

The Fundamental Things Apply

*Over 10 years have gone by
We can't rewind
We're locked in time
But you're still mine*

-Jack Johnson

Part 1

V-Ger was no more. And a crew, who had served together for many years, with distinction and affection, was, at last, reunited.

One evening, several days after the encounter with that errant spacecraft and its probe, the Enterprise was winding down from its shakedown cruise. The newer members of that illustrious crew had begun to coalesce, however, for one member of the senior staff, it was another matter entirely.

Commander Spock came in step beside Lieutenant-Commander Uhura just as she left her station during the shift changeover and rode Turbolift 2 down to Deck 5 with her.

He said nothing; he merely turned to look at her once before looking away. In that quick assessment, he had determined that she had not changed very much, that she was wearing her hair quite differently, and that she appeared in peak physical condition. In his astute estimation, she looked very well.

Uhura was no less busy. She was wondering why Spock had even deigned to join her on the turbolift. She knew it could not have been on purpose for he had more or less brushed off her enthusiastic welcome several days ago when he rejoined the ship and had seemed to go out of his way to keep his distance.

She had to admit, though, that it *was* rather nice to see him again. He had not changed all that much in the intervening years; a little older, but definitely not any wiser for his Vulcan reticence radiated from him even stronger than it had before.

And it was this slight difference in manner that had her mind made up: no matter how glad Admiral Kirk or anybody else was to have him back, she wasn't going to let him back into *her* good graces that easily.

"Commander," he said by way of greeting after they had ridden the lift together for several long moments in total silence.

"Commander," she returned, clearly communicating with her disinterested tone of voice that she wasn't interested in anything he had to say.

Noting her attitude, he straightened even more, if that were at all possible, before turning his body towards her once again.

"You are annoyed?"

Uhura blew out a puff of air.

"Oh, you think? And just what do you think you know about *that* emotion?"

"Would it surprise you to hear that I have, on occasion, felt the sentiment?"

"Well, if you must know, Mr. Spock, I'm feeling a lot of things at this moment."

"I see."

"Do you? Do you really?"

"I have always endeavored to understand you more than you have ever endeavored to understand me."

Uhura had to blink at that statement. It was a very strange thing for him to say. She was certain it contained some hidden or double meaning, but for the life of her, she didn't have a clue what it could possibly be.

"You seem surprised with my declaration, Miss Uhura."

She merely shook her head.

"Then it would seem that the sooner I *endeavor* not to be surprised by any of your actions, Mr. Spock, the better it would be for our friendship."

At the utterance of that particular word, he looked at her sharply.

"Friends? We are friends?"

As the turbolift doors opened she groaned loudly and scoffed crossly.

“Unbelievable!”

Distracted by her fit of pique, she stalked off the lift and nearly collided with Chekov who was hurrying onto the turbolift from the opposite direction.

“Ah, Uhura! Just the person I was looking for. And Mr. Spock, dare you are, also. Admiral Kirk sent me to find you. The Keptain wishes the senior officers to join him for a drink in the officer’s lounge.”

Uhura gave a long, tired sigh. “What? Now?”

She really wasn’t up to it and hadn’t been feeling well for the last few hours and coupled with Spock’s irritating presence, she had been looking forward to going back to her quarters and turning in early. Knowing Kirk as she did, the night was bound to become one long reminiscing session full of talk of old times and recollections of their more outlandish missions. She was simply not in the mood.

“You go on, Pavel. I’ll come some other night. Be a dear and make some excuse for me; I’ll owe you one.”

“Oh no; unacceptable! It is never the same without you, Uhura. Please come; just for a little while.”

Unconvinced, she shook her head. “I know you guys, Pavel; coming for a little while always leads to staying for a long while.”

“What if I promise that I will not be asking for the singing or the joking tonight; many years since we have all been together as one big, happy family.”

Happy family? She glanced at Spock and rolled her eyes; Chekov was laying it on rather thick.

“No, I don’t think so.”

“Please. Please.” Chekov then proceeded to display his most becoming puppy-dog expression, complete with the sad, droopy eyes and the pouty, trembling lips.

“That look of yours is starting to get really, really, old, you know.” Overpowered by such an adorable face, she sighed. “Ok, I’ll come, Pavel, but I’m only staying long enough for one small glass of wine and then I’m off to bed.”

He hooked his arm around hers.

"Vine? No, no! I mustn't be letting that happen; one very large vodka, da?"

"I'm assuming that you mean Russian vodka," she said, pursing her lips.

"But of course; what other kind of Vodka is dare?"

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With the exception of Scotty, all the usual suspects were accounted for, and they were all sitting on the comfortable sofas and ottomans that were arranged in a semi-circle in the center of the lounge.

Spock was the only exception to this; he sat on the periphery of the room on a hard, high-backed stool near the door, almost as if he was not quite sure if he was still welcome in the group.

A few minutes later, Montgomery Scott sauntered through the doors, a large contented smile on his face. He immediately moved towards the Scotch.

"Well Scotty," said Kirk, leaning his head back lazily to speak to his Chief Engineer. "What's the word?"

"A few minor problems, Captain; nothing too big. Unless you want to go all the way back to Earth to complete the refit, I'd suggest we put in to Star Base 16 for the repairs; shouldn't take too long; a week at the outside."

"A week?" questioned Kirk, now staring into the amber depths of his Saurian brandy, "Surely not a week, Mr. Scott; two days at most, three only if absolutely necessary."

"Captain, you will remember that we left Space Dock before the entire refit was completed. I had my reservations then."

Kirk lifted a hand in surrender; he didn't feel like arguing that evening.

"OK, Scotty, I hear you loud and clear: Star Base 16, it is."

"Well," said Sulu, his voice deep and velvety, holding an electric blue colored martini, "You won't hear me complaining. Star Base 16 has excellent shore facilities. There's a lake for both fishing and water-skiing; we could all do with a quick break before heading back into action again."

"Star Base 16?" Chekov thought about that for a moment, then threw his head back and laughed loudly, snorting Vodka up his nose. "I remember now, I once

got very, very drunk dare. I remember vaking up outside somewhere with my face in the dirt."

Nearly everyone laughed in easy camaraderie and Kirk threw a quick glance in Spock's direction, noticing for the first time that his non-laughing friend had not sat very near any of them. He turned back to the group. "I'd like to know what it was you were drinking, Chekov," said Kirk, smilingly. "I'd like to have some of that myself."

Chekov nodded in Uhura's direction. "It vas all her fault, Keptain; Uhura vas the one mixing those drinks dat night."

Uhura, swirling her Merlot in her glass, glanced up, incredulous.

"What do you mean that I was the one mixing the drinks? When was this? I don't remember being anywhere with you while you were falling-down drunk. Now, Scotty on the other hand-."

The table erupted into riotous laughter, Scotty laughing the loudest.

"Aye, lass; you got me there," he said, wiping the tears from his eyes.

But Chekov would not be dissuaded.

"You remember, the party – the barbecue – on Star Base 16."

"A barbecue on Star Base 16? When was I ever on Star Base 16?" She shrugged in a questioning gesture.

"You remember; I vas staying in the hotel, you invited me and many, many others down to your bungalow by the lake."

"Pavel, love; I think I'd remember giving a barbecue on Star Base 16." She leaned over and looked down into the cup cradled in his hands. "What's in that cup of yours?"

McCoy, sitting on the other side of him, leaned over to look into the cup, too, slapping the Lieutenant-Commander on the back.

"Chekov, haven't I told you a thousand times that Vodka would kill all of your brain cells one day!"

"I am not imagining it! Dare vas a barbecue; dare vas!"

“Sure, sure!” replied McCoy, laughing even louder while refreshing his own Andorian Ale.

“But I vas dare! I vas! Big party, plenty to eat and drink; lots of people; happy times.”

Uhura, still unconvinced, turned to the doctor. “I think you’d better check him over for more than just overindulging in Vodka. Our friend Chekov is also quite delusional.”

After everyone finished laughing again at Chekov’s expense, Kirk refilled Uhura’s glass with more Merlot while she was busy smirking with McCoy. Sulu, now looking extremely bored and wanting nothing more than to slip away to call his wife, fished the olives out of his glass. Scotty, already on his third hit of Scotch, was sprawled out inelegantly on a sofa with one eye closed, and the other eye trained on the ceiling tiles, thinking that several of them looked misaligned.

But Chekov would not let it pass, and in truth, he was beginning to grow just a little bit angry; he had always hated being considered the exaggerating younger sibling in this group.

“Mr. Spock will bear me out, for he vas dare, as vell!”

This of course made everyone turn around, and when they did, it was only to find the stool empty and the Vulcan long gone.

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Uhura woke with a start, her head aching violently.

Damn Merlot, she thought.

Damn Kirk and his drinking parties.

She laid in her bed quietly for a while. She wasn’t quite sure, but she thought that she had been dreaming those strange dreams again, yet for the life of her she couldn’t remember what any of these dreams were about. But, there was one thing that she was absolutely certain of after this one, she wanted a plate of pancakes and she wanted them right now.

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“Well look who’s here bright and early this morning! Did you come especially to cheer up my dreary day?”

Uhura favored Doctor McCoy with a small smile.

“Let’s make a deal: I’ll brighten up your day, doctor, just as soon as you brighten mine.”

“Oh? What seems to be the problem?”

“I have a terrible headache; I think I must have drunk too much wine last night.”

“If you drank too much wine then I’m a monkey’s uncle. If anybody drank too much last night, it was Chekov.”

She giggled.

“Poor Chekov; I don’t think he’s going to speak to any of us ever again; he seemed to be quite angry when no one believed his barbecue story.”

“He’ll get over it, he always does.” He took up his medical scanner and passed it over her head. “Well, let’s take a look-see, shall we?” He read the readings, looked skeptical for a moment, and raised a wrinkled eyebrow. “A headache, you say?”

“Well, that and the fact that over the last few nights I’ve been having trouble sleeping. My dreams have been waking me up; but when they do, I can’t remember what they were about.”

“Hmm.” He grunted, checking his readings once again.

“What does that grunt mean?”

“That grunt is just a grunt, young lady. Now tell me, have you felt dizzy or nauseous?”

“No, just a headache and the dreams, why? What’s going on?”

“Could be nothing; could be a lot of things. I’d like to run a few simple tests.”

“A few, simple tests?” she replied, skeptically. McCoy was always overly thorough; she doubted that she would be on time for her shift. “I’m on duty in an hour, Doctor; so you have to make it fast.”

"Now, now, don't you worry your pretty little head about a thing; they don't call me Quick Draw McCoy for nothing."

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Several hours later, McCoy's craggily voice was heard over the Captain's comm-link.

"Jim, I need to see you down in sickbay."

The Admiral spoke into his wrist communicator

"What is it, Bones? We're pretty busy up here."

"Just come down here for a moment, for Pete's sake; and bring Spock with you, too!"

Kirk swiveled around in his seat and regarded the science officer quizzically and shrugged his shoulders.

"We'll be there in a moment; Kirk out."

Kirk glanced around the bridge. Sulu and Chekov weren't on duty, yet, so that left only one officer of rank on the bridge in the sea of young crewmembers and ensigns.

"Come along, Spock, you heard the man; Commander Uhura you have the bridge."

Uhura nearly fell out of her chair. In all of her years serving with Kirk, he had never once left her in command of the bridge.

"Aye, sir," she said in astonishment, while remaining at the communications station, her eyes following Kirk's and the stoic Vulcan's progress to the turbolift doors.

"And Commander," said Kirk, winking just before the turbolift door swished to a close, "Keep the chair warm for me, will you?"

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"What is it, Bones? I'm a very busy man."

McCoy was never one to mince words. "It's Uhura, Jim!"

"Uhura?"

"She came to see me this morning."

Kirk furrowed his brow. "Something serious?"

"No, not exactly – but, I do have a concern."

"Shouldn't she be down here with us to hear these non-serious concerns of yours?"

"Just listen, Jim. After you see what I've seen, we will all have to decide together what exactly to tell her." McCoy pointed a finger at the chair on the opposite side of the desk, gesturing for the Captain to sit.

Kirk glanced quickly at Spock, before finally sitting down; Spock remained standing, his hands clasped behind his back.

"Uhura came to see me this morning, presenting with, or so I thought at first, a mere headache. After I ran a couple of tests, I noted a few areas of concern on the scans that required further study. In the mean time, I gave her a simple analgesic to ease the symptoms and sent her on her way."

"So, what's the trouble?"

"The trouble is this." McCoy flipped on the viewer: it displayed a chart with a jagged blue line. "This is the brain wave pattern of one Lieutenant Nyota Uhura."

"You're slipping, Bones," said Kirk, leaning back in the chair and folding his arms across his chest, "Uhura has been a Commander for over two years."

"Will you let me finish before you go and get all cocky with me?" exclaimed McCoy, testily. "Now, as I said, before I was interrupted, this is the brain-wave pattern of Lieutenant Uhura when she first reported for duty on the Enterprise all those years ago." He flipped a switch and pulled up another scan, but the jagged line on this new chart was red. "This is the brain wave pattern of Commander Nyota Uhura that I completed just this morning."

Kirk compared the two lines. They were similar, but not exactly the same.

McCoy circled several key differences with his laser stylus. "These variations, here and here, indicate memory patterns that were placed there that have recently begun to assert themselves: memory patterns that are not at all characteristic for a human."

Kirk lurched forward. "Characteristics of what, then?"

"It's not a what, Jim; it's a who."

"Then who, Bones?"

"Vulcans," said Spock, finally joining the conversation, having seen the tell-tale signs of Vulcan-like brain-wave activity on the chart.

Kirk had to think about that for a few minutes just to wrap his brain around the discordant possibilities that were beginning to take shape in his mind's eye.

"Are you saying that she and Commander Sonak were—involved or bonded—or something? She never said a thing. If I had known—is that what this is all about? She's grieving and needs time away to mourn for him. She can have all the time she needs. Why didn't anyone ever tell me, Bones."

McCoy rolled his eyes in a large circle. "Will you listen to yourself, Jim? You know what they say about those who assume: they make an ass out of you and me! These are not Commander Sonak's memories that we are dealing with; they belong to another Vulcan all together."

McCoy flipped another switch on the viewer and brought up a different chart, one that he was very familiar with and he waited to drop his next bombshell with entirely too much delight.

"Bones, if she wasn't involved with Commander Sonak, then what other Vulcan has she been in contact with?"

McCoy cut his eyes to the right, looking positively overjoyed.

"Do you want to tell him Spock, or shall I?"

Spock pressed his lips together in a dissatisfied line.

"I believe what the Doctor is trying to say, Jim, is that Miss Uhura is experiencing a random retention of my memories."

Kirk's face went completely blank. And when he tried to form the questions he wanted to ask, his face contorted into several different expressions.

"Spock—are you saying—that you—and Commander Uhura—are—bonded?"

Spock rolled his eyes and sighed; apparently he must state the obvious.

"You will remember, Captain, that I have not seen nor spoken with Commander Uhura or any of you for the last several years."

"Then how do you explain this – this-?"

"I believe the words you are searching for are: imprint upon her subconscious."

Kirk looked back and forth between Spock and McCoy. "Will someone please tell me what the devil is going on here?"

"Gladly," said McCoy, believing that he had already put all the pieces together himself.

"Jim, remember, last night in the lounge when Chekov kept going on and on about some big party down on Star Base 16 and no one seemed to believe him?"

"He was drunk, Bones!"

"Drunk he may have been, but an idiot he most certainly is not! It all happened just as he said; I've confirmed it with Lieutenant Grady who was there herself. Chekov *was* on Star Base 16 several years ago, heck, we were all at Star Base 16."

"But this barbecue – this party he spoke of; I certainly don't remember any party."

"Of course you don't remember a party, Jim, because you never made it down to the planet. In fact, seventy-five percent of the crew never made it down to the surface. If you recall, that was the time I had to quarantine the ship. You had the Scalosian Flu; a lot of people came down with it. Only about a quarter of the crew went down to the planet, which, I'm pleased to say, did in fact include Chekov, Spock, and our very own Lieutenant Nyota Uhura."

"And she doesn't remember this because..."

"Because, very soon after, a few days after to be exact, Lieutenant Uhura was attacked by NOMAD. This is the same NOMAD who erased all knowledge from her brain." McCoy was now warming to his explanation. "Don't you see, Jim? With this recent run-in with V-Ger, an entity very similar to NOMAD, it must have triggered something and her brain is fighting to remember what it was that she forgot! We all know that she eventually got her memories back, but just by the shiftiness in the eyes of the Vulcan standing beside me, I imagine that she did not get *all* of her memories back. Am I correct, Mr. Spock?"

Spock's countenance remained expressionless.

"Your estimation of the events are quite accurate, Doctor."

Kirk screwed up his own face in disbelief and in anger.

"Spock, are you now saying that you knew all this time that she had lost—" he looked at Bones for clarification.

"I'd say she's lost about two weeks worth of memories, Jim."

"Twelve point seven days, to be precise."

"Bones?"

McCoy held up his hands. "That's all I know, Jim."

Kirk was on the verge of exploding. "And you don't think you acted wrongly, Mr. Spock?"

"It was all for the best, Captain," replied Spock, calmly.

At Spock's cool and unfeeling manner, Kirk finally blew the gasket he had been trying very carefully to control.

"The best; how? The best; for whom? What exactly happened to her down on that planet during that time?"

"It is a private matter."

"Spock, will you listen to yourself for a moment? You have willfully concealed vital information pertaining to your fellow officer's full recovery! You have purposely chosen to keep secrets from that officer and that officer's doctor! And, I might add, you have maliciously trampled all over the trust and faith that I have always had in you! You *will* tell me what happened down on that planet and that is an order, Commander!"

Spock, with both hands firmly behind his back, slowly took several steps away before turning around to face both of his friends once again.

"Very well, Captain, if you feel that you must know. It is very simple, Jim; Commander Uhura and I fell in love."

Part 2

(Shhhhh? It's a secret.)

"It's called a micro-subspace field emitter."

"I've read about this, but I've never had the chance to see it up close." She hefted it in her hand. "It's so small and light."

Doctor Jokar beamed, his blue-grey eyes sparkling with excitement. "Precisely, Commander Uhura; it will revolutionize communicator technology. One day, instead of these bulky hand or wrist communicators, we'll have something even smaller."

"In something like a comm. badge that we could wear on a sleeve or on our chests, perhaps; you know: press to talk."

Kirk flashed a larger, proud, fatherly smile. "See what I mean, Jokar," he said turning to the Venutian, "I told you that Commander Uhura was the right person to take a look at your problem; best communication's engineer in the fleet. What do you think?"

"I think I want to steal her away you forever, Jim." He turned back the Commander. "What do you say, Miss Uhura? Can I tempt you away from the Enterprise for the next few days to help me iron out a few bugs?"

Uhura looked to the Admiral; she really wanted to go.

"Can you do without me, sir?"

"Never!" said Kirk. "But of course, I would also never stand in your way. This is a wonderful opportunity, Uhura."

"Yes, I can see that. Then I'll do it, sir, but only if you're sure."

Kirk gestured lazily with a hand. "Just don't get too comfortable down there; I do want you back... eventually. And since Engineer Scott insists on torturing me by coming up with a few more repairs for the Enterprise--this is actually perfect timing. And you won't be all alone, either; Mr. Spock will be part of the team, as

well; Doctor Joker will be putting him to work over on their field coil problems, using the great Vulcan hearing of his to listen in on comm. traffic. "

Uhura frowned slightly, but said nothing.

Jokar stood and extended his hand. "It was good seeing you again Jim; you are always welcome by at any time, especially when you can put me in league with such great people." He turned back to Uhura. "We'll see you in the morning, Commander."

"It was nice meeting you, Doctor."

"So," said Kirk when they were both alone in his briefing room, "I have taken the liberty to get you both squared away. I've already had my Yeoman arrange everything; you and Spock have been put up in a very nice hotel down on the surface; I hear it fairly new."

Uhura winced suddenly and raised her hand to her temple; a slight pain was causing her head to ache.

"Are you alright, Commander?" He watched her closely wondering if he had reawakened a memory.

She waved it off. "It's just a little headache, "

Kirk carefully measured his words. "For a moment there, I thought you had something against being at a hotel with Mr. Spock."

Uhura sighed abruptly. "Permission to speak freely, sir."

"Of course."

She sighed again.

"Ordinarily, I wouldn't have any qualms about working with anyone, but sir, you saw for yourself just the other day when Mr. Spock came on board the ship; he wasn't exactly... cordial. And for the last few days—I don't know what it is—I just get the impression that he's avoiding me. I only wanted to thank him for all he did for me Omicron Ten... rescuing me and everything. And although I never did get a straight story from Gaila—Admiral Nogura—she did tell me most of what he did for me."

"I know, Uhura, I know. But you know Spock; he'd only say that thanks are illogical and that he was simply doing his duty." She didn't seem convinced, so Kirk moved in and took her by the shoulders. "I'd consider it a great favor, one friend to another, if you would help out our other friend. I'm worried about Spock; he hasn't been around humans for quite some time and you are, by far, the most cordial human of all of us put together. Just be yourself; he'll come around again and we'll all be one big happy family again. If I thought it would do any good, I make him work with Bones."

She had to laugh heartily at that one; Kirk could always win anyone over with his wonderful sense of humor.

"Only if you want to see Mr. Spock finally use the Vulcan Death Grip on someone."

"Commander Uhura, you know perfectly well that there is no such thing as a Vulcan Death Grip."

"I know that, sir, but I'm sure Mr. Spock will invent one for just such an occasion."

To be continued...