

Star Trek: TOS (#11) – “Yesterday’s Son”
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Back Cover:

The Romulans attack the planet Gateway, where Federation scientists are studying the Guardian of Forever – the mysterious portal to the past. The starship Enterprise must protect the Guardian – or destroy it. But Spock has already used the portal to journey to the past. On the planet Sarpeidon, 5,000 years ago, Spock knew a beautiful, primitive woman. Now he has gone back to meet his son!

Summary:

One of the books that best manage to bring the original Star Trek series to life is *Yesterday’s Son*, a sequel to the classic Trek episode “All Our Yesterdays”. In the episode, Dr. McCoy and Mr. Spock become trapped together in the ice-cold prehistoric past of the planet Sarpeidon after accidentally activating a time machine called the Atavicron. There they meet Zarabeth, a woman who has escaped her planet’s destruction by fleeing 5,000 years into its past. During their brief time together, Spock reverts to the mannerisms and emotions that his people practiced eons ago, somehow changed by the journey he undertook and the time within he occupies and falls in love with Zarabeth.

In *Yesterday’s Son*, we learn just how far that love affair went.

The Enterprise is uneventfully charting sector 70.2 and McCoy and Spock are enjoying a game of chess. While studying the archaeological records of the now-destroyed planet Sarpeidon (saved by the Enterprise just before the planet was destroyed in a solar explosion), a scholar aboard the Enterprise finds pictures of an ice-age cave painting depicting an individual with pointed ears. After bringing this to Spock's attention, Spock realizes that his involvement with Zarabeth when he and McCoy were accidentally stranded in the planet's ice age has resulted in the birth of a child.

"As I sit in the solitude of my cabin, I know I must begin considering precisely what I should do about the face on the wall of the cave." (Spock, contemplating about the future of his distant son in ice-age Sarpeidon.)

Despite the fact that his son has been dead for 5000 years, Spock feels a familial obligation to him and thus asks Captain Kirk for shore leave. After Kirk insists that Spock tell him why, Spock admits what happened in the past and that he must go to Vulcan and speak to T’Pau and ask her to petition the Federation Council for permission to use the Guardian of Forever to journey back into time and bring his son forward to the present. T’Pau agrees to intercede on Spock's behalf and Spock is granted permission to use the Guardian. Kirk however has required from Spock that he be able to accompany Spock on his journey. On their way, they are joined by Dr. McCoy, who also intends to go, seeing as how he also remembers Zarabeth and has been working on and subsequently discovered a way to medically reverse Zarabeth's Atavachron conditioning

so that she can return to the future along with them. Spock tells Kirk that he anticipated McCoy's desire to accompany them and so he asked T'Pol to secure permission for the three of them.

"Taking in account Doctor McCoy's predictable penchant for rushing in where angels fear to tread, I reasoned he would attempt this. There's usually a logical pattern to the good doctor's illogical pattern."

"Why you pointed eared, ungrateful--"

(Spock and McCoy, as Spock reveals that he anticipated and given an extra security clearance for McCoy for the Guardian of Forever)

Using the Guardian, the trio journey back into Sarpeidon's past and successfully find the spot where McCoy and Spock came through via the atavacron. The moment they find it a painful thought enters Spock's mind. He wrestles with it and find they've found Spock's son. However, due to a miscalculation on Spock's part, they find a young man of twenty-five instead of a small child, who tells them that his name is Zar and that his mother Zarabeth died in an accident many years before. Spock introduces himself but refuses to allow Zar to call him "Father". Zar shows Spock where Zarabeth is buried and Spock uses his phaser to cremate Zarabeth's remains.

"I would prefer you address me by my name. I find the appellation father inappropriate, when used by a... stranger." (Spock)

Zar returns to the Enterprise and passes as a distant relative of Spock, who oversees his education and attempts to train him in Vulcan telepathic techniques. They discover that Zar is an unusually strong telepath for a Vulcan; he can establish contact without touching the other person. Zar becomes conflicted and hurt by his father's apparent refusal to acknowledge him.

"I'm sorry-- I didn't realize-- I was only trying to--"

"On Vulcan, what you attempted just now is regarded as a heinous crime. Forcing a meld, is an unforgivable intrusion of the spirit. You must never do so again. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir, I acted on impulse. It was wrong. I know better now, I won't ever forget."

"See that you do not, or I will not be able to continue your training."

"I suppose you could call it training, as if I was some stray animal you rescued. But I think it's much closer to the programming you do to your computers. I can't touch you! Why!?" (Spock and Zar)

The Enterprise is called back to Gateway to protect the Guardian of Forever from a Romulan intelligence raid. It is imperative to the security of the Federation that the Romulans not discover the Guardian's powers; if they cannot be driven away, Gateway must be destroyed. The Romulans massacre a landing party and the scientists studying the Guardian, place a force field around the Guardian and hide themselves behind a ground-based cloaking device. Zar volunteers to help Spock counteract the force field because he can sense whether Romulans are present even if he cannot see them. Their first try is unsuccessful, but when they rendezvous with Kirk the three men discover they are trapped on the planet; the Enterprise, with Scotty in command, is battling the Romulans (along with the USS Lexington) and cannot drop its shields to beam them up. They decide to try again, but Spock disables Zar with the Vulcan nerve pinch, wishing to spare him from danger. Kirk and Spock are captured and tortured by the Romulans. When Zar wakes up, he is able to telepathically sense their danger. He also realizes that his father cares about him, since he chose to protect Zar instead of Kirk, his closest friend. The Enterprise defeats the Romulan ships and a rescue party beams down. Zar creates a diversion by causing an explosion, allowing the others to rescue Kirk and Spock.

Once the Romulans threat is over, Zar decides to use the Guardian to return to Sarpeidon's past, but to a more settled location than the one he originally inhabited. Although Spock offers him a place among his family on Vulcan, there is evidence that Zar's return is crucial to Sarpeidon's unusually rapid cultural evolution (Zar himself has seen his future paintings in the Enterprise's archives of Sarpeidon and answers his own paradox in explaining how Sarpeidon could go from ice age to time travel in only 5000 years). After a brief family mind meld with Spock, Zar enters the time portal.

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