



Ten Forward

The Theta Fleet Newsletter

Editors: Charlene Harmon & Raymond Dale

Table of Contents

- Cover
- Pg. 1 About US
- Pg. 2 Admiral's Office
- Pg. 3 Task Force Treasures
- Pg. 4 Task Force Treasures
- Pg. 5 The Galley
- Pg. 6 The Galley (cont.)
- Pg. 7 Ready Room
- Pg. 8 Ready Room (cont.)
- Pg. 9 Ready Room (cont.)
- Pg. 10 Ready Room (cont.)
- Pg. 11 Ready Room (cont.)



Ten Forward

The Theta Fleet Newsletter

December 2020 / issue 4

A FLEET INTERWOVEN WITH INTEGRITY

Established in 2009, Theta Fleet prides itself in its "Mayberry" like community warmly welcoming writers new and old. The Fleet's rules are in place for cooperation and are reasonable. The Fleet places emphasis on good story telling and community. In Theta Fleet, we believe in you.

What We Do?

We collect things...things to make us go. This is somewhat true, but really what we do is provide a home for wonderfully creative writers within the broader simming community.

Why Do We Do It?

Theta Fleet stands as "The Other Sim Choice," and is an alternative to the high-octane politics of other fleets. We offer shelter from the storm and you and welcome to stay indefinitely.

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

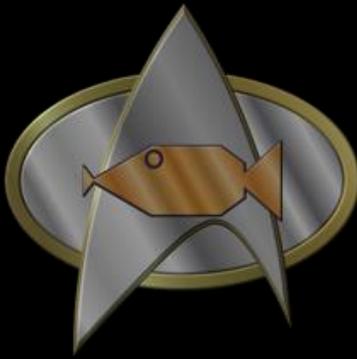
We are the "Mayberry" of the simming community which means you can always knock on a neighbor's door for help or to burrow some sugar.

Services Offered?

Theta Fleet offers hosting services to all sims in the fleet completely free of charge. Alternatively, Split-World Alliance provides their hosting and additional support services to any sim regardless of fleet affiliation or independence. There is also Anime Trek Avatars at your service.



2018 Simming Prize Laureate



From the Office of Admiral Kathryn Burke

2021 Babel Conference

Because Everything is Better with BaCon!

The 2021 Babel Conference is a different type of simming event. It's not about fleets or organizations. It's a conference by players for players. It's about helping each other learn to be a better writer, a better simmer, a better gamemaster.

Join us for this one-day event and learn a bit about how to play with character weaknesses, to work with others to tell more engaging stories, and to learn a few things to help be a better GM.

We also have presentations to help you with Nova, update your starship, and create your own avatars.

And most of all, BaCon is about enhancing the fun of text-based roleplaying.

Come join us for this one-day event **Saturday, January 16, 2021 on the [Babel Conference Discord!](#)**

NOTE: You must read and agree to the rules. The access is temporary until you have a role assigned to you.

From the Office of Recruitment & Community Engagement

- An old Ambassador class still running in the 2390s, check out the [USS Ontario](#)
- The Dominion War approaches and you can be a part of it aboard the [USS Resolution](#).
- In 2233, the [USS Heyerdahl](#) is looking for a talented Communications Officer.
- Howling at the stars, the [USS Wolff](#) is waiting for fellow lunatics to for Ops and Engineering!
- Patrolling the Federation borders, the [USS Standing Bear](#) is seeking a Chief Flight Controller.
- Come grab life by the horns and join the [USS Sitting Bull](#) today!
- Looking for a sim with a long history? Check out the [USS Pandora](#) with its loyal crew.



Task Force Treasures
Highlighted Sims of the Month

Task Force 23

With her eight decks, the USS Zephyr is a light exploration frigate carrying out the Federation peaceful mandate of seeking out new lives and new civilizations, to boldly go where no one has gone before. With a top notch crew of Starfleet personnel, and under the command of Captain Eva Gray (previously the Zephyr's Executive Officer), this starship is ready and willing to chart every star long their trek.

Part of Theta Fleet for sometime, the USS Zephyr is part of the fleet's 23rd Task Force and has been placed within Task Group Phoenix 23-B with a crew up for the challenges of a starship of the Zephyr's charm and charisma. She is a testbed variant of the Nova class equipped with technology and crew to handle a plethora of missions of various types and circumstances as a multi-mission cabale starship.

USS ZEPHYR



Area 51

One of Theta Fleet's newest sim's to open this year in 2020, the USS Resolution is part of Area 51 and offers writers an excellent opportunity to creatively participate during one of the most enthralling periods of Star Trek; The Federation-Klingon War leading into the Dominion War places this gorgeous Galaxy class starship in the heart of a tumultuous time in Federation history.

A tale of two wars and worlds in turmoil, the Galaxy class USS Resolution is fresh out space dock, disembarking after undergoing refits. Now outfitted for modern times with the Federation's state of the art technology: shields and sensors to see the enemy, and sharpened tactical systems with an armament to end conflict. Peace is but a symbolic shield, a reminder of better times while the Federation's might is held within the necessity for survival.

Aboard the Resolution, an untested crew must endure the daunting task of coming together under the command of Captain Matthew Leonard with the experienced hands of their Second Officer, coming together during what will become revered as one of the darkest chapters of Federation History.

Tensions run hot with the Klingon Empire, allies turned enemies must reunite against the inconceivable force of the Dominion as war draws ever so close, and the Federation will be brought to the brink facing an abyss. If you ever wanted to write in this crucial period of Federation history, make your New Year's Resolution by joining the USS Resolution!

USS RESOLUTION



FROM THE GALLEY



Liven up your holiday feasts with some savory Chinese plum sauce, great for putting on duck, chicken, and maybe even a wild targ!

Savory Chinese Plum Sauce

by Raymond Dale

Whether you are a hunter or an excellent shopping cart pilot navigating your way through the aisles of your supermarket, this savory plum sauce is a delightful treat to serve atop of various meats such as chicken or duck.

This recipe is another one from my personal secret stash of recipes. I have made it several times and tweaked it until I found the right ingredients and measurements. This sauce is great for a special meal.

SERVINGS

It will make approximately two cups of it. I know people who will lather it atop of their chicken breast etc., and some who will just use a spoonful. So, it is entirely up to you how much you want to use at a time.



INGREDIENTS

- 4 dates or prunes, soaked in 4 tbsp hot water for 10 minutes
- 500g red or black plums (black will be darker and often sweeter), cut into chunks, pits discarded
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 1 knob of ginger sliced
- 1 clove of garlic, lightly bruised
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tsp Chinese five spice
- ½ tsp cloves
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 2 tsp of honey
- 1 tbsp of plum wine
- 2 tsp blueberry juice (may use cranberry or cherry)
- 2 tsp cornflour or potato starch mixed with 1 tbsp water (optional, only if necessary)

RAYMOND DALE

Simming for almost twenty years, Raymond has held sim commands in various fleets, but has been a mainstay in Theta Fleet since 2015 having commanded the USS Katana (later commanded by Azmaria), USS Musashi, and USS Standing Bear, and has been the recipient of CO of the Quarter and commanding the Sim of the year 2017 and Sim of the Quarter twice.

Formerly, the Deputy Director of Recruitment, Raymond has stepped up to the role of Director and has been a TGCO in Area 51 since 2017. He currently commands the USS Standing Bear and USS Musashi and serves as First Officer of the USS Sitting Bull.

DIRECTIONS:

STEP 1

Place the prunes (or dates) and the soaking liquid into a saucepan along with the plums, vinegar, sugar, ginger, garlic, cinnamon sticks, and the five spice. Simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and discard the ginger, garlic, cinnamon sticks.

STEP 2

Transfer the plum mixture into a food processor and blend until smooth. Pour into a clean saucepan and simmer over medium heat for another 2-3 minutes to thicken slightly. Season with salt. If the mixture is too thin, add the cornflour (or potato starch) and simmer until thickened. If the sauce is thick enough for your liking, scoop over your cooked chicken, duck, turkey etc. If you plan to use for a later time, then simply transfer the sauce into jars and keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

NOTES and TIPS:

This can be used over duck, chicken, turkey, and such. It also can be used as a great dipping sauce for spring rolls, egg rolls, wantons etc.

ABOUT THE SHIP

Established back in 2013 under the command of Monoui as Captain Merith, the USS Pandora had a vibrant yet short run before being reborn anew in 2016 by AJ with Captain Temple leading it through several more years of service in its previous fleet before liberating itself and finding safe harbor in the fleet's Area 51.

Site: [USS Pandora](#)

The Rebel with a Cause and a Crew

An Exclusive Interview with the CO of the USS Pandora and the tale of a loyal crew willing to close the curtain on fleet bravado.

"This is not what I signed for!" – Major Kira Nerys

Reporter: The USS Pandora has a long history from your previous fleet, even predating you as CO. What was it like taking on a command that had pre-established history?

AJ: To be honest, I had no idea about the long history of the old Pandora when I took on the name. I can remember when I was first going through the application stage and I'd been given a list of pre-approved names for Luna Class vessels. They were all names of moons, of course, but I was sitting there saying out loud, "Star Trek: Hyperion", "Star Trek: Prometheus", "Star Trek: Pandora". Then also adding in, "Captain Temple of the USS..." and feeling which one I liked the most. I mean, that's a totally normal thing to do, right? I chose Pandora because of the possibility of sprinkling elements of Greek mythology to the sim, and the name had a sense of mystery and magic to it.

It was only a few months down the track when I was contacted by a former writer of the old sim that I learnt there had been an extensive history of the USS Pandora before. Unfortunately, our previous Fleet held very little regard for the history of their retired sims and the collective works of their players, even going so far as to delete every single reference to them in Fleet canon as if it simply never existed. At the very least, I have been able to adapt my sim's canon to recognise the previous Pandora, and make reference to the fact that we are a refurbished version of the ship. We've been incredibly honoured to have several players from the old Pandora join this sim when it was first established, which has helped to add that voice of history to the new Pandora's story. I wish I was able to include more elements of our history into the sim, and I'm still percolating some ideas on how to do that.

We're a new chapter in the Pandora's history, but we're also different from the previous Pandora in many ways. I've changed the deck layout drastically, and taken some creative licences in order to make our ship more unique. Our area of operations is the Inconnu Expanse, an original concept which allows us to bring in some established Trek species, while also imagining an entirely new world of planets, systems, and spacial anomalies to discover. We're combining *TNG* with *Voyager* and I love that. And I'm also pretty proud of my [Mission Trailers](#), in which I create a movie-style preview of the upcoming mission. They're amateur and a little dramatic, but I think it establishes our own voice.

Reporter: That's something that makes the Pandora really stand out. You have a mixed crew, some of them were writers for the previous run of the Pandora. You even have the former CO as a writer. What's that like?

AJ: It's been an absolute dream come true. When you're planning a sim and going through the process of establishing it, you *hope* to gain some players, you *hope* it will run for a decent amount of time. But what made the Pandora successful in its early months, that crucial stage where a sim either takes off or dies, was the old players coming back to the Pandora and really lifting it off the ground. Glyndar, Nash, Brennan, Griffin, and Fick. They were the core originals who were gracious enough to take a chance on me as a new CO and added their amazing stories to the Pandora. This established the sim as not only incredibly active to begin

with, but we were immediately jumping into Fleet canon and creating our own missions in an area few had bothered to explore before. So that was like going Warp 9 right out of spacedock and I cannot thank those writers enough for not only coming onboard, but for keeping us going for 4 years now.

In addition, we've had some truly outstanding writers join us along the journey. Mindo, Smith, Kaleri, Rrareth. They've all come with keyboards ablazing, taking up their roles on the sim with enthusiasm and skill - helping to forge a new path forward for the ship. I cannot imagine a Pandora without any of these individuals onboard and I am consistently reminded how lucky I am to have them here. I have thrown so many story obstacles and writing dilemmas at these people over the years and they just embrace it. I couldn't ask for a better bunch of people to write with. We've been blessed in more recent months to have Roderick, Briya, and Aenardha join the crew too and they are already carrying the mantle of strong character ideas and jumping into the story, so I don't know what I did to deserve such great people, but the Pandora keeps on growing and getting stronger because of them.

Reporter: You assumed command of the Pandora in 2016 if my memory is accurate. That's several years ago and you've retained a lot of your writers and have only had two XOs in that time. What's the key to such a high retention rate?

AJ: Late 2016. We celebrated 4 years this December. The key is the talent of the people writing here; their ability to take plot ideas and run with it, their creativity in establishing their own character storylines and adding their own voices to the mix; and the complete acceptance that the CO is a masochist who is going to torture them with odd mission ideas (RPG Werewolf, anyone?), fundamental moral challenges, and crafting our own story as we wish. We were the unofficial flagbearer for our area of operation in our previous Fleet and we have never shied away from forging our own path, making the canon that is fun and adventurous for us. I think a successful

sim can retain and attract players, and what attracts players is creative ideas, the freedom to explore, and unique opportunities to expand on Star Trek lore in ways not shown in TV series or movies. Yes, we want those action sequences with ships flying around, we want to discuss Federation ideas and futuristic concepts; but we want to add *our* voice and *our* characters to that world. The Pandora allows players to do that and I think/hope that's why our players have stayed for so long.

Reporter: Not only has your crew stuck by you over the years, but also stuck up for you and made this transition from one fleet to another possible. You had a site stripped away from you and that crew rallied together to manually move data and set up a new site. How would you describe your crew?

AJ: There were some very dark days in the previous Fleet. Massive public fights, big upheavals, drastic changes made to suit a small number of people at the expense of established sims, etc. There was a time when I saw many sims up and leave, good friends and players forced out. All of that shook my commitment to writing and disturbed my willingness to participate in a Fleet that was increasingly corrupt. I had times of doubt whether I could continue writing. But the day we almost lost the Pandora was actually one of the brightest days I've had. The crew were given an instruction to choose a new CO; they chose to stay on the Pandora with me. They chose to leave the Fleet rather than be subjugated by that administration; the crew listened to each other's concerns and we discussed as a group - no, a family - how to proceed. I never put any ultimatums on them whatever decision we were making, they could have easily kept the Pandora going on the old Fleet with a new CO. They chose me and I am forever grateful to all of them for that.

Not only did they choose to stay, but several key players stood up and took on the mammoth task of saving all of our previous posts, content - our entire sim essentially - and move it to a safe location in a very small space of time. I am not afraid to admit that when it comes to the technical side of site management, I am a freaking noob, so not only could I have not done this by myself, if it were not for Mon, Griffio, Kim, and Ray actually doing the long and arduous work required to save the Pandora, we would not have a Pandora to this day. How can anyone adequately describe that kindness, commitment, selflessness? They are my heroes, they saved the Pandora.

Reporter: So, tell us a bit about your journey as a CO. How did you come about getting Pandora as your command?

AJ: I've been kicking around sim writing for quite a while now - always coming and going every once and a while. Back in 2015 I returned to Trek RPG as a dedicated hobby, wanting to play with a couple of character ideas I had at the time. Unfortunately, I had a very negative experience on a sim where a player (who is subsequently banned from Theta Fleet and others for his behaviour), bullied me both IC and OOC. I left and started writing elsewhere, but it lit a fire in me to want to create a sim where players could be respected, where the culture was friendly and positive, and where I had creative freedom to tell the kind of Star Trek stories that I found fun and challenging. It wasn't long into 2016 when I made my first attempts to launch a sim, but with very little technical ability (see above comment on noobness) and non-existent support from the then-TFCO, the idea went nowhere and it never got off the ground. The Pandora did not fly again just yet, I had so much to learn before that could happen.

I was recommended by a friend to serve as XO on a new ship called the SS Star of India, a merchant navy vessel. Little did I know that the CO of the sim, a fellow you may know called Ray, had actually served on the previous USS Pandora as XO. And that Ray had been the player who initially contacted me months prior about the old Pandora while I was planning to start up a new ship under that name. It's a small world after all. Anyway, although the India had a short run, I learnt so much from Ray during that time. I saw how to establish a unique sim premise, how to carry that through from the sim's site to story ideas, and how to create a positive

culture within the sim. Buoyed by that experience, and with some help from a new TFCO to make a website, I had the confidence to go ahead and try to launch the Pandora again.

Our previous Fleet once upon a time had a functional CO Academy which helped to formulate all of my ideas and create a coherent sim premise. This allowed me to narrow down my ideas, and establish exactly where we were going and what we'd be writing about. I was able to flesh out my website and create the brand new Pandora in specs and visuals. This was so exciting to do, I spent hours on my site, and in truth I still get a similar rush when I'm planning a mission or making a video trailer. We launched in December 2016 with Ray as my XO, who brought with him a few players from the previous Pandora. We were also able to attract new talent as well and with a supportive TFCO, we very quickly became a stable, active ship. We came out of the gate strong and just kept going from there - growing to 14 players now, four years of solid writing, our own original storyline, and a new chapter for the Pandora's history.

It's been an honour and a privilege to lead the Pandora and I am grateful for every post, every mission, and - most importantly - every player who has written for the sim.

Reporter: Your CO character is a Human make from Copenhagen, a very robust character with a sense of adventure. What was your inspiration for your character and why did you choose to go Human?

AJ: Nycolas Temple was actually not a planned character at all. When returning to writing in 2015, I had two concepts I wanted to write - one was a Federation Diplomat named Magnus (I was deep into the tv show *Borgen* at the time), and a Marine named Jesse, who would join the SS Star of India as XO. When it came time to assign a character to command the Pandora, I found that Magnus was at home in his current sim and not really in a position to move to command, and that Jesse didn't have the experience either. I liked where they were and didn't want to drastically change their bios to fit in with the new ship. As a result, I created a brother for Magnus, and named him after Nyx Ulric from *Kingslaive*, a Final Fantasy movie, which also ripped off inspired his faceclaim.

I wanted to create a family dynamic that would round-out both characters - I felt it was important to give them both a full sense of their lives. Linking the two was like a missing piece for both their stories. So, because Magnus was the original character, Nyx carried forth his established bio details - mostly human, part-Betazoid, born and raised in Copenhagen, Denmark. Of course, Nyx is the diametric opposite of Magnus as a former Starfleet Intel agent versus the diplomat and politician, but he still swears in Danish like his brother. And they both have a natural positivity to their personalities - they're very friendly people, and I've had crew remarks on how close Nyx is with his officers. He does have that adventurous spirit and a willingness to dive right into any challenge - much to the chagrin of XO Nash and Chief Engineer Mindo, who have to clean up the messes Nyx gets them into. But he's fun to write for and after four years, I'm still finding new ideas for him.

Reporter: 2021 is approaching and once the holidays are over with, what do you have planned for the USS Pandora?

AJ: We've just started our new mission "The Gauntlet", which will see the Pandora hunted down through the Inconnu Expanse as she attempts to make it back to Federation territory. Unlike our first group of missions, this phase has a continuous narrative thread that started with "The Evils Within" and will carry through into the next missions as well. It's very exciting to see these stories play out and to serve up some challenging plot ideas to see what the crew chooses to do; every decision will effect the future of the ship but we're having a blast seeing where the story takes us. This mission will also feature the return of several previous characters from the Pandora's history, both friends and foes, so that will be interesting to see how we've changed and adapted over our previous four years of writing together.

Essentially, we're going to be resetting the board in terms of our established canon, ending some storylines and creating new ones, which I think is necessary to do after a number of missions. I like to change things up and keep it fresh, so we're in that process while also still introducing new characters and planting seeds for the next phase. Apart from that, we're getting settled into Theta Fleet and getting back into the rhythms of writing after what has been a difficult year both in real life and in simming; I'm very much looking forward to just focusing on the writing from now on.

Reporter: What would you say best prepared you for your present command and what has been the biggest obstacle or learning curve?

AJ: I believe it's been a combination of experiences (both as a player and XO), as well as having your own ideas. Anyone can establish a sim, but to make it successful you need to have the people skills, available time, and creativity to keep it going. From watching Trek shows and movies, as well as seeing what other sims do well, I have tried to craft sim ideas that are interesting, challenging, and will keep people engaged. I've learnt that you need to give players the freedom to make choices, while also maintaining a coherent, moving narrative. I am certainly still trying to do that as a CO, that's a continuous goal. I feel it's most important to have a firm list of ideas - for individual posts, and missions, and even mission groups - to keep up interest for yourself and your players.

Time commitment is a big one. There's nothing more frustrating as a player than joining a sim and establishing your character, only for the sim to either die-out or the CO just pulls the plug. I've had both happen, I'm sure most simmers have. So when I became a CO, I've been honest with my crew about when I'm going through periods of inactivity because of real life, and we've adjusted our progress accordingly. I'm still trying to get better at keeping the mission going when others aren't as active; 2020 has not helped at all in that regard, so that would be my biggest challenge at the moment. I am learning to adapt but it's still a process to recognise when it's become necessary and to adapt quickly.

In addition, negative experiences can still give you something positive. What I learnt from being bullied on one sim, I used to create a player code of conduct to ensure my ship had a proudly friendly culture. After failing to launch the Pandora the first time, I realised how much I wanted to try again and what I needed to do to make it successful the next time. I learn from watching other COs do well, instead of believing I knew everything already, to show what I needed to change about myself to become a good CO. I learnt from the previous Fleet how important it is to treat your players well and that you must *collaborate* with them, not just dictate to them. I learnt that if you focus on the writing, your players will write - no amount of bells or whistles can replicate a player who is excited to post to your sim.

And I've learnt to have fun. None of this is worth it if it's not fun, right?
