

Strange Goings On

Part 1, by Yuchtar

Colonel Virginia Lake parked her car in the multi-level garage as usual and casually made her way toward the Studio building. Civilian studio employees knew her only as a not-to-be-trifled with producer; they never could have imagined that she was actually a high-ranking officer in an ultra-secret military organisation housed beneath the Studio with the fate of the world at stake every day.

"Good morning, Janice," she said as she walked in the studio door, but there was no one seated at reception. Lake frowned. That was odd. Janice was never late and as she glanced around the rest of the studio floor, she saw no one else either. That was even odder.

Her frown deeply entrenched, Colonel Lake made her way to Straker's office. Miss Ealand was not there. Someone was *always* there - Straker's office was *never* left unguarded. As head of Harlington-Straker Studios, Ed Straker was an important man; but as head of SHADO, Commander Straker was a vital piece of security hardware!

With a heavy sigh - dreading what she may find, Lake went ahead and activated the office lift into the secret heart of SHADO. As she feared, HQ was deserted too. None of the equipment seemed to be functioning - all the screens were dead. She felt a swell of panic trying to crawl up her throat, but she swallowed it down. What could this be all about? Where was everyone else, and why was she the only one left?

Part 2, By Suzanne Sutherland

Attempting to keep her panic quelled down, Colonel Lake fumbled with a few switches by the Comms Station to try and contact Moonbase. The monitor continued to show a fuzzy picture of nothingness. A slight bead of sweat formed on her upper lip. Wondering what to do next, she made her way to the Commander's office. An ever so slight shuffle made her stop in her tracks and nearly jump out of her skin. The noise was hushed but foreboding.

"Hello, who's there?" she enquired trying very hard to make her voice sound even and in control. Although standing very still, her hand slowly and carefully made its way to the secret inner pocket of her jacket. It seemed to take ages to find her Browning pistol.

There it was again. The eerie shuffling seemed to be coming from the direction of the corridor leading to Straker's office. Maybe Ed was hurt and unable to speak. With that thought in her head, she made a quick grab for her weapon and walked purposefully towards the office.

Virginia found the sliding doors to Straker's office wide open and the corridor absolutely empty. The panic began to subside. A constant feeling of stone cold readiness to tackle whatever was in SHADO HQ replaced her primal fear. In fact, she was getting rather irate about the whole thing.

She walked into the office to see if there were any tell-tale signs of what had happened. Everything in the office was neat and orderly just like Ed. The Colonel smiled at the thought and then walked over to his desk. A script caught her eye. With the pistol still in her hand, she picked up the script and thumbed through it. Oh dear, not another Gothic romance set in Scotland. Making a movie on such a distant location really played havoc with her secret but more worthwhile occupation. Getting the time away from SHADO proved tricky but Ed knew that the cover had to be maintained. She always got the time off to be that high-powered film producer she never really envisaged she would be. A fleeting memory of dampness and grey clouds the last time she was in Scotland filled her with dread. There it was again. That shuffle came from just outside the office. Determination to get to the bottom of all this replaced her unpleasant memories of Scotland.

The figure suddenly appeared at the entrance to the office. It was not human. Neither was it a green-faced alien. She did not take too much notice of its features as she threw down the script and took the pistol in both hands in readiness to shoot. One thing for sure, the creature was disgustingly ugly and coming towards her.

Part 3, by Grant Wray

The figure stopped and looked down, oblivious to Col. Lake's presence. It reached out and a disease-ridden hand emerged from the sack-cloth sleeving of its robe. It picked up a scythe from what seemed like thin air, hefted it a few times, then grunted a few words in a strange language that seemed familiar. Turning slowly so that its face was hidden by its hood, the man-thing shuffled on past the stunned Virginia and walked through the wall of Straker's office into what should have been solid bed-rock.

Replacing her pistol, Virginia attempted to repeat the creature's words as if they were a clue. "Anatha morn tae trund fay a dolla". Over and over again she repeated the words till it dawned on her. The words were Scottish, ancient and broad. She felt the wall where the creature walked through, it was solid enough, but cold, like ice.

She jumped back suddenly as she heard a horse bray then galloping hooves from a standing start. Just in time as a magnificent horse shot from the wall where she had been standing, sitting atop it was a man dressed in rough tartan with his face painted blue. Screaming the man urged the horse on galloping off through the control room, disappearing through the far wall.

Shaking her head frantically to clear it Col. Lake ran out into the corridor again, only to run straight into the broadly grinning Dr. Jackson.

"Ah. Colonel Lake, I am so glad to see you," he crooned, "At first I thought I was dreaming, then I thought I might be going mad. Have you seen the others?"

"If by others, you mean all the Scottish ghosts, then yes. If you mean our colleagues, then no. What the hell is going on? Do you know anything about this?"

"Unusually, no, I have no idea what is happening here. I was beginning to think it was a delusional state caused by some hallucinogenic drugs I experimented with in the sixties, but now I'm not so sure." Jackson's grin had faded. "Colonel Lake, I may well be mad after all, look behind you."

Virginia turned around, and at the end of the corridor she could see quite plainly a procession of robotic machines, each topped with a smooth metal dome which swung from side to side sporting some kind of camera on an armature. She recognised them instantly.

"Daleks. I know there were some in the props store, but not that many. What the hell is happening?"

Dr. Jackson stood open mouthed, "I was just remembering that there was an episode of Dr. Who on the TV in my flat when I first dropped acid. It was about a chase through time."

Virginia smiled a little, "I think I remember that one, how old was I then? Fourteen, it was the first thing I watched back home after my family and I returned from a cruise to America."

Suddenly the prow of a huge metal ship appeared through the control room wall, listing haphazardly to one side, accompanied by a deafening, hollow, metallic scraping noise.

Both SHADO operatives covered their ears, and looked on in awe as the word TITANIC, painted on the side of the ship, passed through the room inches away from them.

Part 4, by Yuchtar

Colonel Lake frowned. "What are you wearing, anyway, Doctor?"

Jackson ran his thumbs down under the lapel of his jacket and replied, "A zoot suit. Like it?"

Lake's frown deepened. "No, not really. Is that Frank Sinatra on the deck of the Titanic?"

"Would appear so, yes, and he's singing *Strangers in the Night*."

"What's going on here, Colonel?"

Lake jumped and turned to find Commander Straker standing nearby. He hadn't come by her, so how had he gotten in? "Ed." she said, startled.

"Where's Foster?"

"I, I don't know - are you wearing blue jeans?"

"Yeah, what of it?"

"Excuse me," said a female voice with an Australian accent.

Lake turned to find an attractive young woman in some sort of uniform.

"Have you seen a Police Call Box anywhere?"

"I'm sorry?" Lake asked, incredulous.

"A large blue box."

Just then, a large blue box appeared out of nowhere and a head popped out.

"Doctor!" exclaimed the young woman.

"Tegan! Been looking all over for you." The figure stepped out of the box to reveal a tall young man with blond hair dressed in a cricket outfit. "New friends?" he said with a ready grin and a glance towards Lake, Jackson and Straker.

"I don't know who they are, Doctor - they just appeared."

"Care for a lift?" asked the Doctor.

"Why, yes, thank you," replied Straker, who walked into the blue box, followed by Dr. Jackson and the girl Tegan.

"What?" exclaimed Lake. "What are you doing?"

"Don't want to come?" asked the Doctor. "No matter. Cheerio." He stepped into the box and closed the door just before the box shimmered and vanished.

"What the bloody hell?"

"Spock. Beam me up. Now!"

Lake turned again to find an attractive young man speaking into a hand radio of some kind. "Captain Kirk?" she asked.

"Spock!" Kirk sighed and lowered the communicator to glance over at Lake. "Well, hello there," he grinned. "Have we met?"

"Errr, not as such, no. What are you doing here?"

"I don't know." He frowned. "I was beaming down to Rigel 7 when I suddenly appeared here. I can't seem to reach my ship, Miss ...?"

"Lake. *Colonel* Virginia Lake."

Kirk grinned again. "Sorry, Colonel - no disrespect intended."

A laser blast hitting nearby broke up the conversation. Kirk and Lake dove for cover. Kirk returned fire and hit one of the robotic looking things coming their way. "What *are* those?" he asked.

Stunned and confused, Lake replied, "Cylons?"

A few more phaser blasts and the other Cylon was dealt with. Standing, Kirk said,

"Cylons, huh? Some sort of android by the looks of em." Looking around, he asked, "Where the hell am I, anyway?"

"Where? Well, London, actually."

"London?! Earth? How did I get back to Earth?"

"Beats me, flyboy, but considering that you're a fictional character from a thirty year old TV show, seems *I* should be the one asking how the hell you got here."

"There can be only one."

Lake looked toward the voice in time to see a very attractive young man with flowing long dark hair bring a sword down across another man's neck. Lake screamed as the other man's head fell and then dove for cover again as bolts of electricity shot out all over the office. The bolts slammed into the young man and then out to smash all the computer screens and light fixtures in the place.

"Well, that was impressive," said Kirk.

Part 5, by Suzanne Sutherland

Eighty feet under Harlington-Straker Film Studios, SHADO headquarters became drenched in darkness. Colonel Virginia Lake felt a warm muscular arm drape itself over her shoulder.

"You know, you are an extremely beautiful woman, Colonel" Captain Kirk replied. Virginia heard an unnerving seductive quality to his voice. He bent towards her to give her a long smouldering kiss.

She bolted upright. "Excuse me, Captain, I am on duty and I am in a terrible state. I came to work this morning to find myself completely and utterly alone. Then all various and sundry monsters, characters and beasts from fantasy and science-fiction began appearing out of nowhere."

Virginia grabbed her head in a state of desperation, "The last thing I want to do is have a passionate kiss with a randy Starship Captain who really doesn't exist!"

"Doesn't exist?" Kirk asked.

"Yes, that's right. You aren't real."

"Oh, really. Well, try this one on for size." The Captain lunged towards Virginia, scooped her up in his arms and pinned her to the wall while he attempted to prove to her that he was well and truly there.

The flattening kiss lasted too long. She struggled to push his manic masculinity away from her.

Kirk got the message. He desisted from his overtures and looked her straight in the eye. "Do you still think that I am a figment of your imagination, Colonel?"

Virginia caught her breath and did not know whether to laugh or spit in his face. She did neither. "You're crazy!" she spluttered.

"I'm crazy? Look, Colonel, you keep saying that I am the fictional character here. What makes you so sure that it isn't the other way around?" he countered.

She thought about it for a long moment. Reality began to flow away like small streams of water left by the outgoing tide. "I ... I don't know ... I'm not so sure any more." Virginia felt a chill creeping down her spine and she hugged herself to stop shivering.

She attempted to hold down her sanity once more. "This is my world and my time, Captain. You do not belong in the 20th Century. You were created out of the figment of somebody's imagination in the 20th Century." There, that sounded credible enough.

Captain James Tiberius Kirk remained thoughtful and then replied, "This place is called what? SHADO?"

"Yes, Supreme Headquarters Alien Defense Organisation"

"Well, I hate to be the bringer of bad news but according to our Earth records, your organisation never existed at all!"

Virginia found a place to sit down that was not covered in shards of glass. She just had to sit down. "But you must have heard of it. You must have access to ancient Government files. SHADO must be in your history books somewhere," she cried in desperation.

He shrugged. "Sorry," he replied and meant it, "looks like we are in the same boat together, you and I."

"No, no, no! In my world you do exist but only as a character of fiction. *I* am real and you are not!"

Kirk realised that she was extremely distressed and put a hand on her shoulder. Virginia

wept. She did not know what to say anymore.

He began to respect her strength of character and resolve. The least he could do was help her get out of this mess. He left her to collect her thoughts.

Captain Kirk went to explore the dark corridors and the ancient computer systems of SHADO. He marvelled at the archaic giant spools of magnetic tape and chuckled to himself.

Just then, the noise of Kirk's communicator began to chirp.

"Kirk here"

"Captain, I take it that you never beamed down to Rigel 7?"

"Spock, am I glad to hear your voice!"

Part 6, by Grant Wray

Spock's voice was clearly audible to Virginia who was lurking around the corner.

"Spock, I want you to quiz the computer about an organisation known as SHADO, S H A D O. What can you tell me about it?"

"Working on that, captain. The computer is having to search the historical records; there appears to be a large number of references to the term in an ancient e-mail distribution archive ... a number of 'web pages' ... Ah, the main entry ... SHADO was an acronym for Supreme Headquarters Alien Defence Organisation, a fictional organisation which appeared in a 1969 television programme made in the old United Kingdom of Great Britain. There is a note here that it had a particularly 'funky?' theme tune."

"Any character names Spock?"

"Commander Edward Straker, Colonel Alec Freeman, Colonel Virginia Lake, Dr ..."

"That's enough Spock. I'm beginning to get the picture."

"So am I Captain Kirk, or whoever you are." Colonel Lake was standing, hands on hips, in the corridor now. "Let's get one thing straight between us. You think I am a fictional character from your world's past, whereas I *know* you are a fictional character from mine. There's only room for one figment of the imagination around here."

Just then a small purple dragon wearing a black beret popped into existence and flew repeatedly in tight circles around Virginia's head. She swatted it out of the way absentmindedly. Tightening her grip on the butt of the gun in her hand, she aimed squarely at the middle of Kirk's head and pulled the trigger. Kirk vanished in a swirl of glittering diamonds.

Looking around her till her eyes landed on a the sign marked 'Emergency Exit', Virginia sighed. "Time to get out of this lunatic asylum". She pulled open the door and began to climb the concrete spiral staircase. Exiting from a door marked 'Cleaning Stores' Colonel Lake noticed that the studio backlots were bathed in a pale green glow. An eerie yet all too familiar humming was just discernable on the breeze. She popped back into the door and emerged moments later with a large bazooka.

"This all seems rather familiar," she murmured to herself as she set off at a trot in the direction of the noise.

Part 7, by Yuchtar

As Kirk's form materialised in the transporter room aboard the Enterprise, he ducked to avoid the bullet Lake had been firing at him. It wasn't there, of course, for which Kirk was grateful. "Nice going, Spock," he said with a grin.

"We have been unable to determine precisely where you were, Captain," Spock reported. "The ship still appears to be in orbit around Rigel 7."

"Yes, well, the ship may be, but whatever the heck is going on, it's not going on anywhere near Rigel 7. Spock, can you get a life form reading near my last location?"

Colonel Lake withstood the blistering wind kicked up by the approaching spinner as she prepared the bazooka to fire. When she did, however, she watched incredulously as the rocket glided right through the UFO as if it wasn't there. The whining alien ship continued straight for her.

"So, this is how it ends, then?" she said quietly to herself. The next moment found her standing aboard the Enterprise with Kirk grinning at her and a pointed eared Spock raising one eyebrow.

"Fascinating," Spock uttered.

As Lake stepped off the pad, two more figures shimmered into existence behind her. Before she knew what was happening, an arm clad in black studded leather was around her throat and the barrel of some weapon was pointed at Kirk and Spock from over her shoulder.

A cold male voice spoke by her ear: "Nobody move." The grip around Lake's throat tightened. "Vila, call the ship and find out what happened."

The other figure fooled with a bracelet for a moment before stammering, "I can't, Avon! There's no answer. No static - no nothing."

"There are 400 men and women on this ship," Kirk said. "You can't possibly kill us all."

"Oh, I wouldn't be too sure about that," Avon said as he shoved Lake toward Kirk and Spock. Holstering his weapon, he added, "So, what ship is this, anyway?"

Breathing a little easier, Kirk said, "You're aboard the Federation Star Ship Enterprise - "

"Federation?!" Avon and Vila said in unison as their weapons came back out.

"NO!" Lake yelled, stepping between the two pair of men. "Avon, their Federation is not the same as yours. *Believe* me!" This was all so incredibly outrageous! Here she was trying to save one set of fictional characters from another set of fictional characters!

"Hey, you look familiar," Vila said to Colonel Lake.

"What?"

Reholstering his weapon once again, Avon said, "Virginia Lake - UFO - you were watching the vid casts the other night." He stepped around to get a better look at the other two men. "And this is James T. Kirk and Mr. Spock."

"We've been sucked into our vid player?" Vila wanted to know with a frown.

"We're not sure just what is going on," Kirk spoke up. "But we all seem to be someone's fictional character and nothing is behaving according to the laws of physics."

"Well, Mr. Spock," Avon said to the stoic form before him. "Shall you and I go see what your ships computer can make of this little predicament?"

With one eyebrow raised, Spock said, "Indeed," and led the way to the Science Department, leaving Kirk, Lake and Vila to stand and look at each other in wonder.

Part 8, by Suzanne Sutherland

Captain Kirk did not stay puzzled for long.

"Well, Colonel Lake, and you, sir, you seem to have the advantage here. Do you have a name?" the Captain inquired.

"Vila ... just Vila"

"Would you like me to show you both a bit of my ship?"

Both Virginia and Vila already knew what the U.S.S. Enterprise looked like, however, neither of them turned down Kirk's offer.

"I think we could all use a cup of coffee. The mess hall is down on Deck 4. I'll lead the way."

Colonel Lake was about to ask about tribbles when the Captain responded to the hailing whistle.

"Yes, Kirk here!"

"Sir," replied Uhura, "you are needed on the bridge. A strange blue circular shape just appeared out of nowhere."

Kirk should have been used to things appearing out of the vast emptiness of space but this had a real sense of foreboding.

"Right, I'm on my way Lieutenant."

He turned to his two guests. "You might as well accompany me to the bridge." He stopped slightly in his tracks and added, "but then I forget you have already seen it before."

"No, no, we'd love to come and see it ... for real!" piped up Colonel Lake.

"Yes, I always wanted to know what it was really like to be on the bridge", added Vila.

Once there, Captain Kirk, Colonel Lake and Vila were very impressed with the sight of a massive slightly pulsating blue circle.

Kirk turned to Lake. Virginia could not believe even at a time like this the Captain managed a naughty twinkle in his eye. "So, what do you make of this, Colonel?"

She could only shrug but it looked rather familiar to Vila somehow.

There was a flash and from out of the circle came a very strange looking craft. It looked almost like an octopus with unusual undulating green patterns on its surface. It glided serenely through space.

"Oh no, it couldn't be ... not the Vo.." mumbled Vila.

"They are hailing us, Captain." said the able Uhura.

"Put them through."

It was as if many voices were speaking at once before an audible sentence came through. "You do not belong here."

"My name is Captain James T. Kirk of the U.S.S. Enterprise. We are from the United Federation of Planets and we come on a mission of peace. Please identify yourselves."

"Sorry, Captain, I'm having difficulty receiving. I ... I can only get one word out of them." Uhura said in a frustrated tone.

"Well?"

She took the fiddly bit out of her ear and with a questioning look stared straight into the Captain's eyes. "I think it was 'Kosh'. What does it mean, Captain?" the Lieutenant asked.

"I don't know but after the day I've had anything's possible."

Part 9, by Grant Wray

"Actually, I think I might be able to offer an explanation"

The voice came from a bearded man standing off to one side of the bridge. He was wearing a green felt cowboy hat, and was holding the hand of a large orangutan.

"ook" said the orangutan.

"You see, I've always believed that the boundaries between reality and fantasy are quite thin. I wrote a book about it once, in fact. Being that the `real world' is merely a construction inside the brain, an impression formed from the sense organs, and the fantasy world is also a construction of the brain, the difference is only the electrical impulses of the sense organs. If these are manipulated, or are false, then reality appears to be fantasy and vice-versa. I always thought the boundaries became dangerously thin in the vicinity of film studios, cinemas and authors work rooms. I expect someone is just imagining all of us."

Avon smirked. "So whose brain are we in then? It certainly can't be Vila's, this ship is much too large. Although it might be the monk...", the orangutan bared its teeth, "ape's."

"ook"

"Are you saying that I'm just a figment of someone's imagination? Now I'm even more insecure."

"Stop whining Vila, I think I'm getting the picture now." Avon turned to the bearded man. "So we must be appearing in your mind then."

"Not necessarily," the man replied, "elements of reality and fantasy could get mixed up within the same delusion." He pointed one finger accusingly.

"ook, ook."

Colonel Lake looked up, "Have the aliens found some way to completely break down the border between reality and fantasy? Or have I been captured and am being fed false sensory impulses causing a delusional state. I wish Commander Straker were here."

Bones, the resident surgeon on the Enterprise drawled, "You could equally be a figment of someone else's imagination, that person would have to be real though wouldn't they?"

Spock unusually agreed with the Doctor, "Quite so. If we cannot determine who here is real, and who is fantasy, it is most likely that we are all, in fact, merely projections in someone else's mind. We are seemingly reacting and having independent personalities, but these could conceivably be generated within another's mind, like in schizophrenia, or maybe our reactions are determined by a computer program, like in the recently hypothesised scenario of holographic simulation."

This was all too much for Captain Kirk. He sat down heavily in his command chair and placed his palms dramatically against his temples. A shaft of light fell across his eyes, "I can't understand all this. Star Fleet training never prepared me for such metaphysical dilemmas. Am I some delusion of a schizophrenic man?"

"As I recall, your philosophy was always `phasers first, who cares about the questions', I know someone else like that. We knock out each of us in turn and determine the consequences. So who do we shoot first? I vote for the man over there with the annoying grin." Avon beamed at the newly arrived Dr. Jackson.

A persistent beeping filled the air.

"That sounds like *my* alarm clock, and where is Ed?" Virginia looked completely baffled.

Part 10, by Yuchtar

Out of nowhere, a body fell atop the navigation console, sending Mr Sulu and Mr Chekov staggering back in surprise. Along with the body came a fair amount of water and the two helmsmen were drenched. Without even thinking, Kirk rushed up to the unconscious Ed Straker and revived him with mouth to mouth resuscitation.

Sputtering and stammering, Straker demanded to know where the hell he was.

"Ed, are you all right?" Colonel Lake wanted to know.

"Finally, a familiar face! What's going on, Ginny?"

"It would appear that most of us are figments of someone's imagination, only we don't know who the real one is ..." It was Avon who had spoken, and there was a sensual husky quality to his voice that made Vila and Colonel Lake both glance at him questioningly.

"Do I know you?" Straker wanted to know.

"Not yet, but you will," Avon said with an enigmatic wink.

"Where's that weird ship that just came out of the blue hole?" Scotty asked as he strained to see out the view screen.

"Oh, it suddenly turned into a giant whale and splattered all over the planet below," Vila answered. "But where's the guy with the monkey?"

"Oh, he just turned into that fica plant there," McCoy said dryly. "And the ape became gelatinous and sank into the hull."

"You're taking all this pretty well, Bones," Kirk told his friend.

With a shrug, McCoy replied, "I'm not really here, Jim, so none of this is happening." Turning toward Uhura, he added, "You know, I've always wanted to do this, but never had the nerve." He took the woman's face gently in his hands and kissed her passionately on the lips.

Spock arched an eyebrow, but Uhura got flustered and muttered, "Oh, Doctor," and turned back to her comm panel. Kirk laughed, but his amusement was cut short when both Lake and Straker collapsed to the deck.

Kirk was by Straker's side in an instant, trying to determine what was wrong, while Avon saw to Lake.

"They're having trouble breathing, Jim," McCoy said.

"Yesssssssss," chimed in Dr. Jackson. "You mussst slap them."

"Slap them?" Kirk asked aghast.

"Yeah, slap them," Avon said. "What's so hard about that?" And he proceeded to slap Lake across the face several times.

"Ed! Ed! Come out of it!"

"Ginny! Ginny, wake up!"

Straker opened his eyes to find Dr Jackson staring wildly down at him, his hair in disarray and his mouth twisted with concern. He heard a slap and glanced over to find Paul Foster slapping Colonel Lake. "What the hell do you think you're doing, Colonel?" Straker wanted to know.

"She is out - like you were - shallow breathing, erratic brain wave activity ..." Jackson explained.

"Ow!" Lake exclaimed upon regaining consciousness just in time to feel Paul's last slap. "What's the big idea?"

"A Ufoe shot a beam of some kind at your car - you've both been out for a good ten minutes," Paul said.

"Ten minutes?" They both said in unison.

"Felt more like ten hours," Lake said.

"Wow, what a trip," Straker added. He and Lake exchanged glances and then smiled enigmatically at each other as they shook their heads and rose to their feet.

"What happened, Commander?" Jackson wanted to know.

"We went on a little trip, Doctor. More than that, I can't say ..."

END