



# Crockett's Spirit

*Impavidus Scribere Veritas — The Brave Write the Truth*



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## Fiction

### Terra in a Bottle

by Brig. Gen. D. Tensa

The alert sounded and the entire com-deck crew jumped. When a stern voice called out, "On screen!" the image displayed before them—the two images—filled them with awe. "Bring us to a halt!" ordered Mission Commander Theo Crane. "This bears looking into!"

The SRS Ranger came to a dead stop. Displayed immediately before them was an enormous panorama of landscape that had no place in space. It was as if an immense piece of paradise had been carved out of the surface of a planet and placed inside a gigantic transparent egg. Beyond the land mass lay a seemingly familiar looking vortex opening to...to where, was anyone's guess.

"Looks like the entire Los Angeles Basin from Earth orbit," remarked Flight Con LuAnn Arden. "It's beautiful!"

"Does resemble L.A. a little, and it *is* a sight to behold," said Science Team Director James Butcher.

"Jimmy, you scan the land form," instructed Crane, "Valea, the vortex."

The solidly built geophysicist from Chicago, Jim Butcher, and the petite, telepathic, Danarian astro-physicist, Valea Minara, both went straight to work.

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## Fiction

### The Alfore Encounter - 38

"Unexpected Travel Plans"

by CAPT Two Wolves

"Captain. A few words on the Azotan," Skonn whispered. Janice was all ears as they toted the shared antigrav palate.

"The entire humanoid race has a genetic alopecia-like appearance" he said.

"Meaning they're all bald?" Janice asked, fascinated.

"Not merely bald, they are entirely hairless," Skonn replied.

"Wow. So, that's their normal."

"They disguise it well. The men wear hats, and the women wear head wraps similar Muslim veils. But, the head wear is used to protect their heads from the sun, as Azotan is semi tropical. Once inside, they remove their head coverings. Except for the teenagers who have recently discovered baseball caps and *hoodies*, and they wear them inside which is considered very taboo," Skonn explained. "The women wear colorful sari like garments that have matching head coverings. The men wear plain long tunics and pants," he continued, as they turned the corner into the huge, Azotan terminal. They were met with a riot of color.

One could clearly pick out the women from the men, and, as Skonn had indicated, bald heads were in abundance. Several noisy packs of teens slinked by, bedecked in jeans, trainers, baseball caps and hoodies with the hoods up.

*Ah, rebellious youth*, Janice thought smiling to herself, "I was one such youth once."

"The hotel is this way, Captain," Skonn said, pointing the way.

"Janice," she corrected, as she followed.

"Acknowledged."

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"Sir, this is unprecedented. The vortex is neither a temporal rift nor a wormhole. It opens, not to another time or another region of space, but to someplace else entirely! Therefore, it must be interdimensional, opening into another universe. There may be more, but scans are yielding little."

"Keep on it, Valea," The lanky commander advised. "Got anything yet, Jimmy?"

"You know how, when you're in the desert, the mountains are so much farther away than they appear?"

"Yeah...what about it?"

"Well, here's a twist. That land form's a lot closer than it looks." His brows furrowed, Butcher was clearly mystified. "And you know what that means..."

"Yeah, it's also a lot smaller than it appears to be."

"Right! About a twentieth the size we'd expect!" And get this! Except for external dimensions, my sensors can't get any clear readings! It's like they're out of sync with the object! Commander, I'd like to go out and take a look."

"Sir," Minara interjected, "that might explain what I'm seeing through the vortex. I can't get any definitive readings from beyond the portal, but it wouldn't surprise me to find that there is a universe there more compact than our own. I'd like to accompany Director Butcher."

"Very well. When you go for E.V.A., tether yourselves to each other and to the shuttle. Anything goes wrong, I'll tractor the shuttle."

"Yes, sir," two voices responded in unison.

Minara arrived at the object first, the director a few seconds later. She touched the surface of the transparent shell with her thickly gloved hand. She wished she could actually feel it; to know and be able to fathom its texture. With a sigh, she activated her emission scanner.

"While you scan, I'll take a visual." Butcher took out his optical reader, maximized its magnification and began peering at the Earth-like surface below. Minutes passed before he again spoke. This time there was emotion in his voice. "Commander, this is incredible! That's not just a land mass down there, it's an island surrounded by water! Why, it's a whole encapsulated world! And get this! There are buildings! There are surface vehicles, air vehicles; I can even make out bipedal human-like beings on the surface! And everything moves at a much accelerated pace! Commander, it's a world unto itself!"

"Well done, Jimmy!" Crane was ecstatic. "Valea, what are your scans telling you?"

"Scans are mostly confusing, sir, but I can say unequivocally that every object below, bipedal humanoids included, is indeed almost exactly one-twentieth the size of everything we are accustomed to. And, Commander, I have two theories. First, the miniaturized nature of what we are examining here carries all the way down to the subatomic level. The atoms and molecules in the realm below are one-twentieth the size of the atoms and molecules in our realm. Second, this *island in space* came from the other side of the vortex."

"Understood. Keep me..." Crane began.

"Wait a minute!" Butcher cut in. "I think we're being approached. A small, airborne craft appears to be heading our way."

Minara instinctively touched the shell's surface once again with the fingertips of her right hand. Almost in a

whisper she said, "They want desperately to communicate with us. I can hear one's thoughts; I can see pictures in his mind." Then, an instant later, she yelled, "There's no time! Minara to engineering! You've got to activate the repulse field and send that thing back where it came from! Now!"

Commander Crane barked into the Comm, "Do it, Mike!"

"Already on it, sir!" Lead Engineer Michael Stoddard responded.

Minara and Butcher hurried back into the shuttle and moved it quickly out of the way.

The Ranger, forward engines and repulse field engaged, began gently pushing the object back toward the vortex, gaining speed and momentum as she went. With but a hundred meters to spare, she veered off. All eyes watched as the *island in space* drifted back through the unstable vortex and returned to its place in the grand scheme of things, in just barely enough time before the portal closed in on itself.

Back aboard the Ranger, Valea Minara enlightened the mission commander and the rest of the crew. "What we encountered is a resort city housed in a virtually indestructible transparent composite shell. Called The Aerie, it orbited the centrally located planet Theros. People from many worlds vacation on The Aerie, entering and leaving via teleports not unlike our own.

"A few hours ago, a rogue neutron star ventured close enough to Theros to dislodge The Aerie from orbit. The interacting magnetic fields between the rapidly rotating star and Theros generated a powerful static discharge that opened the portal between our two universes and sent The Aerie through. Its thrusters having become disabled, The Aerie went dead in space. The people there knew that the vortex was about to close. Their matter, being incompatible with our space, would ultimately have disintegrated. They had to go back."

"Well done, everyone," the mission commander proclaimed, "Well done indeed! LuAnn, how soon can you get us back up and running?"

"Reengaging engines and resetting steering coordinates now, sir," Flight Con Arden replied. "We'll be at cruising speed and back on course in 90 seconds max!"

"Excellent!" Then, looking around the com-deck, Theo Crane winked and said, "Pass the word! Bar's open 'til 2200 hours!"

### **A Nugget by CDRE Logan Kale**

Did you know that Stargate Atlantis contains more pop-culture (specifically science fiction) references than SG-1. Star Trek is the source of most of these allusions, but a few have been seen from other places, such as Star Wars and Back to the Future.

SG: Atlantis: Before I Sleep (Season 1, Episode 15)  
McKay: The Puddle Jumper they escaped in must have been some sort of a time machine. It had to have an additional component built into it.  
Sheppard: Flux capacitor!  
McKay: ...Yeah.

\*Source: Top Secret

*(Continued from page 1, Column 2)*

Tony, Marisol, and Jessica had returned to Shara's room after a long break and something to eat. Upon entering the room, the sight which greeted them nearly made Tony hit the ceiling.

Sitting next to Shara's recovery chair was a fierce looking Klingon female, dressed in a Starfleet uniform, and was cradling Victoria as she chatted with Shara like they were old friends. The conversation stopped when they saw Tony.

"Who the...?" Tony demanded.

"Our contact has arrived," Shara stated simply. The woman handed Victoria back to Shara and stood.

"Greetings, Doctor Gomez. I'm Captain K'Tal of Starfleet JAG," She said introducing herself.

"Mom, Jessica, I need you to step outside for a second," Tony said as he hustled them out of Shara's room.

"Hijo, I know what JAG means, who's in legal trouble?" Marisol asked.

"I can't tell you that right now, Mom. Please take Jessica down to the atrium for about an hour and a half. When you get back I'll tell you," Tony assured her.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ninety minutes later when Marisol and Jessica returned all of the legal issues had been wrapped up. They had just settled down in guest chairs when a ruckus was heard out in the corridor. Both Kiki and Rusty stood up and began to hiss.

"No! No! You cannot go in there!" Nurse Colly's voice shouted authoritatively. Obviously, whoever the intruders were, they were not listening. Tony was on his feet as the door flew open. Five Vulcan males and one female stepped in, causing the cats to advance, lay their ears flat and snarl. One Vulcan male unloosed a phaser and pointed it at Kiki.

"Kroykah!" The Vulcan female shouted. "These animals are sentient. To kill or injure one is an automatic death penalty," She stated sternly. The male holstered his weapon but traded a nasty glance with Kiki who hissed at him.

Shara mentally called her two cats off. They returned to their positions at her bed side while baring their teeth and keeping wary eyes on the strangers.

"Who the hell are you, and what are you doing in my wife's recovery room?" Tony demanded as Nurse Colly and two hospital security officers also crowded in.

"I am Constable T'Pell of the Vulcan Sheriff's Department. I have a warrant for your wife's arrest. She is to return with us to Vulcan immediately," The Vulcan woman said.

"And if she doesn't go?" Tony asked

"She will be subdued and taken forcibly," was T'Pell's cold response.

"Like hell she will! She just gave birth yesterday!" Tony shouted as he advanced on the Vulcans intend-

ing to punch one of them out. He was restrained by Nurse Colly and the hospital security officers.

"I am Captain K'Tal of Starfleet JAG, Commander Hercules legal counsel and I would like see that warrant," K'Tal stated. T'Pell reached into her side carry pouch, removed a tablet, activated it, and handed it to the Klingon.

"I can't read this," K'Tal glowered and said, handing it right back to the Vulcan. Obviously, the warrant was written in Vulcan.

"My apologies," she said as she touched the screen several times and handed it back. You could hear a pin drop as K'Tal read through the document. She then took out her own tablet, recorded the document, then handed it back.

K'Tal read the warrant, then spoke. "As Commander Hercules legal counsel I hereby challenge this warrant and I refuse to allow its execution until its validity can be confirmed by Starfleet! That should take about 48 hours. Additionally, under the Intergalactic Humanitarian Act, Mrs. Hercules-Gomez and her child have yet to be released from a doctor's care. Neither she nor her child may be removed from this hospital under any circumstances until officially released by their physician. Also, she needs time to prepare for travel with her newborn child." K'Tal was adamant.

A staring match ensued between the diminutive Vulcan woman and the statueque Klingon JAG officer. The Klingon won. T'Pell ordered her people out into the corridor, but stayed behind.

"I have no choice but to agree to your legal challenge. I will advise my superiors. However, I will return promptly in forty eight hours," T'Pell said and walked briskly out of the room. Threat gone, Nurse Colly checked on her patients, then excused herself taking the security guards with her.

"I must leave also. In actuality I don't need time to prepare. I merely used the tactic to stall the Constable. I shall return by this time tomorrow," K'Tal said, and then she also exited the room.

"I'm going with you," Marisol declared out of the blue after a moment of stunned silence.

"Mom, you've never left Earth in your entire life, now all of a sudden you're going to Vulcan?" Tony asked, incredulously.

"If I stay home, I will worry. I might as well go so I can help Shara with Victoria," Marisol said. "And Jessica is coming too. She'll be studying Vulcan in school next semester and this will be a good experience for her."

"And I will appreciate your company," Shara said with a tired smile as she cradled her daughter. Amazingly, Victoria had slept through the entire dramatic scene.

"I hope they have room for all of us. Captain K'Tal is bringing her legal team, and half of my family is coming. I might have to ride shotgun," Tony quipped. Everyone chuckled nervously.

# Fiction

## Star Wars - Ashi's Shame

### Chapter 3: Shadows of the Past

by LTJG Ashinaga

Ashi found himself in a strange room. The meager amount of light was diffused by the haze of smoke. A stench of burnt metal permeated every whiff of air. He could see dead bodies, hundreds of them. All friends he had known for years at the Jedi Temple. The view was not of looking down, but looking to the side. Ashi was right next to the fallen body of an Archives administrator. She had been one of his best friends here, and now her blood was staining his fur.

Death, the sight of it terrified him. The sounds of the screams were horrible. The smell of his friend's blood made him want to weep like a child. How he hated to see death, to be near it. His worst fear was causing it. Every time he had to kill in the name of justice, he got so sick in his stomach he couldn't stand the thought of going on.

*No, I don't want to see this,* Ashi thought, which echoed throughout the world in his mind.

"You cannot deny what happened." A new, yet familiar voice answered him.

"But, I can't stand to see it again. Please, make it go away." Ashi let his vision go black and saw that candle light again. He fought to keep that candle steady and surrounded by nothing.

The old man's voice answered, "Not this time, Padawan. You must face reality." At once the dark realm of the candle faded away and the sight of the great massacre returned.

"No!" Ashi yelled and held up his hands in the dream world, hoping to block the view.

"Ashi?" A small voice said his name.

"The children. By the force, are they safe? I can hear them." He looked around in hopes of seeing the child that called his name.

"Ashi, I'm behind you."

He turned around quickly and found little Feng, a Jahalan boy. Instantly he was out of his vision and into the real world. Blinking a few times he cleared the blurriness from his eyes and looked across the planes. The horrid world of death was replaced by the pleasant, wind-swept grasses. He was near the village, in the middle of a field. He hadn't gone to the waterfall this time, for fear that more raiders would return and he would need to be ready to fight them.

Feng, the boy, held a neatly wrapped cloth in his hands. He was only four years old, but very mature for his age. He held up the package "Mr. Ashi, you missed food. I brought you some."

Ashi took the bundle and unwrapped it to find some cooked fish packed in trath leaves, a typical lunch for the Jahalan. "Thank you, youngling."

"I did what you told me to." Feng eagerly said, "You said to focus my mind and I would find you. And I did."

"Very good." Ashi took a bite of the fish, "Have you made sure to have quiet time like I told you?"

"Some times. Momma doesn't understand, she bathes me sometimes when I say I want to be quiet and do nothing."

"It's okay. I'll help you more as you grow up."

"Feng!" A woman yelled from the village.

"Momma is calling. Bye!" Feng scurried across the grasses back toward the village.

Ashi ate on the fish and watched the little boy leave. He could sense a strong presence of the force within the child. It worried Ashi.

Ashi finished his lunch and returned to his meditation. He still needed to calm his spirit after the experience. He crossed his legs better, flattened his tail across the grasses, and softly put his hands in his lap. He used a different technique for meditation than his normal one. He closed his eyes and let the force wash over him. It was a way of sensing the presence of other Jedi or Sith. It was also a way to hear and feel everything the force touched around him. It could be overwhelming, but at the same time, it was immensely calming, like sinking into a hot pool of water.

The warmth filled him and the sense of all the lives on this planet sang. The harmony of space in this solar system was like a chord of lovely music. He could see the sun, the other planets and moons, the asteroid belts, and some rogue bodies orbiting the system: a comet here, a few bits of natural space debris there. This was a powerful feeling and yet humbling. The enormity of the universe expanded around him, shrinking him to a mere speck in the cosmos.

His vision changed against his will. He felt as though he were looking out across the planes before him, yet it was dark. A hooded figure stood before him, dark and ominous.

"Who are you?" Ashi asked, not recognizing this figure.

The hooded man laughed and faded away.

"It is time, Ashi." A different voice spoke to him.

There was a familiar feeling he had thought lost ten years ago. "Master Roh, is that you?"

"Yes, my young Padawan, it is I," Roh replied.

"Master. Where are you?" An anguish filled Ashi, he knew he saw the body of his fallen master on that fateful day. The idea that Roh could be alive was beyond hope, it was impossible.

Roh's old voice answered, "I'm with you, young Ashi. It is time. You will face your enemy soon."

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Ashi immediately thought of the infamous Jedi hunters, "I can't, master. I'm no Jedi."

"Ashi, the past cannot be changed, but the future can." Roh was infamous for his cryptic nature, he could be worse than Master Yoda.

"What does that mean?"

"Go, young Padawan, into the mountains and face your foe. Only then can you be ready."

Ashi let go of his meditation and opened his eyes, "I can't. I have to leave. A Sith will kill everyone. I'm no match."

The voice of Roh grew distant as the connection to this meditation broke. "Go to the mountains, there you will find your answers."

Ashi asked, "Where in the mountains?"

"You will know." The last words trailed off. Only Ashi's force sensitive ears could hear them, but he knew that the conversation had ended.

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Drak sat in the lower commanders office, waiting to be seen. Having filled out the paperwork the previous day, they had summoned him for an interview. The more he sat here, the angrier he got. Not just at the red tape he was tied up in, but the growing need for revenge. His team of Rodian slavers were good and loyal. It was hard to organize a gang like that and not have to worry about them stabbing you in the back. They had sold every kind of person into the slave trade and never gotten caught; no one ever sold out for a bounty. It was a perfect crime life. That Jedi had put an end to his gang and he was eager to get some payback.

"The commander will see you," A protocol droid announced.

Drak walked through the busy offices to the back room where the lower commander worked. Drak let the door shut behind him and then approached the man seated at the desk. This commander was a typical, lower level desk jockey for the Imperial forces. He was a stop-gap for matters before they got to his superiors.

The man sort of glanced up at the green Rodian, "Are you Drak Ogoro?"

"Yes."

With a lazy gesture, the commander pointed at a seat. "Please, sit down."

Drak took the seat and then asked, "Have you looked at my report on the Jedi?"

"Yes. That is why I called you in here. You didn't submit a location for body pick up. The mortician will have to confirm..."

"Body pick up? He's not dead." Drak interrupted.

The commander quickly pulled up the file on his computer, "You reported a Jedi...oh I see, you only reported a sighting. My apologies. I thought you were bringing in a dead Jedi for the bounty."

"He killed my crew, I...had to leave. You need to send someone to get him. And I want the bounty for the report." Drak became more impatient.

"Sir. All bounties for Jedi reportings have been canceled by the Emperor himself. The bounties are now

only for bringing in a Jedi, dead or alive."

Drak angrily pointed at the man, "Your commanding officer, Commander Nellis, asked for a location. I gave you the location."

"Commander Nellis informed me of your request." This lower officer spoke with a dry, mono-toned voice, "I followed up with the local Magistrate General. I am sorry to inform you, but we do not send out units to investigate and collect Jedi any longer. If you want to file a 334-W with the Magistrates office, he will see you in..."

Drak slammed his fist on the desk as he got to his feet, "That Jedi killed my crew and you expect me to go back and bring him here?! You have to go get him and you owe me for telling you where he is!"

The commander was not intimidated, he merely glanced over at another computer tablet he had been looking at before the meeting. "Look, Mr. Ogoro, the Empire does not take false reports kindly, and we do not pay just because you want to extort money from us."

"How dare you! I..."

The commander continued, "Drak Ogoro, suspect in fifteen crimes across five star systems. Spent time in prison for extortion, racketeering, drug trafficking, and prostitute smuggling."

Drak sat back down, "That has nothing to do with this."

"I think it has everything to do with this," The commander calmly stated, "and if you think you can steal money from this office by filing this false report, then you are sadly mistaken. I will not send this report to my superiors at Coruscant, and you would do well to not try this again."

Drak reached for his blaster, so angry he was going to put a hole in this irritating man's head. Unfortunately, he was forced to surrender it to the Trooper at the door. Fortunately, this kept him from adding murder to his list.

The commander, seemingly unfazed by this act, pointed at the door. "Now, unless you deliver a body to us for examination, you can leave."

With a forced calm voice Drak leaned over and asked, "Tell me, what is the bounty for bringing in a dead Jedi?"

The commander sighed and rolled his eyes, but he was obligated to answer. Pulling out a different computer tablet he accessed the bounty database. "Let's see. Any Jedi delivered to an Imperial office, dead or alive, is worth ten million credits. Payable upon full examination and confirmation by the proper authorities."

Drak's eye's bugged. He had heard rumors it was a lot, but he was informed it was ten thousand credits. "Ten...million. Are you sure?"

"Yes. The information is quite clear on that."

"Thank you." Drak turned to leave.

"One more thing, Mr. Ogoro. If you bring us a dead body that turns out not to be a Jedi, there is a special punishment written into the law. You will be subject to a visit by an inquisitor sent by Lord Vader himself. You do

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not want that. Now, have a nice day.”

Drak really wanted to shoot this man. He walked out with a plan simmering in his mind.

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A day had passed and Ashi was getting his stuff packed for the journey. He had to pack lightly, but not forget anything that could prove useful.

Ashi already informed the local chief he was leaving for an unknown amount of time. They wouldn't be able to rely on him to protect them. The chief gave him some money and extra rations for the journey.

There was one last item he considered. He walked out of the little home he lived in and found the shuttle out back. It was an old transport craft normally attached to a larger cargo ship or carrier. It had light-speed engines, but they weren't very powerful. The guns were broken and probably wouldn't work too well. He had thought about completely dismantling it many times. But, it was the only starship in the area. The nearest port city was a few days from here.

He opened the back hatch and found R1 plugged into the charging station. “Hey, wake up.” He slapped the old droids top.

R1 beeped and groaned for a second, then detached the charging arm.

“I'm leaving. I need you to get this ship in running condition.” He checked several small compartments.

R1 beeped and squealed in disgust.

“No, I'm not taking you with me.”

More disgruntled beeping.

“Look, I have to do this alone. Besides, if you're power cells have any issues out there, I won't be able to do anything. Just get this ship in working order, make sure the sub-light drive is working for takeoff, and get that light-speed drive operational.”

R1 rolled passed him and beeped in curiosity.

“Because, if that ship that took off warned anyone, they'll send someone after me. I have to get out of here. Smugglers and slavers I can fight off, but an inquisitor hunting a Jedi would kill everyone to get to me.” He finally found the storage unit with a small box in it. He slowly pulled it out and looked at it for a long time before opening it.

R1 checked the box with several sensors and finally beeped in curiosity.

“It's all I have left of him. I don't know why I'm bringing it, but I feel it's important to have. Or, maybe I'm just grasping onto the past, not wanting to let go.” He was talking mostly to himself about this. He finally put the small white box in his bag and then tied it shut. Slinging it around one arm he stood up, “Listen to me. Get this ship working, and keep an eye on those sensors.” He turned and walked down the open hatch.

R1 rolled to the edge and beeped at him.

“I'll be safe. I don't know where I'm going, but I guess that's part of the journey. Bye R1.” Ashi left his ship and droid behind as he walked out across the vast grasslands of his home. In the far distance he could see the tall forested mountains looming. Master Roh told him to go toward the mountains and that is exactly what he set out to do.

# *Fiction*

## **Fallen Angel - Part 34**

by Capt Wynan

Angel, Boomer, Professor Pearson, Kroll and Lillian walked along the path in the woods going back towards where it all started. The last time they had been out to the bluffs was when the flood waters had come and Angel had shown up at their door. So much had changed since then. New friends had been made as well as enemies. Lillian had grown quite a bit and had come into her time for the rite of passage.

The sunlight dappled the ground through the leafy trees from high over their heads. Small birds flitted through the trees showing bright flashes of color. Angel watched Lillian become visibly more relaxed as they moved farther away from the compound. The child's eyes lit up as she caught site of a bright red bird and an orange one following it flying in front of her, missing her by a few feet. The flowers and plants around them growing along the ground were opening their leaves wide to the morning sun. The forest was thick, making it difficult to see very far ahead. They knew the valley was ahead but since the last time they had been out this way it had been pitch black, raining in torrents and they could barely see the person in front of them.

Boomer walked quietly behind Angel, keeping an eye out for any signs of danger. A large tree about seven feet in diameter, sat in the middle of the path, causing the path to go along either side around it. As they stepped around the big tree, the valley dropped away a few dozen yards ahead of them. The stairway sat to the left of them. Boomer remembered a portion of the stairway had been washed away and wondered if there had been time to fix it. As Kroll led the way to the beginning of the stairs Boomer peered over the edge and saw that indeed they had been repaired. Boomer let out a big sigh of relief.

“I was wondering if any of it was left after that flood,” Boomer said looking over the edge.

Kroll grunted a response and Angel translated, “He says they had to replace all of stairs because they had indeed been completely washed away in the great flood.”

Kroll took the lead as they stepped onto the staircase leading down. Angel followed next with Lillian behind her and with Boomer and the professor bringing up the rear. The stairway hugged the cliff face wall with several landing points where someone could rest a moment before continuing their journey either up or down the stairs. Finally they reached the bottom of the forest floor where much of the undergrowth had been washed away but new growth was clawing for some of the spots of sun that made it to the forest floor. Several of the trees were knocked over, others were leaning on their neighbors. Gaping holes where trees had been ripped from the ground during the flood exposed roots and new growth taking hold.

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"Where should we go from here?" Professor Pearson asked.

Angel scanned the area and said, "I think we should go back to where we all landed on this planet. It's as good a place to start as any."

Everyone nodded in agreement. Angel explained their choice to Kroll who also nodded.

Kroll led the way through the forest where the flood damage could still be seen. Puddles of water were scattered here and there. Flying insects buzzed around their heads and bit. Kroll stopped by a plant with silvery small leaves, picked a few and handed one to each of them. He placed one between his hands and rubbed it briskly to get the leaf to release its oils. As everyone rubbed their hands, the oil released a fragrance that smelled a little like chamomile and alcohol. The insects left them alone afterwards.

Boomer was relieved to be able to look around and take in the sites without swatting at the buzzing around his ears. Things looked different from when they had been down here several months earlier. It was hard to believe how much time had passed. It seemed as if it had been only last week when they started working on the cottage and building their home.

"Professor, remember the berries we found down here? I wonder if we can find them again," Boomer said.

"I hate to say it Boomer but more than likely most of them will have been washed away and what plants are left the berries will have been stripped away from. There hasn't been enough time for new ones to grow," Professor Pearson said.

"I guess. I sure do miss them though. I didn't see any when the natives brought our food or when we were looking for the gas plant around the compound," Boomer said,

"It's possible that the berries only grow down here. It may be due to a difference in the makeup of the soil," Boomer said with a sideward glance at Lillian. He was hoping to help keep her more interested in learning new things and less so in taking on the warrior side of her heritage.

"Why don't we stop at the crystal sphere landing site, have our lunch there and then collect some soil and plant samples to study as we continue on this journey," Professor said to the others.

Angel agreed readily as did Boomer. Lillian appeared absorbed in thought for a moment before she too nodded her head in agreement. As they walked, Lillian ran from plant to plant looking at the leaves as they struggled to reach for the sun shining down. With a book in her hands she would flip through the pages happily calling out the names of the ones she recognized.

The clearing appeared ahead through the forest. Lillian ran ahead to find where the crystal chamber had landed. The landscape was not the same as when they had left it. Trees were knocked down, and across the way they could see a log jam against a wall of trees.

They had to search the area for almost a half an hour before they found the site. It was by sheer luck that they did. A tree had landed where the crystal chamber had landed, digging a furrow in the earth. The flooding had covered the dirt trail leading to the hollow with detritus.

The fallen tree covered it even more.

Lillian climbed in through the branches slipping easily among their tangles. Angel followed the small child making her way in more easily.

"I'm afraid we men will have to wait until they come back out to tell us if they truly have found the site. In the meantime, we could take a break and lay out some lunch," the professor said with a smile.

By the time the food was laid out on the blanket, Angel and Lillian had come back out through the branches.

"Momma says she thinks most of the crystals have been washed away but we did find a few shards that remained here," Lillian said holding up in her little hands a couple encrusted with dirt.

"Well, the river seems to have run this way," Professor Pearson said pointing towards the south. "I think if we follow the path of the river we could find more of the crystals. That would make a grand adventure!"

Boomer sat bent over something he was working on in his lap. Lillian walked over and asked, "What are you doing Boomer?"

"Well, if we are going to find more crystals I wanted to make a basket for you to carry them in," he said looking up at her and seeing a smudge of dirt on her cheek. With a chuckle, he wiped away the dirt with a kerchief he pulled from his pocket. Then he smiled and said, "Come here and eat, little one."

Angel sat nibbling on some cheese while cleaning the dirt and grime off of a crystal shard. All the crystals that had once been about a foot long and about two inches in diameter were now broken into pieces. So far, the largest one they had found was just over six inches long. Everyone sat eating in silence as Boomer worked on the grass basket and Angel worked on cleaning the pieces they had found so far. She laid the last shard on a small pile beside her as she took another bite of cheese.

The crystals in the small pile were dull in color and lifeless with nary a spark of light in any of the pieces. Angel frowned as she looked at them.

"You alright Angel?" the professor asked.

"Yes, I just miss the life the crystals had. They were so beautiful as they shimmered and sparkled in their myriad colors, and I miss having access to the abundance of information that was on them," She said sadly.

"But mommy, you are here now and I can hold your hand and touch your face. I prefer you this way," Lillian said with a smile, her little hand resting on the side of Angel's face.

Angel hugged the child to her. "Thank you."

"Well, I guess we should get a move on if we're going to get much farther today," the professor said.

When they had put everything back in their packs they headed south following the path the flooding waters had taken, skirting the edge of a nearby meadow. They walked for several hours until they found a small stream and a good place to camp for the night. Lillian quickly turned in, tired from her day's adventure of exploring and finding a wide variety of flowers and rocks. Angel, Boomer, Professor Pearson and Kroll sat around the fire that night, all pleased that Lillian seemed much happier and calmer since leaving the compound.

"Today was a good day," Boomer said as he pulled the blanket up over his shoulders. Everyone felt the same. Today had been a very good day.

# Brain Benders

## ACROSS

1. \*Alter ego of 79A, with 18A
6. \*Adoptive father of 1A, with 18A
10. Pilgrimage to Mecca
14. Forearm bones
15. Orpheus' instrument
16. small needle case
17. Merger
18. \*See 1A, 5A and 44A
19. Cliff's pal on "Cheers"
20. Banned insecticide
21. Argon, e.g.
23. Retired flier
25. \_\_\_ de plume
26. Cleo's undoing
27. Mimicking behavior
29. \*Colleague of 1A, with 54A
32. \_\_\_ Mahal
35. Neighbor of Swed.
36. St. Louis landmark
37. Stallion, once
39. Not theirs
43. Like a bairn
44. \*Adoptive mother of 1A, with 18A
45. Grassy area
46. Central point
48. \_\_\_ Piper
49. The U of "Law & Order: SVU"
50. Pivotal
52. D-Day craft: Abbr.
54. \*See 29A

55. Bay window
58. Cashew, e.g.
60. Was ahead
61. Coniferous tree
64. Place to enter a PIN
65. Mudbath locale
68. Ego
70. Biblical pronoun
72. Mountaineer's tool
74. "... happily \_\_\_ after"
75. Lascivious look
76. Swiftly
77. Detective Wolfe
78. \*Mother of 79A
79. \*Strange visitor from another planet, by name



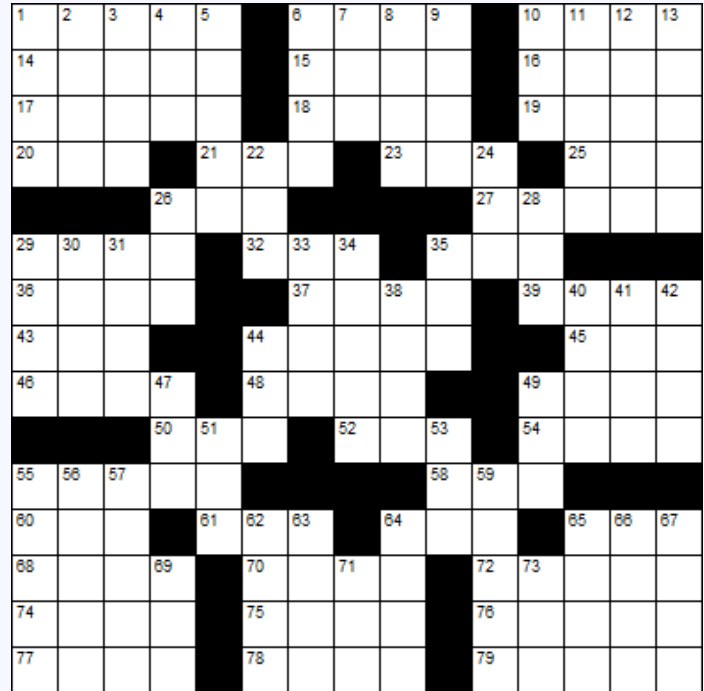
## DOWN

1. Yucky buildup
2. Alight
3. Mine entrance
4. Brazilian city, familiarly
5. Old Testament books labeled I and II
6. Part of B.P.O.E.
7. "Ciao!"
8. Coastal rappers

9. New Jersey team
10. Lady lobster
11. Make amends (for)
12. "12 Angry Men" role
13. \*79A's pal, with 55D
22. Germane
24. Lao-tzu principle
26. Volcanic fallout
28. Quid \_\_\_ quo
29. Croquet area
30. Creme-filled snack
31. Like some tea
33. Trendy berry
34. \*Father of 79A
35. Ultimate degree
38. Chaps
40. Forearm bone
41. Curb, with "in"
42. Fill to excess
44. Operative
47. Barely manage, with "out"
49. Final: Abbr.
51. Brownie
53. Explosive inits.
55. \*See 13D
56. Actor Christopher
57. Slacker
59. Eskimo boat
62. "\_\_\_ cost you"
63. Flightless bird
64. Ambience
65. Navy commando
66. Tempo
67. Figure skater's jump
69. To's partner
71. Not 'neath
73. Tax pro, for short

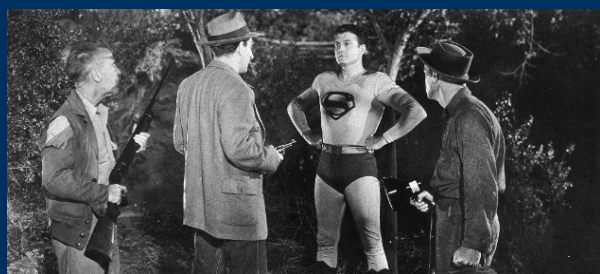
## ESB Crockett's Spirited Crossword Puzzle

**\*Super Hero TV Adventure Series, 1952 - 1958**  
by Brig. Gen. D. Tensa - November 2016



## Answers to Previous Puzzle

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





# More Brain Benders

## SUDOKU PUZZLE

November 2016  
Medium Symmetrical  
by Brig. Gen. D. Tensa

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

Solution to October's Sudoku Puzzle  
Easy Symmetrical

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

## WORD SEARCH

Nov.'s Topic: George Reeves Roles  
Look for 24 character names  
by Brig. Gen. D. Tensa

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

Solution to October's Word Search:  
Wil Wheaton Roles

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

# Brain Benders

## Word Search

### November's Word List:

Benson	John Carter
Bill Reed	Lin Bradley
Bob Willard	Lt. Smith
Boulder	Pilot
Bruce Edwards	Sam Stoaks
Clark Kent	Sancho
Don Richie	Stuart Nagle
El Tigre	Superman
Frank	Surveyor
Gary Lee	Tom Smith
Harold	Williams
Jesse James	Wilson



# Esprit Starbase

## & Crockett's Spirit Staff

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Starbase Commander

Brigadier Drego Tensa  
Starbase Vice Commander  
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CDRE Logan Kale  
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CAPT Y'Wanna  
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CAPT Shayle Carter  
Deputy Chief, ESB Recreations  
Entertainment Section Leader

Simm Team Leader

Trivia Host  
Staff Writer

CAPT Two Wolves  
Senior Staff Writer

Col. Shreya Rose  
Staff Writer

CMDR Bond  
Security Officer  
Games Coordinator

Capt Wynan  
Senior Staff Writer

LTJG Ashinaga  
Staff Writer

Dennis Howard  
Editorial Writer  
Critic



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