

Star Trek (#07) – “Trek to Madworld”
Bantam Books | January 1979

Back Cover:

On an urgent mission of mercy to a dying colony, the USS Enterprise is diverted from its course by Enowil, an unpredictable exile in charge of a world gone mad. With a Klingon and a Romulan warship already under his control, Enowil puts Kirk and his crew through an agonizing, dangerous test of wits while the colonists of Epsilon Delta 4 await evacuation – or certain death....

Summary:

The Enterprise is preparing to leave orbit around Babel as soon as they pick up a pair of passengers: Kostas Spyroukis, the renowned planetary explorer who is personally responsible for locating more than thirty colonizable worlds; and his daughter Metika. The Enterprise has been assigned to transport them both back to their home on the colony planet Epsilon Delta 4 after their stay on Babel and their unsuccessful attempt to have their world's status changed from colony to full member of the Federation. Kirk is looking forward to the meeting as ever since he was a boy he enjoyed reading about Spyroukis's daring exploits. But when the famous explorer beams aboard the Enterprise, Captain Kirk and Doctor McCoy are taken aback by his irritability and haggard appearance.

Enroute to Epsilon Delta 4, Kostas falls ill and collapses. McCoy and Spock determine the cause is a combination of the argon in the planet's atmosphere and the star's native Zeton radiation. Alone, neither is harmful but in sufficient quantities together they make a slow but potent poison. Now it becomes a matter of urgency to save the 700 colonists before they too succumb to the same illness.

“Captain's log, Stardate 6189.0. I have sent through a Priority-1 call to Star Fleet Command, outlining the situation on colony world Epsilon Delta 4 as nearly as we can estimate it. Star Fleet acknowledges receipt of our hypotheses, and promises to get their best scientific teams to work on the problem at once. They will apprise me of the situation the instant they have any results. Meanwhile, the Enterprise continues on its original course for Epsilon Delta 4. I have taken the liberty of increasing our speed to Warp Factor 4; in the event Star Fleet confirms our worst fears, we will want to reach the colony in a hurry to begin the evacuation. My chief engineer is currently working on contingency plans to house the evacuees aboard the ship if and when that becomes necessary. Metika Spyroukis has not left her father's side since he was stricken. I believe I'll have the hardest task of all - telling her that Epsilon Delta 4 may have to be abandoned.”

Pursuant to orders, the Enterprise continues preparing for the inevitable by radioing ahead and explaining the situation to the local officials on the colony, who received the news with anger, dismay and confusion; however, when Metika Spyroukis explained further - including a detailed account of her father's death - they conceded the need for action and promised their utmost cooperation. Evacuation work at their end will begin immediately. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Placer (ship's personnel officer) will decide which of the crewmembers will remain behind on the planet to make more room aboard ship for the evacuees; Mister Scott has the task of readying the ship to carry nearly double its normal complement of people.

To shave even more time off their scheduled arrival, Kirk orders the Enterprise across a normally restricted portion of space; restricted because of its navigational hazards to small ships but not necessarily to those of the starship class. While crossing the region, however, the Enterprise suddenly finds itself seized by Enowil, an eccentric gnome-like being of incredible power, which brings the ship into another universe with its own strange sets of laws. Although the Enterprise is unable to function properly, they are aware that the Klingon star-cruiser *IKS Destructor* under the command of Kolvor, and the *ChR Talon* under the command of Actius Probical are also with them.

Offering anything in his power to give as a reward, Enowil has asked the three groups for help in solving what he refers to as a "private matter." If declined, Kirk can take his ship and leave but both the Romulans and the Klingons will have a chance to obtain what could be an unstoppable weapon. But if Kirk accepts, and stays, he is condemning the 700 colonists on Epsilon Delta 4 to a slow and painful death. Faced with the possibilities that either the Romulans or Klingons could change the galactic balance of power, Kirk chooses to stay. He does so wisely too, as the ship would not have reached the colony for a number of days yet and Enowil, who claims to be an Organian (kicked out because he was "too different") agrees to drop the Enterprise off in orbit of the colony should he retire.

So, Enowil proceeds to show the crew amazing and wondrous things his world has to offer. Anything he wants he can think of, but something is missing. The first person or group to determine exactly what it is will win! Enowil shows the crews an amazing zoo full of wondrous creatures from all corners of the galaxy. They're shown amazing sporting events in the largest arenas imaginable. They're taken to debating centers, logic testing centers, and even sexual gratification centers. It seems there is nothing this world is lacking.

The behind-the-scenes machinations of the group mind grow interesting as the Klingon Commander becomes protracted and looks for a way for his side to win. He knows that Kirk is on an important mission and his crew is also needed elsewhere, but the Romulans could stay however long it took to win the prize. In attempt to tip the scales, Kolvor approaches both the Romulan Commander and Captain Kirk about sabotaging the other. When both men turn him down, he sets his sights on young Metika Spyroukis, whose impatience with the whole affair is quite out in the open. She is receptive.

The plan is quite simple: she will transport aboard the Romulan ship and plant a bomb of Klingon design in their engine room. Although she balks at having to do the dirty work herself, Kolvor does manage to convince her: "I am providing the bomb." She accepts they quietly take leave from the group. She beams aboard the *Talon* with bomb in arms but is caught moments later. After a brief scuffle in the Romulan engine room, and where it looks like she may come out the victor, both Metika and the Romulan officer Marcus Claudius Breccio are whisked away and find themselves in an interesting situation all their own – they're not aboard either ship and seem to be trapped. And despite Metika's treachery, she and the Romulan agree to work together until they find a way out. At that point they go back to being enemies.

Meanwhile, Enowil continues his demonstrations as Kolvor returns to the group, salivating at the knowledge that any moment the *Talon* will explode. But the appointed time comes and goes without so much as a disturbance; then Probal receives a call from his ship and is alerted to the attempted murder, but says nothing. Kirk finally notices that Metika is missing and just as he's about to become overly concerned, she and the Romulan appear. At once the plot to sabotage the Romulans comes to light, shedding confusion amongst the groups. While Kirk and Probal mince words, Kolvor takes advantage and sneaks aboard his own ship to prepare another bomb... for the Enterprise. The group notices that the Klingon has retreated and quickly Kirk comes aboard; a frantic search ensues. Kirk finds the Klingon just as the bomb is armed, but since it is set on a time delay, there's time to deal with it. He quickly disarms Kolvor and takes the bomb to the transporter room whereby Scotty spreads its molecules across the universe.

It explodes with a comical "B-O-O-M" beside the Enterprise.

With the Enterprise safe and the treachery by the Klingons discovered, they are immediately disqualified; Enowil sends them away. And while the Romulans deal with Lieutenant Breccio and his attempt at covering up Metika's part in all this, McCoy comes up with exactly what Enowil was lacking: companionship with free will to give independent opinions. Metika and the Romulan are invited to stay (the two appear to have fallen in love) and as a reward, Kirk asks for a planet to be created to save the colonists to be named Spyrourkis.

"I wonder what you would have asked for, Mr. Spock, if the choice were up to you?"

"That's nonsense, Jim, " Dr. McCoy said. "Everyone knows Vulcans have no wishes or desires."

"On the contrary, Doctor," Spock said calmly. "I could always have wished for a little less sarcasm from those around me."

And for once, McCoy was at a loss for words.

{fin}