

An Ancestor of Mine . . .



Logic in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms.

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When you are studying any matter, or considering any philosophy, ask yourself only what are the facts, and what is the truth that the facts bear out. Never let yourself be diverted ... by what you wish to believe ... But look only, and solely, at what are the facts.

--Bertrand Russell, 1959

INTRODUCTION

Is something true because it ‘all just fits together?’ Is it true because you connect a few dots and folks around you exclaim, “Oh my God, of course! That makes so much sense, it explains so much!”

Certainly not. But it might make a good beginning. You must examine each fact analytically and logically, find evidence to support or refute each statement if possible, weigh conflicting arguments, draw tentative hypotheses, look for new information to confirm or contradict a testable theory. The ‘devil is in the details.’

Mathematicians have a set of rules and procedures to verify the truth of a theorem: first, show a statement k is true for the first case when $n=1$; then show that if $k=n$ is true, then $k=n+1$ is also true. Logicians state that properly formed syllogisms are true: all men are mortal, Socrates is a man, so therefore Socrates is mortal. But most of life is neither a mathematical certainty nor necessarily very logical. In our ordinary everyday life we oft times turn to courts and the law to judge the ‘truth’ of a situation. Yet we also acknowledge that sometimes we use a standard of proving ‘beyond a reasonable doubt’ and sometimes we use a standard of ‘the preponderance of the evidence.’

I don’t know ‘for a fact’ that Lieutenant Commander Spock of the Starship USS Enterprise was (is? will be?) the biological father of Sherlock Holmes. All I can do is lay out the facts – the data – as I found them. I leave it to you, the reader, to form your own judgment. The evidence will speak for itself, but I wish to give some verified and verifiable context as to how this evidence was uncovered. In this

Introduction and also in the *Afterword* I share background information and some independent verification supporting what I found.

You can google my name and find that I am a retired psychologist, though I started my academic studies in engineering. One of my current hobbies began around 1979 when I built my first computer from a kit (a Processor Technology Sol-20). While I now use more modern computers, I still have a fascination for the beginnings of the ‘microcomputer revolution’ and I collect old personal computers and paraphernalia. While living in Tucson around 2009 or 2010 I purchased an old dot-matrix printer with a partially full box of continuous feed printer paper. Only later did I notice that underneath the unused paper was a set of individually type-written pages, pages which tell the story presented here. The pages appear to have been created on an old typewriter, not a modern one, and certainly not on the old printer. There was also one very old handwritten letter with a type-written note attached.

I carelessly skimmed the un-numbered and out-of-order pages regarding some wild cosmic experiment, tentatively concluding that I was reading Star Trek fan fiction mixed in with a Sherlock Holmes pastiche. I am a fan of Sherlock Holmes – I am a member of both the Baker Street Irregulars and the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes. Many members of these societies insist that Arthur Conan Doyle was merely the literary agent for the actual writer of the tales, John H. Watson, MD, Holmes’ friend and biographer. I have read countless more recently written Holmes stories, almost all beginning with an author’s Foreword claiming to have ‘found’ in the attic of a distant relative a manuscript in an old tin box that bore the initials ‘JHW.’ Some seem as if they could have been written by the original creator of the sixty ‘Canonical’ Holmes adventures (i.e., Watson or Doyle), though many contain anachronisms and absurdities, e.g., Holmes fighting dinosaurs in Victorian London!

In 2015 I attended my first Sherlock Holmes fan convention – 221B Con in Atlanta, Georgia. I went to a panel discussion, “From Baker Street to the Holodeck: Sherlock Holmes in Science Fiction.” On that panel was a friend of mine, Lyndsay Faye, a brilliant author and also a Baker Street Irregular and

ASH. At the end of the discussion there was time for a question or two, and I had one. First, I must confess something and how it led to the embarrassing misinformation I intimated in my question to the panel. Honestly, I do not know how to write fiction – I just can't do it. I have written psychology journal articles, had an article published in the *Baker Street Journal*, wrote an online non-fiction piece for reinventinghome.org about a friend's re-creation of Holmes' 221b sitting room, and in 1987 even published the first e-text version of the original 60 Sherlock Holmes stories (*An Electronic Holmes Companion*, on sixteen 5 ¼" floppy disks).

But while I enjoy *reading* fiction, my mind recoils at the thought of putting electrons to screen in the form of a readable fictional tale. I confess that when I formulated my question to the panel, I misled them into thinking that I had an original thought for a story when in actuality I was 'borrowing'/summarizing a few ideas from what I had found accidentally in a tattered cardboard box some five years earlier. I asked if anyone on the panel had ever read a story about how the Enterprise had gone back in time due to a mishap, Spock had gotten separated from the ship, and found himself in Victorian England in the 1840's. For some reason Spock had to wait years before being found by the Enterprise; Spock went through the Vulcan mating compulsion Pon Farr and, before being rescued, impregnated an Earth woman, becoming the father of Sherlock Holmes.

Lyndsay literally jumped up on her chair and shouted, "Oh my God, of course! That makes so much sense, it explains so much! It must be true!" Soon the rest of the room was echoing her sentiments and I was being shouted at, "You must write that up, you must write that!" Word spread throughout the thousand or so folk at the convention about the 'story.' The next day someone at one of the hospitality suites recognized me and informed everyone within earshot that I was the 'famous Bob' who discovered that Spock was Sherlock Holmes' father. Go ahead – google #famousbob and you will find references to me. Within a month or so I garnered nearly 700 followers on tumblr.com from folk wanting to know the whole story.

I swear on a stack of *Encyclopedia Galactica*'s that I did not write the tale which the following pages document in detail. I went back and put the pages I had found into what seemed the proper order (which was pretty easy since the log and diary entries were dated). I did some judicious proofreading and editing – I'm pretty good with punctuation and spelling, just as my dear grammar taught me (I'm also an inveterate punster 😊). I left out a number of unrelated sections which did not advance the narrative and made some minor edits of certain salacious descriptions.

I did analyze and verify what I could – the *Afterword* details some of this effort. The knowledgeable reader should be able to verify and draw similar conclusions. One must not hang an entire argument from a single strand. But when multiple strands are mutually woven together and independently intertwined, it results in a very strong rope which can support a much greater weight of evidence.

HOME OFFICE

INTERNAL MEMO Ref 1795-12-13

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS FOUND IN FIRST M'S PRIVATE PAPERS; FILE MARKED
'VULCAN.' THEY MAY HAVE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS. PLEASE ADVISE.

13 December, 1795

Wold Newton, Yorkshire

My Dear Edmund,

I regret to inform you that I will not be joining you in York on Tuesday. It seems my trip has been artificially extended, as a large blazing stone has fallen from the sky onto a Yorkshire field. We must all now peruse this stone, contemplate it, extemporize to the badgering press about it, and attempt to steal little bits of it when no one appears to be looking. My best effort to bribe the coachman to continue on to York with only myself as passenger was fruitless. Regrettably, he was as fascinated by this smoldering stone as the rabble.

I'm sure you are breathless to know, this spotted and striped artifact is about a yard in length, appears composed of rock and metal, and weighs perhaps four stone. I saw it impact the ground creating a most

satisfactory eruption of clay and soil. It was broiling hot and smoking for a while after impact, although not precisely 'on fire,' as no doubt the press will suggest. You know, of course, that some German men of science claim the fireballs seen in the sky sometimes land, and that these 'meteorites' (so called) come from the moon or even beyond. I am sure Major Topham will look into this, as the field, and thus this stone, is his. No doubt we will all read about it in his newspaper soon, with all its attendant bangs, booms and exaggerations. Undoubtedly, the 'fire' aspect of the fireball's arrival is likely to be over-stressed.

Presently, I am here with Squire Holmes & Wife. The husband is solid, English and boring, but the wife possesses a strain of emotion and unpredictability I attribute to her French blood - she is related to a painter of some renown? There are a few others here, including a young couple I know nothing of, the Rutherfords. They have a bright young lad who may have me rethinking my established position on creating offspring. Don't make that face, Edmund; I am positive there are two or three foundlings of your lineage, scrabbling for life in London alone.

I expect that when I next see you, a scheme will have been devised to profit from this singular event. Perhaps you might persuade your royal charge to invest in some sort of sky-rock mining operation. The only

financial yield I predict is sight-seer revenue for this quarter-of-a-horse town.

Bloody bad luck, I must needs stay here for a day and a half before my coach journey can resume. If you have trouble amusing yourself in York, please picture me wasting away in godforsaken Wold Newton.

As a preemptive measure, if five days without your constant supervision causes your malodourous dogsbody to burn down London, this is the meteorite's fault. Not mine.

Your humble servant &c.

Seamus Moriarty

12 December, 1891

221B Baker Street, London

M,

Find enclosed my account of events surrounding the blackmailing case of April past.

I would remind you that my particular style has prompted your brother to ask me on several occasions if I thought Aristotle would be improved by the inclusion of secret codes and perhaps a romance. I do not change my manner of writing here because I change my audience. Someday, when we see ourselves not as conquerors but as part of a massive cosmos, someone who is not Mycroft Holmes will read this and understand. Therefore "caveat lector." If this is too romantic for your taste, will send unadorned notes.

Yours &c.

JHW

P.S. I have written up a second version that omits all you wish to keep hidden. I admit to keeping the Reichenbach Falls. They were a pleasingly picturesque location, and too good to waste.

From the reminiscences of JOHN H. WATSON, M.D., late of the Army Medical Department

That particular April was particularly bleak and cold. The sun, seldom seen, was at best Dijon yellow, the world was black, brown, grey and wet. My sentiment at the time, perhaps illogical, suggested the natural world had expired and nothing green would ever be seen again.

The view did not improve upon my turning from the window for the hundredth time. My friend Sherlock Holmes continued carefully pressing pins into maps until they resembled fields of stars. He was these days incessantly biting his nails and staring off to some unseen middling distance. He stole away at strange hours, coming back soaking wet, smelling of opium smoke, or both. He often threw himself into a fireside chair, too tired to care if he landed comfortably, where he would uneasily doze for a few hours before getting up and repeating the dreary process. For ten days he had not seen his bed or a bath. Should he have attempted an even dozen, I was fully prepared to chloroform him and secure him to his bedstead for his own good.

It was obvious he was chasing James Moriarty – the supposed mad professor, the Napoleon of Crime, the spider in the center of the web that was all English crime (and lately, Continental crime as well). Holmes anticipated each of the villain's moves; clearly he was closing in on his despised prey. An innocuous telegram to Scotland Yard here, another to his brother there, were rewarded by news in the daily papers that one or more of Moriarty's most intricate, far-reaching schemes were coming undone.

When a pair of footpads roughly waylaid us as we left Simpson's one evening, I could not count myself surprised. That altercation left no lasting damage, but afterwards, suspicions rose that every soul passing our Baker Street residence was in the employ of Moriarty. That I *knew* with certainty the beggar at the corner and the art student with the blue scarf were Moriarty's, was little comfort. Consequently, as a

tonic for her and relaxant for me, I cunningly persuaded my dearest Mary to take her long-postponed trip to Paris. It would not have done for professor M. to think of her as a suitable hostage.

It came as no surprise, when on April eighteenth, Holmes gave Mrs. Hudson *carte blanche* for a trip to Taranto, Italy, where she should remain until she received his secret word. All those precious to us needed protection and anonymity, very far from where Holmes conducted his dangerous game.

In the absence of Mrs. Hudson's usually cheery nature, our home situation seemed dire indeed. Without her kindly presence, building fires, rattling teacups and incessant dusting, it began to feel as if it truly was Holmes and me against the world.

If I am honest, we carried the burden unevenly. I took my revolver on every excursion from 221b, wary of anyone approaching my friend's back. I compelled him to occasionally sleep and even more occasionally eat, but in this closing battle of mind versus mind, I considered myself unarmed.

After endless days standing vigil at our windows, I saw a great knitted oval of a person, completely hidden by layers of grey-blue woolens and scarves, approach our threshold, pausing with a hold on our bell pull. A client with a secret I thought, as he rocked backward on his heels, reluctant to commit to a pull. I carefully noted his work boots, and the generally worn but serviceable quality of his garments. Possessing the carriage of a dock worker, that had perhaps risen in the world, I announced the new arrival.

"Holmes," I called across the room. "someone is come to see us. One of those less genteel coachmen one sees in London center, I fancy."

Holmes looked up from his file of continental newspaper clippings. He had always been thin and pale, but these days was beginning to look positively spectral. With his strange over-bright eyes, he was putting me in mind of those comical dancing skeletons one sees printed on penny-dreadfuls. I felt guilty about this comparison, and even more guilty there was nothing I might do to improve it.

“I’ll tell him to leave, shall I?” Billy, our page, had been gone since before Mrs. Hudson.

“Lestrade can handle whatever problem he has.”

Holmes crossed the room while I spoke, and peered over my shoulder.

“That’s no client. That’s brother Mycroft,” he sighed. “What military plans do you think have been stolen this time, Watson? Who is blackmailing the crown prince today?”

There was a sudden report of a loud, angry pull on our bell.

“It’s a wonder he even bothers with that. Usually, he is already in my room when I open the door; he wishes to prove, that like a prophet of God, locks cannot restrain him.”

Another pull on the bell. “Mr. Holmes!” Mycroft yelled, in a high-pitched, strangled voice.

“He comes *incognito*. Well, I suppose you had better let him in. He was of some use to us in the forged Magna Carta matter, and has been helping with Moriarty.”

I briefly grasped my friend’s shoulder, before descending our steps to grant entrance to his brother.

Mycroft Holmes had always put me in the mind of some kind of large underwater creature, moving slowly and purposefully through a thick undertow. There was something oddly assured about his carriage, as if London could burn around him without giving him cause to hurry. However, the man at our threshold looked frightful and frightened, a worried caricature of his former self. His face, white and stricken, made evident the perspiration on his brow and neck; Mycroft Holmes was clearly terrified.

In a trice he crossed the threshold, slamming and securing the door loudly enough to startle anyone within earshot.

“Doctor Watson,” he said, running a hand across his face. “can you trust your staff?”

“There is only Holmes and myself,” I answered. “We sent the others away.”

“That was wise.” He was beginning to unwind his scarves. With his knit cap gone, hair smoothed and normal respiration restored, he was at least recognizable.

“Mycroft,” said Sherlock, as his brother reached the top of the stairs, “to what do we owe the pleasure of these amateur theatrics?”

Mycroft noiselessly crossed to the basket chair closest the fireplace. He remained silently composing himself until I passed him a generous snifter of ‘medicinal’ brandy from the sideboard tantalus.

My friend was the inverse of his brother, nervous and agitated, far too stimulated to sit, pacing in front of the fireplace with his arms crossed pharaoh-like against his chest.

“Your overall demeanor suggests you are not here on state business?” inquired Sherlock.

Mycroft lowered his glass. “You are referring, of course, to the absence of Mr. Harris.”

“I *do* miss the presence of your protector who lately loiters by our local newsstand, but I was referring to your overall demeanor. When Mr. Melas disappeared you barely noticed. When he died you were perhaps – annoyed?”

Mycroft took another long pull on the snifter.

“You are a long way from annoyed now,” said Sherlock.

“That sounds a great deal like intuition, Sherlock. I’ve often admonished you to proceed with utmost caution regarding first impressions.”

“You could have sent a note; it would have been infinitely easier and safer for me to visit *your* rooms rather than – whatever you are trying to do here.”

“This morning three of my most trusted staff disappeared, along with...” Mycroft shook his head. Then he looked up, and for a moment looked remarkably like his brother. “I am afraid we are being blackmailed, Sherlock.” said he. “I cannot trust the club, even that British bastion boils with much intrigue.”

Sherlock stopped pacing, and then to my astonishment, threw back his head and laughed the giddy laugh of a school girl. Back under self-control he blurted, “Blackmailed! I have benign secrets, and unless your secret is that you are *Jack the Ripper*, your employers will forgive and the public will not care.”

Mycroft sternly turned his head, and looked at him. “You know better than to doubt my ability to gauge a threat.” Sherlock was silent. Mycroft’s eyes turned to blue ice.

“You’re *not*—”

“I’m not Jack the Ripper, you stupid boy! *Dr. Watson* is more likely to be Jack the Ripper than I.”

“*Really*—” I protested.

“My brother does not mean to accuse you of the Whitechapel killings, Watson,” said Sherlock.

“He generally has an awkward way of proclaiming his innocence on any matter.”

I watched bewildered as the two brothers conducted an almost silent conversation in the space above my head, entirely composed of stacking deduction upon deduction, in a manner few, if any, could follow. Sherlock’s face darkened as the conversation progressed until it shifted to the needle-focus it usually bore whenever he surveyed any crime scene.

“Moriarty?” he said, at last.

“Moriarty. Of course Moriarty! Who else for god’s sake?” said Mycroft.

“Then —”

“It is difficult to explain.”

“Simplest terms, Mycroft.”

“You will not believe me.”

“When the impossible has been eliminated, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. How many times have you told me that?”

Mycroft took a long breath.

“All right, believe this: our father was not strictly *human*. Professor James Moriarty has absolute proof.”

By now Sherlock, folded into one of the winged armchairs by the fire, was drinking his own medicinal brandy. For my part, I found it best not to think, just observe. My focus was removing the ashen look from Sherlock’s face. Heated debate between the brothers, the fire, the brandy, and some rather esoteric discussion they had about Camille Flammarion helped his condition. Throughout the night, their conversation danced across the spectrum of human experience, taking unexpected flights of fancy before alighting once again on the previous shock revelation.

“Mycroft, I am not going to argue with you about the hypothetical probability of life existing on other astronomical bodies –”

(Doesn’t know the Earth travelled round the sun, my foot!)

“— I *am* arguing against the likelihood that one of these interstellar beings visited Earth in 1846 while appearing to be an oddly-mannered mathematician, who met OUR mother, *reproduced* with OUR mother – just that proposition is the most absurd of the bunch, you realize? Mycroft, where is the evidence? You know neither of us can accept any assertion without evidence, much less the union of OUR mother with an alien creature.”

“Moriarty stole my original evidence.”

“How convenient for your current yarn, or perhaps – hallucination.”

“Don’t be tedious Sherlock. What conceivable reason would I have to lie to you, particularly about something regarding our probably sainted mother?”

Turning to me with a look of complete disdain Sherlock loudly whispered, “Watson, please give me your unvarnished assessment of my brother’s current mental faculties. Surely he has brain fever!”

“I think,” I said, cautiously, “based upon my limited knowledge of your brother, aside from an understandably heightened anxiety level, I see no impairment of his reasoning faculties.” I paused to let that settle, and then continued. “However, it is possible that painful past memories are interfering with his current presentment. As you rightfully insist, Sherlock, convincing evidence is required for a more satisfactory diagnosis. Clearly, we are both without some proven and rather salient facts.”

Sherlock sighed, and repositioned himself in his chair. It was now dark, the fire behind him reflected from the parlor mirror, drawing golden lines along his face. I noticed the top of his ear looked oddly more angular than I remembered.

“In order to understand this discussion, Watson, you need to know, that while our patriarchy traces back to a country squire, most technically that would be our *adopted* family.”

“Your adopted...?”

“Our *biological* father, for whom I have barely the faintest memories, was a mathematician who died tragically young, a year after I was born. I am sure it was sad at the time, but our widowed Mother married Siger Holmes when I was three. As far as I am concerned, *he* is my father! All I know of ‘Grayson Spock,’ my biological father, is that he wrote two academic papers that remain indecipherable, even to those of an extreme mathematical bent.”

Looks of frustration and sarcasm were indistinguishably painted on Mycroft’s face. I was not sure in what spirit he meant it when he responded, “What I have been *trying* to explain is this was the fiction that Mother and I contrived to tell you – the story we told our stepfather. Our father’s true name was Lieutenant Commander Spock, son of Sarek, of the planet Vulcan. He was the first officer on the United Federation of Planets, Starship Enterprise. When we lost our father, he did not die; he left Earth in a flying space-machine.”

“I am so sorry, Mycroft. A flying space-machine?”

“I was there. I remember it vividly.”

Sherlock put his head in his hands, nervous fingers tapping on his skull. He launched himself from the chair. Somewhere in the vicinity of the gasogene he stopped and spoke, facing the window.

“I think I understand.” He paused briefly. “Watson, you remember that neurologist you sent me to in Vienna?”

I didn’t say anything; how could I not remember?

“Dr. Freud had some interesting thoughts regarding child development – in addition to, ahem, addiction recovery. He said it is common for young children to believe their parents are not their *true* parents, but rather false or step-parents. They believe their real, imaginary parents are out in the world somewhere. He calls it... what did he call it?”

Sherlock leaned into the fireplace, looking directly into the flames.

“I fear I have underestimated the emotional toll it would have taken to be so young and have a father die. I owe you an apology, Mycroft. You hid it well; of course you did, but at eight years old you might well come up with a scenario in which you didn’t have to mourn our father because you believed he was not truly gone. I’m sure I could get you a consultation—”

Mycroft’s huge bulk sprang to his feet. I have mentioned before that he is as tall as his brother, and much larger. It may have been the room’s charged atmosphere, or something Mycroft Holmes is simply able to do; he loomed before us like a mountain.

“You say you would like evidence?” Mycroft picked up our steel fireplace poker, a rod as thick as a man’s thumb and bent it a convex arch without demonstrating the least effort. “I can do that with ease,” he said, “despite my disdain for almost any physical activity. You, Sherlock, can do that too, despite your withered appearance, poor nutrition and a more than healthy interest in Chinese contraband. Understand that Vulcan muscle is four times stronger than human muscle; we are undeniably part Vulcan! You may have noticed that you don’t have to eat or sleep as others do. *Vulcan*. Heat or cold seldom bothers you. *Vulcan*. Watson here can attest to your many feats of superior sight, hearing and sense of smell—”

Sherlock grunted a sound of objection, but Mycroft kept on speaking.

“Normal people cannot by smell distinguish three-day old cigarette smoke on a handkerchief from four-day old smoke; Sherlock, they just can’t.”

Mycroft crossed his massive arms over his gigantic chest, and one corner of his mouth went up, in a strange sort of smile.

“The hemoglobin,” he said, softly.

Holmes’ posture immediately changed. His new position on the chair was petulant and defensive. It seemed he found it easier to talk to his brother while not looking directly at him.

“Why would you bring *that* up now?”

“Holmes,” I cut in. I apologize to the reader, but I had lost the thread of the conversation entirely.

“Hemoglobin? What has *hemoglobin* got to do with anything?”

“Come now, Watson. You remember the experiment.”

“You have so many experiments, my friend.”

“But this was the one I was doing when we first met.”

I will admit I had not initially remembered. I would not in a hundred years have thought Holmes would make so personal a connection. He sighed, the way he did when Lestrade or Gregson disappointed him.

“Doctor, you will recall, when I first met you, I thought I had discovered a compound that reacted to hemoglobin and nothing else. Such a thing would have been... such a thing would have been my single most important contribution to the field of criminal investigation.”

“But—”

“My results were ‘un-replicable.’ The scientific community thought them fabricated. I was laughed out of chemistry journals.” Sherlock rounded on Mycroft. “*You* said it was my careless laboratory technique.”

“Perhaps that... was not the prudent thing to say.”

This near-apology put a pinhole in Sherlock’s righteous fury.

“The problem,” continued Mycroft, maddingly calm, “was not your technique at all. The problem lay in your blood sample.”

“It was my own blood. There was no way for it to become contaminated.”

Unexpectedly, at that moment I remembered some of the things I knew about using bloodwork to identify diseases. I had done some extra study on the general topic of blood during my training at Netley, it having piqued my interest, thinking about performing transfusions on the battlefield.

“Unusual blood would affect an experiment like the one you are describing,” I remarked.

“You have atypical hemoglobin, Sherlock,” said Mycroft. “That was why no one could duplicate your results. No one else on Earth has blood like us, because —”

“Don’t you dare—”

“Because Vulcan blood is, interestingly, copper based.”

And for the very first time I noticed a tremor in Sherlock’s hands, and the dark baggage beneath his sparkling eyes.

“Watson...”

“Tea, Holmes? Brandy? Something to eat?”

“Watson, in your professional opinion. As an impartial observer. Is what my brother saying *possible*? Don’t mind probable. *Possible*.”

Because he asked me to, I thought about it. I thought about Darwin and all he had to say about the way species evolve. If there was another planetoid like Earth, might it not then be peopled with human-like inhabitants? I thought about instances of similar species successfully reproducing. I thought about Mycroft, about that colossal brain that seemed so near omniscient. I did not see, I *had not seen*, a single sign that suggested his mental faculties were in any way compromised.

I did not mean to think it, but I thought about the times Sherlock Holmes had seemed *different*, mechanistic – machine-like, perhaps superhuman. *Inhuman*, my brain supplied. *You must have called him ‘inhuman’ a dozen times in your stories.*

I looked down at Sherlock. I did not want to offer my answer, but he would instantly know if I lied.

(Inhuman.)

“It is possible, Holmes. It might explain a few things I must admit that have always puzzled me.”

Sherlock stared at me like I was Brutus and Cassius rolled into one. But he said nothing.

“Damn it, Sherlock,” said Mycroft, dipping into the map-pin supply, using one to pierce the pad of his thumb then pressing onto the clean edge of Sherlock’s most ornate map, leaving a round dot of blood. “Your blood has a bluish-green tinge, just as mine! Look quickly, before it fully congeals.”

Silently, Mycroft pushed a packet of papers into my hand. “I said I had lost the original evidence; these are selections of our mother’s and father’s diaries. Copies of course. Get him to read them. If he doesn’t believe after reading them, there is nothing more I can do. We will talk again tomorrow.”

Sherlock might not have heard him. He remained motionless as Mycroft regally lumbered towards the door.

“Where are you going?” I asked.

Mycroft smiled. “For ‘business reasons,’ I maintain a number of safe-houses.” His countenance darkened. “I have half-expected an outcome like this for years. Doctor, I vow to you that I have no intention of letting myself or Sherlock be dissected or sold to some traveling circus.” He frowned. “The circus fear is perhaps juvenile, now I say it aloud.” His face became unreadable again. “I do not think I need tell you that revelation of this secret would turn the country, perhaps the world, inside-out overnight. I am not sure that man sitting before the fire or I would survive that. This gambit is Moriarty’s ace, his

final chance to cobble my brother's goal of bringing down his criminal enterprise. Please vow that we will not let that happen."

"Never!" I replied.

Mycroft nodded, then put on his ridiculous woolen hat. "The beggar, the young man sketching, the clerk across the street, they are the only agents Moriarty has posted?"

I nodded, dumbly.

"Good," he said. "Goodnight, Dr. Watson."

The door clicked shut behind Mycroft Holmes and the wet and blustery night.

I rifled through the copy of the papers Moriarty had stolen, all dated and apparently in sequence. I began to read aloud.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE 3044.7

Today we welcomed on-board representatives of the Grunsfield Institute who have brought specialized instruments with which to study the cosmic string, so long conjectured to be within 1000 light years of Earth. In preparation for their arrival, I ran several simulations that suggest the wake of a starship engine in high warp could perturb a cosmic string with unpredictable results. After consulting with the Grunsfield Bolian representative, I received some concurrence with my concerns, although more muted than my own. Based upon my simulations, our approach to the cosmic string will be at low warp speeds and ultimately at impulse power in a shuttle craft.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE 3044.9

As we near the yet-unnamed cosmic string, the Enterprise is proceeding with increased caution. The objective of this research is to approach the event horizon of an attached and presumed stable wormhole, to measure its apparent Hawking radiation for analysis, and to improve our computer models. Approaching to a minimum safe distance, the Enterprise will route high energy gravitons through a prototype, funnel-shaped collection field supplied by the Institute. This field will protect the Enterprise, and enhance the power of a modified tractor beam holding the shuttlecraft *Dymaxion* in place. The experimental 'pressor' field emanating from the shuttlecraft should theoretically protect it from collision with the string and incursion into the wormhole.

I volunteered for the mission since it involves several tasks for which my Vulcan training and reflexes will prove invaluable, should the unexpected occur. The balancing of forces between the Enterprise and the cosmic string will require the careful coordination of Chief Helmsman Sulu and Ensign Chekov at the Science Officer's station, while I pilot the *Dymaxion* and monitor the experiment.

The captain has approved this assignment, although he believes my decision is motivated by a personal desire to have a scientific “first.” I have assured him this is not the case, as there is no logical reason for personal aggrandizement. However he responded with “Say no more,” and oddly exited the turbolift while winking. Chief Medical Officer McCoy reports I am in excellent health, begrudgingly allowing me to pass my physical examination before the experiment, “with flying colors,” – a quaint Earth expression from a previous century.

The Enterprise will reach its closest approach to the cosmic string at 14.00 hours. The mission is scheduled for Stardate 3045.5 at 11.00 hours. My duties will include taking specific readings from the *Dymaxion* for approximately three hours, after which I will return to the Enterprise.

FIRST OFFICER’S LOG, STARDATE 3046.2 (?)

[Unintelligible]

-- limited data currently, the only solution that does not appear entirely impossible is if the simulations were at least partially correct.

Mission conditions were optimal and the shuttlecraft *Dymaxion* was in perfect working order. As I gained proximity to the wormhole, I began to pick up anomalous readings, but the Grunsfield Institute representative assured me they were well within mission parameters. He offhandedly suggested they might lead to possible breakthroughs in cosmic string research, and were worth some risks. Captain Kirk took over the coms at this point, saying he would prefer it if I were to return to the Enterprise. I assured him the *Dymaxion’s* mission was under control and would prefer to proceed as planned. I realize too late, that I should have acquiesced to my captain’s intuition, when he urged caution.

Events unfolded rapidly. Thanks to my Vulcan reflexes and robust memory I can accurately recall something odd coming *out of* the worm hole towards the *Dymaxion*. Although protocol would have demanded it, it seems Mr. Scott was somehow prevented from, or did not react in time to beam me back to the Enterprise.

In the ensuing glancing collision, the fast-moving projectile disabled the shuttlecraft's auto-stabilization system, sending it into a very tight and rapid spin, overcoming the capabilities of the ship's inertial dampeners. Suddenly the craft engaged in extreme pitch and roll maneuvers, during which I may have fleetingly lost consciousness. Moments before blacking out, I recall hearing the captain's voice frantically invoking the use of a tractor beam, then nothing. The *Dymaxion's* sensor readings changed almost instantly, indicating that the tractor beam seemed to be behaving in a manner opposite to its design; I was being pushed towards the wormhole, in a manner that existing theory would suggest impossible. I felt pain in several areas as I entered the worm hole and lost consciousness from the combination of gravitational forces and possibly oxygen deprivation.

Upon awakening, I found the shuttlecraft cockpit mostly dark and quiet. The jarring collision had disabled all but the shuttlecraft's most rudimentary systems and sensors. Providentially, life support and reduced impulse power were still functioning, yet readings indicated that both would not last longer than forty Earth hours. If Mr. Scott had been present, perhaps we could have repaired the engines, or at least been able to send a distress call. Given my injuries and situation, most options were outside my available resources and capabilities.

As the spin subsided and I became fully conscious, my Vulcan mental faculties were quickly restored. I took some preliminary sight readings from the stars themselves and determined that the wormhole – which might have delivered me to any point in the galaxy – had not sent me far. I had been

transported inside the familiar confines of the Sol system. I hypothesized the wormhole had tracked the warp-wake of the recently arrived Grunsfield expedition. By alternately firing fore and aft impulse engines I was able to maneuver the shuttlecraft to the area where I believed Earth to be. I was confident that an active defense grid or some star freighter, would be certain to detect my presence, even though I was without transponder or audio communications.

Perplexingly, there was nothing. I began to doubt my astronavigation skills; perhaps this was not Earth, but another Class M planet with a similarly sized moon? That was not logical. If it were Earth, the *Dymaxion* sensors would surely have detected something other than biological life signs and occasional concentrations of organized settlements. I ran a system diagnostic – twice – which indicated the sensor array was once again functioning almost optimally. It appeared I was scanning an entirely pre-warp civilization, without the slightest artificial electromagnetic readings, only the 7.83 Hertz Schumann resonance. With only limited oxygen remaining, I accepted the conclusion that something had gone radically wrong. Approaching the planet, I sent out several distress signals, without result; immediate rescue appeared extremely unlikely.

Upon entering the atmosphere of this M Class planet in a virtually uncontrolled manner, the external sensor arrays glowed orange then white-hot throughout the descent. The pressor beam remained the only part of the *Dymaxion* functioning nominally, if only partially. It had been fitted to the shuttlecraft by the Grunsfield team; fortunately it had its own power source and significant shielding. I found this ironic, since it seemed likely that the pressor beam was the proximate cause of my distressed situation. My best hope was to activate the pressor beam and let it ‘repel’ the ground beneath me enough to slow my impact with the surface. The water landing was somewhat of a surprise.

Using the emergency exit I freed myself from the shuttlecraft. I had the presence of mind to seize my phaser, tricorder, communicator, and a small bag of emergency supplies before the *Dymaxion* sank out of sight. Its loss was unfortunate; there were many items aboard that would likely prove useful during my temporary isolation.

The water into which I landed is saline, approximately one kilometer from a shoreline distinguished by a thin rise of sand covered with long yellow grasses. After a cold and arduous swim against the tide, I found a place of concealment, a sufficiently inconspicuous place to rest, although not remote or hospitable enough for a long-term base camp. For now, my priorities include recording this log and tending the various wounds I have sustained. I report five cracked ribs, two broken fingers, two small third-degree burns, five second-degree burns, assorted unimportant cuts, and a mildly concerning head wound.

A quick survey suggests that I am on a pre-warp, perhaps pre-industrial planet. My survival and possible rescue may be hampered by the automatic invocation of the Prime Directive of non-interference. Despite additional difficulties, it would not do to have the native denizens finding (and perhaps reverse-engineering) the shattered remains of the *Dymaxion*, or worse still, erecting a shrine to the arrival of a legendary humanoid creature with pointed ears.

My injuries are now treated to the best of my limited ability. Strangely, I find myself missing the familiar, if often antagonizing, bedside manner of Dr. McCoy. Despite a contraindication by the tricorder, this sentiment may be evidence of a possible concussion. Usually I can depend on my accelerated Vulcan healing abilities, although seldom have I had this many concurrent injuries to test my recuperative powers. After some sleep, I should be sufficiently recovered to locate and establish a more permanent

camp. I must find a location where I can sustain myself longer-term in a concealed manner, but be easily located by a rescue party. Given my current meagre resources, I might be facing a considerable challenge.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN

When possible, I should pursue a systematic study of Earth history, since with a 96.7% probability, I am quite certain this is Earth. During my mission with the Enterprise, I have so far visited their antiquity several times, including the 1960s, 1930s, 1920s, and 1880s. I see no reason to be alarmed by my present circumstances, given how often our warp and transporter technologies interact unpredictably with the eleven-fold dimensionality of the space-time continuum.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN

Today I was aroused from my sleep by two men with guns, accidentally finding my place of concealment. Initially, I took them to be military, before realizing that their manner and dress suggested they were more likely hunting for food or sport. There was no chance of avoiding them as their dogs had led them to me. I remained as distant from them as I could, hoping to convince them I was lost. One of them asked what I was wearing, in an accent very unfamiliar to my ear – more like Mr. Scott when he was inebriated. It was clear that my Starfleet uniform was very unlike their garments – a kind of wool suit popular in the mid-1800s Britain.

I thought it prudent to explain my presence in a way that would not arouse suspicion or affect the fragile timeline. I recalled how Captain Kirk had once explained my appearance by referring to me as Chinese; I decided to attempt this again, explaining I was the sole survivor of a shipwreck on the nearby coast.

The men were intrigued, saying they had never seen a 'China-man,' but were suspicious or disappointed because I didn't have a 'queue,' like most Chinamen they had heard of. They then made several allusions to a recent war over old-Earth analgesics. With some difficulty, I convinced them I had exhausted my knowledge of the English language; eventually they became bored with me and walked off to continue their hunt.

Unhappily, I have failed in my goal to remain unnoticed by the planet's population; I must note the date and time. Fortunately, a newspaper, abandoned by the hunters, confirms that I have indeed found myself in Earth's past; the newspaper is dated April 24, 1846. My solar observation suggests it is 11:57 local time.

My current circumstance puts me in mind of the time Captain Kirk and I were compelled to live in a boarding house during the Great American Depression; I believe it was 1933. According to this newspaper, I have arrived eighty-seven years earlier than that.

I am relieved that the sportsmen did not comment on my ears. They seem to be the most 'alien' aspect of my appearance, at least in the eyes of Dr. McCoy. However, one of them dropped a hat I will use to mask my particular distinguishing feature. It is a soft knitted round cap that can be brought down to cover the tops of one's ears. The design is meant to protect a vulnerable body part from the cold but will do equally well to cover my distinctive Vulcan physiognomy.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE APRIL 26, 1846 (APPROX)

This land is empty, quiet, and open to the elements. If it were considerably warmer, I would have no hesitation in comparing it to Vulcan. I have found what I believe to be an abandoned mine recessed into a gully conveniently beside a gently flowing stream. With some time and effort, it can be made

habitable. Stark as it is, it will be a welcome shelter against the showers and daily winds that blow across this area.

There are no major issues with this location as a setting for my long vigil, awaiting rescue by the Enterprise. There are edible items along the roadsides and wild game, mostly rabbits and ducks, both of which are easy to snare. I prefer a vegetarian existence, but it would be illogical to starve. It would be equally illogical to go the local village and interact with more people, further polluting the timeline; without doubt I stand out starkly against the local populace.

By now, the Enterprise crew will have analyzed the data from the cosmic string. The work would likely have gone faster in my presence, but my science team is capable and will of course have the benefit of Grunsfield Institute experts. Assuming the Enterprise was undamaged by whatever collided with the *Dymaxion*, I would expect that a search for me is already underway.

I am heartened to know that the Enterprise crew found a way to retrieve Captain Kirk from an alternate dimension, so this temporal anomaly should not present an insurmountable obstacle. Overall, I have the easiest of tasks – wait, survive, and refrain from creating timeline problems.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE APRIL 27, 1846

Unless the Enterprise sustained damage when the *Dymaxion* was hit, it would normally only be a few more days before they detect my communicator. Given that I have retreated in time and space, it is prudent that I find a method to loudly announce my presence that will work across both time and space; resources will be required.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE MAY 8, 1846

Perhaps the Enterprise was destroyed by the cosmic string, or my time-travel destination cannot be calculated. It is possible that retrieving me is too inconvenient or risks the lives of the Enterprise crew. No Starfleet captain must be reminded, that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one.

As a mental exercise, I am examining the possibility of boosting my communicator signal to contact Vulcan ships of the current era. My ancestors were actively monitoring Earth for warp signatures by this epoch, so could be a source of rescue. Physically creating a rescue beacon requires materials that are not readily available in this age; I have to face the reality of being here for some time, if not permanently.

From the Diaries of Miss Violet Rutherford

June 6, 1846

Lady L. was at Epsom Derby today. I rather wish that had not been the case. I still do not know the details of her falling-out with Mr. Babbage, although I suppose it revolves around the lack of continued governmental interest in his Difference Engine; the particulars might not be so important.

Clara has often wondered why Mr. B. and Lady L. did not part ways long ago, as he is so famously ill-tempered. I suppose he occasionally redeems himself by being quite funny at dinner parties. He seldom means to be funny, but that only improves the effect.

Uncharacteristically, Lady L. carried herself today in such a thoughtless manner. Usually the pink of perfection on any day's outing, today she dressed as if her aim was to pick raspberries. Her shoes matched neither her dress nor her purse and her eyes looked quite heavy, under what looked to be a maid's bonnet. Throughout the entire afternoon she doddered about, constantly worrying the hem of her glove or her bonnet-ribbon. Between races she scribbled numbers in her well-worn wager-book, which after a glance from me was pulled close to her bodice, I suppose making a dark secret of her horse-racing statistics, or perhaps her losses.

At least two years ago, I recall being with her when she was shown Mr. Babbage's prototype thinking-machine. It clanked along raising numbers to the second and third powers and extracted the root of a quadratic equation *by itself*. The device has all the intricacy of a calliope with none of the charm, but its results resemble the tricks of a mathematical conjurer. Sadly, it appears that its mathematical talents may have been perverted to calculate horseracing odds. Notwithstanding my concerns, Lady L.'s wager on 'Merry Monarch' *did* win, which more than paid for the entire day's outing, as a result of him being the least favorite horse of the day. Perhaps she might help Mr. B. finance his next prototype with the day's gambling proceeds?

The second time she discovered me watching her, Lady L.'s face contorted into either a strained smile or a friendly wince. She approached me with a greeting containing altogether too many words beginning with the letter 'D.' Clara believes I am reading too much into such things, but I am *sure* that Lady L. somehow knows about 'Demetrius Dirge.' Clara thinks she *cannot* possibly know; we would never be invited to her box at the races if she *did* know about my serially-published 'Demetrius Dirge.'

Although presenting a pleasant veneer, Lady L. appeared and sounded bored; she talked of nothing except the weather and Lord L.'s new tunnel-building project. For some reason, he is building tunnels all across their Scottish estate. But she says *reason* implies logic and forethought; she claims the Right Honorable Count of Lovelace has neither.

Clara is quite concerned as well – though less so because of the loss to science and more because Lady L. is the best social contact we have. If she were to become a recluse, or (alternatively) take up the cause of some out-of-the way revolution like her father, we would be invited to considerably fewer parties, thus dealing a devastating blow to Clara's future prospects. Until Clara finds someone malleable, handsome, and rich, I shall endeavor to keep us both afloat with Papa's allowance – and of course, with proceeds from the continued adventures of *Demetrius Dirge, Devil Doctor*.

June 9, 1846

Today, Clara related an interesting story she received in a letter from one of her beaux. If it were anyone other than Charles Wycliffe, I would not credit it, but Mr. Wycliffe resembles a big, sweet Irish sheepdog given human form. Although apparently well-to-do and handsome, he has not the slightest spark of invention in him, making him curiously reliable.

Charles claims that a few weeks ago, he and his solicitor were out shooting grouse on the moors when they discovered a man lying on the ground between two large rocks. Assuming he must be either sleeping or injured, they approached him.

The man in question had very straight black hair cut in an odd fashion. He was dressed in a brilliant blue pajama-like cassock, complemented with loose-fitting black pantaloons and the

strangest of footwear. Apparently when roused, he claimed to being the sole survivor of a Chinese shipwreck. As one might expect, his English was quite limited, and his responses eventually became quite tedious. As they walked away, he seemed to pounce on Mr. Wycliffe's discarded newspaper, and loudly exclaimed the date – poor man had probably been at sea for months! This exclamation is an odd detail that seems unlikely to have been invented.

Clara very much likes the idea of his being a Chinese spy, out for revenge against our empire after our most recent war with them. She is also excited at the prospect of a coach ride to rural Yorkshire to pay a house-call on Mr. Wycliffe, no doubt to flirt and size up his holdings; I will of course be her chaperone. Perhaps getting out of London for a few days would be a tonic for us both. Perhaps together we will thwart the evil China-man's quest for revenge on the English crown, or at the very least, generate grist for another Demetrius Dirge adventure.

June 11, 1846

It would be grand to have something interesting to share with Lady L. the next time she invites us somewhere. Neither of us made a good a show of ourselves during the last Epsom encounter; one can only converse so much about the weather and its effects on the racetrack. While I find the actual races to be quite enjoyable, exciting even, the long intervals between races are incredibly tedious for someone lacking any enthusiasm (or money) for betting.

While Clara takes carriage rides across the Yorkshire moors with Charles, perhaps I might hunt this poor Chinese castaway. Were he actually a spy, I doubt he would verbally interact with the locals. At the very least, I may give the poor thing a few shillings for a coach to Liverpool, where he is more

likely to find a work passage back to his homeland. In any event, some of his exploits may form the basis of a diabolical enemy *per* 'Demetrius Dirge.'

Now that I think of it, a Chinese villain could be quite modern. I hear Rymer is writing something new about a mad barber – Mr. Coxtton will certainly want something to run against it, and *Demetrius Dirge and the Doll of Death* is apparently not reviewing well at the moment. Yes, an excursion to the moors will suit us both; London has been uncharacteristically hot and muggy for this time of year, and I fear the air looks and smells rather greener than it should.

June 14, 1846

What luck! It appears I am accompanying Clara to Yorkshire, at the invitation of Mr. Wycliffe to attend a house-party, with the pretext of my being her chaperone. It seems Mr. W.'s estate is a morning's stroll to Wold Newton Village, a place for me of many happy childhood memories!

Once packed and on the train, I could not stop thinking of Father, and our annual trips as children to Wold Newton. How could he not have been drawn to that place? He never tired of telling the story of witnessing first-hand, the famous meteorite strike, and how it led him to a life-long interest in astronomy. Looking back, the meteorite incident quite became the center pivot of his life. As a child I remember spending long hours in his study endlessly looking over his hand-drawn maps of Mars. The maps gave me such a deep wanderlust, heightened by my father's stories about steam rockets that might take us to Mars in perhaps as few as a thousand years.

June 15, 1846

We arrived at the seaside town of Bridlington, which is as close to the Wycliffe Estate as the train will take us. From there we can take the twice daily mail coach to Rudston, where, all being well, Charles W. will arrange for us to be met at the local Inn.

Rustic Rudston, known for the ancient giant monolith that dominates the local churchyard, is central to the area. From its tiny High Street, one sees rolling green cultivated hills lined by heather in all cardinal directions. Given the extent to which Mr. W. seemed smitten by Clara, I am greatly surprised he was not waiting to greet us. I doubt the date slipped his mind, so suspect a tardy member of his household will be along directly to collect us. Until collected, I will make inquiries of the locals regarding encounters with a certain ship-wrecked Chinaman.

Clara and I found ourselves tucked away into the corner of the public-room downstairs, under a truly oppressive mural depicting the Siege of Gibraltar. The Rudston Inn is much too small to have a ladies' only space; even so, sitting in the main area, we were quickly provided with tea and scones, both without charge. Either Clara's beau is popular, or the news of her trip is common knowledge (this place is so small that I would actually credit that), or this is just *Clara*, who attracts small gifts like a magnet attracts metal filings.

Clara has lately decided, (after reading a *Times* article,) that this season, fashionable ladies' clothing should be either black or white, apart from red bonnet-ribbons and accessories. In Rudston she stands out like an exotic parakeet. As always, my dress sense remains impeccably sensible. My smoky brown travelling costume goes especially well with the smoky brown environment of this ancient inn.

Dear Clara is excited and in high spirits, apparently glad I had come along, and relieved at being away from London. She prattled on incessantly about the country silence, not noticing the irony of her constant chattering. We both enjoyed the marvelously fresh air and abundance of birds that were thankfully not pigeons.

When finally talked out, she rested her jaw on the back of her right glove and eyed me silently for a few moments. Her face remained in shadow from the room; her bonnet made the reading of her face more difficult than usual. Out of the blue she asked me how I really was. I wasn't sure what she meant. She already knew that Demetrius was stalled, but that I hoped to find some inspiration amid the moors. Shaking her head at my feeble and uninteresting response, she offered me the last scone.

As I politely refused the scone, the publican came by, no doubt to determine if we were respectable young ladies. Somehow Clara's "What a charming town this is! I'm sure you must know all the local news," turned into a thirty-minute discussion about how the night foreman at the local iron works might have a secret gambling problem.

The iron works has, of late, apparently been suffering from a string of small thefts, metal tools, wire and pieces of odd-shaped glass. I mentioned something about disreputable London doctors buying materials of that sort to make spectacles, and now the landlord thinks I am either Clara's nurse or traveling lady doctor.

Thankfully, Mr. Wycliffe finally appeared aboard a grand coach-and-four. He brought flowers for Clara, on the occasion of his not being here when she arrived – because he is a fairytale prince who sadly took a wrong turn on the way back to his cloud-palace earlier that day. He asked us every quarter of an hour, without fail, if everything was to our liking.

About the time we should have left, he called the publican over to, I thought, settle our account. The poor man lumbered over, looking uncertain and embarrassed to be in our company. I thought his distress was from being called out by Mr. W. for serving us day-old scones or similar. However, it eventually became clear (after a great deal of “speak up, man,”) that the proprietor was wanting to ask my opinion about a lump on the back of his neck.

With the feigned confidence of a Royal College of Surgeons graduate, I was able to assure him that it was normal lymphatic swelling and not early-onset Elephantiasis. Since my instant diagnosis, Charles Wycliffe now believes me to be an over-accomplished ‘Woman of Science.’ He even remarked, “Your lovely sister's correspondence suggests that you have become quite the independent adventure-seeker since leaving the fortress of your parents’ home.” Clara was no help, with all that rot about being my being a treasured confidant of the Right Honorable Countess of Lovelace, and my deep eccentric aversion to all things orange.

Mr. W. is actually quite sweet; I am beginning to appreciate what Clara sees in him. For her sake, I hope he finds out that the vast majority of my limited medical knowledge was gained so I could write more convincingly, (read: *bloodily*) about the exploits of my mad Dr. Dirge. I would hate anyone to depend upon me for a serious course of treatment; although whatever the diagnosis, I would never prescribe blood-letting.

June 16, 1846

Mr. Wycliffe has risen considerably in my estimation. His home, Wycliffe Lodge, has a long arching tree-lined approach leading to an ivy-covered stone house, boasting attractive bay windows, just right for window seats and cozy haphazard gables. Inside, all is thick rugs, drapes, and fireplaces

large enough to roast a whole Red Stag. Upon arrival, a devilishly handsome footman was continually presenting Clara and me with fresh glasses of hot cider. As a result, I was gently freed from thoughts of my blank-page syndrome, Lady L., or the mysterious Chinese spy.

Later, over dinner and still fashionably tipsy, I posited a question to the company about the nature of the mysterious Chinaman haunting the moors. I presented the question in the hopes it might be a topic of interest to all, but selfishly, I wanted to hear every detail about the oddly shadowy creature. My question also served to interrupt a tedious conversation trending towards the relative merits of various grouse-hunting weapons.

Mr. W. was only too happy to relive his adventure with the Chinaman, which Clara reported faithfully, echoing his account exactly to those out of Mr. W.'s earshot. He firmly believes he encountered a gentle poetic soul wandering as a stranger in a foreign land. He had earlier mentioned his recent enjoyment of Byron's *Childe Harold*; this has clearly coloured his interpretation of the strange man's character.

Mr. Simmons, his solicitor, took a less charitable stance. To him, this man must be a sailor-mutineer, possibly a Chinese navy deserter, given the odd uniform; he believes this character is probably behind the ironworks thefts. Simmons spoke of notes he compiled in the hope of passing along to the local constabulary, suggesting where this Chinaman might be found.

I must find a way to get those notes; not sure how, as do not think Mr. Simmons cares much for me or womankind for that matter. His meek wife thinks the Chinaman most likely a holy hermit, and Mr. W.'s surly brother, Henry, on leave from his regiment, did not comment at all; he shrugged at every suggestion, looked mildly ill and frequently called for more cider.

After dinner we had an amusing game of Musical Chairs, and another of Acting Charades. It was a jolly good game! Clara & Mr. W.'s re-creation of Sampson & Delilah was extremely amusing, but throughout I had the oddest wish to away – outside, to the quiet, taking in stars invisible to London; I remained at the gathering to avoid being thought poor company. Had I stolen away, I doubt I would have been missed; Clara is enough good company for twenty.

June 17, 1846

I arose later than I meant to today. Sat out in the garden, writing a bit of the previous entry as it was late, last night. I may have had rather too much cider! Accosted by Mr. W., who was most apologetic at disturbing my scholarly writings. His main objective was to ask what Clara preferred in way of Parisian perfume; it was an emergency! When I explained she was a devotee of London-made 'Floris,' he was overjoyed he did not have to send off to Paris.

I used the opportunity of his good mood to ask him the likelihood of him getting Mr. Simmons' notes for me. I said I was planning some nature-walks on the moors and wished to avoid the Chinaman. For willingly providing 'intelligence' regarding my sister, Mr. W. was more than obliging.

Now that I have his notes in front of me, I am not sure what Mr. Simmons means by "turn right at the odd-looking tree." Will see if it becomes clearer tomorrow.

June 18, 1846

My brown muslin is filthy, the hem is covered with brambles, and I seem to have lost my worn but warm shawl. Under my adopted ‘cover’ as a naturalist, I left on a long walk this afternoon. The rest of the party split between a riding adventure and lounging in the courtyard, drinks in hand. I can’t remember the last time I was *truly* off alone; I quite enjoyed it! The crush of London does offer a kind of anonymous invisibility, but jarring reality almost always awaits round the next corner. Here, the moors roll out to where fields become sky swirling with clouds; it is beautiful and somehow feels like home. This place, not far from a very odd-looking tree, is perhaps where Mr. W. and Simmons encountered the mysterious stranger. This location is so far from everything, and so quiet – it would make a perfect place of concealment.

I found a place where the mud was disturbed down by the stream, which I have since learned is called the ‘Gypsy Race.’ It appears the grass has been bent down, suggesting something heavy had been dragged, or a person had crawled. Eventually I encountered footprints that proved easy to follow until disappearing into a rocky moraine. I *might* have gone longer and farther and seen more, but darkness was closing in and I had foolishly not brought provisions with me. D—n!

Mr. W. very politely expressed interest in seeing the work/notes/sketches I had been doing all day. I deflected, but must remember to attempt something scholarly tomorrow. I’ll try to maintain this tedious charade to afford myself the freedom to roam without interruption or interference. I am unlikely to be missed for games, and have well-established the notion that I cannot sing a note.

June 19, 1846

Extra pair of stockings, notebook, picnic basket from the kitchen, excuses that will allow me to be gone for an entire day. I believe that with the good light from these long days, following tracks into the hills may prove fruitful; we'll see.

Nothing.

Still nothing.

Once the trail moves to rocks, it becomes scrabbly and unhelpful. I've been climbing over terrain more or less at random for the past two hours. It is so infernally quiet here, that birds flying overhead sound like panting dogs. If there were anyone *anywhere* nearby, I could not help but hear them. I'm going to just cease writing 'nothing.' It is discouraging and counterproductive.

Decided to sit down for a moment and think logically about my search. I just realized that I was the only one who didn't play the *who-is-he-really* game the other night. The moors offer nothing of a military/naval nature to spy on, and his presumed lair is unnecessarily far from the village, affording slim succor for a vagrant. Would a *criminal* have interacted so willingly with Mr. W.? His peacefulness is a credit to him; I suppose it is somewhat assuring.

His mild nature is part of the story I want to be able to tell Lady L. when I arrive back in London. If he is interesting and not mad, why is he here? Why would a not-mad person be this far away from civilization, so far from his homeland if indeed he is Chinese? Should he not be making

plans to return to his homeland? Might he be studying some plant or species of beetle? I see no exotic vegetation out here; in truth it is rather barren. Perhaps he has a religious calling? I fear this is becoming a bizarre, wild goose chase.

I should start heading back. The sun's going down, the moon is waning thinly tonight, and I narrowly avoided falling into what I assume was an abandoned jet mine or quarry. Already, there are stars – so many stars. One can see the stripe of the Milky Way galaxy through the sky and an occasional firework show of shooters.

June 19, 1846 – Later

I really have been an absolute idiot. He's an astronomer; he thrives on darkness! What else could he be? It is no wonder you can't find him; astronomers sleep during the *day*.

I saw him briefly as twilight was coming to an end. It would surely reflect badly on Clara if Mr. Wycliffe had to send out his dogs to look for me. But yes, I saw him. Caught just a peek of him, looking down from the rock eyrie I picked for visibility and relative protection from the wind. It was just as Mr. W. had said: simple blue tunic, black hair peaking from beneath a simple green woolen cap. The cap seemed very out of place, but I suppose it supports the 'eccentric' of my 'eccentric hermit' theory. Before he slipped out of sight, I noticed to my surprise – he was wearing my missing ragged shawl!

I do not know why no one thought to mention – or perhaps this is my error, since the person I conjured up when I heard the words "eccentric Chinaman" was eighty-five – why did no one *tell me* that he was so *young and possibly handsome*?

June 20, 1846

Like the stars he observes, he only comes out at night, and so it is therefore logical that I must sneak out. I am aware my quest is odd and that it may fall under the heading of a compulsion. I have gone back and forth twenty times on whether or not to tell Clara. Knowing her inability to maintain a secret, I bribed the housekeeper to leave the back door unlocked and to leave a small hamper of sandwiches where they can be easily found. I don't want Clara to worry, or worse, tell Mr. W., who would no doubt organize a guard to accompany me, or watch my room, lest I escape. I plan to be quiet, cunning, and cautious. I left a note on my bed requesting that if I am not back by morning, to give one of my gloves to the hunting dogs.

Tonight is but a day short of a new moon, a perfect night for astronomy! I have made preparations, having 'borrowed' a dark lantern from the gamekeeper's shed. I found a map of the local moor in one of Mr. Wycliffe's atlases and located the last place I sighted the Chinaman. The map shows a small gully beside which flows a tiny stream (Of course he would need a water source!) The symbol on the map indicates an abandoned jet mine in the ravine. I'm certain that is his lair!

I have put on my good grey walking dress, and my plain but warm hooded cloak. I feel good about the cloak particularly; no gothic heroine would be caught dead wandering the moors in cheery red-and-green plaid!

I have heard that the waters in Loch Ness are so deep and black that the swimmers who dive deep enough panic, because they no longer know in which direction the surface lies. That was the moor this night. I felt like some will-o'-the-wisp wandering about with my lantern. Every hundred

paces I arranged stones in the shape of an arrow to point me home. I was only able to approximate the way to the place I had seen yesterday, but it turned to not matter. With so little for my eyes to do, every sound might as well have been a scream.

While walking, I began to hear the oddest noise. It sounded like crickets at first, but crickets are virtually unknown to the moors. For a few seconds at a time, there would be a sustained burst of fizzing, then nothing. I walked towards the noise, then changed my direction as needed to make sure the sound continued to grow louder and louder.

Listening became unnecessary as soon as I perceived a blue glow, reflecting from one of the trees surrounding the suspected ravine.

I hunched backward into my muffling cave of skirts, close to a small rock formation. I was close enough to peer through a small crack in the rock where now a blue light streamed through, bright and solid.

There was the man, tunic sleeves rolled up despite the cold. Pieces of metal and glass surrounded him, wires twisted together into odd creations, sheltering a small core of something dark, something I could not see.

The fizzing cricket sound was actually made by a tool the man held in his hand. The tool was shaped like – like a pistol, actually, but I never in my life saw any pistol like it. It emanated a blue light which made metal instantly glow bright red. He wore no protective gloves, nor eyeglasses. The tableau made me think of the fakirs of India, who, I have heard, walk over glowing coals without pain, and are capable of all sorts of magical effects.

The combination of buzzing and high-pitched trills, the sparking light, the tangled web of wires, and the man cradled in middle of it all, perfectly at home with the strangeness, was

mesmerizing and captivating. I looked away and briefly lost track of the man; I am not sure for how long; I remained focused on the sparks, awaiting his return.

Danger! I felt a gentle hand on my shoulder. I spun and caught my heel on my petticoat. There was the sound of a rip, my foot slipped and I fell. Certain injury was avoided when one hand caught my shoulder, and another my hip. The hold did not seem comforting, and I instinctively flailed my arms, trying to pull away from an unknown beast. I felt as some tiny prey with crunchable bones.

When he let me fall gently into the soft heather, my urge to fight diminished. Smelling the heather's clean sharp smell restored my faculties. I found my hands and feet and pushed myself up slowly. There I saw the slender outline of a man, only slightly darker than the night sky around him. He stepped back quietly – I think to reduce my sense of alarm. My mind ran through options – I could pretend to be lost, I could pretend to only speak French...

Then he spoke softly; I heard some education in his voice which revealed of all things, an *American* accent. "Are you well... why are you here?" he said.

I didn't say anything.

"You appear to be *spying on me*, are you?"

I looked up to where I thought his eyes should be. "What is that machine in there?" I asked.

There was a long pause.

"Do you recognize it?" he said.

I thought for a few moments what it might be.

"It reminds me of Mr. Babbage's difference engine, although it only shares the characteristic of complexity, not similarity of size or design."

It was more how I imagined his *thinking* engine would look, when completed. Perhaps the Chinese were further along than Mr. Babbage. When I said I thought it was a difference engine, it made him pause for a longer interval. His angular face turned so it caught some of the blue light from the machine.

“You know about difference engines.”

“I’m a friend of the Countess of Lovelace.” (*Friend* was overstating it ...)

“Ada Lovelace?”

“I, I’m a distant cousin.” (*Very distant.*)

“And you have come looking for me. At night.”

“The villagers seem to think you are an astronomer. I thought –”

“Word of me has reached the village?”

“Well, some of them think you are a monk. Or a... poet.” I did not add *criminal* or *spy*.

The man took a deep breath and muttered, to himself. “Nothing is so odd as one who wishes to be left alone.” He held himself stiffly, almost militarily. “And you?” The harshness was back. I disregarded his question.

“You are clearly an inventor,” I said, “a *brilliant* inventor of – oh.” I had just realized. “The thefts from the ironworks – the glass and wire –” There was a *lot* of glass and wire tucked away behind those stones. But that just didn’t seem right.

“You know Lady Lovelace? You call her by her Christian name?”

“All this is incredible! Where does your electricity come from? What is its source? Do you channel lightning, like Mary Shelley’s doctor?”

“You compare me to—”

“The item I saw in there should be in a laboratory, or on a plinth in the Royal Institution. Not on some unlit rock in the freezing cold of the Yorkshire moors. You should have money and assistants. While I have no insight to what you have created, I am certain you might get a *title* for it. Why do you steal your materials? *What is wrong with you?*”

If I shocked him by my sudden outburst of direct questions, and I think I meant to, he made no move to counter it.

“I am an inventor,” he said. “And I... am very concerned that my work should not ... fall into the wrong hands.”

“Oh. Oh, of course.”

I took a step backward, then another; he did nothing.

“I must tell you... I must inform you that if you are a traitor to the Crown, there are a number of people who know exactly where I am, and they expect me back within the hour.”

An eyebrow rose into his hairline. “I see,” he said. “By the wrong hands, I mean *anyone’s* hands but mine. I do not wish for anyone to be... hurt.”

A pacifist could be all right. Acceptable.

“It is widely known that Lady Lovelace is interested only in science, not war or profit. And—” I continued. “If I can find you, others can too. People walk these moors, and your machine both glows and makes noise. It may not be so very secret for very long. The next person who finds it might want to – to sell it. Perhaps to France. I assure you as a lady, I will not tell anyone, except perhaps Lady Lovelace.”

He stared at me for a very long time. He did much of that.

“You shouldn’t be living out here in the cold.” I shuffled my cloak more tightly around me, “It isn’t right.”

“You make some lucid and valid points,” he said.

“Right. Yes, ah. Yes. Jolly good.” Like my father, I become even more British when surprised. “You should, ah... You should come back with me. Except my host doesn’t exactly know where I’ve gone. That shouldn’t be a problem – I’ll announce you as friend of Lady Lovelace’s come up from London. A scientist. To consult with Clara, my sister. (Clara can do no wrong in Mr. Wycliffe’s eyes.)

“It will be first light by the time we get back, or close to. Say you took a private train up from London, to visit your workshop. Your workshop in Yorkshire. Yes, it all makes sense.”

At that moment his Engine gave a particularly loud pop. I jumped. My mysterious hermit just looked amused, d__n him, not nervous at all.

“Does that thing *turn off*, Mr.—”

“Spock.”

Spock. Spok? Spawk? It sounds Oriental. It probably starts with an X or something. But his saying it made him feel more real. It made this strange, windblown encounter real!

“Spock,” I said.

“Yes, at your service.”

“And that is... your forename or surname?” They do these things differently in China I suppose.

“Mr. Spock. Mr... uh, Grayson Spock?” Somehow, he made it sound like a question.

“Well then, Mr. Grayson Spock. I am staying at Wycliffe Lodge, and although it is a slight breach of etiquette to invite a complete stranger to visit tomorrow, I don’t foresee any insurmountable problems... Would you like a sandwich?”

FIRST OFFICER’S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE JUNE 20, 1846

There has been a development in my life as a castaway to nineteenth century Earth. I had hoped the Enterprise would have located me by now, making alternate living arrangements unnecessary. Unless I was willing to throw myself in the ocean, it was inevitable my presence here should be discovered and remarked upon. It seems that humans find nothing more remarkable than one who chooses to remain alone. I have therefore concluded that the most logical way to protect the already-fraying timeline is to remain as unremarkable as I can. Since every large city has its share of eccentrics, my presence in London will only add one more to the existing pool, whereas here in rural England, I am a singular eccentric that may eventually get caught pilfering materials from the limited local sources.

Good fortune has intervened in my Crusoe-like adventure. I have been discovered by a human female of some means, who intends to introduce me to her society as a ‘man of science.’ The human in question is Miss Violet Rutherford, whose eclectic knowledge for the era and connections to other scientific minds, promises low-risk access to the resources I need to complete the signaling beacon I have created. Of necessity I have deceived her as to the true nature of this crude beacon device, bowing to her suggestion of it being an “analytical engine,” a term I recall from reading the history of human pre-warp computer technology during my academy days.

Miss Rutherford is also acquainted with *the* Ada Lovelace, a human pioneer of computers in general and computer programming in particular. To complete the beacon here in insolation, I might as well be working with arrowheads and bearskins. I need materials that only someone of considerable resources would be able to provide in this era. I reason that, if I follow this course of action, it may become possible to escape Earth more quickly, thus impacting the timeline as little as possible.

From the Diary of Violet Rutherford – June 20, 1846 – Later [*continued*]

The back door to the scullery was unlocked as arranged. It was a close-run thing when I nearly ran into Mr. Wycliffe's older brother at the foot of the stairs. My greys and plaids provided just as good camouflage here as they did in the middle of the moor. It didn't hurt that Henry appeared to be nursing an epic hangover.

To my surprise, when I opened my bedroom door, Clara was sitting on my bed. Worried eyes sat at odds to the pink ribbons on her ruffled nightdress. A thrown pillow hit the door behind my head.

"Violet," she hissed. "Violet, what – Why do you look like you've been out campaigning with Wellington for months? You *snuck* out, you snuck out without telling, and — just because I don't see the appeal of all your numbers doesn't mean I'm an imbecile. Was it Henry Wycliffe? He hasn't been in his room either—"

"Clara."

"No, you've been outside. Is there – an *attractive groundskeeper* I was not made aware of?"

“No, Clara, no...” I sat down next to her. The little fireplace had been built up and lit, creating a web of gold around us. “I’m sorry,” I said. “There have been a few developments, and I feared that if I told you, you would have held me back.”

Thank God for Clara’s ability to cool easily! She nodded seriously and quietly as I began my explanation, with much stuttering and much told out of order. She listened and eventually the whole narrative came out– my concern about Lady L., my interest in – Mr. Spock, I suppose I should call him. My coming here for that express reason. My hunt for him, and his invention of God-knows-what. Once she realized that propriety had been preserved, she reluctantly condoned my actions, and was embarrassingly, exceedingly grateful that I was not having an affair with Henry.

“Well, if he is half as singular as you say, then of course he must come to London.”

“I may have invited him here to the Lodge tomorrow!”

Clara raised her eyebrows.

“He could say he was a friend of Lady Lovelace! And you could say he asked to come, but – the letter got delayed, and you only received it this morning.”

“I could say?”

“Mr. Wycliffe can deny you nothing; you know that.”

“Well, perhaps...” She bit her lip. “He will be most upset by this news. He will have to rush around preparing rooms and dinners. Your Mister Spock, does he not have any special diet, being Chinese? Although I suppose if he has been surviving out on the moor, he must not be too particular... Now that that's settled, don't forget I am still annoyed at you for hiding the truth from me.”

I confess I wrote this instead of sleeping. Before that I watched the dark ceiling and the jumping shadows made by the fire for an hour. I thought of poor Mr. Spock, being shoved into the Rudston Inn's worst room, then realized it may be luxury for him, given his recent accommodations. I can't help but feel there is a turning, a shift, something beyond prediction and beyond my control.

June 21, 1846

He has arrived! I must go downstairs and greet him.

It has strongly been suggested that he should leave. Was he raised in a *barn*? On safari in darkest Africa? How can one person have absolutely no manners and no luggage? Mr. W. described him as turning up wearing a green woolen cap, (my former) shawl and blue and black oriental pajamas! He removes the shawl indoors but not the cap, even in the presence of a lady, even at dinner! He doesn't hunt, doesn't ride, and prefers not to eat meat! At dinner he told Mrs. Simmons that she had the makings of a much better lawyer than her husband, and suggested that Mr. Trevelyan's brother was having a scandalous dalliance with the footman whom I thought fancied me!

Half the house is not speaking with the other half. Clara smoothed it over as best she could by informing a number of the guests (in strict confidence) that he is in fact Lord Byron's half-Chinese bastard son. Clearly, the atmosphere has turned against us!

I know it's awful, but I cannot help but think it too funny. Take any stuffy company, stir in Mr. Spock as a reactive agent, abracadabra – chaos!

Rather a too large portion of my funds have gone to chartering a private coach that will take us first to Mr. Spock's camp on the moors, and then on to London. We leave tomorrow morning, at

first light. I don't mind leaving; Clara thinks I have brought a wild vagabond into her life, and now Mr. Wycliffe thinks all Clara's friends are like that. Poor Clara, I seem to have ruined her prospects with Mr. W.

Clara is beyond annoyed with me. The one aspect of all this I would remedy if I could, would be to patch things up between Clara and Mr. Wycliffe. Clara seldom gets annoyed, but today she called me selfish and inconsiderate, harsh words from her. I tend to agree, but have no idea what else I should have done in the circumstance. When I realized Mr. Spock, an obviously learned and gentle man was trying to survive in the wild, I couldn't allow it. I wish I could explain to myself, why I am so willing to upset our lives for Mr. Spock whom I barely know. I know he is odd, but he does possess a pure almost child-like undefinable charm. Oh please, let Clara be mistaken; don't let him be a mad tramp!

June 22, 1846

This morning is cold silver and lavender. I am much improved and heartened that Clara was speaking to me before we left. As I write this, Mr. Spock has refused any help in securing his Engine. Maddeningly, for the last hour, the coachman and I have been sitting on flat stones playing cards; I suspect he is cheating.

In just over an hour, I have lost two pounds, two shillings and one pence. Mr. Spock has boxed up perhaps – half? The load just looks like boxes of scrap metal strung together with black wires. I suppose I should take this opportunity to quietly bang out the end of Dr. Demetrius Dirge. If I don't, the driver shall surely have me sent to debtor's prison.

This week, my Demon Doctor Dirge encountered a mysterious Chinese inventor. I have again used both amnesia and hypnosis as plot devices, but finally it's finished! Regardless of its merits, there are many stacks of cured ham with more literary taste than publisher Coxtton. All is well, especially as Mr. Spock is finally finished with whatever elaborate thing he was doing with those wires.

We are breaking the trip at a dreadful inn in Wellingborough. My remaining funds barely cover one room, which may be fortuitous. I felt that getting one room for each of us would have seemed so much more transcendently scandalous. I have no idea what Mr. Spock thinks, but if there is even the smallest aspect of this current situation that seems untoward, he has not bothered to mention it. I am lying on the bed, essentially dressed *sans* shoes, mostly because I do not trust Mr. Spock to know how to refasten my stays in the morning. There is no hint of mischief. I am not sure he is fully aware I am female; perhaps like the footman he prefers his own gender!

Spock doesn't sleep; he spent most of last night in the carriage, apparently in some sort of dazed half-trance, staring out the window into a mid-distance. At night he writes, he paces, and every quarter of an hour heads down to the stable to make sure that his Engine – all 50 pounds of it – has not managed to get up and walk away.

I started a letter to Clara, which remains unfinished. What can I say to convince her that I am not irretrievably distracted or compromised?

June 23, 1846

We sit, mostly in silence in a bouncing conveyance devoid of comfort on our way to London. For reasons best known to himself, Mr. Spock has calculated how long the trip will take, down to the minute. Do all mathematicians do this, perhaps as a mental exercise? Perhaps out of boredom? There are far too many variables to know for sure, but apart from his elaborate number game, Mr. Spock speaks very little, and may have spent a portion of the trip – *meditating*; is that the term?

We arrived in London at 34 minutes past eight o'clock, exactly as Mr. Spock predicted. Now that we are here I must:

1. Mail manuscript.
2. Send runner to Lady L., phrase note in intriguing way: "Discovered incredible invention, and its inventor. Rather large, and so thinking of bringing it around to you this evening."
3. Buy Mr. Spock clothing that is not blue sleep-wear. Ideally also a proper hat.

Well. Mr. Spock does look rather handsome. Unfortunately, until I can visit my bank, I am rather down to farthings. Fortunately, my father has an account with Ede and Ravenscroft; explanations to Papa later! I steered Spock towards the haberdasher's door and nudged him inside. I don't know; once dressed, I was expecting more of an untouched Rousseau-like individual. He remains completely at a loss in company, likely to offend accidentally, at ease on his own, or when talking about science, rather like Mr. Babbage.

Somehow, given the new setting of a posh clothing store, all of that bleached away. Mr. Spock strode around the shop, inspecting cuts and cloths, displaying rather good (read expensive)

taste. He made the deerstalker he selected look less like the costume of an eccentric inventor, and more like the fashion statement of an aristocrat recently back from a hunting trip, whose bags had been misplaced. The shop assistant trailed around him without being told, and Mr. Spock seemed to take this only as expected. He asked *me* to wait outside by the carriage, to keep watch on the Engine as he put it. He cheekily waved me inside when it was time to pay.

I gathered my skirts through the door, and saw him dressed in his new purchases, which are rather – well – rather *tighter* than the garments he was wearing before. I spied that odd, really quite fine arrow-shaped pin nestled in his cravat, and observed how well a high white collar suits him. He opted for – or perhaps the shop assistant has a keen eye and chose for him – a slightly low-cut vest in an oriental print. In his new garb he could be some wealthy nabob recently returned from the Orient. He looked every bit the hero illustrated in that new Alexandre Dumas serial. The deerstalker hat ruined everything!

I surveyed a perfectly nice row of top hats arrayed in uniform back-lit shelves, then nodded towards the shop assistant, hiding behind a trouser rack.

“I already have a hat,” said he, following my gaze.

“NOT a hat that someone in London would actually wear!”

“I find it strange that any hat could bother you to the degree it seems to.”

“You can walk around with a bucket on your head for all I care.” I stepped closer to him, a little more out of the shop assistant’s hearing. “But Lady Lovelace would be *offended* if someone talked to her while wearing that, and well she should be!”

Mr. Spock stared at me a moment with those bottomless dark eyes.

“Come with me,” he said. Without another word he clasped my hand and drew me behind a curtain into a fitting booth. His grip nearly peeled my glove away. He did not seem to notice the power he was exerting.

“I have certain – certain ‘peculiarities’ that make these cylindrical brimmed hats inappropriate for me,” he said. Without further explanation, popped off his hat, and turned his head to show me – a pointed ear.

After all the fuss over the hat, back at Wycliffe Lodge and now in the shop, I was expecting ears with great rings in them like an African chief *at least*. Or a distinct *lack* of ears. Yes, his ears were pointed, shaped a bit like leaves, and they made him look a bit like an *elf*. But for all I knew, that was just what oriental ears looked like. I cannot claim the acquaintance of so many oriental gentlemen.

Mr. Spock seemed genuinely surprised by my confusion.

“Hu – people tend to comment on my ears.”

I must assume *after* they finished commenting about his hair, pajamas, accent, scientific genius and self-enforced isolation.

Perhaps I was being unkind. Perhaps the peculiar ear shape was some kind of childhood malformation of which he was over-aware. I myself have one eyelid that hangs slightly lower than the other when I am tired. Clara swears up and down that it is so subtle no one sees it but me, but if I am being truly honest... I think she is just being kind.

I sighed. “You could have just *said* that you wanted to cover your ears.”

With the shop assistant’s help, I turned one of those very wide cravats into a small turban, a la Lord Byron. (As I suppose befits our errand.) And because it is a fashion twisted and pinned in place,

it is quite acceptable to be worn indoors. I suppose it makes Mr. Spock look eccentric in a rakish, daring way, which is all to the best. I will admit to being pleased with the general effect.

As he raised me into the carriage (a slightly unexpected gesture), Mr. Spock held my hand a fraction long, as though he had forgotten to let go. Then when he climbed into the carriage next to me, he turned and said directly, "It was very kind but not necessary for you to expend your funds on me. Thank you."

I was touched he said that; I will have to deal with Papa when he is confronted with the bill. Of course, I can but won't repay him; Papa will offer a scolding and I will offer a kiss; as always, we will then be even.

Upon our arrival at Lady Lovelace's residence, a grand elegant neoclassical townhouse in St. James' Square, I was reminded of my first impression of the place. It disrupted my sense of symmetry with its oddly placed main door and stacked chimneys. This odd feeling was not at all relieved when the door opened. Instead of a butler or footman, the Right Honorable Augusta Ada King-Noel, Countess of Lovelace, née Byron, scowled at us, from within a gigantic grey shawl.

Glaring at us, with an intensity of an omniscient being, she sternly pulled a folded paper from her voluminous reticule, making a '*thwip*' sound as she flared it open. "It appears, Violet, you feel you must resort to cryptic notes and intrigue to secure an invitation?"

At times I am terrified that my head might explode if I meet her probing eyes for too long; this was one of those times. Matching her coldness, her comportment was uncharacteristically careless, perhaps a signal that I had over-stretched the bounds of our 'friendship.' Mr. Spock intervened by stepping in front of me, holding out his right hand in an offer to shake.

“I am the Mr. Spock of which Miss Rutherford has presumably written.”

Lady L. looked down at his hand – an unexpected gesture, she is a hand-kiss woman if anyone is – then up at his face. Her mouth quirked, and she did condescend to shake his hand.

“Violet has certainly found someone to look the part of eccentric inventor,” she said wearily. The lady appeared very tired and slightly annoyed. “I appreciate the intended gesture, I think. Alas, you know nothing of me and appear to be better suited to a music hall than the world of scientific invention.”

She stood aside to close the door, an intent immediately blocked by Mr. Spock’s hand and words.

“You have had a falling out with your collaborator,” said Mr. Spock. “over the future of your mutual inventions. You have not left this house in days. You have young children, but have not seen them recently. Your household staff has been reduced to a minimum. You have become disillusioned; perhaps you feel you have lost your essential purpose.” He paused to gauge the effect of his ploy. “I might be able to help in these matters if that is acceptable?”

I foolishly chimed in here. “You really *must* see his invention!”

Until this moment Lady L. had mostly remained at her reserved polite best, but now she erupted into the very definition of feminine fury, all of which was directed at me.

“YOU! – You dare to share these things about my life, revealing them to someone completely outside my circle, whom you then bring to my house to taunt me? Never have I been ...”

Once again Spock intervened, having deftly stepped between us once again, bearing the full brunt of her wrath only a few inches from her screaming reddened face.

“My lady, Miss Rutherford has always mentioned you in the kindest and most gracious of lights. She honors and admires both you and your accomplishments.” He paused again to see if his softly-spoken words had any calming effect, then continued. “There is ink on the sleeve of your gown, but none on your hand. You have been writing, but not recently. Your comportment is not at all the stylish image that Miss Violet always conveys, suggesting an emotional upset or depression. There is an abandoned toy, here on the step, covered by several days’ worth of dust, suggesting you have children, but not the staff to maintain your lovely house. These things I deduced by simple observation after eliminating extremely unlikely possibilities; Miss Rutherford has never spoken out of place regarding you or your household. Except, perhaps to tell me of your collaboration with Mr. Babbage on an analytical engine, which I believe might be more exactly called a ‘logic engine.’”

Her large eyes expanded to their fullest aperture; she paused and nodded slowly. “Yes...” said Lady L., haltingly. “Yes. I suppose it would.” She looked from me to Mr. Spock, and then back again. “Well, I suppose you two had better come inside for some tea at least. Your cab driver is no doubt charging you the earth to wait. Send him off and please come in with your contrivance.”

I settled with the driver and paused, watching him away at a slow trot, as my heart returned from its recent gallop. Mr. Spock insisted on carrying his device across the threshold, placing it upon a reception bench at the front entrance. Note to self: Mr. Spock runs a chaotic game; I had better caution him regarding deducing the behaviour of newly met acquaintances.

By now, Lady L. had fully recovered her composure, ordered tea for three in the drawing room and guided us to some comfortable facing settees. “I understand, Mr. Spock, you have profound knowledge of astronomy,” she half inquired. “My old tutor has a very special interest in

astronomy. She would never forgive me, were I to chase the inventor of an astronomical device that no doubt calculates orbitals, away from my door. Nor would she forgive me not introducing you.”

June 24, 1846

I don't precisely recall crawling into a guest bed that first night, although I suppose I must have done. The journey, the lack of funds, the wine at dinner, my discombobulation before Lady Lovelace's eyes and a lack of restful sleep certainly contributed. I was pointed – or really, taken by the shoulders and rotated – towards a guest room. The drop cloth was half-heartedly pulled off the monster four-poster bed and vanity; I was asleep before my head touched the pillow.

As consciousness was restored, I gradually became aware of white cloths draped over chests and two small sewing tables. On an ornate chair by the door presented a neatly folded set of sleeping apparel. I had apparently shed my top layer and loosened my stays again before collapsing into oblivion. My petticoats were wrinkled beyond all repair, but thankfully I had a trunk full of clothes.

Clara and I have never had any sort of a maid since leaving our parental home; such expenditure would be entirely ridiculous these days, given our somewhat 'diminished' circumstances. We have, of necessity, become self-reliant women of the future! Unfortunately, dear Clara is not here to help me with my self-reliance; I must improvise to suit current circumstances.

On the other side of the door in the adjacent room, Mr. Spock had clearly depended his entire life on a valet. When he revealed himself, my eyes were immediately drawn to the most poorly-tied cravat I had ever seen. I conjectured quietly that he might have been attempting to *strangle* himself. Surprisingly, the turban was acceptable. I'm sure it will not be long before his hair grows enough to

cover those ears, but I don't understand his reluctance to show them. Thankfully long hair is becoming more fashionable among those whom he is likely to meet. The cravat *clearly* needs work!

I looked around, in vain, for a second footman or valet or under-butler or *someone* with a modicum of fashion sense.

"Is something wrong, Miss Rutherford?" inquired my turbaned friend.

"You can't – you can't possibly be seen looking like that."

Looking down, he ran his hands over his unfamiliar garb, as if he only just noticed he was dressed.

"It is illogical to wear clothing this complex. To put it on takes up time that would much more usefully be given to other pursuits."

"Yes, well, until you turn monk robes into the latest London fashion, perhaps you can just... let me..."

I reached out, and yanked away the cravat. I had one moment of satisfaction with it being gone, and then – I had a hand on his surprisingly cool bare neck. I looped the fabric around him as I had done many times for Papa, without much thinking. While I administered to him, I could not bring myself to look into his eyes. I am no Beau Brummel, but the result looked far better than before. He put his hands to his neck, smoothing, exploring what I had done.

"Where is your ah, pin? That brooch you were wearing before."

He said nothing.

"The irregular shaped arrow? Simple? Well made? Silver?"

"That is not... appropriate to this situation."

"It went very well, I thought."

But clearly, to him, it is no fashion accessory. A memento, perhaps a badge? I suppose he will tell me when he is ready.

June 25, 1846

I appear to have unofficially moved in with Lady Lovelace. Each time I allude to leaving, she either immediately changes the subject or requests that I order fresh tea. I have wired Clara to let her know where I am, and that she may have our flat to herself for the time being. I have not heard back from her just yet; I am trying not to read anything into her lack of communication that might not be there.

I do order a great deal of tea. Mr. Spock persists in his dislike of interruptions, interacting with people, (especially) Lady L's servants, but seems to get on famously with her. Thankfully, the absolutely shockingly small skeleton staff working the day we arrived, appears not to be related to a lack of funds, (which I initially feared). It is the result of a separation between Lady and Lord Lovelace. He is away to their estate in Scotland, while she prefers London and some distance from him. It seems Lord L., in a moment of pique, absconded with most of the household staff.

Mr. Spock continues to perfect his Sky Engine almost without pause – except now when he talks about it with Lady Lovelace, they call it a 'Beacon' – they continue to get along like butter and toast. Lady L. is filling great sheets of paper with equations which she shares with Mr. Spock, who is simultaneously drawing exotic plans like an architect.

P.S. Mr. Coxton has put a moratorium on future issues of Demetrius Dirge. He did not like the Chinese character in the last installment. Ironically, he found him 'disorienting.'

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE JUNE 25 1846

I suspect Lady Lovelace thinks I am trying to hide from the authorities. However, since this is a woman with little respect *for* the authorities, this does not present a problem for me; in fact, it may help my peculiar situation. I do not fear potential timeline corruption here as I would with almost any other 'historical figure.' In this era, Ada Lovelace was widely regarded as an eccentric. Her considerable reputation should be enough to explain any accrued inconsistencies. In the distant future it is well-known that Ada became a recluse in the years before her death, which, if memory serves, is tragically only six years hence. Despite her singular contribution to the field of software, it seems Ada Lovelace is to bleed to death at the hands of her doctors, while being treated for cancer – what a tragic loss to human progress! Who knows what advances to software and computing may have been made by this remarkable human intellect had her life-span been doubled. I am grateful that she almost unwittingly offers me considerable help with my plans; I am honored to have this time with her. The Prime Directive prevents me from fully explaining my objectives and the extent to which she is helping; it is unfortunate she will never know.

So far, Ada Lovelace has respected my stipulation that my Beacon remain entirely secret, with the one exception of her old astronomy teacher. She understands the funds that are required to perfect the beacon are not insignificant and feels uncomfortable releasing more without confirmation that I am not a swindler or charlatan. I have reluctantly agreed to this; there is no gainsaying the logic of her position.

However, *Violet Rutherford* seems to have developed a rather unfortunate interest in me as an individual. The fact that she is an avid diary keeper may explain her memory for minutia. She seems to record all my minor comments, perhaps to cross-check later. Of the two females, she is the one who may possibly present the greatest timeline challenge.

From the Diary of Violet Rutherford – June 28, 1846

After days of observation, I am certain Mr. Spock is not Chinese. He presents the very broadest and thinnest knowledge of Chinese history and culture; he remains completely ignorant of Chinese folklore, and I have doubts he can speak Chinese! He appears, in fact, to have only the broadest knowledge of contemporary history and culture. He cannot name the current Prime Minister, Poet Laureate or even the current American President. Of course, many of my countrymen do not exactly follow American politics, and Polk is only recently in office, so believable ignorance on that point. Unbelievably, Mr. Spock had to *ponder the name of the current monarch!*

One thing is clear, whoever taught him English had an *American* accent. My investigations have not brought me any useful conclusions; in fact, the more I learn of my mystery Chinaman, the more questions I have. He is fascinating, frustrating, intelligent, child-like, calm, intense, arrogant, peaceful, and alluring, often all simultaneously. Curiously, I have learned to like him very much over the last short while.

Mr. Spock – *some observations*

1. *Knowledge of Literature* – Vaguely aware of Charles Dickens, although I suspect he may have him confused with someone else. I don't believe Dickens ever wrote about the French Revolution. Mr. Spock also enjoys some American called Melville. Fortunately, we are only a few steps away from the wonderful London library, where I was able to borrow a copy of Melville's "TYPEE" a kind of middling adventure/romance set on a Polynesian island. I cannot imagine what Mr. Spock sees in it!
2. *Knowledge of Philosophy* – Occasionally mentions an Eastern-sounding, "meditation." Perhaps this should fall under religion. He seems to have a sincere sense of fairness and adherence to duty.
3. *Knowledge of Astronomy* – Appears absolutely profound. Will have confirmation of this when Mary Somerville (first female member of the Royal Astronomical Society) arrives.
4. *Knowledge of Mathematics* – Even more profound, if possible. Damn his eyes.
5. *Knowledge of Politics* – Appears to neither know nor care.
6. *Knowledge of Botany* – Nil. Which is in itself a bit impressive, considering he was living off the land, likely for months. Strangely he eschews eating meat of any kind unless forced to.
7. *Knowledge of Geology* – Knows a great deal about meteorites & asteroids, which I can vouch for myself.
8. *Knowledge of Chemistry* – None that I could ascertain, but I await some surprises in this area.
9. *Knowledge of Things Electrical* – The blue glowing machine without a power source has yet to be explained. If Lady L. has fathomed its intricacies, she prefers keeping me in the dark.
10. *Knowledge of Etiquette* – None at all at first. Is getting better, but has managed to shock or offend every household member and guest at least once.

Other Oddities

1. Has very singular haircut (probably oriental fashion).
2. Makes occasional references to a medical doctor-acquaintance he apparently dislikes.
3. Makes occasional references to an old commanding officer called Jim. A prosaic name, but the fact that Mr. Spock uses it instead of a surname does indicate closeness. My best guess is he was close at one time.

I currently hypothesize he is American ex-military – navy, I suppose, given his shipwreck story. Perhaps navies need astronomers, mathematicians or engineers for various reasons. Mr. Spock seems self-assured enough, he comports himself like someone who generally expects to be listened to, if not obeyed. My best guess is that he was an American naval officer, or at least a Petty Officer, if not a Master Chief?

It is possible his parents were very eccentric and raised him as some kind of social experiment. One is put in mind of John Stewart Mill, who I believe was raised to prefer fact and logic over all other facets of human existence. Unwisely, I seem to be drawing from anecdotal evidence now and sallying into the land of complete conjecture. Perhaps one of my new acquaintances will reveal more of this human enigma.

June 29, 1846

Mary Somerville. At first, I found her almost obtrusively pleasant – silver curls, old-fashioned lace collar, possessing a lilting Scottish accent, and the general animated manner of a motivating

school mistress. However, after interacting with her, I have found her to be *absolutely intimidating!* (Or perhaps I have secretly been intimidated by school mistresses all my life?)

Her power to overawe springs from her apparent expertise in almost *everything*. Lady L, for all her brilliance, remains largely focused in on mathematics, from which springs her association with Mary. Unlike Ada, Mrs. Somerville seems to have read every book in existence. Good lord, I discovered to my shame, that she's even read Demetrius Dirge! Because of her accomplishments and range of expertise, she is referred to by the Royal Institution alumni, not as an astronomer or physicist or botanist, but as an esteemed *scientist!* (I suppose a 'man of science' would not quite be suitable.) The Crown now pays her 200 pounds per annum for various past contributions to science that I suppose are beyond my untrained mind. I understand why Lady L. had her summoned; I suspect Mr. Spock could speak of mathematics and (probably) celestial mechanics at her level; she *would certainly be difficult to deceive.*

Walking into the solarium where Mr. Spock had assembled his device, his 'Beacon,' which remains as strange, buzzing and electrical as it ever was, Mrs. S. seemed caught off guard. Lady L. was otherwise occupied this afternoon, but Mrs. S. walked around the hissing device perhaps a dozen times, addressing a few questions to Spock, who stood almost motionless with his hands behind his back. Primarily they were enquiries regarding articles & authors. Mr. Spock *knew nothing* of the publications and general scientific trivia. I must say, that was a ... distressing display for me. Even *I* know how many planets there are in the Solar System, and it isn't *eight*.

Oh, good lord, as I write this, I am worried. Perhaps Clara was right; perhaps Lady L. believed him because she was bored and distressed. Unhappily, I may have believed him for the same reason.

Mrs. Somerville is having a very, very long (private) tea with Lady L., just now returned from the solicitors. I attempted to play on the harpsicord in the adjoining room in a middling sort of way, and every now and then, one or both confidants will glance up at me, revealing the hint of a wince; these glances lead to even more mistakes.

Mr. Spock joined me at the harp. He plucked at it for about three minutes in that stern way he has, as though he disapproved of it. But then sat, looked at me, and started playing the accompaniment to the only Bach prelude I know. He once again surprised me with his musical ability. It was calming to be immersed in the music with him in that way; I imagine he has had years of training. Above our duet, I occasionally hear our names mentioned in their otherwise private discourse. I have become accustomed to our unusual life here, but fear we will be sent into the street when their conference ends.

Evening.

Lady L. requested I take a turn with her in the garden. Her arm was wrapped possessively around my arm, gloved and laced up in the very zenith of fashion. She was certainly dressed for London today, and perhaps a little for her old tutor; she is both impressive and astonishing when she wishes; clearly a lady accustomed to a title. I brace myself for the unkind tirade to come.

“You have no idea who he actually is, do you?” Out of absolutely nowhere.

My mouth was too dry to speak, I shook my head.

“I thought not. Well—” Lady L. glanced around the garden, once trimmed in the French style, now a mass of English thorns. “Not many know this. I mean, Mary of course. Mary has often teased me for it, but – well, I get many of my best ideas from dreams. Many of my best mathematical proofs,

come from dreams. Contrary to popular consensus, I believe that there are pockets of this universe of which we presently know nothing, nor will we for a very long time. One's only recourse is to be comfortable with the strange, the unknown and the mad; almost everything about this universe is mad."

I found her speech a little mad, but said nothing.

"I can see you have misgivings, but your Mr. Spock is more like Mary, than like us."

She stepped apart from me, and for a moment became the very reflection of her famously beautiful father.

"But that is why I need people like Mary and Mr. Babbage. If the clouds are not tethered to the Earth, they become lost. An anchor chain is not so showy as a boat, perhaps, but without the chain the boat can be lost."

In that way of late summer nights, it had become dark over almost the last minute.

"Mary has told me in no unequivocal terms to give your Mr. Spock anything he asks for. She will provide if I cannot. He is a genius who knows things he should not know, not without reading them somewhere, and he has apparently read nothing. Mary says he has her completely re-considering the possibility of psychic phenomenon. She has provided me a short list of friends she would like him to call upon for their mutual benefit.

"He is very private—"

"I fear I must insist. He is not asking for a small amount, and it is only right that he sing for his supper in this fashion. Perhaps that is an unkind turn of phrase. I believe it appropriate that he shares with us, as we generously share with him. I will happily host you both. I can provide a stipend; I have been known to do such things. To be completely frank, I think moving will provide the safest haven

for him at this time; he is too wary by half. That man is *pursued*; I do not know by what, but it haunts his every thought – I digress.”

She reached for my upper arms as if to deliver terrible news.

“The reason I am speaking to you instead of him, is because you are clearly his gentle guide. I believe him to be a noble savage *savant*, while you keep him from running into walls.”

She clasped my arms tighter.

“I saw that bit with the cravat.”

I said nothing.

“*My dear*, have you ever fancied travelling?”

June 30, 1846

Mary Somerville departed this afternoon. We bid her goodbye, and as she was all loaded up in her carriage, she parted the windows back; her intense gaze settled on Spock – standing behind my shoulder, as he often did.

“I have been considering a name for this possible eighth planet, Mr. Spock,” she yelled. “I believe I have it narrowed down to Neptune, Janus, or Vulcan.”

Mr. Spock’s face revealed more shock than surprise; I have seen him surprised before; he was shocked!

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE JUNE 30 1846

I have made a serious error in judgement. It seems possible that my current Earth associates may be capable of *tricking* me into doing irreparable damage to the current timeline. I am hundreds of years in the past, surrounded by animal-powered vehicles, candles, and gaslight. My knowledge of this period of Earth history is slim; I make far too many errors each day. Today it came as a surprise to me that humanity has not yet discovered Neptune, the final planet in the Sol system. My original hope was to create the impression of an eccentric, but ultimately harmless inventor. I did not anticipate the web of connections to which I might be exposed. I was mistaken to think that the timeline would be easier to preserve in London.

They cannot be more than a few years off from discovering Neptune, so this could still be what the humans illogically call a "lucky guess." This slip could have been worse, but I do not trust myself to live in this time and do no harm as I did a day ago. It runs contrary to what Captain Kirk tells me – but Dr. McCoy may be right. I am simply too alien. I will hurt these people, *change* these people simply by existing. I have, perhaps foolishly, built a beacon to attract the attention of passing starships. I have foolishly been telling myself that the risk was justified if it meant my leaving the planet sooner. It would seem my logic has been corrupted by my desire to return to my time. I must meditate on this.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, SUPPLEMENTAL – extra detail included as evidence

I do not hazard a guess as to how she found me. I looked up from dismantling a spanner array, and she – the female – Violet Rutherford stood in the doorway, she blocked with those impractical skirts and petticoats. She guessed my intentions and voiced them.

"You are leaving?"

“I am sorry to halt your prospects,” I said. “This is the wrong time and place for me; you will all be safer if I was – gone.”

I explained that my fate was to travel to a different place every cycle or two, not unlike a felon in hiding. Miss Rutherford expressed her sympathies; she thought my presence had been a great tonic for Lady Lovelace, who has noticeably cheered since my arrival.

“You have been a great help; more help than you could possibly know. Unfortunately, your help could have... consequences. I wish I was able to give you a more complete explanation, but I fear I am barred from saying more.”

To *think* I would ever find myself speaking, in vague half-statements like some character in one of the captain’s detective novels, seems beyond strange. I wanted to leave that room immediately, illogically feeling *much* too exposed by its glass walls and ceilings. I could not go past her as quickly as I felt I must, without crashing through her skirts.

“Lady Lovelace says you are afraid of something.”

A most irrational conclusion. “She is being romantic,” I said. “I am in no danger, and even if I were, fear would not be the appropriate response. Now, if you would --”

“I didn’t say you were in danger. Lady Lovelace thinks someone might be looking for you, and that’s clearly ridiculous. If someone was looking for you, they would have *found* you. You’re not subtle. If you run off in the middle of the night, it might take me a day to find you.”

Clearly, she did *find* me out on the moors; there is no denying that.

“I think perhaps you are one of those types who will punish themselves, if given half the chance. I think – I think you are of the mind that you might *cause* danger, or your invention will. I am certain you

mean no harm, but you can't see the safest route to travel. Most surprisingly, despite your vast intellect, you keep changing your mind!"

I tried to say something, but she was talking over me, in that way that humans occasionally do. Especially humans that are called 'Dr. McCoy.'

"If you intend to run, I will just have to stick to you even closer. Besides, you can't go off on your own. You are a stranger here. I bet you don't know how many farthings make up a guinea. You will be robbed of your clothes within a day."

"I have some competence with mathematics, I could..."

"I have never been on an extended trip like this; I am quite looking forward to it. Disable your machine if you are worried. Take parts with you. But do not skulk out into the night like a thief. Give me one good reason why you should do that."

"Do you not agree that I will inevitably seriously embarrass my patrons? Do you not suppose I should leave before that happens?"

She smiled at that, for reasons I cannot fathom. "You could ask, you know."

"Ask?"

And she turned to go, but looked over her shoulder.

"If you're not here tomorrow, I'm just going to walk around London asking if anyone has seen a very tall American with a strange haircut and a turban."

There is a *point* buried underneath all that pride and stubbornness. I apologize to the Temporal Integrity Commission agent who is no doubt reviewing these logs, for putting in so much extraneous detail. I believed, incorrectly it would seem, that it would help illuminate my most logical course of action. I feel highly unsettled not knowing what to choose. I will remain longer to formulate a logical plan.

From the Diary of Violet Rutherford – July 12th, 1846

At Lady L.'s insistence we have been to see a quiet, scholarly man who knows everything that it is possible to know about rubber. He makes rubber shoes, rubber pillows, rubber gloves, rubber wheels, and rubber equipment for use underwater. He has had some bad luck involving two separate factories suddenly burning down, in a manner mysterious to him. I cannot help but notice that despite these tragic events, Mr. Hancock seems to spend his time mixing and burning rubber with every kind of substance that exists on the planet, in hopes of affecting its... colour, adhesiveness, water-resistance? At the risk of demonstrating my flair for the obvious, these behaviours suggest that one should not be surprised at the flaming fate of his past enterprises.

To be fair, he is a very nice man and thus seemed unjust that his operation had been reduced to perhaps a twentieth of its original size. His new process, which he must have mentioned to Lady Lovelace, somehow chemically alters rubber to be ... I want to say *stronger*? As we walked in, he was crushing a rubber slab in a hydraulic press. He alternately refers to his process as "the change," or "pickling," and remains certain of its usefulness.

With the flare of a showman, he demonstrated his 'change' process for us, but good Lord in Heaven, burning rubber with sulfur smells perfectly dreadful. Even Mr. Spock, who might as well be made of ice, adopted a pained expression, and muttered something about "Vulcan sand fire."

It was quite funny how Mr. Hancock's countenance came alive at those words; he began earnestly scribbling away in his notebook about how 'Vulcanization' sounded a *much* better name for his 'change' than 'pickling,' which the patent office said was too misleading.

Upon hearing the word 'Vulcanization,' Mr. Spock adopted an expression that would befit a man witnessing a headless chicken being animated back to life; he clearly did not like what he heard. He took my elbow and stood up so suddenly that my heels skidded. He said a very business-like goodbye to Mr. Hancock, expressing as we walked out, that it was a wonderful invention, he was sure it would make his name and fortune. Mr. Hancock seemed delighted, and remarked that after ages of setbacks and failures, he was certain that 1846 was finally going to be a good year.

With that, Spock's agitation worsened. We marched briskly back to St. James, whereupon he locked himself in the solarium.

July 15th, 1846

Mr. Spock was missed at dinner again and has not been seen eating anything for two days; he is peculiar!

Lady Lovelace was quite pleased to hear of our successful interview with Mr. Hancock, but today she directed us to take a short stroll to the Royal Institution to visit Mr. Faraday. This great gentleman and noted chemist, has done distinguished work at the intersection of electricity and chemistry. It is supposed that he *has* done very great work in these fields, but alas, it seems his best work may be behind him. There are rumors that he had a breakdown of some sort a few years ago; no one quite knows whether from exhaustion, illness or mental fragility. I am told he can be found

daily at his laboratory at the Royal Institution, but his enthusiasm for research and receiving visitors has waned in equal measure.

After a ten-minute walk from St. James Square, we arrived at the Royal Institution and were shown to his laboratory. After considerable delay from our knocking, he answered; Spock quietly talked to him through the slightly ajar door. We were at first told that he was very busy thinking, and we both should go away.

In response, Mr. Spock became very soft with him, much gentler than I think I've ever seen him with any man. In the dim underground space, Spock pulled a chair up against the door frame, leaned his cheek against it, and began asking questions in a quiet, reasoned way, just as though there was nothing odd at all about this scenario, and he was honored to meet the great man in any way he could.

I am to understand that Mr. Faraday is quite self-taught, and quite from nowhere in particular; clearly, they have much in common. Eventually, Mr. Faraday began to talk back, making short responses, later full sentences, which eventually transformed into a long series of questions, answers and counter-questions.

Perhaps I have been unkind to Mr. Spock, thinking him so strange, so eccentric and bizarre; I have unjustly projected such dark motives upon him. Possibly his behaviour on the Yorkshire moors suggests he is quite like Faraday, locked in his laboratory, talking about how the universe is "connected, all connected, it must be." Meanwhile, Mr. Spock softly appeals for some help to build a device to prove it.

When we returned to Lady L.'s, he quietly and very politely asked her if she had any texts regarding magnetism from which he might study. She immediately directed him to the London

Library, not sixty steps from her front door. I predict myriad difficulties should he try to remove a volume from there.

July 20, 1846

With the aid of an introductory note to Mrs. Faraday, I was able to gain access inside Mr. Faraday's laboratory. I quite approve of Sarah, even though she gives off the general air of being her husband's maiden sister instead of his wife. She too has been ill recently and is glad of any polite company that may cheer her husband. Secretly, she was able to arrange some quite noisy cleaning in the hall, so that if Mr. Faraday and Mr. Spock wished to converse, we would need to be allowed in, with the door closed against the clamor. As she predicted, there were thuds of bolts and then a face, quite a bit more handsome than the weakened voice had led me to expect, under which stood Michael Faraday, a tall man of regal bearing and genteel manners.

He backed away from the door, directing us into a room that would have made a comfortable parlor, were it not filled with bottles covering almost every surface – odd things like Thames water, liquefied gold, quick-silver and several jars of urine. The butler's lift had been turned into a sealed dark room for experiments, so no food or drink from that quarter was likely. Mr. Faraday apologized, but Mr. Spock, who seems to have no sense of eccentricity at all – a trait which is either unsettling or oddly refreshing, depending on my mood – appeared to notice nothing amiss; indeed, Spock seemed confused he was apologizing.

Spock's disarming lack of formality and his knowledge of things scientific, so seemed to impress Mr. Faraday that they appeared to be developing a fast friendship. Within thirty minutes Mr. F. was showing off his chemistry equipment, all his generators – homopolar & electrostatic & electro

polar, not that these names mean a thing to me. Mr. Spock looked impressed, although throughout, I had a notion that Spock had seen more impressive equipment in his native land.

July 21, 1846

Unable to call upon Mr. Faraday today. Mr. Spock has ceased work on his Sky Engine, and began making a replica of something he saw in Mr. F.'s laboratory. I sent another note to Clara, who surely must have *stopped* by our London flat by now. To shed the thoughts and emotional twisting of what I may have done to my sister, I have started reading Spock's discarded magnetism literature.

When Mr. Spock asked if I wanted to take a walk, I could not have predicted a stroll to the docks, where we spent three hours making comparisons of the magnetic permeability of various anchor chains. Although it was an odd errand to engage a couple for an afternoon, something about the strangeness of the task seemed entirely correct, even enjoyable. Did I just refer to us as a 'couple?' I must admit to feeling more relaxed around him, and he sometimes seems to show signs of relaxing as well; I think he almost cracked a smile at one point! I asked if I could hold his arm as we traversed the less reputable streets on our trek back to Lady L.'s; he agreed without comment, as if I had asked him to hold my coat. It felt nice to be on the arm of a handsome man, regardless of how platonic our intentions. As we walked, I could feel his strength and noticeable body coolness. It is no wonder he could survive on the moors without a coat! Strangely, after rounding from Cockspur Street onto Pall Mall, he dropped my arm and seemed to become distracted and irritable. It could not have been something I said, as neither of us was talking.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE JULY 21 1846

I was told I had been spared the effects of Pon Farr because of my human genetics. My father, my physician and the elders, indicated that I would probably have already endured this seven-year cyclic condition if I was susceptible. After my concern for this recurring medical condition had been removed, I pushed forward my plans to join the Enterprise on its five-year away mission and was accepted as First Officer.

Current evidence suggests that my parents, the elders and most of all, me, were mistaken regarding this matter. A fleeting contact, an encounter today with Miss Violet Rutherford seems to have triggered what I believe to be the early indications of Pon Farr.

I wonder if these sensations resemble the closing down of one's body before death, after experiencing torture on what was known in previous times as 'the rack?' Perhaps I am dying; it can be a consequence of entering Pon Farr without suitable release. Worse still, I seem to have lost what Vulcans value most – control of one's emotional state and the ability to think logically through any problem. It seems the more I resist this 'natural hormonal state,' the more I feel anger, frustration and physical malaise.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE JULY 21 1846 – Supplemental

No amount of meditation seems to help. In my current circumstances, I cannot call on the balm of my betrothal bond with T'Pring. Given the timeline distortion in which I now live, she will not be born for hundreds of years. On Vulcan where this condition has existed for thousands of years, there is still no reliable pharmacological relief known. Naturally, Earth is unlikely to have a cure either. My condition is

becoming serious enough that I am willing to experiment on myself in the hope that it will pass and I will survive. Increasingly stringent meditation techniques are having no effect. The logical conclusion is that this will pass, or I will expire.

Inexplicably, my meditation attempts are constantly interrupted by thoughts of Miss Violet Rutherford. The shape, placement and symmetry of her facial features might actually prove quite distracting to many Vulcan males, were she to find herself on my home planet. Although hidden by many layers of fabric and whalebone, she appears to have an overall shape and body fat distribution that many, including me, might find quite pleasing and desirable under the right conditions. It appears these thoughts of her are increasing in frequency and intensity, as my endocrine system disrupts my attempts at useful thought. It is a strong irony that I may perish at the hands of my illogical Vulcan physiology.

From the Diary of Violet Rutherford – July 22, 1846

I am quite worried about Mr. Spock. This morning, working with Mr. Faraday, seemed to be a tonic for both of them. Mr. Spock has devoured all of Mr. Faraday's papers & publications, and seems to be nudging him towards more experiments with magnetic lines of force. In order to do that, a huge link of anchor chain provided by Spock, has been turned into a supremely powerful electrical magnet, while Mr. Spock has made many improvements towards the storage & usage of Mr. Faraday's mercury supply. I am not sure how this is related to the magnetic side of their experiments. I understand that, upon Spock's insistence, his mercury is now handled with very great care, and Mr. Faraday's new project seems to be working wonders for his health and outlook. Unfortunately, towards the week's end Mr. Spock refused all food and spends most of his time barricaded in the solarium.

July 23, 1846

I suspect few people since the Garden of Eden have undergone such a transformational day as this day, I was innocently about to face.

Mr. Spock awoke today with the idea of making a short excursion, which at first seemed most encouraging. Alas, the coach was too slow, the air was too dirty, his cravat was too constricting and his hair, now long enough to cover his ears, is intolerable. He opined that I took (and always take) an excruciatingly long time getting ready and that Lady Lovelace is wasting her mind by spending time at the Ascot races!

I see now I was utterly unkind (and inaccurate) in suspecting that he had no manners when first we met. The hermit on the moors was a paragon of grace, elegance and manners, compared to this new contemptable creature. In the carriage I sat across from him, even though it meant sharing the bench seat with an anchor chain link the size of a pig, and was glad! I remember being eager that we were going to see Mr. Faraday, the only possible calming influence I could think of for a madman with a mind on fire, was perhaps someone who had already walked through that fire.

When I was little, and Mother was scolding me for some transgression, I would always pray that someone would come calling. When such a happy event happened, as it often did, Mama would shift into her happy, charming 'receiving visitors' persona. She would forget about me and my transgressions, and would always be in a pleasant mood by the time the company filed off home. So too, Mr. Spock clearly alters his aspect for Mr. Faraday, becoming a more thoughtful and more temperate version of himself when the two of them join forces.

With that expectation, it was shocking to see Spock's behaviour deteriorate in front of Mr. F. The unfortunate man could not have predicted this encounter. Nothing he did was right, efficient or properly organized. I, standing in the corner, heard Spock mutter something about “and they say you are one of the brightest minds of your time!” He insulted the celebrated Mr. Faraday, who came from nothing and taught himself science while being a bookbinder’s assistant. Michael Faraday, who has won every science medal it is possible to win, who isn’t knighted out of choice, merely because he wishes to remain a paragon of modesty and gentlemanly behaviour.

My goodness! Things came to an ugly head, when after verbal abuse from Spock, Mr. Faraday became flustered and dropped a vial of tartaric acid. When the glass crashed to the counter, splashing droplets of acid and shards of glass onto Mr. Spock’s hand, Spock became enraged, a complete madman. In a trice, the tall large frame of Mr. F. leapt from his chair, his normally benign countenance displaying utter fury; I thought he would strike Spock, such was the effect of the moment.

I grasped Mr. Spock’s elbow in an attempt to pull him back from a certain impending blow, hoping it would break the moment. Unfortunately, my feeble effort to tug his arm would have had the same effect on the recently completed Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square.

Instantly, I considered what Lady L. would do under such circumstances; so naturally I fell into a dead swoon between the two impending combatants. As expected, they both tried to catch me, but Mr. F.'s reflexes were no match for a hale man half his age; I never touched the ground. Though my eyes remained closed to sustain the charade, I could feel myself being carried as an infant in the arms of a rescuing parent, only to be unceremoniously deposited onto a dusty divan in the corner of the laboratory.

Well-pleased, I had interrupted a horrid altercation; my next sensation was Mr. Faraday ‘waking me’ with some truly malodorous chemical. As my eyes opened, he urged me home, with Spock to accompany, along with a verbalized list of things his wife relishes when she faints in public.

Mr. Spock remained entirely stone-faced and silent through it all, carrying my evidently fragile body with one arm, like a bag of comestibles. He nodded a silent and brusque goodbye towards the now-calmed Mr. Faraday, and pulled the door shut with his free arm. Upon hearing the report of the closing door, I was dropped to the tile floor like an ill-favored feline. Startled by the sudden release, it is unsurprising that I did not land on my feet! Spock's terse opprobrium followed:

“You are acting unwell when you are in perfect health. It is inappropriate and unseemly and my expectation is that it will never be repeated. Given your robust state of health, I see no requirement to carry you or even accompany you to St. James Square. Perhaps when you have recovered from this bout of theatrics, we will meet tonight.”

Without regard for my unladylike repose on the cold tile floor, he turned and walked off. Of course, I followed him – he was clearly a danger to himself and others! Primarily others.

I thought the pursuit might be difficult, but I could have been following him from atop a painted elephant and doubt he would have noticed. So focused was he, so blind to the world around him, that it was a great wonder he did not walk into streetlamps or street cars. He walked on relentlessly, and at each intersection, he took the more disreputable turning, until the streets got dirtier, and the pickpockets more plentiful. The eyes and comments I perceived in my pursuit, changed from irritating to threatening. Spock's goal became somewhat clear when he walked into a very small and scruffy looking pharmacy.

I peered through one of its cracked filthy windows, trying to see what he was doing without good result. Before I was quite able to formulate a plan he was out, clutching a paper bag. He removed from it a clear bottle, filled with a brown-red liquid, with a pasted-on label decorated with jagged, spidery writing.

I had had enough. Swinging my skirts around the corner, I situated myself squarely in his path.

"Laudanum? That is how you respond to your mood today? With *laudanum*?"

"I said I would see you this evening, did your hearing fail when you hit the floor?" He blurted, trying to dodge past me.

"Your behaviour is beyond reprehensible!" I screamed, grabbing once more for his iron-like forearm. "Something is clearly wrong with you, and I warn you that no matter how many times you fling me away, I will not leave your side until I have a reasonable explanation."

At this moment I noticed a small shard of glass protruding from the hand he had not used to carry me. Although oozing only slightly, to my horror the wound was tinged with a blue-green hue!

"What Is this?" I said grabbing his thumb to expose his wound to the light. "We are going to the doctor. You may not protest, you may not run away. If you try to run, I will call out that you are a thief and have stolen my purse. This neighborhood is thick with Peel's men, they will cosh you first, then ask me what happened after they have hauled you away. You can be certain that they will have at least as many questions as me!"

"You are correct." he said. His facial expression and demeanor instantly changing from fleeing fugitive to contrite gentleman. "I have been acting without logic and regard to those around me, especially you; I have been what your countrymen might call – an ass! If we can quietly return to Lady Lovelace's solarium, I vow to tell you the complete truth. At this moment, I am struggling to walk and

think simultaneously. Please hold your comments and questions until we are somewhere private. I can only forewarn you that my testimony will be beyond your wildest imaginings."

I felt better that he had calmed down but remained vigilant for the slightest hint of treachery. I am certain I could not have caught him in a footrace, but there were enough people about to hinder any sudden flight by him; it was certain he did not relish incarceration and subsequent interrogation. After a ten-minute walk sharing silence and the sounds of our footfalls on the pavement, we approached number 10, St. James Square. The footman was apparently out, having turned over his duties to a chamber maid. She sheepishly welcomed us into the foyer, and without response, we strode directly to the solarium.

"Shall I request tea?" I asked tentatively.

"If you do not mind, I would prefer we remain alone until I have fulfilled the terms of our exacted bargain." He sounded both passive and resigned to his agreed task. "Please sit and hold your comments and questions until I am finished. Please note, what I am about to do is in violation of the most serious oath I have ever taken. It may have profound consequences for humanity, and thus I must ask you to receive what I am about to say with a most open mind and in the strictest confidence."

Mr. Spock looked quite serious and yet disarmingly endearing.

Before he began, I interjected, "I will do as you say only if you allow me to dress your wounded hand. There remains little point in you telling me your story if you lose a limb or die of the hospital gangrene, which I suspect you have."

Spock had become uncharacteristically passive; it was a welcome change! I suspected the wound was weakening his entire system; it was all I could do to not send for a doctor to come at once.

"I deeply appreciate your kindness and concern, but I can assure you beyond doubt that I am not suffering from gangrene. It is common knowledge that a gangrenous wound has a putrid smell; I invite you to check for any odor at the wound site."

Spock slowly raised the wounded appendage, stopping to remove the glass shard without showing the slightest grimace. Acknowledging that this piece of medical knowledge aligned with my own, I took a tentative sniff and asked if the tartaric acid had discoloured the wound. The implications of little dried red blood at the greenish-looking wound site did not immediately alarm me. I softly urged him to the site of a small decorative waterfall in the corner of the solarium, placed his hand under the gently flowing water and admonished him to wash it carefully. While he did this, I turned my back to him and ripped a yard-long section from one of my petticoats.

"You are lucky that tartaric acid is mild, but I imagine it burns terribly," I said.

I remained focused on dabbing the wound dry, then bound his hand as I had seen done when, as a child, my mother treated me for similar injuries. I stole occasional glances at his face to see if my ministrations caused him any pain, but his face remained unchanged, strangely warm, friendly, and resigned. When I finished my nursing chore, he spoke.

"You have been and continue to be very kind to me. I have kept my bargain of silence, and now I see that I have compelled myself to violate something known as the 'Prime Directive.'"

We retired to a more comfortable location where we could sit adjacent his beacon.

"My strange appearance, my lack of social grace, and worst of all my intolerable behaviour will all be explained by what I am about to say. I can assure you that everything I am about to tell you is the absolute truth, and much of it I can prove if given the chance."

He appeared completely calm and sincere, so I quietly listened until he blurted his first revelation.

"I am Spock, from the planet Vulcan."

I could barely contain my rage. "You promise me the truth and you open with the most transparent nonsense I have heard in my life?"

Sensing I was about to attack him, he reached for my hands with his and firmly held me in my seat. "I understand your incredulity, but I am a dying man with nothing to gain by finishing my life in a sea of lies. I said I can prove what I have to say, and if you listen quietly, I will."

The 'dying man' part got my attention, and I resolved to apply maximum effort to listen calmly to his story, no matter how hallucinatory it sounded. As he spoke, he continued holding my hands, against the possibility of me bolting, or perhaps slapping him into reality.

"Before I begin, I must exact a most solemn promise from you. You **MUST** agree to two things before I begin."

I could tell he was absolutely serious so I agreed, not knowing what he would ask.

"First of all, you must not share what I am about to say with ANYONE. You must be quite clear about this. Secondly, as I am almost certain that I will not survive the week, I wish you to incinerate my dead body, in a quick and tidy manner that I will describe shortly. If my body is discovered by the medical community, or my knowledge of the future gets out, it could contaminate the timeline and

be of grave detriment to you, your family, and thousands of generations to come. I implore you, please keep solemn these promises!"

My face must have turned the colour of a corpse at his suggestion. Did I really wish to know the truth to comply with his wishes? I don't remember answering in the affirmative, but he seemed to think I had, and he emotionlessly continued his tale.

"I was not born on Earth. Not only am I from another planet, but I am from another time. I was born hundreds of years after you and everyone you know are long dead. My odd appearance, pointed ears, and oddly-coloured blood are characteristics of the Vulcan people from whom I partially originate. My father was from Vulcan and my mother was a human female from your planet."

He picked up a tiny penknife from the table supporting his beacon and made a small incision in the heel of his undamaged hand. It produced a few drops of what might be supposed to be red blood tinged with green! "Pure Vulcan blood is green; I am only half Vulcan, hence the colour you are now witnessing."

My mind began to race and reel at the prospect that what he was telling me might be true.

"By a series of unfortunate circumstances, I was separated from a space vessel and crew, who are possibly still looking for me. Because I have not been only dislocated in space but also in time, their search for me has been made infinitely more difficult. This device is a crude beacon I created to signal into the cosmos in the hope of aiding in my rescue."

"Ships sailing the cosmos – you sound quite mad!" was all I could say to this intemperate and yet compelling yarn.

"Please let me finish before you judge my assertions." He calmly continued. "The ship from whence I came is called a Starship. It contains devices and technology that you and your most enlightened friends would find to be beyond fantastical."

Spock reached over to the beacon and slid a small panel back, disconnecting and removing a device that I recalled seeing when he was hiding in the cave.

"You asked how the beacon was powered, and I will now show you."

Grasping what he called a 'phaser' in his uninjured hand, he pointed it at the fireplace, which had been dressed for the convenient lighting of a fire. A short, loud, odd screech and blue beam simultaneously issued from the device, instantly creating a fist-sized hole in one of the logs, which immediately burst into flames.

"That was its second lowest setting. Its highest setting would easily destroy this building."

"A conjurer's trick!" I exclaimed, even though I had to admit to myself it was a very impressive one.

"Perhaps you would care to try the device yourself?" he offered.

With a little direction I was shown how to use the apparatus and pointed it at the stack of logs beside the fireplace. Following another screech and blue flash, the thick log I had selected suffered a similar fate as the one burning in the fireplace.

Spock scrambled to throw the newly burning log safely into the fire, then responded with a terse, "I'll take that now."

Flipping a switch that seemed to disable its red-coloured lights, he grasped it from my hand and placed it back inside the beacon without connecting it, as it had been before.

"It is this device on setting four that you may use to dispose of my body without a trace."

I could not have been any more surprised if I had just witnessed the second coming. I proposed to myself that I must be dreaming. I picked up the penknife with which Spock had wounded himself and pressed the point onto the back of my own left hand. There was pain and red blood; I was not dreaming!

"There is one more demonstration that I can provide which will impart to you more information in one minute than I can with a week of conversation. If I may...?"

Standing squarely in front of me, he gently wrapped my head in his large hands. Cupping the back of my head with his left hand, while splaying the fingers of his right hand across the left side of my face, he closed his eyes. I thought he was about to kiss me, and I considered resisting, but there was something inviting and promising about his full lips that made me abandon my lady-like proclivities in the hope of a novel experience.

Instantly I was transported to a universe of pure thoughts, too many to recount but as real as my own life. I caught fleeting glimpses of Spock as a boy basking in the warmth of his family bonds. I felt the love of his parents for him, his half-siblings, and each other, raced through his adolescence and was over-awed by the beauty of his chosen mate – T'Pring. No detail, regardless of how intimate, was spared in this kaleidoscopic vision of learning, discipline, service, and love. I lived visions of space phenomena I cannot explain. I experienced the camaraderie of officers and crew with whom he shared many bizarre and dangerous adventures. I deeply felt the longing of this stoic traveler for his betrothed but jolted back into reality upon realizing his current boundless passion seemed to be directed towards me!

Nothing could have prepared anyone for the mountain of revelations and emotion that had cascaded into my mind in ten seconds... ten minutes... ten days? With eyes wide open and again

connected to my brain, I now regarded Mr. Spock as one might regard an overwhelming miracle. I had an infinity of questions but could not think of where to begin. Mr. Spock obviously sensed my distress, gently fixing an errant lock of my hair after releasing his grip on my head; he embraced me gently, then guided me to the facing settees, where we sat across from each other for a period of silence.

“Miss Rutherford – Violet, are you well?”

Clearly, I had been overwhelmed by the experience, but found a salient place to start.

“Mr. Spock, I will never doubt a word you say or opinion you offer as long as I draw breath. Please tell me why you think you are dying.”

It was his turn to hint at some doubt at my last statement, but he bravely soldiered on. “As you are now apparently convinced, I possess a different physiology to human males. Vulcans and humans share many similarities but have different hormonal systems that drive their behaviour in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. It will be decades before hormones are discovered by human researchers, but I assure you they affect your sleep cycles, body temperature, moods, and reproductive development. For example, adults are quite differentiated from children because, at appropriate times of their lives, hormones are released that dictate changes to ones’ physical characteristics. I am certain you remember the transition from child to adolescent and its attendant changes.”

Slightly embarrassed, I nodded and bid him to continue.

“Approximately every seven years, Vulcan males experience episodes known as Pon Farr. I suppose at one time, it was a reasonable evolutionary adaptation to ensure the continuation of our species. The occurrence of Pon Farr creates a physiological imperative for a male to mate intensively

with a female until the symptoms pass. Usually within a day or two the episode passes for another seven years. In the event a male is unable to mate, death is often the result.”

“So, this has happened to you before, how did you survive then?”

“I have never experienced Pon Farr before; most experts believed that my human half had blocked this Vulcan trait, and it was something about which I should have no concern.”

“Your mind mixing...”

“Mind meld is the term you are looking for.”

“Your mind meld, imparted to me your great desire for a Vulcan female, to whom you have been promised.”

“T’Pring.”

“Yes, that is she. She appears to be an astonishing beauty and an incredible catch by any measure.”

“We have been matched since childhood, but our studies and careers left us no time for courting or the potential of a family life. It has been discussed between us but deferred to an unspecified future. Now that future is hundreds of years hence.”

I did not know how to proceed to the next topic, until I realised, he had shared more intimate things with me in a few seconds than the accumulated total of everyone in my life combined.

“I must admit to having felt more than a bit exposed, as I felt you were reading me as I read you. Am I correct?”

“You are quite correct. I know I barely asked your permission, but expedience dictated my action as logical. You could not have agreed to something so beyond your experience, and by way of compensation, I reciprocated by hiding nothing from you.”

I was certain he knew where the conversation was heading, but propriety dictated that I approach slowly and carefully; my heart was racing. Suspecting I knew the answer, I asked, “Why do you suppose the sudden onset of Pon Farr occurred at this particular time?”

“After much reflection, I have concluded that my daily interactions with you might have stirred some involuntary reactions. Logically, your physiognomy is appealing to me, as is your physique. You are clearly exceedingly kind and have shown much patience, forbearance, and inordinate interest in my well-being. I suspect the final trigger was pulled when I handled your person at Mr. Faraday’s laboratory. What should have been a minor rescue, stirred feelings beyond anything I have ever sustained. I blush to admit, it was ecstasy and madness combined.”

“It seems that your condition, which a human might call ‘excessive randiness,’ could be cured by finding you a suitable mate.”

He pondered my words briefly then replied. “Human females are quite fragile in their musculoskeletal systems compared to Vulcan females. The contortions of passion under the influence of Pon Farr could be dangerous or fatal to a human female. I am not going to risk the life of another to save my own.”

He seemed to be resolved to his tortuous fate when I opined. “Your mother is a human female and still lives after giving birth to you. Clearly there are ways of dealing with Pon Farr and surviving it, even if one is a human female.”

He considered my words.

“Just out of interest, does this mean Vulcan males mate with their partners only once every seven years?”

“Vulcan males and females are quite like humans in their mating frequency, rituals and need for intimacy and privacy. Pon Farr seems to constitute a singular divergence in mating activity between the two species.”

Explaining the need for honesty had long passed. He knew I had passionate feelings for him, and I knew his feelings for me, both emotional and carnal. I could not have imagined me composing, never mind saying the next words out of my mouth. “I propose you mate with me.”

He looked at me like I had not heard a word he said for the last ten minutes and shocked me beyond distraction with his reply.

“You are the last human female with whom I would consider mating.”

He instantly saw that I had interpreted this as a grievous insult and continued.

“Of all the women I have met, both human and Vulcan, the one whose life and health is most precious to me is yours. I could never put you at risk.”

Coyly, I offered a solution which minimised the danger.

“It became clear to me during our mind meld that I was not just experiencing your memories, but memories of those with whom you have shared a mind-meld. Among those memories was your mother’s experience while dealing with your father during his Pon Farr episodes. If my impressions are correct, they both eventually looked forward to its onset.”

The almost horizontal right eyebrow of Spock’s face, rose to a height that I suspect it seldom attained. He leaned back on the settee and stared out the glass roof of the solarium. I could not tell if he was happy, sad, or just contemplative. After twenty seconds or so he looked into my eyes. “You know I ...”

I cut him off. "I love you too!" I said, without the least hesitation or embarrassment. I knew beyond doubt that he was a good 'man' who had captured my heart and I, his. I crossed over to the settee on which he was now in almost full repose and kissed him fully on the lips. My fate was sealed. "I have preparations to make," I said, leaving him to his contemplations.

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Rutherford – July 24, 1846

During the mind-meld encounter with Mr. Spock, I received many insights into his history, but, in my wildest dreams, I could not have expected to discover the intimate details of how he was conceived. Sarek, Spock's father, was very concerned for the welfare of Amanda Grayson, his mother, when first they coupled, so suggested precautions, which were (thankfully) imparted to me by Spock's mind-meld.

Having some awareness of Mr. Spock's physical strength, I have chosen to follow her (often repeated) procedure for a Pon Farr encounter to the letter, in the hopes that Spock will respond as did his father. To that end, I have secured lengths of rope to the four posts of my current boudoir's bed. In addition, I have slung a rope centrally between the upper beams joining the top of the posts across the bed, such that I can use my arms to carefully raise or lower myself towards the bed, as did Spock's mother.

I was able to vividly recall what Amanda wore for these occasions and shopped until I found a reasonable facsimile of her bedroom attire. It was quite simple, really: a white, head-to-toe semi-transparent silk veil, supplemented with a white bodice, white silk stockings, and a white neckband.

The ensemble cost the Earth, so I will soon be compelled to successfully revive Demetrius Dirge to restore my declining fortune.

In a poorly lit room, the veil creates the illusion of absolute modesty, a characteristic that works in my favor, boosting my shaky confidence. Covered almost head to toe, I was certain I could carry things off at my own measured pace, even though I was about to encounter the randiest man in Christendom.

As previously agreed, while fully dressed, I carefully tied naked Spock's wrists and ankles to the four oak posts of the sturdy bed. I invited him to pull in every direction as hard as he could, with minimal result. We were both satisfied he could not hurt me, regardless of his level of passion. As I left, he looked quite beautiful laying there, exposed but unaroused. I anticipated an immediate improvement upon my return.

When ready, and with much trepidation, I entered the room and stood between two burning candles to let him examine me. I parted my veil a little and leaned over to kiss him deeply on his lips. I carefully and gently caressed his ears with my fingers and eventually my tongue. When I finished the ear foreplay, he was unmistakably electrified, as was I! Carefully stepping onto the bed, I placed a foot on either side of his surprisingly narrow hips, and used the rope above my head to slowly and gently lower myself upon him.

As a result of my actions, he seemed to have abandoned himself completely, like a man in a malarial fever. He strained at the ropes like a trapped animal as I descended lower and lower, capturing his manhood then releasing. It was not at all pleasant for me at first, but fortunately I had foreknowledge that the first time was not necessarily the best time. I continued to tease him, perhaps cruelly.

After ten minutes, I thought I might descend as low as I dare. Upon reaching what I thought was the nadir of my descent, there were two almost simultaneous thunderous cracks. Both ropes restraining Spock's arms had snapped. His now-free arms grabbed my hips, desperately pulling me down from my support rope. At the sudden shock, I sank my nails into his chest in an attempt to support weight that had suddenly been transferred to a most delicate location.

Release for Spock came a few seconds later in the form of convulsions one might expect from a man repeatedly struck by lightning. His sudden possession of me triggered sensations I had never felt before, ones I hoped would never end. After a few moments of rapture, we were both spent and motionless. Perhaps a minute passed while we restored our breathing to an almost normal rate.

"Are you well?" he inquired, as if I had just taken a tumble from a carriage.

"Beyond well," I announced, as I tried to process what had just happened. Among all the thoughts tumbling through my brain, I unhappily contemplated the notion that I had just had my life's peak experience!

"You are unhurt then?"

"I wouldn't go that far my love, but will venture to say... I hope to try that again... soon!"

I rolled over beside him, cradling myself comfortably in his left arm. I stretched my neck to kiss his lips again, tenderly. He spoke softly, with a slight grin on his now relaxed face.

"Perhaps this is not the appropriate moment to mention such things, but I can feel the worst effects of Pon Farr receding from me with the passing of each heartbeat; Violet Rutherford, I believe you have saved my life!"

I put my left arm across his naked chest, pulling myself closer to him, laying my head on his shoulder. “Give me a few minutes to appraise what just happened and I might save your life again, just to be medically certain!”

FIRST OFFICER’S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN, July 25, 1846 – PERSONAL

I am pleased to report an intense and exhilarating encounter with Miss Violet Rutherford on July 24th, which I believe has reprieved me from the terminal effects of Vulcan Pon Farr. Despite my initial concerns, she survived the encounter uninjured and even expresses some enthusiasm for re-enacting the event at regular intervals.

It seems ever more likely that I have been lost to the Enterprise, although I will continue to power my make-shift beacon until the phaser power source drops below useable levels.

If I am to remain in nineteenth century England and continue what seems to be a mutually satisfactory relationship with Violet Rutherford, steps must be taken to legally unite us for the sake of our reputations, national norms and customs. To that end we have discussed a plan to visit a justice of the peace on August 26th to secure the legal status required to conduct our relationship within the accepted bounds of this society. Our nuptials have not yet been publicly announced, in compliance with the custom that permission must be granted by the female’s father before the marriage process can commence.

The time and place of a parental meeting has not yet been determined, as time must be set aside for me to study the appropriate customs and etiquette for this historical period; I wish to avoid committing or repeating any social *faux pas*, for which I have apparently become infamous. To make me

more acceptable to her parents, we are concocting a more genteel backstory for me, which we must carefully blend into the known truth.

Lady Lovelace, surprisingly delighted by our impending union, has offered her home for a small reception. Following our marriage, plans must be made to sustain ourselves as a couple until I am collected by the Federation or until I expire. In any event, provisions must be made for Violet's financial future, regardless of what may befall me.

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Rutherford – July 25, 1846

It appears that word of our scandalous tryst has not reached the household. Lady L. would certainly have broached it by now, were there to be the slightest hint. Ada was surprised beyond measure, when I revealed that Mr. Spock had asked for my hand in marriage. She expressed some puzzlement at the dramatic evolution of our relationship over a very short period. She was particularly concerned that Spock's foul mood episode might become a recurring theme and impediment to any long-term relationship. I explained that Spock's misbehaviour was the final throes of him recovering from a fever he contracted in Yorkshire. This satisfactorily explained his poor appetite, mood and need for isolation. She did remark he was looking much healthier and well-rested lately. I have much to do in preparation of a visit to Papa and may have to find alternate accommodations for Clara; our London flat is definitely too small for three.

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL Diary of Violet Rutherford – July 26, 1846

Papa said yes! Mama is disappointed that we are not having a church wedding, a disappointment somewhat attenuated by Papa's joy at not having to pay for an extravagant celebration. Papa was delighted to hear that Lady L. has offered her St. James Street residence as a reception venue, although he is anxious that celebratory victuals may be of a more extravagant nature than he might otherwise have chosen. Sometimes he can over-do his thriftiness; we both know he doesn't have to.

Spock's first encounter with my mother looked doomed at first, until he remarked on her brooch, recently received from a deceased aunt in Australia. He correctly identified its shape as that of the Southern Cross constellation, a star formation that, alas, I will never see. His good guess led to a conversation about stars and astrological signs, which he carefully navigated without a single insult.

Eventually, her talk of the heavens led to the topic of heaven and the Church of England. Apparently, St. Paul's has recently been gifted a new stock of hymnals, allegedly containing all the best holy hymns. She defied Spock to name a popular hymn he had heard that was not included in this new publication. After a moment of reflection, he responded, "When I was younger, I believe the most popular ancient hymn still enjoyed among my friends was called 'Stairway to Heaven.'"

Mama was certain that she had never heard it and encouraged Spock to play a rendition of it on the piano after dinner. The fact that he knew hymns and could play the piano, certainly raised his stock with Mama. Neither of us understood at the time, Spock could divine the logic of most musical instruments within a few minutes, and he could thereafter proceed to play them passably well.

The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Rutherford – July 29, 1846

Finally, Clara has written to me with the newsiest of letters! She and Mr. W. patched things up almost as soon as our carriage disappeared from view of Wycliffe Lodge. The two of them have taken daily excursions (chaperoned) which have included picnics and lots of talking. On rainy days they take their picnic to the lovely gazebo behind the main house, where Charles remains endlessly fascinated by any topic Clara wishes to bring up.

Clara had delayed writing to me, as it seems Charles has asked for her hand, and she has been at sixes and sevens. Being more of a traditionalist than me in this matter, she thought she should wait until her older sister was married before announcing an engagement. (She was somehow sure that Spock would soon ask for my hand; how could she possibly have known?) With that impediment soon to be gone, she has asked if Charles can formally propose at my reception. Of course, I said yes! No doubt Papa will be happy with her choice, not to mention he won't have to pay additionally for her engagement party.

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Rutherford – August 24, 1846

Our desire for a low-key justice of the peace wedding is requiring far more planning and preparation than I might have imagined. While Mama, Papa, Clara, and Charles will be the only nuptial witnesses, the reception guest list seems to have gotten out of hand. Lady L. is taking it all in stride, not having had a grand party for some time at St. James. I have had to restrain Clara from inviting everyone she knows, including the postman.

I suspect the build up to the day is playing havoc with my stomach. I can barely keep down a thing I eat. Mornings are especially bad; the smell of tea sends me running to the chamber pot.

Catastrophe! I mentioned my nervous stomach to Spock, who, being quite concerned, scanned me with a device that he apparently retained from his wrecked space vehicle. He reports that beyond doubt, I am pregnant! I almost went into a real absolute swoon this time. The thought of impending sniggers and disdainful looks I might expect from those thinking I have endured a forced marriage; it was all too much!

As always, my darling Grayson Spock came to my rescue. He assures me that all will appear proper and above criticism. It seems that the normal confinement period for a Vulcan infant conceived by a Vulcan female, is almost one Earth year. His human mother carried him for over eleven months. There should be no hint of scandal! No fragment of medical news has been more welcome to me than this one provided by him. In fact, his 'Tricorder,' as he calls it, predicts our child, a son, will be born on May 24, 1847 – the monarch's 28th birthday!

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – August 27, 1846

Our wedding and reception yesterday went off splendidly! I could not have been happier to be marrying Grayson, although he informed me after the ceremony, he prefers me to call him 'Spock.' My new lavender dress seems a little tighter than when first bought, and my bosom positively spills out of it! It is just right for such a gay reception; I hope to get much more wear from it... after the baby is born.

I was delighted to see Lady L.'s Grand room decorated with magnificent bouquets and garlands that matched the lavender of my dress. Even though I have dined here on many an occasion, I had never before seen this gilt-china and magnificent silver service employed at any previous gathering. Clearly Ada whole-heartedly approves of our match and provided a party that all will remember.

Spock, uncharacteristically relaxed and smiling, greeted each guest quite cordially and properly. His astonishing memory for names would stand him in good stead, were he to go into politics. Lady L. spared no expense for the viands and wine. It probably helped that Papa assured her full reimbursement. Papa generously provided the use of his own household staff to supplement Lady L.'s depleted personnel, even going so far as to provide splendid matching livery for all.

I'm not much of a drinker but was warned by Spock against consuming alcohol of any kind or amount until after the baby is born. He suggests that this will become sound medical wisdom in the coming centuries; I can't refute that! He also warns against smoking, although there remains little likelihood that I will engage in such a foul practice. I don't mind the aromatic smell of some pipe tobacco but could not imagine ingesting it directly.

We received all sorts of lovely presents with which to make our future household. From Lady L. we received two silver candelabra, and Clara and Charles provided an ornate wheeled cart for the purpose of serving tea and dainties in our future entertaining parlor. We received many wonderful bits and bobs that will certainly help make our lives more comfortable as we grow old together.

Beyond our wildest dreams though, Papa and Mama gave us the deed to some land they had purchased on the Yorkshire Moors long ago, halfway between Wold Newton and Wycliffe Lodge. The land comes with some outbuildings, and enough land to provide us with a small income from the

cultivation of grains and animals. Two families who have worked the land for generations will continue renting the cultivated land from us. I wonder how Spock will feel as a 'gentleman farmer'? It remains to be seen if he will find such an occupation stimulating enough for his restless mind. I am on cloud nine and could not be happier or more hopeful at the prospect of being Mrs. Spock and the mother of his child, and now a landowner!

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – September 1, 1846

All were a bit weepy today as the last of our goods were loaded to into the haulier's wagon for the trip to Yorkshire. Spock was the only one allowed to touch the beacon, which was packed in such a way it could take a tumble from Mt. Snowdon without suffering a scratch. He would have preferred to bring it on the train with us, but I put my foot down! It is a dream to be heading to my own home on my own land, to share with the man I love; I cannot wait to see it for the first time.

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – September 3, 1846

Upon our arrival, the waxing moon provided few visual details of Burton Cottage – our new home. We were exhausted after train delays and the seemingly endless carriage ride from Bridlington. Space transport cannot possibly arrive soon enough for me!

Only a single candle burned in the window adjacent the large front door. We knocked, and to my surprise the door was unlocked; in fact, it had a latch but no lock, a testament to the security that neighbours feel in this region. Someone named Maddie signed the note beside the burning candle, indicating the master bedroom upstairs was ready for occupancy. The mysterious Maddie indicated she would be around in the morning to show us our new home. As I picked up the candle, Spock

must have sensed my exhaustion. He gathered me in his arms like an infant and gently carried me up the stairs to bed.

When I descended the stairs on the morrow in the hope of finding a kettle and some tea, I was astonished to see a young girl sitting at the kitchen table. The kitchen's warmth clearly indicated she had built a fire in the stove, but no kettle was in sight.

"Good morning my Lady," she offered tentatively with worried eyes. "I did not wish to wake you and the Lord. I imagine you arrived very late; I waited as long as I could but had to go home. I am Maddie."

"Lovely to meet you Maddie," I said as non-threateningly as I could, holding out my hand in greeting. "Please call me Violet, and my husband prefers Mr. Spock. We hold no titles; we are just ordinary citizens of the realm – commoners, if you like."

Maddie slowly became a little more relaxed, flying about the kitchen, pumping water, setting out teacups, and making herself altogether useful, while maintaining her youthful chatter. During her labours, she explained that she had been freed by her mother for a few hours to help settle us into our new home. Otherwise, she would be labouring for her family, two young brothers and her parents, Jeremy and Jodie Clarkson. Her frenetic pace slowed a little as she became comfortable with me and my newly remembered girlish banter.

Maddie is a very pretty young thing of about twelve years; the only one in her family to have had any schooling at all. She was delighted to hear that she would have access to the few dozens of books that we possess, when our household goods arrive. Apparently, her family had only a bible to read, which had been damaged in a flood before she was born; she says many of its pages are stuck

together. She intimated that she thought it may have been damaged in ‘The Great Flood,’ but I gently expressed my doubts about that.

After tea and toast, we went for a short walk on my new ‘estate,’ where she pointed out where she lived, and the adjoining house of the other tenant family (the Hammonds). After stepping outside in the morning light, our place looked lovely. The rounded soft edges of its thatched roof contrasted with the angular Tudor style of its exterior walls. Behind the house, a crowing cock ensured that his world was awake and ready for the day.

I let Maddie go on while she named the livestock, fields, and features of the property. She assured me that Spock and I would always be welcome visitors, although tea was not always available due to family finances. She invited me to put a candle in the rear window of the house, should I ever need her to come over at any time; what a sweet and generous girl!

Following the brief tour, she ran off back home to attend to her daily chores, while I walked the grounds to my new palace and happily thought about how lucky I was.

From The MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Rutherford – October 8, 1846

Mama’s and Papa’s letter came by return post this afternoon. It just gushes with their excitement over me being with child. They plan a visit over Christmastide; it is just as well Spock’s parents aren’t coming, as accommodation could become a little stretched.

Maddie asked me if I was expecting a baby, so I must be showing! I admit to being taken aback a little when she asked, as I had no idea of such things when I was her age. Then I

remembered, she was brought up on a farm, where the details of reproduction are probably well-understood by farming folk at a tender age. She gave me such a strange look when I told her I was only two months along; I think she suspects otherwise. Now that she knows my condition, she is being more attentive and helpful than ever.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN, May 28, 1847 – PERSONAL

It may be just as well that I am never found by the Enterprise. I have not only violated the Prime Directive too many times to count, but today I became the father of Mycroft Spock, a son that was born nearly four hundred years before me! If I am found by the Federation, they will be forced to put me on trial. *"Starfleet personnel may not violate this Prime Directive, even to save their lives and/or their ship, unless they are acting to right an earlier violation or an accidental contamination of said culture."* My only recourse will be to plead "Accidental Contamination," although it will have to be determined if I significantly affected the timeline. If I am banished from Starfleet for my actions, I will hopefully have the consolation of a wonderful son and the love of my dearest Violet.

He is a quiet but hungry fellow that shows extraordinary strength and curiosity, which I believe is unheard of among human infants that are days old. I believe he has inherited Vulcan eyes, which can focus virtually as soon as they open. At Violet's insistence, I gave the child as thorough an examination as the tricorder permits. She was relieved that all his systems are functioning as perfectly as a three-quarters human/one-quarter Vulcan could be. Since this device so accurately predicted his birth date, she will never doubt its diagnoses on any further matters.

May 30, 1847

Burton Cottage, Yorkshire

Dear Mama & Papa,

We have been blessed with the most beautiful, perfect, and robust baby boy. I have been so busy since his birth; this is my first letter since the latter days of my confinement. Spock is well-pleased with his son, whom we have called 'Mycroft,' which means 'small field by the stream,' an homage to the place where Spock and I first met; I hope you like it.

If you possibly can, please come to attend the christening next Sunday after communion services. Spock was not raised a Christian, but is amenable to its rituals; regardless, Charles and Clara are delighted to be Mycroft's godparents. It is wonderful to have them so close. I think Clara to be just a little jealous that she has not yet started a family. Charles is such a dear, but I wonder if he knows what to do; I'm certain Clara doesn't! Perhaps Papa can have a quiet talk with Charles after the christening.

We have quite settled into farm life, particularly Spock. He is constantly concocting new apparatus that help with field drainage,

plough efficiency, grain storage and he has even modified our home and the houses of our tenant farmers, so they will remain warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. It appears a certainty that Spock trained as an engineer when he lived in the East.

I must cut this short, as my beautiful son is singing loudly for his supper. Please let us know by return post if you are coming; I hope you do! We will send a carriage to the station to collect you, so please let us know your expected arrival time.

Yours with much love...Violet

From the diary of Violet Spock – February 1st, 1851

I sense some trouble brewing in the brilliant mind of my beloved Spock. He often refers to something called the ‘Prime Directive,’ which I don’t quite fathom. It seems that despite his best efforts to adhere to its precepts, cascades of events seem to overtake his best intentions.

During our last provisioning trip to York, we found the time to walk the grounds of York Minster, whereupon Spock marveled over the design and engineering required to produce such a structure, completed in the 15th century with primitive technology. He immediately took it upon himself to make some drawings, which he could analyze at his leisure upon our return home.

While drawing, he was approached by a tall, curious-looking young man of no more than twenty years, who expressed admiration for Spock's sketches. Apparently being of a mathematical bent, he was impressed by some of the calculations that Spock had included in the margins of his drawings.

The poor creature, having just returned from his family home in Croft-on-Tees, was waiting for a train to return to Christ Church Oxford, after attending the funeral of his dear mother, who had died suddenly at the age of only forty-seven. At first, speaking with a stammer, he quickly became comfortable with Spock, and they talked at length regarding symbolic logic and other mathematical oddities that were less plain to me than Swahili. He, (his name was Charles Dodgson), was impressed that Spock personally knew both Lady L. and Charles Babbage. After talking for the best part of an hour, they hurriedly exchanged addresses, and young Dodgson ran to catch his train. I'm sure they would have talked all night, completely ignoring me, were it not for the train schedule.

Fortunately, I had Mycroft to occupy my attention, who on several occasions attempted to scale one of the York Minster towers. At one point, the little imp almost climbed out of my reach before I caught him! I was exhausted by the time we clambered into the coach for our return home; Spock seems to be his usual contemplative and restful self; lucky ha'p'orth!

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – February 14th, 1851

Today, Spock received a letter from someone named Maxwell, a student (although at Cambridge, not Oxford) of about the same age as Charles Dodgson, who referred him. The letter

contained a few appeals for guidance regarding the methods Spock apparently employed to calculate stresses on the various points of York Minster. While I did not understand most of Mr. Maxwell's letter, I could sense Spock's distress at receiving a letter from this particular young man whom he had never met. I suspect that the apparently brilliant James Maxwell is a name that may still be known hundreds of years in the future, perhaps as a famous architect.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN, February 15th, 1851 – PERSONAL

Based upon my sparse knowledge of the era in which I now live, I seem to find myself accidentally connected with too many significant figures from history. A chance meeting with one Charles Dodgson, has put me in touch with the man whom I believe is James Clerk Maxwell, one of the giants of physics. I am as familiar with the Maxwell equations as I am with my own mother's face, and yet the Prime Directive forbids me discussing their genesis with their actual originator. Mr. Maxwell invited me to visit him in Cambridge, an encounter I would probably relish as much as meeting Isaac Newton or Albert Einstein. I feel my accidental violations of the Prime Directive may be forgiven at a tribunal, were Starfleet to respond to my beacon, but I must avoid deliberate violations, regardless of the temptation. Even though years have passed since I sat on the bridge of the Enterprise, I am reconciled to finishing my life in rural England. I must deny my curiosity and vanity and stay away from Maxwell and this Dodgson fellow; their connections may present rabbit holes I should not explore!

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – February 1st, 1853

As we suspected, (and some of us hoped,) Spock has entered the portion of his male cycle known as Pon Farr. It is so much more comforting to know what we are both facing this time, and we have made enhanced preparations for once again ‘saving my darling’s life,’ in a most delightful way!

Instead of mutual rejection and annoyance with one another like last time, we, (the royal ‘we’) are making the most delicious preparations; even Spock develops a coy smile when we whisper of the prospect.

Spock tells me that Pon Farr is initiated and developed by close physical contact with a suitable female, without actually committing the ‘act.’ I am rather enjoying teasing him without the prospect of satisfaction for either of us, until this coming Saturday night. We have reason to hope that he will derive maximum benefit from his ‘treatment’ this weekend. To this end, we have arranged for Mycroft to spend the weekend with Maddie’s family, where our activities are not likely to disturb him, and he is unlikely to disturb our goings-on. I have taken the precaution of buying stronger rope, and taunted Spock by showing it to him!

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – February 6th, 1853

I seem to recall the last time I ‘saved Spock’s life,’ I fretted at the possibility of having achieved my life’s peak experience; I most assuredly had not! It was so much more comfortable, guilt-free and satisfying without the nerves and physical discomfort of our first experience together, not to mention the prospect of injury, death, or eternal damnation for me. Even though we have been intimate with each other many times since Mycroft’s conception, it is a wholly different level of

intensity dealing with a Vulcan at the apex of Pon Farr. The former devout Anglican in me makes me blush to admit, I am looking forward even more to our next Pon Farr encounter! Spock's reaction is to sleep for 25 hours; I suppose it's only logical!

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – March 14th, 1853

There most assuredly is something about Pon Farr that contributes to the continuance of the Vulcan race, as I once again find myself with child following an intense encounter with Spock and his blessed condition. He got the most churlish grin on his face when I told him the news and raced to fetch his tricorder from its secret concealment. After checking me twice for good measure, he predicted (or the tricorder did,) the date of my next son's birth to be January 6th, 1854. My instinct is to immediately write Mama and Papa with the good news, but I must hold this precious secret for nearly two months, so they will not worry about my eleven-month period of confinement. I can't complain about how easily I dealt with Mycroft, and I am heartened to understand that a second gravidity is usually easier than the first. (At least I now know what to expect!)

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE MAY 1, 1853

Violet informed me that she is with child once again. My tricorder health check confirms she is pregnant and can expect another son next January. While I am delighted at the prospect of another son, I have two nagging concerns. The first and most obvious is how my presence is disturbing the timeline; it is obviously too late to abandon my current life. After 2,565 days in this time and place, there seems little

hope of 'rescue.' Should I be reunited with Starfleet, I will have to accept the consequences of my dealings among the people of nineteenth-century Earth.

My second concern is much more dire. A three-month surveillance of what was once a long-period comet, suggests that its orbit has been significantly altered. Although I have only crude equipment with which to verify my observations, the *Schweizer* comet, as it is known, passed within 12.5 million kilometers of Earth. Currently it has a trajectory that will almost certainly put it in collision with Earth in the mid-twenty-first century. My conjecture is that the wormhole responsible for my current fate may have perturbed this comet and altered its trajectory.

Oddly, if my calculations are correct, then Earth would have suffered a cataclysm hundreds of years before my birth. Such an event would certainly have been recorded in Earth's historical record; I have no recollection of such an event. Perhaps my calculations and those of my enthusiastic young assistants are incorrect.

March 8, 1854

Burton Cottage, Yorkshire

Dear Mama & Papa,

We were so disappointed that you could not attend the Christening this Sunday past. I hope Mama is feeling better following her bout of nervous sensibility; I hear that it has afflicted many women of the Royal Court. I wonder if physicians have considered it may have a contagious nature. Please feel better soon and come have a long visit with your new grandson as soon as you are well.

Unbelievably, our new son received an unintended name, with which he is formally and legally registered at the local parish. His name accidentally changed when the (ancient and mostly deaf) elder in charge of parish records was told his name was to be 'Sherrinford Spock,' a unique name for a singular child. The senile old creature scrawled our chosen name on a piece of paper in the shakiest of hands, and painfully bobbed into the Chancery with the help of his two canes.

Twenty minutes later he emerged with a birth certificate for Sherlock Spock! When I asked where the name Sherlock came from, he claimed to have left his spectacles at home, and could not read his own handwriting. He referred to a compendium of Christian names that sounded like what

he thought he had heard. The old dear concluded that he had written 'Sherlock,' and to be honest, I quite liked the change from Sherrinford. Since Sherlock's heathen father avoided the baptism service to help with the lambing, twice-God-parents Charles and Clara concurred with me that it was a worthy name for our new son.

Upon arriving back at the cottage, I could not contain my wonder when Spock nearly fell into a swoon upon hearing of the name change. There was no anger, just agitation, like one might expect after seeing a ghost. His state soon passed, and he dutifully and somewhat pensively accepted the name of our new son. I am however going to privately question him at my first opportunity about this episode.

Sherlock is a tiny darling, as 'fair haired' as his name. He appears to be as precocious as Mycroft was in his earliest days. Thankfully his appetite is not nearly as robust as that of his brother at the same age! When he knows I am watching, Mycroft treats him with alternating curiosity and disdain. When I secretly watch Mycroft with Sherlock, he becomes as loving and doting an elder brother as one could wish for. I suppose with seven years between them, Mycroft will be more of a mentor and protector than a competitor; time will tell.

I must close now to prepare the evening meal. Papa, please give Mama a loving embrace and kindly get her through this awful malady; she always dotes on you (or gets the staff to) when your gout flares.

With much love for all...Violet

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE DECEMBER 17, 1854

During today's daily rounds at the farm, I, as usual, checked the status of the beacon, which has remained concealed in a false wall I created behind the blacksmith furnace. Since our arrival here I had managed to reduce the size significantly while decreasing power consumption of the device and increasing its radiating power output.

For years it has emitted a slow, steady, and perfectly regular pulse in the form of a glowing blue light that has remained unwavering since the device was first activated. Today, for the second day in a row, I noticed a slight stutter to the pulse, which seems slightly stronger and perhaps slightly faster than yesterday.

The sub-space frequency at which this device operates would not make it susceptible to any but the most bizarre natural phenomenon and the period of coherent interference would likely be quite fleeting. It is possible that the slight day over day increase in this 'stutter frequency' may correspond to a Doppler shift from a similar device moving towards this one. I therefore hypothesize that my beacon has been detected by an interstellar vessel, which may be approaching to investigate its source. Until I am

certain that my hypothesis is correct, I will keep these thoughts to myself, but will begin carrying my Starfleet communicator.

The once much-hoped-for arrival of a search party to rescue me from Earth exile has created a level of anxiety within me that is completely outside my life experience. Given my family situation and the possibility that my progeny will go on to become two of the most famous brothers that ever lived, it seems I might have some profound choices to make if my beacon has been detected by a Starfleet vessel.

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – December 20th, 1854

The prospect of this day has filled me with dread since I discovered the alien origin of my beloved Spock. Today he informed me of his suspicion that his beacon has been detected by a passing spacecraft, probably from his native Vulcan. There is a more remote possibility that it may be his old ship, the USS Enterprise. Reassuringly, after a long talk in bed, Spock promised me that if approached by a Starfleet ship, he will renounce his commission as a Starfleet officer and remain here to raise his sons. He confused me a little when he suggested that he may have to legally change his last name if he remains. Often, he says something during every conversation that I don't understand; I have learned to ignore those portions of our daily dialogues. I feel great relief that he has chosen his family over a return to the future!

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – December 22th, 1854

I had the strangest encounter today! I took our utility cart into Burton Fleming to buy a goose and some puddings for Christmastide and encountered a familiar-looking visitor dropping off a package at the post office. I was as surprised as he was that we recognized each other from our grammar-school days.

Siger Holmes was a year ahead of me in the boy's form; we became somewhat friendly while practicing couples dancing; he always picked me out as a partner and seemed more than a bit annoyed when we had to switch partners. After all these years, he remains unmarried, and seemed disappointed when he discovered I was 'Mrs. Spock.' Five years ago he inherited a very nice acreage, a few miles from Wycliffe Lodge; he and Clara are practically neighbors, but neither know each other!

For five minutes or so, we shared pleasantries and a few old school remembrances outside the post office. I may have gushed a little too much about my gorgeous sons. We talked a little about local news, which included the recent passing of the 'ancient' elder who accidentally named Sherlock. He also mentioned that several villagers were suffering with cholera, and two children at the local school had come down with measles; he warned me to be careful with my boys.

I didn't expect to see Siger again, but he caught up to me as I loaded the cart with the day's shopping. He kindly offered me two bags of sweets as Christmas gifts for Mycroft and Sherlock and a lovely little nosegay for myself. I thanked him kindly and drove away recalling us dancing together at age twelve or thirteen; it seems like forever ago! It then occurred to me that Sherlock was much too young to eat hard sweets, so I opened his bag and had a few on the drive home.

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – January 17th, 1855

Today I nearly jumped out of my skin! I prepared a warm bath for Spock before bed, and no sooner was he out of his clothes, than his jerkin screeched like an owl and emitted a disembodied female voice calling for Mr. Spock. I thought at first this was an amusing trick of his, until I saw the look of astonishment on his face. He asked me to pass the jerkin and reached into its main pocket to produce what looked like a small, plain, rectangular metal snuff box.

When he flipped open the box's mesh lid, the dialogue went something like this: "This is Lieutenant Commander Spock, I read you loud and clear."

"Nice to hear you again, Commander, please stand by for Captain Kirk," replied the female voice. There was a pause, then a male voice came on. "Mr. Spock, you illusive son of a gun, how are you?"

"I am well, Captain; it is good to hear your voice. I had long since concluded that either the Enterprise had been lost by contacting the cosmic string, or after what I assumed was an extensive search, you had given me up for dead."

"We had been scanning for the shuttlecraft with no results. We saw the solitary but weak sub-space signal from Earth and concluded that it must be you. Without that signal, we would have thought you lost forever. The Enterprise sustained damage to the warp core due to the accident which delayed us. How have you been holding out these past few weeks? I'll bet you could use a good Starship-cooked meal."

"Captain, by my reckoning, I have been here in nineteenth-century England for over eight Earth years. During that time there have been a few significant developments."

“My God! Eight years you say? How could that... Of course – the time dilation effect! We must have been deposited in the same relative space-time to you when we were separated and found ourselves near Gilese 411, confirming that we were still in the Alpha quadrant, though in a different time period. While Scotty was making repairs to the warp core, we could barely maintain warp and occasionally relied on impulse power, averaging just under light speed until yesterday. Two weeks for us was eight years for you. I am so sorry, Spock! I can only imagine how isolated you must have felt – alone all those years! I’m sure you will have many stories to relate when we beam you up tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow, Captain?”

“Yes, tomorrow. Scotty and Uhura enhanced the directional sensitivity and range of our communicator channel for purposes of searching for and reaching you. We are in communicator range but are still a dozen or more hours away from transporter range.”

“I see, Captain. I look forward to seeing you tomorrow; I have some preparations to make. Spock out.”

Just like that the voice was gone, but my astonishment was not! Talking snuff boxes, Captain Kirk, transporters? It was all completely mindboggling! When I recovered from my surprise, we talked for hours about what we would do. I could come with him and live in the future with our sons, or more likely, he would remain here with us; the choice would be mine. The most important thing was that whatever happened, we would all be together. I fell asleep in Spock’s arms, but I am almost certain he didn’t sleep a wink.

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL Diary of Violet Spock – January 18th, 1855

Today was a day of dreams and nightmares. At Spock's insistence, I dressed myself in my lavender wedding dress, which thankfully still fits; in fact, it is not nearly as tight as on my wedding day. I dressed the boys in their Sunday-best and we gathered in our living room. Spock appeared in his Starfleet officer's uniform, looking unchanged from when I first saw him, except for his longer hair.

We finished the evening meal together, and after an hour or so of playing games with the children, the snuff box screeched again, startling us all. Oddly, this time the disembodied voice sounded like our town smithy, whom I believe is from Aberdeen.

“Mr. Spock, I have a lock on your location, if you are in fact holding the communicator.”

“Mr. Scott, I am holding the communicator; four to beam aboard.”

“Four? The captain led me to believe that it would be only you.”

“There are four of us Mr. Scott, please energize.”

Spock had infant Sherlock in his arms, and I was holding Mycroft's hand, when I felt tingles all over my body, and we all suddenly appeared on what looked like a stage at a London musical dance hall. Once again, I felt tricked, how could Spock have done something like this to our living room? I saw a smiling man standing behind a strange-looking lectern, and immediately recognized his voice from the snuff box.

“Well, Mr. Spock, you are a sight for very sore eyes; welcome back aboard!”

“It is good to see you again, Mr. Scott. May I introduce my family?”

The smiling Scotsman's face was overcome with a look of puzzlement. One by one Spock introduced us, saving me until last. We descended from the stage, just in time to see a wall panel

slide open, through which two men, dressed in a similar fashion to Spock hurried in. The one I later learned was Captain Kirk, spoke first.

“Is he here yet?” He paused, being at least as surprised as Mr. Scott that there were four souls to greet instead of just one. When he overcame his surprise, he spoke again.

“What have we here?”

“Good afternoon, Captain, permission to come aboard. I would like you to meet my family,” said Spock.

They exchanged pleasantries, while the second man, whom I later learned was the ship’s doctor, offered a somewhat more professional, if slightly irritated, greeting. Doctor McCoy insisted that we all go to a place called ‘sickbay’ before we had any contact with other members of the crew. He reminded the captain that smallpox was still a killer disease in the nineteenth century. The captain agreed but asked to see Spock alone in his ‘ready-room’ as soon as our medical examinations were complete.

We walked as a family along a colourful hall and through another magically opening panel into what looked like the best-lit room I had ever seen. There were ten unoccupied single beds surrounded by odd-looking apparatus; we were instructed to lay down in three of them. (I held on to Sherlock.) We each had an assigned ‘nurse,’ who examined us all with what looked like much bigger and more sophisticated tricorders than the one I had seen Spock employ. I was somewhat surprised when my nurse told the doctor that I had an unusually strong physiology and highly elevated neural plasticity (whatever that is). Spock was examined by the somewhat disagreeable doctor. During the examination, we three ‘Earthlings’ were subjected to having something painlessly pressed into our arms, which Spock later explained, was a disease preventative for a long list of afflictions.

The examinations took only a few minutes more, by which time Mycroft was getting both restless and curious. Under the watchful eye of his assigned nurse, he began a short patrol of the room's perimeter; with gentle guidance he was safeguarded away from various apparatus and sharp implements. During his exploration, he eventually reached up and touched a blue circle on the wall, and magically a darkened window appeared. To my astonishment, WE WERE IN THE STARS!!

I cannot begin to describe the feelings of surprise, bewilderment and disbelief that flooded my mind. I had to be dreaming, and yet Mycroft asked Spock to pick him up so that he might have a better view. I asked if we had been transported to heaven and for moments feared that we had all somehow died together. I then realized if we were dead, it didn't matter, as we would be together for eternity. I could see familiar constellations in vivid detail even though there seemed to be many more additional stars, and one constellation I had never before seen, the Southern Cross.

My nurse (and Spock) assured me we were not dead, then asked if I would like to see my home; with some trepidation, I agreed. We walked in a tight group to a wall at ninety degrees from the window, through which we had been viewing stars that magically did not twinkle. The nurse touched another blue circle on the wall, and a similar darkened window appeared that allowed me to look at an azure orb, very many times the size of a full moon, floating among the stars at what looked like a huge distance.

Upon realizing the white tufts that covered much of Scotland must be clouds viewed from above, I oriented myself to where I was. I could see all of Europe and across the Atlantic, which itself was dusted with many white swirling tufts. It was all too astonishing, beautiful, and frightening, looking down on a living globe undefined by borders.

Our examination of Earth was interrupted by Dr. McCoy, who reminded Spock that he was to visit the captain's 'ready room' as soon as his physical examination was complete. I kissed Spock on the cheek and hastened his return. My boys and I returned to our breathless examination of the Earth and stars.

FIRST OFFICER'S LOG, STARDATE UNKNOWN. EARTH DATE January 18, 1855

My encounter with Captain Kirk in his ready room should not have been a surprise but it seems to have cut me in many ways. Upon his request, I presented a detailed account of my over eight years in nineteenth-century England, including my accidental discovery by Earth inhabitants, which ultimately led to the relationship with my wife, Violet. The captain listened sympathetically, but at the conclusion of my report, he ordered me to confine myself to assigned quarters until further notice. I suspect if my family were not aboard, procedure would have had me confined to the brig. He did not have to explain that Starfleet law, particularly related to the Prime Directive was absolutely clear and inflexible on certain matters; this was one of those matters.

Although I had taken measures during stressful circumstances to avoid contact with anyone outside my timeline, my subsequent discovery and integration into a former English society was in direct contravention of the wording and spirit of the Prime Directive. I would therefore be compelled to face a trial on violation of the Prime Directive, and to explain my actions sufficiently well to avoid expulsion from Starfleet, and possible extended confinement. The trial, led by a team of specialists from the Temporal Integrity Commission, would present evidence of how I had altered the timeline in such a manner as to

lead to the loss of lives or other detriments in subsequent generations. The captain had no choice but to take me into custody until my trial. Given the hour on Earth, I, as family head, have eight hours to explain my situation to my beloved wife and son; Sherlock is too young to remember what is happening. Sadly, they must return to Earth without me.

From the MOST CONFIDENTIAL diary of Violet Spock – January 19th, 1855

My heart is broken. I have been cast down to Earth without my beloved Spock. During a night spent in a large room with two very large beds, Spock explained our heartbreaking predicament to me.

Spock was far more emotional than I have ever seen him. With downcast looks and seemingly on the verge of tears, he explained to me that matters were no longer in our hands. His presence on Earth had contaminated the timeline, and furthermore, he is certain that one of our sons may very well be destined to be among the most famous people that ever lived. Apparently, there is an entire investigative branch in the future that can determine how time-travelers may have influenced future events, and their findings will be used at his prosecution on future Earth. Time-line interference is considered to be a high crime in the future, for which there are severe sanctions. Although Spock's 'crime' is considered serious enough by Starfleet that one should put one's life at risk to avoid it, there is no requirement for a time-traveler to commit suicide to avoid interfering with the past; this will be the thrust of Spock's defense.

I feel I may have been sentenced to a life without the only man I have ever loved besides Papa, to bring up our sons alone without Spock's patient guidance and strength. Spock has slowly increased the efficiency of our small estate, so that it should provide a living for us at least until the boys are grown. I am to report that Spock went for a day trip into Burton Fleming and has not been seen since. It is not unheard of for brigands and highwaymen to pass through this area, and after a while it may be presumed that he fell victim to one such character. There are also many open mine shafts into which one might fall on a dark cloudy night such as tonight. Tomorrow I will dutifully organize what I know will be a futile search.

During Spock's time with the captain, he was able to negotiate one concession, which is literally a beacon of hope. Spock has promised that in the event he is not sentenced to a long incarceration, he will make every effort to return. To that end, he has been allowed to leave the beacon that guided the Enterprise to him, here on our land, so that he may be guided back to me and his loving sons, should fate allow.

Very odd. While writing today's diary entry there was a knock at the door which I hoped might be my Spock, escaped from the starship. I jumped up and ran to the door. Instead, it was Siger Holmes of all people! It seems when he was driving past our house, he saw from the road a bright bluish-red flash emanating from our front window, which he thought might be an explosion or fire. It was probably the effect of our transporter journey terminating in our living room. It was kind of him to stop and ensure that all was right with us, even though I could not reveal it was not.

Sherlock Holmes and I read through the papers that night. He would read a page, then hand it unthinking to me. At first, he scoffed, made noises about how his brother should take over for Jules Verne, but about the time I got up to refresh the lamp oil, he went quiet. Instead of changing position every two minutes, he was still as a stone. He was bent over his legs, one arm balancing on a knee, the other clasped around his neck. I began to pull the papers from his fingers as he finished reading them, he was so absorbed that he neglected to hand them over.

As he finished the last page he leaned back with his head over the back of his chair. Neither of us spoke. The lamp oil had burned down, and although dawn would come soon, it was slow arriving. The final embers of the fireplace provided the only source of light.

“Holmes?”

He was silent for a long time.

“I am afraid to think, Watson,” said he, at last. “I am afraid to *think*.” His voice cracked in a way that shocked me to my core.

“Afraid to think about... yourself? Your... mother? The... cosmos? For the science in these documents is—”

“I was prepared for the science exhibited. Strange as it is to say, I have heard of the theoretical possibilities of dark stars, dense bodies with gravity so great not even light can escape them. I could bend my mind to including ‘time’ in the category of things they effect. That is one part of this document which I am glad I read. A future where all the warring nations of Earth unite, use their combined recourses to explore the cosmos in the interest of discovery and peace? That is magnificent. It is marvelous. All we do is worth it, if only it ends in that.”

It was difficult to settle on what particular item had bothered my friend, since the entire thing had seemed one impossibility after another.

“Is it that your mother and brother hid this from you?”

“They had their reasons. I’m sure Mycroft knew that I would react... unhelpfully.”

“Then your mother’s... amorous...”

“I have not labored these many years under the misapprehension that I was delivered by stork, Watson.”

I was pleased I had gotten him back to his half-humorous, half-cynical manner. It was better than his silence. He stood up to tap his tobacco ash into the fire, which he vigorously stoked to a glowing red life. He packed a new pipe from his Persian slipper on the mantle, more deliberately than usual, lighting it out of habit instead of deliberation.

“You remember our adventure with the Baskerville hound?” he said, smoke beginning to curl in circles around his head. “These papers are like that. Except that the magnitude of *this* turns *that* into a buzzing fly of bother. Do you realize that written here is evidence of advanced thinking and technology that, for want of a better word, might as well be called *magic*?”

I said nothing.

“Putting aside all sorts of cosmic questions about what that says about the nature of the universe,” he said. “or the existence of a creator-God, think about what it means for my work. These people ascend effortlessly into the heavens, travel among the stars, **WORK** among the stars. Some of them read minds, or *think* they can read minds, or produce some sort of effect *akin* to reading minds. Have I used such ability in my deductions before? I know I have. You have noted yourself how I take long leaps in deduction that almost always come out correct. I have said that they were not long leaps at all, but I now think you may have been closer to the truth. Perhaps when I was making a deduction based off handwriting, for instance – which is not as exact a science as was previously thought – I have been using

this *thing* inside my head, unknowingly. How, I ask you, *how* am I supposed to investigate crimes without knowing what conclusions come from *reason*, and what come from my apparent... mystical Vulcan powers; is it all a magic trick over which I have no control?"

I have often noticed that strong willed men, when pushed to *extremis*, will assume a giddy form of hysteria. I was observing this now in Sherlock Holmes. I did what I might have done to a hysterical soldier in the Afghan war; I took him firmly by the shoulders.

"Sit down," I said. "Sit down, my dear Holmes."

Amazingly, he sat! I threw a blanket around him, for it had become very cold now that our fire had cooled and I sat across from him.

"You have told me, again and again, not to theorize before you have facts. That is what you are doing now. You are running yourself to pieces, without cause or evidence. We don't know if this thing exists, how it works, *if* it works. We should test it. We should ask Mycroft – who seems to have been using it for years without anything horrible happening to him."

"Apart from the general state of being Mycroft." But Holmes was smiling. "Watson," he said. "Good old Watson, throwing my own words back at me."

"I mean no harm."

"I know you do not. I realize now that I should never fear coming to the end of myself, for at the end of myself, there is you."

I smiled inwardly. "You should sleep now," I said. "And if you do not, I swear by all that is good and holy, I will use my chloroform. Do not test me!"

* * *

We went to see Mycroft the next morning. We had a minor delay, as Mycroft was not at his Kensington bolt hole, nor at the one improbably accessed through the London Zoo. No, this time he was hidden away at the center of the empire, in an attic-apartment inside Claridge's. As the lock clicked open

from the inside, Sherlock threw me a look which communicated *not a word*. I said nothing and endeavored to keep my face as blank as possible. I had the distinct impression that Mycroft Holmes knew about our two false starts anyway. Now that I know he can in actual fact read minds, I feel better about not being able to fool him.

“Do come in, brother, Doctor,” we heard in booming, rounded tones. The panic of the night before had been overcome, and he received us as if he were in the Stranger’s Room at his club. He was settled back into an armchair, and as we sat across from him, I noticed the remains of a most decadent breakfast spread out over the sideboard. The realization that *this* was how he lived while in *hiding* remains to me the single most impressive thing about Mycroft Holmes.

“Well, gentlemen,” said he, pouring tea from a massive decanter he might have plucked out of the air. “You have read them.”

“They made sense, up until about the point where you come into the picture, my dear Mycroft. There are some questions I want answered; you know how I hate it when I must get the details of a case from a secondhand report, especially when a first-hand report is available.”

Mycroft sighed. “You are being difficult, but that is to be expected. At the very least, you seem to believe now.”

“*Tentatively.*”

“I accept the qualification.” He took a long swallow of tea and paused, as though he were waiting for Holmes continue. When Holmes said nothing, Mycroft said: “So what questions do you have for me then, that are so very necessary I answer in person? I warn you that I am no storyteller like Doctor Watson here.”

I could see my friend’s muscles settling, and his fingers steepling, as he peered out over the top of them. This last month had been throwing him into one unaccustomed situation after another, with barely a moment to catch his breath or even change direction. Last night had been all that again, condensed into

something so complex and diamond-compact that even Sherlock Holmes could not process it flawlessly. But now he seemed back in firm territory, interviewing a client who had had a strange experience.

“What are your earliest memories?” he said.

Mycroft leaned back and touched the fingertips of his hands together in a way that was so like his brother I wondered if it was meant in gentle mockery. He shrugged.

“My early memories are uninteresting. Images. I remember a round, paned window and not liking the rain outside. There was somewhere in London to which mother and father must have taken me. A large cathedral, I longed to ascend its exterior. A theater was red-and-gold, but I could not tell you the programme. Father was mechanically musical; I do remember that. Instruments just made sense to him. I believe that is a trait I see in you, but your music has much more emotion than his. Mother never sang, not even “the Queen,” but Father sang strange songs – about deserts, primarily. I expect I may have understood a bit of Vulcan when I was young, but I’ve since lost most of it. Mother only knew a very little, and she never spoke it after you were born.”

“We lived in an out-of-the way little place in Yorkshire, but often had visitors. I’m sure I would describe many of them as extraordinary or eccentric today; when I was young, I just found them amusing. Mother loved to travel. Sometimes we all went, and sometimes just she alone. Father – Commander Spock, I should say, *is* my father. I also think of Siger Holmes as ‘Father.’ Do not think I am like you in that way, Sherlock. I remember Commander Spock never called me *Mycroft*. He called me *My’tyez*, which is Vulcan for ‘puzzle solver.’ It is possible it was just a generic endearment, like our English ‘honey’ or ‘sweet.’ The Vulcans are a more logical people than we, so it would make sense that they would want to compliment the intelligence of loved ones rather than their similarity to food products. Still, *My’tyez* does sound a bit like my name, and I was very good at solving puzzles.”

“Father would play all sorts of games with me – or at least, I thought of them as games. I realize now they really were tests, logic exercises. I recall one where you took turns saying statements that you

absolutely knew to be true, and the first one to say something in doubt lost. But that would have had to have been when I was a bit older. I started speaking very late.”

I knew from a previous conversation that Sherlock’s third birthday was somewhat overshadowed by Mycroft finishing his first original mathematical proof; this was difficult to imagine.

“The Commander made me all sorts of toys – to help with brain development, but I just thought of them as toys. There was one that was a bit like chess, but more complex and played on multiple levels. Once I asked Father why I should be playing games with such arbitrary solutions. Line up the red pegs in a line, why? Eventually, I could see that when I was presented with a problem, at the end of it there would be something useful, something previously unrealized. I remember him smiling and saying that if I could learn to play the game for the game’s own sake, I should always be at peace.”

“Was this perhaps when you were older as well?” Sherlock broke in. “After you started speaking?” There was emotion on his face, yet his detective’s brain could not allow a contradiction. I could not help but think that this *Spock* would have approved.

Mycroft shook his head. “Father had a way of understanding without my ever having to use spoken language. When I was very young, I was confused that mother could not understand me as he did. I realize now that he must have been using his Vulcan mental abilities to communicate. On Vulcan, there are apparently unconscious bonds between family members. There is a sad Vulcan story about two brothers who were generals of opposing armies, yet still maintained their bond. I have always thought that human twins may exhibit a subdued version of this mental phenomenon.”

“But that is a side topic. When I turned four and had not yet spoken, Mother grew concerned – despite Father saying that Vulcan children often did not speak until they were five or even six. Still, she could not help but worry. Father said that if he looked inside my brain, he would be able to tell if there was anything in any way wrong.”

“I am sure it is not possible to forget a mind-meld. I was barely four, but that sensation is still one of the most intense I have ever felt. There was serenity, logic, cool blue calm over fierce love. Afterwards, even though Father could seem distant and sometimes cold, there was never the smallest doubt about how much he loved me.”

Mycroft shook his head, as if he was just a little annoyed with himself.

“It seems that there should be a way of speaking about the prime cornerstone of Vulcan culture and philosophy without resorting to inexact poetry and metaphor. But – I saw his relationship towards me and Mother like the castle from *Sleeping Beauty*, only with every thorn pointed outward. To him, Earth felt like a jigsaw puzzle piece you hammer into place with your fist, telling yourself the inexactitude is a fault of the makers, yet *knowing* it does not fit. Of his life before, of his ship and his captain, I saw clean straight rulers to measure himself and his world. He loved the clarity of his mission and his role. His life on nineteenth-century Earth was one of those tangled English gardens, twisted up with smells and colours, beautiful but not sensible. It appealed to him, because he recognized aspects of himself within it all; and then there was Mother.”

Sherlock put up a hand; Mycroft abruptly stopped. Or more likely, his musings became too fast to be reflected by speech and recessed back into his mind.

“You received all of this... elaborate character insight... through *thought-transference*? When you were *four*?”

“It was not the only time we melded, and it took my adult understanding of the world to put words and rational meaning to what for a long time were just barely describable sensations, but yes. That is correct.”

“Mycroft, you know this sounds the very *definition* of twisting facts to suit theories. Perhaps you felt the effects of some drug and found all your sublimated thoughts about another individual illustrated

very colourfully. Afterwards, any confirmation of your gained insights will convince you of efficacy of the ‘mind-meld,’ while anything that does not fit – will be made so it does, I expect. Or else ignored.”

Mycroft smiled. “Very good, Sherlock. And I would of course agree with you, except for the fact that Commander Spock used a mind-meld to transfer skills.”

“What?”

“*Skills*. Especially ones I gather most Vulcans find, instinctive. How to initiate a mind-meld in the first place, for one. Or how to perform a Vulcan nerve pinch. I have used that one on occasion when I was attacked prior to having handlers and guards.”

Sherlock turned to me.

“Doctor, I would like you to keep track of my pulse pressure, and any other indicators of health that seem pertinent to you, as my brother carries out a demonstration of his prowess as a medium. Mycroft, your unwillingness to participate would look particularly damning in this instance. Especially if you say a word about unsympathetic vibrations, or how these powers are reserved only for half, and not quarter, Vulcans.”

“But of course, Sherlock. It is by far the most efficient way to communicate information, and I would have done it sooner, were it not for the fact that you would inevitably accuse me of drugging your tea.”

“I have not been drinking tea since I have been here.”

“I had noticed.”

“I wanted to be sure.”

“Most sensible. Now, if you are quite done stalling, come here. I will need to touch your face.”

Like a ship lurching into sail, Mycroft Holmes got to his feet; Sherlock rose as well. I came up beside him, close enough to see his face and hear his breathing. I caught one wrist between two fingers and felt a

steady pulse. If anything went wrong here, in what I was increasingly viewing as something akin to the hypnotism demonstrations I had witnessed with Dr. Freud, I would be there to put a stop to it.

“All right, Sherlock,” intoned Mycroft, sticking fingertips to his brother’s face in a clinical sort of way. “I want you to close your eyes and silently count backwards from ten.”

Sherlock rolled his eyes but did as he was told. Mycroft closed his eyes as well. At around seven seconds, he ceased fidgeting. He began vibrating; his breathing got faster though his pulse stayed even; I watched as closely as I could for any untoward sign. I will admit to drawing closer, seeing a film of sweat on his brow and knowing that somehow, somewhere deep inside his mind he was exerting a great deal of effort. I largely ignored Mycroft as my focus was entirely consumed by the monitoring of Sherlock. His eyes opened at one point, and the brothers seemed to be looking past each other, with faces like the ones they wore when they were having one of those conversations that consisted entirely of short, unrelated declarative sentences.

Perhaps ten or fifteen minutes later (I realized belatedly I ought to have been timing this; that was the sort of information Holmes always liked to know) the brothers broke apart, but continued to look at each other.

Sherlock was the one to eventually break the stare; he swallowed and sat down heavily.

“You understand?” said Mycroft, to the top of his brother’s head.

Holmes nodded. “I’ll take some of that tea now, Watson, please.”

Drinking it, he looked up at Mycroft again. “I never knew for certain if you were on the side of the angels. I am so glad I was wrong.”

This mind-meld seemed to have taken a slice out of Sherlock, who made his way over to the remains of Mycroft’s breakfast, where he sat down to eat more than I had ever seen him eat in just one sitting. Mycroft seemed amused, and I actually think I heard him humming, not a habit I had noted in him

before. He poured himself another cup of tea, and took up his part of the Spock story entirely of his own accord:

“When I got older, the logic games expanded into mathematics games. Father began to tell me stories of his home, although I think for a while, I was under the impression that Vulcan was a place in China or India. Nothing Father did seemed especially strange to me. Vulcan food, Vulcan music and Vulcan habits were common in our house.

“Is that why you will very occasionally walk about naked, Mycroft?” The question came completely out of the air. Sherlock asked it with a highly suspicious amount of innocence.

Mycroft gave Sherlock a very long stare.

“It aids in concentration.” He put exactly the same amount of emphasis on every word. “Vulcan is a *desert planet*. Many of its native techniques involve using the environment to engage with – oh, this is useless.” Sherlock was trying not to laugh with such gusto that his *not* laughing was even affecting me. I resolved to ask Holmes about this peculiar habit of Mycroft’s the moment we were on our own again.

“Anyone would think you were eight years old, Sherlock. And shame on you, Doctor, for encouraging him.”

I took long breaths though my nose in an attempt to keep on the most serious face I could, which no doubt was amusing in its own right.”

“That was before *Moriarty* at any rate.”

Sherlock abruptly stopped laughing.

“You heard correctly,” said Mycroft. “I grew up with James Moriarty, as my tutor – well, one of them at any rate. Did he never mention that? I suppose he wouldn’t have. He was about fifteen when I was seven, and very brilliant even then. So brilliant that our parents engaged him as a mathematics tutor for me, so their being away would not adversely affect my studies.”

Sherlock's eyes narrowed. "Did it never occur to you that this information may have been *useful* to me," he said. "Considering my attempts to trap and track him over this *past year*?"

Mycroft tilted his head to the side.

"No."

"No, it didn't occur to you, or no, it wouldn't have helped?"

"I have been very aware of your activities. When I had any information that I thought may have helped you, I shared it with you."

"I do hope this is the end of the dramatic revelations. You tell me our father was not human, that you appear to have magical powers, and now that you were taught by Professor Moriarty himself in your formative years. Are you quite certain our mother was not actually Queen Victoria, and you are not the long-lost crown Prince?"

"Charming, Sherlock," said Mycroft. I put a hand on his shoulder.

"To continue with the facts you seem so interested in getting from the source, *yes*, I was tutored in mathematics by James Moriarty, later to become your mad professor. If I had been any less academically talented, I expect he would have been a terrible teacher. I pity those students he was meant to instruct during his run as university professor. If you did not get it right the first time, you were being deliberately obtuse in an effort to waste his time. Luckily, I *did* get it right first time, every time, so we got on tolerably well. Anything that was in the least foundational bored him senseless. He was only ever interested in talking about his latest obsession, which at that point was binominal theorem equations. He seldom said anything in a social context, but he was impossible to forget – even for a moment – when he was in the room."

"The Vulcans had many talented mathematicians, some doing wonderful things with zero and imaginary numbers, and yes, binominal mathematics. Some of my games had put me much farther along than James Moriarty in that respect. It is possible that I let a few things —"

Sherlock made a small hand gesture which Mycroft apparently knew meant *explain*.

“I may have told him a few things which made him suspicious of where my knowledge was coming from. He deduced that space was involved, and I don’t think he ever dropped that obsession completely. He became fixated on our family and our family history, and eventually found that both he and Mother had close relatives who witnessed the Wold Newton meteorite and hypothesized that our ancestral lines were affected in some similar way – possibly leading to increased brain power and willful determination.”

“When I was six or seven, our father gifted me a reflective telescope, fashioned by his own hands in our blacksmith shop. We agonized on nights when the heavens were obscured by clouds and delighted when we could work on our own explorations and star charts. None was more delighted than Moriarty, especially when we observed a comet in 1853. To we amateur astronomers, it was the universe revealing its secrets, while many fellow countrymen thought it portended cruel calamities. Father, understandably, had considerable knowledge of the planets and stars which he shared as much as he dared. Strangely, he left me with the impression that he thought the comet did portend disaster; of what nature he did not elaborate. Even Moriarty sensed his concern and redoubled his study of the comet while it remained in view. I believe this interest led to his book on asteroid dynamics, much later on.”

“However, *Father* was something he could never resolve; I saw it bothered him. Where did my father come from, he asked me again and again. I gave him child’s answers: Father came from far away, Father came from the desert. Father came on a ship. But I almost certainly told him too much. Father talked to me soon after about the importance of not... *infecting* Earth with my knowledge of Vulcan practices. Earth had a great destiny and must be allowed to become itself, not just a second Vulcan. More than that, since he was from the future, and not just a different planet, changing the past of this world could conceivably change things enough that this bright, beautiful future of his might cease to exist. He

called it the ‘Prime Directive:’ the first rule, the one thing I must remember if I remembered nothing else. Limit exposure. Do not infect the timeline.”

His mood visibly darkened and said, “There was one letter that neither of you, nor Moriarty has seen. It holds a special place in my strongest vault and in my heart. Now that you have embraced your origins, I thought I should share it with you.”

Mycroft removed a letter-sized frame from an obviously purpose-built leather wallet and handed it towards Sherlock.

“This letter, composed by our father, materialized on our kitchen table, the day following our return from the Enterprise.”

“You read it aloud, Watson, if you will; I fear I know its content and may not have the fortitude to read it aloud.”

I read:

January 20, 1855

To my darling wife and deeply loved sons.

Prior to meeting you, Violet, I considered all emotions to be abhorrent to my precise, logical mind. But in our years together I have slowly learned to not only accept but also embrace the human half of my origin in a way I never thought possible. My heart is heavy to be separated from you all for an undetermined interval. Although now confined to my quarters for the duration of our voyage back, I want you to know that I will take all measures possible to be reunited with you all, if I am allowed to return.

While preparing a defense for my trial before the Temporal Integrity Commission, I informed the captain that my crude observations of the *Schweizer* comet should be checked while we are in the position to alter what might be its catastrophic course. Beyond doubt, my hypothesis of the comet’s

altered course can be traced to the arrival of the wormhole to this era and location. My calculations have been verified to much greater precision. I have been invited to temporarily join Enterprise's science team to determine the best method of eliminating it as a hazard to Earth's future. I have hope that preventing the destruction of the Earth in the 21st century may gain me some lenience from the Commission. I know from my past, that the Earth was not destroyed, so logically we will succeed in mitigating that disaster.

Please keep the beacon safe and hidden for as long as you can. I estimate its current power source will last approximately eleven years, nine days. Without it, it will be almost impossible to locate you in the space-time continuum. Earth's orbital position and Yorkshire are easily found, but as yet we are not capable of returning to a specific time. Please do not attempt to fit alternative power sources to the beacon, as there is a high probability it will become dangerously explosive, given sufficient unregulated external energy input.

These may be the last words you receive from me for a very long time. I am certain that my wonderful sons will live productive lives in the service of their country and society. As for you, my darling Violet, if I live a thousand years more, I am certain I will never find your like again. Keep the faith, I will return.

With ALL my love – live long and prosper!

Spock

After a long pause, Mycroft spoke.

“Mother died on February 14th, 1865, two weeks to the day that the beacon stopped working. It was thought she died in her sleep of a hemorrhagic stroke, but I am certain it was a broken heart. She had this letter held to her chest when I found her. I hope you can see the importance I attach to it.”

Sherlock and Mycroft shared a tearful embrace, an event I would never have thought possible previously, while I hid my own tears and made tea for all. We spent the shank of the evening sharing remembrances and drinking a large bottle of brandy that Mycroft thoughtfully supplied.

I looked at Mycroft and wondered if the boy being fed this gospel of avoidance had affected the man; running the world, it is true, but from his silent club, interacting with almost no one. It seemed somehow sad to me, and that sadness stayed with me as we bid Mycroft farewell and returned to Baker Street to carefully reread Commander Spock's logs.

It was not so very difficult catching one of Moriarty's high-placed confederates. They were not all so clever as their master, and we had the benefit of Holmes' man on the inside telling us where one of them could be found. It happened that this particular one could be found loitering outside a train station in Prague. I was waiting for him, with a service revolver and a rag of chloroform; we were able to move him to a building that (if my nose did not deceive me) had once been a leather warehouse. Holmes somehow had known it would be unoccupied.

The worn-brick building was decrepit and very cold. On this gloomy night in a sleeping city, fog seemed to seep through cracks and windows until I fancied I could feel it between my fingers.

The informant tied to the chair before us was small, stringy and filthy, with small black eyes that bounced around the room as if watching a restless fly. His greasy black hair had not been washed in a long time, neither had his hands. Strangely his nails though dirty, were polished and sanded to uniform shapes. I gathered his current state of grime and disorder was unusual. Coping with the collapse and general disarray of his employer's empire had not, I think, been easy for him.

Towering menacingly over him, Holmes ripped away his makeshift gag, evoking a look of terror on his perspiring and grotesque face.

“I ain’t about to speak,” said he. There was a space for a missing ‘h,’ and I suspected that at one point he had a Cockney accent strong to the point of distraction.

“What you wish has very little to do with anything,” said Holmes. “You will speak, and you will tell us where Professor Moriarty and his ‘device’ currently are. I have it on the very best authority that you *do* know.”

The man shook his head. “‘it me with what you got, then.”

I glanced at Holmes. I knew the undercurrent of darkness that lay beneath my friends’ logical, righteous exterior. I saw the sympathy he felt for those driven to violent acts by revenge, desperation, or instincts of protection. If in one of our more dangerous adventures, some villain had murdered me, Holmes would have murdered him. But I looked at Holmes now, fists at his sides, and I wondered if he was actually going to do the thing of which I have always suspected him capable. I am a soldier; I have seen much of life’s brutal, ugly side.

“Watson” said Holmes. His voice was calm. “You may want to leave, for this next part.”

Moriarty’s agent actually laughed, a loud laugh. “T’won’t do any good at all,” he said. “I know you. Mr. Sherlock Holmes, yes? He’s talked about you. You lot won’t do any worse than kill me, but him, him’ll come after my family, my friends, anyone I’ve ever met once I’ve gone. I’ve seen him do it before. I’ve *helped* him do it before.”

“He won’t be in a position to plan anything come next Tuesday,” said Holmes.

The confederate just shook his head. “You’re good,” he said simply. “Ain’t no one that good.”

I pulled the sleeve of Holmes’ overcoat. He flinched.

“May I speak with you?”

He came unwillingly, but he came.

“Your objections, Watson,” Holmes said, as soon as we were out of hearing. “Out with it. Are you afraid for my health, my immortal soul?”

I shook my head. “It is true that my objections are moral, but they are also... practical. I *believe* that man when he says he is too frightened to talk.”

Holmes glanced over his shoulder, back at the ragged person in the chair. For a moment he was without the strange calm mask he had been wearing since I had chloroformed the man next to the station. My friend nodded. “I suspect you are right, Watson. Pity.”

“And may I remind you – in case you have forgotten – that you have recently discovered you possess the ability to *read minds*.”

Holmes stared at me.

“And?”

“*And?* Holmes, don’t you think that ability might have the smallest amount of utility in our present situation?”

Holmes pulled me away from our prisoner, even farther. “No. We only have the scantest anecdotal evidence of how this procedure works on non-Vulcans. If I do this thing, it is very possible I might be *persuaded* that the answers I get are the correct ones. I have no real proof of the reliability of the specifics, none at all. I might be sent off across the world, looking for a hideout Moriarty was using ten years ago.”

I shrugged. “You could test it.”

“What.”

“I know your methods. If you are not sure of the reliability of this technique, then *test it*.”

“How exactly would you propose I test it, Watson?”

I rocked back and forth on my feet. “Well. You could test it on me, for a start.”

Holmes looked at me as if I had just offered to stick my head into a water wheel.

“You must be mad. No. I couldn’t. I could never risk you in that way, Watson. Absurd.” He became thoughtful. “Now if Mycroft were here...”

“But Mycroft is *not* here. There is no one here. This is fast, and this is possible,” I inclined my head towards our captive. “And I don’t need to tell you that the method you have in mind is *not* the most reliable way of getting information.”

“You might get hurt, dear fellow.”

“Moriarty’s downfall is surely an important enough reason to chance it.” I shook my head “Mycroft did it to you with no ill effects.”

“Yes, but that’s... Mycroft...” Holmes seemed to be running out of objections, and I came in for the kill. It was perversely gratifying to ‘win’ one of our discussions.

“You can read my mind, looking for something safe and innocuous. Then we capture Moriarty.”

Holmes turned away. “This conversation is pointless. I doubt you can even think of something I have not already deduced.”

“I have experience of women spanning three continents...”

“For god’s sake, *Watson*.”

“Tell me which three, and that will be proof enough to be moving forward.”

“It’s too simple. Obviously, the answer is Europe, Asia, and....” I saw his forehead crease.

“India?”

“India is part of Asia, Holmes.”

“Fine. *Fine*. ‘Three continents,’ Watson...”

Carefully, and with a look of deep, deep skepticism, he placed one of his long musicians’ fingers to the side of my nose, another just above my chin, and let the others curve across my temple, landing with a thumb at the base of my ear. It was a strangely intimate pose, and should have felt awkward, yet somehow did not.

I waited.

Nothing happened. I felt a twitch in his fingers, then another. I was convinced that if I did not do something, this would turn to Holmes comically drumming his fingers on the side of my face.

I cleared my throat. "I think you need to, eh, let go?"

"I know, I'm *trying*." He seemed to be trying to make his eyes larger, literally trying to see inside my head. That image, and the entire the situation was so strange that I had to fight the urge to snigger.

"Close your eyes man," I said. "You look like one of the Queen's pugs."

Holmes closed them, after rolling them first.

With a force and an immediacy totally unexpected, something took over my mind. Like a tidal wave. I was overwhelmed, swallowed, lost. I was not myself. I was in an unknowable void, too great and strange to comprehend, and I hoped *he* was able to direct it, because I was beyond all reason and all control... and then, just as suddenly, I forgot what it was like to be myself, and understood what it was like to be Sherlock Holmes.

I understood what it was like to see *everything*, to have information, facts and observations pouring in every time you opened your eyes. I understood what it was like to know people's secrets just by glancing at them, and how so much of the time you would rather remain ignorant. I understood how the morphine and cocaine helped. I saw Mycroft though his eyes, the deduction game the brothers had been playing since Holmes could speak. Holmes had never won this game, but he had never ever stopped playing.

Over *there* was his drive for justice, buried beneath the world's cacophony. *Here* I saw a love for humanity that was so deep and so true, that it brought tears to my eyes and a pain to my chest. The sarcasm, the isolation, it was all protection and shield. He didn't trust that feeling; he feared it. I saw myself though his eyes, in terms impossible to express. To Sherlock Holmes I was light, warmth and firm ground to stand upon. Then I was out.

My shoulder and leg hurt, and I was on a cold, dirty floor. I needed a few seconds to remember where I was, and a few more to remember how to speak again.

“*Watson,*” said Holmes. Before I knew what was happening, he embraced me.

“Watson,” he said again. “All these times that you stood by my side as I played judge and jury... I thought you did it because you admired my methods, my reason, and my logic. I allowed myself to pass judgement only because I believed myself to be impartial.”

I said nothing. There was nothing to say.

“You really think I’m as good a man as that?”

“Yes,” I whispered back.

“You shouldn’t.”

“I think we’ve established your opinions are subjective.”

Holmes shook next to me as he laughed, and I embraced him back.

“Good lord, Watson, your third continent is *Antarctica*?”

I smiled and said, “It was a cold night.”

Holmes stood, and in one motion crossed the room and grabbed our captive by the hair. They were touching no longer than a few seconds before Holmes threw him aside. Our prisoner was in no state to talk then, being taken over by the tornado of Holmes’ mind. Just concentrating on his breathing seemed more than enough to occupy him.

“Moriarty is in Switzerland, Watson,” said Holmes. He seemed to be breathing hard, also. “He is in Switzerland, and he is using Reichenbach Falls to power the beacon. He has it working.”

With that we were off. As we waited for a train, Holmes made a loud comment in German to the crowd around us. My German is only what bits and pieces I remember from school, but I could pick out the words for “warehouse” and “wanted by the state.”

When Prague authorities captured our man, Holmes and I were already out of the country.

Switzerland is beautiful at the end of winter. I noticed this, even as I looked into every new face expecting to see a confederate of Moriarty, even as I worried about the damage the mad Professor might be doing not just to our lives but to our *future*. A world where James Moriarty had the respect, knowledge, and power gained from exploiting that little beacon's secrets, was not a world where the nations of the world united, abolished want and prejudice, and took to the stars in brotherhood. I was sure of that.

We both had doubts of what we would find at journey's end. Our train flew across elegant bridges and mountain tunnels. Charming villages and trees decorated with hoar frost flew past our window, while we each contemplated our next move. The obvious plan was to separate Moriarty from the beacon, of course. But then? Should it be destroyed – could it be destroyed? Where would we hide it so it would never be found? And what of the professor? His syndicate crumbled to dust each passing day, but its ringleader's whereabouts were known to a precious few. As his empire of wickedness collapsed, it took most of its evidence and witnesses into the abyss. With what would we be able to *charge* him?

As my friend remained pensively silent, his exhaustion seemed to fade; his countenance brightened. Uncharacteristically he chatted in German and French to adjacent passengers, borrowing their newspapers and occasionally helping with an obstinate crossword puzzle.

Holmes delighted in showing me some innocuous advertisement, which to him was proof-certain that another crucial tentacle of the arch villain's organization had turned to dust and ashes.

"The price of radishes is down in Dusseldorf, Watson," he said gleefully. "Do you not see the significance?"

Astonishingly he was even pleased when we received the news, via coded telegram from Mycroft, that there had been a fire in our rooms at Baker Street.

“To think they thought we were anywhere *near* there!” he said in delight, waving away my concern. “Don’t fret Watson. I was expecting something along these lines. Of course, everything of importance is safe. Mrs. Hudson will enjoy redecorating when she returns.”

Even with his improved mood, some of his comments puzzled me.

“Would you think me arrogant, Watson, if I were to say my life has not been completely in vain?”

Even before our mind-meld, I knew him well enough to know he did not expect an answer. He sighed, content, and looked away. When I asked him if he planned to take this new lull in English crime as an opportunity to work on *The Whole Art of Detection*, he shrugged noncommittally and ordered more bircher muesli.

As the Roman Empire fell from the outside in, so the last tatters of Moriarty’s criminal enterprise collapsed around the man himself. We knew that his people owned or ran every hotel in Meiringen, so we lodged ourselves at a small boarding house run by an old acquaintance of Holmes’ named Peter S--.

Peter was quietly intelligent and spoke English as well as any member of the Lords; I assumed him to be a former client. It seems, however, that he was part of Mycroft’s network, keeping an eye on London’s powerful and connected, in his capacity as waiter at the Grosvenor Hotel. To this day I wonder if he was an agent of Sherlock or Mycroft Holmes, perhaps both.

“Waiters are silent and discreet, Doctor,” Mr. S—said when pressed by me.

In keeping with his (probable) training, he maintained friendly relations with the staff of two hotels closest to Reichenbach Falls; he was key in helping us to evacuate them. At this point in our journey, Holmes and I found it prudent to assume that every person we met was either a Moriarty agent or had been compromised by one of Moriarty’s agents. Holmes’ strategy was clear. The greater the distance between Moriarty and his organization’s remnants, the more vulnerable he would be.

To that end, we made the charming village of Meiringen that boasted the best access to the falls, into a ghost town. Its best hotel emptied after a shipment of contaminated food was discovered, the other

was abandoned due to a plague scare. The food was my responsibility, so I am able to say it was not truly contaminated. Holmes, however, convincingly spread the false news of the plague.

I am not sure exactly how many of Moriarty's men got carted off from Meiringen with the rest of the sightseers. Although an unprecedented number of hikers sought permits to see the falls, those not discouraged by the plague rumors, were put off by official warnings that Reichenbach was extraordinarily dangerous this time of year. The inexperienced outdoorsman was warned to stay far away. Reichenbach Falls are accessible by few paths, paths that were easily blocked by felled trees or a small man-made avalanche.

Holmes and I remained. On the day we set out to apprehend Moriarty and recover the beacon, there were exceptionally few criminals guarding access to the falls. I had my pistol but reflected I had never shot at anything while rappelling down an icy rock face.

After traversing half of Switzerland, picking our way through holiday makers, and fighting to the very center of the Moriarty organization, there, suspended in some sort of cradle against the backdrop of the Reichenbach Falls, was Commander Spock's beacon. I am not quite sure what I had been picturing as I read the word "beacon" over and over in Mycroft's papers. My mind's image of the beacon was not this! How could something not much larger than a cricket ball be expected to signal across time and space? It glowed the purest azure blue, occasionally releasing frightening electrical bolts while it sat a dozen or so feet from the fall's cascading crush of water; it was impossible to look at anything else.

There was so much else to look at! Reichenbach Falls are composed of black rocks so smooth they seem to have been poured into place. Its cascading water, throwing up spray as white as the brightest clouds, thunders loudly enough to obscure all but the most concentrated of sounds. Supported above this landscape from another world, was a structure somehow clinging to the rocks, constructed at the intersection of calculus and black magic.

I soon realized the beacon was attached to a dozen or more thin black cables, easily mistaken for aspects of the water's dance against the rock face. These cables came from many turbines spinning from the rush of water. Clearly the water was powering the beacon, and for a moment I wondered if it might be possible to stop the falls, and so disarm it. A quick assessment of the water's power rendered that idea ridiculous. I turned to Holmes and saw the light of the beacon blue on his face, highlighting a curious expression.

Suddenly I felt the great pulse of an unknown force, witnessed a cobalt-blue flash, and felt myself falling. I was still in my rappelling harness. Although I was dangling with my feet and hands unable to find purchase on the liquid-coated rocks, my ropes seemed steady enough. I immediately looked around me, to see what had become of my friend.

Holmes had allowed far too much slack in his climbing harness and had fallen dangerously farther than me. He was below me, at the level of the beacon. I noticed that his slide down the rock face had shredded some of his clothes and left his hands bloody.

"Holmes!" I cried. I do not think he heard me over the noise of the falls.

He was not alone. There was another figure now, emerging from the little make-shift wooden shack that clung near the side of the falls like some desperate animal. Although I had never seen him before, I knew there was but one person it could be. Only one man could be in such close proximity to the beacon, living at the very heart of the Moriarty organization.

James Moriarty dressed like an academic in nondescript black, stared at Holmes with deep-set intelligent eyes under a high domed forehead. I knew that look of precision and focus he used, for I had seen it often enough on Holmes' face. They were very alike, the two men – tall and thin and entirely still, standing close on the ledge. But while Holmes was still because every muscle in his body was contracted, James Moriarty was lazily still, in the manner of a lizard.

If my rope had not been swaying, if I had found some place to put my feet, it is entirely possible that I would have shot him and damned the consequences. One of the Holmes brothers would probably have gotten me off using some judicial technicality. My focus was my friend, who was almost touching his relentless tormentor of the last six months.

“Holmes,” said Moriarty, rather clearly over the water’s roar, “You crossed my path on the 4th of January”, said he. “On the 23rd you incommoded me; by the middle of February, I was seriously inconvenienced by you; at the end of March, I was absolutely hampered in my plans; and now, at the close of April, I find myself placed in such a position through your continual persecution that I am in positive danger of losing my liberty. The situation has become an impossible one.” Spoken like it was no concern of his whether other members of the human race heard him, as if that was a pointless concession to make.

“Professor,” was the answer. “As we do not know each other, I feel I must insist on my prefix.”

“I called you Master Sherlock, before. But you wouldn’t remember that.”

“Though I know you very well. But you are correct that it was my brother who made the connection between his old mathematics tutor and the Napoleon of Crime.”

“Dear clever Mycroft – you were never as talented as he. That was obvious even from your infancy.”

Holmes was standing upright but supporting himself against the cliff-face. Moriarty would never notice anything amiss, but I knew that Holmes never stood like that. Had he been injured in his fall? I began to lower myself down, even though there was nothing under my feet but water.

“Your brother will not be joining us?” inquired the Professor, immediately knowing the answer.

“How disappointing; I had hoped this meeting would at least be interesting.”

“Mycroft is clever,” said Holmes. “It is true. My brother is cleverer than I, because he can sift the truly important from the uncountable number of things which only seem important. You should never have expected him to come; he is clever enough to know that you are no longer of any importance.”

I dislodged a piece of rock in my descent, watched it bounce past me into the churning cauldron beneath. The two adversaries seemed frozen in a kind of trance, locking eyes with each other. One or both was sure to recover, soon.

Our situation was due to change at any moment, and not necessarily for the better; I redoubled my efforts to safely descend.

“Your organization is gone,” Holmes was saying. “A spider without his web is a sad figure. I care only that wherever you go, you are not able to take that with you.”

“Your father’s beacon,” Moriarty sighed, “tell me, Mr. Holmes. Did your brother find it here? Did you deduce where it might be hidden? To whom, precisely, do I owe my defeat?” He leaned forward, his great bulbous head undulating. “Or did you cheat?”

There was a long pause where I heard nothing but the falls. Then Holmes spoke.

“I used my inborn abilities.”

“I shudder to imagine what it must be like to have the power to read minds, and then use it exclusively for finding old ladies’ lost jewelry. You could have ruled and remade this world, Sherlock Holmes. I only met your father a handful of times, but I understood that. I understood... as did your brother, who made his own corner of existence nearly by accident.” Moriarty was close to Holmes now, too close – so close that I had difficulty telling the one from the other in the misty air, and if I had to shoot, I could not be sure which of them I would hit.

“You were given the keys to this world,” he said, “and you made a handful of dull hearts tick on slightly longer. You cannot possibly think that you are heir to this beacon. I will therefore pocket it, and you will watch me as I walk away.”

“I know enough to realize it is a bomb,” said Holmes, faintly. “If I fight you, it will be damaged. You, I, and it – will be no more. Then this world will go on as it should.”

“Holmes!” I screamed more loudly. He did not look in my direction, but Moriarty did. And he laughed.

“You brought the loyal doctor? Oh, Sherlock. Always you are lured in by dramatic confrontations. You would go out in a blaze, wouldn’t you? You, me, it – the three most dangerous things in the world all gone in the same instant. Brother Mycroft left to care-take, disconnected and omniscient. It is a certainty that he will not contaminate the world.”

Holmes tried to push past Moriarty.

“If you touch me, it will not be just us who dies, you stupid child.” The professor’s voice was clipped. “That beacon breaks, and nothing green grows on this mountain ever again. Thousands die. Your doctor dies. Admit you have lost, because you will always lose, no matter how many times we play. Because I don’t care.”

Moriarty reached out, and with a few movements of his wrist took the beacon from its setting. He slipped it in a small pouch slung across his chest, and then he turned.

“Let me by.”

“I’m sorry, I cannot.”

“We both know that is a sad bluff.”

Holmes shook his head and glanced at me. I did not know if he was communicating warning, or message, or feeling.

“I have already beaten you.”

“You had to cheat to get as far as this.”

“Well,” said Holmes, standing now mere inches from the professor. “I suppose I will just have to go on cheating, then.”

Holmes suddenly put a hand to Moriarty's neck; Professor Moriarty crumpled.

Holmes perused his fallen foe, then his hand, then back to Moriarty. The professor remained motionless, lying as though he had fainted. Holmes glanced in my direction and threw the end of his rope up to me. I used it to make my footing more stable and clambered down to him. Holmes went back to looking at his hand, like it was some suspicious and highly revealing clue. He then removed the leather pouch from Moriarty's supine body.

"I doubted it would work," he said.

"You idiot," I said. "Was your plan all along to trade yourself for the world?"

"I don't feel fully part of this world," he muttered, turning his hand over to look at the back. "I cannot believe Mycroft's absurd pinch actually worked. Watson, will you check him? Recall the faked catalepsy in the Trevelyan case..."

This was nothing more than a blatant attempt to get me thinking on a new subject, but I still got down on my knees, checked the professor's breathing, and opened an eyelid to take a look at his pupils. There was no pretending.

"He is well and truly out, Holmes."

"I expect I had better let Mycroft know where he can be collected. I haven't made a study of this nerve pinch. I don't know how long we have before it loses its effectiveness. We should bind him. We have rope, lots of rope. I should contact Mycroft. I am not sure he knew what I was planning, but it is useful to assume that Mycroft already knows everything unless I have some evidence to the contrary. He may think I'm dead. And please, no remonstrations, Watson, I beg you. It has been a long year, a very long year."

After binding Moriarty, I put a hand on his shoulder.

"You're hurt, Holmes. I saw you standing oddly back there."

Holmes looked at me and closed his eyes for a moment.

“I believe I landed badly on my ankle.”

“You are not to put any weight on it until I can take a look at it. Lean on me until we are back at the hotel.”

I had thought Holmes might protest, but he merely nodded. “Take the beacon. We can carry it until Mycroft finds a way to send it to the moon or lock it up with the crown jewels. Or do with it whatever it is that Mycroft does.”

I took the pouch containing the little silvery thing, but barely spared a glance for Moriarty. If my friend thought that his life for Moriarty was even remotely close to a fair trade...

“Let’s get off these infernal falls,” I said. “And if you even think for a moment that you need run off again, remember I’ve been inside your head. You are more a part of this world than any man I have ever known.”

Holmes wanted to live out of one of his bolt holes while repairs were being made to our rooms at 221B. However, I recalled to him an evening spent hiding from a reverend who was utterly convinced Holmes and I were grave robbers living in a very small, very wet cupboard. I informed Holmes that as his doctor I was prescribing a change of air.

A surprise knock on the door of our secret location disturbed our plans in progress; of course, it had to be Mycroft! He looked as buoyed as I have ever seen him, if for only a few seconds.

“You will be pleased to know that my agents assembled sufficient evidence against Moriarty to put him away for a very long time. The chief witness for the prosecution apparently claims that my dear brother ‘cast a spell on his brain.’ He claims to have recalled every foul deed he ever committed and felt he should cooperate to save his immortal soul.”

With Moriarty in the most secure custody which Scotland Yard ever devised, Holmes and I joined Mary and Mrs. Hudson in the south of France, spending a pleasant week taking in the sights and eating food as only can be prepared by the French. While there, Holmes, still splinted and limping, solved an intriguing little murder involving a dirigible, the town rat catcher, and a colourful but mentally unsound Colonel Warburton.

A phalanx of spinning prayer wheels proved to be the key clue in this particular case. Subsequently, Holmes developed a fascination for Tibetan mysticism. He claims that their 'altered consciousness' achieved during meditation, lined up very nicely with what he had experienced while practicing his 'Vulcan disciplines.' Despite a decided lack of interest from his brother, Holmes is now planning a trip to Tibet to investigate further. He will support himself busking with his violin as he travels incognito, no doubt also reflecting upon his family and all that has recently taken place. I am saddened that I will not be at his side for many months to come, but I know that when he returns our adventures will continue, for he has always been and will be my friend.

AFTERWORD

Astonished as I was when I read and re-read the materials I had found, it just seemed so fantastic. Yet I had the same thoughts as those folk who had shouted out to me years later when I abbreviated the long tale into a few sentences. It makes so much sense to anyone with even the least familiarity with Holmes and Spock. The similarities are extensive: physical descriptions – tall and thin, sharp hawk-like features, an austere face; physical characteristics – acute senses, an iron constitution and iron strength; special interests – a wide range of exact knowledge, self-defense skills; personality characteristics – logical and unemotional, especially the description of Holmes – “all emotions . . . abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind,” and “faculties of deduction and logical synthesis.” Descriptions of one are mostly interchangeable with descriptions of the other.

I am not even the first to note these striking similarities. Baker Street Irregular and author Poul Anderson discussed the resemblance between Spock and Holmes as early as a 1968 *Baker Street Journal* article (“The Archetypical Holmes,” *BSJ*, XVIII, 139-143). Priscilla Pollner credibly posited that “Holmes Was a Vulcan” in 1970 in a Star Trek fanzine. Author, director and Baker Street Irregular Nicholas Meyer famously wrote that Spock once stated, "*An ancestor of mine* [my italics] maintained that if you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains – however improbable – must be the truth," (though Spock, knowing the truth, used the word ‘ancestor’ in a rather unusual and idiosyncratic way).

But these similarities are not *proof*, no matter how many people both see and observe them.

I began investigating the possible truth of the theory that Spock was the biological father of both Mycroft and Sherlock Holmes. The thoughts and comments I collected are too voluminous to be presented here – they would more than double the size of the manuscript. As an example, here are a few of my notes regarding just the first few pages:

*Home Office memo – was Mycroft the first ‘M’ of what later became the British Secret service, MI6? Wold Newton – actually in Yorkshire, site of 1st witnessed meteorite landing – property belonged to E Topham, local newspaper publisher . . . Holmes – common enough surname but Sherlock’s ancestors did include French painter Vernet . . . Philip J. Farmer postulated that those witnessing the meteorite received some form of radiation causing “a genetic mutation in those present, which endowed many of their descendants with extremely high intelligence and strength”. . . Violet – exceptional woman for Victorian era – independent, strong, bright, science-oriented – OMG! – the V.R. pockmarks on the wall at 221B, not **Victoria Regina**, but **Violet Rutherford??** . . . author of the letter Seamus Moriarty, another common last name – ancestor of Professor Moriarty? . . . who is ‘Edmund’? Edmund Blackadder? ridiculous – a fictional character from a television series!*

There are so very many connections which make sense and which can be documented – worthy, perhaps, of a PhD dissertation. Just a few of the facts that I was able to substantiate: the locations are real and accurately described; modes of transportation between various locations were accurate for the time period; certain mollusks, certain spiders and even the common horseshoe crab have copper based blood; jet mines were common in Yorkshire; Augusta Ada Byron was the only legitimate daughter of poet Lord Byron; Ada Lovelace had a gambling problem; Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, became an academic mathematician who worked in mathematical logic, and his mother did live in Yorkshire and

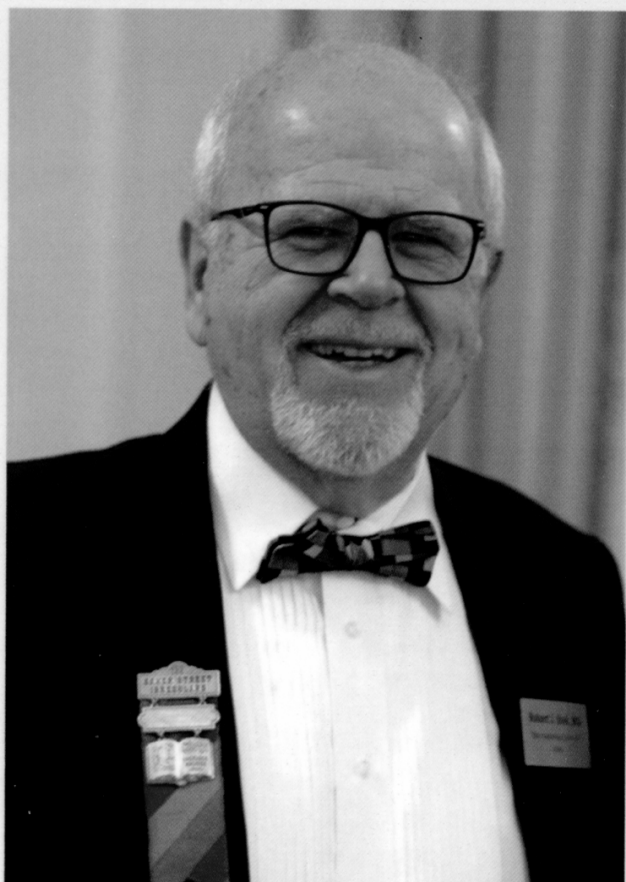
died in January, 1851; Thomas Hancock took out a patent to improve natural rubber using sulphur two months before Charles Goodyear in the United States; Merry Monarch was a real British thoroughbred racehorse and sire; Mary Somerville was a Scottish scientist, writer and polymath who mentored Lady Lovelace and introduced her to Charles Babbage; William King, 8th Earl of Lovelace was an engineer who had a fascination for tunnels; there is an entire sub-genre of fiction based upon the descendants of those who witnessed the Wold-Newton meteorite; the Schweizer comet of 1853 was real and just recently blamed as the cause of several meteor showers (*Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*: October 2020); star system Gilese 411 is real and just over eight light years away; the subjective time to travel eight light years at light speed is about two weeks; Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell were both alive at the time – “*the concept of electromagnetic radiation originated with Maxwell, and his field equations [were] based on Michael Faraday’s observations of the electric and magnetic lines of force.*” This is such stuff that reality is made of. Research, and come to your own conclusions.

But if Spock did father Sherlock Holmes . . . it all just fits together . . . it explains so much . . .



Can Holmes prevent Moriarty from blackmailing him with the astonishing revelation that Star Trek's Mr. Spock, accidentally stranded in Victorian England, was his biological father? It could explain so much.

Logic in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms.



Robert Stek is a retired psychologist living in Connecticut. In 1996 he received the investiture of 'the mysterious scientist' in the Baker Street Irregulars. He also holds the investiture of 'The Origin of Tree Worship' in the Adventuresses of Sherlock Holmes. An unrepentant punster, he is a Libra born on the cusp of Scorpio.

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It has not yet 'gone viral', but with your help it may become highly contagious!