

LOTUS STARBASE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF LOTUS FLEET

ISSUE 14, AUGUST 2015

"The art of life is a constant readjustment to our surroundings."

-- Kakuzo Okakura



LOTUS FLEET:: AN AUTHENTICALLY DEDICATED STAR TREK COMMUNITY

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Message from the Fleet Admiral's Office

Having the Armada system introduced into Star Trek Online was a good move beyond the bonuses, skill point increases and Dilithium discounts used as incentives to form alliances. As importantly, it has also brought the philosophy of cooperation rather than competition and conflict into the battle-centered game.

In Lotus Fleet, we are seeing a different set of subtle rewards manifesting from the encounters alone that we have been having with other fleets and their members since early July. These convergences have occurred in-game and in Teamspeak 3; on multiple channels with several different fleets and even with other Armadas and their fleets.

From a Star Trek perspective, a diplomat is a person who specializes in facilitating peaceful relations between different factions, often by serving as a negotiator or a neutral mediator of disputes. A diplomat who is a citizen of one power may be hired or appointed to professionally serve the interests of another power.

Within the Armada, this shift has allowed many of us to function in more of a diplomatic capacity than we have been doing for many years. As a result, these opportunities now allow a variety of fleets to work toward common goals while helping each other in the process; such as with the completion of Starbase projects for example. Mathematically, this translates as follows in terms of goals:

Starbase = 20 Levels

Embassy = 9 Levels

Dilithium Mine = 9 Levels

Spire = 9 Levels

Research Lab = 9 Levels

TOTAL FLEET LEVELS = 56 (*Lotus Fleet is currently at Level 46*)

Now, if you take that and multiply it by the max number of Fleets that can be in an Armada, you'll get $(56 * 13) = 728$ Armada Levels that can be achieved cooperatively.

Another aspect of this is evidenced in the process of setting up a variety of STO in-game events and activities that encourage inter-fleet teams. The intent is to set-up situations in which members of different fleets actively work together. Our leadership is working on practical ways in which to reward such interactions on-site and in game.

But all of our hard work and good intentions could fall by the wayside if this does not translate to more active participation in STO from our fleet members. We are not talking excessive time commitments, but merely seizing opportunities available to jump into game for a bit throughout any given week; morning afternoon or evening. If you feel that you've been out of the loop for too long or are lost on how to proceed, do not despair. We are also setting up individuals and teams to serve as guides and sages to help you overcome any in-game hurdles that you encounter.



<http://www.arcgames.com/en/games/star-trek-online>

Jeff T



LOTUS FLEET

Arina: New

1. *Where are you from?*

South Africa

2. *What is your position in the Fleet?*

Newsletter Writer/Acting Editor

3. *When did you join Lotus Fleet?*

March 2015

4. *Lotus Fleet has often been described as more than just a gaming fleet, what does that mean to you?*

I owe an answer here.

5. *What is your favorite Star Trek series?*

Enterprise

6. *What is your favorite Star Trek movie?*

Wrath of Khan followed very closely by First Contact

7. *Who is favorite Star Trek captain and why?*

Archer. Because he was first. With his crew he paved the way with no help from the Vulcans. The last episode was total garbage, in my opinion.

8. *What is your favorite Star Trek ship?*

Intrepid

9. *Other than a captain do you have another favorite Star Trek character?*

Shran.

10. *What is your favorite Star Trek uniform?*

TNG

11. *What keeps you interested in Star Trek despite the lack of a current episodic series?*

The values and lifestyle.

12. *Is there a character or actor you wish had never appeared in Star Trek?*

I really can't stand Sisko's voice.

13. *What are your thoughts on J.J. Abrams Star Trek movies?*

Action movies with a Star Trek theme. Nice, but not Star Trek.

14. *Is there someone else you'd like to see direct a Star Trek film?*

Anyone that can bring back the quality and the ideal back

15. How do you think we can best apply Gene Roddenberry's vision today?

Not enough space to say what I really need to say. In short; recognize the right for all species and races to co-exist peacefully and everyone to contribute towards a thriving society.

16. Are you active in Star Trek Online?

No

17. What is your impression of the game today vice when it launched?

No idea.

18. Do you believe Cryptic stays mostly true to Star Trek's vision?

Ditto 17

19. What is your passion in life or your biggest aspiration?

My grandchildren. To see them grow and become the best they can be.

20. What is your biggest peeve?

Lack of respect.

21. What would you say is the highlight in your life to this point?

Apart from my children and grandchildren, that I made something of myself after I lost a few years of my memory in an accident.

22. What is one thing nobody in the Fleet knows about you?

Everything. I work in a hospice as a facilitator for the terminally ill.

23. Could you describe yourself in 5 words?

Empathetic, sympathetic, flirty, fat and over fifty.

24. Do you have a personal motto?

Breathe.

25. What advice would you give new members?

Have fun!

26. How would you define leadership?

Communication, clarity and knowledge. Without it, you are just a figurehead.

24. Are there any other thoughts or information that you'd like to add?

No.



— STAR TREK —
ENTERPRISE™

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How are you writing today?



Frantically



Reflectively



Passionately



Romantically



Intellectually



Humorously



Emotionally



Investigatively



Suspensefully



Formally



Excitedly



Feverishly



Dramatically



Angrily



Persuasively



Continually!



Greetings to all from the LF RP Universe!

The story is coming to it's climatic point as the flagship of Lotus Fleet, the USS Horizon, has separated itself in it's numerous components to hide and protect three thousand colonists, rescue lost people on a prison planet where some of her officers are now themselves trapped with hostile possessing energy beings, prepare to receive the attack of a huge alien battleship and trying to find a peaceful resolution with them.

Meanwhile the prime explorer of the fleet, the USS Phoenix, send her ultra fast captain's yacht to rendezvous with the Horizon bridge module before the alien warship arrives at the star system while the starship herself moves in to reinforce it's defense in case all diplomatic efforts fail.

And all this time, both crews are ignorant that those same alien energy beings are also loose on Starbase Lotus, far away in their own universe. Now under quarantine orders, it will be destroyed in less than twenty-four hours!

Here is the latest contribution from our talented roleplayers:

On the main viewer of the USS Phoenix, Lotus Fleet's prime explorer vessel, the sleek form of the Captain's yacht moved from under the ovoid saucer section, turned in a beautiful arc before it and then shot out in a flash of warpspeed.

"Firebird's departure confirmed," Jonathan Livingstone said, reading it from his sensor panel. "At their higher maximum warp velocity, they will intercept the Horizon command module at about the same time it will be in sensor range of the Draxx battleship. Whether they succeed or not in convincing them of our peaceful intentions, we will be in position one hour fifty-three minutes before the warship enters the Eden star system if present speed maintained."

The tone of the X'Ell was even and factual; yet, the rising of his feathered mane, the rapid blinking of his brain implants and of his huge golden eyes spoke how much he was emotionally invested in Captain Kheren's effort to resolve all this peacefully... and the ability of Commander Riker and his away team on the Firebird to achieve just that. Millions of years of pacifism made him deeply sensitive to the potential violent conflict ahead and he was making tremendous effort not to show how this was affecting him.

"We will be in position in mere minutes," assured helmsman Trenor to his captain. "Captain, do we aim for the saucer section and the protection or evacuation of the civilians behind Eden III, orbit Eden IV to try and assist the Polaris down there or take a defensive position with the stardrive section between the two planets?"

The Captain's posture was upright in the center seat as his gaze drifted from the main viewscreen to the helmsman. Despite being Vulcan, the concern on the bridge was quite palpable. He



therefore spoke in his usual calm and direct manner. "Our first duty, Lieutenant Traynor, is to ensure the protection of *any* civilians located behind Eden III or any other locale in this region." After a brief pause, he added: "Adjust our course to bring us into position in the least provocative yet most efficient route."

The captain then turned his attention to his CSO.

"Lieutenant Livingstone; ensure that all evacuation protocols are in place and that we have triage stations on standby in case of incoming casualties."

"Acknowledged," the X'Ell responded, sending the required information to Operation so that it could coordinate the whole process through Medical and Security. As he did so through the direct connection of his brain implants with the computer interface, he kept his huge eyes towards his commanding officer. "Captain; three thousand refugees will overload our life support systems and cramp us severely. If we take them all in, we will have to return to Starbase Lotus with them as soon as possible. Being in a possible combat zone would be hazardous in such cramped conditions and would not allow us to compensate with even a temporary drain to other systems."

"However, it would free the saucer section of the flagship to rejoin with the stardrive or assist it in any such potential conflict," added Duncan Argyle, standing in for Chief M'ata.

"Tactical considerations are irrelevant if it leads to loss of life," Livingstone retorted.

"Life support considerations are moot if everyone is dead," the Liberated Borg shot back to him with a startling emotionlessness in stark contrast with the highly emotional voice of the Avian science chief.

Their dispute was interrupted by the sudden emergence of quantum travel with the brutal appearance of Eden III on the screen and the announcement of helmsman Traynor.

"Arriving at Eden star system, Captain. Ready to engage full impulse towards the third planet."

"The Horizon is hailing us, Sir," Counselor Kimberly Meyers reported, now filling for her chief the medical command chair where all communications were handled.

Captain Syntron addressed the helm officer first. "Delay engaging full impulse, Lieutenant, until we communicate with the Horizon." The captain then signalled to Counselor Meyers. "Open communications with the Flagship on the main viewscreen, counselor."

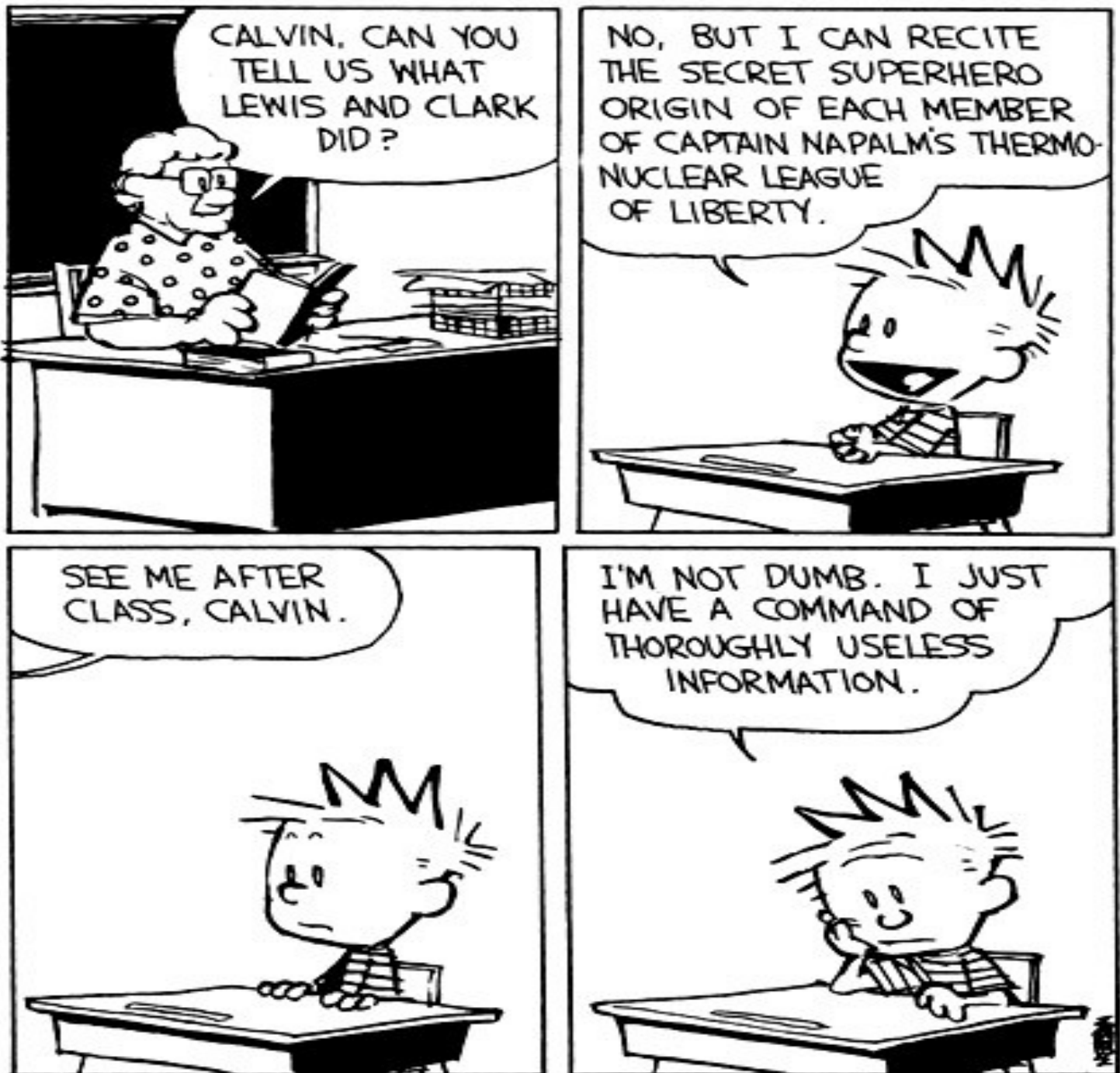
While waiting for communications to be established, the captain noted quietly to his concerned avian CSO. "If necessary, this vessel has the capacity to transport nine thousand passengers in an emergency situation, Lieutenant. The Horizon could carry up to thirty thousand passengers itself. Regardless of how this situation unfolds, we will manage to accommodate any and all refugees in need of rescue and transport."

"In standard conditions, affirmative, Sir," Jonathan agreed before pointing out what his internal sensors were reporting: "but the numerous Zetarrians we have trapped in our shuttle bay are constantly testing and fighting against the forcefield we have put in place to contain them in the shuttle. The drain on our systems is noticeable. If we were to exert this ship in combat conditions with those thousands of civilians aboard, either life support could falter or our tactical systems, or the forcefield imprisoning them... or all of those options... just long enough for people to get hurt, or the ship being damaged... or allowing the Zetarrians to escape. And if that occurs, the probability of trapping them again as we did are dangerously low... and of them taking over the Phoenix unwarrantedly high, Captain."



What would *you* do? Wouldn't you like to find out? Wouldn't you like to be part of such an adventure? A new RP season will follow this tale.

Go to our Roleplay section of our website, get acquainted with our rules, get your own original character approved and prepare to boldly go where *you* have never gone before!



Starship Smackdown

One thing that can definitely be said about most Star Trek fans is that we like to rank things about the show and have lively discussions about their merits and which thing we believe to be superior. Whether it is Kirk versus Picard or Constitution versus Galaxy, we certainly delight in pitting our knowledge of Trek against one another to argue over the best and brightest that the shows have to offer. Usually, it is a good time and no one gets seriously injured or insulted in the jovial and good natured ribbing that can ensue when we argue our case.

In the year of 2015, we had such a competition, between 32 tried and true starships from all 5 series, some movies, and many different factions of Star Trek. When Admiral Evshell started the game, he didn't know that it would end up turning into one of the most successful and long-running games in Lotus Fleet history. With 309 posts, from January 12th to August 27th, 31 pages, and 32 week-long polls between 2 different starships in each poll, the forum thread resulted in one winner, the Federation Akira taking the gold, the Sovereign coming in 2nd, and the Galaxy just making 3rd place.



With the help of Challonge, an online bracketing system, the starships were given positions at random to start off the game. We had 12 Federation ships, but being the primary focus of different starships in the series, it was a given that they would hold the majority. Following the Federation was the Klingons with 7 ships, the Romulans with 4, 2 Cardassian ships, 2 Borg vessels, and 1 each representing the Tholians, Ferengi, Vulcan, Hirogen, and even Species 8472. The full bracket can be seen at http://challonge.com/starship_smackdown.

Each week we would have members of the Fleet vote on their favorite starship. This was not, however, restricted to a pure comparison of tactical statistics, i.e. who would win in a fight. Members were encouraged to vote on which ship they liked best, and it could be based on many different criteria, in-



cluding, but not limited to, design, species, series, episode, movie, tactics, offense, defense, the crew onboard, era, faction, uniqueness, or any number of different things that the member could decide on their own. This resulted in not the biggest and baddest winning (i.e. Borg Cube), but instead the ship that Lotus Fleet as a whole deemed to be the favorite.

The number of votes in each poll ranged from as little as 7 to as many as 14, depending on who happened to be participating that week. Interestingly, the competition that garnered the most votes was in the 2nd round, where the D7 Battlecruiser slightly outmatched the Vulcan D'Kyr 8-6. Another interesting match ensued between the Galaxy and Constitution, as this is a classic comparison (not as much as Kirk versus Picard, but close) that occurs between many Star Trek fans. While the Galaxy triumphed, do not discount the Constitution, as it was a close 7-5 win. We clearly have many members who are not ready to let go of the classics.

Speaking of the Constitution, one of the closest matches of all was in the first round between the Constitution and the Klingon Vor'cha. The 23rd century Klingon ship very nearly knocked out the Constitution early, but it managed to squeeze in a 6-5 victory. Other first round close calls were the Federation Miranda over the Romulan Scimitar at 4-3 and the 7-6 win of the Klingon Bird-of-Prey over the Borg Sphere. The Bird-of-Prey's victory was shortlived as it was knocked out 10-0 by our winner, the Akira in the 2nd round. The Akira actually triumphed handily after that, winning 8-0 against the Klingon Negh'Var, the most surprising upset of all in the Semifinals when it knocked the Galaxy out of the Championship when it beat it 8-5, and the 8-4 win over the Sovereign to get 1st place.

It was upsetting for many to see the Galaxy get beaten once, but then almost again in the Bronze Match by the Romulan D'deridex where the Galaxy barely took home a 6-5 victory for 3rd. That ended up being the fourth matchup to result in a slim score separation of 1 vote. Surprisingly none of the 32 matchups resulted in a tie, so there was no need to figure out what to do for that!

Another part of the game was that members themselves were given a chance to vote on which 3 ships they thought would arrive in the top 3 places. Rear Adm Battle Lion won the Lotus Fleet Cup pictured here with his guess of the Sovereign in 1st, Defiant in 2nd, and Galaxy in 3rd.



Hopefully we will see another game like this coming up in 2016! Admiral Evshell is taking a few months off to work on some other things, but, if luck will have it, we may be in for a major competition between 64 different Star Trek characters. Keep an eye out for that and stay tuned to the forums to see what other interesting and engaging activities Lotus Fleet may come up with!





Greetings Lotus Fleet; this is Admiral Athos coming to you from the Lotus Fleet Research Lab Facility. The USS Aleutian is overseeing the construction of this key facility as well as providing defense against any Iconian threat.

Our Research Lab facility is being built at an astounding pace, thanks to the efforts and contribution of materiel by members of this Fleet. In fact, we are ahead of all of the other fleets in our Armada in building our Research Labs. The overall facility itself is gaining resources to get updated to tier 2; the development labs are at tier 2 while the research labs are at tier 1. Science and Engineering common duty officers are the most needed, as well as dilithium in order to continue building this Fleet holding.

Lotus Fleet's Dilithium Mine, New Romulus Embassy, and Spire are all maxed at tier 3, with all special upgrades completed, save for contracting for a tailor at our Spire. This is NOT a priority and should only be completed as able. Our Fleet Starbase and its periphery facilities are all at tier 4. We have been making progress in completing projects to advance our Starbase facilities, but these are secondary towards building up our Research Lab.

While many have been contributing towards our fleet's holdings, I wanted to recognize several who have reached certain milestones in their contributions towards our Fleet.

Jureth - Fed Fleet Builder X - Rear Admiral
Battle Lion - Fed Fleet Builder VII - Captain
Spawnnner - Fed Fleet Builder VII - Captain
Infernalpotato - Fed Fleet Builder VII - Captain
pk1360 - Fed Fleet Builder VI - Commander
Evshell - Fed Fleet Builder III - Lieutenant JG

As always, if you've earned a higher award for contributing towards our Fleet holdings, please contact myself or Rear Admiral Battle Lion. If you are a new user, make certain that you are on our STO Roster: viewtopic.php?f=7&t=639.

Athos out.



Athos at Research Lab



STLV 2015



STO Tips and Tricks by Rear Admiral Battle Lion

Basic Skill Tree Awareness: Commander Skills

Starship Maneuvers

This skill is a little deceptive, as you might think initially it will improve the maneuverability of your ship. In fact, it does not. It actually improves your DEFENSE stat. Defense stat means the higher your defense, the harder it is for enemy weapons to hit you. This is crucial in PVP, and decent in PVE. In PvP accuracy is very important because people have lots of speed and defense, it's called speed tanking. Makes you harder to hit. Your accuracy needs to be very high if you want to be landing hits in PVP. In PVE it's still useful though, as the standard enemy isn't stacking ACC bonuses, so it can be fairly easy to avoid a lot of damage, if that is how you play.

Starship Targeting System

This is the other half of the coin to defense I just talked about. This skill boosts your ship's accuracy. There is a little known game mechanic though, that any extra accuracy you have over 100%, the overflow will instead buff your crit chance and crit severity. This can be tricky to calculate however because ACC itself is not really a stat - neither is defense - only the DIFFERENCE between those two values is a stat. you always want to have more ACC than they have DEF. So, in this case, it's easier to jam some points into accuracy then try to make up for it with weapon mods or consoles. If you crit stack like I do, put this at 9.

Starship Electro Plasma System

Improves power transfer rate. Wayyy back in the early days of the game, it also effected how fast your weapon power level would regen between beam volleys. In order to mitigate weapon power drain, people would stack this skill and consoles. It no longer works this way!!

Basically, when you switch between different power presets, like I outlined above in a different post...this skill buffs how fast that power transfers from one system to another. It doesn't sound too useful until you really get into the weeds of this power. In addition to that, it ALSO improves any ability that transfers power or adds power, such as any EPTx ability. That's great! Love that. Also buffs EPS power transfer, engineering innate ability.

If you don't have the points to spare for this, just slap on an EPS manifold engineering console for the same benefit.

This skill does ONE more thing and it's not widely known. Most people think the cap for weapons power is 125. In fact for BEAMS, the max overcap is 4x your power transfer rate per second above 125, which is usually ~175-180. This does not work for cannons. For cannons, any power you have 'over' 125 is wasted, and you should be shunting that to a different system.

Anyway, overcapping your beams is necessary to achieve high DPS levels. I highly recommend using this technique.

Starship Impulse Thrusters

THIS is the skill that boosts your ship's turn rate. It also increases your impulse speed. Both good things. Everyone should be trying to go faster. Speed is king. It increases your defense, makes your ship fly better, and you can get places faster so you can do STFs quicker.

Starship Warp Core Potential

Not much to it. For every point you put in here, ALL your power levels rise. This is a great skill for 9 points.

Starship Graviton Generators

Only useful if you use Gravity Well, tractor beam/beam repulsors or photonic shockwave. Improves your knock and slow. Gravity wells will be harder to escape from. Not too big a deal in PVE as just about ANY grav well will hold ANYTHING. I have grav well 1 on my ambassador and use it with 5 aux power and it's enough to hold spheres in Infected.

Still, always good to have points if you have a dedicated grav well or tractor beam ship.

Almost mandatory in PVP if you use GW or TB. Since I use GW, I have points here. I like it.

Starship Particle Generators

Basically the same thing. Improves the DAMAGE dealt by grav well, charged particle burst (CPB) eject warp plasma (EWP), acetone beam, feedback pulse, photonic shockwave, TB repulsors, tykens rift etc, etc. Only improves the damage, does not do anything else.

Not really mandatory for GW, unless you are the crowd control guy on your team. GW3 can actually hurt if you spec for it correctly.

Captain level skills are up in our next issue





Space Skills

Tactical Systems

Lieutenant 57,000/93,000	Lt. Commander 144,000/93,000	Commander 230,000/173,000	Captain 300,000/253,000	Admiral 365,000/365,000
Starship Attack Patterns	Starship Energy Weapons	Starship Maneuvers	Starship Stealth	Starship Energy Weapon Specialization
Starship Weapons Training	Starship Projectile Weapons	Starship Targeting Systems	Starship Threat Control	Starship Projectile Weapon Specialization

Engineering Systems

Lieutenant 57,000/93,000	Lt. Commander 144,000/93,000	Commander 230,000/173,000	Captain 300,000/253,000	Admiral 365,000/365,000
Driver Coil	Structural Integrity	Starship Electro-Plasma Systems	Starship Engine Performance	Starship Armor Reinforcements
Starship Batteries	Starship Subsystem Repair	Starship Impulse Thrusters	Starship Hull Plating	Starship Auxiliary Performance
Starship Hull Repair	Starship Warp Core Efficiency	Starship Warp Core Potential	Starship Shield Performance	Starship Weapon Performance

Science and Operation Systems

Lieutenant 57,000/93,000	Lt. Commander 144,000/93,000	Commander 230,000/173,000	Captain 300,000/253,000	Admiral 365,000/365,000
Starship Flow Capacitors	Starship Power Insulators	Starship Graviton Generators	Starship Inertial Dampers	Starship Countermeasure Systems
Starship Shield Emitters	Starship Shield Systems	Starship Particle Generators	Starship Sensors	Starship Subspace Decompiler

Fleetwide Meetings:

(check the site Calendar for your local time)

Occurs every: 3rd Sunday of month - every month UTC - 5 hours [DST]

This is our Fleet meeting to discuss Lotus Fleet business, events, and other important information.

Afterward, the meeting goes "unofficial" and unrecorded into a round table, where anyone may have a chance to speak; i.e. ask questions, present ideas, etc... This is the social aspect of our meeting and provides an opportunity to get to know everyone involved in the Fleet even better.

Think of it as our Fleet's Ten Forward

Each meeting will be held on TeamSpeak 3. Please download and install TS3 following this guide:

<http://www.lotusfleet.org/viewtopic.php?f=34&t=55>

Also, please RSVP so that we know who is planning to attend, and indicate if you will be bringing a guest.

Invited: Everyone



LOTUS FLEET

Awards, Promotions and Organ Donations

New Members:

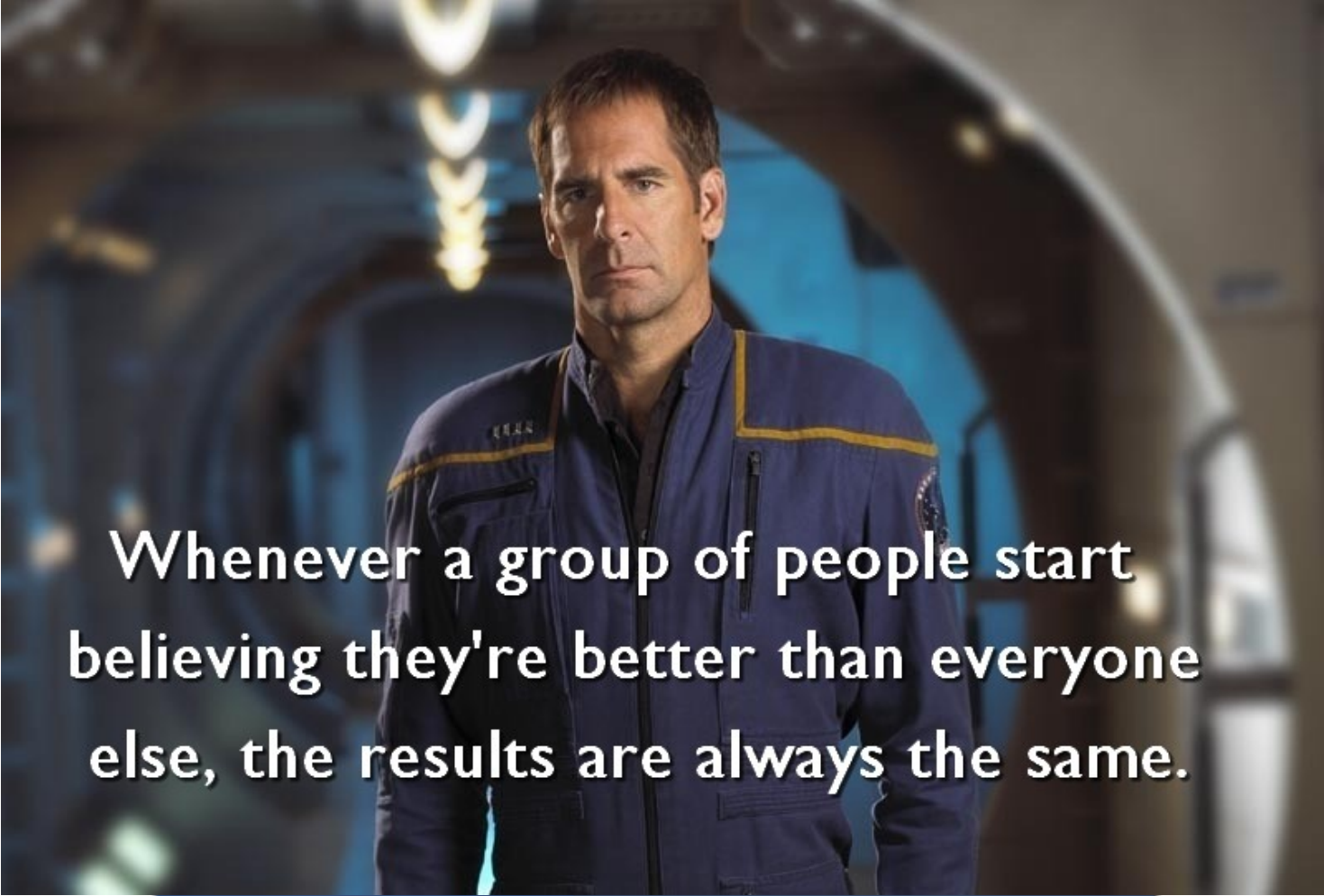
Cadet Appeco;
Cadet Rover Robby;
Cadet oosakatama.

Promotions:

Lieutenant (J.G.) Infernalpotato promoted to Lieutenant

Longevity:

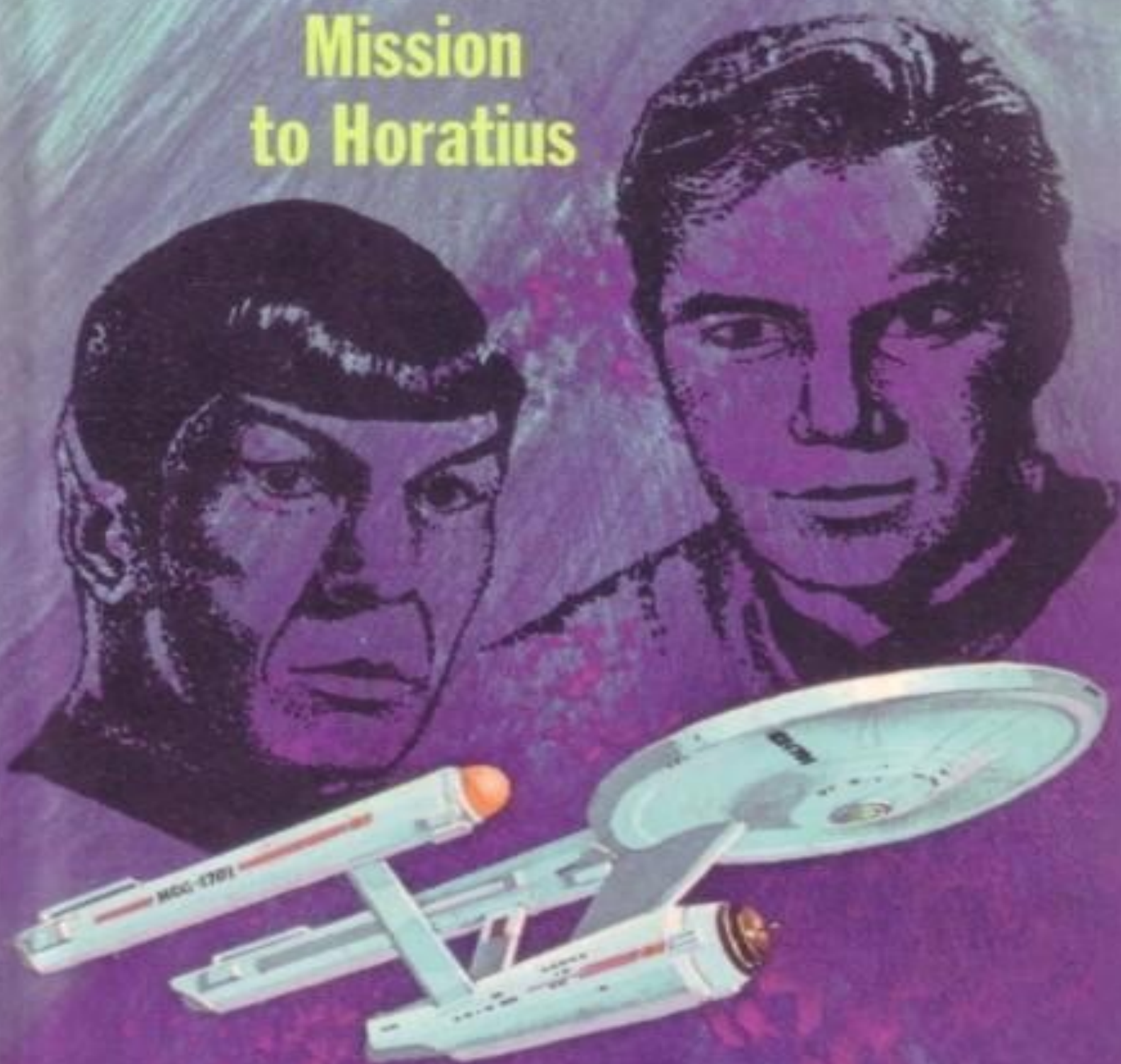
Commander BlueKnightOne: 4 years
Lieutenant Snowfire: 5 years
Lieutenant(J.G.) Anders: 6 years

A man with short brown hair, wearing a blue flight suit with yellow accents, stands in a futuristic corridor. The corridor has blue lighting and curved walls. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

**Whenever a group of people start
believing they're better than everyone
else, the results are always the same.**

STAR TREK

Mission to Horatius



AUTHORIZED EDITION

3. BACK TO THE STONE AGE

CAPTAIN JAMES KIRK, entered the transporter room, buckling on the weapons belt from which his phaser pistol hung. The others had already gathered. The transporter officer stood at the free-standing console, a technician next to him. On the circular platform of the transporter chamber itself, a large specimen box already stood on one of the six light panels.

Kirk looked at his second-in-command. "Well, Spock, any opinions on where to touch down?"

"An interesting question, Captain." The Vulcan looked down at his own phaser pistol.

"General Order Number One restrains us from using our sophisticated weapons against advanced life forms, though it does not prohibit us from protecting ourselves against carnivora and such. However, it would seem unfortunate if we should materialize in the midst of one of those numerous herds of herbivorous animals—both for them and for ourselves. In scanning tapes of the America of the so-called Old West, I have sometimes pondered the question of whether a regiment of, say, the Civil War period, could have withstood a stampede of a bison— ah, buffalo, I believe they called them—herd numbering perhaps a million head."

"Could we have your opinion, Mr. Spock, without a dissertation on early American history?" the captain said dryly, giving his phaser holster a final adjusting pat.

"It would seem to me, Captain, that we had better set down in a hilly, more barren spot, where we would be less apt to be trampled to death before even our phasers were able to decimate the large animals that seem to graze on Neolithia."

Kirk grunted a laugh. "You're obviously right, Spock." He looked at the transporter officer. "Otherwise there would seem to be little choice."

"Yes, sir." The other peered into his screen and made adjustments.

The captain, Spock, Sulu, the yeoman carrying her portable sensor-computer-recorder slung over her shoulder, and Ensign Chekov mounted to their light panels. Chekov loosened his phaser in its holster, in readiness for a possible quick draw.

Kirk said to the transporter officer, "Very well, mister."

The other snapped a quick command to the technician, who dropped levers and threw the activating switch. A column of light gleamed above each transport panel, and the group faded, became transparent, and disappeared.

They materialized in a small glade with wooded hills to each side, except one which enjoyed a stream of exceedingly clear water.

Ensign Chekov, ever security conscious, kept his hand a few inches from his phaser pistol; his eyes darted about. The others stood in open admiration, surveying the countryside.

Even Spock was able to say, "Actually, most fascinating. I have visited Earth but seldom; however, this would seem almost a duplicate of the planet before the advent of technology."

Sulu, in a hushed voice, asked, "Have you ever been in the national park of Kyoto?"

Captain Kirk said, "Mr. Sulu, I have never even been in Japan, though I appreciate your esthetic reaction. Nevertheless, I suggest we postpone appreciation of Neolithia's scenic beauties and proceed to our task of discovering why this supposedly colonized planet is—"



He was interrupted by a scream that temporarily froze them all, save possibly Spock, and then broke into a sound that could only be described as a doglike barking.

From a clump of trees across the glen there erupted a savage figure, mounted upon a horse-like quadruped and charging toward them at breakneck speed. The distance was but a few score yards.

Yeoman Doris Atkins, veteran though she was, resorted to an instinct reaching back into the mists of antiquity. She gave a very feminine squeal.

Sulu yelled, "Hey, look out!"

Spock's eyebrows went up.

Ensign Chekov went into a gunman's crouch and his hand blurred into motion.

Captain James Kirk took a quick step forward and threw up Chekov's gun hand so that the bolt burned blue into the sky. Then he pushed his junior officer to one side and to the ground, even as the rider was upon them. He threw himself to the other side, but not quickly enough to prevent the fur-clad rider, his face a mask of unbelievable color, from striking out at him.

The savage screamed, "Coup!" and slashed with what seemed to be a riding crop.

The blow caught the stumbling James Kirk across the cheek, raising an immediate welt. And then the rider was past them and heading for the forest beyond, crouched low over his horse's neck and shouting back his bark-like war cry.

Chekov was up on one knee, his phaser again at the ready, but his eyes, bewildered, were on his commanding officer.

Kirk, his eyes narrow, snapped, "Mr. Chekov, throw your side arm on stun effect and bring that fellow down!"

The savage was almost to the trees, still barking his triumph. Ensign Chekov brought up his phaser pistol and fired immediately when the weapon reached eye level.

"Good shot!" Sulu yelled in approval.

The savage tumbled from his seat to the ground and remained motionless. Spock, Sulu, and Yeoman Atkins headed for him.

Kirk paused long enough, however, to look at Ensign Chekov. He said, "Mister, if I hadn't thrown up your gun hand, you would undoubtedly have killed him. I suggest that upon our return to the *Enterprise* you review General Order Number One. We have landed upon a planet colonized by mankind, without, I might add, even so much as an invitation from the authorities, whoever they may be. The repercussions, were we to butcher any of the citizens, would reach all the way back to Starfleet Command."

"Yes, sir," Chekov said. "It seemed to me as though the man were attempting to kill us."

"You should have looked closer, mister." Captain Kirk followed the others. "In the first place, you could hardly call the lad a man."

Chekov was taken aback as he stared down at the crumpled figure. Jim Kirk was obviously right. This was no more than a teenage boy, clad in primitive furs, his face painted grotesquely.

Spock's eyebrows were high.



Kirk said, "Comments, Mr. Spock?"

"Most interesting, Captain. The boy is obviously an Earthling. He is made up in war paint in the fashion of primitives. His armament seems to consist of nothing save a short stick. I submit, Captain, that in the early Indian days, it was considered a greater honor on the part of a warrior to strike an enemy with a stick and 'count coup' upon him, as the term went, than to kill him."

The captain grunted. "Mr. Sulu, Mr. Chekov, keep a keen watch. Possibly this ambitious youngster has companions. If they see him like this they will assume him dead, and we have no reason to believe they haven't weapons more potent than sticks."

Chekov and Sulu drew their phasers.

Kirk went on. "Yeoman, your tricorder, if you please. Do the sensors record any sign of intelligent life in the vicinity?"

Yeoman Doris Atkins activated the large, rectangular, handbag-like device she had slung over her shoulder. After a brief moment she shook her head. "No, sir. Some lower life forms, including the, uh, horse that seems to have stopped about a quarter kilometer ahead. But no indication of intelligent life except us in this clearing."

"Mr. Spock, see what you can do about reviving the boy."

The Vulcan bent down, and only his superior reflexes avoided the sudden snap of teeth in the direction of his outstretched hand. He jerked it back and came erect.

"It would seem that would be unnecessary, Captain."

The fur-clad Neolithian sat erect and glared defiantly at the Federation representatives grouped around him. "I am Grang of the Wolf clan and have no fear of death!"

He spoke in a most passable Earth Basic, but in spite of the bravery of his words there was a slight tremor in his voice.

Captain Kirk said dryly, "And I am James of the Kirk clan and have only the usual, normal dread of death. So we seem to be even, boy. But why the attack upon us?"

"Had I been a full warrior and armed with bow or spear I would have slain you all."

"Well, thank goodness for small favors," Sulu said sourly.

The captain said, "That will be all, Mr. Sulu. At least the lad has courage." He turned back to the fallen young savage. "But why did you feel it necessary to attack us, ah, Grang? We have done you no harm, and, in fact, we have come to help you—assuming that this is where the distress call came from."

"Help us?" The boy, seeing that evidently they had no immediate plans to harm him further, came to his feet and glared at the others. "You have come to kill us or capture us and fly us away in your iron birds from the sky."

Inadvertently Kirk cast his eyes upward. However, the *Enterprise's* orbit was too high for the starship to be visible from this point

Spock murmured, "Most interesting."

Kirk looked at him. "Your opinion, Mr. Spock?"

"Since Grang, here, cannot have observed the *Enterprise*, Captain, he manifestly must be referring to raiders from some other spacecraft"



"Why spacecraft? Why not local aircraft?"

"You forget, Captain, that our sensors were able to detect no emanations that indicated technology on Neolithia of the order that could produce airplanes, even primitive ones."

"You're right, of course," the captain admitted. He looked at the boy musingly.

The Neolithian was almost full-grown. In fact, his stature was about that of Sulu, the shortest of the *Enterprise* group. His figure was straight and lithe, and his features were open and clear-cut, to the extent they could be made out through the heavy war paint. He hid the apprehension he must have felt and stared back at his captors defiantly.

Kirk said gently, "Son...."

"I am not your son. We are not even kin. I am of the Wolf clan and —"

"All right, all right Listen, Grang, we have no desire to harm you. However, we would like to speak to your authorities. We are on a mission of assistance and have no desire to kill or capture your people."

The boy was obviously disbelieving, but he said, "Authorities?"

Spock put in, "Your chiefs, your headmen, your elders...."

Understanding dawned. "You mean the Council of Patriarchs?"

"Exactly," Kirk said. "Now, if you will lead us.... Certainly they can't be too far away" —he frowned — "in spite of the fact that the ship's sensors seemed not to have detected them."

"They will kill you all," Grang said defiantly. However, it was obvious the youngster was rapidly losing his original fear of these strangers.

Chekov cleared his throat wryly.

Captain Kirk said, "In which case you will have served your, ah, clan, by delivering us up to them, Grang."

The boy thought about it "Very well, I will lead you. You will all be killed by our warriors in vengeance for those you have kidnapped and killed in your many raids."

"Things are bad everywhere," Sulu muttered. However, he grinned at the boy, whose courage was obvious.

The young savage turned and began to walk in the direction his horse-like animal had taken.

Captain Kirk called, "Just a minute." He brought his communicator from his tunic and flicked erect the antenna grid. He said, "Kirk to *Enterprise*."

"Lieutenant Uhura here, Captain," a voice came back.

Kirk said into the communicator, "Please instruct Commander Scott to assume my command chair and to keep a fix on us. There are some developments here we plan to explore."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Kirk flicked the antenna grid down and returned the device to his tunic.

"All right," he said. "Let's go. Grang, show us the way. Mr. Spock, follow immediately behind me. Keep your tricorder activated, tuned to detection of intelligent life. Yeoman, you follow Mr. Spock. Mr. Sulu, Mr. Chekov, bring up the rear, your phasers on stun effect. Remember, all of you, arrows and spears are quite as effective as the most advanced weapons, so far as terminating life is concerned, *if* they are given the chance to be used."



"Yes, sir." Chekov spoke as if his mouth were dry.

They followed the youth, who proceeded down a forest path. After a quarter kilometer they came upon Grang's animal, which was grazing quietly. Grang whistled softly to the beast, which immediately came to him.

Kirk said, "You're free to go, if you wish, but we're anxious to meet this Council of Patriarchs of yours, and surely our numbers are such that your clan need not fear us."

"The clan Wolf fears nothing," Grang said strongly, taking up his animal's reins, but making no attempt to mount.

"I'm beginning to believe him," Sulu muttered.

Kirk said, "All right, Grang, continue."

They approached a lofty cliff, which the narrow path skirted, and proceeded possibly another quarter kilometer before rounding a bend and pulling up abruptly. There before them loomed a large cave entrance. Grang turned defiantly.

"The cavern of the Wolf clan," he said proudly. "Now all of you will be slain by our warriors."

"Oh, fine," Sulu muttered. "I can hardly wait"

Ensign Chekov said in amazement, "You mean your whole clan, or tribe, or whatever you call it, lives in this cave?"

Kirk said, "Mr. Spock, your sensors?"

The Vulcan shook his head. "Still no indication of human life, Captain. However, there is an interesting aspect"

"Well?"

"Within the vicinity there is a considerable radioactive element. If I were on the ship and had at hand the resources of the library computer...."

"For the time, we will proceed, Mr. Spock. Perhaps later we can go into the broader aspects of the problems that present themselves here." He turned to the young savage. "Grang?"

In the past half hour the boy had lost some of his belligerence, since these strangers had not harmed him. In fact, he was obviously intrigued by them, their equipment, and the mystery of from whence they had come. He hesitated.

"If I take you inside, you will be slain by the warriors."

Kirk said, "A chance we'll have to take, Grang. I have already told you we wish you and your people no harm. Perhaps I can convince your patriarchs of that fact"

Yeoman Doris Atkins winked at the boy. He blinked, taken aback by her smile. "We'll be all right," she said. "Don't worry about us."

That seemed to set him back still further. It had evidently come to him that he *was* a bit apprehensive about these new companions of his coming to an unfortunate end. Other than their early scuffle, they had offered him nothing but kindness.

Frowning, he turned and resumed leading them into the wide mouth of the cave.

Large as the opening was, the group from the *Enterprise* were still astonished by the tremendous size of the interior. Indeed, the mammoth cavern towered so high above them that the ceiling seemed to fade into the distance. The interior stretched back as far as the eye could see. Strangest of all was the almost phosphorescent quality of the rock of the walls and ceiling, so that, though dim, the cav-



ern's interior was not truly dark. It was certainly light enough so that one could make his way without tripping.

For a moment they stood immediately inside the entrance and peered before them in an attempt to accustom their eyes to the dim light

Kirk said, "Mr. Spock, your sensors?"

"Astonishing, Captain. They seem to fail to function."

"Yeoman?"

"And mine, Captain," Doris Atkins said in puzzlement

"Evidently we find why the ship's sensors were unable to detect life. The radioactive qualities present must blanket the sensors." The captain looked at their guide. "You mean your people are able to live in this atmosphere?"

"We have done so," Grang said, his voice slightly surly, "ever since the raiders began to kill and capture us."

Spock said, "You must realize, Captain, that all radioactive elements are not necessarily detrimental to life."

Even as they talked and peered into the dimness of the cavern's interior, they heard the scurrying of feet, murmurs, and even faint calls of dismay.

But now the Vulcan's words were interrupted by a shrill voice that called, "*Grang!*"

Grang bowed his head and hunched his youthful shoulders.

The voice shrilled, "Grang! You have led the enemy to your people! Prepare to die with them!"

Grang's head came up. "No!" he called. "They are not the enemy. They say they have come to help us!"

"Help us?" the voice shrilled all but hysterically. "They are not even members of our tribe. Prepare to die, youthful traitor!"

Once again the young Grang proved himself no coward. His head high, he said strongly, "As a member of the Wolf clan, I demand to be heard by the Council of Patriarchs and on my totem pledge to abide by their decision."

"What goes on here?" Sulu asked nervously.

"Keep your hand away from your side arm, Mr. Sulu," Kirk said. "All of you, if possible, try to smile. Our young friend seems to be going to bat for us. Don't do anything to hinder him."

"Aye, aye, sir," Chekov breathed unhappily.

A figure approached them. At first, in the dimness, it was a seemingly unbelievable figure. The head was that of a monstrous black bat, wings and all; the body, small and shriveled, was covered with dark fur.

Yeoman Doris Atkins sucked in her breath.

As the creature came nearer, however, it became obvious that it was but a very old man attired in a grotesque headdress made from the skin of a bat, and in some animal skin, apparently unique to this world. His face was wrinkled with age and there was a malevolent aura about him.



"The wizard-doctor," Grang murmured to them under his breath. "He is not truly a Wolf, but of the clan Shaman, which supplies the wizard-doctors and wizard-witches of all the clans of the tribe."

The small figure hobbled nearer. "I am Muel of the Shaman clan and an enemy of all raiders from space. Hence I curse you to death and—"

Grang shouted, "I demand a hearing before the Council of Patriarchs! These people are— these people are my friends!"

Doris Atkins whispered, "Thanks, Grang. It was a nice try."

But Captain Kirk said to the wizard-doctor, "Our God is evidently not your own, Muel, and it would seem unlikely that your curses would affect us. Take us to your council, since we have an important message for them and words of peace."

The shriveled little man glared at him, saying finally, "We shall see, stranger from the skies, if the curses of Shaman will apply to you. But meanwhile the council shall judge." He giggled evilly under his breath and turned.

The scurrying of feet in the background and the murmuring of many voices had fallen off, but now, about the wizard-doctor, a score of tall, hefty spearmen, weapons in hand, materialized. They appeared to be older, larger editions of Grang, and, like him, they wore ferocious-looking war paint. Handsome specimens, they stared emptily at the Earthlings and Vulcan, but said nothing.

The wizard-doctor had spun on his heels, and now, hobbling, he led the way down what was evidently a side corridor leading from the main hall of the cavern. And as he went, he chuckled.

Sulu murmured, "He reminds me of a third-class villain in a third-class Tri-Di show."

And Chekov muttered back, "Unfortunately this isn't a Tri-Di show, and, frankly, I'm in no hurry to experience any of those curses our wizard-doctor friend was bragging about"

They made a turn here, a turn there, into one corridor and out into another. A turn to the right, a turn to the left.

Kirk said to his first officer, "It occurs to me that Scotty, up in the *Enterprise*, has lost his fix on us. If your tricorder doesn't work under this pile of radioactive rock, I doubt if the ship's sensors do, either."

"The same thought occurred to me, Captain," Spock said without emotion. "The situation has most interesting aspects."

"Mr. Spock, I sometimes suspect you will find interesting aspects about your own funeral. By the way, I assume you are memorizing these twistings and turnings."

The Vulcan raised his eyebrows. "But of course, Captain."

Doris Atkins said, "I don't know about Mr. Spock, but I'm lost I couldn't find my way back if it meant my life."

"Which it probably will," Sulu growled. "I wouldn't think a seeing-eye dog could get back through that maze."

"That will be all," the captain said. "Remember, we are here on a mission of peace, and as captain of a starship, I am legally an ambassador of the United Federation of Planets."



"Yes, but have these people even heard of the Federation?" Sulu muttered.

"Mr. Sulu!"

"Yes, sir."

They emerged eventually into a long cavern hall, which, happily, seemed somewhat lighter than the corridors through which they had passed. Their guard stayed behind as they entered.

The center of the hall was dominated by a great stone table set on six massive stone pillars. To the far side of it were seated seven elderly-looking Neolithians on roughhewn wooden stools.

Messengers must have dashed ahead to warn them of the coming of the strangers, since they seemed fully aware of the situation.

The oldest of all, who sat in the middle, said in a shaky voice, "Grang of the Wolf clan, though not yet a warrior among the warriors, still has reached the age where by tribal custom he can demand a hearing before the Council of Patriarchs. If he is denied his plea, punishment up to the death penalty may be decreed. Speak, Grang. You are charged with revealing our sanctuary to the raiders from the stars."

Captain Kirk said quickly, "We are not raiders. We have come from afar to answer a call for assistance. I suspect from what you say that the assistance is needed against these so-called raiders from space. Was it you who issued the call?"

The patriarch looked at him. "It is not you who are on trial, raider from space, but Grang. Your fate has already been sealed. Your sentence is the silent death which Muel of the Shaman clan will shortly administer. Speak, Grang."

Grang was obviously standing before the highest-ranking authority of his tribal society, but he was not browbeaten. He said in a strong voice, "I do not believe they are the raiders. I counted coup on the one who is known as Captain of the Kirks, but he took no vengeance on me. I believe they tell the truth, and thus I brought them to speak with the Council. Perhaps they can truly help us against our enemies."

Muel cackled his disgust of the opinion stated, but the head patriarch looked back at Kirk and his party thoughtfully. "And how did you plan to help us against our enemies?"

Captain Kirk took a deep breath. "As of now, we do not even know who they might be. But we have a powerful ship and weapons beyond any of which you know. As ambassador of the United Federation of Planets I can point out the advantages of your joining this great confederation one day and—"

But the old man was holding up a hand to silence him.

"Do not think us ignorant of Earth, the planet of our origin, Captain of the Kirks. Our bards still sing the sagas of Earth and how our people first fled from there to this planet."

"Fled?" Doris Atkins blurted out

The old man looked at her. "To flee the large cities that clogged the atmosphere with fumes. To escape the machines that transported men at hundreds, then thousands of miles an hour, and finally at speeds unbelievable. The gods meant men to walk, or at most to ride upon four-legged beasts. The gods designed men to eat the food of the fields or the flesh of animals, fresh from the hunters—"



not to partake of food from tins or frozen foods. Man is not a machine; he should not live among machines."

He looked away, as though into a far distance. "The bards sing us the sagas of how life was on Earth among devices enabling man to see or talk or hear a thousand miles and more, devices enabling him to kill his fellow-men by the million. Man combating his fellow man in honorable person-to-person combat for sufficient reason is one thing, but slaying the old and women and children, all with a tremendous explosion—this is blasphemy against the gods."

Kirk said, with possibly a slight element of apology in his voice, "Many mistakes are made on man's path of progress, but progress he must. That species that slows down and stops eventually dies."

The old patriarch was nodding. "Perhaps you are right, but here on Neolithia, our people came to find the old way, the simple way, as nature intended it. And here we had found reasonable happiness until the coming of the raiders. Assuming your story is true, that you have come to help us, we refuse your help. We wish only to be left alone."

Spock injected a question. "And all this planet is the same? No industry, modern production, science, schools?"

The head patriarch frowned. "Nowhere. The ancestors of all of us on Neolithia came in the original ship which transported them and then returned, and all are equally against what you call modern life."

"Most interesting," Spock murmured.

The patriarch took a breath, and there seemed to be a trace of reluctance in his voice as he said, "We have fled to this retreat, but now, through the traitor Grang, you have discovered it. We cannot allow you to leave, perhaps to betray us. Hence we must sentence you to the silent death. Muel!"

Kirk snapped, "Chekov, Sulu, Spock. Alert!"

Of a sudden the huge hall was filled with bowmen—scores, hundreds of Neolithian bowmen—arrows to the string and pulled back to the ear, ready for release. The odds were simply out of the question. The bowmen lined the walls, stood shoulder to shoulder upon ledges and in niches.

The *Enterprise* group had, apparently, only seconds to live.

Captain Kirk's eyes darted about, seeking escape, but there was nowhere to go. The entry through which they had come was blocked by the primitive, bow-armed warriors, and behind them, as far as the eyes could make out, were more warriors.

Kirk let out in desperation, "Comments, anyone?"

Sulu managed a hollow, bitter laugh.

Grang had closed his eyes, his youthful face pale beneath his war paint.

Spock said, a slight element of surprise in his voice, "Comments upon what, Captain?"

Kirk looked at him. "We are under sentence of death, Mr. Spock. I expect that momentarily the order will be given for these bowmen to transfix us. Frankly, I can see no escape."

Mr. Spock's eyebrows rose. "What bowmen, Captain Kirk?"

Chapter 4 in next issue



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