

The starship *USS Arcturus NCC-1807* departed the star system, engaging her warp drive shortly after passing the orbit of the star's furthest planet, heading out once again into deep space.

On the bridge, Vice Admiral Eric Johnson sat in the center seat, surveying all the stations around the bridge. His helmsman, Lt Commander Kalin Kale, wearing the gold uniform of an operations officer he received upon re-entering *Starfleet Academy*, adjusted the ship's course while Lieutenant Galen DuLac, sitting at the navigator's position of the helm console, laid in a new course plot toward their next destination.

Anybody who might have seen the starship pass by would probably have commented on how unusual it was seeing what looked like a Constitution-class starship still in active service with Starfleet. However, the last Constitution-class starship was retired almost sixty years before. And the *Arcturus* was an unusual ship. A remnant of the past, thrust unexpectedly into the latter half of the 24th century.

"Admiral," said the chief communications officer, Lieutenant (JG) Setton To'Lock Arbelo, a hybrid humanoid of the Terran, Vulcan and Efrosian races. "We are receiving a communiqué from Starfleet Command. Priority Two."

Johnson stood, walking up to the port side turbolift door, saying as he went, "Pipe it into my office." A few minutes later, the admiral emerged from the turbolift again, a broad smile on his face, as he once again assumed the center seat.

"Galen, lay in a course for the Terran solar system. Kalin, as soon as the course is laid in, engage at warp six."

Kale and DuLac exchanged puzzled glances, but both simultaneously replied, "Aye."

Johnson turned his seat to face Arbelo on his left, and still smiling, ordered, "Mister Arbelo, open the ship wide intercom." Arbelo complied, and after clearing his throat, Johnson spoke.

"Attention all hands. This is Vice Admiral Johnson. I have a few messages to pass on to you. Firstly, I wish to commend you all for everything you have done over the past eighteen months, the way you have adjusted, acted and performed. Apparently, time displacement is not as uncommon as once believed. Like ourselves, the crew of the starship *Bozeman*, lost ten years before ourselves, only recently reappeared, and are having a degree of difficulty adjusting as we have. For this past year, we have been cruising on this abbreviated mission of exploration, acquainting ourselves with the new procedures and technology of this century, with exceptional success."

Johnson took a breath for a moment before continuing.

"I have been asked to tell you that the *Arcturus* is being recalled to Earth. There, she will be decommissioned. And there we will be reassigned to a new starship."

There seemed to be a universal groan from around the entire ship.

"Don't be upset," Johnson assured. "We will be remaining together as a crew. We are all being assigned to the new starship *USS Arcturus NCC-1807-A*. Our crew capacity will double, so expect to meet a lot of new shipmates. Also upon our new posting, every one of us will be expected to assume the new duties for which you spent your time back at the Academy training. Thank you all, and good luck. Bridge, out."

Various emotions took hold on the faces of the bridge crew. Happiness and excitement on the faces of Kale and Arbelo, mild annoyance from the equine-like Cygnian Briana Lithir, the ship's Chief Engineer, sadness on Galen DuLac as he remembered everything he had gone through to remain aboard the great flying machine instead of returning to his home on Avalon, to a sense of loss on the part of Vice Admiral Johnson, who had commanded this vessel for the last subjective decade, including her necessary upgrade only the year before. The only exception was the look of utter indifference on the part of Chief Science Officer Bael T'olos Dagon San-Demetos, the Efrosian warrior priest who had both caused and solved many of the problems aboard the ship during the years.

Still, chatting was at a minimum for the rest of the shift as the bridge crew continued performing their duties.

"Estimating arrival in sector 001 in one day, eighteen hours, forty three minutes, present speed," announced Bael.

"Science Officer's computations confirmed, Lord Johnson," informed DuLac, his speech pattern slipping back into his native Avalonian.

Space, the Final Frontier...

These are the voyages of the starship *Arcturus*!

Star Trek: Arcturus

"The End?" By PJK

Later that day, when his bridge shift was over, Kale headed down to the ship's recreation deck, there to meet his shipmate and companion, Crewman Mickey Ku, a member of his operations staff.

Kale sat at one of the rec room tables with Ku, where they were soon joined by Dr Athena Arcadian, the ship's Chief Medical Officer. Arcadian and Kale had become friends aboard the *Arcturus* because they both hailed from Alpha Centauri, and both had spent many hours talking about their homeworld, much to the distress of Arcadian's fiancé, Admiral Johnson.

"We were just talking about that new Galaxy-class ship they're building at Fleetyards Vulcan, the *Epsilon Indi*. I heard Starfleet delayed its launch again for another mission change. I can tell you, I certainly wouldn't want to be assigned to that ship. But what have you heard from the Admiral about our new ship, Athena?" Kale asked, sipping from the drink in front of him.

"Not much," the doctor replied. "I know Eric was working with the Corps of Engineers before our training mission started last year, but he's been keeping most of the technical stuff top secret. All I know is the new ship is the first of a new design, is at least twice as long as the *1807*, and that sections of the hull can detach and be replaced with mission specific modules."

"But she's not a Galaxy, huh?" Kale asked.

"Not to my understanding," Arcadian replied.

Ku, who had been munching on her chicken salad sandwich, finally spoke up.

"What's going to happen to the *Arcturus*? I mean, this *Arcturus*?"

Arcadian thought for a moment, finally realizing she was stumped.

"You know... I don't know."

"They can't mothball her," said Kale. "She's too old technologically. That's why we only received a minor refit last year. A total rebuilding would have been 'prohibitively expensive' according to the dockmaster where we put in. You don't think they'd scrap her, do you?"

"I hope not, but what else could they do?" Arcadian said.

As they continued talking, Kale started hearing various crewmembers around the rec room saying, "Good afternoon, Admiral." Kale turned around to watch the starship's commanding officer walk over, give Arcadian a quick hug and kiss, then sit down to join them. He was dressed in his off-duty clothes, and slouched in the chair until Arcadian gave him a quick slap on the arm.

"Admiral, we were just talking," said Kale, offering Johnson some replicated chips in a basket. "We all wondered what's going to happen to this *Arcturus* when we all transfer to the new ship?"

"As far as I know (munch) that's still up in the air. (crunch, crunch) I've heard suggestions ranging from scrapping her all the way to becoming the permanent Academy training vessel, sort of like the American Coast Guard's tall ship *Eagle* during the 20th and 21st centuries."

"I guess we'll find out when we enter Spacedock," commented Arcadian.

\* \* \* \*

The globe of the Earth filled the viewscreen, looking like a blue and white marble. On the bridge, a crowd had gathered, all the bridge crew members from all the shifts. A fight had almost broken out as to what shift would actually get to bring the *Arcturus* into dock for the last time until Vice Admiral Johnson, showing Solomon-like wisdom, allowing everyone up to the bridge. Thirty three people on the bridge made for quite a crowd, but the duty shift acting as professional as if they were alone on duty.

"Approach control, this is *Arcturus*, ready for docking procedure," announced Admiral Johnson.

"*Arcturus* is cleared to dock," replied the male voice of the dock controller.

"Lock on," ordered Johnson

"Systems locked," replied Kale as the bridge lighting turned blue, indicating the starship had slaved its computer systems to those inside Spacedock, a remnant of its 23rd century origins.

"Spacedock, you have control," said Johnson.

"Affirmative, *Arcturus*. Welcome home."

On the viewscreen, the massive spacedoors of the starbase slowly yawned open, the control lights leading the starship inside. Surprisingly, once inside, the crew of *Arcturus* noticed an unusual lack of shipping within the dock. Only one other starship was inside the dock, and that was moored on the opposite side of the massive central core complex, almost completely out of view except for the ends of its angular warp nacelles.

"Forward motion slowing," reported Kale, who turned to look at Johnson. A glimmer of a tear seemed to be on the admiral's cheek, but Johnson turned too quickly to be sure. After a moment, Kale rechecked his instruments and confirmed, "Forward motion has stopped. Connecting umbilical and mooring tractors. We are docked."

What followed was an unexpected moment of silence. No one moved. Hardly anyone breathed. No one wanted to break the illusion that here is where they would stay. Finally, the Vice Admiral broke the spell, pressing the intercom for intraship communication.

"All hands, this is the bridge. The final voyage of the original starship *Arcturus* has ended. All personnel are authorized to disembark by their assigned methods. Alpha shift and Beta One will depart via transporters on deck seven. Beta Two and Three will depart via port-side docking port. Please wait for your department to be called. Delta section will depart via the auxiliary craft from the hanger deck. All aux craft must be accounted for and removed from this vessel and placed in storage in spacedock."

As everyone on the bridge started shutting down their consoles and departing the bridge, Johnson called Lt Lithir to the side and asked her to perform an errand. She glanced at one corner of the bridge, nodded her head and left.

"Setton, are you ready?" Kale asked as he punched in his standby code to place the helm console completely under dock control.

“Yes, Kalin. Idrisu will meet us on the flight deck,” Arbelo said as he pressed a button that made all the screens on the communications console flash with the words, ‘This Station Under Computer Control.’

“Where are you headed, Kalin?” asked Admiral Johnson.

“I’m assigned to take Shuttle 7 out of the hanger bay,” Kale explained. “Setton, Idrisu, Mickey and I are taking the *Caitlyn* down to visit London while we have time before the official decommissioning ceremony.”

Johnson nodded, smiling, as the two young officers entered the turbolift and departed. As they did, Briana Lithir trotted out of the other turbolift. She handed Johnson a tool, winked at him, then hopped back into the ‘lift, leaving the admiral alone on the bridge. He walked around, checking each station to make sure they were all locked down for mooring. Finally, he made his way to the corner of the bridge, to the right of the main viewscreen where Lithir had glanced earlier, and with the tool she had given him he removed the fasteners on the dedication plaque, taking it down from the bulkhead. With a last glance around the bridge, he slipped the plaque under his arm and departed.

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“And in conclusion,” said Fleet Admiral Alynna Nechayev, over the PA system, “we truly feel that this celebrated crew will continue to uphold the Starfleet tradition they started almost a century ago.”

The entire crew of the *Arcturus NCC-1807*, along with dignitaries, politicians, ambassadors and Starfleet’s top brass, were gathered in one of the huge reception/viewing rooms inside Spacedock’s central core. Through the windows behind the stage could be seen the top of the hull of the starship, all her lights off, lit only by the lights of the dock itself.

Vice Admiral Johnson and his senior staff, Captain Solak, Commander Baael T’olos Dagon San-Demetos, Lt Commander Kalin Kale, Lt Commander David Maddox, Lieutenant Briana Lithir, Chief Medical Officer Athena Arcadian and Lt(JG) Setton To’Lock Arbelo sat on the stage, all trying not to yawn at once during the Fleet Admiral’s speech.

Nechayev indicated for Johnson to join her at the podium. Reluctantly, Johnson stood.

“Vice Admiral Eric Johnson, we have one more job for you and your crew to perform before you resume your mission to boldly go where no one had gone before,” the Fleet Admiral said. “*Arcturus III*, the planet where your starship was originally built over a century ago, has requested and been granted permanent guardianship of the *USS Arcturus NCC-1807*, for exhibit as an annex of the Fleet Museum. You will assign a skeleton crew to man the ship while you and the rest of your crew escort the vessel to its new home aboard the new starship *Arcturus*, Starfleet registry *NCC-1807-A*.”

The Fleet Admiral gestured toward the transparent aluminum windows, where slowly another starship maneuvered into view. By comparison, this new ship was huge. Twice as long as the Tikopai-class *Arcturus* she now dwarfed. The design, based upon elements of the *Excelsior*, *Ambassador* and of course *Galaxy*-class starships, was angular. The warp nacelles squared off and the main saucer hull, though circular, was divided into pie-shaped wedges, the reconfigurable mission modules. On top of the hull, in black lettering rimmed with red, was the name **U.S.S. ARCTURUS**, and in even bigger lettering, the hull number **NCC-1807-A**.

The entire crowd applauded as the ship slowly maneuvered into the berth directly next to the original *Arcturus*. Quite obviously, this was the ship the bridge crew had glimpsed as they piloted their original ship into dock.

“*Arcturus*, original and **A**, are scheduled to depart for the *Arcturus* system in seventy two hours,” announced Nechayev to the crowd’s overwhelming applause.

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The turbolift opened onto the bridge and Vice Admiral Eric Johnson stepped out, followed quickly by Kale, Lithir, DuLac and Solak. Each started walking around, inspecting the various stations.

The bridge was designed similar to a *Galaxy*-class starship’s bridge, with an upper level where various work stations lined the aft bulkhead behind a forward facing tactical console with rails to each side leading down ramps to the lower level where the conn and ops positions faced the main viewscreen. In between the ramps three steps lead up to the commanding officer’s seat directly in front of the tactical station, the only seat in the command arena.

Kale walked over and pushed open the ops console, sitting in the semi-reclining seat and activating the console. Lt(JG) Galen DuLac did likewise at the conn station to Kale’s right.

The aft turbolift opened on the upper bridge level and David Maddox came barreling out, followed by Ship’s Counselor Valtiir and Doctor Athena Arcadian, and took his position at the tactical post.

As Kale pressed the controls on his ops console, the main viewer came to life, displaying the interior of Spacedock and, off to one side, the original *Arcturus*, still as beautiful as the day she was recommissioned following her minor refit.

Vice Admiral Johnson, who had been conferring with Captain Solak over near where a third turbolift could take the bridge crew directly to the new starship’s battle bridge, walked over to Kale’s station.

“Daydreams notwithstanding, I never really gave you an opportunity at the conn, have I, Kalin?” the admiral asked.

“No, sir,” replied the Centauri officer.

“Well, now’s your chance. I’ve discussed it with Solak, and for this final voyage, I’m placing you in command of the original *Arcturus*. You’ll be taking her to the new Fleet Museum Annex.”

Kale’s face lit up with surprise and joy.

“Consider it training toward the eventual command I know you’ll have someday,” added Johnson, smiling. “Pick a crew of fifty and prepare to get underway.”

“Yes, sir!” replied Kale as he practically popped out of the ops seat and bounded into the turbolift. With a nod as the ‘lift doors swished shut, Johnson resumed his inspection of his new bridge, finally stopping to read the dedication plaque on the bulkhead.

**U.S.S. ARCTURUS**  
Starfleet Registry NCC-1807-A  
Second Starship to Bear the Name

Johnson ran his fingers over the raised lettering before finally turning around and walking up the stairs to his command chair, and with a slump that betrayed his excitement and many recent late nights, sat in the chair and fell asleep.

*To Be Continued...*