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Devra Michele Langsam, Editor

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High Vulcan Ear

Poison Pen Press # 48

July 30, 1978

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Electrostencils by Isis Press

Second mimeo lent by Nova Enterprises Prooftroting Joyce Yasner Jacob Langsam Landlord

Extra type fonts lent by Nova Enterprises

Collators:

Linda Deneroff Barbara Wenk

STOKALINE

AN EDITORIAL MAUNDERING BY YED

Well, friends, it's finally happened. My dear old mimeo will no longer feed reliably (I don't call a system where you have to hold the paperweight with your finger reliable), and the motor on the NOVA Enterprises shook the house so much that the landlady called down to find out what kind of factory I was running beneath her. The repairman cheerfully informed me that the Rosensteins' universal joint (that which connects the motor to the printer, transmitting power from the one to the other—rather like a dilithium crystal) was GONE. Sorry, lady. Of course it works manually—I just can't run the motor. SO00—I have finally broken down (after hand-cranking 114 pages for Trexindex—NO, no, Barbara; don't hit me. YOU hand-cranked 99 of the pages!) and ordered a New second—hand mimeo. Until it arrives, I'm using yet another loaner machine. Thanks, Roger. Meanwhile, I'm supposed to get my own new one in time to finish printing this. Pray for me.

Losira is alive and working for Xerox. Jeanne Powers

CLEAN CLEAR THROUGH: My friends the Klingons have introduced me to a wonderful new cleansing product, that takes mimeo ink off hands, out of clothes, removes rust from sinks, and pulls bloodstains out of clothing! This wonderful new product is:

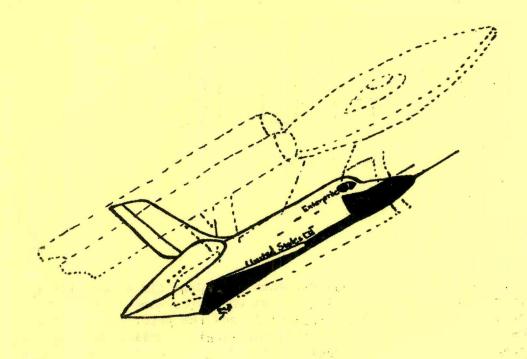
CAMAY
The Beu-ty Clen-zah

(Dunno if I'd want to use it on my face, but it DOES work wonders on inky hands—and you still have skin left afterwards.)

Kopper is a Klingon lawman.

-Jeanne Powers





Apologies to Ken Scher, whose lino (Saint and T'Pope) was incorrectly attributed in issue #5.

Apologies also to those artists and writers whose work was messed up by the mimeo monster in #6.

HANDOUT--I again ask for contributions of art. I need small, filler pieces: ships, portraits of the main characters (I don't have a single Kirk in my file) and cartoons. But please, no large black areas. My printer was very happy about the centerfold poem (which he printed very beautifully)) but I was very irritated. ..printing that cost me \$\$\$. (And just ask Barbara Wenk and Joyce Yasner about the walking-bird illo in #6 sometime. ..) Artwork should be in black ballpoint, india ink, or waterproof magic marker, with no large black areas or very dense zipatone shading. Full-page illos should have one-inch margins all around, and small illos shouldn't be either very tiny or tremendously large. I could also use some long, thin thin borders for the bottoms of pages. Please tell me if you want your originals returned.

Landru didn't have a ghost of a chance. Jeanne Powers

I would like to point out that my friend and contributor, Eleanor Arnason (aka E. A. Oddstad) has now joined the ranks of published novelists, with the pro publication of her *The Sword Smith* (Condor Books # 028, \$1.95). The book is about a blacksmith and the young dragon who accompanies him to learn smithcraft from him. It is, unlike some of Eleanor's other things, only *slightly* peculiar. The book is, the editor said modestly, dedicated to me and Ruth Berman. (Blush.)

Material for issue #8 is well in hand. I have a longish Xmas-on-the-Big-E story by Gaylen Reiss, an ancient Vulcan elegy by Sandra Wise, a rewrite of "Way to Eden"--as it should have been!--by Elizabeth Carrie, "Sunday Afternoon at the Con" by Ruth Bollerud (quite neat and funny, I think), and another Kershu fighting story (this one by someone who really knows something about fighting!) I have vague promises of stories from Anna Mary Hall and Jean Lorrah, and possibly a humorous Kershu story from Barbara Wenk--a very elusive lady.

It has also been hinted that Security may release the tapes of the courtmartial of Intelligence Officer Tavia Nelson, newly returned from a lengthy internment in the Klingon Empire. But this is all extremely hush-hush. . . .

Kondom is president of the Klingon Planned Parenthood League!
--Marnie Ellingson

I'm sorry to have to report that my old cat, Honeypot, died this past September. He had liver problems, no doubt due to his disgraceful addiction to ladyfinger sponge cakes and baby food. I was very sorry to lose him.

I have gotten a pair of new kittens (10 months old now). They are littermates:

Kimchee--tortoise female, 5 lb.
Sundari--blue-grey male (altered) 9 lb.

Given to tearing madly from one end of the house to the other, and to unprovoked attacks upon ankles and thighs. They are a menace to life and navigation in these parts.





KLINGS—The first thing I want to point out about my Klingon stories is that they are NOT nu Ormenel Klingons. These are my own Klingons, and have no relationship to those of Carol Walske and Fern Marder.

Second thing--I hope that you will enjoy the glimpse of the non-military side of Klingon life afforded in "Pre-requisite." I am very fond of my Kershu fighters, and have a second story partially completed, and a third story sort of floating around (although it's kind of stuck right now).

I don't mind other people playing around with the ideas in my story, or even writing stories about my people for their own pleasure. After all, the two Kershu stories planned for #8 were both written by other people.

HOWEVER, these are my invention, my Klingons, as is the art of Kershu fighting. (I'm the world's expert on it $\underline{/modestly}$ buffing her nails. The only expert.) I really don't want anyone to publish stories about Kershu unless I have approved them. Legalities aside, I would HATE to suddenly find someone trying to marry Janet to Master Kinet. . . .

PLUGS PLUGA

PLUGELLES

PLUGOLA PLUGETTES

If you enjoyed "Threshold" and "To Know Dishonor", you will be pleased to know that Fern and Carol are selling reprints of some of their older, out-of-print stories. Send them a businesslength SASE for information.

Fern Marder & Carol Walske 342 E 53 Street, Apt 4D New York NY 10022

Beth Robertson writes (concerning her new poetry zine):

What I need is to drum up support for this zine-- (\$\$\$). Now tell me, as a



college educated, sophisticated New Yorker, doesn't a poetry zine sound like a deeper, more esoteric adventure than the run-of-the-mill *Trek* story zine??? *You* recognize good poetry---I'm sure all your intelligent, cultured friends do too. SO please spread the word around Brooklyn. . . .

All silliness aside, I do need people to buy this damn thing. . . .

INNISFREE - a non-sf poetry zine with contributions by such fannish poets as Ruth Berman, Fern Marder, L. V. Fargas, and others (namely Beth.) To reserve a copy, please send \$2. SASE for inquiries to:

Beth Robertson 198 Adams St Delmar NY 12054



McCoy's instruments add insalt to injury. Jeanne Powers

In the interests of fandom (by which I mean that she is paying me) I have printed volume 2/3 of Roberta Rogow's *Trexindex*. This includes author and subject listings of Trekfan lit up to November 1976. #2/3 is 107 pages long (double column) plus 12-15 pages of introductory material. (I forget the exact numbers.) It costs \$4.00. Volume 1, the title index.



is currently available also, for \$4.00. Volume 4/5, which will contain the listings for poetry and art, is projected for Fall 1978, and after that, this nutty lady will begin on the update-supplement-and-corrections.

Roberta would appreciate it if editors of current zines would send her information on the contents of their zines. SASE her for a list of what she needs to know.

Because of problems with the stencils, it is not the most beautiful print job I have ever done. Sorry, team. . .it's still unique, and an excellent value.

Copies of volume 1 and 2/3 may be obtained from:

Roberta Rogow P O Box 124 Fair Lawn NJ 07410

Speaking of money (as we all must) the Post Awful has struck again. Not only has 1st class mail gone up, but book rate is increasing as well. That's going from $30 \, \phi$ for the 1st pound to $48 \, \phi$, in less than a month! Therefore, I must reluctantly raise my prices again. All subs currently in hand will be honored, however, and SPOCKANALIA will continue at \$10.50 the set, \$2.25 per single issue.

Now, if the service were only as good as it is expensive. . . .

Then there's the new Kershu team--Sky King and his flying sidekick. . .

For those who have been bugging me about reprinting back issues of MASIFORM D, authorized xeroxes can be obtained from:

Lori Chapek-Carleton 557 Cornell East Lansing MI 48823

SASE for prices.

I have gotten myself a new expensive
typer--a correcting
IBM Selectric II. It
has a terrible conceit
of itself. I now have
3 type fonts, and can
switch pitches any time
I like. Whoopie!

My thanks to
Melissa Bayard, who
helped me to get several shading plates,
thus adding to the
background noise in
this zine.

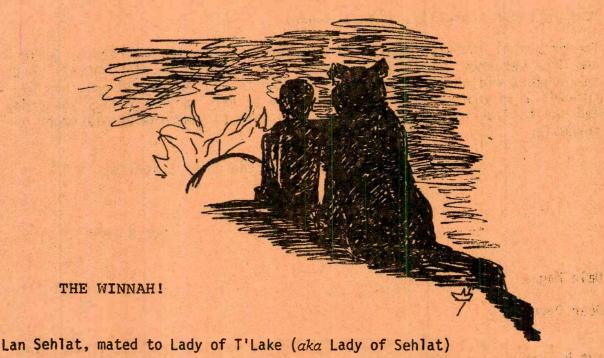
My profound thanks to Barbara Wenk, who typed the mock-up copy of the long stories



thish, as well as putting up with my maundering and breast-beatings during layout.

And now, what we've all been waiting for--the results of our fabu-lous contest to

NAME THAT SEHLAT!



Lan Sehlat, mated to Lady of T'Lake (aka Lady of Sehlat) perpetrated by Terry Glenn

And the Runners-Ulp

Scolumbus's pet, Sel On -- Meredith Minter
I-Scream -- Fern Marder
T'Paw -- Michele Waterloo
S'Anta Claws -- Jeanne Powers
Gen T'Leben
Smoky T'Bear (sex undetermined)

And a group of ghastlies from Barbara Wenk - The Round Table's

Ar-fur Gwene-fur Fur-lin Fur-ceival

Gag, gasp! And to think that my cousin Debbie started it all. Tsk, tsk, tsk.

And thanks to all the determined punsters who upset my digestion with their suggestions.

Kershu is good for you. (Ouch.)

And an update on our ESP-er article from #6. . .

6 Dec 1977

Dept of the Air Force/Air Force Geophysics Lab/Hanscom AFB/MA

Dear Mr Kagan (actually, it's Ms Kagan)

The principal investigators in this experiment were Mr. Everett F. Dagle and Mrs. Margaret D. Hill. . . . there is a statement in /the report/ that the subject did not see the results of the test. This would rule out hypothesis 1 in your article . . . I did get to talk to /Mrs. Hill/ yesterday and she told me that they had never been able to test the displacement hypothesis. . . .

John F. Dempsey/Office of the Chief Scientist

Dec 8 1977

Dale Kagan

Dear Devra.

. . . The subjects definitely did not see the results. That rules out hypnotic suggestion.

Feb 20 1978

Update on ESP research. I contacted Margaret Hill. She has not seen the *Scientific American* article and is not sure if the picture in the article is from her tapes. (I think it is.) Anyway, she is going to send me a copy of the report which includes a photocopy of the tapes they used.

April 8 1978

The ESP research experienced a setback. The tape in the SA article does not come from the Air Force experiements. It comes from a similar experiment done by Puthoff and Targ at the Stanford Research Institute. Apparently NASA was also involved. The SA also reported these results as negative.

All is not lost, however. Mrs. Hill, who did the Air Force experiments, is also a member of a parapsychology organization and is trying to

track down Puthoff's and Targ's address. If she is successful the chase will resume.

May 9 1978

I finally did it! I got the right address to the right person who did the right ESP experiment.

He's Russell Targ of the Stanford Research Institute (near Palo Alto, CA.). I wrote to him and enclosed a photocopy of the page from SA. I'll let you know when I get an answer.

Dale's article, in MD #6, considered the possibility that an Air Force ESP test, declared to have negative results, actually showed evidence of clairvoyance. It has been very difficult, as you may gather from Dale's letters, to get hold of the original computer tapes and data. Without this, it is impossible to check whether the apparent match between the computer's randomly generated numbers and the testee's "ESP"-selected numbers is evident in a) the bulk of the tests, b) in all the people being tested, c) in one or two of the people being tested, or d) only in the small sample which was published in Scientific American. The match shown in the sample the Air Force selected to illustrate the article is clear and tantalizing, but it COULD have been coincidence. We only saw 20-30 of the test matches (out of thousands done). If, however, such matching is evident in a large percentage of the test matches, then coincidence is not such a good excuse.

Anyway, the Air Force doesn't have any explanation for the matching shown except coincidence. So it all hinges on HOW MANY of these coincidental matches can be found.

More on this interesting question as it is 'pathed to us.

Heard about the new ST cookbook? It's called SPOCK MUST FRY.
- Barbara Wenk

THANK YOU. This issue, for the first time I can remember since SPOCKANALIA #1, I am including several items which were published previously. I would like to thank the people who permitted me to reprint their material.

Saurian Brandy Digest #1, edited by Sylvia Stanczyk, for "Ni-Var".

Texas Quarterly, for "Standing on Blacktop".

boojums press, for the bacover,

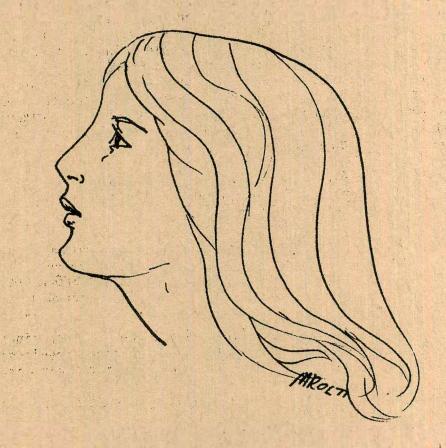
Deborah Ellen Caldwell, who actually owns the bacover, which is a preliminary sketch for the picture used in KEAC, 5th ed.

Thank you kindly, gentlebeings.

You may have guessed that "Co-Incidence?" is a sequel to Barbara Wenk's "Enterprise Coincidence", which appeared in MD #6. What happened was that Marcia Eaton sent me a Letter of Comment which included the story. I loved it. When I read it to Barbara over the phone (after all, it was a comment on her story, wasn't it?) she laughed so hard that she fell off her bed. Barbara is now threatening to write the Klingon version of the affair. . . .

Ruth 10/4 lusts after Kintam. (Tough for Ruth!)

RENEWALS—The number on the "Why you're getting this zine" is the last issue I have listed on your subscription. If you disagree with me, please get in touch with me right away, and include a xerox of your check or a reminder of which con you bought the sub at. Being a poor theat person, I may not get around to sending you a separate renewal notice. Be warned!



Janet loves Janet (Rotten taste that girl has!)

Korbas likes Terries (UGH)

THE HUNTING OF THE PRESS

A Derivative Grimace in Seven Starts
Shamelessly Ripped Off from Lewis Carroll

by

Paula Smith

Start the First

The Setup

"Just the place for a Press!" the Faddis cried,
As she silkscreened her covers with care
By inking her cronies in colorful stripes
And rolling them over each square.

"Just the place for a Press! I have said it twice:
That alone should encourage this crew.

Just the place for a Press! I have said it thrice:
What I tell you in 'PHASE is true."

The crew was complete: it included a Block -A Berman with linos empearled -A Bielowicz, brought in to type up the LoC -And a Best, of all possible worlds.



There was further a Triad, consisting of two (One more were excessive): the name

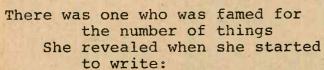
Of them both--at least this initially so--

Was just and exactly the same!

There was also a Lorrah, who, seven till noon Every morning would sit in

the halls,
Drawing circles, and called each
one "Rising Full Moon."

As a template, she sought Vulcan balls.



Like religion, PK-ness, plus a fondness for Kling--s, And her habit of sleeping at night.

She came as a Writer, but owned later on,
As the fanzine was going to press,
She could only write Weddings--and the Faddis turned wan,
For Spock never looked well in a dress.

The last of the crew, coming after the eighth,
Was said to be skilled at such hunts.
She had just one idea--but, that one being "Kraith,"
The good Faddis took her stories at once.

The Lichtenberg said that the Lorrah was wrong;
That no Vulcan could be that hot to trot:
If the Lorrah came too near, or lingered
too long,

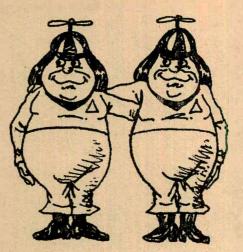
She would Disaffirm her on the spot.

But the Faddis explained, each a tremulous word,

There was only one Lorrah around. Should the Lorrah be cut, thru some fate, from the herd,
Why, the--sentiment would be

profound!

The Lorrah's best course, was,
no doubt, to procure
A secondhand functioning
mug
With tri-handles, resis-



tors, and cross-armature; And a Jewel of Joy for the plug.

Yet still, ever after that
D'R'hiset day,
Whenever the Lichtenberg crossed,
The Lorrah kept walking the opposite
way,
And appeared most peculiarly lost.

Start the Second

The Faddis' Speech

The Faddis herself they all praised without end--

Such a talent, such ease and such grace!
Such dignity, too! One could call her a
friend

The moment one gazed in her face!

She brought a large page, without pen-stroke or key-,

As white as a starship and good;
And the crew were most pleased, having found it
to be

A layout they all understood.

"What's the good of blue lines, or of scales 1 thru 9's?
Our Editor's ours to thank,"

(So the gofers protest'd) "she's brought us the best-- A perfect and absolute blank!"

It was charming, no doubt; but they shortly found out That the Faddis whose health they all drank

Had only one notion to get print in motion, And that was: to bend down and crank.

The Faddis perceived that their spirits were dead, So she told in convivial tone

Some jokes she had heard from an oversexed head,
But the crew would do nothing but groan.

She served out some Coke with a liberal hand And bade them to sit out of reach:

And they could not but own that their Faddis looked grand As she stood and delivered her speech.

"'Tis Space, right out here, the final Frontier!"
(They were all of them fond of quotations:

So their spirits picked up, and the same with their cup, While she served out a stronger libation.)



"Now let me remark on the five sorts of marks,"
Said the Faddis, "these let me express,
By which you may know, wheresoever you go,
The guaranteed genuine Press.

"Let us take them in order. The first is its taste,
Which is meagre and poorly, but staid:
Like a Mary Sue living her life calm and chaste-Until Spock's pon farr lets him get laid.

"The second is coming out late. You'll agree
That this trait gets a bit out of line
When it puts out its flyer in '73,
And hopes to be done '89.

"The third is its slowness in taking a jest.
Should you happen to venture but one,
It will sigh like a thing that is deeply distressed:
And it always looks grave at a pun.

"The fourth is its fondness for cola of Coke,
A singular brew, I certain:
It is sipped, or is slurped, or is used for a soak;
And it never is taken in vein.

"The fifth is ambition. It next will be right
To describe each particular batch:
Distinguishing those that are Garlic, and bite,
From those that are Bander, and snatch.

"For, tho common Presses do never much harm,
Yet I feel it my duty to say
Some are boojums--" The Faddis broke off in alarm,
For the Writer had fainted away.

Start the Third

The Writer's Tale

They roused her with rerunns--they roused her with books-They roused her with iced plomik soup.
They set up the reel of bloopers to look
At the gaffs of the whole Starfleet group.

When at length she sat up and was able to speak,
Her sad story she offered to tell:
And the Faddis cried, "Silence! Not even a shriek!"
As she thoughtfully peered thru a cel.

There was silence supreme! Not a shriek, not a scream, Scarcely even a howl or groan,
As the Writer of Show told her tale of woe In an antediluvian tone.

"My childhood was spent learning Easter from Lent--"
"Skip all that," shouted Faddis in haste.
"Then I skip thirty years," said the Writer in tears,
"And proceed to the facts of the 'Case.



"A dear grandma to me (and to most of ST)
Said, 'If your Press, is a Press, search no more:
Set it up, contribute, draw the Vulcan Salute-What else is an Alternate Four?

"'You may seek it with offset--and seek it with gum--You may hunt it with Corflu and clocks; You may threaten its life with a mimeo drum; You may charm it with stories and LoCs.

"'But, oh, beamish daughter, beware of the day,
If your Press is a boojums! For then
You will all without mercy be criticked away,
And never be heard from again!'

"It is this, it is this that oppresses my soul,
That produces this blanch on my face:
And my heart is a-quiver, as if 'twere the whole
Of the giant amoeba of space!

"It is this, it is this--" "We have had that before,"
The Faddis myoptically said;
And the Writer replied, "Let me say it once more:
"It is this, it is this that I dread!"

"I look for a Press--having none makes distress-For I do need a home for sweet Lor':
I set up, contribute, draw the Vulcan Salute.
(Else what is an Alternate Four?)

"But if ever I meet with a boojums, that day,
In an instant (of this I am sure),
I shall all without mercy be criticked awayAnd the notion I cannot endure!"

Start the Fourth

The Hunting

The Faddis looked uffish and wrinkled her nose.
"If only you'd spoken before!
It's excessively awkward to retype your prose,
With the Press as it is on the floor.

"We should all of us grieve, as you may well believe,
If you never were heard from again:
But you might have said then, when we set up the den--"
"I informed you the day we began!

"I said it in Hebrew--I said it in Dutch-I said it in German and Greek!
But I wholly forgot (and it vexes me much)
That English is all that you speak."



"'Tis an interesting tale," said the Faddis. "Please write
It with carbon in double space type.
But the Press is at hand! Let us start it tonight!
While our great opportunity's ripe!

"To seek it with offset, to seek it with gum;
To pursue it with Corflu and clocks;
To threaten its life with a mimeo drum;
To charm it with stories and LoCs!

"For the Press is a singular creature, that won't
Be composed in a commonplace way.

Do all that you know, and try all that you don't:

Not a chance must be wasted today!"

Then one of the Triad (either Delta or E)
Signed her name on the cover for all.
The Writer did slipsheets, whereby broke her knee,
And tried to fade into the wall.

The Berman and other of Triad did go

To the mimeo and worked it in turn.

But the Lorrah went on drawing circles, to show

No interest in the concern:

Then the Bielowicz tried to appeal to her pride,
And the Block and the Best to her pique;
When the Lichtenberg found none in whom to confide
She had wholly forgot how to speak.

"Be a man!" said the Faddis in drag as she heed
The Lichtenberg starting to sob.
"Should we meet with a Vulcan in desperate need,
We shall want all our strength for the job!"

Start the Fifth

They sought it with offset, they sought it with gum;
They pursued it with Corflu and clocks;
They threatened its life with a mimeo drum;
They charmed it with stories and LoCs.

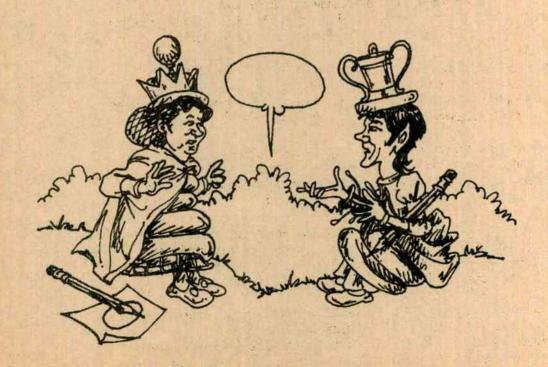
Then the Lichtenberg thought of a wonderful plan For possibly finding the Press:

She figured to wander the Shadyside span, And tokieling, divine its address.

But the very same plan to the Lorrah occurred:
 It had chosen the very same place.
Yet neither betrayed by a sign or a word
 The disgust that appeared in her face.

Then came, shrill and high, a syllogist by,
Its sub-major premise unveiled.
The Lorrah turned green and refused to be seen,
And even the Lichtenberg paled.

"'Tis the voice of the Vulcan," she suddenly cried;
"No tsaichrani would fail to sound
That millenious burble, that frumious pride,
Whenever he Zyetos around.



"'Tis the voice of the Vulcan. The proof of the chain Of my logic is this, mark my word:

Since a Vulcan's best argument comes from his brain, The next premise is not to be heard."

So the Lorrah did list. Not a sound had she missed When she said, "I hear nothing," quite meek. The Lichtenberg's eye gleamed above her reply:

"'Twas exactly the Nothing we seek!

"Take Naught as the subject to reason about (A convenient matter to state): It is Nothing, or No-Thing, or Emptied-All-Out; Or else Zero Divided by Eight.

"Now 'tis Nothing that's greater than Heaven by far,
And Nothing is over the Law;
But when given a choice, a chocolate bar
Is better than Nothing at all.

"Hence a chocolate bar is better than Law
And better than Heaven's embrace:
And there's Nothing the proof of this whole brouhawhaw-You see now the facts of the case?"

Then the Lorrah confessed, in affectionate scenes
More eloquent even than tears,
It had learned in ten minutes far more than all zines
Would have taught in two hundred ten years.

They returned to the house, and the Faddis, unbloused (For the moment) with joy unconfined,
Said, "I think it seems fair that the Lichtenberg share
With the Lorrah between them one mind."

Start the Sixth

The Berman's Fate

They sought it with offset, they sought it with gum;
They pursued it with Corflu and clocks;
They threatened its life with a mimeo drum;
They charmed it with stories and LoCs.

But the Berman, while seeking with offset and gum,
By the Doctoralthesis was seized.
She was blue in the prose when the others had come:
And she British Romantically sneezed.

Without rest, without pause, sharp'ning clause after clause
On the Late Nineteenth Century Scene,
She Lyttoned and Thackeraged, George Donald/Mac-ramaed;
Never a thought to the zine.

To the horror of all who had come there in need Of the stories of travel thru space,
The Berman refused to do more than proceed At a horse-drawn Victorian pace.

"Leave her here to her fate--it is getting too late,"
Said the Faddis; "Our Press is near done.
There wants only the stapling--as soon we collate-And of course we do first the printrun."

Start the Seventh

The Criticking

They sought it with offset, they sought it with gum;
They pursued it with Corflu and clocks;
They threatened its life with a mimeo drum;
They charmed it with stories and LoCs.

"The Writer is shouting," the Bielowicz said;

"She is whooping like mad, or from stress.

Is it possible, gathering mail, she read

A LoC or review from some Press?"

They gazed and held hope that the Writer could cope With this fantasmagorical stroke.

While the Writer ran for ard with the epistoline word, They broke out a bottle of Coke.

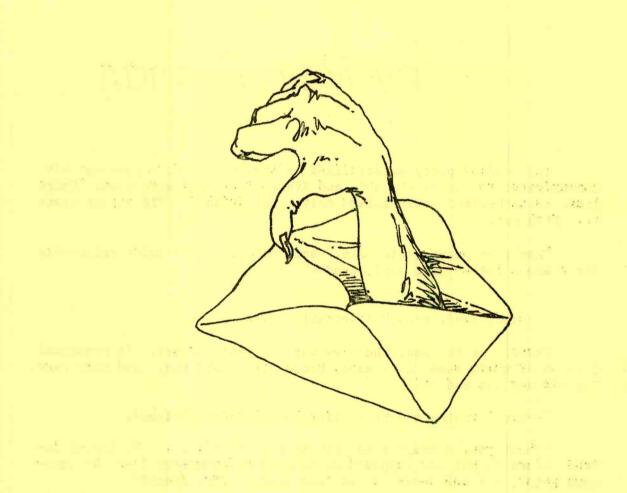
"It's a Press!" was the sound that first came to their ears,
And seemed almost too good to be true.

They let out with a torrent of laughter and cheers;
Till her ominous words, "It's a boo-"

Then, silence. Some fancied they heard in the air A weary and wandering sigh
That sounded like "--jums!" but the others declare
It was only a truck that went by.

They hunted till darkness came on, but they found
Not a staple nor brad to express
The proof they would need that they stood on the ground
Where the Writer had met with the Press.

In the midst of the word she was trying to say,
In the midst of their loud chivaree,
She had all without mercy been criticked awayFor the Press was a boojums, you see.



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BUTTON, BUTTON

by Ruth Berman

The landing party materialized on the beach. Kirk took out his communicator to signal the ship and Sfaren that they were down. "Shore leave is authorized—this island only," he finished. "If anyone wants it. Kirk out."

"Don't be pessimistic, Jim," said McCoy. "It's quite reasonable for a shore leave--sun, surf, sand--"

"--sand, sand, sand," interrupted Kirk.

Except for the sea, the view was, in fact, dreary. It presented a vista of white sand, grey sand, brown sand, gold sand, and more sand. The air was hot and still.

"--but I wouldn't want to live here," McCoy finished.

"Thank you, Bones," said Kirk dryly. "Well. . ." He looked inland. Sfaren's hut was supposed to be only a few meters from the beamdown point, but the dunes hid it from sight. "Mr. Spock?"

Spock completed a sensor scan and pointed over the nearest dune. "Just beyond, Captain."

They began walking, stumbling a little in the soft sand.

"Do you know much about Sfaren, Speck?" asked Kirk.

"Negative, Captain. He is said to be an excellent zoologist."

"He's the greatest student of evolution since Darwin," said McCoy flatly.

Kirk blinked and considered the sand around him. "A zoologist--on a desert island?"

"Probably a precaution against spreading life-forms from one island to another," said McCoy. "Of course," he added teasingly, "as a Vulcan, maybe he thinks it's homey. Hot enough for you, Spock?"

"The temperature is comfortable," said Spock placidly.

They were now in sight of the cabin, a neat grey pyramid marked only by the lines where it folded when not in use.

The door slid open as they approached, and Sfaren stood up to greet them. He was about Spock's height, with much thinner skin. His complexion was distinctly light green, unlike Spock's sallowness. He had a round, dreamy-eyed face, for a Vulcan, but he spoke English crisply and without an accent as he said, "Welcome, gentlemen. My house is yours."

"You honor us." Kirk answered.

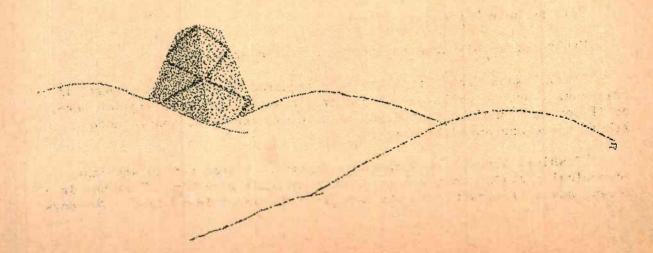
It was a little cooler inside, and Sfaren set the hut's controls to make it a little cooler yet. "Water," he said, pointing out a pitcher and glasses that he had set up for them, then waved at chairs, inspected their uniforms, and shook hands with Kirk. "Captain?"

Kirk introduced himself and his two companions. He was not surprised to see the zoologist salute Spock in the Vulcan manner. He was surprised, however, when Sfaren turned the salute to McCoy, and said ceremoniously, "Leonard."

"Sfaren," said McCoy, bowing forward a little.

"Your latest paper--isolating pseudoallergens--interesting," said Sfaren.

Kirk stared at McCoy, and even Spock raised a quizzical eyebrow at him.





"Thank you," said McCoy, trying to ignore the attention he was getting, although his face was turning red.

Sfaren turned back to Kirk.
"Grateful for your coming, Captain.
Not equipped as detention center.
Excuse." He went into the other
room to bring in his prisoner.

"Bones, you didn't say you knew him!"

"You didn't ask. He was one of my instructors in med school." McCoy shook his head dolefully. "Interesting," he repeated. "Hmp! Well, one of us will convince the other before I get out of here."

Sfaren reappeared with a phaser in hand and a young, still beardless Klingon in front of him.

He waved the Klingon towards Kirk and turned to scrutinizing Spock. "Part Terran?" he asked McCoy. McCoy nodded. "That will teach you to cut classes."

McCoy choked, half with laughter and half with indignation.

"Not good for the respiratory system," Sfaren remarked meditatively.

Spock, still looking somewhat insulted, pounded the doctor on the back to help him catch his breath.

Kirk reluctantly pulled his attention away from them and turned to the young Klingon. "What are you doing here?"

"I am Kthar of Gezerid. I am a warrior enrolled in the Empire's lists."

"All he says," remarked Sfaren.

Kthar folded his arms together and stared at a wall.

"Well," said Kirk, "it's all he's required to say. But--Kthar, in fairness, I should tell you--if you didn't accomplish your mission here, or if you can convince Star Fleet that it was harmless, you're more likely to be exchanged home again."

"Possibly accomplished mission, Captain," Sfaren put in with the economical phrasing that was apparently habitual with him. "Crashed in ocean, had a life-raft. Should have been one-day trip to land. Two days

before returned from hunting myself and saw instrument-notations."

"So." Kirk examined the young Klingon. Kthar was blinking rapidly, but otherwise was statue-perfect in disdain. Kirk looked back at Sfaren. "Any idea what his mission might be, sir? Are your researches of military importance?"

"Not to my knowledge. Don't think in military terms, however." He stopped and fell into thought for a few moments. "Didn't land here—took an island north in archipelago—with game." His lips pursed briefly at the un-Vulcan habit of meat-eating. "Still. . .agricultural applications of research expectable."

"Agriculture. . . supplies. . ." mused Kirk. "That could be it, but I don't think it's likely. The planet itself? Not strategically important. Spock--ideas?"

"We are near a disputed star-system, Captain," Spock said, "although this system is not itself in question. If the Klingons were to engage in open battle over that system, in defiance of the treaties, it would be useful for them to have bases here."

Kthar was staring at them.

"Getting warm?" Kirk asked.

Kthar turned his head away and scowled at the wall.

Kirk thought over Spock's suggestion and shook his head. "Useful, yes, but not useful enough to justify the risks. Still, we'll have to warn Star Fleet of the possibility. It may affect negotiations."

Kthar's shoulders drooped. "I . . . " He stopped and shifted his gaze to the floor.

Kirk waited.

His communicator squealed.

Kirk grimaced, annoyed at being interrupted just when Kthar showed signs of talking, but he took up the instrument and said into it patiently enough, "Kirk here."

"Sulu here, sir. Lieutenant Uhura--she disappeared!"

"You mean she's lost?"

"No, sir. She just. . .disappeared. We were walking on the beach-skipping stones--we'd just gone for



a swim--" Sulu stopped and took two deep breaths, as if to ward off hysterics, and then continued, "I heard a voice say 'How fascinating!' and then Uhura vanished. Like beaming out, but all at once. All of a sudden, she just--well--she just wasn't there."

Kirk glanced at Kthar, but the Klingon's face showed only wide-eyed amazement. Kthar went back to wall-watching almost immediately, as he became aware of Kirk's scrutiny. "Very well, Mr. Sulu," said Kirk. "Get over here and make a full report. *Enterprise*, Kirk here."

"Scott here," said the engineer's voice.

"All personnel on leave to return to the ship, except for Mr. Sulu, who is reporting to me here. Set up a scan-search for Lieutenant Uhura... and...probe the vicinity for Klingon ships. Kirk out."

McCoy said, "Could the Klingons really be responsible, Jim? I don't think this boy could have faked surprise that well."

Kthar bristled at "boy," but made no other sign.

"It's worth considering, anyway," said Kirk. "There aren't any native intelligent species here?" he asked Sfaren.

"Doubt it. By now explored islands considerable thoroughness."

Kirk nodded. "Kthar?" he said abruptly. "Any suggestions?"

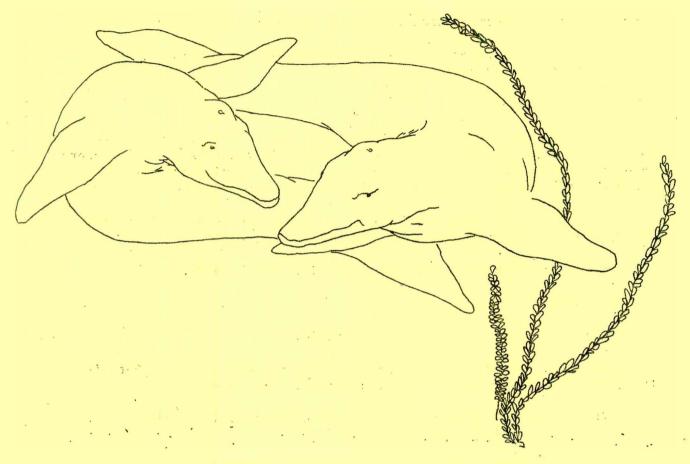
"Me?" Kthar was so surprised at being consulted that he considered the question seriously. "Perhaps," he said, "a being alien to all of us. If so, a powerful enemy to both our peoples." He took a deep breath. "If it is so, Captain Kirk, I offer my cooperation. Command me."

"Thank you," said Kirk gently, knowing how much it cost the Klingon to make such an offer--always assuming it was sincere.

The door opened, and Sulu came striding in. He shivered as the cooler air hit him. His costume--sandals and a large white towel tucked sarong-fashion around his waist--was appropriate to the weather outside, but singularly incongruous next to the uniforms of his fellow-officers.

"Report, Mr. Sulu," ordered Kirk.

"A large party of us went swimming, sir," Sulu said. He had forced himself out of stunned astonishment on the way over, and now was ready with a coherent account. "Ensign Chekov kept watch for us. Approximately ten minutes ago he announced the approach of a small school of dolphin-like animals. They were not yet close enough to shore to be considered a potential danger, but we all swam towards the beach, and Lieutenant Uhura and I came out in order to walk on the dunes and see what they looked like. The dolphins, I mean." He stammered and lost track of himself momentarily,



then recovered and went on, "Approximately five minutes ago we had reached the top of a dune just south of the beach, and a voice said 'How fascinating!' and Uhura was just stepping forward to see if she could make a stone skip twice, and then she froze and. . .she vanished. I couldn't tell what direction the voice came from. I looked all around, but I couldn't see anyone."

"Others see anything?" asked Sfaren.

"I don't think so."

Kirk opened his communicator, but before he could tell it anything, he felt his muscles go taut.

"More of them!" said a voice out of nowhere. "Oh! And different ones!"

Sfaren and Kthar vanished, softly and silently.

Kirk felt a wind sweep along his skin and die as air flowed in to fill the spaces where they had been.

"Captain, are you all right?" said Scott's voice from the communicator.
"We got a reading-some kind o' power-from where you are."

Kirk found he could move again. "We just had two more disappearances:

Sfaren and the Klingon prisoner. Anything to report on Uhura?"

"No sign of her, sir. The others are safely back on board. No useful information from them."

"Scan for ships?"

"Aye, sir, and there is a Klingon ship. But it's well out o' the system. Not close enough to be doing anything—not unless their engineers have gone a good wee bit further than I give them credit for—but they're out you. It's on their side of the border, hugging it close."

"Keep an eye on them. Kirk out." He turned to Spock. "That voice didn't seem to come from anywhere. Telepathic projection?"

"You heard it speaking English, Captain?" Spock asked.

Kirk nodded.

"I heard Vulcan. Definitely telepathic."

"Professor Sfaren would have noticed the presence of a telepath if it had been on this planet long, wouldn't he?" said Sulu.

"If it broadcast widely, and if it were close enough," said Spock. "Vulcan telepathic range is quite limited."

"Was that the same voice you heard before?" Kirk asked Sulu.

"Yes, I think so." Sulu looked around at the walls of the room.
"Captain," he said, "if that. . . being, or whatever. . . was projecting the truth, we're probably not in any further danger from it. It's got a sample of all the available species."

"Yes. If," said Kirk. He was silent a few moments, then rapped out his orders, pointing at each one of them in turn. "Spock, McCoy. Go over Professor Sfaren's notes on this planet. Any other notes he has for this region of space. Look for anomalies of any kind. Mr. Sulu, you and I are going to inspect the scene of the. . .disappearance."

For a blank second Sulu caught a frog in his throat and could not acknowledge the order. Probably safe was one thing. Going out was another. Not that staying indoors seemed to be much better. He coughed, cleared his throat, and found he was already searching for a tricorder from among Sfaren's equipment. "Aye, Captain," he said. He slung the instrument over his bare shoulder, and they marched out of the hut.

It was impossible to march over the sands, but they trudged along, making what speed they could, and came again to the beach. The sand was churned up too thoroughly to reveal any particular prints along the sheltered stretch where the crewmembers had been swimming.

The tide was going out, and two large, ornate sand castles were already crumbling rapidly as they dried. A wading pool, dug in the sand, still held a little muddy water.

Kirk turned slowly around. "Where did--uh--" His throat muscles froze, choking on the unspoken words, and he could not move or even cough. The best he could do was to move his eyes, and all they showed him was Sulu.

The helmsman was as motionless as Kirk, but he tried to clench his fists convulsively and succeeded in closing his hands enough to be aware that one hand was on the tricorder controls.

"My my my my my!" said a voice, its wonder increasing with every word.

If Sulu could not fight, he could at least get a record. He concentrated on the hand in contact with the tricorder. The muscles tightened, and his thumb knocked the instrument on.

"That's not alive, is it?" the voice said.

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The tricorder jumped out of Sulu's hand and flew up into the air. The strap caught on his neck as it went. Sulu shook his head fiercely, trying to keep the strap from winding around and strangling him. It pulled loose and went on up, but he hardly noticed in the relief of having his muscles free again. "Captain--" he began, turning to see how Kirk was.

Kirk boughed, swallowed, shook himself, then nodded reassuringly at Sulu.

The tricorder hung motionless in the air over Sulu's head.

Sulu looked up at it, gauging the distance,

Kirk shook his head. It was too high to jump for.

The voice sounded again. "Oh, I follow! It's dead, but it sees. And they see with it. Isolated intelligences--blind in themselves."

"We're not exactly blind," said Kirk. "Only to some areas of the spectrum."

"Would you do that again?" said the voice. "It's pretty."

"Do what again?" said Kirk.

"Creating harmonics in sequence with your remarks."

Kirk and Sulu looked at each other blankly.

"You mean talking?" said Sulu.

"No, no, not talking," said the voice impatiently, "what you did while you were talk--" It stopped abruptly. "Do you mean those harmonics are supposed to convey your meanings? All by themselves?"

"Yes," said Kirk. "We're not telepaths, you know."

There was a shocked silence. Evidently it did not know.

The heat was oppressive. Kirk's clothes stuck to him, and the air was like weights, pulling at him. He sat down and spread his fingers against the sand. "Well? Are we 'people'?"

"Yes, I suppose so," said the voice cautiously.

"What've you done with our friends?" said Sulu. He sat down, too, after one more look at the hovering tricorder.

"Oh, but that wasn't my doing. Prudence did that."

Kirk was bewildered for a moment, until it occurred to him that "Prudence" was a name.

"And not a very appropriate one," said the voice, answering his thought.
"But his parents liked it, so. . . . Oh--and my name is Flashback."

"How do you do," said Kirk politely. "I'm James Kirk, and this is Itake Sulu."

"But your names don't mean anything!" Flashback protested. "And those harmonics you make are all so much alike. . . ."

Kirk started to explain about the origins of names in their cultures, and then realized that he did not know what Sulu's name meant and did not want to introduce himself as "Supplanter Church." "Would it be easier for you to think of us as Captain and Lieutenant?"

"I think so," said Flashback dubiously.

"Now. . . about our friends," said Kirk.

"Oh, yes. Prudence's specimens. The trouble is, when he gets really interested in something, he won't listen to reason. Do you have that kind of type?"

"Yes," Kirk admitted.

"We could wait for him to lose interest, but Prudence does like to study things thoroughly. . . On the other side, if Prudence could be distracted, somehow, I could free your friends while he was occupied. How long would you need to get out of reach?"

"I'm not sure," said Kirk. "How far can you reach?"

"Oh--" Flashback hesitated. The tricorder bobbled about in the air for a moment. "If you call this thing's longest length one, we can reach about three dozen dozen times that length beyond the edge of a mountain."

Kirk was not entirely sure what kind of distance was being conveyed, but it was clearly not astronomical. "We could beam away from here further than that in a few seconds." Then, wondering if Flashback could pick out of his mind the scale of a "second," he counted out, "One. . .two. . . three. . ."

"Yes, yes, you think quite clearly," said Flashback, interrupting impatiently. "That's all right, then. We'll distract him, and you can all go away, back where you came from."

"What about Professor Sfaren?" Sulu asked Kirk.

"Ummm. Flashback, one of Prudence's 'specimens' has been studying your world. Would there be any way for him to go on doing that, do you think?"

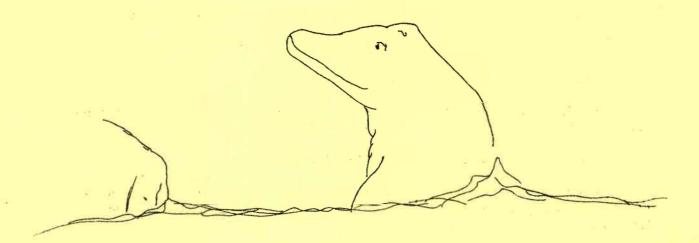
"I don't think that really sounds fair," said Flashback. "If he's going to study us, why can't we study him?"

"Ah. . .well. . .I suppose you can. But there'd have to be an agreement not to run experiments on each other without permission."

"Prudence won't like that," said Flashback thoughtfully. "Eut it does sound fascinating. Maybe I'll study you instead. What kinds of experiments would you permit, do you think?"

"Could we talk about that later? Besides," added Kirk hastily,
"I can't speak for Sfaren. . . and Prudence has to be distracted first."

"Oh. Yes. Well. . . I don't suppose you have any other interesting specimens around?"



"Not in the immediate vicinity," said Kirk.

"Prudence didn't get a Terran male in his collection," Sulu began cautiously, working himself up to volunteer as bait. A devoted hobby-rider himself, he understood a collector's mania for completeness.

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"He didn't?" said Flashback delightedly. "That'll be an overset to him! Think of it, missing something that elementary! Is one of you a Terran male?"

"We both are," said Kirk.

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"Oh. Well, I don't think that would work. My idea was for just one specimen that would be hard to get."

Sulu and Kirk looked at each other, neither one willing to say the name that came immediately to mind. But with a thought so strongly focused, it was all the same to Flashback whether they spoke aloud or not.

"Commander. . ." Flashback faltered over the name and began again.
"This Commander is a hybrid? That should do nicely. If you have a few more like you to confuse the issue, it would help if they came here, too."

Kirk brushed the sand off his hands and opened his communicator. "Kirk here." He did not like the idea of risking others, but McCoy and Spock were within the danger-limits in any case. However, he decided, he did not trust Flashback enough to call his ship. At the suspicious emanation, Flashback gave an inarticulate bleat of indignation so intense that it gave Kirk an instant headache. He winced and closed the communicator on top of Spock's answer to his hail so that he had both hands free to massage his temples.

"Oh, I am sorry," said Flashback. "I keep forgetting you can't block. But I'm not supposed to shout like that anyway. My parents say it's rude."

"I see," said Kirk. Gingerly, he opened the communicator again.

"Spock here," it said. "Are you all right, Captain?"

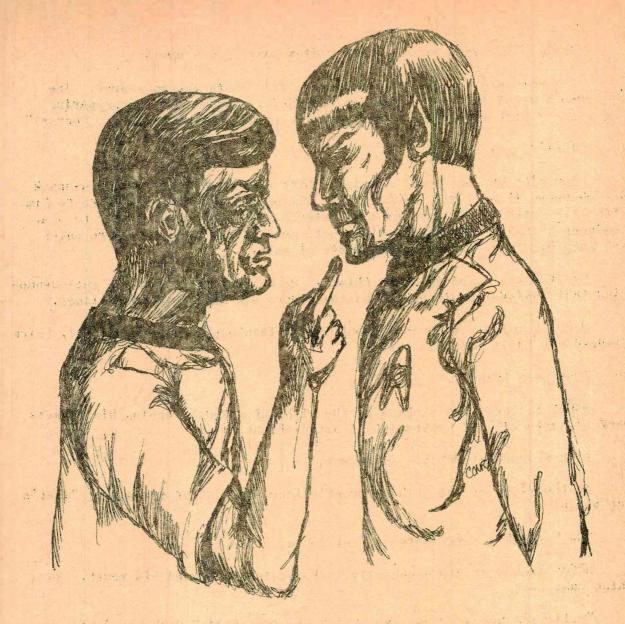
"Yes, it was just. . .a little static."

"No significant progress to report, Captain. Dr. McCoy believes he has noted two items in Sfaren's reports which--"

"It's just a hunch," McCoy's voice interrupted.

"Never mind," said Kirk. "We've found one of the aliens, and he's offered to help us. Come on over to the beach. We'll need you, too. Kirk out."

"Actually," said Flashback, "I'm a 'she'."



"I'm sorry--"

"That's all right. I suppose," she said in a tone of discovery, "that you think we're all alike, too."

"Yes," Kirk admitted.

The beach was silent, then, for a few minutes, except for the non-telepathic noise of waves rolling on sand. Sulu, staring at the tricorder once, wished he could get it back to see what, if anything, it had perceived about the curiously friendly entity which was, so far as he could tell, completely invisible. His wish was followed by a contrite "oops, sorry" sensation from Flashback, and the tricorder dropped into his lap.

But before he could go over its readings, Spock and McCoy appeared at the top of the dume. Kirk and Sulu stood up, brushing off sand.

"Well, Jim?" said McCoy, as they drew near. "Now what?"

"I'm not sure," said Kirk. "Flashback?" There was no answer. The telepath's attention was presumably elsewhere, concentrated on preparing her trick. Kirk shrugged. "What were the anomalies you spoke of, Doctor?"

"Well--" said McCoy.

"Now, let me see," said a voice. Kirk did not think it was Flashback and supposed it must be Prudence. The aliens did not all seem alike to him, after all, although it was not a difference which suggested gender to him. Prudence's thought-flavor was different, swifter and narrower, more eager and less humorous, more like the taste of salt.

"--it was a combination of things," McCoy went on, "based on the assumption that whatever stole Uhura and the others was native to this planet."

McCoy's voice was suddenly much louder than usual, almost painful. Kirk clapped his hands over his ears.

They were pointed.

McCoy faltered and stopped at the sight of a Spock running his fingers over his ears with an expression of astonishment.

Kirk grinned at McCoy's amazement.

At the sight of the grin on Spock's face, the doctor exclaimed, "That's not Spock!"

"No," Spock's voice agreed, "but go on, Bones."

McCoy looked at him doubtfully, but obediently opened his mouth. No-thing came out.

"Well, I'm not sure the assumption was justified," Kirk heard his own voice say.

Beside him, McCoy raised one eyebrow and murmured, "Fascinating."

"But if it was native," Kirk's voice went on, "it struck me that Sfaren had recorded a couple of times when he thought he was being called and turned on his communicator, but found no one in range."

McCoy's body blinked, turned round, and stared aghast at sight of Sulu.

Sulu's body looked at his hands, nodded slowly, and said, "Most interesting."

Kirk's voice hesitated a moment, then barreled on with its medical report. "The illusion is fairly common, but if it was real, then--" The report halted

again, this time in McCoy's astonishment as Sulu's body bent down and flung one arm sharply out, skipping a non-existent stone.

Sulu's body stumbled with the movement, recovered, and looked around at them in confusion. "Where did you--My voice!" He clapped his hands to his throat and looked ready to scream.

McCoy's body took a long breath, looked carefully at them all, and went up to Sulu. "Uhura, that you?"

"Yes," said Sulu.

"Don't worry. You're all right. But we'll have to explain it later." He smiled comfortingly and patted Sulu on the shoulder.

McCoy, from within Kirk's body, looked all round, counted on his fingers the number of bodies he was sure Spock's personality had been inside, and could not get past his own. He pointed an accusing finger at his own body. "You're not Spock!"

"No, I'm Sulu," said McCoy's voice.

Something somewhere began to growl.

"Spock?" McCoy asked.

The growling sound became a roar, or possibly sobs. "He's gone!" Prudence shaped the thought of his temper tantrum, "He isn't anywhere!" And then he was too angry to speak, and simply yelled.

"Hurry," said Flashback, the softer telepathic voice establishing a moment's peace in their minds before the tantrum beat at them again.

Sfaren, Kthar, and Uhura appeared on the beach.

"Enterprise, Kirk here," said Kirk to his communicator. Spock's head was less susceptible to psychic noise, he found, but all the same Kirk used one hand for the communicator and held the other over his forehead.

"Scott here. . . Captain?" said the communicator doubtfully.

"Seven to beam up," said Kirk, not stopping to explain why he had Spock's voice, "and make it fast. Arrest the Klingon."

All seven faded from the beach. Kirk spared a moment's gratitude, before the paralysis of the beaming process hit him, to the efficiency of Scott and his technicians, for a standard transporter held six transit plates, and beaming up more than that from one location meant putting some into holding circuits or using two transporters focused on the same spot. Failsafe circuits prevented beams from scrambling in such a situation, but could result in delay, unless the operator had the skill to set the focus precisely right the first time.

As the transporter room solidified around Kirk, all six plates were occupied, and when he leaped off the one he was on, another shape flickered golden into view and became Kthar. Kirk grinned in relief, and Transporter Chief Kyle, his face still rigid with concentration, looked up to count arrivals, and gaped at the sight of Mr. Spock's face bright with smiles.

The transporter room door opened, and Scott bustled in, followed by two security guards, who promptly cut out Kthar from the herd, and led him aside.

"Captain, are ye all right?" Scott asked McCoy.

"Huh?" said McCoy, then, remembering where he was, he pointed doubt-fully at Spock's body. "Over there, Scotty--I think."

"Put the prisoner in the brig," Kirk told the guards. He hesitated, felt the eyebrow on his face lifting in the Spockish manner it was used to, and added, "That is you, Kthar, isn't it?"

The youngster threw up his head proudly. "I am Kthar of Gezerid, a warrior--"

"Lock him up," said Kirk. "Uhura?" he said to Sulu.

"Yes. . . sir," she answered, too lost herself to try to figure out what individuals might be inhabiting the faces around her, let alone what could have been going on between the moment when paralysis struck her on the beach and the moment when she was free again but stuck in Sulu's body.

"Find me a frequency that those telepaths can perceive so we can talk to them. I don't care how you do it, just do it!"



"But--" Uhura looked at Sulu's hands. The unfamiliar color was disconcerting enough, but the unfamiliar size was worse. How could she find the right controls with fingers too long for her accustomed reflexes?

"Mark and move!" snapped Spock's voice, in an unmistakably Kirkian intonation.

Uhura gritted Sulu's teeth. If the captain could function, so could she. "Yes, sir," she said, starting for the door. "Can you give me any idea of their location?"

Kirk shook Spock's head, but the captain's voice answered her.

"Try the oceans," said McCoy. "That was the other anomaly, Captain," he said to Spock. "Professor Sfaren's been taking isolated species for his evolution studies, so he settled on a planet with no major continents and plenty of islands. And he stuck to the land-forms. As he said, he'd covered them pretty thoroughly and found no intelligent species. That leaves the oceans."

"The dolphins!" said McCoy's voice, cutting off McCoy, and Sulu continued, "Remember Flashback talked about being able to reach beyond the edge of a mountain? They must think of islands as we do of mountains, rising up out of the sea. Beyond the edge of a mountain must mean inland, not straight up."

"Logical," said Uhura's voice approvingly, as they crowded into the lift.

Once on the bridge, they were welcomed back with smiles that quickly turned to looks of dismayed concern as (seemingly) Dr. McCoy sat down next to Chekov at the helm, Spock took Kirk's chair, leaving Kirk standing behind him, Uhura went to Spock's sensors, and Sulu took over communications from Mr. Alden. The fact that Uhura and Sulu were still in bathing costume did nothing to reassure anyone, either.

Minutes went by as Uhura, eyes fixed on the board as she forced Sulu's hands to work by sight instead of touch, ran up and down the range of frequencies and cued in the various forms of transmission and translation. Her eyes were beginning to water when a delighted voice suddenly rang out on audio.

"But you said you weren't telepaths! Or is this another--what do you call them?"

"Mechanical device," said Kirk. "Has Prudence calmed down yet?"

"No!" said Prudence for himself, sulkily. "There're lots of us for the professor to study, and only him for me. It's not fair."

"I think," said Kirk, stressing the word, "that scientists from several species will be only too happy to come to study you and be studied. If you're careful to respect their liberties."

"And will there be any like the Commander?" asked Prudence.

Uhura's voice murmured, "Highly illogical."

"No, Prudence, there won't," Kirk said firmly. "But there will probably be some Andorians, and Tellarites, and Izarians, and Reidonians--"
Kirk had to stop for breath.

"They all sound the same," said Prudence.

"They're not. Believe me, they're not," said Kirk.

"Oh. Well, all right."

"Prudence," said Flashback warningly.

"Oh, and I'm sorry. And you can come back to the mountain, if you like. I won't do anything without asking."

"Thank you, Prudence." Kirk looked down at the blue tunic of Spock's body and shuddered, suddenly aware of the strange pulse and rhythms of blood and nerves. The ship felt cold, and he did not know how to adjust himself to it. "Flashback, you can put our minds back into their own bodies?"

"Oh, yes! That is--if you tell me who goes where. You all look so much alike."

"We can tell you," said Kirk. "Mr. Scott, you have the con."

A few minutes later, they were assembled on the beach. After checking identities, they got into a circle for Flashback's benefit, with each one touching the shoulder of the body he or she belonged to. Sfaren stood to one side, thought again, and moved further up the dune, out of the line of transference. He folded his arms and stood quietly, eyes and mind intent on them. "They are ready," he said, both aloud and telepathically.

They felt nothing, but the scenery before their eyes seemed to jag.

Kirk knew he had to be back in the right body, because he didn't see himself anywhere. Nevertheless, he could not keep from feeling his own face and hair and wishing he'd thought to bring mirrors along. He felt foolish, until he noticed that the others were doing the same thing, and even Spock had put his hands up to his ears.

"Thank you," said Kirk, rejoicing in the sound of his own voice. Partly for the pleasure of hearing it again, he went on, "Prudence, while you were studying them, did you happen to read in Kthar's mind why he came here in the first place?"

"The one who felt hostile towards the others?"

"Yes."

"He was being naughty."

"I beg your pardon?" said Kirk.

"This is his first term of service. His father is his ship's commander. His father said he was too young to go scouting along the border, and he was going to prove him wrong."

Kirk grinned. "Apparently his father was right. No mission. Goodness knows if Starfleet will accept evidence like this--"

"--my backing," put in Sfaren.

"Hmmm, yes." Kirk turned to Uhura. "When we get back to the ship, call that Klingon vessel Scotty located. Tell the commander we'll meet him at the border and give the boy back to them." He smiled to himself. "Starfleet will say I should put it all through channels, but that takes too long. I'm just not in the mood to. . .keep someone from being where he belongs."

"Can say it will improve diplomatic relations," said Sfaren.

"Don't think I won't," said Kirk. He opened his communicator.

Sfaren put out his hand, gesturing to wait.

"Sir?" said Kirk.

"Immediate departure a necessity?"

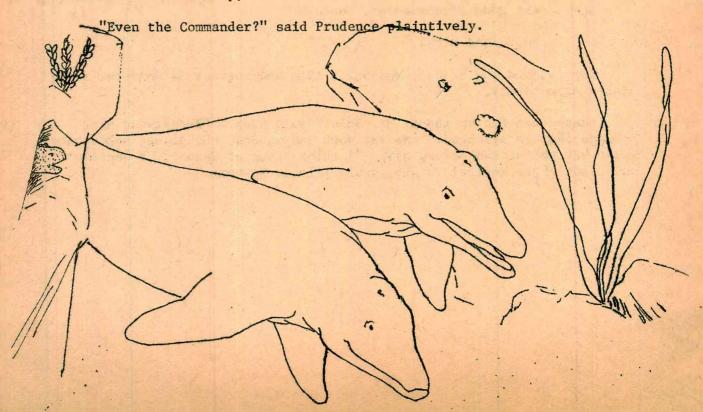
"I don't suppose so," said Kirk. "Why?"

"Haven't had chance to discuss paper with Leonard."

"Oh. Go ahead."

McCoy winced, and set off with Sfaren, over the dune towards the hut.

Kirk looked at the beach. He did not feel like a swim. "I think we can wait on board ship," he said.



Spock stayed behind. Kirk wondered if the science officer was primarily gratifying his own curiosity or simply being generous in giving Prudence a chance to inspect a real Vulcan-Terran hybrid.

A good three hours went by before McCoy signaled to have himself and Spock beamed aboard.

Kirk went to the transporter room to greet them, but McCoy did not speak to him. His face bore a look of restrained jubilation, and he pushed off the transporter ahead of Spock, muttering, "Scuse me--paper to re-write," and was out the door.

Kirk turned an enquiring look first to the door and then to Spock. "What happened to him?"

"Professor Sfaren pointed out to him some spots of inadequate documentation," Spock said, as he and the captain set off for the bridge, "but Dr. McCoy convinced him of the essential correctness of his hypotheses."

"You mean Bones won an argument with a Vulcan? Well, that explains it." Kirk looked at his first officer teasingly. "Must have been quite a shock to you."

"Negative, Captain. In his own field, Dr. McCoy is an excellent scientist."

"What?" said Kirk. "I thought you always said he was a witch-doctor."

"But a very good witch-doctor, Captain."

"I. . .see," said Kirk.

They reached the bridge, and Sulu, trim and correct in uniform, swung around expectantly.

"Ahead warp factor three, Mr. Sulu," said Kirk. "Rendezvous with Klingon ship as arranged." He sat down and watched the planet below them swing off the screen before him. "I think Kthar of Gezerid, a warrior enrolled in the Empire's lists, would like to go home."

LINES WE'D LIKE CAROLYN HILLARD TO HEAR

"Random factors seem to have operated in our favor."

"Random factors, hell. I'm on the pill."

"Fascinating. Activity without end. But with no volition--"

"Are you going to give me my hotels for Boardwalk or not?"

"Since the days of the first wooden vessels, all ship masters have had one happy privilege. . ."

"Not with this Ensign you don't!"

"Each one of you will go in there--die--as the others watch!"
"It's only a routine physical, Spock. . . ."

"Mr. Spock, the gentleman from Gideon is here. . . ."
"You may relay to him, Lieutenant Uhura, that we find the two
Bible-tapes to be quite sufficient."

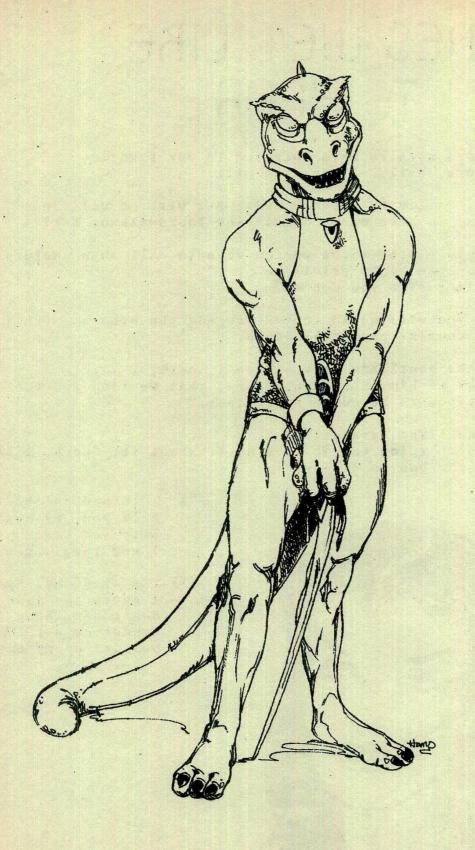
"Emotional squalling Earther!"
"Well, if you're going to get that upset about it, Spock, I'll change the baby's diaper. . . ."



"As I turned and beheld you, my eyes betrayed emotion. I beg forgiveness."

"That's okay, Mr. Spock.

I guess you just
don't see these
Frederick's IDIC
pasties every day



and rapide

Isabel Real

It took me ten long years to discover the reason why the STAR TREK episode featuring the alien Gorn was so familiar. There's a universe of difference between Brown's "Roller" and Coon's Gorn! And there is an even greater difference between the period piece "Arena" and the episode bearing the same title: the basic premises are similar in both, but the World War II atmosphere that lingered over Fredric Brown's piece in the 1940's would have seemed incongruous in the 60's.

As originally written, Arena exemplified a commentary about the war. The Roller's tentacled form, its desire to inflict pain upon helpless life-forms, the fact that Carson (Kirk's original counterpart) realized the inability of the two cultures to co-exist, marked a perfectly justified bias on the author's part, the voice of allies everywhere suffering the enemy's torture and struggling against immeasurable odds to rise from its dominance. Brown noted also that what stood between success and conquest was a mental hazard, a barrier that had to be surmounted, no matter what the cost.

The original short story has been hard to find. I don't recall seeing it since I first read it, about 25 years ago, in an old magazine a relative passed to me, when my interest in science fiction and ability to understand English (my native language is Spanish) permitted full comprehension of the work. However, last spring a collection of Brown's stories saw the light, published by Del Rey Science Fiction, and I once again refreshed fond memories of Arena and other gems by Fredric Brown. I might add that his short-short stories are incomparable, magnificent one- or two-page studies that stimulate the reader's imagination beyond compare.

But we mustn't forget Coon's adaptation. The original was a dated piece: we could no longer sympathize with the views of a people torn by war. We want to know, to feel, that mankind will surmount obstacles and that, in so doing, it will be able to avoid its destruction. . . and its enemy's. We want to dream. The obliteration of a speciec (Roller/Gorn/Outsiders) would have been inconceivable in STAR TREK, therefore, an avenue of peace was made available, and Kirk's foe was seen as motivated by reasonable sentiments. The promoter of the contest did not enforce the death sentence for the defeated species in our version; it did so in the original story.

The Gorn was not the senseless, all-hating Roller. The audience was spared the thoughts that penetrated Carson's being in the older

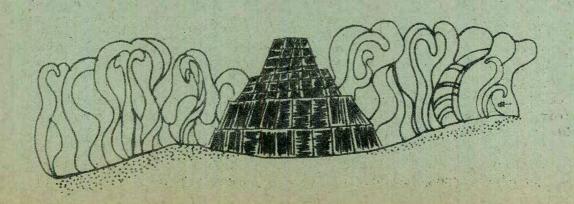
story. The barrier between the contestants did not exist--figuratively and in reality--because the adaptation took into consideration the changing mentality of man dealing with other life-forms, here on Earth and throughout the galaxy. It took note of the fact that civilized beings have understandable motives, often similar to ours. We can only hope that Coon's vision is confirmed.

By modifying the Gorn's nature, we were spared the useless and cruel dismemberment of the small lizard that the Roller eagerly undertook and that Brown described in gory detail (a look at the war's horros, perhaps.) It would have been a despicable scene and I'm glad it was omitted; let's leave the horrors of the past in the past, and remember to avoid them in the future. The Roller's death, by harpooning, was also changed for the same reasons; a harpoon deep within a being's body must assuredly be rather terminal, and the Gorn's untimely death would have spoiled the optimistic ending of the episode.

It is in the Metron's portrayal that I found no rational justification for change. In the original story, the entity who brought the contenders face to face, outside time and space while the universe stood still waiting for the outcome, was without form. For the contest, it became the planet, the blue world where the foes confronted each other for the survival of their respective species, not just the crews of their individual vessels. Only one such entity existed, the final phase of evolution to which mankind travels, a thousandth of an inch per generation. Of course, it could easily be that a physically visible Metron was more appealing to the television audience than an unseen entity; I will not contest Mr. Coon's sound judgment.

The original Arena was most gratifying. So was the STAR TREK episode based upon it. Because we are children of this present, the latter's optimism fitted our needs far better. Mr. Coon, in fact, improved the original, taking into consideration the audience it was for and the time when it was played.

Let's just hope that equally good scripts will come our way on the forthcoming series revival!



CO-INCIDENCE?

Country of the second of the s

Marcia Eaton

Kirk swung his legs over the bed as Spock entered sickbay. "What do you think?"

Spock surveyed him carefully. "A distinct improvement."

"Not the ears, Spock, the Commander. Does she suspect?"

"There has been no indication that she does, Captain."

"Good. Good." He stood up and rubbed his hands together.
"Then we pulled it off."

"Wait a minute." McCoy looked from one to the other in growing puzzlement. "Pulled $w \ln a t$ off?"

"The Commander is a major Romulan intelligence agent who is being. . . " Spock glanced at Kirk, "I believe the word is 'planted'?" At Kirk's nod, Spock continued, ". . . planted to both give us false information about her empire and to obtain information about us."

"But what about the cloaking device?"

"The bait for the trap, you might say." Kirk grinned.

"And we swallowed it, all the way. You know, they almost made it too easy. . . explaining to Spock which area was off limits, stationing only one guard. . . "

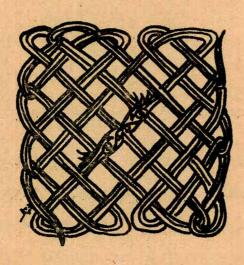
There was a sudden whine as the *Enterprise* lurched sideways, vibrating violently. Then the engines stopped and the ship was ominously silent.

McCoy picked himself up from the floor. "What in tarnation is happening?

"I believe our circuitry has just. . .short circuited," Kirk replied, "and about right on schedule, too."

"Seventeen minutes, 38 seconds ahead of schedule, to be exact," offered Spock.

Kirk hoisted himself back onto the bed. "Break out the Saurian brandy, Bones; it's going to be a long wait."



Sonnet For An Editor
(On Receiving SPOCKANALIA 1, 3, and 5)
Barbara Wheel

How can I thank thee? There are so few ways
That I can tell you of my true delight
With these three magazines. They shed such light
Upon my truest love; they sing his praise;

They give his background, life-style, every phase Of this most complex being's day and night.

I fantasize. I think I have the right

To share those nights with him--and also days.

These pages feed my appetite; they talk
Of that one perfect being I adore.
I sit and read about him round the clock.
I cannot learn enough. Dare I implore,
Since I so suffer hopeless love for Spock,
That I in future will see 2 and 4?

The Free Enterprise



10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

LOCAL NEWS

BY GERALDINE STOUT

MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE? It has been noticed by the editors that our Chief Surgeon has, in the past, been accused of using "beads and rattles." Evidently, certain other individuals have decided that the good doctor was lacking in needed medical equipment. It is our studied opinion that the same warped minds that came up with that automatic "Reject" bed were also the source of the large masks seen hanging in the Sick Bay. The doctor seems to think that our two new Vulcan interns are responsible. Oh, come now, doctor; just because it was a Vulcan that made the comparison in the first place. . . .

ONE AND TWO AND THREE AND FOUR AND. . .We all know that Our Captain takes a thirty minute jog around Deck 5 every morning, and we all know enough, by now, to stay out of his way. Yesterday, our girl Jinxie, in her neverending quest to get out of Starfleet, managed to be on her hands and knees looking for her contact lenses, just as Our Captain came around the corner. Says Jinxie, "I sure got a lot of bruises, but it was all worth it. As we were lying there all tangled up, I spotted one of my contacts right in front of my nose. Unfortunately, the captain was sitting on the other one. But I'm not complaining; we have to expect mixed blessings, sometimes."



HOLIDAY REPORT: Christmas this year was marked with dreams-come-true. Ship's Services outdid themselves with traditional-type decorations. They were so good that someone was heard to remark that all we needed was an electric train around the base of the Christmas tree. Our Captain was then overheard telling the doctor about his great-grandfather's electric train that his family still had, and that they always had it out at Christmas. Some of our friends in Engineering started work immediately, and by Christmas morning had a lovely electric train, complete with smoke and whistle, to put under the

tree. All morning, we were treated to the sight of our superior officers, down on the floor, playing with the train. Next year, we'll have to get them all engineer's hats.

A record number of hangovers marked New Year's Day. Doctor McCoy gave one of our interns, T'Harai, the job of taking care of the "My mouth feels like the bottom of a birdcage, there's a troop of Klingens holding maneuversin my stomach, and my hair hurts" synd.ome. T'Harai decided that, rather than waiting around for the sufferers, she would announce that relief was available. Unfortunately, rather than using a vocal announcement, she used a familiar sound effect over the ship's public address system. To hundreds of victims, that "Plop, plop, fizzzzzzzzz" over the speakers was the ultimate torture. The captain, although understanding of the general sentiment, would not allow the lynch party to space the poor intern. The captain's humanitarianism should be commended. The intern offers as a defense the fact that she has never seen a hangover. We're trying to figure out a way to give her personal experience. Chemistry lab, take note!

SPORTS The Annual Inoculation-Avoidance Contest was won by Captain Kirk, who managed to avoid his injections through the use of his numerous duties. Lieutenant Sulu, last year's winner, was caught due to Intern Sluthak's superior speed, and his ability to disarm the swordsman with an ahn woon. T'Harai managed to get Commander Spock and Ensign Chekov, last year's runners-up. We didn't realize that this was turning into a team sport.

For those interested in regularly scheduled events:

Thursday at 19:00-Bridge game, contract, in Holy Alley. Be warned; the Ship's chaplains have Extra Help.

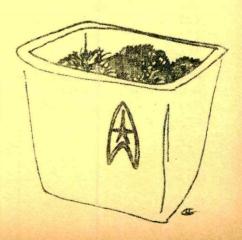
Whenever --Floating crap game. Check Free Enterprise bulletin board (wherever that is.)

Tuesday at 21:00 -- Engineering Basketball

Saturday at 03:00--Sick Bay pillow fights

Lieutenant Sulu has started a kite-flying club in the hangar dack by figuring out a way to have a controlled air leak. Unfortunately, it takes one month for hydroponics to replace the air loss, so we can't do it too often.

Lieutenant Mendoza wanted to start a nonlethal bullfighting ring in the hangar deck, but the Captain vetoed it. According to him, we have enough bullshit around here. Ole, Captain!



Classified Section Gaylen Reiss, Editor

WANTED DESPERATELY-1 glommer or reasonable facsimile as tribble predator. Capt. Koloth % ISS DEVISOR

WANTED-Starship and small, adventurous crew for long journey. You won't believe how long! Rojan, % Masiform D

WANTED-Large stock of Scotch whiskey or Saurian brandy. *Tomar*, % Masiform D

WANTED-Specialists to re-populate Cestus Three Base. Apply Starfleet Command.

WANTED-Analyst. I keep having these weird dreams. Capt. John Christopher, USAF, Earth

WANTED-Physician for bizarre and unproductive community. Extraordinarily light duties. Address replies to: Parmen % Masiform D

WANTED-Impressionable youths for modern army. Must like ice cream. Gorgon, % Masiform D

WANTED-Klingons and Romulans willing to help take over the Federation. Khan Noonien Singh, Ceti Alpha V

WANTED-Psychiatrist for Khan Noonian Singh. Marla McGivers, Ceti Alpha V POSITION WANTED-Former lawgiver is looking for new job off-planet.
Marplon, Landru's Planet

WANTED-For Beta III (Landru's Planet): Doctors, teachers, plumbers, lawyers, electricians, builders, contractors, repair people, salespeople, assemblers, garbage collectors, more.

FOR SALE-Space legs. Limited supply. M. Scott, % Masiform D

FOR SALE-Planet Triskelion. $3x10^{18}$ @ (quat-loos). Will bargain with serious buyer. Provider One

FOR SALE-Flying parasites from Ingraham B. Call 12-733-418-202-667-1509 after 5.

Advertisement

SALE!!

!!SALE

Small multi-legged creatures Great for Vulcan neck-pinch gag.

See them at your nearest Star Base 5&10

WANTED-Information leading to arrest and conviction of longlived Terran artist faking my work. Sten, Marcus II

WANTED-Crew for biological expedition to Omicron Ceti III. Desparately need experienced Vulcan First Officer/Science Officer. Leila Kalomi, Star Base 27

WANTED-Cure for the common cold. Zarabeth, in Sarpedon's snowy past

FOR SALE-Cure for the common cold. Ha-ha. L.

FOR SALE-Tholian Web. 400 credits per meter. Commander Loskene, Territorial Annex of the Tholian Assembly FOR SALE-Territorial plots in Interspace. Tax free. H. Mudd, % Masiform D

FOR SALE-4-D Xmas tree. Includes stand. Less tinsel. Cheap. M. Scott % Engineering Daily

FOR SALE-Multitronic computers. All models; hardly used. Must sacrifice. Dr. R. Daystrom % Tantalus Rehab. Colony

FOR SALE-New, improved cloaking device. Will sell to highest bidder/blackmailer. C.& V. Delminnen % Masiform D

FREE to good home. Tribble kittens. Many colors, adorable. Koloth % ISS DEVISOR

#

Advertisement

GALACTIC QUACK PHARMACEUTICALS
Now's the time to take that trip you've
been planning. . .

without ever leaving home!

We have a large selection of new & hardly used hallucinogens that the Surgeon General has classified as "possibly safe."

Let us help you plan your itinerary today!

FOR RENT-Officer's quarters on well-known starship. Single occupancy. No utilities. Reply Box R-74

EMPLOYMENT-Many openings now for Star Fleet security guards. Full & part-time. Insurance a must. Absence of family ties helpful. Apply:

Star Fleet Command

EMPLOYMENT-Bartender/
Trader for space station near Klingon Neutral
Zone. Must have stable psychological profile.
Apply SS K-7

EMPLOYMENT-Like to travel? Here's an opportunity to see the far reaches of the galaxy: Be a security guard. What a way to go! Apply Star Fleet Command

EMPLOYMENT-Immediate opening for Assistant to Federation Undersecretary in charge of Agricultural Affairs in distant quadrant. Credentials will be examined closely. Send complete resume to: Box K-7

EMPLOYMENT-Immediate opening for talented "controller." Must be willing to part with nonessentials. This is permanent position. Luma

EMPLOYMENT-Tired of the same old grind? Here's your chance to work alongside the professionals on the most modern ships in the fleet! Be a Star Fleet Security Guard. Apply at any Star Base.

NOTICE-I am not responsible for any debts unless contracted by myself.

H. Mudd

NOTICE-to de Federation: I got Bela Oxmyk in a bag, and youse is now dealin' wid me. Ya know what I mean? Jojo Krako

NOTICE-The bloodmobile is coming! All blood types needed.

PERSONAL-to Kevin Riley: Now, be sure to drink all your milk. Mom

PERSONAL-To The Man: Please come home. All is forgiven. Companion. PERSONAL-To M: Perhaps, if it is permitted, you will now find your Yonada. Natira

PERSONAL-To Capt. Kirk: It worked. Deela

PERSONAL-Your Glory: I've taken a cargo ship full of dilithium crystals and I'm headed for the Klingon Zone. Do I have your permission to leave (snicker)? Lord Petri

PERSONAL-to One Named Kirk: ee'eeble namrishri s'lundo trisdum, esh immframick prod' woodwilp? Cloud William

PERSONAL-nn-Harcourt! Harcourt Fenton Mudd, where are you, you miserable sot? Stella 459

PERSONAL-Kirk, if I go, I'm taking you down with me. Capt. Ron Tracy, awaiting trial on Star Base 14

PERSONAL-You mono-toned humans are all alike. Lokai, still running around on Cheron

PERSONAL-Lokai, you half-white, stop spreading that propaganda rubbish. Commissioner Bele, still pursuing Lokai

PERSONAL-

-Gem

PERSONAL-Kirok, you fool, you forgot to reveal the secret of the temple before you left. Behold a god who leaves! Salish

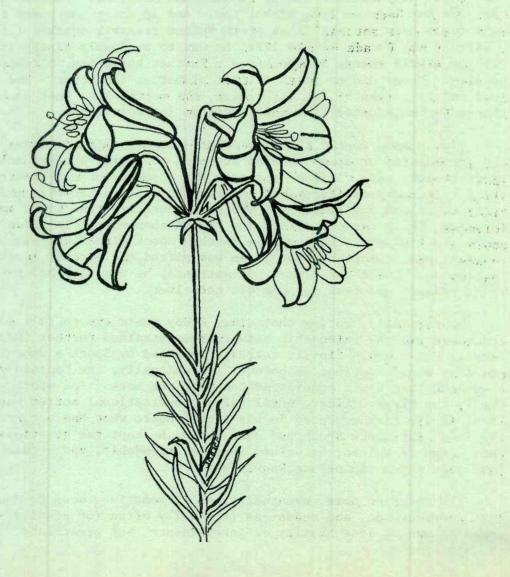
Last Will and Testament

Reported by Deborah Lleyn Phillips

- I, Pavel Andreievitch Chekov, being of pickled brain and wasted body, do bequeath my amazing capacity to consume enough works to flood the Don to Meester Scott, who likes to think of himself as a drinking man.
- I, Montgomery Scott, who can drink anyone under the table at any time, leave all my worst hangovers to Ensign Chekov.
- I, Doctor M'Benga, being of a highly intelligent mind and a body that Uhura lusts for, herewith bequeath my ability to slap Vulcans around without getting reprimanded to Doctor McCoy and Christine Chapel.
- I, Sulu, (Helmsman of the *Enterprise* and Chief Pilot of the Fifth Quadrant Beaver Patrol) of Fu-Manchu mind and Kung-Fu'd body, leave my role as D'Artagnan in *The Three Musketeers* to any talented fellow swordsman who joins the Lower Decks Little Theatre Group.
- I, Lieutenant Uhura, of liberated mind and X-rated body, leave my ability to look devastatingly sexy while beening hailing frequencies to all female communications officers, and my ability to fight off an octopus and/or Captain Kirk to the Captain's new yeoman, who looks as if she could use it.
- I, James Tiberius (Tomcat) Kirk, being of lewd mind and horny body, will my ability to get laid every night despite being short to Scotty, who's been with those technical manuals for too long. Also, I will my talent for making long-winded sermons on various subjects while copping a feel to all future midshipmen.

I, Spock (last name unpronounceable), being of mixed-up mind and botched body, hereby leave my ability to delicately raise my left eyebrow to Doctor McCoy, who has the annoying habit of not-so-delicately raising his right one. Second, I will my capacity to appear totally bored in the midst of a Kling attack to an often panic-stricken Mister Chekov.

I, Leonard "Bones" McCoy, being of bitchy mind and wimpy body, hereby bequeath my graduate course in sarcasm at the Atlanta School of Bitching to anyone assigned duty with a damn Vulcan, 'cause they'll need it. I leave my Confederate flag to Lieutenant Uhura (no need to thank me, honey) and my supply of Rebel Yell to Spock, because I know they will appreciate the stuff.



Once Upon a Time

The wall

Nancy Giudice

11 7 11 11

THE MENT OF STREET STREET

If Spock had been cold, repressed, slightly strange before, he was only slightly more so afterward. In fact, of those who knew him, only McCoy pinpointed a change in him; and McCoy had clues no one else had. He had been on Beta Niobe, too. And if McCoy had hoped the incident might have softened that stern Vulcan reserve, cracked (if only a little) the facade of his life, he was to be doubly disappointed. For the subtle change in Spock was a further hardening, a reapplication to duty. Never did he speak of that planet or that time. And more by that omission than by any other sign, the doctor knew that somehow, the change in Spock dated from that incident in their lives.

Time passed aboard the Enterprise—watches changed, leave time was accumulated or spent, duties attended to. Many strange and many known planets were visited, and each was a source of new knowledge. Alien cultures were discovered and explored, alien theories and practices noted and codified. And whenever there was time to be spent in idleness, Spock was not idle. The finest computers that Star Fleet could provide were always within reach. Spock plied them with data, suppositions, theories. Each item was sifted and sorted, arranged and rearranged. Spock had always had patience; he now also had purpose. Years passed, and that purpose did not alter.

Sporatically, during that time, McCoy would try to talk to Spock. And never was the friendship between them strained further than at those times. McCoy would finally retreat, rebuffed by Spock's unbroken reserve, and they would continue as before. Occasionally, the Captain would skirt a subject that Spock considered too near the mark. And Spock would become wholly the First Officer, until safer conversational matter was supplied. Then, if Jim Kirk wondered in his secret heart what had occurred to reverse the human influence Spock had once shown, he kept the questions to himself. For, human or Vulcan, he valued Spock's friendship, and between strong men, love must often tiptoe unacknowledged.

The solution came, eventually, as it sometimes does to men of ability, perseverence, and means—as it equally often (or equally seldom) comes to men of less ability or intelligence, but great luck. And which of these Spock was, I leave to you to decide. In either case, he had the answer.

Now, at last, Spock had the theory, and the equations, and the belief. Only the immediate means, the ship itself, needed to be directed to the proper place, at the correct angle and speed and time. He would be able to revisit Beta Niobe. No matter that it had flashed into atoms five Terran years ago. Somewhere in the past, it still existed. With it existed the Atavachron, and, somewhen, the science that prepared living beings to enter the past—and the knowledge of how to reverse that conditioning. For that Spock had searched, planned, and theorized. Now his purpose could be fulfilled.

No one who knew him, even his enemies, could say he was dishonorable. No one could accuse him of being careless of life, even alien and quite repugnant life. No one would say he was a man who left his obligations unfulfilled. With good reason.

He had allowed himself to love Zarabeth, he had touched her life. He had left her (been forced to leave her, he reminded himself) to unending isolation, punishment doubly cruel after so short a reprieve. So it was his duty to find her, and rescue her. He had searched out knowledge and power; he had combed the sciences for secrets, and won. Now duty would be fulfilled. If he had been human, he would have said his conscience would be cleared. But he wasn't, of course. And neither was he Vulcan, entirely.

Spock succeeded, of course. How could he fail?

He had known time travel was possible. But Star Fleet had proscribed use of the Guardian of Forever. And excessive ship's speed as a means of time travel did not always place the traveler when he wanted to be. But the years of calculations, the theories and counter-theories, proofs and rejections, were for this purpose. The *Enterprise* could travel back into Beta Niobe III's past, and it would arrive somewhen in that world's history when the Atavachron existed.

Spock was, officially, on a mission of observation; Kirk was, officially, in command. But it was in truth the First Officer who gave the commands and made the adjustments that sent the *Enterprise* kaleidoscoping back into the past. And it was the First Officer who led the landing party. It was no coincidence that they beamed down into the Library.

It was a Library busy and active, filled with people, and it conspicuously lacked Mr. Atoz, but the Atavachron was there. While the landing party made unobtrusive official observations for official reports, Spock went exploring.

First it was necessary to travel in time to the Atavachron's very beginning, to the time when the knowledge of how to prepare a person for

life in the past was in its infancy, and when processes for re-entry into one's normal time zone were not yet suppressed, distorted, or lost.

Ah, here it was—an early tape depicting the Atavachron's own inventors. Spock stepped through the portal and, minutes later, reappeared. hours of persuasion, hours of preparation, were telescoped to a few minutes of "Library time." But when he reappeared, he held in his hands a leather kit and a tiny sensing device—the means for Zarabeth's reconditioning. The means for Zarabeth's freedom.

Now the problem of finding Zarabeth.

Tape after tape flickered onto the viewer and off; he had not much time. The right tape, and the right time on it, were essential. He must arrive after he and McCoy had left that time period, but not much after, for what might have happened to Zarabeth in the interval he could not guess.

At last, the tape was there, the one he and McCoy had blundered into five years before, or--a century into the future, depending on your point of view.

He succeeded, of course. How could he fail? So fine were his calculations that she, in her Ice Age (subjective time) spent, actually, only twenty days alone, from the time she saw him disappear to the time he (miracle of miracles!) came to the cave calling her name, calling her name in the wind.

She loved him, of course. How could she not? But he had fulfilled his purpose and was at peace. He had given Zarabeth the freedom of the Trenty third Century, all its glories and civilizations for her to choose from. He turned away, as only Spock could turn, holding logic in his teeth as another man might a knife. His duty done. Free her. Leave her to her life.

But Zarabeth had plans of her own. Twenty days is not five years or more, but blizzards make a positime out of thinking, too. So she turned to him, and innocent child, told him his duty was not ended yet. For she must be educated in his ways and by his people, in order to be a fit mother. . . and there she let the words lie, neither accusing him nor claiming saches.

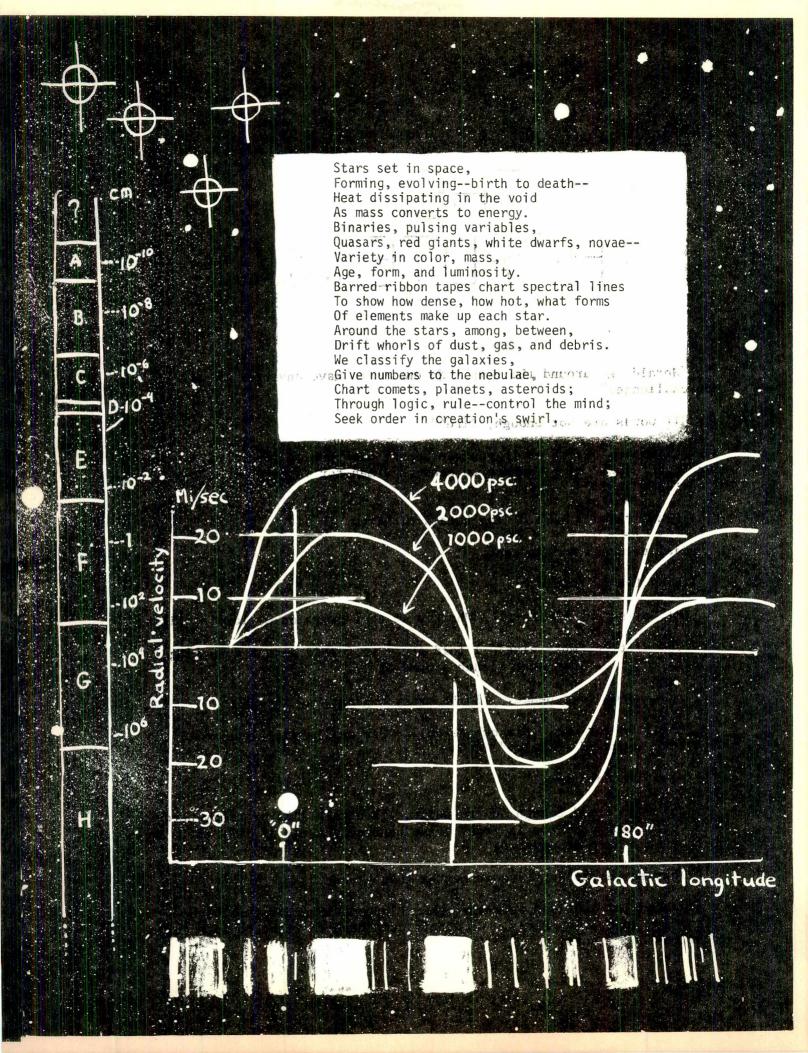
And of course he had to yield. Duty must be fulfilled. If there should be in duty pleasure, how much more reasonable the performance. And if there should be wild heartbeat of anticipation behind the rigid stance, who would know? Only Zarabeth. And she was his.

4. I have be surveyed by each the most being offered for a figure of the safety of

PROVIDE LANGUE TO SEE THE STATE OF THE STATE



Ni~Var, Observations by a Vulcan Navigator, Starship Endeavor by Mary Schaub Powdered fire-gems Tossed carelessly against the vast Dark cloak spread out between the worlds. A treasure strewn in random heaps--In clusters, swarms, stray single motes--Like spangles on a jewelled gown; No robe could match the richness here... These lustrous, multi-colored sparks--Ice-blues, warm amber, sullen red, Pale gold, blood green--enmeshed and linked By strands like silver sehlat hair, Or wisps of cloud, some dark, some bright, In smoky curls; dim, silken veils. New wonders shine at every glance; No limits bar the questing eye. Beauty displayed in endless ranks--Sublime, apparent paradox: At once diverse, yet also whole.





"Herald, go around the camp. No one is to have anything to do with that challenge."

"If words are not enough, Sire?"

"Talk them out of it if you can; don't put them on report unless you have to. I don't want to have to censure a man for valor just because he's stupid besides."

"I understand, Sire." The herald withdrew.

Saul returned to his tent.

"Play for me, David."

The boy struck the harp. "What is it that preys on my lord's spirit?"

"The Gittite, what else? I told Abner to forbid anyone answering the challenge. I just sent Mosheh around again."

Young hands wove peace. "Is he truly a giant, my lord?"

"He'll do for one. Six cubits tall. His mail shirt alone must weigh five thousand shekels."

"Slow him down some."

Saul was calmed enough now to smile. "You talk like my crazy heroes, David. That spear of his is iron. Five hundred shekels if it's one. Do you know what iron means, lad?"

"They say it holds its edge better than bronze."

"A blade of iron can hack through a blade of bronze without even dulling its edge. No, David. We didn't come here to fight hoplite duels with iron-shod giants.

"--You have brothers in camp, don't you, lad? Go, spend a watch with them. There may not be time tomorrow."

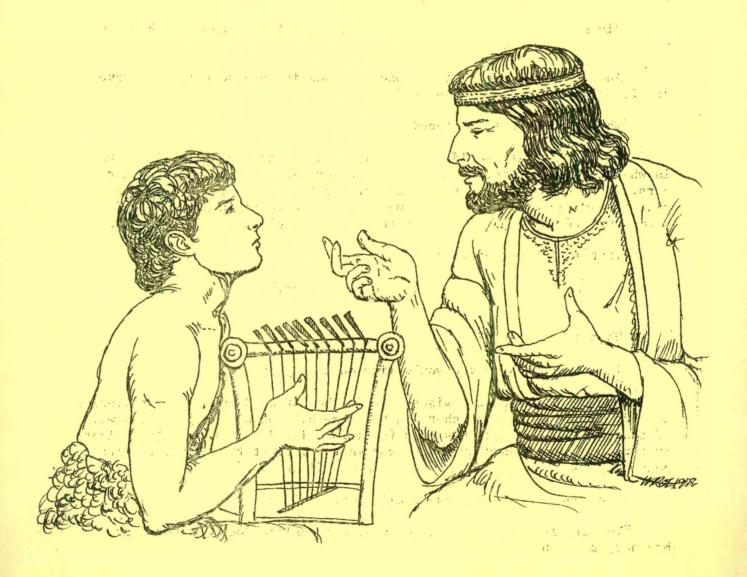
"Thank you, my lord."

"Did this northern dog bring us from our flocks and our fields just to make faces at the *Caphtorim?* The Gittite has been swaggering up and down the lines for days."

"Let him."

"Let him sneer at our valor? Spit on our honor? Let him-"

"Peace, Shammah!" Eliab raised his voice to cut through his brother's tirade. He continued, much lower. "The northerner has done what our fathers did not do. He and his son are the ones to follow."



Abinadab looked past the disputing pair. "Here comes one who agrees with you, Eliab. Over here, David!"

"David! What of the king?"

"What of the Gittite? What has he done to make my lord and the captains so angry?"

"A challenge. Our champion against him. But your lord will have it that we have no champions."

"Shammah, I told you to hold your tongue." Eliab turned back to his youngest brother. "He wants to fight the Gittite. He's an ass."

"Is the Gittite really all over bronze?"

"I saw him," said Abinadab. "I mean, I saw his armor walking. Head to foot. He even wears greaves."

"His spear," said Eliab. "You'd think he stole a weaver's beam and put a spearhead on it."

"And a javelin slung at his back. I saw it when he turned to wave at his friends," Abinadab finished.

"Then. . . all but his face?"

"Now you see it, David," said Eliab, "and a grim sight it is. That is why the king is angry; some of the men are as silly as this brother of ours. Or perhaps not. Perhaps they are just as well pleased that the king forbade accepting the challenge. They can complain about it and swear that if the king were not a coward they would march out right now."

"That is not our brother, Eliab."

"No. We have a fool for kin, but not a cur."

"What is it, David?"

"I thought perhaps you would like music, my lord."

"David. I am not the wisest man in the world--Samuel keeps reminding me--but I can see when another man has something on his mind. Sit down. If that brother of yours has been foolish again, don't fret. I'd decimate my forces if I punished every man who wants to fight the Gittite. Without numbering the men who want someone else to fight him."

"Have you had another bad spell, sir? I'll--"

"You'll sit there and tell me what's troubling you. If not your brother, then what?"

"The Gittite. Send me."

"But, Sire! A boy?"

David flushed. Ignoring General Abner, he addressed the king. "My lord, your servant has killed both lions and bears."

"They weren't wearing armor, David."

"His face is all the target a sling-stone needs."

"He'll only have but one chance, Sire!"

"Not so, my lord." He still was not speaking to General Abner.
"The big spear is for thrusting, not throwing. By the time he unslings the javelin, I'll be out of range." David forgot to be formal. "You won't be risking a soldier. Let me do it. I know I can take him!"

Saul stared at Abner. The general returned a level gaze. "It would be murder, Sire," he said quietly. "A boy against a hoplite?"

"A slinger," said the herald. "A shepherd?"

Saul looked toward him. "Go on, Mosheh."

"Army slingers don't aim. Their target is an army. All they have to do is keep one volley coming after another. A shepherd does have to aim." He turned to David. "Are you sure you can hit his face?"

"Perhaps not the first stone. Or the second. But he'll have to raise his head to use his spear. I'll hit him."

Saul rose. "Wear my armor. Mosheh, send--"

"By your leave, my lord. I've helped unshell you; I know how heavy your armor is. It would weigh me down. And it might get in my way; I'm not used to it."

"You can't go out naked," Abner protested. "No arms, no armor!"

"I have my hands and my feet. I must go against the Gittite as I went against the lion. He who preserved me then will stand by me still."

When they reached the stream, David stopped and knelt by the bank. "I need stones, Mosheh. You go on ahead. Tell them we accept the challenge." He picked up a small, smooth stone, weighed it in his hand. "Should be accurate," he thought aloud, "but it's light."

Mosheh left him turning over stones in the stream. A few he accepted at once, most he rejected out of hand. Some he held while he looked further before he decided yes or no. When Mosheh returned, there were four stones in David's pouch and two more in his hand.

"It's the best," he said, "but it's too light." He dropped one stone back into the stream, the other into his sling. "Five shots, Mosheh. Five smooth stones."

"The lion is coming. May He who preserved you then, stand by you still."

David crossed the stream. In his left hand he held a shepherd's staff, in his right hand a loaded sling. In the pouch at his belt were four smooth stones. He walked toward the Caphtorim lines, a shepherd defending the flocks.

Goliath of Gath stared at the shepherd lad. Contemptuously, he waved his shieldbearer aside. His bronze mail shirt was thicker and heavier than any other man could bear. Proof against javelins, let alone a staff.

"What do you think you're doing, boy?" he shouted. "Chasing dogs away from the pens?"

"Chasing a wolf from the sheep."

"With a staff?"

"My lord has a staff to strike you dead."

"Go home, little boy. Tell your father to send a man."

"I am the youngest of my father's sons. He set me to guard his sheep."

David shifted his grip on the borrowed staff. It had diverted the Gittite, but its main purpose was simply to be there, in his hand. His own staff had been in his hand when he killed the lion with an overhand snap, and without the familiar extension of himself, his aim was off. He did not think about the staff; shifting his grip was automatic.

Normally, a slinger whirls the sling horizontally about his head once or twice to get up speed before releasing the free end with a snap of his wrist. That would do for any later shots, but this first one had a chance of surprise. The stone in the sling was the largest of the five, since it would not have full speed to enhance its impact.

He swung vertically, an overhand snap without preliminary. The stone sped full at the Gittite's face. David dropped the staff and got out another stone.

Goliath of Gath lay sprawled on the ground. The shieldbearer stared at his master, then at the magician who had felled him. The deadly slinger was loading again. The shieldbearer crouched behind the shield and backed away.

David walked over to look at his wolf. A sling-stone will penetrate





the shoulder of an armored man; there was not much left of the face of the Gittite. Pulling the dead man's sword from the scabbard, he hacked off the head. It was by no means a neat job, since David had not used a sword before, but the head would never have made a handsome trophy in any case.

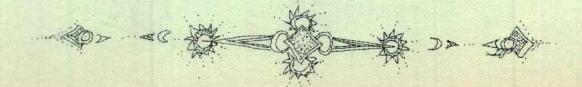
Holding up the gory thing by the hair, he faced the Caphtorim army. The shieldbearer was halfway to the lines and still backing, still crouched behind the shield. David turned to his own people, again held up the head. The Tribes shouted. He stuck the head on the sword and carried it back to his own lines, retrieving the staff on the way.

12

STANDING ON BLACKTOP

RUTH BERMAN

In the far corner of the playground, outside the range of games, the gravel gave way to clover (before the yard was blacktopped). The difference in the footing distanced the corner from the recess noises, though I was still in sight. In late spring bees came, lumbering in the light over the green junctures. I told myself the repetitious tales of the interminable life (I killed him once, but he recovered) of the Coceytus. I only watched the Coceytus, voyaging among the worlds, but now, standing on blacktop, I hear the children and the bees and smell green sunlight in the tar.

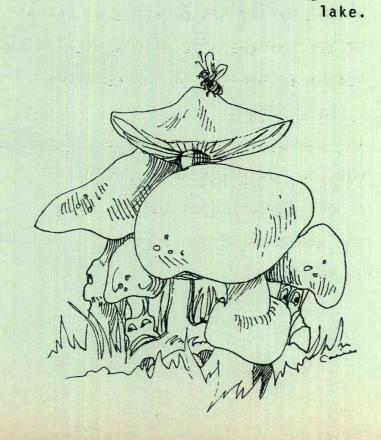


A POME

Loosely Recalled From Something Ned Brooks Said In A Letter
by Devra Langsam

One
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Any
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PREREQUISITE

BY

DEVRA MICHELE LANGSAM

"Janet, will you get your goddamned legs out of the way! This isn't any blinking gymnasium!"

"If you'd watch where you put your own stupid feet--" Janet surMartin-Tanya snarled in return, dabbing at the coffee stain spreading on her pants.

"Oh, come on," said Ruth, another of the Federation exchange students.
"Let's not fight with each other." She brushed her short brown hair away from her face.

"Why not?" asked Ivor disagreeably. He'd spilled coffee on himself, too. "Who else can we quarrel with? We don't get near enough to any Klingons--"

"You seem to do a pretty good job of arguing with the math teacher," said Huang Chu, without looking up from his chess game. "If you'd stop fighting with him about abstruse techniques, maybe the rest of us would have a chance to learn enough to pass the course."

"If he'd shut up occasionally, he might even learn to add," Janet said, getting to her feet. "Ivor's such a mathematical genius that he can't subtract without a calculator."

The mood in the Forcign Students' Lounge at Arbara University was particularly tense that day. As usual, the Romulans had withdrawn into their own corner, and were playing one of their noisy, interminable dice games, leaving the Federation group to their own company.

And they were tired of their own company, of four months spent in each other's pockets, fifty incompatible people eating, sleeping, studying together. Although they were surrounded by Klingons here on Kershi, in the heart of the Empire—a whole university, a whole planetful of them—they were as isolated as if buried in a snowbank. They'd come from all

over the Federation to be part of the first Klingon-Federation student exchange program—mathematicians, and linguists in love with pre-Imperial verse forms, and med students specializing in non-human physiology—and now most of them wished that they could just go home.

Jan strolled over to the chess players. After watching for a few minutes, she asked, "Smith, how can you be so calm all the time? Doesn't it bother you to have to take elementary math and remedial Kersherani—as though we weren't all fluent in the stupid language!— to be here on Kershi and never even talk to a Klingon?"

The Vulcan turned his attention from the chess board. "One does what one must. No doubt it would be a waste of time to remind you that my. . ."

". . .name is not Smith, it's Simhith. Yeah." Jan wandered distractedly to the window, and stood looking out at the busy campus. "Dear God, sometimes I think my mother was right after all."

"Will you stop flitting around like a bat?" Ivor said.

"What did your mother say?" Ruth asked, still trying to keep the peace. She hated fights.

"She said that we'd end up in a foreign students' enclave, segregated from the Klingon students and all the real university life--'protecting us' they would call it. Because the Klingon authorities wouldn't know how to deal with us--"

"After nearly twenty years of alleged peace, the Klingons damned well ought to know how to handle Terrans," Chu said acerbically.

"--and they'd be afraid of incidents. 'Forget all that nonsense about the honor of it--to be first is always difficult'," Jan quoted bitterly.

"For a dancer, your mother's pretty sharp," said Martita surJoycePatrick, "considering that she spends half her time tieing her ankles into knots around her neck, and the other half drifting around the stage like an ostrich on anti-gravs." Martita looked with malicious satisfaction at Jan's furious expression and continued, "I've met your mother, remember. But dancers are like phys ed majors—all their brains are in their. . . feet. . .anyway."

"Kershu fighters," said Jan rigidly, "are NOT like Terran phys ed majors--or like Star Fleet security personnel, EITHER. The Klingons respect Kershu fighters. . "

". . .like the teacher in gym class today?" interrupted Huang Chu, turning from the chess board. "That was a wonderful demonstration of Kershu fighters' falling techniques you gave us all hour."

[&]quot;Breakfall," Jan said.

"Too bad we all got involved in doing punishment exercises as well, just because you irritated the teacher," Ivor put in. "Why'd you have to argue with her? She won't let you practice those fake-fight moves. She's told you that three times already."

"Fake-fight?" Jan pushed the heels of her hands together savagely and said, "You're lucky that I'm not supposed to fight with incompetents like you."

"Fight, ha!" Ivor retorted. "I've never seen you fight ANYBODY. All you do is blow your mouth off, get in the way with those damn fool exercises, and cause trouble."

Jan growled, her dark eyes sparking dangerously. The Romulans, sensing something more interesting coming, broke up their dice game and sauntered over to watch.

"I wouldn't fight with a girl anyway," Ivor said.

"Goddamn you!" Jan yelled. She looked around the circle of spectators—the Romulans eager for any diversion, the Federation students, united for once, forming a solid front against her. "I hope you sit here in your little woolly nest until you rot!"

As she slammed toward the door, Ruth said, "Jan, where are you going? Jan, please come back. You know everyone's temper is short these last few days."

"Where can she go?" Huang Chu said. "We're not permitted in the regular student cafeterias, OR the main library, OR the gymnasia, OR the Free--" The closing door cut off his voice.

With a determination born of four months of frustration and anger, Jan headed for the regular students' cafeteria, in defiance of strict regulations that exchange students should not "attempt to mingle with native students until given official permission."

Ignoring the stares and mutters that her appearance provoked, Jan concentrated on selecting her food, ending up with a thick greenish soup, barbecued ribs (animal indefinite), a chunk of dark heavy bread, and a plate of creamy pudding. And chai.

Jan scowled at the cup. Good chai was a tart, slightly bitter drink, sometimes served with a blob of butter floating on top. The instructors at her old fighting school drank it constantly. During her ten years as a fighter-trainee, she'd more or less learned to drink it, as long as she put in plenty of sugar. "Barbarism," Master Irimi used to say, referring to the sugar.

Jan suspected that this was not going to be good chai.

The cafeteria was crowded, and Jan was a little surprised to see a whole table empty. Carefully, she manoeuvered around pushed-out chairs, and put down her tray. It was obviously a student cafeteria. Even though

the odors (strange but not too unpleasant) and faces were different, there were the same plastic chairs, sticky table-tops, and general air of mess.

Cautiously, Jan sampled the various dishes. The bread was coarse and chewy, but edible, and the soft pudding she remembered from parties at fightschool. The rest of the food—maybe because it was cafeteria fare—seemed pretty awful.

Too much spice! she thought, reaching wildly for the mug of chai. Someone joggled her elbow, and the chai splashed. She looked up and saw several Klingons sitting down at her table. The Klingons were all dark, with strongly forked eyebrows, and heavy scowls.

"Stupid Terry bitch," one of them said in Kersherani. He reached across the table, and poked the meat on her plate with his finger. Switching to heavily accented Federation Standard, he said to the man next to her, "Look, Korbas--meat! Micha must have failed her last test!"

Jan jerked her tray back from under the other's hand, sending another spray of chai all over. "I speak Kersherani."

"What do you know! She can talk, just like an intelligent being. Not just that barbarians' gibble-gabble," Kothor said.

"How strange," Korbas agreed. He switched back to Kersherani. "But you shouldn't say nasty things like that about the meat, Kothor. Everyone knows what weak stomachs Terries have."

"Yes," agreed the man next to Kothor. He scowled across the table. "The only strong thing about them is their noses, which are always ready to poke into anyone's private affairs. No odor of dishonor is too foul for them to sniff."

Jan struggled with her temper. "If you don't care for my company, leave. You joined me."

"Ah, but this is our table," said Korbas.

"I didn't see any 'reserved' signs."

"That," said Korbas, "is because nobody but a dumbshit Terry would sit uninvited at our table." He smiled and fingered his beard, which had the feathery appearance of newly-sprouted hair.

"Why? Who are you that you're so important? I don't see any herolight around your heads," Jan retorted. "Perhaps you are gods in disguise?"

The man next to Kothor leaned across the table and spat into her plate. "You foul our land. There is no welcome here for you."

The others were silent for a moment. Then the Klingon woman at the table said, "Really, Kintam. . . that was very rude."

"It was supposed to be," Kintam snapped.

Jan took a careful deep breath. "I warn you--I am a fighter. Do not insult me or my people any further."

"But what kind of a fighter?" Kothor asked, and the others laughed.

"Terran women are WONDERFUL pillow-fighters."

"Mattress-wrestlers!"

Korbas nodded. "That is all Terry women are good for, anyway; they have no more brains than eggfowl. Our women are fighters, like Manardesa, but I would not insult them by comparison to a Terran."

The woman gave him a mock-bow.

"I give you a second warning," Jan said, clenching her fists.

Korbas looked down his nose at her and said, "All talk, no action. That is a Terran."

Jan stared around at them and said, slowly and deliberately, "I give you fair warning. I am a Kershu fighter. If you attack me further, it is at your own risk."

"Excellent!" said Korbas, shoving his chair back a bit.

"Korbas!" Manardesa said.

Korbas raised his eyebrows and replied blandly, "She SAYS she's a fighter."

Manardesa grimaced. Then she shrugged, and said, "Not in here, then. Outside, fool!"

Korbas considered, then nodded, turning to Jan. "Come then, mouth-that-walks. Leave our table, or come out and fight."

Come out and fight. Oh, yes. Was this togetherness and meeting alien ideas with liberal welcome? Jan remembered what the Terran Consul had said at their last briefing session: "No, you will not audit the Kershu fighter classes during orientation. I've had them pull your name. We want to project the non-aggressive, co-operative image. Try to keep a low profile."

Maybe I should give in, and just leave, she thought bleakly. It's not really that important. Then, NO! Damn it, I'm a fighter, and I will not throw a fight. The hell with the Consul. They KNEW I was a fight-student when I came!

"Where's outside?" she asked.

The Klingons exchanged looks, possibly of surprise. Then the woman,



Manardesa, said, "There are practice mats."

So that was what those dark grey sheets were. "All right," Jan said. "Let's go."

As they stood up, Jan noticed that none of them were wearing knives or other personal weapons.

Good God, she thought, they're ALL Kershu fighters. And here I've been shouting off my mouth about my being a fighter. When will I ever learn to keep my mouth shut?

They moved together, Jan not quite a part of the group. Other students moved out of their way. Probably it was true, Jan thought, that no one WOULD sit at their table uninvited. One or two people called casual greetings, but no one seemed interested in interfering with the pack. Put your money where your mouth is, she told herself.

Outside, the air smelled cool and fresh after the reek of the cafeteria. They cut across the dead grass,

skirting several very muddy places, toward where one of the dark mats lay. There were two young men already on it, weaving around and grappling with each other.

The group stopped at the edge of the mat.

"Move off," Korbas said loudly. "Vacate."

The two rolled clear of each other, and stood up. "We're practicing now. Why don't you take one of the other mats?"

"Because we want this one."

"We reserved this place," the gold-skinned fighter on the mat interrupted. "You're not one of the Masters, to order us around, even if you ARE in the Intermediate class now."

"Clear off, before we beat the hell out of you."

"You're asking for trouble, Korbas," the gold-skinned one said.

"Who's going to give it to me, sniveller? You?"

The two on the mat stared at the circle of people around them, all older than they were. Jan was suddenly conscious of how much younger Korbas must be than the others in his pack. Playing with the big boys, she thought.

The two glared, conferred briefly, then stepped off the mat. They pulled on thick indigo warm-up suits, and walked away rapidly, still muttering.

Kintam, the man who'd spat in her plate, said, "Well, Earther, come and prove your words."

Jan blew her breath out in a hiss. She'd cooled down a bit, but being called THAT fired up her temper again. "A fighter who loses his temper has lost the fight too," Master Irimi always said. Calm down, she advised herself. "I will warm up first."

"Then you'll sprain your toe and be--er--incapacitated," said Kothor. There was a buzz of agreement from the spectators, strangers who'd stopped to see what was going on. "No Terran can fight."

"All right." Jan bent over to slip off her shoes and socks. "What rules?"

"Since you are only a Terryfem, we'll say first fall," Korbas answered.

"Considering what I'm fighting, why don't we say first foul?" Jan said, and stepped onto the mat. It felt springy underfoot, and she bounced a little, flexing her knees. The dark grey surface had a slightly gritty texture, and her toes gripped it comfortably.

Korbas stepped onto the mat too. He gave her a curt half-bow and waited, his hands relaxed at his sides. Jan bowed. Korbas went into an attack crouch. He danced forward, shifting rapidly from one foot to the other. Jan backed away, and Korbas reached out and hooked his hand into her armpit. Jan deliberately relaxed into his grasp, then swiveled and heaved Korbas over her hip to the mat.

Korbas grinned, bounced back to his feet, and cut in toward her other side, grabbing two-handed for her elbow. Jan returned his grin, enjoying herself hugely. She went in under his guard, grabbed an ankle, and yanked upward. Korbas fell. He rolled back to his feet and came towards her, apparently intending to try a body grapple. She backed again, cautious. Properly done, that hold could be very effective—but it would also leave him wide open to a neck grip. Foolish—hadn't she shown she could block him? Easy, easy, she told herself. Here he comes now.

Jan pivoted, dropped onto his back, and flattened him onto the mat, grabbing his left wrist with one hand as her other hand slid down his arm. She planeted her right hand against his up-turned elbow and firmly applied pressure.

Panting, Jan crouched next to Korbas, pinning his elbow flat. "The fall is completed," she said. "Is this acknowledged?"

After a moment, Korbas said slowly, "I acknowledge it."

Jan released her grip on his wrist and stood up. Now she was aware of the sweat running down her shoulderblades. Her eyebrows were damp, too. She rubbed her face on her sleeve, gratefully drawing deep lungfuls of air. She turned to Korbas, feeling a bit of a fool about the whole thing. But Korbas was looking past her toward the side of the mat, his expression dismayed. She turned to look also.

"Well, Korbas?" said the slender man standing there. His charcoal-colored slacks and ivory body shirt stood out among the gaudy tunics the students wore. There was a furrow of either pain or annoyance between his eyes. Kintam and the others of the pack were cautiously edging away from him.

"Sir?" Korbas said hesitantly.

"Much is permitted you because of your skill, but you go too far when you push others off the mats at your pleasure. You are but a student among other students."

UNGGG, Jan thought. Korbas looked uneasy.

"But perhaps your skill, too, is less than you think it. The Terran
...woman. ..was the victor."

"She is not without skill, Master Kinet," Korbas said.

"The answer I would expect, since you have just lost to her through your stupidity and carelessness." Kinet rubbed absently at his temples.

"But you didn't actually see the bout," someone protested from the anonymous safety of the crowd of spectators. "Korbas was already pinned when you got here."

Completely ignoring this interruption, Master Kinet said, "Perhaps

I shall have you dropped to the Junior class, since it seems that anyone can outfight you, even a Terran.

"But then again, Korbas, perhaps you merely played at fighting? That might explain your losing, but pillow-fighting is not for the open mats. That is for your own quarters."

Korbas flushed a deep maroon. "She has skill--"

"Be quiet. You are in disgrace. As a fighter you are completely incompetent."

"But," Jan said, "he is your student." Goaded beyond any good sense by the implied insults to her fighting, she charged on, "What does that say about the skill of his teacher? If he's incompetent, what does that make you? Inept as a teacher and a fighter both?"

The Master looked at her, an appraising, scornful look. "Who are you, then?"

Jan stuck her chin out. "I am Janet surMartinTanya, of Taranheim. I am an exchange student."

"Your manners show it." The Master's eyes dismissed her, and he swung around to the spectators. "Ah, Kothor, Manardesa--how surprising to see you here."

The two, part of the group that had been at Jan's lunch table, looked uncomfortable, and retreated into the crowd.

"I threw him in a fair fight," Jan said loudly, but the Master paid her no attention. Jan breathed deeply through her nose, clenching and unclenching her fists. She'd won the fight, and now it was all wiped out, taken away, made nothing. Whatever status she'd won, Master Kinet had just destroyed. She felt very hostile.

"Too bad, Terry," Korbas said in a low voice. "But it was a good fight." He looked at the Master, and his face tightened into formal lines.

"So now he's going to land on you, for kicking the others off, and for losing to me."

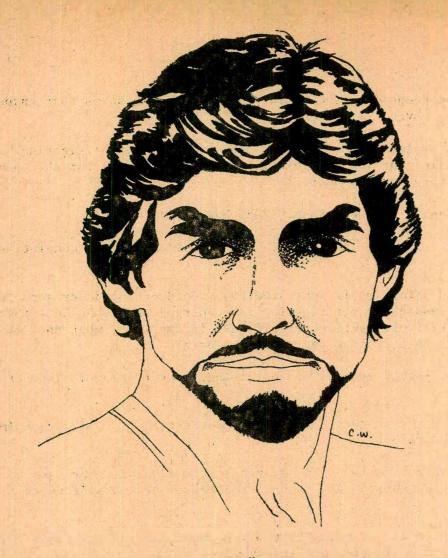
Korbas nodded.

"He's a pig-headed fool," Jan continued. "I'd like to push his face down into that mud."

"You couldn't do it. Don't try it," Korbas answered. "He would squash you, or me, for that matter, with no effort at all."

"But what about both of us? Could we take him that way?"

Korbas half-turned and looked at Jan, his eyebrows wrinkling. "Just the two of us? Are you crazy?"



"The TWO of us MIGHT take him," Jan said, a faint, slightly mad smile on her face. He doesn't think I can fight. Oh, I want to show him!"

"Korbas!" Master Kinet said sharply. "Come here!"

Korbas sucked at his lip, then started over. Jan caught at his arm. "'Stand at my back, my brother,'" she urged. "What have you got to lose now anyway?"

"Korbas Kodreskar!"

He wavered, then grinned in assent, and she lifted her chin and matched his step as they crossed the mat together.

The Master looked irritated. "I do not expect to have to call you twice, student. What have you to say?"

Korbas bowed. "Master, this Terryfem and I beg to attack you." He dove for a knee-and-ankle grasp, and Jan swung in from the left, reaching for Kinet's wrist and throat. The three of them rolled off the edge of the mat into the mud.

There were several minutes of thrashing around. Thrust away, Jan rolled onto her shoulder, somersaulted, and came back to her feet. Ignored, she worked around the muddle of arms and legs, and kicked Master Kinet's feet out from under him.

"Vasanti!" she shouted, and jumped into the fray again.

She found herself kneeling behind Master Kinet, bracing his back on her raised knee, one elbow locked tightly around his throat. Korbas knelt on the Master's thighs, holding both of the man's thumbs in a lock-grip.

Jan looked at Korbas over the top of the Master's head and shouted, "We did it!"

Korbas bared his teeth and jerked his head in acknowledgment.

There was a slight, rustling sound in the crowd of spectators, followed by silence. Then Korbas looked at Master Kinet's face, which was hidden from Jan. Slowly, the light of excitement and battle-fire died in Korbas' face, and he released his grip. Jan loosened her hold, and came to her feet.

The Master rose gracefully, his face furious. He brushed fruitlessly at the mud smeared on his dark pants. Then he looked at Korbas, and Korbas swallowed, half-ducking his head.

"Come," Kinet said softly, the menace in his voice unmistakable. He turned on his heel and swung away, across the grass, splashing through the mud.

"Oh, dear GOD," Jan said. Korbas followed his Master. Jan looked after both of them.

Then, suddenly, she ran after them, scrambling to catch up.

Kinet walked rapidly, not looking back to see if anyone followed. Naturally. He was Fight-Master.

They crossed the grassy stretch, and came to a series of long, two-storied buildings, arranged like the spokes of a wheel.

As they turned down the short path leading to a turquoise door, Korbas suddenly noticed her. "What are you doing here?" he hissed. His face looked strained.

"He said to come."

"He didn't mean you."

"You're still calling me EARTHER in your mind, aren't you?" Jan retorted.

Korbas stared at her, and then turned to the low step in front of them. The door opened as Kinet held his palm in front of the scan-eye, and Jan silently followed the others inside. They walked down a long hallway and entered an office at the far end. Kinet swung around and saw Jan.

"What are you doing here?"

Jan swallowed a mouthful of spit and said, "I--ah--I felt guilty letting him take the blame. It wasn't right."

"Guilty?" Kinet frowned, and rubbed his temples again. "What have you to do with Korbas taking blame?" He stared at her. "Do you realize that I intend to punish Korbas?"

Jan nodded. "Yes, sir." She hesitated. "I've trained--"

Kinet cut her off with a wave of his hand. "Well, then, what reason did you have for following us? Did you think that you could convince me NOT to punish him?"

"No, but--it wasn't his--I mean," said Jan awkwardly, "it was my idea to jump you."

"He need not have agreed."

Kinet shook his head negatively. "I will not permit that." He paused, eyeing her thoughtfully. "Yet there is plenty here for both of you."

Jan's stomach twisted, but she said faintly, "I will share his punishment."

Kinet snorted. "Perhaps when you have watched it, you will change your mind."

Korbas, who had been silent during this exchange, suddenly said, "In front of HER?"

"You would prefer it outside, before everyone who passes by?"

Korbas clamped his teeth onto his lower lip and shook his head rapidly.

"Come here." And Korbas walked over to the desk where Kinet stood.

Jan wondered in a sick way if he were planning to break one of Korbas' bones, or perhaps dislocate a joint. Irimi, her old Fight Master, had used different methods, but there were always the horrid insinuations whispered by the older students. . . .

Kinet twisted Korbas' left arm behind his back, and then pushed him, face down, across the desk. The Master fumbled for a minute under the edge

of Korbas' patterned tunic, releasing his trousers, and pushed the tunic up out of the way. Then Kinet poked through the litter of papers on the desk top, muttering, until he located a thin rod. He settled his thigh against the edge of the desk and began to beat Korbas, the stick whistling down against bare flesh. Korbas grunted with the impact of the blows.

Jan felt a hysterical laugh rise in her throat. All that non-sense about how "real" Kershu fight masters punished their students, and here it was, nothing more exotic than a beating. A choked sound from Korbas reminded Jan of the few occasions when her old Master had seen fit to beat her, and she tasted bile.

"You mean you got so upset about a spanking?"
She could almost hear the laughter among her classmates, home, years ago.
And I'm 18 now; she thought, which is pretty old for this kind of thing.

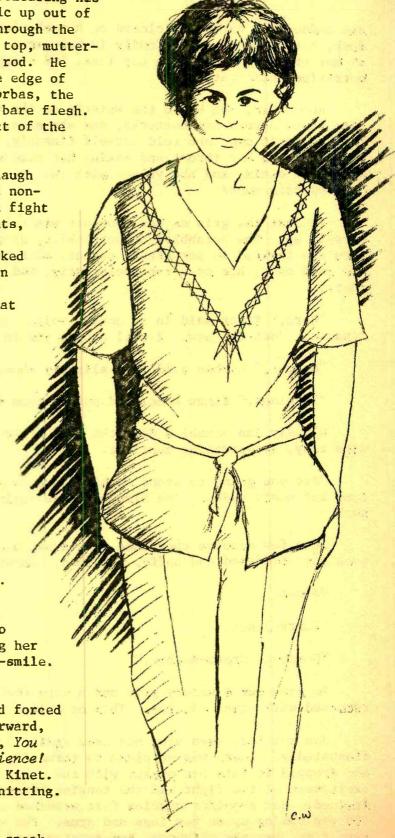
Kinet released the young man, whose buttocks were now crisscrossed with vivid scarlet welts. Korbas dove for his pants, keeping his face turned away from Jan.

Kinet turned to look at Jan. He did not look quite so angry now. He snorted, seeing her face, and gave a twisted half-smile. "Well?" he said.

Jan swallowed again, and forced her reluctant legs to move forward, while a part of her mind said, You WOULD have an attack of conscience! At last she stood in front of Kinet. He stared at her, his brows knitting. "You accept this freely?"

most afternate

Not trusting herself to speak,



she nodded. A hard hand closed on her shoulder, and she bent over the desk, her blood pounding loudly in her ears. She felt the smooth fabric of her trousers slide down her legs, and clamped her teeth together in horrified anticipation.

Above her, she heard the whistle as the rod sliced down. A line of fire laced across her buttocks, and she said, "AHH!" through gritted teeth. Don't cry, she told herself fiercely, but the tears came anyway, spilling down her throat and making her nose run. The stick cut down again and again, and she yelped with the pain. I didn't remember it hurting this much!

At last the grip on her shoulder was released, and she dizzily pulled herself up. She scrabbled at her ankles, dragging her pants into place. Then she fumbled in her sleeve pocket, searching for a clean tissue among the used ones; her nose ran inelegantly, and she was coughing from swallowed tears.

"Here," Kinet said in an amused voice, and handed her a packet of tissues. "Get out now. I will expect you in class tomorrow morning."

"Master," Korbas said in a slightly choked voice.

"In class," Kinet said, and pushed them toward the door to the hall.

Blindly Jan stumbled down the hall after Korbas, and out the door, into rosy, eye-dazzling sunlight.

"Are you going to stand on his doorstep and cry?" Korbas asked in a damp but nasty voice. Jan blew her nose again and followed him down the path.

In a few minutes they came to a cross path. Korbas stopped. His eyes were reddened and puffy. He said, "Goodbye, Terry."

"Janet."

"Terry-Janet."

"Goodbye, Creep-Korbas."

He gave her a watery grin and a very cautious half-bow, which she returned with equal caution. Then he walked slowly down the road.

Jan sniffed, then blew her nose again, looking at the sodden tissue disgustedly. There was no place to throw it, however, so, with a sigh, she dropped it into her pocket with the other used wads. Now that the excitement of the fight and the tension afterwards were gone, she felt drained. Her shoulder muscles felt wrenched and strained, and there were bruises coming up on her legs and arms. The welts on her buttocks burned like fire, but she shivered, her sweat-soaked clothes damp in the early evening breeze.

You are the biggest fool I know, she told herself. If you'd WANTED to hurt yourself, you could've fallen down the stairs, and saved yourself a lot of time and effort. She turned toward her dormitory complex, and began to limp home. Halfway there, she stubbed her toe on something, and suddenly realized that she'd never put her shoes back on. They were still on the grass next to the fighting mat.

Jan started to laugh. Of all the incredibly stupid things she'd done today, that, somehow, was the finish. She was still chuckling as she turned back, walking gingerly in the damp grass.

The evening was turning chill when Jan stopped at the Foreign Students' Canteen to pick up a self-heating meal and a handful of candy bars. Martita came over and said, "What happened to you?"

"Nothing."

"That's one of the messiest nothings I've ever seen. You're all over mud. And did you hear? There was a big fight between one of those fighting teachers and two of his students. This afternoon. Apparently it was a terrible breach of something-or-other."

"Oh?" said Jan, grabbing a random bunch of book tapes from the racks. Two of his students? she thought.

"I will expect you in class tomorrow."

TWO of his students? ME, his student? God, that's crazy. I'm not one of his students. Suppose I went, and he hadn't meant me to? I don't think I could stand being thrown out of a fightclass.

"I will expect you in class tomorrow," he had said.

Crazy.

"I thought you'd be interested," said Martita huffily, "since it's about those cloddy fighters."

"Oh. Yes. Well. Thanks," said Jan vaguely, and went over to the cashier.

All the time she was eating—not really hungry anymore, but you have to take proper care of your body—and while in the bath, trying to soak the ache of her bruises away, she kept wondering.

But how could I go to his class? I already have classes all morning. It'd mean missing one of my other classes, the assigned ones. Once or twice might be all right, but if I cut them all the time, I'd probably be flunked out of the school.

"I will expect you in class tomorrow morning. Tomorrow morning. Get out now. In class tomorrow."

Jan gave it up as hopeless and went to bed.

It didn't matter much, as it happened, WHAT Master Kinet had meant. The next day Jan was so stiff she had to roll out of bed.

When people complain about being beaten, why doesn't anyone ever say how awkward it is trying to go to the bathroom standing up? she wondered bitterly.

Even after a fiercely hot shower, Jan felt only about half-human.
"I don't care if he did want me to come to his stupid fightclass. What can he do to me, anyway? I'm not even in his dumbshit class," she said aloud. She firmly suppressed the memory of practicing shoulder rolls for a full hour-her old Master's punishment for a class deliberately missed —and crawled back to bed. She spent most of that day lying on her stomach reading mediocre adventure stories on the portable tape viewer.

Around nine that evening, her phone buzzed. For a moment, she didn't recognize the dark face that stared out at her. Then he said, "It is Korbas Kodreskar. We fought yesterday."

"It is Janet surMartinTanya. What do you want?"

"What a tactful way to open a conversation. Since we are in some sense kin, having bled together--" here he grinned, in appreciation of his own macabre humor--"I thought to warn you. Master Kinet is not pleased that you did not come to class today."

"WHAT?"

"He told you to come, didn't he?"

"Then he did mean it."

"Of course."

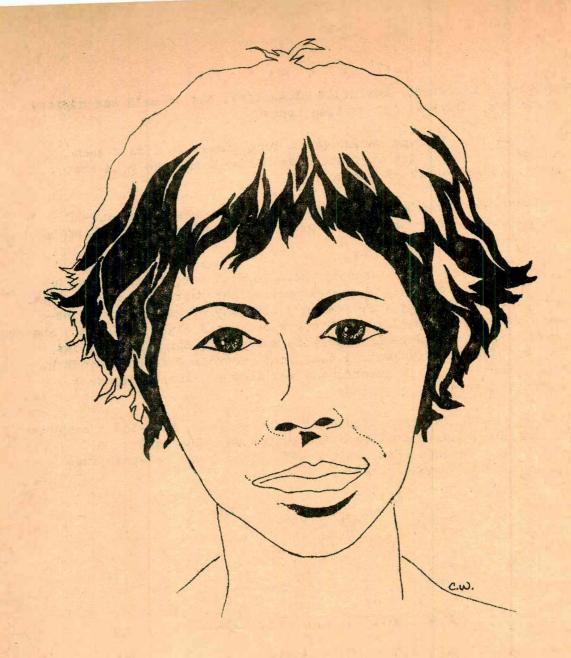
"But I'm not in his fighting class," Jan said, wondering if everyone else were going crazy. "I'm an exchange student; I'm not ALLOWED to take anything but the block remedial courses for Federation students."

Korbas shrugged. "You WERE. Now you are in Master Kinet's Intermediate fighting course. He can arrange things when he wants to." A pause. "Check your schedule with Programming, if you doubt my word. The Master was somewhat irritated. If you do not come to class tomorrow--" Korbas shrugged again, expressively.

Jan could just see it. "Thank you. I'll check into it. Though I find it hard to believe that he would want to teach me, after the stupid way I behaved. Why would he want me in his class?"

"He always wants the good fighters, the ones with tournament potential."

"Really?"



"Yes, truth. He called me last night, to see if I remembered your name."

"And how welcome that must have been," Jan murmured.

Korbas made a face expressive of extreme pain. "He didn't make me fight today. I stood and watched. He just meant me to know who is the Master." He hesitated and then said, "Master Kinet is one of the finest Kershu fighters in the University. He only takes the best students."

"Right," Jan said, feeling dazed. "Well, thanks for telling me. I wouldn't want to irritate the Master."

"I'll see you in class," Korbas said, and broke the phone contact.

Jan stared at the blank phone for a few minutes. Perhaps I should check. She punched out the programming code, and a minute later had confirmation of Korbas' statement. The green print of the computer bank stated baldly that she'd been switched to an advanced conversational course

in Kersherani, a different (but still elementary) set of math and history courses, and the Intermediate fighting course.

Jan stared at the phone screen for a long time. It didn't seem possible that she should get what she'd wanted so desperately as the result of a damn silly fit of temper.

"He always wants the good ones, those with tournament potential," Korbas had said. Me, she thought. A great feeling of warmth swelled in her.

Jan straightened. She'd probably have to work very hard to keep up with the Intermediate class, and she suspected that Master Kinet would not make things too easy for her. He wouldn't like any of his students getting above themselves, especially not one who'd won a fight with him. And the other students would undoubtedly make life merry hell for a while. The newest fighter student was always a butt, and everyone's fetch-and-carry. Well, she'd lived through it before, and you didn't learn to become a fighter without getting some bruises.

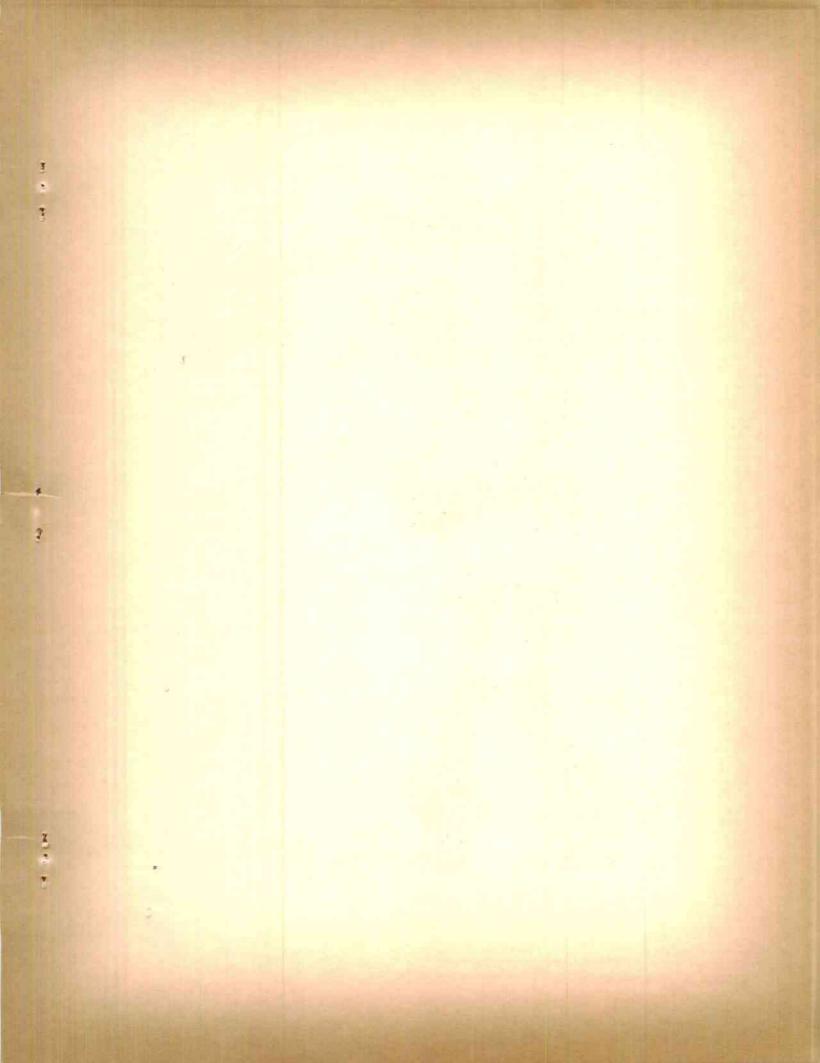
"He always wants the good fighters." Jan smiled. She slid a computer wafer into the desk top, and flicked the switch on. She said,

"Dear Parents--Fantastic news! Today I was accepted into the Intermediate Kershu class--"

for my dear Ben, collates and Jens Who always ever read Devra

YOU ARE GETTING THIS ZINE BECAUSE:

YOU'D LIKE TO BUY A PAIR OF Tate PASTIES
YOU BELIEVE IN THE FORCE TINKERBELLE
THE STAR TREK MOVIE
YOU CONTRIBUTED
YOU HELPED (SLAVED, COLLATED, ENCOURAGED)
YOU KNOW WHAT THE AREARA UNIVERSITY COLORS ARE
YOU WEAR THE ARBARA UNIVERSITY COLORS
YOU AGREE WITH KINTAM
YOU ARE A FIGHT STUDENT
YOU LIKE PRE-IMPERIAL KERSHERANI EPICS
YOU PAID CASH
YOU SUBSCRIBE, AND YOUR SUB IS GOOD THROUGH #
YOU SUBSCRIBE, AND YOU JUST EXPIRED (QUICK, THE DXYGEN!)





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