

Flashing Guns/Flashing Swords

The fanfiction magazine



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Cover art by JeanPaul Robin silent_rip@hotmail.com <http://www.JeanPaulRobin.deviantart.com>

And now, a word from the editor:

Well, this issue is really small; you'd almost think people had better ways to spend their time in the second half of December than writing fan fiction.

But anyway. . .

Many thanks to all you kiddies out there who've been reading my magazine, sending encouraging messages and so forth it's all really appreciated.

So, you can probably see I'm experimenting with a new variation on cover art; it takes a bit more work, but the art doesn't have to be scrunched up like, unfortunately, some it has been, and looks more professional, more like a 'real' magazine.

I have created a new section: Websites of note. Well, as of now, it's *Website* of note, but I hope you folks will nominate others; it's a list of website I think will be interesting, helpful, and/or fun to those interested in fan fiction and fan art in general.

Since there aren't so many submissions this issue, I have decided to include a story of my own to flesh it out. I was a bit worried it could be inequitable, to include a story I wrote in my own magazine, but after much thought, I decided two things:

1, I have not turned away any story submitted to me thus far, so I am sure that if I were someone else, and I submitted the story, it would be accepted; since it is not displacing any other story by anyone else, it seems entirely equitable for me to include it.

2, it's my magazine, so I can do what I want with it. Nyeah.

If you actually read my story, please tell me what you think. In fact, if you read any of these stories, please tell the authors what you think.

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.

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The Hero Comes Home

Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

Bea W. I.

“LINK!” Beth screamed, and I laughed. “I can’t believe you’re back! Colin, Talo, Malo! LINK’S BACK!”

“Really?!” Colin’s voice emanated from his house, followed by a crash, and then the young boy himself catapulting out the door, knocking into me with the biggest bear hug I had ever received from him.

Talo was soon to follow, with Malo shuffling along after them. No one noticed the figure standing nervously in the shadows, wringing her hands as she watched, almost invisible.

“I brought you all something,” I said to everyone, and their eyes grew large as Rupees. For Talo, I brought out a small sword, just his size. I had already asked Pergie and Jaggle about it, just to make sure they didn’t mind their son having a sword.

“Wow!” Talo exclaimed, his eyes shining as he carefully took the hilt. “This is for me?!”

“Of course!” I replied, laughing. “All yours. I’ll teach you the finer details on sword fighting sometime.” The young boy let out a whoop and raced off, swinging the sword around like a maniac as he ran around the village. I chuckled and shook my head, turning to Beth.

She looked up at me with awe as I slowly took a dress out of Epona’s saddlebags, carefully folded so that it didn’t get wrinkled. It was a light, pastel pink, with ruffles galore and a train longer than the dress itself. Beth squealed, looking as if she couldn’t contain herself, and grabbed the dress from me, her little eyes filling with ecstatic tears.

“Thank you, Link! Thank you, thank you, thank you!” she shrieked, running off even faster than Talo had and disappearing inside her house, coming out a moment

later with the dress on. It was quite flattering to the ten year old, and I heard a slight chuckle come from underneath the trees, where the shadowed figure was still waiting.

Now I turned to Malo, smiling as I took my whole giant wallet out, jingling and filled to the brim with Rupees.

I handed it to him, and his eyes widened as he looked inside. For the first time in awhile, Malo’s face broke into a grin, and he ran off as fast as he could, the Rupee bag clenched in his tiny fist. I smiled, turning to Colin, who was looking up at me with a strange expression on his face.

“It’s okay if you didn’t get anything for me,” he said suddenly. “I have a sword and everything.” I laughed, saying incredulously, “You think I didn’t get you anything?”

Taking the young boy’s hand, I lead him into the forest, right next to Ordon Spring. A saddle was hanging on a tree branch overhanging the entrance to the spring, and Colin looked up at this with confusion.

“What...?” he began to ask, but I pointed into the spring. The young boy walked forward, his eyes widening as his gaze came to rest on a black colt that was tethered to a tree branch, snorting and whinnying in uncertainty.

Immediately, Colin walked forward, taking it’s head and stroking the muzzle, calming it down almost at once. “What’s its name?” he asked softly, combing his fingers through the mane.

“Shadow, but you can change the name if you like. I bought him off of someone in Castle Town,” I replied.

“Shadow...” Colin whispered, grinning. “Is that his saddle?”

"Mm hmm," I answered, taking it down from the branch. "Along with his reins. You're going to have to train him to use them and respond to them, but I don't think that will be hard for you," I said with a smile, and he nodded eagerly.

"Thank you, Link! Thank you so much!" the young boy exclaimed, running to me and wrapping his arms around my waist. I smiled, showing him how to put the reins onto Shadow.

I was amazed at how quickly the horse calmed down. Epona had been frantic the first time I had tried to tack her up, and that was after I had had her for three weeks. But Shadow simply stood still while Colin carefully slid the leather reins onto his head, along with the saddle.

Grinning, the young boy led Shadow back to the village, me following close behind and fondly remembering how ecstatic I had been when I had first received Epona.

We entered back into the village, and now the adults congregated around me, congratulating me and asking how I was.

I smiled and detached myself, saying, "There's someone I'd like you all to meet." They waited as I walked into the shadows of the trees, stopping next to the figure hidden there, and murmured, "They don't bite. You can come on out." She laughed.

"I'm not afraid of them. I just don't think they trust Twili," she answered, and I chuckled.

"Shall I translate that from Midna speech? I'm afraid of them because I don't think they trust me," I said, and she playfully slapped my shoulder.

"Fine. Would you believe me if I said that it was the children that freaked me out?"

"Not for a second."

Midna scowled, and I laughed again, taking her arm and pulling her out into the sunlight. "This is Midna. Midna, meet Rusl, Uli, Hanch, Sera, Pergie, and Jaggle. I could never have completed my journey without her," I said, and Midna looked

down, blushing slightly.

"An honor to meet the Princess of the Twilight," Rusl said, smiling warmly and extending his hand. Nodding, Midna took it, introducing herself to everyone else as well.

"Link's got a girlfriend!" shrieked Beth, still in her absurd dress. I laughed, subtly not objecting, and Rusl raised his eyebrows, smiling at her.

"Well, why don't you two come on back to the house and tell us all about your adventure?" Rusl asked, and Uli nodded, smiling. I noticed that her stomach was no longer enlarged, and with surprise I exclaimed, as we were walking back to the house, "You had your baby!" She smiled again and nodded. "I'm so sorry I couldn't be there," I continued, and Uli laughed.

"No matter. You're here now, and Colin has been being a wonderful big brother. Much like you used to be when he was born," she said serenely, looking over at her little boy with pride. He was trying to coax Shadow into the ranch, and failing miserably. The little colt kept trying to chase butterflies that were fluttering around the flowers, and it was with unfailing patience that Colin gently nudged it back around to the ranch entrance.

I chuckled as we entered the house, Midna and I sitting down on the couch while Uli went into the next room and took the crying baby from her crib.

"This is Martha," she said softly, sighing as the girl immediately stopped crying and burrowed into her mother. Rusl smiled, and then turned back to us.

"Well, tell me all about it. Your adventures, your problems, the wonders that happened along your quest, everything," he said, and surprisingly it was Midna who began first.

We stayed in the house for hours, stopping our explanation when Colin came in, his cheeks rosy from the icy cold outside and his blue eyes sparkling.

"I got Shadow into the ranch!" he

exclaimed breathlessly. "And Fado promised to keep him safe."

"Good. You can count on Fado," I replied, smiling and secretly remembering all the times a goat had run off into Ordon Woods and I had been sent to retrieve it. Well, he was good with the horses, if nothing else. Colin nodded enthusiastically, and then stretched.

"I think I'll go to bed now. Thanks so much Link!" he said again, and then went to kiss his parents goodnight. Uli smiled after he had gone, saying, "If he even *can* sleep, that is."

I laughed, and Midna and I got up, bidding Uli and Rusl goodnight and then walking hand in hand out to the spring.

We sat down right next to the water, looking into the crystal clear depths. Midna sighed and leaned into me as I wrapped an arm around her shoulders, and I saw her flame colored eyes close.

"Thank you, Link," she murmured.

"For what?" I asked, absently twirling a loose strand of her hair between my fingers.

"Everything. Helping me to see who I was and who I needed to be, helping me to save my world...giving me my life back."

"You're welcome. Now, can I ask something that's been on my mind since you came back?"

"Go ahead."

"Why did you shatter the Mirror?"

Midna paused, sighing. "I thought...I thought it was because the Twilight and the Light can't mix. That's what I told myself for the short time I was living back in my old home. But then...I realized that the Twilight and the Light *had* mixed: you and me. And nothing but good had come of it. I suppose I was only thinking about Ganondorf, and how Zant had been subject to his sorcery because of me, because of the Twilight. And how I had been transformed because of it, unable to

help my people or do anything at all..." She trailed off, shaking her head. "I really don't know why I did it. But when I let myself cry that one time, it just seemed like the right thing to do. You would go on, live your life, and though you may never forget about me you might be happy. Maybe the same thing would have happened with me."

"But we both know that that wouldn't have been the best thing by far," I answered, tucking the loose strand of hair that I had been playing with behind her ear.

"No," Midna agreed, sighing and resting her head on my shoulder, her eyes drifting closed. "Not at all."

I smiled, kissing the top of her head, and lay down on the sand, pulling the already asleep Midna down next to me.

In the morning, we found that it had snowed. The spring's magic had kept Midna and I from getting cold or wet, but a fine blanket of the white powder covered everywhere except the sand in Ordon Spring.

"Midna, wake up," I murmured, shaking her awake. She yawned and rubbed her eyes, mumbling, "I don' wanna...you can't make me..."

I chuckled and splashed her with spring water, making the Twili jump up and yell, "Where'sa food?"

I cracked up as she looked at me accusingly, walking into the warm water and dousing me with it.

"Hey!" I exclaimed, diving into the deeper area of the spring and completely soaking her with spring water in the process.

"Ohhh, you're going to pay for that, Mr. Hero," Midna growled, tackling me and forcing me back underneath the water. I laughed, using my strength over her to reach the surface, where I splashed her with water once again.

Midna laughed and used magic to control the waterfall, sending it crashing over me.

“Not...fair!” I gasped, spluttering as the water calmed again and I was able to stand. Midna laughed, doubling over, and didn’t see me come up behind her and push the Twili out of the spring and into the snow.

“H hey!” she exclaimed, and I yelled as she grabbed my wrist and took me tumbling down into the snow with her. I chuckled, standing up and offering her my hand. She took it, shivering, and asked incredulously, “By the G Goddesses, Link! H how are you n not c cold?!” Midna asked through tremors, and I chuckled, taking my coat off and handing it to her.

“All the months spent in Snowpeak, I guess. When I wasn’t a wolf, *you* got to be all warm in my shadow,” I said, smiling.

“Is t that why you n never really wanted to t turn into a wolf while we were at Snowpeak?” she asked, shivering noticeably less.

“Mostly. You didn’t have any outer clothes or fur to protect you. I didn’t really want to take any chances,” I replied, and she smiled slightly.

“Thank you,” Midna said, and I nodded.

“Shall we go home and warm up?” I asked, and the Twili chuckled and nodded, still wrapped in my coat.

We walked home, stopping to play with the children a little before retreating to my “tree house” on the outskirts of the village.

I made some soup, salvaging my last bottle of Superb Soup from ironically enough Snowpeak Ruins, and heated it up, giving one bowl to Midna and saving the other for myself.

I sat down on the couch right next to her, facing the window and watching the children play in the snow, fondly remembering my early years. “What did you do for entertainment as a child?” I asked Midna, who shrugged, a look of affection in her eyes as she watched Colin, still working with Shadow.

“Well...we played a lot of games in the field behind the palace when I was

younger. We would race, play tag, hide and seek, and all sorts of others. When my friends couldn’t come out and play, the maids and the servants played with me. It was actually really fun, since they let me order them around and everything.” She paused, smiling to herself.

“And?” I asked, and Midna snuggled closer to me.

“Well, your parents stayed for a couple of days sometimes. I’m sure I didn’t know them as well as you did, but they were really fun. Sienna would always pretend to overlook me, which I thought was the funniest thing. And then she would always walk right next to me, saying, ‘Where could Midna be?’

“Calanon always let me win in races, too. I think he was walking or something,” she laughed, and I smiled, chuckling as well.

“What about your parents? Did you ever play with them, or talk or anything?” I asked, and Midna shrugged.

“Well, Father was always too busy with the council or something, and Mother only came out every once in awhile. We talked at dinner though, but it was always about things I didn’t know,” she said, and I nodded.

Just then, Colin burst into the door, saying breathlessly, “Link, I did it!” I stood, pulling Midna up with me and setting our bowls down.

Colin pulled both of us outside into the freezing cold, and jumped down the ladder. He put two fingers to his lips and gave a long, low whistle, strikingly similar to one of the shorter melodies I had howled to the Golden Wolf.

Shadow came running, neighing and allowing Colin to pull himself up onto the adolescent colt’s back.

“Sweet Nayru, Colin, how did you get him to trust you so quickly?” I asked in awe, running my fingers through Shadow’s mane.

“I don’t know,” Colin said, smiling. “He

just likes me, I guess.”

I chuckled, as did Midna, and congratulated Colin, who beamed and rode Shadow back towards the village.

“He learns quickly,” Midna said in surprise, and I nodded.

“And he has a remarkable way with animals,” I agreed, and she smiled as we walked hand in hand back into the forest.

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IN HIS EMPEROR'S SERVICE

Chapter 6; 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*****□

Jaegoos was the first on her feet. Leaping from the canteen table she struck Kale square in the side of his head with her shock flail, he spun in mid air before falling flat on his face. He continued to twitch, still showing signs of life.

Jaegoos landed on her feet, having already unholstered her bolt pistol, pulling back the hammer as she aimed for his head, and did nothing. Everything just seemed to stop, no one moved. Finally, she calmly just holstered her pistol.

"Do you think he's okay? I mean what was it that just happened?" Lask began as the eerily calm Jaegoos crouched by the prone body of Kale.

Ohmi moved to her side, "Is he alright?" There was a slight tremor to her voice, it was so slight in fact that only Jaegoos noticed it.

She put her fingers to his neck, sticky with blood. She began to read his pulse, "HE IS DYING."

"Nux, grab his legs, we're taking him to the infirmary."

"Boot "

"Now, Jeanette!"

Looshy began to make signs of warding, her fixed grin had faded away to an unusual grimace. "That was a Perils of the Warp attack, Ohmi. Kale must be a psyker, he could be dangerous. I could sense something amiss with him, but I wasn't sure..."

"If he wer' 'possessed' then he wouldn't be passed out on the floor now, would 'e?" Looshy's grin returned in a flash. "Allrighty

then."

Okay. Now that was intense. I pray to Emperor it was all a dream, I decided despite my better judgement to open my eyes.

"Hello."

And was met by a pleasant looking face. Short black hair, and some strange looking white ridge in her hair with a red cross painted on it. A white mask over its mouth. "Uh, hi?" That seemed the appropriate response, when confronted with a greeting.

The head drew back, and something was put to my forehead, it felt damp.

"Say 'ahh'."

This felt very familiar, I responded by opening my mouth and letting my tongue out.

I felt something press on my tongue, as the ah, for lack of a better word, nurse investigated my throat.

"The motor's running and someone is behind the wheel!"

What?

"I cant imagine why Miss Wierbowski makes the servitors say those things." I turned my head, to see Mr Sandhammer standing near my bed, his arms crossed behind his back.

"Still, it is rather cute don't you think, Mr Kale?"

I looked to the medical servitor as she pulled down her mask, her various servo arms folding up behind her though she still had a single flesh and blood arm and grinned at me.

I tried to sit up, letting out a groan as I felt the pain in my head. I fell back down.
"Emperor preserve me, what just happened?" Oh my head.
Mr Sandhammer gave me a Look. With a capital L.

"According to McVisconte, you suffered a 'Perils of the Warp' attack. I have seen the like before, though apparently yours was quite graphic. If our resident Commissar had not knocked you out well, lets just say you and I would not be having a Polite conversation right now." It was amazing how this guy could actually accentuate capitals into his speech.

Oh damn, damn, DAMN!! "Perils of the Warp?"

"I allow many things past on this ship, but there are there are two things I cannot abide by. Thieves and Liars."

Damn, what can I say now? "Now under normal circumstances, you would be little more than a chunk of debri floating away from my ship but, in light of certain members of the crew feeling somewhat 'fond' of you, I have decided to let you remain. For now."

"Well, thanks."

"Oh don't thank me just yet, Mr Kale. Now, when you feel up to it, I expect to see you in my office. We have a few things to discuss."

I watched him leave. Damnit, but that man had a way of scaring the crap out of me. Only a few moments after Sandhammer had gone, Ohmi, Nux and the others walked in casually filing into the room. Something felt wrong.

"So are you feeling better now, Kale?" Ohmi began, as a strange urge to say: "I am now," crossed my mind. I decided against it.

"Yeah, I'm fine. Mr Sandhammer says I have Jaegoos to thank for that."

"DAEMONS ATTACKED YOUR SKULL."

Sounds like there still here.

Lask narrowed her eyes at Jaegoos, who ignored her in return, before looking to me. "You really had us worried for a moment there, you lost a lot of blood."

"Natie, here she patched you up." Ohmi indicated the servitor, which smiled in response.

I sat up, reaching for my head it still ached a little. I then noticed that I was shirtless, and that my pants were folded neatly on a nearby table.

A sudden self conscious embarrassment gripped me as I realised I was near naked in a room with five, well six counting 'Natie', other women.

The room fell silent then. Ah here it comes, most likely it will be

"YOU LIED TO US." Yep, of course it would be her.

"Why did not tell us before, that you are a psyker?"

I narrowed my eyes at Lask, "I am not a psyker."

Looshy made the sign of the aquilla, I noticed her smile looked a little forced.

"Then how would you explain what happened? I can sense your psychic aura, so don't lie to me."

"I don't know!" Imediately the Medical Servitor rolled forward.

"His vitals are flaring. Please leave the patient to rest."

After a few moments hesitation, everyone did indeed clear out except for Ohmi. Nux looked back at me, before leaving though. Meh.

Natie, gently but firmly put her hand to my chest I lay back down, as she began to fuss at the various needles and wires that had been stuck in me.

Ohmi just sat down on a chair by my bed, holding her hands together.

"Sorry about the others, you jus' freaked us out a bit back there."

It looked like she wanted to say something important. "How long was I out anyway?"

"A few hours. There isn't too much damage, considering it all. The main thing was bloodloss. Fortunately I was able grow some in time for you."

Huh? "Did you say, 'grow' some?"

She nodded, "No one had the same blood type as you, so I just cloned some of your own blood and Natie, here, she fed it back to you."

I noticed the blood packs suspended above

my bed. Heh, never heard of cloning blood before. Where the hell did Mr Sandhammer get all this tech?

I should thank her. "I guess you saved my life then, thanks Ohmi. I hope I get a chance to repay you."

Ohmi leaned forward slightly as I spoke, her robe had also parted ever so slightly, giving me a view I really shouldn't have. Hmm...

Ohmi laughed, I was really starting to like her 'hehek' it sounded cute. "Of course you will! Why wouldn't you?"
Because Jaegoos will likely shoot me soon? Because I'm supposed to

Instead of responding, I looked at her her lovely smile her black hair that fell messily over her face. The fact that I

thought she was beautiful. And that she reminded me of, Her.
Ohmi seemed to have noticed I was staring at her.

She gave me an odd look, "Why are you looking at me like that?"

I think you know. I wish I did.

She shifted under my gaze, and I noticed her cheeks begin to colour.

Suddenly Nux came in. "Ohmi, Lincoln said to call you to Main Storage, he says the patch the Servitors put on the hull breach is coming loose.."

Ohmi sighed, rolling her eyes as she sat up, "I'll leave you to rest for now." Then with a smile, she added. "Get well soon." And winked.

This just got complicated.

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

Author's comments:

Now this chapter was an improvement. I was and still am, quite happy with this.

Natie is inspired by Mr Culexus 'The Good Doctor' , pic further in Issue But I cant use Dietrich since she is actually hanging with Commissar Raege, another character entirely on the other side of the universe or so. Nevertheless, I assumed Ohmi might have made another hence, The Good Nurse, □Natie. :3

TOMORROW LINGERS

Chapter 6: this is a continuation of a story that began in issue #1

By A. Reynolds

Subject: Star Trek: The Original Series

'You know, I told Spock to spend time with her, but I didn't expect him to take me *quite* this seriously,' Kirk complained to McCoy as they sat in his quarters one evening. 'I've barely seen Spock off duty in what a month? I never expected *him* to be the one we lose to women and domesticity.'

'Woman, not women,' McCoy corrected him, taking a long sip of his Saurian brandy and setting the glass down on the desk. 'No, I don't know, Jim. In some ways he's the most traditional of us. He comes from a highly regulated, highly disciplined culture, where your entire future's mapped out for you by age seven. That planning didn't work out for him, but it doesn't mean he's been put off it forever. I've done the marriage thing. I didn't enjoy it. And you

Jim smiled. 'No, I don't see myself settling down any time soon,' he said. 'Too many beautiful women in the galaxy for that, I'm afraid.'

McCoy laughed. 'No, I don't see that either, somehow. But Spock I don't know. He's always struck me as missing a bit of something. Maybe that influence that'd make him a bit more human, perhaps.' His forehead furrowed. 'Does that make me racist, Jim?'

'It means you care about his happiness,' Kirk said, shaking his head. 'And I think he is happy. I haven't seen him this relaxed in a long time.'

'I thought he was going to drop down in a dead faint when he first found out,' McCoy grinned. 'But you're right. It seems to be working out just fine. Christine's happy. He's happy. And you're sorting out the clearance for their staying on the ship, aren't you?' he asked, a look of concern slipping onto his face.

'I think it's pretty much settled,' Kirk

nodded. 'There's the Lexington as precedent, and we've already got an allowance for married quarters. There should be enough room, and I can clear out a suite in the centre of the ship, allowing for maximum protection for the child.'

They sat in silence for a few moments, sipping at their drinks, then Kirk began again, 'Do you think Spock really *would* leave the ship, if they won't allow a family on board?'

McCoy shrugged. 'I know Christine wouldn't want to go live on Vulcan, and Spock's insistent on the child having a Vulcan education. I think he's right, too. A brain like that does need certain training and certain stimulus. Honestly, Jim, now he's used to the idea I think he'd follow her to the ends of the galaxy just to be close to the child. He takes his responsibilities very seriously.'

'And what about her?' Kirk asked curiously. 'It's not just about the baby, is it?'

McCoy shook his head. 'I think he loves her, Jim in her own right, not just because she's carrying his child. You know he's always shown a latent attraction to her. It just needed this to push him in the right direction.'

'Hmm,' Kirk mumbled, toying with his glass.

'Jim, are you jealous?' McCoy asked suddenly, a smile spreading over his face.

'I wouldn't say I was *jealous*, Bones,' Kirk protested. 'It's just I guess I miss my friend, that's all.'

'Well, Jim I guess you'll have to settle for me,' McCoy said with a tone of mock hurt. 'I'll have to improve on my chess. Anyway, when the baby comes, he'll want somewhere to escape to.'

'Yeah, that might be true,' Kirk nodded. He stretched in his chair, rubbing a hand at the back of his neck.

'Muscles aching?' McCoy asked, reaching for his scanner, his professional interest piqued. 'I can give you a shot to help relax that.'

'Oh, it's just my neck and shoulders,' Kirk said, rubbing a hand at his shoulder now. 'But I wouldn't say no to the shot.'

McCoy nodded, reaching to his ever present medical bag.

'Shouldn't really be doing this, since I've been drinking,' he admitted. 'But you're not going to report me to the captain, are you?'

'My lips are sealed,' Kirk smiled, sighing with the relaxation that came as McCoy released the shot into his neck. 'It's this damn overhaul,' he muttered. 'I know I ordered it, Bones, but it's I don't know. How can something manage to be so tedious and so tiring both at the same time?'

'I'd say you brought it on yourself, Jim but you brought it on all of us,' McCoy complained. 'I don't mind rashes and headaches, and even ingrown toenails, but the sheer amount of *paperwork* one of these annual checks takes just drives me crazy.'

Kirk smiled. 'We've got to do it once a year, Bones. I thought I might as well get it done before the red communications start arriving from headquarters. Besides, it gives Spock something to focus on. He's been so distracted recently.'

'Can you blame him, Jim?' McCoy smiled. 'He's got a baby on the way, he's still trying to work out his feelings about Christine...'

'The amount of time he spends with her, I'd say he's pretty much worked out,' Kirk grumbled.

'*I* know he is. *You* know he is. But Spock's got to analyse every goddamn feeling to death. No wonder they go in for arranged marriages on Vulcan, Jim,'

McCoy said with a grimace. 'It's because otherwise both parties would be in their dotage before they settle on the fact that they might actually love one another.'

'You think he loves her, then?' Kirk asked, bypassing the humour of McCoy's statement in his preoccupation with Spock.

McCoy shrugged. 'He hangs around sickbay when there's no need to be there. He watches her when he thinks no one's looking, with that look in his eyes. He's solicitous, and gentle, in a way I haven't seen Spock be with anyone before. He actively seeks out her company. He looks forward to being able to talk with her, exchange ideas with her. Yeah, he loves her.'

'But they haven't ' Kirk began, then said awkwardly, 'You know...'

'Jim, I haven't discussed with Spock if he's entered full conjugal relations with my head nurse!' McCoy said heatedly. 'And I haven't discussed it with her, either. Really, I don't want to think about it.'

'I'm sorry, Bones,' Kirk said with a smile. 'I'm just concerned for him, that's all. Spock's like a brother to me. More than a brother. And essentially he got dragged into this situation because Henoah used his body to rape a woman. It's an odd foundation for a relationship.'

'What's normal about life on a starship?' McCoy asked philosophically. 'Spock's a big boy, Jim and Christine's a big girl, too. They talked about it. They've worked it out. From what I've gleaned it's not as if Henoah held her down and forced her. There are issues there, on both sides, but we have to trust them to work them out on their own.'

'Hmm. Maybe so,' Kirk said, but there was still a tone of doubt to his voice. He glanced over at the clock, seeing that it was close to midnight and between them they had drunk the majority of a bottle of Saurian brandy. 'Bones, I'm going to hit the sack,' he said, pushing his glass aside. 'I've got about two thousands reports to go through tomorrow, and I know already I'm

going to have a headache.'

McCoy smiled. 'Drink plenty of water before you go to bed, Jim.' He reached into his bag again. 'And in the morning, take this,' he said, handing the captain a single red pill. 'That'd knock out the granddaddy of all hangovers - leave you fresh as a daisy.'

'Thanks, Bones,' Kirk said, putting the pill carefully in a small box on his desk. 'And good night.'

'Night, Jim,' McCoy said with a warm smile, moving toward the door. 'I know when I'm not wanted.'

'Humph,' Kirk muttered as the door opened. 'I just know you'll have about the same amount of reports to deal with as I have, and it'd be irresponsible to keep you any longer.'

'That much is very true,' McCoy nodded.

He stepped into the corridor, and the door slid shut behind him.

Spock was distracted. He was intent on a full recalibration of the shield generators a task that involved intent, unwavering concentration. And yet, he was distracted. He had, that morning, gained his first glimpse of the awakening of consciousness in the developing foetus. He had put his hand on the tautness of Christine's abdomen, and felt through the intertwining, random thoughts and emotions from her mind, and then, finally, he had caught it. Like a whisper in a crowded room, it just barely reached his senses. A wondering awareness of *outside* itself. An awareness of other consciousness, of the mind of the father reaching out to the mind of the child. It had no idea of relationships such as father, mother and son, but it was reassured in the complete protection of the minds surrounding it.

Spock sighed. He had overlooked yet another series of responses. He absolutely *had* to focus his thoughts. He had to drive the domestic out of his mind.

He glanced about the bridge. Kirk looked about as distracted as he did, staring at the same padd held in his left hand that had been there five minutes ago. Kirk had confided to him in the elevator that he had spent the evening drinking with McCoy, and although the tablet the doctor had given him had dispelled the pounding headache he had woken with he still felt fogged with the after effects of the alcohol.

In some way that helped Spock to focus his own mind. He had no current physical concerns to trouble him as Jim did. It was purely the mental distracting him, and he had not spent years studying mental disciplines to be distracted by the simple touch of yet another mind.

□□□ He closed that part of his thoughts away from himself, and turned back to his console, reminding himself of exactly where he was in the process. He immersed himself in the work again, allowing nothing to touch his mind but the reams of figures that told him at exactly what efficiency each inch of the ship's enveloping shields was operating.

The light on Spock's console comm unit flashed, at the same moment that McCoy's voice said, 'McCoy to Commander Spock.'

Spock flicked the channel open immediately, suppressing annoyance at the interruption to his work. The shield recalibration was reaching a delicate stage.

'Spock here,' he said briskly.

'Spock.' McCoy's voice was unaccountably grave. 'You need to come to sickbay.'

'Doctor, I am -' Spock began.

'*Now*', Spock,' the doctor said in a tone that would not accept refusal.

A coldness seemed to seep through Spock's body at that tone of voice, although he did not know why. He turned immediately to the navigation console, saying, 'Chekov, take my post.'

He left the bridge without waiting for a response. There had been something in

McCoy's voice that had implied far more than his few brief words had said.

As he entered sickbay McCoy took him by the arm, hurrying him through the ward. His entire bearing was one of exhausted defeat.

'She's unconscious at the moment,' he said. 'Will be for a few hours yet.'

'The baby?' Spock asked, without looking at the doctor.

'Gone,' McCoy murmured, as if even that one word was too much for him to say.

Spock processed that information in an instant, but he pushed it behind rigid shields to deal with later. Deal with the living, and then, when there was time, those beyond help. That was what all of his training had told him.

'Is she in danger?' he asked.

'No,' McCoy said softly. 'She suffered a haemorrhage when she started to reject the foetus. It happened very quickly. It was lucky she was here. She lost a lot of blood, and she's had a transfusion. I kept her unconscious for the procedure.'

'And there was no chance' Spock began, unable to finish his question.

'He just died, Spock,' McCoy said, shaking his head. 'We had no idea until she started contractions, but he was already gone by then. It just happens sometimes, with cross species pregnancies. His life processes just failed. We couldn't do anything.' He hesitated for a long moment, then said, 'Do you want to see him, Spock?'

Spock closed his eyes slowly, and kept them closed for a few long seconds. Then he nodded his head, once.

'I'll go and clean him up,' McCoy said, glancing towards the operating room. 'Just give me a minute.'

Spock looked at him with a gaze that seemed to pierce him right to the heart.

'There is no need, Doctor,' he said.

'Then let me come in with you?'

Spock shook his head. 'No, Doctor. I would prefer to be alone.'

McCoy returned his gaze for a moment, and then nodded. 'Spock er we were busy trying to save her life,' he said as the Vulcan took a pace towards the room. 'We haven't had a chance to sort anything out.'

Spock nodded without turning.

'I quite understand, Doctor,' he said.

He disappeared through the sliding door, looking strangely thin and vulnerable as he entered, his hands hanging loose and useless at his sides. McCoy stood, and waited, for what seemed like a very long time. Then Spock came out again, just as composed as he had been when he went in. There was a smudge of red blood across his chest, at the height that one would cradle a child, but he didn't seem to be aware of it.

'There is no need to send someone in to clean him,' he said quietly. 'I have done it.'

McCoy opened his mouth, but something about the Vulcan's face made him stay silent. Spock straightened his top, and drew in a deep breath, then looked directly at the doctor.

'Call me when she shows signs of waking, Doctor,' he said.

McCoy nodded. 'Shall I call Jim and let him know not to expect you?'

Spock's eyebrow rose a heartbreakingly familiar expression considering the pallid set of his face.

'There is no need. It will only take me a moment to change. I am involved in a complex recalibration of the ship's shields.'

McCoy looked at him, momentarily startled but Spock was Spock, he reasoned, and Spock would deal with this

in his own unique way. He could not find it in himself to judge him.

'All right,' he nodded. 'And Spock,' he said, touching a hand to his arm. 'I'm sorry. I truly am.'

Spock met his eyes again.

'I know, McCoy,' he said quietly, then he swiftly turned and left the sickbay.

Kirk had barely noticed that Spock had left and then later rejoined the bridge, absorbed in his own business of checking the many reports that had been to his station for the attention of the captain. During a general overhaul such as the one he had ordered the frequency of these reports tended to double, if not triple, and they were mostly figures and notifications that were deadly dull, but demanded his full attention.

He had seen Spock moving to the lift earlier, and assumed that some factor in the shield recalibration required his attention in another part of the ship. But when a warning light flashed on the arm of his chair, activated by an action at Spock's console, he looked over at the Vulcan in startlement. He occasionally got these warning lights on his chair, but never, never were they related to anything the efficient Vulcan had done.

Spock was bent over his viewer, his fingers spread on the buttons of his console, his face set with intense concentration. Kirk got up and went over to him.

'Spock,' he said quietly.

Spock jumped as if startled, and straightened from the viewer. His face seemed abnormally white, abnormally motionless. Sometimes the lack of emotion on Spock's face gave Kirk the feeling of looking at a brick wall. This was one of those times.

'Spock, I've just had a red light on my panel,' he said in an undertone. 'It looks like when you were adjusting the magnetic fields of the shield generators you reversed

the polarity.'

Spock stared at him without moving for a moment, as if Kirk's statement was taking longer than usual to sink in. Then he turned to his viewer, his fingers suddenly swift and sure as he called up the necessary data.

'I apologise, Captain,' he said finally, turning back to him. 'I have remedied the situation.'

'Spock, in combat that mistake could have killed us,' Kirk reminded him gently.

'Yes,' Spock said blankly. 'Captain,' he said after another moment's silence. 'May I be excused. I am not fit for duty.'

'Spock, what is it?' Kirk asked him quickly, astonished at the Vulcan's request. Usually it was keeping the Vulcan from taking on too many duties that was the problem.

Spock's mouth worked for a moment, but he didn't seem to be able to find the correct words. Finally he said, 'Please, Jim.'

Kirk looked at him, confused, but then he nodded his head, and gestured toward the door.

'You're excused, Mr Spock. But I want to see you when my shift's over, and I'll expect some explanation.'

Spock stared at him for a moment, before nodding his head briefly, and then leaving the bridge without looking back.

Kirk sat back down in the centre chair, distracted with concern over his first officer.

'Chekov,' he said suddenly. 'Did Spock leave the bridge earlier?'

Chekov turned in his chair to face him, nodding. 'Yes, sir, for about twenty minutes, I think. I took over the recalibration.' He suddenly looked concerned. 'Did I do something wrong, Captain?'

'No, Ensign,' Kirk said with a smile. 'You didn't do anything wrong. Do you happen

to know where he went?'

'He didn't say, sir,' Chekov replied.

Uhura, ever aware of what was happening on the bridge around her, turned in her chair and said, 'I believe he had a message from Dr McCoy, sir. I didn't hear what he said, but I definitely heard his voice just before Mr Spock left the bridge.'

'Thank you, Lieutenant,' Kirk said.

He was suddenly overcome with concern. There was something deeply disturbing about Spock's attitude just before he had left the bridge. He rubbed his thumb over his lips, then realised that Chekov was still watching him.

'Oh take over Spock's station again, Ensign,' he said quickly. 'He won't be back for the rest of the shift. Best pause the recalibration. Spock can begin where he left off when he's next up here.'

'Aye, Captain,' Chekov nodded smartly. He called a replacement to his own console, then mounted the upper deck and took over the Vulcan's station.

Kirk thought for a moment, then opened a channel to sickbay.

'McCoy here,' the doctor replied. His voice sounded distracted, his attention elsewhere.

'Bones,' Kirk said quietly. 'Was Spock down there about half an hour ago?'

'Yes, Jim, he was,' McCoy said gravely. 'He's down here now.'

'Bones, what is it?' Kirk asked, his concern deepening. 'He made a mistake on the bridge. That's not like Spock. He asked to be relieved.'

'Jim.' McCoy lowered his voice. Kirk got the distinct impression that Spock was very close by, and the doctor didn't want him to overhear. 'Jim, Christine lost the baby.'

Kirk was silent as he let that sink in. Then he asked, 'When, Bones?'

'About a hour ago, Jim. He just died, and she had a haemorrhage when her body tried to reject the foetus.'

'Then when Spock came back to the bridge before he knew?' Kirk asked in a stunned tone. 'Bones, why did you let him?'

'How could I stop him, Jim?' McCoy asked. 'You know Spock. He thought he needed to be on the bridge. Anyway, it doesn't matter. He's here now, sitting with her. She's still unconscious.'

□Kirk sighed heavily. Suddenly the stacks of reports he had to process didn't seem important at all.

'Bones, do you think he needs company?' he asked. 'I can come down...'

'Who knows what he wants?' McCoy said tiredly. 'No, I'm sorry, Jim. He asked me to leave him alone, but that doesn't mean that that he doesn't want *anybody* with him. I'd be inclined to leave him, though. Let him process this in his own head. Offer him comfort when he wants it. It's still sinking in, I think.'

'All right,' Kirk said slowly. He thought for a moment, then said, 'Bones, will you pass on my condolences? And tell him I've signed him off duty for the week. For at least a week. I know he'll argue with that, but he's entitled to it, and I don't think he's fit for the bridge right now.'

'I will do, Jim,' McCoy said softly. 'McCoy out.'

Spock was standing in the doorway to McCoy's office, holding a dark folded cloth in his arms. When McCoy cut off the communication and looked up, it was obvious to him that Spock had caught every hushed word he had spoken, but there was no hint in his dark eyes as to how the words had affected him. As McCoy stood he caught a glimpse of metallic embroidery on the dark fabric that looked strangely familiar to him. He realised with a sudden jolt that it was the cloth that usually lay

across the end of the Vulcan's bed, that as far as he was aware had not left that place in all his time on the ship.

'It didn't work out then, on the bridge?' McCoy asked sympathetically.

Spock could repress his emotion all he liked, but the doctor had seen too many people in the past stricken with shock and grief, and there was no denying that Spock was filling the criteria. He looked as if he did not know where to go or who to turn to.

Spock shook his head simply. 'My concentration is not as it should be.'

'Well, I don't blame you,' McCoy said sympathetically. 'Jim er Jim signed you off duty for the week, Spock,' he said awkwardly. 'And I second that.'

Spock nodded slowly, then said, 'Of course.'

'Spock, it may not be regulation,' McCoy continued, 'but this may be the time to prescribe a stiff brandy.'

Spock's eyebrow rose minutely.

'Not right at this second, Doctor,' he said quietly.

McCoy's own eyebrows rose. He had been expecting nothing more than a flat refusal.

'I have duties to perform here,' Spock said, his fingers clenching awkwardly on the dark cloth he held. 'I needed something to wrap him in,' he said, before McCoy could ask why he had brought it here.

'Spock, are you sure?' McCoy asked. 'You've had that forever.'

'Since I was born, in fact,' Spock said, in a strangely normal tone of voice. 'My mother used to ' His voice broke suddenly, and he turned away from the doctor for a moment. Then he turned back, and continued steadily, 'My mother used to wrap me in it, as a baby.'

A ghost of a smile flitted across McCoy's

lips at the image of Spock as a baby, of Spock holding onto something akin to a security blanket all this time. Then his face grew grave again as the image transferred from the live, healthy image of an infant Spock, to the cold, still face of the child Spock was proposing wrapping in it.

'You don't, I imagine, have a suitable casket,' Spock continued.

'No, Spock,' the doctor said. 'I well, I put him in a supply box for now,' he said, then rushed, 'I'm sorry, Spock. I couldn't leave him lying out as he was, and it was all I could '

'Doctor,' Spock said firmly, holding up a hand. His eyes were still unreadable. 'I understand. You had no logical alternative.'

'No. I suppose I ' he began, then trailed off again. 'He's under a stasis beam for now in the morgue. Do you want me to take that cloth, or do you want to do it?'

'It is my duty to him,' Spock said quietly. 'Doctor, will you have a suitable casket made?' he asked, his eyes focussed on a blank patch of the opposite wall instead of McCoy's face.

'Oh er of course,' McCoy nodded. 'Is there anything I mean Is there anything specific you require?'

Spock shook his head. 'Christine may, of course, feel differently,' he began.

'But she won't want to be thinking about that now, will she?'

'I don't know,' Spock said, suddenly looking very tired, as if he very much needed to sit down. 'I have a certain knowledge of her mind. She may...'

'Spock.' McCoy put a hand on his arm, and Spock all but started at the touch. 'I don't think *you* want to be worrying about that now, either. I'll get a standard casket made, and if either of you want anything changed later, I can sort it out. Is that all right?'

Spock nodded slowly, seeming dazed.

'Yes, Doctor, that is fine,' he nodded. He

turned away, then suddenly seemed to remember something. He turned back, and said sincerely, 'Thank you, McCoy. You have been

Words seemed to fail him. McCoy smiled, and touched a hand to his arm. 'I've done just what I'd do for any friend, Spock. Now will you let me come with you when you

wrap him in that cloth?'

Spock hesitated, and for a moment it seemed he was going to refuse but then he looked directly at McCoy, and nodded.

'Yes,' he said. 'I would welcome your company.'

To be continued. . . .

Author's comments:

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

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Dain and the Beastmen

Jochannon Mahler

Subject: Warhammer Fantasy

The town of Addlesheim lies near the edge of the Great Forest, along the road from Talabheim to Altdorf. There they tell a tale of the 'Gray Man', who appears to herald destruction and calamity.

The road south from Talabheim is not an easy trip: bandits, mutants and Beastmen infest the Great Forest, and even the mighty Empire cannot maintain constant patrols of these woods.

A man strode along the road one day; he was most undoubtedly a man, though shrouded from head to toe in much patched garments: a hood and cloak, patched so many times the original color was impossible to determine were worn over a dusty robe; the overall color was a dirty gray, but highlighted by more colorful patches. His boots were a dusty black, and with every stride kicked up more dust into the air, dried by the summer sun.

Even his hands were covered; wrapped about with sackcloth up to his fingers, not an inch of his skin was visible.

This man was called Dain, which in a long dead language means Not; a name he chose himself, for that was what he was: nothing, neither living nor dead, he was cursed with everlife, and for the past 5,000 years he has traveled the Old World seeking something to make the years worth living.

Well no more! It had appeared to him only a few days ago, as if a sign from his long dead god; he had stopped for a drink in a lumberjacks' village at a crossroads and found they were being terrorized by a troll. Then it came to him in a flash: HE COULD FIND SOME CREATURE CAPABLE OF KILLING HIM.

If it seems peculiar to you that a man would not think of that for over 5,000 years, dain himself would readily admit that he is not

the shiniest penny in the purse.

He immediately set out to challenge the troll, but it failed to kill him, and he wound up leaving it hamstrung, to be slaughtered by the lumberjacks.

Still, he had a purpose now, and that was enough to cheer him up, so he sang as he strode along, in a dry, but cheerful voice:

"Heavy, weary is my heart,
For I'm distant from my dear,
While I travel 'long the roads of the land;

With a yo he ho to my lover I shall go,
I shan't rest till I can take her by the hand.

My arms and legs are "

He stopped suddenly: coming atop a rise, he could see he had come near to the end of the Great Forest, and below him lay a large town he didn't know the name of.

What stopped him suddenly was the obvious military preparations being made in the streets of the unwallled settlement.

Settling the sword on his belt more comfortably, he set off to find out what was going on after all, it might give him a chance to die.

After walking unobtrusively through the streets of Addlesheim and listening carefully, Dain had gathered that 1: a Beastman horde coming forth from the forest to slaughter and pillage was almost a seasonal occurrence. 2: the rampage this year was particularly horrible. 3: the horde was being led by a particularly fearsome Beastman who towered at least twelve feet tall and could demolish buildings with his bare hands, and that 4: they were approaching rapidly. After thinking it all over, Dain rubbed his hands together in satisfaction. "Perfect." He murmured,

smiling in anticipation. Something like hope shining in his mismatched eyes.

Poor fool.

The passage of a cloaked and hooded man through the town did not go without comment. Indeed, the witch hunters tried to track him down several times, but an observer would have been astonished at the ease with which he evaded pursuit a man can learn a lot in 5,000 years of unlife, and the tale spread of the Gray Man, whose presence heralded ill fortune to the people of Addlesheim.

It was only a few days later that the first Beastmen started marching out of the forest.

There was panic in the streets; militiamen and soldiers rushed to hastily raised walls, peasant archers hurried to palisades, while women grabbed their children ran into their houses and locked their doors.

It was all done with a minimum of panic, and the men had time to ready their weapons and watch as the Beastmen horde kept coming out from the forest.

The hundreds of men watched as thousands upon thousands of Beastmen move silently, and without seeming to notice the nigh unfortified town a few bowshots away, into formation.

They formed massive columns, all aimed straight for the town; Beastmen, Gors, Minotaurs, all seemed more fearsome than the rest. And more than one man cried, sure they were about to die.

Finally, the stream of horrible monstrosities ended, and the Beastmen finished their formation and stood still.

A Beastlord, taller than the tallest minotaur stepped into the sunlight; many cried out on seeing him: his horns were wickedly curved, longer than a man is tall, and stained red with blood. His hands were alike stained; the ax, larger than a cannon he held easily, like a man would carry a stick. He looked upon the mere men and

their puny wooden walls, and roared challenge; a unit of militiamen took to their heels, and many men cried out in shock.

He laughed. A horrible, heart wrenching sound that seemed to promise slaughter and death. He raised his ax high to signal the advance

“Hey! Plug ugly! Yeah, I’m talking to you, you stupid bastard!”

Dain worked his way through a hole in a hastily thrown up barricade and strode out onto the field. “You want to kill someone? Right here! I’m ready for you, ugly!”

Both armies watched, dumbfounded, as the lone man marched across the grassy field, trailing a stream of invectives as he made a line straight for the Beastlord.

The great bull head lowered and the Beastlord watched, puzzled, as the gray enshrouded figure closed on him. The beast reached a decision, and roared something that echoed off the buildings, where more than a few men were whispering “Gray Man” in puzzlement, fear, and wonder.

A Gor ran forward; a powerful whelp, who had crushed out the lives of many men already; it put itself in the path of the suicidal man, brayed challenge, and rushed at him, club raised high.

Without breaking stride, Dain drew his sword, easily sidestepped the Gor, and without looking, swung his blade back and up to cut into the Beastman’s neck. The Gor kept on for a moment. Then stopped and reached back to feel the cut, a puzzled expression crossed the muzzled face, and without moving a muscle, he fell to the ground, his neck half severed, leaking blood to pool around the body.

Dain hadn’t broken stride. “Don’t you send your minions after me!” He shouted, indignant. “I want you, and no one else!” A few men on the walls cheered him on, but most watched in awed silence.

It was too much for a herd of minotaurs; bellowing each other on, they rushed at the impudent human, horns and claws ready to

rend him asunder.

They descended on him, and he disappeared under their mass; a melee ensued as the minotaurs, mad with bloodlust, began tearing and biting at each other.

After some minutes as the blood flowed, Dain hacked his way out from under the blood maddened beasts, casually hamstringing one as he marched on. "I'm tired of this!" He shouted. "I want you to come here and kill me!"

The Beastlord hesitated: if Dain had been a regiment of fully armored knights, he'd not have waited a moment to begin the slaughter. But there was something about this one man, an inevitability about him. Nervous, it took a step back, then stopped as it realized what it had done.

"Hey, don't you run away from me!" Dain bellowed. "I haven't even begun; now you come over here, and let's begin this!"

A pack of beastmen, overawed by Dain's invincible approach, turned and fled back into the woods.

A cheer rose from the human army, and men climbed from their posts and jumped down from the walls, and ran out after the Gray Man.

Beastmen fled, the Gors, bigger and tougher, wavered, the beasthounds whined, sensing their handlers' dismay.

The Beastlord was prepared to rampage through the lands of men; he had killed hundreds himself, but for the first time in his long life, the Beastlord felt fear: this man would not stop until he was dead, and even the great Beastlord was unsure he could stay this man from his course.

He backed away two steps, and raised his ax uncertainly.

Dain, seeing his death retreating from him, took to a run. "Oh, no you don't!" He cried.

The Beastlord, his nerve finally broken, turned and ran back into the forest, the rest of the horde, seeing their lord gone,

scattered and routed, trampling each other in their haste to follow him.

The human host pursued, not stopping at the edge of the forest, they rushed headlong through the trees, easily cutting down the stragglers who fell in their way.

Some time later, Dain exited the Great Forest, hungry, footsore, and wanting to get drunk; he'd had to kill thirteen beastmen that'd stumbled in his path, only to find when he finally caught up with the Beastlord, that he'd stumbled headfirst into a mighty Oak and broken his own neck.

He sat down with a thud and leaned his back against a convenient tree. "I've snatched victory from the jaws of defeat." He moaned, then clasped his hands over his eyes and began to cry.

After a moment, he brightened up, and stood up; he'd heard terrible, horrific things of the elves of Loren: they had tree men who could rend a man limb from limb, and, so it was said, take root in them, slowly crushing and sucking the life from them; their magic was said to be perhaps the most powerful of the races in the Old World, and few men who ventured into their forests ever came out again. Certainly encouraging to a man who wanted to die.

After cleaning and sheathing his sword, Dain set off southwards. After a while, he started to sing as he strode along.

"My arms and legs are weary,
My mouth is dry and dusty,
Yet rest I can't nor eat nor sleep nor cry;

With a yo he ho to my lover I shall go,
Then rest I shall, and sup and drink and sigh."

The town of Addlesheim lies near the edge of the Great Forest, along the road from Talabheim to Altdorf. There they tell a tale of the 'Gray Man', who shall appear in times of destruction and calamity to protect the town from harm.

Author's Comments:

Dain is my first genuine OC in Warhammer Fantasy.

Pictures Corner

got pictures to go with your stor y/ies ? Please send 'em with the text, and I'll stick 'em here.

Alternatively, if you have fan art regular ol' fan art I'd be happy to include it if you want.



Submitted by Jon Taylor, from his story 'In His Emperor's Service'. Natie is inspired by Mr Culexus 'The Good Doctor' http://mr_culexus.deviantart.com/art/The_good_doctor_111768248

Website s of note:

Just one right now, but they're worth it

Warhammer 40,000 fanon wiki:

http://warhammer40kfanon.wikia.com/wiki/Warhammer_40,000_Wiki

A few guys got together and created a wiki of fanon characters, vehicles, places, battles, and organizations; very friendly people, and some very interesting stuff there. I highly recommend you go and take a look.

Casting Call

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Got a great story you want to share? We'd love to read it: send contributions as text in the body of an e mail in the following format:

Subject line: *Contributing.*

First line: *Author's name, e mail address, Author's home page;*

Second line: *Genre WoD, Naruto, Warhammer, etc. , Story name, Word count;*

Text of Story.

Author's comments.

Send any pictures associated with the story as attachments to the e mail; unless otherwise stated, they'll be included in the Pictures Corner.

Now, I can't say this too many times: any stories you submit are still yours: I'm not asking for any exclusive rights; if it's your story, you can do whatever you want with it.

Cover Art:

Absolutely necessary; cover art has to be of the young lady on the cover, in costume from something with fandom Star Wars, Star Trek, Harry Potter, etc : original drawing here: [http://jochannon.deviantart.com/art/Leanna Magazine Mascot 139944247](http://jochannon.deviantart.com/art/Leanna%20Magazine%20Mascot%20139944247)

Other fan art:

1, Poetry:

Poetry is no problem, just so long as it follows the same guidelines as fiction.

2, Pictures and Drawings:

Pictures and drawings may be published by arrangement.

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I am not opposed to original fiction, if you have a story you want to publish here; but this is for fanfiction, so any original writings will have to take back seat.

Fiction Submission Guidelines:

1, Length:

Up to 3,000 words is optimum; I'm willing to go up to 5,000 words; longer stories can be published as serials by arrangement.

2, Foul language:

In moderation, I have no problem with vulgar language; it depends on how much, and how it's used: if your characters have a conversation and curse two or three times, that's fine; if there's hardly a sentence in the whole story they don't curse, that's a problem.

3, No netspeak:

If one or two characters speak in netspeak, that's no problem, but the body of the story has to be recognizably English.

4, Format.

Do NOT use indents: double space between paragraphs;

All text will be published in the same size and font, so any fancy formatting tricks won't work. Sorry.

5, Editing:

I will not edit your stories; they will be published exactly the way you submit them. By the same token, I will not fix typos.

6, Sex:

It's normal, it's natural, sex will not get your story disqualified, but NO pornography!

6.1, anything even hinting of pedophilia will be thrown out immediately.

6.2, stories touching on rape will have to handle it very delicately.

7, Spelling:

If you have a spellchecker, use it: like I said, I won't fix typos.

8, Property:

I'm not asking for any exclusive rights: any story you submit is still yours: I'm not even looking for first printing rights; I'm asking for non exclusive printing and archival rights.

In simple language? I'm asking for permission to publish your story in the magazine, and to archive the story so people can go back and read it again.

9, Re publishing:

If a story's already published, on DA or Fanfiction.com or elsewhere, that's fine; as long as you own it, you can submit it.