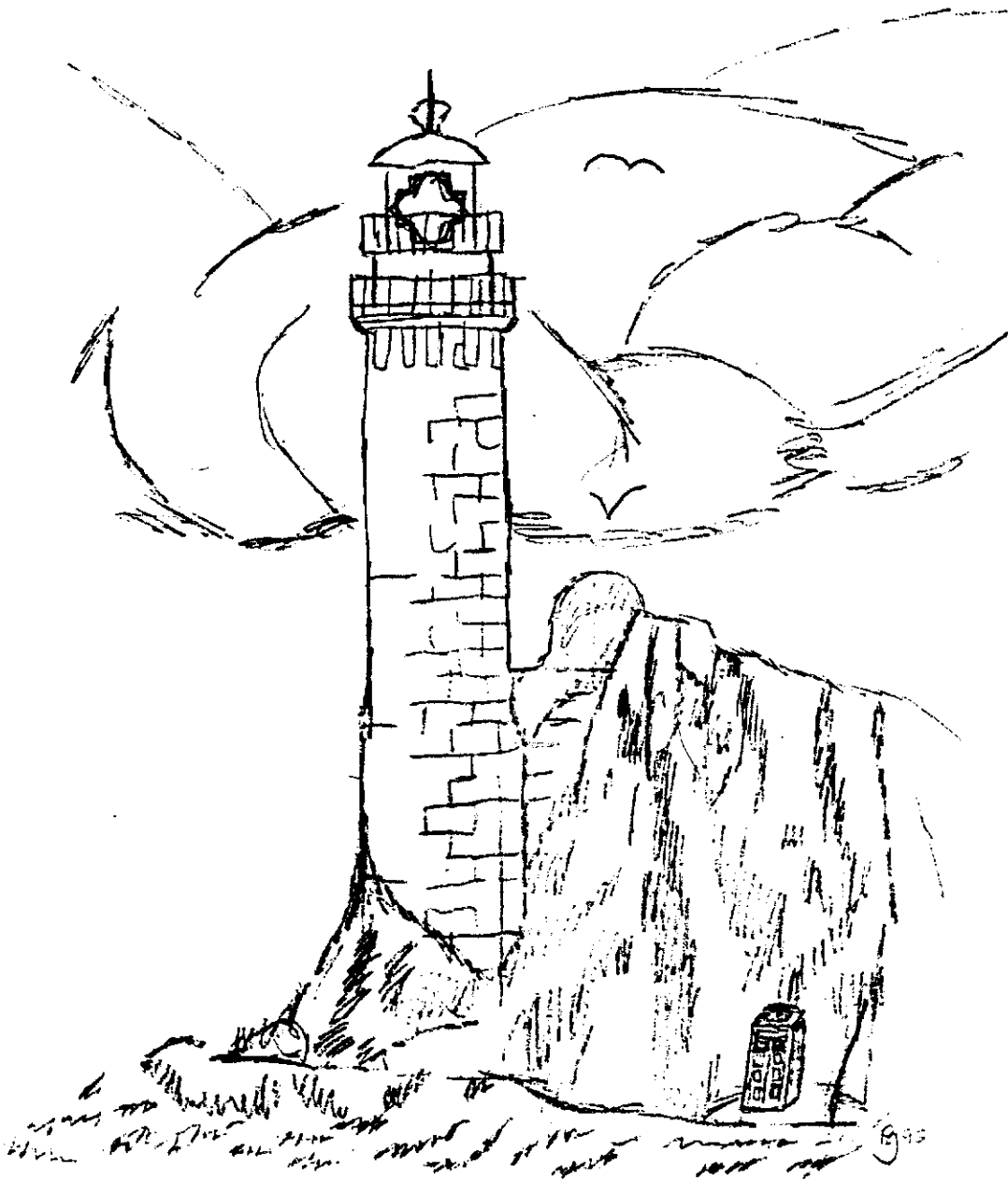


Dune Sea Express

#16 September 1992



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Additional last minute note for DOCTOR WHO FANS:

Take note of the following release dates:

OCT 8 - CBS/Fox is due to release:

The Tomb of the Cybermen
Shada (unfinished Tom Baker Episode)
The Pertwee Years
Caves of Androzani

BOOKS

Aug 1992 - Nightshade
Oct 1992 - Love and War
Nov 1992 - Universal Databank
Dec 1992 - Transit
Feb 1993 - The Highest Science
Mid 1993 - Evil of the Daleks and Power of the Daleks

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The Evolution Dilemma Part 1

By Ted Foster

Captain's Personal Log: Stardate 4431.8 Through all that my crew and I have seen and experienced, rarely have there been times when I have been able to share with them the activities that I do for recreation. The occasional Dixon Hill adventure is usually enjoyed by myself alone, and the number of experienced fencers and archaeologists on board is limited. However, today I am looking forward to introducing some of my bridge crew to one of my more relaxing pastimes.

I

"This is your idea of a 'docile' mount?" Will Riker asked as his captain and friend approached. Jean Luc Picard smiled and handed him the reigns of the horse he led in addition to his favorite Arabian.

"Docile enough Number One," he said, "you really wouldn't enjoy a pony." Will had to admit the Palomino was a beautiful animal, though he had never realized before how large a horse could be up close.

"He might not, but I would," Deanna Troi said walking up to join them.

"Are you sure we can't convince you to join us, Counselor?" Picard said while he mounted easily. Riker followed his motion, pivoting the stirrup and then stepping up. However, his eyes opened wide as he misjudged the saddle and nearly slid off the other side. Grasping quickly on his saddle horn he managed to stay upright, and achieving his balance he smiled somewhat sheepishly at Deanna.

"No," she said suppressing a giggle, "I think I'll just watch for a while."

"Is this all there will be?", Picard asked. "I'm afraid most of the others had obligations, Sir," Riker answered. "Chief O'Brien is busy with his daughter while Keiko is away on leave, and Geordi is in the midst of a minor dilithium realignment. Worf said he would be joining us later though."

Picard began to suspect something of a conspiracy to avoid his riding class was afoot, but dismissed the thought. "Well then Commander, lets start out with a walk. Um, think of it as impulse power."

Riker shot a helpless look at Deanna, then said, "Just let me know before we attempt warp speed, Sir."

Picard chuckled and then started off at a slow walk with Riker's horse falling neatly in behind. "Now relax in the saddle. For walking let the motion come easily." Riker complied as best he could, and he forced himself to relax his death grip on the saddle horn. "That's better", Picard said with satisfaction. "We'll try this a while and then move the speed up a notch." Deanna found a comfortable rock to sit on as the two moved out across a small meadow.

Riker found himself enjoying the experience as he began to

The Evolution Dilemma

trust his mount more and more. It wasn't long before he had moved up to a trot and then a cantor.

Picard admired his progress and began gradually pushing them onto different types of terrain. Leaving the meadow they moved into an area of spacious pine trees. Aside from forgetting to duck under several small branches, Riker handled the experience well. He had yet to get down the perfect rocking motion for handling a trot, but so far he didn't seem to feel much of the expected soreness in his thighs and hamstrings.

"Ready for Warp 9, Number One?" Picard called back.

"Warp what?!" Riker answered as his horse imitated that of his captain's by speeding up to a gallop.

At first Riker felt real fear at losing control of the animal, but gradually his confidence came back. A fleeting picture of himself dressed in an ancient barbarian's furs charging forward wielding a large broadsword came to mind, and he laughed to himself in spite of the situation.

Picard rode quickly down a trail up to a large outcropping of rock. Looking back, he said, "Very good. You should try..."

Passing around the rocks, his speech halted as a deep throated snarl erupted from the other side of the boulders. Totally taken by surprise his white Arabian reared back in terror as Picard fought to remain in his saddle. Unable to stop in time Riker's horse rounded the corner as well, to stand face to face with a sight that chilled the executive officer's blood. In front of him was a vicious head nearly a meter wide split vertically from top to bottom with a cavernous mouth lined with multiple rows of sharp teeth. Malevolent green-red eyes stared out from the face on each side of the mouth. The creature raised a clawed forefoot to strike.

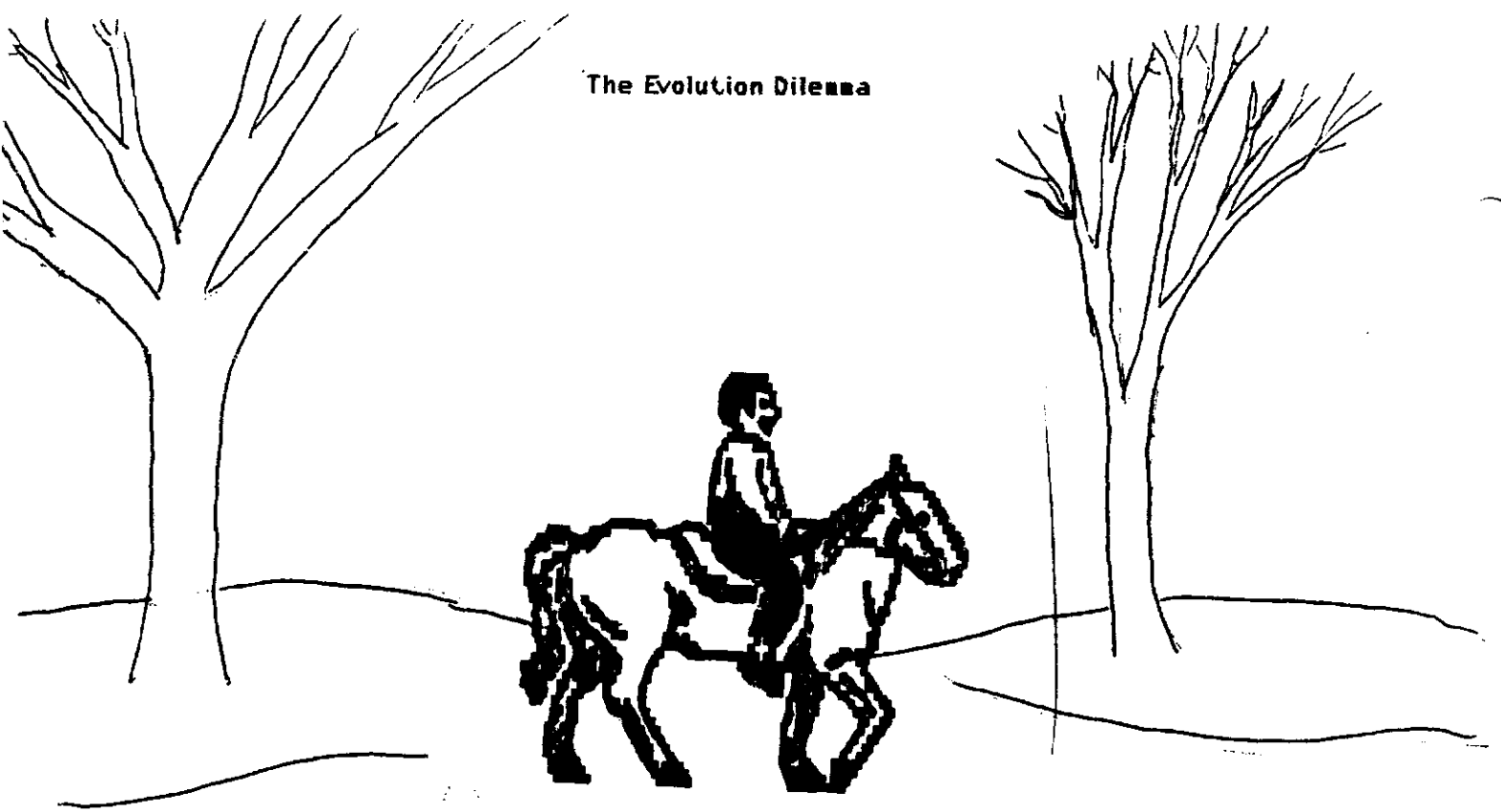
In total panic the palomino threw Riker off effortlessly and bolted, and with a muffled crunch he landed in a patch of shrubbery nearby. With remarkable agility he drew a hand phaser from his belt and prepared to fire.

"No, Will!", the Captain shouted as he continued to try to both fight and soothe the bucking horse. The expected attack never came. Halting a split second before firing, Riker was able to get a better look at his assailant. The beast was at least five meters long with a twin tail and sleek navy blue fur. Two rounded horns were found on either side of the head, and heavy chains surrounded each horn. Following them up, Riker noticed for the first time a rider on the monster's back.

"Worf!! What in God's name is that?", Riker shouted in exasperation. Wearing a bizarre collection of metal and leather riding gear. The Klingon looked puzzled. "At first I was reluctant to come, but the Captain recommended I could find a suitable mount. I have chosen one I feel comfortable with. Because of my inexperience I chose a young mai'Kharj rather than the full grown adult." Finally regaining control of his horse, Picard regarded his security chief. "I appreciate your concern, Lieutenant, but it might be wise next time to decide on mounts in advance."

Counselor Troi appeared running down the trail ahead of them. Seeing everyone in one piece, she breathed a sigh of relief

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and helped Riker to his feet. She whispered to him, "I pointed Worf in your direction, but he didn't make his choice of animals until he was too far away."

Riker nursed his shoulder, gave her a wink, and turned to the Captain. "I would like to continue, Sir, but seeing as my brave steed has chosen to run off...."

"Its no problem, Number One," Picard said, "Computer, freeze program and return the Commander's horse to this location. Please adjust the parameters to eliminate a horse's inborn fear of the mai'Kharj." Seeing the subdued expression on his First Officer's face, Picard nearly laughed out loud, but was interrupted by a voice from a hidden speaker.

"Commander Data to Captain."

Seeing Riker's smile return, Picard sighed. "Saved by the bell, eh Commander?" Raising his voice, he added, "Picard here."

Data's voice continued. "My apologies for interrupting your holodeck time, Sir. A message coming in for you from Starfleet. It is priority one."

It occurred to Picard that in the quietness of space the disaster call came all too frequently. Still, part of the purpose for his ship and crew was to help avert or minimize such disasters, so it was to be expected they would see more than the average being. "On our way, Commander. I'll take it in my ready room in two minutes," he said, and dismounted off his still-frozen horse. "Computer, save program and exit." The electric sound of doors down the trail sounded immediately.

"I felt your fear, Imzadi," Troi thought as she followed Riker toward the holodeck's exit. "I should have known better, but you had me worried."

"Somehow I should have known that it was possible for Worf to turn this into a version of his exercise routine," Riker teasingly thought back. "Next time I'm setting him up with a de-clawed house cat."

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II

Cruising at Warp 8, the Starship looked for all purposes as if it were no more taxed than if it were cruising on impulse power alone. Part of the wonder of it, Picard thought, was how concealed its power was. Let loose all at once it would form a small sun, but controlled as it was the ship moved along with a barely noticeable hum. It took a trained ear to notice the changes in sound that the ship made as it accelerated or changed course. Picard made it a point never to let those sounds become so common that they melted into the background. Like an ocean vessel's captain feeling the condition of his ship through his feet, his personal link with the Enterprise was in the sounds she made.

He focused his mind once again on the problem at hand. The call had come regarding a colony world near the Cardassian border named Derallium II. The colony was almost 60 years old, and had thrived in spite of the armed conflict that had raged around it for over twenty years. As a precaution in any new system, an orbiting network of "shepherd" satellites had been installed to provide planetary communications, weather information, monitor geological changes, and to search for natural and unnatural visitors from space.

It was this network which had located a near orbit asteroid, or grazer, which it relayed to a central ground station. Like the millions of such chunks of space debris found orbiting most suns, this one was notable only for its size and position. Like all the others it was labeled and chosen for continued monitoring. However, after several days of observations, the station caused the first world wide panic in the colony's history by issuing an imminent collision alert. Calculations showed that the asteroid would impact the world within 6 days, and as the closest Starfleet vessel the Enterprise had been sent to lead the effort to save the colony.

Even at a sustained Warp 8, the ship wouldn't arrive for another three days. Picard planned to use the time to familiarize the experts under his command with the facts and to come up with several contingency plans. Checking the chronometer in the arm of his chair, he noted the time and then moved toward the briefing lounge. "You have the bridge, Ensign Ro."

Ro moved down from the tactical position with her usual grace and an "Aye, Sir." Picard entered the rear doors to find his staff already assembled.

"I've called this meeting", he began, "to review the facts for this mission and to begin our contingency plans so that we can be ready to act upon arrival at Derallium II. I've asked Commander Data and Lt. LaForge to present what information we have at this time."

Beginning without further word, Data engaged a few controls in front of his position and a three dimensional holographic image of the Derallium system appeared above the conference table. "This is the current position of all relevant planetary bodies as of this stardate," he began. "You will note the orbit of the colony world in yellow and that of the asteroid body nicknamed, the Reaper, in red."

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The computer image showed the orbit of the planet to be almost circular while the asteroid held to a more elliptical path around the star. However, at two points in their orbits near the nadir point of the asteroid, the paths crossed forming two bright orange spots. Data changed the view to a close up of one of the two orange points. "In approximately six ship days, 13 hours, and seven minutes, calculations provided by the ship's sensors show that the asteroid will become trapped in the gravity well of the planet and impact somewhere in the southern hemisphere in this region." A display of the colony planet appeared showing a path of destruction hundreds of kilometers wide and thousands long passing across the two large southern continents.

Geordi LaForge double checked his information pad and added, "The planet is marginally class M with a nitrogen/oxygen atmosphere. High amounts of hydrogen, sulphur, and carbon dioxide are also present due to large amounts of geologic activity. All of the colony's inhabitants live on the two southern continents, while several small unmanned outposts exist on the small island chains found in the northern hemisphere. The current population is 42,700 inhabitants."

"The object itself," Data continued, "is approximately six point two kilometers long along its axis and four kilometers wide at its widest point." A pear-shaped planetoid appeared on the room's main computer screen. "It is of typical composition for a rocky type of asteroid and consists mostly of iron and a variety of silicates. It will be travelling at approximately 28.500 kilometers per hour relative to the planet at the time of collision. Lt. LaForge and I have taken the data from the colony's geoscience station and extrapolated the effects of the collision.

"Our computer simulations show it will impact with a force of around 120.000 megatons. We are talking about devastation on a global scale here with mass extinctions and violently altered weather and geological patterns", Geordi added. Picard could tell by the grim expression on his face that his engineer was not convinced that eventuality could be avoided.

"Our first efforts then," the Captain began, "Shall be in finding a method of preventing a collision. Suggestions?"

Lt. Worf was the first to speak. "It may be possible to destroy the mass with multiple combined photon torpedo and phaser blasts aimed at calculated weak points in the asteroid's structure."

"That hypothesis assumes we could destroy more than 95% of that structure," Data interjected. "I do not believe that is possible in the time we are allotted. The best we could achieve in the time period would be to break the object down into chunks no smaller than 1000 cubic meters. Following the same trajectory of the current object, the resulting hail of large meteors would cause a much wider area of devastation with the same global results."

"I know this sounds crazy," Riker said, "but is there any evidence that Q or others from his continuum are involved here? They have created this kind of boondoggle before."

"No evidence points to it, Commander," Geordi answered. "Unlike before, there hasn't been any indication that this asteroid was suddenly shifted out of place or has been acting in a peculiar way."

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"I'm afraid we're on our own this time," Picard noted. "However, would it be possible to use the same warp field envelope technique as before to move the asteroid with our tractor beam?"

Geordi thought for a minute, then said, "it should be possible, Captain, though I don't know if we can move it far enough. Data?"

Data's eyes began to move back and forth in their characteristic pattern as he said, "accessing..." After a moment, he looked up at the group again. "I calculate a 14% probability that such a maneuver would succeed in preventing a collision for this orbit. Assuming success, sufficient time would then exist to pulverize the asteroid to the required levels."

"Those odds aren't promising. Is there anything else we can do to strengthen our hand?" Picard enjoyed this portion of his job. Throwing out a problem allowed him to see each of these people's minds in action.

Geordi spoke up again. "We could begin manufacture right away of thruster modules similar to those that we attach to cargo carriers. Attached to the asteroid in sufficient numbers they might give enough additional thrust."

Data considered the proposal for a moment. "Assuming we could manufacture fifty remotely operated thrusters, that would raise our chances of success to 52%."

Picard frowned. Half a chance was better than none, but not much. "That helps some. Commander Riker, I want you to work with LaForge's and Data's sections on tackling the problem of moving the asteroid. Begin manufacture of the modules immediately."

Turning to Beverly Crusher, he added, "Doctor, I want you to work with Worf, Counselor Troi, and Lt. Hak'el of the geosciences lab on coming up with contingency plans for the planet's inhabitants should our effort's fail. Any further suggestions?" No one offered anything else, so he closed with, "all right then, meeting adjourned. We'll meet again in 24 hours to check on progress,

To be continued...

Next issue in Part 2 of The Evolution Dilemma - Picard meets the leader of the colony on Derallium II and hears of the genetic experiments the colony has been performing on the native inhabitants and a mysterious third party takes an interest in the Enterprise's situation.

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Critique-al Mass

Siskel and Ebert NOT!

By Tony Steele and Mark Gillespie

T.S. We have been asked...

M.G. Conscripted is more the word for it.

T.S. I'm writing this. We're not ready to argue yet. I was saying we have been conscripted to write this column discussing, pro and con, the good, the bad (and sometimes the ugly) sides of Star Trek.

M.G. In our opener we will look at the Next Generation episode "The Outcast". It was boring. I hated it.

T.S. If that is all he has to say about it, this will be a short column. I, of course, liked that episode. If you recall that was the episode where Riker and a member of an androgynous species (Soren or Zoren or something like that -P.G.) risked their lives together to save a shuttlecraft, and they began to have a relationship. This is seen as a regressive trait by her people and is forbidden behavior. They refuse to allow Riker to see "her". To be single gendered is to be less than androgynous, and this is a treatable sickness, in their eyes. Riker attempts a rescue but is too late. We are left with the question of whether it was a treatable sickness, or did they through surgery and brainwashing alter an individual to fit the androgynous mold. The underlying statement, to me, was about homosexual behavior, and our view of it. I believe Mark might have liked this episode if he had gotten the message when he watched it.

M.G. I got it. I just don't agree with the way they presented it.

T.S. I thought it was a clever way to address the issue of homosexuality, without being shocking and blatant about it.

M.G. I don't see why they couldn't have been more open. In the classic series issues were not cloaked like a Klingon Bird of Prey. If they really wanted to deal with homosexuality, they should have just come out and had homosexual characters, not this androgyny crap.

T.S. But that's the whole point. In the eyes of her society, she was gay, treated as a deviant, just as gays are here. We felt stronger sympathy for her, because she wanted to be as we are, tending towards one particular sex. Paramount would not have allowed a more blatant treatment of the subject. They would not have been able to sell it to network syndication and advertisers.

M.G. I disagree. ST:TNG is very hot now. I doubt all of their advertisers would jump ship over a truly gay character. At worst some of the TV stations would have boycotted the episode, but I don't think more than a few would. If ST:TNG were a network show, I would agree, but since it is syndicated, the show can get away with more. Look at the episode "Justice", for example. But let's get back to the review. I feel the idea was presented badly. We pretty much see only Riker's point of view. We only saw the evil society trying to take "Pat's" sexuality away from her. They did not bother to go into detail about why they feel that their way was better. All we got was Riker going around saying how wrong these people were. We should have been given more insight into the other culture. Also, they could have introduced the topic of gender better than having "Pat" ask "What is gender? What is it to be male?" I wanted to scream when she said that.

T.S. The real question though was whether "society" had the right to enforce their "way" on the individual, right or wrong. Soren should have been allowed to leave with Riker on the ship, if she wanted. She should have been allowed to have a gender, if she wanted. Soren and Riker were in love, and should not have been separated.

M.G. Yeah right. That is another flaw of this episode. It is not believable that Riker would develop intense feelings for Soren in the short time they were together. This is yet another example of how ST:TNG will destroy a character for the sake of the plot. It was normal for him to be angry at the society for what they did to "her", but he would not have risked everything to save "her". He would have been frustrated that the Prime Directive was keeping him from "doing the right thing". With all the other women in his life, I don't see him in love with "her".

T.S. To allow the character to grow with experience is not to destroy the character. It might have been interesting to see what they could have done with the relationship, if it had turned out differently. ST:TNG has enough lead roles to compensate for the loss of one character, if it had come to that. Look at Yar and Wesley, for instance.

M.G. It might have been interesting, but it would never happen. They have shown repeatedly that Riker wants to stay on the ship. That is where he feels he belongs. He would not give up Starfleet for any woman. It is not in his nature.

T.S. You've got me there. Riker probably would not have left the ship. We aren't allowed to experience that, or any other alternative, because they took away her rights as an individual to make her own choices in life. That was a big part of the message!

M.G. I agree, but it was still a stupid episode. (finis)

Interstellar Molecules

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: If you want to see a Captain Sulu movie write Brandon Tartikoff don't ask me. I would love to see one but I have no control over the people in charge at Paramount. So, here it is one more time, write to:

Brandon Tartikoff
c/o Paramount Pictures
555 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90038

Paramount doesn't think you will go see a movie where Kirk, Spock, and McCoy do not play large roles. Write and tell them otherwise. It also won't hurt if you point out they could be making a mountain of money on a Sulu movie while they wait for Next Gen to start making movies.

ON THE HOME VIDEO FRONT:

For Doctor Who Fans:

Tomb of the Cybermen is out on video in this country. This is a missing episode that the BBC has now found all four parts of. It has not to my knowledge been shown since it's original airing in 1967. *Tomb* is the only story from Troughton's second season that exists in it's entirety. We have none from his first season and only five from his third season. This is definitely one to pick up.

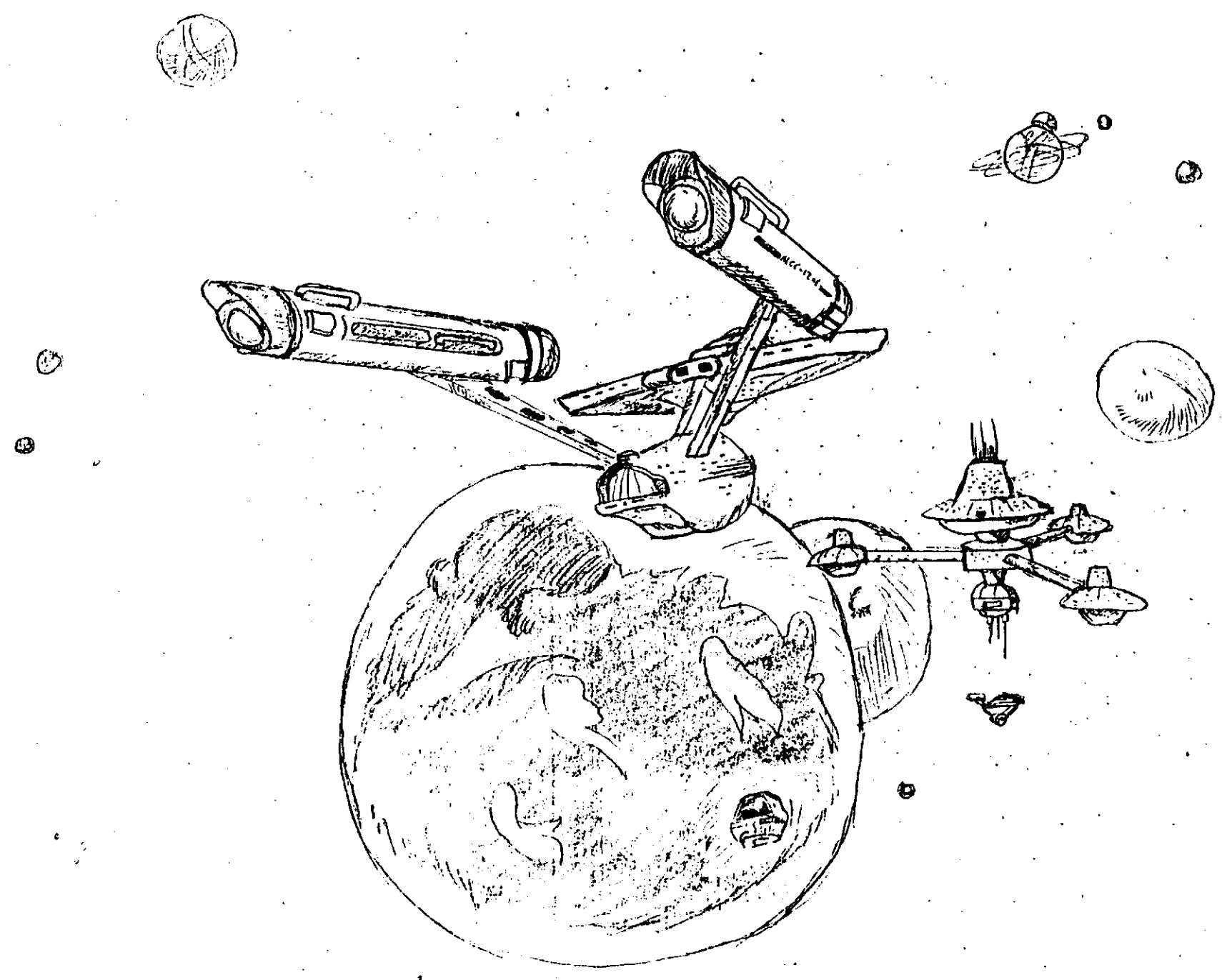
Bjo Trimble says in the last *Space-Time Continuum* I received that *Moontrap II* is out on video. But I have not been able to locate it. If anybody has seen it let me know.

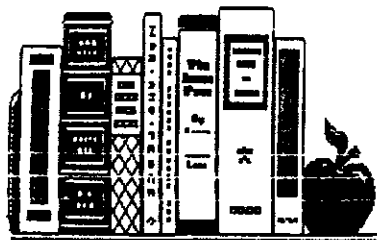
Vincent starring Leonard Nimoy has supposedly been rereleased on video as of July 23. But I have not made it to my video store to see if I can order it yet.

FOR CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT COLLECTORS:

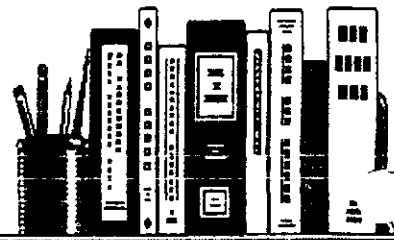
This year's Trek ornament (it's a series now, one new one each year) is the Galileo and should be in your stores by mid-August. If you are not on a list, check the smaller towns around. Hallmark is limiting the metropolitan areas. I'm told that Austin will only be allowed 40 shuttles per store. I spoke with the owner of one Hallmark's (we have 4) here in San Angelo and his quota is 160. And he has ordered all 160 because he had calls from all over the country last year for the Enterprise ornament. 160 is more than all 4 of our Hallmark's got put together last year. So if you're having trouble go to your library, get the phone books for the outlying areas and start calling. You should be able to find one eventually. My Hallmark owner says they are not underestimating the demand this year. The ornament does light up and will retail at \$24.95.

More news in December, Pam





Suggestions For the Spacefaring Insomniac



Perchance to Dream

Star Trek - The Next Generation Novel #19 by Howard Weinstein

Rating: 00 (Lieutenant J.G.)

By Ted Foster

Star Trek novelists (and fanzine writers too) have a particularly binding set of limits that they need to work within when putting their stories on paper. The limits come from two very distinct areas, and the first of these is the axiom that Gene Roddenberry set stating no major conflicts should exist between the crew members in his casts. While promoting a future vision of harmony among humans, it greatly hampers writers by stating that drama arising from such conflicts is off limits. The best Trek writers work in some of this drama anyway, but most look to outside sources (i.e. alien races, distant colonies, crew members under mind control) to provide the conflicts and hence the drama for their stories.

The other set of limits that these writers must circumvent comes from the wonderful technology of the 24th century. In many cases the technology is just too good, which makes for impressive technical manuals but pretty lousy stories. The novel would be just plain boring if, as David Gerrold wrote, "All Kirk had to do in every show was call for Scotty to beam his butt out of danger." So, to get around this, most of the adversaries in the Star Trek universe have to be able to render their character's weapons, communicators, and transporters ineffective.

I remember listening to the promotions for The Next Generation which described many of the innovations that had been made in the 70 odd years between the series - hand phasers that would level a city, transporters powerful enough to reach across a star system, and ship speeds unheard of. However, many of the writers realized that this announcement not only took away from the people-type stories that pervade the Trek scripts but also limited them even more than the technology of the old series. In the end the NCC-1701D ended up, story-wise, no more powerful than its NCC-1701 grandfather.

The limits above also have the unfortunate side effect of making many stories follow a distinct formula. The formula runs something like this:

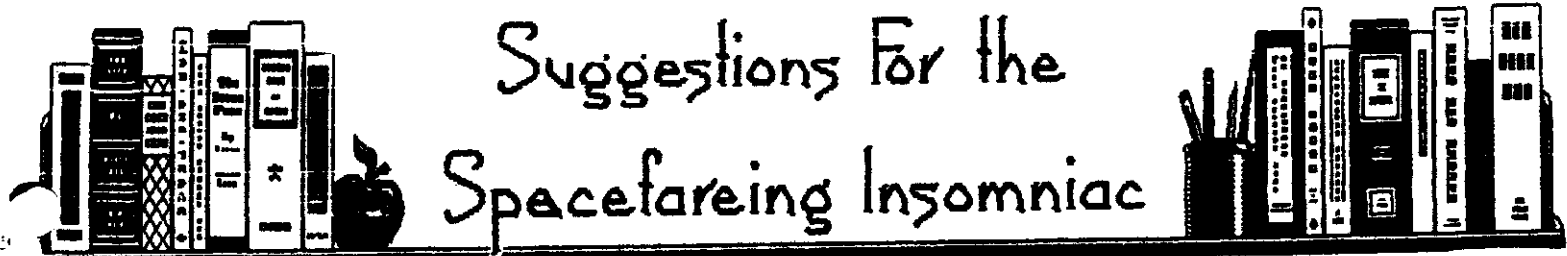
1. Some of the crew get separated - usually an away team with lots of security shirts.
2. They find their communicators and phasers have suddenly, mysteriously stopped working.
3. The Enterprise, even with its sophisticated sensors, cannot locate them.
4. The Adversaries (read aliens, terrorists, swirling energy patterns) make their presence known. It becomes obvious that they have a problem which only the Federation (read the Cast) can solve.
5. The away team will become the hostages who will be sacrificed if the Enterprise doesn't help.
6. After several plot twists, the Enterprise crew makes the Antagonists see common sense and finds a comfortable solution for all. These plot twists include other aliens, terrorists, and swirling energy patterns.

The best Trek stories (the recent episode "The Inner Light" comes to mind) escape this trap by finding original tales and innovative points of view. The recent TNG novels have not been so lucky. "Perchance to Dream" falls under this formulaic category, with Data, Troi, Wesley, and two other academy cadets being whisked away from an away team mission to a hidden underground cavern losing all contact (of course) with the ship. Picard must not only deal with the mysterious forces that made them disappear, but also with a race of somewhat paranoid cat-people known as the Tenarins who demand the planet for colonization.

Howard Weinstein's work with the characters is fairly well done, but the book cries for something new. If communicators work so little of the time, they would have been disused long ago. Why does Data always seem to be a magnet for energy beings who need to communicate? Even the Tenarins make a promising start but become humans dressed in furry rags. We have seen all this before, and the story becomes a robotic read.

Fans Please Note!!

Coming in July is a second Next Generation hardcover book which for many of us is long awaited. "Izadi" by Peter David will take a long, close look at our favorite couple, Deanna Troi and Will Riker. This will include their pre-series relationship as well as their future together. Even the hard-line Classic trekkers will want to check out this one! See you next month!



Suggestions For the Spacefaring Insomniac

By Sandra Provence Steele

Ice Trap

By L.A. Graf

**1/2 stars

Well I finally took time away from my job as convention chairperson for S*T*A*R*Fest '92 to read this book. Frankly, I'm unimpressed. This novel has an equal mix of agreeable and disagreeable elements.

Ice Trap is clearly a "message" story about the fate of the oceans when the plankton and other biota become unbalanced through indiscriminate fishing. For those of you who don't keep up with the environmental news; there have been massive die offs of plankton and other marine life. Algae is spreading through areas of the ocean reducing oxygen levels in the water. Tuna and other common ocean fish are currently overfished that the average size of an individual fish is over three times smaller than those caught five years ago.

Within the setting of Ice Trap the situation involves Federation (plankton) Harvesters. Ostensibly the Enterprise arrives at Nordstral to investigate the spread of mental illness and winds up investigating a missing shuttle. Because of the extreme magnetic field activity on the planet, normal methods of recovery can't be used. Uhura and Chekov go down to the surface. Chekov was put in charge of the team because he is security chief (?). (Talk about a demotion.) However, due to a bad attitude on the part of a member of the planetary rescue team, Uhura pulls rank and usurps Chekov as leader. She makes some poor choices which eventually cause trouble.

The Kitka are the native people of Nordstral. They are cleverly designed and without the book's indepth description of this culture; the whole novel would be pathetic. The author has a good grasp of ecology and the interrelationships of various forms of life. It's too bad that they haven't read any other of the novels to find out more about the characters.

Characterization and pacing are the two weakest aspects of this one. I wouldn't go out of my way to read this again, but I've read much worse.



**MR SCOTT, PLEASE
CHECK YOUR
COORDINATES
AGAIN,...**