

## Eros Unbound

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# **Eros Unbound**

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## Summary

Jim was hollering and Uhura was pleading and as a particularly ugly alien tossed him over the cliff edge Leonard McCoy had just a split-second to make the decision of whether to live or die.

He chose to live.

Spectacularly.

With a burst of golden light and white feathers.

# Chapter 1

To say the negotiation wasn't going well would be an understatement.

Five hours on the godforsaken rock and all they'd accomplished was pissing off the locals.

They'd beamed down with a security detail, but no phasers, and for once Leonard caught himself wishing Jim had ignored the rules. Three hours in it had become clear the Anrovian leadership had ignored the "no weapons" clause in the terms set out for the talks.

Four hours in it became clear they were pathologically xenophobic, and the mission was likely to be a bust.

Five hours in and Jim and Uhura were still trying their best, calmly sitting at the outdoor negotiating table. The rest of the team had been separated, the security detail, Spock, and Leonard himself surrounded by armed guards. It had been hours since he'd been asked to weigh in—initially they'd hoped access to Federation med tech could be a key negotiating point, but that was part of a larger plan that was left in tatters. At least the scenery was pretty: the outdoor amphitheater was cut into a spectacular cliffside. Subtly stretching legs that were beginning to ache from standing in one place for so long, Leonard tried to enjoy the sun on his face and mentally wager how long Jim was likely to keep flogging a dead horse before giving in and admitting defeat.

Abruptly, the Anrovian negotiator raised his voice and bellowed, "You do not think we are serious, Captain? Allow us to make a demonstration."

Leonard's eyes flew open as something gripped his wrist and *yanked* with superhuman strength. Jim was hollering and Uhura was pleading and as a particularly ugly alien tossed him over the cliff edge Leonard McCoy had just a split-second to make the decision of whether to live or die.

He chose to live.

Spectacularly.

With a burst of golden light and white feathers.

It had been so long since he'd stretched his wings, much less willed them into existence, that he fell a hundred feet before being able to recover. *Flying*. The visceral rush of it, the feeling of air holding him up; it was all he could do to not let out a whoop. It had been far too long.

Striking upwards, Leonard crested the cliff edge in five hard beats of his wings to find utter pandemonium. Uhura had her arms around Jim, as if she were trying to hold him back from tearing the Anrovian leader apart with his bare hands. One redshirt from security was bleeding on the ground, while another grappled with a sentry. Spock appeared to have nerve-pinched a further two into submission.

The Anrovian guards had lances, which was somehow fitting; the fluid motions of darting and ducking that kind of weaponry came back quickly and Leonard fought his way back to his friend's side with a cry of, "Jim!"

The captain wheeled around, white-faced and wide-eyed as he yelled, "Bones!"

Before they could say anything more, the sparks and whorls of light from the transporter took hold and Leonard found himself rematerializing on the Enterprise with the rest of the away team.

Jim was panting, staring at where Leonard's wings emerged from the tatters of his uniform shirt. He blinked, seeming to remember himself and recognize where he was, then barked, "My ready room, McCoy, now!"

Trailing Jim through the corridors, Leonard couldn't be bothered to muster the energy to hide his wings. The secret was out anyway.

Jim didn't look back the whole way there, but as soon as the door closed behind them he rounded on Leonard, jaw tense and eyes a little wild as he demanded, "Are you a mutant?"

"Mutant?" Leonard scoffed in surprise, "You've been reading too many comic books, kid."

"What the hell, Bones? Wings?" Suddenly fearful as another possibility occurred to him, Jim gasped, "Wait, did they do something to you? Did they—"

"No." Leonard scrubbed a hand through his hair, "No, they didn't do this to me." What a cluserfuck his day was becoming, "I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I was trying to just live a normal life; blend in." So much for that.

Jim's jaw closed with a click, then he more softly stated, "You have wings."

"I have wings," Leonard confirmed. "I always have."

"Anything else you need to tell me?"

"My name isn't Leonard." When Jim just crossed his arms across his chest, the doctor confessed, "It's Eros."

"Eros?" Jim frowned, "Wait, like Cupid?"

"Not *like*, Jim. Quite literally." Jim's gaze flitted down to Leonard's waist, as if expecting to find a toga or a diaper or something. Exasperated, he barked, "My eyes are up here."

Jim's gaze flicked back to Leonard's face and something else seemed to occur to him as he blurted out, "Oh my God, Bones, the jaded old man routine makes a lot more sense. What are you, like a thousand years old?"

"More like four."

*Four thousand years old.* Jim could scarcely wrap his head around that. “So you’re immortal?” The pitch of Jim’s voice was increasing until there was almost a squeaky-rasp to it as he asked, “How did I not know this? Wait, can you even be killed?”

Leonard shook his head. “I’m mortal, Jim. For the first time in my life I’m pretty much human. I just happen to have wings.”

“First time? How did that happen?”

“It was a hell of a divorce, remember?”

“Wait, you were actually married? Gods,” Jim waved a hand between them, “do that?”

“Unfortunately. And she did get the whole damn planet. Jocelyn got the bow and arrow too, but I guess the wings fall under ‘my bones’— which were the actual terms of the divorce, I’ll have you know. Damned harpy.”

Jim’s eyes were wide, as if he was still trying to process everything. Eventually, he gave himself a little shake and said, “The senior staff will be wondering what’s going on— we’ll have to tell them.”

Leonard nodded his acquiescence, steeling himself for what he hoped would be a fairly civil conversation.

Jim’s version of *telling them* was to stride into the conference room and announce, “Turns out Bones has been holding out on us!”

Jim made a little ushering motion and Leonard reluctantly stepped up to the table. “I’m mortal now and pretty much human aside from the wings, but I wasn’t always. A long time ago I was worshipped as a god on Earth— in ancient Greece.” He licked his lips. “My name was Eros.”

In the sudden silence following his confession, Jim’s voice was equal parts delighted and dripping juvenile innuendo as he asserted, “Bones here was the god of *love*.”

Chekov was looking at Leonard like a particularly puzzling calculation as he began to ask, “But wasn’t Eros specifically...” He trailed off at the quelling look from the doctor.

The question wasn’t stopped quickly enough, as Jim perked up and looked between them as he asked, “What?”

Chekov flushed pink and it was clear nothing would compel him to finish the sentence now that he was the center of attention. Leonard rolled his eyes and fixed Jim with a glare as he explained, “The ancient Greeks had words for different kinds of love between individuals: fraternal, familial, dutiful... I was specifically the god of *erotic* love.”

Jim made a choking noise, as if some saliva had gone down the wrong way.

Uhura managed to simultaneously appear both impressed and skeptical.

Spock's eyebrow was reaching new heights.

And if Sulu's smirk got any bigger his face was liable to get stuck that way.

Leonard sighed. It was going to be a long day.

## Chapter 2

Once he'd recovered from his near-choking Jim kicked everyone else out of the conference room and rounded on Leonard again, red-faced, as he exclaimed, "Bones, you were the god of *boning*!"

Everything in him was wanting to wilt in embarrassment, but Leonard hadn't survived the pantheon by being particularly retiring. Figuring a good defense was a strong offence, he replied, "Damned straight!"

"But Bones—" Jim gaped, "What did you even *do*?"

Making his tone match that of someone talking to a particularly slow child, he explained, "Well, Jim, when it was all pythian virgins and farm animals mankind needed a little help here and there." The flush on Jim's face was spreading down his throat and it was all Leonard could do not to laugh. He concentrated, hard, and his wings winked out of existence, then with as much dignity as he could muster, asserted, "Now if you'll excuse me, Captain, I think we can consider the debriefing finished. I'm going to go have a shower— who knows what bacteria was all over that alien's filthy hands."

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"Oh, for the love of— Out!"

As he'd expected, Jim was sitting in his quarters when Leonard got out of the shower. Unfortunately, Jim with a new discovery was like a dog worrying a bone. At least Leonard had put on sweatpants before stepping out of the bathroom.

Jim didn't budge from the edge of the bed. "Can I just see your wings again? Please, Bones!"

Towelling dry his hair, Leonard didn't even spare a glance. "No."

"Come on! You *have* to let me see them."

"I don't have to do anything."

"Please? Please, Bones? I mean, *wings*!"

Jim's wheedling was quite frankly unbecoming, so Leonard set down his towel and relented. It was easier the second time that day, just a thought, a touch of effort, and *pop*. The feathers were glossy in the artificial light of his quarters.

Jim stood, stepping forward and almost reverently reaching out a hand.

“Careful—” Leonard stepped back, out of range, “it’s been a long time, and they’re a little sensitive.”

More slowly, Jim extended his hand and gently stroked the arch of one wing; Leonard had to suppress a shiver at the sensation.

Ghosting his fingertips over the silky surface, Jim asked, “How strong are they? Can you carry things when you’re flying? Wait, could you carry *me*?”

Smirking, fondly, Leonard replied, “Yeah, I could carry you, Jim.”

The thought was enough for Jim to let out a huff of breath that sounded like, “Holy shit.”

Leonard eventually had to twitch away, the sensation becoming almost overwhelmingly intimate, not that Jim knew that. He willed his wings away and grabbed a t-shirt, quickly pulling it over his bare torso.

“How do you do that?”

“I dunno,” Leonard shrugged. “I just think and it happens. I never really knew how it worked.”

“That’s gotta violate about a million rules of physics.” There was a wrinkle between Jim’s thick eyebrows. “Do you, like, *know* things too?”

Leonard was under no illusions as to what kinds of *things* interested Jim Kirk. Rolling his eyes, he replied, “Yeah, Jim, I’m a veritable Kama Sutra.”

“Huh.” It was a strange response for Jim: something almost vulnerable, quickly schooled.

It had been a long day, and Leonard was not feeling up to puzzling that out, so instead he simply finger combed his hair as he said, “I think it’s time we got some rest, Jim. And I know you’ve still got to report to command.”

“Yeah,” Jim rocked back on his heels, “yeah, you’re right.” He vacillated for a moment, then made for the door. “Sleep well,” there was the slightest pause, then, “Bones.”

Already pulling back his quilt, Leonard managed a tired smile. “Thanks Jim, you too.”

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If the way crewmen stopped and stared as Leonard walked to the mess hall was anything to go by the gossip mill had been working overtime all night. When a hush fell over the entire room after the door slid open, he paused in the doorway and glowered. When no one seemed inclined to move, Leonard barked out, “Yes, I’ve got wings. No, I can’t do anything else. We done?” One ensign from stellar cartography dropped her fork, but aside from that the only response was some shamefaced shuffling. Rolling his eyes, he stomped over to the drinks dispenser and requested a black coffee.



## Chapter 3

Leonard had acquired a shadow.

It hovered at the edges of his vision in the med bay, trailed him from his quarters and slipped into the shadows when Leonard was working out in the gym.

He tolerated it for two weeks before finally boiling over five minutes before the end of alpha shift. “Alright, that’s enough!” The person hiding just around the corner of the supply closet stilled. “I feel like I’m in a bad stage version of Peter Pan.”

A few seconds of silence, and then Jim Kirk peeked around the corner to ask, “Bones?”

“Cut it out with the rogue shadow routine, Jim. If you want to ask me something, just do it.”

Jim froze like a deer in headlights, then blurted out in a single breath, “Havedinnerwithme.”

Leonard frowned, not quite able to parse the rush of syllables. “What?”

Jim stepped closer and repeated more softly. “Will you have dinner with me?”

Leonard’s frown only deepened in confusion. “We always have dinner on Tuesdays.”

“No, I mean,” Jim straightened, “Can I take you for dinner, Bones?”

What? He blinked. “Like a date?” When Jim nodded, Leonard could only ask in befuddlement, “What brought this on?”

“I never thought of you, you know...” Jim cleared his throat, clearly mortified, “as a sexual person before.”

“What did you think I was?”

“Um... asexual? Old-fashioned? Traumatized by divorce?” Jim winced, but soldiered on, “Terminally heterosexual?”

“Hell, Jim, it’s the twenty-third century.” Leonard pinched the bridge of his nose, feeling the beginnings of a headache. “And now imagining me flying around in a skimpy loincloth practicing the erotic arts has got you rethinking that?” The pinkening of Jim’s cheeks told him he’d been right about the loincloth and Leonard groaned internally. “And you want to have dinner with me why exactly?”

Jim attempted a winning smile and offered, “Hope springs eternal?”

“Dammit, Jim, I do not need to be another notch on your bedpost. And let me tell you, there are already *plenty* of notches on mine.” Several bedposts worth, in fact. Maybe a mid-sized furniture store.

Jim's smile faded and Leonard had the sudden sense that he'd made a serious miscalculation. "Hey, sorry, I shouldn't have said anything," Jim was in full retreat, hands up as if appeasing an angry dog. "Forget I said it, okay?" The younger man turned quickly, heading back towards the main corridor.

"Wait!"

Jim froze, shoulders drawing together with tension, but he didn't turn back.

Leonard very carefully set down the stock-taking padd. "You don't mean like some fling, do you?" Jim's silence was confirmation enough. "Hell, kid..." Jim flinched and Leonard corrected himself, "Jim." He took three quick steps, then gently took the younger man by the shoulders and carefully turned him so they were face to face as he said, "I'd like that."

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That night, in his quarters, Leonard gently pushed Jim onto the bed and then moved to carefully straddle his lap. They were both shirtless; dinner in the officer's mess had turned into a movie on the sofa which had turned into making out on the sofa, which had turned into untucked shirts and pawing at each other until Leonard had raised an eyebrow and Jim had exhaled a gust of breath and nodded.

"Can you..." Jim trailed off, cheeks pinking.

"You want me to summon my wings?"

Jim nodded.

They unfurled quickly— stretching so that they spanned the small room, tips brushing opposite walls.

The sheer wonder on Jim's face was unmistakable as he breathed, "You're beautiful, Bones."

Leonard's drawl lengthened as he admitted, "Been a long time since anyone's called me that."

Eyes wide, gaze roving over the white feathers, Jim asserted, "You are."

That may be, but so far as Leonard was concerned he wasn't the handsome one in their pairing. In the old days they'd have carved statues of Jim out of the purest marble. "So are you." Jim's hands came up to caress the wings and Leonard shivered, feathers rustling.

Quickly snatching his hands back, Jim blurted out, "Sorry!"

"No— it's okay." Leonard smiled, lopsidedly, as he admitted, "It feels good."

Oh. *Oh*. Jim grinned, reaching out again to run his hands over the leading edge of the wings. This time Leonard took a breath and buried his face in the crook of Jim's neck, trembling slightly from the sensation. It felt like flying.

Jim was whispering something into Leonard's hair that sounded like his names, intertwined, "Eros-Bones..."

And yet... something didn't feel quite right. Leonard gathered his wits enough to sit up and catch something dancing in the younger man's eyes. He rubbed a thumb over Jim's cheekbone and asked, "You okay?"

"A little nervous," Jim admitted, "You've got, like, four thousand years of expectations."

Leonard's smile softened and he pressed a quick kiss to Jim's forehead before pulling back to gently say, "Just a tip: when you're sleeping with the personification of erotic love, things seem to go just fine."

Jim beamed, relieved.

*Fine* turned out to be an understatement of epic proportions.

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