

**Star Trek: TOS (#10) – “Web of the Romulans”**  
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Back Cover:

*Ravaged by a killer virus, the Romulans enter Canara, where the only antidote can be found. Desperate, they incite a victorious USS Enterprise attack on one of their vessels, but Kirk discovers their ruse. Meanwhile the central computer has fallen in love with him, severely crippling the Starship Enterprise. Somehow Kirk must overcome the lovesick computer and bring the antidote to the Romulans, before the galaxy crashes over the brink of war.*

Summary:

The Enterprise is on patrol near the Romulan Neutral Zone, responding to reports of increased Romulan activity on their side of the Zone, which has caused some alarm at Starfleet Command. While there's nothing specific to substantiate, scuttlebutt from traders and mercenaries alike dispel actions of a people whipped into a frenzy, but what over no one knows. The crew has just come off of a week-long shore leave at Starbase Eight and is rested and alert; however, there is one point of stress: a continued computer malfunction is hampering normal ship's operations. The computer programming consultant at Starbase was down with a severe cold and therefore unable to affect repairs. The malfunction is not considered serious enough to warrant restriction of the Enterprise's duty, but Kirk is concerned over the ability to handle an emergency situation with the computer in its present state. Despite his objections, the Enterprise proceeds along the edge of the Neutral Zone as ordered. When Kirk and company arrive, they find a lone cloaked Bird of Prey under the command of S'Talon, sitting in space. Taking the bait, Kirk decides to wait the ship out to see what its next move will be. That's exactly what the Romulans want.

Unbeknownst to the Federation, the Romulan Star Empire fall victim to a devastating virus (Myrruthesia) that threatens to annihilate their entire population. The only hope for a cure lies with a chemical compound derived from a grain (Gran) that grows only on the planet Canara. But there's a problem, for Canara lies inside Federation space. Fearing that the Federation would use the knowledge to destroy the Empire, desperate to survive and too proud to ask for help, the Romulans assemble a war fleet to take what they need, either by bargain or, if need be, by force.

As the story unfolds, we learn a great deal about the Romulan political system, the Praetor is the highest political figure and the position is currently being held by a greedy, self-serving individual. He sends one of the most loyal and effective Romulan commanders on what is a suicide mission into Federation space as nothing but a decoy and also calls back into service an aged commander whose loyalty to the Empire is greater than any personal animosity he has for the Praetor and his political machinations.

Little do the Romulans know that the Canarans are fiercely loyal to the Federation. When the Romulan bird of prey crosses into Federation territory, Kirk engages in a cat and mouse game with his enemy but comes under fire not from the Romulans, but from within -- the computer has fallen in love with Captain Kirk!

*"Spoooooock," Kirk said in a desperate, tiny voice.*

*"I am sorry Captain..."*

*"Look at it this way, Jim: she may be a machine, but she's all yours," McCoy chuckled.*

*"You did say you loved her, Captain." Spock's voice was innocent.*

Starfleet fears the worst when communications is lost to the Enterprise (they were aware of the computer situation but not the extent of its infatuation with Captain Kirk nor the lengths it may go to be with him and only him.) Starfleet sends a fleet of four starships - the Exeter, Farragut, Hood and Potemkin - under the command of Admiral Iota to investigate the Romulan threat and to determine if the Enterprise has indeed been lost. Admiral Iota turns out not to be the best candidate to command this small fleet, as he fervently believes that the Federation needs to eliminate the Romulans at all costs.

Back aboard ship, Kirk and crew are at a distinct disadvantage, as the computer continues to malfunction at an ever alarming rate. Eventually it will only accept orders from the Captain, virtually cutting off the rest of the crew from performing their duty. Kirk and company are able to regain access through auxiliary control, and not a moment too soon. The Romulan ship "Raptor" is quickly running out of fuel, shows itself and attacks the Enterprise. The battle is short however, and the Romulan Commander is invited aboard ship in an attempt to find out - once and for all - what the Romulans are steadfastly attempting to hide. After a brief, but fierce discussion, Kirk learns of the plague that affects only Vulcanoids (Romulans and Vulcans).

When Kirk and Spock learn that the Raptor is but a decoy, and that a Romulan fleet is already positioned at Canara, Kirk is quick to warn them: the Canara are a warrior-like race and are fiercely loyal to the Federation. They would destroy the entire crop of Gran than see it fall into Romulan hands. Better let the Enterprise act as a mediator to help keep the peace. S'Talon is taken aback but accepts the situation - he has no choice but to, his entire race is dying. To help smooth relations before arrival, Captain Kirk manages to regain use of his subspace radio and get word to Starfleet Command. But Admiral Iota hears nothing of it - he steams full-speed ahead, hell bent to wipe the Romulans off the face of the galactic map.

Through it all Kirk and S'Talon intervene with the authorities on Canara to obtain the Gran for the Romulans, but when Admiral Iota takes over the auxiliary control room of the starship Potemkin and attempts to attack the Romulans, tensions escalate. Kirk manages to work through Iota's own security system to convince him that the Romulans are not attacking the Federation, and Iota gives himself up. The invasion is stopped and an agreement is reached to provide the cure to the Romulans. The Enterprise once again saves the day.

*"Our work here is almost complete. Soon we will return home and the cooperation we have enjoyed will dissolve. We will be enemies with the Neutral Zone a wall between us and there will be little opportunity for personal feeling. James Kirk, not only are you and your crew directly responsible for stopping a war and keeping a civilization from decimation by disease, you have secured my position as well. I believe, Captain, you would make as valuable a friend as you are dangerous an enemy. Whatever circumstances may require of me, I remain in your debt... I will remember Captain." (S'Talon)*

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