

Things Not Forgotten

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Things Not Forgotten

by [Beatrice Otter](#)

Summary

Sometimes even Spock breaks Starfleet's rules on classified information. This is one of them.

Notes

Written for: The 2013 treknovelfest

Prompt: Spock telling his wife about Zar. (Yesterday's Son/Time for Yesterday) by A.C. Crispin)

AN: Sorry it's so late! November-December is one of the busiest times of the year, and most of my fannish energy in those months goes to Yuletide. And then I got distracted by other things. But here it is, eventually.

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

Spock was contemplating the possibilities—and difficulties—inherent in the current relations between Coridan and its neighbors, in preparation for his participation in the upcoming summit. He had thoroughly studied his briefing material, and come to the conclusion that recent tactics used by the Federation in that area were suboptimal and perhaps even counterproductive. As he was not a specialist in this part of space and would only be in the area for a short while, affecting long-term change would be a notable challenge.

He would have been much more productive if his concentration were at its usual superb height.

"I can feel you staring at me, Spock," Saavik said without turning around.

Spock did *not* startle at being found out. "I find the curves of your form aesthetically pleasing."

Saavik lifted her head from her own work, and while her face remained as still as ever, a ghost of amused pleasure danced along their bond. "I had deduced that, yes, given the increased percentage of time you have spent watching me over the last few months."

"I confess I do not see the logic in my assignment to this conference," Spock said. "I will hardly be there long enough to make a difference to the outcome. It is therefore a waste of my time and the Federation's resources." His time would be far better spent at home, just now.

"I believe Ambassador Garrghela is hoping to persuade you to remain on with the team and accept an extended assignment," Saavik said.

"Indeed?" Spock said. Although his wife was a Starfleet officer while he himself was now in the diplomatic corps, she knew the ambassador in question, while he had never met the woman. "I find that unlikely; she is aware of recent developments and my request for restricted duties for the time being."

"Garrghela is a Wishtanr," Saavik said. "They don't pair bond, and males have little to do with child-rearing. She may not fully understand your wish to be present for the birth and childhood of your first child."

Spock cocked his head. "I see."

Saavik narrowed her eyes, as she studied him; perhaps she felt something through the bond, or perhaps she merely read his face with the ease of long practice. Their marriage was, in the grand scheme of things, fairly new, but they had been friends for many years.

She should know. It would doubtless affect his relationship with their child. "Will you have time free this evening?" She was attempting to take care of as many things as possible now, before the birth, so that her recovery and bonding period with the child would be unimpeded.

They had not had many evenings to spend together recently, and he did not wish for either of them to be distracted for this conversation.

"Yes," she replied. "Provided I work efficiently this afternoon."

Spock nodded, and turned back to his own reports.

Dinner that evening was pleasant, though a human would probably not have found it so. The traditional silence at mealtimes allowed and encouraged Vulcan families—mated pairs in particular—to focus on and strengthen the mental ties that bound them. So Saavik knew, as they ate and then cleaned up, that he had something important to share, but that he did not anticipate it requiring action on her part. He could feel her curiosity, speculation sliding through her mind as she added the scraps to the compost pile and put the left-over portions in the cooler. But she kept to the silence, confining her questions for later. Saavik was often impatient with Vulcan traditions, but this one she embraced more than he did himself. Still, it was no hardship to lose himself in the shape of his wife's mind as he scoured the dishes.

Tonight they did not linger in the silence of their minds, once their tasks were completed. With a mental nudge that a human would have labeled "affectionate," Saavik's mind withdrew its focus on their bond, returning her full attention to the physical world. "I have not often felt guilt from you, husband, nor pride. Yet now I sense both at once."

Spock tilted his head. "The guilt is over actions long since taken, the consequences over; but the story of them is a long one, requiring much explanation. I would prefer the study to the kitchen for this discussion."

The study was a large enough for two desks and a work-table with comfortable chairs around it. There was a couch along one wall, and a large screen on the wall opposite it. The room was decorated in warm golds and browns, with art from both Vulcan and Earth on three walls. Spock assisted Saavik to a seat on the couch; the changes to her center of gravity made navigation difficult at times. Spock joined her, calling up certain of his personal files on his PADD.

"When I was serving on the *Enterprise*, during her first five-year mission, we found a planet called Sarpeidon which was about to be destroyed by its sun, Beta Niobe," he said. "Although the inhabitants of Sarpeidon did not have warp drive, they were quite technologically advanced; we attempted to make contact, to warn them of their fate and perhaps assist in an evacuation. But we were too late; the planet was abandoned. They had used a time machine called an Atavachron to save their population by going back in their planet's timeline. While we were scanning their records for our own preservation, Doctor McCoy and I were accidentally transported back in time several thousand years."

Saavik raised an eyebrow. "To a time before the Reformation? How did you handle it?"

Spock shook his head. "Not well. I had not previously realized the extent to which I was affected by the subconscious ethnic telepathic links which all Vulcans share. I do not believe anyone was; travel between time periods is really the only way to gauge such matters. When the general background "hum" that one does not consciously "hear" changes so dramatically in such a short time—the effect was greater than I could anticipate, and greater than I was capable of admitting at the time."

"I had wondered how Starfleet—how anyone—had come to realize that time travel posed special problems for Vulcans," Saavik said. Spock had made sure that the lessons learned from his experiences were added to Starfleet time-travel protocols. "I should have known that you and the *Enterprise* had something to do with it. No other Starfleet vessel—certainly no other Vulcans—have had as much experience with time travel as you have had."

"Probably, yes," Spock said. "Though I will point out that several of my experiences with time travel are quite highly classified and thus not part of the public record. It *is* possible, however unlikely, that there are others with as much or more direct personal experience, who have simply had their experiences kept secret."

"Classified information wreaks such havoc with calculation of probabilities," Saavik said. She sent a mixture of annoyance and amusement over their bond. She knew as well as he did that secrecy was sometimes necessary, however much it might rankle.

"It actually did not take more than a few days for us to be rescued and returned to our proper time," Spock said. "But during that time, we were given shelter and food by a Sarpeidon woman named Zarabeth who had been exiled alone to that time. She could not come back with us because her exile was intended to be permanent; coming back through the portal would kill her."

Saavik considered him, and Spock wondered what she could sense over the bond. "You spent time in the far past, with all the savagery and impulsivity of our ancestors whispering in your subconscious. You mention a woman by name. And you have hinted about a child. You could not have been there long enough to learn that Zarabeth conceived; and you could not have returned after the time machine was destroyed by the supernova. How did you find out she had borne your child?"

Spock sighed. He was grateful she was not pushing for details; it was an incident he seldom thought of, and never without self-censure. "We had downloaded as much as we could from Sarpeidon's computer banks. Some time later, an ensign who was studying them came to me with an image of a cave painting from those data banks. The painting was of a Vulcan adolescent boy, and it was indeed from Zarabeth's time and location." He touched a key on his PADD, and Zar's self-portrait from the cave appeared on the screen. Spock studied it; he had so few images of Zar, every one was precious. But they could never be publicly displayed without questions following that Spock could not answer.

"Quite a shock," Saavik said. Spock could not tell if she was speaking of his reaction at the time, or hers now.

"Yes," Spock said. "I focused immediately on what my duty must be: to retrieve the child and Zarabeth if at all possible. I knew of a highly-classified time-travel device that *Enterprise* had encountered in its travels, and T'Pol was able to get me permission to use it. Captain Kirk, Doctor McCoy and I took leave and used the device to travel back in time. But the device is usually not exact, and we missed the mark by a few years. The child was almost thirty, and Zarabeth had been dead for years. It was ... quite a difficult situation, and I did not handle it well. His name was Zar; he was an adult, close to me in age, and I had little idea of what to do with him. On his side, he did not understand Vulcan emotional disciplines, and there was quite a cultural gap."

"When we first met I was a child, and we had quite a cultural gap ourselves," Saavik pointed out. "And he could not possibly have had less understanding of Vulcan disciplines than I. Yet you did quite well with me." Saavik had been born and lived her early years as a Romulan prisoner, surviving on her own without any adult of any species. After she had been rescued, Spock had taken her under his wing and helped her become civilized enough to go to school; he had remained a mentor throughout her adolescence and her early years in Starfleet, when their relationship had shifted to that of dear friends. Decades later, it had become more. They were still friends, but they had become lovers and spouses, too. It would not have been possible had Spock been as clueless with Saavik as he had been with Zar.

"That was some years later," Spock pointed out. "I had had time to grow and mature, and to contemplate how I might have handled things better."

"And you had already made your mistakes," Saavik said. "I see I owe him a debt. What happened to him?"

"He was on the Enterprise for a few weeks," Spock said. He changed the picture to one taken during Zar's first time on the board. "Our relationship was ... rocky. He was closer with Jim and Leonard than he was with me. And he missed his home. His mother had taught him what she could of math and science and art, but he had much to learn. He had grown up making flint knives and spearpoints; he could see no place for himself in a world of starships. And I could not give him the affection he craved. There was an incident at the time machine that required Enterprise to return. Zar was able to help, but he decided to return to Sarpeidon's past. Not to the ice age when he had been alone, but to a slightly later period when art and technology were beginning to flourish. He took with him a tricorder and various scientific and technological history files. I barely had time to say good-bye before he was gone." Spock looked at the image of his son. Speculation was pointless in this case, but Spock had never been able to prevent it. If he had been a better father, would Zar still have gone back in time? And would that have been better or worse for him?

Saavik brushed a hand against his. "I grieve with thee." Through their bond, he could feel it: support without pressure, grief that allowed him space for his own.

"I did see him once more," Spock said. "The time-travel device we used was not precisely a device; it was a living machine, and Zar had been able to communicate telepathically with it. When the device malfunctioned, we needed him to make contact with it to determine what might be done. So we brought him back, and he was instrumental in solving the problem. Our relationship was much easier that time, but he had a kingdom to lead and a wife he loved." He brought up an image of Zar and Wynn on their wedding day. Concealing the tricorder and setting it to record had been difficult, given how suspicious Wynn's people had been, but well worth it; Spock had always regretted that he had not thought to bring a smaller camera along.

"And so you lost him again," Saavik said. "Did Zar and his wife have children?"

Spock nodded. "Yes," he said, bringing up pictures from the Guardian of Forever. "Three girls and a boy. I do not know their names."

"If ever I meet them, I shall ask," Saavik said, shifting around on the couch to find a different position. The new position entailed leaning her upper body over Spock, but he did not mind the intrusion.

"*That* is highly unlikely," Spock said.

"The whole chain of events is highly unlikely," Saavik said. "The first incident which threw you back in time and resulted in Zar's conception was within the realm of possibility for a Starfleet officer, if only barely so. That you were then able to travel to the past on *two* separate occasions to meet Zar—and that he just happened to be the person you needed to communicate with the time travel device—is beyond calculation. This is but one more proof of what I have always known: that the laws of probability become less probable around Enterprise officers. I only served aboard her for a brief time, so perhaps it will not work for me; in any case, I would not rule out the possibility that I, too, might have enough of that 'magic' to lead to a meeting with my stepson or his family."

Spock raised an eyebrow at the word 'magic'. "If you do, give him my love," he said. When first he met Zar, he could not have said it aloud.

"I will," Saavik said. She squeezed his hand. "Now that I know of Zar, you can display his picture here in our home," she said. "He should be here, even if he cannot be here in person."

"I would like that," Spock said. His free hand crept to Saavik's belly to see if he could feel the fetus moving. "I have always known how much of Zar's life I missed," he said. "But I know it so much more clearly, now, than I ever did before."

"You could still tell the Diplomatic Corps that you are refusing all offworld assignments for the duration of my pregnancy," Saavik said.

Spock was silent for a while, considering. Sarek would no doubt protest, as would Spock's superiors, but they would allow it. "I think I shall."

End Notes

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