

Star Trek: TOS (#06) – “The Abode of Life”
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Back Cover:

On the planet Mercan, there are no stars, no moon, no outer space... The citizens of Mercan cannot conceive of worlds beyond their own. Their sun, Mercaniad, is prone to deadly, radioactive flare-ups, and the Mercans have organized their lives around the need to survive The Ordeal--until a strange visitor appears from out of nowhere... The USS Enterprise, badly crippled and in desperate need of repairs, must seek help from a people who cannot believe in its existence. Mercaniad is about to blow, and James Kirk faces an impossible choice: to attack the sun itself and save his ship and crew — or let a people live in peace, in the only world they know... the abode of life.

Summary:

The Enterprise is exploring strange gravitational anomalies along the edge of the galactic rim when a massive gravimetric disturbance hurls the ship into the void between the Sagittarius and Orion arms, crippling the engines and leaving the ship stranded over 125 years away from the nearest planet. As the crew make repairs and begin to limp their way back they detect a single star with a solitary class M planet in orbit. The world may just turn out to be their salvation but what they find is a people who believe that they are the sole life in the universe. When Kirk's landing party are captured by the Proctors and taken before the Guardians they discover that the world, Mercan, is deeply divided and on the verge of civil war. To make matters worse, the sun, Mercaniad, is prone to violent solar activity and is now beginning to enter an active phase which will flood the whole system with a hyper concentrated form of berthold radiation. Now Kirk must try to negotiate for the materials needed to repair the ship without breaking the Prime Directive or adding fuel to the fires of revolution that are already beginning to burn.

Captain's Log: Stardate 5064.4 :

What started out as a restful scientific mission has turned into one with some danger associated with it--as I should have suspected. Any time we venture into uncharted sectors of the Galaxy, we must anticipate and be prepared for the unexpected. In this case, we knew the gravitational anomalies were here, and they've been one of the basic reasons why the Federation hasn't established outposts, colonies, or Starbases across the interarm void in the Sagittarius Arm. We haven't encountered any further gravitational anomalies, but we'll proceed with care, approaching the inner edge of the Orion Arm gradually, taking data as we go. In a way, this possible hazard benefits my crew because they were beginning to become bored and restless with routine. Because this new hazard involves the Enterprise against the universe rather than against hostile life forms such as Klingons, Romulans, and others that we've encountered in the past, it's indeed a form of "relaxation" for us because it's different and allows us to pit our minds against the forces of nature rather than against the forces of alien life forms. Naturally, this is probably most

exciting to Mister Spock, who's been engaged in an almost compulsive display of continuing work with the sensors and the ship's computer, taking and evaluating data with what is for Spock an almost feverish intensity of effort. It's been more than ten watches since he's left his post on the Bridge. Doctor McCoy seems unworried about this continued activity on Spock's part, advising me that Vulcans often show the capability to work for long periods of time without what we would consider to be "rest," especially when the activity involves such logical and cerebral work as Spock is now engrossed in."

Captain's Log, supplemental:

We are limping back toward home, the Orion Arm of the Galaxy, at Warp Factor One. By random matrix techniques, Spock and the ship's computer have located us approximately three hundred sixty-five parsecs into the interarm void between the Orion and Sagittarius Arms at galactic coordinate Mark twenty-one-point-zero-one and a distance of approximately sixteen hundred parsecs from Starbase Four. This extreme distance, plus the presence of considerable interstellar dust along the galactic plane at the edge of the Orion Arm, explains Lieutenant Uhura's inability to raise Starbase Four on subspace radio. Commander Spock has managed to complete a rough realignment of the SINS, providing us with rudimentary navigational capability. Sensor probes out to the limit of range have located a few Population Two stars scattered through the interarm void, but we're not close enough to any of them to determine whether or not they possess planets.... And we're going to have to find a planet or a planetoid to orbit in order for Lieutenant Commander Scott to effect repairs to our second warp drive unit, which is completely inoperable. In fact, its repair will require materials that Scott will have to extract from a material source in order to fabricate parts. Without a second warp drive unit, we're doomed to crawl across the interarm void for perhaps years before we are able to get a distress signal to Federation facilities. On the other hand, the jump interrupted a data-dump transmission to Starbase Four, which means that Star Fleet Command knows the Enterprise is in trouble somewhere. We can only hope that a search-and-rescue mission will be dispatched, which is the reason why I've instructed Lieutenant Uhura to broadcast an assistance call on all Federation emergency frequencies. However, since we can't count on getting any help, we must do the best we can to save ourselves, because I will not abandon the Enterprise even if we happened to discover a habitable planet but were unable to repair our warp drive. We'll get home with our data...and I will do everything I can to ensure that it doesn't take forever to do it...."

Captain's Log: Stardate 5067.7:

The Enterprise has been in standard orbit around this planet for four watches. Sensor probes indicate the presence of a wide variety of life forms, but there's no visible transportation activity on the planetary surface below. There're no ships plying the oceans, no aircraft in the atmosphere, and no space-travel activity. Yet we see evidence of farms, villages, and even some cities-although I'd hesitate to call them "cities" as we know them. And there's no communications activity in the electromagnetic or subspace spectra. Something lives on this planet, some species that's advanced enough to develop transporter technology and the energy sources required to power such a system. We

haven't spotted the energy sources yet, either, although they might be passive solar types. Both Lieutenant Commander Scott and Commander Spock believe that any culture possessing transporter technology would be able to assist us in the repair of the warp drive unit. If not, there're obviously mineral resources that Scott could use for raw materials to complete his repairs because he reports that the warp drive unit can't be repaired without fabricating new components...and we don't have them aboard. Therefore, we're going to have to utilize the resources of this planet in one manner or another. However-and I specifically want to go on record in this regard-I'm faced with a dilemma. If there's intelligent life on this planet-as there indeed seems to be, although they're ignoring us in orbit-how are we going to make contact with them and permit Scott to repair our ship without violating the Prime Directive? On the other hand, we may find a sufficiently advanced culture here that we'll have to establish preliminary diplomatic relations between the Federation and their political organizations. This dilemma isn't firm. Spock's acquired enough data on the planet at this point to permit us to take an initial landing party down to its surface. Therefore, I'm beaming down with the initial landing party on the next orbit. This is the only way we can get the answers that we must have."

Captain's Log, recorded into a tricorder on Mercan, exact stardate unknown:

Orun has spent a long time telling us about Mercan. A lot of what he's said amounts to something similar to the fairy tales, legends, and religious stories that we tell our own children. They're fables and parables. But there isn't the wide variety of stories from Mercan that there are on Earth, because there's something totally unique here on Mercan: one single, planet-wide culture with little variety or variation caused by regional differences because the Mercans have had their transporter system now for generations. This has leveled out their planetary culture.... It's going to keep xeno-sociologists of the Federation busy for a long time to come...if our initial contact here doesn't disturb the culture so deeply that it destroys this unique discovery. I keep thinking of two cultures of Earth that were so completely destroyed that practically none of their heritage remains: the Mayas and the Carthaginians. None of us dare make a mistake, because if we do, two possibilities face us. Either we'll never get the cooperation of the Mercans to repair the Enterprise, in which case this data will sit here until another Federation starship discovers this world. Or we'll impact this culture so strongly that it'll shatter...and I'll have destroyed a people in order to save my command...."

Captain's Log, supplemental, stardate unknown:

Inputted on a tricorder somewhere on the Mercan city-island of Celerbitan. It's not easy to hide from Proctors. They seem to be everywhere in Celerbitan, passing the word to people and urging them to transport into the Keeps. The Keep for Celerbitan appears to be in the depths of a very large ocean called Sel Ethan directly south of this island chain. As a result of our uniforms and our different appearance, we're holed up in what appears to be a large warehouse full of pallets, boxes, and other packed goods in the foothills north of the main city and the Guardian Villa. Orun suggested that we obtain some Mercan clothing, but I vetoed this because there's no way that we can look like Mercans,

even in their simple loose-fitting clothing. We're just too short for anyone to mistake us for Mercans. It's time and effort that would have been wasted anyway, because even if we were taken as Mercans, the Proctors would try to herd us into the Keep...and there we'd certainly be discovered. We're well hidden now, and most of the local population of this area has been evacuated already. We have water in a stream that runs past this warehouse and through a semitropical forest outside, so we can hold on for quite some time with our emergency rations. However, Orun fully expects us to be contacted by the Technic before sunset tomorrow. As far as we know, the Proctors haven't followed us here. Our tricorders show no life-form activity within a kilometer or so that would indicate Proctor presence. Another supplemental report, sundown, one Mercan day before the Guardians predicted the start of the Ordeal. Looking at Mercaniad through the haze of the ocean air on the horizon, it becomes quite apparent that something is happening to the star. It has sun spots large enough to be seen with the naked eye. Even at the bottom of this atmosphere it's possible to see extensive prominences beginning to extend from the photosphere around its disc. I don't think anyone has watched the antics of a Class G irregular variable at this range before. I hope Mister Spock is getting copious data."

Captain's Log: Stardate 5076.8:

We can do nothing but wait for data from Spock's observations. I gave the Mercans a quick tour of the ship after leaving the Bridge. The Prime Directive has already been compromised, and there was the chance that I might learn something more about the level of sophistication of these isolated people. I'm encouraged, but the Mercans may be learning more about us than we are about them. Once Thallan discovered what Spock was doing, he and Othol began to cooperate with Spock, providing an unsuspected source of information on past Ordeals and the behavior of Mercaniad for the library computer to work on. I didn't suspect that Orun knew enough physics to be of assistance to Commander Scott...but he has. Orun is down in Engineering with Commander Scott, advising the Engineering Officer of the exact nature of the radiation from Mercaniad so that the shields can be selectively adjusted to reject the most intense parts of the spectrum, thus saving power. Delin's in Sick Bay working with McCoy in the laboratory, assisting him in a complete biological work-up of the Mercans, donating her own blood and biopsy tissue samples as well as working alongside Doctor McCoy in the analysis, thus saving him considerable time. These members of the Technic group on Mercan are intellectually brilliant people, and I wouldn't worry about the Prime Directive and about the possibility of bringing Mercan into the Federation if I were assured that all Mercans were of their quality of intellectual sophistication. These four are certainly our equals in many areas of science and technology, albeit sometimes from a totally different viewpoint and approach, as one might suspect from their isolation. However, I know that all Mercans aren't like these four Technics. Having dealt with Pallar and his Guardian group, I frankly face a problem that I don't know how to solve, much less even how to approach at this time. It appears that the Guardians won't give up their dogma about being the sole abode of life in the universe. When these four Technics get back to Mercan with their acquired knowledge, they may feel strong enough to attempt to overthrow the Guardians. If this is the case, I may have triggered a planetary civil war...and I must take full responsibility for having done so if it occurs. My big problem is Proctor Lenos, who

appears to be in a state of shock at the moment after seeing the Enterprise. In fact, my biggest problem may be the Proctorate led by Lenos and even Lenos himself. He is not a stupid person. He may well convince himself of the reality of the Enterprise and of the subtle flaws in the Code that he's charged with enforcing. If he does come around, which way will he go and which way will he be able to take the Proctorate? These must be considered as pure speculations inserted into the record merely to indicate the development of my own line of thinking as we proceed toward what appears to be an inevitable confrontation that will undoubtedly cause a drastic change in the culture of Mercan. I have insufficient data to take action here at this time. In fact, I have insufficient data to act at all until Mister Spock reports...."

Captain's Log: Stardate 5077.5:

Let the record show that it was the concept as well as the actions of Commander Spock, First Officer and Science Officer, to attempt to stabilize the irregular variable Class G star called Mercaniad by a triggering input of energy from two photon torpedoes. The chances of success were marginal, and the operation proceeded with my full authorization and with my full awareness of all of the possibilities, including those associated with the success of the venture. The able assistance and willful cooperation of three humanoid inhabitants of Mercan and members of their Technic group-Thallan, Othol, and Orun-were vital in the execution of this activity because they provided much of the long-term data on Mercaniad that was unavailable to Spock and the library computer. The behavior of Mercaniad during its flare-ups, locally termed the Ordeal by the Mercans, was also important data that was provided by the three Mercan experts. Although the activity was conceived and carried through by Spock, it was done with my full authority, and I accept full responsibility for whatever the consequences may be. A continuous watch on Mercaniad since the detonation of the photon torpedoes in its core has revealed that Spock's initial conclusions were correct. The star is rapidly stabilizing into what appears to be a regular Class G0 star with all the characteristics of stable Class G stars throughout our sector of the Galaxy. The output of hyper-Berthold Rays has diminished to practically zero; complete data on this heretofore unreported phenomenon is stored in the library computer for later analysis and interpretation by Federation stellar specialists. However, this stabilization of Mercaniad will undoubtedly result in the destabilization of its humanoid civilization. We have willfully destroyed an irregular astronomical occurrence upon which the stability of their culture was based. Under the circumstances, I had no alternative or option available to me that would have permitted me to save the Enterprise and her crew from certain destruction. Therefore, I took the responsibility upon myself to openly and willfully violate the Prime Directive and General Order Number One, realizing in advance that any stabilization of this star would alter the culture and life-style of the humanoid inhabitants of Mercan beyond any possibility of restitution. My course of action in the immediate future is not apparent to me at this time. I have aboard the Enterprise leaders of two of the three political and social groups of the Mercan culture: Prime Proctor Lenos and Technic leader Thallan. It therefore appears to me that I must attempt to convene and moderate a meeting between the Guardians, the Proctorate, and the Technic in hopes of helping them create for themselves a stable new order on the planet in the total absence of the major lever

possessed by the Guardians to maintain their position in the culture: the Mystery of the Ordeal, the Guardian ability to forecast with accuracy the flare-ups of Mercaniad. Mercaniad will no longer create the Ordeal because of our actions. Although I may have saved the Enterprise and her crew, I am forced to ask myself the question: for what have I saved her? The Mercan science and technology may certainly be up to the task of providing Lieutenant Commander Scott and the Engineering Division with the necessary support to repair the warp drive unit that's required to permit us to return to the Orion Arm and Federation Territory. But will the Mercans help us? Or will their energies instead have been diverted into a planet-wide civil war because of my actions and decisions?"

Captain's Log: Stardate 5079.3:

The plan of the meetings that was thrashed out between Mister Spock, Doctor McCoy, Mister Scott, and I may work after all. I'm very encouraged after our meeting with the four Mercan Technics...but I have to keep reminding myself that this is the easiest of the three Mercan groups we're going to meet. The Technic group will most certainly make my job easier, even though they're initially opposed to granting any position to the Guardians in the new arrangement; the Technic people aboard believe that the Guardians' role is no longer required and that the Technic can now assume that mantle of semipriesthood. But Thallan and the rest have to mull over what they saw and heard during the meeting...and they're not stupid people. They all took copious notes during our presentations, writing furiously in that script of theirs that appears so much like Arabic. Thallan wants to return to the surface, but I don't want to let any of them off the ship until we've met with the Guardians...which are going to be the toughest of the three groups to work with. I'm trying very hard not to play the conquistador role by leading these people in any direction. They've got to work out their differences themselves. None of us aboard knows enough about the Mercan civilization yet to force a viable arrangement on them that would work, much less endure long enough to prevent a planetary civil war. The only thing I insist I must do is to keep hammering away at them, if necessary, to compromise and come to an agreement. That is why these meetings will take place here aboard the Enterprise, where one disenchanted or stubborn faction can't go storming out of the conference to whip up that civil war. I won't let them off the ship to do it. I must make this work...or it will be a long time before Star Fleet has the opportunity to listen to this...."

Captain's Log: Stardate 5080.7:

In a few minutes, I'll beam down with a landing party to the island-city of Celerbitan and the Guardian Villa on the surface of Mercan, the Abode of Life. This is probably the most critical phase of our attempt to stabilize the civilization of Mercan. Our meeting with the Technic group led by Thallan revealed that their technology is well-advanced due to the copious amounts of iron, aluminum, and copper available on or near the surface of the planet, with high-quality lodes deep in the mantle, where the Mercans built their Keeps generations ago. These lodes and ore bodies have been relatively undisturbed because, without a large moon and tidal strains, Mercan is a tectonically stable planet with little

movement of its continental plates. Thus, it's been easy for the Mercans to develop the iron-based technology we find on nearly all Type M planets inhabited by humanoids. Although the Mercans seem to have forgotten a lot of the older technology that preceded the universal use of their traveler system, my Engineering Officer believes that the Technic possesses the necessary technology in metallurgy, materials science, and antimatter know-how to provide us with raw materials and finished parts built to Scott's specifications, even though the Mercans don't have antimatter warp drives yet. We shouldn't expect that they'd direct their technology toward star flight anyway. They've developed antimatter as a compact power source for their traveler system. In the course of talking with the Technic members, we learned that Mercan is also rich in the basic material for an antimatter energy system. The Mercans call it "vitaliar," but Scott says it's an alloy of several elements of the matter-antimatter system. There are also some low-quality dilithium crystals on the planet, but the Mercans never thought to use them in their antimatter systems because they had developed different but more complex techniques. The use of the Mercan dilithium crystals in our systems would not produce the efficiencies we require...but there're a lot of these low-quality dilithium crystals on Mercan if we wish to make some modifications to use them. Scott's looking into this now as an alternative if we need additional dilithium crystals for our return journey. We might be able to effect repairs here without the Guardians and without establishing a restabilized civilization on Mercan. But we'd save ourselves and leave a shambles behind. With the technology possessed by the Mercans, there might be nothing left when we got back...and I'm sure the Federation will want to establish diplomatic relations, if not offer outright Federation membership to these people. Mercan is in a critical location to support future Federation exploration and colonization of our treaty-permitted sector of the Galaxy in the Sagittarius Arm. In addition, it has valuable ore deposits; even the low-grade dilithium crystals are of value to commercial star ships that don't operate at the high warp speeds of Star Fleet vessels. Eventually, perhaps in less than a century, the Klingons are likely to work their way this far toward the center of the Galaxy. If we don't have Mercan in the Federation, I know the Klingons would indeed play the conquistador role...if they left anything at all except their own fleet base here. I want to put my thoughts on record before beaming down, because this is a critical operation and I want a record to remain, should something happen. But we're going down in force this time. Lieutenant Commander Scott will have the conn in my absence. My landing force will consist of Mister Spock, Doctor McCoy, Lieutenant Sulu, and seven of our most experienced security officers under Sulu's command. I intend to convince Pallar and the Guardians to beam up willingly to meet in the ship. If they won't agree to parley in the Enterprise, I have Prime Proctor Lenos as a hostage if I wish to use him as such. I'd rather not, since he appears to understand the situation now and is willing to confer, however reluctantly, with the Technic and the Guardians. If Pallar abandons Lenos, we'll get Pallar up here by force. We may have to stun a few Proctors or even some Guardians to do it. At this point, I'm not averse to using coercion in the form of physical force to bring the Guardians to conference. We've got too much to lose...."

Captain's Log: Stardate 5081.3:

All three groups are aboard the ship now, although they're still isolated from one another. We know they're discussing the new situation among themselves. Thallan's asked to beam down to Mercan to talk with the other leaders of the Technic group. I permitted him to go, accompanied by Orun and Sulu. Apparently Prime Proctor Lenos has absolute authority within the Proctorate to make whatever decisions he determines to be best, which is understandable in a paramilitary organization. The Guardian group has not asked to beam down for consultations with their organization. I was probably correct in picking the four Guardians that we beamed up; they're the true leaders and top people in the Guardian organization. I've asked each of the three groups to indicate to me when they're ready to meet with the other two. I haven't placed a time limit on this. However, if it drags out for more than several days, we'll begin applying pressure to hold the joint meeting. But I'd like to have each group work through their own position, using their own logic and their own intimate knowledge of their position in the Mercan culture. Spock advises me that this is the best way to proceed. He cites the history of several planets as precedents. Addendum here: I want this log to include a special commendation for both Lieutenant Commander Spock and Doctor Leonard McCoy, but for separate actions. Spock is to be commended for his bravery and behavior while gravely wounded in the right hand by a Proctor bullet; he was willing to continue to fight even though he was obviously in extreme pain and agony. On the other hand, Doctor McCoy is to be commended for the quick and professional action on his part in coming to Spock's aid under fire and for a marathon session of seven hours in surgery rebuilding Spock's right hand, a feat that required an unusual knowledge of Vulcan-human physiology and an extreme competency in surgery. Spock has been returned to duty, albeit with his right hand covered with plastiskin to accelerate healing. There's nothing to do now but wait for the Mercans to assimilate the data we presented to them concerning the Federation and the possible options available to them in reorganizing themselves. At the moment, time is not critical. However, should news of the stabilization of Mercaniad manage to leak from the Guardians still on the planet or from the ranks of the Technic, some of whom may have already detected it, we might be faced with a time-critical situation. I sincerely hope this doesn't happen. I'd rather that the reorganization conference here on the Enterprise proceed without the pressure of an impending civil war...."

Captain's Log: Stardate 5099.5:

It seems incredible that we've done it in ten short days. It took fifty-five delegates one hundred and twenty-two days to draft the Constitution of the United States of America in 1787...and even then it was an imperfect document that required continual alteration for centuries thereafter. And it took over a hundred people, accompanied by staffs totaling more than a thousand assistants, nearly two years to draft the Articles of Federation of the UFP on Babel. More years of work were needed to come up with the statutes for the Interplanetary Court of Justice and those regulating interplanetary commerce. But the twelve Mercans, assisted by four officers of Star Fleet Command, one yeoman, and the library computer of the USS Enterprise, have, in ten days, drafted what the Mercans proudly call the Enterprise Agreement. How good is it? How long will it last? I wish I knew. Unlike those who drafted the Constitution of the USA, we had the knowledge of

the known universe available instantaneously at our fingertips in the ship's computer memory banks. Unlike the delegates to the Babel Convention, there was only one planet with three power groups involved. Maybe this wasn't a hasty agreement after all. Maybe it will work. But the Mercans are going to have to find out for themselves because they're the ones who wrote the Enterprise Agreement, and they're the ones who agreed to abide by it. Scott, Spock, McCoy, and I acted only as advisers, providing the inputs the Mercans wanted from the history of the planets of the Federation. The Agreement isn't simple. After all, the Mercan culture isn't simple. In our short stay here, we haven't even started to unravel it, much less experience a great deal of it. For example, the Mercans possess highly developed entertainment arts, both passive and performing. They have an educational system, but we haven't had the chance to see it because we've been too busy; it must be a good system, because it trains their citizens well in a complex planet-wide culture tied together by the cheap and instantly available traveler system. Mercan is something like Earth might have been if travel had turned out to be as universal as communications there. The crux of the matter was going back to the roots of the system that had existed when we arrived here. I'll leave a lot of the analysis up to the Federation xeno-sociology and anthropology teams who will follow. But it's very simple and goes right back to the basic definition of a social organization, something we knew about on Earth for centuries but which was turned into a science when the first space colonies provided a means to test social systems in isolation. In any social organization, an individual relinquishes some basic rights in order to participate in the greater security of the group. This requires some modification of individual behavior, plus some means to coerce an unwilling individual into the proper mode of behavior. This requires laws, rules, regulations, and codes of behavior. I live under several every day and don't even bother to think about them. The Mercans have lived under similar conditions for as long as they can remember. When the Mercans realized that the end of the Ordeal would not require a complete change of social organization, but a modification of what already existed, it was relatively simple, according to my First Officer, Mister Spock, who has already analyzed the outcome to his logical satisfaction. Once the Ordeal was no longer a factor in Mercan life, none of the three groups was either a challenge or a threat to the other. The Guardians were just that: the guardians of the laws of Mercan. It was unfortunate that their remote ancestors, being the intelligentsia of the planet at the time, also discovered the Mysteries of Mercaniad that permitted them to predict the Ordeal. That grew out of proportion with respect to the real role of the Guardians; they are the ones who enact and interpret the rules of conduct between Mercans and their various institutions. Once the Guardians understood that, they became the de facto government of the Abode...as they really were all along. And under the provisions of the Agreement, they'll attempt to expand their ranks. They think they can do it by means of competitive examination once they've learned how our lawyers are trained and then admitted to the legal practice by examination. Well, we'll have to see how it works for the Mercans... The Proctorate, on the other hand, is the Mercan equivalent of the social organization that enforces the rules of social conduct. Elsewhere, they may be called the police, the military, the guard, or Star Fleet. There was not much need to change the Proctorate under the Enterprise Agreement because they already have their own procedure for selecting, training, and admitting new members. I have no reservations about the possibility of the Proctors taking over; in the first place, as Lenos admitted, they haven't

fought in a long time because the code duello takes care of most of the fighting urge of the Mercans of both sexes. (I don't think I mentioned the fact that the Mercan women, including Delin, carry sidearms as well, and that the Mercans protect their women but have no chivalrous code that we humans inherited from the Arabs.) I know why Lenos and his Proctors chose Spock to sit with them; like the Proctors, Spock is basically a very violent man who keeps his emotions under tight control and who doesn't like to fight...except during pon farr, when I personally know that Spock can be very violent indeed. And to some extent, I too understand the Proctors. The military/naval profession is a strange one because of the reluctance of its professional members to engage in the activities of the profession. The Technic, who thought they were the political saviors of the Abode, discovered when the chips were down they really didn't want the job because they were interested in things, not people. This isn't true of all the Technic members, because those who were the staunchest anti-Guardian Technics would probably have made better Guardians, even though they were rebels. The Technic was afraid of the Guardians who were afraid of the Technic. After all, the Technic was discovering things that didn't match the dogma of the Guardians; the Guardians were afraid that the Technic knowledge would unseat them as "keepers of the faith," so they tried to suppress the Technic. They were a threat to each other. In stabilizing Mercaniad and removing the Ordeal as a factor in Mercan life, we didn't realize at that time we were removing that threat. The Technic knows now that they're free to investigate anything they want to, but they also now realize that this freedom of inquiry carries with it the obligation to openly disseminate what they learn, especially to the Guardians, who, in turn, now realize that they must modify the rules and codes on the basis of new information from the Technic. I think it's stable. But I'm not sure. The Enterprise Agreement includes checks and balances, and one of the most important of these is the willingness of the Mercans to accept the Articles of Federation of the UFP. Now, at last, we can get busy putting the Enterprise into shape to return to the Orion Arm. But the best that I can do is look over Scott's shoulder and try to smooth out diplomatic problems that occur...."

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