

The Fall-back Position

By Robert Lydford

A loud humming noise startled Ensign Kerry Lyle, as she patrolled through the Stations arboretum. It seemed that the Inquisitor was having a bad day. His usually well behaved Tardis was undergoing somewhat of an identity crisis, within the last five minutes it had been a Mayan step pyramid, a Small Grecian temple, a Dead-wood stagecoach, an Amerindian wigwam, finally settling on a twentieth century garden shed completed with potted geraniums in the window. The Inquisitor stepped out, a sonic screwdriver in his hand and his brow streaked with a mix of sweat and grease, his frilly sleeves had been pulled up to just above the elbow, and held in place by the kind of elasticised bands made famous by riverboat gamblers. He didn't seem too be happy as he knelt down by a marble fountain and washed his face and hands. He scratched at his newly bearded chin with the safe end of his sonic screwdriver before putting it back in his pocket, and sitting down with a sigh, upon a small bench as he pulled his pipe and tobacco pouch from one of a number of pockets sewn into the lining of his long black Edwardian style coat, which hung beside him on the branch of a small cherry tree. He lit it from a small silver coloured laser emitter, as something took his attention. He glanced up and caught sight of the young woman in a gold coloured shirt that was visible under the black and grey of her duty uniform. She was watching him disapprovingly. It didn't really bother him; he'd been disapproved of before, and in much grander company. 'Sir, we don't permit unauthorised fires here on the station.' He smiled at her, pointing to his pipe, before taking it slowly from his lips, allowing a slow spiral of blue-grey smoke to curl up from the corner of his mouth. 'How can you do that?' She asked. 'It's got to be unhealthy breathing in all that smoke.' He grinned as twirled the pipe theatrically between his fingers. 'Very probably!' He replied. 'But then, I've been doing it for –' He paused as he took another long draw on his pipe. 'Ages.' he said with his best roguish grin. She shook her head, placing her Tricorder under his pipe causing it to bleep. 'That stuff is pretty toxic. You do know that? Don't you?' He nodded.

The planet Kronos, Homeworld of the Klingon people, seat of power of the High Council, and Home to Ke'reth and home from home for the half Human Kana. The Great Hall of Heroes, a museum of Empire's heroes past. Kana glanced up at an imposing figure of a woman. Even as a statue, the artist has caught the hardness of her stare, her proudly ridged brow and high cheekbones. A long curve bladed dagger held within her left hand a toolbox held at her right thigh. 'My Great aunt Kheyne.' She said proudly, looking back to Ke'reth as she ran her hand across the figures heavy studded belt buckle. 'She was the Chief Engineer of the I.K.V. Bloody-Claw.' She continued proudly. Mother persuaded Father to give me a Klingon name, he just altered the spelling.' Ke'reth nodded, as she spoke. 'Not only was she a great engineer, but it's said, that she killed more than a dozen men, many with her bare hands.'

As they moved through the alcove filled halls lined with warriors, they passed a raised plinth the statues on it bearing the images of Kor, Kang and Koloth. Past Ghavak - Conqueror of the great desert of Khull, past Sabak, Kahless's personal armourer, past Veklaq, Lord Regent of the First House of Reklaw. Through a rune-covered archway they moved on up a long flight of stairs into a wide circular throne room where a statue of Kahless the unforgettable held a silent vigil in his carved marble court. Beside him stood the statues of his Advisors and Generals. Akrah the wise, said to be a gifted seer.

His cloaked figure bent and supporting himself with a wooden staff. General Theel, of the forests of Kre'ak, Makura the Mighty, Lord Wolf of the Mountains of

Kri'stak, and founder of their Clan, Admiral Dreleq First Sea-Lord of the Northern Ocean. Then in an alcove standing at the back of his court, stood a figure, thin and gaunt, its features seemed unfinished, a broken bat'leth of antiquated design hung limp in its hand. No name was bore upon the plaque. Kana lit a pale blue candle and placed it reverently with the others present on the marble plinth at his feet, as Ke'reth spoke. 'The unknown warrior.' She nodded. 'Legend tells of the Warrior who stood and fought alongside Kahless at the Battle of three turn Bridge.' Ke'reth said with a deep overtly theatrical dramatic tone evident in his voice. Kana smiled as she checked her chronometer. 'It's kind of sad, that such a great warrior isn't remembered.' Ke'reth nodded as a ghojmoq. (Klingon Nursemaid/bodyguard) lead a pair of small children into the chamber. Ke'reth and Kana left the room, moving through a pair of heavy red curtains at the back of the room and down another flight of stairs, into a long artefact and picture lined hallway that told the story of Kahless, a number of warriors stood among the visitors stood warriors in their Kahless era armour, ready to tell their tales of the Great Warrior King of the Klingon people.

The Inquisitor tapped his fingers on the Tardis's central control column. 'There, I think that's got it.' He said to himself with a grin that verged upon a self-satisfied. l'Sar watched him as she idly played with her pocket knife. The Inquisitor rubbed his hands as the semi transparent central column of the console rose and fell with a strangely metallic hum, its colour faded from red to a pale yellow. 'Fancy a little trip?' He asked. L'Sar shook her head.

'I have work to do.' She said. 'And with b'Sel on Romulus and the Ambassador away, I have plenty to do. I have a number of files that need his signature.' She said, holding up a couple of Padds. The Inquisitor grinned as he checked his profile absentmindedly in a reflective panel set within the Tardis wall. 'It's ok, I promise to have you back before you're missed.' She sat down in a Blue and white striped deckchair with Titanic stencilled neatly along one side. The chair with its antique canvas was far too soft for her, as she struggled to retain her composure as she sank backwards. 'Perhaps we can pop to Kronos and get Ke'reth to sign some of your paperwork for you.' She smiled. 'Sorted!' the Inquisitor said, as he moved swiftly around the console flicking switches, pressing buttons and pulling levers. 'Hold on to your ridges!' The Tardis flickered and faded, flickered, hummed and then disappeared from view. In what seemed to be only a couple of minutes travelling time, before the Tardis dematerialised on Kronos. 'There!' The Inquisitor grinned as he grabbed his coat and tri-corn hat from a Victorian oak hat rack located near the door. 'Come on then, let's go!' He grinned, with a near childlike enthusiasm. 'I placed us in the entr e hall a few minutes before I believe Ke'reth and Kana are due to arrive. That's if this place still opens at oh-nine hundred hours local time.' He said checking his ornate pocket watch, before snapping it closed as they left the Tardis. Which now appeared to be a three-meter high ornate red marble gateway covered in Klingon runes.

It was as they stood and watched that an elderly white haired warrior dressed in pale blue armour walked slowly across the hallway. His back was bent, and he moved with a curious shuffling motion, in his hand was a control peg, to open the huge double doors. As the doors opened, Ke'reth and Kana entered the hall. Ke'reth's Armour was tan coloured and edged with pale gold, and hers was tailored and corseted from purple lizard skins. The old man smiled.

'It's always an Honour to have an Ambassador here. And you've always been one of my favourites. I knew your Father well, a great Warrior was Ton'arg.' Ke'reth nodded. 'And young Kana, You've come to see how the atmospheric lighting rig you designed for us, has been put to good use.' Kana nodded. 'That's one of the reasons Hagreq.' She replied. The old man smiled as she continued. 'Ke'reth wanted see the

Scrolls that were uncovered wrapped around that broken sword that was found in that big archaeological dig near Qe'meS, a few months back.' The old man smiled. 'Third level just off to the right from the antique weapons chamber.' The old man said as he left the room. Kana then glanced back at an extraordinary sight, a second stone gate, and the even more unusual sight of the Inquisitor beaming at her, from behind the ancient archway. 'Good morning Ambassador, Kana, sorry to pop in on you, but l'Sar has some paperwork for you to sign, apparently it's a little urgent.' Ke'reth shook his head, partly in disbelief at the oddness the Inquisitor's ship, partly the oddness of the Inquisitor, who in his opinion, despite the man's obvious wit and charm never quite seemed to fit in. His ship, which was both the largest and the smallest vessel that Ke'reth had ever come across, and according to l'Sar, even the layout of the rooms seemed to be in a near permanent state of flux.

It was as the Tardis's doors closed, that it shook unexpectedly as the central pillar flashed amber and plummeted alarmingly into the console as the deckchair slid towards them with a hiss as the floor pitched to around thirty degrees to starboard. 'Ke'reth managed to catch l'Sar as l'Sar caught Kana; whose hand had already dipped subconsciously into her tool belt. 'Damn!!!' The Inquisitor scowled. 'Thought I had that fixed.' He announced to no one in particular, perhaps even to the ceiling. 'Problem?' Kana asked.

'Define problem?' the Inquisitor replied, smiling anxiously. She shook her head.

'As in, something broken?' She asked, barely hiding her sarcasm.

'Very astute of you, to notice.' He said, as the Tardis pitched the other way. She sidestepped the deckchair as it slid back across the room. 'It's an Engineer thing!' She snapped back at him, above the growing whining humming noise. The central cylinder rose up, now a disquieting shade of blood red. Her next question was cut short by an equally alarmingly loud grinding noise guaranteed to unnerve any engineer. 'I don't think any Tardis has ever made that noise before.' The Inquisitor said with a shrug. 'No Kidding!!!' Kana replied curtly. A few seconds later, the Tardis faded from view and reappeared near the edge of a cliff. Less than a couple of meters further to the right and the Tardis would have fallen into the water far below. The Tardis finished its slow dematerialisation, now in the form of a 1944 German Military checkpoint complete with a swastika banner, Barbed wire, warning posters written in German, and a red and white painted barrier marked HALT. A lone warrior his long hair flowing and his back banners fluttering in the wind, was riding at full tilt towards the span of a large iron bridge where three paths converged. It was, as the Tardis appeared, that the Horse-like Sark beast which the warrior was riding, reared up throwing him hard from his saddle. He landed badly as the panicked beast ran for the cover of a copse of nearby trees. Unfortunately for the warrior his foot was still caught in the stirrup. Ke'reth had seen the man's fall from the door of the Tardis, and started to run to the man's aid. Drawing his pistol. Ke'reth allowed his electronic eye to aim for him, as he pushed the trigger-stud with his thumb, a bolt of blue-green light severed the strap from the stirrup, freeing the man as he rolled over and over several times before coming to a stop, where he lay crumpled a few hundred meters ahead. Kana looked out as the Inquisitor lent over her shoulder. 'Where are we?' She asked. The Timelord took a deep breath, as he ran back to the now smoking console.

l'Sar was already using a small blue powder fire extinguisher on. He tapped in an irritated jabbing motion at the buttons surrounding a small oval screen. Kana stood and watched him, her arms tightly folded. 'Well?' She asked.

'Erm!' The Inquisitor said. 'Good news and bad news I'm afraid.' Kana's eyes told him in no uncertain terms that she wanted more information. 'This is Kronos, isn't it?' She asked. He nodded. 'Are we anywhere near the Hall of Heroes?' She inquired. He shrugged uneasily. 'The High Council Building?' She asked impatiently. 'The First City?' Her eyes now almost begged for information. 'Near is relative, but the good

news is, that by my calculations. That we're only about three hours as the crow flies from the – Do you have crows on Kronos?' He asked breaking his own line of thought. 'From the First City.' He continued, getting himself back on track. 'Or at the very least, from the small settlement which will become the First City in about fifteen hundred years, give or take a decade or two.' he shrugged as he shook his pocket watch to his ear. Its temporal circuit was radio linked to the mechanism within it, which could explain why it was running backwards with the speed of an extractor fan.

Ke'reth knelt down beside the man, it was worse than it looked, Ke'reth's knowledge of medicine was limited, but he knew from his time on the battlefield that this man's injuries would kill him. Several sword blows must have pierced his skin, creasing his armour, which felt thick red, warm and sticky. His fall had almost finished him; the man died in Ke'reth's arms. Ke'reth raised his head to howl for the fallen, when his Electronic eye's movement sensor attracted his gaze back to the woods. Ke'reth rolled over and laid flat out in some nearby long grass, in time to see the pennants and banners that he recognised as from his history lessons as belonging to warriors of the Tyrannical Molor. They were riding swiftly towards the bridge where a lone warrior awaited them, standing silent bat'leth in hand. With no real thought for his own life, Ke'reth snatched up the fallen warrior's blade and half ran half stumbled down the hillside, arriving as the first of the Enemy warriors had found the bridge. Ke'reth's bat'leth blocked the warrior's first blow and returned it hard with the flat of his blade. Then a worrying thought took him. If this is the past, What If I alter History. Ke'reth switched tact. Thankfully years of training with a blade had taught him to subdue an enemy without killing him. An unexpected blow bounced off Ke'reth's wrist guard cracking the bone. The man was strong but his blows were random and unrefined. Ke'reth stepped back and dropping his bat'leth he punched the man squarely in the face, hearing the man's teeth break as he shattered the man's nose causing a jet of blood to escape matting his beard. The warrior fell face down into the grass. Taking up the fallen blade again, Ke'reth moved out onto the bridge.

The Inquisitor took a pair of field glasses from a small cupboard and looked through them before handing them to Kana. She smiled at the ultra-high magnification and inbuilt omni-directional Tricorder, with its target recognition software. 'These are nice.' She said feeling the weight as she watched the Bridge. 'Where do you get them?' She asked as she passed them to l'Sar, who took a look before handing them back to Kana. 'They're a standard Starfleet issue.' He said. Kana glanced at him. 'They're not Starfleet issue, I can tell you that.' The Inquisitor smiled.

'Correction.' He said. 'They will be, in about ten years from now.' She smiled.

'I suppose there's no chance of me being allowed to play with these in my lab for an hour or two?' He shook his head.

'You wouldn't want to screw up the timeline would you?' The Inquisitor grinned, taking back the binoculars. Kana shrugged.

'Worth a try I suppose, closest thing I've ever seen to those, is the Optical implant Ke'reth wears, and that's based in what our Imperial Intelligence Labs got from retro-engineering captured Borg Drones.' The Time-lord smiled a disconcerting smile. L'Sar cocked her blaster rifle, as she pulled it from her kitbag. 'We've got to get down there Ke'reth may need our help.' The Inquisitor shook his head slowly as he looked through the binoculars, as his hand came down to rest firmly on the rifle barrel. 'He seems to be doing remarkably well, and he's fighting defensively, so he must have realized the danger in killing someone, and upsetting the space-time continuum.' He grinned as he handed back the binoculars to Kana. 'Yes, your Ambassador is quite handy with a sword, kind of reminds me of a Pirate, that I one met in the Caribbean. It was either 1760, or 1670.' Kana watched as at least thirty

armed warriors emerged from the woods, riding hard towards the bridge. She glanced back to I'Sar. 'Well don't just stand their looking pretty!' She snapped handing I'Sar her bat'leth, from the kitbag. 'Go help him, I'm going to see if I can help to get this Tardis-thing to get me back to where-' She paused scratching her brow. 'To when, I belong.' She added.

It didn't take I'Sar long to find her first target. She swung the bat'leth down hard enough for the flat of the blade to break the man's arm; her second blow sent him face down into the dirt. The next man had his ribs cracked as she floored him with a single blow. Another rode up on her as she fought, she just grabbed the reins of his steed, and swung her fist hard up into the warrior's belly knocking the wind from him, as she pulled him down and delivered a vicious kick to the side of his head. Ke'reth arrived beside her, a wounded man dressed in a heavy hooded journey cloak staggered along beside him. By now a number of warriors had arrived and were clearing up the last of Molor's men. The Leader of them trotted forward, and addressed the wounded man. 'Lord Kahless.' The warrior said, breathlessly. The injured man beside Ke'reth threw back his hood. Ke'reth stared at the man, before dropping to one knee his blade in his left hand held flat to the ground, as he saluted with his right. 'Lord Kahless.' The man continued, looking at Ke'reth as he spoke. 'We were chasing some of Molor's raiders when we heard the fighting, where are your retainers, my Lord?' Kahless pointed sadly towards the other side of open plains from whence he'd come. 'We we travelling to the town of Khaden to the south, when we were attacked by Molor's men, they brought my life dearly with their own.' Ke'reth stood up and opened the collar of his undershirt, to get some air. It was then that Kahless's eyes fell upon the Medallion he wore. 'Men!' He said raising his voice. 'It looks like one of Makura's wolves has come down from the mountains to save me.'

By the time their party made it back to the hill where the Tardis now stood, the Inquisitor had managed to make it appear as something approaching a Klingon traveller's wagon. But its temporal Circuits seemed to be in Kana's words. "Fried till they were extra crispy." He and Kana had already set up a Field Commander's tent complete with Napoleonic crests and brass eagles at its corners. The Inquisitor had pulled out a pair of large wooden chests that were now in front of him; he was on his knees rummaging, through their contents. 'Don't worry Kana, I'm pretty sure, that I have a spare temporal coordination Circuit somewhere.' She knelt beside him. 'What's it look like.' He glanced up at her; a look of bewilderment crossed his features. 'It looks like a temporal coordination Circuit, what else would it look like?' She shrugged as he pulled out a pale blue crystal buffed it upon his sleeve.

He then shook it to his ear before throwing over his right shoulder, before reaching into the box with a look of excitement upon his face. 'You've found it?' She asked. He grinned pulling out a green painted wooden yo-yo. Albert Einstein gave this to me while we were discussing physics late one night in a hotel on the outskirts of Hamburg. We were drinking apple-flavoured schnapps as I remember. I put him right on a couple things, to do with the relative nature of the space-time continuum, and he gave me his favourite yo-yo, to thank me. He pulled at it, and let it drop as it spun its way back up the string. 'Haven't seen this in years, I always wondered where I'd put it.' She just stared at him. 'With all respect, it's junk!' She snapped irritably. 'Junk?' He asked incredulously. 'This yoyo once saved my life, I actually once managed to briefly hypnotise a Yeti with it.' Kana's eyes narrowed. 'A what?' She asked as he blinked. 'Big dumb hairy thing, looks a bit like a dirty white throw rug wandering around, but doesn't really have the brains of a rug.'

Kahless's party arrived at the camp as I'Sar made the introductions. Kahless stared hard at the Inquisitor. 'You're different?' He asked. The Time-lord stood up and rubbed his hands on a red poker dot spotted handkerchief. 'Gallifrian actually.' He said as he took Kahless's hand and firmly shook it. 'This is a bit of an Honour for me.' The Inquisitor mused. 'I've heard all about you.' Kahless's eyes narrowed. 'I've never heard of your land, is it a large settlement, This Gallifrey?' Kahless asked, rolling the unfamiliarity of this new place name around his tongue. 'No, it's small and quite far away, to the west.' He bluffed. Kahless turned to Ke'reth, and placed his hand upon his shoulder. 'This is the man that saved my life. I've never seen his kind of fighting before.' He patted Ke'reth on the back. 'It looks like the Mok'bara, but your style is free form, less rigid than I've seen before, I should get you to help train my men. Ke'reth smiled, as he covertly slipped his med-kits bone-setting wand in under his wrist guard and activating it, to repair his broken bone. He felt the heat against his rapidly swelling wrist, as he closed his hand into a fist and experimentally rotated it. It seemed okay, but he still made a mental note to have it checked out when he got back to the station. 'Hurt your wrist boy?' Kahless asked. Ke'reth glanced up. 'It should be okay, just knocked it. It just felt a little stiff.' Kahless grinned, good, I might need your skills, but what bothers me is the strange company you keep.' Ke'reth looked around him. 'Many people who fled from the Tyrant Molor ended up in the mountains. Makura accepted them all to his Fort at Khemnis. Ke'reth said quietly, as he inwardly thanked his Father for making him learn his Clan's long and bloody history. The answer seemed to satisfy Kahless's curiosity for now.

Ograh, Kahless's General looked over to where I'Sar sat and sharpened her blade. She smiled up at him, as he helped his men gather firewood. The sky was already darkening. He sat down beside her and unrolled a hand drawn parchment map. 'The Gods have smiled on us; we've arrived before the bulk of Molor's army.' She nodded pointing towards a number of red painted blocks on the map. 'That's them, the ones you fought were just scouts, my men and I were sent ahead, to meet Lord Kahless and his forces.' She looked over to the other side of the map to where a number of blue shapes had been drawn. 'Is this map to Scale?' The General laughed.

'Almost.' he replied, as she looked across the plain.

'Then our troops are-?' She asked, as he pointed to the space between two low hills in the distance. 'Just over that rise.' He said, as he was interrupted as two men built like Ke'reth arrived with a freshly killed Grelop, a kind of large four-hoofed quadruped, its heavy antlered head hung limply from its broken neck. Another man was setting up a makeshift spit to slow roast it over.

Another warrior pulled on the reins of his Sark and started to unpack a rice-like substance I'Sar recognised as T'rahl. She could feel herself getting hungry at the thought of it. It must have been the time travel; the Inquisitor had oft warned her that it would throw off her body clock.

Kana exited the Tardis shaking her head. 'He still can't find it.' She announced 'He did find among the stuff that even he said that he didn't recognise. Leonardo Da Vinci's favourite paintbrush, a Roman General's helmet, a box of slime, most of what he called a Cyberman and Dalek's control arm.' She said counting the items off on her fingers. 'It looked a bit like the antique thing dad had for unblocking the sink at home.' I'Sar handed her a wooden bowl full of a mixture of fried T'rahl and Zemoq leaves. Not the best vegetarian meal that Kana had ever had, but she wasn't going to get involved in a battle on an empty stomach. If she had anything to say on the matter, she wouldn't get involved in the battle at all. With any luck the Inquisitor would find the What's-a-ma-call-it and the thing-amy-jigg before they got themselves

involved in one of the most decisive and bloodiest battles of the first Klingon Civil war.

Ke'reth, Kahless and the Inquisitor and had been talking animatedly over their meal, as a young Warrior Kana had been introduced to as Mogroth passed around a small barrel-sized jug of Klingon ale. She swigged down her ale and took another tin mug full. If she was going to die in the morning, she certainly didn't intend to die sober. Her big incentive to drink was in thinking that she might not live long enough to get a hangover. After his meal Kahless took out a small leather bag and a pipe. The inquisitor brought out his own pipe, and was rummaging for his tobacco, when Kahless handed him his pouch. 'Try this' He said. The Inquisitor took a long drag from his pipe and relaxed his mind, as he lay back against a tree stump and watched the clouds drift by. 'Good?' Kahless asked. The inquisitor nodded lowering his hat to shade his eyes. Kahless smiled, as he took a handful of seeds from a pouch on his belt. 'If the gods are with us, I intend to plant these around my new City.' The Inquisitor grinned, as Kahless placed a number of the small blues seeds in his hand.

'Why were you riding with your scouts?' Ke'reth asked. Kahless looked up from lighting his pipe. 'A good General leads from the front, plus the fact that I wanted to get the lay of the land before dusk fell.' Ke'reth smiled as he chewed a lump from a large piece of meat that he held by the bone.

A couple of hours had passed, and while most slept, the Time-lord rolled out from under the Tardis's central command consol, its luminous central column was now a pale purple colour, which the Inquisitor told Kana, was probably a step in the right direction. The quiet off key humming noise had returned, as the Timelord tried to explain some of the science behind the Tardis, in terms an Engineer would understand. 'You see, the Tardis emits High-density Chroniton particles, which allow it to slipstream the space-time continuum so it's capable of theoretically travelling to any point in the history of any planet. Add to that the ability to slip in and of the trans-Dimensional sub-space reality vortexes.' She nodded.

'Sorry, lost you somewhere around about the Slipstream Space-time thing.' He smiled. Really? 'A bright girl, like you?' She nodded.

'This isn't engineering; it's some kind of Magic, if you asked me, it might as well be witchcraft. There are wires under here that don't seem to connect to anything, crystals lit from within, that flash at random, seemingly without a power-source. There's a circuit board with some kind of weird integrated Iso-linear chips on it.' She paused.

'It seems to be processing a couple hundred Gigaquads of information per second, it isn't even plugged in.' The Inquisitor knelt down and smiled.

'Looks okay to me.' He grinned. Kana felt her frustration level moving slowly into the red part of her Engineer's brain. 'I've spent most of my life around technology, but this is beyond me. It looks like it was designed and built by madman!'

'Thank you!' He replied, as the Inquisitor took out his sonic screwdriver and tapped it against a fuzzy glowing green sphere that freely rotated between two copper coils causing it to make a sound, a little like a metallic sneeze. 'Is that working?' She asked. He grinned as he put his hand lightly upon her shoulder. 'Seems to be.'

The day came slowly, as a sound like the rumble of thunder greeted their waking ears. Kana awoke within the deckchair her tool belt loose in her lap. A weird dream about not understanding an engine had haunted her sleep, she woke up with a start, at the sound of a War horn, heralding drums. As her eyes focussed, she glanced up at the Inquisitor who had a large mug in his hands. She could smell his coffee. It was real coffee, No replicator paste and boiling water. 'Good morning.' He

said with the kind of chirpy contagious smiling optimism that almost made the Klingon within her want to kick him. Kana wasn't quite the morning person that the Inquisitor appeared to be. 'I've fixed it.' He grinned, as she felt a vibration run through the floor beneath her boots, and up the legs of her deckchair. 'My Temporal circuit was still connected to radio I built a few years back to predict the following days winner of the first ever Kentucky Derby.' The Drums were getting closer as Ke'reth entered the room he now wore the black and gold sash of the Order of Kahless over his armour.' Her eyes fell upon the silver sword emblem embroidered onto black backcloth. The woven image showed the blade hung by chains beneath a golden ribbon surrounding a five-sided window revealing the Morning star of Boreth. 'You have got to be out of your tiny walnut sized lumpy-headed mind.' She said, as she pulled herself up level with Ke'reth's chest. Ke'reth grinned. 'Careful Chief, you're very close to insubordination!' She cursed under her breath as she threw her tool belt around her waist and buckled it. 'I won't be born for around fifteen hundred years, so you just try and make that charge stick and they'll put you in a padded cell in some Psychiatric Hospital so fast, your ridges will spin.' She straightened his sash, as she spoke. 'Do you think b'Sel would let you fight? If she was here, she'd knock you flat on your backside, and try to slap some sense into you, before she'd let you go play hero.' Ke'reth grinned. 'History states that the battle took less than three hours. I'll be back within an hour.' She scratched her forehead, her lack of sleep, wasn't helping her mood. 'You actually intend to fight?' She asked. He nodded. She reached up and feigned checking the temperature of his brow. Ke'reth looked into her eyes. 'It's nice to know you care.' She shrugged.

'Care!!!' She snarled incredulously. 'I don't want to have to tell your mother that you died in a battle that you had no right to be at, because you had never been born.' Ke'reth grinned, as she raised her voice. 'You could really botch up the Empire. Ke'reth opened his tunic and unrolled a parchment of his own; it was covered in sketches and Ke'reth's heavy runic penmanship. He also handed her a Padd. 'This is a newly released document, found among the ones that I had copies made of. It tells that the Unknown warrior persuaded Kahless to change his battle plans, because of a dream he'd had the night before the battle.' She read the padd before snatching the parchment. 'Are you claiming a pre-destination paradox?' She asked.

'This is fascinating!' The Inquisitor said, as he read Ke'reth's notes. 'Kahless's men are marching into an ambush on two sides. Molor's archers will slaughter them, almost to a man.'

The Inquisitor rolled up the parchment and resealed it with a tie made from a strip of Targ hide. 'He has to go. If only to get this to Kahless.' Kana relented reluctantly, as she opened a pouch on her belt. 'If you're going into battle, would you wear this?' She said holding up a small black ring. Ke'reth took it and held it up to his optical implant to get a better look at it. 'It's a miniature Borg forcefield generator' She explained. 'It should keep you safe.'

The war horns sounded as if they were almost outside the Tardis, as the Inquisitor handed Ke'reth his blade. Just then I'Sar entered the room, also wearing a sash in Kahless's colours. After a moments rummaging amongst her tools and spares, Kana found what she was looking for, and handed I'Sar a small black ring shaped broach. 'For luck.' She said hopefully, as I'Sar pinned it to her sash. The drumming was now almost deafening, as the War horns sounded their reply to first horn's challenge, as Molor's men gathered at the far end of the plain. Ke'reth ran out onto the battlefield his blade in hand, I'Sar was right behind him. Now on the horizon a cluster of war banners appeared from the valley to the right of the woods. Horns and drums were played as swords were bashed against shields. 'You made it?' Kahless laughed as he spoke out loud enough for his generals to hear him. 'I thought my mountain friend here was going to oversleep and miss the battle.' Raucous

laughter rang out. Ready yourselves men, I'm told that we outnumber that petaQ's men five to one. Well ride them down, and grind their bones into the soil of this cursed field!' A cheer went up as a ripple moved through Kahless's Cavalry; his infantry and archers echoed the cheer. Then onto Qe'meS, where I'll order the building of a great city, a city to rival any city that has ever been built!' Another cheer sounded 'A City so Great, it will be the First City of a new age of Empire!'

Ke'reth grinned. 'Lord Kahless, I must ask you to look at this.' Ke'reth said pulling the hastily written scroll from under his tunic. Kahless raised his right hand to quieten his men as the first row of Molor's heavy cavalry moved forward at the trot. Ke'reth pulled himself up into the Chariot that had been prepared for him and l'Sar. 'A Trap?' Kahless asked, anger rising in his eyes. I saw this in a dream.' Ke'reth said. 'His archers were missing from the field, his standard bearers each held two standards and men made from straw had been tied into their Chariots. His best men were hiding along the wide woodland path that you intend to order your men into.' He isn't buying it. Ke'reth thought, desperation creeping into his mind. 'I saw you in the mountains!' Ke'reth said, as Kahless once again turned to face him. 'I saw you plunge your hair into a lake of fire, I saw you hammer it upon the banks with your bare fists, and cool it in the lake at Lusor. I saw you twist it into the emblem that we all now wear. The forging of your great sword, the first of its kind, the first sword of Honour.' A glimmer of change seemed to grow in Kahless's eyes. 'How do you know of things? 'Things that even Akrah the wise has not foreseen?' Akrah lent forward in his saddle.

'Who can say of whom the gods give their sight and counsel. For what it's worth Sire, I too am uneasy in following your orders. This field of honour has too many dark and secret veils, as hard to pierce as night's dark and sightless curtain.' Kahless seemed to soften. 'What else do you see, old friend?'

'Dark actors wait within the wings, whilst others plan dark deeds and have darker intents upon their minds, as they move unseen upon this unlit stage.'

'A trap?' Kahless asked.

'Aye my Lord, that would be my Counsel.' Kahless smiled then we shall pour a light upon that blackened stage. Order our archers to set their arrow-shafts aflame, and burn that treacherous wood to blackened kindling!!!' He yelled.

As his archers moved forwards to set up their campfires, within minutes of the first arrow's fall, the woods seemed to scream in flame. Kahless then ordered his men to the right of the wood and ran them across his enemy's flank, as a blade would run across a throat. Kahless then lent down and slapped the rump of the beast that pulled Ke'reth and l'Sar's chariot sending it hurtling forward as he chased them to the battle.

By midday as history had foretold, the battle's end was hours old, and the tyrant Molor laid dead at Kahless's feet, slain by his mighty hooked blade of Honour. The sky hung dark with a curtain of foul smelling smoke clouding the very air above them, a burnt a broken field of tatty blackened fire-scorched stumps. All that bore silent witness, and marked the open graves of Molor's slain. After the battle Kahless had ordered the bulk of his forces on to Qe'meS. Ke'reth slowly turned his chariot, to return to the Tardis. But a hooded figure blocked his path. Ke'reth glanced at l'Sar who steadied her beast by pulling back on the reins, before stepping down to approach Akrah. 'You're not coming with us?' The old man said, in an eerie matter of fact manner. Ke'reth shook his head as he whirled around and smashed his bat'leth upon a rock, shattering the blade. Akrah smiled. 'From the first moment we met, I knew that we were to travel along different paths.' The old man said with a knowing twinkle in his eye. Ke'reth carefully picked up the parts of the shattered blade and

wrapping them tenderly within his parchment, he handed them to the old man. 'Will you bury these for me at Qe'meS?' The old man took the bundle.

'I will.' He replied. Ke'reth leant conspiratorially towards Akrah.

'Please allow my name to be forgotten by History, can you do that?' A thin knowing smile came to the Akrah's battle-parched lips. 'I suppose so.' Ke'reth returned the old man's smile, saluting him before turning and helping l'Sar down from the chariot. With one last look back Ke'reth recorded the image of the old man digitally within his eye before turning slowly and walking back towards the hill where the Tardis stood waiting.

A few minutes after midnight, a dulled whooshing sound heralded the Tardis's arrival in the Hall of Kahless. Kana moved from one statue to another, as she shone her pocket torch into their carved impassive stone faces. They looked somehow different from the men she'd seen scant hours since, fifteen hundred years ago. The Inquisitor and l'Sar walked with her. She stopped before the statue of the unknown warrior, a heavysset figure, a broken blade hung limply within his hand. CRASH!!! The sound of breaking glass startled everyone within the room. Ke'reth ran over to where she stood her mouth hung upon, beneath her upturned eyes. 'It really is a quite remarkable likeness, isn't it?' The Inquisitor said lighting a match from a small box decorated with a label telling him to collect War coupons. Within the box, lain among the matches where a dozen or so small blue seeds. The Inquisitor smiled, as he opened an ornate Victorian silver hipflask, and took a swig before wiping the rim and passing it to Kana. 'To Kahless the unforgettable!' He announced, as Kana took a long swig. A wicked smile passed between them. 'To Ke'reth the forgotten!' She replied. They were still laughing as they made there way back to the Tardis.

Back on the Station the Inquisitor stood among the flowers at the edge of the stations arboretum, he glanced up as Lucretia Nax stepped out from behind a marble fountain. 'Inquisitor you startled me, I was just taking an evening stroll.' He smiled as he beckoned her over, as he rummaged through his pockets before pulling out a small box. She watched fascinated as he opened the box. 'Are they seeds?' She asked.

'Your very perceptive my dear, they are indeed seeds.' She smiled as picked one up.

'Seeds for what?' She asked, as he glanced around himself.

'They're an extremely rare Klingon rag-leaf, and if these grow, I can take cuttings and get them sent back to Kronos where this sweet little plant has been extinct for almost fifteen hundred years.' She blinked.

'What did they do with it?' She inquired, as she sniffed the small blue seed.

'They used to pick it, then dry it out in the sunshine, before ripping it into tiny pieces and then they would smoke it. It's one of the most satisfying smokes that I've ever had. Kahless the Unforgettable himself introduced me to it. She grinned, as she looked down to an area just outside the shadow of the Tardis, which had regained its familiar step pyramid shape. 'There!' She said pointing to a small open patch of open soil. 'Perfect.' He said with a grin.

'You intend to grow Rag-leaf Tobacco on the station?' She asked, the inquisitor nodded. 'What would Admiral Jat say?' She asked. 'I mean she'd never permit it.'

The young Trill said with an anxious grin. 'Between you and I, I wasn't going to tell her.' She smiled as he spoke. 'I thought that if you had the time you could plant them for me.' He said causing her to grin. She nodded. 'Our little secret?' She asked

'Our little secret.' He replied, tipping his hat to her.