

Comprehension Questions for Day 2 of “The Trouble with Tribbles”

Check your comprehension of the following expressions.

What do the following two sentences mean? **“Is the rest of your history that faulty, Ensign?”** Choose from the explanations below:

1. Is the rest of your history just as impressive?
2. Is Russian history so full of big problems?
3. Is your country’s history really the source of so much trouble?
4. Are you that badly informed about history?
5. Is your understanding of history the source of so many problems?

In the expression, **“I see you didn’t waste any time taking your shore leave,”** the word **“shore leave”** specifically means:

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| 1. a trip to the beach | 3. coming back from your vacation |
| 2. vacation/break time away from the ship | 4. going to the local bar or pub |
| | 5. going on a date |

In the sentence, **“We do not equip our ships with, how shall I say it, non-essentials,”** what does the hand gesture indicate the Klingon captain means?

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| 1. bars and pubs | 3. women |
| 2. delicious foods | 4. tribbles and other pets |
| | 5. weapons |

In this sentence, **“Its trilling seems to have a tranquilizing effect on the human nervous system,”** what does **“tranquilizing”** mean?

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| 1. exciting | 3. pain-relieving |
| 2. relaxing | 4. makes sleepy |
| | 5. calming |

In the sentence, **“Kirk may be a swaggering, overbearing, tin-plated dictator with illusions of godhood, but he’s not soft,”** what does **“tin-plated”** mean?

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| 1. weak | 3. unstable |
| 2. low-quality | 4. heavily-armored |
| | 5. over-protected |

In this sentence, **“It seems they’re bisexual and reproduce at will... and brother, have they got a lot of will,”** what does **“brother, have they got a lot of will”** mean?

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| 1. They want to reproduce like their brothers. | 3. They have a strong instinct to reproduce. |
| 2. They have a strong instinct to eat. | 4. They are very difficult to persuade. |
| | 5. They are very dangerous creatures. |

Discussion Questions for Day 2 of “The Trouble with Tribbles”

1. Which of the plot lines in this story—the Klingon/Starfleet conflict, or the tribble problem—do you find most interesting? Why?
2. What analogies do you see between these two plots and real-world events and concerns in our own time, or in past times in history?
3. Which characters and narrative moments set your “alarm bells” ringing? How do they amplify or challenge the analogy you mentioned above? For example, how does the tribble-seller “Cyrano Jones” fit into the analogy you’ve described above?
4. If you were to retell this story, except set it in the present day, how would you transform it to make it work? (Example: One way to read the 1980s movie *Gremlins* is as a direct adaptation of “The Trouble With Tribbles.”)

Whatever questions you don’t answer as a group—and also, the questions you *do* answer as a group—continue to think and ruminate on them. Tomorrow, we’ll discuss the story more deeply.