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A Star Trek: Bellerophon Vignette

“True Crime” By PJK

Aboard the Federation starship USS Bellerophon NCC-74705

Sector 50109 – Federation Fifth Fleet Area of Responsibility

Stardate 66271.8

The carved wood door to crew’s mess parted and Captain (Carrie) K’danz – commanding officer of the Intrepid-class starship *Bellerophon* – stepped in, looking around the room to see if her husband – ship’s chief engineer Dar – or their adopted son Jacob Danz had already arrived to share dinner with her. Instead of her family, she noticed her recently assigned chief science officer – the Vulcan Lt Commander T’Var – sitting in the corner near the forward windows, reading from a padd.

Having not had the opportunity to interact socially with her new chief science officer, the captain stepped across the mess hall toward the Vulcan woman.

“Good evening, Commander,” K’danz said as she approached T’Var’s chair.

T’Var looked up at the approaching human woman, a placid – some would say typically Vulcan – expression on her face.

“Good evening, Captain. What brings you to the crew’s mess?” she asked.

“Meeting Dar and Jacob for dinner,” K’danz explained. “We try not to eat alone in our quarters too often. The interaction with the crew is good for Jacob.”

“Indeed,” T’Var agreed. “Social interaction is one reason I choose to spend my free time here instead of alone in my quarters as well.”

“I guess that is one way in which you differ from your predecessor, Commander T’Ashara,” K’danz remarked, pulling over a chair from a nearby table and sitting down with T’Var. “She did not often spend much time in social situations with the rest of the crew. I hope you don’t mind my asking, but what are you reading? You seemed thoroughly absorbed in whatever it is.”

“A hobby of mine I picked up while attending the Academy on Earth,” T’Var replied, mildly surprised that the captain would take an interest in her reading pursuits. “While in San Francisco I was introduced to the fictional detective character of Philip Marlowe. I found the stories quite fascinating and intellectually stimulating, and those in turn led me to discover other celebrated fictional detectives such as Miss Jane Marple, Sam Spade, Dixon Hill, Hercule Poirot, and of course the great Sherlock Holmes.”

“So you’re really into detective fiction?” K’danz asked. “Not something I would expect from a Vulcan, with all due respect.”

“On the contrary, Captain,” T’Var explained. “I have found the genre of Earth detective fiction to be a worthy intellectual exercise, as I attempt to deduce the identity of the criminal perpetrator alongside the main character. There is no comparable literary genre on Vulcan.”

K’danz leaned toward the Vulcan woman, attempting to glance at the screen of the padd as she asked, “So what famous detective are you reading tonight? Holmes? Hill? Nick and Nora Charles?”

“Nothing fictional tonight, Captain,” T’Var replied, turning the padd slightly to face K’danz. “My interest in detective fiction also led me to explore the topic of true-crime before I graduated the Academy. My first exposure was to the history of the serial killer they called the Zodiac, who operated in and around the San Francisco region in the mid to late 20th century. That led me to investigate several other long-unsolved crimes and sparked my interest

in the field of criminal investigation even further. The book I am currently reading is in regards to famous... or perhaps infamous would be more appropriate... serial killers on Earth in the 20th and 21st centuries. Men and woman like Ed Gein, John Wayne Gacy, Ted Bundy, and Aileen Wuornos. There are even chapters related to violent killers of note, such as Scott Peterson – another native of the San Francisco region – and Eric Napoletano.”

“Sounds like you missed your calling, Commander,” K’danz remarked. “Perhaps instead of a science officer you should have been a security investigator, like I started out my career in Starfleet as?”

“On the contrary, Captain,” T’Var said. “It is through science that many of the crimes described in this book were solved and the perpetrators brought to justice. But I imagine on occasion what it might be like to be on the hunt for the Zodiac Killer or some other infamous murderer. Purely for intellectual purposes, of course.”

“Well, Commander, let’s just hope you never get that opportunity while you’re serving aboard my starship,” K’danz remarked just as the nearby door opened and the half-Klingon chief engineer and his son walked in, looking around for K’danz. “If you’ll excuse me, I believe it is dinner time.”

“Of course. Enjoy your repast, Captain,” T’Var replied as K’danz got up to join her family and the Vulcan woman returned her attention to her padd.

The End