



Crockett's Spirit

Impavidus Scribere Veritas — The Brave Write the Truth



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Honor

by Brigadier Tensa

The university senior sat in a desk-chair down the hall and around the corner from his computer science professor's office taking a make-up final exam. There was nobody else around. He felt knew the material. That is, until he came to the question regarding a particularly troublesome multi-step computing procedure. The question was worth a good many points. The course grade and his GPA would be affected by his ability or inability to answer the question. He probed and probed his mind trying very hard to remember how to do it. The answer never came.

His text book for the class was sitting under his chair; he and brought it with him. The solution to the problem was there. He knew exactly what page to turn to. No one would see him open the book. It would be so easy...

The young student picked up his test sheet and his books, turned the unfinished exam in to his professor, and then left. Ultimately, he received a "B" for the class and a considerably lower GPA than a grade of "A" would have assured him.

"You had the book, why didn't you just open it and get the answer?" a friend asked him later. "The professor was in his office and there was no one else who would have seen you. After all, who would have known?"

He looked his friend straight in the eye and said, "I would have known."

I prize honor above all other human traits. I like to think that I'm a person of honor. Are you?

Incidentally, the student in this story graduated summa cum laude with a grade point average of 3.80.

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Fiction

The Alfore Encounter - 34

"Curious and Curiouser"

by CAPT Two Wolves

Janice had returned to her room fully intending to shower and get some sleep. However, here it was, 0245 hours and she was still awake. So she decided to pack and leave. That's when the middle door slid open, revealing Skonn, fully dressed and a tad rumpled looking. Obviously, he'd not slept a wink either.

"I'm starting to believe what Doctor Savage says about Vulcans," Janice said, as she sealed her travel case closed.

"What would that be, Captain?" Skonn asked, feigning ignorance as he folded his arms and leaned against the door frame.

"That Vulcans can hear a mouse pee on cotton," Janice replied.

"I also was unable to sleep, so, I was well aware of your activities," Skonn said as the left side of his mouth quirked upward.

"I figured I'd better leave before sunrise," Janice told him.

"And go where?"

"Back home to the family ranch."

"By yourself? You are well aware of Doctor Savage's dim view on your being alone at this particular time."

"I'm not going to be alone, Skonn. At the ranch, there are ranch hands, three of my brothers are there, plus a number of friends. So, I won't be alone, Skonn," Janice lied. She'd fully intended to steal off for a couple of days on Shadow, her favorite horse.

"You are coming with me to Azotan," Skonn announced, inwardly startled by his own boldness.

Janice turned those inherited *high beams* on him in response.

Those eyes...., Skonn thought.

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"And how in blazes are you gonna get me to Azotan? Are you gonna neck-pinch me like you did in Sickbay?" Janice demanded. Then, realizing what she had just said, she added in a softer tone, "Oh, I'm sorry. Forgive me. I know it was done for my own good. The past couple of weeks have been rather stressful. I've not been very professional," she apologized.

"All the more reason for you to not be alone," Skonn asserted. "I've noticed you have turned down every invitation to spend time with command staff, friends, and especially the Commodore's widow who was like a mother to you," Skonn told her. His words cut into her.

At eleven years of age her mother had died suddenly. Janice was sent to live with the then Captain LoDebear's family in India. Yodie welcomed Elijah Darden's only daughter as her own. To her children, Janice was their baby sister.

"I do not want to impose. I'm not exactly in a position to pay people back," she told Skonn. Janice believed in contributing at least a little something toward the cost of her room and board.

"The invitation to Azotan is all expenses paid. Since I am judging two major events, travel, hotel, meals, and other expenses have been paid for myself and a guest. I have never had a guest before," Skonn told her.

"Never?"

"Except for Echo, and she does not require much."

"No lady friends?"

Skonn frowned and shook his head once.

Just as I thought. The poor thing is socially awkward. She mused. A kid as handsome as he is should have ladies falling at his feet, yet he's taking his commanding officer instead. I guess I'm considered a safe date. "Okay. I'll go as your guest. What will I be attending? I hope I don't have to dress up,"

"First will be the Intergalactic Karate Championship which will last ten days, then the Intergalactic Hoverboard Championship," he explained. "There is a five day break between both events, so I suggest we become members of the *tourista*, and take in the sights. The only dress required is an event jersey, a T-shirt, or a hat. Those will be provided upon attendance."

"Great, when do we leave?" Janice asked.

"Since we are both packed, I suggest right now in order to avoid the rush."

"Is Echo ready?"

"Like me, she is always ready," Skonn replied.

"Well then," Janice said, "let's get going,".

Forty minutes later they were on The Galactic Star bound for Azotan, both sharing a luxury suite. Skonn slept on the pull out sofa while Janice slept on the bed. Both were so worn by the past events that they'd fallen asleep fully clothed.

Meanwhile, at Star Fleet's VIP compound back on Earth, the Gomez mini-clan had just awakened. Track

Cats and Graya were fed first. Then Shara and Tony sat down to have their final breakfast together before departing for Puerto Rico.

"Shara, who was that Captain who..." Tony started.

"Captain William Ciaccio of Starfleet's Diplomatic Corps," Shara interrupted. "I've had the misfortune of encountering him several times in the past."

"Misfortune? Did he hit on you too? He sounds like a real sleaze ball," Tony said with disgust.

"That he is, but more importantly, Kiki revealed something disturbing to me about him," Shara replied, as she mentally called the cat to her. Kiki padded in and sat at her feet, eyes on her Vulcan companion similar to a dog looking to its master.

"Kiki. Tell Tony what you revealed to me about Captain Ciaccio," Shara said. Kiki padded over and put her left paw on Tony's right foot. Since she wasn't mentally bonded with him, direct physical contact was needed to transmit her thoughts.

Not like that man. Man not smell like Vulcan, not smell like Human, not smell like Klingon, Kiki thought-voiced into Tony's mind. *Shara ask what smell like. I not know,* Kiki continued.

"Thank you, Kiki. You've been very helpful," Tony said scratching her head.

Shara raised her right eyebrow as if to say to her husband, "Well?"

"If I remember my Starfleet Academy studies correctly, when Captain Kirk and the U.S.S Enterprise, visited Space Station K7 during what is now called the *Quadrotriticale* Incident in which the perennial hybrid grain had been poisoned. Kirk discovered that Nilez Baris' assistant, Arne Darvin was not who he appeared to be. Kirk discovered this because some of the tribbles that inhabited the station took a distinct dislike to the man when they were brought near to him and screeched at him in revulsion. Earlier, Kirk had found out that the Tribbles had done the same thing to some Klingons who were visiting the station. Putting the two together, Kirk deduced that Darvin was a Klingon spy who had been surgically altered to appear Human, and that he had poisoned the grain," Tony explained. "If Ciaccio doesn't smell like a Human, Vulcan, or Klingon then he might be a Romulan," he concluded.

"A Romulan spy, and a highly placed one at that! No wonder he actively seeks to court female starship commanders and captains," Shara replied with a frown. "He is data mining, and sending information back to The Shining Path!" she declared.

"I recall LodeBear warning us there is a radical group that's trying to disband Starfleet. So, that's their name?"

"Affirmative."

"Shara, we are going to need solid proof of this. I know the Track Cats are accurate at reading people, but there must be solid evidence of the fact that Ciaccio is not who says he is. I think I know a couple of colleges who can help. Or, at least, investigate this more thoroughly," Tony said as he took out his comtab.

"In the meantime, I will get everything ready for us to depart," Shara said.

Fiction

Fallen Angel - Part 30

by Capt Wynan

Kroll stepped up next to Captain Moore, causing him to look up at the native in surprise. A guttural rumbling came from the center native. Angel translated when he paused.

"You are here today to decide your fate. Both the newcomers and you, Kroll, have broken our laws in bypassing this council before advising the newcomers of our plans. Kroll seems to have grown fond of the newcomers. It is not the fault of the newcomers what Kroll has done but the New Comers are at fault for not seeking out another for council." Angel paused a moment as the lead Native spoke again. A look of shock came over Angel's face as she stared at the lead Native, who nodded affirming what he had said.

"He says you, Captain Moore, are to fight to the death and Kroll cannot help. If your captain lives, you all will leave this compound and Kroll with you. You will be banned to the outer edges of the natural lands. If he dies, you all will share his fate."

"Now wait a minute!" Henderson started forward. Captain Moore held up his hand, halting Henderson in his tracks.

Captain Moore turned back to the council seated in front of him and said, "I accept your challenge but if I win you have to listen to us and hear us out before exiling us to wherever you are thinking of sending us."

A guttural reply came from the leader. Angel turned and said, "Agreed, you will battle our champion, Gaiel."

A battle staff was tossed to Captain Moore who caught it clumsily. He felt the heft of the staff trying to find its balance and get the feel of it.

A large native, stripped to the waist, stepped forward, battle staff at the ready. A smile spread across his lips showing his shark-like teeth. Captain Moore had been with these natives for almost a month and had never seen any one of them smile. He now wished he wouldn't smile. Captain Moore took a stance in the middle of the chamber keeping an eye on his opponents he said, "None of you interfere, got it?"

His crew mumbled, but assented.

A gruff chuckle came from Gaiel now squaring off against Captain Moore. The large native side stepped and thrust the staff towards Moore who knocked it to the side with a quick slap of the blade as he stepped away from the charge. Moore turned quickly, facing his opponent, his weapon up. Moore, still trying to get the feel of the staff, swung it back and forth. Gaiel brought up his staff from the ground trying to cut Moore from the bottom up. Moore thrust his staff down to block the blade. When the blade met the staff it cut through the middle leaving Moore with two sword length staffs. Captain Moore felt more at ease with the two pieces

and made quick use of the blades. He charged Gaiel knocking his staff out of the way with one blade while bringing the second down towards his left side. Moore's blade nicked Gaiel, leaving a long thin, red streak down his arm.

Gaiel swung back, growling, and brought the blade down towards Moore, cutting his shirt, leaving a scratch down across his chest and stomach. Gaiel spotted the blood on Moore and his grin grew wider. Other natives ringing the chamber started slamming their staffs into the soft dirt of the chamber; a slow drumming sound filled the air. Henderson clenched his fists wanting to help, but still heeded his Captain's orders. Kroll stood by, his face a mask. Gaiel shoved his staff with the wooden middle at Moore's chest knocking him backwards towards the line of natives ringing the room. Kroll moved swiftly, using his own staff, blocked a blow from one of the guards behind Moore.

Moore worked his way back to the middle of the room looking around at the natives seeing blood lust in their coal black eyes. They were all smiling as each of them picked up the tempo of the staffs hitting the ground. Gaiel had a foot in height on him as well as over fifty pounds, Moore watched as Gaiel walked around the chamber raising his staff as if he had already won. As he turned to face Moore, Moore dropped down, swung his left leg in a sweep knocking Gaiel off balance. Moore leapt to his feet and, with the butt of the staff, jammed his opponent in the torso and drove him off his feet. With the blades crossed in front of him on either side of the man's neck, Moore stood over Gaiel ready to take the kill that was his.

"Angel, you tell them this, I don't fight to kill and I certainly don't send my men on a suicide mission by sending them in a ship that will be their death trap once they leave the planet." Moore kept Gaiel at bay while Angel relayed the message.

The leader slammed his hand on the arm of his chair and barked out a response. Angel's face went white as she looked at Captain Moore and said, "He says you either take the kill or he will order his men to slaughter everyone now."

"Did he not just hear what I said?" Moore yelled over his shoulder.

Angel repeated again to the leader what Captain Moore had said. A gruff response said all that Moore had figured he would say. Gaiel lay on the ground just to the left and a few steps away from the center high chair. In one quick movement he lifted his left sword and pointed it at the leader. "If a death is what you want, maybe yours would suffice," Moore said through gritted teeth.

Slowly the leader raised his hands on either side as the color drained from his face. "One move from anyone and I will kill you." Moore said, his eyes not leaving the leader's.

Angel spoke again to the leader who responded in a softer voice. Then, turning to Captain Moore, she said, "He's listening."

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"My mechanic, Henderson, said there is no way that ship of yours will do anything but get your people killed. Now, if you prepare it properly, you can send it up, transmit a signal to a friendly station, and get a ship back here that would take everyone off this planet that wants to go with none of your people getting killed. Maybe you don't think life is precious but I do. We have been on ships all of our lives. When was the last time any of your people were up on a ship?"

Angel relayed the message. The leader sat there looking around the room at his people. With a heavy sigh he finally nodded his head and spoke. Angel relayed what he said.

"We will listen to what you have to say. We do hold life to be precious. We honor all life, yours and ours. Your Henderson and your interpreter will help us get a ship here that can get us off the planet? We have been here for more than three generations. Some of our people wish to get back out there, among the stars. Some want nothing more than to live out their lives here," Angel translated.

"You are willing to work together for both of our benefits?" Moore asked still holding one sword at the leader and the other at Gaiel's neck.

The leader held his gaze as he replied, his answer short. Angel replied, "He says he and the rest of the council are willing to work together."

Moore asked, "Kroll, is his word good?"

Angel relayed the question, Kroll nodded his affirmation.

"That's good enough for me," Moore said as he stepped back away from Gaiel and put both swords in one hand as he held out the other towards the leader. The leader looked questioningly from Moore to Angel. Angel quickly informed the leader of the custom of a handshake. The leader looked at Moore's extended hand and after a moment shook it.

Henderson let out a breath he hadn't realized he had been holding. "Great, now we get to work with these natives who we thought were nature loving peaceful people, just to find out they like killing people!"

"Well, at least we won't be killed until after the ship is ready to go up," Boomer said out of the corner of his mouth.

Henderson glared at him and said, "Bite your tongue! I'm hoping our amazing charms will win over the natives. At least the charms of Angel anyway."

Kroll lead everyone out of the council room, no one made a move towards them.

Moore asked Angel a question as they crossed the compound, "What would have happened to Kroll if I had lost?"

Angel asked Kroll and he responded. Angel replied, "Kroll says he would have been skinned alive slowly and tortured until he finally died." Moore looked at Kroll in amazement.

Henderson spoke up, "You know, at least with us, it would have been a quick death."

New Talent Fiction

Bark: Origins of a Super Hero

by ENS Ashinaga

Chapter 5: Unpleasant Discoveries

The Eiffel Tower was lovely this time of year. The Christmas season was in full swing and everything around Paris was extraordinarily beautiful.

A large crowd had gathered around the base of the tower for an important event. Hundreds of photographers were surrounded by thousands of citizens eager to get a glimpse of some visiting royalty. Prince William and his lovely wife greeted friends among the French as a stop on a Christmastime tour of Europe.

"My eyes are beginning to burn, Will." Kate blinked while continuing to smile and wave for the crowds.

Prince William shrugged and leaned over to sign an autograph for a little girl. "Don't worry, this should be over in about an hour."

Kate laughed. "In an hour I'm going to be blind. Should do well for that interview later."

William smiled at the little French girl and stood next to his wife to continue waving to the crowds. "Don't fret, I'm sure we can....what is that?"

Just then, one of the photographers pushed his way passed the police barrier and came right at the Royal couple. A police officer tried to stop the man but was thrown a good distance by the unnatural strength of the photographer. Another officer approached but was blindsided by the large camera hurled at him. The man, his glowing red eyes fixed on the Prince, held up his hand with a hole opening in the palm.

William gallantly covered his bride, but it was unnecessary as a gunshot was heard from above, and the droids left arm was severed. Another blast and its body was pierced.

Ashwood jumped down from where he had strategically placed himself on the Eiffel tower. Drake Ashwood doubles as an action movie star and as a superhero with the Urban Rangers. His marksmanship is unparalleled and he uses it well to defend his assigned city of London. With one last blast from his rifle, he split the hand with the weapon in two, just to be certain that it would not have even a small chance of harming the Prince.

"Prince, I suggest we cut this short."

Prince William looked stunned, "Drake Ashwood, what are you doing here?"

Ashwood continued to scan the crowds for any other suspicious characters. "I was visiting a friend here in Paris when I heard you were coming. I decided to scope out the event, luckily for you."

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Kate agreed, her eyes glued on the thing that tried to kill them. "I should say!"

Ashwood was becoming uncomfortable with all the people around. "Okay, enough talk, get in your ride and let's get the hell out of here!"

The Prince and his Princess got into their secure limousine and were whisked away.

* * * * *

"By order of the United Nations, and the World Alliance, all Dignitaries and their families have been removed from the public sector and taken to secure locations. The rash of assassination attempts has not taken a single life yet, but the possibility is growing with each new attack. Now, on to business news with..."

Frost turned the monitor off on the shuttle she and Bark were sitting in. Only five people were traveling in this pod. Bark and Frost, along with two pilots and another student going to be dropped off to join a team in San Francisco.

"Aren't you hot?" Frost asked, looking at the way Bark panted.

Bark nodded from beneath a heavy dark cloak he had covered himself with. He wanted to keep from drawing too much attention from people as he went to find his girlfriend.

Frost laughed, "It's no wonder; this thing's as heavy as denim. And that hood is almost comical the way it sits on your ears."

Bark typed and handed the pad to her.

"Sure, if you flatten your ears, you can't hear that well, but you look silly. Come on, take the hood off." She motioned to lower it for him.

Bark sat back so that she missed his head, it was his way of saying "no."

"You look more conspicuous with it on." She pulled on it, but the way he was holding his head against the wall, it wouldn't come down. "Fine; look like Christmas yet-to-come."

Bark picked up the papers he had been given by the General. These were the documents sent to the station in regards to him.

Frost looked at the papers as well, she frowned and shook her head. "You aren't going to take this offer...are you?"

Bark handed her the papers and then typed into his pad. "I don't know. This might be the only chance I'll get to be human again."

Frost read the papers, at least the parts about what he would have to agree too. "I don't like it. They want you to turn yourself over like you're some kind of experiment. You're a person, not a test-tube."

"They might be able to change me back from being a dog."

Frost laughed, "You're not a dog. Bolt's a dog, you are just a furry person...with a tail."

He handed her more text and then lifted up one leg to show her the extra furry shin and foot. She read, "I look like I'm wearing boots, I bark, and I can hear those damned whistles, certainly feels like a dog."

Frost nodded, "You're just different. But so am I. I can make ice anywhere I want to, and I have a very cold touch. But, that doesn't mean I'm not human, I'm just special. You're special, and I think that giving up what's special about yourself would be a mistake."

Bark shook his head, and typed. "I don't know. It might be my only chance and I might kick myself for missing this opportunity. But, on the other hand, I don't want to sit around in a laboratory for years while they do God knows what to me daily. I am conflicted."

Frost put one of those cold hands on his hand and looked into his eyes, which took a little bending considering he was covered by that cloak. "Listen to me. You can be a great man. You've already proven your hero qualities. The people of the ULH will be at your side, and you won't be an outcast. When the people of Earth see your bravery and heart, they'll see a great man, not a furry dog."

Bark shrugged, but he smiled with a little embarrassment at the compliments. "I will have to think about it."

Frost nodded. "Please think about it. I'm sure this team of scientist can wait a little while longer for your answer."

"Las Vegas Stop in two minutes." The pilot announced.

Bark took a breath and let it out; his chest trembled a little with the exhale. He gulped and pulled the cape in around him further.

Frost put her hand on his leg and rubbed the fur, "Calm down, relax, and just think of how good it'll feel when you find that your girlfriend is happy to see that you're alive."

Bark quickly typed on his pad and handed it to her. She looked at it and shook her head, "No, we aren't going back. This Jessica deserves to know that you're alive." He grabbed the pad and typed again, then showed it to her. Again she shook her head, "No, it doesn't matter that you don't look much like yourself. Believe me, you are fine, she'll be alright." She was getting tired of repeating herself, though she would continue doing so until her words had completely sunk in.

Just then, the small shuttle pod landed in an empty parking lot. Fortunately with the technology of the ULH, these shuttles could cloak so as not to surprise anyone, and they could land and take off vertically.

Frost stood up and waited, but Bark didn't stand. The pilot turned in his seat, "Aren't you two the Las Vegas stop?"

Frost frowned and leaned over to look at Barks face under the hooded black cloak. Realizing he needed some severe encouragement, she calmly stated, "Listen, if you don't go through with this, I'm going to take you into the training room, and I'm going to do my very best to freeze your balls off."

His eyes widened and he gulped again. He wasn't sure if she was bluffing, and that was a scary notion. So, with a shaking tail, he stood up and slowly followed Frost to the door. She opened it and then stood aside so that Bark went first, just in case she needed to push.

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The pilot announced to them, "The shuttle will be here in 48 hours. If you need me before that time, just signal."

Bark and Frost left the pod and looked back to see what appeared to be a door in the middle of the air. It closed leaving nothing there but the sights of the strip nearby.

Frost looked at her friend under the black cloak, "Okay, where to?"

Bark looked around and got his bearings. His memory was still fuzzy in places and he was always looking at things with new eyes. He pointed and then said, "Boof." With a snarl he typed into his pad and handed it to her.

"Oh, so her family owns the Moonbeam casino. Wow, rich family."

He nodded and took the pad back.

Frost could see that he was fighting on the inside, his mind was telling his legs to go, but his legs were too scared to listen. "Come on, before a dog catcher comes by." She made the joke knowing it would make him glare. Frost grabbed his hand and pulled him along.

The Moonbeam Casino was one of the oldest and most visited Casinos of the entire Las Vegas Strip. Built in 1963, the Moonbeam was a huge dome that was designed to look like the moon setting on the horizon. It had been home to high caliber stars, several movies shoots, and of course high rollers. It is rumored to be run by a mafia family, but Joshua Henderson knows this family and knows that this isn't the case, not anymore.

"Can I take ya orda?" A scantily dressed woman asked a man in a cowboy hat. She had a very definite accent of the Bronx.

The man laughed with a hearty Texas bellow. "I'll have the most expensive drink in the house, and make sure these lovely ladies have whatever they want. I'm win'n." The man threw down another winning hand of blackjack and busted yet another bank. All the while he had two very busty babes hanging off of each arm, both highly interested in what this sugar daddy was winning.

The waitress rolled her eyes and walked around the table taking all the drink orders. Roxy knew this casino probably made more money on the bar than anything else. Every time anyone wins anything, the first thing they do is order expensive booze. But, she didn't complain much, they're better tippers when they're tipsy.

The waitress navigated through the crowds, heading right for the bar. If she paused for even a moment, someone else would be throwing an order in her direction and she simply couldn't carry that many glasses without breaking one. Heaven knows that if she broke just another glass, she wouldn't have one red cent in her check again.

She slapped down her written orders, "Hey Mak, set 'em up, we have another winner on the blackjack who is throw'n dough at me." Roxy took a moment to sit while the bartender filled the orders.

While the waitress waited for the glasses to return,

she noticed a couple that did not seem the ordinary tourists for this casino. In fact, she recognized one of them. Leaving the bar for a moment, she ran over to meet the celebrities.

"Oh my gosh, oh my gosh, yer that Frost chick ain't ya?" She immediately recognized the woman in the blue and white tights.

Frost and Bark stood together, each looking around for any sign of a family member of Jessica's. Frost was recognizable. She had been a part of several missions that were all over the news. Her fame drew attention much of the time.

Frost smiled and nodded, "Yes. I'm Frost. Would you like an autograph or anything?"

Roxy shook her head. "Nah, I ain't the autograph type. What are ya do'n around these parts? Another big-wig villain? Oh, I bet it's those killer robot things!"

Frost shook her head, "No, nothing to worry about really. My friend here is looking for someone."

Roxy smiled and leaned over to see the mostly cloaked Bark. "An who is this fella? Another superhero?"

Bark nodded under the cloak and then typed on his pad. He handed it out to Frost.

She read it and nodded, "Yes, this is Bark, he's a new recruit. He's looking for Jessica Hardy."

The waitress was surprised to hear that, "You know the Hardy's?"

Frost nodded, "Let's just say my friend here is a friend of Jessica's. Can you point us to her?"

"Ya, come with me." She walked them around the bar and into a restaurant in the back where the high rollers ate. It was an expensive area with a large stage for the resident celebrity, who was not performing at this time.

Inside were just a few people, most of them enjoying an intimate lunch of steak or lobster. Bark and Frost were led to the edge of an upper balcony where the wealthiest resided for dinner and the show. "She's ova there."

Frost was about to thank the helpful waitress when she noticed that the girl they were being shown to was currently entertaining a handsome man. "Uh, who is that with her?" Bark looked up when she said this and pulled his hood back.

Roxy, not having noticed Bark just yet, answered. "Oh, that's Mr. Sorrel. He's an old boyfriend who came back into town. Good time'n too if ya ask me."

Frost asked, "Why do you say that?"

Roxy turned and her eyes nearly fell out of her head at the sight of Bark, but she held it together enough to answer. "Oh, uh, yeah. Well, Ms. Hardy's boyfriend up and died a month or so ago. The Police were all a fuss about his go'n missing and some lab explosion, and I don't know what. Jessica mourned and was so blue you could'a lost her in the ocean. But, when her old flame dropped back in town, she perked right up. If ya ask me, I think she's expect'n a ring soon. They dated a long time ago, ya know. Not that she'll invite me to the wedding or anything."

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Bark took a few steps closer and looked at his old girlfriend with the saddest puppy dog eyes anyone has seen on a man or dog. Something in them flickered, the light off of his tears, or the beating of his broken heart. But, it did not take a telepath to see that he knew what he had was gone.

Roxy smiled at Bark, "And what...I mean, who are you?"

Bark looked back at her and then simply walked out.

Frost smiled at Roxy, "His name is Bark, and he doesn't talk much. Please, if you'll excuse me." She left to follow her friend.

Roxy shook her head, "The things that come and go in this place, sheesh. Oh my! My drink order!" She ran back to the bar to get her stuff.

Bark walked all the through the Casino with his eyes fixed on the doors. He didn't notice or didn't care that everyone was staring and whispering to each other. He knew that it would be hard to come back after all this time, but he wasn't expecting this. Why didn't she wait for him? Why did she give up on him so quickly? What would he do now?"

"Bark! Please, wait!" Frost ran after him.

Bark got all the way to the front of the Casino and stopped long enough to let Frost catch up with him.

"Bark. Please, just go and talk to her."

"Woof!" he loudly barked at her, and then continued down the strip.

Frost followed as fast as she could, "I know this must hurt. But, you need closure or something like that. Don't leave broken hearted."

Bark turned, he quickly typed something into his pad and then handed it to her. "Thank you for trying. But now I know I really don't have any other options. I am going to New Zealand."

Frost shook her head, "No, please don't say that."

He simply shook his head and started walking toward the landing zone.

Frost let out a sad sigh and followed, "I guess I can't say anything to stop you now, can I?"

Bark shook his head again. She came up to his side and gave him back his pad, then took his hand to walk with him. She signaled for the shuttle pod as otherwise they would be waiting a while for it. Soon enough, it would drop Bark off in New Zealand, and Frost would go back to the station.

The shuttle lowered onto the helicopter pad near the airfield of Christchurch, New Zealand. Bark used a special code printed in the documents. The scientist team would send for him at the airport and take him to where they wanted to start the tests.

The pod landed and the door opened. Frost and Bark were the only passengers. Frost insisted on stepping out with him to say goodbye.

"Well, it has been fun knowing you, Bark."

He smiled at her and typed onto his pad. "Tell eve-

ryone thanks for doing what they have done for me. I guess you can tell Tobias not to worry about that translator thing he is developing."

Frost read it and nodded, "I doubt he will stop. Tobias loves to tinker around with that sort of thing. But, I guess you won't need it." There was a deeply depressed look that was fighting to come out in her.

Bark smiled and typed, "Don't look so sad."

Frost wiped a tear out of her eye, "Hey, any girl is sad to lose her puppy."

He laughed and rolled his eyes. Before he could type anything in response, she grabbed him in a full bodied hug. He put his arms around her and hugged back. They had never embraced like this before, but somehow this felt right. Bark loosened his grip on her and leaned back. Looking into her quivering eyes, his wish to speak again had never been stronger than it was at that moment. But fate is a funny, fickle thing, taking what it wants and leaving what you don't expect.

The moment was broken by the sound of a car horn. Both looked over to see a stretch limo waiting on him.

Frost let go of the dog and smiled, "Well, Merry Christmas, and...well...I'll find out if they have a visiting time or something like that. This isn't goodbye, not forever."

Bark smiled and shook his head. Without any more typed words or farewells, he walked over to the waiting car. Frost watched him get in and then she returned to the shuttle and told the pilot to take her home.

Bark looked through the highly tinted windows to see if he could tell where the shuttle was. But, with its cloaking device, he was unable to see anything. So, he simply imagined it going back up to that orbiting dot in the sky.

"Mr. Joshua is it?" A man in a dark suit surprised the dog.

Bark looked up. He reached to get his pad and type on it, but someone grabbed him by the head.

The darkly dressed man leaned forward and pressed a hypo-spray into his neck. Bark struggled hard with the man beside him.

"Don't let him hurt himself, we need the specimen in one piece!" The dark dressed man yelled at the assistant.

Bark threw his shoulders and head back hard enough to slam the assistants head against the window of the car. He then punched the dark man in the face. Without anyone restraining him, Bark tried to grab the door handle, but his strength was failing him quickly. In a matter of moments the world went hazy and he could no longer hold his eyes open. Sleep overcame him and his struggle ended.

The darkly dressed man pulled out a black handkerchief and dabbed his bloody nose. "I see he's everything Dr. Osten promised, and more. He should prove to be quite useful to our plans."

Brain Benders

ACROSS

- Checks for prints
- *Title character of the TV series which is the theme of this puzzle, with 19A
- *Space Academy astrophysicist with soft spot for Captain Steve Strong, with 72A, preceded by Dr.
- Opinions
- Chapter in history
- Latin dance
- Brenda of the comics
- D.C. V.I.P.
- Astrological ram
- *See 6A
- *Cadet who replaced 57A
- Scull
- Water carrier
- Agatha Christie's "The ___ Murders"
- Staff note
- Relating to the abdominal cavity
- Blackthorn
- Afflicts
- Outback predator
- Eye drop
- Constellation near Ursa Minor
- Talon
- Pi, e.g.
- Saudi, e.g.
- Martial arts

workout

- Familiarize
- Big-ticket ___
- Hankering
- Use charges
- Floral ring
- *Cadet who is "so cocky, so sure of himself"
- *Cadet Alfie "the brain" ___
- Broadcasting
- Mail place: Abbr.
- Any Platters platter
- In reserve
- Branch
- Big name in games
- *See 9A
- *Convict who escaped from *Prison Rock*, with 34D
- Double agents



DOWN

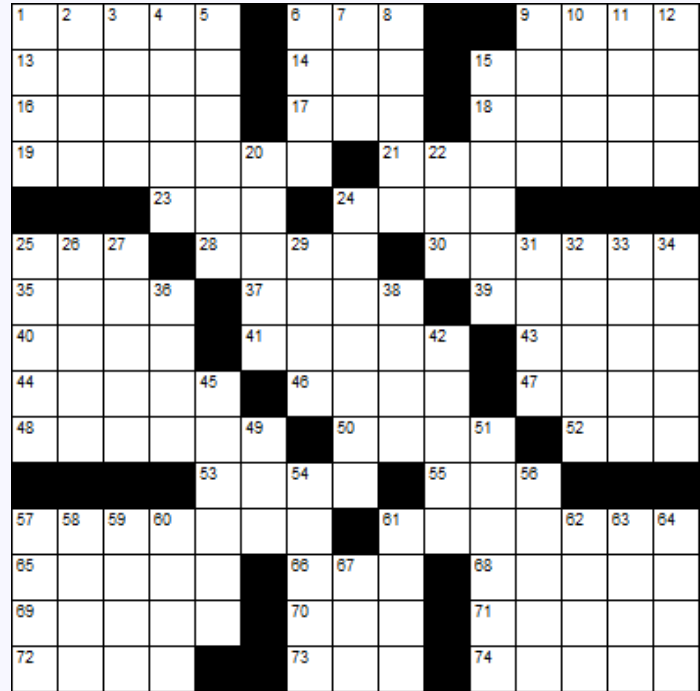
- Tiddlywink, e.g.
- "Do ___ others..."
- Rigging support
- Engine supercharger
- Mill site
- Reason to cram
- Miner's find
- Devil ray
- Jelly containers

- Leave out
- Cain's victim
- Snoop (around)
- Posted
- Tire pattern
- Popular fruit drink
- *Rocket cruiser commanded by Captain Strong and name of the Unit of Cadets training under him
- *Cadet ___, pal of 6A
- Cloudiness
- Cousin of a raccoon
- Red giant in Cetus
- Spank
- Dental filling
- Banded stone
- *See 73A
- Border lake
- "Begone!"
- Daggers, in printing
- Burning up
- Mark of perfection
- Large unit of resistance
- Actress Samantha
- Aleut's abode
- Atmosphere
- Oscar winner Paquin
- Do perfectly
- "Well done!"
- Familiar and cozy (Var.)
- Tranquil scene
- Christie's "Death on the ___"
- Gets the picture
- In favor of

ESB Crockett's Spirited Crossword Puzzle

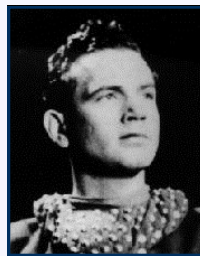
*"... Space Cadet" - TV Series From Oct. 2, 1950

by Brigadier Tensa - July 2016



Answers to Previous Puzzle

V	I	D	E	O	B	A	D	B	R	U	T	
A	T	O	L	L	E	K	E	L	E	I	G	H
T	E	P	I	D	L	A	C	A	N	G	L	E
M	E	D	I	A	L	C	A	P	T	A	I	N
E	E	L	R	A	N	D						
S	A	M	S	T	O	A	C	O	M	E	T	X
P	R	O	M	A	C	N	E	G	E	N	R	E
R	E	D	O	R	A	G	U	S	S	T	U	N
I	N	A	N	E	S	E	R	A	A	R	C	O
G	A	L	A	X	Y	R	O	L	L	Y	E	N
T	A	T	S	V	I	M						
S	P	A	R	R	O	W	S	O	N	A	T	A
A	L	P	H	A	I	D	I	K	N	U	R	L
R	O	S	E	S	N	U	N	U	N	T	I	E
I	D	E	A	E	G	G	P	A	U	L	I	



More Brain Benders

SUDOKU PUZZLE

July 2016
Medium Non-Symmetrical
by Brigadier Tensa

		8	4					
		6						
	3		9		8	2		
							7	
			5	1	2			
2	1				6	4		
	9							6
8				5				3
4				7			5	

Solution to June's Sudoku Puzzle
Easy Non-Symmetrical

8	3	4	1	7	2	6	9	5
1	9	5	6	8	4	7	3	2
2	7	6	5	3	9	4	1	8
5	8	3	2	4	7	1	6	9
7	6	2	3	9	1	5	8	4
9	4	1	8	5	6	2	7	3
3	2	7	9	1	5	8	4	6
4	5	8	7	6	3	9	2	1
6	1	9	4	2	8	3	5	7

WORD SEARCH

July's Topic: Michael Dorn Roles
Look for 38 character names
by Brigadier Tensa

M	A	E	R	O	M	R	I	C	K	E	W	O	R	F
S	M	S	D	B	C	T	K	T	H	O	K	M	A	K
A	A	T	O	V	A	H	A	A	V	X	Y	H	H	R
N	R	E	C	K	N	N	I	U	L	D	L	I	J	W
D	C	E	T	W	S	N	E	E	R	I	E	T	H	W
M	U	L	O	O	A	Q	V	A	F	U	B	M	F	R
A	S	L	R	M	R	N	U	N	D	U	S	A	G	O
N	C	U	E	I	N	G	A	T	H	A	I	N	K	G
G	O	R	K	I	Q	M	S	I	M	O	N	Q	D	E
T	I	C	U	D	R	J	O	H	N	U	S	T	A	R
F	R	Q	T	I	B	F	O	U	R	B	Y	H	E	S
G	A	T	A	T	O	G	U	V	E	N	K	O	U	Z
U	B	H	L	K	R	U	L	L	Y	J	I	M	M	Y
Q	C	T	A	Y	L	O	R	X	E	L	N	A	G	A
B	D	K	N	E	B	U	L	A	S	S	D	S	D	C

Solution to June's Word Search:
Jeri Ryan Roles

S	R	K	C	E	X	P	A	M	N	I	C	O	L	E
H	L	A	O	C	L	Y	D	I	A	A	Q	X	V	R
E	X	T	N	S	A	R	A	H	X	N	M	V	Y	T
R	T	E	S	E	V	E	N	O	F	N	I	N	E	A
R	A	M	T	X	L	R	A	C	H	E	L	S	S	E
I	R	U	A	K	I	M	B	E	R	L	Y	I	V	R
X	A	R	N	U	S	O	N	Y	A	B	L	A	D	E
C	C	P	C	A	R	R	I	E	L	O	C	K	E	B
L	O	H	E	D	J	A	Y	Y	A	N	N	E	G	E
A	L	Y	S	J	G	W	E	N	D	O	L	Y	N	C
I	E	L	U	Q	J	E	N	N	I	F	E	R	T	C
R	Y	D	T	W	O	O	F	T	H	R	E	E	Y	A
E	B	E	T	H	S	A	U	N	D	E	R	S	L	M
V	E	R	O	N	I	C	A	A	L	L	E	N	E	M
A	M	A	N	D	A	L	A	T	T	I	M	E	R	V

Brain Benders

Word Search

July's Word List:

Bane	Hitman	Sandman
Borl	Jimmy	Simon
Chairman	Kalibak	Steel
Chief	Kru'll	Tala
Clown	Kyle	Tar
Dante	Maero	Taurus
Doctor	Marcus	Taylor
Dr. John	Nebula	Thain
Fireman	Ouros	Thok Mak
Four-By	Quinn	Thomas
Gatatog Uvenk	Reyes	Worf
Gork	Rick	Xel'naga
Guard	Rogers	

R.I.P. Anton Yelchin

by Brigadier Tensa



Anton Viktorovich Yelchin (11 March 1989 – 19 June 2016) was a Russian-born actor from Southern California who played Pavel Chekov in Star Trek, Star Trek Into Darkness, and Star Trek Beyond. He also voiced the character in the 2013 Star Trek video game, and appeared as the character in an Xfinity commercial. Yelchin took over the role from Walter Koenig who portrayed the character on Star Trek: The Original Series and in seven feature films.*

On 19 June 2016, Yelchin was killed outside of his home in Los Angeles when his car rolled down his driveway, pinning him against a security fence and brick mailbox pillar. He was 27 years old. His death was ruled an accident as the result of "blunt traumatic asphyxia." His 2015 Jeep Grand Cherokee was subject to a recall. Fiat Chrysler will be investigating the circumstances behind his death.*



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*Source: memory-alpha.wikia.com/wiki/Anton_Yelchin

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