

*Captain's log, stardate 48655.6:*

*As is usual this time of year, the Sarek is transiting through the wormhole to the Alpha Quadrant, where we will dock at Deep Space Nine to resupply consumables and perform crew rotation. A few members of my crew whom I have gotten to know quite well and have become especially fond of the past two years will be reassigned to other ships or new assignments. I will most especially miss Lieutenant Jo Ann Tredworth – who has received special orders to the Vulcan Science Academy, where she will work with Tehanu and Karondar, the special Romulan siblings she rescued from the warbird Trager a few months ago – and Lieutenant (JG) Lawrence Harcue – who will be moving on to Advanced Tactical Training at Starfleet Academy.*

*Kale, out.*

“Neutrino emissions are rising,” reported Lieutenant Jadzia Dax at her science console in the operations center of the Cardassian-built Bajoran space station *Deep Space Nine*. “The *Sarek* is right on schedule.”

“Good,” said Commander Benjamin Sisko. “Now maybe I’ll be able to get that ballgame in with Captain Kale and his fantasy team.” When the two commanding officers had first met on Kale’s assignment to the *Sarek*, the young captain had challenged the station commander to a game of baseball in a holosuite. “On screen,” ordered Sisko.

On the main viewscreen appeared the impressive view of the Bajoran Wormhole opening and a Galaxy-class Federation starship emerging from it.

Major Kira Nerys, the Bajoran liaison to *Deep Space Nine* and Sisko’s first officer, turned to the Trill woman sitting at the science console.

“Dax, inform the *Sarek* they are cleared to dock at upper pylon two.”

The command crew watched the screen as the starship reacted to the clearance given them and slowly maneuvered to dock at the indicated pylon. With a final click, the docking latches locked the ship to the station.

Space, The Final Frontier...

These are the voyages of the starship *Sarek*!

Star Trek: Sarek

## “A Fond Farewell” by PJK

**This story is dedicated to the original Senior Staff of the Federation Chapter *USS Sarek NCC-72075*, without whom the starship *Sarek* would have been no more than fragmented ideas in the back of my mind. Thanks guys, for providing the Wormhole to let a starship FLY!**

An hour later, Captain Kalin Kale, the thirty one year old commanding officer of the *USS Sarek*, and Lt Commander Yu-Fen ‘Mickey’ Cosna, his first officer, walked up the stairs to Sisko’s office in Ops of *DS9*. Pressing the door chime, they heard Sisko’s baritone voice say, “Come,” and the doors slid open. The two *Sarek* officers entered the office, and to the captain’s surprise, Sisko was not alone. Kale now understood why he had received the unexpected call to Ops. In light of recent events, both officers recognized Commander Sisko’s visitor.

“Admiral Nechayev,” said Kale, bowing slightly at the neck in greeting. “I’m pleasantly surprised to see you here.”

“It’s good to see you again too, Captain. Especially under much better circumstances than our last meeting.”

“I believe both of you know my first officer, Lt. Commander Cosna?”

Nechayev nodded as she shook the younger woman’s hand. Sisko offered the two new arrivals a seat, and sitting once again himself, turned to Kale.

“I’m glad to see the two of you are getting along much better than when you first met.”

“A misunderstanding that has been rectified,” said Kale.

“The job, and all the help that Kalin... I mean, Captain Kale... has given me, especially with regards to my son, Shawn, have contributed a great deal to our better relationship.”

“That’s good. It makes what I have to say a little easier,” Nechayev remarked.

“I was wondering what would bring the Fleet Admiral all the way out to the boondocks,” commented Kale, who then looked at Sisko with an embarrassed grin. “No offense intended.”

“None taken,” Sisko confirmed.

“What brings me out to – as you say, Captain Kale – the boondocks, is crew transfers,” answered Nechayev.

“Crew transfers? Since when does the Fleet Admiral supervise routine crew transfers?”

“When it involves the command structure of the Federation’s Gamma Flagship.”

“In what way?” asked Kale with sudden concern.

“Captain, you have done an amazing job in command of the *Sarek*. However, Starfleet has come to the conclusion that your experience and knowledge is needed elsewhere. As of stardate 48688.8, you are in charge of the Essex-class Development Project.”

The announcement hit Kale with surprise, shock, pride, sadness, and a hundred other emotions he could not name. The same emotions passed through Cosna at the same moment. Meanwhile, Nechayev continued.

“Of course, I’m sure you realize, such a promotion would require you to step down from command of the *Sarek*.”

“Are you giving me a choice or an order, Admiral?” Kale asked for clarification.

“A choice, of course. But it would be my recommendation that you accept the new post. It would look extremely good on your record, and we could not have a better officer in charge of the project.”

Kale thought. Thought hard. His mind pulled one way, his heart another. Although two years could be considered a long time by some standards, it seemed barely a moment in the young captain’s memory. But the decision had to be made, and soon. And Kale made it in the best interests of his career.

“I’ll do it, Admiral.”

The response prompted looks of surprise from both Cosna and Sisko.

“Very good. And congratulations. Your official orders will be presented to you soon. And Lieutenant Commander Cosna...”

The Fleet Admiral turned to the young Asian woman sitting before her.

“Under the circumstances, congratulations to you, too. I hereby officially promote you to full commander. As of stardate 48669.7, you are the acting-commanding officer of the *USS Sarek*.”

Nechayev stood and placed a new pip on Cosna’s collar, making the new rank official.

“Now, Captain,” the Admiral continued, looking once again at Kale. “Let’s talk about the staff you’ll need...”

\* \* \* \*

The ready room door chimed.

“Come,” said Kale.

The doors slid apart to reveal the ship’s Vulcan chief engineer, her hands clasped characteristically behind her back.

“You requested my presence, sir?”

“Yes, T’Veer. Please, come in and sit down.”

As she entered the ready room, she noticed the ship’s first officer sitting on the couch where she had been reading a real paper book, one of the many in Kale’s collection. As the engineer sat in the seat opposite Kale, Cosna joined them at the desk, placing Kale’s copy of Asimov’s “Foundation” on the desk in front of where she sat.

“T’Veer,” started Kale, “there has been a change in the command structure of this vessel. As of 0800 hours tomorrow, this ship will be commanded by Commander Cosna.”

A remote hint of emotion showed for an instant on T’Veer’s face, but neither Kale nor Cosna seemed to notice it. Instead Kale continued.

“I’ve been requested to head the Essex-class Development Project at *Utopia Planitia Fleet Yards* in the Terran system.”

“I offer my congratulations, Captain. And to you also, Commander.” T’Veer noticed for the first time the three full pips on Cosna’s collar.

“In accordance with procedure, as well as my recommendation and Commander Cosna’s approval, you will, also as of 0800 hours, be posted as this ship’s new executive officer.”

“My thanks.”

“Of course, that’s just temporary,” said Cosna.

“Commander, based on the nearly twenty years it took the Galaxy-Class Development Project to finally build and launch the *USS Galaxy* and her sisters, I do not believe Captain Kale will be returning to the *Sarek* anytime soon.”

“You misunderstand,” said Cosna. “When I said temporary, I meant that after three months, all of which we will spend patrolling the Cardassian Demilitarized Zone, I will likewise be transferring to *Utopia Planitia* to assist Kalin. At that time, Starfleet will promote YOU to captain and place you in command of the *Sarek*. It would be sooner, but the Admiralty didn’t want too radical a change in the command structure of this starship all at once.”

This time a display of emotion crossed T’Veer’s face that her two superiors could not miss.

“Is there something wrong, Commander?” asked Kale.

“It is just that this is so sudden. I did not expect it.”

“Neither did I, Commander,” explained Kale. “But sometimes things come up that nobody can foresee. However, I believe you will make an excellent captain. Make me proud.”

“Pride is a human emotion.”

“One that I happen to know you’ve experienced.”

T’Veer opened her mouth to protest but was cut off by Kale.

“... But I won’t tell anyone. You have my word. And my faith in you.”

After a moment, T’Veer spoke again.

“Thank you, Captain. I will not disappoint you.”

\* \* \* \*

That evening, a hastily organized party was held on *Sarek's* holodeck 3, which had been programmed as an Earth-like park around the same time of day as the ship's time. Crew members came and left at their leisure, and as the 'sun' set in the 'distance,' a number of small campfires were started, around which traditional Terran delicacies like hot dogs, hamburgers, and potato salad were served.

Though most of the crew tried to act happy in the artificial environment, a sense of sadness pervaded the crowd. As is usual in the enclosed community of a starship, news – especially bad news – travels fast. Over ninety percent of the crew was already aware of the captain's impending departure, and they each spent a few minutes on the holodeck to say their farewell to him.

As the hours passed and the party wound down, a small group of people gathered at the largest picnic table. These consisted mainly of the ship's senior staff, family, and some close friends on the crew. If not for the trees, grass, and campfires, one might have mistaken the gathering for a command staff meeting like those so often convened in the briefing lounge over the last two years to solve one problem or another.

"I propose a toast," said Captain Kale, raising the cup of some exotic synthale in his hand. The crew followed suit with drinks of their own.

"To the crew of the legendary Federation starship *USS Sarek*, the finest crew I have ever served with in all my times with Starfleet."

Glasses, mugs, and various other drink-holding devices were clinked together in the toast, followed by the traditional sip of each drink. As people put their drinks down, a few glasses hit the table harder than expected, the result of too much ale and no desire to yet shake off the effects of intoxication by a few of the crew.

"Captain," said Lt Setton 'Monster' Arbelo as he tried to fill his glass again, "I have to admit I will miss you. After serving with you for over eight years on three starships and during re-training at the Academy, it's not going to be the same around here without you."

"I agree," said Val'ri Raijah, who sat with her husband, Lieutenant Sylvan Xaran, with whom she held hands out of sight below the table.

"I will miss you all as well," said the Captain, a tear appearing at the corner of one eye. "And I promise to keep in touch with you all. Somehow, I'm not sure how, but I will."

Then, spontaneously, the small crowd formed one big group hug.

\* \* \* \*

All of Kale's belongings had been packed and transferred to a cargo bay on *Deep Space Nine* for eventual loading onto a transport to Sector 001. Kale took one last look around his quarters, making sure he had taken everything. The only item remaining was one book, an antique hard-covered copy of Michael Crichton's "Jurassic Park", a book he had been trying to get T'Veer to read for over a year, as a gift for the Vulcan. Since Commander Cosna would be leaving the *Sarek* in only three months, she had decided to remain in her quarters. But when T'Veer took command after that, she would move into the commanding officer's quarters. The book was one last surprise from a CO who enjoyed surprising people pleasantly.

He grabbed his duffle and headed out toward the ship's main docking port. As he exited the turbolift on deck twenty five, he found – but was not really surprised by – the line of crewmembers on both sides of the corridor from the turbolift doors to the airlock.

"Orders, HUT!" commanded Commander Cosna. Immediately everyone snapped to attention. Kale walked down the corridor slowly, admiring the spit-and-polish precision and professionalism shown by his crew. He took note of a lot of faces he recognized: Lieutenant Setton To'Lock Arbelo, who slipped the captain the 'thumbs up' sign as he passed; Lieutenant Penji Fil, who Kale often playfully teased; Lieutenant A-ZuRQuIL, who winked one last time at the commanding officer he admired – in more ways than one; the assistant chief engineer V'Pier 'Greg' N'Vorda, the shapeshifter, whom Kale had requested personally when he heard word that the young engineer was wasting away at an assignment in the Corps of Engineers; Counselor Kethry Sutherland, the half-Betazoid woman who helped him – and his crew – through several crisis over the years; and standing near the docking port door with his mother Mic Cosna, young Shawn Clove, whom Kale had tried especially hard to make feel welcome aboard the ship. Too soon, Kale reached the inner docking port door, where his chief engineer and close friend T'Veer stood at attention.

Kale found it impossible to say anything, he was so overwhelmed by the emotions he was feeling. Never in his life had he ever believed he would feel like this. Swallowing, he was finally able to turn to his now-former first officer and say, "Commander Cosna, permission to disembark?"

Finding it just as hard to hold her composure, Cosna curtly replied, "Granted, Captain."

Kale hesitated a second by the door, finally grabbing Cosna in a hug. With a single tear flowing down his cheek, he whispered to her, "See you in a few months." Finally regaining his composure, he turned one last time to look at his crew, wondering when... or even if... he would see any of them again.

Finally, with a last nod, he turned and exited the airlock. Rather than reporting directly to *DS9's* Ops, as would be normal procedure, Kale took a turbolift down through Pylon Two and back up into Pylon One. The view looking down on the main sections of the station from the window of the docking port's control room was impressive, but the only thing Kale's attention was drawn to was the starship just off to his left. As he watched, the *Sarek* slowly detached from the pylon, maneuvering on thrusters to clear the station, then up and away. He watched the ship's main impulse unit flare to life, as another tear dripped down his cheek. Leaning as close as possible to the viewport, he watched the *Sarek* turn and head off toward the Cardassian border until she was lost from view. With a final sigh he wondered if the crew would come across any of the other surprises he left behind, then grabbed his duffle and headed off to wait for his transport to Mars.

*To Be Continued...*