

Star Trek: TOS (#12) – “Mutiny on the Enterprise”
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Back Cover:

The USS Enterprise is crippled in orbit around a dangerous, living, breathing planet, and a desperate peace mission to the Orion Arm is stalled. Captain Kirk has never needed his crew more. But a lithe, alien woman is casting a spell of pacifism – and now mutiny – over the crew. Suddenly Kirk's journey for peace has turned into a terrifying war – to retake command of his ship!

Synopsis:

The Enterprise, having just come off of a very tiring mission of the mapping and preliminary contact of Class Q planet Delta Canaris IV (to which Kirk recommends commendations to Spock for his unflagging efforts in contacting the wafer-thin intelligences on the high-gravity planet), overdue for dry-dock repairs and shore leave for its crew, is never-the-less ordered to ferry three ambassadors from Starbase One to the Orion Arm – Zarv, a brusque Tellarite, a capable but officious Earthman, and an ambassador in plant form. Their mission is to oversee peace negotiations between Ammdon and Jurnamoria, neighboring star systems near the Romulan Neutral Zone. Already on the verge of war, the situation is further complicated by Jurnamoria's invitation of Romulan intervention rather than Federation, which would give the Romulan Star Empire a potential holding across the Neutral Zone if talks are unsuccessful.

Undoubtedly unhappy about Romulan involvement, Kirk is equally unhappy that he must send his ship back into harms way without repairs, but he reluctantly obeys. Not long after departing, the sensors locate a derelict adrift in space, with a single life reading aboard. The mysterious humanoid is transported aboard, and identifies herself as Lorelei. The crew is at once fascinated by Lorelei, also known as “the Speaker of Hyla”, but the mystery surrounding her grows when Spock is unable to find any record of her planet of origin. McCoy is certain her bio-patterns are Terra norm, and she has no issues breathing the Enterprise's atmosphere or eating the food, so is welcomed with open arms. But after finding out where the Enterprise is headed and why, the staunch pacifist within her manifests and thus she begins to convince the crew that their mission is one of war, not peace, and that manning weapons is immoral.

“The Speaker of Hyla, Lorelei, troubles me strangely. I find myself increasingly convinced by her arguments to abort the peace mission to Ammdon and Jurnamoria and return to Starbase One. The condition of the Enterprise continues to deteriorate. Equipment malfunctions are the least of our problems. My greatest concern is the crew upset and growing disaffection. It is almost as if the crew is on the brink of disobedience, but that is absurd. Such a thing cannot happen on this ship. It will not.” (Kirk, Captain's Log)

The crew begins to passively resist the Captain's orders to carry out their mission leaving Kirk and Spock to constantly monitor all vital systems to prevent a ship-wide disaster. To stem the growing inattention to duty he thinks is caused by a postponement of shore leave, Captain Kirk assembles his section heads, but this does not seem to phase the crew. As more and more crew fall under the influence of Lorelai, Captain Kirk arranges for Ambassador Zarv and Lorelai to each address the crew. This turns out to be a serious error, as Zarv speaks well but Lorelai completely captivates the crew with the sound of her voice. Soon, the crew is in mutiny, refusing to man their posts even in the face of danger. This resistance has one flaw, however; the Enterprise ends up incapacitated. To repair the engines, they need a certain metal for radiation shielding, and divert to a previously unexplored planet that contains the raw materials they need.

“We will soon attain orbit about the fourth planet in the system. Uhura reports no radio signals emanating from the planet, but Mr. Spock's life-form readings indicate a highly complex civilization. The riddle posed by this seeming contradiction is only one of the items on our agenda. Nowhere in the galaxy has an advanced civilization been found that did not employ hertzian radio, even for minor communications. Perhaps this is the first.” (Kirk, Captain's Log)

After obtaining orbit and beaming down, Spock, McCoy and four security men beam down, are attacked and later imprisoned (is the planet a living organism?). To make matters worse, Ambassador Zarv and his diplomatic mission beam down without permission in an attempt to negotiate for their release, but all three are killed by the planet. The diversion of power required for this use of the transporter shuts down an entire section of the ship. With their deaths and the possibility that the natives employ a form of telepathy, Kirk begins to believe there's a scant chance of success in negotiating either for the release of those imprisoned or for the shielding they so desperately need. So, he becomes desperate to mount a rescue party; however, since this would be a show of violence, the crew rejects it out of hand, and thus turns to Lorelei for instruction.

Since she is unable to convert Kirk she maroons him on the planet's surface, taking the Enterprise under her power. Fortunately the Enterprise is unable to leave orbit due to damage sustained in the mutiny and still requires the raw materials, which she is able to negotiate for.

“Marooned on the planet, I have few choices left to me. The crew of the Enterprise has mutinied, falling prey to the alien Lorelei's words of pacifism. I must reach Spock and the others, rescue them and, using this small group, regain control of my starship. The outlook for this is not good.” (Kirk, Captain's Log)

Kirk later meets up with Spock, McCoy and the others, who are able to fancy an escape by drugging one of the thorny corral bushes near their cell, which sets the entire planet unconscious. They locate a hilltop overlooking the quarry from which the shielding materials for the repair of the Enterprise's engines are being mined. And since there isn't enough power to transport the raw materials to the Enterprise, Lorelei must rely on the ship's shuttlecraft, which gives Kirk the necessary means of returning to the Enterprise.

With the number of necessary trips via shuttle dwindling, Kirk & Co. makes their move and those marooned are able to return to the Enterprise. Once aboard, but it's harder still to regain control of the ship. Lorelei's hold on the crew is as sure as if she had them chained, but they have no more time left. They manage to win back Scotty's support, retake the Enterprise and detain Lorelei.

Since she is unable to reach her audience, they slowly begin to revert to their normal selves. Mr. Scott has a hell of a time maintaining the warp engines on their way to Ammdon-Jurnamoria as the condition of the MHD bottles is, at best, dangerous. The crew slowly returns to normal, with only occasional relapses attesting to the power of Lorelei's persuasiveness and sonic-laden words. While Lorelei herself remains in her detention cell, unable to speak with anyone directly. But there's just one more obstacle to overcome: the Ammdon-Jurnamoria peace talks. Without Ambassador Zarv and his diplomatic team, chances do not look good at preventing war. If they don't, however, the Romulans will traverse the Orion Arm and enter Federation space.

When the Enterprise arrives at the Ammdon-Jurnamoria system, he finds both planets on the brink of firing upon each other. Kirk tries to complete the peace mission, but Lorelei's prediction proves correct, and a war does start, with the Enterprise in the middle. An intense assault by the Jurnamoria fleet has severely damaged the Enterprise. With one last-ditch effort, Kirk has the Ammdon and Juramorian leaders beamed aboard for one final conference.

"I do not think I will fail this time. My argument for peace is one so potent the vice-regent of Ammdon and the Constable of Peace of Jurnamoria will not be able to resist." (Kirk, Captain's Log)

His secret? He sits the leaders from both sides down with Lorelei. Her persuasive powers convince them that peace is the way. In turn the Enterprise is able to complete its mission, avert a war, and keep the Romulans safely behind the Neutral Zone.

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