

Star Trek: TOS (#04) – “The Covenant of the Crown”
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Back Cover:

An Enterprise shuttle is forced to crash-land in a violent storm on the barren planet Sigma 1212. Spock, McCoy and Kailyn, the beautiful heir to the Shaddan throne, survive in the near disaster. Pursued by primitive hunters and a band of Klingon scouts, they must reach the mountain where the fabulous dynastic crown is hidden. With the help of Spock and McCoy, and her own fantastic mental powers, Kailyn must prove that she alone is the true heir to the throne. Should they fail, they will open the door for Klingon takeover of the whole quadrant.

Synopsis:

During a surprise birthday party for venerable Dr. McCoy, the Enterprise is mysteriously recalled to Starbase 22 so that Kirk can be given a new mission directly from the commanding Admiral. After speculating what the mission might be, Kirk and Spock meet with Admiral Harrington to discover that the mission stems directly from Kirk's early years in Star Fleet.

As a young Lt. Commander, Kirk was assigned as the Federation Advisor to King Stevvin of the planet Shad, a planet with valuable mineral deposits (Tridenite ore) and a vicious civil war. For over five centuries, the Dynasty of Shad had withstood all that opposed it, but now it was faced with revolt from within its very ruling Council. When the fighting escalates, Kirk convinces the ruling monarch to take his family and flee the conflict rather than stay; to voluntarily go into exile on a planet some parsecs away. But an absence to last no more than a few months has stretched over 18 years. With the war ended and the people once more requiring leadership, the years the King of Shad must journey back home to help the Shaddan Empire return to its former glory. The only person he trusts? James T. Kirk, now Captain of the Enterprise.

When the Enterprise reaches Orand, the planet of exile, the reunion between King Stevvin and Kirk is bittersweet, as the Queen he once knew has passed on and the King is quite elderly and frail, unable to assume the throne. Yet, only a person who has the ability to command *The Covenant of the Crown* will be acceptable to both sides. Kailyn, the King's beautiful daughter of age, will now assume the monarchy. In order for her to do so she must have the Crown of Shad, which was hidden away on Sigma 1212 many years ago. But it's not as simple as finding and wearing the crown; only the true ruler of Shad can wear the crown. If the heir of King Stevvin cannot accomplish this feat, then the rebel faction will take control and join the Klingon Empire, taking over 20 star systems with them! So the question that comes to bear is: can beautiful, young Kailyn perform the task and prove she is the true heir to the throne?

It's not an easy one with the IKA Nightwing, a K't'inga-class Klingon battle cruiser under the command of Kaidin, quietly on their trail. To circumvent the surveillance, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy and the Princess travel to the harsh world that hides the crown via shuttlecraft while the Enterprise proceeds on its way to Shad. All seems well until a spy on the King's staff alerts the Klingons who sends a scout to pursue the shuttle. The resulting attack on the Galileo III (and bad weather) forces the craft to crash-land upon the barren border world of Sigma 1212, whereby sixty-two percent of the planet's land-mass is too cold for human habitation. Now the three must survive Klingon scouts and natural forces to literally reclaim the Shaddan crown; else risk a Klingon territorial takeover of the entire quadrant!

"If all goes well, the shuttle crew will retrieve the Crown, rendezvous with the Enterprise, and allow us to complete our mission of reunification. I hope King Stevvin can somehow live long enough to see his plan come to a successful end."

While Spock fills the time by telling the story of the Army of Ten Thousand – a Vulcan story set during the Time of Awakening millennia ago on Vulcan whereby Surak confronted an army of 10,000 warriors alone and they stood down in the face of Surak's logic (said that this event was one of the defining events in the Awakening which laid the foundations of modern Vulcan society) - their journey takes an even more harrowing twist as the three come against native traders (who take them as slaves) and the Zanigret, a native specie of Sigma 1212 with long shaggy white fur, sharp fangs, three-toed claws, bearing a resemblance to an Earth bear. In addition, Kailyn is diagnosed with Choriocytosis, a virus that affects the ability of blood cells to carry oxygen to the body's organs (known to affect Humans and Vulcans), which weakens her physically.

On the Enterprise, the mission faces a serious turn of events when Captain Kirk must not only deal with the secret agent at large, but must tend to the pressing matter of the King's untimely death. This forces the Enterprise to detour to Zenna IV, a mining planet that relies upon the export of Tridenite ore for its economic wealth, to secure a sacred burial urn for the King's ashes. Nars, a member of the King's entourage, is able to secure one and ensures King Stevvin his place of honor, but at a cost. Kirk thinks he is the spy.

Through the process we come to understand the value of the Tridenite and the Klingon's involvement in this Quadrant. Tridenite is an energy ore far cleaner and safer than uranium or any other isotope used for providing power. Vast quantities of the ore exist on Shad, the only source in Quadrant J-221. Shad supplies the ore to twenty other planets in the region whose economies and industries depended on it. Years ago the Klingon Empire incited a civil war on Shad in an attempt to cut off the Tridenite supply and thus pave the way for the conquest of the quadrant.

Spock, McCoy and Kailyn's perilous journey finally takes them to the Kinarr Mountains; there they find Shirn O'tay, solemn keeper of the Crown of Shad. Through Shirin's careful preparations, he is able to take Kailyn to the Crown, but she alone must perform the final step - obtain mastery over the crown's three sacred jewels, symbols of the god Iyan in Shaddan faith.

Unless she can make it glow, the rebels will take over and join the Klingons. When Kailyn is unable to clear the naturally foggy crystals (due to self-doubt about her ability to bring her world together) and obtain command of the Crown, Shirin refuses to let her take it. Without the clearing of the jewels, the people will not follow her whether she wears the crown or not. Risking her life, Kailyn takes the hazardous journey back to the caverns for a second try and this time clears the crystals; by showing her will, Kailyn proves she is the rightful ruler of Shad. Of course, having the will to pull off the job is about 90% of any task and therefore demonstrates that she can bring her people together.

Spock, McCoy and Kailyn escape from Sigma 1212 aboard the Klingon scout craft sent to capture them; the Enterprise is able to fend off the Klingons to rescue them, the spy is captured (it's not Nars!), and Kailyn ascends the throne on Shad. Mission Success.

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