

Star Trek Enterprise: The Avatar

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Star Trek Enterprise: The Avatar

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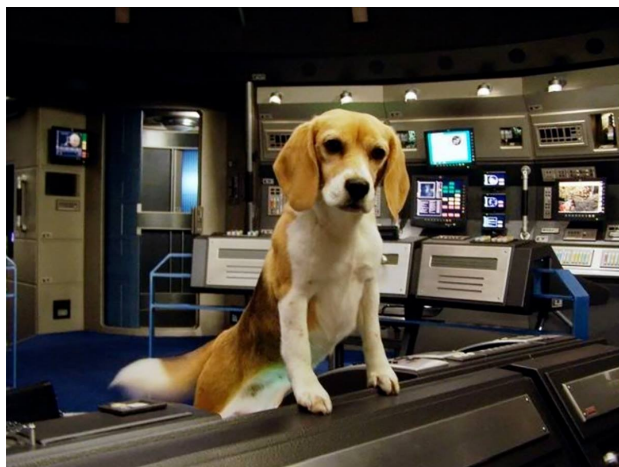
Summary

Porthos saves the day.

Notes

I am bringing this story across from the old Ad Astra site to make it more searchable.

This story was written in response to a challenge on the Trek BBS site for "Pets."



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“The last time I fixed one of these...” There was a thump and the U.S.S. Enterprise slid sideways.

“Trip?” asked Captain Jonathan Archer. He was standing near the door to his quarters, speaking into the comm system. When the ship lurched, it threw him off balance, but he maintained his footing. “Trip??” he asked again, then: “Woah” as he experienced a heavy color shift. For some reason the comm unit and the wall it was attached to was moving farther away and the floor was much too close. He only gradually realized that his face was wet because he was drooling. All the colors in his darkened, grey quarters were far too bright.

T'Pol was on the bridge, in the captain's chair. She saw the wave coming from behind her and to her left - saw it even though her eyes weren't oriented toward it. As the wave passed through the bridge, the bridge crew crumpled. T'Pol had to filter out the brightness that each of them experienced. It was hard enough for her to filter it out and only with a supreme effort she managed to stay in the captain's chair.

The U.S.S. Enterprise was drifting further into some sort of gravimetric field that was causing a problem with the functioning of the brains in the ship. And the warp field had collapsed. There was nothing wrong with the warp engines - they were still running - but the nature of this region of space resisted warping. And the only way to get the Enterprise free from this field would be to adjust the warp field. That's what Commander Tucker had been thinking just before he collapsed.

T'Pol could read each last coherent thought from each crewmember as if they were words hanging written in the air. This was fortunate - she had a good understanding of what needed to be done to reconfigure the warp engines to actually create a useful warp field in this region of space. And thanks to Ensign Travis Mayweather's attentive tracking, T'Pol knew which way to point the warp field to get the Enterprise clear.

There was only one problem - her mind could range all over the Enterprise - see things that any opened pair of eyes could see - read the last coherent thoughts in every mind. But T'Pol was paralyzed in the captain's chair. And everyone else, including Doctor Phlox, had collapsed and was equally helpless to move.

Dr. Phlox was still thinking - although much more slowly than T'Pol. "Other minds. Simpler minds..." It took T'Pol several minutes to figure it out. In part because Phlox was thinking very slowly and his mind was still slowing down. Each brain was taking the effects of this field differently.

Other brains! Dr. Phlox had a menagerie of very simple animals - none of which would be of any use. Their bodies were not up to the job - but more importantly they were all trapped in cages. As, unfortunately, was a sleeman Phlox had recently acquired - an animal not entirely unlike a spider monkey. But its relatively complex brain was also frozen by the effects of the gravimetric anomaly.

The same effect that had paralyzed his best friend had somehow made so many things clear to a small beagle. The first thing he needed to do was to get free from this room - which he had known how to do for a very long time. A quick jump and his nose to the pad. It was only now that he realized it had to be his nose and not his paw because the door-pad was heat-activated.

He was already on his way to engineering because that's where his best friend had wanted to go. Normally, he would be licking his best friend's face, but he could feel Captain Archer's desire to go to engineering so strongly that he headed there himself. The lift was just a short gallup down the hallway and the same nosebump was able to summon it. But the moment it arrived, he realized that it wouldn't take him anywhere unless he could speak the destination.

"Woof a WOOO wer..." "Weer woof wer wer..." "Weeer a woوو woوو..." "Woof woo Wer whine..." Porthos finally laid down on the floor and let out a long, pathetic, high-pitched whine. He didn't even know why he had to go to engineering or what he was going to do when he got there, but he had never been so frustrated that he was incapable of articulation in English.

The lift was going nowhere. The lift door wouldn't even close without a destination. He would definitely have gotten a piece of cheese for this performance. But the lift wasn't going to give him any cheese, either.

Something in his little doggie brain remembered the mocker. It was in Med Bay - always imitating the doctor's voice. Porthos had no idea how to get the strange little lizard-like creature to say "Engineering", but one thing at a time.

Fortunately, Captain Archer's quarters were on the same deck as Med Bay, which was just a quick gallup around the corner. Porthos panicked the lizardish mocker (and the rest of Dr. Phlox's menagerie - and had he known it, Dr. Phlox himself) by jumping up onto the table and pushing the little cage down onto the floor.

"Flurfburgle!!! Pibbit! Pibbit!! Pibbit! Flurf!! Flurf!!!" the mocker started shouting, in an astoundingly accurate imitation of Dr. Phlox's voice.

Not that Porthos really understood cursing, but it was just as well he didn't know Denobulan. Doctor Phlox, it appeared, had quite a filthy mouth when he thought no one was listening.

The mocker continued to treat the beagle to a choice selection of Denobulan expletives until Porthos managed to push the cage into the lift. But the moment he got the cage and himself into the lift, the mocker very clearly, and in a surprising imitation of Subcommander T'Pol's voice, said, "Engineering!"

As soon as the lift lurched into motion, the mocker subsided into a mild grumbling, consisting of perhaps less vulgar Denobulan cursing. When the lift stopped, the mocker said, once again in T'Pol's voice, "You have to take me to the main engineering console."

Porthos had less than no clue what Mocker T'Pol was talking about, but he gamely pushed the minuscule lizard's cage around Engineering until the lizard said, "Get me up on that thing."

It was an impossible request. Porthos couldn't carry the cage in his mouth. He finally settled for pushing the lizard's cage to the elevator and activating its control to take himself and the lizard to the 2nd floor, then pushing it across the floor until it could look down on the controls it wanted to see.

"I need you to turn the big green dial on that panel," said Mocker T'Pol.

Porthos had no idea what green meant - he couldn't distinguish green. But he made the heroic leap from the 2nd floor onto the panel and managed to scrabble a bare foothold on it.

"To your right," Mocker T'Pol tried.

It was fortunate that Captain Archer had trained Porthos to perform a large number of tricks, some of which required him to understand right from left, up from down and even as esoteric a concept as turning a dial. There was a significant amount of trial and error and it took several minutes before he was able to position the dial (and a number of other controls) to Mocker T'Pol's satisfaction.

The little beagle was exhausted when Mocker T'Pol asked him to take the cage to the bridge. But he was also a determined little doggie and with tremendous effort, managed to push the cage back into the lift, from which Mocker T'Pol could order it to the bridge.

T'Pol had been busy on the bridge while talking Porthos through the delicate manipulations of the warp field modeling system. She had to manage an astounding intellectual challenge (because the one brain on the Enterprise that she could not inhabit was that of Porthos) and at the same time gradually command her paralyzed neck muscles to move - less than a millimeter at a time - until she could see the helm station directly in front of the captain's chair. The physical effort just to move her head a tiny bit at a time had her dripping with sweat.

Her voice was still paralyzed, so she had to use the mocker to give Porthos instructions, but at least he could leave the cage on the lift.

Somehow, Porthos realized that his labors were about to bear fruit and he bounded with renewed energy to the helmsman's chair and put his front paws on the helm station. He had to use his nose for most of the controls as they were heat-activated. It was a bizarre trio - T'Pol's eyes seeing the controls - her voice coming from the somewhat lizard-like mocker that was still inside the lift, and the small beagle at the helm, setting course and engaging at warp 2.

It only took about 15 minutes for the U.S.S. Enterprise to break free of the gravimetric anomaly, but it took much longer for the effects to wear off.

Trip had a pounding headache as his head had smacked the wall rather hard on his way down. Jonathan Archer was pretty much unhurt, but grossed out by the enormous amount of his own drool that had gone from his mouth, onto the floor and onto the side of his face - and into his hair. T'Pol's neck muscles were screaming in agony from her effort to move her head while she was paralyzed.

Travis Mayweather had a terrible cramp in his left hamstring because his leg had folded in a weird position when he had slumped out of the helmsman's chair.

Lt. Hoshi Sato took it on herself to return the mocker to Med Bay and was scandalized at the stream of profanity (in Denobulan) that erupted from the upset little creature. When Dr. Phlox received the animal from her, he was mortified as its tirade continued unabated - it turned out Phlox was also capable of swearing in several other languages - a talent that the mocker had picked up from him and was only too eager to display.

Alas, poor Porthos could feel his overworked little doggie brain slowing down to a more normal amount of synaptic activity - things that had seemed so bright and clear to him moments ago were becoming more mystifying. He understood less and less of what he had accomplished. But one thought did remain quite clear in his little beagle brain:

He was a very good boy.

And someone owed him a big block of cheese.

The Avatar

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