

T-Negative 16, July 1972, comes from Ruth Berman, 5620 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis Minnesota 55417.

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Illos: Rosalind Oberdieck, pp. 5, opposite 6, 9; Tim Courtney, opposite p. 6; Rae Ladore, pp. 19, 30, 34; C. Lee Healy, pp. 46, 47; Al Kuhfeld, p. 50.

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this issue

Back issues are available for 75¢/one or \$2/three; at present, #'s 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15 are available. I will be reprinting others later.

Thank you for clippings: Sue Ager, Laura & Margaret Basta, Carmen Carter, Sue Clejan, Debbie & Devra Langsam, Anthony Tollin.

Brag Dept: The July issue of F&SF has a story of mine, "3-OK."

SON OF STAR DATE
by Ruth Berman

In "In Re: Star Dates" (T-N 11) I said that I hadn't been able to find any cases in which the shows' order of broadcast gave a better chronological order than did the order of production or of Star Dates. Since then I've noticed a striking anachronism. In "Menagerie" (16th show produced, broadcast November 17 & 24, 1966), Kirk put into his log:

Star Date 3012.4. Despite our best efforts to disengage our computers, the Enterprise is still locked on a heading for the mysterious planet Talos IV. Meanwhile, as required by Starfleet General Orders, a preliminary hearing on Lieutenant Commander Spock is being convened.

But in "Court Martial" (produced earlier, #15, but broadcast later, February 2, 1967), when Spock took the stand as a witness, he brought with him a disc with his credentials identifying him for the record. The Star Date was 2947, but the information on the disc said:

Mr. Spock. Serial Number S 179-276 SP. Service Rank: Commander. Position: First Officer, Science Officer.

Spock's apparent demotion begs explanation.*

The possibility that it was a real demotion seems out of the question. What could "the best first officer in the fleet" (as McCoy called him in "Operation: Annihilate") have done to deserve it? That is, aside from mutinying against Captain Kirk and kidnapping Captain Pike, and we have it on Commodore Mendez's authority that, in view of the historic importance of Captain Pike, no action was contemplated against Spock on that occasion.

It could be argued that Spock had been promoted to full commander shortly before "Court Martial," and that Kirk simply forgot and gave the wrong title when giving his log report in "Menagerie." Kirk's habit of getting names mixed up is well known, as Yeoman Smith/Jones ("Where No Man Has Gone Before"), Lt. McGivers/McIvers ("Space Seed"), or Lt. Kyle/Kowl (Kowl in "Immunity Syndrome," although identified as Kyle in the credits and called so in the various other episodes where he appeared) could testify. However, these are all errors of name, not

* Indeed, the DeForest Research company spotted the discrepancy and tried to get the script changed (see The Making of Star Trek, pp. 316-7), but the correction evidently did not reach the cast in time to be used.

errors of title, and they involve people whom Kirk doesn't know as well as he knows Spock. Besides, it seems unlikely that Kirk would still have been confused about a "new" rank a hundred star-days later ("Tomorrow is Yesterday," 3113), when he introduced Captain Christopher to his "First Officer, Lt. Commander Spock."



Two possible explanations occur to me. Each has something to recommend it. (1) The disc brought down by Spock was, I should think, a print-out from the ship's computer records. The erasure of

the "Lieutenant" from Spock's file could have been an accidental by-product of Finney's tampering with the computer's memory banks. No one noticed it at the time, because people hear what they expect to hear in overly-familiar routines, and they were, moreover, too worried about Kirk to pay attention to the simple identification of witnesses. But the indication that something was wrong with the computer's records lodged subconsciously in Spock's mind and was brought to the surface when Kirk's stoic remark about Spock's finding a new chess partner reminded Spock that there was something wrong with that other chess partner of his, the computer.

(2) Spock may have held an anomalous position in rank. So far as I recall, there was no full commander on board the Enterprise until Spock became one. It seems odd that there should be a vacant rank. Possibly the First Officer was normally supposed to be a Commander, but the man or woman who set off on the five-year mission as First Officer died shortly before "Where No Man Has Gone Before," and Science Officer Spock, the most senior Lt.-Commander on board, was appointed to fill his or her place, granted a full commander's pay, and temporarily marked on the records as a commander; verification of his "acting" rank did not come through from Starfleet headquarters until much later. This theory would explain why Lt.-Commander Spock was wearing a full commander's braid on his sleeves (two solid bands, as opposed to the solid band plus a broken band worn by

Lt.-Commander Scott or Lt.-Commander McCoy), long before he was being called a Commander. The uniforms in "Where No Man Has Gone Before" did not distinguish among the middle ranks of the officers, but as early as Mudd's Women (S.D. 1329) Spock was wearing a commander's braid.

In either case, it would appear that it was not until late in the first season, or maybe early in the second season, that Spock was officially promoted. I think that the first references to him as a commander occurred in "Immunity Syndrome" (S.D. 4300), when Spock made a log-entry calling himself Commander Spock (instead of saying First Officer Spock, as he had on earlier log entries), and Kirk recommended special citations for "Lt. Commander Leonard McCoy, Lt. Commander Montgomery Scott -- and my highest commendations to Commander Spock."

Recent Articles of Interest

Metropolitan Review (213 W 29 Str, NYNY 10001), "I Grock Spock; star-trek convention," by Joseph Saitta, February 22, 1972, pp. 1-3, 6, 13. Illustrated with photos of the convention, with some good shots of Roddenberry. A photo of a fanzine display includes T-N #12.

The Fifth Estate (Detroit), "Star Trek Phasered-Out," by Ken Fireman, March ?, 1972, pp. 11, 14, a retrospective praise of the show; another March issue has a letter ("Son of Startrek?", p. 16) by Laura T. Basta, discussing the efforts of S.T.A.R. (B 102, University Center Building, Wayne State U, Detroit MI 48202) to help bring about a revival of the show (\$2 for a subscription to S.T.A.R.'s recently-begun newsletter).

The Detroit News, "'Star Trek' fans are out of this world," by Chester Bulgier, Section C, p. 1. Article about S.T.A.R. Illustrated with publicity stills: Kirk & Nona, Spock, Chapel & McCoy.

The Monster Times (Box 595, Old Chelsea Station, NYNY 10011), "Star Trek Will Not Die," letter by Wayne Pesqueira, p. 22, and a note on the convention illustrated with a still of Chapel in "The Monster Times Teletype" by Bill Feret, p. 10, March 1, 1972; "A Blessing in Grave Disguise" by Marc Bilgrey and "He Waits Impatiently," by Ron Dionne, letters praising the all-ST issue done earlier, p. 22, and a note on Shatner's role in an episode of "Sixth Sense," "The Monster Times Teletype," by Bill Feret, p. 24, March 15, 1972; "Star Trek Revisited," by Dave Izzo, p. 11, a short article on the convention illustrated with badly printed or under-exposed photos, March 29, 1972; "MT Hits the Turnpike," p. 19, letter by Vicky Dann praising ST, May 31, 1972.

National Lampoon, "On the Night Before the Last Day They Filmed 'Star Trek'," by Chris Miller, June 1972, pp. 61, 70. An obscene, amusing story. (Also in the issue, a short story by Theodore Sturgeon, "Pruzy's Pot.")



January 1971

SPOCK'S **N**EMESIS
Kraith IV
Part One
by Jacqueline Lichtenberg

Chapter One: T'Aniyeh's Peril

The U.S.S. Enterprise hung in synchronous orbit over a single spot on a nameless planet far outside the frontiers of the United Federation of Planets. The digital readout on the helmsman's console read Star Date 7-2750.6. The subjective time elapsed since they'd left Federation Space was almost two years.

The huge main viewscreen faithfully recorded the bright oranges and shimmering reds of the planet below although not one eye aboard was watching. The ship's high-ceilinged corridors were buttressed against the oppressive silence by the triangular archways and overhead cross-beams that were brightly decorated in sharp contrast to the unobtrusive blue-grays of the bulkheads.

The quiet, however, was deceptive.

Four-hundred-seven human brains labored on circular tracks of vivid memories almost too painful to bear, yet too captivating to relinquish. One half-human brain suffered the same fate...almost.

On the bridge, bodies lay forgotten in every imaginable position -- draped, jackknifed, prone, propped -- as if they had all suddenly collapsed.

In the turbolifts, along corridors, in quarters, recreation rooms, gymnasiums, laboratories, duty stations, and in dark crawlways, bodies lay sprawled with the boneless grace of the totally unconscious.

From Captain Kirk, slumped with abandoned dignity at the center of the circular bridge, to the Yeoman draped over a tray of toppled coffee cups, they were locked in their memories as securely as a current confined to a superconducting circuit.

Only in sickbay did the pattern vary. There, Chief Surgeon Leonard McCoy lay crumpled at his desk, stricken in the act of recording a medical log entry on the patient in the next room.

The patient, Spock of Vulcan, also lived only within his memory, but he was not locked on an invariant memory cycle. His body lay below the diagnostic panel while all six life-signs indicators hovered near the bottoms of their scales. But, at the mo-

ment, in his mind, Spock was preparing to voice his Life's Decision to his father as they faced one another in the spacious central hall of the austere, ancestral mansion that had been his boyhood home.

The gigantic, imported air-cooling unit vibrated within the massive stone walls, an oppressive reminder of his mother's humanity, which had made this decision necessary: to dedicate himself to the Vulcan Science Academy, or to acknowledge that he'd never be totally at peace within himself if he ignored the needs of his human half. A balance must be struck, or sanity would be forfeit. To allow that to happen would be illogical.

Having made the decision, he spoke the words to his father and suffered his father's pain without a flicker of outward reaction. With the peculiar pride known only to those whose sole motivation is logic, he turned his back and walked away from his father, away from his home, toward the Starfleet Academy.

In the condensed reality of his memories, he lived again the crises of past years. Men, ships, planets, stars fled before him. T'Pring divorced him. T'Rruel died. T'Aniyeh, human of body, but Vulcan in spirit, boarded the Enterprise. He stood before her, offering the touch that did not touch and yet would always touch.

And he'd been accepted -- not only from logical necessity, but with full, eager willingness to accept a bound Unity, a Unity defined by ages of Vulcan tradition and regulated by modern Vulcan philosophy.

Thus established, the touch brought to them a peace and strength rooted in a logical harmony with the forces that rule all life...and death.

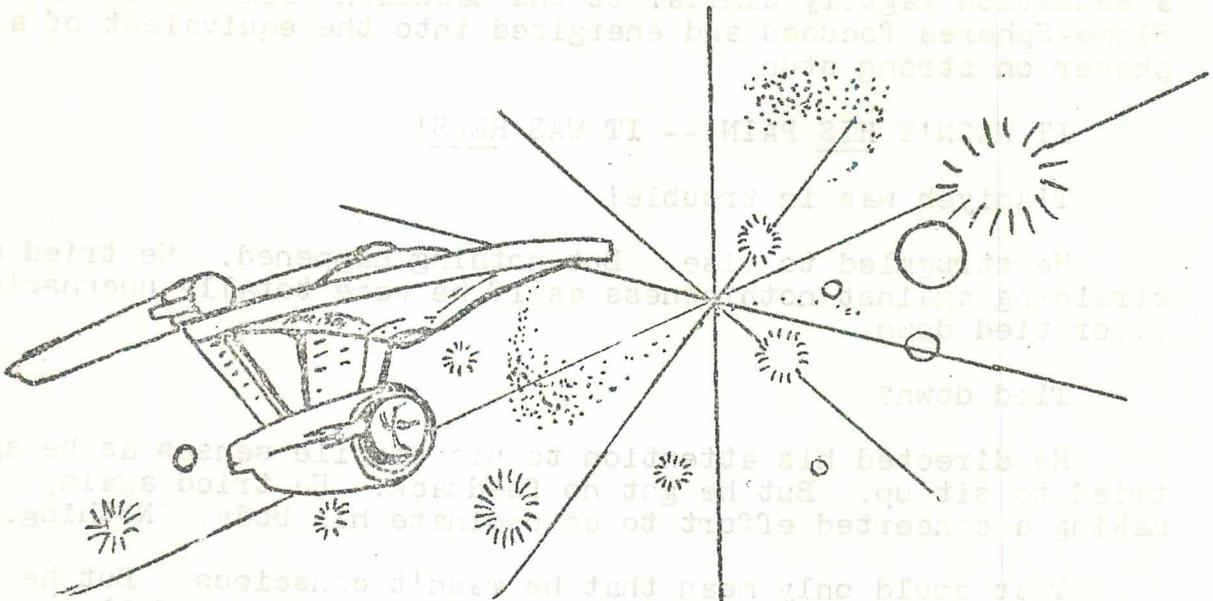
Death! There was danger!

DANGER!

The alarm thrilled along his nerves. Somewhere in that complex Vulcan brain was the dread knowledge of an imminent crisis...but mental apathy swallowed the disturbance and returned his mind to inner paths.

He stood again on the bridge of the Enterprise, secure in the new, confident peace that was his right, and scanned the surface of the planet, searching for the survey party. They should have reported half an hour ago.

No cause for alarm, he told himself sternly, although they were in for a reprimand if not worse. T'Aniyeh had gone down with them, but risks were an accepted part of a Service career, and there were no known hazards below...just his growing...illogical...concern for her welfare.



The planet was quite beautiful, really, a class M-IV, almost a twin of Vulcan, and T'Aniyeh would welcome a brisk walk in fresh air and sunshine. Being human, she missed home more than he did, and, through their link, he knew the satisfaction she felt as the dry wind lifted her dark hair.

He reached out to her mind, opening channels of sensitivity deep in the subconscious levels.

Bending over the hooded viewscreen, he shifted the focus of his scanners and combed an adjacent area of the planet below. They must have walked far. There were natives down there, too. Very sparsely scattered. Humanoids. Readings fairly close to Vulcan norms. Possibly a related species. They'd found a number of such peoples in this region of space.

He flipped a switch, adjusted a dial, and began to home in on the landing party's communicators. They should have answered Uhura's signal by now! He'd have to put them all on report.

Suddenly, before he could get a clear fix on the party, a lance of pain skewered his head and sent him stumbling back from his chair, sagging into the startled captain's arms. His last

memory before consciousness disintegrated was a cold orange explosion in his brain that sent white-hot agony through every nerve, a sensation vaguely similar to the backlash from two cross-linked Flame-Spheres focused and energized into the equivalent of a phaser on strong stun.

IT WASN'T HIS PAIN -- IT WAS HERS!

T'Aniyeh was in trouble!

He struggled to rise. But nothing happened. He tried again, straining against nothingness as if he were totally unconscious ...or tied down.

Tied down?

He directed his attention to his tactile senses as he again tried to sit up. But he got no feedback. He tried again, making a concerted effort to co-ordinate his body. Nothing.

That could only mean that he wasn't conscious. But he was! He puzzled over the contradiction, searching for a fallacy.

He'd had a similar experience once when his grandfather had been training him in the six hundred and seventy Disciplines.

Suvil had detached the young Spock's consciousness from his physical awareness in such a way that his body continued to function, but his mind was unable to connect to imminent reality. The object of the exercise had been to teach the boy that he couldn't break out of the prison of his own mind without outside aid. The moral had been that the science-of-mind is a dangerous tool that demands all the respect one accords a matter-antimatter generator activated in a populous city.

He'd had occasion to induce a mild form of the state for healing but always with modifications that would bring him up to semi-awareness before the chrysalis of his own mental barriers could enclose him forever. This time, he theorized, he'd slipped below the threshold while making a similar attempt.

He checked for new scars. There were none.

The only remaining possibility was that somebody had done this to him. But who? And why?

No matter. He must undo it. T'Aniyeh was in danger, and he was in no mood to tolerate that.

The immediate problem was how to reach full consciousness. The classical answer was the sensory cue. He'd been trained to respond to pain; therefore he should simply have someone inflict pain.

But he'd already sunk too deep to reach out to anyone. Therefore, the only way to obtain a pain-cue was from his own memory. Visualizing the search for the landing party and T'Aniyeh, he nursed his uneasy doubt about her well-being, deliberately lowering all his pain blocks, and then he conjured the mind-deadening blow again....and found himself no nearer reality.

All right, he thought, try a more severe pain. He reconstructed the events at Deneva when they'd encountered those oddly detached braincells that invaded more tightly organized nervous systems, controlling their victims with pain. One of the creatures had invaded his body and nearly driven him to crash the Enterprise before he'd realized what was happening and controlled the pain. But the experience was etched indelibly in his memory.

Once again that terrible agony flashed along abused nerves, triggering bone-bending muscle spasms.

He made no effort to defend himself as wave after wave of white-hot agony seared every receptor of his brain. And, slowly, through the blanketing haze, he became aware of his body. The linkages were re-establishing...with clumsy slowness...almost as if nerve tissue were regenerating...but it was happening. He could feel the pain even more sharply now.

It was REAL.

As he lay on the sickbay bed, the six life-signs indicators on the diagnostic panel over his head wobbled up from their base lines, beginning to oscillate around mid-scale...some higher, some lower, but all, at last, alive again. The second indicator from the left...pain...clung tightly to the top of its scale.

Then, slowly, the pain indicator lowered, hovered for a moment as if confused, then dropped smoothly to the bottom of the scale. A few seconds later, it rejoined its fellows, dancing around the Spock-norm readings.

Commander Spock, First Officer of the U.S.S. Enterprise, opened his eyes, then rose smoothly to sit on the side of the bed, dangling his feet, in puzzlement. There should have been an attendant.

He slid down, stretched systematically to relieve some last cramps -- he'd apparently been motionless several days -- and went into the doctor's office.

Two quick strides brought him to McCoy's body, and he realized that whatever had imprisoned his mind had also attacked McCoy...and the whole ship.

Frowning slightly, he positioned his fingertips around the human's skull, hunting for the braincenters he needed. Then he opened his mind to the thought-flow within.

After several minutes, he pulled away, stunned. The attacking force was still operative. And he could do nothing to break its grip on the human.

He took a medical scanner and went in search of the captain, checking everyone he passed on the way. He found he could touch the minds of anyone he'd previously touched, but the rest were as closed to him as if they were dead. That, in itself, was unusual. In fact, fascinating. He needed more data.

Medical scanner whirring, Spock bent over the captain, carefully checking all his vital signs. As with the others, the body was in fair condition. But the mind was locked.

Spock went to his library computer and trained all available sensors on the planet beneath. He left the readouts feeding into the computer and went to the navigator's station. Their orbit appeared stable enough, and there were no other ships in range of their sensors. Whatever was attacking must be below them.

Gently removing Sulu from the Helmsman's chair, he sat down and grimly worked an orbit change into the board and laid it in.

Nothing happened. He checked the circuitry...Auxiliary Control, Engineering...all wide open. He should have control of the ship from here. He stared at the planetary image on the screen. Illusion?

The library computer bleeped, and he called for the readout.

The high-pitched, mechanically modulated female voice said, in its staccato monotone, "All-sensor-readings...no-significant-change-for-last-sixty-one-hours...Landing-party-still-missing... Presumed-lost. Tower-structure-directly-below-ship-..."

"Stop!" Spock swiveled out of the chair and pounced on the computer console.

Twelve minutes later he'd extracted all the data on the artifact below their position. It wasn't much, but coupled with the aberrant behavior of the main computer it led him to a wild surmise...and a desperate course of action. First, his own body needed food. He went to the messhall and grabbed several packets of field rations. Then he hurried to the medical lab to load two hypoguns with a potent mixture of nutritional concentrate and mild, time-released stimulants, and set about dosing the crew. If he succeeded in deactivating the dze-ut', as he now thought of the tower, it would do little good if the crew were all dead.

Once again on the bridge, he made the necessary log entries describing the situation and his proposed course of action, hinting at the nature of his theory in the warning he left in case he never returned. Then he balanced the captain's body over his shoulder and entered the lift. In sickbay, he took a wheeled table and set the captain on it, then added McCoy and Nurse Chapel. After a brief stop in Engineering to collect Mr. Scott and a longer pause in the quartermaster's sanctum, he set the lift on course for the hangar deck.

There, as everywhere else aboard ship, crewmen sprawled in ungainly disarray. He munched his last ration packet as he surveyed the cavernous chamber. Glumly, he counted the bodies he'd have to remove and inject with fortificant before opening the huge shell-doors to hard vacuum. Then he set to work.

The turbo-lift brought a shuttlecraft, Galileo 7, up into launch position on the deck, and he loaded his somnolent passengers aboard. Then, carrying a crewman's body, he went back to the turbolift with a pair of anti-grav lift-bars and unloaded the supplies he'd requisitioned.

Half an hour later, he took a last turn around the hangar, searching for stray bodies even though the counter on his hypogun read 406. Then he set the main doors on automatic and climbed into the shuttle.

It was a tight fit for the five of them and all the gear. Empty, the long rectangular cabin seemed quite spacious. There was adequate room to walk between the four high-backed passenger chairs. But now he had converted all available deck for cargo stowage. Only the co-pilot's chair remained empty beside him.

Checking once more that all his passengers were secured with safety harness, Spock seated himself at the control desk and took a deep breath. His long fingers caressed the levers with a sure familiarity that belied the uncertainty in his heart. Ahead of him, the hangar doors cracked and parted to expel the tiny craft into the void. He activated all three view-panels over the control desk and cut an orbit for a landing site that would put a logging forest between them and the dze-ut'.

He chose the site with care. He wanted to be as close to T'Aniyeh as he could get and still remain free of the dze-ut'. He picked a sandy crater surrounded by precipitous rock walls that promised, to Vulcan eyes, a plentiful water supply as well as potentially useful material and a certain amount of strategic cover, even though the crater wall was breeched at several points.

It was all he could do to aim the shuttle for the flat center of the crater, headed away from T'Aniyeh. Every foot of distance he placed between them heightened the vague tension he

refused to admit he felt. Yet, logically, the crater was the best possible compromise.

Well before he touched down, he made one last check with the shuttlecraft's sensors. They registered no natives in the vicinity, and no hostile animal life, but he remained sceptically alert.

And it was well he did. The tiny vessel swooped into the atmosphere, obeying the autohelm flawlessly, until, a bare twenty kilometers above target, a soft arhythmic clicking of the simple device began to repeat its pattern for a third time.

Leaning forward alertly, Spock frowned. In the silence of the cabin, he could hear the humans' breathing and, under that, the unobtrusive operational sounds of the machinery. He concentrated on the musical clicks of the autohelm as the complex tonal pattern began a fourth time. Then he flicked switches until he obtained a simultaneous readout of the orbital calculations on his central screen.

Calculating swiftly, he nodded and a moment later was on his knees opening the access panel under the autohelm. He lay down on his back and slid, head first, into the recess. In a few seconds he had discerned the computer's difficulty.

It was imposed by a new, external field, and there was nothing he could do to rectify it.

Quickly, he disconnected the autohelm, engaged the Emergency Manual Over-ride, and snapped the access panel closed as he set his mind to the rapid calculations.

Seconds later, eyes fixed on the viewscreens, his fingers hovering over the controls, he prepared for a tricky manual landing. Summoning all his concentration, he eased the ship's vector into the desired value and applied deceleration gently but firmly.

In the cabin, the passengers felt nothing, but from the ground the shuttlecraft could be seen to buck and waver as the flesh-and-blood pilot fought for control of the aerodynamically unstable craft.

Then, as speed reduced, the ship steadied and zeroed in on the chosen crater and settled with only a slight bump, unfelt by the gravity-shielded passengers.

Safely grounded on the fine sand, Spock leaned back in his chair and blanked his mind, warily testing for the dze-ut' influence. But they were free of it.

Silently, he turned to examine the humans slumped in the chairs behind him. Not one had begun to stir. He'd hoped they could come out of it spontaneously, but apparently it was not to be so easy.

He had two choices...wait until they woke, or attempt to break the circular memory track with his own mind.

Ordinarily, he would have chosen to wait at least a few hours, but time now was at a premium for him as well as for the whole crew. He would try to reach the captain and, through him, the rest of them. But he'd need a sensory anchor, a life-line to reality, lest he become lost in the captain's dreamworld.

Once decided, he moved rapidly. He unstrapped the humans, one by one, and hauled them out onto the warm sand. The terminator was approaching. It would be full night here very soon. All the better.

When he had them all laid out in the fresh air, he chose a convenient, flat rock and struck a 15-hour magnesite-nitron cube on it.

The fire erupted, then settled to a shaft of blue flame. Kneeling at the captain's head, Spock fixed his eyes on the flame.

Starlight. Fragrant breeze. Rocks. Gritty sand.

When he was sure that all his thought-trains would lead out to sensory reality, he flexed his fingers, positioned them on Kirk's skull, and sank easily into the strangely flavored, human memory.

Chapter 2 : MEMORIES

Looking up from his reader, Kirk saw that the Rec Room was crowded this evening. He sipped his iced-tea with the solicitous pride of a mother cat watching her kittens struggle over a ball of twine.

In one corner, Chekov and Sulu were wrangling over some exotic new game. In another corner, Spock and Tanya sat over an apparently fascinating text, occasionally discussing it in a serious undertone. Kirk was pleased that Spock had found a point of social contact.

Uhura sat with her magnificent legs propped up and some sort of colorful needlework in her lap. She appeared to be napping. Mr. Scott was writing a letter, and Christine Chapel was curled up with a tape-reader.

Pleased by the domestic peacefulness, Kirk went back to his roaring sea saga, Ship of the Line. He was glad he'd come here tonight. It was good to relax with friends. He finished the chapter and looked up again to savour the warm atmosphere.

Sulu and Chekov had untangled the rules of their game and induced Uhura to join them. Now they were looking around for a fourth. Chekov held up a wait-a-minute hand toward Sulu and crossed the room, obviously homing-in on Tanya. The whole ship still buzzed with rumors that Chekov had set his sights for her and was thoroughly encouraged by her cool indifference.

The room was small and quiet enough for Chekov's voice to carry as he said heartily, "Excuse me, Mr. Spock. Tanya, come join us for a new game. It's called Surinko. It's a multi-lingual version of scrabble..."

Tanya took a breath as if she were about to accept, but Spock gestured sharply, shooing Chekov away. "Mr. Chekov, we're busy."

Chekov took a deep breath and started to turn away flushed with anger. Even off duty, you don't talk back at your superior officers. Then temper got the better of him, and he rounded on the seated couple, aiming his fiery Russian indignation at the impassive Vulcan First Officer...oblivious of his accent.

"Mr. Spock, you can't keep human girrl verking around the clock all the time! She has right to some relaxation! Just because she's great lingvist doesn't mean you own her soul!"

Patiently, Spock answered the emotional outburst. "Mr. Chekov, the young lady does not welcome your attentions and is weary of your persistence."

"The 'young lady' can speak for herself!" He vibrated with the intensity of the injustice.

Spock's voice was cool and barely carried, but Kirk noticed that every ear was tuned to the charged conversation as the First Officer said, "She has asked me to speak for her."

"I'd like to hear that from her. Is she your girl or something?"

All eyes riveted on the Vulcan in undisguised fascination.

Tanya and Spock traded glances, reached a mutual decision, and turned back to Chekov. For a long moment nobody moved. Then Spock said, still privately, but positively, "Yes, Mr. Chekov."

Incredulous, Chekov looked to Tanya, who nodded almost imperceptibly.

The Russian gathered his dignity and returned to Sulu. Everyone else traded stunned looks, hardly daring to glance at the Vulcans, who continued their discussion as if nothing had happened.

Shortly, the humans turned back to what they'd been doing, but the warm atmosphere had chilled. Christine was the first to leave. Then Scotty. The game broke up before it actually got started, and the three would-be players left. Then Kirk sat pretending to read while trying to decide what to do.

He was chiding himself for having been so worried about Spock. The Vulcan was obviously capable of taking care of his own affairs quite efficiently.

Thinking back over it, Kirk realized it must have been going on quite a while. It certainly explained why Spock had been so adamant about having Tanya assigned to the six-year mission! And all without a hint of personal involvement. Not that Kirk hadn't hoped there was a personal interest there somewhere, but, he admitted, he'd no idea it had gone so far!

He wished he knew more Vulcan protocol. Would it be proper to offer contratulations? Or should he just leave quietly?

One thing was certain, and even Spock must realize it. The ship would be bursting with the news well before morning. Settling on a compromise, Kirk gathered up his reader, climbed to his feet, and headed for the door, favoring the couple with an approving smile and a nod.

For one strange moment, the scene blurred and split into a double image. He seemed to be watching himself leave the room while he sat approving of his choice of compromise. He shook his head to clear his vision and headed for McCoy's quarters.

Now that the question was resolved, Kirk realized how worried he'd been about Spock. No point fretting about it, now. It was all settled. He wondered idly when it had happened...not that it was any of his business. Tanya had always been cold toward men, but she'd never been any warmer toward Spock. At least not in public. Her manner toward him seemed to partake of the innocence of a child and the immunity of a nun...as if the male/female relationship were completely irrelevant.

T'Rruel, on the other hand, had come aboard carrying a torch that lit up the whole ship. And Spock had responded so strongly nobody doubted his interest. Maybe, Kirk theorized, that was because he'd just met T'Rruel, but had known Tanya for years?

That idea had a strangely correct ring to it. Again he experienced that odd, splitting sensation, as if part of his

thoughts were happening outside his brain. He looked at what he'd been thinking, and he approved -- with one addition. T'Aniyeh's manners were derived from her upbringing. She'd been raised as a Daughter of the Tradition...a female of a kataytikh family. Of course, the Daughters lacked the essential physiology to participate in the male/female relationship. But T'Aniyeh, being human, was not exempt.

Actually, his thoughts went on without his guidance, she's quite a passionate individual. He'd known that ever since her foster-father had introduced them. Her previous emotional upheavals were merely one symptom of her foster-father's mistake in failing to mate her. Now, of course, that was fairly well controlled.

Now, wait a minute! he thought back at himself, I've never met her foster-father. The first time I ever laid eyes on Tanya was at Spock's house...and, at first, I couldn't decide if she were Vulcan or human. In fact, he thought, I'm still not too sure.

Of course, he conceded to himself, that was the first time you ever laid eyes on T'Aniyeh.

You know, he answered himself wistfully, that was a lovely interlude. Did me worlds of good. Sometimes I wish I'd let Sarek talk me into accepting another Flame-Sphere. That little trinket could conjure up the whole experience in a flash and leave a washed-clean feeling like nothing I've ever experienced before.

You know, he answered himself wryly, I wish you'd taken another Flame-Sphere, too. One or two more deep-contact shocks and your telepathic blocks will be demolished forever. That can be a deranging experience. The Flame can soothe and guide the healing by providing solid anchor in reality. And that is precisely what we need right now -- both of us. If we had a Flame-Sphere, we'd have no immediate problem.

What problem? I don't have any problem. I'm as free as I was that night we climbed the mesa back of Spock's house. Remember that?

Indeed I do. It was one of the most difficult pieces of political maneuvering I've ever undertaken, and at the very last minute I thought you and Dr. McCoy would back out. It's a steep climb up that switch-back trail, but it's traditional. It was an experiment that turned out so well it may be credited with saving the Federation.

What in the universe are you babbling about?

Do you remember the conversation at all?

No, it was mostly in Vulcanar, and we weren't carrying translators. Not that they would have helped much, I'm sure.

Hmmm. Probably not. But as we climbed I worked very hard on T'Pakra, because she is one of the Daughters who has T'Uriamne's confidence. The other 18 in the group were all chosen for their influence in the Guardian Council. I wanted them to see, first hand, what humans were like.

Humans!?

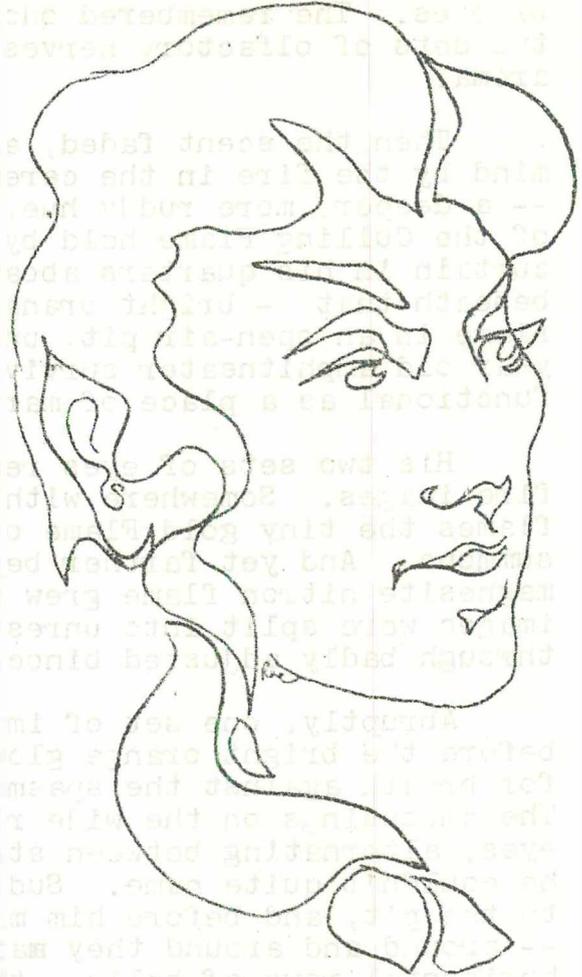
Yes. Remember how, when we got to the top of the mesa everybody sat down to give you a chance to rest? It was fully dark by then, and the stars were winter-brilliant. The chill nightwind hadn't reached us yet, but it was coming. We could smell it...and hear it far up the valley.

We organized into work parties, and I showed you how to operate the pollinating rods. It's not difficult, but there is a knack to it. The serious way you took to the strange task impressed the group as words never could. Life...all life...is sacred to us. You showed them that humans are able to share our attitude.

And then, later, when the fire leaped high, you danced with us -- without understanding, yet with a reverent joining that transcended all barriers and created something new, something unique in all Vulcan history. That night, two humans taught 19 Vulcans the meaning of the idic.

When the rhythm changed, and the traditional argument began, you had sense enough to leave the circle and just watch. That really impressed them.

You may not think that 19 votes mean very much, but they were 19 very special votes -- and I think that one episode can be credited with saving the Federation...at least temporarily.



Kirk saw again the fire on the mountaintop, the bright red flames low but steady, fragrant smoke diluted by fresh night breezes. The remembered odor had a strange ambivalence, as if two sets of olfactory nerves responded differently to the same aroma.

Then the scent faded, and the flames were overlaid in his mind by the fire in the ceremonial pit at the Guardian Council -- a deeper, more ruddy hue, and, joined with it, the flickering of the Culling Flame held by Sekur duly installed before his red curtain in his quarters aboard ship. And yet another fire burned beneath that -- bright orange coals with an occasional tongue of flame in an open-air pit, under a leaning pylon in a two thousand year old amphitheater surviving in weatherworn ruin, yet functional as a place of marriage -- and of death.

His two sets of eyes responded differently to the overlaid fire-images. Somewhere within the transparent veils of leaping flames the tiny gold Flame of the Sphere danced its peaceful summons. And yet farther beyond, the distinctive hue of the magnesite-nitron flame grew to sharp brilliance. The multiple images were split into unresolved double images, like the view through badly adjusted binoculars.

Abruptly, one set of images shattered, and he reeled dizzily before the bright orange glow of the amphitheater pit, fighting for breath against the spasmodic cramps of the surging fever. The embossings on the wide rim of the pit wavered before his eyes, alternating between strangeness and a familiar significance he couldn't quite name. Suddenly, he was standing with his back to the pit, and before him marched the ceremonial banner-tenders -- around and around they marched, and his eyes riveted on the horizontal rows of bells...the horizontal rows...the horizontal rows...the wedding banners.

Finally, someone sprinkled the precious Flame-Dust onto the coals, releasing the billows of life-giving smoke. It drifted around, wafted by the gentle breezes, until, fully diluted, it reached him.

Responding gratefully, his diaphragm unknotted long enough to draw air, and it was as if he'd breathed the fire itself deep into his body with the needed oxygen.

The searing flame ate out his lungs, plunged through his diaphragm, and curled deep in his abdomen, where it grew tendrils that crawled down his thighs and up under his lower left rib to infect his heart. With every pulsation his heart sent fire surging through his body and, ultimately, through his brain. His eyes were white-hot coals that strained to leap from his head, and all that held him in check was the intermittent, rich chording of the ceremonial bells -- living symbol of the civilization that gave significance to his needs and promise of meaningful surcease to his agony.

Something deep within him cried out, "No! I will not! The mind controls! I WILL NOT!" But as he fought that soundless battle he knew it was hopeless. Once begun it could not be stopped by will.

His heart was a blue-white nova, flaring to a chanted rhythm more ancient than civilization. Out of that rhythm grew an image, a cool silhouette...dark, lithe, and desirable. Promise of relief...salvation from this unbearable, useless...senseless...torture. If only he could reach out....

The nova exploded.

Darkness.

Silence.

Total lack of sensation.

The strange duality had deserted him. The fire was extinguished as if it had never been. He felt in contact with a pale, flat, unadorned, pragmatic reality.

What a dream!

Way off in the blackness, a tall, slender blue flame licked toward the heavens.

He thought, oh, no, no, no, not again! I couldn't take it. I'm washed out, exhausted.

But, menacingly, the flame floated nearer. He tried to retreat but found himself trapped by the leaden weight of his body. Too exhausted to struggle, he watched the fire grow larger.

This time it stayed a single, well-focused image...the fire of a magnesite-nitron cube, a coldly functional, prosaic artifact of civilized technology. Its flame carried no dark mystery, spoke to no ancient drives, beat no ceremonial rhythm, roused no frightful associations. An ordinary, everyday, useful piece of standard equipment.

It stopped approaching. Now it was a well-defined light in an ordinary darkness. It shed radiance about itself in a perfectly ordinary way, illuminating the flat-topped rock on which it stood and the smooth, fine-grained, multi-colored sand on which the rock sat.

He took a breath. The air was hot and dry, but hardly fiery. There were scents, strange but not unpleasant. He blinked, and his eyes remained cool and moist. His body ached as if he hadn't moved in a century or two, but it was hardly an unbearable agony.

He shook his head. It wasn't like him to wake disoriented. He looked around. Behind him a shuttlecraft was parked on the fine, dark sand. Its door was closed. To his left, laid out in a neat row, Scotty, Bones, and Christine Chapel?

Above, hard points of stars decorated a clear, moonless sky.

The fire flared, briefly illuminating a dark silhouette, a defiant figure, stiff-backed, legs braced slightly apart as if prepared for some demanding test of strength. The arms hung straight down, fists clenched in fierce determination. But that head! He'd know that head anywhere.

Yes! Now he remembered. He'd been on the bridge, worrying about Spock and about the missing landing party, when something started to happen to the crew. They'd seemed to be falling asleep all about him, and he, shocked as he was, couldn't seem to keep his mind on the situation.

He dug his fingers into the warm sand and let it flow through his fingers. Spock had brought them down to the planet. Shakily, Kirk climbed to his feet and wobbled toward his First Officer. "Spock!" he called, surprised at the miserable croak he produced.

The Vulcan turned stiffly. "Captain," he drew a ragged breath, frowning, "I must apologize. I had not intended to expose you to that. If there can be no forgiveness, I will understand."

With one trembling hand, Kirk brushed that aside. "Nonsense." He bit his lip. "But...was that...well, I mean, it was so real. Was it just a memory? Or...Spock, are you all right now?"

"After a fashion. Temporarily."

Kirk shuddered. He hadn't needed to ask that question. He'd known. And he needed an unstable First Officer the way he needed a wildcatting antimatter pod. How long had it been since T'Rruel? Four years?

The ground swayed alarmingly under his feet, and his knees gave out. But before he collapsed the firm Vulcan arm tightened about him, supporting, guiding.

"Captain, you've been unconscious for several days. Come inside; drink, eat, and I'll brief you."

Weak as he was, Kirk hung back. "What about the others?"

"I can do nothing for them just now."

Pondering the grieved tone of that, Kirk let himself be tended. Soon a measure of strength returned, and he listened to Spock's account with increasing concern.

An hour later, weak but clear-headed, Kirk sat on the sand beside the fire and regarded his sleeping crew somberly. Spock sat crosslegged before him, staring into the fire over steepled fingers, abstracted into deep Vulcan meditation. The captain mulled the situation over and over, culling through the facts with the tactician's keenly incisive reasoning. It seemed like a bizarre final-exam question for some nightmare Academy course.

As he waited for Spock's attention to return, he lined up a set of questions. The more he learned, the greater grew his ignorance.

His impatience mounted. He knew it was both impolite and dangerous to rip a Vulcan out of deep contemplation, but, as the minutes dragged by and Spock remained locked in thought, Kirk's anxiety grew. The others must be roused soon if they were going to do anything to save the ship.

Then he conceived another fear. The flame-image had triggered a dangerously compelling association for Spock's sensitized nervous system. If he became lost in that again, they might all be doomed. On the other hand, Sarek had said the flame was a multi-valued symbol in Vulcan philosophy. For several more minutes Kirk fretted at the decision, and then, with a worried glance at the three bodies laid out on the sand behind him, he reached over and stroked Spock's raised fingers gingerly.

Swift as a Denebian lythma, Spock's hands captured Kirk's wrists in a fierce grip that clamped off his circulation and threatened to snap the bones, but the Vulcan's expression didn't change. For several long seconds he continued to stare into the fire, immobile. Then, as if swimming up out of ocean depths, the Spock-elan infused the granite-like features with personality. Still staring into the fire, Spock said, "You should never do that, Jim."

Slowly, as if only now regaining control of his hands, Spock released Kirk's wrists and turned his gaze toward his captain.

"I know. I'm sorry," said Kirk.

"Apology accepted. But never again."

"I'm frightened, Spock."

"A logical reaction under the circumstances."

"But just what are the circumstances?"

"I believe I explained."

"Only partially. Just what is a...dze-ut'?" Kirk struggled to get the final aspiration on the "t" just right. He never learned how badly he failed.

"I wish I knew. I call it that because it resembled the mythological structure in shape and function, but I've no idea how deep the resemblance actually goes."

"You'll have to tell me more about it, but, first, we must do something for the others."

"I was preparing myself for the attempt when you interrupted. I cannot allow them to experience the confusion of identity that we encountered. I believe I have a method which should be more effective...with your assistance."

"Me? What can I do?"

"You are a latent telepath, Captain. We've both known that since you were inadvertently en rapport with that gaseous creature that killed Captain Garrovick."

"Nonsense! That was an accident."

"I gave you the Flame Sphere mainly because of your reaction to the Household Guardians on your first visit to my home. You'll recall that Dr. McCoy was unaffected by the Guardians? Nor did he perceive any inordinate depth in the hospitality ceremonies." His eyes sought the fire again. "And there were other occasions when your barriers went down spontaneously. It's been happening with increasing frequency. Every time circumstances have forced me to touch your mind, your barriers have been further weakened. At this point I dislike exposing you to further stimulation without protective devices at hand. However, I see no satisfactory alternative."

Vaguely, Kirk remembered dreaming some nonsense about telepathy.

"That was no dream, sir. During our confusion of identity, you were thinking with my mind. And I with yours. That can be deadly dangerous, and it must not be repeated."

Shocked, Kirk said, "I've never known you to casually read thoughts like that. It's very disconcerting."

"Indeed it is. I apologize. However, we are still en rapport, Captain. It is difficult for me to separate spoken from unspoken. That is the only reason you succeeded in rousing me safely. Don't ever try it again."

"I won't. What do we do now?"

Unwinding his long legs, Spock rose smoothly to his feet.
"Come."

Obediently, Kirk followed. Spock shifted Scotty's body closer to McCoy and asked Kirk to set Christine perpendicular to the men's feet. He placed the captain between the men, joining Scotty's hand to the doctor's and placing Kirk's on top of the two.

"Captain, reach over and grasp Nurse Chapel's hand firmly, then fix your eyes on the fire and think about the danger to the Enterprise. I want you to feel the fear natural to the situation."

Kirk did as he was told, and, surprisingly, as he catalogued the known risks and speculated on the unknown, the situation seemed fearfully hopeless. It wasn't panic that he felt, but the normal fear that sharpened his mind, steadying his hand and strengthening his muscles beyond human norms.

He hardly noticed the hot, dry skin that brushed his right temple or the steady, charged presence that invaded his mind.

Then the fire image split into five ghost images, whirled unsteadily, flared blinding, and exploded into seared blackness.

Suddenly he was ripped apart, torn from his flesh, sundered from identity. Lancing shafts of burning, nerve-grating pain ripped his mind apart. Raw agony shredded his flesh.

Something hauled him bodily away, tearing his nerve-roots from their moorings, shaking him thunderously.

"Jim! Jim!" The urgency in Spock's voice brought him back. He opened his eyes and found himself sagging against the Vulcan.

"I'm all right, I think. Sorry it didn't work. I tried... but I'm no telepath...."

"It did work, Captain. But I thought we were going to lose you."

Regaining his balance, Kirk stood, wiping sweat from his brow. He was vaguely aware that his rapport with the Vulcan had been shattered, and something told him that Spock was pleased with that. There was a stirring behind him, and he turned to see Scotty, Christine, and Bones sitting up, dazed and weak. Silently, he set to work with his First Officer, revitalizing the three humans.

Chapter 3: SKIRMISH

In due course they all settled down in a circle before the magnesite-nitron fire to make battle plans. This time Spock sat cross-legged with his back to the fire, Kirk opposite him, McCoy and Christine on one side, Scotty on the other. Interestingly, Kirk noted, McCoy ended up between Spock and Christine. The Vulcan was subtly avoiding her.

The captain led off the discussion. "As I see it, we have two choices. Destroy the tower that's generating this mental field, or remove the ship from its path. Mr. Scott -- "

"Your pardon, Captain..." Spock interrupted.

"Yes, Mr. Spock?"

"Neither of those alternatives would serve our purposes. If we destroy the tower, we'll have no way to revive the crew...and we'll destroy the landing party as well. If we succeed in removing the ship from the tower's influence, we'll still have no way to revive the crew. You didn't revive spontaneously when removed from the field."

McCoy said, "But you revived us?"

"True, Doctor. But I've previously had occasion to...touch minds...with each of you. The reason I brought all of you here was that I was unable to reach any of the others."

"And," added Kirk, "the cost to Spock was far greater than anyone has a right to ask."

"Captain," said Scotty, doodling in the sand with a fingertip, "from what I remember just before I...fell asleep...I dinna see how we're going tae move that ship -- or fire any of her weapons, either. The main computer controls were locked...."

"Locked?" said Kirk. "How?"

"Captain, the main computer operates on low voltage...very similar to an organic brain," said Spock. "The most sophisticated computers are affected by the dze-ut' field in the same way as an organic brain. The simpler units in the shuttlecraft were largely unaffected...but they, too, were vulnerable at close range."

"All right, Spock," said McCoy, "let's hear your alternative."

The Vulcan eyed him coolly. "We must dismantle the dze-ut' circuit...not destroy it."

"Just what," asked Kirk, "is that going to involve?"

Spock studied the fine sand in the dancing blue firelight. "We must approach the dze-ut' while it is still in operation. We must then penetrate the tower, locate the power nexus, and remove the focusing filters." He looked up meeting each pair of eyes in turn, then leveling his gaze at Kirk, he said, "It is my guess -- hardly more than a surmise -- that T'Aniyeh is both power-nexus and main focus of the circuit. If we are to free the crew, we must recover her alive."

Kirk blinked. He'd never known Spock to prevaricate or to load the facts toward his personal preference -- but there was always a first time. And the pressure on Spock was, Kirk knew from recent personal experience, enormous. Possibly, the only way to save the ship and the crew was to destroy the tower and Tanya with it. But, at the moment, Spock's personal values would place Tanya's safety above all of their lives. And Spock was the only one among them who had any knowledge, however hazy, about what they were up against. Just how far could he trust his First Officer?

Kirk said, "Are you certain, Spock, very, very certain, this is the only way to save the ship?"

Levelly, as if aware of Kirk's doubts, he answered, "No, sir, I'm not at all certain. My reasoning is based on possibly fallacious analogy, and fragmented legends which are notoriously inconsistent with one another. I may be wrong."

"We must act," said Kirk. "Time is short, just how short we don't know. Bones, how much longer would you say the crew can survive in that state?"

McCoy cleared his throat, pulling a long face. "Well, now, Captain, it's hard to say -- "

Spock broke in. "It is also irrelevant. The important question is how much longer T'Aniyeh can survive."

Kirk snapped, "Explain!"

"When she dies.-- if she dies while still holding the crew in paralysis -- they all will die with her."

"How certain are you of that?" asked Kirk.

"No more than of the rest. But I do know that the stress on the nexus operator of a dze-ut' circuit is such that he will certainly die well before the subjects. This circuit has been operating for almost four days. Our legends quote a maximum of a little more than twice that. However, T'Aniyeh is human. If

she is at the nexus, we may have much less time." He frowned. "But she is also a Daughter of the Tradition. There is an ancient fragment of legend to the effect that only a Daughter who is...betrothed...can survive the focal-nexus."

Scotty unfurrowed his brow. "How does this...circuit you've postulated actually work?"

"That, Engineer, is something which I couldn't explain to you even if I did understand it myself. The dze-ut' come down to us from our equivalent of thaumaturgy, alchemy, witchcraft, and magic. No dze-ut' has been constructed on Vulcan -- if indeed one ever was -- in more than ten thousand Earth-years."

Scotty was helplessly intrigued. "Ten thousand years! Then how do you know of it at all?"

Spock shrugged. "Fragmentary references to legends of an oral tradition recorded hundreds of years after writing was invented. Nobody even knows to what language the word dze-ut' belongs."

McCoy shifted his weight on the sand, fishing under one hip to remove a sharp stone. "I knew you were a history buff, Spock, but I never realized you went so far!" He tossed the offending rock into the darkness.

Spock skewered him with a glance. "My family takes its responsibilities very seriously, Doctor."

"All right," Kirk interrupted, "let's presume we're going to remove Tanya alive. The first step is to approach the tower. How can we do that, if the minute we enter the field we're rendered unconscious again?"

Spock's eyebrows climbed innocently. "It will, of course, be necessary to construct a protective device."

McCoy nodded, his inherent cynicism rising to the occasion. "And I suppose you've got that all planned."

"Unfortunately, no, Doctor...though I have some ideas."

Kirk asked, "And just what will this device do?"

"It should render each of you immune to the dze-ut' field -- that is, if it can be constructed, and if it can be made to work."

Kirk sighed. "Supposing we have such a device...then what?"

"We must deal with their guards."

Scotty wiped sweat off the back of his neck and peered anxiously at the sky. "You make it sound too simple."

"Not intentionally, Engineer. That may well be the most difficult part of the operation. You may ask yourself what kind of society could, without a discernible technology, detect and nullify a starship in orbit? What kind of a society could construct an operational dze-ut' and incorporate an alien entity into the circuit? These people are armed with devices that generally destroy the operator as well as the target. What does that imply of their psychology?"

Determined to hear the worst, Kirk pressed, "And what happens after we get into the tower?"

"I have no idea, Captain."

"Take a guess."

He shrugged an eyebrow. "T'Aniyeh and the others must be removed from the circuit -- alive. If that is accomplished, the crew should waken spontaneously, and so should T'Aniyeh...and anyone else affected by the circuit."

McCoy challenged, "You seem awfully sure Tanya is in the thing."

The expression on Spock's face belied his words. "I'm not certain, Doctor. I can only guess."

"All right," said the captain, "I guess we haven't much choice. We'll try it your way. What's the first step in constructing this field nullifier?"

Spock said, "While you're resting, I'll do some prospecting."

"For what?" asked Kirk.

"I don't know, sir. But this world must be rich in raw materials, and this region looks most promising."

Kirk shrugged. He was in over his head -- and his head was spinning from cumulative exhaustion. "Good luck."

A few moments later Spock strode off into the pitch darkness, a field exploration belt buckled low on his slender hips.

The others bedded down in the open. There was still a good seven hours before dawn, so there was no reason to cram themselves into the shuttle. Kirk elected the first watch, giving Scotty the second and McCoy the third. That way they'd each get almost four hours' sleep.

After setting the automatic alarms, the perched on a warm rock in the light spilling from the open door of the shuttlecraft. It was a little late to worry. They'd already chosen a course of action. Nevertheless, Kirk spent two hours in intensive worry. That, after all, was a captain's job.

Then Scotty tapped him on the shoulder, interrupting a doze he hadn't been aware of entering. He found himself a place on the soft sand and was asleep immediately.

He woke to the tweet of his communicator and had it open before McCoy could grab it. The first hint of dawn was paling the sky as Spock's voice came tensely. "Captain, check your tricorder readings. I believe the natives know we're here."

He turned to McCoy, who re-checked the readings he'd been checking every five minutes for the last hour. McCoy shook his head.

Kirk said, "Spock, we don't read anything here. Where are you?"

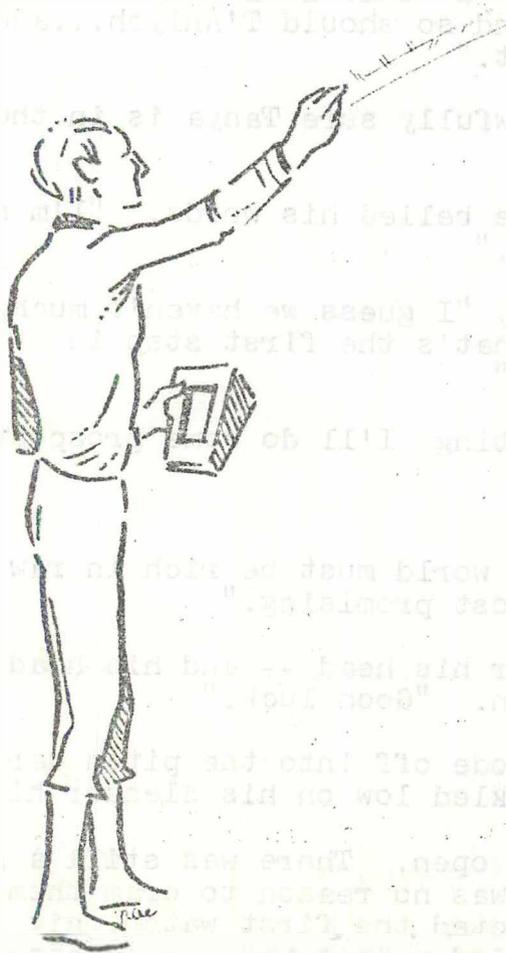
"On the far perimeter of the crater, Captain. Due west of you. And I do read a group approaching slowly. Bearing 119 mark 0. Range...approximately one mile."

"Did you find what you went after?"

"A suitable facsimile."

"Fine, then return immediately. We'll prepare to take the Galileo up."

There was a long pause followed by a hesitant, "Yes, sir. Spock out."



Lips pursed, Kirk closed the grid with his forefinger and tapped it thoughtfully. Then he said, "Bones, get everybody up. Yellow alert. I'm going to check our supplies."

Kirk climbed into the shuttle and began sorting through the packing cases stowed precisely according to regulations in every available square foot. When he'd finished the inventory, he rocked in the pilot's chair, meditatively staring at the non-reflective blue-gray bulkheads, the round-hooded plotting scopes, the triplets of levers and twinkling control lights. Deactivated, the three forward viewscreens were hidden by safety shields the same color as the bulkheads, giving the cabin a closed, almost claustrophobic feeling that wasn't quite dispelled by the white light of the overhead glow-panel striking clean highlights off the six shiny, black chairs.

Mechanical miracles. Technological slaves. Polished sterility. Against stone-age...what? They'd confronted many formidable telepaths -- but never anything like this.

His glum thoughts were interrupted by the sound of familiar steps in the sand. He called, "Spock, come in here!"

Tapping the fine dust off his boots, Spock entered.
"Yes, Captain?"

"You knew we wouldn't be taking the shuttle up again, didn't you?"

"No, sir. But it seemed a reasonable assumption in view of what happened to the shuttle on the way down -- and what they've done to the Enterprise computers."

"Will destroying the dze-ut' fix the Enterprise computers?"

"Destroying the dze-ut' will fix nothing."

"Your pardon. I meant dismantling -- or whatever you have in mind."

"Unknown, Captain."

"And you're not particularly interested in that aspect of the problem right now?"

Spock lowered his eyes. The gray-green lids were like sore bruises under the sharply slanted brows.

"Spock, level with me. How long do you have?"

The Vulcan paced stiffly to the far end of the cabin, removed his equipment belt, and began to sort items. He said,

"I wasn't mistaken about those readings, Captain. A group of natives is approaching."

"Don't change the subject. I'm not moving out until I know what I've got to contend with."

Speaking to the wall, the First Officer continued, "I was proud of you, that night on the mountain. You are of my mother's people, and in that sense I was proud. But at this moment I am shamed."

"Spock, it would be illogical to hold me to Vulcan standards of behavior. I ask because I need to know, and I've no other way to find out -- unless you want me to order Bones to -- "

Spock held up his hand. "I apologize, Jim."

"Unnecessary and irrelevant. Just answer the question."

He met Kirk's eyes soberly for a moment, then turned back to his sorting. "I estimate about 13 standard days before...." He trailed off, unable to find the words.

Kirk supplied "...before you'd be likely to do anything foolish?"

He nodded, turning back to his equipment.

McCoy's voice drifted in. "Jim, we've got a flicker of a life-reading now. Someone is approaching...make that a group... maybe ten individuals."

Spock added softly, "At least 15."

Kirk went to the door. "All right, Bones, we're leaving... on foot. Get a directional fix on the group. Nurse Chapel, douse the fire. Scotty, get in here and give us a hand."

As the engineer climbed into the cabin, stamping sand, yawning and scratching, Kirk went to the pile of equipment and hefted a ruck sack. Just hauling one's own body around in this gravity was a chore -- but it would be more of a chore without food or water. He began choosing and sorting items.

When Scotty saw what the captain was doing, he picked up another of the light packs and exercised his own judgment in loading up. He said, "Captain, I dinna see that we'll get verra far on foot. The heat, gravity, low oxygen...and the sun will be up soon."

Kirk answered, "We may not get very far, Mr. Scott, but it will probably be farther than we'd get in the shuttle now that they know we're here. It will just have to be far enough."

Scotty nodded gravely. "Aye. But how will we carry enough water to last more than a day out there?"

Spock turned, strapping the restocked belt about his hips. "We won't carry that much water, Mr. Scott. Two-quart canteens will be sufficient."

Highland skepticism played about the expressive eyes. "I havena seen any sign of water aroun' here."

Cocking his head to one side in peculiarly Spockian amusement, the Vulcan said, "You 'havena' looked, Engineer."

Kirk backed off from the array of crates, swung his pack to his shoulder, and leaned out the door. "Bones, your turn." As the doctor approached, Kirk continued, "Take whatever medical supplies you think will be useful. Split the load between you and Christine. I've got rations for five days for you both. If we haven't succeeded by then, we'll be dead."

McCoy started to protest. He was a doctor, not an explorer, then, mentally gauging the weight of Kirk's pack, he subsided.

Scotty finished stowing his load and backed out, leaving McCoy and Spock to work over the remaining three packs. Scotty joined the captain at the shuttle's controls trying to milk the last possible shred of meaning from the larger sensor system of the shuttlecraft.

Presently Spock joined them. "Those readings are almost meaningless."

Scotty turned, offended by the insult to his carefully tended machines. "Oh, are they now? And how would ye be sae wise?"

Spock placed a transparent orange crystal on the desk before them. It looked like a natural growth of quartz with faceted spikes jutting in every direction. "This is far more reliable than a tricorder or sensor system under the circumstances. The natives have something that distorts all sensor readings that are based on neural activity." He brought out a second crystal, a long, emerald-green shaft. As he touched it to one of the projecting facets of the orange crystal, a blue spark jumped the gap and a tiny picture materialized in the green crystal.

The humans bent forward to peer at the image. There was a sandy plane dotted with petrified growths and sand-sculpted rock outcroppings. Filtering among these with obvious stealth, 15 tiny figures advanced along a curving front, arrayed for battle.

The image wavered and broke apart. Spock drew a ragged breath. "I can't do that for sustained periods, but I assure you it's accurate."

Scotty's head swiveled on tense shoulders. "An unco crystal ball!"

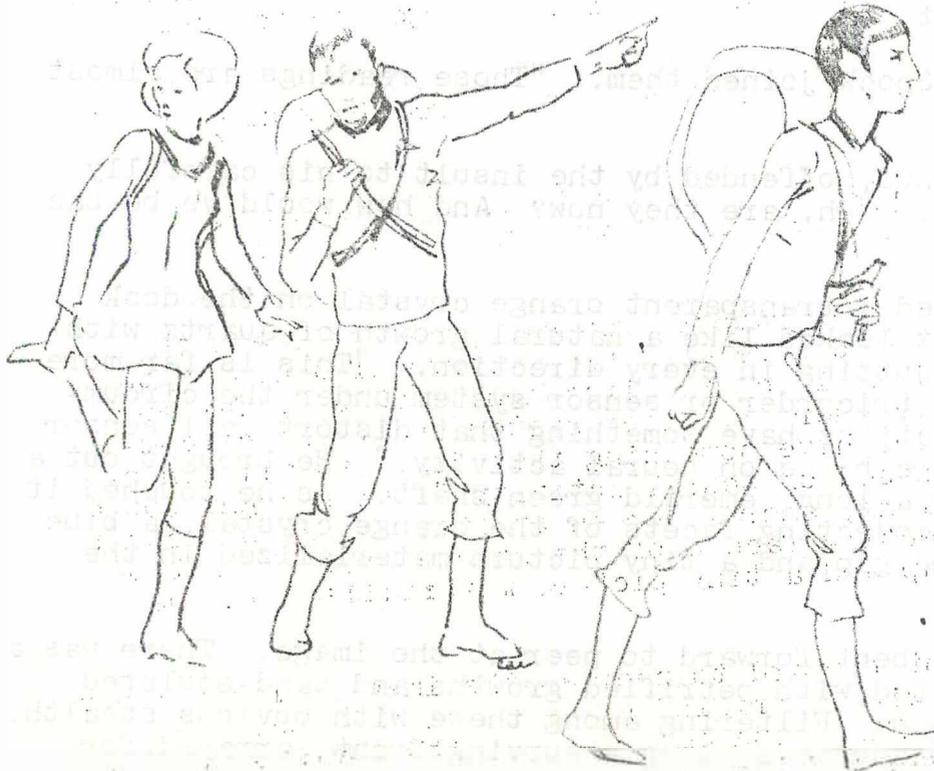
"Not exactly, Engineer," replied Spock dryly.

Kirk asked bemused, "How does it work?"

"I don't know, Captain. I've never heard of anything like it before. I stumbled on it by accident while looking for something else. That group is much closer than our tricorders indicate. I suggest we move if such is our intention." He pocketed the two crystals and sealed the flap.

Kirk wondered what other surprises his First Officer would spring on them from that loaded belt. But he gave the orders to lock up the shuttlecraft, and soon they were wading through loose sand, toward a barely visible cleft in the crater wall.

The stars were disappearing already, and the half-gray, shadowless, pre-dawn light lent a weird, shifting quality to the rugged skyline that surrounded them.



Spock kept throwing worried glances around them and stepping up the pace until the humans were choking on dry throats and searing lungs.

As the first slice of blue-white sun topped the horizon, and they were only ten yards from the heap of loose boulders that filled the cleft, Spock whirled around, bent into a

fighting crouch, pushing Scotty on ahead with out outflung arm. "Run!"

Simultaneously, five silhouettes topped the ridge behind them and to their right, and a blood curdling shriek echoed across the silent desert. One of the five silhouettes leaped high and seemed to float down to the sand not twanty yards from them.

Kirk's hand went to his phaser, but froze in mid-gesture as he remembered General Order One.

Spock nodded. "Our phasers wouldn't affect them on anything less than maximum. They have some sort of neural shield."

Kirk glanced behind. Scotty, McCoy and Nurse Chapel were scrambling for cover among the rocks.

Abruptly, a ton of glowing orange gelatin seemed to whomp him soundlessly on the back of the head, and then it crawled into his brain.

He stumbled two more paces and sprawled full length on the warm sand, mouth and eyes frozen wide open in the gritty sand. His thoughts oozed orange gelatin and sent orange ice down his nerves, jerking his body spasmodically. Then, suddenly, it was gone, and he rolled to his feet.

Spock's strong hand on his elbow propelled him toward the rocks. He staggered a few steps, and the hand was gone. "Captain, take cover!"

Spitting dry grit from his mouth, Kirk wiped his streaming eyes and turned back to face their attackers. More heads were silhouetted against the paling sky now, and six tall, thin natives faced off in a parabola with Spock at the focus. The Vulcan stood frozen in the act of reaching for one of his belt pockets.

Out of the corner of his eye, Kirk saw Scotty's head bobbing up from behind a boulder and sensed the phaser the engineer held. Blinking away tears, Kirk gestured hold-your-fire.

Spock's arm jerked another inch toward his belt. The six natives arrayed on the flat sand before him tensed in unison as if linked in exerting some common force. At once, Kirk knew the orange gelatin was invading Spock's mind, but he was fighting it -- successfully enough to engage six opponents at once.

The others on the ridge above them seemed content to stay out of it, but Kirk wasn't. Warily, he moved in under Spock's line of sight, crouching low, keeping a close eye on the six natives. When he'd reached the Vulcan, he hesitated, trying to

decide which of those pockets Spock's hand was going for. Then he seized one of the flaps and fumbled it open.

Within were several porous rocks, spongy-soft inside, but lava-sharp on the jagged surface. He took the largest and placed it in Spock's hand, then waited out the eternity until the fingers closed on the pale orange treasure.

Kirk retreated the way he'd come, giving Spock room to do whatever it was he'd planned.

Spock's arm swung up and around in an overhand pitch, and the rock soared -- not toward the six natives confronting him, but high up onto the rim of the crater. The six opponen~~s~~s cut and ran in terror, and at the same instant Spock turned, grabbed Kirk's arm, and pounded for the rocks where the others waited. As he ran, the Vulcan shouted, "Take cover!"

A split second later, he threw the captain down behind a boulder and flung himself onto Kirk's body as if protecting a child from a force that could rip flesh from bones.

The world ended in searing orange flame that encased Kirk's mind in ice-cold gelatin. The explosion behind Kirk's eyes seemed to split his head open like a ripe cantaloup. Then, mercifully, he blacked out.

A moment -- or a year? -- later, Kirk opened his eyes to find his First Officer seated on a convenient rock, elbows propped on knees, two fingers steepled in that peculiar gesture of immersion in subjective reality. Kirk rubbed the nape of his neck, looking for the source of the migraine that was nesting in his skull, as he watched McCoy lead the ungainly scramble down the rock-slide with Scotty and Christine racing behind him.

There was no sign of the natives.

Chapter 4 : C ADGETATION

McCoy had his medical scanner out and going before he was even in range, but he couldn't decide who to start on. With a disgusted glance toward the Vulcan, he tackled Kirk. "What happened?"

The captain submitted to the examination passively. "You're asking the wrong man, Bones."

"It doesn't look as if I'm likely to get anything out of him -- " He chinned in the direction of steepled fingers. " -- for a while."

Kirk nodded, regretted the extravagance of the motion, and said softly, "We'd better leave him to his own devices."

McCoy fumbled in Christine's rucksack and came up with a squeeze bottle. "Tilt your head back, Jim, and look at the sky."

Gentle fingers deftly held first one eye, then the other open, and irrigated the reddened corneas. A few seconds later, a hypo finished off the headache, and a mouthful of water rinsed the sand from his teeth. He felt almost human again by the time Spock lowered his hands to rub his left calf, gingerly.

McCoy drew the medical scanner on the Vulcan, but as he consulted the three inch tube, Spock snatched it, switched it off, and returned it to McCoy's belt pouch. "I suffered no physical injury save for a slight muscle strain."

McCoy grunted skeptically, but Spock moved past him before the doctor could check for pulled muscles and torn ligaments. The Vulcan walked smoothly enough, but that was no guarantee he was uninjured.

Spock looked into Kirk's eyes solemnly.

Kirk said quietly, "You might have broken my ribs, Mr. Spock."

"Which is worse, Captain, a cracked rib, or a mind shattered beyond repair?"

Kirk blinked. "That bad?"

"Worse."

"Are you all right?"

"Functional."

"I don't understand any of this."

"Neither do I. I've learned much in the last few minutes. I'll require some time to digest it. Meanwhile, I suggest we place as much distance between us and our opponents as the advancing day will allow."

"We'll need shelter from the sun. We should return to the shuttlecraft and wait until night."

"That's what they expect us to do, sir. They will use the daylight remaining after they regain their senses to see to it that the shuttle never rises again."

Kirk rubbed his chin. "How long will it be before they wake up?"

"Unknown. However, we'll find suitable shelter along our path."

Gauging the remaining shadows, Kirk rubbed the back of his neck. "Did you scout the region from the air?"

"Fleetingly. But I gained much more data from our recent adversaries."

With one more glance at the sun and an ineffectual swipe at his streaming brow, Kirk said, "All right, let's move out!"

Once more, the group scrambled over the jumbled heap of boulders; this time Spock took the lead, while the humans helped each other up the steepest parts.

By the time they crested the pile of rubble, the sun was fully master of the glaring sky. The rolling hills of pale ochre rock and sand that stretched before them undulated beneath an early morning blanket of heat-shimmer reminding the captain queasily of the gelatin that had frozen his mind.

As they paused to catch their breath, Spock came to Kirk's side, as far away from Christine as he could inconspicuously arrange, and scanned the view before them. "It's going to be a pleasant day. Unfortunate that we must spend it in a cave."

Kirk glanced at him suspiciously. "Mr. Spock, are you joking?"

"No, Captain, it would never occur to me. I was merely stating the fact as I see it."

Kirk gestured to the broken country before them. "Well, that looks like a vision of purgatory to me. On Earth, they call stretches like that 'badlands'."

Expressive eyebrows arched upwards. "On Vulcan, they call it a forest."

"Oh, come now, Mr. Spock. It takes trees to make a forest. That's a definition true on any planet."

"Correct."

"Well, I don't see any trees."

"I do." He walked over to an ashen-gray boulder that stood as high as his head and ran a hand appreciatively over the rough surface. "This, for example, is a healthy sapling resembling the genus portunakreas. Its root system must reach down almost fifteen hundred feet already. When it taps the water table, it will flower, spreading surface tendrils hundreds of feet in all directions."

Kirk joined him touching the pulpy surface hesitantly. It did seem to be alive.

"May I suggest, Captain, that you caution everyone to watch carefully where they put their feet from now on. Within the crater the sand effectively protected the life-forms, but, here, one might injure the vegetation by tripping over tendrils or exposed root nodules."

Kirk gaped incredulously. Vulcans! Indeed! More worried about injured vegetation than injured humans! But all he said was, "A wise precaution, Mr. Spock. However, a wiser one would be to find shelter before we all collapse from the heat."

Spock pointed straight ahead, directly along their line of march to the tower. "On the far side of the next ridge, just below the crest, is a deep root-cavern and a water supply."

"You seem certain of that."

"I am." The gravely drawn planes of the Vulcan's features didn't invite further inquiry. They moved out.

A hundred weary years and two gallons of sweat later, they ducked into the moist darkness of an oasis and, shedding their packs, collapsed on the soft dirt floor to rub sore legs and gulp the cool air into dessicated lungs. The last to eschew the sun and duck into the tunnel was the Vulcan. The body belongs to the life-surges of the biosphere where it belongs, and no amount of intellectual discipline can lessen the call of the seasons.

Unlimbering his canteen, Kirk called his First Officer over, then swigged luxuriously at the precious liquid. "Spock, what kind of a place is this?" He offered the canteen and, at the expected refusal, stoppered it.

"An unpleasantly chilly one," Spock answered glumly.

Scotty had arranged a field lantern, and the long, moist tunnel was revealed for a good 20 yards back. It was about four yards wide and rose to barely seven feet high after the low entrance. Then it tapered sharply as it slanted downward and back. Spacious enough, and seemingly pleasant enough. Kirk said, "You expect dangerous animals?"

"No, Captain. The few species of insect likely to be found here are harmless."

Kirk looked around for the tricorder, spotted it, and called, "Nurse Chapel, what was the temperature out there?"

"A hundred and thirty and rising, sir. It's about 90 in here. Shall I check again?"

"No...no. Just morbid curiosity. Mr. Spock, what do you expect the peak temperature in here will be?"

"I doubt if it will be more than a hundred degrees Fahrenheit. There is considerable evaporation holding the temperature down."

Kirk nodded and pulled his shirt over his head. "You mentioned a water source...?"

Spock gestured toward the sloping rear of the tunnel. "The moisture is coming from the main taproot. It shouldn't be too far back. Shall I collect the canteens and refill them?"

"Why not? Tell me, Mr. Spock, is this a common phenomenon on Vulcan, too?"

Spock nodded. "In certain areas where this species abounds, and logging operations are in progress."

"Logging operations?" Kirk prompted numbly, determined to hear the whole incredible story.

"Yes. Harvesting of the surface nodules after the tendrils have dried stimulates the seeding process if it's done properly." He put a hand out to test the tunnel walls. "Whatever else these people lack, they do have an efficient logging policy, and considerable sophistication in agriculture in general."

A bit dizzy from the heat, Kirk leaned his shoulders against the cool, moist wall. Against his bare skin, the tender root-fibres entwined in the silky soil felt as good as satin sheets. He said, "Isn't it strange to find a species of Vulcan 'tree' here?"

"No, sir. Throughout Federation Space, we've found life-forms virtually identical to those evolved on Earth. And we've found much other evidence of the activities of the Preservers. In this galactic sector, M-IV worlds abound. It is not surprising to find Vulcanoid species. You'll recall that it has been suggested we are not native to Vulcan."

Spock gathered the canteens, purification pellets, and a filtration funnel and disappeared down into the dark hole, his belt light gyrating wildly against the walls, revealing the matt of thread-like roots that supported the loose dirt.

Christine knelt by Kirk and gave him a ration packet. "Captain, what's the matter with Mr. Spock? I've been afraid to utter a sound in his hearing ever since we woke up in that...crater. Did you see the look he gave me when I reported the temperature? It's as if he's furious with me for some dreadfully careless error...?"

Kirk pulled a face to hide his amusement and settled himself on the floor of the cavern. "No, Miss Chapel, it's no mistake of yours. Let's just say he's...very concerned...for the safety of the landing party."

"Oh." She became all stiffly starched nurse as she arranged his meal and moved on. Even covered with sweat, dust, and sand, and strained with anxiety, fear, and battle-shock, she still had the self-control to project an image of aseptic efficiency.

Scotty dropped down near Kirk and wriggled himself a comfortable seat in the rich soil. "I've never known Mr. Spock's concern for anyone's safety to make him snub a body. A good officer doesn't demoralize his crew. Nobby what Mr. Spock can be verra difficult at times."

"Well, Scotty, there's always a first time."

The engineer's slight turn of head and furrowed brow was purest highland skepticism.

Kirk's lips pursed. Then he sighed. "We're all entitled to our little...obsessions...from time to time. It's only natural."

Scotty frowned his puzzlement.

Reluctantly, Kirk continued, nearly in a whisper, "At the moment, Spock is very, very concerned for Tanya's safety. In fact, I'd say he's somewhat...emotional...about it."

"He's really serious about her?"

Kirk nodded.

A knowing smile lit Scotty's face. "Ah," He nodded. "Well, as you say, sir, even Vulcans are entitled."

Just then the dull clinking and the flashing light announced Spock's return, and Scotty pulled his face down to innocent neutrality. The Vulcan marched casually into the group, placing each canteen by its proper owner with a courteous, matter-of-fact air. In some undefinable way, his manner discouraged the humans' reflexive, but almost meaningless, thank-you's. He stepped around Christine with the fastidiousness of a cat and settled near the entrance where it was warmer.

As Scotty, McCoy, and Christine searched out sleeping places and made themselves comfortable, Kirk rose, scratching his bare chest and wondering if he could sleep again. He went over and hunkered down next to the Vulcan, who was sorting through his rock collection, spreading the stones out on a flat boulder. "Don't you think you should get some sleep, Mr. Spock? You were up all night."

"I will, Captain, but first I have some work to do."

"Mind explaining what?"

"I am building a mechanical mind-shield."

"But that's impossible, isn't it?"

Spock gave him a reproachful look.

"Well, I mean the designers of the Universal Translator have tried to produce one for years and haven't got a commercial model yet."

"Wrong approach, Captain."

"So what is the right approach?"

He held up one of his raw jewels. "This -- with a little magic, some superstition, and a dash of legend for flavoring."

Kirk looked askance. That didn't sound like Spock.

Impassively, the Vulcan continued fashioning, chipping, grinding, probing, poking, and taking tricorder readings. He said, "I learned a great deal from our late enemies."

"Are you sure they didn't learn a lot from you, too?"

"I don't believe they gained anything of value."

"And what did you learn about them?"

With nearly savage concentration on his task, the Vulcan spat out his words in little, toneless bursts, as if reciting strings of transporter co-ordinates. "They've turned their minds into offensive weapons. The strongest mind in a clan-family group actually dominates and physically controls those under him. They were attempting to take control of us in the same way they took T'Aniyeh. They are incredibly strong-willed, and they use augmenting devices of subtly sophisticated design."

Avoiding Kirk's eyes, he continued with unsuppressible distaste, "They do not have marriage, but only demand-rights within the clan-group. They sell their children to the strongest bidder and destroy the un-sellable ones. They live like animals who know no beauty. I want nothing more than to leave this world as swiftly as possible."

The intensity carried across the two feet of moist soil and shook Kirk. Never before had he known Spock to condemn the values of an alien society. But, as he'd told Scotty, there was always a first time. He was sure the Vulcan would regain his perspective...afterwards.

With every cell of his body, Kirk experienced Spock's primordial horror at the use the natives had made of the mind-meld. The mind/mind touching was a deeply personal experience, a sharing that could weld two fiercely independent beings into an indivisible unity. Kirk knew the Vulcans' reverence for this touching and knew within his bones that the only time such subjugation is justified is the only time it is unavoidable, when the ancient drives surface and cannot be denied.

With his own glands, Kirk knew the many-pronged fear that was digging at Spock's vitals. Uppermost was a black horror at the kind of people who had their hands on her

He remembered their fatuous gloating when, during their second attack on his mind, they'd discovered his condition. He'd let them presume that to be his only motivation in seeking her out, and they had made a vague, ill-defined threat to...use... her at some imminent opportunity.

The disgust! The primitive anger that rose at the memory flooded his body with liquid flame. Only with grim determination did he master that surge. He would bring her out of their hands...untouched. There was no reason for haste. There remained much work to be done...and plenty of time....

But his mind refused to let it lie. Their time would come in due course. But what then?

Of course, the probability of conception was relatively low. But such a pregnancy would be very dangerous. The Enterprise certainly couldn't abandon the mission for the sake of two lives. He had absolutely no faith in McCoy. Saptiir was the only man living who could be trusted with such a problem. And he was beyond reach, at home.

He'd not expected this situation to develop until they were well on their way back into Federation territory. But, apparently, his human wasn't about to cooperate...as usual.

Nevertheless, danger or no danger, he knew beyond the slightest question that they'd both do their best to assure conception. Nature provided for the survival of the species, not individuals. They were helpless in the face of that.

He became aware that his eyes had closed, and he sat in limbo. Outside...way outside...somebody was calling him. "Jim! Jim! Break if off! Withdraw! You are Captain James Kirk. Captain!"

"No," he protested feebly, "I'm...."

He opened his eyes. Dizzily, he saw himself standing in front of himself shaking himself by the shoulders. The scene

flipped insideout with a sickening blur, and he was staring at Spock.

"Captain?"

"Spock! What happened?"

Spock closed his eyes for a moment, taking a deep breath, deliberately draining the tension from his face. Then he released Kirk and went to sit down beside the rock where he'd spread out his collection of oddments. "I was afraid we'd lost you that time, Captain. We must be much more careful."

Kirk looked around. The others were all asleep. He sat down. "Spock...for a few minutes...I...we..."

"I warned you before, Captain. It's dangerous to do that."

"But I didn't do -- "

"Your pardon, sir, but you did. You reached out..touched... and joined. You have a very tenacious will. It was all I could do to disentangle from the linkage."

He turned from his work to frown penetratingly at the human. "Jim, violation of mental privacy is a serious crime -- among Vulcans. We tend to react to the offense with...violence."

Kirk took a deep breath. He'd just been reprimanded and warned by his First Officer. But he now knew the fierce sincerity behind those coolly spoken words. He said, "I...understand...."

Spock dropped his eyes. "You must learn to control your need...for contact...at least until we get home."

"I'll try. But I wasn't aware -- "

"I know. You must try very hard."

Kirk climbed to his feet.

"Captain." Spock looked up at the human. "It's very like asking an infant not to try to walk. I know that. But you must restrain yourself -- you must."

"Thank you, Mr. Spock. Now, I think we both must get some sleep."

"Yes. It's quite exhausting. I'll have part of this working in a few minutes. Then I'll rest. We'll be safer with a nullifier over us."

Kirk nodded and stumbled off to find himself a place to sleep. His mind was reeling under the load it had absorbed in the

last half day. Sleep might help to digest some of it and give him the vitality to face the rest. As he stretched out and squirmed himself comfortable, laying his head on his pack and spreading his shirt under his bare shoulder, he thought, one advantage to being in Spock's mind was that the smothering heat became a delightful chill, and the dead, dry, tasteless air became moist with delicate fragrances, rich vegetation, and teeming life. The grim hell out there turned into an unspoiled picnic ground good for roaming aimlessly and communing with nature in the Vulcan way.

He caught himself. Those were thoughts of the kind Spock had just warned him against. He cast about for some peculiarly Kirkian thing to dream about and in five minutes was sound asleep on an ancient, square-rigged sailing ship, creaking and groaning against the waves with the quiet, reassuring twitter of mice busy in the holds, inching above sloshing black bilge water.

"No!"

Kirk woke to Spock's husky cry of anguished denial. With one motion, he rolled over and was on his knees searching the darkness for his friend.

Near the entrance, the dazzling rays of the late afternoon sun struck deep into their hole, drying a half-circle of floor to an ashen gray. At the edge of the steaming, cracked soil stood the Vulcan, braced tall, head thrown back, a grimace of pain distorting his features as he sucked air through clenched teeth.

Before Kirk could rise, Spock had dropped to his knees, all trace of that bone-cracking rigor drained away. By the time the captain reached him, Spock was shaking uncontrollably. Kirk knelt and placed his hands on Spock's shoulders. "Spock, what is it? What's the matter? Are the natives attacking again?"

Shrinking from the touch of human flesh, he shook his head. "Leave me!"

"I want to help, Spock. Tell me what happened. What's wrong?"

Breathing easier now, he tried to control the shaking enough to rise. "Nothing."

"You expect me to believe that?" Kirk reached out a hand to steady his friend, not daring to admit to himself how much he feared that second touch would be rejected.

Gaining his feet independently, Spock grasped Kirk's outstretched wrist bruisingly. "I am...very cold. I am going outside for a while."

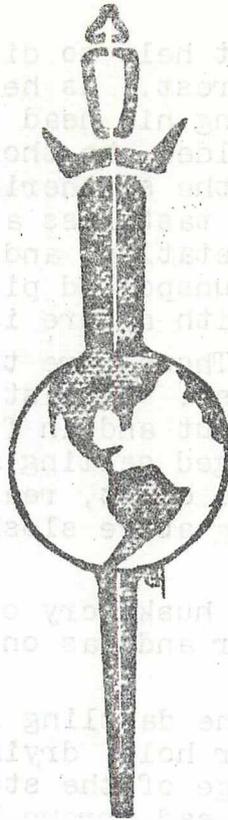
He started past the human, but Kirk blocked his way. "Spock, what happened!"

The Vulcan inspected Kirk's hand as if it were a specimen of poisonous reptile he'd captured. "It's not something that any human should experience. You're too easily subject to cardiac arrest, brain hemorrhages, and similar malfunction."

The purpling flesh was beginning to prickle. Ignoring the pain of Spock's grip, Kirk implored his friend, "Spock....!"

to be concluded

RORRIM



MIRROR

(to the tune of
"Thais"

by Ruth Berman

by Ruth Berman

One time on board the Enterprise,
On board the good ship Enterprise,
There dwelt a band of gallant crewmen and crew-women, too,
Who'd voyage through the Galaxy,
Across the widest parallax, e-
ffecting words of charity, and deeds of derring-do.

Now, in another universe,
There was the same ship, but much worse.
Its corridors were stenciled with an evil-omened sign.
A phallic dagger through a globe
Was on each wall and on each robe,
A symbol of their golden rule: "What's yours will soon be mine."

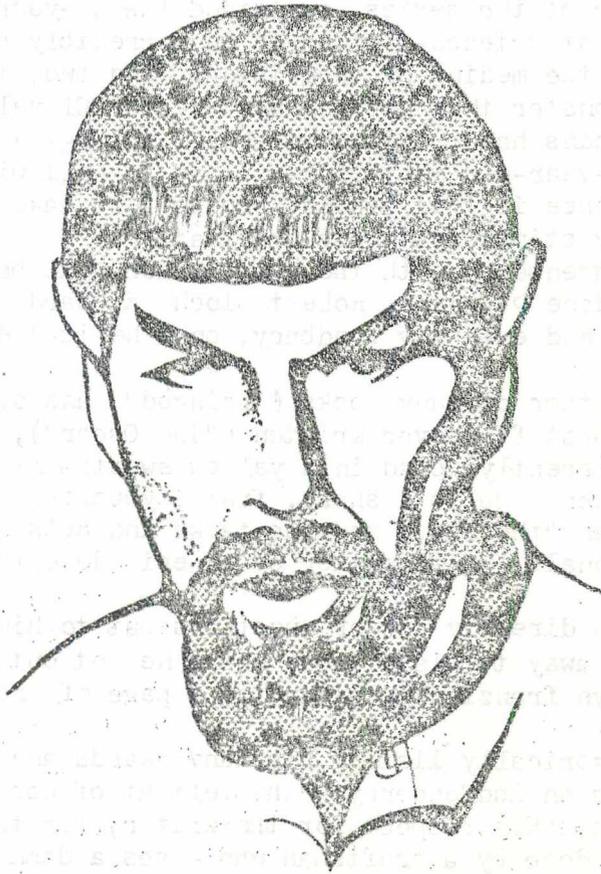
Once, beaming from a stormy spot,
Uhura, Kirk, McCoy, and Scott
Discovered they had beamed aboard this Enterprise so weird,
Where arms were raised in strange salute,
Uhura looked a prostitute,
And, worst of all, Commander Spock had grown a Vulcan beard,

While Sulu, he looked treacherous,
Likewise, distinctly lecherous,
And so Uhura volunteered to keep him occupied
So Scott and Bones could jury-rig
A way that in a hurry e-
Gress back to their own universe for all four would provide.

Meanwhile, in the captain's cabin,
Kirk had gone some rest to grab in
Peace, and was amazed when he discovered on his cot
A lass who said that she was his --
Or was she? Kirk said, in a whiz,
"You are the captain's woman, till the captain says you're not."

Spock and Marlene both were wise,
And they soon pierced through the disguise
And learned there was a milder way of life to try to find.
They helped get rid of Sulu, then
Returned them to their world again
(And Kirk, to his delight, found there the girl he'd left behind).

((a typo in
verse 1:
"words" should
be "works"))





LD-TIME ARTICLE:

((San Francisco Sunday Chronicle's "Datebook." John Stanley:
"Television: A Trek Through Deepest Space," Sept. 4, 1966.))

Hollywood -- Gene Roddenberry, who gave a new image to the Marine Corps in "The Lieutenant," may now be giving a new image to bug-eyed monsters and other extraterrestrials in "Star Trek."

This is the new, way-out brainchild of Roddenberry -- a prolific script-writer and the creator of numerous other series -- and it is being ballyhooed by NBC as "the first adult space adventure." It could very well establish a new trend -- if Roddenberry's laser is directly on the beam, that is.

"Star Trek" (which has its premiere episode on Thursday at 8:30 p.m. on NBC) is set in the 22nd Century and concerns the USS Enterprise, a 300,000-ton spaceship which is ten stories high and carries 400 passengers.

It is on a five-year mission from home base, Earth, to conduct an investigation of space and the countless worlds harboring forms of alien life.

*

It is obvious that Roddenberry's goal is to blast the hour series above the juvenility of such fare as "Lost in Space" and "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea." And though he will be working primarily with familiar pulp magazine material, he says he will "inject the human element into the stories. We're taking the weirdest stuff and making it as believable as possible."

The purpose of the series, explained the 45-year-old writer, is twofold. "One, to show that science-fiction is an incredibly rich body of literature as yet untapped by the medium of television. And two, to show that sci-fi can be more than the monster that gobbled up Tokyo or Cleveland. This is the distorted view most Americans have, thanks to cheap, unimaginative films. They have been playing to a 15-year-old mentality. I say to hell with that. I refuse to believe an audience is that stupid. Doesn't it make sense to give them something that truly stimulates their imaginations?"

Helping Roddenberry with the stimulation will be such well known fantasy writers as Theodore Sturgeon, Robert Bloch, Richard Matheson, Harlan Ellison, Robert Sheckley and even Ray Bradbury, once he is free of prior commitments.

*

Ellison, author of many books ("Paingod") and scenarist of what has been hailed as the worst film ever written ("The Oscar"), happened to be on the set of "Star Trek" recently, clad in a yellow sweatshirt with orange stripes, and grimy tennis shoes. He is a short, frail, youthful-looking man, who refers to his typewriter as "the axe," and who talks and acts more like a farm-bred fan than a professional. He is author of an episode entitled: "City on the Edge of Forever."

Rather than directly answer questions put to him regarding "Star Trek," Ellison hurried away to his office, where he got out his "axe" and began slamming the keys frenziedly, producing a page of prose which he eagerly turned over.

After categorically listing his many awards and accolades as a writer, Ellison comments on Roddenberry: "The delight of working for and with him defies semantics. His respect for the writer, for the philosophy of writing -- when it's being done by a craftsman who gives a damn, and not just a hack -- is unique in my experience with Hollywood producers. Roddenberry won't settle for less than the best, and if that means great bouts of inventiveness, then it's

up to me to come up with them. That's the sort of challenge that makes writing this show a kick in the head, and not the mere money-drudgery of the bulk of sdriptwriting."

*

One of the leading actors on "Star Trek" is Leonard Nimoy, who portrays Mr. Spock, the scientific officer second in command to the Captain, in turn played by William Shatner.

The role of Spock requires that Nimoy wear special ears which recede upward into a point, heavy make-up, and uplifted eyebrows -- all to give his elongated face an alien look.

For Spock is no ordinary earthman: He is half-human, half-Vulcan, the latter being a race of beings which apparently once engaged in some hanky-panky with an expedition from Earth that had been cooped up in space too long.

When Nimoy -- a seriously intent but warm, friendly actor -- was first offered the role he told Roddenberry that he did not relish the idea of playing a creature covered with hair or a rubber suit.

Nor did he want to play "straight man computer" to Shatner. So he was provided a far more complex role and finally agreed to make the pilot episode.

"When I saw the film," recalled Nimoy, "I went back and told Gene I thought we had made a mistake. I wanted my release from the role. But somehow he talked me into staying, with the out that I could undergo plastic surgery after 13 episodes. Now I wouldn't lose these ears or eyebrows for anything. The more I've submerged myself into Mr. Spock, the better I've come to admire him as an individual."

Just what is there so intriguing about Spock? "Let me try to explain by describing the Vulcan species. To begin with, a Vulcan considers emotions in bad taste. They are a logical, sophisticated people who have bred feelings out of their blood. It interferes with clear thinking, so scientific are they in nature.

"In one story, for example, a virus gets aboard the Enterprise, which strips crew members of their defense mechanisms and forces them to act out their repressed desires. Spock is equally affected and goes into hiding to begin an intended battle with himself to ward off this threat. He must re-establish his values, and in so doing breaks down and weeps. He also feels love and parental instinct toward a woman passenger aboard ship." Other stories, Nimoy indicated, would have equally bizarre internal conflicts.

Besides having green blood, a 212 pulse count, and an anatomical make-up that is totally different from any Earthman's, Spock's knowledge of the human body enables him to render an individual unconscious with a mere pinch.

Nimoy has always had a great deal of respect for science-fiction, though he was never really an insatiable reader. "But I was always aware of its contribution to literature and remember Bradbury influencing me a great deal as a young adult. I sincerely believe 'Star Trek' to be an equally significant contribution -- our stories touch on the imagination and intrigue it in a way no contemporary drama can."

Nimoy is a native of Boston, having been brought up in a family of barbers. When he decided to be an actor he first got rid of his Boston accent at the Pasadena Playhouse, and went through a lean period driving taxis on weekdays and pushing chocolate sodas on Sunday afternoons.

"My career has not been phenomenal," Nimoy admitted. "I went many years waiting for lots of small breaks to bring me the one big break. I made a low budget film entitled 'Kid Monk Baroni' and while the critics liked it, it never got the distribution it deserved. Then I made two films with John

Frankenheimer but in both cases my scenes were spliced out. I seemed to be in a rut on television as either a Spanish character or an Indian. It was a real stigma because they never wanted me to play a straight Caucasian role."

*

Nimoy feels that that long-awaited break finally came in a "Wagon Train" episode which in turn was beefed up by a "Dr. Kildare" role. He also recently starred in the screen version of Genet's "Deathwatch," directed by Vic Morrow (of TV's "Combat!"), and critics concurred on a "laudable sensitivity" in his performance.

"You might say," pointed out Nimoy, "that I've come full cycle -- that I'm playing a freakish character once again. But I don't look at it that way. Spock could be the start of something new. Who knows, it might become a prestige thing to play an alien as it has become a prestige thing to play a villain on 'Batman.' But whatever, I'm expecting entire new worlds to open up for me after 'Star Trek'."

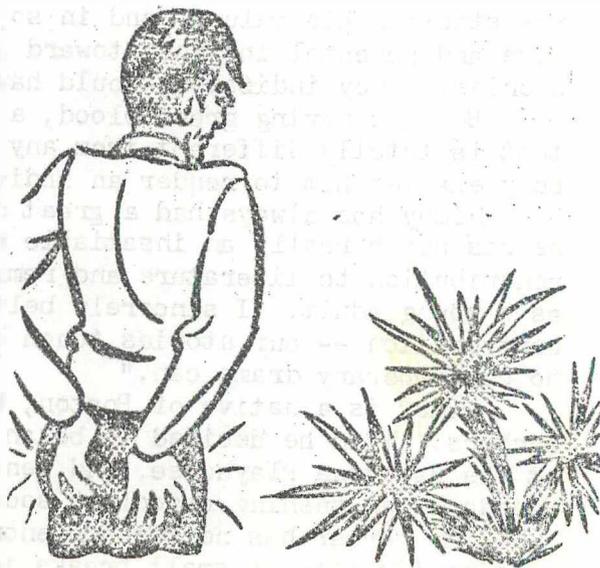
TREKZINE REVIEWS
by Carol Pruitt Ing

Since this is the first time this column has appeared in T-Negative (and not all of you subscribed to Deck Six), I'll begin by stating the ground rules:

1. Editors who would like their zines reviewed should send a copy to me at 22 Centre Street, Apt. 9, Cambridge MA 02139. (I will not review a zine unless the editor requests it.) You will receive a complimentary copy of the T-N issue in which your zine is reviewed.

2. Only trekzines or zines containing a substantial amount of trek-ish material will be reviewed. This rule may be bent from time to time, to allow reviews of zines containing material of probable interest to most trekfans, but in general I mean to exclude (for example) club journals which focus on the actor rather than on his ST character (although club journals with a substantial amount of trekish material will be eligible, subject to #3, below.).

3. Only those zines which are generally available for a per-issue price will be reviewed;



furthermore, no editor should submit a zine unless a) it will continue to be available for at least four months after submission, or b) it will be reprinted soon and orders are being taken, or c) orders are being taken for the next issue, which is similar to the issue submitted. (The editor must state case c), when applicable, at the time of sending me the issue.)

4. I reserve the right to postpone any review (e.g., if a great number of zines are submitted within a brief time span), or not to review any zine. In the case of a refusal, the zine will be returned to its editor. (I hope I won't be exercising this last policy, but I thought it should be mentioned.)

Masiform-D

50¢ from Devra Langsam, 250 Crown Street, Brooklyn NY 11225. Very good repro: mimeo (electro-stencilled artwork, photo-offset cover). 72 pages.

MD is a genzine with trekkish overtones; this issue is about half-and-half. There are two or three (depending on how you interpret one of them) very good Spock poems, miscellaneous cartoons and drawings, and a short Spock's-childhood story.

The trekkish main course is a couple of dozen pages written and liberally illustrated by Rosalind Oberdieck, entitled "People Who Live in Glass Houses Shouldn't." The transporter malfunctions (again); McCoy's brain and/or personality ends up in Spock's body, and vice versa -- the story is a study of the two men's reactions. Although a few details seem lacking in verisimilitude, the idea is original, and the writing is good, handled with a light, humorous touch. An illustration of McCoy/Spock and Spock/McCoy does somehow manage to look like those two bodies with transposed personalities.

In the "other" department, Marion Zimmer Bradley has compiled a glossary of her Darkovan words and phrases (I enjoyed it, even though I've read none of the books); there are two Dark Shadows-style parodies of Lewis Carroll by Marian Turner ("You are old, Cousin Quentin, the vampire cried," and "The Quentin and the Barnabas/ Were walking hand in hand"; both amusing). The back cover (also by MRO) is a portrait of Strider on horseback (of course he looks like Leonard Nimoy -- but pointed ears and bangs?). And so forth. Oh -- another Austin cover.

REVIEWS

William Shatner

"Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie?" by Don Petersen -- Mary Moody Theater for the Performing Arts, St. Edward's University, Austin Texas -- c. March 1972. Austin American Statesman, "Review/ 'Tiger' Opening St. Ed's Theater," by John Burstin, March 14, 1972.

"Its story...centers on a group of young narcotics trying to kick their habits in a big-city rehabilitation center.... The youthful cast performs remarkably well under Mangum's direction, and in William Shatner, the celebrated stage

and TV actor who's been brought in as a guest star, it has just the kind of seasoning and professional balance to keep it all together. Shatner plays the English teacher in the tumultuous rehab center -- not the showiest role in the play but one that becomes carefully fleshed out and quickly likable through his earnest but subtle playing.... It's a solid show, all the way round, and as much of a tribute to guest-star Shatner's professionalism as to the student cast that it isn't a one-man vehicle by any means."

"Kid Talk" -- talk show -- c. May 21, 1972. WS defending hunting by archery.

"FBS Playhouse New York" -- "The 40's: The Last GIs" -- segment "Untitled" by Norman Corwin -- c. May 25, 1972 -- Narrator/Hank (the protagonist).

Leonard Nimoy

"Dinah Shore Show" -- talk show -- c. April 28, 1972. LN discussing his photography.

Walter Koenig

"Steambath" by Bruce Jay Friedman -- Century City Playhouse, LA -- c. June 1972 -- God ("Morty")
Los Angeles Times, "Stage Review/ Friedman's 'Steambath' Offered at Playhouse," by Dan Sullivan, Part IV, p. 12.

"Alas, the local production is very nearly as wrong as it can be, anxiously punching for laughs and hardly ever playing for truth.... Morty, played by Walter Koenig, comes off better, but not that much."

T - WAVES: L E T T E R S

from Deborah Goldstein, 17511 Ohio, Detroit MI 48221

Loved "The Disaffirmed." I think S'darmeg is the best character that's been created in a long time. Maybe part of it is the illos which depict him as cute (with jughead ears?), but I fell in love with the guy. In fact, I like him better than Spock, or at least Spock in Kraith, which, because the TV series is unavailable at the moment, is my impression of what Spock is. Spock is so remote and really alien. S'darmeg is a nice guy, the kind of guy I'd like to take home to meet my parents. Maybe because he's younger than Spock? Maybe because he did miss the Affirmation? Or (horrors!) because you made him more Human? In any case, don't you dare drop the character there. What happened between him and Uhura, for Heaven's sake? Perhaps even -- what happened to him while he was shipwrecked? I'd like to know what could drive a Vulcan to carving dragons on/into his crutches. Isn't that highly illogical?

I also appreciated the cover illo and the poem. Although I really doubt that such photos would be taken in whatever year it was that Stella and Harcourt got married, somehow it fits them to a T.

Shatner was just on a re-run re-run of One Step Beyond, "The Promise," here in Detroit. It was about a German Luftwaffe POW living in England during and after the war who was a bomb disposal expert. To quote the TV Guide blurb: "Carl Bremer's afterhours work is deactivating unexploded bombs in postwar London. Then his wife becomes pregnant, and he promises to give up the job. But there's just one more bomb!" And of course he dies. You just know it with a write-up like that. Shatner did a very good job, though he lost his German accent in a couple of places. In fact, though I've seen him in nothing but Star Trek, either before the series or since, this one episode was enough to overlay "Tomcat" with a portrayal of a human being. I now can believe the reviews which said he is a good actor.

from Shirley Maiewski, Hatfield, South Deerfield MA 01373

Today at work I was looking through Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary at the Book Store (where I work at U. Mass.) and came across the word: ENTERPRISE (wonder why I looked that up?). It says, after all the pronouncing things, "to undertake," then: "1. a project or undertaking that is difficult, complicated or risky" (the 5-year mission), "2a, a business organization" (weell, that doesn't apply, but) "2b, a systematic purposeful activity" (to seek out new life, etc.) "3, a readiness to engage in daring action." ENTERPRISING -- "marked by an independent energetic spirit and by readiness to undertake or experiment" -- that certainly describes the Enterprise crew.

Enjoyed your story "Brother's Keeper." Not your fault, but it has always bothered me that McCoy's first name is Leonard. Just does not go with McCoy! (Not because it's LN's name -- certain names go well together, and "Leonard McCoy does not.") Wonder who named him anyway? I'll be very embarrassed if it was Roddenberry or D.C. Fontana.

from George Senda, 340 Jones Str #1163, San Francisco CA 94102

I disagree somewhat with you that "For the World is Hollow, and I Have Touched the Sky" marked the beginning of the end of McCoy's life style. A bit of evidence here is in the Blish adaptation of "Whom Gods Destroy" (Star Trek Six). This, of course, is on the assumption that Blish's adaptations do not deviate from the plot-line of the shows that were aired. (Unfortunately, they do, but for the sake of argument....) Anyway, part of the conversation between Kirk and the real Governor Cory: Kirk: "I'm not a doctor at all.... But if I can get him into McCoy's hands...." Cory: "McCoy? If you mean Leonard McCoy, he's probably Chief Medical Director of Starfleet Command by now. Hopeless." Kirk: "No, Donald. Garth is not an admiral and McCoy is not warming any bench on Earth, either. He's in orbit right above our heads. He's the Chief Medical Officer of the Enterprise." Surely McCoy doesn't want to remain the Enterprise's CMO forever?

((As long as "being away" is his life-style, he probably does, but the indications of the third season suggest that eventually he'll go for a more settled way of life, no doubt in a higher position. Unfortunately, as you say, Blish's evidence is unreliable; this particular bit of dialog was not only never aired, but never occurred in any version of the script that I've seen.))

Back to the matter of the telepathic translator. A few instances where the Federation could have gotten great knowledge were from the computer banks of the Yonadans ("For the World is Hollow"), the computer systems in Spock's Brain (the episode -- that is not a pun!). There is also a good probability that the Federation obtained valuable knowledge from the portal in "The City on the Edge of Forever" (although I doubt that the Enterprise crew would have been dispatched, because of the high emotional involvement of various members of its crew).

from Stephen O'Neil, 421 20th Str #A, Costa Mesa CA 92627

The Universal Translator -- Balok in "The Corbomite Maneuver" did not necessarily have his own version of a Universal Translator. He had quite thoroughly scanned the Enterprise before communicating and could have deciphered the language in that time. The Translator cannot be an adaptation of the Metrons' one, because Kirk had left it behind when he was transported back to the ship. Undoubtedly some scientists within the Federation had been working on the idea of a universal translator for some time. It could be that by about S.D. 3200 ("Metamorphosis," S.D. 3219) a working-model of sorts had been completed. (I'd hate to put a test-model on a Starship and then have it screw up translations during negotiations with a newly discovered life-form.)

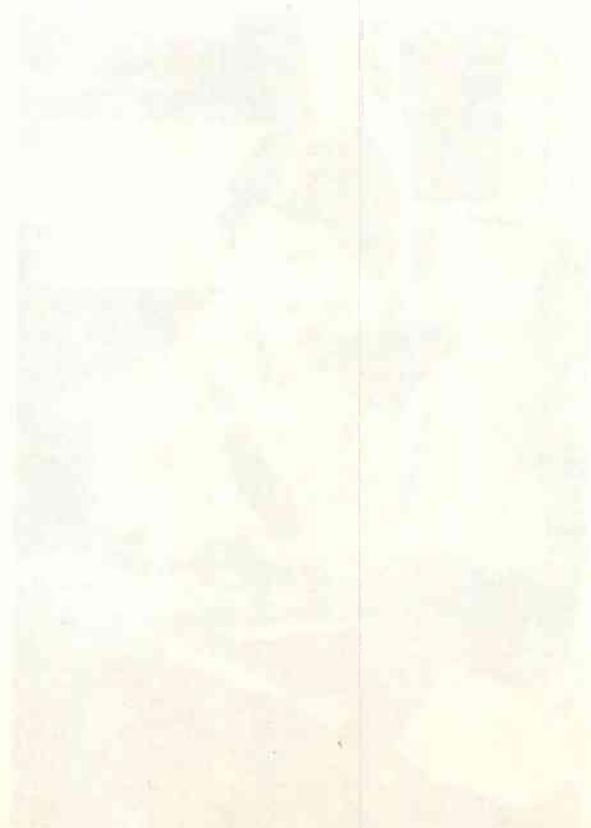
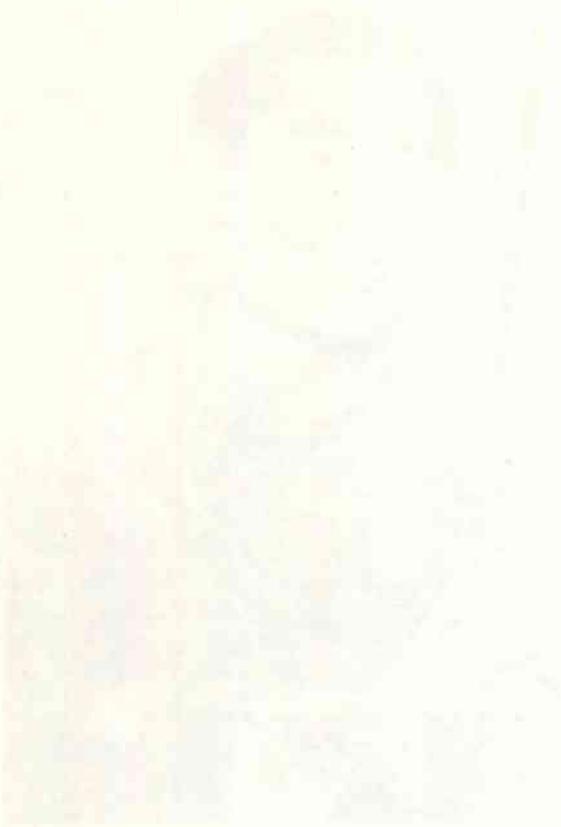
from Sue Clejan, 22431 Collins Str, Woodland Hills CA 91364

Did you know that John Winston (Lt. Kyle) was in the movie "Sole Survivor," as well as William Shatner? He played the pilot who spots the plane "Home Run" (and the ghosts try to flag him down).

from Jennifer Guttridge, 80 Brookside, South Mimms, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, England

I have collected TV21 for four years, almost since they started putting the "Star Trek" strip in it. TV21 has now merged with another weekly periodical, Valiant. It is rather difficult to obtain even over here and has to be ordered from a bookseller to ensure that you can get a copy each week. The periodical does contain some atrocious anomalies. They constantly "land" the Enterprise on planets, moons, and whatever else takes their fancy, regardless of the fact that such a procedure is unheard of and impossible. They have Spock coming out with weird exclamations like "My Stars!" and "Ye Gods!" and calling Kirk "Skipper" and McCoy "Doc." It's enough to make any true "Star Trek" fan curl up under the nearest stone and die. And most of the artwork is appalling. In four years I think I might have seen about four good studies of Spock, and most of those were in the early TV21s.

((Ah, but you should see the American comic book! Then you'd appreciate TV21 and even Valiant and TV21!))



Sulu

