



Child of Two Worlds (Star Trek: The Original Series)

By Greg Cox

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An all-new *Star Trek* novel from *New York Times* bestselling author Greg Cox, taking place in the blockbuster *Original Series* era!

The year is 2255, not long after the events of the *Original Series* episode “The Cage.” A young Spock is science officer on the *U.S.S. Enterprise*, under the command of Captain Christopher Pike, when an outbreak of deadly Rigelian fever threatens the crew. Reviewing the Starfleet medical database, Dr. Phillip Boyce comes up with a highly experimental and untested new treatment that might save the crew. Just one problem: it requires a rare mineral substance, ryetalyn, which is not easily obtained...except on a remote alien colony near the Klingon border. But borders are somewhat blurry in this part of galaxy. Pike will need to tread carefully in order to avoid provoking an armed conflict with the Klingons—or starting an all-out war.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Greg Cox is the *New York Times* bestselling author of numerous *Star Trek* novels and short stories. He has also written the official movie novelizations of *Godzilla*, *Man of Steel*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Daredevil*, *Ghost Rider*, and the first three *Underworld* movies, as well as books and stories based on such popular series as *Alias*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *CSI*, *Farscape*, *The 4400*, *Leverage*, *The Green Hornet*, *The Phantom*, *Roswell*, *Star Trek*, *Terminator*, *Warehouse 13*, *Xena: Warrior Princess*, and *Zorro*. He has received two Scribe Awards from the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers. He lives in Oxford, Pennsylvania. Visit him at GregCox-Author.com.

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Child of Two Worlds

One

Eighteen years later

“Rigelian fever, Captain. There’s no doubt about it.”

Spock overheard the doctor’s report from his station on the bridge of the U.S.S Enterprise. The young science officer listened intently while simultaneously monitoring sensor readings of the surrounding space. As the ship was presently conducting a routine survey of an uninhabited star system, no other urgent matters required his attention. He suspected that the rest of the bridge crew was also paying close attention to the conversation in the command well.

“How bad is it?” Captain Christopher Pike asked, getting straight to the point. Still in the prime of life, he was a fit Earthman of North American descent, with an athletic build, dark hair, and icy blue eyes that conveyed both keen intelligence and concern. His gold command turtleneck uniform contrasted with the blue science tunic Spock wore. A strong chin rested thoughtfully on his knuckles. “How many crew members are affected?”

“It’s spreading fast,” Doctor Phillip Boyce said gravely. The older man, clad in a standard blue medical jumpsuit, stood by the captain’s chair at the center of the bridge. Thinning silver hair and lean, deeply lined features betrayed that he was approaching retirement age, at least by human standards. An Earth symbol was emblazoned over his heart, indicating that he had received the bulk of his medical training on his home planet. “My sickbay is filling up and more crew members are showing symptoms by the hour. I’ve instituted standard quarantine procedures, but I’m afraid that amounts to locking the barn door after the horse has already bolted. We could be looking at a full-fledged outbreak here.”

“Damn,” Pike muttered under his breath. A serious expression grew even more somber. “Can you treat it, Doctor?”

“I’m trying,” Boyce said, “but this appears to be an unusually virulent new strain of the disease, which is proving resistant to conventional treatment.” He shook his head ruefully. “I might as well be handing out

sugar pills . . . or martinis.”

Pike nodded. “What about unconventional treatments?”

“Funny you should ask,” Boyce answered. “I’ve been scouring the medical literature—in my copious spare time, of course—and there are reports of a radical new treatment that has yielded some promising results so far. It’s highly experimental, though, and has barely begun clinical trials on humans.” He frowned. “I’d hate to turn our crew into guinea pigs.”

Spock understood that Boyce was not speaking of a literal metamorphosis, but was merely employing a quaint human idiom. He made a mental note to review the relevant literature on this new treatment at the first opportunity. Medicine was a science, despite the doctor’s occasional protestations to the contrary, and biochemistry was but one of many disciplines in which Spock prided himself on being well-versed.

“We may have no other choice, Doctor.” Pike glanced toward the navigation station. “Mister Tyler, how far to the nearest Starfleet medical facility?”

Spock had already performed the necessary calculations in his head, but let Lieutenant José Tyler carry out his duties. Years of serving aboard the Enterprise had taught Spock that humans sometimes reacted negatively to being “shown up” by another, particularly where their own responsibilities and fields of expertise were concerned. It was an illogical and emotional response—data was data after all—but, in this instance, there appeared to be no compelling reason to answer the captain’s query before Tyler did. The young Earthman was a skilled and highly capable navigator. An extra moment would make no significant difference.

“Starbase 17 is closest,” Tyler reported promptly. Blond hair and boyish features made him seem even more youthful than his actual years. “But even at top speed, it will take us weeks to get there.”

Four point zero eight weeks, Spock thought. To be precise.

“Weeks we may not have,” Boyce said. “We haven’t lost any crew members yet, but you know how nasty Rigelian fever can be if not treated. It can go from basic to pneumonic to septic in a matter of days, leading to shock, seizures, and eventually death.”

“You don’t have to paint a picture for me, Doctor,” Pike said. “All right, then. What do you need to carry out this experimental new treatment, if necessary?”

“That’s where it gets tricky,” Boyce confessed. “The treatment requires significant quantities of a rare mineral substance called ryetalyn, which is not commonly found on Federation starships . . . or most anywhere else for that matter.”

“So where can we get our hands on some of this . . . ryetalyn?” Pike asked, trying out the unfamiliar word. He had never heard of this mineral before, despite all his years exploring the stars.

“The devil if I know,” Boyce said. “Did I mention it was rare?”

“A search of the ship’s computer libraries may yield the nearest source of the mineral,” Number One suggested from her post at the helm. A dark-haired Illyrian woman whose cool composure and formidable intelligence often reminded Spock of his own people, the Enterprise’s first officer turned her gaze toward the

science station. “Mister Spock?”

“The computer is processing the request,” said Spock, who had already initiated a search of that nature. A hard-copy printout issued from the computer terminal, and Spock swiftly scanned the document. “According to past surveys of this sector, ryetalyn can be found on Cypria III, an alien colony precisely 61.09 hours from our present location.”

“Good work, Mister Spock,” the captain said. “So what do we know about this place?”

Spock called up a full report on the planet, and was preparing to summarize it, but Number One spoke up first, rendering his efforts redundant.

“Cypria III is a Class-M planet colonized by a humanoid species over a century ago, not long before its parent world abandoned its expansionist space program following a period of political and economic turmoil. The future Cyprians, in particular, emigrated in search of a younger and less developed world that was in a more natural state, as opposed to the heavily mechanized and industrialized culture that had overrun their homeworld. Although they maintain cultural ties to their planet of origin, the Cyprians have been largely independent for generations—and inclined to remain so. Their infrequent encounters with Starfleet have been peaceful to date, but they have expressed little interest in joining the Federation. Deeply attached to their adopted world and its rich natural bounty, they seldom venture beyond their own system and have no significant space force to speak of.”

Pike regarded her with a bemused expression. “And you knew all that off the top of your head?”

“I have an eidetic memory,” she reminded him. “And I endeavor to be informed on the regions of space through which we travel.”

“Of course.” Pike cracked a rare smile. “I expect nothing less from you, Number One.”

Spock was impressed as well. Not for the first time, he reflected that the first officer would fit in well on Vulcan, perhaps even better than he did. He felt a twinge of envy, laced with a certain bitterness, but dismissed the emotion as unworthy of his Vulcan heritage and training. He could not allow his human side to distract him from his duty. The ship needed him to be at his best.

“Captain,” he said. “You should be aware that Cypria III is located near territory presently claimed by the Klingon Empire.” He called up a star map that appeared upon the main viewer at the front of the bridge. Dotted lines indicated areas of Klingon influence, while an illuminated yellow circle represented the Cyprian star system. “The precise borders are disputed, but, as you can see, Cypria III is less than a light-year beyond the edge of the contested region.”

“Terrific,” Pike muttered with what Spock recognized as sarcasm. “And what are the Cyprians’ relations with the Klingons like?”

“Frosty,” Number One said. “As noted before, the Cyprians value their independence. They are no more interested in becoming vassals of the Empire than they are in joining the Federation, although their uncomfortable proximity to the Klingons may be another reason they’ve kept the Federation at arm’s length to date. Joining the Federation might be seen as a provocative act by their Klingon neighbors. Better for all concerned, perhaps, if Cypria maintains its neutrality where the Klingons and the Federation are concerned.”

“A logical policy,” Spock observed, appreciating the colony’s position. “Positioned between two superpowers, Cypria is well-advised not to take sides.”

Although the Klingons had yet to start a war with the Federation, as the Romulans had done nearly a century ago, relations between Starfleet and the Klingons had been growing steadily more confrontational over the last several years, as both parties expanded outward across the galaxy and extended their realms of influence. The Klingons, in particular, tended to be very territorial when it came to vast swaths of space. There were those who said that war was inevitable, perhaps in less than a decade, although Pike wanted to think that peace was always a possibility.

“Well,” Pike said, “let’s hope that neutrality doesn’t extend to denying us assistance during a medical emergency, and that the Klingons feel the same way.” The map on the screen gave way to a view of the stars ahead. “Mister Tyler, set a course for Cypria III, but let’s stay well clear of that blurry border.”

“Aye, sir,” the navigator said.

“Speed, Captain?” Number One asked from the helm.

Pike glanced at Boyce, whose grim countenance conveyed a definite sense of urgency.

“Engage hyperdrive,” the captain said. “Warp factor seven.”

“Yes, sir.” She peered into the gooseneck viewer at her station and waved her hand over the helm controls, which responded to her precise gestures. “Warp factor seven.”

The Enterprise’s powerful warp engines activated, distorting space-time to propel the ship far beyond the speed of light. Within moments, they had left the unexplored solar system far behind and were hurling through deep space toward the Cyprian system. Spock’s keen ears heard a crewman coughing hoarsely over by the engineering station. Glancing across the bridge, he saw that Ensign Hawass looked pale and feverish. The man’s hands trembled as they passed over his control panel. His breathing was labored.

Alert to the crewman’s distress, Pike swiftly relieved Hawass from duty and ordered him to sickbay, but it was clear that quarantine measures had indeed proved ineffective. The fever was at loose aboard the Enterprise, and not even the bridge was safe.

Pike frowned as he watched Hawass exit via the turbolift.

“What was that you were saying about barn doors, Doctor?”

“You asked to see me, Captain?”

Spock entered the briefing room to find Captain Pike reviewing a stack of status reports on the ship’s systems. Pike’s preference for hard-copy documents was a personal eccentricity the crew had come to indulge, despite the fact that printed reports were clearly destined for obsolescence. Spock did not fault the captain for this singular predilection; in the four years that he had served under Pike, he had never observed the captain’s fondness for print to have any impact on his judgment or leadership abilities. Pike’s command was exemplary.

“That’s right, Mister Spock.” Pike looked up from his papers and gestured toward an empty chair. “Make

yourself comfortable.”

Spock took a seat at the conference table. The viewscreen at the end of table currently displayed images of the colony on Cypria III from past Starfleet expeditions to the planet. A large urban metropolis indicated an advanced and thriving civilization, with technology comparable to the Federation’s. Skyscrapers and maglev train tracks denoted both prosperity and progress. Lush greenery testified to the planet’s flourishing ecosystem. Spock found it unsurprising that most Cyprians saw little need to leave their world, which appeared generously well-suited to humanoid life.

“Does this concern the present medical emergency?” he asked. “I’ve taken the liberty of familiarizing myself with—”

“I’m sure you have,” Pike interrupted, “but hold that thought. We’re still nearly a day away from Cypria III, so I wanted to take advantage of this lull to discuss another matter with you.”

Spock had reported to the briefing room directly from the bridge, where Number One was presently in command. He wondered what this was about.

“You have my full attention, sir.”

“I would be stunned to hear otherwise,” Pike said, sounding amused for reasons Spock couldn’t quite isolate. The human sense of humor often resisted easy analysis. “You’re familiar with the U.S.S. Intrepid, of course.”

“Naturally,” Spock replied. The Intrepid was a Constitution-class starship manned by an all-Vulcan crew. It was felt by most Vulcans that a homogenous crew was the most logical choice, promoting greater efficiency and cohesion. A crew sharing the same background, culture, environmental preferences, and, of course, a commitment to logic above all else was bound to function better as a unit—or so the theory went.

Granted, it could be argued that such homogeneity ran counter to the ancient principle of IDIC, which exalted infinite diversity in infinite combinations, but most Vulcans felt that holding fast to their own time-honored customs and traditions in no way excluded respecting the ways of other species and civilizations. Vulcans had never sought to impose their own logic on others, no matter how rigorously Vulcans themselves were expected to adhere to the teachings of Surak, and regardless of how manifestly obvious it was that the Vulcan way was preferable. If there was an inherent contradiction between prizing homogeneity and diversity, it was one that most Vulcans managed to reconcile without too much effort.

But Spock was not like most Vulcans.

“A position as first officer has opened up aboard the Intrepid,” Pike disclosed. “I’d be sorry to lose you, but I’d be remiss if I didn’t inform you of this opportunity. It would mean a promotion for you, as well as opportunity to be among your own people.” He chuckled softly. “I can’t imagine it’s always easy for you, rubbing shoulders with us shamelessly emotional humans day after day.”

It can be challenging, Spock admitted to himself. He thought back to that earlier moment on the bridge when he’d held his tongue regarding the distance to Cypria III to avoid bruising Lieutenant Tyler’s ego and feelings. Accommodating and making allowances for his crewmates’ volatile emotions and frequent lapses of logic had become a routine part of his daily existence, like the constant pull of a heavy-gravity planet that one gradually learns to live with, despite the perpetual strain on one’s system. It might be a relief, in that

respect, to dwell among Vulcans again. He would no longer have a constant barrage of emotional displays chipping away at his own hard-won self-control. He could just be Spock, one Vulcan among many, and not the Vulcan aboard the ship.

Then again, there were reasons that he had left Vulcan and joined Starfleet in the first place . . .

“I hope that I have not given you any reason to believe that I am dissatisfied with my posting aboard the Enterprise,” Spock said. “Or with my fellow crew members.”

“Not at all,” Pike assured him. “I’m only thinking of your own best interests here. You deserve to know what your options are.”

“Thank you, Captain.”

Spock found himself oddly conflicted by this unexpected turn of events. Usually when faced with a choice, he could readily determine the logical course of action, but at this moment he truly did not know what to think. At present he was third in command aboard the Enterprise, after the captain and Number One; strictly from the standpoint of career advancement, the decision was obvious. Nor did he have any doubts about his ability to fulfill the duties of first officer. He deemed himself both ready and able to take on a position of greater responsibility and authority. Advancing to first officer aboard another Constitution-class starship was the next logical step.

And yet . . .

“You will always be a child of two worlds,” his mother had once said. The words came back to him now as he contemplated the choice before him. What was preferable: to be the only Vulcan among a crew of humans, or the only half-human aboard a ship of Vulcans?

“With your permission, sir, I think it best to meditate on the matter rather than make a hasty decision. May I give you my answer shortly, perhaps after the present crisis has been resolved?”

This was a logical approach, so why did it feel like he was stalling?

“By all means, Mister Spock. Take your time. I suspect we’re going to have our hands full soon enough.” He looked Spock squarely in the eye. “Just know that you have my full support whatever you decide, and you can count on a glowing recommendation should you choose to apply for the post aboard the Intrepid.”

“Again, my thanks, Captain.”

“You’re welcome, Lieutenant.” He sifted through the reports before him. “Let’s talk again later . . . assuming any of us survive this damn fever, that is.”

The control console on the table chimed urgently, signaling a transmission from the bridge. Spock routed the signal to the viewscreen, where Number One’s image promptly appeared. The familiar steel-gray confines of the bridge could be spied in the background.

“Pike here,” the captain said crisply. “What is it, Number One?”

“A complication, sir. We’ve received what appears to be a distress signal . . . from Klingon space.”

Spock raised an eyebrow. Calling such news a complication was an understatement, to say the least. Pike rose immediately to his feet, worry written on his face.

“We’re on our way, Number One. Pike out.”

Spock hurried after the captain.

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