

'Cross the River

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Summary

Spock reflects on a memory of his mother.

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He did not know why the memory came, unbidden, but he welcomed it anyway.

Truthfully, he could likely trace back through the thought processes that led to it, but as he picked up his freshly laundered uniforms from the ship's laundry on Deck 8, he just focused on the memory itself. Later, perhaps, he could go back and follow the paths that led to it.

She was kneeling in the kitchen, humming, in a beam of screened sunlight from the window. In her hands was a delicate and ancient piece of fabric, which she carefully washed in an old bucket. The soap suds sloshed over the sides, but she didn't seem bothered by the fact that she would later have to mop it up.

He had wondered then why she simply didn't take more care to not slosh soapy water over the sides of the bucket, in order to save herself the later effort of mopping it up again.

The suds were iridescent in even the screened light, and the tune she was humming was human in origin, though he didn't know the name or the composer. He had been checking through the code of a program he had been working on, line by line, but every once in a while he paused to watch his mother washing delicate and ancient materials by hand.

He had never asked her why.

They had a perfectly functional sonic-laundry unit. She used it on nearly all of the clothing in the house; it was perfectly safe for the fabrics, and would never fade the colors. Nonetheless, once every so often, she would take certain pieces that he later understood were heirlooms, and wash them by hand in a bucket of water.

It had been many years later, when he had more contact with humanity, that he had come across a painting on a trip to a museum. He had thought, perhaps, that he would understand humanity better if he looked more closely at their culture.

The painting was of a woman, kneeling in sunlight, washing clothes. Her hair was pinned under a bonnet; her apron was damp. And even as he went through the details; the brush strokes, the artistry, the use of color and light and contrast, he could imagine for only a moment that he could hear his mother humming.

Many years later, he walked into the quarters which were as arid and red as the world he had once called home, and put his uniforms away. And he remembered.

Spock had never asked her why.

Perhaps now, however, in some way he understood.

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