

Star Trek (#01) – “Spock Must Die!”
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Back Cover:

Captain Kirk and the crew of the starship Enterprise find themselves in the middle of an undeclared war waged by the Klingon Empire...

The Organians should be consulted about the war but their entire planet has disappeared – or been destroyed...

Mr. Spock entered the transporter chamber. His image would be flashed to Organia by the huge machine's faster-than-light tachyons. But the experiment failed. Suddenly there were two Mr. Spocks. One of them had to be destroyed...

BUT WHICH ONE?

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"Captain's log, stardate 4181.4. We are at war with the Klingon Empire."

Launching an unprovoked attack upon the Federation, the Klingons have broken the terms of the Organian Peace Treaty – leaving the Enterprise stranded deep in uncharted space, cut off from the rest of the Federation fleet.

To find out what happened to the Organians, Commander Scott rigged an experimental modification of our transportation system designed to enable a tachyon replica of Mr. Spock to travel faster-than-light to Organia. But the experiment failed, and incredibly, left us with two identical Spocks: one of whom is a replica in every way the opposite of our first officer, a traitor whose continued existence poses a grave threat to the Enterprise and quite possibly the entire Federation.

One of the Spocks must die. But which one...

Summary:

Spock Must Die begins with the Enterprise on a deep-space mapping mission far from the security of Federation space, when word comes that open hostilities have finally erupted between the Federation and the Klingon Empire. Despite an end to aggression previously forced upon them by the Organian Peace Treaty, the Federation is tallying stymieing losses and Captain Kirk finds himself within the rear echelon of Klingon forces, completely cut off from the aid of other Federation ships, which must now scurry to protect Earth, Vulcan and other primary targets of the United Federation of Planets.

But since the Organians, near-godlike beings made of pure conscious thought, had maneuvered the two parties into a stalemate, aggression by either party toward one another should be impossible... what has changed? Why have they not intervened? Determined to solve the mystery of the Organian's lack of action, the Enterprise slinks through Klingon space on a heading to Organia, but the planet is months away at high-warp, and every light year the crew travels brings them closer to annihilation.

Inspired by some earlier scientific banter – Dr. McCoy's earlier objections to the transporter, positing that he had been “killed” the first time he had been transported, and a duplicate created – Scotty devises a revolutionary plan to use tachyon particles in the transporter process to enable Mr. Spock (who was selected as the most logical person to investigate on Organia) to “beam” to the planet, even though the Enterprise is well out of range, by way of creating a tachyon duplicate. This duplicate would in no way alter or affect the original and when the process was complete, the tachyon duplicate would eventually cease to exist, but when the transport finished its cycle and the shielding opened, a surprise waited – instead of sending a duplicate to Organia, a duplicate of Mr. Spock stood on the platform.

“Captain's Log, Star Date 4019.2: I have appraised the Department heads of the situation and asked for suggestions. For the time being I have not informed the rest of the crew, in the interests of morale. Since any given one of them is seldom on the bridge, I am spared having to explain away the odd spectacle of Mr. Spock on duty all ten periods of the day.”

The two Vulcans are inimical to each other, and both announce that they are the real Spock. They each declare that the other must be destroyed. Convinced by the weight of their inexorable dual logic, Kirk agrees, but which one is the original and which is the simulacrum? Now, Captain Kirk must devise the best plan to change the tide of the war, determine which Spock is the original, and keep his crew safe while rescuing the Federation. To do this Kirk resists the urge to join the fight, kicking the Klingons in their exposed flank and presses on to Organia, months away.

Meanwhile, on their long and arduous journey, the Klingons are alerted to their presence and evidence surfaces that one of the Spocks is a Klingon agent. How else would the Klingons know of their position? Eventually Spock One barricades himself in McCoy's laboratory, refusing to come out unless his assurances are met: the death of Spock Two. Growing weary of the blackmail, and trusting neither men, Kirk decides to hold off until they reach Organia.

Upon arrival at Organia, we learn that the planet has been encapsulated by a field of tachyons that acts as an anti-thought device on a major scale; it imprisons the Organians on their own planet, forcing them to relive visions and nightmares at every turn. It is this field and Scotty's previous attempt at penetrating it that has created the duplicate Spock. When the Enterprise sent its beam toward Organia, it was reflected back upon itself by a true mirror. Therefore it created a duplicate of Mr. Spock in mirror image. This revelation allows McCoy to come up with the perfect, fool-proof test to determine which of the

Spock's is true: make him consume foodstuffs. For McCoy knows that amino acids, the building blocks of life, would react very differently to a mirrored individual – it would be poison to him. HE surmises that Spock One, who has barricaded himself in the lab, is the false Spock... and why? He is about to tell all when Spock One cuts off contact and flees the ship via a modified shuttlecraft; one that can travel at warp speeds.

Kirk, Spock Two and Scotty feel the effects of the tachyon shield first hand, when they beam down to contact and liberate them from the terrible Klingon weapon. The three have a difficult time remaining in contact with each other as the field forces each to live or relive a swirl of surreal images from their own dreams and pasts. Kirk is steadied by Mr. Spock but it becomes clear, even through the melee of images, that his savior is none other than Spock One, who has plans of his own. Spock Two becomes aware of this (through a later explained telepathic connection – emotions rather than thoughts) and in the process of rescuing Kirk, dispatches Spock One.

Scotty creates a dampening effect to counter-act and eliminate the tachyon field; with Organia freed from the confines of this terrible weapon, Klingon forces everywhere cease their advancement. And with their dastardly deed known to the beings of Organia, Ayelborne, Claymare, and Trefayne pass a sentence down upon the Klingons that would bring any space-faring civilization to their knees: they are banned from space flight for a thousand years thereby eliminating the Klingon Empire.

“Captain's Log, Star Date 4202.0: I do not suppose anyone will ever piece together exactly what happened on all the battlefronts at the moment the Organians were let loose from their planet-wide prison. Some of the myriads of incidents, however, are reflected in reports which reached the Enterprise officially, or were intercepted, and were duly entered by Sulu as Captain pro tem. Even most of these, of course, are virtually incomprehensible, but in some cases we had previously encountered the Klingon officers who were involved and can guess how they might have behaved or what they were confronted with; and in others we can reconstruct approximately what happened with the aid of the computer. But the total picture must be left to the imagination, and the computer has none -- perhaps fortunately for us. If the universe were shrinking at the rate of a centimeter a day, and all our measuring rods were contracting with it at an equivalent rate, how could we even suspect that anything was happening?”

Once again Captain Kirk and the Enterprise have saved the Federation from the mighty Klingon Empire. The Enterprise is to report to Starbase 16 for two week's worth of maintenance and repair and to receive new orders. Given the time it will take the Enterprise to reach Starbase 16, Kirk, Spock and McCoy once again reflect upon the question of whether or not one who is transported is still the original when reconstructed, or whether the original has ceased and been replaced with a replicant. Do we have an immortal soul? Spock dismisses the question...

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