

Reboot (Legacy)

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Reboot (Legacy)

by [Beatrice Otter](#)

Summary

This is what we leave behind.

Notes

Written for: jedibuttercup

"I wonder how many times I've written in this journal today." The man is sitting in an overstuffed chair in a stereotypical twentieth-century living room. An ugly plastic portable writing table is in front of him, a cheap paper journal resting open on top. "There's no way to tell; this could be the first time this day's ever come around, or it could be the hundredth, or the thousandth, or the millionth. Or the billionth." He cocks his head to the side. "If I can't tell the difference, does it matter?" He stops to consider the question, bald head bobbing. "Yeah, that's more Doctor Jackson's type of question than mine. Except he's on his way to Atlantis, or maybe he's there already, and if it really *has* been this day a million times already, he's long dead." He pauses again, considering. "Assuming he's not ascended. Or downloaded into some robot body. Or downloaded into a clone. Or been zapped with some kind of alien immortality ray. Or preserved in stasis. Considering his record, I'm not gonna assume he's dead no matter how long it's been. Though it's a pity we'll probably never find out who wins the next round of 'how will Doctor Jackson die next.' I won the whole pot, last time—nobody else chose 'Replicators' *and* 'Ascension.'"

The holodeck program hit number two on the Federation Newsweek's list. Lieutenant Colonel Carter's message hidden in DNA was firmly in the number one slot and likely to remain so for some time based on classroom use alone. It was the diary that came closest to edging it out, even if only briefly. It wasn't surprising; Stargate-fever had swept most of the quadrant, as archaeologists, historians, scientists of all kinds vied to uncover more about the previously unsuspected gap in the quadrant's history, to untangle the implications of the revolution in physics brought about by stable wormholes creatable on demand. New discoveries were announced or rumored every day, but the pictures remained fragmentary, disjointed; too much had been lost, perhaps irrevocably. What was even less surprising was that it didn't last, superseded by other, less historical programs based on tantalizing fragments of information combined with everything the lurid imaginations of the holowriters could come up with.

Jean-Luc Picard was as fascinated with the Stargate program as anyone; certainly, travel in the quadrant would be revolutionized if they could get a Stargate network up and running, and that was only the tip of the iceberg. But he avoided the sensationalism of the holodramas, and snorted at Will Riker's enthusiasm for them. Not that the rest of his officers were any better; Worf, in particular, fought the Battle of Dakara several times. (They knew little of Jaffa culture, but what information there was seemed to indicate a warrior race; the writers had filled in the blanks by appropriating Klingon culture, filtered through Federation perceptions, up to and including use of "it is a good day to die" as a battle cry.) No, Jean-Luc kept to his standard fare of classics such as Dixon Hill, even when Beverly deserted him to join Counselor Troi in "The Sam Carter Adventures."

"Oh, come on, Jean-Luc, it's not supposed to be accurate," Beverly said with a laugh. "It's supposed to be *fun*. And I have to tell you, as an action-adventure, it's a lot of fun."

"So is 1930's New York, Bev," Jean-Luc replied, tipping his fedora with Dixon Hill's trademark charm. And if Dix's New York was no more accurate than Carter's SGC, at least that was a publicly acknowledged fact.

"Captain!" Jean-Luc turned to see Counselor Troi standing behind him in green twentieth-century military fatigues, though her hair (as

always) cascaded down her back in a fashion that did not say "military" to anyone except, perhaps, Klingons. "Dixon Hill again, I see. Are you ready to fight the Goa'uld, Beverly?" She turned to her friend.

"Have a nice time, Jean-Luc," Beverly said, stepping around him to join Troi.

Jean-Luc watched them go, then went on to his own holodeck alone with a sigh.

"According to the astronomers, I wrote yesterday's journal entry somewhere around 9,500 times. On the bright side, all that writing but no sore hands." He looked down at his hands, then off to the side. "The thing about working in the SGC is," he says after a while, "you get used to the end of the world. Happens all the time. Well, not *all* the time, but we come close a couple times a year. People die, go missing, are crippled physically and mentally and emotionally, and yeah, shit happens, but it happens a lot more at the SGC than anywhere else in the world. The galaxy, it feels like, sometimes. Felt.

"You learn to joke about it, take it in stride, because you'll crack like an egg if you don't. I remember, the second year of the program, when we started up the annual Galactic Villain award, some people were kinda shocked at how we were poking fun of the Earth almost getting destroyed. We did Best and Worst costume, Most in Need of the Evil Overlord List, Stupidest plan, Most Likely to Succeed, a bunch of others. By the fifth year, the award ceremony was the highlight of the year. By the seventh, some of the younger recruits were lobbying to send trophies to the 'winners.'" He looks straight ahead. "But how do you joke about the death of an entire galaxy?"

Two days later he watched with disbelief as LaForge and Data walked down the hall in the now-familiar SGC fatigues, discussing some technical problem animatedly. To the best of his knowledge, neither were attracted to action-adventure stories. "Commanders," he said. "Sam Carter Adventures, perhaps?"

LaForge laughed. "No, sir. I'll take a phaser over a P-90 any day. No, they just came out with a new one—Scientists Save the Day. The Earth is in jeopardy and we have to come up with some way to use an alien device from the Stargate-era to save it."

"It must be difficult, considering how much we have yet to learn about how those devices worked," Jean-Luc said noncommittally.

"Actually, Captain, it is a great deal easier for us than it would have been for the scientists who originally dealt with the events and devices the scenarios are based on," Data replied. "We have a far greater understanding of the physics behind them than was possible in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, even given the undeniable genius of several of the scientists involved. For the most part, their understanding of the devices, themselves, was no greater than ours is now, and their understanding of the scientific principles the devices relied on for operation was much less."

"I see," Jean-Luc replied, cutting off Data's lecture with the ease of long practice. "Carry on, then, gentlemen."

"Some astronomers outside the program are making a big deal about the way the stars changed. There are a million different theories, all of them incredibly far-fetched. At least, I'd have thought they were far-fetched if I hadn't spent the last nine years working for Stargate Command. None of them are even close to the truth, though. It'd be pretty ironic if the SGC got outed now, after it's all shut down.

"It sounds more final, somehow, now that I've written it on the page. Stargate Command is shutting down, going out with a whimper instead of a bang. We dialed several worlds, the ones closest to us, that would be least affected by stellar drift. Nothing. I even tried Abydos, just for old times sake, even though they were lost over two years ago. They're sending Odyssey, the only hyperspace-capable ship Earth has left, to nearby worlds to see what's going on. If the Stargates are still there, if they've been in use enough to keep the DHD's drift calculations updated, if there's any sign of life out there besides us ... I don't know what they'll do. But there's always been a faction that wanted to put the genie back in the bottle, and now that the threat of imminent destruction isn't hanging over our heads (we assume, anyway), they think it's the perfect opportunity to do it.

"Life's not fair. I got enough proof of *that* working at the SGC, let me tell you. But this is worse than normal. We saved Earth so many times, all of us, even the ones like me who just sat in the control room and dialed the Gate and did paperwork. We defeated the enemy that had the Asgard on the run, and even kept Earth alive against an enemy the Ancients themselves couldn't beat. And the whole galaxy died to keep Earth safe. And people are so caught up in their piddling little conflicts and don't even know how much blood was shed by good men and women so that they could have the luxury to do that.

"The SGC may be shutting down, but the Trust apparently isn't. One of their dummy corporations announced today that they've made a quantum leap in human genetic manipulation and cloning, and are close to creating the perfect human in their labs. They're boasting they can make designer children for anyone who can pay, make them strong, smart, good looking, healthy ... everything the Goa'uld were looking for in their quest for a Hok'Tar. Nirrti would be proud of them. Is this our legacy, to be forgotten except for the shadowy corporations who use our work to line their pockets?"

"I can't take this right now. More later."

"You really should give one of the Stargate programs a try," Will said at the end of a meeting in the ready room the next day. "Some of them might surprise you."

"Is there *anything* else going on in the quadrant besides the Stargate investigations?" Jean-Luc exclaimed somewhat testily, putting down his PADD with a clatter. It was slightly uncharacteristic of him, but it was the third such comment he'd heard that day, and it was not even lunch

time. And his first officer was the only person on the ship he could vent at, besides Beverly who had been his friend for almost two decades before becoming his subordinate.

"Not really, no," Will replied, grinning, presumably at his normally even-tempered captain's show of exasperation. "Didn't realize it was such a touchy subject. Y'know, if you'd just make an appearance in one, people would probably stop bothering you about it."

"Thank you for your concern, Number One," Jean-Luc replied with some dignity, "but I believe I can arrange my own recreation. Please keep me informed of the situation down in Astrometrics," he added before Will could mention the times Beverly or Troi had had to order him to take a vacation.

"Yes, sir," Will said good-naturedly, taking it like the dismissal it was, rising and walking out. He paused, just before the door slid open, and turned back, a twinkle in his eye. "If you need some advice on which one to pick, or want some company, I'd be glad to—"

"Number One," Jean-Luc said, glaring at him.

Will raised his hands in surrender and slipped out the door.

"I had a dream last night. Nightmare. Earth was about to be destroyed and I couldn't remember the address for the Alpha Site or Atlantis or any of our allies. I woke up in a cold sweat. I know they wanted all record of gate addresses purged in case the Ori show up, but surely if they were waiting around for us to return to normal time they'd have shown up by now. I dialed the gate for nine years. I have to write this down, see the addresses in black and white. I just have to.

"Abydos.

"Chulak.

"Langaria.

"The Land of Light.

That evening, Jean-Luc bowed to the inevitable. Chief Master Sergeant Walter Harriman became the second face of Stargate Command (after Colonel Carter) because of a fluke of history: his family survived World War Three, including a niece with a passion for family history. Several of Harriman's personal documents had been preserved, including his diary, along with enough photographs and home videos to give the programmers a decent physical template for the man and his surroundings. The Harriman program was boring, old-fashioned, with almost no interactivity but completely historically accurate. It didn't satisfy his crew, but was more to his taste than dodging Death Gliders.

Jean-Luc entered the holodeck. He sat down on the couch opposite the hologram of Harriman. "Tea, Earl Grey, Hot," he said. When his tea materialized, he took it and settled back, crossing his legs and getting comfortable. He sipped his tea. "Begin program."

The twenty-first century man came to life. "Personal diary, Chief Master Sergeant Walter Harriman.

"This diary breaks about a hundred different security regulations, but I'm going to keep it anyway. I have to be positive for the junior enlisted people at the SGC, set a good example. So many of our people went on the Daedalus to Atlantis, I'm the senior NCO for Air Force and Marines alike. And it's not like I can talk to the officers. But I have to have some place to let it all out, and it's not like I can tell my wife. She wouldn't believe me even if I did tell her.

"The galaxy is going to die tomorrow."

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