

S T A R T R E K I I

"Lord Bobby's Obsession"

STEP OUTLINE REVISED
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STAR TREK II

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TEASER

1. A Romulan craft has presented a distant Federation colony with an unacceptable ultimatum, and the Enterprise has been dispatched on a high-priority mission to deal with the Romulan.

Thus, the sight of a derelict spacecraft becalmed in space would seem to be insufficient cause to pause and investigate. However, this derelict is a Klingon destroyer which might still harbor an intelligence-bonanza in the form of a highly-advanced weapons system. And, if that's not reason enough, our sensors report some sort of life-form still aboard.

Which, for both humane and security reasons, calls for a pause to board the derelict and briefly investigate.

Radio contact (by LT. UHURA, assisted by exo-linguist YEOMAN JENNIFER YORK) at first draws no response at all, then suddenly a burst of incoherent signals which, when decided by Jennifer, astonishingly seem to come out as a haunting 19th-century English folksong, with which Jennifer is, from her own background, very familiar indeed.

KIRK, after due consultation, decides it is sufficiently urgent and safe to beam aboard a landing party to investigate

Uhura signals for permission to board. But the derelict's only "response," by design or accident, remains that same haunting, deeply romantic English folksong.

ACT ONE

2. Transporter Room. LT. CHEKOV arms and briefs the boarding party, which is under the command of WILL DECKER, and includes Jennifer as interpreter or decoder.

Although a strange magnetic pulse from the Niobe interferes with some of the Enterprise's relays, once this problem is identified and dealt with, the transbeaming seems to take place without incident.

Until we realize all but Jennifer and Decker have, somehow, been left behind.

3. The bridge of the Niobe. Decker and Jennifer rematerialize, shocked to find the rest of the party not with them. Decker tries at once to communicate with the Enterprise. But whoever has been playing around with those magnetic pulses also is scrambling all communication between Decker and the Enterprise.

4. Kirk is concerned at having no proper communication with Decker and Jennifer. But at least they seem to be okay and functioning and, with the Transporter being, for the moment, not altogether reliable, he decides to rely on Decker's resourcefulness. At least, until Ilia can identify the precise nature of the disturbance and how it may be neutralized.

5. Decker and Jennifer explore the unfamiliar bridge of the

partially-ruined vessel, somewhat like two intrepid children roaming a haunted house.

They realize the derelict looks as it does not only from severe battle damage (although no bodies are visible), but also from someone's positively ingenious attempts to restore her ability to travel.

Both are startled suddenly to find themselves confronted by what appears to be an Edwardian dandy, affable, witty, superficial, who introduces himself as ROBERT STANDISH, Third Earl of Lancashire, but his friends call him "LORD BOBBY."

Lord Bobby, rather implausibly pleads loneliness. Particularly for a fitting companion like Jennifer, whose lady-like coolness and Oxonian accent on the radio had convinced him, sight unseen, that, after decades -- or is it centuries? -- of drifting, he had at last found a kindred spirit.

Lord Bobby, pleading to be taken aboard the Enterprise, spins out, with a conviction which leaves Jennifer quite moved, a curious tale of having been, some time around the year 1900, Earthtime, kidnapped by Klingon space-explorers (using one of those primitive "saucer"-like vehicles whose existence Earth governments feared to acknowledge for the next hundred years)...who, between tests, had maintained him in a cryogenic state which kept him from aging...until one day he awakened to find the vessel, apparently after a fierce battle, disabled and abandoned -- with himself as the only living soul aboard.

Already, we begin to see a sense of kinship between Lord

Bobby and Jennifer, both of whom share a love for English literature and a nostalgia for the green hills and rolling lawns of an upperclass Edwardian England even their ancestors were, in actual fact, not very likely ever to have experienced in just that way.

But we, and possibly Decker, also begin to note a subtle evasiveness about Lord Bobby, as well as a tendency not to let you get too close to him...

6. Kirk abruptly is enabled once again to communicate with Decker. And, after some questions which convince him that the man poses no security threat, grants permission for this curious man-out-of-time to beam aboard.

7. On the derelict's bridge, while Decker is communicating with Kirk, Lord Bobby casually touches a complex (and definitely non-ornamental) bracelet on his left wrist, which arms what we will later identify as a doomsday device.

We realize now that Lord Bobby's ability to interfere with the Transporter, to scramble or monitor radio transmissions, and to project the image of him Lord Bobby wants us to see, all derive from this control-bracelet. Which (as we will discover) is able to siphon power even from a supply as distant as the Enterprise.

Thus, when the Transporter, with its intense surge of electrical power, now starts to beam them back...Lord Bobby's

control-bracelet is momentarily weakened just enough to give us (but not Jennifer or Decker) a fleeting glimpse of what he really is -- an altogether alien kind of creature, beautiful in his own shimmering way -- but definitely not human.

And the device he has armed continues imperceptibly to pulse with life.

ACT TWO

8. Kirk, intrigued by Lord Bobby's appearance and manner, accompanies him to the sick bay's Diagnostic Center and interrogates him while the DRS. McCOY and CHAPEL prepare to do a routine scan on their curious guest to determine whether, after all these frozen centuries, his metabolism still functions normally, or whether, after exposure to Klingon testing, he poses any immunological threat to public health.

Decker, still bothered by Lord Bobby's story, and aware of his interest in Jennifer, assigns her to him as a kind of "Intourist Guide," to keep a close eye on him until they can be sure he is totally harmless.

The security-minded Chekov, after a swift computer scan of late 19th-century English literature and social history, at once begins to poke holes in Lord Bobby's story of his alleged roots (the Third Earl of Lancashire's only son died at age twelve). But Lord Bobby is able ingeniously to counter

each of these challenges.

Kirk, however, finds more serious holes in Lord Bobby's story (the Klingons did not have saucer-like interspace vehicles until the 1950's), and tries to pin him down to the truth.

At which point, Lord Bobby makes no further attempt at ingratiating. He simply demands that the Enterprise "return" him to England.

And when Kirk firmly tells him that this vessel is on a high-priority combat-ready mission in quite another direction, and gives orders to his helmsman to proceed full ahead, Lord Bobby simply touches his control bracelet and waits for him to realize that the derelict is now attached to the Enterprise by a powerful magnetic pulse.

He also informs them that any attempt to break this grip -- of which the Enterprise may be capable -- would trigger a doomsday device aboard the derelict which would destroy both vessels.

9. Drs. Chapel and McCoy are getting a computer readout clearly informing them that Lord Bobby is an alien life-form, and all the tests they've run on him are totally irrelevant.

10. The Enterprise's sensors confirm to Kirk that Lord Bobby's is not an idle threat. There is an activated doomsday device aboard the derelict. And, while the Enterprise has enough

power to break its magnetic grip, such an attempt could trigger the device.

11. Jennifer is giving Lord Bobby a tour of the Enterprise, but soon realizes he's far more interested in hearing about her memories of England, while ingeniously disputing any memories which don't tally with his preconceptions.

She is of course aware of the threat he poses to the Enterprise, and tries to remind him of such "English values as fair play, or concern for one's kith and kin, the colony menaced by the Romulans. At the same time, she finds herself falling more and more under his spell, because in every other way he is the ideal man of her still not totally forgotten teenage fantasies.

12. Kirk reports to Starfleet Command that the Enterprise is temporarily under the control of an alien being insisting on being taken "home" to Earth.

He is urgently informed that no other vessel is currently close enough to intercept the Romulan before it carries out its threat against the endangered colony. And that they must find some way to neutralize the threat from Lord Bobby.

13. Kirk, SCOTTY and XON make plans to beam a landing party aboard the derelict. And, although doomsday devices, by definition, are not supposed to be susceptible to disarming,

they are to see whether some way cannot be found to deactivate it.

Xon, however, points out that Lord Bobby, thanks to his control bracelet, will instantly detect the momentary power-drain from the Transporter, and could force them to abort the mission by threatening instantly to set off the bomb.

Which confirms Chekov's feeling that Lord Bobby himself must be tricked and overpowered.

14. While Jennifer, with Lord Bobby, struggles to keep her sense of duty paramount over her personal feelings, Kirk and Chekov prepare their trap.

Kirk demands a demonstration that Lord Bobby is not merely bluffing.

Lord Bobby obliges. But, the moment he bares the bracelet, Kirk and Chekov, in perfect teamwork, immobilize his arm.

But now, when Chekov tries to seize and remove the bracelet, he screams with pain.

They are forced to release Lord Bobby, who is merely amused at their childish stratagem.

And now treats them to a demonstration of his power.

His control-bracelet suddenly drains all the power from the Enterprise's air-conditioning system and suddenly renders everyone aboard prostrate from heat and gasping for breath.

A moment later, he causes them to feel their blood turn to ice.

Now will they stop under-estimating him and do as he demands?

ACT THREE

15. As though reading Chekov's mind, he also pleasantly assures them he has anticipated they might, in desperation, be foolish enough to try to kill or stun him. His control bracelet is set accordingly. From now on, the slightest violent shock to his person would set off the doomsday device.

And, tired of their childlike stratagems, he gives them a one-hour deadline either to set a course for Earth or be blown up.

Kirk, offering Lord Bobby a thirty-second illustrated history of modern England, tries to show him that the idyllic 19th-century upper-class life he is determined to enter simply no longer exists.

Lord Bobby, however, has a perfectly "reasonable" answer. Travel at Warp-10 to deposit Jennifer and me back in late-Victorian England, and you will actually gain time for your mercy mission.

With his power-bracelet, he sets the doomsday device to go off automatically fifty-nine minutes from now. Unless, seeing they have followed his orders, he presses the "override" button.

16. The Bridge. A desperate conference. Someone asks why can't they do as he says, and then return to their own time? But any tampering with Earth's past history -- especially by introducing an alien life-form -- is against standing orders and simply non-negotiable.

There's only one possible course of action. To board the derelict and seek, somehow, to neutralize a Klingon doomsday device of whose appearance, location, technology or protective boobytraps they are of course hopelessly ignorant.

Volunteering for the party are Decker, Scotty and Xon.

But, since all agree it is unsafe to use the Transporter, the party will have to resort to an old-fashioned shuttlecraft, at a penalty of many precious minutes.

17. Jennifer, realizing that a great deal, perhaps everything, depends on her, tries desperately to get at the source of Lord Bobby's strange obsession.

And, knowing that he holds all the cards, he tells her frankly of his birth and childhood on a primitive planet colonized by Earth people from the Brittanian Commonwealth, whose "superiority" and "style" he had always admired. And how, as a youngster, he had signed up as a cabin-boy on a Federation craft, hoping one day to be taken to that legendary planet Earth.

However, several battles later, he had ended up a prisoner on the Klingon craft. Where, after an encounter with a

Romulan destroyer, he remained the sole survivor, suffering agonies of loneliness allayed only when he learned how to use the damaged vessel's surviving library of English literature.

His passion and sincerity are such that it is possible for Jennifer, at least briefly, to see Lord Bobby as someone who sincerely wants to look and live like a human, and with whose taste for gracious English country life we ourselves would be glad to identify. Even his little lies and tricks are, after all, prompted only by his flattering dream of wanting to be like us.

18. The shuttlecraft, after cautiously circling the derelict, decides to enter through a ragged hole blasted into its flank.

This, by way of several auxiliary airlocks (one of which malfunctions and nearly leaves them all trapped in a tiny space) finally gets them to the bridge.

Here, with the aid of handheld sensors, they begin their search for the doomsday device, with only the vaguest idea of how to identify the object, let alone disarm it. And the deadline steadily sticking closer.

19. Jennifer, now beginning to find Lord Bobby sympathetic and virtually "human," pleads with him to release the Enterprise at least until it completes its current mission of protecting a threatened colony. Thousands of lives depend on it.

She is shocked to realize that Lord Bobby, despite all

his reading about such abstractions as "honour" and "self-sacrifice," in all sincerity, simply does not understand that, on our scale of values, peoples' lives count for more than one man's (or humanoid's) dream.

20. The Bridge. Kirk is under increasing pressure from Starfleet Headquarters.

Afraid that Lord Bobby's control bracelet may also enable him to monitor radio signals, and hoping to mislead him if he is listening in, Kirk defies a direct order and is relieved of his command. In favor of Decker. And why does Decker not acknowledge the order? Kirk comes up with some excuse. Starfleet Command, realizing he can't speak freely, suspect the worst. But there is no other vessel close enough to come to the aid of the threatened colony!

21. Aboard the derelict. Xon, after several failures, discovers an object which seems in no way related to the vessel's power or navigation systems. What's more, it is not, like all other devices they've found, equipped with a simply way to make modular repairs.

It appears, in fact, to be a solid piece of some unfamiliar metal even their sensors are unable to identify or penetrate.

Only one thing about it they are finally able to identify. A component they determine to be an advanced kind of clock which swiftly ticks off the micro-seconds. Indicating

that Lord Bobby had indeed triggered it to go off in an hour -- with only fifteen minutes left to go -- and it still very much looks as though only he can shut it off.

ACT FOUR

22. Kirk, afraid to communicate with his team aboard the derelict, joins Jennifer and Lord Bobby in the Environment Room.

Here it does not take him long to realize that, although Jennifer is struggling valiantly to remain loyal to the Enterprise, Lord Bobby's spell (whether sexual or hypnotic) is such that Kirk can no longer fully count on her to help him play for time.

23. On the bridge, a desperate message from the embattled colonists, faced with imminent Romulan attack, and Uhura's agony at being overtly unable to offer them any hope.

24. On the derelict, a brief, sharp dispute between Decker and Xon as to the best point at which to make a high-risk attempt to invade the doomsday device.

Standoff. When Scotty suddenly appears from an adjoining room with a duplicate of Lord Bobby's control bracelet.

25. Jennifer, trying valiantly (but no longer with complete conviction) to carry out Kirk's covert instruction to gain time at all costs, has made one small but unforgivable slip.

Which makes it impossible for Lord Bobby not to suspect she had, to some extent, been simply stringing him along.

He confronts her with this. And Jennifer, because she did, and does, care for him -- that is, for the image he artificially projects -- with some pain admits the truth.

Bobby, in a sudden burst of savage disillusion with Earthly humanity, decides to hell with it. He doesn't want to go to a place like that! Now that his dream is shattered, let them all blow up together!

As Jennifer, terrified, pleads with him...

26. ...and Kirk, monitoring their conversation, now is desperate enough openly to communicate with the party in the derelict, learning they may have the key to disarming the doomsday device, yet still running various tests to make absolutely sure...

27. ...Lord Bobby, not without tenderness, says goodbye to Jennifer and prepares to set off the terminal explosion...

28. ...Kirk sends a desperate message to Scotty not to wait...

29. ...Lord Bobby and Scotty, almost at the same moment,

both activate and override the order to explode -- but Scotty is just a split-second ahead.

30. Aftermath. Lord Bobby, now powerless, naturally expects to feel the full fury of Kirk's vengeance.

He is astonished therefore when Kirk offers him the option of beaming back to his derelict, destined never to see his dreams realized, but able at least, with the aid of his library, to go on dreaming.

31. Transporter Room.

Lord Bobby makes a sincere, last-minute attempt to enlist Jennifer in his obsession. It's a good try, but it fails. Now, with Jennifer looking on, moved, Lord Bobby, doing a Ronald Colman/Sydney Carton stiff-upper-lip renunciation number ("tis a far, far better thing..."), returns alone to his world of pure illusion.

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"THE SAVAGE SYNDROME"

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