

## The Pampshifter: Chapter 9

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“So the good news is that the goo is off Donnie. That bad news, on the other hand...” said Luna as she ushered Ellis, Meg, and Mason into the med bay. To their surprise, the slimy substance that had once surrounded Donnie’s pelvis had seemingly vanished, leaving Donnie in just an undershirt and diaper, “...the goo has gone missing. Ellis, I thought you said the room was sealed.”

Looking back toward the door, Ellis responded stoically, “It is.” All at once, the crew began to frantically look around. “Okay, everyone out. Mason, help me grab Donnie.”

As Meg and Luna wasted no time rushing out of the med bay, Ellis and Mason quickly moved to the hospital bed Donnie was on and took hold of his arms and legs. “Alright, on three. One, two, three!” said Ellis, lifting Donnie’s limp body with Mason in sync. The two promptly made their way to the door, with Meg locking it shut once they cleared the doorway. A collective sigh echoed throughout the cramped corridor.

“Ugh...wuh’s goin’ on?” said Donnie, his eyes barely opening after his anesthesia nap. To his confusion, his crewmates could only chuckle, feeling an intense sense of relief over the fact that Donnie was now free of his gooey fate.

Setting Donnie down gently against the wall, Luna proceeded to test Donnie’s vitals, finding nothing wrong with his heart rate, lungs, or reflexes once the anesthetic wore off more. “Well, I’m not that kind of doctor but I’ll hazard a guess you’ll live,” she said cheekily.

“You say that but I feel like if I don’t eat something in the next ten minutes, my stomach’s gonna swallow itself,” said Donnie, his statement followed up by a noisy tummy gurgle to emphasize his point. It wasn’t like the rest of the crew could blame him. He’d been out for several hours.

Patting Donnie on the back, Ellis quickly transitioned into a hug as his anxiety came down. As captain, he always maintained perfect poise in the face of danger. But all rules went out the window when it came to him and Donnie. “You son of a bitch...what do you say we get you fed and then put down for the long nap?”

“Hey, Captain, come in. Over.”

Breaking from his hug with Donnie, Ellis’s attention turned to the comm box located at the end of the hallway as Roland’s voice came through loud and clear. “I’m here, Roland. What’s it looking like down there? Over,” he said, bouncing from foot to foot ever so slightly.

“What’s it looking like? It’s looking like we can raise the oxygen levels back up because I’ve got the patch filled. Over,” said Roland, causing everyone in the hallway to cheer victoriously. Not only was Donnie saved but now they weren’t going to suffocate.

Unable to suppress the big smile on his face, Ellis responded, "Great fucking news, Roland. Now get your ass up here so we can eat and go back to sleep. Over and out." The group once again cheered.

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"There he is! Our hero everyone!" shouted Meg as Roland entered the mess hall where his fellow crewmates and Luna were busy chowing down. Everyone briefly stopped eating to give their ship's lead engineer a round of applause, "Especially my hero. You saved me...from having to patch the ship myself." Her crewmates laughed and jeered at her.

Not being one for fanfare, Roland eased down the volume of his big welcome with his hands. "Hey, hey. No need for thank yous. I'd much rather someone pass me a plate," he said, sitting down at the large round table ready to dig in.

"Yeah, you'd better hurry. I think Donnie's gonna eat the whole ship soon," said Mason, earning a playful middle finger from Donnie in return, who was too busy chowing down to issue any sort of verbal comeback. In truth, Mason was far from wrong as Donnie had already scarfed down two full plates of crappy space food and was in the process of clearing a third.

Filling up his first place, there was still one question Roland needed answered, "Speaking of our dear Lieutenant, anyone wanna tell me what happened to the shit that was stuck on him?"

"At the moment, whatever that thing is is currently starving of oxygen in the med bay. All vents are sealed and doors are locked in the surrounding area," said Ellis, his confidence putting his crew member at ease, "Plus Mother is monitoring the area for any movement. Once it comes out of hiding, we'll know."

\*COUGH! COUGH!\*

Suddenly, all eyes were drawn toward Donnie as he started to cough. He raised his forearm to his mouth to avoid spewing all over the table. However, after a few more coughs, it became clear to him that something was wrong.

"See? I told you he was eating too fast," said Mason, giggling slightly as he landed a few hardy pats on Donnie's back. His expression quickly turned sour as the coughing didn't halt, "Donnie, you good?"

Before Mason could finish his question, Donnie's body locked up and began convulsing. "Shit, he's choking," said Ellis, slamming his arm down on the table and clearing a spot on the table to lay Donnie back. To his surprise, Donnie's coughing soon came to a stop, replaced by groans of agony as he clutched his lower gut.

Beads of sweat dribbled down Donnie's forehead as the pain coming from his intestines was more intense than any he'd experienced prior. And then, as suddenly as it came on, the pain seemed to wash away. He gasped and squeezed his eyes shut as an unexpected rush of euphoria filled his veins.

\*BLOOOOOOOOOOOORRRRRRT!!!\*

TO BE CONTINUED...