

The officer moved silently through the cargo bay to the secured stasis chamber. Looking back and forth to make sure he was not being observed, he unlocked the chamber that he had confiscated two weeks earlier, removing the rather large box that was inside and carrying it to the cargo transporter.

Placing the box on the transporter pad with a grunt, he quickly walked behind the control console, entered the transport coordinates and beamed the package away.

“That ought to do it,” the officer commented as he once again glanced around to assure himself he was still alone, then slipped silently out of the cargo bay.

Space, the Final Frontier...

These are the voyages of the starship *Sarek*!

Her ongoing mission;

To seek new life, To contact new civilizations,

To Boldly Explore the Unknown!

Star Trek: Sarek

“Shore Leave ‘94” By PJK

Captain’s log, stardate 47894.0:

The Sarek has emerged from the Gamma Quadrant and docked at DS9 for crew transfers, and will afford some of my hard working crew a few days of shore leave in the nearby Hunt-Valley system.

Kale, out.

Ship’s counselor Kethry Sutherland stood in the captain’s quarters, admiring some of the mementos that Kalin Kale had acquired during his years in Starfleet.

“I’m glad you decided to take some leave, Captain,” the half-Betazoid woman said as she picked up one of the nick-knacks to examine more closely.

Kale stood in his bedroom, placing his new uniform into the duffel with his toiletries and other clothes.

“Well, Val convinced me I should go, and I always wanted to visit *Starbase Marriott*, and with our schedule bringing us back to the Alpha Quadrant, this seemed the best time to do it,” explained Kale as he closed his bag. Changing into a set of civilian clothes and placing his combadge on his chest, he walked back into the living room, where Sutherland was examining a display case containing Kale’s 23rd century lieutenant’s pins from his service aboard the old starship *Arcturus*. He stepped over to his desk, where he pressed the intercom button.

“Kale to Lt Commander Cosna. Please meet me in shuttlebay two in fifteen minutes, Mic.”

“On my way, sir.”

Kale and Sutherland walked out into the corridor and headed in the direction of the shuttlebay.

“Who is going with you?” the counselor asked.

“Val, of course,” answered Kale, referring to the starship’s civilian ombudsman, Val’ri Raiaj. “And Mister Fil, our security chief. And to my surprise, T’Veer and T’Ashara have decided to join us as well.”

The starship’s chief engineer, Commander T’Veer, and assistant chief science officer, Lt Commander T’Ashara, were both Vulcan, so shore leave was not something in which they normally participated. But Kale reminded himself that T’Veer was only half-Vulcan, and T’Ashara, being as close a friend as a Vulcan could be with T’Veer, usually accompanied the engineer to many events.

The duo exited the turbolift and passed through the heavy doors into shuttlebay two. Sitting in the center of the bay, the Type-6 shuttlecraft *Camry* was being prepped by Lieutenant (JG) Penji Fil. The catullan security chief placed the shuttle on stand-by and proceeded to secure the gear and luggage in place at the rear of the shuttlecraft.

The *Sarek*’s first officer, Lt Commander Yu-Fen Mickey Cosna stood stiffly at attention as the captain approached.

“Mic, I want you to supervise the new transfers. Make sure Pearson gives out the correct cabin assignments. Oh... I almost forgot. A-ZuRQuIL informed me there was an abnormal power surge reading in cargo bay nine this morning. Have engineering look into it.”

“Sir, yes, sir!” responded the diminutive Asian woman very formally. Kale rolled his eyes, his normal reaction to Cosna’s aloofness, said his good-byes to Cosna and Sutherland, then stepped into the shuttle.

* * * *

“...We spent a jolly shore leave there for just three days or four, but Argo doesn’t want us anymore.”

The chorus echoed through the cabin of the *Camry* as they finished the song Kale had learned during his time as an Academy cadet nearly a century earlier. Over the course of the five hour journey between the Bajoran system and the Hunt-Valley system, the five *Sarek* crewmembers had turned to singing various tunes they all knew, until the shuttle's computer voice announced their arrival in the Hunt-Valley system.

"Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" asked Kale mockingly to Fil, the shuttle's pilot, while hitting the chief of security lightly on the head with a foam emergency flotation cylinder the captain had found among the shuttle's supplies, as he had been doing periodically through a large part of the voyage.

"Yes!" Fil finally was able to respond, after several hours of answering no.

As the shuttlecraft altered course to reach *Starbase Marriott*, the two Vulcan women started gathering their belongings from the storage compartment.

"Mister Fil," said T'Ashara as she uncovered a case underneath several of the duffelbags. "What is in this box you stowed in the rear?"

"That's... um... just something I thought I would bring along with me for the trip. Some... supplies."

"What kind of supplies?" asked Kale, now also curious.

Fil's stalled reply was interrupted by a voice from the comm speakers.

"*Starbase Marriott* to Starfleet shuttlecraft *Camry*. You are cleared for approach on west docking field, access bay D."

"Thank you, Starbase control. *Camry*, out." Fil replied, glad the trip was almost over.

* * * *

The five *Sarek* crew entered the starbase's main facility, checking in at the control desk to locate where they would be quartered before carrying their luggage to their rooms. Due to the unusual crowd currently in port at the starbase, Kale, Fil and Raiajh were forced to share a single suite, while the two Vulcan women shared a second room. After settling in briefly, they decided to take a walk around the base to acquaint themselves with the facilities.

The base was located on the rim of known space in the Beta Quadrant, so as could be expected, there were a large number of Klingons walking around the facility, a place they had used for recreational purposes since even before the treaty that had allied the Empire with the Federation. Surprisingly, there were also a number of Romulans and Ferengi slinking about in the shadows, as well as a number of races Kale did not even recognize, among the crowds.

Shortly after registering their presence in Ops, each of the crew then set out on their own.

Kale looked around the main building complex. As he had expected, the base contained a recreational facility with a Zero-G gym, a pool and holographic simulation chambers, normally called holosuites. The base's most surprising feature was a brig facility run by the Klingons. Though containing mostly drunks and rowdies, Kale noticed at least one smuggler among the unhappy lot.

Around midday, the captain met with Fil, and together they headed toward the base phaser range. Turn after turn, shot after shot, the Centauri captain beat the Catullan lieutenant each time.

"And you call yourself a security chief?" Kale mocked with a chuckle.

"Just a little out of practice, Captain."

"I hope that's all it is. I'd hate to put you under Lieutenant A-ZuRQuIL."

Fil's eyes widened in horror at the implication.

"No, sir! Anything but that!"

Later in the afternoon, the *Sarek* crew gathered to have dinner together. Using a ground vehicle to reach the distant area of the starbase where the replimat and several restaurants were located, over a hearty dinner the four officers and one civilian crew member discussed their plans for the days ahead. To Kale, the sound of three days relaxing, without the problems he had encountered during his first year of commanding the *Sarek* in the distant reaches of the Gamma Quadrant such as the Zrradarians, the Pluton, Thorta II, and the *Q* sounded almost like paradise.

Later that night, after darkness had fallen, Kale, Fil, T'Veer and T'Ashara made their way to the base's sky dome, where Astronomical Studies maintained a number of optical, radio and subspace telescopes for study of distant systems beyond the Federation border, each taking a turn looking through the smaller optical scope at other planets within the Hunt-Valley system.

"What do you see?" Fil asked as Kale looked through the scope's eyepiece.

"The gas giant of this star system, two orbits further out from the primary star. I can even make out five of the planet's moons."

"Neat."

After looking a moment longer, Kale stepped away from the telescope to let the Catullan lieutenant have a turn. Through the eyepiece he could see the large, round shape of the gas giant planet, its grey and white bands contrasting with one another in the turbulent, hydrogen-filled atmosphere. Superimposed over the planet, the small specks of five moons could be seen, all in a straight line across the face of the planet. But very quickly, due to the rotation of the planet Hunt-Valley II, known as Towson to the local population, on which *Starbase Marriott* was located, the gas giant quickly moved out of the telescope's field of view.

"The planet is gone," said Fil, looking away from the telescope's eyepiece.

A puzzled look crossed Kale's face, and T'Veer looked up from another telescope she had been observing the star Vega through, her right eyebrow skirting the bangs on her forehead.

"How do you lose an entire planet?" Kale asked, straight-faced.

"Highly illogical," T'Veer added.

"But... I mean... The planet moved... Ahh, forget it."

“Okay, Lieutenant. Whatever you say.”

The red-faced Catullan lowered his face toward the deck and quietly slunk away.

* * * *

Early the next morning, Kale was awakened too early by the sound of the room door opening and noisily slamming shut as Fil left. Kale fell back to sleep a few minutes later only to be awakened again by the returning Fil slamming the room door. It took a few more minutes before Kale was again snoring, only to be woken again by Fil leaving once again, closing the door with a slam. It continued periodically another three times before the chrono alarm buzzed at 0800 hours, waking both Kale and Raijah for the final time.

“Mister Fil,” Kale said groggily. “What time did you get up this morning?”

“0530 hours, Captain. I decided to sleep late today.”

“And why were you going in and out of the suite so many times?” Kale asked with a groan.

“Just my early morning swim, my calisthenics, meeting with... I mean, practice on the phaser range. That kind of stuff.”

“That kind of stuff...,” Kale repeated. “Well, tomorrow, could you do ‘that kind of stuff’ a little MORE QUIETLY? STOP slamming DOORS!”

“Yes, sir. Sorry, Captain.”

The three *Sarek* crewmembers got ready for the day, contacting their two other shipmates in the room they shared next door, and after meeting in the hallway headed down to the public areas to eat.

“You wouldn’t believe how early Mister Fil got up and went out this morning,” Kale said to T’Veer as he rubbed his eyes.

“Or how often,” Raijah added.

“Yes, I would,” replied the Vulcan engineer, almost sounding annoyed. “I heard each time he let the door slam behind him.”

“I said I was sorry,” pleaded Fil.

“Captain, I learned something that may be of interest to you,” said T’Veer as they walked. “Admiral Johnson and Doctor Arcadian are here at the base presently as well. We may be able to get together with them later today.”

“Very good. I would like to see them again.”

A short time later, as they were enjoying breakfast at the restaurant in the base’s main building and discussing the plans for the day, a Starfleet lieutenant approached the table Kale was sharing with Raijah.

“Excuse me, sir, but are you Captain Kale of the starship *Sarek*?” the young officer asked.

Kale nodded his head while still munching on his Belgian waffle.

“Your presence is requested at the base security office, sir. It is important.”

Kale wiped his mouth with his napkin as he replied, “Of course.”

* * * *

“I can’t believe it,” said Kale as he watched the vid file.

“The evidence is all there,” the Federation official as he filled out the appropriate ‘paperwork’ on his padd. “I’m afraid we must bring him in for questioning. Would you accompany the security officer for the arrest?”

“Of course,” Kale said again.

As the official called for a security officer on the intercom, Kale remembered something from the previous day.

“Can I add a charge?” he asked, to which the official nodded.

A moment later, the security officer the official had called for, a burly Klingon major, stepped into the office as the Federation official handed Kale the padd.

“You know where the suspect is?” the Klingon grunted.

“Yes. Follow me.”

Kale led the Klingon officer to the base’s main level, near the central corridor where the *Sarek* crew had agreed to meet. Spotting his crew, Kale stepped up to them, all of whom were facing him save one.

“Lieutenant Penji Fil,” Kale said, causing the security chief to turn in surprise just as the Klingon officer grabbed his arm. “You are hereby placed under arrest for conspiring with illegal traders, dealing in illegal contraband, and incompetence in your duties.”

“Come with me, prisoner,” the major growled as he lead the surprised Catullan away to jail. The other four *Sarek* crew followed close behind, the civilian Val’ri Raijah pulling out her holocam to record the incident for the record. Making their way down to the security level, they watched as Fil was tossed into a small, cramped cell and the force field barrier turned on.

“What specifically is Mister Fil being charged with doing?” asked T’Veer.

“According to the security scanners on B-Level, he made a deal with a known Ferengi smuggler to transport a rare, illegal delicacy,” answered Kale.

“What kind of delicacy?” T’Ashara asked.

“Chocolate-covered tribbles.”

“Ewww!” harmonized Raijah, T’Veer and T’Ashara together.

“Apparently that was what he was doing this morning when he told us he was on the phaser range. And he needs the practice too. I beat the pants off him there in competition yesterday. That’s why I added the incompetency charge.”

Raiajh looked at the six cells in the holding area. Most were unoccupied this particular morning. However, one cell on the far end of the block had a rather pissed looking Ferengi male sitting in it.

“His partner in crime?” she asked.

“Yes, according to the vid.”

Fifteen minutes passed, during which time another prisoner, a Federation merchant ship crewmember was locked up, apparently taken right from her breakfast table over what she was yelling were trumped-up charges, as the *Sarek* crew waited to find out what would be done to their security chief. Finally, three other Klingons walked over.

“Captain Kale, we’re releasing your crew member,” said the colonel, the warden of the brig. “We cannot find him guilty.”

This admission surprised Kale, as he had often heard Klingon justice was both swift and harsh.

“Why?” he asked.

“Lack of evidence,” responded one of the other Klingon officers, licking his lips.

The third Klingon lowered the force field on Fil’s cell, and the security chief nearly ran out to join his shipmates. As the five walked away, Fil started to boast, “I was restraining myself, you know. I could easily have taken that Klingon Major down. Easily!”

“Right, Mister Fil,” Kale said with a smirk. “Whatever you say.”

* * * *

While T’Ashara was out visiting some relatives that had traveled to the base from Vulcan, Kale, T’Veer, Raiajh and Fil enjoyed a drink together at the base lounge. As the captain sipped from his glass of synthale, he noticed two familiar faces among a trio who walked into the bar.

“Admiral Johnson! Athena! I’d heard you were on the base. How are you?”

Eric Johnson and his fiancée, Athena Arcadian, joined the four *Sarek* crew at their table, introducing them to the third member of their party, a friend they were at the starbase to visit. As greetings were exchanged and drinks ordered, the conversation quickly turned toward business.

“*Arcturus* is now trying to recruit heavily,” explained Arcadian. “Starfleet needs new blood. Especially with people like you all going on to bigger and better things of your own.”

“The *Arcturus* just hasn’t been the same without all of you,” commented Johnson. “I still call my new ops officer Kalin from time to time when I’m not thinking about it. He gives me such a foul look when I do!”

“Gee, Admiral, maybe I should come back?”

Johnson looked at Kale, not sure if he actually meant what he said.

“NOT!” finished Kale.

“Still,” continued the young doctor as the admiral frowned. “*Arcturus*’ current assignment has been to travel from world to world in the Federation, attempting to recruit new personnel. That and the problem over at *Tesla*.”

“What problem?” Kale asked, the smile he had from teasing Johnson quickly slipping away. “Remember, I’ve been out in the Gamma Quadrant for almost the last year.”

“*Outpost Tesla* is gone,” explained the admiral. “The entire outpost. No real explanation yet as to how or why. *Arcturus* has been looking into it.”

“The Borg?”

“Not likely. No Borg ‘footprint’ and none of the usual results. No crater. No real destruction. Just no people, like they all suddenly left.”

“Might be a problem similar to what occurred to the colony on Tarchannen III. You should look into that, Admiral,” suggested Kale.

“That’s one possibility,” Johnson replied.

Quickly, the conversation turned more personal, each sharing what they had been doing for the last year and what had been going on in their lives. Soon, the time came for Fil to leave for ‘Special Duty’ with the base security personnel – his punishment arranged by Kale for the recent smuggling attempt for which the charges had been dropped – and the *Sarek* crew decided they should be moving along themselves. Saying their good-byes, the three remaining crew headed back into the base’s main facility.

* * * *

Kale and T’Veer were walking through the base rec facility when they came across a disturbance. Joining the crowd, they noticed T’Ashara standing nearby with the two relatives she was meeting at the base. In front of the gathered group, a Klingon and a human were ‘debating’ about how they would crew a vessel for a mission into the Badlands near the Cardassian border.

“I recognize the Klingon,” said Kale as he watched the discussion with interest. “He’s Commander Kurn, a member of the Klingon High Council.”

“But why is he arguing with that human about how to crew a starship?” T’Veer asked.

“Good question.”

Kurn and the human quickly agreed on a ship’s captain, then turned to arguing about a security officer; one suggesting a Vulcan for the position, the other wanting a Native American man he knew. They finally compromised by suggesting they find a half-Vulcan, half-Indian for the position. Kale and T’Veer watched for a few minutes longer, then moved along on their way.

“Captain,” said T’Veer as they walked along the corridor. “Where did Lieutenant Fil have to go so suddenly earlier?”

"I made a deal with him," said Kale. "In exchange for erasing that earlier little blotch from his record, he had to volunteer some time with the security department here at the base for a while."

"Really?" said T'Veer with a touch of surprise.

"Hey, maybe it will make him think twice about surreptitious deals with Ferengi in the future."

They walked back into the lounge, finding a pair of seats to sit down. As Kale looked for a waiter to order a drink, he noticed a familiar-looking woman in a blue jumpsuit-style uniform walk by.

"Lieutenant!" Kale called after the woman. She turned around, and seeing who had called her, smiled as she walked back toward where Kale and T'Veer sat.

"Captain! How are you?" the tall Trill lieutenant asked.

"Very well, thank you. T'Veer, this is Lieutenant Jadzia Dax, *DS9*'s science officer. Lieutenant, this is Commander T'Veer, my chief engineer."

Te two women exchanged greetings as Dax sat down at the table.

"I guess this is why I didn't see you when the *Sarek* docked at *DS9*," said Kale. "Kethry will be disappointed to find out you were here and not at the station. She was looking forward to seeing you again."

"Well, I have to relax some time. And they have a great wrestling instructor in the Zero-G gym here."

To Kale's amusement, as they talked, just about every male that passed where they were sitting could not take their eyes off of Dax, a couple even stopping to stare. However, the lieutenant was having a different effect on Kale, who was instead reminded of someone else from his past who closely resembled the Trill woman. Putting the memories out of his mind, he continued the conversation until Dax finally said, "Well, if you'll excuse me, I have to meet a friend for a game of Ton-go... If he's out of jail by now." Saying her good-byes, she rose from the seat and departed. Kale watched her go, briefly noticing Fil off in the background, now performing security duties. Moments later, Raiajh and T'Ashara walked into the lounge.

"Did you see that debate about a mission to the Badlands in the corridor earlier?" T'Ashara asked. Kale and T'Veer nodded their heads.

"Their debate was not logical. After all, a mission such as was discussed so close to the border would only provoke the Cardassians in my opinion," T'Ashara commented. Again, Kale and T'Veer nodded.

"I'm getting hungry," remarked Raiajh, ignoring the other conversation that was occurring.

"Well, if we can get together with Mister Fil, perhaps we can return to the replimat?" T'Veer suggested. "What is everyone in the mood for?"

"I saw Fil out in the corridor just outside the lounge a couple of minutes ago," Kale said. "I'll go find out when he gets off duty."

After a few minutes of searching the area, eventually finding the wayward security chief, he Kale met with the others to tell them Fil would be joining them soon. Taking the time to return to their rooms and change into fresh clothes, they were soon joined by Fil before heading to the replimat.

* * * *

After the meal, at which the *Sarek* crew tried an assortment of Terran Mexican dishes, they settled down in the captain's suite to relax and talk about how they were enjoying their shore leave and what else they wished to do before having to return to the *Sarek*.

"To tell you the truth, this is the first time I've really taken shore leave since joining the crew of the old *Arcturus*," said Kale.

"The first?" Fil asked, sounding doubtful.

"The first," Kale admitted with a nod. "I was supposed to take leave just after my re-training cruise when we all went back to the *Academy*, but I... but it was cancelled." A brief look of sadness crossed the captain's face before he regained his composure.

"Speaking of rest and relaxing," interrupted Val'ri Raiajh. "I understand that one of the starships in orbit is having a party in their lounge tonight, and all the senior staff here at the starbase have been invited. Do we want to go?"

Kale looked around at his crew, finally saying, "I don't see why not. I didn't get much sleep last night..." He glared pointedly at Fil. "...But it may be fun. We don't necessarily have to stay for the whole party."

Once again changing into fresh clothes, the five made their way to the starbase's transporter complex, entering in the coordinates for the starship hosting the party. The base transporter chief informed the crew there was a minor ion storm in the system which might interfere with transport, but Kale decided to still give it a go. The transporter energized, but it seemed a little rougher than normal at first to the *Sarek* crew. When the materialization had finished, they were shocked by what they saw.

Instead of their regular clothes, they all now wore what seemed to be variations of the usual Starfleet uniforms, including Val'ri Raiajh, but none like anything Kale and his crew had ever seen before. The men's uniforms were much more militaristic, while the three women wore two-piece outfits, their abdomens bare. Each wore a name tag of some sort in place of where their combadges would normally be located, the captain's tag identifying him as 'Captain Kalin Kale - Commanding Officer - *ISS Epsilon Indi*.'

"Uh oh," he commented.

Behind the transporter console, an officer in a uniform similar to Fil's snapped to attention, saluting similar to what Kale knew as a Klingon salute. The captain looked over at Raiajh, whose tag read 'Counselor Val'ri Raiajh - Chief of Security.'

"Um... If you're the security chief, what is Mister Fil...?"

Looking the other way at Fil, he saw the tag which said, 'Ensign Penji Fil - First Officer's Personal Guard.' He was standing next to T'Veer, whose tag identified her, 'Executive Officer - *ISS Epsilon Indi*.'

Noticing the transporter chief was now giving them all a strange look, the captain decided to put on his best – or rather worst – face and barked, “What are you looking at, Mister? We changed our minds! Beam us back exactly where we came from!”

“Yes, sir!” the chief exclaimed with another salute and quickly energized the transporter.

Moments later, the *Sarek* crew was back where they had started, back in their own clothes, in *Starbase Marriott*’s transporter facility. They all breathed a sigh of relief as *Marriott*’s transporter operator rechecked his coordinates and beamed the party to the party, free of ion interference.

* * * *

The 10-Forward party lasted on into the night, and the tired *Sarek* crew left about halfway through, following a conga-line directly to the transporter room.

Early the next morning, Fil awoke, got dressed and left the room, following the same out-in-out-in pattern as the prior morning with one major exception: He had learned to close the door quietly.

“No Ferengi this morning I trust?” Kale asked Fil when he finally awoke at 0930 hours.

“No, sir. Never again, sir,” replied Fil. Raiajh almost smiled.

The crew assembled in the base restaurant again, helping themselves once again to the available buffet, where they found Admiral Johnson and Dr. Arcadian.

With only a few more hours remaining before they were to leave, the *Sarek* crew spent their time taking holophotos of the sights, including one group photo in the outpost’s Earth-like terrarium in the center of the base. Then as they loaded the *Camry* with their luggage, they took more photos of the other shuttlecraft from various other ships and bases around the quadrant parked near Entry Bay D.

Finally the time for departure neared and the *Sarek* crew offered their good-byes to everyone they knew before boarding the *Camry*.

“Starbase Control to Starfleet shuttlecraft *Camry*. You are cleared for departure.”

“Thank you, Control,” replied Fil as he activated the shuttle’s engines and the craft took off into the clear pink skies. As the *Camry* attained orbit and headed out into deep space, Kale pulled out the same foam stick he had hidden in one of the shuttle’s storage compartments when they arrived, smacking it over the pilot’s head once again.

“Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?” chorused Kale, T’Veer, T’Ashara and Raiajh, followed by laughter from Kale and Fil.

“You know, it’s a long trip home,” commented the captain as the shuttle entered warp. “Does anyone know anymore songs?” When no one answered, Kale sighed. “All right, all right, I’ll start off.”

The captain took a deep breath before starting to sing, “When we pulled into Argo port in need of R and R, the crew set out investigating every joint and bar... We had high expectations for their hospitality, but found too late it wasn’t geared to spacers such as we...”

* * * *

“*Sarek* to *Camry*, you are cleared for approach and landing in shuttlebay two,” announced the voice of the starship’s deck officer.

“Roger that, *Sarek*,” Kale replied. Halfway back to *DS9*, the captain had assumed the shuttle’s helm just for fun and to keep his piloting skills properly honed.

“Welcome home, Captain. Lt Commander Cosna and Lieutenant A-ZuRQuIL will meet you in the shuttlebay.”

“Swell,” Kale replied with a groan.

The shuttle touched down dead-center in shuttlebay two, and as the rear hatch lowered to the deck, Kale stepped out, followed by his crew.

“Welcome back, Captain,” Commander Cosna said without much enthusiasm.

“How about a hug?” asked the tall Capellan security officer next to Cosna, his arms wide open in greeting.

“Down, boy! Heel!” ordered Kale. A-ZuRQuIL lowered his arms in disappointment.

As the entire group started walking out of the shuttlebay, Cosna turned all business.

“We looked into that power surge you asked about before you left. Engineering determined it originated in a cargo transporter that was in use at the time, though we still have not determined by whom.”

“Don’t worry, Number One. That little puzzle was already solved,” Kale said with a glance at his security chief, who tried to blend into the bulkhead as he walked. “Anything else to report?”

“Yes. The new assistant chief engineer you recruited has arrived and assumed his duties. Though I’m not so sure I trust a shape-shifter.”

“Don’t forget, Lt Commander N’Vorda was one of the engineers that designed this starship, and he came well recommended from the Corps of Engineers. I’m sure he’ll work out fine. Anyone else?”

“Yes, sir. A number of new engineers arrived with Mister N’Vorda. I have already assigned one, Ensign Ron Giacobbe, as our new transporter chief. And Val’ri,” Cosna said as she turned her attention to the Deltan-Vulcan civilian chief. “We have a few new civilians come aboard as well. One is a Klingon self-defense instructor, another is a musician. Lieutenant Pearson has already assigned quarters to both.”

“Thank you, Commander.”

“Sounds like everything is ship-shape and ready for departure,” remarked Kale.

“Aye, sir. We’re scheduled to depart the station at 0900 hours tomorrow.”

“Very good.”

The group walked further down the corridor in silence for a few moments, until Cosna finally looked up at Kale and said, “Oh, by the way, sir. How was your shore leave?”

A smile crossed Kale’s face as he answered, “Nice. Very nice, thank you.”

The End

Author’s Note: Shore Leave ’94 – a Fifth Fleet Parody???

Our readers may note this USS Sarek adventure is a little sillier than the norm. The reason for this is because this story was based closely on actual events. In the summer of 1994 – prior to joining the Navy but working toward that goal – I decided I would take the opportunity to finally travel to Towson, Maryland for one of the annual Shore Leave conventions. Traveling with me were Phil Schreiber (Lt Penji Fil), Nadine Sacks (Val’ri Raiajh), Virginia Raab (Commander T’Veer), and Virginia Varnuska (Lt Commander T’Ashara). The town of Towson is located in the Hunt Valley region of Maryland and the annual convention is hosted by the Marriott Hunt Valley Hotel.

*Among some of the sillier things that occurred during our visit to the convention was the Klingon Brig, where you could have your friends ‘locked-up’ for a short period for a small donation to charity. Phil became enamored with the idea of being arrested by a Klingon almost from the moment we arrived in Towson, and the Sarek crew made his wish come true. His arrest photo was the cover of the very next issue of **Wormhole Warble**, the Sarek’s newsletter. Of course, in trying to adapt our convention visit to a USS Sarek adventure story, I had to come up with a somewhat valid reason for arresting security chief Fil. That’s when a brainstorming session among the crew writers hit on the notion of Fil smuggling chocolate-covered tribbles and his quick release being due to “...lack of evidence.” (burp)*

Some of the other events portrayed in our story were the sky-gazing at Jupiter and the constellations done with telescopes on the hotel’s tennis courts the first night, meeting with Eric Johnson (Admiral Eric W. Johnson) and Diane Rippalone (Dr. Athena Arcadian) in the hotel bar/lounge – where a discussion of the recent (in July 1994) defection of an entire chapter – Outpost Tesla – from the Federation: A Star Trek Fan Association to Starfleet: The International Star Trek Fan Club, foreshadowed future problems the Federation organization would be facing in years to come, and attending several convention events like the on-stage talks by Tony Todd (Commander Kurn) [during which he discussed casting rumors for the upcoming TV series Star Trek: Voyager] and Terry Farrell (Jadzia Dax), and the traditional Saturday night 10-Forward party.

While many of the Fifth Fleet adventures were inspired in part by real-life events, most were not usually taken to the extreme that “Shore Leave ’94” was taken. It’s a silly little story, but we hope you enjoyed reading it.

~Cap’n Pete – February 2015