

# Puddings Aren't Logical, Mr Spock (by Robert Bee)

"Jim, I tell you he won't do it," Dr McCoy insisted.

"C'mon Bones, you underestimate him." Kirk... Captain James Tiberius Kirk of the USS Enterprise NCC1701 to be precise... gave his Chief Medical Officer an enigmatic smile. "I'm willing to bet you that I can get him to do it."

"Hah," Bones laughed. "I won't take a fool's wager, even if the fool is my Captain."

"Bones, I order you. I'll bet..." Kirk tossed ideas around his head like planets around a G Class star "... my second ration of pudding against yours that I can pull it off."

Bones whistled. That was a serious wager. Dr McCoy loved plum pudding, with brandy custard and a dob of fresh cream on top. But he loved his allocation of second helping even more. The first helping just served to remind his deprived taste buds of what they had missed in the past year between Christmases. The second helping. Now that was when he came closest to gastronomical heaven. Did he dare risk that on a fool bet? He quickly assessed the odds of losing. Then he assessed the impact on his taste buds of a third... good god almighty, a third... unheard of in Enterprise's history... serving of pudding. There was no contest.

"Done," Bones said, holding out his hand to shake on the bet. "Second servings are the stake. And the bet is..."

"The bet is," Kirk smiled, "that I will get Mr Spock to play the head magi in this year's Nativity play."

Spock raised a quizzical eyebrow on his otherwise immobile face. "Your request is not logical, Captain," he said. "Therefore I cannot concur."

"What's not logical, Spock?" Kirk was relishing the challenge of persuading Spock to join the cast of the Enterprise's traditional senior officers' production of the Christmas play. The lower ranks enjoyed it. He had already cast Nurse Chappel as Mary and himself as Joseph. The thought of being accused of auto-nepotism had never crossed his mind.

Sulu had agreed to be a shepherd, as had Uhura. Engineer Scotty and Ensign Checkov were itching to play their parts as wise men, though when Kirk had confided with Scotty that he planned to have Spock play the third magus, Scotty had quipped he'd be perfect for the role of donkey at the stall. He had the ears for it.

Kirk hadn't yet told Bones that he was being cast as the angel.

Spock casually moved a piece on the 3-D chessboard from the top level to a square on the bottom. "Check, I believe Captain."

Kirk made a quick replying move. "I asked what's not logical?"

Spock turned his gaze squarely on Kirk. "Captain, you want me to play the part of, pretend to be, a wise man. That's not logical." He lifted another piece and planted it opposite Kirk's king. "Must I point out that as a Vulcan, I am, by nature, a very wise man. I cannot pretend to be what I clearly already am." A perfect eyebrow was raised again. "Mate, by the way."

"But you'll do it?" Kirk asked, anticipating the pleasure of consuming McCoy's second pudding ration.

"On two conditions, Captain," Spock said.

"And they are?"

"Firstly, I make a minor change to my lines."

"Whoa there, Mr Spock. You can't tamper with Earth religious tradition," Kirk protested.

"A minor change only, Captain. A few words. A trifle," Spock said.

"Okay Spock. But only a trifle," Kirk agreed.

"Speaking of which brings me to my second condition." Spock licked his lips and told Kirk. "Agreed, Captain?"

Kirk couldn't reply. He was too busy laughing and crying at the same time.

So it came to pass that the crew of USS Enterprise sat down to their traditional Christmas feast to enjoy special rations held in deep freeze over the year's interstellar travels for this occasion. But before the meal began, the auditorium's lights dimmed and the Nativity story unfolded onstage, with Nurse Chappel's tummy suitably bulging and Kirk richly bearded.

The play proceeded with respectful solemnity punctuated by muffled giggles at the command officers dressed as inn-keepers, shepherds and wise men. Finally, the third wise man, unrecognizable to the crew with his heavy make-up and large crown down over his ears, stepped forward, knelt and placed his gift of myrrh at the foot of the manger. Then he stood to make the magi's blessing. To the delight of the audience, he raised his hand, spread his fingers in the Vulcan salute and intoned. "May you live long and prosper."

The crew roared with surprise that Spock could be persuaded to put aside his rigid Vulcan austerity to dress up for an Earth play.

But that was nothing to their surprise, later towards the end of the feast when the steaming Christmas puddings were brought out, to see Dr McCoy scowling over his single pudding serve, Captain Kirk quietly enjoying his first, then second course, and Spock, unaccountably, enjoying three full pudding courses.

When Uhura asked him how it could be, he licked his spoon, raised an eyebrow and said "It's perfectly logical, lieutenant. It's Christmas."

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