

RETROZINE

Two Fandom
Elders,
One More Time!

Summer 2022 * Issue 5



IN THIS ISSUE:

**Trouble Brewing:
Episode 3, BIG TROUBLE
Commentary by Germaine Swanson
3D-Printing a Starship by Fara Shimbo**

RETROZINE 5

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Editor: Germaine Swanson

Geek Girl: Fara Shimbo

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Marjorry Donatello is taking time off to deal with boring issues surrounding exams. Niall Shapero is busy with pro work and interviews. Both will return next issue! Right, guys?

My Soul Sings Again

By Germaine Swanson

I found out recently that some of my peers and colleagues have difficulty reconciling my work personae with my Science Fiction past and Trekker present. They thought I was levelheaded. And, yes, they knew I was bright, but they didn't know I was "that" kind of bright. They could neither reconcile me with their illusions of Trekkies nor their dread of *fundamentalist SF-ers* with their glasses, bad teeth and bugged-out eyes trying to convince them there are *Worlds* out there beyond the stars.

If they knew that before they got to know me, they would have run away faster than they do from door-to-door religion salespeople on pilgrimage.

"Have you heard the good news from Klaatu¹?"

Let me share with you the words of Michael Valentine².

"Here's a pamphlet about *Star Trek* and how it saved the world!

For a while they were struggling with this new side of my personality. Since I don't really talk about it in places where I would be considered a freak, I only share my passion if or when asked or when they express the surprise that it has become so mainstreamed these days. As if it were a plague, or Monkey Pox.

Well, how do I explain to these people that my new calmness and sharpened intellect is because I've been indulging in *Strange New Worlds!* It activated brain cells I thought were long dormant. I have Nerd conversations again about potential science and creativity. I'm analyzing shows and savoring story arcs. I am actually tingling with joy when I think about SNW.

I wrote a text to a Trek friend that began with:

"OMG! SNW is amazing! SKREE! (Short for scream)"

When TOS debuted in 1966, I saw it because my father turned it on. The news had gone out among the people that a new show was going to be on TV which would have a respectable black character in the cast (for a change). Therefore, it was our civic duty to watch it and make it successful. (They didn't know how Neilson Ratings worked at the time.)

My dad watched part of it and went back to his newspaper. I watched TOS and was hooked. It felt like home. It felt like a place I would want to be some day. It touched a part of my soul that I don't think existed before. I went from reading all the science books I could find in the children's library to reading

science fiction. I had some fantastic librarians who nurtured my love of reading and let me borrow mainstream SF from the adult section. I think they were just glad I was reading. They used to listen to me nerd-out about what I read. Between Trek and the librarians, I nurtured an understanding and appreciation of good science fiction verses ray guns and shiny suits.

I wrote stories about *Star Trek* characters. My best friend and I played *Star Trek* Landing Party games in the neighborhood while the other girls sat at home playing “Barbies”.

Time passed. My soul occupied itself with growing up in a discordant, unsafe world. But it did not atrophy. It waited.

Several years later, when I was in High School and college, the warmth in my soul resurfaced with the return of TOS as reruns on WPIX-TV in NYC. And then the conventions! I was at home at the conventions with hundreds of people who thought like I did. They got it! (Whatever “it” was.) The group I was most attracted to held meetings in the vicinity of my old high school. Some were alumni of the college I was attending at the time and, a few years earlier, ran the science fiction club I tried to resurrect before I even met them. It was Kismet! It was meant to be. I was with my people, and they accepted me warts, race, and all. I expected to be at home in *Star Trek* Fandom Land forever.

Then fandom sort of collapsed. The money makers took over conventions. I went into hiding in the mundane world where I got that level-headed reputation. My soul lay dormant.

Cycling forward a few decades...

While in hiding, I learned that not everything named *Star Trek* had the same attraction as TOS. Some offerings were depressing. Some were weird. Some were a waste of brain cells. And others were good SF but just not Trek enough. Whatever it was that attracted me to Trek was missing from these offerings the studios and authors created.

There was one bright spot, a fan-made TV series of full-length episodes titled *STAR TREK Continues*³ (STC) in about 2014 until 2018. it gave me an experience closest to the feeling TOS gave to my soul. STC had professional production values and TOS-style props and sets. The actors were talented, and the scripts were superb. It felt like old Trek with new faces. The performances were strong yet not imitations of the original. They were interpretations of the characters and essence of TOS.

“Continuing the 5-year mission where we left off! *Star Trek Continues*³ is a multiple award winning, fan-created web series. Our vignettes and episodes are available for viewing online for free on our website.”

STC gave me a taste of that old Trek feeling. It was a nostalgic revisit to *What If? land*, endings and sequels to episodes and a final ending to the five-year mission. I still love it. It filled the void but did not re-ignite my soul’s passion. Paramount, et al. did not endorse it or consider it in their plans for the future of Trek. It is a footnote of fan-fiction that is worth seeing.

Then...

It started with *Star Trek Discovery*. The old tingling was reignited. History repeated when, like TOS before, I watched because it had a black, female captain and stayed for the journey. It isn't really Trek but is a good SF show in the Trek universe. I watched it because I like it. But I loved Captain Pike, Number One, and Spock. They were perfect depictions of the characters. If I knew at the time, that there was a letter-writing campaign to have those characters appear in their own show, I would have been at the keyboard in a hot minute just like when we held a letter-writing campaign to get TOS back. So, even activism was rekindled. I would have been ready to storm the Bastille in order to help get that show produced, and this time it would have worked.

Well, it was. *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* was released in 2022.

To date, *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* has released seven out of the ten episodes that will comprise Season One. I am delighted. It is old Trek with twenty-first century technology. The scripts are great. The pacing of the stories is exciting. It follows the Star Trek philosophy that things will be better in the future and people will follow values of fairness and equality. SNW is good science fiction and has rarely done anything to distract me from the story or production.

The comedic sections of some episodes, especially when on the pirate ship in Episode 7 *The Serene Squall* were not obviously as funny on first viewing. It took two viewings for it to become clear that this section was supposed to be funny and not awkward. Comedy timing isn't their strength, yet. There is space for improvement.

My soul sings arias. My head is clearer than it has been in years. My curiosity is unfurling in the summer sun. Everything is new again. I am back and so is Star Trek. There is hope in the universe and an alternative to the crap that is happening in the world.

"No, Mom. Star Trek is not a drug. But if it were a drug, I would certainly take it", said the teenaged me about 50 years ago when I would rush home from school and force everyone in the household to be silent so I could record the reruns of TOS without commercial interruptions on my cassette recorder.

In hindsight, maybe it was a drug; a drug that made me feel hopeful, inspired, energized to participate in future changing event and helped me learn that in grass-roots action the needs of the many outweigh the need of the few and many people can make change for the better occur. My soul is revived. I am alive and happy as I was ages ago.

-----.

- 1 The Day the Earth Stood Still, Movie, (1951) Twentieth Century Fox Productions
- 2 Stranger in a Strange Land, (1961) Robert A. Heinlein; G. P. Putnam's Sons Publishing
- 3 STAR TREK Continued. 11 episodes currently available for viewing online at <https://www.startrekcontinues.com>

The cast includes:

Vic Mignna as Captain Kirk

Todd Haberkorn as Mr. Spock

Chuck Huber as Doctor McCoy

Chris Doohan (son of James Doohan) as Lt Cmdr. Scott, and

Grant Imahara (from *Mythbusters*) as Lt. Sulu.

It also featured guest stars from previous Star Trek series including:

John de Lancie (“Q” in ST:NG), **Michael Dorn** (“Worf” in ST:NG), **Michael Forest** (*Who Mourns for Adonis? TOS*), and

Anne Lockhart (daughter of June Lockhart).



Want to join us for Excitement, Adventure, and Really Wild Things? The *Trouble* can always use new blood! Take part in the main adventure, or go off on your own or with friends to make a unique story!

The U.S.S. *Trouble* is a new starship, dedicated to exploration and research. Our adventures take place between ToS and TNG. Our only weapons are sarcasm and guile. On the *Trouble*, you can be whatever you want, including (but of course not limited to) furry, grumpy, fat, old, bewildered, artificial, imaginary, or even a cat.

Contact us through the website or via editor@retrozine.net!

Admiral's Personal Log

2211.6

I am settling into life on the *Trouble*. It's odd trying to fit into life on someone else's ship even if the captain is a dear, old friend. I feel like a third leg on a biped. I don't know what to do with myself. I'm used to giving the orders and running the mission. This is why commodores get into so much trouble when they travel on other captains' ships. They want to run the ship and control the missions because they outrank the captain, only to end up getting everyone killed or worse. There are a whole lot of things worse than death when you screw up in Starfleet. When you screw up like that, your death is probably the best thing that could happen, all things considered.

Maybe commodores feel they have something to prove. They aren't that far from being a Captain. One who hasn't ascended to the Admiralty after five years one will probably be there forever. It's worse for those who have been behind a desk and therefore have no field experience. They really try to prove they are as good as the big boys and girls.

Not so an Admiral. We have nothing to prove to ourselves or anyone else. We know if we do something dumb or try to override a captain's orders (sometimes that's the same thing) there is no glory there for us. You help make the captain and crew to be successful and powerful. You are careful not to create friction that can cause disrespect for the captain and dissension among the crew.

I'm keeping my ham-handed self out of the picture and focusing on my own mission. I really thought announcing my retirement was going to free me from this little job but, alas not.

Over the years, I've raised controversy about who should be admitted to the Academy. I like to recruit from all species that have good candidates, ones with unique skills or gifts are the best for creating cohorts filled with beings prepared for future science and technology. Many members of the Board of Admirals do not have the vision to see that as we meet new species while expanding the Federation we will need more varied and adaptable crewmen and interact with them. We have federation members who are not oxygen breathers or see in different spectra than most mammalian bipeds. They have a certain preference for bipeds and have only just begun to promote bipeds who aren't Vulcan or from the Space Colonies and settlements.

The excuse is always that it will cost too much to refit ships to enable them to have poly-species crews. Bull. Well, my mission is to embed myself among a crew of the type I've been visualizing and report on whether it works. Will there be respect, harmony and discipline among the crew? Will crewmen be assigned to tasks they are well adapted to or will they all be Red Shirts? The only ship that fit that prescription was the *Trouble* led by my old friend Captain Shimbo. They, (the Admiralty) set me up, gave me the job of evaluating the success in such a way that my vision would die an unnatural death. I think too many Federation politicians were feeling pressured to open up the Academy to more kinds of people. My turning in a negative report could kill many birds with one stone, including my career and expanding admissions.

I actually feel pressured to give a fantastic report no matter what, but I am a graduate of the VSC (out-worlder's) Annex. Vulcan training and ethics won't allow lying to be an alternative (in this situation). T'pryl my assistant, is gathering intel that might clarify the part of the mission related to Beta Kerrotyn and whether we can use it to our advantage.

The Federation's politicians want to pry open the recruitment lines. Our cadets have done astoundingly well in their assignments. Those who did not join the military or exploratory sections of the Fleet have gone on to be assets to the Federation in areas of Science and diplomacy. In essence diverse admissions have been a win-win for the Academy – but crewing a ship? That's a different story to some members of the Admiralty who want me to discredit my own theories by putting a wrench in the dream.

Then there are the missions I have undertaken on behalf of the Federation while touring the Sectors in search of new recruits. The traveling Starfleet Academy “dog and pony” Recruitment Show and Festival was frequently a cover for passing or gathering information. Sometimes negotiations occurred which made it a great idea to compensate the source of information with a placement in the Academy for the young princess or prince, rebel, or merchant's progeny. Sometimes people were secreted off-planet, hidden among our retinue. Academy Recruitment was part educational and part (covert) diplomacy.

Many go to the Academy as a safe and innocent way to get offworld. We transport the potential recruits to the base, free of charge, with the promise that they could return home, all expenses paid, if they didn't want to join. Many parents or families were more than happy to ship their little darlings off-world. Of course, as the different types of species that the Federation hopes to absorb increases, the need for the appearance of greater diversity of species in Starfleet increases. And, this is where Starfleet and the Federation disagree: of course we want you in the Federation—but not in our military or among our elite.

The *Trouble* has a multi-species crew. They are hand picked by their captain for, as I understand, expertise, ability and compatibility. It's the perfect ship to observe, discredit and use to kill the vision of (my) program. Where are all those friends who owe me one now that I need them? Then again, it is better for me to do the evaluation than for someone who hates me to do it. Under those conditions, the idea and the program would definitely be torpedoed from sentence one.

Captain Shimbo's ship is fantastic. I'm a little mad at myself because it felt odd communicating with non-humanoids (no, non-bipeds, I think) as if they were anyone else. By the second day on board, I stopped feeling awkward interacting with the crew. Today, I saw Fara discipline an officer for the disruptive behaviors of its symbionts. Since it was the symbionts that were bothering crewmembers, she spoke directly to them as if they were sentient people and received pledges of an end to the practical jokes and future promises of obedience. So far, no more complaints from the crew.

Mark and the dragons are also assigned to the *Trouble*. We haven't seen each other in a while and are sharing a cabin. Technically, it's a suite. The dragons have been Elsewhere which is fine with me. I always feel like they are watching us or taking notes for some experiment they are planning. Mark says they like us because we have Luck. I don't know anything about this Luck business, but good things do happen when we work together. Mark is an excellent tactical specialist: quick thinking, amazing analytical powers, diligent, has suspicions until proven otherwise, and experienced. He is a good man to have at your back in a fight and even better when he takes the lead. He has experience, intuition and a history of successes. If Luck is involved, I'm blind to it. He says Luck and the Dragons brought us together (by chance?) which saved his career (court martialed?), his life (imprisonment?) and my mission (very hush-hush).

How do we keep the marriage going when we tend to be in different parts of known space? It helps to be married to a telepath. We are always connected; bonded so to speak. Thank goodness for that because, by nature, I am a very jealous woman who has had to work on controlling her temper (and other gifts) since toddler-hood. I hope this is a quiet mission because it would be nice to spend some time with him. At some point, I will have to tell him about my plan to retire from the Academy. I will as soon as I have one.

Swanson, out.



Trouble Brewing

Episode 3: Big Trouble

FADE IN:

1 INT: INSIDE THE HANGAR DECK

1

A great crowd of crew is in the hangar deck to bid VIRGIL TRACY farewell. While Tracy makes a farewell speech, not all of which is intelligible, focus on MORIARTY in the background, wearing a large and somewhat cumbersome backpack. Sahn is brachiating among the various pipes and conduits on the ceiling to get to Thunderbird 3, and eventually disappears behind it.

VIRGIL

No, really, I have to get going. This is actually my brother Alan's ship and he wants it back. He gets cranky when his big brother runs off with his toys.

CAPTAIN

Well, you know you're welcome back at any time you're in the neighborhood. Best of luck to you! And thanks again for your help!

There is general cheering and carrying on. MORIARTY quietly disappears behind TB3, which CAPTAIN briefly notices. As TB3 departs:

CAPTAIN

(To Admiral)
Doing anything fun in the next hour or so?

ADMIRAL

Not really.

CAPTAIN

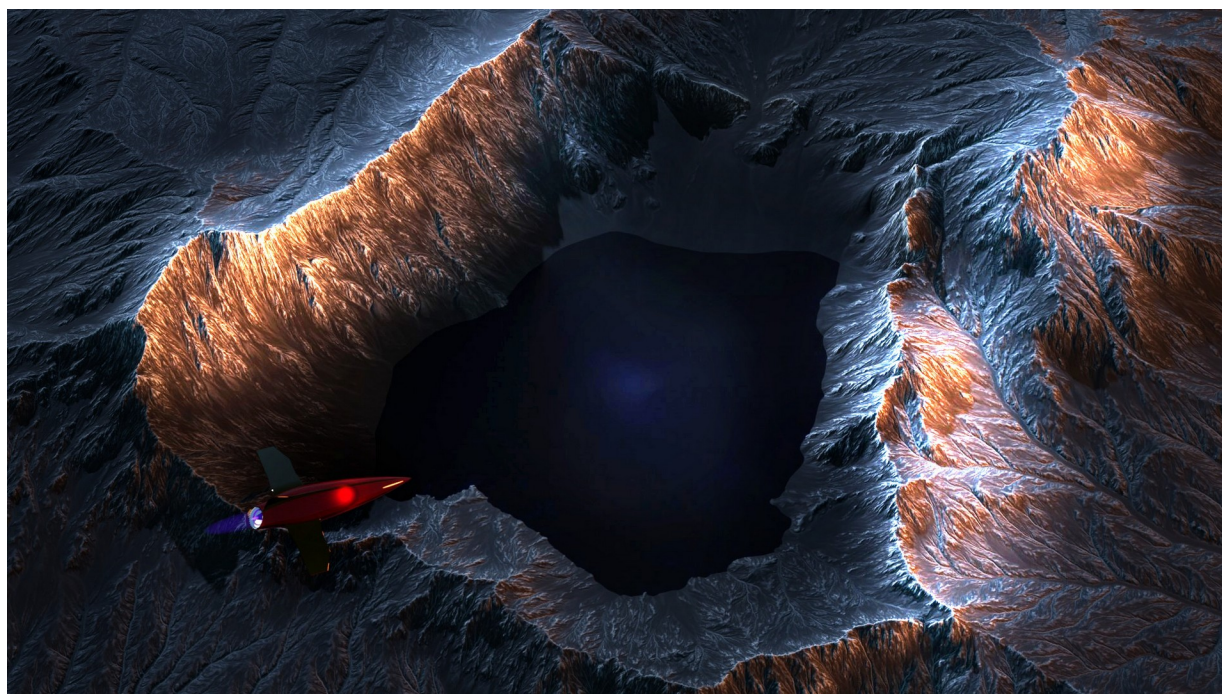
My ready room, in 15. No, make it 20. Mark too. If you would be so kind.

FADE TO:

2 EXT. SURFACE OF BETA KERROTYN, EVENING

2

A tiny spaceship, made of what appears to be a burgundy-colored glass, lands next to a small inlet from one crater to a larger one. After a few moments, it appears to deflate and peel apart. MORIARTY shakes sahn's self out of it, gets up, walks away, and sniffs around.



Eventually, sahn seems to settle on a direction. Sahn rummages through the deflated dæel and extracts a narrow tube and a crystal bottle. Sahn carries both of these in sahn's tail as sahn trots off, nose to the ground.

After a while, MORIARTY notices a thin-film rainbow on the edge of the lake. It's not nearly enough to bother collecting, but digging around the area of the slick, sahn comes upon a hidden cache of small ampules of the britsa, which have been slowly leaking over time. A little stunned at first, MORIARTY scoops up the ampules and puts them in the jar sahn has brought.

Just for giggles, sahn decides to scout further around the edge of the lake, and after some distance and time, sahn happens upon a Device. Just a box, about the size of a lemon, with what might be an antenna on it, but definitely a Thing.



Slowly, MORIARTY grins. Sahn puts the Thing in sahn's stomach pouch, and trots off further along the shore.

FADE TO:

3 LATER, SAME DAY, CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

3

CAPTAIN walks up to the Ready Room doors, swinging Mudd's Maltese Falcon in one hand. When the door opens, the Ready Room, previously a pirate ship cabin, is Sam Spade's office, in glorious black and white. CAPTAIN stops, looks around, looks at the Maltese Falcon, thinks a moment, leaves the room, puts down the Falcon, and picks up the palm tree. When she opens the ready room door again, the ready room is the bridge of "The Bucket," a.k.a. *Reluctant*, from the *Mr. Roberts* movie. CAPTAIN, now rather suspicious, leaves the room and picks up the Falcon, and walks back in. When she reenters, the room blinks for a second, then the entirety becomes the Blue Screen Of Death.

CAPTAIN

Mr. Sandor, to my ready room, please?

CAPTAIN thinks it over, leaves the room, puts the palm tree back in its place, and returns still carrying the Maltese Falcon. The room reverts to Sam Spade's office. CAPTAIN settles down in Spade's chair and puts her feet on the desk. After a stage wait, SANDOR enters. He is a very tall human with a buzz-cut, a pronounced widow's peak, and no eyebrows.

SANDOR

(looking around eagerly, then brought up sharp)
Captain, you ... oh. I'm sorry, Captain, I...

CAPTAIN

Not a problem, Sandor, actually, I rather like it. But it looks like you've got a leak in your holography-room experiment somewhere. (Noticing a large welt on Sandor's hand.) Don't tell me, let me guess. Singers?

SANDOR

Alas yes, Captain. I passed Mr. Mjy... Mysh... I passed our Geologist in the corridor and a couple of them slapped me.

CAPTAIN

Nobody can pronounce his name, I call him Max. I will have words with the miscreants.

SANDOR

Thank you, Captain.

ENTER ADMIRAL and COMMANDER SWANSON.

SANDOR

(Noting the Admiral and snapping to attention)
Admiral Swanson.

CAPTAIN

Admiral, may I present my science officer, Mr. Sandor. I stole him from the *Yamato*. He's working on a new recreational project which I think has tons of potential. Had a prototype on the *Yamato* that had hula-hula girls.

SWANSON

The *Yamato* that was just renamed the *Argo* for some reason?



SANDOR

Yes, sir. That's the one.

CAPTAIN

I have a feeling this new "holography room" idea of his is going to go far. So, when it's a standard feature of all Starfleet vessels, you can say you knew him when. Anyway, Sandor, how do I turn it off?

SANDOR

(apparently to the walls)

Just say, "Desslok!"

The room turns back into the standard ready room. The Captain is now sitting in a standard issue Starfleet chair at a standard issue Starfleet table.

Captain's Personal Log, 2211.6

The new Main Bridge is finished! The gals down in Spaceship Architecture did a really good job on it. Lots roomier. The old "Captain's Barcalounger" is gone, and I have an actual chair. It has buttons on the arms. I'm still not sure what they all do, but I'll tell you this: one of them better be for calling the Tea Lady, and another better be for ordering pizza.

I got a message today from someone I haven't seen in almost 60 years: Fer Hewaei. She's retired now; she must be old as dirt, but she still has thick, wavy, white-blond hair down to her knees and I'm still jealous. Most days I actually have hairs... She was a captain when I knew her, back in middle school. She came to give a talk to our class and told us about her adventures and her ship (the name of which I can't remember) and her crew, some of whom really didn't like each other very much. She lives in the Outer Hebrides now and raises Shetland ponies, which is masochism in the extreme. Shetland ponies are just plain evil, I guess that's why she likes them. She congratulated me on putting off making captain for 40 whole years. To this day I'm still blaming her for me being in Starfleet in the first place. I was perfectly happy being a science officer.

Which brings up, who in their right... well, okay, why would anyone in their right mind make me a captain anyway? They can't be that desperate, right? There are tons of people they've been grooming for the job for ages. And (why I don't know and never will know) there is still some unspoken prejudice against older women on starships. Unless you can make yourself look a lot younger than you are, you may be there, but you are invisible. Men are allowed to be old and grey; we have to fight for it. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

But I'm here now and whether or not the job suits me, time will tell.

By the way, I had to read the Riot Act to Max's Stinger-symbionts today. Normally I don't dress down people in public, but I found back in grad school that when you want a Stinger to take you seriously, you need witnesses. They're pretty things, and very good at what they do. But hey, youse guys... enough earning your name already.

I'm enjoying having Admiral Swanson on board. Can't help wondering, though, if she's here to see how the Old Bat, in a position in which one never finds Old Bats (in the Captain's Chair) is getting along. Seeing if the giddy young, svelte, enthusiastic crew will actually respect an old Grandma who's seen it all already? Whatever. Lots of fun sitting in the kitchen drinking tea and remembering the Good Old Days when knights were bold and dinosaurs ruled the Earth, and we were as young as half my crew.

I also wonder why she wants to retire. She's always been up for Excitement, Adventure, and Really Wild Things in the past. They make you an admiral, put you behind a desk, and make you part of the bureaucracy. I guess that would make me want to retire too.

So far, dear Uncle Harry is making no trouble aboard the *Trouble*. I know this will change. That's okay, it will give me an opportunity to learn from the Master.

Haven't seen much of Bob, he's holed up in Engineering working with Sandor and Gus on a Secret Project.

Dorcas (ahem) Lt. Cmdr. Addomecaroi is an absolutely evil Dungeon Master. She must have been a Shetland pony in a previous life. My level 53 Hobbit Mage has just been hit with a Second Childhood curse so she's back at Level 1. AUGH.

Weird seeing Ruba again. She's still green. At least she doesn't seem to be putting herself in mortal peril like she did constantly in the old Academy days. Same sour old bat as ever. But I do like those trilobites she's got. I must have some. I wonder what she'll take for a couple.

Harry the Cat is still constantly at my side. Where would I be without him? The new bridge has dedicated spots for the cats to sit—and the crew to put down their coffee cups. Of course, the dedicated spots for the cats to sit are the last places the cats *want* to sit, but there you go, cats.

I think I'll wander off to the zoology lab and see if anything interesting's happening down there.

Ciao, bella!

CAPTAIN

Isn't this brilliant? Every ship should have one. Good work, Sandor. Carry on.

SANDOR

Thank you, Captain.

SANDOR gives a slight bow to the Admiral, and a nod to Swanson, and leaves. ADMIRAL and SWANSON pull up chairs. Tea and donuts appear on the table, and the CAPTAIN, if no one else, digs in.

CAPTAIN

Mr. Swanson, report?

SWANSON

I have good reason to believe Beta Kerrotyn is a "trap planet" set up by some old race, possibly the Murchies, no longer active in Federation space. In particular, it may be a specimen-collector site. Could be the britsa there is the "cheese" in the trap. This idea is based on its out-of-the-way location, and also that the britsa is, so far as I know and the dragons can detect, the only thing of any possible value there, and it's too curious that it's such a high-value item on such an otherwise barren and inactive world. I have a full report here for you.

CAPTAIN

Thank you. I'm sure it will make interesting reading. Thank the dragons for me, too. Let's set the security issues aside for the moment, Swanson, I'll trust your judgment here, just keep me informed.

In the meantime, we have the pressing matter of what to do with Ruba. Well, here's my two cents on Ruba Lacincia before I forget what I wanted to say.

So far as I can tell, Ruba isn't doing anything illegal.

Unethical? That I don't know yet. Just don't have enough information, but from your report, Swanson, she doesn't have the wherewithal to do anything ... scary, let's say. She can just breed some trilobites and whatever else she's got, I think.

So...

Why does the Federation want her? They had her once and they chased her off with a sharp stick. So, one is given to ask, does the Federation know anything that, uhm, might help me see my way clear in this case?



ADMIRAL

I have my aide covertly checking on it and she'll report back to me. But I suspect it has something to do with Ruba's history of bioengineering, which got her in trouble before.

CAPTAIN

T'Pryl still your aide?

ADMIRAL

Yup. She's put up with me for years. She fills in the blanks that I've missed. She'll do well when I finally do retire and she takes over.

CAPTAIN

Oh. She must be "that Vulcan" that Ruba hates so much.

ADMIRAL

Well, Ruba doesn't know the whole story of why she's still alive. T'Pryl risked a lot to get her off world that time.

CAPTAIN

Can't say I blame her, Vulcans can be ... aggravating. Anyway, our and/or my orders were to get her back to Starbase whatever-it-was. I can see a problem here. I'm absolutely certain there is something, somewhere, in Federation law that says Thou Shalt Not Kidnap People, especially civilians. So maybe Starfleet Command doesn't see grabbing someone, locking them up, and bringing them to some starbase, as kidnapping in sensu stricto, but Lacincia most certainly will, direct orders notwithstanding.

ADMIRAL

That's why my orders are so vague. It might not be policy but my orders imply that it's an option. Kidnapping her won't make her be more cooperative. We need a more "diplomatic" plan.

CAPTAIN

Well, you're looking at the wrong captain if you want diplomacy...

ADMIRAL

(smirking)

But not sneakiness. And, maybe that's why they gave this assignment to us. Use your imagination, what would work to get her here willingly?

CAPTAIN

(sits back and thinks)

Well, hmmm... Lessee... OH! How about this. She's breeding trilobites. We've got Chip. There's no way to get Chip to go back down to that planet until we get the transporter fixed, which may happen and may not, SO...

How about I invite her to come up... no, scratch that. How about I broadly hint that she wants to come up here and meet Chip? Really, sometimes if you're obviously being fatuous you get people's backs up and then they have to do what you want just out of pure intransigence. What do you think?

ADMIRAL

I agree with your logic. It would serve us if we encouraged her to think it's her idea to visit the ship.

CAPTAIN

Well, it won't be her idea to visit the ship. It will obviously be my idea, and knowing Ruba, she will explode if she doesn't find out what I'm really up to.

ADMIRAL

Ah...huh makes sense. What's your plan?

CAPTAIN

(shrugs)

Just ... blatantly suggest in my airy-fairy nonchalant way, "suggest" that she'd really love to come up here and meet Chip. I'd clear it with Chip, of course. If Chip says no I'm sure there's someone else up here she'd love to see.

ADMIRAL

You know her better than I. Go for it. How do I fit into your plan?

CAPTAIN

For now, I guess you don't. I want to get her back up, but not that high.

ADMIRAL

She'd smell a rat if she thought I'd be in favor of it. Maybe you can use that to your advantage.

CAPTAIN

(Grinning)

I'll put that piece of information in my back pocket and pull it out if I need it.

ADMIRAL

(Gives the thumbs-up.)

CAPTAIN

Groovy. I'll go clear this with Chip and see what I can arrange.

ADMIRAL

I'm expecting a report from T'Pryl, so we'll have more background on exactly what Starfleet wants. I want to know if Starfleet even knows what's going on.

CAPTAIN

I want more donuts. Hey! Who ate all the donuts?

FADE:

4 MUDD'S QUARTERS

4

MUDD slowly sits up on his bed as MORIARTY enters the room. MORIARTY jumps on the table and slowly starts removing things from sahn's pouch.

MUDD

Oh, MUST you reach into that thing in public? That is so disgusting.

MORIARTY

(Arranging items on the table)

Jealousy, eh? Look what I found.

MUDD leans in to examine the items. There are several vials, all in a jar, and the box that Moriarty has found.

MUDD

Those jars are already leaking. Pernicious stuff, this britsa, you must have it inside your... oh, never mind, I'm sure you can clean it up yourself. Just a moment.

MUDD goes to his large safe full of drawers and rummages around, while Moriarty opens sahn's pouch, leans down, and sniffs at it. Sahn shrugs, turns to watch MUDD. MUDD returns with another jar with a very wide mouth and a suspiciously high index of refraction.

MUDD

(opening the jar)

Put the britsa in here.

MORIARTY

You put it. I did my bit.

MUDD, flustered, gets up again, gets a set of tongs from his safe, and one by one transfers the vials into the large jar. MUDD and MORIARTY watch in fascination (or something) as a couple of dark stains disappear into the tabletop.

MUDD

Now! Let's turn our attention, shall we, to this fascinating object right here.

MUDD picks up the object. It is about grapefruit sized and polygonal, dark in color, submetallic in lustre, and, in places, there are conical indentations. He weighs it in his hands, gives it a bit of a shake, taps on it. Turns it over and over, looking for edges, and finds none.



MORIARTY

I sonar-scanned it, it's empty. Well, I'm pretty sure it's empty anyway.

MUDD

Quel damage. Nevertheless, it's got to be worth something. It's very conspicuous, don't you think?

MORIARTY

Too conspicuous. It was meant to be found.

MUDD

Quite likely. But by whom? That's the real problem, isn't it?

MORIARTY

(with a sublimely evil grin)

We'll know when they show up and don't find it, won't we?

FADE OUT:

5 **CHIP'S QUARTERS**

5

Chip's quarters are austere in the extreme, with everything useful to her being underwater. The quarters are simply a ramp to pools she shares with the ship's dolphins. Plants, whose leaves Chip occasionally reaches for and eats, hang from the ceiling. The doorbell chimes.

CHIP
(Grumpily)

Enter.

CAPTAIN enters. Looks around for a seat, and seeing none, sits on the floor.

CHIP
(trying hard to be polite but still grumpily)
What can This Self do to be of service?

CAPTAIN
(In Big-Sister Command Voice)
Oh, I know that.
(in a kindlier voice)

But since it isn't necessary that you allow this visitor, that would be rude. ... I admire your insistence on proper protocol, but this isn't the Quadrantid and I'm not Sister Evarista. So relax. I'll tell you when to worry.

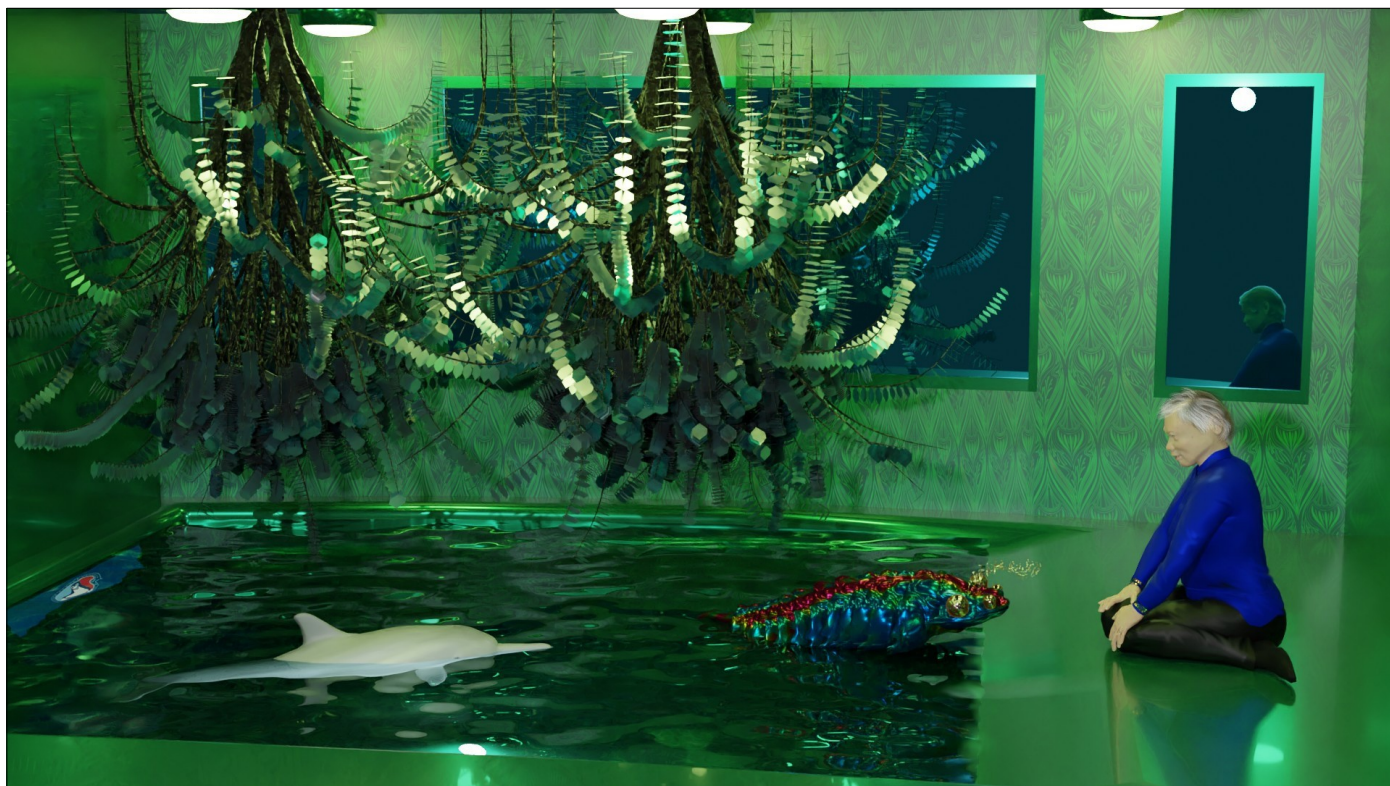
CHIP
Might This Self ask what the purpose of this meeting is?

CAPTAIN
Soitn'ly.

CHIP Makes an exasperated noise.

CAPTAIN
All I'd like you do is swim around in the water and look pretty. Person I want to visit loves trilobites. Someone I know, and she'll either just sit here and stare at you or pepper you with questions, none of which you are under any obligation to pay the least attention to. I should add, it's very unlikely she'll agree to come aboard ship, but you know,

just in case...



CHIP takes a while to think this over.

CHIP

This Self will see That Self.

CAPTAIN

Thank you, Chip. I hope you feel better shortly.

FADE

6 PLANETSIDE

6

CAPTAIN rides up to LACINCIA's cave, calling out. VINNY is with her. Eventually, LACINCIA appears, looking disgruntled.

LACINCIA

I was sure you'd be gone by now. There's nothing here. We're not friends anymore. Go away!

CAPTAIN

Oh, we'll be gone shortly. I just wanted to know if you'd be

willing to part with a trilobite or two?

LACINCIA

Why?

CAPTAIN

Because they're pretty, and they're interesting, and I have a salt-water aquarium in my quarters and a trilobite or two would be happy there, I think. Make me happy, anyway.

LACINCIA

You have a ... a fish tank, in your quarters, on a Federation starship?

CAPTAIN

Well, yeah. They're my quarters, I can have whatever I want. And, well, I'd like a little trilobite or two and I'll pay you for it and/or them, of course.

LACINCIA

(Stalling)

What have you got in that tank now?

CAPTAIN

Oh, you should see! I have a pair of Royal Grammas, and some lovely blue Chromis, and what else? A couple of little Dammerers, you know, those things from Walsngromt with the [makes hand gestures indicative of claws]. Oh, yeah, and six or seven baby Chíkshu.

LACINCIA

What are Chíkshu? Since obviously you want me to ask.

CAPTAIN

Cool species. Arthropods, just really big when they're fully grown. Metallic, and really colorful. Like giant trilobites who refer to themselves as "This Self." These I've got are the children of one of my crewmembers.

LACINCIA

You keep ... someone else's kids ...

CAPTAIN

Well, yeah. You know, that's the trouble with Chíkshu, they don't really like their kids. Probably explains why they're

dying out. But there's this experiment going on and Chip asked me if I could keep them out of her own quarters, so I offered my fish tank, and-

LACINCIA

(very wrong-footed and suspicious)

What are you up to now, Captain Doctor Shimbo?

CAPTAIN

What? You don't know from Chikshu? You should look 'em up! Anyway, I promised I'd be back soon, it's Ensign Zugt's birthday and we're having a big party. But think about letting me have a couple of your trilobites? I'll pay you whatever money you want. Let me know. *Ciao, bella!*

CAPTAIN turns and rides off, VINNY following, barking.

LACINCIA gives a disgruntled sigh, goes into her cave, looks around. After a while she turns on something on the remaining dashboard of the shuttle she came in, and scrolls around for a while. Selects something and starts reading; and as she does, her eyes get very, very wide. She walks out to the cave entry and looks around. There is nothing there, but she stares, narrow eyed, in the direction the Captain has ridden off in.

LACINCIA

You bitch...

FADE:

7 LATER SAME DAY, CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CHIP'S QUARTERS

7

CAPTAIN and LACINCIA go up to CHIP's door and CAPTAIN rings the doorbell.

CAPTAIN

Thought you couldn't resist. You'll like Chip, she's weird, you know.

The door slides open and CAPTAIN and LACINCIA enter. CHIP and HIUWH are in the water, and both look up. LACINCIA is momentarily stunned.

LACINCIA

That's not a bottlenose dolphin. I thought everyone in the Federation had bottlenoses.

CAPTAIN

No, Hiuwh is a La Plata River dolphin. Better fit all around for a small ship, and you know what salty water can do to ship's systems. Anyway, Hiuwh and Chip, may I present my old pal Ruba. She's here to gawp. Ruba, *je vous present* Lt. Commander Chp Pntshe Dh, and Ensign Hiuwh. I'll leave youse guys alone to chat, I have a D&D game going on on the bridge I need to attend to. Dorcas is a wicked, wicked dungeon-master!

Oh... Hiuwh, a moment of your time?

CAPTAIN and HIUWH go to a corner and converse quietly for a moment. As they part, HIUWH whistles something and CAPTAIN bursts out in laughter. CHIP flattens her antennae in a huff, and RUBA looks anxiously puzzled. CAPTAIN leaves.

FADE OUT:

BRIDGE OF THE TROUBLE

8

Everyone is sitting around, chatting and occasionally looking at the controls in front of them. For the moment, there is nothing to do, so they are all playing D&D with DORCAS as dungeon-master. The Tardis doors open and all turn around. CAPTAIN exits the Tardis/Elevator.

CHAMBERLAIN

Captain on the bridge!

Everyone stands at attention.

CAPTAIN

Thank you, thank you! I'll be here 'til Thursday. Don't forget to tip the piano player. As you were. Deal me in.

(thinks for a moment)

Oh... I needed a catchphrase. "Deal us in!" I like that. Hmmm!

Captain sits down, amidst much snickering, as does everyone else. The Tardis/Elevator doors open again and the ADMIRAL enters.

CHAMBERLAIN

Admiral on the bridge!

Everyone stands at attention, even the CAPTAIN.

ADMIRAL

As you were.

Everyone sits again but there is no more chatting, as there would have been if the captain only were there. People try to look busy.

MAX, being crawled over by several STINGERS, approaches the captain. Max's voice, even through a translator, is very thick, and buzzy, as if he were an old frog speaking through a comb.

MAX

Captain, if I may have a moment?

CAPTAIN

Of course, Max, what is it?

MAX

We would like permission to carry out a geological survey of Beta Kerrotyn.

CAPTAIN

Oh. Of course. Go ahead. Sorry I didn't think of it.

MAX

Thank you, Ma'am.

As MAX turns to go (very slowly, as he does everything), CAPTAIN reaches out and grabs one of the Stingers

CAPTAIN

Oh, by the way, Max...

MAX

Yes, Captain?

CAPTAIN

(looking over the "captive" which is wiggling around trying to get back to Max)

Tell this to the Stingers, if you would be so kind:

(grabbing another Stinger and addressing the two of them directly)

If you guys want to stay on my ship, to say nothing of becoming Federation members some day, Cap'm Fa's Absolutely, Positively Unbreakable Rule No. 1 is: Thou shalt treat my crew with

respect. They are NOT toys.
Stinging random passers-by, for entertainment on your part, or for any other reason, is absolutely, positively, right out. One more episode and you all leave the ship for good. Do I make myself abundantly, incredibly, and excruciatingly clear?

CAPTAIN puts the STINGERS back on MAX's back. They wiggle their arms a bit, and MAX makes a brief burst of noise. All the STINGERS (there are four or five) hold their arms rigidly upright, looking like a bunch of bioluminescent, upturned tables.



CAPTAIN

Good. I'm pleased that we understand each other. You may go.

MAX

Thank you, Captain.

The STINGERS nest (or maybe hide) between MAX's scales. MAX and the STINGERS leave. DORCAS sighs and CHAMBERLAIN rubs her arm.

CHAMBERLAIN

(Scratching her arm)

Thank you, Captain.

Several other people mumble agreement.

CAPTAIN

De nada. Va bene. (Looking down at the new chair) Which of these buttons calls the Tea Lady?

ADMIRAL

Where'd you pick them up?

CAPTAIN

Found them when I was off exploring for my dissertation. Interesting species. Symbionts, in a way. The big ones eat rocks and dig tunnels. The Stingers light the way and eat grubs the big ones dig up and keep the big ones clean, and the big ones, they can tell you the mineral composition of the rock just by taste alone. Great geologists! The others? They're the brains of the outfit but they have a sense of humor, and they know what it is for. Little hive-minded rotters. (turns and gives the Admiral a quizzical look. Something on your mind?

ADMIRAL shrugs and looks distracted.

CAPTAIN

Dorcas, you have the com.

9 ADMIRAL'S QUARTERS

9

ADMIRAL and CAPTAIN are sitting in the kitchen. There is tea, and a cat.

CAPTAIN

Good tea!

So, what's up? I will now try to shut up and listen.

ADMIRAL

(After taking a longish time to think)
There's more to my mission than I've shared.
This trip is a "goodbye" present to me from Starfleet. I've spent decades trying to convince them to build and assign crews by specialties regardless of species. My staffing belief is, "If they don't eat each other they can work together."
I've had a lot of pushback over the years. Starfleet are just beginning to embrace having multiple species of bipeds working together. They claim refitting ships for different environments is too expensive or not cost effective. I think they like keeping the divisions among species. It gives them a political advantage.
My job wasn't political, it was recruiting the best candidates for Star Fleet's greater goal.

CAPTAIN

Which 'greater goal' is this, now?

ADMIRAL

You don't really want to know. But I'll say this, it is no different than what happens when rich and powerful beings have access to absolute power. It's why most of the Federation is still too immature to play with the "big beings".

CAPTAIN

(rolling her eyes)

Bureaucracy...

ADMIRAL

Well, my mission is to experience my vision and explain why it can't and doesn't work.

CAPTAIN tries to raise one eyebrow and fails.

ADMIRAL

You have created, on the Trouble, what I've been trying to achieve. You've created a crew whose specialties and personalities match your needs. This raises so many questions I hadn't considered before. Abandoning the idea before looking at the variables is ridiculous.

CAPTAIN

"It is a capital offense to theorize before one has all the evidence."

ADMIRAL

I've been assigned to write the report that proves it doesn't work, and see all the holes. I must describe the conditions and how my theories don't work. Well, in the right hands, they do work.

CAPTAIN

Oy...

ADMIRAL

I've been on this crazy journey since I got here. I have never really worked under the conditions I described. We are just adapting to having Vulcans and Andorians on the ship level. Here you are with a flying ark of specialists. (Admiral simulates explosion) Mind blown!. Once you get past the initial weirdness, being on your ship is like walking through any mall on a space station. It all feels ... normal. At least to me. So, that refutes one item on their list. It isn't discomforting to work in that kind of crew. For that matter, if you as a crewperson can't get along with your crewmates, you must be reassigned - or shot (she snickers). Ship's harmony *über alles*. Generally, in the right hands, any crew can work together. Your history shows that's true.

I was surprised by my own initial reactions. I began to doubt my own sincerity of belief. Was I just the foolish idealist the brass believes I am? Nope, I'm back. My basic beliefs have been sustained, Starfleet is going to be very disappointed in my report. I bet it never sees the light of day.

CAPTAIN

Good, then they'll leave us alone to actually do our jobs!

ADMIRAL

I'm sure they have a plan B up their sleeves. Our mission appears to be a zero sum proposition. No matter how it turns out.

CAPTAIN

Well, if they want to fight with me they're welcome to.

ADMIRAL

You are not their issue. They get rid of two or three problems with one assignment. One: their issue with multi-species crews. Two: they get Ruba for whatever they want. Three: I'm sure there is a third thing they'll get. I know the cost thing. You

can always kill an idea if you can prove it costs too much.
That's how they clean house.

The Captain's com badge beeps. Captain answers.

CAPTAIN

Yes?

HIUWH (dolphin)

(The voice is synthesized; you can just barely tell.)
Captain, please come to Chp Pntsche Dh's quarters immediately.
Lieutenant Commander Chip is gone! I have locked your guest in
as you requested.

CAPTAIN

Left the quar... never mind, I'm on my way.

CUT:

9 CHIP'S QUARTERS

8

LACINCIA is standing in a corner, looking terrified. She is also extremely
wet. HIUWH splashes water on her every time LACINCIA moves.

LACINCIA

(nearly panicking, speaking very fast)
I didn't do anything, I swear!

CAPTAIN

(looking around)

Hiuwh, what happened?

LACINCIA

I was—

CAPTAIN

(As if warning off a toddler)

AHT!

Lacincia deflates.

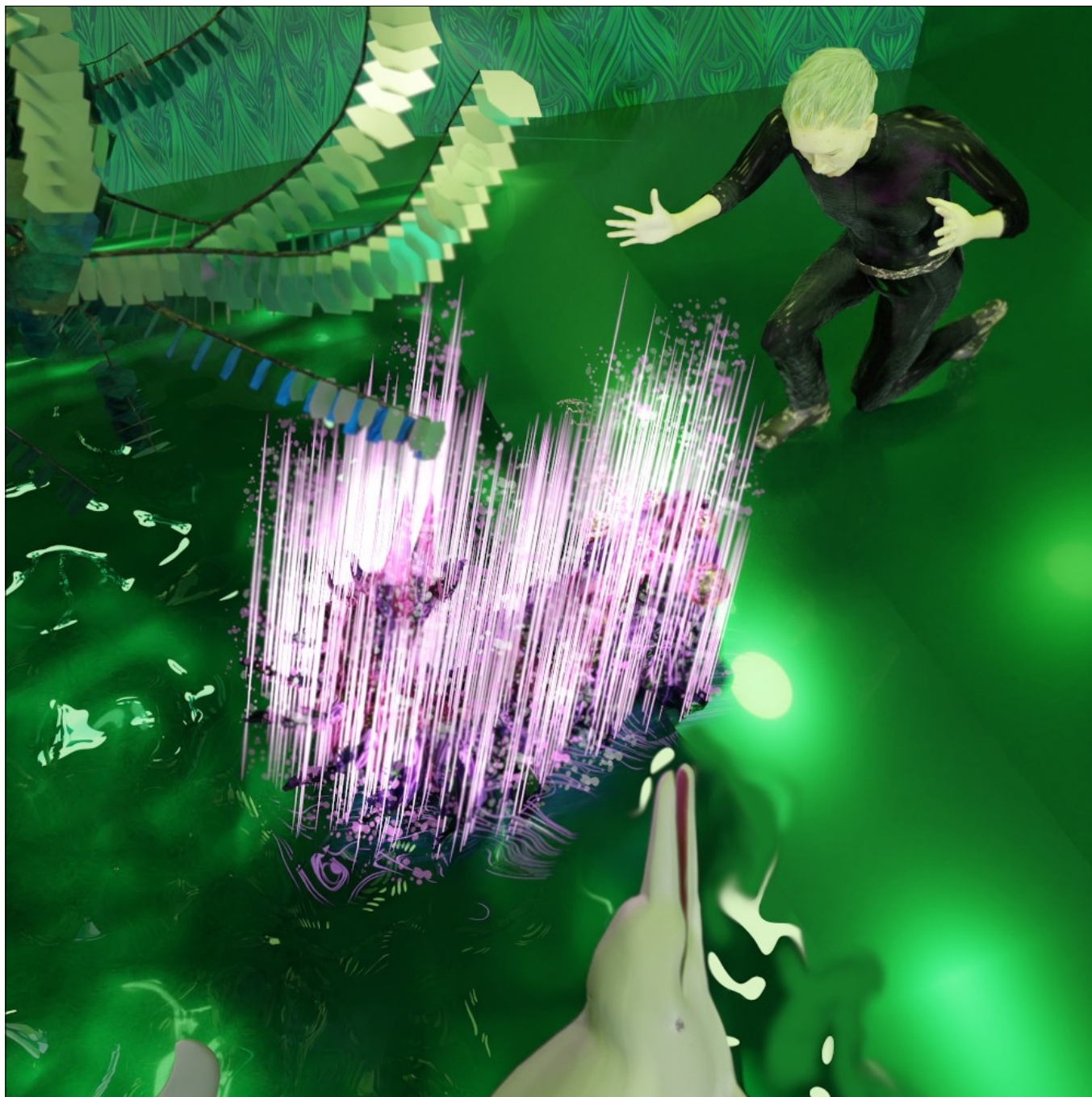
CAPTAIN

Hiuwh?

HIUWH

The guest tried to touch the lieutenant commander, and there was a light, like a transporter, and Chip was gone!

Captain and Admiral both give Ruba the side-eye



LACINCIA

All I wanted to do was see what Chip felt like. I touched her, like this (goes to touch the Captain, thinks better of it) Anyway, that's all, I swear!

HIUWH

I can corroborate!

CAPTAIN

(after some thought)

I have a bad feeling about this...

TO BE CONTINUED...

If Death Was Coming for You, What Would You Do?

Germaine Swanson 6/2022

An ancient Mesopotamian fable:

A merchant in Baghdad sent his servant to the marketplace. The servant returned without his goods appearing to be terrified. The servant explained that he saw Death in the marketplace and Death was looking at him. He was terrified and begged for help. The merchant, who was a good man, and valued his servant, agreed to disguise him in the finest clothes and give him a fast horse so he might ride away safely to the city of Samarra. Later that evening the merchant encountered Death in the marketplace. Unafraid, he asked why Death had threatened his servant. Death replied that he was surprised to see him in Baghdad today because they have an appointment tomorrow in Samarra.

Synopsis of “*The Appointment in Samarra*”. (Retold by W. Somerset Maugham [1933])¹

What would you do if you knew when and where you were going to die? Would you cheat death by hiding in your “Fortress of Solitude”² in the frozen north? Would you stay away from the thing that was prophesied to kill you so you would be safe like the needle the princess³ was destined upon which to prick her finger? Would you secrete yourself in a cave on your lands to heal after the loss of you wife, friends, and heroic deaths of your fellow warriors in battle?⁴

Or would you jump on your horse (after a little convincing) and ride straight to Samarra while enjoying adventures along the way?

Captain Christopher Pike decides to choose the third option and progress to the fourth. He leaves his fortress, goes to save the damsel in distress (Number One), and decides to accept his journey on his road to destiny. He has ten years from some point in time (the date of the prophesy, perhaps?) to use his “get out of jail free” card. He chooses adventure over stagnation. Facing challenges to help the many instead of saving the one (himself). It is almost as if he has been freed to try radical new things because he knows he isn’t going to die today. His destiny protects his crew from death because they aren’t included in the prophesy.

Pike is enjoying his new liberation and seems to plan to live life to its fullest while he has it. He surrounds himself with favorite things. Enjoys cooking, entertaining, and spending time with the people in his crew who he trusts and depends on as if they are family. It’s like a cross between the Samurai lord feasting with his chosen “men” before battle or an evening with Robin Hood and his Merry Men in the forest. Convivial and lighthearted before they may face certain death.

A fire in the hearth of his quarters burns like an eternal flame of life. It sets a mood of warmth, life, and safety in the background. Rather than a man on a death pilgrimage who would be safe if he just stays away from the place and time, he plunges forward to fulfill his destiny as only he can while saving as many as he can along the way. He’s living another example of the Star Trek morality that one values the lives of the many over the life of the individual.

Pike is needed. Pike goes to help. All the parts of Pike that make him a bold, adventurous, and compassionate leader, trusted, and respected by his crew, are amplified by the gift that death will not visit them – today. He can lead from strength and confidence because he is not addled by that basic fear that most people have.

Pike experiments with who he is in his current reality. Or at least that his how I see his ever-growing and rising pompadour hairstyle which looks like it seeks to fill the entire area above his head. It resembles a tilted silver halo or the cartoon character Johnny Bravo (“don’t fight ladies, there’s enough of me to go around”), or perhaps it is designed to herald his arrival like a royal page trumpeting and announcing, “make way for the hero, the king, the seasoned veteran of many wars. Make way!” It certainly does get your attention and shows a freed sense of humor about himself.

I disagree that Pike telling everyone he knows when he is going to die is a character flaw or a display of weakness. He’s leveling the playing field. His crew doesn’t have to whisper about him behind his back. He is living his reality. He tells the latest woman he sleeps with about his mortality because he doesn’t expect to be coming back. He has a limited time and things to do.

He makes choices to keep his crew safe and fulfill the mission or save the colonists. He uses the knowledge, experiences, and expertise of his bridge crew to inform his choices. From what little we know of him before his experience with the oracle in *Star Trek Discovery* there is no evidence that he was the same liberated captain he is now. The man went home to heal and hide. The hero emerged to fulfill his destiny.

Since Death is going to get you anyway, why hide or wimp out? Go for the gusto, live in the moment.

This treatise is based on viewing the first seven episodes and *Discovery*. I look forward to finding out whether it continues along this story arc.

- *An Appointment in Samarra* John O’Hara, 1934
- *Superman, DC Comics* (*Superman frequently retreated to his fortress of solitude to heal and think.*)
- *Sleeping Beauty*, fairy tale. She is cursed by an evil fairy to die/sleep for 100 years if she pricks her finger before she becomes 18.
- *Outlander, Diana Gabaldon*

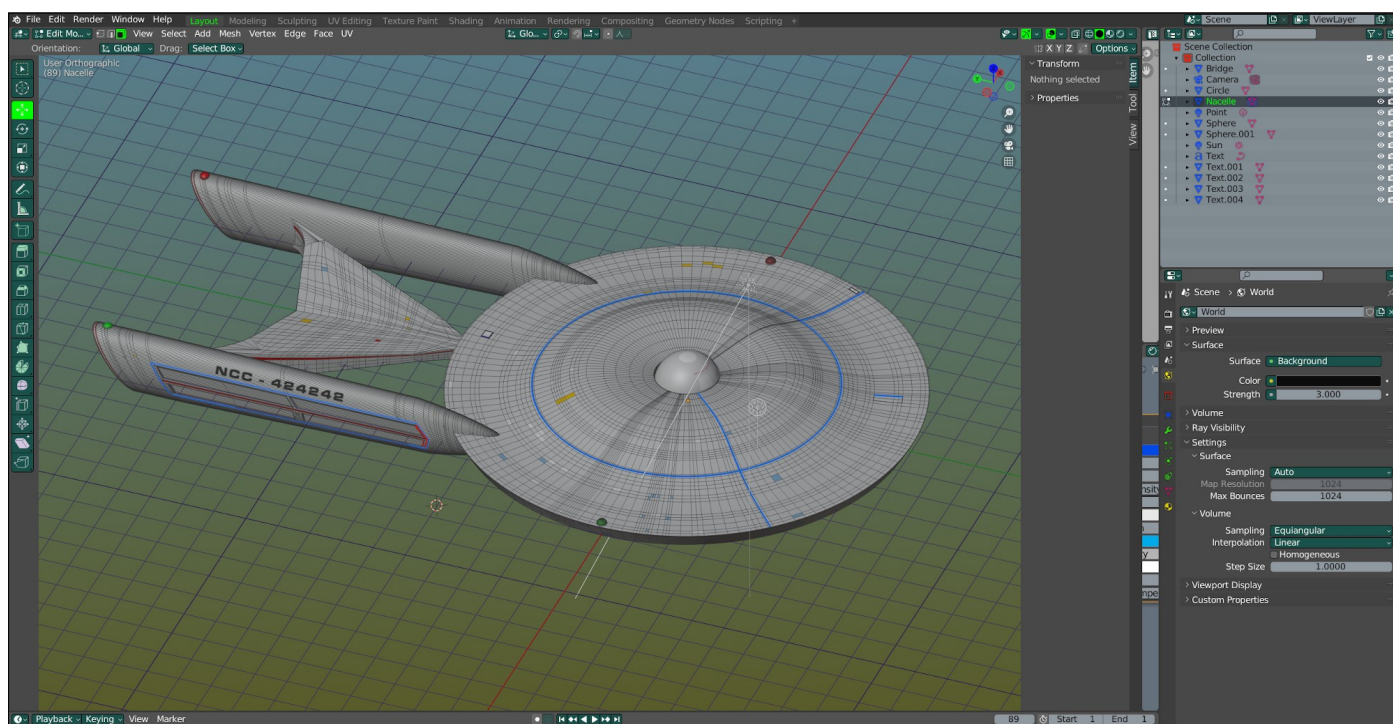
Making *Trouble!*

Designing and 3D Printing Our Starship

by Fara Shimbo

By now you've seen plenty of pictures of the USS *Trouble*, NCC 424242. Having a model you can use for illustration is nice, but having one you can play with and hang from the ceiling, well, that's a whole different matter. But it can be done, and here's how I did it.

The first step was designing the *Trouble* in 3D modelling software. I use Blender.



3D Modelling. *World's steepest learning-curve, but great fun once you get used to it!*

I'm not going to go into detail of how I actually designed the model. It is a long, complicated process (if you really want to know, let me know and I'll consider making a tutorial). I used Franz Joseph's Enterprise Blueprints for inspiration (fortunately, Bob still has his 1976 copies!). I didn't stick to them exactly. The *Trouble* is supposed to be a ship designed with major input from its crew, and since the whole story of the *Trouble* takes place somewhere in the "Lost Era" between TOS and TNG, I felt I had, and deserved, some latitude.

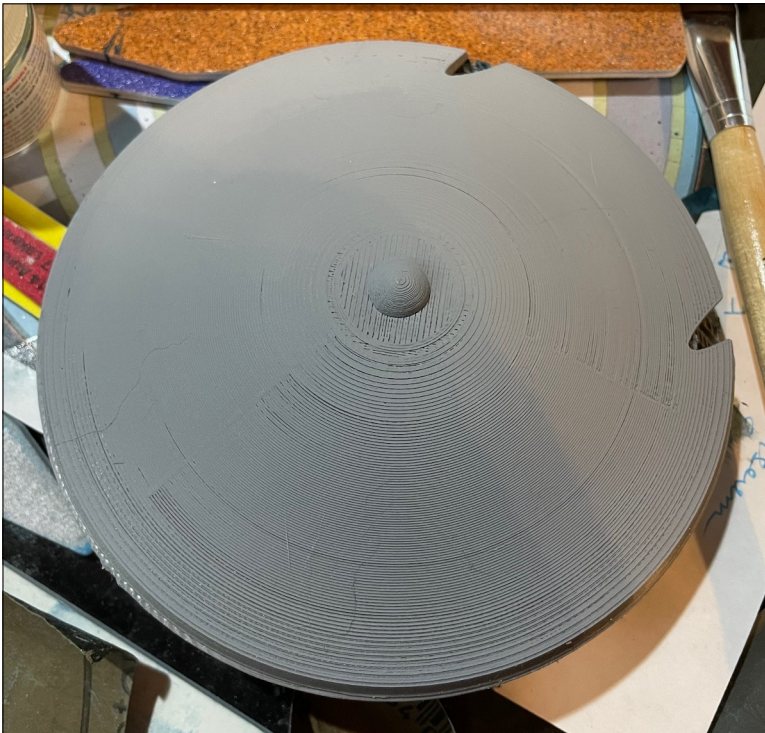
Anyway, the *Trouble* is what I came up with. My husband Bob named it, saying, “Then you can say, ‘Here comes *Trouble!*’” and you’d be right!

My printer is an old Lulzbot Mini, which has served, and still is serving, me faithfully through the years. The Lulzbot is actually my second printer; my original printer was a MakerBot Thing-Maker, which I worked to death. Both of these printers cannot print very large things, so what I needed to do next was break up the model, which I hadn’t originally intended to 3D print, into smaller parts that the printer could manage. This meant separating the rear-assembly (nacelles and the “triangle” though I have no idea why I call it that), the top of the saucer, and the bottom.



How’s this for a Blast from the Past?

I use the version of CURA made specifically for the Lulzbot to slice the model parts. For those who’ve never printed like this before, a slicer cuts the model into very thin, horizontal slices, that can be printed one on top of the other. This, of course, leaves you with lines in your print, more or less wide depending upon the printer and slicer. This is not necessarily a bad thing.

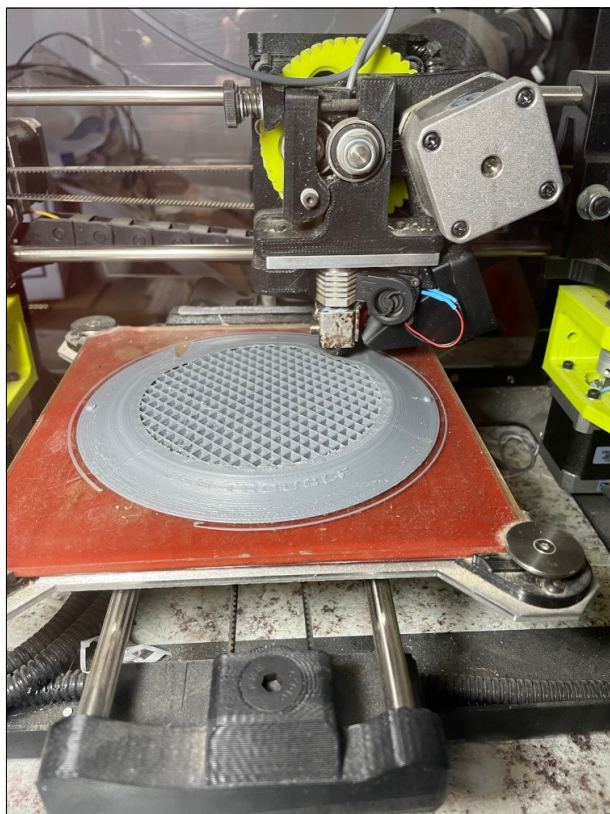


Here the Lulzbot is working away on the top of the saucer.

Here’s how the bottom of the saucer looks right after printing. I’ve sprayed it with sealing primer, which was, unfortunately, the same color as the filament I used. I could have gone over it a few more times in order to completely fill in the lines between the layers, but I decided not to. After all, the *Trouble* wasn’t made in one piece, so why should it look like it was? The lines between the layers make pretty perfectly sized and shaped edges of plates of whatever material the ship is made from. (ABS plastic in this case, but I digress.)

Total time to print: about seven hours.

Yup, seven hours. Good thing I’ve got lots else to do!



The top part of the saucer. As the printer builds, it makes a fill-in structure so that upper layers have a secure place to which to attach.

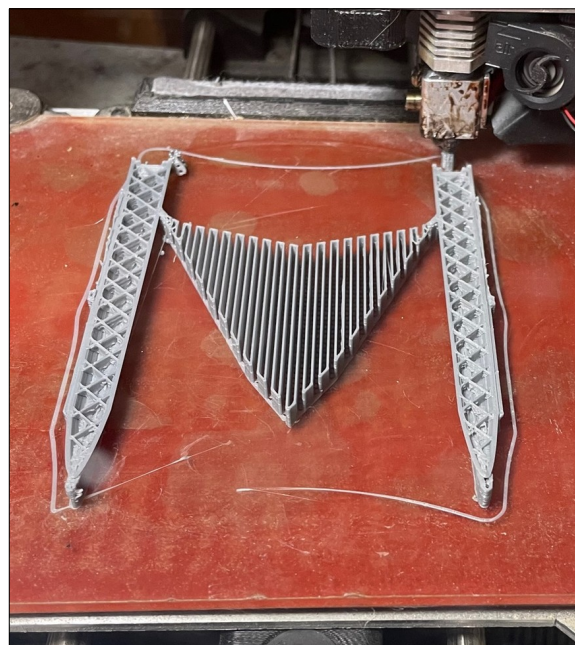
sticks and sanding “twigs,” starting at 220 grit. Yeah, I know, in some places there’s a LOT to take off, and you don’t want to spend your whole life sanding. But the base structure is a semi-flexible plastic, and any rougher grit will just rip up the plastic and you’ll end up with a spaceship that looks like it was made of every kind of macaroni that Ronzoni sells! I use finer and finer grits until either I get to 1200 grit or I can’t stand any more sanding. I usually get a pretty nice finish, and paint adheres well.

While I’m doing all this, I printed out the nacelle section. This time, the printer prints an external, as well of an internal, support structure. I’ve seen what happens if you don’t specify the printer do this. It gives a whole new meaning to “spaghetification.”

In this picture, you can see why the print takes so long. As the layers pile up, the printer adds a support structure for the layers which will go over it. I have some control over how dense this support structure is; I can have it be something anywhere from no structure to solid infill. If I made it solid, it would take ... too long to print. If I had it not provide a support, the model would collapse on itself. Then all you get is a big blob covered in strings of inedible spaghetti. The default is 20% and this seems to be a good amount, but of course, it adds greatly to the time taken to print, and also the amount of filament used. Filament ain’t cheap. You can’t always get what you want. But if you try sometimes...

Once the print has cooled down enough for you to handle it (did I mention it’s hot? Well, it’s hot. Has to be, or the layers won’t stick together!) I pry it off the hot plate, take it outside and spray it with primer/filler. After that dries, I give it a coat of paint. This helps with the next step: the endless, endless sanding.

Like I said, I’m not trying to smooth out all the lines, but I’d appreciate the ship not looking like it was made of linguine. I wet-sand with a variety of sandpapers, sanding



Support structures inside and out.



On the other hand, maybe you do want a ship that looks like linguine...

Once I had everything rough-sanded, I sprayed the whole thing with primer. Alas, the primer, it turned out, was pretty much the same color as the model, so I gave the whole thing a coat of black paint as well, and sanded... and sanded... and sanded, until it was perfectly smooth, or so I thought.

Now came time to paint. I 3D print a lot of parts for my Block City building sets, and I always use a metallic paint because they look cool that way. So, off to the local hobby emporium to buy metallic black paint.

They had none. Supply chain problems, you know....

So, I ordered some online, and a few days later it showed up. I painted it on.

It looked awful. No matter how carefully I painted it, it looked like a kindergarten project. Yeah, I could have airbrushed it, but I donated my airbrush to TinkerMill years ago so...

Suddenly it dawned on me: what I really needed for this job was Rub 'n' Buff! Good old Rub 'n' Buff! I'd used it before, but I hadn't even thought of it for decades.

Once all the parts are printed, it's time to line them up and glue them together. I used superglue for this and yeah, I almost glued my fingers together. Nothing sandpaper couldn't fix.

No matter how careful you are, there are going to be seams and things that need filling, and parts that for some reason or other just don't—or won't—line up. I used an acrylic putty to fill in gaps. There turned out to be some gaps left in the top of the saucer as well, so the putty was used to fill them.

I should say, I didn't fill *all* the gaps, nor did I sand flat all the linguine-lines. After all, the ship was built in pieces, and I thought there should be a way for this to show. The linguine-lines proved very convenient that way.



Ship put together, putty (white) applied. And now, more sanding...

Hobby store didn't have any of that, either. Supply chain problems, you know... So, I ordered some online, and waited another several days.

To get the color of the *Trouble*, I mixed pewter with black (half and half), and that gave me just the finish I was looking for—except for the fact that my sanding skills were not quite as wonderful as I thought they were.

Oh well.

Now... the details. How best to do these teeny details?

Back in The Olden Days I used to draw with crow-quill pens and 6x0 rapidographs, but by hands were never steady enough to paint with an actual brush. Well, those olden days are long, long gone, so I looked around for acrylic paints with felt brush tips. Then I got an even better idea: I looked around for Glow-in-the-Dark acrylic paints, in lots of colors, with brush tips! And lo and behold, I found them!



And yeah, I still didn't do the greatest job painting the poor *Trouble*, but I did my best.

Although, now I think of it, I have this bottle of glow-in-the-dark paint that I bought back in the 1970s. I wonder....

And yes, the lights and lettering do glow in the dark, but too faintly for me to photograph, alas.

The wavy bits on the "triangle" between the nacelles is an artifact of the printing process; I kept it because it looked pretty cool.

Of course, having done all this, I realized I needed a stand for the thing. So I designed one.

And then the Lulzbot breathed its last.

After a few attempts to fix it, on my part and on Bob's, I finally decided to retire the poor thing and ordered a new printer, with a larger bed so I can make nice big ships. I like BIG ships and I cannot lie...

What I ended up buying was a Voxelab Aquila, a printer with quadruple the bed space (the bed is the table onto which the printer prints), at 1/10th the price. Curious as to how well the new printer would do, I decided to print out the stand I had designed for the ship.



In the photo on the left, the grey is my dead printer, and the purple is the new one. Quite a difference, and I have a feeling it's only partially due to the extreme wear-and-tear I put on the poor old thing.

To Be Continued....

Got a story to tell, in words, pictures, or sound?

WE WANT YOU! Yes, YOU!

Deadline for the next Issue (No. 6, July) is **21 July 2022**.

Submissions can be sent to editor@retrozine.net or to submissions@retrozine.net.

Here are some tips for getting things to us.

📖 WRITTEN WORD:

For New and Original written-word science fiction, fantasy and fanfic, please send your work in a **plain text file** (no pre-formatting or PDFs, please, it only makes our job harder! We will make them here). This may be .txt (plain text), .odt (OpenOffice, LibreOffice), or .doc/.docx (Microsoft Office), though we can read pretty much every file format you can think of. We don't have a word limit, but we may suggest that anything very long be serialized.

NOTA BENE: Initial submissions of longer works must be at least 1,000 words so that we can properly decide if you work is going to be a good fit for our audience. If you're 1,000 words or less, just send the whole thing.

If you are submitting a story that has previously been published, please note we have a cut-off date; we are only accepting work published in the 20th Century. Please include the place it was originally published, the editor at the time, the date of publication, and any reviews you think might be of interest to potential readers.

If you are including illustrations, please see the notes below for whatever type of art you have. If you were not the artist, please forward permission to use the art from the original artist if the work was not a work-for-hire. (A "work-for-hire" is any work that has been ordered from an artist and paid for, and is therefore no longer the legal property of the artist.) If you wish to use a work which you have purchased from an artist, such as a print, make sure you purchased publication rights as well.

🗣️ SPOKEN WORD/READ FOR YOU:

Please send text files first! We have really good, experienced editors here who may want to suggest clarifications, additions and the like. Once the story has been accepted, you may choose to narrate it yourself, or choose a narrator. (And please, no offense intended, but please carefully consider your narration skills before taking this step!) We will give you instructions on how to send sound files if the story is accepted, but we reserve the right to reject a sound file if it is of poor sound quality (too much background noise, cats yowling to be fed, etc).

🖼️ TRADITIONAL MEDIA ART:

Please send these as .png files, with images as large and clear as you can manage and uncompressed. One shouldn't have to say this, but please only send images of your own work unless the art is an illustration for a story which you are submitting at the same time. If you are considering submitting a print you bought from an artist, please refrain unless you purchased publication rights at the same time.

🖥️ DIGITAL 2D:

Same as the above really, but here we will accept .psd (Photoshop) and .xcf (GIMP) as well.

🗑️ 3D/3D PRINTABLE:

If you're just sending a static image (or a collection of different views of a 3D object you've made, the guidelines are the same as for Digital 2D. We'd much prefer either .blend (Blender), .skp (SketchUp) or .stl (stereolithography, the standard for most 3D printers) formats for these files. One of us (probably Fa) will likely print your model to make sure that there are no holes, that supports work, and to determine approximately the amount of time and how much filament a print takes. I (Fa) print on a Lulzbot Mini.

🎵 MUSIC and MULTIMEDIA:

Please, please, *compress these files before sending them!* [filename].tar.gz is preferred. We'll take .wav, .mp3 and .mp4 formats, as these are the most widely compatible with different operating systems. (If you are unfamiliar with translating between formats, Tenacity is an excellent, and free, tool for sound. If you want to try your hand at video recording and editing, Fa uses OpenShot on Linux (works on all platforms) for her YouTube videos; also free and very easy to learn.

🗿 SCULPTURE, CERAMIC and GLASS:

Pictures of same only, please. We cannot be responsible for the way objects subjected to the post may be handled (trust us, we can tell you horror stories). See the guidelines above. Please include the size and medium/media of your creation, and anything else you might think cromulent.

LET'S GET CREATIVE!

If you've got something that just doesn't fit into the categories above, please email a description, and we'll see if we can work something out.

LICENSING:

Original works which are being published for the first time can be [Creative Commons](#) licensed. Do follow the link and look into it (creativecommons.org).

LAST BUT NOT LEAST:

You may only contribute **your own work!** You may not "agent" for someone else, or "surprise" someone by trying to have their work published for them. If you don't own it, don't send it. Fa has been bending computers to her will for almost fifty years now, and both of us have taught, and raised kids. Trust us, we know all the cheats.

Got it? Good! Please send submissions to submissions@retrozine.net. We will send you a note letting you know your submission was received, but we cannot guarantee when we'll get to look at it in depth.

See you next time!