

The Adventure Continues... Changes

By Tom Hudspeth

The section of space known as “The Triangle”, where the Federation, Klingon and Romulan star empires all meet, is a place where civilizations and egos clash. It is a contested, and congested, area of space, with commerce vessels and warships roughly equaling each other.

Near the end of the Dominion War with the inhabitants of the Gamma Quadrant, the newly re-forged alliance of the United Federation of Planets and the Klingon Star Empire, decided to build a project to protect both of their interests in the Triangle, and to re-supply their ships in the war against the Dominion.

That project was Starbase 410, a giant “Guardian Class” space station. Located near the “ram qil”, or Night Fire, nebula, and integrating the latest in Klingon-Federation technology, it was a totally self-sufficient bastion of peace, and a guardian of civilization in the troublesome “Triangle”, where tempers were often short, and trigger fingers even shorter.

Klingon General K'batlh epetai LoDnI' was reading a data pad as he entered his quarters on his Flagship the I.K.V Hegh qaD. While concentrating on the information contained on the pad, he turned and entered his bedroom. He realized his momentary lapse in situational awareness when he was struck in the back by a two handed blow.

K'batlh reeled from the hit, but did not go down, the data pad falling from his hand, forgotten. Instead, he turned toward his attacker. This only meant that instead of a kidney punch, K'batlh took the next hit to his rock hard stomach muscles. The force of the punch lifted him up and flung him across the room to strike the wall. He landed with so much energy, that the breath was knocked out of him and he was momentarily stunned. K'batlh slid down the wall to the floor.

His assailant came towards him. Gathering all his strength, K'batlh pushed up from the floor with his powerful legs and caught his antagonist with a two handed upper cut to the abdomen. This caught his attacker by surprise, and forced her to fly across the room onto the bed. K'batlh jumped across the room to land on top of his foe, grabbing her arms and holding her down with his weight. She struggled and bit him, only increasing his excitement.

His enemy was a Klingon female, who said to him, “You have defeated me. Take me, my General, as you would any prize in battle. I submit myself to you.”

After a while, when things had calmed down, K'batlh rolled off of the bed and went to stand by the window. The female, his mate qu'Bang, followed him. She wrapped her arms around him and gazed at his face, lit by the light of the stars. K'batlh continued to stare out the window.

“You think about conquest and glory.” She told him. “You think that you will find little of both in this dull area of space near the Federation.”

“I have a duty to perform. The Klingon High Council...”

“Can be damned for all you care!”

“Careful woman! I do not like your tone!”

qu'Bang disengaged herself from K'batlh and crossed the room to the food dispenser. Pouring herself a drink, she said, “I know you, K'batlh. You chafe under the command of the Trill Admiral. You seek power for our clan and glory for yourself.”

“We have seen battles enough for any warrior while stationed here, and I wield the largest fleet in the Triangle.”

“Meanwhile, your enemies on the Council become more powerful. Do you know what they say? That you have become soft, like the Earthers you serve under.”

K'batlh strode across the room and slapped her.

Qu'Bang looked up at him and licked the blood from her bleeding lip. "Again?" She asked, "So soon after the first? Perhaps you are not so old and tired as some members of the council think you are."

"Bah! You are unsatisfiable!" K'batlh told her.

Qu'Bang continued, "As is your ambition my lover. You will not stop until you are Chairman of the High Council."

"But if it is as you say my mate, then how can I bring favor to house LoDnI? What can I do to gain recognition here on the outskirts of civilization?"

"You must command. You must take charge. You must make this area of space yours. Only then will you have power in the Council Chambers. Until then, you are a forgotten soldier in a forgotten corner of the galaxy."

"I will consider your proposal."

Brian Starr found himself back on the pirate asteroid turned spaceship. He was running down the corridors looking for something, no, someone. Where was she? He knew he only had seconds before the entire place blew up. He had to find her.

"Brian! In here! Help me!"

Brian went back to one of the countless doors that lined the hallway.

"I'm here S'ena!"

"Oh, Brian, I knew you'd come back to save me!"

Brian searched for a way to open the door. Suddenly, a control panel appeared. Brian frantically pressed the buttons, trying to find the correct combination to make it open. In frustration, he reached for his phaser, and blasted the panel. Surprisingly, this caused the door to open.

Brian charged into the room. S'ena was hanging from chains on the far wall. Her clothing was torn and she was bruised, but she smiled at him in relief. Brian pulled on the chains, but they were securely fastened to the wall. He once again reached for his phaser, but it was gone.

"Looking for this, hero?" Said an evil voice from the door.

"Yarda!" S'ena shouted.

Brian turned to find a strange red skinned Orion standing in the door, leveling his phaser at them.

"Well, my dear, I guess you're not really an Orion slave girl, so I have no more use for you." Yarda said. He aimed the phaser at S'ena and fired. S'ena disintegrated atom by atom, the energy racing across her body in arcs. "Nooooo!" She said as she disappeared.

"You madman!" Brian yelled as he sprang towards Yarda. Time seemed to slow as Yarda repointed the phaser toward Brian and pulled the trigger. Brian could feel the burning sensation as he fell to the floor, his body being torn by un-natural energies. Fire screamed in his veins as it ate him, body and soul.

"S'ena!" Brian shouted as he sat up in bed. He took a deep breath and realized he had been sleeping. He was covered in sweat.

Brian got up and staggered to the replicator. "Water, cool." He told the machine.

It took Brian a few minutes to change his bedding and take a sonic shower. Afterwards, he felt better. Not refreshed, but certainly not sleepy either. Well, might as well get some work done, he thought. Still, the sight of S'ena flashing out of existence would not leave him alone.

Vice Admiral Anarita Jat whistled as she made her way to her Executive Officer's Office. Yes, Vice Admiral does sound nice, she thought, even if Admiral Thomas had

rather stripped her down to crewman first class for the loss of the *Dark Star*. The ultra secret spy ship had failed on it's first mission by being struck by a phaser bolt while unshielded. Anarita had been forced to leave the helpless wreck lost in space while she tried to find another ship with just a thruster suit. Since the ship was secret, she couldn't officially be blamed for her loss, now could she? Admiral Thomas had instead been forced by Starfleet Command to promote Anarita Jat to Admiral for successfully ending the pirate threat to the triangle. Ah, Anarita thought, the fortunes of war.

Admiral Jat reached the door to Captain T'Pina's office. Her going to her Exec's office for their customary morning briefing wasn't unusual, since T'Pina had been injured during the battle of Wolf 359. T'Pina was an excellent Executive Officer doing a tough job on Starbase 410, and Anarita was inclined to make indulgences for her disabilities. She chimed for entrance. Then she waited. And waited.

Anarita tapped her comm. badge, "Computer, location Captain T'Pina."

The calm female voice replied, "Captain T'Pina is in her office, Level 7, section 24."

Anarita chimed again, nothing. She typed her over ride code into the door panel. The door obediently opened to reveal T'Pina sprawled out behind her desk on the floor.

"Jat to Medical" Anarita said as she rushed to her old friend. "Emergency transport to sickbay from this location."

Meanwhile, in transporter room 3, Lieutenant Commander Saryena Remora gave Commander Jeanette Warren a hug.

"Are you sure this is what you want?" Jeanette asked her.

"Yes, it is just too exciting for me around here. I have to go and take some time off. Besides, archeology can be exciting too."

"Oh, sure," Newly commissioned Lt. Ellie Barstow said from behind the transporter console. "It's real exciting digging up to your arm pits in mud for some ancient alien's bones and left over parts."

"Well, I hope someone digs me up in a thousand years and remembers who I was. We all have to die sometime, and if we can provide a little knowledge to our descendants, then I'm happy to help." Ensign Laura Shepherd said.

"Speak for yourself," Cdr. John Borda chimed in. "I plan to live forever. Maybe I'll be the one to dig you up!"

"Heaven forbid." Lt. Laura-Jean Morris replied.

"Well, maybe I'll be back." Saryena told them.

"We'll be looking forward to it." Jeanette told her warmly.

Saryena mounted the transporter and nodded to Ellie. Ellie worked the controls and Saryena disappeared in a sparkle of lights.

"Next!" Ellie announced.

"Well, at least I know we'll be coming back." Shepherd said.

"Yes, the Daystrom Institute just wants to confer with us about Three." Morris added. "We should only be gone for a short time. Maybe we can get some holiday while we are away."

"Yes, please leave the station in one place for us. We'd hate to come back and not find you all."

"No problem there," Warren said. "Three has promised not to move the station any more."

"Hurry back." John added.

The two Laura's stepped up to the transporter platform and Ellie dematerialized them. As everyone moved to leave, the console beeped.

"An incoming transport." Ellie said.

"Well," John replied, "Let's see who it is."

On the platform, a tall figure condensed into shape. A humanoid man with trails of spots on either side of his face materialized. The first thing they noticed was that it was an Admiral. Coming to attention, they all suddenly felt ill. They recognized who it was, Admiral Dalen Varr.

Admiral Varr stepped down from the transporter, an imposing figure at any time. His stern look hadn't changed as he evaluated the crew before him. Now seasoned Starfleet veterans, each felt like they had back when they had last been subject to Varr's attention, back in Starfleet Academy when they had been cadets.

"Permission to come aboard." Varr announced rather than asking.

"Ah, granted." Jeanette replied hesitantly.

"May I assume you are the highest ranking person present?" Varr asked.

Jeanette looked around as if she just walked in. Turning back to Admiral Varr, she said, "Yes, Sir."

"Good, then you will show me where to find Admiral Jat." Varr said as he headed for the door.

"Yes, Sir." Jeanette hurried to catch up to him.

As soon as they left the room, John said, "Oh, my god!"

"What?" Ellie asked completely confused by her friends reactions.

"Oh, that's right, you didn't go through the usual Starfleet Academy, you studied here on Starbase 410." John said. "Admiral Varr instructed most of us in San Francisco, or more factually, scared most of us. He expected us to follow regulations to the strictest interpretation of the letter. Any cadet who broke even the smallest of rules was put through the wringer. We all wanted to graduate just so we could get away from him." John looked at the door. "And now he's here."

On the newly recovered and refitted *Orange Blossom*, civilian merchant Captain Jartan looked at his passengers, his blue Bolian skin mixing with the green light given off from his command console. Saryena Remora nodded in his direction.

"We are ready as we will ever be." He told her.

"How are the others?" Saryena asked.

"Balor of Tanis IV is in his cabin asleep and that monster Buroo with his space rat..."

"Lou is a hamster." Saryena interrupted.

"Well, whatever it is, they are both down in my engine room mucking things up!"

"He is a fast learner, I'm sure he won't touch anything important."

"So you think. Well, I've got permission to leave from Three."

"And no one knows where we are going?"

"Three does, but I made her promise to keep it secret. I love her even if she is a hologram, but it sure is hard to keep secrets from her. " Jartan admitted. "But she'll be keeping tabs on us, and if we get in trouble, she will send a rescue. As far as the rest of the universe goes, I am taking you to your new assignment on some backwater world. "

"I guess it can't be helped." Saryena said. "Ok, a journey soon started is sooner ended. Let's go."