

Phenotypes

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Summary

He's on his second beer when, out of nowhere, he spots Bones at the bar. He's wearing different clothes- Jim doesn't recognize them, which is strange, considering he and Bones practically live out of each other's closets- and his hair is spiked up sharply, but there's no mistaking him.

Notes

as always, i owe huge thanks to my beta kinneys for making this so much better

The crew is on leave, and Jim is drinking alone. Bones went out with Scotty and Keenser earlier, which means he won't be back until mid-morning tomorrow at the earliest, so Jim is free to find his own drinking partner. Or more, if he feels like it. He's not sure he does. Not tonight. They had a rough mission; the entire crew, including him, is still reeling from the loss of an entire planet and some of their own. The idea of fucking a stranger when his skin still feels like it's covered in ash just doesn't sit right with him.

He's on his second beer when, out of nowhere, he spots Bones at the bar. He's wearing different clothes- Jim doesn't recognize them, which is strange, considering he and Bones practically live out of each other's closets- and his hair is spiked up sharply, but there's no mistaking him.

Getting to his feet, Jim curiously makes his way to the bar.

"Bones," he says when he reaches his friend's side. Bones doesn't answer. Jim frowns and tries again, a little louder. "Hey, Bones." But Bones still doesn't respond. Finally, Jim puts his hand on Bones' shoulder. "Bones!"

Bones turns around, forehead crinkled, and Jim immediately knows he's made a mistake. Whoever this is, it isn't Bones. He looks like Bones- exactly like Bones, right down to the wrinkle between his brows- but Bones has never looked at Jim with such a blank expression.

Jim withdraws his hand quickly. "Sorry," he says, backing away. "I thought you were someone else."

The guy quirks a brow at him in an eerie echo of Bones. "It's fine," he says. His accent is sharper, more Western than Bones' Southern drawl. He holds out a hand. "Name's John Kennex."

Jim takes it. "Jim Kirk."

"You waiting on somebody?"

"Nah. I only came up because I thought something must be wrong for my friend to have come here."

John nods, and Jim ought to let the conversation end. Instead, he jerks his head toward his table. "You want some company?"

"Wouldn't mind some."

They go back together and order another round of drinks. They drink in silence for a time, Jim scrambling mentally for something to talk about with Bones' doppelgänger.

"You know," John says abruptly, "you keep giving me looks."

"Sorry."

"I never said it was a bad thing." He tilts his head, eyes narrowing. "You don't look at me like you look at a friend."

"Well, we're barely more than strangers-"

"Let me rephrase. You look at me like we're more than friends. I'm gonna go out on a limb and guess you'd like that from your friend."

Jim looks down at his beer and pretends the label is something fascinating. Bones is perceptive, but he hasn't picked up on Jim's feelings. How the hell did a stranger figure it out so fast?

The chair creaks as John sits back in it. "I'm not opposed, you know."

Jim's head jerks up. "Excuse me?"

"My friend bailed on me, too." John shrugs. There's tension radiating off him, though, that undercuts his unconcerned air. "If you want, I'd come back to yours with you."

"That's forward."

"I've been told I'm 'pent up'," John says sourly. "It's not charity, if that's what you're thinking."

"I wasn't."

"Great."

Jim fidgets with his drink a little longer before he sighs and says, "You have to be gone before he gets back."

John tilts his head, considering. "Ordinarily, I'd say I'm not that kind of girl, but maybe this way I'll get to shower and not have to deal with Dorian's judgment. You are taking me back to your place, aren't you? Because I'm not young enough for a quickie in a dark alley."

"Of course I am," Jim blurts, his mind already filled with the possibility of Bones' twin in his bed. "Who's Dorian?"

"My partner. My work partner, that is. I mean, he lives with me, but he's a robot. There's nothing going on between us."

Somehow, Jim gets the feeling that that isn't exactly true, but he doesn't push.

"So... should we go?"

There's a hole in the pit of his belly, something that says what he's doing is wrong, but Jim pushes it aside. It's not as if he and Bones are actually together, and John is making this decision of his own free will.

John quirks his brow again and gives him a ghost of a smile that reminds Jim of Bones. "Yeah, why not? Lead the way."

They pay and leave. As they head to the shuttle, their shoulders brush. Jim keeps his hands to himself, keenly aware that if anyone from the crew recognizes them and blabs, this will get back to Bones. Jim can't risk that, and luckily, John doesn't push.

He takes the seat beside Jim on the shuttle calmly.

He must not be afraid of flying, Jim thinks. He finds himself wishing John did fear it. Then he would have a reason to hold his hand, like he's always wanted to do with Bones.

Sneaking John into the hotel without bumping into anyone isn't as hard as Jim would have thought.

The moment the hotel room door shuts behind them, John is on him. He takes Jim's face in his hands and kisses him hard. Jim doesn't fight him. He's been ready to go since the shuttle landed. He runs his hands through John's hair, messing it up like he wanted to do to Bones the entire time they were at the Academy and Bones insisted on taming it every morning.

John backs him up to the closer bed and follows Jim as he falls back onto the mattress. He's a fantastic kisser, and with his eyes closed, Jim can almost convince himself John is Bones. He's a little more tentative about it than Jim would like- he can almost feel John wondering if he's doing this right- but Jim doesn't have any real objections. He especially doesn't object when John settles over him, one thigh between Jim's.

They break apart to breathe, and Jim slides his hands down John's chest. He's built slightly bigger than Bones is, but that's all right. The mouth sucking hickeys down Jim's neck is the twin of Bones'.

Fumbling with John's pants, Jim is ready to find out what's waiting under them.

That's the moment the door flies open and Bones comes staggering inside. He blinks against the bright lights, eyes narrowing unhappily. Then he looks over and spots Jim and John.

"Oh," he says, audibly surprised. Then, louder, "What the hell?"

John, who twisted around at the sound of Bones stumbling inside, looks similarly thrown. "You... You look just like me."

Bones nods. "Who's your friend, Jim?"

Jim swallows. There's no getting out of this. "Bones, this is John Kennex. John, this is Leonard McCoy."

"I've heard about you," John says, getting up. He walks over and starts circling Bones, his brow furrowed. "You're the surgeon who come up with that technique for balancing Orion hormones." It isn't a question.

Bones nods again. "And you are...?"

"Police. I work homicide."

"Dangerous work."

"Not as dangerous as space," John points out. "I take it you work with Jim."

"I do." Bones folds his arms, looking uncomfortable. "I think I met your partner down in the lobby. Robot, calls himself Dorian?"

John sighs. "Yeah, that's him. I better check on him." He turns back to Jim. "It was, ah, good to meet you, Jim."

Jim nods. "Yeah. Real good. You, uh, stay safe out there."

"Will do." And with that, John practically runs out the door, leaving Jim alone with Bones.

"It's not what you think," he says lamely.

"So you weren't about to sleep with my could-be twin?"

"Well..." Jim gives Bones his most earnest look. "It wasn't intentional. I thought he was you, then we got to talking..."

Bones rubs his hands over his face. "I'm going to take a shower. We'll talk more after."

Jim watches helplessly as Bones turns away from him and walks stiffly to the bathroom. The door shuts behind him, and a moment later, Jim hears the water running.

He knows he made a mistake. He let himself get carried away. This is his punishment.

Jim never intended for Bones to find out he loves him- and in a way, that secret is still safe. But it's lingering just below the surface. It wouldn't take much to bring it bubbling up into view. Not for Bones.

Shit.

He's so busy worrying, he doesn't hear the water shut off or the door open. He doesn't even hear Bones' footsteps. He's just suddenly confronted with his best friend's damp, scowling face.

"I changed my mind," Bones says. "We're talking now."

"But-"

"No buts," Bones interrupts, right before he plops down on the edge of the bed, trapping Jim between him and wall. Jim could theoretically shove him off, but this is both new and usual for Bones. Jim wants to see where it goes.

"How long?"

Jim shrugs, not bothering to pretend he doesn't understand. "A while."

"And it's just... It's just physical?" Bones' voice is soft, encouraging. The usual edge is gone. He sounds as lost as Jim feels.

"It's not," Jim admits to his lap.

Bones puts a hand on Jim's shoulder. "Why didn't you say something?"

"You know me. I'm no good with feelings."

"That's not quite true." Bones inches closer. "You're just no good at being vulnerable." He brushes Jim's hair away from his face. "Can't say I blame you."

"Is this the bit where you say we can still be friends?" Jim asks hopefully. He wants more, but he'd die without Bones at his side.

"Of course we can be friends. I was thinking maybe we could try something a little more complex, though."

Jim's head jerks up. "You-"

Bones smiles weakly at him. "You never thought maybe I'd want the same thing?"

Of course Jim thought about it. He just never gave it any credence. Bones likes dependability, calm. Jim can't give him either.

"You're thinking too much," Bones says, and that's when he leans in and kisses Jim. It's a gentle kiss but a certain one. Bones knows this is where he belongs.

Jim knows it, too. He knows it in the pit of his stomach when he kisses Bones back, knows it in his fingers when he tangles them in Bones' hair, knows it in the thrill that runs down his spine. He knows it when they part and Bones stays close, his lips barely an inch from Jim's.

"No more doubles," he murmurs.

"Don't tell me you found one of me," Jim jokes.

"There's no one like you in the universe," Bones says softly. "And even if there were... I've had the real thing. Why would I ever want second best?"

He leans in for another kiss, then, which Jim happily returns. That kiss becomes another and another and another, each one progressively more heated until Bones twists and settles himself over Jim.

His weight feels immediately familiar, as if Jim has always known it.

Moving away from Jim's mouth, Bones presses a series of kisses down Jim's neck. They start out soft but quickly escalate into sucking kisses that make Jim shiver.

"Lord," he breathes, his head swinging up. "You don't know how long I've wanted this."

Jim smiles crookedly. "Not nearly as long as I have."

Bones arches his brows but doesn't fight him, instead presses a kiss to Jim's temple. "As much as I'd like to take this further-"

"It's better if we didn't," Jim finishes. He knows how Bones feels. Jim has wanted him for so long, his body is aching for him to hurry things up, to get as much of Bones as he can before Bones disappears. But he's tired and still a little drunk, and he wants to be sober for this, wants to see Bones in the full, bright light of day the first time. He knows Bones won't go anywhere in the meantime. That's not who he is. He's here now. He'll be here in the morning, too.

"We don't have to sleep in separate beds, though, do we?" Jim asks.

"They're twin sized beds, Jim."

"And?"

"And we're grown men." Bones sighs. "I'm not helping if you fall off."

Jim does fall off. Twice. But each time, Bones is there, sleepily tugging Jim back up against him. He wraps his arms around Jim after the second time, pulling him against his chest. He noses at the sensitive skin behind Jim's ear and sighs happily. He drifts back off within minutes, and Jim, who's wrapped up securely, follows not long after.

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