

THE STAG COLLECTION

Online Edition, Issue 1, July 2002



An ongoing series reprinting some classic Star Trek fan fiction from the 1970's published by the Star Trek Action Group and reprinted here by Infinite Frontiers.

INFINITE FRONTIERS



CONTENTS

| Contents | Page |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 2 |
| STAG - A Brief History | 4 |
| "A Little Knowledge" by Julia Harmer | 6 |
| Editors: | Simon Plumbe, Colin Gunn |
| Writers: | Julia Harmer |
| IF Writers: | Colin Gunn, Simon Plumbe |
| Artists: | Darrel Bevan, Gary Moffat, Tobias Richter, Jason Rorbach |

Cover artwork by Gary Moffat.

Star Trek® is a trademark of Paramount Pictures. No attempt is made to supersede any rights held by any holders of copyright in Star Trek® material.

For details on advertising, subscriptions, on contributing to the magazine, or for a full list of all of our Star Trek and other fanzines write to us at:

Infinite Frontiers
PO Box 8966
Great Barr
Birmingham
B43 5ST

Or e-mail us at:

InfiniteFrontier@aol.com
www.infinitefrontiers.0catch.com

Paper edition of this reprint was first produced in 1998, this e-zine edition published 2nd July 2002.

The STAG Collection is © copyright 2002 Infinite Frontiers. All stories herein are © copyright The Star Trek Action Group and their respective authors, reprinted here with permission.

Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of The STAG Collection. You may be wondering what this brand new fanzine is all about. We thought it would be a good idea to include this extended introduction and the following article to fill you in on the idea behind this new series, and how it all came about.

The idea started when we saw a number of years ago in a number of fan club newsletters that many clubs were either stopping or reducing their fanzine output, due to poor sales, the increasing competition from professional novels from Pocket Books and so on. We didn't really agree with that and we have always felt that there is a huge demand for good quality fanzines, it's just that many clubs don't have the resources to tap into that potential readership or they seem to be disillusioned with the whole fanzine idea.

Also we began to realise that many fanzines that have been published over the years were produced on a very limited print run (usually no more than 250 copies) and that once these have sold out, the fanzines are rarely, if ever re-printed. Okay, we can understand that if the publishers are certain that they aren't going to sell more than 250 copies, but that means that there are a vast number of Trekkers who simply aren't getting the opportunity to read some wonderful pieces of fiction, simply because the clubs can't afford to release it.

The idea then formed to contact one of the UK's bigger clubs, negotiate with them and try and obtain the rights to re-print all their old, out-of-print fanzines in our Amiga disk version of The Final Frontier which was in production between available since 1991 and 1996, to promote their forthcoming fanzines and to try and offer the club financial assistance in creating/producing new fanzines for the future.

Simon initially contacted IDIC who, for reasons we won't go into here, weren't interested in the idea, so Colin then attempted to contact the Star Trek Action Group of whom he had a large number of

fanzines that he had bought over the years. The organiser, Lynne Bannister, was not only interested in the idea, but was very enthusiastic and immediately started to help us out and said that, as long as we obtained permission from the original authors, we could use any STAG fanzine we wished.

We then got together and started to sift through all of Colin's old STAG fanzines, looking for names to contact and suitable fanzines that we wanted to reprint (in other words, fanzines that were suitable for a family audience in the same way that The Final Frontier was), and we quickly found a large pile of over 50 stories!

However, many of these fanzines were written in the mid-late 70's, and we felt that the best way to get the addresses of the original authors was from the organiser of STAG at the time, Sylvia Billings. Unfortunately, the address we had for Sylvia was out of date, and we had no luck with directory enquiries, or literally dozens of other sources including the local council that covered the area in which she used to live!

Finally, we managed to contact Sylvia, arrange permission to use all of her fanzines. What was even better was that Sylvia managed to help us out with a number of the more elusive addresses we had been trying to find.

In every case, we offered to either send the authors a print-out of their fanzine as it appears in TFF or a copy of TFF if they had an Amiga. What did surprise us was the sheer level of support and enthusiasm we encountered from all of the authors with this project. All of them were only too happy for us to re-print their work, knowing how many new readers their fanzines are going to reach, and many are offering help in tracking down other authors and some are even offering to lend us their own STAG fanzines.

Most of the fanzines that we have clearance for will appear here in THE STAG COLLECTION over time as we can get them edited and assembled. However, some may also be serialised in our other fanzines.

It's not an easy task producing this series, as each fanzine has to be completely re-typed by hand (most of these fanzines were produced before ANY of the writers had home computers - imagine trying to produce 30-40 page fanzines with nothing but a typewriter!), but we think you'll agree the results are worth it. Naturally, there will be no TNG, DS9, VOYAGER or ENTERPRISE fanzines here, because STAG stopped producing fanzines before any of the shows premiered, but we think you'll enjoy the stories on offer.

We're starting the series off in this issue with Julia Harmer's "A Little Knowledge" which is a Spock story - the rest you'll have to find out for yourselves!

Anyway, enjoy the mag and feel free to comment on what we have put together. We hope you'll join us in a few months time for Issue 2. Best regards,

Simon Plumbe and Colin Gunn
Editors, The STAG Collection

Contact us at:

The STAG Collection
Infinite Frontiers
PO Box 8966
Great Barr
Birmingham
B43 5ST

Telephone:

07860 948296

E-mail:

InfiniteFrontier@aol.com
www.infinitefrontiers.0catch.com

STAG - A Brief History

by Colin Gunn

As you have probably noticed, this new fanzine is a new ongoing series devoted to the work of the STAR TREK ACTION GROUP, affectionately known as STAG. The fanzine will be devoted to re-printing many of the (now sadly out-of-print) excellent pieces of fiction that this club printed in its long existence. As a way of introducing this fanzine, what follows is a brief history of what was Britain's longest running club...

Back in the good old days (yes, there really were some), the only way that fans could enjoy their Star Trek was to either watch the show on TV (always a good option) or read the appalling Annuals that came out each year, which re-printed some of the Gold Key Comics that were published in the US. Noticing the ever growing interest in Star Trek, two of its fans, namely Jenny and Terry Elson, set up the Star Trek Action Group in 1973. The club was used as a springboard for the dream that the two had, which was to hold what would become the first British convention, and through a lot of hard work the first ever British Trek convention was held in Leicester in 1974, and the guests...? Jimmy Doohan and George Takei!

Prior to the Con, an interview appeared in the Elson's local newspaper, an article that sparked off a reaction that neither of them had ever expected. Not only did it appear in their newspaper, but was also syndicated in the national press, and as far as Australia! They were deluged with mail and STAG had begun.

In 1975, a familiar name to Trek fandom took over the role of club president. Janet Quarton (of IDIC fame) took over the running of the club. Previously in 1974 Janet joined as Membership Secretary. She would remain as President until 1981. Janet formed a new committee, including fellow IDIC committee member Sheila Clark.

Sylvia Billings (who wrote some excellent stories, some of which we will be featuring in this fanzine) joined the committee in 1977

and then took over the running of the club in 1981. Again a new committee was formed and this included Cilla Fitcher, Wendy Downes and Kath Walton. In 1978 another familiar name to fanzine readers joined as a committee member, Valerie Piacentini.

During 1981 and 1983 a staggering amount of fiction was released, mainly I would imagine due to Sylvia's passion for Trek fiction. During this period of Sylvia's reign was the time that I was a member of STAG, and I can attest to this fact as I would endeavour to buy most of the fanzines that they released.

During January 1983, Wendy Downes resigned because of her involvement in running the Leonard Nimoy club, Spotlight. Soon after, Cilla and the remaining committee member brought in by Sylvia, Kath, also left. To replace the gap on the committee, Lorraine Church and Deborah Watts joined.

In 1984 a new president took over in the form of Catherine Richardson, and once more a new committee was elected. Margaret Richardson and Lesley Wood took over the running of STAG with Catherine.

1988 saw Margaret taking over as president and Lynne Collins (now Banister) joining the committee.

In 1990 Lynne took over the Presidency and remained the President until the club's demise. She brought in new committee members Peter Banister and Vanessa Amdurer, all of whom also remained on the committee. Although I think she had to marry Peter to keep him there!

In its twenty year history the club has done a lot for fandom and Trek. The fact that it's lasted this long shows that they must be doing it right and it's evident that they have Trek and its fans firmly in their hearts. One of the club's highlights must be when they had a feature in The Sun in 1976, whose by-line was "THE LITTLE BAND OF TREKKERS MAKE THE BBC TOE THEIR LINE". The article dealt with the absence of Trek on the BBC. And what happened? STAG members

were writing to the Beeb to get them to show Trek again. The Beeb decided to re-run the adventures of Kirk and Co. for all to watch. Not bad, eh?!

Not content with this victory. The following month of that year (July), members began to bombard the Beeb with letters to try and get them to show the now famous banned episodes, "The Empath", "Miri", Plato's Stepchildren" and "Whom Gods Destroy". Unfortunately, the letter writing campaign did not work this time. (However the BBC have since shown all of these episodes when they started a repeat showing of the series in the early 90's).

As you can see, the club went through a lot of changes during its illustrious career.

Our hope is that this new fanzine will help to promote membership in Star Trek fan clubs, and at the same time allow fans of Trek fiction to get a chance to enjoy some of the enjoyable and landmark fiction that this club produced. Hopefully in a future issue we can get someone from STAG to write a few words to our readers. But for now, sit back and enjoy the read...

Colin Gunn



Infinite Frontiers Online

Have you got some spare time on your hands while browsing the web? Then why not visit the Infinite Frontiers web site where you can find a large selection of articles, features and much more covering a wide range of interests including:

Amiga
Disability Issues
DVD and Video
Gameboy Advance
Gamecube
PC
Playstation
Playstation 2
Sci-Fi and Fantasy
Star Trek
Transformers
Wrestling

As well as all of this, there is an extensive art gallery with hand drawn and CGI images, free downloads for the PC and Amiga including games and screensavers as well as downloadable fanzines, original sci-fi video footage, an events calendar, online games, competitions, readers adverts and much more!

We'd also love to hear from any of you interested in working on the site - writers, artists, programmers, animators and more! If you think you can help, please get in touch as soon as possible.

Visit us now at:

www.infinitefrontiers.0catch.com

or email us for more info at:

InfiniteFrontier@aol.com

"A Little Knowledge"

by Julia Harmer

This story was originally published as a stand-alone fanzine in the late 70's and has been re-printed here, in full, with the kind permission of the STAR TREK ACTION GROUP and the author, Julia Harmer. As can be expected with older fiction, a few elements of the story are now dated and may contradict things now known about the Star Trek universe, but they shouldn't spoil your enjoyment of this superb piece of fiction.

* * * * *

The look on McCoy's face told Kirk that he was feeling just as tired and in need of a rest as himself and indeed as every other member of the crew. Spock was also showing signs of strain. He had taken the brunt of the last mission and got them out of a nasty situation with the Klingons. They had threatened reprisals on them, Spock in particular. 'Yes,' Kirk thought, 'Spock is in need of a rest'. Kirk's attention came back to the present as Uhura's voice broke the dreamy air.

"Captain, I'm getting a message from Admiral Miles at the Academy."

"Put him through, Lieutenant."

"Captain Kirk, you are requested to proceed to Panavia, where you will pick up and transport Professor Medhurst to the Academy, where he is due to give a lecture to the cadets. He is a very important man, Captain. You will treat him with the utmost importance. I shall expect you within five days. Admiral Miles out."

"Acknowledge, Lieutenant. Well Bones, it looks like we are going to have our relaxation after all. A few days at the Academy, what more could you ask for?"

"I could think of a few! It's hardly a pleasure palace, Jim."

"You may meet some old friends, Bones, reminisce a little." Without realizing, Kirk was thinking of his days there, when he noticed

how silent it had become. He was brought back to the present by McCoy.

"I see you're already at the Academy, Jim."

"Day-dreams seem to be catching, Bones."

In the meantime, Spock had left his station and was now standing beside Kirk. He too had a glint in his eye but for a very different reason.

"What do you think of our new assignment, Spock?" A hush fell over the bridge.

"It should be interesting, Captain. Professor Medhurst is an extremely knowledgeable man. His knowledge of ancient planetary literature is well known throughout the galaxy and it would indeed be a pleasure to meet him." Spock shuffled a bit uneasily as he became aware of the silence that surrounded him.

"Well, I'm glad you feel that way, Spock, because I'm delegating you to be his escort while he is aboard the Enterprise." 'Well,' thought Kirk, 'It will give Spock some work that he will enjoy doing and keep the Professor out of my hair.' To be inundated with facts was interesting enough but for hours on end he didn't think he could cope with, also he had a large amount of paperwork to complete from the last mission.

"Why thank you, Captain. It will indeed be a pleasure to accompany the Professor for his short stay on the Enterprise."

"Very well, Mr. Spock." As Spock went back to his station, Kirk couldn't resist a sly wink in McCoy's direction, to which he sidled up to the Captain and out of what he hoped was earshot of Spock, said, "Jim, does that mean I shall have a bit of peace from our First Officer for a few days?" Jim was just going to reply when a movement caught their attention, it came from the direction of the science station. They turned to see a very indignant Spock. He said nothing but the raised eyebrows said it all... McCoy thought he had better make a hasty retreat. "I'll be in sickbay, Jim, if you want me." His exit from

the bridge was watched by a pair of dark staring eyes that held their gaze until the turbolift doors closed.

With a silent smile Kirk turned towards Sulu. "Mr. Sulu, set a course for Panavia." This brought Sulu up with a start.

"Ah... yes, Captain. Course laid in, Sir."

It only took two days to reach Panavia. Before they went into orbit arrangements had already been made for Professor Medhurst to beam up on their arrival.



"Mr. Scott to the bridge... Spock, McCoy to the Transporter room. Mr. Sulu, have a course laid in for the Academy and leave orbit as soon as the Professor is aboard."

"Yes, Sir." But Kirk hadn't heard the reply, he was already in the turbolift on his way to the Transporter room, where Spock and McCoy were waiting.

"Well, Mr. Spock, I presume you have made arrangements to entertain our guest?"

"Indeed, Captain, there are a few things I wish to discuss with the Professor." Kirk didn't ask what. He thought it best if he saved it for the Professor. Before they could say another word the familiar sparkles began to appear on the transporter platform.

James T. Kirk stepped forward to receive his guest.

"Professor Medhurst, it is a pleasure to meet you. This is my First Officer, Mr. Spock, who will be your guide while you are aboard, and my Chief Medical Officer, Dr. McCoy."

An evil look came across the Professor's face as he eyed the Enterprise officers. His gaze held on Spock, their eyes held for a short moment, then the Professor turned to the Captain, his face noticeably softened.

"It is indeed a pleasure, gentlemen, but if you would show me to my quarters, I have been working on documents for the governor of Panavia and to meet my schedule at the Academy I have gone without sleep to accomplish my work."

"Forgive me, Professor. If you will allow Mr. Spock to show you to your quarters, we shall have time to get acquainted at dinner."

"I shall look forward to it, Captain." With this Professor Medhurst followed Spock from the Transporter room, leaving Kirk and McCoy staring after them.

"It's not very often our passengers want to go straight into hiding. I'm not sure if it's the rest he wants or Spock he wants to keep away from. Did you see his face when he first saw Spock, Jim?"

"Yes... yes, I did. He probably wasn't expecting a Vulcan when he beamed on board, although for someone who's had so much to do with alien planets it was a surprising reaction!"

Kirk was deep in questioning thought and jumped quite noticeably when McCoy took hold of his arm and began leading him from the Transporter room.

"Ah... we're probably imagining it, Jim, the first sight of Spock is enough to make anyone start." A slap on the back and a hearty laugh could be heard as they left the Transporter room for their respective destinations.

* * *

Dinner turned out to be as expected - a two sided conversation between Spock and the Professor.

"Spock, why don't you show Professor Medhurst over the ship? I'm sure he would like that." Kirk had to break up the never-ending conversation somehow.

"I would be delighted to show the Professor. I thought that the Computer section would be a good place to begin, we have a variety of old books in the computer, perhaps you would be interested in seeing them?" The Professor rose from his seat, quickly followed by all the officers.

"It would give me great pleasure to see over your ship, Captain. If you will excuse me, gentlemen, Captain." With that the Professor and Spock departed for the Computer section, followed soon after by Scotty.

"I think I should get back to engineering. You never know, the Professor may want to see what makes the Enterprise go and I couldn't have anyone else doing the showing around, could I, Captain?" A simultaneous goodnight from Kirk and McCoy followed him out of the door.

"Well, Bones, he's certainly got Spock and Scotty running round him, I wonder who's next?" McCoy caught Kirk looking at him from the corner of his eye. "Well, it's not going to be me! It's a good job we have only one day to go before we reach the Academy, what with Spock and now the Professor, three computers... I don't think I could stand it any longer." Kirk came to stand beside him and putting an understanding arm around his shoulder, "Don't worry, Bones, a little knowledge is good for you." Before anything more could be said, Kirk was leading him out.

"How about a drink to calm your nerves, Bones?"

"The best idea you've had all evening, Jim!" A more livelier McCoy was seen entering the Captain's quarters.

"Make yourself comfortable, Bones, while I pour the drinks." McCoy relaxed into a chair hands behind his head and feet outstretched in front of him.

"I don't know about you, Jim, but the Professor certainly knows more than any person I know." A laugh escaped Kirk.

"What's the matter, Bones, making you feel inadequate?"

"It's not that, Jim." McCoy had put his foot in it again. He had to grin himself at his own admission of inadequacy and thanked heaven that Spock hadn't been there to hear it, that he would never let him live down.

"Seriously, he seemed to be reciting, like out of a book, and Spock's really hooked. Is it possible to memorise all that?"

"I should hardly think so, Bones. He has been at it ever since he came on board. He's clever but not that clever. Come on Bones, drink up, we have an early start tomorrow." At this remark Bones looked astonished.

"What's the early start for, Jim? We don't arrive at the Academy until evening."

"Well, I thought you would want a quick refresher course before we get there, seeing as it is worrying you so much... the lack of knowledge, that is." Jim Kirk had slowly turned his back on McCoy. He knew he wouldn't be able to keep a straight face much longer and if he had seen McCoy's expression, it was a picture to behold. He turned again to face him, not giving him time to answer. "Seriously, Bones, I shall have to do this paperwork before we get there. It wouldn't do for a starship Captain to be seen not doing his work!"

McCoy picked up his glass and emptied it. "Okay, Jim, point taken. Tomorrow can't come quick enough for me, to place the Professor in the cadets' hands and get on with some relaxation." McCoy was still moaning to himself as he went through the door.

Kirk turned his attention back to his work. Several hours later he was finished. He stretched and thought it would be good to get some sleep and look forward to meeting some old friends the next day. While he was showering, McCoy's remarks about the Professor came into his mind. 'He does know rather a lot, especially for someone who can only be about my age.' The thought drifted away as he relaxed in the shower. He drifted off, fell into bed and felt himself drifting away, wallowing in the dreamy state he now found himself. 'McCoy can't be right, Spock would have sensed if something was wrong, of course Spock would know.' Mmmmm... With a slight smile to himself he rolled over and darkness enveloped him and he was peacefully asleep.

* * *

James Kirk awoke to his cabin buzzer, "Come" was his rather sleepy reply. Spock came through the door to stand by Kirk's desk, waiting for him to emerge from his sleeping quarters.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, Captain, but I thought you would already be up." Spock waited patiently.

"How did you enjoy your evening with Professor Medhurst, Spock? What time did you and he finally retire?" Kirk knew it would be late but the answer he received wasn't what he had been expecting.

"The Professor unexpectedly retired early. I was about to show him my private tapes on ancient Vulcan readings, when he apologised and went to his quarters. I, however, did not." Before Kirk could ask why, Spock was already supplying him with the answer. "During the evening I had on several occasions asked the Professor about certain kinds of Vulcan work. He, however, changed the subject each time. I have been doing some research on the Professor and his knowledge does cover Vulcan."

"Perhaps he just wanted to talk about other things, Spock. I wouldn't let it worry you. I'm

sure he knows plenty." Two eyebrows slowly made their way skyward.

"Indeed, Captain. However, I did come to ask if you would join myself and the Professor for breakfast, also Dr. McCoy, if he is ready!" Kirk thought that this was a little Vulcan dig for his benefit but Spock gave nothing away in his face.

"I would be happy to join you, Mr. Spock. Ten minutes?"

"Thank you, Captain. Ten minutes will be fine." Spock very formally left Kirk's cabin, quite aware of the not too happy face that his Captain was now wearing at the thought of another brain wearing meal.

* * *

McCoy was already with Spock and Professor Medhurst when Jim Kirk arrived. A glance at McCoy showed he wasn't too happy with him, or Spock for that matter, the looks he was giving. Spock was quietly drinking his tea, oblivious to McCoy's searing glances.

"Good morning Professor, Doctor." He received a grunt from McCoy and a courteous good morning from the Professor. He placed his coffee down and thought he had better not say too much to McCoy for fear of upsetting him further, although to watch McCoy fume and not retaliate was enjoyable in itself.

"What exactly are you going to lecture about at the Academy, Professor?" Kirk thought he had better start the conversation before it became too late to get a word in.

"I am here to speak to the cadets on one subject alone."

"And what would that be, Professor?" McCoy was now beginning to sit up and listen, as this was the first time the conversation had been on his level.

"The Klingon language, Captain." All eyes turned to him, including some other members

of the crew who happened to be in earshot of the statement. Before anyone could reply, he carried on, "As so much of your work takes you into contact with the Klingons, Admiral Miles thought that my knowledge would help them."

After the initial shock, Spock being the first to recover, replied, "Indeed, Sir, I think more knowledge in that area would be of great value to the cadets. A very logical suggestion on the Admiral's part."

"Thank you, Mr. Spock," was the rather icy reply. The look he gave the First Officer matched the tone in his voice. This was noted by both Kirk and McCoy, who exchanged quick glances. Spock obviously had not noticed.

"If it would be permitted, I should like to sit in on one of your lectures, Professor. I would find it most interesting."

'You would' thought McCoy but thought under circumstances he had better not voice his thoughts. McCoy was getting decidedly bored with the whole thing.

"Oh well, I have patients waiting for me in sickbay. No point waiting here for them to come calling. See you later, Captain, Spock, Professor. If you will excuse me." With that he was gone.

Kirk decided to take advantage of his departure and make an opening for his own. "I also have work to do, if you will excuse me, Professor, Mr. Spock I will leave you to entertain our guest on his last day. I shall see you before we beam down."

"Yes, thank you, Captain, but I don't think I require Mr. Spock's company. I have some work myself to finish in my quarters before we reach our destination. If you will excuse me, gentlemen." The three men rose from their seats. Kirk moved aside to allow the Professor free passage to the door, then turned immediately to Spock, "Oh well, Spock, it looks like your services are no longer required. If you could join me on the bridge, I believe we have some work to do."

"Indeed, Captain."

As an afterthought Jim turned to Spock, "Unless, of course, you would like to rest a while in your quarters, you didn't get any sleep last night."

"I am quite all right, Captain. As you said, there is work to be done."

Feeling as though he had said something he shouldn't, he followed Spock to the bridge.

* * *

The day passed uneventfully for the bridge crew. Nothing was heard from Professor Medhurst, apart from his wish to have his meals served in his quarters. No-one thought anything of it, as he did say he had work to complete.



"Care to join me for a coffee, Mr. Spock?" The boredom was setting in fast for Kirk and he was wishing the final couple of hours would pass quicker than they were doing. Spock, realizing Kirk's vulnerability in this

area, thought it best to 'humour' him when this 'feeling' set in on his Captain.

"Certainly, Captain."

"You have the con, Mr. Sulu," was Kirk's over-quick reply. Spock followed him into the turbolift without even raising an eyebrow at the light-hearted air of his Captain. He could never understand all this emotion over a cup of coffee.

As they entered the rec room, Scotty's beaming face met them.

"Ah, Captain, Mr. Spock. Care to join me? I was thinking I was the only one around with a thirst!" Kirk hadn't noticed before, but it was rather quiet. He glanced around to find that they were the only ones there, got his coffee and joined Scotty and Spock, who had declined the beverage.

"Well, Scotty, they must be getting ready for R&R. It has been a little while since the last and to be spending this one at the Academy..." this comment seemed to answer it all.

"Aye, Captain. Dr. McCoy is quite looking forward to it. I was hoping that he would join me but as you say, everyone is getting prepared." A little dismay was behind the reply. Scotty sat looking into his drink giving it an occasional swirl. He was scheduled for the third beam down party, which seemed to be an awfully long way off to Scotty.

"Never mind, Scotty, I expect you can find something to keep you busy in the meantime." A broad smile spread across his face.

"That I can, Captain and if you gentlemen will excuse me, I can start right away." Scotty was back to his usual lively self, all thoughts of his R&R put to the back of his mind - he was quite looking forward to 'tinkering' with his engines. Two sets of eyes followed him out of the room, each with a bemused look. Even Spock showed signs of bemusement, as much as it was.

Spock was waiting for his Captain to finish his coffee. Jim was deep in thought playing with his beverage rather than drinking it. Kirk realized that he had been far away and abruptly put his cup on the table.

"Sorry, Spock, didn't mean to get carried away," quite aware that his face must have shown a look of embarrassment - time had passed quicker than he had realized. There was a buzz from the wall communicator.

"Bridge to Captain Kirk."

"Kirk here, Uhura."

"We are preparing to enter orbit, Captain. Arrangements have been made to beam down directly into the Academy - something about a transporter room problem, Sir."

"Thank you, Lieutenant. Inform Professor Medhurst we shall meet him in the transporter room as soon as he is ready. Kirk out. Well Mr. Spock, shall we get prepared?"

"It would seem logical, Captain." Jim Kirk had a way of stating the obvious. Spock had learned to go along with Jim on this need. They both left the empty room and headed for their cabins. With what time was left to tidy up, at least Kirk was pleased that the dress uniform would not be required, he knew Bones would be, too.

* * *

McCoy was the last to enter the transporter room. They had all been waiting, knowing that he had a last-minute crisis in sickbay, but nothing that wasn't quickly sorted out.

"Sorry I'm late, gentlemen," he said, looking a bit flustered. This was acknowledged with a knowing grin from Kirk and Scotty, who had come to beam them down personally. Spock and the Professor said nothing, but McCoy thought he saw a rather impatient look from Spock.

'Can't imagine why. Hadn't he had enough in the last couple of days?' He gave Spock a quick glance. Kirk led the way onto the

transporter platform and they all took their places.

"Ready when you are, Scotty." Kirk's order was answered with an, "Aye, Sir. Have a good time, gentlemen." A sign followed. He was hoping that McCoy would still be sober when he met him later - it wasn't much fun enjoying yourself when one of you had already had his enjoyment. With that the sparkles had taken them.

* * *

They reformed in amongst the hustle and bustle of the Academy. Kirk's first reaction was one of annoyance.

"What's the matter with Scotty beaming us down here?" Before anyone could comment further, Admiral Miles appeared with an outstretched hand, "Captain Kirk, can I call you Jim?" Before an acknowledgement could be made, he continued, "I must apologise for the inappropriate beam down point but we have been having some difficulties and the engineers are correcting it now."

Having cooled down slightly, Kirk was able to greet the Admiral in a better frame of mind. "It is a pleasure to meet you, Admiral. May I introduce Professor Medhurst, my First Officer, Mr. Spock and Chief Medical Officer, Dr. McCoy."

Generous handshakes were given all round from the Admiral, with the exception of Spock, who had his hands firmly behind his back and wouldn't get them out for anyone, especially for an over-emotional Admiral.

After the warm welcomes were given, the Admiral continued in his flustered manner, "Would you follow me, gentlemen. A place a little quieter, I think would be more appropriate. My own rooms would be the best place at the moment."

Nobody knew what the Admiral had meant by 'at the moment' but they would find out sooner or later and it was to be sooner than they thought.

The door of the Admiral's quarters swooshed back, to display quite a homely room, much to Spock's obvious distaste, but it did go with the Admiral's emotional nature. 'Rather overdone' thought Spock.

"Can I offer you refreshment, gentlemen? Some brandy, perhaps - a special vintage I keep for occasions like this." Even Spock accepted the offer. If it was for an occasion like this, whatever was exceptional about it he had yet to find out.

"I must apologise, Professor Medhurst, for the lack of ceremony when you beamed down. Unfortunately some of the cadets found one of your tapes on Earth history and they found some interesting pieces. A cadet named Tevel - a new recruit, only been with us a short time - thought it would be appropriate to do something in your honour. That's what all the hustle and bustle was when you arrived."

'Now we know,' was the simultaneous thought from the three Enterprise men, who looked at each other in bewilderment. Seeing the look he was receiving from the officers, he continued,

"They are holding a Rag Week, gentlemen." His gaze fell on Professor Medhurst, who he thought may like to continue, being as it was his finding of this unusual cadet entertainment of the twentieth century. A quick look of astonishment passed over the Professor's face but was quickly hidden. All eyes fell on the Professor. With a slight shift of embarrassment he quickly recovered.

"As you have been doing so well up till now, Admiral, I think it would be only right for you to continue." He shuffled uneasily in his seat. Spock gave a slight raise of an eyebrow and turned towards Kirk, who, along with McCoy, had turned his attention back to the Admiral.

"Very well, Professor, although I don't think I shall explain as you would, as I have only been outlined on the idea." After explaining what he knew on the subject, which turned out to be very little, he sat and watched the amused expressions on Dr. McCoy's and the

Captain's faces. Seeing Spock's eyebrow disappear into his hairline brought a smile to his face. "I'm sorry I can't fill you in any more, gentlemen. My apologies to you in particular, Professor. I seem to be the only one in the Academy who hasn't read this particular piece."

The Professor straightened himself, with a relieved look on his face. "That is quite all right, Admiral Miles. After all, you do have an Academy to run. I wouldn't have expected you to know about it but I appreciate the effort the cadets are putting in on my behalf. I should like to meet this cadet Tevel, whose idea it was - a bright young man." He rose from his seat and started towards the door. "If you would kindly show me to my rooms, I would like to finish off my papers for the lecture I am giving the cadets tomorrow."

They all followed his lead, Kirk being the first to leave his seat. After all, this was R&R but all were seriously doubting whether they would actually get any.

"If you don't mind, Admiral, I think we would like to freshen up," a typical Kirk smile accompanied the request.

"Please excuse me. I am being selfish, keeping you. I shall be attending your lecture tomorrow, Professor, so I shall see you then. A few of the cadets wished specifically to show you to your quarters, it seems you are all well known to them. They are waiting for you now, so I shall say good evening, gentlemen." After wishing the Admiral a good night's rest, they departed, to be escorted to their rooms. A relaxing evening was now in store, Kirk hoped, as they made their way along the corridors. The cadet escort seemed to be very quiet, 'nervous, I should think - perhaps a little light conversation would help out.'

"How are you coming along with your bit of twentieth century history, cadet...?"

"Oh, Smyth, Sir. Very well. I am sorry that it all seems to be getting a little out of hand. It should all be over by tomorrow evening."

Out of hand it certainly seemed but Kirk thought that there must be some organisation somewhere...

His attention was taken by the lack of speech from his Medical Officer.

"Anything wrong, Bones?" McCoy's face took on a startled look.

"Oh no, just thinking about tomorrow, Jim." He hadn't meant his disappointment to show but he wasn't very good at hiding it.

"You should enjoy it, Bones. You know how much you wanted to hear the Professor's lecture."

Spock was not beyond the occasional 'leg pull' with the Doctor, "Indeed, it should prove very beneficial to you." Spock's eyes lifted to the ceiling, which he began to inspect intently. McCoy was nearly at bursting point but could say nothing except,



"I shall see you tomorrow, Spock." With a definite emphasis put on the word 'you' and trying to keep his voice on an orderly note. Spock had now finished his inspection of the

decor and was looking straight at McCoy. "Indeed, Dr. McCoy, I believe the lecture begins at 14:00 hours. Is that correct, Professor?"

"Yes, it is, Mr. Spock. I shall look forward to you all being there. I shall have seats reserved for you and if you come along early, Mr. Spock, I can show you the work on which I shall be covering."

"Kirk and McCoy exchanged surprised glances. This was the first time he had spoken in some while and to address Spock in this manner after the coldness earlier was quite surprising.

"I shall indeed be there early, Professor, shall we say 12:00 hours? That is if it is convenient to you?"

"But of course. 12:00 hours it is." He had certainly brightened up, even more so with Spock's acceptance. They were interrupted by one of the cadets.

"Dr. McCoy, these are your rooms. I hope they are satisfactory, Sir."

McCoy entered and after a quick glance stated, "They look fine to me."

"I hope you enjoy your stay, Sir. Good evening." He made his way through the group still standing at the door. They watched him make a hasty retreat down the corridor and out of sight.

"See you later, Jim," he said as he relaxed in a chair, glad to get his feet up.

"Give me a buzz when you're ready, Bones." Kirk turned back to the others and realized Spock wasn't looking too happy about the wait. He caught Spock by the arm and proceeded down the corridor, knowing full well that Spock was hoping that they wouldn't be stopping at every room to 'drop somebody off'. Kirk and Spock were shown to their respective rooms, arranging to meet later in the evening, leaving the Professor and cadet to proceed to his quarters.

The Professor turned to the cadet, "Well, Tevel, I presume?" Their pace slowed to a stroll and their voices lowered to a whisper,

"Yes, Commander Kalek, all is going to plan."

"You will not address me as Commander while we are here. We will finish this conversation in my quarters." They proceeded along the corridor. Professor Medhurst was the first to enter his room, Tevel made a quick glance down the corridor before entering.

"I hope you find your rooms comfortable, Commander."

"They are quite adequate. They will serve their purpose. You have made the departure arrangements for tomorrow?"

"I have, Commander. I have arranged for a medical shuttle to be waiting in the athletic field, close to the Academy entrance. No questions will be asked, as they believe it to be part of the celebrations. I have obtained help from a few cadets, who were only too pleased to help me in our kidnapping. They believe they will receive a sum for ransom and then for safe return of their Mr. Spock. What they don't know is, Mr. Spock will be a long way from here by then."

"Yes, Mr. Spock..." Spock's name seemed to roll off his tongue, as though he was deep in thought. "I shall be revenged for my brother's death and Mr. Spock shall pay dearly for his murder." He threw his now unfastened jacket across the desk, scattering everything on it to the floor. He lay down on his bed, closing his eyes. "I shall be staying in my quarters until my meeting with Mr. Spock at 12:00 hours tomorrow. You shall arrange to be in the lecture hall at this time and don't forget the paralysing hypo."

"I shall have everything ready, Commander." He could see that his Commander had drifted off into sleep by his steady breathing. He slowly entered the corridor, checking as he went that all was clear before emerging completely. The door closed behind him and he made his way to the Rec Hall, joining the

other cadets for the evening, to keep his cover and to help pass the time. He was getting rather edgy now. He had done well with his Commander's plan and it had to go to plan or his life would be forfeit at the hands of a revengeful Commander...

* * *

At exactly 12:00 hours, Spock entered the Lecture Hall. Commander Kalek had his back to Spock as he approached. A few cadets were milling around the hall arranging the seating. Spock noted that there would be quite a few in attendance. He proceeded to approach Commander Kalek, at the same time looking for an appropriate place to put his treasured tapes, that he had once more brought for, as he thought, the Professor's inspection. He placed them carefully in an out-of-the-way corner and carried on towards the Commander. All movement ceased, the cadets had their eyes on Spock as he made his way across the hall. At the silence the Commander turned.

"Ah, Mr. Spock. You are very punctual. We have been waiting for you." He paused to let an evil sneer spread across his face, "I believe you know cadet Tevel, Mr. Spock?"

"Yes, I do, Professor. He escorted us to our quarters last evening."

"I'm glad you do because we have a little surprise for you," but before Spock could react, he felt a pressure in his back and a hiss from what sounded like a hypo. His face showed a look of amazement as his limp body hit the floor.

A satisfied grin sat on the Commander's face. He turned it to Tevel, who reciprocated it. The watching cadets came up to assist.

"Well, all is going as planned for you. He is quite unharmed. The next step is to get him into hiding and then you can inform Admiral Miles and Captain Kirk of his kidnap, whereupon the small ransom will be paid and Mr. Spock will be returned. The extra funds should help you all, no doubt?" A beaming smile was set on all their faces, quite pleased

and quite unaware of the revengeful kidnap that was in fact taking place.

"Oh yes, Sir, it will indeed help us and the Admiral is a sport when it comes to this nature and I believe Captain Kirk will also be amused. I will hand over the ransom tape at 14:00 hours - this is the time for the lecture to begin. It is very good of you, Sir, to delay your lecture for us."

"That is quite all right, Cadet Smyth, there is plenty of time for what I want to do." Little did they know the meaning behind his words. "And now, if you would check that the way to the athletic ground is clear, we can continue." The Commander felt a warm glow inside, at the thought of having Spock in his grasp. Only a short time to go and he would be safely away with his prisoner. The adrenalin was rushing through his veins at the thought of what he would put Spock through for his brother's death. He took Spock roughly by the arms and instructed Tevel to take his feet and they proceeded to the shuttle. The cadets had done their job well, not one person did they come across.

The door to the shuttle was open, they went straight inside, Tevel pausing momentarily to check for onlookers.

"Put him over there, Tevel," he spat as he threw Spock to the floor. There was a crack as his head hit the tool casing. A slow trickle of blood flowed from the gash and gradually soaked into his sleeve where his arm lay across his head.

Commander Kalek placed himself at the controls, "We have a rendezvous to make, Tevel, and less than two hours before the Admiral and our dear Captain Kirk are made aware of Mr. Spock's absence."

Tevel stayed silent as his Commander brought life to the shuttle. Being a medical shuttle, access was easily obtained and she went unnoticed.

* * *

"Rendezvous in five minutes, Commander." Tevel turned towards Spock, who was starting to stir, his arm fell away from his head to lay at his side, now revealing the deep gash he had sustained a short time before. Tevel noticed, shrugged and turned back to the immediate problems, of meeting their Klingon companions.

* * *

The Klingon base had been well hidden, deep in the rocky waste of Buffalo. It had been there for some time without detection and gradual infiltration of young men into the Academy had been easy. When the Commander's orders had come through, it had been easy to accomplish them.

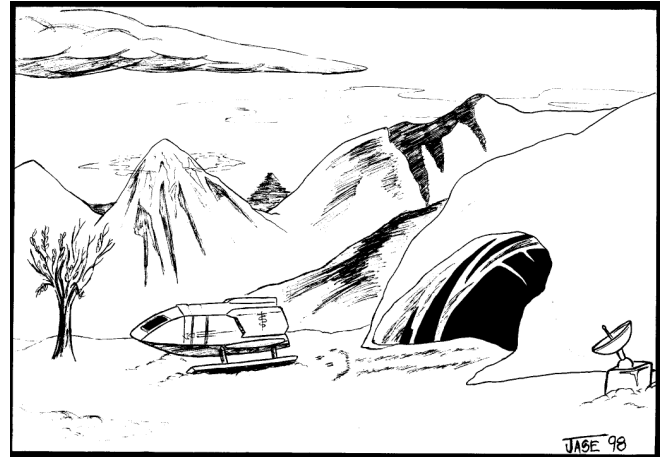
At the base haste was being made for the meeting of the shuttle. A clear area had been made for their arrival. It had been made adjoining the base entrance, an opening in the wall of rock which led deeply into the ground. Once the shuttle area had been completed it had been camouflaged completely by the heavy snow that had fallen during the night, from above not a trace could be seen.

"We have the shuttle on our sensors, Sub-Commander. E.T.A. in five minutes."

"Very well, Lieutenant, call Security to the shuttle area. I will join them there."

A short distance through the dark wet tunnel brought him out to the cleared area. An icy wind blew through the entrance, coming off the white plain beyond. The silence was broken by the security guards as they made their way from the tunnel to await orders from their superior. They stood against the rock face watching for the approaching craft. It came into view as a speck on the horizon, getting larger as it approached. The roar of its engines could be heard, breaking the silence. As it came closer the wind was drowned out by the roar. The snow rose in the air as the shuttle came in to land, blowing some white flakes into the tunnel mouth and the area around.

The security guards, along with their Sub-Commander, ran to meet the shuttle. The engines closed down and the self-assured face of Commander Kalek met them as he opened the shuttle door.



"We were successful. He is in there. Take him!" He moved aside to allow his second in command and security entry. He stood waiting for Spock to be brought out, to gloat on his captive. Spock emerged, held firmly by the two security men. He hung limply between the two, partly conscious, unable to gain his feet, his head was hurting abominably, for a reason he did not know. He was trying to fight the lasting effect of the drug, without success. His neck felt wet and his sleeve was sticking to his arm. He fought to open his eyes. He opened them just enough to register blood. He had enough senses alert to realize that it must have come from his head. What had he done? He gave up the fight trying to remember and turned his mind to the Commander, who was only standing a few feet away.

"So, Mr. Spock, at last I have you. Are you wondering why?" Spock could not answer, although he was faintly aware of the question. "Does the name Kutek mean anything to you? You're not answering, Mr. Spock, never mind, we have plenty of time, now." He turned to his Sub-Commander, "Take him below!"

Rough hands dragged Spock forward and past the Commander. He was becoming aware of the cold that surrounded him. The icy wind had no trouble getting entry to his

body, his thin Starfleet uniform admitted the icy blast without any fight.

Commander Kalek followed behind his captive, watching with delight at the drag marks in the wet soil, left behind Spock as he was hustled below ground to what fate awaited him.

* * *

The buzzer sounded at Kirk's door, "Come," A grinning McCoy entered.

"Recovered, Jim? That was quite a night," exclaimed McCoy, who had sheepishly entered Kirk's room, wearing a haggard look and holding a somewhat aching head.

"That certainly was, Bones. Haven't had so much fun since..." he paused, "The last time I was here?" This was more of a question than a statement.

"With what these cadets get up to, yes, I would say it would be the last time you were here!" He settled himself on the edge of the bed, "Shame Spock didn't stay to enjoy the fun. I suppose it was a good job he didn't; that escapade with the computer would probably have curled his ears!"

Kirk doubled over with laughter at the thought, then wished he hadn't, "God, my head!" He slowly sat down next to McCoy. "What have you got for a hangover, Bones?"

"Your Chief Medical Officer is prescribing for you the same as he had himself."

"What's that, Bones?" he drooled from under his hands that now covered his somewhat dowdy complexion.

"A cup of coffee and a walk round! Believe me, it works, once you get out there with those cadets, you get so numb you can't feel a thing!" McCoy rose from the bed, thinking that it would be best to get out of armshot of Jim, 'just in case' he didn't like the medicine.

No, Jim didn't like it. He slowly strolled over to McCoy, who was edging back to the door, a

large grin spread over his face, his arm linked in McCoy's and turning him towards the door said, "Come on, Bones, let's see if your prescription really works." They headed for the coffee lounge without a word of protest from McCoy.

* * *

Spock awoke with a start, his face stinging and head whirling. He was lying on a cold, wet surface, his body feeling the sharp stones beneath. His shirt had gone; he didn't remember it being removed, nor did he remember the beating he must have had to make his body ache so and bleed; blood covered his body. He raised his eyes to look into the face of a guard. 'That was where the slap had come from,' he thought. He tried to pull himself up on an elbow, fighting for his Vulcan strength to come to his aid. For his effort he received a sharp kick in his side. He fell on to his face, fighting for control, then felt himself being dragged from the floor and dumped on a higher level.

He was left alone for some time, time having no meaning in his unconscious state. He felt the cold stone on his face as he became fully conscious. He turned his head slowly, opening his eyes to see the roof of the cave above him. He noted the droplets of water that hung there, they fell on his body but he didn't feel them. His gaze moved around his prison, three bare walls and on the fourth, an opening that was well lit. He blinked to clear his sight, 'A force field' It gave light to the gloom. He felt cold, so cold, it soaked through his skin like water through cloth. He lifted his head enough to see what injuries he had suffered. There was a lot of blood. He moved slightly to feel for damage. His legs were all right, his arms were the same but bruised. He raised his hand to wipe some of the blood from his body, then pulled his hand away as pain shot through him. He tried again, slower this time. 'Broken ribs... yes, several.' The dark patches proved to be heavy bruising. He lay his head down again, trying to make sense of what had happened. He closed his eyes and felt himself drift into sleep, with the knowledge that he would regain some strength if given the time and that his body

wounds were only superficial and would heal before too long, if given the chance. The chance was not to come.

* * *

"Do you think we will get in there, Jim?" was McCoy's remark from seeing the rather overcrowded Lecture Hall, "I don't blame Scotty for going back to the ship. If I hadn't got roped in on this, I would have been with him."

"It's not that bad, Bones. At least we have a seat reserved for us."

"Yeah, when we can find it!" They pushed their way through the somewhat over-excited crowd, only to get halfway when they were stopped by an out of breath cadet.

"Captain Kirk, I have a message from the Admiral, he would like you to go to his office immediately."

"Lead the way, Mister." McCoy's eyes took to the ceiling in frustration, the thought of the way back to the door was not amusing. 'I doubt if Spock would have thought so, either. That was a thought - where was Spock?'

"Hey, Jim," he yelled over to the hubbub, "Have you seen Spock?" Kirk came to a halt, waiting for McCoy to catch up to him.

"No, I haven't, he said he was going to be here early, remember?"

"Oh yes, he must be at the front somewhere, eager as he is." They continued to follow the cadet, who had made his way to the door.

"The Admiral's office is just down there, Sir."

"Yes, I know, Cadet and thank you." He carried on down the corridor with McCoy in tow, having a little grumble to himself about 'even Spock's not this much of a nuisance.'

Kirk stopped at the Admiral's door, then buzzed for admittance. He heard a low voice call, "Come." They entered to see a rather

worried looking Admiral, who was tossing something around in his hands.

"Ah Jim, they found you." He came round to stand in front of his desk, "I found this on my desk a short while ago, I think you should hear it." He placed the tape he had been holding into the player and a young voice came from the speaker. Kirk and McCoy stood listening intently.

"Admiral Miles and Captain Kirk. We are holding your First Officer for ransom. He is quite unharmed and will be returned to you as soon as the sum of 25,000 credits is paid into the cadet funds. You will not find him through searching the Academy but as soon as we have acknowledgement of the sum paid into the account, we will release him, and Sirs... this is... ah... this is part of the rag week, Sir."

The laughter that arose from Kirk and McCoy could have been heard in the Lecture Hall. The Admiral joined in the hilarity, realising the officers could see the funny side of it. McCoy gasped for breath.

"Spock... kidnapped...?" Off he went again into roars of laughter. Coming up once more for air, he exclaimed, "I think I feel more sorry for the cadets who are holding him..." The laughter ceased as the buzzer sounded. A cadet entered.

"Sir, I have a package for you. It was handed to one of our cadets and it is addressed to the Captain." A surprised look came across Kirk's face as he accepted the package.

He looked at McCoy as he fumbled with the tie, "I wonder who's sending me packages, Doctor?" Silence hung in the air as the wrapping fell away to reveal... a tape and a blue science top that was covered with blood. Kirk picked it up staring in disbelief, his heart beating so hard he could feel it in his ears. He turned to the Doctor, who raised his eyes from the familiar top to gaze at Kirk. No-one made a sound as the Admiral touched his hand to Kirk's shoulder. Knowing something was terribly wrong, the bearer of the package left unnoticed. Kirk lifted up the tape and placed it in the viewer.

"This is Commander Kalek, Captain. Does the name Commander Kutek mean anything to you...? Yes, Captain, I thought it would. With your help Mr. Spock killed my brother. Yes, brother! By now you will have recognized the blue uniform. Now you are going to suffer as I have. Revenge, Captain... I leave you with a last look at your dear friend, Captain, it is the last you will see of him."

The tape went silent and they were left looking at a blood covered Spock, propped in a chair, arms hanging limply at his side, shirtless! After they had heard the tape, the men stayed perfectly still, until Jim Kirk turned away to face the wall, he was finding it hard to hold his emotions in check. With a slight fault in his voice he turned back, "Well, it seems you were right, Doctor, there was something wrong with our Professor - I would say he had an implant and our profound Professor turns out to be a Klingon Commander... we've got to get him back, Bones."



* * *

Echoes of voices awoke Spock from his light sleep. He felt so stiff, he moved his legs slowly from the ledge where he had been placed, the cold stone floor made contact with his bare feet, the first time he had realised that his boots had been removed as well.

The voices got nearer. He watched as the force field was turned off. He recognised the two Security men from his last ordeal. He had no chance of gaining his feet, he was pushed

to one side of the ledge, one of the men sat beside him, an arm was jerked from his side, a rattle of chains brought his attention to his hands. Spock said nothing.

"Do them good and tight, we don't want him to escape, the Commander would not be pleased at his loss," said the onlooking guard as he came to assist his friend. "That should hold him! Come on, give me a hand." They pulled him to his feet by the chains that bound his hands together.

"Ah..." a groan escaped Spock's lips, the first sound he had made in some time. The escaping sound hurt his dry throat. He tried to get his balance at the unexpected rise to his feet but failed. Still held by the chains he fell to his knees, they grabbed him under the arms and dragged him out of the dark cell.

Spock tried to see where he was heading but there was little to see, a never-ending cave complex, a lamp occasionally lit their way, throwing shadows on the ground as they passed, their feet echoed as they went and the occasional curse from the guards as they scuffed themselves on the jagged rock, the curses bounced back at them from the rock walls.

They turned a corner to be confronted by bright lights. Spock closed his eyes, giving them time to adjust. Pain from his broken ribs was all he could feel, it took his mind from the cold and damp. He opened his eyes with a start as he was unceremoniously put in a chair. He sat with relief, drew in a breath and held it until the pain subsided.

"Well, Commander Spock, how do you like your accommodation? I'm sorry about the lack of furnishings, but you do understand. How are you feeling, not very well? You will be pleased to know that this is just the beginning!" He spat the words at Spock, who was looking straight into his eyes.

Spock forced himself to speak, "If I remember correctly, Commander, you asked a question, which at the time for reasons out of my control, I could not answer. If you would ask it again, I would do my best to do so this time."

Spock was having trouble breathing, he had fought to get the words out and was trying hard not to show the Klingon any weakness.

"So, you remember? I was coming to that subject but as you have brought it up... The name Kutek, does it mean anything to you?" Spock's eyebrows rose slightly, half the gesture of his old self.

"I believe he was commanding the vessel that was destroyed in our last mission." Spock was still trying to clear his head, trying to make something out of all this.

"You are quite correct, Mr. Spock and you killed him! He was my brother. A life for a life. I have suffered from his loss and now I won't be the only one."

"Revenge, Commander?" This remark brought a venomous punch from the Commander, which Spock caught cleanly on the jaw. He remained silent but blood trickled from his mouth and flowed to his unclothed body beneath. His eyes remained locked with Kalek's who sneered back at him, obviously heartened by the blood flow.

"Now you know why, Mr. Spock and as I said, I shall not be the only one to suffer. While you were unconscious, we made a short tape, it went to the Academy, oh yes, along with your shirt, which was suitably covered in your blood and sent to..." he paused to give effect "... Captain Kirk."

Spock's face showed the desired effect. "Why my Captain, Commander?" The clink of chains echoed in the chamber, as he drew his tied hands up to wipe away the blood from his mouth.

"Now, come now, Mr. Spock, I saw your friendship, I felt it, it was not hard to see, I had opportunity while I was on your ship. I had planned on just taking you, but the opportunity arose... Why should I be alone to suffer?" He pondered for a moment, "I wonder what he will do now... Whatever, he will be too late. Take him back. I shall be with you in a short time, Mr. Spock."

Spock had no choice to reply but was taken back to his prison. Leaving the lights of the chamber he had difficulty to see but felt the rocky floor as his feet were dragged across it. A light tunnel caught his attention. He breathed deeply, keeping back the pain that once again surrounded him. Why hadn't he noticed it before? The sharp awakening and the new feel of his injuries had been the cause of his missing it before, but this time he would remember.

* * *

Captain Kirk sat in the Admiral's office, stunned at the news he had heard on the tape. His best friend, gone, how did it happen? He turned to McCoy, who was pouring out three drinks. McCoy handed one to the Admiral and another to Kirk, "Here, take this, Jim. Down in one go, Doctor's orders!" Jim Kirk tipped the glass up and drained it, then held his breath as it made its way to his stomach. It numbed his nervousness slightly but didn't numb the loss. The Admiral was slowly sipping his brandy.

He hit the intercom, "Get Smyth in here, now!" His relaxed self now gone and the formal Admiral was coming forth. "I'll get to the bottom of this, Jim, don't worry." The door buzzer sounded. Admiral Miles called to the waiting cadet to come. By the look on his face, he knew what he had been called for. Obviously, word had got round from 'our package carrier' thought McCoy.

"All right, Smyth, tell me all you know about the kidnapping and I mean all!" Kirk and McCoy seated themselves to hear the cadet's statement.

"Sir, I know very little, it was cadet Tevel who started the idea. He said the kidnapping was part of the Rag Week. Mr. Spock was supposed to have been taken a short distance and put into hiding for a few hours until the... ah... ransom was paid, Sir." He shuffled uneasily, not knowing what to expect from the Admiral.

"I think it's time to call a halt to this whole affair. It has gone far enough. I shall see you

later, Smyth. Send for Tevel on your way out." Admiral Miles sat playing absentmindedly with the tape. Kirk got up from his seat and walked towards the Admiral. He held out his hand,

"Would you mind, Admiral?" Admiral Miles looked at the tape in his hands and then at Jim Kirk,

"Not at all, Jim," he said as he handed him the tape. Kirk returned to his seat next to McCoy. He was deep in thought as he sat looking at the tape.

The communications sounded. They all looked up and then to each other. The voice that came from it was more mature than before, "Admiral, this is Security Chief Westly, Sir. I received your message for locating Cadet Tevel, Sir. My men have searched the area and it would seem he has gone, along with Professor Medhurst." The room fell silent. As they had all guessed by the statement, Tevel was Commander Kalek's assistant.

"Very well, call off the search."

"Yes, Sir. Sir, we found some tapes in the Lecture Hall, I believe they belonged to Mr. Spock. Shall I bring them to your office?"

"Yes, Lieutenant." With that the communications were closed. He turned to Kirk, who was still staring at the tape he held in his hands, "I'm sorry, Jim. An infiltration is a serious thing. I shall have it looked into immediately and I shall do all I can with a search further afield, as he is most certainly not in the Academy."

The door buzzer sounded and Lt. Westly entered with Spock's treasured tapes. He placed them on the desk and left the room. Nobody made a move to touch them.

James Kirk visibly pulled himself together and stood, McCoy following suit, "Admiral, I think I can do more aboard the Enterprise. I shall keep you informed of any progress made. I thank you for your help and hospitality, I'm only sorry that it wasn't under better

circumstances." He offered the Admiral his hand which was warmly accepted.

"I will keep you informed also, Jim and I too wish our meeting could have been in different circumstances." He stood watching as the two officers left his room, knowing that there was not much he could do to help, but seeing the friendship between Spock and Kirk, he knew that Jim would find a way.

* * *



"Ah, I'm sorry, Sir, I've done everything possible, there's just too many Vulcans down there. I can't tell Mr. Spock from any of the others." Scotty turned resolutely to his Captain. He was sitting as he had done for the past three days, staring blankly at the viewscreen. He had done all that was possible to locate his friend, all to no avail. McCoy had stood by him with encouragement, but his help was becoming a frustration to Kirk, whose lack of sleep and continual pushing was beginning to tell on everyone, most of all himself.

"Jim, I am ordering you to rest. Three days without sleep is not doing you or Spock any good."

McCoy's unwanted presence was once again felt by Kirk, "I am here, Doctor and here's where I intend to stay. Is that clear?" The build up was starting to come into the open, unheeded by the spectators. The bridge crew had all felt the backlash of Kirk's worry in the

past three days and McCoy was bringing it to a head.

"Oh yes, it's quite clear, Captain! Clear that you are in no fit state to run this ship and I am ordering you off this bridge. If you do not report to your quarters this minute, I shall get Security to take you to Sickbay, where I'll make you rest. Is that clear, Captain?!"

Jim Kirk remained silent, his hand covering his eyes as he leant back in his chair, holding back the anger he felt for Leonard McCoy at this moment. Minutes passed, silence remained. Understanding glances were passed between the bridge crew, to come to rest on their Captain.

"I'm sorry, Bones, I didn't mean to snap your head off. I seem to be doing it a lot lately. I'll take your advice... Scotty, let me know the minute there's any news, no matter what."

A smiling Scotty faced his Captain as he rose from the command chair, "That I will, Sir. Admiral Miles said he'd keep us informed on the infiltrators and anything new I will pipe down directly to your cabin." Scotty's eyes followed him as he alighted the steps of the bridge, to come to stand by Uhura. With a tired smile, he placed his hand on her shoulder. Their eyes held for a moment then he turned towards the turbolift doors where McCoy was waiting. They entered the lift together.

* * *

Spock entered his prison chamber, held firmly by his captors. He had to try to escape, even in his depleted condition. His mind was trying desperately to formulate some kind of plan, no matter how small, he had to try. Putting his pain as far to the back of his mind as he could, forcing what little Vulcan strength he still had to the fore, he concentrated on his chains. If only he could break them! They were not particularly strong but in his present condition he wondered if he could gain the strength for this achievement. His face went taut with concentration. He had to do it now before the guards left and the force field replaced once more. As the guards turned

there was a snap! He had succeeded. He could not relax his mental hold for a moment. He turned on the unsuspecting guards, applying two simultaneous neck pinches. They fell to the ground at his feet. Not giving them a second glance, he staggered for the door, gasping for breath and desperately holding his body. He slumped against the joining wall, his mind reeling as the all too familiar pain coursed through him. 'A few moments rest...' He clung to the slime-covered wall with his free hand, digging in the rock as though seeking access through it. His hold slackened and his hand limply slid down the surface of the wall.

Finding the lighted tunnel was easy, keeping his control was not. His feet were now cut and bleeding. There was no pain, the cold had seen to that. Daylight shone ahead accompanied by an icy breeze. He made the entrance and halted, sinking into the ice covered rock, his gaze held by the white slopes that surrounded him. 'Snow.' His eyes followed the whiteness until his gaze halted at his feet. The clear shuttle area was now gone, along with the shuttle, the shuttle that had obviously taken Jim the tortured tape along with his uniform. The thought brought his mind back to his present situation. 'Uniform top,' he gazed down at his abused body. Most of the blood had gone, washed away by the water that continually washed the cavern interior. He could do nothing about the covering. He had to get away, even if he died in the effort, which was very possible.

His first awkward steps into the snow left deep prints as he fought for balance with the one available hand, his other still clasping his body. His heartbeat was the only sound he could hear. It pumped loudly in his ears. His steps once again faltered and he sank to his knees, gasping for breath, his air intake was felt as a cold blast which seemed to freeze his lungs. He closed his eyes and lowered his head into the snow and waited for the sound to abate. He looked up and outlined the horizon, 'Must get to cover.' He noted trees and what looked like a rock over-hang. He stumbled to his feet, gaining control once more and forcing himself to the chore of escaping the open plain. He stumbled. His

last recollection was of impact, colours filling his vision and then blackness.

* * *

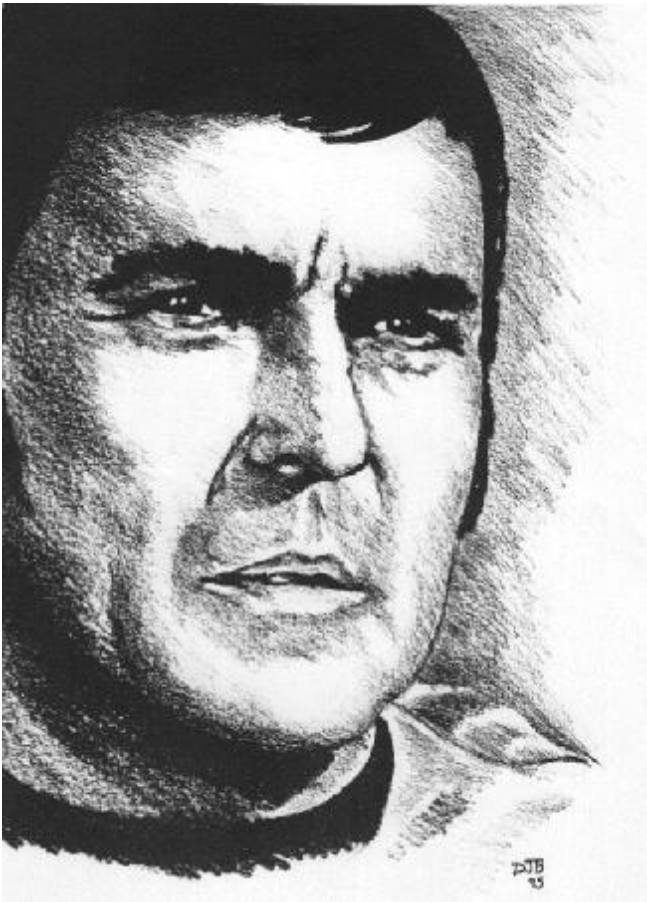
"Bridge to Captain Kirk." Kirk was instantly alert. He had hardly slept in the few hours of our his quarters confinement. His head swirled as he hit the intercom.

"Yes, Scotty, what is it?" A smiling Scotty came over the viewer.

"I think we have something, Captain. You'd better come and see for yourself."

On my way, Scotty!" A hasty grab was made for his shirt as Jim Kirk left his quarters. The journey to the bridge never seemed so long as it did now. When the turbolift doors opened Kirk nearly collided with Scotty, who was patiently waiting for his arrival.

"What have you found, Scotty?"



"Ah don'na how we missed it before, but take a look for yourself." Scotty stood, hands

clasped behind his back, rocking on his heels, and wearing a rather pleased expression, "A wee force field, Captain. Admiral Miles says there is no authority for it to be where it is and is ordering a security team to the area. I said you would contact him, Captain."

Kirk turned to face Scotty, he grasped him by the arms firmly, a look of hope covering his face, "Thanks, Scotty," he could say no more.

"It's a pleasure, Sir." He hoped that this was indeed where they were holding Spock - his Captain couldn't take much more of this pressure.

Once again in the command chair, Kirk resumed his role of Captain. "Uhura, tell Admiral Miles we will meet the security team at the designated area... and Lieutenant, thank him," Uhura greeted his message with a smile, the first smile in nearly four days.

Kirk arose from his chair, heading for the turbolift, the lack of sleep overcome by the adrenalin pumping through his veins. "Uhura, get Dr. McCoy to meet us in the transporter room and security, we need all the help we can get. Mr. Sulu, you have the con. Come on, Scotty, you're coming too."

"Aye, Captain." The turbolift doors opened, a startled McCoy came face to face with the Captain.

"What's all this about a force field, Jim?" He was abruptly turned back into the lift by Kirk and Scotty, looking slightly dazed.

"I'll you on the way to the transporter room, Doctor," with that the lift doors closed on them.

* * *

Spock woke once more to see the blurred walls of his prison, the icy blast and white landscape gone, to be replaced by the damp darkness of his cell. He felt warmer, much warmer. He lifted his hand to his face, it was wet, he was sweating profusely, 'a fever.' He knew that within a short time the fever would

take his mind completely but at the present he was still capable of rational thought. His limbs were heavy to move, his eyes closed once more, shutting out his dismal surroundings.

"Ah....." Firm shaking woke Spock to a harsh reality.

"You had a slight accident, didn't you, Mr. Spock?" Commander Kalek's voice echoed in his ears. "I forgot to mention this little detail about our force field, but no matter, you seemed to have found it without the previous knowledge." He slowly walked over to his captive officer, "Your Federation is very slack, Mr. Spock, it had remained undetected for the time we have been here, a clever achievement on our part, don't you think?" He seated himself down next to Spock, who still lay on his rock bed, staring into the Klingon's eyes.

Spock did not speak, any words would have been useless. Kalek's face began to draw close to Spock's, their eyes still holding. Spock noted the beads of perspiration beneath the eyes that were descending. He waited with resolution for the Klingon's next move. It came as a tearing pain to his head. His hair was gripped with a fierce hold that forced his head painfully back onto the stone slab under him, Spock's fingers dug into his bed with an iron grip, his eyes closed tightly. He never really felt the blows that followed, bright colours were all his vision held for him. He concentrated on the brightness that flowed before his eyes, they slowly began to fade, until they mingled with the blackness, along with Spock's consciousness.

* * *

A sea of red hit Kirk, McCoy and Scotty when they entered the rather crowded transporter room - the security team had lost no time in preparing themselves for the assault to come. Word of Spock's kidnap had taken only a short time to travel the ship's grapevine. Alert status had been held by Security for the past four days, they were ready and waiting and when the Captain's message had been relayed to them.

Scotty walked towards the transporter console and had a quiet word with the Lieutenant in charge. Finishing the short conversation, he turned and made his way back towards his fellow officers.

"One team already beamed down, Sir," he stood waiting patiently for Kirk's reply.

"Okay, Scotty, we'll go next. Doctor...?" McCoy was gazing in a transfixed fashion at the armoury that the security team bore, phasers varying in size and shape, on the floor lay a few items that he didn't remember seeing before but looked lethal, nonetheless. 'My God,' he thought, 'I can see I'm going to have more than one person to patch up after this!'

"Sorry, Jim, I think I had better inform Sickbay to be ready for a few emergency patients. It won't take a minute." He turned towards the intercom, leaving Kirk in an anxious position.



"Well, Scotty, beam down the next team while we wait. They may be able to get set up down there." He paced restlessly, narrowly missing Scotty on his third turn, "Sorry, Scotty." McCoy rejoined them, giving Scotty no time to reply.

"Well, I have made all the arrangements, Jim. Let's just hope they won't be needed." McCoy laid his hand reassuringly on Kirk's shoulder and guided him towards the transporter platform. Scotty and three security guards followed close behind. One word was spoken as they took their places, "Energize", and they were gone.

* * *

Indeed, Security had everything set up well when the officers formed on the rocky surface. A few trees and plant life grew intermittently around them. The sight was picturesque and held their gaze as they scanned the white plain ahead of them. A sharp pulling on his arm brought Kirk back to reality, "Jim, get down," McCoy was kneeling in the snow, urging Jim Kirk to join him. Kirk slowly settled himself down into the snow. He gazed around and then noticed the movement, several movements, they mingled with the whiteness, the environmental suits blending perfectly with the snow. His eyes carried on to scan the area, his amazement clearly showing on his face as he realised that, with the Admiral's team and his own, there must have been at least fifty men, but to the general observer, there were none.

"Scotty?" Kirk whispered the name, knowing any sound would carry into the stillness. "Pass the word, no-one and I mean no-one, is to move without my say so."

"Aye, Sir." Scotty knelt his way to better cover, to give his Captain's orders to the men, which were quickly passed from one to the other, nods could be seen as acceptance.

"Kirk to Enterprise," the words hardly audible as he spoke into the communicator,

"Sulu here, Captain."

"Are you ready to neutralise the force field?" as he spoke, his eyes glazed over. He stared openly at the rock wall on the other side of the plain, 'what will I find there?' The cave entrance was clearly sighted from his position, his thoughts carrying him into the time ahead.

"The M-Ray is ready for use on your signal, Captain." Sulu's voice held a note of concern.

"Very well, Mr. Sulu." Before he continued he glanced over at his friend, Leonard McCoy, who gave a slight nod of his head and an encouraging smile. "Mr. Sulu, it's all yours." Communications were broken, leaving the men with a feeling of dread. Kirk's face showed the changing emotions he was feeling, dread turning to fear, and again to anger, "Scotty... pass the word."

A few minutes after, one flurry followed by many, could be clearly seen covering the deserted plain.

* * *

"Commander!... Commander!" echoed through the tunnels, along with running feet that stopped at the entrance of Spock's prison. An out of breath Klingon ran in, leaving several men running past. All eyes turned to him.

"Federation men! We're surrounded! The force field has been destroyed."

At this startling exclamation, the Commander grabbed a guard and pushed him towards the door. "Get out, send a message to our home base. Inform them of the attack and our discovery!" he yelled above the running feet and loud shouting that was coming from all around.

"Impossible, Commander, the radio room has been taken, they are everywhere!" He ran from the room, not waiting for orders. The others followed, leaving the Commander alone.

"Wait! Take the Federation man!" He went insanely on, "I want my revenge!" He grabbed at Spock, pulling him onto the ground and half dragging him towards the door. Spock cried out in pain. He held on to the Commander's clothes for support but was dropped to the ground where he lay still. "Wait, wait," Commander Kalek ran to the door and was gone, his shouts drowned by phaser fire.

Noise, shouting penetrated Spock's fevered mind. He fought with all his strength for concentration. 'Phaser fire? Running feet?' He wasn't sure if it was fact or his fever playing in his mind. Then all was quiet. He turned his head slowly and raised a hand to clear his vision, the remnants of his chain that he still wore ringing in the stillness. Footsteps broke the silence once more. Spock didn't move, he waited for the steps to approach. Shadows hung in the entrance.

"Jim, in here!" McCoy raced into the cell, followed closely by Jim Kirk. For a split second they halted, not believing the sight that confronted them. McCoy went for his medi kit and Kirk for his friend.

"Spock...?" A raised hand gave him the proof he needed. He clasped it gently in his own, cushioning Spock's head with the other.

"Someone get me a blanket and a stretcher!" McCoy yelled over his shoulder. A blanket was pushed into his hands. "Come on, Jim, let's get him back to the ship." As Kirk released his hold, McCoy placed the blanket around Spock's body. The hiss of the hypo was the last thing Spock heard as blackness overcame him and he succumbed to welcome peaceful sleep.

* * *

After leaving Spock in Dr. McCoy's care, Kirk had spent a rather restless few days onboard. All the thanks had been said; it was quite an emotional conversation that was had between himself and Admiral Miles on that last communication, but all being well, they would meet again, hopefully under different circumstances.

'I wouldn't want to go through that again,' thought Kirk as he paced his quarters, which was now becoming quite a habit. All this waiting was getting to Kirk. Over the last seven days he had done nothing else but wait. After three days of refusals, Kirk had had enough. He adamantly set course for sickbay, in no mood for refusal this time.

McCoy was sitting at his desk when Jim Kirk arrived, for what seemed the umpteenth time in the past few days.

"Can I see him now, Bones?" His manner was one of frustrated impatience as he approached McCoy's desk.

"Yes... he's awake, but don't make it too long, he still needs plenty of rest." McCoy thought his words an utter waste of time, knowing Jim and Spock. He rose from his desk to follow Jim into the intensive care unit.

Kirk halted at the entrance, hands clasped behind his back. Spock, on hearing the approaching feet, turned his head to face him. Kirk stood, taking in the bruising and still very visible scars on Spock's body. He approached him slowly, this was the first time Kirk had seen Spock since he was beamed back on the Enterprise and couldn't quite take in the fact that he had survived his ordeal. 'Vulcan will-power,' Kirk thought and smiled at Spock, thinking that McCoy would say 'Stubborn Vulcan will-power.'

"How are you feeling, Spock?"

"Better, thank you, Captain. I presume you captured Commander Kalek and his men?" What looked like a very Vulcan smile crossed Spock's face, waiting for Kirk's reply.

"Well, I did have a little help from Security and Admiral Miles," he snatched a quick glance at McCoy, who was now standing, arms folded, alongside him.

"Don't you believe him, Spock. Security or no, he practically took on the whole lot single-handed once he knew it was the Commander's hideout, you couldn't hold him back." McCoy was grinning from ear to ear, glancing from one to the other, knowing full well that when Spock was out of sickbay, he would want a full account of just how Kirk had managed this marvellous feat.

"Indeed, Doctor? I look forward to hearing the Captain's report on it." A very pained expression passed over Jim Kirk's face as he

shuffled rather uncomfortably on the spot and giving McCoy searing glances in the process.

"Well, I think that's enough for now, Jim. Spock's going to rest, aren't you, Spock?" The authority in the question gave no room for argument.

"If you say so, Doctor." A very patient Spock turned his eyes towards his Captain, who had stayed exactly where he was and gave no indication of moving.

"I have a little something for you, Spock," Jim unclasped his hands from behind him and uncovered three tapes that he had hidden there, "I believe these are yours?" Silence filled the room. Spock reached up and took the tapes from him. McCoy and Kirk exchanged knowing glances. "I have been looking after them for you, Spock." His eyes held with Spock's for what seemed like minutes. They thought they caught a slight fault in Spock's voice when he finally spoke,

"Thank you... Jim." His eyes followed Kirk as he departed from the room. He turned at the door, a large beaming smile spreading across his face, the relief obvious in his words, "Next time, Spock, when you attend any lectures, remember..." he paused to give effect and to watch Spock slowly raise a brow, "Too much knowledge is not always a good thing!" With that he was gone, knowing that what he left behind was a rather happy Doctor and a slightly greener than green Vulcan.

THE END



An

INFINITE FRONTIERS

Publication

July 2002