

**Star Trek: TOS (#57) – “The Rift”**  
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Back Cover:

*Every thirty-three years, a rift in space connects the Federation with a mysterious race called the Calligar who live on a planet hundreds of light years away - much too far to travel in a starship. Captain Kirk and the USS Enterprise are dispatched to transport a Federation delegation of diplomats, scholars and scientists who will travel to Calligar directly during the brief period of time that the rift will be open.*

*Mr. Spock leads the Federation party as they travel by shuttle through the rift just as a group of the aliens arrive in Federation space. The meetings go smoothly until the Calligar take Spock's party hostage and Kirk discovers that the aliens are keeping a deadly secret. With angry Tellarite and Andorian fleets ready to attack the Calligar, Kirk must save Spock and the others before war breaks out and the rift closes for another thirty-three years.*

Synopsis:

FIRST CONTACT

*“You carry around in your head the findings of all ships in any given sector for the past three years, Lieutenant?”*

*“No, sir. The past five years.” (Captain Pike and Number One)*

The USS Enterprise, under the command of Captain Christopher Pike, is on its way to Vega IX to tend to their injured and wounded after the taxing incident that took place on Talos IV (see “The Cage”), when an unknown blip appears on their sensors. Stopping to take a look, both Number One and Spock reports that a rather unusual “rift” in space-time has just appeared. Although small and unstable, the rift does possess the qualities of a wormhole and might harbor sentient life on the other side, which the two argue warrants further study. The nature of the rift is not known, nor is it known why it hadn’t been picked up by any other Federation vessel that had passed this way over the last five years. Spock postulates that the rift either existed a few seconds before or after the natural flow of our own universe, and something changed to bring the two into synch now. The only way they’d know for sure if anyone was on the other side is to attempt to traverse the rift. With a lot of “maybes” and “may nots” Pike attempts communication but nothing further. When a response is not received he orders the hyperdrive engaged and the Enterprise re-enters time-warp toward Vega IX.

*“Someday, you'll pull a hypo out of there and give me a heart attack.” (Captain Pike, to Dr. Boyce, who is mixing drinks from his medical bag)*

With the Enterprise once again back on course, Pike retires to the recreation room to box away his frustrations. There he meets Lt. Tyler, his young Latin navigator, and drafts him into a sparing match. Tyler is young and agile, easily beating his Captain in hand-to-hand combat. His shots are right on, knocking Pike out cold with a left hook. Dr. Boyce comes to the rescue, reviving him and tending to his injuries. The two hold a private conversation about the reasons behind the encounter with Tyler. Pike reveals that he feels he's too aloof with his crew and he wishes he were more in tune with them; their friends. Boyce points out that Pike keeps them at arms length by referring to them by their rank, rather than their names. The conversation is soothed over by a martini and soon the topic of conversation moves toward Vina and Number One, who Boyce suggests fancies Pike.

The conversation is interrupted when a call from the bridge requests Pike's presence – they've received a transmission from the rift. The short transmission lies to rest any question regarding sentient life on the other side of the rift; it said simply that only 72 hours of contact can be had at any one time, over a period of 33.4 Earth years. The Enterprise, sure that they'd never make it back to the rift after porting at Vega IX, turn about and return. After sending through a probe or two (which were returned broken up), the crew surmises that the ship's hyperdrive and time-warp component will protect them from the effects of the portal's time-warp long enough to traverse the wormhole. Pike settles in and sends the ship through; the journey is anything but peaceful. Nightmarish visions of individual crew-member's past and/or possible future are shown to them in confusing, twisting ways. Although all crew are affected, José Tyler seems to be the most conflicted, calling out the words "ec... ma...".

*"You appear puzzled. This is the correct earth greeting, is it not?" -- "It is one of the better-known ones. They taught us at the academy, however, not to be presumptuous. There are at least five known planets where a handshake is considered an obscene gesture and one where it's a declaration of war."* (Master Builder Zyo and Captain Pike, shaking hands at their first face-to-face meeting)

Meeting the Enterprise on the other side are the Calligar, a Gamma Quadrant species that inhabits a series of satellites (referred to as the Worldnet) orbiting in a spider-web-like fashion around a world cast in flame. They were once planet-dwellers but an accident set their world on fire. As a people, the Calligar are isolationists who follow a concept called Harmony (something akin to the Vulcan IDIC or Human Quakerism philosophies) which oversee their beliefs while the Worldmind determines their contribution and role. The dissection of such philosophies are entertained aboard a reception held aboard ship as the crew become introduced: Zyo, Master Builder (the title for a hereditary position that is the political leader of the Calligar); Alt, Master of Status (the title for a hereditary position that oversees the Harmony of the Calligar); Marco, Zyo's son; and Ecma, Zyo's daughter. José Tyler, who had seen Ecma in a vision traversing the rift, takes to her immediately.

When the crew is later invited to browse the Worldnet of the Calligar, Ecma takes Tyler to a special holography center where any place could be imagined and then created within (much like the Holodecks later seen in TAS and TNG). While they frolic and begin to fall

in love with each other, the Calligar impress both Spock and Number One with their vast technological advancements by scanning the Enterprise's computer banks (much to their chagrin) then replicating and producing the components for their computer upgrades, which were not scheduled to be installed until the Enterprise reached Vega IX. At first the pair is highly perplexed, distrusting and skeptical, but later succumbs to their curiosity and prepares the components for installation. They just get the components installed when the ship is alerted to instability in the rift – it is beginning to close much earlier than expected.

Tyler and Ecma, who are oblivious to the Rift's potential closure, have hit upon a romantic moment. And just as the pair are about to consummate their new-found relationship, Ecma's brother Macro interrupts them and fisticuffs ensue. With just five minutes left to spare, Tyler overcomes Macro and he is alerted to the trouble, attempts to get Ecma to join him on the Enterprise, and then parts the surface without her. His lasting image of her pains him greatly – Macro, Ecma's brother, begins to fondle her sexually, toying with the man's emotions. This is an image that will fuel Tyler's anger for many years to come. Meanwhile, with all crew accounted for, the Enterprise slips through the rift and returns home unscathed. The first contact between the Calligar and the Federation is a success albeit brief – The Enterprise returns on course for Vega IX and its computer upgrades are on-line.

*“Should I be concerned about my command future, Number One, vis à vis your ambitions?”*

*“No, sir...I'll be wanting a bigger ship, sir.”* (Captain Pike and Number One, after Number One explains that she programmed the ship's computer with her own voice because she wanted it to have a voice that commanded respect.)

## SECOND CONTACT

The year: 2287. It has been 33.4 years since the opening of the rift and now the USS Enterprise-A, under the command of Captain James T. Kirk, has been chosen to follow-up on the Enterprise's original mission and revisit the conduit, now known as “Pike's Rift”, “Anomaly T-128” and/or “Brigadoon” (named for the 20<sup>th</sup> century musical by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Lowe based on a much older story by Friedrich Gerstäcker about the mythical village of Germelshausen, which fell under an evil magic curse causing the citizens to awake one day for every hundred years of sleep. Tyler, as a Lt., uttered the term “Brigadoon” during the first contact reception aboard ship and the unceremonious name stuck.)

On board ship is José Tyler, notable navigator who served both Captains Robert April and Christopher Pike (now a Commodore); Ambassador Robert Fox, notable Federation Ambassador who tangled with Kirk during the Eminiar VII incident (see TOS episode “A Taste of Armageddon”), assigned to represent the United Federation of Planets in second contact; Dr. Richard Daystrom, inventor of the Duotronic computer and the failed M-5 computer (see TOS episode “The Ultimate Computer”) to which he fell into and

recovered from a nervous breakdown, is assigned to second contact as the Federations fore most mind on technology; Thak, an Andorian chargé d'affaires and top scientist; and Shondar Dorkin, a Tellarite expert on social development.

Their mission is a simple one, to re-establish contact with the Calligar who in turn wish to be kept apprised of progress and give the Federation some idea what their technology and society are like at this stage. To visit the Calligar this time round, rather than take the Enterprise through the rift – her bulk originally destabilized the rift and caused it to close prematurely during first contact – they will equip a shuttlecraft with a “warp sled”, a new technology that will mate a typical shuttlecraft with a platform capable of traveling at warp speeds. The craft’s overall mass and small form will keep the rift from destabilizing sooner and its new warp drives (rather than the old hyperdrive and time-warp systems the Enterprise employed during Pike’s time) will keep the investigative team from experiencing the same time temporal strain that showed Pike his future and Tyler the breakup he had with Ecma.

*“Did you attempt to insult me, Andorian?”*

*“No, I succeeded. Would you mind speaking in the other direction? Your breath is wilting my antennae”* (Thak to Shondar Dorkin)

The mission itself may be a simple one, just getting to Pike’s Rift proves to be more troublesome than one would imagine. With both a Tellarite and Andorian aboard (races who instinctively dislike one another) calamity ensues, but is related to nothing more than vocal jousting. Robert Fox is still somewhat a thorn in the side of Kirk, although the lessons taught to him during the Eminiar VII incident have mellowed him out more – though still a stickler for regulation. Dr. Daystrom, however, is the more troublesome one; although fully recovered from his breakdown, some mental instability remains enough to throw doubt into the mind of the genius computer specialist. And then there’s Tyler himself, anxious, cautious and hopeful to see Ecma again after all these years.

Upon arrival, the Enterprise picks up the singularity and a small object on a trajectory to rendezvous with them in short order – it’s the representative of the Calligar. The representative appears upon the ship’s transporter pad in much the same way as last visit: after reviewing the ship’s computer library, the representative transports himself aboard. Everyone is introduced then to Ecma, Master Builder of the Calligar, but it’s Joe Tyler who is entranced. He re-introduces himself but Ecma doesn’t seem to know him, at first, but after letting him wallow in sadness for only a moment she reaches up to kiss him and it is as if the years melt away.

With the Calligar representative in the capable hands of Tyler, Kirk takes the opportunity to launch the shuttle. But once the shuttlecraft is away Ecma turns more introspective as the two catch up in her quarters. Ecma reveals her father, Zyo, has passed on (“he had no choice”) and that Marco, her brother, is well. At the mention of her brother, Tyler asks her about the incident he witnessed during his beam-out – the molestation, the act of incest. Ecma rebuffs him, suggesting human taboos are not her culture’s taboos (meaning relationships including incest are not uncommon) and, in fact, she has a child by him –

Regger. This naturally takes Commodore Tyler aback although Ecma explains this is how her father and many others in her family (and society's line) were born. Another proverbial bomb is dropped when Captain Kirk appears (at her call) and she tells them both she intends to resign the title of Master Builder (something no one has ever done; it is not allowed), and requests asylum aboard the Enterprise.

*"I do not wish to return to the Calligar and nothing in this galaxy can make me."*  
(Ecma to Kirk)

Spock, Scotty, Daystrom, Thak and Dorkin aboard the Warp Sled shuttle make it through the rift and connect with the Calligar. There to welcome them are Alt and Macro, who have both never forgotten Spock and Tyler, and don't approve of the "openness" of Zyo and Ecma's policies. After pleasantries are exchanged, the crew of the Enterprise is allowed to explore the WorldNet – Scotty is taken to an Engineering section to observe their technological advancements (he is amazed when told they can re-grow Dilithium Crystals) while Daystrom is taken to a computer facility (where he is shown wondrous things and begins to question his usefulness). Meanwhile aboard ship all hell is breaking loose. Kirk is willing to grant asylum for the right reasons, but Ambassador Fox and he are butting heads – Fox will not allow it. Although Tyler feels the asylum should be granted solely because Ecma loves him, she says her love for him is just not enough and alludes to another reason: a concept called "thinning".

When a Calligar reaches his or her apex, their essence is absorbed into the collective Worldmind, therefore, no Calligar ever really dies and their lifetime of knowledge and experience is kept for future generations. The individual has little say when his or her "thinning" will occur – it simply comes when the Worldmind computer determines a person's future contributions will not reach the same level of success as previous ones. Ecma, who fears this "death" because she has recently been selected to be thinned, wishes now to defect to the Federation, but at what cost? Being separated from her people – who are connected to the WorldNet at a deep, sub-conscious level – has unintended consequences. Unaccustomed to the lack of stimulus of the Worldmind, Ecma collapses and begins to suffer withdrawal. As soon as the Calligar become aware of the situation, they capture and hold the Enterprise landing party hostage.

Captain Kirk now must walk a delicate line between philosophies, but when Ambassador Fox makes the contents of the mission public, both the Andorian and Tellarite governments dispatch ships to the area serving only to complicate matters (the Andorian ship "Stealth" commanded by Vandar, and the Tellarite ship "Belligerent", commanded by Khund arrive). The situation becomes even more problematic when the landing party attempts escape, ending in the death of Shondar Dorkin who died to protect the Andorian, Thak. The party succeeds enough to get a message to Kirk, confirming what Ecma had told them about "thinning", based on the concept of "nonexpansionism", and how they use that philosophy to contain the population explosion. With neither side giving in – and Kirk pressed to two choices: either getting the Calligar to release the party or convince them not to thin Ecma – there's not much wiggle room.

Kirk and Tyler take a second Warp Sled shuttlecraft through the Rift and meet with Altm Macro and the rest of the Calligar counsel. The instant Macro sees Tyler the two get into a scuffle, unable to keep feelings of jealousy, rage and hatred repressed any longer. Macro believes that it is all because of Tyler that Ecma has left “him” and her people and thus harbors great malice toward Tyler. The fight to the death that Macro wanted doesn’t come, however; Tyler renders him neutral in just one Phaser blast. With the hostilities dispatched (for now), Alt delivers his ultimatum: either Ecma returns to be thinned or the hostages remain. Kirk then plays the last card he last left: he petitions the counsel to allow him to speak with the Worldmind directly.

On board the Enterprise, Sulu has his hands full with a belligerent “Belligerent” crew to hold back and McCoy with Ecma. Although still weak, she has regained consciousness. But now that she has awakened, Ecma is beginning to have second thoughts especially when she hears that the exchange crew are being held and will not be released unless she re-joins them. Wishing no harm to come to the Federation crew, she tells McCoy and Sulu she wishes to return to her people and will do so using the ship on which she came to the Enterprise. As soon as the Enterprise contact the Calligar to relay the news the “Belligerent” charges through the rift – the Calligar agree to the exchange; however, at the mention of Shondar Dorkin’s death, the Tellarites fly off in search of blood.

Meanwhile, back on Calligar, Spock is chosen to make contact with the Worldmind as his Vulcan mental disciplines make him the logical choice, but it doesn’t go as planned. From the very moment Spock makes contact, he hurts physically. When blood begins to pour down his chin, Kirk attempts to pull Spock from the contact; however, he and Dr. Daystrom (who attempts to keep Kirk from intervening) become caught up in the beam connecting Spock to the Worldmind. They too, now, enter the vast network. But there’s something afool here – someone or something has an ulterior agenda. It’s Regger and he’s hijacked the Worldmind for his own dastardly purpose. As the son of Ecma he was next in line to be Master Builder, but unlike most other Calligar, he became ambitious and wanted that title as soon as possible. Therefore, he crafted a plan to make the WorldNet issue orders to thin Ecma before her time forcing her to either abdicate and seek asylum on board the Enterprise, or die. Either way he would become Master Builder and control the Calligar people.

Kirk and Regger have a vicious fight of wills within the Worldmind, leaving Captain Kirk the victor. At the end Kirk, Spock and Daystrom appear in a recreation of Kirk’s quarters joined by one other: Zyo, previous Master Builder and friend. The two discuss the finer points of philosophy and although the order of thinning has been rescinded (as it was a farce to begin with), Zyo argues that Ecma still cannot be permitted to leave. Kirk prevails upon Zyo’s sense of right and wrong, of the concept of life and death and most importantly, on the right to choose. Reluctant as he is Zyo comes to a mutual understanding with Kirk and allows Ecma to make her own choice even if that might mean she can never return and have her essence added to the Worldmind. Zyo releases the Enterprise crew from the Worldnet and asks to speak to Alt so that his and the Worldmind’s collective decision can be properly relayed.

But there is no rest for the weary – the mass of the Tellarite ship has caused the rift to become unstable and it begins to collapse. With only minutes to spare, the crew take the Warp Sled shuttle back through, and find Ecma on her final trajectory to enter the Rift. Tyler details for Ecma what has occurred, but when Spock lets it be known she doesn't have to die, she becomes elated (and relieved – she doesn't have to leave her people now). With only seconds to spare now she takes her ship into the event horizon of the rift and it closes, leaving Tyler grossly heartbroken. But just as he begins lashing out at her in sadness, her faint voice appears over the intercom – she chose to stay and the two profess their undying love for one another.

In the end everyone is touched by the second contact with the Calligar. Kirk who gets a new lease on life and adventure in the cosmos marries José Tyler and Ecma aboard ship, Dr. Richard Daystrom has his confidence returned and invents a new computer program laying the groundwork for which holodeck technology is later derived, Dorkin is made a hero and enshrined in the hall of heroes on Tellar (having died most bravely for fighting off two dozen of the enemy – a story told to the Tellarites by Kirk), Thak later writes a popular musical play about the Calligar that wins him the Zankar-Bowles Prize for Creative Fiction, the Federation Intergalactic Studies Counsel recommends that the Calligar be contacted again upon the next opening of the rift; however, the rift opens and closes undisturbed – the Federation fails to make contact due to the engagement of hostilities as part of the Klingon-Romulan war in 2320.

It is unknown what happened at the 2354 opening, or if anything was planned for the 2387 opening. As for Macro, upon learning that he was now Master Builder because his sister had left him and his son was dead, he wept. And he didn't stop weeping until his death many years later.

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