

The Very End

Vega helped his wife Rio do cleanup after dinner. Then while she took a candle-lit bubble bath in private and in the rare silence of a parent's life, Vega went to his young son Thomas's bedroom. After tucking him in he sat down on a chair next to his bed, and read a storybook to his son. It was Thomas' favorite book so he asked to be read it more than any other, whether in bed before going to sleep or while sitting after dinner in the livingroom.

The storybook was titled *The Dread Space Pirate of Zyzeen*. It had been started by Susan and then, after her death, taken up and finished by George Grindle under commission from Betty's father, Broderick Neva, who himself was still in grief over the loss of his own daughter but saw this as one way of memorializing her as well. It ended up being the most popular half-fictional, half-biographical storybook in the history of both space and time, and, even in it's most watered-down, family-friendly version, the *fastest* best-selling one in the entire galaxy.

Vega finished reading the story to his son when he reached the classic 'THE END' point at the ending and then, after kissing him goodnight, and telling his wife he'd be with her in a few minutes because he had one last item of business to do for the night, Vega went into his private study. He closed the door and locked it, turned off the lights, and sat in his big black leather captain's chair, and leaned back, looking up and outward at something only he could see. The chair was familiar-looking because he had salvaged it personally from the wreck of the legendary silver starship Eryon then installed it here, in his study in his own home, on the planet New Zyzeen.

He sat there that night and thought again about his

oldest and closest friend -- other than his own wife, of course. It was a man named Richard of Zyzeen. A hero, truly, and therefore now dead. Vega would remember him at his very best. He remembered all their adventures together across the galaxy. Across and back again. Even some desperate but necessary adventures that led them deep down into and eventually back out of multiple alternate dimensions of space, time, more space and of course, on occasion, some adventures both into and then out of several pairs of pants -- when the ladies were particularly lucky. As Susan, Richard's second wife and ultimately the last Queen of Zyzeen, both had and had not been by the very end.

And then the former master bounty hunter -- who was lately starting to feel his age (or perhaps it was the mileage, honey) -- and the new **de facto** leader of the Rebellion, a highly trained killer and veteran of many terrible or otherwise pointless wars, who had served both **for** and eventually **against** the evil Galactic Empire, a man known throughout the galaxy himself as The Man in Black, now, well, what he did was end up sitting alone in the dark for an hour or two, simply lost in time and memories of the past.

And crying.

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THE END

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AND YES THIS IS THE VERY VERY END OF THE
DREAD SPACE PIRATE RICHARD

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL THE FANS!

GOODBYE, GOOD NIGHT AND SWEET DREAMS

(And then he closed the book, got up, turned off the lights, then pulled the bedroom door closed gently behind

him.)