

Scott





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### E NDSET

On Friday, January 3, 1969, I had some letters to take over to the studio, including, to my surprise, William Shatner's Christmas cards from Gene Roddenberry and Gregg Peters. Shatner had had his address withheld from the studio lists that season, and apparently Roddenberry and Peters had forgotten that mail addressed to the Star Trek stars went, unopened, to Star Trek Enterprises. So instead of simply giving Shatner their cards, they'd mailed them (and only the fact that they'd sent me cards, too, so that I recognized the envelopes while sorting and pulled them out kept the executive producer and production manager from being sent a photograph of William Shatner and a catalog of souvenirs apiece).

I had some trouble getting in that day, as it seemed they'd been having too many visitors recently. The new assistant director, Gene DeRuelle, coming out of Stage 9 as I was about to go in, stopped me and asked if I had any business there. Forced to consider the issue so suddenly, I wasn't really sure I did, but I stammered out something to the effect of, "Yes, I handle fan mail for the show." He looked dubious, but just then Teresa Victor came out and said brightly, "Oh, hi, Ruth. Do you have any mail for us?" DeRuelle decided I was authentic and went on his way.

When I got inside, I found that Shatner was (I think) getting ready to film a scene. However, he took the time to make small-

talk for a few minutes, asking me how I was and how my writing was going. I mentioned that I'd submitted a story-outline to Star Trek some months ago, but didn't expect to hear anything about it unless the show got renewed for another season. Shatner nodded. "I'm in the same boat," he said. "I wrote a script that they accepted tentatively, and it was going to be the 25th or 26th show this season if they got the money to do more shows. But they only got the money to do 24. If we get renewed, they'll do it next season."

I made some conventionally sympathetic answer. In retrospect, I'm amazed that I didn't ask him what his script was about, but I was feeling ill at the time, and it somehow didn't occur to me that I could press him for details. And, at that, I don't think there was time for me to have done so -- he said, "Well, it's been nice talking to you," and went about his business a minute afterwards.

As I started out, Doohan looked up from the "rehearsal table" to ask how I was. (The table was a sturdy, somewhat battered one, usually sitting in a corner of the briefing room and looking very out-of-place against the futuristic, curved "beams" of the set. It was used as a convenient place to study or read over lines.) He had been studying lines he already knew and was glad of someone to talk to. DeForest Kelley, in the same situation, came over and suggested that they go over their lines in the upcoming scene.

The scene was a corridor scene in "Turnabout Intruder" in which McCoy and Scott discuss what to do about "Kirk's" attempt to courtmartial Spock. They read through the scene once, tonelessly. They started through it again, but Kelley came to a halt at one point, when Nurse Chapel was supposed to come up and point out that Janice Lester had earlier referred to a rendezvous between the Enterprise and the Potemkin that she couldn't know about if she weren't Kirk. The information was supposed to trigger his decision to go against the seeming-Kirk, but the switch in mood between being conspiratorial with Scott and being Doctorish for the nurse's benefit and then back again was so abrupt as to be ludicrous unless done carefully. Kelley practiced intonations for a few moments, trying to smooth out the transitions, and then, getting an attack of the late afternoon sillies, went on with his lines in a Scottish accent. Doohan's face remained glum, but he read back Scott's lines in a Southern accent, and they kept on going until they came to the line, "But that would be mutiny!" Doohan read it without expression.

"No, no, you're doing it all wrong," said Kelley. "Like this: 'But that would be mutiny!'" he shrilled, flopping a limp wrist out like the Mad parody of Marlon Brando in "Mutiny on the Bounty."



Both men broke up laughing and abandoned rehearsal for a spell of cozy grumbling. "That Gene DeRuelle!" complained Doohan. "He gave me a 10:00 call, and we still haven't done my scene." It was then a little before five.

"I've been here since 7:30," said Kelley.

"Yes, but you had a scene. You got to act," said Doohan enviously.

"Well, yesterday I had a 7:15 morning call, and we didn't get to my scene till 7 PM. And I was in the first part of the scene and the last part, but the director wanted us to do it in sequence so we'd get the flow of it instead of doing it in sections. Humph!" he snorted. "We could have done it in sections all right. But we didn't. And I didn't get out till 10."

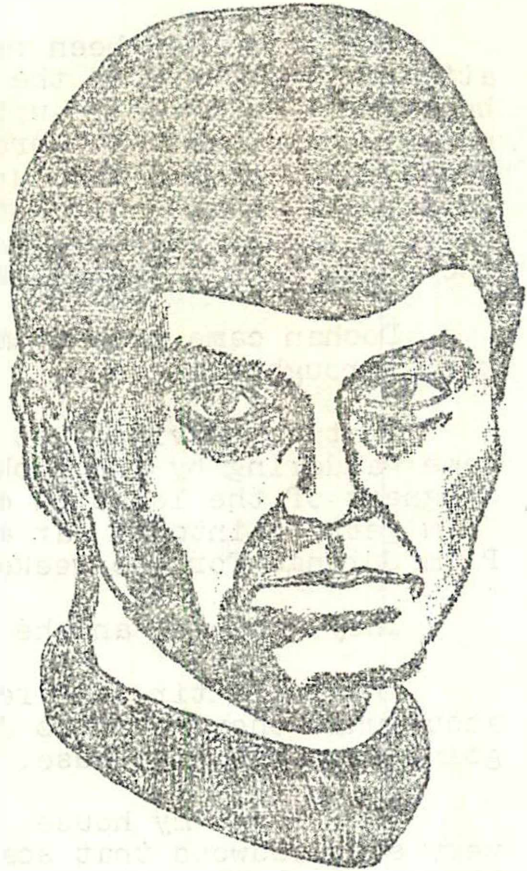
A telephone light was flashing a few yards away. No one answered, and finally Doohan got up, muttering, "Why doesn't anyone ever answer the phone?" He picked up the receiver and said in a deep, impersonal voice, "Hello, Star Trek set." He sounded very much unlike himself, but very much like the Daystrom computer and the other non-human voices he'd done on the show. It amused me to hear that voice actually coming out of him, because it was so different from his Scott-voice that even when he (as Scott) interrupted himself (as Daystrom computer) I found it difficult to hear any similarity in the voices.

Majel Barrett came walking by then, and Kelley called out, "Hey, Majel! you're in this scene. Come rehearse."

"No, I'm not."

"Yes, you are. See?" he said, pulling out the latest rewrite of the scene.

"Oh, no," she said, sitting down beside him. "I thought I was through for today."



The scene had been rewritten some half-dozen times in an attempt to get across the point about Janice Lester's Kirkish behavior. Half the re-writes had McCoy remembering it spontaneously, and half had Nurse Chapel interrupting him with it. The final re-write had the nurse come in with the information -- but, when the film was edited for broadcast, the whole business of proving Kirk's identity to McCoy at that point was cut out, and the nurse wasn't in that scene after all.

Doohan came back from the phone, and the three of them read through the scene.

Shatner, having just finished his last scene for the day, came wandering by and looked at his diligent colleagues with the smugness of the leisured class. "I just finished," he announced. "I'm getting into my car and driving to the airport and going to Palm Springs for the weekend."

They groaned, and he headed off for his dressing-room.

They were tired of rehearsing by then and began to talk about what they would do during vacation. Doohan said he was going to paint his house.

"I painted my house, once," said Kelley. "It was built of a very soft redwood that soaked up paint like a sponge, but no one thought to tell me that. I was painting that house all day long every day for weeks. Paint paint paint paint paint," he said dreamily (like the Dormouse going "twinkle twinkle twinkle"), slapping an imaginary brush lazily against an imaginary wall.

Finally they were called -- not to actually do the scene, but to go rehearse it in the corridor -- and I left.

The following Thursday Rick Carter phoned me at work to say that he had some work to turn over to me and that I really did want to see the last day of the last show being filmed, right? I agreed that I did and got permission to go over.

The set was funereal in atmosphere. All the shipboard scenes had been completed, leaving only the few planetside scenes to do, with Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Janice Lester, and Dr. Coleman. By the time I arrived, the scenes left to do involved only Kirk and Janice. The usual crowd of technicians was there, bundled up against the cold (heaters were turned on between takes, as fans had been when the filming for the season started in May; the heaters were as ineffective as the fans). Everyone was subdued and quiet. The show had not actually been canceled, but the odds seemed good that it would be.

Shatner had the flu, on top of the depression they all felt, and he was meek and quiet between takes, although he managed to be as heroic and Kirkish as ever during takes. Sandra Smith

(Janice Lester) flirted with him, trying to cheer him up, so industriously that at first I wondered if there was anything between them, until I noticed that she was playing ministering angel only during short breaks. Longer breaks she spent talking with a man I didn't recognize (her agent or boyfriend or husband, I assume), who was obviously of more interest to her than any of the regulars.

She succeeded in cheering Shatner up a little, but he really perked up only once while I was there. That was when Rick Carter suggested that there was someone present (me) who hadn't heard what Shatner had done the day before. Shatner beamed and proceeded to explain to me that a Canadian fan of the show had tried to get onto the lot to see him by pretending to be an interviewer from a movie magazine. Shatner had spotted her at once as a fake, but didn't tell her so.

She struggled on with her impersonation, pulling out a pencil and a small notebook, and asked what he'd done before Star Trek.

"I was a brick-layer."

"A brick-layer?"

"Yes. I was laying bricks on the studio lot one day when Gene Roddenberry came along and said 'How would you like to be on television'."

"Oh. And what are you going to do after Star Trek?"

"Go back to laying brick."

Shatner chuckled at the recollection. "I told her all about a brick-layer's hopes and philosophy and ambitions: there's too much stucco in Los Angeles, too much clapboard -- there should be more brick!"

"Bill!" called the director.

Shatner pushed himself up out of his chair and went to stand patiently behind the clapboard, looking as if he did quite seriously think there was too much clapboard in Los Angeles.

At the end of the take it occurred to him that he didn't really need to plod over to his chair between takes; there was a perfectly good sick bed right there on the set, if "Janice" didn't mind letting him borrow it.

He spent the next several breaks lying on the bed. When the shots involving the bed were completed, crewmen came to take it off the set and out of the way of the cameras. Shatner did not see them coming until they started to pick up the bed. Then he

sat up hastily and started to climb out, but they said solicitously, "Don't move," and carried him off with it. He sat grinning on the bed, looking half embarrassed and half pleased at being paraded around like an Eastern potentate in a palanquin. (It looked a little bit like T'Pol's entrance, too, come to think of it.)

When his shots were completed, he left. Soon after, the shots involving "Janice" were completed, and she left. That left only a few close-ups of assorted alien devices to film. The crew finished those, set up a small table with paper cups and a few bottles of assorted spirits and mixes, and gathered around for a farewell party. There was not much conversation. I wandered once through the dark, empty ship sets, then went over to Rick Carter's office, picked up the work he had for me, and left.

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**SPOCK'S AFFIRMATION**  
by Jacqueline Lichtenberg

The admiral's office was quiet, efficient, and so neat it resembled an unoccupied hotel suite. Admiral Pesin sat with both hands on his desk calmly reviewing the curious orders he was about to issue. Seated in front of the admiral's desk, the Schillian looked rather like a man-proportioned toad, or perhaps lizard, if you stretch the term a bit. The Star Fleet uniform pants and tunic didn't help at all.

Presently a transporter beam built two figures in front of the desk. Captain James Kirk and his first officer, Commander Spock, of the U.S.S. Enterprise, presented themselves with proper formality, and then Admiral Pesin introduced the Schillian as Lieutenant-Commander Ssarsun of Starfleet Security.

"Gentlemen," Pesin said, "be seated." He looked from Ssarsun to Kirk and finally to Spock, where his gaze became unreadable. After a long thirty seconds he said, "Commander Spock."

"Yes, sir."

"It is...with regret that I must inform you that Sarek is still missing, and that the Vulcan authorities insist that, though there is still hope, your father must be declared legally dead."

Raising one up-swept eyebrow a bit, Spock answered, "Yes, of course," as if he'd been told that the Enterprise uses a matter/anti-matter power system.

Pesin frowned. Even Vulcans didn't usually take such news quite so lightly. "I'm sorry I can't offer you home leave on this



occasion, but I've finally received instructions from the Vulcan authorities on the disposition of the Kraith. They expressed pleasure that you participated in the recovery of the Kraith and that it remains in your personal custody." Pesin cleared his throat apologetically. He'd tried to argue Spock into giving it up for safe keeping in the Base vault. "Now," he continued, "I'm instructed to ask if the Kraith is still functional."

Spock nodded gravely. "It is." His arms were folded across his spare torso as he sat at attention somehow giving the impression of a vitally alive and interested bystander at events which didn't affect him personally.

Pesin pulled his eyes away and consulted his desk reader. "Very well. I'm instructed to ask if you're prepared to take your place as..." He read the word carefully. "Kataytikh."

Kirk was watching Spock carefully and could just barely discern him subvocalizing the word several times in an effort to identify it through the human mispronunciation.

Finally Spock answered, "Yes, I am prepared." He intoned the words as if they were some sacred formula.

"Good. Now, these are your orders. There are five Vulcans here on Star Base IX, three dancers and their musicians. You are to take them and the Kraith to Feda XII, and there perform the... uh..." He consulted his reader again. "I give up.-- the English term is Affirmation of the Continuity; you understand the referent?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know the planet in question?"

"Yes, sir. There's a Vulcan archeological expedition there."

"Right. They recently lost six members in an accident...."

"That explains it." Spock nodded as if all were now clearly logical.

"Explains what?" Kirk put in from the side.

Spock glanced his way, then noted the admiral's blank look and said to both of them, "It explains why the Kraith has not been called back to Vulcan by the fastest ship available. It explains why my father has been declared legally dead, and yet I am not ordered to Vulcan immediately. And it explains why five entertainers and I are to go to Feda XII."

"It does?" Kirk felt, as usual with Spock, that he'd missed something vital somewhere.

"Of course. We are to replace the lost archeologists."

"Oh," said Kirk, not at all sure that anything had been explained.

Pesin harumphed and flicked his reader to the next view. "Which brings us to you, Captain. Finances being what they are this year, I'm not going to send the Enterprise halfway across the Federation as a personal taxi for six people and a ceramic cup, not even if that cup happens to be the most important Vulcan artifact in the universe. There is a troupe of 37 entertainers, which includes the five Vulcans, assembled here and ready to tour the Federation Bases and entertain the personnel as part of the Federation Day celebrations. They've been with the Potemkin for the first half of the tour. Now you'll take them the rest of the way. You'll make two stops before Feda XII, lay over until after their ceremonies, and continue. Here --" He handed Kirk a tape cartridge. "-- are your orders."

Kirk took it. "Yes, sir."

"You will do everything in your power to help the entertainers, but, remember, the really important part of this mission is to get the Kraith, Spock, and those five Vulcans to Feda XII by 5289.72. The Vulcans have warned me that failure to do so may well result in the gradual disintegration of the Federation."

"Yes," Kirk said, "I can see that. If humans don't take the values of the non-human members seriously, there is no basis for unity at all."

"Precisely. Which brings us to Ssarsun, here. He is to travel with you as Spock's assistant, allegedly being groomed for a post as Science Officer. He will be known as Lt. Ssarsun. In reality--" Pesin frowned at Spock. "--he will be your bodyguard. He will be with you at all times when you're not in your quarters."

"I hardly think that necessary."

"Mr. Spock." Pesin was very grave. "I'm in possession of the most emphatic document I've ever received from Vulcan hands, and it asserts that you are a most important person...at least for the moment. I would be guilty of gross negligence if I didn't take such an elementary precaution. You are familiar with Ssarsun's people?"

"Yes."

"Are you willing to accept him as your bodyguard?"

Spock closed his eyes as if to overcome an illogical reluctance.

Ssarsun spoke into the silence, a crisp elocution unexpected from such immobile lips. "Spock, I was raised from infancy on Vulcan, and, after a few years among my own people, I returned to school there. I shan't..." He searched for the right word. "...disturb you." He'd had plenty of experience blending his highly flammable Schillian personality with the coolly logical Vulcan mind.

Spock took one moment longer to ponder the prospect of allowing the deep and sustained telepathic contact that Ssarsun would require for his very sanity, and to weigh that against the possible usefulness of the unusual talents of a Schillian. Then he raised his eyes to the admiral.

"Mr. Spock, it's not entirely my own idea. When I suggested that whoever kidnapped Sarek and stole the Kraith might very well go after you next, the Vulcan authorities insisted Ssarsun be assigned to guard you."

"In that case, I have no choice. I accept." He turned to Ssarsun. "But not right now. You must allow me time to prepare."

Ssarsun didn't nod; his thick neck wasn't constructed for the gesture, but nictitating membranes veiled his eyes for a moment in assent. "Of course, I understand."

Everyone put in a busy three hours loading the troupe of 37 entertainers of various species, finding rooms for them and their luggage, rounding up stray crewmen who'd been sent on leave, loading supplies of all sorts, and tending to the myriad details of bringing an immense starship from "drydock" status to "operational."

But finally all was in order, and they were cruising at warp six on the first leg of their zig-zag across the Federation.

Kirk was marching briskly along the corridor, heading for his quarters to change for the inevitable full dress banquet in honor of their passengers, when the door to Spock's quarters slid open, and Spock and Ssarsun emerged almost shoulder to shoulder.

"Oh, Captain," Spock called, "may I speak to you for a moment?"

Kirk stopped and waited for them to catch up. "Surely. What's on your mind, Mr. Spock?"

"I would like your permission to offer hospitality to the Vulcan guests, sir." He thought that over a moment and added, "Vulcan hospitality, that is."

"Vulcan hospitality? Just what does that imply?"



"Technically, sir, you are the host here. But you are not Vulcan, and I am. Therefore, I should offer hospitality in your behalf. So it must be at your order that I kindle fire in the rooms of our guests and offer them water."

"Oh, well, certainly, Mr. Spock. See to it for me." Kirk nodded and started away, and then a thought struck him. "But we've had Vulcan passengers before, and..."

"Yes, sir, but it is now a time when such observances become...appropriate."

"Oh. I see. Very well, then, carry on."

The large recreation room had been cleared and long tables set up and heaped with exotic delicacies. The guests moved about or clustered in small groups, and the air was alive with the singing, clicking, chattering, and humming of the many languages of the Federation.

Spock and Ssarsun entered and stood surveying the glittering crowd, then moved to one of the tables to fill glasses.

"Well Spock." McCoy came up behind them with a well-lubricated joviality. "Aren't you going to introduce me?"

Spock turned to McCoy. "Of course. Dr. McCoy, this is Lt. Ssarsun."

McCoy cocked an eyebrow at Ssarsun. "Schillian, aren't you?"

"Yes, Doctor." The Schillian didn't need to be a telepath to read Chief Surgeon in every line of McCoy's face.

"Never had the pleasure of meeting one of your people before."

"We aren't known for the inclination to travel."

"So I understand." You could almost see him mentally flipping through a medical encyclopedia. Then he frowned. "But don't you require...ah...constant telepathic contact with one of your own kind?"

"No, Doctor, we require constant telepathic contact with a telepath. Mr. Spock has been most generous. I think you will find my psych profile as it has always been."

"Oh. I see. Well, I guess you'd better come down to see me for your routine check-in tomorrow." He half turned, then thought again. "Better make it late tomorrow." He'd have to do some stiff boning up on Schillians.

McCoy turned as a tall, lithe girl in a long, clinging, golden gown came drifting over. Her dark hair was piled on top of her head in a helix and was fixed with little tinkling bells that jingled musically to the coordinated rhythm of her walk. It was some moments before the warm smile on McCoy's face froze at the realization that this was one of the Vulcan dancers.

As she scanned the group and acknowledged his existence, McCoy could visualize a thin film of ice encasing her loveliness. The poise and grace were cultivated not to crack the film. Such a pity! Such a waste! He knew that she was as untouchable and as unmoveable as Spock. Maybe even more so.

She fixed that gaze on Spock, and they traded Vulcan greetings. "I am told you are the Kataytikh Spock, son of Sarek of the line of xtmprsqzntwlfid."

"Correct."



McCoy wasn't sure, but he thought her gaze just a little warmer as she answered, "I am called T'Rruel."

Christine Chapel, resplendent in her dress uniform, came up to the group, casually surveyed the table, and indicated an arrangement of porous cubes on colored toothpick-like holders next to a bowl of scintillating froth. "This is a Vulcan delicacy, isn't it, Mr. Spock?"

Spock tore his eyes from the dancer's and followed Christine's gesture. "Indeed." He took a cube, twirled it in the froth, and examined it. "Try some; I think you might like it."

She copied the gesture with an expertness that belied her ignorance. "What's it made from?"

Spock chewed thoughtfully. "It is a by product of the metabolism of an insect."

McCoy and Ssarsun had started to try this rare treat, but McCoy froze at Spock's explanation, searching Spock's face for some clue that it wasn't as bad as that. Spock continued as if he hadn't noticed McCoy's discomfort. "It resembles honey in many ways, except that it's a true by-product. This is a particularly excellent example."

Ssarsun munched contentedly and reached past McCoy for another cube. "Excuse me, Doctor, but tomorrow you may tell me how much overweight I am; tonight I feast." He slipped past McCoy to stand between Spock and Christine. "Oh, yes, Miss, go easy on this one, it's about the only Vulcan food that is fattening."

Seeing that everyone was enjoying the frothy cubes, McCoy bit into his gingerly, lit up with a dubious smile, and ate it all, noting with a medical eye that Spock, the only underweight member of the group, had eaten only one.

T'Rruel turned to Spock. "I am also told that you are the science officer of the Enterprise."

"Correct."

"We've been having a problem with our tokiel. I wonder if you might help. Our mechanic is not too familiar with the portable model we're using."

Christine looked annoyedly at the ceiling translator and whispered to Ssarsun, "Did you get that? What's a tokiel?"

Ssarsun looked at her; they were about the same height. "Oh, of course it wouldn't translate; there's no equivalent. It's a folk-art dance platform. You have to see it to believe it. T'Rruel is one of the foremost tokiel artists of her generation, a true genius."



When Christine looked back toward Spock, T'Rruel had taken him off in a corner and was explaining something with graphic body movements that Spock was watching most attentively. She was certain that his gaze lacked some of his usual analytic coolness.

Ssarsun followed Spock at a discreet distance, leaving her alone with McCoy, who helped himself to another cube. "Wonder what this is called," he mumbled.

Christine answered, "Yhotekhq," and turned away.

McCoy glanced after in surprise.

Late the next afternoon, McCoy was seated at his desk, just finishing the section on Schillian health criteria. His viewer showed a final paragraph set in glowing red: "All three Schillian sexes prefer to be referred to by the same, masculine pronoun. The examining physician is cautioned to regard the sex of his patient as confidential and under no circumstances to reveal it to non-medical personnel. He is further cautioned not to indicate to the patient that he has noticed or noted the sex of his patient, though it is commonly understood that he must do so. This is an area of great sensitivity in all Schillian cultures, and, as Schillians are noted for their violent temperament, extreme tact must be employed."

McCoy snapped the viewer off just as his door opened and Spock and Ssarsun entered. "Oh, there you are, Ssarsun. I was just about to try to find you."

Ssarsun glanced at McCoy's reader. "I know. Shall we get on with it?" There was a smile in his voice if not on his face.

"Very well, then." McCoy gestured to his examination room, and they entered. Spock followed and closed the door. He had a fist-sized gadget in his hand and was picking at it curiously while taking readings with the tricorder that was slung over his shoulder.

"Something I can do for you, Mr. Spock?"

"No, Doctor. I'll wait over here." And he went toward a table at the far end of the room.

"Examinations customarily take place in private, Mr. Spock."

Ssarsun put in mildly, "It's all right, Doctor, Spock is with me."

McCoy looked from one to the other. "It may be all right with you, but it's not all right with me."

Spock assente with raised eyebrows and started for the door. Ssarsun interrupted, "Spock, no. Wait. Doctor, I'd hate to have to bother the Captain...."

McCoy shrugged. "You really want him here, don't you? All right, don't see what harm it can do. We'll start with the psych-analyzer over here...."

Two hours later McCoy checked his noteboard and said, "You can put your shirt on now. You're as sound as you ever were."

"Thank you, Doctor." He moved to where Spock was re-assembling the component he'd been working on. "It was the blues circuit, wasn't it?"

Spock snapped the pieces back together. "Indeed. Sukar will be interested to hear your analysis."

The door slid open, and Kirk paced in and looked around. "Spock! Just what is that mess spread all over the floor of Rec Room Four? I promised the Vulcan dancers they could use that room for rehearsals...."

"It's their tokiel, Captain, and we've just fixed it. We'll have it re-assembled in about an hour."

"Oh," Kirk said as if that explained everything. "Tokiel."

"Yes, sir."

"Would it be too much if I asked, what is a tokiel?"

The door whispered open once more, and T'Rruel moved into the room just in time to hear his question. "You've never seen me work, Captain?"

Kirk turned and smiled graciously. "I've never had that honor, no."

"In that case, you must attend our dress rehearsal tonight. Skahn and I will be dancing the whole Motek, not just the segments we do for the show."

"Now, that's something I'd like to see," McCoy said.

Spock said, "I'm sure there will be room for you, too, Doctor."

The Rec Room was dark when Kirk and McCoy arrived. Spock met them at the door. Just then, Nurse Chapel came speeding down the corridor with a noteboard. "Dr. McCoy," she called, "here are the results on Ssarsun. Oh, Mr. Spock!"

Spock nodded. "We were about to start, Nurse. Would you like to stay to watch T'Rruel dance?"

She smiled as nicely as she could. "Now? All right. I think I'd like that."

They went in and found places on the chairs grouped on one side. The room was very dark, and, after Spock closed the door, it took several minutes for Kirk to be able to make out the shapes before him.

The center of the room was occupied by a small, oval stage, about half a meter above floor level. Two Vulcan men were seated at a large console at the far side of the stage, and two women and another man stood behind them. They were dressed in a shimmery, clinging material that almost glowed in the dark.

Spock came to sit beside Ssarsun, who was just behind Kirk. He leaned over and said softly, "Keep in mind that this is a rehearsal mainly to adjust the equipment. Some of the color and tone registers are still off considerably."

T'Rruel mounted the dais, accompanied by a ripple of sound and a moving burst of rainbow color that seemed to hang in the air behind her like streams of gossamer. She stood still as the glow died around her, and she was wrapped in living gold like a candle flame.

Then she moved her head rhythmically, side to side, slowly allowing the movement to grow into a rippling motion of the whole body accompanied by a harmonious chiming of a myriad tiny bells, while rainbow streamers curled outward like wisps of smoke.

Spock shook his head. "No. No, there's something else wrong. What do you suppose it is, Ssarsun?"

"I don't know. I've never seen that effect before."

Spock stood up. "T'Rruel. Try your signature."

She spun around, reaching high, and lunged forward into a dancer's imitation of a fencer's stance. She was enrapt in a cocoon of purple smoke, and the bells turned to plucked strings.

One of the Vulcan men seated at the console called. "Spock. Come look at this."

Spock went over to the console, and T'Rruel joined them as the lights came up to very dim. The six of them set up a murmuring exchange in Vulcan. Ssarsun turned to the humans. "Well, he warned you. They'll have it tinkered up in a minute."

Christine, who was seated next to Ssarsun, asked, "How does it work? I've never seen anything like it before."

"There's a field projector under the stage, and a computer is programmed to read every tiny motion of the dancer's body and translate it into music and light. It's a modern refinement of one of the most ancient folk arts of Vulcan."



"Folk art?" prompted McCoy.

"Yes. To understand it fully, you have to grasp the philosophy of T'kiamut'h. Briefly, that's the idea that all relationships can be expressed by four parameters, as the simplest algebras can be constructed on four postulates. The Vulcans constantly seek beauty in the fundamental structure of nature...."

"Folk art?" prompted Kirk.

"Yes. You see, in tokiel, the four parameters are space, time, color, and tone. There are various classical sequences, but even within them, there is a vast field for the individual creative artist to present his own ideas."

"You mean," put in McCoy, "it's a glorified lecture, if you know how to read it?"

"In a way, perhaps to you, it would be, but to a Vulcan it's more the use of beauty to express beauty. I don't understand the Vulcan primary motivations all that well, but it has to do with their incessant groping after a comprehension of infinite Reality. The test of comprehension is expression, or the ability to recombine dissimilar elements into new beauty." He broke off, seeing that he'd lost them. He wanted to explain that "comprehension" and "expression" can be the same word in the Vulcan language, and that an esthetic sense is placed high on the scale of Vulcan values, and that logic is merely one facet of Infinite Reality, but he realized that that wouldn't elucidate the art of tokiel for them. Nor would the fact that the greatest tokiel artists were themselves logicians of the highest order.

Just then a chord rippled forth, and the lights dimmed. Ssarsun turned toward the platform to see Spock with one foot on the tokiel platform, about to mount into the field. In one incredibly swift movement, Ssarsun was out of his chair, running the six paces to Spock's side, as he shouted, both mentally and audibly, "Spock, no!"

Spock turned, and the five Vulcan performers jumped as if stung by a high voltage current. He'd shocked them on the telepathic level. Ssarsun came up beside Spock and looked around at the performers as the lights came up again. "I apologize. I didn't mean to startle you so, but there is danger."

The Vulcans gathered around Ssarsun, while Kirk came over followed by McCoy and Christine. T'Ruel looked incredulously from Ssarsun to Spock. "You're linked!" It was both accusation and condemnation, delivered by a statuesque goddess of justice.

As Spock stood mutely under that glare, Ssarsun said, "T'Ruel, I will not obtrude...."

Scepticism and rejection bordering on true loathing were so evident in the usually unreadable Vulcans that Ssarsun fell silent. Kirk and McCoy stood paralyzed.

T'Ruel's gaze locked onto Spock's face. "Spock, you are Kataytikh in your father's place and by his father's hand, and yet you don't seem to realize that

you've destroyed your usefulness to us by...." She glanced at Ssarsun and then at the floor, striving desperately not to exceed the limits of good taste by displaying emotion.

Ssarsun turned to Spock. "Bring them together, Spock...right now...show them it's not so. Show them T'pau knows what she does." He didn't say that the seven-way mental blending would show him whether one of them had deliberately set the tokiel stage to kill. He knew that such trivia as attempted murder wouldn't interest them now. He turned to the others. "You five will have to be his nucleus, anyway. He won't have time to select from the others, so it will have to be you. Today, tomorrow. What's the difference?"

T'Rruel leveled a cool gaze at him. "You will have to leave."

"I cannot."

"You must."

"I cannot. I have my orders. Believe me, you won't even know I'm there. Go ahead. Let him try. That will settle it, won't it?"

She looked at the others and then back at Ssarsun as if to say, "you'd better be right!" Then she moved to confront Spock. They were the same height, and their eyes met levelly for a long minute. Then Spock drew a deep breath and raised his right hand, fingers separated in the Vulcan salute. Slowly, she raised her left hand and joined his, palm to palm. A moment later, he looked toward the other Vulcan female, who joined T'Rruel's free hand. Quickly, now, he accepted the others until the last joined his free hand to complete the circle. Outwardly, nothing happened.

Ssarsun stood on one side, the captain, McCoy, and Nurse Chapel on the other, all but forgotten, afraid to move, or to breathe.

Then, as one, the Vulcans dropped hands and stepped apart.

Spock looked gravely around the circle. "Henceforth, my judgment as Kataytikh will be unchallenged, and my authority final." Plainly, he'd vindicated himself, and he now dominated the group. He turned to Ssarsun. "You spoke of danger?"

"The vision is now clear." He moved to the tokiel console. "This was accidentally left on a reverse polarity when you finished the analysis routine." He threw two switches that went snick, snap. "Now it's safe. Go ahead and test it out."

He moved toward the humans and herded them back to their seats as Spock mounted the dais, handed T'Rruel up, and proceeded to execute a series of turns with easy familiarity.

The dancers were invisible on the platform, and only figures of colored light appeared, grew, moved, and faded. The focus and definition was greatly improved, and the colors were sharper, blending only in certain areas.

Then a rippling sound accompanied by the rhythmic tolling of a large bell announced the start of the Motek as Spock returned to his seat.

To the humans, it was a pyrotechnic display of rhythm, form, and sound utterly strange, yet somehow pleasing. The dancers themselves were rarely visible, but the total effect was very like a ballet. Toward the end, long gossamer streamers wove intricate patterns in the air, moving swiftly, yet never touching, never faltering. Kirk found himself holding his breath as T'Ruel, alone on the platform, spun around, reaching high, and then lunged forward in a beautiful imitation of a fencer's stance to the accompaniment of a pure, sweet wailing tone.

Later, as Christine lay trying to sleep, she kept analyzing the look she'd caught on Spock's face as the lights came on. Was it the same lively interest he turned on a mathematical problem? Was it the excitement of conquering a mystery? Or was it a warmer kind of excitement? Whatever it was, it was certainly more of a reaction than she'd ever been able to elicit. And that rankled.

The rest of the trip to their first stop went without incident, and since shore leave facilities there were adequate, practically the whole crew attended the performance and the gala banquet afterward. Then they were speeding through space toward their second stop.

It was during the second "night" after the banquet that Ssarsun was walking along the corridor outside Engineering, feeling sorry for himself. Spock had elected to stay onboard rather than attend the banquet, so they'd both missed out on a good time, and Ssarsun was feeling the need of less frosty company.

Scotty came along, head down, wiping his hands on a throw-towel, and bumped into the Schillian. "Oh, Ssarsun!" He looked around. "Where's Spock?"

"Sleeping. I'm off duty, but I'm not tired, so I was walking."

"No! Well, come along to Rec Room Ten. Uhura promised to sing for us... uh...you do like human music?"

"I'd be delighted."

They walked along to the turbo-lift side by side. "Ssarsun," Scotty said, "I don't know much about Schillians. Tell me, do you folks use...uh...alcohol in any form?"

"You mean, have we developed the distiller's art? Oh, yes. There are some particularly fine liqueurs beginning to be exported in quantity."

"Really! I've never come across them."

"It's a big galaxy, Mr. Scott."

"Aye. Call me Scotty." The Chief Engineer allowed his diction to revert to its natural lilt.



The turbo-lift carried them within a few feet of the Rec Room, and when the door opened they could hear Uhura's sweet voice curling itself around a peculiar melody. She was standing in the middle of a mixed group of crewmen and some of the performers. Her voice was low, melodic, and rather uncertain.

Ssarsun listened for a minute, and then she caught sight of him and stopped. He moved to her side. "Oh, please continue, Miss Uhura. You were doing so well."

Uhura bit her lip and smiled shyly. "I'm really not all that...."

"Please. You've evoked such nostalgia with so few notes. Indulge me a little.... Here, I'll help," and he picked up the melody where she'd left off, albeit several octaves lower. She joined in, and together they wove a wordless duet of blended sound which was springtime and flowers, yearning and joy... discovery and loss. Every eye in the room which could shed a tear of emotion did.

Then, as if realizing they'd launched a party on too solemn a downbeat, someone picked up a drum, someone else a pipe, and everyone was dancing. Shaking himself, Ssarsun grabbed Chekov and whirled him away in a fair imitation of a polka. Later he danced with Uhura and then with some of the other nonhumans, with a fine disregard of male/female roles.

Breathless, he made his way to a table where Scotty was seated, and sat down, puffing, close to the engineer. "A while ago you mentioned alcohol. Now, I happen to have brought along a couple of bottles of Schillian Schlugtamer...."

"Never heard of it."



"Certified safe for humans. Becoming quite popular. Feel like experimenting?"

Scotty rose. "Do ye like Scotch, man?"

"Never tried it, but I hear it's rather mild."

"Mild? Well, now, Laddy...you just come along with me...."

It took Scotty several hours to admit it, but he'd finally met his match with a bottle. He consoled himself with the fact that the other's metabolism gave him an unfair advantage.

In the morning they woke, feeling much better psychologically, and much worse physiologically, and went their separate ways in remarkably good cheer, promising to meet again.

During the journey, Spock spent most of his off-duty hours closeted with the other Vulcans, or escorting T'Rruel about the ship. Ssarsun always tagged along, and the three of them became a familiar sight.

Spock became his frostiest Vulcan self and even began slipping into Vulcan phrasing occasionally, a thing unheard of since his first days with the Enterprise. Rumors based on as little fact as possible made the rounds, and the other female crewmembers made sure Christine heard every one of them.

About six hours before their scheduled stop at Star Base 12, Christine was seated in Rec Room 2, nursing a cup of black coffee and holding the dietitian's report that Spock had just left with her. Spock and Ssarsun, as inseparable as ever, marched out the door as T'Rruel came over to Christine's table.

"May I?" She indicated the second chair.

"Of course, why not?" Christine was determined to be civil.

"He's a strange one." She sat and folded her hands on the table.

"Who?"

"Spock."

"Not really," she answered noncommittally, while her eye traveled down the report she held, automatically checking trouble spots, and lighted on Spock's name. He'd refused his last two meals. Her heart thudded into her throat. She forced her voice level. "Why do you say so? He hasn't been eating lately; perhaps he's ill?"

"No. Not ill. It is a time of fasting for us."

Christine took a deep breath and a long drag at her coffee.

"I mean, he seems so...." T'Rruel hesitated, searching for the right word. "Well, almost...human, at times."

"Oh? Well, maybe that's because of his mother."

One graceful eyebrow grazed T'Rruel's impeccable hairline. "His mother?"

"Mmmm. I'm sure she must have imparted some of her traits to him, if only by accident."

"His mother was human?"

Christine put on her best wide-eyed innocence. "I thought everyone knew...."

"Vulcan is a large planet. Not everyone knows everyone else."

Christine imagined she'd just poured a whole bucket of ice-water on one very shapely piece of dry tinder. Just then all the ship's hooters began whooping out a Yellow Alert. Christine gulped the rest of her coffee and grabbed the Dietician's report. "Excuse me."

The captain's quarters were spacious enough, but not designed for large conferences. Spock stood in one corner, arms folded across his chest like a stone statue. Ssarsun was seated near him, while McCoy perched on one corner of the desk, and Kirk paced back and forth, unsure, for the first time in his career, if he'd really considered all the ramifications before issuing a command decision.

"So that's the whole story, Bones," Kirk finished. As usual, the doctor had gotten caught in the cross fire between him and Spock and had insisted on an explanation. "Now, what do you think?"

"Your orders are clear enough about priorities. But...."

"True. But so are our standing orders. Ssarsun."

"Yes, sir."

"You've never served on a Starship before, have you?"

"No, sir. My talents are rarely needed on Starships."

"One of our highest traditions -- " Kirk paced over to stand in front of the Schillian. " -- is our...automatic...response to distress signals... especially where there's an indication of armed attack."

"I understand that, sir. But my instincts tell me, very emphatically ...this move represents a danger to Spock."

"Spock." Kirk turned toward his first officer, who'd remained silent since his first objection was over-ruled. "It's true that we can divert to

Ahrent III, even spend 20 hours there, and still make Feda XII on schedule, isn't it?"

Spock blinked assent. "Twenty-one hours, 17 minutes."

"Then tell me again, exactly why do you object?"

"Because Ssarsun objects, and I trust his judgment." He looked away for a moment, considering. "Also...perhaps my judgment is colored by values that are not yours."

Kirk turned away toward his desk. "The report was that a small raider had attacked a hundred-man outpost on Ahrent III and been beaten off, slightly disabled. Now, how could such a vessel pose a serious threat to the Enterprise?"

McCoy put in, "And it could mean death to those hundred men. They've sustained radiation casualties that need a Starship's medical facilities."

Spock eyed the doctor. "Coincidence upon coincidence, until credulity is strained to the utmost, and still you don't see it?"

"Show us," Kirk invited, throwing himself wearily into his desk chair.

Spock took a deep breath. "The patrol ship of this sector is out of range, but the Enterprise can just spare enough time to divert to Ahrent III. A raider, just large enough to pose a threat to the outpost appears, inflicts damage that requires our assistance, and limps off slowly. Bait."

Kirk steepled his fingers and pursed his lips. "Maybe. But it could happen. It has happened before."

Ssarsun spoke up. "May I respectfully remind the captain that there have been a considerable number of security leaks on dozens of starbases and posts lately. We theorize that Klingon and Romulan intelligence networks are being strengthened. They must have had excellent sources to execute the theft of the Kraith, if it was they. They might know that Spock and the Kraith are aboard the Enterprise."

Spock stepped forward gravely. "This could be a new phase of the war, Captain. Armed conflict is out of the question since the Organian Treaty. They may now try to tear the Federation apart by pitting us against one another. And, Jim, if anything can succeed, this will. I don't think you appreciate the... importance...of this particular Kraith, nor our attitude in the matter."

Kirk rose and moved around the desk cocking his head to one side. "You mean, if we don't get to Feda XII on time, Vulcan will secede from the Federation and take a bloc of other worlds with them? Just like that? Isn't that rather...illogical?"

"The values may seem strange to you, but I assure you the logic is impeccable. The admiral's warning was phrased very mildly. The situation is much more critical than he indicated."

McCoy swung his leg thoughtfully. "It seems rather emotional to me."

"Not emotional, Doctor, but far more basic than you realize."

"I just can't believe -- " Kirk paced out his frustration. " -- that if we explained that it was a matter of the lives of a hundred people against...." He stopped to stare at Spock as he realized that he really didn't know what the consequences would be for the Vulcans. His decision had seemed so logical...he'd hardly believed his ears when Spock had objected to his order to respond to the distress call. Now he felt shocked at his oversight. Kirk threw up his hands and collapsed into the desk chair again. "How can I make command decisions if I don't have all the facts! All right. Make me understand. What will happen if we're, say, an hour late getting to Feda XII?" He looked at Spock hard. "Is it a matter of life or death?"

Spock sighed. "Not...exactly. If it were merely a matter of life or death, your logic would hold, Captain. The problem is that we would not die. Our laws forbid suicide and ostracism. Therefore, Tsaichrani...excuse me... therefore, Vulcan would have to absorb 57 individuals who had not...your phrase is 'Affirmed the Continuity'. This would be a devastating blow to the stability of our culture."

McCoy shook his head. "I don't get it. A mere 57 out of -- " He searched the air with one hand. " -- how many billion?"

Spock looked at McCoy and took a breath to provide the precise Vulcan population count. McCoy raised a hand to forestall the flood. Spock blinked and donned a patient expression.

"Spock," Ssarsun said softly, "why don't you give it to them from the beginning. They're groping in the dark. If they understood the importance of the Affirmation, I think they'd change their minds."

Spock clamped his hands behind his back and looked from Kirk to McCoy. He saw two friends...a concept that they'd defined for him by their very existence...who had stood by him through the most traumatic experience of his life. They'd learned something of his culture then. Perhaps it was time for them to learn more. "In the beginning, when we who now dominate our planet lived in caves, used chipped stone implements, and knew no society larger than the clan, there arose in one tiny enclave a mutation. It was a dominant genetic strain, passed through the male line, and it displayed one single trait that differentiated it."

He saw that he had their attention and continued, "The trait was the ability to draw large numbers of people together into a mutual telepathic linkage. Those first ancestors of mine used their gift to forge and perpetuate social values and launched one of the bloodiest periods of history known on any planet.

"Then came the Reforms. By then, the dominance of the gene, together with a vigorously practised tradition of exogamy, had spread the trait. The Kataytiche banded together and put all their power behind the Reforms. We used the accumulated wisdom of ages to restructure our society for peace.



"But the durability of the structure depends on the transmission of our value system. So we meet in groups of no less than 57 every 51.23 standard years to Affirm the Continuity. One who doesn't participate...he and his children born during the ensuing interval...are not only lost to the Continuity, but represent a destructive influence within our society. In 52 years, 57 people can become as many as 478. The damage can never be fully repaired."

He turned and paced away from Kirk. When he turned back, the lecturer's tone was replaced by earnestness. "Consider, now, who this particular group of 57 includes: 51 of the foremost of our young scientists. And I doubt if I could ever make you understand the importance of someone like T'Rruel. She is very young, and the brilliance she has shown is a mere foreshadowing of what she may yet do."

Ssarsun leaned forward. "Not to mention Spock himself. He traces his lineage directly back to the original xmprsqzntwlf. Only one other family can make that claim. And Spock is the last of his line."

"None of my father's ancestors has ever missed an Affirmation. The line is unbroken for millenia. I am both custodian and transmitter of a Continuity which my society values...very highly."

Spock fell silent, and Kirk discovered he'd been holding his breath. He let it go and shook his head. "Where does the Kraith fit in?"

"The drinking of the First Water is a social act which symbolizes... well, never mind. It's the act which initiates the Affirmation. The Kraith is the vessel used in the Drinking, and it is...very extraordinary."

"Yes, I've seen that." McCoy could still visualize the twisted corpse that lay beside the Kraith when they'd found it. Spock claimed the Kraith had killed him, but wouldn't explain how. He'd said that only he could touch the Kraith...but wouldn't explain why. Very extraordinary, indeed.

"This particular Kraith is very old. The legend is that it dates from the time of the Reforms. It's never been used. When it has been used, it will be destroyed." Spock hoped that would illustrate how highly his group was valued.

Kirk hesitated. He knew that if he were Vulcan he certainly wouldn't have sent the Enterprise off course...no matter what. But now they were half-way to Ahrent III.

Ssarsun lunged forward and caught Spock's hand, alarm written in every muscle. "Captain! We're being attacked!"

Kirk slapped the intercom button on his desk viewer. "Bridge! Status!"

"Normal, sir!" It was Sulu's voice. "Maintaining Yellow Alert."

"All sensors full out, Mr. Sulu. Scan for an approaching vessel. Sound Red Alert. I'm on my way. Kirk out." He'd seen Ssarsun in action and was taking no chances. "Come on, Spock." He was out the door almost before the

others had a chance to move. The Red Alert hooters were calling all hands to their stations, but somehow a pathway was always open for the captain.

The bridge was in a state of quiet tension when the three of them stepped out of the turbo-lift. Ssarsun followed Spock to the Library Computer, Kirk climbed into his chair and waited grimly.

Sulu looked over his shoulder. "Nothing, Captain." Then he turned back to the helmsman's console. The huge main view-screen filled the forward wall with star-studded blackness.

Spock said, "Tie all sensors into the Main Computer, Mr. Sulu."

Ssarsun moved to stand by Kirk's right hand. "They're coming, sir. Won't be long."

Ssarsun had never seen the bridge in this state before. He could feel the well-trained tension ready to crackle from Kirk as he sat in the central arena of command, either toward the twin consoles of the Helmsman and Navigator in front of him, or to his rear where Spock worked over the main computers and Uhura presided over the ship's communications board. The enormous emptiness on the main screen contributed a sense of unprotected insecurity that kept Ssarsun's inner eyelids tightly closed.

Spock barked, "Mr. Sulu, deflectors!"

Sulu hit the switch. "Deflectors on full."

The floor shifted hard under their feet. Uhura started her damage control routine, and her board crackled with crisp reports. Spock checked his scanner. "Photon torpedoes, Captain. Delivered from warp eight. A small vessel, about twice the size of the Galileo. They're turning for another run. This could be the raider."

"That's a favorite Romulan tactic," said Kirk. "See if you can get her on our screen."

The floor shook again as the gravity compensators labored. Spock shook his head. "No, sir. Too fast."

"Tie the main phasers into the computer and instruct for maximum dispersion."

"Aye, sir." Spock's hands flew over his board.

Ssarsun blinked all his eyelids in sequence. "It won't work, Captain. We're going to be hit this time." Ssarsun moved to Spock's side. If a Schillian could tremble in fear, he would have been vibrating the whole ship.

Suddenly, the world stood on its side, and for a moment they all floated in free fall. The ship's power died with a turbo-whine and growl, and the

lights went out. Seconds later the ship's gravity stabilized, and they all fell a good eight feet to the deck. Then the emergency power came on.

Sulu was the first to recover, and he worked the main screen into focus. "We got him!"

The steady murmur from Uhura's board told at what price. Sulu turned to assess the damage to bridge personnel, and his left hand shot out to his intercom switch. "Medical team to the bridge -- on the double!" Combat veteran though he was, he could scarcely overcome his shock at seeing his captain draped over the command chair like a broken rag doll, the first officer sprawled on top of Ssarsun, who was jackknifed between the computer console and the chair, and the communications officer gracefully prone in front of the lift doors. He looked around for Chekov, but couldn't find him. He was on the floor in front of the Navigator's station.

The lift doors swished open, and McCoy stood there with a team of doctors. As he looked around, Spock began to stir, and Uhura picked herself up. McCoy automatically lent her a hand, and then motioned his men to take care of the captain, while he saw to Spock and Ssarsun. Medical scanners in hand, they fanned out with smooth efficiency.

By the time McCoy reached him, Spock was on his feet. When McCoy pointed his scanner at Spock, Spock pushed it toward Ssarsun. "I'm all right, Doctor, but Ssarsun is hurt."

McCoy shifted the scanner to his other hand and completed a once-over on Spock, while Spock ignored him in favor of a long look at the main screen, which now showed the tiny ship that had disabled the Enterprise. Then he bent to his instruments, probing the quiescent enemy with every sensor at his command. Nothing. No life forms...no power.

When he looked up, McCoy was wheeling Kirk's stretcher into the turbo-lift, which already contained Ssarsun's stretcher. It was a tight fit. Everyone else was in place and functioning. "Lt. Uhura," Spock snapped as he moved to the command chair, "Damage report!"

"Direct hit Engineering Deck Six, near the main gravity compensators. Pressure doors closed. We've lost warp power. Mr. Scott's assessing the repairs now, but he says it's difficult, because there's some kind of projectile lodged in the hole, and he's afraid to move it. It ticks. They're working in vacuum. Sick bay reports five



dead, seventeen injured...not counting the captain and Mr. Ssarsun."

Spock eyed the main screen with outward equanimity. Inwardly, he was seething with reactions...none of them (he noted with satisfaction) at all emotional. "Remarkable," he muttered. "In fact, fascinating. Mr. Sulu, lock onto our late opponent and bring it onto the Hangar Deck."

Sulu turned toward Spock, about to ask for a repeat of that one, changed his mind, and began the procedure...gingerly. As soon as he laid a hand to the controls, the tiny ship erupted into an orange blaze and began to move away at sublight speed. It was already out of range for the commanded procedure.

Spock sat forward alertly. "Impulse power, Mr. Sulu. Follow. Deflectors on full. Bridge to Engineering, report! How soon can we have warp speed?"

"Engineering. Scott here. Maybe 30 hours after I get this...thing...out of my Engine Room."

Very quietly, Spock said, "Make it 20, Mr. Scott. Bridge out." Then he sat studying the mysterious enemy, so utterly devoid of identifying markings and so unexpectedly dangerous. In 30 hours it would be too late to make Feda XII. He swallowed a slightly emotional lump of desperation verging on panic. To miss the Affirmation would be a distastefully emotional experience. He turned to find McCoy pointing a medical scanner at him. "How is the captain?"

"Slight concussion...he'll be out for hours. The ship is all yours, Mr. Spock."

Spock turned back to the main screen, where the raider was fast disappearing from maximum magnification.

"Well," prompted McCoy, "aren't you going to ask how Ssarsun is?"

"I don't have to, Doctor. Torn ligament and the equivalent of a sprained back. Slight concussion."

McCoy nodded. "That covers it, except for assorted cuts and bruises. So what are you going to do?"

"Follow that raider."

"He's leading us away from Feda XII?"

"Precisely."

"It's your ship, now, Mr. Spock. Why don't you..."

"I admit I am sorely tempted, Doctor, but it's not my ship. It's Jim's ship, and I must do what I believe he would do were he sitting here."

"I think you're wrong. I think he was changing his mind."

"It's too late now, Doctor." He turned to eye McCoy. "It's a command decision." He made the emphasis so gentle it was almost un-Spockian.

McCoy got the distinct impression that, had he been able, Spock would have burst into tears. Then he pooh-poohed himself. He had an overactive imagination.

Spock took a deep breath. The raider had effectively disappeared from their screens. "Mr. Sulu, you have the con. I'll be in Engineering. Let me know if there is any change." He rose and went to the lift with McCoy trailing after.

Engineering looked more like an ill-managed construction workshop when Spock marched in looking around for Scotty. He noted the quiet efficiency of Scotty's men with a lack of disapproval which was his highest form of praise. Then he spotted the Chief Engineer near a makeshift lock that had been installed in the emergency bulkhead halfway down the corridor. He was dressed in vacuum gear and had evidently just doffed the helmet to wipe sweat from his brow.

Spock made his way across the littered floor. "Engineer, report."

Scotty turned. His face was deeply lined, and he looked much older than he had that morning. "It's a Romulan torpedo, Mr. Spock. One of their sonic, delayed detonator models. Havena seen one in years. Come over here, I'll show you." He led the way to a viewscreen and punched a combination.

A four-part diagram appeared on the screen, and Scotty pointed out the salient points as he spoke. "Here is the action. This is the fuse. And... yes...I remembered right, this is the timer fuse circuit. It can be aborted..." His tone became more grave. "...but...I havena a man with a hand steady enough. See how this shaft has to be drawn out without the slightest vibration? I can rig up a sling to do the job...but it will take a couple of hours...and I don't know how much longer we have before that clock runs down."

Spock studied the diagram. He knew the model, but had never defused one himself. He nodded. "Get me a vacuum suit, Mr. Scott."

Scott looked at the Vulcan a long moment. It was a Romulan machine designed to be defuseable by Romulan hands...presumably. He'd heard that Vulcan specialists had been carried to deal with these babies during the Romulan wars. He nodded.

Ten minutes later, Spock confronted the softly ticking mechanism with a cautious tricorder probe. Then he reached deep within himself to tap the wellspring of steadiness that was his most cherished heritage and knelt to the job.



The gloves made it difficult to manipulate the tools with delicate sensitivity, but he was grateful that the anachronistic specialty tools were still regulation equipment. It didn't occur to him to be grateful that Scotty ran a neat, tight department. He worked with swift sureness that gave the sweating men monitoring the scene on the intercom no clue that he'd never actually done it before. His tricorder was registering an ominous change in the rhythmic ticking, by the time he was ready for the last and most delicate stage, the withdrawing of the shaft. He flexed his fingers inside the stiff gloves.

No. It would never work, and he'd not get a second chance. He made a swift calculation, and, sealing the suit at the wrists, he drew the gloves off. Very conscious of the hard vacuum on his bare hands, he grasped the shaft and drew it gently out.

He forced his hand to drop the cold metal...and with it several pieces of skin...and then he rose and took the five quick steps to the make-shift lock, dripping icicles of boiling green blood.

During McCoy's ministrations, Spock found he couldn't keep his mind off the utterly irrelevant subject of Fate. He was even willing to entertain such notions as a "Prime Mover." For instance, yesterday, had he not, in the last instant, pulled himself together and aborted that certain mindtouch...his hands might well have been too unsteady....

Even when he reminded himself that this uncontrollable curiosity alienated him from his own kind, he could scarcely drag his mind back to business. But discipline finally won out, and he found himself back in the command chair of the fleetest of Federation ships of the line, while it wallowed after an utterly improbable raider.

Sulu threw a glance over his shoulder. "They've gone to ground, sir! Landed on the fourth planet of this system."

"Class Six Orbit, Mr. Sulu." Class Six should do it, he thought. For enough to give them 42.78 hours before orbital decay required powered maneuvers, yet near enough to use the transporter...sparingly. He made the appropriate log entries and then issued the orders for a landing party. He was virtually certain what his sensors would show as soon as they were near enough.

An hour later his certainty was confirmed. No life forms...no power. He had no logical alternative. He ordered the landing party down. Then he went to sickbay to check on the progress of the injured.

Sickbay was quiet, now. Most of the injured had been discharged to their quarters. In the room just off McCoy's office, Ssarsun and Kirk lay next to each other, while Christine monitored their medical displays. It took Spock only a moment to note their condition, and then he approached McCoy, who was seated at his desk reading.

The intercom whistled, and McCoy answered, looking up at the enigmatic first officer.

It was Sulu's voice. "Is Mr. Spock there?"

Spock leaned down. "Spock here, Mr. Sulu."

"Landing party report, sir."

"On my way. Spock out. How soon can you have the captain on his feet, Doctor?"

"Couple of hours, if necessary. He's sleeping now. Ssarsun will be laid up for days."

"I know. He's still unconscious."

"Maintaining contact?"

Spock nodded. "Tenuously."

Spock turned to go, and McCoy rose to follow. "Landing party?" he asked.

By the time they reached the bridge, McCoy had pumped Spock for all the details. Spock folded himself into the command chair and activated the intercom. "Landing party, report."

"Kelowitz here, Mr. Spock. As you suspected, this little ship is one solid block of machinery...but it did carry a crew of one. In sensor-shielded vacuum gear, sir. She's dead, sir...I think. All the weapons systems are inoperative. Propulsion intact, but we can't raise her until we get a doctor down here to remove the pilot. It's very strange. She seems to have been wired into the controls."

Spock eyed McCoy. "Cyborg?"

McCoy pulled a sceptical face. Spock said, "Very well, Mr. Kelowitz. Carry on. Spock out. Let's go, Doctor."

Choking on his protests, McCoy followed Spock into the elevator. They were taking their places on the Transporter pads before McCoy could put his objections into words. "Spock, are you sure you're not exposing yourself to an unnecessary risk?"

"A calculated risk, Doctor. If the Klingons or the Romulans are using Cyborg raiders..." He shook his head. "We must have that ship."

McCoy held his peace and went quietly to sparkling pieces. When the world again became visible, it was a sandy plane whose only distinguishing feature, other than a baking, desert heat, was a tiny craft, close to a rosy rock pinnacle.

They waded through the wind-rippled sand, Spock in the lead, McCoy wishing he had the Vulcan's temperature tolerance. The hatch had been sprung in the crash, and they entered the velvet darkness which soon revealed itself to be a well-lit interior.

Without looking around, McCoy knelt beside the pilot, a very lovely Romulan woman. He swore. She was a cyborg, all right. What a perversion! Then his tricorder registered a faint, oh so faint, trace of life. He didn't hear Spock order the rest of the landing party back to the ship, but then Spock's sure fingers were working over the cyborg's control connections, oblivious to the pain from the injured hands.

Suddenly they were slammed back to the rear of the tiny cabin and pinned there by a grueling surge of acceleration. The builders hadn't wasted space on gravity compensators. Only the pilot's couch was properly rigged and unaffected. Then the engines stopped, and they were in free fall. The eerie whine of sliced atmosphere picked up and began to whistle through the cracks around them.

The crash came as an almost welcome release from terror, and McCoy surrendered gratefully to unconsciousness.

Had Spock not disconnected the pilot from the course computer and almost disconnected the engine controls, she would certainly have smeared them over half the continent.

As it was, Spock woke with no broken bones, and only a wrenched ankle as souvenir. The pilot, he ascertained, was now thoroughly dead. Then he tended to the ankle. A few moments' concentration had the swelling under control. He left his boot off, hobbled over to McCoy, who was sprawled on the canted deck, apparently unmarked, and checked him over with the medical scanner: no damage other than two cracked ribs and a dislocated shoulder.

Balancing on his good foot, Spock braced himself, grasped the doctor's wrist, and gently eased the shoulder back into place. When he checked the scanner again, he was satisfied. Next, he reached for his communicator. When he flipped it open, the insides fell out with a fine tinkle. The doctor's had fared a little better, but, when he tried it on the Enterprise's frequency, all he got was static.

Favoring his abused ankle, he made his way to the entry and had a look around. They were deep in a crevice gouged out of what looked like metallic crystals. Their position made them invisible except from directly above. From the look of it, the rocks were such high-grade ore that there was no hope of getting a signal out and very little hope that the Enterprise sensors could spot them unless they'd been tracked. At least, it would take some time.

When he went back inside, McCoy was sitting up probing his shoulder. Spock filled him in on the situation; they treated each other's wounds and settled down to wait. Spock stood in the entry hatch, his eyes roving over the loose rock walls of their prison. A climb was out of the question.

The hours rolled by. Spock rummaged through the dead ship taking tricorder readings. He couldn't even get the lights on again, and the only light came through the hatch and assorted cracks. Eventually the weight of the silence settled heavily on McCoy, as the heat grew worse. Presently, to make conversation, he said, "I could surely use a drink of water."

Spock turned. He almost looked contrite. "I'm sorry, Doctor. This temperature must be hard on you. There is water about a hundred yards up the canyon." He pulled on his boot. "Come, we'll take a walk."

"You must be thirsty, too. Even Vulcans need water."

"I do not feel the need. Come."

They scrambled and walked, slowly, up the crevice. The silence between them was so thick, McCoy thought he could cut it with a knife. None of his usual comments seemed less than boorish considering what Spock must be going through. Finally, in a desperate effort to raise his own spirits, McCoy said, "How do you know there's water here?"

"I can hear it, Doctor...and smell it. I'd forgotten you couldn't, or I would have mentioned it earlier."

Mentally, McCoy kicked himself. Then they rounded an outcropping, and the tiny cascade was revealed in all its wet glory. The pond drained into an underground chasm. McCoy ran a standard tricorder check and then drank. When he rose, he held out a wet hand to Spock. "You really ought to drink...."

Spock backed away from the drops and their splashings as if the water were a deadly poison. "No, thank you, Doctor."

McCoy frowned. "What's the matter?"

The stony mask of a thousand generations of Vulcan forefathers veiled his face. "It is forbidden...there is still a chance...come, let us return to the vessel." He turned and stalked away, as if mortally offended. McCoy followed back to the only shelter from the relentless heat.

Hours later, McCoy was seated on the deck while Spock leaned against the bulkhead and stared out the hatch. The doctor was sure he'd been asleep, because he remembered dreaming of one of his more vivid experiences, the time he'd accompanied Spock to his marriage ceremony and accompanied Jim's "body" back to the ship.

He stared at Spock, now seated cross-legged on the deck, looking out the open hatch at the gathering dusk. He was normally a rather withdrawn type, but these last few hours he'd been positively...elsewhere. McCoy felt as if he'd been excluded, shut away, barred. If he didn't know better, he would say, treated as a man would treat an animal that just happened to tag along. "Spock, how much time is left?"

"Two hours, 11 minutes."

"Jim must be in command by now."

"Yes."

"What about Ssarsun?"

Spock turned his head to glance at McCoy, then looked back out at the thickening night. "Didn't I mention that I'd lost contact with him?"

"No, you didn't. When did this happen!"

"When I lost consciousness. I don't know why. Perhaps we moved around the planet out of range."

"He must be half out of his mind by now!"

"No. One of the others will take him."

"Why don't you try to reach him?"

"I have been trying."

"No luck."

"Nothing."

"What about the other Vulcans?"

Spock turned again, the exterior glow lighting the drawn planes of his face. "What about them?"

"Can you reach them telepathically?"

"No. Telepathy is not directional, Doctor."

McCoy sighed. "Well, let me have another look at that ankle." He heaved himself erect and moved toward Spock.

"That won't be necessary. It's healed serviceably enough."

"It has?" McCoy pointed his scanner. So it had. He kneaded his shoulder. "I envy you for your Vulcan nervous system if not for your philosophy." McCoy froze. There was something in that...but what? And he had it!

He stood over the seated Vulcan, and his heart pounded into his throat. Now, how to put it so he wouldn't get himself killed in the process?

"Spock?"

"Yes, Doctor?"

"I have an idea. A way we might yet get back to the ship in time to make Feda XII."

"I'm listening."

"You won't like it."



Spock turned with one eyebrow raised to peer at the doctor. He didn't have to say it; McCoy could read "irrelevant" in every line of his face. Spock had already spent hours ransacking the wreckage for the components of some type of signalling device. He'd done everything he could think of. Any new idea was certainly worth listening to.

"Spock, you...ah...." McCoy turned and walked away. He gathered enough courage to speak, but not to face those analytic eyes. "You kind of like T'Rruel, don't you?"

"What do you mean 'like'?"

"I mean...she...well, she registers on you, I mean as a female."

"I hardly see that that is any of your concern."

"It's part of my idea. Just answer. It's a fact, isn't it? You do respond to her?"

Spock swallowed hard and breathed evenly for a moment. When he spoke his voice was level, controlled. "I don't know. It's possible."

McCoy interpreted that to mean that Spock was on the verge of falling madly in love. "You say that telepathy isn't directional. Yet I seem to remember that your engagement ceremony involves a touching of minds that is supposed to form a bond that will draw the interested parties together at the appropriate time. Isn't that directional?"



"Not exactly. Nevertheless, the situation doesn't exist."

"No. But your ankle is as good as new."

Spock cocked his head and frowned quizzically. "I don't follow your logic."

"Of course not. Cultural inhibitions can create actual blindness. Spock," McCoy squatted down near the First Officer and peered through the darkness trying to read that inscrutable face. "if you wanted her, wouldn't she come?"

"T'Rruel?"

"Yes."

"But...I don't...."

McCoy was sure the other's bewilderment was actual. Perhaps it was impossible, but he'd gone too far to back out now. "You have such perfect control over your body, Spock. I understand that this is an area where that control fails. But I'm sure that if you wanted to you could induce...that state." McCoy held his breath.

Spock was silent for a long time. Finally: "Doctor, you don't know what you've said."

"I apologize if I've been offensive. It was unintentional. I had an idea. I had to state it."

"Rightly so. But you offer me the choice between committing murder or suicide. The probabilities are so finely balanced, the unknowns so numerous, that the choice is surprisingly difficult. And it is a subject on which I can't trust my own logic."

"I didn't know...."

"Of course not. And I wasn't aware of the choice until you pointed it out to me, which is, in itself, fascinating."

"Explain it to me."

A moon began a swift traverse of the night sky. The doubly reflected light gave Spock's normally sallow complexion a graveyard cast, while the lines of his face were etched in black. When he spoke, his voice was pitched low, with absolutely no hint of what seethed inside him. But McCoy read tension in the straight back and unnaturally still hands. Here was control, not tranquility.

"It's theoretically possible, what you propose. But there is, as you guessed, a cultural inhibition against...inducing Ponn Farr. Therefore, data on the subject is scanty. This I do know: that, when induced, it goes on to

completion within hours. As well as I can estimate, there is only a 20% probability that I might be able to reach T'Rruel. I have no way to estimate the probability that she would accept. If she did not...I would die, regardless of when they find us. If she did accept, and they find us in time to make Feda XII, there is a 68.78% probability that T'Rruel would die."

"How do you figure that?"

"We don't practice contraception, Doctor. Our population problem has always been the opposite of yours. A pregnant woman usually cannot survive the physically and mentally draining experience of the Affirmation. We go to a great deal of trouble to avoid the situation, which is the primary reason I don't know T'Rruel's thoughts on the subject."

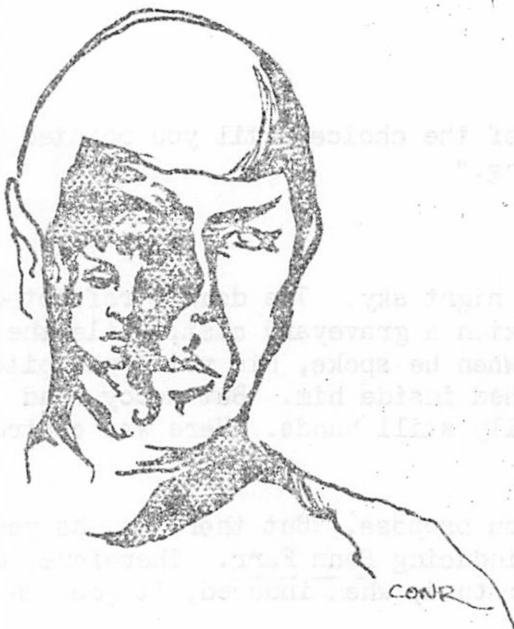
"You're right; I didn't understand. If you try, someone will probably die. If you don't try, they may find us in time anyway. Or they may not... and then there'll be trouble! What a decision!"

"And I don't know if my decision to try is logical."

McCoy sat, stunned. His brilliant idea was about to cost a life...and he'd dedicated his existence to saving life.

Spock rose, and McCoy followed, not knowing what to do or say. "Doctor. Afterwards...you will neither speak to me nor make your presence known. We will wait in silence. That will be difficult enough." He took a turn around the cabin, stopped at the hatchway to peer into the sky, and then resumed his cross-legged seat.

There was nothing to see. The shadows deepened again as the moon set. The hour that passed then seemed 50 times as long as the whole time since they'd received word of the theft of the Kraith.



McCoy sat motionless, remembering that moment with a clarity that amazed him. He'd been on the bridge to give Jim a routine report. Spock had been overhauling his library computer input when Uhura announced the arrival of two messages at once, one from Vulcan and one from Starfleet Command.

Kirk had had her put the one from Vulcan on the main screen; and McCoy remembered the look on Spock's face as T'Pol had spoken, first to the captain, common amenities, and a request that the ensuing message be given to Spock. Then she'd spoken to Spock, in that strangely euphonious language that served all Vulcan.

Spock had just stood there, woodenly. They were so far from Vulcan that the message was days old when it arrived. And, McCoy realized, he'd never told them what she'd said. The message from Starfleet Command had sent them after the Kraith and had led him inexorably to this point...three feet from a man who was going swiftly, deliberately mad.

With one smooth motion, like a spring uncoiling, Spock stood up. McCoy did likewise, but with far less agility. The years were catching up to him.

And then they were caught in a transporter beam and reconstructed aboard ship. T'Rruel and Kirk were the only others in the Transporter Room. The two humans stood mute as Spock's eyes met T'Rruel's. The tableau lasted an eternity.

Then, without word, sign, or gesture, Spock descended from the transporter platform and walked out the door. T'Rruel followed smoothly, without a backward glance.

The two starfleet officers turned toward one another and, in perfect unison, heaved huge sighs. McCoy hardly knew where to begin asking questions. His hands solved the problem for him. He found himself pointing the medical scanner at the captain and asking the routine questions. Then he launched into a quick report of what had happened to them.

When he'd finished, Kirk said, "Yes, of course. When Ssarsun lost Spock, T'Rruel insisted on linking with him on the assumption that Spock would try to reach them mentally. When Ssarsun regained consciousness and still they couldn't reach you, Ssarsun suggested what the next logical move would be. He had some trouble convincing T'Rruel. They argued in Vulcan for half an hour. He finally pointed out that with either of them alone, it would never work, but the two of them together could zero in on you right away."

"How's Scotty doing? Are we going to make it?"

"We've been traveling at warp eight since I plucked you out of that wreck."

The two men moved toward the door. McCoy carried the tricorder with the records of the wreckage. He'd have to compile a complete report on that cyborg. Undoubtedly some other ship was moving to pick it up. He was sure Spock's report, when he filed it, would be the usual exhaustive and detailed study. He'd have to go some to look as good. But he'd have a head start, since Spock would be thoroughly preoccupied for the next several days.

The trip to Feda XII was unremarkable, save for the straining and groaning of the ship's skeleton as Kirk tried for new speed records. Occasionally, the engine room crew drew extra duty and hazard pay repairing blow-outs of various descriptions, and once they lost power for all of 12 seconds.

At Spock's request, Kirk logged the marriage and had Uhura dispatch the appropriate notifications. The tone was anything but appropriate for a wedding day, especially when McCoy confirmed the pregnancy the newlyweds already knew about. McCoy restrained Christine from offering them a wedding present. He tried to explain the absence of the usual atmosphere of joy and hope which should prevail on such occasions, but could not without betraying a confidence.

Alone in Spock's quarters, T'Rruel and Spock looked at one another, the knowledge of the probable futures heavy on them. Spock had just had a brief glimpse of the meaning of life: the kind of thing which gives a human, or a Vulcan, drive, purpose, direction, and the only meaningful immortality. It still lay warmly within him, reawakening all his childhood yearnings toward belonging, a hope he'd abandoned years ago. In a few short hours he'd acquired a wife...and a son. His abused system had not yet fully recovered equilibrium, and he found an emotional basis for his reluctance to part with them. "T'Rruel," the ancient name rolled off his tongue like a song, "I will try to protect you."

She went to sit on the bed. "You cannot. There are only 57 of us. Each must carry his own share...in full. The only chance is to master the changes before the Drinking." She lay back on the bed and in two slow breaths was deep within herself fighting for her life and the life of her child.

Spock adjusted the ambient temperature for her comfort and sat down in his desk chair to wait, and to plan. Nevertheless, he would try to protect her. She was exactly what he'd always thought he wanted in a wife, and he was just beginning to realize how right he'd been.

They arrived at Peda XII without 10 minutes to spare, and beamed the Vulcans down to the diggings. Kirk fended off requests for shore leave, and the ship settled down to waiting.

Ssarsun and Scotty closeted themselves with a case of good scotch and even better schlugtamer that Ssarsun had been saving to work off a really colossal mad. He couldn't imagine anything more colossally maddening than Spock's beaming down into an enemy craft while his bodyguard lay unconscious. Besides, later, he'd have to relinquish the tenuous thread of contact, his lifeline to reality, for a few hours during the peak of the ceremonies, when Spock would need all his concentration just to stay alive. It was always better to be drunk at such times. He'd discovered early in his career that sobriety sharpened the hallucinations unbearably.

Kirk and McCoy passed 65 of the 68 hours by pretending to adhere to routine. But finally the tension got to be too much for the doctor, and he took a flask of his best brandy and went in search of the captain. He found him in his quarters pretending to read a status report. Silently, he poured two glasses full and sat down to kill the three hours remaining. Life in the service seemed to consist mostly of a series of life-or-death crises strung together by unbearably eternal waits.

Sixty-eight hours, 30 minutes had passed before Kirk's communicator tweeted. "Kirk here."

"Captain." It was Spock's voice, level, businesslike. "Five to beam up, sir. Please have the transporter room cleared. I'll be bringing the Kraith with me."

"Right. Five minutes. Kirk out." He looked at McCoy. "She didn't make it."

McCoy capped the flask and rose. "Let's go. When a rigid shaft is forced to bend...it shatters."

Kirk nodded and rose. "Yes. He may need us. But he'll never admit it."

They were out the door and marching along the corridor toward the transporter room as McCoy cautioned, "Jim, don't try to make him admit it. For the present, let him handle it in his own way. Maybe later...one day...he'll come looking for a shoulder."

"Right, Bones."

They cleared the transporter room, and Kirk locked onto the target, checked by communicator, set the time delay, and left the room.

When they re-entered, four weary Vulcans were making their way silently out of the room. Spock hefted a plain blue case and descended from the platform. He stopped in the middle of the floor to look at his two friends. "Captain...I'll require about a day before I can return to active duty. I'm quite thoroughly exhausted."

"Granted. Take as long as you like. T'Rruel...?"

"Is dead."

Kirk closed his eyes and shook his head. He started to reach out to Spock's free hand.

Spock stepped back quickly. "Thank you, Jim. But I still have some unfinished business." He indicated the Kraith. "If you'll excuse me, I'll be in my quarters." He made for the door.

Fifteen minutes later, he was stowing the case for safekeeping. The next time they stopped at Vulcan, he'd perform the ceremonial destruction and bury the remains. There was no hurry. He had 52 years.

The door chimed. He reached over and tripped the release. Christine came in carrying a tray with two steaming dishes under brightly polished covers. "I made some pekrewp. The others said it turned out well, so I thought you and T'Rruel would...." She looked around. "Where is she?"

The savory vapors had reached him, and he identified the traditional dish by smell. Its festive associations were hardly suitable at the moment, but it would provide the concentrated and easily digestible nourishment he needed now. "She's dead."

"Huuuuuh!" Her indrawn breath and growing frown culminated in a breathed, "Ohhh! I didn't know. Oh, Spock, I'm so sorry! What an awful tragedy."



"It was the result of actions taken in full knowledge of the probable consequences. It was unavoidable."

"Even so, I'm sorry."

"There's no need to be sorry." He locked the cabinet and rose to take the tray from Christine. "We live in changing times, Nurse. We have witnessed the end of an era today. An ancient symbol has passed into dust. A new symbol will be made to light the way into the future."

Christine wanted to say, "If you can't feel your pain, I'll feel it for you. But I know you can, and I want to share it with you and make it easier." But she remained silent and left the tray with the hungry Vulcan.

It didn't even occur to Spock to be grateful for the food, done by hand to perfection. It was a nurse's duty to look after the health of crewmembers. But, as he sat staring at the closed door, he reminded himself of Christine's well-known attitude toward him. That was a problem he'd have to grapple with again, soon.

But first he owed his ravaged body a good rest. As he finished the last spoonful, the door buzzed. "Come."

Kirk paced over to Spock's desk, motioning him to remain seated. "I'm sorry to bother you now, Spock, but a message just came in I think you should know about."

"Yes, sir?"

"Spock...I'm sorry..."

"Jim...." How to explain without alienating? "Jim, sympathy isn't necessary. It isn't even welcome. I'm very tired, and the human practice of...'breaking the news gently' only strains my patience. It's about Sarek, isn't it?"

Kirk nodded. "They found a body tentatively identified as Sarek. They're not sure. The search will continue. We've been ordered into the area."

Spock nodded, noting the way the room spun about him. He was truly on the verge of collapse. His efforts to save T'Rruel had drained every resource of vitality. "Thank you. We'll discuss it later, if that's all right with you."

"Yes, of course." Kirk turned to go, then came back. "Spock, I have to say it. I...feel...sympathy...so I'm compelled to express it. I want to help...."

"I understand, Jim. But I don't need help...only rest."

Kirk nodded. "Sleep well," he said, and left.

For a moment Spock sat staring at the closed door. Deep inside, he knew Sarek was not dead. He knew that as Kataytich he would feel that loss as a

severance deep within, and there was no such sensation. Perhaps he would yet rescue his father. He didn't remember stumbling to the bed and tumbling into the deepest sleep he'd ever known.

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Old Time Review Dept., cont. from p. 54

TV Guide, May 20, 1967, "Second Thoughts," by Cleveland Amory, p. 13.

"To re-review, we would say that the show we most overcriticized was Star Trek...."

addenda:

Nichelle Nichols -- "Tarzan's Deadly Silence" -- Ruana -- premiered July, 1970.

Walter Koenig -- "Medical Center"

-- "Between Dark and Daylight"

-- Harry Weller --

April 22, 1970.

George Takei --

"Which Way to the  
Front?"

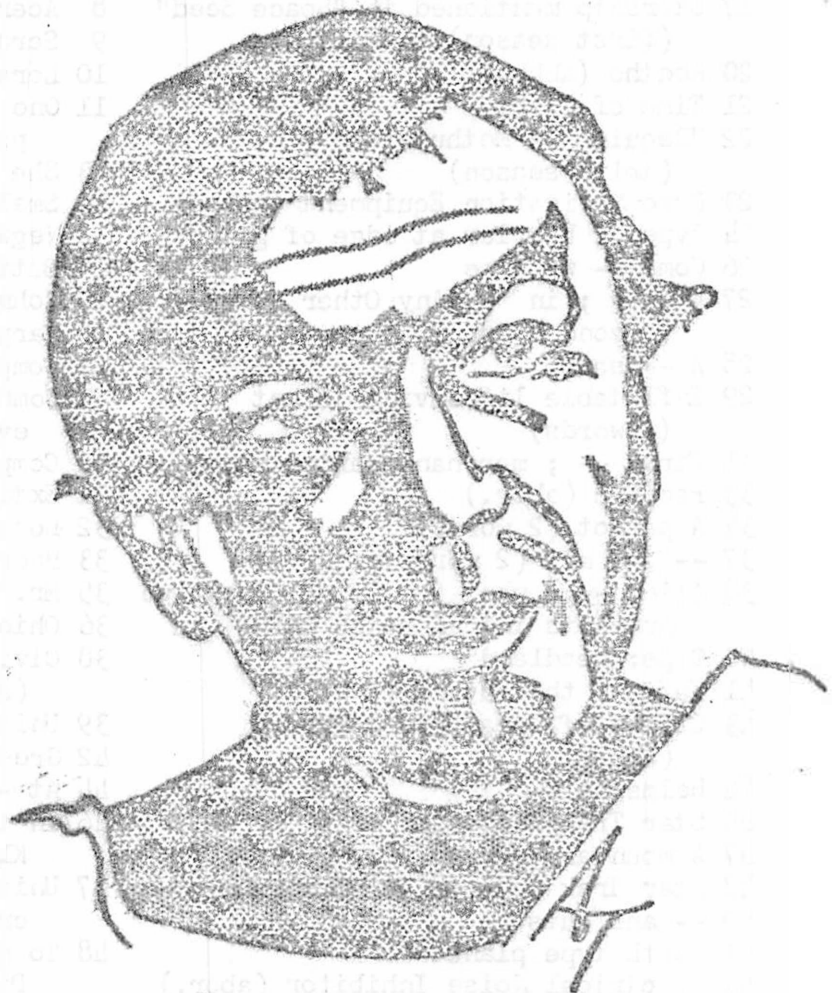
premiered July, 1970.

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T'Pol refused a  
seat on the  
council because  
she thought  
it would lower  
her standing.

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- N.B.



Kor -- "Errand of Mercy"

STAR  
R  
CROSSES  
K

by Clarica Scott

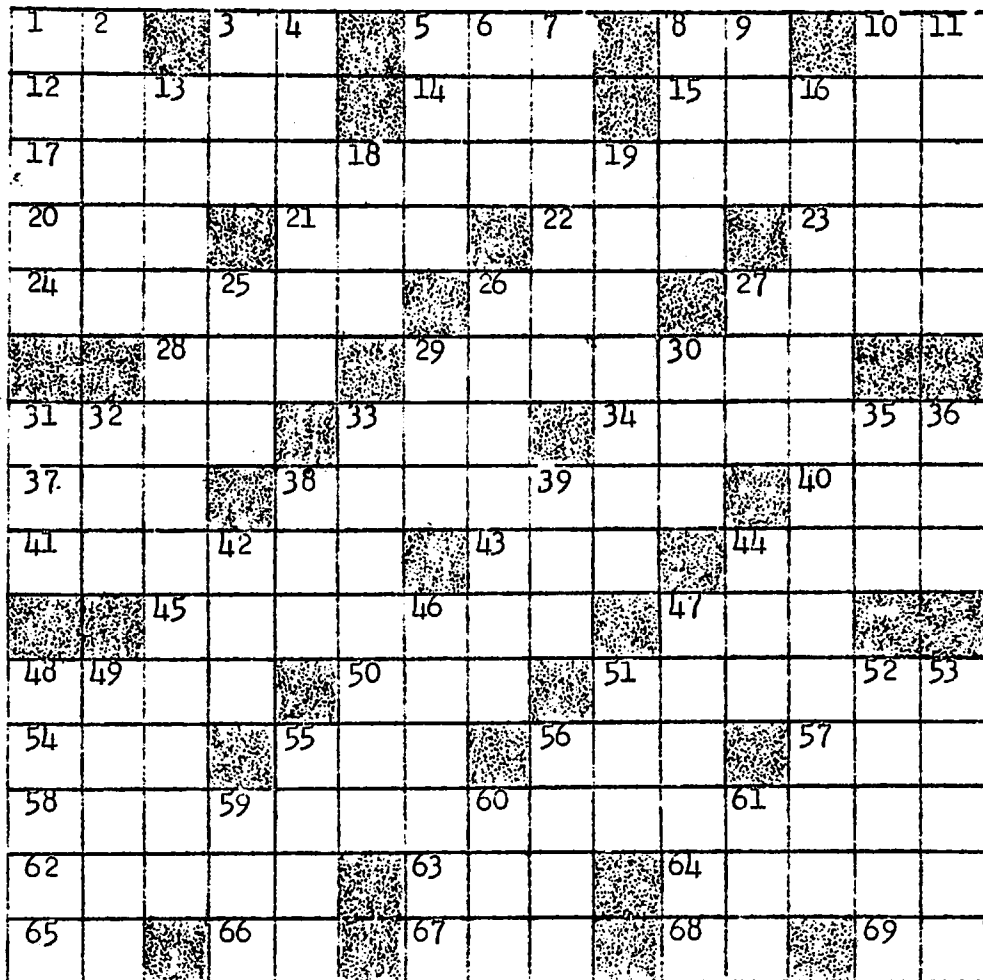
ACROSS:

- 1 In that or like manner (adv.)
- 3 Whether
- 5 Trigonometric function (abbr.)
- 8 With one actress; passable
- 10 Yes (German)
- 12 A dried fruit
- 14 Over and --
- 15 The lowest deck of the ship
- 17 Starship mentioned in "Space Seed"  
(first season)
- 20 Months (abbr.)
- 21 Time of light
- 22 "Requiem -- Methuselah" (  
(third season)
- 23 Gyro Navigation Equipment (abbr.)
- 24 Type of barrier at edge of galaxy
- 26 Come -- with me
- 27 Lt. -- ; in "By Any Other Name"  
(second season)
- 28 A -- sayer
- 29 Inflatable lifesaving jacket  
(2 words)
- 31 First -- ; merchant marine rank
- 33 Pacific (abbr.)
- 34 A parrot (2 words)
- 37 -- , o my! (2 words)
- 38 Alien -- ; what the Prime Directive  
prevents interference with
- 40 Cape; headland
- 41 Taxi of the future (2 words)
- 43 Office of Strategic Services  
(abbr.)
- 44 Helmsman --
- 45 Star Trek Weapons
- 47 A mountain banana
- 48 Star Trek script (first season)
- 50 -- and outs
- 51 Earth type planet
- 54 Electrical Noise Inhibitor (abbr.)
- 55 Old -- ; Kirk's enemy in "Deadly  
Years" (second season)
- 56 Sigma Alpha Epsilon; fraternity  
initials

DOWN:

- 1 Froth, foam
- 2 Actor Welles
- 3 Business abbreviation
- 4 Feudal estate (variation)
- 5 Snug
- 6 -- and out; thoroughgoing, undis-  
guised
- 7 Choke back
- 8 Acerb
- 9 Scrap, morsel
- 10 Loran --
- 11 One thing the life support systems  
prevent
- 13 She carries us on our Star Trek
- 16 Smaller ship, as an escort vessel
- 18 Negative vote
- 19 Battle of the tin soldiers (2 words)
- 25 John -- ; Scottish Arctic explorer
- 26 Warp -- ; measures of speed in space
- 27 Compass point
- 29 Combining form denoting ill, bad,  
evil
- 30 Compass point
- 31 Extinct flightless bird
- 32 Lover, friend (French)
- 33 Beer advertisement (2 words)
- 35 Mr. Clement (sf writer)
- 36 Ohio State University (abbr.)
- 38 Civil Aeronautics Administration  
(abbr.)
- 39 United Star Ship (abbr.)
- 42 Greek letter
- 44 At -- ; lost, bewildered
- 46 In the -- camp (Romulan's or  
Klingon's, etc.)
- 47 United Federation of Planets space  
craft groups
- 48 To mitigate, appease (Scot. &  
Dial. Eng.)
- 49 Map detail
- 51 Sylvia became a black one in a  
second season script
- 52 Lustrous fabric

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 57 Electromagnetically Adjusted Orbit (abbr.) | 53 Eastern Religion (abbr.)                             |
| 58 Star Trek script (second season)           | 55 Keyed up with eager interest                         |
| 62 Look after (2 words)                       | 56 To slight designedly                                 |
| 63 Not me                                     | 59 A Jewish organization to further Territorialism      |
| 64 River in eastern Hungary                   | 60 A long time  |
| 65 Ethyl (chemical abbr.)                     | 61 Necessary element provided by life support equipment |
| 66 Nickname of Whig poet Thomas Shadwell      |   |
| 67 Space Navigation Bureau (abbr.)            |   |
| 68 Senior (abbr.)                             |   |
| 69 Southwestern state (abbr.)                 |   |




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Admiring Lieutenant Uhura  
 Our Scotty attempted to lure her.  
 She scorned his advances  
 With withering glances,  
 And Scotty grew dourer and dourer.  
 -- Nan Braude

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## A LETTER

by Dorothy Jones and Astrid Anderson

12 Doma, A.R. 2109

Terran calendar -- I forget; July or something

Dear Myfanwy:

Yes we received our orders. We'll join the Enterprise before it leaves Earth next month.

Of course I like Vulcan, except for the very very dry air. (And Amanda has taught me how to cope with that.) But we'll be glad to get back on board. I do feel just a trifle out of place occasionally.

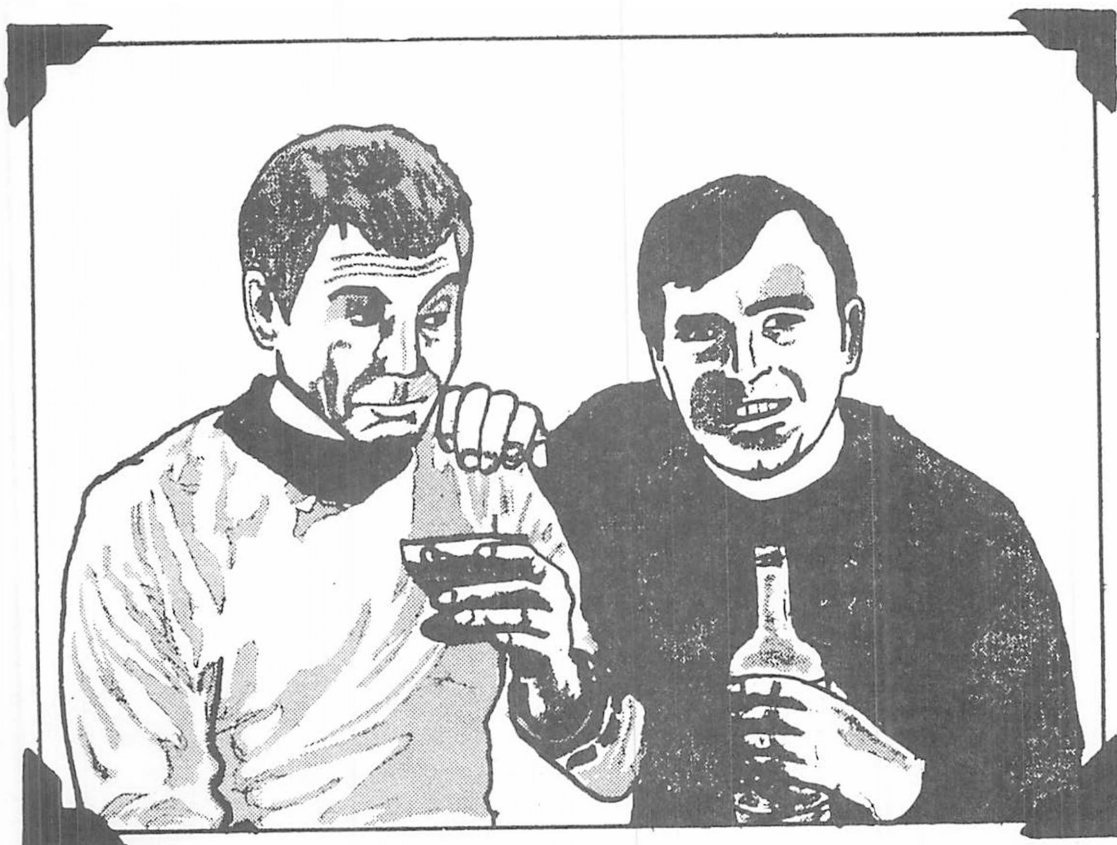
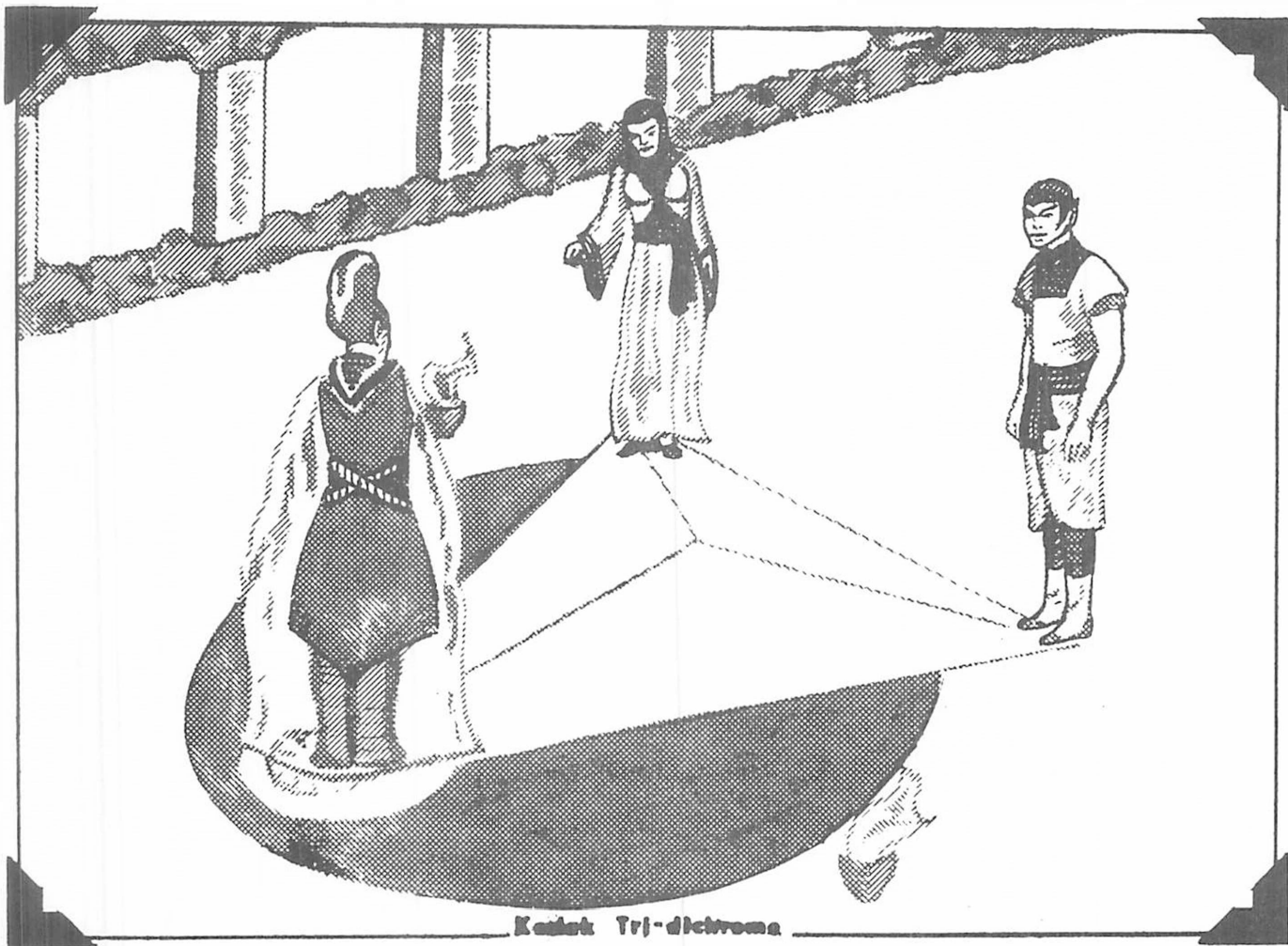
And I thought we were a disruptive influence on the big E! -- remember the glorious drunk with which McCoy and Scotty celebrated the news? And people carefully not staring at us in the corridors, and going into quiet transports as soon as we had passed? And the captain sneaking glances at him on the bridge, because he wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary, but just sat there and glowed. (He still does. Most flattering.) Really, not since the days of monarchies and dynastic marriages has any engagement been of such interest to so many people other than the principals.

We're interesting here, too, but it's a little different. It's not that the Vulcans dislike or reject us, or even me; they accept me just as they accept Spock: with reservations. No, it's just that here is the second generation of Vulcan-Terran marriages in this fine old Vulcan family, and people are beginning to wonder rather nervously whether this may not get to be a habit!

We can't have helped soothe them by being married not once but twice. It would have been three times if we hadn't persuaded the captain to be content with being best man. And one of these days I'll persuade Spock to be content that I wasn't allowed to sing the chant at my own wedding. Non omnia possumus omnes.

(Did you see T'Pol's expression when the incense drifted out to her? Spock says it's nothing he can possibly describe, but that it smells like the air he breathed before the world was made.)

Yes, I was very glad that the kun at kali fi wasn't required in our case. Not only would I have been at a loss to find a challenger; the less time I spent out in that broiling sun the better. For the same reason I was pleased that a Vulcan wedding ends with bride and groom vanishing into the middle distance and not having to attend the reception. (Because, Spock explains, under ordinary circumstances the groom is in plak tow and isn't going to put up with any more deleted ceremonies.)



Give my love to Dr. McCoy. All of a sudden I'm very fond of him, and I keep remembering him giving me away with that great soggy grin. And explaining that he never did understand me, but he doesn't understand Spock either so he knows we're right for each other. Please tell him he is So Right.

Marriage is a noble institution; I recommend it highly to practically everybody. It's remarkable how one feels. The old song was right: one day has gone by on its path, and the world is forever changed. It's as though I had had one eye since birth and had just been given the other. I could see perfectly before, but now I can experience the world through two viewpoints...this is very badly phrased. Let it stand that although we were happy before (at least I was) we have something now that we'd go to great lengths to avoid losing. This doesn't, fortunately, mean that either of us has turned overprotective. Spock as chief science officer and I as linguist will have numbers of landings to make, often apart from each other. Being realists, we expect to worry like the devil. But neither of us would try to safeguard the other at the expense of duty. Keep that in mind if you're thinking what I think you're thinking.

And stop worrying about how I'll get on with my in-laws. Amanda is a darling. There was a bit of confusion at first before she realized that I'm not quite herself 40 years ago; I've been working with Spock for five years, and I know more about the Vulcans than she did as a bride. And, when we realized that, we had a good laugh and got along swimmingly from that moment.

But it's Sarek that I can really talk to. We never met officially when he was on the Enterprise so he knew nothing about me except that I was Spock's choice and we would have to get along somehow. But since we've met, he seems to have decided that I'm the appropriate person, and he approves of me.

The first couple of days we were all being very polite and agreeable. But then I asked Sarek if he really had a copy of "The Tale of the i Malka," which Spock had mentioned to me. (That's the story of the four warriors who held off an army at the land bridge at the foot of Sašli till their kinsmen could get there.) Sarek hadn't known I knew Old Tongue! So he blinked -- Vulcan equivalent of a staggering double-take -- and all of a sudden I was persona gratissima and Sarek took me into that holy of holies, his library. One wall is lined with tape-reels and one with scrolls; the others are white plaster so minutely carved as to be fair acoustic tile. And he showed me the epic I wanted, and others I didn't even know about, and then said, "Wait." He opened a copper-lined box and took out six more scrolls. He spread out the first one, and, by heaven, it was a bilingual text in Old Tongue and Šndšdxlmi. Now climb down off the wall. It's full of prothetic vowels and is pronounced (i is that no-color vowel like in Ti-Pau) Šhındishidkhĩlmi, and



it's the old language, long dead, of the plains people from whom Sarek's family is descended. I didn't know there was any of it extant but in place and personal names; and here's Sarek with half-a-dozen texts in his library, including a bilingual!!!

Well, when I climbed down off the wall, I realized the scrolls are heirlooms preserved since before the conquest of the plains people by the hill people -- the ones that spoke Early Old Tongue. And I had already known Sarek and Spock are Šndšdxlmi stock, from their long family name.

\* \* \*

Later.

At that point I realized I should've said "our name," and Spock wanted to know what I was chortling about, and I didn't get back to writing for a while.

So that's what I do most afternoons: perch on a stool, in a long flowing robe (local style) and my hair in a plait down my back (appropriate for a Vulcan wife in the privacy of her home), learning Šndšdxlmi. (You can call it Old Plains if you'd rather.) Sarek isn't a linguist himself, but we manage. He is a marvelous person, and such a gentle voice. If we weren't both respectable old married people....I'm kidding.

I thought you knew about Christine. That all went very well. I was afraid she'd make a scene, but she took it like an officer and a gentlewoman, and gave me her recipe for plomik for a wedding present. I tried it out, and Spock was most polite, but couldn't help saying (O the eternal male on any planet!) that it wasn't as good as the plomik his mother used to make. So Amanda's teaching me Vulcan cookery, and here's her plomik recipe, adapted to Terran vegetation.

About 8 ounces cooked carrots, and the juice thereof.

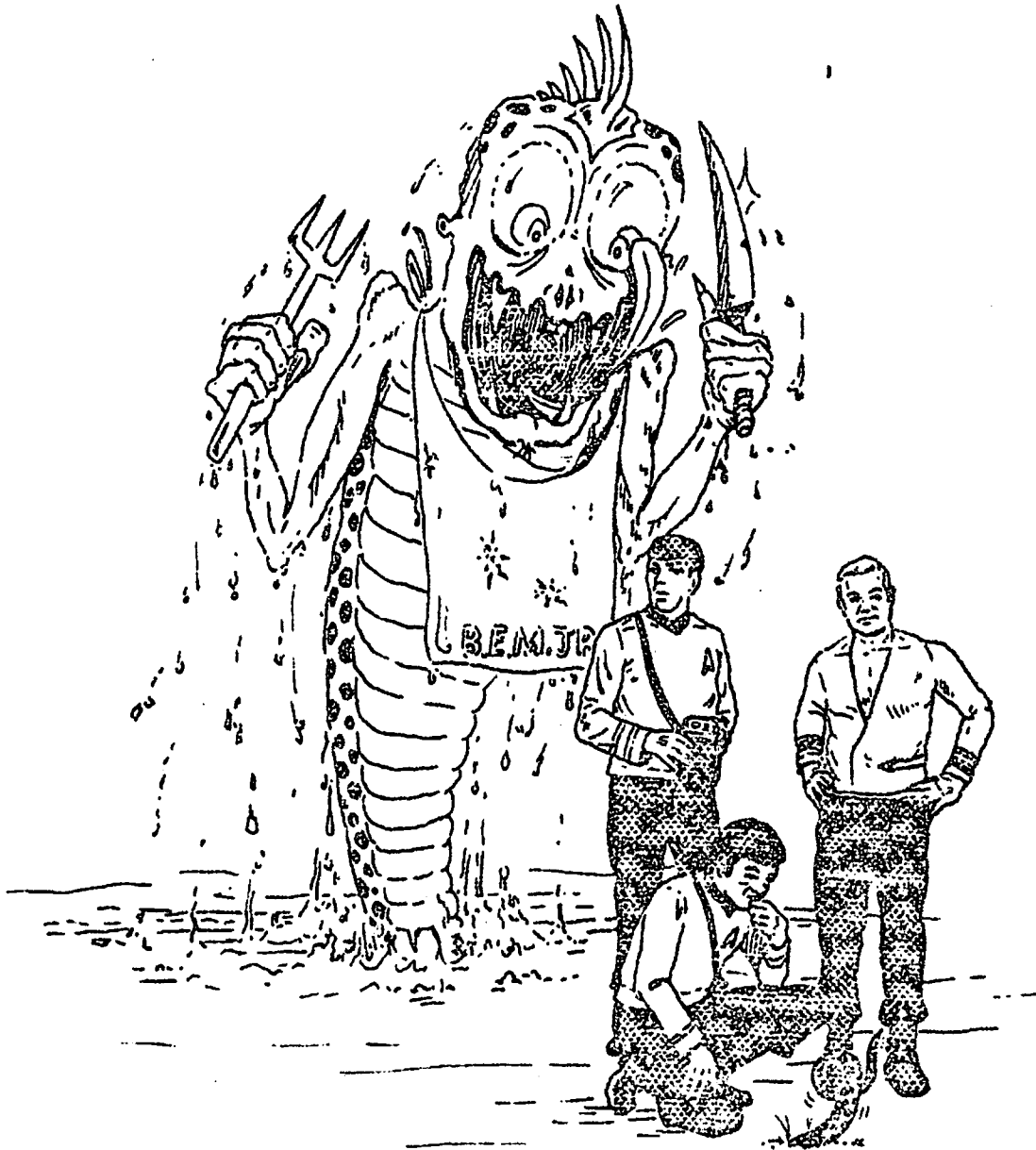
About 7 ounces miso (Japanese soy bean paste).

Juice of one or two lemons to taste.

Put carrots and miso in a blender and blend like crazy till smooth and unrecognizable. Add water as needed (about 1- $\frac{1}{2}$  cups) to produce the proper consistency (that of split-pea soup). Heck, you know what plomik should look like; you were there to see it splattered all over the bulkhead. Heat it and add lemon juice to taste. This is sort of classic plomik. You can add bits of other vegetables (as parsley or cucumber) if you blend the bejeepers out of them first.

Have a nice time in the Sierras. What the devil are you doing backpacking with a Regenswelter? Does he/she/it/that know that peace has broken out? I'm glad Bones will be there to patch you up if required. Unless you get eaten by a grizzly who hasn't read the game laws, I'll see you next month.

Valde a pur, Dorothy



## T - WAVES

from Dorothy Fontana

Regarding the letters asking about the type of operation used on Spock's father in "Journey to Babel"...the correct word was cryogenic. Leonard transposed the "y" and the "r" and it came out "cyrogenic." When the dailies were seen the next day, there arose a terrible moan from the watching bodies (me, Bob Justman, etc.), but rather than have him shoot it again, it was left. Time was money, and it was rationalized that maybe "cyrogenic" was far-out enough to be accepted as some kind of 23rd Century operation. Ac-

tually, I have recently heard two newscasters (one well-known nationally broadcast type and one well-known locally broadcast type) mispronounce the same word in exactly the same way.

In the list of my work there is a long-standing error I wish you'd correct. I never claimed any credit on "Catspaw," though I was forced to do extensive revisions on it in my capacity as story editor. I did not ask for credit. It came as a shock and a surprise to me to see the credit listed on the first draft script when it came back from the mimeograph company. I discovered Gene Coon had put it in that way, and I immediately demanded that the script cover be changed and that I be left off the writing credits. Robert Bloch has been a friend for a long time and I had no wish to intrude on his credits. The changes in "Catspaw" were not of my origination, and I felt my contributions were on order, so to speak. Therefore, I could not ethically claim credit. "Catspaw" appeared on screen as written by Robert Bloch.

However, I later did extensive creative work and rewrite on "The Ultimate Computer" for which the Writers Guild arbitration committee awarded me full teleplay credit, with story by the original writer, Laurence N. Wolfe.

Additional old credits are: THE TALL MAN (story) "The Parson" starring Richard Deacon and Harold J. Stone; THE TALL MAN (story & teleplay) "The Cloudbuster" starring Sue George and Frank DeKova; THE TALL MAN (story & teleplay) "Tiger Eye" starring Richard Bakalyan and Rex Holman; FRONTIER CIRCUS (story) "Lippizan" starring Vera Miles; SHOTGUN SLADE (teleplay) "Secret Gold" starring Scott Brady; BEN CASEY (story & teleplay) "Did Your Mother Come from Ireland, Ben Casey" starring Tom Bosley, Cesar Romero and Billy Mumy.

Did you know I received a Writers Guild Award nomination for my script on THEN CAME BRONSON, "Two Percent of Nothing"? As you may or may not know, WGA Awards are judged on the basis of script alone. No film is viewed, and the writer submits what he considers his best effort. My BRONSON script was much revised after my second draft was turned in, and was further changed by the director (also a writer) on the location set. But...moral triumph!...on the basis of writing alone, my original script garnered one of the five nominations in a field of close to a hundred. The official nomination was for Best Dramatic-Episodic Script for 1969.

Gene Roddenberry's new picture at MGM has a tentative start date of August 10. It's now called "Pretty Maids in a Row," will be directed by Roger Vadim (the French director) and has Rock Hudson as the male lead. It is a sexy, funny (black comedy) murder mystery. Bill Theiss is doing the costumes, which are contemporary.

from Juanita Coulson

Ignoring for the moment what the first unsuccessful pilot was (just a rough sketching out of characters, something obviously done before Nimoy had grown into the role, and before Hunter was anything at all except the designated hero) -- it's interesting to speculate: the earlier, smiling Spock might

have been Spock's earliest adjustment to life among humans, an attempt on his part to become as human as he possibly could. The hints about the Vulcanian expedition and the suggestions of startlement or revulsion at finding a Vulcan in human company (Mudd, Kor, Stiles) imply the Vulcanian expedition was something that strained human-Vulcan relationships severely, perhaps almost to the breaking point. Perhaps it was enough of a psychological trauma to make Spock

turn his back on his humanity and retreat into the Vulcan shell we saw in the second pilot...a shell Kirk gradually coaxed him out of.

Zuker



from Joyce Yasner

I have a few criticisms to offer on "The Vigil" by Dorothy Jones and Astrid Anderson. Actually, my criticism is directed to Dorothy's end of the story, more specifically, her Vulcan language. She had an article dealing with the language in Spockanalia 3. (Is that all right, or should I stick to just what she said in the story? The things are closely related.)

The idea of there being a less tightly structured or developed Old Tongue is fine. Obviously the Vulcans weren't as socially or technologically advanced back then; languages do evolve, and if Vulcan remained the same through two thousand years it would be a rather dead language. Now, the modern Vulcan language would be closely concerned with accuracy and depth of expression. The language would have to be capable of coping with the sophistications of logic.

But I argue with the idea of deleting what is referred to as "lovewords" in "The Vigil," and also with what Dorothy called "poetic and inexact vocabulary" in her Spockanalia article. First of all -- and I'm not trying to be a wiseacre -- what are lovewords? It can't be words like "kiss" or "hug," or "put your two fingers on mine," could it? Vulcans might not go around calling each other by names such as darling or honey, but the words must exist if the acts they correspond to exist.

As for poetic vocabulary, practically any vocabulary can be poetic. For example, in Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," you come across the line "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons." None of the words is poetic; put them all together, though, and they're poetic.

Inexact vocabulary can be a matter of context. Imagine the following scene: two Vulcans, a sehlat, several Klingons who have dropped in for lunch and want meat for their meal. The Klingons and one Vulcan are sitting at

table. The other Vulcan comes in with a plate of steaming food, which she places on the table. She says, "The sehlat is too hot to eat." Now, are they having sehlat for lunch? Or is she off-handedly remarking that the pet has been running around on the veranda in the noon-day sun and is now panting over his Gaines burgers, too hot to eat his lunch?

"Red" is an inexact word. You could substitute vermillion, rose or 90 other words to describe a color exactly, but the general, inexact word has a function. It is virtually impossible to delete inexact vocabulary -- there really is no such thing.

If I can add to the observations of Dean Dickensheet -- there's a rather direct steal STmade in "The Cloud Minders." As I recall, a similar cloud city was in Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels. That's, in my opinion, more blatant gall than stealing from old Buck Rogers episodes. More people know about Gulliver's Travels.

from Jacqueline Lichtenberg

I really enjoy the Dorothy-Myfanwy series, though I feel the plotting is a bit thin. There is considerable skill in creating cameo impressions and choosing a few well-defined and sharply revealing scenes to narrate. I thought they could have found a more interesting situation for the vigil that proved climactic. It came out a bit over-contrived, because they've often made casual surveys of the life on planetary surfaces and even conducted manhunts without such terrific exertion. Also, I think the timescale was wrong. Spock has gone for longer periods without food or rest and not shown such symptoms. I think. Anyway, it would have beefed up the story if the situation were set up more tightly and the length of the extraordinary sustained effort were longer with perhaps some other extenuating circumstances such as disease, injury, esper-type injury, or something more imaginative. The color page for the Dorothy-Myfanwy series was very nice -- dressed up the issue beautifully. The Romulan drawing was fabulous, and the photo work was very interesting.

from Gail Barton

Doris Beetem, Judith Brownlee and I (Gail Barton, 31 Range View Drive, Lakewood Colorado 80215), put out a Vulcanzine, Eridani Triad, with stories, articles, poems, and pictures, concentrating on Vulcan and the Vulcans. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope for information on price.



## Old Time Review Dept.

## First season reviews

Minneapolis Star, c. Sept. 9, 1966, "TV-Radio Chatter," by Forrest Powers.

"Star Trek,' a science-fiction series, also was given the 'sneak preview' treatment on NBC Thursday night. The program stars William Shatner as commander of a huge space-ship which has a Playboy bunny-type waitress.

"The opening story concerned a creature on Planet M11 that was able to change itself into any human form. This creature required salt to survive and satisfied its craving by stealing the body content of people and leaving them dead.

"Shatner performed his heroics grimly. For good reason, I think."

Variety, Sept. 14, 1966, "TV Reviews," by Trau., p. 36.

"Star Trek' obviously solicits all-out suspension of disbelief, but it won't work. Even within its sci-fi frame of reference it was an incredible and dreary mess of confusion and complexities at the kickoff. The interplanetary spaceship trudged on for a long hour with hardly any relief from violence, killings, hypnotic stuff and a distasteful, ugly monster. Moreover, this Norway Productions-Desilu-NBC offering lacks the virtue of at least providing an illusion of the wideopen (upper) spaces and had a crude made-in-studio look, whether lensed exterior or interior.

"By a generous stretch of the imagination, it could lure a small coterie of the small fry, though not happily time slotted in that direction. It's better suited to the Saturday morning kidvid bloc,

"The performers are in there pitching, but the odds are against them in all departments -- script, direction and over-all production. William Shatner, one of a star-billed pair, has a good track record in tv and legit, but as the skipper of the Enterprise spaceship appears wooden, and uncertain about his function; same goes for Leonard Nimoy, costarred as Mr. Spock, so-called chief science officer whose bizarre hairdo (etc.) is a dilly; and DeForest Kelley as chief medico, et al.

"A quota of decorative females, most of them in vague roles, are involved in the out-of-this-world shenanigans. In the guesting line-up, Jeanne Bal valiantly attempted to portray a homicidal human-turned-monster, with Alfred Ryder as her grim-faced husband. They were apparently archeologists undergoing periodic medical checkup, but that's only a guess. The biggest guessing game is figuring how this lowercase fantasie broke into the sked."

NY Times, Sept. 16, 1966, "TV Spies, Space and the Stagestruck" by Jack Gould, p. 73

"Star Trek,' which N.B.C. is presenting at 8:30 PM on Thursdays this season, makes clear that life in space will probably be more traumatic than on earth. A sick teenager who was never acquainted with terrestrial amenities ran amok last night on the master patrol ship. The accent was less on the super-duper gadgetry usually associated with travel in the heavens than on astronautical soap opera that suffers from interminable flight drag. It was TV's first psychodrama in orbit."



TV Guide, March 25, 1967, "Review," by Cleveland Amory, p. 1.

"The Mission of the 'Star Ship' Enterprise is to seek out and discover new worlds -- 'To boldly go,' as is stated each week, 'where no man has gone before.' In other words, Enterprise not only splits the infinite -- but, horror of horrors, infinitives, too. And quite a trip this good ship has each week.

"The Enterprise has plenty of fun places to go, and, make no mistake about it, it has fun people to go to those fun places. First of all, there is Captain Kirk (William Shatner), who's pretty close to the last of the clean-cutters. When he says sternly, 'Affirmative' or 'Negative' to some scheming girl yeoman, you just know -- well, he yeomeans it. Second, there is his space mate, Mr. Spock (Leonard Nimoy), a 'science officer' who not only has pointed ears but also, we are told, a 'precise, logical turn of mind (which he) inherited from his father, a native of the planet Vulcanis, who married an Earth woman.' (We've warned you men before about marrying below you.) Third, there is Dr. McCoy (DeForest Kelley) who is, we are also informed, 'the oldest and most experienced space traveler on the ship.' (If he's too old for you, girls, look at it this way -- 200 years from now, what will it matter?) And fourth and fifth, there are Mr. Sulu (George Takei), 'the helmsman,' and Lieutenant Uhura (Nichelle Nichols), a beautiful Negro communications officer. Altogether, they're so darn well-integrated internationally that it seems a pity to waste them on outer space. We need them right here on Earth.

"Most of the trips, of course, involve shoot-'em-ups of one sort or another. Our favorite trip was to a

beautiful planet where the crew saw, in short order, a large White Rabbit, a small Alice

('You follow the rabbit,' Shatner barks, 'and I'll badktrack the girl'), a Don

Juan, a tiger, a Japanese samurai, a German strafing plane, a Black

Knight (apparently a loser in the Ajax contest), as well as a rather hazy

girl friend of Captain Kirk's of 15 years before (Shirley Bonne) and a

man named Finnegan (Bruce Mars), an upperclassman who had actually hazed

Kirk at the Space Academy. Even when it turned out that all these halluci-

nations were hallucinated up by the crewmen themselves, we still weren't

out of the woods because one of them, the Black Knight, looked like the

real McCoy -- or at least real

enough to kill Dr. McCoy. 'It's my

fault!' cried yeoman Tonia Barrows

(Emily Banks), who had hallucinated up both Don Juan and the Black

Knight. 'I'm to blame!' But Captain

Kirk shook her. 'I need every crew-

man alert,' he said. 'Face front.

Don't talk. Don't think. Don't

breathe!' It was good advice -- and

in our opinion the best way for an

adult to watch this show. For the

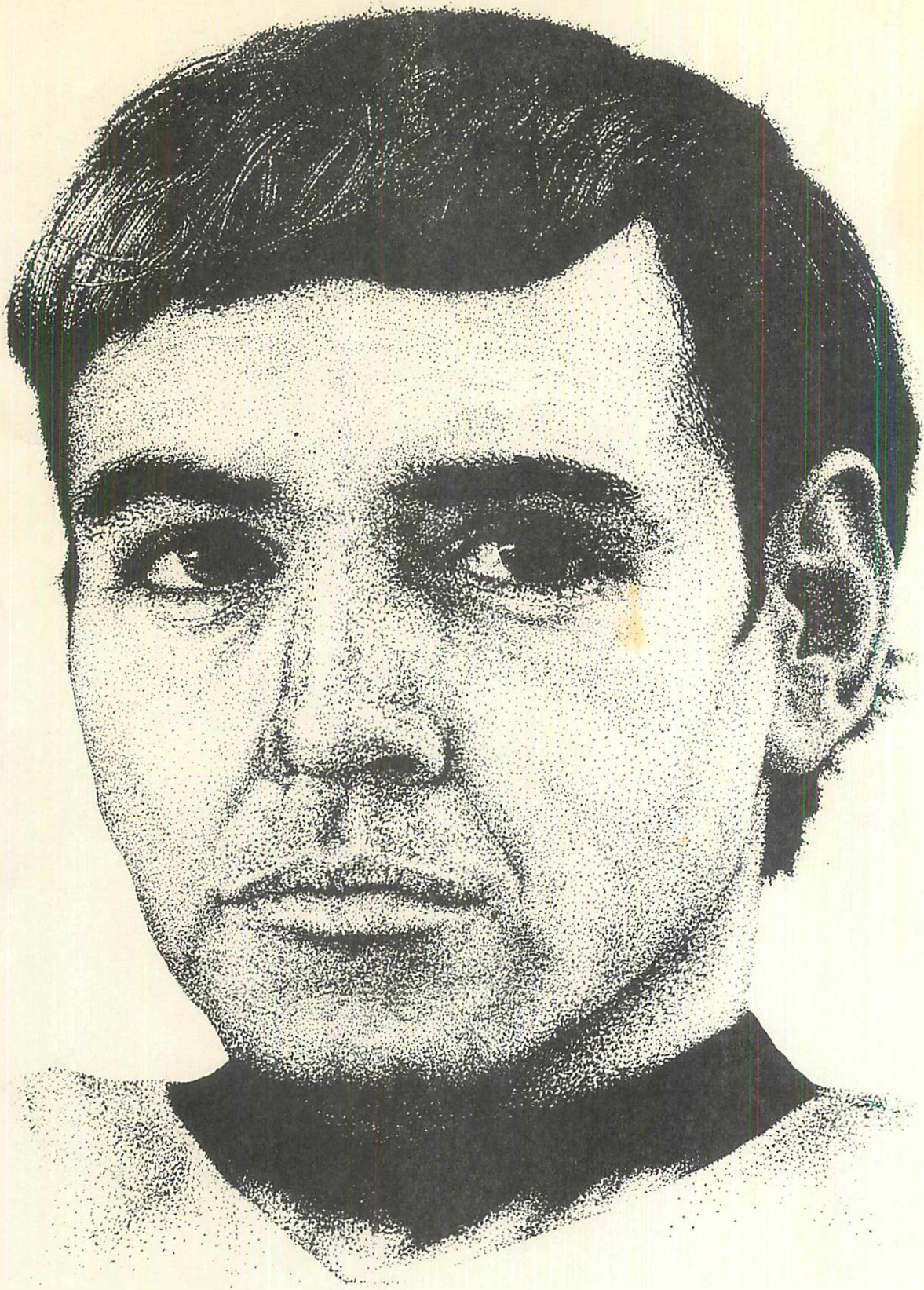
kids, though, let 'em breathe. Let

'em even halluciante. They'll love it.

(cont. p. 43)







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