



Masiform D 8

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Devra Michele Langsam, *Editor*

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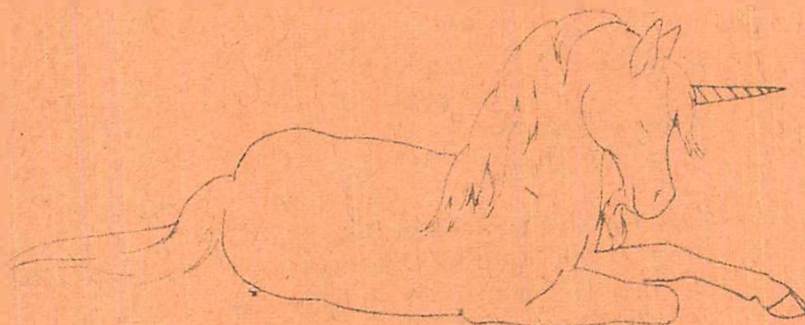
You'd like to go to Disney World ☐

You won't wear mouse ears either ☐

You think Kintam is right (He's not provincial, he's just a bigot!) ☐

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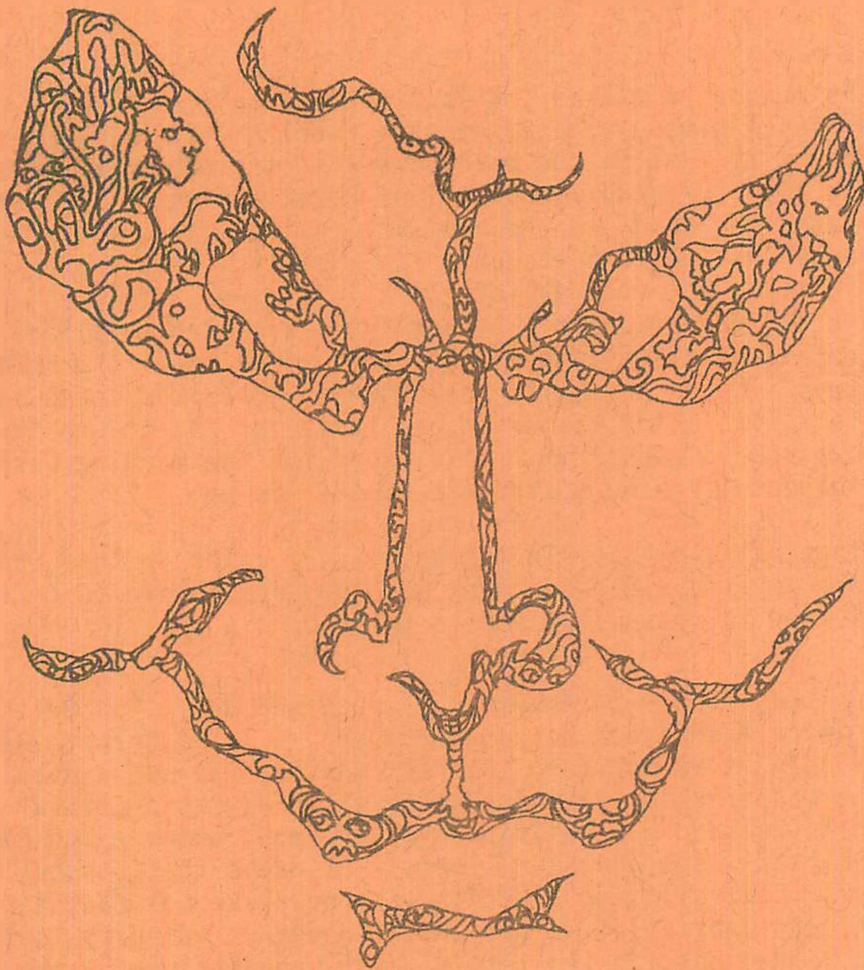
effusions by the editor

One of the reasons I'm late (or later than usual) is that Old Faithful, my Congressional mimeo, finally stopped feeding. It had been sort of erratic, and got at last to the point where it was producing more crud than good sheets. So I printed almost all of Roberta Rogow's last Trexindex (more on this later) by hand, on the Nova Enterprises machine. This one is hand-crank only (having lost its universal joint). This may make strong bodies 12 ways, but it's definitely a lot slower. It was also the straw that broke the faned's back. I finally just called Gold Seal and bought a new (second-hand) Gestetner 360. This newer model (in addition to fancy dohickeys like an automatic jogger which sometimes works) is widely available. It's a lot easier to get parts for it, and to find someone who knows how to repair it. I've named the new machine Master Kinet, since I expect it to be a stern taskmaster to me.

Master Kinet may also explain the paucity of color in this issue. My color kits are for the old hand crank machine, and I have to be very powerfully motivated to crank 1100 sheets by hand. . . .

On the fighting front--In November, I received my yellow belt in Taekwando, and Joyce Yasner now has a green belt. It is hard to believe that we've been doing this for more than six months. It was a distinct shock when *Sensei* Cooper said, "Ranking belts will add extra moves," to realize that that included *me*. (A ranking belt being someone who has a rank belt, other than white, however lowly.) I guess that January will be the real test. Lots of times I've done things, like the Canadian Air Force exercises, and kept up all right until January. January is the down-month, the I-have-no-time-I'm-late-with-my-magazine month, the depression time. If I can just keep going through January. (Since I wrote this, I twisted my leg-knee-hip? or all of the above. One of the joys of physical training. But it seems to be better today. . . .)

By the way, Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh is *not* a pseudonym. She is neither me, Joyce, nor Barbara. Furthermore, she would probably walk across the water from London and beat me up at the suggestion. (And since she was a purple belt in Japanese-style karate last time I saw her, two years ago, this could be very awkward.)



Carrie Rowles 78

You vill submit to zis fenzine. . .AT WUNCE!

The Post Awful is up to its usual tricks. This time, it lost a set of pictures mailed to me in November, and now it seems to have misplaced the duplicate set the artist did. She mailed them January 11th, and it's now February 2nd, and nary a sign of them. I am delaying as long as possible, but I may have to either pull the story, or use substitute artwork from my files. I hate to disappoint the author, who'd like to see her story in print, or the artist, who's drawn and mailed the pictures twice now. It's really a rather sticky situation.

Speaking of files. . . please submit stories, poetry, and articles for *Masiform D*. Pretty please. I have a charming story about Harry Mudd, a good ship story by A.M. Hall, another of Barbara Wenk's scurrilous and nasty attacks on those upright ~~fluffy~~ honest virtuous ~~fluffy~~ kershu fighters, an article by Ruth Berman, and at long last, my survey. . . all of this good stuff to go into *MD #9*. BUT--I'd really like some more. (Lots 'n lots more.) Thish and #9 will pretty well clean me out. How about some new entries for *The FREE ENTERPRISE*? How about some articles? How about. . .

The survey I mentioned above, by the way, was one I did last year. I asked my acquaintances about visualization and how they perceived certain things. Those of you who kindly participated will be pleased to know that I have finally collated most of the results. Now, if it doesn't take me more than six months to draw the charts, it should appear in #9. It is always possible that this information was already obtained by a real scientist, and is easily obtainable elsewhere, but we've never let little things like that stop us before, have we?

In case this is your first dose of *Masiform D*, and you're dying to get more, the following issues are currently available:

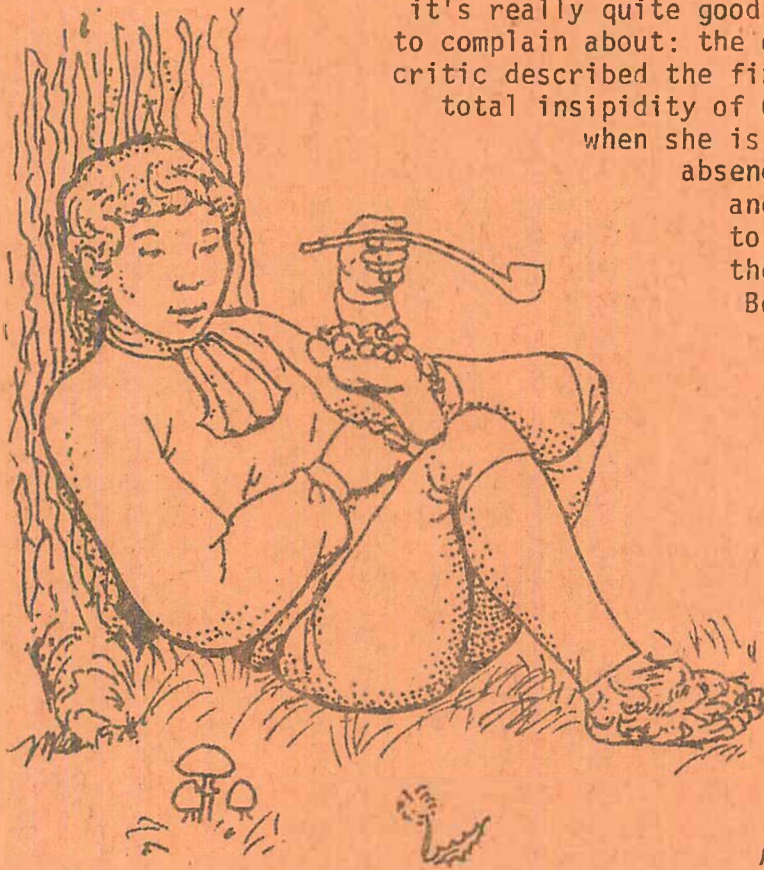
MD #6 contains a *nu Ormenel* Klingon story by Marder and Walske, a sequel to "Enterprise Incident" by Barbara Wenk, an *sf* story by Elizabeth Carrie, and poetry, artwork, and humor. Cover by C. Walske.

Threshold (a Special Supplementary Issue) is a story of cultures in conflict, personal relations, and the inevitability of war. It is a major work in the *nu Ormenel* series about Klingon/Federation confrontation. Also includes poetry and music by Fern Marder and artwork by Carol Walske. Written by F. Marder and C. Walske, edited by Devra Langsam.

MD #7 contains 'Button Button' by Ruth Berman, the first kershu story by Devra Langsam, the latest edition of *The FREE ENTERPRISE*, and other fiction, humor, and artwork. Covers by C. Walske and P. Foglio.

Single issue \$2, subs 2 for \$4 (4th class). First class, \$3.75, 2 for \$7.50. Airmail rates upon request.

Spockanalia 1-5. Complete set \$10.50, single issues \$2.25 each. The first fanzine (1967-1970), full of weird old stuff like the original *ni-var*, "Visit to a Weird Planet" (Jean Lorrh), "To Summon the Future" (Juanita Coulson), and "Lament for the Unsung Dead" (C J Peyton).



I went to see *The Lord of the Rings*, and it's really quite good. One can find things to complain about: the orcs' rush hour, as one critic described the final battlescenes; the total insipidity of Galadriel--especially when she is offered the ring; the absence of Galadriel's gifts--and just *HOW* is Sam going to defeat Shelob without the vial of light? And Boromir's deathscene is in a class by itself--rather like the education at Albany State, which has never been equaled. Surpassed, yes--equaled, never! On the whole, however, it is a quite faithful version of the first two books, beautifully, indeed, lovingly produced and animated. And the Nazgul in the first few scenes are really *creepy*.

Passing from the sublime to the ridiculous. . . . After the big build-up given *Battlestar Galactica*, it has proven rather disappointing. Not only that, it is *DAMN* irritating. If it were simply awful (as about 70% of the episodes are) I would just wash my hands of it, as I did with *Space:1999*. However, once in a great while, they will have a very good show--the two-parter with Commander Caine, for instance, or the recent show with Fred Astaire. So you can't just give up on it--but then they'll go and do one of those bloodyawful stupid ones, like the fire episode. *ARRGHH!* As one of my friends has suggested, perhaps they have two completely separate production crews: one which does the good shows, one which does the rotten ones. *Sigh.*

Kill the kid and dismantle the *dagget*! Kill the kid and dismantle the

On this topic, Mary Schaub writes: How *can* you be so insensitive as to talk down *Battlestar Galactica*-- especially when they work so hard to popularize a perfectly bizarre set of measurement units? Any fighting vessel that will sit still and let the enemy close to within 5 *microns* has to have *GUTS* (and a faulty micrometer). Talk about close calls! I have whomped up some units of my own that may soon be adopted by the

Galacticans. . . the *akron*, a measure of the distance of the ship AT ANY GIVEN TIME from Ohio

the *citron*, a measure of volume equal to the quantity of grapefruit that will fit into the shuttlecraft

the *crouton* (suggested by a friend) which I then defined as the volume of a pile of breadcrumbs that, in cylindrical shape with diameter of one meter, will reach to Adama's chin.

the *moron*, a chilling unit reflecting the intelligence of the fleet. So far, it is so small that I haven't been able to get a reading on it. . . .

Some of you may have noticed, in my *Gnu Sound Alphabet*, that there were a few letters with no words attached. Just like the other abecedarians, (one of whom wrote, "X is the letter for which I've no rhyme.") I found that some letters defeated me. . . good ol' xylophone! So, if any of my gentle readers can suggest words which begin with the missing letters, but are pronounced with a *different initial sound*, please send them to me, and we will feature them in a re-run. (Go on, find me a word beginning with *f* that's not pronounced *f*. And no Welsh jokes, please.

Gaylen Reiss wishes to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the Kraith Universe, and the writers of Kraith, who inspired her charming story, "Solstice". Sorry, Gaylen; this should have gone right on the beginning of the story, but I got my wires crossed.

We finally found out what happened to the missing artwork. It was found kicking around the Post Awful down in West Virginia. Took it an entire month to go from one side of the room to the other. Therefore, Ruth Bollerud's story will appear in MD #9 (Ghu willing). I ask everyone to *pray* that we'll be third-time lucky, and that the artwork actually arrives before the next deadline.

And now, a few plugs for various and sundry.

boojums press publishes a whole line of delightful goodies, from an interesting and well-edited zine (*Menagerie*--#11-14 in print, \$1 + 75¢ postage) to peculiar humor to a *Man* from *UNCLE* novel. SASE them for a complete listing: boojums press
507 Locust St
Kalamazoo MI 49007



Joyce has, after incredible delays, produced another *Eelbird Banders' Bulletin*. (cackle!) #2 contains such charming items as Howie Weinstein's satire on his own *Trek* episode, "The Pirates of Oreo", and "The Last Lay of Lieutenant Mary Sue. (I forget who's the perpetrator of *that* one.) Joyce keeps saying she wants to publish meaningful fiction, and people keep sending her funny stories instead. *tsk*. At any rate, issues 1 and 2 may be ordered from: Joyce Yasner

140 Cadman Plaza West
Bklyn NY 11201

\$1.75 4th class, \$2.50 1st class. Future issues, please send 4th class rate plus SASP (since the rate depends on how much the issue weighs.)

Roberta (whose work I am happily *not* printing), having finished the basic *Trexindex*, is now (crazy lady!) working on a Supplement. Said Supplement will contain information on fanzines published 1976 to 1978, plus older items which she missed last time around. (If you own a zine which Roberta did NOT index, please get in touch with her about this.) The Supplement will probably cost \$6, and will contain all the sections which were published separately in the main volumes. The three main volumes (containing authors and titles, subjects, and artists and poetry) are still available, for \$4 each. A useful index to fannish writing (fiction and non-fiction), from: Roberta Rogow

P O Box 124
Fair Lawn NJ 07410

And another zine which I like, *Time Warp*. A very varied zine, this has a first issue with a heavy Romulan influence, a second issue featuring a *nu Ormenel* story and "Kirk's Challenge", by Eileen Roy, and a third issue of *Star Wars* material. Beautifully produced, and full of good stuff. Order from: Anne Zeek

P O Box 296

Staten Island NY 10301

#1, reprint, \$3 plus postage (4th class, 75¢, first class, \$2.50)
#2 (color cover, over 200 pages), \$5 plus handling as above
#3 (color cover)--includes "1000 Worlds" story--\$4, plus handling.

Elsewhere in the zine, you'll find a notice about the reissuing of various *nu Ormenel* material, in two grand volumes. Not only does this have all the stories and poetry and articles in one place (so you don't have to keep scrabbling around through your collection to find what you want) but it also includes new material.

When I was doing the layout for this issue, I was a bit hampered by not knowing whether or not I'd be using Ruth Bollerud's story, and how long it would be. So, I simply decided that it would appear at the end of the zine, so that I could do the rest of the work while waiting for the artwork. Therefore, I decided to save 6 pages for the editorial. Then I said to Barbara and Joyce, "What ever am I going to say to fill up a whole 5 pages?" "Don't worry," they replied, "you'll find something to drivel along about." And so I have.

SOLSTICE

by
Gaylen Reiss

"Captain's log, 4822.6. The *Enterprise* is enroute and on schedule, bound for Acrux IV with their much-needed supplies. This is no emergency rendezvous, however, and we are proceeding at Warp 2 to allow Mr. Scott to do some calibrations and re-alignment checks of the engines. ETA Acrux system, seven days."

The watch was changing. Lieutenant Theresa van't Dorff, leaving the turbolift on level three, failed to see a rapidly-moving crewman, who subsequently crashed into her. He blanched and started apologizing profusely, but the lieutenant waved it off.

"Don't worry about it!" she insisted as she picked up her report and continued down the corridor. The crewman stared after her, openmouthed. Was this the same lieutenant who had put his roommate on report for appearing for duty with dirty fingernails? And what was that tune she was humming?

"Isn't there any way I could get in today?" Nancy Brosford pleaded.

"Sorry, Nance, but the kitchens have all been signed up and reserved until after B shift tomorrow."

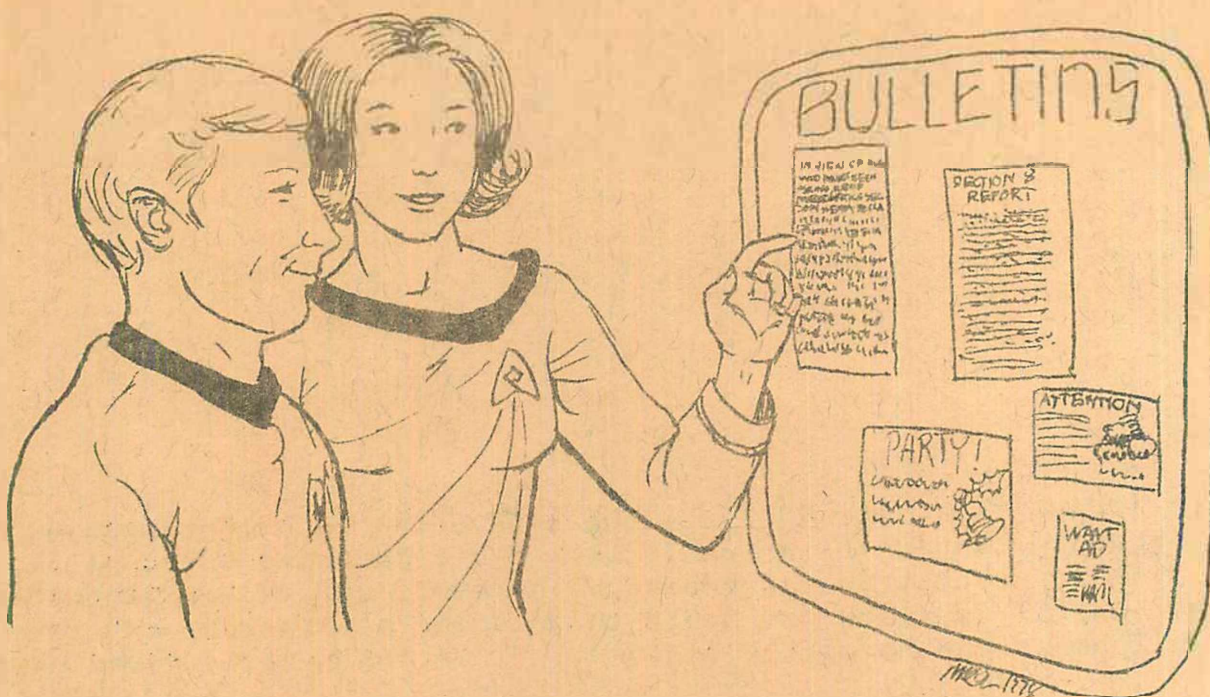
"But I promised. . ."

"Look, I'm not sure, but I think 'Sak and Calabar might switch with you. I heard them talking about making decorations tonight instead of coming here. Why don't you check with them?"

"Thanks!" Nancy breathed gratefully, and struck off to find the couple.

The neatly printed notice on the bulletin board read:

In view of all who have been asking, we of the Mathematics Section hereby declare the results of our most re-



cent calculations concerning the ship equivalent time of the 360th Terran day of the current year, for the period 0000 to 2400 hours, UT.

Using the ship's projected speed and course data significant to the 11th digit, the corresponding ship time for the above stated period is:

4830.0211 to 4830.0217

or approximately 51.84 seconds.

May we suggest you check the chem lab for Scalosian water?

On the bridge, Captain James Kirk finished chatting with Lieutenant Uhura and handed back her latest report approvingly. Then he moved to the Library-Computer station, where his First Officer seemed to be totally engrossed in readouts of some sort or another. Kirk stood by the Vulcan's elbow and waited to be noticed. When, after some time, he *hadn't* been noticed, he cleared his throat.

"Ah, Spock?"

Spock blinked, then took him in. "Yes, Captain?"

"What's so interesting?"

"Interesting, sir?"

Kirk indicated the readouts, and Spock explained, "I was monitoring sensor input. Mr. Scott's calibrations require collaboration with the space-density and vector quantities in the navicomputer, and it is essential that their accuracy be determined."

Kirk vaguely remembered having to write limit-of-error equations in Academy physics classes, and couldn't imagine a less interesting subject. But Spock was obviously deeply involved in what he was doing.

"Very well, then, carry on!" the Captain said, amused.

Spock's reply was a somber, "Affirmative," as he turned back to his board.

Kirk shrugged it off with a smile as he stepped down, then up, to the command chair. Spock was in one of his "wery Wulcan" moods, as Chekov would say. But now was the time for a wholly human pronouncement. Kirk grimaced at his own silent joke. He punched the appropriate button on the right arm of his chair to give himself access to the ship-wide intercom.

"All hands, this is the Captain," he began by force of habit. "We have seven days travel time to Acrux IV. Accordingly. . ." and he paused, wondering how many bets had been placed on his next decision. He did not notice Chekov's crossed fingers, nor the breath Sulu was holding. "Accordingly, ship's observation of seasonal celebrations (there, that shouldn't offend anyone) will culminate five days hence, at 4828.0"

That is, he felt like adding, barring any unforeseen emergencies, galactic wars, or supernovae. But the crew knew that.

Composing the rest of his announcement, he missed Sulu's exhalation and grin toward Chekov, who shook his head a bit, sadly. Uhura smiled and began humming softly to herself. Spock's only visible reaction to the news had been an almost imperceptible lift of one slanted eyebrow.

"Any unusual chemical, radioactive, or pyrotechnical displays must be cleared through Engineering Section or the First Officer. That is all. Kirk out."

Almost at once, preparation for the Yuletide celebration began in earnest. Three adjoining rooms were set aside, with every intention of making their atmosphere as far from ship's

norm as possible. The aftmost room was set to maintain a hot, summer-like temperature. Brilliant live tropical and desert flowers soon shared the corners with sheaves of hay (or the nearest equivalent available), also being used as decoration.

The room at the other end of the line was set at a chilly temperature reminiscent of Earth's northern wintry areas, and certainly served to make one more appreciative of the artificial fireplace. Mindful of the regulations against open flames, the designers nevertheless wanted the unit to emit a respectable amount of heat. The holographic yule log and flames were programmed to burn and crackle like the real things. Scotty was overseeing its construction himself. A huge evergreen tree stood in an opposite corner, rather bare at the moment, but soon to be more properly adorned as various crewmembers added hand-made ornaments.

The room between the two extremes was just that--normal ship's temperature--and was also the location of most of the consumable items that found their way into the area. It, too, was being decorated, although a specific theme had not yet been selected.

The impression Kirk got when he entered the area was one of mild to moderate disarray. A group near the punch bowl was lustily practicing Christmas carols, the harmony as yet slightly off. Before he managed to find Mr. Scott, Kirk was offered more calories than he cared to think about. With great willpower he declined all offers and moved to where Scotty was bending over a pile of diagrams with three technicians.

"Lads, the insulation and thermostatic controls are fine, but I want another look at the heat dispersion unit before ya' install it."

"Oh, Captain!" Technician Haarfager's tone sounded a trifle too guilty to be merely a casual greeting.

"Haarfager. How's your brainstorm working out?"

"It's working fine, sir. . . according to Mr. Scott."

"Scotty?"

"The whole set-up will be perfectly safe, Captain, or I won't OK it."

"All right, Scotty; you know I trust your judgment. By the way, has anyone heard what Mr. Spock thinks about all this?"

The Norwegian technician examined the diagrams with renewed interest. But Scott had seen him talking to the First



Officer earlier in the day, and said so.

"Haarfager?" Kirk's expression asked the obvious question.

"Well, sir, Mr. Spock said, umm, actually he called the whole idea 'illogical' and said any recommendations Mr. Scott had would be adequate for us to follow. He. . .uh. . .insisted that cooling the temperature of a room only to heat it with *that*," he indicated the fireplace, "was simply a waste of ship's energy. I didn't get a chance to explain that--"

"That's all right. I get the idea," Kirk finished, not giving the technician a chance to explain either. The captain looked over to Scotty, who merely shrugged it all off and leaned over his work again.

"Now then, lads. . ."

Satisfied as to the precautions being taken, Kirk wandered about the three rooms, enjoying the spirit they exuded. He was present to witness Lieutenant Kyle's fourteenth prank of the day, resulting in Kyle being officially designated the "Lord of Misrule", following an English custom as old as the eleventh century.

And against all tradition, Pavel Andreovich Chekov was chosen to portray the customarily-female Russian *Babouschka*.

"Times change, Pavel," one of his friends said. "We can call you *Babouschkovich*, perhaps?"

"*Nyet*," the Russian answered, but with a grin.

The planning went on.

"What is *that*?" Yeoman Theorbo demanded of the Swedish engineering assistant.

"That is a *Julbukk*, a straw goat, and it brings good luck around this time of year. Which is probably something you could use--luck, I mean. I saw you going after Todd Norrkop in the cafeteria yesterday. Tsk, tsk, tsk."

She blushed.

The Captain finally abandoned the scene for the reassuring monotony of the corridor. When he came to the bulletin board, he stopped to read Jose's hand-lettered invitation to join his friends in their nightly celebration of *Las Posadas*. Kirk had encountered the singing procession a few nights ago, when they'd sought out that night's host's cabin on Deck Five.

Kirk's eyes settled on the drawing of *Jultomten*, the Swedish Christmas elf. There was something disturbingly familiar about the elf's face that took him a moment to recognize. Then he grinned, until he realized that, before long, he'd probably see his *own* face as that of Santa Claus, *Pere Noel*, *Julnisse*, and numerous other personalities. Merry Christmas!

He rounded the last corner and came to the cafeteria. Laughing and singing, a large group of off-duty crewmembers stepped aside to let him enter as they left. He went directly to the food processors and punched up a cup of hot coffee. It arrived almost immediately, along with a sprig of--holly? A yeoman who was standing nearby noticed his puzzlement and explained, "Synthetic decorations, Captain. Supposedly, they're even edible. At least they're non-toxic."

"Don't you think this is going a bit too far?" the Captain hinted.

"You should see Uhura's red and green tribbles!" She grinned, anticipating his wince.

He looked around for a table then, spotting McCoy sitting back in a corner. As he walked closer, Kirk noted an obvious air of gloom surrounding the Chief Surgeon, who was toying with his coffee. The doctor was so obviously preoccupied that Kirk's question seemed inevitable.

"What's eating you, Bones?"

"Spock isn't."



Kirk didn't quite get that, but grinned anyway. "What?"

"Spock. Isn't. Eating." McCoy was deadly serious as he looked up. "I just checked--again."

The Captain compressed his lips in thought. Sure, Spock had seemed out of sorts lately, but--no, come on, there he was assigning human values to a Vulcan again. McCoy was probably overreacting.

"Bones, have you ever thought that maybe Spock doesn't really *like* the ship's food?"

"WELL, I'm not crazy about it, either, but I don't just give up eating!"

"Maybe not, but I sure consider it every time you change my diet card, believe me."

"You can't stop eating," McCoy lectured. "You'd collapse from low blood sugar. He wouldn't; his metabolism is different."

"See?" Kirk said triumphantly, as though the doctor had just solved his own problem. "Just because he's stopped eating doesn't mean there's something wrong with him."

"I never said there was."

"Not precisely, but--"

"There he is," McCoy interrupted. "Spock!"

The tall, thin form of the First Officer handed a notepad to one of the Engineering officers at a table near the door. Kirk was momentarily afraid that Spock would pretend he hadn't heard McCoy's summons. But, after a moment, he threaded his way toward them.

"Yes, Doctor?"

"Umm, sit down, Spock." The Vulcan favored them with a pained expression that clearly indicated he had other things to do, but finally he took a seat, as if resigned to the inevitable.

McCoy sat back, stirring his luke-warm coffee and forcing Kirk to take the lead. Kirk gave the doctor an I'll-get-you-for-this look, and made a concerted effort not to stammer.

"How are things, Spock?"

As soon as he'd said it, he realized his mistake. Two slanted eyebrows rose in unison as if to say, "Things?" and Spock began his recitation, "The engineering and sensor calculations are--"

"No, no," Kirk corrected himself. "I mean, how are things with you?"

All he got in answer to that was an expressionless stare.

Dragging in McCoy for support, Kirk added, "Bones told me you haven't been eating lately; if anything's wrong. . . ."

"Captain." The voice was patient, Kirk thought, but--controlled--which implied the presence of something being suppressed. But. . . "There is nothing wrong with me. I am in perfect health. Doctor McCoy completed my routine physical examination not eight days ago. Has he reported those results to you as well as my. . . apparent diet aberrations?"

"Spock, I didn't mean to pry." Kirk searched the air for some kind of 'logic' behind this line of questioning. "It's just that, well, with the crew involved in Christmas celebration and all, and you seemed to be so. . . out of it. . . ."

Elbows on the table, Spock brought his hands together in front of his chin in a gesture the others knew well. "You concluded that I was unwell because I was not reacting to the upcoming celebration in the same manner as the ship's Human crew?" Kirk drew in a sharp breath, but Spock continued, "Captain, this celebration is yours, not mine. I cannot become. . . emotionally involved. . . like the others. I would not have believed you still expected it of me."

"Of course I don't expect you to--"

"What kind of holidays do Vulcans celebrate, Spock?" McCoy broke in suddenly from his analytical silence. The Vulcan turned slowly to face him, and the doctor continued, "You must have something analogous. We all learn from history, and assigning certain dates to remember--"

"Vulcans have no need of such mnemonic devices, Doctor. Our knowledge does not have to be enforced yearly to be remembered."

The two humans remained doggedly silent as Spock looked from one to the other over steepled fingers. Then his gaze left the two, ending up somewhere on the table between them.

The universe between their two cultures seemed impossibly vast at times. Nonetheless, his own creation had spanned that distance, and he was a continual, living link across that void. Forced to bridge it in his own mind in order to survive, he'd found ways to draw the two sides together. But now, across the table, he saw a need to understand the differences.

"There are certain days of the Vulcan year set aside for . . . 'debates' I believe would be the closest word. And there are others for. . . dancing and. . . meditation."

He paused. This was like describing a nebula to people who were unfamiliar with kinetics, ionization, or electromagnetic theory. How should he continue?

Description is no substitute for explanation, he thought.

"You are aware that the Vulcan year is not equivalent to the Federation Standard Year," he began again. "Calculation of the space-time differential between Vulcan and the *Enterprise* is not difficult. However, the ship's isolation from current events significantly hinders--and supports--individual. . . formulation."

Of course it does, Kirk thought. There's no one else on board to share your native observances. No word from Vulcan until after the fact. Imagine not having a soul around who participated in your holiday. No carols at Christmas. No fireworks on All-World Day. What did the Vulcans. . . .

"The Vulcan year begins at our winter solstice, much as Earth's begins approximately nine days later. On Vulcan, the custom is for the people to experience intensive meditation for six days before the solstice, in order to review the year on an individual level. This culminates in. . . personal. . . celebrations and. . . dancing, as larger and larger groups consider the changes which have come about."

He paused again to take a breath. One part of his mind began to analyze the similarity between his present predicament and that of a computer forced to approximate complex mathematics. Was this a logical form of 'frustration'? He concluded, "Since my situation in Star Fleet accentuates the individual aspects of any . . . holiday, I have attempted, as much as possible, to pattern them to the yearly cycle on board the *Enterprise*."

The stoop-shouldered Vulcan seemed drained of energy. Had he been human, Kirk would have offered him a drink. As it was, Spock had just informed them that, despite any appearances to the contrary, he was in the middle of his own intense celebration.

There was silence again for a long moment.

Then McCoy drawled, "There doesn't seem to be much personality to a holiday that celebrates the position of the sun. How could that become traditional with people?"

Drained or not, Spock's eyebrows rose noticeably. "Recall your ancient history, Doctor," he said slowly. "Your Christian nativity celebration was purposely scheduled by Roman missionaries to coincide with the ancient rites of the pagan sun worshippers, who celebrated for weeks at the winter solstice. During the feasting, the solar radiation striking their land went through its annual minimum, then increased, supposedly indicating the success of such a celebration."

"I didn't ask for the *entire* history lesson, Spock."

"Nor have I given you one, Doctor. I merely point out that your current practice of decorating with greenery, with light and open fires, has its roots in the ancient bonfires of the sun worshippers. Those early festivals managed to flourish without the personalities you now associate with this time."

"Now, hold on; just a minute. You can't tell me that Vulcans don't have any"

Kirk sat back and let them go at it for a while. Strangely, the light had come back into Spock's eyes, and he no longer leaned on the table as if to hold himself upright. This seemed to be good therapy; no doubt what Bones had had in mind all along.

They argued their way through the Roman practice of green boughs, flowers, and the giving of presents for the Saturnalia, the Druids' original mistletoe, and the Saxons' holly and ivy. Then the captain broke it up by suggesting that Spock should go with him to check in on the bridge. The ship would be flying with a minimal crew on duty in the next few days; every-

thing that could be anticipated, should be.

As they left, McCoy grumbled that his coffee had gotten cold.

Kirk moved wordlessly down the corridor, Spock at his side. The First Officer still seemed, well, if not tense, then preoccupied. Didn't Vulcans ever relax? The captain found his mind bursting with questions, reactions, and decisions about Spock's holiday that he wanted to air. But was this the time to do it?

They entered the turbolift and Kirk ordered it to the bridge. Spock was staring off into space; soon he'd be unreachable again. It was now or never.

"Spock."

The dark eyes pulled into focus with obvious effort and regarded him steadily.

"Spock, I know you don't need more than 15 or 20 minutes to check out the bridge systems while we're cruising free like this--"

"My average requirement is 17.225 minutes."

"Yes, well, I was just thinking that. . .if there were other things you'd rather be doing. . .there's no reason why you should be the only one sitting regular watch duty. You could go half-shifts like the rest of the maintenance crew."

There was a barely perceptible pause which, Kirk was certain, meant Spock wanted to agree. But the other answer came. "No. . .Captain. That will not be necessary."

Are you sure? Kirk ached to ask, but didn't. He knew the Vulcan's decision would not change.

They both knew there were some things which could not be expressed verbally.

Spock realized that he would always have difficulty melding the definitive Vulcan way with a human way that was illogical and even self-contradictory at times. Humans only understood the tip of the IDIC ideal of beauty in diversification; there must be limits to how much difference a culture could absorb without being affected detrimentally. . . .

Kirk stood under the Vulcan's unwavering gaze, feeling discontented without really knowing why.

//It's all right, Jim// seemed to pass between them, but Spock's lips hadn't moved.

Kirk understood that his offer to accept Spock's situation was enough. The momentary link between the two shattered as the 'lift doors opened and each man turned to his own duties.

Handmade greeting cards, songs, decorations, and Doctor McCoy's personal hangover remedy helped prepare the crew for Christmas Eve. Kirk attended the traditional service that particular evening, when the choir stunned everyone with an unbelievably beautiful performance of works by Bach, Handel, Ch'ing, Therim, Ssurru, and others. The service was broadcast throughout the ship, which enabled everyone to be taken on a journey from a tiny spot on Earth's globe to distant parts of the planet and to the stars in a search for symbols of peace and happiness.

It was over much too soon, but Kirk knew a smaller audience was preparing for the somber midnight mass in the chapel. They would have real candles there, too--lighting the menorah and other religious symbols--the only time such flames would be permitted on the ship.

He walked down the corridor, immersed in the quietly festive but *peaceful* atmosphere. The fragments of delicious odors he caught from various rooms reminded him that he was still quite full of Christmas Eve dinner himself. Roast turkey, gingerbread, roast goose, black pudding, rice pudding, plum pudding. . . .

The visions dancing in his head effectively blanked his forward scanners; too late, he tripped over a pair of wooden shoes placed outside the door to one of the junior officers' quarters.

I would never have expected this of van't Dorff, he mused as he replaced the *sabots* with exaggerated care. Still, he admitted, as he completed his journey, they seemed to have even more character than the personalized red-and-white stockings which had appeared mysteriously all over the ship. And if he ever caught the joker who'd decided that the Captain's should be filled with dead branches, he'd put him or her on deck-sweeping duty for a month.

He chuckled to himself, tucked the sticks under his arm, straightened the stocking to the correct angle, and disappeared into his cabin.

Christmas Day found final touches being put on the three rec rooms before that day's bash. A smattering of the crew, already well lubricated, arranged greenery and flowers and directed newcomers where to put their offerings.

Though personal gifts and messages were being exchanged throughout the ship, these rooms were intended for all to share. Edible and drinkable concoctions from all over Earth were being made available, as well as samplings of other favorites from the Federation. Most were related to customary celebration or history in some way, and the energetic Uhura had been in charge; but some time ago, by popular demand, she had been ordered to seat herself and deliver some appropriate musical selections with the help of a Vulcan lytherette. It made the atmosphere more congenial, if not the work easier.

Dozens of crewmembers wandered in and around, some obviously debating between a chance to relax in the cooler room in rarely-worn bulky sweaters or to admire Uhura's fantastic summer outfit.

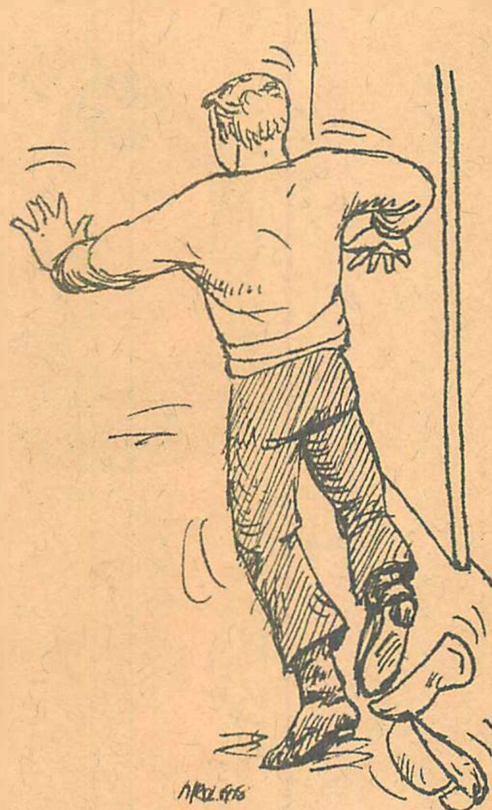
Into this controlled chaos, with anticipation and some trepidation, strode the Captain and First Officer. As yet, the place was cheerfully festive without being outrageous. The sounds and smells in the room were as varied as the sights, where oversized artificial snowflakes hung serenely next to real miniature desert blooms.

Kirk ambled over to the punch bowl, where Uhura was soothing a dry throat. Spock, meanwhile, was called upon to settle a budding argument concerning the identity of an unlabeled Capellan snack.

Uhura glanced over the Captain's shoulder and appeared to remember something. "Oh, Mr. Spock?" The First Officer looked up, and she continued, "We don't have anything of Vulcan origin yet. Is there something traditional you could suggest?"

Spock looked at her for a moment. The Bantu dress she wore. The Vulcan lytherette under one arm. The glass of Arcturian punch in her hand.

Outwardly, he merely stood, transfixed, for several seconds.





Inwardly, hundreds of carefully-buttressed points of argument were falling into place.

He'd spent the past several days analyzing his current life situation--building a mental structure that incorporated all facets of his life-at-the-moment. But now a new insight affected the construct, and it changed subtly, shifted, then compacted sharply to form a conclusion. The exact meaning of the new arrangement was irrelevant at the moment. He would meditate on it in detail, privately. But the consequences of suddenly reaching a solution were overwhelming.

Like a violent chemical reaction, elements of his construct broke their bonds and plunged to a lower activation state. . . releasing far more energy than the concentrated effort he'd used to arrange them. And the result was almost unbearable. Waves of liberated energy coursed wildly through his brain. His nerves thrilled alarmingly.

Control was vital. There were many possibilities. He had been well trained on Vulcan in methods to utilize unchanneled energies for the good of others. He would study those alternatives. But for now. . .for now, a verbal response was required. He composed himself, externalized his awareness, and spoke in a normal tone.

"Indeed there is, Ms Uhura. . . ."

The multi-layered Vulcan *V'p'Ovukd* was introduced to the throng in the middle rec room that evening. Spock adjusted the sonic controls on the huge bowl which kept the different layers separated, explaining how the complexity of the ingredients made it prohibitively costly to program the nutritional beverage into standard ship food processors. There was also the fact that even the separated components could not be stored more than 21 hours without significant loss of--"potency". Then he showed the group how to use the large, oddly-shaped ladle to get the right proportions of each mixture in one dip. Stirring the results briskly, he offered glasses to Kirk and McCoy and lifted his own, draining his glass at once. The humans tasted theirs cautiously, made approving gestures, then drank deeply.

The cream-colored liquid was warm, with a taste of Loommelon, peppermint, and Argelian achet nuts, and so smooth it was almost luxurious on the tongue. Kirk's taste buds could not rise to the problem of classifying it accurately.

"That. . .is an interesting drink, Spock. It's. . . ." Words failed him. "I've never had anything like it."

"I do not doubt that, Captain. But remember, this is still much inferior to samples made from the freshly-picked Vulcan fruit. Their uniquely-combined trace elements add much to the basic characteristics one finds in synthetic preparations." He ladled out portions for the others nearby as he spoke. "The texture and flavor of each serving depend on the exact proportions of the layers mixed together in the glass. Thus only a practiced hand will obtain the same result each time. Would you care to try?"

Kirk had been watching Spock carefully, and felt up to the challenge. He accepted the ladle and scooped up a portion, stirred the fluid, and took a swallow, noting the bemused look in Spock's eyes as he reacted to the unexpected sour taste.

To McCoy's questioning look, he explained, "It's like gritty lemonade!" and offered his glass to the Doctor to prove it.

Spock produced another round of the more palatable mixture before handing the ladle to another crewmember desiring to make her own attempt. A crowd dispersing from a nearby *pinata*-

breaking joined the group. They listened incredulously to their friends' description of the liquid's properties before trying it themselves. The non-alcoholic beverage quickly became the evening's taste sensation.

When the start of the light show was announced, Kirk dragged McCoy along to get a good seat. "Coming, Spock?"

After imparting instructions to the gathering that remained, Spock left them with the *V'p'Ovukd*, realizing that the wild combinations they would produce would be less harmful to them than certain foods they habitually consumed.

Closing in on the table, the others tried their hand at dipping up the right mixture. The results, when tabulated, were unequivocal. With little regard for her embarrassment, Christine Chapel was unanimously voted the best dipper in the group.

Lieutenant Sulu had set up his handmade Light Projection Unit in the warmer room, and was preparing to astound everyone present with his laser-light imitations of fireworks and other pyrotechnics. The room darkened as the last of the audience was seated. Under Sulu's control, a small red spot of light climbed the wall and continued to the middle of the ceiling, whereupon it exploded into hundreds of fragments. The red changed to silver and blue amidst the *oohs* and *ahhs* of the spectators. The changing patterns drifted away down the walls.

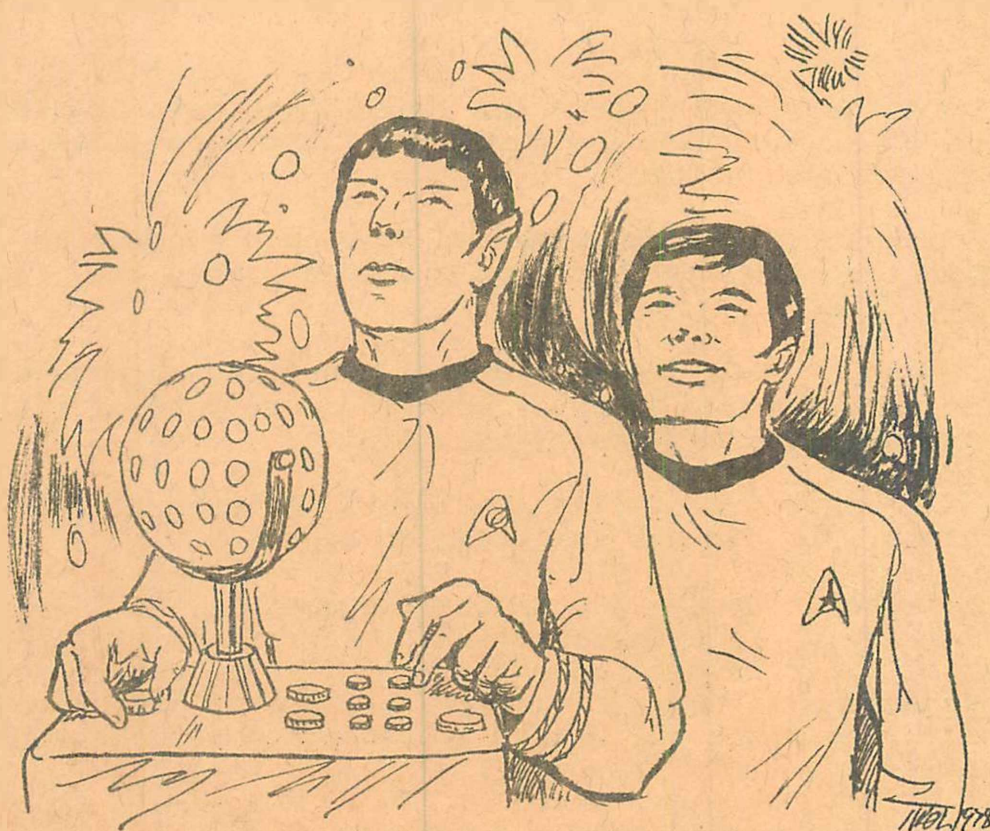
Sulu made adjustments as he continued, compensating for the non-spheroidal shape of the room. The show went on long enough for him to begin running out of repertoire. He'd just given them a taste of one of his favorite light-pattern projections, "Aldebaran Rainbows", when the unit suddenly went dead and the room was left in darkness, unbroken save for the tiny indicator lights on his console.

After the inevitable groans, someone snickered. A female voice attempted to suppress a sudden squeal.

Sulu flipped switches, trying to determine the problem. He'd built the thing, and he doubted if a dozen people on the ship knew how to work it. Thus his surprise when Spock materialized beside him, asking, "May I be of assistance, Lieutenant?"

The usually staid voice of the helmsman sounded remarkably relieved. "Yes, sir. If you could take over here. . .I'm still getting power, but I think the differentiator has gone out."

Spock slid into the lieutenant's seat and fingered the unit's controls, his superior vision in darkness making up for his lack of Sulu's knowledge of the switch positions.



"Now try it, sir," came, a minute later, from across the room. Spock activated the unit and set up a pattern of growing concentric circles, like waves on a pond, adding enough light for Sulu to see his way back. Then he switched to a complex Lissajous pattern, adding and subtracting various components with the numerous controls.

"Yes, I believe you have corrected the imbalance problem as well," he said. "The negative exponential phasing was off considerably." And he keyed up a fantastic set of intertwining multi-colored lines to illustrate. "There, do you see the difference?"

The crowd's enjoyment of the new images was obvious, and Sulu urged Spock to continue. "I was almost out of ideas, anyway."

For the second time that day, Spock let himself be talked into something he had not intended to do. And the reason behind this sudden expression of creativity? The question merited further study.

For almost three-quarters of an hour, Spock tested his ability to take an abstract statement and translate it into a visual image with Sulu's projector. No one recognized his source material, he realized. But that didn't seem to matter to them.

When he was finished, the room lights were brought back up. Spock stood there, taking his first clear look at the unit he'd been using.

Kirk and McCoy complimented Sulu on his creation, remembering that the show had been his idea. Then they faced the First Officer.

"Spock," McCoy began, several unhealthy egg-nogs beyond being embarrassed, "I never knew you were that artistically inclined. That was really beautiful."

Kirk murmured similar sentiments, waiting for the Vulcan's reaction. It did not take long to appear.

"Indeed," Spock said rather thoughtfully. "I was merely attempting to illustrate several integrations of the inter-spatial hypergravitational theorem. The beauty of the original equations is unquestionable." He cocked his head to the side. "You found the visual presentation to be a source of beauty?"

"Yes!" chorused both his friends.

"Hmm. That is fascinating." He'd just found one means of getting humans to appreciate an abstract form of Vulcan beauty. Fascinating, indeed. "I would be interested in your reactions to certain Vulcan art forms combining the aural and visual media," he said casually.

McCoy frowned, worrying only that such an event might involve another period of enforced starvation for the already too-thin First Officer. Kirk just smiled.

The trio separated amicably then, and Kirk headed back for the cool-warmth contrast of the open fireplace, noting on his way that the *V'p'Ovukd* bowl was too empty to support further experimentation. He was offered a glass of Vegan brandy and accepted it, then found a seat facing those hypnotic flames.

It was too bad they were almost to Acrux; he would have liked more time for this.

Someone started a Shaulan carol, and a few voices joined in quietly. Without the benefit of words, the alien music seemed to describe that strange planet perfectly. The tune was a picture, a story, and a lesson to those who could grasp it.

Kirk sat with his drink and watched the fire for quite a while, considering the idea of a long-overdue education on his part concerning things Vulcan.

After all, there was always next year.

MONARCH OF THE SKIES

Jane Aumerle

Kirk: I am the monarch of the skies,
 Captain of the *Enterprise*,
 Whose exploits brave the Galaxy hymns;
Large And we are his women and his ladies and his fems,
 Chorus: And we are his women and his ladies and his fems,
 His women and his ladies and his fems!

Kirk: When on planets strange we tread
 I feel no doubt nor dread,
 And I snap my fingers at the Klingons and the bems;
 Chorus: And so do his women and his ladies and his fems,
 And so do his women and his ladies and his fems,
 His women and his ladies and his fems!

Kirk: But when faced with bureaucrats
 And assorted dirtside rats,
 I resort to ingenious stratagems;
 Chorus: And so do his women and his ladies and his fems,
 And so do his women and his ladies and his fems,
 His women and his ladies, who'll follow him through Hades,
 and his fems!





THE MANY WAYS TO EDEN

BY ELIZABETH CARRIE

Contrary to popular belief, some episodes of STAR TREK went through quite a few transformations. I have taken "Way to Eden" as an excellent example of this procedure, having secured copies of several of the different, rejected versions.

The first is short, and that, perhaps, was its downfall.

The USS *Enterprise*, on routine patrol, encounters a spaceship stolen by a group of rebels. The vessel has been driven to the point of imminent explosion. On Kirk's command, when the occupants will not answer his signal, the starship heads back to a starbase for instructions. As the *Enterprise* turns, the stolen vessel blows up.

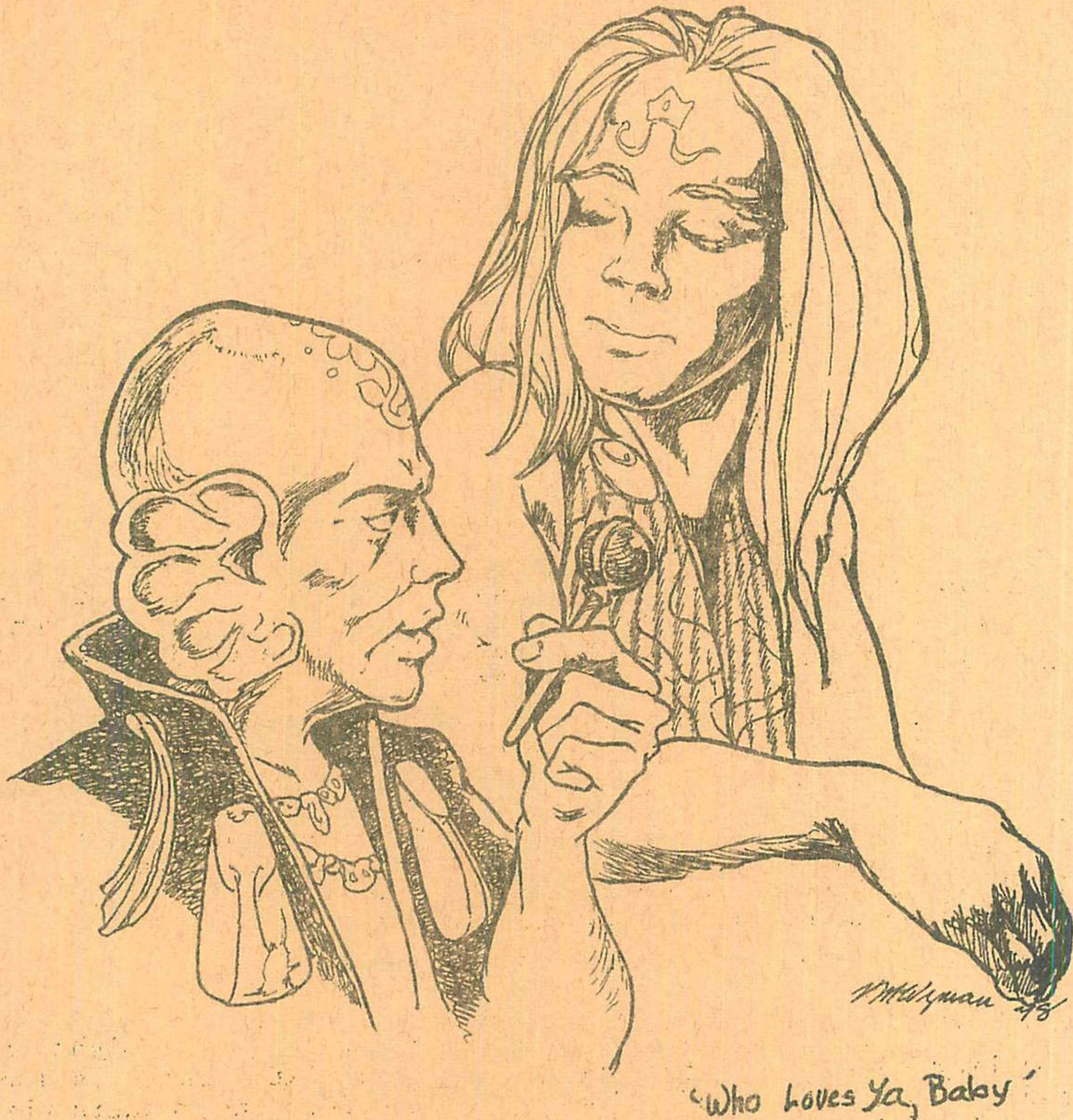
* * *

A pity it was not more seriously considered. It might have been an improvement over the one aired. The next version is longer, and has some very good points going for it. One wonders why it was rejected:

The *Enterprise*, chasing a stolen spaceship which will not acknowledge Kirk's hail, finally must beam the occupants of that vessel aboard, because the vessel will explode soon. It is discovered that one of the group is the son of an ambassador whose planet is in a tight diplomatic situation. Kirk, in spite of that, throws the bunch of them into the brig. After dropping off his prisoners--and skipping when he finds that because of his actions, Catulla is at war with the Federation--Kirk watches the starbase as he warps away. He is surprised to find that the insane leader of the rebel group has destroyed the starbase. Kirk only hopes that no mention of his actions was sent from the base before its destruction.

* * *

Perhaps what the producer and director wanted was not a big blowup at the end. The next version did not follow the others in that respect. Your guess is as good as mine as to why it was rejected:



The *Enterprise*, after chasing the stolen spaceship, beams its occupants aboard, when it becomes obvious that their vessel will be destroyed. They are a group of rebels, revolting under the leadership of the very revolting Dr. X. Cedrin. His puttylike ears are flattened against his nicely varnished head and pinched around the edges in a fluted pattern (he's great with piecrust). He keeps his little group obnoxious by reminding them that their objective is to find the fabled planet of Eden.

When they will not leave the Transporter Room, Kirk and Spock go there. The son of the Catullan ambassador is one of the rebels, and diplomacy must be used. Kirk goes anyway.

KIRK (as he enters Transporter Room): All right, you revolting creeps, get off your butts and get to Sickbay.

SPOCK: Captain, I don't think--

TON O' RAGS, *the Catullan*: Filbert, filbert, filbert--

KIRK: Where? I love filberts--

SPOCK: Captain, I don't think--

KIRK: It's my ship; I'm the captain. I can confiscate anything--

SPOCK: Captain, I don't think--

KIRK: Spock, what is it?

SPOCK: I forgot. Oh, right. I don't think--

KIRK (*turning to the Catullan*): Are you Ton o' Rags?

TON: What's it worth?

KIRK: I'll let you keep your filberts.

TON: I'm Ton o' Rags. And you're the filbert.

KIRK: Huh?

SPOCK: Captain, we haven't got all day. Maybe I should handle this.

KIRK: Know-it-all. Go ahead, but don't come crying to me because it doesn't work--

SPOCK (*walks to Ton and holds up index finger*): One.

TON: One what, Filbert?

SPOCK: Not one what, and I'm not the filbert around here.

KIRK: Charades. I love charades. Okay, first syllable, sounds like-- (*The Vulcan silences him with a deadpan stare.*)

SPOCK (*repeating to Ton*): One.

TON (*holding up first two fingers of his hand*): Two.

SPOCK: Buckle my shoe.

TON (*smiling*): Hey, man, you're not Filbert.

SPOCK: Please state your objective--

ADAM, *another rebel*: I object--

SPOCK: I said objective, not objec-tion. Sir (*he turns to an older man, Dr. Cedrin, who is sitting cross-legged on the floor*) what is your purpose in being out here in space?

CEDRIN: To boldly go where no man has gone before.

KIRK: Now wait a minute, buster-- that's my purpose.





CEDRIN: All right, all right. To find Eden.

KIRK: Huh?

CEDRIN: And to be left alone to harass and disturb all you establishment-types who are just trying to do your jobs.

ADAM: Right off, man!

KIRK: Don't you mean right on?

ADAM: Filbert.

KIRK: Oh, nuts. All right, whether you like it or not, you bums are going to Sickbay, then the starbase. I have to treat you like guests because I'm ordered to, but boy, are you going to be sorry if you get on my nerves.

SPOCK (to transporter operator): That's how he does treat his guests.

KIRK: Spock, take these--people to Sickbay. They seem to like you.

SPOCK: Go ahead, insult me.

KIRK (as he heads for the door): If you insist. . . (He leaves to a chorus of 'Filbert, filbert, filbert--')

On the bridge, Kirk sits in his command chair and orders Uhura to notify the starbase that they have the stolen vessel's abductors, but that the ship was destroyed.

UHURA (smugly): Boy, are they going to be mad at you.

KIRK: Cut the cheery chatter and send the message, please.

UHURA: Yes, sir.

KIRK: Personal note to the Catullan ambassador. His bum of a son is safe, no thanks to him.

UHURA (*hesitates*): You want that sent word for word?

KIRK: Ah. . . not if you think he'd take it the wrong way.

UHURA: Right. (*Turns to noteboard, to rephrase the message*)

CHEKOV: Captain. . .

KIRK: Now what? I suppose you know one of the girls in that group, and you want to see her.

CHEKOV: Vell. . . as a matter of fact. . . .

KIRK: Again? How many ex-Academy trainees did you shack up with? And they talk about me. . . . (*He thinks about it and brightens*) All right, Ensign. After all, you are in training for a starship command.

CHEKOV: Tank you Captain.

KIRK: Uhura, take over for Chekov.

UHURA: But Captain, I'm still trying to word that message to Starfleet--

KIRK: Okay, okay. (*He motions for another crewmember to take over for the navigator. Spock passes Chekov at the turbolift doors.*) Mr. Spock, are they in Sickbay?

SPOCK: Yes, sir. We had to stop and pick up a bottle of brandy.

KIRK: Brandy?

SPOCK: To bribe Dr. McCoy to check them over.

KIRK: Do they really believe in Eden?

SPOCK: They believe in peanut butter.

KIRK: Peanut--

SPOCK: Most myths are founded on truth, Captain. And they are not completely stupid, contrary to appearances.

KIRK (*dubiously*): Well, if you say so. . . .

SPOCK: Their leader is Doctor X. Cedrin.

KIRK (*incredulous*): The bald guy with the funny ears--

SPOCK: Watch it, paunchy.

KIRK: Let me rephrase. The bald guy with the robe?

SPOCK: Yes, sir. He was a brilliant research scientist in something or other until he was found sitting on a flagpole and was dismissed from his post. And Ton o' Rags has an extraordinary grasp of space theories, like his father.

KIRK: So if they're such big-deals, why are they running away? To Eden, no less.

SPOCK: They are basically lazy, irresponsible and neurotic. How well I understand their need to get away from the pressures and demands of our technological society.

KIRK: Sounds good so far.

SPOCK: They wish to live in a place of peace, with all the simple demands of the flesh at hand.

KIRK: Better and better.

SPOCK: Where each person would live for himself, without answering to anyone.

KIRK: Where do I sign up?

SPOCK: A place without a military leader--in fact, with only a wise celibate to guide them.

KIRK: On the other hand. . . That would let me out as leader, and I couldn't stand just being one of the group. Okay, so they have this stupid idea--

SPOCK (*sighs*): Yes, sir.

KIRK: Mr. Spock. . . what is a filbert?

SPOCK: A hazelnut.

KIRK: You know what I mean.

SPOCK: Very well. The term refers to narrowminded squares.

KIRK: I see. Well. And I am a filbert?

SPOCK: To some people.

KIRK: In that case, I will have to try to broaden my thinking patterns.

SPOCK (*doubtfully*): You could try.

KIRK: By the way. . . do they have any filberts?

Sickbay. Chekov enters and finds the rebels sprawled around, waiting to be examined. Adam is trying to make music from a two-by-four with nylon strings nailed to it, and the rest of the group is enjoying his efforts. They applaud as he finishes his rendition of "Swanee".

CHEKOV: Pardon me, you bums, but is a beautiful young woman with you? Her name is Irena Gotalotanerve.

ADAM: Be out in a minute. The quack's giving her the onceover.

A moment later, a young woman in sarong skirt and bikini top enters, followed by Nurse Chapel. The nurse points to Dr. Cedrin, then the examining room, but he stays seated on a table. The nurse smiles and pushes the table into the other room while making a siren noise.

IRENA: Pavel, schveety--lonk time no see.

CHEKOV: Irena. Why-- (*he looks around as the group converges on them*)

ADAM (*as the couple leaves Sickbay*): Think it was my breath?

The two walk and talk in the corridor.

CHEKOV: How could you do dis to yourself? You vere a proud member of



A Credit to his Profession

de Academy; neat and clean; a foxy lady--

IRENA: Dat's vat I always liked about you, Pavel; you admired my mind.

CHEKOV: Why did you do it?

IRENA (*shrugs*): Why not? And how about you?

CHEKOV: I am proud of myself. Can you say de same?

IRENA: Of course. I am proud of you, Pavel. Efen your mother would be proud of--

CHEKOV: You know vhat I meant.

IRENA: Vhat do you vant me to say--I'm a bum, and I like beink a bum?

CHEKOV: Yes. *(He leads them into a lounge, and they sit on a couch)*
It's been so lonk, Irena. . . de last time I saw you, you short-sheeted de bed and left vithout a vord.

IRENA: Dat vas vhy. You nefer did appreciate my sense of humor.

CHEKOV: But I vas in bed at de time!

IRENA: See. No sense of humor.

CHEKOV: Where did you go?

IRENA: I stayed in de city vith friends. Dey enjoy a good laugh. Oh, Pavel, forget de past. Run away vith me, and ve shall lif happily efer after.

CHEKOV: Your screws are still loose, Irena. Go to your friends.

IRENA *(as she leaves)*: Party pooper.

At a noise outside, Chekov goes into the corridor, and finds the rebels at the Sickbay doors, being held back by security men. Kirk shows up a moment later and battles his way past the group, which is chanting 'Filbert, filbert, filbert'.

KIRK *(in Sickbay)*: What's going on, Bones?

MCCOY: Baldy here has been keeping secrets. *(Points to Cedrin, sitting cross-legged on a bed)*

CEDRIN: Liar. I've never been able to keep a secret.

MCCOY: You kept this one. Jim, he's a carrier for a deadly disease which evolved over the past few years; Hunchbaccus notradama. We can immunize against it, but there is no cure.

KIRK *(falling back several steps)*: Is the crew in danger?

MCCOY: No. Everyone should have gotten immunized along with their regular shots. I'll check in case anyone was missed.

KIRK: Check me first. I don't want to catch--

MCCOY: I'm sure you're safe, Captain--

KIRK: I mean, I don't want my hair to fall out, and my ears to--

MCCOY: Really, Captain, you've had your shots--

KIRK: You know, just in case--accidents can happen and someone might have put it down wrong on my record--

MCCOY: Jim, trust me.

KIRK: Are you sure, Bones?

MCCOY *(sighs)*: Yes, but if you really want a booster. . . .

KIRK (*sighs in relief*): If you insist. . .

Out in the corridor, after Kirk leaves Sickbay, he finds the rebels sitting on the floor.

KIRK: Dr. Cedrin will be released when we determine it is medically safe.

They begin a chorus of 'Filbert' as he walks to the turbolift.

KIRK (*smugly*): Go ahead and chant. I've had my booster-shot.

On the bridge. Kirk approaches his command chair.

SCOTT (*over intercom*): Captain, I just had one of that traveling scum in here, and threw it out. It wanted to get the crew to run away with them.

KIRK: All right, Scotty. I'll take care of it. (*Turns to the Vulcan*) Mr. Spock, can you take care of that?

SPOCK: What's the matter? Your arm broken, Captain?

KIRK: Not at all, Mr. Spock. You just seem to be able to communicate with them better than I can.

SPOCK (*to himself*): I'm not surprised. (*to Kirk*) Very well, sir. I shall try.

KIRK: Thank you, Mr. Spock. (*To himself as the Vulcan leaves*) Sucker.

Spock goes to an isolation room of Sickbay. Cedrin is sitting on the bed, playing solitaire. He throws the cards off the bed when he sees Spock and pretends he's been doing nothing. Spock, no fool, since he did not yet get his booster-shot, remains outside while he talks to Cedrin.

SPOCK: Dr. Cedrin, could you put your followers on their leashes? They don't seem to be completely housebroken, if you know what I mean.

CEDRIN: Tough toenails. I have no control over them. You act as if when I snapped my fingers (*he snaps his fingers*) they'd come run-- (*several of the rebels appear behind Spock*)

SPOCK (*as Cedrin nods for his followers to get away*): They do seem to respect you, Doctor. C'mon, be a good egg. Make them behave. (*Cedrin just stares.*) Okay. I'll find Eden for you. Is it a deal? (*No answer from Cedrin*) Look at it this way, Baldy. It's either behave, or get locked up when we get to the starbase.

CEDRIN: As I have been locked up by your technology?

SPOCK: You give me a lot of credit. Granted, I am good at what I do--

CEDRIN: I was speaking figuratively, dummy.

SPOCK: You're the dummy, Derwood.

CEDRIN: Derwood? How did you--?

SPOCK: I checked your file. The X. stands for Derwood. And you knew you were a carrier for this plague.

CEDRIN: You don't think I was going to let a little thing like that stop me, did you?

SPOCK: Well. . .

CEDRIN: I have to get away from this environment, which produced this thing in me--to some primitive place where I can be purged of this.

SPOCK: Have you considered castor oil?

CEDRIN: Only the primitives. They will cleanse me, make me pure. They'll treat me like a god, which is only right.

SPOCK: Uh-huh. Seems logical. (*rolls his eyes*)

CEDRIN (*smiles*): And now you're going to tell me if I stay I'll be cured.

SPOCK: I am?

CEDRIN: And because of that I should tell my friends to mind their 'p's and 'q's.

SPOCK: If you say so.

CEDRIN: Very well. Send them to me. I'll tell them exactly what to do.

SPOCK (*dubiously*): Right.

Back on the bridge.

KIRK: I guess we took care of them, Spock. They've been a lot better since I ordered you to talk to Cedrin.

SPOCK (*drily*): I don't know what I would have done without your help, Captain. (*Sarcasm turns to hesitation*) Captain. . .about Doctor Cedrin. . . it is, of course, only my opinion--I haven't consulted Shirley yet---

KIRK: Shirley?

SPOCK: The library computer. She only allows her closest friends to call her Shirley. Of course, working as closely as we do--

KIRK: You were saying something about Doctor Cedrin . . . ?

SPOCK: Affirmative. It is my belief that Doctor Cedrin is. . .

KIRK: Yes?

SPOCK: Whacko.

KIRK: Do you mean--?

SPOCK: Bug city; flipped over; the big loony tune--

KIRK: Spock, are you trying to say that Doctor Cedrin is insane?

SPOCK: That's the word. It was right on the tip of my thumb--

KIRK: Don't you mean tongue?

SPOCK: That is tongue in Vulcan.

KIRK: Spock-- does this mean-- could Cedrin be a filbert?

SPOCK: Impossible to say at this time, Captain. I shall ask Shirley about it at my earliest convenience. Captain, I made a promise which I should like to keep--

KIRK: Sorry, no one is allowed into my cabin.

SPOCK: I know, sir. It's not that--

KIRK: No orgies without inviting me.

SPOCK: It has nothing to do with--

KIRK (*dismayed*): You didn't promise them they could keep their filberts, did you? I was really counting on--

SPOCK: No, sir. I promised to find Eden.

KIRK (*relieved*): Oh, is that all? Okay.

SPOCK: I will need some assistance; someone to feed me data from the auxiliary control room.

KIRK: Chekov? Can you be trusted? Last time you had a girlfriend on the ship and you were sent to auxiliary control, you locked the door and no one could get in for a week.

CHEKOV: Yes, sir. I learned my lesson. . .

CHEKOV AND KIRK (*in unison*): Use your own cabin.

KIRK: Very well. Assist Mr. Spock.

Chekov is alone in the auxiliary control room. Irena enters.

IRENA: Am I allowed in?

CHEKOV: No.

IRENA: Good. (*walks over to him*) Hi, schveety. Vhat you doink?

CHEKOV: None of your business, nosey.

IRENA: Vhat room is dis?

CHEKOV: De auxiliary control room. Like it said outside.

IRENA: Vhat's it for?

CHEKOV (*blandly*): Controlling auxiliaries. Vhat did you tink? (*more seriously*) Just in case de main controls break down.

IRENA: Isn't dat just askink for trouble?

CHEKOV (*sighs*): Vhy did you come here?

IRENA: Seemed like a good idea at de time, party pooper. (*she wanders around the room*) Lots of nice stuff, bubby. How do you remember how eferytink vorks?

CHEKOV: De computer remembers. I only haf to remember how to ask de computer, and dis booklet (*holds up small booklet*) has all de rules. Piece of cake.

IRENA: And vhat you doink now?



Chekov, and Mother Russia

CHEKOV: Helpink Mr. Spock find Eden.

IRENA (*suppressing a laugh*): Why-- did you lose it? (*she has a fit of giggling, then sobers when Chekov does not join in*) Schveety, you haf no sense of humor.

CHEKOV: Dat is a matter of opinion.

IRENA (*moves to stand close to Chekov, her arms around him*): Kiss me, my stodgy lofer, and tell me how I can take ofer de ship.

CHEKOV: Take ofer de--

IRENA: Remember, schveety, my sense of humor?

CHEKOV: Dat's right. Don't vorry; I'll catch on. *(takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately)*

SPOCK *(over intercom)*: Mr. Chekov, are you sleeping?

CHEKOV *(distractedly)*: Not yet. *(Breaks away from Irena when he realizes who was speaking)* Ah--no sir, Mr. Spock. Haf some more data for you in a jiffy.

Chekov sits down and Irena leaves, the booklet cleverly concealed in her clothing.

In the rec room. The rebel group is gathered together. Irena walks in and waves the booklet for everyone to see.

IRENA: It's a cinch. I got all de directions here. Ve can do it from auxiliary control.

ADAM: Auxiliary control? Is that where they control the auxiliaries? *(guffaws)*

IRENA *(coolly)*: Wery funny.

TON: So when do we do it?

ADAM: As soon as things start. Now everybody go out and be friendly. You know how to be friendly. *(Smiles knowingly, but is met by confused and blank stares. Clears his throat.)* Be obnoxious. You know how to be obnoxious. *(Everyone smiles and nods.)* Right.

They all leave for different parts of the ship. Adam goes to Spock's cabin.

SPOCK *(at sound of the doorchime)*: Go away, we don't want any.

ADAM *(enters anyway)*: Like hi, man. Busy?

SPOCK: Do I look busy? I mean, I'm sitting here, kneedeep in starmaps, green-eyed from staring at this computer just to find your stupid Eden. What would make you think I'm busy?

ADAM: I don't know. Always safer to ask. As long as you're not doing anything. . .

SPOCK *(sighs after he realizes subtlety doesn't work)*: Yes?

ADAM: Wanted to know if--Hey, that yours? *(nods to Vulcan harp, on a shelf nearby)*

SPOCK: No, the harp fairy left it.

ADAM: Mind if I--? *(moves to take it. Spock jumps up and grabs the harp, cradling it protectively.)* I won't hurt it. *(Holds up hand, palm out)* Promise.

SPOCK: Well. . . *(Reluctantly hands over harp)*

ADAM (*plays a chord*): Oh, wow--that's like--incredible--like--

SPOCK: It sounds as if it's in pain.

ADAM: Would you give a little? (*Holds out the harp*)

SPOCK: I gave at the office. (*Takes instrument and plays a few chords*)

ADAM: Oh, that's today. Like a minute from now. How about a session? You and us? It could send your eardrums. That's why I came. I wanted to ask, but you know, the Great White Whale, he, you know, like don't come down to us in the reaching and like, we're supposed to cooperate and it would be just swell, gosh, if you know what I mean.

SPOCK (*stares, bewildered*): If I understand you correctly, I don't think that's allowed on Federation ships.

ADAM (*impatiently*): I meant a concert, with you playing with me and my friends.

SPOCK: Oh. In that case, I believe that the answer is maybe. Perhaps even yes.

ADAM: Oh, wow. Thanks. I'll go now and just tell everyone. Gosh, thanks--

SPOCK: Don't mention it. Please.

The rec room is filled with crewmembers; the rebels are playing, seated on the floor, and Spock walks in. He sits down and plays a medley of his hit while they accompany his harp with the string-nailed two-by-four and an old bicycle wheel with string tied across it. The crew seems to love it. The crew has been space-bound too long.

At this time, one of the rebels sneaks away and knocks out the crewmen in auxiliary control. Surprise, Kirk!

On the bridge:

SULU: Captain, something is wrong. I'm not in control any more.

KIRK: If you can't hold your liquor, you shouldn't drink.

SPOCK: Captain, I think he means that the ship controls are on override elsewhere.

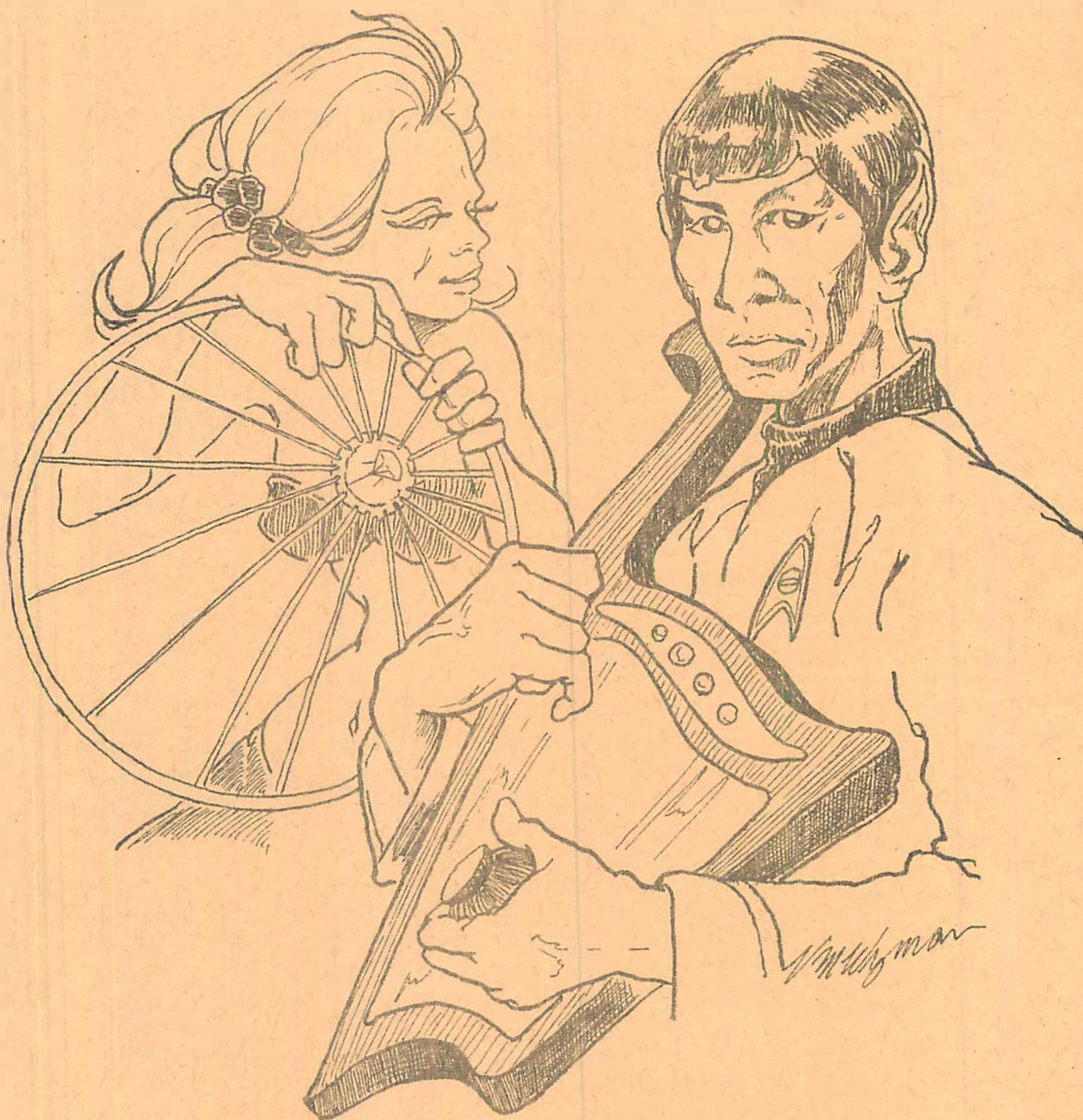
SULU: That's right, Captain. We're going off course, and helm won't respond to my controls.

KIRK (*at their looks at his denseness*): I knew that.

CEDRIN (*over intercom*): Sure you did, Captain. Tell me another one.

KIRK: If you don't stop talking to me like that, I'll have you flogged.

CEDRIN: You have to reach me first. I've taken over control of your ship, Captain. The *Enterprise* is mine until we reach Eden. You try to stop me and I'll blow it up.



IT WOULD SOUND

KIRK (to Spock): Can he do that?

SPOCK: Yes, sir.

KIRK: Well, do something about it. No one takes my ship away from me.

SPOCK: Well. . . I could try to bypass circuits. . . .

CEDRIN: Do that and you'll be sor-ry.

SULU: Captain, we are leaving the Neutral Zone and entering Romulan space.

KIRK (*screams*): Romulan space!!! No, Cedrin, please! (*Spock slaps his face and the captain regains control*) Thanks, Spock. I needed that. Do you read any Romulan patrols yet?

SPOCK: Of course not. You know we aren't doing a story about Romulans. We're only here to add suspense.

KIRK: Of course. Oh, by the way--you're on report for striking your commanding officer. (*turns to intercom*) Doctor Cedrin, you are violating Romulan space, and endangering the peace of the Galaxy. (*several crewmembers snicker*) They will think this a military intrusion and attack. Return the *Enterprise* to me now and allow us to go to the starbase, and nothing will be said about this.

ADAM (*over intercom*): Like, baloney.

KIRK: If you do not, you'll never reach Eden. This ship, and you, will be destroyed.

ADAM: Oooh, I'm fwightened.

KIRK: Adam, Ton, your leader is crazy. Honest. Spock, tell them.

SPOCK (*coolly*): Tell them what?

KIRK (*after a pause*): All right, Spock, you're off report. Now tell them.

SPOCK (*sits at his station*): Adam, there is a file in the computer banks on Doctor Cedrin. You will find in it a report attesting to the fact that he is a carrier of a bacillus strain known as Hunchbaccus notradama.

ADAM: Nobody's perfect.

SPOCK: You will also find a report from the same hospital, giving a full psychiatric profile and projecting these actions of his. In a word, he is. . . ah. . .

KIRK (*whispers*): Insane.

SPOCK (*nods*): Insane. (*to Kirk*) Thanks. It keeps slipping my mind.

ADAM: Tell me something I don't know.

SPOCK (*earnestly*): Adam, you know I believe in peanut butter. But there is a terrible difference between what you want, and what Baldy wants.

ADAM: You mean he doesn't want to kill off all the primitives with a plague?

Kirk shuts off the intercom.

SPOCK (*at gooseneck viewer*): We are within sensor range of Eden, Captain, and continuing to approach.

KIRK: Well, if they're going to do something, they'll have to do it soon. Spock, Scotty, come with me.

They go to the corridor of auxiliary control.

KIRK: We'll cut our way through. Phasers out and set to kill. Me first, then Spock, then Scott. Go ahead, Scotty.

The engineer begins cutting through with a torch while the captain and the Vulcan stand by, watching. Suddenly a whistle starts, and Spock grabs at his head.

KIRK: Spock, what's wrong? *(Scotty stops the torch)* It stopped, Spock. It's okay now.

SPOCK: No, Captain, it hasn't. It's--*(gasps)* they're using--

They collapse to the deck, unconscious. The rest of the crew does also.

Later, Kirk comes to. The auxiliary control room door is open. Spock and Scott are also conscious.

SPOCK *(still sounding in difficulty)*: Captain, you must--in the control room--the sound system--turn off--

Kirk runs into the control room and turns off the sound system. A moment later, an in-control Vulcan joins him.

KIRK: Well, why didn't you come in and turn it off?

SPOCK *(shrugs)*: I thought you wanted to be the hero.

SCOTT: What was that?

SPOCK: You mean--was it live, or was it Memorex? Actually, it was Memorex--a tape of Yma Sumac, played in sensurround. Fortunately, the volume was only high enough to render us unconscious. It was set, however, to resume on full, which would have destroyed all living matter within range.

KIRK *(satisfied)*: Then I was a hero.

SPOCK: Of course, Captain. Aren't you always?

KIRK *(on intercom)*: Kirk to bridge.

SULU *(on intercom)*: Bridge; Sulu here. What happened? I heard a sound--

KIRK: Never mind. Just be satisfied that I saved your life, and the lives of everyone else on board.

SULU: Not again?

KIRK: You really want to be an ensign again?

SULU *(hastily)*: We sure are lucky to have such a brave captain.

KIRK: That's better.

CREWMAN *(over intercom)*: Hangerdeck to Captain.

KIRK: Nyess?

CREWMAN: One of the shuttlecraft has been taken, sir. We were all knocked out--

KIRK: A likely story.

SPOCK: I read the shuttlecraft on our sensors.

KIRK: Where?

SPOCK: It has landed on Eden. Captain, I read no sign of sapient life at all, animal or humanoid.

KIRK: Serves them right. Kirk to Sickbay.

MCCOY (*over intercom*): Yes, Captain?

KIRK: Report to the Transporter Room, ready to beam down.

MCCOY: Gee, Jim, thanks. I didn't know I was going to get my shore leave now. And on Eden, no less.

KIRK: Spock says there isn't any life down there.

MCCOY: Then why send me? I thought you were my friend---

KIRK: We're going to rescue the rebels.

MCCOY: Oh. Okay. Should I bring my medical kit?

KIRK (*exchanges 'I don't believe it' glances with Spock*): Yes, if you wouldn't mind. Kirk out. Kirk to bridge.

UHURA: Yes, Captain?

KIRK: Send Chekov to the Transporter Room. He's going to get to be a big hero and save his girlfriend.

UHURA: Yes, sir. He's on his way. (*adds in mock pleasure*) Oh boy, two heroes.

KIRK: I try. See ya later, toots.

They beam down to a beautiful land, visually everything one would imagine Eden to be--if one imagined it being partly in California and partly on a sound stage. But it is silent.

SPOCK: The legends were true. A fantastically beautiful planet.

KIRK: Well, one out of three ain't bad. It's a planet.

SPOCK: Picky picky.

KIRK: Was this what they expected to find, Spock? (*The Vulcan shrugs*) Well, let's go find them. Everyone be careful not to damage the plants. There might be a gardener around.

They spread out. Chekov screams in pain. They run to him.

KIRK: You called?

CHEKOV (*holding hand close*): Sorry, sir; no, I screamed. I touched de flower--

KIRK: What did I tell you about touching things?

CHEKOV: I'm sorry, sir. I did not expect it to get efen vith me.

MCCOY (after running tricorder over Chekov's hand and the plants): The flowers are filled with acid, Captain. All the plant life is. Even the grass.

KIRK: What!? Let's get out of--

SPOCK: Our clothing will protect us for a short time, Captain.

KIRK: How short?

SPOCK: Long enough to find the rebels.

KIRK: Let's get moving. (mutter) Some Eden. . . can't even walk on the grass. . . .

They come upon a tree with a body beneath it. It is Adam, a partially eaten piece of fruit still in his hand. Kirk calls McCoy over and the doctor runs his tricorder over body and fruit.

MCCOY: This fruit is poison: filled with cyclamates and saccharin.

SPOCK: His name was Adam.

KIRK: So?

SPOCK: Adam? Eden?

KIRK: Yes?

SPOCK: You know-- Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, and the forbidden fruit?

KIRK (the light dawning): Oh--right. So?

SPOCK (sighs): Never mind.

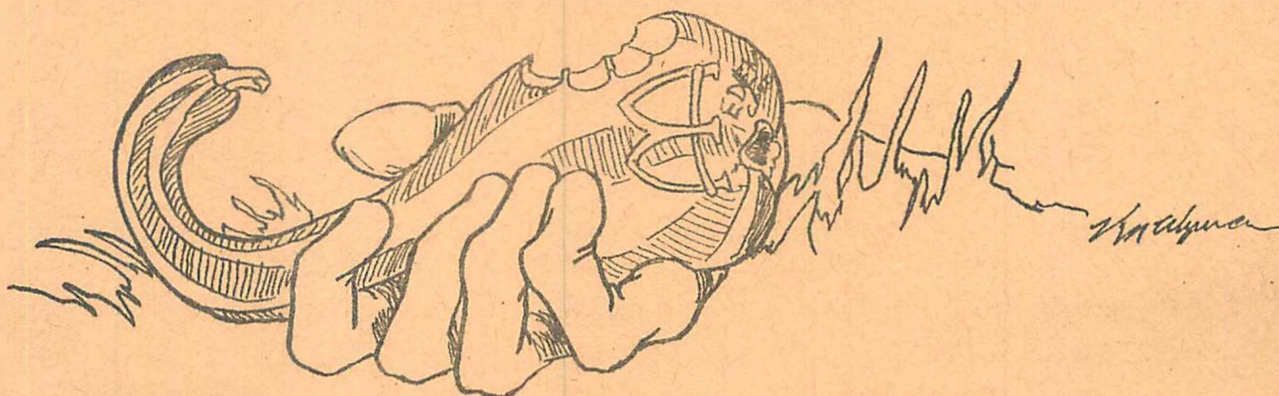
They go on to the shuttlecraft.

KIRK: Come out, come out, wherever you are.

The doors open and the injured rebels crawl out.

KIRK (self-righteously): That'll teach you to try to take over my ship. God sees and He knows--

They start to crawl back into the shuttlecraft to get away from Kirk.



CHEKOV (*to his girlfriend*): Irena? Don't mind him; he's always like dat.

She lets him take her out of the craft and carry her to a rock, where he sets her down. They quickly find that the rocks are covered with acid also, and Chekov very carefully puts her back on the shuttlecraft platform.

IRENA (*sobbing*): It vas so beautiful.

KIRK: Still is. (*sighs*) Ah well, that's life. Everybody back to the ship.

CEDRIN: Not me. (*Runs to a tree and eats some fruit, dying a horrible death.*)

KIRK (*shrugs*): Well, it's your choice. . . . (*Takes out his communicator*)
Kirk to *Enterprise*. We're ready to beam up. Tell everyone Eden's a bummer. The grass is full of acid--

UHURA: The what is full of what? And you call that a bummer?

KIRK: Real acid, Uhura. Real grass.

UHURA: Oh. In that case, you're probably right.

Later, the starship is orbiting the starbase. On the bridge:

KIRK: Uhura, inform Starfleet the four will be sent down as soon as they're in the Transporter Room.

UHURA: Yes, sir. Very good; I don't have to change a single word.

KIRK (*ignoring her comment*): And mark the incident closed.

UHURA: With pleasure.

KIRK: Captain to Transporter Room. Scotty, are they ready?

SCOTT (*on intercom*): No, sir. There's one left to come.

KIRK: Very well. Mr. Chekov, do you want to go and see your girlfriend off?

CHEKOV: Captain. . . I vish first to apologize for my conduct durink dis time. I--did not maintain myself under proper discipline. I endangered de ship and crew by my conduct. I respectfully submit myself for disciplinary action.

KIRK (*with disbelieving smile*): Are you serious?

CHEKOV: Vell. . . .

KIRK: I didn't think so. Thanks for the thought anyway. Go on.

CHEKOV: Tank you, sir. (*stops at turbolift at Irena steps out.*) I vas comink to say goodbye.

IRENA: And I vas comink to say goodbye to you. (*She kisses him passionately.*) Be incorrect occasionally, my stodgy lofer.

CHEKOV (*smiles*): And you, be correct, my flighty fruitcake.

IRENA: Occasionally. (*She smiles and turns to leave.*)



'I had to tell her something...
Captain'

SPOCK: Ms Gotalotanerve. *(She stops and looks at him.)* It is my sincere wish that you do not give up your search for Eden. I do not doubt that some day you will find it--or make it yourself.

IRENA: You sure you don't want to come along?

SPOCK *(hesitates, looks at Kirk, who glances away when he sees Spock notice him, and shakes his head. Speaks in lowered voice)*: I don't know what he'd do without me.

IRENA: Wery vell. So long, eferyone.

She leaves. Chekov and Spock return to their stations. Kirk walks to the Vulcan with a smile on his face.

KIRK (*quietly*): What did you mean--'I don't know what he'd do without me'?

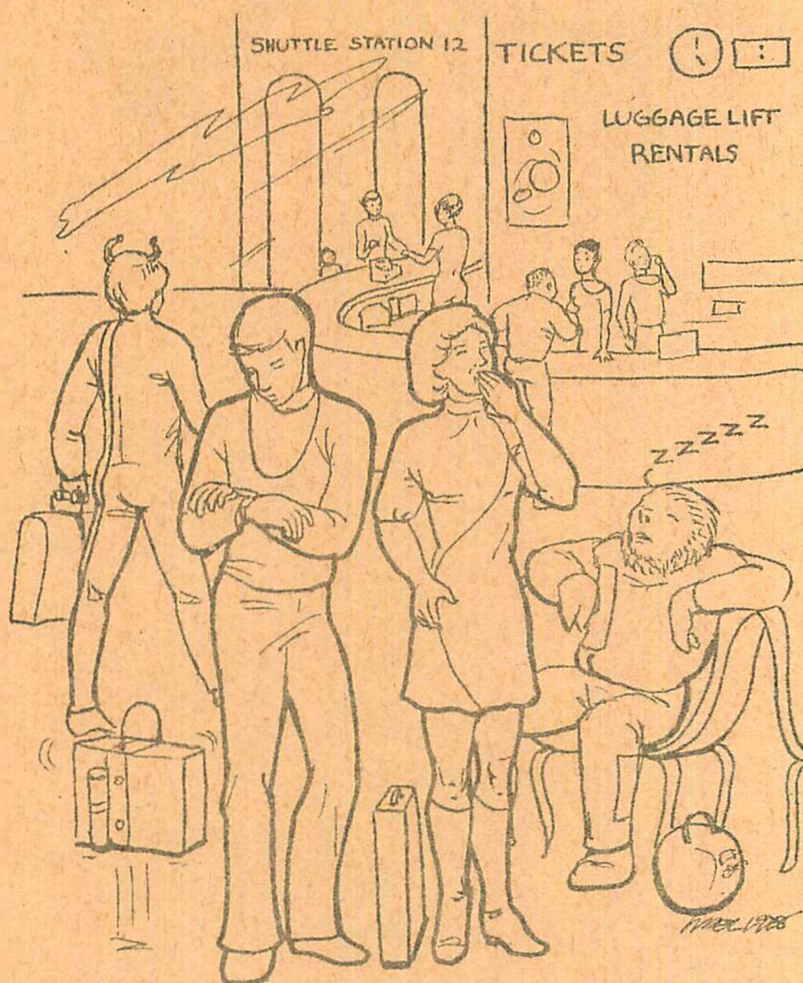
SPOCK (*hesitates*): I had to tell her something, didn't I?

As the captain returns to his command chair, Spock and Chekov exchange knowing glances.

* * *

Perhaps there are advantages to the aired version, but they escape me. The last version you just read has excellent characterizations, drama, suspense--even humor. But we are not, I suppose, qualified to make such a decision.

And so it goes in life. . . . Ah, well. . . .



DAMNED LAYOVERS!

MORNING HAS BROKEN

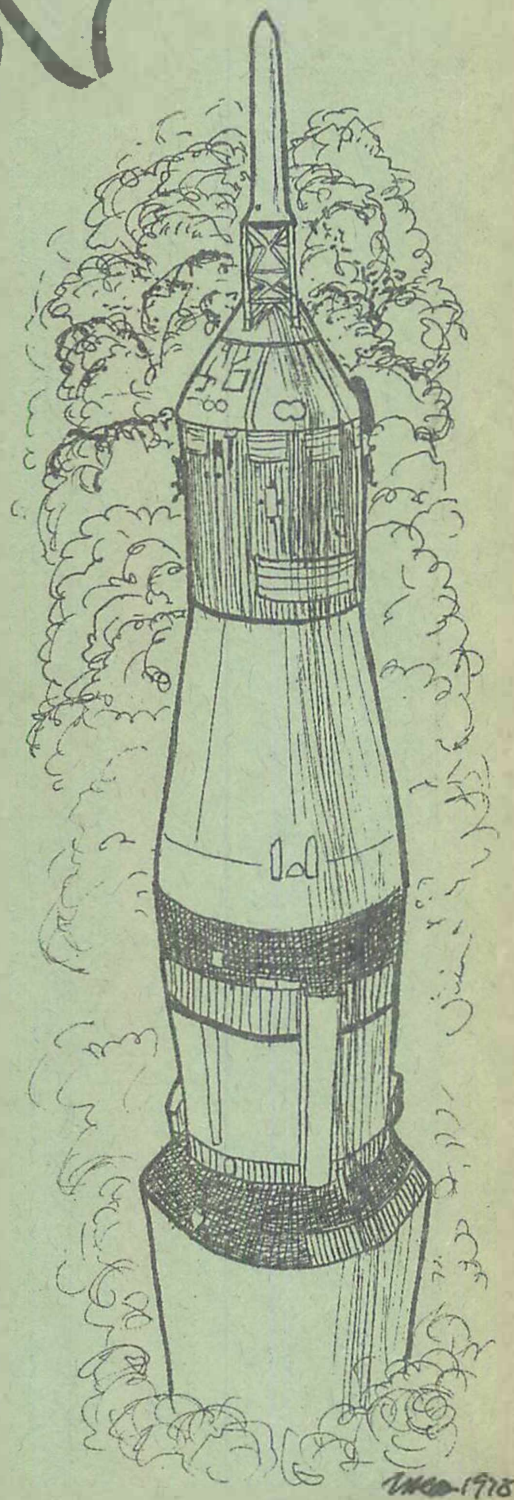
by PAT KELLY

Morning has broken; it's a great morning.
P.A. has spoken with the last word.
Praise for the speaking,
Praise for the launching,
Praise for our leaping
Up from the world.

Loud the jets do bawl
Star lit in heaven;
Fun is the free fall on the first day.
Praise for the neatness
Of our new garden
Building completeness
In our own way.

Ours is the sun light,
Ours is the orbit
Born of the real might of the great day.
Praise of the nation,
Praise every launching,
Man's re-creation
Of the first day.

Morning has broken; it's a great morning.
P.A. has spoken with the last word.
Praise for the speaking,
Praise for the launching,
Praise for our leaping
Up from the world.



(to the tune by the same title sung by Cat Stevens)

A Question of Superiority

BAWN O'BEIRNE-RANELAGH

While the kershu fighters went through the opening ceremonies of the invitational student competition at Arbara University, John daydreamed about his years of training in karate. The school he'd attended, the classes, the exercises done alone, were all as traditional and formal as centuries of practice could make them. The discipline learned in training fitted each student as a tailored suit of armor. But it was not a blind discipline. Within the classes, the techniques were performed as each student's physique and intelligence interpreted them. And outside the training hall, the master advised his senior students on the application of their skills, considering with them the ways to deal with the new forms of humanoids that the expanding Federation encountered. Often he would simply present a problem, and listen as the seniors discussed it. But once, when the seniors boasted that each knew the right attacks to use against a Langvra, the master rose and demonstrated, simply, a series of attacks. The only noise, as the chatter died, was the crack of his loose-fitting clothes as he moved.

John remembered that night with a surreal clarity. It was the third time he had been invited to join the senior session; from then on, he would no longer have to wait for an invitation. And he had been so impressed by the seniors' talk, the stories of masters they had seen in action, the descriptions of fight-winning techniques. Impressed, until the master rose and moved. Now, many months after, his mind's eye still saw, poised in eternity, each strike, each blow. Though he knew the master had moved with blinding speed, the perfection of each stance was burned into John's memory as if each were a statue.

In the silence that rang in the small room when the master sat down, John slowly began to understand what he had spent five years learning. He had only been going through the motions, he realized--all his knowledge was shallow and empty. He would have to begin again. And he had, training harder than ever, relearning everything, feeling his body gradually absorb what his mind had, on that night, discovered.

So, as the first contestants lined up on the floor, John watched with interest. He accepted the events that had brought the school seniors

to this competition, although this sort of fighting was against all the principles they had learned--not to fight except as a last resort, not to make a display of their skills, and more.

John remembered, without fear, the insulting, insensitive pride of the kershu fighters here at Arbara University. On their visit to John's hall, they had refused to join the class, pushing aside the students who were already waiting. They had marched forward together to read out their invitation, and they did it with an edge of contempt in their words that made John's hackles rise. The master, however, had thanked the Klingons with his usual politeness, no trace of irony in his words or voice. The kershu fighters left, as they had arrived, in a jostling pack, and among them, John had realized with a shock of surprise, was a Terran girl.

Now the fights had started. John concentrated on the two Klingons in the central area. The morning fights were eliminations for the kershu circuit fighters only. Other styles were to wait for the afternoon. He knew something of kershu fighting's wealth of techniques from the reports of the Terran circuit, but he hadn't seen any in action before. He was amazed by the fighters' speed and flexibility; so quick were the attacks and counters that the fight almost looked rehearsed. It was only during the pauses that John could see each fighter assessing and measuring his opponent. Suddenly, it was over--one fighter was lying pinned helpless to the floor. The referees motioned the victor back, as a whole section of the spectators rose, cheering and shouting, and waving the micro-programs which were already lit up with their hero's name. John glanced at his program. This Ketac, of Barwen, was obviously a top fighter with a large fan following, and Barwen was among the toughest of the kershu schools. Ketac preened himself as he left the ring.

For the rest of the morning, the elimination fights went on. John listened as his friends commented on the style of the fighters; he was himself too dismayed by their speed and the variety of their skills to say anything. Kershu used holds and throws that none of his school had seen before. Were they really to compete that afternoon against these fighters? Some of them--humanoids that John hadn't seen before either--had strange physiques that made it especially difficult to judge their moves. One of the seniors pointed out a group of Langvras; even sitting down, the creatures seethed with activity. Their fighters attacked remorselessly and untiringly, were awkward to defend against, and almost impossible to hit.

For John, however, the fights soon merged into a blur; the constant shouting and cheering or groans and boos from the kershu fighters' fans among the spectators made a racket that dulled the senses. It all seemed far too much like the Roman gladiatorial contests of Earth's uncivilized past.

The last fight before the lunch break brought a rustle of anticipation from the audience. The fighters lined up, and John recognized the Terran girl who had come to his school. He half rose in surprise, just as she raised her eyes to scan the crowd. Had she seen him? Or was that curt nod just an attempt to clear an errant lock of hair from her eyes?

And she fought well. Unlike many of the smaller, lighter fighters, she was bold in attack and defense. Her style was not as solid as that of the heavily muscled Klingons, but she was fast, and her techniques were clean and sharp. She won, quickly, with an accurate, powerful snapping punch to her opponent's chin, just enough to rock him back on his heels without harming him. It was obvious that the punch would have disabled him had she intended it to. The decision was unanimous, but for once the raucous fans were silent.

"Who is that girl?" John asked. A senior passed across his micro-program with the index code already fed in. The thin sheet displayed the fighter's name and school, then merged into a short vid of her fighting. She was called Janet. She'd placed in three of the competitions on this circuit. And she was on the Arbara rota for the afternoon's challenge. John made a note to watch her in the finals later.

During the lunch break, John and the rest of the seniors ate with their master. The events of the morning had passed quickly, and most of them were feeling discouraged and unsettled. The master seemed amused by their unease, and gradually his confidence and gentle humor improved the seniors' spirits. By the time they reassembled for the afternoon's events, they were looking forward to the competition.

The kershu fighters, picked from all the recognized Klingon schools, lined up along the length of the competition hall. Their masters stood in front of them, facing the referees. The chief referee, a retired kershu fighter and honorary master of the fighting school on the Yasjoy worlds, stepped forward and held his hands forward, palm up, in the classic kershu salute.

"We welcome you, fighters of the Federation. We are pleased that you attend our competition. Of all the kershu circuits, this one is the most respected; and of all the kershu competitions in this circuit, this one is considered supreme. For thousands of years, kershu existed only for Klingons. But now our schools have opened to outworlders, and our masters have gone to other worlds to teach our fighting skill. We, of the Klingon Empire, have seen outworld fighters; we have seen outworld fighting styles; and now, at the height of our kershu competition year, each of our schools has invited a school of a different fighting style to compete with ours."

He stepped back, and the fight referees walked to the central area, now the only one lit. The chief referee, in the center of the arena, called out the fight rules. As with all kershu fights, victory went to the fighter who either immobilized his opponent or landed a blow that would kill or cripple if delivered with full force. The fighters would be drawn by lot, one circuit fighter against a representative of an open fighting style. The masters of each fighter would introduce both their school of fighting and their student on the micro-program as their fighters prepared.

The kershu fighters turned and went to their waiting area, beamed off at the end of the hall. At signals from their masters, the outworld fighters moved in their groups to the area at the opposite end. John and the other seniors followed their master, with tension already showing in their stiffening shoulders and the flexing of their fists.

The waiting area was crowded, but each school had a space to itself, marked off by the usual invisible sound-baffling beams. In each area, the noise of the other contestants dropped to a murmur, but every area was open to the arena.

"There will be only one fighter, picked by lot, from each school," the master said. "Whoever it is should remember this. You have all learned as much as can be taught. Your knowledge can now only be improved by experience. And all experience is worthless unless you have self-knowledge. When you fight today, fight with understanding of yourself, and though you may lose, you will not fail. Now, let's watch the contest for a few minutes. Then we'll have a short lesson to warm up."

By the time their school was called, the fighters were glowing with sweat from the 'short lesson'. Panting, but relaxed and grinning, they had begun speculating on whose name would be picked. Beyond them, in the arena, the kershu fighters were methodically, one after the other, defeating the fighters of the invited Federation schools.

The announcer's voice interrupted, beamed directly into their waiting area. "Master Kinet Kinistran, of the University of Arbara." Kinet appeared on the micro-program, his face lean and hard.

"Our school is acknowledged the prime kershu school of the Klingon Empire. It was our school that first accepted outworlders as trainees. We have not always been disappointed in our hopes for these students, and it is one of them whose name has been drawn. Janet surMartinTanya, of Taranheim, who has won honor with us."

Again, the applause and shouting that had greeted each Klingon was mixed with boos as Janet went forward to the ring.

An official came into the waiting area and handed John's master a plastic card. The master's face remained impassive. He nodded slightly, then straightened and spoke to his students. The program transmitter was focused on him, but he talked to the seniors as if he were holding an after-class session.

"Our skills are not taught as a sport, yet we have accepted your invitation. Our school teaches patience and tolerance. It began among the peasants of a small Terran nation, because the warriors of that nation had an overweening pride. They oppressed those who could not resist them. They used their knowledge of weapons and fighting against people whose only weapons were empty hands. So, in our tradition, we have learned to keep our knowledge secret, never to fight unless there is no other way."

"Now, we are invited to show our skill, and as our ancient masters once did, we have made the choice. Any one of our class could demonstrate the sincerity of our style. John is chosen."

John walked forward, too numbed with surprise to feel nervous. He faced his master, and bowed. Then he simply went to the contest area, stood at his line, and waited for the fight to begin. This time there was no curt nod from the girl.

"Prepare." A short pause. "Begin."

John stepped forward, ready. The girl feinted and moved, trying for a throw. John slipped to one side, just enough for her to miss her grip, but she was far too fast for his counter-punch. Again, he waited, and again she moved in. This time Jan went straight for a throw, but he blocked her arm before it gripped his jacket. His back-fist strike to her temple flicked a lock of her hair. That was a point! He stepped back, expecting the referee to halt the fight and award the point, but no call came. He saw the flicker of surprise in her eyes--she knew his blow was valid. She glanced quickly at the referee, but still no call came.

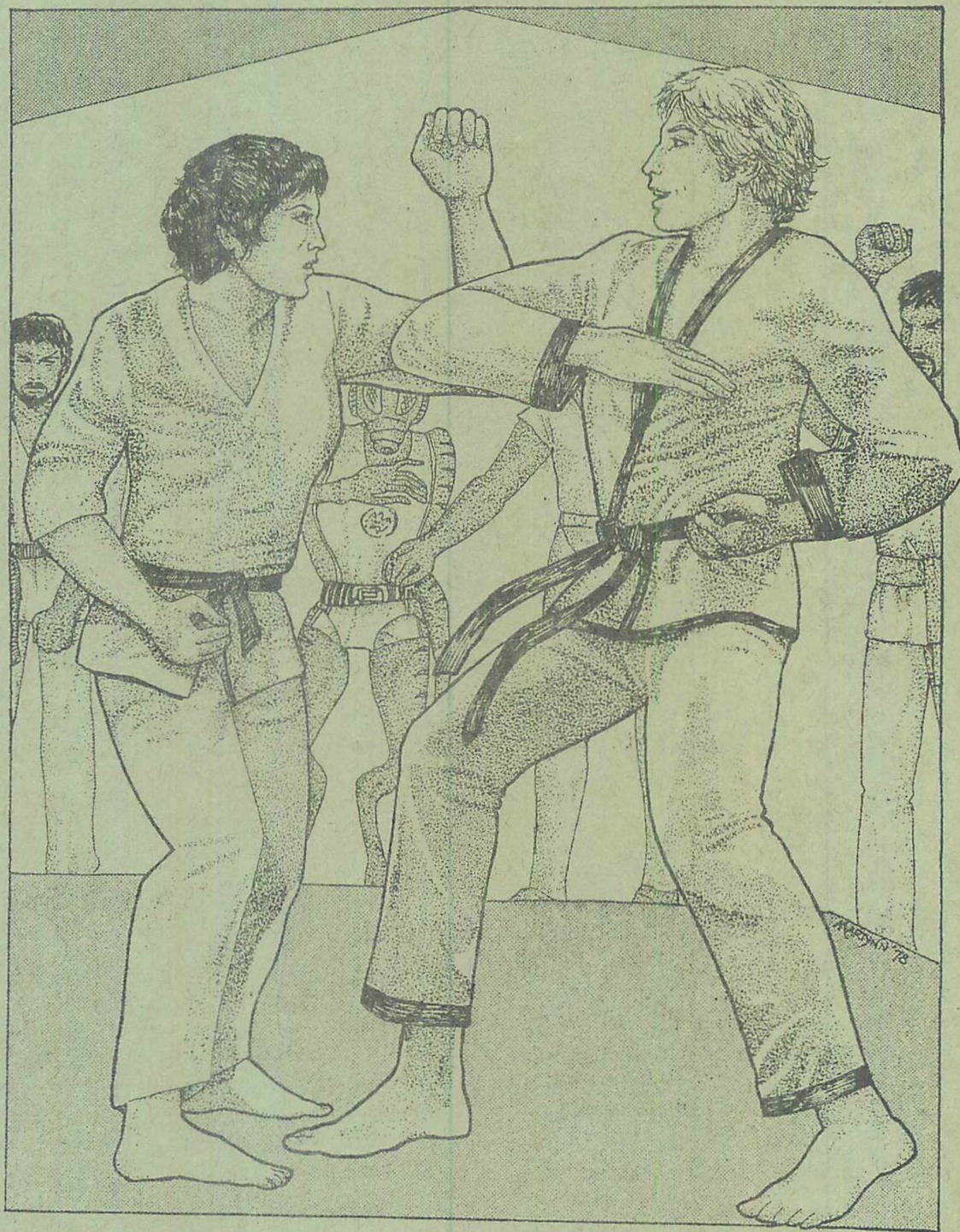
They fought on. Jan moved around the contest area like quicksilver. John didn't even try to read her movements; she was too fast, and her techniques too strange to him. Instead, he concentrated on the space around him, ignoring his opponent until she came into range, then defending and counter-attacking. It wasn't easy, but his early blow to her head had made Jan wary of him. Her reactions, superbly trained and naturally fast, stopped her from carrying through any attack that had been anticipated or blocked, and her speed took her out of the range of his punches.

John began to move forward, not waiting for the attack, going in to limit her space and cramp her style. Was she tiring? It seemed now that he had more time to block, to see opportunities. She tried another feint, and as she changed direction, John attacked. He hooked his foot behind her ankle, and swept her leg aside, following as she fell, before she could roll. His fist had begun to move towards her unprotected head. This time, the referees could not pretend to be blind!

"Time! Stop!"

John froze. There was still a full minute on the clock. For the second time, his surprise was mirrored in Jan's eyes. Slowly, he stood up, releasing her. She stood too, and moved back to her place, as John became aware of the uproar around them. The contest area was ringed by kershu fighters, all shouting--at the referees, at Jan, at John.

"Filthy Earther, you're throwing the fight!" one spat at Jan. Her face remained impassive, her gaze withdrawn. Past the ring of angry Klingons and the terrific noise (most of the kershu fans were shouting, and some were fighting among themselves) John saw the University master, Kinet, talking to the referees. And he saw his master moving quietly through the crowd towards the fight mats. Just as John was thinking that the Klingons were not so poorly trained that they would invade the fight area, he felt a heavy thump across his back. He turned to see a row of



jeering, shouting Klingons, and his master who stepped through the mob and onto the mats as if he were walking through a park. The noise died down slightly. The master turned to the referees, addressing the University master by name.

"Kinet Kinistran, your student Janet has done your school great credit. She has shown true spirit, more so than these." The master's gesture seemed to include the referees as well as the mob. "If you, or any official here is not satisfied, I invite you to name another fighter. John will still stand for us."

"Well," the master said to John, "that's done it. I've really insulted them now. They'll be hopping mad--but they'll also have to change the referees!"

Officials were moving the Klingon crowd away from the arena, back to their waiting areas and seats. The roar, stilled for an instant by his master's challenge, was now even louder. Some of the Klingons even seemed to be frothing at the mouth. It was an unnerving sight.

Out of the uproar a Klingon leapt forward, teeth bared in scarcely-repressed fury. Without even looking at Jan, he stiff-armed her off the mats and took her place, fists clenching.

"I," he said, "am Ketac. I challenge for Barwen!"

The arena referee stepped to the center of the mat area, turned to face John, and gave the Klingon salute. John bowed in reply, hands by his sides.

"Do you continue this fight by all our rules?" the referee asked.

"Yes, I do."

The referee turned to Ketac, asking the same question. Ketac snarled by way of reply, glaring past the referee at John.

"Prepare. Begin!"

Ketac had rushed on him before John could move, raining blows and grasping for holds. John ducked and evaded, desperately. But he was caught by a glancing punch which rolled off his shoulder. His arm tingled with the shock. Ketac had intended to hurt. Had that blow landed on a vital spot, John would be dead--or, at best, crippled. John saw the blood-lust rise in the Klingon's eyes. There was only one thing to do. If he retreated, John knew he would be overwhelmed. He had to attack, and keep attacking. He could not let the Klingon choose the pace of the fight.

Ketac had moved back, eying him, preparing his next attack. Just as he lunged forward, John stepped in, jolting the Klingon with a long straight punch to the lower ribs. Ketac woofed as his breath was forced out, but he didn't stop. He pushed forward, trying to jostle John off-balance. John, inside his opponent's range, swung a sharp elbow strike to the side of Ketac's jaw, but the Klingon jerked his head aside, and

the blow slid by. Then, before he knew what had happened, John was falling backwards, one leg trapped in the Klingon's grasp. John twisted desperately, hooking his other leg over Ketac's arm. And it worked! The Klingon, surprise showing through his anger, cartwheeled through the air and landed on the edge of the arena.

"Stop!"

John picked himself up and stepped back at the referee's sharp order. Surely even the most biased of judges would have to award him the point.

Ketac, however, paid no attention to the referee. He climbed slowly to his feet, his eyes focused on John's face, and flung himself forward.

John automatically blocked Ketac's blow, and the referee clapped his hands and cried again, "Stop!"

Ketac launched another blow at John. As he blocked again, John looked at Ketac's wild but oddly intent eyes. He realized with sudden shock that Ketac did not hear the referee, did not mean to obey. Ketac would not stop fighting until one of them was disabled--or dead.

But I don't want to kill him, John thought frantically. The ethics of his school-- John jumped back, disengaging from the other fighter. "I concede the match!" he shouted.

Ketac's only response was to rush at John. John whipped around, sliding to the side. Without thinking, John flicked his arm out, the side of his fist striking up at the Klingon's skull. The blow landed, hard. Ketac dropped.

Slowly, the Klingon rolled over, his body slack, his jaw hanging open. The referee knelt on one knee to examine the fighter. Looking up, he signalled the official end of the bout, his arm straight in the air, fingers spread.

"He is dead."

But that blow is only supposed to stun, John thought numbly. *But-- but maybe that's only true with humans. Maybe it does kill Klingons.* He stared in horror at the body on the mat, thinking of the words of his school's oath.

'I will not kill if there is any other way.'

John looked around at a touch on his arm. His master stood beside him. John turned to him, feeling slightly ill. "I didn't--" he began.

"Don't talk," said the master. "You did very well. Now go back to the waiting area."

John walked back past the babble of the spectators, and the stunned silence of the other fighters. Even his own classmates seemed to draw

away from him. Suddenly exhausted, John sat down on the floor, head in his hands.

"John." One of the seniors nudged him. "Visitors."

John got up. His classmates had gathered around him, blocking him from view, but also preventing him from seeing. They stood aside now. The visitors were one of the young Klingon fighters--and the Terran girl, Jan. Though it must have been frightening for them to come forward alone against the massed karate school, they both stood straight and calm.

John greeted them uncertainly.

"This is Korbas," Jan said. "We're both Master Kinet's students."

Korbas said, struggling with the words, "You have our respect. We, kershu fighters, are ashamed that Ketac attacked without warning. Turning a competition into a killing matter--"

"I didn't want to kill him." John grabbed at the chance to explain. "I didn't think that blow was hard enough to kill, it's supposed to stun." As he spoke, he glanced from Jan to Korbas, and glimpsed, behind them, a change in the activity in the contest area.

One of the referees had raised Ketac's body into a sitting position, and was pulling Ketac's arms forward. John's master stood behind Ketac, and with a steady pressure, pushed his fist against Ketac's back. Twice he pushed--and Ketac raised his head, looking dazed.

Jan and Korbas turned to follow John's astounded gaze.

"I don't believe it!" Jan gasped.

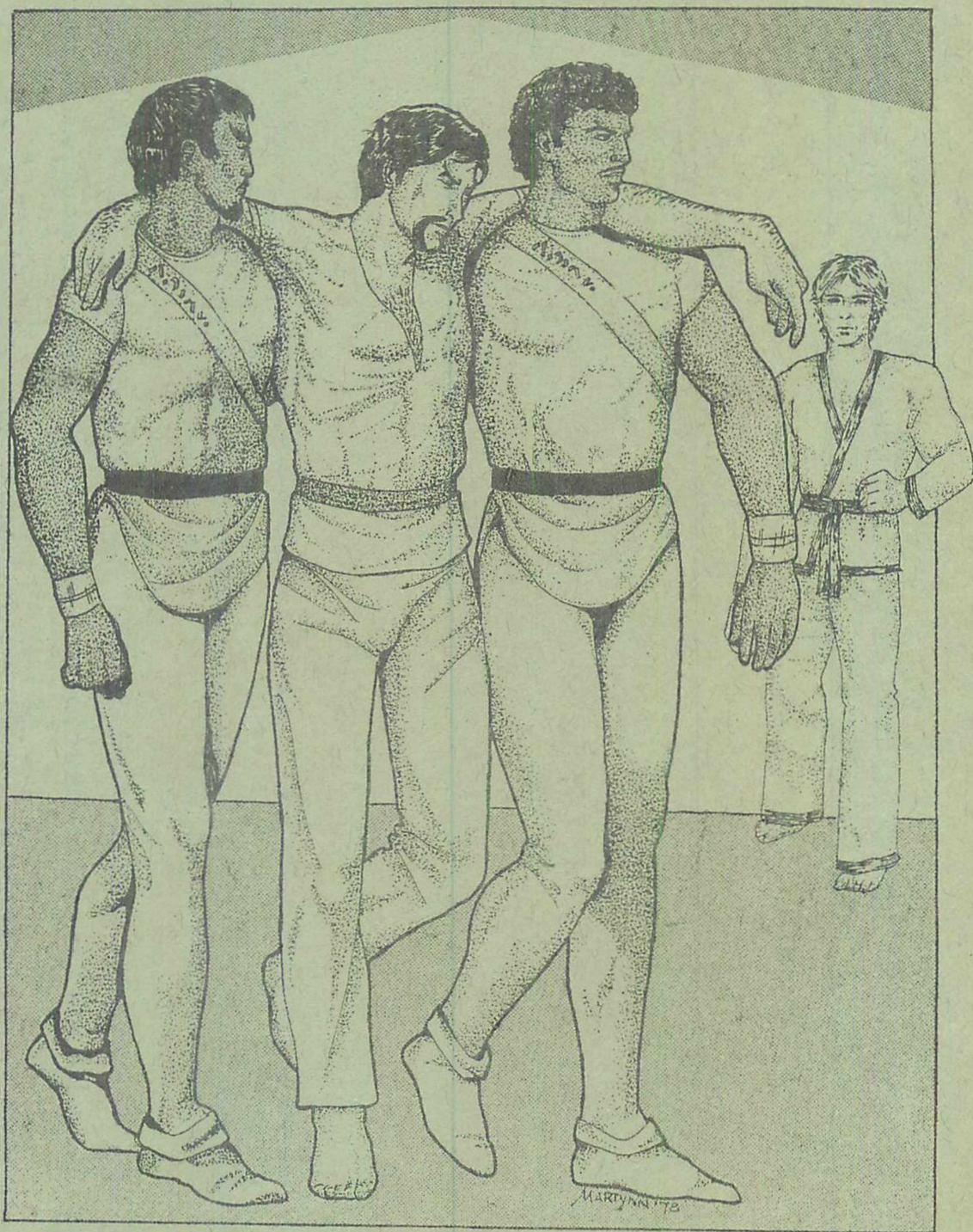
Ketac was walking away, supported by two officials.

John, Jan, and Korbas stared after him, and then exchanged confused looks. There was a long moment of silence, and then one of the tournament officials yanked out his microphone and announced the cancellation of any remaining bouts.

The competition was over.

"I think," said the master, "that I made a mistake in putting your name on *all* the ballot-slips for that competition with the kershu fighters. It seemed like an excellent way to ensure that you represented us--but perhaps *that* was not a good idea. Your mind has not been on your practice since you returned."

"Yes, Master," John replied automatically. Of course, he knew karate was the right way. That went without saying. But it had been interesting, that opportunity to see the Klingon techniques. There would be other mixed tournaments. His hand slipped inside his jacket, touching Jan's message.



The Gnu Sound ~

A~isle

B~delium

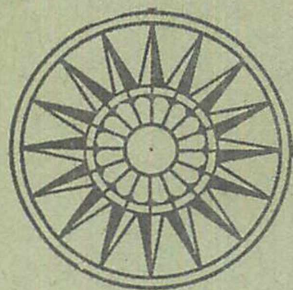
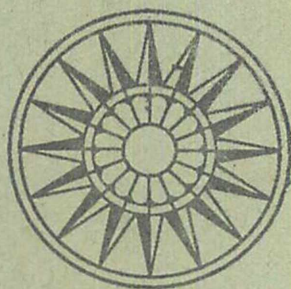
C~thonic

D~jinn

E~uphemism

F

G~neiss



H~onor

I
J~ai lai

K~nife

L~lama

M~nemonie

With thanks to Ruth Berman, Pat O'Neill and Fern Marder

an alphabet for the future

N

O

- possum

P

- sionic

Q

- uay

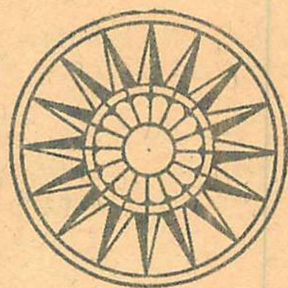
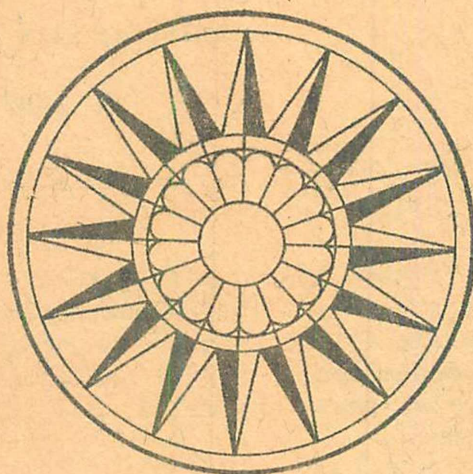
R

S

- yzygy

T

- sunami



U

- itlander

V

- olkswagen

W

- hore

X

- enon

Y

- clept

Z

- eitgeist

THE WAR OF THE WELL

A VULCAN ELEGY

Translated, with notes and introduction
by
Sandra Wise

This poem is one of the earliest extant examples of Vulcan Pre-Reform literature.

Written approximately twelve thousand Standard years ago, when the Vulcans were semi-barbarous nomads, scratching for a living in the arid foothills of the L-Langon Mountains, the poem tells of an inter-tribal war for possession of a well called the "Sweet Water", which led to the annihilation of one tribe, and the founding of the city of ShiKhar by the victors.

It is difficult for the natives of water-rich worlds, such as Earth, to comprehend the vital role that water-rights played in the early history of Vulcan. In those times, possession of a single water-hole could mean the difference between survival and death for an entire tribe. In this context, see lines 60-61 of the poem, where the women of the defeated tribe are made to say:

Who will protect us? How shall we care for our children
Now we have lost the well of Sweet Water.

If we can believe the poem, it was the desire to safeguard the well that led the victors to give up their nomadic lifestyle, thus beginning their long climb to their present level of civilization.

The poem is written in an obscure dialect of Old High Vulcan, and therefore is not as well-known, even among Vulcans, as it deserves to be. The Vulcan Science Academy Press has recently published a superb translation of the poem into modern Vulcan, by Storin and Setarr, which should correct this deficiency as far as Vulcan-speakers are concerned. Only the desire to make the poem accessible to those who do not speak that language has emboldened the present translator to place herself in such distinguished company.

It is a rare translation that does justice to the original, and the translator dares not hope that she has achieved this feat. The complexity of the original is such as to defy transcription.

For instance, line 9 might be translated as follows:

Warriors went far to follow Shikarr noble in war.

This gives you the alliteration (*warriors--war, far--follow*), the assonance (*far--war*), and the internal rhyme (*far--Shikarr*), but does not convey the subtle overtones of the original, which shows that the nobility of the warriors and the nobility of the leader reinforce each other.

Faced with the impossibility of doing justice to the original, the translator has elected to sacrifice the form of the lines while retaining the content as best she can.

Line 107 of the poem says:

T'Palle has made this poem.

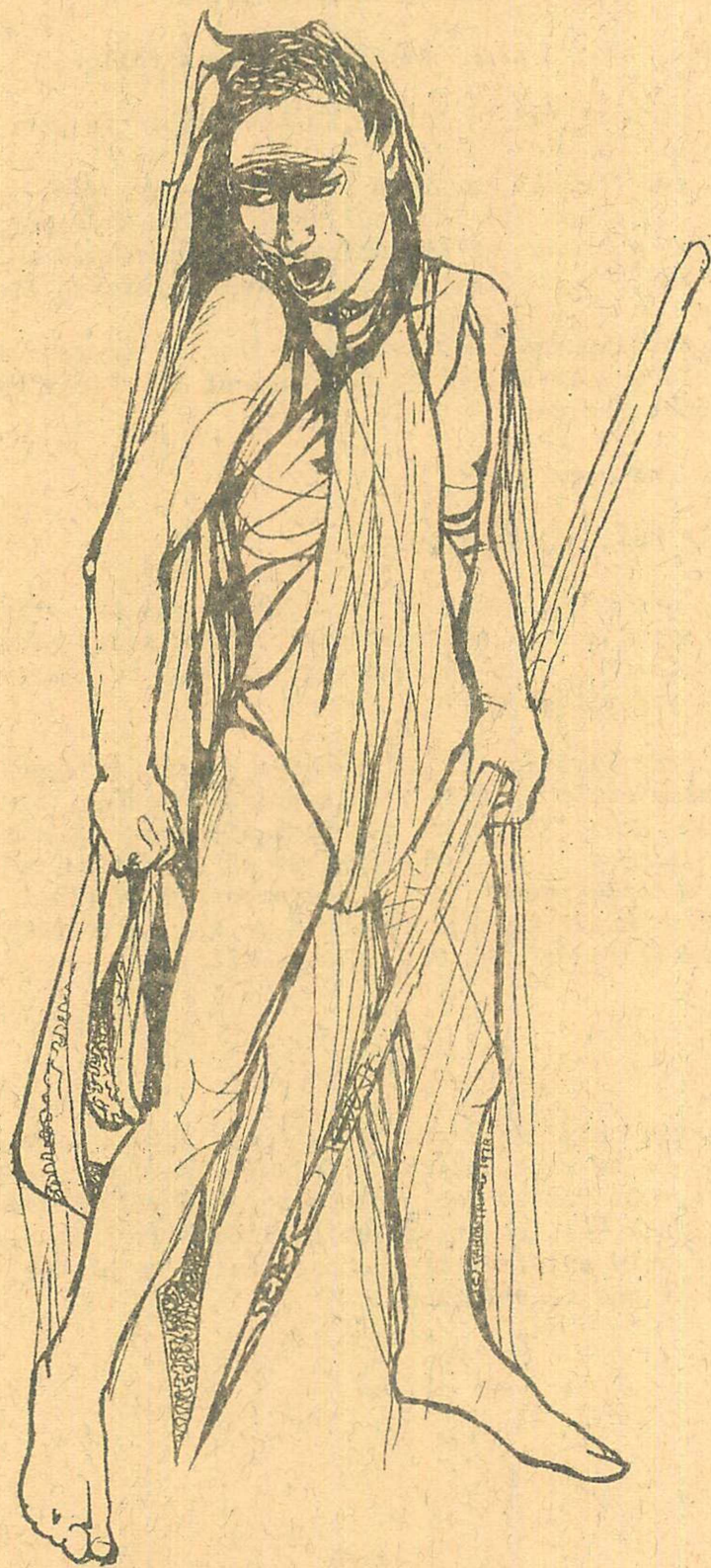
Controversy has raged over whether T'Palle was the original author or simply the transcriber of a traditional tribal song. The point-of-view of the poem is that of a contemporary witness to the events described, which proves nothing either way.

The fragmentary *Hunting of the Le-Matya* mentions "Sepek, son of Shikarr and T'Pel, the wise woman". Again, this proves nothing, since T'Pel/T'Palle is not an uncommon name. However, a tribal wise woman was responsible for maintaining and passing on the oral history of the tribe, and was therefore a likely person to make poetry out of contemporary events. For a fuller discussion of this, the reader is referred to the introduction of Storin and Setarr's translation of *The War of the Well*.

** ** *

This translator only hopes that this translation, lame as it is, will inspire some readers to seek out the original, armed with a good Fedral-Vulcan dictionary. Or better yet, that some poet will arise capable of giving *The War of the Well* the translation into Fedral it deserves. In conclusion, I can only say that if the poem fails to please, the fault is entirely that of the translation.

** ** *



THE WAR OF THE WELL

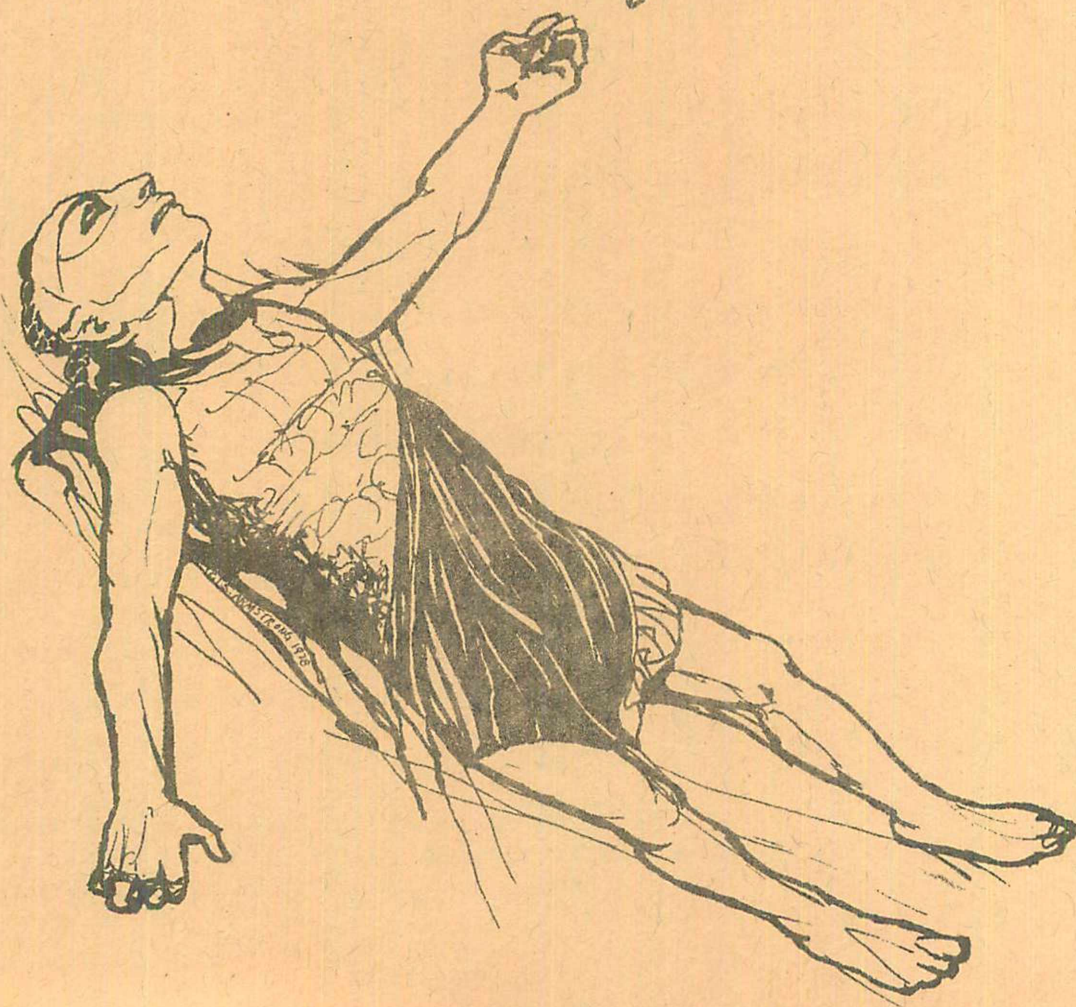
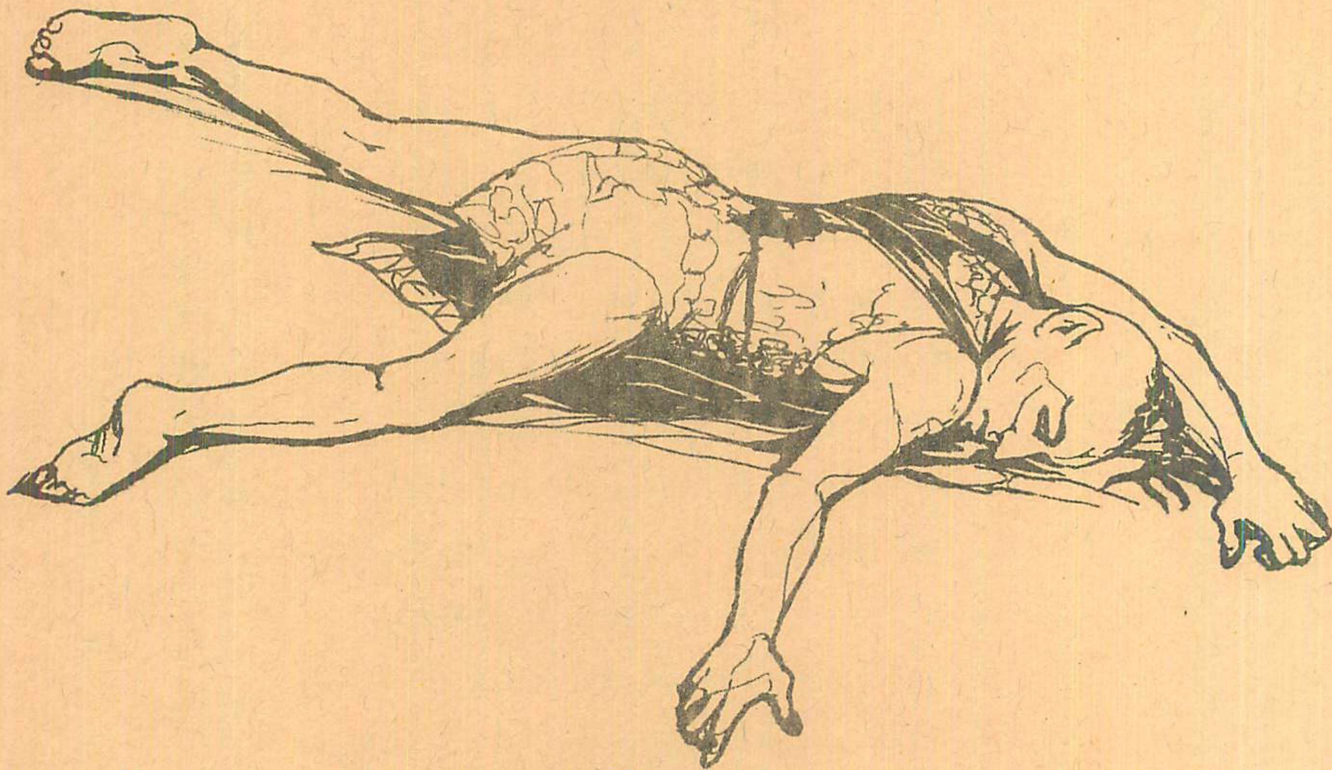
- These were the heroes who died in the War of the Well.
 Our men went down to the Sweet Water with the dawn.
 They had become as metal on the Devil's Anvil (1)
 Their high courage shortened their lives.
- 5 Green were their weapons, may they never be cleansed. (2)
 Great is the grief, many kinsmen mourning
 In the tents of the tribe, in the hills of L-Langon.
 Our men went to the Sweet Water with the dawn.
 They followed Shikarr, noble in warfare.
- 10 They were few in number, but great in courage.
 They went to win back the well of Sweet Water
 Stolen from us by those treacherous scum (3)
 The lackeys of Steddin, may his name be cursed forever.
 May he spend eternity buried in hot sand. (4)
- 15 His carrion would sicken even scavengers.
 These were the heroes who died in the War of the Well.
 The warriors of Shikarr, the noble chieftain:
 Sebek the young, the youngest of them all.
 He was a youth in years, but a man in courage.
- 20 He killed ten foes before falling himself.

(1) *the Devil's Anvil*: The desert now known as "Vulcan's Forge".

(2) *Green were their weapons*: With Vulcan blood.

(3) This is as close as the author ever gets to giving us the back-ground of the poem. Naturally, since the original audience already knew the facts of the case, there was no need to mention them.

(4) *buried in hot sand*: The worst crimes, such as treason, were punished by *Intel-Shiya* (Unmerciful Execution), which meant being buried up to the neck in the sand and left to die of thirst.



- Starn was a mighty warrior in the host.
 He would rather do battle than go to his wedding. (5)
 Death was his bride, at the well of Sweet Water.
 When Sassek rushed into battle,
 25 It was like the attack of a Le-Matya (6)
 Those who were merely brave fled from him.
 Sobel wore red garments into battle. (7)
 Many women mourned him like widows.
 His red was dyed green with the blood of the foe.
 30 The enemy laughed when they saw Sakar.
 He went to battle jewelled, as to a feast.
 His blade turned their laughter to mourning.
 Storr was the ugliest man in the host.
 From the back, he looked like a storage jar. (8)
 35 He stood shoulder-deep among the corpses of the slain.
 Sittar the Swift, who could outrun the wind,
 He was like a whirlwind among the foe.
 They struck at his body, but touched only his shadow.
 Soren and Soran, born at one birthing.
 40 They were always together, in life and in death.
 No man could say which was the braver.

(5) Literally: "He would rather have the *kal-if-fee* than the *koon-ut*."

(6) *Le-Matya*: The Vulcan "mountain lion".

(7) *red garments*: "To wear red garments" is to be sexually promiscuous, i.e., by implication to have been copulating on the ground, Vulcan soil being noticeably red, like that of Earth's Australian outback. (It is interesting to compare this to the Earth expression "to wear a green gown", which means exactly the same thing. See Robert Herrick's "Corinna Going A-Maying", Greensleeves", etc.)

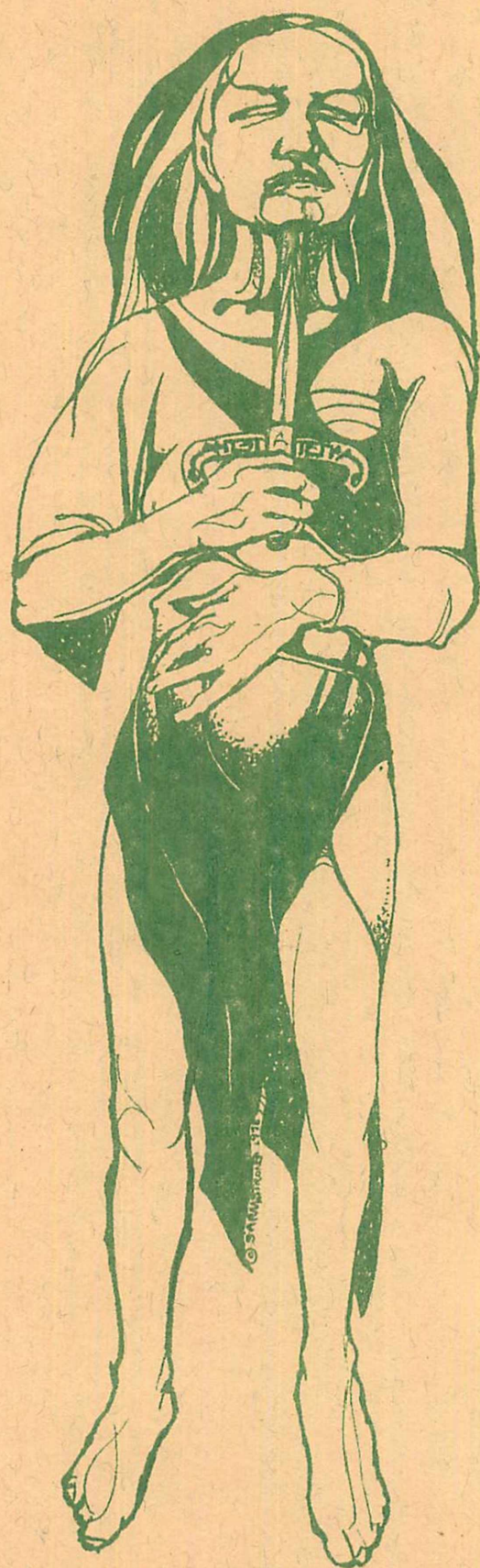
Likewise, Sobel cannot have had more than one widow, monogamy being the Vulcan custom.

(8) *like a storage jar*: short and squat.



- All women loved Skalin for his beauty.
 His eyes were the stars reflected in water. (9)
 He fell upon a heap of the slain.
- 45 Starrin was the sweet singer of our tribe.
 His voice was like water poured into a jar. (10)
 He made blade-music among the foe. (11)
 These were the heroes who fell in battle.
 For every man we lost, the enemy lost ten.
- 50 None of the foe returned to their own tents.
 Never has there been such slaughter of a host.
 When the sun stood at noon, the battle was over.
 Those who still lived returned to our tents.
 None escaped without a wound.
- 55 Great was the grief, many kinsmen mourning,
 Because of so many warriors slain.
 Water fell from their eyes.
 Water they poured upon the ground. (12)
 The widows of the foe came to our tents
- 60 Saying: "Who shall protect us? How will we care for our children
 Now that we have lost the well of Sweet Water?
 Have mercy on us, that are defeated!"

-
- (9) *stars reflected in water:* on thirsty Vulcan, any comparison to water is high praise.
- (10) *His voice was like water:* See #9, above.
- (11) *blade-music:* Tribal songs were often accompanied by the rhythmic clashing of weapons.
- (12) *upon the ground:* Conspicuous waste of precious water, in token of extreme grief.



Said Shikarr the noble chieftain:

"What mercy would have been shown our women

65 Had your men triumphed in the War of the Well?"

Then spoke the boldest of the women:

"Merciful Death we would have given them. (13)

Merciful Death is what we ask."

Said Shikarr the noble chieftain:

70 "Who seeks for death can always find it.

Those who would live must destroy their R'Lur! (14)

Then they may dwell among our tents."

Then spoke T'Etha in bitter scorn: (15)

"Better by far death with honour

75 Than to crawl whining to the feet of the foe.

Myself will greet death as I greeted my husband." (16)

Said Shikarr the noble chieftain:

"The choice is yours, you are free to make it.

What warriors your sons would be!"

80 Then spoke T'Etha in bitter scorn:

"Never will I bear sons to my foes.

Now you will see how a woman can die!"

So saying, she threw herself onto a blade.

(13) *Merciful Death*: *Tel-Shiya*; the snapping of the neck to cause instant, painless death, used as a means of execution.

(14) *R'Lur!*: Usually translated as "totem", but this is misleading. In essence, the collective external soul of a tribe. Shikarr is asking the women to destroy their tribal identity and become non-persons, so that they can be absorbed into his own tribe.

(15) *T'Etha*: Apparently the person called *the boldest of the women* in line 66.

(16) *as I greeted my husband*: With pleasure, presumably.

Said Shikarr the noble chieftain:

85 "Remember her name to teach to your children.

She was a brave woman; let her not be forgotten."

The other women went to a Merciful Death

Save only three who were heavy with child.

They would not kill the life within them. (17)

90 They burned the R'Lurl and found shelter in our tents.

Their children are now our children. (18)

The dead were buried with proper ceremonies.

Said Shikarr the noble chieftain:

"We have lost many brave warriors.

Now the well of Sweet Water is ours again,

We will keep it forever, and never lose it.

We will build a wall around it that no foe can breach."

Until that day, the tribe lived in the desert.

Now we live beside the well of Sweet Water;

100 Until that day, the tribe lived in tents.

Now we live within a wall;

The Desert Wind has founded the Desert Oasis. (19)

(17) *the life within them*: Because of their low birth rate, the Vulcans have an almost mystic reverence for pregnancy.

(18) *our children*: It appears that only adults were given a choice between life and death; the children were adopted by the victorious tribe.

(19) Literally: "*Shikarr* has founded *ShiKahr*." -- a rare example of a play on words.

Listen! I will repeat the names of the dead heroes:

Sebek the Young, Starn and Sassek,

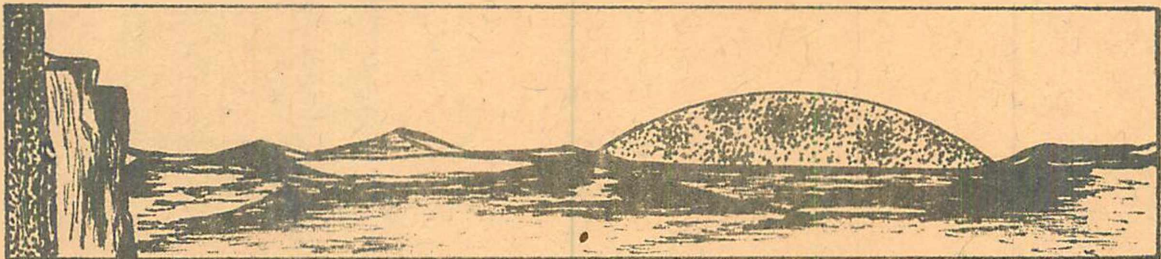
105 Sobel, Sakar and Storr the Ugly,

Sittar the Swift, Soren and Soran,

Skalin and Starrin; T'Palle has made this poem

So that their names will live forever.

* * *



OBLIGATORY
STAR WARS
ITEM

(Just so you know that
this is an *sf*
magazine.)



PAT
OWE/4/18

The Four Mousekersheers*

or

Janet and Kintam and Korbas and Manardesa Go To Disney World

by

Barbara Wenk

*Title inflicted by Joyce Yasner

"Oh, come on," said Jan, offering the headgear to Kintam. Kintam regarded it with every indication of extreme loathing.

"Everyone else is wearing one," Korbas added helpfully.

Manardesa peered at Kintam over the frame of her sunglasses. "You don't want to look like a *tourist*, do you?"

The trio looked hopefully at Kintam.

"I will NOT," he said, "wear a pair of mouse ears. I don't care what you three do." He looked his companions over with disgust. After a day spent ravaging Disney World, Janet, Korbas, and Manardesa had all accumulated a thick overlay of what Kintam referred to as 'stupid Terry junk'. "I think you're all crazy. I've never seen anything as stupid as those ears. They look even stupider than Vulcans'!"

"Kintam, sometimes I think you're incredibly provincial." Manardesa, who was wearing sandals, shorts printed with a design of orange trees and koala bears, a Mickey Mouse t-shirt, sunglasses with pink lenses in the shape of butterfly wings (the wearer's nose serving as the body of the insect) that concealed her face from forehead to midcheek, and the mouse

ears, returned to her intent perusal of the Magic Kingdom map.

Kintam turned his attention to Korbas. "The only good thing about that furry hat with the striped tail is that you can't wear that *and* those ears. And why you don't throw away that pirate sword is beyond me. You broke it hours ago."

"He doesn't want to be a bladeless wonder," Jan said, preparing to dodge if necessary.

Korbas contented himself with gritting his teeth and saying, "Just wait until we get back to the hotel," in tones of dark menace.

It was the afternoon of their last day at Disney World, and Janet, Korbas, Kintam, and Manardesa had just finished eating ("Again," as Korbas had commented, just before he bit into his sandwich). After the excitement and tension of competing in the Interstellar Martial Arts Tournament that had been part of the Peace Treaty Anniversary celebration, the four fight students had been delighted to find that they 'd have a chance to spend a weekend at one of Terra's most famous attractions. Since their ship wouldn't leave from the Florida spaceport for several days, Kinet had turned them loose on the unsuspecting amusement park.

The group lounged around the open-air table as Manardesa consulted the map. Jan and Korbas occupied themselves observing the sidelong looks their group drew from many of the passers-by.

"What do you suppose they're staring for?" said Korbas.

"I can't imagine," said Jan lazily. "May--"

"I can," Kintam said.

"--be they've never seen kershu fighters before."

"You look it," Kintam retorted, staring pointedly at the mouse ears on her head.

Jan and Korbas exchanged an amused, meaningful glance. Kintam, refusing all blandishments, and ignoring all pleas and threats, was dressed in his usual plain, neat tunic and shorts. While Jan, Korbas, and Manardesa merely looked like typical tourists, Kintam looked like a Klingon. Tourists at Disney World were no novelty. A Klingon was.

"Well?" said Korbas to Manardesa after a moment. "What shall we do next?"

Manardesa refolded the map and replaced it in her voluminous tote bag. "I know what!" she said eagerly. "Let's go on Space Mountain again!"

"NO!" shouted Kintam and Jan. They retained the most vivid and unpleasant memories of yesterday's encounter with Disney World's biggest



attraction. At the end of the ride, Jan and Kintam had staggered off, clutching heavily at each other for support. They had spent the next half hour in a state of collapse on the couch thoughtfully provided by the management at the ride's exit ramp. Manardesa and Korbas, unable to interest their companions in further activity, had bounced back to the Space Mountain entrance. They continued to go through the ride until they ran out of all of their own 'E' tickets and several they managed to worm out of Jan and Kintam.

"How about the Mad Tea Party Cups?"

"Dear God," said Jan weakly. "Right after *lunch*?"

Korbas and Manardesa, who had apparently been gifted with indestructible nervous systems, and what Kintam and Jan had come to consider a nasty, unhealthy penchant for all the more vertiginous activities available at the resort, promptly assumed deeply put-upon expressions.

Jan turned to look at the Ice Cream and Belgian Waffle stand across the square. "How about. . . ."

Her friends followed her gaze, then fastened accusing stares on her.

"You've already had all your desserts for today," said Manardesa.

"AND tomorrow," Kintam added.

"As well as most of next year's," concluded Korbas.

"But I didn't even *say* anything!" Jan protested.

"Glass head," Korbas informed her.

There was a pause. The four silently considered the best way to conclude their visit.

"What haven't we done?" Jan asked.

"You haven't set the place on fire."

Jan threw her wadded-up napkin at Kintam.

"This place is fun," said Manardesa thoughtfully. "And poor Master Kinet hasn't seen it at all."

"Some people are born lucky," Kintam muttered.

Manardesa continued, "We should get *him* a souvenir, too."

"Sounds like a good idea," said Korbas. "What?"

There was a long, ominous silence. The four faces took on identical expressions of evilly amused contemplation.

"I'm sure," Korbas said, glancing at Jan with a grin, "that we'll find something."

"Something appropriate," said Kintam.

"Like that red marble bathtub with the gold clawed legs and the nails picked out in green jade--"

"Manardesa, you've got the most appalling taste I've ever heard of!" Jan said.

The four pushed back their chairs and stood up. The casual suggestion had metamorphized into a fixed determination to Buy Kinet A Present.

The next couple of hours passed pleasantly. They wandered from shop to shop, debating, in agreeable acrimony, the relative merits of the available items.

The only incident that marred the shopping expedition occurred as they walked from one shop (which offered for sale a three-foot high replica of the Taj Mahal that played 500 popular songs). As they stood by the doorway, several preteenagers ran up to them.

"Can we have your autograph?" Several pieces of paper were shoved at Kintam. "We saw you in the tournament on the tridee, and we just love kershu fighting!"

Since Kintam didn't speak Federation Standard, he was forced to turn to Jan for a translation. "What do they want?" Recalling, with an inner shudder, the behavior of some of the more mature female Terran fight fans, he added, in darkly suspicious accents, "I will *not* kiss them."

"I'll kiss them," put in Korbas. "The girls, anyway."

"Nobody asked *you*," said Kintam.

"They want to see you toss someone--after all, you're a hotshot kershu fighter," Jan said to Kintam.

As Jan turned to exchange grins with Korbas, Kintam leaped at her and promptly pinioned her securely beneath him on the ground. He sat on her, looking happier than he had since leaving Kershi for Terra, and began scribbling 'Fight-Master Kinet Kinistran' on the pieces of paper pressed into his hands by the children.

"I'm going to get you for this," Jan warned him, trying vainly to writhe free. She was hampered in her efforts by the children clustered closely around her and Kintam.

"You and what six other fighters?" Kintam inquired calmly. He handed back the last paper to the impressed children, got off Jan, and instantly ducked behind Korbas and Manardesa, who stopped snickering long enough to grab Jan's arms as she sprang up.

"You can't start a fight here," Korbas said.

"You're not supposed to jump someone without warning. And YOU can just stop that idiotic giggling, 'desa!"

Manardesa pushed up her sunglasses to look at Jan. "So complain to Kinet and see where it gets you."

"A fighter is always prepared." Kintam's tone was smug.

After a moment's obligatory glaring, Jan allowed herself to be brushed off, and they resumed their quest for the Perfect Gift for Kinet. After considering and rejecting a number of unique items--a handtatted, plaid, yak-hair stuffed pillow; a six-foot high white linen palm tree stuffed with comfee-foam and embroidered with 'A Gift From Sunny Florida' in orange thread ("But Kinet LOVES plants!" Manardesa had argued. "That's why we're not getting it," Kintam answered. "Remember what happened the last time you had a little idea about giving him some plants?" "Well, it's a lot better-looking than those plastic flowers--" "No," the others chorused, and Manardesa had given up.); and a Mickey Mouse watch. The watch was almost chosen, since it not only told the time on twelve planets, but the date, the phase of the moon, and the wearer's current biorhythmic state. But while the four were discussing the merits of the watch, the ideal item was finally discovered.

After purchasing the gift, the four returned to one of the cafeterias for refreshment. ("Don't you three ever think about *anything* but food?" Korbas asked plaintively.) The object was unwrapped and placed on the table.

"That," said Kintam with great conviction, "is without a doubt the most repulsive thing I've ever seen."

"YOU picked it out," Manardesa pointed out unkindly.

"Yes, but it was YOUR idea in the first place. I thought you were supposed to be the sensible one in this group." Kintam returned his gaze to the object on the table. "God alone knows why."

They studied the object on the table. It seemed to return their entranced stares. It was a three-foot long translucent blue fish. It was studded all over with imitation cracked marbles. It also lit up.

Manardesa, apparently hypnotised by the thing, tentatively reached out and poked one of the marbles with her finger. The fish's mouth dropped open, and it began to play a lively, strongly syncopated tune.

The four regarded it with rather stunned awe. The three Klingons looked at Jan. "What song *is* that?" Manardesa managed to ask.

"I *think* it's supposed to be 'Some Day My Prince Will Come', Jan said in strangled tones. "From *Snow White*."

This meant nothing to the Klingons. Jan hastened to assure them that the song was completely inappropriate. This led into a spirited discussion of how to present the item. Korbas rather cravenly suggested that they mail it.

"And maybe it'll be lost in transit."

"Things like that NEVER get lost," Manardesa declared. "They always turn up two days early and in perfect condition."

Finally deciding that Kinet's life would not be complete unless they presented it to him at once ("All *four* of us," Kintam said. "*To-gether*." "Coward," said Jan.), they collected their various bags and parcels and started back to the hotel. Korbas, Jan, and Manardesa were soon lagging behind Kintam. His hope, that if he outdistanced the others no one would think he was a member of the motley crew, was in vain. Jan, Korbas, and Manardesa insisted that he carry the unwrapped fish.

After depositing the day's haul of oddly assorted presents and souvenirs in their rooms, they gift-wrapped the fish and sallied forth in search of Kinet.

Kinet was finally discovered sitting by the pool. He was sprawled comfortably in a lounge chair cheerfully debating with a tall, chestnut-haired Vulcan. The topic was the virtues of kershu fighting as opposed to karate.

"Moral superiority is all very well, Sondt," Kinet said, "but--" At that point Sondt's wife, a sleek Vulcan woman with waist-length black hair and a green bikini that appeared to have been spray-painted to her body, walked up and handed each of them a drink.

"Thank you," said Kinet. Just as he was in the process of swallowing, he caught sight of his approaching students.

"What is that little group?" inquired the Vulcan woman with amused interest. "They seem to be coming this way."

Kinet closed his eyes as if in pain. "Those are my students."

A slow grin spread over the woman's face. "*Those* are your students?"

"Sara," Sondt said. "Aren't we expected somewhere?"

"Don't bother on my account," said Kinet.

Sondt stood. "T'Misoara?"

"Oh, all right," she said. "We really do have a tennis match soon."

As she and Sondt strolled off, Sara glanced back at the group of fight-students. She raised her eyebrows and shook her head slightly.

Sondt, looking tempted to push her into the pool, said something to her in an undertone.

"Ha!" Sara said as they vanished around one of the groups of ornamental shrubbery. "I'll bet."

Kinet leaned over and put his drink carefully on the ground beside his chair. Jan, Korbass, Kintam, and Manardesa came to a stop in front of him.

"Yes?" Kinet said in a depressed voice.

His four students looked at Kinet and then at each other. Jan, who had drawn the short straw, stepped forward and held out the gaily-wrapped parcel.

"We brought you a little souvenir," she said.

Kinet reluctantly accepted the parcel. A sudden memory of the farewell present he had given his own fightmaster when *he'd* been a student made him reach for his drink again. After taking a large swallow and replacing the glass, he said, "How thoughtful of you."

"Aren't you going to open it?" Manardesa asked.

Kinet, trapped, slowly began to unwrap the gift. His students prudently retreated a few paces back from his chair.

When he had removed the object from the paper and ribbons and saw it clearly, he stared at it in speechless amazement for a moment. Then he said, watching the anticipatory faces of his dear students, "Does it do anything else, or is it merely cleverly designed to revolt all on-lookers?"

Jan, Korbass, Kintam, and Manardesa exchanged looks of suppressed glee.

"It also plays a traditional Earth song," Korbass volunteered.

"Does it really?" said Kinet.

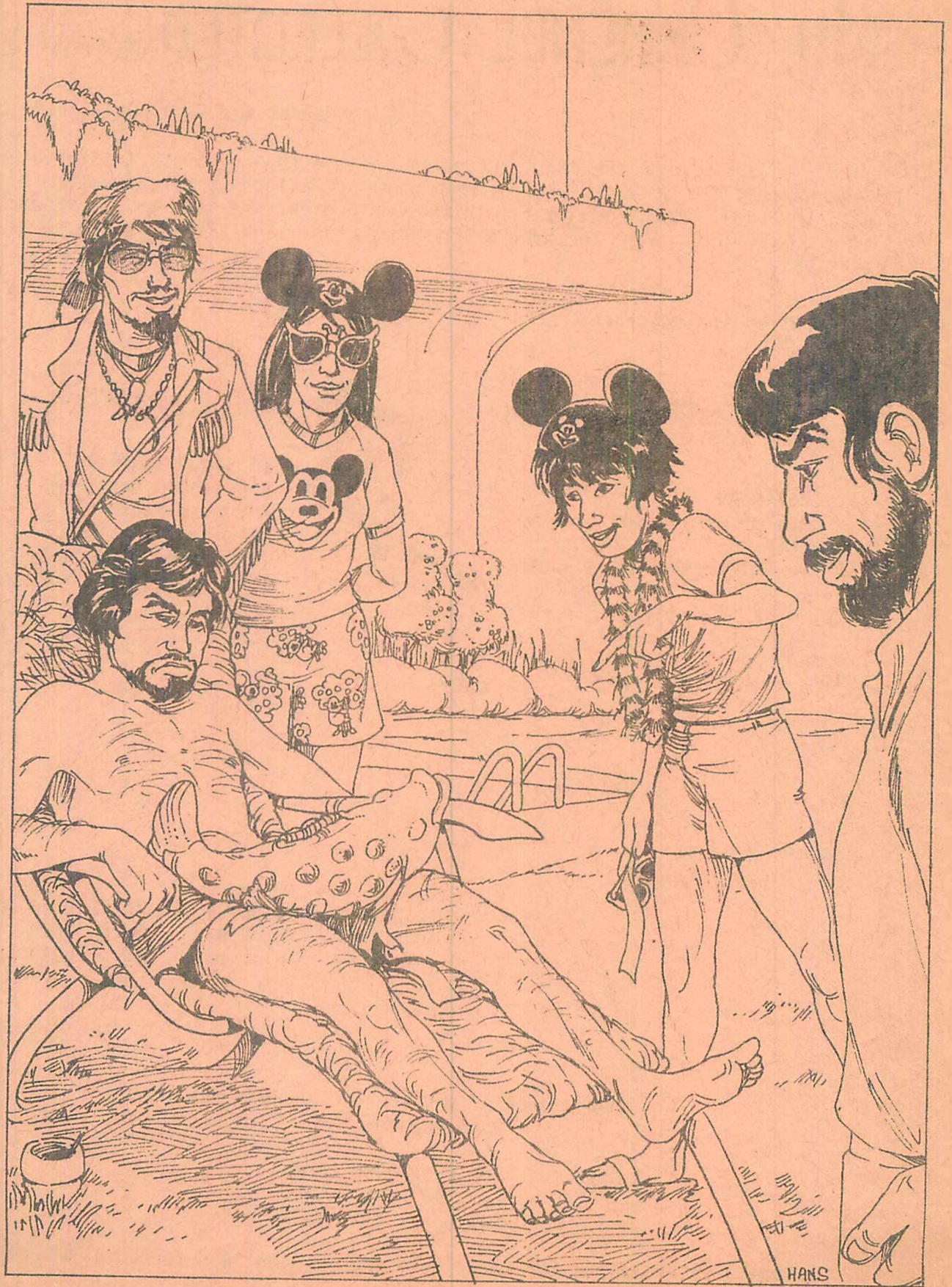
Jan indicated the marble that acted as the 'On' button. "All you have to do to hear it is push that."

"And it lights up, too, I see," Kinet observed mildly.

"That's right," said Kintam.

"Well," said Kinet. He looked at the fish on his lap. "The student lounge needs another lamp. I'm sure everyone will appreciate *your* contribution to the room immeasurably."

Of course, he thought, I could always send it to Master Kemiskahn. . . .



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