

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a brown jacket with a white fur collar and black boots, sits at a wooden table in a rustic pub. The pub has stone walls, a fireplace with a fire, and wooden beams. There are other people in the background. The text "STAR TREK: THE LEXINGTON ADVENTURES" is overlaid in yellow at the top.

**STAR TREK:
THE LEXINGTON ADVENTURES**

COUNTRYSIDE MOURNING

**An Original Short Story
by Lexington creator
Joey Bonice**

“Countryside Mourning”

**Story by
Joey Bonice**

**Star Trek: The *Lexington* Adventures based on Star Trek[®] created by
Gene Roddenberry**

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It's about 1130, thought the young redheaded woman. The young woman took another drink from the pint of Guinness she had been working on for the last hour. *Too many in too short a time. I gonna pay for this later.* Three more empty pint glasses attested to both her state of mind and what she had been doing this morning. She had come down earlier, wearing a bomber jacket of a World War II-era design, white fuzzy wool sweater, leather sweatpants, and snow boots while holding a black flat top hat, leather gloves, and brown & white earmuffs. She commandeered one of the empty tables and ordered four pints of Guinness, even though it was 7 a.m.

What is this galaxy coming to? she thought, staring into her drink as if that was going to give her an answer. *What is the point of all this waste, death, and destruction? Whoever came up with this can go to bloody hell! No... hell is too good for them. May God damn them to the worst place He can think of! That just by be appropriate!* As expected, the drink gave no answer and angrily, she took a deep drink, as if the liquid had somehow offended her.

Just yesterday about this time, the woman had arrived in this sleepy little village in the very north of the United Kingdom nestled in the hills of Scotland. How she had found it or even knew it existed, none of the villagers knew and the newcomer was not really in the mood to explain how she knew about this little village.

For the newcomer's part, as soon as she had arrived at the outskirts of the village, she instinctively knew she had found a place to attempt to heal her wounds. It was like something that had come right out of a painting. This village was quiet and peaceful; just the things she thought she needed to become herself once again. She was there to take what was left of her thirty-day survivor's leave.

Her ship, the U.S.S. *Yorktown*, had been virtually blown out of the sky by a combined Orion Syndicate ambush and she had been one of the few surviving crewmembers that had brought the *Yorktown* back to dock. As soon as the *Yorktown* pulled into Deep Space K-5's expansive naval yard, she and the other survivors were given the usual regulatory counseling session. Since the *Yorktown* had been her first and only assignment out of the Academy in her short Starfleet career, her assigned counselor had anticipated this would hit event would hit her hard so he had granted her the survivor's leave thinking that she would use the time to be with her family in the hopes they would in a better position to be able to help her.

How wrong he was. She hadn't even talked to her mother in years and her only other direct relative, her half-sister, was three years old. And as far as she was concerned, the less she talked about her step-father, the better.

When she entered the inn, she made her way to the check in desk and she politely but distantly asked for a room. She had stayed silent the entire time the innkeeper checked her in and she only gave a cursory thank you as he handed her the electronic code key. She took her Starfleet issue duffle bag to the room. She looked around at the simple room and, after deposited her bag on the dresser, she sat on the soft bed for what seemed to her to be just a few minutes, trying to gather her scattered thoughts.

What had somewhat astonished her during her check in was that no one seemed to know who she was even though she hadn't seriously attempted to hide her identity. Her flat hat had been low on her head and how she was dressed could *almost* have been

mistaken for a common, every day outfit with her leather sweatpants being the only deviation from the norm. Her long curly red hair identified her, at the very least, being a fellow Scot or it could be inferred that being Scottish was some part of her heritage. However, if it wasn't her outfit that told people she wasn't local, then it would have been her accent. Her accent was definitely from the south, coming courtesy of her birthplace, High Wycombe.

Looking around her room once again, she decided that if she was indeed going to go crazy, it wasn't going to be in here. She left her room and made her way downstairs, entering the old country pub that was part of the inn. What she hadn't known, or cared if someone had said something to her, that while she was checking in earlier, an enterprising soul had taken a photo of her, then called up her image from the internet as she walked up the stairs to her room. And it was then that he and the assembled patrons surrounding him learned that they had in their midst the recently installed Princess of Wales, the second in line to the English throne. What was someone like her doing in their village, of all places? To say the town's residents were staggered that the Princess of Wales would come and visit them, much less book a room and seemed to be intent on staying a while, was an understatement. It hadn't taken very long for the news of the princess' arrival to spread like wildfire around the entire town.

When she made the turn to come into the pub, it seemed like the place was nearly bursting with everyone wanting to get a glance at the princess. It was nearly standing room only and the princess had to gently force her way to a table by the fireplace. While she was being polite, it was her body language that basically said to leave her alone. More than a few of the pub's patrons went over to her to try to talk to her or at least find out why she was there, especially without the usual royal entourage or any type of security present. The princess made it clear to everyone present that she wasn't there in an official capacity but she was there as a private citizen and that while she was honored they wanted to meet and talk to her, she desired no one's company but her own. In addition, she also firmly insisted that no one tell anyone she was there. She would look at it as a personal favor to her if the residents would honor her privacy while she was there.

To the villagers, it was clear that there was something clearly affecting the princess. But it was her impassioned pleas for privacy that made everyone think that maybe they should respect her wishes. The village elders went outside and talked among themselves. It was decided that out of respect for her royal rank, they should respect her privacy and no one dare contact the media or Buckingham Palace to let them know where the princess was. After all, they reasoned, she *did* tell someone at the Palace she was here, right? She would not have come here without letting *someone* in London know she was here, right? They also decided that if no one was going to come from the Palace, then it would be up to them to watch her and make sure no ill befell her.

The elders pulled everyone out of the pub to let them know what they had decided. The plan was simple, there would always be a couple of people on duty to keep an eye on her while she was in the pub to make sure she didn't get hurt or try to hurt herself. And this would be all the time she was in the pub. Getting volunteers for the watch part wasn't hard... everyone seemed to want to do their part in protecting their princess. The first

watch was quickly set and the assembly broke up as it was now dark and the temperature was falling with a light snow persisting.

During that evening and the various watches' vigil, anyone who looked at her would notice that while she was nursing her pints of Guinness, she would stare into nothingness and sometimes, she could be seen shedding a tear before angrily wiping it away with her hand. Some would even notice that she silently said something, as if she was cursing herself for showing this weakness in front of them.

The tears that had managed to slip past that night were not only for her fallen shipmates; there were two other reasons for the tears. A few months before, King James VIII, the King of the United Kingdom and her uncle, had passed away. The *Yorktown* had been on the frontier at the time he had passes and for her to get back to attend the funeral would have been impossible as it would have taken nearly two weeks just to get to Earth and another two to get back to the ship. By the time she would have gotten to London, everything would have been done and over. So even though it made sense to mourn her loss while on the *Yorktown*, his death still had hit her hard, especially seeing as James had had a big part in raising her. He continued to do so even after her mother had remarried to a man whom the princess never considered to be her father, no matter how hard the adopted-by-marriage step father tried.

She had just gotten over her uncle's death when the *Yorktown* had her near-fatal encounter with the Orion Syndicate. With that traumatic event right on the heels of her uncle's passing, it had the effect of reopening her freshly healed mental wound. Not only did it open it, it very deeply cut into her psyche. She never had faced death where there were loved ones and friends involved with each event so close to each other. She felt as the despair, grief, and depression weighing in on her and by the time she got to the village, it seemed to be on the verge of consuming her soul.

All she knew is that she needed help but she didn't know where to turn. The counselor that had been psychoanalyzing her at K-5 hadn't been much of a help. For all that time she had been with the counselor, she knew what she was feeling was much worse than anyone suspected and he really didn't seem to be the type to confide her real thoughts and feelings. So, she had played along in the hopes that she would be able to talk to her husband and work it out with his help.

What was it that the counselor called it? she thought. 'Post traumatic stress disorder.' And as my husband would say... 'I call bullshit' on that. This isn't a stress disorder... this is a lot more than that! I know I should not be feeling like this!

To compound her troubles, she had received word while she was en-route to Earth that the U.S.S. *Lexington* had gone missing. Captain Kirk all but confirmed it when he had called her to tell her the news personally. And it felt like Kirk had kicked her hard in the gut. The man she loved with every fiber of her being was now nowhere to be found. She knew in her mind that Starfleet could take him away from her at any time but try telling that to her heart. She, as the song went, truly, madly, and deeply loved him and she knew she would love him even after they buried her in Windsor Castle.

I wish I could talk to Alex! He'd know exactly what to say and what I need to hear right now! But the Lexington has gone missing and him along with it! Where the hell could he have gone? I need him now more than ever! God knows I need him more than ever right

now! If he could not hold me in his arms, the sound of his voice in my ears would be enough!

So not only had the universe taken away her uncle and many of her closest friends but now it seemed to have taken away her husband. She felt that she was screaming at the top of her lungs at something and nothing was answering her. The feelings of depression, sadness, and despair threatened to take over and leave her of a complete wreck of a person. And the worse part was that she felt like she was powerless to stop the oncoming madness that was growing in her mind.

She felt as if she was having a nervous breakdown and there was nothing she could do to stop the madness.

She definitely knew that she had to get away to a place where they respected someone's privacy and after a little research, she had found this village. Far away from the Starfleet, the Palace, and everything else. It was a big reason she had picked this place, even though it was in January. And after the events earlier in the night, she knew had picked a good place. Any other time, she'd have been having pints with the locals and having fun but this time, all she wanted was time to herself. Her normally cheerful self was now muted, subdued. She had noticed that when she heard herself talking to the innkeeper, she could not believe how flat and emotionless her voice had sounded when compared to her normally upbeat voice. She was a naturally happy person but you'd never had guessed it if you had met her in the last three weeks. To their credit, the villagers seemed to be putting up with a princess that was almost out of her mind with grief and pain and, so far, had complied with her wishes with a sense of understanding.

It was on her seventh pint when she started to yawn. She knew the alcohol would hit her hard with what little food she had snacked on down in her stomach. And Lord above knew she needed it to try to get some sleep as she had hardly slept since the *Yorktown's* near demise. She went back up to her room at 2 in the morning, disrobed, took a quick shower, then put on her satin pajamas to try and get to sleep. And that's when the nightmares would start; they'd had a huge part of making her life a living hell.

The nightmare this evening was where the entire bridge of the *Yorktown* was soaked in blood. She recalled that a near point-blank torpedo hit near the bridge module had overloaded many power conduits and showered the bridge with lethal shrapnel. With that blast, many of her shipmates were struck down and instantly killed, among them Captain Ivan Rigervoski, whom she admired and respected. The only reason she was alive was that a phaser blast a second before had tossed her to the deck and out of the direction of the shrapnel. Blood was everywhere and right beside her was a corpse that was missing the top third of the body. She let out an involuntary scream that reverberated off the walls. Blood was pouring from the walls, the conn, the helm console. Yet, she was squeaky clean. The blood was everywhere, coming from every corner and crevice with the bodies of all her friends piling up like cordwood around her.

Just as the bodies and blood were going to overwhelm and drown her, she screamed herself awake. She bolted upright and grabbed her chest, drenched in cold sweat. She went back to the wash closet and tried to dry her pajamas with some success. She forced herself to lay back down and close her eyes but she knew she would be completely unable to go back to sleep. When she finally succeeded in closing her eyes, all she would see was

her friends lying in heaps around her, all of them bloody, some of them missing body parts, some without a head or even half of their body. And on top of the pile was her uncle and husband, both staring at her with lifeless eyes. She tried to scream but there was no sound.

Every time she had the nightmares, she silently would scream in both pain and rage to the universe, letting it know what it had done to her. The training she received at the Academy covered all the technical aspects of losing a shipmate but not once did they discuss or cover on how to deal with the emotional aspects of death.

Finally, she gave up on sleep and looked at the clock beside the bed. 5 a.m. She sighed and began preparing for the day ahead. Her feelings were getting worse rather than better, even after the seven pints from yesterday. By anyone's count, that should have made her sleep but all it did was heighten her dark feelings and being drunk at the same time. She had held the slight hope that her drinking alcohol would let her get some relief but the alcohol seemed to be having the opposite effect on her.

Am I on the way to becoming an alcoholic? I haven't drunk this much since my wedding reception, where I got really drunk! Back then, I passed out in my husband's arms but I managed to wake up to complete our wedding night! By all rights, I should be passed out but here I am on the road to being drunk and still living in hell! Maybe...

She took a long shower and after working on her hair and makeup, she decided to put the same clothes on as she had on the day before but she did change out sweaters. The sweatpants she was wearing were the only sweats she brought with her and she didn't want to ruin the other leather pants she had packed since they were more dressy and she forgot to pack more jean-style leather pants that she normally would wear.

I love to wear leather clothes, she thought. Shirts, pants, blouses, tank tops, dresses... I love wearing them all when they're made of leather. But I am kind of picky on what types of leather clothes to wear and when. The sweats should be enough for today... the others I've got are too classy for drinking. Maybe I should get another pair of leather jean trousers...?

Forcing herself to come back to the present, she looked down at her glass and much to her surprise, the glass she was holding was now empty. She blinked hard and found that she was starting to see double, meaning she was well on her way to being drunk once again and it was nearly noon.

She decided that maybe some fresh winter air would help her with her drinking and maybe help her mental state as well. And to go out in this weather, she decided that the outfit she was wearing would do just fine. *With all the leather and heavy clothing I'm wearing, she thought dryly, it should protect me from the cold Scottish January outside.*

The princess looked around and saw at least four people looking at her. She gave them a slight smile, knowing they were watching her as part of the village elders' plan to make sure she didn't hurt herself or get hurt. She looked to a nearby window and saw it was overcast with some more snow drifting in the breeze. Funny how she hadn't noticed there was at least three inches of snow on the ground as she arrived and there was at least two more inches on the ground since she came down earlier this morning. No matter... she liked snow and she knew she needed the walk, even if it was to see if she could forestall the darkness in her soul for just a little while longer.

Slowly, she stood up and surprisingly, her legs were as strong and stable as ever. No one reacted but she knew they were curious as to what she would do now. Next, she put on her hat, gloves, and earmuffs. Now that took everyone off guard but there was one person who put their concerns to words.

“Are you going outside, Your Highness?” came a Scottish female voice from behind the princess. She slowly turned to see the innkeeper’s daughter, acting as the waitress, with another pint of Guinness on her small serving tray. “It’s still snowing and cold out there today, ma’am. Even the Met is saying to stay indoors if you can.”

“I need to get out for a little bit,” she said, noticing that her words were slurring together and added with her accent, it was beginning to become a little hard to understand her.

“Say again, ma’am?”

The princess cleared her throat. “I need some fresh air,” she repeated. “But please keep the pint ready. I’ll have it when I come back.” Surprisingly, the emotionless tone that had been in her voice had softened but you could hear her depression... or at least *she* could hear it. But then, being a communications officer, she’d been trained to hear the difference. And she knew without a doubt she had some of the best ears in Starfleet.

Undaunted by her current state of semi-inebriation, the princess made her way to the door. Very much like the last time she was drunk, her step was unexpectedly sure, not at all indicative on having just drinking four pints with nothing to eat. She opened the old oak door and stepped outside. As she did so, she almost came to regret her decision of going for a walk.

Just as the waitress had said, it was cold and overcast with a slight snow still falling. The wind wasn’t blowing very hard so she didn’t feel the need to zip up her bomber jacket as the sweater was doing its job. Between the hat and earmuffs, it did the job of keeping her head and ears warm. She was grateful she had worn her hat and earmuffs though. The hat was a gift from an old childhood friend and she liked it so much that she wore it many times when she was off duty. However, she didn’t have much reason to wear earmuffs on the *Yorktown* as the ship was climate controlled. However, she’d always liked big puffy earmuffs in the dead of winter as she thought them as being cute. Her wool sweater and sweatpants were doing a similar great job so far in keeping the snow and wind out and her body heat in. The same could be said with her bomber jacket; after all, it had been designed for very cold temperatures that could be found at 30,000 feet. It was one of those things she was glad Alex and talked her into it. It helped that she liked the way the jacket looked on her, especially with her hair down.

Freezing to death would be a tall order with the way she was dressed.

Taking a deep breath, she started to walk. She noticed that a few stouthearted people were also out and about in the snow, making their way either to the local market for some last-minute supplies or to get a pint at the pub before the snow really hit. She saw that they had noticed her but left her alone, though one of them seemed to be talking to thin air. For her part, she pretended that she didn’t notice their stares as she walked past them.

Now I know I must be drunk, she thought. Who in their right mind would be talking to the sky?

As she walked along, she kept having the feeling like her heart had been torn out of her chest and had a steam roller roll over it. It didn't help that she had been drinking heavily and literally didn't know who to turn to for help. Counselors were right out if the one at K-5 had been any indication of their general level of competence. And she didn't know any in private practice to consult so that left only one other person and he was missing.

She was on her own and completely lost within the confines of her own mind.

As she walked along the lone road headed out of town, a local police constable was coming out of the small police station and instantly saw her headed out of town. For her part, she noticed him but really didn't look at him. To him, her uncovered face was becoming as red as her hair and that was enough to cause him concern. After all, he was both the security for the village and now that she had left the pub, he was her entire security force.

Is that why the person was talking to the sky? Were she really calling the PC just to make sure I am fine? Boy, they are really taking me seriously!

"Your Highness," he said. That was enough to get the princess to stop and look at him. Like all United Kingdom police officers, he didn't carry any visible weapons on him but she knew he would be a formidable opponent if she chose to try him. While on the *Yorktown*, she had studied Krav Maga and had the opportunity to use it in combat several times while she was assigned to some away teams but she knew she wasn't in any condition to use anything she had learned. Better to try to be charming than confrontational.

"Can I help you, Officer?"

He walked closer to her. "Question is, ma'am, can I help you? I saw you down at the pub yesterday and I saw you in the window again this morning so I know you've had more than just a couple of pints. Some of the people around here are now getting worried about you with your drinking. Is there something that I can help you with? Problem with the mister?"

Several very rude, downright vulgar, comments came to her mind but since he was being polite and seemed to have her well-being in mind, she ignored the comments forming in her mind and decided to be polite. She thought, *The last thing I need is to be arrested! Imagine what my commanding officer would say if she had to bail me out of a small Scottish jail!*

"I'm happily married and we're not fighting... sir." *Or at least I think I'm still married! But it's true that I love him and we are happily married!* "I'm just going for a walk to clear my head. As you said, I've had quite a lot more to drink than what I am used to having. Hoping the fresh air will clear my mind." *In more ways than one!*

He didn't seem quite satisfied with her response. "The Met Office says there's to be more snow coming in this afternoon. About half a meter or better by 1800 tonight. Are you sure you should be out here?" She heard the inferred "*in your condition*" that he tactfully left that part off.

"I know what you're saying, Officer. Look, I promise I won't go far and I'll be back soon." Normally, her charm and sincerity would have been enough for him to permit her to go on her way but with her looking like she'd not been sleeping and not being able to readily stand still on her feet, the officer wasn't so sure the princess was entirely able to fend for

herself. But he could be wrong. He knew she was a Starfleet officer and the officers in Starfleet knew how to handle themselves in rough and hairy conditions. So, he was reasonably certain she would know if she needed help but he also knew not to let her go too far without getting some assurance from her that she would do so.

“Your Highness, I’ll make you this deal. You let me know in what direction you’re going and if you’re not back in an hour, I’ll personally come and get you. I won’t tell a soul where you went. It’ll be just you and me who will know. Is it a deal, ma’am?”

She thought about it. Of all people in the village, he should have been the one to report her to Buckingham but instead, he had kept quiet, apparently content to honor her wishes *if* she stayed in the pub. But now that she was out and in the weather, he knew he would be held responsible for her but he also knew, like everyone else, that she had wanted privacy. And privacy here was available in spades, as everyone minded their own business as they went about their lives. This one time, it would not hurt to let her go. It was clear to her that he figured that he could let her go out if she knew he would follow up with her if she didn’t come back as she said.

“I can live with that, Officer,” she finally said. She pointed to the road out of town. “I’ll be heading out that way but I won’t stray from the road. If I don’t come back soon, you should be able to find me easily enough.”

Her response seemed to placate the officer. “Just so we understand one another, ma’am. One hour. No longer. And mum is the word.”

“I shouldn’t be *that* long but yes, we understand one another. Thank you. I appreciate your concern... and your silence.”

He nodded in assent and started to make his rounds in the town before the snowstorm hit. The princess walked in the direction she had pointed. As she walked, she could feel the depression, sorrow, and rage hitting her harder with each meter she traversed. Tears that she had been tamping down for days were starting to flow down her cheek and hitting the fresh snow. Still, she fought them as she walked along the country road.

When she felt was a respectable distance from the village, she fell to her knees and let loose a primal roar, finally able to let her emotions have full unfettered rein. She fell forward on her hands, all the while screaming and crying while aiming all her rage and grief with all her might at the universe at large. She was no longer a princess but a woman who had too much taken from her too soon in her life. Whoever had coined the phrase ‘Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned’ had never met this woman in her current state.

“GOD DAMN YOU!” she screamed at the universe. “WHY? *WHY?* WHY, GODDAMMIT? WHY DIDN’T YOU TAKE *ME* INSTEAD OF *THEM*? WHY DID YOU LET ME LIVE AND THE OTHERS DIE? WHO IN THE BLOODY HELL ARE YOU TO DECIDE WHO LIVES AND WHO DIES?”

“IF YOU WANT BLOOD SO BADLY, THEN GODDAMMIT, COME AND TAKE MINE, YOU BASTARD! I’M RIGHT HERE! TAKE A THUNDERBOLT AND HIT ME WITH IT! STRIKE ME DEAD! YOU KNOW YOU CAN DO IT SO COME ON! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? I’M RIGHT HERE! TAKE ME, YOU SON OF A BITCH! I’M RIGHT HERE!”

As expected, there was no answer from the heavens. She looked up, her face now redder than her hair, as if daring the powers that controlled the universe to strike her dead. All there was for her was maddening silence and that only fueled her rage even more.

“WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU WAITING FOR?” she screamed, her voice becoming raw. “YOU COULDN’T WAIT TO TAKE MY UNCLE, MY FRIENDS, AND NOW MY HUSBAND! I LOVED ALL OF THEM! SO WHY ARE YOU WAITING TO TAKE *ME*? YOU KILLED THEM WITHOUT HESITATION SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GO AHEAD, YOU BASTARD! KILL ME! YOU KILLED ALMOST EVERYONE ELSE I CARED ABOUT SO TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT AND KILL ME RIGHT WHERE I AM! COME ON, YOU COWARD! I DARE YOU... KILL ME NOW!”

Lieutenant Commander Angelica McKnight looked down at the ground, hitting it with her fists, punctuating her words. “*GODDAMN YOU! YOU TOOK MY UNCLE AND I DIDN’T SAY A WORD! YOU KILL MY FRIENDS AND I TOOK IT RIGHT ON THE CHIN! AND NOW YOU TAKE AWAY THE ONLY MAN I HAVE EVER LOVED? I LOVE HIM MORE THAN MY LIFE!*” Her rage reached its peak. “*AND YOU TOOK HIM AWAY FROM ME, YOU MISERABLE, COLD-HEARTED BASTARD! DO YOU WANT TO TORTURE ME, IS THAT IT? YOU’VE ACCOMPLISHED THAT! MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! SO PUT ME OUT OF MY MISERY! JUST COME ON DOWN AND FINISH THE JOB YOU STARTED! GODDAMMIT, IF YOU CAN’T, THEN YOU ARE ONE SPINELESS MOTHERF--!*”

It was then that Angelica’s voice gave out so she could no longer shout. But the loss of her voice didn’t stop her from continuing to howl like the wounded animal she was, shrieking and crying like she had never cried before. She shouted and cried for a while longer before she fell to the ground, all her energy drained out of her and for the very first time in her life, not caring if she lived or died.

“I love you, Alex,” she said hoarsely, barely able to get the words out of her throat. “No matter where or when you are, I will always love you. Just come back you me. You’re the only thing that matters to me. Come back. Just come back, my love.”

With those words, her world went dark and she fell asleep.