

Coming Home

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/22156852) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/22156852>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Star Trek: Discovery
Relationship:	Hugh Culber/Paul Stamets
Characters:	Hugh Culber , Paul Stamets
Additional Tags:	Set after the finale of season 2
Language:	English
Collections:	Star Trek Secret Santa 2019
Stats:	Published: 2020-01-07 Words: 1,121 Chapters: 1/1

Coming Home

by [mojikara](#)

Summary

Suddenly, the biobed felt a mile wide. Paul surrendered to sleep.

Notes

Written for aphelyons in the Star Trek Secret Santa Tumblr exchange! :)

Stamets heard Hugh speak through the haze of pain and panic. Hugh was here? Here, when they were about to travel through time? He couldn't focus. Couldn't try to fathom what that *meant*.

The biobed was firm against his back, but it was also unexpectedly narrow. The other times he'd been in Sickbay, he'd felt entirely secure. Annoyed, generally, because didn't his body know he had work to do? But secure. Safe. Knowing that everyone else was taken care of and he was in the most sensible place for himself.

Discovery kept shaking. If he fell off the bed, he'd be not only a burden but also a nuisance. Imagine that, rolling out of bed during an emergency. Making other people turn aside from their important work to look after him. Disgraceful. (He knew that was wrong. He knew that being weak, needing help, was okay. Same as when he helped others. But he couldn't quite touch that knowledge. He just didn't want to be a *bother*.)

He was terrified. Beginning to drift off, which was both comforting and horrifying; he needed to be awake, to be aware, to know what was happening! He needed to help!

Words, suddenly. Clearly. "You're my home."

...and everything came into focus for one sweet moment. Stamets stared up at Hugh, who was obviously scared as well, but holding it together. His face was pale. Stamets wanted to ask if he'd been eating, he wanted to say it's okay to be scared, the ship's in danger but there are good people on the bridge, Saru's a good captain and Burnham's never led us wrong, but his mouth wouldn't work right.

He stared at Hugh. Hugh, who was taking care of him – and coming to the future.

Suddenly, the biobed felt a mile wide. Paul surrendered to sleep.

Doctor Pollard allowed him home after three days in Sickbay. And allowed him to work, but only if he kept warm, and followed very strict instructions about focusing on a screen. His eyes hurt if he spent more than an hour at a time trying to read.

He and Hugh limped along the corridor. Hugh had an arm around him, and Stamets was trying very hard not to lean on him more than absolutely necessary, and yes, he was very aware of the metaphor and wanted his stupid brain to shut up before it noticed any more stupid metaphors.

"You don't have to help me. You've done enough."

"Says the man who injected himself with tardigrade DNA," Hugh retorted.

That really wasn't what Stamets meant, but he felt his lips curve in a smile anyway. Hugh was here. With him. Giving him grief. Even if it didn't last, even if Hugh realized how much

of a mistake he was making, they'd still had their reunion. And Hugh still had a chance at living again. That was huge. Hugh-ge.

(Okay, so maybe he needed to wean himself off the painkillers more quickly.)

They made it to Stamets' quarters – what used to be their quarters – eventually. Hugh helped him to a seat on the low couch, and fussed around, finding him a blanket, a cushion to support his back. Water. The throat lozenges he particularly liked from this replicator (didn't taste right from the one in Sickbay) – with a touch of lavender and honey.

"It's so clean," Hugh said eventually.

Stamets nodded. He was drowsy already, but didn't want Hugh to go. "Easier to find things when I want them."

"No, no, it's not that," Hugh said, and he sat down on the low chair opposite Stamets. His eyes were kind. His eyes were always kind, even when he was yelling. Strong, would stand up to anyone, but he cared so much. "Looks like you haven't been living here. Even if you've been existing here."

"Ah," Stamets said with difficulty.

How do you tell someone how much you've missed them, without putting weight on them to stick around? How do you tell them you'll wait as long as they need you to, even if that's forever, even if they never really come back?

After a long moment, Hugh reached out and patted him on the knee. He diplomatically changed the subject, by filling Stamets in on what had been happening.

They were safe, about nine hundred years in the future. No contact from any equivalent of Starfleet yet, but they also hadn't done much to try to find anyone, either. Mostly just hiding out in a nebula, enacting all the required repairs. Discovery was in – not great shape, but good enough shape.

"And the crew... well. Mostly they're doing okay," Hugh concluded. "Michael and Saru are holding it together, and that's a big help. Everyone chose to come along. No one seems to be regretting it yet. We could use a counsellor on board. A few of us are trained in psychotherapy, but it's not enough."

Stamets could listen to him talk for hours. Hugh was here. In his quarters. Their quarters. No, his quarters. Don't push, don't move too fast.

"How about you?"

"Psychotherapy?"

"No," he smiled, painfully vulnerable. Painfully open. Painfully hopeful, and stupid. "How are you doing?"

Hugh answered him with a smile like the sun. "I made my decision. I chose to come along, too," he said softly. "I don't know what you remember from Sickbay."

"Not much. You made me feel better. The bed was too small."

Hugh frowned, but when Stamets didn't explain that non sequitur further, he reached out and took his hand. Stamets looked down at their fingers entwining, then back up at Hugh's face. "I chose to come along," Hugh repeated, and this time he didn't leave the last part unspoken. "I chose to come along with you. But I don't want to push you."

"That's my line!"

"It is? Oh. Oh, I see. It'd make your friend Tilly very happy if, uh, if we pushed each other more, I think."

Stamets laughed shakily, and nodded, thinking back to some conversations he'd had with Tilly recently. Tilly was always so supportive, and such a pain in the behind when it came to his own personal life. He tugged at Hugh's hand. Hugh shifted over, sitting next to him.

"I don't ever want to disappoint Tilly," Stamets whispered, and he leaned in, just a little, and Hugh leaned in too, and then they kissed. It was awkward. It was chaste. It was *perfect*.

Stamets kissed Hugh, but it was Paul who leaned his forehead against Hugh's. His husband.

"I promise I'll move back in soon."

"Take it at your own pace, please. You're worth the wait. If you move too fast, I'll - I'll pout."

Hugh laughed, and it was like coming home.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!