

Blazing Guns / Flashing Sword

The fanfiction magazine



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Cover art by Raven raesteves2@yahoo.co.uk www.fanfiction.net/~ravenraspera

And now, a word from the editor:

Wow, an issue of the magazine gone out without any drama: cover art on time and everything.

So, I want to expand from just me with an old mac to some sort of group of people working together.

I've talked with a few people, and while there's nothing definite, I've got a few jobs in mind that might need filling:

Proofreader as you're no doubt aware, I don't proof read or edit any stories submitted; I've talked with a few great folks over at the warhammer fanon wiki <http://warhammer4okfanon.wikia.com/> if you're interested, and they offered to proof read for me. So, from now on, I'll offer proof reading as a

Blog manager I've started a blog for the magazine, for news, writers' bios but I'm no good at blogging, so if any of you are willing to do a lot of hard work for no money, I've got a job for you.

Alternate publisher someone willing to format the stories into an issue and put it out if I can't.

Any others, well... I can't think of anything else.

Thank you for reading. You got any questions or comments? I'd love to hear them: please send an email to: fanficmag@gmail.com

Or, if you want to reach me personally, you can reach me at hans.mahler@gmail.com, or check out my user page at either <http://jochannon.deviantart.com> or at <http://warhammer4okfanon.wikia.com/wiki/User:Jochannon>

Feel like you've missed something? Just e mail me and I'll send you any of the previous issue s

Jochannon Mahler

We have a wonderful selection of stories from a bunch of great writers here, so without further ado let's get to them.

<i>Siblings in the Dark, Pt. 2</i> , Christian VedsøPage 4
<i>In His Emperor's Service</i> , Jonathan TaylorPage 6
<i>Tomorrow Lingers</i> , A. ReynoldsPage 9
<i>Momiji's Affirmations</i> , Bree MPage 17
<i>Casting Call</i>Page 20

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Siblings in the Dark pt. 2

By Christian Vedsø

Subject: World of Darkness.

□

He returned.

Well, I knew he would... but he still managed to surprise me.

□

"Adam!" I gasped. I had just turned around to get a bottle of juice from the fridge behind me when I realized he was there.

Once again, he had entered my apartment, my apartment on the 15th floor, mind you without me realizing until I was staring at him.

□

"...when did you get in?" I asked as soon as I got my breath again.

"Just now" he replied calmly, as if breaking and entering wasn't illegal in his sister's house.

"How? Did you "

"Don't worry about it. Nothing's broken" he said, cutting off my stream of accusations before it even began.

"Adam..." I sighed, ready to open up for the speech I had prepared since the last time he was there "Do you have any idea how we felt when you supposedly got murdered? Dad was crushed! I... Damn it, I thought you were dead!"

"I was. More or less" he said slowly, as if he didn't get my point.

But no, I wasn't going to give up yet. Last time, he hadn't given me a chance to scold him, but now, he was going to get it.

"It's a year ago... Where the HELL have you been?"

"Hell is close..." he said. I didn't get it. I just decided to hug him instead.

"You'll tell me. You have to. I want to know, Adam"

"Firstly, my name is AREUS. Secondly, no, you don't want to know. And thirdly... sorry. I would have told you that I survived, but... things came up"

"Things?" I asked as I took a step backwards, looking at him. I wanted the cat out of the bag, and I wanted it now.

"Yes. Things. As I said, it's best if you don't know"

"Ada ... Areus! You can't just return from the dead and don't tell anyone what happened!"

"I've not returned. I just wanted to say hi to my sister"

"What do you mean?"

"I'm... not really alive, Celene" he said. I didn't say anything for a few moments. He was kidding. He had to be. He couldn't really be... dead... could he?

"Then how do you do it? Walk around, stand, breathe... live, if you're not alive?" I decided to ask, the pent up anger growing because he wouldn't tell me anything.

"It's best if "

"Bullshit. Tell me, and do it now" I said. Even though I was his little sister, I had often done that. Insisted on something until my older brother gave in and did whatever I wanted him to.

□

"You want to know?" he asked again, as if I hadn't made the point clear already.

"Yes, I want to know" I replied with a silent sigh, leaning into his chest again.

□

"It began on the 1st of July " he started, but I interrupted.

" where you were brutally murdered by a bear, then disappeared... we couldn't even give you a proper burial, as your body was snatched from the scene of the crime!"

"That's not even close to what happened" he said with a sigh, and continued, placing his index finger across my lips, making it obvious that he wanted to avoid further interruptions.

"I was attacked. True, it was a beast, but not a bear. It was a vampire"

□

I looked at him as if he was an idiot, quickly pushing his hand away from me.

"A vampire?"

"...that's what I said"

"You can't honestly ask me to believe such a thing... can you?" I asked. I knew he was lying. I knew he was hiding something from me.

"Areus, you're not a vampire" I was stating what I, at the time, felt was obvious.

As you may have guessed... I was wrong.

□

"Three days ago, I was hunting for a suitable victim... someone to feed from. I had no idea you lived here..."

Author's Comment:

Another chapter in the story of Celene Marie Henderson. If you like it, you can comment on my E mail or on the original story on deviantArt.

You can reach the author at: christian.vedsoe@get2net.dk or visit his home page, at: www.christiane.v.deviantart.com

"Y you mean... be before you noticed it was me, you were going to... S seriously?" I stammered, a chill going down my spine. Suddenly, I felt as if he wasn't joking.

"Yes" he sighed. Without noticing, I had taken a step back from him and, even though it was subconscious, the reason was clear. He scared me. I was afraid of my own brother. I turned away from him.

"Areus... don't feel bad about that" I tried to comfort him, even though it seemed like I was the one needing comfort. I could feel myself trembling slightly; something about his presence just made me uneasy.

"If you're really a vampire... then okay. I can handle it" I said slowly, then turned around to only face air.

He left.

Just like that.

□

I stared into the darkness of my apartment for a moment, but froze in shock as my doorbell rang. I took a deep breath and walked towards the front door, opening it to see a woman in the hallway outside.

"Celene Marie Henderson?" she asked, her voice tired, yet resolute.

I nodded, looking her over.

She had a blond ponytail, wore a simple, white shirt and a regular pair of jeans... but behind her designer glasses, something in her look made me nervous.

"I need to talk to you about your brother"

IN HIS EMPEROR'S SERVICE

Chapter 3; this is a continuation of a story that began in issue #1

By Jonathan Taylor

Subject: Warhammer 40,000

*****ENCODED TRANSMISSION*****
*****TO: INQUISITOR RESTRICTED *****
*****FROM: RESTRICTED *****
SUBJECT: PROCUREMENT OF RESTRICTED
LOCATION: STATION MARAK ROGUE TRADER SPACE
*****MESSAGE BEGINS*****

Damn it.

□

I opened my eyes, to see the now familiar surface of the room's ceiling. I reached for my bergen having not trusted Ohmi to leave it alone I had been keeping it on my bunk and pulled out the data slate. Meh, I hated that picture.

□

"Hey, are you awake?" It was still dark, but of course she was awake that girl just never seemed to sleep.

□

"Yeah." Leave me alone.

□

I heard her climb from her bunk, moving over to my own, she leaned her crossed arms on my bunk. Facing me with that pleased smile.

□

She opened her mouth to speak, when for no apparent reason her mouth just continued opening until it had opened up completely horizontal and then from the blood soaked maw the hordes of chaos daemons totally came out and started stealing the furniture. And an amazing creature with the word, "Doomrider" painted on its chest yelled: "I do cocaine!" for some reason.

□

Sensing something was amiss □ I leapt from my bunk only to mysteriously turn into a squiggly beast and begin grunting for scraps, prodding the Ork Runterd in the leg hoping he would let me eat it. I realised that was quite strange and decided to fly away, so I stood on my hind legs and let rip with an amazing fart and started to fly really fast until I broke the atmosphere of the shit hole I had been living on. After crashing into the Emperors golden toilet and then yelling "stfu noob!" at him and

then the entire Sisters Soritas came and said: "No."

□

Failing to escape anal rape from the Cannoness I started running only to realise I was now human again except I still had a sore ass.

□

I stopped, wandering seriously the hell was happening.

□

I then started prancing on the grass to realise I was now a pretty marine, and I said to the flowers "Hello biatch's." And then the Angry marines came on flying 'Fuck You' signs, and totally destroyed the entire Eye of the Warp through sheer anger.

□

.....

□

I opened my eyes, and hesitated. Raising my hands to my face and checked that I was whole. Eh, I hate dreaming.

□

"Hey, are you alright?"

I looked over to see Ohmi, standing near my bed. She looked tired.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Just had a weird dream." Weird was an understatement.

□

"You were talking in your sleep." Oh crap. "Kept saying strange things, fidgeting like a bad gear. Kinda woke me up."

Her mouth had curved back into her winning smile, but her voice was tinged with annoyance. I just couldn't read her, even with my ps shut the hell up.

□

"Uh, sorry." I climbed out of the bunk, moving to stand away from Ohmi. But she

moved towards me, a strange look on her face.

□

"Who's Jessica? Is she that woman on your data slate?"

□

There it was, the question. The question for which I would not answer, the answer which made bile rise in my throat and sweat bead on my forehead. I felt my hands begin to tremble. My mouth was dry, and in my mind's eye I could see her. Her smile, her touch, the feel of her. And I felt the pain, the hate the rage that was with me on that fateful day. I saw her then. Jessica, you bitch...

□

Ohmi backed away from me, "Woah! What the!?! Sorry! Did I say something wrong!?" She looked terrified, holding her hands up as she backed up against the door.

□

I realised I was snarling. Immediately my face fell, and I calmed myself. "Ohmi, I'm I'm sorry." She didn't seem convinced.

"I'm not angry with you."

□

She continued to eye me warily. "Well, alright. Um, see you later." She hurried out before I could say anything else.

□

Damn it.

□

□

Nux swayed to the side, deftly avoiding my swing and countering with a perfect strike to my ribs. I grunted, barely managing to keep my balance.

"Heh, that was a good un' almost got me." Nux was grinning, she really seemed to be enjoying herself.

□

I don't know why I kept agreeing to these sparring matches, perhaps it was just pride. Heh, at least we didn't have an audience this time. In fact, the others had been avoiding me since this morning. Damn it all.

□

I ducked, narrowly avoiding Nux's fist as she overextended that wasn't like her at all and responded with a strike to her stomach. Which turned out to be a lot harder than I had expected. It was still

enough to wind her evidently. She doubled over, gloved hands on her knees, coughing.

I bent over to her, intending to apologise only for her arm to swing up and lock around my shoulders. Towering over me with a victorious grin, she then pulled me back and struck me full in the chest with enough force to send my legs flying out from beneath me. I slammed into the ground with a good deal of force, grateful for the cushioned gym floor.

□

She stood over me for a moment, looking very pleased with herself, before offering her arm to me. I ignored her, bending my legs at the knees before kicking out using the momentum to get back on my feet.

I brought my fists up, determined to stand my ground.

"Come on, we're just getting started."

Nux beamed, I don't think she gets to spar very often.

□

Nux and I continued for a time, before finally she conceded to a break before someone got hurt. I took a drink from my canteen, noticing that Nux was looking at me oddly. Her face was ringed by her red hair, plastered to her face from sweat. A slight smile on her face, her arms crossed beneath her breasts. I found that she was actually quite, er attractive, in her own way. I mean what!?

"So, do ya feel better now?"

I considered a score of different replies, coupled with masking my feelings from her.

"No." What the hell am I saying!?

□

She nodded, "It's about Ohmi, now isn't it?" She moved her hair away from her face before she continued, "She said you yelled at 'er dis mornin'."

I looked away, why the hell is my face getting hot!?

"Ya know, she hasn't been actin' herself since ya got 'ere." She paused for emphasis. "Dint' ya think it were a might odd that in this big ship the only spare bunk was in 'er room?"

□

I felt a cold grip on my heart. Oh crap. "So?" Why am I acting like a kid!?

Nux grinned, "It was funny at first, I mean yer not so bad, kinda weird but not unlikeable. When 'compared'," Nux slowed with that word, her eyes closed in concentration as she sounded it out slowly. She looked so cute.

"Compared, to the other mercs we've had over the years."

"Well, thanks."

"Yer welcome. Anyway the others be pissed at ya. I reckoned they expected me to beat ya down today."

This conversation was steering into sensitive territory. I felt a sudden urge to escape, to get away. It was taking all my self control just to keep my teeth chattering. Damn it, and things had been going so well.

Ah well, here goes nothing. "Why why didn't you?"

Nux grinned. "I did!" Huh? "Yer tougher than you look, I've been trying to break yer face all mornin."

□

*****MESSAGE ENDS*****

□

Author's note: It is a proven scientific fact that even the most serious of people in the most serious of situations will still have the most crazed, non sensical dreams that have no real baring on their lives and DO NOT have some hidden metaphorical meaning that will explain the whole story.

□

However, without fail, if the protagonist of a book has a dream then it will be super important, explaining secretly various important things in the story usually plot holes or even more popular act as some kind of prophetic warning. Most normal people and I define normal by Me know that dreams are just crazy. And fueled by cheese. Mmm cheese.

3

Oh.

□

"Well I'm tired, but I think I learned yer pretty good." I winced as the addrenalin started to dissipate making my bruises hurt a hell of a lot more.

"Nux," Oh damn it. "I wasn't angry at Ohmi."

"Eh? I know that! I seen the way ya look at her," What!? "Ya had a quarrel or whatever and Ohmi got upset. So I hit you, thats how it works."

Nux laughed, "Did ya think if I was really upset with ya ya would still be standin'?" She clapped me on the shoulder, "You should clean yerself up afore ya go lookin' to 'apologize'," She closed her eyes again. "to Ohmi. Since yer all bleedin' an such."

□

I felt like laughing, as if something funny really had just happened. Unable to think of anything to say, I just dumbly followed Nux to the showers. As I washed away the grime and blood, I started to really consider my mission. And how comprimised it already was.

□

Damn it, I'm going to hell.

TOMORROW LINGERS

Chapter 4: this is a continuation of a story that began in issue #1

By A. Reynolds

Subject: Star Trek: The Original Series

Three cups of black tea and a lot of random conversation later, and McCoy had cajoled Christine into a more optimistic mood. Of course, she would need that friendship, he realised. It was very easy to treat any medical concerns she had, and then dismiss her at the end of the day and not speak to her until morning. But more than the best medical attention and advice she would need friendship and support during a time which, he had to admit, would terrify him if he was going through it himself. And he *had* gone through it in some way. He had experienced a terrifying nine months of expectation when his wife was pregnant. He had felt the joy learning to love an anonymous, incapable creature that grew into his own daughter. He had felt the wrench of a Starfleet career that separated him from her over millions of miles of empty space. He did not regret for an instant the void between him and his ex wife, but it was hard being so far from his own grown child. Despite his experiences, he could not imagine for an instant being able to go through the process of pregnancy and birth without a partner at his side, with a child that showed every sign of being more Vulcan than human. Just for a moment he felt furious at Spock for his human, scared reaction. Spock should be the one reassuring and supporting Christine, not him.

□□□

'Doctor?' Christine asked him, breaking into his thoughts. Her hands were still cupped round the warmth of her last cup of tea, but the mug was empty.

'Oh sorry, Chris,' he said quickly, forcing a smile. He had not done this much work just to bring her down again with his own thoughts. 'I was just thinking I wouldn't be very responsible if I gave you any more tea. How about a nice herbal cup this time?'

She made a face. 'I don't put 'nice' and 'herbal' in the same category. Besides, no

one worries about caffeine during pregnancy any more.'

'Call me old fashioned if you like, but *I* worry about introducing large quantities of *any* drug during pregnancy,' McCoy said firmly. 'Especially in a delicate, interspecies pregnancy. Who knows how caffeine affects Vulcans?'

'*We* do,' she reminded him. 'We live with a Vulcan, remember? And it affects them less than humans. But it doesn't matter. Caffeine aside, my bladder won't take much more liquid.'

'Well, in that case,' McCoy said, taking the cup from her hand and putting it aside. 'Relaxed mood and full bladder this seems the perfect time for a scan. What is it? Sixteen weeks now?'

'Going on seventeen,' she corrected him.

'Well, then, why don't we take a look in on junior and see how he's getting on? I've been wanting to check on his copper levels to see if your supplements are doing their job.'

'All right, Doctor,' Christine said with a smile, getting up and going with him to the examination room. These checks always seemed to ground her to remind her of the reality of this tiny life developing within her and push away what suddenly seemed like more trivial concerns.

'You get up on the couch, and I'll get the scanner,' McCoy said, turning to the cupboard at the side of the room. The sickbay wasn't set up for obstetrics, but the portable imager did just as well for scans like these as it did to show an image of a patient's heart or lungs or other vulnerable organs.

'I'll bet you'll find a lot's changed in the last few weeks,' he continued as he came back to her side.

'I'm sure,' she smiled, resting back on the couch and relaxing.

Christine had been studying the texts on Vulcan human pregnancy intently for the last few months, and she knew that McCoy had too but it was never quite possible to forget that Child X in all the literature, and Parent V and Parent H, were almost certainly Spock and his parents. It made the reading all the more relevant, but it was also far more difficult to accept the documented difficulties and dangers of the pregnancy with a professional detachment.

'Let's have a look,' McCoy murmured, touching the scanner to the blue fabric of her uniform dress over her abdomen. The screen beside the bed blinked into life, displaying an almost perfect image of a developing foetus, curled as if in serene sleep and floating in a warm red darkness. The veins that lined the translucent skin were undeniably green.

'Look at that!' Christine said in wonderment as McCoy moved the scanner to show more of the profile. 'Perfect little Vulcan ears! Oh, and the line of the eyebrows look just beginning to have definition! I'm going to have a proper little Vulcan!'

'The Vulcan genome is dominant,' said a deep voice from the door.

Spock was staring, transfixed, at the image on the screen. He had spoken automatically, giving his scientific point of view despite his emotional preoccupation.

'Mr Spock!' Christine said in surprise, caught between joy at his presence and embarrassment at his intrusion.

Spock seemed to shake himself out of his distraction at her voice. He looked from her, to McCoy, and back again, looking very much like a startled animal and then he abruptly turned around and walked out of the room.

'Spock!' McCoy snapped. He turned to Christine, saying firmly, '*Stay there*,' then followed Spock out of the room.

The Vulcan was standing by the door into the corridor, one hand braced on the doorframe, breathing deeply as if trying to control some unwanted reaction.

'Spock,' McCoy said quietly, coming up behind him and putting a hand on his arm. He could see that the Vulcan needed the tactful approach at the moment. 'Come back in there. You know it's the best thing to do, don't you?'

He carefully avoided using the word *logical* for fear of the Vulcan thinking he was digging at him. Spock stared at him, seemingly unable to speak.

'Why did you come down here, Spock?' the doctor asked curiously.

'Oh...' Having an intention to state seemed to help Spock to focus. 'I came for a medical consultation, Doctor. My hands, and perhaps some torn muscles. I also came to ' He glanced towards the door to the treatment room, then cleared his throat. 'I need to speak to Miss Chapel. Doctor, that was '

'That was your baby,' McCoy nodded, unable to repress the broad grin that spread over his face.

'A boy,' Spock said. It was not a question. Obviously he had taken in every detail of the scan.

'Yes, it's a boy,' McCoy said, putting a hand to Spock's arm. 'Come on. Come back inside and take a look. I don't think Christine will mind.'

Spock seemed rooted to the spot.

'It appears to favour Vulcan characteristics.'

'Well, like you said, Spock the Vulcan genome is dominant. You certainly display more of your father's Vulcan genes than your mother's human ones. This baby has blood that's ninety percent copper based, Vulcan organ placement, Vulcan facial features. His brain shows almost exclusively Vulcan features, and he's likely to have similar telepathic skills to yours. His lungs

will maybe be a mite less efficient than yours in thin air, if he continues to develop as he is, but still more efficient than a human's. He carries Christine's genetics, and your human genetics too, but it's the Vulcan ones that are manifesting themselves.'

Spock nodded numbly.

'Come on, Spock,' the doctor said more firmly, realising that the Vulcan would need something more than gentle persuasion to get him to enter the room. 'Either you come in there now and talk to her, or you risk the mother of your child thinking you're a complete bastard for the rest of your life. What would you rather?'

Spock looked at McCoy sharply, seeming to snap suddenly out of his numbness at McCoy's words. He appeared to have grown two inches taller.

'I have every intention of honourable conduct towards Miss Chapel,' he said in a steely tone.

'She doesn't want *honourable conduct*, Spock,' McCoy said acerbically, unfazed by the Vulcan's tone. 'She hasn't stepped out of a Victorian novel. She wants support, and just perhaps someone who *cares* about her.'

Spock looked directly at McCoy. For a moment the doctor seemed to see through the hard, logical glaze of his eyes into something deeper, and perhaps more human.

'I do not intend to let her down,' Spock said in a quiet, firm voice. 'But any arrangement will be worked out between Miss Chapel and myself without outside interference.'

McCoy looked at him for a moment, then, much to Spock's surprise, smiled warmly.

'That's just as it should be, Spock. Come on.' He tugged lightly at his arm, and finally the Vulcan moved. 'Christine,' he said quickly as they came into the room. She showed every sign of being about to get down off the couch and leave the room. 'Do you mind Mr Spock being

here?'

She looked at him for a brief moment, not meeting his eyes, but just letting her gaze run suspiciously over him.

'Doctor,' Spock said in his low baritone before she could speak.

She shivered momentarily, his voice reminding her simultaneously of both Spock, and Henoeh.

'Would you leave us a for few moments?' Spock asked. 'I would like to speak to Miss Chapel in private.'

McCoy hesitated, looking briefly at Christine to be certain she was happy for that to happen. He had heard very few details of what had happened with Henoeh from Christine. He had never placed any accusation of rape on Spock in his mind Spock could barely be held responsible for what Henoeh had done but he couldn't be quite sure whether he was dealing with an event that had been consensual or not.

Christine gave him a small smile, and nodded. 'Please, Doctor,' she said. 'I'll be fine.'

Spock stood rigidly, hands locked behind his back, until the doctor had left the room. Christine watched him, feeling inexplicably wary. As Henoeh he had reminded her of a warmed cat, relaxed and easy of movement. He had been emotionally accessible, open and generous of feeling. As Spock he seemed to be wrapped in a carapace of stiffness, cold, and divorced from what others may feel. Henoeh had been so easy to penetrate but she had not liked what she had found below the surface. Spock, she knew from experience, had depths and layers of warmth, generosity, loyalty and caring. He had the ability to burn with passion or rage, to be kindled with fires of fascination, and even obsession, on a myriad different subjects. He could play music that would elicit a whole gamut of emotions from his listeners, whether or not he experienced the emotions he was eliciting. She suspected that he did, not matter what he might protest to the contrary. He offered so much once the first layers of defence

were peeled away. But right now that Vulcan carapace was shut tight over all of those many varied depths, defending him rigidly against whatever emotional attack the situation might bring him.

When his stillness continued even after the door had closed she said tentatively, 'Mr Spock? You wanted to talk to me but you're not talking...'

'Yes.' Spock removed his gaze from the wall, and turned slowly to face her.

She began to sit up. It felt odd to be lying in her so brief dress in front of him, despite what had happened between them. The more she saw him the more she realised it truly had happened between her and Henoah, not her and Spock. He reached out a hand as if to help her sit, but she was upright before he could reach her, and she could see the relief in him that he had not had to touch her.

'Miss Chapel' he began.

'*Christine*', she urged him. 'After all this, surely it can be Christine?'

Spock raised an eyebrow, a spark of warmth entering his countenance. 'Yet to you I am *Mr* Spock,' he reminded her.

She smiled briefly. 'You seem to demand formality, Spock,' she said, dropping the *Mr* with some difficulty.

Spock inclined his head in agreement. 'Perhaps that is true,' he said, taking a step closer. 'But the time for formality between us seems to have passed.'

He let his eyes linger on her, assessing the lineaments of her face. She was pleasing. Her face was attractive, her body was attractive. She was strong and capable, but there was still a supreme grace about her. But there was something more something about the expression in her eyes that drew him more than the physicality of her body. She looked tired, and she looked preoccupied, but there was something in there that he desired to know better. He did not want, and did not intend, to hurt her.

'Christine, I am sorry,' he said softly. 'My conduct earlier was reprehensible. It is hardly Vulcan to turn and run from a problem.'

She shook her head with an apologetic smile. 'I should have told you sooner. I really should. I just had no idea how'

'I can understand,' Spock said truthfully. 'I think there will need to be many words exchanged before we are both fully reconciled to the situation. It is quite unique, I would imagine.'

She gave a small laugh. 'I hope so. I really do.'

'Do you accept my apology?' he asked, with such a look on entreaty on his face that she would have forgiven him anything.

'Of course I do!' she said, reaching out a hand to him by instinct. 'Do you accept mine?'

He took half a step closer to her, then seemed to recall something, and stopped moving again, clasping his hands behind his back.

'It was never necessary for you to apologise,' he said.

Her brow furrowed in puzzlement. His entire attitude was one of contrite repentance, and yet still he held himself back from her, as if he was afraid she would burn him if he came too close.

'Mr Spock, why won't you touch me?' she asked.

Spock sighed. 'I thought you might accept my behaviour as a normal Vulcan response,' he said.

'But it isn't. You've touched me before.'

A flash of his finger trailing up her cheek in his quarters, wiping away a tear. Clasping his hands between hers as she confessed her love for him. His feelings flooding into her mind, and then ruthlessly being tugged back again. Times of emotional instability, for both of them... Suddenly she wondered, was that her memory, or his?

She couldn't be sure.

'You see, don't you?' Spock said, reading the expression on her face.

'There's some kind of connection,' she hazarded. 'Something between our minds.'

'Hench mated with you,' he said. 'But he used *my* body. *My* mind. There is, invariably, some linking of minds when a Vulcan engages in such an act. And then my consciousness was placed in your body. I had no idea at that time of what had happened. I tried to distance myself from your thoughts, and I suspect you tried to conceal the memory. It is difficult to separate fantasy from true memory in a human's mind. And now you carry a child within you with its own telepathic ability, an ability that is necessarily linked both to me, and to you. If I touch you '

He trailed off, seemingly unable to voice his concerns.

'If you touch me,' she prompted him.

Spock exhaled. 'Whatever has passed between us, I am still a private individual. I do not care to share all that is within my mind without the proper preparation. If I was to touch you '

'I'll know what you're thinking,' she continued for him. 'I'll know just how you're scared, and why, and what all of this means to you...'

Spock shook his head. 'Astute but I am uncertain if *I* know what all of this means to me. I do not want to expose what amounts to a wilderness of chaos. I do not want to expose myself to the chaos that I imagine must exist within your own mind.'

'I've had longer to get used to this, remember,' she said with a smile. 'There's not so much chaos any more. I'm scared sometimes, and uncertain, but I'm growing more used to the idea.'

Spock glanced over at the door. He was growing increasingly uncomfortable at having this conversation in the sickbay examination room.

'Christine, may I come to your quarters later?' he asked. 'This is hardly the best forum for discussing this. The doctor is waiting outside.'

'Oh, of course,' she said quickly, in some ways relieved at the short reprieve from what promised to be a difficult discussion. 'Although I have to warn you, I'm finding myself falling asleep in my chair by about half past eight at the moment.'

Spock nodded. 'My mother has told me that the demands of a Vulcan foetus are not easy for a human body to bear. Would it be acceptable if I accompanied you back to your room when you are finished here?'

'As long as you stay to get treated yourself, first,' she said, eyeing his awkward stance with a critical gaze. 'I'm guessing your back and arms hurt like hell?'

'Colloquially put,' Spock nodded, 'but accurate. Shall I call McCoy in now?'

McCoy came back into the room warily, eyeing both Spock and Christine's faces for signs of stress. They both seemed remarkably relaxed though, and Christine lay back on the couch without him asking as he picked up the scanner again, looking far less self-conscious than she had before.

'You two all right?' he asked cautiously.

Spock glanced at Christine, then back at the doctor.

'Quite fine, Doctor. Will you proceed?'

McCoy looked at Spock warily again. It was hard to know just how to act in this situation. He had never, in all of his time on this ship, expected to be performing an antenatal check on a human crewmember who was bearing Spock's child - least of all on a crewmember who happened to be his head nurse and close friend.

'Okay,' he said slowly. 'Christine, you know the process by now. Just lie still, relax, and let '

'Doctor, you are prevaricating,' Spock said.

His eyes were already fixed on the screen despite the fact that there was nothing on it as yet.

'All right,' McCoy nodded, meeting Christine's eyes, and smiling reassuringly. He wasn't certain whether he needed to reassure her, or whether he needed reassurance himself. This whole situation was just downright odd. 'Here you go,' he murmured.

The image flickered into life again. The still, drifting, dreaming foetus, curled around itself with one hand held up to its mouth, its thumb touching the developing lips. The translucent skin, veins running through it like paths laid down for an unconscious purpose. The fluttering movement at the side of the chest where the Vulcan heart beat with rapid, urgent determination. Eyes that were spherical and impossibly large, blind behind diaphanous eyelids.

Spock had moved a step closer to the screen, a step closer to the bed where Christine lay, without realising it. His lips were parted slightly as he stared at the image in rapt fascination.

'Genetics predict dark hair not surprising since both of you are naturally dark,' McCoy was saying. 'Brown eyes, projected adult height around six foot three, six foot four, hale of limb and healthy of body. You've made yourself a perfect Vulcan, Spock.'

'I did not do this,' Spock said slowly.

McCoy groaned, rubbing a hand over his face. 'I thought you'd got over the shock a little by now,' he began. 'Spock, you'

'Doctor, you misunderstand me,' Spock said impatiently, still staring at the screen. 'I fully accept genetic responsibility for the life before me. But I cannot take credit for it. It *he* is his own being, quite unique. He will be a person...'

McCoy smiled, meeting Christine's eyes and catching her own smile as it flashed over her face. Spock was standing so close to her now that he was almost touching her, his hand resting on the couch just by

her head. Spock had evidently just realised what the doctor had seen Christine realise the first time he had scanned her that it was not just an organised collection of cells growing inside her, but a life, unique and irreplaceable.

McCoy continued to scan, recognising that Spock needed no acknowledgement of his sudden realisation. The statement had been perilously close to emotional.

'One good thing, Spock,' McCoy said, his eyes moving over the results. 'His blood type is T negative, like yours, so if he needs any transfusions during gestation he'll be all right.'

'And his human blood type?' Spock asked curiously.

'O. The most common type. Same as Christine's and same as the human elements in your blood. The copper levels are just fine, Christine,' he added. 'It looks like the supplements are doing their job.'

'My mother found *hav'la* both appetising and beneficial during pregnancy,' Spock put in, his eyes still fixed on the screen. 'The copper in it transfers excellently to the foetus. I will programme it into the replicator.'

'*Hav'la*?' McCoy asked suspiciously.

Spock shook his head. 'Simply a vegetable dish rich in copper, Doctor. It's quite popular on Vulcan.'

'I don't know if I want anything messing up the balance we've got, Spock,' McCoy said doubtfully. 'I've worked it out to the microgram...'

'It cannot hurt to introduce a certain amount of Vulcan cuisine at this point,' Spock insisted. 'I am correct in thinking that the foetus tastes the mother's diet in the amniotic fluid?'

'You are, but'

'*I'll* decide whether or not to eat *hav'la*,' Christine said firmly, cutting through their argument. 'Leonard, I might like it, and Mr Spock, if I don't like it you

won't catch me eating it through a sense of martyrdom.'

Spock started, realising suddenly that his fingers, as he leant his hand on the table, were caught up in the golden strands of her hair. He stepped back instantly, claspng his hands behind his back again, barely suppressing a wince as his muscles protested.

'All right,' Christine said authoritatively, deciding to roll with the tone of command she had managed with the two superior officers. 'Dr McCoy, you've got all the readings you need from the scan, as far as I can see. Mr Spock, your injuries need seeing to. I understand that you don't want me to treat them at the moment, so since my shift finished about six minutes ago, I'm going to go to my quarters. I will see you there when you're finished sir,' she added quickly, suddenly becoming conscious of the inappropriateness of her tone.

Spock looked at her, his eyes holding hers for a moment, showing a glinting appreciation for her tone of voice despite the fact that he should reprimand her for using it with him. He nodded his head, once.

'I will see you there, Miss Chapel. Doctor, shall we do as the lady suggests?'

'Well, I can see who's in charge in this sickbay,' McCoy began to grumble. 'Let me see,' he said, turning his scanner on Spock as Christine left the room. 'Muscle strain in your arms and back, a couple of small tears here, and here,' he said, pointing to the specific locations high up on Spock's back. 'And those cuts on your hands, of course. You certainly did a good job on yourself, Spock.'

Spock raised an eyebrow. 'I was concerned with aiding the trapped crewmen, not my own physical capabilities.'

'Yeah, right,' McCoy murmured, running a healing beam over the first of the muscle tears. 'That's why, by all accounts, you completely ignored everyone in there and took Christine off down the corridor for a little tête à tête.'

Spock shifted uncomfortably. It was no wonder he had never pursued any personal relationships while on board ship. The reaction from McCoy would be quite unbearable.

For a moment the shock of it all rolled over him again. How had he gone from a quite ordinary, if eventful, day on the bridge to standing in sickbay staring at the image of a four month old foetus that belonged, genetically, to him?

'It does not matter, Doctor,' he said, shaking his head. 'Really, it does not matter.'

McCoy's own eyebrow arched at Spock's evident unwillingness to argue. It was rare that the Vulcan would lay a quarrel such as this aside. It was a sport that they both enjoyed.

'Well, here you go, Spock,' he said, turning his attention to Spock's hands and cleaning and treating the cuts there. 'That should be a lot more comfortable. They're sealed and set off on the healing process now. Just don't agitate them, or they might open again. Same goes for the muscles in your back. You're free to go.'

Spock nodded briefly, silently grateful that McCoy had acknowledged his unwillingness for a confrontation, and let the subject drop.

'Oh I'll send a copy of that scan to your private terminal,' the doctor added as Spock headed for the door.

Spock paused, turning back to meet his eyes. 'Thank you, Doctor,' he said earnestly. 'I will value it.'

'And Spock,' McCoy said, causing him to halt yet again.

'What is it, McCoy?' Spock asked, a small amount of impatience rising now.

'Just remember, that if you need to, both Jim and I are here to talk to. No hang ups, no teasing. Just as your friends. Okay?'

Spock nodded, the tension in his shoulders relaxing just perceptibly.

'Okay,' he echoed, the word sounding awkward in his mouth. 'Thank you, Leonard. I will remember.'

To be continued. . . .

Author's comments:

This story follows on from events in the Star Trek: The Original Series episode Return to Tomorrow.

You can reach the author at: coffeebeancamel@hotmail.com or visit her home page, at: http://aconitum_napellus.deviantart.com

Momiji's Affirmations

Chapter 1

By Bree M

Subject: Fruits Basket

I walk over from the doorway and sit down beside her bed where she is sleeping soundly. For a time I just look at her, her soft brown hair and peaceful expression sweetly complimented by the soft breeze entering from the hospital room's open window which gently plays with her hair.

"Ahh, I guess you're sleeping, right Tohru? Well I guess that's a good thing, you need your sleep to get all better and go back to being your cheerful, kind self" I smiled softly, "things are too quite without you".

It has been a week since Tohru had been admitted to the hospital, after falling from the edge of a cliff while in Akito's company. Momiji was one of her most frequent visitors, with the exceptions of Saki, Arisa and Yuki. Between themselves they managed to keep her company for most of the time she was hospitalized.

I lie back in the cushioned chair, and let my mind wander while Tohru slept on. Kyo had been banned from visiting Tohru by her 'bodyguards' Saki and Arisa. I did my best to not to bring him up. There are two reasons for that really. The first, being far more selfish, that the more time I have with her, the more time I have to win her over. As for the other reason; I knew it made her sad to think, much less talk, about him. The last thing I'd ever want for her is for her to be sad. To me, seeing her sad is one of the most depressing things I've ever witnessed, and I've seen some very sad things in my time.

"Momiji?" I look over and see Tohru's soft, sleepy, brown eyes looking back for a moment before she immediately sits strait up with an adorable embarrassed expression as red flowed to her cheeks, "Ahh I'm sorry Momiji, I had no idea you were going to visit, if I did I would have..."

I put my finger to her lips, "Tohru, it's alright", I smile at her, "I don't mind staying with you when you're sleeping and it's quite and peaceful here, much more then at the main house, so I can rest here with you". I remove my finger and she smiles back. There are few words to describe how wonderful her smile makes me feel, for whatever reason; it just fills me with courage... and hope.

"What were you dreaming Tohru?" I ask lightheartedly, her peaceful expression suddenly leaves, and I immediately curse myself.

"I... dreamed of... Kyo" her eyes turn down and her hands clenched at her side. Of cause she had been dreaming of him. Even when you don't talk about him with her you can tell it's him who is on her mind, and if she thinks about him so much while she's awake, he must make up a lot of time in her dreams while she sleeps.

I put on my mask to cover the pain in my heart that would show in my eye's if I don't. You see, no matter how many times I tell myself I don't have a chance with Tohru, I can't stop myself hoping. So when she reminds me that it's him she wants, well, it just hurts that much more.

I slowly raise my head and see her slightly down turned lips and her carefully blank expression. My heart misses a beat when I remember when I'd seen that exact expression before. It was the same as my mother's, between her fits of rage. My heart felt like it had nearly been ripped in two.

I remembered Yuki explaining that she was still upset over the argument she had had with Kyo before she fell. It wasn't fair

on her; suffering because of his stupidity. My parents had argued often before my mum had her memories erased. Now my mother will never have the chance to apologize, or forgive. I just couldn't let Tohru carry that around with her like I have...

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"Tohru...", I start slowly, "there's something you should know, that Arisa and Hana think would be better that you don't." I look up at her, and her eyes met mine, part apprehensive, part curious, as she silently allows me to continue.

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"You see..." I pause for a moment, to word what I'm about to say very carefully "Whatever happened between you and Kyo... he was with you from the moment he heard you were hurt. He was really scared for you Tohru. I think he's been carrying the blame for whatever he did to you all this time... so you shouldn't". I look up from my lap at her, damnit, her down turned face only just showing the small tears running down her beautiful cheeks.

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"Ahh Tohru, don't cry, I...uh... I mean..." then, she looks up and smiles, her lightly tear stained cheeks making her look so... like I just want to hold her and make everything okay. "Thankyou for telling me this Momiji. I'm so lucky to have you, Arisa, Saki, Akito, Yuki and everyone else". I smile at what she said, taken by her thinking that she's lucky to have me around, missing the subtle undertones of what was really going on in her head and heart.

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"Ahh but your mistaken Tohru" I wink, "Its' just the opposite, we are the lucky ones to have you" I send her the biggest Momiji smile I can muster, "and guess what, I got a present for you". Her eye's light up at the large bunny plush I bought. "Here's someone to keep you company when none of us are able to visit"

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"Oh Momiji! I just love it" she placed the rabbit in her lap and leant over it from the bed to hug me. I remember she doesn't

know I've been released from my curse. I flinch backwards, and she stops midway.

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I recall what I said to Kyo, how much happier she would be if it was him, rather than me, who was released from the curse. I quickly fumble for my mask as the memories and feelings come back, clouding my eyes. I see a slight blush creeping over her cheeks.

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"Ahh I'm sorry Momiji, I guess I still need to remind myself sometimes not to hug any of the Jyunishi". She smiles at me while she picks up the soft toy.

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A slim blond nurse knocks at the door, "I'm sorry, but visiting hours are just about over". She looks between the two of us, no doubt, trying to determine our relationship.

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"That's alright, Tohru, I think I should be heading home now anyway. I still have to walk home before dark" I shudder. It's not that I'm exactly afraid of the dark, I just don't like it. I smile at her and get up from the chair.

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"Yeah, that's true, take care then Momiji, and thankyou, again, for the bunny. I think I'll name her Moon Bunny, cause she's same colour as the moon. She's so soft. Will you visit again soon?" said Tohru, holding her new soft toy close and ever so cutely.

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"Of cause I will Tohru, and remember, whatever Kyo did, it's not your fault... Can you promise me something?" Tohru looked up from her bed.

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"Of cause Momiji" and I saw her sweet smile again, giving me courage.

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"Will you not blame yourself for what Kyo did? I'd hate to see you carry those feelings around with you".

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Her eye's fall for a moment before looking up at me with a smile, "Okay then Momiji, I'll try to. I'll see you when you can come next then, good night Momiji, have a safe trip".

"Goodnight Tohru", 'my princess'. I close the door behind me, take a deep breath and removing my mask for those few precious minuets between the hospital and the Sohma's main building, before I returned to the joyful Momiji most know.

I believe the sun should never set upon an argument...

You can reach the author at: Sora1589@hotmail.com, or at her homepage, at: <http://sora1589.deviantart.com/>

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