

Authors note; Due to an 'investigation' by Section 31, I am unable to bring you the latest instalment of the regular, continuing serial this month. It should be back next month.

I am, however, able to show you this, which is unconnected, except in a tenuous way, to the regular story. A long time ago....

In Klingon folklore, there is a tale of a brave warrior that fought at the side of Kahless himself. It is the tale of a warrior whose final battle was rewarded not with medals, nor with songs of valour, though these did follow in decades to come.

This is the tale of the Klingon warrior who was rewarded for his long and fearless service of the House of Kahless by being taken physically to Stovokor. This is the story of the last time on Qo'nos of s'Ma'Je, know for centuries as

The Ascended

By James Harrington

A relaxed atmosphere pervaded the encampment that evening, as darkness timidly crept toward the grouping of tents in the Hekh Qlt plains.

A campfire was already aglow in the barren dessert that Kahless had chosen to spend this night.

It was easy to defend. Three sides of the encampment looked out over a flat plain that gave a clear view to the horizon. Any enemy could be seen in good time to prepare for battle.

The fourth ran level for several meters before sloping up into a steep incline that peaked almost twenty meters above them. This was the only approach that needed any serious attention by the sentries on watch this night. They had ample supplies.

Those of Kahless' men not on patrol were gathered around the fire, drinking and telling tales of daring deeds and honour gained. These were a seasoned troop that had seen many battles.

"Tell us the tale, s'Ma'Je, of how you spilled that Mogh p'tach's entrails, and took his woman!"

The circle of revellers laughed as one passed around the blood wine, and grunted agreement.

The warrior that was the target of the request laughed softly and shook his head. He was younger than many of the others, though just barely. His ridges were less pronounced, his beard less full than some of the warriors. He was clad in the ubiquitous garb of the warriors of the age, a fur tunic and bracea of animal skin, akin to leather. He had discarded his boots, and was rubbing his feet after the long haul from the last camp.

"No, my brothers," he replied, his smile showing his gold tooth. "The night is still young. I would not put you to sleep while the wine still flows.

"I hear you put the Mogh wench to sleep with your clumsy attentions!" Roared Kahless.

The whole group roared with laughter, s'Ma'Je as much as any of them. "Well," he answered, "She was a Mogh bitch! No respect!" More laughing was followed by more wine, and the stories continued into the night.

As light started to return to the Hekh Qlt plain, the sound of snoring and wind breaking was broken by a loud crash, like twenty cymbals falling from the sky. The two sentries turned to see a flash as something popped into existence on the plane.

Several Klingons woke and roused their fellows from their sleep.

As the group assembled, they were awestruck as they gazed at the vision that greeted them.

Out to the south, in the expanse of plain that stretched to the horizon, stood a gathering of armour-clad warriors. That they were fighting men was obvious, since the silver armoured figures carried bladed weapons at their belts, and some kind of crossbow in their arms.

It was not a crossbow. One of the silver knights aimed the object at Kahless' men and a bright light shot from the device and incinerated the chest of one of the Klingons. He collapsed, smoke wafting from the raw wound the size of a mans head. The smell of burnt meat was in the Klingons warriors' nostrils.

The Klingons reacted swiftly, finding cover for defence, though this was alien to them, it was pragmatic and wise. Kahless had trained his men well. Still, tents were not going to provide cover for long against the intruder's weapons.

All the warriors were observing this unknown attack force. None had seen these armoured knights before. For their part, it seemed that the opposition was unaware where they were. They looked about them, as if trying to recognise the surroundings, their single, red eye scanning from side to side incessantly.

"Who are these shinning demons come to plague us?" Asked Kahless "They are like nothing I've seen!"

The intruders began marching towards the encampment, keeping a tight formation all the time.

In this era, Klingons had not discovered energy weapons, so had no way to try to stop the armoured attackers before they reached them.

When the silver Cyclops ' were close, the whole troop of Klingons leapt at them, using

Bat'leth's, fists, rocks, heads, anything that they could to damage or kill these attackers.

It was not enough. Although the Klingons outnumbered the tin men four to one at first, the energy weapons of the enemy gave them an unfair advantage.

Charred Klingon bodies started to mount up, the smell of burnt flesh becoming almost unbearable. Some of the Klingons were getting lucky and catching the silver suits at a join in the armour, and felling them in a shower of sparks. Swinging his Baht'leth at head height, s'Ma'Je caught one of the enemy in the eye, causing a flash, and a strange coloured liquid to squirt out, soiling his tunic. The creature fell, twitching.

His comrades were having some limited success now. More of his number were using their

d'k tahg knives to impale the attackers at the midriff, where there was a flexible rubber-like linking band.

Turning to see how his Chieftain was faring, s'Ma'Je caught sight of Kahless surrounded by five of the tin men. Issuing a stream of Klingon expletives as he ran, s'Ma'Je launched himself to his Lord's aid.

Soon he was between two of the silver men, smashing their heads together repeatedly, until something gave, and the red eye of one exploded, blinding the other. This gave s'Ma'Je the opportunity to gore them both with his knife, while Kahless rapidly dispatched two of the others by wresting the energy weapon from one, and using it to blast each in turn.

This left only one to deal with, and the other Klingons were now outnumbering the remainder.

Kahless turned the energy rifle on the last of his attackers, but it had s'Ma'Je in a grip around the throat. The creature was behind the Klingon, and dragging his struggling form away from Kahless. He could not get a clear shot. He would not risk harming this brave young warrior.

The struggle continued to the start of the slope, s'Ma'Je twisting and striking at the tin thing with his feet, which hurt, as he had still not got his boots on.

As they edged higher up the slope, s'Ma'Je managed to twist out of the creatures grip enough to unsheathe it's sword, and strike blindly at it, hoping to hit one of the vulnerable areas.

Kahless followed, frustrated and unable to help his comrade without risking killing him. The silver thing backed away still.

Fate stepped in, as the tin man stumbled on its backward climb up the hill, releasing its grip further. Taking advantage of this, s'Ma'Je grasped the stolen blade, and thrust it into the silver devils soft middle, and then the roving, bright red eye.

When it moved no more, s'Ma'Je dropped the sword, spat his contempt at the fallen, and turned to descend the incline, and give aid to his comrades, if needed.

As he turned his back, with one last effort, the silver thing grabbed the fallen sword. It thrust it into s'Ma'Je's lower back, right next to the spine. Then it collapsed in a shower of sparks.

Kahless roared in anger, but before he could react further, was struck in the back by one of the energy blasts.

Kahless felt as if a mountain had fallen on him. He was surprised, and not a little glad, to be feeling anything. Shaking his head to clear his thoughts, he glanced back towards the battle.

He noted, as he struggled to raise himself, that his men were now gaining ground, the silver knights numbers diminishing rapidly now. A pair of his men had dealt with his assailant. His own survival, he mused, must have been due to being at the edge of the energy weapons range.

Turning to face the fallen s'Ma'Je, he gasped audibly when he found no sign of his comrade.

Sprinting as best as he could the remaining distance to the deceased knight, Kahless found only a trace of the Klingons blood and a small piece of his tunic. "But I saw...." He breathed, but did not finish his sentence. As Kahless scanned the ground around the scene, he made out what looked like footprints, and two lines leading to the summit of the hill.

Upon reaching the crest, Kahless was driven to gasp once more, as he could not believe his eyes.

Nestled in the dust bowl the other side of the hill was a large wooden ship. It had three masts, its sails furled and sitting neatly, unconcerned, many leagues from the nearest ocean.

Two figures could be seen making for the ship. One of them was s'Ma'Je, supported by the other form, a dark clad man with a long black cloak flapping behind him. Kahless was about to call out in protest, or start running after them, when they both *passed through* the side of the ship.

The greatest warrior Qo'nos would ever know sat heavily down in the dirt and just stared at the spectacle as, with the roar of a thousand Klingon warriors, the ship simply faded away.

History and legend recorded how s'Ma'Je had been taken to Stovokor physically in a great ship.

What legend, and Kahless, didn't know was.....

The lighting in The Inquisitors time vessel was subdued, a table lamp providing adequate light for him to read his book. At this point in his life, his 8th regeneration, he looked rather like an English gentleman of around the 1920's. He was dressed in a wing-collar shirt, with a white double-breasted waistcoat and bow tie, black formal dress trousers with a silk stripe at the seam.

On an antique hat stand behind him hung a tailcoat and one of those cloaks that people of that era donned for a theatre performance, or the opera. And a silk covered top hat. He put down his copy of "The Truth", by Terry Pratchett, and finished his cup of tea.

"A jolly good read, that!" he exclaimed, tapping the book with his finger. "And so true to life."

He stood, and walked over to the hexagonal control console housed in an alcove at one end of the large wood panelled room.

It had been many centuries since he had been cut off from his home world, and would be many more before he was re-introduced to Gallifreyan society. Thus, the console was a mish-mash of technology, as he had improvised repairs and renovations with materials at hand wherever and whenever he happened to be at the time.

"Let's see, shall we?" he muttered to himself. He had only been in this particular universe for two years, by Tellurian measurements, and was still finding his way about. Levers were pulled, buttons pressed, and the floor shuddered as the time

craft followed the new instructions and headed for the programmed destination. "Chicago, 1925. Let's see what it's like in this version."

Suddenly, the ship shuddered violently, and the walls distorted, buckled inwards. "What the bally hell's going on?" cursed the Time Lord. Another rippling shook the room, and the Inquisitor frantically checked and re-checked the readings on the console.

"So!" he breathed, "Time distortion! And dashed close, too!" He re-set the controls, and the glowing instruments inside the glass column that connected the console to the arched ceiling of the alcove started to move restlessly up and back down.

As the sound of the materialisation died away, the traveller viewed the scene outside by means of a primitive looking cathode-ray tube. The screen showed nothing that would enlighten him, just some sandy plains, and a sloping hillock a few meters from his ship.

"Have to have a little recce, then!" He sounded like he relished the prospect. Donning the opera cape, he operated the door mechanism, and stepped outside. Pausing to look back at the time vessel, which resembled an old Earth sea ship, with sails furled, he tutted and shook his head. "Dear oh dear." He said, "I really must disconnect that door camouflage. I'll never find the bally way in if I'm in a hurry. Shouldn't have let that Centauri trader talk me into that." And with that, he set off parallel to the ship and the hill.

Just then, a loud shouting, and the clash of metal carried to him from beyond the slope.

"Ah," he looked up towards the hill, trying to determine the source of the sounds. "Sounds like Rugby! Perhaps someone there can enlighten me."

As he reached the summit, it became obvious that it was not a Rugby match that was taking place. Two factions were engaged in battle. Keeping himself flat on the ground to avoid detection, The Inquisitor looked on as the rival warriors fought it out. From his very long and extensive travels, the Time Lord recognised the silver combatants at once.

"Cylons!!" he exclaimed. "How the deuce did they get here?" He squinted, and placed a monocle in one eye. "Ah!" he murmured, as he recognised the other faction. "Klingons, of course!" These he had very little experience of at this point in his life. That would change in his future, when he would meet the captivating L'Sar. One of the Klingons was being almost dragged up the slope in his direction! The Inquisitor ducked behind the summit, to keep out of sight.

"That explains the time distortion, then. Those Cylons don't belong here. Wonder how that came about?"

The sound of the scuffle between s'Ma'Je and the Cylon got louder, as they slowly ascended the other side of the hill. Torqcraf The Inquisitor peeped over the top, so that he could see, but only the top of his head and his eyes showed. He watched in horror at the clumsy fight between the Klingon and the Cylon. He closed his eyes tightly when he saw the Cylon stab the Klingon in the back. "I say." He whispered. "Bad show, old man. Rotten Bounder!!"

When next he looked over the hill, he saw Kahless shot, and as the Klingon fell, ran down to where s'Ma'Je lay.

The Inquisitor checked for anything resembling a pulse, although he knew nothing of Klingon anatomy. There was still life in the fallen warrior.

"Don't worry old man, I can help you." Torqcraf hauled the heavy warrior off the ground, his arm around the other, and the Klingons arm around his neck. "Heavy blighter, aren't you?" mumbled The Inquisitor. They made their way precariously back towards the ship.

When s'Ma'Je awoke, he was in a poorly lighted room. The pain in his back also affected his neck and arms, so he found it difficult to turn his head. From the corner of his eye he could see a darkly clad figure hunched over what looked, to the Klingon, like some altar, aglow with lamps and candles. Above him was a high, arched timber ceiling. He must be in a temple!! Or dead, and on the ship to Stovokor! He tried to call out, but the searing pain caused him to choke and cough. The dark figure came striding quickly over to him.

"Steady on, old man!" he said, "I've stabilised your condition, but you won't be able to move for awhile yet!"

Turning his head with difficulty, s'Ma'Je eyed the stranger. He was not Klingon. He wondered if this was what the armoured warriors that had attacked the camp looked like beneath their covering.

The Inquisitor patted s'Ma'Je affectionately on the shoulder, and said; "I'm afraid that you'll have to remain with me for quite some time."

The Klingon frowned at him and attempted to raise himself. His pain persuaded him to lie back on the trolley bed. "Calm down, old boy." Soothed the time traveller. "You and your, what? troop? Yes troop, that'll do. You were attacked by some bio-mechanoids called Cylons. Now they aren't native to your universe, never mind your planet. Now, you were injured, although not fatally, but I brought you aboard my ship to heal your wounds. I had intended to put you back with your comrades, but I've checked my data banks, and I'm afraid that you've become quite a legend!" The look on the Klingons face made it clear that he didn't understand.

"You see," continued Torqcraf, attempting to explain more succinctly, "I arrived at the scene of the battle because my craft had detected an anomaly in time. Something not quite right, as it were. When I saw them, I assumed that the Cylons were the cause, but they vanished without a trace shortly after you and I entered the TARDIS. That's this ship, bye the bye. She has an almost infinite data bank of what's what, and when's when. And it turns out that you, young feller me lad, are a legend in Klingon history. So I have to keep you with me, for a while, until you can be safely deposited on an appropriate planet, and fulfil the prophecy. And don't ask me what that is, you'll find out in due course."

The Klingon struggled again. He did not want to spend the rest of his life on this barge! Nor was he going to live his life to some strangers plan. The pain returned, and s'Ma'Je resigned himself to biding his time, perhaps gaining his captors confidence and forcing him to return the warrior to his people in due course.

The Inquisitor, seeing his guest was settling down, returned to the console to continue his exploration of Klingon history. He had the feeling that, once the warrior saw the many worlds that they had access to, the things that he could learn, then s'Ma'Je would settle down, and become the warrior of legend gladly. One day, s'Ma'Je would leave the TARDIS one final time, and take on the mantle of the mythical warrior that Klingon history would call

The Ascended.