

## Star Beagle Adventures Episode 6: Perpetual Change

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## Star Beagle Adventures Episode 6: Perpetual Change

by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

### Summary

The crew of the U.S.S. Beagle see perpetual change...

### Notes

Throughout this episode, snippets of lyrics are quoted. These are from the song, "Perpetual Change" by Jon Anderson and Chris Squire. The song first appeared as track 6 on "The Yes Album", 1971, Atlantic Records.

## SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 1: Whisky 4

### Chapter Summary

When all you see...  
Is near disaster gazing down on you and me...



#### **The Star Beagle Adventures**

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 1: Whisky 4

#### 6.1

#### Whisky 4

The elderly former premiere of the Vulcan Science Academy had not roused from her morning meditation as usual. Within 20 minutes, T'Eln's assistant director, T'Kusytt, alerted Dean Sakura Nakamura Holland and also the entire Astrophysics and Stellar Cartography department. It was not unusual for T'Eln to extend her meditation if she had a particular issue to consider. But she almost never did this without first alerting T'Kusytt of her plans. This extension was unplanned.

T'Kusytt's response to the situation, was, however, not. There were many situations that might cause a vulcan to extend meditation without notice. Given T'Eln's extraordinary discipline, the only likely causes ranged from problematic to potentially disastrous. Of the members of the department, Falok, the team leader for the astrophysics group, was the closest to T'Eln, in part because he was a distant relative and in part because of his own extraordinary discipline.

By pre-arrangement, T'Eln was removed from her quarters to the Astrophysics and Stellar Cartography center, located adjacent to the probe lab. Falok settled on the floor facing her. He did not enter a meditative state, nor did he attempt a mind-meld, but he placed his hand on hers to facilitate any attempt on her part to communicate with him. Even deep inside her meditative state, T'Eln would be aware of this plan and of Falok's presence.

In the bizarre, multi-level, multi-gravitic engineering section, the masked luchador and 1st officer for the U.S.S. Beagle, Commander Dutch Holland, did not like the readings one of his devices was producing. He reached out to the bridge: "Skip, Sakura, the D.T. generator is reading some very strange fluctuations in local spacetime. It's like there is a massive black hole, but it's not registering as producing any gravitic changes even though all the space-folding characteristics are there."

"This is Lieutenant Commander Senek, in command. The captain was headed toward engineering to..."

"He just walked in, Senek," Dutch Holland interrupted as Captain Skip Howard strolled into Engineering. He turned toward his friend. "Why did you leave the bridge, Skip?"

"Not my shift to be in command," Howard replied. "This is Senek's watch. I'm doing that walk-around thing granddad keeps going on about at the academy. By your expression, I gather the thingamajig is not making you happy?"

"Skip, Dutch," came Sakura Nakamura Holland's voice from the bridge. "Please be advised that Premiere T'Eln has not roused from her meditation. It's unplanned."

"You are aware that the D.T. generator has a bad case of the D.T.'s, correct?" Howard asked. "Please tell me that 2 plus 2 does not equal 5..."

"Your arithmetic is inept," Lt. Cmdr. Senek responded. "But your metaphor might, unfortunately, be apt. The relationship between your Doppler Tunneling readings and T'Eln's extended meditation could be more than casual."

"All stop," Howard ordered. "Bring all probes to station keeping and advise the task force to do the same."

In the Probe Control Lab, just forward of Astrophysics and Stellar Cartography, Major Janet Carter had just arrived due to concerns raised by Sergeant Tommy Richards.

"Sergeant, we have an all stop order," Major Carter remarked. "Why is Probe Whisky 4 not responding to all stop?"

"Unknown, Major," Richards replied. "I have initiated full reverse, but the probe continues to move forward."

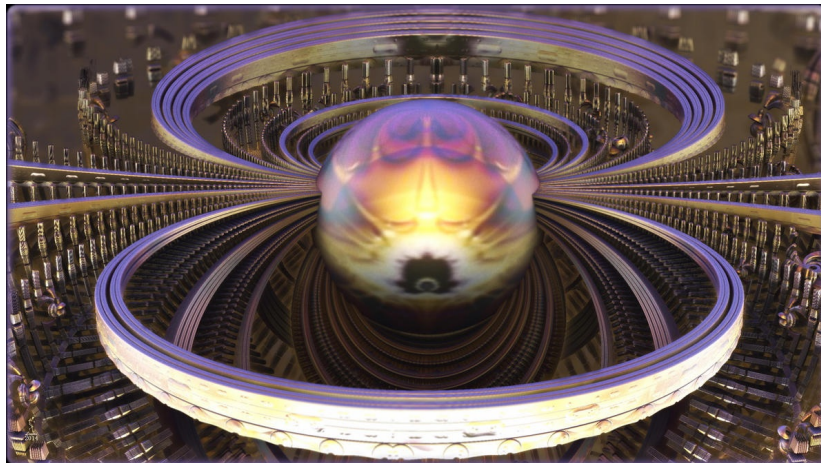
Major Carter hit the comm switch: "Captain Howard, Bridge, we have a problem with Probe Whisky 4. The probe is not responding to all stop and is moving forward despite our attempt to put it into full reverse..."

"This is Captain Howard. Emergency cutoff all external communications, incoming and outgoing..."

"Emergency cutoff, aye," Richards replied. Then: "We are still receiving telemetry from Whisky 4 despite the emergency cutoff. All other channels are shut down, but the Whisky 4 channel remains open."

"Emergency destruct Whisky 4," Captain Howard ordered.

"Sending emergen..."



(Perpetual Change by Lent on Deviant Art)

## SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 2: Bridge

### Chapter Summary

When what you'll see...  
Deep inside base controlling you and me...



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 2: Bridge

### 6.2 Bridge

Lt. Cmdr. Senek had saved 2nd Lt. Piper Acrele's life with a vulcan neck pinch. She had tried to overload one of the hand phasers that was stored on the bridge. As a preventive move, he had removed the power packs from each of the phasers stored on the bridge and, because the power packs could not be destroyed, he had instead placed the now unpowered phasers in the replicator and destroyed them.

Still, nearly three years after that incident, Piper needed watching. Sakura was made of firmer stuff. Following the folding incident, the three had found themselves isolated on the bridge. They could access the reclamation chamber, which, fortunately, included a vibe shower, and the replicator had reliably provided food and other necessities. But there was one necessity it could not provide...

Senek had been profoundly annoyed at how much Piper and Sakura relied on his mental and emotional stability. As hours turned into days, he had locked the major command functions to enforce Captain Howard's last order - station keeping. No matter how much first Piper, then even Sakura questioned the validity of that order, Senek had felt his captain's thoughts and emotions. There was an unspoken component to that order - it was not to be countermanded by any party other than the captain himself.

As days had turned into weeks, Senek had ordered the image of the roiling starfield into which the U.S.S. Beagle had been projected, to be reduced from the size of the entire port-bow wall to a frame no larger than the typical viewscreen of an Intrepid class vessel - 2.5 meters by 5 meters.

Putting a visual frame around it had helped his human companions compartmentalize what the viewscreen and all their instruments were telling them: the stars had gone mad. Nothing stayed put. Every star was in motion that defied the normal stellar trajectories. Stars were always moving, but they were not supposed to move that fast. Nor were those movements to be so chaotic, defying every principle of gravitation and the conservation of motion.

Stars and groups of stars made inexplicable U-turns, stopped, started moving again, bounced about as if a basketball team was warming up by dribbling them and shooting them through invisible hoops. It could not be fairly referred to as Brownian motion. Brownian motion followed rules, was, once initial velocities and masses were known, predictable.

As weeks had turned into months, Senek had ordered the frame reduced to a half-meter squared and the brightness dimmed so that the perpetually changing starfield would have to be looked at deliberately to be viewed. As annoying as this chaos was to an orderly vulcan mind, Senek had found himself both surprised and exceptionally annoyed at how much human minds depended on order. In the absence of an apparent order, the humans in his care had a much harder time imposing order on their universe.

A universe that had been reduced to the U.S.S. Beagle's bridge. The captain's office was unavailable. The lift doors would not open.

And now, after three years without any contact with his bond-mate, the one barely flickering flame of reason left in this tiny society of three was guttering and threatening to go out... or not to go out, but to be engulfed by the fires of pon farr...



## SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 3: Medical Center

### Chapter Summary

The sun can warm the coldest dawn...  
And move the movement on the lawn...



### **The Star Beagle Adventures**

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 3: Medical Center

### 6.3 Medical Center

Dr. Tentis Uto reached for his ever-present cup of hot sog, looked at the mug, then stepped over to the window of his office in the U.S.S. Beagle's medical center and poured it out on the ground below. A few young medical students walking by, carrying their student med-kits, looked up at him in puzzlement.

They had every right to be as puzzled as he was. Uto had acquired a taste for the pungent, bitter drink due to its psychoactive effect, muting his unusually powerful telepathic abilities, making it easier for him to suppress the pandemonium of non-telepathic minds. Those endowed with telepathy learned, like babies learning the social mores about screaming, how to quiet their thoughts.

Humans, klingons, tellarites, denobulans and others never had to learn that skill, making living among them similar to spending time in a pre-school full of screaming toddlers who had not yet learned to use their "indoors" voices. Very few of these people ever learned. Skip Howard was one of the very rare ones who did, making him unusually peaceful company for a human.

But at this moment, Uto was having a harder and harder time hearing his shipmates and the growing silence was unnerving. It wasn't just him. His medical staff were reaching out to him throughout the medical facility and alerting him that they were sensing that isolation as well. Of the dozen betazoid medical staff onboard, only 8 of them were in the medical center, including his wife, Dr. Bettes Uto.

That left four betazoids desperately reaching out to him telepathically - their voices fading as if they were separated from him by increasing distance. This effect was confirmed by his wife and other staff present. By now, the minds of all the other members of the U.S.S. Beagle's crew were gone.

Uto walked out of his office into the Beagle's medical center to comfort his staff. A picnic would definitely help. It was a gorgeous day on campus, so he had a picnic lunch replicated and ushered his staff outside. There were a few picnic tables, shaded by an awning, just outside. They sat there, communing in thought, some looking out at the mountains in the distance, others looking back at the beautifully designed U.S.S. Beagle Medical Center building - a triumph of blended vulcan and betazoid architecture.

# SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 4: Astrophysics and Stellar Cartography Lab

## Chapter Summary

And there you are...  
Making it up but you're sure that it is a star...



### **The Star Beagle Adventures**

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 4: Astrophysics and Stellar Cartography Lab

## 6.4

### Astrophysics and Stellar Cartography Lab

Assistant Director T'Kusytt and Planetary Systems Science Director Tetri Phynyx from the Denobulan Planetary Society had aged well over the past 20 years. Both had been quite old when the U.S.S. Beagle had passed through the inside-out (a term that Falok had received from the meditating Astrophysics and Stellar Cartography Director, T'Eln, at the moment that it happened).

Tetri Phynyx was a frequent visitor in the ASC lab, as were her staff. For 20 years now she, T'Kusytt, Falok, and two of Falok's astrophysicists, a married couple, Amar Kalil and Isa Miller, had been isolated in the ASC lab.

T'Kusytt and Falok were both quite telepathically sensitive and while they could not hear the thoughts of others (unless performing a mind meld), they were aware of the presence of their fellow crew members. But the telepathic presence of anyone outside of the ASC lab had gradually faded during the first five years of isolation.

For the denobulan and the vulcans, 20 years was a considerable period of time, but for the two humans, it was devastating. Amar and Isa had gone from middle-aged to quite old. Falok, now age 50, seemed entirely unchanged.

But the real aging miracle was the still-meditating T'Eln. T'Kusytt and Falok had taken turns to share physical contact with the ancient woman, now 237 years old, making her the oldest vulcan on record. Her companions had been keeping her alive with intravenous feeding. There were very few precedents for a vulcan living to such an age - and none for one living 20 years in a meditative state.

The isolation had been maddening for the humans, and both T'Kusytt and Falok had used mind-melds to help give their human companions the mental discipline necessary for surviving this total isolation.

And it was total. The clear window between the ASC lab and the Probe Control Center had become opaque - nothing could be seen through it, nor could it be broken.

And while everyone else accepted the change in their surroundings, T'Kusytt knew it was wrong. The ASC lab was not located in a sanctuary within Mt. Langon. There were no statues of the ancient priests on the U.S.S. Beagle. Nor was the roof of the lab open to provide (at night) an unobstructed view of the stars gone mad.

Yet there were the statues. And there were the stone walls. And there was the open skylight. And there were the insane stars.

And no one other than T'Kusytt thought their presence the least bit odd.

## SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 5: The Galley

### Chapter Summary

And there you're standing...  
Saying we have the whole world in our hands...



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 5: The Galley

### 6.5

#### The Galley

Private First Class Raanda Habib had been, once again, outbid in romance. Her options aboard the U.S.S. Beagle were depressingly limited. She was well advised to avoid relationships with other enlisted Marines and prohibited from pursuing officers, whether Marine or Star Fleet. And there were no Star Fleet enlisted personnel assigned to the U.S.S. Beagle, most of those functions being performed either by marines or civilians.

That left the civilians, far less than half of whom were human males and most of those were middle aged, married, or both.

There was, however, the handsome, fit, 30-year-old and single planetologist from Sierra Leone, Phillip Gorman. Gorman's features were a blend of West African and Arabic and he looked like a creature of the desert, with magnetic, fierce green eyes that contrasted with his dark face. He was quiet, serious, intense, courteous, and charismatic.

And Guz Maxwell had gotten to him first.

Raanda wandered among the brightly colored tents in the U.S.S. Beagle's galley. Tents from which vendors offered a variety of fresh fruits and various preserves and jerkies. She wasn't hungry, but she obtained some jerky for later and a few apples for the horses and camels. Other members of the Beagle's diverse crew found the blazing heat and the blazing sands that surrounded the Beagle's galley to be unbearable.

The heat felt great to Raanda and feeding first a few horses, then one of the camels made her feel better. She had been raised among such animals and felt completely comfortable with them where others might be terrified.

As the sun set and the madness of the stars became visible in the night sky, Raanda wandered back to the main tent where somehow the ship's systems managed to keep the ever-present sand off the carpet. Private First Class Sasha Soko waved her over to his table.

"You're in a brown study tonight," Sasha remarked. "What has you so mopey?"

"Oh, nothing. And my love life. Which are pretty much one and the same thing," Raanda responded.

"You're a girl," Sasha observed. "And you've got those eyes... You should have guys lined up around the block just to talk to you."

"What guys? Every guy on this ship is out-of-bounds except for that cute planetologist. And Guz got to him first." Raanda put her elbows on the table, propped her chin on her hands and managed to look even more glum.

"There's Falok," Sasha suggested.

"The vulcan?" Raanda asked. "No way. Way too complicated..."

"Humans only, eh?" Sasha prodded.

"No... But... Well..." Raanda, even though dark-skinned, managed to blush violently. Instead of trying at this moment to figure out how she felt about interspecies mating, she changed the subject. "How about you and Chauv? Is that still a thing?"

It was Sasha's turn to blush, his ears glowing like Bussard collectors. "Apparently what happened on Serrat Prime stays on Serrat Prime.



Which is fine with me. I'm not really sure what came over me..."

"Pretty sure that was a 400-pound tellarite that was coming over you there, Sasha..." Raanda teased.

Sasha laughed and grimaced. "Ohhh, that's... uncomfortably accurate... I mean, she's smart and funny and cool... But I'm really not the kind of guy who's into farm animals."

"Sasha! That's mean!"

"Well, she does have..." Sasha held his hands out in front of his chest as if holding breasts... "You know... Four... Um..."

Raanda nearly melted down laughing. Then: "She wasn't your first, was she?"

It hardly seemed possible, but Sasha managed to blush even harder. He shook his head vigorously. "No!"

"Okay, dish! Come on now," Raanda prodded. "I've been dry as a bone since we got here. I'm having to live vicariously through you... Who?"

Sasha looked furtively about. "Well, Guz spread it about that I was a virgin and that trill oceanographer, Akri Dexe, literally pulled me into her quarters..."

"Oh my god, Sasha! She's gorgeous! How did you let that slip away?"

"Um... Well... She was pretty wild. For hours. Then she kind of dusted her hands, said something like, 'now that's taken care of,' and kicked me out of her quarters and hasn't looked at me since."

"What a heart breaker..." said Raanda.

"Then there was that denobulan, the assistant director of planets or something... Risl Phynyx..."

"She's ancient!" Raanda responded.

"She's only 240 or so..." Sasha replied. "That's like... in human years..."

"65! Sasha!"

"Well, you know what they say about older women..."

"Yeah, where are the claw marks? You got snagged by a super cougar... Have you ever even screwed a human?"

"Um..." Sasha was, impossibly, blushing even harder. "The archeologists... Fish Head and Arizona Kind..."

"At the same time??? You bed hopper!!" Raanda pushed Sasha, causing him to rock sideways on the table bench.

"Well, I was with Fish... and her roommate kind of... walked in on us... and..."

"Sasha!!!"

## SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 6: Engineering

### Chapter Summary

I see the cold mist in the night...  
And watch the hills roll out of sight...



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 6: Engineering

### 6.6 Engineering

“So how is the thingamajig this evening?”

Captain Skip Howard strolled up to Dutch Holland. It had been three months since the readings from the Doppler-Tunneling Generator had told them that both relative spacetime and subspace had been turned inside-out and the stars had started their insane dance.

It was impossible for a 300 pound luchador to project glumness through a face mask decorated with a puma’s face surrounded by flames, but somehow Commander Dutch Holland managed it. He stepped up to the insanely complicated machine, selected the correct series of punch cards to run through the slot, carefully set the levers and dials, then stepped back and, with both hands, grasped the handle of a large lever that projected up through the stone floor.

It took all of his considerable strength to activate the device by pulling the lever - powerful muscles in his arms and back easily visible under his skin-tight golden uniform. Large wheels started turning, lifting large cups of water and dumping them into the green, crystalline steam generator. The machine steamed and whistled and throbbed as it shuffled punch cards. A tiny propeller at the top spun, measuring the pressure of the steam release.

The dot matrix printer fired up and printed page after page of the results. Captain Howard and Commander Holland waited patiently, shifting their weight from side-to-side as the machine did its annoyingly noisy and slow work.

The massive, masked luchador removed the printed pages and started scanning them.

Captain Howard squatted down to his haunches and looked out across the hills to the horizon, watching the stars leap and dance madly in the mist. This part of the ship was always warm and always dark. He wasn’t sure why it had been designed that way. Or why the hills and cabins seemed to hang about at random angles with people walking about hanging nearly upside down in relation to him. It had something to do with the triangular layout of the three separate warp engines and their independently powered nacelles.

With three separate engines powering three semi-circular nacelles, the U.S.S. Beagle required incredible precision. Dangerous things could happen if the engines were slightly misaligned. Standard Star Fleet vessels avoided this problem by powering multiple nacelles with a single engine. Which proved far more rugged. Particularly in combat.

But it was precisely this layout, enhanced by the uniquely vulcan semi-circular nacelles, that made the Doppler-Tunneling Generator and other experimental enhancements possible - enhancements that were not possible with the standard Star Fleet design.

Howard stood up as Dutch Holland dropped the pile of paper into the storage bin. With all the others.

“So what is it telling you, Dutchie?”

Somehow, Dutch Holland managed a sour expression right through the luchador mask. He pointed at Captain Howard. “You’re not real.” He pointed at himself. “I’m not real.” He pointed at the Doppler-Tunneling Generator. “This thing itself is not real. That’s what it’s telling me. Those...” He pointed out to the insane stars...

“Those are real.”

# SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 7: The Probe Laboratories

## Chapter Summary

And boy you'll see...  
It's an illusion shining down on you and me...



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 7: The Probe Laboratories

## 6.7

### The Probe Laboratories

Sergeant Tommy Richards swam from the forward Probe Lab back into the Probe Control Lab. The sliding French Doors between the two labs were stuck open, which had allowed the Control Lab to flood. Fortunately, the U.S.S. Beagle's vulcan-built circuitry was designed to function when either partially or completely immersed.

Both labs had flooded the moment the Whisky 4 probe had encountered the inside out and in that same instant pulled the U.S.S. Beagle into the spacetime/subspace knot even though the probe was nearly 30 light years away. This was the sort of causality that knocked "spooky action at a distance" into a cocked hat.

"How are the reserve probes?" asked Major Janet Carter.

The large, heavily muscled African American woman looked odd bobbing in the water wearing a large, bright yellow, rubber ducky floater. For some unfathomable reason, these were the only kind of life preserver the replicator would provide.

Safety requirements allowed her and Sgt. Richards to shed their waterlogged uniforms in favor of appropriate, protective clothing. For some reason, the glitch that consigned the two marines to yellow, rubber ducky floaters also refused to provide regulation swimwear. They had to make do with yellow dive suits decorated with light blue polkadots. There was an unspoken agreement between the two to never tell anyone about this difficulty with the uniform code.

Tommy Richards was darker skinned than Major Carter. At 6'5" and 270 pounds of pure muscle, he looked like the ideal U.S. Marine. Or he would if it weren't for the rubber ducky and the blue polka-dotted yellow dive suit.

"Sir, probes Echo 1 through 4 and probes Whisky 1 and 2 are all in the forward lab and ready for launch, despite being immersed. However, the immersion causes a problem with making any modifications to either their payloads or their circuitry."

"Understood, Sergeant. What about the launch tubes?"

"The launch tubes are all flooded, but ready for use, except for the tube that was used to launch Whisky 4. I crawled into the tube to verify this: the outer tube door appears to be missing. There is a long, glowing thread that begins where the tube door should be and cants at an angle congruent with the thread being attached to the probe.

Major Carter was puzzled. "Has the tube door been replaced with a force field?"

"I could not find any evidence of one. The water in the tube simply stopped where the door should be, but I was able to push the sensor of my tricorder through without any resistance and it read an atmosphere and pressure. But that only existed in a tunnel about 4' in diameter, radiating from the thread. And I say thread, but it is more like a cable about 4" in diameter." Sgt. Richards used his hands to describe the cable and its atmosphere.

"Permission to explore, sir?"

Major Carter boggled at the young marine. “Are you asking permission to exit this ship into an unverified atmosphere that radiates from a beam of light that might be connected to a malfunctioning probe located about 30 lightyears ahead? Are you planning to crawl along a cable of light across 30 lightyears to get to that probe?”

Richards shook his head, ran a hand across his jar-head cut platform of short, springy black hair. “It didn’t sound like such a stupid idea inside my head, sir.”

“Yeah, you’re not going out there, Sergeant,” Major Carter replied. “Not without an EVA suit. We need to learn more about the missing door. Take a cutting system so you can remove that door if it shows up once you get outside. I want a report on the structural integrity of the bow of the ship, but I don’t want you getting more than 20 feet away from that tube door...”

## SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 8: General Krank's Quarters

### Chapter Summary

And there you are...  
Saying we have the moon, so now the stars...



#### **The Star Beagle Adventures**

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 8: General Krank's Quarters

### 6.8

#### General Krank's Quarters

It was completely impossible. Outrageous. Lance Corporal Petra Spitze had fallen in love. Something her mother had warned her about - to be avoided at all costs. And something that was ultimately completely unavoidable.

Every Spitze woman had fallen in love at some point during her journey through the U.S. Marine Corps. Spike's mother. Her grandmother. Her great grandmother. And love always betrayed them. Always wounded them worse than anything they ever encountered in battle - and all of them had fought on the front lines in every war. That's what it meant to be a Spitze. To be Spike (as all of them had, in their own time, because of their last name, been called.)

And to heap insult upon injury, it was a klingon she had fallen in love with. Spike hated klingons. She could appreciate them for the amazing warriors they were. Klingons had saved her life and the lives of her fellow marines on many occasions. Klingon humor was infectious. But during the Klingon-Cardassian War, klingons had killed far too many of her fellow marines... her friends... her best friend... slaughtered mercilessly after he had surrendered... It was too much for her to ever forgive.

It had started innocently enough. She had started regularly visiting General Krank in his quarters to learn Tri-D chess from him. He was a master. And she proved to be an apt pupil. The horrendously complicated game with all of its bluffs and stratagems made perfect sense to her. Appealed to her strategic and combative nature... To her generations long instinct for survival and victory in battle.

Every time he explained a particular open, or mid-game, or end-game strategy, it made intuitive sense to her and she got to the correct conclusion before he could complete explaining it. At her request, he began to teach her some of his martial arts techniques that had made the assassin Tarron Rerg such a terrifyingly capable fighter.

Then the universe turned inside-out and they had become isolated in Krank's quarters. If you could call this isolation... Their game had expanded: Instead of 32 chess pieces, 48 spaces across three planes, plus 16 spaces distributed among four moveable attack boards, their game board stretched across nearly 10,000 cubic lightyears, along with its adjacent sub-spatial complement and included thousands of stars.

The stars could not be destroyed, only captured and held motionless for a certain number of rounds. The rules were negotiable, but based on Tri-D chess... Very loosely...

Because moving the stars required physical combat.

But it wasn't physical combat with the intent to harm, but rather to overwhelm their opponent with pleasure while not giving in to it themselves. They didn't actually have bodies to accomplish this... it was in the movement of the stars... Two massive egos wrestling and enthralled with each other... Each trying to overwhelm the other with some inexplicable blend of intellectual, emotional, instinctive, and physical pleasure. With the stars as their playthings.

Or perhaps they had become the playthings of the mad stars...



## SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 9: Probe Whisky 4

### Chapter Summary

And then you'll say...  
Even in time we shall control the day...



#### **The Star Beagle Adventures**

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 9: Q Lock

6.9

#### Q Lock

Sgt. Tommy Richards walked through the completely flooded forward section of the U.S.S. Beagle's Probe Laboratory. He quickly found that the bulky EVA suit would not fit into the tube-chute. He had barely fit into it an hour earlier wearing a skin-tight dive suit.

Without hesitation, he opened and stepped out of the EVA suit. At this point he simply had to hold his breath as there was no way to remove the oxygen tanks from the suit.

It was the first time he had ever, in his 6 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, that he had ever defied an order.

He crawled into the tube, then violated another order by climbing through the opening to the outside of the U.S.S. Beagle. The stars out here were normal, unlike what the sensors were telling everyone on board.

He took a deep breath. That should have killed him - but there was an atmosphere around the glowing white cable that led to the errant Probe Whisky 4. Out here in space. No force fields. No gravity that he could discern...

Richards grasped the white cable and it immediately pulled him away from the Beagle - so fast that the vulcan designed and built ship became vanishingly small in a heartbeat.

Warp speed.

In a body suit.

A yellow body suit with light blue polkadots.

Richards had known somehow that the cable would take him to the probe. The moment he grasped the cable, he was again violating explicit orders. Major Janet Carter had explicitly ordered him not to go further than 20 feet from the opening of the tube. 20 feet. Not 30 light years...

Sgt. Tommy Richards defying orders was similar to a brick wall ordering lunch. Or fish riding bicycles. Even stranger as those things had actually happened...

The cable slowed perceptibly as he neared Probe Whisky 4.

The probe was about 5' long and about 2.5' in diameter. The front end of the probe was poking into some sort of fold in space. It was as if someone had rolled up a patch of spacetime, folded it and tied it into a half-hitch around the front end of the probe.

Tiny stars could be seen whirling and dancing madly through this patch of space-rope. And the probe was slowly sinking deeper into it.



Tommy Richards realized he had come all the way out here to execute an order. Captain Howard's last order to him.

The access panel was located near the rear of the probe. Richards removed the access panel and started the very complicated process of doing what the probe's controls were designed to make it impossible for anyone to do. In fact, there was no one aboard the U.S.S. Beagle who could get this done anywhere near as quickly as Sgt. Tommy Richards.

He defeated one failsafe after another, taking less than 2 minutes to convince the probe that he really wanted it to self-destruct. Right now. No countdown. The probe was slipping further and further into the knot - faster with each inch that slid into the knot...

T'Eln's eyes snapped open.

She reached out to Falok, the mind-meld starting even before her ancient, wrinkled hands found his face.

Falok needed all of his discipline and training - the old woman's mind was simply unleashed through his - like a lightning bolt passing through his head. She needed his power. Together they reached out first to Dr. Tentis Uto, then to his wife, Bettes, then to each of the other betazoids in turn, barely receiving permission before taking over their minds, first the betazoids, then the other vulcans, then even Captain Osollaa sh'Zhiathis, making use of even the minimal telepathic ability of the sole andorian on board...

Probe Whisky 4 was destroyed...

"What are you doing, Sergeant?" asked Major Carter.

Tommy Richards lifted his hand from the control panel, surprised at what he had just done. Even more surprised he was still alive. And completely confused as to why he was surprised...

"Sergeant???" Major Carter asked again from behind his chair...

Then the captain's voice came back over the comm system:

"Emergency destruct Whisky 4..."

# SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 10: Long Live Shroedinger's Cat

## Chapter Summary

As truth is gathered I rearrange...  
Inside out... Outside in... Inside out... Outside in...  
Perpetual change...



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 10: Long Live Shroedinger's Cat

## 6.10

### Long Live Shroedinger's Cat

“So what, exactly, is a Q Lock?”

Captain Skip Howard had assembled the Beagle's leadership in the executive conference room. As was typical for such meetings, Lt. Cmdr. Senek was in command, but was participating from the bridge. Commodore Yui Song and Captain Rhonda Carter were participating from the bridges of, respectively, the U.S.S. Mako and the U.S.S. Escort.

This time, the person with the answers was the ancient Premiere Emeritus of the Vulcan Science Academy, T'Eln.

“In this case, it is exactly what it sounds like. A lock put in place by a member of the Q Continuum. It carries both a signature and a warning. The warning is to not approach.”

“And why did our instruments not pick up this warning?” Howard asked.

“The warning is not for you,” the elderly vulcan explained. “The Q Continuum is unconcerned with any creatures that require spacecraft or make use of subspace radio for communications. I only picked up on the warning due to my meditations. When I meditate, I mentally encompass the task force and all of our assets. I extended my meditation to explore the Q Lock, was drawn in and was trapped in the asylum. I was able to use the Whisky 4 Probe to escape from the asylum, then leveraged my escape to facilitate the U.S.S. Beagle's escape.”

“Asylum?” Howard asked.

“You can imagine that insanity is an enormous problem for the Q Continuum,” said T'Eln. “Eternity and relative omnipotence are their curse. It is surprising how few of them have had to be confined. Only two. And this locked region of space is their asylum. A vast region of space and stars locked away to prevent them from destroying all life in our galaxy. The lock is not perfect. It is nearly impossible to escape. But creatures can be drawn in with relative ease.”

“We targeted the Q Lock with Whisky 4 because of the readings we were receiving from one of our experimental devices in engineering,” added Commander Dutch Holland. “But I'm starting to remember very strange things...”

“I have unlocked your future, non-linear memories,” T'Eln explained. “We never actually entered the asylum. But we were about to and this ship and all of us were drawn into that future reality and experienced it for differing periods of time. Those experiences never happened, but they generated memory engrams in your neural networks that I have, with the help of my staff, Dr. Uto's staff and Captain sh'Zhiathis, been able to stabilize. Over the next few days, you will attain more and more of those memories. They will seem dream-like. But they are not dreams. They are a reality that you never experienced, but for which the potential existence was so strong that you developed memories of these non-events.”

“I am not remembering anything unusual,” said Commodore Yui Song, speaking from the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako.

“Nor will you. Only the U.S.S. Beagle and its complement were exposed to this potential reality,” T'Eln opined.

“It feels as though we barely escaped becoming trapped in this Q asylum,” Captain Howard observed.

“I would have been lost forever in there, if the Whisky 4 Probe had not partially entered the asylum,” T’Eln replied. “But this ship was saved by a series of very good decisions, starting with your orders to set the Beagle and it’s probes to station keeping, cutoff all communications, which protected the Mako and the Escort and their crews, and to destroy the Whisky 4 Probe.”

“Moreover, Lieutenant Commander Senek understood the vital nature of maintaining station keeping, which he potentially did for more than three years of subjective experience. And Sergeant Tommy Richards carried out your order to destroy the Whisky 4 Probe... and was willing to give his life to execute that order,” T’Eln continued.

“But he destroyed the probe before Captain Howard gave the order,” Major Janet Carter objected.

“Yes and no,” T’Eln opined. “The temporal nature and causalities surrounding this incident are nearly impossible for me to explain in any way that you could comprehend. Perhaps I can employ a mixed metaphor from a famous human scientist and a famous human philosopher...”

T’Eln looked around the room. She had everyone’s rapt attention: “Shroedinger’s cat is dead. Long live Shroedinger’s cat.”

# SBA Episode 6: Perpetual Change - Scene 11: Playthings of the Gods

## Chapter Summary

As mist and sun are both the same...  
We regard them as pawns in our game...

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

Scene 11: Playthings of the Gods

## 6.11

### Playthings of the Gods

Lance Corporal Petra Spitze was never so afraid to walk into life and death situations. This was much more intimidating. She drew a deep breath, straightened her uniform and placed her hand on the access request panel.

“Enter!” came General Krank’s voice. It sounded unchanged. Spike took another deep breath and walked in to find the ancient klingon in full armor, as always, a holographic Tri-D chess set frozen in mid-game from their most recent game. A game that had been interrupted by the Q Asylum incident.

Instead of sitting at the game table, Spike took up a firm stance, took another breath as if to speak, and then had no idea how to start.

General Krank remained seated at the gaming table.

After a few moments of silence, he prodded her with a polite klingon greeting: “What do you want?”

Spike rolled her head, popping her neck nervously, took another deep breath: “I’m remembering things... Did we... Were we...” She gestured with both hands, pulling them apart, then putting them together and lacing her fingers, then pulling them apart only to bring them together and lace her fingers in a different pattern. “You know...”

“Copulating?” Krank asked.

Spike made a few more frustrated gestures, then sighed. “Yeah... Copulating...”

“Yes. For an indeterminate period of time,” Krank replied. He was enjoying Spike’s discomfort just a little. “It was glorious...”

Spike couldn’t argue with that. But she had come loaded for klingon, ready for a fight and she would not be denied. “I will not marry you. I don’t care what your traditions require, you understand?”

“I was not going to ask,” Krank replied. “What makes you think that I would want to marry you?”

Spike was stunned. “But... Your traditions...”

“You know far too little about our traditions. I have been married and, even though my wife is dead, by our tradition I am still married. I am not required to take a second wife. You have the right to demand that I marry you, and tradition would require me to comply and make you my second wife,” Krank explained. “But I can make no such requirement of you. And even if I could...”

“You wouldn’t want to?” Spike was, oddly just a little hurt.

“You must understand, Spike,” Krank replied. “I could not in good conscience press for marriage based on this experience. First, because while you and I remember it, it never actually happened. And even if it had, it was not of our volition. We were made to be the playthings of gods long gone mad.”

Spike relaxed visibly, relief washing over her.

She settled down at the gaming table to complete their game. It took about five minutes before Krank announced, “Checkmate in three.”

Spike laid her king over, but kept her finger on the piece. There was a bit of a wicked gleam in her eyes. “It really was glorious...” She maintained aggressive eye contact with the ancient general for a few moments, something that made neither of them uncomfortable. Then:

“Do you think we might become the playthings of gods again?”

Krank reciprocated her aggressive stare... A low growl began deep in his throat...

### Perpetual Change

#### Chapter End Notes

This is the final scene for Episode 6.

The adventure will continue with Episode 7: The Roundabout.

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