

Data's Beach Day

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Data's Beach Day

by [spacedogfromspace](#)

Summary

It's shore leave time on the Enterprise-D, and you know that that means: BEACH EPISODE! Follow Data as he experiences his first ever beach vacation.

Notes

My entry for the Star Trek Swimsuit Special zine!

Second Officer's personal log, Stardate 25102.5.

The crew has taken shore leave on the beaches of the south of France, on recommendation by Captain Picard. Though I volunteered to stay aboard the Enterprise, several of my crew-mates insisted that I come along, even after I explained that as an android I do not require the 'rest and relaxation' that they do. I am not sure what the purpose of visiting a beach is, but I am certain that this will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about human behaviour.

A bleep sounded in Data's quarters, signalling that someone was at the door. "Come," Data said, ending his recording and turning towards the door to greet whoever was on the other side.

At his command, the door hissed open, revealing Counselor Troi, who was dressed rather unusually in some sort of flower print leotard - ah, a *swimsuit: a streamlined costume worn by beach-goers designed to resist damage from water and reduce drag while swimming*, Data discovered by searching his database. She also wore a hat with a wide brim, and a large pair of tinted glasses.

"There you are, Data," Counselor Troi said. "Everyone's beamed down already. You aren't trying to skip the beach to keep working, are you?" She peered at him over her glasses. Why she was wearing glasses so dark that they were hard to see through puzzled Data - oh, *sunglasses: eye-wear designed to protect fragile human eyes from bright sunlight*, his database told him.

Data tilted his head at her inquiry - a movement that humans - and half humans, in the case of Counselor Troi - interpreted as an indication of curiosity. "I have informed the crew of my plans to attend the beach-going. Why would I change my decision without notifying them?"

Counselor Troi smiled and shook her head. Many of the crew responded to his observations and questions in such a way, and he had never quite managed to work out what it meant. "Anyways, Data, we're waiting for you," Counselor Troi said.

"Then I shall not keep you waiting any longer," Data said, stepping towards the door. He stopped when Counselor Troi made no movement to leave the doorway. Data looked at her inquisitively. "Is something the matter, Counselor?" He asked.

"Well, you aren't planning on going to the beach in *that*, are you?" She asked.

Data blinked, looking around himself. "In what?" He asked when he saw nothing.

"Your uniform!" Counselor Troi exclaimed, grinning. "We're on shore leave, and we're going to the *beach*. You should probably wear something a little more appropriate," she explained.

"Ah, of course," Data said, pretending he understood what counted as 'more appropriate.' "I will do that. You needn't wait for me."

"I'll wait," Counselor Troi said, stepping into the room and sitting down in one of the chairs Data always kept ready in case of company. "Then

we can walk to the transporter room together."

Data closed himself in his washroom, accessing the database in search of what might constitute as appropriate apparel for the beach. He found himself puzzled by the options, but in the interest of time he chose a pair of long shorts. He frowned at the contradictory nature of the phrase 'long shorts.' *Short pants*, he decided. As well, he chose a strange type of footwear known as flip-flops, which were overwhelmingly popular in his searches about beach wear. Porting the information to the replicator, he watched thoughtfully as it materialized his selection. He felt that something was missing, and his mind turned briefly to Counselor Troi before programming another request into the replicator.

When Data stepped out in his strange new outfit, Counselor Troi grinned and brought a hand to her face to stifle a laugh, as Data was wearing a floppy sunhat and sunglasses identical to her own.

"How is this?" Data asked, oblivious to her amusement. "Is this appropriate apparel for this excursion?"

Counselor Troi nodded enthusiastically. "It is," she answered. "Very good choices, Data."

"Thank you, Counselor," Data said, a question forming on his face. "Though I have to say that none of this seems very practical. Aside from the eye protection, which I do not need but will wear to fit in with the others."

"It's not supposed to be *practical*, Data." Counselor Troi said as she stood. "It's supposed to be *fun*. Now come on, we're already late."

"There you two are," Geordi looked up as Data and Counselor Troi walked into the transporter room. He was dressed similarly to Data, though without the hat and sunglasses. "I was beginning to worry you weren't going to show up."

"My apologies," Data said. "Our tardiness is my fault."

"He needed a bit of a change in wardrobe," Counselor Troi explained, shooting Geordi a wink.

Geordi nodded. "I see. Well, in any case, the transporter is up and ready to go if you are," he said, tapping at the transporter panel to hand over control of the transporter to the ship's computer. "Energize," Geordi commanded once the three of them were positioned on the transporter pad. Beams of particles engulfed them, whisking them away to Data's next big adventure.

The three of them materialized on a pristine white-sand beach. The sun was high, there wasn't a cloud in the sky, and the reflection of the light off the water and high albedo of the sand made Data immediately understand why all of his sighted crew-mates were wearing dark-tinted glasses.

Doctor Crusher, Commander Riker, and Lieutenant Worf were huddled nearby, apparently in argument. Doctor Crusher was pointing an accusatory finger at the other two, seemingly scolding them for something, but she turned to Data, Geordi, and Counselor Troi when they approached.

"*Please* tell me you three will be wise enough to apply sunscreen," the Doctor sighed. "Unlike these two stubborn idiots," she stabbed a thumb over her shoulder to indicate that the idiots in question were Commander Riker and Lieutenant Worf.

Counselor Troi smiled, reaching out a hand to take the bottle of what Data presumed was 'sunscreen.' "Of course. *We* understand the importance of proper skin protection, don't we?"

"Yes, ma'am," Geordi agreed.

Data looked back and forth between Geordi, Counselor Troi, and Doctor Crusher before answering. "Define sunscreen, Doctor?" He asked, unable to access the database this far from the ship.

"Oh," Doctor Crusher said, jumping into an explanation. "It's a kind of lotion that protects your skin against UV radiation."

"Ah," Data said, understanding. "Of course. Many organic life forms such as yourselves are sensitive to ultra-violet radiation from nearby stars. I understand why arming yourselves against them would be important, as prolonged exposure can cause burns, peeling, blistering, dermal cancers, melanomas, and-"

"Actually, I think maybe I *will* take some of that," Commander Riker interrupted. "What about you, Worf?"

Lieutenant Worf grunted. "A warrior doesn't need lotion to fight the sun," he said.

Doctor Crusher pinched the bridge of her nose. "Think of it as... armour," she said, her patience clearly wearing thin. "It would be foolish for a warrior to go to battle without armour, no?"

Data turned to Lieutenant Worf, giving him a knowing look. "She's right, you know," he said, preparing to provide historical examples of the advantages of wearing armour into battle and cautionary tales of the dangers of neglecting to, but it wasn't needed, as Lieutenant Worf gave in the moment Data opened his mouth.

"Fine," he said. "I will accept this unconventional armour."

"Finally," Doctor Crusher said under her breath, too quiet for anyone but Data to hear.

The bottle of sunscreen was passed around the group, Doctor Crusher supervising to make sure everyone used a liberal amount, stating that she didn't want to see anyone coming into her sickbay with burns later. When the bottle was passed to Data, he looked at his companions. "As I am an android, I am unaffected by ultraviolet radiation. However, I will apply this sunscreen as it appears to be an essential beach-going ritual." Counselor Troi, Commander Riker, Doctor Crusher, and Geordi grinned at this, while Lieutenant Worf continued to scowl. Data took it as a sign that he had made the correct choice.

Geordi looked around quizzically as Data applied the sunscreen. "Hey - where's the Captain?"

Doctor Crusher gestured down the beach. "Already set up with a good book."

Data looked in the direction she was pointing and spotted Captain Picard sitting in the shade of a large umbrella, novel in hand. "I was unaware I was to bring a book," he said. "Should I return to the ship to fetch one?"

Commander Riker smiled and clapped him on the shoulder. "Don't worry, Data. Reading isn't the *only* thing to do on the beach. There are plenty of other activities. Beach volleyball, for example."

Data looked at him curiously. "Does beach volleyball differ from regular volleyball other than the location of the court?" He asked.

"There's a couple differences," Commander Riker said. "For one, each team only has two players. Who's up for a game?"

Data raised a hand. "I would like to participate in beach volleyball."

"Sure," Geordi said. "I'll play a few sets."

"Great, you two can be one team," Commander Riker said, before turning his attention to the others. "We need one more. Who wants to be on my team? Deanna?"

Counselor Troi shook her head. "Not right now. Perhaps later me and Beverly can play the winners."

"Worf?"

Lieutenant Worf considered for a moment. "I will join you in your quest for victory," he agreed.

"Great!" Commander Riker beamed. "Game on!"

Despite never having played the game before, Data learned fast, and quickly became a match to Commander Riker's skill. Geordi and Lieutenant Worf were equally terrible at the game, which made the teams well-balanced.

"Come on, Worf, set me up for a spike," Commander Riker called out after Data was easily able to return all of their volleys.

"I am trying," Lieutenant Worf grumbled, struggling to keep the ball from landing in the sand at his feet. Data was unsure what a 'spike' was, but the answer came to him when Lieutenant Worf managed to set the ball high in front of the net, allowing Commander Riker to leap up and slam the heel of his hand into the ball, sending it rocketing down into the sand on Data and Geordi's side of the net. Data took this maneuver into account, adjusting his strategy to predict and defend from it. He also wanted to try out the maneuver himself.

"Geordi," Data said. "I would like it if you could also set me up to perform a spike," he requested.

Geordi grimaced as he swayed in his crouched ready position. "Well, I'll see what I can do," he said, projecting a lack of confidence in his abilities.

"Your effort is appreciated," Data said to reassure him.

It took a few attempts, but Data took advantage of a good set made by Geordi to replicate Commander Riker's spike. He executed the maneuver perfectly, sending it hurtling down to his opponents' sandy court at speeds that neither Lieutenant Worf nor Commander Riker could react to. Unfortunately, this meant Commander Riker didn't have a chance to get out of the way, and the ball hit him square in the forehead, knocking him flat on his back. The ball bounced out of bounds, ignored by Lieutenant Worf, who was looking back and forth between Commander Riker and Data, paling.

"Are you okay, Will?" Counselor Troi called from where she was observing alongside Doctor Crusher. Commander Riker raised his hand in a thumbs-up before dropping it back down to his side.

"Maybe we should take a break from volleyball," Geordi suggested as he and Data watched Lieutenant Worf help the dazed Commander Riker to his feet.

"Yes, perhaps that is a good idea," Data said.

"So long as I get my rematch later," Commander Riker said, jabbing a finger at them, looking disoriented.

As they watched Lieutenant Worf and Commander Riker walk off to join Counselor Troi and Doctor Crusher, Data turned to Geordi. "What other activities are typical in beach-going?"

"Hmm," Geordi hummed, looking out towards the water. "Well, it's too calm to surf, but Captain Picard mentioned that this was a good snorkelling location."

"Snorkelling?" Data inquired.

"It's when you go out swimming to look at the fish and the reef," Geordi explained. "You wear watertight goggles and use a breathing tube called a snorkel so you don't have to keep sticking your head up for air."

"I do not need to breathe, and my eyesight is unaffected by water," Data said. "But I will use this equipment if the activity requires that-"

Geordi put up a hand, shaking his head. "No, you don't have to do that. Watching fish is the true spirit of snorkelling, anyways." A thought seemed to cross his mind. "You are water-proof, right? Submersion won't water-log your circuits?"

"I am designed to survive in many environments, including prolonged submersion in water," Data assured him.

"Good," Geordi said with a nod. "Well, let me grab a snorkel and we'll head out. And you might want to leave your hat and sunglasses on the beach."

The two of them waded out into the gentle surf. When it got too deep for Geordi to stand, he began to swim, keeping his face in the water and using the snorkel to breathe. Data, however, had the buoyancy of a rock, and simply walked along the bottom, his head slowly vanishing beneath the waves as he went deeper, following Geordi towards the rocky reef off the beach.

Data had known that the coral reefs of Earth were incredibly beautiful and vibrant, but now he knew what the expression 'pictures couldn't do it justice' meant. No camera could capture just how colourful and lively the reef really was.

Geordi dove down towards him on a breath hold, and unable to speak, made a series of gestures that Data understood to be a warning not to touch the corals. Of course, Data was aware of the extreme fragility of the small organisms and would never think of disturbing them, but he flashed Geordi a thumbs up to communicate that he understood.

They explored the reef, Data walking along the seabed, careful not to step on anything living, and Geordi returning to the surface frequently to acquire fresh oxygen. They pointed out strange and interesting fish to each other, such as a strange flat creature burrowed in the sand that had both its eyes on one side, the large eel with sharp teeth peering out at them from its cave, or the octopus that changed colour to camouflage itself as it moved around. Data was particularly enamoured with the very long black-and-white striped sea snake that glided through the water gracefully with its paddle-like tail, but Geordi, understandably, wanted to be nowhere near it.

After a while, Geordi tired of swimming, and indicated to Data that he was returning to the beach. Data understood, but as the physical exertion of swimming didn't apply to him, he decided to continue observing the reef, and gestured to communicate that to Geordi.

While exploring the reef alone, a shadow glided over Data. Looking up, he saw a very large fish - a sixteen-foot long tiger shark that had come to observe him. Data was impressed by the shark. Its size was formidable, and he was delighted to see that, similar to its namesake, it sported a series of dark stripes down its back. But most of all, Data liked how curious it was, circling around him and watching cautiously at first, then swimming closer and brushing against him as it passed by. It even took an exploratory bite of Data's leg, letting go when it realized that Data didn't have any flesh for it to eat.

Wanting to share the experience of observing this creature with his friends, Data took hold of the shark when it made another pass, holding it snugly under one arm. It wriggled to get away, and while it had impressive strength, it was no match for Data's titanium grasp.

Back on the beach, Counselor Troi, Doctor Crusher, Commander Riker, Geordi, and Lieutenant Worf were standing in the surf, providing their feet some respite from the hot sand. Counselor Troi suddenly looked out to sea, brow furrowing.

"Something wrong, Deanna?" Commander Riker asked, seeing her concern.

"I sense... a disturbance," she said, seeming confused.

Just then, a shark's dorsal fin appeared out of the water, followed by a whole shark as it somehow rose out of the water. Everyone stood watching in disbelief as Data's arms appeared next, holding the shark above his head, which also emerged as he walked into shallower water. When the water was chest height, he stopped, still holding the massive, wriggling tiger shark above his head, and called out to his friends. "Geordi, Doctor Crusher, Commander Riker, Counselor Troi, Lieutenant Worf, I have found a most impressive fish and wished for you to see it," he said calmly.

Nobody knew how to respond to that, and they all just gaped at Data and the giant shark he had dragged out of the ocean. Finally, someone spoke.

"Data, put the shark down!" Counselor Troi called out.

"No, wait!" Lieutenant Worf said. "The shark is one of Earth's top predators. I must battle it to prove my worth as a warrior," he started towards Data and the shark.

"Worf, *no*," Doctor Crusher protested.

"Worf *yes*," Lieutenant Worf said.

Counselor Troi ignored them. "Data, it's *frightened*, let it go," she called.

Data looked up at the shark in surprise. "I did not realize I would be able to frighten such a powerful creature," he said, lowering it to the water. "My apologies, friend. I did not mean any harm." He released the shark, which darted off, vanishing into the calm sea. Data walked onto the beach to rejoin his friends.

"I have to admit," Geordi said. "That *was* a pretty cool shark."

"It would have been a formidable opponent," Lieutenant Worf said, seeming disappointed at his missed opportunity to fight a shark.

Commander Riker clapped him on the shoulder. "Next time," he said, before turning to Data and Geordi. "Now, how about that rematch?"

Second Officer's log, supplemental.

Shore leave on the beach was very educational, and also quite enjoyable. I look forward to the next time I can participate in beach-going with my friends. I would like to experience this 'surfing' Geordi referred to, or perhaps I will follow Captain Picard's example and bring a good

book. I will be storing this experience in my long term memory bank, as it is not something I want to forget.

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