

WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE . . .

Scene: the bridge of the starship ENTERPRISE on patrol near the Orgasmion cluster on the evening of the third Tuesday in February, year 2327. In command is Starfleet Captain Kirk T. James.

The Captain's personal communication console beeps. He picks up the handset.

KTJ:

Captain here. *(Listens a few seconds)* Oh, not again . . . the same thing that's happened the last few weeks? *(Listens again)* Okay, I'll send Nullnipple down to sort it out. *(Slams down handset in annoyance)*

2nd Officer:

Problems, Captain?

KTJ:

You bet your pointy ears, Sprock. Same one again - those Parnassian droids are making a mess of the music session down on 5 deck.

2/Off:

. . . as they have repeatedly since they boarded the ship at Glutea Maxima seven para-weeks ago.

KTJ:

Right again. That was the Cultural Officer on the phone - she's NOT happy with the situation, especially since this time there are a couple of orval players from Invidia Two at the session who are starting to get really hot under two or three of their collars about what's going on. It could turn ugly any minute.

2/Off:

Agreed. Invidians are pretty serious about their music.

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KTJ:

I'm sending Nullnipple down to have a look and see what we can do to lower the temperature a bit.

2/Off:

Lower the temperature? Surely the Refrigeration Officer can handle that?

KTJ *(with slight smile)*

Just an expression, Sprock. *(Picks up handset and keys in a number)*
Nullnipple, Captain here. Would you report to the bridge ASAP? Thanks.

(Almost instantly a robotic presence glides through the bridge doors. It is large, broad-shouldered, but gives the strange impression of somehow being female. It - she? - approaches the Captain's chair and is standing at attention when the Captain speaks)

KTJ:

At ease, Nullnipple. We have that problem on 5 deck in the Session Chamber - again. Those damned Parnassian droids are making a mess of things - again. Only this time there's a real threat of violence.

NN

(in a "your call is important to us" kind of voice) I understand, Captain. What is it you want me to do?

KTJ:

Well, for starters you'll have to drop in on the session to get a real feel for what's going on. You're a musician, aren't you? - I mean, in addition to being the Ship's Assistant Security Officer?

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NN:

Affirmative, Captain. I play the Rhythmic Vibrating Klarf Skin at the session sometimes myself - I'm shape-shifted when I go there, of course, so I don't alarm anyone - and I'm taking lessons on the Aurigan Blortquell from the Chief Officer.

2/Off:

And I understand you've been asking questions about Vulcan traditional music too.

NN:

Yes indeed, sir. A wonderfully rich tradition, considering that Vulcan music uses only a three-note scale.

KTJ:

Excellent. I want you to shape-shift yourself into a musician and go down to the 5 deck right now. The Cultural Officer knows you're coming. Keep an eye on those Invidians - sounds like they're about to explode. And their recent adoption of the Ritual Cannibalism Response won't help the situation.

NN:

What about the Parnassian droids, Sir? I have to agree that my experience with them indicates that they are indeed annoying - they play very loud Nuclear Shembengs that are all the rage in their home galaxy but are considered very inappropriate for session music.

KTJ:

I'm not much of a musician myself, but I heard them a few weeks ago and I tend to agree with you. As a matter of fact Chief Engineer was complaining that he had several large cracks to repair on 5 deck that seem to have been caused by the vibrations of that . . . thing the droids play.

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2/Off:

The Nuclear Shembeng has been called the most obnoxious instrument in the Universe. It has in fact been banned from most sessions throughout the Federation, as far as I know. Three Parnassian droids were recently neutralized on Moussaka 3 when they attempted to smuggle their shembengs through the Arrival Security Module . . .

NN:

If I may suggest, Captain: the Parnassian droids have largely completed the task for which we took them on board, correct?

KTJ:

You may be right. Let me check. *(Picks up handset, dials)* That you, Spotty? *(A vaguely Scots voice can be heard on the other end)* Sorry I had to waken you - I know you're off watch. *(Louder noises from handset)* I KNOW you're the Chief Engineer and not the Doctor, Spotty, but what the hell does that have to do with anything? Look, we've got a big problem and you may have the solution. Listen: are those Parnassian droids almost finished with their mapping of the meta-cyclical conduit? *(Reply voice for several seconds)* Look, Spotty - they may in fact be the most sorry-ass para-life forms in the entire Federation, but right now I need to know if they're almost finished that mapping job. *(Voice)* Yes? They finished yesterday? Great. Thanks, Spotty. *(Voice)* Yes, you can go back to sleep now.

NN:

If they serve no further function on the ship . . .

2/Off:

. . . and if they and their Nuclear Shembengs are threatening the peace and security of this vessel, its crew, and our mission . . .

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KTJ:

Basically I have no choice. Is the Transporter operative again, Sprock? I know there were some problems recently in the Chronology Adjustment module . . . did the techs get the spares installed yet?

2/Off:

They were working on it yesterday, but I'll have to check with the duty Maintenance Officer to see if they finished.

(Captain's handset beeps repeatedly. When he picks it up, a yelling voice is heard)

KTJ:

Captain here . . . oh no! Okay, we'll take care of it right away. *(Slams down handset)* All hell has broken loose at the session. Nullnipple, get down there stat - apparently one of the Invidians grabbed a Nuclear Shembeng from one of the droids and smashed it into a million pieces. Then another droid tried to repolarize the current in the Invidian's orval and blew out most of the power on 5 deck. The Session Chamber is in total darkness and there's a huge fight going on. Security's on the way, but the Cultural Officer has fainted, and three of the Lizard People from Chameleo Delta are having uncontrollable phospho color shifts.

NN:

I'm on the way, Captain. *(Glides silently off the bridge)*

2/Off *(after speaking on phone)*

Captain, Maintenance says the Transporter is basically operative, but they haven't run tests on the Chronology Adjustment module yet. They can't guarantee that the Temporal Destination Function will work.

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KTJ:

Understood, Sprock. *(Captain's handset beeps again)* Captain here . . . is that you, Nullnipple? I can barely hear you . . . what? Say again? *(To 2nd Officer)* Sounds like the end of the world down there. *(Into handset)* Yes, yes, I understand. Thanks, Nullnipple. Have Security get those droids into paracuffs and down to the Transporter Room immediately. And make sure they have those blasted shembengs of theirs with them. *(To 2nd Officer)* Sprock, get the Duty Officer into the Transporter Room on the double. I don't care where we send those droids - I just want them off my ship.

2/Off:

Aye, aye, Captain. *(Picks up handset and relays orders; 30 seconds later)* Transporter Room reports all in readiness, Captain.

KTJ:

Very well. *(Captain's handset beeps)* Good work, Nullnipple. *(To 2nd Off.)* The droids are in the Transporter Cage . . . tell the Duty Officer to activate on my signal . . . three, two, one . . . mark! *(The bridge lights dim slightly, then recover. Sprock's handset beeps)*

2/Off:

They're gone, Captain. We're not sure where, but they're gone.

KTJ:

I don't care where they've gone, as long as they're off this ship. Good work . . . and good riddance!

(New scene: an evening city street in Boston, year 2024, in front of the Jolly Pigeons pub. Music is heard inside. Three strange-looking dudes with banjo cases suddenly materialize. They look dazed until they become aware of the music; then, big grins appear on their faces. They turn and enter the pub.)

(To be continued . . . ?)