



ERIDAOOI

TEIAO



EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Hullo

This will probably be our last issue for a while. I would like to thank those of you who ordered our past issues for your patience and LoCs. We all liked hearing about your reactions to the writing and the artwork. Found it a bit of a relief to diversify the artwork this time. I hope to see some of you at a con somewhere. I look forward to nattering about the show, the Vulcans, and the good ship E. or what have you, with you all. This is whether you are neos, Dirty Old Broads, young men with a deep yen to get your hands on those phaser buttons, or Dirty Old Pros. You know if we keep up this nonsense long enough the show might come back. Particularly those Strekcons. Till then. May your ancestors breed quickly.

Peace and long life,
Gail Barton

Gail Barton

Six years ago Star Trek got under my skin. I turned on the set and said, "Gee!" (At the time I was too naive to know that "Goshwowohboyohboy!" was the correct response.) I grew up with it; I will never be the same again. There was never a program before that could affect people so deeply.

We've dedicated an unbelievable amount of time to Star Trek: stories, poems, the marathon rap sessions on Vulcan biology. Inevitably, it led to this zine. After two years of putting out ET, I still don't quite know why I ever started. You put a little blood into every issue.

Our first Triad felt uncomfortably like dancing on Star Trek's grave. Now it seems that ST may be revived. I'm looking forward to it with crossed fingers, despite the fact that it would mean an hour-a-week mortgage on my soul.

This is Eridani Triad's last issue. If the show is revived, so may our zine, in some form. As a matter of fact-- it's an ominous sign-- everyone is sitting around thinking up new titles---

LL&P,
Doris Beetem

Doris Beetem

Greetings---

This is my last issue of ET. I say this with some twinge of nostalgia and also with some relief at the thought of not having the pressure of publication upon me. Yet with almost the same breath I also announce that I may do a zine of my own. I say "may" because the decision to go it alone leaves that strictly up to me and gafia always looms. I have decided to decide after Christmas. If you hear of a new zine, possibly entitled PRIME DIRECTIVE, that will be me. I would like to thank all of you who sent in comments on my work, especially you who wrote directly to me. (It is somewhat mind-boggling to receive "fan letters"!)

Please feel free to continue to let me know how you feel. I must admit that practically all the criticism I received was usually heartily concurred with by me. Be sure to say "hello if we meet at a con... I always enjoy a good Trek con

ERIDANI TRIAD III

EDITORS:

Gail Barton	Doris Beetem	Judith Brownlee
31 Rangeview Drive	4161 W. Eastman Ave.	1556 Detroit St. Apt. 1
Lakewood, Co. 80215	Denver, Co. 80236	Denver, Co. 80206

ART CREDITS: M. L. Barnes- 8, 9, 11, 14, 20, 21, 72, 121.
 Gail Barton- 12, 18, 25, 27, 28, 29, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 68,
 69, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 86, 87, 88, 89, 103, 105,
 107, 112, 117, 119, 120.
 Liz Danforth- 58, 100.
 Bill Guy- iii.
 Jim McLeod- 1, 3, 6, 7, 23, 52.
 Roz Oberdieck- 30, 32, 37, 39, 40, 44, 47, 50.
 D. Carol Roberts- 90, 95, 98.
 Mary Ann Walther- 74, 92, 96.

 SEPTEMBER 1972

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A ROSE FOR MIRANDA by Ruth Berman.....1
 TO THE HALF-BREED by Judith Brownlee.....7
 THE MATING GAME by Judith Brownlee.....8
 SPACE-- THE FINAL FRONTIER by Doris Beetem.....23
 A LITTLE MORE THAN KIN, BUT LESS THAN KIND by Devra Langsam.....30
 THREE HAIKU by Carrie Peak.....51
 WARP IN LOGIC by Hal Clement.....52
 BONDING by Jacqueline Lichtenberg.....58
 THE HUNTING by Doris Beetem.....62
 THE VULCAN LOVE MYTH by M. L. Barnes.....72
 MEET ME AT INFINITY by James Tiptree, Jr.76
 SONNET-- TO SURAK FROM A FAR-TRAVELED KINSMAN by Gail Eirann.....89
 AND MAYBE TELL YOU ABOUT PHAEDRA by Doris Beetem.....90
 STRANGERS WHEN WE MEET by Judith Brownlee.....100
 THE TASTE OF HOME by Judith Brownlee.....121

 PRICE: Eridani Triad II& III, \$1.00 an issue. Add 30¢ postage.
 Orders or letters of comment should be mailed to above addresses.



Hullo

This will probably be our last issue for a while. I would like to thank those of you who ordered our past issues for your patience and LoCs. We all liked hearing about your reactions to the writing and the artwork. Found it a bit of a relief to diversify the artwork this time. I hope to see some of you at a con somewhere. I look forward to nattering about the show, the Vulcans, and the good ship E. or what have you, with you all. This is whether you are neos, Dirty Old Broads, young men with a deep yen to get your hands on those phaser buttons, or Dirty Old Pros. You know if we keep up this nonsense long enough the show might come back. Particularly those Strekcons. Till then. May your ancestors breed quickly.

Peace and long life,
Gail Barton

Gail Barton

Six years ago Star Trek got under my skin. I turned on the set and said, "Geel!" (At the time I was too naive to know that "Goshwowohboyohboy!" was the correct response.) I grew up with it; I will never be the same again. There was never a program before that could affect people so deeply.

We've dedicated an unbelievable amount of time to Star Trek: stories, poems, the marathon rap sessions on Vulcan biology. Inevitably, it led to this zine. After two years of putting out ET, I still don't quite know why I ever started. You put a little blood into every issue.

Our first Triad felt uncomfortably like dancing on Star Trek's grave. Now it seems that ST may be revived. I'm looking forward to it with crossed fingers, despite the fact that it would mean an hour-a-week mortgage on my soul.

This is Eridani Triad's last issue. If the show is revived, so may our zine, in some form. As a matter of fact-- it's an ominous sign-- everyone is sitting around thinking up new titles---

LL&P,
Doris Beetem

Doris Beetem

Greetings--

This is my last issue of ET. I say this with some twinge of nostalgia and also with some relief at the thought of not having the pressure of publication upon me. Yet with almost the same breath I also announce that I may do a zine of my own. I say "may" because the decision to go it alone leaves that strictly up to me and gafia always looms. I have decided to decide after Christmas. If you hear of a new zine, possibly entitled PRIME DIRECTIVE, that will be me. I would like to thank all of you who sent in comments on my work, especially you who wrote directly to me. (It is somewhat mind-boggling to receive "fan letters"!)

Please feel free to continue to let me know how you feel. I must admit that practically all the criticism I received was usually heartily concurred with by me. Be sure to say "hello if we meet at a con... I always enjoy a good Trek rap.

Chias, Judith

Judith Brownlee

ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

M. L. "STEVE" BARNES is both writer and artist. (She also raises beagles.) Her artwork was displayed at ST Con in New York, while her writing has appeared in Impulse and Grup, of which she is co-editor. Both her prose and illustrations are represented in this issue.

RUTH BERMAN was a well-known fan before Star Trek was broadcast. She became active in Trekkfandom publishing Inside Star Trek and T-Negative. The latter is still in publication and is the longest running Trekkzine. She has been an active contributor to fan publications of all kinds and has now achieved pro status with the publication of her work in various prozines.

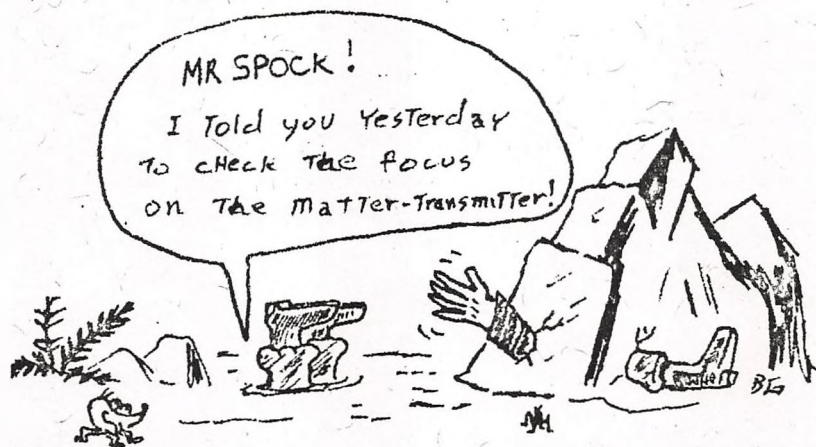
HAL CLEMENT is the pen name of Harry Stubbs, a friendly, mild-mannered teacher who is a professional sf writer of long standing. Perhaps his best known work is Mission of Gravity. Harry is an enthusiastic Star Trek fan and enjoys contributing work, like his article in this issue, to trekkzines and other general fanzines.

DEVRA LANGSAM is perhaps best known as one of the co-editors of Spockanalia, one of the first well-known trekkzines. She now publishes Masiform D. Her work in this issue is her second published Trek story; the first was "Family Affair", published in Spockanalia.

JACQUELINE LICHTENBERG is known in Trekkfandom for her voluminous Kraith series, parts of which have appeared in T-Negative, Impulse, and Pastaklan Vesla. "Bonding", in this issue, is written with a different background than she normally employs. It has, however, all the hallmarks of her distinctive style.

JAMES TIPTREE JR. has written several stories professionally published in If, Galaxy, and New Dimensions 3, including the ST-oriented "Beam Us Home", which was published in Galaxy in 1969. "Meet Me At Infinity" is the first draft for a script which he intended to submit to Star Trek. Since Star Trek was cancelled it is being published in its current form, with few further revisions.

Also GAIL EIRANN, CARRIE PEAK, and incidentally, DORIS BEETEM, and JUDITH BROWNLEE.





A
Rose
For
Miranda

by Ruth Berman

James Kirk smiled dutifully at a courting couple strolling in the herbarium, and retreated to the roses. Screened by two rose bushes, he sat down on a bench, closed his eyes, and breathed deeply. He tried to distinguish different odors, but it all came to him as one heavy essence-of-rose drugging him with the sweetness. He began to feel dizzy, so he opened his eyes and leaned back. There were roses of all colors there: white, yellow, pink, red, purples so dark they were almost black. There was even a single blue-rose plant, with one blossom just opened.

Ensign Megan had apparently been amusing himself by going through with a bartlett again. The placard next to the blue rose now quoted an Andorian poet ("--- and see all heaven in her face"--- Harvik) instead of a Terran playwright ("---I thought you said blue roses"--- Williams), and a sentence from Tennyson had sprouted beneath the bushes, "The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near'; And the white rose weeps, 'She is late'."

Kirk made a face. She was near all right, but she would be on time to leave the ship. He still could not entirely understand how she could do it. No matter how beautiful the Medeusans' minds were, the plain fact was that a human being had physical needs, and.... He shrugged. Physical needs could be satisfied by masturbation, after all. Bleak, but adequate. And no doubt the beauty she saw in the Medeusans was partly their serene freedom from those same physical needs. Even a Vulcan couldn't give her that kind of peace. For a moment he heard a voice in his head, saying, "This fight is to the death." He shuddered, wondering how much she knew of the pon farr and the rituals that controlled it. What a pity it was, too. When she said she had been trained on Vulcan, he could have sworn for a moment that she looked to Spock like God's gift to Vulcan-Terran hybrids. But she insisted on going with Kollo. "Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments," he quoted to himself, smiling ruefully as he remembered how Miranda and Kollo had traded other lines from Shakespeare. But this Miranda wanted a true mind, not a Prince Ferdinand. Admitting impediments to that marriage of true minds had been precisely what poor Marvick had tried to do. And, he had to admit, he'd been tempted to try, too, and he more than half suspected that McCoy and even Spock had felt the same.

He shrugged, went in search of Megan, and found him turning sun lamps on a bank of wild thyme.

"Lo, Cap'n," the burly horticulturalist greeted Kirk cheerfully.

"Hello." Kirk watched him work for a moment. "All right to pick a red rose?"

"Alf a mo'." Megan trotted round to check the number of blooms. "Aye, sir."

Kirk went to the transporter and was not seriously surprised to find McCoy there, too.

Spock finished setting the controls on the transporter and the three men waited in silence.

When Miranda came, she was smiling, and bent a warm look on all of them, oddly unlike any expression they had seen there before, and yet, somehow, familiar. Kirk suddenly recognized the look; Spock had had it when linked with Kollo. But behind the cordiality of Kollo, the face was undoubtedly that of Miranda and a Miranda at peace with herself. Kirk sighed.

McCoy told her goodbye and left the room.

Kirk gave her the rose he had brought and then lingered by the door, unwilling to leave until the last possible moment.

Spock told her goodbye and set his protective vizor in place.

And still Kirk lingered.

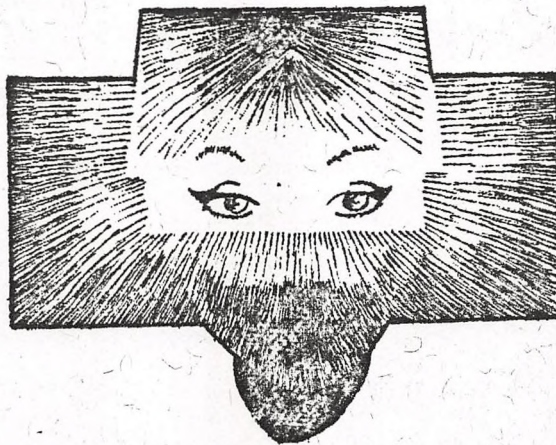
Miranda/Kollos began to fade away. Their human section blurred out of sight, but their Medeusan section blazed suddenly through the vanishing metal of the carrier, and Kirk saw shapes and colors he had never seen before.

A part of him stepped back dispassionately and watched from a vantage point above and behind as the rest of him began spinning through memories of the unusual in search of a label. Memories safely buried at the back of his head rose up and swarmed before his eyes, and even the observant part of him could not get out in back to feel uninvolved again.

He turned and went out the door to get away from them, but they turned and came with him: himself grown old, shrieking as he was locked into a barred wheelchair, himself impaled by the thorns of an alien rose, himself shivering against a wall as flares of phaser lights in colors he did not know sped past the ship and a computer's mechanically female voice begged him for a course to let them escape the deadly lights, himself rolling on hot, mica-flecked sand toward a fire with bright flames of a color he did not know, himself....

A vast expanse of seamed, tan-colored material with two hard, blue stones inset somewhere just above its center loomed into his view. "Ah oo ai!" it howled. "Ah oo ai!"

He leaped at it, and he and it and all his cowering selves rolled down a steep, icy hill. He struck wildly at it as they turned and it struck back. He screamed and shut his eyes. It was better to be safe in blackness with those other selves than out there with the thing. He and his selves lay in darkness, howling.



Miranda KOLLOS

McCoy, puzzled that it was taking the captain so long to follow him out, turned back and waited outside the door. "Are you all right?" he asked when Kirk emerged.

Kirk did not answer.

McCoy caught the captain by the shoulders, and held him steady. "Are you all right?" Even though he was prepared by his suspicions, the suddenness of the attack appalled him. He fell, but kicked himself free, rolled out from under, pulled out his hypo, grabbed a thrashing arm, and found himself unable to hold it still. He clung more tightly yet, letting Kirk fling both of them about as he would, and jammed the hypo against the shoulder.

The knockout potion took effect, and the captain collapsed into a huddle, arms around knees, head tucked down against his chest.

McCoy staggered to his feet, and called for Spock.

They uncurled Kirk's arms and legs, lugged him off to sickbay, and set him on a bed. McCoy scowled as the tell-tales promptly began dropping below normal, without indicating any physical cause for the captain's state of shock. Kirk again drew in on himself. McCoy caught him, gently tugged him to lie flat, strapped him down, set up bottles of plasma and liquid nutriment, and turned the bed's temperature up.

Kirk lay still, his breath whistling slowly in and out, and his face pale.

"Spock?" said McCoy.

Spock drew a chair to the bedside, sat down, and placed his hands at Kirk's temples.

The self rolling on hot sand spun over and up into a crouch as the intruder approached. The intruder said, "This fight is to the death," and reached out to throttle him with the long white band it held in its hands. He struggled against it, but the hot air was choking him, and the flames flickered their unfamiliar colors close to his eyes. He tried desperately to lunge away from the fire, away from his opponent, away....

Spock withdrew his hands and sat staring at the wall.

Someone slapped his face. Spock caught the arm and held it still while he refocused his eyes and found himself looking at McCoy, who said sharply, "Drink this," and held out a cup in his free hand.

"What is it?" Spock said, looking at it suspiciously.

"A cup of hot tea. With three spoonfuls of Vulcan sugar," said McCoy gently. "And my wrist hurts."

Spock dropped the doctor's arm and accepted the cup. As he drank he became able to relax into the chair. "How is the captain?"

"Getting weaker. You couldn't reach him?"

"No. He thinks I am attacking him as when..." Spock left the sentence unfinished and concentrated on the hot tea.

"Should we call Dr. Jones back to the ship, do you think?"

"Negative. She is linked with Kollos, and contact with him in the captain's state would be unhelpful."

McCoy was silent, rubbing his bruises. He could tell he was going to have a black eye out of the fight with Kirk, and his arm ached.

"Doctor," Spock said abruptly, "how would you try to reach him if you were a telepath?"

"Me?.... I...." McCoy cocked his head and almost smiled. "I don't know. But I know what I'd do if I were you"

"Indeed."

"Yes. I'd cry."

Spock raised both eyebrows.

"If Jim thought either of us was in trouble-- seriously needed his help, I mean-- he'd do his damndest to reach out," said McCoy slowly, thinking the hunch out more fully as he went along. "Now it'd be one thing if you could... project a mental stage set, if you see what I mean, and project some kind of menace to put you in danger. That might do it--"

"That is beyond my skill."

"-- but if you could pretend to be terribly unhappy about something, he'd want to comfort you, and that would do it, too, I think. Especially if it was you. I'm human. Emotional display doesn't signify as much with me as it does with you-- as you've pointed out to me on any number of occasions. So, if he saw you crying...." McCoy trailed off. Spock's normal expression resembled the proverbial Great Stone Face, but that was jello to the frozen hardness confronting him.

"Any specific grief, Doctor, or do you suggest an attempt at general misery?" said Spock.

"Hell, I don't know. You could pretend you were broken up over losing Miranda. I think he might empathize with that." McCoy stared at the floor, recalling Miranda's face as she stood on the transporter. "I don't know," he repeated.

"Get out," said Spock.

"Wh....? Oh. Yeah." McCoy retreated to his office next door. Things were bad when a doctor wasn't allowed in his own sickbay. But, then, there wasn't anything in the literature on treating Modcusagenic shock. They'd lost Marvick, saved Spock. If Kirk lived, that made two out of three. Not a bad percentage. He'd have to write an article describing the treatment for the Journal of Space Medicine. He wondered if Miranda would be willing to take time to co-author it. Probably not. Well, Spock could co-author it, then. If Kirk lived.

The intruder stepped onto the hot sands, and Kirk tried to run behind the fire, to get it between them. It was not a long way to run, but he went pounding along for what seemed like a long time and still had not covered the distance.

"Miranda!" he heard the intruder cry, "I've lost her... I've lost...."

Kirk stopped at the words. So it was only one of the selves. He stared into the flame. "Yes," he said, "I've lost her." He could see figures in the fire, almost. He reached out his hand to pick a flame that bloomed like a rose, except for its poisonous color.

"Jim!"

Hands seized him from behind and dragged him away from the flame.

Kirk spun around and tried to leap on the intruder, but the figure collapsed before he could start. It lay on the ground looking up at him, and tears ran out of its eyes.

"Jim, I'm lost."

"Spock?" Kirk crouched down beside him, straining his eyes in a vain attempt to see what the matter was.

Spock bit his lip, but the sobs were audible anyway.

Kirk reached out and put his hand on his friend's shoulder. His eyes felt heavy. He tried to open them.

He woke. He was lying down. There was a ceiling overhead. Spock was sitting at his side, and he was not weeping. But he looked tired, and he was holding one finger against his lower lip as if to keep it from bleeding.

"Are you all right, Spock?" Kirk said hesitantly. "I think I dreamt you were... you were..."

"That was a projection, Captain, to bring you to consciousness. I will inform the doctor that the stratagem has succeeded." Spock took his hand away from his mouth and inspected it. There was no blood. He stood up and walked steadily toward the door.

"But I...." Kirk gave up and lay back. He suspected that his First

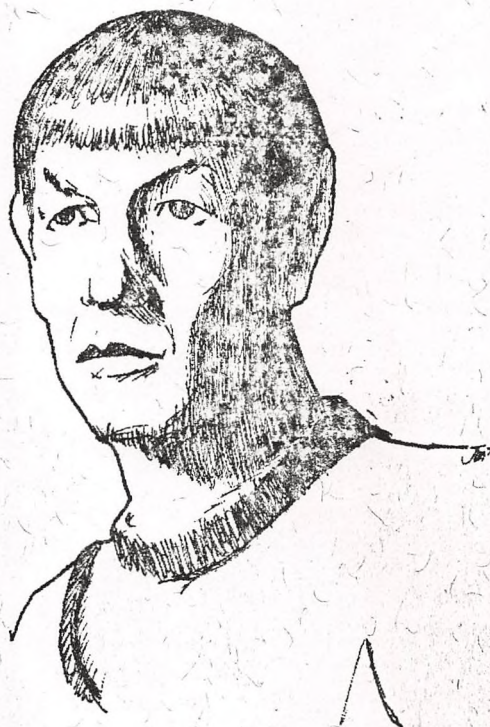
Officer was not telling him everything and never would. "But are you sure you're all right, Spock?" he demanded anxiously, before Spock could get out the door.

Spock turned around and regarded him with the one-eyebrow-up expression which Kirk had come to recognize as his version of uncontrollable hilarity. "I am quite well, Captain," he said, and left the room.

It suddenly dawned on Kirk that he was in bed in sickbay and therefore, presumably, ill. But he felt all right. There was nothing wrong with him, so far as he could tell, except that he'd been having a nightmare, and even that was beginning to slip from his memory. He would have been glad enough to let it go, but he thought it might have something to do with Spock's unusual behavior. He remembered that the dream was something about roses, and Spock, and Miranda... and Kollos? For a moment a strange light shimmered in front of his eyes, and he shrank away, but then the warmth of the bed steadied him, and his sight cleared. He could still smell roses in the room. The last of the dream went from him, and when he thought of Kollos the only image in his conscious mind was the smile on Spock's face, and on Miranda's.

THE END





TO THE HALF-BREED

by Judith Brownlee

My Indian blood cries out to you.
 I think you would understand the kiva.
 Unlike the Man, you come equipped with understanding--
 And more--a willingness to accept
 An alien's alien values.

My African blood knows much of you.
 I think you would understand blackness.
 The daily fight for manhood--for humanity--looms, trembling,
 Under the surface calm
 Of your sea-deep eyes.

My Eastern blood sees kin in you.
 I think you would understand karma.
 You own a thousand years of order and knowledges;
 Even the Samurai way
 Is a common experience.

My Woman's blood strikes fire from you.
 I think you would understand me.
 I turn away from the slave-masters of a hundred thousand years;
 You offer me your hand
 And freedom.

the mating game



by

Judith Brownlee

Lt. Sulu turned to Captain James Kirk with a big grin. "In orbit around Wrigley's, Captain," he said.

With an exuberant snap Kirk hit the all-ship hail button on his console. "All hands report for shore leave as scheduled. Transporter crews on stand-by."

With happy alacrity Sulu transferred his control board to the keeping of his relief, who was standing by. He slapped Kirk on the shoulder as he went past. "Better luck next time, Captain. Maybe then you'll draw first shift."

With a grin Kirk jabbed the air where Sulu's arm had been. The small Japanese wasted no more time getting into the turbo-lift and was gone immediately.

Kirk monitored the transporter room circuits to check the steady flow of his crew to the planet below-- Wrigley's Pleasure Planet, the most legendary and coveted shore leave facility in Federation space. Few and far between were the scheduled stops at this leave port, and every starship crew treasured the opportunity. Even sick men had been known to leave their beds, rather than miss out on Wrigley's. It was said any pleasures for civilized beings

could be found on Wrigley's-- and there were those for the uncivilized as well.

Kirk slipped into a pleasant daze-- considering the possibilities. He was suddenly jolted out of his daydreams by a familiar voice.

"Captain."

Kirk looked around at his first officer with a fatuous grin. "Yes, Mr. Spock?"

The Vulcan ignored his captain's facial expression and presented his request, body erect, hands behind back. "Captain, I believe I have not been included in the shift schedule for shore leave. I realize that it is because I generally do not participate in leaves of this nature, but I would like to request an assignment for this occasion."

Kirk suddenly realized that his mouth was open and shut it abruptly.

"You... want to... go down to... Wrigley's?"

"That is correct, Captain."

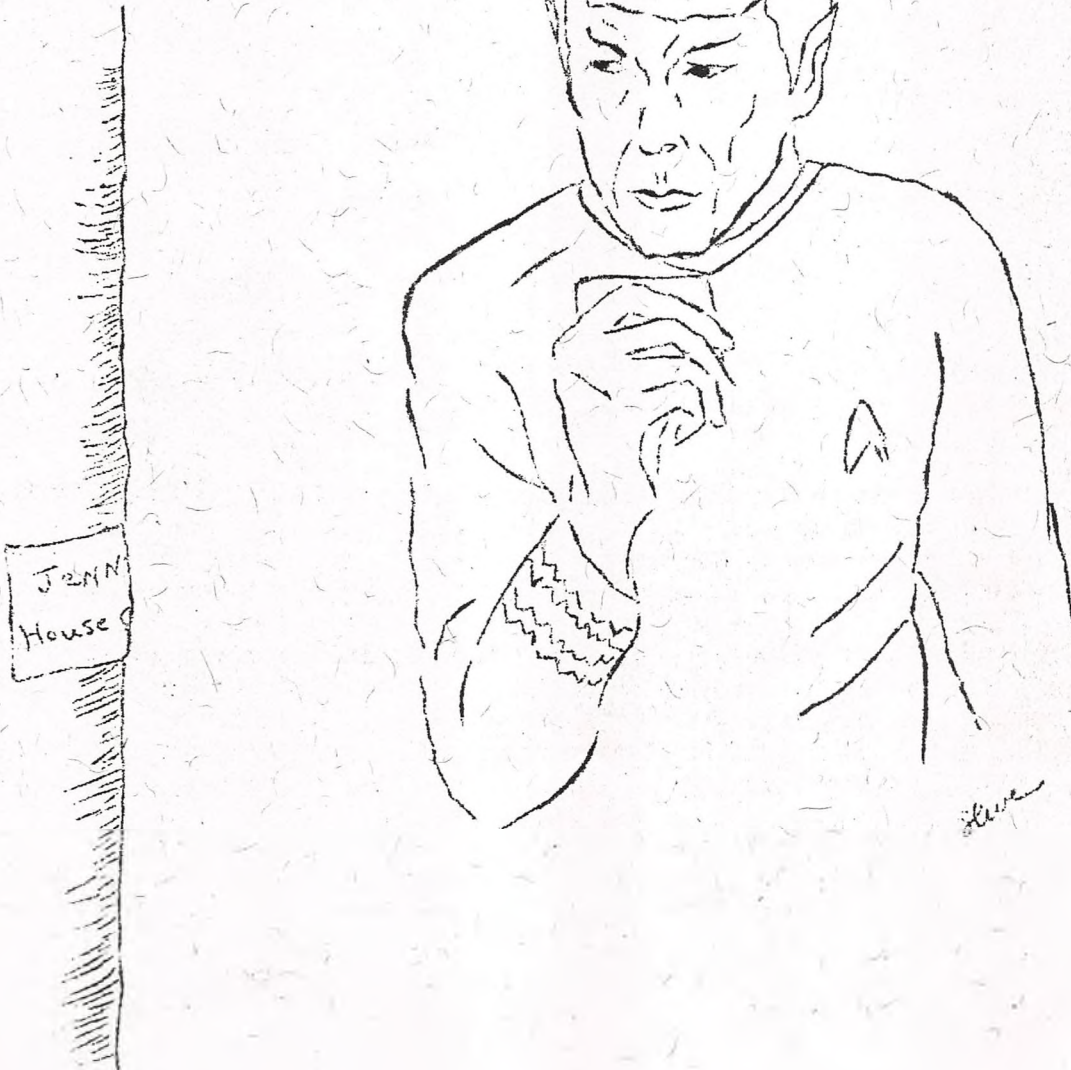
Kirk rubbed his mouth slowly as he stared at his officer. He cleared his throat. "Why certainly, Mr. Spock. Uh, permission granted to take first shift. I'll be here for several shifts, in any case."

The Vulcan nodded in understanding and left quickly.

The bridge was quiet.

Suddenly Chekov sighed loudly. "Spock on Wrigley's," he said musingly.

"It boggles the imagination."



Spock stood like a stolid rock in the midst of the rushing, flowing carnival crowd. Once more he checked the location sensor he had purchased. He waved the rod before him and saw that it glowed brightest to his left. He continued his slow, steady progress to the left. His Vulcan face and Starfleet uniform were enough to prevent the crowd from trying to pull him into the merriment. He pushed his way out of the main flow of the crowd and continued down a side street, leaving behind petulant mutters about the dreary shore patrol.

Half way down the small, thinly patronized side street, the locator sensor began to flash. Spock stopped and turned slowly, watching it. When the locator was pointed at a building on the right, the light changed to a steady glow. Spock looked at the building and then at the paper in his hand. The number and street name were the same. He walked toward the building and was about to signal the door when his gaze fell on the discreet plate affixed there:

JENNY'S HOUSE OF JOY

Even Spock had heard that name. His jaw clenched as he once again checked the paper in his hand. "Check with Jenny," it said. Spock started to crumple up the slip of paper in disgust. McCoy and his practical jokes! A thought struck him and he kept the paper.

He made his way back to the main intersection and located a computer terminal. Wrigley's had long since dispensed with a large permanent staff. Their computers did the job. Each arriving client registered himself with the computer service, stating his preferences in amusements. Then computers soon located another customer with complementary tastes. Wrigley's liked the arrangement. Amateurs were ever so much more enthusiastic than professionals, and it did cut down on the overhead.

Spock looked again at the name and queried the computer. Within seconds it had checked its records and come up with an address for the name he had. Spock checked it against the paper and crooked an eyebrow at it. The same. He double-checked by asking for the specialty he was seeking. A longer wait, then the same results. Mentally, Spock erased the plans he had been formulating for McCoy and apologized silently. Slowly he crossed the path of the revelers again and strode back to Jenny's House of Joy, perhaps the most famous antique bawdy house on Wrigley's.

Spock signalled the door at Jenny's and waited while he was scrutinized by the peeper. An amplified voice issued from the door. "A Vulcan?"

"I am looking for someone."

"Shore patrol?"

"No."

The speaker considered the well-known fact that Vulcans never lied and decided to open the door. Spock was confronted by a boy of about twelve years, serving, it seemed, as doorman to Jenny's.

"Yeah?" said the boy.

"I am looking for a person named..." he consulted the paper "... Flory Polansky." Spock looked at the boy. The face was blank as his own. "I understand," Spock continued, "that she is the only Class Five on the planet." The boy continued to stare. "Do I have the right address?" asked Spock.

The boy waited a moment longer and then disgustedly decided that he could not expect a bribe from a Vulcan. "Yeah," he answered. "She works here all right. Come on in."

With a satisfied nod, Spock tucked the paper into his belt and followed the boy inside.

Outside on the street, a noisy group of carnival people had overflowed into the quiet byway. Just as the door closed on Spock, several members of the group spotted the familiar ears.

The clown looked at the ballerina. "No," she replied, shaking her head, and looked at the knight for confirmation. "It certainly looked like him," said the knight. All three looked again. "That's Jenny's," said the clown. Three pairs of eyes met again, and three heads shook slowly in unison. "Nooo," they said, and burst into laughter. They were swallowed up by the larger group and soon forgot what they had seen.

Jenny looked like a harried lady executive, which, of course, she was. Her hair was immaculately arranged, her make-up perfect. She gave the impression of having just left important matters hanging to talk to you, which, of course, she had. Spock, being under no preconceived ideas about the looks and behavior of those in her profession, found nothing incongruous about her. With brisk strides she led him to a door in a hallway and left him there with instructions to "just knock". He rapped on the door and it opened at once.

A tall, dark-haired woman in deshabille opened the door with a ready smile, a smile that dropped when she saw the uniform and Vulcan face.

"Flory Polansky?"

"Yes." Her face was wary.

"I understand that you are a Class Five."

Her smile returned. She reached out for his hands. "Come on in!" She tugged him across the threshold and the door sighed shut.



The USS Enterprise was awash in dreams as it circled Wrigley's. The remaining crew moved slowly through their maintenance tasks. Kirk blessed the efficiency of the ship's computer and put it on extra alert for any errors committed by ship's personnel. Then he, too, settled down in his command chair for a reflective gaze at Wrigley's, as it could be seen rotating in the big screen on the bridge.

Suddenly there was a quiet gasp from Lt. Uhura at her communications station. Kirk tilted one eye in her direction and saw her pressing her receiver to her ear with disbelief on her face.

"Captain!" she exclaimed, with anguish in her voice. "It's Starfleet Command! They're canceling all leaves! We're to report to Zone Roscoe as soon as all personnel report back on board."

Kirk jerked to attention in his chair. "Acknowledge," he told Uhura, and began slapping buttons on his console. His commands fell on disbelieving ears all over the ship, and Kirk imagined that he could hear the groans that arose. At least, he thought grimly, no one can say I didn't miss out too.

"Put it through to all communicators on planetside, lieutenant," he told Uhura. She sat for a moment, looking at him sadly.

"I know, lieutenant," he answered with a sigh. "Me, too. It wouldn't be so hard to take, if they weren't pulling us out for Roscoe."

"Roscoe?" replied Uhura.

"Admiral Castle's private war game... we're his new pawn."

Stunned, Uhura stared at him for a moment. Then as she turned to her board to contact the crew members below, a word crackled from between her teeth.

"Lieutenant!" said Kirk in mock astonishment. He looked at her with a sad smile. "Not in mixed company!"

"How did you find me?" asked Flory.

"Our ship's doctor is Leonard McCoy."

"Joanna's father?" Spock nodded. "Then you must be from the Enterprise."

"Correct. Dr. McCoy told me of a letter he had received from your friend, his daughter, that mentioned you would be here on leave. He gave me this address. I hope I am not imposing on your holiday, Miss Polansky."

"Please," she said, "call me Flory." He gave no response. "It's short for Florentine. My mother loved the city of Florence, but hated the name." His face was still impassive. She sighed. "Very well. Miss Polansky it will be, Mister Spock."

He nodded, satisfied. "Shall we begin?"

Tensely Kirk watched the chronometer as his people began to return to the big ship. The orders had said "when all personnel were back on board", but he knew he was expected to shave the time as closely as possible. "How are we doing, lieutenant?" he asked Uhura.

"Computer reports seventy-two percent returned and transporters still operating at top capacity. We should be a hundred percent shortly."

Kirk nodded.

The turbo elevator swished open and disclosed a sour Mr. Sulu. He stomped past Kirk's command chair, glaring at him. As Sulu reclaimed his navigator's chair, Kirk noticed in the blackness of Sulu's short, straight hair a handful of bright confetti. He watched it fall slowly and haltingly to the deck.

"Sailor's luck, Mr. Sulu," he muttered as the bright flakes drifted down. "You got more leave than I did."

Startled, Sulu glanced back at Kirk over a shoulder.

"Sorry, captain."

"Yeah," said Kirk. He turned to Uhura. "Lieutenant, how's the percentage?"

"In the nineties now, captain," she answered, watching the figures change as each new body materialized in the transporter chambers. "There it goes, captain... no, wait... it stopped short of 100 percent." She paused. "There's another."

"How many actual count?"



Uhura keyed the request in. "Three still out, sir. Let's see. Lieutenant Riley... he's checked in-- says he'll be along in fifteen minutes. Yeoman Haines... says she's... well, she'll be back just as soon as she can get away... and the last is..." Her voice trailed off.

"Yes, lieutenant?" said Kirk.

She looked at him in wonder. "Captain, it's Mr. Spock."

"Spock? What's his report?"

"No report."

"No report?"

Uhura slowly shook her head.

Impatiently Kirk jabbed at his communicator tie-in. "Put me on his communicator channel, lieutenant."

"Yes sir."

"Enterprise to Spock." Kirk waited for his signal to be acknowledged. "Enterprise to Spock." There was still no reply. Kirk scowled at the communications officer.

"There's no mistake, captain," she replied. "That's his channel, all right."

Kirk tried once more. "Enterprise to Spock." The channel remained dead.

Uhura and Kirk looked at each other in amazement.

Chekov looked at Sulu and muttered, "Score one for Wrigley's."

Irritatedly Kirk checked the chronometer once more. Over his shoulder Lt. Uhura was hailing Spock over and over again on his personal communicator channel. He interrupted her.

"Are Riley and Haines back yet?"

She checked. "Haines is back... Riley in the transporter beam now... just arrived on board."

"Nothing from Spock?"

She shook her head. "Shall I continue to hail?"

"No. Contact Wrigley Control. Ask for a location check through their computer." There was a silence on the bridge and the crew stared at him. Kirk squirmed in his command chair. "I realize that the computer's main function is to make assignments," he said angrily, "but it does do other things."

"Yes sir," said Uhura dubiously.

Kirk punched the all-ship hail. "Attention. Attention, all hands just returned from shore leave. I want to see anybody who saw the First Officer down on Wrigley's. On the bridge, on the double."

Uhura was carrying on a sotto voce conversation with Wrigley Control. She turned to Kirk. "They're checking, captain."

Kirk nodded. Uhura remained poised by her communications board, her slender fingers pressing the receiver to her ear. Kirk drummed his fingers on the command console. Sulu looked over his shoulder at the captain, who angrily snatched his hand from the console and clenched it into a fist in his lap. Kirk shot an impatient glance at Uhura. Her board chattered briefly and her fingers flew to the control keys. "Reply coming in, captain," she said. For a few seconds she listened. Then she broke the connection and turned again to Kirk, removing the receiver from her ear. "Wrigley's says he's not registered with their computer."

Kirk exhaled noisily. "Well, that's something. I was beginning to think I didn't know him at all."

The turbo elevator opened and three crew members entered: Lt. Kevin Riley, Yeoman Rhoda Buckingham, and Crewman Ahmed Singh.

Kirk gave Riley a hard look. "That was a long fifteen minutes, lieutenant."

Riley pushed back his auburn hair and gave Kirk a freckled grin. "You know how it is, captain. Some things you just don't walk away from."

Kirk grunted sympathetically. "You three saw Spock on Wrigley's?"
They looked at each other.

"Come," said Kirk, "either you saw him or you didn't."

"Well, sir," said Riley, "it's not that easy."

"I'd swear it was him, sir," said Yeoman Buckingham. "Tell him, Ahmed."
She poked the dark crewman with a jabbing finger.

"Uh... it did look like him, captain," replied Singh.

"Where was he?" Kirk heard the turbo elevator open again and looked up to see Dr. Leonard McCoy entering the bridge. The captain turned his attention back to the trio, waiting for an answer.

Buckingham and Singh both looked at Riley, who sighed heavily. "You're not going to believe this, sir," he said.

"Riley," said Kirk in growing irritation. "I didn't call you up here to play games. Where is he?"

"In Jenny's House of Joy."

The bridge froze. No one looked at Kirk.

Kirk stared at the three for a moment and then turned away in disgust.

"Riley, you're high."

"No, sir!" Riley protested. "Haven't had a thing. Impairs the... ability... you understand, sir." Riley's face was turning a mounting brick red. Rhoda giggled.

Before Kirk could launch his planned blast at the trio, Dr. McCoy stepped forward, interrupting.

"Lieutenant," he said with a grin, "your knowledge of modern pharmacy is abysmally lacking. Remind me to fill you in on a few things some day."
McCoy looked at Kirk. "Other than that, he's right, Jim. Spock is at Jenny's."

Kirk was beginning to think they'd all gone crackers.

"How do you know?"

"Because I gave him the address."

Kirk stared at McCoy. Then, slapping his hands on the arms of his command chair, he jumped up and moved away from them. "Okay," he said, turning back. "Let me get this straight." He tallied the points on his fingers. "One, my first officer, Spock, is a Vulcan-- I hope that is unchanged. Two, for the first time since I have known him he asked for shore leave at a pleasure-oriented leave port-- but Wrigley's does offer non-emotional, non-physical attractions-- a rare request, but not totally inconceivable. Three, when the crew is recalled, Spock is the only one not to respond-- here we are getting into the unbelievable. Four, when his



personal communicator is hailed, no response-- fantasy already. Five, some of my best people tell me they saw him in a... in Jenny's-- verging on hallucinations. And six" --Kirk jabbed his left index finger at them-- "my ship's surgeon tells me he gave that Vulcan the address!" Kirk paced briefly and turned with his hands out. "All right, doctor, to complete this madman's raving, why did Spock want the address of Jenny's House of Joy?" Kirk waited belligerently for McCoy's answer.

McCoy found himself filled with glee and a devilishly evil compulsion came over him. He put on a straight face, put his arms behind his back, rocked on his heels, and told his captain the truth.

"Why, captain, I believe he had every intention of... I believe the phrase is... 'playing around'."

It took all of McCoy's control not to laugh at Kirk's expression.

Captain Kirk finally ordered a sensor check of Wrigley's for location of Spock's reading. He was convinced at last when Lt. Uhura asked Wrigley's for the name of the establishment at the coordinates of that reading. She looked at Kirk's harassed face and shrugged.

"Jenny's?" asked Kirk with a sigh.

She nodded. "Jenny's."

"Jim," said McCoy with a grin, "shall I--"

"No, doctor," snapped Kirk. "I think you've got some people to sober up. If Spock's in Jenny's, I'm going to be the one to get him-- alone."

Kirk had himself beamed directly to the street outside Jenny's. He was taking a chance of collision if there had been a crowd around. But, he thought moodily, he felt like taking chances. He strode up to the door and signalled with an impatient jab.

"Yeah?" said the voice of the young peeper.

"I'm Captain Kirk of the USS Enterprise. I understand one of my officers is on your premises. I want to see him."

There was a pause. "Just a minute," said the boy. The door remained shut.

Kirk waited impatiently, shifting from one foot to another.

Suddenly the door swished open. In the opening stood the immaculately groomed proprietor, her simple business tunic doing an injustice to her figure.

"Can I help you, Jim?" she asked with a smile.

"Ah... Jenny," Kirk said in surprise. He cleared his throat. "You're looking well... just the same."

"It's been a while, Jim."

"Well. Well, you know how stingy Starfleet is with assignments to Wrigley's."

She nodded. "Can I help you?"

Kirk looked around the street. "Ah... could I come in?"

"I don't know, Jim," she replied seriously, "whether you can or not. What do you want?"

"I'm told one of my officers is inside. The ship's been recalled and leaves are cancelled."

"And... you've come to fetch him."

Kirk cleared his throat again. "Yes," he said lamely.

She shook her head slowly. "Sorry, Jim. Here at Jenny's we make a point of never interrupting a customer."

"But--"

"Your officer should know that. He must judge the odds of a recall when he decides to patronize Jenny's."

"But this officer is--"

"We don't break that rule for anything or anybody, Jim. Our reputation stands on it."

"Jenny--"

"Nice to see you again, Jim. Come back sometime when you're not on duty."

The door swished shut, leaving Kirk with an unspoken protest hanging out of his open mouth.

Angrily he stepped back into the street. He flipped out his communicator and tried Spock's channel one more time. No answer. He switched to the ship. "Lt. Uhura, do the sensors still show Spock here?"

"Your readings are almost on top of one another, captain," she replied.

He signed off and stowed his communicator back in his belt. Briefly he touched his hand phaser, but pulled his shirt down over it resolutely. "No need for that," he muttered to himself.

Slowly he checked out the building. As far as he could tell, it was totally inaccessible. Blank walls, with all service equipment and delivery facilities on the roof.

He stood in front of the building, fists on hips, studying it. No chance on breaking in with anything short of a phaser cannon. No, direct assault was not it. He took his communicator out again.

"Lieutenant, have the transporter crew beam me aboard, and have Dr. McCoy meet me in my quarters."

Uhura acknowledged. Kirk felt the beam grab him and the world dissolved in shiny sparkles.

Kirk had his head tangled in his tunic when the door signal sounded. He jerked at the stubborn fabric, which settled even more firmly around his nose and mouth. The signal sounded again.

"Come!" he barked through the muffling folds of the tunic, and as the door swished open he gave one more heroic jerk.

As Doctor McCoy strode into Kirk's private quarters he saw the bare-chested captain, twisted tunic in his hands, his chest heaving with inhalations from the exertion of freeing himself.

"Well," McCoy said musingly, with a tiny smile, "should have brought my medi-sensors. Hate to miss an opportunity."

Kirk glared at him as he threw the tunic on his bed. He began to rummage in a storage compartment over his bed. "In this case, Doctor," he said, "I require your help in a non-medical area."

"Oh?" McCoy raised both eyebrows and crossed his arms, the picture of bored half-attention. "I wasn't aware that I was an expert in any other area."

Kirk removed a folded bundle from the storage compartment and shook out a rather flashy silver civilian tunic. He held it up for the doctor's perusal.

"I think this will do nicely for Jenny's, don't you, Bones?"

McCoy pursed his lips. "Perfect," he replied. "Is that all you wanted?" he asked sardonically.

Kirk began to struggle into the tight-fitting tunic. "It's only the beginning. We can't get through to Spock while he's in Jenny's. They won't let me in to get him, and won't alert him themselves." Triumphantly he pulled his head through the neck of the tunic and smoothed it to fit his body. "So a more devious attack is necessary." He dug a black beret out of the storage compartment and tugged it onto his head, pulling the full front lip down over his eyes in a rakish domino mask.

Kirk turned to the compartment again, speaking to McCoy over his shoulder. "So I says to myself, I says, 'Who, in the entire complement of the Enterprise, is my expert on cat houses?'" He took black, full-cuffed gloves from the storage compartment and pulled them onto his hands. "The answer was easy."

"So dig out your civvies, Bones," Kirk continued. He smiled at McCoy's slightly startled look, and clapped him on the back. "I'm going to need full benefit of your expert knowledge and experience on this reconnaissance!"

Kirk and McCoy fidgeted nervously at the doorstep of Jenny's. In their hands were the chits issued by the Wrigley computer directing their fictitious persons to Jenny's in answer to a carefully framed query.

"Yeah?" said the peeper, in response to their signal.

Silently, Kirk held the chit in view of the peeper's eye. McCoy showed his over Kirk's shoulder.

The door slid open immediately. Kirk gave McCoy a quick glance and moved quickly into the airlock-like entry way. More slowly, McCoy followed, a quiet raven in his plain caped jumpsuit, next to Kirk's flamboyance. "Sometimes," he had said to Kirk as they had stepped onto the transporter terminals of the Enterprise, "it's a good idea to be as invisible as possible in a place like Jenny's."

The outer door closed behind them. Kirk poked his computer chit into the slot in the wall. McCoy's followed immediately. There was a short churn of machinery and the inner door opened.

The two men walked into a pleasantly humming room. Through all the ages of humanity, all barrooms, no matter the popular drug dispensed, have had a kindred air. Jenny's was no exception. There were tables for holding food and drink, chair arrangements for holding people, a dais for holding entertainers. Noise, smoke, low light level, music, laughter were all in ancient tradition.

Without hesitation the two new arrivals took chairs and ordered whatever came to mind from the waitress who appeared at their table.

McCoy watched the departure of the waitress with appreciation. "Jenny's always does everything right." He nodded toward the waitress. "That'll beat individual table synthesizers any day."

Their orders arrived with synthesizer quickness. With a sigh of appreciation, McCoy wrapped his hand around the frosty mint julep. Kirk slowly sipped the burning Saurian brandy, his eyes scanning the room. Unobtrusively located to the left of the entertainer's dais-- now empty-- was a door. Almost as unobtrusive was the beefy type drinking alone at the table next to it.

"That's it," Kirk muttered to McCoy with a slight nod to the door.

Slowly McCoy sipped his drink and slid his eyes in that direction.

Kirk stood and ambled slowly around the room, pausing here and there to banter with various guests of Jenny's who had not yet made a contact. As he neared the door, the jock at the guardian table stiffened and began to watch him carefully. Kirk stopped to talk to the occupants of the last table before the door. Then he straightened and turned toward the door. The guard half-rose. Kirk froze for a second and then, tossing the guard a ribald greeting, staggered away, back to McCoy.

As Kirk lurched back into his chair, the doctor took a big swallow of his drink and rose with it in hand.

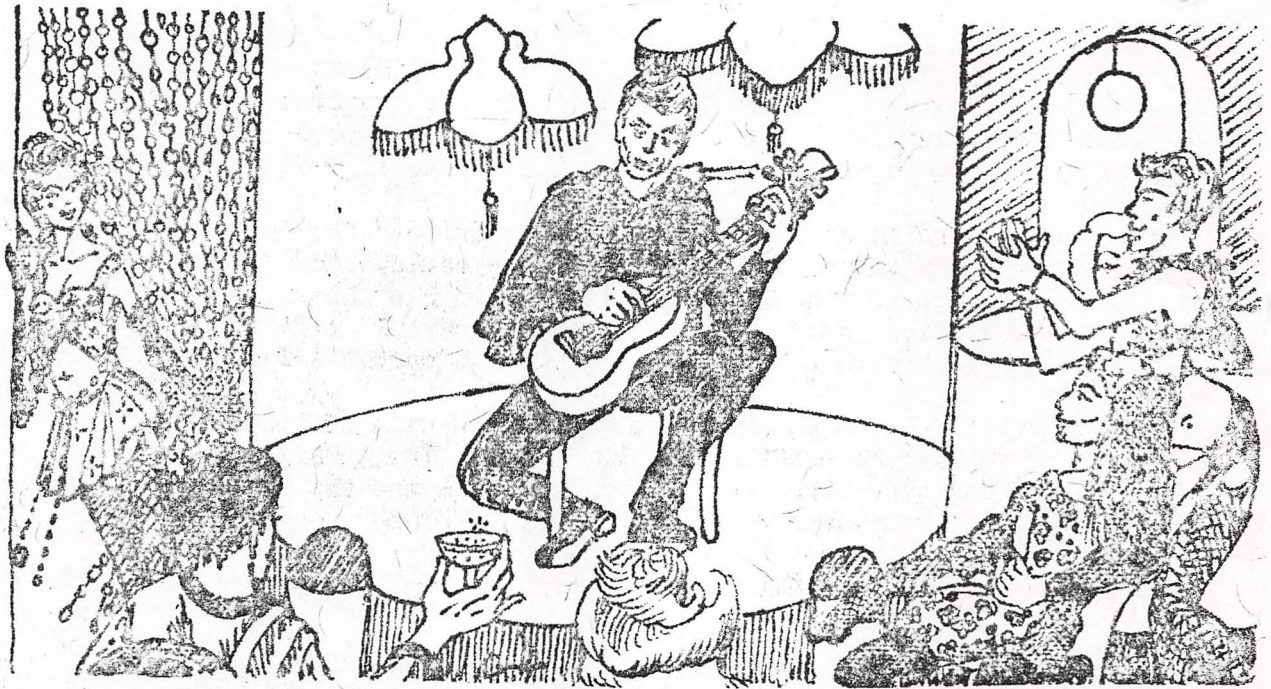
"What you need, Jim Bo, is a diversion," he said with a sleepy grin and walked to the dais. There he rummaged around the various discarded instruments and came up with an ancient acoustic guitar.

"A gee-tar!" he exclaimed, with hammy broadness, to the room. Everyone turned to watch him.

"By doggies!" he exclaimed again as he seated himself and pulled the strap over his head. "Ain't played one a these in a 'coon's age!"

Kirk groaned into his brandy.

Jim Kirk had listened for a half hour in amazement. He hadn't imagined in his wildest fantasies that his medical officer knew so many funny, obscene songs. As McCoy had begun to catch the attention of the room, the lights had quietly darkened and he was then singing in a harsh spot of light. Jenny's, like Wrigley's, knew when to take advantage of amateur talent. At first Kirk had winced at the thick Georgian accent that poured from McCoy's lips,



but Jenny's customers had accepted it and soon it was clear that it was necessary to the color-- or off-color-- of his material. As McCoy's julep had disappeared, a waitress had quickly replenished it, and by now the doctor exhaled the odor as well as the sound of the Old South. He seemed to waver a little as he replaced the glass on the floor next to him.

"Well, now," McCoy said with a sly, mushy grin. "Wouldn't want t'keep y'all good people from the business you came heah foah." As the audience protested, laughing, Kirk caught a sharp, and sober, glance from McCoy. With a start he remembered his business there. Bones began to sing again, his voice unpolished but warm. The song was an even bawdier number about an Andorian ascetic who grappled with the problem of universal parity, hampered by the presence of a sharp-taloned Orion slavegirl. The audience began to anticipate the chorus and sang it along with the doctor in great drunken guffaws.

Kirk glanced at the door guard. He was beating time on the table with his hammy fist and laughing until tears rolled down his face. Slowly Kirk rose and began to work toward the door. McCoy saw him and began to build the tempo of the song. The room was rocking with music and reeling in tunes and laughter.

Kirk arrived at the door unobserved in the darkness, noise, and confusion. The guard faced the performer on the stage so that his back was turned to Kirk. Tensely Kirk jabbed at the door actuator. If it was locked... If the hall beyond was lighted...

It wasn't, and it wasn't. He slipped through in a burst of laughter and as the door closed silently behind him he heard the great crash of applause for the end of the song.

Almost immediately the hall branched out into two forks, one leading to a stairway that obviously went up to the service facilities on the roof, the other leading to the warren of rooms that filled the rest of Jenny's. Kirk wondered down the halls, looking at the procession of doorways. No labels, only numbers. He stopped and took out his communicator. It squeaked feebly when he flipped the grid up, but the feedback monitor showed only a cycle of current. It reached out so far and then bounced back to the transmitter. No contact. He stowed the communicator and cautiously extracted from his belt a small, specialized sensor. Holding it before him, he moved down the hallway.

After many doors, he stopped before one. The indicator on the sensor had wavered and reacted to the Vulcan blood heat and heartbeat behind the door. With a smile he looked at the door and memorized the number. He checked the sensor reading one more time and, satisfied, returned it to its hiding place.

With a curse, Kirk stumbled through the door into the noisy, smoky main room of Jenny's. The guard moved faster than he could, and Kirk was up against the wall by the door, a thick forearm cutting into his throat.

There was a quick, sudden silence in the room. In a flash, Kirk saw McCoy across the room with a girl on his lap. The doctor's face was frozen and waiting.

Kirk gurgled a laugh and smiled at the guard with drooping eyes. "M'frien'," he said, "where th' hell's the head?" The question sliced into the silence and shattered it. McCoy began to laugh and the room followed his lead. With a curse, the guard pushed Kirk away from the door, and he staggered back to McCoy's table.

Kirk dropped into the chair and slapped the table. "Where's mine, buddy?" he burred at McCoy.

"What's your pleasure, m'friend?" asked McCoy, his arm around the cool brunette on his lap.

Kirk looked at the keyboard built into the table and slapped a button. "How 'bout a foursome?" The brunette giggled and kissed McCoy with verve.

The room they had been ushered to was efficient yet luxurious. Kirk's blonde pulled away from him as the outer door closed. She went to the autobar and eyed the keys. "More drinks?" she asked brightly.

"I don't think so," said Kirk, drawing his phaser. The blonde gasped as much at his sudden sobriety as at the sight of his weapon. "Get back," Kirk said and McCoy pulled the two women away from the bar installation.

Taking deliberate aim, Kirk fired the phaser directly at the heart of the autobar. It began to hiss and melt. Brilliant arcs flashed in its interior. The phaser beam continued boring into its heart. Faintly, alarm bells began to ring. The lights in the room flickered. The blonde threw her hand across her eyes and screamed. Without moving the phaser, Kirk glanced at her, and saw McCoy try to calm her. There was a heat-filled flash and the wall exploded silently.

Kirk found himself on top of a heap of women and McCoy. He returned the phaser to his belt and tore the mask-beret from his head. The door hissed slowly open.

Kirk ran into the hallway. McCoy was helping the frightened women to their feet in the debris-filled room.

All down the dim hallway, the automatic doors had hissed open in unison, in response to a complete power failure. Startled and angry cries drifted down the hall and various figures appeared at the doors to cast disgruntled looks up and down.

"Come on, Bones!" cried Kirk and began running down the hall, counting the numbers as he went. He finally arrived at the door he had earlier located. McCoy came panting up and stopped directly behind him, and both stared into the room revealed by the open door.

Spock and Flory Polansky were oblivious.

Kirk cleared his throat, and was noticed immediately.

"Captain?" said Spock.

Kirk walked slowly into the room. "All leaves have been cancelled, Mr. Spock."

The Vulcan got up. "May I suggest that you might have chosen a more conventional method of relaying that information?"

"Jenny's has some extremely effective protection for her clients." Kirk said. "We couldn't get through the house screens to your communicator."

Spock turned to Flory, who had risen.

"It has been, Miss Polansky," he said with precise politeness, "most educational and most... amusing." Flory smiled at him while he continued on. "I presume your time is--"

Flory stopped him with a wave of her hand and a laugh. "I'm a customer here, too, like yourself, Spock." She smiled. "This is my favorite vacation spot."

"I see," replied Spock gravely. "I will look forward to meeting you when we are in the same area again."

Flory came toward him. When she didn't stop at normal conversational distance, Spock began to stiffen, but she was too quick for him. She grasped his shoulders and raised herself to plant a kiss on his reluctant cheek. As she stepped away, her eyes sparkled at his discomfiture. "I too," she said, mocking his exactness, "shall look forward to that time, Commander Spock."

McCoy snickered.

Spock glared.

Kirk spoke to his communicator. "Lieutenant Uhura, three to beam up."

The acknowledgement was covered by the pounding of feet running down the hallway. Jenny and several large types appeared suddenly in the open door.

"I had a feeling," Jenny said angrily to Kirk, "that this sudden power failure was a little too coincidental with our earlier conversation." She advanced a few steps. "Do you realize you've completely ruined my entire protection system and all energy systems in the house?" She moved closer, furious. Menacingly, the bruisers followed. "Do you realize---!"

"Energize," said Kirk to the communicator.

Jenny moved toward him again.

"What about the damages?" she hissed, hands on hips.

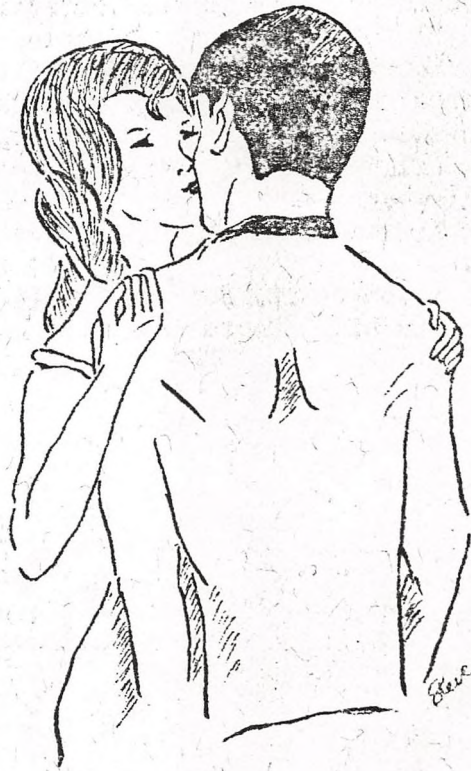
"Send the bill to Starfleet," replied Kirk. The transporter beam caught him and froze him, as he thought that it would be, perhaps, a difficult item to explain.

The three starship officers materialized in the transporter on board the Enterprise and went immediately to the turbo lift. Kirk gave the elevator the deck number of Officers' Country. As the lift began to move he turned to Spock.

"You have the con until I change clothes. Lieutenant Uhura will brief you."

Spock nodded. The three of them stood silent as the elevator moved. Slowly Spock became aware that both of his friends were smiling at him. Just as he was about to request an explanation for their undivided attention, McCoy spoke.

"You know, Jim," he said, keeping his eyes on Spock. "Even though I knew why Spock was at Jenny's, I'll



have to admit it's still hard to believe."

Spock raised an eyebrow sharply.

Kirk answered with his eyes on the Vulcan too. "You're right, Bones. There's something about a place like Jenny's that... sort of brainwashes you."

"Gentlemen," Spock said, "I am astute enough to realize that you are indulging in that human pastime known as 'needling', but I must confess that I am at a loss to see your point."

McCoy folded his arms. "Spock, you are the only man I know, half-Vulcan or not, who would spend his time in a place like Jenny's... and with someone like Flory Polansky..." The doctor paused, still looking at Spock. His mouth twitched. He tried to keep a straight face, but the words burst out in guffaws. "...playing chess!"

Kirk was a little more successful at keeping a straight face. Spock went a little green, a symptom Kirk had finally learned to recognize as blushing. "Now, doctor," Kirk said, "we have to be fair."

McCoy wiped his eyes. "What do you mean?" he asked, gasping for breath.

Spock folded his arms and was unaware that the tight feeling in his forehead was what most humans recognized as angry irritation.

The lift stopped abruptly and the door swished open. McCoy stepped into the doorway to hold the lift and turned to hear Kirk's reply.

Kirk put a thoughtful finger over his lips for a moment and shot a glance at Spock. He saw a jaw clench. "You aren't much of a chess player, are you, Bones?" he asked.

"I may not be a chess player, Jim," said McCoy, "but I know it has nothing to do with..."

"No, no, Bones. I only meant that if you were more of a player you might have noticed something else."

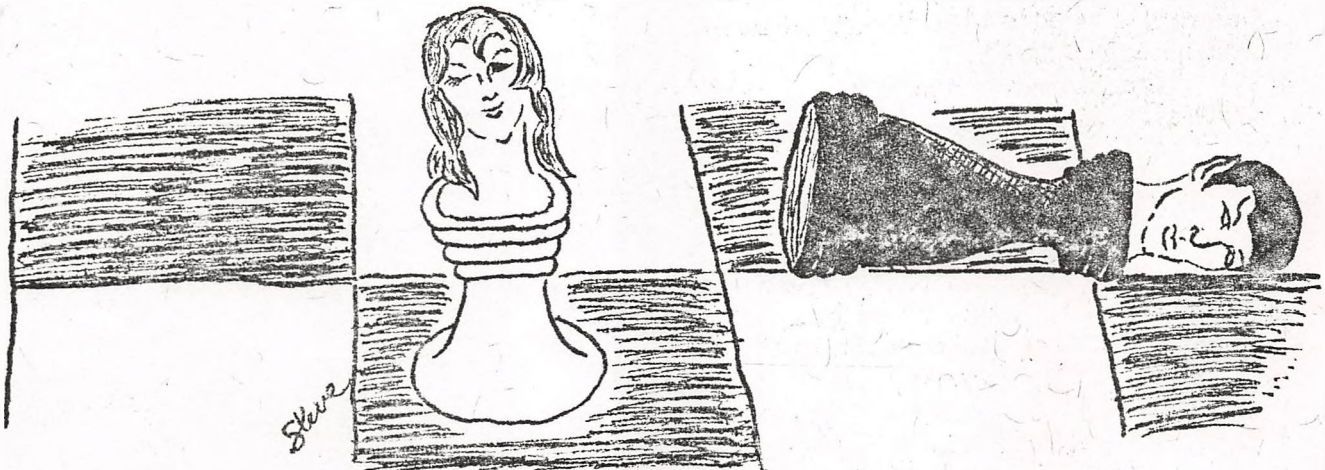
"What?" Bones forgot to grin at the uncomfortable Spock and leaned toward the captain in real curiosity.

"I took a look at the chess board, Bones. It was just two moves to mate."

McCoy's face remained blank. Spock moved restlessly and spoke. "It is certainly not unusual that Miss Polansky can play an excellent game of chess. She is, after all, a class five chess master. Most players over class three will go out of their way to meet a peer-classed master for a game. Miss Polansky and I--"

Kirk cut him off with a wave of his hand as understanding flodded McCoy's face.

"You got it, Bones," he said. He pushed McCoy through the door and stepped after him. He turned back to Spock with satisfaction as the door began



to hiss shut, and spoke to McCoy, still looking Spock in the eye:

"He was losing, Bones!"

Spock's last view was of them beating each other's shoulders and laughing uproariously. Fortunately, the lift door shut away the ridiculous sight and left him in peace.

"Bridge," Spock said, and the machine complied.

Spock strode onto the bridge and took the command chair without comment. The bridge crew looked around in surprise and relief.

"Mr. Spock," exclaimed Sulu, "where were--" Sulu stopped suddenly when he realized that he might not really want to ask that question.

"Lieutenant Sulu," said the Vulcan in what Sulu could swear was an ominous tone. "You will resume attention to your instruments."

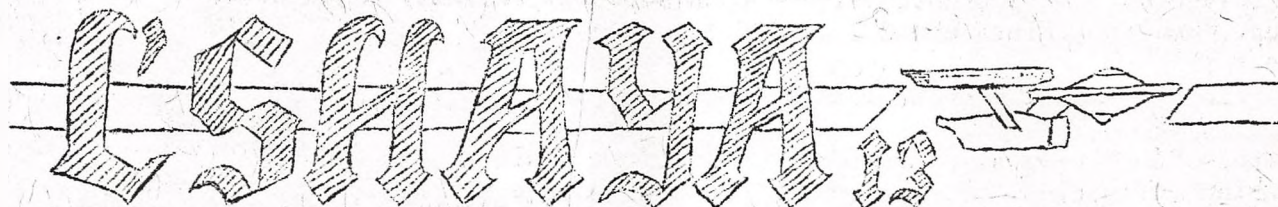
Sulu turned quickly around and listened quietly while Uhura quickly updated the first officer.

"Navigation," said Spock icily to Sulu, "you will lay in course for Zone Roscoe and proceed at Warp Six."

"Warp Factor Six," replied Sulu. "Aye, aye, sir." He pulled his neck down into the collar of his uniform and tried not to attract the First Officer's attention. He wiped perspiration from his forehead and shook his head in wonderment.

It had been, he thought wearily, a weird day all around.

THE END



announces, for new subscribers only: a year's worth of L'Shaya 13
for \$11.00 *** including:

- 2 IMPULSE: A TEREKZINE
- 6 FRIENDS OF MIND (reviews of
straight SF and fiction)
- 1 STAR TREK COOKBOOK
- 1 NI-VARIATIONS, Vulcanur poetry

ORDER FROM:
Liz Danforth
P.O. Box 9097
Phoenix, AZ
85068

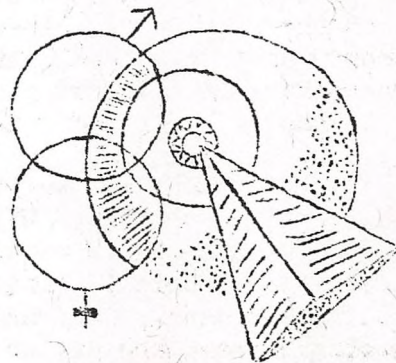
GRUP

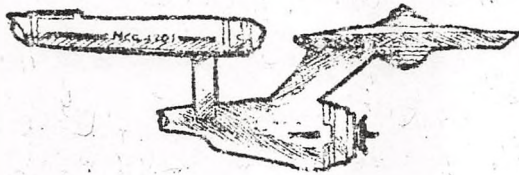
130 pages
Story Editor:
Carrie Peak
702 Bryce Dr.
Colorado Springs,
Colo. 80910

\$1.50 plus postage
Art Editor:
Steve Barnes
Rt. 3, Box 186
Brighton, Colo.
80601

TREK FICTION, POETRY, ARTICLES, ART

FOR THE ADULT TREK FAN





SPACE-- THE FINAL FRONTIER

by Doris Beetem

We have watched the voyages of the Star Ship Enterprise, as it boldly goes where no man has gone before, and have seen its stalwart crew meet many a strange alien civilization. However, perhaps the most interesting science-fiction culture shown on Star Trek is-- our own. Captain Kirk deserves study as much as any other alien. To shrug off peculiarities in 22nd century behavior portrayed in Star Trek's ethnographic records by smiling wisely and saying "Broadcast Standards" or "Fred Freiberger" is unscientific.

What do we know about Federation civilization? Principally, we have seen the bridge crew of the Enterprise-- that superbly racially mixed little group. However, hints about life off the Enterprise are given from time to time.

First, Star Trek probably takes place in the 22nd century-- between 2131 and 2196 (CEF-SS)*. The Federation of Planets, a loosely-amalgamated union, controls "our" area of space through Starfleet. Within the Federation are a variety of worlds. First-generation planets like Earth, Telluria, Andoria, and Vulcan are old, highly technologized, sometimes environmentally controlled. (Me-WE). Worlds like Mars, Alpha Centauri, and Deneva (TY- OA) were colonized within the last century or so and are frecher and simpler. And on thousands of worlds and through dozens of lightyears, the Federation is raw frontier.

The Enterprise is a ship of that frontier. Starfleet, probably in the lifetime of Capt. Kirk, certainly in the memory of Garth of Izar (WGD), has altered from a primarily military fleet to a quasi-police force, in response perhaps to the growing protection and service needs of the colonists. The Enterprise must fight off Romulan and Klingon threats, but also, the mail must go through.

Technology is advancing even as we watch. Under Capt. Pike (Me), the Enterprise was revamped to be faster, stronger, and capable of carrying more crew in the same total ship-space. Daystrom's duotronics (UC) revolutionized the computer field. And then, of course, there are the super-weapons and devices that Our Boys invent or discover every week.

In short, Federation civilization is not simply expanding-- it's exploding.

Within the confines of the Federation are any number of disparate philosophies. The Argelians (WF) are hedonists; the Vulcans, despite their rather nervous contacts with humans, maintain a strictly alien culture. On the more technological human worlds, the last battle of the Industrial Revolution is brewing. Some humans, like Richard Daystrom (UC), look with enthusiasm toward the day when machines can do anything men can-- only better. Hippy groups-- Adam and friends (WE)-- reject the direction of

* Abbreviations on final page.

Federation advances as unhuman, and are branching out on their own divergent path. And there is Samuel Cogley (CML), busily keeping up business at the old stand, in spite of progress.

Daystrom, Adam, and Cogley are not isolated lunatics. They are tips of vast sociological icebergs. Where human society is not attenuated through parsecs of empty space, their kind must be far more common.

What have all these social movements of the "core" of the Federation got to do with the Enterprise? Very little, really. The Enterprise is a ship of the frontier-- "Wagon Train to the Stars". Therefore, Capt. Kirk and his crew, spiritual descendants of the pioneers, are usually more reminiscent of The Virginian than 2001: A Space Odyssey.

It is sometimes hard to believe in the situations we see on the Enterprise. Take Capt. Kirk, for example, who falls in love at every port-- sincerely. Or the rollicking, Gunsmoke-type brawl in The Trouble With Tribbles. Or the phaser-in-hand gunfighter crouch that every security guard adopts immediately before he gets killed (FC-LG).

Naive and 'televisionish' though these actions look to a 20th-century audience, they make sense on a less-inhibited, less-ingrown frontier. And Capt. Kirk, Scotty, and the dumb security guard are frontiersmen. In the past, every spatial frontier has created new rules and values for those who settled it. The American West is the most familiar example. The frontier inevitably attracts-- and rewards-- the malcontent, the fanatic, the low-caste genius: men like Jim Bridger, John Fremont, Harry Mudd (MW), Samuel Cogley and James T. Kirk.

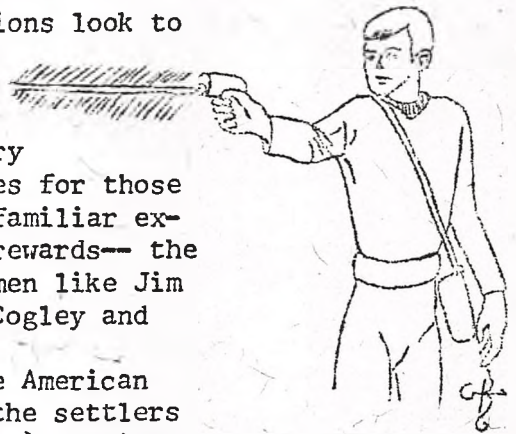
The Star Trek scene certainly resembles the American West. We have seen the Marshal (Capt. Kirk), the settlers (Omicron Ceti III-- TSP), claim-jumpers (Klingons), Indians (Romulans), and even the occasional itinerant snake-oil peddler (Harry Mudd and his patent Venus drug).

Is it really fair to compare the Enterprise's patrol sector to the American West? We have not heard Capt. Kirk or anyone else describe the nature of their own culture. Indeed, their voiced opinion is that they are simply "normal human beings". (Those who behave differently-- including 20th century man-- would be "abnormal".) Capt. Kirk sees history pretty much through his own preconceptions; the cultures he empathizes with are the ones like his own.

James Kirk dislikes the 1930s, '60s, and '70s. In the New York of the Depression, he preferred to quote Orion novelists rather than successfully masquerade as a native of the era (CEF). He likes to say that man "found the wisdom to survive"-- the sixties and seventies (RT). This does not argue a fondness for our era. He probably considers us barbarians for our wars (SS-PLW), our pollution and our television (BC)*, just as Mr. Spock considers the "stone knives and bearskins" (CEF) of 20th century technology barbaric.

On the other hand, he is a fan of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans (explorers and swashbucklers), and he has really voluminous knowledge of the Chicago Mob (which he glamorizes slightly, perhaps because of their defiance of the bureaucracy). Although the heroic captain spoke loudly against the government of Sigma Iotia (PA), once he adopted their methods he started to use any number of gangster expressions that he never heard on Iotia. He must have watched a lot of Jimmy Cagney movies...

* Ha! If he only knew!



Abraham Lincoln (the log-cabin president) is his hero (SC), and he found enough interest in the American West to memorize names, dates, and places of the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral (Sp). In other words, if you were Boldly Going Where No Man Has Gone Before, you're in.

And it is clear that the frontier is what Capt. James Kirk knows.

Examining Capt. Kirk's macrocosm, we see that it is no cyborg, rapidly-mutating environment. Future Shock would have made very bad television drama; however, it is only just to add that it might be very difficult to live in, too. Perhaps Our Boys aren't so dumb, after all.

The men of the Enterprise, instead of sampling esoteric super-sensations, rely on simpler pleasures-- the ones that have been continuously in favor for hundreds of years. In a totally alien environment, it may aid mankind's stability to indulge in brands of fun that are not too complex for the layman to understand.

During game-time, we have seen the chess and checkers sets brought out. Among the physical sports, Sulu at least enjoys fencing (NT), and Capt. Kirk a friendly round of judo (CX). For those who do not prefer varieties of attempted maiming, there is always the old standby, making out.

Liquor is favored over the chemical "highs" that an advanced technology could certainly produce. Alcohol, however, has two advantages on the frontier. First, the uninhibited-glow-into-aggression is just what hyper-active frontiersmen want. And second, liquor has a long and revered tradition of many happy drunks. Colonial Terrans are nothing if not proud of their ethnic traditions.

The arts are oriented toward fun and/or moral uplift. (For Dedicated Types like the Captain, moral uplift doubtlessly is fun.)

Music is often atavistic. Jazz is back (CK). Uhura sings ballad-like love songs (CX), and Spock knows them, too (PS), unless we assume that the Platonians like translating songs from Greek to English. Old-- really old-- dances may have been revived. Yeoman Theresa Ross (SG) and Capt. Kirk both knew the waltz. Apparently the Enterprisers like a dance which permits touching bodies-- but which is not yet sexual foreplay.

The Karidian Players put on a performance of Hamlet (CK). That is insufficient proof that drama has cycled back from our current experimental forms, although Kirk does quote Shakespeare a good deal. However, can the Enterprise crew really be imagined watching with any comfort a play by Ionesco, Pinter, Eliot, or even Tennessee Williams? (At least, without copious comments about "the bad old days".)

By the 22nd century, technology seems to be solving more problems than it causes. The men of the Enterprise have no time to battle their machines, like Dr. Sevrin (WE). They must use them to fight outside perils. In another two centuries, machine conveniences have become even more essential, even to the rugged, self-reliant frontier man; Capt. Kirk wouldn't know what to do without them.

In The Enemy Within, when the landing party was freezing on the planet, their obtuseness would have shocked an Eskimo-- or a New York Boy Scout. They cut up sheeting into separate blankets, instead of huddling together for warmth, and heated rocks well-exposed to the icy wind. No one tried to send fuel-- a simple petrochemical or good old elemental Carbon-- through the partially-malfunctioning transporter. Without the machines, neither Kirk, Spock, or Sulu could think of a way to survive.



While technology has not turned 22nd-century man into zombies or computers, it has launched a rather startling invasion into the so-called "soft" sciences.

It is one thing when Dr. McCoy cures everything from Spock's kassaba fever to a rainy day in the Enterprise sickbay. However, he also gives the crew psycho-emotional examinations with colored lights (TI) and is a noted authority on space psychology (CMI). McCoy and Bones Boyce (Me) before him are no psychiatrists-- they rely heavily on bartender psychology. Why, then, are they psychoanalyzing the crew?

Tantalus Penal Colony (DM) and Garth's insane asylum both depended on drugs and mechanical devices to cure sick minds. Lie detectors (WF) have advanced to infallibility. Medicine and biology have improved to the point where psychology-- an inexact science at best-- is seldom necessary. They are quicker and more convenient to use. The old techniques are obsolete; when situations arise that can't be dealt with by biology or medicine, McCoy has to fall back on horse sense or the Vulcan Mind Meld.

Sociology and anthropology have gone the same route as psychology. Those in the field are no doubt competent at collecting statistics and potshards, collating and classifying (exemplified by the Richter Scale of Cultures, a very scientific tool which did not work well on Organia (EM), perhaps because of the scientists' preoccupation with technology).

However, we have never seen these specialists maintain what the 20th century would call the proper scientific attitude while actually looking at the phenomena they are supposed to be studying. Sociologist Lindstrom (RA) displayed a totally ethnocentric attitude on Landru's planet. Between his "What kind of a father are you?" and "How can these primitives be doing this to us?" he had very little time for neutral, scientific observation. Anthropologist Palamas knew her Greek mythology, but came apart at the seams in sticky romanticism when she met Apollo (WM). Marla McGivers (SS) was worse. This incompetence is to be expected with amateurs; with professionals it is inexcusable.

The question is: why the apparent retrogression from what we've already achieved, from the work accomplished by Mead, Leakey, even Desmond Morris? Unfortunately, these fields do not yield themselves readily to a mechanistic approach. Technology is far more advanced than it was in the 20th century; it is an indispensable scientific tool-- therefore, if technology doesn't register something, that something isn't there. At least, not there for scientific study. Psychology, sociology, and anthropology have been given far more advanced technical aids; otherwise, they've suffered.

This blind spot, "unscientific" as it may seem to us, is how the man of the 22nd century frontier "keeps the machine in its place" and prevents himself from going cyborg. To us, the workings of the mind are mechanistic, Pavlovian, or scientifically rational; the human soul is put in jeopardy. The 22nd century, however, relegates those brain functions which Spock's tricorder can't register to the safe sphere of man's "humanness". This includes imagination, free will, and personality. Enterprise crewmembers can live unencumbered by naturalism, "nature versus nurture", and Freud.

We forget, nowadays, that Freudianism is only a theory. But it is-- and it's no longer useful to Capt. Kirk's world. On the frontier, a man who believes in free will can go further than one pondering his Oedipal complex, anal retentiveness, and latent homosexuality.

Freudian concepts have collapsed almost to nothing. Capt. Kirk sees his subconscious as a primitive beast, a shadow of himself, but almost unconnected to his conscious mind (EW). We hear terms like "obsession" (Ob), but the definition owes more to Herman Melville than Sigmund Freud. Can we imagine Kirk, Spock, or McCoy believing in an exotic like the "Oedipus complex"? Above all, would Capt. Kirk dare to say, "I love my ship... she's a beautiful woman" (NT-IM, etc.) if there were any Freudian armchair psychiatrists listening?

Spock cites the "collective unconscious" of Jung, however, (Cp) and seems to think that black cats, witches, goblins, and castles are likely lumber for the human racial memory. This sounds quaint and medieval to us, but the interpretation is apparently accepted in the 22nd century. Certainly Spock could never make it up.

There was a time when black cats meant black magic, when plague was caused by curses, when Greek gods walked the Earth. This, as Capt. Kirk would agree, is superstition, and no modern man can believe that.

However, man does need something to believe in. Mere unorganized facts cannot give purpose or meaning to his life. It seems that the "collective unconscious" theory is being used-- appropriately unconsciously-- in order to recreate mythology for mankind.

Capt. Kirk believes in freedom and love and Starfleet and His Ship, and his rationale for his values is that they are human values. His predecessors in the old days might have said Christian values, pointing to a Bible or papal bull. Due to the collective unconscious theory, Kirk can say, "Humans have always been this way-- and I'm a human!" A neat and elegant reason why what he believes is right.

Alas, many of the actions Kirk calls "inhuman", this century has done. He told the Children of Vaal (Ap) the "human way" of living together, helping each other with love; many people now would rather give their love to the State than to each other. Roger Korby, the cyborg (LG), might be accepted enthusiastically by a believer in Skinner therapy.

Capt. Kirk lives in simpler, perhaps better, times. He is a social absolutist; we are social relativists. Perhaps it is the stress of entering the Atomic Age, Space Age, and Age of Automation, perhaps the moral shock of Hiroshima, Dachau and My Lai, but the main cry of today's intelligentsia is "Where are our values?"

Capt. Kirk knows what his values are. This can make him seem incredibly smug and ethnocentric, of course, but there is no one to say whose idea-set is objectively right. Historically, each in-group simply debunks the group preceding. Reality is essentially in the eye of the beholder, and the Space Frontier's worldview seems to work.

Naturally, this devout belief in "human values" fosters the formation of stereotypes, which we in the 20th century consider a no-no. The final frontier, however, is not bigoted enough to negatively stereotype anyone, except Klingons, who don't care, and bureaucrats, who may deserve it.

Stereotypes can smooth relationships, standardize expectations, and bolster the ego, providing that one has not been saddled with Stepin Fetchit. Or, as Dr. McCoy would say, "I'm a doctor, not a bricklayer!" (DD)

There's no time for internecine conflict in space. Frontier stereotypes-- or ideals, to use a less loaded word-- are used to add to the morale or efficiency of the people who use them.

The captain's stereotype, for example, is pragmatically necessary to keep the ship a working unit instead of a democracy, whether that ship is the Pequod, a World War II submarine, or the Enterprise. The Enterprise crew finds an extremely strong emotional significance in the Captain as the Father of his Crew. Everybody loves the Captain, except Gary Mitchell, after mutating (WNM), and Finney, who's crazy (CML). Somehow, the captain must fulfill the crew's



incredibly high expectations. He must be "a paragon" (MW); Spock said that the captain dare not show himself to the crew as anything less than perfect (EW). Capt. Kirk drives himself almost beyond human limits to be perfect, the flawless mainstay of the crew-- and succeeds. No wonder it's a lucky ship...

On a technological frontier, the difference between the sexes is a convenient way to prove that you're not mechanized yet. So naturally it's played up big. Men are real he-men, girls are real she-women.

Men are to be muscley, brainy, capable of taking on anything the frontier dishes out-- with hands and teeth, if necessary. It's probably no accident which makes Sulu a duelling aficionado, Scotty the ethnic-liquor enthusiast, Chekov a brawler-with-Klingons, and Kirk a compulsive ladies' man. They are proving their masculinity, in the terms of their own century.

This is probably what causes the startling disparity between the female crewmen's reaction to Mr. Spock-- and ours. He just isn't playing the game according to their rules. We like the cool scientific type, they like a man to prove he's not a computer. Pacifism, vegetarianism, and exotic cultures are "in" just now; a good line, a nice smile, and a strong right hook would be more admired on the Enterprise. We wouldn't admire a man who wore lace ruffles on his cuffs, took snuff, and wore a long powdered wig. It's no wonder the Enterprise girls don't appreciate this century's hero.

There is, of course, Nurse Chape. You could say she has better taste-- or else is kinda weird.

"A woman is always a woman," says Kirk (CK), meaning a beautiful, seductive, glamorous creature. They are hyper-feminine in a rather romantic sort of way (almost as if they came from Central Casting). The super-sciences of plastic surgery and dietetics must get a real workout, judging from the feminine pulchritude we see. (And masculine too, come to think of it.)

However, besides being all-woman, 22nd-century females are also expected to be highly efficient. Arrel Shaw (CML) is a lawyer, Miranda Jones (TNB) a Medusan ambassador's aide, Lt. Uhura a communications officer, and Lenore Karidian (CK) an accomplished actress (and fearless killer).

The pioneer young start out little hellions, running around exercising their vocal cords (CSL). Who but Capt. Kirk could remember "dipping little girls' pigtails into inkwells" (SG), when inkwells must be obsolete two hundred years? But there's too much going on outside to grow up slowly. Children have a brief, confusing adolescence, like Charlie Evans (CX), then, like Jamey Finney (CML), grow up fast. Lenore Karidian, at nineteen, was a sophisticated woman.

This breaks down some of the recent gains in eliminating role-typing, but the natives seem happy with it. It was Spock who said, "Fascinating... a totally parochial



attitude" (Met)-- the Enterprise crew has its ethnocentrism. On the Final Frontier, you can be eccentric or odd, like Cyrano Jones (TT) or Harry Mudd, but if you contradict basic frontier values you'll get your face stepped in.

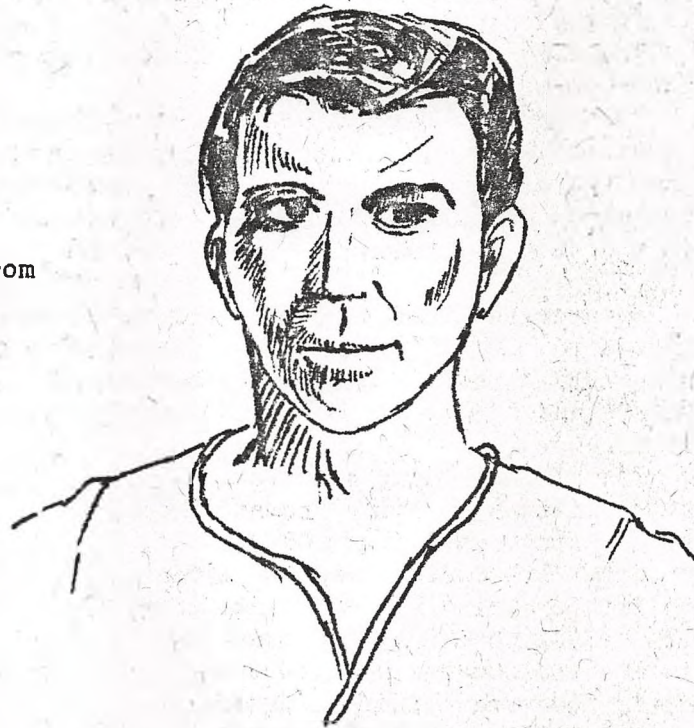
No one has more prestige than a starship captain. Within his sphere Capt. Kirk is "the glass of fashion and the mould of form". He possesses all the faults and virtues of his age-- in spades. He's courageous to the point of recklessness, a charming lover faithful to no one but his ship, sympathetically understanding of his fellow man insofar as he fellow man is exactly like him.

One thing that Capt. Kirk could not endure is to live as we do. Capt. Kirk, Mr. Spock, and Dr. McCoy-- heroes all-- need the Enterprise and the frontier. They are the pioneers who, by pushing outward, avoid looking within.

In time the Enterprise's patrol sector will be more settled and more civilized. Then the Enterprise's missions will fit the action/adventure format no more. Star Trek is not merely a science-fiction TV show. It has chronicled an era of destiny, the bright and beautiful dream of the Final Frontier.

THE END

Note: abbreviations are from the Star Trek Concordance, except for the 3rd season shows listed below.



NGD: Whom Gods Destroy
 SC: Savage Curtain
 Sp: Specter of the Gun
 TI: Turnabout Intruder
 WE: The Way to Eden
 TNB: Is There In Truth No Beauty?
 CSL: And The Children Shall Lead

A
LITTLE
MORE
THAN
KIN,
BUT
LESS
THAN
KIND

by Devra Langsam



Yeoman Raman Gupta fidgeted, as he waited in the transporter room to welcome the Enterprise's passenger. Normally, Kirk would have been there, but the Captain was, Raman confided to the transporter tech, in a perfectly foul mood.

"Hung over?" said Ali, absently checking the transporter board.

Raman shook his head. "Just in a bad temper. The Captain hates carrying civilian passengers. Said he wasn't interested in running a damn ferry service, and he wasn't going to be a reception committee for some half-assed student.

"Glad I'm not on the bridge today," Ali said. "Here she comes."

Raman watched the sparkles flow into a tall, thin girl with a mound of baggage at her feet. He blinked; the girl remained as she had first appeared,

with olive skin, sleek, seal-like black hair falling over her shoulders... and pointed ears. She was indisputably Vulcan.

Raman clicked his tongue in wonder, and then moved forward. Things were certainly going to be interesting. "Welcome aboard the Enterprise, Miss..." He hesitated. He'd been given the passenger's name, but surely Vulcans didn't have names like Sara?

"Marenjas," the girl said clearly. "Sara Marenjas. Hi."

Raman blinked again, but carried on with routine. "I'm Yeoman Gupta. Dr. McCoy is waiting to give you a regulation quarantine check-up."

She smiled and said, "Thank you. I'm very glad to be here." Then she stepped awkwardly over the pile at her feet, and began to collect it.

"Never mind that," Raman said. "That'll all be taken care of. Ali, have Miss Marenjas' gear taken to her quarters... routine decontam first." The tech nodded, and Raman continued, "This way, please," interrupting Sara's survey of the transporter room.

Left alone, Ali flicked a switch on his board.

"Bridge, Communications," a voice answered.

"Transporter room. Our passenger was received in good order. Oh, and Lieutenant, you're not going to believe this...."

Raman and the girl walked down the corridor to Sickbay, Sara alertly observing everything.

"Is this your first time on a starship, Miss Marenjas?" Raman asked, making conversation with some difficulty.

Sara nodded. "The miners use quite small jumpers, you know." As they stopped by the door, she added, "This is such a huge and fascinating ship."

Raman couldn't quite figure out how to answer that, so he led her into Sickbay, speculating on her news value. Trust that gabby Ali to have spread it all over already, except maybe to Mr. Spock.

McCoy was waiting. Raman forestalled him by saying very rapidly, "This is our passenger, sir. Miss Marenjas, our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Leonard McCoy. Doctor, this is Miss Sara Marenjas, of Zeldia Colony."

McCoy gave him an annoyed look and said, "Very well, Yeoman. I'll call you when I've finished with the young lady."

Reluctantly, Raman left.

"I have several tapes for you," Sara said. "Our local medic was afraid that you might not be familiar with my species, so he..."

McCoy waved the tapes aside. "Why the hell didn't those Star Fleet idiots tell us to expect a Vulcan? Would've had Dr. M'Benga up here to help me, instead of... As though we didn't have enough problems." He looked at the tapes in her hand. "Put those damn things away; you might need them for someone else. I know all I need to about Vulcans already... damn crazy body systems."

Sara giggled, and McCoy coughed, suddenly embarrassed.

She pushed her hair behind her ears with an impatient gesture, and grinned at him. "I understand that our medic talked to himself for six months after I came to the colony. That's why he made the tapes, having had so much trouble himself."

"He should've had more faith in Star Fleet's competence." McCoy shook his head, considering this in the light of his own previous statement. "Well, the First Officer's a Vulcan, and anyway, one of the staff interned on Vulcan." McCoy gave her a doubtful look, and said, "I suppose that you're from one of the outer research stations. Didn't know there were any Vulcans stationed around here."

"Oh, no," said Sara, sitting down on one of the examination tables, which began to wheep irritably to itself. She swung her legs back and forth idly. "My parents were traders. They were shipwrecked, and the local people took me in."

"Oh," McCoy said. He watched Sara inspect the sickbay equipment with obvious interest. "You're going in for medicine?"

"Because I'm snooping around? No, I'm going to study engineering-- don't know what area-- and equipment like this-- well, I just like looking at it." She turned suddenly and smiled at McCoy. "Actually, I like fooling with it. I think our medic was as glad to get rid of me because I poked around in his machines as much as because of my nutty physiology."

"My God," McCoy thought. "Spock will have a fit when he sees her." Then he reconsidered. He'd never gotten a straight answer from Amanda on that question... maybe young Vulcans did smile, once in a while. Maybe. He decided to put off finding out. "Let's get this examination going now, young lady."



Some time later, McCoy made a final notation on his electronic clipboard, and said, "Well, Miss Marengas..."

"Marenjas," she corrected. "Why don't you just call me Sara?"

McCoy looked surprised, but complied. "Sara, you appear to be in the pink-- or should I say the pale green-- of health. No reason why you shouldn't mingle freely with our crew, enjoy the facilities of the ship." He paused before thumbing the wall communicator. "I'd better report in to the Captain; then maybe you'd like to tour the ship."

Sara nodded, her face glowing with pleasure. Rather an unnerving sight, McCoy thought.

Kirk's mood had improved now that the ship was on course and moving sweetly. He was prepared to forgive Star Fleet for dumping a passenger on him. "Yes, Bones?" he said.

"Checkup on Miss Marenjas completed, Captain. She seems to be in very good health, but a little overwhelmed. Maybe you and Spock would come down and meet her. A little personal touch would be a big help."

"I'd think, Doctor, that you could apply all the personal touches necessary," Kirk said, leering.

"Why Jim, what an idea. She's only 16 years old!"

Kirk laughed. "All right, I'll be down to apply the personal touch. Though why you'd want Spock along, too..."

"Believe me, Jim, he should be here."

"You never give up on him, do you, Bones? All right, on my way."

A few minutes later, the Captain and Spock entered Sickbay together. McCoy watched with pleasure as the Captain's jaw went a little slack. Spock looked at the girl with interest, one eyebrow arching slightly. Then he gave her the traditional Vulcan salute, murmuring what McCoy assumed were words of greeting.

Sara looked at Spock, visibly surprised. "Oh, yes, the First Officer, right?" she asked McCoy. She looked again at Spock's right hand, with its fingers spread in the greeting.

Spock cocked his head to one side with a look of what-have-we-here.

Kirk cleared his throat. "Miss Marenjas, I'm Captain James T. Kirk, and this is my First Officer, Mr. Spock."

Sara smiled at Kirk. "How do you do. I'm very grateful to you for taking me to Coulson V."

"You'll still have a two month layover on Coulson V, before you can transship for Johnston's Planet," Kirk said. "It's too bad that you have to wait so long for a connecting flight."

"Well, if I'd had to wait for the regular passenger run from Zelda, I'd have missed that connecting flight, and half of the fall term too. I'm looking forward to Engineering school, but I think that I'll enjoy being on my own for a while." Her face took on a speculative look. "I'm thinking of going to a hostel where I can play a lot of tennis. I'm very good at it; maybe I can make the Varsity team if I get in some extra practice now."

Spock looked a trifle satanic. "Possibly your studies will leave you little time for such extra-curricular activities."

Sara gave a pleased giggle and slid off the examination table. "You sound just like my Dad. I've never had any trouble handling schoolwork and all the extras I've wanted."

"Presumably the work will be considerably more difficult."

"Spock, you're a killjoy," said McCoy. "Anyway, there's nothing to stop you having a good time while you're with us, Sara. I'm a lousy tennis player, but I deal a mean hand of poker."

"Doctor," Sara said, "you are a dear." She flung her arms around him and gave him a hug.

Spock said something that sounded like 'crackerjacks', followed by a string of equally unintelligible syllables.

"Excuse me?" Sara turned to him. "What did you say?"

Spock, looking extremely grim, repeated his statement, adding a bit to it.

Sara shook her head. "I'm sorry. I didn't understand you."

Spock's face froze into hard lines. "I am sorry to have to say this before others. I would have expected one of your age to maintain suitable behavior, despite changes in circumstances. Such actions one might tolerate in a five-year-old."

"Mr. Spock," Kirk said sharply, "you are speaking to a passenger on our ship, not to a member of your family."

"Captain, if you saw a child throwing rotten fruit out of a window onto people's heads, would you not stop him, even if you did not know him?"

Kirk scowled. "The circumstances are completely different."

Sara shook her head in confusion. "What did I do? They told me back at the colony that Vulcans were queer, but I never believed them. I don't feel queer myself, and I'm a Vulcan." She looked at McCoy.

"Spock has some funny ideas," said McCoy, glaring at him. "He probably thinks that you shouldn't touch anyone, for fear of contagion."

"One avoids unnecessary bodily contact with others," Spock said. "This is taught to very small children."

McCoy had a sudden mental picture of a giggling group of Vulcan children behind a barn, feeling each other's hands.

"That's very interesting, I'm sure," Kirk said, with a slight edge to his voice. "If you feel that you can refrain from constantly criticizing her behavior, Mr. Spock, I'd like you to show Miss Marenjas around the ship."

"Yes, sir," Spock said, his non-expression that of pained obedience. "If you will come with me, please?"

Sara swung back to McCoy. "I'll see you again, won't I, Doctor?"

McCoy grinned at her encouragingly. "Why don't you meet me for dinner? I'll buzz you on the intercom."

They walked down the corridor, and paused for the lift. As they entered, Spock said, "Observation Deck." Then, with the air of one doing an unpleasant duty, he continued, "'Sara' is not a Vulcan name."

"My given name is T'Misoara, but it doesn't sound like a girl's name, so they called me Sara." She snorted faintly. "They couldn't manage my clan name at all."

"Who," Spock asked, "are they?"

The lift doors opened, and the two walked into the observation section. Spock opened the view ports. He waited for an answer, then repeated the question.

"Who are they?"

Sara withdrew her attention from the multicolored stellar view and said, "My foster parents, the Marenjas."

"Not Vulcans," said Spock.

Sara shook her head.

Spock looked at her intently, eyebrow raised in curiosity. "I am interested in hearing the circumstances of your parents' deaths, if you do not mind."

Sara plopped down on the floor, and sat cross-legged. "Oh, no, I don't feel disturbed talking about it, or anything like that. It was so long ago, you see."

"That is not precisely what I meant. I trust that you will not feel the question is an intrusion."

She looked at him slant-wise. "I won't tell on you. Well, my parents were traders, and they took me with them. There was an accident; the shields failed, I guess. Anyway, they were killed. Some miners in Oddstad's Cluster found the wreck, and took me back to the main settlement at Zelda. The local authorities tried to find my relatives... well, they were going to try to, but things were very confused just then. There was an epidemic of yasneri..."

"Yasneri?" repeated Spock.

"It's a variant strain of flu, and they couldn't make enough vaccine in time. Practically the whole colony was sick; a couple of people even died from it. Yasneri's a very strong strain. It was a couple of months before anyone had time to do anything except absolutely vital things, and by the time they got around to checking the records on me, the people who were taking care of me-- Zelda's too small to have anything like an orphanage; they just farm the kids out to people..." She stopped, confused by her own sentence. "Mom and Dad wouldn't hear of sending me so far away. So they adopted me."

"And the Vulcan authorities were, in fact, never notified."

"I don't think so. Zelda is a very frontier-ish sort of place. They don't bother much with red tape."

"I see," said Spock. "How old were you when the accident occurred?"

"Three, I think." Sara frowned considerably. "They're not really sure,

because I seem to be kind of underdeveloped for my age." She rubbed one finger over her lips, thoughtfully. "But I told them I was three. Mom and Dad always said how clever I was to know Galstandard when I was so young. Funny that I can't remember any Vulcan now."

"Presumably it would come back to you if you were exposed to it again." Spock took a deep breath, cleared his throat, and then said, "I must apologize for scolding you, in the Sickbay. I assumed that you had had..." He stopped, and then began again. "I judged your behavior against that which I would have expected from an average Vulcan child. Obviously that was unjust. I am sorry if I caused you distress."

"Oh, that's all right," she said, reaching out impulsively toward Spock. "They had the same kind of trouble, only backwards, when I first came to Zelda. They thought I was emotionally retarded, or something."

"Indeed?" Spock said, his eyes interested. "What sort of treatment did they use?"

Sara shrugged. "I don't really know what you call it. But they worked very hard with me, for a long time." She grinned. "So now I'm normal, like everyone else."

"No doubt Dr. McCoy would agree with you." Spock looked at her somberly. "I will show you the rest of the ship."

They re-entered the lift. "In your quarters," Spock said, "are storage areas, sanitary facilities, a computer outlet, and a viewscreen. You may eat in any of the mess rooms that you choose. The computer will give you a layout of the ship."

Sara nodded. "I have a good memory. It shouldn't take me too long to learn my way." She looked at Spock sideways and then said in a nervous rush, "You remind me of my father, but I remember him as being much, much taller."

"That is understandable," Spock said. "Your memories are those of a very young child. Probably any Vulcan male would remind you of your father."

"I suppose so. I've gotten accustomed to everyone looking... well, human. You know, the other children used to tease me about my skin color... just children calling names. It's funny to see someone with skin like mine."

Spock said nothing, but gestured her through the open door. They turned to the left and he said, "This is the gymnasium. I believe that you will find the facilities quite good, although we do not have the space for tennis courts."

"What kind of sports do you like, Mr. Spock?" Sara asked, looking at his shoulder muscles appraisingly. "You'd be very good in basketball, I'd think."

"I do not care for team sports," said Spock. "I play chess."

"That's not a sport... I mean, well, it's not exercise."

He had no answer for that, so they watched Sulu fencing with one of the security men for a while. Presently Spock said, "I will show you the hydroponics section, and then I must return to the bridge for my watch."

"I'd rather see the engines," Sara said, "the control chambers and all that stuff."

"Mr. Scott will show you the Engineering division tomorrow."

"Mr. Scott? Who's he?"

"The Chief Engineer. He takes a personal interest in engineering students."

Sara gave an excited little bounce. "That will be nice."

Spock looked startled, but only said, "Come." He turned and began to walk down the corridor.

In the garden, Sara began to shiver. "Ugh," she said. "It's so clammy in here, and cold, too." She was wearing a short-sleeved dress of some light-weight beige material.

"It is comfortable for the rest of the crew. I find it rather chilly, but one adjusts. You should wear warmer clothing. The quartermaster can issue it."

"I was planning to buy warm things at school," Sara said defensively, in the face of his tacit disapproval. "They hardly make any cold-weather clothing at home. Zelda's a hot planet; the others are always complaining about it. Suited me fine." She shivered again.

"It was careless of you to forget..." Spock stopped.

Sara grinned at him. "I didn't know you'd worked in a nursery, Mr. Spock."

Spock folded his lips and said, "I will take you to your quarters now."

"You don't like anyone to tease you, do you?"

"It is not commonly done on Vulcan. I am not, of course, able to prevent Dr. McCoy from indulging himself at my expense." Spock considered the question, his eyebrow quirked. "There are not many others on the ship who care to attempt it, since I am second in command."

At her quarters, Sara turned and said, point-blank, "I wish that I could remember more. Am I very different from most Vulcans?"

Spock looked at her with something like pity in his eyes, and nodded, then turned and walked away.

Sara was surprised to find Spock outside her room early the next morning.

"May I come in and talk to you?" he asked.

Inside and seated, he seemed to have trouble beginning. Finally, he made a precise steeple of his fingers and stared at them, then said, "After we spoke yesterday, I thought a great deal about you. I would like to offer to teach you the Vulcan way."

"Why?"

"Because," said Spock uncomfortably, "it is my duty. I cannot allow you, who are no more than a child, to remain unaware of the traditions and ethics of your people. As an adult, it is my place to train and help you. I cannot force you to listen to me, but I must offer this."

"I am not a child," Sara said hotly. She looked down at her small breasts angrily. They were barely visible beneath the pale lime jumpsuit she was wearing.

"Among Vulcans, you would be considered a child. Not an infant, but surely not an adult."

Sara asked, "How old are you?"

"I am thirty-seven point three standard years of age. My father is one hundred three point six; he is middle-aged."

"You are kidding," Sara said.

Spock shook his head.

"All right, skip the age bit. Maybe you do think I'm a child. Why do you want to teach me? This whole thing sounds like a come-on."

Spock flushed. "I do not, personally, wish to teach you. I find the idea profoundly unsettling. I am not a teacher by profession. Also, you have many personal habits which I find distasteful. However, I will try to teach you, if you desire."

"You find me embarrassing?"

He nodded. "I should not permit myself to react so strongly. You are obviously not flouting our teachings deliberately."

Sara rubbed the side of her neck agitatedly. "Are all the Vulcans that I meet going to feel this way?"

"You would not be aware of it. I am part Terran, and thus have more difficulty in controlling my reactions than most Vulcans."

"That's not what I asked you."

"No doubt others will recognize the illogicality of their reactions, and will be able to suppress such feelings more successfully than I have done."



"You're avoiding my question. Would most Vulcans automatically think that I was acting disgustingly?"

Spock hesitated, then nodded.

She let her breath out in a long annoyed sigh.

"It will be different with Terrans," Spock assured her. "They will be surprised, but pleased. Most of them appear to feel that it is natural for everyone to act as they do. They will find your actions strange for a Vulcan, unless they take you for a Romulan, but there are few of them in Federation space. However, they will merely assume that you are a happy convert to their way of life."

"I guess that I am, in a way." She stared at the floor for a minute.

"What is it that's so terrible about the way I act? How should I be acting?"

"I cannot compress two thousand years of teachings into one sentence."

Then he softened. "To be Vulcan is to view life logically, without allowing oneself to be swayed by emotional reactions. It is the discipline of one's body and mind, a way of action, an ethic of behavior. It embraces all of one's life, including one's most personal habits, one's thoughts. It is control."

"I don't like to have people... I mean, I like people, and I want them to like me. Maybe if I knew about it, I could... well..." Sara trailed off.

"I do not offer to teach you about Vulcan. You may learn that from the computer banks. I offer to teach you to be a Vulcan, as far as I am able-- to train you as I was trained myself."

She moved uncomfortably on her chair. "I don't know. I mean, do I really want to be..."

He looked at her, eyes intent. "I do not offer this lightly. Please consider very carefully before making a decision."

"Let me think about it."

Spock waited.

Then, Sara said, "All right. Teach me."

Spock nodded. "We will begin this afternoon. Now I must sleep; I have just come off watch. I will return at 1300 hours. May the learning be sweet to you, T'Misoara."

After Spock left, Sara fidgeted around the room for a few minutes, unable to settle. The communicator buzzed, interrupting her dithering.

A solidly-built man dressed in the red tunic of Ship's Services looked out of the intercom screen.

"Miss Marenjas? I'm Chief Engineer Scott. Would ye care to breakfast wi' me before I show you around Engineering?"

"I'd like that very much, thanks," Sara said. "Could I meet you at Mess Room six? I want to try finding the way myself."

"Oh, aye, that'll be fine. Ten minutes?" At Sara's nod, Scott added, "If ye get lost, just set up a yell. Scott out."

He was outside the mess room when she arrived.

"It's a good thing Mr. Spock told me about your family," Scott began, as they sat down.

"Oh, did he? I wonder why," Sara said, looking up from her fruit salad.

"Otherwise I'd have practiced my Vulcan on ye." Scott took a long drink of coffee. Seeing her blank look, he explained, "Mr. Spock's teachin' me, so I can read the technical manuals in the original, ye see. They're grand engine makers, the Vulcans."

For a moment Sara had the weird feeling that Scott was talking about someone else, as though she weren't actually a Vulcan too.

"So you'll be goin' to Johnston's Planet," Scott continued. "A good basic school. Are you thinkin' of entering Star Fleet, or goin' into medical or mining work?" He scraped the last of his oatmeal up energetically. "I've always been partial to ships myself, but some say there's nothin' like working in the deepwater cities."

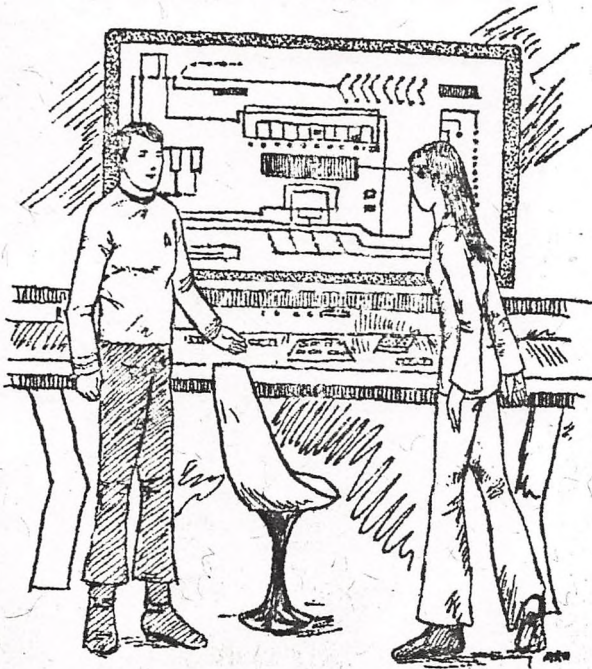
"I don't know exactly," Sara said, thoughtfully buttering her toast. "It's like picking candy; I mean, how can you possibly choose?" She piled raspberry jam on lavishly.

Scott nodded. "When ye begin the applied work, then it's easier to get the feel of where you belong." He took a final drink of coffee. "Any time you're ready now."

Sara stuffed the last corner of her toast into her mouth, and said indistinctly, "Let's go."

"She's a fine ship," Scott said affectionately, as they walked into Engineering. "Now this is the main control board, linked into the board up on the bridge. All the ship's power runs through this board..."

He led her from main control to internix regulator, from power gauges to automatic and manual environmental controls. The transporter circuitry came in for special attention, because, "It's as skittish as a kitten, and as flighty as a female, look ye. Not that all females are flighty," Scott continued hastily, "it's just in a manner o' speaking."



With an effort Sara kept her face straight, and in a moment she was absorbed in the excitement of following the circuit tracers in that same skittish excitement. Beside herself with pleasure, she followed Scott, eagerly obeying his orders to "Look at that now, will ye?"

Only the influx of people as shift changed brought them an awareness of the time.

"Wael, I suppose that I'll have to let you go now," Scotty said reluctantly. "Mr. Spock was very firm about ma not keepin' you here all day. But you're welcome any time, mind."

"Except in an alert," Sara said, and Scott grinned at her. She patted the nearest piece of equipment goodbye, and set out for her quarters feeling uplifted by her choice of profession.

She was still feeling jaunty when Spock arrived at her quarters,

his arms filled with computer decks. Sara smiled at him and said, "Hi, there!"

Spock blinked, then carefully deposited the armload of green, blue, and yellow wafers on her desk. "A number of these are texts in elementary Vulcan. If you study them privately, and we work on the material together as well, you should make fairly good progress."

She looked at the pile distastefully, but nodded.

"Very well," Spock dropped into the second chair awkwardly. He reached over and handed her a small flat disc.

"What is it?" Sara asked, examining the object.

"A sweet cake," Spock said. "It is a traditional present to a child beginning his education."

Sara bit into the cake. It had a lemon-spice taste.

"I will call you T'Misoara," Spock continued. "This will help you to concentrate upon the difference between your former manner, and that toward which we shall strive. To be a Vulcan does not mean following our ways just here, or in my quarters, or when you are studying. It means a total commitment, a total involvement."

Sara smoothed her hair back and then said, "I can't promise that. I'm sorry, but I can't. I've got to know what I'm getting myself into first."

Spock said nothing.

"Are you annoyed?"

"Vulcans do not..." Spock began, and then changed that to, "I do not permit myself to feel annoyance."

"I'm willing to try a compromise," Sara said, leaning forward in her chair. "I'll try to learn what you want, to act the way you want me to, and we'll leave the total commitment for... until... well, after I've seen things more."

Spock frowned, and then reminded himself of Staveb's opinion on such matters: "Commitment follows understanding; the greater the understanding, the more total the commitment." Or, as the Doctor would no doubt say, "Half a loaf..." He nodded, and said, "Very well, it is agreed. We will begin with the simpler exercises. As your skill in Vulcan develops, we shall attempt to speak only in that tongue, but we will begin in Standard."

He gestured at the other chair. "Sit, T'Misoara. Calculate mentally the products of the numbers one cross one through forty cross forty."

"Multiplication tables?" she asked incredulously. But she began obediently. At twelve times thirteen it occurred to her that this was what computers were for.

"Is this really necessary?"

"Begin again and complete..." Spock stopped. He looked at her thoughtfully. "It is an exercise given to four-year-olds, to train them in concentration and perseverance. The actual mathematics is not, of course, significant." He sighed. "Obviously, this is too difficult for you, though one would have thought that you would be able to master such a simple problem, despite your lack of training."

"Good God, you don't think I stopped because I couldn't do it, do you?" Sara asked. "Multiplication is simpleminded. Anyone can do it."

Spock looked at her with a skeptical expression.

"I can extract square roots in my head. As if I would have trouble with a stupid thing like that."

After a few minutes, she said, "Oh, shit! I lost my place."

"Obscenity is illogical. It reflects an undisciplined mind and lax training."

Sara gritted her teeth and resettled herself. Ten minutes later, she bounced out of the chair. "I've done it. Now what?"

"Good," Spock said. "Please sit down again." He rose and slipped a blue tape deck into the desk viewer. "I believe that you may find it easier if we begin with the general principles of Vulcan ethics. Then you will be able to appreciate the purpose of the various exercises, and to build on the basic ideas."

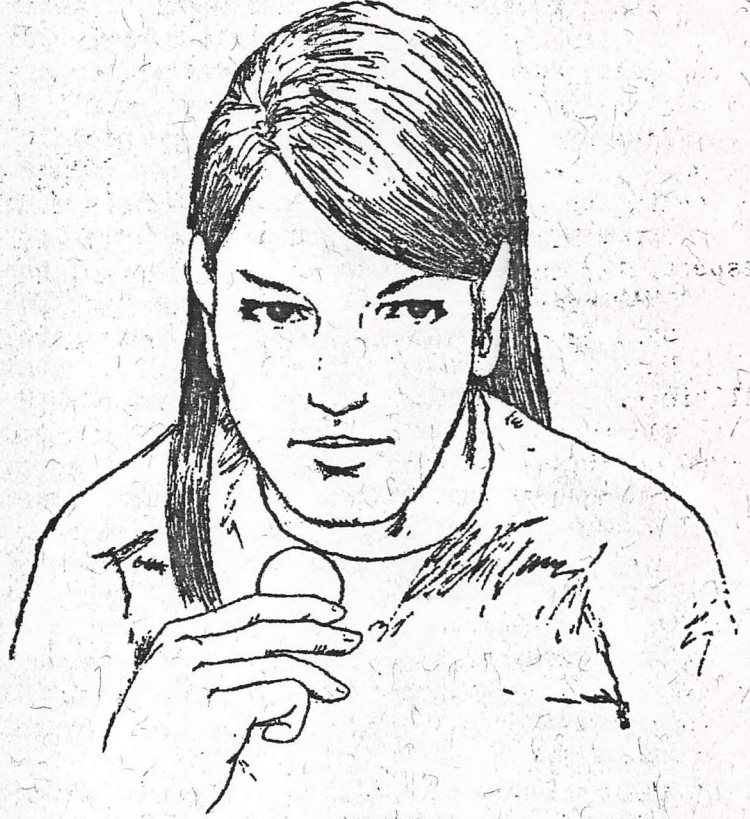
"These are the Constructs of Surak, the great reformer and founder of our present system. After we have discussed them, perhaps I will be able to select suitable exercises for you."

"I see that you've resolved your difficulties with Mr. Spock," McCoy said, when he met Sara at dinner the next day.

"He's going to teach me about Vulcan ethics and culture. I should say, 'He's going to teach me to be a Vulcan.' Very difficult." She giggled, and then said, "I have got to stop doing that."

"So he's trying to change you from a nice, normal person into another damn computer."

She smiled at him and dug her fork into a pile of mashed potatoes. "Doctor, naturally I'm curious. I don't know if I'll want to BE a Vulcan, but I want to know what they're like. So I'm trying it for a while."



McCoy shook his head, and sprinkled salt on his boiled beef. "Damn Vulcan anyway!"

"Don't worry, Doctor. I spent thirteen years living like a human, and I don't believe that three weeks of training can erase that."

McCoy snorted and applied horseradish sauce. He picked up his fork and said, "Come down to Sickbay after lunch and take a look at the medical equipment. A lot more elaborate than you'll have had at your colony hospital. You said you hadn't decided on your special field yet, didn't you?"

Sara pulled her face into a wicked parody of Spock's. "Doctor, you are trying to distract me from my Vulcan studies"-- here McCoy snorted-- "and succeeding very well, too. I'd love it."

McCoy had just opened up one of the bed panels, so that Sara could peer respectfully into its guts, when Spock walked in.

"T'Misoara, Dr. McCoy," Spock said politely.

Sara jumped. She turned to face him and said, "Spock."

He raised an eyebrow. "One should control one's physical reactions at all times. The mind must control the body."

"Is that so?" said McCoy. "I seem to remember an occasion where you displayed considerable shock on seeing someone. Even he commented on it."

Spock eyed McCoy with displeasure. "The circumstances, Doctor, were rather unusual. Surak acknowledged this." He pulled himself up. "I present the child with a poor example of proper behavior, quarreling with you."

"Please don't call me 'the child'; it sounds as though I'm mentally retarded, or a piece of misplaced laundry."

Spock ignored the interruption. "I wished to tell you that I have sent a message to Vulcan. I have asked my father to trace the records on your family."

"To see if I'm the long-lost princess?" Sara asked.

"I beg your pardon?" Spock looked blank.

"It's a classical motif in Terran literature, Spock," said McCoy. "I'm surprised that you didn't recognize it."

Spock raised an eyebrow. "Indeed?"

"The mistreated orphan always turns out to be the true princess, stolen as an infant by the wicked whatevers."

Sara grinned and added, "Stories like Cinderella and... oh, Little Princess, and Oedipus, and ones like that."

Spock looked disapproving. "Possibly you have relatives who would be interested to learn your whereabouts; there may be property belonging to your family. In any case, my father has agreed to take care of this."

"I wish that you hadn't," Sara began to pace back and forth, her hair swinging across her shoulders as she turned. "This is just an experiment, what we're doing. I don't know if I want all kinds of public officials wandering around with my name on their lists."

"I am bound to report your parents' accident to the authorities, so that suitable action can be taken."

"Why?"

"For the record. It would have been reported eventually."

Privately McCoy doubted it, but decided not to press the matter. "You mustn't let Spock's devotion to authority and proper channels fool you. You might not think it to look at him, but he ran away to sea as a child."

"Doctor," Spock interrupted, "entering Star Fleet Academy can hardly be equated with 'running away to sea as a child', as you so quaintly phrase it. I was eighteen years old at the time."

"But you did it without your father's permission, and there's a little matter of legal age, isn't there?" McCoy asked nastily.

Spock's jaw tightened, and his face took on a martyred expression.

"His real problem now," McCoy said, looking at Spock as though he were a mounted specimen, "is that he'd like to smash me verbally, but he can't because he's trying to set you a good example. His best squelches are attacks on my morals or my competence as a doctor, and they're not really relevant to the argument at hand..."

"It is not an argument," Spock said firmly.

"...and it's not logical to introduce irrelevancies into serious debate on a topic. Besides, he hates to lie."

Sara tried valiantly to smother a giggle but only succeeded in giving herself a choking fit.

Spock scowled at her and then looked at McCoy, tilting his head toward the side of the room. McCoy raised an eyebrow himself, but nodded.

"You all right, Sara? Good, then I'll leave you to poke around in that bed... don't worry about damaging it; it's been needing an overhaul for a couple of weeks."

"Now that I've got you here, Spock," McCoy continued, "I want to speak to you about your last examination. When I told you that you were too heavy, I meant you to take more physical exercise, not to cut down on your caloric intake." He guided Spock into his office.

"Doctor," Spock said, his arms folded behind his back, "I must ask you to co-operate with me in the matter of T'Misoara's training."

"Why?" McCoy asked bluntly. "And what would you like me to do, anyway-- stop talking to her? She's a nice kid. And I'm not the only man on this ship, where she will be, I remind you, for only three weeks."

"That is true, but she feels that you are sympathetic toward her,"

"Hell, a good quarter of the crew'd be delighted to be sympathetic toward her, if she showed any inclination that way."

Spock sighed, something he had done much more frequently than usual since Sara's arrival.

"Look here, Spock," McCoy leaned forward, propping himself on his hands, "why are you doing this? Here's a perfectly well-adjusted girl, satisfied with herself and her relations with other people. Don't tell me you're trying to make her into a good Vulcan. I know that you can't do that; she's gone too far in our direction. She's too old. You're not a good Vulcan (he waved down Spock's protests) --certainly you're not accepted completely, even after rigorous childhood training and a lifetime's effort. She's never going to be accepted by Vulcans; why shouldn't she stay the way she is, and be happy?"

"It is very difficult to deny one's basic nature, Doctor, and not all of our differences are due to training." Spock paused and then said, "Are you so sure that she is happy?"

"That sounds pretty funny, coming from you, Spock. Do you care?"

Spock nodded.

"I don't mean just as your 'Vulcan duty'. I mean caring about her as a person, Spock, a real person, not an idea."

"I care for T'Misoara," Spock said quietly, "and I am concerned about her." He raised his eyebrow in amusement at himself and added, "I like the child."

McCoy scowled. "That's something, anyway."

"Further," Spock continued, "I believe that her adjustment to life as a Terran is less perfect than you think."

"On what do you base that? She seems quite content to me. And what if you can't manage it? If you don't teach her the inner control to match the outer behavior--"

"-- she will at least be able to live with other Vulcans without suffering continuous snubs and disapproval," Spock finished.

"At that rate she'll be a poor Vulcan and a poor Terran," McCoy said.

"She will have achieved a working compromise."

"Are you so very sure that you're right, Spock?"

"Quite sure," Spock said. Then he turned and walked out, leaving McCoy to frown at the wall, eyebrow raised thoughtfully.

A few days after this, while they were playing chess, Kirk said to Spock, "The doctor tells me that you're perverting our passenger." He moved a piece, judiciously.

"I am teaching her Vulcan," Spock replied.

"So I gathered. McCoy doesn't approve."

"My actions are not dictated by the doctor's approval."

"Not in this case, eh?" Kirk looked at the boards and said, "Your move."

Spock moved a pawn, apparently at random.

"How much can you teach her in three weeks, anyway?"

Spock folded his hands together. "Enough so that she can begin to understand what being a Vulcan is. If she is not taught now, she will face perpetual rebuffs from other Vulcans in the future. But the Doctor is incorrect when he says that I am wrecking her emotional adjustment. I do not believe that I have been anywhere near so effective as he implies. To be a Vulcan is not an easy thing, not something one puts on in a day. It is..." He paused, struggling for words, and instead nodded at Kirk. "Captain."

Kirk zig-zagged a knight onto Spock's second level. He looked at the pieces a minute and then gave a tomcat smile. "Mate in four moves, Spock."

Spock looked at the boards without interest. "T'Misoara-- I do not feel that I am reaching her. I am not skilled as a teacher and I cannot even use what I remember from my own training. One does not use the same methods in teaching an adult that one uses with a child." He picked up a discarded bishop and stared at it.

"I feel that she is only playing at this. It amuses her; she wishes to please the first adult of her own species she has met. It is a challenge."

Kirk scowled at Spock and said, "You're taking this too personally. The girl is almost grown. She has parents to take care of her, and legal guardians on Johnston's Planet. She's not your responsibility, even if you have volunteered to give her a history course."

Spock quirked an eyebrow. "By both Vulcan and Federation standards, T'Misoara is an infant. Her 'parents' adopted her illegally, and are not of her species in any case. They have given the Johnston school authorities the right of loco parentis, but that is almost meaningless, except in extreme cases of antisocial activities. It is a mere legal facade, designed to maintain the fiction that her parents' rights over her are being exercised, lest they lapse by default. As a child of my species, and a citizen of my planet, she is very much my responsibility."

"Well, I still wouldn't worry about it so much. You're doing the best that you can. What else can you do?"

"I don't know, Jim."

Kirk, who'd been amused by Spock's precise dissection of his argument, became uncomfortable. Spock didn't usually open up this way. He'd talk a lot sometimes, but he never said anything personal. Kirk turned away from the distress in Spock's eyes. "I wouldn't worry about it. Do you concede?" he asked. "Or are you going to sacrifice the queen?"

"No," said Spock, "the bishop," and concentrated on his next move.

Oddstad's Cluster was a week behind them, ship's time, when Spock received the message from Vulcan. The phrasing was formal, but the message was quite clear. The courts had declared the minor child T'Misoara of the clan Knvdtrogmtrw, in the absence of kin nearer than second cousin, to be a ward of the state. She was to be off-landed at Vulcan.

It was to have been expected, but Spock felt that the Governing Committee and the Courts had been rather hasty about it.

It proved exceedingly difficult to explain.

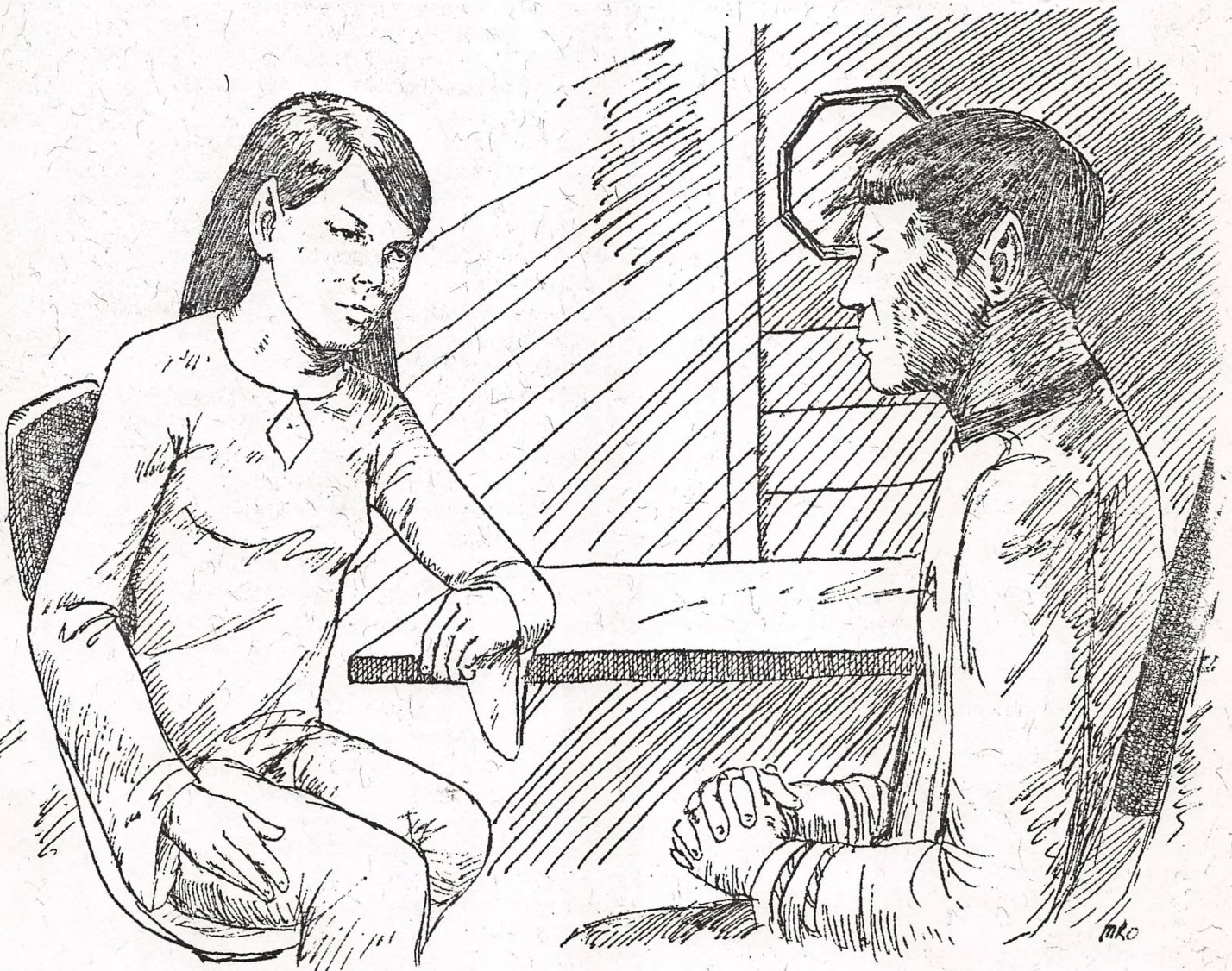
"The Governing Committee, which has charge of various domestic affairs, such as the welfare of dependent children, wishes you to go to Vulcan. There your training can be handled more efficiently, by suitably prepared teachers." Spock felt, somehow, that his words were drying up.

"It's very kind of them, to be concerned about me. I'll be happy to go to Vulcan after I've finished my engineering degree."

"They wish you to go to Vulcan as soon as possible."

"But I have a scholarship," Sara said, running her fingers through her hair. "I don't want to give it up; my parents can't afford to pay for that school without it."

"There are excellent engineering schools on Vulcan." Spock had not expected it to be this difficult. "As a state ward, your school expenses will naturally be taken care of. You could attend such a school and receive your training simultaneously."



Today she was wearing a chocolate-brown tunic and tights, with gold fringes around the cuffs and hems. Sara began to twine a piece of fringe around her finger irritably. "I don't want to owe anyone anything. I earned that scholarship."

Spock frowned. "It is not considered a debt. It is the responsibility of the government to provide for those whose families cannot do so."

"But my family has provided for me. I don't want to go to Vulcan. I want to go to the engineering school on Johnston's Planet."

"T'Misoara, you are not being logical. There is an optimal period for this type of training; after a certain age it is extremely difficult, and often unsuccessful. The studies of refugee children conducted after the Romulan Wars are quite conclusive. Attending engineering school has no such limit. Probably the scholarship can be deferred. You are very young, and may complete your career instruction without prejudicing your work-- after the other is finished."

Sara looked at him defiantly. "I don't want to go."

"You misunderstand. The Committee has ordered you to return. As a Vulcan, you are bound to obey them."

"McCoy says that you ran away."

"McCoy, like most Terrans, talks too much, and to no purpose. The fact remains that you have no logical alternative."

"You keep saying 'logical' as though it were sacred, or something," Sara said. "You may think that it's logical, but I'm not going."

"You have no choice, T'Misoara."

She jerked around toward him, her hands clenched on the chair arms.

"What the hell do you mean?"

"As a Vulcan citizen who is also a ward of the state, you are obliged to follow the Committee's orders. If you do not, they may request your extradition to Vulcan."

"Just let them try it, or anything like that. I'm a citizen of Zelta, and no damn busybodying outsider's going to force me to go anywhere or to do anything-- and the Federation will back me, too!"

"T'Misoara, this is not a question of forcing you, or of your flaunting authority. Consider the possible results of your decision."

She glared at him and said, "I'm not going."

Spock reached out and caught her wrist between his thumb and fingers.

"Listen to me. My mother is a Terran. All my life I have watched her struggle to understand us, to be accepted by us. She has not succeeded; she can never belong. I, too, all my life, have stood between two worlds. Although I have tried, I am not fully accepted either by Vulcans or by humans. There is no place for me. Do you wish to reject your place, to condemn yourself to this?"

"What the hell do I need to be accepted by Vulcans for? I'm doing all right with humans. They took care of me when I needed help, and they don't ask any stupid questions." Sara twitched her wrist out from under his fingers and jumped up from her chair.

Making a last attempt, Spock said, "If you turn your back on Vulcan, you are making a choice that will be difficult to undo. Perhaps you think now that you will be satisfied with a Terran, but can you be sure how you will feel when you mature, and experience physical desire? You have not been betrothed, but the potential is there. We are not Terrans; the physiological differences are real. You can never share your mind with a human."

"You're saying that no Vulcan would ever want to marry me." Sara gave Spock a contemptuous look. "What about your own mother, then?"

"My father," said Spock a trifle bitterly, "is generally acknowledged to be brilliant, but eccentric. And there were other matters which modified the situation."

"Well, so what; you don't have to... I mean, I never heard that you had to marry someone to sleep with him. Sex is no problem."

Spock clamped a firm control on himself, and said, "That is not the Vulcan way. You would have considerable difficulty in finding a Vulcan willing to have such a relationship."

"Nice of you to worry but I'll manage-- and I'm not going."

Spock looked at her, fighting intense anger. "I have reasoned with you, and described the inevitable results. I have spoken to you of private matters that normally I would conceal. What will convince you?"

"Nothing! Nothing, because I don't care about your logic, or your arguments." Sara turned, her head thrust forward, and shouted, "STUFF your logic!"

After a moment, Spock rose from his chair. "There is nothing more to be said."

As he walked out, Sara shouted after him, "I won't; I won't; I won't!" Then she began to throw tape decks at the closed door, grabbing them off her desk in handfuls.

Considerably shaken, Spock obliquely questioned McCoy. The doctor, however, was worried about a case of chemical poisoning from one of the labs, and only replied that no one had ever succeeded in understanding teenagers, and that if he, Spock, did so, he should set himself up as a family counselor, which he, McCoy, did not intend to attempt.

When her temper had cooled, Sara was annoyed at herself. Self-defense was one thing, and screaming like a cargo loader was another. She tried to locate Spock.

"I'm sorry, Miss Marenjas," said Lieutenant Uhura. "Mr. Spock's not in his quarters, or on duty, and he hasn't reported in to me."

Finally, she left a message with Communications, and went to her quarters. Twenty minutes later, Spock called her on the intercom.

"I'm really sorry that I lost my temper that way," Sara said, without preamble. "It was a pretty stupid thing to do."

Spock looked at her, unmoved. The planes of his face looked as though they had frozen into place. "Loss of self-control is generally foolish. I should not have expected any great degree of control from you, however, considering the circumstances." He waited for a minute, then asked, "Have you reconsidered your decision?"

"No," she replied flatly.

"Then I have nothing further to say to you." And he clicked off the switch.

Spock continued to cold-shoulder Sara whenever he met her, ostentatiously refusing to speak to her. Kirk, who watched the byplay with some amusement, thought that Spock seemed to be spending a great deal more time in the public recreation rooms and gymnasium than he usually did.

The other crewmembers were not entirely sure how to react. As the First Officer, Spock's attitude was almost official policy. Yet the situation was really more like a family quarrel. Mr. Spock was not, normally, a very social person. He rarely spent much time with anyone but the bridge officers. Then, in the space of a week, he had devoted himself to a total stranger and, suddenly, had dropped her completely.

A couple of the younger men tried to make up to Sara, but Spock always seemed to appear. The sight of him, silent and grim over a game of computer chess in one corner of a rec room, was enough to daunt most such encounters.

After four days of this, Sara appealed to McCoy.

"Well, now," he said, "I don't know what I can do. I never saw anyone make Spock do anything he really believed was wrong, and even Jim couldn't make him talk to you, if he'd decided not to." He looked at her curiously. "What happened, anyway? I thought that you were getting on just fine with our animated computer."

"Yes, I was; he was pleased with my progress, and then the Vulcan government said that I was a ward of the state, and had to go to Vulcan, now, right now. So I said, all right, after I get my engineering degree, and Spock said, No, now, and they would have me extradited if I didn't go, because I would be a vagrant minor, and..."

"Take it easy," said McCoy. "Spock tends to get very intense over nothing. I don't see how they could do anything to make you..."

"No, they will, I'm sure they will," Sara interrupted. "They'll make me go, and change again, and I can't!"

McCoy looked surprised at her sharpened tone. "But that's what you were doing working with Spock, and you liked that."

"They won't like me, and they'll push, and push, and push."

"Spock likes you— now I know he does," McCoy went on firmly as Sara shook her head in denial, "he told me he does."

"That doesn't matter. He's used to people acting like humans. They'll think I'm sickening. It'll be just the same; changing everything, making it all different. Saying everything right is wrong, until I won't know, I won't be able to tell anything..." She was breathing hard and coughing.

"They'll make it all different?" McCoy's eyebrow arched in curiosity.



"Just like before. And I can't stand it. I can't do it again. I can't change all over... not again. They kept after me all the time, why don't you kiss your mother, shake hands with the nice man, smile for us, baby, don't you like the pretty doll... over and over and over."

McCoy looked at her calculatingly, and walked over to his medical dispensary cabinet.

Unnoticing, Sara continued, "Never stopping. Always after me, always..." Her voice rose and she began to shudder, until her entire body was shaking. "Always after me, always wrong. No, no, I can't!"

McCoy put the hypo against her shoulder and gave her a shot. "That's all right," he said soothingly as Sara looked up wildly. He put his arm around her and led her to one of the beds. "We won't make you do anything. Just sit down now. That's right. It's all right now... nobody's asking you to do anything. Just lie down here and everything will be all right."

He watched the drug overpowering her. Slowly her sobbing died away, but he didn't leave her until her grip on his hand had loosened of its own accord, and she slept.

"I told you that passengers were nothing but trouble," Kirk said, when McCoy's call interrupted yet another game of chess. "Never mind Spock, you had no chance anyway."

"I beg to differ with the Captain," Spock said, and they argued the possible moves as they went. "I am attempting a new gambit," Spock said, as they entered Sickbay.

"Well, Doctor, what's the problem now?"

"Our passenger was having a fit of hysterics because she claims that someone," here McCoy glared at Spock, "is going to kidnap her from school, and drag her away to Vulcan. That's the first time I've ever seen a Vulcan in hysterics, and I sincerely hope it's the last, too!"

"Come on now," said Kirk. "That's a pretty wild accusation to make."

"I did tell her, sir, that extradition papers might be served on her, if she refused to obey the orders of the Governing Committee." Spock put his hands behind his back, his expression guilty.

"But that's an arm of Vulcan domestic government; they have no authority over citizens of other planets. They can't..." McCoy stopped, and reconsidered. Then he balled his hand into a fist, and pounded his other hand angrily. "Of course. If she's a Vulcan, then obviously she's a Vulcan citizen."

Spock nodded. "That is the way that the Vulcan government sees it."

"But she's a citizen of Zelda," said Kirk. "That's how all the forms list her, and her registry is in that planet's name. Her foster parents live there."

"However," said Spock, "the Vulcan Governing Committee claims that the adoption was illegal, since no attempt was made to locate the next of kin. Also, as a Vulcan national, her adoption request should have been cleared with the Vulcan government."

"A little difficult out there," McCoy said.

"Just the sort of thing that lawyers love to get their teeth into. It could drag on for years before a final decision is made." Kirk rubbed his temples tiredly. "And naturally the Vulcans will be extremely difficult about the mistreatment of a minor child by 'aliens'." He turned to glare at Spock. "I assume that you precipitated all this when you had them check for her records."

Spock shrugged.

"In the meantime, who gets custody?" asked McCoy. "Or is she just shunted back and forth? By the time they make up their minds, she might be as old as I am."

Sara called from the next room, "Doctor? McCoy, please-- where are you?" She looked slowly at the delegation around the bed. "You gave me a tranquilizer, didn't you?"

"You were hysterical," McCoy said. "But you'll be all right now."

Sara pushed herself unsteadily to a sitting position, so that she could see all of them. "My head hurts."

"Typical of Terran medicine," said Spock, "with its numerous undesirable side effects. I find several of the doctor's potions rather nauseating, particularly such stimulants as Masiform D and..."

"Let us skip the one-upmanship for now, shall we, gentlemen?" Kirk said, forestalling an indignant reply from McCoy. "We have more important things to discuss."

"Potions!" muttered McCoy. "I'll give you potions."

Kirk leaned over the bed. "Sara, no one is going to make you leave this ship against your will. I give you my word on that. You don't have to worry about getting to your school. My orders are to deliver you to Coulsón V. If the Vulcans want you, they'll have to fight it out in the Federation courts."

"I would like to ask you one question," Spock said. "Are you truly content as a Terran, to remain so the rest of your life?"

"Shut up, Spock!" McCoy growled.

Sara considered the matter. "I don't know. I really don't know. But I can't face the thought of changing myself again-- of going through what I went through as a child. I can't bear it!"

McCoy put a soothing hand on her arm.

"Do you remember the changes that well?" Spock asked, with interest. She nodded.

"Apparently your retraining was done in an exceptionally clumsy manner. Colony medics are usually given excellent psychotherapy training. I am surprised that..." Spock hesitated and looked at McCoy.

"Oh, the medic didn't do any of my training," Sara interrupted. "He used to fight with my parents about it all the time."

"Indeed?" Spock looked like a beagle after a rabbit. "How long did your 'emotional retardation' last?"

Sara looked vague for a moment, then said, "Until I was about five or six, I guess, but..."

"But there were occasional relapses until you were ten," Spock said.

Sara scowled.

"And, in fact, you still have difficulty with such things as showing the proper warmth on meeting people, and in developing casual relationships."

Sara looked mulish.

Spock seemed not to notice Sara's expression, but gave McCoy a questioning look.

McCoy frowned. "Well," he said, "there seems to be some lack of adjustment." He looked at Sara, and continued, "But, of course, unusual backgrounds sometimes produce minor personality quirks." He shifted his gaze to Spock in a meaningful way.

Spock ignored this, and turned his attention back to Sara. "You are not going to deny what I have said. You cannot deny it."

Sara started to say, "No, I'm..." then reconsidered. "You're not going to trick me that way."

"Your answer indicates that you are aware yourself of the need for..."

"I'm not going!"

"Vulcan therapists are..."

"No!" Sara shouted.

"Have you two idiots ever heard of the word 'compromise'?" McCoy asked acidly.

There was a moment of silence. Then Kirk said, "Explain."

"She won't go to Vulcan. The Vulcans won't let her wait to receive basic training. Well, why the hell can't they send someone with her to Johnston's Planet, to tutor her while she's going to engineering school there?"

Spock cocked his head to one side, his expression interested.

"But what about the cost?" asked Kirk. "Who's going to pay?"

"The Vulcan Governing Committee," McCoy said triumphantly. "As a state ward, they'd have to pay all her expenses if she were on Vulcan. Wouldn't they?"

Spock nodded.

"But, if she's living on Johnston's Planet at the engineering school, the scholarship will cover her living expenses and tuition. The Governing Committee would have to pay for the basic instruction if she were on Vulcan— and it's not the kind of training you can give to masses of people; she'll have to have an individual teacher no matter where she is. So, why not pay for the teacher on Johnston's Planet? The teacher's living expenses could come out of what they saved on her expenses."

"It sounds logical," Kirk said. "Almost too logical for any government to accept."

"And," McCoy went on, beaming, "she wouldn't be cut off from the daily personal contact with Terrans that she's accustomed to, so she wouldn't have to adjust to a completely new way of life all at once."

"But suppose," said Kirk, "that Sara decides, after a year or so, that she doesn't want to be a Vulcan. Won't the whole thing start over again?"



"I doubt it," Spock said. "Although legal age on Vulcan is somewhat older than it is on Earth, we recognize levels of competence. That was why I was permitted to attend Star Fleet Academy, even though it was against my father's wishes. When she is eighteen, if T'Misoara chooses not to continue her Vulcan training, the Governing Committee will be obliged to agree."

"Well, Sara, how about it?" McCoy asked, smiling down at her. "Does that sound like a fair bargain to you?"

She considered it gravely, the planes and angles of her face suddenly extremely Vulcan as she concentrated. Then she nodded. "I agree to it."

"All right, Mr. Spock," Kirk said. "Get that message out to Vulcan... and do you think that your father might exert a little pressure, just to help things along? Bones, I think that a momentous occasion like this calls for drinks all around. How often can I say that my Chief Medical Officer has outmaneuvered TWO Vulcans?"

"Captain," said Spock, "you know that I do not take alcoholic..."

"Bull," Kirk said. "You can drink with Methuselah, you can drink with me. Nobody said you had to like it. What about you, Sara?"

"I don't know if I like it. I'm too young to drink, at home."

McCoy twinkled at her. "Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained, as the Old Vulcan Proverb says."

Spock opened his mouth to voice a protest, thought better of it, and said, "Indeed. It also is said, 'Out of the mouths of infants and fools may yet proceed great wisdom.'"

McCoy grinned again. "'Insults are illogical', to quote our First Officer. Well, shall we go and have that drink?"

THE END

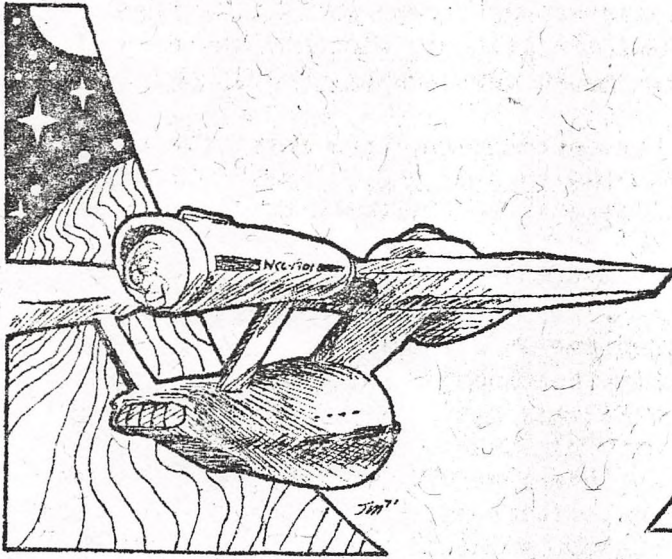
THREE HAIKU

by Carrie Peak

Mind touching
I see/feel the familiar difference
of your soul

Eridani, red trinary
Hot, sere atmosphere
Ah-- my homeworld!

Blue grey lady!
Fire diamonds on black velvet
and she is mine.



WARP in LOGIC

by Hal Clement

The problem of dramatizing history has never been adequately solved. The writer who attempts the task faces the criticism of the historical purist who says it didn't happen that way, the scientific purist who says it couldn't have happened that way, and the dramatic purist who says it shouldn't have happened that way. The bits of galactic history which have been presented, with the aid of the Federation and the cooperation of Star Fleet, under the collective title of STAR TREK are no exception. Several different historians have been involved, all of them competent or better; the technical advice from Star Fleet must be presumed to be adequate; it seems unlikely that the Federation has made any serious attempts at misrepresentation--for one thing, there is no obvious motive for its doing so. Nevertheless, the more critical devotees of the series have been bothered by one major apparent inconsistency.

This lies between actual interstellar distances, which have been fairly well known since the mid-twentieth century, the times apparently spent in travel by the starship Enterprise, and the explanation of "warp speed" furnished the historian-dramatists. This explanation, incidentally, contained a still more detailed inconsistency. The basic claim was that interstellar speed was w^3c , where w is the stated warp and c , as usual, the normal vacuum speed of electromagnetic radiation. However, the formula was not so stated in the guiding document furnished the historians; it was implied by a set of examples: "Warp factor two is eight times the speed of light; warp factor three is twenty-four times the speed of light; warp factor four is sixty-four times the speed of light, and so on." Note the twenty-four, which, of course, is not the cube of three. Was this inner discrepancy deliberate, or did an error slip through Star Fleet's public relations office? Such things do happen; the present writer, working in the adjutant's office of an Air Force base, once caught a letter of agreement about to go out over a staff member's signature which would have charged a contractor for electrical power by the kilowatt, rather than by the kilowatt-hour. Still, when taken in conjunction with the larger problem discussed here, I strongly suspect that the wording was deliberate, and meant to attract attention from critical readers. More of this later.

The major problem, of course, is that when Captain Kirk gives the order, "Ahead, Warp One," he would seem to be planning a journey of five to ten years (in this part of the galaxy, at least) to the next star system. It has been

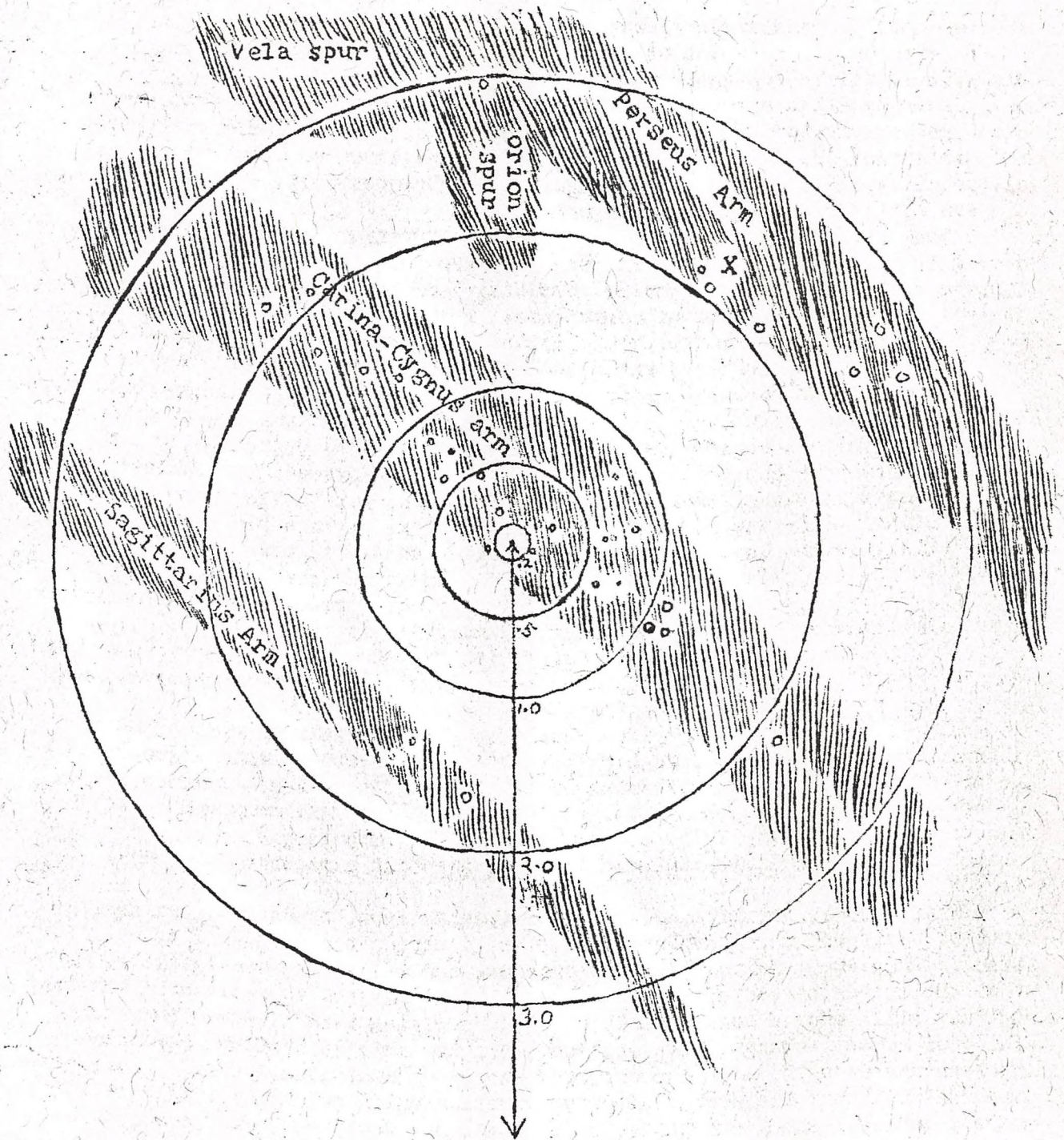
suggested that the twentieth century astronomers were wrong by a factor of one or two powers of ten in their estimate of the galactic distance scale; we now know that they were about right, however, and in any case this would not explain all the inconsistencies.

For example, in "Where No Man Has Gone Before," the force field which starts the trouble is stated to be at the edge of the galaxy. Galaxies being what they are, this is an indefinite line at best. For one thing, the Solar system is much farther from the center of the galaxy than any line which would ordinarily be drawn to indicate the "edge" on an ordinary photograph of a spiral nebula, but there is plenty of galaxy farther out. Star counts and plots of neutral hydrogen clouds indicated that there were fairly well defined spiral arms, or at least one such arm, nearly two thousand parsecs outward from the one whose inner edge was occupied by Sol and his planets. One must assume that any reasonable "edge" must be many times as far away from the Solar system as even such distant supergiant stars as Rigel, Deneb, and Antares--themselves about the most distant single stars visible to the unaided human eye from Earth. Nevertheless, the Enterprise could not have spent more than a few weeks en route, judging by the directions and distances of other stars she is stated to have visited on her five-year journey. If we try to assume that the galaxy is a hundred or a thousand times smaller than supposed in the twentieth century we may resolve this particular trouble, but we immediately encounter others.

Presumably, the same scale error would also affect our estimate of intergalactic distances. However, the Kelvans had to do strange and impressive things to the equipment of the Enterprise to make the trip to the Andromeda galaxy possible in a mere three centuries. If we try to claim that the scale error is not the same--that Messier 31 is actually some two thirds of a megaparsec away, as supposed in the 1960's, while the Milky Way is only a thousand light years or so across--we will have to explain why the stars in the two galaxies are so grossly different--objects such as Rigel and Antares actually fainter than the sun here, but thousands of times as bright in the Andromeda galaxy. I am not chauvinistic enough to be hurt by the suggestion that the latter body is thousands of times the diameter of the Milky Way; this would only be a mild addition to the burden of knowledge I have borne for several years--Andromeda is clearly larger in diameter and thickness, and beyond much doubt several times as massive as our own galaxy. However, I am conservative enough to be very uncomfortable at the thought that basic physical laws differ drastically in the two systems; and if the scales are really that inconsistent then either Andromeda's stars generate remarkably little light pressure in their interiors, or the hydrogen in this galaxy is amazingly easy to fuse into helium.

A further point exists, which does not depend in any way on how right or wrong the twentieth-century astronomers may have been. In "Trouble with Tribbles," Sulu mentions at the very beginning that the Enterprise is one sixteenth of a parsec from Space Station K-7 (This was how I caught the words; I have not seen the manuscript. If it was one sixth of a parsec, things are even worse). He then gives the estimated time of arrival as "a few seconds." If "Warp Six" is really about two hundred light velocities (200c), a sixteenth of a parsec at that speed is about eight hours travel.

Again: there has been frequent comment about the small points of light observed to flit past the starship when she is travelling at warp speed. If these are stars, then the average interstellar distance is traversed in a few seconds. The speed must then be in the hundred-parsec-an-hour class employed by the inertialess Galactic Patrol craft of E.E. Smith's Lensman



A rough sketch chart of the part of the galaxy within 3 kiloparsecs of the Solar system. The center of the galaxy is in the direction indicated by the arrow, at a distance of about 10 kiloparsecs. All individual stars visible to the unaided eye from Earth, including supergiants such as Rigel, Deneb, and Antares, are inside the 0.5 kps circle; most of them are inside the 0.2 circle. X indicates the double cluster in Perseus, just visible on a clear (unpolluted) night. On the scale of this diagram, M31 (the Andromeda galaxy) is about 50-60 feet away.

stories—and the Andromeda galaxy is about two years journey away.

A million c's is a lot of speed. Even today, few people can really visualize a million of anything—much less a single c.

Other examples exist, but it seems clear from those cited that there exist grounds for doubting the explanation of "warp speed" which was given the historians (few of whom, be it noted, passed it on to drama viewer at all specifically!). This doubt raises two major questions: what is the truth, and why has it been withheld from us?

As a physical scientist I find the first question far more interesting, and will deal with it first. The second presumably involves matters of individual and possibly of social psychology, or even political "science." These lie outside my field of competence. I will close this article with an open hypothesis on the matter, but will be neither surprised nor hurt to have it rejected—or better, replaced—by more competent minds.

My first fleeting thought was that the law was really a higher power one—that a fourth, or sixth, or tenth power of the warp number gives the speed in lights. This is clearly untenable. It leaves "Warp One" as slow as ever, and cannot be carried very far without making the Andromeda trip an afternoon jaunt—long before a sixteenth of a parsec gets down to a "few seconds."

It might be a linear scale, in something like parsecs per day or per hour—still has the local stars ten minutes or so apart, though it gets us to the "edge" of the galaxy in a month or two. The other side of the pincer is that it makes the journey to Andromeda a matter of a mere twelve or fourteen years; the Kelvans were wasting their engineering efforts.

An exponential parsec-a-day scale, with Warp One standing for one psc/day, Warp Two for 10, Warp 3 for 100, and so on, is of course, far worse; Andromeda is about three days away at Warp Six.

I have come to a fairly firm conviction, as a result of much brooding along the foregoing lines, that Warp is a condition rather than a speed. Under ordinary conditions of space warp, $1c$ is the normal speed for electromagnetic radiation (see Maxwell's equations) and the maximum speed to be approached asymptotically by accelerated matter. Changing warp conditions changes this upper limit, but does not require that a material body move faster.

Warp Zero is normal space (it is not quite zero, of course, but negligibly small). Warp One permits high c -values by altering the nature of space itself; Warp Two permits still higher ones, and so on. It seems likely that the speeds permitted by a given warp value may not themselves be constant, but may still depend considerably on the underlying natural space curvature. This, of course, changes with distance from the main mass of the galactic nucleus and from the more concentrated masses of individual stars. It also seems likely that the degree of warp condition which can be applied may also depend on local space-curvature conditions; this would at least account for the frequently issued order, "Ahead, Warp One, Mr. Sulu."

Naturally when maximum speed is demanded by the current situation, maximum warp condition is also required. Therefore, orders and conversation may easily sound as though warp condition were synonymous with speed ("Give us Warp Eight, Mr. Scott!"). This would contribute to the widespread misunderstanding of the true situation.

If this notion is at all correct it explains some other difficulties in interpreting the dramatized histories. I have found it very hard to work out the actual track of the Enterprise on her five-year mission, which seems to have involved stars lying in all sorts of directions from the Solar system and, to put it mildly, at a variety of distances. Rigel—Mira—Capella—Pollux—Aldebaran—Regulus—I won't bother to quote the whole Concordance, but



This sketch shows a typical galaxy, roughly as it appears in an ordinary astronomical photograph. The circles well outside its apparent limit show where its brightness is approximately that of our own Milky Way at the position of the Solar system, as calculated from the "luminosity function"—the known number of stars of various magnitudes per cubic parsec of space in our neighborhood.

it's hardly necessary.

However, with differing warp conditions possible in different volumes of galactic space, a minimum-time course from one star to another could, and probably would, involve a remarkably tortuous path in light-space. A foot trek through Okefenokee Swamp (or possibly a taxi ride in New York) might provide a fair analogy. The Solar System lies near the inner edge of the so-called Carina-Cygnus arm of the galaxy; it might save a good deal of time, because of higher available warp values, to duck out of the arm or above the galactic plane even for a journey to a fairly close star system.

This could also explain why the precise limits of the Neutral Zone between Romulan and Federation space seem so irregular and are so difficult to delineate on conventional light-picture maps of the galaxy—the sort which are published in books, not the sort stored in computer banks. In terms of warp travel, the edges of the Zone are no doubt simple and logical curves—though the precise shape of the curves no doubt changes with warp conditions as a shoreline changes with rising tide. The shortest max-warp distance between Gamma Hydrae IV, where Kirk and several of his crew caught the aging disease, and Star Base 10, presumably the nearest place where Commodore Stocker expected to find adequate treatment, apparently forced a cut through the Neutral Zone.

It is conceivable that the "real" boundary would have irregularities

like those which seem, at first map glance, to lie between Italy and Switzerland or between pre-conquest Tibet and China; but this is extremely unlikely if the Zone was set up by rational governments having professionally competent defense departments. The map irregularities of national boundaries on ancient Earth usually reflected travel complications; so must those in "mapped" galactic space. At higher-than-usual warp conditions the travel limitations are altered, just as the most rapid course between Toronto and Buenos Aires would not be the same for a bicycle, a Piper Cub, a jet liner, and a shuttle-rocket.

This all implies that interstellar navigation is much more complex than a look at a photograph of the galaxy would suggest. It also indicates that exploration is not just a matter of glancing around through scanners to decide what's the most likely-looking system to visit next. Navigational charts, as intimated above, are not simple maps--not even three-dimensional ones. They demand the expression of factors which require more than three dimensions to "plot," and we therefore never see anything like ordinary maps on the bridge of the Enterprise. The charts are number sets stored in the computer banks. An unexplored region which appears nearby to telescope and scanner may be weeks away by the most efficient warp route, and even longer while that efficient route is being worked out, simply because the path which must be followed bears no simple resemblance to that followed by light at Warp Zero.

Trying to translate "Warp Five" into specific speeds is therefore meaningless. I cannot even guess the maximum c-value possible to a given warp condition, and doubt very much that it is a fixed value anyway. I do assume that the slope of the warp-versus-maximum speed curve is always positive--that is, that raising the warp condition always increases the maximum possible speed--but even this is only an assumption. A more detailed estimate is not logically possible from the historical data alone. So much for the physical facts.

Why haven't the historians told us this? Here, too, there is a simple and natural, but inadequate, explanation. The presentations are given as drama, rather than history, and the writers feel that too heavy a load of pertinent science would overextend the attention of historically-inclined watchers whose scientific interest and background might be inadequate. This was a common practice in the entertainment industry of the twentieth century, where it was customary to assume adolescent or lower intelligence on the part of its audiences. (This is not meant as a slur on the industry in question, which had ample justification for its attitude.)

This explanation, however, does not account for the fact, already mentioned, that the Star Fleet guiding manual supplied to the historian-dramatists itself gave the warp-cubed-equals-c fable; it seems unlikely that the Federation or one of its agencies would have treated presumably competent professionals, even non-scientists, as adolescents. There would seem to be some reason why the Federation, or Star Fleet, is reluctant to have the facts too widely known.

They cannot, of course, be trying to conceal them completely; all civilized organizations had learned by the start of the twentieth century that there is no use trying to hide natural laws, even though engineering details may sometimes be profitably withheld for commercial, military, or educational reasons.

The last of these is all I can suggest in the present instance. Just conceivably, Star Fleet is looking for people alert and informed enough to note the inconsistencies in these dramatizations. Such people grow harder to find as our modern technological culture sweeps more and more of the population into the leisured, unmotivated class; and social agencies with important jobs to perform have been reduced to even wilder recruiting and selection techniques in the past.

However, I am not in love with this notion, and will gladly abandon it for any other not too grossly paranoid. I really can't buy the notion that Klingon agents have infiltrated our history departments with the aim of making the Federation look silly.

BONDING

by Jacqueline Lichtenberg

Seven years, thought Amanda. Seven Vulcan years. And now her son was to become a man.

As she wrapped herself in the ceremonial dress she'd worn at her own bonding, Amanda thought back to that day, so long ago, when she'd first set foot in this Keep. The first few weeks, she'd seemed to spend all her time dressing for ceremonies—and how she used to struggle with the simple fastenings!

Yes. She'd come a long way and now, one final step. She would become the mother of an adult..a new status in the clan. She flushed with excitement. It was almost enough to dispel the cloud that overhung the event. Soon she would be allowed to travel with Sarek and represent the clan in external matters.

Composing herself, she marched the length of massive stone hallway that led to the Covenant Room of her clan Keep...her Keep. Yes, she thought, after all these years...her clan.

She paused before entering the room and joined her inner peace into harmony with the peace that reigned within the great hall. Then she entered without causing so much as a ripple among those who waited within. Kneeling, she made her greeting to T'Lan and then backed off into her place beside Sarek.

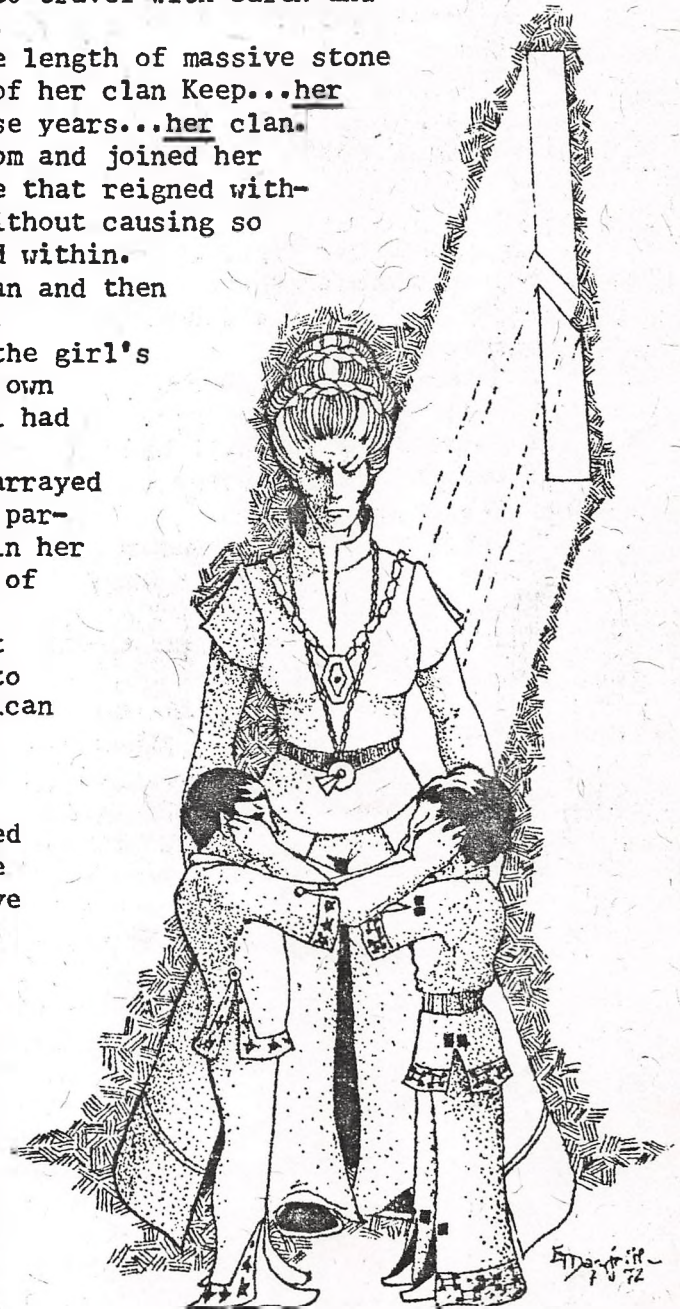
Across the hall, the guests from the girl's clan were all in their places. At her own bonding, thought Amanda sadly, the hall had been almost empty.

Searching the faces of the group arrayed across from her, Amanda picked out the parents of the girl. She couldn't restrain her curiosity and stared beyond the bounds of courtesy at the mother.

Soon, they would be relatives, but Amanda feared she would never be able to like T'Vramle. Even a full-blooded Vulcan woman couldn't hide the bitterness of belonging to a man she did not want. Belonging. Chattel.

When their eyes met, Amanda blushed and lowered hers. She could sympathize with the woman. What hell she must have endured in cluture. Must still endure. Even a perfect bonding couldn't surmount that. Certainly, it had affected the child, too.

But while Amanda avoided the woman's gaze, she missed her son's entrance. She caught sight of him as he knelt before T'Lan and then took his place in the center of the room. The sight of his regal pride clothed for the first time in a man's garment



made her heart skip a beat. Head high, face relaxed in a schooled calm, he stood before T'Lan--competent, self-possessed, like a prince. But she knew that inwardly he trembled.

We shouldn't have told him, she thought.

Just then, T'Pring swept into the hall like the overture to a symphony. She was a lovely child but she moved with the grace of an adult. She knelt to T'Lan and awaited her touch.

T'Lan looked down at the girl, then up at T'Vramle. Finally, she shifted her gaze to Amanda who met her eyes steadily. After a few moments, while the child waited for the Matriarch's touch, Amanda bit her lip in horror. Oh, she thought, oh, T'Lan, you promised!

All this while, the girl knelt, eyes downcast, body motionless. How dreadfully embarrassing, thought Amanda. The child has poise anyway. And courage. Any Clan Matriarch is an intimidating figure--but the Matriarch of her bond-mate's clan is a terrifying figure even to a Vulcan bride with impeccable credentials.

Beside her, Amanda felt Sarek shift his weight infinitesimally. As if it were a signal, T'Lan extended her hands to the girl and touched her head briefly with distaste.

T'Pring assumed her place beside Spock and the young couple stood together for the first time. But they didn't trade glances.

Amanda wet her lips. Would T'Lan make a scene? It wasn't the Vulcan way, but--she buried the thought in the back of her mind. T'Lan knew this was the best match they'd been able to arrange--and she had agreed before the whole clan.

But was it fair to Spock? Oh, they shouldn't have told him! He'd have to live with that over his head for decades!

But they'd had to tell him, she reminded herself grimly.

T'Lan pitched her voice low and began the ancient ritual of questioning. "Sarek..."

Sarek stepped three measured paces onto the floor.

"Thee is father to this Spock?"

"Yes, T'Lan."

"Has he shown sign of puberty?"

"He has not, T'Lan."

Amanda read pride in the way her husband held his head up as he spoke. The formal examinations had taken place the night before, cloaked in a rite of privacy that was more public than a proclamation. The whole thing seemed ridiculous to Amanda. Yet her family took it seriously. Once it had been common practice for bonding to take place much nearer puberty. Yet, to Sarek, it was a matter of fierce pride that his family had never once been stigmatized for neglect of the bonding of a son. His pride kindled a small glow within her as T'Lan turned toward T'Vramle.

Suddenly, there was a tremendous flurry of bells in the corridor and four gatekeepers bearing ceremonial banners burst into the room taking positions on either side of the door. Between them walked---T'Pau!

Amanda gasped, hands clenched into fists behind her back to keep them from her mouth. The Matriarch of All Vulcan--the only one whose authority transcended clan walls because, technically, she was a member of every clan.

The stately old woman moved quietly to the chair that was always kept ready for her in every ceremonial room of every keep. Then she greeted T'Lan with staid dignity as if she saw nothing unusual in this utterly unprecedented attendance at a private clan gathering.

With careful neutrality, T'Lan returned the Matriarch's formal greeting and dismissed the escort. After T'Pau seated herself, T'Lan made an enormous effort to proceed as if nothing had happened. "T'Vramle."

The girl's mother stepped forward and stood facing Sarek but attuned to T'Lan's ritual questions.

"Thee is mother to this T'Pring?"

"Yes."

"Has she shown any sign of puberty?"

"She has not."

"Sarek," T'Lan proceeded smoothly, "does thee accept this T'Pring as bond-mate for your son, Spock?"

"Yes, T'Lan."

"T'Vramle, does thee accept this Spock as bond-mate for your daughter, T'Pring?"

"Yes,"

You bet you do, thought Amanda. You know how lucky you are.

T'Lan paused.

The silence burgeoned like a black cloud while the Matriarch inspected the floor at her feet. The children began to fidget. Amanda could tell from the way their hands stiffened at their sides as they tried to control the urge to move.

At long last, T'Lan raised her eyes to T'Pau. Amanda caught the shadow of a tightening around T'Lan's eyes. T'Pau had been Matriarch of All Vulcan before T'Lan had been born. Even the most senior matriarch trembled before T'Pau. But T'Lan represented one of the most powerful of all the families. She would not allow herself to falter. "The girl, T'Pring, is not acceptable to me," said T'Lan, softly but distinctly. "Spock is a son of my clan. His welfare is my responsibility. I cannot approve of this bonding." She stepped down and marched for the wide doors, but T'Pau met her halfway--just opposite the young couple.

"T'Lan."

The two regal women stood face to face wrapped in a crackling silence.

"T'Pau, thee is guest in my house. Do not interfere."

"T'Lan, thee has other guests today."

"I can no longer welcome them."

"Superstition is illogical, T'Lan."

"It is not superstition. A daughter of challenge, conceived in Cloture of Possession, will challenge any bonding contracted by her parents."

"It is not so. There is only a forty-one percent chance that she would challenge."

"It is an unacceptable risk for a son of my House."

"This son of your House has greater than a twenty percent chance of never calling her. Would you wish that on any other daughter?"

"I cannot accept her. His life is in my hands today. I cannot be party to--"

"Then allow me to lift part of your burden. As Matriarch of All-Vulcan, I decree that an alliance between this House and that of T'Pring is vital to the well-being of All-Vulcan."

Amanda saw T'Lan's lips tighten slightly. No doubt, T'Pau had her reasons for invoking the genetic laws and T'Lan knew that a formal challenge of those reasons would only result in an ignominious defeat for the clan. Perhaps, thought Amanda, T'Lan even understood T'Pau's reasoning. After all, T'Lan had suggested T'Pring's clan as a source---

T'Pau turned to T'Vramle. "Is there another daughter among your clansmen suitable for bonding this season?"

"No, T'Pau."

"Is there a son among your clansmen ready to be bonded?"

"There is one, but he is promised. There are no others."

"It is logical then that this pair be bonded for the well being of All-Vulcan. T'Lan, thee will officiate."

She didn't say it, but Amanda could hear the threat. If T'Lan wouldn't do it, T'Pau would.

T'Lan conceded. "It is logical. For the well-being of All-Vulcan. Let the sacrifices of this House be recorded that we be not called upon again during Spock's lifetime."

"It will be recorded," T'Pau answered.

T'Lan resumed her place and inspected the children while T'Pau seated herself. Finally, T'Lan sighed. "It is not our custom to ask such a weighty decision of you at this time, but--Spock, does thee agree to this Bonding?"

"Yes, T'Lan."

Amanda noted proudly how he didn't even flick an eye over to consult his father. He'd made his own decision. If he'd said no, T'Lan would have aborted the proceedings at whatever cost. Now she was glad they'd told him ahead of time. He was a man.

"T'Pring, Does thee agree?"

"Yes, T'Lan."

The Matriarch moved to the children and turned them toward one another. It was the first time they'd seen each other's faces, but they didn't stare. Externals were unimportant here.

T'Lan guided Spock's hands to T'Pring's face and her hands to his. The ancient formulas that rolled off her tongue sent goosebumps up and down Amanda's spine. It was the first time she'd heard these words since her own bonding.

At length, T'Lan placed a hand on each small head and spoke the final word. The silence in the room could not have been achieved by any group of humans. Nobody breathed for several minutes.

Finally, T'Lan dropped her hands. "It is done. Go your separate ways until the time comes."

T'Vramle gathered up her daughter and their party made as hasty an exit as the protocol of T'Pau's presence allowed. Amanda trailed Sarek, Suska and the few close clansmen out the door, but as she reached the hall, she turned.

T'Lan stood framed by the light from the high windows. Her back seemed bent as if under an intolerable weight--she was the picture of a mother who has just buried a son and mourns deeply.

It was a tableau Amanda would remember sharply one day, and then it would haunt her for years after that.

THE END





THE HUNTING

by Doris Beetem

Rhinegelt. It was a frontier planet: a few hundred kilometers of settlement surrounded by barely-surveyed terra incognita. Shore leave would be limited to either hiking, hunting, and camping in the primitive areas, or drinking and carousing in port-towns reminiscent of the American West of three hundred years ago.

"You're getting old, McCoy," the U.S.S. Enterprise's Chief Medical Officer told himself. Roughing it, either in the forests or the port-towns, didn't appeal to him. Perhaps he wouldn't bother leaving the ship this stop.

The sickbay door swished open. "What shore party shall I assign you to, Bones?" Capt. Jim Kirk asked. To the captain, nothing was more relaxing than a stable orbit around a safe planet, and a lessening of responsibility for the four hundred and thirty crewmen he commanded. So the captain could always approach shore leave with considerable energy.

"I don't need leave," McCoy said. "Give it to somebody who can use it."

"A little rest'll do you good, doctor," Kirk replied. "That's what you always tell the crew, anyway. Even Spock's taking leave."

"He is?" Dr. McCoy was startled by this unusual occurrence.

The captain was obviously greatly pleased. "Spock's been under too much stress lately-- even for a Vulcan. He's been stretched both physically and mentally, although he'd never admit it. We've both seen it."

"And you know how stubborn Spock is about taking shore leave. He says it's illogical."

"By his own request, I put him down for shore party three. And Lt. Uhura tells me that he's already contacted Rhinegelt Port Control and arranged to take out a Primitive Area hunting permit."

Dr. McCoy reviewed four years of poking, prodding, and psychologically dissecting the Enterprise's Vulcan science officer.

"Something's wrong there, Jim. Spock wouldn't kill a fly. A hunting permit, you said?"

"Why not ask him about it?" answered Kirk, apparently untroubled.

"Sure you don't want shore leave?"

"Ye-es," McCoy answered slowly. "Guess I will, at that. Put me down for party three."

Kirk foresaw another McCoy/Spock bout, but complied with the request.



"Fool Vulcan! He can't be gone already!" McCoy, waiting impatiently outside Mr. Spock's door, signalled for admittance again.

"Yes, doctor?" Imperturbably, the Vulcan surveyed McCoy's collection of camping equipment, which was piled lumpily in the hall. McCoy was determined to be well-prepared, and had packed everything from medikit to insect repellent to a small tent.

"Spock, I'm going with you," McCoy asserted, too proud to soften his statement to a request. "I'm all packed and ready to go."

Mr. Spock, staring quizzically at the heap of equipment compiled by the tenderfoot woodsman, replied, "I can see no logical reason—"

"Blast it, I've got a hunch," McCoy interrupted. "A human, irrational hunch that you'll need my help. Now, am I going with you or not?"

Spock, after considering the matter carefully, answered, "You have the right. And I should have a companion. A Vulcan preferably, but you will do." While McCoy was deciding whether or not to be insulted, Mr. Spock, after picking up a small green sack of his own, slung a good part of McCoy's camping equipment over his shoulder. "Come, doctor," he ordered, starting down the hall.

"But what about your supplies?" McCoy spluttered. "Don't you need to get ready...?"

Mr. Spock shook his head and continued on his way. McCoy picked up the remainder of his equipment (there was more of it than he'd thought) and followed Spock to the transporter chamber. Once again, he checked to make sure that his medikit was still securely packed. He didn't need a hunch to know that Mr. Spock acting strangely meant trouble.

Three days later, McCoy was still puzzled, although he was learning more about Mr. Spock's character than ever. He'd discovered that given half a chance, the Vulcan would keep his mouth shut forever. However, no new information had been offered about the hunting expedition.

"Dr. McCoy, you have turned up your sonic screen to the point where it is audible to me." Both the doctor and Spock had edged quite close to their campfire; McCoy for protection against the native animals, and Spock because he found nights on the Rhinegelt savannah chilly.

McCoy grudgingly turned down the protective device. "By the time it's low enough for you, the wild animals it's supposed to ward off won't notice it," he complained.

"I am somewhat dubious about the value of a supersonics transmitter as protection. Were I a wild beast, I suspect that I would more likely be irritated into attacking than retreating," Mr. Spock said politely, but with a trace of resentment against the machine. Since the beginning of the hunt, he'd used no tools at all, and was eating various tubers he'd collected without even bothering to roast them in the fire.

"Hasn't eaten anything but native plants since we came here," McCoy thought. "Some hunter!"

Above them, the giant planet Fafnir glowed green in the sky. It provided as much light as Earth's full moon, but in coloring the landscape distorted

vision. McCoy peered gloomily out into the savannah. "What game animals are found on Rhinegelt, Spock?" he asked suddenly.

"Scissorbuck, white mammoth, and owltiger. We are hunting an owltiger," Spock replied, answering the question that had been bothering McCoy more and more with time.

Scissorbuck were the brown antelope-types with prongy white horns, McCoy knew, and the mammoth would be farther north. But... "How big are owltigers, Spock?"

"Approximately the same size as the Terran Bengal tiger."

"Then why," McCoy exploded, "are you hunting one with no weapon? What are you going to do— give it the kiss of death?"

"I can stun it with a nerve pinch long enough to accomplish my purpose."

"What purpose, Spock?" McCoy asked. "You've got to let me know, or I'm likely to be a hindrance when the time comes." He was determined, this time, not to let the Vulcan lapse back into silence again.

Mr. Spock settled back, nodding reluctantly at McCoy's request. "I am engaging in a ritual hunt— one of the more important rituals of my people. Since I am a male of full physical strength and dexterity, I seek out the most dangerous beast of all. It is the mok farr— the time of remembrance."

"Another Vulcan ritual— and me with only a medikit," thought McCoy, appalled.

"The hunt does not end in a killing. Instead, I shall meld minds with the animal, as you have seen me do before. The purpose of the tradition is to see and understand, in the ferocity of the beast, the savagery of the Vulcan nature, which we have hidden and controlled so carefully."

"And then what?" McCoy asked skeptically, thinking privately that Spock, unlike young men on Vulcan, had doubtlessly already encountered more savage ferocity than he would ever require.

"Then I shall officially be an adult."

"You mean you're not?" McCoy asked amazed.

Spock shook his head, shamefaced. "My human heritage impeded my telepathic ability, and I was quite young when I left Vulcan. I could not have successfully completed the ritual. Since then, I have had mind contact with many aliens— humans, the Horta, a Medusan. Now I am prepared. I do not wish to further postpone the rite."

"Wouldn't it be safer to put it off until you could get to Vulcan?" McCoy ventured tentatively.

"Doctor. The mok farr is the Vulcan rite of passage into adulthood. If our positions were reversed, would you put it off?"

"I guess you've got a point."

Mr. Spock curled up like a cat on a pile of leaves— he was carrying primitivism a bit too far, McCoy thought resentfully— and prepared for sleep. "The correct phrase would be 'Good night, doctor'," Spock said sleepily. McCoy crawled into his sleeping bag, and for a long time listened to the voice of the warm wind.

As usual, Mr. Spock was up at dawn, irritatingly alert, and as usual, McCoy slept half an hour longer, savoring each precious moment of sleep with an intensity he had not previously possessed. Once McCoy was finally wakened, Spock had them ready for the trail in practically no time at all.

In three days, the Vulcan science officer had taught McCoy something of the rudiments of stalking— enough to tiptoe quietly down the trail. Spock, who by this time had appropriated the carrying of nearly all of McCoy's pack, was more silent still.

"How long until we find your owltiger?" McCoy panted.

"We have been following a scissorbuck herd for two days now," Spock replied. "Eventually one will make an appearance."

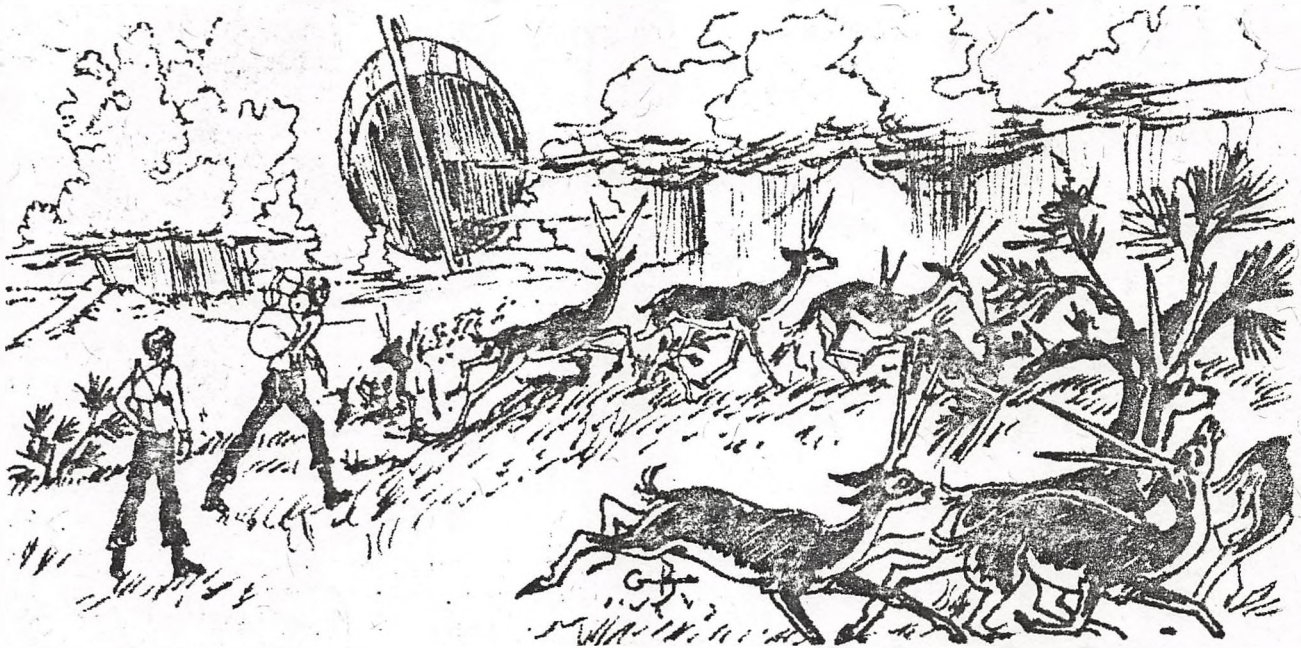
"Mmmph. Maybe."

"Dr. McCoy, do you know nothing of hunting?" Spock was watching the lithe brown forms of the scissorbucks move slowly in the distance.

"I've fished a little."

"I have never been able to comprehend the Terran attitude that fishing is a sport. Considering the mass ratio between man and fish, it can hardly be called an equal contest. At any rate, you may trust me. I know what I am doing."

At that moment Spock's keen eyes caught the leaders of the herd sniffing the air nervously. "Wait here," he commanded, slipping off the bulky pack and moving quietly toward the herd. After a few minutes McCoy crept after him, clutching medikit firmly in hand.



From a slight rise he watched Spock approach the now skittish herd. The Vulcan's Star Fleet uniform was relatively easy to spot-- McCoy recollected the incredulous eyebrow-raising he'd encountered when he had suggested wearing different clothes for the occasion. Apparently Spock considered his uniform an auxiliary skin.

McCoy strained his eyes looking for an owltiger, then finally flipped open his medikit to check its lifeform-sensor. He hadn't wanted to take one of the Enterprise's tricorders on a private excursion, but the medikit would perform the same function.

Yes. Spock was cautiously approaching the location of a large animal only a few hundred yards from the herd. Then McCoy saw the owltiger.

It was huge, a mottled dun color, with a small white ruff. The owlish ears were what gave the beast the name owltiger, McCoy knew, that and the two wicked fangs placed close together which gave the impression of a beak.

Had it seen Spock? The scissorbucks were beginning to scatter. Then McCoy saw Spock fling himself toward the giant carnivore at a dead run. The great cat roared, and responded by leaping toward him.

As the two closed, McCoy cursed the government regulation that made phasers in Primitive Areas forbidden. He watched helplessly as the beast attacked. Spock was almost under its paws, and then suddenly standing over the brute, which was twitching convulsively. "He's safe!" McCoy shouted thankfully, then added, "Knock wood."



The owltiger's short red thoughts flooded into Mr. Spock's mind. Spock struggled with the problem of handling its bestial emotions without suppressing them, and attempted to calm the beast by mentally asserting, "We are one mind. Our thoughts are moving together." hurt pain attack slash "No! We are unity-- no need for that!" run leap bite hurt "The twitching-- in legs-- will stop-- flesh rending food the hunting fascinating-- all thoughts-- same-- monomania-- monom-- mon-- teeth claws kill-- kill-- kill killkillkill...

The owltiger shook itself and bounded off. McCoy watched it go with a feeling of great relief. "Well, that's that," he told himself, satisfied. He was startled, then, to hear an unearthly roar.

Or was it a scream? "It's Spock!" McCoy realized. "I'm coming," he yelled, and recklessly scrambled down the slope toward his comrade.

Spock was crouching on all fours, flexing and unflexing his hands, looking at the strange blunt claws. He felt clumsy and off-balance. The whole landscape was full of confusingly different colors, sounds, and odors. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the scissorbuck herd alerted and on the run, and he growled in irritation.

Some creature was crashing down the hill at him. Suspiciously, he prepared to spring. But foggily, from the back of his mind, he remembered that the creature had something to do with sickness and whirring things that hurt and his own blood. Rattled, he got up on two feet and fled.

"Wait, Spock, wait!" McCoy puffed. He'd known that catching Spock was impossible from the moment that Spock had started to run, but had continued until the last glimpse of the blue shirt was gone in the distance.

"Damn!" McCoy remembered bitterly Mr. Spock's tendency to get so tied up in the mind of the being he was contacting that he had to be pried loose. "I'll have to bring him back to himself, or he'll be yowling at the moon for the rest of his shore leave," McCoy grumbled. Nagging at him was the recollection of Simon van Gelder. Spock had snapped back to normal immediately after being pulled away from him. Never before had Spock maintained mental identity with a being so far away from him. Worriedly, McCoy reached for his communicator to summon help.

It wasn't there. He'd let Spock carry it, along with most of his gear. The doctor scrambled over the dusty grasses to where Spock had dropped his pack, opened it, and riffled through. No— Spock had carried both their communicators securely on his belt. And they were both lost with him.

Glumly, McCoy considered the situation. The nearest Wilderness Station was about twenty miles back along the river. By the time he could get there and call the Enterprise, Spock could wander off so far that the search operation might take months. And heaven only knew what would be happening to Spock, mentally and physically, in the meantime.

Grinding his teeth quietly, McCoy decided to follow the herd. Maybe Spock would return. He had to!

Mid-day. The sun's warmth comforted Spock, even as it disturbed him by revealing colors he'd forgotten how to name. Night was best, when the violent stars lit a grey landscape, and he could prowl, scenting sharp living odors on the wind. It was too cold to hunt then, though.

He tried to doze, well-hidden in the tall grass, lying with his head on his hands. Both legs were drawn up awkwardly to his body, showing great rents at the knees of his trousers where the dura-fiber had been worn away by too much clumsy scrambling on all fours. His knees were scratched and gashed also, and his hands.

Drifting between sleep and wakefulness, he mewled discontentedly. Once his eyes flicked wide open with an expression of horror and near-awareness, and his mewling rose almost to a shriek. But then he stiffened, and put his head back down.

Spock's eyes gleamed ferally as his ears flattened at a small, suspicious sound. He had been hunted. Something was following his trail, some... what? He couldn't remember what, but he didn't want it to find him.

He sighed. No way to hunt and run away at once, and now he was so tired. He kept wary guard regardless, but trusted his ears more than his eyes, which constantly dropped and closed. Suddenly his eyes snapped open. There was a rustle in the grass and a small, foolish rodent ran in front of him. It was small... but he was hungry! Spock carefully lifted one paw.

McCoy watched the sun flee over the mountained horizon. His back straightened painfully as he unfastened the heavy pack. The light would soon be gone— he'd try again tomorrow.

"Why didn't I go back and call out the search parties?" he asked himself for the thousandth time. "Nine days— we'll be absent without leave in two more. Anything could be happening to him out there."

He rubbed a grubby sleeve against grainy eyes, and strove to see one flicker of blue somewhere on the savannah in the fading light. Hopeless. Spock's Vulcan stamina could probably keep him ahead of McCoy indefinitely.

Scrabbling through his pack, McCoy searched for a nutri-bar. He'd unceremoniously dumped more than half his baggage when he set out in pursuit of Spock, but he'd had to keep certain necessities in order to continue the chase at all. Food, for example, and a rather bulky water-detector.



Dr. McCoy sat on a rock, and bit at the food concentrate in the rapidly fading twilight. It would be another bad, cold night. His sleeping bag was at least fifty miles back, and he didn't dare light a fire for fear Spock would see it and run. Using the sonic screen was definitely out, too—Spock's sensitive ears might pick it up.

"Wait a minute—" McCoy smiled ephemerally. Then he searched out the screen projector in his kit. It had been too small and light to be worth leaving behind. Scrutinizing its control dial carefully, he saw that it allowed a considerably stronger broadcast than the labelled "protection" range.

"Wouldn't this just be audible to those Vulcan ears, though!" McCoy chuckled grimly. "And that feline fiend inside him will be madder than a wet hen when it hears this. Maybe even mad enough," he speculated, "to come and try to stop it!"

His plan was risky, McCoy knew. The supersonics might frighten Spock into running off. "But what choice have I got? I could be following him till doomsday." Decided, McCoy flicked the sonic device on and up to maximum.

The vibration made McCoy's teeth grate rustily in his mouth. He couldn't hear the sound, but it was palpable, and pushed on every nerve relentlessly. From far off toward the mountains, he heard a bloodcurdling screech, and another and another echoing it, from much closer locations.

McCoy considered morbidly the chance that his trick might prove fatal. Some maddened owl-tiger leaping on him with bloodlust... Or even Spock. McCoy formed the grotesque picture of himself as King Pentheus in reverse—ripped apart by a man who thought he was a lion.

Then McCoy remembered Spock, standing stiffly, and saying in a thin, precise voice, "Nothing can excuse the crime of which I am guilty. I intend to offer no defense. I must... surrender myself to the authorities..."

"And he would," McCoy thought savagely. He grabbed his ever-present medikit, pushed the med-record button, and spoke. "To whom it may concern-- Jim, I guess. About the events occurring to Mr. Spock and me on Rhinegelt." He paused and then added peripherally, almost idly, "Damn it, Spock, don't try to deny that I brought this on myself!"

Outlined on a ridge, a scissordoe trembled and twitched her ears nervously. Then she ran toward the mountains, as if scenting the acridness of a grass fire, and nearly bowled Spock over in her uncautious flight.

The rasping shriek caused even more pain to Spock's sensitive ears than the doe's. He stood his ground, wondering. No! It was not like a fire, or a flood... something natural, to hide from. It was... Spock searched through his muddled thoughts... him! The following one. Spock remembered other times of pain, when he had been strapped down so he couldn't run, and the face of the following one. A face that smiled too much.

"I will stop him!" And Spock, gathering up all his will, waded painfully through the tall grasses in the direction of the hurting.



McCoy thumbed his medikit and peered toward the hills, deathly afraid. Hypnospray... sedative... knockout drugs. He considered them all, then muttered, "Nothing organic's wrong with him... nothing but the sanity of that alien Vulcan mind. What am I going to do for him? And my God, what will I do if I guess wrong?"

Over the absolute silence of the hypersound, McCoy heard a sound-- a branch snapping. And then hoarse, heavy breathing, as if every intake of breath was half a sob. Before McCoy could take a reading on his kit, Spock appeared, gliding swiftly toward him, looking ragged muddy, and homicidal.

McCoy had been expecting savagery, belligerence-- all the emotions written nakedly on Spock's face-- but not, somehow, the Vulcan's incredible, panther-like speed. Before the doctor had time to more than yell, "Spock!"... Spock had sprung. The lunge carried them both to the ground, where Spock dug his fingers cruelly into McCoy's neck with slowly-increasing force.

"S-s-pock... s-s-top..." McCoy hissed breathlessly. Then, as the Vulcan's lethal grip did not slacken, McCoy kned him in the stomach. Spock panted, and released him. McCoy scrambled off, feeling a little more confident, until he looked into the Vulcan's face, to see a vicious smile. And recollected, with a dreadful certainty, how the cat toys with its prey.

The screen projector was sitting on a rock. Twisting desperately, McCoy reached it before Spock became aware of his intent, and grabbed it as his only protection. The projector vibrated fiercely in McCoy's hand as he jabbed it toward Spock. The diabolically feral look faded and Spock covered his ears with shaking hands, pacing backward fearfully.

The doctor had tasted his moment of triumph for only an instant, when he realized that Spock was about to bolt again. He'd overlooked his whole purpose... he wasn't looking for a triumph, anyway. Swallowing hard, he flicked the screen projector off, gambling on Spock's mental controls for his life.

It was still Spock-- nothing could change that. The Vulcan seemed confused, as if memories were being awakened, or perhaps because he was being pushed into an entirely different pattern than the days of chase on the savannah. Spock would have to choose now, to think. McCoy waited.

He found himself looking into eyes that were neither bestial nor logical, neither a Star Fleet officer's nor an owltiger's. Spock simply stood immobile, projecting a mute doubt and horror. It seemed to McCoy in that moment that all the gambles had been lost.

Then Spock stepped forward and pleaded in an awkward voice, "Alab hwallir k'len?" McCoy could practically have hugged him for every incomprehensible, tongue-twisting Vulcan syllable. Spock was acting human again!

The doctor had pried the communicator off Spock's belt, and they were coalescing out of golden sparkles onto the comfortably safe transporter platforms, before he remembered to amend that description.

It was nice to have the authority to certify yourself medically fit for duty, McCoy thought. The captain, after grasping the situation's seriousness, if not its nature, had wanted to argue that with him. The doctor recollected how Kirk's grin at his friends' bewhiskered appearance had faded when Spock had toppled unceremoniously to the floor. He was worried about them both.

McCoy thankfully tugged on a clean shirt and hurried out of his office into Sickbay. Whether he'd be able to certify Spock medically fit was another matter. His med-scan had revealed Spock to be in acceptable, if not perfect physical condition, and Dr. M'benga had agreed that he was suffering from no more than shock. But whether Spock would snap out of it quickly was another matter.

As Dr. McCoy entered the ward, M'benga approached him and whispered, "Mr. Spock has an unusually resilient mind, for either a Vulcan or a human. He should recover quickly now." He paused, then asked, "It's not a medical question, doctor, but this wasn't anything you did to him?" Scowling, McCoy returned to his patient.

McCoy sighed with relief as he saw Spock eye with loathing the sponge bath M'benga was taking away. The Vulcan was already back in thermal underwear and was finishing dressing rapidly. "Look at it this way," McCoy said soothingly, "it's better than a belly full of fur balls."

Spock looked up at him sharply and McCoy was immediately aware that Spock was in no mood for the usual feuding back and forth-- he just wanted to talk. "I believe I understand now the purpose of the ritual, doctor."

"To understand how to control emotion?" McCoy ventured.

"No, to demonstrate that the alternative is attractive. I have wondered from time to time why there are such extensive game preserves on Vulcan. It seemed to me that the "track and stalk" that is favored there had no logical value, since the prey was not killed. Now I know that there must be many

who wish to recreate the experience of the mok farr."

McCoy, as usual, was not quite sure that he knew what the Vulcan was getting at. "Wait a minute! You can't tell me that you liked running around in the bush regressed back to an animal."

"As you should know, not all of that was intended to be in the ritual." The Vulcan's face was unusually somber. "It is what you have always advocated-- a life ruled by the nerve endings. More pleasurable, in some ways, than my own. But I shall not choose it."

"Why?" McCoy asked.

"Doctor. Choose the life of a wild animal?"

"No," McCoy explained, "not that. But you might live a little more according to your nerve endings, Spock."

"The end result would be essentially the same."

The sickbay door whistled and the captain of the Enterprise walked in, anxious about the condition of his friends. Catching the polite battle stance of his Science Officer and Chief Medical Officer, Kirk extrapolated, "You must be all right, Spock. Bones never argues with seriously ill patients."

"Have him tell you some day, Jim, about the time he tried to walk out and go back to duty in the middle of an operation," McCoy cracked.

"All right, what's been going on, and why didn't either of you take my advice to rest during shore leave?" Capt. Kirk demanded.

Dr. McCoy opened his mouth and prepared to give a long, aggrieved account of Vulcan rituals, uncomfortable nights of reversion to Boy Scouting, and a companion who alternated ignoring him and pouncing on him. The frozen look on Spock's face stopped him, and he closed his mouth carefully. "He wants to tell Jim slowly. In his own time. Or maybe not at all." Out loud he answered, "There was a Vulcan custom Spock wanted to go through. What was its name again, Spock?"

"The mok farr," Mr. Spock replied thankfully.

"Oh," Kirk said, mystified. "Well, I hope it worked out all right."

"There was... some difficulty." Mr. Spock said seriously. "But Dr. McCoy solved the problem."

"How?"

McCoy grinned. "I took a thorn out of his paw!"

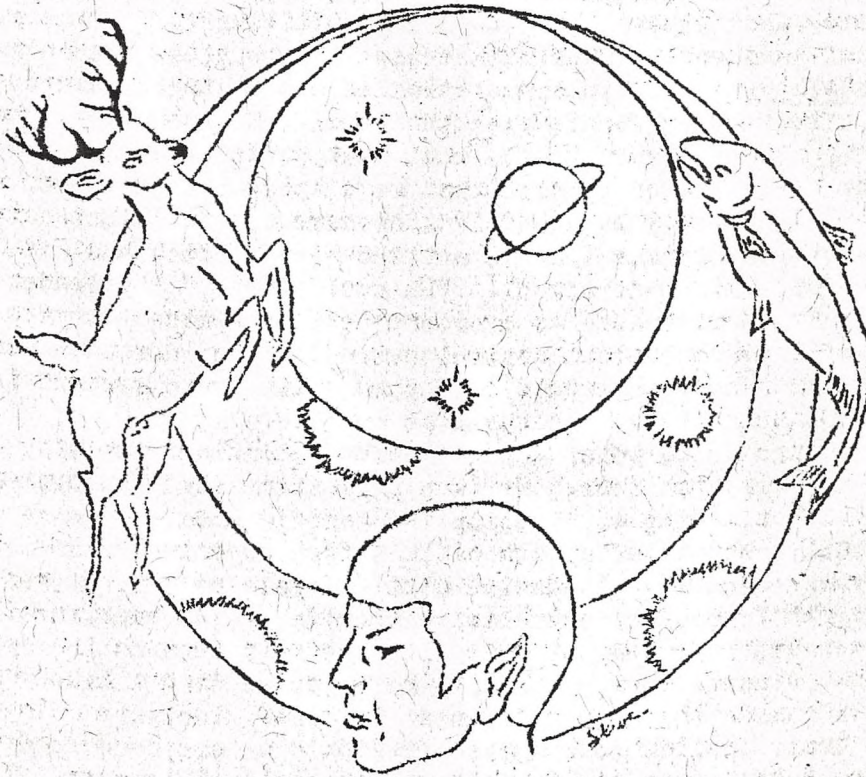
THE END



AN SF & STAR TREK
fanzine

50¢

EDITOR: Devra Michele Langsam
250 Crown Street
Brooklyn, New York
11225



THE VULCAN LOVE MYTH

by M. L. Barnes

Many are the tales that wax enthusiastic about Mister Spock's amorous qualities. With our hero in the grip of "pon farr" the reader is besieged with stories of his tender and solicitous regard towards his current bed-partner. Her sharing of his satisfaction seems to be of paramount importance.¹

Now, I also find Mister Spock sexually exciting, extremely masculine, and undeniably intriguing. It is part of his 'mystique', a projection of that restrained sexuality that is so apparent to all of us. If he were totally human the attributes assigned him would be valid. But he is not. As he rather impatiently told Kirk..."Nor am I a man...I am a Vulcan!"² And as such, those aforementioned tender qualities come under grave suspicion. Sorry, girls--but t'ain't so!

First, let us consider the Vulcan method of choosing mates. A completely parental selection evidently. There are no emotions involved--no tender expressions of devotion. Totally, coldly logical.

¹"Time Enough" by Lelamarie Kreidler, SPOCKANALIA 4

²"Amok Time"

Next the Vulcan sex drive must be investigated. Practically non-existent most of the time, it leads us to believe that perhaps very little knowledge of the opposite sex is gained over the years. In our human relationships we often find that the experienced lover--the fellow who has developed a few previous sexual liasons--makes the best bed partner. He knows what will arouse, what pleases, how to bring fulfillment. He has also, through years of incidental acquaintanceship with females, (and a male/female association is always sexual in comotation if not content) learned the basic tenderness or attentiveness we females thrive on. He knows the importance of the "courting" period, however brief, that must precede the bedroom romp.

I can hear the cries of protest that have arisen. Any reader who has come this far will probably be in violent disagreement. Unfortunately, in our society, love making is a learned art and Mister Spock has had little opportunity to enroll in that school. "He could learn," the reader insists. Indeed he might if he were able to overcome certain dominant traits. But a deep, inhibiting layer of Vulcan control over-rides any normal human behavior we might expect from him. He would be far more likely to respond in the manner of any Vulcan male who has the urge to mate.

And that brings us to point three. We must consider the state of mind of the Vulcan male in "pon farr." He is highly stimulated and over-wrought (to the point of not eating or sleeping and sometimes to the point of not thinking). A quite normal outgrowth of this type of drive.³ He is erotically aroused, ready to consummate his desire with a female he may not really know. To undertake a rather casual, animalistic coupling...in short, he is in rut.

For a clear understanding of this state we must turn to the lower life forms on our own planet. Here, and only here, do we find a likely parallel. Salmon spawn with much the same pattern as Vulcans. They are cold-blooded and are not a truly applicable example. Yet here we are concerned with reproduction as a basis for survival of the species. This must be the underlying purpose for "pon farr" if we can only strip away our human desire to romanticize it.

Dogs are seasonal in sex life also. Again we see very little "wooing." The female is passive until oestrus is in full bloom. Then she actively seeks the male and he is drawn to her. They exchange amenities, get to the basic problem, and go their separate ways. Still, the female takes an active part in the allure of the moment, and this is unlike the Vulcan situation.

Only in deer and elk and some similar animals do we see true male rut. It is aggressive by nature, brutal and brief. The fire is not quenched by one experience. Over a period of days every waking moment is devoted to slaking this insatiable thirst. Love and tenderness do not enter into the picture. So it must be with Vulcans. Some authors have offered the premise that through the mind bond the selfishness of the male's act is tempered and becomes to the female, if not pleasurable, at least bearable.⁴ But even if this is the case, until the bond has time to strengthen the female's situation must indeed be grim.

It is true that a few animals pair and stay together to become devoted parents. Some, like the wolf, are monogamous and gentler feelings must permeate the alliance. But it is doubtful if this is so during the mating period. The same must apply to Vulcans; the sex drive at such times is all-consuming.

³"Wild Heritage" by Sally Carrighar

⁴"Let Me Count the Ways" by Judith Brownlee, ERIDANI TRIAD 2

This is not to say that Vulcans ~~cannot~~ experience tenderness and even affection towards their partner. Witness Sarek's attitude toward Amanda.⁵ He is almost as understanding as a human husband (although he would 'logically' deny it) and in a normal situation this manner would be appropriate. But not, please, not in a state of "pon farr."

Now we must turn to the Vulcan mating itself. Almost total strangers, locked together solely for the purpose of "koon-ut-kali-fee", there can be no real depth of emotional feeling. Indeed their logical minds would reject any such inclination. From what we were permitted to see of the Vulcan marriage ceremony we are led to believe that T'pring was not aroused by Spock's agitation. In fact so little was her mind touched by it that she defied his claim. Hardly the actions of a woman suffering from a feminine equivalent of "pon farr". From this it is surmised the female Vulcan is always in a state of "passive readiness." Bluntly stated, she may be bred at any time her male has need of her services, whether she is physically and mentally prepared or not. What we are talking about is simple rape.

And herein lies an unadmitted appeal to Spock's sexuality. A dark and possibly Freudian side of our human female nature: which of us will deny the secret and deeply buried thrill that this forbidden word brings to mind? The advertising world and other commercial interests purport that every woman's dream is the white knight who rescues his fair maiden and bears her off on his charger into the sunset. Presumably we are to draw our own conclusions as to their future relationship. The feminine mind is expected to see it all wrapped in gossamer clouds of star dust. An analogy rather like that of the bee shaking pollen on the flower that has little to do with human emotions. Come fellows! That is for little girls...according to psychologists, very little girls, indeed. A fairy tale concocted to placate the Victorian mind.

The true female is something quite different. She is, in her way, as sexually motivated as the



⁵"Journey to Babel"

male. She may even be the aggressor, in a devious manner. Through this association, Spock becomes a symbol of the height of sexual experience. She is aware of the danger posed by "pon farr" but is obsessed by the idea of it. She is attracted by Spock's remoteness, but desires to destroy it—to arouse him. She must subconsciously realize what getting into bed with him would be like, but she seeks to drive him to that very situation. All the while she is convinced that through her he will find an avenue of escape for his deeper emotions of love. Such is the human female—the optimist of our race. Optimism can be a wonderful quality but not when it seeks to tamper with a racial inheritance and such a basic tenet of Vulcan life.

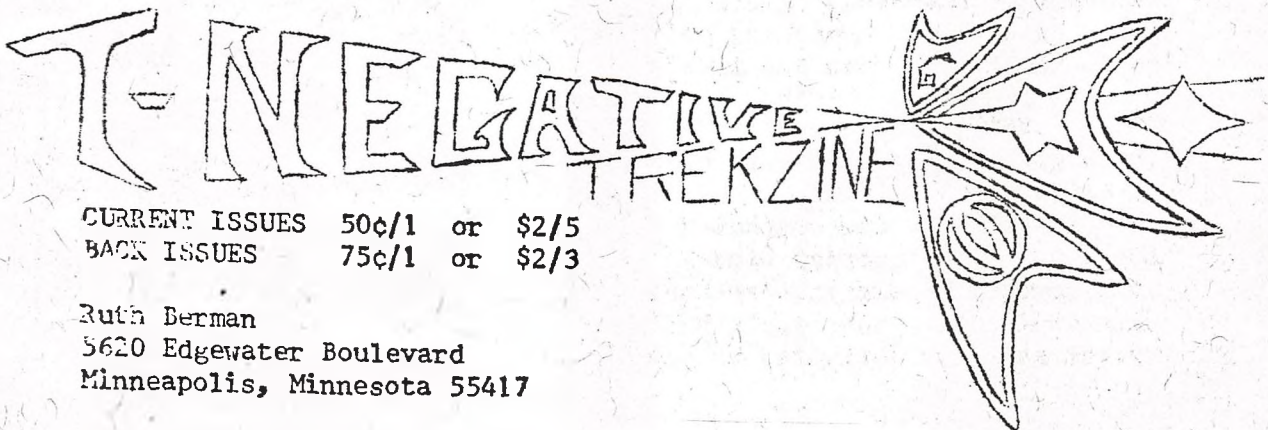
For Earthlings, let us keep our gentler ways. That certain spark of attraction that leads to that game we find the most exciting of all. With it, let's keep the more or less prolonged period of erotic arousal, the shared endeavor and the final adventure that leads (hopefully) to enjoyment for both partners.

For Vulcans, who may be unable to develop a sexual relationship as we understand it, their own way is best. In what other manner but forcible rape could two people, almost total strangers and inhibited from any emotional reactions, hope to consummate a sexual act? It would seem to be a logical method to me. Furthermore, in this unique race we may be dealing with that mysterious phenomenon of Nature called "induced ovulation." This is a term used to describe ovulation that can be brought about in the female of certain species only by stimulation from the male. This stimulus is normally provided in the form of antagonistic, aggressive, and seemingly "rough" sexual behavior on the part of the male⁶. In no other way can such a female be impregnated. It seems likely to me, considering the cyclic aspect of potency in the Vulcan male, that such a condition may exist in the female. It would be difficult to guarantee that her fertility coincided with his unless this is the case.

So let's do away with this strange myth that has grown to gigantic proportions. In his human moods, Spock might indeed find release in a tender and shared experience. But he would probably be as uneasy about it as when any of his humanity escapes his control. For us, our human style of sex is fine, but for a Vulcan—it's got to be "pon farr"!

THE END

⁶"Wild Heritage" by Carrighar



CURRENT ISSUES 50¢/1 or \$2/5
BACK ISSUES 75¢/1 or \$2/3

Ruth Berman
5620 Edgewater Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417

THE LONGEST RUNNING TREKZINE * 16 ISSUES & STILL PRINTING

MEET ME AT INFINITY

by James Tiptree, Jr.

The yeoman leaving the bridge with a coffee-tray sneaked a look at the view-screens, froze, gave a stifled wail and ran. He was intercepted at the door by Dr. McCoy, who called for a medical corpsman. As the yeoman was led off, McCoy advanced grimly on Captain Kirk, who was gazing at the screens with a rather odd, exalted expression.

The screens showed black, starless emptiness ahead of the Enterprise, relieved only on one side by a far, forlorn swirl of stars.

"Jim, that makes twenty-six people down with space-shock," said McCoy. "Human beings can't take this. How much farther out do you intend to go?"

Kirk glanced up.

"You know this mission is to explore as far as possible beyond the Galaxy-- to record data that man has never touched before. Every light-year on gives us that much more." His face softened briefly. "There's no danger, Bones. It's just empty space."

McCoy moved to where Spock was studying his computer readouts.

"How far out are we now?"

"One thousand and thirty-five point two light-years beyond the Rim," said Spock without looking up. "Conditions here seem to be multiplying our normal velocity at Warp Six. Most fortunate."

McCoy's jaw set.

"Fortunate!" he grated. "Three long months of travelling straight out from anything man has ever called home, into the ultimate void between the galaxies-- and now we're caught in a current to nowhere. Fortunate! How do we get back?"

Spock lifted his head.

"Slowly?" he said.

"Jim, turn back."

"Bones," said Kirk, "We're not going to sail over the edge of the universe, you know."

McCoy stared at him.

"Columbus," he said softly, "Sail on! Sail on-- and on!"

Spock raised an eyebrow.

At that moment the lights turned odd, and a sound that was not a sound shuddered through the bridge. People and things congealed, their outlines shimmered and ran and---

Captain Kirk was lounging in his command chair, but it was a Kirk immensely fat, beribboned and beaded. He lifted one pudgy hand, stared at it peevishly. Bloating, confused, he gasped, gagged.

Through a swimming haze loomed the oddly blurred contours of Spock's face-- or was it Spock? Hands grasped Kirk's shoulders, shook him.

"Captain!"

"Jim, Jim!"

Kirk came lunging up over them, and let out a raging stream of unintelligible words. As they fell back from him the scene cleared to normal.

"What did you say?"

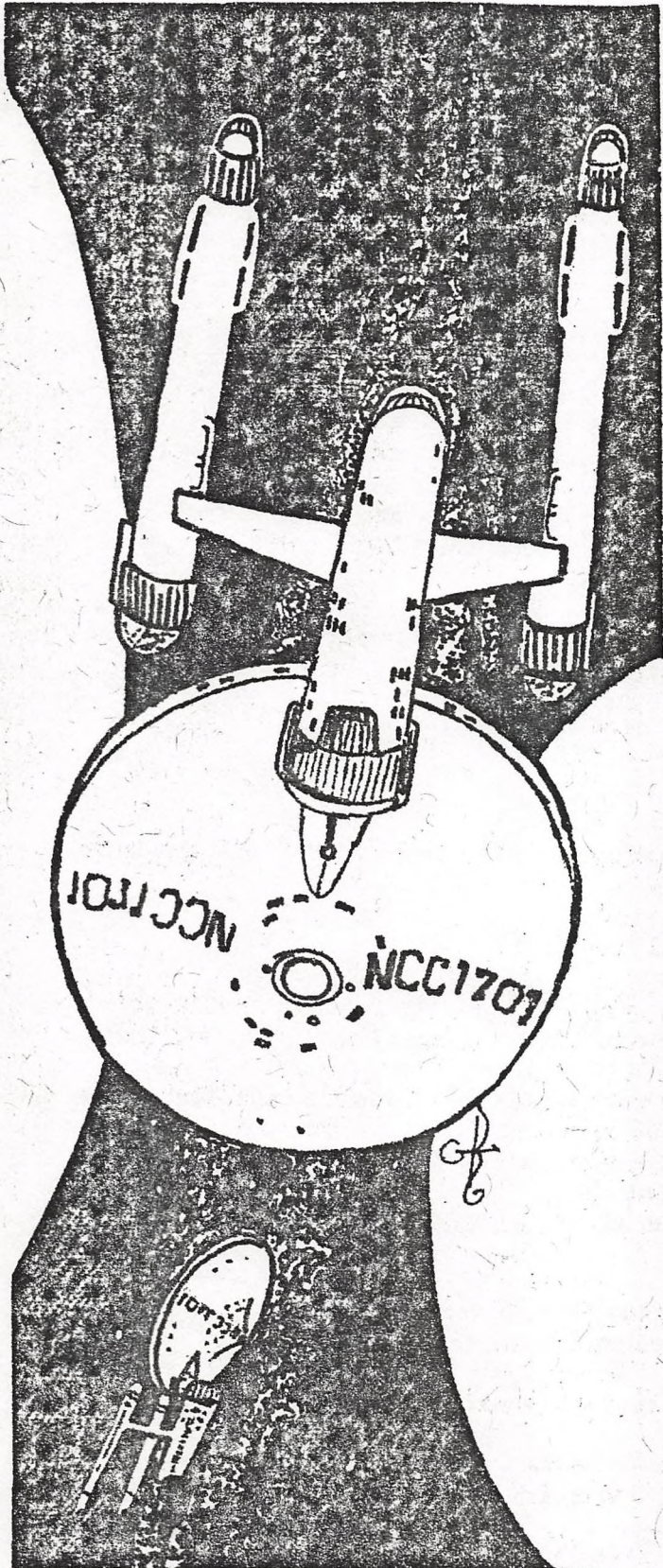
"He said," spoke up Ensign Chekov, "'Why don't you talk in Russian?'" Everyone was staring at Kirk.

Kirk, himself again, stared back at them.

"Do you speak Russian, Captain?" Spock asked.

"No!" Kirk said tautly.

A scream came from Lt. Uhura. McCoy and Kirk saw her collapsing against her board and rushed to her. Kirk held her up against him.



"Please, please—" she begged faintly, her face a mask of despair, "Please get back from here— this awful place—"

"Space-shock... You too?" asked Kirk. Her head moved weakly.

"No— no— something else! Oh, please, no!"

"There are ghosts here," said Chekov, matter-of-factly batting his head to brush something away.

"Something ahead, Captain!" called Sulu from Uhura's board. "A— a ship!"

"It can't be!" snapped Kirk, racing for his controls.

"Decelerate!" ordered Kirk. "Get it on the screen, Spock!"

The screen cleared, zoomed in on a starship.

"It's us!"

"It's the Enterprise!"

"It's the Enterprise out there!"

"Red Alert! Mr. Scott to the bridge!"

Captain's log, stardate 7529.2, on reconnaissance mission 1035 lightyears north of the Galactic plane. Although we are far beyond any previous mission, we are now in sudden contact with what appears to be another starship of the Constitution class. Kirk out...

"Can you get a better view, Mr. Spock?"

"It's our twin!" exclaimed Scott. "No! It's the Enterprise herself, by god, sir, I tell you I know her—"

"It can't be, Scotty," said Kirk. "we're two hundred lights from any other Fleet vessel!"

"It's not another vessel, it's us. Look at those modified IR radiator pods! I built them!" insisted the Scotsman.

The ship on the screen wheeled majestically broadside.

"There's her registry, Captain! But--"

Chekov spoke "It says "United Spaceship Zembylya! That means "Earth" in Russian, Captain."

"I'm getting a message, Captain," said Uhura, fighting against illness. It's in Russian; I'm feeding it through the translator."

The impersonal voice of the translator intoned: "This is the United Space Ship Zembylya calling unidentified vessel. Identify yourself. Repeat. Identify yourself."

"This is the United Space Ship Enterprise. There is no United Space Ship Zembylya," said Kirk heavily. "Who are you?"

"There is no United Space Ship Enterprise," said the voice. "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

"Obviously there is some confusion," murmured Spock wryly, "since you are both here. The problem, Captain--"

Kirk ignored him.

"Enterprise to Zembylya: We do not have any explanation for this phenomenon, Captain. Our mission is peaceful reconnaissance, but we are adequately armed. Perhaps it would be useful if we came over to meet you?"

"Agreed," said the stranger. "Our mission too is peaceful. We are standing by to receive you, Captain."

"Beaming--" began Kirk, but Spock finally broke in.

"Captain! May I strongly suggest that we go by shuttle?"

"Why, Spock?"

"I haven't worked it out fully, Captain, but it may be vital not to go by beam."

"Intuition, Spock?"

"No, merely an incomplete extrapolation of the logical contingencies. Beaming may be dangerous."

"Very well. Mr. Sulu, move us closer to the Zembylya and tell them we're coming in the shuttle. Spock, Dr. McCoy, I want you."

As they maneuvered the small shuttlecraft between the floating giants, Kirk asked, "What's your extrapolation, Spock? Where did that thing come from and what is it?"

"Captain, you know that we have been travelling faster than is possible according to the laws of physics within our Galaxy. This implies that there is some change in the laws as we pass beyond the Galaxy. Of course it has been proposed that the so-called physical constants are only constant in local universes. Therefore--"

"What kind of change?" demanded Kirk.

"Well, in an unscientific way you might say--"

"Thank you, Spock," muttered McCoy.

"--say that the limiting factors of time and space are attenuating. Thinning out, out here."

"Time and space are thinning out?" Kirk asked.

"I knew it. We're going over the edge." grated McCoy.

"Perhaps becoming indeterminate would be a better translation," said Spock. "If the constants permute through other values they may imply other universes..."

The shuttle docked. The hangar was identical with that of the Enterprise. Kirk, Spock, and McCoy emerged in silent, controlled amazement, and found themselves being escorted by a courteous but efficient-looking guard of crewmen in high-collared tunics, by the familiar elevator-- with signs all in Cyrillic-- to the bridge. Their bridge, running a little to red plush and Victorian heaviness.

Rising from the command chair to greet them was-- Kirk himself, five years and ten pounds older, and gloriously starred and collared.

"Captain Kirkhov, U.S.S. Zemlya, at your service," said the older man in a thick smoked-sturgeon English, with a bow.

"Captain Kirk, U.S.S. Enterprise," Kirk bowed stiffly. "My first officer, Mr. Spock... Dr. McCoy."

Kirkhov extended his arm.

"My medical officer and second in command," he said. "Doctor-Commandant Makkoyin."

It was McCoy's heavier twin, with a wry grin on his wide Baltic jaws.

The two shook hands dazedly.

"And," went on Kirkhov, "my science officer, Comrade T'pock."

The figure than moved forward from the computer was Spock. As his own sister. Sober, long-faced Vulcan, but milder, more graceful.

The two aliens regarded each other with one raised eyebrow each, and then slowly both brought up their fingers in the Vulcan V of greeting.

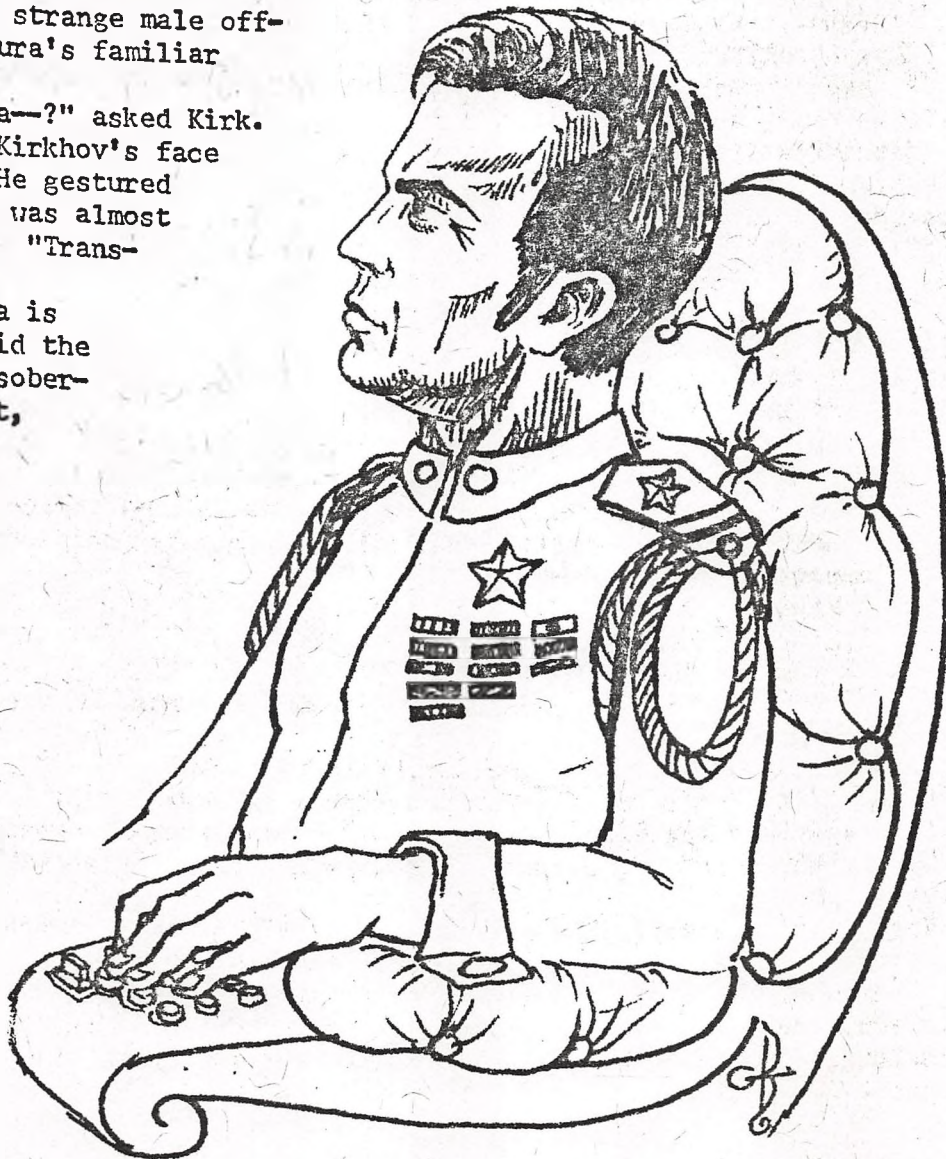
"Perhaps we sit down," said Kirkhov heavily.

As they found seats, the eyes of the men from the Enterprise converged upon the communications board, where a strange male officer sat in Uhura's familiar place.

"Lt. Uhura--?" asked Kirk.

"Uhura!" Kirkhov's face turned grim. He gestured at the lad who was almost Ensign Chekov. "Translate, please!"

"Lt. Uhura is dead, sir," said the young officer soberly-- a crew-cut, eager Chekov, with tall corn growing in his accent.



"She died suddenly two days ago of a brain embolism."

McCoy and Spock looked at each other.

"Are you an American?" Kirk asked impulsively. "Amerikansky?"

"Da-- That's right, sir, Bill Chester, Dubuque, Iowa, sir."

The officer beside him, in Sulu's chair, was a trim young Latin Amerind. Kirk rubbed his head. The two captains regarded each other for a moment in silence, and then both spoke at once.

"We are duplicates--"

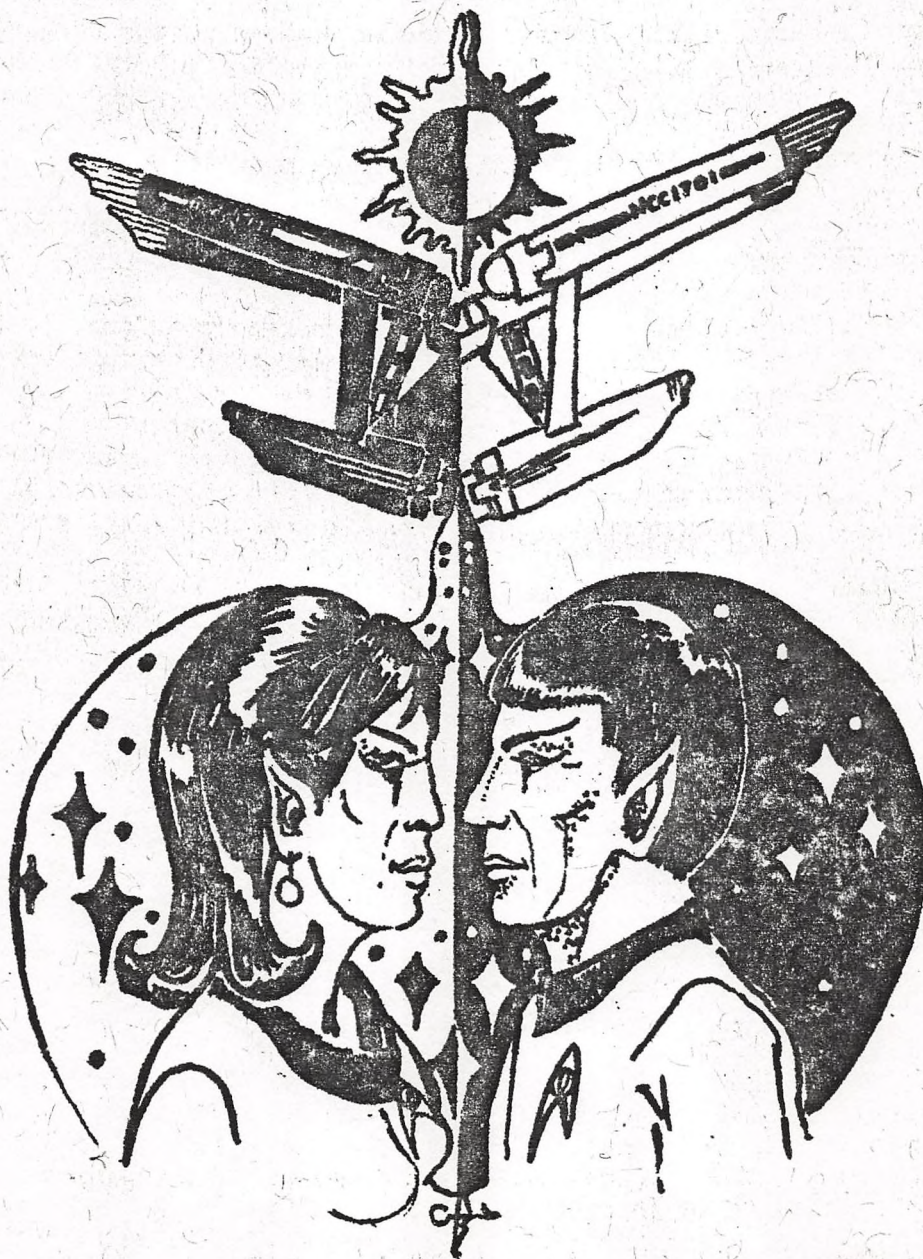
"Do you know what this is all about, Captain?"

With one accord, they both turned on their science officers, who had been conferring in low, rapid Vulcan.

Mr. Spock spoke for them both. "It seems clear enough, Captain.

T'pock and I agree perfectly."

"That's nice," said Kirk carefully. "WHAT'S GOING ON?"



"Alternate universes, Captain. We have, as it were, slipped through the boundary conditions of our own universe, into this very similar universe where the Zemblya, in this space and time, is making exactly the same exploratory voyage that we are. A remarkable scientific opportunity."

"Maybe they slipped into our universe, Spock. How do you know we're in theirs?"

"Their communications with their homing beacons are still functioning, Captain. I believe if you call the Enterprise you will find ours are not."

"Call them," said Kirk.

As they waited, Kirk eyed a familiar figure arriving in the background-- unmistakably the Chief Engineer.

"I suppose you're an Eskimo, in this universe," Kirk muttered.

"Edinburgh, sirr," replied the Chief.

"That figures," Kirk grinned. "You can take the Scotsman out of the engine-room, but you can't take the engineroom out of the Scot... What's the word, Spock?"

"All our familiar signals from the course beacons we posted have ceased, Captain. But they are getting some different signals which are undoubtedly those from the beacons the Zemblya posted in this universe. We are in their universe... fascinating!"

The sombre Vulcan was almost smiling, his eyes on T'pock.

"How do we get back?" asked McCoy.

"How do we get back, Mr. Spock?" asked Kirk. "Any suggestions?"

"Well, not on that point, Captain, but I do have one."

"Yes?"

"It would be logical to request Lt. Uhura to report at once to sick-bay for a cerebral analysis. Since her analog in this universe suffered from a brain embolism, perhaps--"

"I get you," said McCoy, and turned to his communicator.

The Russian Captain Kirkhov had completed his conversation with his Science Officer, and turned to Kirk, waving Chester to them as translator.

"The Captain says you seem to be marooned in our universe, sir," said Chester.

"That's what it seems," replied Kirk slowly.

"He suggests that you and your ship return as official guests to Starbase 40, where you will be offered every hospitality and our scientists and historians will be able to confer with you on the history of your universe, which has obviously differed somewhat from ours."

"He's going to get some shocks," Kirk rumbled. "No-- don't say that. I wish I could invite the Captain to our universe--"

Clamor broke out from both the Zemblya's communication console and Kirk's communicator.

"Sir-- your ship is fading out!"

On the screens the outlines of the Enterprise were dimming, wavering.

"Scotty!" Kirk yelled into his communicator. "Get us back!"

"No, Captain! NO!" interposed Spock, yanking him by the arm, "To the shuttle! He can't beam us back, now-- quickly, the shuttle!"

The three Enterprise men bolted for the elevators. Kirkhov signalled to let them pass and followed with T'pock and Dr. Makkoyin. They raced through the familiar ship, lights going strange and sounds unreal, burst into the hangar and poured themselves into the shuttle. There was a strange moment's calm as McCoy turned to close the lock behind them. He found himself looking into the face of Dr. Makkoyin on the ramp.

"Tell me, Doctor," said McCoy, "do you find Vulcan logic hard to take in a female?"

"Take?" puzzled Makkoyin. Then he beamed and slung an arm around the Vulcan officer. "I married T'pock!"

McCoy mooshed his hand over his face and yanked the airlock just as the scene went blooey. The Zempliya was gone from around them, and they were reeling in darkness and stars.

"Very satisfactory," said Spock calmly. "You see now why it was best to come in the shuttle, Captain? If the intersection of the two universes proved to be temporary, when the Enterprise slipped back into its home space, we would have been dropped into hard vacuum. As it is, we have the shuttle to take us to the Enterprise... over there, I believe."

He brought the image of a ship nearby to the center of the shuttle's screen.

Kirk was looking a bit smug.

"Well," he mused. "What do you know? I was a Captain in that world, too... Spock! THAT'S NOT MY SHIP!"

"No," said Spock. "Unfortunate." He didn't look sorry.

"We're in a different goddammed universe," said McCoy bitterly.

Captain's log, stardate 7529.4, beyond the Galactic rim. The Enterprise has reverted, we believe, to its own time and space, leaving Spock, McCoy, and myself isolated in a second alternate universe. We are in a shuttlecraft proceeding toward an unidentified vessel which appears to be a large pleasure-craft or private space yacht. Kirk out...

"Mr. Spock, any signals yet? What are those blips floating around the ship?"

"No signals, Captain. The blips appear to be... bodies."

"Dead people, Jim-- in orbit around their ship. No suits." McCoy whispered.

The three men stared tensely as they neared the stranger. It was not unlike a miniaturized, ornate Enterprise. Its bridge was embellished with a crest and golden scrolls.

"The Eldorado," read Kirk. "It's somebody's yacht. What's it doing out here?... Better suit up."





They were close enough to see the vacuum-mangled bodies tumbling slowly in space outside the airlock. Only one of them wore a suit. As they floated past it, a familiar profile showed inside the helmet.

"It's Uhura!"

"She may be alive— let's get her, quick!"

The floating suit was grappled, wrestled inboard and unhelmed.

"She's alive," grunted McCoy, doing things medical. "Hasn't been out too long. Okay, let's get this foul suit off."

They pulled the suit away to reveal an Uhura not more than fifteen, and with her limp body clad not in the familiar uniform, but in an entertainer's golden bikini, ridiculously feathered, with gold lace boots. The lovely face was bizarrely painted.

"No wonder our Uhura went into shock," said McCoy. "Dead of cerebral stroke in one alternate world and dying in space in another!"

The shuttle ground on the stranger's hull. The men clambered out and secured their craft. As they approached the airlock it swung open and two suited figures in violent combat burst out. One huge shape reared up, lofting a wrench above the helmet of the other. The Enterprise men launched themselves at the pair, and Spock managed to get a shoulder-pinch on the behemoth. The other put up no resistance.

They dragged the two inside, cycled through the lock, and emerged into the messed-up controlroom of a luxury yacht. McCoy cautiously cracked his face-plate.

"Air's a bit stale, but safe."

"Captain, I suggest we do not unsuit," said Spock.

"You mean, we may find ourselves in space again?" asked Kirk.

McCoy rolled his eyes. They contented themselves with freeing their faces, and then turned to unsuiting the two ex-combatants. One turned out to be a frail, aged, white-haired Vulcan. The big one was a young, shockingly fat travesty of Kirk, with a mustache on his sulky face. Kirk gazed down at him in horror.

"The time-track seems somewhat different here," said Spock. "You and Uhura have younger alternates, mine is older."

"And that's not all," said Kirk angrily. "What in Chaos is going on here?"

The old Vulcan was reviving. His eyes locked with Spock's and they went silently through the greeting. McCoy returned from a brief exploration.

"Jim, their oxygen-regeneration system is dead, and their air is going. Food has run out. They're in trouble."

Spock looked up from his colloquy with the old man.

"Three months ago standard time they were caught in a neutron storm and blown out here. Their ship is just a toy, for short cruises. No adequate computers. They've been rotting here ever since."

"The bodies, Spock. What's happened?"

The old Vulcan raised himself and addressed Kirk directly, with great dignity.

"Captain Kirkland is young," he said. "He has received no training. When he saw that there was not enough air or food for so many persons, he became a prey to panic."

"Panic?" Kirk demanded. "You mean, he killed off his crew so he could live longer? He pushed you out the airlock?"

The aged Vulcan nodded gravely.

"Why... you last?" asked McCoy.

"He kept three of us until today. His doctor, his entertainer, and me, his tutor. He hoped that Dr. Maccoby could do something to help him stay alive, and the girl, Ura, pleased him. As for me, he hoped I would find a way to signal for help. When I told him that there was no way, he had no more use for me."

"Doctor... Doctor Maccoby-- you say he's out there?" McCoy asked painfully. "With no suit?"

"Yes. Captain Kirkland shot him. Dr. Maccoby told Captain Kirkland that he would not keep him alive if he could."

McCoy's jaw lifted slightly when he heard his alter ego's defiant last words.

"And the girl Ura--"

"Captain," Spock interposed, "we must get her in here, in case the shuttlecraft should fade out."

"Right," said McCoy, and they left to get Ura.

Kirk regarded the old Vulcan.

"Tell me: By what right is this--" he pointed to the twitching obesity on the floor-- "by what right is he a captain?"

"By right of being the son of the third richest woman in the Galaxy," said the Vulcan.

"A murdering fat boy," Kirk mumbled savagely at Kirkland, who was now opening bleary eyes. "A rich coward who kills his own crew..."

Spock and McCoy carried Ura in and laid her down. As McCoy bent over her, she roused.

"I went out the lock myself," she said in a clear child's voice. "I went out myself! I wouldn't stay-- he said I'd call to be taken back, but I didn't! I didn't call, did I?"

"No," said McCoy gently, "you didn't call."

"Who are you?" she wondered, and fell back asleep.

Spock, who had been inspecting the consoles, spoke up.

"Captain, if I insert our main power-packs into their circuits, I believe we can send out a distress-call which will reach their base. Magister Spock--" he gestured at the old man-- "can give me the heading. But it will be a complete drain, and we would then have only emergency power in the shuttle."

"Do it," said Kirk, and turned away as the two Vulcans conferred. A moment later Spock left to fetch the pack.

"Jim, we can use the catalytic enzymes in the shuttle's survival kit to get their air and food systems going again," said McCoy. "Even if our enzymes fade out later, the process will go on its own."

"Do that, too," said Kirk, and McCoy went.

Kirkland heaved himself up.

"Who are you?" he demanded of Kirk, pulling himself to his feet. Beneath his fat was a big frame, topped with a piggish boy's face. He was clad in the tatters of an ornate beaded uniform-- the uniform of Kirk's hallucination.

"I suppose you're some kind of rescue squad," he observed peevishly. "Damned late, too. Don't you know I'm Captain Kirkland? You nearly let me die. When I tell my mother--"

Kirk, controlling himself with difficulty, exploded. "You are not fit to call yourself a captain!"

The fat boy's jaw fell, and his eyes blazed.

"How dare you!" he bellowed back in a parody of Kirk's roar. "I'll show you--"

Too late, Kirk saw that they had neglected to relieve him of his phaser. As the boy aimed at him, Kirk dodged and let fly with a kick that knocked the weapon sailing, followed by a solid smack to the jaw. Kirkland sat down hard, with Kirk standing over him.

"You do not deserve to be rescued. You aren't a captain, you're a murderer. We're helping you because of these others, the people you tried to kill. If it weren't for them, I'd happily let you rot in your own garbage until you were as dead as those men out there!"

"Who-- who are you?" Kirkland asked.

Kirk glared, groping for words that weren't.

"I'm you!" he burst out. "I'm you, you slobbering delinquent-- you as you should have been! Look at me! I'm Captain Kirk of the starship Enterprise-- a ship big enough to swallow a hundred of your play-toys!" Kirk's voice dropped to deadly softness, he brought his own face close to the fat one. "Captains do not kill their crews!"

"... my mother..." the boy mumbled. "She'll fix you."

"Jim, he's about seventeen," McCoy said, passing. Kirk's face changed slowly. He turned away. His mother--

There was a pyrotechnic display from the communication console; the two Vulcans stood back, apparently pleased. The thrum of a super-powerful outgoing signal filled the air briefly, and then the power-pack blew out. The two Vulcans nodded.

The life-support systems began to stir. Kirk's nose twitched to the freshening air as he rejoined his officers.

"The signal has been sent, Captain," said Spock. "And I believe Dr. McCoy's catalytic treatment has been effective."

"Jim, has it occurred to you that we are stranded on a wrecked craft in an alien universe?" said McCoy plaintively.

Kirk's face wrestled with conflicting emotions. "I can't leave that-- and these two at his mercy!"

"Jim, we cannot stay," Spock reminded him.

McCoy grunted.

"There are hypnodrugs in my kit," he said slowly. "But they would wear off. Unless perhaps our science officer's talents include something more permanent?" He and Kirk eyed Spock, who looked grave and reluctant.

"You wouldn't dare!" yelled Kirkland, who had gotten the drift and onto his feet surprisingly fast.

"Oh, wouldn't we!" grinned Kirk wolfishly, and got him in an armlock while McCoy applied the hypospray. The huge boy went passive, goggling. Spock stepped in front of him, touched his head, and "got into" his mind. There was an agonizing moment until he said, "Now, Jim!" And turned the boy's face to Kirk.

"See me?" Kirk rasped. "I'm your conscience! I'll be inside you from now on, wherever you go, whatever you do. You can't get away from me. If you ever mistreat other people again, I'll kick your heart in! Hear me? Look at me! These people over there are your friends. You're grateful to them.



You're going to do what they say, and you're going to take care of them. A captain takes care of his crew. When you get back home-- is there a Space Academy where you come from?"

The boy nodded, zombi-like.

"All right. You're going to apply to the Academy and work your guts out to become a real captain. And if you ever call on your mother or her money again, Big Brother here will tear loose inside you and burn you into little, greasy, ashes. Mark and move!"

McCoy and Spock exchanged glances as Kirk turned away, breathing hard. They released the now-docile Kirkland.

The girl Ura had risen, and came up to Kirk.

"You know," she said dreamily, "I've always wished I could get real space training. But I mean, it's silly, isn't it?... a girl like me..."

Kirk took her shoulders, coming back to himself. "Try it," he said thickly. "Try it. It's not silly. In fact--" he held her off, able to smile again, "I have reason to believe you'd be exceptionally good at communications."

McCoy smiled strainedly.

"And now, Jim, if you're quite ready-- how the hell do we get HOME?"

"There's one course we might try, Captain," said Spock. The aged Dr. Spock nodded. "Since we do not belong in this universe, there may be a natural resistance to having two versions of the same event in the same place at the same time. If so, we could make it easier for this universe to eject us."

"How?"

"A quite primitive expedient. We get in the shuttle and—" he brought his two forefingers together "-- attempt to occupy the same space as the Eldorado. Magister Spock and I believe that is our best chance of forcing ourselves back into our home universe."

"You mean we ram the shuttle into the Eldorado?" Kirk's voice rose.

"Exactly. Hard." said Spock. The old Vulcan nodded serenely.

"Jim, two Vulcans are crazier than one!" McCoy protested, his eye-whites showing round. "It's suicide! What if we don't pop out of this universe?" We crash the shuttle and kill ourselves!"

"The Eldorado might not receive much damage," said Spock. "Can you think of a better way, Doctor?"

"Can you?" Kirk asked Spock.

"No," said Spocks Jr. and Sr. in unison. The old Vulcan made a fist-clashing motion encouragingly to Kirk, like the excellent tutor he was.

"The odds are not good, of course; say--"

"Spare me," said Kirk brusquely, deciding. "Let's go."

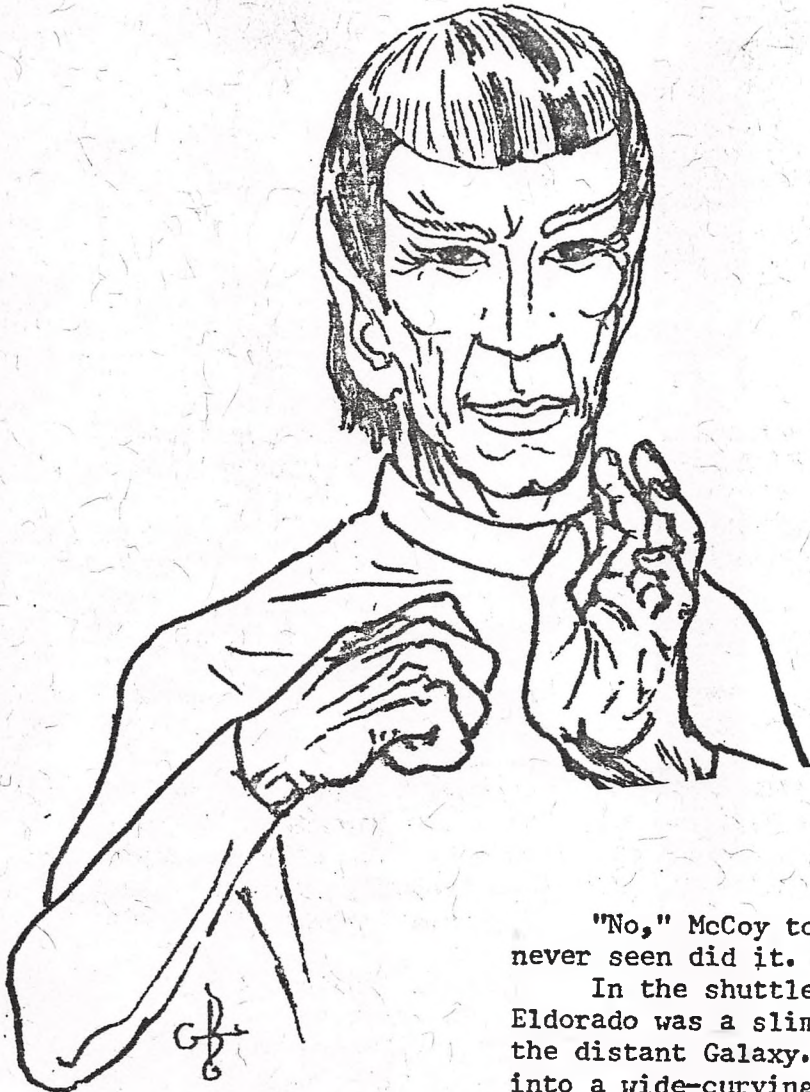
The Enterprise trio started out the airlock, and turned back for a moment to face the three they were leaving, struggling with the unsayable. The girl Ura waved timidly, hopefully. The old Vulcan held up his hand in the Vulcan V of well-wishing, Kirkland was standing a little straighter and seemed to have shed a few ribbons. Kirk gave a deep, monitory grunt and they left.

As they moved across the hull to the shuttle, Kirk stopped and pointed at one of the bodies still floating nearby.

"I did that," he said bleakly, touching helmets with McCoy.

"No," McCoy told him. "A woman you've never seen did it. Kirkland's mother."

In the shuttle, they backed off until the Eldorado was a slim silhouette coasting against the distant Galaxy. Then they accelerated into a wide-curving collision course to ram head-on.



"Will this work, Spock?"

Spock shrugged. "Induction does not yield certainties, Captain." McCoy's eyes summoned Celtic gods as the little shuttle bored head-on toward the yacht.

"The more forceful the impact, the better the chance," said Spock. Kirk slammed the throttle around the dial. The shuttle flamed and leaped forward. The bow-scrolls of the Eldorado loomed in their viewplate, its curlicues and cupids growing larger-- larger-- the men braced. There was a preliminary tearing crack, the lights strobed, time froze and---

They were floating in darkness, alone with a crumpled noseplate.

McCoy exhaled and thumped Spock's shoulder.

"The Enterprise, Captain," said Spock, bringing her-- yes! NCC-- 1701!-- onto the screen. Kirk stared hungrily at his ship, then spoke into the communicator.

Kirk to Engineer. Put a tractor beam on us, Scotty, and bring us in. We're out of fuel."

When they came at last to their own bridge, Kirk's eyes went to the screen where the great Galaxy still floated in darkness.

"Lt. Uhura," he said softly, abstractedly, "are you all right?"

"Yes, Captain," she smiled. "The surgeon corrected something--" her hand brushed her head behind one ear "--I feel fine."

"Good," said Kirk. His face quirked for an instant, recalling Ura's feathered bikini. He turned back to the screen. McCoy was standing implacably at his elbow.

"We'll never see this again," Kirk said. "Our Galaxy a thousand lightyears away... Funny; somehow or other I got out here in all three universes." He grimaced, remembering Kirkland, and snapped back to normal. "You're right, Bones. Time to go home."

He sat down to give orders and McCoy started out past Spock, who was eying the screens with grave regret.

"I married a computer," McCoy muttered. "Crazy Russian fool!"

THE END



sonnet: to Surak from a far-traveled kinsman
by Gail Eirann

The Colonists' Reforms are, I regret
To say, as you have heard: They've boiled down
The gods to One, who wears the Warrior's crown.
In bravery they find all virtues set,
How can you ask me, then, why what I've met
In coming home again has made me frown?
You've chosen One to whom you give renown:
The calm and skillful Smithgod is your pet.
You search for knowledge, you revere control,
You keep the battle-lust out of your heart,
You hold all hatred fenced out of your soul--
It's all as beneficial as you say,
But you and they have both shut out the part
Which values love. Alas! Where can I stay?





AND MAYBE TELL YOU ABOUT PHAEDRA

by Doris Beetem

"Oh, Sarek!" Amanda cried, anguish in her voice. "How could you have done this without even consulting me? Is Spock to have no say in the selection of his own wife?"

Her Vulcan husband activated the voice-tape from the Enterprise, and Amanda listened anxiously to Spock's voice. It sounded obedient, as if Spock had never disobeyed his father's orders, and impassive, as if her son had been able to forget...the other marriage.

"...your choice concerning my marriage, Father, sounds most logical," their son's familiar voice, precise as always, continued. "I am pleased that you have selected my bride from a Service family, and I am sure that T'hyel, the widow of Capt. Satak of the Intrepid, is aware of the circumstances she would face as my wife. You have my permission to make all necessary preparations."

"You see?" Sarek asked gently. "Spock has no objections."

Amanda felt trapped. How could she make her men understand that some things could not, even on Vulcan, be settled only with logic? "T'hyel's too old," she muttered rebelliously.

"Thirty years Spock's senior," her husband replied. "Amanda, we cannot pretend that Spock's human heritage will not shorten his lifespan. T'hyel is a logical choice."

"Logic!" Amanda exclaimed. "What happened to love?"

Sarek, with considerably more understanding in his eyes than she had expected, answered, "That matter is generally left to the two parties concerned."

Spock examined, a trifle nervously, the house of T'hyel and Satak--the house in which, by Vulcan custom, he would live if he elected to wed Satak's widow. One small window at the side of the house was securely shuttered in the ancient ritual of mourning. Otherwise T'hyel would seem to have acclimated to her loss in the four years since Satak's death.

Striding up the walk, he knocked at the hexagonal door. No sooner had he done so than the door opened, to reveal T'hyel standing in the doorway.

He studied her covertly. She was in no way the crone his mother had imagined, but a tall, stately woman with shining blue-black hair knotted into a thick rope. Her face was as unlined as a girl's, and showed a pervasive, almost mask-like calm. Spock had just time to wonder--had she been standing right by the door, examining him--before T'hyel invited him into her home.

She escorted him to a study--possibly Satak's originally, as Spock recognized a few alien touches: a softly glowing mnar sculpture from Rigellius, two matched Andorian picture-plates, and an onyx Terran chess set. The room was comfortable--was it T'hyel who had made it so?

T'hyel came directly to the point. "It is not merely my respect for the will of the elders that makes me agree to re-marriage," she said. "I have learned that I could not endure the loneliness of a life of widowhood."

"Satak, however, was off Vulcan a great deal," Spock ventured cautiously.

"I did not object to that," T'hyel answered. "I had my own interests, my home, and my children, and I was pleased to have privacy. But to know that he will never return...there is a lack." She paused, then continued, "Your own career requires almost continual absence from Vulcan. Many women would find that hard to accept. But I could."

Spock felt slightly embarrassed at this forthright appraisal, and somewhat apprehensive as to where the conversation would lead. He realized suddenly that he was a great deal more used to dealing with human women.

"Your husband was a great man," he said, attempting to change the subject.

"All of Star Fleet regrets his loss and respects his achievements."

T'hyel accepted this praise--and the hint toward a less personal topic--with grace, and they soon passed on to the more theoretical issues of science, Star Fleet, and the role of Vulcan in the Federation. Spock's respect for her intellect grew steadily. Her understanding of these matters was keen, although her own interests seemed to be concentrated in areas closer to home.

Finally Spock unwound sufficiently to suggest a game of chess. T'hyel calculated the time, and said, "Perhaps tomorrow, Spock; it's growing late. I hope that you will stay the night at our home."

Spock answered with a careful nod.

"Then you will eat the evening meal with us. And Spock," she said, rising from her chair, "I would like you to make the acquaintance of my children--especially T'aricia. She is of an age to make logical judgments." And with this oblique reminder of the purpose of his visit, she led Spock out into the main room of the house, where she left him.

Her two children--T'aricia and Sebbis. Sarek had described them,

although not exhaustively, in his message. Sebbis was a young boy still in First School, but T'aricia was already an adolescent. They were likely to be a problem. He was not trained to deal with children, especially another man's. They would hardly be like him, as he'd been as a child. Looking back to the days of his youth, Spock remembered that he had not been at all fond of Vulcan children.

A shadow slid from behind him into his lap. Startled, he turned his head to see who had approached him so noiselessly that he had heard nothing. "T'aricia?" Spock questioned. He saw a young girl, tall enough to have achieved her full height. Her tousled hair, her eyes and her complexion suggested a study in sepia, as her mother reminded him of india ink on white.

"Yes," she admitted. "Mother is fixing dinner, but I wanted to give you this now." And she dropped a ripe purple keevas fruit into his hands.

"But why, if it will spoil my supper?" Spock asked reasonably.

"I want to be first to welcome you," T'aricia answered. "You will stay, won't you--please?"

"Has your mother discussed the...the circumstances with you?"

"Yes."

"Do you approve?" Spock asked bluntly.

The girl's eyelashes fluttered slightly as she studied her answer. "You see," she said awkwardly, seeking for words, "you're a hero. I know that's a strange word for a Vulcan to use--perhaps that's because we've had no heroes for thousands of years. Not since the time of Surak, perhaps. Vulcans had been walking the same tracks that our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used--and then you went out into the galaxy. While Vulcan was being measured foot by foot, you were exploring new planets!"

She paused, concentrating on the Patterns of Emotional Control that Spock had learned at her age. "My father would not have gone into Star Fleet if not for your example."

Spock frowned slightly. "Space killed your father. Have you no regrets, then, for my example?"

She shook her head. "Mother and I read the report. He was needed where he was." Settling on the arm of Spock's chair, T'aricia asked, "What is space like? I'd like to hear about it from your point of view."

Remembering the question that T'aricia had not answered, Spock asked again, "You have not told me, T'aricia--would you approve if your mother married me?"

"I thought I had told you."

Spock shook his head, and took her hand sadly. "It is not necessarily pleasant to live with a...legend."

She took her hand away when T'hyel called, and they both hurried to the evening meal. Apparently the children would not be such a problem as he'd thought. Spock decided that he would continue the conversation some other time.

He slept in the guestroom that night. It was slightly musty and impersonal, as all guestrooms invariably are, but nevertheless seemed almost as familiar as his quarters on the Enterprise, on which he had spent so many years. Spock wondered briefly what it would be like to be sleeping in the master bedroom.



The family seemed to be falling into place. The little boy, Sebbis, whom he'd met at dinner, was well-behaved and obviously worshipped his mother. And the daughter, Spock recollected again with astonishment, apparently worshipped him. All through dinner she had asked eager--and intelligent--questions about his experiences on the Enterprise. She seemed a kindred spirit to himself in many ways; perhaps she had inherited her proclivities for deep space from her father.

T'hyel was everything that he had ever heard that a Vulcan woman should be. She reminded him of a dilithium crystal without a flaw.

Spock turned restlessly, wishing that he knew more about Satak and his life than Star Fleet records could tell him. He had the disturbing impression that he could use Satak's advice. In time he slept.

The morning was bright and sunny, promising for the day that clarity and heat which makes even Vulcans stay indoors. T'hyel, as she had promised, brought out the chessboard and lost three games to him, although not without a struggle each time.

T'hyel pushed the onyx chesspieces to the side of the board and asked, "How long is your leave?"

"I must leave for my rendezvous with the Enterprise in two standard weeks. It is not, I know, much time in which to become acquainted with you and the children, and if possible, I should prefer to visit my parents also."

"My children are willing to accept you already," T'hyel answered quietly. "So am I."

"So soon?" asked Spock, shaken. "How could you possibly make a decision of such gravity this quickly?"

"You must remember," T'hyel answered, "that both T'aricia and I read extensively about you before you arrived."

She was putting the chessmen away with housewifely care and awareness of their value, and so did not see Spock's expression. Amanda would have giggled; Spock himself was having difficulty in preventing his eyebrow from attaining its full, amused arch. He wondered if their research had extended to the sensational newstapes, or if T'hyel had contented herself with Science Academy reports and synopses.

"In any case," T'hyel added, "you must make up your mind during this leave. You may not be able to get back to Vulcan again before the time for marriage."

"Mother?" T'aricia stood in the doorway, gazing into the room as if at a forbidden treat. "You'll be driving Sebbis to class soon. Shall I show Commander Spock our garden while you're gone?"

"Isn't it too hot?" her mother inquired.

T'aricia leaned negligently against the door. "Not if we stay in the shade."

T'hyel looked questioningly at Spock, who said to her, "I suspect that being a parent is much like being the first officer of a starship--with no off-watch. I am quite willing to inspect the garden with your daughter."

The garden was very hot, and the shade of the keevas tree offered little relief, although the pattering of its leaves offered the illusion of a fountain of cool water. Spock, however, resting his back against the tree, was oblivious to any discomfort in the heat, and half-closed his eyes in appreciation. The little courtyard by his parents' house had been much like this, with the addition of a gasping lilac bush in one corner.

"I've been cold so long on the Enterprise that I even forget to shiver," he remarked idly. "I can tell that you, too, appreciate the sunshine."

"How?" she asked.

Spock flicked the top of her nose, where the freckles were, lightly. "Freckling implies solar action, which in turn indicates that you are frequently in the sun, which I assume is because of your own preference. Elementary, my dear T'aricia."

His last sentence was in English, and she asked suspiciously, "Was that a quote?"

"A paraphrase from a Terran personage noted for his logical thought, who unfortunately was totally fictional."

"No!" T'aricia exclaimed, entranced.

"His name was Sherlock Holmes, and he was the creation of an author named Arthur Conan Doyle."

"Did you eat the fruit I gave you? Would you like another one?" T'aricia asked suddenly, pointing upward at the purple clusters over their heads.

"Indeed I did, after dinner last night. It is a delicacy that seldom comes my way."

T'aricia immediately jumped onto the bench girdling the keevas tree, and rustled in the leaves. Her face was well hidden by them when she asked shyly, "Do you like me?"

Spock hardly needed to consider. "Yes, very much."

She emerged out of the foliage with two keevas fruits. "Do you think that I might be able to work with you one day? In Star Fleet, perhaps?"

Spock accepted one of the purple fruits. "Theoretically, it would be possible. Of course, I do not know the plans that may have been made for you."

"You're going to be in Star Fleet for a long time, aren't you?"

"It is one of the major purposes of my existence," Spock answered simply. "I cannot imagine any other life."

"I'd love to hear all about it."

"If you ever join the Fleet," Spock advised her, "that kind of hyperbole will invariably be picked apart by every human you meet."

"How do you know it's hyperbole?" T'aricia asked, and smiled at him with mischievous admiration.

Spock cleared his throat, and said hurriedly, "Since my specialty is astrophysics, I shall tell you of certain odd phenomena demonstrated by that quasar-like formation, Murasaki 312, which the Enterprise..."

In the evenings Spock liked to sit in the main room of the house, where most of the family activities took place, and watch. As yet, he thought, he was not quite a part of them, standing on the thin line between 'guest' and 'family'. It felt rather like the last few visits to his parents' home, but with a considerably less static-laden atmosphere. For the time being he was content to observe, become more familiar to them, and (how McCoy would laugh at the domesticity!) enjoy home cooking.

Tonight T'hyel was sitting at the dinner table working household accounts. Her long brow wrinkled infinitesimally with concentration as she calculated figures into an efficient-looking notebook. She had the true quartermaster's mentality. Doubtlessly the household finances could be worked into a simple computer program, but watching T'hyel's obvious enjoyment of the task, Spock decided not to suggest it.

Sebbis was sprawled on the polished wood of the floor, under the light of the fluorescence-globes. Beneath his hands an odd construction was growing out of plastic parts and copper wire. It was not very clear what it was. Spock had long since concluded that the boy had either the makings of a theoretical engineer or an avante-garde artist, but was not quite sure which.

"What is that?" Spock asked, interest tempered with caution. He recollected one of his own youthful experiments—an experiment with nitrogen tri-iodide which had promptly exploded.

"Just a thing," Sebbis answered, pushing his hair back with a piece of blue plastic. "With flying buttresses. I made it once before, for class, and it won first prize for design."



Spock, successfully resisting the urgings of scientific curiosity, did not pick up the little model to see if its main structural arch was indeed a Moebius strip. "Is there any particular reason why you are building it again?"

"You didn't see it the first time," Sebbis answered diffidently.

"Oh," Before the sound of the syllable died away, the Enterprise's science officer was seated on the floor, assisting in the manufacture of flying buttresses and adding his knowledge of multi-valued alien architecture to the project.

Finally noticing the pair of shiny ribboned boots standing beside him, Spock commented wryly, "The copper wire we have utilized in these models would be sufficient for at least eight conventional radios." Then, looking further up, he saw his lytherette case in T'aricia's hands.

"I was hoping you would play," she said, characteristic enthusiasm in her eyes.

Taking the pale-green-and-gold case, he stood up. Spock had been hard put to find a reason for bringing his lytherette to Vulcan. He was no troubadour, after all, to win his lady-love's affections with song. But now he was glad he had packed it: if it gave T'aricia pleasure, that was reason enough. Swiftly glancing at T'hyel, he asked, "Have you objection?"

T'hyel had finished her computations some time ago. She shook her head in a well-bred fashion and answered, "No, certainly," then added to T'aricia, "Do not touch Commander Spock's possessions without his permission."

T'aricia was daunted only an instant by this rebuke. Then she sat down happily at Spock's side and listened to him fondly brushing the strings. Observing his audience, Spock decided on a melody that would probably not have found favor with Vulcan musicologists. He would even dare to sing. "This is a Terran folk song," he explained softly.

"Three... three... the rivals...

Two, two, the lily-white boys, clothed all in green-oh,

One is one and all alone and ever more shall be so."

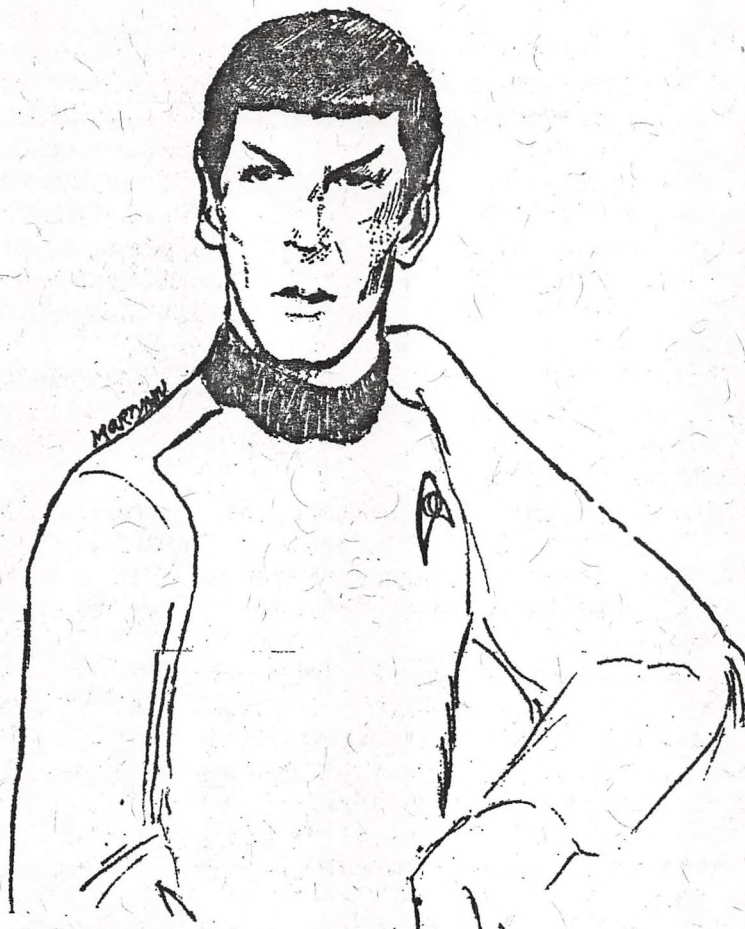
He had no idea what the words meant, but they seemed to evoke something.

The remainder of the visit continued to resemble marriage simulator-training more than romance. There were no rose-scented gardens (McCoy would be appalled) and no dimly-lit rendezvous (Captain Kirk would never understand). On the fourth day before the end of his leave, Spock made his decision. His nervousness was only slightly alleviated by the knowledge that everyone in the household had been paving his way for well over a week.

"T'hyel, have you changed your mind about marrying me?" he asked, just in case.

She shook her head, waiting expectantly.

Examining her features, Spock asked himself if he had ever seen a more beautiful woman. Probably not, he was able to answer--no one but a Vulcan could be anything like T'hyel. "I would like to begin the arrangements for the betrothal," he said carefully. Watching her perfect features, Spock realized that she had been holding her breath; it was an encouraging discovery.



"Yes, please," she answered, and Spock touched her cheek gently with an awkward hand.

They sat silently for several hundred heartbeats, and then T'hyel gave him a rare, tenuous smile. "Checkmate in three moves?"

"No," Spock answered, moving a pawn.

Final arrangements for the betrothal were carried out with almost indecent haste. Several elderly relatives were in attendance who wanted to see him 'safely launched at last'.

Spock was amazed at how similar it was to the last time. There had been amazingly little difference between the scared seven-year-old Spock and the once-bitten-twice-shy adult. Except that T'hyel was nothing like T'pring, Spock reminded himself.

He tried to catch his breath, both elbows on the long, cloth-covered banquet table. There was always an elaborate feast after the betrothal; it was a more favorable time for the in-laws to meet than during the repressed secrecy of koon-ut-kali-fee. Spock wondered guiltily what T'hyel had had to pay for the food. But that, of course, was her business.

A tureen of plomik soup was handed to him, which he passed down hastily, finding that the memories associated with it made the very smell odious to him. His parents were not eating much either; Sarek's doctor had placed him on a low-fat, salt-free diet after his return from Babel, and most Vulcan spices gave Amanda hives. She was still sniffing absently into a handkerchief, after indulging in a brief, inopportune period of sobbing during the ceremony.

On the opposite side of the table, T'hyel was calmly attacking a plateful of stuffed youbash. From time to time she shot sharp looks at

Sebbis, to insure his continued good behavior.

For the first time Spock really felt the age-difference: T'hyel possessed an equilibrium, a serenity that could only be attained after decades of practice. Probably he would never quite have it. But she didn't seem to mind, Spock thought gratefully, knowing for sure now the tenor of her mind.

At the last minute T'aricia had decided not to attend the ceremony, electing instead to supervise the storage of Spock's personal effects, which he was having crated and shipped to his home-to-be. Although not wanting to press the issue, Spock had missed her presence. Well, she would congratulate him when they returned.

The gathering broke up well after dusk. Spock discovered that there were an unbelievable number of relations and family connections to be re-introduced to. He managed to keep a firm grip on T'hyel's hand all the way home, despite driving the aircar.

When he returned to the by-now-well-known guestroom for a greatly desired period of meditation, the crates stacked neatly on either side of the bed were instantly evident. So was T'aricia's presence. Her face seemed pale, compared with the surrounding darkness. She was sitting on the bed, holding one of the smaller boxes.

Spock flicked on the light. "Why sit in the dark?"

"This is the box you marked for Sebbis to have," she replied. "Your glass-shapes are a good present—I can't think of anything he'd like more." She spilled them out onto the bed: large and small brightly-colored fragments of highly flexible glass in assorted shapes.

Spock picked up a green rod absently. "I was seven when my father gave these to me." He twisted the glass into the shape of an Egyptian cross. "I want Sebbis to have them."

T'aricia bent over the glass-shapes also, presently displaying her handiwork to Spock. Taking a quick look at what she had done, Spock guessed, "Four black clover-leaves?"

"They were the footprints of a gigantic hound!" she hissed.

"You have been reading."

"And thinking, too, Spock." She scooped the glass-shapes up and into their box as if impatient with childhood. "I'd like to apply for admittance to Star Fleet Academy."

Spock considered his answer carefully; it would carry great weight, he knew. "Keep it as one possibility out of many, but do not dismiss it, T'aricia. I know that you would be a valuable member of the fleet. But you are very young to choose."

"The youngest age for becoming a midshipman is seventeen Terran years old, and I'll be that in a few months. You left Vulcan for Star Fleet Academy at eighteen."

Spock compressed his lips into a thin line. "My departure was overly precipitous. I was as aware of that at the time as I am now. I would not have left so early if I had not been convinced that it was then or never." He saw that T'aricia was looking at him with troubled eyes. "I am wrong to speak of this. There is no need to burden you with my past problems."

"I don't mind," she answered softly, then continued, "But with me it wouldn't have to be a permanent decision. I could come back to Vulcan and do even better in the Science Academy after the experience."

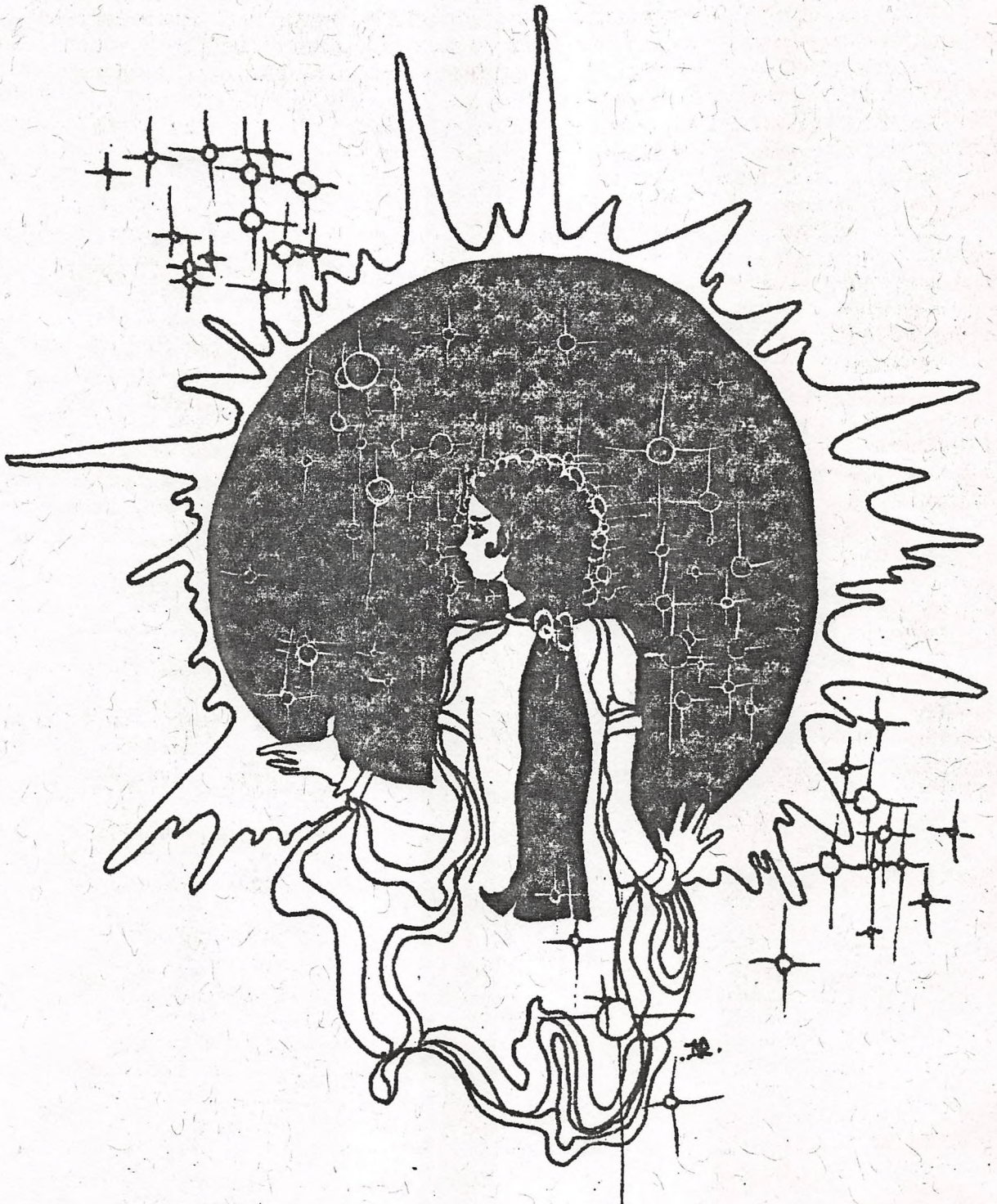
"Star Fleet Academy does have an excellent teaching staff in the field of inorganic chemistry," Spock admitted slowly.

"You know what my field of study is!" T'aricia said, delighted.

"Of course I've found out, and I am pleased. But..."

"I'll dedicate my life to science—I won't marry—I'll become a scientist in the fleet, and maybe—"

"Calm," Spock commanded, and T'aricia instantly obeyed him.



"Do you think," T'aricia continued more steadily, "that when I complete Star Fleet training, I might be assigned to your ship? I would...I would like to be with you."

"That is another matter," Spock replied. "Service on the Enterprise is dangerous. It is not merely a sample of Fleet experience, it could mean death. I doubt if T'hyel would allow it."

T'aricia drew a long breath. "There would be humans on the Enterprise as young as me--maybe younger. And it is not my mother's decision. It's yours."

Surprised, Spock considered the new parameters of the situation. "That's true. I don't know what to say--except that you may go to Star Fleet Academy, if you are determined to do so. When you complete your training, I will attempt to find you a position on the Enterprise, if it is still your desire."

"I know it will be,"

Suddenly conscious of his weariness, Spock said, "Let me rest then."

T'aricia floated out of the room. Spock slumped onto the bed. Reminiscently, he fished out the Egyptian cross from the abandoned box of glass-shapes. Tomorrow, he'd have to give them to Sebbis.

Spock spent well over a hundred credits on subspace radiograms in order to discover alternate transport schedules, and managed to delay his departure two precious days. They disappeared almost instantaneously, and for the first time he found himself returning too quickly to his uniform and his ship.

Somehow he found time to discuss T'aricia's ambitions with his wife. "I do not wish to dispute your orders, but are you not being overly precipitous in arranging to send T'aricia to Star Fleet Academy?" T'hyel asked, a faint edge of worry in her voice.

"It is her own wish. She is obviously quite determined."

"It is a wish of very recent origin, Spock. She has never mentioned it to me,"

"Perhaps because I am the one in the Fleet."

T'hyel saw in the determined set of his shoulders that Spock was re-fighting a very old battle. She shrugged almost humanly and acquiesced.

Goodbyes were said on the small landing field where Spock was to meet the first of the three ships that would take him to the Enterprise. T'hyel's leavetaking, naturally, was a formal one. "Be sure of me until you return."

"You know I am," Spock answered.

Sebbis simply looked up proudly at him and said, "Goodbye, Father."

T'aricia stared fiercely at him. "I will see you soon." She seemed almost ready to burst into tears; fortunately, Spock observed, T'hyel did not notice.

There were conventional words to say, but none of them seemed suitable. Spock struggled to think of something they would all understand. Finally he ruffed Sebbis' hair, to that young man's dismayed enjoyment, returned T'hyel's crossed-hands gesture of affectionate parting, and hugged T'aricia.

"You are all...very dear to me," Spock said painfully, determined to speak the words while he could. Star Fleet duty was very hazardous, after all. Then he turned abruptly and headed toward the tiny tradeship, a little afraid of his new family's reaction to his intemperate words.

"You are very dear..." Both T'hyel and T'aricia mouthed his words silently, not displeased.

THE END



STRANGERS WHEN WE MEET

by Judith Brownlee

"Captain, there's a call coming in from the Saratoga."
Kirk swiveled his command chair around and looked at Uhura. "Put it on the main screen, lieutenant."

Attention on the bridge of the USS Enterprise turned to the forward viewing screen, as the communications officer's efforts were rewarded by a picture of the bridge of the Enterprise's sister starship, the Saratoga. Centered in the view was the Saratoga's Tanzanian first officer.

"Commander N'wambe," said Captain Kirk, "how is your ship?"

N'wambe grinned. "Thanks to your Mr. Scott she's in much better shape. It seems we have warp one. Not any more than that, but we will get to Star Base 15 much sooner than we would have under impulse power. Mr. Scott has just beamed back to the Enterprise and we are ready to leave Rampart."

"Are all your people on board?"

"Aye," said N'wambe, taking a list handed into the view. He checked it quickly. "Everyone's ashore that's staying ashore."

Kirk nodded. "I'll tell the garrison that you're leaving."

N'wambe stopped smiling. "She knows, Captain Kirk. I just spoke to her."

"I see," said Kirk. "I'll be speaking to her anyway, Commander. Good luck."

N'wambe hesitated. "I regret we couldn't talk her into staying with the ship."

Kirk shrugged. "Her reasons were logical, of course."

N'wambe threw his hands up in exasperation. "Allah deliver me from her logic!" Kirk smiled sympathetically. N'wambe frowned and said, "Logic aside, I'm concerned about her. I'd like to ask a favor, sir. Would you...ah!...I don't know...keep an eye on her while you are here?"

Startled, Kirk shifted in his chair and then gave N'wambe a sceptical look.

"I know, captain," said N'wambe. "How well I know! But could you do something?"

As Kirk raised an exasperated hand, the elevator door opened. First Officer Spock entered the bridge and went to his computer station.

"Mr. Spock," said Kirk with satisfaction.

"Yes, captain?" responded the Vulcan, turning to Kirk.

"Ah...is Mr. Scott back on board?"

"Yes, sir. He says the Saratoga is capable of reaching Star Base 15 within several weeks now."

Kirk smiled at Spock. "Thank you." He turned back to N'wambe. "I think I have an idea after all, Commander. I think there is something I can do."

N'wambe sighed. "Good. Thank you, captain."

Kirk waved a hand. "Good luck." The picture disappeared. "Uhura, will you get me Captain T'pelle at Rampart Base?"

Once again the forward viewing screen received a transmission, this time from the planet the Enterprise was orbiting. Seated before a desk in an austere room was T'pelle, captain of the Saratoga.

"Captain," Kirk said without preamble, "your ship is leaving."

The Vulcan woman paused for a split second, then spoke. "Thank you, Captain Kirk. My first officer had so informed me."

"I know how you feel, captain. At least I know how I'd feel if it were the Enterprise that had been attacked and had to limp off to dry dock repairs without me."

"Indeed."

Kirk cleared his throat. "Yes...well. As you know, the Enterprise will remain here for a few days to make sure you're set up below without any problems. How is Dr. Wycoff's party settling in?"

"The archaeologists seem to be satisfied with our temporary measures so far. They have already begun their work."

"Will you be needing any personnel from the Enterprise for your staff?"

T'pelle shook her head negatively. "The garrison is functioning quite well with volunteers from the crew of the Saratoga, Captain Kirk. A sufficient number declined to accept the leave offered by Star Fleet to my crew. The balance of the crew and Commander N'wambe should have no trouble moving the Saratoga to Star Base 15. We will all, of course, be relieved

of this garrison duty when the Saratoga is spaceworthy again."

"I'd like permission to grant shore leave to my crew, Captain T'pelle."

T'pelle raised an eyebrow and regarded Kirk for a moment. "There is, of course, very little here or anywhere on Rampart designed to function as shore leave facilities. However, it is possible that your crew might find the ruins interesting."

"In any case, Captain T'pelle, you've got a real, live planet down there with fresh air and bushes. I think most of my people would consider that sufficient shore leave facilities. Thank you."

"A reminder to your people not to disturb Dr. Wycoff and his people would be in order, I believe."

Kirk suppressed a grimace of annoyance. "Of course, captain."

The viewing screen faded.

Kirk drummed his fingers on his chair arm, and took a moment to clear away the aggravation the female captain always instilled in him. "Vulcans!" he muttered under his breath, and then, "Women!" This invocation of his two nemeses seemed to clear the air for him, and he exhaled sharply. Back to business.

"Mr. Spock."

The First Officer turned his chair to Kirk. "Yes, captain?"

Kirk gestured him over, and Spock came to the side of the command chair.

"I'm about to announce that shore leave assignments are available for Rampart."

Kirk waited in silence for Spock to respond. Finally, the Vulcan said,

"Yes, sir," somewhat quizzically.

"I thought I'd give you first choice."

Spock looked at Kirk. "I had not planned on requesting shore leave, captain."

"You hadn't?" Kirk said, startled.

"No." Spock put his hands behind his back.

"But..." Kirk was stopped by the look in Spock's eyes. "I see." Kirk rubbed his mouth. "I think you should go down to Rampart, Mr. Spock. I'd like a first hand report on Dr. Wycoff's arrival and set-up."

Spock raised an eyebrow. He'd heard T'pelle's transmission along with the rest of the bridge crew. "Captain," he said, "I fail--"

"You will take leave, mister," Kirk said brusquely. "If you feel insufficiently occupied in checking out the Wycoff party, I have another assignment."

Spock waited.

Kirk coughed. "I have been asked," he said in a low voice, "to keep an eye on Captain T'pelle. Her first officer is concerned about...her mental state."

The presumptuousness of Kirk's statement pushed Spock's brows right into his hairline. "Captain," he began, "Vulcans..."

"I know, I know," said Kirk, still pitching his voice low. "You people don't have mental states! All right...this is unofficial...from your point of view probably unnecessary...but at least go down there and prove N'wambe wrong."

Spock thought for a second, then complied. "Very well, captain."

Kirk sighed with relief. "Take the first party to beam down. You've got a three-day pass--use all of it." Spock nodded. Kirk felt his annoyance sliding back. "I'd think," he said in a hoarse whisper, "that you'd be interested in seeing her after all this time."

Spock gave Kirk a look the captain had seen many times. He knew it meant, "I am a Vulcan," and all that that entails.

"Live long and prosper, T'pelle." Spock's Vulcan accent was flawless as usual. His face was totally schooled. There was no sign in him that he had



not seen the woman before him for many months.

T'pelle studied his blank face and unflinching eyes for a brief moment and then slowly raised her hand to answer his greeting. "Peace and long life, Spock...bond-mate." She was gratified to notice a tiny flicker of acknowledgement in his face. She gestured away from the temporary transporter landing stage he had arrived on.

Spock stepped down, and the two of them began to walk slowly side by side toward the temporary building a short distance away. A Terran on-looker might have said that they strolled. T'pelle walked steadily, her arms and hands hanging by her sides, immune to the Terran problem of what to do with self-conscious hands. Spock, too, walked slowly and steadily, his back straight and his hands clasped at the small of his back. His eyes were rapidly taking in the surroundings.

T'pelle knew what he was doing, although she was not looking directly at him. I can almost, she thought, hear the clicks as he takes in everything...like a

computer filling data banks: building -click- rocks -click- woman -click- ruins -click- sun -click---

"It is good to see you again, Spock, after all this time," T'pelle said, still walking, still looking straight ahead. Spock flicked a glance at her. Well, she thought, he would not find her unschooled either. She continued, her brow smooth, her body relaxed as she walked.

As they neared the building, she spoke. "May I offer you refreshment? I have some particularly fine Terran tea that I have become proficient at preparing according to the rituals of an island in the northern hemisphere of the planet."

Spock raised an eyebrow and looked at her. "The Japanese tea ceremony has interesting points. Sulu has discussed some of the requirements with me."

T'pelle shook her hand at him. "The ritual I make reference to is from another island in the northern hemisphere...Britain, I believe it is called. The heart of the ritual is the necessity of a warm tea-pot."

Spock nodded. "It should be interesting. I shall be pleased to accept your invitation."

The tea was pleasantly hot and had an invigorating aroma that Spock sniffed with pleasure. T'pelle was busy preparing her cup, but she noticed that little chink in his armor. With a tiny smile, she set the tea-pot down and picked up her cup. "What will you be doing here on Rampart, Spock?" she asked.

"Captain Kirk has asked me to assist Dr. Wycoff," he replied, all business again. "I am also...taking advantage of the shore leave arrangements."

"You may find it illuminating to explore the ruins. There is so much

here, covering the entire planet, that the archaeologists will be here for years. The reports you could file on what you find and surmise will be of greater value than those of the rest of us, I am sure."

Since he agreed with her statement, Spock felt T'pelle's remark needed no reply. They drank their tea in silence.

Spock lowered his cup and looked at her. "What happened to your ship?"

She looked at him questioningly.

"I prefer primary sources," he replied.

T'pelle put her cup back on its saucer, and stood up. She found it difficult to speak of action with her body at rest. As she began the story of the wounding of the *Saratoga*, her muscles began to wind tight with battle attention all over again.

"We approached Rampart in the standard routine of discovery, mapping, and exploration. The solar system had been noted at a distance, but no direct approach had been made. Of the five planets around the single primary, only the second one--this one--was M-type. For convenience then, we came here first. We were interested to note the vast technological ruin covering almost the entire surface of the planet. We began to swing around in standard orbits calculated to cover the surface with sensor probes. Science Officer Johnson reported that she was beginning to receive strong sensor readings indicating a great deal of energy activity coming from a localized area."

"Which area?" Spock interjected.

T'pelle gestured to the floor. "Here. That is why I decided to set up Rampart Base here." Spock nodded and she continued her story.

"I called for the computer to analyze the energy readings and provide a description of their nature. Lt. Commander Johnson had just begun to key that request into the ship's computer when we were hit by a rapidly spaced series of energy beams from the planet surface."

T'pelle's voice stopped for a moment as she paced her small office, re-living in memory the self-recriminations she had made later. Why had the shields been down? Why had she proceeded on the assumption that the planet was harmless? With a negative shake of her hand she tossed off these thoughts and went on with the story.

"I had made the erroneous assumption that the planet was uninhabited and harmless. As a consequence, the ship sustained considerable damage before we were able to deploy the shields. We had lost warp power completely. The shields protected us from further damage, but each hit sustained was draining our power. The energy beams continued to pour up from the surface. I took the chance of remaining in orbit while trying to locate the defenders of the planet to convince them of our peaceful intentions. Another error. It turned out that there were no inhabitants, and had not been for some time. Lt. Commander Johnson is to be commended for her use of the sensor system. She was able to pinpoint the source of the beams and when we were unable to affect it with phaser fire, which had weakened considerably, Weapons was able to obtain one effective photon torpedo which was used to eliminate the fire from the planet."

Silence fell. T'pelle had ceased her pacing abruptly with her back turned to Spock. Spock sat for a moment waiting for her to continue, but began to understand that she would not. He sat down his cold cup.

"The Terrans have a saying, Captain," he said to her from his chair.

"To err is human." He knew what she would answer.

"I am not human."

"Indeed," Spock answered, "and I am." These words, which he would have fought against saying to any other, came easily in her presence. She turned to him and stared wordlessly at him.

"I think I am beginning to grasp an understanding," Spock said, "of that



part of me. I must admit some things of value in some of human philosophy." He rose and went to her side. "The point is, one must learn to live with one's errors and accept the fact that they will be made, despite our greatest efforts. Consider, please, that you were forced to make command decisions in the absence of complete data. The Terrans have a word for that, too. It is gamble, and a gamble in most senses cannot be predicted by logical means."

Her eyes softened, and the tightness began to relax from her body. "Thank you," she replied.

Spock tried awkwardly for an ending to this sharing of feeling. "I... would be interested in seeing the mechanism which controlled the automated defense battery. I presume it is nearby. Is there much to see, or was it destroyed?"

T'pelle shook her hand at him in lieu of words for a second, then said, "No, it is compar-

atively intact. I will guide you."

Rampart's sun beat down on the two Vulcans from a cloudless sky as they picked their way across the rubble that was all that was left of the civilization that once flourished on the planet. They did not notice the heat.

T'pelle stepped on a tilted stone which gave a lurch and almost threw her to the ground. She recovered her balance quickly as Spock watched silently, and they continued on.

"The underground entrance is not far from here," said T'pelle after a moment.

Spock nodded, his attention on his footing. "It is logical for them to have put their defense mechanisms underground."

"A considerable portion of their civilization was also underground. This above ground construction is the older, and I suspect much of it was already decaying while the planet was still inhabited."

Spock paused a moment and looked around slowly. "Yes," he replied, "I can see that now. This is not recent destruction."

T'pelle had waited a few steps ahead while he stopped. He now continued to her side. He stopped again when she did not turn to continue walking.

"I suspect," she said to him, "that your visit to Rampart has another purpose than assisting Dr. Wycoff. His staff is quite sufficient."

Spock looked around at the ruins again, squinted up at the sun, and then looked down at her. "I will admit that it seemed appropriate to take the opportunity to contact you again."

"I see," T'pelle replied. She turned slowly and again began picking her way carefully through the fallen stones. Spock followed.

Finally T'pelle shook her head and said, "It was not necessary. Many bond-mates do not meet again after bonding until they face each other at koon-ut-kali-fee."

Spock halted, struck by a memory. T'pring's child's face close to his...chubby children's hands touching minds...cool, dim Covenant Room filled with people...T'pring's proud, cold, achingly beautiful face... "Kali fee!"

Deliberately, he began walking again. "That, of course, is true," he said. They were walking side by side now. The footing had suddenly cleared and they were moving down a long, smooth area of apparent paving.

"It is also true," Spock continued, "that many bond-mates know each other well and are even professional colleagues before they..."

His voice faltered and died away. T'pelle looked up at him and saw his mouth clamped shut, jaw muscles clenching.

"Before they mate, you mean," she said, still looking at him.

He flushed slightly. "Yes."

I had forgotten that about him, T'pelle thought, slightly dismayed. Suddenly she halted and put out a hand to stop Spock. "Look," she said softly, nodding to the wall that had gradually risen on each side of them as their pathway had slowly sunk lower in the ground. They were now on almost a ramp leading down into the lower levels of the ruins. The walls on either side of them were covered with arabesquing figures and designs.

T'pelle moved away from Spock toward the wall. "I always stop here when I come this way." She reached out and touched the wall delicately.

Spock began to examine the wall more closely. After a moment he said, "Fascinating."

T'pelle turned to him eagerly. "You see what they were doing?"

Spock walked closer to the design and attempted to follow a theme of sorts, his finger brushing the colors ever so often. "It would appear they were attempting to express some of the basic laws of physics as...an artform, I presume, would be the closest description."

"Yes," T'pelle said, her face shining. "Look here..." she pointed out another theme..."and here..."swiftly her finger traced another curling design. "Do you see?" She turned to him with more excitement than Spock had ever seen in a Vulcan.

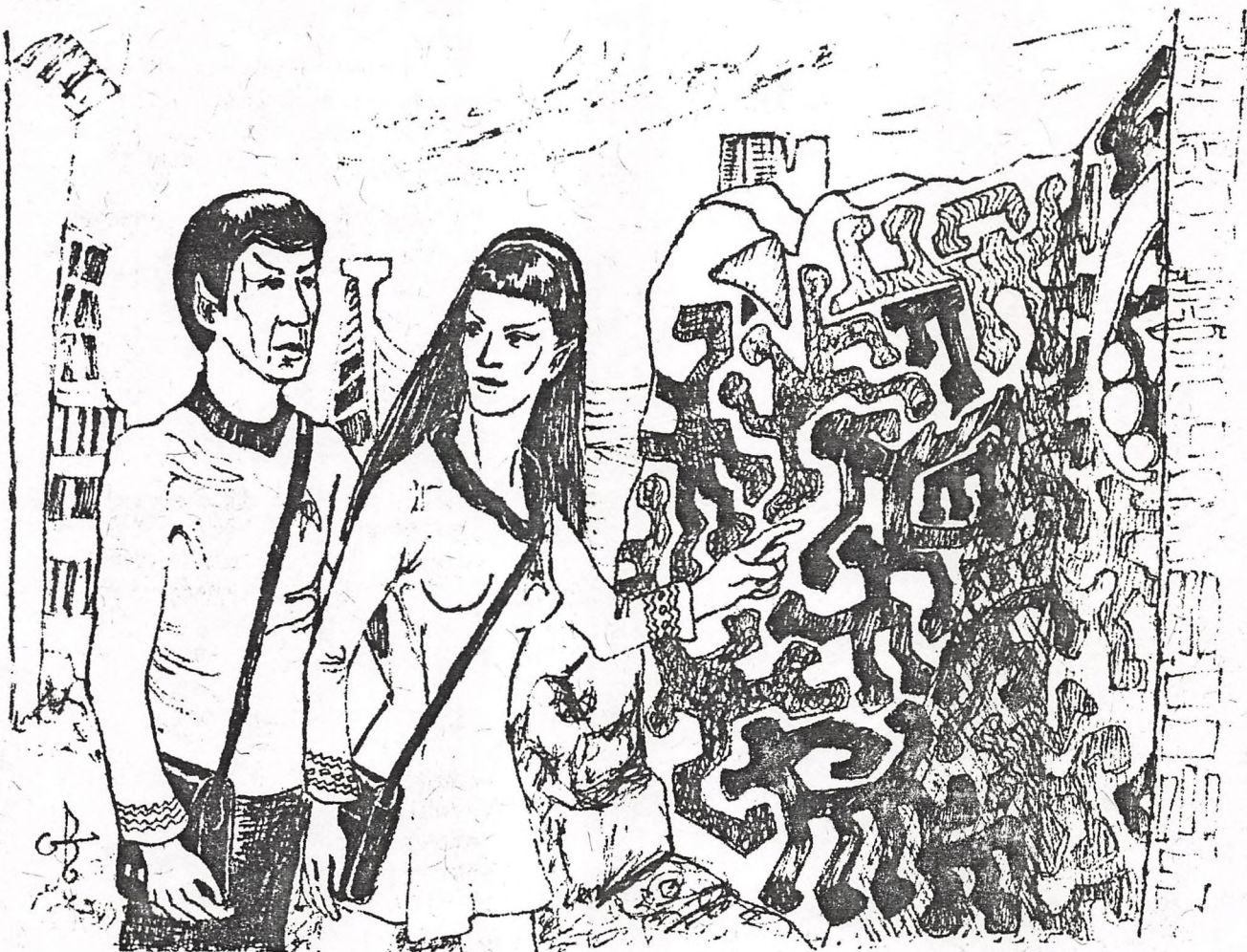
Spock pulled his hand back from the wall and stared at her. "Scientific enthusiasm is, of course, a necessary ingredient to the most productive research." His voice echoed strangely in his ears as he remembered how many times his father had said that to him...and he could not keep his memory from adding the rest of it in his head...Always remember, however, that it is an emotion, which can color and distort your work. As Spock remembered his own agony of control, his face grew stony and he did not see the light fade from T'pelle's face.

"Of course," T'pelle said. They began to walk down the ramp again. After a moment of strained silence, T'pelle spoke again, watching the design slide by them as they walked. "It reminds me a little of Vulcan...science and art blended to the benefit of both...like the dance."

After another moment of silence, Spock said, "Do you dance?"

In reply she gave him the gesture of assent.

"I would be interested," he said, "in observing your interpretations."



T'pelle nodded. "I would be honored," she replied. She looked up in the growing darkness of the descending rampway at his rigid profile and felt a deepening dismay. Somehow she knew he would disapprove of her interpretations... they were too unconventional. Suddenly she remembered her mother, face faintly creased with distaste... You make a passion of the quest for knowledge, daughter...

Spock was startled when T'pelle suddenly hurried some distance ahead of him, then stopped to examine the murals while he caught up. He took his torch from his belt and switched it on. It was foolish to move rapidly in this area without illumination, he thought sternly.

"How much further do we go?" he asked when he reached her, stabbing her face and long black hair with the light of his torch.

"Only a little further," she said, and once again moved ahead of him into the darkness.

Spock felt a coldness in his middle. This...uncontrol...was unsettling. Especially in a Vulcan.

Spock put his torch on a fallen stone in the littered hallway, and set it for general illumination. T'pelle did the same with hers, leaving it on a wall ledge.

Spock began taking in the hallway in his usual manner.

T'pelle went to a nearby door which had been pushed open. "This hallway is apparently the beginning of administrative control offices, computer installations...all connected with the defense system. The actual assault weapons were destroyed by the photon torpedo, but they appeared to be based

essentially on the same principle as the phaser. Luckily, they had their control systems at a distance from the weaponry itself."

"Yes, that arrangement is quite reasonable."

"Not all sophonts are reasonable."

"Indeed."

Spock wondered down the hall, peering into opened doorways, trying to decipher the graceful lettering of the signs. T'pelle followed along, providing explanations when she had them, suppositions when she didn't.

Spock had reached one closed doorway that seemed promising. "Why isn't this door open?"

T'pelle came up beside him. "Lt. Commander Johnson noticed some unusual energy emanations from this area, and I decided it would be best to leave the opening of this room to Dr. Wycoff."

Spock took out his tricorder and its whistle bounced eerily off the close walls as he took a reading. "Interesting."

"Spock..."

"Yes?" He turned half-way to T'pelle, still holding the tricorder.

"I was...pleased with your betrothal gift."

Startled, Spock did not move for a second. Then, deliberately, he shut the tricorder and stowed it again.

T'pelle had opened her kit and now brought out the idic Spock had sent her. She dangled it from her fingers and let it twist and glitter in the torchlight.

Reflectively, Spock reached out and took the pendant in his fingers.

It was a link between them.

Spock touched her face with his other hand. "I am glad you are pleased," he said gruffly.

When Lt. Commander Louise Johnson turned the corner and walked into the torchlight, she thought at first that she had accidentally stumbled into a rendezvous of two Terran members of the crew. Although the man only touched the woman's face, there was an intensity there that spoke of more.

"Oh, my," she drawled in her embarrassment, "y'all 'scuse me!" She had started to duck back behind the corner, when she realized who the woman was. That stopped her retreat.

"Captain," she said in amazement.

T'pelle put the idic back in her kit, unaware of her officer's embarrassment. "Miss Johnson," she said, "I am pleased you are here. I wanted Commander Spock to meet you."

Louise came forward and looked at Spock appraisingly.

"Spock," T'pelle said to him, "this is Lt. Commander Johnson, my Science Officer. You will remember I mentioned her excellent work with the sensors."

Louise began to raise her hand to her shoulder, and Spock thought for a moment that she, like many Terrans, knew enough of Vulcan customs to salute him in the Vulcan manner. He raised his hand to answer her.

When Louise's hand reached her shoulder, her fist popped open wide, fingers akimbo.

"Hi!" she said brightly.

Spock's fingers had already formed the Vulcan salute. Stunned, he said nothing for a moment. He tried to drop his hand unobtrusively, and failed. "Uh...hi," he replied, trying to follow her lead.

"Commander Spock," she said, smiling. "Ah've heard a lot about you." She poked him playfully on the chest on the last word.

"And I," Spock replied, his composure regained, "have also heard a great deal about you. I understand you are very competent with your sensor batteries."

Louise smiled. "Commander," she said, "my sensors are always on probe, and my batteries are always charged." She laughed excessively at her own remark.

T'pelle stood in a wide stance with her arms crossed. She raised an eyebrow.

"Commander Spock," Louise said to him, "It was nice meetin' you, but I got to get on back upstairs." She patted the tricorder slung on her trim hip. "I got a whole mess of pictures and goodies here that I'm just dying to discuss with the computer." She nodded at T'pelle. "See you later, captain." Without waiting for an answer she trotted away out of sight.

Spock looked at T'pelle rather sceptically.

"I will admit," T'pelle said, "that first impressions of Miss Johnson are deceiving. Her demeanor, I am told, is typical of her birthplace...the Terran province of Texas. She is, however, an excellent officer."

"Indeed," muttered Spock, looking away into the darkness where the Terran woman had disappeared.

Louise Johnson's efficient jog soon carried her to the surface of Rampart and on into the garrison headquarters building. Many eyes watched her appreciatively as she bounced by. Those of lesser rank sighed and turned back to their work. Fellow officers watched a little longer, but also turned back to their work. Science Officer Johnson had a reputation for more than her efficient use of sensor batteries. Several of the watching males had effectively burned their fingers on her. Louise was a woman known to prefer the role of the hunter, rather than the pursued.

She continued down the main hallway of the small building and turned in abruptly at the communications room. She came to a halt before a ruddy, blonde lieutenant in the red tunic of Security.

"Rieman!" she exclaimed. "What're you doin' in communications?"

The short, but stocky lieutenant grinned and folded his arms. "Well, I tried to find an alien menace, really I did, Miss Science Officer." Suddenly he fell into a gun-fighter crouch, hand hovering over his phaser at his belt. Slowly he scanned the room. Just as suddenly he broke the pose and popped upright again, laughing. "But the aliens wouldn't cooperate." He grinned broadly at her as she pursed her lips in exasperation and tilted her head sceptically at him. "Uh...well, yeah," he said, kicking the floor. "Seems like communications was all they could find for me to do at the moment."

Louise smiled sweetly and he could see the old cobra coiled behind her eyes. "Well, lieutenant--honey--do y'all suppose you could get li'l ole me a line to the Enterprise computer?"

Rieman whistled and seated himself at the communications panel. "Yes, ma'am! When you start pouring on that Texas corn, a man learns to leap." Quickly he punched in the proper keys. He listened for a moment to his receiver and then turned to her. "Enterprise says stand by."

"Humph," she said, and sat down on the edge of the counter and folded her arms. "That could go on for some time."

Rieman ran his eyes down her figure and did his daily silent 'va-va-voom'. "Waddaya know new?" he asked, reaching for a lukewarm cup of coffee sitting above the panel. "Any scuttlebutt for your old drinking buddy?"

Louise remained silent for a moment and looked back over her shoulder at the hall. "Yeah," she finally said. "What do you know about Commander Spock?" Rieman breathed deeply and stretched back in the chair, putting one hand behind his head. "Lessee--first officer of the Enterprise, also Science Officer. Vulcan-Human hybrid. Raised on Vulcan. One of the first to join the Fleet. Often unofficially called 'best first officer in the fleet'. Past due for his own command...who knows why."

"Have you met him?"

"Briefly."

"What's he like?"

Rieman waved a hand. "Vulcan to a T...more than any other I've met--"

including the captain." He sat up, thumping his feet on the floor. "Say, what's all this? I asked you for news, now I'm getting the old pump. Why do you want to know all this?"

"Well," Louise said, dropping her voice. "I walked in on them--down there," she pointed to the floor. "I mean, I really walked in on them."

"Spock and...the captain."

Louise nodded. "I know it's hard to believe, but I really think our iceberg captain has finally got the hots for a man."

Rieman whistled and settled back in his chair.

"And I must give her credit for good taste," Louise continued. "He's the tall, dark, brooding type--my favorite." She tapped a finger on her arm. "It would be interestin' to give her a run for her money."

Rieman took a gulp of the nasty coffee and grimaced. "Don't bite off more than you can chew this time, honey."

Johnson looked at him sharply. "Make another check on my computer tie-in, mister."

Rieman put the cup down with elaborate slowness. "Yes...ma'am," he said impudently, and slowly began punching the keys.

Louise watched him coolly for a moment and then began digging out the tapes she had made below with her tricorder.

Spock pulled himself away from the mass of circuits he had been examining. They had been revealed when he had carefully removed a wall plate next to the unopened doorway that he had inquired about several hours earlier. Not daring to actually touch anything he had spent several dizzying hours trying to trace them visually. With a sudden sense of fatigue, he sat down on a nearby slab of wall that had fallen into the hallway.

It is a good idea, he thought, to give my eyes a rest, considering the bad light. He then realized that the torch had been slowly fading for some time. He picked it up and fitted the adapter base to his phaser and charged it. The light level flared up. Much better, he thought.

He rose and leaned against the wall next to the open panel, resting his weight on his forearm. He stared at the circuits again. They were almost beginning to make sense.

"Hi!"

Spock came very close to be startled, and had to pause for a fraction of a second to compose himself before turning.

"Lt. Commander Johnson. You--that is, I did not hear you approaching." Spock found the blonde Terran woman somewhat disconcerting. When she looked at him, she seemed to...expect something, something beyond him.

"Really?" Louise smiled. "Ah'm surprised. I'd think you could hear very well indeed."

"Yes," replied Spock. "I can. That is why I am at a loss to explain it."

Louise moved closer to him. "Perhaps it was that fascinatin' can of worms." She nodded at the open circuits. "This wasn't here before."

"Yes, that is undoubtably why I did not hear you." He peered into the panel once again. "I discovered this some time ago. I suspect it will answer some questions about this doorway and its odd energy readings."

Louise looked around. "Where's the captain?"

"She is down one of the adjacent corridors, examining the mrrals. I suspect these circuits were intended to control a protective device. The circuitry for that is obvious, but what kind of protection?" He paused still looking at the circuits. "I am quite sure you will have no difficulty finding her."

"Commander Spock."

Spock looked at her. "Yes?" He still stood before the panel, forearm

on the wall.

She slid between him and the wall so their faces were only inches apart. "I'm not on duty now."

Spock's first impulse was to move, to avoid touching. But for some reason he decided not to. He raised an eyebrow instead, and said, "Oh?"

"Yes." Louise seemed to snuggle back against the wall, fitting her back to it. "And there's somethin' I've always wanted to know." She noticed disappointedly that the Vulcan did not make the usual response of looking at her body. She continued on with more determination. "Why would a Vulcan join Star Fleet?"

He looked back at her without response.

What a marvelously stony face, she thought. She raised her hand to touch his face. Just when her finger tip would have touched his cheek, he pulled back slightly. She froze her hand and looked up in his eyes, challenging. When his eyes remained brooding and uncommunicative, she moved her hand again. He allowed her to touch him.

"How warm your face is," she murmured.

"The Vulcan body temperature is..."

She pulled her hand away and waved it slightly. "Spare me the details." She still remained intimately close to him.

Spock was startled to feel her knee touch his. Why do I remain, he asked himself, but did not move. She reminded him of...of several women. He cleared his throat.

"It may be assumed," he said, "that there are as many different reasons for a Vulcan joining Star Fleet as there are Vulcans who want to join Star Fleet. I know, however, only my own reason."

Louise put her hand under his upraised arm and hung her fingers on his bicep. "Which is?"

"Personal." He still did not change position.

"I see." She began to run her hand up and down the muscle of his arm. "Commander," she continued, "I wonder if you would be interested in assisting me in some personal research."

Spock began to be aware that he was picking up the fringes of her emotional state. It intrigued him.

"What is the nature of this research, Miss Johnson?"

"Louise," she breathed at him. She pulled away from the wall and leaned toward him, her face almost touching his. "It occurs to me that it might be interesting to observe the nature of a kiss between two alien species." Her free hand came up to his chest and she looked up at him expectantly.

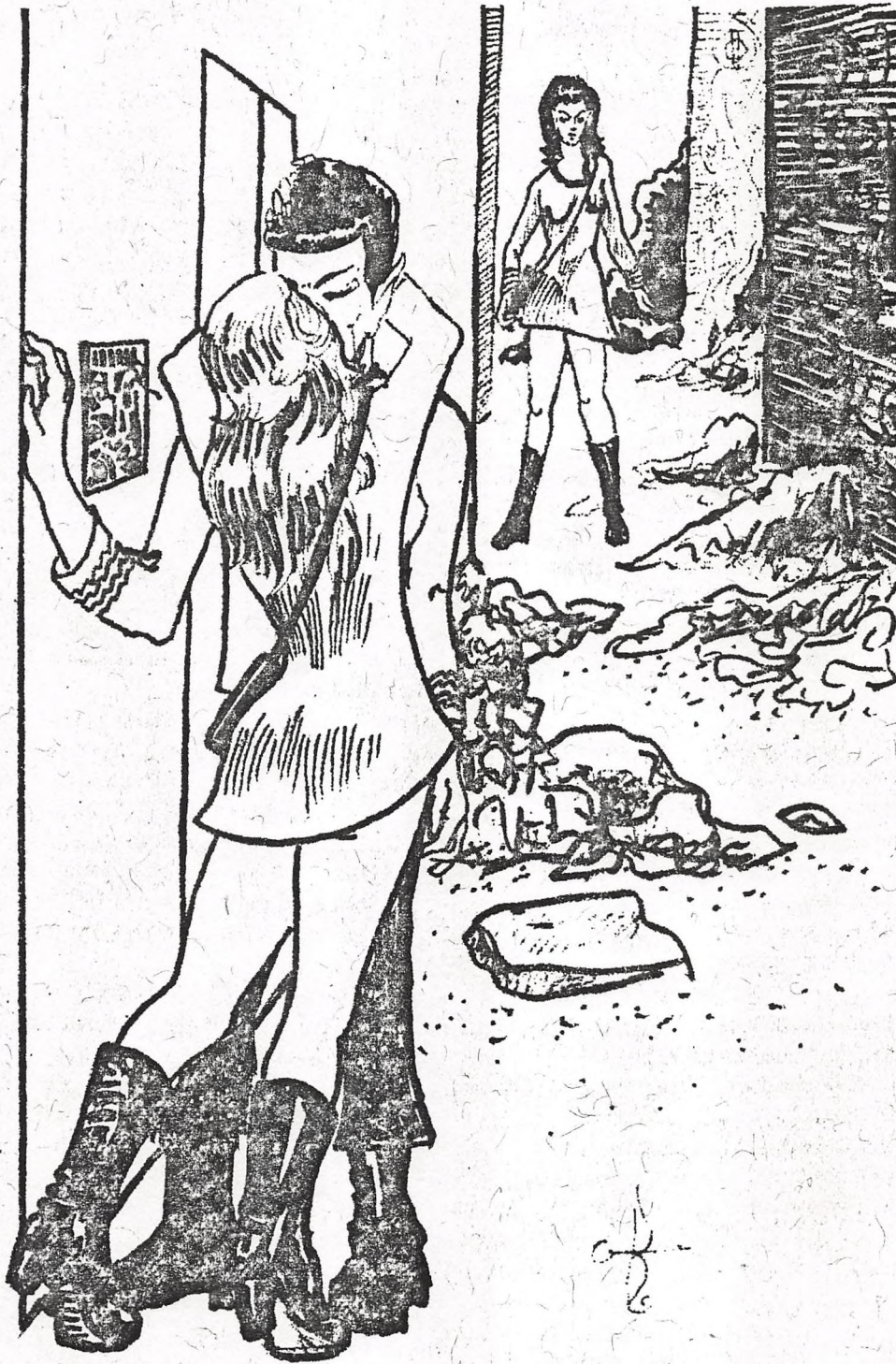
He spoke instead. "I was under the impression that this is an intimacy somewhat inappropriate to the term of acquaintanceship we have had so far."

A real iceberg! Louise thought, and then she determined to make something happen. She put both hands on his shoulders. "That," she said, "is for you... and me...to decide." Slowly she began moving her lips to his. The last thing she saw before closing her eyes, were his eyes, wide open. He had not moved.

T'pelle sighed. She had not learned any more about the fascinating murals than she had already known. She glanced at the chronometer in her tricorder. Time to be getting back to the surface.

As she walked back to where Spock was working with the panel of circuits he had discovered in the hall beside the strange doorway, she mulled over the things that had passed between the two of them. I wonder, she thought, if the bonding was a good idea? The talk on Vulcan about him was that he was not Vulcan enough. She shook her head. They were wrong. His problem is that he is too Vulcan. Without flexibility there is no strength.

She turned the corner of the corridor and then stopped short at the scene blazing before her in the torch-lit hallway.



Louise tightened her arms around Spock's neck and pulled herself to him. She set her mouth firmly on his. Dimly she realized he had still not responded, still not retreated. Then she lost herself in a sea of warmth and sensation.

One part of Spock stood back and observed, somewhat amazed. It was his Vulcan part, and at the moment could do little more than observe. The human part of him refused to withdraw, enjoying sensations. A Vulcan thought

pierced through. Interesting, it said calmly.

T'pelle did not move. She knew they would not know she was there until she was ready for them to know it. This was the time to examine her reaction. I suppose, she thought, that I should be pleased. He is certainly not being too Vulcan now. Perhaps they were right after all. Can I picture this in Desert Keep? Suppose my father stood where I stand? Can the future matriarch have a husband in doubt? She was amazed to find herself struggling to keep her emotions under control. Finally her mind echoed the same phrase over and over: Bond-mate...bond-mate...bond-mate...

The kiss ended. Spock stood frozen, amazed at himself and somewhat analytical. Louise opened her eyes, and looked up at him.

A voice came out of the darkness. "Commander...Miss Johnson." Louise stiffened as T'pelle walked into the light. When she stopped the three of them froze into a tableau for a moment. Then Spock straightened and cleared his throat. T'pelle walked slowly toward them, looking at the circuit panel.

"Have you found anything?" she asked.

Spock looked at the circuits. "I believe so," he replied, the old iron back in his voice. Louise Johnson's head was obstructing clear view, so he gently pushed her aside. "Excuse me, Miss Johnson. If you will look here, Captain..." He indicated a section of the circuitry.

Louise backed away from the two Vulcans in amazement. Could she have been mistaken? Was there nothing between these two? She finally decided this was the time to leave. Slowly she began edging away.

"That is the one...yes," Spock was saying. "Be careful. I cannot be sure of the function of that section." Delicately T'pelle pushed aside two circuit cylinders. Cautiously Spock shook his hand negatively. Suddenly the two Vulcans sensed a sound in the air. It began to cycle up like a mechanism tuning up. They both looked up, listening. The sound began to peak. T'pelle looked at Spock.

"I suspect," he said quietly, "that we are now about to discover the function of these circuits." Before T'pelle could comment they heard a faint cry down the dark hallway.

T'pelle snatched up the torch and ran toward the sound, Spock following slowly. A short way down the hall, the torch light revealed the crumpled form of Johnson. Spock knelt beside her.

"She appears to be merely sleeping," he said after a moment. Suddenly he put his hand down to the floor to steady himself.

"Are you in need of assistance?" asked T'pelle.

Spock shook his head, then put his hand over his eyes as if the motion of his head had dizzied him.

Alarm began to grow in T'pelle as Spock's head began to droop. "Spock?" she said as he slowly slumped to the floor.

A whisper escaped his lips. "...sleep...field..."

T'pelle knelt beside Spock and shook him, but he didn't stir. So, she thought, this is their defense. T'pelle considered a course of action. She herself felt no ill effects, but they had obviously put into action the final efforts by the original inhabitants of Rampart to defend their planet. She couldn't defeat it here--not without Spock. It was possible the garrison sickbay might offer some answers. Without thinking, she knew that Spock was her choice to return to the surface. She could only carry one, and he was obviously more useful.

She took Spock's arm to pull him across her shoulders, then stopped. She dropped his arm and opened her kit, searching for a tissue.

She couldn't carry him back into the world with lip paint on his mouth.

The hypospray hissed softly as T'pelle administered the medication to Spock. She stepped back and waited for it to take effect. She had had no problem getting the unconscious Spock to the garrison sickbay. She had chosen a strong Vulcan stimulant in hopes it would awaken him.

She could see signs of his struggle to consciousness. It suddenly occurred to her that she did not know what to say to him. There simply was no precedent. Before she could come up with an appropriate remark, his eyes suddenly opened. He was awake.

Spock glanced quickly around the small room. He did not seem to see her. He laid his head back and stared at the ceiling.

"Are you well?" T'pelle asked softly.

Startled, he looked at her. "Yes," he said thickly.

T'pelle busied herself putting away the hypospray. "We apparently activated the defense system for the weapons control area."

Spock watched her blearily. "You..." he began.

"I can only assume the sleep field has no effect on Vulcanoids. That raises the interesting speculation that the original inhabitants of Rampart were non-humans in conflict with humanoids. Apparently--"

"I...I..." Spock stopped for a moment and she could see him gather himself and fight off the grogginess. With determination he turned to her again. "I...ask forgiveness." He lost his breath and could say no more.

She stared at him for a moment and then reached for the hypospray and began preparing another dose of stimulant. "I guessed at the dosage," she said, watching the hypospray gauge. "You appear to need more."

Spock remained silent as she gave him the injection. Shortly, more color began to flood his face. He exhaled in relief. "Yes," he said. "That is better."

T'pelle put the hypo away again. She turned back to him with a tiny frown. "It is a massive dosage. I am concerned that it may be harmful."

Spock pulled himself up to sitting position. "It is obviously necessary. What is the situation?"

"All personnel are asleep, caught wherever they were. Fortunately, no one I have seen was in a dangerous position. No one seems to be injured-- just asleep."

"Do they respond to stimulants?"

"I have not attempted that yet. You were the first."

"I suggest that you might do so now."

"Yes." T'pelle went to the medicine supply cabinet and took down a selection of items. She packed them in her kit, and then turned to him. "You should remain here until I return."

Spock nodded. "I will try to supplement the medication with efforts of my own."

T'pelle nodded and left.

He had intended to enter the meditation state, but found his thoughts drawn to the event in the ruins. Immediately he was overwhelmed with embarrassment. Slowly, determinedly, he began ridding himself of the obstructing emotion.

T'pelle returned quickly. She went straight to the cabinet and began returning everything she had taken. "No effect," she said, closing the cabinet. "I gave Lt. Rieman the largest dose I dared, and he did not even blink." She turned to Spock. "We will have to go back down there and turn it off."

Spock began getting off the bed. "I suppose we have as good a chance of de-activating it as we did of activating it."

T'pelle turned to him. "A gamble?"

Surprised, Spock looked at her. Then his face relaxed somewhat.

"Yes," he said, "a gamble."

They got as far as the beginning of the ramp before Spock went down. He caught himself on his knees and stayed there for a moment, panting. Concerned, T'pelle came to him. He waved away her helping hand.

"It is no use," he said. "The field is stronger here." He widened his eyes and blinked them. "I will not be able to go further."

"Then you must return to the base."

"Your chances of de-activating the field alone are not good."

"And you cannot do it asleep." They looked at each other silently. Then T'pelle spoke again. "Logically, there must be a master switch. I will look for that."

Spock remained silent. Then he pulled himself up. "Very well," he said. "I believe I can return without assistance."

He began to retrace his steps. T'pelle watched him silently. When he was some distance away, she spoke. "Be careful."

He raised his hand in reply, and then was out of sight.

Resolutely, T'pelle turned to the descending rampway, switched on her torch, and began moving down.

With a touch of impatience Spock tried again. "Enterprise, Rampart Base calling. Emergency." Still no reply. It was inconceivable that his call was being ignored. Obviously, he concluded, the field extends far enough to affect the Enterprise. Still, he tried one more time.

"Enterprise, emergency!" He checked the communication controls again. No error. "Enterprise. Lt. Uhura, respond." No answer. "Is there anyone awake? Please answer this call if you can hear me." Silence. "Enterprise, answer me."

There was a brief flurry of clicks in his earphone, and then a voice replied, "This is the U.S.S. Enterprise."

Surprised, Spock recognized the voice. It was the voice of the ship's computer.

"Computer," he said, relieved, "this is the First Officer, Spock. What is the status of the ship and ship's personnel?"

"Ship's personnel do not respond to duty calls. Routine maintenance has not been observed for 2.32 hours. All systems are normal except Engineering."

"Engineering? What is the status in Engineering?"

"By-pass valve SJ-198 failed 1.52 ship's hours ago. Duty personnel failed to observe the indicator light and no replacement has been made."

A by-pass valve, Spock thought. A simple matter of replacement--usually. "Status of orbit, computer?"

"A deviation has occurred."

"Analysis?"

"Contact will be made with planet atmosphere in plus 1.52 hours."

"Attempt all correction procedures."

"All correction procedures in my program have been followed. Contact time remains 1.52 hours."

"Very well, computer. Stay in contact at this frequency."

"Affirmative."

With a definite sense of frustration, Spock broke communications. Somehow, he had to get up to the Enterprise.

Some time later Spock returned to the sickbay. The effects of his earlier injection were beginning to wear off. He prepared another dose and administered it to himself. As alertness began trickling back he checked the supply cabinet and nodded to himself over what he found there.

He went back to the communications station and keyed himself into the Enterprise computer again.

"Computer."

"Yes."

"Add the following to the ship's log."

"Proceed."

"Captain's log, supplemental...First Officer Spock reporting. Due to the action of an alien defense system accidentally activated by Star Fleet personnel on the planet code-named Rampart, all human personnel at Rampart base and aboard this vessel are asleep. Captain T'pelle of Rampart Base, who is Vulcan, and myself, a half-Vulcan aided by stimulants, are the only conscious beings we have been able to discover on or near the planet. As a result of this, a simple maintenance item in the ship's Engineering section has failed and there are no conscious crew members to replace it. This replacement or the awakening of the crew must be accomplished quickly or the safety of the Enterprise will be endangered. I was caught on planet when the sleep field engaged, and I find that I cannot transport to the ship, owing to the fact that Rampart Base is still only a transporter receiver, not a transmitter, and there is no one awake on the Enterprise to beam me up. I have completely explored the garrison base here and can find no shuttlecraft on the ground, nor any other means of transport out of the atmosphere. At this moment the only hope of saving the Enterprise lies in Captain T'pelle's mission below the surface of Rampart to locate a cut-off switch for the sleep field." Spock paused. "End of transmission."

"Recorded," said the computer.

"Status of vessel, computer?"

"No change. Estimated time of contact with atmosphere, plus .95 hours."

Spock stared at the dials and buttons before him, and tapped an unconsciously nervous finger on the housing. "First officer out." The transmission whisper from the Enterprise faded in his ear.

Spock reviewed his log entry in his mind. "...Captain T'pelle's mission..." Suddenly he stared at the chronometer in the communications panel. It was past time for T'pelle to check in with him. They had said nothing about it, but he assumed that she would surely... He pulled his communicator from his belt and flipped the grid up.

"T'pelle," he said calmly. "This is Spock requesting status check." As he waited for her reply he reflected that she had probably been delayed over one of her murals.

No reply. He checked the frequency. He re-set the communicator.

"T'pelle, reply requested."

No answer.

Deep under Rampart, T'pelle's torch lay on its side in a hallway filled with floating dust. A communicator signal beeped forlornly, over and over.

Spock sat stiffly at the communications station in Garrison Headquarters, his fingers steepled.

It is necessary, he thought, to secure the safety of the Enterprise. I have been unable--so far--to do so. T'pelle does not answer her communicator. She may be in need of assistance. If I go underground I may aid her...or I may fall irretrievably asleep. In which case I cannot aid her or the Enterprise. If I remain here, it is possible that I may devise a plan to help the ship. It is also possible that T'pelle may be incapacitated and therefore will not find the cut-off switch, which may be the only hope for the Enterprise if I find no other answer. Therefore I should go down to assist in the search. But I may fall asleep...

Over and over Spock tried to find the logical answer to the situation, but he kept cycling back to the same impasse. Finally he broke position and rubbed his face with a shaking hand. It was the field, he was sure, and the medicine that kept him from seeing the obvious answer. But he could

not remain idle. Time was slipping away, and he must decide to do something.

Spock shifted the pack on his back and paused several yards from the point where he had turned back earlier in the day. He could feel the sleep field draining him even now. He eased an instrument out of the pack and into his hand. Slowly he paced forward to his earlier blackout point. When he stood in the same spot, and felt the blackness hovering, waiting to drench him, he put the instrument to his arm and activated it. He stood, wavering, for a few seconds and then returned the hypo to the pack. He fished his communicator from his belt.

"Computer, add to ship's log: I have decided to search for Captain T'pelle who does not respond to the communicator signals. In accordance with my suspicions, I have discovered that injecting myself with a stimulant for humanoids gives me a much stronger resistance to the sleep field. I am able to pass the point where I failed before. Therefore, I am preparing to enter the subterranean levels. Spock out." He flipped the communicator shut and switched on the torch. Slowly he moved forward.

After what seemed only a few minutes sweat began to bead on his forehead and his footing seemed gooey. Spock paused to assess the situation and then realized he needed more stimulant. He took the hypospray out again and gave himself a double dose. Again he moved downward.

The murals made him dizzy now, and he tried to keep his eyes straight ahead in the torch beam. He still saw them dimly in peripheral vision, and the walls on either side of him seemed to writhe with unknown shapes. His face was wet again and he could feel the dampness in his tunic under the pack and down his sides. Abruptly he was on his knees.

Barely holding on, he pulled the pack off, and sat down, leaning against the wall. He dialed another double dose of stimulant on the hypospray, noting the low level of the reservoir. As he waited for the effect to hit him he looked at his chronometer. A half hour gone. How much time left...he couldn't remember. He paged at the pack with numb fingers. First aid equipment... engineer's kit...field rations. Bemused, he removed a ration pack



and slowly ate the concentrate block.

Suddenly he realized he had been sitting against the wall for...he didn't know how long. Anxiously he pulled himself to his feet. He felt fresher now. He hauled the pack onto his back and began trudging downward again.

In his next moment of awareness, he felt a surge of claustrophobia. The light from the torch created a little room in the darkness of the maze of hallways, and he suddenly imagined he could feel the tons of weight over his head. He mentally shook himself and the feeling disappeared. He stretched his eyes wider and moistened his lips. He kept going. He moved the hypo from the pack to his hand.

As he entered the weapons control area he suddenly felt as though he had been clubbed from behind. He found himself on his hands and knees again. He slumped onto the floor and fumbled with the hypospray. Through dimming eyes he dialed the last of the stimulant. He administered it almost by reflex action as his eyes fluttered between opening and closing.

This time as he rose his vision blurred and the scene swirled before him. He seemed to move in slow motion and it took an eternity for one foot to pass another. He staggered down the hall, moving forward by touch, as he dragged a hand down the wall, stumbling frequently over debris.

He could see a light. Follow the light...the light...the light. Why? Why not? First one foot. Then another foot. Hands numb...barely feel the wall. Keep-the-knees-going...

His body was still. He no longer moved. What a relief! Wetness welled in his eyes when he thought what a relief it was not to move. He rolled over on his back and stared up at the light. Friendly light. Spock considered the light and liked it. A thought nudged at him. Sleep? Oh, that would be even nicer.

His hand pushed at the surface he lay on, and he realized it was rock shards and dirt. Curiosity impelled him to look at it before he slept. Blearily he opened his eyes. There was enough light from the friendly glow overhead and his own discarded torch a few feet away. Oh, yes, and that other on the floor. Spock looked.

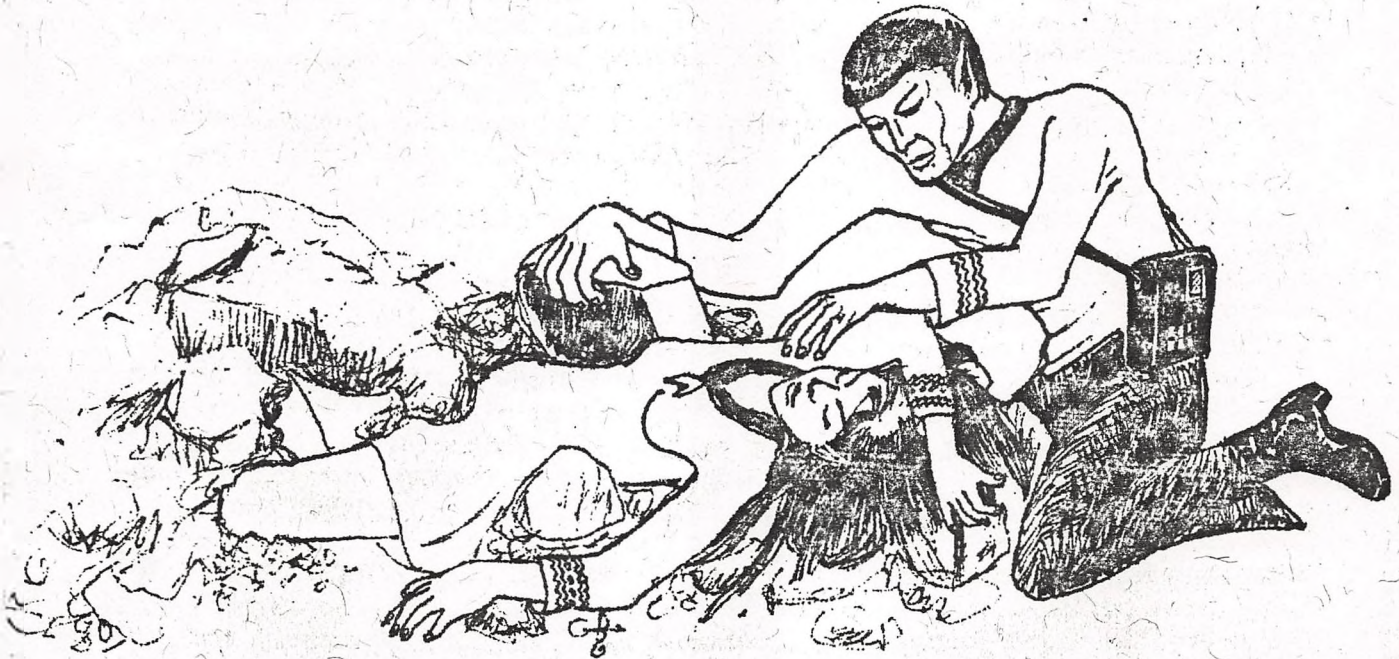
Fascinating, he thought. I am about to sleep on debris from a collapsed wall. The thought amused him and he smiled drunkenly. He leaned forward, repressing giggles in his throat, and patted the rubble like a pillow. A chunk disengaged from the general pile-up and rolled away. He could see... yellow. He wanted to sleep and he didn't care about the yellow...but it was a familiar yellow. He tried to concentrate on the yellow.

He had it! Jim's yellow! He dug into the debris, raking it off the yellow, uncovering a form. The sight sobered him. Not Jim's yellow... captain's yellow! It was T'pelle.

Now he mustn't sleep! He remembered. With sobbing breaths he pulled himself to his knees. He tugged at her body, but his arms had no strength. Fighting down panic, he glared around him. The circuit panel stood open not far away. But the circuits and wires writhed in his vision like the murals. He put his head down. He knew he couldn't manage the circuits.

He turned back to T'pelle and with one hand smoothed her disordered hair while he tried to think...think...think. But he could think...not one thing. He slumped to the ground beside T'pelle. He was losing vision. A black fog seemed to be slowly inching in. Despairing, he threw his head back and saw the light again.

It was a red light and it flashed. That seemed to mean something. Tortuously, slowly, he pulled himself up again to look at the light with squinted eyes. He could repress the giggles no longer. Softly, almost with dignity, they bubbled from his mouth as he raised his arm slowly... slowly...and draped his hand over the lever...and threw the cut-off switch.



The pounding demand for sleep ceased at once. Spock dropped back down to the earth while his body tried to decide what to do. There was enough of an overdose of both stimulants in his system to make him want to climb the walls. On the other hand, he was physically exhausted from his struggle. His body compromised with a case of the shakes.

Spock stared at his quivering hands and then pressed them together before his lowered head. For moments he did not move. Slowly his body quieted. He took deep, calming breaths. Then his head went up as he heard a sound down the hallway.

"Miss Johnson," he called down the hall.

"Wha--what?" The woman sounded confused.

"Lt. Commander!" Spock called again. "Come here."

There were sounds of movement, stumbling. Louise Johnson appeared in the light of the fallen torch. She stopped when she saw Spock sitting beside the fallen debris that partially covered her captain. She put a hand to her face.

"What happened...sir?" The last she added belatedly at the expression on his face. "Are y'all hurt?"

"You, Miss Johnson," said Spock, "have been asleep." He looked at T'pelle and gently removed some dirty smudges from her face. "We," he said, glancing down at his own soiled uniform, "have been working."

Johnson's mouth fell open and her face began to flush. Spock wiped at the stains on his tunic. He looked at the blonde science officer again. "I suggest," he said, "that you procure assistance for us. The captain appears to be injured. I am somewhat incapacitated for the moment, although that will pass."

Johnson straightened. "Yes, sir."

"Do you have a torch?"

"Yes, where I woke up."

"Good. Be careful."

Johnson stood looking at Spock for a moment. "Yes, sir," she finally said. She started to turn, but looked back over her shoulder. "I won't be long."

"Thank you, Miss Johnson."

When Louise had vanished from sight Spock turned back to T'pelle and was somewhat startled to find her looking at him.

"Are you in pain?" he asked.

"It is controlled."

After a moment he said, "I will free you when I have rested a moment."

She nodded. After a second she said, "I must confess that I cannot see the logic in your coming down here, although it does appear your... gamble...succeeded."

Spock raised an eyebrow, and cleared his throat. "Even a gamble is sometimes logical."

She looked at him in surprise, then, with a tiny smile, nodded in acceptance. She looked up at the crumbled wall and doorway. "We were right to distrust this door. I was careless. It was trapped."

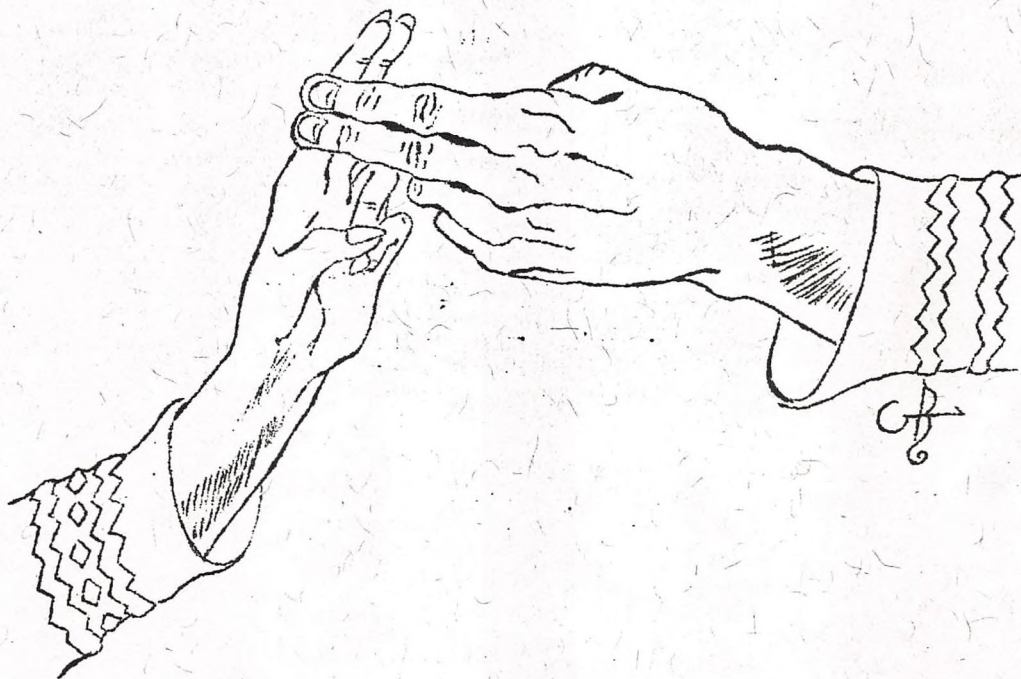
Spock looked steadily at her. "We have both," he said, "been careless of traps."

The smile flickered on her lips again. "We are not so different then."

He did not smile, but somehow his face was less stony. "No," he said, and held out two fingers to her.

Carefully she reached out a free arm and touched two fingers to his. Then quietly they waited together for their people to come and find them.

THE END





THE TASTE OF HOME

My mouth has known un-Vulcan tastes.
 But then that is why I am here,
 On this stranger spaceship:
 To taste other worlds.

Yet my lips burned at the touch...
 Ice maiden who was snow and fire;
 Gentle, loving colleague from my past,
 Aliens, both.

Can my fingers heat with that same fire?
 Once they seemed so molten as to melt into hers,
 That commanding woman of cousinly breed.
 Yet she was not Vulcan.

The very contours of your face are home.
 Your dark hair blows like night wind;
 Your logical eyes control their ancient passions,
 And our hands flame beyond any outworlder kiss.