

The Gol Letters

**Della Van Hise
(Writing as Carlin Rae Thorne)**

**STARDATE 2709.32
San Francisco, California
EARTH**

Dear Spock,

*I thought I could let you go. I thought I **had** let you go, since I am reminded daily by this pain in my heart that you are no longer with me.*

*Did you know that you left scars on my psyche when you left for Vulcan? At least that's what the Base shrink here at Headquarters keeps telling me. And it's on his suggestion that I'm writing these letters -- letters that will, most likely, never be sent. And, since no one other than the closet moths will ever read these words, let's be truthful. The doctor didn't 'suggest' that I write these thoughts down. He ordered it. Says I'm close to the edge, and that he won't approve my promotion to the admiralty until some of these wounds are healed. He told me to forget protocol and manners, to leave my personality outside the door when I sit down to write. He told me to put to paper what's in my heart -- whether those thoughts are poetry or pain, murder or madness. He told me not to be Captain Kirk, but after all these years, I'm not sure I **can** be anything or anyone else. But now, under doctors orders, I have to try.*

So, I sit here in my apartment, staring out over the Bay, wondering what you are doing all those light-years away. In the end, I guess it doesn't matter. At least, I don't want it to matter.

Sorry. Too bitter, eh, Spock?

*Then again, I'm **not** sorry. I don't know anymore.*

Shit. Let's stick to less touchy subjects on this first letter. Then, later, if I want to strangle your image on this paper, we'll see.

This psychiatrist shit was Bones' idea, you know. When you left, he knew it was over -- not just the five year mission, but all of it. Did you know that he left, too? But at least he had the good manners to say goodbye and to tell me that he'd keep in touch. You couldn't even do that, Spock.

Anyway, I digress. Bones is back in Georgia now, somewhere around the Atlanta area. I heard through the grapevine that he's given up human medicine altogether, gone into veterinary practice. I guess he finally realized something that you made me see a long time ago: animals are simpler. They don't have the problems that we so-called higher lifeforms have. If they love, they do it freely, unconditionally. If they are angry or hurt, it's with good reason -- and they let a person know one way or another that they're hurting. They mate to make little animals, without the complications of emotions, without the fears and jealousies and guilt that their human (or Vulcan) counterparts are subjected to on a daily basis. If they run away from home, they usually do it out of hurt or fear; they take refuge in hollow tree stumps or find a nice woodsy area where they can be free of the humans that complicated their lives.. Makes me wonder sometimes if you aren't the "superior being" we all thought you to be. Makes me wonder if you are, after all, very simple and animalistic. You've run away from home to live in the mountains of Gol. I guess your life there must be easier, less complex.

It's late. I'm not even sure what I'm feeling anymore. I certainly don't know what I'm saying, or even trying to say. But I guess it boils down to this:

I must have hurt you. So, like any feeling creature reverting to its simplest form, you ran away from home. But this time, Spock, you ran so far that the people who love you the most can't even come after you.

I spoke to your father last week. He said he didn't even know of your return to Vulcan and your retreat to Gol until he saw it on the news. I'm not terribly surprised that you didn't tell him. After all, you've been running from Sarek since you were 18 -- when you left home the first time.

I just wonder when -- or if -- the running will ever stop.

Love, (do you even know what that means?)

Jim

STARDATE 2745.19
The Gol Mountains
VULCAN

Jim,

It is with some regret that I find the necessity to write these words down -- words which, barring cosmic accident, you will never see. It seems that my commitment to the Kolinahr is, initially, not enough to put thoughts of you from my mind. Therefore, Master Senja has instructed me to place those thoughts on paper, forming a solid reality of you which may then be purged.

I do not mean to seem cruel or unfeeling. Or, perhaps, I do intend to appear unfeeling. The attainment of the Kolinahr is, after all, my goal now.

Undoubtedly, you must have wondered why I have chosen that goal. Perhaps you have even believed it is because of you. In many ways, my friend, it is.

At any rate, that is now irrelevant. I am here, and you are undoubtedly on Earth, promoted to the admiralty, continuing with the goals you set for yourself some thirty years in the past. I am pleased for you, for I have always wanted you to enjoy the fulfillment of your life.

I am not certain at what point my feelings for you changed. (It is difficult for me to write that word, to confess to emotions which, here at Gol, are viewed with silent distaste -- a paradox in itself, since distaste must be considered an emotional response, and yet I digress). But, suffice it to say that I have had feelings for you that, had they been allowed to continue, might have destroyed us both.

My thoughts wander. I apologize.

The mountains here are jagged and treacherous;, and despite the fact that the desert lies below us some 5,000 feet, it is always cold here. The monastery is ancient, carved into the living stone of my world by the first monks who followed Surak's teachings. It is said that their immortal spirits, their katras, keep watch over the disciples who now inhabit this dark place. Not a very logical idea, considering the teachings here; but legends have never been noted for their believability.

On the day I arrived here, almost a month ago by your time calculation, I wondered why I had come. Perhaps it was because I believed that the very alienness of this Vulcan refuge would not allow your ghost to follow me. You have always dwelled in the light -- beneath the warm sun of your native Earth, or in a starship's well-lit corridors. Here, at Gol, the darkness would oppress you, drive you away, make you long for the sun

again. I had hoped that would be sufficient to keep thoughts of you from accompanying me on this journey. I was wrong.

I hope you are well; and even though we will never meet again, it is my wish that you continue to follow those ideals we shared for the five years we were together on board the *Enterprise*. I think of her often, and I think of you.

That is all a monk is allowed.

Regards,
Spock

STARDATE 2912.01
San Francisco, California
EARTH

Dear Spock,

What have I done to you that was so terrible it drove you all the way back to Vulcan? Did I not give you enough friendship? Or did I give you too much? Did I not take your hand when you were alone? Or did I put my arm around your shoulder once too often? Did I love you too much or too little? Or is it that I was just too damn scared to speak of love to you at all?

The Base shrink is really on my ass. I think they're monitoring my dreams. I know, I know; no one in the galaxy has that technology yet. But sometimes I wonder. That weasly little son-of-a-bitch sits there in his padded leather chair talking about you as if he were on the Enterprise with us all those years. I want to strangle him for his audacity. I want to kill Bones for putting his medical recommendation on the bastard's desk. I guess I need someone to blame and, whether you believe it or not, I don't want to blame you, Spock. Then again, I can't deny that I'd never needed a shrink before you packed your bags and left. Before I met you, you weren't important to me. Before we became friends, I didn't need your friendship. Before you let me see that other, secret side of you, we could function as captain and first officer, each of us with our own separate lives.

That changed. And, dammit, you failed to accept responsibility for that when you ran away to Vulcan like a child hiding behind its mother's skirt-tails. You seemed to think that you could just go, walk away as if we'd never meant more to one another than some cold, inanimate object. Maybe that's all I ever was to you. But you were certainly more than that to me. I.... I.... Well... I.... I loved you.

There. I said the forbidden words. And I'm sure they hurt me more than they'll ever hurt you. You're off on Vulcan now, petitioning the Webster Foundation to remove the word "love" from the dictionary.

Anyway, on to more important things. At least, things that have had to take your place.

I sold the old farm last week. With mom gone now, and Peter off on Deneva trying to rebuild after the disaster with those damned creatures, the place was going to hell in a handbasket. It needed someone who could take care of it, someone who would plant the fields and harvest the crops, someone who would give a shit. The fact of the matter is that I wouldn't have sold it if it weren't for you. We spent

too many shore leaves there, I guess. Your ghost was still prowling through that old barn, marveling at horse tack weathered with the centuries. Your footsteps were still imbedded in the sand by the creek, your fingerprints still imprinted on the rocks where we sat drinking milk on that hot summer afternoon last year.

You became a part of my past; and now I can't even go home because parts of you are still there.

I wish I'd visited Vulcan more often. I wish I'd slept in the mountains of Gol just once. I wish I could have left some part of myself in your past, in your Self.

Maybe then you wouldn't be able to stay there. Maybe then you'd be driven, a screaming madman, from the sanctuary of your priesthood (or whatever it's called).

The fact of the matter is that you never took me to Vulcan other than that one time when T'Pring called you back to mate. Could it be that you were planning this all along? Could it be that, with a conscious effort, you always kept me at a comfortable arms' length?

You never wanted me in your life. And, god, it hurts to know I was blind all those years. It hurts to know that, all that time, you were watching me make a fool of myself as I courted your friendship, as I foolishly tried to seduce love from a stone.

I hate you.

Love,

Jim

STARDATE 2832.07
The Gol Mountains
VULCAN

Jim:

Perhaps I am mistaken, but at times, it seems that I can feel your thoughts, pressing against my mind, trying to elicit some response that five years of togetherness failed to rouse. Or perhaps that is not altogether correct. Our five years together *did* evoke a response in me – a response which I was afraid to comprehend, a response which has now brought me here into these mountains to contemplate for the rest of my life.

There is much about me that you do not understand, a part of myself that I never allowed even you to see. Master Senja has stated that perhaps I was not fair to you, given the parameters of our relationship; and, upon reflection, I am forced to agree with him. It is also his suggestion that, in the words of these letters, I attempt to put to parchment those things which were always secretly hidden away within me. Since you will never read these words, and since I know no other way to reconcile the abyss that it a part of me, I see no harm in following my teacher's suggestion.

I will begin at the beginning, since it is, logically, a place to start.

You know only that my father did not approve of my choice of career in Starfleet. You never really understood why, other than the explanation which was publicly evident -- that he wished me to follow a career with the Vulcan Academy of Sciences rather than pursue my life with the Starfleet.

You have also heard the myth that Vulcans cannot lie. That, Jim, is the ultimate lie. Vulcans lie quite well. They merely attempt to conceal their half-truths with possibilities that, under other circumstances, *might* have been the truth. But no matter. I digress once more.

My father is not a "religious" man in the human definition of the word. However, he as well as many other Vulcans do subscribe to a belief in mysticism. There are prophets on my planet – prophets who, occasionally and for a fee, will attempt to predict a person's future. I realize how barbaric this must seem to you, yet it would appear that every world has some flaw in its basic spiritual structure. Ours is an inclination toward believing in clairvoyance and it is, in many instances, scientifically verifiable in its correctness.

At any rate, Sarek consulted a prophet by the name of T'Shara on the morning of my seventh birthday. His reasons, according to my mother, were to discern whether T'Pring would be a logical choice of mate for me. T'Shara apparently told my father that I would never formally wed T'Pring, and that, instead, I would give my soul only to one man.

When Sarek inquired as to the identity of this man, he was told that the man would be a member of the Starfleet. Upon further questioning,

T'Shara revealed that I would join the Starfleet myself at the first opportunity of legal age. She further revealed that I would leave Vulcan, travel with a starship called *Enterprise* for many years; and that, during my journey, I would avow myself to a man who matched your description with uncanny precision.

Sarek is, in many ways, old fashioned, even by Vulcan standards. He knew that my joining with any man would be an unproductive union; and as our family name is an old one, he wished to continue that lineage. He sought to bind me to Vulcan; and, in reality, he drove me further away than if he had never attempted to influence my life's decision. For eleven years – from the day of my seventh birthday until the morning I left for the Academy on my eighteenth, he lived with the knowledge that his line would perish with me.

I did not learn of his visit to the seeress, T'Shara, until I boarded the transport bound for Earth. At that time, my mother gave me a package of letters – actually, her diary, kept from the time of my birth until I departed Vulcan to join the Starfleet. It was in those letters that I learned of Sarek's involvement with T'Shara; and it was then that I became aware of you even before we met.

Captain Pike was an excellent commander, yet he never attempted to elicit friendship from me. He was content with my efficiency and my loyalty to him as my superior officer. I knew at once that he was not the man in T'Shara's vision. However, when you took command of the *Enterprise*, I was instantly aware of the rapport between us. And, unfairly, I never told you of T'Shara's predictions. You can imagine them now.

She said that we would become closer than brothers, that we would be flesh of one flesh, mind of one mind, soul of one soul. In her somewhat flamboyant manner, told to me through Amanda's diary, T'Shara predicted that "the light king and the dark lord will swear themselves only to one another, forsaking all others, forsaking even their heritage and the philosophies which bind them to their separate worlds."

In short, she predicted that you would lay aside your past and your present, your gods and your world, to be with me. I, in turn, according to T'Shara, would lay aside my logic and my stoic nature, my past and my present, my personal creed and my faith in Surak's teachings, to be with you.

In the end, neither of us would be what we were; instead, we would have become twins – each thinking the same thoughts, each sharing the same emotions, each bound to the moment of the other's death.

It was a responsibility I could not accept.

I am, despite the teachings here at Gol, sorry.

Regards,
Spock

STARDATE 3217.05
San Francisco, California
EARTH

Dear Spock:

I don't hate you. I just sometimes wish I could. I also wish I could pack these letters up in a plain brown wrapper and send them to you. I would probably try, except for the common knowledge that Gol is the one place in the universe that mail carriers don't go. Are the Vulcans there that afraid of hearing something they may not like, something that might rattle the foundations of their misplaced faith? Are you one of them now?

I had a dream last night that we were back on the Enterprise, and that through circumstances which weren't clear to me, we were... lovers. Physical, emotional, spiritual. The whole nine yards. And you know what? That dream didn't scare me nearly as much as I thought it might. Instead, it was the first time in years that I felt right, that I felt good about myself. You were lying in my bed next to me, and we were cramped and uncomfortable from sleeping like spoons; but neither one of us seemed to notice the inconvenience.

It went on like that for a long time. (Shrinks don't know what they're talking about when they say that dreams only last a few seconds. I know this one went on for hours; I was there, dammit, and the shrinks were on the other side of this damnable galaxy). Anyway, it was as if time had stopped or some such ridiculous thing as that. We just kept lying there like two lazy cats with canary on their breath, swapping kisses the way some men might trade priceless coins.

And you know what? When I woke up this morning, my lips were swollen as if you'd really been there. I tasted copper on my tongue. Your myrrh/musk scent was still hot on my pillow.

That was the real dream, I suppose: that you would ever allow yourself to love me, that you could ever give more of yourself than a recitation of facts and figures.

The dreams will have to be enough. Tomorrow morning I go in for the psyche-evaluation required for my promotion to the admiralty. I intend to pass it, one way or another. If that means burying you and all thoughts of you from my mind, that's how it'll have to be. Bones is off in Atlanta giving enemas to horses, and you're on Vulcan being a horse's ass. Maybe the two of you should get together. But I can't quit living that easily. I'll take the promotion if it's offered, and I'll be the best damned admiral Starfleet's ever had.

I have to belong somewhere. I have to be something more than Captain Kirk now. Or maybe I have to be something less. Whatever.

Stay well. And good luck on not feeling anything ever again. If you dream of me, wake yourself up and put my memory back in an empty bottle. That's where I have yours now – in a fluted bottle on the hearth, gathering dust. I think of your emptiness whenever I look at it.

*Regards,
Jim*

PS... Forgot to mention that I'm getting married next week. Her name is Lori Ciani. You might remember her as the one always hanging around Nogura's door at Headquarters. The one with the big tits and no brains. I'm told she'll be good for my new image. She wants to have a son next year. Somehow, I don't think I'd make a very good father. Or a very good husband.

STARDATE 3621.07
The Gol Mountains
VULCAN

Jim:

It is winter here, and snow is upon this barren mountain. Existence is difficult. I have never particularly liked the cold. Of course, as a priest of Gol, I am told to ignore the cold, just as I am encouraged to ignore this empty place in my heart where you used to dwell. Master Senja does not know that I am still putting these thoughts to paper; he believes me "cured" of you in the first six months that I began these writings. There are some things one does not speak of even to a Master.

Yet, therein lies the fallacy of Gol. There are secrets here. Not just my own. Other priests have their secrets as well. They are harboring memories, feelings, emotions. They are needful of more than logic to warm their bed or cool their fires in the time of the Fever. Yet the pretense of Kolinahr continues. I often think they believe it even themselves.

I am hopeful that you did not sense my shameful burning. The pon farr, it seems, does not care that I am a priest, nor that I have willingly set aside my feelings. It is a biological imperative; and I am beginning to wonder if perhaps the teachings of Surak were in vain.

I was serviced by a priestess named T'Seane. It was done quite logically, without feeling, without emotion. She took me into her body without ever closing her eyes, without ever making a sound despite the obvious physical discomfort. (She had been at Gol since she was fourteen, and was a virgin, I am told). At any rate, she carried my son for five months, nine days and twenty one hours (calculating conception from the time of our first coupling on the Sixth day of Tasmeeen). The child was never born. Due to my hybrid nature and certain human factors in my blood, T'Seane spontaneously aborted the fetus more than four months prior to its scheduled birth-time.

The remains were taken by my Master and left for the le-matya and the scavenger birds at the base of the mountain. We are not permitted to grieve at Gol. The child was never born; therefore, it had no essence, no personality to mourn. It is a logical way. Yet it is inhuman. I am not human, however. I should not feel this overwhelming sense of grief. Not just for my unborn son, but for you, Jim.

At times, it has occurred to me to leave this place, to admit to the Masters that I am not a priest, that I do not have Vulcan's cold blood pulsing through my veins. I am, despite every effort, half human. I wonder if that human half is you? I wonder sometimes if destiny guided the actions of my

parents, bringing them together despite all odds and all logic. I wonder if the human factors in my blood are as much yours as they are mine.

Illogical ponderings only serve to complicate what is. I am Vulcan. I am human. And somewhere in the middle, I am Spock.

I am. And that fact alone precludes any possibility of achieving Kolinahr. That which exists cannot become independent from reality. And reality states that all living creatures need the company of their own kind at some point in their lives.

I would come back to you if I could. Yet I am afraid of what I might find. I sense that your life has gone on without me, that you have sealed your wounds with a thick salve of stone. You have built walls against me – walls which I can no longer breach. Or, more precisely, I have constructed those barriers. I built them stone by stone each time I rejected your touch, each time I slammed the door on the feelings of friendship and, yes, love, I felt for you.

I am a fool. I am a priest now.

And we are both alone because of it.

Warm regards,
Spock

STARDATE 4722.19
San Francisco, California
EARTH

Spock,

It's been almost a year since I last wrote in this diary that no one has ever read or ever will read. I thought I'd gotten over you, had even convinced myself that I could go on without you.

I was wrong.

And now there's something out there. They've been tracking it on long-range scanners for more than a month, and it's heading straight for Earth. If I were a religious man, I might think it was the long-predicted end of this wretched world. But I'm not religious; I lost my faith in any benevolent God the day you left for Vulcan. We're alone in this universe, products of accidental creation and demented evolution. The only thing that sets us apart from the other, so-called "lower animals" is an opposing thumb. That's not much in a galaxy this vast.

The Enterprise has a new captain now – and she's a completely new Enterprise. You wouldn't recognize her; I'm not even sure I do. And she feels empty and alien as she never did before. We don't belong with her anymore. And knowing that, I'm not sure we belong anywhere except where we've been for the past two and a half years: you on Vulcan, me playing Starfleet's Wonderboy here at Starfleet.

Anyway, it's all irrelevant now. Whatever that thing is, they're sending the Enterprise out to meet it – maybe to shake hands, maybe to shake a finger at it and send it on its way. I plan to be on her, Spock. One last time, I plan to be on my ship -- our ship. Maybe it's just school-boy foolishness, but I think I have to prove to myself that I can still go out there and make a difference, with or without you.

I'm leaving these unfinished, unsealed letters in a box in Nogura's office, with the instructions that, if I don't come back, Starfleet is to have them delivered to Gol, mail-carriers or not. Read them in good health, and try to remember that any anger conveyed in them is not really directed at you. I guess I'm just mad at myself for losing the only two things in this universe that ever mattered to me: you and the Enterprise. I have a chance to get at least one of them back now, and though it'll never be the same without you and Bones, most of the old crew is still with her. If nothing else, I know they won't think bad of me when my eyes mist from time to time. Besides, we may not last long enough for any of us to worry

about my occasionally odd behavior. That cloud will be over Earth within four days; and if we can't stop it, we may be a part of it forever.

Sorry. Didn't mean to get maudlin or self-pitying again. I just wanted you to know that I still think of you, and that my thoughts are always warm. Sometimes I still dream about us. Sometimes I try not to dream at all.

If you ever do read these letters, Spock, just remember one thing: you are unique to this universe. There is only one of you among all those billions of lifeforms. No one can take your place. No one can threaten your individuality. Sometimes, I think you were afraid that we might become too close, that we might just sort of melt into one another and become a lump of Jim/Spock with no singular personality. I wouldn't have wanted that; neither did you. I just wish we could have enriched one another, added something to one another, balanced each other. That's what human love is, my friend – the balance between passion and logic.

Stay well. Think of me once in awhile, even if you have to hide those thoughts from the Masters and other priests. I don't care if the universe forgets I was ever here; but if you forgot, my life would have meant nothing.

Take care.

*Love,
Jim*

STARDATE 4822.20
The Gol Mountains
VULCAN

Jim:

This morning, just before the sun rose over these jagged mountaintops, I was informed by the Masters that my goal lies elsewhere. Apparently, despite my every attempt to conceal my feelings for you, I was unsuccessful. Kolinahr cannot exist within me.

Additionally, a courier arrived last evening carrying a box filled with several unsealed letters scripted in your handwriting. He offered no explanation, save to say that an Admiral Nogura was the sender, and that the letters were left in his possession by you.

I read the letters and, regardless of my invocation of the presence of Kolinahr, I wept.

I sense that you need me, that perhaps you wish me to return. I also sense that you may believe our lives can resume where we left them over two and a half years in the past. I am not certain that is possible.

We have both changed. We have grown older. We have each hurt the other, perhaps inadvertently. But the hurt is nonetheless there. And regardless of what we may do, that hurt is a part of us forever.

And yet, my footsteps will bring me back to you. Of that, I am certain. I am also certain that our reunion will not be entirely pleasant. The wounds of time are deep, jagged and infected. It will take time for us to heal. It will take time to learn to trust again.

It seems strange perhaps for me to say that you have hurt me when, in reality, it was I who left you to return home to Vulcan. And yet, if you had reached out to stop me, I never would have gone. It is irrelevant that I did not give you the opportunity to do so. I was afraid that you *would* stop me. I was more afraid that you wouldn't.

At any rate, I have no choice now but to follow you. I seem to have spent much of my life doing just that. Yet those were the only times I was fulfilled.

I am sending you these letters which will precede my arrival on the *Enterprise* by less than an hour. I had thought to keep them silent, to leave them to the vultures as padding for their nests. Yet it is secrecy and silence that has damned us already.

I am coming home., Jim.

I am afraid, but no longer fearful to admit my fear.

Perhaps we should talk tonight before we sleep.

Be gentle with me, as I will be gentle with you.

Love,
Spock