

**The infamous STXI file :: 2009-2010**

(J.J. Abrams, *Star Trek XI*, 2009)

by mazaher

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**summary:**

<i>Scars</i>	2
<i>Tattoo</i>	3
<i>Death of a warrior</i>	4
<i>The test</i>	5-6
<i>The cleaner (reboot)</i>	7-9
<i>Scrapbook</i>	10-13

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## Scars

by mazaher, 2010

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Bones has scars of his own.

One, a thin discolored line, runs across the palm of his left hand like an afterthought of fate. That, he got on Mu Quadrantis III, when he slipped his hand under the steel wire which was slowly strangling me, grasped it, and stopped it.

Another crawls lazily up the back of his right forearm. This is crossed at regular intervals by the short bars of actual stitches. We were grounded on Thrraal by transporter malfunction with only a basic medkit, and a morg almost bit his arm off. I had to sew him up myself, he muttering in equal measure directions and curses, me fumbling with old-fashioned thread and needle.

(It was that time when Spock came very, very near to smiling when he saw Bones, aching but safe, materialize on the finally fixed-up pads).

A sweep of angry red marks is scattered diagonally on his back. Those he got only three months ago (3.19, Spock would correct), shielding Spock and me from poisoned darts shot by the natives on Alpha Geminorum XXV. I keep an eye on them every time Bones takes a swim. I see Spock watching them too. As the poison decomposes, they're slowly turning from black to blue, to greenish-brown, to red, to deep pink.

He also got a phaser shot in his left shoulder, another in his lower right calf. Phaser scars look like pale starfish.

Other scars can't be seen on his body, but they're there. I know. Spock knows.

Every time he says "He's dead, Jim," leaves a scar.

Planetside or on board; red-shirts, technicians, ensigns, officers, crewmen and -women, aliens of every description; because of accidents, attacks, natural events, battles with Klingons, Orions, Romulans, illness, madness, mere misfortune: every death he feels like a cutting wound.

Not to his pride as the ship's CMO, entrusted with the task of keeping them all alive. Rather, to his compassion towards all lifeforms. Maybe also to his trust in life.

Bones is constantly at us so that we allow him to erase our scars, but it's funny how he never seems to find the time to erase his own.

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## Tattoo

by mazaher, 2010

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James T. Kirk has a tattoo.

It is small, it is black, it is on the upper left corner of his chest, and it is a word in Andorian.



The word is  , *zhi*: daughter.

It is the name of his first dog, his only dog, the one his stepfather Frank refused to allow him to bring to Tarsus IV.

The one Frank had promised he would take care of until Jim's return.

The one he gave away within a week.

Jim doesn't speak of his tattoo. In his personal file, the information is misplaced: it should be included in Unclassified Data, not in the MIA section, the one about how to identify corpses.

But I know about it. I saw it for the first time when Jim cracked his collarbone during parachute training in his second year at Starfleet Academy, and didn't say anything until just before going to bed.

"Hey, Bones," he'd said "do you by any chance have some ketoprofen at hand?"

(It took me three sessions with a bone-knitter to mend him).

I felt my eyes widen in surprise when I saw the black script on his pale skin. Jim glared at me, challenging me to comment, and I spoke of something else. Given the situation, it can't be said that I lacked other topics to rant about.

Later, when we both were in our respective beds and the lights were already off, I heard Jim murmur quietly:

"She was my friend, you know. A bull terrier bitch, two years old." Pause. "By the time I was fourteen, I became aware that life was writing a story on my body. I wanted to write my own version."

"I know," I sighed. "Sleep now."

Jim turned over, closed his eyes, and we left it at that.

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## **Death of a warrior**

by mazaher, 2010

*Aliens, as well as heroes, come in different shapes and sizes. To anybody who might feel tempted: this is nothing to laugh about.*

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She was a warrior among her people. Her whole life, her whole existence, was aimed at protecting the hive, keeping the young safe and the provisions unspoiled. She walked around all day long on her three pairs of legs, drawing circles around the nest along the well-worn concentric paths, retracing a magic ring drawn by generation after generation of warriors. She followed their scent, and her own. The scent, the hive, her people. That was her.

When the machine, worked by beings so huge that she couldn't even see them, had taken her away, she had not realized what had happened. She couldn't find the path or the scents anymore. None of her people came across her, touching feelers in greeting and reassurance. She couldn't find the hive.

She didn't imagine she was lost. She thought the nest was lost, and began to search, ever more frantically, for a trace of the right scent, pushed beyond the limit of resistance by the need to find, to fight, to defend.

Finally she got it, a faint thread of pheromones, and ran after it, icor rushing fast in her veins. But what she found was not the nest. It was a hard, smooth, dark surface. Moving.

The heel of Kirk's left boot, which had carelessly trodden on what had looked like an anthill while running to the beam-up point, now came down on her, severing head from chest and body, crushing both.

But not completely.

There were now two chunks of her, broken legs flailing, mangled feelers quivering, icor leaking, and still she couldn't die, still she fought to protect.

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It had been an emergency beam-up from Gamma Myrmidonis V, not the right time to be too picky with the signal. Kirk, Spock and Chekov had bunched together as soon as they'd reached the appointed spot, an oval of 73 by 104 cm, and as a bunch they had materialized in the transport room. They had stepped down from the pad and were going on their way to debriefing, when Spock, walking as usual half a step behind Kirk, had stopped dead in his tracks. He was very pale and his eyes were closed.

Kirk turned around at once, worried, asking. It took a moment before Spock could answer.

"Captain, I am receiving unintentional, distressing telepathic signals from an alien mind. It is urgent that I investigate the source."

He crouched and began examining the floor, frowning, fingertips delicately grazing the smooth surface, until they found what they were searching for. Spock slipped his phaser from his belt, turned it upside down, and pressed the heel deliberately and forcefully on a small black dot on the floor. A tiny scrunching noise was heard. Then silence.

"It seems that our mission regrettably caused the death of an uninvolved third party," Spock murmured then, and he extended his hand in the ta'al over the warrior's remains.

"I grieve with thee," Kirk answered.

"And I with hir people."

::

## **The test**

by mazaher, 2010

*Inspired in part by heresluck's fanvid The test, at <http://heresluck.livejournal.com/308207.html>; see also killabeez's in-depth commentary at [http://community.livejournal.com/vid\\_commentary/22647.html](http://community.livejournal.com/vid_commentary/22647.html)*

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### **1. Kirk**

I have been watching last month's newscasts.

We are back on Earth after our ordeal. I have been promoted, and duly mobbed by journalists. The Enterprise is under repair, Scotty scooting this way and that along the corridors, supervising the works, out of himself with excitement. Spock has locked himself into a room to meditate and has not re-emerged since yesterday evening. Bones is presently passed out on the extra bunk in my quarters, after sampling one single-malt scotch too many: he's definitely a bourbon man. Uhura is celebrating with Gaila, according to a gals-only private ritual which doesn't involve me nor allow for my presence.

I am still awake, not too drunk, not too tired, and restless enough for two. I got the idea just now of checking out who won the basketball game between the Andorian Ki-linns and the Bootes' Flying Snakes, which was scheduled in Miami on the afternoon of the fateful day when Vulcan called for help.

But I don't get as far as the results. I've happened on some video footage of my trial for the Kobayashi Maru test. I almost click on the next page, but then I stop. I watch, just a handful of seconds.

It feels like a century ago.

I see myself as I never did.

Until the moment when Admiral Barnett's voice, loud through the microphone, called me to the bar, I had believed I would easily walk, run, slip or fight my way out of any mess in which I could possibly stick myself, like I had jumped from my father's Corvette at the very last moment: brake, clutch, stick, hand-brake, eject.

Until the moment when Spock stood up as cool as rue, adjusted his jacket, and stepped down to confront me, I had believed I could out-talk anybody: plead, confute, imply, mislead, or downright lie.

But not this time.

I watch the tension in my shoulders. I watch my eyes when meeting Spock's, and when \*not\* meeting them, and I see myself in the act of morphing through an irreversible process of change.

I learned then, once and for all, that I would never be allowed to step away from responsibility anymore.

I learned from Spock then, once and for all, that choices have consequences, and that I would be called to answer them. That the moment always comes for accounts to be settled.

I look at myself, and finally I see.

That was my Kobayashi Maru.

Have I passed the test?

::

### **2. Spock**

I seem to be unable to meditate in a functional way.

The Enterprise has returned to Terra after the Narada incident. The voyage has been slow, uneventful, and tiring.

Our arrival has been met with the customary, slightly frantic social activities humans consider indispensable in happy circumstances of public import.

As soon as possible, I have retired in my quarters at Starfleet Academy, and set myself to the needed task of reordering my mind.

But I can't.

Along the last 25.6 hours, I tried again and again, employing in succession the Seven Keys of Mental Peace in order to erode the peaks of my individual thoughts and smooth them out in the plain of impersonal serenity, but there is one item that still resists. I feel its mass behind my shoulders. Until it will stand unchallenged, it will be impossible to reach the point when the pronoun "I" ceases to have meaning.

I turn around in my mind and look at it.

As was to be expected, it is an emotion.

Fear.

I watch it develop in my consciousness, and assess its extension in time.

It begins in the time and place of the Captain's trial for how he cheated in the Kobayashi Maru test.

I replay the scene as preserved in my memory.

I now acknowledge that, at the time, fear was an emotion I had never faced.

I was standing there, lecturing the best cadet the Academy had ever seen about the emotion of fear and the need to conquer it, and I had not the faintest experience of what I was talking about. Only abstract concepts.

But \*he\* had.

I have been loved. I have felt protected by the constancy my parents maintained in their affection, even if they could not, or would not, always shield me from the occurrences of the moment. I knew even then that, as humans say, "they had my back".

But \*he\* was alone.

When I endured kahs-wan, I was by myself in the desert, but all the same I was not alone-- my mother was waiting for me at home.

When he drove his dead father's car over the edge, he was alone in every sense of the word. Nobody was waiting for him.

Only when my mother disappeared into the crumbling ravine, falling to her death on a dying planet, did I finally get acquainted with my fear.

His fear, I met when we melded the first time. If the test I had designed had the aim of trying the cadets in command training for their ability in functioning under the stress of coming death, he had passed it already before he was fourteen, and it had not been a simulation.

It is not a coincidence if he is firstly a warrior and I am firstly a scientist. He fights to protect, because despite his recklessness, he is very aware of danger and of the meaning of the adjective "deadly". I search for knowledge, because despite my inquisitiveness, I trust the purity of my intent to protect me from harm.

I watch myself leaning over the abyss, my hand extended toward a woman who is not there anymore, and finally I see.

The death of my mother was my Kobayashi Maru.

Have I passed the test?

::

## **The cleaner**

by mazaher, 2010

*This is an extended, ST version of an originally non-ST short story.*

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### **1. Cleaning up**

I am the one who cleans up afterwards.

They give me all I need: gloves, overalls, detergents, disinfectants, cloths, dusters, sponges, steel wool, dry-and-wet vacuum, pressure-washer, portable sonics.

A notice says I can ask the guard on duty for whatever else I need.

I never ask.

There is this room behind a steel door.

The plate on the outside just says "Room".

I am appointed to clean the Room whenever They order me.

It is completely tiled in small white squares of porcelain, even the ceiling.

The walls are bare. The machines are taken away when They're finished.

The only fixture is an enamel tub, the sides covered in the same white tiles as the walls and ceiling, the drain hole large and grilled.

There is blood in the tub, usually. Spatters of blood on the walls. Once also on the ceiling.

Teeth marks on the enamel.

There is piss, and shit, and spit, and mucus.

Sometimes semen.

Probably tears.

I clean up.

I leave the room pristine and shining in its lethal white.

Ready for the next use.

What else can I do?

They said my own would live if I'd live and obey.

I would choose death for them, rather than this.

I'd choose it for myself as well.

But this is worse than mere death, and I won't choose this for them in their stead.

I keep my silence, and clean up.

I wonder, would I recognize their blood, their spit? their tears?

::

### **2. Killing off**

The alarm wakes me up at 02:15.

The usual neutral voice orders me to the Room at once. How indifferent it sounds every time.

I walk the corridors. I get the trolley with the tools. The guard opens the door, I roll it in, the door slams shut behind me.

The tub is not empty.

Somebody lays inside, a creature, supine, completely still. The fur is scorched and bloodied, the belly slashed open, purple innards protruding.

What am I supposed to do with it?

I shuffle nearer. The purple mass suddenly quivers, pulsates. Long black eyes slit open and a ragged breath begins to rasp in and out.

What do They want me to do?

What should I do?

What can I do?

What do I do now?

What I wish for, is to have died before all this began.

What I know, is that I, and my own, will pay for my mistake if I don't guess and do what They want me to do.

But I don't even know if my own are still alive as They promised.  
And this creature doesn't deserve all this, any more than my own do.  
I grab the glass bottle of acid, break it on the floor, pick a shard.  
I cut the creature's throat.

::

### **3. Chores and tools**

I rang for a plastic bag for the corpse. The bag was heavy and shiny. I wrapped it around the body, pulled the zipper closed and wiped the outside clean. It was too heavy for me to pull out of the tub.

Then I cleaned up the Room as usual.

I don't know if I did what They judge was right.

I only know that nothing happened to me.

No news about my own.

Not that I'm expecting any.

Since then, I sometimes find corpses in the Room. Or almost-corpSES.

Sometimes half-corpSES.

One day, I have found a short-blade cutter among my tools. Too short for a weapon, but enough for what I need to do.

I kill them off, then clean up.

::

### **4. Leaving be**

Tonight it's different.

It's a humanoid, male, tall, arms stretched at his sides.

His skin is greenish-white, or maybe it's the reflection from his green blood pooling in the tub. He's still wearing the tatters of a uniform: black pants, blue tunic. A golden logo on the breast, a high hyperbole with an underscored parabola.

His ears are pointed.

His eyes are closed.

I come nearer, to see if he's breathing.

He isn't. The only movement I see is a frantic pulse in the artery along his neck.

There I will cut.

This never gets easier.

I clutch the cutter.

His eyes spring open. He turns and stares at me. Round brown eyes, the pupils dilated.

Filled with pain. And determination.

He takes a shuddering breath, then another.

He says, "Do not. He will come and get me."

I lower my hand.

I turn around.

I clean up.

::

### **5. Letting go**

He did come, the fair one.

He broke into the Room and ran straight to the tub.

Others followed, carrying a stretcher and shining, buzzing medical instruments which made my heart race in fear as I backed into a corner and crouched behind the trolley.

He was touching the body in the tub.

Fingers light on his bloodied brow, down the temple through sweat-soaked black hair.



His voice was broken when he said "I've got you. Got you."  
The dead one in the tub nodded, just once.  
"I told her you would come," he whispered.  
Then he lost consciousness.

Now They are dead.  
We are free. What remains of us.  
My own were not found.  
But the fair one came, the dead one lived.  
I won't forget.

::

**JAMES TIBERIUS KIRK, *Scrapbook* (2233 - 2241)**

by mazaher, 1993-2010

::

I want a motorcycle  
That can take off and fly  
So that whatever happens  
I never must slow down.  
I want to fly it often  
I want to fly it fast  
And paint it all in red  
(I'll never paint it brown)  
(2233)

::

My new computer is a dragon  
It eats bytes and lays eggs  
It breaks all locks and firewalls  
And rushes through the 'net.  
(2235)

::

There's no rose without a thorn  
there's no cow without a horn  
there's no roof without a shower  
there's no boy without a lover  
there's no flower without a snake  
there's no handle without rake  
there's no shadow without body  
there's no feud without ally  
there's no danger without caution  
there's no stop without a motion  
there's no snail without a trail  
there's no joy without a wail  
there's no truth without a notion  
there's no bang without commotion  
there's no death without a corpse  
there's no boss without a posse  
there's no flour without a mill  
there's no fool without a hill  
there's no hook without a dee  
there's no YOU without a ME  
(2237)

::

If I was a star  
It would be in a binary system.  
I would be a G sun  
Paired with an orange K  
And around our balance point  
Many planets would turn.  
Some would be class Q  
Some would be T  
But some would be M

With mountains and sea.  
(2238)

::

A book is not enough  
To learn the story in full.  
A holovid shows only  
One point from which to look.  
I want to be in the middle  
I want to be out there  
To learn what happens after  
Those two strange words: The End.  
(2241)

::

Take a jump start on the night  
Get there before dawn  
To the field of long grass swaying  
All the way uphill to heaven  
Where the swallow is the janitor  
Sewing the sky to the edge of the world  
With wings of blue steel  
And cries of sunlight.  
(2241)

::

Get out of your clothes  
Get out of yourself  
Get out in the open  
And see what's left.

Discover what drive  
makes you breathe every day  
Discover what season  
will not fade away.

Remember whatever  
so fondly you loved  
Remember that nothing  
is safe as you thought.

Happiness blooms  
like daisies in may  
But sorrow remains  
like earth day after day.

Yet without a dark soil  
no flowers will grow  
Without after sorrow  
what love would you know?  
(2243)

::

*The following is present in two versions. One is written with care in two columns on one face of a single sheet of ruled paper; the handwriting suggests a date around 2236. The other is pasted at the back, scribbled as prose on a scrapbook page in a handwriting compatible with year 2239. The later version has footnotes added in a sarcastical vein, expressing bitter contempt for the naïveté of the composition. The notes have been omitted in this edition.*

Pat Wild was an outlaw,  
he robbed the mail-coaches.  
He came alone on his sorrel  
stopped the coach  
went away with the money.  
He shot so straight  
that guns were tilted from the hands  
of those who tried to stop him  
and nobody stopped him.  
But if he saw an immigrant on the coach  
he didn't steal his money  
because he had been an immigrant  
and he had been robbed.  
They had taken his land  
killed his father and brothers  
left him half-dead  
and burned down his house.  
He had fled to the mountains  
alone with his horse and gun  
a good fire for the night  
and a cave to sleep in.  
The woods were all his own  
from the tops to lowlands  
clear streams grassy pastures  
but not a home to come back to.  
He had a girlfriend  
in town, Sally Mason,  
she sang at the saloon.  
One evening he went to see her  
unseen, behind the saloon  
at midnight he kissed her again  
mounted his horse and turned away.  
But a traitor had seen him  
kiss Sally behind the saloon  
he ran and gave a warning  
and his enemies took their guns.  
They took their guns, mounted their horses,  
those who had taken his land,  
they galloped after him  
while he rode away  
He rode at ease  
thinking about Sally  
he heard them coming  
and galloped away.  
They were too many to face them  
and shoot away their guns  
he turned to the church wanting to hide there.  
He got down on the doorstep,  
sent his horse away free,  
he stopped a moment to unsaddle him,  
take the bridle off.  
They took him on the church door

where they went to pray God,  
he didn't fight, they were too many.  
They took his gun, they beat him,  
then they brought him under the oak tree  
and hanged him with a rope  
When he fell from the horse, hanged by his throat,  
they shot their guns  
Hurrah, Pat Wild is dead!  
They came back across the town  
singing Pat Wild is dead!  
The whole town was afraid  
but not his girlfriend Sally Mason.  
She went out in the night  
with a wheelbarrow,  
went to the big oak  
(the whole town was watching from the half-closed windows)  
cut the rope Pat was hanging from,  
and kissed him on the mouth.  
She brought him home in the wheelbarrow,  
they saw her digging under a tree  
behind the saloon  
they saw her bury something  
and stick a cross on the grave.  
But Pat Wild wasn't dead  
stretched on the couch he opened his eyes and looked at her.  
I'm not dead this time, Sally Mason  
and she kissed him again.

::