

## Scotty's Birthday Challenge

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/709) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/709>.

Rating:	<a href="#">General Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Star Trek: Multiple Series</a>
Character:	<a href="#">Montgomery "Scotty" Scott</a> , <a href="#">Guinan</a> , <a href="#">Ensemble Cast - Multiple</a> , <a href="#">Leonard "Bones" McCoy</a>
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of <a href="#">RBS Writing Challenge Entries</a>
Stats:	Published: 2023-07-23 Words: 3,079 Chapters: 1/1

## Scotty's Birthday Challenge

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### Summary

This story was written as an entry for the July/August 2023 challenge on Trek BBS:

"The writing challenge theme is: Contest. Any Star Trek series, era, canon, non-canon, ships, crews or characters welcome."

### Notes

Special thanks to:

- + Hawku for lending me Qu from the Phoenix-X series
- + Will the Serious for lending me Lushas from the Vulcan series
- + Gibraltar for lending me Glal from the Reykjavik series
- + BountyTrek for lending me Sunek from the Bounty Trek series

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### Star Trek BBS

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"Q!!!" exclaimed Guinan. "What are you doing here in Ten Forward?"

"You too? It's not Q, it's Qu," the junior demi-divine prankster responded with exasperation. "Same pronunciation, different spelling."

"I know how your name is spelled," Guinan retorted. "It's not my fault - it's that damned Autocorrect. It keeps changing my name to Guinean. Everything gets spelled correctly around here - all wrong."

"Cue Qu from the Q Queue!" came a voice from the other side of the bar. Despite the written dialogue providing almost no opportunity for it,

the thick Scottish brogue came through clearly as a red-shirted, dark-haired engineer emerged from the darkness.

“Montgomery Scott?” Guinan asked. “The last time I saw you, you were an old man.”

“Aye, lassie, gey auld indeed. It's mah 144th birthday 'n' ah wanted something special fur it. Ah tried summoning a demon juist tae break th' monotony 'n' git this fellow instead.”

Guinan squinted a moment at the miraculously rejuvenated engineer, then turned to Qu: “What did he say?”

“Not a clue,” Q's slightly less experienced but more phoneme-endowed doppelgänger responded. “Don't worry, the writer is using an online English-to-Scots translator. He'll get tired of it after a while and Scotty will become more comprehensible.”

Montgomery Scott took another breath for another burst of English-to-Scottish-Slang computer-translated exposition: “Ye see, ah asked me laddie 'ere tae gather th' greatest luses throo'oot a' th' maybe aye federations sae we cuid hae a wee gam. A gam o' heroes. A gam o' endurance. A gam o' wits. A gam o' strategy... 'n' fur sic a tourney ah hud tae be fit, fightin' trim.”

Guinan and Qu looked at each other again. “You're the great listener,” said Qu.

“And you're the djinn granting his wish. Surely you know what he asked you for...”

Qu shrugged again. “He had a wish. I decided to grant it. I didn't have to understand it. That's actually part of the fun.”

Guinan rolled her eyes. “Can't you just... wiggle your nose or something and magically understand him?”

Qu snapped his fingers a few times, then even tried wiggling his nose. “It seems I have temporarily lost my powers. Part of the game, I suppose.”

“So let's get this game started!” came a big, growling voice. A bear with a purple Mohawk, matching purple goatee and dark sunglasses emerged from the darkness.

“A bear? wha let a bear in 'ere?”

“IRA Bear,” the ursine corrected.

“You mean like the producer?” asked a lovely, scantily-clad andorian woman.

“Now that's more like it,” said Scott, with a lingering appreciative gander toward the svelte andorian.

“Nope,” IRA Bear replied. “Iconian Republican Army. I've been out of work for a while.”

“Who are you?” Guinan asked of the newest, bluest addition. “And why can I understand him, now?” she added, gesturing at the suddenly lucid Scotsman.

IRA Bear answered. “The writer had too many windows open and the Scottish Slang translator was taking up too much memory. The andorian is **Lushas**, borrowed from the **Vulcan** series by **Will the Serious**.”

“Can't we just get on with this?” asked Garrick, with some exasperation. “So many introductions... Speaking of which, who's the guy with the tusks?”

“That would be **Commander Glal**, Commodore Trujillo's tellarite sidekick from **Gibraltar's Reykjavik** series,” Chancellor Martok responded with a hearty laugh. “And here we have **Sunek**, the laughing vulcan from **BountyTrek's** eponymous work, Ensign Beckett Mariner from **Lower Decks** and the obligatory, dark-hooded stranger over there in the cloak. Now let's get started!”

“Started with what?” **Qu** asked. “Oh, by the way, full disclosure, the writer borrowed me from **Hawku's Phoenix-X** series....”

“Hello,” said Scotty, “This is a bar. We are all famous luses. A drinking contest, of course!”

“And we start with bloodwine from my personal stock!” Martok announced.

“I'm not sure I have...” Guinan started... “Wait...” She pulled several flask-like bottles from under the bar.

“House rules,” said Scotty. “We ask for it, you've got it.” He winked at Guinan. “And bloodwine is a perfect start. Nice and salty. Make us all thirsty.”

“Objection!” the sarcastic vulcan objected. Sunek gestured at Mariner. “How can a cartoon compete in a drinking competition?”

“Compete? No... I'm going to win! I always win!” Mariner grabbed a bottle of bloodwine, which instantly became a cartoon bottle with cartoon bloodwine when she grasped it. And she became the first to drink, which she followed with a wild whoop.

Lushas gestured toward Mariner with her bottle of bloodwine. “She's not a bad girl. She's just drawn that way.”

Commander Glal raised his bottle. "Here's to imaginary, two-dimensional women with gigantic egos and very real thirst!" At that everyone quickly downed their bottles.

"And in honor of our absent host," said Qu, displaying a bottle and turning it so that everyone could read the label, "United Federation of Planets Old Vine Zinfandel from Chateau Picard, vintage 2016... Almost as old as I am!"

"Here's to starship captains who abandon their posts to grow little round fruit for others to drown their sorrows in," Glal toasted. "Down the hatch!!"

"Wait," said Guinan. "You're supposed to sniff..." She sighed as the drinkers lifted their wine glasses and quaffed the expensive, vintage wine - most quaffing the entire glass-full in a single quaff. Guinan was a good judge of drinkers and could tell this group was just getting warmed up.

IRA Bear yawned widely and loudly, gathering everyone's attention. "Time to spice it up a little... with... Beetle Juice!"

"Beetle Juice?" asked Lushas.

"Beetle Juice!" enthused Glal.

Guinan dutifully poured out large cups of beetle juice for everyone in the room.

"Eeewwww," complained Mariner. "What is crawling around in it?"

Martok replied with a hearty laugh. "Time beetles. Bite into them and they make you lose time..."

"Here's to the beasts of the wood and their creepy, beastly, insect-ridden concoctions!" Glal chortled. He started to down the drink, then slowed down and began to savor it. "Wow... not bad at all. Really very sweet. Especially the beetles."

"Far too sweet," said Garrik, "Time for a healthy serving of kanar..."

A few of the contestants groaned, including the otherwise irrepressible Sunek. "Alcohol doesn't affect vulcans, so I've got this contest in the bag. But I would almost consider forfeiting the game just to skip this nasty stuff." He held up the glass of thick, gooey black liquid and made a face.

Scotty and Mariner exchanged significant glances.

"Here's to lugubrious spoonheads and their crude, oozing poisons," Glal toasted, then tossed back the kanar and gulped it down as quickly as possible, suppressing his gag reflex more successfully than most of the others in the room. He shook his head and wagged his tusks. "And that will separate the men from the boys!" He bowed gallantly toward Lushas and Mariner.

Mariner glared at the tipsy tellarite. Lushas smiled, batted her eyelashes and antennae, and stepped out just so to emphasize her fantastic legs. Even Mariner had to stare. The alcohol might have turned into cartoon liquor in her hands, but it was definitely having an effect.

IRA Bear grumbled at the taste of the kanar. "This stuff really is horrible. I'm starting to regret inventing it..."

"Ah-Hah!" exclaimed Mariner. "I knew you were a stalking horse for that DS9 producer guy..."

"No, really," stammered IRA Bear. "I'm just a leftover extra from the Iconian Revolutionary War..." He yawned widely, laid down on the floor and curled up. "I'll never forgive them for rejecting that script. Best damn script I ever wrote... That kanar really is nasty," he grumbled, then fell sound asleep.

Sunek started laughing. "That kanar was so bad that he couldn't bear it!" He guffawed, then waited for everyone else to laugh. The sarcastic vulcan looked about at his silent companions who were just staring at him. "Get it? He couldn't BEAR it?"

Silence.

Somebody coughed.

"Andorian ale, please," Lushas asked. This request was met with applause.

"Now there's a good choice!" Scotty enthused. "Wash the taste of that black slime down a little."

"Now you've hurt my feelings," Garrik said.

Lushas brushed her fingertips down Garrik's chest and handed him a glass of the sky blue ale, bringing a smile to the cardassian tailor's face.

“And here’s to smashing blue women with healing fingers and tasty blue liquor!” Glal toasted. The tellarite was beginning to slur his words a little.

Qu sat down in a chair. The half finished glass of andorian ale dropped from his hand and shattered on the floor. “I’ve never been drunk before...” he mused, then slid out of the chair to the floor, unconscious.

“Q down!” Sunek burred.

“It’s Qu and this isn’t funny!” said Guinan. “Drinking until you pass out - alcohol poisoning... toxic shock... This Qu needs a doctor!”

Sunek gave Guinan a puzzled look. Garrik was standing next to the puzzled, bemused vulcan: “It’s Qu, not Q. Same pronunciation - different spelling.”

“Ah,” Sunek replied quietly. “That makes perfect sense...” He dug in one of his pointed ears with his pinky finger.

“Rules of the game, lassie,” Scotty offered. “No contestant will come out of this game with anything worse than a splitting hangover. Which they will have earned honestly!” A few drunken cheers followed that statement.

“Well, at least move the fallen out of the way of traffic so they don’t get trampled,” Guinan rejoined, then returned to the bar.

“My turn!” Mariner announced. “Saurian brandy!” Her suggestion was met with unanimous groans.

“There are no words for how foul that drink is!” Martok was also starting to sway a little. “Bring it on!!!”

“Here’s to klingon warriors who... go swimming... with big, scaly women... with battle lust in their... livers!” Glal was starting to have problems putting together coherent sentences.

The downing of the golden saurian brandy was followed with guffaws of disgust from all of the drinkers.

“Tastes like yesterday’s puke!” complained Lushas. She sashayed gracefully over to the couch that Martok and Sunek had laid Qu out on, then just as gracefully crumpled to the floor next to the comatose demi-deity, somehow managing to keep her private parts private, despite her skimpy clothing.

“And now for the coup-de-gras,” said Scotty. “Single-malt Scotch whisky from the lowlands of my homelands in the highlands.” The taste of this beverage was met with sighs of appreciation by all the remaining contestants.

Sunek held his fingers up in front of his face and ran his thumbs across them with a worried look. “I feel a tingling... I think it’s affecting me...” The sarcastic vulcan’s eyes slowly crossed and he would have toppled to the floor if Garrik and Martok hadn’t caught him.

“Who knew vulcans... were... so... heavy!” Garrik grunted as he helped Chancellor Martok carry the comatose vulcan to one of the couches. After lowering Sunek onto the couch, Garrik sat heavily on another couch. “Woah...” he managed, then lay down on his side. “I think I’m going to take a little nap.”

Martok threw his head back and laughed at the unconscious vulcan. “He couldn’t hold his liquor!” The elderly klingon chancellor found a chair, sat down heavily as his eyes crossed. He slumped out of the chair unconsciously.

Glal looked on in disbelief. “I didn’t think there was any drink in the Alpha Quadrant that could put down a vulcan.” The torn-up tellarite’s tusks were drooping.

“And you would be right, laddie,” said Scotty. “Not a single one. But when you blend saurian brandy and high quality Scotch together with a dose of kanar...”

“You get a chemical assault that only the human digestive tract can withstand,” finished the hooded stranger with a distinct drawl.

“Nighty night, brave warrior,” Mariner said as the drunken tellarite started to sway. She caught him and was easily able to lift him as he turned into a two-dimensional cartoon at her touch. Mariner deposited the two-dimensional Glal on another couch. He resumed his three-dimensional form as soon as she stepped away from him.

“Okay stranger,” drawled Mariner, mocking the hooded man’s accent. “It’s your turn.”

“Actually, sweetheart,” the stranger rejoined with a genuine drawl, “It’s yours. Everclear!”

Mariner was the least tipsy of the three remaining contestants, but one touch of the cartoon everclear to her cartoon lips put her down immediately.

“Pure grain alcohol. Doesn’t mix well with pigments,” the stranger drawled. “I’m taking you on your word that she’ll be all right in the morning.”

“She’s a series regular in a beloved animated franchise owned by Disney,” Scotty replied. “She’s not going anywhere.”

Both of the remaining contestants were startled when Mariner began to snore. There was no sound, only a cartoon bubble over her head featuring a running stream of the letter “z” in various fonts and sizes.

“Okay Guinan,” said Scotty. “You get to choose the tie-breaker.” He and the hooded stranger sat down heavily at the bar.

Guinan looked scandalized, then that expression was replaced with one of resignation. She pulled out a bottle with luminescent fluid in it that caused anything nearby that was white to glow brightly. “This is the only thing I have left.”

“Oooohh,” said the stranger.

“Ahhhhh,” said Scotty. “What is that?”

Guinan held the bottle up. “It’s...” She looked at it again in some confusion. The luminescent fluid made her teeth and the whites of her eyes glow in the darkness. “It’s...” She put three glasses on the bar and held up the bottle again before pouring from it. “It’s ultraviolet...”

“Wow,” said Guinan. The three fellow travelers had swallowed their drinks - although it seemed more like breathing that sweet, sweet midnight air from under the mountains.

“You can say that again for me, lassie,” said Scotty. His words seemed to twist in the air over the bar. That sweet, sweet midnight air from under the mountains.

The stranger ran his hand along the countertop of the bar. “I can feel... everything... It seems so smooth... But I can feel every tiny imperfection...” He looked up at Guinan. She could see piercing blue eyes under the stranger’s black cowl. Not black - midnight blue, she noticed for the first time. “I know every intoxicating substance ever catalogued in the Alpha Quadrant,” the stranger drawled. “But I’ve never encountered or even heard of anything like this... It’s like... That Sweet...”

“Sweet...” Scotty contributed.

“Midnight Air From Under the Mountains,” Guinan completed reading, having finally located the label on the bottle.

Scotty’s eyes filled with tears of wonder. “Now I understand it all. After all these years. It’s all so significant...” He looked into Guinan’s eyes, his voice thick with emotion. “Oh my beloved, how I’ve longed to see your face just one more time. How I’ve longed to kiss your lips just one more time...” He puckered up and leaned in to give Guinan a kiss, then slowly but inexorably, planted first his lips, then the side of his face onto the bar between them. Drooling. Snoring.

“One of the best men I’ve ever known,” said the hooded stranger. “The most fortunate of men. He’s been proclaimed dead at least three times and always comes back from the dead. Like some redshirt revenant on a rampage.”

Guinan was thrown into listening mode by the hooded stranger’s intensity. And the influence of That Sweet, Sweet Midnight Air From Under the Mountains.

“I was the best man at his wedding. He married the love of his life,” the stranger drawled on. “They had known each other for decades before they fell in love, and then they lived together for several more decades - right through to the end of her life. Old age. Comes for us all. But he just lived on...”

As the hooded stranger spoke, Guinan could see the spell wearing off, the brash young Scot becoming an old man as he slept. Something similar was happening to the hooded stranger.

“Never could hold his liquor,” said the man in the hood. Guinan was astounded at the change in his hands - now the desiccated hands of a very old man. “That’s because he never really was an alcoholic. He loves to drink, but he could always walk away from it at any moment.”

“But not you,” Guinan observed.

“Well, I haven’t had a drop in fifty years. I was due for one last binge,” the stranger drawled. “You see, I also married the love of my life..” The stranger removed his cowl and cloak to reveal a blue uniform underneath. “Two years later she took everything in the divorce. Took the whole damn planet. All I had left was my bones.” Dr. McCoy sighed heavily. “I suppose I’d better help these people.” He retrieved his medkit from his cloak.

“Should you be practicing medicine as drunk as you are?” Guinan asked.

McCoy stood up, stretched and patted his back. “Prosthetic liver. Prosthetic kidneys. They’ve already processed most of the alcohol out of my bloodstream and stored it. I’ll have to go drain them out and rinse them out soon. That’s not going to be pleasant.” He pulled a warbling salt-shaker and a hypospray out of his medkit and began administering medicine to the various sleeping contestants, starting with the inert, red-shirted engineer.

“This won’t do much more than soften the blow of their hangovers, but then that’s part of the rules of the game, isn’t it?”

After administering various mild analgesics to the various contestants, McCoy and Guinan finally arrived at the inert, two-dimensional Mariner.

“I don’t think your medicine will work on her,” Guinan fretted.

McCoy waved the warbling salt-shaker over the inert cartoon. Gave the device a puzzled look. Shook it (releasing a fine spray of salt and causing it to warble more loudly.) Then ran it over her again. He made an amused noise as the salt-shaker warbled at him. “Huh. She doesn’t seem to have a liver. Actually, she doesn’t have any internal organs. I suppose that makes sense... She’s two-dimensional. No place to put any internal organs.” McCoy observed. “What you see is what you get. But it looks like the everclear erased part of her lip and damaged her uniform.”

Guinan turned a disparaging look on the elderly doctor: “And how are you going to repair that, Doctor?”

McCoy arched an eyebrow, tilted his head, rubbed his chin and made a number of “hmmm” noises.

“Hmmm,” he said one more time. With feeling. He turned toward Guinan:

“Got any crayons?”

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