

LOTUS STARBASE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF LOTUS FLEET

ISSUE 19, FEBRUARY 2016

The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails." --- William Arthur Ward



LOTUS FLEET:: AN AUTHENTICALLY DEDICATED STAR TREK COMMUNITY

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Message from the Fleet Admiral's Office

Greetings fleet members and friends of Lotus Fleet!

We now enter our second month of 2016. Did the Ground Hog see its shadow? Will winter continue on for several more months or is spring right around the corner? This all depends of course on your current geographical location.

With this being the 50th anniversary of Star Trek, there are numerous things transpiring and occurring throughout this year in commemoration of this event. For example, click on this link for the Smithsonian Update on Enterprise Studio Model Restoration. We're talking about the original large scale model that was used for all 79 TOS episodes that has been housed and displayed in the Smithsonian in Washington DC since 1974. [Smithsonian Enterprise-studio-model-restoration](#)

Destination Star Trek Europe Set for October in Birmingham, England - See more at: [Destination-star-trek-europe](#) Among the confirmed guests, who'll be available for autographs, photo ops and talks: William Shatner, Christopher Lloyd, Walter Koenig, Jonathan Frakes, Marina Sirtis, Alexander Siddig, Terry Farrell and Nicole de Boer. More guests will be added in the coming months.

This also marks the 6th anniversary of Star Trek Online with activities currently transpiring in celebration. Read through the related STO article in this issue as well.

Our RP department has begun a new season of stories with 5 starships being launched for their current missions. Read Admiral Kheren's update on the status of what is going on in the Role Play department.

So, as I asked in the previous issue, what will you contribute to the legacy of Star Trek during this monumental year? Share with us your plans and ideas so that we can include them in next month's issue of the Newsletter.

Until then, "Second star to the right and straight on 'til morning."

Jeff T

Admiral Jeff T
Fleet Commanding Officer

STAR TREK

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

STAR TREK MAGAZINE

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SPECIAL

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OCTOBER 2016
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TITAN

Talking Maurs

1. *Where are you from?*

Philadelphia area

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

Academy Professor of Medicine and Science

3. *When did you join Lotus Fleet?*

I can't say for certain but I believe it was around 2010 or 2011.

4. *What keeps you here?*

The genuine interest everyone in the Fleet has in the Star Trek community. I also enjoy the structure and community the fleet offers.

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

It's a tough call as I find all of the series have their pros and cons. If I had to pick one, I'd go with TNG. I recall this series being the first one I was introduced to early on.

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

I'd have to say that First Contact is my favorite. As I mentioned above, my favorite series is TNG. I really enjoy the crew from the series and always like when they give you a glimpse into how things transpired in regards to Earth becoming space bound, etc.

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

Favorite captain is easily CAPT Picard. I find the manner in which he handles himself in many instances to be exemplary of an ideal Star Fleet officer. In addition to that I find that having his past being not so great shows how he was able to transform into the captain he was in the series/movies.

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

I have always been a fan of the Defiant, both in-game and when it's used in the series.

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

I have many favorites depending on which series you're referring to. In Enterprise, I'm a fan of Trip; DS9, I enjoy Chief O'Brian; TOS, I tend to lean towards Bones (the same goes for the reboot movies).

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

Deep Space 9

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

I find the existing content and message to be strong enough to continue my enjoyment within the Star Trek Universe.

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

At this point not really, however when I first started my start to finish endeavor of watching all of TNG, I really did not like Q, however in the later episodes involving Q he grew on me.

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

I enjoy the cast they chose more than anything. I think in order to appeal to the mainstream it needed to go into more of an action direction. I will say that I'm still looking forward to Star Trek Beyond and hope that Simon Pegg's statement that the movie is much better than the trailer appears is true.

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

There isn't anyone that I can think of in particular.

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

I think Gene Roddenberry's vision would be very applicable to how foreign affairs should be seen. Understanding that we're all here on the same planet relying upon and being tolerant of each other is a great point.

16. *Are you active in Star Trek Online?*

Yes, I actively play two characters: Scimaurs (my science officer) and Maurs (my tactical officer).

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

The game is completely different compared to what it was at launch and for the better. The updates and additions to the game (especially the foundry) make for a very enjoyable game.

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

For the most part yes, and if they don't many of the content creators in the foundry do.

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

Primarily my passion and biggest aspiration in life is to be the best father and husband I can be for my family. Second to that, I love my job within environmental protection knowing that what I do has an impact on many other people for the better.

20. *What is your biggest peeve?*

My biggest peeve would be when people fail to take pride in what they do. In addition to my primary job, I also bartend and find that many people I work with just show up to make money and leave, not taking time to improve anything at the bar or educate themselves in their craft.

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

Well besides my amazing family, I'd find the highlights in my life are the experiences that I've been able to gain from my jobs whether it be the people I've met and worked with or the places I've had the opportunity to go.

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

While there are many things nobody in the Fleet knows about me, it's quite tough to decide what one thing I want to share with you all. We'll go with for the longest time I was very addicted to World of Warcraft. Thankfully I've gotten past that stage in my life...

23. *Could you describe yourself in 5 words?*

Open-minded, Reliable, Rational, Handy, Humorous

24. *Do you have a personal motto?*

You can't make anything happen without trying.

25. *What advice would you give new members?*

Explore all opportunities available to you. This goes for in-Fleet and in life.

26. *How would you define leadership?*

Leadership is being able to motivate others to the point that they want to follow you.

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

Recognize that there is nothing more important than your friends and family.



I AM A SUPER-VILLAIN.
I'M NOT A DOCTOR!





“LOTUS FLEET IS LAUNCHING!”

This is Admiral Kheren from our Roleplay universe. As of now, no less than five ships have been deployed to face the promises and perils, projects and pitfalls of the final frontier. And here is but one example of what is happening:

Stardate 88664.0 The USS Horizon, still overseeing the colonization effort in the pocket universe beyond the Azimuth Horizon anomaly, receives a distress call from an inbound supply ship. Rushing first to the rescue is the USS Polaris, the Aquarius class integrated escort starship of the flagship, under the command of Executive Officer Commander Neil S. Redding:

The cool, austere voice of dark-haired, dark-eyed Vulcan ops officer S'Tron followed his words with a finger dance on his console that brought a static garbled audio message to their ears.

"I'm picking up a subspace transmission, very faint... audio only."

"Put it on," Redding said from the command chair, clapping his hands in front of his chin.

"Mayday! Mayday! This... hiss... the U... hiss... Champlain. Hiss... have an Invidium leak... hiss... cargo cont... hiss... three. All... hiss... systems ... hiss... shutting down. Warp and impulse... hiss... off-line, transporters and life support... hiss... mayday! Mayday!"

"Ptolemy II class of freighter alright," strategic ops officer Nathaniel Gray stated, his tall gaunt frame a step behind the command chair. "One hundred and ninety-eight officers and crewmembers."

"An invidium leak will also affect our own propulsion systems if we get in contact with it," warned the Andorian Sheenea with blue skinned fingers, grey eyes and slim forehead antennae glued to her helm controls. "That's why they can't evacuate with their own shuttlecrafts either. Even lifepods will emerge powerless and adrift. And that, if their ejection mechanism works in the first place."

"Bad containment protocols and plain negligence must have caused this. But why would they carry such foul stuff in the first place?" growled the frighteningly muscular security Lieutenant Carmilia Julian behind her weapons station. "No one has been using it anymore for over a hundred years."

"No one in the Federation," the smooth, mesmerizing Deltan voice of bald Doctor Sheelya Osaro-Lyth explained. "But out here, the colonists of Eden III need it for their medical stasis fields until they

can finish building a proper hospital with modern technologies... also on board this cargo vessel."

"Sir, I have the Champlain on sensors," science Lieutenant Valencia Irksos reported. On the small viewer before them all on the compacted bridge, a saucer flanked by a pair of nacelles tugged three long cylindrical sections linked like the segments of a caterpillar to what other starships was the neck section under it. Some orange-tinted gas seemed to be seeping from the last container and partly obscured the whole view of the vessel. It was slowly drifting with lights flickering all over the hull.

The woman at the science station turned her chocolate-hued face towards the large man sitting in the spartan command chair, barely two meters on her right side.

"Sorry for the delay, Commander, but there are some intermittent anomalous distortions in the area."

From the technical station, the six-limbed Edoan engineer Taegae Jeonghun turned his bald, ovoid chitinous head around so that his gravelous, thin voice could better be heard.

"In its natural, gaseous state, invidium disrupts molecular bonding. It becomes inert liquid at minus two-hundred and twenty degrees Celsius. Although space's average temperature is minus two-hundred thirty-three Celsius, here it is at least as high as minus one hundred ninety because of the proximity of the Azimuth Horizon anomaly. That's why we can see it still and clinging like this to the hull of the even hotter vessel."

He visibly swallowed before finishing his analysis.

"With all this invidium floating around it, a transporter beam would be disrupted. Whatever or whoever we would try to beam through that might. Just might end up in one piece... or alive... but not for long."

Nathaniel Gray stepped closer to Redding.

"We cannot get too close, we cannot use transporters and we cannot send shuttlecrafts. We don't have the capacity to evacuate so many people... and it is dubious that they will survive four more hours for the Horizon to arrive in time."

"Invidium poisoning, slow asphyxiation and acute hypothermia, brutal decompression... On some worlds, such painful, inevitable death sentence would call for a mercy killing," mused Doctor Osaro-Lyth, clearly not agreeing at all with the idea.

Redding sighed in thought, several seconds ticked by as he pondered the situation.

"Okay... how about if we fine tune some low yield torpedoes and scatter the heavier concentrations of gases away from the ship, and then grab it with a tractor beam dragging it along until we can pull out the crew. It hasn't taken any structural damage it seems."

"Their structural integrity field has collapsed but their hull is still intact," confirmed Jeonghun.

"What do you think Gray, better odds than an easy death?"

There was no sign of sarcasm in his voice. The strategic operations officer for his part just shrugged his shoulders.

"Death is death, Sir; nothing ever easy about it. But firing torpedoes this close without damaging the ship will be tricky. Even at low yield, quantum torpedoes still detonate powerfully. But if Lieutenant Julian is good enough, they will be quite shaken in there but unhurt and the quantum resonance will displace enough of the gases for us to try and lock on it with a tractor beam. If then we drag it far enough where standard space temperature is low enough, we will avert the immediate crisis."

"I recommend a fixed steady position abeam, Sir," The tactical woman said in her throaty

voice.

"No problem," assured the Andorian at the helm; "we're far enough from the anomaly to not be heavily affected by its presence. I can keep her steady as rock for you."

"Alright people, let's get to it. S'Tron," said Redding as he swiveled the chair in his direction; "Apprise the Horizon of our situation as well as our solution."

"Acknowledged."

Then, the commander swiveled around towards Irksos.

"While there setting up for that, get me a sensor sweep of the area. Even if this wasn't a planned ambush, it could still be an opportunity for someone."

"Aye, Sir; scanning," the dark-skinned woman answered, her eyes and fingers already busy at her instruments.

After a few minutes, Carmillia Julian was first to report readiness.

"Weapons team confirm a volley of torpedoes reconfigured to low yield and widest dispersal pattern of detonation in the forward tube. Full firing arc spread programmed into the firing sequence. Target lock confirmed. Proximity detonation calculated to safest distance to the vessel. Ready to fire on your order, Sir."

"Confirming tractor beam sensor lock," chief of ops S'Tron added. "Activation upon clearing out of the gaseous field."

"Ready to move away once tractor lock confirmed, full impulse," the Andorian pilot followed right after the Vulcan. "Heading 090 mark 45 to also get away from the vicinity of the anomaly."

"That will further help cooling the gases that will still leak from their cargo," Jeonghun commented.

"Medical team ready. I'll go join them," Doctor Osaro-Lyth said as she moved to leave the small, spartan bridge.

Redding left arm was supported by the chair arm, his hand remained on his chin.

"You my fire when ready, Lieutenant Julian. All stations stand at the ready."

At that very moment, a red light blazed on Irksos, Sheenea and Julian's panels simultaneously.

"Sir! Shields just snapped on!" blared the powerfully built woman at tactical.

"We're going into evasive!" the Andorian zhen at the helm reported as the main viewer's image canted sharply to the right without her even having time to touch the controls, thanks to the Pel automated warning program.

"Three ships decloaking, equidistant twenty thousand kilometers, port, starboard and aft!" Irksos read out loud from her scanners. The tactical chief was confirming from her own tactical sensors. "Klingons Birds of Prey, Sir! Boxing us in and arming torpedoes!"

"*Klingons?* But that's not possible! Not in this area!" Lieutenant Gray exclaimed.

"Target any incoming torpedoes and move us into a position to better cover of the freighter, extend our shield around it if possible," Redding ordered.

The phasers of the *Polaris* fired in all three directions but only Sheenea's deft maneuvering allowed them to evade full impact. Nevertheless, the entire vessel shook from the close proximity detonations, activating their personal dampening fields just in time to keep them in their seats as they were grazed by the salvos.

"Minor damage to outer hull plating port and aft ventral, starboard dorsal!" declared Jeonghun, his voice shriller than ever. "Shields holding at ninety-four percent. "

"Mark XXV photon torpedoes, Sir!" Julian reported between clenched teeth. "They go to warp 9 with five seconds shielding and a yield of at least twenty-five isotons. Impossible to intercept!"

"They've cloaked again; standard Klingon multiple angle, hit and run tactic," analyzed Gray. "They'll use random timing to confuse us."

Disabled freighter, impossible to rescue crew and an ambush, am I stuck in a Kobayashi Maru test? Redding thought.

It was almost impossible for Redding to take the situation seriously, but he really had no choice.

"Open a Channel," and waited for the acknowledgement before he continued. "This is Commander Redding of the USS Polaris. To Klingon vessels; we request clarification of your intentions."

His voice was confident and firm, without even a hint of excitement or distress.

"They're jamming all frequencies," S'Tron replied in his imperturbable voice. But the tension of the moment shone in his eyes. "We can extend our shields to cover the freighter or the cargo but not both... and this will put us dangerously close to the invidium cloud."

"Which will also make us a sitting duck," warned the strategic ops officer. "And if that gas touches us, we will be a lacquered duck."

On the screen, one of the raptor-shaped destroyer shimmered into view. But this time, Carmillia and Sheenea were ready. The Polaris shifted angle so abruptly that they even felt the jolt through their personal inertial dampeners. Phaser cannons blasted directly at it and the Klingon attacker recloaked. Because of the time it had took to orient the heavier weaponry of the Polaris, its shields had reformed just in time to avoid complete destruction.

"Damage to their bow plating, but their torpedo launcher is disabled," reported the tactical officer, now smiling savagely. "At least this one will not spit anymore at us for a while!"

The hull around them vibrated and the image on the screen swerved dizzily as the Polaris moved into wild evasive maneuvers. Blinding flashes of light obscured the view at the same moment.

"But it can still be an effective lure," Nathaniel then reminded his commanding officer.

"Shields down to seventy-six percent!" the Edoan engineer announced. Ventral hull plating weakening!"

"They're ignoring the Champlain completely; they must want it and its cargo," the strategic officer suggested then.

Redding still couldn't convince himself that he wasn't suffering from temporal reversion, but those torpedo impacts felt real enough.

"Move us away from the Champlain, best possible speed." he said without a hint of hesitation.

"Abandoning the Champlain, Sir?" wondered Lieutenant Gray, eyes wide.

"A little tactic I call the spoilsport maneuver, so far its worked every time on pirates." Redding gave a slight grin. "Arm one of our modified torpedoes and target the freighter, fire at maximum optimum range, make sure the Klingons have enough time to target and shoot it."

Whether or not they were actually Klingons, the three birds of prey wouldn't have time to decide which one of them should target the torpedo, making it most likely all of them would. He had no doubt that his apt crew would take full advantage of their greed. If this really was the product of his layered memory, those three ships would be captained by thieving Ferengis. Given their predictable level of greed, he hoped for once that this was the case.

"Quantum torpedoes are just as fast and shielded as their latest photon types," the tactical woman stated. "The only way to do that is by launching the torpedo as a mine. Ready, Sir."

"If we use it as a mine to provoke harsh action, we have to drop it as close as possible to the

freighter," the strategic officer noted. "Helm; plot our trajectory to fly by the Champlain at maximum impulse, then maximum warp away from here."

He turned to Redding.

"At your command, Sir. Heading?"

"I..." Redding paused. "No, they'd never... fall for a mine attack against..."

What was going on? He knew that quantum torpedoes moved to fast for that maneuver... Didn't he?

Then, with a look of painful frustration on his face he stood up.

"Gray... take the conn." Never in his life did he want to give that order, it was harder than he imagined.

"Sir?"

"Just do it!" he said with a bitter snarl, and stood off to the right of the captain's chair.

His pride churned against the walls of his stomach but he ignored it, this was what had to be done.

Puzzled and definitely nervous, the lieutenant stood before the command chair but did not sit in it. His hand went to his sweating brow.

"He... helm..." he stuttered as he swallowed hard. "full impulse... bearing... err bearing 020 mark 15, standby warp drive. Science, Full... full sensor scan to get those Klingons as soon as they decloak. Tactical... drop mine as we cross the Champlain's path."

His nervousness contaminated everyone on the bridge but they all answered "Aye, Sir" and the image of the freighter suddenly loomed very large before them.

"Klingons decloaking!" shouted Valencia Irsos, louder than usual. "Same attack formation!"

On the screen, the round bow of the freighter went past them on the starboard side.

"Drop mine!"

"Torpedo away!" Carmillia Julian confirmed through clenched teeth.

"Warp speed!" yelled Gray.

Instantly, the stars stretched all around the screen then a flash shifted the blurry luminous lines into swiftly moving points of light. The jump was so sudden that it took their PIDs for them to stay in place.

"Maximum warp," said Sheenea, the only one apparently calm and composed among all of them junior officers.

But that was only because Andorians were physiologically hardwired to get calmer and more focused in a crisis. But that also made her quite dangerous; a wrong word or move and she could lash out like a savage predator.

The only one truly in control was Vulcan ops chief S'tron. His deep, calm tone did much to counter Nathaniel's infectious nervousness.

"We have cleared the jamming zone."

"One of the Klingon ships is near the freighter, apparently disabled. It's the one we shot earlier," Irsos reported with a forced grin. "Apparently, detonating it themselves sent the invidium gas cloud straight to its face and contaminated their systems before their shields could be fully raised."

The strategic lieutenant let a sigh of relief blow from between his dry lips, then turned his blinking eyes to Redding standing beside him.

"And I... I thought the Kobayashi Maru was just a... a useless simulation... N-nice tactic there... Sir..."

"And it's not over yet," Carmillia growled. "The other two Birds of Prey are in pursuit. We are distancing them... but not by much."

"They can't match our emergency speed," engineer Jeonghun informed them, finally able to regain a fraction of his thin voice. "And just to try to keep up, they will need all of their reserve power; which means no cloak and minimal shields."

"And as long as we stay at warp, they can only use torpedoes as well," the tactical woman reminded them all to try and calm down everyone.

Then the ship's comm beeped.

"Sickbay to bridge; what's going on out there? Are we helping out that freighter or not? Any casualties?"

Silence weighted heavily on all of them. No one looked at Redding but they were all waiting.

The former flagship, the Intrepid class USS Lotus, the Prometheus class USS Alsea, heavy warship of the fleet, the USS McKenzie, veteran destroyer of Lotus Fleet and the deep space explorer USS Phoenix have also all launched to such bold new adventures. But most of them are just about to leave dock; so, now is the time to create that Starfleet character you always dreamed of playing and join any one of those brave and bold crews!

The Lotus Fleet Role-playing universe is ready for you. Are you ready for its challenges and wonders?

It's *all* up to you!"

*Roses are Red
Violets are Blue
Neither of these observations
are relevant to this scenario
I am most uncertain as to
the logic in this association.*

*It would be agreeable if you
would be my valentine.*





Happy 6th anniversary of STO and as of January 1, 2016, happy 8th anniversary to Lotus Fleet! Regardless of if you've played STO from Friends and Family Beta or just recently started playing, we're glad you're here and part of Lotus Fleet! January brings a new year and with it some changes. Because of life, I will be stepping down as the Operations Division Commanding Officer. Quite simply, I do not have the kind of time to devote to the position that is required and that this Fleet deserves. Succeeding me will be Vice Admiral Battle Lion who is quite the expert on all things STO.

While I am stepping down, I am not disappearing. I will be assuming the role of Fleet Advocate. Being a founding member of the Fleet gives unique experience in which to carry out the Fleet Advocate's responsibilities as I contributed to the creation of the original General Orders and Code of Conduct. I also created the concept of the Fleet Advocate's roles and responsibilities, all of which simply means that I'm quite well suited to step into the position.

As I will remain a Tier 5 officer, I have been asked to continue to manage our Fleet Holdings in STO which I am more than happy to do. Our Fleet is doing well; we are at level 52. All of our Fleet holdings, except for our Starbase, are completed; all projects and special projects are done. We only need to complete projects in order to provide provisions as that become necessary. Our Starbase is at tier 4 and it will take a while to get it fully complete. The greatest need for our Starbase projects is common duty officers; we don't even require dilithium unless we are completing provision projects. Make certain to check out the link below on ways to acquire common duty officers.

Please reference this thread and work to help to fill the need: <http://www.lotusfleet.org/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=309>

We're also sitting quite well with the amount of provisions that's we've accumulated and because of that, we've adopted a new strategy to ensure that our own members have opportunities to contribute and build Fleet Credit. Until such time as our provisions drop below acceptable levels and Lotus Fleet members are unable to fill the need, all provision projects will be locked out from allowing other Armada members to contribute. The Starbase projects will remain open to Armada contributions as we have a long way to go and can use all the help we can get in building a Tier 5 Starbase.

As for the STO 6th Anniversary events, make certain that you collect as many Omega Particles as possible, of all 3 colors. Red can be found at Earth and Bajor; Blue can be found at Vulcan and Andor; Yellow can be found at Starbase 39-Sierra and K-7. Once you combine the particles into slivers, then into shards, then into fragments, and finally into Omega Technology upgrades, you can apply the upgrades to any of your gear with zero cost. These Omega upgrades are massive jumps in the quality of your gear; you can get Gold gear if you have enough Omega upgrades. I plan to concentrate on collecting these Omega Particles to the exclusion of almost everything else.

Good luck and enjoy STO!

~Admiral Athos

STO Tips and Tricks by Rear Admiral Battle Lion

This will be a short post; there isn't much to tactical consoles.

I'll group them into categories:

+Specific Kinetic damage

These consoles boost specific types of kinetic damage, like photon or quantum.

Probably shouldn't use more than one of these unless you are a kinetic build.

If you like a hybrid energy/kinetic play style though, might as well throw one of these on there.

You can check the prices on the exchange, but these only go for decent cash. Still better usually than selling them to the vendors.

+Specific Energy Damage

For maximum damage, it is recommended that you just slot as many of these as you have tactical console slots. Pick the type that boosts your energy. Always check the prices of these on the exchange, often they are worth EC. The more popular damage types like AP can sell for quite a bit.

+Generic Damage

Consoles such as +beam/+cannons/+torpedoes/+mines generally not too useful, unless you switch energy types VERY often and can only afford one set of tac consoles. OR you like to slot weapons of different energy types, (often called RAINBOATING, for Rainbow Boat...what it looks like when you shoot different colored beams from your ship). I recommend against these consoles, because you are basically gimping your DPS for no reason.

As a side note, the +Mine damage console is actually useless. Even if you had a kinetic boat, you should run the +kinetic specific console, as it affects torps AND mines.

Just sell these on the exchange.

The TAC console Meta game is really boring. Sorry. But it IS profitable, so sell those consoles.

Next Issue: Tactical Space Bridge Officer Powers

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.

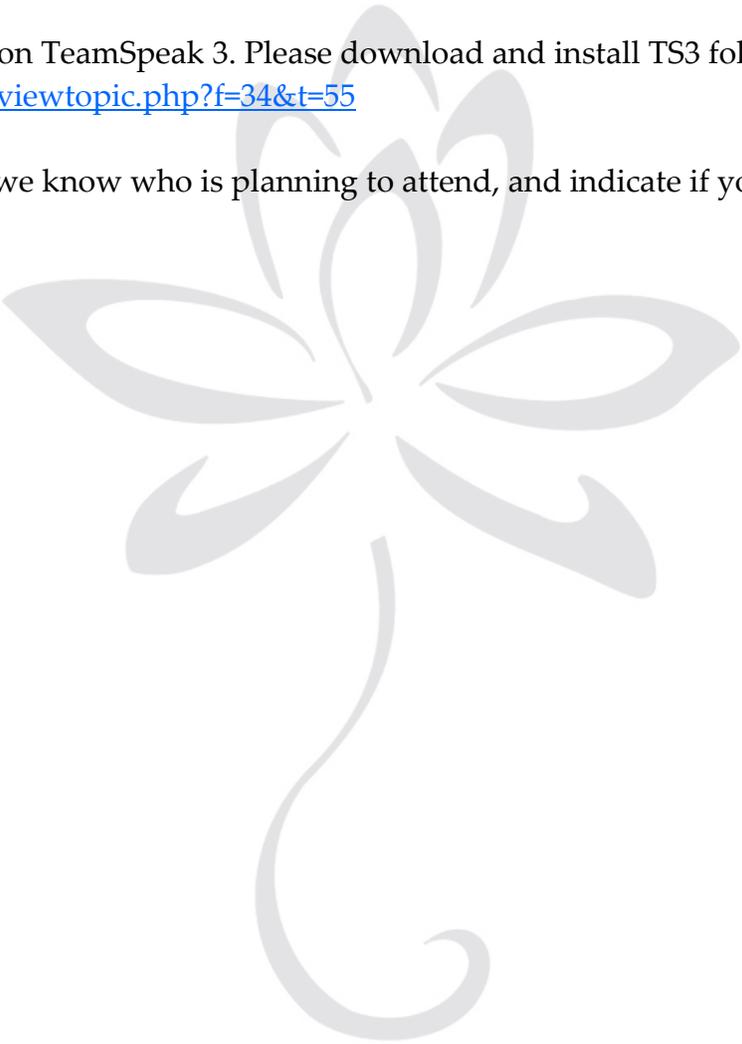
Think of it as our Fleet's Ten Forward

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



Awards, Promotions and Organ Donations

New Members:

Cadet Artemis
Cadet geodip
Cadet Sahni

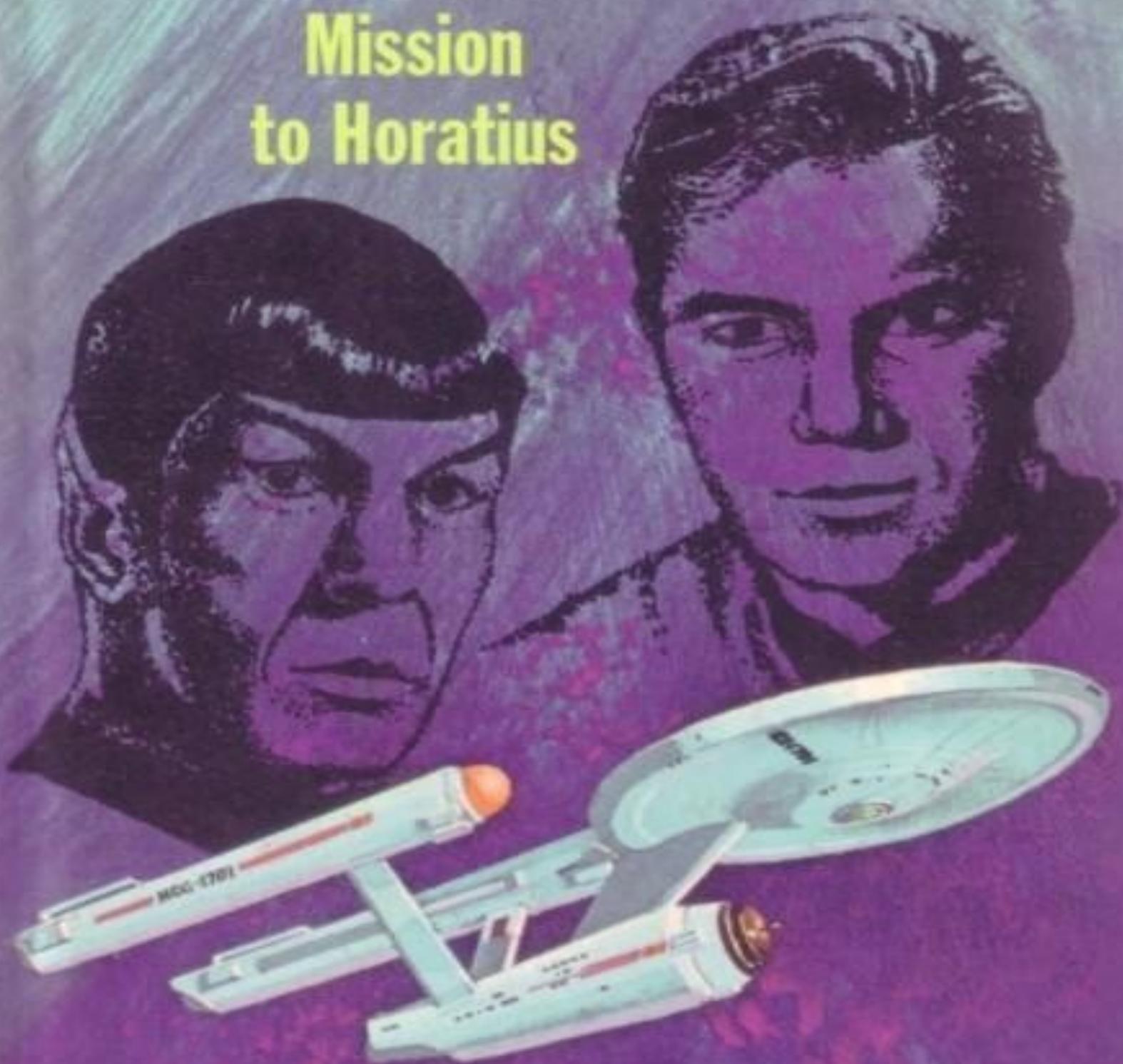
Longevity:

United Federation of Planets Ambassador McClintock: 3 months
44th Fleet Amnassador Damix: 6 months
Liberty Task Force Ambassador Grayfox: 6 months
Lieutenant(j.g.) Hera: 3 years
Lieutenant(j.g.) Vimes: 6 years
Commander Sorripto: 6 years
Provisional Vice Admiral Spawner: 7 years
Provisional Admiral Christopher Stevens: 7 years
Provisional Fleet Admiral Jamie: 7 years
Admiral Athos: 8 years



STAR TREK

Mission to Horatius



AUTHORIZED EDITION

8. MYSTERIES SOLVED

THE THREE combatants from the *Enterprise* had been equipped with leather gladiators' kilts and with sandals suitable for working in the sand of the arena. They stood now at the far end of an oval enclosure, which was smaller than the Colosseum of ancient Rome, but remarkably like that arena of death where man and beast had died in countless thousands for the entertainment of the Roman mob. There were few observers here, however, besides the technicians operating TV cameras which were spaced every few feet along the wall. This fray was obviously going to be covered from every angle possible; it wasn't every day the managers of the Bavaryan palace arena had opponents from the stars to perform.

There was a small spectators' box halfway down the arena and perhaps fifteen feet above the sand. Large enough to hold only a score of people, it was now being occupied by Nummer Ein, his daughter Anna, and a dozen or so of what were obviously his immediate staff. They were laughing and chattering among themselves as they took their places.

Janice Rand said softly, "I didn't think the girl, Anna, was quite the type who would enjoy this sort of spectacle."

"She isn't," Kirk said. However, he didn't go into what Nummer Ein's daughter had told him at the reception. For all he knew, the Bavaryans had sensors that were delicate enough to be picking up their every word.

Scott grumbled, "I still think it's my job to be in there instead of Grang."

"No," Grang said strongly. "I am Grang of—"

"Aye, I know, lad," Scott growled. "You're Grang of the Wolves."

"Our opponents seem to be with us," Spock said.

Emerging from a metal door at the arena's far end were the uniformed Bavaryan officer who had informed them of the combat, several ring attendants, and three *Doppelgängers* attired in garb identical to that of the *Enterprise* group.

The newcomers made a parade of it, winding up in front of Nummer Ein and his party. Dr. McCoy said wryly, "Caesar, we who are about to salute you!"

"Do we have any special strategy, Captain?" Spock asked. In his gladiator kilts his lithe muscles were more than usually accentuated.

Kirk shook his head. "It's man for man. The smallest of them seems to be on the right. He is yours, Grang. I'll stand in the middle. You on the other side, Mr. Spock. If you're successful in finishing off your man, go immediately to the assistance of whichever one of us might need it"

Somewhere, unseen trumpets sounded, and the three *Doppelgängers* turned stolidly and began marching in the direction of the *Enterprise* champions.

"This is it!" Kirk said tersely. "Spread out, Grang, Mr. Spock. Remember, this is a primitive battle, nothing barred. As of this moment you have stopped being gentlemen!"

The Bavaryans came in at a rush, slightly crouching, arms extended. They were obviously experienced hand-to-hand fighters.

Suddenly Grang, the Neolithian, screamed his tribal war cry and dashed forward to meet his foe. The scream fell off into a doglike barking and Grang was upon him before the slower-moving Bavaryan could recover from his surprise at the noisy attack.

Kirk and Spock stared, momentarily fascinated. Then they had to tear their eyes from this development as they, too, closed with the foe.

James Kirk threw himself into the karate fourteenth kata. As his opponent put up his guard, Kirk rushed him with a left-hand block to the Bavaryan's right arm. Without warning, with his right hand open, palm to the outside, he struck his opponent's face across the left jaw as his hand slipped around the other's neck.

In the background he could hear Grang's voice yell, "Coup!" but he had no time to check on how his associates were doing.

Captain Kirk's opponent was obviously unacquainted with judo, either of the kenpo or the allied karate type. With the back of his hand Kirk forced the burly Bavaryan's head down toward him as he went down briefly on his left knee and then came up fast with an uppercut punch to the other's chin. He jumped back, turned slightly to the side, and lashed out with his foot into the enemy's mid-section.

Even as his opponent was falling, James Kirk spun to the right with the intention of hurrying to Grang's assistance.

However, Grang's own enemy was thrown up against the arena wall and was lying in an awkward, grotesque position, and Grang was plowing through the sand in the captain's direction as though he intended to come to Kirk's aid.

The two of them turned in Spock's direction.

The Vulcan hadn't as yet finished off his man, but there was no question of how matters were going.

Larger than Spock the *Doppelgänger* might be, but the Vulcan's reflexes were so much faster that he was making mincemeat out of the slow-moving professional wrestler. Using his hands as choppers, judo fashion, the first officer would step in quickly, slug the other across the neck or face, and step back again before his opponent could retaliate. It was a brutal sight to watch.

Kirk put a hand on Grang's arm. "We're not needed," he said dryly, "and the television audience will get the message the more strongly if we don't intervene."

Grang nodded. "Mister of the Spocks can take care of himself," he agreed.

And even as he spoke, the eyes of the sole remaining *Doppelgänger* foe rolled upward, and he sank, unconscious, to the sand.

As though rehearsed, the three victors turned and faced the box where sat Nummer Ein and his group.

Whatever reaction they had expected from His All Highest, they certainly didn't receive it. Nummer Ein was beaming down at them, almost as though in congratulation.

Even as a group of ring attendants filed onto the sands and began picking up the fallen Bavaryans and hustling them from the arena, Nummer Ein said unctuously, "The end of round one."

Captain Kirk stared up at him. "The end of round *one*?"

"That is correct." Nummer Ein nodded. "When all the members of one team have fallen, one minute of rest is taken, and then the next round resumes."

"One minute of rest?" Kirk said in disgust. "If you think any one of those three men is going to come back into this arena in one minute, you've got a surprise coming."

He turned back to where Dr. McCoy was giving both Grang and Spock a quick once-over. "You seem all right," McCoy said. "That was quick work, Jim. Now what happens?"

What happened came as a shock to the spacemen. The trumpets sounded, as before. Nummer Ein smiled down. "And now we have round two." And the three recently defeated *Doppelgänger*s marched back into the ring, seemingly as fit and aggressive as ever.

Kirk, Spock, and young Grang could only stare as the three Bavaryan champions came in at a lumbering run, each heading for the *Enterprise* man who had sent him to the sands but one minute earlier.

There was no time to plan the battle. Captain Kirk fell into the ninth kata position.

His opponent threw a vicious right punch, and Kirk grabbed his wrist with his left hand. It was the same man, all right. For a brief moment the captain had suspected that Nummer Ein was ringing in a new fighter on him; but he was sure it was the same one.

Kirk walked in and grabbed the man's right shoulder with his right hand, slugging him at the same time in the chin with an elbow punch. Simultaneously he moved in quickly with his right foot. Coming around to the Bavaryan's right leg and kicking forward against the man's leg, he toppled him expertly onto the sand.

The other grunted in pain and attempted to roll out, but Kirk didn't release the Bavaryan's wrist. Instead he held him and gave him a heel stamp straight to the solar plexus. Somewhere in the background he could hear Grang making his doglike war cry, but there was no time to see how the youngster was doing.

Still holding the wristlock, Kirk came down on the fallen *Doppelgänger*, chopping the man's Adam's apple as he struggled to rise.

He came to his feet, breathing deeply. "All right," he panted. "That's the end of round two. Let's see you come out for round three, mister." The other merely looked up at him.

Kirk whirled and headed in the direction of the youthful Neolithian.

This time young Grang wasn't doing so well. In spite of Grang's youthful agility, the Bavaryan had managed to get a strong hold and was slowly bending the boy backward.

Kirk gritted his teeth and muttered, "We have stopped being gentlemen," and came up behind the *Doppelgänger* and kicked him sharply behind the left kneecap. The man screamed and went down and stayed there.

Kirk and Grang, both panting now, turned to hurry in the direction of Spock. However, as before, the Vulcan dominated his opponent with his faster reflexes. It was simply a matter of avoiding the other's bull-like rushes, slowly chopping him down with rights and lefts to the man's face, and giving judo blows wherever opportunity presented. By the time Captain Kirk and Grang reached the scene, the Bavaryan had once again sunk, unconscious, to the sands.

But even Spock was puffing now.

The ring attendants filed in once more, this time with stretchers, and began gathering up their champions.

Nummer Ein laughed down at them. "Very well done, *Herren*, but we will see how you fare in round three. Or perhaps you will last until round four."

Dr. McCoy came hurrying up, his face worried. This time his charges were not untouched, although they had suffered no serious injuries.

Janice Rand had acquired water for them somewhere. She fussed over the boy, who was in worse shape than either Kirk or Spock.

Grang panted, "Captain... Captain of the Kirks...."

Kirk looked at him worriedly.

Grang said, "It was ... it was not... the same ... man."

Kirk scowled. "Are you sure? Mine was the same."

Grang tried to catch his breath. "He *looked* the same, Captain of the Kirks, but he was not. He was perhaps a twin of the first one. But in the first fight I counted coup on the enemy by striking him across the face with my hand. It caused a slight cut beneath the eye. But this man now.... He had no cut"

McCoy said, "Perhaps they applied an astringent back in the arena sick bay or wherever they cart those brutes."

But Kirk was scowling. "They didn't have time to give them much in the way of medical treatment," he muttered.

The trumpets sounded, and the three Bavaryans trotted back into the ring and headed for the *Enterprise* team.

The eyes of the group from space bugged.

Kirk blurted, "But I was certain he wouldn't be able to come back!"

"Most interesting," Spock said. He looked at his commander. "I, also, was of the opinion that my foe would be unable to return. But that is he, unless I am mistaken, charging toward us. He has a mole on the side of his nose."

The teams clashed again, but this time the *Enterprise* group moved more slowly. The pace was beginning to tell.

Captain Kirk circled his opponent, who was seemingly as fresh as ever, certainly as fresh as he had been fifteen minutes before, when he had entered the ring the first time.

Nummer Ein shouted down jovially, "You seem to have lost some of your *élan*, you of the Federation."

Kirk didn't bother to look up. He attempted the fifth kata, but the other avoided the karate position and managed to land a shocking punch to Kirk's right shoulder. Kirk shuffled backward in the sand to collect himself. There was no question in his mind but that his opponent was the Bavaryan he had faced only moments before.

There was no longer time or energy for niceties. Nor could James Kirk take the chance of having the other close with him. The Bavaryan was a bear of a man, and if once the Earthman allowed himself to be taken into the other's grip, he doubted if he had the strength remaining to triumph.

He had to do something quickly and finally.

The opponent attempted another slugging punch, which, had it landed, would have brought the starship's captain to the ground. However, Kirk, moving as quickly as he could, stepped in and executed a kenpo left inside block to the other's punch. Then he moved in quickly with a right forward kick to the opponent's middle. The man grunted in pain, and simultaneously Kirk's right arm shot straight out and he swept the right hand, edge-of-hand style, in a whipping manner to the other's larynx.

Kirk whirled and shouted up to Nummer Ein as loudly as he could, considering his breathlessness, "Unless this man has immediate surgery he will die!"

His All Highest seemed to find some amusement in that statement, and various others in his group even laughed.

Kirk had no more time for them or his fallen enemy. He began plowing in the direction of Grang, who was on the ground trying to cover up as his heavier opponent rained blows and kicks upon him. Once again the captain came up behind the Bavaryan and slugged him with a quick rabbit blow across the back of the neck.

When the other had fallen, Kirk helped the Neolithian to his feet. The marks of the strife were obvious on the youngster's face, and he was breathing so deeply that his breath came in gasps. However, he puffed, "Mister of the Spocks," and headed, stumbling, to the assistance of the Vulcan, who was slugging it out, falling back step by step before the onslaught of his seemingly tireless Bavaryan opponent.

It took the combined efforts of all three to bring the single remaining *Doppelgänger* to the sands. Once again the ring attendants came hurrying out to retrieve the fallen Bavaryans. Grang sank to the sand, exhausted. Kirk and Spock stood above him, their chests heaving. McCoy, Scott, and Yeoman Rand hurried up, their faces showing dismay.

Nummer Ein called down, his voice still jovial, "You seem to lack stamina. Prepare yourselves for round four."

McCoy, his face suffused with anger, stalked over to the area immediately below the box occupied by His All Highest and called, "Captain Kirk and his companions are in no condition to continue this barbaric nonsense!"

The Bavaryan dictator asked in a mocking tone, "You wish to concede?" Kirk took a deep breath and managed an emphatic "No!" Spock shook his head. "Never!"

Even Grang, still sitting on the sand, looked up defiantly and gasped, "Members of the Wolf clan never surrender."

"Very well." Nummer Ein chuckled. "We will grant a slight recess of, say, one hour. At that time the game will proceed, unless, of course, Captain Kirk, you are now willing to communicate with your ship and turn over your library banks to my technicians."

A group of four armed *Doppelgängers* marched from an entry and escorted the *Enterprise* group back in the direction of their cells. The three combatants were so exhausted that the others each gave them an arm in help.

"One hour recess," Kirk ground out from between his teeth. "Hardly a breather."

They preceded their four guards down the corridor in the direction of the cells. The cell doors were open and the five men began to file into the one they had been assigned. Suddenly they stopped.

Anna Shickle, daughter of Nummer Ein, emerged from the cell of Janice Rand. In her right hand was a phaser, one of those taken from the *Enterprise* officers by the *Feldherr's* men. Her face was expressionless as she brought the weapon up.

"Look out!" Scotty yelled, misunderstanding. Coolly and calmly she leveled the phaser and beamed the four guards down.

The Federation group stood for a moment in shock. Then McCoy gasped, "But you've just killed those four men—your own people."

She looked at him strangely. "They were only *Doppelgängers*."

Kirk said, appalled in spite of the situation, "Despite your class differences here on Bavarya, those were men you cut down. You murdered them."

She shook her head. "You don't understand. Don't you know the meaning of the word *Doppelgänger*?"

"*Doppelgänger*," Spock said. "Of course I know the meaning of the word, a Teutonic term signifying 'duplicate,' or 'copy.' But it had not occurred to me...."

Anna said, extending the phaser toward Captain Kirk, "On Bavarya we have two classifications, the *Herr-Elite*, who are real people, and the *Doppelgängers*, who are duplicated over and over again. We chose, long years past, those most suited to be soldiers, then made them over and over. The same with servants and factory or field hands. Actually there are only a few tens of thousands of the *Herr-Elite* on all the planet"

McCoy was aghast. "The technique is not unknown back on the Federation worlds, but it is certainly not utilized on human beings. Certainly our sensors can completely analyze the composition of any human body, but long ago we discovered that in attempting to duplicate the body a prime ingredient is missing— that which is called the psyche, or, if you wish, the soul. That spark of something which differentiates man from the animal."

Kirk said, "These *Doppelgängers* of yours—in short, they're *zombies*." He had taken the weapon away from her. Now she produced a communicator from her clothing and handed it over, as well.

Spock murmured, "Most interesting. Now I see why our Nummer Ein thinks in terms of ultimately challenging even the Federation. He has at his disposal literally unlimited numbers of soldiers."

Kirk said to the girl, "And you've revolted against this situation. It was you who sent the call for help. Why?"

"Why?" she asked, a sad, somewhat wistful quality in her voice. "Possibly because once I loved my father."

"Your father," Grang growled contemptuously.

She looked at the boy. "My real father. You see, Nummer Ein is not my father. He is a *Doppelgänger* of my father, who I am sure is now dead. I am the only one who knows it among the *Herr-Elite*, but Nummer Ein himself is a soulless copy of a real man. And now, if you will all follow me...."

She led the way down the corridor in the opposite direction from that from which they had just come.

Kirk said, a question in his voice, "And out there in the arena—those three, ah ... *Doppelgängers* we just fought?"

"You didn't fight three, of course, but nine copies of three men, which is the reason why Nummer Ein was so amused. You see, Captain, he could have sent in ninety, or even nine thousand, for that matter. Perfect duplicates."

They hurried after her.

"Where are you going? What is your plan?" Kirk demanded.

She said over her shoulder, "We are going to the duplicating banks. There is but one set. Long ago our technicians lost the ability to build new ones."

That meant nothing to the men from the *Enterprise*, but they saved their short breath. They soon lost their sense of direction in the maze of halls and corridors. The total area of the palace of Nummer Ein was even greater than they had previously estimated. At long last they came to a bank of early-type elevators and hustled into one. Anna spoke into a tube, and the chamber began to rise. A robot voice said, "You are entering the Forbidden Rooms. Identify yourselves immediately or you will be destroyed."

This was evidently no problem. Anna held up her hand to a small viewing screen so that the fingerprints could be read. The voice was heard no more. She was, after all, Anna Shickle.

They emerged into a gigantic hall of electronic equipment and long banks of files. "Here you are," she said.

Kirk looked at her, puzzled. "What is your plan?"

She shook her head. "I have none. I was forced into immediate action by your situation, and I had no time. Nummer Ein planned to have *Doppelgänger*s made of all of you and return them to your starship. Your shipmates would never have known the difference, and your replicas would have been in his power."

Kirk frowned at her. "Why? How does your *Herr-Elite* keep the *Doppelgänger*s under control? I'd think they'd revolt."

She shook her head. "They dare not. Here in this room are the records for each *Doppelgänger* on Bavarya. Any sign of revolt from one of them, or any group of them, and the *Herr-Elite* technicians simply come up here, take out that individual's record, and destroy him."

"Destroy him how?" Scott asked.

"I don't know, but he simply disappears."

Spock looked up and down the long banks of equipment, some of it recognizable, some not.

"Most interesting," he said.

"That's a great contribution," Kirk muttered. His own eyes were darting over the endless machinery. "Scotty, comments?"

The engineer was scowling. His voice, as always when under pressure, had the heavy Scottish burr of his youth. "I don't know," he said. "Mon, it would take me forever to trace out the beastie circuits and figure out the workings of all this."

Kirk darted a look at Anna. "Where is everybody? How long will it be before somebody comes?"

She shook her head. "Only a selected few of the *Herr-Elite* technicians and scientists are allowed in here. They know how to operate and repair the equipment, but they could never rebuild it. Right now they are all undoubtedly at the viewing screens watching the arena show. When it is discovered you have escaped, undoubtedly some will rush here."

Kirk snapped, "Scotty, Spock—get at it. Bones, any comments?"

McCoy's eyes were narrow in thought "Jim, as I remember, in the experiments that took place in this field long ago, the person duplicated had a matrix— a mold or impression. Wipe clean the matrix and the duplicate simply reverted to the molecules of which it was composed." He made a motion toward the banks of files. "Undoubtedly those contain the matrixes of every *Doppelgänger* on Bavarya. But beyond that, I know nothing."

Kirk drew the communicator Anna had given him from the small pouch in his gladiator kilts and raised the antenna grid. "Captain Kirk to the *Enterprise*."

When Uhura's answer came, there was relief in the communications officer's voice. "Lieutenant Uhura here, Captain. We've been worried about you."

"Is the ship still under fire, Lieutenant?"

"Yes, sir. Not always, but intermittently. We don't dare lower the deflector shields."

"Mr. Sulu, please."

Sum's voice came through. "Aye, aye, Captain."

"Mr. Sulu, get a fix on us. I want the ship's sensors and computers, the full efforts of the electronic brain of the *Enterprise*, concentrated on this hall. The problem is to determine the workings of the equipment the hall contains. At once, Mr. Sulu. I'll keep in touch."

"Aye, aye, Captain. How much time do we have?"

"None. Over and out"

Kirk turned back to the others. "Scotty?"

Scott and Spock had both been going from one piece of equipment to another, shaking their heads in bafflement. "Time, Captain," Scott said. "If I only had time I could easily figure out every machine in the place."

"We need inspiration now. We don't have time. The most we can expect is one hour from the time we left the arena. Our absence will be discovered then, if not sooner. And we've already used the greater part of it getting here."

Yeoman Janice Rand said in sudden excitement, "Captain! That bank of dials and switches over there. The one with the impressive chair before it"

Kirk looked at her and then where she was pointing. "What of it? There are a score of what are obviously some sort of control panels in this hall."

"But none with a chair that... that fancy. It must be the seat of someone particularly important."

Kirk looked at Anna. "Comments?"

She said slowly, "I have been in here only once before. When I was a little girl my father brought me. I... I think he sat there."

"Scott!" Kirk snapped. "See what you can find."

The engineer hurried in the direction of the control banks in question. Behind them they could hear the elevator begin to hum.

The whole group hurried over to where Scott was staring down in despair at the electronic control board. "Whoosh, mon, I haven't *time!*" he protested. He stared at dials, switches, buttons, and levers and shook his head.

Kirk activated his communicator. "Kirk to the *Enterprise*. Nothing?"

"Uhura here," the voice came back urgently. "No, sir. We've got the fix on your group, but so far, nothing."

"Put the computer voice directly on."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Scott had plumped himself down in the elaborate chair, his hands racing over the various controls, but he restrained himself from actually attempting to manipulate devices he didn't understand.

"This red switch," he muttered. "There's a wee control lock on it—to prevent it from being accidentally activated, undoubtedly. But what's it for? What does it do?" He threw off the lock. "I don't dare move it."

Behind them a voice screamed, "Don't touch anything!"

All spun around.

Nummer Ein stood there, his eyes glaring madness. In his hand was one of the phasers he had appropriated from the captain and his group.

Spock said mildly, "I might point out that the weapon you hold is mine. While it was being taken from me, I shifted its selection lever to overload. I do not recommend that you press the trigger, Nummer Ein."

The robot-like computer voice of the *Enterprise* came through the communicator held in Kirk's hand. "*The red lever will wipe the matrixes of every duplicated human being on the planet Bavarya.*"

"Don't touch..." Nummer Ein began to shrill, and even as he did he moved his gun hand in a spraying motion and depressed the trigger.

He and that part of the room, including a sizable portion of the wall and elevator banks, blew up in a thunderous explosion. Unbelievably, none of the *Enterprise* contingent was harmed. Gathered around Scott before the control desk, they had been far enough off to be safe.

Spock's eyebrows went up. As he stared at the body of Nummer Ein sprawled on the floor he said, "It would seem that he doubted my word."

Kirk said to his senior engineer, "All right, Scotty. Throw the lever and let's see what we get"

The engineer pushed it forward. Nothing seemed to have happened.

But Janice Rand gasped, "Look!" and pointed.

The fallen body of Nummer Ein had disappeared.

Kirk held his communicator to his mouth. "Kirk to the *Enterprise*."

"Yes, Captain. Sulu here."

"Is the ship still under fire?"

"Not at the moment, Captain."

Kirk looked at Anna. "Are the phasers that have been bombarding the ship operated by *Herr-Elite* or *Doppelgängers*?"

"*Doppelgängers*, with the exception of a few *Herr-Elite* higher officers."

"Can the officers operate the equipment without the aid of the men?"

"I... I wouldn't think so."

Kirk said into the communicator, "Take a chance, Mr. Sulu. Drop the defensive screens long enough to bring us up. Notify the transporter room."

"Aye, aye, sir."

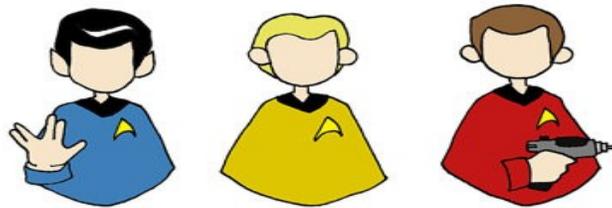
Kirk turned to Anna Shickle. "We'll leave now. There is nothing more for us to do. I would suggest you destroy this room and its contents with this phaser I'll leave you. Without the room, you and the others of the *Herr-Elite* will have no *Doppelgängers* to do your work and to maintain your military machine. That will mean you will have to buckle down for yourselves to a new way of life. Let us hope that in the future, when Bavaryans reach out into space again toward neighboring planets, they will go in peace and with a real desire to help the others in their march to a higher state of civilization."

Anna nodded. "I have friends, of course. We have an underground organization which was directed against Bavarya's present policies. Not all of the *Herr-Elite* believed in Nummer Ein's teachings." She looked at Grang. "Someday we may meet again, young man from Neolithia. I suspect that when you return you will no longer be satisfied with stone weapons and skins to wear; you will be a spark that starts your people to resume the march of progress."

Grang said stiffly, "I am not sure. We of the Wolves are a proud clan." However, he looked at Kirk, then Scott, and suddenly grinned. "Nevertheless, I begin to suspect that iron makes a better blade than flint. Perhaps there are a few changes which might be made on Neolithia."



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