

## The Lost Kingdom

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## The Lost Kingdom

by [mistral](#)

### Summary

legends of our time

### Notes

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

### The Lost Kingdom

Captain Hans Moffat sat in his office, checking cargo manifests. A cup of coffee sat, steaming, on the corner of his desk. The latest load that Hermes carried was a mixed bag at best. A pair of deuterium tanks trailed the load that was strung out behind Hermes, followed by two Starfleet stasis chambers filled with vaccine for Rugalan fever destined for Beta Hydroxi Six, Kelvan's World. After that were five standard cargo carriers with an assortment of luxury trade goods. Each container was held to the next by a "belt and suspenders" system of force locks and duranium cables. Moffat had to figure his course after the drop-off at Kelvan's World so as to maximize his profits and minimize his fuel loss.

"Captain, uh, sir?" Terrence Lagos sounded a bit disturbed, even over the intercom.

Yeah, Terry, what is it?" Hans was more than a little distracted and didn't hear the catch in Terry's voice.

"Sir, I have a very strange object on the long-range sensors. It's ... um, biological."

Hans dropped the padd he's been reading. "It's alive? In space?"

Now Terry sounded uncertain. "Not exactly, Captain. It shows up as a biological entity, but it lacks all of the usual life signs one would expect. I guess it could be a corpse but its kind of big, y'know?"

Hans sat and considered his reply for a moment. Terry wasn't the best operational officer in the galaxy but he'd been with the Hermes for over fifteen years. Hans trusted him enough to wonder what he'd found. "Terry, let's set a course that will allow us to get a tighter scan, as long as it doesn't cost us too much time. Who knows, maybe we can sell whatever it is to Starfleet."

"Yes, sir, we'll do that. We should have something more in an hour or so."

"Thanks, Terry." Hans picked his padd back up and began to read. His now forgotten coffee sat there growing cold.

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Forty-seven minutes later by the ship's chronometer Terry hailed Moffat. "Captain, um, we have the object on the screens. You might want to come up here."

Moffat had been so immersed in his graphs and charts he's forgotten the earlier call and it took him a moment to respond. "Uh, yeah, I'll be right up." He got up and headed for the turbo lift.

On the bridge the navigator, Mercedes, and the head engineer, V'Shanti, were staring at the screen. Terry got up from the central chair as Moffat entered. "What the hell is that?" Moffat asked. Everyone was looking up at the peculiar brown object tumbling through space.

V'Shanti spoke, and his antennae bobbed a bit, signifying his agitation. "Hans, what ever it is, it's coated with a biological organism. Sensors say there is a fusion generator under all of that, as well as a number of commonplace materials. I think," and here his blue face scrunched up a bit, "that it is a machine but the outer surface is alive. It draws power from solar and cosmic background radiation to sustain itself. Without a closer examination I can't tell you anything else. I'm sorry," he apologized, "but Hermes's sensors don't have the refinement to tell us more."

"Do you think that it might be dangerous?" Moffat looked at Terry as he spoke.

"The scans aren't detecting any kind of viral agent or anything like that. I think we can take it aboard the shuttle deck if we run it through a

decontamination cycle.” Terry didn’t sound overly worried so Hans made his decision.

“Go ahead and bring it in, then. Maybe Starfleet will be interested. V’Shanti, see what you and Bill can learn about it. If we give them a preliminary report the ‘Fleet boys will be thrilled.”

The Andorian engineer left the bridge as Terry began manipulating tractor beams to drag the unknown item on board. Moffat took the center seat and watched through the viewscreen until the strange object was out of sight.

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Moffat was back in his office, monitoring the price of deuterium on Halifax Five when V’Shanti paged him. “Captain, we have finished a preliminary analysis.”

Moffat pulled himself away from the subspace feed in a distracted fashion. “Analysis?” he asked.

V’Shanti sighed. “Of the object we found, Hans.”

Moffat visibly shook himself free of his current activity. “Oh, right, the thing we found. So what is it?”

“Well, we still don’t know what the biological sheath is made of. Underneath it is a Terran fusion reactor, a few square yards of transparent aluminum, about forty kilos of duranium and an assortment of metals and plastics that would seem to be mechanical wiring.” V’Shanti paused for a moment, then continued, “Hans, we’re also picking up what would seem to be a human corpse in the center of it all. Oh, and the whole mess is between three and four and a half centuries old. That’s all I know.”

Moffat rocked back in his desk chair, stunned. “Thanks, V’Shanti,” he said, in a weak voice. Switching channels, he said, “Terry, contact the closest Starfleet vessel and tell them we have something they may be interested in.” Shaking his head, he returned to his reports. “Problem solved,” he said to himself. He just didn’t realize how wrong he was.

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When the call from the Hermes came in Captain Niklesh Sanjay of the Oberth-class science vessel Cochrane was deep in meditation in his quarters.

“Captain to the Bridge.” T’Mon’s voice was devoid of emotion as always but the strength of its tone penetrated Sanjay’s mantra.

“On my way, Commander,” Sanjay replied. Sighing, he uncrossed his legs and rose, tugging at the hem of his tunic. It was a short walk from his room to the Bridge.

“Commander, what do we have?” His first officer turned from the main sensor and communication console.

“The cargo ship Hermes has taken aboard an unusual find. They are requesting that we take possession of it.” As Sanjay opened his mouth, T’Mon anticipated his question. “It was a bit unusual in its composition and when I heard the description it reminded me of a report filed by the Enterprise.” T’Mon stopped speaking and Sanjay was about to open his mouth again when the Vulcan continued, “Although I am relying on the Hermes’s engineer’s report, it would seem that they have found a cryogenics tube dating from Earth’s late twentieth or early twenty-first century. The person encapsulated is apparently dead but the historical value of such a find...” His voice trailed off.

Sanjay knew that Earth history was, not a passion, but certainly an area of extreme interest to the Vulcan. “Very well,” he said, “Make course for the Hermes, warp six.”

“Thank you, Captain,” T’Mon responded.

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“Well, I’m just glad to contribute to the Federation’s base of knowledge,” Captain Moffat said from the viewscreen. From Sanjay’s perspective, his face filled the screen completely. The sweat on his brow was quite apparent.

“Is something wrong, Captain Moffat?” Sanjay asked. Moffat shook his head emphatically.

“Not really, Captain. I just want to get on my way. We’re carrying vaccine for the outbreak on Kelvan’s World and I’m in a hurry to get back on course.” Something about his demeanor raised warning bells in Sanjay’s mind but he acted as though nothing was wrong.

“Of course, Captain. We’re transporting the object to our cargo bay now. You should be on your way in a few minutes.”

“Thank Go-I mean, that’s great. Thank you, Captain.” The viewscreen reverted to a starscape with the Hermes sitting in the center of the screen. Sanjay and T’Mon exchanged curious glances.

“Captain,” Chief Engineer Korlu had an eager tone to his voice, “The package has been delivered. My men are working on it now.” When Sanjay opened his mouth to reply the Hermes dashed to warp. T’mon’s eyebrows climbed high.

“Very good, Chief. Let me know when you’ve found something.” Sanjay glanced at the navigator’s panel. Hermes was leaving at warp seven, a dangerous speed with the cargo she carried. With a sinking feeling, Sanjay turned the Bridge over to T’Mon and headed for the cargo bay. This just didn’t seem like it was going to work out well.

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Sanjay hadn’t gotten very far when the inter ship hail whistled and the voice of Lt. Burke, Head of Security, echoed through the corridors. “Burke to Sanjay.” Sanjay slapped his combadge.

“Sanjay here.”

“Um, Captain, I’m at the rec deck. Sir, I haven’t had a drink. I just got here.”

Trying not to sound exasperated, Sanjay replied, “That’s just fine, Lieutenant. What seems to be the problem?”

“Sir, uh, well…” There was a pause and then the security officer continued, “I’ve been talking to an …intruder, I guess.”

Sanjay paused to consider for a moment. “You guess?”

Burke was decidedly uncomfortable. “Well, he’s about four feet tall and he’s wearing a tuxedo jacket and a pair of red shorts with big yellow buttons. And he’s a mouse.”

Sanjay didn’t say a word. He began running tactical situations through his head for re-taking the Cochrane’s recreational facilities from a deranged security officer.

“Captain?” Burke sounded sane but seriously distressed.

“Mr. Burke, why don’t you, ah, ask our visitor where he or she came from.”

“Uh, yessir,” Burke replied. Sanjay switched off and began making his way towards the rec room. As he rounded the corner of deck four, seven very short men with picks and shovels walked past him in the other direction, whistling. Sanjay just gaped at them as they went by. He was reaching for the nearest communication panel when T’Mon’s voice sounded through out the corridor. “Captain Sanjay, please respond.” Sanjay slapped his combadge again.

“Sanjay here.”

There was a pause and then T’Mon said, “Captain, it is my duty to inform you that two apparently intelligent Earth chipmunks have engaged the ship’s computer in an argument about our current course. They are utilizing the secondary navigation station to do so.” Sanjay almost had a chance to respond before T’Mon cut him off. “One of them is wearing what I believe is called a ‘pith’ helmet, sir, as well as a khaki vest.” Sanjay sat down in the corridor, oblivious of the stares of passing crewmembers. Time passed. “Captain?” T’Mon asked.

“Tell the computer to ignore the chipmunks’s commands and…just keep an eye on them for now.” Sanjay stood back up and walked briskly towards the cargo bay. “Korlu, what’s going on down there?”

The Tellarite engineer sounded perplexed. “Sir, whatever this thing is, the report from the Hermes supports what we’ve found so far. It’s definitely an old-fashioned cryogenic unit. The bio-sheath around it will need some study. We’re having problems taking readings, though. There’s some kind of flying animal swooping on my technicians and they have to keep aborting their scans to duck. What kind of crap is this? Uh, sir,” he added.

Sanjay pinched his nose. “Could you describe the creature, Chief?”

“Well, it’s got four legs, it’s kind of fat and grey and it has the largest ears I’ve ever seen.” Sanjay remembered a trip he’d taken as a child to Paris and sighed.

“Chief, it probably won’t hurt you or your technicians. Just find out all you can about the object.”

“Aye, Captain,” Korlu replied.

Sanjay headed for the turbolift. It opened and he stepped inside, his head still whirling from the reports he’d received. He barely noticed the other person in the lift until after the doors had closed.

“Hi, there!”

Sanjay’s head jerked up at the figure next to him. And up. And up. The bear was scratching his head and smiling down at Sanjay.

Eyeing Sanjay’s uniform, the bear said, “Sorry, pal, I seem to be under dressed for this occasion. I guess you could say I’m wearing.” And he gestured with one meaty paw, “the bare necessities.” The turbolift doors opened and Sanjay fled into the corridor.

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Entering the cargo bay, Sanjay stopped and looked up at the flying elephant cruising the top half of the bay. Shaking his head, he made his way over to Korlu and his techs. “What have you got?” he asked.

“Korlu shook his porcine head. “It’s a bio-mimetic coating of some sort.” A large snake slid past the techs, whispering to itself. Korlu absentmindedly side-stepped it as he continued his report. “Whatever is happening, the sheath becomes thinner whenever one of these things appears. Then it grows in the real sense of the word and gets thicker again. Then something else spawns off of it and wanders out the door. I’ve seen at least three young, human females, a fish with a crown that didn’t last too long, a dragon and an old woman who insisted we eat the red fruit in her hand. We had to stun her,” he said, gesturing off into a corner. Sanjay could see an old lady in a black robe splayed out on the deck, unconscious. An apple lay near her hand. “Captain, what the hell is going on?”

Sanjay grimaced. “I don’t know, Chief, but I think it has something to do with whatever that thing is that you are working on. I want your team armed with phasers. If this is what I think it is, there could be some fairly dangerous creatures, uh, ‘spawning’ from that bio-mimetic sheath. And contact Mr. Burke’s second. Tell her to find that snake that just left here. I’m not worried about someone getting bitten but I don’t need a mutiny on my hands.” Korlu looked at him oddly for a moment and then began shouting out orders. Sanjya exited the cargo bay and headed for the turbolift. He reached for the control pad and then hesitated for a moment, his hand poised in midair.

Shaking his head, he tapped the 'OPEN' button. When the lift opened he waited long enough to check the car out before stepping in. "Bridge," he said. The turbolift shot off to the Bridge and spit Sanjay out in time to see two squirrels, a mouse, a skunk and a rabbit make a beeline around his feet and into the turbolift before the doors closed. A pair of bluebirds were flitting around the top of the dome ceiling. Sanjay sighed and took his seat.

"T'Mon, do we have the traced projection of the object's path? Can we backtrack it to the point of origin?"

The First Officer consulted his records screen. "Yes, Captain. We have a possible trajectory out to forty light years, based on the Hermes's original sensor records."

Sanjay thought for a moment. "Very good. Take us to the last known point of origin, maximum warp."

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Twenty-seven hours later Sanjay had slept and returned to the Bridge. The Cochrane was approaching the object's point of origin. The navigator, Ensign Byrd, looked up.

"Sir, we are as far as we can go. The Hermes's sensors weren't strong enough to penetrate beyond this point." When Sanjay didn't answer Byrd looked back at him. "Sir, what do you want me to do?"

"We'll wait here," Sanjay replied, stroking his beard. "Chief Korlu, cut the bio-mimetic sheath off of the object. Use whatever you need to make it happen, short of destroying the machinery underneath."

"Aye, Captain," came the reply. "Uh, sir, a large, striped, feline spawned off of the sheath. We had to kill it-it was aggressive beyond belief. I'm sorry, sir."

"There's nothing to be sorry about. You did what you had to do," Sanjay replied.

Korlu opened the circuit but hesitated before he spoke, "Sir, it talked to us as it attacked." He paused and then, "I'm sorry, sir, we had no choice."

Sanjay contemplated Kipling and the vagaries of the universe. "Chief," he said, his face a mask, "Don't worry about it. You did the right thing. Take my word for it, that cat was a sheer killer. Sanjay out."

The Bridge was quiet, except for the two bluebirds dancing around the ceiling. Sanjay waited for Korlu's next report.

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"Captain, we've cut the sheath free of the, well, thing. It looks like a coffin, sir. Mostly transparent aluminum. The design is so antiquated, I'm surprised it's still working. Definitely Human technology but very old. Sir, we tossed the sheath aside. Something is trying to spawn but..." here the Chief sounded puzzled, "It's like it's struggling."

Sanjay looked at T'Mon. "Captain," the Vulcan said, "It may have something to do with proximity to the inhabitant of the cryogenic capsule." Sanjay nodded.

"Chief," Sanjay said, "Move the sheath as far as you can away from the capsule. That might alleviate the spawning problem."

"Captain..." The tone in T'Mon's voice made Sanjay focus. "We have two large vessels...Captain, I'm not sure what they are doing but they are coming into proximity with us." On the view screen the two ships, easily the size of a standard Starfleet space station, shimmered into view. A voice boomed through the ship's communication system.

"Why have you stopped the dreaming?" A figure appeared on the screen. It lacked a neck, although it seemed to be humanoid. A half-dome composed its head. It had only a mouth and what passed for eyes. The skin was grey, and it wore no clothing that could be discerned.

"The dreaming?" Sanjay asked.

"You have stopped the dreaming. Why? We found this Dreamer drifting and gave it the means to feel it's dreams. Why have you interfered?" The figure showed no signs of emotion but the universal translator conveyed anger.

"Uh, if you could give us a little bit of time to evaluate our data I will give you an answer. There are many unknowns here."

The figure on the screen contemplated for a moment and said, "Do not waste time as this state is difficult for us. We must soon return to the dreaming." It vanished abruptly.

Sanjay looked at T'Mon in astonishment. "T'mon, this has been a very weird day. My brain is dead. What did he just say?"

"Sir, I believe that what he is saying was a statement about his race. Perhaps they live in a dream state and functioning on a level that allows them to interact with us is unnatural to them." T'Mon looked intrigued.

"Is that possible," Sanjay asked, "to perceive reality from a dream-state?"

"It would not be impossible. Many beings that we refer to as mentally ill perceive their reality in a fugue or dream-like existence but if that was the natural way for your race, adjusting to our way of consciousness would be...like making yourself intentionally insane. We should hurry with our analysis of the current situation-I doubt these beings can communicate with us for long."

Sanjay slapped his com badge, "Korlu, what do you have for me?"

“Sir, I don’t know much about Human history. I’m going to let Ensign Sanderson explain what we have found.”

Ensign Sanderson began to speak in a hesitant way. “Captain, the cryo unit has a plaque welded to it. Sir, have you ever been to Disneyland over in Paris?”

Sanjay thought of a warm summer day with his parents, a day he had wished would never end. “Yes, Ensign, I’ve been there.”

“Sir, the plaque says: ‘Walter Elias Disney, 1901-1966’. Sir, I thought he was a myth.”

“I guess there really was a Disney, Ensign. Chief, has one of the doctors examined the, um, body?”

“Korlu cut back in. “Yessir. This guy is totally dead. His body didn’t survive the cryogenic procedure. It was pretty primitive technology, sir.”

T’Mon interrupted. “Captain, the dead brain of some humanoids, including Humans, can retain engrams beyond death if they are cryogenically suspended. It is possible that these people have used a technology that taps into that.”

Sanjay looked at him. “So you think all of these manifestations are the dead dreams of a dead man?”

T’Mon gestured at the bluebirds pinwheeling around each other near the ceiling. “That is a possibility, sir.”

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After Sanjay contacted them and explained that the Dreamer they had ‘helped’ was, in fact, deceased, the Dreamers had vanished the bio-mimetic sheath and all traces of the manifestations from the Cochrane. They did not use a transporter. Their ships shimmered away soon after.

Sanjay went down to the cargo bay. When he entered, Ensign Sanderson was standing near the cryo unit.

“Hello, Captain,” he said. His hand rested on the sarcophagus.

“Ensign,” Sanjay responded. “I went there, too. I’ve seen the Magic Kingdom.” His voice sounded wistful. “I can’t help but wonder what he might have created with the tools we could have given him. It’s a shame the technology wasn’t good enough to save him. I would have liked to have seen the castles he would have built.”

Sanderson just watched him as he rubbed his hand on the sarcophagus, touching the plaque with a reverence.

## End Notes

A monthly challenge, if I recall. Something about incorporating pop culture with Star Trek? Don't remember.

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