

ROLE PLAYING IN THE FINAL FRONTIER



By Fantasimulation Associates

Editor's Introduction: Because many of our readers are unfamiliar with or new at role-playing games, the following will serve as an introduction. For those of us with some experience, it also offers a fairly interesting scenario written up in an unusual form.

"Captain's Log: Stardate 7744.6

In response to orders from Star Fleet Command Headquarters in this sector, the *Enterprise* is approaching the Tareel star system. According to her last subspace transmission, scout vessel *Xanadu* intended to perform a preliminary survey of the third planet of this system. *Xanadu* has since failed to make any of its scheduled subspace reports. The *Enterprise's* mission: Investigate the *Xanadu's* disappearance."

Captain James Kirk touched a button on the arm of his command chair, and the *Enterprise's* computer silently entered his remarks in the starship's electronic log, as it had done thousands of times before.

The huge main viewscreen displayed a single disk, growing larger against the panorama of stars. "Tareel III dead ahead, Captain," Lt. Sulu reported from the Helmsman's chair.

"Approach with caution, Lieutenant," Kirk ordered. "Bring us into a wide parabolic pass. I want a quick sweep with sensors before committing to standard orbit."

Sulu's fingers deftly manipulated controls, executing the order as Kirk turned his command chair toward the communication station. "Any luck with raising the *Xanadu*, Lt. Uhura?"

The lovely Communications Officer shook her head. "No response on any band, sir, and I've been trying ever since we came in range of the system. If the *Xanadu* is out there, she isn't talking."

Next to Uhura, Science Officer Spock stood peering into the sensor hood at his station. "Preliminary sensor scans show no signs of a starship, but it could be in sensor shadow, orbiting on the far side of Tareel III." The tall Vulcan officer turned from the scanner toward the Captain. "I assume," he continued, "that is the reason for the fast parabolic orbital pass."

Kirk smiled. "You assume correctly, Mr. Spock. If there's a ship in orbit here, we'll know soon enough. If not..."

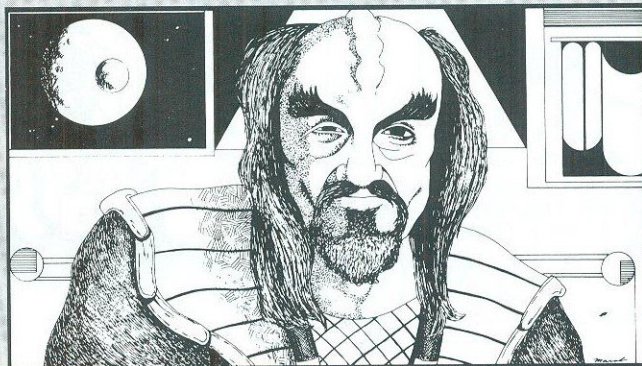
Kirk's next words were cut off by a persistent beeping from the science console. Spock quickly turned back to the sensor hood. "A contact in orbit, Captain, large enough to be a starship." Spock hesitated, fine-tuning the sensor lock. "Too large for the *Xanadu*. Power output level and type consistent with that of a Klingon warship."

"Now in visual range, Captain," reported Ensign Chekov from the Navigator's station. "And there he is! Shall I raise shields, sir?"

"Not yet, Mr. Chekov," Kirk replied quickly. "This is unclaimed space. He's got as much right here as we do."

"Captain!" Lt. Uhura called urgently. "I'm getting a transmission from the Klingon vessel."

"Put it on visual, Lieutenant," Kirk ordered. A moment later, the face of a Klingon commander appeared on the main viewscreen.



"Federation vessel, identify yourself," the commander snarled. "You are intruding upon an operation of the Klingon High Command."

Kirk gestured to Uhura to open communications to the Klingon ship. "This is Captain James T. Kirk of the *USS Enterprise*. We are proceeding on a search and rescue operation in this area. Identify your vessel and intent."

The Klingon frowned. "Search and rescue, indeed. Search and destroy is more likely. I am Captain Klavan of the cruiser *Obedience*. Your presence here is extremely suspicious at this time, *Enterprise*. We suspect an Imperial Klingon scoutcraft has been waylaid in this area. Enter standard orbit and prepare to be boarded."

Kirk's voice was even but stern as he replied. "We have lost a scoutcraft as well, and are now searching for that vessel. This is an unclaimed system, and we do not recognize your right to board. Your 'request' is denied, Captain."

"Your excuse is glib, but too convenient and all too transparent, Earther. Prepare for boarding or battle!" The transmission ended abruptly.

From the science station came the calm voice of Mr. Spock. "His shields are going up, Captain."

Chekov's voice, in counterpoint, betrayed his excited state. "He's accelerating out of orbit, sir! He's coming straight for us!"

The entire bridge crew awaited Kirk's next order.

In a dramatic series like *STAR TREK*, decisions made by the Captain and crew of the *USS Enterprise* are what create the excitement. What fan would not want the chance to control the helm of a mighty starship, have mankind's knowledge at his fingertips in the ship's computer, or perhaps even sit in the command chair and match wits and your crew's expertise against the dangers and excitement of man's final frontier?

With ***STAR TREK: The Role Playing Game, Second Edition***, players can discover whether they have what it takes to be a Star Fleet officer. The game provides rules, background, and materials for a unique form of cooperative pastime where you and your friends can put yourselves in the place of the famous crew of the *Enterprise*, or create your own starship for adventures in the *STAR TREK* universe. And the fun does not end there. You are not limited to Star Fleet player characters. Additional supplements allow you to play a wide-ranging group of characters such as Klingons, Romulans, or merchant traders.

A role-playing game is different from a boardgame or card game. In this special kind of simulation, you are not a single player competing against others toward a specific goal. Instead, you and your fellow players cooperate in a sophisticated game of 'Let's Pretend.' You become the characters of *Enterprise* crewmen, or new characters you create yourself, trying to think as they think and react as they react. Your success in the game is largely determined by how well you 'get inside the head' of your character and make decisions based on the character's personality and capabilities, rather than your own.

The operations of the game are moderated by a referee called the gamemaster. The gamemaster starts out as a sort of scriptwriter for your episode of *STAR TREK*. He creates an adventure background and sets the stage for the entrance of your characters. Unlike a script for a TV show, however, you have no set lines or actions. The gamemaster presents the situation and tells you what your character sees and hears, but it is up to you to make decisions on what the character will do or say. As in *STAR TREK*, the safety of your imaginary crew, and of the United Federation of Planets, may well hang on your decisions.

Your adventure takes place in the imagination of the players and the gamemaster. Cardboard counters, or lead miniature figures, representing individual characters are sometimes

moved on mapboards representing adventure locations in order to aid in resolving situations between individuals. Starship combat can also involve cardboard markers, or miniature models, representing ships; and a unique set of control panels provided for the important starship crew members represent the control of movement, weapons, and defenses of the ship.

"Raise the shields, Mr. Chekov," snapped Kirk. "Mr. Sulu, veer off. Make us a difficult target." Both men quickly complied, and the huge starship veered away from the rapidly closing Klingon war vessel.

The young Russian Ensign turned to Kirk, confusion in his voice. "We aren't going to run, are we, Captain?"

Kirk shook his head grimly. "We aren't running, Ensign. But I'm not going to let Captain Klavan choose how this meeting proceeds. We'll fight, my way."

"He's closing to disruptor range, Captain," Sulu reported.

"Mr. Chekov," Kirk addressed the eager Ensign. "Give us all the power you can to the rear shields. We'll probably take fire." Kirk tapped his command intercom. "Mr. Scott, this is the Captain," he said softly.

A familiar brogue issued from the intercom speaker. "Aye, sir. I've been monitoring bridge traffic. Are we to show 'im our tail?"

Kirk grinned, knowing his Engineer's feelings about Klingon arrogance. "Only till we show him our teeth, Scotty. Be prepared for some tight maneuvers. We'll need all the power you can spare us for phasers when he passes."

"Och, I gie the idea now. We'll be ready," Scott replied with a chuckle. "Engine room out."

"He's coming within range, sir," Chekov reported. "He'll fire any moment."

"Be ready, Mr. Sulu. When he fires, take it on the rear shields, then cease forward acceleration and bring 'er 'round hard to starboard. Fire as he shows us his rear shields."

Sulu suddenly realized what Kirk intended to do. "I understand, Captain."

"He's firing now," interjected Spock. The next moment the ship rocked slightly as the disruptor fire struck the shields. The rapidly accelerating Klingon ship shot past the *Enterprise*.

Kirk nodded toward the waiting Helmsman. "Now, Mr. Sulu!"

'Engineer Scott' looks at his control panel and reports power allocation to the other players. 'Chekov' had previously established the strong rear

shields that protected them from Klingon fire. This phase 'Sulu' will be turning the ship, so 'Chekov's' player changes the settings, putting most of the power into the forward deflectors.

'Sulu' notes the power available for the maneuver: plenty for what the 'Captain' had ordered. He then turns his attention to weaponry, concentrating the available power in the forward phaser banks, energizing them to full capacity.

'Spock' rolls the dice, trying for a result lower than his character's rating in *Starship Sensors*. The roll is successful. "I'm scanning the Klingon's shielding, and I made my sensor Skill Roll," the player tells the gamemaster. "What does Spock find out?"

The gamemaster consults his own panel, which displays the Klingon ship's status. "As expected, Spock finds the rear shields are very low. The Klingon Captain did not expect you to maneuver behind him, and reinforced his forward shields instead."

The 'Spock' player reports this fact to 'Kirk'. "Very good, Mr. Spock," replies the 'Kirk' player. "Mr. Sulu, execute the maneuver and fire at will."

'Sulu' reaches for the cardboard spacecraft counter resting on a starfield map superimposed with a hexagonal grid. He moves the counter one hex to the right and turns it a bit. The gamemaster moves the Klingon ship one hex straight forward. 'Sulu' continues rotating his ship counter as he moves it another hex. The Klingon ship moves another hex forward, passing the *Enterprise* counter. 'Sulu' moves again and rotates the counter. The *Enterprise* silhouette on the counter now faces the rear of the Klingon ship. "I'm firing forward phaser banks now," he states.

'Sulu' consults a chart on his control console, then rolls a ten-sided die. "A hit," he reports excitedly, "for a total of 20 damage points!"

The gamemaster checks his panel. "Ouch! Right in the rear shields, too." He moves a couple of counters on his control panel, which is shielded from the 'crew's' view by a notebook propped open in front of it.

The 'Spock' player rolls the dice again. "I already have a sensor lock on that ship, and I just successfully made another Skill Roll. What kind of damage did the Klingon take?"

"His warp engines are heavily-damaged, with a large subsequent drop in available power," reports the gamemaster.

After another couple turns of action, the Klingon ship, too badly damaged to put up a fight, limps away. The 'Kirk' player decides not to follow.

"We're not going to pursue, sir?" The young Navigator was puzzled again.

"Negative, Mr. Chekov. We've established our credentials in this matter. Our first concern is our mission, and I believe Captain Klavan was telling the truth about losing a ship out this way."

The Vulcan Science Officer raised an eyebrow. "Based on what evidence, Captain? Klingon officers are not noted for their veracity."

Kirk smiled. "Just a hunch, Mr. Spock. A feeling. Intuition."

Spock shook his head. "Illogical," he murmured.

"Perhaps," agreed Captain Kirk. "Do you recommend otherwise?"

"No, Captain. I am aware that human intuition has proven valuable in the past, particularly when voiced by an experienced and skilled commander." Kirk knew that was the closest thing to an expression of faith he could ever hope to get out of his First Officer. Spock, nevertheless, had faith in his commander, even though Vulcan philosophy had no expression for it.

"Bring us back on course for the planet," Kirk ordered. "Enter a standard orbit, Mr. Sulu. Mr. Spock, scan the planet's surface and look for anything that might tell us more about what happened to the *Xanadu*."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The 'Kirk' player sat back in his chair, notepad in hand. "Okay, suppose you tell us what Mr. Spock's sensor scans of the planet reveal."

The gamemaster consults his notes. "Spock had better make a Skill Roll against his rating in *Starship Sensors* first," he says.

'Spock' picks up the dice and rolls a number well under his *Starship Sensors* Skill Rating. "There it is," he says. "What do I find?"

The gamemaster hands 'Spock' a map. "This is the central continent of one hemisphere. Conditions are Terra-like, for the most part, though the atmosphere is a bit thin."

"Perhaps for some of us," interjects the 'Spock' player.

"Yes, Mr. Spock will feel right at home in that regard," the gamemaster admits, "though the temperature is closer to Earth's than Vulcan's. Your sensors indicate the ruins of several large buildings, about two-thirds of the way up the eastern coast, as well as large concentrations of metal that *could* be the remains of several downed spacecraft."

"Several spacecraft?" The 'Sulu' player looks up from the map excitedly. "Maybe we've found the missing Klingon scout as well as our own."

"Maybe so," 'Kirk' reflects. "Right now, I'm mostly wondering what brought them down in the first place."

The gamemaster smiles evilly and rolls dice behind his open notebook. "I'm so glad you asked!"

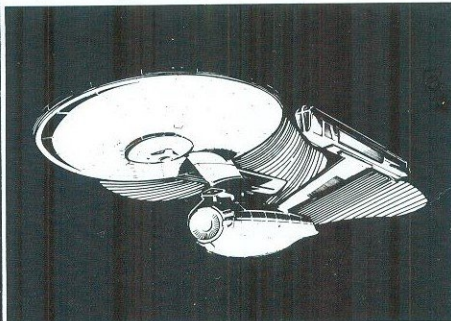
The *Enterprise* lurched suddenly, as if shaken by a gigantic hand. Kirk hung on to his command chair as the ship's computers automatically adjusted the artificial gravity to compensate.

"We're under attack!" Ensign Chekov shouted, surprised by the sudden movement. He had fallen to the floor momentarily before scrambling to his feet at his station.

Spock kept his feet, and ducked his head to look into the sensor hood. "Negative, Ensign. We are being gripped by an excessively strong tractor beam."

"Chekov, get the shields up," Kirk ordered swiftly. "Sulu, leave orbit. Get us out of that beam's range."

Sulu operated the helm controls with deft, experienced hands. The great ship shuddered as it fought the pull of the tractor beam and tried to maneuver out of orbit.



"No good, Captain," Sulu called, the strain showing only slightly in his voice. "There's not enough power."

"Captain," Mr. Spock interjected in his usual firm, even voice. "Sensors indicate that shields seem to be ineffective in this instance. Might I suggest dropping them and diverting the power for use by the Helm in maneuvering?"

Kirk switched on his intercom instead of replying. "Scotty!"

"Scott here," came the immediate answer from the speaker. "What have ye got pullin' us by the tail, Cap'n?"

"Tractor beam from the planet," Kirk replied. "We need more power to the Helm, fast."

"Ye are already gettin' all my wee bairns can gie ye, sir."

"Can you cross-connect from the shields, Mr. Scott? We haven't much time."

"Aye, sir," Scott replied. "At least we can gie it a go."

The 'Scotty' player scans his control panel. He moves the shield allocation marker back to zero and raises the marker showing maneuver power a like amount. "You've got it," he says.

The gamemaster nods to the 'Sulu' player. "Now you need a successful Skill Roll against your rating in *Starship Helm Operations*," he informs the player.

'Sulu' picks up the dice and rolls a 19, well under his Skill Rating. "Made it," he calls delightedly.

"All right," the gamemaster continues. "You begin to pull away from the tractor beam. At a distance of 1,000 kilometers from your standard orbital height, the tractor beam abruptly shuts off."

"Establish a stable orbit at this altitude, then," the 'Kirk' player orders. "Are we still within transporter range?"

The gamemaster shakes his head. "Not at this extreme orbital distance."

The players briefly discuss the situation among themselves. "All right," 'Kirk' says finally. "We'll establish an elliptical orbit that will drop down briefly within transporter range of the buildings we spotted. Meanwhile, we'll get a landing party together and check out that tractor beam at the source."

After a short briefing, Kirk met Spock, Chekov, and two security officers in the Transporter Room. Scotty was setting the controls as the Security Chief handed out Phaser II pistols and communicators.

Spock filled in the landing party on the current planetary situation. "Our best sensor scans can get little information at this distance. We have, however, detected life readings near two different large metallic objects in the target area. Not knowing which is likely to be the *Xanadu*, I have instructed Mr. Scott to beam us down near the smaller of the two."

"Why the smaller object, Mr. Spock?" asked Chekov.

Kirk smiled. "An exercise for the student, Ensign. You speculate why Spock chose the small object."

Chekov hesitated thoughtfully. "Perhaps because, if both objects are recently-downed ships, ours and the Klingons', ours is likely to be the smaller vessel?"

Spock nodded. "Precisely, Ensign. Even if it is not the missing Federation ship, it is logical to wish to beam down near the smallest concentration of strangers. It is a very fine distinction."

"However," Kirk said. "Mr. Spock's fine distinctions have saved our necks more than once." Kirk turned towards the console. "Scotty, how soon till we are in range for transport?"

"Just another minute or two, sir. You gentlemen may take your places on the platform."

As the party headed for the platform, the door slid open and Dr. McCoy entered, tucking a small medical pouch under the back of his uniform shirt. "Wait for me, Jim," he called, joining the others on the transporter platform.

Kirk looked at him quizzically. "Bones, I didn't assign you to this landing party."

"I'm assigning myself, Captain," McCoy insisted. "Heaven knows I'm not fond of scattering my molecules across space in this contraption, but if the *Xanadu* was forced down, as you speculate, there may be injured people down there." McCoy cast an amused glance at Spock. "Besides," the doctor continued, "You never can tell when Spock will get a headache from splitting logical hairs."

Spock fixed McCoy with a puzzled stare. "Doctor, I fail to see the relevance of a discussion of injured follicles..."

"Never mind," Kirk interrupted, impatience winning out over amusement. "When you're ready, Scotty. Energize."

With a high-pitched droning sound and an electronic sparkle, the landing party faded away.

"All right, you sparkle and fade, and reappear here..." The gamemaster places a small square-grid map on the table, placing six colored counters representing the landing party in a small grouping.

"This over to your left is a small Federation scoutcraft, heavily damaged." The gamemaster notes one large shape on the map.

"My compliments to your deductive abilities, Mr. Spock," the 'Kirk' player states with a smile. "Right on target."

The gamemaster continues his description. "A voice to your left calls out to you. When you look, you see a man in a Star Fleet uniform with his arm in a sling. He is waving frantically with his other arm." A new counter is placed on the map, near the tail of the scoutcraft.

"We'll move in that direction," the 'Kirk' player tells the gamemaster.

"As you approach, you hear the whine of disruptor fire behind you." The gamemaster rolls the dice behind his notebook, then continues. "The shot struck at your feet."

The 'Kirk' player hastily moves counters. "We'll dive for cover behind the ship."

"The injured Star Fleet officer draws a phaser and covers your retreat by laying down suppressing fire." The gamemaster rolls the dice once more, and consults hidden notes. "He doesn't

hit anything, but he slows up the Klingons. You all make it safely."

Kirk, his own phaser drawn, peeked around the damaged stern section of the scoutship. He saw shadowed figures ducking down behind the remains of a small Klingon vessel. Satisfied that no further attack was imminent, he turned to the injured officer.

The young officer wore the sleeve stripes of a Lieutenant Commander on a gold command division shirt. His left arm was supported in a crude sling as he holstered his phaser with the other hand. "Good to see you, sir." The officer glanced at Kirk's chest insignia and sleeve stripes. "*Enterprise* insignia... You must be Captain James Kirk."

Kirk was slightly embarrassed by the young officer's tone of deference, tinged with more than a bit of awe. They shook hands solemnly. "I'm Kirk. You are with the *Xanadu* scout party?"

"Lt. Commander Thaddeus Cosgrove, First Officer, I would surmise," interjected Spock. Kirk glanced at his First Officer, surprised. "Before leaving the *Enterprise*, I, of course, checked the personnel records of the *Xanadu*."

"Commander Spock's reputation proceeds him as well," Cosgrove continued. He was obviously aware of Vulcan customs, since he greeted the *Enterprise* Science Officer with a nod of greeting, not a handshake.

Dr. McCoy approached, medical scanner in hand. He passed it over Cosgrove's bandaged arm. "Compound fracture. Happen in the crash?"

Cosgrove nodded. "Yes, sir, but I'm able to handle it for now. Better you should look after Doc Wagner. She's banged up pretty bad. Follow me, if you would, sirs."

On the opposite side of the damaged vessel, three other Star Fleet crewmen waited, phasers drawn. A fourth, a woman in her mid-forties, lay on a pile of blankets against the side of the ship. Dr. McCoy immediately moved to help the injured woman, followed by Cosgrove.

An older man in command uniform greeted Kirk's party. "Commander George Lorenzo of the *Xanadu*," he announced. "This is Lt. Del Rey and Ensign Corben."

Kirk introduced himself and his officers. Upon finding that two other crash survivors were manning observation posts to watch the Klingons, he dispatched the two *Enterprise* security officers to join them.

Commander Lorenzo explained how his ship had been forced down by the tractor beam. "We found out the beam is apparently automated, controlled from the central building beyond the

Klingon ship. When we tried to get in, we were attacked by a force of robotic guard mechanisms. That's when Doc Wagner caught a stray beam.

"We retreated and were regrouping for another go at it when Sparks M'narrn, our Science Officer, detected the Klingon ship coming into orbit. Our main communication gear was damaged in the crash, but we managed a short-range job and tried to warn the Klingons. The blasted thing burned out on us before we could convince them, and then they were caught too." He shook his head ruefully. "Naturally, the Klingons who survived blamed us. They attacked as soon as they could dig out of the wreckage, but we held them off. Beside the two on guard duty, we're all that's left. Seven others didn't live through the crash landing."

"It's a miracle any of you made it," Chekov observed. "If I may say so, sir, that must have been some mighty fine piloting you did."

Lorenzo managed a small smile at Chekov. "Thanks, son. I wish it had been a bit better, for my comrades' sake."

McCoy then approached the group. "It's not good, Jim. She's pretty badly hurt. Damage looks like massive cellular disruption, what you might expect from a crude blaster-type weapon."

"For a crude device," Lorenzo offered, "those robot guards sure are efficient. Mostly, I suppose we were just out-numbered."

"Perhaps if we joined forces with the Klingons, we'd have a chance," Kirk suggested.

McCoy laughed. "I'd rather take my chances with robots. It's probably safer."

"They haven't listened to any of our proposals for cooperation," Lt. Del Rey advised the group. "They just ignore us when they aren't shooting at us. Can't your ship just beam us out of here?"

Kirk quickly explained their difficulty. "The *Enterprise* will make another close pass in three hours. We need to be ready then."

"Dr. Wagner's condition is too delicate to wait three hours, Jim," McCoy said anxiously. "We have to knock out that tractor beam sooner, so I can get her to the *Enterprise* ahead of schedule."

"Gentlemen," Kirk offered, "this calls for a bit of old-fashioned diplomacy."

The players again discuss the situation briefly among themselves. "All right," says the 'Kirk' player finally. "We'll call out to the Klingons."

The gamemaster imitates a gruff, low-pitched voice. "What do you want, Earther?"

"This is Captain Kirk of the *Enterprise*," the 'Kirk' player replies. "Can I speak to your commander?"

The gamemaster continues with a harsh laugh. "The *Enterprise*? Well, well now. I am Commander Krava. Have you further treachery to plot, Kirk?"

"No tricks, Commander. I'd just like to discuss our mutual distress, man to man. I'll meet you alone and unarmed, halfway."

The gamemaster grins, which makes the 'Kirk' player a bit nervous. "Very well, Kirk. Unarmed and alone, behind the small green building to your left."

The 'Kirk' player looks at the map and finds the building referred to by the gamemaster's Klingon commander. The area behind it is out of the direct view of both ships, and seems like a safe enough place to meet and still avoid ambush. "Agreed, Commander. Five minutes."

"This is a big mistake, Jim," McCoy insisted, as Kirk prepared to leave for his meeting with Commander Krava. "We can't cover you from here if that Klingon decides to break the truce."

Kirk shrugged. "Do I have any choice, considering Dr. Wagner's condition?"

McCoy sighed. "No, not really," he admitted. "But I don't have to like it."

Kirk slapped his friend on the shoulder. "I'll be fine, Bones. Where's Spock?"

"He insisted on checking with the sentries again," McCoy looked thoughtful. "I wouldn't mind checking with that one Security Ensign myself, Ensign Lee. She's got a smile just like sunshine."

"Bones, did anyone ever tell you that your attitudes toward women are a bit archaic?"

McCoy gave Kirk a sarcastic look. "This from the great galactic womanizer, himself?" In a moment, McCoy was again solemn. "All kidding aside, Jim, be careful."

"I will."

Kirk rounded the small green building with care. The sun was low in the sky, and the building's irregular angles cast shadows that were perfect for an ambush. He was a bit early, hoping to arrive before the Klingon could get a position.

Suddenly, he saw the Klingon round the building from the other side. "Kirk," the Klingon called out cautiously. "Are you unarmed?"

Kirk stepped forward, showing empty hands. "I am. And you?"

The Klingon, satisfied, approached. "Of course, of course, Earther. A Klingon's word is his bond, as your people say."

"Well," Kirk observed as he greeted the Klingon commander, "that's not quite what we say."



With a rapid movement, the Klingon reached behind him and pulled out a disruptor pistol. "Stand very still, Earther. A Klingon trusts only what he can hold in his hand."

"Another similarity between us," Kirk said as he saw Spock step out of a shadowed area and grasp the Klingon's shoulder from behind.

The 'Spock' player consults his rulebook's chart describing the Vulcan nerve pinch, then rolls the dice. "Made it!" says the player with decidedly un-Vulcan excitement. He then quickly resumes character. "What happens?"

The gamemaster sighs. "The Klingon slumps to the ground, momentarily stunned. Nice maneuver."

"I'll grab his weapon," says the 'Kirk' player quickly. "Okay, Commander, start talking."

"You were supposed to come alone, Earther," the Klingon muttered peevishly as he rubbed his shoulder.

"I won't even dignify that with an answer, considering this disruptor, Commander," snapped Kirk. "What I want is cooperation, however, not a hostage." He shoved the disruptor pistol into the waistband of his uniform.

For a split second, the Klingon considered jumping Kirk, then looked at the Vulcan First Officer and thought better of it. After a few minutes of accusations, all countered by Kirk, the Klingon replied evenly, "Perhaps this will yet be the basis for a worthwhile alliance."



"Is everybody about ready?" The gamemaster seems impatient to get the assault on the central building started, and the players know that when the gamemaster is excited, it means things are not going to be as easy as they hoped.

The 'Kirk' player is confident. "I think we've got it all covered. Let's see, the smaller group, Spock, McCoy, and Ensign M'narrn from the *Xanadu*, will provide the diversion by setting off a phaser overload near the yellow building. When the robots investigate, Commander Krava and the Klingons will attack from the left, and our party will move in from the right. We ought to catch the robots in between with no cover."

The gamemaster looks thoughtful. "Perhaps," he says non-committally. "Who is going in your group?"

"Everyone except the diversionary party," 'Kirk' replies. "Oh, I almost forgot. Ensign Lee, the *Xanadu*'s Security Officer, is staying behind to guard Dr. Wagner."

The 'McCoy' player looks skeptical. "Why isn't McCoy staying with his patient? Is he necessary for the diversion group?"

'Kirk' thinks for a moment before replying. "You're right," he agrees finally. "McCoy will stay behind with the injured Doctor. Lt. Del Rey will go with the diversion party instead."

"Now that you've settled everything," the gamemaster concludes, "set up your counters on the map for the combat sequence."

The players set up counters for their characters and the non-player characters of the *Xanadu* crew, whose actions they will control during the battle. Then they watch as the Gamemaster sets up the Klingon Commander and his forces, who in this instance will be cooperating (supposedly) with the players.

As the combat segment begins, the 'Kirk' player notices the gamemaster removing the Klingon Commander and his Lieutenant from the board. "Hey!" 'Kirk' calls indignantly. "Where are they going?"

The gamemaster smiles. "Oh, they took off just as the battle started."

"Figures," grumbles the 'Chekov' player. "Never trust a Klingon."

The combat sequence proceeds until the characters have taken the building and immobilized the robots. In combat situations like the one developed here, the gamemaster will provide a tactical map on a square grid of the combat area. In this case, the area involved is the central building of the alien complex.

As Kirk's party, the *Xanadu* survivors, and the Klingons move into the robot-guarded complex, they are represented by counters on the tactical map. A simple set of movement and action rules determine how and when the counters are moved and what actions each can take during a ten-second tactical game turn. The players choose the actions for their characters. In this instance, the Gamemaster allows the players to exercise control over the *Xanadu* crewmen and even the remaining Klingons, because they are cooperating (for now). The gamemaster chooses actions for the robotic guards.

When the Federation officers or Klingon crewmen fire, the players compare the character's already calculated To-Hit Roll with a 1-100 dice roll. Sometimes the roll is modified by conditions such as range, movement of the target, and so on. A hit is scored if the modified roll is equal to or less than the To-Hit Number of that particular character. The system is simple and easy for even the novice to master.

A well-placed shot from Chekov's phaser dispatched the last of the robot guards. "Nice shooting, Mister," called Kirk, as he approached the power room control panel.

"The shooting isn't finished, Earth-er!" called the gruff voice of the Klingon commander. Kirk turned to see Commander Krava enter the room, his disruptor pressed against the back of Ensign Sharon Lee of the *Xanadu*. Then McCoy also appeared, led by the disruptor-toting Klingon Lieutenant.

"Sorry, Jim," called McCoy. "They jumped us while we were tending to Dr. Wagner. We never had a chance."

"Now I see why you disappeared when the shooting started, Krava. You circled back to our camp."

"Where I found your so-called guard. Really, Kirk, you should be able to do better than this female. Your medical officer was occupied with his patient, and thus has some excuse, but this so-called Security Officer wouldn't last ten minutes in my ship. I would never have been able to sneak up on a man, even an Earthman, so easily. You will now all drop your weapons and - OOF!" The final interjection came as Ensign Lee's elbow found the pit of the Klingon's stomach. A moment later he was flying in an ungraceful arc to the floor, his disruptor in Ensign Lee's free hand.

McCoy's captor was so startled he never saw the Doctor's quick right cross coming. Anxious to make up for being surprised earlier, McCoy made the most of his opportunity and quickly subdued the Klingon Lieutenant.

"Don't try it!" Kirk called to the startled Klingons as he raised his phaser. The other Federation officers acted quickly, and the Klingons were covered before they had a chance to fire a shot. The young blonde woman covering Krava with his own disruptor couldn't repress a big smile of satisfaction and triumph.



"Nice work, Ensign," said Kirk with a grin. "I think there may be a commendation in this for you."

"There certainly will be," confirmed Commander Lorenzo. "Care for a self-defense lesson later, Captain? She's quadrant champion three years running."

The pretty blonde looked embarrassed. "It was nothing, sir. Sorry I let him get the drop on me in the first place."

"We all make mistakes, Ensign," Kirk said. "Krava will vouch for that, won't you, Commander?" Kirk pulled out his communicator and flipped the grid. "Kirk to *Enterprise*."

A familiar voice answered immediately. "Lt. Uhura here, Captain."

"Lieutenant, have the *Enterprise* brought around into standard orbit immediately. We have secured the area and will shut down the tractor beam. Inform sick bay that we have injured from the *Xanadu*. Have a full medical team beam down to where you dropped us off as soon as you are in range. We will meet them there. Kirk out."

Later, in sick bay, Kirk dropped in to check on Dr. Wagner's condition.

"She's doing just fine, Jim, now that we have her under proper treatment. I swear, doctors are the worst patients. Now that she is feeling better, I'm not sure just who is running things here," McCoy chuckled. "Cosgrove's arm knitted well, too. He'll be ready for duty by the time we reach Star Base Twelve."

"Speaking of which," Kirk said in a confidential tone, "are you still interested in getting better acquainted with Ensign Lee?"

McCoy looked skeptical. "Well, I don't know about that, Jim. Perhaps I'm a bit old for the lady after all."

"Bones!" Kirk was visibly surprised. "I never thought I'd hear you say that. Since when are you feeling your age where women are concerned?"

The Doctor looked uncomfortable. "Well, since she tossed Krava across the room. I'm a bit inhibited by women who could answer a pass by putting me in traction."

"Well, in that case, perhaps I'll offer to give her a little tour of the *Enterprise* myself," Kirk speculated. "I love a challenge."

"You're too late, Jim," McCoy informed him with a chuckle. "She was in here checking on Dr. Wagner a minute ago when Chekov stopped by and offered to give her the grand tour. They seemed quite taken with each other."

"Oh," Kirk stopped and shrugged. "Oh, well, then."

McCoy laughed. "Maybe we're both getting old, Jim! Come on in and meet my patient, anyway."

"We're not getting old, Bones," Kirk countered, as they walked toward the sick bay ward. "They're just making them very, very young these days."

