

Epiphany Trek

The LaSaille Chronicles



The LaSaille Shorts

GARRY STAHL

The LaSaille Shorts

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The Following are works of fiction. All characters are fictional, any resemblance to persons living or dead is coincidental.

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These brief scenes were written mainly to keep the gears greased between writing bouts on bigger projects. The funny thing about writing, but the more you do it, the easier it is to do. I decided that if I could put little efforts into one to three page stand alone pieces that I would keep the creative juices flowing for the longer stories. So far it is working.

Often I write these smaller pieces or scenes and they get incorporated into my larger stories. Earlier before this got started I had used up my entire supply of stand alone scenes between **The First Principle** and **Ships in the Night**. Well more came out, but with Jerry as the theme for the most part. A few of those I didn't include here feature other characters.

If one disappears from this collection that means it found it's way into something bigger. Two of the shorts I have done, Eulogy and Departure have already suffered that fate and are seen in **That Thou Art Mindful**.

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Annobellum

Caroline swept through the front parlor and onto the veranda a soft rustle of skirts marked her passing. Her husband sat, silent. The letter lay loose in his hands.

"Jean, what news do you have?"

"Paul is coming home."

"Is it the end of this awful war."

"Yes. God be praised, at long last yes."

She gently touched his shoulder. "Any word...."

"No." He shook his head. "No word on either Richard or Jerold."

"Jean, can you soften your anger?"

He say back in the chair, the letter forgotten. "To see my sons alive, I would forgive anything Caroline. God as my witness, I would forgive anything."

Paul LaSaille finished hammering in the last nail. He laid the rifled musket in the hooks. "May it never again be rased in anger."

Jean nodded. "Amen son to that."

"How fairs the farm Father. Have we damages that must be repaired?"

"No, by God's mercy we have been spared the worse of the ravages of war. The core of the stud is intact, and the majority of the good brood mares we have saved. Our buildings have not been greatly damaged."

"Pray tell Father, how did you save the horses?"

"By God's mercy the space we made beneath the barns to hold the runaway Negroes were large enough to hold our horses. Yes, we lost some. But they did not seek below the stalls for further animals."

Paul nodded. "What one gives freely, God returns."

"There is work to be done, and it falls to you and I to do it Paul. Have you given thought to marriage?"

"Yes. I have not had the time of yet to seek a wife suitable to our station. It shall be my concern to do so."

"What do you know of Jerold?"

"Little I fear. We were separated at Cold Harbor, and I have no word of his fate."

"Of Richard, I fear that like my brother James, we shall not hear of him again."

*Let us pause in life's pleasures and count the many tears
While we all sup sorrow with the poor
There's a song that will linger forever in our ears
Oh, hard times come again no more*

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*It's a song a sigh of the weary
Hard times hard times come again no more
Many days you have lingered around my cabin door
Oh hard times come again no more
Though we seek mirth and beauty and music bright and gay
They are frail forms a-waiting by our door
Though their voices are silent, their pleading seems to say
Oh, hard times come again no more
It's a sigh that is wafted across the lowly plains
It's a wail that is heard upon the shore
It's a dirge that is murmured across the lonely grave
Oh hard times come again no more
It's a song a sigh of the weary
Hard times hard times come again no more
Many days you have lingered around my cabin door
Oh hard times come again no more.**

Annobellum -- Garry Stahl, April 2005

An historical piece. A bit of flesh on an otherwise dry entry in the Epiphany Trek chronology. Like many families the LaSailles were divided by the issues of the American Civil War. Lexington itself was divided in sympathy and changed hands several times, but with minimal damages. Cities such as Atlanta were burned to the ground.

** Hard Times Come Again no More -- Stephen Foster. The song written in 1855 was popular after the war, for obvious reasons.*

Card Night

"Read'm and weep Pauly." Ryan tossed the cards down on the wardroom table."

"Damn it LaSaille, do you know how to loose?"

"Sure I do." replied the flier with the Clark Gable grin. "I just forgot for tonight." His buddy, Patrick laughed.

Lt. Paul Gram shook his head. "That wipes me out."

2nd Lt. Morris looked disappointed. "Pauly, you can quit, we have to get our money back from this Navy card shark."

Gram shrugged his shoulders. "I don't have scratch Morris. How can I play?"

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Lt. LaSaille pointed to the new .45 pistol that Lt. Gram wore on his belt. "What about that?"

"My gun?"

"Why not?"

Gram unhooked the holster from his belt. "If you're willing to play for GI issue, who am I to argue?" Gram placed the pistol on the table. Ryan handed him the cards.

Paul Gram shuffled the cards. "Ante up boys, deuces wild."

The cards softly hit the table as each player examined their hand. "Gimme two." "I'll hold." "Damn, three." The cards were again passed around the table.

Gram looked around the table. Hailey tossed his cards on the table. "Fold."

"Too easy Pat." LaSaille threw a fin into the pot. "I'm in."

"Me too." said Morris.

Gram pointed to the .45. "I'm good with that?"

"Sure," LaSaille replied. "You're all in."

"I stand."

Silence lengthened as Morris considered. "Raise." He tossed a fin and two bucks in the pot.

LaSaille considered. "Stand." and matched him.

Gram nodded.

Morris laid his cards out. "Two pair, aces high."

Gram smiled. "Looks like we got you LaSaille."

LaSaille shrugged and laid out his cards. "Full house, threes and fours."

Gram's face dropped and he laid out his cards. "Three of a kind." The two aces and a duce looked a little disappointing.

LaSaille gathered up the pot, including the gun. "Gentleman, it is now fifteen minutes later than we agreed to halt this game. Ensign Hailey and I have operations at 0500. We bid you goodnight." The fliers left leaving the two Marines sitting in the wardroom.

Ensign Hailey grinned. "Lt. Commander Carter is going to split."

"We are going to get split if we don't get in before curfew. Come on."

Lt Commander Jim Carter was finishing the morning briefing. "Weather is reported to be clear and cloud free for the remainder of the day. If you see otherwise report it at once. The latest intelligence puts the Jap forces at 150 miles and closing. If anything has changed you will get reports before takeoff. Lastly, these are Devastators, not the Dauntlesses. We have not had, to my mind, near enough training in these planes. Killing Japs is good, getting you all back on the carrier is better. OK, let's suit up and roll.

Lt Commander Carter was suiting up with his squadron when he spotted Lt. LaSaille with a big-assed holster in place of his issue .38.

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"Lt. LaSaille." He inquired in his sweetest voice. "Where did you get that .45?"

LaSaille turned so the "USMC" was plainly visible on the holster. "One of the Marines was kind enough to part with it Sir."

"Kind enough... What manner of persuasion did you use Lieutenant?"

"Poker sir, and I won a hundred and fifty bucks from the Marines as well as the pistol."

Carter raised eyebrow. "A deal is a deal Lieutenant, carry on."

Card Night -- Garry Stahl, May 2005

That .45 had to come from somewhere. So here is where it comes from. I have been reseaching Ryan Clark LaSaile's past. Tentatively the USS Bunker Hill CV-17 is the ship he served on. The Marine holster is no longer in existence. Jerry did not take it to 'Nam and it did not survive the destruction of the house in 1971.

Defense

Gerry ran down the line of trucks until he came to the first one. He levered himself on the step. "Paul."

The trucker rolled his window down. "Yes Sir."

"OK, get rolling and don't stop for anyone short of Virginia"

"Yes Sir."

Gerry lowered his voice. "Paul, you have two hundred years of this stud's work behind you. Please don't lose it."

Paul offered his hand, Gerry shook it. "I'll do everything humanly possible Mr. LaSaille, and God willing a little bit more."

Gerry jumped down from the truck step. "ROLL OUT!"

He watched the trucks leave, with his heart in his throat. When the last of the trailers had turned out of sight he trotted back to the house. He could see the smoke from the big howitzers on the other side of the highway. The distant thudding of the artillery fire sounded dully over the hills.

The parlor was a buzz of activity. General Harkens was directing communication with his forces. His aides and other officers shuffled in and out of the room. Gerry looked at the rifled musket over the mantle, it was the last time this manner of man had mudded the floors of his house.

The general looked up from his computer bank. "Did you get your horses out?"

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"Yes. How far?"

"They are fifteen miles away."

"What are your plans?"

"If we don't hold they will over run Lexington. I plan to hold. What are your plans?"

"This is my home General. I'll be damned if any man drives me out of it."

The flashes continued over the hills long after dark. Gerry sat looking out the bedroom window with a rifle over his lap. Aleilan lay beside him.

You want to do something.

Yes.

**What would you do?*

I don't have any intelligence on their positions.

You don't believe in this war.

No, I don't, but they are attacking my home, that makes them my problem.

**Would you have us act?*

**Why get involved in the wars of men?*

You are one of us, this is our home too.

Have everyone meet me out back by the dump.

Gerry looked the computer screens over. The Vietnam era camo fatigues still fit. The vacuum sealing had done its job.

As he finished up the General came back in. "What the hell are you doing?"

"My friends and I are going for a walk."

"A WALK! Are you crazy man?"

"No, anything but." Gerry walked out of the room and house towards the ammo dumps. The General was right beside him."

"All I have to do is call the MPs, mister."

"I would advise against that, it would be a waste of good MPs."

"Who the Hell do you think you are?"

"Jerold Ryan LaSaille, owner of Bellicolone and veteran of more battles than you are."

"What kind of bleeping answer is that?"

"The truth."

The remaining farm hands had loaded the five Ane down with munitions from the dump. Gerry twisted a hand into Aleilan's mane and transmitted the first location to the group.

The general continued to seethe. "And you're going to attack the entire Western Alliance with a bunch of antelopes?!"

"Something like that."

<CRACK!>

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Tefban looked down the hill at the camp. **So, what's the plan?*

You lot say out of sight. Killing grunts isn't going to stop them. I plan to hit the officers.

**So what are we doing?*

Carrying the bombs for me. Gerry loaded up with a good selection.

I'll be back.

The guard looked the right size. Gerry stood up and belted him with the tree branch. The kid went down like a stuck ox. He quickly stripped him then dressed in the uniform himself. He called an Ane down to get the kid back to the farm. A quick moment of mental contact taught him what he needed to know.

Gerry trotted back up the hill twenty minutes later. Behind him the camp was coming apart at the seams. The fuel and ammo dumps rocked with explosions throwing flaming bits all over the camp. The headquarters and officer's quarters were mostly flattened and ablaze.

Gerry grabbed horn. **Next stop.**

Just before dawn Gerry walked back into the parlor wearing the wrong uniform and covered in mud. The General was shouting into phones as soldiers rushed around. He handed the phone off to an aide. "What the HELL have you been up to?!"

"A little native insurgency."

"A LITTLE!? The whole of the front for fifty miles is seething."

"I know a few tricks. Are they falling back."

"Yes. But..."

Gerry turned around and went back to the kitchen. The General followed him. Gerry started making some tea.

"How in Hell's name did one man cover a fifty mile front, and get in and out of those camps?"

"I have a few tricks."

"I wouldn't mind getting in on those tricks Mr. LaSaille."

"No."

"What do you mean 'no'?"

"Just that. I am not going to tell you how I did it."

"We are in a state of emergency Mr. LaSaille. I do have certain powers at my disposal."

"General, I don't give a rat's ass about you, the United States, or the Western Alliance. Those men threatened my home. They are now falling back on all fronts and a goodly percentage of their officer corp is dead. Yes, I targeted fuel, ammo, and the top brass. Before you threaten me General, I would keep that in mind."

Defense -- Garry Stahl, April, 2005

This would be during Green's War in the 2040s. Jerry was home for this one. I have discussed the situation in the Epiphany Trek Pedia. While Mr. LaSaille didn't save the Eastern US single handed, he was instrumental in turning them back at the gates of Lexington.

Yes I have used "Gerry" throughout. It was Jerry's habit to change his name through the 21st and 22nd centuries. Jerry, Gerry, and Mr. Ryan are all variations on a theme.

As to his comment about fighting more battles than the General, it is likely true. Jerry was in East Africa during the Eugenic Wars, and fought Kahn's forces and the chaos that followed that dark time. A story on that could be in the works.

Birthday

"Ahem, start log, January 14, 2064. "Sol is a distant light. I am further from Earth than anything man-made has ever gotten. I passed the Voyagers, passed the Rangers. I'm even further from Earth than Alpha Centauri.

"Why? Why am I out here? There are easier ways to become a hermit, but I have to question that. Earth has gotten so small in the last century, small and very uncaring. Technology has made it near impossible to hide. Am I hiding? After all, I might have the first ship out the gate. I seriously doubt I have the last, or the fastest.

"I might have simply picked the most interesting way to die, if I can die. I question that. Bullets, blades and bombs, oh God they hurt, but I always get better. I at best should be an ancient cripple. More likely I should be moldering bones. I am 116 years old today, and I am every bit as fit and strong as the day I turned 18. I have no right to be fit or even alive, but here I am.

"Professor Smythe always said; "Never argue with facts. Facts will not casually brush aside if you disagree with them". The fact is I am alive, and I am fit. I may never know why.

"Today is my birthday. No one here to celebrate except Aleilan and Elizabeth, not that I have much to celebrate. After what the bastards did to Anne, I suppose they are the only friends I have in the universe. I have nothing left but them, and this ship. No doubt all I have worked my life to preserve is gone. Destroyed by that bastard and his pet bastards. It would be like Green to take it out on my horses...."

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Jerry pushed away from the computer. "Damn."

You're troubled. Aleilan nuzzled the back of his neck.

Vile thoughts. I thought I was beyond being hurt, but I left Bellicolone behind, and I left part of me in it.

It's taken care of Jerry.

**How do you mean, it's taken care of?*

You signed everything over to the Ansisi, money, farm the works. They will take care of it. I know how you feel, love. Those are my feelings too.

I figured they would liquidate everything and hide.

No. I saw to that. You love Bellicolone. And the Creator willing when you can return to Earth, it will be waiting for you to return.

Jerry spun his chair around and hugged her neck. He worked up to her head until they were nose to nose. **That's the best Birthday gift I could get.**

And don't forget. Just because we are way out here doesn't mean we are out of touch.

**The All can reach out here?*

She slurped his nose. **Look around you Jerry. What do you think I spend most of my time doing?*

I have been self absorbed, haven't I.

A little.

A lot. That ends tonight. As much good company as you two girls are, I could use some mental stretching. I am getting out into the All tonight, and maybe I'll bake that cake after all.

Birthday -- Garry Stahl, August 2005

I've had a bit of a dry spell, not totally dry as I have been working on larger stories, including one that is expanding on the "Briefing" short. This came up tonight, so I thought I would toss it out there. The timing is obvious, during Jerry LaSaille's journey from Earth to El Nanth. It is also one of the few times I have placed a CE date in the story to allow it to be nailed down.

Imitating Art

Lt. Madison checked her board. "Commander Taggart, the aliens are closing fast."

Taggart looked cool and collected. "Steady as she goes Lt. Laredo."

"Yes, sir, holding steady."

Dr. Lazarus looked up from his sensors. "Commander, if all goes as we expect this will be an historic first meeting."

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Taggart threw a grin in his direction. "Yes, but does anything ever go as we expect?"

Jerry hit the pause button. ****I don't know, it just isn't the same any more.**** He got up from the pile of Ane he was sprawled among. ****Five hours of Galaxy Quest is too many I think. It just doesn't thrill like it use to.****

The Ane pile shifted around a bit. Lassilan asked, ****Why? You have indicated you are fan of this entertainment.****

Jerry got himself a glass of oom juice. ****A show about people pretending to be in space. Here I am on a world that is not Earth, among a pile of very unhuman people, watching actors pretend to be space explorers. It's dihydrogen and antimatter, not beryllium spheres. My uplink is smaller and higher tech, than their comms. Aleilan and I have crossed 74 light years of space. Real adventure, and I was scared, not throwing quips to the crew. If I want mysterious alien artifacts I need only take the shuttle back to Builder Station. What else does one say? Fiction pales before the reality.****

Aleilan got up. ****So are you giving up on Galaxy Quest?***

Jerry shook his head. ****No, I'm a too dyed in the wool fan I guess. But right now I'm feeling jaded. On the bright side I am catching up on the movies I missed first run. I'm just twitchy. It's getting late. I should turn in. I have plenty to do tomorrow.****

****Would a few human faces help?*** Aleilan nuzzled him under the chin.

Jerry petted her absently. ****It's been what, four, five years since I've seen a human face? Do I even remember how to talk?***

****Judging by your singing earlier today, yes.****

****Where would we get human faces?***

****The Anisi have asked to leave Earth. The post war conditions are disintegrating.****

****Damn. Even if I could get the antimatter plants working on my own, I don't know if the Savanna can make the haul. Never mind if I show my face I'm likely to get shot.****

****Jerry?***

****Yes.****

****The Express, remember?***

****Oh, yea, that long distance teleport thing. We would need to work on more than my little garden and the oom orchard.****

****Yes, that is why we would bring in a few at a time.****

****That's a relief. More than few would rapidly strain my ability to cope.****

****The more we bring, the more we have to cope. We must work quickly.****

****I don't know why you are bothering to ask me, it is your world. I have to admit I'm looking forward to seeing other Humans again.****

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Imitating Art -- Garry Stahl, January, 2006

*In Epiphany Trek **Galaxy Quest** replaces **Star Trek** as the gee wizz science fiction hit of the mid 20th century. For my money **Galaxy Quest** is a thoroughly enjoyable parody in which I clearly saw both my self and my friends. It also managed to be a good adventure tale on top of that.*

Since Jerry is a frank self insertion character he was a pretty serious "Questy" back in the day. Of course the Savanna was packed with every form of entertainment he could lay his hands on, including his favorites.

For the true "Questy" the full run of the Galaxy Quest franchise.

Galaxy Quest (TOS) three year run The classic series.

Galaxy Quest: Reunion (motion picture) The crew of the Protector ride again.

Galaxy Quest II (TSS) (same cast but with Guy and Jane) 7 year run. Endless arguments over whether the soul of the show was lost even as it gained with new and better production values.

Galaxy Quest: the Spawn of Sarris (motion picture) The Son of Sarris returns to gain revenge for the death of his Father.

Galaxy Quest: The Legacy of Lazarus (motion picture) Dr. Lazarus was lost in the last film, or was he? The Crew of the Protector follow the clues he left behind.

Galaxy Quest: Return to Thermian (motion picture) Having retrieved the clone of Dr. Lazarus the Protector crew return to find Thermian under siege by aliens with strange powers.

Galaxy Quest: Star Station Andromeda (series with new cast) 7 years With the cast and concept getting long of tooth Hollyweird tries the same thing, but different and harder.

Galaxy Quest: The Last Outpost (motion picture) The brother of Dr. Lazarus seizes the Protector and takes them on a quixotic quest to the edge of known space.

Galaxy Quest: Beyond the Farthest Star (motion picture, original cast wrap picture) Old foes seek rapprochement when there is a disaster on their home world.

Galaxy Quest: Traveler (series with new cast) 7 years With the concept getting even longer of tooth Hollyweird tries again, but with more boobs, more explosions, and harder.

Galaxy Quest: Passage (motion picture) Aging members of the Protector crew aid the crew of the Traveler to over come a galactic madman.

Galaxy Quest: Mutiny! (motion picture) The Traveler is taken by renegade crew. Can Commander Wayjane save the day?

Protector Begins (Later Galaxy Quest: Protector) 3 years. With the Galaxy Quest franchise floundering on the rocks Hollyweird tries again with a prequel, dumber with more action and HARDER!!!

Galaxy Quest: Serpent's Tooth (*motion picture*) Commander Wayjane must face off against his own son turned against the Confederation.

All tongue firmly in cheek, of course.

Settlement

The wind sighed softly through the structures around them. Towers a half mile high stood dotted among lower buildings, everything glass and crystal.

Aflin M'bongalonga spoke at last. "So Jerry, what do you call this place?"

Jerry shrugged his shoulders. "I've just called it the crystal city. I only come here to loot the place for useful items."

"Why didn't you settle here?"

"In an empty city? I'm no believer in ghosts but this place is spooky. It doesn't look like a ruin. It looks like it should be full of people, but it's not. Even on my looting trips I catch myself looking behind me suddenly."

Aflin craned his neck at one of the taller towers. "But you want to settle the refugees here."

Jerry waved in the direction of one of the buildings. "Come on, I'll show you why."

The building was a midget among the giants. It was a mere two stories tall. All the unburied windows were clean. The door had been dug out of the dirt. Jerry walked down into the hole and in the door. Aflin followed him. The lights came up as they did.

Aflin looked around with big eyes. "The LIGHTS work!"

"And everything else too. The first couple of years I was here I cleaned this building up from boredom. Once I got a third of the glass clean, the lights came on. Sanitation works, there is even running water, hot and cold. We can dig the first story out, finish cleaning the glass, get some more furniture in here and we have a nice welcome center. Heck the first refugees can live here while they clean another building. There are some apartments units that are small enough to get reasonably clean. The guys that built this place were damn good engineers. It's ready made technology. Leverage for city folk that have never lived rough."

Aflin looked about. "Crystal City eh?"

"That works." Jerry wiped his finger through the dust on a table.

"What about farms?"

"That we are going to have to teach. However, those that wish to eat will learn. Come on. Lets get going."

He and Aflin walked back into the harsh sun.

"You have to wonder what this place looked like at it's height." Said Aflin.

"Ask the All, someone will have memories." Jerry punched the button to open the shuttle craft.

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"Yea, I suppose they would." Aflin mounted the shuttle ramp. It's gotten pretty bad on old Earth. The people we bring here are going to see roughing it as a blessing."

"At least there is a here to rough it in. Heinlein always said that the beauty of space travel is you could get away from wars. I suppose he was righter than he would ever know."

Settlement -- Garry Stahl, May 2006

Well the refugees had to start coming in at some time. This would be some time after "Imitating Art" and before "Breakthrough" by several years.

First Day

Jerry glanced at his terminal once more on the instructions of "how to stow you kit". He continued to follow them with economic movements. Meanwhile...

"Man I can't believe it, I have been trying for two years to get this position, and here I am at Starfleet Academy, the bestest place in the whole universe, now I am finally here, it took me two years of hard work to get out of Billings, Montana, not that Billings isn't a great place to be mind you, but it is Montana, so I am use to wide open spaces, but not like the wide open space of space, yea man that is the ticket, and I finally got the ticket to here, Starfleet Academy where the spaces are wide and the science is cutting edge like so sharp you will bleed! What did you say your name was again?"

"Jerold LaSaille, Jerold Ryan LaSaille."

"Can I all you Jerry?"

"Doesn't matter to me."

My name is Simon, Simon Tullard, but I answer readily to Sam, man Jerry can you believe we are finally here this is just awesome, totally awesome, to be at The Academy, the very one and onliest Starfleet Academy. Four years of the best training in the universe right here in old San Fransisco, can't wait to get some time in town, I've never been here before, but I understand the town is wonderful, but not has good as The Academy no sir Bob it isn't, nothing could be as good as finally getting into Starfleet because that is indeed the place to be, everything that is happening is happening right here in Starfleet and now we are going to be a part of that, new worlds new civilizations, riding out in the latest and best of the ships in the Federation, out on the cutting edge peeling back the unknown, you couldn't ask for better than that, and it all starts right here at Starfleet Academy...."

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Jerry folded the last uniform, and closed his locker. It was going to be a long four years.

First Day -- Garry Stahl, August 2005

As we see Jerry LaSaille as a Captain in the 2260s it follows that at some point he had to start at Starfleet Academy. "Diversified" room assignment have their pitfalls.

The Center Seat

The space between the stars. A spacer spreads a lot of time out here. The space between here and there, wherever here and there might be. Boring holes in the subspace barrier between the real and unreal. Cheating Einstein.

It was another one of those endless nights. This one more endless than most. Damn, I miss the touch of Aleilan. Yes dear I know you are always there. But Humans like Ane are creatures of touch. And I long for your touch. Even your rubbery cold nose.

I looked out the window of the lounge. The tea in my hands had long grown cold. Damn this night was long, lonely and frankly desperate. It was ten hours since we quit that place of dying, and I haven't stopped shaking. The only problem is I'm not allowed to shake. I'm the Skipper now. I have too many crew injured, and far too many dead, including Capitan Marshall. With the Commander missing a leg and pumped full of drugs that leaves me the man in the Center Seat.

Dammit Joe, you leave a big set of boots to fill. Everyone is looking at me like I have answers. Joe, how many times did you find yourself in exactly this spot? We are all looking at you waiting for the commands we expect will pull our collective rears out of the fire yet again. Joe Marshal, you were damn good at it. Even this old man geeked for it. I'm going to miss you something terrible. One more grave along my road.

I can feel the shimmy in the ship that says that all is not well. Anyone that has been on this ship more than month knows it too. I'm the Skipper, I must if necessary hold her together with my thews of iron. Like Atlas holding up the sky. Pity I left them back home.

I'm suppose to be Mr Experience. The guy that has seen that and done everything. I have never done this before. They are right. The Center Seat is different. A ship, her crew, the power in your hands is humbling. the lives in your hands is scary. Only the Republic is not well. Save for one turbolift the

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strong back is inaccessible. A maze of welded plates, force fields, and screw braces. I wonder how many of the crew are aware how close she is to breaking in two? Too many I think. Starfleet people are aware, it is what they do. I wonder how many are as scared as I am? A goodly number there as well I'm willing to bet.

Every minute takes us closer to Starbase 24. That sick little shimmy is starting to develop a pattern. That can't be good. I better get down to engineering and see if Andy has any tricks left in his bag. I don't think any of us are going to sleep between now and Starbase 24.

I don't know how much longer we can hold her together. We did it one more time, a spit wad here a bit of wire there and prayers to the gods of space. We'd toss in a chicken sacrifice if we had one. Tune the warp drive with a hammer. The intermix channel is wrapped in carbon epoxy. Engineering by the seat of the pants. So much for the complaint that no one does any "real" engineering anymore. The whole surviving engineering crew looks scared. They know we are out of tricks. The boys in the black gang deserve medals everyone one of them. This ship is still sailing. That's a miracle by any standard.

The door to my cabin slid open and the lights came up as I entered. Expected, what I didn't expect was Lt. Serra nude on my bed. Fetching to be sure, but this was unexpected. Yea, I stood a moment and looked at her. What was it about fighting and surviving close scrapes that makes you randy as all hell? The sight of a young and lovely woman nude on my bed was not helping the issue. The light was starting to wake her up. I gently touched her shoulder as I sat beside her. "Mai I take it you have a reason for this?"

She sat up and wrapped her arms around me. "I...I'm scared...and I figured you would need someone too."

Damn, I'm not stronger than other men. "You know I really shouldn't. I think they call it taking advantage of rank."

"I'm offering. You seem so alone here. So unapproachable. We thought you were dead, twice. I found that hurt a lot. I would have never been able to say what I feel."

"What do you feel Mai?"

"You...I don't know, I hesitate to say love. I like you very much. You're the kind of man I find hard to resist. Right here right now I don't want to resist."

"I'm a difficult man to keep Mia. Starfleet rips people apart all the time."

"Then give me a night. I'll give you one." She looked at me shyly. "I can tell you want one. Hold me so we know that it's not in vain. What will come will come. I want someone to hold tonight. I didn't figure you for a man of stone, you might want someone to hold too."

"No, I'm not a man of stone." I got up and started striping. "Lock door." I am not stronger than other men.

The Center Seat -- Garry Stahl, December 2010

A bit that fails into the tail end of To the Valiant. It started with the first sentence. I wrote what came on the screen after that.

Transfer

"Commander James Tiberius Kirk, on this stardate you are requested and required to take command of the USS Lydia Sutherland NCC-1522 and to direct her in accordance to such orders as you are given. Signed, Admiral Fanna J Carter, Starfleet Command." Kirk folded the fancy paper orders.

"Welcome aboard Sir."

"Thank you Lieutenant Mogwar. Is Capitan LaSaille still aboard?"

"Yes sir he is in his...your quarters, packing the last of his gear."

"Good, lead the way, I can have a word with him and settle my kit before I tour the ship."

"Aye Aye sir."

The Lydia was a small ship, it didn't take long to get to the Captain's cabin. LaSaille was indeed still there, a stocky man that looked if anything younger than Kirk himself. Like himself LaSaille was in his number one His gray polished silk jacket was open and his hat was on the kit bag lying nearby. LaSaille got up from the desk he was working at as Kirk came in. "Commander Kirk, good to see you." He said offering a hand. "Have you read yourself in?"

Kirk shook it firmly. "Yes sir. Thank you. And you sir. Any parting words of wisdom to the new commander?"

"Parting words...hmm...have a seat." He motioned to the bed and sat back at the desk himself. "Lydia is a good girl. Willing as the day is long, but a bit on the fragile side if you push her hard. It's going to take a while to get a feel for that. The Ennex class has some issues in the direction of durability. Listen to your crew, they know her limits. You have a good crew. They are young, as one might expect, but they are worthy of a good Skipper. I've had good reports of you Kirk. You've come a long way from that shuttle on Anaxar."

Recognition dawned. "You were the Lieutenant Commander on the Republic. I heard about that, bad business."

"I wasn't good. But yes. I was that Lieutenant Commander. I know the voyage back was short, but I saw your work, and I like what I saw. I was sorry that you were headed to the Academy for command school, and then again, glad to see you were taking it. I see you have done well."

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"I do my best Captain."

"Continue to do your best Kirk and it will serve you well. Well, That pretty much covers the letter was in the middle of witting you. It's better to give it in person in any case."

"Yes sir, I was hoping to catch you before you left, for that reason."

"Good that you did. If you will excuse me I have a reading in to attend myself, now that I have been relieved of command here. There is a packet of orders on the desk for you right here." LaSaille stood up. "Good luck with what ever and where ever they may send you."

Kirk stood and shook hands once more. "And you sir, wherever you may go as well. Good voyages, and safe return."

"Good voyages, and safe return, I like that." LaSaille fastened his jacket, donned his hat, took command of his kit bag and left the room.

Kirk looked around the small cabin now bare of any personality. Plenty of time to see to that. He had orders to read, and a ship to tour.

Transfer -- Garry Stahl, January, 2009

*The timing here is two years before the start of **The First Principle**. Jerry did a short tour at Starfleet Command in fleet operations before getting the assignment to the Kongo. The jacket is speculation as we never saw the dress uniforms of the "Pike Era". The hat on the other hand was seen on Pike's desk in The Cage. We never saw anyone wear one. A hat straight out of Forbidden Planet. Star Trek was seen very much as "Forbidden Planet: The Series" as conceived.*

Planets

The fog rolls in early in the predawn, I'm not sure the meaning of local time. The rolling hills below me are bathed in bright moonlight. It is fascinating to watch the fog flow around the loom of the hills, always staying to its own level like slow motion water.

We spend too much time in space I think, we forget the drama of a world simply being a world. We call it "being in space", but really we are in our little capsules of manufactured comfort. Space itself is far too harsh for our frail lives. Planets are where we belong. So all the romance of the space ways is living in what amounts to a cozy hotel filled with high tech gadgets and strapped to a warp drive. Dangerous? Yes. There is danger. But you never feel that until it is

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about to swallow you. Dull little manufactured cells of comfort.

Planets are different. Even with our technology we can't tame planets. We can build space ships that are grounded and call them archologies, but the planet continues to be a planet around them. Weather batters them, earthquakes can bring them down. You can never ignore the planet. The planet always wins.

On leave I sit and watch the hills below our resort vanish into the fog. It's a nearly nightly event, I like it. I like the chaos of worlds. Surf beating itself against the rock of the shore, the drama of a thunderstorm. We see these events on class M worlds the Galaxy around. Location and conditions vary, and sometimes the backdrop is stunning. The terminator thunderstorms of El Nanth. Watching them roll in for miles from one of the upper balconies of Crystal City. The very air is electric, you can taste it. Andor and the great bergs. Ice islands the size of starships grinding and colliding, booms and groans that sound like they are from the depths of some underworld. Objects that big should not move like that. Sunrise on Vulcan's Forge. One does not think that a sunrise would have sound, but you can hear the sands expand as the heat of the sun hits them. It is said the ancient Masters of Gol found enlightenment in those sounds. In the right mood, when you are receptive, it can sound like music.

Worlds are the true treasures. Nebulae are only beautiful from a distance. Inside one you are too close to make out the structure. Stars are for the most part stars. The interesting ones are far too dangerous to ever approach. Worlds are what we are made for. Clarke said it right. Space is small, only the planets are huge.

Planets -- Garry Stahl, December 2010

*A Jerry LaSaille character thought noodle, no real plot here. It would fall into the leave period in the front end of **Collateral Damage**.*

The Bet

Jerry carefully placed the copper cap over the steel nipple. The mutter of the small crowd gathered was slightly distracting. He pulled the hammer back to full cock and lifted the heavy rifled musket to his shoulder. Silence fell over the observers as he drew a bead on the unfortunate plank at the end of the field.

Kapow! A corner of the plank flew apart as the shot echoed off the barns. There was a smattering of applause at the historical event. Jerry grinned from

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ear to ear. "I've always wanted to do that. Thanks Ian."

"It was a pleasure Captain, but ye need to be thankin' Lt Masterson. He did the work."

"Excellent work Mr Masterson. It has been a hotly debated question for nearly two hundred years as to whether this gun could be fired. Thanks to you, we have an answer."

"I was an honor to work on it Captain."

"Well I'd better clean it out before I hang it back up." Captain LaSaille tuned to the crowd at large. "Party down people."

Giles Masterson turned back to his lover Candy Meyers. "Pay up."

The Bet -- Garry Stahl, March 2005

A really short short. Something from Jerry's "Kongo" era.

One of Those Days

I hurried back to my to my cabin as decorously as possible. They said in the Academy that there would be days like this. No one ever believes them...ever... even me. I should know better too. In any case it would not do for the crew to see the Captain have a fit in the corridors.

I flopped face first on the bed and did my best not to bust out laughing. I really did. Finally Aleilan came over and didn't quite cold nose me.

****What has you riled?***

I rolled over. ****The Bronian Ambassador.***

****Give.***

****It would be easier if they where not Human, really, parallel fashion, some excuse.***

****Give!***

****Formal attire does differ from world to world.***

She was rooting under my back looking for a spot for that nose. ****Give!***

****Clown suit, right down to the whiteface and red nose.***

Okay, I didn't hold it in, but at least I had company.

One of Those Days -- Garry Stahl, January 2011

Strange new worlds... Some times the truly strange ones are not so new.

In a Bar

"Capitan LaSaille, it is good to see you. I was given the impression you where not the sort of man to frequent bars."

LaSaille looked over the over dressed Orion. "I'm not responsible to your impressions Jant."

The golden man smiled. Then they will have to take care of themselves will they not? Truly, you are not a drinker. This I know of you. Why do you come to the bar?"

Jerry shrugged. "It's a small station. This is where the people are."

"So you watch the people."

"It's a small station. And it isn't the deck of the *Kongo*."

"Ah, yes. The Human need for something different to look at."

"That could be the reason."

Jant signaled the bartender and took his Dr. Pepper. "Capitan, you are one of the most difficult men I know to get a personal answer out of."

Jerry raised an eyebrow. "From an Orion? I'll take that as unusual."

"So, what is the *Kongo* here for?"

"The usual, sadly. Some poor bastard got his ship screwed up. We pulled the survivors off."

"And you drop them off here?"

"Yes, from here they can arrange for passage."

"Not pirates I hope."

"Not this time. Let's turn the table Jant. Why are you on the back side of nowhere?"

"Because old friend, it is the backside of nowhere."

"On the run again Jant? Not anything I need to arrest you for I hope."

"That would be telling." Jant shrugged, a very Human gesture. "No harm in it. I lifted a cargo out from under the nose of a rival. He holds grudges. I wish to live to spend my money."

Jerry kept his elbows on the bar. "Where was this?"

"Onthar. Oh, it was legal. Natural Order and all."

"But he doesn't see it that way."

"Well, I suppose he does, and if he can get it back, the Natural Order favors him."

The back of Jerry's neck started to itch. ****Gun...door**** flashed across his mind. He came around from the bar the phaser in his hand before he had finished turning. The trigger in the process of being pressed before the target was plain. The Orion in the door didn't have time to register shock as the beam splashed across his chest. The blaster skittered away from him and he slumped in the door of the bar.

Silence nailed the moment in place. Jerry lightly fingered the phaser in his hand looking for the next threat. Jant looked on in shock. People moved away

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from the stunned Orion.

Jerry flipped his communicator out with his free hand. "LaSaille to *Kongo*."

"*Kongo*, Captain."

"Security to Jango's Bar."

"Aye aye Capitan."

Jerry closed the communicator. "This your friend Jant?"

Jant carefully toed the unconscious Orion over. "Yes, that would be him."

"Well today is your lucky day. He gets arrested." He flipped the communicator back open. "LaSaille here."

"Yes Capitan, security is on the way."

"Second issue Mr. Steel." He shot a look at Jant.

"*Darvn Treasure*."

"Find and secure the crew of *Darvn Treasure*. Their captain just tried to shoot a man in the back over a business deal. I don't want any more trouble."

"Aye aye Capitan."

A commotion broke out in the back of the bar. An Orion was trying to get free of his shirt being held by an Ane. Most unpolite language was coming forth. Jerry leveled the phaser on him. "Stop struggling. Hurt her and I'll be most aggrieved." **Part of the crew?*

Aleilan let go of the shirt. **Yes, I think he called in Jant's location.**

The Orion stood his ground covered by the phaser.

The *Kongo's* security quad came running to the bar. "Capitan?" inquired the Lieutenant in charge.

"The one on the ground, and this one here. Take them to the brig. We are securing his ship until we investigate."

Security took the prisoners and transported back to the *Kongo*.

Jant tossed off the rest of his drink. "I guess I should get back to my ship."

Jerry eyes him narrowly. "I think you should, to make sure she stays right there."

"Are you arresting me too?"

"You're a material witness Jant. I would rather not arrest you, so don't do something that would make me, like trying to leave."

"And you intend to get to the bottom of this."

"You know me fairly well."

Jant rolled his eyes. "That isn't always an advantage."

In a Bar -- Garry Stahl, November 2010

A short Jerry scene that might become something bigger. I am still noodling on it. Just to prime the pump.

The Break

The window lit up with lightning shortly followed by a roll of thunder that shook the house. Jerry LaSaille could hear Miss Lilly on the floor below as he worked at his desk in the study. It would be a while before anyone on Earth slept through a thunderstorm after the weather caused by the Whale Probe.

He snapped the PADD off with a sudden decision as thunder buffeted the windows yet again. He made his way down to the kitchen. Miss Lilly looked up from her fussing as he came in.

"Mr. Jerold, you still up?"

"I should ask the same question. It's well past your bed time."

"I find it hard to sleep." She looked out the kitchen window at the beating rain.

"I understand. I came down to raid the fridge."

"Well, don't let me stop you." She peered out the window with the next flash of lightning. "There is someone on the back lawn."

As if in reaction to her statement the outside lights came on followed by a pounding on the door. Jerry shot her a look and went to the door. The rapping was repeated. "Who the Hell?" Jerry opened the door. His son was framed in the opening "Clarke? How did you get here?"

Clarke LaSaille stood on the back porch with water streaming down his face. "Roban. Do you mind if we come in?"

Jerry stepped out of the door. "Come in, please. Miss Lilly, get a robe and some towels please."

Miss Lilly went for them at once. "I don't know why anyone would be out on a night like this. Mercy sakes." Her voice fading as she left the room.

Clarke came in followed by Roban, who was equally as wet.

Jerry took Roban by the nose. **Don't shiver, or we'll all be wet.**

Tall order. His skin twitched with the suppressed instinct.

"Clarke, get out of those wet things."

Miss Lilly was back shortly with an armload of towels and a robe. Towels were dropped over Roban and Clarke got dry as well while Jerry dialed up some tea.

Jerry then helped Roban get dried off. **Are you staying or moving to join the general herd?*

**It's the middle of the rainy season. Where is everyone here?*

Tonight, in the ballroom. There might be one or two Ane wide spots left.

Thanks. Roban left the kitchen seeking the company of his own kind.

By this point Miss Lilly had Clarke into the robe and sipping on a cup of tea at the Kitchen table. Jerry sat down as well.

"I suppose the obvious question is what brings you here?"

Clarke looked into his tea. "I had a blow up with Mother. Shouting, arm

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waving, the works."

"And...."

"I needed to get away."

Jerry took a sip of his own cup. "Crystal City wasn't far enough 'away'?"

"Not this time." The rain continued to vent it's fury.

"What was different this time?"

Clarke sat back pulling the robe around him. "I don't really know Dad. It was the same tired argument, the same emotional appeals. Maybe that is it, there was nothing different, except I have heard it one too many times."

"So why all the way here?"

"Mom might look around Crystal City for me. She won't come here."

"That's likely. What about your work?"

"It will hold. I told Elizabeth I was leaving."

"That will keep you covered. What next?"

"I don't know. Maybe I just need some time to cool off. Time to think without my head being messed with all the time."

"Indefinite stay?"

"Yea, until I can think this out."

"You'll need to call Nairobi in the morning, and let them know you are here. This is Earth, not El Nanth. Bureaucrats so thick you can't help but step on them."

"Ugh, it might be a short indefinite stay."

"Don't make plans now. That will keep till morning."

"Yea, is there anything to eat around here. I left just before dinner."

Jerry smiled. "I was fixing for a kitchen raid myself. Let's see what we can find."

The Break -- Garry Stahl, November 2004

*Another character piece with Clarke. Not much else to say about it. There was some Jerry short before it that got subsumed into **After the Voyage**.*

Audit

"Good morning Tara." Jerry walked passed his aide's desk. toward his own office.

"Morning Admiral. Captain Styles is waiting for you."

"Good. Are the orders in place."

"Yes sir."

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"Tell everyone to move. I want it done in five minutes."

Levyson pressed a stud on her desk. "The word is given."

"Affirmative" said the voice from the speaker."

LaSaille nodded and entered the office. Styles was looking out the windows at the morning traffic on the bay. Jerry waited a moment, watching him watch. He walked to his desk, sat, then cleared his throat.

Styles started and turned quickly. "Admiral LaSaille, I didn't hear you come in."

"Captain Styles, sit down."

Styles took the indicated seat. "You left a message that I was to see you sir, as soon as possible."

"Yes. Why isn't the *Excelsior* ready for operational status."

"Well, ahem, we have been having some difficulties in the shake down. I don't think we have located all the damage done to the drives Admiral."

"You have had two months to repair ten minutes of work."

"Mr. Scott is a most thorough engineer sir...."

"I don't buy it. I don't buy the 'Scotty is an engineer beyond mortal hope.' line. I am calling some engineers in from outside the project, to audit it."

"Sir, I must object, the transwarp project is cutting edge. Most engineers will not understand it."

"I am of the opinion that if Starfleet engineers cannot understand something, if it is beyond their understanding, then it is not engineering. What might it be if it is not engineering?"

"Admiral LaSaille, I have the highest confidence that we can work these minor bugs out of the traswarp drives. We will have them working."

LaSaille noted the light winking on his desk. "We shall know shortly if your confidence is well founded. As of this moment the command codes have been changed on the *Excelsior* by my order. You are relieved of command Captain. The auditors have control of the *Excelsior*."

Styles sat gaping like a fish out of water.

"I strongly suggest you keep yourself handy should the audit team have any questions."

"On examining the USS *Excelsior* we have concluded that the transwarp system is unstable, and even if run within accepted tolerances would prove a danger to her crew." Captain Henderson sat down.

LaSaille looked over the figures in front of him. "In short Captain Henderson you are telling me the transwarp project is a crock of shit, and it stinks?"

Henderson leaned on the conference table. "Yes sir, it is my opinion and the opinion of my team that Starfleet was sold a bill of goods. The promised performance will never materialize."

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"Your recommendation?"

"I recommend that the *Excelsior* be refit with a standard warp drive system before it is turned over to an operational crew."

LaSaille sat, arms crossed. "Just ducky."

Henderson blinked. "Sir?"

"An expression of frustration Captain Henderson, proceed with your recommendation. *Excelsior* is back into the design phase. Get the refit rolling at once, if not sooner. I'll file the report with Admiral Cartwright.

"Admiral LaSaille, this is unacceptable."

"What sir is unacceptable about the report?"

"We cannot have the *Excelsior* tied up for additional years waiting for a new warp system, we need her and ships like her out on patrol, now."

"I strongly disagree sir. If we have ships like her on patrol we will have less ships and fewer crews. Captain Henderson's report states the facts. *Excelsior* is not a safe ship. I will not certify her for duty."

"Do you have any safe ships Admiral LaSaille?"

"I have several thousand. I take it you are referring to the *Enterprise A*."

"I seem to recall asking for her specifically to deal with the Nimbus 3 situation."

"You did and you are changing the subject sir."

"Then I'm changing the subject. Why wasn't she sent?"

"The *Enterprise A* had not at the time been reported fit for duty by her Captain. An officer of long experience."

"Which is why I wanted him on the scene."

"Then why was transferring him to the *Constellation* for the mission not acceptable? I offered you the combination of any fit ship and Captain James T. Kirk, but you refused. It was Kirk and the *Enterprise A*, or nothing. I seem to recall that Captain Strak handled the matter without further loss of life, and saw the miscreants arrested for their crimes."

Cartwright fussed with the PADDs on his desk. "Yes, an acceptable outcome."

"But not the outcome you wanted."

Cartwright's head snapped up. "What makes you say that?"

"Because...it is most evident that it was not the outcome that was wanted." LaSaille looked him right in the eyes.

Sweat popped onto Cartwright's brow. "What outcome do you think was wanted, Admiral?"

LaSaille continued his level gaze. "I don't know, but displeasure at the the outcome we have is evident."

"Get your freaky powers out of my head!"

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LaSaille kept his level gaze. "My, 'powers', as you quaintly put it are not in your head Admiral Cartwright. Telepathically probing a superior officer is not a permitted action under the uniform code if I recall correctly. Unless one believes and states sufficient cause to believe that one's superior officer's mind has been controlled by someone else, and have so logged that belief."

Cartwright broke the stare. "You seem to know a lot about the uniform code as pertains to telepaths Admiral."

"It is in my best interest to know these things. About *Excelsior*...."

Cartwright went back to his PADDs. "Do as you see fit. Dismissed."

Audit -- Garry Stahl, March 2005

I did this one some time back, but was holding it back to see if it developed into something more. What the heck, here it is. The timing of the story is fairly obvious.

I have been asked why I portrayed Admiral Cartwright in such a manner. My impression of him from the films he was in was of a man that formed and kept grudges and those influenced his behavior. The kind of treason we see in The Undiscovered Country is not a sudden or overnight behavior. Kirk was set up to fail in The Final Frontier. In Epiphany Trek canon Admiral LaSaille vetoed sending the E-A and sent a ship with a working transporter, so no idiot plot.

Reflections

Rain hissed down in sheets outside the stable door. Jerry continued to brush down the big Tennessee Walker in the quiet gloom of the barn aisle. No sound but the rain and the horses muttering one to the other. A dusty haze filtered the wane light as he worked. This was simple work that hearkened back to a time before memory. A time when some forgotten genius decided that a horse was better to ride than to eat.

****I would love to meet him.****

****Yes Aleilan, so would I. Every time I touch a horse I think of the wonderful gift he gave us.****

Aleilan cocked her head at him. ****Horses are a gift?***

****A gift, helpmate, companion, friend. For three thousand years we built our world on the backs of horses.****

The mare turned her head to look him in the eye. "Yes, girl, I'm thinking about you." He briskly brushed her withers. ****Now we give the few that remain**

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beautiful places to live, and a life of horsey ease.**

**Today's ride was ease?*

**You ask her. Is she happy?*

Yes, but you knew that.

You asked me a question beautiful one. I know she likes running with you.

We like running with the horses. They are bright for animals.

So made by man. Horses and dogs are the animals we bred for intelligence. Someone to be our friends, not simply our servants.

You don't seem to have much affinity for dogs.

I never have. Jerry led the mare into her box. He checked her hay and the water system.

Aleilan idly chewed at a bit of hay. **Better quality than usual.**

Good crop this year. We have a goodly amount laid up as well. He latched the stall door behind him. The mare continued to pay attention to her hay.

Jerry looked out again at the rain. The barn cat twined around his feet supplicating for any treats he might have. **Well, we might as well finish up in the barn before supper. That doesn't look like it is letting up soon.**

Miss Lily cocked her head at the slight "whump" upstairs, and the kitchen chandelier shook slightly. "Well. Mister Jerrod and Aleilan are finally in from the barn.

Clarke continued to mash the potatoes. "At least he has time to clean up before supper. Horse, ugh."

"Now young man, horses, including their smell, made this here farm all it is. You best be learning to like it."

Carol shifted the roast as she basted it. "Horses don't have as much odor as Ane. They are both pleasant."

Clarke shook his head. "I guess it's what you grow up with. I grew up with Ane. We don't have horses on Savanna."

Carol finished up with the roast. "You don't? I'm surprised someone didn't import them."

"Someone did after contact. They died. I understand it wasn't pretty. No one has tried since."

Miss Lily continued forming biscuits and placing them in her pan. "More's the pity. I don't think a place is fit for man without horses."

"I remember Dad telling me stories about Bellicolone when I was a kid. It always seemed to be a magical place like Pern, or Middle Earth. Not a place where real people lived or worked. I always got Bellicolone and Benden Weyr mixed up in my dreams. Horses were dragons, dragons were horses. I guess my

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biggest surprise on seeing a real horse was that it was so small."

The kitchen door shook as Jacob came in from the farm. He stripped his slicker and boots. "Woh, that rain is coming down. Mr Jerrold in from the West Barn?"

Miss Lily nodded. "Yes, they popped in a few minutes ago. You still have plenty of time to clean up."

He smiled. "I'll take that hint." He departed for the upstairs.

Miss Lily continued with her biscuits: "Horses were small. Heh, I would never have thought it."

Clarke continued mashing. "I was disappointed they didn't fly too."

Carol set the roast back in the oven. "I thought you were born on Earth Clarke?"

"I was, but when Dad took command of the *Kongo* Mom took me back to Savanna. I was too young to remember then."

Miss Lily put her biscuits into the second oven. "I have never been off Earth. I cannot see why I should start."

Carol checked the green beans. "It is worth it if only once in your life. I can see why it draws the people it does. Space has a stark beauty."

"Dad said you and Jacob are from Deneva."

"That's right. Jacob answered Mr Jerrold's ad for a horse farm manager. Deneva has plenty of horses."

Dad took me out once on the *Kongo*. I was still a kid and it was very exciting. Other than shuttles around the system, that and my trip to El Nanth in the first place it was my only Starship trip. I always wanted to take a trip on the Savanna."

Jerry entered the kitchen on that remark. "Sorry Clarke, that isn't likely to happen."

"Pity, she is a marvelous old ship."

"Marvelous old wreck. I don't want to think about what it would take to get her space worthy."

"You should consider it. It would aid in preserving her."

"Yes, that it would. I'll put it on the list of things to do."

Jacob looked into the kitchen. "Supper about ready? I'll chase down the boys."

"Soon as the biscuits are out and the table set." Said Miss Lily.

Jerry went to the cabinet. "I'll get those dishes."

After supper Jerry walked back among the barns with Aleilan. Water ran down the cobbled path in the aftermath of the rain. The clouds slowly parted to reveal the stars.

**I used to stand here as a kid and look at the stars with my brother. We had

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a telescope. The wonders that simple tube revealed. I never dreamed I would be here now, seeking the places I have visited.**

The past we can know. The future is always a mystery.

Yes, but it's that mystery that keeps us going.

Reflections -- Garry Stahl, April 2005

I have been working around this one for a while. It wasn't going anywhere. Well it never did, but it's too good a character piece to leave behind.

Ones I Used to Know

Snow fell gently on the bare trees. Big soft flanks drifted down on a nearly windless night. Jerry lifted the mug of hot coco to his lips and watched the snow fall. Magical, that was the word that always sprang to mind. Snow changed everything. The trees and fences became things of wonder in the diffuse moonlight and the falling snow.

The fire burned low. It's glowing logs were the only light in the parlor. Christmas Eve. The tree lent it's odor to the atmosphere. The speakers softly played the tunes from his childhood.

Jerry smiled, the old crooner never sounded better, and indeed it would be a white Christmas, a rare one. With half lidded eyes he could almost see his Mother in the rocking chair, her knitting on her lap. He and his brother by the old RCA putting the big 78 records on one by one. His sister as usual was shifting the presents beneath the tree, looking to see how many she had. Dad? But of course, he was in his Father's chair, and the presence of the old man was close beside him. Uncle Joe doubtless had all his corny old stories to tell again, and Aunt Marie would fuss about them as usual.

Susan was here with their young son, and Anne, it was good she could make it too. Connie sat by the fire with her warm smile, just for him. Hane and Nia gathered into the circle. Sara was here too, Oh Sara, the things I never told you. Just then the kids came bursting in from some game. He reached out to hug them all.

*"...Just like the ones I used to know
Where the treetops glisten
and children listen
To hear sleigh bells in the snow..."*

The fire slowly died in the hearth as Jerry sank down into his chair. Aleilan, carefully not to wake him, licked the tears from his cheeks. She lay back down at his feet and cradled her head in his lap. His hand, unseeing, sought the comfort of her touch.

Sleep well my love. For as long as we remember they are never truly gone.

Ones I Used to Know --Garry Stahl, November 2004

I seriously doubt anyone will ever get the punch in the gut this little piece gave me, and I would not wish it on them. Never have I poured words onto a page with as much emotion. I have had an interesting life. That is really all that need be said. It gives insight into the character of someone that has loved and lost, again and again.

The Gift of the Magi

Clear, bright, cold. Christmas morning was cold for the typical Kentucky winter day. The new-fallen snow covered Bellicolone in a blanket that muffled sound. The horses frolicked in the unfamiliar snow. Even they seem to understand that the day was special and the snow was meant to be played in.

Jerry stood on the porch and watched for a few minutes. He heard the door creak open yet again. Aleilan checking to see that he hadn't frozen stiff, again.

"No I have not succumbed to the rigors of the weather."

It's cold outside. You should be wearing more.

"Yes mother." Jerry continued to watch the horses in the nearest pasture as they tossed their heads and chased each other.

The door creaked again as she stuck her head out up to the horns.

**Breakfast is ready. Are you coming in?*

"Yes yes, I'm coming in. Miss Lily's biscuits are not to be missed."

Jerry hung his jacket by the kitchen door. The kitchen was warm. Miss Lily had gone all out and cooked a real meal for Christmas breakfast, nothing from the processor this time. She looked up from placing dishes as he closed the door.

"Well, it is about time you stopped looking to catch a cold."

"You know I've never been sick a day in my life."

"Well that's something where it's never to late to start."

The door opened again. Jacob and Clarke stomped in from the snow. Clarke looked about half frozen. Jerry poured him a coup of coffee and got it into his hands. He clutched the cup gratefully.

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"Man oh man, I thought I would never miss El Nanth. It is *cold* out there."

"Brisk." Said Jacob. "That is what we call brisk. Oh boy I smell something good."

Miss Lily fussed. "And it is right going to waste if you men do not set down and start eating."

Carol Martin came in from the parlor herding her and Jacob's two boys. Presents had been opened at the crack of dawn. They piled into chairs agog at the breakfast spread. Clarke took a seat and Jacob sat next to his wife. Aleilan settled down at her place next to Jerry's chair. At last Miss Lily sat as well, satisfied that all was prepared as well as it could be prepared.

Jerry addressed the table. "We come once again to join in the fellowship of food. Here at the end of the year, and the beginning of the next. Let us dwell on those gifts we have, and not upon those we do not. May we be grateful that within the circle of our family we have not suffered loss as we have in years past. Let us hold in our hearts a proper thankfulness for the fact that we have food in plenty, shelter that is secure, and that our other needs are equally met, for this is not the universal case for all beings. Lastly may we be thankful for the gift that is each other. Both those present at our table this morning and for those who are not. For our greatest gift that is given and that is to give is the love and friendship we share one with the other. Merry Christmas to each and every one of you."

The Gift of the Magi -- Garry Stahl, December 24, 2004

God bless us, every one.

Heirloom

Snow in late November. I watched the flakes fall big and gentle on the farm. It wouldn't last this early, it never did. Starfleet had a short vacation on the old US Thanksgiving. Not that operations ever really stopped, but North Americans got cut a bit of slack. It all equaled out in the end. We covered for Europe on Boxing Day, and the other regions of Earth on their respective holidays. Even the off worlders got their holidays off. So I had a day to play farmer.

I stopped by the curio cabinet. Don't know why but I opened it. Now the cabinet is filled with bits from the family dating back to the early 1800s. The one pistol was said to come from France and be older than that, but we never got the dates verified. I know most museums have more interesting stuff, but they don't let you play with it.

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My hand went to the music box. It was decorated with the cameo of a young woman, very pretty. I smiled at the thought; as a very young man I had had imagined marrying a girl just like her. When I was a kid we were not allowed to touch it. My Mother would wind it once in a while so we could listen to it. A very old song, but surprisingly loud. After the tornado it had never worked again. I suppose I was lucky to find most of the stuff. It was a beautiful piece with inlaid woods and shell.

**Why don't you have it fixed?*

**Yea. There is a good place in San Fransisco that does restorations. Let me check the computer.*

**It would be in line with your progress in getting things back to working state.*

I pulled up the screen, an old plasma TV case. and did some quick checking. Yes, he was open Fridays, including this one. **Aleilan, meet me in the hall.** I grabbed my coat and pulled something on her. Frisco is cold in November.

We landed at the edge of the Starfleet campus. I grabbed a BATA car big enough for the two of us and gave it the address of Barnum's Antique shop. A few minutes drive into the old town area and we were in front of the shop. I held the door for Aleilan, we didn't bring a badger.

I could tell the proprietor though it unusual for an Ane to be in his shop. However he got to the point. "Can I help you?"

"Yes, your listing indicates you repair music boxes."

"Yes sir we do. What do you have?" I placed the box on the counter. He picked up and looked it over. "My my, French 18th century if I am correct." He opened it. "Nuremberg movement." And took out his loop. "Yes, I can see where it is broken. The damage does not look new."

"No, it's not. It's lucky to survive. The damage happened in Kentucky 1971. A tornado I understand."

"Indeed it is lucky. Yes, I can repair the movement, with a minimal impact. We are dealing with a few bent parts. The spring at least is free of rust and has not been stored wound. I can even repair the few chips on the box itself."

"Please do not. That is considered part of family history."

"As you wish sir. Where can I reach you?"

I gave him my card. "Either Starfleet Headquarters or my home in Kentucky."

He scanned it into his counter unit. "Thank you, Admiral?"

"It's my day off."

He smiled: "Yes, we all need time off. It shouldn't take me too long, unless I find something ominous once I open the movement."

"Call me when it's ready."

"As you wish sir."

Aleilan and I left the shop into the bitter San Fransisco wind. **Home?*

She asked.

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I grabbed a horn and we were back in the hall. I gently cleared my ears.

Why haven't I done this before? That box has been broken for two hundred years and I just now get it fixed.

I think you have less stress now. To begin with you were just glad to have it. Then you were gone, and only now you are living here and have ease and leisure. You are reclaiming your heritage.

Still I waited this long. I suppose all things when we are ready.

I was in the office Monday when the fellow called. I headed down after lunch.

"Ah, Admiral LaSaille, I have found a most curious thing. Were you aware of the secret compartment?"

"No, I was not."

He held the open box out. Here in the lid. You can just get a pen nib under the edge of the wood here and it moves."

"Go ahead, open it."

He did so. A neat square of wood came out of the lid, and a piece of paper followed it. I picked it up, it was heavily creased and brittle. I opened it with great care. "French I think. I haven't used French in a very long time. Since school in fact." He smiled, if he only knew how long that was. With Aleilan's help I dredged the French out of my head.

"What is it?"

"A love letter from one of my ancestors to another I believe. A five hundred year old lovers' secret. I think I want to sit down with it and carefully translate."

"It is your letter."

"Is the box done?"

"Yes, let me return the cover of the compartment to its place and it is good to go."

"Did you wind it?"

"Yes, a lovely tune. I think you shall enjoy it very much."

I affixed my thumb to the padd and took my box and letter back to the office. I had them transported back home at once, after I got Archeology to stabilize the paper.

After dinner that night with most of the house asleep I sat in my chair in the parlor and took the letter in hand. Just for Atmosphere I wound the music box to hear the tune again, it had been centuries since I last heard it.

My Dearest Marie,

Long are the nights when you are away from me. I can but lie in my bed and dream about being back in your presence.

Only then can your light fill the darkness that is my life when you are not there. The endless days between the joyous day that you have agreed to be my bride and the wedding to come seem unbearable. My breast shall burst from the anticipation of your

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light entering my life once and for truly ever.

I have everything in readiness for you here. The nest is built and lacks only the birds to give it life. Next Sunday we shall have the bans read for the third time, and be truly man and wife. We shall take communion together as one. Have patience I pray and God likewise give me strength to endure these four endless days. The last days I shall be without you. Take Comfort in Christ, and know that my soul shall always be with you.

Forever your Slave: Paul LaSaille

Young love. It had been forever since I was young. I knew that I still had love. The letter was dated May 19, 1787. The things you can learn by looking at your own stuff. When I wonder had young Marie placed the letter under the lid of the music box? Did she ever take it out and read it again in the time she was married? The music box had made it to America, survived years in this house and was one of the lucky objects that got through the tornado mostly intact. All so I could read this letter 500 years later.

Aleilan came into the parlor. ****Are you sitting up all night?***

I put the letter down. ****No sweety. I do need to get some sleep. What do you think?***

****Frame it. It's a piece of family history. As close to their story as we will ever get.****

****Tomorrow will be soon enough. Let's get some sleep.****

Heirloom -- Garry Stahl, December 2010

Still writing to write. Getting back into doing Jerry again. I like the character. I like these pieces about his family and life.

The Warrior's Tale

The company was good, the new warriors fresh and eager from their training gathered about the old heroes and begged tales of glory. All but MogQua told their tales of battle to the eager youth.

Finally Mogtak turned to his Grandfather. "Sire, you are the greatest warrior among all here. What is the most frightening foe you ever faced?"

The old man took a long sip from his blood wine. "It was a Human." he said quietly.

The young warriors muttered their denial. "A human?" "How could a Human

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be fearful?" "Humans are barely worthy foes."

"SILENCE." Cried the old warrior with a roar, lurching to his ancient feet. "Silence! Since you have been impudent enough to insist, I shall tell you. I shall tell you what fearsome really is."

All sat silent now, gazing with respect at the ancient one.

"When I was young as you are now, I had a friend. Kars was his name. His Father had been a warrior in the first war with Humans. His Father had died in that war on Anaxar, as had many. But, Kars knew the name of the Human that had killed his Father. He had a name, and he nurtured that name like a malignant thing through many years and many cruises together. Lieutenant Jerold LaSaille. Yes, I remember the name. I heard it often.

"We were on cruise, shortly after the First Kittomer Accords. Klingons were welcome for the first time on Starfleet worlds. We toured the city at the foot of Starbase 24 as it was known then. Kars, Ger'Mok, and myself. As we swaggered down the street we passed a group of Starfleet in their soft uniforms. I heard the fateful name spoken by one of them. 'Admiral LaSaille' she said to an older Human. Kars stood like you had run the main power bus of a war cruiser through him. 'Wait' I cautioned. 'Humans have only so many names'. Kars was unhearing. He turned toward the Humans, who by now were watching us. 'Are you Jerold LaSaille.' Kars demanded of the older man. 'Yes' he replied. Kars was working himself up. 'Were you a Lieutenant on Anaxar?' 'Yes.' said the Human, as calmly as you please. 'You killed my Father'. said Kars. He was in a full rage by now. The Human stood impassive. Kars drew his knife and spat out the words of challenge. 'I challan... **BOOM!**' Yelled the old one, the young warriors started back slightly. "The old human had a slug pistol in his hand quicker than we could see. Kars was on the ground.

"It was only later I recalled this to any detail. Kars fell as if someone had jerked him down with a rope from behind. He fell heavily he did not move or cry out. A small hole oozed blood from between his eyes. Bits of his head splattered the street and his blood pooled beneath his shattered head. We turned toward the Human named LaSaille. His fellow Humans looked as shocked as did we."

One of the young men leaned forward. "And then you killed him."

The old man fell heavily back into his chair. "No. The Human held the slug pistol at arm's length. I moved slightly, and the gun moved to cover me. I looked into the eyes of my foe... and saw nothing. NOTHING!! He would as soon have killed me as taken his next breath. My honor, my skill, were meaningless to him. If my movements displeased him at all, I would die, and my foe, did...not...care.

He put the gun away. 'Pick up the trash, and leave.' He said. As calmly as you ask for more blood wine. He turned back to the officers he was with, and were dismissed. Ger'Mok and I grabbed Kars' body and fled."

"Grandfather, it is hardly a tale of honor. Why was this frightening?"

"Must I spell it out?" grumped the old man. "Yes, yes I must, because you

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are young. Well you have learned the ways of the warrior and well you understand the way of honor, and the relationship between you and your foe." The young men all nodded. "Even Humans understand this, even if most of them could not articulate it." Again the nods. "This man did not fight. He cut Kars down before he could get the challenge out of his mouth. He measured Ger'Mok and myself and dismissed us. To find a man that did not fight. One who killed or did not kill, without consideration of his foe. To find a reasoning being that refused the most basic of relationships, that of foe to foe. That was frightening beyond any creature I have done battle with."

The young warriors were quiet. At last Mogtak broke the silence. "In all due respect Sire, this man is long dead."

MogQua leaned forward, his voice barely above a whisper. "Yes, that he might well be. As you sit here full of blood wine and your own potential for glory, an ancient tale does not sink it. He is out there, him, and others like him. Old Human warriors get this way I am told. They grow bitter and tired, but no less deadly. This LaSaille is not unique. Some night, some sober night when perhaps everything has not gone your way this man will steal into your courage, thief into you hearts. He will sink to the bottom of your being, and you will know fear. Remember this: You never know where, and when, you will cross his path."

The Warrior's Tale -- Garry Stahl, October 2004

In this case it was controversy. Never has anything I have written engendered so much comment, both for and against. I wanted a Klingon point of view to Jerry. I got it.

Old & New

"Admiral LaSaille, I understand that you do have a right to defend yourself, but the manner of your defense...how does one say this...it was brutal."

LaSaille locked eyes with Admiral Cendara. "Have you ever been stuck with one of those knives?"

"No, I can't say I have."

"It isn't pleasant. I don't intend to have a repeat of the incident."

"Why don't you carry a phaser like everyone else man?" Added Admiral Yanyos of Military Command.

"I do."

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"Why didn't you use it? that would have saved a world of trouble."

"Trouble from whom? The Klingons?"

Cendara broke back in. "No, the only complaint I have gotten from the Klingons was your parting comment about trash. They claim that it was and I quote 'not an honorable tribute to a fallen foe'."

Jerry shrugged. "They would be right, it wasn't the most diplomatic thing to say. I do regret it."

Cendara was on his feet. "Why didn't you just stun him, they we would have nothing to regret!"

"Admiral Cendara, how well do you understand Klingons?"

"I've met a few."

LaSaille leaned into his point. "I mean understand them, how they think, how they act, why they act as they act?"

Cendara sat down. "No one in the Federation knows them that well."

"There is one person."

"Who?"

"Myself."

"When did you spend time among Klingons?"

"How soon we forget. I spend two years slinking around in the rain and mud of Anaxar studying Klingons."

"What's your point?"

"Stunning him would only have made it worse. I would have dishonored him among his fellows. He would, at that point, do anything to find me and kill me. The reason the Klingons have not complained about my shooting him down in the street, is they would have done the same thing. OK, they likely would have fought him blade to blade. I declined to fight. He didn't do his homework."

Cendara looked at LaSaille with horror. "You don't even understand this, do you? Your actions are a public relations nightmare. We cannot have the head of Galaxy Exploration Command, a full Admiral in Starfleet shooting people in the street like some 20th century thug!"

"Far better the Admiral take a knife in the gut, or have a Klingon gunning for his hide the rest of his life?"

"That isn't what I mean."

"It's exactly what you mean even if you don't have the guts to say it. You would prefer a Galaxy where that sort of thing didn't happen. A Galaxy where nothing and no one ever rocks the public relations boat. I would prefer a Galaxy where I could eschew violence as well, but it isn't happening. As for PR, I have some suggestions that are likely to be physically impossible."

"We have to consider the reputation of Starfleet."

"Individuals can take it up the ass if that helps PR. Better an heroic funeral than a dead punk."

"I'm not wishing anyone dead. Good grief man, we do have to consider how the public views us."

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Yanyos interjected. "We cannot allow this incident to go without some manner of action Admiral LaSaille, for the good of the fleet."

LaSaille addressed the Advocate General, who had remained silent to this point. "Has any law been broken?"

She consulted her PADD. "No, to the best of my knowledge no laws have been broken."

"Has any Starfleet regulation been broken?"

"No, there are no regulations about flag officers carrying personal weapons, or defending themselves."

"Has there been a diplomatic complaint about the shooting?"

"No."

Jerry looked the other members of the joint chiefs over. "But 'something must be done', and that solely for the PR. 'For the good of the Fleet'." His face hardened. "There was a time, when the actions of this body were directed to the honest accomplishment of the mission in our charter. There was a time that any officer that did right and good could expect that his actions, no matter how unpopular, would be defended."

Cendara sat with his hands spread firmly on the desk. "We must consider the good of the service. Times are changing, Starfleet must keep up."

LaSaille looked right at him, and spoke softly. "There was a time we led, not followed. There was a time when such nonsense as 'the greater good' was not tolerated in this room. There was a time I was proud to be a part of Fleet. I have served Starfleet for 61 years. I have done good in that time. But I have no more patience for the mealy mouthed organization that flinches with every change in the wind of almighty public opinion that Starfleet has become." Jerry opened his jacket and shrugged it off. His shoulder holster and the grip of the darkly blued Colt were exposed to everyone. He tossed the coat down in front of Admiral Cendara. "I'm through with the lot of you, as of right now. I have other things to do with my time."

Old and New -- Garry Stahl, January 2005

"...to everything there is a season, and time for every purpose under Heaven". All actions have consequences. Here we see the consequences of the events in A Warrior's Tale. Jerold Ryan LaSaille moves into the era beyond his time in Starfleet.

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Closure

Hot and thin. The few times I had been on Vulcan that is the thought the air always brought to mind hot and thin. So I was on Vulcan again, at the request of a most unusual man. At the moment I was walking behind a Vulcan woman that was taking me to him.

I caught sight of myself in a reflective surface. It startled a little still. I was still getting used to not wearing a Starfleet uniform every waking hour, discovering that I still had no great sense of style.

“This way Mr. LaSaille” said the woman indicating a door. “He knows you are coming.”

I entered the austere Vulcan sitting room. The man in question was meditating. I stood just inside the door and waited until he indicated awareness of me.

“Come in Mr LaSaille.” He rose from his meditative posture. “I was not sure you would come at all.”

I entered at his bidding. “I was surprised that you were asking for me. I would think I would be the last person you wanted to see Srock.”

“The logic is not apparent, no.” He turned to face me. “I do not claim logic in this matter. Logic, has frequently failed me in the past.” A slight hint of a near smile crossed his lips.

“I am here.”

“I see that you are. You did not bring Aleilan.”

“She is in the lobby. You did not ask for her. I am no longer an officer in Starfleet Srock. I travel with whom I please.”

“Indeed. It has been many years, and your visage has not changed. I expected those changes as a human would age.”

“I am as I am.”

“You offer no explanation.”

“I do not. I have a question however.”

“The obvious one I think.”

“Most likely, why did you wish to see me?”

“To do a human thing. To express my thanks.”

The laugh nearly got out. I sternly suppressed it. “Your thanks? Srock, you have been in this institution for 50 years and you thank me?”

“Yes, I thank you. Without you, I would most likely be no where. My Katra lost, my memory forgotten. I am to be released soon. I can attempt to find for myself a more normal life, because of you.”

I stoned for a moment, silent. “Then I can but accept you sentiments with the grace with which they are offered.” I made the hand gesture Vulcans use. “Live Long and Prosper Srock.”

He returned my salute. “Live Long and Prosper Jerold LaSaille.. As you once said to me, for what you have done to my benefit, I will remember.”

Closure – August, 2008

*This scene came to me driving to a computer meeting. It's a nice end cap to **Hail to the Valiant**.*

Now That You Have It...

Summertime, Savanna sizzled on a perfect day. El Nanth was at zenith, and you could all but hear the UV hit the ground.

Aleilan was out playing among the herd. Jerry brushed his hair, nearly white from the sun, back from his face. Time to pop down for a haircut. Might as well fire up the old hovercar and take a run into town.

The garage was a cavern of cool compared to the sun outside. Jerry ran a through preflight on the old Sabb. It didn't get out very often.

Preflight finished he buckled in and opened the garage door. As he hovered out the roof turned a near black as it came out under the open sky. He flipped the approach radar on, and put on the headphones with the mike around by his mouth.

"Jerry to Landing traffic control, how is the approach at 500?"

"Morning Jerry, you are clear at 500, enjoy your drive."

Roger that Landing. Approach at 500 is clear into town."

Jerry ran the car up to 500 meters, eased the throttle forward to Mach 2 for the drive into Landing City.

Twenty minutes latter he settled the car down to ground hover mode and eased into the town proper. There wasn't anyone's vehicle in front of Floyd's barbershop, but a small herd of Ane was gathered in and about. When he entered he noted that several of the locals were present as well. An Ane was getting a mane trim at the moment. It was someone he knew.

"Treban, when did you decide on the cultured look?"

Today, and I am following through on the decision.

"It suits you."

Why thank you.

Jerry looked at at the small crowd. "Who's next?"

"You are." Said Jila. "We're just hanging loose."

Nuru looked up from the filmy he was reading. "When are you rolling the *Kongo* out?"

Jerry smiled. "Next week. Oh she looks good. All finished except for a very

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through inspection."

"That's something I don't think anyone wants to miss. It's going on three years now?"

Jerry sat. "Five. It took me two years to get her bought and moved to El Nanth."

Jila nodded. "Yea, she looked a sight coming in. Starfleet used her up good."

"That is what starships are for."

"What are you going to do with her?"

Jerry scratched his chin. "I don't have that part thought out truth be told."

****It is always best to tell the truth.**** Interjected Treban.

"A statement of the obvious. She isn't the ship the *Desiderata* is, not as fast, not as roomy. She is a bit of history at this point."

"What about starship rides?" Asked Nuru.

"Starship rides?"

"Yea, let people get a feel for what a starship is like. So many museum ships are locked down and safed to the point they might as well be mock-ups. Why not let people feel the real thing, underway."

"I'll have to consider that Nuru. I don't want to play tour guide to an endless parade of tourists, but the idea does have a certain appeal."

"It would do these kids good to learn what went before."

A light came into Jerry's eyes. "Yes, it would."

Nuru looked at him. "You're not thinking what I'm thinking?"

"No, I don't think so. Taking school kids out would be a good thing and I will be doing that, but taking Starfleet kids out would be good as well. They need exposure to something outside the latest thing. A chance to absorb an older Starfleet culture."

"Always the subversive."

"Damn straight Nuru, Damn straight." Jerry grinned.

"Next?" Called the Barber.

Now That You Have It... -- Garry Stahl, March 2005

The question asked of the dog that finally caught the car.

Reasons

The Klingon warrior approached the Human with caution. He kept his drink firmly in front of him. He would have preferred a disruptor, a ship's disruptor. A public place was no assurance with this Human. He stopped a few feet from the

Human's table.

"Are you Jerold Ryan LaSaille?"

"I am."

"I am Karass, son of Karnor, House of m'Thos I have questions I would have answered."

Jerry looked at the Klingon doing his best to be calm. "Sit, ask your questions."

Karass sat and placed his drink on the table. He placed his hands flat on the table as well. "Twenty five years ago you shot my Uncle at Starbase 24."

Jerry's face drooped a bit. "Yes, I shot a Klingon."

"Why did you dishonor him with your words?"

Weariness stole over Jerry's face. "I was not a Klingon, and at that time, I was barely a Human."

"I do not understand. I want to understand."

"I don't know if I can explain it."

"Will you try?"

"This understanding matters to you?"

"Yes. I want to know what differences drove you to say these things. You are not a Klingon. Your death will not unsay the words that have been said. Only your words can accomplish that."

Jerry nodded. "I will try to explain. twenty five years ago I was suffering the long term effects of a most rare malady, longevity. I have spent the last ten years trying to get a grip on that."

Karass furrowed his brow. "How is living long a disease?"

"It depends on how long you live Karass. I am nearly 400 years old. Humans are not evolved to live 400 years. My mind was slipping. I was forgetting the when of things, I had started to look on shorter lived people, as being less people because of it. Your Uncle, at that moment meant less than nothing to me, and I said words that should not have been said. I have since regretted them deeply."

"Your words are strange. But I sense truth in them. How comes a Human to live so many years?"

"You find that out Karass, and then tell me. I don't know. I simply fail to die, I fail to age. No one can explain me, least of all me."

"You tell me that you regret, what have you done to repent your actions?"

"I have sought help for the problems of my mind. It was seek help or descend into madness. I had no desire to live a mad man."

"Have they worked?"

"I am in public. It is only recently I have allowed myself back into public. What token do you wish to take from this Karass?"

"I do not know."

Jerry nodded and spoke in Klingon. "Your Uncle was a proud warrior. He was prepared to avenge the death of his Father, your Grandfather. His only error was in misjudging an old wolf that had seen too many fights. I dishonored his

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efforts with my words. Can I restore that with new words?/"

"/You are Human, I will accept your words. I have one further question./"

"/Ask./"

"/How did my grandfather die?/"

"/He died performing his duty. It was war, he was my foe. I thought I had killed him cleanly. Klingons are a tough people./"

Karass rose from the table. "I leave with a lighter heart than I came with." He turned and left.

Jerry sat and pondered....

Reasons -- Garry Stahl, February 2005

Surprise

Professor Montgomery Scott looked at the gleaming ship in the El Nanth space dock window and marveled. Not that the *USS Kongo* was a particularly marvelous ship, but that it was here in the pristine condition it seem to enjoy was a marvel indeed.

"Do you like her Mr. Scott?"

Scotty turned to see who addressed him and felt faint. He couldn't be seeing this, he couldn't! "God all mighty!"

erry grabbed him in a rough hug. "Not quite. But is is damn good to see you again. I though you were lost for sure and forever."

"Aye, I did too. I was damn lucky."

"You were damn good according to Mr. LaForge."

"I thought you had left Fleet behind?"

"I have, but I've mostly forgiven them. Different people, different times and attitudes. Elizabeth never forgets. I had keyed in a note for any news about the *Jenolin* I recently got the news you where rescued."

"Look at ye, ye are not a day older than last I saw ye. How Jerry?"

"Scotty, remember that conversation in the Academy when I was accused of being, something over forty?"

"Aye, it was along time ago. I recall ye admitted to something of the sort."

"I very carefully didn't say how much over forty I was."

"I recall a good deal of imprecision on that part."

"If how much older that forty had gotten out I would never have been able to finish school.

"So how much over forty were ye?"

"When we graduated, I was six years short of my 300th birthday."

"Ahem,well, bein' that yea are standing here, I canna discredit that. What

ever ye have, bottle it. I'll switch from Scotch."

"That is the shame Scotty, I can't. I would if I could."

"Aleilan still with ye?"

"Yes. She is on Savanna right now. I'm here to invite you to dinner. You can meet the whole family."

"Well I'll not be turnin' that doon. What about the *Kongo* here?"

"The short story is I bought the hull and restored her."

"I never got to see her myself."

"Lead on Scotty."

A short walk took them directly to engineering. Scotty looked about, respecting the fact that many of the panels were live.

"How well restored is she?"

"Fully functional. She even caught a pirate not too long ago."

"Ye patrol in her?"

"No, but I pay for my dilithium and antimatter by taking Starfleet or local system cadets out for training once in a while. You know what it costs to keep one of these beasts up and running. The Ane treasury isn't bottomless."

Scotty's hands twitched over the master system control panel.

"One minute." Jerry pulled a communicator out of his pocket. "Station control, *USS Kongo*."

"Station control here."

"The *Kongo* will be dock testing engine systems."

"Test noted, proceed *Kongo*."

"Go ahead Scotty."

Scott caressed the old controls feeling the ship come alive around him. He set the system for simulation and proceeded to run the *Kongo* through several tests. "Aye she's a sweet ship."

"Are you in a hurry to get where your going?"

"Nae. When does she go out next?"

"Ten Days. It would be a nice switch to take the center seat."

"Ye don't?"

Jerry gave a little smile. "Qualified engineers on this gear are as rare as hen's teeth. I can state as a fact that the two most qualified engineers on Constitution class starships are standing right here, for the whole of the Federation."

"An ye never served as an engineer."

"Necessity and all. I have become good for lack of anyone else. Oh, I have a goodly number of trained and willing assistants, but they either graduate the local Academy or if Starfleet, move on to other assignments I have to keep training new ones. I have let her out without myself on board."

"Good you don't try it by yerself. Well, I was headin' to the backside of nowhere. Starbase 600, seems they have a chance of cracking the disodium problem. Their young genius asked for me by name he did."

"Wow. Is this for real or is this another pipe dream?"

The LaSaille Shorts

"For real, they have a source of disodium and Young Provid Akkknin has gotten a reactor started, if not sustained."

"Sweet, I'll have to look into that. Do you have a ship?"

"Nay, I dinna think the *Hairy Haggis* could make the trip. She's a sweet ship, but small."

"Cash out any tickets you have. You just got an invitation for a two week vacation and a quick trip via Express."

"Ye can do that?"

"I know where Starbase 600 is. Oz is an Ane world. I can have you teleported there in seconds."

Scotty put out a hand. "Ye have yerself a deal."

"Now, I happen to know that Mike at the Shipview Cafe has a bottle of The Glenlivet under the bar. Real stuff, not replicated. I know you hate to keep a bottle waiting."

Surprise -- Garry Stahl, May 2009

*This would be after Susan's "**Matters of Perspective**" and ties in with the Starbase 600 game. I have the recovered Scotty (Relics) taking a post at the Edinburgh Institute of Technology as an instructor. He was asked to come out and brainstorm on the disodium project, which he is doing here. There is a scene in the game where he walks into Hailey's office with the teleporting Ane trotting in behind him. A bit o' fan service for Jay's character, as Admiral Hailey.*

Lt. Provid Akkknin, an Andorian is also a character in the game. A troubled Lieutenant. Hailey was offering clean slate transfers to problem people in the core to get people. Akkknin was on of those he got. This problem turned out to be a genius with authority issues. He was put in a position to thrive, and started doing something with the disodium Hailey had discovered earlier. Needing more experience he asked Scotty to come out and help him.

Again this refers to the yet to be finished "First Day" about Jerry's time in the Academy. I'm having fun with it, but I don't have a plot yet. So far it is scenes of Jerry at the Academy, it's not about anything.