ScoTpress

ENTERPRISE - LOG ENTRIES

a Star Trek fanzine

71

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ScoTpress - Sheila Clark, Valerie Piacentini, Janet Quarton & Shona

Hello, and welcome to Enterprise - Log Entries 71.

As some of you may know, Enterprise - Log Entries won the award for Best British Zine at U.F.P. Con. Sheila, Janet and Shona would like to join me in thanking everyone who voted for us. We were thrilled to win the award, especially against some stiff competition. However, we would also like to take this chance to thank all our writers and artists, without whom we would not be able to produce a zine at all. Also we mustn't forget Linda, Wendy, Charlotte and Elizabeth, who are responsible for the actual printing, and Carla for general assistance in getting the masters to Linda and collecting the printed zines when it isn't always handy for Sheila to do so. These are all the people who really earned the award.

I would like to mention two zines that we have coming out in August. 'Something Missing', by Sheila Clark, is the third story in the 'Something Hidden' universe, and presents the Enterprise crew with a mystery to solve when children begin to vanish on a peaceful colony planet. For those interested in the factual side of Trek, Janet has compiled a complete credit listing for the episodes, the most detailed listing I know of to be printed.

Among the zines currently available are 'Spinner of Nightmares', by Pam Baddeley, the sequel to 'Weaver of Dreams', and Enterprise Incidents 6 and 7, both of which consist of stories by one of fandom's classic writers, Jennifer Gutteridge.

Enterprise - Log Entries 72 is scheduled for early September. Longer term plans include Enterprise Incidents 8 which is in the planning stages. This will consist of stories that Sheila wrote in the very early days of her writing career and didn't consider good enough to print. She is going over them, editing and re-writing to bring them up to a printable standard. We're hoping to have it ready for the con next May; and if the re-writing expands them enough, there'll even be an Enterprise Incidents 9!

Details of these and all other ScoTpress zines can be obtained by sending an SAE to Sheila at the address below.

As usual we welcome submissions of fiction, poetry and artwork for ScoTpress zines. We are looking for series-based action-adventure stories, preferably with some character inter-relationship. Alternate universe stories are acceptable, but even these should not be movie-based, K/S, or involve the death of main characters, or be primarily about other ships. These *are*, after all, "The voyages of the Starship Enterprise..."

Submissions may be sent to either -

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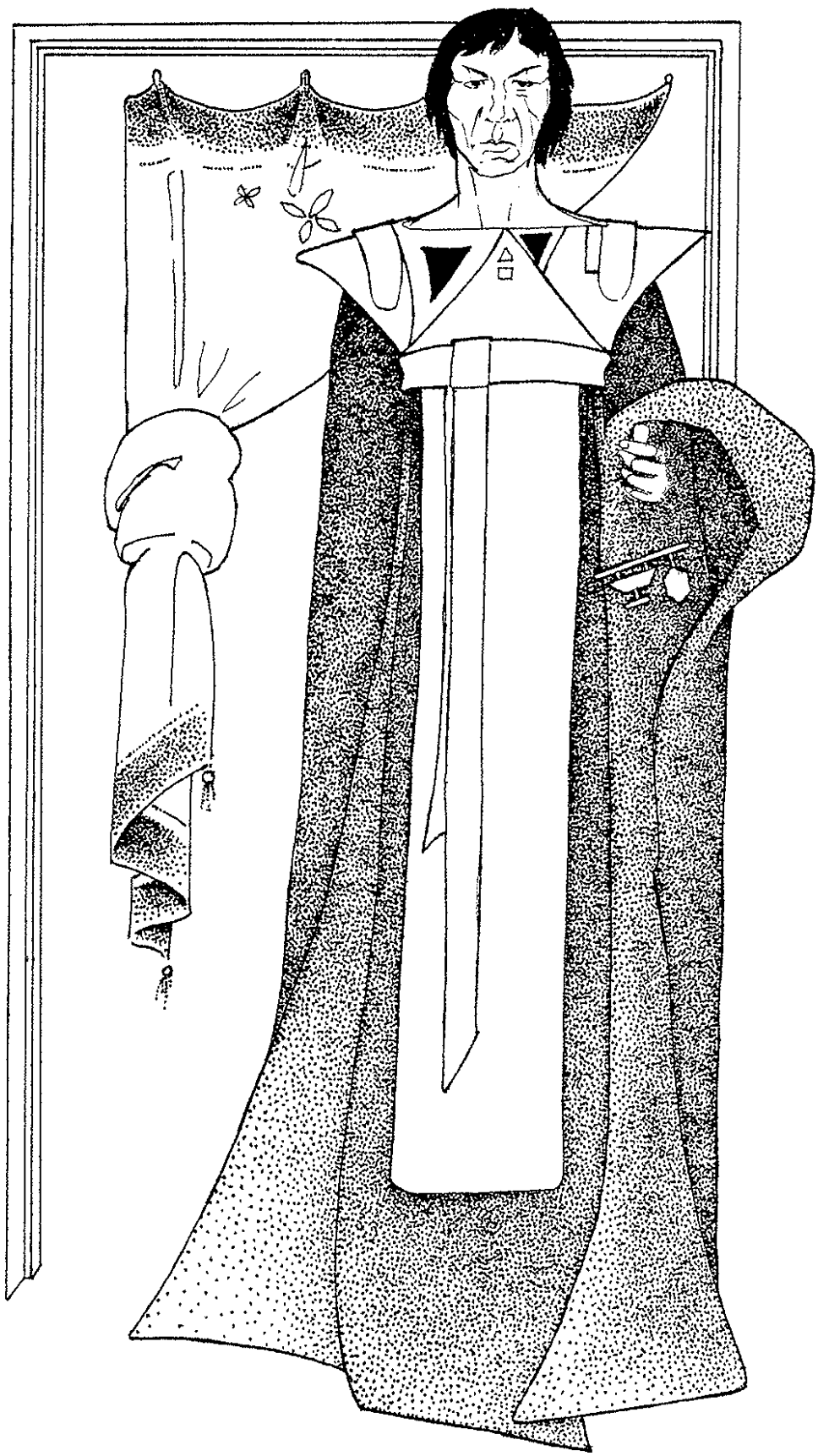
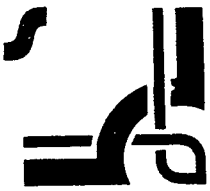


A Cure for All Ills



by

Lorri Goodison

"That's crazy! No way can you convince me that machines can't do everything a man can do and more. The 'bedside manner' days are long gone, Doctor." The young man rose and left, raising his eyes in disbelief at the old crock he had just put down.

The 'old crock' watched him go, a knowing smile on his lips. Some things never changed, including opinionated newly-graduated doctors.

"Rather an overbearing young man, wouldn't you say?"

"He kinda reminds me of someone... Christine! Well, I'll be..."

Christine Chapel's eyes twinkled at her former colleague's discomfort. "Never thought to see me here, did you?"

"Well, I... Well, no. Sit down a minute until I get my senses back." The familiar blue eyes studied her closely. "You haven't changed, apart from your hair and that little matter of promotion I heard about."

"I wouldn't be at a medical conference unless I was a doctor, would I?" She reached across the table to clasp his hand gently. "How are you?"

"Same as always, I guess. Just as cranky and irritable, a few more lines - and I'm still a pain in the ass. Oops, sorry!"

"That's all right. Now I'm a doctor I can say 'ass' too. I heard you had a country practice these days."

Dr. Leonard McCoy nodded. "Uhuh. I was gettin' too old for Starfleet."

"That's a matter of opinion. Care for a drink?"

"Sure. I'll pa..."

"You will sit where you are," interrupted Chapel. "After all those years on a nurse's pay, I don't know what to do with all the extra money anyway."

McCoy returned her smile, then resumed his study of the crowd as she walked to the bar. The doctor he had spoken to earlier was at the far side of the room, expounding on his theories to some others of like persuasion. He was very familiar, that youngster. All fired up with the enthusiasm and dedication of youth. As he watched, Dr. McCoy found his mind going back through the years to another, very similar, young man...

... The newly qualified doctor felt confidence and excitement bubble within him as he studied himself for the umpteenth time in the side window. Neatly styled brown hair, square-jawed face and direct blue eyes were reflected back at him, together with the medical insignia on his uniform. He had been qualified for some months, but with this first planetary assignment he felt as if only now could he truly say he was a doctor.

He glanced hastily around, not wishing anyone to catch him admiring himself, but no-one was watching. All eyes were on the briefing notes handed out earlier, so he followed suit, scanning the information.

The medical team was en route to a colonised planet where the colonists and natives had successfully integrated. The natives seemed to have accepted the machinery and customs of the colonists without rancour, showing a rare adaptability and acceptance. On this planet the experiment had been a success, unlike some others. After those first colonies the Prime Directive had been born, to prevent further disasters.

McCoy laid down the notes and glanced at his neighbour. The tiniest of sighs escaped his lips as he contemplated his fate. Trust him to be stuck next to a Vulcan! He had not met many, but those he had come across all conveyed the same impression of anti-social clinical disdain. Didn't they get excited about *anything*?

Meanwhile, there was a worthy recipient of his charm just across the aisle, if he could catch her eye. Blonde, petite, and shapely, Dr. Dale Quentin would succumb quickly, he knew. Just give him a chance to move in, and...

A nasal-like tone announced the approach of the shuttle to its destination. McCoy curbed his licentious thoughts and eyed the landscape outside.

Savanna terrain stretched to the level horizon, stunted trees pock marking a sweep of dried red grass. Some local animals cropped steadily on, well used by now to the arrival of space vehicles. Edging out into the wilderness was a burgeoning space port, the outskirts dotted with native buildings grouped together like mushrooms. McCoy hoped he would have a chance to look around in between checking the health of the colonists.

He did, but not until three days after the landing, when the medical team was making trips to outlying settlements. His team of three had just returned from a distant ranch to the spaceport, and after a brief rest the young doctor felt up to a little exploration. He would have preferred to have the company of Dale Quentin, but she was busy putting together a report and would not be enticed outside. McCoy mentally shrugged and resolved to try again later on.

He walked freely through the streets, drinking in the peaceful atmosphere. There were few incidents of unrest here, the natives being by nature friendly. They scurried by on business of their own, a small race with crimson skin and almond shaped eyes. Apart from their large sensitive ears, they could have originated from the same branch of humanity as McCoy himself.

The sun was warm, and McCoy felt sorely tempted to spread his weary frame out on one of the neatly cut lawns, but as most of these had temples on them he felt he'd better remain standing.

"Earther! Earther! You, Doctor - come!"

He spun round, startled by the stilted, excited cry. A native woman was running towards him, waving her arms wildly. "Come! Come! Sick - much sick!"

McCoy avoided asking questions, following her to one of the native family villages close by. A group of silent natives stood outside a squat building. They parted as the two approached, then regathered round the entrance.

Once McCoy's eyes had adjusted to the dim light he saw there were three natives already in the room. A man stood at the far side, arms folded, his eyes fixed disapprovingly on the woman. Beside him sat an older woman, an unreadable expression on her round face. In the corner was a bed, where a young girl tossed and turned, muttering to herself.

McCoy immediately strode towards the bed, but before he reached it the older woman rose and caught his arm. "You not needed here. Child dies - is in the hands of the gods. Go."

McCoy's professional pride bridled at this brusque order. "Now just one moment. I don't know who you are, but..."

"I Hahotah, Sun Mother to this family," she told him in a deep yet lilting voice. "I know child is dying. You cannot help."

Just what I needed, McCoy thought sourly, *the local wise woman.* "Sun Mother, I'm a doctor, and I can help..."

Hahotah imperiously interrupted again. "Doctor no good." She turned her attention to the mother, who stood torn between helping her child and obeying custom. "Leatha, you fool. Bring Earther here - no good. You listen to Hahotah!"

McCoy took the opportunity to push past her and reach the sick girl. He ran the feinberger over her, laying one hand on her burning brow. The readings were not good, but without further information he could not fully diagnose the illness or treatment. "How long has she been this way?"

No-one answered. McCoy looked up, angry. "Well, someone speak, dammit! I can't help her if I don't know the facts."

"Eight moon-risings," intoned the dry, even voice of the father.

McCoy raised his eyes heavenwards. Great - they didn't use Standard Time, and he had no idea whether they meant new moons or the nightly journey of the moon. But he dared not delay help in order to get an explanation.

"Get someone to run to the hospital. Tell them to send an ambulance at once, and to prepare an emergency room."

Hahotah sauntered out of the door and despatched a boy as ordered. That done, she strode in to stand disapprovingly at the end of the bed.

"Waste of time."

"At least I'm trying," snapped McCoy. "It's a damn sight more than you are doing."

Kahotah shrugged. "I help the living, not the dead."

At that Leatha burst into tears and ran to be comforted by her husband.

McCoy resisted the urge to strangle Kahotah and settled instead for seeing to his patient's comfort. A damp cloth lay on a table close by, and as he bathed her forehead he asked her name.

"Neecah," voluteered the father, who seemed to be a man of few words. "I Lalotan. My mother die of this."

"Then it's hereditary? Common among your people?"

"I do not know. It comes as it will, without warning."

"Hmm." McCoy studied Neecah's pinched features, an idea forming in his head. "If this is what I think it is, Lalotan, I may be able to save your daughter."

Kahotah snorted, her dark eyes gleaming with scorn. "The clever doctor! He seeks to cheat death with his bright machines."

"Modern technology has saved more lives than your damn hocus pocus and scorn!" McCoy began hotly, irritated beyond endurance by her attitude. "My bright machines may be this girl's only hope. If you'd brought her in before, this might not..."

The arrival of transport interrupted his tirade, and within a few minutes they were on their way. Neecah muttered feverishly to herself, her eyes creased with pain.

"It's all right, Neecah," McCoy whispered. "You're going to be well."

In the corner of the ambulance Kahotah's eyes bored into him, daring his modern methods to usurp hers.

"Na kanpata, na werenti la e'nethrn! Na kanpata!"

McCoy cast a glance at the parents waiting in the background as he feverishly calibrated readings. "What's she saying?"

"She cries for forgiveness from the gods." This was from Kahotah, who had refused to be kept from the girl's bed. A grim smile played about her lips as she stood there, an incongruous bundle of colour in the sterile hospital room.

"Forgiveness? Why?"

"Because she is surrounded by the outworlder's machines and cannot give up her spirit as she should."

McCoy paused, looked at Lalotan and Leatha. "Is this true?"

"It is our way."

McCoy heard the words, but did not afford much importance to

them. He had little patience for religions which taught refusal of medical aid to the seriously ill. He was not about to give up on this girl's life for the sake of a local custom. His attention returned to the machinery, while Hahotah watched his every move.

Two hours later all his work and know-how had not altered the situation one iota. If anything Neecah was worsening, her cries reduced to low mumblings. Despite all his efforts her pulse continued to weaken.

"How is it going?"

McCoy looked with weary eyes to the woman who stood beside him. Any other time he would have dazzled her with his Southern charm but now it was all he could do to raise a diplomatic mutter.

"Not good. She's sinking fast, and all the hospital computers can offer is the cheering news that very few survive this disease. I don't understand it - the chance is slim, but it's there, and yet she seems to be willing herself to die."

Dr. Dale Quentin sighed and studied the readings. "You're right. I wish I could do more to help, but this one's yours, Leonard."

McCoy nodded as he walked over to check Neecah's vital signs once again. He avoided Hahotah's direct gaze and Leatha's hopeful, expectant expression. All this modern life-saving equipment, and he could do nothing!

A cancerous tissue had grown over Neecah's skin in the last twenty minutes, crawling across her features even as he watched. He felt so impotent, like a child struggling to solve a riddle it would never understand. He had been so sure... Dammit, he still was! Why have all this technology if not to save lives?

"The teaching begins here, now, as you face death."

Startled, McCoy stared at Hahotah. He began to speak, but before he could -

"Na kanpata!"

Neecah's parents ran to her side, as helpless as the Earther doctor and his machines. Neecah stiffened, her back arching as her eyes stared sightlessly into her mother's face. McCoy's hands flew over the panels. He seized a hypo, plunged its contents into the girl's arm.

"No!"

The Earthman's anguished cry echoed in the cool room, a cracked and despairing cry. From its roots a high-pitched keening came from Leatha, while Lalotan closed his eyes and moaned deep in his throat. Hahotah held the young doctor's gaze, but there was no triumph in her eyes, only pity.

"You not accept death's hand, you die young yourself. Know when to help, and when to give of the spirit."

McCoy could do nothing but stare at the empty shell of a girl, Neecah's cry for forgiveness ringing in his mind. Around him the machines he had once thought infallible gleamed a mute testimony to

his failure...

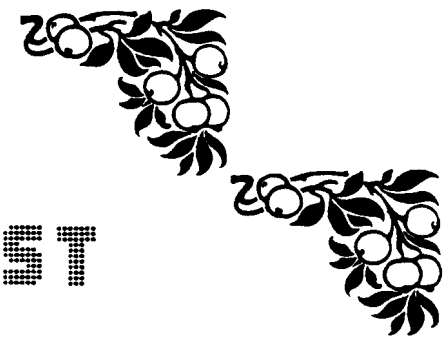
..."Too much thinking is bad for you."

McCoy started, brought from his memories by Chapel's quiet voice. "Oh, just remembering some good advice. Pity I've never learned to act on it."

"Hmm. Sounds serious. You need a drink."

McCoy smiled and accepted the proffered glass. "A toast. To absent friends... and to an arrogant young fool who thought he knew it all."

His amused gaze caught another glimpse of the young doctor surrounded by admirers. He would learn. He would learn that death, as well as life, must be respected.



The QUEST

I waited for you half a lifetime.
Some instinct said that you would come.
A 'feeling' unnamed and yet knowing,
the unseen bond of planet and sun.
A thousand ages would roll past me
yet I walked on ever alone,
like a magnet searching for rare metal,
but on every side only stone.
As a bird flies blindly on migration
to some far land it's never seen,
so all my senses reached out for you,
though perhaps you were only a dream.
And then like a hand on my shoulder
your spirit reached out and touched mine.
Our love was brief, barely a moment,
but the memory lasts for all time.

Sheryl Peterson

in the days of MARS

by

Janice Pitkethley

Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock waited on the transporter, ready to beam down to the planet's surface. The planet was Earth, the location, London. Their presence was required at the official opening of the new Federation Embassy.

As they were dematerialising, they were aware of the transporter operator shouting, "There's a malfunction!" Darkness, pain-filled darkness, descended...

Slowly the mists began to clear and Spock opened his eyes to see the anxious face of Captain Kirk bending over him. All around the sounds of terrible explosions filled the dark night, and the sky turned red from the raging fires.

"Spock! Are you all right?" Kirk shouted above the noise. "You had me worried - you were unconscious for over half an hour."

"The proper response under the circumstances would be to ask, 'Where am I?'"

"That's a good question." Kirk helped the Vulcan to his feet. "Wherever we are, it sure isn't safe... Look out!" They took cover in a doorway as the sound of a new explosion reached them. Fallen debris littered the roadway.

"Look, Spock - up there." Kirk pointed at the fingers of light sweeping the sky.

"Searchlights, Captain. They are looking for some kind of craft." Spock's sensitive hearing had picked up the sound of droning engines before they became audible to Kirk.

"What the...?" Kirk was too astonished to finish his unspoken question.

"Captain, I believe they are called aeroplanes. They are being used for aerial bombardment."

"But that was a couple of centuries ago! Where the devil *are* we, Spock?"

"Unknown at present, Captain." Spock was just about to say something else when Kirk grabbed his arm.

"Shh! There's someone coming. Let's get out of here!"

They were too late. The approaching man had seen them. He wore a uniform of some kind, and a strange looking steel helmet on his head.

"Hoi!" he shouted after them. "What are you two doing up here? You should be in shelter."

"We - uh - lost our way in the dark," Kirk explained as the man reached them. Fortunately it was too dark for him to see Spock's features.

"Lost yer way, eh? Come on, I'll show you where you can shelter until the raid is over."

They couldn't do anything else but follow. The man led them down the street for a couple of blocks, then into a large doorway.

"Careful," he warned. "The stairs are ahead, and we can't have any lights showing."

They began to descend, the steep stairs seeming to go on for ever, down and down. At last a glimmer of light could be seen. They entered a dimly lit tunnel where hundreds of people were sheltering. It looked as if they were on some kind of platform, with tracks separating one from the other. The nearest people made room for the newcomers, looking sympathetically at Spock, who kept his hands over his ears. Ear damage from the explosions was common, and no-one thought too much about it.

"My brother had his hearing damaged by blast," the man next to them remarked. "Is that what happened to you?"

Spock could only nod in assent. The man rummaged in the sack beside him and tossed over a woollen cap.

"Here, put that on. It might help."

At that moment the dim lights flickered, and Spock was able to put the cap on without anyone seeing his ears.

"Where are we?" Kirk turned to their helper. "We - uh - lost our way in the raid."

"This is Marble Arch Tube Station," the man replied. "There won't be much left of poor old London if that old Jerry Adolf sends more planes and those damn doodlebugs over, mate!" He clenched his fists in anger.

"*Wha...?*" Kirk began, before Spock put out a hand to stop him from saying anything further. They looked at each other, the same thoughts going through their minds.

"Captain, I am going to meld with you," Spock whispered. "It will enable us to communicate privately. Pretend you have sustained an injury to your head."

Kirk did so, and Spock began the link. It looked to the people around them as if he was examining a wound or injury on his friend's head. Kirk felt the soft probing at the entrance to his mind and remembered not to resist as Spock had instructed him to do on previous occasions.

Are you with me? came the impression, and he replied,

Yes, Spock. I am here.

We have been transported backwards in time, Captain.

Yes. The references he made to Adolf and planes. He can only mean Adolf Hitler.

We are in London, but in the mid nineteen-forties. The Second World War was taking place. We must have passed through a time warp, Captain.

Kirk felt the presence beginning to withdraw from his mind, then Spock broke the meld completely, taking his hands away from Kirk's head.

"It is only a minor injury. Nothing serious," he said for the benefit of their neighbours.

The raid showed no signs of abating. Even at this level in the deep subway station they could feel the vibrations and hear the rumble of distant explosions. Every so often the lights would flicker. The place was cold and damp, and the tunnel walls glistened with moisture. Kirk could feel the Vulcan shivering. He knew that Spock disliked physical contact, but moved closer anyway, and they huddled together for warmth.

The long night dragged on towards morning. Kirk was dozing when the shrill blast of whistles brought him to instant wakefulness. Four uniformed men stood at the bottom of the stairs.

"That's the All-Clear," the man next to them said, picking up his bundle of possessions. "We'll get some peace until tonight - then they'll be back!"

Slowly the tube station began to empty. Kirk and Spock followed the crowds up to street level. The air was filled with smoke and choking dust from the ruined buildings.

Not knowing where to go, they wandered around aimlessly through the damaged city. Kirk stopped and pointed to a store which had been damaged - it now had no windows or doors.

"Theft, Captain?" Spock sounded surprised.

"Who cares? We're too conspicuous in our uniforms, dirty as they may be. Come on."

Five minutes later they were transformed into civilians, no different from the rest of the present citizens of London. Now they could merge with the crowds in safety.

"I feel better. Don't know about you, Spock, but I'm hungry."

"I confess I am also, Captain."

They walked on a little further. "We have no credits with us. They would be useless here, anyway."

A slight rain began to fall, making the surroundings even more dismal. Late afternoon found the two friends still wandering the rubble-strewn streets, cold, wet and hungry. Twice the sirens wailed, but each time it was a false alarm.

They turned a corner to find a long line of people waiting by a wheeled vehicle. Girls in uniform were handing out hot food to the people who had been made homeless. Kirk and Spock joined them and

received a mug of soup each.

"Drink it!" Kirk ordered as Spock examined his with some suspicion. "Somehow I don't think there will be any meat in it!"

The soup warmed them and dispelled their hunger for a while. Night was approaching, and with the darkness would come the bombing aircraft.

As soon as darkness fell the rise and fall of the wailing sirens could be heard.

"Aircraft approaching, Captain. I can hear them."

"C'mon, Spock. It's time we weren't here!" Kirk shouted as the sound of the first explosion reached them.

They ran towards the nearest building, trying to evade the flying debris. A house nearby received a direct hit and dissolved into flaming ruin. Kirk felt himself being lifted bodily by the blast wave; it hurled him across the street, right into a pile of fallen masonry. Blinding light exploded in front of his eyes before darkness claimed him.

Minutes - or hours - later Kirk came round and sat up groggily, his mouth and eyes filled with choking dust.

"Oh, my head!" he groaned, trying to get to his feet. "Spock, where are you? SPOCK!"

There was no sign of the Vulcan. Kirk managed to stand upright at last; the ground fell away then rose to meet him as he swayed, trying to collect his scattered senses. "Spock... where are you?"

Then he saw the rubble from the bombed building, and an arm protruding from below. Spock was buried beneath it. Frantically he tore at the still-hot rubble with his bare hands, the hot brick cutting the blisters which were already forming. He did not even notice. Almost weeping now, he continued to dig and pull at the debris and rubble until there was enough room to drag the still figure clear.

Fearing the worst, he felt for the neck pulse. Yes, it was there, though barely discernible. Spock had a large gash on the side of his head, but no outward sign of any other injury could be seen. Carefully he managed to carry Spock to a safer place. Before he could enter the nearest building a vehicle weaved its way through the rubble and stopped near them. A team of helmeted men jumped out.

"Here's another one!" the leader called, advancing towards Kirk and the prone Vulcan. The squad of men wore armbands with the red-cross symbol. The leader and two others knelt down beside Spock.

"Yer mate's had a bump on the head, eh? Come on, we'll take you to the first-aid station. Look at yer hands! What'd you do - dig him out?"

Only understanding half of the man's Cockney accent, Kirk could only nod in agreement. Willing hands transferred the injured Spock to the vehicle, Kirk and the rest of the rescue squad climbed in and they set off for their destination.

Kirk's thoughts were in turmoil as the vehicle bumped along the ruined streets. How could he explain Spock to the doctors? Bad enough trying to explain the pointed ears, but Spock was bleeding as well from that head wound. What would they say when they saw his blood was *green*?

Spock was still unconscious when they reached the casualty station. Kirk followed the party of stretcher bearers into the treatment room. The doctor tried to turn him away, unsuccessfully.

"No! I *must* stay with him..."

"You're American. Is your friend as well?" the doctor asked.

"No - uh - yes, sort of..." Kirk was completely lost for words.

"Wall, let's see what we can do for him."

The moment James Kirk had been dreading had come. He winced as the doctor removed Spock's cap.

"What the...?" he began in astonishment. "I don't believe this! Look at his ears... and... whatever is coming from that wound in his head? It's *green!* Wait a minute - what is going on here? Who are you?"

"Look, I'll explain," Kirk said heavily. "He's hurt. Can you help him?"

"That is what I'm here for." The doctor shook his head in bewilderment as he got his instruments ready. "First we'll see to that head wound."

Kirk watched in fascination and with a growing sense of horror as the doctor cleaned and *stitched* the wound on Spock's head. "If only McCoy were here to see this..."

The doctor finished what he was doing and checked the rest of his strange-looking patient for injury. "Your friend is lucky. Apart from that head wound, he's only bruised."

Kirk sighed with relief at the statement, then jumped to his feet at the doctor's startled exclamation, "I can't find any heartbeat!" He moved the strange instrument the doctor was holding and listening through from Spock's right side to low down on the area where the Human liver would normally be. The 'missing' heartbeat came through loud and clear.

The doctor remained outwardly calm, removed the stethoscope from his ears then checked Spock's pulse and pulled back one of his eyelids. "He should be coming round soon."

He led Kirk away from the bed and began to dress his injured hands. That done, he poured strong tea into two mugs and locked the door. "Sit down, Mister. You have some explaining to do. Who *are* you?"

"It's a long story - and a strange one which you might find hard to believe." Kirk's eyes were serious as he looked at the doctor. "We are from your future. An accident brought us back in time."

"After seeing your friend I would believe *anything*," the doctor said incredulously. "Who or what is he? Where does he come from?"

"From Vulcan," came the voice from the bed.

Both Kirk and the doctor spun round to see Spock conscious and watching them.

"How do you feel?" Kirk was at his friend's side.

"My head hurts. What happened?"

"You were buried under some rubble. This is a first aid station. A rescue team brought us here."
Spock sat up carefully and managed to stand unaided. "You are a medical practitioner? Thank you for helping me."

"It... it was my duty," the doctor stammered. "I have never seen anyone like you before. Where did you say you were from?"

"From Vulcan. Other life-forms are beyond your comprehension at the moment."

The doctor sat there stunned. He had read so-called 'science fiction' stories about aliens from other worlds and dismissed them as nonsense. Now here he was in the presence of an alien - it was almost too fantastic and beyond belief. What was he to do? In wartime Britain any suspicious persons had to be reported to the authorities. Only he knew the two strangers for what they were...

A bleeping sound interrupted the doctor's thoughts. He looked up in surprise as Kirk took a device from his belt. It was obviously a radio of some kind - a voice was coming from it. Maybe these two *were* enemy agents after all - the Jerries were known to get up to some strange tricks...

"Captain! Are ye all right?" Scott's voice came over loud and clear. "We've been searchin' through time for ye. The USS Intrepid is in the sector of the Guardian of Forever and we are in communication with both. Are ye ready to beam up?"

"Give us five minutes, Scotty. Stand by." Kirk turned to the doctor after making a sign to Spock. "Our people have traced us; we are returning to our own time and place."

The doctor looked fearfully at the Vulcan advancing towards him.

"Trust us," Kirk said. "We can't leave you with all that knowledge of the future - you could do something to cause it all to be changed, then all that we know would cease to exist. Let Spock touch you - nothing will harm you."

The doctor stared into the dark eyes now so close to his own; somehow he could not turn away from that dark hypnotic gaze. He felt the touch of Spock's fingers on his temples, then his mind flooded with brilliant light...

He saw the vastness of space with its millions of stars and planets, then a ship travelling among them, the Enterprise herself. Linked to Spock's mind he walked her corridors and stood on her Bridge. The scene changed to a hot dry world; overhead the sky was flinty red instead of blue, tall proud Vulcans walked among the architecture of a city famed for its design and beauty. From there he travelled to the Sas-a-Shar desert with its black mountains and stark scenery. *Once more* the scene changed. He saw the Earth of the future, a beautiful place where all men lived in peace...

The vision faded and he felt a great sense of emptiness and loss as Spock's mind withdrew from his. "Thank you for showing me your world and the Earth of the future." He spoke softly, still unable to take his gaze away from Spock. "There is hope for us after all..."

Kirk shook the stunned doctor's hand, smiling. "Thank you for all you have done for us."

They stepped back out of range. "Two to beam up, Scotty."

Spock raised his hand, fingers parted in the Vulcan salute. "Live long and prosper. Farewell..."

The doctor watched, astonished, as the two figures dissolved in a shimmering golden sparkle and were gone... and along with them went his memory of all he had seen and all they had said to him.

A loud knocking on the door brought the doctor back to his senses. He turned the key in the lock and the leader of the rescue team entered the room to find him still staring at the empty space.

"Where are the two casualties we brought in? One of them had a head wound."

"What...? Oh, it wasn't too serious. I discharged them. They've gone home now," the doctor said in a vacant tone.

Centuries in the future the Enterprise left Earth orbit and headed out into space...

Cry from an Alien Heart

I need, and yet I cannot
put a name to what I yearn for.
I am hungry, yet the food I eat
fills me never at all.
I am empty, my horizons
are as bare as sand-swept desert.
I am lonely, yet a thousand people
drift past like a wall.
I am different, yet by blood and bone
I am the same as they are.
Am I alien because I believe
In things they will never see?
I am alone, and yet
the universe is mine forever.
The Earth is home for now,
the stars offer eternity.

Sheryl Peterson

memories

by

Antje Technau

Spock's family was one of the oldest and most respected on Vulcan. Therefore the family council decreed that Spock should be sent to Gol for one year to learn the Old Tongue and the ancient rites. This was family tradition. It would also smooth Spock's way for a diplomatic career. His Kahs-wan trial had been the first step, the subsequent bonding to T'Pring - a very presentable and intelligent girl who would hopefully grow up into a likewise presentable and intelligent young woman - the next; now Gol would follow.

Only two people had mixed feelings about the council's decision: Amanda, who could hardly bear the thought of not seeing her son for one long year; and Spock, whose interest in science and computers grew each day. But the wishes of the seven-year-old were insignificant, protest was out of the question, so Spock merely listened. Besides, the training on Gol was an honour, and hadn't he just decided to be a Vulcan?

Two weeks later Sarek took his son to Gol. Amanda had said goodbye to her son before he went.

Spock carried only a few clothes with him, some of them ceremonial tunics which Sarek had worn before him when he had spent his year on Gol. Sarek turned Spock over to a grave young priest and left. Only when the priest showed Spock the cave which was to be his dormitory and which he had to share with thirty-four other boys did Spock realize that he was all on his own now. He could not dare to show any weakness; never had one of his ancestors shamed the success of his family during his year on Gol.

The success of his Kahs-wan had made him feel strong, his bonding with T'Pring, accepted. He had felt Vulcan. But now, standing before the niche in the stone wall where he could put his clothes, the murmurs of the other boys introducing each other around him, he felt as insecure as before. Would they accept him?

At this very moment, one of the boys approached. "I am Serik, son of Suril," he told Spock self assuredly.

Behind the sturdily-built boy stood four others. Obviously Serik was the leader of this group. Serik did not even bother to give the traditional hand sign signifying respect for the other, at least, not before he knew if the other could boast of a family commanding similar respect to his own, or so his appraising glance told Spock.

Spock had been taught by his father to value people for their character and their achievements, not for their family line. True, the family was all-important, but coming from a line of great ancestors was no feat in itself; rather it was seen to be an

obligation. And his mother had taught him that bad manners did not dishonour the person they were inflicted upon, but the person who displayed them.

Therefore Spock gave the hand sign. "I am Spock, son of Sarek."

"Ah, the Earther," came the reply.

"No," thought Spock. "Not again. Not for a whole year." Aloud he said, "I passed the Kahswan trial. I was accepted on Gol because I am Vulcan."

"Why 'Earther'?" asked the smallest of Serik's group, who looked no older than five years and almost fragile, but who had to be seven at least to be accepted on Gol.

Serik turned, both eyebrows raised disapprovingly. "Because his mother is from Earth."

"But he looks Vulcan and he acts like a Vulcan," the small one insisted.

"Certainly not for long. He cannot deny his Human traits. He will soon show his emotions." With these words Serik turned away and headed towards the cave's exit. Since all the other boys left too, Spock followed suit.

The circle of stone walls that formed a small roofless building was soon crowded with students. There were strange symbols on the stone floor, which meant nothing to Spock as yet. The priests introduced themselves to their young students, who had to step forward thereafter to introduce themselves.

The small one's name was Selik. He came from a less prominent family than the others, but during the lessons it soon became clear that he had every right to be on Gol. But later, when the priests gave the boys instructions on where and how they could and should prepare their meals, Selik again joined the group around Serik.

Spock found himself at a cooking place together with a boy called Surak, whose family claimed the most famous of all Vulcans as their ancestor, but whose performance during the lessons had given Spock no explanation why his proud parents had given Surak his name. Obviously they had miscalculated. At least Surak did not mind that his mother came from Earth; on the contrary, he asked Spock a lot of questions about Earth.

The following weeks were demanding, each day filled with lessons in the Old Tongue, use of the lirpa and ahn-woon, and the proceedings and meanings of the old rituals. Pre-reform History was a part of all lessons - and Serik's speciality.

Spock was not avoided by the other boys; they worked with him when he was assigned to their group, greeted him, some even talked to him. The priests always regrouped the boys after each task, each exercise. Vulcan society had depended heavily - and still did - on the ability of its members to work in efficient groups. The regrouping called on the boys' abilities to deal with different persons and to fit into a new group.

Serik and his group were an exception to this rule. Whenever

Serik had been assigned to another group than his own he tried to play the leading role. Finally he and his followers inevitably ended up together. He became as much an outsider as Spock, maybe even more so, because Spock was gradually accepted. Apparently, the priests seemed to be indifferent to this development.

After five months the Gol students were sent to different places which they had to locate on their own, again in groups but without supervision. This was meant to be a test for the boys' abilities to work as a group and a test for their skills in the Old Tongue.

Spock, Selik and Surak made up one group. At first Selik silently trailed Surak and Spock, later he joined in their conversation. To his surprise Spock found out that despite his high intelligence Selik had a very low opinion of himself. Certainly, he had performed badly during most of the physical exercises, but he had recently learned to balance his lack of strength with amazing speed. He seemed unable to concentrate on any given subject, but could give the answers when asked. But it was completely beyond Spock what Selik could see in Serik. Serik was exceptional in all subjects, but his character was not worth emulating at all.

When Vulcan's suns went down the three boys agreed to walk on, and when the suns rose again they had arrived at the decaying wall which once might have been the south part of a building.

To the dismay of the three boys the inscription they had to translate was almost illegible. They started by copying what was left of it on slates, but the words did not make any sense to them.

"If I had a computer and a tape with the Old Tongue, I could make a programme, feed in the text and then order the computer to search for logical completions, pick the most likely one, and have it translated," Spock remarked.

"But you don't have a computer," Surak said. "Besides, we're supposed to use our own knowledge and our own skills, not those of a computer."

"Well, after you've told us why we have to translate this text, maybe you can also enlighten us how we should do it?" Selik asked with a hint of irony in his voice.

Surprisingly, Surak did have a suggestion to make. "Maybe we should try to find out what this building was used for, what purpose it served, and then have a look at the text again."

Spock and Selik had not thought of that as yet since they had concentrated too much on the text itself.

They took the measurements of the floor and deduced height and length. It had been a small building. The material used was supposed to be highly resistant to time and erosion, yet only one wall was left. This indicated how old it was - Pre-reform time, most possibly.

Now it was Selik's turn. He gave them a lecture on Pre-reform cults. It had to be some temple, since the Vulcans of that time built no houses for themselves, only for deities or cults. He arrived at one sect that had coded their teachings in mathematical formulae, Spock held up his hand. "This could be it," he said. He

decoded the text easily filling in the missing parts. To be able to practice his mathematical skills after such a long time!

The text was a ritual oath for the adepts of the sect, who pledged their lives and skills to the Grand Master and his aim to take over all of Vulcan by any means. The inscription being translated, they set out to return immediately. Rest could wait. Maybe they would even be the first to arrive? The last part of the way they even ran, and then slowed down to walk decently and sedately into the circle of stones.

Except for one priest nobody was there. They were the first ones.

They gave the traditional salute. The priest returned the greeting and led them to a room of whose existence they had not known until now. One of the priests wore a Master's robe. When they entered he rose and asked,

"Who translated this?"

Selik stepped forward and replied, pointing at Spock, "Spock, son of Sarek."

Spock protested, "But Surak had the idea how to start, and Selik knew our ancestors' history better than I. Without them I would never have made it, or it would have taken much more time." Spock was too excited to keep the formal language that was in order. Nobody seemed to notice.

"Can you verify what these two have said?" the Master presently asked Surak.

He merely nodded, and the Master then dismissed them.

Back in the dormitory the boys still wondered what the presence of the Master meant, but were too tired to discuss the matter. Their sleep was only interrupted when other groups returning from their excursions came in.

Two days later all the groups were back and the priests called them to the circle. The Master ordered that the translators present their solutions. He listened and corrected whenever the necessity arose. Spock found the reports most interesting. Some translations told of columns where proud warlords had inscribed the tales of their blood victories, thereby unintentionally leaving to their peace-loving descendents a horrifying example of what the lust for power could do to a being; some told of cave paintings of even earlier times which showed the proceedings of blood-sacrifices; and slates that told of processes that did not serve justice.

Serik's group rated surprisingly low. Serik had wanted to translate their text all by himself so that he alone could claim the honour of having mastered the task. When Spock left the circle of stones with Selik and Surak he knew that Serik would not get over the fact that the 'Earther' and his group had beaten him.

But the following months passed without incident. Spock had now been ten months on Gol, and he almost enjoyed it.

Then the priests sent the students out a second time, this time singly, to climb up to the platform where the Masters lived and to spend a month under the guidance of the first Master who accepted them. He or she would teach them the simplest techniques and exercises of Kolinahr, as a counterbalance to the teachings about and of Vulcan's savage past.

Spock had been walking for many hours and had almost reached the platform when a small figure appeared to his left and ran up to him. It was Selik. Spock raised an eyebrow. It was not allowed that two students walk together. Selik had to know this.

When Selik shouted that he should stop he raised his other eyebrow too. One did not shout another person's name. But he waited.

"Spock, Serik and his friends have passed you. They're waiting for you."

"Why?" Spock asked.

"They're planning something. Go in another direction."

"How do you know about this?"

"Serik asked me if I wanted to see how he is going to prove to the others that you're an Earther after all and unworthy to live among Vulcans."

"Interesting," Spock mused. "I would like to know how he wants to prove that."

"You'll soon know," a voice said behind him.

In the next instant two of Serik's group gripped his arms. On Serik's command they threw him down.

"And now you're going to tell us that you're an Earther after all, the son of a man who has forgotten that he is a Vulcan and who has married an inferior being," Serik demanded. His eyes had the fanatic glow of a Pre-reform warrior who held the life of his enemy in his hands. He probably thought that he was just that.

"I see no logic in repeating a sentence as illogical as this one," Spock replied calmly. He did not feel calm, however, when Serik unfastened the ahn-woon he wore instead of a belt.

"I am going to convince you of my logic," Serik announced.

The leather sang viciously through the air and cut into his back. Spock winced, but managed to stifle the cry.

"Stop it, Serik!" Selik pleaded. "You can see that his blood is as green as ours!"

"This Earther must have corrupted you - you behave like an Earthman. Most irrational."

"The only one behaving irrationally is you, Serik," Spock challenged.

Could *his companions* not see that Serik...? The Ahn-woon came down again and again in rapid succession. Selik had turned away,

apparently trying to fetch some help, but one of the group blocked his way. Selik attacked him, but the other was stronger.

"Well, Spock?" Serik asked.

"Let me go," Spock said.

Serik's eyes narrowed. "That was the wrong answer, Spock."

More blows. He closed his eyes and concentrated to block out the pain. The deeper his concentration became the less he was aware of his surroundings. Serik's voice became indistinct.

There is no pain. There is no pain...

Suddenly there was only blackness.

When Spock regained consciousness he was alone. The suns had reached their zeniths and he felt weak. His back seemed to be a single open wound. He could hardly move, yet he had to leave this place, at least to reach the shadow of a rock, better still to move forward. He could not be sure if Selik was able to find someone, so he had to find help on his own.

To walk upright proved to be impossible, so he started to crawl. Some hundred metres further on he collapsed. His hands and knees were bloody and dirty, his back burned, his head swam.

What would Sarek do in such a situation? Spock wondered. Certainly not give up. Mother must never know... Spock forced his body to obey his will and moved forward again.

He did not know how long it had actually taken him to reach a ledge under which there was a well. Should he wait until someone came to fetch water, or venture down? In his present condition the latter was too risky. He could hurt himself even more severely if he tried. But staying up here would minimize his chances of being found.

He was still pondering the problem when a figure clad in the tunic of a Priestess-Adept appeared. She carried a jug. Her parents had either made it possible for her to spend a student's year on Gol too, the girls being trained in a different camp, or she was being trained to become a priestess.

The girl knelt beside the well when a pebble fell down beside her. Astonished, she looked up, and saw another pebble flying towards her, definitely not of its own volition. The girl T'Jin climbed the ledge and found the stone thrower unconscious.

As Spock woke up everything seemed to be in a blur. An old woman in a Master's robe bent over him. She offered him water and ordered him to concentrate on healing his body. Spock had learned some of the proper techniques prior to his Kahs-wan in case he got hurt. He concentrated.

Suddenly he felt pain. He woke up gasping for air. The pain receded and finally only his left cheek burned. He caught the small hand that beat him, received a question whether she had hurt him, and

the wish to help. He looked into a small face with large green eyes and dark hair.

"Are you feeling any better, Spock?"

"Yes. Who told you my name?"

"The Master has mind-melded with you in order to be able to inform your relatives."

"Why did she want to inform my relatives so soon?"

"You could have died. Also to find those who tortured you. They have to be punished. It will all be done within days."

"Days? How long have I been unconscious?"

"3.546 days. They will summon the relatives of the boys in question. They shall know what their sons did."

At this moment someone with presence entered, a presence that communicated itself instantly. T'Jin greeted T'Pau, who returned the salute and signalled to the girl to leave.

Spock also wanted to greet her, but T'Pau made a slight gesture signifying informality.

"Didst thou recognise the faces of those who hurt thee?" she asked.

"Yes. T'Pau, may I enquire what will happen to them?"

"They will have to leave Gol without reception of the IDIC. Their families will have to accept the responsibility for their sons' deeds as they had the responsibility for their upbringing."

And his family would take no chances that Serik could disgrace them again, Spock realized. They would care for him, give him psychological treatment, and they would watch his every step.

There is irony in it, Spock thought. He's different, I'm different. Now we will both be watched for aberrant behaviour.

When the ceremony of the Presentation of the IDIC was held a small, green-eyed Priestess-Adept watched the proceedings. It had been a learning experience for her, too; now she knew with her heart as well as her head that to be different was not to be inferior. She would not forget.

The Sore Lesson

by

Joyce Devlin

The vast green playing fields behind Starfleet Academy were as usual relatively quiet. Well, it was only six in the morning, and the sun had just started to rise, giving the sky a lovely orange glow. The athletics track at the far end of the sports ground was being used by two solitary figures, Commander David Jamison, my First Officer, and myself, Captain James T. Kirk of the Destroyer Invincible, which was currently in dry dock undergoing repairs.

The leader slowed his pace to allow me to catch up. "What's up this morning, Jim?" he asked me as he stopped. "You're usually a regular Mr. Sunshine."

"Well Mr. Sunshine set last night and now wishes he hadn't bothered to rise," I informed him as I came to a stop by his side.

"Bad night?"

"Yes. You got any antacid pills on you?"

Jamison shook his head. "Sorry," he replied, eyeing me over. "Boy, you look like death."

"Believe me, I *feel* like death warmed up."

"That'll teach you to get drunk at a stag party and leave me the con," Jamison teased. "Anyway, I don't know about you, Jim, but I certainly couldn't have got out of bed this morning if I'd drunk as much as you did last night."

"Neither could I - I fell out," I retorted. With a smile I added, "How did you know about last night?"

"I have my spies."

"Oh yeah?" I waited as I expected to hear more.

However, Dave wasn't about to tell. His eyes had wandered across the track, searching for something to change the subject. He found what he was looking for. Two females in black tracksuits had started to jog round the track slowly. Together they pulled to a stop at the 200 metres mark.

"They're nice," Dave commented, nodding in their direction.

"What?" I couldn't see the object of my friend's interest at that point due to the fact that he was standing in my line of view.

"Boy, you're *not* well, are you?" Dave said, moving to one side to give blurry-eyed me a better view of the females.

I looked them over as they took up their marks at the start of the bend. "Anyway, I wasn't drunk, just happy," I said in

self-defence when I realised what he had said, adding as an afterthought, "A week's wages on the blonde."

"Done," Jamison replied, rising to the bait, "but the brunette'll run her into the ground," he added encouragingly as he pulled on his tracksuit bottoms.

"No chance," I replied confidently, as I felt I was onto a sound investment.

The two females took to their marks, counted three, and shot forward together, neck and neck; then the blonde edged just ahead.

"Told you," I smiled, but the brunette had apparently read my mind, for as they came off the bend onto the home straight she strode ahead and crossed the line well in the lead.

"One week's wages owed." Jamison felt pleased, I could see by the smug grin that crept onto his face.

I was not exactly bothered whether I had won or not as I watched the two figures cross the track in our direction, but something in Dave's attitude annoyed me. He was being too smug.

"Smartass!" I replied. "Looks like we've got company." I nodded towards the females, who were now within communicating distance.

"Dave!" the brunette called as she recognised my First Officer.

"Dawn... It's been a long time."

My expression changed to surprise as it became clear that the victor of the race knew the victor of the wager. "You two know each other?" I questioned, although the fact was obvious.

"We're old friends," Dawn informed me as they came to a stop beside us.

"Dave, you knew she'd win?" I tried to hide my annoyance at being had.

"He hasn't been up to his old tricks again?" Dawn asked, eyeing me over. "Aren't you going to introduce us, Dave?"

"Sorry. Commander Dawn Collins, this is Captain James T. Kirk, Jim to his friends."

"Hi, Dawn. That was some fancy running." I couldn't think of anything else to say.

"Dawn's an international athlete, and a member of the Federation team." The blonde, who had remained in the background until then, came forward.

"Didn't Dave mention that? Oh, this is Wendy Dykar," Dawn introduced her companion to us.

"Hi. Haven't you heard of *the* Dawn Collins? She's the one who beat the top Vulcan sprinter at the trials last weekend." It was clear to all that the blonde admired her friend's ability to run.

Dawn, however, was blushing with embarrassment. "Big mouth!

I'm not as good as all that - the Vulcan was running with an injury, and she still came second to a top field," Dawn hurriedly replied, trying to play down the whole affair.

It slowly dawned on me that Dave had known all along of Dawn's ability to run. I looked across at my First officer, who was now looking a bit sheepish.

"Say, how long have you two known each other?" I asked.

"Since our Academy days," Jamison informed me. "Dawn, what are you doing here, anyway? The last I heard you were Chief Security Officer on the Andromeda." Once again he was trying to change the subject.

"I'm in H.Q. Security now," she replied. "Have been for the last six months now, and I hate it."

It was at that moment that my communicator chose to interrupt the conversation. I sighed as I removed it from my tracksuit pocket, grumbling that it had better be something important. "No rest for the weary," I muttered as I flicked it open.

"Captain Kirk?" the voice said.

"Yes," I responded.

"Please report to Admiral Philips' office at 09.00 hours. Thank you. Starfleet Command out." The voice left no doubt that it was anything other than an order.

My face clouded over into a frown as I looked at my First Officer, who just shook his head.

"Who's been a bad boy, then?" he teased, trying to lighten the mood a little.

"Dave, it's no joke. Remember I'm on leave, and Philips is wanting to see me." I thought for a few seconds, unable to come up with any reason why the Commanding Admiral would want to see me. "I can't think what he wants me for."

"You're either being flung out or promoted." Jamison came up with the one thing that had not passed through my mind.

"What for?"

"How about..." Jamison thought for a moment, then he had a brainwave. "Getting drunk last night. Perhaps the Admiral's going to make an example of you."

"Dave, I *wasn't* drunk last night, and I can't think of anything I've done to get myself court-martialled over."

It was clear to all that I was more than a little worried over the outcome of the pending interview, for the only explanation I could come up with was that the Invincible was ready for active service and there were new orders for me. Yet it would not be the Commanding Admiral who would handle anything as small as that.

"Anyway, I was thinking more on the lines of new orders. Perhaps he's got something for the Invincible to do." I voiced my own opinion rather dubiously.

"I hope not," Dave groaned as he looked at his chronometer. "Look, if you've got to see the C.A. you'd better get going now, Jim. It's getting late." Jamison was a joker at times, but he knew when a situation called for seriousness.

"Jim, if you're in any kind of trouble, give me a call. Maybe I'd be able to help," Dawn said as she handed me her card, which she took from her tracksuit pocket.

"You're a law graduate?" I questioned as I read the writing on the card.

Dawn nodded. "Yes. Now you'd better go or you'll get into more trouble with the C.A. You can't keep *him* waiting."

I nodded and turned to walk across the playing field to where my aircar was parked. My mind was still searching for a possible reason for the interview. In the last few months we had been testing new equipment and generally patrolling - nothing out of the ordinary.

Was it possible that they were going to give me a desk job? True, I *was* due for a transfer, but...

I decided to push all those thoughts to the back of my mind. As I glanced back towards my companions I saw that the three of them were jogging around the track.

I entered the Commanding Admiral's outer office at exactly 08.55 hours. The Admiral's secretary looked up from her desk as I came to a stop in front of her.

"Can I help you, Captain?"

"Captain James T. Kirk to see the Admiral, as requested," I reported.

"The Admiral will be with you shortly, Captain. Please take a seat." She pointed to the chairs in a far corner.

I crossed over and sat down, aware that the secretary was watching me over the top of her computer terminal. A small red light flashed on her desk, indicating that the Admiral was ready for his first interview.

"You may go in now, Captain." She pointed again, this time to the large door at the other end of the room.

I stood up and straightened my light green uniform top; with my heart in my mouth I crossed to the indicated door, knocked on it, then entered.

Admiral Philips sat behind a large desk, exactly as a man of his rank should. On one side of him was a computer terminal, on the other a video monitor.

I marched across the room, came smartly to attention, and saluted; the salute was not returned, as one never salutes when seated, no matter how high a rank one is.

"Captain Kirk, please be seated." It was a request, not an order. Well, it didn't look like I was about to be reprimanded, but

I was still very tense.

"All right, Jim, I'll come straight to the point and put you out of your misery."

I braced myself for the impact.

"You are being promoted to full Captain, and your new command will be the USS Enterprise."

The Admiral waited for me to realise what I had just been told. Then it hit me.

"*The Enterprise?*" I babbled like a child.

"Yes. Captain Pike recommended you."

"Why me?" I asked the man in front of me.

"He felt you were the best man for the job, and frankly, Jim, so did the Selection Board. I myself would have liked to see you in command of a Starship two years ago, but the Board decided you lacked experience. The courses you've been doing for the last few months were to test you. The Board was most impressed with the results. It's a big responsibility for one so young; you can, of course, turn it down if you don't feel ready for it."

"Sir, if I'm not ready now I never will be." I was feeling a lot better now than I had been ten minutes earlier, and was having some trouble keeping my excitement in check.

"Very well, Captain," the Admiral continued. "You take command of the Enterprise in ten days, at the end of your leave. I suggest you spend some time in Personnel, reading up on your officers. I'm sure you'll want to choose some for yourself. Feel free to do so. I cannot guarantee their transfer, but I'll do my best to get who you want. There is one officer who has requested permission to stay aboard."

"Who is that?"

"Lieutenant-Commander Spock, the ship's Science Officer." Noticing the look on my face he went on, "He's the best in the Fleet."

"Yes, I know."

"He's half Human, and very highly thought of."

"I know his reputation." I had nothing against the Vulcan Science Officer - I had worked with aliens in the past and would do so again - but Vulcans were... different.

"Right, Captain, you have an appointment with the Quartermaster in five minutes. Your orders will be relayed directly to you. Congratulations."

The Admiral stood up and held out his hand. I came to my feet and took hold of the outstretched hand.

I was in a daze when I left the Admiral's office. I did as I had been ordered and headed for the Quartermaster's Store, which was on the fourth floor. The turbolift doors opened, and the

Enterprise's new Captain stepped out.

The Quartermaster himself was waiting for me, inch-tape round his neck. The next hour or so was spent being measured for my new uniform.

Once I had escaped the clutches of the Quartermaster I made my way to the Personnel Office, feeling quite proud of the gold uniform top of full Captain and the arrow emblem of the Enterprise on my chest.

A young woman came smartly to attention as I entered the office. "At ease," I commanded, and she obeyed.

"I would like to go over the Enterprise's personnel files, please," I informed her.

"Yes, sir; but first, please, the Security scan." She indicated the scanner on her desk.

Once the scan verified who I was she led me to a small output terminal. "Just press this switch and type in the information you require, sir. Any problem, just call me."

"No, it all seems straightforward, Yeoman," I replied.

For the remainder of the day my head hung over the computer console. It wasn't until the yeoman tapped my shoulder that I looked up.

"It's after six, sir, and I've got to go off duty. I'm sorry, but I can't leave you here," she apologised.

"Sorry - have I kept you back?" I asked, glancing around the small office. I saw that all the terminals were empty, and that I was the only one left.

"Not really, sir. There was a lot to do."

I switched off the machine and stood up to leave. "By the way, what's the best restaurant in the area other than the rec room?"

"Ramoldie's, sir. It's in the complex."

"Thank you," I replied, and left the yeoman to secure the personnel computer for the night.

The restaurant was indeed living up to its name as being the best place in town for home-cooked food. I sat at a table set for two eating my meal as I reflected on my day. The Enterprise was reputed to be the best ship in the Fleet - a very high honour indeed for one so young. I was, after all, the youngest Captain in command of a Starship.

I finished my meal and glanced casually around the restaurant. The Commanding Admiral was dining with some friends at the opposite side of the room near the big open log fire, yet there was no sign of any security guards. Now that was unusual, I thought. Perhaps that was why I was uneasy; I could smell danger, yet apart from no security with the Admiral there was nothing to account for it. I put the feeling down to the fact that I was always more alert when

planetside, as a reflex action. It was the way I had conditioned myself for landing party duties, and alertness had always paid off. Relaxation came hard.

"May I join you, Jim?" a voice asked.

I looked up and was surprised to find Dawn Collins standing there. "Sure," I responded, standing up swiftly to pull out the other chair for her. Dawn sat down heavily.

"What's wrong?" I questioned, adding, "Would you like a coffee?"

"I'd love one, please."

I beckoned the waiter over and ordered the coffee. "Want to tell me about it?" I asked, sitting down again.

"I don't know what's wrong, but I've got this uneasy feeling that something's going to happen. Did you know Admiral Philips is the biggest security headache we have? I've been looking for him for hours - he will insist on coming to places like this without an escort, and he's not even taking the threats seriously."

"What threats?" I asked as my ears pricked up.

Dawn remained silent until the waiter placed the cup on the table and left. "There've been threats to his life. Up till now they've only been threats, but..."

"I see. Any idea who's sending them?"

"No. If we had, he or she would be lifted by now. You know how it is, Jim."

"Yes, I do, and I can guess what your job tonight is." I glanced towards the Admiral's table.

"Yes." It was then that she noticed the gold uniform top that indicated I was a *Starship* Captain. "Your uniform! Don't tell me *that's* what he wanted to see you for this morning?"

"Yes - all that worrying for nothing," I replied, smiling.

"For nothing! Jim, you're a full Captain, *and* in command of a Starship. Which one?"

"The Enterprise. And I'm not officially in command until next week when my leave finishes," I informed her.

"But she's still your ship. Have you told Dave yet?" she questioned, her own excitement at my promotion evident in her face.

"Yes, and he's now the Invincible's Captain," I informed her.

Dawn's expression changed to one of surprise, as though she could not believe her ears. "I'm glad. He's a really good officer."

"Yes, I know," I replied, putting my own cup down on the table top.

"Can't help wishing it was me. I hate being shore-bound," she smiled, finishing her coffee.

"So do I. Have you finished?"

"Yes."

"Right, let's go."

"Where?"

"Well, you can't leave here yourself, nor am I about to leave you sitting alone, as the Admiral will realise you've found him," I smiled; I knew the drill all too well.

"I hadn't thought about that."

"Right, it's settled. I'll escort you out, and you can call in and let them know you've found him."

The noise of the restaurant faded as the swing doors closed behind us. I crossed to the reception desk to pay the bill when something made me turn round sharply. All my instincts told me something wasn't quite right.

Dawn stood in the communications booth. I saw the expression on her face through the glass doors. I knew only too well what was passing between her and the Security Chief, so I decided to wait a few moments till she finished her call to say goodnight. After all, I did want to see her again...

Suddenly a loud explosion ripped through the restaurant, engulfing me in the aftermath of the blast, throwing me to the floor as the dirt and rubble fell around me and the screams began.

I got to my feet too quickly, resulting in the floor rising to meet me as blackness folded in around me. A few minutes later I came to and stood up slowly, shaking my head to clear it, deciding at once that it had been the wrong move to make. Sluggishly I made my way over the rubble to what had been the communications booth.

Commander Dawn Collins sat on the floor, looking in disbelief at the communications mike in her hand.

"You all right?" I asked, hanging onto the twisted metal for support.

"What?" she replied, a little shocked.

"Dawn!" I took hold of her by her shoulders, ignoring my throbbing, bleeding head.

"Jim, I'm all right, but your head..." She reached to touch the deep cut on my forehead.

I caught her hand gently. "Is just fine. I'll contact base, you do what you can to help," I ordered as I wiped my face with the back of my hand.

The scene was one of total carnage. People lay sprawled in the wreckage, buried in the rubble. Limbs had been severed, blood was everywhere. A quick check revealed that the Admiral was not among the injured or the dead, as far as we could see.

Commander Collins managed to ascertain from one of his guests that he had been in the toilet at the time of the explosion; however,

there was no way she could go in to check, as the door sensors would only admit males.

Dawn told me later that she realised she would have to get a man to go in for her, but everyone seemed busy with the rescue operation. Through the dusty haze she spotted me, and made her way to my side.

"Jim, could you please go into the Gents and see if the Admiral's there?"

"The Gents?" I questioned, to make sure I had her right.

"Yes, if you would," she asked. "*I* can't go in, can I?"

"No," I agreed, looking round.

"Over there." She pointed across the room.

"Right," I replied as I crossed the rubble carefully, trying not to stand on anyone. My head was swimming and the dizziness threatened to creep over me again. I did not know if it was due to the effect of the bang on my head or to the sight that was in front of me. Swallowing, I entered the toilet area of the restaurant.

The Admiral was standing propped against the wall, nursing his head.

"Are you all right, sir?" I asked.

"What happened?"

"An explosion, sir. That's all I can tell you at the moment," I informed him, unable to believe my eyes, for in front of me was a hole where the wall should have been.

Philips followed my gaze, his eyes widening as he saw the hole for what was obviously the first time.

"Let's get you out of here," I suggested.

"A bomb?" It was clear the Admiral had no intention of moving until he knew everything I did myself.

"I don't know, sir, but the emergency services are here, so let's get you to a doctor."

"You look like you could do with one yourself," the Admiral observed as he followed me out.

Dawn was waiting, ready to whisk the Admiral away to safety. "Sir, let me escort you to the base hospital for a check up. It would be safer," she urged.

"She's right, sir," I piped up. "This is no place for you."

"You're an open target." Dawn said what I had been trying to say.

"You think this was meant for me?"

"Frankly, sir, I do."

I escorted them to the Security aircar which was parked just outside the door and watched them disappear into the horizon. All I wanted to do now was crawl into bed. Instead I went back inside, for the Security Chief would need to take a statement.

The emergency doctor was busy trying to stop an artery bleeding. He saw me hovering in the background, and without looking up from what he was doing, barked out a few sharp orders.

"You!"

I realised it was me he was talking to, so I knelt down beside him.

"Hold this like this."

I obeyed, turning my head from the sight. It took only few seconds for the doctor to seal the ends together. Once the immediate danger of his patient bleeding to death had been avoided, the doctor had time to look up and see just who his helper had been.

"I'm sorry, sir, I thought you were an orderly," the doctor apologised as he realised that his assistant was in fact a Captain.

"It's all right, Doctor." I stood up quickly, and the dizziness that I had been experiencing since the explosion threatened to close in on me.

The doctor helped me to a chair. "The name's McCoy. Here, sit down and let me look at that head."

"I'm all right," I protested as usual.

"And I'm the doctor around here, so sit!"

For once I obeyed, as I was in no mood to argue the point with this doctor. I was not sure he wouldn't have won, anyway. I flinched as McCoy's fingers probed the injured area.

"You'll live, but you'll have one helluva headache for a few days, so take things easy." McCoy sounded as though he seriously doubted that I was capable of taking anything easy.

"My head already hurts, and I've too much to do before I take command of the Enterprise to take things easy," I smiled feebly.

"Well surely you can spare a few hours for a good night's sleep."

"Now that's what I call a good idea," I replied, adding as an afterthought, "but Security will want to interview me."

"Yes, they'll have to take a statement, but tomorrow will be soon enough for that. Right now you're my patient, so off you go home to bed or you'll spend the night in the base hospital."

"Yes, sir," I mocked.

"And I want to see you tomorrow morning at the hospital."

"Yes, sir," I repeated, making a mental note that once Piper retired I would request Dr. McCoy. For one thing, I liked his attitude to his work and his fearless way of dealing with superior

officers. He was, in fact, like myself, a no-nonsense man when it came down to it.

The following morning I found it considerably hard to get out of bed. My head was throbbing wickedly, and I felt sick. As soon as I stood up I realised I should have stayed in bed. I sat down on the edge of the bed until the dizziness passed, then headed for the bathroom where I showered and dressed; then, as I didn't feel like any breakfast, I headed straight for the base hospital.

The examination went better than I could have hoped. McCoy seemed pleased enough as he washed his hands after changing my dressing.

"Like I said, you'll live, but you'd better take things easy for a few days," he informed me with a smile.

"Fine, but it's going to be impossible to take things easy."

"Why?"

It was clear that no feeble excuse was about to be accepted.

"I've honestly got too much to do before I take command of the Enterprise."

"Well you'd better, or you won't get the necessary fitness clearance from me," he threatened.

"You win." There was nothing else for it but to agree to his demands as it was clear I was the loser.

"Good. Now off you go home and try to relax," McCoy suggested, adding as I opened the door, "I'd better see you again tomorrow morning."

As I left the building via the main entrance I saw Dawn standing by the small ornamental fish pond that filled the centre of the foyer. She seemed upset so I crossed over to her side and laid my hand on her shoulder. She turned round, saw it was me and broke down and cried on my shoulder. All I could do was stroke her hair until the sobs subsided and she stopped shaking.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Are you all right?" I asked as I released her.

"Yes, thank you." She hung her head before she told me anything else. "Jim, my sister was killed this morning. I've just had to identify her body."

I could understand how she felt for it had not been that long since I'd had to do the same thing, only my loss was a friend, not a sister.

"Look, let's get you out of here," I suggested as I slipped my arm around her waist and escorted her out of the building.

It was at the foot of the main stairs that we met the head of the Security Department, who did not look at all pleased.

"Collins, what the hell are you doing here?" he asked in an abrupt manner.

"She's just had to ID her sister," I informed him.

"Oh. Well, you'd better take a few days off to see to the arrangements." There was nothing else he could do as I could so easily have pulled rank.

"Well," Dawn said shakily when he had moved on, "I'm now free for a few days, so that will let me get some extra training done, if you're interested."

For some reason I found myself unable to refuse her request. I would be fully fit for my new command and set an example to my junior officers, I thought to myself as I considered the advantages of it.

"You're on, once I've seen the Security Chief at the restaurant," I smiled. "There are a few things to be done this morning."

"Mind if I tag along, then?" she asked, adding in a hurry, "I won't get in the way, I promise."

"My aircar's outside - come on if you're coming," I commanded as I hurried for the exit, Dawn in hot pursuit after me.

"Wait for me, will you!" she smiled.

I recognised the Vulcan bending over a mangled piece of kitchen equipment when we arrived as Lieutenant-Commander Spock. Captain Tiler hovered in the background, impatiently waiting for the Vulcan to finish his report. He saw Dawn, and stormed over.

"What the hell are you doing here? Hasn't the C.O. seen you yet?"

"Section Commander Collins is with me, Captain," I intervened.

"And who the hell are you?" he asked hotly.

"Captain James T. Kirk, of the USS Enterprise," I introduced myself.

Spock raised his eyebrow in a fashion I would soon grow to recognise.

"Captain Kirk? I'm sorry, I didn't..." Tiler began.

"So it would seem. However, if you have no objections to Commander Collins being here, then I suggest you refrain from using that tone. Now, I was dining here last night. If I can be of any help?"

The Vulcan straightened his uniform top as he stood up, his examination completed. "Captain?"

"Yes, Mr. Spock?" Tiler turned to face the Vulcan.

"My *examination* reveals only one thing. A fuel leak caused the explosion, not a bomb, as first thought. I can find no evidence of

anything other than a fuel leak in the main cookers."

"Well, I never. My thanks, Mr. Spock. You will, of course, supply a full written report?"

"Of course."

"You may return to the Enterprise when you are ready."

"I will, of course, return directly. Captain Kirk?" Spock turned to me.

"Captain, you were here last night at the time of the explosion?"

"Yes. Is there something I can help you with?"

"Yes, sir. I am curious to find out some details of events before the blast."

"Is there somewhere we can talk, Captain?" I asked Tiler.

"Yes, sir. The manager's office is empty."

Dawn never knew what passed between Spock and myself and she never asked, but we came out of the small office like old friends deep in conversation.

On the athletics track I was very quiet as we jogged around for the second time. Dawn was surprised that I kept up with the fast warm-up pace she had set for us. The sun was going down, and the sky had taken on a beautiful orange hue.

"Red sky at night, shepherd's delight," I said as I stopped to catch my breath.

"Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning," Dawn finished the old saying. "You okay?"

"Yeah. What's next?"

"Just some sprints and a cool-down, then home for a shower," she informed me, smiling.

I could tell she loved running. "If the rain holds off, you mean," I corrected. The clouds were creeping in over the orange haze, and the sky was blackening.

"You're right. Come on, let's get started - a couple of hundreds, then few times round the track and home. I'll race you," she challenged.

Dawn raced for the house door to open it. The rain had started to come down in torrents. I locked the aircar, and by the time I reached the shelter of the house I was soaked to the skin.

Dawn closed the door behind me. "You're wet through," she laughed.

"Yes, and I'm cold. I'd forgotten how quickly the weather changes," I smiled. As I pulled off the wet tracksuit top and took hold of the towel she offered me I held her gaze for a long moment.

"I'll put the water on, shall I?" she offered, breaking the spell. "You'll need a hot shower or you'll stiffen up," she continued as I crossed the room and stood in front of the wall fire while she went into another room.

After a few moments she returned with two drinks. "Here, try it - you'll like it," she said, trying to make conversation.

I took the drink from her and sipped it slowly. She was right - it was good.

"What is it?"

"Minia fruit drink."

"Oh."

"Don't you like it?"

"On the contrary, I love it," I told her, smiling. "Dawn, I need a good Security Chief on the Enterprise, and I've asked for you."

"Good. Maybe I'll get off this planet and do something I really like. Thank you, Jim." She reached up and kissed me on the cheek.

I took her in my arms and the kiss became long and sweet. Only the sound of the water heater buzzer going off brought us back to reality.

Dawn disentangled herself from my arms. "Right, your water's ready. Go and have your shower, and I'll dry these wet things." She scooped up my wet top and pointed. "In there."

"Thanks, I won't be long. Anything for eating? I'm starving!"

"Go and have your shower and I'll fix something."

Dawn drew back the living room curtains next morning, allowing the sun to shine directly onto my sleeping face. I had fallen asleep on the couch the night before and Dawn had just covered me with a quilt and left me to sleep. I stirred and sat up stiffly, rubbing my neck.

"You all right?" she asked.

"Yes, just stiff. Sorry for falling asleep on you."

"That's okay. Look, I got a call this morning - I've to report for special assignment and you've to see the Commanding Admiral at ten. And before you ask, I don't know how they knew you were here."

"That's not important at the moment. Come here," I ordered softly.

Dawn crossed from the window and I took her in my arms. "Dawn..."

"I know, Jim. I feel the same."

"God, is that the time?" I asked, catching a glimpse of the wall clock.

"Yep. You'd better get going. I think I said that to you once before."

"Can you drop me at home?" I asked, pulling on my tracksuit top. "Oh, that's how they knew I was here - my tracer's on," I told her as I pulled it from my pocket.

"Trust you. It's a good job nothing happened, isn't it? Or they'd have known all about it."

Dawn dropped me off at home where I changed into uniform and headed for Starfleet Headquarters. My mind was not on the pending interview, however, but on Dawn. I wondered what her special duty was, and was surprised to find I was hoping it was nothing too dangerous.

I parked my aircar in the officers' lot and crossed the tarmac walkway which lead to the Headquarters building. When I passed though the glass doors I realised how quiet it was - there was no-one about in the reception area. I turned to look around, and bumped into Dawn.

"Sorry," I apologised, surprised to see her.

"Jim, something's up. There's a Security alert on, and there should be a guard on this entrance," she informed me.

"The Admiral!" I said, remembering what she had told me about the threats.

Dawn was already heading for the stairs; I hit the alarm switch on the desk and followed her.

We reached the outer office together. The door was open. The Admiral's secretary was lying dead in a pool of her own blood, taken by surprise.

Dawn edged her way slowly, silently to the Admiral's door. It opened as she touched it. The intruder stood over the Admiral's unconscious body.

Dawn hesitated for a split second. That proved fatal. The killer opened fire with his phaser. Dawn dropped. I fired, and the intruder fell.

I was unaware that the room was filling with Security as I knelt down beside Dawn's body. Whatever type of phaser the intruder had used one thing was certain - it wasn't Federation standard issue. Dawn's body lay unmarked, unmoving.

A hand touched my shoulder. "She's dead, sir." The voice belonged to Dr. McCoy.

No response.

"Jim, she's dead."

The voice penetrated my mind. I looked up. "The Admiral?"

"He'll be all right. A bump on the head, that's all." He smiled shakily. "Jim?"

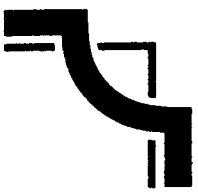
"I'm all right - or I will be," I told him as I walked away.

I knew I would have to answer questions but right then I wanted to be by myself. I had learned a sore lesson. Somehow I'd never thought that it could hit me so hard. Death... I had seen death before, had even watched one of my best friends die in my arms, and yet I had never experienced the lost, empty feeling that swept over me then.

One thing for sure - I'd never again get involved with a woman who was in Starfleet. It didn't pay.

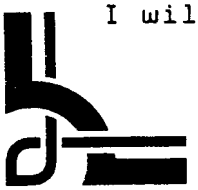
Resigned, I headed for my aircar and the solitude of my own flat.

The TALISMAN



I love you in a way
that far transcends physical passion,
yet if I told my friends your name
they would not understand.
To them you are not real,
a figure of imagination -
and yet you shall be more to me
than any Human can.
I faltered and drew back
whenever someone tried to come close.
I could not find a mind
that held the strange depths of my own.
And you were just a face at first,
a person I admired,
till our minds brushed like two wingtips
and I was no more alone.
I shall always be an alien,
it seems to be thus fated;
but no more need I walk alone
with you there safe at hand.
I will bear you in my heart,
a talisman to shield and guide me.
Wait for me. Though it may be many lives,
I will yet walk Vulcan's sands.

Sheryl Peterson



ENTERPRISE TOO

by

Jan Davis

For Susan Atkin

THE STARFLEET MOUNTED EXPLORERS

Their motto: Will ride anything, anywhere, anytime.

Their anthem: The William Tell Overture.

This is a group of tough men and women. (Sometimes believed to be as wild as some of their mounts.)

Their job is to explore areas of planets, mainly mountain ranges, normally inaccessible to other explorers. They use native animals if at all possible, as these animals would be suitable for the planet's conditions; otherwise their own registered horses can be transported from the nearest starbase. Each Rider has a number of animals posted on various starbases.

As well as the regulation luggage allowance, each Rider is permitted to take his or her own equipment, as much of it is made to suit the Rider. The Rider is responsible for the upkeep and repair of the equipment. When being transferred to a new ship, their records state how much room they need for themselves and their horses, if travelling with them. They are responsible only to the most senior officer of the unit or ship they are assigned to.

Captain Kirk made his way down to the transporter area. As he was walking he was quietly cursing the administration idiot who had created this latest crew blunder, whoever it was who had decided that the Enterprise needed a Starfleet Rider among her crew. *Surely,* thought Kirk, *this Rider would be more suitably placed on a planetary exploration ship.*

He entered the room just as the Rider was beaming aboard. A girl materialised; around her lay various items including a number of saddles, boots, blankets and hats. In fact, the whole transporter area was full.

"I'm Captain Kirk," he greeted her. "You know that all this is against Starfleet regulations. You are only allowed 100 kilos."

"Captain, as a Rider I am allowed to bring my personal equipment with me. My own personal luggage is well within the limit." She stepped down from the transporter area. Over one shoulder she carried a number of halters and bridles.

"I hope that I have been provided with sufficient space, as stated in my records."

"I believe that Personnel have sorted out suitable quarters for you. As for your horse, they have not yet found suitable stabling.

Exercising could be a problem, not to mention..."

"Captain, I would be dealing with *that* myself. As for exercising - no problem. Your ship's corridors will do nicely, as they are wide enough and high enough, and on a ship this size there are plenty of them. Otherwise the shuttlebay could be used. But since I am not bringing any of my horses with me, none of that matters. Though I am sure I can find plenty to ride around here."

She gave Captain Kirk a knowing look. He took a step back; for once he was not sure if he could handle this half-wild girl.

"Is someone going to show me to my quarters?" she demanded.

"Ensign Manning is." Kirk signalled the Ensign forward. "I will arrange for your equipment to be loaded onto an antigrav trolley and delivered to your room."

"Thank you, Captain. Lead on, Ensign." She waved the Ensign on ahead of her.

As the girl left there was a ringing coming from her bridles and spurs. Kirk watched her go. Whatever was he going to do with her? He had read somewhere in her file that one of her ancestors had been a Red Indian belonging to the Sioux tribe. It was quite possible that her handling of animals was linked to her bloodline. As he looked at her belongings he half expected to see a stetson. Lo and behold, perched on top of a saddle there was one. Kirk groaned. It was getting to be an elaborate joke. He turned and left the transporter room.

Two days later Dr. McCoy appeared on the bridge looking very ruffled.

"Jim, have you met Rider Yen yet?"

"Yes, briefly. Why?" Kirk enquired.

"Well, you'd better talk to her. She has just refused a medical examination."

"Why is that?" Kirk asked, getting interested.

"She's just told me that she's perfectly okay, and that she doesn't need a quack doctor to tell her so."

"Bones, that's your province. What do you expect me to do?"

"Throw the book at her or something. I don't know."

"Okay, I'll see what I can do. Uhura, ask Rider Yen to meet me in Briefing Room 4. Bones, will you join us?"

"Be right with you." Dr. McCoy followed him off the bridge.

Uhura contacted Tricia Yen.

Tricia Yen looked up from her tack cleaning. *What now?* she thought as she answered the intercom. "Rider Yen here."

"You're wanted by the Captain," Uhura informed her. "You're to go to Briefing Room 4 at once."

"Right, I am on my way."

Tricia cursed as she threw down the cloth she had been using. She removed the apron she was wearing to protect her uniform and stormed out of her room. She met Captain Kirk just outside the briefing room, and he stood to one side to let her go in ahead of him.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?" she demanded.

"For a start, I am the Captain of this ship, and as such I expect some respect." He paused, and the girl nodded.

"Another thing; I have just heard from Dr. McCoy here that you have refused to have a medical examination. Since you have only recently come on board this ship, I insist that you have one, in case you have any diseases that you could have picked up from your travels. I don't want you to pass any virus on to the rest of the ship's crew. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now go with Dr. McCoy and get it over with."

She turned and left the room.

Dr. McCoy paused at the door. "Thanks."

"No problem, Bones. I think Rider Yen will be awkward until a suitable job has been found for her. But when? Who knows?"

McCoy arrived in sickbay to find Tricia waiting for him. He proceeded with her medical.

"Well, Doctor?" she asked as he finished.

"Yes, you were right - there's nothing wrong with you. But I still like to make sure. Off you go, young lady."

Tricia almost stormed out of the room.

The job for Rider Yen came sooner that Kirk had expected. A few days later he was on the bridge when Uhura turned to him.

"Captain, I'm picking up an emergency signal. It's from the cargo ship USS Victoria. They report that they have serious engine damage."

"Get me their Captain," Kirk ordered.

"Yes, sir." Uhura turned back to her controls. "Captain, I have the Victoria's Captain for you."

"Main screen," he directed. "This is Captain Kirk of the USS Enterprise. What is your problem?"

"Greetings, Captain Kirk. I am Captain Leslie of the USS Victoria. The problem is that our engines are in a dangerous

condition; not only that, but we have a nervous cargo, and one of them is sick. The cargo is for the colony on Argille. We are unable to deliver it."

"What is your cargo?" Kirk asked.

"Thirty horses. One is a stallion, with twenty mares and nine yearling foals. It is one of the mares that is sick. We have only just enough food for them to get to Argille."

"I think we can help you. Helm, how long before we get to their position?"

"About six hours, sir."

"Captain Leslie, we'll be with you in six hours."

The screen returned to the star navigation picture. "Uhura, get hold of Rider Yen and ask her to meet me in Briefing Room 4. Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy."

The three men left the bridge and met Rider Yen in the briefing room.

"Well, Rider Yen, at last I have a job for you. A cargo ship has asked for our help due to an emergency in their engine room. We are going to take their cargo to Argille. This cargo is to be your responsibility. There are thirty horses - one stallion, twenty mares and nine yearling foals. One of the mares is sick. I'm sure Dr. McCoy will help you."

"You're joking! I'm a doctor, not a vet," McCoy stated.

"Doctor, for the one that is sick, may I have the use of a small side ward as a stable?" Rider Yen asked.

"Why?" Dr. McCoy enquired, thinking of his clean sickbay and the effect a horse might have on it.

"Rider Yen is being logical, Doctor. Sickbay has all the possible equipment and medical treatments she may need," Mr. Spock explained.

"What about the rest?" Captain Kirk asked.

"Oh, I had thought of the shuttlebay for them. It should fit them all comfortably. To get the horses on board we can use Docking Bay 9, that is the nearest one - providing the Victoria can dock there. Captain, while the horses are being brought on board, can the corridors that will be required be cleared of personnel? The horses, I will handle." Tricia was beginning to make plans.

"Okay, I'll issue orders to that effect. Anyone found there after that can help with tidying up after them. I can see that you have already sorted out a lot of the problems. Is there anything more that you will need?"

"Thank you, Captain. I require very little at present. When we reach the Victoria a few extra hands to help unload the food and bedding would be welcome. Also, can I have two large open tanks to use as water troughs for the shuttlebay, and a large bin to use in the sickbay ward?"

"I'll see what I can arrange for you. You have about five and a half hours to get ready," Kirk assured her.

"Five hours, 28 minutes and 30 seconds, to be precise," Mr. Spock stated.

Tricia nodded and left; there was almost a bounce in her step.

"Well, Jim, I certainly didn't expect you to find her something as soon as this."

"Neither did I, Bones. I'm worried, as I don't know how sick that horse is. I hope that Rider Yen will know. The Victoria's Captain didn't appear to know, or if he did he wasn't bothered. Help her if you can."

"I will. I'll go and inform Nurse Chapel of our new patient. Also, there's the small ward to prepare. I wonder how Christine is going to react?" Dr. McCoy left the room.

Kirk was deep in thought. Mr. Spock tried to reassure him. "One good thing will come out of this - your roses will benefit from the horses."

Tricia Yen had already sorted out the halters and lead ropes she might require, so she decided to visit the shuttlebay. Mr. Scott was already there.

"It's all right for you, lassie, changing my shuttlebay into a stable, but where do you suggest I place the Galileo?"

"Can you move it to the end of the bay and shield it? Block the whole of that end so that I can store their food and bedding behind it as well. The rest of the area requires splitting in two, as the yearlings must be kept away from the stallion."

"Right, I'll see that all that's done. Now these are the helpers that the Captain has arranged for you."

He went off muttering to himself, and the five men stepped forward.

"Okay, you lot, I won't need you until about half an hour before we meet the Victoria. For now, continue helping in here. See you all at Docking Bay 9 later." She left the shuttlebay and headed for the canteen.

Captain Kirk returned to the bridge and Uhura turned to him. "Captain, Mr. French wants a word. It's about Rider Yen."

"Thank you, Uhura. Now, Mr. French, what can I do for you?" he asked as he sat down.

"It's like this, sir. Rider Yen has just been down and requested that I provide her with 2 kilos of sugar cubes, 100 kilos each of carrots and apples, plus a number of other items. Do I supply her with them?"

"Of course you do. Rider Yen is looking after about 30 horses.

Give her what you can and keep some more in reserve. We can stock up again possibly on Argille or at a starbase. Mr. Spock?"

"Rider Yen seems to have thought of everything. The supplies she has requested will help to pad out the feed a little."

The time came for them to dock with the USS Victoria. Kirk arrived at Docking Bay 9 to find the five helpers emerging from the airlock, each hauling a bale of hay. They vanished down the corridor. Security had found another five helpers. Tricia appeared, leading a mare.

"Captain, this is the sick one. She is in foal, and due to have it any day. She also appears to have a defective heart. I am just taking her off to sickbay. You! Take this down there now!" She threw a hay net at one of the volunteers. He picked it up and with a glance at Captain Kirk hurried off.

"I had a call from Mr. French about your requests. I cleared it, and if you need any more it will be waiting for you. Oh, here, I collected these for you." He handed her a bag of sugar cubes.

"Thank you, Captain," she said as she tucked them away in a pocket of the jacket she was wearing over her uniform. A riding crop and a bundle of rope hung from her belt.

"Come on, Lady - time to get you settled." She clicked her tongue and the pair left, with Kirk watching them go.

McCoy greeted Tricia at the sickbay door. "So this is our patient," he said, tentatively petting her. "Any idea what's wrong with her?"

"Indeed yes. There will be the patter of tiny hooves quite soon, but the worrying thing is, Mother has a defective heart, so she must be kept under a watchful eye."

"In that case, Nurse Chapel and I had better keep a close eye on her," he said. "Off you go and get the rest on board."

Tricia left sickbay after taking another look at the mare, who was by now tucking into her hay. Returning to the Captain, she informed the small group,

"Keep back, everyone. I'm bringing out the stallion next, and they can be nasty."

As she returned the stallion tossed his head, and Kirk took another step back. Tricia laughed at the reaction and went on.

Next came the mares; it took a couple of trips to get them all aboard.

"Captain, will you thank Mr. Scott for me?" she asked as she went past on one trip. "The shuttlebay has been converted just right."

With the help from her aides she herded the nine yearlings in one group. A man followed them out of the Victoria.

"Greetings, Captain Kirk. I'm Captain Leslie. That young lady

of yours seems to have everything under control."

"Rider Yen should know what she's doing," Kirk replied.

"So, she is a Rider. I wish we'd been supplied with one."

"The horses are now in good hands. The only misgivings I have is how we're going to get them off. I doubt Rider Yen would allow us to use the transporter," Kirk pondered.

"The colonists have shuttles suitable for the job," Captain Leslie assured him. "Ah! Here she is now."

"All are safely stored, Captain, and Dr. McCoy tells me that the expectant mum is great."

"Expectant mum!" Captain Leslie could not believe his ears.

"Your sick mare is to have a foal, as well as having a weak heart."

"Well, how were we to know? Our ship's doctor is no vet," Captain Leslie exclaimed.

"Neither is ours, but he seems to muddle through with our various crew pets. Rider Yen seems to know her stuff."

"Thank you, Captain. Now for their food and bedding." Tricia was itching to get back to work.

"I have it ready for you. They are already loaded onto antigrav trollies," Captain Leslie informed her.

Tricia nodded her thanks and took the group of followers back into the other ship; they soon returned in convoy.

"Where are you going to store all that?" Kirk enquired.

"Don't worry, the observation room will be kept clear. I don't want to ruin the crew's extra entertainment. It's being stored behind the barriers, alongside the Galileo. Another point, Captain. Can it be seen to that no-one but myself is allowed into the shuttlebay?"

"Agreed. I'll arrange to have guards posted."

She left; there was plenty of work for her to do. Kirk stood wondering what else could happen in the next few weeks.

Tricia was kept quite busy, feeding the horses in the shuttlebay and taking food and hay for the mum-to-be. Then, two days later, it happened.

Tricia was cleaning up the foreleg of one of the foals, which had been injured while playing with its mates. She had brought it out into the corridor while she attended to it. One of the guards was holding the head collar very nervously. His partner answered the intercom.

"Rider Yen, it's for you," the guard called.

"Who is it?" she asked without looking up.

"Doctor McCoy."

"Tell him if it's about the mare, I'll be with him in ten minutes."

"I heard that, Rider Yen," McCoy answered her. "See you then."

She returned the foal into its section of the shuttlebay. He was soon joining his mates in their games. Tricia left and hurried towards sickbay. One glance at the mare told her that the foal was indeed on its way, but would be some time yet. She returned to her room and collected a blanket, then went to scrounge a pillow from Dr. McCoy.

"You don't really need those. There are plenty of beds in here," he said, sweeping an arm at the empty main ward.

"Doctor, I am sleeping in there with her, as I can visualise half the ship's crew descending down here in the next 24 hours. During which time, as much peace and quiet as I can give her, the better."

"Right," he said. "I'll see to it that only us three, the Captain and Mr. Spock are allowed past this point." He indicated two beds halfway down the ward.

He went off to make the arrangements, and Tricia returned to the mare. Nurse Chapel appeared at the door.

"Coffee, Tricia?"

"Welcome!" Tricia climbed over the barrier laid across the open door.

"How long before it arrives?" Christine asked as they entered the office.

"Any time. It's all a matter of waiting. You know how it is."

Dr. McCoy arrived. "I've never known this ship to be so quiet. It's like having a ship full of expectant fathers."

"I bet the sick roll will be full later."

"Don't worry - Nurse Chapel will sort out the genuine cases and the rest can wait. Any ideas about the foal's name? The last baby I delivered was named after me. He must be all of five now."

"Well, horses don't have Human names. I *have* thought of Enterprise Too, spelt T double O as a suitable one."

"Enterprise Too - great. It doesn't even matter what sex it is with a name like that."

"I hope the ship has a birth register."

"Don't worry about that. It'll be entered into my log as well as the ship's log."

A few hours later Enterprise Too was born. Tricia had lent a hand, but only just. The mother licked her baby clean. When the

foal was a few hours old Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock were allowed to see her. She was standing up on very wobbly legs. The group retired to celebrate in Dr. McCoy's office.

Tricia soon left the party and returned with a bucket of food after feeding the others. The mare greeted the bucket.

"I suppose you are ready for this now. Move over, Enterprise Too, so that your mum can tuck into this."

Captain Kirk laughed at the sight of the foal as it wobbled out of Tricia's way. He had followed her down the ward.

"Dr. McCoy has just thrown us out. Engineer Tand has just brought in one of the ship's cats. It looks ill."

"What's it like?" she asked.

"Large, black and white."

"Oh, that one!" she exclaimed. "I have often seen it prowling around the straw and hay. It is possibly suffering from overeating mice. I think it has found quite a number in the bales."

"Another few weeks and this lot will be on Argille. I'm sure you'll miss them."

"Of course, Captain. After all, this is my chosen work which I have specialised in. There are times that I do feel out of place on this ship."

"I hope I can find some more work suitable for you to do once this lot have gone."

"Thank you, Captain."

The drama was not finished yet. Two days later Enterprise Too's mum showed signs of weakening and she went off her food. Dr. McCoy and Tricia kept a concerned eye on both mother and foal. Tricia finally decided to feed the foal by hand, with the help of Mr. French and her own foal-milk recipe.

Tricia slept with the mare. Enterprise Too was responding well to her rubber glove bottle. Despite all their efforts, however, the mare's heart failed and she died. Enterprise Too was a week old when Tricia became her new mother.

They eventually arrived at Argille and the colonists collected the horses. Enterprise Too was rejected as they were unable to hand rear her.

So Tricia remained Enterprise Too's mother. Starfleet agreed to allow her to bring the foal up, and once it was old enough it would become one of her registered horses. In the meantime, Enterprise Too had become another ship's pet on board the Enterprise.

The crew spoilt her, but in the foal's eyes Tricia was still her mother. Uhura changed a nursery rhyme.

"Tricia had a little foal,
Its coat was red as gold,
And everywhere that Tricia went,
The foal was sure to go."

Debate of a Cause

Even as a Romulan Commander
I find no pleasure in this duty
whereby I must destroy
a defenceless Federation outpost,
knowing it will only mean war.
Certainly there is something more
than to waste the lives and materials
that will certainly be laid forfeit
by such a confrontation.
Even now a Starship follows,
the one called Enterprise,
and I begin to doubt my actions...
questioning if war
is truly the right path.
Only loyalty holds me to duty,
for I am ingrained too deep
by the training of the Empire
to turn from its path now.
So why, then, do I feel this doubt
of the cause of this war,
knowing that it is by our own hand
that destruction now looms upon us?
Are we truly so sure of victory?
The Captain of the Federation Starship
shows cunning and courage,
and my inner confidence dwindles.
Why must we as Romulans
wish to destroy the best
of what others have to offer?
Would it not help our worlds more
to work as allies more than enemies?
Yet my private wishes are of no matter
in this act of war.
Duty requires obedience
to the instructions I've been given.
I shall fight until I meet
a warrior's death,
though my heart would silently cry
for peace instead.

CarolMel Ambassador

Mistaken Identity

by

Janice Pitkethley

The scene was unfamiliar. Instead of having landed near the towering buildings of Starfleet Headquarters, the Enterprise party stood in a street with strangely gabled houses. Fortunately it was deserted, no-one was around to witness their arrival. Captain Kirk looked around at the dull dingy area.

"This sure isn't Starfleet Headquarters. I wonder where we are. Any ideas, Spock?"

"Obviously the transporter has malfunctioned, Captain. At the present time I am unable to give you our precise location."

"Let's take a look around."

They wandered through a maze of streets, most of which had a waterway or canal running down the centre. A few of the buildings seemed to be damaged. Sometimes they had to climb over piles of rubble which blocked their path. They only saw one citizen, a man dressed in a shabby threadbare coat. He looked fearfully at them and scuttled away before they had a chance to address him.

The stillness of the deserted streets was broken by the heavy tread of marching feet...

"In here!" urged McCoy, pushing open a door. It was better to stay out of sight for the time being. The sound of marching became louder and a squad of steel-helmeted soldiers turned the corner and marched past the basement where the Enterprise party were concealed. Something about the soldiers seemed strangely familiar.

"Captain, I believe I know where we are." Everyone turned to look at the Vulcan First Officer. "I have studied Earth history," he continued. "Those soldiers were German. We are on Earth in the mid nineteen forties. Location, a country called the Netherlands."

"Good God, Spock, that is impossible!"

"Obviously not, Captain. I found this news sheet."

Astonished, Kirk and McCoy read the badly printed paper. "Amsterdam. June 6th, 1943."

"So we are in wartime occupied Amsterdam?" McCoy growled. "I will never trust that damned transporter again. I never liked being taken apart by a machine - look where it has left us!"

"How did we get here, anyway?"

"The logical explanation is that we were passing through a time warp which affected the transporter as we were beaming down."

"Right again, Spock - as always."

The premises they were in seemed to be some kind of warehouse. It had an office on the first floor, deserted like the rest of the building. Kirk discovered a clothes closet and they changed into civilian clothes, getting rid of the Starfleet uniforms. Spock found a peaked cap. It was a bit too large, but served the purpose of hiding his ears. Kirk and McCoy dissolved into laughter at the comical sight.

"... and a Dutch Vulcan!" McCoy spluttered. "That's a new alien race for the Federation."

"Doctor, your sense of humour is most illogical. Captain, I have reason to believe that this building is occupied. I can hear faint noises."

"From where, Spock?"

"From above. I distinctly heard voices and footsteps."

"We searched up there," McCoy said in disbelief. "It's an empty office."

"Obviously not, Doctor. I suggest we continue the search further."

"The voices you heard, Spock - could you understand what they were saying? I mean, what language were they using?"

"Some of it was too faint. I heard German, and another voice speaking in Dutch."

"The noise we made laughing at Spock in that cap would have brought soldiers down here in two seconds to investigate. Whoever is up there *must* have heard us."

They went up to the first floor and began a search. Before leaving McCoy hid their uniforms and equipment under a loose floorboard. They went round the deserted office tapping walls.

McCoy discovered something after a while - it was a bookcase with heavy industrial volumes. "I think I've found it, Jim."

Indeed he had. The bookcase sounded hollow, and Spock's sharp eyesight discovered an almost invisible seam around it. They pushed hard and it swung open to reveal a very steep staircase.

"Careful now," Kirk warned before they proceeded to climb it. "Whoever is up there may have weapons."

He led the way up the steep staircase. Two men stood at the top; they stepped back and raised their hands in surrender as the Enterprise party appeared in the doorway.

"We come in peace," Kirk addressed them. "Can you speak English?"

The men could see that they were unarmed. The taller one stepped forward. "Yes, I speak English. Who are you?"

"Our ship was... destroyed. We came in search of our missing crewmen, then we came in here to avoid a patrol of soldiers. We - that is, one of my crewmen heard sounds and we came to investigate."

"Your ship was lost, you say? I can tell by your voice that you are an American."

"I am Captain James T. Kirk of the - uh - USS Enterprise. These men are some of my crew. There were only the three of us left after the ship was lost. I don't know where we are, or the rest of my crew." (That was true.) "And you, sir? May I ask who you are?"

The man was reluctant to answer. He hesitated. No doubt he was too wary to answer. In these times no-one could be trusted. Were these strangers really who they claimed to be? Kirk saw his hesitation, and ordered Spock to bring their uniforms and equipment.

"These are strange," the man said as he stood fingering the uniform shirts. "I have never seen naval uniforms like these before."

They then showed him the Enterprise identity discs which gave the wearer's name, rank and serial number; on the other side was 'USS Enterprise'. These were closely examined, as were the tricorders, communicators and other equipment. When asked what the tricorder was for, Kirk struggled frantically to remember his history lessons.

"It is a type of - er - naval device used to help track down submarines."

"You seem to be refugees like ourselves, Captain Kirk. For all I knew you could have been German agents. We are in hiding, as you have probably realised. But come - you must be hungry and thirsty. We do not have much in these hard times, but you are welcome to share what we have."

He gave the 'all-clear' by a series of raps on the wall. People began appearing from different rooms, staring curiously at the three strangers.

"We have guests. They are the Captain and two sailors from a wrecked American ship."

They were given some Dutch cheese, a small piece of hard bread and a cup of weak, bitter-tasting coffee. While they ate the men questioned them even further.

"Just *how* did you find our hiding place? We were very careful in concealing it."

"Well... Mr. Spock here has very sensitive hearing. He detected the faint noises you made."

They were all very interested in the progress of the war. Spock was the one who could give them the most information. One of his studies had been Earth history, and his brilliant Vulcan mind stored all the dates and events of the Second World War. He knew exactly the information to give without naming an event which would take place in the future. His audience hung on to his every word.

Kirk stood up. "Thank you for your hospitality. We cannot stay here any longer. We must go and - uh - try to contact someone from the Dutch resistance. We are also in danger, and would bring more to you if we were discovered here."

"The streets of Amsterdam are very dangerous, Captain Kirk. Should you meet an enemy patrol..."

"Don't worry, we'll be very careful."

Seeing they were determined to go, their host did not try to detain them any longer. He said goodbye with the words, "If you don't contact anyone, you can come back here."

"Now we can talk," said Kirk when they were in the basement once more. "The Enterprise will be tracking back to us - it's just a matter of time."

They went out into the streets of Amsterdam, intending to help in any way the family who had welcomed them. A little further down the street they came face to face with a patrol of soldiers. It was unavoidable.

The soldiers aimed their guns at them and the leader barked, "Hande hoch! Schnell!" Arrogantly he stood there, hands on hips and his booted feet splayed wide.

Then an astonishing thing happened. He stepped back, threw out his arm stiffly in a Hitler salute, and addressed McCoy as, "Herr General!" McCoy just stood there staring at him.

Immediately Spock took command of the situation, realising that McCoy had a double, and that the leader of the patrol had mistaken him for the German general. He spoke to the patrol leader in the stern voice of someone who has authority behind him.

"We are on a secret mission, Unteroffizer; we are dressed in civilian clothes to try and capture the leader of the Dutch Resistance Movement. We are the General's aides."

"You will permit us to escort you to Headquarters, Herr General?"

They couldn't do anything else but agree, and were marched off to the 'Headquarters', wherever that was. Half an hour and a maze of canalled streets later they arrived at a large building on the Deidseplein Square. It had once belonged to the Dutch government, but now a large swaztika flag hung above the doorway, conveying its sinister message to all.

The patrol leader ushered them through the front door. He clicked his heels and came to attention, announcing, "General Von Richtshoven and his aides."

An officer who was of junior rank to McCoy stepped forwards. "We are honoured with your presence, Herr General. Come - I will show you to your room."

The room turned out to be a luxury suite. Well pressed and brushed uniforms hung ready to be put on. The floor was covered in thick Persian carpets; mahogany furniture, beautiful ornaments in gold and silver completed the decor, while priceless oil paintings hung on the walls. No doubt all had been looted from the museums and big houses of Amsterdam.

The officer bowed, Prussian fashion. "I will leave you to get into uniform. Throw the rags you are wearing out into the corridor where the orderly will collect them."

At last they were alone.

"Now we can talk. What a situation to be in!" whispered Kirk. "Thank heavens you're the double of General What'sisname, or else we would have been taken prisoner."

"Yes, and Spock realised it right away. Is that my uniform?"

"Yes, Doctor, it is," said Spock, holding it up. "It seems by the colour, rank badges and insignia that General Von Richtshoven is a high-ranking SS officer."

"SS..." McCoy looked at the black uniform. "They were a bad lot, weren't they? I just hope my 'double' doesn't decide to appear."

"That would complicate matters, Bones. Imagine two General Von Rightovens turning up."

"General Von Richtshoven," corrected Spock. "Captain, you should speak..."

"Ssh! Someone's coming," Kirk silenced him.

There was a discreet tap at the door and an orderly wheeled in a trolley groaning with the sort of food that Amsterdam had not seen for years. All three realised they were very hungry; breakfast time on the Enterprise *did* seem a long long time ago...

All three felt uncomfortable in the strange uniform. McCoy could hardly restrain himself from laughing at Spock in the black uniform and the high peaked cap. The shiny knee-length boots creaked as the Vulcan walked, which sent McCoy into another fit of suppressed giggles.

The orderly returned for the tray, followed by another officer.

"I hope everything was to your satisfaction, Herr General? We have important matters to discuss with you. Follow me, please."

He took them to a large room where other high-ranking officers were seated around a table. Papers and documents lay everywhere, and one of the officers carried an important-looking briefcase decorated with the eagle and swastika.

"When do you go back to Berlin, Herr General?"

"I go back this evening," McCoy replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Excellent," the officer continued. "I have here the final plans for the invasion of England from the Dutch and French coastlines. It is called 'Operation Sea Lion'."

"I have heard of it," McCoy interrupted.

"... as I was saying, these plans must be in the hands of the Fuhrer by tonight. Will you take them to him?"

"Most certainly. Your plans are safe with me."

That settled, the officers began talking about what they would do once they got onto English soil.

"The Fuhrer will take up residence in Buckingham Palace," one said. "Ten Downing Street will be Gestapo Headquarters. I am looking forward to setting up concentration camps in Scotland and putting all the English Lords and Earls out to work as shepherds and street cleaners."

Kirk felt his scalp prickle as they talked about their grisly aims. McCoy was trusted with those plans. He must make sure they did not change history in any way - the future of all mankind would be affected if the Germans invaded England.

After the meeting was over McCoy ordered a car for himself and his aides. A big black limousine arrived at the doorway in moments. They got in and Kirk took the wheel. McCoy shuddered.

"Say your prayers, Spock. We're about to be killed. Remember the last time *he* drove a car?"

Fortunately it wasn't as bad as that. After a few jolts and bumps the car went weaving down the street. They stopped a few streets away from the warehouse and took a large hamper from the back seat; when opened it was found to contain luxury food.

"This was meant for our journey to Berlin. Those families will welcome this."

Kirk then released the brake and the car rolled forward into the canal, sinking almost immediately in the dark salty water.

"They'll never find that car again. Our friends at the warehouse will know what to do with these plans."

Forgetting that they were in SS uniform Kirk, Spock and McCoy climbed the hidden staircase once again. The two men recoiled in horror at the sight of the dreaded black uniforms with the silver deaths-heads on the lapels.

"They have come back to arrest us! I knew they couldn't be trusted!"

"Let me explain. These uniforms... we stole them, plus these top secret plans."

Kirk went on to tell the whole story. It sounded incredible until someone produced a newspaper with a photograph of General Von Richtshoven in it - he and McCoy could have been identical twins. The briefcase was handed over, and the contents closely examined.

"These plans will be very valuable," one of the men said, replacing them carefully. "I will give them to our Dutch helpers - they will see that they get to Winston Churchill himself if need be. This calls for a celebration."

Cries of delight greeted the opening of the hamper. It had been years since the refugees last saw anything like the luxury food and drink it contained. The women and girls busied themselves setting the table, and everyone sat down to a feast. Champagne corks popped and the refugees toasted the 'three American sailors' over and over again. They drank to the victory of the Allies and talked about what the plans for Operation Sea Lion would do for the progress of the war. It was a jolly party.

Still, the dreaded SS uniforms made the refugees uneasy. It was

a strange sight, three 'SS officers' sitting at the same table, laughing and talking - two of them, that is; the other one never smiled.

Spock looked up to see a girl coming towards him. She was about twelve years old with a mischievous face and dark curly hair. She bent forward as if to take away his coffee cup... and without warning snatched the SS cap from his head.

Stunned silence fell as everyone stared at his fully revealed Vulcan features. The girl gave a little scream and backed away, dropping the cap.

One of the men was the first to break the silence. "Who... what... are you?"

"It's a long story." Kirk tried to explain in the best way he could. "We are from your future..."

They looked at the three strangers with more fear than if Adolf Hitler himself had suddenly appeared in the room.

"The future? But that is supposed to be science fiction... space, and all that. Are you spacemen or something?"

"In a way. An accident brought us back in time. We arrived here completely lost."

"I knew there was something different about you three - especially *that* one. Who or what is he?"

Spock answered for the first time. "I am a Vulcan, from the planet Vulcan, which is in the constellation Ophiuchus"

"You... you are an alien?"

"Yes, I am."

The coffee cooled and the food was forgotten as everyone tried to understand this startling discovery. They began asking questions.

"You told us about a ship, the USS Enterprise. Also, those uniforms certainly weren't naval."

"The USS Enterprise is a real ship, and I am her Captain," Kirk explained. "She is a Space Cruiser. In our time man has reached the stars. Since we disappeared the crew will have been working non-stop to find us."

"What is it like in your time?"

"All nations are united, at peace with one another. Earth is a beautiful place, not troubled by war or hostilities. That is a thing of the past. Mankind has learned by his mistakes, and we live in peace."

The girl who had snatched Spock's cap began to speak. She halted and pressed her hands over her ears in terror as a high-pitched whine was heard.

"It's a bomb!" someone shouted.

Only the three strangers knew the sound for what it was, the

Enterprise transporter. The refugees stared in terror as the figure of a man began to appear, surrounded by a shimmering golden sparkle. It was Scott.

"We've found ye at last! Whit the devil is that ye're wearing? An' who are thae folk?"

"All in good time, Scotty. Bones, go and bring our uniforms and equipment - we can't leave anything behind."

The girl stood there, tears streaming down her face. She pleaded, "Take us with you. Take us away from this place."

"We can't," McCoy explained gently. "You would not be able to fit in with our time. Also, we could be changing history for all we know. I'm sorry, but we cannot take you with us."

He left and returned with their uniforms and equipment, looking at the group of people standing there.

"We'll have to do something, Jim. We've told them too much about ourselves."

Spock came forward. "I can make them forget."

The refugees drew back in alarm. "They are going to kill us!" one man shouted. "They can't leave us with all that knowledge of the future."

"We harm no-one. Let Spock touch each of you in turn. He will place a suggestion in your minds. There will be no pain or anything. Don't be afraid."

The Vulcan formed the mind meld with each one. They felt a great sense of peace as his fingers rested on their foreheads as he placed the suggestion to forget into their minds.

Scott was getting impatient. "C'mon, man, we've no' got much time left."

Spock broke the last meld and turned to Kirk. "Captain, as soon as we leave here, all that took place will be wiped from their memories. We have never existed. They will discover the briefcase in its hiding place."

They said goodbye to the group of people and moved back out of range. Scott opened the communicator.

"Scott to Enterprise. Four to beam up."

As they were dematerialising, Spock received a strong thought from the girl with dark hair.

I am Anne Frank...

THE DREAM AND THE REALITY

by

Karen Hayden

The rec room was practically deserted when Kirk entered, and he sighed. It would do the morale of his crew no good at all to see the Captain of the Enterprise looking so haggard and thoroughly worn out. He wiped his eyes with his fingers, willing himself to full wakefulness, and hastily programmed strong black coffee. He downed it quickly as his First Officer entered.

Spock's eyes narrowed at the sight of his Captain and friend. The dark circles beneath the hazel eyes could mean nothing but that lack of sleep was the norm at the moment. The Vulcan slowed his pace, approaching Kirk's table with some trepidation. Though he knew full well that there was nothing physically wrong with Kirk he'd still known for some time that *something* was badly affecting the dark hours which Kirk had, through necessity, to spend alone. The problem he faced was how to persuade Kirk to allow a discussion of what troubled him to take place. It was almost as if Kirk was running away from the problem, unwilling to face it, and that was so unlike their Captain that Spock found himself doubly concerned.

He sat opposite Kirk, analysing the look that was held so deep within the lion eyes, attempting to *see.* But, he acknowledged silently, Kirk could shield himself as well as any Vulcan when he wanted to. So stubborn...

"Jim. Good morning."

Kirk looked up, smiling his smile, trying so hard to hide the tiredness behind his charm. He nodded. "Spock, my friend. Good morning." Kirk looked deeply into the dark brown velvet Vulcan eyes, obviously searching for something, but either he couldn't find it or he was afraid to acknowledge it was there. He said nothing more.

Spock, not wanting to push the issue too soon, made no comment, but he swallowed before he could find his voice. *Routine. Calmness.*

"The star-mapping is almost completed in this sector, and as we have as yet received no new orders from Starfleet, we may be able to take advantage of the shore leave facilities on Hitachin after all."

Kirk visibly relaxed at the news, sighing. "Good. The crew needs that badly."

"And you." Few words, but they said all that was on Spock's mind.

Kirk looked up again at the implications that had been made in those few words, gauging what had not been said, and frowned. He knew all too well that he could hide nothing from his friend, and that it had been a long time since he could switch on his incalculable charm to throw the Vulcan off the track; *this* occasion was no different. He knew he wasn't being fair to Spock, knew that he should tell someone, wished he could; but he also knew that he

could not talk about it yet. Not even to Spock - most especially not to Spock. Not yet. They were only three days from Hitachin. Perhaps then...

Spock again anticipated his thoughts before Kirk was able to find the words. "If you would permit me to accompany you to Hitachin, I am certain that I would be able to assist you, Jim. I do not wish to intrude, but I would be... honoured... if you would allow me to listen, and to help."

Kirk reached out his hand, touching the Vulcan's arm lightly, transferring his gratitude with touch, but he removed his hand quickly. He wanted Spock, needed him more than ever. The Vulcan was always there for him, no matter what time or place or circumstance, and Kirk never ceased to be amazed by the fact that in that vast universe in which they lived they had been brought together, for each other, to make each other into the whole they had never been before.

Nodding his head once, he smiled, managing to dispel the exhaustion which had dulled his eyes. As if drawing back a curtain to step back into his role of invulnerability Kirk rose to his feet, squaring his shoulders as he pulled his shirt down. "I'm due on the bridge."

Spock nodded and watched him go, knowing that in three days time the problem which had weighed so heavily on Kirk's shoulders would be put into perspective, and removed.

Kirk, walking towards the turbolift, allowed gratitude to sweep through him, and he knew that he could endure a few more sleepless nights and some more pain if it meant that he would be relieved of his burden at the end of the three days. Only three days...

McCoy was waiting for Kirk when he arrived on the bridge - and Kirk knew why. McCoy had been trying to persuade him to go to sickbay for days, but Kirk had made repeated excuses for not going. That very morning Kirk had seen the doctor stop at his Captain's cabin door as Kirk himself had entered the turbolift unseen, heading for the rec room. When McCoy had received no answer to his call he had used his medical over-ride to enter, concerned, and Kirk well imagined the disapproval McCoy would have had at what he found inside - an empty room, and a bed unslept in.

Kirk nodded in the doctor's direction, a hurried greeting, but intentionally proceeded to take a slow thorough tour of the bridge. He knew he was delaying the inevitable, but also knew that he needed a few moments to show his crew that all was well with him before the confrontation with the ship's surgeon.

He reached the science computer station to feel an emptiness creep over him. It was unnerving to find Spock absent, though he knew that Spock had insisted on splitting shifts with him on purpose. The Vulcan had used the inevitable research excuse, but Kirk knew only too well the reason for Spock taking the longer graveyard shift.

Feeling McCoy's eyes boring into him as he reached the centre seat, he relaxed his carefully erected facade of invulnerability, and he finally approached the doctor as he saw the concern which clouded the blue eyes, concern for *him*. He understood McCoy's need for reassurance, and realised that the doctor really did deserve some

kind of explanation. He placed his hands behind his back, surveying his domain for a moment, then indicated the turbolift with his eyes as he ordered Sulu to take the con, informing him that he would be in sickbay if needed. McCoy relaxed and went to stand by the doors, waiting for Kirk to join him.

The Captain walked briskly to the lift, his head high, but as soon as the doors closed he sagged against the wall, his left hand massaging his neck muscles, his right against the wall, pressing hard in a sheer effort to keep himself upright. They rode downwards in silence, McCoy's concern more than evident.

McCoy guided his Captain into his office and locked the door before he said a word. When he did speak it was with the voice of the Chief Surgeon of the Enterprise, not with the voice of Kirk's friend.

"This has gone far enough, Captain. If you don't tell me what is wrong - and I mean *really* talk - that I'm going to have little option left to me. I will have to declare you unfit for duty."

The words hung in the air between them, the atmosphere strained, almost hostile, and Kirk stood before the doctor, his chin raised in defiance. But the stand did not last long. He knew when he was nearing the end of his tether, and though he knew that as he spoke his full charm was coming to bear, he also knew that it was having no effect whatsoever on McCoy. He sank into a chair, resigned, suddenly feeling grateful that it had come to this. It would almost be a relief to be able to tell his friend *something* , if not everything. He ran his fingers through his hair.

"Bones, you know I wouldn't risk the ship. If I was truly unfit I would know it, and I *wouldn't* command." His voice changed subtly, the command tone taking over from the quiet charm. "You *know* that." His fist clenched upon the table.

"Okay, Jim, okay. I know. I also know that Spock would have come to me long before now if there had been any doubt at all as to your fitness for duty."

Kirk's eyes opened wide in an expression of innocence, and his hand opened, palm upwards in a 'What did I tell you?' gesture. "But...?"

"But though you aren't physically impaired there *is* something wrong. Something that you are very determined I shouldn't find out about. What? Why haven't you been sleeping? You won't let Spock or me help you... Are you so sure you can help yourself?"

Kirk hesitated but a moment, giving himself time to appreciate the amount of caring which was within this older man whom he called friend. He sighed, looking inwards for a moment at himself.

"This past mission... It's made me doubt my abilities, made me realise my vulnerabilities..." The hazel eyes met blue ones in a plea for understanding. "Look, let's just say that it's all made me think. About me. The ship. The crew. In a way that has never worried me before. Can't explain it properly, but it's made me realise just how insignificant we all are, and how easily we could lose... everything."

Kirk dropped his gaze from McCoy, unable to meet the penetrating look at that moment. He was finding it difficult enough to bare his *soul* without seeing McCoy's reaction to it at the same time. He stood up, began pacing, but McCoy remained seated, his analytical mind in top gear.

"I've begun to have dreams... At first I could cope with them, could still sleep some. But lately..." He sighed. "Well, it's just easier not to bother, to stay awake and try and think things through..." Kirk drifted into silence, obviously deep in thought.

After several minutes McCoy coughed quietly. It was enough to arouse Kirk, and McCoy went to his side.

"Can you tell me about them? Talk them through with me?"

"*NO!*"

The answer had been too quick, too forceful, and Kirk knew it. He sought to give McCoy the reassurances that he wished he could have himself. "Sorry, Bones. I can't. Not now. And not..."

Another silence, which McCoy again had to break himself. "Not with me."

Kirk turned to him ruefully, and nodded. "They're to do... with Spock. And I couldn't tell anyone but him. Please understand, Bones."

"I do." His voice was quiet.

"Yes. You would, wouldn't you? You never condemn me - us - for having to shut you out sometimes."

McCoy shrugged. "You're special together, and you deserve each other, need each other. And I'm glad for you both. But I don't feel shut out. I know there is always a place for me in there..." and he gestured towards Kirk's chest, and his heart, "... which is kept just for me. I accept that, gratefully."

The last word was whispered, and Kirk drew a little nearer, smiling then, both at McCoy's answer and at the embarrassment the doctor couldn't quite conceal. It wasn't like McCoy to divulge so much, yet he'd obviously felt the need to say it, and it had helped himself *and* Kirk, too, more than either realised. Kirk suddenly realised that their past mission had badly affected McCoy, too...

His gruff exterior back in place, the doctor turned back towards Kirk. "Will we get shore leave?"

"If I have my way, Bones. We're going to be passing pretty close to Hitachin, and as we've received no new orders... Convenient, huh?"

McCoy smiled then. "You and Spock be sure to get some rest now, okay?"

Kirk nodded.

"And promise me you'll really talk, then. Get everything off your mind, out into the open. Put the past behind you, look to the future - and quit worrying!"

"I promise. I'll talk. And I will try to stop worrying, okay?" Kirk stepped closer. "Okay?"

"Yeh, yeh, okay. Now get outta here. *Someone* has got work to do on this ship!"

"I've gone already." But at the door the Captain halted. "Thanks, Bones."

"Nothing to thank me for. Just be sure to do as I say. Here!" He threw a small bottle of pills to his friend. "Take two of these and get some *dreamless* sleep for once."

Kirk grimaced at the sight of the red pills, but capitulated gracefully, saying he'd go to his quarters.

"No. Ward 3 is vacant. Grab a bunk there. I'll contact the bridge and look in in an hour."

"Bones..." But Kirk didn't finish the sentence, knowing it was pointless to make any objections. "Yes, Dr. McCoy, sir. Your wish is my command."

Kirk laughed and left. McCoy smiled after him. It was a long time since he'd heard his friend laugh...

When McCoy looked into the ward half an hour later Kirk was sleeping the deep, peaceful sleep that he had intended for him.

When Captain Kirk finally awoke after a solid 16.3 hours of sleep it was to find his First Officer sitting next to his bed, his fingers steepled before him. As Kirk raised himself to a sitting position Spock roused himself and looked at his Human, unable to disguise the obvious relief he felt to see Kirk looking so much better. Kirk briefly wondered what story McCoy had told him...

"How long have you been sitting there, Spock?"

"A fraction under 3.7 hours, Jim. My watch had ended and I could meditate here as well as in my cabin."

Kirk smiled, folding his arms, but he didn't make the comment he'd intended to make - that perhaps it had been concern, and not meditation, that had kept him at the bedside - asking instead, "Have we received any official orders yet?"

"Indeed, yes. But..." His 'but' interjected between Kirk's smile and a sigh, "... they are in our favour for once."

"Oh?" Kirk's eyes shone in the subdued lighting of sickbay.

"We are to proceed to Hitachin for ten days leave, for *all* personnel."

Kirk smiled at the emphasis Spock had placed on the word 'all', and Spock inclined his head a little, acknowledging his Captain's obvious pleasure at the news. To be able to witness the Human's face light up was enough for the Vulcan. He rose stiffly to his feet, mentally noting that he too would benefit from some time away from the ship, and bowed his head slightly, conveying to Kirk the wordless message that he would return to the bridge and continue caring for

his ship until Kirk could join him and take over the joyful task himself.

The Captain followed his retreating back with shining eyes, grateful that in no way had Spock tried to push him or pressure him into divulging what was on his mind. Spock knew that if given time Kirk would be unable to do anything *but* confide in the Vulcan, and Kirk knew that he knew. They were both, now, content to wait a little longer. Kirk was grateful for the talent that Spock possessed, that of being able to persuade him to tell the Vulcan things he could never tell anyone else. How many times had Kirk needed to talk, but had no-one to talk to - until Spock had come into his life? It made Kirk feel good to know that never again would that occur, that never again would he need someone and not have someone, for Spock *would* always be there for him.

The remainder of the star-mapping mission proceeded uneventfully, and they entered into orbit around Hitachin just as Spock had predicted. The personnel officer had worked out a satisfactory schedule to enable all crew to have the maximum time possible on the planet's surface, and it was happy crewmen and women who began to beam down.

Kirk and Spock were among the first, as per medical orders. McCoy was in the transporter room to see them off.

"Just you remember what I said, Jim! Plenty of reading, swimming, quiet country walks..."

"Yes, yes, Doctor! We remember."

McCoy wasn't distracted a bit. "And talking. *Real* talking. Plenty of rest, and forget the ship for once."

Spock interposed himself physically between an annoyed Kirk, resentful of so much fussing by the Enterprise's mother-hen, and the said mother-hen. "Doctor, I will ensure that the Captain follows your instructions to the letter, and I will return him to you - and to his ship - in one piece."

McCoy smiled sheepishly, and calmed down a little. "Yes... well... Okay then. Go on - you've wasted five minutes already. We'll see you in ten days."

Kirk's eyes softened and he waved a hand at McCoy as they finally dematerialised.

McCoy watched them disappear with an even bigger smile on his face, knowing that when they returned whatever was on Kirk's mind would be well and truly resolved, and all his demons would have been put to rest.

The planet was a beautiful one. Sparsely populated, and with a planet-wide weather control ensuring constant temperatures of 78 degrees, it was an ideal retreat for space-weary travellers. The bright orange sun shone down its greeting as they headed for the cottage, which was located amongst the lilac-topped trees.

There were flowers and wild life in profusion, and Spock

immediately began to study his surroundings, but he continued to keep a solicitous eye on the Captain. He was determined to do just as he had promised McCoy he would, and it was a certainty that Kirk would not get over-tired during *this* shore leave. Even if Kirk had any inclination to overdo things, Spock had no intention of allowing him to...

The cottage was just where Spock had described it to him, and they entered eagerly, dumping their belongings unceremoniously on the floor, even the Vulcan forgetting, for a moment, his habitual tidiness.

Kirk, looking around the room, walked towards the door, immediately announcing his intention to head up into the hills to do some exploring, obviously not wanting to waste any time. Spock walked quickly to stand beside him in the doorway, shaking his head firmly, and Kirk stopped in his tracks.

Angry, Kirk could not prevent an outburst from passing his lips. "Spock, I am *not* a child, and I will not be restricted in everything I do!"

Spock's voice was quiet, in stark contrast to Kirk's raised one. "I know." He pointed to the sky, to the rapidly sinking sun. "In this hemisphere of the planet, however, night falls rapidly, and you would find yourself in a strange environment, unable to see where you are going, if you left now. I suggest that it would be..." Spock turned towards Kirk, revealing a slight smile, "... logical... to wait till morning, and make an early start."

Kirk dropped the arm he'd raised towards Spock in objection, and managed to look sufficiently sheepish and embarrassed as he nodded in agreement and walked towards the fireplace, sinking into a chair. He laughed gently. "In other words, I'd get lost in the dark!"

Spock lowered his head so that Kirk wouldn't quite see the mischievous expression that he knew would be in the Vulcan's eyes. "If you would care to put it like that, Captain... yes."

Kirk giggled. "I could do with a coffee, anyway."

While it was brewing they unpacked and laid the fire, then sat contentedly before the roaring flames, which were designed to give out little or no heat, enjoying their drinks - Spock had decided to stick to fruit juice - and looking forward to an evening alone. By silent agreement they lit no lights, and night finally closed in. Instead they watched the stars through the large window as they sat in the firelight.

Always the stars. Spock knew it. No matter where they were, what they were doing, Kirk's eyes, his soul, would always be drawn to the sky and the stars. And, Spock admitted, he *could* understand how Kirk felt, for he too felt the same way - now. Since he had met Kirk, and become close to him, he was able to understand and appreciate so much more than he could before. And he could realise anew how much he had missed, before.

Before... What a cold memory the past turned out to be. Before Kirk meant before warmth, before understanding, before acceptance, before friendship, before... love. Yes, even that. For he also knew that he did consider Kirk to be the brother that he had never had, the soulmate for whom he had craved all his life, and that he did...love... the Human. And he felt protected in the knowledge that

Kirk would never turn away that special breed of love, for it was reciprocated in full measure. Spock couldn't quite understand how Kirk could feel so strongly about Spock himself, when he had received rejection from so many during his lifetime. They were feelings he had not expected to find in anyone but his mother - but he knew, now, that he could accept them, cherish and treasure them, and even rejoice in them. And he 'felt' now more than ever - especially after that last mission they had undergone - that if he lost those feelings, that man, he would not survive for very much longer. Without Kirk there would be a large void, not just in his life but in his very soul.

Kirk watched his Vulcan, deep in thought as the firelight caused his deep brown eyes to flicker and shine with an inner light of their own. He wondered absently what his own eyes looked like in the light from the friendly flames, but then quickly rejected the thought as irrelevant and concentrated instead on observing his friend.

What was going through that computer-like mind of his? It wasn't fair to ask, for Kirk had not, as yet, confided any of what was on *his* mind to Spock. Perhaps now was a good time to do just that. Perhaps if he talked, then so would Spock, even if not entirely directly, and they could help each other.

Making the decision was easy, carrying it out was not. He waited several more seconds before finally rising slowly to his feet, walking the few steps that separated them, and kneeling in front of the Vulcan.

It took a few seconds before Spock even noticed Kirk's presence, but when he finally did he met Kirk's gaze directly, enquiringly.

"Penny for them?" Kirk purposely kept his voice low, in tune with their mood.

"Why does it concern you so when I grow quiet and contemplative? It does not mean there is anything wrong."

Kirk smiled. "It's an emotional weakness of mine, I guess. Indulge me. Please."

"Of course." Spock noted that his friend had placed his hands firmly upon his own knees, obviously hesitant to instigate actual contact between them. Realising their mutual need for the reassurance of touch, he leaned forward himself, placing his hand upon Kirk's shoulder and squeezing gently. "There is nothing wrong, I assure you. I was... thinking."

"Yeh... We do both seem to have a lot on our minds lately, and it doesn't always have something to do with the ship, either. Perhaps it would help us both if we were to talk." He swallowed nervously, getting to his feet again. Spock's hand dropped back into his lap, and he rubbed his fingers absently together. "You do agree?"

"I do." Quietly.

"But it's hard to find the words."

Torn between wanting to leave Kirk alone to find a way to talk things through, and wanting to be at his side to give support, Spock finally rose to his feet and went to stand beside his Captain, close but not touching, his hands clasped tightly behind his back. But he

found it easier to study the reflection of Jim Kirk in the window next to which he now stood, rather than witness directly the obvious pain in the hazel eyes.

"It is unusual for you to find it difficult to speak with me. About anything."

Kirk clenched a fist in front of him, hoping that Spock wouldn't see it. He knew he had hurt Spock because of his hesitation to discuss things with him before now, and he regretted that more than anything.

"It's not the talking which is difficult, my friend. I find it easier to talk to you than anyone else. Ever. it's the subject that is difficult..."

The moon had risen as they stood there, and Kirk's face was upturned now, raised to meet it. He seemed to draw much-needed strength from the sight of it, for he suddenly began to talk in earnest, quietly but sincerely. His face was pain-filled.

"I've never had dreams like those before..."

"Is that why you've been avoiding sleep?"

"Yes."

"Did you forget I was there?" Spock's voice did not betray his pain, but Kirk turned to face him, sensing... something... and sought to reassure.

"Never! I knew you were there. You're always there for me. But I couldn't make you see what I was seeing. I couldn't do that to you. I had to have time to try and figure things out for myself first. Can't keep running to you for help *all* the time, can I? Much as I'd often like to..."

He laughed nervously, but the attempted joke was lost on the Vulcan. It was too close to the truth for *him*, too near to how he felt himself, and he began to appreciate truly just what Kirk had been going through, even though he still didn't know the content of the dreams.

Kirk continued, "I wouldn't be much of a starship commander if I did, would I?"

Spock hid a smile. "You have to be *you*. I understand. And I wouldn't want you any other way."

"Hmm..." Kirk, lost for words for a moment, looked to Spock for guidance. The Vulcan, gesturing to the large over-stuffed chairs they had left moments before, drew Kirk back to the fireside.

"Can you tell me about them now?" There was pleading in Spock's eyes, a request for trust, and a promise of patience and understanding. Just as always.

Kirk nodded, whispering, "I think so."

His eyes settled upon the flickering flames, not upon Spock, and strangely the Vulcan was grateful. Spock could see him replaying the dreams within his mind's eye, analysing them again, enduring their pain again, and he could see how much it was costing him. And Spock

began to fear the truth, knowing that Kirk had been unable to tell McCoy before they'd left the ship, or even admit it all to himself; yet he was now about to share his emotionally draining experiences with Spock. Did he have the strength to be able to help him as he should?

The Human rubbed one hand over his tired eyes, then lowered it to his lap, keeping the fingers tightly clenched. When he did eventually speak his voice was so quiet that it would have been almost impossible for anyone but a Vulcan to hear him.

"I've never really faced up to the thought of losing... everything... before. The reality was there, but I simply accepted it and carried on living. We all know what we're facing when we join the service, but do any of us really analyse it, contemplate... loss?"

Spock's voice was quiet also, in keeping with Kirk's present mood. "The loss of what, specifically, Jim?"

"Not just what." Kirk finally looked at Spock, and met his eyes. "Who."

And Spock finally knew. It was as he had feared. The dreams *were* a premonition. His had been as real as Kirk's, though he knew not, yet, whether the content was the same. But he also knew, now, that he could never tell Kirk the truth, could never admit that he too had been seeing what he feared to be their distant future...

In a brief moment of time he recalled the childhood tales of the Ancients that he had heard, and because of his youth had discounted. Tales of the K'Tal'yan, who had the gift of sight, who could warn of danger, who could tell of good and bad ahead of time. He recalled the memory, re-evaluated it, believed it, and feared for them both anew. But he knew he could never tell Kirk, knew that what he sensed would have to be buried deep again, and erasure of memory attempted. Spock swallowed deeply but said nothing, allowing Kirk the time he obviously still needed to voice his thoughts. The words finally came, and Spock leaned forward in his chair.

"This last mission obviously triggered it all off. It made me realise my vulnerability, and made me take note just how easy it would be to lose everything that means anything to me..." He too sat forward, folding his hands together, and being nearer the firelight his eyes looked more golden than ever.

Spock found it difficult, suddenly, to keep his eyes away from them and to concentrate on what was being said, re-enacted there before him; Kirk's admission of a vulnerability he had never acknowledged himself before, let alone admitted to anyone else. And Spock was also seeing, deep within those lion eyes, a reflection of his own dreams...

"Final acknowledgement is... terrifying, Spock."

The Vulcan could see by the bunched muscles in Kirk's back that his captain would have preferred to get up, to walk, to pace his concerns away, but that he was forcing himself to sit still, to face what had to be faced at last, instead of running as he had been doing over the past days. He admired him anew, knowing how much pain it was causing Kirk to relive those dreams.

"It's like a love affair, Spock. With *Her*." It was obvious

Kirk was referring to the Enterprise, but Spock found it difficult to understand the analogy. "Difficult to explain - or even admit to. And yet, if she... was damaged, badly... Or even... destroyed... It would be like losing a real person. A member of the family. A lover, even..."

"And you have dreamed of her being destroyed?"

Kirk again found what it took to meet Spock's eyes. "Perceptive as always, Spock." He took a deep, deep breath. "Yes. But it was more than a dream. Almost a... a premonition. It was so *real*!"

Spock shuddered, unnoticed, and remembered again his own dreams. So. It was true, then... But there was nothing anyone could do to change the tide of time; useless to mention it to his soulmate. Instead, he sought to reassure.

"Do not place more significance on this than necessary, Jim." His features softened a little. "To dream *is* healthy."

"Dammit, I know that! Do you think I'm a fool or something?" Kirk was angry, and that was just what Spock had intended, knowing that anger would help to dispell some of his fear, and he tried to stop a small smile from forming as Kirk's voice rose dramatically.

Kirk, realising immediately what he was doing, looked suddenly sheepish. "Sorry, Spock."

"Apologies are unnecessary between us, Jim. I can well see how disturbed you are by what has happened. I hope I can... help you. Put things into perspective."

"There's those three words again..." Kirk became reflective. "I keep seeing a... a kind of fireball. Looks like a shooting star, almost, and it's veering across a reddish sky... There's no indication that it's the ship, but I *know* it is. Something keeps telling me over and over that it's the end, that she's dead, and everything I've always known is over. Over and over..."

He grew silent, but then looked across at Spock again, sitting so erect before him. "But it's not *that* vision which bothered me so much. I guess I could have thrown that off in the end. After all, she isn't *real* ... I *know*, Spock. *I'm* okay, and I somehow know that the bridge crew is with me - Scott, Bones too... but the rest of the crew... and *you*..."

His voice became choked, and Kirk found himself without the ability to do anything except to look to Spock for help that he wasn't sure he could be given, and blink away unwanted tears.

Spock left his chair; this time *he* was the one attempting to convey support. "Jim... Jim, it was only a dream."

"Yes..." It was but a whisper. "But it could happen!"

Yes, it could, thought Spock. *And I could lose you...* But the Vulcan did not voice that thought. Instead he stated, "You said yourself that we all knew the dangers, the risks, when we joined the service. It is the life we lead - and none of us would want to change that."

"Maybe not. And yet I don't think I want that responsibility any more. I couldn't cope... with losing..."

Suddenly Kirk broke off and moved past Spock. The Vulcan, as if he'd been struck, remained totally unmoved and passive, but beneath the Vulcan facade he kept well erected, he was far from being controlled.

"Jim, you don't have to say the words. I know what you're trying to say." They could say it without the need of words, especially here, while alone. Just a look was enough. "I feel..." *The word does no harm, especially when it does describe what is torturing me, so...* "... the same."

Kirk turned back towards the Vulcan, questioning eyes trained upon him, seemingly surprised that Spock, again, had read him like a book. But deep down he was not surprised at all. For Spock to anticipate his feelings, thoughts, fears, was totally, completely normal, and Kirk felt comforted to realise that anew.

"Yes, my friend, you do, don't you? You already know of the loneliness, the emptiness, the complete desolation that life can bring. No need to explain, or ask for help. You know it all. And understand."

Spock nodded almost imperceptibly, almost as if he was afraid to actually admit it. "Yes, Jim. I have known all those things. But that was in the past." Kirk drew a little nearer. "Since being with you, sharing things with you, finding a home... with you, and the ship, I have ceased to feel alone and empty. But I *do* understand."

Kirk knew then that if he himself needed more than actual words to reassure him, then so also did Spock. And here it would not be wrong. Here they need not fear prying eyes of people; here they could be open with each other, honest; and Kirk felt a smile play upon his lips as he reached out a hand towards Spock, only to find it shaking. He closed his eyes for a moment, afraid that Spock would not accept the gesture, but within moments he opened them again at the touch of a more-than-Human-warm hand grasping his own. Spock closed his fingers tight, hiding the tremors which shook the Human's hand within his palm.

"Perhaps I am the only person who *would* understand, Jim. Your fears for the future are not unknown to me. Now I have found what I have searched for all my life..."

He could say no more, but looked deep within the hazel eyes, searching for his answers and finding them.

Kirk returned the look, trying to gauge what Spock was thinking and just how much he would accept from him, how much contact, how many words, in an attempt to help. And he, too, found his answers within the deep dark eyes.

He stepped closer and had folded Spock in an embrace before the Vulcan had a chance to move backwards out of reach. For a moment Spock stiffened, fighting the contact although not actually moving, then he relaxed and fell deeper into the embrace. Both men realised immediately that this was what they needed. They recalled memories of a time when Spock had thought Kirk dead, by his own hand. It had helped then, it helped now, even more than either consciously realised.

Kirk pulled back slightly, hesitant to witness Spock's reaction to this emotional display of his but also needing to see his face, to see what Spock could never tell in words. And he was glad. For that

one action had dispelled all the fears for his friend, just as it had for him. It had served to prove to them that their world was still real to them, always would be, and that they would always be there for each other. Even death could not part them. They were a part of the very fabric of the universe, just as the stars themselves; and even if the dreams *did* come true, even if it was proved that somehow they *were* both seeing their futures, it did not matter. They would face it all together, and they knew that even death could not destroy what they had, what they shared.

They broke contact, both turning towards the fire, watching the flickering flames as they marked the passage of time. Kirk broke the silence.

"We won't dream any more, Spock."

Spock's head turned quickly, his mind noting the 'we' in the sentence. Kirk knew, after all. He had guessed and had kept his peace...

Kirk smiled into the flames, knowing that they would be together to face what might come, that there was no more need for fear.

THE WINGS OF SPACE

If I could fly
I'd be your falcon.
I could soar o'erhead
and guide you.
I would be your eyes,
and lead you
as your sentry
and your guard.
I could fight for you,
win battles,
keep you safe,
my wings to shield you.
Free at last
to give the love
that to all others
I have barred.

Sheryl Peterson

ONE CHANCE IN A LIFETIME

by

Brenda Kelsey

Spock dutifully completed the rituals that should have ensured his easy entrance to the multi-levels of meditation. Instead he denied himself that soothing haven and shifted himself from the centre of the contemplation garden. He reseated himself against one of the pillars still heated from the brightness of the day, stretched out long legs in front of him, crossed them at the ankles and contemplated the toe of his boot. The boot, the one on his right foot, was comfortable, familiar, and matched the one he was wearing on his left foot. He wriggled his toes experimentally and watched the material flex and bend, dislodging tiny grains of sand.

He mused on that insignificant event.

Just like life. We go through our lives, which are comfortable and familiar, picking up grains of experience and, because we are Vulcans, we shed them again without ever really noticing that we acquired them in the first place. If it is not within the bounds of Tradition then it mustn't be contemplated; and yet, how did those Traditions come to exist? Someone must have thought about all the things that aren't permitted, for how else could the Traditions be able to forbid something as 'not to be known'?

He sighed at this paradox, knowing that it was one he had to solve by himself, remembering the lessons that had been awarded to him at the age of nine when, in childish innocence, he had asked the Teacher of Tradition that very question. He had learned *that* lesson thoroughly. Question what is, but never where another might learn of your doubts.

This meditation Garden was the perfect spot to use to examine those persistent doubts. He had discovered early on in his young life that he could maintain mental parity with his peer group while curtailing some of the meditation periods, or even missing some of them completely. He used the resulting free time to what he considered to be good effect. The freedom of thought thus permitted had gained him several original ideas for use in his studies. he had developed a small reputation for scientific brilliance, and his father had pronounced himself satisfied with his progress.

Satisfied.

The highest praise awarded by his father. It was not the Vulcan way to heap praise on anyone, to say that a job was well done or that a design was elegant. 'Satisfactory' was the ultimate in praise.

Wall, he had achieved *satisfactory* results in his studies. The premier place in the assessment table and offers from five scientific groups to join them in their researches; and this morning, the cause of his restless disquiet. A position in the Academy itself!

And what was even more disquieting, and the reason for his present state of introspection, was the fact that he was unsettled by

the offer.

He breathed deeply, crossed his left foot over his right and stared at that boot instead. He had been offered the very prize he had worked so hard to attain. He had to discover the reason why he was now hesitating. Why he did not now want what he had striven for.

He had bothered the problem for all of the day and had not discovered the answer. He wondered if the others in his study group had noticed his abstraction. Probably not. They never interested themselves in him.

He stiffened slightly, held that thought and examined it. The wording was imprecise. Re-examine. His scientific training came to his aid, lending detachment and distance.

They never included him in what was occurring; that did not mean that they were not interested in him or what he was doing. He chewed a lip, suddenly thoughtful. What if...?

He reviewed the day that had just occurred, concentrating on the people who had surrounded him. His premise was correct! Apart from here and now in the Meditation Garden, the only time he had been alone and unwatched was when he had been dealing with the necessary bodily functions. He reviewed the previous day. The same conclusion. He reviewed other days, chosen at random from his memory. It was always the same. Wherever he went, whatever he did, he was watched.

But all children were watched, he argued with himself, so that they could be taught how to react correctly... *No,* he warned himself, *be precise in your thoughts. How <u>not</u> to react correctly.* And the people who were watching him seemed to be his own peer group. And if they were watching him...

QUIS CUSTODIET IPSOS CUSTODES?

The phrase from the Terran book popped into his mind.

Very well. They watch me. I accept that. But why? For what reason? The obvious one is my mixed heritage. They watch me to see if I lapse from being Vulcan, to see if I do not 'not react' correctly. It must be more than that. That's always been done. I figured that out almost as soon as I realised that I was different, so why the sudden increase in interest, the more total coverage?

The answer came to him easily, more easily than he could have dared to believe; and was therefore all the more shocking.

Alien studies.

His peer group had been involved in studying alien cultures. One of them was the culture of Terra. He analysed the content of the course for the first time. 61% had been dedicated to his mother's culture. Surely that was too high a percentage? There were other races equally as important as the Terran - not as vigorous, true, but with a definite and meaningful input to the Federation - that had barely received 5% of the time. Had the amount of time dedicated been meant for a purpose other than purely educational? Had it been yet another subtle test of his hybrid nature?

He considered the possibilities with a clear dispassion which would have been considered satisfactory by his teachers, and decided

that it probably had been.

"And it seems that I passed that one too."

He said the words out loud then, continuing the introspective mood, considered his reasons for thinking that he had performed in a satisfactory manner. There was no evidence to support his conclusions, except for the fact that he had been offered five positions and a place at the Academy, the one thing he had always wanted.

He sat up and hugged his knees, rubbing his cheek idly on the smooth material of his trousers.

A position at the Academy was what he had been informed that he should want, so dutiful son that he was, he had accepted that instruction along with all the others.

What if...?

What if he had failed that last test, if indeed it had been a test? If he had, what better place to continue to study him than at the Academy, surrounded by trained scientists and researchers. And what then? More tests? More contamination? For that was surely how his family would see it, accepting the necessity for studying their hybrid offspring.

And if he were no longer behaving in the correct manner?

That thought stopped him in his mental tracks.

He wasn't.

He was using the period of time set aside for the purpose of meditation to resolve problems caused by his inability to accept wholeheartedly and without demure the Traditions and the Teaching of Surak. For if he had achieved acceptance, there would be no lingering doubts, only the calm assurance that what was, was meant to be so.

He had already failed his father.

He suspended conscious thought, pressed his face against his knees and attempted to accept the idea that he was an abject failure. The shadows had lengthened considerably before he relaxed again, straightening his legs, easing muscles cramped by the immobility of his pose. A measure of calm had returned to him, and he resumed the contemplation of his life with a new urgency.

He was a failure. The question was, had those studying him realised that fact too, or was the position at the Academy the reward that it had at first seemed to be?

The more he thought about it, the more the latter seemed to be the most likely possibility. The Academy was large. Placed in such an environment he would be free to begin relationships outside his peers, and he strongly doubted that the entire Academy staff would have been recruited to observe his behaviour. No, if he had been discovered he would have been offered only one position, seemingly a very good one, and those people working with him would have been his keepers.

He winced at that thought, but yes, 'keepers' would be

accurate. They would treat him as if he were an experiment. He would be kept, stimuli of varying types would be applied and his behaviour noted and examined. Exactly in the same manner as had been done for as long as he could remember. He did not feel any resentment or anger at that thought. It simply *was*, an accepted part of his life-style.

The problem he now faced was what he should do. He was being urged to accept the Academy offer. It was what his father wanted him to do; but if he did accept, how long would his Vulcan facade last? He now realised that his behaviour was not normal, his concentration less than absolute. It would be noted by someone. There was so infinitely many things that he could fail in if he went to the Academy, and so very many people there to notice the inevitable lapses from Vulcan normality. He had survived until now because he had been supremely unaware of them. Now he was not. He would not survive a prolonged period at the Academy, and yet he could not accept any of the other offers. No-one ever refused the Academy in favour of a less prestigious post. That simply was not logical.

Catch 22.

His mind supplied another Terran paradox.

Damned if he did and damned if he didn't.

He leaned back and directed his gaze upwards to the portion of the sky where Sol gleamed palely. Could he go to Earth? What reason could he give? How could he explain to Sarek?

Could he explain to Sarek? Ask for his help to conceal the undeniable truth? What would Sarek say?

The hopelessness that he had been trying to contain swelled up again and finally escaped from his control.

The truth will out.

Yet another Terran saying, and how accurate. He now realised that he had known of his failure for a long time. His disquiet had been solely caused by his regard for his father, concern about how it would affect *him.*

Having successfully concealed his disability from his teachers he couldn't bear to bring shame to his father by being revealed as a Human by the Academy staff, or by anyone else. Could he tell Sarek himself, and ask for his help? What would Sarek do? Spock was his heir. If he told Sarek then the Traditions would admit no other course than for Sarek to reveal publicly his son's inability to follow Surak's Teachings.

His problem therefore seemed to be not whether or not to go to the Academy, but the far more important one of trying to shield Sarek from the consequences of his son's deficiencies.

It was obvious that if he stayed on Vulcan he would be discovered, so he'd have to leave. The destination had to be decided on; and employment, for once he left there would be no support from the Family, and no returning. How could he earn a living? What skills did he have which he could sell? It had to be something which would not bring additional shame to Sarek, an honourable career in which he could continue to pretence of being Vulcan.

This brought even more seemingly insoluble conundrums to Spock's now frantic mind. How did one obtain employment? How much credit was required to purchase simple necessary items like food? How did one find shelter in a strange place, somewhere to sleep? Such things had never been absent from his life, provided for him by the family. Now he would have to provide them for himself, and he didn't have the vaguest idea how. He knew so much, but not about the simple, everyday things. Was this too planned?

For the first time in his controlled, neatly organised, carefully nurtured existence he felt panic begin to stir inside him. Then the answer to all the problems literally passed before his eyes. The tiny glowing shape of a Starship in orbit, arcing across the sky.

Starfleet!

He heard again Sarek's views on the semi-military organisation which provided both protection and exploration services to the Federation. He had been almost scathing in his condemnation of the behaviour of some of the Starfleet personnel. If Spock announced that he intended to join Starfleet, moreover to attend the training courses on Earth instead of Vulcan, and refused to discuss that decision with his father, Sarek might even be provoked into disowning him.

He blinked hard, refusing to yield to the destructive idea that Sarek would help him. Sarek was a Traditionalist, and as such his behaviour could be predicted. It was far better for Sarek to disown him than to know the terrible shame which would be experiences if the truth ever did become known.

His mind nipped from point to point, analysing his plans and conclusions. He could find no fault in any phase of his plans, although much later he frequently puzzled at the fact that it never once occurred to him that Starfleet might reject his application.

He meditated on the possibilities of his survival. Although greatly improved from the carnage of the earliest days of deep space exploration the rate at which Starfleet personnel died while on active duty was high. 36% of deep space duty crew did not return from their first five-year tour. he rate climbed to 68% of those who attempted two tours. That thought did not dissuade him, in fact he welcomed the idea. He had no death wish, but the idea that he might not survive to be fully adult was something of a comfort. He would not be drawn to T'Pring, and she would get the mate she truly deserved.

And... Amanda?

He consciously blocked that avenue of thought and forced himself into a first-level meditation trance, free-wheeling his *mind* over the lessons of the previous year, trying to discover how badly he had succumbed to the contaminating Terran influences, determined to eradicate them from his mind.

He was pondering on a poem, thought also to be a song, although only the lyrics had survived, when he was drawn from the trance by the sound of footsteps approaching the Garden.

He froze in the deep shadows and waited for the intruder to enter the Garden, still not quite wanting to believe that anyone would knowingly intrude into this, the most private of all places,

while the ancient indicators at the entrance proclaimed that it was in use.

He watched in total misery as Stonn walked quietly into the centre of the Garden, stood at the Meditation Point and looked into the flame of the fire-shrine. As he turned to leave, Spock spoke.

"I give thee greetings, Cousin."

Stonn whirled, trying to pinpoint him in the darkness.

"Why are you not meditating?" demanded Stonn briskly.

Spock rose and faced him in the flickering light. The uneven flame highlighted his still rough and pitted skin, stretched tight over a bony frame that seemed to be two sizes too large for him, the dull lank hair and the thick bushy eyebrows. All physical features of late childhood long since outgrown by his peers, and by Stonn. Spock found that he almost envied him those outward symbols of normality. No matter, he would use them as a reminder of how different he was, and thus the reason for his decision to leave, when he was far away.

"I have been waiting for you, Stonn."

"Why?" demanded the Vulcan.

"To inform you that if your need to use the Meditation Garden should again prove to be so urgent, you have only to ask the Teachers to have alternative arrangements made for you. I find that your constant intrusions into my privacy are becoming... disquieting, and if they should continue I will make representation to the Family Council for you to be examined on this. I find that your behaviour in these matters is somewhat less than... satisfactory."

Stonn gazed at him in stupified silence, astonished that his compliant cousin could address him in this forceful manner; then Spock bowed, oh-so-slightly, and left the Garden, walking surely along the pathway which was illuminated by the unfettered glory of the star-filled night sky of Vulcan.

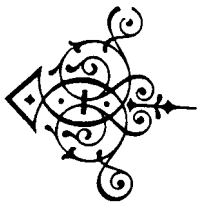
I wonder? It's frightening.
Leaving now, is that the right thing?
I wonder? It scares me.

But who the hell am I?
If I don't even try?
I'm looking forward,
I know I'll be strong.

One chance in a lifetime.
Yes I will take it.
It can't be wrong.

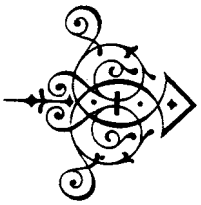
(DEPARTURE : ABBA)

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND



by

Elaine Sheard



Dr. McCoy sat back in the seat of the shuttlecraft, gave a sigh, and said, "Amnalos is not a bad little planet, and the party to mark the coming-of-age of the Prince was really enjoyable, but I'll be glad to get out of this monkey suit and get back to the Enterprise."

"You didn't seem so eager to leave that tall blonde you were showing the night sky," his Captain observed with a smile.

"Quite something, wasn't she?" the doctor replied with a grin. "But I guess I know when it's time to go home. Talking of home, Spock here must have spent at least an hour discussing something with the Vulcan Ambassador's daughter. Even a Vulcan must have noticed that she was a very pretty girl."

The Vulcan First officer, who was piloting the ship, was in no way embarrassed by this. He answered in his usual precise manner. "T'Sella finds some of the work done by the Enterprise science department of interest. I consider it my duty to be of assistance to any fellow scientist; their race or gender is immaterial."

"Oh, come on, Spock!" the doctor countered. "Don't tell me you didn't notice what she looked like."

"I noted T'Sella's physical appearance, but considered her obvious intelligence of more relevance."

Captain Kirk laughed at this. "Whatever the merits of your respective companions, it's time to get back to the Enterprise and get some work done."

Spock replied, "Of course, Captain, though it may be some time before that can be accomplished, as the navigational difficulties in this area are even more pronounced than usual."

"You're speaking of what is said to be one of the wonders of the galaxy, Spock," the doctor commented.

"Perhaps," Spock acknowledged, "but in order to avoid the effects of the ion disturbances which cause this so-called wonder, our course must be somewhat convoluted."

"Trouble, Spock?" his Captain asked.

"It may well be, sir. The instruments are being adversely affected and the shuttle is not answering to the helm."

Indeed, as he spoke the shuttlecraft's flight got decidedly worse. The Vulcan wrestled with the controls, but things did not improve. Although all three men were now fastened in their seats this did not prevent their being badly shaken by the vehicle's erratic *motion*.

After a time things improved somewhat, and Captain Kirk turned to his First Officer. "Any idea where we are, Spock?"

"At the moment no, Captain. However, the instruments are returning to normal - I should therefore be able to answer your question soon."

The doctor asked, "Does that mean you've managed to get us lost, Spock?"

Spock did not answer, and it was Captain Kirk who said, "Not now, Bones. There's not much anyone can do until the navigational computer comes on line."

The doctor was apologetic. "Sorry, Jim, Spock. I guess it's the heat getting to me. It's certainly got hot in here."

Spock was all business. "Yes, the temperature has risen considerably. There is also evidence of outside friction, though I am at a loss as to its cause."

For once the doctor remained silent. Things became worse, the craft's uneven movements increasing. The First Officer suddenly appeared to reach a decision and began rapidly changing the settings of the controls. As he did so he addressed the others.

"The readings and actions of the shuttlecraft indicate that we are approaching an apparently unknown planetary body, and that our angle of descent is too severe. I am trying to correct this, but cannot say how successful I shall be."

No-one answered, indeed they were hardly able to do so. The craft's speed and temperature increased. The landing, when it came, was very rough, and when at last the craft came to rest it was badly battered, but still intact. The same could just be said of the passengers.

Dr. McCoy was the first to speak, saying in a shaky voice, "That was quite a landing. Is everyone all right?" He then got up from his seat and went to look at the others.

The Captain answered ruefully, "If you don't count bruises and shaking hands, I'm unhurt. What about you, Spock?"

The First Officer, already on his feet, said, "I am uninjured, Captain."

"What about the shuttle, Spock? Is there any chance it will lift off from here?"

"I can tell you that when I have checked the engines. I suggest in the meantime we determine if the air outside is breathable."

"I'll see to that," the doctor volunteered. He then looked carefully at the appropriate instruments and verified his findings on a tricorder. Spock did some similar careful checking, and they then both returned to the Captain, who was sorting survival equipment.

Spock spoke first. "The engines are damaged beyond repair, and since I had to use our stored water to cool the shuttle as we descended, we have only the emergency supply left." He imparted this litany of doom in his usual expressionless voice.

When the doctor spoke, however, he didn't trouble to hide his feelings. "Why is it, Spock, that everything sounds even worse when you say it? I at least have better news. The air outside is breathable. Since the remaining water will last only 48 hours, and most of the food is dehydrated, I think it might be a good time to take a look outside."

The Captain agreed. "You could be right, and there's no time like the present." He went to the door and opened it.

The scene it revealed was uninspiring, just dust and rock, with a thick haze overhead. The Captain and First Officer took a walk round the immediate area. When they returned the Captain said,

"There doesn't seem to be any water in this vicinity, and as what we can see of the sun has passed its zenith, the best plan would be to get a good rest and set out fresh in the morning."

That evening they managed to have a good meal without using too much water, and then they settled down for the night. The darkness lasted six standard hours. After a somewhat uneasy night, mostly because of a fine set of bruises, the three men were relieved to pack up their equipment and set out in search of water and more information about their - they hoped - temporary home.

The First Officer, equipped with a tricorder and carrying a lightweight tent, took the lead. Dr. McCoy came next with medical supplies and their remaining water. Captain Kirk brought up the rear with the food and a rope. Each man had a communicator and phaser.

The haze was still with them giving a purple tint to their surroundings. It was hot, and the air was rather thin. They walked for some hours, descending slowly. The terrain gradually changed, with small bushes and shrubs appearing.

The day lasted for about ten standard hours, but by nightfall they had still not found water. They pitched their tent beside a small clump of bushes, and after a meal of their small supply of undehydrated food and a drink of water, the two Humans got ready for sleep while Spock took the first watch.

Just before dawn, while the Captain was standing his watch, he suddenly felt a knife at his throat and a voice whispered in strangely-accented but quite understandable English,

"Make a sound and it will be your last!"

The Captain kept still until he heard the sound of fighting coming from the tent, then he tried to kick his assailant; he was rewarded with a blow to the head, and knew no more.

He recovered consciousness to find himself bound hand and foot inside what appeared to be a large moving covered wagon.

"Are you okay, Jim?" he heard the doctor ask.

The Captain groaned. "Yes, I'll live - I think. Where's Spock?" He turned his head as he spoke, and by the faint light coming through the overhead canvas saw the doctor and Spock tied as

he was. The Vulcan was obviously unconscious.

The Captain asked in a worried voice, "Is Spock going to be all right?" When the doctor nodded he continued, "What happened after I left you?"

"Two natives entered the tent and attacked us. Spock dealt with them, but unfortunately there were a dozen more outside."

"I didn't hear one of them," the Captain said in self-disgust.

"Just as well, Jim. There were at least thirty of them. We didn't stand a chance."

"That's no excuse, and you know it."

As he spoke there was a small sound from Spock. The Captain was all concern. "Can you hear me, Spock? How badly are you hurt?"

"I am functional, Captain," was the calm reply.

"No thanks to me," the Captain continued bitterly.

"There were too many to defeat without violating the Prime Directive, Jim," was the soft reply, "and resisting only made some interesting additions to my bruises."

"I can imagine." Captain Kirk put self-recrimination behind him and went on in quite a different tone, "Now, Bones, what can you tell us about our captors?"

The doctor matched his tone and answered briskly, "I don't have any medical equipment, Jim, but they appear humanoid to me. As they speak a kind of English they probably came from Earth originally. Their leader, Alara by name, informs me they are nomadic traders, going from city to city. One of their main trade goods is slaves - to which we are a welcome addition."

"Oh, that's just charming!" was all the Captain could think to say.

After a time the wagon stopped and a man entered, tying the flap of the cover back. In the added daylight the men from the Enterprise saw a humanoid of average height, with a dark olive skin, dark hair and a set of rather bad teeth, which he flashed at them as he said,

"Well, I see that our sleepers are awake. That's good, as we don't want to overburden the animals, so you will be able to enjoy a nice walk."

Captain Kirk was not amused and asked angrily, "Who do you think you are, attacking strangers and kidnapping them?"

The man replied, still smiling, "I am a registered trader with permission to travel these parts. I don't think, however, that you have similar permission."

"No," admitted the Captain. "We are law-abiding men who have merely lost our way."

"That's your bad luck and our good," was the reply. "The people round here don't like strangers, so you are fair game. Has your friend told you what delights await you?"

It was Spock who answered. "If you are referring to your intention to sell our persons for profit, then yes, he has."

"The others certainly, but I don't know about you. They are a superstitious lot around here - they might not like the look of you."

Spock raised an eyebrow at this but said nothing as the other man went on, "You're the best fighter I've ever come across, though that's hardly the most suitable recommendation for a slave. Still, I might find a buyer for you."

The three Starfleet officers were at the back of a file of men all with their hands tied together and then tied in a long line. The dry landscape had given way to a somewhat marshy area which made the going rather muddy. There was at least no shortage of water, though their only meal had been some very dry bread.

At last night began to fall. The column stopped and the prisoners were allowed to rest, just being fastened by a long chain. The evening meal was a surprisingly good stew. The Humans and the Vulcan exchanged meat and vegetables without comment.

The doctor, however, couldn't manage to eat his supper, saying, "I don't know about you two, but I'm just too tired to eat." Before the others could answer he lay down and instantly fell asleep.

The Captain was still feeling slightly guilty, and said uneasily, "This is hard on the doctor. Let's hope he's feeling better by morning."

Yet the next day the doctor was obviously not just tired, but ill. When Alara came to retie his prisoners he looked at the doctor and said with only half a smile,

"Your friend seems to have a fever. The inhabitants of Relem, the next city we visit, won't admit anyone who is ill, or their companions."

It was Spock who answered, saying in a matter-of-fact voice, "In that case, since you acquired us without cost, it might be as well to release us."

Alara grinned. "There's no need for that. The gate keeper at Relem takes my ill slaves off my hands at cut price. Some get better, some die, but everyone makes a profit."

Captain Kirk suggested, "If you return our equipment we may be able to help our friend."

"You a doctor, then?"

"No, but with the help of our equipment I might not need to be."

"Your belongings were given to the women, as is our custom, and I'm sure they'll not want to give them up. When Javel the gate keeper is your owner he will take care of him."

For most of the day the doctor was unconscious, so he travelled in the wagon while the other two Enterprise men walked behind.

Just before dusk they reached a walled city of some size.

Beside the medieval gateway was a small cottage with a large outhouse. They were met by a man in early middle age. He was small, and dressed in a shabby jerkin and trousers. While the others waited Alara entered into a whispered conversation with this individual, then the man came over and examined the three with care. A bargain had obviously been struck as the Captain and First Officer were instructed to carry the doctor to the outhouse, where there was a barred room with four primitive bunks.

"In here," the gate keeper said. After the two men had obeyed he locked the door behind them and looked at them through the open bars, not without sympathy. He then said, "The doctors don't treat slaves, of course, but I know a Bronain healer who's very good. Saw my wife through the birth of our son, didn't he, when we'd given up on ever having a living child."

Captain Kirk was making the best of things and spoke reasonably. "We'd be very grateful if he can help our friend, but he had better hurry, as he's getting worse."

"I've sent the boy for him. In the meantime I'll bring you some water and you can try to keep him cool."

"Thank you," was all the Captain said. After Javel had left he went over to the doctor and felt his head. "He's still very hot," he said worriedly.

Spock was reassuring. "The healer may be able to help. After all, it is in Javel's interest to see that he gets well."

Javel returned with the water, and the Captain bathed the doctor with it. Time passed, but at last footsteps could be heard and two men entered the room. Spock merely expressed the surprise he must have felt by a raised eyebrow, but the younger of the two visitors showed open astonishment, as well he might, for he was a vulcanoid. He was a tall slim youth with a grave but open countenance; he was dressed like Javel, but of a somewhat smarter appearance.

When he spoke he showed a resect not usually given to a slave. "I'm sorry to stare, sir, but as you see we are not dissimilar in physical type. You are the first person I have met who looks anything like myself."

Spock replied coolly, "That is an adequate reason."

The young man went on, "Tell me, are you a member of a viable society, or are you - as I am - one among many who are physically different?"

"My land is peopled by those who look as you and I do, though there are some differences, as one of my people would not indulge in personal questions when they could help someone in need. You *are* the healer here to tend my companion, I take it?"

The young man flushed and Captain Kirk said quickly, "I can understand your curiosity - it probably made you forget everything else for a while."

"Yes, it did, though I am not usually so remiss."

With this the young man went over to the bunk and looked at the doctor. He didn't look at Spock again, but questioned Kirk closely about the fever. He then said in a business-like manner, "This looks

like swamp fever to me, though without finding the bite of the insect that causes it I cannot be positive. However, I can treat the symptoms. Your friend appears strong and well-fed, so he has a chance of recovery."

He then gave the doctor water and a dark medicine by means of a tube to the stomach. Next, he instructed, "Keep his temperature down - the greatest danger is dehydration. I will get Javel to bring you some water. Try not to worry - he has an excellent chance of recovery."

Captain Kirk was relieved. "We are very grateful, Healer."

"There is no need to be. I am not a doctor, but one who is skilled in the use of herbs. I come from Brone, a country two days away from here. There is no slavery there, so we are glad to help those who find themselves here. I have other patients and cannot stay, but I will return when I can." With a small nod he then turned and left.

The Captain and Mr. Spock took turns through the night following the healer's instructions. By morning the doctor seemed much cooler, though he had still not regained consciousness.

Just after dawn the healer returned. He was pleased with McCoy's condition, saying, "I shall give your friend another dose of medicine, and then stay until he recovers consciousness."

Captain Kirk said, "We are in your debt, Healer. I'm sorry, I don't even know your name."

"My name is Landar."

"Well, Landar, I'm James Kirk, this is Spock, and our ill friend is Dr. McCoy. While we wait will you tell us how you came to Brone if you know nothing of your family?"

"I understand your interest, James," was the reply; and, still not looking at Spock, he went on in an even voice, "I was found wandering in the hills, as a child of about four or five, by a shepherd whose family took care of me. I remember nothing of this, but she whom I have always regarded as my mother tells me my clothing was much torn and I was scratched and exhausted. I could not speak, nor answer when spoken to. Veral, my mother, cared for me as she would a baby. In time I learned to speak and became part of the family. Veral is a healer of much distinction, and as Carrel her son showed no interest I learned her art, and now go round the neighbouring countries as she did when younger."

Kirk commented, "It would appear that you were part of a family tragedy."

"Very likely, although all enquiries by Veral proved fruitless, so it is possible that I was the only survivor of some accident. The only reminder of that time is this necklace I was wearing when I was found." At this he touched a chain he had round his neck.

Spock showed interest. "If you have no objection, it might prove useful if I could examine that."

Without a word Landar removed the chain and handed it to Spock,

who, after looking at it carefully, held it so that Kirk could see it. The Captain had no difficulty in recognising an IDIC at the end of the chain.

Spock turned to Landar, saying almost kindly, "This symbol represents a concept of my people. There is no doubt, therefore, that your origins are with them."

Landar took the chain and put it back in silence. He then said almost reluctantly, "I would be glad to know of your people and your country, yet my home and family are here."

"I understand that, Landar. Tell me, how many years is it since all this happened?"

"It is eighteen years and three months since my brother found me."

"How many days are there in your year?"

Landar looked surprised at this, but answered readily enough. "Three hundred and twenty; but surely that is the same everywhere?"

Spock answered calmly, "It was possible that you measured your years differently. You should know that even if you were five when found you are, by our custom, under age. You must learn something of my peoples' ways and then make an informed decision on whether it would be better to leave with us, should we have a chance to do so."

They were interrupted by a sound from the bunk as Dr. McCoy regained consciousness. Landar immediately went over to examine him. The doctor opened his eyes and said weakly,

"Oh no, not another Vulcan! Tell me it's all a bad dream."

Landar answered seriously, "You have been ill with a fever, Doctor, and it is quite possible that your thoughts have been somewhat confused."

Captain Kirk came from behind Landar and said reassuringly, "It's all right, Bones, Landar here is the local healer, and he doesn't at the moment know what a Vulcan is."

"Why? Isn't Spock here?"

Spock stepped into his line of vision and answered softly, "Yes, Doctor, I am."

The doctor relaxed when he saw him and asked, "Have I been ill?"

The Captain answered, "Yes, you were unconscious for 36 hours, but the healer here has brought your temperature down and you should soon be well."

It was now Landar's turn to reassure the doctor. "You need sleep, but your recovery is only a matter of time."

The doctor said, "I don't know what's going on, but I'm too tired to care." With that he turned over and was instantly fast asleep.

Landar addressed the Captain. "When he wakes he will be weak but there is no longer cause for alarm."

Captain Kirk smiled warmly. "You probably saved his life, Landar, and I must thank you."

"Thanks are not necessary, Captain, for this is my work. To see your friend recover is thanks enough. I must go now, but I will return later in the day." With that he nodded to Spock and left.

It was in the early evening that Landar returned. He brought with him a tray on which was soup and even some fruit. He put the tray down, and after looking carefully at his patient said, "I see the doctor is still sleeping peacefully. Javel's wife Zoe has sent food, and when your companion wakes she will warm some soup for him."

Kirk smiled at him. "Thank you, Landar."

"It is Zoe you should thank. She is a good woman. Indeed, Javel is not a bad man, even though he is not averse to making a profit from slaves."

Kirk asked curiously, "You say there is no slavery in your country?"

"No, there is not, I am glad to say. I try not to judge others, but I must admit that in this case it is not easy."

Spock commented, "My people have a philosophy which has great respect for another's way of life, yet slavery is repugnant to us and has not been practiced for many hundreds of years."

"I am relieved to hear this. The gatekeeper and his wife seem to think that they owe me a debt. As Javel knows I will not own slaves he has offered to release Mr. Spock without cost because of our physical resemblance - though it must be admitted that the fact he will find no buyer for him here could have something to do with it. He only asks that we give our word that we would not help your friends to escape."

Spock answered coldly, "I shall stay with my companions and share their fate."

Captain Kirk wasn't having this. "No, Spock. It's better that at least one of us is free. We can't do anything until Bones is stronger anyway."

Landar was apologetic. "Javel is not willing to feed you, Mr. Spock, as he can see no profit in it. He has, however, given me four weeks, until the next sale of slaves, to make a private purchase of your companions. He is asking 60 fenlings, a fair price. It is quite a substantial amount, but one we might be able to find."

Spock asked almost eagerly, "I can, perhaps, find paid employment?"

"You will only be accepted if you work with me. There is money to be made in the traders' camp, and as the local tooth-puller has broken his arm there might be work in that field."

Kirk asked urgently, "You mean the same traders as brought us here?"

"Yes. Their camp is outside the north gate of the city."

Captain Kirk turned to Spock. "Our things, Spock. Perhaps it may be possible to get them back."

"Indeed, Captain. An interesting thought."

Landar asked, "The traders have something of yours which you value?"

It was Captain Kirk who answered. "Yes - among other things, Dr. McCoy's medical equipment. With it even a non-medical man could make a discreet contribution to your art."

Spock, however, was doubtful. "That could present an ethical dilema, sir."

Captain Kirk was firm. "You have my permission to take Landar into your confidence not just about his future biological problems but also about our origins. I leave it to your judgement."

"I appreciate that, Captain," Spock replied blandly.

"I thought you might," his Captain replied with a grin.

So it was that next day Mr. Spock and Landar made their way towards the traders' camp. There, almost inevitably, they were met by Alara, complete with his large smile. He said jokingly,

"Well, Landar, I see you have a new assistant."

"Not an assistant, Alara, but someone with whom I have a mutual interest. I wish to offer my services in return for the former property of Mr.Spock and his companions."

"As I explained to the one called Captain, these things now belong to our women."

"I accept that, Alara. However, the last time I was here your wife asked me to aid your son. I could not do so at the time, but have now thought of a way in which I may be able to help him."

Just for a moment Alara's smile faltered. "Wait here. I will fetch my wife." With that he hurried away.

Spock turned to Landar and said gravely, "I trust, Landar, that your wish to help us has not made you change a medical judgement?"

"No, Mr. Spock. Though I accept all you have told me both of Vulcan and the Federation, I still regard my first concern to be for my patients. Alara's son Revel suffers from an opaque skin over his eyes which makes him blind. It should in theory be easy to remove. Though use of the knife is forbidden in the city, since we are outside the walls that does not apply here."

"This operation, and its high rate of success, is known to me. I would not let you attempt it, however, if it was not for the fact that uninformed use of our equipment could present a much greater danger than any to the boy, or to you."

"How is that?"

"Among it are weapons of great power. We use them for defence,

but in other hands they could be used with fatal results."

"In that case it would appear that neither of us has much choice in this matter."

Alara returned followed by a young woman with long dark hair and flashing eyes. She carried a large beaded bag in one hand and held a child of about five or six by the other. She spoke to Landar in a half-challenging voice.

"So, Healer, you now think you can help my son?"

The reply was kind but firm. "It will mean the knife, Rella, but it will give him the chance of sight. Has Alara spoken of payment?"

Without a word Rella tipped the bag she was carrying upside down, and out fell all the missing equipment.

On seeing this Spock asked, "Madam, may I examine these things?"

She did not speak, but gestured permission. Spock quickly bent down and checked the things, particularly the phasers, making sure they were still in the non-firing position. He then picked up the medical equipment, saying, "Rella, if you would let us make use of this it will greatly aid your child."

Rella turned to Landar. "There is no danger in this?"

"I cannot guarantee that, but with the help of Spock and his equipment the danger is small."

Rella gathered up the rest of the things, but left the medical equipment with Spock. She then said, "Very well, I will give you all these things when the child can see, and you can keep the little case for the moment."

Landar spoke softly to her. "You must trust us, Rella. Take us somewhere private and leave the boy with us."

It was Alara who answered. "If harm comes to our son I will hold you responsible."

"I accept that, Alara. Let us begin at once - there is no reason for delay."

Soon they were in a small tent at the back of the camp, Revel still clinging to his mother's hand. She spoke to the child gently.

"Revel, you remember Landar, he with the kind voice and caring hands. You will stay with him and he will help you to see."

With this she led him to a small bed at the rear of the tent. Landar went over to him, and taking his hands gently reassured him.

The boy said, "I am not afraid, Mother; I know Landar will take care of me."

Alara gave Landar a hard look. "He had better," was all he said, however. Then he took Rella's arm and walked with her from the tent.

As soon as they had gone Spock opened the medical kit, but

Landar said, "I am sure your medical equipment can be of great use, but first I shall help Revel to sleep." He then turned to the child and said softly, "I will touch you with my hands and you will fall asleep. When you wake all will be over." With that he put his hands to Revel's head, and after a few moments the boy was fast asleep.

Spock observed this with interest. "A Vulcan healer can induce sleep, but only after much training. How did you become aware of this ability?"

"It was a form of self-protection. I found when I touched those I was treating I shared their pain. I tried to prevent this, and found as I did so that I could deaden their pain and also induce sleep."

"You are obviously a natural healer. Will the child now feel nothing during the operation?"

"No, he will remain asleep if the removal of one layer of skin is all that is necessary."

Landar then produced a knife, but Spock interrupted him, saying, "With this equipment a knife is not needed." He then showed Landar a laser scalpel, and after a few instructions and a little practice allowed him to use it.

The operation was quickly completed, and Landar then said, "As far as I can tell the eyes are now clear."

Spock made a final examination with the medical scanner and nodded. "Though I am not a doctor my readings confirm that."

"In that case I will fetch Alara and his wife."

Rella rushed over to the bed where Revel was just waking. The child opened his eyes, gave a small cry, and quickly closed them again. He then reached out and touched his mother's face. He slowly removed his hands and re-opened his eyes, saying in wonder, "Mother, is this seeing? I can touch your face without using my hands."

Tears ran down Rella's face as she answered, "Yes, my son, that is seeing."

Alara, standing by the door of the tent, smiled even wider than usual, then he went over to the bed and hugged his wife and son.

It was some 15 minutes before Alara joined Spock and Landar, who had waited outside the tent. He handed Landar the beaded bag, saying, "Here is your payment, Healer. You have more than earned it. I now know how Javel feels towards you. I am in your debt."

"The fee is more than fair, Alara. I am glad that your son can see."

It was three weeks later that Mr. Spock made one of his periodic visits to his colleagues, who were still in Javel's custody. Dr. McCoy, much recovered, asked him,

"Well, Spock, how do you like the medical profession?"

"Landar has been concentrating more on dentistry. Between us we

have removed or repaired the teeth of almost everyone in need for miles around."

Captain Kirk was intrigued. "How do you manage it all, anyway?"

"We set up a tent, and between Landar's natural ability as a healer and my somewhat faltering use of the medical equipment, we manage quite well."

"How about the financial side?"

"Dentistry in this instance is not well paid, but sheer numbers should enable us to secure your release in about a week's time."

"That's good to hear, but tell me, how are the natives taking this new venture in dentistry?"

"It cannot but be an improvement on what they are used to, Captain. We have had no complaints."

Dr. McCoy said teasingly, "A whole new career for you, perhaps, Spock."

"Hardly. It merely convinces me that my talents lie with inanimate objects."

"Not much of a bedside manner I take it, Spock?"

"It would appear not," was the calm reply.

So it was that when a week later Landar left the city to return home in his healer's cart he was accompanied by the three Enterprise men. This journey, unlike their earlier one, was very pleasant. It was now summer and the days were warm. Mr. Spock's thoughts, however, were elsewhere.

"If we could perhaps search the area where Landar was found as a child with the tricorder, we would have an excellent chance of finding the craft in which he must have travelled to reach this planet."

Captain Kirk was doubtful. "Would there be any point? It could well have been badly damaged."

"Since Landar suffered no major injury the vehicle must have landed safely."

Dr. McCoy wasn't so sure. "You can't tell me that a five-year-old Vulcan child would have been wandering about on its own unless its parents, or whatever, were badly injured. We managed to walk *away* from the shuttle, but you say it'll never fly again."

Captain Kirk was having second thoughts. "If Spock thinks it's worth a try then so do I. What do you think, Landar?"

Landar, who had followed this conversation with interest, replied, "My brother can tell you where he first found me. But he and the other shepherds know the area well, and they have never discovered anything unusual."

Captain Kirk said, "With our equipment we'll find it if it's

there."

The cart, pulled by animals the local equivalent of horses, made good progress. It was early afternoon of the second day after a night spent under the purple sky that they came to a crossroads. Landar stopped the cart and jumped down. He frowned as he examined a small flag which he had taken from the side of one of the roads. He turned to the others, saying,

"My mother arranges for this sign to be placed here to tell me that I am urgently needed in the indicated direction. Yet why the flag, as that is the road I take on my way home? Not only that, the flag appears to be upside down."

Spock replied thoughtfully, "That would perhaps be to tell you that she does not want you to go home, Landar."

"I agree. It would be wiser, I think, to leave the road and go over the hills to where my brother has his winter hut. He will surely contact me there."

Landar drove the cart to a small clearing about 100 yards down the road. Here he unhitched the animals and then said to the others,

"It is a walk of several miles on a hill path. The going can get a little rough at times." He looked doubtfully at the doctor as he went on, "Perhaps it would be better if I went alone."

Captain Kirk was firm. "No, Landar, we'll all go. We can help the doctor if necessary."

The doctor was indignant. "I'm not an invalid, you know. It's just the day for a nice walk."

So it was agreed. The going was easy at first, but as time went on the doctor had silently to accept help. It was late afternoon when they arrived at last at a small wooden hut. Landar asked the others to wait while he went inside.

Several minutes passed and then Landar came out of the hut followed by a giant of a man with black curly hair and a long black beard. Landar called out,

"Gentlemen, this is my brother Carrel."

The large man looked at the three closely, especially at Spock, then he said in a deep voice, "I think it would be better if we all went inside."

The hut had two bunks down one side and tools on the other. Landar introduced the Enterprise men and told his brother something of their acquaintanceship.

Carrel listened carefully and then replied gravely, "A charge of witchcraft has been made against Landar and his assistant by the Relemions, something about an unauthorised operation. Normally our Lord would not have given permission for them to enter our country, but he is hoping to make a marriage between his son and Count Derfer's daughter, and has therefore given the Relemions a week to make an arrest."

Landar said, "I did nothing illegal, Carrel, I merely helped Alara's son as I told mother I would. Since this took place outside the city it broke no laws."

Carrel replied somewhat grimly, "It has not a lot to do with the law. Alara told of your lookalike and his strange equipment, and all your painless tooth-pulling seems to be the talk of the city. It would probably have come to nothing if the doctors had not made a complaint against you. They have been waiting for just such an opportunity. I believe both you and Spock are in great danger. They are even talking of calling out the dogs."

Landar said worriedly, "I left the cart at the clearing near the crossroads. If they should find it and get my scent..."

"They have already been to our home and removed some of the clothes you leave there."

"What of mother? Is she in danger?"

"I think not. She has our Lord's protection. All think she too was bewitched by you. She sends her love and asks only that you leave without seeing her, for your own good."

"With your help I will, Carrel. I will go with these men, but they will need your help to find their way back to their own country."

The small party spent the night in the hut. The truth of their origins was not told to Carrel. He was not an unintelligent man, and was obviously very fond of his adopted brother, so he questioned the Enterprise men closely. In the morning he spoke to them all, sounding somewhat relieved.

"I trust Landar's judgement of you because I must. I do not blame you for what has happened - with Landar's curiosity and his appearance it was almost bound to happen. All his mother and I ask is that you take care of him."

Kirk answered seriously, "We will, Carrel. We are aware of the debt we owe him."

Landar didn't agree. "I just did what I considered necessary, as no doubt so do you."

Captain Kirk said with a smile, "That's one way of looking at it."

Later that morning, after a breakfast of bread and cheese, they set out. After about an hour Carrel led them to a small plateau and then told them,

"It was here that I first saw Landar. He came from that direction." He then pointed up a small hill.

Captain Kirk said, "Thank you, Carrel. We must part here, but whatever happens no-one will ever know that you have helped us."

"I was sure of that, Kirk. I trust you, or I would not let my brother go with you." With that he turned to Landar and took him in a bear-hug, saying gruffly, "I shall miss you, boy. Now you take

care of yourself."

"And you too, Carrel. Tell mother I'm sorry for all the trouble I have caused her."

"Don't be silly, Landar. She'll just be glad you've found friends who can help you make a new life."

"Tell her I love her, and will always be grateful for her care."

"I shall, Landar, I shall." With that Carrel gave Landar a small push and with a nod to the Enterprise men turned and walked quickly away.

Mr. Spock made no comment on the emotional scene, but said, "Since we have only one tricorder I shall divide the area into a grid and make the necessary search."

Kirk replied, "I'll come with you. Bones, you and Landar might as well go and sit by that small stream and we'll get back to you."

It was the middle of the afternoon when the two men returned. Dr. McCoy, noting his Captain's expression, stood up saying, "Success, I take it?"

It was Spock who answered. "The tricorder shows a metal object of some size hidden in the bank of an old river bed."

Landar asked, "You know it is there but cannot see it?"

Kirk replied, "We do, and with the help of our phasers we should be able to expose it."

The earth and shale of the bank were featureless, but Spock carefully checked his tricorder and after a nod from his Captain drew his phaser and fired it.

Landar started in surprise then said, "I can now see why you were so concerned by the loss of your property."

As the beam met earth and shale it pulverised it, and slowly a space vehicle appeared. It was rather larger than the shuttle, long and sleek. It took all the energy from the phaser, but at last the ship was fully visible.

"She's a beauty, Spock," Kirk said. "Can you see any sign of damage?"

"No, Captain. This is a type R432 private vehicle. They were designed and built on Vulcan, and have many fail-safe features."

Dr. McCoy asked, "Does that mean they were almost indestructable?"

"No, Doctor, nothing this complex can be so described. It does, however, have a high standard of safety."

"All right, so far the ship looks fine, so how about the passengers? Why didn't they all get out?"

Spock too was curious. "The main door is on the other side, but even though the ship went into the bank the emergency door should have opened. We shall investigate."

The door towards the back of the ship was closed. There was, however, a small hole neatly cut near the bottom.

Dr. McCoy commented, "Your fail-safe door seems to have needed a kick in the pants, Spock."

The Vulcan didn't answer, but borrowing the Captain's phaser walked to the other side of the ship and cleared the soil away from the main door. He then approached it and after studying it for a few moments activated the lock and the door slid almost silently open.

Captain Kirk jumped down beside him. "Emergency override, Spock?"

"Yes, Captain. I will enter and see if any of the oxygen supply is left."

"Is that likely?"

"This kind of ship carried one small phaser with enough power to make a hole about the size of the one in the emergency door. Since escape was impossible for anyone but a small child, to continue to use the oxygen would have been illogical."

"Not to me, Spock."

"You are not a Vulcan, Captain."

After saying this Spock took several deep breaths and then entered the ship. Nearly five minutes passed. Captain Kirk was just about to follow when his First Officer reappeared.

"What kept you, Spock?" the Captain asked half angrily.

"I merely restarted the oxygen reply and then I returned," was the bland reply.

"Yes, sorry. Did you see any bodies or anything?"

The reply was expressionless. "I did, Captain. In the control room are two mummified Vulcans, one male, one female."

Captain Kirk pulled a face. "Will you tell Landar?"

"Yes, Captain, I will."

The two men made their way to where McCoy and Landar were waiting. Mr. Spock made a purely factual report of their findings. Dr. McCoy, however, was more circumspect, saying gently,

"Landar, would you like Spock and me to put what are probably your parents in a cabin before you go in there?"

Landar's reply was firm. "No, Doctor. I see that their bodies must be moved, but I consider it my duty and privilege to help."

The doctor looked at the young Vulcan kindly and then asked Spock, "How long before we can go in there, Spock?"

"Another five minutes, Doctor. I will check the log to enable me to inform Landar of his relationship to the occupants."

The four men entered the ship together. While Spock activated

the computer Captain Kirk, after one quick look round, went further into the ship to explore.

The other two men took a look round the control room. One of the bodies, still clothed and looking almost alive, was sitting in the pilot's seat. The other, that of a woman, was half sitting, half lying by the side of this chair. Dr. McCoy, his professional mask in place, examined them, while Landar, his face for once showing Vulcan reserve, watched.

The doctor said evenly, "The man must have been fatally injured in the landing. He has a massive skull fracture. The woman, apart from a broken wrist, shows no evidence of serious injury."

Spock, hearing this, said, "You are correct, Doctor. The log tells me that Saver, Landar's father, was rendered unconscious by the landing. His mother T'Barr, whose injuries were superficial, was able to help her son to leave the ship. She then joined her husband and chose that they met death together."

Landar looked at the two Vulcan faces, so carefully preserved that they could almost have been sleeping, then said softly, "I am honoured to have seen them and consider it fitting that they were together."

The Captain returned with two large covers. The grisly task was carried out in silence. It was not easy. Saver was wedged into his seat and Spock's Vulcan strength was needed to remove him. Cloth and mummified flesh did not stand up well to this treatment, and one arm even became detached. Landar lifted it without visible reaction and gently added it to the cover. They wrapped the fabric lightly around the body and carried it to the smaller of the two cabins.

T'Barr was easier to remove and at last the job was completed. The floor and consoles were covered in small pieces of clothing and dust. They all went outside while the atmosphere was flushed.

It was becoming dark when the four men tried, not too successfully, to eat their evening meal in the control room. Afterwards Spock gave his report to the Captain.

"This ship is in remarkable condition. I have effected repairs on the emergency door, and the ship should lift off successfully. Since Saver had to empty the water tank as we did, however, this must be refilled before we can leave."

"How much does it hold, Spock?"

"Three hundred gallons, sir."

Dr. McCoy protested at this. "But the nearest water is half a mile away! How do we get it here?"

The Captain answered, "The hard way. These ships weren't built for such primitive planets. There is a pump, but we'll have to get the water to the ship ourselves."

"How long is that going to take, for heaven's sake?"

It was Spock who answered. "Six to eight hours. I have managed to construct some receptacles so we should be able to start as soon as it is light."

The doctor said dryly, "We'd better get some rest then. How about you and me using the big cabin, Landar?"

The youth seemed almost disinterested but replied, "Very well, if you wish, Doctor."

After they had gone Kirk asked, "What chance have we of getting away, Spock?"

"An excellent chance, Jim. The ship is quite powerful and the atmospheric disturbance appears to have eased somewhat."

It was just before dawn next morning that the four men had breakfast. They left the ship just as the sun was rising. Landar was sorting through some herbs he had collected the day before.

Captain Kirk, after studying his First Officer's face, asked, "What is it, Spock?"

The reply was even. "For some time I have been hearing a large number of animals some distance from here."

Landar approached them and said, "I too have heard them. They must be a hunting pack. The sound is coming from the direction of my mother's farm. They will no doubt be hunting for us, and in time must find our scent at the hut."

"How long before they get here do you think, Landar?" Kirk asked.

"Two, perhaps three hours. However, as I am the one they are primarily after I can return to the hut, obliterating our trail from here to there as I do so. I can then lead them in the opposite direction. I know these hills well, and will not be caught easily."

Spock studied him then asked, "There is a chance of you outrunning them indefinitely?"

"Very little, but it will give you a chance of escaping. The only alternative is for all of us to be captured."

Spock, his voice almost harsh, said, "The animals will follow a fresh scent whoever's it is, therefore I shall be the one to go."

Kirk didn't like this. "Isn't there another way, Spock?"

"No, Captain. Landar is a minor and a civilian; it is out of the question that he should do this. The ship is easily piloted, and I am the only other person who can give you enough time to fill the water tanks."

Landar insisted, "I am not a minor on this planet, and I was the one to get you into this."

Kirk didn't agree. "You were the one to get us this far, Landar. Without you the doctor would probably be dead and Spock and I still slaves. Even so, I tend to agree that your local knowledge could give you the edge."

Spock gave his Captain an almost angry look. "If Landar is allowed to do this I shall consider I have failed in my duty to a

Vulcan child. There can be no future for a Vulcan who considers he has acted dishonourably. Jim, I ask you as my friend to let me do this."

Kirk knew when he was beaten. "Very well, Spock. If you see it like that you have my permission to go."

Landar, who had been listening to this, walked away from the two men. When he was some feet away he turned towards them, and they saw that he had a phaser in his hand. He spoke first to the doctor, who was standing further away by the ship.

"I am sorry to repay your kindness in this way, Doctor, but I too heard the dogs in the night. I have known Mr. Spock long enough to realise that I might have need of your phaser." He then turned to Spock. "If you try to stop me leaving, Mr. Spock, I shall use it on you. I have seen how it works and I shall stun you long enough to get away."

Spock, at his most controlled and dominating, answered, "You will have to, and you cannot be sure that you will not kill me. You could well make an error in the setting. I do not think you could take a life." With that he slowly but firmly walked towards Landar.

The young man hesitated, lowering the weapon slightly, then he suddenly tightened his grip and fired, hitting Spock in the legs. The First officer stood for a long moment, then fell silently to the ground.

McCoy ran to him and after looking at him briefly said grimly, "All right, Landar, you haven't killed him, but it will be at least half an hour before he can walk again."

Captain Kirk sighed and said, "You'd better keep the phaser, Landar, you're going to need it."

Landar looked down at the phaser and then threw it at the Captain's feet. "No, Captain, I do not want it. Try and make Mr. Spock see I have my own sense of honour. Will he accept this?"

Kirk looked down at his friend with sadness in his face. "He won't like it, but yes, I think he'll accept it."

Without another word Landar turned and, scattering herbs as he went, ran quickly away.

It was nearly an hour before Spock could walk. Dr. McCoy expected one of his cutting remarks on the matter of phasers, but the Vulcan said nothing; he merely began with grim determination to help fetch water from the stream.

The task was finished well before the time set by Spock, despite the reduction in numbers. It was now late afternoon, and as the Vulcan allowed the doctor to attend to his blistered hands he spoke to the Captain in his most controlled voice.

"We should try to leave as soon as possible. It will be dark in less than an hour."

The Captain tried to match his tone. "Very well, Spock. We can leave as soon as you're ready."

The ship had to be manoeuvred out of its resting place. This

successfully accomplished, the engine was given full power. It answered readily enough, seemingly unaffected by its years of inactivity.

Spock piloted the ship with great determination, and it went quickly through the atmosphere. Although the ion storm was still present it was much less than when they had arrived. It was not, however, until they had left the disturbance completely behind that the communications console came on line.

At last they could see the stars, which Spock studied carefully before saying, "We are quite some distance from Amnalos, but I will try to contact their space control."

He then activated the radio, but received a transmission not from a planet, but from a Federation ship.

"This is Lieutenant-Commander Scott, in command of the USS Enterprise, calling ship type R432."

Spock raised an eyebrow at this, and the Captain smiled at the doctor, who smiled in return, the first time he had done so since Landar had left.

Spock replied to the Enterprise. "This is Commander Spock aboard Vulcan ship type R432. I have Captain Kirk and Doctor McCoy with me, and request coordinates for transporter use between this ship and the USS Enterprise."

Mr. Scott was jubilant, and said happily, "I don't know how you did it, but it's certainly a relief to hear from you. Are you all well?"

Captain Kirk answered, "We're all fine, Scotty. I won't ask how you came to be here, but it's great to hear your voice."

"We've been keeping an eye on this area, sir. I'll have those coordinates for you in a few minutes. Is your ship in some kind of danger?"

Captain Kirk turned to his First Officer and asked, "Well, Spock?"

The reply was quite expressionless. "No, Captain, the ship is in excellent condition. However, as soon as you and the doctor are on the Enterprise I shall be using it to return to the planet."

Captain Kirk did not looked surprised, and asked almost casually, "Suppose I ordered you not to?"

"Then I would have to disobey you, Captain. You would not make the error of trying to force compliance, I trust?"

"No, Spock, I'm not even going to ask you not to go. I just hope that if you return alone you'll at least come back with your Vulcan pride intact."

"I shall, Jim. I have - somewhat reluctantly - accepted Landar's judgement in this matter."

The doctor handed Spock the only working phaser saying, "I'm sorry about what happened down there, but I think you'll find this useful."

Spock took the phaser from the doctor and said almost kindly, "I do not blame you in the matter of the phaser, Doctor. One does not expect theft to be the result of association with a Vulcan, even one without the advantages of Vulcan training."

"I suppose his actions were logical, if you look at them from his point of view."

"Yes; I should therefore have anticipated them, but I did not."

Captain Kirk was firm. "You couldn't possibly have known, Spock."

"His reasoning should have been clear to me, as I too heard the dogs in the night, but now I respect Landar's right to make the decision he did."

As he finished speaking the coordinates for transportation came from the Enterprise. Spock changed the heading of the ship slightly, and ten minutes later the optimum position had been reached.

Captain Kirk said, "Be careful, Spock. I'm expecting to see you back in one piece."

The doctor spoke softly. "Good luck, Spock."

Spock acknowledged them with a nod, then making the Vulcan hand sign replied, "Live long and prosper, Captain, Doctor." He then turned and gave the order to transport the two men. As soon as they had gone he reversed the ship's course and headed back to the planet.

It was dark when the vehicle landed. Spock put the ship down behind the hills for which Landar had been heading. The somewhat shabby travellers had not made use of the wardrobe of the ship's Vulcan owner, but now Spock had no hesitation in taking two warm cloaks. He put them both on and taking a sharpened knife and the phaser, set out on his search.

The night was very dark. Spock walked quickly to the top of one of the nearby hills, and standing quietly, looked and listened carefully. After some minutes he seemed to hear something. He left the hill, and after making a large circle approached a large camp.

He carefully studied the camp, which was well hidden in a clump of trees. To one side was a crude wooden pen, inside which were many large dog-like animals. About twenty men were sitting around a fire in the middle of the clearing, talking and laughing loudly. These were obviously the hunters, but where was their quarry?

After some time one of the men took a log from the fire and went over to a figure, unseen until now, tied to a tree. The figure appeared lifeless, but the man said something, at which his companions laughed. Then he lifted the prisoner's head and waved the log in his face. By the light of the burning log Spock had no difficulty in recognising Landar. It became apparent that the young man still lived, for when his tormentor suddenly touched the log to his arm he groaned.

Time passed, the fire died down, and the camp became quiet as the men settled down for the night. Spock edged carefully round until he was directly behind Landar, then whispered only loud enough

for Vulcan ears, while putting his hand over Landar's mouth.

"It is Spock. Keep quiet, and I will cut you loose and carry you away from here."

The youth was only half conscious but seemed to understand. Spock carefully cut the rope that held Landar to the tree and carried him for about half a mile. He then stopped and cut the ropes that still tied Landar's arms and legs together.

The young man shook his head to try to clear it and began to rub his limbs, saying softly as he did so, "If you will give me a few minutes I can probably walk."

The reply was brief. "That will not be necessary."

With that Spock wrapped Landar in one of the cloaks and before the young Vulcan could protest lifted him over his shoulder. Then, half walking half running, he set out for the ship, arriving there without incident.

Spock opened the door quickly and putting Landar down on one of the seats began activating the controls. They were soon heading away from the planet, Spock dealing with the navigational difficulties with ease.

As soon as they were on course he put the ship on automatic, and turning to Landar tended his most obvious injuries without comment. He then wrapped both cloaks around the youth and waited for the expected call from the Enterprise.

The docking bay was big enough to take the ship and Spock had no difficulty in landing it precisely in its middle. There he was met by a now-immaculate Captain and doctor.

Kirk greeted him with a smile. "Well done, Spock. How is the boy?"

"He is suffering from shock, but none of his injuries are of a permanent nature."

Dr. McCoy wasn't accepting that, and as he motioned two orderlies to put Landar of a stretcher he said tartly, "*I'll* decide about his medical condition, Spock." Then, as the young man tried to insist that he could walk, he spoke to him just as sharply. "You're walking nowhere. One stubborn Vulcan is enough. You'll do as you're told."

Landar read the doctor's underlying concern and said quietly, "Very well, Doctor."

McCoy was pleased by that. "There you are, Spock - at least he's not too young to learn."

It was some days later that Landar, newly released from sickbay, followed the doctor's directions and made his way to Spock's cabin. The use of the library computer in the last few days had explained something of the ways of the Federation and of Vulcans to the youth. He was not looking forward to the coming interview.

Mr. Spock, however, was most courteous, saying, "Sit down, Landar. Dr. McCoy tells me that though you are still in need of rest you are well on the way to recovery."

"Yes. The doctor has been very good to me."

"He does tend to take his work rather personally."

"I like and respect the doctor. Is that wrong?"

"That is not for me to judge, but I must tell you that to express such feelings is considered bad manners for a Vulcan."

"Well, I'm not really a Vulcan, am I?"

"You are, Landar. You cannot escape that. Your Vulcan family is an old and honourable one, and is waiting to welcome you back into its midst. Only on Vulcan can your natural talents as a healer be properly trained. Only there can you learn the mental discipline necessary for marriage - and you *must* marry, Landar. Why are you so hostile to this? It is surely what both your biological and adoptive families would want for you."

"I still know very little of Vulcan ways, but it seems to me I shall be expected to apologise for my upbringing, for my non-Vulcan values learned from Veral."

"You will not. Honour will be paid to Veral for her care of you. But your public face must be Vulcan."

"That's just it. I don't *want* to be someone for whom it is considered allowances must be made."

"That will not be the case. As your father's only son you could one day be head of your family. As a healer who has an understanding of Humans and their ways, your contribution to the Vulcan idea of IDIC could be considerable."

"What about my behaviour towards you, sir? You can hardly think it something that will recommend me to my Vulcan family."

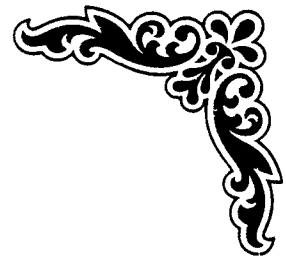
"I never questioned your motives, Landar, and I now accept your right to make the decision you did, even though you are under age. I have already informed your family that in my opinion you show all the qualities necessary in a young Vulcan."

Landar was silent for some minutes, and Spock did not interrupt his thoughts. At last the younger man spoke.

"If yours is an example of Vulcan behaviour I cannot but respect it. I shall try to adapt to the Vulcan way of life. Yet my thoughts and values are my own; I may well modify them, but I do not think I could change them, even if I wanted to."

"No-one will ask that of you, Landar. We are all the result partly of our nature, partly of our upbringing. Respecting freedom of thought, together with personal restraint, is both a Vulcan and a Federation ideal."

"If that is so I can but try to live up to it, for nobody could really ask for more."



The Logical Thing

You ask me, Spock,
what made me do it,
to marry your Human mother,
and I cannot resist the urge
to explain in my Vulcan way
that at the time...
it seemed the logical thing
to do.
For when in my younger years
I had come to feel for the woman
called Amanda,
I determined that if I were
to have her to wife
the reasons must be logical.
No-one, save Amanda herself,
can truly realise
the carefully set plan I laid
to make it necessary and logical
to marry her.
I speak of logic and duty, but for those who truly
understand
Vulcans,
they would know there are
deeper motivations.
I could give a list
of logical reasons
for choosing Amanda,
thus satisfying Vulcan decorum;
but it is only to my inner self
that the true reasons are known,
which need not be voiced
to be understood
by those who have the right.
All I need say is,
"It was the logical thing."

CarolMel Ambassador