

CONTACT



VOLUME ONE

DECEMBER 1975

CONTENTS

EDITORS PAGE	3
STORY: NOT OF THAT FEATHER	4
POEM: THE BETTER WAY	18
IN A PIGS EYE	19
STORY: THE SILENT CONNECTION	21
WRITERS CONTEST	33
POEM: AMOK TIME	34
POEM: UNDERSTANDING	34
EULOGY	35
STAR TREK SONG SHEET	38
CROSSWORD PUZZLE	39
WORD FIND	40
POEM: THE TRUTH	41
DE PROFUNDIS	42
FUN FOTOS	46
POEM: COMMAND DECISION	47
STORY: PHASE II - CHAPTER ONE THE INVITATION	48
TRIVIA TEST	66
ANSWER PAGE	68

EDITORS' PAGE

Man is a social animal. From the dawn of recorded history we learn of his need to communicate with others -- to seek out beings of his own kind and be accepted by them. As man began to develop, he found there were many ways to achieve this communication and he employed them all -- touching, seeing, language. He learned there was great satisfaction in having his thoughts and feelings understood. He made Contact!

Then man began to grow further, to learn more, and he found that there was an even greater satisfaction in being not only understood, but agreed with. So he began to be selective, seeking out those whose thoughts and feelings reflected his own. He developed groups and moved within them. He had made another form of Contact.

And as man, hopefully, grew even more, he began to realize that within this world, indeed even the Universe, there can be, in fact, a great satisfaction in communication with others who may be different from him. Hopefully, he has learned to delight in that difference and understand that although it exists, there are levels on which he can relate. This is still another form of Contact.

Then, once in a while, sometimes no more than once in a lifetime, man finds another individual with whom he can relate so completely that their meeting is as electric as two charged wires suddenly touching. He looks into the other's soul and he knows. He understands and is understood without the need for oral, written, physical or visual communication. Each one is a half of a whole, drawn together in such complete harmony that their differences combine to create unity. When this happens, when a man finds that perfect compliment to himself, this is a very special Contact!

PEACE AND LONG LIFE **

THE EDITORS



Not Of That Feather



The tall lean Earthman stepped up to the Enterprise trio who had just beamed down onto his porch.

"Welcome to the Kessler Colony, gentlemen," he greeted them. "I'm Leon Kessler at your service!" The man's voice was resonant and strong.

Kirk, Spock and McCoy looked at their surroundings curiously. This was a well developed, self sustaining Earth colony on the outer fringes of the Procyon star system. It's technical name was Damion II and it had been colonized seven years ago by this man Kessler and his party of 37 men and women. But the Federation had heard no reports from them for almost six of those years so they'd finally sent a Starship to investigate. Detecting life forms but getting no response to their transmissions, they beamed down to what seemed like the center of the colony. Their greeting unsettled Kirk.

"Mr. Kessler. I'm Captain James Kirk of the USS Enterprise. This is our Science Officer, Commander Spock, and our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Leonard McCoy." He paused for acknowledgement, then continued. "I must say, sir, you don't seem surprised to see us," almost adding, as if you expected us.

Kessler nodded sagely. "It was inevitable, Captain. We knew the Federation would send someone here eventually." He broke off and indicated the house. "Come inside out of this heat and I'll try to answer your questions."

They entered the house which appeared from the exterior to be a huge whitewashed wooden dwelling, faintly resembling the ancient Southern plantation homes of Earth. The interior was anything but crude. The first thing that struck one was the infinitely cooler, filtered air. The furnishings were quite modern and opulent. As they entered the room Kessler indicated as his study, a young girl tidying up looked up at them in surprise and it seemed alarm.

She was small, finely featured, with thick brown hair and dark eyes. After her initial shock she stood quietly observing them with keen interest. She appeared especially fascinated with the Vulcan.

Kessler finished speaking and turned to the girl. "Gentlemen, this is my sister, Lydra," he said proudly, and introduced the trio to her. "They're from a Starship, dear. The Federation has sent them."

Her eyes darted from one face to another uneasily. "Hello," she stammered in confusion. Appearing about to say something else, she caught her brother's eye and retreated to the file case behind the desk.

Kessler sat down and indicated they do the same. "Lydra will supply you with my reports. I've kept them faithfully since our transmitter was destroyed in a small fire six years ago," he said, flicking a button on his desk. A man appeared in the doorway. Tall, ruggedly muscled, weathered face, he was a formidable looking contrast to the luxury of the room.

"Yes, Sir?" he questioned Kessler.

"Hartley. . . will you bring our guests some refreshment, please." Turning to Kirk, he explained, "We make our own fruit ale here which I'm sure you'll enjoy, Capt. Kirk." The tone was calm and benevolent, but Jim sensed something about this man, something he couldn't quite put a finger on, that he distrusted.

Meanwhile, Lydra had extracted a thick folder and after a moment of indecision she handed it to Spock. Her eyes locked with his so intensely for a moment, that even Spock reacted. He could almost feel her mind reaching out for his, and it startled him. Then the moment was gone, and Spock turned his attention to the reports.

Kessler settled himself more comfortably. "As you can see, everything has gone smoothly. We are in need of nothing. Since we are a productive society, I'd prefer no interruptions in the pattern of our daily life."

Spock, scanning the reports, spoke up. "Captain, I note here there have been four deaths over the past six years. One of them was Todd Mason."

Kirk rubbed his chin. "Hmnn...Regrettable. We carried news for Mason. He'd come into quite a legacy from his grandfather," he explained to Kessler. "How did he die?"

Kessler spoke quickly. "He was killed in an explosion in the foundary almost three years ago."

Spock looked up in surprise. "This report indicates, Mr. Kessler, that Todd Mason was the victim of an accidental drowning. And it took place five years and three months ago."

Leon Kessler stirred uneasily and there was a pause when everyone held their breaths. The awkwardness ended when the man, Hartley, brought in a tray of drinks. Kessler coughed and cleared his throat.

"Thank you, Hartley, that will be all," he said casually. Handing out the glasses he spoke easily to Spock. "I must have Mason confused with someone else."

Kirk stood up. "Mr. Kessler, if you don't object, I'd like to contact my ship and then take a look around your colony. I shall try to be unobtrusive, but I do have a report to make."

Kessler's smile was frosty. "Oh, yes, Captain, I quite agree. But you will come back and join us for dinner, won't you?" he asked politely.

Kirk smiled. "I'm sure that will be fine. Till then," he nodded.

As they walked out into the bright sun, the Captain was thoughtful. All about them was the bustle of a productive colony, yet something seemed oddly out of place. He stood in the middle of the road, again trying to pinpoint the source of his uneasiness. He spoke to McCoy.

"Bones, do you sense anything. . . different here?" Kirk groped for the right words. "Anything about Kessler himself, perhaps?"

The doctor looked around him easily. "No, not really, Jim. Kinda reminds me of the Old South around here." Kirk looked at him in amusement, and McCoy grinned, the easy comradeship of shared laughter.

"When they had slaves and masters?" Jim smiled wryly. He walked ahead of his officers and pulled out his communicator. "Kirk to Enterprise...Come in, Scott," he said. Getting Scotty's reply, Kirk reported that they found the colonists alive and well. "But," he added, "we're going to stick around here for a while just to make certain."

"Trouble, Captain?" Scott asked.

Kirk hesitated. "No, not exactly, I just want a closer look. I'll contact you later. Kirk out."

The man, Hartley, slipped quietly away from his hiding place nearby and headed for the big house.

* * * * *

"They are suspicious, Sir. They will dig and probe..."

"Is all secure?"

"On the surface, yes, but these men..."

"Yes, I see. Perhaps an accident..."

"Understood. It would be the easiest solution."

"Go, then!"

* * * * *

The trio had wandered a distance from the colony itself. Spock, taking his tricorder readings, found no abnormalities. The air was oppressively humid and still, and they had worked up a sweat climbing over the rocky terrain. Kirk didn't know what exactly he was looking for; he'd hoped to get some perspective out here. But there was nothing to be found and he turned now to the other two.

"Let's head back to the colony. I want to talk to some of the people before we get back to Kessler." He started down the path, a little ahead of Spock and McCoy.

"Nothing like a walk in the woods to sharpen the appetite," McCoy grumbled, kicking a rock out of his way.

"Doctor, even you must realize the benefits derived from..." Spock's reply was cut off by a rumble from somewhere above them. His comrades hadn't picked it up, but Spock's sharp Vulcan ears had. Looking up, he saw the landslide headed for them, and he shouted, but his warning came a fraction of a second too late. With a deafening roar, it suddenly seemed like the whole mountain descended upon them, flinging them this way and that, like helpless little toys.

As the dust cleared and clean air filtered its way back into Spock's lungs, he sat up stiffly, gingerly testing his muscles. He felt uninjured and hearing McCoy's coughs to his left, he made his way in that direction, over the rubble of rocks and sand.

McCoy sat up with Spock's assistance and together they cleared what small debris they could out of the way. The doctor realized he'd lost all his equipment and Spock had too. But right now that thought was not uppermost in their minds.

"Where's Jim?!" McCoy asked in sudden alarm.

6

"He was ahead of us just before the landslide," Spock replied, scrambling in that direction quickly. He and McCoy looked around, seeing nothing at first, then Spock turned to the right and moved a few rocks out of his way violently, to get to the body which McCoy could see now too, pinned under the main part of the landslide.

"Jim!" Spock's voice was uneven as he bent beside the still form. McCoy reached them and put his fingers on Kirk's neck.

"He's alive," he said grimly, feeling so much at a loss without his instruments. Spock had started to move away the smaller rocks, but it was a pyramid effect and for every one that Spock pulled out, three more took its place.

The Captain roused and began to cough the dust out of his lungs. He tried to sit up, but found he couldn't move. Only then did he realize he was pinned down. His chest felt like a ball of fire and he blinked dazedly at his friends.

McCoy's voice was ragged. "Don't try to move, Jim. Just lie still." The pain on McCoy's face told Jim what he wanted to know, what he had to know; it was bad.

Spock, on his knees at Kirk's side, was looking at him in concern, unmindful of the small trickle of green blood working its way down the side of his face. His superior Vulcan physiology had failed him and he felt the frustration of helplessness engulfing him. Again he tried to move one of the bigger boulders obstructing his progress but a clipped moan from Jim stopped him instantly. Their eyes met and Kirk read the confusion in Spock's face. He felt Spock's frustration, and tried to move his free hand toward him. It was a brief moment of weakness for Kirk, an instant when he thought: I'm going to die and I don't want to die! and Spock understood this and reached his hand out and grasped his Captain's fingers tightly, willing the strength to flow from him to Kirk.

McCoy came around and touched Spock's shoulder. They got up and moved a few yards away.

"Spock, you're going to have to go back to the colony for help," he said softly.

Spock's face was tight. "How bad is it, Doctor?" There would be no jokes now about McCoy's abilities.

McCoy shook his head. "I've no way of telling without my instruments, but there's got to be some internal damage -- from all the signs there's internal bleeding. All I know for sure is that if he doesn't get help and get it soon, he'll die, Spock. Jim will die!"

Spock didn't reply, but he flashed McCoy a piercing look, then turned back to the Captain.

As Spock knelt, Kirk spoke in a somewhat stronger voice. The initial shock had passed and the Captain was feeling his wits returning. "Spock," he said, "give me your communicator. I can't get to mine. I've got to call the ship, get a team down here..."

"Captain," Spock cut him off, "there are no communicators. All our equipment was lost in the landslide. With your permission I'll go back to the colony to get help from the people there." The ramifications were obvious to Kirk, as they were to Spock. Without communications it would be some time before Scotty got

suspicious enough to send down a re-con party and even if they managed to get Kirk dug out and brought back to the house, they had none of the medical facilities of the Enterprise to treat a badly injured man. And there was that other thing, Kirk thought. That uneasiness he'd sensed back there. Something about Kessler. He swallowed visably and blinked in the glare of the sun.

"Okay, Spock," Jim said evenly. "But be careful. We can't be sure these people are our friends."

Spock nodded and stood up. Needlessly he turned to McCoy.

"Take care of him," he said simply. Before he left, he took one last look at Jim Kirk, proud, strong, vital Captain of a Starship, laying here helplessly pinned down, possibly dying, and with a great effort he turned and began to descend.

* * * * *

"You fool!" Kessler hissed.

Hartley cowered visably. "I tried, Sir. It was difficult..." He was interrupted by a third man, stationed at the window in this comfortable study.

"The Vulcan is approaching the house now, Sir," he informed Kessler.

"All right, we'll deal with this one first." He picked up a pen and began writing with a good deal of concentration. It was thus that Spock found him upon entering the study.

"Mr. Kessler... There's been an accident," Spock said rapidly, pausing when Kessler failed to respond or give any indication of awareness. As he opened his mouth to continue, Kessler spoke, but to Hartley, not Spock.

"Has this man been given permission to enter my chambers?" he asked.

Spock stood there, not quite comprehending; a sense of bafflement replacing his urgency. Hartley stepped up to him.

"Sorry, you'll have to make an appointment and wait your turn," he said, giving Spock a slight shove.

Spock's tone was neutral. "You don't seem to understand. Captain Kirk has been injured in a..." Before he could finish, Kessler stood up and suddenly Spock saw it all. It had been no accident! For some unknown reason this man had caused the landslide. It was illogical, but it was true!

Kessler's tone had changed again and it was easy and warm. "Yes, Mr. Spock, a great pity, isn't it? But I'm afraid I can't let you report back on our little colony here. Taylor," he indicated the third man who had drawn his phaser, "show Mr. Spock to our 'guest quarters'."

Spock was shoved roughly out of the house and down a path toward a windowless brick building containing barred cubicles just big enough for a man to stand in. He tried to protest as they locked him in, telling them it was illogical to attempt this on the Federation, but he was ignored, then left alone.

Alone, to stand there and think about that man up on the mountain, possibly dying, and he was powerless to stop it. He tried the bars; they were tight. He could see no possible means of escape. He forced his mind to the unanswered questions. What

was Kessler's motive for wanting them dead? What would they have found if they'd explored further?

At that point he heard the scraping of the outer door being opened. It was the girl, Lydra, bearing a tray of food.

"It is dinnertime." She attempted a smile.

Spock shook his head forcibly. "I do not desire sustenance!"

Her look was open and amazed. "Do not fear, Mr. Spock. It is clean. I prepared it myself."

At first he thought she meant hygienically clean, but his puzzled look made her stammer and flush.

"Oh! I thought you knew! That is. . ." she broke off in confusion.

His mind was working fast now. She had backed off a few steps and he tried to reach through the bars to her, but they were too close together. "Lydra," he said, his voice soft, coaxing, "there's something in the food, is that it? Your brother puts what in the food?"

She spoke hesitantly. "A plant extract. I don't know what it's called. I don't even know where it comes from. But it makes people passive, obedient, like slaves," she said, her voice growing stronger. "He found out it's use about a year after we came here, and with the help of a few loyal men began to administer it to the rest of the people so he could have total control!" She broke off, looking dismayed. "But, if you didn't know this, why would he lock you up?"

"It would be easily detected and he knew we'd learn the truth," he explained patiently. "So that's why he didn't want us bothering anyone," he mused. "Has no one here attempted to resist?"

"Some have tried," she replied tonelessly, eyes down. "They are dead." She looked up at him sadly. "Mr. Spock, I'm sorry you had to get involved in this! I wanted so to warn you away earlier but I was afraid to!"

Spock looked at the girl, an idea dawning on him. "Lydra, there's an injured man up on the mountain. Can you get up there with a few men and..."

She shivered. "No! I cannot interfere! I should not even be here!"

Before he could stop her, she had fled the way she came. Since she seemed the only logical chance for his freedom, he set about trying to call her back with his mind. So enrapt was he in this endeavor, that he didn't hear the two men enter until they were at his cell. He looked up as they unlocked the door, phasers pointed at him.

"The boss wants you," Taylor said grimly, and they led him again to the big house, to that cool, soft, deceptive room.

He had no chance to resist with those phasers trained on him. They shackled his hands behind him and pushed him into a chair. Then Kessler dismissed them with a wave of his hand.

"Leave us!" he commanded. He sat silently observing Spock for a moment, then he spoke. "You mentioned the Federation, Mr. Spock. I wanted to ease your mind on that. You and your friends met with an accident here. Regrettable, but just an occupational

hazard, wouldn't you say?"

"Kessler," Spock replied, "it is only a matter of time before our ship sends down more men to investigate our absence. They will take the same steps we took upon arrival. They will draw the same conclusions."

The smile Kessler gave him was chilling. "Yes, but meanwhile your Captain will be dead!" Perhaps Spock's face gave him away, because suddenly Kessler pounced on this fact. "You would see your Captain die, Spock. Is that what you want?"

Spock was puzzled. This was no game for logic. The man was totally illogical and Spock had no guidelines for human madness.

"I do not understand what it is you want," he replied.

Abruptly, Kessler's tone changed. "Of course, I could save your Captain. For a time at least," he smiled slyly. "The Federation would see I had done everything I could. A pity that he died anyway."

Spock's face was noncommittal but he felt a tightness inside, a feeling akin to hatred that was foreign to him. Kessler went on.

"But the important thing now is to get Captain Kirk off that mountain, isn't it? For what would it matter if you find a way to escape if he is already dead? That is what you must logically conclude, is it not, Mr. Spock?"

Spock still did not reply.

"Well," Kessler said, "perhaps I could still save him. For the right price."

The Vulcan thought he understood that one. "If you mean, Sir, that we make no mention in our report...." Kessler cut him off.

"No, no," he denied. "You cannot be bought that easily."

"Correct. You have no way of winning and the death of my Captain would serve no purpose."

"Does that bother you, Spock? It doesn't bother me. After all, it's not the winning that counts, but how you play the game," he chuckled.

But what game are we playing, Spock wondered. What are the rules with this madman? Kessler was speaking again.

"So, your ship sends down men to search for you. Well, we have ways around here of controlling a man. Perhaps you know of them."

"I know of them," Spock said shortly.

Kessler looked surprised, then he smiled. "Good. Well, regardless of how this all turns out, Captain Kirk is bleeding to death."

Spock's head was spinning from the man's constant change of pace. "What is it you want from me?" he asked wearily.

"I spoke of a price, Spock. A price for your Captain's life." Kessler stood up straight, and his eyes took on a glow. "Will you beg, Spock? For your Captain's life, will you get down on your knees and beg?"

Spock looked at him in astonishment. It was a ghastly practical joke. The man was totally insane! Every fiber of his Vulcan heritage rebelled in him. "Vulcan's do not beg!" he spat out.

Kessler's chuckle was soft. "I know. That's why it's such a high price I place on your Captain Kirk. Is he not worth it, Spock?"

Spock repressed the emotions churning in himself and shook his head. "I cannot."

Kessler seemed angry as he pushed the button on his desk. "We will give you a second chance, Mr. Spock, after you have a chance to think it over."

The two men entered; one was carrying a hypospray....Spock knew what was coming and he tried to resist, but the combined strength of the two men was too much for a Vulcan with shackled hands. As the hypo pressed into his arm, the last words Spock heard were Kessler's.

"As I said, we have ways of controlling men here, Mr. Spock."

A wave of dizziness overtook Spock and he blacked out.

* * * * *

McCoy's probing fingers made Jim wince. The doctor looked apologetically at his friend and reached up to wipe away the beads of sweat forming on Kirk's face. His skin under McCoy's hand was cool, even with the hot sun glaring down on them. Jim's voice was weaker now.

"How long has it been, Bones?"

McCoy looked up at the sky, trying to read the movement of the strange sun. "Too long," he muttered.

Kirk tried to move again and was hit by a fresh wave of pain. McCoy eased him back and standing, removed his blue tunic and rolled it into a pillow, which he placed carefully under Jim's neck. The stark black of his shirt provided a glaring contrast to the whiteness of his dust covered face, as he bent over Kirk.

The Captain tried to speak, his voice coming out hoarse. "There must have been trouble, Bones. Spock must have..." He broke off, unable to go on.

McCoy was torn by the inactivity. He wanted to go find out what had happened to Spock, to go bring help back, yet he couldn't leave Jim here all alone, to lie here and die by himself.

"Take it easy, Jim." He forced himself to smile. "Spock's never let either one of us down before. I'd never admit it to him, but that Vulcan's pretty handy to have around when the chips are down."

Kirk managed to grin. "That's what I've been telling you..." His voice trailed off as he lost consciousness again. McCoy hastily grabbed for the pulse, alarm in his eyes. It was there; faint, but still there. Rubbing his eyes, Bones peered off in the direction of the colony. If Spock didn't get back soon, it would be too late. What was keeping him, he wondered.

* * * * *

As Spock's consciousness returned, he realized he was alone again with Kessler. The man was studying him avidly. Spock felt oddly at peace here, his senses lulled into a state of amiability



by the drug. Kessler was speaking, and Spock looked up passively at his voice.

"Now, then, Mr. Spock, we were discussing the price of your Captain's life."

It all came back to Spock with a rush of emotion strange to him. With a great effort he willed his mind to clear, even physically tossing his head as though to diminish the cobwebs. His voice was low and controlled. "I am a Vulcan!"

Kessler's voice taunted him. "And Vulcans do not beg, or so you said. Yet your Captain is dying. Right now, out in that hot sun, his life ebbs from him."

Spock said nothing, so intent was he on freeing his mind from this foreign influence. He would do just about anything to save Kirk's life, he thought. Just about....

"Don't you care, Spock? Don't you care that he'll die, his insides smashed under the weight of those rocks?"

Illogical! The Vulcan coming through strengthened Spock. This man will not let us live. It will serve no purpose for him to save Jim.

"You can save him, Spock. I can help him. Isn't what I ask a small price for a life?"

Spock had almost mastered it now. His sanity was restored, but his emotions were still churning.

"He'll die, Spock, unless we help him, you and I. Our sun stays up for another four hours. Four more hours for him to lie in that hot sun with the rock's weight on him, crushing the breath from his lungs, crushing the life from his useless body!"

Kessler's words fell like hammers on Spock's ears. He winced under each phrase like a blow. With tortured eyes, he looked at Kessler.

"You can help him! Why won't you help him?!" Spock almost screamed the words.

"You must beg me, Spock. On your knees. And I'll send the men up to get him. You can lead them. Beg, Spock. That's all it takes."

A quiver of revulsion ran through Spock's nerves. He owed Kirk his life a thousand times over. Jim had risked his career, his life, his all for him. Was that which Kessler demanded really so high a price to pay? Was pride worth a human life? That life which was so closely bound up with his that they were more than brothers. Almost without thinking about it, he was on his knees, the touch of the thick carpet soft on his legs. Carried away by the force of emotion so new to him, he looked up at Kessler without shame. Somehow this seemed so logically right all of a sudden.

"Please," he implored. "Help me. Help the Captain. I beg of you!" The words, once out, could not be recalled and self-revolt set in as Kessler laughed that maniacal laugh. Fully aware now, an aching sense of shame came upon Spock, who realized what he'd done!

* * * * *

Bones had been digging in the rubble, trying to locate some

of their lost equipment. At least feeling like he was doing something, he wasn't surprised that he was unsuccessful. A sound from Kirk brought him instantly to the Captain's side.

"Easy, Jim. Just lie still," he cautioned.

The sheer frustration of being unable to move around put an edge to Kirk's voice. "Bones, did you have any luck?"

McCoy shook his head. "None. It must've all gone down the cliff somewhere. It could be anywhere by now." He stood abruptly, straining his eyes down the path. "Jim!" he exclaimed. "I think someone's coming!" He threw Kirk a look of relief and ran a few feet ahead, as a voice called out from below.

"Ahoy! Are you there?" It was Hartley, and McCoy recognized him as the man he'd met earlier in Kessler's office. With him were two other men and Spock.

"Over here!" Bones answered.

As they reached Kirk and began clearing away the rocks, Spock hurried to his Captain's side to see for himself that he had arrived in time.

McCoy's voice was anxious. "Well, it sure took you long enough," he growled, but something in the Vulcan's blank face stopped him from saying more.

Kirk looked up at his First Officer with what little strength he had left. "Spock..." he began, and appeared about to say something else, but changed his mind. What words could one use, Kirk wondered, the dizziness engulfing him again.

Spock's voice was controlled. "I shall assist with these rocks, Doctor. Stand by with the first-aid kit," he ordered.

McCoy had checked it out and it seemed adequate on a short term basis. As the rocks were cleared away, he administered pressure packs and bandages to the worst of Kirk's superficial wounds. The Captain, although weak, was conscious and obviously in pain. He tried not to show it, but as the last great boulder was lifted from him he gave in with a mighty shudder. McCoy prepared a pain-killing hypo, but Kirk waved him off.

"Bones, I don't want..." he began as McCoy pushed it home.

Inert now, they lifted him gently onto the stretcher and descended to the house. There wasn't really time for words until they got him settled in a bedroom on the second floor. Then McCoy turned to Hartley.

"We've got to get back to our ship," he told him grimly.

"Perhaps some of our equipment could be located if. . ." The man's chuckle cut him off.

"Forget it, Doc. You three aren't getting any help," he sneered. "When Kessler gets back you're going for a little walk, you and the Vulcan. If you meet with an accident, that's just too bad." He moved to the door where the other two men stood, armed now with phasers. "Don't try anything. As Spock will tell you, it's useless around here."

McCoy stared after him in disbelief, as the door was bolted on them. Then he turned to Spock in frantic horror. "What in thunder's going on here?!" he exploded.

At that point, Jim stirred. McCoy came to his side. The

Captain reflected he felt better now. Something in that hypo McCoy'd given him, no doubt. He took in the richly furnished room with clear eyes. The doctor was putting something warm and soft over him and it almost lulled him back to sleep, but he fought off the lethargy with effort. He was the Captain, after all, and the success of this mission, like all others, was his responsibility. He looked at McCoy expectantly.

Bones looked at his friend and laid a hand on his shoulder. "Welcome back, Jim," he said softly, smiling into that inquisitive face.

Spock stepped over to them and Kirk faced him eagerly. Choosing to ignore the concern he saw on their faces, he concentrated instead on the surge of command he suddenly felt.

"Your report, Spock, on our situation?" he asked.

"The landslide was no accident," Spock explained. "Kessler intended then to kill all three of us. He could not have us inquiring too deeply into his colony."

Kirk looked at him sharply. "Did you discover the secret he's hiding?"

Spock replied tonelessly, his eyes fixed straight ahead. "He discovered a drug - a native plant extract - some form of extreme barbituate, I would surmise. It makes the colonists mentally weak and submissive. He uses it to achieve total control and power." His eyes met Kirk's. "He is a madman, Jim. He has no intention of letting us out of here."

Kirk's voice took on an urgency. His head was spinning again and he had to get this out. "Spock, you've got to get back to the ship! Get out of here, somehow, and hide until the re-con party gets here. Someone has to...stop...this," he trailed off, lapsing into unconsciousness again.

Spock bent over his Captain in concern, and McCoy looked at him thoughtfully.

"We've got to get him back to the ship soon, Spock, or it'll be too late. He needs transfusions and treatment right away," he told him. Spock didn't seem to be listening; he'd walked over to the window and stood staring out at the growing dusk with unblinking eyes. McCoy watched him curiously. Something about Spock was all wrong. It was apparent when he talked, in the way he stood, but the doctor couldn't put his finger on what it was.

"I can see no logical answer, Doctor," Spock said softly.

Bones walked over close to Spock, who stood with one hand on the windowsill. The fingers were quivering of their own volition, he noticed. What have they done to you, Spock, he wondered sadly, but this man was a Vulcan and he couldn't say the words - not to him. McCoy's voice, when he spoke, was gentle.

"I've never seen you give in so easily, Spock," he chastized, and Spock turned to stare at him with such a wounded look that McCoy suddenly knew. What had Spock said about that drug? It made men mentally weak and submissive. That's what the difference was! The missing element was Spock's defeatism and lethargy! But, something more, he thought suddenly. He sensed that somehow, somehow, Spock had compromised and was now fighting some inner battle with himself. The Doctor longed to reach out to him, to erase the pain

in those haunted eyes, but he didn't know how.

The air was charged with the electricity of unspoken words and thoughts as the two men, Human and Vulcan, tried to bridge the gulf between them, in a situation so totally different for them.

Spock broke it off as he crossed the room and sat down. McCoy hesitated only a moment, then he followed and stooped down by Spock's chair.

"You heard what the Captain said, Spock. You've got to do something! You can't just sit here and allow this to go on!" he snapped, trying desperately to get through the barriers Spock had put up. Jim would know, he reflected. He could reach Spock where no one else could.

The Vulcan shook his head. "We are locked in, with armed guards at the door. We have no weapons or means of communications. What would you have me do, Doctor?"

McCoy chose his words carefully. "I don't know what they've done to you, Spock, and I know you won't tell me. But you've got to snap out of it. This isn't like you; you've got to realize that!"

Spock looked at him thoughtfully, McCoy's words penetrating at last. He sensed there was something wrong with his thinking processes. Perhaps he did have to take action of some sort.

Just then, the scrapping of the bolt snapped them both back to the present as they turned their eyes toward the door. Lydra entered timidly, and after a moment's hesitation she came up to Spock, her eyes brimming with tears.

"He's going to kill you, isn't he?" she asked frantically.

"We cannot be allowed to report what we know," Spock answered flatly.

McCoy's voice was gruff. "Doesn't he realize killing us will only postpone the inevitable? It's a senseless move!"

Lydra shook her head. "It doesn't matter to Leon. He's convinced himself he can handle anything."

"The man is insane," Spock injected.

Lydra looked at him with understanding. "I know that now," she admitted. "If only I could help."

"It's too late," Spock replied tonelessly.

"Perhaps not, perhaps there is something..." she began.

"What could you do?" he asked in disbelief.

Her voice grew stronger. "We have a radio. It's in a little shack not far from here. Only Leon and Hartley know of it. Even I'm not supposed to, but I do."

While she was speaking, Spock's face had grown intense; his eyes bored into her. Hope, for the first time, kindled in him, banishing all cobwebs, all sense of dullness from his mind. Adrenalin pumped into his veins and unchained his wits again.

"You must take me there," he spoke urgently.

"No....." Lydra hesitated. "I'm afraid. If Leon finds out, if....."

Spock looked at her intensely, but his voice was composed, logical, as he felt his senses returning. He spoke reasonably.

"Lydra, you have admitted that your brother is insane. You

must know that forcing the colonists to be slaves is wrong. Kessler will kill my friends and I and there will be an investigation by StarFleet. The end is inevitable. To pretend it is not is illogical. But you can save our lives, perhaps the lives of more, by helping us to hasten the end."

Lydra hesitated only a second, then she spoke resolutely. "I will bring the guards their dinner. I shall tell you when it is safe to leave." Her eyes met Spock's with grim determination.

She was gone for what seemed to McCoy to be an eternity, but was, in fact, a very short amount of time. He paced the room impatiently, but Spock stood quiet and controlled beside his Captain's bed, the balm of his purposeful plan soothing the few tortured ghosts of his past actions into oblivion.

They heard Lydra's return. She beckoned to Spock.

"The guards have eaten. They won't stop us now," she said.

"But hurry, Leon will be returning soon."

Lydra and Spock hurried past the guards, lulled into passiveness by the extra amount of plant extract she had put in their dinners. Spock stared at them for an instant with revulsion for what this drug could do to men if used by the wrong hands. Then he went on, out of the house and down a small path to a rickety wooden building.

She led him into the dusty gloom carefully. Lighting the area, she indicated the old communications console resting there.

"Does it work?" she asked breathlessly. "I know Leon has listened on it - that's how he knew of your arrival."

Spock had bent over and was working with the dials. "I believe it needs a few adjustments. Are there tools?" he asked. Together they poked around the area and came up with a toolkit. He sat down and was soon lost in concentration.

He was almost finished when suddenly, the door was flung open. Spock and Lydra looked up, startled. Her brother stood there, silhouetted against the night sky, the anger contorting his face into a grotesque mask. He pulled out a phaser and pointed it at them.

Spock stood, brushing aside a feeling of loathing for this man and what he had forced him to do. He was a Vulcan and he must deal with this logically.

Lydra was not bound by such a code. She rushed over to Kessler. "Leon, no," she cried. "You mustn't...." She was flung aside, roughly.

Venom in his voice, Kessler turned to her. "You too, little sister! You plot against your own flesh and blood!" he roared.

Spock made a move and the man swung back to him. "Stay where you are!" he warned.

"You cannot kill me in this manner. It would be far from accidental," Spock reminded him.

Walking toward Spock, Kessler turned his back on the weeping Lydra, who was huddled on the floor. "Don't count on it, Mr. Spock. You will beg me again - this time for your death - before I am through with you!" His eyes were glowing, all semblance of rationality gone from him. "You will suffer, I will make you suffer, and she will watch it!"

Lydra rose quietly and reached carefully to one side where the tools were kept. Her fingers tightened on the axe handle.

Impervious to her, Kessler raved on. "My sister will learn as I learned that there is nothing special about Vulcans. They beg and grovel just as every other man. Men are worthless, despicable creatures. Especially men who interfere into other people's concerns. For that you'll pay!"

She had advanced cautiously but as she raised the axe, Kessler sensed something, perhaps a flicker on Spock's face, and he spun, only in time to cry out as she brought the weapon down viciously.

Hysterical, Lydra swung it again and again, until Spock reached her side and forced it from her hands. She clung to him, sobbing, and he felt the weight of her as she mercifully passed out.

Laying her gently on the floor, Spock looked thoughtful for a moment, then turned resolutely back to the radio.

* * * * *

Striding purposefully down the corridor toward Sickbay, Spock felt the familiar comfort of the ship easing all other thoughts from his mind. He was back in his sane, logical world again and his senses responded to it. He was about to lay waste to the last nagging worry of that nightmare as he checked with McCoy on Kirk's medical report.

The doctor looked up as Spock entered and smiled eagerly. "Glad to see you, Spock. Maybe you can help convince my patient he can't go running up to the bridge right away!"

They both walked over to where Jim sat up in bed, looking tired, but well. Spock raised his eyebrow.

"He looks well, Doctor. Are you certain he isn't malingering?" he asked drily.

Kirk's eyes twinkled. "Tell him, Spock. He's trying to keep me down here so he'll have someone to talk to," he protested. "Convince him I've got a job to do!"

Spock looked archly from one to the other. "It seems to be a most comfortable arrangement for both of you." Sobering, he added, "It is good to see you looking better, Captain."

Lifting his chin, Kirk gave Spock a look of triumph, putting his silent thanks to his Vulcan friend without the need for words. "What's the report from the team on Damion, Mr. Spock?" he asked.

"The colonists have elected to stay there and are showing no after-effects from the drug. I've assigned three crew members to help them set up their government and they give an excellent prognosis for success. The three men - Hartley, Taylor, and Wyman - who worked for Kessler, are in the brig and we'll be dropping them off at Starbase Six where they'll await trial and deportation."

McCoy's voice was thoughtful. "And, there's Lydra Kessler, down the hall being put through medical examinations, but I don't think she'll have to worry about standing trial. From your statement, Spock, it was clearly self-defense. What worries me is the

psycic damage. She may have to undergo some rehabilitation."

"I am sure the rehabilitation will be minimal," Spock replied. "She exhibited signs of being a very courageous young woman and it is reasonable to assume that she will be able to reconcile her actions and make a new start for herself. And now, Captain," he added, turning to Kirk, "with your permission, I shall return to the bridge. In your absence there is much work that I must do."

Kirk looked soberly at his First Officer. "Spock," he began, "there's something I wanted to say...I, well, I never did get a chance to thank you. Spock, I know more happened that I'll never know about, but..."

"Yes," Spock cut him off. Embarrassed? "Captain," he said, "I really must get back to the bridge."

Kirk looked long at him. They would speak of what happened on that planet no more. He nodded to Spock, who turned and left Sickbay.

McCoy looked after him. "Well, Jim," he said thoughtfully, "I'd say Spock certainly is a man who's 'not of that feather'."

Kirk looked puzzled. "A man who's not what, Bones?"

"'Not of that Feather'. It's a quote from Shakespeare," he explained. "It goes, 'I am not...' he trailed off as an inspiration hit him. "Look it up in the library tapes. That'll keep you busy and I'll be able to get some work done." He grinned. "I've got better things to do, too, than playing nursemaid to convalescent Starship Captains." His eyebrow shot up testily as he left the room.

Kirk sighed and leaned back in his bed. He grinned openly at the doorway, then he pressed the button on his bedside console.

"Can I help you, dear?" came the soft, feminine voice of the computer.

"Yes," Kirk replied. "Library tapes on the complete works of William Shakespeare."

THE END

*

*

THE BETTER WAY

"Infinite Diversion", The Vulcan medal boasts,
"In Infinite Combinations is a better way than most".
Logic, not emotions, can keep your course set straight
Never feel what humans call love or fear or hate!
Then, tell us of the "Pon Farr", with its logic ripping needs,
And unemotional mercy shown by quiet Vulcan deeds.
And the linking of two minds, the understanding gained.
Just a "logical" experience to a Being, Vulcan trained.
Unfeeling logic, crystal clear-then tell us how its so,
That a culture based on peace, as yours, does not love of
others show.

"IN A PIG'S EYE"

(An unsent letter from the Chief Medical Officer to the First Officer of the Enterprise.)

STARDATE: 4079.6

DEAR SPOCK, (How you will cringe at that salutation!)

The purpose of my writing this to you is that there's something I've been wanting to tell you for a long time. I couldn't tell you in person - I'd be too embarrassed. And if you were an emotional being, you would be too. That's the point, I mean the crux, of what I wanted to say to you.

I know I've teased you a lot, grumbled about it, but the truth of the matter is, Spock, that I really do admire and envy your logical, non-emotional approach to life. As a man of science, I'd be remiss if I didn't admit that yours is a better way than ours. We humans go charging off helter-skelter, guided by our feelings in every crisis we face, while you remain cool and unemotional, logically taking all the right actions. Take for instance, that time on Vaal's planet.

I would never have been able to assimilate all the data, arrive at such a logical conclusion and take such an unemotional action as quickly as you did. You saw that the thorns from that plant were aimed right at the Captain. You realized that if Starfleet had so much invested in you, they must have even more invested in him, so logically he must be the more valuable one to save. And you reasoned if you just shouted to him he may have delayed a second and the thorns would have still hit him. So your only logical course of action was to remove him physically. Completely unemotional action! I admire that!

And then there was that time on Janus VI when we didn't know what kind of creature the Horta was. All we knew was that it was killing our people. But you, always the scientist, had pointed out to Jim that if it were the last of it's race, it would be a shame to kill it. I remember even the Captain was worried that you might take an unnecessary risk to yourself to keep it alive. So, I can appreciate the logic and reasoning it must have taken for you to completely reverse your thoughts when you learned the Captain was trapped alone in the tunnel only "ten feet away" from the creature. Your unemotional, "You must kill it, Jim!" only serves as a tribute to your ability to corrolate all the facts, and arrive at so swift a decision. My unbound compliments to you, Spock!

Time and again, you have astounded us with your astute logic and taught us how efficient unemotionalism can be. A Captain tortured by thoughts of a lost love would not be 100% effective, so the logical thing for you to do would be to

touch his mind and cause him to "Forget". I can understand that. And how many times you've volunteered for hazardous duty because you've logically pointed out that a First Officer is more expendable than a Captain or Chief Medical Officer. And of course, we all understood that you were motivated by pure logic the time you kidnapped Capt. Pike, stole the Enterprise and headed for Talos IV without telling Capt. Kirk so that he wouldn't be implicated.

I must admit, I stand in awe of your explanation when you lost the shuttlecraft Galileo. You managed to save our lives by "logically reasoning that it was time for an emotional outburst". Now, that was a gem!

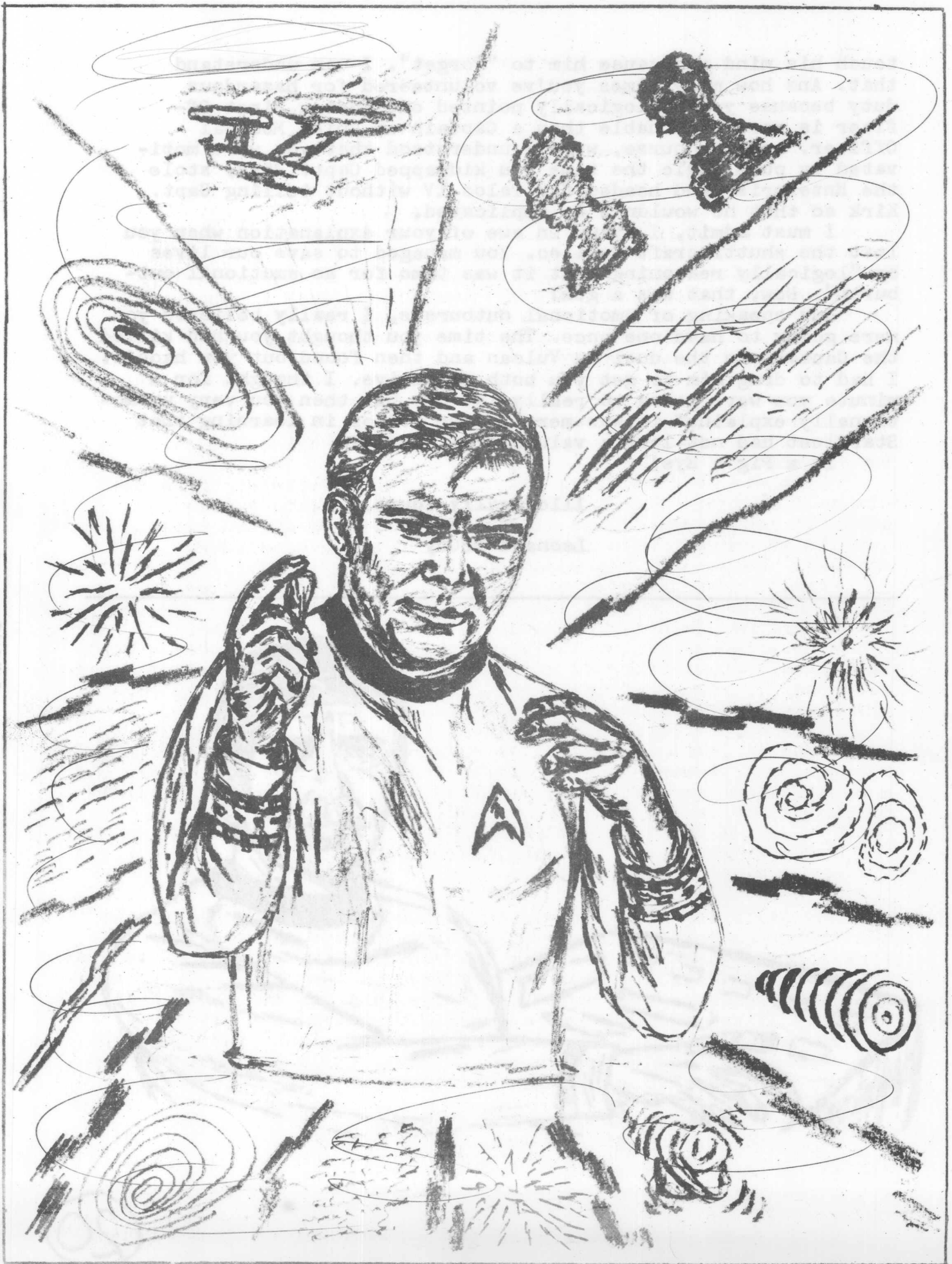
And speaking of emotional outbursts, I really believed you were going to have one once. The time you thought you had killed the Captain in the duel on Vulcan and then found out you hadn't. I had to drug him to get you both out alive. I thought for a minute you were going to really let go, but then you very unemotionally explained it was merely your relief in learning that Starfleet had not lost a valuable officer ---

In a Pig's Eye!

Illogically Yours,

Leonard McCoy





THE SILENT CONNECTION

The sixth planet of the star Capella, commonly called Henson's Planet after it's discoverer, was not what Kirk would have picked as a place to spend a two-week vacation, but it was suitable to human life and classified M. The atmosphere was somewhat thinner than Earth's and drier, with a temperature akin to that section of Old Russia known as Siberia. It had a rocky terrain, juttied with deep crevices and craggy peaks that made walking trecherous.

The Enterprise sensors had shown the planet to be uninhabited, agreeing with previous scouting reports, and the ship at this time was locked into orbit above so that its science department could investigate any potential value of this newly discovered world.

Kirk was contemplating the bleak horizon stretching before him as his First Officer approached. Spock carried a tray of assorted containers filled with bits and peices of the terrain.

"I am preparing to beam aboard with these specimens, Captain," he greeted his superior.

Kirk's eyes twinkled in amusement at Spock's obvious delight in being involved in this scientific investigation.

"Personal delivery guaranteed, eh Spock?" he teased.

"As Science Officer it is my job to see to the proper distribution and catagorizing of any and all samples we may take," Spock answered. "The rest of the landing party will be gathering more specimens and readings for another hour, Sir."

Overlapping their conversation, another voice was speaking, if speech it could be called. We Humans might call it telepathic thought, but it was more than that. The beings conversing were on a mental plane so much higher evolved than ours that their powers of communication can only be guessed at.

* HE IS THEIR LEADER *

* HE WILL BE THE ONE, THEN *

* IT IS NECESSARY *

* WE MUST BE SUBTLE *

As Spock de-materialized, Kirk smiled fondly after him, and went to check the progress of the other science specialists. It took him most of the hour Spock had referred to, and satisfied that all was going well, he made his way back to the beam-up point over the rocky landscape. He moved carefully, his footing sure, until suddenly it seemed there was a depression where none had been before, and with a cry of surprise, he felt himself falling into the gaping crevice. He remembered no more, and his concious mind did not hear the voices. He was oblivious as they probed and adjusted his mind.

* IT IS AS WE THOUGHT *

* THIS IS THE BEST WAY *

* HIS MIND IS TOO WEAK TO RESIST *
* SUCH PETTY BEINGS *
* HE WILL REMEMBER NOTHING *
* THE PROGRAMMING IS COMPLETE *
* HE WILL DO OUR WORK FOR US *

####

####

####

In the Science Lab, Spock was interrupted by the intercom.

"Scott to Mr. Spock, come in!"

He flicked the switch. "Yes, Mr. Scott, what is it?" Spock asked patiently.

"We've a bit of a puzzle here, Mr. Spock. The Captain called in and said he'd be at the beam-up point and we were to transport him aboard on his signal. Well, he didn't show up and now we can't raise him on the communicator, either."

Spock stood thoughtfully for a moment, then asked, "Have you contacted any of the other members of the landing party?"

"Kyle's doing that now, Sir, but so far it's negative. They all say he was by earlier, but they haven't seen him recently."

McCoy, who'd been helping in the culture analization, stepped up now behind Spock.

"Maybe something's happened to him, Spock," he said gravely.

The Vulcan looked at him evenly. "That is a possibility, Doctor. One of many, I might add. We cannot make such an assumption on so little data."

Scotty's voice came through again. "We've got two members of the landing party who just beamed up. Would you be wanting to question them, Mr. Spock?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Scott. On my way, Spock out." The First Officer turned to McCoy. "Do you care to join me, Doctor?"

"Lead the way, Spock," was Bones' gruff reply.

In the transporter room, they obtained very little information from the two young crewmen who only repeated what Scotty had already discovered. They listened to reports from the planet surface where the remaining crewmen were conducting an impromptu search, but to no avail. Spock's decision to act came swiftly.

"Mr. Scott, equip a security team with sensor devices. We shall beam down and conduct a thorough search of the area. Dr. McCoy, you will accompany me. We may have need of your services."

"What do you think happened, Spock?" Bones asked in concern.

"I do not know, Doctor, and I have no opinion. I am merely doing the logical thing," Spock said evenly.

Who are you kidding, Spock? McCoy thought. You're just as concerned as I am!

####

####

####

The place looked the same to Spock. He reflected that there were many places where a man could go unnoticed. He was engrossed in organizing the search party in the most systematic way possible, when a shout from McCoy halted him in midsentence. Turning, Spock saw the Captain making his way towards them a bit unsteadily.

Leaving the guards, he hurried to Kirk's side. McCoy had reached the Captain first and was running the medi-scanner over him.

"What happened, Captain? We lost communications with you," Spock asked with some relief.

Kirk's voice was easy. "Sorry to alarm you all. I lost my footing and took a fall. I must have blacked out for a few moments, but I'm all right now," he said.

"Let me be the judge of that," McCoy growled, the brusqueness masking his relief. Softening, he added, "That's a nasty bump you've got on your head, Jim."

"The landing party was unable to locate you. Where was it you fell, Captain?" Spock asked.

Kirk indicated the rise behind him. "Back up on that knoll somewhere," he dismissed the incident.

"I want to check you but in Sickbay," McCoy ordered, and Kirk, about to protest, changed his mind and agreed. Better to be safe than sorry, he reflected.

Unknown to him, the voices were in Kirk's head now.

* COME. OUR WORK BEGINS *

* ALL GOES WELL *

* HE WILL NOT RESIST *

* THIS IS THE ONLY WAY *

####

####

####

Spock entered the bridge and nodded to Kirk as he took his place at his station. Kirk acknowledged the greeting wordlessly as he went on with the systems check he was conducting.

"Navigational controls A-OK, sir," Sulu checked off.

Kirk put a hand up to his temple to obliterate a sudden pain. Brushing it aside, he continued.

"Engineering Section. Report," he ordered. The pain hit him again, forcing him to squeeze his eyes shut.

Spock looked at him curiously. Stepping down to Jim, he spoke softly, so they would not be overheard.

"Captain, are you unwell?" he asked in concern.

"Headache," Kirk explained. "Must be that fall I took."

Spock looked at him uncertainly. McCoy had pronounced the Captain well after that incident. "Do you wish for me to carry out the Systems check?" he asked, aware of the strained look on his Captain's face.

Kirk looked at him gratefully. "Good idea, Spock. I'll go down and see if Bones can give me something." He stood up and left the bridge with obvious relief as Spock slipped into his chair.

Everything went smoothly and no problems came up, until Spock received a communication from the Science Lab.

"Geologist Pritchett here, Sir. We've had an accident. One of the shelves of cultures fell over. We lost about half our samples."

It was a regrettable occurrence and Spock relayed it to Kirk when he resumed command. The Captain was mildly annoyed. The

samples would have to be replaced.

Kirk's next headache came some time later in the briefing room, where he was hearing the preliminary data gathered by the science teams. A sudden, sharp stab of pain in his temples drove all conscious thought from his mind. It tapered off then, and he persisted with the meeting doggedly, choosing to ignore the vicious throbbing in his head. At the conclusion of the meeting, he turned to Spock.

"Mr. Spock, take the Con. I'll be in my quarters," he told him abruptly.

And, silently, the voices came again.

* GO *

* THE HANGAR DECK *

* DO NOT WASTE TIME *

* DO NOT BE SEEN *

* GO *

On the bridge, Spock was preparing his log entry; he looked up at Chekov's cry of exclamation.

"Mr. Spock, there's a depressurization in the hangar deck!" the ensign informed him.

"There's a crew working down there!" Sulu injected in alarm.

"The hatch is in open sequence," Chekov reported, tension in his voice.

Spock's voice was steady. "Manual override, Mr. Sulu. Cancel that Open Sequence and pressurize the Hangar Deck. Lt. Uhura, get a medical team down there in case those men need aid."

"Manual override in effect, Sir," Sulu told him, breathing a sigh of relief.

A narrow escape, Spock thought grimly. He ordered the area closed off until they could determine what caused the malfunction.

####

####

####

There were several more scattered incidents over the next few days. The food processors were not functioning properly, and Kirk had to order an engineering team to repair them. The transporter went out, stranding the lab team on the planet surface for hours until they corrected it. And through it all, Jim was bothered by those blinding headaches that sent him to his quarters or to Sickbay for ease. He could feel one coming on again as he sat on the bridge discussing these matters with Scotty and Spock.

"Gentlemen," he was saying, "something or someone is trying to sabotage this ship! There have been too many 'accidents' to be called accidents! Spock, does anything we've learned about this planet give you any clues?" he asked, rubbing his temples.

Spock's answer was cautious, his eyes on Kirk probing. "No Sir. However, there has been insufficient....Sir, are you all right?" he asked, as Kirk's face contorted.

The Captain spoke with effort. "I'm going to Sickbay, Spock. I think for now we should order all the men up from the planet until we can determine what's going on."

As he retreated, Spock looked after him thoughtfully. He had his own ideas as to what was causing the malfunctions, but he wasn't quite ready to voice them yet.

####

####

####

McCoy looked at Jim in puzzlement. "I don't know, Jim. There's absolutely no medical reason for these headaches. I've put you through the tests twice now. You're perfectly healthy!" he said in exasperation.

Jim frowned. "Bones, there's got to be something! They don't last long, but they're becoming more frequent. I have a job to do, I can't be laid up with phantom headaches!" he said. Getting to his feet, he paced restlessly.

Uhura's voice came urgently over the intercom. "Sickbay, alert! Send a medical team to the Engineering Section at once."

Kirk strode over and flicked the switch as McCoy dispatched his men. "This is the Captain. What's happened, Uhura?" he asked.

"There was an explosion in the Jeffries Tube, Sir," she informed him. "Two crew members were injured attempting to repair the damage."

Kirk looked at McCoy with a sick expression. "What..is..happening to my ship?!" he intoned.

The medical team entered with the two injured crewmen, followed by a dirty faced Spock. McCoy took the wounded back to treat them, and the First Officer turned to Kirk.

"The damage has been repaired, Captain. It was fortunate that Kyoto and Slayman were nearby. Their prompt action averted a serious burnout," he informed Kirk.

Voice charged with anger, Kirk said, "What caused it, Spock? How did this happen?" It seemed he'd been saying those words too damn much lately, he reflected in annoyance. Something beyond his ken was taking place and the Captain was determined to find out what it was.

"The circuit was definately tampered with," Spock told him evenly. "Someone was there very recently and cut the wires to short circuit."

McCoy joined them. Kirk was still mulling over Spock's latest information.

"Someone here on the ship, Mr. Spock?" the doctor asked, repelled at the thought it might be one of the crew.

Spock nodded gravely. "Someone with a great deal of knowledge about the ship, judging from the variety of malfunctions we've encountered."

Jim turned to McCoy. "How are your patients, Bones?" he asked. "They're going to make it," McCoy replied. "They'll be out of commission for a while, though."

Kirk nodded. "We have a lot of questions, but no answers. Bones, about these headaches -- "

Spock cut him off. "Captain," he said thoughtfully, "has it occurred to you that these incidents always happen when you are incapacitated?"

Kirk looked at him sharply, the hairs on his neck prickling.

"What are you saying, Spock? A connection?"

"Possible," his First Officer concurred.

Kirk looked dubious. He could see no correlation between the attempted sabotage and these headaches of his. Perhaps the timing was right, looking back he could see that, but to what purpose?

"It's a theory, Mr. Spock," he admitted, "but we need more specific information. Let's go try to find some answers."

A little while later, Jim had to leave the bridge again, the throbbing in his temples increasing. Several minutes after Kirk had gone, Spock put Scotty in charge and headed for Sickbay, where he found McCoy at his desk.

"Doctor," he began.

"What can I do for you, Spock?" Bones asked, surprised to see the Vulcan here.

"I'm here to inquire about Captain Kirk's health," Spock told him, choosing his words with care. "I have reason for concern," he added.

The doctor frowned. "If you're referring to those headaches, Spock, you know as much as I do. I've given him every test in the book and everything checks out normally. And yet," he stood up and walked around the desk, "there's got to be a cause!" he exclaimed in frustration.

"Then, in your opinion, the accident he encountered on the planet surface --" Spock began, but McCoy cut him off.

"-- Wouldn't cause all this. No!" The doctor shook his head emphatically.

Spock appeared about to say something else, but suddenly they both became aware of the complete silence. The ever-present hum of the ship had ceased, indicating a shutdown in the life-support systems!

At that moment, Jim Kirk was lying on his bunk in his quarters. The ache had passed and he was planning to return to the bridge. But Spock's words earlier were still with him, and the more he thought about them, the more it fit in. Could it be possible that someone, somehow, was causing not only the malfunctions to the ship, but arranging to get him out of the way for a while? Could someone aboard be an enemy spy? It was possible, he concluded.

Just then, his intercom beeped. Growing these past few days to dread the sound as a harbinger of trouble, he crossed the room and acknowledged the voice.

"Emergency, Captain," Scott informed him. "There's been a shut-down of the life-support systems on Deck 7."

Sickbay! Kirk's stomach lurched. "Evacuate the area and restore systems manually," he ordered, knowing even as he spoke that these things would have been tried already. The able, competent officers who served as the Enterprise bridge crew all knew their jobs well.

Scotty's voice was tight. "Manual override is not functioning either. We've evacuated most of the area, but the doors jammed on the Sickbay complex, and we've got about 8 crew members trapped

down there, according to Mr. Spock. He and Dr. McCoy are trying to free the doors but haven't succeeded so far."

Spock was down there too? By now, Kirk realized, their air would be getting thin - if they hadn't succeeded so far, they certainly wouldn't now!

"Get a team down there to phaser through, Mr. Scott -- I'll meet you there -- Kirk out." Snapping on a life support belt, Kirk quickly left his quarters.

Outside of Sickbay, he hailed Scotty, who was directing the crew working on the doors. The Chief Engineer shook his head.

"We've little hope of reaching them in time, Captain. Mr. Chekov's on the bridge trying to repair the manual system, but I'm not promising anything."

Kirk stood by, watching the slow procedure helplessly. His friends were trapped in there and there was nothing he could do!

"How long do they have, Scotty?" he asked anxiously.

"Only about another 2 minutes, Sir."

Fretting with the inactivity, Kirk was startled by the sudden resuming hum as life-support returned to normal! Chekov had come through! Feeling his muscles relax, Kirk waited patiently until they freed the doors, then he strode in eagerly.

"That sure was a close one," McCoy greeted him.

Kirk grimaced and nodded. "Too close! Another of our mysterious malfunctions." He turned to Spock. "I've been thinking about what you said earlier, Spock. About the connection. It's happened again, hasn't it?"

"Yes, Captain, it has," Spock answered slowly.

"It seems whoever is causing this trouble wants me out of the way! What I can't figure out is why?" Kirk mused aloud.

Spock was uncomfortably silent. Kirk looked at him sharply, a question in his eyes. Finally seeming to make up his mind, Spock said, "Not exactly, Captain. You've taken the right hypothesis and drawn an inaccurate conclusion. It's not...." he hesitated and Kirk stared at him in astonishment, a glimmer of what Spock was getting at beginning to penetrate.

"Get to the point, Spock! Say it!" he said fiercely.

Spock's tone was soft. "It's not someone else, Jim."

"You think I'm sabotaging the ship?!" Kirk exclaimed, horror in his voice. "You think I'm causing these malfunctions!?"

"Now, wait a minute, Spock --" McCoy injected.

Spock silenced them both with an upraised hand. "Not consciously, Captain. I do not believe you are even aware of it. Yet in each instance you have had the opportunity, the knowledge and the skill to carry out the mishap. My theory is that you are unconsciously carrying out some form of programming."

"You're saying something or someone has taken over my mind?" Kirk asked, repulsion setting in at the very thought, making his voice sharper than he intended. "Ridiculous! I'd know if I were doing these things!"

"Not necessarily, Jim," McCoy said thoughtfully. "The mind's a tricky thing. Those headaches could be an indication that something's going on like Spock says."

"And, Captain," Spock broke in, "there was that time down on the planet that you were unaccounted for."

"I fell! I told you, I slipped and blacked out!" Kirk protested. Seeing their impenetrable faces, he added, "I remember it! Nothing happened!" He could see their disbelief, their doubt. He felt betrayed and yet he knew that was wrong. They all had the good of the ship at heart. Spock and McCoy may be misguided, but he couldn't doubt their loyalty. An idea occurred to him, and he groped for the right words.

"All right, you suspect that something happened in that time I was unconscious down on the planet. Can we - prove it - can we - reconstruct it?" He looked steadily at Spock. "Can you go back in my mind, use your Vulcan powers to relive that time?"

Returning Kirk's stare, Spock said simply, "It is possible." It would be, he knew, quite an ordeal. On previous occasions he had found Kirk's dynamic brain to be quite oppressive. The mind meld was a deeply personal experience, but this he would do for his Captain, and for the safety of the ship, willingly.

Kirk nodded his compliance, and seated himself on the empty lab table, legs dangling freely, forcing himself to relax. As Spock's fingers reached out for his temples, Jim met his eyes steadily, staring into those deep, dark, expressionless orbs, willing his mind to go blank. The first time Jim had experienced this mental probe of Spock's, he'd been slightly repelled, uncomfortable under such a direct penetration of his inner being. Yet, as he grew to know and respect the Vulcan ways, learned to trust and understand this Vulcan in particular, he no longer felt any sense of violation. It seemed right. It seemed natural.

Spock's voice was controlled and rhythmic, as he intoned the words to bring their minds together. "Our minds are reaching out... Our thoughts are one.... We are one...."

McCoy stood by helplessly and watched the drama being played out before him. In a few moments they would know the truth and Bones hoped to God that Spock was wrong.

The Vulcan was speaking again, his face contorted with the effort. He had reached the memory he sought. The words were partly Kirk's, coming from Spock's mouth. "...Everything well...must beam up...Surprise!...Falling...ground seemed to open up!..." A sense of bewilderment. "...Who?...What?..." Spock broke off, fighting for control.

"What is it, Spock?" McCoy asked in alarm.

"I am not certain. There is a block. His mind is strong." Concentrating again, he continued. This time the voice was different, deeper and slower. "...Your mind is too weak to resist us...You will leave this place and remember nothing...destroy the ship...destroy all the trespassers..." Kirk's words broke in again. "...I cannot...my ship...what are you?...get out...leave me..." Deep again, slow. "...We are greater than you...we do not destroy...you will destroy...ship...not we..." Kirk again. "...NO! I won't...OOHHH!" Spock writhed as though in pain, his head snapping back. Strange noises rose from his throat, an agony of inner mind.

McCoy stepped up and pried his fingers from Kirk, dissolved the link quickly, and supported Spock until he came out of the trance-like state. As the Vulcan straightened his back and drew a deep, tremulous breath, Jim Kirk opened his eyes and shifted his body. A look of horror crossed his face. Spock went over and stood beside him.

"It's true, then!" Kirk exclaimed, remembering now those things Spock had brought out of his subconscious mind.

"Yes, Captain. Your mind is being controlled by extremely powerful beings. You are being forced by them to destroy the ship."

As Kirk sat motionless, McCoy required an explanation. "Why, Spock? For what reason?"

"They consider us trespassers; enemies who have come to plunder their world. They assume we are too weak to resist them."

Kirk looked at him thoughtfully, forcing away the feeling of sickening dread and suppressing his emotions to better find a solution. "So far they've been right, Spock. I've done their bidding admirably."

"You must resist them, Captain. Try to communicate with them."

"I can't do it alone, Spock." He looked pointedly at the Vulcan. "Will you help me?"

"Now, wait a minute, Jim!" McCoy interrupted. "What you're asking may be dangerous for Spock, not to mention what you could do to yourself. These beings obviously have capabilities we haven't dreamed of!"

"Do you have another solution, Bones?" The doctor's silence was answer enough. He knew it was difficult for Bones to sit by doing nothing.

Spock addressed McCoy. "There seems to be no other logical alternative." Turning to Kirk, his voice was grave. "I can only strengthen your own mind, Captain," he warned. "It will not be easy to challenge them."

Kirk's voice was strong. "I won't destroy my ship! They cannot force me to do that; not now that I know of them!"

It was agreed upon to wait until Kirk's next headache, the signal by which the aliens obviously contacted him, to attempt again the mind link with re-inforced resistance. Spock instructed Kirk on how to use his mind to establish communications with the aliens.

Time dragged by slowly. Each of them carried out their respective duties, the routine tasks covering the tension. Jim went off duty; out of habit he got a tray of food from the galley, then sat and stared without touching it. A sudden stabbing pain brought him to his feet. Fighting against the pounding in his head, he reached the intercom, buzzed for Spock in the Science Lab.

"It's beginning," he said tersely. "I'm in the Officer's Galley."

"Stay there, Captain. Try to fight it - I'm on my way."

Kirk sat down, rubbing his temples gingerly. He tried to practice Spock's technique. Over and over he willed his mind to repeat, "I will not do what you want...I will not destroy my ship...I will not..." He could sense the pressure this time, he

could feel himself slipping into blackness. He struggled against it, fighting for consciousness. Dimly then, he was aware of Spock's presence at last, cool hands touching the hotness of his pain filled head. Tearing his mind from the struggle, he concentrated on achieving the mental link. He was aware of a new strength; he could feel Spock's mind enter his. Renewed and reinforced, he turned back to the pressure that pounded his brain. Through the powers of Spock's mind, he / they could perceive the third presence, insistant, strong, trying to sublimate Kirk's consciousness. Focussing on it, he / they could hear the thoughts. It was nothing new to Spock, but it was a revelation to Kirk.

* WE MEET WITH MUCH RESISTANCE *

* DO NOT UNDERSTAND *

* THIS IS UNEXPECTED *

* VERY STRONG THIS TIME *

* BACK OFF -- RECONSIDER *

And then, quite suddenly, the presence was gone, the pain eliminated and as Spock dissolved the link, Kirk looked at him in amazement. Both men were breathing hard, composing themselves with obvious effort. There was a tremor in Jim's voice.

"We did it! They're gone!"

"Yes, For now." Spock's voice was steady. "They were startled at the resistance they met. They will undoubtedly attempt it again."

Together they moved to Sickbay; McCoy was expecting them.

"I believe," Spock said, "we should remain here until the next contact is established. We do not know how severe their next attempt shall be, Captain."

The doctor was running a check on Kirk's body functions.

"Your blood pressure's up, Jim, and your brain waves are showing signs of abnormality. Too much more of this increased pressure's going to kill you!" he admonished. "I want to be ready with a tranquilizer if it becomes necessary."

"No!" Kirk said sharply. "I've got to be able to communicate with them -- find out what they want." He silenced Bones' protest with a command. "That's an order, Doctor. Only as a positively last resort if it seems to endanger the ship." If they win, Kirk thought drily.

There was only a few minutes for speculation before a sharp stab of pain, feircer than any other, brought a cry from Kirk's lips. Spock moved swiftly, reaching in to Jim's mind; the pain became his pain, the thoughts his thoughts. The link was established. The two men moved apart and Kirk felt the strength and skill from Spock's extraordinary powers supporting him as he addressed the aliens, verbally, for that was easiest for him. He spoke hoarsely, the pain and pressure stronger than ever.

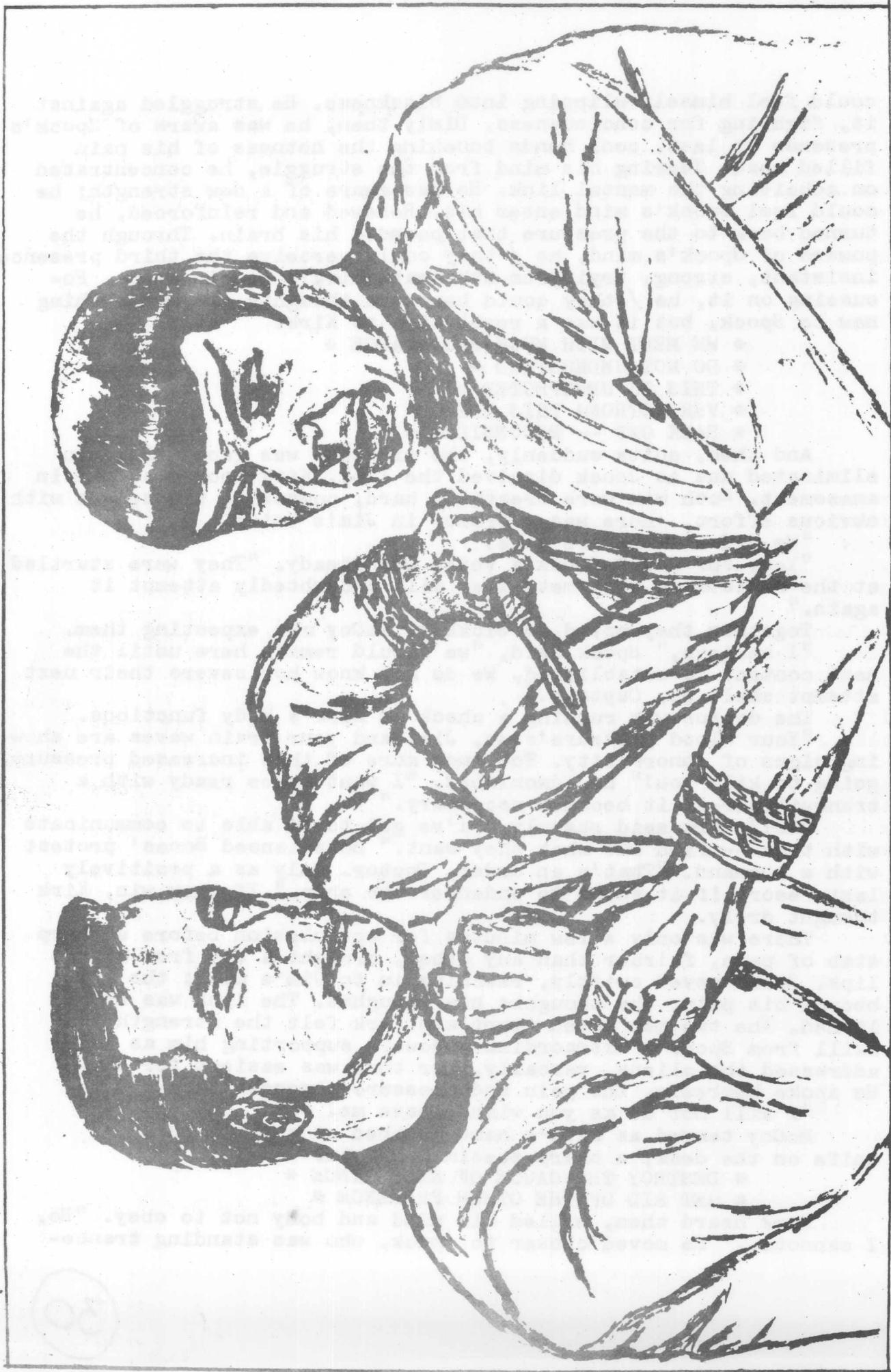
"I will not do as you wish! Leave me! Go!"

McCoy tensed as Kirk's hand grabbed at a small surgical knife on the desk, a sharp specimen curate.

* DESTROY THE CAUSE OF RESISTANCE *

* GET RID OF THE OTHER PRESENCE *

Kirk heard them, willed his mind and body not to obey. "No, I cannot..." He moved closer to Spock, who was standing trance-



like against the wall. Kirk's hand jerked up, bringing the knife blade to Spock's throat.

Spock counter-acted. His piercing eyes riveted on Kirk. His mind willed Kirk to stop. Through telepathic contact, the Vulcan was able to guide the Captain's mind to resist the intense pressure being wrought by the aliens.

With a great effort, Kirk lowered his arm. The knife clattered noisily to the floor.

McCoy prepared a hypo as he saw both Kirk and Spock's heads snap back under the pressure. "Stop it!" he shouted, though he didn't know what he was shouting at. "Stop it! You'll kill them!"

Kirk heard the commands again.

- * DO AS YOU ARE TOLD *
- * GO TO THE COMPUTER SECTION *
- * WALK DOWN THE HALL *
- * DO NOT RESIST *
- * WE CAN DESTROY YOU *

As his feet began to obey, his mind refused. "I will not go to the computer! I will not sabotage my ship!" The pressure intensified for just a moment and as he continued the resistance, quite abruptly they were gone again. Completely spent, Kirk sagged to his knees. Spock staggered to McCoy, who was running the medi-scanner over the Captain. Jim looked up in concern.

"Are you all right, Spock?" Spock nodded, and Kirk continued as McCoy adjusted the instrument for Spock's physical computations. "They were confused, weren't they?"

"I detected a sense of bewilderment," Spock agreed.

"Neither one of you can take any more of this!" McCoy protested. "If it hadn't stopped when it did, you would've burned out some brain cells."

Spock turned to McCoy. "Doctor, your medical terminology --"

"Spock! What's going on?" McCoy interrupted, when he realized that Kirk seemed to suddenly go into a trance. His face was chalky-white, his eyes were glazed and unfocused. "Jim!" Bones exclaimed, shaking the Captain.

Kirk felt them enter his mind, although this time there was no pain and just a slight pressure. He was aware of Spock and McCoy and what was going on around him, too, although he was powerless to signal to them. He knew when Spock reached for him, and could feel the telepathic Vulcan's thoughts touching his.

"They are probing his mind," Spock explained to McCoy, the words torn from his throat with effort. He was unable to say any more, so intent was he on achieving the link.

- * YOU ARE AN ENIGMA *
- * WHY DO YOU RESIST US *
- * YOU ARE NOT WHAT WE EXPECTED *

Kirk / Spock replied, mentally now, Kirk understanding at last how it was done. "We are men of peace. We mean you no harm."

- * YOU ARE INTRUDERS *
- * YOU COME TO PLUNDER OUR LAND *

"We believed this place to be uninhabited. We were not aware of you."

* YOU ARE INFERIOR *
* INFERIOR MINDS ARE BEASTIAL PEOPLES *
* PRIMITIVE PEOPLES *

"Yet we resist you. We have not harmed. You have done the harm - the hurting. Not we."

* WE MUST PROTECT OUR LAND *

"You know from our thoughts of the Federation of Planets that we represent. There are many life-forms among us. Yet we work together. Is that primitive?"

* IT IS NOT *

* YOUR MINDS ARE WEAKER THAN OURS *

* YET YOU SHOW GREAT WILL AND STRENGTH *

* THIS IS ENCOURAGING *

"We have come only to study your planet. Later perhaps, if you allow it, we could send representatives to discuss with you our common goals and interests. We have those specially trained in such areas. They could communicate with you as we are doing now."

* IT IS GOOD *

* WE WILL ALLOW IT *

* STUDY AS YOU WANT *

* YOU WILL NOT BE HARMED *

* WE WILL LEAVE YOU NOW *

With that, they departed, leaving Kirk / Spock entwined alone. Then Spock destroyed the link, giving a shudder at being free of the emotions and force of Kirk's mind.

"Fascinating!" Spock said in wonder. "They are really quite pacifistic, Captain."

McCoy, feeling reassured that they were indeed all right, was somewhat at a loss. "What happened? Are they gone?" he asked.

"Yes, Bones," Kirk said strongly. "When they discovered we meant them no harm, they were quite reasonable. They've agreed to a contact with the Federation. Perhaps a Vulcan or a Medusian Ambassador can be sent here."

"What kind of life - form are they?" McCoy asked curiously.

Spock replied. "Obviously unlike anything we know of, Doctor. The wonder is that we can communicate at all."

"Well, I've often thought that about the Vulcans, Mr. Spock," McCoy teased, smiling at the First Officer.

Kirk grinned at his two friends. He stood up weakly, McCoy's arm supporting him. "I'm okay, Bones," he protested. He looked soberly at Spock. "That was quite an experience, my Vulcan friend. Thank you." It had been a unique, eye-opening event for Kirk, and more than ever he valued and appreciated the Vulcan way.

Spock nodded, acknowledging his Captain's thanks. "It is fortunate they did not choose to inhabit the Doctor's mind. They may have received a different opinion of humans."

Bones was about to retort, but Jim silenced him. "Okay, you two! We have work to do. Let's get to it!"

McCoy smiled as the two friends headed for the bridge.

THE END

ATTENTION, ALL WRITERS!

BELOW YOU WILL FIND A SIMPLE STORY EXTRACT, CONCEIVED IN THE FIENDISH MINDS OF THE EDITORS. WITH NO FORETHOUGHT. WE CHALLENGE YOU TO SHARPEN YOUR WITS AND YOUR PENCILS: BUILD A STORY AROUND THIS INTRIGUING SCENE AND SEND US THE RESULT. NEXT ISSUE WE WILL PUBLISH THE BEST WE RECEIVE.

CONTEST RULES:

1. BE AS BRIEF AS POSSIBLE (NO MORE THAN 5 PAGES, SINGLE SPACED) AND TIE IN ALL THE DETAILS IN THE SCENE.
2. THE SCENE ITSELF MUST BE PART OF YOUR STORY - BEGINNING, MIDDLE OR END IS UP TO YOU.
3. WINNERS WILL BE CHOSEN ON THE BASIS OF ORIGINALITY, CLARITY, AND ADHERENCE TO THE THEME OF THIS FANZINE.
4. DEADLINE DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS FEB. 15, 1976.

GOOD LUCK!

* * * * *

Kirk backed out into the corridor. He knew he was trembling; he willed his legs to steady him. A gentle hand touched him on the shoulder and a familiar voice spoke the word, "Captain". Kirk turned to meet the piercing eyes of his First Officer. Pleadingly, he beseeched, "You saw, Spock?"

Spock nodded. "Yes. It is time."

Kirk fought off a rising panic. His hands felt as cold and clammy as the walls around him. He forced himself not to think, to concentrate on his breathing.

Spock lowered his eyes. For an instant he gripped the Captain's shoulder tightly, then he removed his hand. His voice was steady, quiet as he spoke.

"Jim - I'm sorry. I didn't..." He could not go on.

* * * * *





UNDERSTANDING

"You wouldn't know just what to do,
With a Genuine warm feeling"
McCoy lashed out accusingly,
At the Vulcan near him kneeling.

"Really? Doctor?, Spock replied.
His non-committal tone,
Masking anquish deep inside
And feelings never shown

Then suddenly he understood,
At last the Doctor knew.
And speaking gently as he could
Said "I'm worried for Jim, too".

AMOK TIME

If I must lose this officer,
I'll know the reason why.
For he is too important,
For me to let him die.

He has risked his life for me,
In countless ways gone by
And he is too important,
For me to let him die.

Is he not worth my whole career?
At least I have to try.
For he is too important,
For me to let him die.

We'll set our course for Vulcan,
Where the air is thin and dry.
For he is too important,
For me to let him die.

He is my friend and nothing else
Explains the reason why.
That he is too important
For me to let him die.

EULOGY

He wept. In the solitude of his quarters with no one to hear, James Kirk gave in to the consummate grief in his heart and let the tears flow freely for the first time since it happened.

First had come the shock, the disbelief; that merciful numbness of grief. It can't be so! There's some mistake! And even when it was proven beyond a doubt to be so, the mental denial, the feeling that this was but a bad dream and he needed only to wake up.

But now, the realization had set in fully, bringing with it the tremendous, aching sense of loss, the incredible loneliness and pain.

James Kirk was his own man; in every sense of the word a leader among men, commander of the finest Starship in the galaxy, and yet this time the Fates had dealt him a blow from which he didn't think he'd ever fully recover. And this time there was no loving hand nearby to touch his head and whisper, "Forget". James Kirk must go on alone.

The senselessness of it all brought a fresh wave of anguish. If there had been a reason, a higher glory, a purpose to it all, maybe that would have softened the blow, given him something to cling to. But to have it happen in this manner, a freak accident on a routine mission, was the ultimate in irony.

Kirk's mind went backward to the myriad dangers they'd encountered. The time the Vulcan had entered his pon farr and they had rushed him to his homeland to prevent his destruction. The time the female Imorg had taken the very brain from his body to do her planet's controlling. The time the shuttlecraft Galileo was believed lost with her entire crew, and again when the parasitic creatures of Deneva had entwined themselves around Spock's nervous system and there seemed no solution. Yet all these incidents had a tomorrow, and now there would be no more tomorrows for his Vulcan First Officer.

It had been a routine exploration. Spock had taken the shuttlecraft Copernicus out to gather atmospheric data from closer view. A sudden ion storm had entered the area and despite all their efforts to affect a rescue, the small defenseless craft was obliterated swiftly, its matter dispersing into debris particles. There wasn't even a body to be borne home, Kirk thought, with a wrench of his heart.

Spock was dead. And now he, James Kirk, had to somehow pick up the pieces of his life and go on from here. A life that would never again be the same, he knew. For in all the vastness of space these two men, so different and yet so completely complimenting one another, had been drawn together as though Fate intended it. There had been between them a certain quality so rare and treasured in this life that some never found it.

The Captain of the Enterprise stood and paced his room ponderously. In a few minutes he must go to the auditorium and face

the assembled crew. It was his duty, his obligation, to deliver the eulogy, to conduct the memorial service for Commander Spock. He had no words prepared, he could only speak as his heart dictated. It was an ordeal he wished he could dispense with, but it was necessary and he would do it because he must. Just as Spock himself once had to search for the words to declare his Captain legally dead when he thought Jim lost in the Tholian sector.

Kirk's door opened and McCoy stood there, clad in his dress uniform. There were certain military standards which seemed foolish right now. It was proper, it was showing respect, true enough, yet somehow so pathetically insufficient.

"Ready, Jim?" the Doctor greeted him softly, carefully measuring the effects of this tragedy on his friend. McCoy himself could not speak of it yet, of the frustration and helplessness he'd felt. As a doctor, death was his sworn enemy, he rebelled against it more forcefully than the average man. Yet, much as his own grief hurt, he knew his duty lie in helping the Captain to channel his.

Jim looked at him, his eyes beseeching McCoy, the naked hurt showing through. In just a minute he would be the Captain to his crew. He would put up his chin and do what was expected, but right now he was just plain Jim Kirk, a man who had lost his dearest friend.

"What's the answer, Bones? Where's the justice?" he asked, his frustration suddenly turning into rage. He wanted to smash something, beat someone, take out his uselessness in physical brutality, as if by doing so he could change things, turn back the clock, bring Spock back to life. Just as Spock had acted physically in so many instances to prevent Kirk's death. He'd been there when the poisoned plant had shot off it's darts, taking them himself rather than risk injury to his Captain. He had lessened the odds when Kirk fought the Yangs on Omega, and again leaped to his defense when the strange man-child Charlie Evans had attempted to harm Kirk. But now, Spock was gone, and no action on Jim's part could bring him back.

McCoy moved in close and put a hand on Jim's shoulder, fingers gripping tightly. "I have no answer - no one does. You must seek out the answer within yourself. We all must," he added, his thoughts a kaleidoscope of memories. He and Spock in the wilderness wastes of Beta Lyrae's ice age, his frozen feet about to drop off; Spock urging him on. He and Spock in the arena of the Roman-like planet, his opponent settling in for the kill before Spock moved swiftly and rendered the man helpless. Spock's sympathy and concern when the Vians of Minara had tortured him so badly they almost succeeded in killing him. A plethora of pain consumed the doctor and he forgot for a moment he was supposed to be reassuring the Captain.

Kirk got up and moved abruptly. "C'mon, Bones, the crew is waiting," he said evenly. He straightened out his face, composed his thoughts and left his quarters.

James Kirk walked slowly into the auditorium, eyes straight ahead, hands steady. Reaching the dias at the front, he looked out at the sea of upturned faces. Those silent, comforting faces

of his co-workers, turning expectantly now to him to say the words for them, to put voice to what they were all feeling. Death and danger were no strangers to these brave men and women gathered here, but familiarity does not soften the hurt, especially in a situation like this, where death had come so unexpectedly and brutally.

Kirk stood with his hands resting on the platform, willing his muscles to relax. He spoke quietly and clearly, his voice carrying nonetheless to the back of the room in the silence.

"We are here now to pay homage to the memory of Commander Spock," he began. "We all know what happened, perhaps we don't know why it happened. Doctor McCoy says we have to find the answer within ourselves and I expect that about sums it up." He paused, flashing a look at Bones, sitting so still in the first row. "Mr. Spock gave his life in the performance of his duties; he died the way he lived, with honor and courage. Yet though he died, he left a legacy to all of us who knew him. A striving for perfection, a deep sense of admiration for the orderly and logical way - " His throat tightened on that last. How long, he wondered, before I can hear the word 'logical' without choking? He continued. "These are but a few of the things Spock has bequeathed to us fortunate enough to know him and his unique Vulcan philosophy." A very tiny smile appeared around the corners of Jim's mouth. "He would not wish us to grieve; it is exclusively a human trait. No, Spock would expect us to go on with out duties, taking what comfort we could from the memories we carry of him."

He looked at the faces, tearful, courageous, all members of the same family. "Spock was my First Officer, my friend. He cannot be replaced, but we must go on, living out our lives as was intended. And feeling that much richer for having known that Vulcan named Spock.

"There will be a minute of silence now. All rise."

As the four hundred got to their feet, Kirk bowed his head. He would go on, he knew now. A part of him had died with Spock, and he would never be the same, but his duties compelled him onward, just as Spock would have gone on without him.

With heavy heart, James Kirk left the room.

* * * * *

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Don't panic! 'Eulogy' was written as an experiment in the genre known to all fans as the "What if..." story. We all saw, in The Tholian Web, Spock's reaction to Kirk's death, and I began wondering about the reverse. Hence, 'Eulogy'. However, this by no means indicates that the author wishes Spock dead any more than the Creators wished Kirk dead in the Tholian Web! I have no desire to abort the relationship!

STAR TREK SONG SHEET

* THE GOOD SHIP ENTERPRISE *

(to the tune of: The Good Ship Lollipop)

On the Good Ship Enterprise
It's a quick trip through starry skies
Where asteroids play - tag with comets in the old Milky Way
There are outposts every place
Talk about most crowded space
And those colonies - every week we have to save one of these
Captain Kirk is there - he is debonaire
With his cool First Officer, Spock
Scotty and McCoy - Oh Boy!
Sulu groks while Uhura rocks!

On the Good Ship Enterprise
You will sure flip over Star Fleet's prize
When you Energize - On the Good Ship Enterprise!

* OUR GUY GENE *

(to the tune of: Our Gal Sal)

They called him frivolous Gene
A peculiar man on the scene
With an idea worth telling,
A show so compelling
Is our Old Gene.

His troubles, sorrows and care,
All the fans are willing to share.
Star Trek is his pet quirk,
The bane of the network
Is Our Guy Gene.

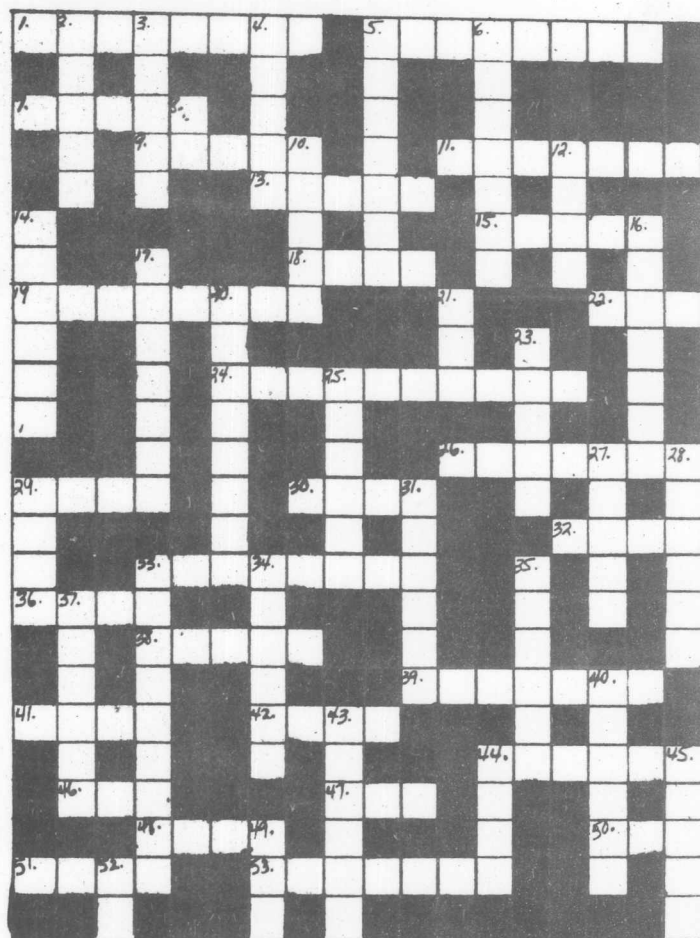
STAR TREK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1-"Return to it" because "it is yesterday".
- 5-It waited years for a question.
- 7-The Bad Guys in the "Omega Glory".
- 9-The Good Guys in the "Omega Glory".
- 11-He was the "Wolf in the Fold"
- 13-The episode where Spock felt the Enterprise was cast in the role of Satan.
- 15-The only death penalty left is visiting here.
- 18-The other Gene.
- 19-"The" Show.
- 22-Ted Cassidy played this Android.
- 24-Here began "The Deadly Years".
- 26-Squire of Gothos.
- 29-The first Pilot, "The _____".
- 30-Head Thrall on Triskelion.
- 32-One of the Black/White Men.
- 33-Paradise or Immunity.
- 36-The "Drive" of the Enterprise.
- 38-Where Kirk fought the Gorn.
- 39-They're nice to have if you're being attacked.
- 41-Color of Science uniforms.
- 42-Pike's girlfriend.
- 44-Spock uses this to analyze what's approaching.
- 46-Majel Barrett in Megagerie, "Number _____".
- 47-The last scene in a story.
- 48-Where Dr. Devrin wanted to go.
- 50-Kirk's record.
- 51-He came aboard with Eva, Magda, & Ruth.
- 53-"The Savage _____", a story about Lincoln.

DOWN

- 2-She wanted to die to save her people.
- 3-He demanded a piece of the action.
- 4-The landing party found a flag here.
- 5-The Shuttlecraft.
- 6-Miss Lincoln in "Assignment Earth".
- 8-Starfleet Academy (inits.).
- 10-That pointy eared Vulcan.
- 12-The Skotians believe he was a Hitler.
- 14-Lt. Leslie. He's Bill Shatner's stand-in.
- 16-Mr. Scott enjoys this drink "_____ Brandy".
- 17-A little furry animal.
- 20-A type of fever.
- 21-The kind of mission Kirk & Spock were on in "The Enterprise Incident".
- 23-The color of Spock's blood.
- 25-A big furry animal who's bite is deadly.
- 27-Red or yellow.
- 28-A Starship.
- 29-The Enterprise carries 430.
- 31-The interesting thing about his costumes, is their appearance of falling off.
- 33-The episode where the Enterprise found an old ship with a crew in suspended animation.
- 34-Where Jim's brother was killed.
- 35-"_____ of Gothos".
- 37-The God in "Who Mourns for Adonias".
- 40-The studio where S.T. was made.



- 43-McCoy was going to love her 'till he died.
- 44-What a phaser can do.
- 45-He was not "of the body".
- 49-The Enterprise' call letters.
- 52-Miss Fontana.

STAR TREK WORD FIND

By: Kevin O'Brien

In this puzzle are 32 words related to Star Trek. Look for them forwards, backwards, up and down and diagonally. When you find a word, just put a circle around it.

ENTERPRISE CERES AHPJ
SIAMEE BUMBLEPAHCLPHE
CCRODXNTGT TAKEIWOOF
OHECRHOAUTDLIIFNTTF
TONFOKNQUUVJTORDAOR
TLTUCRZSFHYPOKOKRNI
YSALIALPFSREDCDCETE
KUHURAANTNAHOODMXOS
OYSSSTELOPEANTPERTRE
EKXELBBIRTNTESNUAPD
NEYEMCCOYTRUEEBXHEV
INONRSTOLNALMRESSDO
GTMIGALILEOISORAMOK
MAIRALBOERESABRATSE
OWNOGNILKANETTYABRH
ROTACINUMMOCKOOLETC

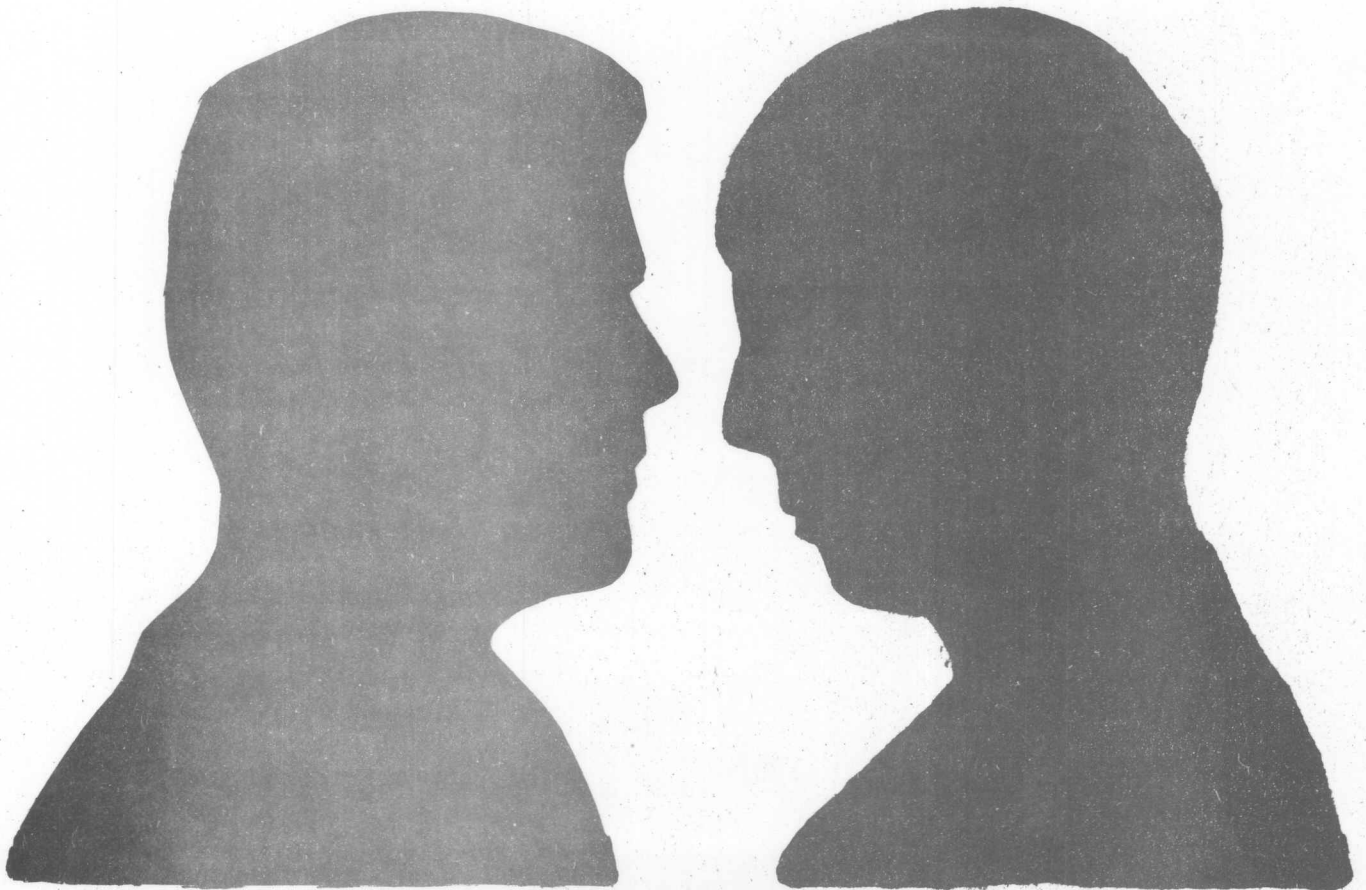
THE TRUTH

The bullets will not kill you, they are spectres and not real.
Let me reach your mind, Jim, and show you what I feel
Facethem squarely, do not fear, for what I say is so
They are just illusions, Jim, my mind will help you know,
Believe!

You are Captain James T. Kirk, A starship you command.
This paradise you've found here, Jim, is not your native land.
You're not Kirok! you're not a God, my mind will help you see
Your home is in the stars above, now listen, Jim, to me.
Remember!

The agony you feel now, the pain that you must know.
She died because she couldn't bear, to let either of you go.
But I can ease your suffering, Jim, and touch you with my mind.
So while you sleep I'll help you leave, these memories behind.
Forget!

I couldn't ever say it, Jim, I couldn't let it show
For I am bound by logic, it's a thing which you must know.
I do not show emotions, Jim, I can't afford to care
For I am Vulcan you can see, we have no feelings there.
Love!



De Profundis

BY C.R. FADDIS

EDITORS' PREFACE

We were just about to complete this zine, when we recieved the following story. As we read it with a mixture of "pain and delight", we wondered what to do with it. We had planned to use it in our next issue as we felt it might be a bit much in the same copy as "EULOGY" and we didn't want to present CONTACT as morbid. And yet, we found it to be such a poignant and powerful vignette, so typical of our theme, that we felt compelled to share it with our readers. Thus we made our descision to include it at this time. Many thanks to Connie and to Carol Frisbie for thinking of us.

The merciless technology of subspace radio caught and reproduced the minutest detail: the throat-torn, mindless screams; the shuddering breaths sucked in between each scream; the gradual decanting of screams into blood-clogged gurgles. The radio could have been turned off, yet no one made a move to do so; it was impossible to listen, but impossible not to. Then, finally the wheezing tapered off and stopped.

Spock deliberately relaxed his cramped hold on the seat-sides of his chair and glanced at the chronometer. It had taken McCoy a full forty minutes to die. Spock raised his eyes to scan Kirk, but the Captain sat quietly in the command chair, his eyes still tightly closed, his face drawn, but giving no other visible sign of the horror he unknowingly was projecting.

The radio crackled to life. "You will now surrender the renegade Kerl or your Lieutenant Garrovick will be put to death as well."

Uhura swallowed her sobs, straightening, and pulled herself together enough to transmit the Captain's reply, but the silence stretched out. Kirk gave no sign of having an answer.

"Enterprise", the Romulan voice insisted, "your officer is impatiently awaiting your reply."

Silence ruled. Then, slowly, the Captain doubled over in his seat as though all the life had gone out of him, and he covered his face with his hands. "No," he rasped, barely audible. "We can't."

"Kirk," the radio demanded, "give us your answer."

Spock shot out of his chair and punched the transmit button at Uhura's console. "This is Commander Spock of the Enterprise. Your demand for Kerl cannot be met. Kerl's request for asylum is

fully legal, and we are under obligation to honor it. However, your kidnapping and murder of our officers may well be construed by Federation authorities as an act of war. I strongly advise you to return Lieutenant Garrovick to Federation territory unharmed."

An agonized shriek in Garrovick's unmistakeable baritone erupted from the radio in uncompromising answer. This time, Spock cut the reception, but the cries continued in the minds of the bridge crew regardless. For long minutes, no one moved, and only muffled weeping shocked the utter quiet.

Spock stepped down into the well of the bridge, but hesitated.

"Captain ?"

Kirk did what was expected of him. He sat back in the command chair and cleared his face of pain, giving the order to return to the outpost in a dead voice. The bridge crew stirred back to life, laying in the course, engaging Warp Drive, contacting the outpost. There were routine things to do to absorb the mind. The Enterprise turned from the Neutral Zone in a graceful arc and fled the frown of fortune.

Kirk stared through the viewscreen, but his eyes were blank and dry. He'd sought and tried every alternative, but the single one that would have worked was the single alternative he did not have: Kerl was worth more than the lives of two officers; Starfleet would readily have traded an entire starship, crew and machine for the Romulan genius who'd perfected the cloaking device. No, Bones and David had not died without reason. But they had died.

After a million kilometers, Kirk pushed himself to his feet, but his knees betrayed him and the bridge spun away sickeningly. Spock, who had stood by in supportive silence the whole while, lent real but unobtrusive support now.

"Mr. Scott," the Vulcan called, "Please take the con."

Not until the turbolift doors were safely shut behind them did Spock allow Kirk to slump into his arms. He did not take the Captain to Sickbay; he knew instinctively, that it would have been the worst choice now. He carried him, instead, to his own quarters. The Romulan, Kerl, passed by in the corridor and turned with the others there to watch the Vulcan and the Human disappear around the bend. Voices buzzed, speculating worriedly, but there were no answers, and Kerl went back to his cabin to meditate.

In Spock's quarters, the Vulcan eased Kirk into the chair by his desk and knelt beside him, not sure what to do next. Kirk sat limply, as apathetically as he'd lain in Spock's arms, but the anguish he'd broadcasted earlier had dulled not a bit. Spock winced as he touched Kirk again, unable to block such intense emotions completely, but he determined to blunt Kirk's pain with any method he could employ. He positioned his hands on Kirk's down-turned face in the precise placement necessary for editing

memories. Jim was listening to those screams, over and over, and the stab of his horror slashed into Spock's guts with real physical pain. The Vulcan hesitated, recovering himself, and in that brief moment he was firmly and angrily pushed away, refused, denied. He dropped his hands and pulled back.

"Jim--" he began, and found no words.

Kirk did not, would not, look at him.

So. The Human was determined to suffer, to punish himself. Spock settled back on his knees to consider. Kirk would not accept Vulcan comfort;; Spock barely knew how to give any other. The Doctor's shrieks ran fresh through his own mind as well, and he wondered fleetingly if he indeed had any comfort to give at all. His own sense of loss was catching up to him. The initial acid banter had long since transmuted into an affectionate repartee. He knew and admitted it, and in doing so, admitted to the grief now. But there had been nothing he could do for that friend; there was, perhaps, a little yet that he could do for Jim.

With exquisite gentleness, Spock reached over to Kirk and unsealed the Captain's tunic at the neckline, then rearranged Kirk's arms and drew the shirt off over Jim's head. Kirk did not react. Spock removed Jim's black tee shirt, then unfastened the trousers and drew them off too. He put the boots aside and pulled Jim to his feet, leading him into the bathroom, then turned on the shower. He finished stripping Jim and walked him into the stall and scrubbed him down, cleaning the lingering sweat of horror away, trying to ease the tension out of cramped muscles. Jim endured it numbly, not protesting.

Spock turned off the shower and sat Jim on the seat of the commode, toweling off the fine ash of dead epidermis and dirt, and wrapping him in a dark Vulcan informal robe that covered him completely, and then some. Spock tenderly combed the tangles out of Jim's hair, then led him back into the main room, easing him onto the edge of the bed. He pulled the desk chair over, then sat facing Kirk, but did not speak. He had done everything as he imagined one Human would care for another, where one was functional and the other was not. It was what McCoy would have done, but McCoy would have known what should be said now, what could reach through the numbness, the denial. Spock sighed mentally. His logic could find no solutions. If open solicitude had no effect.....

Without warning, out of the apathetic gloom, Kirk's shoulders shuddered and he bent forward, folding his hands tightly, beginning to sob.

The sound cut through Spock with anguish and relief. Uncertainly, he touched Jim's clenched fingers and Kirk grasped his hands tensely, holding onto him, weeping harder.

A scene touched Spock's memory: Jim's anguished clasp on McCoy as Edith Keeler was killed. Without thinking, he pulled Jim to him, sliding into a tight mutual embrace, and did not resist the electric grief of it. The water sprang from his eyes perforce and soaked Jim's hair at the nape, but he did not notice; the linked shock and loss overwhelmed.

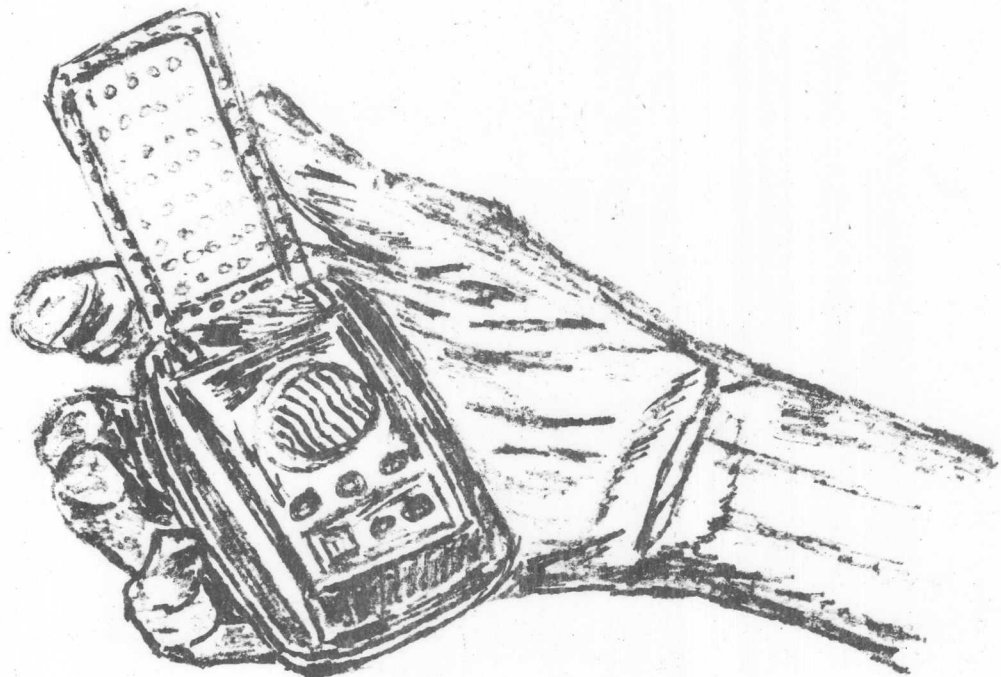
Our friend!

Gradually, the meld afforded perspective; the grief was experienced in a sort of parallax, and became manageable. Logic met anguish half way; the very sharing made both priceless, a mutual shoring-up against those pressures which could crush. It is, they thought simultaneously, the solution he proffered for both of us.

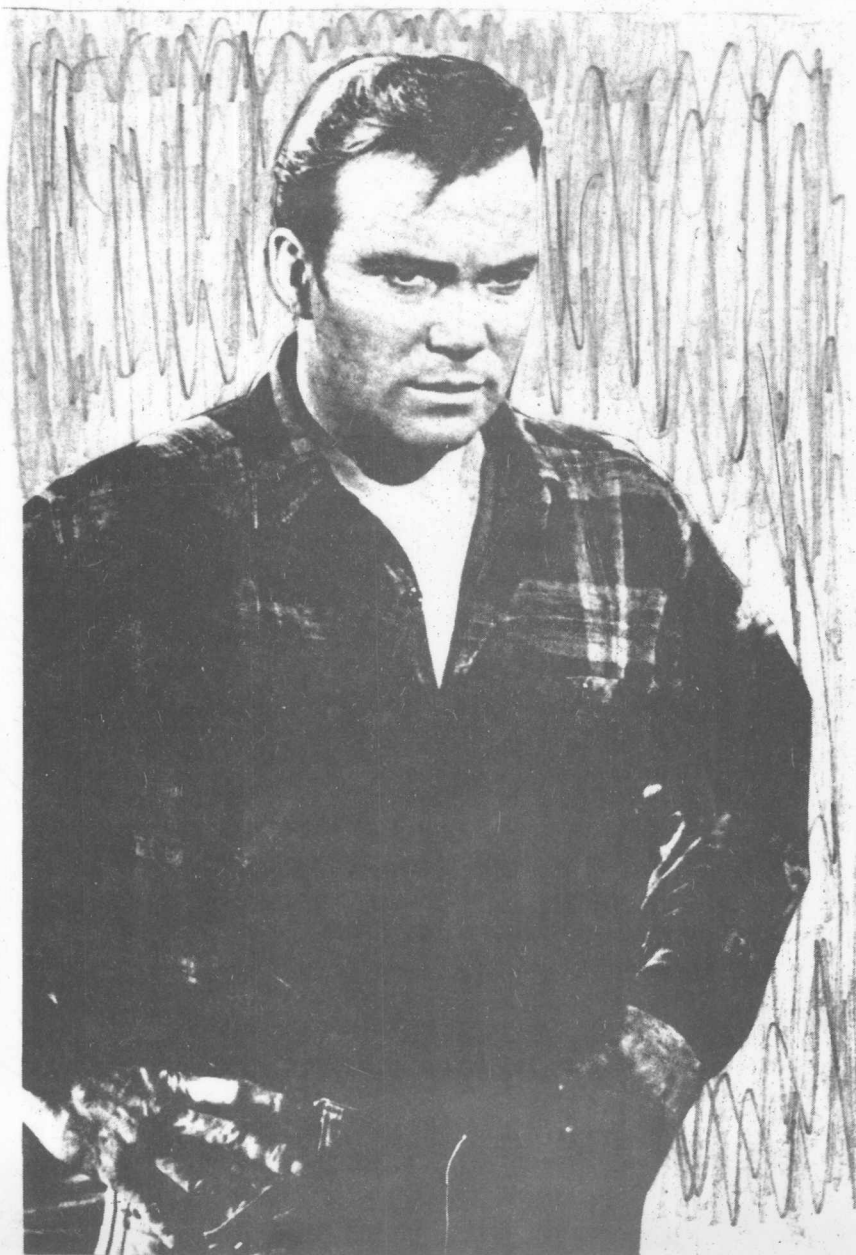
The catharsis had left a tremendous lassitude of mind and body. Spock delicately disentangled from the link, and Kirk sank back on the bed, depleted. Spock rose long enough to pull the covers up over Jim's shoulders, then crawled in beside him, too spent to bother with undressing. As he let sleep take him, he permitted himself the venial luxury of throwing one protective arm across Jim's chest.

Time would heal those wounds still left.

THE END



"WELL, UH, YOU
SEE, CAPTAIN, THERE
WAS THIS OTHER PON
FARR I FORGOT TO
MENTION."



"WHAT D'YA MEAN, THE
SHIP'S LAUNDRY LOST ALL
MY GOLD SHIRTS?"

COMMAND DECISION

HOW COULD HE CHOOSE,
AND YET A CHOICE, HE KNEW HE HAD TO MAKE
FOR EITHER WAY, HE HAD TO LOSE
THE ONE HE LET THEM TAKE.

BOTH WERE HIS FRIENDS
HE COULD NOT BEAR TO SENTENCE EITHER MAN
IS THIS THE WAY AT LAST IT ENDS?
PART OF THE VIANS PLAN.

HE LOOKED AT SPOCK,
HIS DEAREST FRIEND. COULD HE DESTROY HIS BRAIN?
THE VIANS THREATENED THAT THE SHOCK
WOULD LEAVE HIM QUITE INSANE.

HIS EYES MET BONES,
AND IN HIS HEART HE FELT THAT QUIET DREAD.
THE VIANS WARNED IN SPOKEN TONES,
MCCOY WOULD END UP DEAD.

"I'VE CHOSEN MEN
TO DIE BEFORE." HE ONCE HAD MADE THE BLUFF,
AND NOW TO FACE THAT CHOICE AGAIN,
WHEN ONCE HAD BEEN ENOUGH.

HE LOOKED AT GEM,
AND WONDERED NOW, SO TINY AND AFRAID,
WHAT IS IT SHE MUST DO FOR THEM?
THIS GAME THE VIANS PLAYED.

IS SHE THE SEED,
THE CENTRAL PART FOR WHICH THE STAGE IS SET?
WHAT IS IT THAT THE VIANS NEED?
WHAT TESTING MUST BE MET?

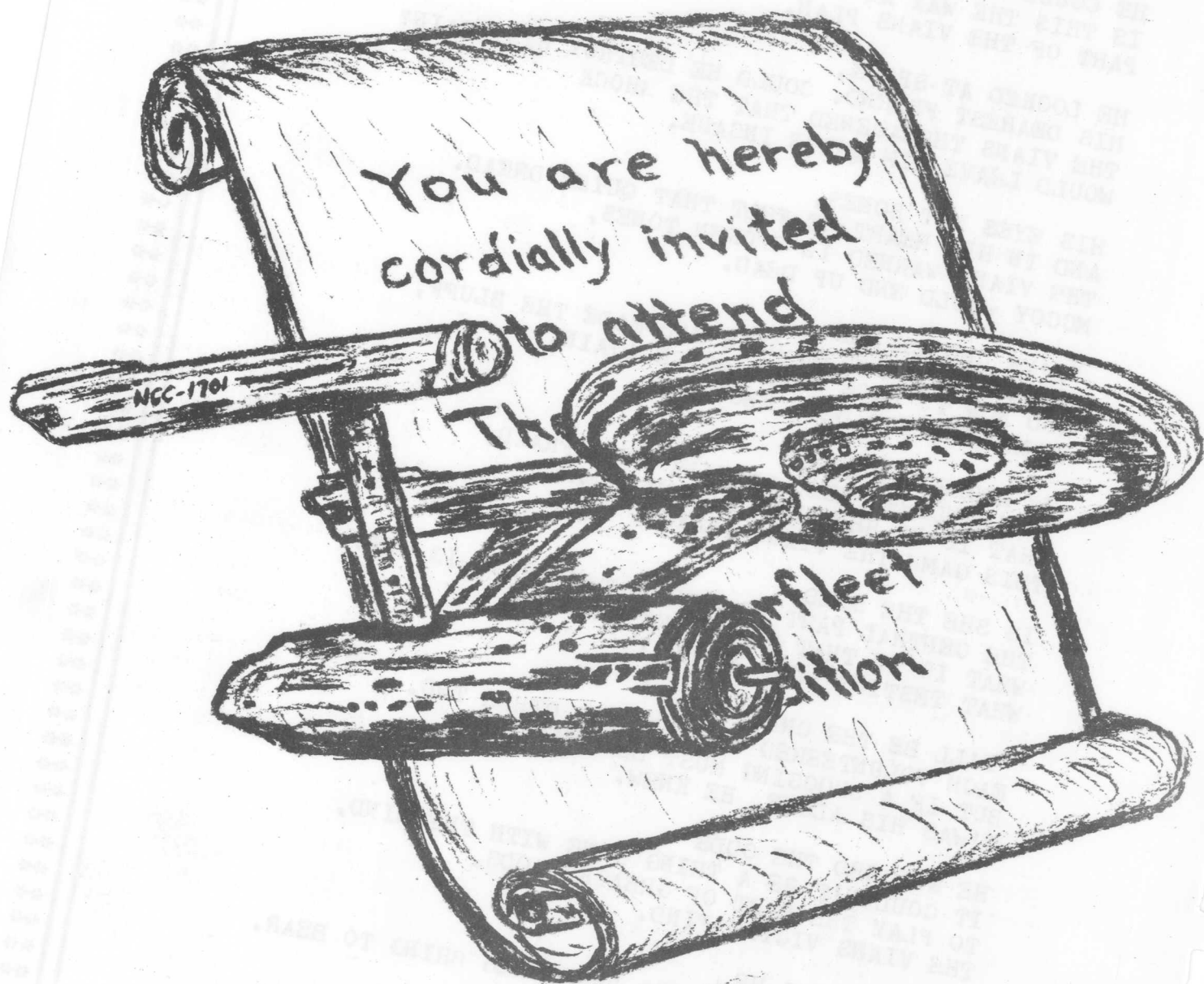
"I'LL BE THE ONE,"
EACH VOLUNTEERED TO SAVE THE OTHER TWO.
BUT IF A CHOOSING MUST BE DONE,
T'WAS HIS ALONE, HE KNEW.

HE WEIGHED THE ODDS
IT COULDN'T BE A THING DONE WITH THE MIND,
TO PLAY THE PART OF GREATER GODS,
THE VIANS VICTIM FIND.

CAPTAIN, WAS HE
AND RANK DOTH OFT ITS PRESSURES BRING TO BEAR.
SPOCK OR BONES? IT HAD TO BE
DECISION, NONE COULD SHARE.

"I'VE MADE MY CHOICE ,"
AT LAST HE KNEW. HIS HEART FELT BITTER GRIEF,
THEN SUDDEN HYPO STAYED HIS VOICE,
AND OFFERED SWEET RELIEF.

HOW COULD HE CHOOSE?
AND YET A CHOICE, THEY KNEW HE HAD TO MAKE.
EACH FRIEND WAS WILLING HERE TO LOSE
HIMSELF, FOR THE OTHERS' SAKE.



PHASE II

CHAPTER ONE

THE INVITATION

Admiral James T. Kirk pushed the button to open his door. A recurring stab of loneliness filled him. The rooms were so empty now, without Areel to share them. He spent as little time as possible here these days.

Since his wife's tragic death in a shuttle crash six months ago, Jim had been burying himself deeper and deeper into his work, concentrating all his effort on accepting what had happened. They had a good life together, a good marriage; he felt fortunate to have found such unexpected happiness at all, albeit shortlived.

I really ought to move, he mused, entering the living area. But as usual, he shoved the thought aside, reluctant to go through the ordeal of sorting through their possessions.

He was meeting "Bones" McCoy for dinner this evening; a pleasant interlude which he was greatly looking forward to. Both of them living on the same Starbase as they did, the two old friends didn't see as much of one another as they'd like.

An envelope on the floor caught his eye. Slipped through the mail slot, it was an old-fashioned, written style communication. Undoubtedly something quite formal; they were the only things sent that way anymore. Glancing at it, he noticed the Star Fleet insignia and although his curiosity was piqued, he moved first to fix himself a drink.

That done, he settled down comfortably with the envelope. It was probably an invitation to some formal affair which he had no interest in, but would feel obligated to attend, due to his rank and status here on Starbase VIII.

As he read the engraved script, he felt a chill rush up his spine. Feeling part excitement, part dread, he sat entranced, staring at the words.

"YOU ARE HEREBY CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND
THE DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONIES FOR THE FORMER
STARSHIP, USS ENTERPRISE, TO BE HELD ON STAR
BASE FIFTEEN ON STARDATE 5274. 1. ALL FORMER

OFFICERS ARE ASKED TO ATTEND AS WE SAY
FAREWELL TO A GRAND OLD LADY IN THE
FINEST STAR FLEET TRADITION.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, THE USS ENCOUNTER
HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO TRANSPORT PASSENGERS
FOR THE CEREMONIES. CONTACT REAR ADMIRAL
LESLIE WINKINS FOR DETAILS."

So, they were going to scrap her. His ship. The Enterprise. The very name sent a plethora of emotions running through him. The pride. . . and the guilt, inexorably linked together in his mind. They're not killing her now, he thought. We did that a long time ago, Spock and I. Resting his chin in his hands, he let his mind roam freely over the memory of that time and the way it had been. It was painful, but he suddenly couldn't hold it back any longer.

* * * * *

At the same time, on the Planet Vulcan, the Enterprise former First Officer stepped quietly into the sun baked courtyard, his eyes searching. Discovering what he sought, Spock walked briskly to where his wife sat.

T'Pania broke her reverie and looked up steadily to meet Spock's gaze. She held up her two right forefingers as he sat next to her and joined his fingers to hers. It was more than an embrace, it was a joining of souls.

"I wondered what became of you after the meal," he chided her gently. He could sense her discomfort. "T'Pania, Selik is young. He objected to this journey because it would take him away from his studies at the Academy. I can understand that," he told her soothingly.

She looked at him sharply. "Do you try to convince me or yourself, Spock?" she asked, an edge to her voice. T'Pania knew that in many ways their son was a great disappointment to Spock. Coldly logical, totally Vulcan, Selik did not respect his half-human father. It was a thing she could not change. Tossing her head, she stood. "At least T'Prett is eager for this trip."

Spock stood behind her and touched her shoulder. "And you, my wife? Obviously you are not eager." Turning her to look at him, he said patiently, "It is a thing which I must do. I was the First Officer aboard the Enterprise. There is no logical reason for me to decline attendance at a ceremony meant to honor her."

She met his look unwaveringly. "And no doubt Captain James

Kirk will feel the same," she said quietly. She felt his fingers tighten their grip on her shoulder, although his face remained impassive. "Spock, your life in Star Fleet is over. I can see no logic in going back to what was so very painful for you."

Spock was prevented from answering by the sudden appearance of a very young, slim Vulcan girl, headed for them at top speed.

T'Pania frowned. "T'Prett, do not rush so. It is most undignified and illogical. You are old enough now to know..."

Spock cut into her lecture smoothly. "Our daughter has something on her mind, my wife. Undoubtedly it is of great importance," he teased.

The girl hesitated as her mother looked from one to the other. T'Pania spoke stiffly. "I have things to attend to in the house. I shall leave you two alone."

Spock looked after her sadly. He wished his daughter had not interrupted them. He wanted to make T'Pania understand, to explain to her why they must journey to Starbase XV. But the moment was past now. He turned to T'Prett.

"What is it, Kirsha?" he asked softly. He alone addressed her thus; it was a Vulcan word meaning roughly, Little Bird.

She looked up at him in adoration. "Father, why can we not go aboard the Encounter to the Ceremonies?" she pleaded.

A shiver went up Spock's back. He had made it clear that his family would travel in their own ship to the Starbase. Certainly they would not go on the Encounter. Kirsha should understand why.

"Your grandparents would feel more comfortable traveling with us," he explained lamely, using Sarek and Amanda for his excuse.

"Pah," Kirsha snorted. "You know that grandmother is most desirous to see Stack again," she chided. "And Father, I would like to see a Starship."

A smile played over his features and he laid a hand on her hair, a wisp of memory curling around his mind. His first glimpse of that awesome, majestic ship. The power and might of her churning in him an emotion he wasn't supposed to feel. How stiff I was then, he thought. How very young. Like Kirsha is now, he mused, but she is more fortunate than I was. She doesn't have the human devils to put down.

Reading his thoughts, Kirsha pressed her advantage. "What was it like, Father? To serve aboard the Enterprise?" He'd never told her very much about his life in Star Fleet. She knew he had human friends, one in particular, his Captain. And of course she knew

something about Stack and the tragedy. But he'd been silent about most of it, and Kirsha was enough of a woman to be curious.

Spock looked at her silently, trying to think of the right words. "It was...an honor," he said at last. "The Enterprise was the finest Starship in the Fleet. My work was quite rewarding." Yet, even as he spoke, he knew this was not what he wanted to say. So much more, it was. So much you couldn't put into words. He added, "I was happy there."

"Then, why...." she began, but his look cut her off. Lowering her eyes, she said, "Forgive me, Father. I do not mean to pry."

"You will see the Enterprise when we get to the Starbase, Kirsha. Until then, you will have to content yourself with other matters."

Kirsha knew she was being dismissed, so with a final nod of her head, she left her father standing alone in the courtyard and returned to the house.

Spock looked at the horizon, where the shadows of night were swiftly gathering. This was his home and he had found a certain peace and contentment here. Prestige, honor had come his way also, but they were unimportant. No matter that he was Ambassador Spock of Vulcan, greatly respected, not only by his own people but by the Federation itself. The important part was that he respected himself again. He had learned to live, despite the past. And if I have learned to fashion a new life for myself, he thought, then surely so has Jim Kirk, for he is no less a man.

* * * * *

Doctor Leonard McCoy raised an arm in salutation as James Kirk approached the table. Since his retirement from the service, shortly after Kirk's departure from the Enterprise, he had built a small private practice here on Starbase VIII, but the bulk of his time he devoted to research and to various charities. He was a busy man, but in a comfortable way, doing only what he loved to do.

The two friends smiled at one another in easy comradeship as Jim slipped into a chair.

McCoy, never a man to beat around the bush, came right to the point. "Did you get your invitation, Jim?"

Kirk allowed a half smile to overcome his features. He was aware of the nuance in Bones voice, of the probing look the doctor was giving him. "Yes, I got it," he answered shortly.

McCoy smiled, lifting his drink to his lips. "I'm looking

forward to seeing Peter again," he confessed.

"You're going aboard the Encounter, then?" Kirk asked in surprise. Why not, he wondered. Bones had no ghosts to lay.

The doctor's voice was gentle. "Will you attend the ceremonies, Jim? Can you?"

Kirk looked at him evenly. "I must. I was her Captain. I'm not sure if I want to, even now. But Bones, it's more than just me and Spock and even Tarra. It's 430 of the greatest men and women I ever knew. It's that Grand Old Lady the invitation mentioned. My ship. They're burying her, Bones. Doesn't she deserve the finest funeral? Shouldn't her Captain be there to say goodbye? Could I ever look myself in the eye if I didn't go?" Realizing how impassioned he was becoming, he checked himself and smiled ruefully.

McCoy looked thoughtful. "But you won't travel on the Encounter. Peter will be disappointed," he stated, referring again to Jim's nephew, Cmdr. Peter Kirk, who was the First Officer aboard the Starship Encounter.

Kirk smiled, thinking fondly of the boy he and Areel had finished raising after his retirement from active duty on the Enterprise. He was looking forward to seeing him again. It had been three years since their last meeting. But considering that Peter's ship was the one commanded by Captain Stack. . . Theron, he thought with a stab, Theron St. John. . .

He looked over at McCoy. "Peter will understand. You go aboard the Encounter, Bones. Tell him I'll meet him at Starbase XV."

McCoy shifted in his chair, uncomfortable at what he was about to bring up, yet knowing it had to be said. "Jim, do you reckon Spock will be there for the ceremonies?"

Kirk's answer came without hesitation. "Of course." Can I be sure, he wondered. After all these years, am I still so finely attuned to his attitudes that I can know for a certainty what he's thinking? His mind answered, Yes. "He'll go," he said, "for the same reasons I'm going. To honor his ship...and to lay down his ghosts." Jim looked steadily at the doctor. "I'm going early. I have to see Spock first -- talk to him, before I can face any of the others."

And suddenly, sitting there at that table across from McCoy, Jim Kirk was eager and anxious for the first time, at the prospect of seeing Spock again.

* * * * *

Immediately after assuming orbit, the Ambassador's party of seven beamed down to Starbase XV and were escorted by an eager

young ensign to the suite assigned to them by the upper echelon.

Kirsha had gotten her first glimpse of a Starship when, still aboard their vessel, her father had brought in a visual transmission of the Enterprise in orbit, upon their viewscreen. Spock had swallowed visibly at the sight of her, hanging there in space. He had known this would not be easy and yet he had not been fully prepared for the wave of emotion the sight of his ship aroused in him. She looked lifeless - already dead, for they had come to bury her. And yet, those familiar letters NCC-1701 still visible on her hull, somehow challenged one to pride and honor.

Fascinated with its imensity, Kirsha was still talking about it when they reached their rooms.

"And Father said the bridge was located at the top level of the main spherical section," she chattered, with an air of familiarity with such terms.

Her brother, Selik, stood testily to one side with his espoused wife, T'Pleish. He spoke with cool disdain. "More interesting, and more to the point, my sister, would be the location of the photon torpedo and phaser banks." The words were flung out as a challenge to Spock, who regarded him with an icy detachment.

"It is well established fact that Star Fleet uses force only in self-defense and only as a last resort, Selik. For you to believe otherwise is biased and illogical," Spock said mechanically.

"Illogical? Is it illogical to -- "

"Selik," his Grandfather cut him off smoothly. "T'Pleish looks weary. I believe you should retire to your room with her. We cannot have her overtaxed by this journey." Sarek looked at his Grandson, who led T'Pleish from the room, properly chastized. Such a Vulcan, he thought. The sort of man I wished Spock to be when he was that age. And yet, there is something unpleasant about that boy. Having, Spock had once said, is not always so pleasing a thing as wanting. It is illogical, but perhaps it is true. He met the eyes of his son in mute acknowledgement.

Amanda came up and laid a hand on his sleeve. "Sarek, you too must safeguard your health. There is much to come in the days ahead and we shall need our rest also. Come," she entreated. He looked upon her fondly. Yes, he thought. Much to come. Especially after the Encounter docked tomorrow. Bidding farewell to their son's family, they took their leave.

T'Pania busied herself arranging their things, her eyes not meeting those of her husband. Spock watched her thoughtfully for a while, then he rose and drew on his cloak.

"I go to meditate, my wife," he said softly. She looked up,

nodded affirmatively, as he closed the door behind him.

Spock left the building and walked aimlessly for a little way. Presently he came to a small park that was all but deserted at this time of day. The few people who passed him on his wanderings were all wearing Star Fleet uniforms, naturally so, for on a Starbase the population was generally about 80% military. It was on a Command Base very much like this one that Spock had first recieved his orders to serve aboard the Fleet's new Starship, the Enterprise, those many years ago. He had been under the command of Christopher Pike and he had served with admiration and respect, for Pike had been an excellent officer to work with. But it wasn't until later, when Pike was replaced by James T. Kirk, that Spock had really found a sense of belonging, had made a life for himself that he was completely content in.

The Vulcan leaned back against a stone wall and drew his thoughts inward. He knew, with the clarity of total empathy, that before too very long he would be seeing James Kirk again. And what then, he wondered. They tried to resolve it once before. They tried to go on as if none of it had happened. But it had happened, and they could not logically pretend it had not. When at last they had parted and gone their seperate ways, there seemed no other solution.

Even now, the wounds were still there. He had managed quite effectively to cover them over, to go on. But could he bear seeing Jim Kirk again, and having the past rush up to meet him?

He knew he must. For in each of our lifetimes, he reflected, there is a time for all things. And the time had come now to put down the past once and for all. And that meant talking to James Kirk, his former Captain, and his friend. Kirk, with whom he had laughed and suffered, lived and worked so closely with, who knew him more completely than any living soul.

Spock stood up straight and drew his cloak about him. With a renewed vigor, he was suddenly anxious to see Jim again and he knew that what he desired most in the world right now was to hear that familiar voice. They would solve this at last, as they had solved so many things in that long ago past - together.

He headed back with determination.

* * * * *

Swallowing over the lump in his throat, Admiral Kirk stopped before the door he'd been told was Ambassador Spock's suite. He was filled with apprehension, but he made himself go on. He sounded the buzzer with force, and because he had steeled himself so, he was startled when the door was opened by a young Vulcan girl.

Kirsha eyed him with open curiosity.

"Excuse me," he apologized, pleasantly surprised by the attractive female. "I was told this was Ambassador Spock's room?" He made it a question.

She inclined her head formally. "You are correct. I am T'Prett, daughter of Spock."

This was Spock's daughter? Jim was delighted. "Well," he chuckled softly, "I'm Admiral James T. Kirk. I was a friend of your father's ---" He broke off as her eyes grew wide in recognition.

She opened the door quickly, bidding him enter. From another room, Kirk heard another female voice call out.

"Who is it, T'Prett? To whom are you speaking?"

"Mother, come," Kirsha said urgently. "It's Captain--I mean, Admiral Kirk."

T'Pania entered slowly, her eyes riveted on Jim Kirk. This human. She had heard so much about him and yet never had they met. She raised her hand in the formal Vulcan greeting.

"Admiral. I am T'Pania. I am honored to meet you. I have heard my husband speak of you many times," she told him, a touch of coolness in her tone.

There was no coolness from Kirsha, as she invited him to sit.

Kirk smiled, a bit uncomfortable at being forced to make small talk with these strangers after having brought himself here to see Spock again. "I just arrived for the ceremonies," he explained. T'Pania's quiet nod was all the reply he got. "I wanted very much to see Spock...."

"My husband is in meditation, Admiral Kirk. But no doubt he will wish to see you when he returns."

"Oh yes," Kirsha agreed. "You must wait for him, Admiral." Now, she thought. now is my chance to learn more about Father's years in Star Fleet.

"Of course," Kirk nodded. He glanced uneasily at T'Pania and sensed her disapproval. He did not quite understand this, but having come so far and after so long a time, he was not about to be deterred from his mission by anyone. Jim Kirk, former Captain of the Enterprise, would see his first officer - and friend.

T'Pania read his uneasiness and his determination. These humans were such uncomfortable people, she thought. Always rushing about so. It was part of what she failed to understand about

Spock. How had he tolerated serving with the likes of them?

"You are still with Star Fleet, Admiral?" Kirsha asked him.

"Yes, that's right. No longer active duty, however. I'm stationed on Starbase 8 as a liason officer. Mostly paperwork." He flashed her one of his most charming smiles.

Her composure broke for a moment. As a Vulcan child, she was unaccustomed to such charm. It was definately unsettling. And curious. She decided that she approved of this friend of Father's. Returning to her original topic, she asked, "But do you not miss the fascination of journeying to unknown worlds? The satisfaction of commanding a Starship?"

Kirk looked at her, amazement growing in him. She was quite an astute young woman. And most definately Spock's daughter.

"Yes," he admitted, "at times. It was a rewarding experience, T'Prett."

T'Pania rose then, and gestured to her daughter. "Enough, T'Prett. The Admiral has journeyed to see your Father and you prattle on like a foolish child with your questions." She spoke quietly to Kirk. "Admiral, I do not wish to offend you, but my daughter and I have certain matters to attend to. My husband should return momentarily and I believe you two have much to discuss in private. Therefore, I welcome you to stay and await him, while we take our leave."

Kirsha wanted to protest, but she dare not. She didn't want to leave; she was anxious to see her father and James Kirk together again. Mother was always limiting her education. But she had no choice, so she followed T'Pania to the door. Turning, she bobbed her head at the Admiral.

"It was most gratifying to meet you, Admiral Kirk, May you and my Father rejoice in your reunion."

Kirk stood and returned her nod. "Thank you, T'Prett. The pleasure was indeed all mine."

With a hasty flurry, she followed her Mother and closed the door behind her.

Jim stared at the closed door for a moment. What a darling girl, he thought. What other surprises does Spock have in store, he wondered. He had known Spock was married on Vulcan, but he had never considered....children. Other children.

He paced the spacious room restlessly. He picked up a news cartridge and played it through, although he paid little attention to what was said. He stared out the window for a while, then went

back to sit on the sofa.

Just then, the door opened. Kirk got to his feet quickly as Spock entered the room.

Turning, Spock saw him and their eyes locked as the two stood facing each other at last.

* * * * *

Kirsha paced the floor of her Grandmother's room restlessly. Here she was, on a Starbase, with dozens of exciting things going on all about her, and she was cooped up with her Mother and Grandmother. At the next break in the flow of conversation, she made her move.

"Mother - I am going to walk about a bit. I would like to see more of the Starbase," she said.

Amanda smiled at her with understanding. T'Pania nodded solemnly.

"All right, T'Prett. Do not be too long, however, for your Father will be coming for us soon."

"Yes, Mother," she replied, quickly escaping the confines of the room before her Mother had a chance to change her mind.

She walked without purpose for a while, absorbing the sights and sounds of this fascinating place. She wondered abstractly if her Father had returned yet.

Before long, she found herself in front of a large structure, quite impressive looking, which proclaimed itself to be the Starbase Control Center. Curious, she walked inside.

The corridors were bustling with uniformed men and women, going about their duties. Kirsha moved among them and although some of them gave her a second look, no one challenged her right to be there.

She made her way to the Communications section, and once there, she was startled to hear them discussing the Starship Encounter. It was approaching orbit, only hours off.

Now there, she thought, is where I ought to be. An idea occurred to her and she found her way back to the Information Desk. A young yeoman looked up at her with interest.

"Yes, Miss - may I help you?" he asked.

"I am T'Prett of Vulcan, daughter of Ambassador Spock. I wish

a shuttlecraft to rendezvous with the USS Encounter." She drew herself up with dignity.

He looked perplexed. "Just a moment, please."

She stood dispassionately waiting until he returned with his superior, Cmdr. Ashley. The older gentleman took her hand.

"It's an honor to meet the daughter of Commander Spock. What can we do for you?" he asked.

Kirsha was a bit taken aback. It was fascinating how the mere mention of her Father's name evoked respect from others. As she was growing up, she had observed this special treatment on a few occasions when she had been allowed to accompany her Father on his travels or at affairs held on Vulcan. But for the most part she had been sheltered from this side of her father's life, mainly staying at home or attending school. And here, on a Star Fleet installation, where he was known better not as Ambassador Spock, but as Commander Spock, the respect and admiration due her father was more keenly evident than ever. Kirsha nodded her head slowly in acknowledgement of this second-hand praise. She explained to the kindly Cmdr. Ashley that she wished to meet her brother's starship before it entered orbit. Without hesitation he summoned a craft and pilot for her, thinking this request in no way unusual or inconvenient.

In a short while, she was on her way, not bothering to ponder on the consequences of her actions.

* * * * *

Peter Kirk turned away from his position at the communications console aboard the Encounter. He looked with some surprise at his Captain. He had just received a most startling communication.

"Captain Stack," he said, "I have just received notice that your sister, T'Prett, is coming out from the Starbase in a shuttlecraft to meet the Encounter." Peter didn't elaborate, but he watched the impassive face of his Captain. Had he seen a flicker of emotion there, or was he imagining it?

Stack raised one eyebrow. "Indeed?" he asked.

One of their distinguished visitors, Dr. Leonard McGoy, had been making a tour of the bridge and talking to his 'honorary nephew', Peter, when the call had come through. He turned now to Peter.

"T-who? Spock has a daughter?" he exclaimed in delighted astonishment.

"T'Prett, Doctor," Stack said steadily. "She is the daughter

of Spock and T'Polia." He turned to Peter and said calmly, "Mr. Kirk, you will go to the hangar deck and meet her craft when it arrives. You may show her around the ship, if she so desires, or entertain her in whatever fashion you deem best."

Peter Kirk hesitated. Softly he said, "Stack...don't you think you should -- "

Stack shot him a cold look. "At this point, my presence is required on the bridge. It is most unfortunate, but necessary."

His First Officer stood up reluctantly. "Yes, sir." He turned to McCoy. "Bones, would you like to come along?"

McCoy smiled. "You bet I would, Peter!" he replied eagerly.

This girl's arrival was going to be another in a series of delightful incidents he'd encountered since coming aboard this vessel. The past few days had been one pleasant experience after another. First, seeing Peter again, and Stack too, although he had reservations about that. Then he had been reunited with all his former fellow officers from the Enterprise, who were also traveling to Starbase XV for the ceremonies. They had spent countless hours talking, catching each other up on all the news, laughing and partying far into the night. Bones didn't know when he had last enjoyed himself so thoroughly!

And now he was following Peter down to the hangar deck to meet Spock's daughter. Well, wasn't that a peach! Somehow, he found it hard to imagine Spock with a daughter. A sudden memory came to him of Spock with the infant, Theron St. John. Spock would be a good father, he reflected soberly.

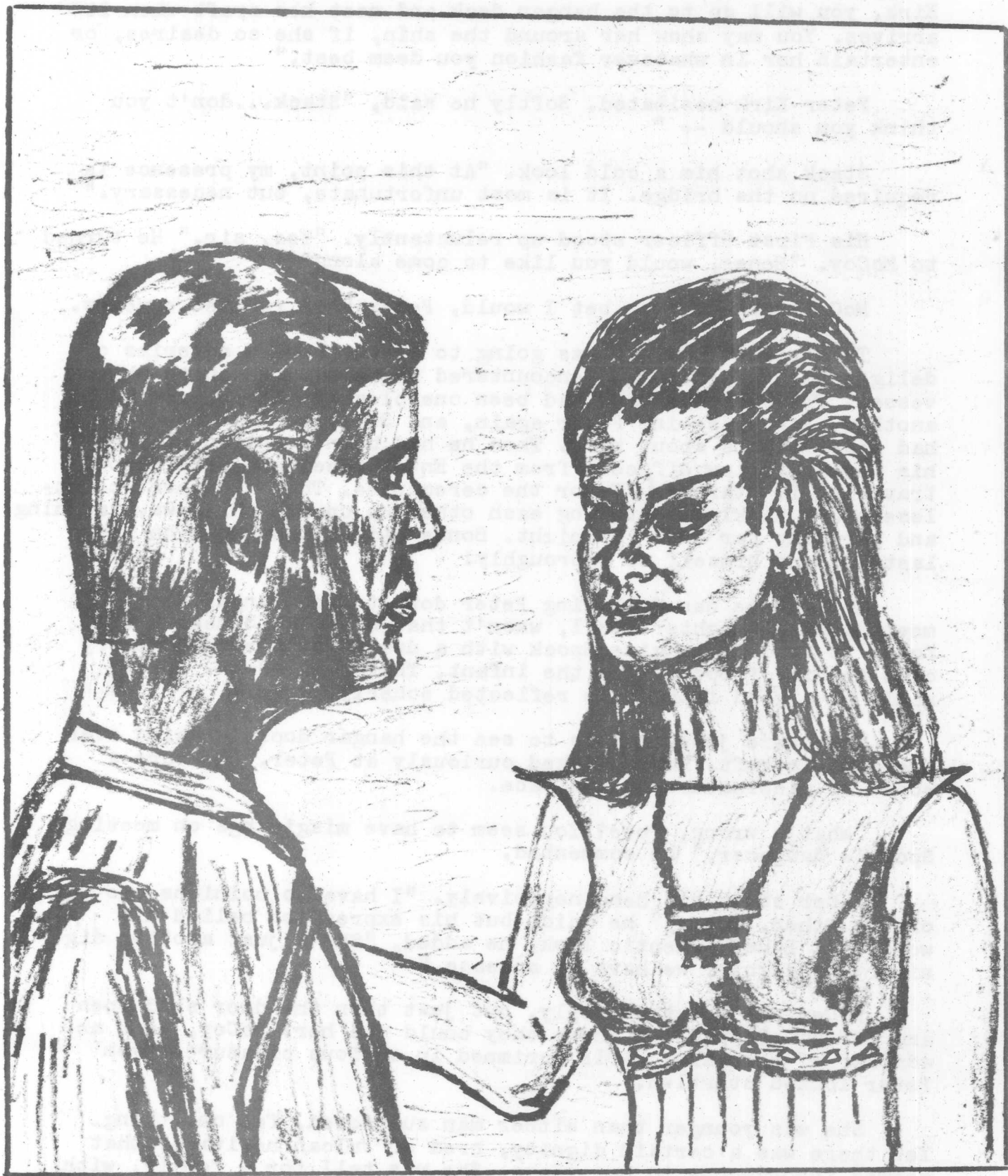
They were just in time to see the hangar doors closing over the shuttlecraft. Bones looked curiously at Peter, who wore a scowl of displeasure on his face.

"What's wrong, Pete? You seem to have misgivings on meeting Spock's daughter," he commented.

Peter shook his head negatively. "I have no opinions one way or the other, Bones," he said, but his expression belied his words. At Bones' skeptic look, he added, "She's just another dignitary's daughter we have to appease."

McCoy was about to reply, but just then the door slid open and Kirsha stepped out where they could see her. McCoy, ever an admirer of beautiful girls, grinned in obvious pleasure. Even Peter looked startled.

She was younger than either man suspected, for one thing. Yet there was a certain dignity, bred of Vulcan heritage, that seemed incongruous to her years. She was tall for a female, with



a mane of jet black hair swept softly back to reveal her delicate pointed ears. Her eyes, under thick lashes, were alert and curious.

Yes, McCoy thought, definitely Spock's daughter, and he wondered fleetingly if her father was aware that she was here.

She stepped up to them, questioning, and raised her hand in the Vulcan greeting. She waited, respectfully, for them to speak first.

McCoy had never managed to perfect the salute, so he merely nodded, but Peter greeted her easily in her own fashion, molding his hand in the Vulcan salute.

"Welcome. I am Commander Peter Kirk, First Officer of the Encounter. This is one of our guests, Dr. Leonard McCoy, former Chief Surgeon of the USS Enterprise," he told her.

She looked from one to the other, her mind rapidly assimilating the data. Peter Kirk - the same name as Admiral Kirk. The doctor - she had heard his name from her father - he had been a friend. The Captain - Stack - why had he not come to greet her?

"It is an honor. I am T'Prett. I assume you were advised of my arrival?"

"Yes, and I trust you had a good journey," Peter told her formally.

She cocked her head to one side. "Cmdr. Kirk, are you of the same family as Admiral Kirk who knew my father?"

"He is my Uncle, yes. ."

"I see. I had the pleasure of meeting your uncle earlier when he came to call on my father," she told him as the three of them walked down the corridor.

McCoy looked at her keenly. "Jim came to visit your father, T'Prett?" he asked, desiring more information on this crucial visit. "When was this?"

"Just a short while ago. Unfortunately, my Father was not there at the time, but the Admiral was awaiting his arrival when I left," she told him.

Peter, to whom all this was immaterial, could sense the girl's preoccupation as she looked about the ship with keen interest. He could fully understand the wonder that overtakes one at their first glimpse of a Starship - the majesty and surging power of Her - and he was filled with a sense of pride in

this, his vessel. For the first time, he felt a sense of liking for this Vulcan girl, who seemed to appreciate the right things.

He took her through the ship, explaining patiently and almost reverently the things they were seeing, quoting her statistics and facts that her eager, analytical mind seemed to comprehend at once. He was impressed by the intelligence of her questions. They went through the Engineering Section, the Medical Complex, the Science section, all the vital areas of the ship, with the curious exception of the Bridge. Finally, he turned to her with a smile.

"Now, if you'd like, I'll take you to the Recreation Room, where some of our guests are."

McCoy was in full agreement. "Yes, T'Prett, I think you might like to meet some of the people who served with your father aboard the Enterprise."

She indicated her compliance wordlessly. She hadn't said anything about the obvious oversight of the Bridge, or the deliberate snub of the Captain. Stack always was a bit of a stranger to her. She knew though, that he would logically consent to see her if she so requested. So she bided her time. Besides, it was more interesting to see these friends of her father's than to have an unpleasant reunion with Stack.

They entered the Rec Room and she saw a group of men and women seated around a large table conversing easily. Peter led her to them and as they approached, the former Enterprise officers stopped talking to look curiously at the young Vulcan.

McCoy smiled eagerly in anticipation of their reaction. "Well, my friends," he announced, "I've got a surprise for you. Meet T'Prett of Vulcan - Spock's daughter!"

He was not disappointed. Several eyebrows shot up, but all of the faces were friendly - and impressed. Bones grinned at Kirsha, who stood silent and dignified in spite of her curiosity which at this moment was unbounded.

"Don't you let this group overwhelm you, T'Prett," the doctor continued, taking command of the situation.

Kirsha drew herself up and looked at Bones with one slightly raised eyebrow. "Why should I be overwhelmed, Doctor?"

A few chuckles were heard from the table, but McCoy recovered himself. "Never mind," he told her. "Here, let me introduce you. T'Prett," he began, "this is Montgomery Scott and his wife, Heather. Scotty was the Chief Engineer aboard the Enterprise, and now runs a shipping fleet, the Scott Line, out of Orion."

Scotty had done quite well for himself after he'd decided it was time to leave the service and settle down. He'd opened the shipping fleet and had been so successful with it that his ships were considered the number one fleet in space. The business was still expanding and Scotty had prospered. He had also met and married Heather, a beautiful young entertainer who had come to his home planet with a dancing troupe. The couple was very obviously much in love.

Scotty smiled winningly at Kirsha. "Aye, and it's a pleasure to meet you, lass. And how is your father?" he asked.

Kirsha lowered her head. "I am honored to meet you, Mr. Scott. My father is well and would most certainly wish me to extend his regards."

The other two couples, seated at the table were following all this with close attention. Bones turned now to the dark skinned woman with the pleasant smile.

"This is Uhura, former communications Officer aboard the Enterprise and later Captain of the USS Hornet, now retired from active service," McCoy said.

"Her husband, B'Hustain, is delegate to the Interplanetary Advisory Council," Peter added.

Uhura smiled sweetly at T'Prett. "It's so good to meet you, honey. Sit down, make yourself comfortable," she advised.

As Kirsha did as she was bid, Uhura went on. "We've all heard so much about your father and the wonderful things he's been doing for the Federation."

Before Kirsha could reply, Peter continued the introductions, pointing out the final couple at the table.

"T'Prett, this is Dr. Christine Chapel Henry, and her husband Dr. Tyrone Henry, joint founders of the Chapel-Henry foundation for medical research."

"Christine was my Head Nurse aboard the Enterprise," McCoy put in. "That was before she decided she was good enough to give her old boss competition," he teased.

Christine reached across the table and laid a hand on Kirsha's arm. "I'm really pleased to meet Spock's daughter. We all thought so much of your father," she said wistfully. "But it must be somewhat confusing to be meeting all of us for the first time."

Kirsha shook her head. "On the contrary, Doctor. I have heard my Father speak of you all for some time, and it is a distinctly

fascinating experience to meet you at last."

Scotty chuckled. "Now that's Spock's daughter!" he exclaimed.

McCoy smiled ruefully at the remark. Sitting down next to Kirsha, he explained, "Later you can meet our final passenger, Gov. Julu of the Federation colony, New Japan. He was the Chief Navigator for the Enterprise." A dark look came over McCoy's face. "There was one other officer who won't be attending the ceremonies. Commodore Chekov was killed in active service about six months ago. His ship was lost with no survivors."

Peter broke the silence that followed. "Well, if you folks will excuse me, I really have to be getting back to my duties aboard the bridge. Bones, I trust you can entertain the young lady for a while?" he queried.

Kirsha stood up abruptly. "I would like to see the bridge, Commander. And my brother," she commanded gently.

Peter, taken by surprise, flashed an uncomfortable look at McCoy. McCoy regarded Peter with cynical amusement. The ploy had not worked. Not with this perceptive female.

"I'm afraid that's impossible at this time, T'Prett. Perhaps in the future...." He let it trail off.

McCoy cocked an eyebrow at him, knowingly. "The girl has a valid request, Peter. I agree it's time she see her brother."

Peter glowered at his old friend. Without words he told McCoy not to interfere in this. He turned to the silent and impenetrable Vulcan. "I'm sorry," he apologized. "I'll advise the Captain of your request."

Christine broke the unspoken tension. "Please, T'Prett, stay and chat with us for a while. We have so many questions to ask you," she said gently.

"Aye," Scotty affirmed. "and I'm sure you have questions to ask of us," he added sagely.

Reluctantly, T'Prett turned her attention back to them and nodded her affirmation.

As Peter left the room, rather hastily she thought, she observed the mysterious look the doctor was giving him.

Tucking her curiosity to the back of her mind, she concentrated on following the conversation flowing across the table. Before too long, the guests began to leave. They had to ready their things for arrival at the Starbase and each had details to attend to.

Finally, she and Doctor McCoy were left alone at the table. She turned to him, her eyes questioning. "And you, Doctor? Do you not have other things to do?"

"They can wait," he said abruptly. He wasn't the most familiar with Vulcan psychology, but he hadn't served with Spock all those years for nothing. The girl obviously had something on her mind, and he had a feeling she wanted to discuss it with someone.

She made a steeple of her fingers and stared at them with intense concentration. "I hardly know Stack," she began, hesitating. McCoy's look encouraged her to go on. "I do not know humans too well, Doctor, but I sensed something between you and Mr. Kirk earlier. My brother does not wish to see me, correct?"

McCoy lowered his head and shook it slowly. "I don't know, T'Prett," he hedged.

"Why?" she asked, her voice neutral. "It is illogical. It is true that he and Father are not close, but I am, after all, of the same family and it is a discourtesy to ignore the fact."

McCoy looked at her sharply. "Your father and Stack are not close? What does that mean?" he asked. Perhaps here, he thought, is the key to what I sensed about Stack. And why? After all, everything that was done was done out of love for Stack.

"Stack did not live at my Father's house like my brother Selik and I, Doctor. Most of the time that he was not away at school, he spent at the home of my Grandparents."

McCoy chewed on that for a while. Stack not raised by Spock? It hardly seemed possible.

Sensing his thought, Kirsha said quickly, "It was not that Father did not wish him to be home, of course. Mother too, invited him many times into our family, but Stack always refused. As a child, I could never comprehend it."

"How much do you know about Stack, T'Prett? About his birth?" Bones asked cautiously, weighing his words carefully.

Kirsha hesitated. "I know his mother was a human," she said. "And that she and Father were never married. But I've never been told much about those times," she admitted.

Bones looked at her carefully. It was sad, it really was, that the events that took place those many years ago were obviously taking their toll on Stack now. All that had been done to protect him, to benefit him, had backfired. There had been so much secrecy, and the events had been covered over for so many years now, that those who were closest to Stack, if indeed anyone were close to the impenetrable Human-Vulcan, were unable to help him accept his situation. When will we quit hiding our skeletons in the closet,

he thought feircely. A need to help, to be of some service, made up his mind. The time for secrets was over. It was time they laid down the past once and for all and do what they could to untangle Stack and make him the man he was meant to be.

The Captain of the Encounter, as McCoy saw him, was a twisted, neurotic mess! Oh, he functioned capably enough, got through his daily routine and managed to make an outstanding career for himself in Star Fleet. But inside he was crying out for something, and he could never be the sort of man he was meant to be, the sort of man his father wanted him to be, without his feet on the right path. McCoy turned to Kirsha.

"T'Prett, too much has been hidden for too long. I'm going to tell you about your Father and Stack's mother. I think you have a right to know. Her name was Tarra St. John....."

....TO BE CONTINUED....

HELP !!!

A PLEA FROM THE EDITORS OF CONTACT ---

AMONG OUR MANY TALENTS (??) WE HAVE CONCOCTED
A MYRIAD OF ORIGINAL STAR TREK SONGS. WE SING, DANCE,
AND PLAY AN ELECTRIC CHORD ORGAN - BUT...WE CAN'T
READ MUSIC! WE HAVE THE WORDS AND KNOW HOW THE TUNES
SHOULD SOUND, BUT WE CAN'T PLAY THEM ON A LEGITIMATE
INSTRUMENT. IS THERE SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE IN THIS VAST
UNIVERSE WHO COULD LISTEN TO THE TUNES ON A TAPE AND
TRANSCRIBE THEM INTO PLAYABLE, SINGABLE SONGS????
WE WOULD BE EVER INDEBTED!!!

TRIVIA TEST

Answers found on the last page.

1. What three words did Kirk predict to Edith Keeler would become more important than "I love you"?
(a) Let me Help (b) I can Understand (c) Let us begin.
2. In which episode was Kirk not compared to Caesar?
(a) Mirror, Mirror (b) Conscience of the King (c) Bread & Circuses
3. Where is the Command Base of the Enterprise located?
(a) Starbase 6, near Alpha Centauri (b) Starbase 12 in the Gamma 400 System (c) Starbase 1 in the region of Orion
4. In what episode did Spock admit, "I am a fool."?
(a) City on the Edge of Forever (b) Galileo 7 (c) All Our Yesterdays
5. When Bones said, "...might 'nigh onto a hundred, Jim boy," he was talking about the number of:
(a) Laboratories underground on the Shore Leave planet
(b) Particles Hengist would be scattered into in Wolf in the Fold (c) Plants beamed aboard the Enterprise from the Omicron Ceti colony.
6. Lt. Marla McIvers was:
(a) a psychiatrist (b) an historian (c) the Captain's Woman
7. The Life Prolongation Disease was caused by:
(a) The water (b) a Virus (c) a Comet passing through
8. Scotty was ashamed to admit he was not up on his:
(a) Shakespeare (b) Keats (c) Milton
9. In what episode did Yeoman Rand tell Kirk to look at her legs?
(a) Charlie X (b) Enemy Within (c) Miri
10. Two other Star Trek episodes mentioned in 'Turnabout Intruder':
(a) The Enemy Within and Obsession (b) The Tholian Web and The Empath (c) The Empath and The Enterprise Incident
11. She writes poetry, paints pictures, dances and quotes Shakespeare:
(a) Rayna (b) Marta (c) Lenore Karidian
12. In which episode did Spock say, "I will never understand the medical mind."?
(a) The Tholian Web (b) Miri (c) The Immunity Syndrome
13. In 'The Trouble With Tribbles', the tribble Spock held and stroked was what color?
(a) all white (b) all tan (c) tan and white
14. The "Book" of the People of Yonada was kept in:
(a) Bela Oxmyx's office (b) a monolith (c) the Library