

Previously in Star Trek: Dauntless...

When informed that his ship is ready for inspection following major repairs, Fleet Captain Peter J. Koester pilots a Workbee to personally examine the exterior of the USS Dauntless while it remains moored inside spacedock at Starbase 719. The view of his starship from afar prompts memories of events with deep emotional meaning to the starship captain to surface.

And now the conclusion...

Space, the Final Frontier...

Star Trek: Dauntless

“Recollections – Part 4” By PJK

After almost two and a half hours of maneuvering around the starship *Dauntless* in the little Workbee, Fleet Captain Peter J. Koester was nearing the end of his external inspection of the ship's recent repairs. Everything appeared satisfactory, and Koester noted he would again have to submit a commendation for *Starbase 719*'s repair crew in recognition of their excellent work.

As he turned the Workbee back toward the hub of the spacedock, Koester's thoughts drifted once again to another instance when he had enjoyed the sight of his ship much like he was doing now. Except on that particular occasion, she had been his ship again for only a few minutes...

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Stardate 62936.2

December 2385

Captain Peter J. Koester, his sixteen year old daughter Gem, her 'dog' Nanook, Captain (Carrie) K'danz, and Lt Commander Dar had just spent a pleasant evening in San Francisco, eating dinner and sightseeing, after meeting with Admirals Owen Paris and Kathryn Janeway and coming to the agreement that Koester – having been recently rescued from captivity by the Min on Erma IV – would resume command of the *USS Dauntless* and K'danz – who had commanded the *Dauntless* for most of the previous year – would accept a transfer to the *USS Bellerophon* with several key members of the crew, including her husband Dar.

The sun had long since set and the evening was distinctly chilly with the winds blowing in across San Francisco Bay when the foursome and little animal entered the grounds of the Presidio. As they neared the Admiralty building, where a transporter station was located, Koester turned onto another path that led toward the Golden Gate Bridge.

“A little late to go sightseeing on the bridge, isn't it, Peter?” K'danz asked.

“A little too cold too,” Gem Koester remarked, shivering slightly in the wind.

“Actually, I was thinking instead of beaming back up to the ship that we could head over to the tram station and hop a shuttlecraft up to orbit?”

“Let me get this straight, Captain,” Dar remarked. “Beaming up to the ship: less than a minute. Taking a shuttlecraft: another ten minutes walking in the cold to the tram station, then at least twenty minutes to reach orbit and probably another ten to rendezvous with the *Dauntless*.”

“Hey, you guys can beam back up if you want, but I think I would rather take the scenic route,” Koester said. “And besides, I don’t think Nanook likes beaming all that much.”

The fluffy little white dog-like creature looked up at Koester with a curious expression, yipping once when the captain pointed in his direction.

“I don’t think Nookie really minds...,” Gem started to say.

“I’m pretty sure I saw him start to shake nervously when we entered the transporter room earlier,” Koester insisted with a glare at his daughter.

“Well, we’ll see you back aboard the ship,” K’danz remarked. “I’ll have the bartender in 10-Forward standing by with a hot toddy for you.”

“Wimps!” Koester called out as he watched K’danz and Dar enter the door of the Admiralty. He then looked at his daughter, who was still staring longingly in the direction the two officers had gone, “Come on Gem. The sooner we reach the tram station, the sooner you warm up.”

“Fine,” she replied.

About ten minutes later the pair and the small ‘dog’ were in the station. Several air trams, which transported civilians and Starfleet personnel to almost any point on the planet in just a few minutes or few hours time, were parked in the large open bay overlooking the Golden Gate. Koester approached the station scheduling office, where a Starfleet lieutenant sat behind the desk organizing a list of cargo, where it had to go, and when it had to be there, and inquired into the availability of a shuttlecraft up to the *Dauntless* in orbit.

“You’re in luck, Captain,” the lieutenant replied. “We have a shuttlecraft making an orbital supply run to several ships geosynchronous orbit in the general vicinity of where the *Dauntless* is station keeping. Should be plenty of room for you, your daughter and her...” The lieutenant paused as he noticed Nanook looking at him wearily, the fur on his back bristling and his teeth slightly bared. He seemed to grow several centimeters as the young officer watched before Gem knelt down and tried to calm her pet down. “...um... her... uh... dog?”

“Thank you, Lieutenant,” Koester said before leading Gem and Nanook over to where a Type-12 shuttlecraft warmed up as several pallets of supplies were loaded aboard. Koester introduced himself to the pilot and shuttle crew chief, and a moment later boarded the shuttle. Just a few minutes later they were taking off over the waters of San Francisco Bay, the nose of the craft pointing higher and higher.

“Lieutenant,” Koester said to the pilot of the craft once they had exited the atmosphere. “I was wondering if you might do me a small favor.”

“What would that be, Captain?” the pilot asked.

“This may sound a little strange, but it’s been a long time since I’ve... since I’ve seen my ship. Could you perform a quick inspection tour for me?”

The pilot exchanged a sidelong look with his crew chief before shrugging his shoulders and activating the shuttle’s communications transmitter.

“Shuttlecraft *Halley* to *USS Dauntless*.”

It took several seconds before a familiar and amused-sounding voice replied, “*Dauntless*. Captain K’danz. Go ahead, *Halley*.”

“I know this is an unusual request, Captain, but I have a passenger aboard requesting I perform an inspection tour of your starship. Request permission to maneuver close to your vessel.”

There was no response right away. For a brief moment, Koester started to fear K’danz would deny the request. Then her voice returned to the speakers as she said, “Request granted. Just be careful. That’s my relief you’ve got aboard your shuttle, and I don’t want him dying and me getting stuck here. ...Again!”

His expression even more confused if possible, the pilot replied, “Copy that. Permission granted to perform close-aboard maneuvers. *Halley*, out.” The pilot then turned slightly to look at Koester as he said, “You’re going to be assuming command of the *Dauntless* soon?”

“Yes. For the third time now.” His expression took on a far-away look as he said, “I always seem to come right back again.”

The pilot and crew chief exchanged puzzled looks once again before the lieutenant said, “Well, in any case, congratulations, sir.” He then returned his attention to flying the shuttle as it neared the *Dauntless*.

The shuttlecraft was approaching the Sovereign-class starship from aft and below. It almost looked like the pilot was going to maneuver to land in the secondary shuttlebay – the one the Starfleet Marine Corps air wing utilized – until he pointed the nose of the small ship above the hull and between the large warp nacelles. Slowly rolling the shuttle, Koester was able to see the upper secondary hull and the Bussard collectors in turn before passing over the main shuttlebay’s opening doors and directly over the bridge, clearing the dome by less than a dozen meters. Koester’s eyes took on a look of affection as he gazed at the various sections of his ship, and even Gem could not help but stare out the window in awe at the vessel she had lived on for the last six years of her life, and two years previous to that as well.

As the *Halley* passed the bow of the *Dauntless*, the pilot brought the shuttlecraft to a complete stop almost effortlessly, then pitched the craft over to face the ship. Several of the crew could be seen looking out the large windows of 10-Forward, a few even waving at the passengers of the shuttlecraft before it nosed down and passed under the primary hull. For a moment it appeared the *Halley* might collide with the starship’s main deflector dish until the pilot pulled the craft to starboard, passing along the port side of the *Dauntless* and under one of the large impulse engine decks before soaring up and around to line up with the main shuttlebay. Less than a minute later the *Halley* touched down on the deck. Koester could see three people standing just inside the shuttlebay doors waiting for him.

“Thank you very much, Lieutenant,” Koester said, shaking first the pilot’s hand and then the crew chief. “I appreciate everything you’ve done for us.”

“It was my pleasure, Captain,” the pilot replied. “It’s been a while since I was allowed to fly like that. It was fun.”

Gem gathered Nanook up in her arms as she and her father disembarked the shuttle and walked over to where K’danz, Tom Paris, and Dar stood waiting.

“Did you have fun?” K’danz asked her former commanding officer.

“Yes, Carrie. I did,” Koester replied.

“Some nice maneuvers out there,” Paris remarked with admiration.

“Gem and I had a very accommodating pilot, Commander,” Koester stated. He then added, “The night is still relatively young. Shall we go have that drink in 10-Forward?”

“We still need to discuss the change of command ceremony,” K’danz said. When she noticed the looks she was getting from all three male officers, she amended, “Which can be done over drinks in 10-Forward.”

“Lead the way, Ex... ..Carrie.”

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It was a simple matter to return the Workbee to its nest in the spacedock hub, remove the flight suit and retrieve his uniform. Minutes later Koester was back in one of the starbase turbolifts and heading toward the nearest transporter room.

Several minutes later, the transporter aboard the *Dauntless* hummed to life and Fleet Captain Koester materialized on the platform, nodding acknowledgement to the transporter operator in the booth before tapping his combadge as he stepped down and out into the corridor.

“Koester to Commander Arbelo.”

“Go ahead, Skipper,” the voice of his first officer, Setton To’Lock Arbelo replied.

“I’ve completed the external inspection. Are you ready to compile results and prepare the final acceptance report to the repair yard?”

“Just finished up with the internal inspection five minutes ago,” Arbelo replied. “Fitting into some of those hard-to-reach places in the nacelle took a little longer than I planned. Where do you want to meet? Your ready room?”

“How about 10-Forward?” Koester suggested.

“10-Forward? A little informal, don’t you think?”

Koester entered one of the turbolifts as he replied, "Actually, I think it's exactly the right place to do this. Meet me there ASAP, Exec."

"On my way," Arbelo agreed.

Koester smiled as he deactivated his combadge and said, "Deck ten, forward section one." The turbolift beeped acknowledgement and started moving. Seconds later the doors opened and Koester emerged, only a few meters from the carved wooden doors of the main crew recreation lounge. He stepped inside, glad to see several of his crew enjoying some down time. In one corner, Counselor Tanzia Gera and Lieutenant (JG) JoElla Faggio sat talking with Ensign Karr'rinak, the Kairn 'exchange officer' who had recently joined the crew of the *Dauntless*, while across the lounge Marine Gunnery Sergeant Christopher O'Laughlin was playing a game of Terrace with Major April Mendez.

Koester started moving into the lounge toward a table up near the forward windows when the door on the opposite side of the room opened and Arbelo stepped in, looking around before seeing his captain and waving toward him. Koester indicated toward the table he wanted to sit at, and the two senior officers sat down simultaneously.

"How did it go, Exec?" Koester asked.

"Everything checked out," Arbelo replied. "You?"

"Couldn't be better," the captain said before gesturing to one of the waiters to bring a couple of drinks over. Then, to the puzzlement of his first officer, he said, "It's good to be home."

The End