

Star Trek The Return to Melmac

One of the last of his race, the aged Gordon Shumway dares to take over the Enterprise in order to attempt a sling shot maneuver to time travel back to the late twentieth century to prevent the catastrophe that destroyed his home planet . . .

But first, a light snack . . .



A work of fan fiction by Samuel Stokes

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Star Trek: The Return to Melmac

EPISODE 1

By Samuel Stokes

“Captain’s log, stardate 1332.3, Captain Gordon Shumway, here, making my final log entry from the bridge of Orbit Guard One.”

It was the year 2265 on the old Earth Calendar. Captain Shumway had renamed his spacecraft Orbit Guard One just over a century ago when he received a message via interstellar communications that the last of his Orbit Guard buddies had gone to Barry (smooch smooch). After the destruction of his home planet Melmac on his birthday, the 28th of Nathanganger, 1985 (28th of October on the Earth calendar), Shumway wandered through space for nearly a year, before he crash landed his vessel on Earth.

“I’m preparing to rendezvous with the U.S.S. Enterprise. They have just begun a five year mission, and they think that’s pretty nifty. Of course, I’ve had cases of the hiccups that have lasted longer than five years, ha!”

Melmacians are a particularly long-lived species, partly due to the medicinal Carl shrub in their diet, which has a profoundly positive impact on the Melmacian immune system. Melmacians generally live to the ripe old age of 650, unless of course they meet an untimely end, such as was the case for many Melmacians during the aforementioned destruction of the planet Melmac. The details of the destruction were not even entirely clear in Gordon’s memory, after all it was so long ago, but it had a little more than too much to do with a bunch of raving bureaucrats trying to make their points with nuclear weapons.

“I’m recording this, so that in the event that I don’t succeed, that the history of the end of the Melmacian race can be preserved for future generations.”

Melmac lost a staggering portion of its population during the destruction. Less than a tenth of a percent of the entire population of the planet evacuated in time to survive the destruction. The Melmacian race abruptly became an endangered species on that day. Unfortunately, many of the survivors did not have access to Carl shrub and eventually succumbed to local diseases on the planets they settled. Gordon was fortunate enough to find a botanical substitute, namely ragweed, on planet Earth. In the early 1990s, most of the Melmacian survivors settled on the colony of New Melmac, founded by Captain Skip, who became the first and only governor of the colony. The colony was, in fact, thriving in the first 200 years of its settlement, largely because Gordon advised them to collect ragweed samples from Earth to harvest on the new colony, which was very effective in treating Rick and Stella’s radiation poisoning (at the time, opening a tanning parlor on Mercury seemed like a good idea, but unfortunately it’s not easy to find suntan lotion in SPF 15¹⁰⁰). Gordon eventually joined the others in the colony, but spent most of his time off-world as he was the Melmacian ambassador to Earth, and later served the same function in Starfleet; he was, in fact, instrumental in its foundation, although Starfleet historians disagree as to whether or not he only attended the founding conference because of the free buffet for delegates.

“Course is plotted and laid in. Standing by to go to warp.”

Tragically, the thriving colony of New Melmac suffered an ill fate after the time incursion of a rogue Romulan Captain called Nero. Traveling back from the future after the destruction of his home planet of Romulus, Captain Nero went on a rampage destroying many worlds and imprisoning and enslaving numerous races throughout the galaxy. Sadly, the colony of New Melmac was too small and did not have strong enough defenses to fend off the attackers and the colonists were enslaved on Nero’s ship. Because of the poor working conditions and the absence of Carl shrub in Romulan prison food, Gordon Shumway soon found himself alone in the galaxy. He had his mind set, he knew what he had to do, and nothing could distract him from his ultimate purpose.

“But first, a light snack . . .”

Two hours and a few dozen feline mignons later, Gordon felt full enough to continue his journey, at least until supper time. Gordon had gained a lot of weight in the last few centuries. One of his first projects in the early days of Starfleet was to oversee the food replicator design project. After years of intensive research, a team of top scientists produced the first 10-course meal, which Gordon tested for quality. After many hours of strenuously testing the food and noting the quality of each bite, Gordon praised them on a wonderful appetizer and asked to see the main course.

“Captain’s log continued . . . I now go to meet up with the U.S.S. Enterprise in order to abscond with the vessel and attempt a dangerous slingshot maneuver in order to time travel back to 1985 to prevent the destruction of Melmac. Even though I will most likely be imprisoned and lose my title as Melmacian ambassador, I will not rest until I save my planet from its tragic fate . . .”

The aged Melmacian yawns slightly, “After a short catnap.”

When Shumway awoke, he knew what he had to do...

“Time to eat,” he said.

But then, realizing that he had already eaten prior to his nap, he settled for a mere 8-pound pot roast to tide him over, and a Diet Coke. After all, at his age he figured he’d best keep an eye on his caloric intake. After this small indulgence Shumway was ready to begin his mission.

“Engaging warp engines,” said Shumway.

Shumway’s ancient, but sturdy, vessel careered across the cosmos in a flash of bright light. His vessel, Orbit Guard One, had only been slightly modified for space travel in the last two centuries. After all, Melmac was already centuries ahead in technological achievements when the ship was constructed back in the 20th Century.

Shumway ate a gallon of ice cream for dessert followed by a bottle of TUMS while the automatic pilot navigated the ship to the Alpha Quadrant. The aged Melmacian was quite calm as the ship came out of warp within one light-year of the U.S.S. Enterprise.

On the Enterprise, it was a different story. The crew was scrambling frantically as the abrupt approach of the unidentified vessel had prompted a yellow alert.

“Spock,” said Captain James T. Kirk, “Have you been able to identify the vessel yet?”

The stoic Vulcan responded, “It appears to be an ancient Melmacian vessel. Standby while I cross-check with the ship’s computer... confirmed, the vessel is of Melmacian origin. Call sign is Orbit Guard One. Captained by Ambassador Gordon Shumway.”

“Melmacian,” replied Kirk, “I don’t believe I’m familiar with that species.”

“Understandable,” said Mr. Spock, “as their home planet Melmac was destroyed in 1985 on the old Earth calendar. The few of the species that still remained colonized New Melmac until they were conquered and enslaved by Nero.”

Kirk shuddered at the name. Only a few years earlier, Kirk had been promoted to first officer under Captain Pike as they fought against the rogue Romulan from the future. His devastation of many planets, including the total destruction of Spock’s home planet Vulcan, left a gaping wound in the Alpha quadrant that only now was showing the first sign of healing.

“Hail the vessel,” said Kirk.

Lt. Uhura opened a channel.

“Orbit Guard One,” said Kirk, “We are surprised to find you so deep in space. Do you require assistance?”

“Captain Kirk,” responded Shumway, “Thank goodness I found you. The guidance system in my navigational array seems to be malfunctioning.”

“Do you know what the problem is?” asked Kirk.

“Uh,” said Shumway, “Well, I may have, uh, well, eaten some of the component parts during a feeding frenzy.”

Kirk glanced at Spock who added, “Melmacians are known to have bi-monthly feeding frenzies, and their biological predilection towards food digestion has equipped them to eat many things that would be inedible to humans.”

“Why would Melmacians have such a biological predilection for food digestion?” asked Kirk.

“There are a number of theories about that Captain,” answered Spock, “but most researchers believe that it was just an evolutionary quirk of sorts.”

“Yeah, so’s your pointy ears,” retorted Shumway, “so you going to give me a tow or what?”

“Kirk to shuttle bay, lock a tractor beam on to Orbit Guard One and bring her in. And let’s give the Ambassador a proper welcome.”

The senior staff quickly adorned themselves in dress uniforms to receive the ambassador in the shuttle bay. The tractor beam slowly brought in Orbit Guard One, making a slight thud as the vessel made contact with the shuttle bay floor. The senior staff, Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, and Mr. Scott were standing by in their dress uniforms as the door of Orbit Guard One opened, revealing the short, furry, Melmacian ambassador.

“On behalf of Starfleet and the United Federation of Planets,” began Captain Kirk, “We are honored to have you as a guest aboard the U.S.S. Enterpr – “

“Yeah, yeah,” said Shumway, “It’s been a long trip. Can someone show me to the little boy’s room?”

Spock raised one eyebrow.

“Of course, Ambassador,” said Kirk without missing a beat, “On the way, perhaps you can explain to Mr. Scott, about the trouble you’re having with your vessel.”

“It was the strangest thing,” said Shumway, “I was on my way to Space Station K-7. An old acquaintance of mine sent me a subspace transmission claiming that he’d found a creature that could eat more than me.”

“Fascinating,” said Mr. Spock.

“Yeah,” Shumway, “Some little furry creatures called tribbles. He bet me ten bars of gold-pressed latinum that I couldn’t beat one in an eating contest. Well, I have my pride, so I had to accept the challenge. Anyway, I set a course to K-7 and suddenly I’m coming out of warp way off course.”

“Well,” said Kirk, “I’m sure Mr. Scott will be able to take care of things.”

At this point, they had reached the public restroom, which Shumway briskly entered and shut the door. The senior staff briefly conversed in the hall.

“What do you make of him, Mr. Spock,” asked Kirk.

“Most curious,” said Mr. Spock, “Space Station K-7 is a considerable distance from here. It is difficult to believe that he could have been traveling off course for so long without realizing it.”

“Perhaps this feeding frenzy of his has affected him in some way,” said Kirk, “Bones?”

“Yes, Jim,” said Dr. McCoy, “I am not an expert on Melmacian physiology, but from what I recall, the feeding frenzies are often accompanied by memory loss and confusion. I will check the ship’s computer to learn more. Meanwhile, I’ll give the Ambassador a full physical check-up.”

“Scotty,” said Kirk, “How long do you expect repairs to take?”

“That’s hard to say, sir,” said Mr. Scott, “I’ve never worked on a Melmacian spaceship before. I’ll have to see if I can replicate the right parts.”

“Get to work on it, Mr. Scotty,” said Kirk, “If anyone can fix it, it’s you.”

“Aye, sir,” said Mr. Scott with a look of consternation on his face as he headed back to the shuttle bay to begin repairs on Orbit Guard One.

Meanwhile, Gordon Shumway was just finishing up in the restroom. Shumway reached into a secret pocket in his formal ambassadorial dress uniform, which he had rarely worn, even on formal occasions. Though unorthodox, Shumway preferred to wear a black tuxedo with a top hat and cane. When asked why, he would always respond that, “Every girl’s crazy about a sharp dressed man.” For diplomatic reasons, Starfleet never took any official action regarding this breach of protocol.

As Shumway reached into his secret pocket, he pulled out a miniscule device and set it on the edge of the sink as he washed his hands. He then put his hands under the automatic hand dryer. He had to blow dry his hand five times to dry the water out of his thick fur. Just then a whistle chimed on the computer console in the restroom and Captain Kirk’s voice was heard over the small speaker.

“Pardon me, Ambassador,” said Kirk, “You’ve been in there a while and we wanted to make sure everything is alright.”

“Everything’s fine, Captain,” said Shumway, “It’d take you twice as long if 90% of your body was covered in fur.”

“Of course, Ambassador,” said Kirk, “My apologies.”

“Yeah, yeah,” said Shumway, dismissively.

Shumway took the panel off of the computer console and examined the wiring, “Let’s see, now. Was it the red wire or the blue wire?”

Shumway attached the device to the blue wire, “I guess I’ll find out soon enough.”

As Shumway exited the restroom, Dr. McCoy began, “Ambassador, I would like to give you a full medical check-up at your earliest convenience.”

“Look,” said Shumway, “I already explained, it takes a long time to dry all this fur...”

“No, no,” said McCoy, “I wanted to make sure that you are in good health following your feeding frenzy.”

“Oh that,” said Shumway, “Sure, whatever, you think I could get something to eat first?”

A few hours later, Shumway had finished his meal in the mess hall and reported to Dr. McCoy’s office for a physical checkup.

Shumway sat on a medical bed in sick bay, while Dr. McCoy examined him with a tricorder.

"Let's see," said Dr. McCoy as the tricorder whirred, "Your heart appears to be where your occipital lobe should be, you seem to be missing several vital organs in place of which you have several additional stomachs, and assuming that green stuff in your veins is blood..."

"No problem, Doc," said Shumway, "You'll find that most of my major organs are part of the digestive system."

"Indeed" said Dr. McCoy, "But you do seem to have a fever. Your temperature reading is 114.8 degrees Fahrenheit."

"Nah," said Shumway, "That's normal. In fact, right after a feeding frenzy, my temperature rises to 425 degrees. That's residual heat from digesting such large quantities of food."

"It's amazing that your stomachs can handle that much heat," said McCoy.

"We have a saying on Melmac," said Shumway, "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen. It turns out everyone can stand it, that's why we all hung out in the kitchen most of the time."

The intercom in sick bay whistled, followed by Mr. Scott's voice, "Ambassador Shumway, please report to the shuttle bay."

"Well, that's my cue," said Shumway, hopping down from the medical bed, "As long as everything looks ship-shape, Doc."

"Of course, Ambassador," said Dr. McCoy.

Captain Kirk was already in the shuttle bay, where he and Scotty were discussing the situation.

"Very strange, indeed, Mr. Scott," Kirk said, just before the doors opened revealing Ambassador Shumway.

"Captain," said Shumway, "Mr. . . what was it again?"

"Scott, sir."

"That's right," said Shumway, "If only I could think of some really obvious way to remember that."

"Mr. Scott has made an unusual discovery regarding the damage to your navigational array," said Kirk. He then motioned to Mr. Scott, "Scotty?"

"Yes, Ambassador," said Mr. Scott, "I located the missing parts for your navigational array in a little plastic bag in the glove compartment in the cockpit."

"Oh," said Shumway, "That's what those were! That's the last time I'm going to a mechanic in one of Harry Mudd's body shops."

"You didn't question why there were spare parts left over when you had your ship serviced?" asked Kirk.

"No way," said Shumway, "I don't know anything about the things, I just stick my key in the ignition and it goes."

Kirk and Scotty exchange a wary glance.

"So, Captain," said Shumway, abruptly changing the subject, "I've seen your restroom and your sick bay. How about a gander at your main bridge?"

"Of course," said Kirk, "Right this way."

Kirk gestured towards the doors to the main corridor, from which they found the turbo lift and rode that up to the main bridge. When the turbo lift doors opened, the entire bridge crew turned to gaze at the diminutive alien. They had encountered a number of alien species in their travels, but none of the bridge crew had yet met a Melmacian.

"Welcome to the bridge of the U.S.S. Enterprise, Ambassador," said Captain Kirk.

"Thanks," said Shumway, "now where is the navigation console."

"It's over here, where Lt. Sulu is navigating," said Captain Kirk, "Sulu, set a course for Space Station K-7."

"Aye, sir," responded Sulu.

"Actually," said Shumway, "I've had a slight change of plans."

"Standby, Mr. Sulu," said Kirk.

"Mr. Sulu, set a course for the Andromeda galaxy. Melmac System," said Shumway.

Sulu exchanged a quizzical look with Captain Kirk.

"I don't understand, Ambassador," said Kirk, "The Melmac System would take over a hundred years to reach, even at maximum warp."

"Not with the components in my star drive," said Shumway, "and once Mr. Scott integrates that into your ship's warp engines then we can make it in less than a day."

Kirk glanced at Mr. Spock.

"Interesting," said Mr. Spock, "Certainly, Melmacian star drive technology is centuries ahead of human or Vulcan warp technology, but I know of no examples of it being integrated into a Federation vessel."

"Why the Melmac System, Ambassador?" asked Kirk, "After the destruction of Melmac, were other planets in the system inhabited?"

"It's not that," said Shumway, "I'm planning to use the Enterprise to make a slingshot maneuver around the purple sun of the Melmac System in order to travel backwards in time to 1985 on the Earth calendar, to prevent the destruction of my home planet."

Captain Kirk grinned, and holding himself back to keep from laughing at Shumway's audacity, he said, "That is certainly a noble quest, Ambassador, but Starfleet has strict regulations regarding time travel. We couldn't, by any means, travel back to intentionally alter such a major historical event."

"I'm sorry, Captain," said Shumway, pulling out a small orb-shaped controller, "But I'm afraid I'm not actually asking for permission, here."

Shumway pressed a button on the controller and suddenly the view screens on the bridge powered down, and the emergency lights, started flickering, slowly at first and then more rapidly, changing colors every few seconds. Over the intercom came the Bee Gees singing, "Whether you're a brother or whether you're a mother, you're stayin' alive, stayin' alive. Feel the city breakin' and everybody shakin' . . ."

Shumway pressed another button on his orb-shaped controller, "Oops, wrong button."

The lights returned to normal, and when the main view screen came back online, it became apparent that the ship had gone to warp.

"Report, Mr. Sulu," said Kirk.

"We're on a course for the Melmac System, Warp 9," responded Sulu.

"Mr. Spock," said Kirk, "How has he gained control of our ship."

"Unknown," said Mr. Spock, "But for the moment, it appears as if we are at the Ambassador's mercy."

TO BE CONTINUED...