

USF PADD

LUNA CLASS

Featured Sim:

USS
Hermes



Janturul - Part I

An Independent Sci-Fi fan
fiction story

Book Review

"Physics of the Impossible"

Search Picture

Deep Space Nine Crew

From the Editor

Greetings!

I hope you have your cup of coffee ready and plenty of time to sit back and enjoy this month's *USF PADD*, cause it's a whopper! Almost twice the size of many of the other issues and loaded to the brim with goodies from the *USS Hermes* sim, it's a wealth of information on Captain Billing's crazy bunch.

They all did an excellent job in supporting this month's sim feature. It was a delight to read their contributions, and a lot of fun to put it all together for your reading pleasure. I want to especially thank Captain Billings and Lt. Cmdr. Durnadus for their exhaustive efforts chasing after crew members for the OOC interviews. It would have been quite overwhelming for me and the rest of my correspondents to handle all that by ourselves.

For those that enjoy reading other Sci-Fi fan fictions aside from the ones taking place in the *Star Trek* universe, this month's *PADD* also features the first part (of many) of an independent Sci-Fi adventure story with the mysterious name "Janturul." What's it all about? Well, you will just have to sit down and read the introductory chapters.

You will also find a review on a quite interesting book that bridges the gap between fictional and real-world technologies, a fun picture search involving the crew of *DS9*, lots of cheesy recipes, and of course, the always fascinating and informative News Section.

So, sit back, relax, and enjoy!!

Lori

Wanted: Ads

Consider advertising for your Sim in the *USF PADD*

All USF hosts are warmly invited to submit

GRAPHIC or TEXT ADS

to be displayed in various sections of this magazine.

For more information email:

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Table of Contents

Briefings

4 [Star Trek](#)

Star Trek (franchise) and Star Trek related news items

7 [Star Trek Online](#)

Star Trek Online (MMORPG) news items

8 [Sciences](#)

Real life science news items

Special Bulletin

10 [USF PADD Contests](#)

An analyzation by the PADD's Editor-in-Chief

Featuring: USS Hermes

11 [Sim Universe](#)

Ship, mission, and crew information

18 [Behind the Scenes](#)

Out-of-Character interviews with the players

37 [Beginnings](#)

Information about the launch and history of the sim

38 [Meeting – In Real Life](#)

Interview with some of the Hermes' crew that met IRL

Fan Fiction

42 [Janturul](#)

An independent Sci-Fi adventure story – Part 1

Comics & Humor

50 [Ad-Lib](#)

Off-the-cuff excerpts from USF sims

Data Network

53 [Search Picture](#)

The DS9 Crew - Can you spot the ten differences?

54 [Book Review](#)

"Physics of the Impossible" by Michio Kaku

USF Cookbook

55 [Stuffed Double Cheeseburgers](#)

55 [Spicy Cheddar Corn Muffins](#)

56 [Charlie Brown's Cheese Cracklins](#)

57 [Staff & Contributors](#)

On the cover: Ship image: [Memory-Gamma](#) | Background by Capt. Loriaarra, inspired by Lt. Cmdr. Durandus



Memorable Quotes

I really didn't have to work, shall we say, with Star Trek. It was a natural. When I opened my mouth, there was Scotty. It's like I tell people what you see in Scotty is 99% James Doohan and 1% accent.

– James Doohan

"Mister Spock, the women on your planet are logical. That's the only planet in the galaxy that can make that claim."

– Jean-Luc Picard, *TNG*: "Yesterday's Enterprise"

Intelligence Report

by Lt. Cmdr. Solik

For the Fans

If you were lucky enough to go to the Fan Expo in Vancouver last week, then you might've seen this in person. Marina Sirtis and Michael Dorn were on stage together, talking about *TNG*. One of the hot topics of discussion was how the show was initially received from diehard fans of the original *Star Trek*. To see what the on-screen lovers had to say about that, and more, you'll just have to read the article!

Check it out:

- <http://www.treknews.net/2012/04/25/michael-dorn-marina-sirtis-fan-expo-report/>

Pushing Trekkies

Bryan Fuller, known for his work on *Pushing Daisies* and *Heroes*, has stated that he is trying to bring *Star Trek* back to television by 2014. He's been talking with Bryan Singer (known for directing most of the *X-Men* films, and making a cameo appearance in *Star Trek Nemesis*) on a new series, but don't believe they'll have anything concrete until the next Abrams movie is released. Both Singer and Fuller are fans, so let's keep our fingers crossed.

See what they have to say:

- <http://www.startrek.com/article/microsoft-closes-in-on-universal-translator>

Eye-Phones and More

Google has announced a new project, codenamed "Project Glass", which is eyewear that functions like a smartphone, allowing the wearer to make calls, send text messages, get maps and directions, and even post to Google+ (Google's social networking service). At first, you may be

skeptical, arguing "How can they do this, if people are already distracted by their phones, and then this thing will be right in front of their eyes?" Well, the interface is transparent, and most functions take up very little space within your scope of vision.

In addition to this, Google invites Android users to try out the Google Goggles app. It allows you to take pictures and can search the Internet or save information based on what's in the image. If you get a picture of a business card, it can save the contact information to your phone, and you could snap a shot of a quote and it will search the Internet for that.

This is related to *Star Trek* because Geordi La Forge's VISOR not only granted him sight, but also gave him information based on what he was looking at, like having a tricorder covering your eyes, but with limited functions.

Read on:

- <http://www.treknews.net/2012/04/22/google-goggles-project-glass-star-trek-technology/>

Just Teasing

As reported last June, a new video game based on the Abrams-verse has been in the works, meant to fill in the gap between the first film, and the sequel that's currently still in production. The game's developer, Digital Extremes, has just released a new trailer for the game, which look pretty awesome!

Check it out:

- <http://www.treknews.net/2012/04/18/watch-teaser-trailer-star-trek-video-game/>

A New Experience

For ten years, *Star Trek: The Experience* graced Las Vegas with a unique encounter for fans of all ages. Now, it looks like we've got a suitable replacement. A full-scale replica of the refit *Enterprise* is headed for Las Vegas. There aren't too many details yet, but looking at the images, it's going to be a real ... something. Just really stands out. Other than "Spectacular!", I'm not sure how else to describe it!

Oh, the lengths we go:

- <http://www.treknews.net/2012/04/09/starship-enterprise-attraction-las-vegas/>

Doctor Tinkerer

Last year, Qualcomm and the X-Prize Foundation announced the contest to design a working medical scanning device, based on the tricorder from *Star Trek*. Doctor Peter Jansen, a graduate of McMaster University in Ontario, has talked about his entry, and what he expects to work on after it's done.

"I'm a doctor, not a tricorder!"

- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/13/star-trek-tricorder-science-fiction-device-spock_n_1424740.html?icid=maing-grid10|htmlws-main-bb|dl9|sec3_Ink3%26pLid%3D152401

Planet of the Red Plants

Some new shots of the next film was been released by On Location Vacations, a news site that features celebrities, filming locations and events. Looks like Abrams let his guard down.

Check out the scenery:

- <http://trekmovie.com/2012/04/27/more-star-trek-sequel-set-shots-emerge/>

The Un-Retireable

Leonard Nimoy, who's announced his retirement and re-retirement several times, has HINTED that he may appear in the next film. When asked if he would return, he replied, "We're talking."

We'll see!

- <http://trekmovie.com/2012/04/27/did-leonard-nimoy-hint-he-may-appear-in-star-trek-sequel/>

Watching at Warp Speed

This one is mainly just for fun, but as the image in the article suggests, this could make even Spock's head spin. YouTube user Twilight1138 has compiled a video of 56 separate episodes of *Star Trek*, with audio. The voices mostly just sound like a bunch of static, but you can make out the brass fanfare and some of the beeps and other electronic sounds.

Don't know which one to keep my eyes on:

- <http://www.treknews.net/2012/04/26/56-episodes-of-star-trek-at-once-video/>
-

Event Calendar

(upcoming Star Trek and Star Trek related conventions)

Oct. 18, 2011-May 28, 2012 – *Star Trek: The Exhibition* – Saint Louis, Missouri, USA

May 4-6, 2012 – [Official Star Trek Convention](#) – Crowne Plaza Cherry Hill, Cherry Hill, Pennsylvania, USA

June 9-10, 2012 – [Official Star Trek Convention](#) – Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

August 9-12 – [Official Star Trek Convention](#) – Rio Suites Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

October 19-21, 2012 – [Destination Star Trek London](#) – ExCeL London, London, England

For details on official *Star Trek* conventions, visit www.creationent.com.

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



by Lt. Cmdr. Solik



Set a course for... Las Vegas!

Cryptic Studios has announced that they will be in attendance at the Las Vegas convention. We don't know too much about what they'll have there yet, but there will definitely be representation for *STO* there!

Rule of Acquisition #34



"War is good for business."

Well, that may be true, but even in times of war, there is still plenty to find out there.

By defeating enemies, you can now pick up Ferengi Lock Boxes, which contain a multitude of rewards for you to reap. One of the most sought after prizes may be the Ferengi D'Kora Marauder Class. It comes with the unique console, *Battle Module 3000*, which fires an EMP (Electromagnetic Pulse) blast which drains power from enemies and then boosts your ship's weapons and engines, also granting you the ability to fire Swarm Missiles.

In addition to the D'Kora, you can also receive experience and commendation point boosts, combat pets, consoles and more.

For more details on the Ferengi Lock Box, check out the developer's blog [here](#). For information about the D'Kora Marauder, you can read the next blog post [here](#).

Ask and You Shall Receive

Executive Producer Dan Stahl found some time to answer some more questions submitted by fans. Some players are concerned about new ships that we were told are in the works, and others that they'd like to see in the game. Other questions involve the Foundry, while other deal with mission content.

I won't give away everything, so you'll just have to read what Stahl answered! Check it out [here](#)!

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



Watching the Universe

by Captain Loriaarra

One Switch. One Head. The World.

Sometimes we tend to forget how fortunate most of us are that we can walk, talk, and function in the most normal way our species is meant to function. If that isn't the case, it's amazing to see how technological advances make it possible for people to still have a more fuller part in life. You might look at your computer with all its buttons and find it somewhat hard to fathom doing all the things you do on it with just one switch. But it's possible!

Watch the inspiring video:

- http://www.engadget.com/2012/03/21/even-cerebral-palsy-cant-stop-this-dedicated-video-creator/?icid=maing-grid10%7Chtmlws-main-bb%7Cdl20%7Csec1_ink2%26pLid%3D146330

Traveling In(fo) The Future

What could travel be like in the future? Robot power? Carrying luggage and keeping squeaky-clean public areas? Who knows. If you want inspiration or just stay in a high-tech futuristic setting during a stay in New York City, check out the Yotel Hotel. Or maybe watch the video first and then decide. You'd have to bring your own quirky people!

It's all-white:

- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/la-carmina/what-is-the-future-of-tra_b_1379043.html?icid=maing-grid10%7Chtmlws-main-bb%7Cdl7%7Csec3_ink1%26pLid%3D148404

The Power That Makes Stars Shine

Deuterium and plasma are words we're familiar with as *Star Trek* simmers. While we might not know details, we understand they have to do with energy and the power that runs our fictional vessels. That's actually based on real facts. As scientists have been searching for alternate and clean forms of energy, they couldn't help but envy the greatest powerhouse of all in our system, the sun. It's powered by nuclear fusion. Simulations with fusion reactors have indicated that a self-sustaining fusion reaction is feasible.

Can a weapon program lead to clean energy?:

- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/27/nuclear-fusion-power-sandia_n_1381973.html?ref=science&icid=maing-grid10%7Chtmlws-main-bb%7Cdl19%7Csec3_ink3%26pLid%3D147124

Insides Out

Ever heard of plastination? It's a procedure that preserves whole bodies by replacing water and fats with certain plastics and make them touchable, while they do not smell or decay. Dr. Gunther

von Hagen patented this method in the 1980s. It allowed him to plastinate the donated bodies of people and put them into specific poses, which he eventually showed in an exhibit to the public. Some of my friends had gone to the Body Worlds exhibit when it was in a museum near where I live. I couldn't bring myself to do it, it's just so creepy! Yes, I'm a little squeamish. But many of you might not be and find this quite fascinating. Well, the Doctor has done it again. His new exhibit is all about animals, from the great to the small. It might take a while before it gets to your neighborhood, though.

Under the skin:

- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/05/animal-inside-out-exhibit_n_1406482.html?ref=topbar
- Body Worlds - <http://www.bodyworlds.com/en.html>

Homecoming

The space shuttle *Discovery* made its final flight on the back of a modified Boeing 747 to Washington, D.C., where it will make its permanent home at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. Many people went outside to witness this memorial occasion as the craft made its final passes through the capital. In turn, the prototype shuttle *Enterprise* was brought up to New York City on April 23, to be displayed at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum.

Airborne one last time:

- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/17/space-shuttle-discovery-dc_n_1431253.html?1334673933&icid=maing-grid10%7Chtmlws-main-bb%7Cdl1%7Csec1_Ink2%26pLid%3D152639
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/08/nasa-space-shuttles-discovery-enterprise-endeavour_n_1410972.html?ref=science&icid=maing-grid10%7Chtmlws-main-bb%7Cdl5%7Csec1_Ink3%26pLid%3D150441

100 Years of Fascination with a Disaster

A hundred years ago, on April 15, 1912, the pride of the White Star Line found its way to a deep-sea grave on its maiden voyage. In all that time, that tragedy still looms large in people's minds. Even some of the youngest generations today know what the word "Titanic" embodies. Inspiring countless books, documentaries, and movies, the ill-fated ocean liner has surfaced time and again in our consciousness. You might have noticed the onslaught of articles in current historical, scientific, and otherwise popular magazines due to the centennial anniversary of the disaster. The story continues to haunt us. What have we learned? Have new insights been gleaned to prevent arrogance leading to similar calamities?

Just a few interesting articles:

- Historic Overview - <http://www.history.com/topics/titanic>
- Why Still Fascinated - <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Why-the-Titanic-Still-Fascinates-Us.html>
- Optical Illusion - <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/Did-the-Titanic-Sink-Because-of-an-Optical-Illusion.html>
- Famous Victims - <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Seven-Famous-People-Who-Missed-the-Titanic.html>

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

USF PADD Contests

by Captain Lorianra

Seems to me that I'm not all that good at running contests. Who would have thought?? Heh. Yes, I'm always the last one to know! Haha. And I really thought this one would get some attention, considering many of you like creating new and exciting species/people/villains. To my great disappointment, though, I didn't get any valid submissions.

I suppose, putting a lot of effort into something like that might seem more feasible to do for one's own sim alone. Perhaps it just felt daunting to come up with something that the whole of USF could possibly use, and in the amount of time that was allotted. I assure you all, my co-conspirator, Commodore Booker, and I would have been fully involved in the process of making it work for the whole fleet, once a winner would have been chosen.

In any case, something isn't working either with my approach, the topics, the timing, or who-knows-what. And I'm the first and foremost person that stops after a couple of failures and looks over my track record to analyze what exactly could be changed to make it more appealing.

As always, I'm not about to roll over and just give up. If you thought that, you don't know me very well. There has to be something I can adjust to make this work. Even if it's just once.

I want to show you all how much fun this can be!

Now, I could sit here for a long time, mull stuff over, theorize, and then assume I figured it out. Or I could talk it out with Booker (poor guy), or perhaps others I tap for brainstorming and general advise and/or feedback. And that might work. But I've always been of the opinion that going to the source is the best bet. In this case, it means those who the contest was aimed for would certainly be able to tell me with more honesty and accuracy what exactly kept them from participating than any pondering I could do by myself. So it shall be then.

It definitely hasn't been the first time I've asked for feedback from you, our readers and USF members, and it won't be the last. You've never disappointed with giving valued insights.

So, please take a moment, click on the link below, and answer the two questions in the survey about the PADD contests. It won't take long and I'd be most grateful for your help.

Thank you all!

[Survey: USF PADD Contests](#)

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

USF Features

all information collected by Captain Jerrid Billings, Lieutenant J.G. Knomik Brott, Lieutenant Commander Kayshl Durandus, Captain Loriaarra, Lieutenant Commander Solik, and Cadet Malachi Styles

USS HERMES

Tuesdays, 10 pm ET, in the AOL/AIM Chatroom "Final Frontier"

Sim Universe

In-Character (IC) and In-Universe Information

Ship Specs

Class	Luna
Type	Explorer
Length	450 meters
Width	215 meters
Draft	75 meters
Cruise Speed	Warp 7
Max Speed	Warp 9.3
Crew Capacity	440 (90 officers; 350 enlisted)



(image: test shot for [Star Trek Excalibur](#) beta)

Mission

Launched in 2385, the USS Hermes is a Luna-Class vessel, and is the seventh starship to bear the name. Though it was built primarily for exploration, the Hermes capabilities allow its crew to carry out a wide variety of missions, from planetary surveys to enemy combat. As a result, the Hermes often finds itself in unique situations that include battling the Breen, traveling through time, and trying to fight off our doubles from the Mirror Universe.

Perhaps the one thing more interesting than the Hermes, however, is her crew. A heart broken captain, hanging on to a love of one of his crewmates from a timeline that never existed. A chief medical officer who routinely disobeys orders and disregards protocol, but always in the interests of doing the right thing. A tactical officer who was cloned by Section 31 in order to raise an army to fight the Federation's next war. An Engineer from the mirror universe, constantly living in the shadow of his late counterpart who was beloved by the entire crew. (And let's not forget the Over Enthusiastic Transport Chief!)

Everyone on the Hermes has a story, and often times, those stories are constantly interacting with each other. Combine that with unique missions loaded with unexpected twists, and a drive to complete them no matter what the cost, and you suddenly have one of the most intricate, intense, action packed ships in the fleet.

Starring

Crew:

▲ Commanding Officer	-	Captain Jerrid Billings , Human (joined with Trill symbiont)
▲ Executive Officer	-	Commander Ken Kennesaw , Human
▲ Chief Operations Officer	-	Lieutenant Sara Kelly , Human
▲ Helmsman	-	Chief Squill, Ferengi (NPC)
▲ Transporter Chief	-	Over Enthusiastic Transporter Chief, Human (NPC)
▲ Chief of Tactical/Security	-	First Lieutenant Si John ZoLak , Ziddain
▲ Tactical/Security Officer	-	Lieutenant J.G. Olson Jaraa , Human
▲ Tactical/Security Officer	-	Lieutenant J.G. Tapal Carmello , Orion/Vulcan
▲ Tactical/Security Officer	-	Ensign Thelaris Ek'Nara sh'Apavaa , Andorian
▲ Chief of Engineering	-	Lieutenant Andrew Carmello , Human
▲ Engineering Officer	-	Lieutenant Cora Majors , Human
▲ Engineering Officer	-	Ensign Levani Sen , Orion
▲ Engineering Officer	-	Ensign Malcolm Sarif, Human
▲ Chief Science Officer	-	Lieutenant Tanok , Vulcan
▲ Science Officer	-	Ensign Satak , Vulcan
▲ Chief Medical Officer	-	Lieutenant Commander Kayshl Durandus , Betazoid
▲ Medical Officer	-	Lieutenant J.G. Diana Shepard , Betazoid
▲ Counselor	-	Ensign Katelin Troi , Bajoran/Betazoid
▲ Counselor's Assistant	-	Will Riker, Poodle

Civilians:

Ethan Grimms , Human	-	Engineer
SubCommander Tok, Romulan (NPC)		
Ori, Ugly Dog-like Creature	-	Ship's Pet
Jeri Billings	-	Captain's Daughter
Lauren Kennesaw	-	Executive Officer's Daughter

Fleet Representative:

▲ Fleet Captain Tia Sloan Ryan , Human
--

Crew Introductions



Captain Jerrid Billings:

"Hello? Is this thing on? - Ah, yes!

"Hello. My name is Captain Jerrid Billings, and I am the Captain of the USS Hermes. They said I should talk about myself, but I've had such a crazy career, I don't think I'd be able to describe it all right here in one sitting. I mean, seriously, I've been in Starfleet a REALLY long time. I've fought in the Dominion War, traveled through time, been assimilated by the Borg... In fact, I don't think I've had a single night's sleep in fifteen years.

"Some people find it interesting that I'm harboring a symbiont from Trill, even though I'm a human. I know. I should be dead, right? But see, normal



symbionts can only bond with Trills because Trills produce a certain enzyme that the symbiont relies on for survival. My symbiont not only produces the enzyme itself, it is incredibly adaptive to new environments. As a result, my symbiont has the ability to join with any species it comes in contact with. The Trill Symbiosis Commission doesn't approve of this, but I rather prefer it this way. There are so many more things I could experience as a Klingon, or a Ferengi, or a Tribble that I could never experience as a Trill. I feel like I understand the universe a little bit deeper than my counterparts.

"In my spare time, I like to either play with my six-year-old daughter, or hang out in the holodeck. There's nothing like a good holonovel to take the edge off of a bad day. Oh, I know I don't have a social life. But I'm the Captain of the ship! I'm not supposed to have a social life, remember? I've got to report to admirals, and sign peace treaties, and defend the Federation, and whatnot. What I wouldn't give to escape this ship for a little rest and relaxation. But the last time I did that, the transporter malfunctioned and I ended up on the planet naked. Don't laugh! It wasn't that bad at first. Apparently, the local inhabitants see that as a sign of great wealth. It was when they found out I didn't really have money that they got upset. Can you believe that's a capital offense?

"Anyway, that's a bit about me... Perhaps a little too much... Oh, well. We'll let the editor worry about that."



Commander Ken Kennesaw:

"What can I say about myself. I have had several conflicts when it comes to trouble. I have gotten into trouble bad enough on several occasions that I was demoted back to Ensign at least twice and once taken off command of a ship. It's all in my bio if your interested in specifics.

"I have never been a great Commander. I am even worse at following orders, from command and medical personnel alike. Ask my medical staff they will tell you how true it is. I'm married to a gal that was once my patient, and I now have a lovely daughter, who is 7 years old." *(sighs audibly)* "My wife and the councilor on my ship are both trying to con me into allowing Lauren to adopt a pet."



Lieutenant Sara Kelly:

"Oh! For me joining Starfleet was never a question. I grew up in Starfleet! Both my parents were very dedicated to Starfleet as well as they parents before them. Although my parents never forced my decision to join Starfleet, they believed I should do whatever brought me the most happiness and satisfaction, I know they were proud of me when I joined.

"Has my ideas about Starfleet changed? Well, I suppose one can never truly prepare for what a life in Starfleet will bring you... even when you've grown up living on Starships or what have you... because each new day brings something new. The universe is full of many wonders, and yes dangers too. I believe in Starfleet just as I did before I joined, and I am dedicated to its cause just as my parents are. I don't think I could ever stop being apart of Starfleet."

(grins) "Yes! I did just have a baby. My husband and I actually met at the academy and the rest is sort of history. He transfered to the Hermes shortly after we were married. We have a beautiful baby girl."

"Hmm...well since I grew up with parents who were both Starfleet officers, I do not believe it will be difficult to raise my child and also be involved in Starfleet. One can be a mother and a Starfleet officer you know. It's not impossible... it's just different. Before having a child you are not as worried about risks. Now as I am responsible for not only myself, but my child... I am a little more careful. I don't believe that this is detrimental to my ability to fulfill my duty or anything... in fact I think it makes me an even better Starfleet officer. Instead of flying off the handle and maybe taking unnecessary risks, I am more calculating and careful about what I do and ultimately I can help keep the ship and its crew



safer than ever because I would do anything to keep my child safe."

"Uhhh....yeah.....the Hermes is exciting. It sure keeps you on your feet. I'm sure there are plenty of people who would just love to serve here. It's a good ship and a good crew. Like I said, I love it here...I just might not want to give up a great opportunity elsewhere if it happens to fall on my desk."

(smiles sweetly) "Okay! Thanks for interviewing me! This has been quite fun. I know some people might not appreciate what you do, but don't take it personally. Some people are just shy. Anyway, enjoy getting to know the rest of the crew!"



Lieutenant J.G. Olsen Jaraq:

(Sits down and straightens his uniform) "Uhm... I guess greetings are in order. Hello, I am Lt.JG Olson Jaraq, tactical officer aboard the USS Hermes.

"I can't say that I have done anything noteworthy in the short time I've been a Starfleet officer. Usually I just try and keep the crew safe and the ship intact and I sometimes devote my free time to that as well. When I'm not working I can usually be found in my quarters studying or in the holodeck." (smiles awkwardly) "I'm not a very social person until I've had a bit of whiskey to loosen the tongue.

"Short history? Born and raised in the DMZ, after that I roamed around for a bit, was a gun for hire for a while. When that was over I joined Starfleet. I think that's short enough. I have to admit my

experience in the freelancing business has helped me a lot during my time on the Hermes."

(looks at his watch with a concerned look on his face) "I'm terribly sorry but I have to cut this a bit short. I have to get the torpedo tubes recalibrated by 19:00 hours." (stands up smiles and walks out).



Lieutenant Andrew Carmello:

"Heh... is this thing on? Really, you guys need some better equipment, I could modify it in a few minutes! Oh... did I say that out loud?

"OK, my name is Andrew Carmello, and I have been part of the Hermes since I was a Lieutenant, junior grade. I work in engineering most of the time and have gotten myself to be the chief engineer of the Hermes, Yipeeee!!!! Anyway, now that all the excitement is over, let's get on with business. Engineering has been my life and my passion for many, many years. I come from a family of engineers, so of course, it runs in the family.

"I have been through a large amount of ordeals since I've been on the Hermes, from almost losing the ship (not my fault) to getting married to my beautiful wife, Tapal Carmello, who is currently on leave to take care of the kids while I get the income. Don't get me wrong, I don't just do this for the money, I do this because I have a duty to the Federation and I love it all the same.

"Furthermore, I am one of the best engineers you'll ever find in this here Starfleet. I've gotten this ship through hell and back in a moderately intact fashion. That doesn't mean there haven't been a few bumps and bruises and a few dry dock visits, no. But, every ship goes through that."



Ensign Malcome Sarif:

"I'm just a regular folk who happened to get caught owing his life to the captain. I don't like to owe favors, so here I am, sticking my neck out 'til I feel like movin' on. I used to be part of Starfleet, back when I thought I knew it all. I guess I'm back now, but not all in spirit yet. Could say I had a rough goodbye last time, but I'd rather not go into the specifics.

"Don't bother asking about my arm. Yes, it's mechanical and outdated. Yes, close combat quarters are a field day for me. Yes, a crime lord forced the procedure on me to try to keep me in his pocket. No, I don't enjoy my total reliance on Neuropozyne, which ain't exactly the cheapest drug in

the 'Verse. And no, I can't remove it unless I want to shut down my nervous system.

"Governments are usually for getting in a man's way. But for now I just see my service as 'lookin out for me and mine.' The 'Verse is a big place, and a lot of it ain't shiny. I got nothing to go back to, and the cap'n seems to have his head on straight. For the most part. So if anyone plans to mess with him, me, or this pretty boat of ours, they had better make peace with their dear lord."

Lieutenant Tanok:

"Hello. I am Lieutenant Tanok of the U.S.S. Hermes. I am the Chief Science Officer on board the ship. However, thanks to my training in Star Fleet, I am more than capable of adapting to and functioning in other areas of the ship.

"As with all other Vulcans, logic and science dictate a larger part of my existence. I find myself discussing relevant scientific quandaries and phenomena with the Ensign in my area, Ensign Satak. The two of us have nearly maximized the capability of the Science Lab on board, and have a large database of information and records on our various findings, including a multitude of samples and studies for Star Fleet analysis.

"And yet, despite the draw of science and logic, there is another part of my life that holds great precedence. When I was young, my father passed on to me an ability that has run in my family for generations." *(a ball floats up into the view of the camera)* "I have nearly mastered the abilities of telekinesis and telepathy. I find that extreme uses of these abilities can have astounding physical ramifications, and as such I use caution and take extreme measures only when necessary. I plan on mastering these abilities in my pursuit of completing the ritual of Kolinar, and until then I use them to help the crew of the Hermes in any way that I can."



Lieutenant Commander Kayshl Durandus:

"Well hello beautiful! I'm Dr. Durandus, but you are more than welcome to call me Kay." *(setting down her tiny mirror and red lipstick, plumps her curly red hair and gives a sultry grin for the reporter's camera)* "So, what would you like to know."

(crossing her legs, the sultry smile still prominent on her face) "Well, I'm relatively new to the Hermes. I graduated from Starfleet Medical Academy about a year or so ago."

"Oh that? It's nothing." *(turns her head away shyly)* "I merely enjoy my job and my crew. Who am I to argue with Billings and Kennesaw if they actually find me effective at what I do." *(winks)*

"Gods.. Who told you about that little ditty?!" *(giggles and rolls her eyes)* "Confidential informant my pretty little Betazoid booty." *(resists the urge to read the reporter's thoughts and find out who the informant is)* "I like to consider myself a traditional Betazoid. I was born and raised on Betazed, 3rd house if you care to know. So in response, all I can say is that I consider restraint and clothing purely optional."

(leans forward, giving a flirty twinkle in her black eyes) "So, I have FABULOUS great hologram program, we could continue our little interview there. I might even have some Uttaberry Wine for you to sample." *(gently takes the reporter's hand and whisks away towards Holodeck 1)*



Lieutenant J.G. Diana Shepard:

"Hello. - Well, what would you like to know?"

"Yes, I am a doctor on probably the most dangerous ship of the fleet. I swear Billings gets us into more fights than I can count, and sickbay is OFTEN full



of injuries." *(sighs)* "Not to mention every time we get into some sort of bind... I am ALWAYS thrown across the room at least once... either the ship does flips, or some sort of alien is on board wrecking havoc with the crew and somehow I'm the one that gets picked up and thrown across the room. Oh! And I've been shot point blank with a phaser I don't know how many times! It's amazing I'm still alive!

"No, I'm not upset really. I just never expected to be so jolted all the time. But I suppose it keeps me busy. And I can handle pain... I was on Betazed when the Dominion took over for a few years. That was an interesting life, let me tell you.

"Why Starfleet? My father was a Starfleet officer. He died during the Dominion war. He died protecting freedom for me and the rest of the Federation. It was my duty to follow in his footsteps.

"No. No regrets. I love where I am, and I love who I am. This place is where I am meant to be. And if I can serve the people of the Federation by healing them, I have fulfilled my duty to my father and to myself.

"Would I transfer from the Hermes? Well if I was ordered to, of course I would... but I do realize that people do not stay on the same ship they began on. I will likely move to another ship one day, but for now this is my home.

"Yep, I've seen some crazy things out there. I'm not sure anyone can be prepared for the kind of constant craziness that we run into on the Hermes. You have to expect the unexpected, and when something totally off the wall comes your way--you have to just think on your feet and just go with the flow... otherwise you might end up completely insane!

"Alright then! Well you know where to find me if you have more questions! Sickbay is my life..."



Ensign Katelin Troi (and Will):

(Sitting in her Quarters, Troi thinks, 'I guess since I have to do this. I had better get it done.') "Will come here Bud, we have a assignment to do. Captain's orders".

(Will, being the best little guy you would ever want, jumps up in his Mom's lap and sits.) "BARK BARK!" ~I love you, Momma.~

(Troi turns on the recorder.) "Well, let's see. My name is Troi Katelin, I am the ship's Counselor, sometimes Pilot/Helm Officer, and part time member of the Medical Staff on the U.S.S. Hermes. The handsome little guy in my lap is William T. Riker, Counselors assistant/ship's therapy dog. Yes, I know your gonna ask, he is named after my Aunt's son in law. Now you know who my Aunt is, so go figure. She raises poodles for the fun of it.



"I am a Betazoid and Bajorian, wrinkled nose mind reader. My Dad is from Betazed and Mom is from Bajor. My sister is a member of the Vedek Assembly. My sister and I are very religious. We practice the Bajorian faith, as in Temple, the whole thing. When I am on Bajor or at Deep Space 9, I go to Temple first. I am still a Ensign, but with all the different jobs I have to do, it's hard to keep up with the paper work that I am suppost to do to get promoted. Sometimes I do need sleep. Keeping this crew sane is another story all together and patching them up, too.

"One of the things about our senior Medical staff. We are all Bajorians and all females. We have a way of doing things and we get the job done."

(Will looks at Momma.) ~What about me?~

"Will's Uncle Will and his Aunt Deanna adore him and spoil him rotten when they get a chance to see him. I got permission to have him on the ship from Captain Billings. What a process, but it was worth it. Most of the time he hangs out in my office in sickbay. He has lots of friends on the ship, but most of all he loves the Captain's daughter Jeri and Commander Kennesaw's daughter Lauren. Lauren dog sits for me a lot.

"Will has had a fun life on the ship. He was party to the Great Body Switch. His mind was in Lt. Tanok's body, Tanok is a Vulcan. Will's body was being used by Dr. Shepard. For me it was wonderful, I could talk with him. I love Will with all my heart. He is very special.

"One last thing, he bit the Captain once, now mind you the Captain has nano bots in his body.

I found out that Will ate one and that they have multiplied. Time will tell what happens to him."

(Will looks at Momma again, gets down to go find Mr. Cow to play with. As Troi is about to finish you can hear the sound of Will making his cow go Mooooooooo.)

"I love being on the Hermes. I have a home away from home and Will has one, too".

Ethan Grimms:

"Okay, let's just get this over with. My name is Ethan Grimms, and I'm pretty awesome. Umm... what else do you need to know?

"I don't belong here. I wasn't born here. In this universe, that is. I'm from what you people so affectionately call 'the mirror universe.' The other side. I was brought here under extreme circumstances. It's really all the fault of your Ethan Grimms. He was the chief engineer of the Hermes. Got himself sucked into my neck of the woods and got himself killed, too. So, long story short, I ended up here on the Hermes and the Captain's allowed me to stick around and help out as a civilian.

"I save the ship and the crew a lot. I don't get much credit for it, either, but whatever. I like to keep myself busy. Sometimes I leave the ship for a while because I have.... things... that I need to do. But as much as it pains me to admit, the Hermes is the closest thing to a home that I have."



[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



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Behind the Scenes

Out-of-Character (OOC) Information and Interviews with the Players

Jerrid Billings' Player

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Durandus

(puts her hand on her chin in an attempt to look serious) So, I have come to realize that although I feel like I know you rather well, that there are still quite a few things I don't know about my valiant Captain. So tell me, how long have you been SIM-ing, with USF or otherwise?

Oh, wow. I've been simming for as long as I can remember. I started in the USF in.... '97, I wanna say, and I was in a few other smaller sim groups before that. So right around 16 years. But what surprises people more than how long I've been simming is how old I was when I started. I was only around 7 or 8.

Wow, you were quite the youngin'! I can only imagine the adventures you had... the trouble you've gotten into during all those years...

I was a royal pain in the butt. I couldn't spell, my grammar was terrible, and I wrote about the most ridiculous things. I honestly don't know how my ship mates put up with me back then. But Captain Tage was a very tolerant woman. She told everyone to basically ignore me and let me do my thing, because I was obviously having fun, and that's what simming is all about. Eventually, I began to mature and learn what I could do, and what I couldn't.

(mumbles under her breath) Well, the royal pain in the butt hasn't changed... **(coughs and smiles)** Well, I'm glad that you had a mentor, so to speak. It's uplifting to hear that our fellow USF-ers are so open-minded and willing to work with others for the sake of fun. Do you know if any of your old ship mates are still active in USF? Do you share old war stories?

Actually, quite a few of them are. Sol Berman remained on Starbase Everest and eventually became her Captain. He constantly reminds me how much I've grown since then. I also served as Captain Jhalen Fjori's XO on the Columbia for a few years. And though Lyra Rose is no longer simming, she still keeps in touch with the host string.

That's amazing! You're more of a veteran than I would have imagined. Sure, I started way back in the late '90s as well, but life and hiatuses happened. What is it you enjoy most about USF that keeps you coming back to us so consistently?

There are many reasons. First, and most important, I really enjoy the people I sim with. On every ship I've served on, there's always been at least one person who's made an effort to make me feel welcome. And the Captain's I've served under were all VERY talented writers. I can't remember a week where I wasn't looking forward to what that sim had to offer, and how I could make myself a part of it.

I really enjoy writing, and Star Trek has always been the greatest passion of my life. Sharing my



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? 15 years

What brought you to the USF? I don't even remember. I think I stumbled across it surfing the web one day.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? 3 years

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? 16 years

What other genres of role-playing do you do? World of Warcraft (Computer) and Pathfinder (Tabletop)

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Deep Space Nine

Star Trek movie? The Undiscovered Country

Star Trek game? Star Trek Online

Star Trek book? I.Q.

creativity with my peers is a fulfilling, rewarding experience, and I can't imagine a better way to have spent the past 16 years.

(slow claps) Honestly, that's the best USF speech I've ever heard. I believe if I ever continue my marketing campaigns during my convention trips, I am definitely going to quote you on that. That's absolutely terrific.

Well, as a minion of yours for a while now, I can tell you that your experience over the years with talented writers and warm welcomes has definitely rubbed off on you. Quite frankly, I have yet to interview a Hermes crew member that would say otherwise. And what's more, your plots keep the crew talking even outside of SIM time. How do you manage to balance that fine line between insanity and intrigue when it comes to creating your epic plots?

I don't! Haha. But seriously, when it comes to writing a plot, I always ask myself one question: What would make the best story? Often times, the best stories are about the characters themselves, so if there's a crew member I wanna highlight, or a relationship I want to draw attention to, I'll come up with a story to put that character center stage. And all the while, I look for different twists and turns to keep the sim interesting. Cliff hangers and epic plots twists are a specialty of mine, which is good, because those are the kinds of things that keep your simmers coming back for more.

Well, your insight is truly inspirational. I'll be sure to give you full credit when I get a ship of my own to torment... I mean charm. Is there anything else you'd like to add before I let you continue about your business of enticing the masses?

Yes. 3+7=10. - Just kidding!

(raises an eyebrow) Yes... Well.. Also, very inspiring... Thank you for that. Again, thank you for your time, Captain Billings. I hope to see you around USF for another 16 years!

Trust me. If everybody in the USF retired, I'd still be here writing a plot for anyone who wanted to see it.

Ken Kennesaw's Player

interview conducted by Captain Lorianra

I've got it on good authority that you weren't looking to become the Hermes' XO, but only serve as CMO. **(smirks)** Did Billings charm you into it eventually?

At the time. I You could say that, yes, it's true that I wasn't looking for the XO spot, but the fact is I wasn't even looking for another post at the time. I was asked to come help out and ended up staying

Which means you probably really like the Hermes, hm?

I do. I started out helping out in medical, then ended up being talked into CMO and then XO.



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? I have been on the Hermes sim for about 3 years.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? I started simming in 1997.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? I only sim in Star Trek role-playing games.

What is your favorite:
Star Trek series? The Next Generation
Star Trek movie? Star Trek III: The Search for Spock

Billings is a great conartist.

(chuckles) So I heard! What's the best thing about the Hermes to you?

The folks that play on her. They all take the game seriously, but don't mind getting a few surprises that I or Billings put to them.

It's awesome to have a great crew. Makes being a host really fun, doesn't it?

That it does. This crew seems to have become really close over the past 2 years.

That's wonderful. (smiles) I've also heard that your IC wife has joined and you get to play with her again. You've been writing with her for a long time, haven't you?

We have. I was ecstatic to find out that she would be able to join simming again and then come back to a ship I was on. We have continued our story line from our other ship together.

What ship was that?

USS Ares.

Ahh. And how long have you two been writing together?

Four years I believe.

That's pretty cool. I'm glad you get to enjoy continuing that story.

So am I.

So, if Ken wouldn't have gone into Medicine, what do you think he'd be doing now?

Good question. If he hadn't come on board at the Hermes, I guess he would be enjoying his retirement and spending time with his little girl.

But you never saw him doing anything but be a Doctor, hm? He's pretty tall, could have been a Security officer.

He could have been, but he's not one to follow every order, and he can get away with it better in medical than he can in security.

I see. A little bit standoffish?

You can say that. If you read the character profile, the character has been demoted for JUST that more than once.

I saw his little boyish teasing of the dogs. (winks) You think that sort of personality is something an XO needs? Being able to stand up to the CO at times? Seems more like a James Kirk trait.

Not sure, I guess it depends on the person behind the character.

But you and Billings work well together OOC, right? How's the relationship IC?

(laughs) Again, it depends .. but on the situation, Ken has his rebellious side and sometimes it comes through at the wrong time.

(chuckles) Any favorite wrong time you can recall?

When Ken pulled rank and pulled the CO off duty, when he was the CMO.

I think that's a favorite thing to do, or at least threaten to do, of any CMO! (snickers) Mine included.

Yep. (laughs) I've even had it done to me, by our current CMO.

Uh huh, it comes back to bite ya. (laughs, too) Alright, so is there anything else you'd like to mention?

Only that if you ever get a chance to come watch, please do so. It's a Hoot. Billings is a wonderful host and a great story writer.

Sara Kelly's and Diana Shapard's Player



interview conducted by Captain Lorianra

Now, knowing that you play on other USF sims as well, I must ask you about your recurring choice of doing double characters for them. Is that something you like doing? Or just something that happens incidentally?

(laughs) I just like to multitask! No really, it just happens by accident. I never really intend to do two or more at once. However, I enjoy throwing in some NPCs when we need extra people, but it is never my intention to extend the NPCs to playing character... until it happens. In fact that is how Diana came to be.

We had a sim in which we had to create alternate characters that had to save the day because all our main characters were incapacitated..... then I kept Diana on as an NPC after we finished that sim, and I grew to like the character so much I couldn't resist making her an actual playing character. I love to write logs and develop characters... so I guess I just can't help myself.

(chuckles) That was basically my next question, wondering if one is your main character and the other an NPC, or if you switch equally in between them however things happen in sim or for log writing. Do you have a favorite between Sara and Diana? Or do you truly like them equally?

		Player OOC Stats
How long have you been with the USF? About 3 years.		
What brought you to the USF? My mother was apart of USF for years....I finally joined her and have been hooked ever since!		
How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? About two years with Sara, and a year and a half with Diana. I actually started Diana as a result of one of the sims where we needed to come up with new characters for a period of time because our main characters were incapacitated. I liked the character I created so much I decided to keep her and make her an actual playing character.		
How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? Three years, USF was my first.		
What other genres of role-playing do you do? None.		
What is your favorite: Star Trek series? I love all the series, but my favorites would have to be Voyager and TNG. Star Trek movie? I LOVED the new Star Trek MOVIE! Very well done.		

Hmm....I like them both. I can't really say I have a favorite of any characters I play in the USF. Each one is my creation, and each one is fun to develop and grow with throughout the sims. Sara and Diana have different personalities and different lives, and so it's fun to explore both characters. Sara has had a lot of drama during her time on the Hermes, but is very loyal to her friends on the Hermes. Diana has had a rough life, but enjoys what she does, and loves the excitement of the Hermes.

That's cool. You get to explore the same setting from different aspects. Nice. (smiles) So, it doesn't get confusing to you at times playing two characters?

Not really. Sometimes if things are going pretty crazy in sim I accidentally say something from one of the characters that was meant to be said from the other. (shrugs) But that's not too bad, and I try not to have it happen often.

What is interesting though about Sara is that she is the only human character I play in the USF... She's the only character that I play that does not have ANY telepathic or empathic abilities. So it's kind of fun playing her and being completely ignorant of some of the tensions or moods of the other people around her. And what is awesome with having Sara and Diana together is that I can both be ignorant and know what is going on in people's head at the same time! Best of both worlds.

That sounds like something Freud would be all over. (snickers) Anyway, whose sim characters does either of your characters get along well with, and whose do they completely clash with?

Sara absolutely hates MU Ethan Grimms (from the Mirror Universe), she thinks he is egotistical and altogether useless, mainly because he is always thinking of himself more than anything. And he always complains about having to do things... not to mention he has a knack for getting in trouble and bringing everyone else around him down with him. She also doesn't like the fact that he just came from the Mirror Universe and arbitrarily got to be apart of the crew and be used on away missions. She thinks he can't be trusted.... and yet she knows he's knowledgeable and does tend to be useful, which makes her even more bitter about the whole thing. Everyone else Sara pretty much gets along with.... it actually takes a lot to get under her skin... and MU Ethan Grimms tends to cross that threshold often.

Diana just thinks Ethan's antics are funny. She doesn't really care whether he's there or not, as long as he is not putting himself or others in danger. Diana has a natural compassion for everyone, being a physician, and so can get along with pretty much anyone. However, she can be fiesty and she will not let people get away with things in sickbay. She knows how to defend herself and others, especially when it comes to their safety and health. If Diana has found something worth fighting for, she'll not give up until she's won. She gets along the best with Kayshl, and the two pretty much run sickbay. If you ever go up against the two of them--watch out! They're a dynamic duo with similar determination and lack of fear when it comes to fighting for what's right.

Well, that's a short list of antagonists. So, what type of setting do you like playing out in sim or logs best, the dramatic, or the peaceful, or maybe even comedic stories?

Yes! I enjoy all of it. Although the drama makes for good writing, you have to have some peaceful and some comedic stuff in there, too.... or it'd be too tiring. Really it's like life... a little bit of everything... sometimes more drama than fun... sometimes more fun than drama. It's what makes simming and developing characters so awesome! You get to create and experience whole lives... the best thing is that the story never ends--you simply get to have unlimited adventures as you grow and discover new things about your character and everyone else's characters.

Well said. Last question. What is it you like best about the Hermes sim?

The people. There are a lot of wonderful simmers on the Hermes. The player of Ethan Grimms being one of them. He always makes the plots interesting (and gives Sara something to be angry

about, or Diana something to laugh about).... And Kayshl. I LOVE to JL with Kayshl. She is amazingly creative and between the two of us--we can throw in some twists and turns to the sim plots ourselves!

I can see why you say that. It seems like they're a really great bunch from what I've seen.

I also enjoy when we get to contribute to what plots we do. Billings allows us to come up with ideas for the sim plots and will give us the reigns to the sim if we want it. Although often time there are like four or more subplots going on at the same time so it can get kind of crazy. The sim definitely keeps you on your toes!

Olsen Jaraq's Player

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Solik

What sort of things can you tell us about Olson, that's not in his bio or the IC intro?

Nothing really, I tried to cram everything into the bio when I updated it last time.

Ok, fair enough. Force people to read that then, eh? (winks)

It's a little bit long I'll admit, but there was a lot I had to fit into it. (smiles)

Ah. So, what do you like about portraying a Security officer? Would that be your first choice if you could join Starfleet?

Actually I think my first choice would be Engineering, but I went for Security in the sims for the action.

Interesting. What's the appeal to engineering?

I have an almost morbid fascination with the warp drive as a means of faster-than-light-speed travel.

Aw, can't be that bad.

Not obsessive, but it still intrigues me since it is actually a theoretical possibility.

Ah. What would you consider to be some of Olson's strengths and weaknesses?

One of his main weaknesses would be that he isn't very social, he prefers solitude. I think his strengths are that he's very resourceful and great at thinking on his feet.



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? It's closing in on 2 years now I think, I joined in the latter half of the summer of 2010.

What brought you to the USF? I was looking for a way to convert stardates to regular dates when I stumbled upon the USF site and after browsing around on it for while, I decided to join.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? For as long as I've been in the USF.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? The USF is the first one I've tried and the only one I'm in.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? Not counting skyrim. This is the only one.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? It's a tie between Voyager and TNG.

Star Trek movie? First Contact

Star Trek game? I've only tried two, Bridge Commander and STO and Bridge Commander is, well to be honest, crap, so it would have to be STO.

Well, those strengths are certainly good qualities for being in Security. And Engineering, for that matter. So, what sort of things do you like about the Hermes?

Well, it's a very active and light-hearted crew, they joke around a lot. It's fantastic simming with them and there's always an exciting plot being played out.

Cool. Back in 2009, the Agamemnon did a small joint-sim plot with them. They seemed to be a pretty good group.

Yes, they are.

Well, I thank you for your time, and I'm sure our readers appreciate it as well.

I hope they do, look forward to seeing the next issue.

Andrew Carmello's Player

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Durandus

So, I hear you found USF via the assistance of Google. What prompted the search that brought you to USF those 5 years ago?

Actually, it started with a video game. I love *Star Trek: Bridge Commander*, it's my favorite Star Trek game ever. I wanted to do more games like that, but there were no simulation games like it. Therefore, I searched Star Trek Simulations and found the STSF, then USF after leaving STSF.

I assume by STSF you mean the "Star Trek Simulation Forum" over at www.stsf.net?

Yes. I didn't like the way they simmed, so I found USF.

Not that I mean to downplay any Star Trek RPG out there, because by all means the more the merrier, but what was it that drew you to USF? Was it something specific, or just the draw of something new?

The idea that I didn't need to go to the Academy and I loved the logging system.

Interesting! Well I'm sure happy you moved. (winks)

Yes, very. I'm happy.

So do you have a favorite log you've written, perhaps a plot that is epically memorable?

The very long relationship plot between Tapal and I, and our battle with the Mara... it's a very long log series written when we were on the Independence and transferred to Hermes.

Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? 5 years.

What brought you to the USF? Google search.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? 4 years.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? 6 years.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? Beside video games? None.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Star Trek: Voyager

Star Trek movie? Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan

Star Trek game? Star Trek: Bridge Commander

Star Trek book? Star Trek: Voyager series books.

Is Tapal another character of yours or another player in USF?

Another player. She used to be on the Hermes, but eventually had to back down due to time constraints. We were married before that happened, so we now have the plot set so that she is now off duty, at home, taking care of the kids.

(nods) I see. I like that you were able to integrate her absence so well into both character's story-lines.

Yes, it worked out so nicely.

So, having served on two different ships with one character, do you see any major differences between the two?

I really can't tell a true difference. Plot wise, they are both a great sim as the captains always come up with such excellent plots. I see nothing wrong with either sim. No real major differences, besides the people.

I notice you haven't done any other RPGs outside of Star Trek, any particular reason?

I didn't know really what that question meant when I answered it... did it mean video game RPGs, or things like our Simming? If the first, then I've played many, if the latter, because nothing else has interested me.

Well I took the question to mean both when I answered, you know, MMOs, D&D, etc etc...

Ok, then I've played lots.

One last question, any reason why you always play Engineering characters?

In real life, I'm a very stagnant person. I do like to try new things, but in this case, I just love engineering. I've never gotten tired of it. I'm not a big tactical person and I'm nowhere near a science or medical person, so I settled for engineering because helm and OPS seem too boring for me.

I like getting into the meat of the ship. I like to act like I'm repairing ships and I also love the technobabble and the technical aspects of every starship that has been created, canon and non-canon. I love every bit of engineering and never get tired of it.

Well, is there anything else you'd like to add, before I let you go for the evening?

I just want to say that I love simming with a passion. I'm on 5 different sims, currently on LOA for some because of school work, but I'm on 5 sims because I love to sim. Over the summer, I did nothing and would get bored, waiting for Friday, the Lothlorien, my first USF sim, to come so that I could play. I started looking for other sims for that reason.

Now, I have started so many sims that I love and cannot bare to leave without great heartbreak. I love to sim and think every time of a canon Starfleet Officer as my role model for each sim I do.

I am glad that you do! It's nice to see players so passionate about SIMming. Thank you so much for you time and have a wonderful evening, Mr. Carmello.

Thank you you too!

Malcolm Sarif's Player

interview conducted by Captain Billings

So I know you haven't been simming for very long. What do you think so far?

It's definitely something new and exciting for me. The crew keeps things fresh, and I enjoy it a lot.

How did you get interested in simming?

That's all thanks to you of course! I watched it from the sidelines for about three weeks... and after that I was just ready to dive in. Haven't looked back since.

Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? Been on the Hermes for roughly 2 months.

What brought you to the USF? The captain, my friend, recruited me.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? This is my first sim.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? I don't do any role-playing besides some anime cosplay. I'm actually a Firefly fan, thus my character's heavy influence from Malcolm Reynolds (as well as Adam Jensen from Deus Ex).

That must have been a fascinating experience, watching that from the sidelines for the first time. What interested you the most?

I've never seen simming before, and it reminded me a lot of improv comedy! Just instead of crackin jokes, people were improv'ing *everything*... the action, the plot, the reactions, the conversations... everything that happened was fresh and never rushed. So that aspect was really appealing to me, and it's still a big part of why I continue to show up every Tuesday night.

Good to hear! Now, let's talk about Malcolm. I was very impressed with his bio. You've created a very rich character for yourself. Why don't you tell us a little bit about him?

Mal is definitely a "shoot from the hip" kind of guy. His past isn't too shiny, he's had a few run ins with people he'd rather not associate with. But for now he has his things in order, and tries to stay laid back. He's got a mechanical arm prosthetic. Kind of gives a steampunk feel to a futuristic character.

He worked for a criminal organization, didn't he?

That he did. Turns out Mal had a very unsettling, life threatening altercation on a planet with some undesirables. He had no money, and the only person willing to give him a surgical procedure was the local crime lord. Without Mal's knowledge, him being in a critical state and all, the crime lord gave him his mechanical arm to replace the one he had lost. He used this instead of a biosynthetic prosthetic because the body would rely on an expensive drug called Neuropozyne to prevent the body from rejecting the implant.

So, long story short, Mal was in his pocket because it was the only way Mal could acquire the drug. If he goes without it longer than two weeks, the arm believes the user is trying to remove the implant, at which time it will shut down the entire nervous system. Luckily, Mal was able to eventually steal a shipment of the drug and escape.

That's such a rich story for someone who's never simmed before. Where do you get inspiration?

It's actually a combination of two separate characters. Mal's personality, appearance and first name are inspirations from Malcolm Reynolds of the late *Firefly* series. The mechanical arm and backstory are influences from Adam Jensen of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.

Sounds like you have a keen interest in science fiction.

Yeah, I've always been enthralled with sci fi in general. Firefly, Starcraft and Mass Effect stand out to me as my most avid passions in sci fi. I enjoyed the Star Wars movies as well. But the only time I was exposed to Star Trek was when my dad used to watch *The Next Generation*. I like to dip into everything, so I'm glad I took the opportunity to learn more about Star Trek and interact with the fans of sci fi in a way I've never done before, through simming.

What's your favorite part of simming so far?

I can tell every person on the ship has unique relationships with each crew member, so I love the interesting and often hilarious interactions between people. Someone like Ethan is gonna provoke Kay or Tanok into rolling their eyes at his actions, while Olson is often likely to join and cause further shenanigans to ensue. I'm looking forward to establishing those sorts of relationships on individual levels.

Sounds like you'll be doing this for awhile. Do you have any plans for your character's future?

I've got a couple things in mind, of course. But I'm definitely willing to just sit back and see how things unfold as a crew. We'll see how it goes. In any case, I'm definitely looking forward to it.

Last question. Being a new simmer must be an exciting and overwhelming experience for you. What advice would you offer future simmers who have never simmed before?

Oooh. Tough question. I would say that your backstory is very important, but don't try to rush and get your character at the center of attention when you immediately join. I found it was better that I've developed gradually into my position. Now everybody is comfortable with me and I'm starting to form those unique relationships with people like I talked about earlier.

Tanok's and Satak's Player


interview conducted by Captain Billings

So first thing's first. How did you get interested in Star Trek?

My parents had always made a big deal about it. They have collected every Star Trek Christmas ornament since they were first released in the late 80's. But I kind of blew it off as an "adult thing". But then my best friend sat me down, when we were about 15 or 16, and had me watch a few episodes of TNG, and I was pretty much hooked immediately.

What did you like about it?

I liked the balance of story and action. Almost every episode seemed to play a relevant part in the overall plot line, and there was always some sort of action, be it a fight scene or some very interesting science phenomena. And, the

Player OOC Stats	
	
How long have you been with the USF?	I have been with the USF for 3 years.
What brought you to the USF?	My best friend became Captain of the Hermes.
How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character?	For 3 years, as long as I have been with the USF.
How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether?	Again, 3 years.
What other genres of role-playing do you do?	I am into table top games as well as this.
What is your favorite:	
Star Trek series?	The Next Generation
Star Trek movie?	The new Star Trek release.
Star Trek game?	Star Trek Online

deal was sealed when I was introduced to Q, one of my favorite characters across all of the shows.

Ah, yes. I can't imagine anyone not liking Q. So I hear you run two different characters on the Hermes. Is that true?

That is correct. After developing my first character, Tanok, to nearly the limit of his capabilities, I decided he needed a cohort, someone starting off to follow in his steps, and that someone needed to be in my control. The two characters compliment themselves greatly, if I do say so myself. *(winks)*

Let's talk about Tanok for a second. He's a Vulcan, right? With a few special abilities?

That is true. Tanok was developed to have telekinetic and telepathic abilities inherited from his father. Of the course, of the two years that I have played him I have progressively built his abilities, but managed to keep things realistic and manageable, so that he is not a "broken" character.

And what about Satak? What's he all about?

Satak required an entirely unique characterization from Tanok. A simply copy paste wouldn't work. I wanted him to be a Vulcan as well, but he needed something to make him unique. So to go along with the usual mass of scientific knowledge, I have had him trained in advanced thrown weapons combat, which has proven very useful in multiple SIMs.

That sounds like a pretty handy team. Now, is simming with two characters difficult? Would you recommend the experience to anyone else?

I'd only recommend it if the simmer is almost 100% focused on the sim at all times. It requires a lot of switching back and forth between IM windows, and you need to make sure your speaking or acting for the right character or people can get confused. If you can do this, it's incredibly handy and helpful. Even I make a few mistakes sometimes and it all works out ok. But if you can't handle the amount of focus required, I'd stick to a single character.

So you've been simming on the Hermes for a couple years ago. Whats your favorite simming story so far?

I'd have to say the SIM that I wrote myself and lead was lots of fun.

You wrote a sim? What was it about?

Imagine if you will a species that feeds on all living things, sometimes even converting them into hideous beasts that are slaves to a hive mind. Some would call it a Borg sort of species. I say, take the Borg, combine them with the flood from the Halo video game series, and multiply the evil and terror by 50 and you have the Brood. And the Hermes had a pretty terrifying run in with them.

That sounds exciting! What was it like, running a sim?

It was very intense. You try to plan everything in advance. As a logical thinker I find that I can easily cover a lot of story holes and plan for some of the unexpected. But it always seemed that someone was creative enough to come up with something I could no plan for. It was very exciting and fun!

Sounds like you had a good time! Last question - What advice would you give someone who wanted to try and write a sim?

My advice would be to sit down and really consider the possibly of the SIM playing out. What is the goal? What effect do you want the plot to have on the simmers, and write out an actually plot line to see if it's really plausible and if you need to fill in story holes. If you can do all of that and answer those questions, you'll be well on your way to writing and excellent SIM.

Sounds like a plan! Thank you for taking the time to sit down with me. (smiles)

You are very welcome. Thank you for the interview.

Katelin Troi's Player

interview conducted by Cadet Styles

What was your main influence in creating this character?

My convention friendship with Majel Barrett Roddenberry and Marina Sirtis as Troi.

Now that is definitely a awesome influence. You are personal friends with them, or were in Majel's case?

Majel, at conventions, only. But she would ask my husband and I to bring our poodles to come see her every time she saw us.

(smiles) That is pretty awesome.

She owned poodles when Rod was little. We found that out when we went to her memorial service.

Now, I see you mention that Troi is extremely religious. Do you include that in the sims?

My religion is like the Bajoran religion, and yes. That is why I am not at some sims. Holy Days are going on for us right now. When Troi has time she goes to the temple.

Well, I meant more do you do anything special DURING the sims because of this?

Yes. She does say prayers. My character's sister is a Vedek.

Nice. Now. Her dog on the ship is telepathic? Where does he originate from?

Now he is. He was not in the beginning. He bit the Captain and got a nano bot. He is just starting to speak to her, but he is not that strong mentally yet.

(raises a brow) A nano-bot, from the captain?



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? About three years or so.

What brought you to the USF? I met Fleet Captain Tia Ryan at the big Las Vegas convention.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? 3 years

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? I think more than 15 years.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? None; pure grade AA Star Trek fan.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Star Trek: The Next Generation; that's because of my dogs: Data, Tasha, and Will Riker, the Star Trek Poodles.

Star Trek movie? Star Trek: Generations

Star Trek game? Any.

Star Trek book? Any of the Mirror Universe ones.

He has them in his blood. He's a Trill.

Well, that should be interesting to read about. So, Will was a normal dog before biting the captain?

Yep, in every way.

What made you decide to have him become telepathic?

He is empathic, he can sense when I am happy or sad. He will come to me and sit in my lap. He waits to be hugged.

(smiles) I actually think all dogs are like that.

Mine is worse, We had a picture done with Majel, right before she died. She held him in the picture.

So, you decided to take it a step further with him and make him able to communicate telepathically?

Yes, because he looks at me and when I say something to him, like "go get Mr. Cow," he gets it. We were told by a trainer that he was a little too smart. You tell him get a lighty ball, and he comes back with it.

(smiles) I have a toy poodle, and she knows the difference between her toys. She will go after what you specifically say.

He knows color. Dogs are suppose to be color blind.

In the sim, will the dog talk only to Troi, or will he communicate with others on the ship?

Only to Troi. We have to build the bond and the link.

(nods) One more question. One that I ask everyone... What do you see as the future of the type of simming that we do in the USF?

Mmmm, I would like to see a StarFleet Corps of Engineers Sim for one, I would also like to see more people like me. This is not just for younger fans. I am one of the seniors in the group. I started simming with AOL 3.0.

Thank you for your answers.

(Note: For more information on Katelin Troi's player's real life connection to the Roddenberry family and many different Star Trek actors, see the interview about the Star Trek Poodles with her other character, Maggie Grayson, in the [February 2011 USF PADD](#) under the "Behind the Scenes" section for the USS Independence.)

Kayshl Durandus' Player

interview conducted by Captain Lorianra

I have to tell you, I'm actually rather flattered that it was the PADD that drew you back into the USF. (smiles) And I'm glad you help out as much as you do.

I don't recall ever knowing of a chat-based RPG with a publication, so the mere fact that it existed was intriguing. When I found out it actually had some riveting content, too, I just couldn't resist myself. Having designed things like that all my conscious life I just couldn't help but join in on the awesomeness.

(chuckles) Anyways, now that I'm done blowing my own horn. (smirks) Betazoid. Why? I've noticed you play her very flirty and forthright, like I've only seen one other person play a Betazoid character before. Is that the fun about it?

(grins) Honestly, your horn playing is luring...

(laughs) Flattery won't get you nowhere.

(flutters her eyelashes) Flattery usually gets me everywhere.

As for the Betazoid question... I can get pretty deep and philosophical with that response. I suppose it depends on how much you want to know about the player. I guess the short answer is that I wanted a character that could be flirty and fiery and sarcastic, but caring and empathic.

Betazoid characters always seemed a bit more.. risque to me. Troi's mother, Roxanna, comes to mind. I also enjoyed their religions beliefs and their openness. As you may note, from some of Kayshl's logs, she does take advantage of the Betazoid's openness to nudity.

Actually I have to confess I haven't read many of them. But I can tell from her intro she's some-thing else, dragging my camera guy off like that.

But in general, I've just noticed that a lot of people who play Betazoids, which notably in USF it most often seems to be a Betazoid hybrid, do it only for the reason that they'll have the ability of



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? I have been active on the Hermes since 1/19/11. I was actively assisting with the USF PADD for a few months before that. Technically, I'm fairly confident I was active in this group back in the late 90s (maybe around 1997-1999), using a Vulcan character, but I'm not entirely sure it was USF. However, it's the only explanation I could come up with for being subscribed to the USF PADD.

What brought you to the USF? The USF PADD actually. I started just wanting to help with the PADD after I saw the Photoshop tutorial sections. After I did an interview with Ens. Maggie Grayson (i.e. Counselor Katelin Troi), I decided to join the Hermes and get back into my old vice. I've been addicted ever since, and I slap myself for ever leaving.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? I've been on the Hermes with Kayshl Durandus since I started, so about 14-15 months now. ~Wow... it's been over a year! Seems like I've spent a lifetime with the crew of the Hermes. The almost feel like family now.~

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? Well I started back in the good-old-days of AOL Chat rooms and all their dial-up glory. I know I was actively role-playing online since junior high, so maybe as early as 1996. I went on an ELOA for awhile through college, but I've been doing some sort of role-playing since then.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? Well, I started with Star Trek chat-based online RPGs. From there I have gone to MMORPGs (i.e. Worlds of Warcraft and Star Trek Online), and even tried my hand at a Fantasy-style forum-based RPG in 2007 with an elemental character I created. I had a short stint with D&D last year, but it was short lived. I am primarily active in USF and STO now.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Star Trek: The Original Series

Star Trek movie? Either Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan or Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country

Star Trek game? Probably Star Trek Online, but I haven't played many others. There was one other one I enjoyed, a First-Person-Shooter involving the TNG timeline, but I can't remember what it was called.

telepathy and yet still look Human.

Honestly, and I suppose obviously after my previous admission, I never thought about picking a character based on ability. I knew the personality I wanted to portray, and that was the best fit for me. *(gives a playful grin)* I can tell you Kayshl's first off-duty experience on the Hermes was... interesting... *(recalls images of boxers waving outside the mess hall windows)*

***(laughs)* Do tell.**

(gives a devilish smile) Well, I'm not exactly proud of the outcome of the shenanigans in question... it led to quite a bit of a mess, and the Captain wasn't at all pleased. *(her grin doesn't fade)* However... he did get to know me quite well after that. *(revels in some internal joke)*

In a nutshell... Carissa, a former Hermes crewmember, and I had a bit too much wine in the Holodeck and decided to find an answer to a debate we were having... *(pauses for dramatic effect)* Boxers or briefs.

We found out for ourselves and sent them out into space on a sensor probe for all to see. *(her eyes glisten)* That inadvertently caused the entire ship to swap bodies and our litter prank ended up causing a lot more grief than intended. As luck would have in, the Captain ended up in my drunk, high-heel wearing body.

***(chuckles)* I remember reading some of those logs. That was actually along my next question. Do you actually manage to embarrass Billings? I mean in any sim, not just that one.**

(pauses to think about that one) I did in a free SIM once, not sure if that counts.

He's not easily embarrassed, hm?

He's not easily bested or embarrassed. He's also a very busy person; it's not easy to joint-log with him. Thus why most of my personal logs involve other ... confederates...

That doesn't seem to diminish the enthusiasm of the crew, though. *(smiles)* I've done one JL with him when he was on the Loth, before he left for the Columbia, and I was the counselor there at the time. *(smirks)* I remember something about foot odor...

Oh yeah! He came in and took his shoes off and put his stinky feet on my desk.

(jots down a note about the Captain having stinky feet)

And the entire crew is "Overly Enthusiastic". *(puts emphasis on the words as if it's some huge inside joke)* One of the many things I love about it.

It's great to have a crew with enthusiasm. Makes simming so much more fun. *(smiles)* So, if there would be anything at all you could change about your character, what would it be?

Nothing, honestly. I want to have a character that seems real, and is relatable. So I would hope that any imperfections would be benefits. But if I had to change something it would probably be to develop her family history and relationships more. I've touched on it lightly in logs before, but haven't done anything in depth. Nothing a few more personal logs can't solve though.

Well, get to writing. *(winks)* Planning on becoming a host, someday?

(grins, flattered at the mere suggestion) Is that an invitation, Ms. Editor-in-Chief?

***(chuckles)* Maybe. We definitely need more.**

As always, I'm usually up to no good. So there may or may not be some evil plans afoot for future "leadership" positions...

I was going to ask you if you had a special plot in mind you're just itching to play out if you became a host.

Yes, actually, but I'd hate to ruin the surprise. Let's just say I couldn't have thought of it without the support of the Hermes' crew and the Captain's exasperatingly entertaining plots. So you'd have to offer me a position and a crew first to find out any more details. *(winks)*

In fact... if you have any volunteers... *(looks around for stray PADD workers)*

(chuckles)* Well, unfortunately I don't have the power to grant you a ship or a crew. But maybe someone from HC will read this. *(smirks)

(grins excitedly and fluffs her hair) Oh well, excellent. I'm glad you got a good profile picture then.

So, lastely, aside from your support for the PADD and your lively involvement with the Hermes, you've also taken initiative to do some advertising for the USF, care to tell us about it?

Well, I was invited to go to Dragon Con with some friends this past August. I was extremely excited to go, as Leonard Nimoy was scheduled to attend and I just ordered a shiny new uniform to wear to the event. I had heard from Billings that he had done some recruiting at a few conventions he's gone to in the past, and I know a few people that have doen the same at the Vegas con. So I decided to design a business card to take with me and recruit a few people.

And did you get to hand out a lot of them? How were they received?

I gave out most of them. I sent a few to Billings, though. Overall, they were very well received. People loved the design and the idea of USF.

I suppose you don't know first hand if anyone actually checked out Sector001?

I know a few people did. A few classmates I tried to recruit and a friend I ran into at MegaCon.



"Business Card" Kayshl designed for advertising the USF

Nice. Maybe this will inspire some other USFers to come up with ideas on how to advertise Sector001. It would be great to get more new blood. *(smiles)*

Well, if they need any advertising assistance, or a pretty little Star Trek model, they know where to find me. *(gives her best Vogue pose)*

So, thanks for your time, Kayshl. Very enlightening and fun.

Always a pleasure.

Ethan Grimms' Player

interview conducted by Lieutenant J.G. Brott

So it appears I'm not interviewing the real Ethan Grimms at all? If he got sucked into your universe and died, how did you get into our universe? What do you miss the most about your universe?

Well... "real" is a relative term. I'm as real as anyone else. I just happened to come from another dimension.

Doesn't that cause dizziness or cramps?

As to how I ended up here? It was all that "other" Ethan's fault. He accidentally opened up a tear in space/time and got sucked into my universe... the one you all so affectionately call the Mirror Universe. And then got himself captured.

The Hermes came after him and got themselves into trouble. I reluctantly helped the other Ethan and some of his crew mates escape. But Ethan was killed. My vessel - the ISS Hermes - was destroyed shortly thereafter. My home was lost.

Were you part of the Terran Empire?

Yes, I was an officer of the Terran Empire, newly rebuilt after winning our freedom from the terrible Alliance.

The mirror universe is known for housing evil versions of us from this universe. Would you say that's a fair statement?

Not at all. Though, don't ask any member of the USS Hermes' crew that question. They'd likely have a different answer.

They don't like you I presume? Lack of trust?

I feel like I've earned their trust and respect. Or, at least, I should have. I have saved their collective butts a number of times since I took up residency aboard the Hermes.

Well, that is something. Now for more questions. I see you have been simming sporadically for 15 years. What made you go back and forth and now finally stay put?

Honestly it's still a little sporadic. I've been simming semi-regularly with the Hermes for several years but I have taken breaks from the sim a couple of times. In fact, I left the sim (and the character of Lt Cdr Grimms) and initially was not going to come back permanently.

In a land of Xbox and online games, what brings you back?



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? I've been serving sporadically for about 15 years. I've simmed as multiple characters on various sims. I've even hosted more than once.

What brought you to the USF? A friend of mine was recruited and told me about it. They didn't last, but I did!

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? I joined the Hermes and created the character of Ethan Grimms in June 2008. I've been playing the mirror-universe doppelganger of Grimms since May 2010.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? USF was my first experience, so about 15 years.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? None.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? The Next Generation

Star Trek movie? The Wrath of Khan

Star Trek game? Voyager: Elite Force

Star Trek book? The Destiny trilogy by David Mack

Characters and relationships. Playing a video game is cool... that's fine... but it lacks depth. And you're playing a story that's already been pre-written. In USF, you can create and develop your character however you see fit. You can write logs to fill in their backstory and give them personal growth. You can create relationships with the crew.

The primary reason why I came back - and have stayed back - on the Hermes for the past couple of years is that I was really excited about the idea of killing off my character and then coming back as his doppelganger. It just opens up so many story ideas, and allows me to play a totally different character. Captain Billings asked if he could get me back on the sim as a "guest star." It was only going to be temporary, for one story. But then we introduced Mirror Grimms and things just escalated.

What personality traits do you bring to Grimms from your real self and what is clearly not you?

I'm incredibly sarcastic. It's just engrained in my personality. I use it at work. I use it in my personal life. And I definitely incorporated it into Grimms, only I turned it up to 11. Mirror Grimms is incredibly selfish. He doesn't care about others' well beings as much as his own. His number one priority is himself. I'd say that's only sometimes true with me IRL!

So if Grimms is a civilian on the USS Hermes how can he be in a position to save the ship, single handedly, each and every sim?

Well, I mean, I shouldn't have to. Let's be honest. The ship should have a capable crew. And they are... most of the time. Sometimes they just take too much time talking, or thinking. They don't act! Alien at your door? Shoot it. Don't spend an hour trying to talk to it. They're just so damned optimistic.

So people from your old universe were a little more action rather than reaction. The old explore vs. exploit debate.

Exploitation really isn't a part of the Hermes crew's vocabulary. I, on the other hand, have no problem with taking advantage if a situation presents itself.

When did you come to realize that our universe was the correct one?

Who says I have? I've.... grown accustomed to it. And there's nothing left for me back where I came from. Everything I had.... everyone I cared about... is gone.

Oh come now Mr. Grimms surely ever fiber of your being tells you we have it pretty good here.. well, if you skip the Dominion War.. and the Borg.

Yeah, see! I didn't know anything about the Dominion or the Borg until I came here. In fact, the Hermes found itself sucked back in time a few months ago and we ended up at Deep Space 9 at the start of the war. It's not all sunshine and roses here, ya know.

If a rift opened up to the old mirror universe, would you go back?

I.... I don't know if I would go back. I would need a reason to, I guess. There was someone... who I cared deeply for back home. But as far as I know, he is dead. If I knew... I mean, if I had proof that he was alive.... I dunno. That was a couple of years ago. I... I don't know if I could just go back like that.

How would the mirror universe receive a visit from the USS Hermes? Try to capture? Would you help save the ship despite being 'home'?

I suspect that the Terran Empire would see the Hermes as a threat, should it enter their universe. I wouldn't recommend vacationing there. And I don't wish any ill will on the Hermes crew. I mean, I

don't want them to die. I guess I'd do my part to try and help them if I had to. Maybe. *(shrugs)*

That's very... commendable of you. *(grimaces)*

See! Another example of me having to save them when I shouldn't have to.

Does the Hermes bring in a lot of elements from TNG, your favorite series, into their plots? Also do you get the chance to write any plots?

The Hermes brings in elements from all over the Trek universe, and TNG is definitely included in that. In fact, the Enterprise-E worked its way into a supporting role in a plot not too long ago.

I am very grateful that the Hermes' CO, Captain Billings, is open receiving ideas and feedback from the crew. I don't normally come up with my own plot, but I might brainstorm with Billings or offer up suggestions if he is suffering from writers' block. Sometimes I will introduce my own B-plot that can run concurrent with his A-plot. I've definitely contributed to some of the story direction in the past.

What do you hope for the future for Mr. Grimms, the USS Hermes and simming in general?

Well, as far as Ethan Grimms goes... I am not sure where I'd like him to end up. I love the character. I will not kill him off (been there, done that). I'd like for him to become a useful member of Federation society in his own special way.

I adore the Hermes crew. They're just great people. I hope that they all stick around for a long time, and that the sim will prosper and thrive. The same is true for simming and the USF. There are times when I am genuinely surprised that the organization has survived for so long! Trek is in such a weird place right now. It's suffered a downward spiral, then went dormant until JJ Abrams did the reboot. There's no Trek on TV these days. Things are kinda quiet. But it's great to see the USF still going.

That leads me to my last question. You now are in charge of creating the next Star Trek TV series. What's it going to be all about?

Oh geez... there are so many options. I think that, from a business perspective, the smartest thing would be to build off of the success of the Abramsverse. ST2009 was a critical and box office success. They're filming the sequel now. I would probably work with Team Abrams to develop a series set in this new universe. New characters. New setting. But tie it in with this new film franchise.

Would certainly raise the production values even further.

Don't get me wrong... I still love the 'prime' universe very much! I just don't think that you could do another TV series set there right now. I'll just keep reading the novels to get my fix.

Yes, those have slowed down a bit. I'm reading "Watching the Clock" temporal investigations novel now. So any last words for the readers of The PADD, or I mean The Grimms?

I prefer my statue be made out of white gold. A national holiday in my honor is fine. Please, no parades. I find them tacky.

I will forward that to the people most likely to push those agendas through committee. Thanks for taking the time to answer some questions. Any time I look in the mirror I'll think of you.

Fantastic. Thanks for the interview!

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



USS Hermes - Beginnings

by Captain Loriaarra

One of the most interesting and perhaps also most frustrating things involved with sim features is tracking down the sim's history, or more specifically its beginning. While I had the privilege of interviewing several ex-USFers that I might otherwise not have ever talked to, now and then I simply can't pull enough strings to find the actual creator of the sim and pick his/her brain.

Unfortunately, that happened this time. All my information sources and connections weren't able to get me in contact with the USS *Hermes*' creator, Captain Rick Semino.

Fortunately, though, several of my usual sources have come to my rescue and divulged whatever they knew about the *Hermes*' past. First and foremost among them was Captain Rosanna Severine, who by the way is a great fountain of knowledge for a lot of the USF's past. Sort of a "technological pack rat", she was able to give me files on rosters, bios, ship specs, and the launching sim ceremony!

With the help of Commodore Shane Booker, Fleet Captain Carissa Hunter, and a few others I was able to confirm pretty much everything I managed to dig up during my research.

Beginnings and Launch in a Nutshell:

The *Hermes*' first sim took place on SD 9608.04. It included a ceremony in which the ship's CO, Captain Rick Semino, was introduced, and he in turn introduced his XO, Cmdr. Matt Solo. It appears the USF was growing quite rapidly back then and was in need of more sims. Semino went from the USS *Federation* straight to the creation of the USS *Hermes*, sending out ship specs on SD 9607.27 and an initial roster on SD 9608.02 in preparation of the launch.

According to that data, the USS *Hermes* was a Mercury Class refit, a multi-role Science and Reconnaissance vessel, with the registry number NCC-4501-B. And it evidently had a sun roof! Haha. (Ok, ok, not quite. That was a joke Semino cracked at the first sim. I just had to share it.)

Several of the initial crew members had followed Semino to the *Hermes* from the USS *Federation*, and some of those that quickly filling up other position in the weeks following the launch were actually second characters created by people the *Hermes* crew new from the USS *Lothlorien*.

Succession of CO's and XO's:

Creator Captain Rick Semino was the first CO of the ship, with his XO being Cmdr. Matt Solo. Solo didn't stay all that long and was soon replaced by Cmdr. David Chid, who according to the roster of SD 9705.29 was even acting CO for a short while. Eventually, Chid was listed as CO on a roster from SD 9708.05, and his XO was Cmdr. Leetanzia Grant-Storm. By April 98, then Captain, Grant had become CO and Cmdr. Jason Storm served as her XO.

In the beginning of 1999 it gets a little murky, but the mission brief of SD 9904.13 showed Cmdr. Koric Hawkins as XO, and six months later he wrote a Captain's Log, SD 9910.22, about the successful change of command. By January of 2000, Cmdr. Sabrina DuCant became his XO.

A different chapter began for the *Hermes* at the end of 2001. The roster, SD 200111.05, showed a combined crew of the USS *Hermes* and the USS *Halifax*, lovingly called the *Hermifax*. Then Captain, Booker, CO of the *Halifax*, actually shed some light on this for me. He told me that both sim were simming at the same time and had done several plots together, so they decided to combine the sims for a long-term plot. That plot actually lasted some two years or more, until Booker retired, and the *Halifax*'s crew transferred permanently to the *Hermes*.

In March 2005, Captain Carissa Hunter was CO, and Cmdr. James Kirk, Jr., was her XO. Some two years later, in April 2007, Captain Joe Tremblay became CO, joined by his XO, Lt. Cmdr. Sirch Nogal about two months later. By the end of 2007, Commodore Jason Storm took over the command of the *Hermes* for a while.

Current Captain, Jerrid Billings, has been in the CO seat since November of 2008. Cmdr. James Kirk, Jr., served as his XO from March 2009 until Cmdr. Ken Kennesaw replaced him in September 2009.

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



Meeting – In Real Life

Simming with the same people every week and getting to know your fellow simmers over an extended period of time tends to leave many of us with the intrigue of what the players behind the characters might be like for real. Of course, it's not everybody's wish to meet up with their crew mates for real – some are very private – but many have and want to, nonetheless.

Several crew members of the USS Hermes have had the same aspirations and actually took steps to meet in real life. What was it like? Were there any unexpected surprises? Did it change how they looked at each other afterward? Was it simply all great fun?

Let's find out!

Meet-Up: Jerrid Billings – Ken Kennesaw – Tanok

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Kayshl Durandus

So! Word on the street is you gentlemen have been busy arranging some off-duty meetings? Care to enlighten us with regard to your mischievous endeavors?

Lieutenant Tanok: Well of course it involved food. (lol)

Commander Ken Kennesaw: You mean other than the truth in it?

Captain Jerrid Billings: Well, Tanok and I live together in Ohio, and Ken and I had been trying to get together for awhile. So one day, we just made plans and Ken came down from Kentucky.

Ken: Down? Try up, Dude.

Tanok: I actually wasn't sure if I was going to make it, but i tweaked the schedule cause I really wanted to meet Ken in person.

Ken: I'm that special. (chuckles)

(grins) Sounds like trouble to me.

Ken: You know it.

Jerrid: Nah. We were only trouble to the waitress who had to keep giving us refills for three hours.

Ken: I have to admit it was an interesting 3 hours.

Tanok: It really was. I've known the Captain for a long time, but he is the only person I've known and seen that sims, so it was interesting to meet someone else who does it.

Jerrid: By the way - Ken is the shortest dude I have ever seen in my life. Totally not what I expected.

Ken: (LOL) Hey, I cant help I didn't get the TALL genes. Going back to Billings place and all three of us simming at the same table with 3 laptops was funny also.

Tanok: Definitely made taking care of things through the chain of command very easy.

I can definitely see how face-to-face SIM-ing can come in useful.

Ken: VERY!!!!

Tanok: It really was! Having another person to bounce ideas of off instead of messaging really changed the situation for the better.

Jerrid: It was funny, because for the first time, Ken got to see how I maniacally run a sim. I always have my own little comments like, "Let's try this," or "THAT WOULD BE AWESOME!"

Ken: He's not joking. He was saying those things all sim. As far as me being short, I was surprised to see how young Tanok and Billings were.

Do you think SIM-ing as a group in the "real world" is more effective than other VOIP systems?

Jerrid: Depends. What's VOIP?

Voice-Over IP, like Skype, Ventrillo, Teamspeak...

Tanok: I think at some point if you have too many people in the same room it takes away from the idea of simming in the first place. I'd say depending on the ship it varies. For our ship the 3 of us was perfect.

Ken: Never tried that. VOIP that is.

Do you think that knowing the real person behind the character takes away any of the mystique?

Jerrid: Nah. I AM my character. Jerrid behaves exactly the way I would in any given situation.

Ken: I would have to say it depends.

Tanok: Only a little bit. And yes the Captain is this way in real life as well. And Ken plays his character so well, many times I completely forget what I remember about him from meeting him. (lol)

Ken: (LOL) Tanok. NOOOO comment.

(gives an awkward grin at the inside joke) Well, I suppose full envelopment into your character is the overall goal, right?

Jerrid: Definitely. I feel like I know Jerrid just as well as I know myself. They're both equally complex.

Tanok: Yes. The same as acting. By doing so, it really brings a character to life, one that people are going to remember and appreciate as a simmer.

Ken: Yes I agree with the both of them

So has your meeting inspired you at all? Would you seek out other members of the USF?

Tanok: I would definitely. I often times find myself sitting here, reading what people sim, and wondering, "Geez I wonder if they are like this in real life?" (lol)

Jerrid: Oh, there are so many people I want to meet. One of the things that makes the Hermes so unique is that we are constantly talking to each other outside of the sim. Sharing ideas, chatting up the latest sim plot, etc. I've gotten to know many of my ship mates personally. I would love to meet all of them in real life.

Ken: I have met others from other groups. And yes, if someone was in my area or I was going to an area where I knew a player lived, I would ask if they would be interested in meeting up.

So are there any other words of wisdom or awesome stories about your meet-up that you care to share before I let you fine gentlemen go?

Jerrid: Awesome stories? I know we have at least one good one.

Ken: Well I wouldn't mind doing it again, Matter of fact if it wasn't for Ohio State and KY playing in semi finals in the NCAA I would have met up with the others for dinner or something. On my way back from vacation, I drove right by there.

Jerrid: I wish had gone out and done something. All we really did was sit there and chat, and then sim together. There aren't really many radical stories that can come out of that. Haha.

(laughs) Well, with the way you SIM, Captain, I would beg to differ...

Tanok: My words of wisdom would be that if you have the chance to meet up and SIM with someone, do it. It's really an eye opening and fun experience.

Ken: I did have a great time.

Well thank you all again! I am glad to hear you all had a wonderful time!

Ken: It was fun. Thank you for your interest in our meeting.

Meet-Up: Ethan Grimms – Si John ZoLak

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Kayshl Durandus

I found out Ethan recently meet up with ZoLak in Vegas not too long ago. They actually know each other IRL from before the Hermes. So, I did an interview with Ethan. ZoLak is hard to pin down, so I was unable to get one with the both of them.

Also note, we did a SIM plot on the Hermes with a Mirror Universe version of the ship and crew. In that mirror universe, Ethan and ZoLak had a relationship. I try to explain that in the interview when I mention it, but thought it warranted explanation here as well.

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So, Mr. Grimms... May I call you Mr. Grimms? *(winks at her shipmate)* Word on the ship is you've been doing a bit of traveling outside of the Hermes SIM. I also hear it involved a bit of OOC-relations with a fellow crewmate. Inquiring minds would love to hear more about that... *(grins, as if she knows some huge secret he's about to reveal)*

Ethan Grimms: Yes, I have traveled recently, to visit the Hermes' own resident Zidda, Si ZoLak.

(raises an eyebrow) So, star-crossed lovers from the mirror-universe reunite in real life? (sighs, batting her eyelashes) So romantic...

Ethan: (*chuckles*) Yes, quite. Of course, what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas, so.... (*chuckles again*)

(laughs, clasping her hands together) Oh, I can only imagine! *(winks)* So, Las Vegas, NV, was the destination of choice, huh? Any specific reason you care to share, or was simply the idea of going to Sin City enough of a reason?

Ethan: It really works out quite well. ZoLak has taken up residence there. I can visit him while also enjoying the sights and sounds of the Las Vegas strip. Kill two birds with one stone.

Wow, what an excellent place to know a local! So, what do two off-duty Star Trek SIMmers do in Vegas, when not attending a certain famous convention?

Ethan: I brought along a mutual friend (a civilian, non USF-er) and the three of us spent some time on and off the strip. We did all of the usual things that you'd expect to do in a city like that - good

food, a little gambling, caught a show. But we also went away from the touristy stuff, too.

One of the advantages of having a local around means that you can go off the beaten path, a bit. We went go-kart racing and even went to a shooting range!

(shudders at the thought of Ethan with an actual IRL weapon) Sounds like a fabulous trip! Have you visited ZoLak often since he's been in Vegas?

Ethan: When he first moved out there, we actually didn't see each other for a long time. Eventually I bit the bullet and made the trip. Ever since, we've established a pretty good pattern where we take turns. I'll go to Vegas one year and he'll come out to the east coast the next. He's got a lot of friends and family here so he can usually get a nice vacation out of it.

Wow! Sounds like a pretty decent arrangement. So you've known each other for a while? Did you know each other prior to your time together on the Hermes?

Ethan: Oh yes. We go back a long, long time. In fact, it was I who brought him into the USF fold.

(slaps him on the back) Well on behalf of the entire Hermes crew, and USF, we thank you for your fabulous recruiting skills! I shiver to think what life would be like without him on the crew.

Ethan: I know, right?!

So, do you have any parting advice to fellow SIMmers seeking to unite in the vast and daunting world outside of USF?

Ethan: Well, I have met other USFers along my many travels. They turned out to be just as great OOC as they were in the USF. I think that it can be really cool to get to know the person behind the character. I'd love to meet more.

Well, I am happy to hear that! I can't wait to hear about your future travels and encounters. (leans in her voice softer) In fact, I'd love pencil myself onto your list...

(smiles) Perhaps that could be arranged.

(smiles excitedly) Well, thank you Mr. Grimms, and best of luck on all your future travels!

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

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"Heart of Gold"

by
Lance Bacon and Inara Wood

(Note: This is an independent Sci-Fi story, not a Star Trek fan fiction. It does not play in the Star Trek universe, but takes place in an original universe created by the authors specifically for this story.)

PROLOGUE

Some 3500 years earlier....

The muffled yells and bangs were swallowed by the silence of night. Like a blanket the darkness had settled over the forested mountainside as four pairs of legs made haste to their destination. Soon, the noise from inside the carriage ceased, and only the sound of the boots hitting the ground and the labored breathing of four lungs disturbed the nocturnal peace.

Sometime later, the men came to a halt. With trembling knees, they set the container on the ground. A shaking hand grasped around a lever. A swift pull, and the door was unlocked.

Silence.

Then the door sprung open from the powerful kick of a foot. A man in silken robes jumped out, his eyes roving over his surroundings in bewilderment. The group of soldiers he encountered eyed him warily. Each had their weapon drawn, ready to defend. They instinctively backed up when the man pulled an item from the folds of his robes.

It began to glow.

A murmur went through the group. Again, the soldiers backed up a few steps, raising their weapons and tightening their defensive stance. The man lifted his chin, straightening his posture, as a more regal expression came to his face. His eyes shifted from one side to the other, then to the archway straight ahead. With sure steps, he walked toward the entrance through the parting group of soldiers and stepped into the building.

The vaulted room was only illuminated by torches mounted on the walls. He was greeted by a dark figure standing on the far end of the room. As he stepped further into the room, the clanking behind him indicated that the entrance had just been sealed. No sign of worry was reflected in his expression. He stopped in the middle of the chamber.

"What is the meaning of this?"

The dark figure whirled around, stepped into the light of the torches, and lowered himself to

one knee. "My liege," he muttered, bowing his head.

"I ask you again, what is the meaning of this, General?"

"It is for the protection of... the artifact." He pointed to the glowing item.

"It needs no protection, I assure you."

The general gave a slight nod. "So it doesn't, my liege. However... you do."

In the golden glow reflecting on his face, the lord's eyes narrowed in puzzlement, then suddenly widened in shock. He dropped to his knees. The artifact fell from his hands and clattered to the floor, its glow ceasing. A trickle of blood ran from the corner of his mouth, before he fell forward with a muted groan.

"It shall no more overthrow empires." The woman's voice was icy and hard. Her hand was still clutching the blood drenched dagger. Her cold eyes met the general's. "Carry out your orders."

CHAPTER 1

Consciousness returned slowly to him. The first indicator that he was indeed alive was the sound of crates being moved about by lifting equipment. The next sensation was pain, in his jaw, chest, ribs and stomach. He groaned. For a boy of only seventeen, trouble seemed to find River way too many times throughout his life.

He slowly opened his eyes to find himself pretty close to the ceiling of wherever he was. And he was chilly! Why was he chilly? He lifted his head and quickly discovered why.

He was naked!

The bastich had taken his clothes. His new clothes! Boots and everything.

Gone. Damn.

He slowly turned over to survey his surroundings, and found he was laying atop a pile of crates, inside a cargo bay. About nine meters below him a hover-lift was moving crates around. It didn't seem like they were working the stack which he was on, so he probably could stay hidden up there for now. He just wished he had something to keep himself warm.

River had hoped he would have been able to stay on the *Kniver*. He thought he had made himself useful and earned some favor with the captain, even though he had been a stow-away. He had spent three months on the ship, doing whatever menial tasks they had wanted him to do. In a short time, he had learned quite a bit about the ship and its operations. He had done everything Captain Sheng had asked of him. Apparently, that hadn't been enough.

The last thing River remembered seeing was a new young face and the freighter captain's fist coming at him. He guessed that Sheng was having a good laugh at leaving him unconscious on top of the crates as they were unloaded into the cargo bay. The worst part of this, other than being naked, was he had no idea where he was.

River lay on top of the crate for what seemed like hours. All motion in the cargo area had ceased. All voices were gone; everything was quiet. He decided now would be the time to make his move. He climbed down from the crates; a task that was not as easy as one might expect. The crates were all the same size, so climbing down was like trying to climb down a smooth wall. He had to find the hand-holds for the crate below with his foot, and having his bare skin rub against the cold side of the stack was very uncomfortable.

The floor of the cargo bay was equally cold as he touched it with his feet. He made his way towards the door, staying behind as many crates as possible for cover. Reaching the edge of the stacks,

he crouched low and surveyed the room.

Directly across from River's position were two doors. They were about five meters away, so it would be a short dash to reach them. Both doors had a small window approximately face high. The one to the left showed light beyond it, the one to the right was dark. Both had door knobs and hinges, so he guessed they were manual doors that swung open towards him. He took one more look around and started for the doors.

Halfway between the crates and the doors, by sheer luck, River spotted a dark figure on the opposite side of the left door. He stopped mid-stride and turned back to the crates. Someone was coming into the cargo bay, and River was certain he would be spotted. He dove for cover, landing face down, not even having the time to tuck and roll. He hit the hard surface, and a sharp pain went shooting through his torso, but he knew he couldn't cry out. Fortunately for him, the person coming through the door was already talking and making noise.

"...ering warehouse 23, now, " the voice, definitely female, said. "I will ..." the voice stopped suddenly, as if she had heard something.

"*Shilene? Is everything okay?*" The second voice definitely sounded like it was coming from a two-way transmitter. The bay was quiet for far too long, River thought. Apparently so did the person on the other end of the two-way. "*Shilene! Answer me. Are you okay?*"

"Yeah. I'm okay," Shilene finally replied. "I just thought I heard something when I came through the door." She let out a nervous chuckle. "You know me, spooked by my own shadow sometimes. Okay, I found the stack."

"*Is the shipment from Strom there?*"

There was another long moment of silence. River could hear the rustle of the woman's clothing as she moved around. He guessed she was looking closely at the crates. He wished she would hurry. This floor was cold!

"Yes," Shilene finally said. "I found it. The packing manifest says twenty-four pieces."

"*Excellent. Okay, you can call it a day, Shilene. See you tomorrow.*"

"Tomorrow it is, boss," she replied.

River listened as the female, known only by her voice as Shilene, backed away from the crates and made her way to the door. He waited a full minute after he heard the door click shut before he even tried getting up. He peeled himself off the painted concrete floor and made his way to the edge of the crates. Moving cautiously, he tried his best to stay as silent and as hidden as possible, just in case good ole' Shilene decided to play detective and had only pretended to leave the room. Fortunately for him, she had not. In a mad dash, he ran across the open floor to the two doors.

He tried the door on the right first. Even though it was dark, it could be an office where he might find some clothing. The door was locked. Normally, these manual locks were not a problem for him, but in his current predicament, he wasn't exactly carrying anything to pick a lock.

Moving to the other door, River tried the knob. It turned. He glanced through the window and saw a brightly lit corridor. *That steking' figures. I'll probably get halfway down this corridor and ole' Shilene will come back.*

Before he pulled the door open, he scanned the high-wall and ceiling area for any security cameras. The image of a young Rastin male, running in the altogether, would certainly raise some alarms. He didn't see any type of surveillance equipment. That didn't mean there weren't any, but he was going to take his chances. He pulled the door open.

The warmth from the corridor washed over him. Oh, it felt so good. River cautiously traversed the hallway. Of course, this particular part had absolutely no doors which he would be able to duck into should someone come from the other way. Fortunately, no one did.

He reached a t-intersection, and glanced in both directions of the new corridor. It was also empty, but there were several doors along its entire length, in either direction. To his right, River saw an opening with bright light spilling out. As luck would have it, the room turned out to be a locker room for the workers. He entered.

All along the walls were lockers, some with mechanical locks, others without. Beyond the lockers lay what looked like a shower room. *Ohhh steke! A hot shower would feel so good right now, but I better get outta here.* He checked the lockers without the locks first, to see if there was anything he

could utilize.

The very first locker he opened, had a set of blue coveralls hanging in them. On the floor of the locker were a pair of rubber-soled shoes. Oh, this was too good to be true. River decided to not press his luck trying to look for anything else. He took the clothes from the locker. There was a cloth name tag stitched to the front of the coverall with the name "Ambian" printed on it. *Thank you, Ambian*, River thought to himself. He pulled on the coverall. Fortunately, it was a decent fit. The shoes were as well. Time to find out where he was.

He slipped from the locker room and started down the corridor. Straight ahead of him he saw a lit sign above the door. Though it was not exactly a word he understood, he knew from past experience that buildings on a lot of worlds generally marked the exits, usually with signs similar to the one he was headed for. Just as he thought he was in the clear, a voice yelled out to him.

"Hey! You!"

River turned to look down the corridor in the direction of the voice. Despite the balding man not looking angry, he bolted out the door. No need to make things more complicated.

"Oh steke!" he said the minute the setting sun hit his face, "I'm on a steking planet!"

He briefly surveyed his surroundings. It seemed he was in some kind of business development; square buildings with signs he couldn't read all around. He quickly moved away from the depot, just in case the man would come looking for him, and wandered through the streets for a little while, finding his way to the edge of the property. Beyond that seemed to be more buildings, but that part looked like a local settlement area, with shops, restaurants, and a market.

Food! River definitely was hungry.

* * * * *

Veronica raised the fruit to her nose. It smelled wonderfully aromatic, just ripe enough to be used for dinner. "How much for three?"

The elderly woman at the stand smiled. "Two tazar."

"Hmm. that's a bit steep," the girl pondered, weighing the fruit in her hand. "I can give you one."

"Fine fine," the woman conceded. "Just for you."

With a broad smile, Veronica added the fruit to her almost full basket and paid the woman. She sauntered off, proud of haggling the price down. She knew the fruit was worth a lot in a good and ripe state, but she had a budget and yet wanted to provide a memorable meal for her father tonight. Tomorrow, he was leaving to meet with colleagues on the site of their newest project, and who knew how long he would be gone this time.

One more stop and she would be ready to head home. The vendor at the stand held out a large flat bread to her. "Njurani?"

"No no." She shook her head adamantly. "Just a loaf of white bread... sourdough preferably."

"Human staple, hm?" The man grinned, a few of his teeth missing, as he handed her a long, braided bread.

Veronica paid him. She took a few moments to go over the list she had in her head. Satisfied that she had everything for the meal, she headed through the diminishing crowd and out of the market place. The sun was beginning to hang low, and people all around were returning to their homes.

The settlement looked a bit tiny to River. Kind of back galaxy. Still, it could be a good place to get some food. Finding a place to sleep would be more difficult. The smaller the settlements, the more people noticed you.

He walked down the street, looking at the shops. It suddenly dawned on him that he should be a little more cautious. It would be just his luck to run into Ambian, who certainly wouldn't be happy to see River wearing his work suit. He thought about ripping off the name tag and had even started to tug on it, when he saw a girl exit the market.

He watched her, sizing her up. Slender. Long, dark hair. Probably no older than himself. How nice. She was carrying a large basket of food. Loose stuff, too. This was just too perfect. All he had to do was get ahead of her and set her up.

Veronica glanced at her digital pocket watch. Dang, it was already later than she had thought. She hastened her step. There were still a ton of preparations she had to make before the meal. She mentally kicked herself for dawdling and turned the corner into a small side street.

Steke! River thought. *She's moving quicker. Did she see me?* He continued to follow her. She never looked back, so maybe she was just in a hurry. He ducked down the next alley, got to the back of the buildings, and ran as fast as he could to get himself ahead of her. When he thought he was far enough ahead he turned back towards the street she was on.

River approached the corner very cautiously. He peered around it, just enough to see that she was still headed his way. Her expression made it look like her mind was off on another world.

Perfect.

This was a maneuver River had been taught back on the streets of Zadar City. The way she was moving and not really paying attention, this would work like a charm. He waited for just the right moment, then stepped right out in front of her, purposely bumping into her.

The collision snapped Veronica out of her thoughts. She bounced off him and stumbled back. The basket slipped from her grip and landed on the paved road, spilling half its contents over the smooth rocks.

"Oh no!" She scrambled to gather her ingredients.

"Oh! I am so sorry," River said in his best apologetic voice. "Here. Let me help you." He started to help her pick up her groceries. Occasionally, he would pocket a piece of fruit, or another small item that was edible and did not require some kind of mechanical opener. "I am really sorry. I just wasn't paying attention."

"Look what you've done," Veronica complained, feeling discontent over his blunder. She righted the basket and returned the items to it. "I hope the gulla-gulla fruit didn't get bruised." She cradled one in her hands.

"I know," River commented. "It was totally clumsy of me. And there is nothing worse than bruised gulla."

She stood, grabbing the basket by its handle, and regarded him. Her gaze drifted from the worn out running shoes over the blue coverall to his face. Her eyes met his. Momentarily, they flicked to the pointed end of his ear that was sticking out from under his black hair, then back to his dark brown eyes. *Rastin*, she thought briefly. "And how would you know that?"

River held the gulla-gulla fruit in his hand, turning it slightly. "I've been around. I know what a good piece of fruit is, and what happens when you bruise it." He held it out to her, staring just a little. *My, but she is pretty.*

Veronica eyed the fruit, then peered at him again. "You can keep that one. I have two others."

"Oh. Okay," River said, looking at the fruit, a sort of half-smile on his face. "I didn't hurt you, did I?" Her lips drew up into a light smile. "I'm not that fragile."

"So you're not," River agreed. "Well then.... thanks. I apologize once again and shall be on my way."

Just as she nodded, the sound of a horn penetrated the air. She looked up at the darkening sky. "Shields are going up," she noted, then looked back at him. "You should find your quarters."

River looked to the sky. "Hmmm... 'spose I should. Well then, good night."

The street lights, which had just begun to come on, intermittently flashed red to signify the alert status of the outpost. River moved back into the commercial district, looking for a place to find shelter. He wasn't quite sure what danger the alert was sounding, but the girl's words seemed to signify the urgency getting to quarters.

His mind was half on looking for a place to spend the night, and half on the girl. Her face, those stormy-blue eyes specifically, kept coming back to him. She had also been generous. River did feel a bit of regret for stealing from her. It was because he was thinking about her that he made a stupid mis-

take he normally wouldn't.

While moving along the street, he remained close to the fronts of the stores and shops, and completely missed seeing the man who had just stepped out. Bam! It was like running into a brick wall. River backed up and had to look up to see the man's face. He was in some sort of uniform and had a commanding air about him.

"Why aren't you in your quarters...." the man inquired, looking at the name tag, "... Ambian?" River could literally feel the man scrutinizing him.

"I uh.... well.... uh....," he stammered. *Steke! Why can't I think?* He was usually quick witted with the answers, very good on his feet. He didn't like being surprised like this, though.

"New around here, eh," the man more stated than questioned. Then, totally surprising River, he reached out a strong hand and forcefully turned the boy's head to the left, revealing the blue and gold tattoo just below his right ear. "Straight brows, pointed ears. Rastin, I would say. And a street rat, to boot. Hmmm..." He studied the tattoo a moment. River wanted to get out from under his grasp, but the man was strong and River felt he would only get hurt more by resisting. "Zadar City, I would say." The man let go of River's head and grasped the front of the coverall. "But you aren't Ambian. I know Ambian, and you aren't him."

River swallowed hard. He was caught. His eyes quickly looked over this new adversary, trying to find a weak point he could lash out at and free himself. The unfortunate part was, the man seemed prepared and had a stance preventing any offensive moves by the boy. Who was this guy? River looked again and saw the firearm at the man's side. Crud! Now he would probably spend the night in a holding cell.

"Talk to me, boy!" the man demanded. "Here is where you beg me not to toss you in a cell."

"I beg for nothing," River retorted. He held his head defiantly, his eyes met the man's eyes. "Those days are over."

"Yes," the man replied. "I can see you won't." His free hand started to roam over the outside of River's coverall, looking for a weapon. When it found one of the lumps where River had hidden away the stolen food, the man freely explored the shape, then moved on. "How long have you been here..... Ambian?" He continued the search for a weapon.

The Rastin endured the probing of his coverall without protest. The man obviously wanted to make clear he was in charge. River could handle that. In fact, he suddenly sensed there would be a way he could avoid spending the night in a cell. All he had to do was play it cool. "I arrived just today."

"Where did you steal the food from?"

"I didn't steal it all," River told him. "The gulla-gulla was given to me by the girl I.... procured the rest from."

"Procured," the man repeated with amusement. "In your case, stealing would be a better word. What's to stop me from locking you up right now?"

"Nothing, sir," River answered honestly. His eyes still held the man's. He tried to keep the anger he was feeling from showing. "I am sure you have already made up your mind."

"Think so, do you?" There was no mistaking the man's confidence. He knew he had the Rastin. "If you aren't going to plead, give me a reason why I should not charge you."

"Because it is not my fault I am here," River told him. "And I do what I must to survive..... whatever I must."

"I bet you would," the man noted. A slight smile came to his face. "I will offer you a place to sleep tonight. In our facility." He released his hold on River's coverall, but quickly put his hand on the back of the boy's neck. "This way."

River moved along under the man's not-so-subtle guidance. They entered what looked like the local jail. The man escorted him to the back where the cells were. They were simple cubicles with openings that had no bars or doors. River guessed they used a force-field to keep prisoners in.

"You can sleep in here," the man told him, pointing to the first cell. "And relax, I will not put the force-field up..... unless you give me a reason to."

River eyed him curiously. "Thank you... for your kindness."

"Oh, I am not being kind..... Ambian." A smile again came to the man's face. "You *will* earn your keep."

* * * * *

"Why the gloomy face, my dear?" Edward Fowler wiped his mouth with a napkin. He sat his fork down and studied his daughter's expression for a moment, as she poked around in her meal. "You're dissatisfied with your own cooking?"

"No, just dissatisfied with the lack of some of my ingredients." Veronica wrinkled her nose.

He raised his brow, waiting. She would eventually tell him without him having to pry, he knew.

"All the apologizing and helping me pick up the groceries... it was all a scheme just to steal from me," she huffed. "And to think I gave him one of the gulla-gulla as a thanks."

Her father's eyes lit up in understanding. "You've been bested, hm?"

She shot him a look.

"Perhaps he was simply hungry," Edward offered before he dug into his meal again.

"He probably was. That's why I gave him the fruit. I figured he could use the nourishment. You should have seen him, dad, he looked so scrawny."

"Then you shouldn't be so upset over him trying to wrangle up something to eat," her father chuckled.

"It's not really that," Veronica replied with growing indignation. "I can't believe Captain Albren would let any of his men get so undernourished that they would feel the need to steal."

Again, her father halted his eating. He swallowed down the food already in his mouth. "You mean, he was one of the troops?"

"No. He wore the blue coverall of the maintenance department."

"I see." Edward sat back. He noted the umbrage in her eyes. "Why do I suddenly feel sorry for the Captain?" He grinned, knowing his daughter's feelings about the socially disadvantaged.

"Because you know I will march myself down to the depot tomorrow and let him have a piece of my mind." She flashed him an impish smile, and finally put a forkful of food in her mouth. "He's got a fairly small battalion to feed, including the maintenance crew. There is no reason why anyone would have to resort to stealing," she ranted on with mouth full, "and then, I will look for that guy and treat him to a nice meal." She swallowed. "He won't be hard to find."

"Oh?"

Veronica put her fork down and took a drink. "He's Rastin."

"Rastin? Are you sure? In this part of the galaxy?"

She nodded emphatically. "I know... I was just as surprised. But I'm certain, dad."

"It's unusual, but not unheard of," Edward pondered.

"Hmhmhm." She tasted a piece of the gulla-gulla. "So delicious," she said with delight, wiping a trickle of juice from her chin. "But you know, that wasn't the thing that surprised me the most. The Captain employing an 'off-worlder'... *that* was the big surprise. I mean, we all know of his prejudice..."

"Oh, come now, Ronnie," her father interjected, frowning lightly, "he's not that bad."

"Not that bad?" She stood abruptly and began clearing the table. "That's like saying a Murangi snake is nothing more than a Pheto worm with a bad stomach ache," she scowled. "The man has no tolerance for any race that has 'unhuman' features. That's exactly the reason why his troops are all made of Humans, Booril, and Tempares. And I can tell you, he only puts up with the latter two because they have Human ancestry."

"You just know it all, don't you?" Edward chuckled. He loved his daughter's personality. Despite her passion for certain matters, she usually had a mild and loving spirit that reached out to everyone. "I always thought you'd make a good 'Human' rights advocate."

She frowned at him. "Don't patronize me, dad."

"I wouldn't dream of it." He threw his hands up in surrender.

Veronica peered at him in mock annoyance. "You're just trying to get me all riled up to distract me, so I won't be upset about you leaving tomorrow."

Again, her father chuckled. He picked up his plate and utensils and took them to the sink. "You

got me all figured out, don't you?" He flicked his finger across her nose before he pulled her into a warm embrace. "Thank you for the wonderful meal. You rival your mother in your skills."

She sighed. "I still don't understand why I can't come with you this time?"

"Because... I told you it was too dangerous, sweetheart." He kissed the top of her head. "Markson has emphasized to me over and over how treacherous the terrain and unpredictable the weather is. I trust his assessment. He's been there for months now. I'm only going because both him and Phyriss keep bothering me about coming. They asked me last night again when I'm scheduled to arrive. In all honesty, I have the suspicion that they found something Markson doesn't want to tell me about until I get there." He pulled back slightly and met her eyes. "We talked about this already, Ronnie. Please understand. Besides... I really can't say if I'll be gone three days or three weeks."

"All the more reason for you to take me along," she argued.

He sighed. "No."

She pushed her lip out in a pout. "Yeah... you just rather leave me alone here."

"That's the beauty of knowing people here on the outpost," he brushed a strand of hair from her face and lifted her chin, "you won't be alone."

"Hmph." She pulled away from him with a groan. "If you're talking about Sawyer... no thank you."

Edward couldn't hide the grin. "Amongst others, yes."

"He's just as bad as his father... stubborn and prejudiced," she grumbled. "Ever since we got to this place, he's been hanging on my heel like a leech." She bristled.

"I think he fancies you," her father winked.

"Please, dad, I'd like to keep my food down for a while."

"Now now," his grin widened, "where is that loving spirit of yours, my dear? If ever there was a creature needing that impartial affection you give out so freely to those in dire need of it... it would be him."

"Creature is the right word." She rolled her eyes.

----- to be continued -----

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[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

Wanted: Helm, Sec/Tac, Sci, Med

The forefront of expansion. Exploring uncharted space 3 months away from Federation territory. Making the unknown familiar. Boldly going to the stars, despite adversity.

USS Lothlorien

Friday @ 9pm. Sector001 Webchat

Contact: CaptCrain@aol.com

USF "Ad-lib"

Off-the-Cuff Excerpts from USF Sims

USS Hermes

Swiss Cheese:

CaptJerridB: AXN> As Malcolm heads out the door, the five officers open fire, just barely missing him.

Ken Kennesaw: +INTRUDER ALERT IN MEDICAL+

Ken Kennesaw: ::fires on the ones firing on Malcom::

CaptJerridB: ::Frowns as he does not get a response from sickbay::

CaptJerridB: +Billings to Kennesaw+ What's going on?

Ken Kennesaw: ::takes down one of the 5::

malcolmsarif: ::sees the pursuers and continues to barrel through sick bay::

CaptJerridB: AXN> Kennesaw hits an officer, but the other four take cover, shooting at everyone, but concentrating their fire on Malcolm.

andrewcarmello: Stop blowing holes in my ship!

CaptJerridB: (ROFL!)

- *Poor Chief Engineers. Must be heartbreaking to watch your beloved ship turning into Swiss cheese. Fortunately, Carmello, I think standard phaser setting is on stun. No perforation. ;-)*

Have you been hugged today?:

JafenTheTerrible: @Dammit, enough!! ::looses his cool as his eyes glow red for a moment and he grabs Billings and squeezes him tightly:: I hope you like a big ol hug from ol Jafen.

CaptJerridB: @ ::Grunts:: I'm not into men. Sorry.

- *Awww, look, Jerrid is one of those men that pretend they don't hug their buddies. LOL Come on now, Captain, if you can slap them on the butt during a football game, you sure can give them a big bear hug. ::sweet smile:: It doesn't make you less of a man.*

Real gone:

CaptJerridB: @ OETC> Hold on to your hats!

CaptJerridB: @ AXN> The USS Lynx shoots out of the Hermes so fast that everyone who is not sitting down gets thrown towards the back of the ship. He then whips the Lynx towards the planet, throwing the AT around again, and shoots the ship towards the planets surface.

thelarisshapavaa: @::Rolls her eyes::

ethangrimms: @::is happy that he's wearing his seat belt; feels like he's riding a roller coaster:: Ahh... finally, a little excitement!

LieutenantTanok: @::glad he put his safety belt on::

KenKennesaw: @::holds on :: DAMN SO fast??

thelarisshapavaa: @::Resists the urge to knock the OETC out::

kayshldurandus: @::Grabs the seat trying not to fall to the floor::

CaptJerridB: @ OETC> It's 10:31 already, sir! We gotta get there FAST.

ethangrimms: (LOL)

- *Wow! Over Enthusiastic Transporter Chief (OETC) likes putting the pedal to the metal, hm? How much caffeine does the guy consume each day? ;-)*

In need of a pick-me-up?:

Lieutenant Tanok: Coordinate with tactical. This transport must be done fast with minimal damage to the ship.

Ensign Satak: Transport is ready sir!

thelarisshapavaa: Manic Depressive Tactical Officer> ::Glumly mans the bridge tactical console:: All weapons on full. I guess.

ethangrimms: ((LOL Thelaris))

TroiKatelin: ((LOL))

CaptJerridB: ((Haha!! That's funny!))

- *Awsome! Is that the official counterpart to the Over Enthusiastic Transporter Chief? LOL Just the kind of Tactical Officer every Captain would loooove to have.*

Loaded:

Olson Jaraq: ::Arms himself with a phaser and gets a tricorder::

ethangrimms: ::arms himself with phasers, rifles, knives and then grabs a toolkit::

kayshldurandus: ((damn, Ethan. Ur like Rambo))

Olson Jaraq: ::steps onto the pad and looks to Ethan:: You really going to need all that stuff?

ethangrimms: ::looks at Olson; blinks:: Maybe.

Ken Kennesaw: +Olson , Ethan+ Let me know when you're ready.

Olson Jaraq: *coughs* overcompensating *coughs*

- *Feeling a little inadequate in certain areas, Mister Grimms? ::smirks:: I think Jaraq hit the nail on the head... ::cocks head:: ...so, does that mean Rambo had the same problem?*

USS Excelsior

Dair-y I say:

Doctor Bailey: (Sorry im late. A cow decided to hang out in front of my truck.)

CommanderTrellis: (LOL Blame it on the walking cheeseburger, Doctor. hehe)

FstLt Jyrantev: (A cow, you say? ::nudges T'Ashal::)

CommanderTrellis: (rofl)

CaptainT'Ashal: (at least it didn't sit on your hood)

- *It's been three years ago! THREE years since I had that encounter with that cow, and yet the joke never seems to get old. Heh. Never thought cows could fly, but that one sure did. ;-)*

I'm a doctor, not a thespian:

CommanderBones: ::wouldn't normally disrespect the captain, but she started it...so does a passable and humorous imitation of the captain while in her chair::

CaptainT'Ashal: (LOL Bones)

LtCmdrDire: ::sees Bones, and chuckles::

CommanderBones: ::encouraged by the laughter, continues on, speaking in the captain's voice and uttering nonsensical commands::

CommanderBones: Now everyone, I want you to go there and do that...but I'm not telling you what or where unless you ask politely and say Simon says first...because that is how we do it on Vulcan.

LtCmdrLobren: Hey, Doc?

CommanderBones: This is on a need to know basis, and you don't need to know....

CommanderBones: Yes, MISTER LOBREN, what is it? ::still trying to do TAshal's voice::

LtCmdrLobren: No disrespect, sir.. Awww, hell. Can ya shut the heck up?

CaptainTAshal: (Bones got me down ;-))

CommanderBones: ::stands up and does TAshal's mannerisms:: Mr. Lobren, how would you like a trip to the brig?

LtCmdrLobren: 'Bout now? Prob'bly wouldn't mind it one bit.

FirstLtSyvek_Kail: (Cracking up here, Bones. lol)

LtCmdrDire: (No kidding. Can't keep a straight face..)

CommanderBones: Yes, well, the brig is where you should be...while I have well known thieves traipsing around here free as a bird.

EnsignHale: ::giggling a bit::

CommanderBones: ::knows Trellis would stop her if he was here, but he's not, so she carries on::

LtCmdrLobren: :: sighs, which sounds like a small landslide::

Ens_Mitch_Kryer: ::trying not laugh at what's happening behind him::

CommanderBones: McMillian, get your crazy ass over here and shoot somethign for me.

LtCmdrLobren: :: mutters:: Mebbe we just shoot YOU..

- *You know your crew loves you if they feel free to mock when you turn your back on them. LOL I don't think any of us could keep a straight face while Bones was doing her impersonation. Too bad for her that I saw the security recordings of it later. ::grins sheepishly::*

Glad to know you care:

CommanderBones: ::shifts captain's head in her lap and takes her pulse, preferring some good old fashioned medicine::

CommanderTrellis: ::steps to the Doctor's side:: How is she?

CaptainTAshal: ::groans, one of her legs looking quite strange::

CaptainTAshal: ::rolls on her back, looking up at Bones::

CommanderBones: She will be back to her charming old self in a few days...but for now, she has a date with sickbay. She has a broken leg and I doubt she's eaten or had water in 2 days. ::injects her w/ another stokaline shot::

CaptainTAshal: ::wry grin at Bones:: Feels good to be home...

CommanderBones: ::smiles back:: We missed you.

CaptainTAshal: ::chuckles lightly:: You are a bad liar.

CommanderBones: Your replacement was a big jerk...we didn't notice it wasn't you until just recently. ::grins::

- *Yes, can't you just feel the love oozing from that last statement? ::chuckles:: Rescued from a doomed ship, my impostor exposed and imprisoned... I suppose I should be happy to see they were glad I was back. ;-)*

Have any interesting lines from one of your sims? Send them our way! We'd love to share the fun and laughs. Use the [feedback](#) link (select "PADD Editor"). For verification purposes, the date of the sim from which the information is taken **must** be included.

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

Search Picture – Spot the Differences

Can you find the 10 differences in the two pictures?



(original, top)

(search picture, bottom)



[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

DS9 premiered in January 1993 and ran for seven seasons. It's story revolved around a space station instead of a starship, since *TNG* was still airing and producers did not want to run two series with starships at the same time. This also made continuing story arcs and the appearance of recurring characters much easier.

DS9 was the first *Star Trek* spin-off created without the direct involvement of Gene Roddenberry. The series notably features darker themes and the many aspects of war.

The space station known as DS9 first appeared in the *TNG* episode "Birthright", and was a former Cardassian facility, called Terok Nor. There were a few cross-over episodes between DS9 and *TNG*, including the series premier.

Pictured from left to right:
Lieutenant Commander Worf,
Quark, Constable Odo,
Lieutenant Commander Jadzia
Dax, Captain Benjamin Sisko,
Jake Sisko, Major Kira Nerys,
Senior Chief P.O. Miles O'Brien

(The answers can be found on the
bottom of this issue.)

Book Review: "Physics of the Impossible", by Michio Kaku

by Captain Lorianra

"Physics of the Impossible" is a book exploring the possibilities of creating certain Sci-Fi technology for real. Its author, Michio Kaku, is a physicist and writer, who, much like the late Isaac Asimov, has served as adviser to many popular Sci-Fi shows.

Kaku gives a short summary of how he actually came to be a physicist and particularly interested in the "impossible" in the preface of this book. I have to say, any parent should gain a completely different appreciation for the simplicity of their children's science fair projects when reading about Michio's 2.3-million-electron-volt betatron particle accelerator that he built for his high school's science fair in his mom's garage. That thing consumed the entire kilowatt power output of his house and generated a magnetic field some 20,000 times that of our Earth! His goal? To generate a beam of gamma rays powerful enough to create antimatter.

I just simply had to laugh. I'm glad my children stuck with exploring the human anatomy, making paper-mache volcanoes, or other basic projects.

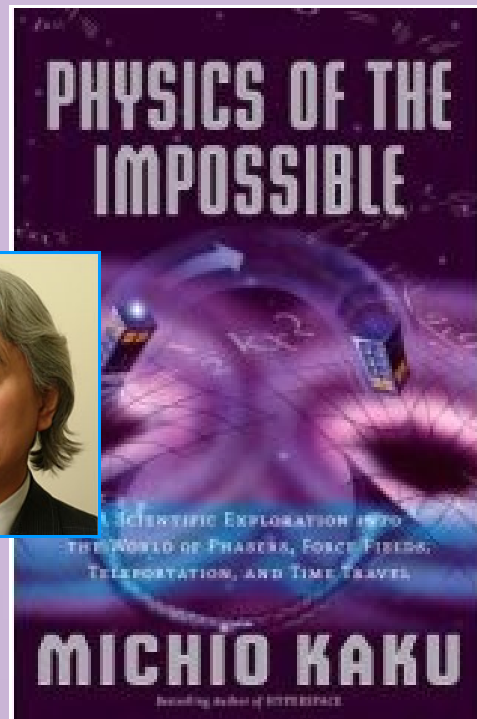
Having come to appreciate that the "impossible" is often a relative term, Kaku actually divides the subject matters discussed in his book – from force fields, cloaks, phasers, and starships, to time travel and perpetual motion machines – into three different categories, or classes. "Class I" are the technologies that might be impossible right now, but don't violate the known laws of physics and therefore could be possible in the near future. "Class II" are the technologies that sit at the very edge of current understanding and if they're at all possible to achieve, it will probably not be until millennia from now. "Class III" are those technologies that completely violate the known laws of physics.

I actually like how he breaks these fictional technologies into classes. After all, the word "impossible" seems so final, when in reality what is impossible has much to do with the knowledge and abilities of the days you live in, just like so many things in our everyday life would seem quite impossible for someone from medieval times, for example.

Real-life physics seem to be a quite dry matter to many, and while parts of the book are not easy to digest, I'm as much a Sci-Fi geek as I'm a true science geek. I utterly enjoyed diving into these subjects. Kaku's mixing of drawing on his extensive knowledge as a physicist and his love of Sci-Fi stories and fictional technology makes the book fun to read for anyone who is of like mind as myself. I highly recommend it.

FYI, I have to admit, I took pages of notes for possible use in future sims. Yes, it'll be my cheat sheet for plots to come. Sue me!

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



by Nadja DeChevalier

Stuffed Double Cheeseburgers

(taken from "Woman's World" magazine, August 9, 2010)

(When I spotted this recipe, I had to think of Lt. Cmdr. Lobren, and couldn't resist making a copy.)

INGREDIENTS:

12 slices sharp Cheddar cheese, 9 oz.
1 ½ lbs. ground beef (or other meat)
1/3 cup chili sauce
1 tbsp Montreal steak seasoning
2 tsp onion powder
6 hamburger buns

PREPARATION:

- (1) Prepare grill for direct-heat cooking. Fold each of 6 slices of cheese into quarters; reserve.
- (2) Gently mix together beef, chili sauce, seasoning, and onion powder; divide into 12 portions. Shape each portion into 4"-wide patties. Place one folded piece of cheese in the center of a patty, then top with another patty; pinch edges together to seal. Repeat with remaining patties and folded cheese.
- (3) Grill burgers, turning once, until no longer pink near the cheese centers, 4-5 minutes per side. Top each with a slice of remaining cheese; cook until cheese is melted, about 1 minute.

Serve on buns with the fixings you like best.

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

Spicy Cheddar Corn Muffins

(taken from "Relish" magazine, March 2012)

INGREDIENTS:

1 ¼ cups yellow cornmeal
¾ cup all-purpose flour
2 tbsp sugar
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
½ tsp cayenne pepper
1 cup buttermilk
1 egg
6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
1 ½ cups grated aged Cheddar, divided
1 cup fresh corn kernels

PREPARATION:

- (1) Preheat oven to 425°F. Butter 12 standard muffin cups.
- (2) Combine cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cayenne pepper in a

- bowl. Whisk together buttermilk, egg and butter in a separate bowl. Add buttermilk mixture to the cornmeal mixture and stir just until combined. Gently fold in 1 cup cheese and corn kernels.
- (3) Divide batter evenly among the muffin cups. Sprinkle tops with the remaining ½ cup cheese. Bake 15-17 minutes, until golden and a wooden pick inserted into the center comes out clean. Remove muffins from the tins and cool at least 5 minutes before serving.

Makes 12 muffins.

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

Charlie Brown's Cheese Cracklins

(taken from "Relish" magazine, March 2012)

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup Cheddar cheese, grated
½ cup all-purpose flour
2 tbsp butter, softened
Water

PREPARATION:

- (1) Preheat oven to 400°F.
- (2) Mix cheese, flour and butter in a large bowl with your fingertips. Add just enough water to make a stiff dough. Don't over mix. Roll dough into small (¾ -inch) balls.
- (3) Place on a greased cookie sheet and bake about 15 minutes, until lightly browned.

Makes about 20.

Guten Appetit!!

Like to share a favorite recipe? Don't be shy. We love to hear about food. Use the [feedback](#) link (select "USF PADD") to submit recipes and food-related articles.

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)



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Staff

Assistant Editor: Lieutenant Commander Solik (*News Section*)

Creative Advisors: Vice Admiral Jonathan Anders, Commodore Shane Booker, Captain Havraha cha'AAnikh, Captain William Styles

Graphics Artists: Captain Loriaarra, Lieutenant Commander Solik

Proofreaders: Fleet Captain Crelak, Lieutenant Commander Kayshl Durandus, Lieutenant Commander Solik, Captain William Styles, Rear Admiral John Styre, First Lieutenant Leyva Torosi, Commander Simon Trent

Contributors for this Issue

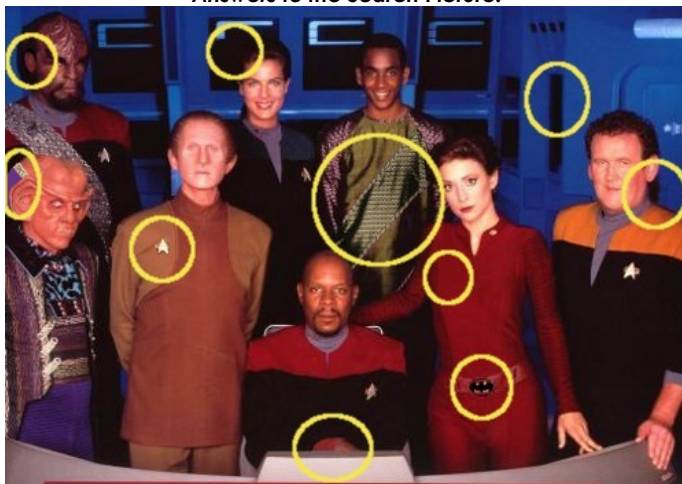
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[\[back to top\]](#)

[\[back to table of contents\]](#)

Answers to the Search Picture:



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