

Star Trek: TOS (#39) – “Time for Yesterday”
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Back Cover:

Time in the galaxy has stopped running in its normal course. That can mean only one thing -- the Guardian of Forever is malfunctioning. To save the universe, Starfleet Command reunites three of its most legendary figures -- Admiral James T. Kirk, Spock of Vulcan, and Dr. Leonard McCoy -- and sends them on a desperate mission to contact the Guardian, a journey that ultimately takes them 5,000 years into the past. They must find Spock's son Zar once again, and bring him back to their time to telepathically communicate with the Guardian. But Zar is enmeshed in troubles of his own, and soon Kirk, Spock, and McCoy find themselves in a desperate struggle to save both his and their world.

Summary:

In the Star Trek episode that inspired Yesterday's Son, half-Vulcan Starfleet science officer Spock and Dr. Leonard McCoy pass through a time portal - the Guardian of Forever - into the past of a planet about to be destroyed. The people of that planet, Sarpeidon, have already fled into their past, where it was once their custom to exile those they might otherwise have imprisoned. In Sarpeidon's great ice age, Spock and McCoy are rescued from the killing cold by Zarabeth, a banished political prisoner from a far later era. Going backward 5,000 years in time causes Spock to regress to what the Vulcans of that period were like. In “Yesterday's Son”, Spock learns that he fathered a son with Zarabeth, and that this son - Zar - has grown up marooned in the ice age with only his mother's companionship. With Zarabeth dead, Spock decides to bring Zar forward in time and give him a chance at life. Zar chooses, at the book's end, to return to Sarpeidon's past after seeing evidence in the planet's history that his leadership is destined to guide that world's warring tribes through their first steps toward civilization.

This is where the story continues...

The Enterprise's Five Year Mission is a matter of memory now and Kirk and Spock are working at Star Fleet Command following their turn rescuing Earth from Vejur. The day is quiet until Admiral Morrow contacts Kirk and Spock to help with a dramatic rescue near Alpha Centauri, but will not disclose why. Once a certain person has been rescued from the stricken ship, Morrow explains that pockets of time around stars have begun to accelerate, forcing the stars to progress through their life cycles at rapid rates with disastrous consequences. The source of all the temporal anomalies is sector 90.4 - home of Gateway and The Guardian of Forever. The archaeological team entrenched there has been unable to get the Guardian to respond at all. After Spock recalls that his son Zar was once able to communicate telepathically with the Guardian, the Enterprise is placed under the temporary command of Admiral Kirk and detailed to transport a powerful telepath to the Guardian.

The telepath (Marishal, a rather intriguing sort) manages to partially restore the Guardian's time-travel functions but collapses in a comatose state, after the Guardian's consciousness overwhelms her. Now, Spock believes the only chance is for his son, Zar, to telepathically communicate with it. The problem is, Zar died on Sarpeidon 5000 years ago. Therefore, the only option left for Kirk, Spock and McCoy is to use the Guardian of Forever to travel into Sarpeidon's past to find Zar, hoping that his powerful telepathy combined with Vulcan shield training will allow him to successfully restore the Guardian to its normal state. When they jump through, Kirk, Spock and McCoy appear in the Lakreo Valley of Sarpeidon and find themselves in the middle of troops preparing for war. And although only 12.5 years have passed for them it has been twenty years since Zar last saw them, and in his efforts to move Sarpeidon culture forward he has found his settlement of New Araen surrounded by his enemies.

They find Zar in charge of a small, technologically advanced settlement that is about to engage in a battle with an alliance of less advanced but more numerous enemy clans. His death in the coming battle has been foretold by the priestess Wynn, the daughter of one of the enemy clan chiefs, who declares that the alliance will be denied victory only if "he who is halt walks healed" and "he who is death-struck in battle rises whole." "He who is halt" clearly refers to Zar, who walks with a painful limp because of a leg injury he suffered many years before. In order to increase his city's odds of survival, Zar marries Wynn (who is pregnant with his child), forcing her father to change sides. The Enterprise men manage to convince him to come back with them and deal with the Guardian, although he insists that he will return afterward to fight in the battle despite the prophecy.

Zar successfully melds with the Guardian and returns its consciousness to its physical structure, along with a burst of energy that turns out to be several beings of pure energy. The Guardian explains that it abandoned its duties to search for its Creators, who long ago evolved into beings of pure energy and entered another dimension. Its fundamental programming required it to answer their summons and bring them home, resulting in its apparent malfunction. They wish to find their home planet, but they have forgotten where it is. The Creators assume the form of people drawn from the memories of the Enterprise men in order to converse with them. While some of the beings act in a benevolent manner, a few seem capricious and cruel. Eventually, Kirk and the others manage to convince them that their search would endanger intelligent life throughout the galaxy, and they re-enter another dimension via the Guardian. The Guardian, with the assistance of Zar and Spock, is able to force the less benevolent Creators to comply.

McCoy convinces Zar to undergo treatment and physical therapy aboard the Enterprise, healing his limp and giving him a greater chance of survival in the coming battle. Zar achieves peak physical condition and is able to walk normally again, fulfilling the first half of Wynn's prophecy. When he returns to Sarpeidon's past, Spock follows him, intending to help save him in the battle. Spock is unable to prevent the death-blow from landing, although he deflects it slightly, and Zar is unconscious but still alive. In order to fulfill the second half of the prophecy, Spock puts on Zar's armor and shows himself to the army, leading them to believe their leader has risen from near-death.

Zar's army wins the battle. After ensuring that Zar will survive the blow and leaving him to Wynn's care, Spock returns to the present.

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