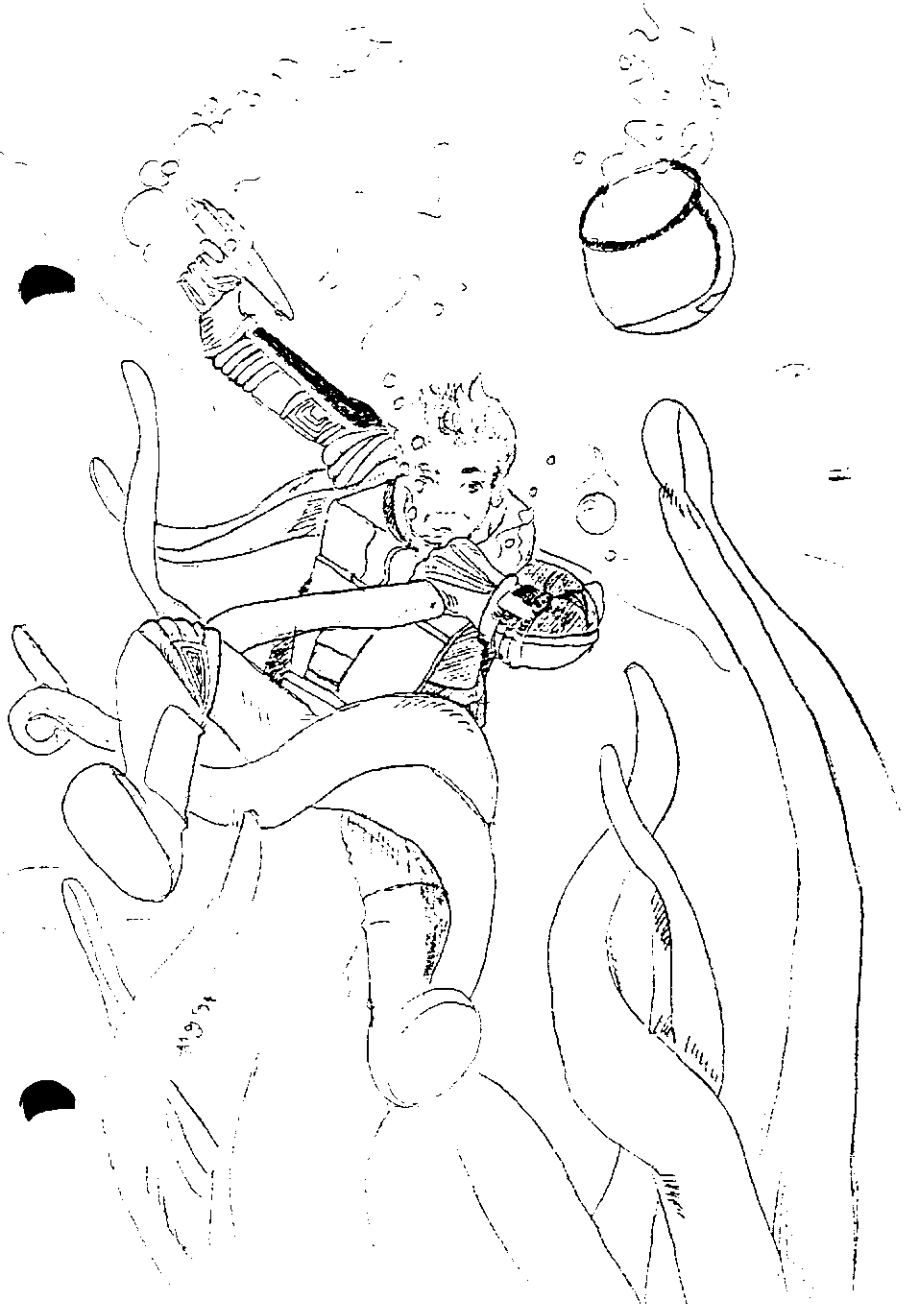


Dune Sea Express



#23 Summer 1994



Legend

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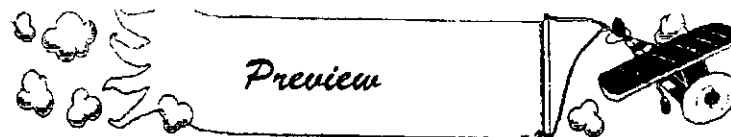
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The Evolution Dilemma will conclude in another 2 or 3 issues. At the completion of the story's run in the DSE we hope to have the whole story in its entirety available in one fanzine with additional artwork. Also at this same time we hope to make available *Doctor Who and the Lady of the Lake* as was previously published in the DSE. More on these exciting developments as they occur.

ETC and the DSE staff will be attending Lone S*T*A*RFest in Austin, TX on Sept 3, 1994. Stop by and visit the more profit minded of us in the dealer area.

The Evolution Dilemma

Part 3

By Ted Foster

IN PREVIOUS PARTS: Captain Picard's riding lesson was interrupted by a distress call from Derallium II, a colony endangered by an asteroid on a collision course. The Enterprise crew along with assistance from The Pegasus, a fighter-carrier commanded by Captain Marschall, and the Solstice, a Betazoid passenger ship, make several attempts to persuade the asteroid to take another course. All attempts fail, some because of a mysterious black ship that seems to be stalking the efforts.

Plans are enacted to evacuate the planet's inhabitants, however, Coordinator Effingham tells Picard that the colonists will not leave the native species behind. It seems the colonists have been doing genetic experimentation in an attempt to raise the local animals to sentience.

With the impact of the asteroid imminent, Picard orders the final evacuation of the planet. Only a group of colonists refuse to leave, taking refuge in an old lead and molybdenum mine. An away team is sent to retrieve them. Riker, Marschall, Dr. Crusher and an away team descended into the mine. After considerable difficulties the away team persuade the colonists and the Tenarin to allow them to beam them off the planet and to the safety of the Pegasus' bays after the fighters were launched. The locals are beamed to the ship but the interference of the approaching asteroid halts the process before the away team can beam away. The team must make it back to the shuttle before the asteroid hits in just two short minutes....

XX

Riker led the way with his long strides and Romaine was right behind him. They reached the lift less than a minute after Riker had given the order and piled in. He slammed his hand onto the actuator and the lift moved upward. For a minute, only the sound of labored breathing could be heard in the car, then it began to slow. He readied himself for more effort.

The doors opened and they moved out again, this time in reverse order with Marschall and T'Pol leading. To everyone's relief, the blast door had been raised making it possible to go through without having to blast it apart. Beverly's athletic conditioning helped her as they reached the stairs and took them two at a time to the surface. They all reached the top in quick succession, and then time slowed...

The shuttle was still nearby where they had left it on the plateau, but it would be another run to reach it. A roaring filled the air, and their attention was drawn upward.

Riker gasped at what he saw. Gigantic fireballs were racing across the sky from west to east at high speed - each glowing like a newborn sun. Brilliant trails of glowing green and gold followed each even though the sun still hung in the sky. The sounds were that of an old-style turbine engine, and were of such a level that Will would have sworn the source was next to his ear. They were passing overhead, but were far too close to the ground for comfort. As they watched for only a heartbeat, a new sound could be heard.

This low, tortured howl came from due west, and it grew rapidly in intensity. Coming in over the horizon, they briefly caught a glimpse of another fireball - this one much closer. And it was headed downward with astonishing speed.

Riker yelled, "Back into the tunnel! Take cover!"

Simultaneously, Marschall was yelling into his comm unit, "Enlahr, take off NOW! Get out NOW!"

Everyone began to turn or backpedal back into the mine entrance. Behind them, the shuttle thrust began to build. Will took a step behind the tailings pile when a blinding light erupted over his shoulder. In the tunnel the passage became lit as though by a noonday sun, and Riker, Marschall, and Romaine all felt their backs getting hot and at the same time felt themselves being pushed forward by an invisible wall of hot air. They spilled forward onto the others who fell en masse to the landing at the top of the stairs.

The light dissipated, and the dim light of the cave returned. For a brief second there was relative quiet, and then T'Pol began to get up. Riker yelled at her, "Stay down! The shock waves will be here any second!"

"Open your mouths.", Crusher said intently, "Expect big

pressure changes."

Warning came with a sudden rushing of air out the entrance. Will felt his ears pop painfully, but he kept his mouth open and his lungs let go of much of the air they contained. Within a few seconds, the first shock struck them. All felt a massive body blow to the chest, and then the ground began to heave. Sharp, side to side motions combined with a more gradual wave motion as the tremors continued. Rocks from the side walls began to fall, and then the rocks of the entrance tunnel came crashing down. They were thrown into pitch darkness, and still the world shook.

Will wondered how long the tremors had lasted, and how much longer they would continue. One minute? Ten? His stomach was definitely not enjoying this, and he could feel the adrenaline pulsing through his veins. He wanted to run, but there was no where to go. How long would the tunnel remain, he wondered? He closed his eyes, and prayed.

XXI

Ages come, and ages go. The planet relentlessly continued to move through space. A smattering of smaller rocks did not appreciably change its course - it shrugged off the explosions and continued onward. The planet Derallium II had experienced thousands upon thousands of such collisions in the past and had continued its path around the star unhindered. Indeed, the very planet itself had been formed from such collisions three and a half billion revolutions ago, and those same collisions had been partly responsible for life beginning to form on its surface much later.

But on a smaller scale, on the planets surface, all was chaos. What before had been several million tons of solid nickel, iron, and silicates was being vaporized within the span of milliseconds as the Reaper's remains impacted in an area 6000 kilometers long and 2000 wide. The first blows landed in the western ocean hurling vast amounts of molten rock and water vapor into the atmosphere. Chain reactions between the superheated metallic vapor of the asteroid and the water resulted in subsequent steam explosions of many megatons which hurled even more material into the air.

On land it was much the same with huge plumes of debris only now starting to settle into craters. Smaller, less dense portions of the Reaper also flashed to vapor before reaching the ground causing tremendous air bursts which leveled millions of acres of natural land and set it ablaze. But huge boulders larger than office buildings continued to pummel the landscape. In places, for the first time in aeons, the crust of the planet was opened up and the mantle beneath laid bare.

Like a struck animal, the planetary tectonics of Durallium II absorbed the pounding and reacted with violence of its own. As the tremors from the collisions began to subside, the planetary plates began to shift now that the stasis along the faults had been shattered. The world began to vibrate again as tremors and their harmonics pushed and pulled the surface like a dog with a rag. Volcanoes long dormant erupted all along the western mountain range, and the sky took on a sickly, black color. Elsewhere monstrous tsunamis were the order of the day inundating all of the western coasts with walls of seawater which swallowed cities and left plains of wreckage and silt in their wake.

Slowly, all of it began to combine like a ghastly symphony. The debris from the impacts began to combine with the ash thrown up from released volcanoes which in turn joined with the smoke of millions of raging fires on the surface. Billions of tons of new water vapor mixed with tremendous amounts of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and dust forming clouds the like of which there had not been for several thousand years. This indeed spelled the death-knell of 90% of the life on the planet's surface. For even with all of the immediate damage on the surface, the slow, killing truth was that the entire biosphere of the planet had been altered. The average temperature, rainfall, and availability of sunlight would not stabilize for several centuries, and only those few species that could adapt would remain. And unfortunately, this short list did not include the small group of humans now struggling in the darkness beneath the shelter of a mountain.

Will Riker came back to his senses with a start, and immediately began to cough. The ground had ceased its violent shaking, and a haunting silence now hung in the dust-filled air. But not completely. Through the floor and the back of his spine he could feel a dull rumble, a sound so low it could only be felt rather than heard.

Breathe. First order of business, Will my boy, he thought - you've got to clear enough away for that. He lifted his head in the darkness, felt dirt and stones fall away from his head, and the air came easier, though the grit covered his teeth and tongue.

Move. He suddenly noticed he felt much heavier than before, and so tentatively began to move one muscle and then the next. First an arm, then the other. As he experimented, more of the debris fell away including several larger rocks. His back and left thigh ached from some of the impacts, but miraculously nothing seemed to be broken. He got up into a low crouch.

Light. Definitely a priority. Must see if possible, he thought. He fumbled for the utility light at his waist and brought it up to his head. To his satisfaction, it clicked on and the remnants of the small chamber were lit with a bright beam of light which struggled to pierce a thick cloud of dust. After the minutes of total darkness it was almost blinding, but Riker forced himself to concentrate on finding the other members of the away team.

Around him the floor was scattered with large rocks and piles of dirt and dust. He checked each mound on the floor looking for movement and scraps of clothing. He found Beverly Crusher first. She had landed on her back and her face showed several large bruises, but she was breathing on her own and beginning to come around. Nearby he found Marschall and Romaine piled on top of each other.

The Captain awoke with a moan and a start, and shook his head as if to clear his ears. He looked up at Will and managed after a moment to croak out, "Broken ribs....I think I separated my shoulder as well." He took a breath and immediately sucked it in as Riker helped him to sit up. "I'll be able to travel here in a minute." He looked over at

the prone form next to him and simply said, "Romaine?"

Both Crusher and Riker gently uncovered the security officer, and found she had received a sharp blow to the head. Her hair was matted with blood and dirt, and the doctor took several moments to clear the tangled mass away. The wound was superficial, but a concussion was almost certain. As she continued to work, Riker moved on.

T'Pol was the last to be found, and Will looked grimly at her wounds. Her face was badly bruised and he suspected a broken nose. Similarly, one large rock had landed on her left arm at the wrist and hand mangling the carpal tunnel and the surrounding bones. As he pulled her to a position where he could work on the bloody wound at her wrist, he gasped in surprise! Her eyes were open and were quietly regarding him.

Her face remained composed, but she said with effort, "My medical kit would be of use, Commander. I can control the pain to some extent, but you will need to work quickly in order to maintain proper circulation to my hand."

It took a moment for him to absorb all this, but he snapped back to his situation quickly and found the medical supplies at her side. His Starfleet training kicked in and he focused on the task at hand; following her quiet directions to the letter. First he examined the shattered area and cleaned what he could, and then dressed the wound and splinted it. Only once when he was directed to move the hand to determine the bone fractures did her mask of composure crack, and she snapped her control back into place as quickly as she had winced.

When he had finished, Marschall crawled over to him. It was difficult enough to breath already with the dust weighing the air down, and everyone was trying their best not to stir up more. As the Ranger got to him, he handed him his tricorder.

"We've a problem, Commander.", he said. He touched the controls to display the geotechnical data he had been receiving. "I'm not able to scan more than 30 meters or so thanks to the rocks. But overall stress in the area is building. I believe the deep magma chambers are pushing up around us. The tremor activity has broken up old blockages, and now the lava is free to move. That's why the subterranean gases you see are also rising. Its only because

this chamber is so close to the surface and that the lower tunnels have collapsed that we haven't been suffocated yet."

Will thought a moment. "Can we blast our way to the surface? Get off the mountain?"

Marschall shook his head, "I wouldn't recommend it. If we could cut our way through without bringing the ceiling down, I'm not sure we could breath once we got there. The hydrogen sulfide and carbon dioxide levels are skyrocketing as these gases are pushed to the surface. More than likely they have already displaced the oxygen, and we would suffocate quickly. Here, in this chamber, I figure we have about 4-5 hours left for the four of us."

"So your telling me we can't stay, but we can't leave either?", Will asked. He had not meant it to be sarcastic, and Marschall's eyes told him he understood.

"Yes, that's right. Our only hope lies in quickly contacting the ships and having them beam us out."

Will thumbed his communicator. It chirped once but no answer was forthcoming. He took it off, and thought hard. Additional power was available from the phasers, and he could try reverting the sensory receivers of one of the tricorders into transmission amplifiers for his comm badge. It should work. In theory. Now could he do it in the dark with dirt everywhere, almost no tools, and in under an hour? Riker old son, he thought, Geordi had better give you a gold star for this one.

XXIII

"Any sign of them, Mr. Data?", Picard asked. He had been in close communication with Commander Evans aboard the Pegasus, and had felt his stomach drop when the away team was unable to beam out. Since then maximum use was being made of the advanced sensors of the Enterprise in a localized search, but nothing yet had been able to pierce the heavy ionic and electrical interference the collision had caused.

"Nothing certain, Captain. We are getting sporadic life signs, but are unable as yet to pinpoint the source and location well enough for using the transporters." The androids voice was calm, but there was a detectable urgency

to it that told Picard that Data was reacting with a deep concern. In any other humanoid, it would have been a stressful growl.

Picard looked around the bridge. Everyone was absorbed in their work, doing what they could. Geordi had his engineering teams working round the clock to restore the ships systems, and had promised warp capability in 24 hours. Worf worked from his station to aid Data in his surface sweeps while still keeping an eye in the other direction for the intruder. Ro was working the helm and continually making adjustments to maintain position as the planet's magnetic and gravitronic field fluctuated wildly. McIowski at science station two was completely absorbed in trying to manage life support for thousands of people.

And then there was Troi. Picard had to admit he had never known another woman like her. Oh, he had known many women, and many telepaths to boot. But she was unique; a person able to peel away the outer layers and get at his soul. She did so not by brute force as the Borg had but with an irresistible brush of compassion with which she deftly weaved like an artist. She made a patient willingly want to share their problems with her, to openly trust her because of the sincere trustworthiness she projected. To a man very practiced and rather proud of his ability to work behind his 'captain's mask', being an open book to the Counselor was both troubling and comforting. He might occasionally wish she would refrain from saying "Interesting..." when he made a personal decision, but Jean Luc had long ago decided he would not want anybody else in the counselor's seat.

She raised her head and their eyes connected. Her face was ashen, but though a frown tugged at the corners of her mouth she gave no other emotional response. His gaze became a questioning look, and she shook her head no. So Will wasn't dead yet, and therefore it was a good chance that Beverly and the three Pegasus crewmen were alive as well.

He got up and walked back to the science stations. The remainder not being used by Geordi or McIowski were recording data on the planet below. Areas on the continent below which could support human life were shrinking into pockets. This was especially true in the area of the mountain stronghold. The breathable air was simply being

pushed aside by the release of millions of tons of noxious gases.

Where would they have gone? Assuming they were all together, he thought, Will would be trying to seek out a location providing safety from the blast effects. Probably he remained underground, thought not too deep. He would be looking for air to breath; some form of protective bubble that would supply the away team until help could be sent.

It was time for that help. He turned to Troi and Worf.

"Counselor, Lieutenant. Prepare a rescue team equipped for medical aid and subterranean work. Inform me when they are ready to leave. Mr. Data?"

The android at ops turned to face him.

"Prepare a class one probe for launching to the planet's surface near the last known location of the Cerberus. Full sensor array, and I want a additional power provided to the probe's transmitters so that it will be able to communicate with the ship."

"Aye, Sir"

All right, people, he thought silently below. You've done us the favor of surviving this long. Just a little longer to allow us to return it.

XXIV

Riker touched the last of two connections together, and then allowed himself the luxury of sitting back to try to get the blood flowing to his legs again. He whispered to Marschall, "What do you think?"

"It should work if the units aren't too banged up. I don't know how long it will last though." The captain pointed over to a several small power regulators which had been removed and bypassed to get the kind of output they would need to transmit.

"How much time?"

"About 10 minutes before we lose consciousness.", Beverly answered beside him.

"All right.", Will said very softly, "Here goes nothing."

He touched a power cable to the circuit they had made, and the badge chirped loudly. Will gave himself a fraction

of a second to grin, and then began talking in a rasping, cracked voice, "Away team to Enterprise. We need emergen...."

The tricorder behind him erupted in a shower of sparks and electrical energy, and Will's heart sank.

Marschall banged his fist onto the floor, but then moved to recline with an expression of calm displeasure. Riker saw that Beverly Crusher was also calm, but when he looked at her she could not meet his gaze. He took her hand in his, and together they sat back.

No one spoke. TPYrl continued to tend Romaine even though they had very few minutes left. Riker admired her both for her sense of duty and for the emotional pain she must be fighting. He knew enough about Vulcan theology to know that she would desperately wish to relinquish her essence, or 'katra', to a willing host when the end came. But no one here would survive.

He found himself thinking of Deanna, of their brief time together as lovers. He had yearned to get to the stars as a young man. Why? He'd wanted adventure, to be sure. Adventure and to be making history instead of reading it. But why? What had he been searching for?

Fulfillment? Too simple an answer. A reason for his existence? Possibly, though that was too broad a response. He had, in fact, found several good reasons for his existence. One of the best had been at one of his earliest posts on Betazed. Deanna had awakened a side of him that he had not known existed within himself. She had shown him love without condition or expectation, and had opened to him what a true love could be. She was so many things; friend, confidant, giver of affection, conscience, spiritual support, lover,....Imzadi. She had given a meaning to their passion deeper than any he had known.

That wouldn't change, no matter who she eventually had relationships with. But he had learned another thing during his time with her. For all she was to him, it wasn't enough.

He couldn't give up his dreams then, not yet. So he had

He remembered thinking then through the blindness of youth that she would wait for him to get done becoming the youngest Commodore in Starfleet. He had had fantasies about

their reunion and wedding. But several years was all it had taken to show to him that they were both growing as people. And since they were not together, they were growing apart.

The air was getting so stale his breath was involuntarily coming in shorter gasps. He tried to relax with limited success. Deanna would be proud, he thought, of his finally taking the time to breath in through his mouth and out through his nose. Her favorite relaxation technique. More things he owed to his relationship to her.

Had he been a fool not to court her and marry her as soon as they had been reunited on the Enterprise? Yes. And no. Nothing he could do about it now, but the regrets lingered.

The air seemed empty...his head began to swim. He felt a deep urge to ask her for forgiveness for his foolish times, for being young, for being ambitious. In his mind the lack of oxygen began to make colors appear before his eyes, and his ears kept telling him that the rocks were moving against each other.

"Deanna...", Riker croaked. He formed a last thought of love and comfort, and projected it as she had taught him with all the strength he could muster.

The grinding noise got louder. Will was about ready to close his eyes when a blinding light appeared right next to him.

XXV

"Probe launched, Sir.", Data said, and his hands moved quickly to lock in the transmission from the probe. "Thirty seconds to impact.

"Very well.", Picard said. He had just gotten a report from the shuttle bay that it would be at least an hour before a shuttle could be configured to be able to fly through the turbulence, the electromagnetic cacophony, land on the surface, and return. Worf had promised him to be ready in a shorter time if possible, but no word had reached the bridge yet.

"Impact. Receiving data..."

Data channeled the large amounts of data coming into his station to the various points where it could be recorded and analyzed. "Protective cocoon expelled. The unit has landed

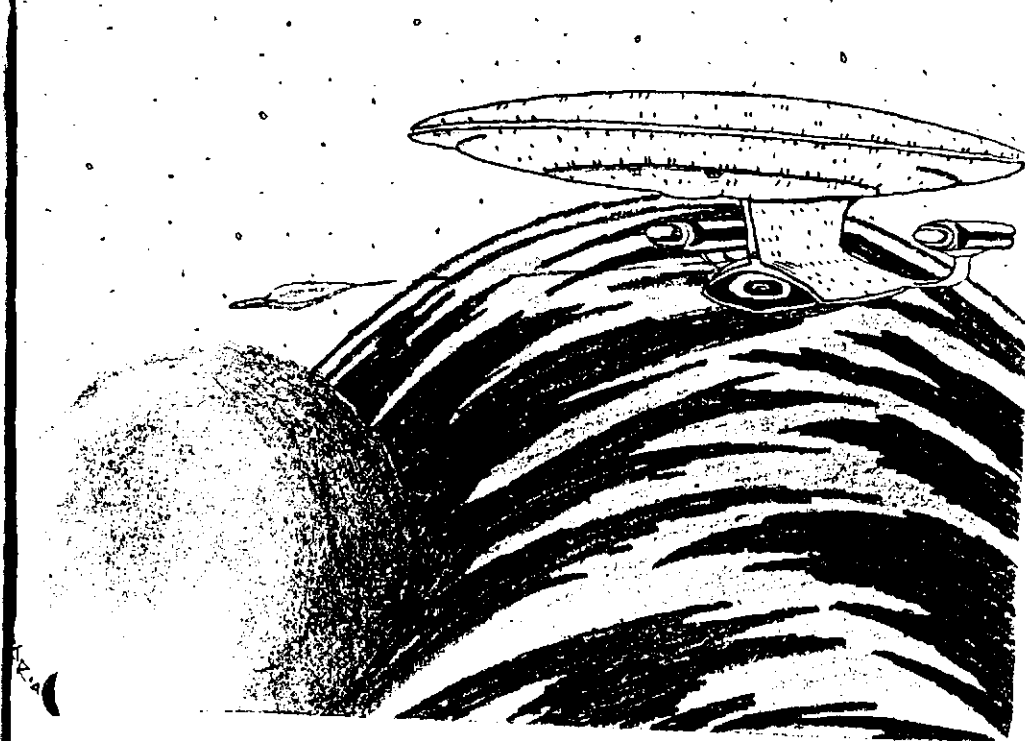
on target 1.8 kilometers from the mine head. Instruments show the atmosphere to be unbreathable and the surrounding rock temperature to be 48 degrees. Sir, there is a large buildup of magma in this area. Several volcanic vents are ejecting material and gases close to the probe's location. I am reading magma flow to the west."

"Life signs, Data?"

"Scanning. Intermittent life signs determined to the east. I will attempt to localize."

Deanna Troi suddenly rocked backward as if struck. Eyes wide with disbelief, she managed to utter, "No! Captain....no..."

To be continued.....



Critique-al Mass

Babylon 5: "Mind War" Part 2

Lead Gallery: **RS: Roben Simms** TW: Terri Wadsworth **DJ: Dan Joplin**
JG: Janeta Girard **TG: Traci Girard** **GR: Greg Rowe**

This review is continued from last issue...

GR: I liked it when Garibaldi was in the elevator while they were talking about what the telepaths can pick up. And he was like checking her out.

TW: Obviously..

DJ: I get the feeling he was doing it on purpose. He knew she would pick up on it and wanted to see what she'd do.

TW: He found out didn't he.

DJ: That's why the line came in, "I think I'm in love"

PG: Well, his first favorite thing is something dirty and his second favorite thing...He couldn't find anybody that would do his second favorite thing with him. The telepath wouldn't do it. He finally got D'Lenn at the end of the episode was sitting there in his quarters with him watching Marvin the Martian cartoons and eating popcorn and she didn't really understand.

TW: Marvin the Martian or the popcorn?

DJ: Both.

TW: She didn't understand the allure?

DJ: Yea

GR: Garibaldi is our comic relief, I think.

PG: He is the epitome of humanity in all it's glory. Sinclair is kind of above it all but Garibaldi is just an average guy.

TW: I like Sinclair. The first episode of DS9, I just didn't like Sisko at all. He was very cold and straight and humorless.

DJ: Yea, but look at what he'd lost. He lost the love of his life.

PG: These characters on Babylon 5 seem to be a little more well thought out than they were in the beginning on Star Trek.

RS: Babylon 5 had the chance to make some changes, too. They did the movie and then they had a year to work on it.

DJ: Wait till she sees the big alien in the suit that nobody knows what he looks like.

PG: Kosh.

DJ: Ambassador Kosh all you see is this big plastic helmet and these shoulder pads and this gown. He's got like this little eye thing. There've only been two people that have seen him and those two characters...

TW: Are insane...

DJ: No, those two characters were in the movie and have been transferred off the station.

RS: They were shipped back to Earth. The Vorlons are real secretive.

GR: They have really cool spaceships though

TG: We've watched the episode with Walter shouldn't we talk about it? He's certainly not being typecast as a goody toe shoes Chekov.

DJ: I like the character, Koenig can definitely do a good bad guy. He's just bad enough.

GR: His character is set up to come back. His hair doesn't look real bad like it did in Star Trek VI. Did you think he had too much hair in Star Trek VI? It was poofy. And he looked good in black.

TW: It was different.

GR: So do all these psi people wear gloves?

PG: I think they don't want to touch anybody. It's a direct sort of link telepathically for them.

DJ: The psi cops remind me of the S.S. I look at them and I see Third Reich.

TG: I can see why they'd need the controls on the psi people.

PG: But like Ivanova said, "Who watches the watchers"? It's almost a catch 22 for them. Somebody has to be the ultimate in charge.

GR: it's the media

PG: The People.

TG: It's the TV producers.

TW: So are we gradually going to find out more about Earth at this time.

PG: Eventually, They are dealing with human issues and as long as they continue to do that I think it'll be fine.

RS: It's good heavy duty science fiction that's not a Federation.

They're not coming up with all these weird explanations for all the changes in physics.

PG: Space is silent. And we haven't gotten the explanation on the jump gates yet. And it's not necessary that they be explained.

GR: And out in space when they're not going through the jump gates they have to use their thrusters and unlike Star Trek they keep going until they use their thrusters to stop.

RS: In the first episode, it was great. You'd see them coasting backwards and firing.

GR: You never see that on Star Trek. When they corner you can almost hear them screeching their tires.

PG: Like they were flying in the atmosphere.

And in Babylon 5 you get the feeling things aren't all up and down. They can be this way and that way. On Star Trek it's usually 2 dimensional.

TG: Except for the last 5 minutes of The Wrath of Khan.

DJ: But in this show you see ships coming from every angle.

PG: It's very three dimensional.

DJ: I'll be happy if 2 things happen. 1. They come out with some type of tech manuals on this show and 2 that they come out with a whole line of models. I'll be a happy camper.

TG: They haven't done a lot of merchandising

GR: Not yet...

PG: To wrap this up because we've gone way beyond 2 pages at this point. We've said a lot of negative things about Star Trek. In it's defense. Star Trek, whichever series, is good television. Babylon 5 is good science fiction.

Babylon 5 schedule Update

The following are the titles and air dates for Babylon 5 as of June please remember these dates and titles are subject to change

The date refers to the week of...

July 4 1994 Grail

July 11 1994 Eyes

July 18 1994 Legacies

July 25 1994 A Voice in the Wilderness part 1

Aug 1 1994 A Voice in the Wilderness part 2

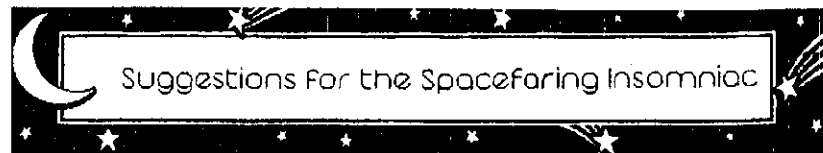
Aug 8 1994 Babylon Squared

Aug 15 1994 The Quality of Mercy

Oct 24 1994 Chrysalis (End of season 1)

Oct 31 1994 Chrysalis part 2 (Beginning of season 2)

Earth II, Spielberg's new series for NBC, began production June 28th in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This series is set 200 years into the future, where a group of colonists crash-land on a wilderness planet thousands of light-years from their original destination.



And since my illustrious editor did not say I needed to be restricted to Trek books, I'd like to take this time to introduce you to some of the other science fiction and fantasy books I have read. Most of the Star Trek fans I know read quite a bit of both...

The Eye of the World, The Great Hunt, and The Dragon Reborn by Robert Jordan (Tor Fantasy)

This trilogy begins with a magic user appearing in a small village who convinces three young lads that the evil is after them. Certain that they are a threat to their town, they leave with a company of friends to reach a city of safety. On the way they are pursued by twisted man-like beasts led by shadowy cloaked figures, and their dreams are filled with encounters with the Dark One. One of the band, it is later revealed, is the savior of the world, and it is he who must confront the Lord of Dark imprisoned in his dread mountain.

"What books am I talking about?", you ask. *The Fellowship of the Ring*? Surprisingly, no. This work is the property of author Robert Jordan who has been cutting his teeth on Conan and other fantasy novels for years. And even though I grew seriously worried about the lack of originality in the first chapters (especially when he called his nasties "trollocs"), his story works, and does so beautifully.

From a delicate beginning, a detailed and vibrant world emerges filled with magic and people of all kinds. He has created not only fantastic images but a lengthy, plausible history of ages grand and dark. We come into this world as explorers, and as our heroes set out for adventure the reader goes along with eyes equally naive but ready to see the globe. Each city has a distinct flavor, each culture a history to be proud of, and each person met full of secrets and desires of his own.

Well timed introspection by the characters lets us into their hopes, dreams, and fears, and we come to know each one as

an individual. As they grow and change through the adventures, the reader does so with them. Not all changes are for the better. I found myself yearning to help Rand Al-Thor fight the madness of this unbelievable power, compelled to guide Matrim Couthorn against his foolish, mischievous ways, and wishing very much to guide Perrin Aybara along his tightrope existence between man and animal. And not all the heroes in this story are men by a long shot. Indeed, the most powerful people in this day and age are women - the only ones who can wield magic without an evil madness consuming them.

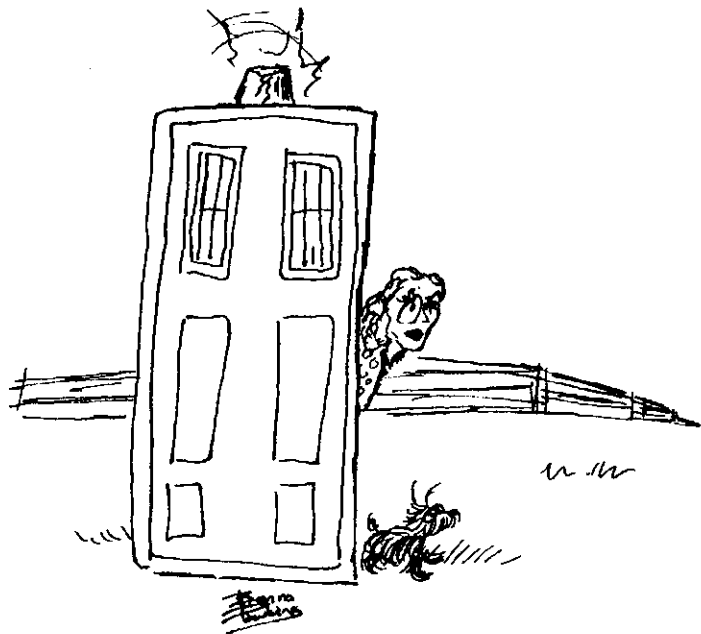
Probably the best thing about this series is that it is incomplete. While each book is a marathon of adventures unto its own, the story is far from over. With any luck after 2400 pages Jordan will bless us with volume four soon, and I for one will race you to the bookstore to get it.

Ted Foster

Note: This column was written some time ago and since it's writing there have been 2 additions to this series which is by the way called "The Wheel of Time":

The Shadow Rising (1992)

The Fires of Heaven (1993)



How Dorothy really returned to Kansas

Trek or Treat

A three-ring Convention where the Past and the Future meet in the present.

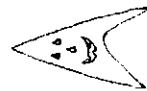
October 21-22, 1995

San Angelo Convention Center, San Angelo, Texas

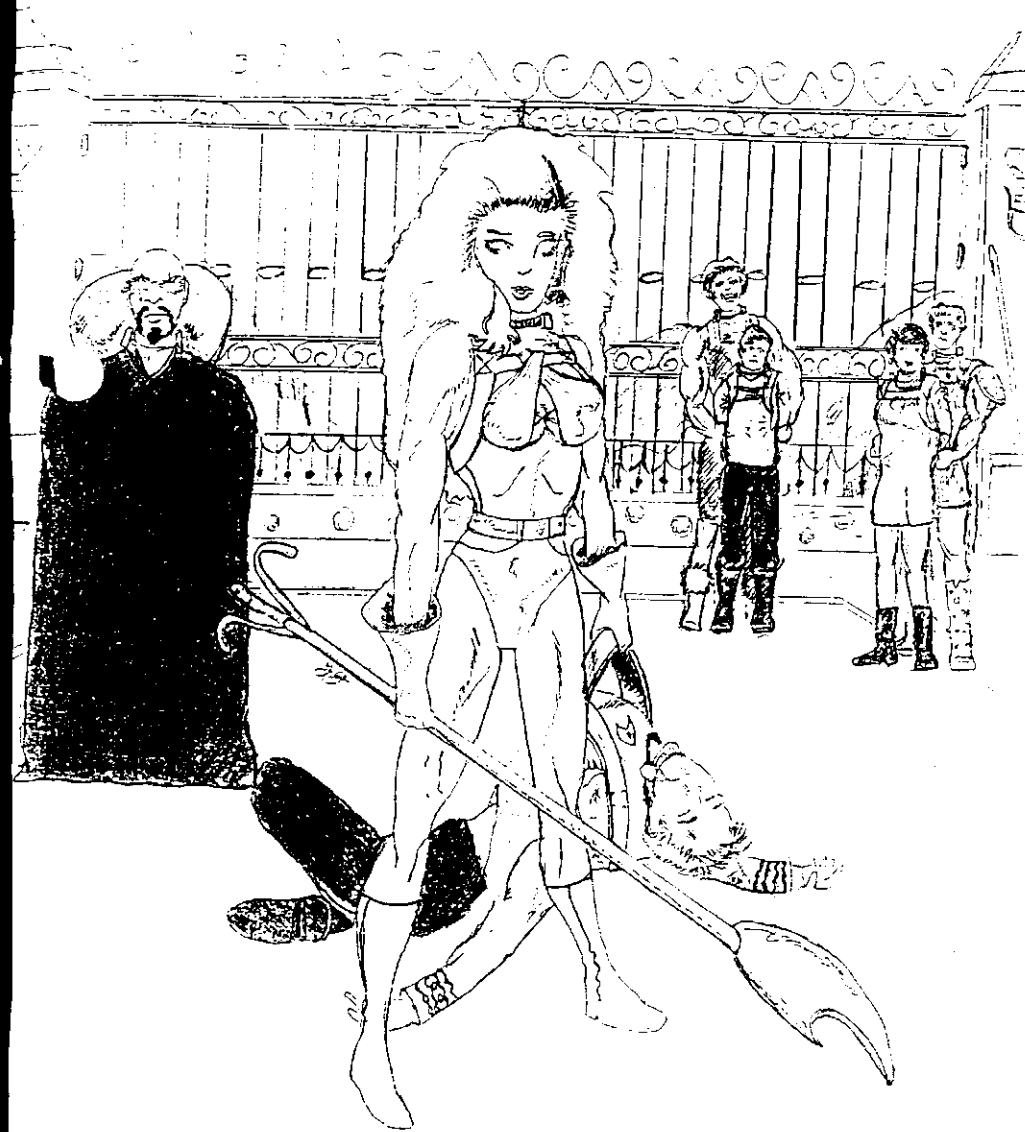
Benefits the Make-A-Wish Foundation

Guests include: Bjo Trimble (*On The Good Ship Enterprise*)
Events include: costume and model contests,
charity and art auctions, masquerade ball,
Trivia and other games, video room and more

San Angelo Comic Book and Card Show also taking place in the
Convention Center



Come one, Come All to the
Greatest Show in the Galaxy!





Dune Sea Creations

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