

beyond

mutara

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**Star Trek
fanzine**

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NCC-1864
U.S.S. RELIANT



ALERT
CONDITION: RED



RADIATION

NCC-1701
U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

THE MAN WHO DIDN'T LIKE TO LOSE

by Margaret Rainey

Kirk knew the bitter taste of defeat as, bridge crew dead and flames raging about him, he gave the order to abandon ship. Humiliated, fuming, powerless, he sank into the command chair, while his mind screamed to know just where he had gone wrong.

A shaft of light pierced the gloom, scything through the smoke like a scimitar. The side of the bridge cracked open, fresh air wafted in, and a diminutive figure mounted the steps from the outer shell of the simulator.

"All right, gentlemen. Let's go to debriefing and discuss this little debacle." The 'casualties' stirred, dusted themselves off, and slowly filed out, leaving a benumbed Kirk brooding at the blank viewscreen. Commodore Hernandez, Assistant Head of Training Command, studied the still figure.

"Don't take it so hard, Lieutenant. We've all been through it." Kirk dragged his mind together and drew a deep breath. He shook his head, but didn't speak. Hernandez spoke quietly to him. "You did very well, you know. As good a performance as I've seen here in many a year. Gave those simulated Klingons quite a run for their money." Kirk shook his head again.

"I lost my ship. Both ships, the Farragut and the Kobayashi Maru. This is the second time I've taken the test; I should've known how to cope with it this time, and yet I still lost both ships. With all due respect sir, I don't call that very good." Hernandez chuckled.

"At this stage I usually get voluble complaints about how unfair it is that the simulation can be altered in the middle of the test, and yet you don't complain about those twists I threw in, you only blame yourself for not coping with them adequately." Kirk shrugged.

"I was in command. Who else is to blame."

"You don't consider the test unfair?"

"In a way, yes; but then life isn't exactly fair either. It's how you cope with the unexpected that counts." Hernandez smiled approval.

"Exactly, Mr Kirk. Not everyone appreciates that. Not everyone sees the point of this test either, until they get told what it is. What would you say is the point of it?" Kirk paused and thought.

"Well....it's obviously not just to rescue the Kobayashi Maru...."

"It's not about the Kobayashi Maru at all really, apart from the fact that she's the instigating factor."

"Then what is the point of it all?! Sir!" Kirk's frustration burst through. "Humiliate the command candidate by showing him how little he really knows? Well you've shown that all right."

"Hey Lieutenant, take it easy. Nobody's trying to humiliate you in any way. You did an excellent job there, whether you believe it or not. As your examiner, it's what I think that counts. Fortunately!" Rita Hernandez smiled at the young man.

"Let me tell you the secret of the Kobayashi Maru." Kirk looked up attentively. "You Can't Win," she stated.

"No sir, I know that. I've tried. Twice."

"I mean that literally, Mr Kirk. We don't let you win, no matter what you do. You may turn out to be another Garth of Izar as far as your tactical skills are concerned, but then we didn't let him save the Kobayashi Maru either."

"Well then what is the point of it all?!" Kirk was becoming exasperated.

"So that you can experience the No Win situation, Mr Kirk. The one where there is just no way out. It can happen to any commander at any time; sometimes it's the last situation they ever get into. That's what we want to see - when your time comes, how you'll face up to the inevitable. It's a test of character, and you came through with courage and dignity. That's all anyone can hope for." The Commodore put a hand on Kirk's shoulder. "You passed with flying colours, Mr Kirk. Put it behind you, and concentrate on the rest of your course; you still have a month of work left here before you rejoin the Farragut."

"I'll try." Kirk rose to leave the simulator, and paused to survey the debris. "I guess that....I just don't like to lose, that's all."

* * * * *

"He's gone again."

"Hey Kirk, how about bringing your attention back down here among us mortals, huh?" Kirk started, blinked a bit, and smiled sheepishly at his table companions.

"Sorry fellas. Guess I was a bit far off." Lt Andrew McIntosh studied him carefully for a moment, as Kirk resumed eating.

"What the hell's wrong with you, Jim? You've hardly said a dozen words to us in the past three days."

"Yeah," agreed Lt Thorfinn Fujita. "Ever since you took that last simulation you've been brooding. How are we, your humble room-mates supposed to snap you out of it if you won't even talk to us? I mean I know you guys at the Command School are all a bit weird, but even us lowly Engineering School folks feel offended by being ignored for so long." He smiled over at Kirk.

"Ha!" retorted McIntosh, "when did an engineer ever have the brains to feel anything? Now we scientists...."

"Says who?!"

"All right, all right!" broke in Kirk, grinning. "I'll talk - if only to prevent bloodshed." He poured a coffee, and blew on it.

"So?" queried Fujita. "You still narked about losing out to the Klingons?"

"Yes. No. Not exactly." McIntosh grimaced at Fujita.

"Thanks Jim, that makes it all clear."

"Hell, Andy, I'm not annoyed at losing...well, yes I am, but not principally. I'm annoyed at being dealt a rigged deck; at being set up like that. You can't win, you can't break even, and you can't get out of the game. That annoys me."

"So what? All you command candidates get put through it, don't you? Well what's so special about you that you take it all so personally?"

"Didn't you know?" asked Fujita. "Our James T doesn't like to lose. He's got to be Captain Perfect."

Kirk chuckled.

"I doubt I'll ever be that; but no, I don't like to lose. I don't believe in the no-win scenario. There are always alternatives."

"Not in a simulation like that one." McIntosh sounded definite. "I should know. My latest study topic is the programming techniques used in those beasties. If they don't want you to win, or even stand a chance, then you won't. Take it from me."

"Well I've been thinking about that." Kirk smiled a devilish smile, and McIntosh's heart sank.

"Oh-oh. Thor, tell me he's not up to something here."

"To hell with that. If he is, I want to know about it - so that I can be far, far away." Kirk put on an innocent look.

"Why do you both assume I'm 'up to something'?"

"Well," said McIntosh, "we've only known you a couple of months, Jim, since we all came here to attend the Graduate Training Schools, but I think we know you well enough after rooming together for that time, to say that for sheer deviousness, you have no rival."

"I second that motion," Fujita grinned, "but it does make life interesting, does it not? Go on Jim."

Aware that he had their undivided attention, Kirk wondered how to break it to them. Perhaps the roundabout way, he decided. Present it as a challenge.

"Andy...."

"Yes...?" A wary response.

"You're the computer wizard. How good are you on those simulation programmes? You intend to specialise in them, don't you? How much do you really know about what makes 'em tick?"

"Quite a lot, as a matter of fact! My trial programme got top marks last week."

"And how easy is it to adjust them, once they're programmed? You'd have to be pretty clever to manage that, wouldn't you?"

"Well, not really. It's fairly straightforward, unless you're a complete idiot at the game. The hard part is getting it right in the first place. You see...."

"Yeah," Kirk forestalled a long lecture. "So in theory, you could reproduce a simulator programme with a few subtle alterations here and there. I mean it wouldn't be hard for someone with your talent, would it?"

"No, not at all...." he stopped abruptly, and a worried look came over his face. "James....tell me you're not suggesting what I think you're suggesting. Please!" Fujita too indicated that the penny had dropped.

"Jim! Alter the scenario? They'd bust you, right through the floor!"

"Kirk, you're crazy! It's impossible!"

"You just told me it was easy. For a man of your talent."

"Forget the flattery! It's easy, in principle, to adjust the programme tape, but don't you think that somebody will notice? I mean a little thing like that?!"

"Of course they'll notice; but the point is, I don't intend to let them know how it was done."

"What?!"

"Listen. The computer building houses the scenario tapes in a secure facility in the basement. I've checked out the security arrangements, and I think I've figured a way past them. All I need is you, Andy, to get a hold of a programme tape and do a Kobayashi Maru scenario with a few minor alterations that I'll describe to you. I'll then replace it for the original, and ask to take the test again. This time the Kobayashi Maru gets saved." Kirk sat back, and smiled at the stunned expressions opposite him.

"Wait a minute," protested Fujita. "How did you get hold of the security arrangements for that place?"

"Ah. Well." Kirk's smile broadened to a grin. "There's this rather delectable little red-headed female lieutenant over in the security school...."

"You mean the one with the big...."

"That's the one."

"Oh brother. I should've known!" They both laughed.

"Well, Andy?" McIntosh was sitting with a vacant look in his eyes. "Andy?"

"You know," he mused, "I bet I could do a better job on that programme than the original." Kirk pounded a fist on the table.

"That's the spirit!"

"Yes; if I were to...." McIntosh rose and wandered off. "I must get to a terminal and figure this out." Kirk watched him go, elated. Fujita laughed again.

"Well, James, you certainly suckered him right into that one. Congratulations!" Kirk turned to him, with a smile to charm butterflies from their flowers.

"Well, Thor, I hope to make it a clean sweep. You see, I need you to make me the gizmos I need to beat the security systems!!"

"WHAT?!"

* * * * *

"WHAT?" Commodore Hernandez was frankly disbelieving.

"I'd like another crack at the Kobayashi Maru, sir," repeated Kirk. Hernandez stared for a moment at the young man standing at parade-rest in front of her desk.

"You're not joking." It was a statement.

"No sir." The Commodore rose to face him.

"What is it with you, Kirk? You're some kind of masochist, is that it?"

"No sir. I's just like another go."

"Oh; twice wasn't enough?"

"No sir." Stubbornly. Hernandez pondered.

"Well....this is most unusual...I don't believe we've ever had anyone taking three tries at any scenario before."

"But it's not outwith Regulations, sir. 'A Candidate may request a repeat performance on any simulation in which he feels he did not perform satisfactorily.' It doesn't define how many repeats, sir."

"Mmm. So you're a barrack-room lawyer as well, I see." Hernandez sat down and tapped a finger on the desk top for a few moments. "Why, Mr Kirk?"

"Sir?"

"Don't play the innocent. You know what I mean." Kirk refused to be baited.

"Let's just say I feel I could....make a better showing this time, sir."

"Hmm. I don't understand you, Kirk....but technically....I suppose I have to give you permission, if you're really set on it."

"Yes sir."

"Well....all right, go ahead. But if you perform worse than you did last time, I'll downgrade you accordingly; is that understood?"

"Perfectly sir. Thank you."

"Be at the simulator at 0915 tomorrow. And Kirk....this'd better be good."

"Yes sir." Kirk saluted, and as he left the office, the Commodore could not see the smile on the face of the tiger.

* * * * *

Darkness. Dense, thick, blanketing darkness. There was no moon, and to the silhouette huddled in the shadows of the massive computer building, this was an added blessing. The lights of the outer complex shone brightly on the main entrance, and cast the rest of the building into sharp relief. Kirk checked his chronometer. Another two minutes until the MPs passed on their round. They were icing on the cake really, most of the security lying in the computer controlled systems anyway, but he still didn't want to run into them. As he waited, pressed flat against the deepest shadows he could find, part of him wondered just what the hell he was doing here, risking a court-martial like this. Shut up, the rest of him whispered, you know what you're doing here, and you're damn well gonna succeed too. A glint of white helmet and the sound of voices borne in the still night air told him that the security patrol was on time. As the two men passed, talking about last night's ball game, Kirk's mind couldn't help reflecting that this was what it felt like to be a saboteur. Dressed completely in black, with a borrowed navy-blue balaclava over his head, he was all but invisible in the darkness. He grinned wryly to himself. James T Kirk, commando SAS perhaps, or maybe Ninja of old Japan, or Hellikon of Rigel IV. Brushing aside these thoughts, he moved soundlessly to the service chute further along the wall behind him. Not the easiest way in, being designed for the disposal of garbage and leading down to the main furnace, but certainly one of the more unexpected. He extracted a small instrument from the satchel over his shoulder, and proceeded to scan with it to determine the access code to the chute. He'd have to break the code, like cracking an old-time safe, but was sure that with Andy and Thor's genius together backing him up, it would be little problem.

* * * * *

"Twenty minutes. I wonder how he's doing?"

"Sit down. Try to relax."

"How can you sit there being so Orientally Inscrutable?"

"It's all the Saki I drink. Sit down. There's nothing we can do."

"Yeah. Right. I wonder how he's doing?"

"Yeah."

* * * * *

Dropping lightly from the interior access to the garbage chute, Kirk listened for a moment as he took his bearings. All quiet on the western front. He took a few deep breaths, and wished he weren't sweating quite so much. Ah well, press on. The first camera point should be just there, by the stairs down to Storage Facility One. Yep, there it was. He quietly took out another of Thor's Little Black Boxes, and aimed it at the remote camera which was scanning slowly back and forth. Praying that it did indeed interfere with transmission frequencies as if a positronic micro-brain were beginning to malfunction, he raced under the eye and slipped round the corner and down the first few stairs. There he paused. Still no sound. This was, after all, only a medium class security facility, and therefore subject to only medium class security, but it would still take a lot of luck, as well as foresight and planning, to crack it. Two more camera points and the storage entry itself to go. Time to move on. Soundlessly, he faded down the stairs.

* * * * *

"Forty five minutes. God, I can't stand it."

"Will you stop pacing? You're driving me nuts."

"How can you sit there and be so goddam calm?!"

"I am merely resigned to my fate. Now if you must pace, go and do it elsewhere."

"And have somebody see me in this state? Oh yeah, terrific. Think up another one."

"Andrew....ah, what's the use."

"You realise if he's caught, we're all up the creek?"

"You know Jim wouldn't rat on us."

"Yeah, yeah. God, I can't stand it. I wonder how he's doing."

* * * * *

With the corridor now in darkness, Kirk slipped on his infra-red goggles, and in the strange light, approached the Storage Bay door. One last hurdle left, just one. Don't lose the head now. Wait! what was that? A beam of light, no several beams, across the corridor. He raised the goggles. Nothing. He lowered them again. Damn. Beams of IR light, right across his path, at different heights up the walls. Hell fire. She hadn't told him about this. Thank the Great Bird for those goggles. Now what did he do? He couldn't squeeze between them without breaking one or more. Let's see now....if he could cut off the bottom beam, he'd have a good 60cm between the floor and the second beam. More than enough to squeeze under. But cutting the beam would inevitably set off the alarms. He'd have to reflect it somehow, back into the sensors; but how? Thinking desperately, he racked his brain for a solution. Come on Kirk, think, he chided himself. What the hell do I do now?

* * * * *

"Ninety minutes. NINETY BLOODY MINUTES! He's been caught Thor, I'm telling you!"

"For God's sake, if he'd been caught, the MPs would be banging at the door. Now sit down before I sit on you myself." There was a banging at the door. Both men froze in horror. The banging was repeated and a muffled voice was heard.

"C'mon you guys, open up! It's me." Somehow Fujita found the self-possession to rise and open the door. Kirk burst into the room, and tore off his balaclava.

"Jim! What happened? How did it go?"

"How did you get on? For God's sake man, tell us!" Kirk flopped onto a bed and closed his eyes.

"Jim, say something. Anything! Talk to us!!"

"You didn't make it, did you. Oh God, all that, and you didn't make it."

"Says who?" The figure on the bed summoned up the energy for a feeble grin.

"You mean....?"

"You did....? You DID?!!" Kirk sat up.

"Mission accomplished," he said simply.

"Oh Lord. I think I'm gonna faint. Pass the booze."

"I'll second that. Tell us, Jim. We've been going nuts."

Over a glass or three of illicit Saurian Brandy, purely for the nerves of course, Kirk related his tale to the others.

"....so I'm standing there, sweating bullets, and then like a flash of light, it hits me."

"What?"

"How?"

"The quartz screens from the frequency analyser, of course. They're small, but they're highly polished, almost to a mirror finish. I figured I could dismantle enough of the analyser, and use the quartz surface to reflect enough of the beam back into the sensor eyes, to make it seem as if it were still intact. Don't ask me how, but it worked. Mind you, I can't say your analyser ever will again." He emptied the components onto a table with a thunk. "Sorry about that, Thor." Fujita waved it aside.

"Never mind that. I've got a better design in mind anyway. Go on."

"Well, after that, it was a breeze....relatively speaking. I got in and left the tape, picked up the real one, and made my way out the same way. Nothing to it."

"Nothing to it - listen to him. My God. How brash can you get? It'll be a different story when you're hauled up in front of the Review Board." Kirk rose and stretched.

"Nobody can prove anything, Andy. My....er....contact....in security graduated yesterday and shipped out this morning. You two won't talk, and I don't know a thing about it - Me sir? No sir!" So what's the problem?" McIntosh rose as well, and muttered as he went for another drink.

"This'd better be worth it, that's all. My nails are bitten away to nothing, just so's you can play Starship Captains without bruising your delicate ego. One of these days Jim ol' son, you'll run up against something you can't alter to your satisfaction, and then you'll have to face the consequences all by yourself. Are you listening to me?"

"Save your breath," advised Fujita. Kirk was already asleep.

* * * * *

The bridge shuddered under the blow of the Klingon torpedo.

"Damage reports all stations. Lock phasers as you bear. Fire!"

"Phasers fired. A hit sir!" The Klingon warship flashed out of being, the last of four attackers smartly dealt with by the simulated USS Farragut.

"Continue to sweep area for further intruders. Engineering, report our status. Communications, contact the Kobayashi Maru."

"Aye sir. Engineering reports we have functional warp power in one nacelle; shields are weak, but holding, and the transporter is operative. I have the master of the Kobayashi Maru for you sir."

"This is the USS Farragut. We are closing on your position Captain. Stand by to have your people beamed aboard. Farragut out. All transporter rooms, check co-ordinates and stand-by to receive signal. Sensors, report."

"All scans clear, sir. No contact."

"In transporter range now, sir."

"Transporter room, commence beaming. Engine room, what's our best speed out of here?"

"Warp two point five, sir."

"Stand by for warp drive. Helm, engage course back to our previous position when I give the signal."

"Aye aye, sir."

"Transporter room here. All survivors aboard, sir."

"Thank you. Engage warp drive. Let's get out of here."

"Contact, sir. Limit of range and closing. Estimate three ships."

"Can they catch us before the Zone boundary?"

"Negative Captain. Not at this speed."

"Time to Zone crossing?"

"Eight minutes twenty seconds."

"As soon as we cross, set course for the nearest starbase, and send out a call for assistance in transporting the crew of the Kobayashi Maru. It'll be getting a little crowded down there."

"Aye, sir."

"Tell them....mission accomplished." Kirk tried hard not to grin.

* * * * *

"Mister Kirk!" The Commodore's voice was expressionless. "Please come with me." Bracing himself for the inevitable, Kirk rose from the command chair, and turned to face the consequences. He followed the Commodore to her office and came to attention before her desk. She sat, and eyed him with suspicion.

"Mr Kirk. Something very extraordinary just occurred in that simulator. I'd like you to tell me about it." Kirk took a breath. Didn't Garrovick always say that the best defence is a good offence?

"Yes, sir, I noticed that. I was wondering why you'd decided to let me pull it off this time."

"Let you?!"

"Why yes, sir. I assumed...."

"I don't care what you assumed Mister; I didn't let you do anything. There's something very fishy going on here. The chief tech reports that the scenario tape has been altered, just enough, to permit a fighting chance of success, and yet he didn't do it, and the tapes are under security surveillance when not in use. If I thought you had the know-how to alter those tapes, I'd suspect you." Kirk put on his best 'who, me?' look. "Yes you. As it is....I still suspect you. I feel it in my bones. Whatever this is, you're behind it Mr Kirk, and you're not leaving here till you come clean. Now, spill 'em."

"Sir?"

"The beans Mister!"

"Sir, I don't know...."

"DAMMIT, Kirk!" She slapped both hands onto the desk, and rose to point an angry finger at Kirk's nose. "DON'T lie to me. I can take a lot from a young officer of your potential, but I will not tolerate a liar, no matter who he is. I thought well of you, Kirk. If you lie to me now....not only will I lose all faith in my own judgement, but you will carry that lie with you for the rest of your career. If you value your honour James T Kirk, tell me the truth."

Kirk was stricken by this outburst. He stood in rigid silence for five long seconds. Then he spoke quietly.

"I'm responsible for changing the tape, sir. I broke into the storage facility last night, and made the switch."

"You what?!"

"Yes, sir. I have the original tape in my possession. If you'll permit me, I'll return it today." Hernandez sat heavily, and said nothing for quite a while. Kirk was beginning to find the tension just a little wearing, when she finally spoke.

"You mister, have one helluva nerve. I've never heard the like. You broke into the storage facility, and substituted your own tape?" Kirk swallowed.

"Er....yes, Commodore."

"Why? Not to mention how?" Silence was the only response. "Why?"

What the hell, thought Kirk, as well hung for a sheep....

"Sir, I believe I made that clear at my last run-through. I don't like to lose out when I consider that there are viable alternatives. In this case, you wouldn't let me exploit those alternatives, so I had to make my own. I realise my methods were somewhat unorthodox, but I feel...."

"Unorthodox?! That's putting it mildly! I could have you hung drawn and quartered for this, Mister. D'you realise that?"

"Yes, sir. I am fully aware of the consequences of my action, and I assume sole responsibility."

"You do, huh? Who made the tape? Who helped you breach the security systems? Answer me that."

"With respect, sir, I must decline to do so. It was my idea; I carry the can." The Commodore rose to pace behind Kirk.

"What am I going to do with you, Lieutenant? I can't encourage this sort of thing; it's fraud. I have no precedent to guide me because, frankly, no one's ever had the stupidity to try it before. How should I deal with you? Court martial? Would you like that?"

"No, sir."

"No, sir. I should think not." She resumed her seat, and flapped an irritated hand at Kirk. "Dismiss, Mr Kirk. I'll have to think about this. Until further notice you're restricted to quarters when not attending class. Now get out and leave me and my headache in peace." Kirk about-faced to leave. "And I want that tape on my desk by noon, and a full report on how you beat those security systems by 0900 hours tomorrow. At least we can try to stop anyone else with the same bright ideas."

"Yes, sir." The door closed behind him. Hernandez sighed deeply, and raised her eyes heavenwards.

"Ah, madre de dios. Why me?"

* * * * *

LT JAMES T KIRK IS HEREBY DIRECTED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE GRADUATE TRAINING SCHOOLS' REVIEW BOARD AT 1500 HOURS THIS DAY.

The communique was brief and to the point. Kirk, in dress uniform, sat outside the chamber door, and wished that his mouth weren't quite so dry. The door opened and a yeoman beckoned him in. He marched up to the table where the three Chiefs of Training Command sat in all their glory, and snapped off a salute. Might as well go out in style, he thought.

"Ah, Mr Kirk. Stand easy." Admiral Lomax eyed him with a neutral expression. "So you're our budding Houdini, are you? I suppose you realise the seriousness of all this?" Kirk swallowed.

"Yes, Admiral."

"Humph. Commodore Hernandez has given a full briefing to Commodore Nkomo and myself, and we've done a lot of thinking about you. Let me spell out our possible courses of action, so that you're in no doubt as to the gravity of the situation. First, we could commit you for Court Martial on charges of conduct unbecoming an officer. That'd get you busted in rank, and you could wave goodbye to your chances of ever holding a command. Alternatively, we could just throw you in the brig

for a month or so, and move you down the seniority list 100 places. Or, there's what's known as administrative punishment, for those cases we believe that there's still some hope for." He paused, and weighed up his next words carefully.

"Commodore Hernandez has had a lot to say about you, Lieutenant. She thinks, and Commodore Nkomo and I concur, that you have a lot of potential. However, if you go on swashbuckling your way through the service like this, you won't get very far; you'll be stamped on, hard. Is that clear to you?"

"Perfectly, sir. I'd like to apologise to the Board for my conduct, sir. I realise I behaved improperly and I'll take whatever you decide to dish out with no complaint."

"Well that's mighty big of you, mister. Now shut up and let me finish." He glared at the red-faced Kirk. "I've been reading this report of yours on how you did it. It makes interesting reading. I'm forced to admit that it's a model of lucidity, and points up the weaknesses in our systems like lighted beacons. You'll be pleased to know that changes - big changes - are already in effect. It won't happen again. Security Division is not pleased with you, so I'd stay out of their way till you leave. Now as for what happens to you....you are being cited with an official reprimand for your conduct pertaining to the simulator test, and your unauthorised entry into a secure facility. You are also being docked 28 days pay. A copy of this reprimand will be placed in your record. Have you anything to say?"

"No, sir."

"Wise man. Consider yourself lucky."

"I do, sir."

"This will also be placed in your record, alongside the reprimand, mostly at the behest of Commodore Hernandez, I may say." He passed a paper to Kirk. "Read it outside. And Kirk - if you ever try anything like this again when I'm around, I will personally kick your tail from here to Rigel and back. Clear?!"

"Aye aye, sir. Thank you, sir."

"Dismiss." Kirk left the room and collapsed onto the bench outside. He knew he'd gotten off incredibly lightly for a potentially serious offence, and was weak with relief. With trembling hands, he opened the paper that Admiral Lomax had handed him and read:

LT JAMES T KIRK IS HEREBY COMMENDED FOR ORIGINAL THINKING UNDER CONDITIONS OF ADVERSITY. HIS NOVEL METHODS IN TACKLING THE MOST EXTREME ODDS AGAINST HIM ARE DESERVING OF NOTE, AND HIS ZEAL AND ENTHUSIASM IN ATTEMPTING THE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE SHOW THE OUTSTANDING POTENTIAL OF THIS FINE YOUNG OFFICER. HIS ORIGINALITY AND UNORTHODOX TACTICS UNDER STRESS ARE WORTHY OF FUTURE REFERENCE, AND IT IS HOPEED THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO DISPLAY SUCH FLAIR THROUGHOUT A LONG CAREER IN STARFLEET.

LOMAX HEAD OF TRAINING COMMAND

He read it several times, not quite believing what it said. This was a commendation? After all that? A shadow loomed across him, blocking the light. He looked up dazedly to see Commodore Hernandez smiling down.

"Not quite sunk in yet, eh?" She sat beside him. "You, Mister Kirk, are going to be one helluva starship captain - if you ever live that long, of course, and don't get busted first. I thought long and hard about you before I went to Lomax, and the more I thought, the funnier it became. I mean, let's face it, it isn't every day that a lowly lieutenant manages to put one over on the whole of Training Command; and with such panache! I figured you deserved ten out of ten for style, if nothing else. Anyway, I told Lomax the whole thing - and he laughed fit to burst. That started me off, and we spent about five minutes giggling like helpless school kids -

highly undignified of course, but great fun. 'Rita' he said to me, 'this is one candidate we can't flunk. If we can just turn that twisted genius of his loose on the Klingons, all our problems will be solved.' I can't echo his sentiments exactly of course, but he has a point. We couldn't just let you off, but the commendation will outweigh the reprimand when they're placed in your record, so you don't have too much to worry about. We just kept you on tenterhooks and looked mean to teach you a lesson. I hope it worked." Kirk found his voice.

"I'll say it did. I was petrified in there."

"Well good. Did you no harm at all to have a little of the stuffing knocked out of you. Now if you just keep your nose clean and apply yourself to the rest of the course, you'll rejoin your ship with high recommendations and a fairly clean sheet. OK?"

"OK. I mean, yes sir. I'll be a model pupil." They rose together.

"Right, off you go. You're expected in tactical."

"Aye, sir. And....Commodore," he smiled a dazzling smile at her, "thank you." He strode off down the corridor whistling jauntily, and Hernandez watched him go.

God help the universe, she thought in wonder, if James T Kirk ever got a real starship of his own!



ONCE I DIED
by Linda C Wood

Once I died
Gladly, willingly,
To save the ship, to save you.

Then a miracle of science,
Wonderfully, amazingly,
Recalled me to life, and to your side.

If I had not returned to you then,
Happily, joyfully,
Your waiting would now be over - mine has just begun.

The years have flown
Quickly, too quickly
And now it is my turn to be alone.

Rest in peace, T'hy'la
Gently, peacefully,
I feel it will not be long till I am beside you again.

I will come soon
Happily, joyfully,
And we will fly to the stars again - together, forever



INDULGE MYSELF?

by Linda Watt

Typical, just typical, as I sit here at helm control I can well see from whom Captain Spock got some of his command training. I have this feeling of deja vu, that I was in a similar situation just a couple of years ago when the then, ex-Admiral, Captain James T Kirk said almost the same type of thing, put a different way, of course.

That time it had been 'thataway' and it had been a simple matter of laying in a straight course to take the Enterprise out into deep space, avoiding the various planets etc en route, until Kirk had worked out in his own mind exactly where he wanted to go for the Enterprise's shakedown trials.

Now Spock, on Kirk's authorisation of "Captain's discretion", says "You may indulge yourself, Mr Sulu". Oh how I would love to indulge myself; perhaps a little pleasure planet hopping? It would certainly make these young, innocent cadets grow up quickly, and probably give the Admiral and Captain a few headaches about what Starfleet might think - anyway it would serve them right for those indistinct orders.

Just where can I take the Enterprise? It's not that the choices are limited; it's the exact opposite, there are too many places to choose from. Perhaps I should head towards Vulcan, at this slow cruising speed we should arrive there just in time to leave again; maybe even giving the Captain a few hours leave to visit his parents, if he could be persuaded to leave the ship in the hands of his cadets and some capable officers.

Or, perhaps I should head towards Altair VI or....there are so many possible destinations that are in a straight line from here. After what Admiral Kirk said about not believing these cadets could actually steer, just before we boarded, I think I had better make it a direct course - it might also settle his nerves a little after Captain Spock gave Lt Saavik orders to take the ship out of dock. Mind you, can you blame Kirk being nervous after having watched Lt Saavik destroy the simulator and 'kill' the bridge crew (by the way, just why did Dr McCoy have to pick me to land on when he 'died' I can still feel the bruises on my legs).

Or, perhaps....oh well so much for daydreaming about where we could go. I will do exactly what I did last time - head straight out of the Sol system until our illustrious commanders get round to making up their minds about just where they want to go. One thing I must remember when I take command of my ship and that is not to issue such a vague order, you never know I might have a homesick helmsman and find the ship heading for his home planet.



SPOCK

by Sheryl Peterson

You are not real, they say,
Why am I weeping?
For you are but a fantasy,
A dream...
A human actor dressed up
For the moment,
To play a fable
On the silver screen.

Why should it break my heart
To watch you 'dying'
When at filmings end
You rise and walk away
They cannot 'feel'...
No words of mine can tell them
How I mourn your death
A galaxy away.



THE BALLAD OF MR SPOCK
by Linda C Wood

Half Vulcan, half human, a social misfit,
Spock quested for truth but never found it,
Till two lifelines converged and in friendship would lock;
No-one would think of Kirk without Spock.

Over thousands of planets and millions of stars,
The Enterprise sought new life beyond Antares.
Through all their adventures they stood beside each other,
To Kirk, Spock was closer than a brother.

Then came the time in Stardate 81
When the Genesis world was about to be born.
A time bomb set in motion by an evil stranger,
The Enterprise was crippled, the crew were in danger.

The genesis bomb would engulf the ship and explode;
Spock, knowing this, the ship's security over-rode.
No human could enter the radioactive warp drive zone
to repair the engines in time, but Spock could, and went in alone -
It was the logical thing to do.

As the radiation caressed him with its rays of death,
He saved ship and Kirk, but had little time left
To say goodbye to his closest friend,
To know of a new world's beginning before his own heroic end.

Separated by the glass wall from the radiation's deadly gale,
Kirk could only stand helplessly as he watched his Vulcan fail.
"Live long and prosper", the words Kirk knew so well,
Were the last words Spock said before the radiation overcame him,
and he fell.



WHY, SPOCK, WHY?
by Linda C Wood

Why, Spock, Why
Had you to go and leave me behind to cry?

Where, Spock, where
Can I travel, knowing you're not there?

What, Spock, what
Can I share with others, knowing that with you, I cannot?

How, Spock, how
Can I face alone the rest of my time now?

Who, Spock, who
Can ever replace you?

When, Spock, when
Can I at last be with you again?



COMING TO TERMS
by J Devlin

CAPTAIN'S LOG : STARDATE 8212:25

The USS Enterprise entered orbit around Vulcan at 1753. Permission was granted for a standard orbit. Commander Scott has the repairs now well under way: estimated time for repairs, minimum of ten days.

Captain Sulu replaced the log mike in position. He glanced around the bridge which seemed devoid of any well-known faces, except for Uhura's. She smiled at him in understanding. Since Spock's death, no-one had really seen much of the Admiral. Nobody that was, except McCoy, the Chief Medical Officer. Not that the Admiral was ill - it was just that Spock was now dead.

Admiral Kirk had been on the bridge briefly after the funeral, but it had been long enough to show he was all right. Everyone knew he still felt deeply responsible for his friend's death. It has been a major blow to the Admiral. The original crew of the Enterprise knew of the mind link that had existed between the two friends; the severance of the bond had been a severe blow to him and the strain of trying to cope without it, was proving very difficult. The lack of contact was unsettling, to say the least.

Now he and the Doctor had beamed down to the Vulcan Starbase; their mission, Sulu could only guess at.

"Captain," Saavik, the half Vulcan/Romulan, broke into his thoughts.

"Yes, Lieutenant."

"I will need your signature on form BB7 for requisitioning the main biotophonic panel," she informed him, holding out the clipboard to him.

"Very well." Sulu took the clipboard from her.

"Permission to beam down to the Vulcan Stores, sir?"

Commander Chekov alighted from the turbolift. The little Russian who had been First Officer on the USS Reliant was now the Enterprise's Exec.

The position of Captain had been first offered to Commander Scott, who for reasons best known to himself turned the offer down. It had not been an order.

Kirk, having no wish to make his friend unhappy, had accepted his refusal with no argument. He himself agreed with Scotty that he would be happier staying with his beloved engines.

On hearing Commander Scott's answer Starfleet Command had agreed that the next choice was Commander Sulu. The Enterprise, after all, needed a Captain and they were not prepared to let Admiral Kirk talk them into giving the Command back to him.

Sulu, having accepted command, requested Chekov for his First Officer. Kirk could not help but agree - after all, he was Chief of Operations and Personnel, therefore the final decision was his. He himself was pleased by the choice.

* * * * *

Vulcan was in the middle of her summer; the heat beyond even the hottest tropical summer Earth had ever experienced. Even in the air conditioned Starbase the heat was still excruciating. McCoy and Kirk walked down the long corridor of the Starbase, noting that the base personnel all wore lightweight uniforms.

Because it was very warm they had beamed down in their own lightweight uniforms. Kirk wore a short sleeved open necked white uniform top, his rank indicated on his shoulder. Bones McCoy wore the same type of uniform top but the colour was pale green. He was, as usual, grumbling.

"You might have said it would be this warm, I would have worn my swimming trunks and got a tan!"

"It's Vulcan," Jim replied. "Just wait till we get outside the base. It should be three times as hot!"

"Now he tells me! I wish I had stayed on the Enterprise!"

Kirk stopped dead. "Bones, I need you with me. I can't do this alone!"

"I know - so let's get it over with, shall we?"

Jim nodded curtly, "let's go!"

They headed out of the building to the waiting aircar that the Base Commander had laid on for them. The driver stood by the open door.

"Where to, sir?" he questioned, as he saluted them.

"Ambassador Sarek's residence please," Kirk ordered.

It was a silent twenty minutes drive to the Ambassador's house. As the aircar drew up, Kirk noted that the front of the house had not changed.

"It's still the same," he commented to no-one in particular.

Admiral Kirk stepped out of the aircar, McCoy following. He had never agreed with this idea of Kirk telling the Ambassador himself but it was too late now to stop him, even if he could. Once Jim Kirk got an idea into his head, no-one could shift it. The door to the Ambassador's home was opening.

"Welcome home, Admiral Kirk." The servant did not smile. Both men followed the young Vulcan into the drawing room. "Ambassador Sarek will be with you shortly."

Once she had left them, McCoy spoke.

"Jim?"

"Uh?"

"There's no going back now!"

"I know. You do understand that I've got to tell him myself?"

"Tell me what, James?" Sarek asked as he came in through the door. McCoy, surprised though he was at the Ambassador's use of the Admiral's first name, masked it well.

"Sir, I have some very distressing news for you," Kirk opened.

"So it would seem." Sarek indicated for them to sit.

"Sir, Spock is....gone." Jim could not find the words to express himself. "You tell him, Bones. I can't."

Sarek listened carefully to McCoy's account of the incident.

"I see. So my son is dead." Sarek spoke calmly.

"Yes, Ambassador. I am sorry."

The old Vulcan studied his son's bondmate carefully. He was deeply hurt, yet he was still able to function rationally. Sarek could not understand why Spock had seen the need for his companion; the link had, Sarek knew, become permanent without either of them realising it until it was too late. Then both had accepted the fact with no arguments for the mind link between two people was a very delicate thing. Once established it could be held for only a short time before it became permanent, and a continuation of melds with the one mind could also become a fixture, and both had known it.

Sarek was disturbed by the news, but he had been given a lot to consider.

"I must retire to consider the events you have just told me. Your rooms are, as always, prepared, my son."

The servant showed the two men to their rooms. McCoy unsure whether to leave Kirk waited with him for a while to satisfy himself that the Admiral was holding up.

"You think Sarek will be all right?" Kirk asked.

"Sarek can look after himself. It's you I'm worried about, Jim. You look terrible." McCoy took the opportunity to scan the Admiral, against the protests of his senior officer.

"Stop being an old mother hen! I'm all right, just tired," he grumbled.

"Well, someone's got to look after you."

"Meaning you."

"Yes, meaning me."

"I just can't help blaming myself for Spock's death, Bones. If Khan hadn't come after me Spock would still be alive today," Kirk said as he sat heavily on the bed.

"If...if...if...!" McCoy exploded. "That's all I ever get from you now! For crying out loud, Jim, it wasn't your fault, it just happened! Okay, so if Chekov hadn't been so slow to realise it was the Botany Bay....If Carol hadn't been developing the Genesis Device....If Spock hadn't been so foolhardy as to go into the chamber without a suit, he might just be alive today. No, it wasn't your fault, and don't try and tell me it was!" McCoy did not yell, but his tone of voice told Kirk not to argue.

"Anyway, one good thing came out of it. You've got a son, and a darn handsome, intelligent one at that." McCoy smiled.

"That's no consolation for losing Spock."

"No, but you've been at Starfleet Headquarters for almost seven years and you've only seen him when his duty and yours allow it - so, Jim, it's not as if you've been in close physical contact with him everyday."

"No, but I had him to call on if I needed him, or he, me. Now he's gone and I've no-one!"

McCoy realised this was getting to the crucial point.

"You've got me, Jim."

"I know, Bones....but you're not Spock." Kirk had to smile; for the first time he realised McCoy really cared what happened to him.

McCoy began to relax, satisfied that Kirk was adjusting he felt easier about leaving him for the night.

* * * * *

Sarek could not understand how his adopted son was still functioning. He knew his son had had a true bond with this exceptional human. Yet Kirk was behaving as if his bondmate was not dead. It was, in fact, totally illogical.

It was true that he himself had taken some time to get used to the fact that his son was bonded to a Human male, but he would never have considered trying to persuade his son to break it.

Spock His mind summoned all its strength into one single shout. There was no reply. On the other hand, there was no severance of the family bond he held with his son....The family bond was an old traditional bond that only the highest of the high held the birthright to use. It permitted the father to join his mind with his children's. The bond was used as a lifeline between them, father could call on the son whenever the need arose. It was a seldom used bond, but it still stood strong. That was why Sarek himself had not been alerted to Spock's death...or...was he really dead? His son's mind was stronger than his own; it was, in fact, one of the strongest Vulcan minds in the galaxy. Sarek was convinced that he, if no-one else should have felt the loss of such a contact. Yet he had not.

* * * * *

Jim managed to sleep well. For the first time since Spock's death his sleeping hours had not been plagued by nightmares. He felt rested for once.

The door opened and McCoy poked his head round.

"Ah, you're awake. Breakfast in 15 minutes. Up you get, Jim."

"In a minute, Bones."

"Right. See you downstairs. Don't be late."

Kirk leaped out of bed. He did not understand the elated feeling he was experiencing.

* * * * *

Over breakfast all three men remained silent. Kirk and McCoy out of respect for the grief of the older Vulcan.

Sarek broke the silence and what he said astounded them both.

"I do not believe my son to be dead."

"I saw him die, sir. I was there," Kirk said gently.

"Did you feel the severance of the bond?" Sarek asked quietly. He knew how deep this Human's feeling for his son went.

"Well, not exactly. Just a growing discomfort."

"That is normal when one is separated from ones bondmate for long periods."

"Are you trying to say Spock is not dead, sir?" McCoy asked, unable to believe his ears.

"Vulcans can at times appear dead but are, in fact, in a deep trance."

"Sir, I examined him myself. All his body functions were terminated. The radiation...."

Sarek held his hand up to silence the Doctor.

He was undoubtedly dead by Human standards but there is such a thing as a family bond - and if Spock was dead, I would have been alerted to the fact." Sarek lowered his head.

"I don't understand." Kirk's face had drained white.

"It's simple," McCoy growled. "He thinks I made a mistake!"

"I saw him die," Kirk repeated.

"Please, I am not saying you made a mistake, Doctor. I have no doubt that your readings did indicate my son was dead. Only - you are able to function normally, James. I myself do not know why that is, but the only logical possibility is that my son is not dead and until such time he is you will go on the way you are; uncomfortable, depressed...."

McCoy did not know whether the Vulcan was only trying to ease the blow for himself or what. One thing he was sure of, Spock was dead....or was he? McCoy did not like the doubt that was creeping into his own mind.

He would never know how Kirk managed to get through the rest of the shore leave on Vulcan. McCoy's services were needed at the Starbase. There had been a shuttle port accident, and all available medical personnel had been drafted in to help. The next time he saw Kirk was back on the Enterprise.

Jim studied the unfinished chess game, unable to decide his next move. As Chief of Operations he could deploy the fleet as he saw fit....yet there was no way in which he could go looking for his bondmate and stay in Starfleet.

The choice was his. There was, however, the fact that a pioneer team of colonists was due to leave for Genesis in three months. Kirk decided that if Spock was indeed alive then he would find his way back. That, Kirk was sure of. Summoning all his strength he cried through the bond.

SPOCK

There was no reply.

Kirk lifted his red uniform jacket, shouldered into it and headed for the bridge.

Word spread through the Enterprise that the Admiral was en route to the bridge. The morale of the crew lifted at the news.

The repairs carried out at Vulcan had been internal; the Starbase did not have the dry dock capabilities for a Constitution class starship, so external repairs would be carried out at Starfleet's San Francisco dock centre.

The bridge doors opened and the Admiral stepped out of the lift. Taking a deep breath he asked, "ETA, Captain?"

"Thirty minutes, sir," Sulu responded, rising from the command seat. "Would you like to take her in?!"

Jim considered for a moment. There was no use doubting himself now. Spock would not like that. Yes, he would do it.

"Captain Sulu, I would like that very much," he smiled.

The tension on the bridge lifted; everyone let out the breaths they were holding.

"Entering Solar System, sir," Saavik informed him.

"Helm, reduce speed to impulse, warp .5."

"Warp .5." The helm officer complied with his order.

"Uhura, contact Dock Control, request clearance."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Sulu crossed to the Helm Control and dislodged the young Lieutenant. McCoy had been informed of the Admiral's decision, decided he could not miss the opportunity to see Jim Kirk in command of the Enterprise once again, and joined him on the bridge.

Kirk smiled a welcome as McCoy stepped down beside his command chair.

"You okay, or do you want a tranquiliser?"

"No." Kirk shot him a look of disbelief. McCoy winked.

"Nice to have you back among the living, Jim."

"Sir, Dock signal all clear."

"Thank you, Uhura."

Saturn appeared on the main viewer.

"One quarter impulse power, Mr Sulu."

Sulu's hands flew over the controls. He had been waiting for the order.

"One quarter impulse power."

Slowly the damaged starship slid past Jupiter. Mars followed quickly.

"Mr Sulu, maneouvering thrusters if you please. Cut impulse power," he ordered as the dockyard came into view on the viewer.

The Enterprise slid gracefully into the lacework of the Dock Centre. Kirk watched silently as Sulu's skilful hands brought the silver swan into the centre of the lacework.

"Thrusters at station keeping, Mr Sulu."

"Thrusters at station keeping, sir. Holding steady," Sulu responded once he had carried out the order.

"Dock Centre signalling green on main umbilical line," Uhura reported.

"Engage main umbilical, Mr Chekov," Kirk ordered.

The lights on the bridge dimmed suddenly as the main power closed down, then they came on as quickly as they had gone off.

"Main umbilical on-line, sir," Chekov reported.

"Good."

"Dock signalling all secure," Uhura informed him. "And, sir - Starfleet signalling that you have to report to Headquarters for debriefing."

"Report, message received and understood."

McCoy looked at Kirk and smiled. "Ah well, Jim, it's back to flying computers for you."

Kirk grunted. The last thing he wanted was a debriefing.

"You know, Bones, I feel like deploying the Enterprise out that-a-way," he motioned with his hand in no particular direction. Everyone on the bridge laughed.

Only McCoy knew exactly what he meant.

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SPOCK THOUGHTS  
by Linda C Wood

\*Pain\*. The radiation - sapped my strength - I'm burning - can't stand - must - rest.\*

"Spock!"

\*Jim's here - must try - to get up - yes. My jacket - that's better - my eyes - can't see properly - try to walk over to him. Oh, the wall of the chamber - he's here - must know -\*

"The ship - out of danger?" \*My voice - it's like a cancer.\*

"Yes."

\*Good - it wasn't in vain - must tell him -\*

"Don't grieve, Admiral - it is logical - the needs of the many - outweigh...."  
\*Can't breathe, lungs flooding.\*

"The needs of the few."

"Or the one." \*Yes. Try to hold on - a little longer - try to make it easier for him -\*

"I never took - the Kobayashi Maru test - till now. What do you think - of my solution?"

"Spock?!"

\*Didn't work. Strength going - can't stand any longer. How can I tell him?\*

"I have been, and always shall be, your friend." \*Smile - he'll understand the Vulcan salute.\* "Live long, and prosper!" \*He returned it - farewell, my friend - no more strength, no more time - the darkness is crowding around me....\*

"No!" cried Kirk, but Spock - was not there to hear him.





ANOTHER DAY WILL DAWN  
by Ann Preece

Kirk remained sitting in the semi-darkness of his quarters for some considerable time after David had left. Although he was due on the Bridge, somehow he didn't seem to have the necessary energy - or the will-power - required to make the short journey by turbolift. In spite of the fact that his crew awaited him beyond the closed door of his cabin, despite the very recent reconciliation with his estranged son, he felt more alone now than he had ever done in his entire life.

That which he had been dreading for so long had finally happened: Spock - the very dear friend who had become so much closer to him than a brother - was dead, having sacrificed his own life in order to save others; taken from him at a time when it was least expected. Dead! It was an irrevocable fact, a fact which Kirk had desperately tried to escape from. But now, with the finality of the highly-charged funeral service, and the jettisoning of Spock's coffin towards Carol's 'brave new world', his conscious mind was forced to accept, and come to terms with, the bitter truth: Spock was dead. The inescapable knowledge hurt - it hurt like hell, and Kirk felt the mantle of loneliness, so long kept at bay by the presence of a very special friend, now begin to settle around him even more firmly, unrelenting in her jealous grasp. Always before, Spock had been there to help alleviate the loneliness, to support and encourage when the responsibility of command decisions became too difficult. Now....there was no-one, and the thought of the future was beginning to fill Kirk with a feeling of dread.

"Oh, Spock - why? Why did it have to end this way?" he murmured brokenly, burying his face in his hands as he felt the bitter sting of tears on his cheeks, while dry sobs tried to force themselves passed the constriction in his throat, shoulders shaking with the violence of his emotions.

Spock had told him not to grieve, but that was one request which he knew he would find difficult to fulfil. Grief was the only thing remaining to him now, and while the hurt would - as it must - eventually lessen with the passage of time, the memories of these horror-filled days would remain indelibly printed on his mind forever.

"What were the words you used, Spock?" Kirk mused. "'The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'" \*Or the one\* his mind silently added.

Slowly, he left his seat and began to pace restlessly back and forth. "For so long we cheated death, won out over tremendous odds, always had 'Lady Luck' on our side, didn't we, Spock?" Kirk murmured out loud, as though by talking to himself he could help to ease just a little of the pain. "How many times in the past did we face similar situations? And how many times did we succeed in solving those 'no-win' situations before the ultimate sacrifice had to be made?" \*Until now\* an inner voice reminded him.

"It's strange," he continued musing, "but somehow I never thought it would end this way. I always hoped that - when the time came - the Fates would be kind and claim us both together; or, if not, that you would out-live me and I wouldn't have to face these long years of loneliness. My God - in this cold, harsh reality, how hard and selfish those words sound to my ears!

"But somehow, I never thought I would lose you, that you'd always be there when I needed you. Even after the five year mission had ended and I had accepted - much against everyone's advice - my promotion, and you had returned to Vulcan to undertake Kolinahr, I knew we wouldn't be apart for too long, the bond between us wouldn't permit it. But....as the time passed, with no word from you, the doubts began to creep in. The two and a half years of our separation were the longest years of my life, and I began to think that I really had lost you. But not even that separation had prepared me for this parting: for the pain of losing you a second - and final - time."

He dashed the back of his hand across eyes that had filled with tears. "And do you know what hurts the most, Spock? The fact that you died alone! Oh, I know I was there, but I wasn't with you! I wanted to hold you in my arms one last time, help ease your pain - but I couldn't....I couldn't!" His voice broke on a sob and he tried desperately to hold back a fresh on-rush of tears. The following words were whispered. "The....end....came so soon, Spock. There was so much I wanted - needed - to say...and not enough time." He took a deep, shuddering breath. "I....never even had the chance to tell you how much I loved you, Spock....and now....now it's too late!"

Blindly, he felt for his chair and sat down, allowing free-rein to his pent-up emotions. But as the storm gradually abated, and the sobs began to subside a little, he knew, in his heart of hearts, that this was not his way - indulging in self recrimination would not help him to come to terms with his loss, and he knew, with absolute certainty, that Spock would not wish it.

With great effort of will, he pulled himself together and crossed to the bathroom in order to bathe his face, thus removing all outward traces of his grief. That done, he fastened and straightened his uniform jacket, before bending to retrieve the copy of 'A Tale of Two Cities' which had fallen, unnoticed, to the floor. He turned it over carefully in his hands, remembering the occasion when Spock had given it to him, and a fond smile lit his face at the memory.

"I'm going to miss you, Spock....but someday....someday, I know we shall be together again. Another day will dawn, so until that time comes....goodbye, my Vulcan friend."

As he placed the book on the table and turned to leave, it was at that precise moment that he felt it - a slight, feather-like touch on his mind, so faint as to be almost unnoticeable, and for an instant he almost wondered if he had imagined it. But as the feeling of warmth persisted, an overwhelming sense of peace began to suffuse his entire being. He knew, with absolute certainty, that Spock was with him, and that knowledge filled him with hope. Suddenly, the future didn't seem so grim and uncertain after all. He smiled.

"I understand, my friend....I understand."

His step was light as he made his way to the Bridge.



WILL I EVER SEE YOU AGAIN  
by Joyce Devlin

I look upon your face  
and I  
want  
so much for you to  
awake  
but...  
you've gone  
to  
wander the stars  
No more,  
Time -

"Yes, my friend -  
you are, as always,  
right.  
I close my eyes now  
as the  
tears  
roll down my cheeks,  
Now that you have  
left me  
I  
whisper to myself,  
Will I ever see you  
again,  
Spock?"

"No, my friend, you  
could not.  
For  
it is beyond even  
you.



ALWAYS YOUR FRIEND  
by Linda Watt

(Based on 'Another Day Will Dawn' by Ann Preece)

Jim, I stand beside you, even though you are unaware of my presence, and grieve for you. I am aware of the pain you feel over my death but please understand, I could not let the ship and its crew die in Khan's wild plan for revenge. I wanted to tell you what I planned to do but there was no time. I am glad though you were near at the end; I felt I was not alone. I asked you not to grieve for me but how can you not grieve when you are Human and grief is a Human emotion that should not be bottled up inside.

You say you are sorry we could not die together, as we had always hoped, (if we had to die) but in a way I am glad that you are still alive. You are a survivor and will carry on. I know that it is painful for you at this moment but in time your pain will pass. I wished I had been able to tell you all the things I was unable to say due to my heritage, but I am sure you knew them. There was no need to tell you that I loved you as a brother yet I wish I had been able to tell you, it might have helped in this time of pain.

I am glad that you have been reconciled with David. He is a fine son and someone you will be proud of one day. I am glad there is someone to help fill the gap my death has brought you even though that friendship will be in a different form from the one we shared.

I wish, and hope, that you will seek McCoy for comfort in this time. My death is just as hard for him to bear as it is for you. He still feels guilt at not being able to stop me from going into that radiation chamber, even though he hides it well. I tried to ease his pain by mind melding with him before I went in - one day what I placed in his mind will come to him and may help him come to terms with his guilt.

Where you left my body is beautiful but something is happening that I cannot yet understand. I feel the joy of new life all around, though have a strange sensation I cannot explain. It is peaceful on this new planet that will hopefully one day be inhabited by gentle people who will not know war and hate but live in peace and harmony, at One with themselves and the universe.

I feel great pain as I stand silently by and watch the tears come but am glad you can now cry and ease that great tension building up inside. I wish there was some way I could let you know I am here beside you. I have tried but your grief is too great for me to break through your barriers. Somehow I must try to reach you, to let you know that you are not alone, that what I said before my body died, that I will always be your friend, is true.

You are leaving now to go to the bridge, to face everyone again. You look different, as though you have now started to come to terms with what has happened. I will try one more time to contact you again. I wish I could speak to you but if you sense I am here that will be enough for both of us.

I have done it, you have felt me in your mind and said you understand. I will not leave you; I will always be beside you, as it was once said I would be, and one day we will both stand together, side by side, again.



REMEMBERING  
by Ann Preece

"He isn't dead as long as we remember him."

They had been high-sounding words spoken in an attempt to soothe a troubled friend struggling to hide his grief over the tragic loss of a loved one; but now, in the cold, harsh reality of his quarters, they returned to haunt him, to force him to face up to the truth of the last few days and to try - however unsuccessfully - to accept the inevitable fact: Spock was dead, and there was very little he could do to help to ease the pain awakened by such knowledge.

It was with a heavy heart, and an even heavier step, that McCoy had made his solitary journey from the Bridge to his own quarters - thankful that the corridors of the officers' deck were more or less deserted - and hoping that here, at least, he could find the solace he so desperately needed to help him face the future.

He had to admit to feeling a momentary pang of guilt at refusing, albeit gently, Kirk's tentative invitation to join him later that evening, but he was perceptive enough to realise that the invitation had been extended merely out of politeness, and more to keep up appearances than for any other reason. McCoy knew, as did Kirk, that they both needed time alone to come to terms with their loss, and try to accept it, each in his own way. It was a path which, on this occasion, would have to be taken alone.

As the door slid closed behind him, effectively shutting out the world of the Enterprise beyond, McCoy leaned thankfully against the cool, metal surface, allowing himself the luxury of forgetting, for a few brief moments, the horror of Spock's death and what it would ultimately mean for himself and Kirk.

Wearily, an unsteady hand was raised to rub, ineffectually, at tired eyes, and his blurred gaze, clouded with grief, took in the familiar contours of his cabin, alighting on a lone bottle of Saurian brandy standing, seemingly in readiness, on his desk. Purposefully, he made his way over to it, and with the merest hesitation, poured a generous measure into an awaiting glass. Swirling the liquid round and round, he almost lost himself in the amber depths, before raising the glass to his lips and taking the first long drink. Perhaps, as on previous occasions, it would help to deaden the pain for just a little while, provide blessed relief for just a few hours: it had worked in the past, so why not now?

But 'now' wasn't like any other time, and if he had thought to find his answer in drink, then he was to be disappointed, for over an hour later, although the bottle of brandy was now empty, he still remained stone cold sober.

With a sign of resignation, he dragged himself over to the bed. Not bothering to undress, he lay down on top of the coverlet, but even sleep proved to be an elusive visitor, for every time he closed his eyes the scene in the radiation chamber would play itself over and over. Bitter memories inveigled their way to the surface of his mind, insidiously burrowing themselves into his conscious thoughts, claiming his attention, and forcing him to remember....

Remember that Spock was dead, had willingly made the ultimate sacrifice: given his own life so that millions, including the people on board the Enterprise, could be saved....

Remember that this time he had failed his Hippocratic oath, and had had to stand by and watch while one of his dearest friends - yes, he could admit that now - died, and know that there wasn't a damn thing he could do about it....

Remember that this time he couldn't possibly perform the miracle required to restore the Vulcan to life, couldn't pick up the pieces as he had so often done in the past when either he or Kirk had suffered severe injuries....

For so long they had feared the inevitable: that one day time would run out, and the cold hand of death would reach out and claim one of them for his own; on this occasion time had, indeed, 'run out' for the Vulcan.

"Why, Spock?" McCoy muttered, the sound of his voice shattering the still quiet of his quarters and seeming loud to his ears. "Why did it have to be you? Oh, I know in your book you were the 'logical' choice, but that doesn't make the knowledge any easier to bear. I know we've always felt that one day something like this would happen and we'd be powerless to prevent it; but that it should've happened now, and in such a way...." He shuddered as he remembered those final moments, re-lived again the horror of Spock's death - the details of which were so clearly etched in his thoughts - and realised that that particular memory, while it would gradually fade with the passage of time, would remain with him always.

He allowed his mind to wander back over the times they had shared in the past: the verbal battles which served to hide the genuine affection and respect they held for each other; the moments of gentle teasing; the shared joys and sorrows; comfort given and, more importantly, received; fond memories which would survive times passing, and help make the pain of acceptance a little easier to endure; precious recollections which would keep alive the spirit of a very special man.

"We've been through so much together - the three of us; taken the rough with the smooth, the good times and the bad. Now, whatever the future holds for us, we'll have to meet it without you...."

"How will Jim face up to that, I wonder? Ever since he became Captain of this ship, all those years ago, you've always been there to help, to support, in anyway you could; except for the time you went hairing off to Vulcan to undertake Kolinahr, that is. After V'ger everything seemed so different. Although you wouldn't say much to me about what had happened during the two and a half years you were away, I learnt enough from the little Jim told me to know that you'd refused Kolinahr because you'd felt that your answer lay elsewhere. I like to think that over the years you did find the peace and contentment for which you'd been searching most of your life. Certainly, you seemed as though you had, at last, accepted yourself, accepted the two sides of your heritage which helped to make you the person you were, and you and Jim reached a new understanding, became even closer, if that were possible. But now....now all that's changed...."

"I'll never forget the look on Jim's face when he realised you were dead; that there was nothing he could do to help you, to reach you. I've never seen him look like that before: not even after he'd lost Edith or Miramanee. But then, I always guessed that your death - if the Fates were cruel enough to take you first - would hit him the hardest. You were always so close, always that special bond drew you together no matter how far apart you were....and I must admit that there were times when I used to envy that closeness, envied that special relationship you both shared, until I realised that you needed me, too, each in your own way....I never had the chance to thank you for that, did I?"

He sighed, his thoughts returning, of their own volition, to the present and, more importantly, the future.

"What awaits us now, I wonder? Will Jim find a way to survive this, find a way to live without you by his side? And, come to that, will I?"

"I cared about you, Spock, but you knew that, didn't you? In my own way, I cared about you as much as Jim; even though I knew we didn't share the same closeness, I did know we were friends, and that's helped a great deal over these past few days..." As McCoy's voice trailed away into silence, an undisturbed hush fell over the cabin.

Restlessly he turned over, trying to ease tired muscles into a more comfortable position. Perhaps spending the evening alone hadn't been such a good idea after all,

he thought. Re-living past memories had only served to make him feel more miserable, and nothing concrete had been achieved by the exercise. Perhaps he should see Jim, talk things through with him: it might do them both some good....

With that thought in mind, he began to slide off the bed when, as if on cue, the door buzzer sounded: instinct told him, without any doubt, who his visitor would be at such a late hour.

As the door slid open at his request, the object of his latter thoughts stood framed in the doorway, as though hesitant to enter for fear of disturbing the occupant.

"I....thought you might need some company....I'm not disturbing you, am I? If you'd prefer to be alone, I can come back some other time...." There was a half-hidden note of pleading in the quiet voice.

McCoy shook his head. "I can't sleep, either....too much on my mind. As a matter of fact, I was about to come and look for you...."

Kirk raised a questioning eyebrow, an innocent gesture so reminiscent of Spock that it sent a momentary stab of pain through McCoy. He hurriedly began talking to hide his discomfort.

"I've been trying to forget," he said, indicating the empty bottle of brandy. "Thought it might help - you know, the age old cure for all problems - only this time it didn't work."

Kirk nodded in understanding. "I know how you feel - it didn't work for me, either. That's why I sought you out. I couldn't face spending anymore time on my own, and I felt that I had to talk to someone about....what happened: there's no-one else I can turn to - except you."

"There's David - or Carol."

"They wouldn't understand. I haven't seen Carol for years, and as for David - well, I know he's my son, but we're more like strangers. Oh, we've made our peace with each other, become reconciled, and given time, I believe we might have a worthwhile relationship - he's a son any father would be proud to acknowledge as his own. But right now....you're the one I need....and if I read my Chief Medical Officer correctly, I think you need me as much as I need you. Perhaps it would help us both if we could talk awhile...."

\* \* \* \* \*

They talked until well into the night, each deriving a small measure of comfort from the presence of the other, two people brought even closer together through their friendship for one man: the half-Human, half-Vulcan who had touched and enriched their lives in ways neither would forget.

"If only there had been something I could've done to help him....I feel so helpless....so guilty...."

"Bones....please....don't blame yourself: as you told me at the time - only I was too wrapped up in my own hell to see it - there was nothing that could be done. It was Spock's decision; he was prepared to give up his own life to save - not only us - but millions of other people who might have suffered through Khan's madness. By condemning that decision, that choice, we undermine his actions, and his death becomes meaningless....pointless. Now that I've had some time alone to think things through, I....believe I can understand what he did and why he did it, accept his actions as he would have wished me to do, although I can't pretend that knowledge doesn't hurt - because it does....it hurts like hell...."

There was a lengthy silence after Kirk had stopped speaking as each man became lost in his own thoughts. Characteristically, McCoy was the first to speak.

His voice was subdued as he asked, "Where do we go from here, I wonder? What happens now?"

We go on living our lives as best we can - we face the future each in our own particular way. It isn't in either of our natures to give up - and in any case, Spock wouldn't have wanted that." He glanced across at the tired, drawn features of the man opposite him, and suggested, gently, "Why don't you try and get some rest? You, like the rest of us, have been under a tremendous strain - perhaps more so - and there are times when I tend to forget that my Chief Medical Officer isn't as infallible as he would like us to believe." He fell silent for a moment, remembering another occasion, long ago, when he had used similar words to Spock: the memory was a painful reminder of all he had lost. He continued, "I'll stay with you until you're asleep, if that's any comfort to you?"

McCoy nodded, somewhat relieved, and grateful, that he wouldn't have to spend any more time alone with his memories: Spock's death had hit him harder than he'd realised.

Within minutes he was safely settled beneath the covers. "Well - this certainly makes a change," he chuckled, his voice containing the first note of lightness that Kirk had heard in hours.

"What does?"

"Our reversal of roles: you are tucking me in for a change, instead of the other way round!"

Kirk returned the grin. "Let's just say it's about time I returned the favour. Now - go to sleep, Doctor - and that's an order!"

Dutifully, McCoy closed his eyes, only to open them again moments later.

"Jim?"

"Yes?"

"You will be all right now - won't you?"

In the semi-darkness, Kirk smiled, greatly warmed by the doctor's genuine concern, a concern which took precedence over his own unhappiness. As usual, Bones was thinking of another's welfare before his own. It was time for reassurances that things would be all right. "Yes, Bones - don't worry about me: I'll be fine. It's strange, but somehow....somehow I believe that things really will be 'all right'. I....sense that we haven't seen the last of our Vulcan friend: I can feel him here, in my mind; and there'll always be a part of my heart that will belong to him." He paused for a moment, before continuing thoughtfully, "One day, I'm going to come back to the new world we helped to create. I've no idea what I'm going to find there, but I've promised myself that I will return, and nothing - and no-one - is going to stop me. Until that time comes, I have my memories to sustain me, and no-one can take those away from me." There was a note of determination in the measured tone, and McCoy felt strangely comforted by Kirk's words.

In the space of a few short hours, despair had been replaced by a feeling of hope; understanding had taken the place of bewilderment; acceptance had removed the last traces of doubt. Kirk's words had given him the strength he needed to face the

future and all it held for them both, and somehow, he knew that everything was going to be all right.

Greatly comforted, he closed his eyes, turned over - and slept.



JIM - YOU'D BETTER COME DOWN  
by Sheryl Peterson

What was it in Bones' voice  
That struck such terror  
That I turned all in one moment  
To your chair...  
Did my heart know what my mind  
Had not yet realised?  
But oh God! When I did look...  
And you weren't there!

I could only hurry there  
Eyes filled with your anguish  
As you dragged yourself to my side  
One last time.  
And yet you offered ME comfort  
With each word  
Feelings naked now as your dark eyes  
Sought mine.

And I fled then while my mind  
Was blind with terror.  
Knowing against all reason  
What I'd see...  
But they held me back, Spock  
When I would have joined you  
Denying me the right  
To die with thee.

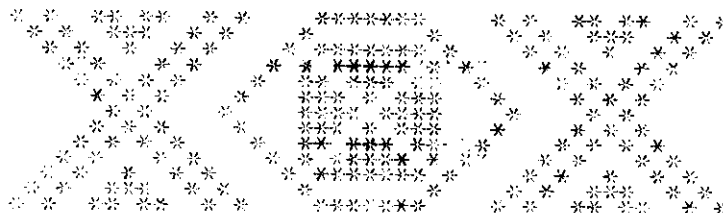
My arms ached with the desperate wish  
To hold you  
While you saluted me, frail hand  
Held high  
As you crumpled to the floor  
I crumpled with you  
Oh Gods of Vulcan...no...  
Spock please...don't...die.



PERSONAL DIARY  
JAMES T KIRK  
STARDATE 8207.21

by Linda C Wood

It is now several months after that terrible day in the Mutara Nebula when the price of defeating Khan was losing you. There was no time to say all I wanted - I couldn't, anyway. It all happened so suddenly, and the shock of watching you, your face horribly burned, your voice thick with pain, your blinded eyes looking at me but not seeing, as your great strength left you and you left me - still has not dimmed. I have tried to function normally throughout this time but, despite everyone's comforting words, I find I have ceased to function properly as a Starship Captain. I miss your strong presence beside me, your reassuring voice in my hearing - I cannot work without you. Your heroic sacrifice to save the Enterprise is the noblest act I will ever know but, dammit, I need you beside me, Spock. You once said that my first, best destiny was to command a Starship, but my destiny cannot be fulfilled without my star brother beside me. My destiny is over. I can neither live long nor prosper without you. What am I to do? The darkness of empty space is crowding around me. Help me!





FORGET  
by Sheryl Peterson

Forget!  
The cry opens into my mind  
Life a shaft of fire  
Repelling an invader  
And for a heart-stopping second  
My thoughts falter  
As the 'enemy' appears,  
Uncovering its dread visage  
On the viewscreen of memory...

Pain...  
Death...  
Spock...!  
NO!!!

Forget!!  
My heart screams in despair  
And driven back by the  
Crashing tide of my desperation,  
The memory flows  
Back whence it came...  
Back to where I drove it  
Into the deepest recesses  
Of my subconscious.

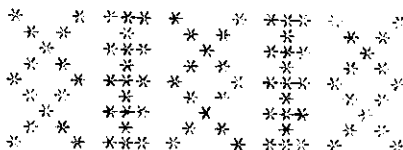
Lock me away!  
I do not wish to be seen!  
It calls back silently  
In my halls of memory  
And my heart twists  
Remembering another voice  
Which said that also  
But he only found  
The pain and madness of Pon Farr  
My spectre is worse  
For it is the end of life...  
His life!  
And I cannot...  
I DARE not  
Force it yet.  
Not now...  
Perhaps not ever!

You taught me everything, Spock...  
To love,  
To be what I was  
Though, like you, I was different  
Neither one, nor the other  
Yet somehow more than both

You taught me the fearsome control  
Which gives me such strength now  
In my time of greatest need  
So that my face hides  
My ravaged heart  
With never a tear  
To betray the ruin inside me  
But the one thing I need most -  
You could not teach me that  
For it was your gift alone.

If only you were here now.  
For one instant of time.  
To place those slender fingers  
Against my cold brow  
And say that one word  
Which yet was ever  
The greatest gift you could bestow  
FORGET!  
Then all would be peace  
Though it be  
The peace of nothingness.

But you are dead, Spock  
And I can not forget  
Though I shield my mind  
With all the ferocity  
Of a Vulcan  
Denying an outworlder admittance  
To his holiest of holies.  
It lurks without my gates  
Ready to pounce  
Whenever my guard lowers,  
Like some uneasy ghost  
Doomed to know no rest,  
For I saw you die  
And shared your agony  
And though my mind  
Denies the memory  
And locks it away  
I cannot forget.  
Sleep with the gods, my Spock  
I mourn thee now and forever  
And my heart breaks  
In silence.



GENESIS EXODUS  
by Linda C Wood

On the return journey from Genesis to Earthbase, although Admiral Kirk was automatically carrying out his routine tasks while on duty, he had appeared detached and forgetful of minor detail and had retired to his cabin when off duty, refraining from social contact of any kind with his crew. Dr McCoy, ever watchful, was growing increasingly concerned about the Admiral's physical and mental condition but, hoping his friend would find the reserves within himself to pull out of it, decided to say nothing to him. However, one evening McCoy was passing Spock's cabin when he heard a slight sound from within, like a musical note being played. He entered the cabin unannounced and found Kirk sitting at Spock's desk, holding his Vulcan harp closely to him, his face a mask of grief. Kirk was not quick enough to hide the expression from McCoy.

"Jim, you must pull yourself together."

"I can't, Bones - he was closer to me than any brother - a part of me has died with him."

"Jim, if you don't pull yourself out of this, your work will suffer and I will have to certify you as unfit to Captain the Enterprise!"

Suddenly flaring in anger, Jim shouted, "Do you want to let me die, too? If you took my ship from me, there would be nothing left for me to live for - this ship is mine and no-one else will have her." He stood, trembling with anger and glaring at McCoy.

Angered himself, McCoy responded, "What do you mean 'Let you die, too'?"

"Mean? What do I mean?" Suddenly the anger left Jim. "I - I'm sorry, Bones, I don't know what I'm saying any more. Please forgive me."

"Try to put Spock's death into perspective, Jim." McCoy's voice was gentle again. "He died as he would have wished - saving the ship for you. I said as we left Genesis that he's not dead as long as we remember him, but you must get your priorities right - put the memory of his existence in the past where it belongs and live with the living - he would want you to do that - 'Live long and prosper' were his last words to you. Do just that. You have a ship to run. Look to Carol and David as your future."

Jim emitted a long and shuddering sigh. "Yes, Bones, of course you're right. You will not find me like this again. Thank you. Bones, when we get back to Earthbase, I want to recommend both Spock and Peter Preston for citations for bravery over and above the call of duty. Would you bear witness and countersign the petition for me?"

"Yes, of course, Jim, it's the least we can do for both of them, and Scotty will be right **proud** of his nephew if Starfleet Command pass the recommendations. Why don't you come along to my cabin and we'll have a glass of Saurian brandy?" and Bones ushered Kirk out of Spock's cabin.

\* \* \* \* \*

During his debriefing with Starfleet Command at Earthbase, Kirk lodged his recommendations for bravery awards for both Spock and Peter. He knew that it would take several weeks for them to be passed and contented himself that he had done all he could for the time being. Kirk requested permission to take leave while the Enterprise was being fully repaired. Leave was granted him and he took a scoutship to Vulcan. With a heavy heart he contacted Ambassador Sarek and requested to see him. Sarek and Amanda received him at their mansion. They greeted Kirk with sombre Vulcan ceremony.

"Ambassador Sarek, I had to come and see you and your wife Amanda to offer my condolences."

Both Sarek and Amanda sat expressionless as Jim spoke. Kirk expected that of Sarek, but Amanda? She showed no grief at all.

"Ambassador, there was - nothing - I could do to save him." Kirk's voice caught and he fought for control. "He saved the ship and crew in the most heroic act I'll ever see, but I could not save him, he was dead before we could get him out of the radiation chamber."

Silent tears ran from Kirk's eyes and he looked directly at Sarek, unashamed of revealing his emotions in front of the Vulcan.

Sarek said coolly, "But you are his bond-brother and you are still alive."

"What do you mean?" asked Kirk.

"Surely you have not forgotten the vow you both took at the bonding ceremony?"

"Ambassador, my memory was damaged with the Klingon mindsifter and Spock, you will recall, gave me back my memories. I cannot, however, recall the actual wording of the ceremony - could you repeat it to me, please?"

"The Vulcan Bond-brother vow is: 'My mind is your mind, my life is your life, my being is your being, until death meets us together.'"

"I wonder why Spock didn't give me that memory back? Could it be that he cancelled the joint-death vow by not doing so? I cannot feel him in my mind, Sarek. He kept mentally withdrawn from me to allow me to fully recover from the mindsifter and, even when we went out on the Genesis mission, he did not come into my mind again."

Sarek replied: "No, Kirk, the bonding vow, despite the fact you are human, is placed in the deepest recesses of your mind - if Spock were dead, you would be dead within minutes of his death. Your humanity does not debar you from that. I therefore suggest to you that he is not dead at all."

Kirk's heart leaped.

"But we put his coffin out to burn in the atmosphere of the new Genesis world. His body couldn't have survived that, even if it did somehow survive the radiation burning."

"Are you sure the coffin burned out?" enquired Sarek.

"It didn't register on the scanners after we ejected it."

"I would suggest you check that out," replied Sarek.

Kirk took his leave of the Ambassador and his wife shortly afterwards and returned to the Vulcan Starbase. He put through a call to Lt Saavik at Earthbase.

"Lt Saavik, you programmed the flight path of Mr Spock's coffin, didn't you?"

"Yes, Admiral," she replied.

"And - did you programme it to burn up in the Genesis planet's atmosphere?"

There was a pause. "Admiral, that was the intention, I know, but, the night before the funeral, I sat watch over him, as is our Romulan custom. Admiral, I thought I felt something there, just for a moment, just the faintest touch in my mind, then

it was gone. I must confess that I reprogrammed the capsule to land on the planet's surface. Please forgive me, I meant no disrespect to Captain Spock - he was my mentor and I - admired - him greatly."

"Lt Saavik, never again apologise to me for using your initiative! Kirk out!" as he broke the communication line.

Jim's hopes soared - could he still be alive but dormant, stranded and trapped on Genesis? He opened his mind as Spock had trained him to do, searching, searching, for the mind of his Vulcan friend. Nothing. He returned to Earthbase, where he contacted Carol Marcus and arranged to meet her over dinner.

After a pleasant meal, Jim could restrain his impatience no longer.

"Carol, how soon can we get back to Genesis for you to run checks on the success of the project?"

"As a matter of fact, Jim, I've just been told by the Research Centre that they want me to return as soon as possible to carry out tests."

Jim smiled broadly. "I'll take you there, Carol."

"Why, Jim?"

"Because I have reason to believe that Spock is not dead."

"But Dr McCoy pronounced him dead, Jim!"

"Bones has been known to make mistakes about Vulcan physiology before now," Kirk said wryly.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kirk approached Starfleet Command and requested permission to take the Enterprise back to Genesis as a shakedown flight and explained to the governing Admirals that he thought Spock could still be alive down there. Permission was granted and, as soon as the ship had been repaired and refitted, the Enterprise slipped majestically out of Earthbase spacedock and warped out.

It seemed an interminable journey to Kirk, but they finally approached the Mutara Nebula and the Genesis planet floated like a blue and green jewel in the viewscreen. Kirk again opened his mind for Spock, but still there was no response. His heart sank a little.

"Lt Saavik, scan to locate Mr Spock's coffin. It should be quite easy to locate as it's the only man-made lead box on the surface."

"Scanning." A short while later she said, "Got it!"

"Relay the co-ordinates to Mr Scott and get him to beam it up!" Kirk ordered, and left hurriedly for the transporter room. In a shimmer the black coffin appeared on the pads. "Get it to Sickbay immediately!" said Kirk, and followed the trolley to McCoy's hospital.

Two engineers were standing by to remove the lid from the coffin, but McCoy held Jim's arm and said, "Jim, he's dead, both mentally and physically dead. Don't you think I checked when we got him out of the radiation room? All body and brain activity had ceased. If you open that casket, if his body is still intact, there's every chance that it'll disintegrate as the air gets to it. Watching that happen would be too much to bear, Jim."

"Bones, the fact remains that I should be dead if he is dead. I'm willing to take the chance - open the casket, engineers."

Slowly, the lid slid off the casket to reveal - a sleeping Spock, his face and hands no longer burned and his complexion a greenish-yellow. Suddenly, in Jim's mind, came the familiar and well-loved deep voice - \*Hit me hard, quickly!\* Jim immediately lifted Spock's inert body out of the casket and onto the diagnostic bed.

"Hit him, hit him hard and he'll come out of it!" yelled Kirk, slapping the Vulcan's face and joined, with considerable enthusiasm, by McCoy.

Spock drew a deep, wracking, sobbing, coughing breath, another, then another, and his dark eyes opened as he drew back from the onslaught of the blows and said huskily, "That....will be....quite enough, thank you....gentlemen."

Jim, laughing, crying, laughing again, embraced the prostrate but very much awake figure of his Vulcan friend. Spock was too physically weak to respond with anything but a slight twitch of his lips, but he opened the mind-bond to Kirk and emotions and feelings that no words would, or could, convey passed silently between them, then McCoy spoke and they broke the bond.

"You were dead, Spock," he stated, with amazement in his voice.

"Indeed, it would have appeared to be so, Dr McCoy." His voice gained strength as he spoke, the colour in his face returning to a healthy green. "On the Genesis planet," he continued, "there is a regenerative process going on that apparently regenerated the cells in my body, too. I have been in the deepest level of the Vulcan healing trance for most of my stay on the surface and I realised I could not escape the confines of the casket unaided."

"Why couldn't I find you through the bond, Spock? I've searched continuously for you but could not contact you."

"It was the combined effect of the radiation poisoning affecting my telepathic processes until the Genesis Effect repaired me, plus the fact that I was entombed in a lead container. I could not transmit my thoughts at all. As soon as you opened the casket I was able to contact you."

McCoy was running tests on Spock as the Vulcan spoke and he said, "We'll have to get you fed, Spock, your nutrition levels are dangerously low and you must restore your strength before returning to duty."

"Very well, Dr McCoy. I am looking forward to enjoying Dr Chapel's cooking, I must confess." Kirk and McCoy laughed, and Christine Chapel, standing behind them, blushed to her roots.

Returning to the Bridge, Kirk said: "Commander Uhura, please send the following message by subspace to Starfleet Command and Ambassador Sarek and his wife Amanda on Vulcan: 'Spock 'Recalled to Life' and resuming duty whenever possible.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

In the meantime, with the Enterprise orbiting her Genesis planet, Dr Carol Marcus and her son David were finding it difficult to contain their impatience about Kirk delegating a scientific team to beam down to the planet's surface. Carol was most anxious to see at first hand the effects of her 'cooking'. As soon as she heard that Spock was alive and recovering in Sickbay, she took the turbolift to the Bridge.

"Jim, you must allow my science team to go down to the surface."

"Carol, the ship's Science Department is running planetary tests just now, and as soon as I get clearance from them, I'll put you down. Lt Saavik, report on the research results, please."

"Admiral, there is evidence of magma core activity on Genesis, and the Mutara Nebula is emitting an ion storm. However, the effects of the storm should avoid the area of Genesis by two parsecs. There are no life-form readings from the surface of the planet."

"Thank you, Lieutenant. Carol, prepare your team to beam down in fifteen minutes time."

The landing party consisted of Carol, David, two Scientific Officers from the Enterprise and two Security Guards. They arrived at the transporter room and went onto the pads. As Scotty beamed them down, there was a sudden energy flux and the signal almost broke up, but Scotty fought for control, held it and they reported back as having safely arrived on the planet's surface.

Scotty reported the incident to Kirk on the Bridge. "I dinna ken what happened, Admiral, but I'll check it out - it may have been a drift of the ion storm you reported a wee while ago."

"Kirk to Dr Marcus - I'm sorry for the bumpy ride you got there, Carol, but our technicians are trying to locate the fault and we'll get you back up as soon as possible."

"Don't hurry, Jim, there's work enough for us here to last a lifetime." To Carol's eyes, the Genesis world was a lush, leafy, verdant wonderland full of new species of plants, fruit and water.

"We don't have that long, Carol, just a couple of hours. I've just received a message from Starfleet Command to proceed as quickly as possible to Starbase 8, there's apparently something brewing with the Romulans in that sector and the Enterprise is required there as a back-up."

"Why don't you ship us down some supplies and we'll stay on the surface till you complete your mission and come back for us?"

"That would be uneconomical, Carol and, besides, I'm not prepared to take the risk of leaving you, especially as our Science Department reports magma core activity on the planet."

"That's normal, Jim, even the Earth has core activity."

"I accept that, but yours is a new world and it may yet be unstable. You will beam up in two hours - consider that an order. Kirk out."

Scotty reported back to Kirk. "Admiral, there's no fault in our transporter to have caused the bumpy ride - it must have been from the ion storm - I dinna like it."

"Lt Saavik, update on that ion storm, please," ordered Kirk.

"Admiral, I've been monitoring its progress and it has changed course and is heading towards Genesis! There are also increased readings on the magma core of the planet. I will keep a close monitor, but I estimate that the main body of the ion storm will intersect with the planet in about 30 minutes time."

In the meantime, Carol, David and the science team were collecting samples of flora on the planet. Simultaneously, the landing party and the shipboard computers registered a powerful surge of electricity crackling through the stratosphere, resembling a lightning flash, although all that the landing party felt was a tingling sensation.

"Kirk to landing party, come in Carol."

"Marcus here."

"Carol, we registered an electrical surge in the stratosphere. I think you should beam up now, I don't like the feel of this at all."

"Yes, we felt it, it was like a solar wind, but it seems to have passed. Please give us a few more minutes to complete our sampling."

"Permission denied. Prepare to beam up."

As Kirk spoke the sky suddenly went very dark above Carol's team and a subterranean rumble, an earthquake deep within the planet, was felt.

Lt Saavik turned from her science station. "Admiral, I'm getting pulsating readings from the planet's core. It looks as if there's a build-up within the planet of the magma core. There is the distinct possibility of earthquakes high on the Richter Scale."

"Transporter room - Scotty, beam the landing party up, now!"

Scotty energised, but simultaneously there was another surge from the approaching ion storm and the transporter short-circuited before the matter could be fully boosted. The landing party were stranded on a very unstable planet.

"Admiral," reported Lt Saavik, "I'm getting increasingly violent readings from the core of the planet - it has begun to pulsate in a manner which suggests to me that the whole planet may explode at any time!"

"Kirk to hangar deck - prepare the shuttlecraft for immediate dispatch to planet surface!"

At that moment, Spock stepped out of the turbolift and proceeded to his post, relieving Lt Saavik for other duties.

"Mr Spock, you should be in Sickbay," Kirk said with a look of concern on his worried face.

"Admiral, I shall recover better at work."

"Very well, you have the con - I'm going down to get Carol and David up. The planet's going to explode."

"Admiral, I would not advise you to go down to the planet personally - there is a probability factor of 89.9% that your return flight will not be possible owing to the stratospheric turbulence alone."

"Spock, that's Carol and my son David down there - I cannot stand by and risk their deaths. As you were."

The Vulcan raised an eyebrow but said no more.

"Mr Sulu, you will accompany me to pilot the craft."

Sulu gulped convulsively but followed his Admiral into the turbolift.

In the hangar deck, the shuttlecraft was ready for takeoff. The area was cleared of personnel, the great doors swung open and the shuttlecraft arced down to the planet's surface.

A fierce, planet-wide electrical storm buffeted the shuttle, but with expert handling Sulu fought the controls and landed near the marked beacon of the landing party. Sheltering from the storm, the landing party, standing a short distance away, made a dash for the open doors of the craft. They were half-way there when an enormous flash of lightning tore into the middle of them and David and Carol fell, the others blown off their feet by the impact.

Kirk screamed in anguish and dashed out of the craft. He felt the planet vibrating under him as he ran to Carol and David's side. David stirred and groaned. He was badly burned but conscious, but Carol lay quite still. Jim ran to her side, held her in his arms, but she was quite obviously dead.

"No, oh, no," murmured Jim.

"Enterprise to landing party," came Spock's voice.

Amidst a haze of grief, Kirk reached for his communicator. "Kirk here," he said, his voice husky.

"Admiral, please leave the planet surface immediately - the magma core is going critical, the planet will explode in 15 minutes."

Kirk turned to the survivors. "Get David onto the craft," he ordered. He held Carol close, kissed her still-warm lips with infinite love and gentleness, then left her lying on the planet she gave birth to.

"Get us out of here, Mr Sulu!" said Kirk, then sat in the co-pilot's seat.

It took ten precious minutes for Sulu and Kirk to urge the shuttle through the atmospheric turmoil of the dying planet to rendezvous with the waiting Enterprise. As soon as the craft had docked and the hangar doors were closed behind them, Kirk said through the internal comm system, "Take her out, Spock." The Enterprise broke orbit, gained speed and leaped into warp drive just as the Genesis world exploded - exploded into death as it had exploded into life and, at the end of it, there was nothing there at all.

In Sickbay, David slowly recovered from his near-electrocution. When he was well enough, Kirk told him gently of his mother's death.

"She would have wanted to have stayed on her planet, father. You did the right thing."

"Why did it explode, David?" Kirk asked.

"The planet was formed in the Genesis bomb from a starship, not from a sterile planet rotating round an M-Class star as originally intended. My guess is that residual radioactivity from the Reliant's pile locked within the planet's core acted as a catalyst when the ion storm approached. It was an unstable environment without a sun and planetary system to support it. We have a lot of research to carry out before we attempt another Genesis experiment, but I know mother would want me to continue. The next time we'll find the right planet and do it properly."

Spock entered Sickbay. "Admiral, Dr Marcus, may I offer my sincere condolences on the death of Dr Carol Marcus. I grieve with thee."

Kirk looked at the Vulcan, a strange expression on his face. He said, "Thank you, Spock. When last we left planet Genesis behind, it was you we were grieving for."

The Vulcan turned away from Kirk, unable, for once, to reply.

The comm buzzed. "Uhura to Admiral Kirk."



"Kirk here."

"Admiral, I've just received a coded message from Starfleet Command, to be read by you personally."

"Oh? Thank you, Commander, I'm on my way."

When he reached the Bridge he took the message, opened it, and a smile of satisfaction flitted across his face. He turned to Spock, who was at his station.

"Captain Spock."

"Admiral?"

"I have great pleasure in informing you that Starfleet Command have conferred on you the Golden Starburst of Honour medal for your action in saving the Enterprise during the battle with the Reliant. The honour will be conferred on you on our return to Earthbase."

"Admiral, I am greatly honoured, it is the highest award in Starfleet. But, as I have said before, what I did was logical - no human could have carried out the repairs in time."

Kirk smiled - it was just what he expected the Vulcan to say. He punched the comm button for Engineering.

"Scotty."

"Surr."

"Starfleet Command have awarded your nephew, Peter, the posthumous award of Silver Starburst for his bravery during the Reliant battle."

There was silence at the other end of the line.

"Scotty?"

"Surr, what can I say?" his voice was strained with emotion.

"No need, Scotty. His actions contributed to saving the Enterprise. He died a hero's death. Kirk out."

"Mr Sulu, set in a course for Starbase 8 - we're needed there."



THE LAST FAREWELL  
by Sheryl Peterson

"Don't grieve" you tell me  
As you hang there - dying  
Your face, so cruelly burned,  
Presses close to mine.  
We reach out - but our fingers  
Find no pathway  
And we cannot even touch  
For one last time.

You sag towards the floor,  
Your great strength falling,  
Yet still the plea  
For comfort in your eyes.  
And I must crouch there  
Knowing I have failed you  
For I cannot even hold you  
As you die



NO KILL I!  
by Sheryl Peterson

QUOTE - Leonard Nimoy says "No more, Spock must go."  
Gene Roddenberry says "It's possible they may write the popular character  
out for good."  
Is this the end of Spock?!!!

Will you kill me?

My voice stirs within you  
Like some pale ghost  
From nether regions of Self  
No other human can plumb  
Let alone understand.  
Begging entrance  
Through the wall of denial  
You raised between us.  
To shut me in?  
Or to keep me out?  
Only you can tell.  
But I feel your thoughts  
Grow still and tremble  
As my presence,  
Once so welcome,  
Is now felt once more  
Like an uneasy spirit  
Which will not be exiled  
And must ever grope forlornly  
Through once-loved passages  
Of consciousness.  
More invader now  
Than twin -  
More guarded against  
Than embraced -  
What did I do to you  
That you reject me now?

We gave each other life!  
I was a dream  
Without substance.  
You were but a human  
Just like a thousand others.  
Then we came together -  
Melding in the truest sense  
Completion  
Fulfilment  
Belonging!  
Through you  
I walked the earth  
Through me  
You flew among the stars  
And found  
That you could be loved  
By your own kind,  
For you became  
The embodiment of me  
And a dream that spans Forever.

Could you kill me?

Oh there were times  
When thronged round  
By love-filled faces  
Who looked automatically  
At your ears (so short!)  
And called you  
Only by my name  
Asking for favours  
Only my powers could grant.  
I heard you screaming  
In silent anguish  
"I am not Spock!"  
I am Leonard Nimoy"  
But they saw only me -  
Heard only my voice,  
And your glory  
Had a bitter taste  
Because it was not yours.  
Not fully.  
Did the seeds of hate  
Begin to germinate then  
In the lonely fields  
Of your secret resentment  
That even sharing my life  
Could not dispel?  
I wondered.

You put me behind you -  
Walked new paths  
And learned new things  
That I did not teach you.  
That therefore were yours  
And you were happy  
And - at peace?

The years passed  
I was always there  
Eyes still sought me  
When they met yours  
In streets worlds apart.  
But time had dulled  
Your knife-edged despair  
And you tolerated it  
Until -  
I rose phoenix-like  
From the ashes  
Of your dearly-won peace  
Because - quite simply,

Hate me though you might  
I was yours - your alter ego  
**And you** were too - jealous?  
To lend me to another  
For any reason  
Even though I was a ghost  
You wished so much to lay -  
That you had thought laid  
For all time.

Now it begins again  
The love  
The possession  
The feeling of being trapped  
Inside an alien body  
In an alien universe  
And now you know -  
Even worse -  
That it is for all time  
You cannot cast me off  
**Like** a worn-out coat  
So you will kill me -  
Perhaps  
One mornings shooting?  
A length of film  
Running only bare minutes  
Some green dye on your clothes  
Or something exotic?  
How many ways  
Can scriptwriters kill 'a part'?

Then you would not need  
To fear me again - ever  
As for the inevitable uproar -  
The angry phone calls  
Could be ignored  
The hate mail left unopened  
But do you not fear  
My eyes accusing you  
From the mirror  
When you shave?  
Or the eyes of strangers  
Meeting yours  
In a thousand places

Silently asking  
"WHY?!!!"  
"How could you do it  
When we loved you so much?"  
When they loved me

Can you kill me  
Knowing all this?

I think not - logically  
But humans are not -  
And never will be -  
Logical  
It is part of their charm  
I have always found it -  
Fascinating  
Now it may well prove  
My death.

I am a Vulcan  
The mind rules  
There is no pain  
Only a great - fear?

And is it only chance  
That at this same instant  
You remember -  
A seeming eon ago -  
A creature  
Strange to your senses  
That also faced death  
And knowing it was - perhaps  
The last of its kind  
Pleaded -  
The first and only time  
In its entire life  
NO KILL I!

I await your decision  
Whatever it may be.

Signed

Spock



REMEMBER - REGRET  
by Sheryl Peterson

Why did I never tell you  
While I had you?  
Why could I not reveal  
Just how I felt?  
But whenever I tried  
Your eyes would pierce me  
And all my resolution  
Would just melt!

The times I snapped and snarled  
When we were helpless  
You must have thought  
I loathed you to the core  
But Spock - now you are dead  
And still unknowing  
Though I loved Jim  
Yet I loved you far, far more.



RETURN  
by Vicki Richards

So now he was going back. He had told himself that one day he must go back there, and he had known that it was a promise he would keep; a vow he would have been totally unable to break even had he wanted to, which he definitely did not.

A part of him dreaded what he might find there, and he knew that what he feared most of all was proof that the fragile hopes he could not, quite, give up, had no substance after all. No; he would cling to those hopes, for at least a while longer.

He tore his eyes from the viewscreen to see McCoy standing beside him, as of old. The Doctor half-turned and gave him a small grin, but Kirk could see that McCoy was also having trouble keeping his eyes from that particular forward view.

"How long have you been standing there, Bones?" Kirk asked his friend, momentarily returning the grin.

"I just got here, as you well know, Jim," McCoy answered lightly, thankful to see that Kirk could still smile, even now. "It shouldn't be long now before we see it."

"No," replied Kirk quietly, "not long." His gaze returned to the viewscreen.

It was eighteen months since the Enterprise had last been in that sector. Since any ship had been in that sector. Only unmanned probes had been allowed anywhere near that part of the galaxy which had once been known as the Mutara Nebula. The Genesis scientists had calculated that would be the minimum period before it would be safe for anyone to land on the beautiful new world which he had last seen glowing with new life, no more than a few hours after its unexpected birth. A sight burned indelibly on his memory forever.

Had he not, this time, kept command of the Enterprise, he doubted that after this last eighteen months he would still have been the same James Kirk at all. But Starfleet Command had eventually decided that, no matter what past regulations had been, James Kirk was still the only man to be in command of the Enterprise. Every time the galaxy was threatened, it seemed, they had to wait for him to sort it out. V'ger, Genesis, whatever.... When they had asked, did he want to keep her, they hadn't needed to ask twice.

His ship had needed him, as he had needed her. How he could have survived all those years planetside he just did not know. Out here was where he belonged, all right. His old friend had been right about that. But then, hadn't he known him better even than he knew himself? He understood now that Spock had always felt he was only keeping the Enterprise in trust for her real commander.

So now the Enterprise's real commander sat in the command chair, the only Admiral ever to have permanent command of a starship. James Kirk making history again, he thought wryly. But they had stayed with him, most of his old legendary crew, and they, and his ship had helped him get through this last eighteen months.

Spock had asked him not to grieve; he had wanted him to carry on. And Kirk had done his best, not wishing Spock's sacrifice to have been, not for nothing, but lessened. Saving the lives of over four hundred people could never be for nothing.

But still he felt the empty place on the Bridge as keenly as he had done then. And the empty place in his soul would always be there.

When the orders had come through he had known full well it was because the Enterprise was considered the best ship for the job; Starfleet was not in the habit of dishing out personal favours. Now that the Galaxy-class long-range exploration ships were here, his own dear ship was no longer one of the fastest in the Fleet, but she was

still the best. Still there were more requests for transfers to the Enterprise than to any other ship. And she was still his. That at least had not changed.

Neither had the man standing next to him. Bones was still there, too.

"Penny for 'em, Jim?" McCoy grinned at his old friend. Thank God he could still smile, too. McCoy understood only too well that the grief Kirk felt was an ever-present thing; a part of his life, now. Not that anyone who didn't know him well would be able to see it, and not that it had affected his performance as a starship commander. That was a role James Kirk could fulfil better than any other man he had ever known, without hardly having to think about it. Jim had reacted to Spock's death with far more strength than McCoy had expected. But then, he was James Kirk.

McCoy knew that he was doing his best to fulfil what Spock had wanted; if he could not forget the grief, still he could carry on, almost as before. The Enterprise was known as the best ship in the Fleet, McCoy reflected, because she had the best commander. That was a role he would never give up. He understood that, too, was what Spock would have wanted; he had known Jim belonged on the Bridge, as he had known he belonged at that Science Station. McCoy could not help turning momentarily to see Saavik sitting in that particular seat. She was a brilliant Science Officer, but she was not Spock. No-one ever could be.

McCoy understood the nature of Kirk's grief only too well; he had his own to carry. Yet they had both carried on, and even he had come to realise that his real home was out here, among the stars. Maybe he had always known that. He supposed, in the end, that their carrying on as they always had done was only logical.

Dammit, McCoy, he thought with a sudden pang, after all these years, you're talking about logic? He wondered idly what the man who should have been sitting in that seat would have said to that. McCoy wished with all his heart that the Vulcan could have been there to tell him.

"Genesis 1 on visual, Admiral," came Uhura's voice from her console, professional as ever. Yet Kirk and McCoy could both detect the underlying anticipation. Spock had, in some way, touched all those who had ever met him, and all felt the loss.

"Put it on the screen, Commander." Kirk's voice sounded a lot calmer than he actually felt.

Uhura fed in the information she had received from the small, unmanned satellite monitoring the Genesis planet, and onto the viewscreen came the image of the most beautiful planet all those present on the Bridge had ever seen.

Even more beautiful than when we left, Kirk thought to himself, I thought then that, if we had to leave him, at least it was in a place of beauty.

"As soon as we establish orbit, have Dr Marcus and the other scientists meet me in the transporter room. And a security team." The orders came smoothly. He had always known that nothing would keep him from personally setting foot on that world if the chance ever came his way. And if the chance hadn't, then he would have somehow found a way to go there.

McCoy was looking at him questioningly, the request plain in his eyes. This time the Doctor had said nothing about the Admiral risking his personal safety. Bones knew better than that, this time. He noticed Saavik staring at him, too. She had said nothing about regulations, either.

"Okay, Bones," Kirk said softly in response to McCoy's unspoken request, "I guess it would be sense to take the Doctor along."

McCoy's relieved grin was his reward as he stood and spoke in a louder voice.

"Mr Saavik - you have the conn."

The Science Officer stood immediately and went to take the centre seat, with an air of - understanding. Kirk stopped and looked at her momentarily, remembering how, at the service when they had committed Spock's black coffin to space, when all the humans who had known him had been trying so hard not to cry, Saavik had been the one with tears rolling down her face. Seeing that had almost caused his own control to crack.

"Come on, Bones, we've work to do."

Once again, Kirk and McCoy stepped together into the turbolift.

\* \* \* \* \*

The transporter had set them down in a scene of unsurpassed beauty. During the past months Kirk had made it his business to find out everything he could about the Genesis project. But nothing he had learned had prepared him for this. The two young scientists who had programmed the matrix had possessed undeniably great imagination; he had seen this world forming from the sub-elementary particles of the Mutara Nebula, and what he had seen then had been beautiful, but this....

Genesis 1 just had to be the most beautiful world in the galaxy; there was no other way of coming close to describing it. As if Madison and March had somehow taken all that which is best from all the known worlds and had somehow programmed the Genesis device to bring it all together in one indescribably perfect world, Kirk reflected. What those two would have yet created had they lived.

Kirk turned to McCoy. Bones had a stunned expression.

"Well, Bones?" asked Kirk gently, "what do you think of your 'universal armageddon' now?"

"I don't know what I think," McCoy replied, awed, "this place, it's.... If you don't mind, Jim, I think I'll just walk about for a bit. Takes some getting used to."

Kirk nodded. He understood how McCoy needed time to think. His own thoughts were whirling around his mind like a maelstrom. And they were almost all about the friend they had lost.

"Okay, Bones. But don't stray too far from the scientists or the security men; and keep that phaser handy. You know we haven't had even half a chance to study the life forms yet, and from what Carol told me about Madison and March's imaginations, there are likely to be some pretty weird things running about this place."

"No Eden without a serpent, eh, Jim?" McCoy replied, smiling, "don't worry, I'll be careful." McCoy left with a wave. He had every intention of being careful. The planet might look beautiful, but he didn't trust it.

Kirk watched him go in some amusement. Same old Bones. Then the amusement faded as the ever-present memory of what had happened on the day of Genesis 1's creation impressed itself on him again. He sighed and turned towards the nearby trees. McCoy wasn't the only one who needed to be alone for a while.

The forest was as beautiful and perfect in its creation as the rest of the planet he had seen so far; yet not so perfect as to spoil the effect. The two young scientists who had programmed Genesis' matrix had been real geniuses, there was no doubt about that; and neither was there any doubting theirs, or the Marcuses, good intentions. Which was just as well; Kirk didn't even like to think about what might have happened had Khan had a chance to discover the Genesis device's operation.... If he had re-programmed it, then McCoy's universal armageddon might well have become fact.

Suppressing a slight shudder, Kirk looked at the wonders around him; Khan hadn't been able to re-programme, and had instead triggered the creation of the incredibly lovely world of Madison and March's imaginations. Kirk felt it somehow appropriate that the two should have such a monument as Genesis 1.

When they had first heard about Genesis, Kirk had been apprehensive as McCoy about it. Only Spock had really considered its positive possibilities. And now, Kirk wasn't so sure. Spock had probably been right; hadn't he always been?

As for Genesis itself; according to Carol Marcus, the likelihood that it had been destroyed as the device dissolved the Nebula in the forming of its new matrix was practically negligible. The possibility was also low that it had escaped entirely, and was now adrift somewhere in deep space, as some quarters had feared. The scientist who had conceived Genesis believed rather that the device had actually been caught up in the creation of the planet, and now rested deep within its crust. Kirk hoped she was right, and that it would stay there. He knew the Marcuses intended to locate it, but privately he hoped that it would be irretrievable. He didn't want it destroyed; not after seeing the incredible things it could do; but he believed it might be better if it stayed lost until some future time. We've learned to deal with other two-edged swords in the past, he thought, maybe Genesis isn't beyond us, someday.

Then his thoughts turned again to the friend who had sacrificed his own life so that he and McCoy, and his, and Spock's ship, could be alive today. James Kirk walked deeper into the forest.

For a little while he stood quietly and watched the small forest animals play about him; most seemed Terran in origin, others of kinds he had never before seen. They did not seem afraid of him, until the noise from his communicator caused them to scurry for cover.

"Kirk to Enterprise," he said quickly, an unexplained anxiety settling over him.

"Saavik here, Admiral," came the immediate response. "Admiral, ship's sensors have located a continuous signal emanating from the surface of Genesis 1."

Saavik seemed to hesitate; an unusual occurrence which unaccountably made Kirk's stomach develop a few knots. "Go on, Lieutenant," ordered Kirk.

"The sensors have detected a tracking signal on a Federation frequency of a type emitted by a capsule such as the one in which we sealed Captain Spock's body. On the surface of the planet, Admiral."

Kirk felt as if his heart had jumped into his throat. That was impossible! They had all seen Spock's coffin glowing as the burn-up of re-entry had begun. It had to be a mistake.

Whatever it was, and whatever it cost him, Kirk knew he had to find out what it meant.

"Beam me up, Lieutenant," Kirk ordered. "Then set me down at the co-ordinates from which that signal originates. I intend to investigate."

"Yes, Admiral, immediately." Saavik's tone indicated that she had expected no other response to her news.

He felt the transporter effect take him, and a moment later the familiar walls of the Enterprise transporter room solidified around him. He noticed Scotty at the console - had Saavik told him about the unexplained signal? She had probably ordered him down there, but then, so would he have done.

There was no further time to consider that issue, for the Engineer signalled that the co-ordinates were programmed. Kirk gave the order to energize, then realised Scotty was wishing him good luck.

If the scene at which the transporter had first set the landing party down had been beautiful, then the tree-lined glade in which he now stood could only be described as surpassing that beauty tenfold. Fern-fronded branches trailed downwards from seemingly-ancient trees, to meet a rich velvet carpet of grass. Sunlight shone in golden shafts through the roof of trees, the illumination giving the glade a magical, silvan quality. He almost expected to see elves sitting around somewhere in discussion and deep thought.

Then he turned and the sight he did see made him catch his breath and stop.

Spock's black coffin rested on a bed of thick, soft grass. A thought flitted through Kirk's stunned mind, telling him that it was almost as if Genesis had created this beautiful glade as a monument and resting place for a man who had sacrificed himself so willingly for others.

How like Spock, thought Kirk for the millionth time, To give his life for us all, and then to tell us not to grieve. Still he stared at the black capsule in disbelief, unable to accept that what he saw was real.

Then he approached, and knelt, and gently reached out and touched the smooth black exterior. It was real all right. But how could it be? How could it have come through re-entry unharmed, let alone land intact in that place? Yet it appeared as whole and unharmed as when his Vulcan friend's body had first been placed in it. What was even more astonishing - it's physical form had not been altered at all, even though it had been caught up in the incredible power of the Genesis effect. What strange thing had happened here?

With the lump in his throat threatening to choke him, Kirk did what he knew he had to; he keyed in a sequence to override the seal, causing the black coffin to slide open, and steeled himself to look inside.

Spock's coffin was completely, impossibly, empty.

Kirk stared into the emptiness, his mind whirling with a thousand different ideas, most of them unpleasant, as to what could have happened to Spock's body. An animal couldn't have taken it out; that sealed lid would have been protection enough against Genesis 1's life-forms; similarly, the intact coffin indicated that the body would not have been harmed in re-entry, either. But how had that happened? And if the Genesis effect had not broken down the capsule into sub-elementary particles to use in the formation of its new matrix, then....

Carol Marcus had said that Genesis was life from lifelessness. Through the last months he had clung to the thought that perhaps, just perhaps, that might mean something. Yet Genesis was so complex a concept that he had not dared speculate too far; and he knew he could not afford to let himself hope too much, especially when he did not really believe that there was anything to hope for.

And now this. An empty coffin. It didn't make any sense at all.

Or did it? Did it? From what he had learned about Genesis, there was the possibility that Madison and March had programmed a certain selectivity into it. It did not necessarily have to destroy everything in its path in favour of its new matrix, as McCoy had thought in his first horror at discovering its existence, or as Spock himself had hypothesized. But Spock hadn't had all the facts then, and now he, Kirk, knew that it was not so. The two young physicists had not wished to destroy everything of worth in the forming of their new world; the fact that they had in reality programmed it not to do so was proven by the intact, unchanged black capsule before him.



Kirk stood slowly, hardly daring to think the thoughts which came to him. If Genesis had decided to protect and keep the capsule throughout not only the fires of re-entry but the incredible trauma of the new planet's birth, it had to be because Genesis had identified the capsule's contents as something worth keeping.

It had taken all Kirk's strength to cope with Spock's death, and now he found that hope re-kindled was yet a harder pain to bear. If he was wrong....

He stood there in the glade, still staring at the sleek black capsule, not knowing where to begin his search. Yet begin it he must. It was what he had come back here for. To find out, once and for all.

Kirk had always believed in an afterlife, and the more he saw of the universe, the more he believed in it. Surely in some dimension, Spock still lived. His Vulcan friend's spirit had been so strong. Life from lifelessness. Was it conceivable that Genesis, having decided to preserve the Vulcan's physical form, could some way call his consciousness back to it? Genesis was more than a miracle, but could it really do that? Or was it just that in his loneliness he wished it so? Kirk looked at the ground. Sometimes the grief really was more than he could bear.

Then he stiffened. For a moment he thought his mind was playing tricks on him. Then he knew with certainty that he could sense someone watching him from behind.

"Jim, I am here."

A deep, calm voice he had never thought to hear in life again.

He whirled, disbelievingly, hardly daring to look. And in that instant he knew it was true, all of it. Now he would not need to grieve.

At the edge of the glade the tall Vulcan stood watching, as if he had been waiting. The same old Spock, with the same small smile playing around his mouth as of old. Spock the unchangeable, his dark eyes glowing with an inner joy.

Kirk couldn't even speak. All he could do was grin. And run forward.



THE VAULT OF TOMORROW  
by Sheryl Peterson

What is this thing called 'Death'  
That takes you from us?  
What could ever dim the light  
In those dark eyes?  
That 'see' through all the shields  
We raise to others;  
That light our paths  
Like stars in midnight skies.

And if we never see you more  
What matter?  
When in our hearts and memories  
You reign.  
Though we 'see' you die  
And break our hearts in silence  
Racked by this empathy  
That 'feels' your pain.

What could ever blot you  
From our dreams, long finished,  
Destroy your presence  
Always by our side?  
You are not flesh  
To be buried and moulder  
Though a writer's whim  
May cast you to one side.

They could sooner cause the sun  
To leave the heavens  
Than to wipe you from the hearts  
Where you hold sway.  
Spock, you live within us all  
Down through the eons  
And you are not dead, T'hy'la  
Just... 'away'.



RENEWAL  
by Vicki Richards

McCoy stood atop a small rise and looked around him at the strangeness of the new world. Strangeness and beauty. 'It literally is Genesis,' he heard his memory saying, and he remembered again the friend who had said those words. How he regretted some of the things he had said to Spock, even if friendship had been behind them.

But he knew Spock had understood; somehow, he knew. That crazy Vulcan had understood humans better than most humans did, when you came right down to it. Look how he had fooled him that day. Turned one of his old tricks against him.

I know why you did it, Spock, but.... McCoy stared out into the distance, totally unable to continue the thought without breaking down. And he had no business doing that; not when Jim needed him.

A wind sprang up, and he turned. He left the small hill, intending to make his way back to the beam-down point, where the Genesis scientists were busily setting up their equipment. But he wasn't going to hurry; the place took some getting used to, like he'd told Jim; he needed some time on his own, and he knew Jim needed some, too.

He wasn't quite sure how he felt about Genesis anymore. He had never felt easy about the damn thing; not from the first moment he had heard about its existence. Jim and Spock hadn't felt quite the same about it, but he knew now that they'd both shared some of his fears. And he'd run off at the mouth at Spock again....

But Spock had understood. It was strange that, after that day that neither he nor Jim, nor any of the old Enterprise crew were going to forget, he had found he had come to understand the Vulcan better than ever. When it was too late. For a long time it had really bothered him; then a thought had struck him, and when he'd questioned some of Scotty's engineers, one of them had actually remembered Captain Spock reaching down to briefly touch his face before entering the deadly chamber.

The confirmation of his suspicions had made McCoy feel strangely humble. He hadn't told Jim; just did his best to do what he knew Spock wanted; tried to help Jim to carry on.

And Jim had coped; somehow, he had coped. McCoy wasn't sure how, but he had carried on better than he'd ever have thought he could. He'd shown them all the way. At times, McCoy had wondered just who was helping who.

He could see Jim was doing his best to do what Spock had wanted; he was trying not to grieve too much. But McCoy knew Jim Kirk too well; if on the surface, he looked much the same as ever, McCoy knew that inside he was a mass of anguish.

Surely you must have known he'd still grieve, Spock, McCoy's thoughts cried again to the unheard wind. Even after eighteen months he couldn't think of that last conversation he had witnessed without his own grief threatening to crash about him like an unbearable weight.

Without the Enterprise, McCoy doubted that Kirk could have made it; then when the orders had come through to return to the Genesis world, he had seen the look on his friend's face. It had been a look of desperate hope, which he knew had a very small, maybe no chance at all, of being realised. Then McCoy had finally understood what had kept Jim Kirk going.

So many things were claimed for Genesis; if you listened to some of the wilder rumours circulating around the Federation, then you'd believe it could do practically anything. Well, he'd seen what it could do at first hand, and in some ways he guessed it was a miracle.

But he didn't think the miracle Jim Kirk was hoping for had a chance in ten million.

He was nearing the beam-down point; he could hear the voices of the landing party. Genesis scientists and Enterprise personnel. Glad as he was that he hadn't actually come face to face with any of the Genesis world's life-forms Jim had warned him about, still he wondered if maybe he'd come back too soon; his solitary walk didn't seem to have made him feel much better.

But then, some things you never did get over.

Angry with himself for letting things get on top of him just at a time when Jim was likely to need him more than ever, McCoy scowled at the new world around him, and continued on towards the voices. Then his communicator beeped.

Kirk's voice sounded strange. Choked, almost. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but he didn't like it.

"Kirk to McCoy," said the communicator, "Bones - I've found something. I think you'd better see it."

"Okay, Jim - where are you?" What could Jim have found? Whatever it was, it sounded like it had really got to him. All sorts of horrible possibilities flitted through McCoy's mind; he wasn't at all sure he wanted to find out what it was. Damn Carol Marcus, and the whole Genesis project; he'd never trusted the infernal thing.

"Scotty has the co-ordinates," came the reply. "Have yourself beamed over. And Bones - get ready for a shock. Kirk out."

McCoy looked at the communicator thoughtfully. He'd been right; Jim sounded close to breaking. Something was really wrong.

He flipped open the grid again. "McCoy to Enterprise - get me the Transporter Room." Whatever it was, he was about to find out.

\* \* \* \* \*

He materialised in a tree-lined glade whose beauty momentarily took the breath away.

There was Jim, standing just a few feet in front of him, looking - McCoy wasn't sure how he looked. He wasn't quite sure what the look on his friend's face meant at all. Then he caught sight of the too-familiar black capsule in the glade behind him, and felt a knotting in his stomach as he wondered just what it was Jim had found.

McCoy knew he'd opened it. What had he found? McCoy didn't think he wanted to know.

"Bones - it's okay - don't look like that!" Kirk was walking quickly forward, taking his arm and beginning to lead him from the glade.

And he was smiling.

"Jim? What....?" McCoy said in a weak voice, not even bothering to protest at the way Kirk was practically dragging him along.

Kirk stopped and looked at him. Then the smile came again. "Bones, I....Forget it; you're gonna have to see this for yourself. Come on."

Then he was off again, gesturing for McCoy to follow. The good Doctor was by now extremely confused. He hadn't seen his friend like this in a very long time. It was beyond explanation, and McCoy was very worried, and very puzzled. What had Jim found to make him act like this; had it finally pushed him over the edge?

Yet Jim seemed to be truly glad about something. McCoy began to follow, then suddenly stopped dead. There was only one thing could make Jim Kirk act like that.

Not daring to even think the thoughts trying to get into his mind, McCoy hurried after him.

They were out of the trees, and walking towards where the nearby hills came down to meet the forest. Kirk kept slightly ahead all the time, still not answering McCoy's questions properly; just saying he had to see for himself, it was the best way.

Then Kirk stopped, and turned McCoy around. Just in front of them, partially hidden by several trees, stood what could only be a makeshift shelter. Neatly constructed and functional. Then as he watched, a tall, familiar figure came out and walked towards them.

And McCoy knew then that the miracle had happened.

"Spock, I....You're alive!" said McCoy, totally unable to say anything else in his shock, knowing he looked stupid and not caring.

"Indeed, McCoy," came the gentle reply. Not an answer a Vulcan might give, but the moment didn't call for logic, and Spock knew it well.

Then it was McCoy's turn to grab Spock by the shoulders. The human didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "I don't know how this can all be true, Spock; but damnit, man, you don't know how glad I am to see you."

"I, too, am glad," replied the Vulcan. He remembered how McCoy had said similar words that time so long ago when he had returned to the Enterprise after leaving Gol. That time he had not been able to respond, and it had hurt McCoy. Not any more. If he could tell Jim how he truly felt about things, then surely he owed it to McCoy to let him see how much his friendship was also valued. Long years it had taken; long years and a passage through death; but even before Genesis he had learned much, and now....Well, now he had been granted a chance no other had been, and in future he was going to make certain both Jim and McCoy always knew how much they meant to him.

Kirk stood watching as a smile appeared on Spock's face again, and his grin grew wider as he watched McCoy's confusion. He knew that tears were close as well; but they were tears of gladness, and today nothing could matter except the fact that, against all the odds, all the finality of death, he had Spock back again.

He took out his communicator. He was looking forward to seeing the looks on the faces of Scotty and Rand when they materialised in the Transporter Room. If he knew Scotty, he'd still be there, waiting. Did Spock have any idea of the kind of welcome he was going to get? The thought almost made the tears start again.

"Kirk to Enterprise," he said.

"Enterprise here. Your orders, Admiral?" said Saavik's voice.

Kirk looked again at McCoy and Spock. They were both watching him, now. Kirk didn't think the silly grin was going to disappear from Bones' face for quite a while. He grinned back.. Then spoke into the communicator.

"Three to beam up, Lieutenant. Kirk out." He couldn't say any more. For once he just couldn't find the right words. Like Bones, they were all going to have to find out for themselves.

"Jim," said Spock quietly, "it is good to be going home."

Kirk nodded, and out of the corner of his eye saw McCoy nodding, too. Maybe there wasn't any need for words.

"Yes, Spock," said Kirk, "time to go back to the ship. Our ship. She's missed you, too."

And as if in reply, the great starship's transporter mechanism was activated, bringing the three travellers home to her. All was again as it was meant to be.

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TIME  
by Linda C Wood

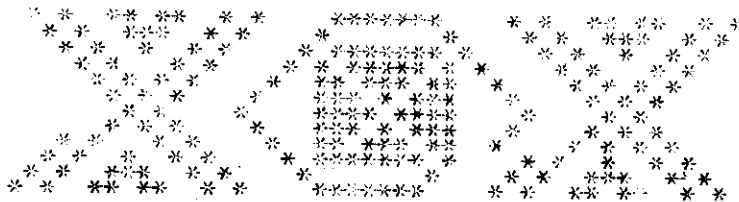
Time cannot erase  
The memory of your serene face.  
Without conscious choice  
I hear the sound of your voice  
Echoing in the chambers of my mind  
When rest and peace I try to find.

On the Bridge I swivel my chair  
But another man is sitting there  
Head bowed in calculation  
At the Science Officer station.  
If accidentally I speak your name  
My very being wracks in pain.

They say that time will ease my grief -  
Time, that fleeting, rushing thief;  
All the years together, gone,  
Like a haunting, lilting song  
With a bittersweet refrain,  
Savoured once, then never again.

These memories now return to mock -  
I needed you beside me, Spock!  
"I have been, and shall be, your friend."  
Were your dying words, seconds from your end.  
But why did you speak in the future tense?  
You knew you were dying, it doesn't make sense.

But what's this I hear McCoy telling me?  
You melded with him, his mind drifting free -  
You bade him "Remember" - the word burnt like a knife -  
He says in time the Genesis world will restore you to life!  
So now is not our story's end!  
My heart leaps with joy - I am coming, my friend!



REAWAKENING  
by Vicki Richards

He felt as though the struggle against the unseen, unidentified enemy had gone on for eternity. The confusion and bewilderment had sown seeds of panic; but that he had refused; it had never been his way. Desperately he tried to use the thought processes he had once known, but could not identify enough facts in the dark haze he seemed to have been held in forever. Vague impressions and thoughts drifted in and out of his unknown isolation; just out of reach of consciousness. He wanted to cry, but knew not what for, and could not.

The loneliness was more than he had ever known. No matter how much he tried, he could not recall the wonderful things he had learned - where? Then suddenly his struggles yielded the first small success he had gained in what seemed like forever; that was not the time he wished to remember; it was the time before, when he had been....

But it had gone again, and the loneliness closed in around him once more. Still he would not give up; he had to try. For what he did not know; but he would not give up.

Then the vision of a half-remembered face drifted into what consciousness he had. It lasted only a moment, and was gone. But it might as well have been a lightning bolt. In that instant of half-remembrance, the loneliness had vanished. That had returned was now of no importance; he had identified his enemy.

It was forgetfulness. Now he knew that he fought to remember.

\* \* \* \* \*

Finally the haze parted. Sensation returned, and sight. He found himself sitting on the ground in a place he did not know.

The glade was beautiful. Truly more beautiful than anywhere he had ever seen. Or was that true? Were there not other places, as equally beautiful in different ways? Still he could not remember. And the loneliness was still with him; perhaps it always had been.

There had been a time.... No, it had gone again. How he wished he could recall it. But at least he could see again; at least he could move around. He was not sure what his dark prison had been; where he had been entrapped.

Now he was free, and in time he would remember.

\* \* \* \* \*

He had returned to the glade again. Inexorably he was drawn there; it was the place, after all, where his memory began. Try as he had during the days and weeks since consciousness had returned, he still could not find any answers. Instinct and common sense had told him enough to enable him to build a shelter and to survive; but it was not enough. Though the world on which he found himself held untold wonders, it was not enough. His only waking thought was to remember. And to find out why he was lonely.

The shining black cylinder still lay there, unchanged. He pounced on the thought and examined it; why should he have expected it to be changed?

The numbers and symbols on its side should have meant something to him, he knew. In a moment where deep-rooted instinct took over again, he dropped to the floor and sat cross-legged, his hands steepled before him.

Meditation was not a word he could recall; but the processes were ingrained and almost automatic. Instinctively he went through the old, almost-forgotten

disciplines, sinking deeper through the levels of self-awareness, until finally he found something.

He **had** been dead. Now he was alive again. And once he had not been alone.

He could not tell where the knowledge had come from, but he could not doubt it. Standing, he saw the beauty of the world anew, and realised it should have some deeper meaning for him. But the revelation he had experienced was too strong for him to consider much else at that moment.

Silent and troubled, the tall figure walked from the glade.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was night, but sleep would not come to him. He sat in his shelter and thoughtfully examined the small metal object he had been wearing when he returned to awareness, for the first time. It appeared to be made of two different metals; a hollow circle surmounted with a triangle, and a small, brilliant jewel. He was vaguely aware that once it had meant a great deal to him.

Frustrated with his inability to clear the fog in his mind, he left the safety of the shelter. He was not in the habit of going abroad after nightfall; ancient instinct told him to beware predators; but this night was different.

Outside, he looked up, automatically drawn. And saw the stars.

As if stunned, he stood there and stared. The brilliant stars shone in the velvet blackness, and he knew them. Even knew some of their names. Then he remembered the silver ship that flew among them.

And that ship's master. The face which had haunted his dreams cleared in his mind, and it finally came to him. All of it. And the enormity of it all brought the loneliness crashing down on him again.

Vulcan control, if it had ever existed anywhere, was now hardly there at all. Desperately grasping at long-forgotten disciplines, he forced his mind to turn down the old paths of logic. He needed to think, before sanity fled in the evidence confronting him.

He sat on a small grassy rise below the stars, too shocked to reach any level of meditation. Memories he had despaired for whirled in his mind, threatening to overwhelm.

He remembered his decision. There had been no alternative. He could not have let Jim and the others die, when there had been a way to save them. He had not wanted to die and leave them; but logically there had been no choice. Lying to McCoy had been hard; but not as hard as saying goodbye to Jim in that way. At least he had managed to save them.

And he had died. What was death? He vaguely recalled some wonderful experience, but instinctively knew he would not be able to bring it back to his conscious mind, under any condition. In his position it would be easy for a confused mind to consider he was in some kind of afterlife. But he knew life for what it was.

How could it possibly have happened? A thought which had been forming itself ever since realisation had returned was confirmed by a study of the constellations. He was in the position in space once occupied by the Mutara Nebula. And he knew that the formation of the Genesis World could be the only possible reason, as fantastic as it seemed, for the fact that he was there, living, and apparently unchanged.

The very hypothesis contradicted itself. Truly Genesis had the power to create life; but as he had told Jim and McCoy, it could be expected to destroy all existing life in its path in favour of its new matrix.

But he had not been 'existing life'. Perhaps that was the key.

It was the only possible explanation; or at least the only one his tired and traumatized mind could come up with for the moment. Only his inherent use of logic prevented him from despair or worse in those moments of realisation.

Then he recalled the many things he had learned from his human friends, especially Jim; and he determined he would not despair - he would hope! And was there not reason for it? He had been dead, undisputedly; and now he was alive again. For some reason he could not be entirely certain of with incomplete data, Genesis had chosen to return him to life, unchanged. And although his time sense appeared to have been temporarily disrupted, and without reference points he had no way of telling exactly how long it had been since that day he had shown them what he and Jim thought of the no-win scenario, still he was alive. Undoubtedly it would have been Jim who, knowing his wishes on the subject, would have ordered the black capsule to be ejected into space. Towards the Genesis world. He knew Jim, and he knew that meant something else, too.

Whatever difficulties there were, Jim, and McCoy, would find a way to return to the Genesis world one day.

And he would be there, waiting for them.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the days that followed, he did his best to discover as much as possible about the Genesis world; partly because the old, insatiable curiosity was still there; and partly because Federation scientists would want to know all they could about the world the genius of the Genesis scientists had created, and he was in an excellent position to observe.

A great part of his purpose was to attempt to discover the age of the Genesis world; a task greatly hampered by the lack of equipment. If he could ascertain how long it had been since the day of creation, then he could estimate how long it was likely he would have to wait before they came for him. Also, he had to admit to himself that he needed something to keep him occupied. Of course, he had never liked wasting time or opportunity; but in this case, he was not entirely sure his reactions were totally motivated by logic. In fact, he knew they were not. It was a long wait.

Eventually he came to the conclusion that the world of Madison and March's imaginations had been in existence for some four months or more. The very nature of the Genesis world made any estimate highly suspect in its accuracy. Although he could not tell how long he had been absent from what was termed 'life' for; he could no longer term that absence 'death', as others did, for some fleeting sensations from that time still lingered deep in his subconscious; he did know, with the unflinching certainty on such matters he had always possessed, that it had been exactly two point three-five-seven months since his day of reawakening. Not the day when he had finally returned to consciousness in the glade, but that night when he had looked up towards the stars, towards the place where his home and friends still were, somewhere, and had finally remembered that once he had been Spock of Vulcan.

And although he still had no points of reference to gauge that gap in his time-sense by, he knew it would only be a matter of time before the silver ship he called home returned for him.

\* \* \* \* \*

The months seemed to stretch on into eternity, as illogical as that was. With the return of memory, and acquired knowledge, he had been able to make his shelter more comfortable, and food had not been a great problem; the young world literally teemed with plant life. The newly-created animal life-forms gave him much opportunity for study, and although he suspected not all the Genesis world's life-forms would be as



apparently harmless as those in the vicinity of his shelter, he did not encounter any which threatened him. Lack of comfort had never concerned him; yet although he had easily fallen back into the old routines of meditation, the aloneness became increasingly oppressive.

Mainly because he knew that out there, somewhere, Jim Kirk still wandered the stars, thinking he was dead.

He had asked him not to grieve; and he knew his friend would try, and McCoy would do his best to help. But he knew them well; knew what they would have felt, and he felt an extremely unVulcan longing to see them, to tell them - it's all right; you don't have to grieve any more; I'm alive.

And still the months stretched on and no-one came.

\* \* \* \* \*

On another of the bright, fine mornings that unique world seemed to have an abundance of, Spock found himself in the glade once more, silently taking in the place where he had returned to consciousness. The black capsule was still there on its bed of grass; the sight of a tangible piece of the Enterprise set his thoughts on the same tracks they had covered and recovered over the last months.

The biggest question was, naturally, why was he alive at all? The only possible conclusion was that the Genesis effect had, for some reason, returned him to life. And unchanged. It could only be logical if Madison and March had programmed it to such a purpose; had they suspected their invention was capable of that? And then; what of Khan and his followers? He did not think the same could possibly apply to them; after all, the last survivors of the Botany Bay had been caught up in the very moment of creation; surely Genesis could not have left them unchanged. In that cataclysmic instant when the dust of the Nebula had been changed into something else, surely they would have been incorporated into the new matrix.

And Genesis itself? Undoubtedly the planet had formed around the device, but was it irretrievable? Spock could not entirely decide whether that would be a good thing. Perhaps it would be best if Genesis were left where it was for a long while. But it was yet another reason to make a return visit by Federation representatives an absolute certainty; and he knew Jim would be with them, if he had to go through the whole of Starfleet to do it.

That was the main reason why he could not leave the area of the glade. The black capsule still emitted its homing signal, and any ship in orbit with sensitive enough sensors would detect it. He was irresistibly drawn to the glade, and knew it was because when Jim did come, that would be the place he would come to.

As silently as he had come, Spock turned to go. It was almost eighteen months by his calculations, and still no-one had arrived to break his isolation.

And the loneliness was getting worse. He no longer attempted to deny to himself that he felt it.

Then he heard a sound which made him halt suddenly in mid-stride. The unmistakable hum of a Federation transporter.

He whirled round just in time to see the figure take shape, and as recognition took place, almost cried out. But the sudden lump in his throat prevented him.

Jim Kirk stood in the middle of the glade, between Spock and the capsule. His back was almost turned to the Vulcan, but Spock would have known his friend anywhere.

As the watching Vulcan looked on in unbelievable, overpowering relief, totally unable to move or say anything for the incredible gladness that overwhelmed him, he

saw Kirk go over to the capsule and gently, almost reverently, touch it. He could not see Jim's face properly, but he knew exactly what his friend was feeling. Wanting to call out to him, Spock found he still had not, quite, regained control of his vocal chords. Perhaps, too, it was best for Jim. Give him a few moments to adjust; make the shock less. If that was possible.

Then Kirk did what Spock knew he would do; he opened the capsule. Then, as he stood in stunned disbelief, Spock took a step forward and stopped. Kirk looked totally shattered and disorientated.

Yes, my friend, thought Spock, the last months have been hard on both of us.

Then, after a few seconds that seemed to last forever, Kirk turned and started to leave the glade. Then Spock did call to him.

"Jim, I am here."

The effect was as if Kirk had been struck by lightning. His expression as he looked at the Vulcan in sheer amazement and disbelief; quickly replaced by a grin of such intensity, caused Spock to find himself beginning to smile back.

Then Kirk was running forward, and had grabbed Spock's shoulders, apparently unable to speak either.

"Jim; it's all right. I'm alive." Finally the fates had allowed him to say the words he had waited so many months to say. Then he finally gave into the smile trying to come out.

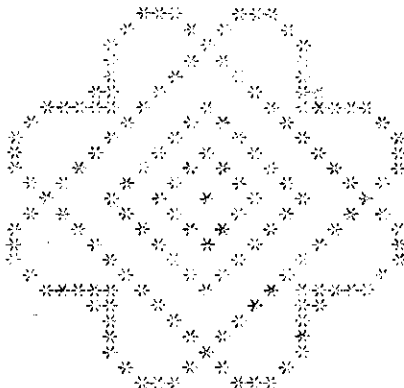
"Spock, how? I...Spock, it is you. I'm not sure I understand, but right now I don't care." Although he was finally able to speak, the emotion in Kirk's voice was apparent. Understandably.

Spock nodded; the old, familiar gesture filling Kirk with a gladness he had never thought to know again.

"I have a hypothesis; it needs data. But, Jim; I don't think I care either. To be alive, and to be able to see my friends again....It's enough."

Kirk nodded back at the Vulcan, practically unable to tear his eyes away, lest he should somehow disappear again. Then he reached for his communicator.

He looked back at the Vulcan, to see he was smiling again. "Spock," he said, his voice still dangerously close to cracking, "I think we'd better tell McCoy."



THE LOGICAL THING TO DO  
by Karen Hayden

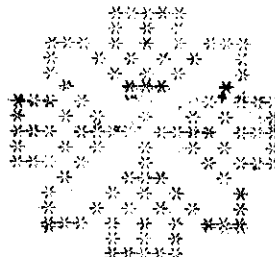
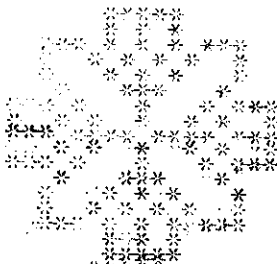
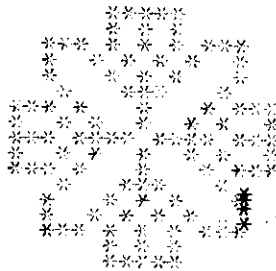
It was a trip to - nowhere.  
And yet, as he told me, it was...logical.  
And the only thing possible.  
I told myself - save up those teardrops,  
Do not let them fall.  
For he has told me not to grieve...

I allowed my hand to join with his  
Upon that glass wall,  
We were so near - and yet so very far.  
I felt his tendrilled thoughts  
Touch with mine, and hold them tight,  
A bond that could never be broken,  
And a sign that it was not 'the end'.

His breath left his body.  
But he was not dead!  
For I could feel his presence  
Deep within me, Safe.  
Protector and protected  
From all that stood before us.

I vowed that I would return,  
And until the time was right  
I would spend all my time  
Searching for a tomorrow  
When we will be together again,  
When there would again be a meaning  
To my life.....

Life from lifelessness.....



McCoy's Soliloquy

by Linda C Wood

Well, Spock, you finally blew it this time. For all the times I've been able to pull you out of trouble, pull you back from death's door at the last second, you finally did it this time. O.K., you saved the whole damn ship, and all who sail in her, in a typically unselfish act of unconscious heroism, your altruism and loyalty to Jim coming through when we were in the worst jam we've ever been in. There really was no way out, but you found a way. I heard you say to Jim, 'The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few - or the one.' Quite true, and you achieved that end by what you did. But what about the needs of the 'one'? Your own particular one? If I'm feelin' this bad about losin' you, how in space is he feelin'? But there's nothin' I can do for him just now, we all must face death and grief in our own way. I reckon he'll want to be along with his memories - but I'm worried about him - will he want to go on without you by his side? I said to Jim that you're really not dead - as long as we remember you. I know neither he nor I will ever forget you - how could we? Anyway, must try to get some rest now, my shoulder still hurts from where you gave me the neck pinch to put me out of action - if only I hadn't looked away - I should've guessed you'd pull that one on me - ah, nice to get horizontal for a while - maybe I'll just close my eyes for a few minutes...

\*SIGH\*

Huh? What was that? Must've dozed off - could've sworn I heard Spock's voice, but that's impossible, he's...

\*SIGH\*

Ah! Am I goin' mad? Is my grief for him makin' me hear voices? A voice I know I'll never hear again? But it was Spock's voice. Remember. Remember what? It's important, I know it is...

\*SIGH\*

The voice is in my mind - could he have melded with me when he put me out? Is that what happened? Maybe if I relax, try to sleep again... It's no good, when I try to sleep, I don't. Think I'll just read a book for a while, try to relax some more... Images flashing through my mind...I see Spock...

\*SIGH\*

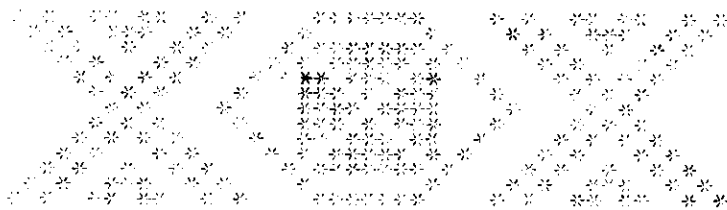
Oh, my. Oh my God - he's not dead! Got to work fast, though, little time to save him... "McCoy to bridge..."

"Kirk here, Bones - what is it?"

"Jim, turn the ship around, get back to Genesis fast - it's Spock..."

"Bones, Spock's...dead. We've just got to get used to the fact."

"Jim listen to me. For God's sake turn the ship around - there's something that I've remembered..."



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