



Starboard Bow

*Story by Jim Caswell and Ken Hallaron
Audioplay by Jim Caswell and Doug Zeitlin*

Episode Summary

As the USS Aurora prepares to chase the Romulans back to their side of the Neutral Zone, Evori recounts a similar situation with the Klingons aboard the USS Potemkin.

Starring

Lt. JG Violetta Knorre	Joan Hallaron
Lieutenant Jax Card	Matt Hallaron
Commander Frank White	Andy Fox
Evori	Jim Caswell
Captain Patrick Michael Connerly	Matt Hallaron
Lt. Commander J'hos T'Minear	Ric Steele
Commander Jared Tobin	Mick Mise
Captain Lenna Bradshaw	April Sadowski
Yeoman Emily Gibbs	Louise Francis
Ensign Nader Massad	Doug Zeitlin
Lieutenant Damian Oldfield	Lee Sands
Lt. Commander Riley Finnegan	Pete Nottit
Lieutenant J.G. Ra-tevnarem	Eli Marti
Lieutenant "Ringo" Starkey	Steve Cain

and Featuring

Captain K'Bach	Justin Bills
D'Iorak	Ken Hallaron
Warbird Commander	Steve Cain

Stardates

Deep Space 5	58272.9	February, 2381
U.S.S. Potemkin	P 726.3	March, 2259

PROLOGUE

SCENE 1 – ENTER INT.: *Hallway – USS Aurora*

SOUND: Footsteps walking down hallway.

KNORRE

I still don't understand the point of this, Lieutenant.

CARD

It's the experience of racing along, the wind through your hair, going as fast as your vehicle will carry you.

KNORRE

How can the wind blow through our hair if we are wearing these helmets?

CARD

It's a figure of speech. We're going to be in an enclosed vehicle too, but that's not the point.

KNORRE

Da, that's what I said. I don't understand the point. Besides, we travel at faster speeds than what you describe at half impulse.

CARD

Just trust me. It's an experience you'll never forget.

KNORRE

I bet you use that line on many women to get them into the holodeck with you.

CARD

Trust me, Knorre, if I was trying to pull that one on you, it wouldn't be in a stock car at Indianapolis. It would be on the back of a Kawasaki driving down Waikiki Beach.

KNORRE

You've got a specific program for that, then.

SOUND: Footsteps stop. Computer chirps.

CARD

Computer. Begin program Card NASCAR Three.

SOUND: Silence – 1 beat.

SOUND: Computer beeps confirmation and holodeck doors open.

CARD

After you.

KNORRE

Thank you.

CUT TO INT.: Holodeck Two – USS Aurora

SOUND: Engine background noise fades as feet walk across pavement.

KNORRE

So that's a car. It looks different than the ones I saw in museums back home.

CARD

That's because this is a stock car. It's got some differences to it.

SOUND: Footsteps start and door is pulled on without opening.

KNORRE

How do you get into it?

CARD

You have to crawl in through the window.

KNORRE

That's ridiculous. What's the point in having doors if you cannot use them?

CARD

It's how they were built. It was to keep them from flying open in case of a crash.

SOUND: Silence – 1 beat.

KNORRE

I am not crawling in through the window.

CARD

That's how you get in.

KNORRE

Not me. Computer, adjust program Card NASCAR Three to enable car doors to be opened.

SOUND: Computer beeps in confirmation and holodeck adjusts. Car door opens.

KNORRE

See. How hard is that?

CARD

Killjoy.

KNORRE

Feel free to climb through your window if you want.

CARD

Maybe I will.

SOUND: CARD grunts as he climbs in through the window.

KNORRE (snickering)

Do you know how silly you looked?

CARD

Shut up and put on your safety harness.

KNORRE

All of this equipment is not relieving my anxieties.

CARD

Don't worry. I always run with the safety protocols online.

SOUND: Computer beeps.

KNORRE

I don't know. I do not have a good feeling about this.

CARD

You and your feelings. Pull the harness over your head and

buckle it between your legs. Like this.

SOUND: A harness buckle snaps into place.

KNORRE

You know, it's not too late to go to the lounge and play a game of chess.

CARD

And where's the challenge in that?

KNORRE

You have yet to beat Petrov's Defense. Once you get past that basic maneuver, then you will find the challenge of the game.

CARD

Are you going to buckle up or not?

KNORRE

Fine.

SOUND: A second harness buckle snaps.

CARD

Now, put on your helmet.

SOUND: Car engine revs to life.

CARD

You hear that? Isn't that a beautiful sound?

KNORRE (muffled by helmet)

What?

CARD

Never mind. <beat> (muffled by helmet) Hang on tight.

SOUND: Car chokes and dies.

CARD (muffled by helmet)

That's never happened before.

SOUND: Car is restarted and peels out.

CARD (muffled by helmet)

There you go. You feel that? You feel the vibrations from the speed? That's what I'm talking about!

KNORRE (muffled by helmet)

What?!

SOUND: Car takes a tight turn.

CARD (muffled by helmet)

Whoa! Steering seems to be a bit off. Seems a bit sluggish.

SOUND: Silence – 1 beat.

KNORRE

I can't hear a thing you're saying with that thing on.

CARD (muffled by helmet)

I said the steering seems a bit sluggish. You should put your helmet back on.

KNORRE

I'm really getting the feeling this isn't the best of ideas, Jax. I think you should stop the car.

CARD (muffled by helmet)

We just got started.

KNORRE

I really think you should stop the car.

SOUND: Car screeches through another turn.

CARD (muffled by helmet)

That's odd. I tapped the brakes and they didn't respond.

KNORRE

I really think you should stop the car!

CARD (muffled by helmet)

Alright already. I get the message. <beat> OK, that's not good.

KNORRE

What have you gotten me into this time?

CARD (muffled by helmet)

We'll be OK. I always run with the safety protocols online.

KNORRE

With everything else going wrong, what makes you so sure they are still online?

CARD (muffled by helmet)

Good point. Which means that, even if we were to freeze the program, we'd be as likely to fly through the windshield and get splattered on the pavement as not.

KNORRE

And you find this to be fun?

CARD (muffled by helmet)

Only when the holodeck is working properly. Holodeck two to engineering.

SILENCE – 2 count – followed by another screeching turn.

CARD (muffled by helmet)

Engineering?

SOUND: Communicator chirp.

KNORRE

Knorre to Commander White. Please respond.

WHITE

White here. What can I do for you?

KNORRE

You can get us out of here!

WHITE

What?

CARD (muffled by helmet)

We're trapped in holodeck two. We need an emergency beam-out.

WHITE

What did the two of you do to my holodeck?

KNORRE and CARD

Nothing!

SOUND: Car screeches around another turn, scuffing against the guard wall.

KNORRE

OK, that one was just too close.

WHITE

Initiating emergency beam out.

SOUND: Transporter activates, followed by the car crashing into a wall.

CUT TO INT.: Transporter Room Four – USS Aurora

SOUND: Transporter fades away. Engine background noise returns.

WHITE

What happened?

CARD (muffled by helmet)

Not sure, sir.

WHITE

What? Take that stupid thing off.

SOUND: Silence – 1 beat.

CARD

Not sure, sir. It's the same program I've been running off and on for the past six months. Except that Knorre made the computer open the doors.

KNORRE

You are not blaming this on me, Lieutenant.

WHITE

A minor alteration to the program shouldn't have caused a cascade effect like that. <beat> I'll take a look at it. I should have it back up and running in about a half hour. I've never seen a problem with the holodeck that took longer than an hour to fix.

CARD

There goes my reservation time then.

KNORRE

We could still go and play chess.

SOUND: Communication chirp.

CONNERLY

Alpha shift bridge personnel report to the briefing room immediately.

CARD

So much for that idea.

KNORRE

After you, Lieutenant.

SOUND: Cue Intro music and monologue.

ACT I

SCENE 1 – ENTER INT.: *Briefing Room – USS Aurora*

SOUND: Doors opening.

CARD

I'm telling you, it's a fluke. Normally it's as safe as sitting behind your console.

KNORRE

And I'm telling you, next time I tell you I have a feeling, listen to me.

SOUND: Door closing.

EVORI

Is there a problem?

CARD

Oh, ummm.... Admiral. Didn't know you were here.

EVORI

No real reason you should, other than the fact that you're docked at my space station.

CARD

I mean....

KNORRE

Nothing major, Admiral. Just a holodeck malfunction.

EVORI (nonchalantly)

Oh.

CONNERLY

Take a seat, Lieutenants.

CARD

Yes sir.

SOUND: Two chairs pulled out.

CONNERLY

Admiral, the floor is yours.

EVORI

Thank you, Captain. We just received word from one of our sensor probes that a Romulan vessel has just crossed into the Neutral Zone. I am dispatching the Aurora immediately to head the ship off and send them back across the boarder.

CONNERLY

A rarity. For a change, we get to chase them back across.

EVORI

I thought you might like the idea of it.

T'MINEAR

I don't suppose they could accidentally set off one of the mines?

TOBIN

Can we take the fact that they are navigating the field without incident as confirmation that they are responsible for the mining?

CONNERLY

Well, that would be too easy.

EVORI

I am sure that they would claim that they were just taking their chances and got lucky.

CONNERLY

I wouldn't bet on that; it depends on how full of themselves they are feeling today.

CARD

And, as they have crossed over to our side of the boarder, they must be feeling pretty ballsy.

EVORI

As such, take absolute care with this situation. We still don't want to spark a war, even if they would be the instigators.

TOBIN

This time.

CONNERLY

Quite right. Let's get underway, people. Card, plot us a course and let's get going ASAP. Commander, I want us running at Yellow Alert the whole journey. Knorre, keep the sensors hot. I want to know if they sneeze in our direction.

KNORRE

Aye, Captain.

T'MINEAR

I just thought of something. They must want us to know they are coming, otherwise they would have just crossed over cloaked.

CONNERLY

A good point, J'hos. Let's run with shields and weapons hot as well, just in case we're walking into a trap.

TOBIN

I'll have secondary crews report to secondary and tertiary bridges in case of emergency tri-separation.

CONNERLY

Good idea. Dismissed.

SOUND: Chairs sliding out and feet walking to doors. Doors open and close.

CONNERLY

It really is rare that we get the chance to head them off at the pass.

EVORI

J'hos's point made me wonder, though; how often do they cross the Neutral Zone and we don't even have a clue that it's happened?

CONNERLY

It makes me wonder what underhanded scheme their up to this time. <beat> OK, Admiral, I recognize that look. You have a story to share about a situation like this. Do you want to come along so you can tell it while we're on the way?

EVORI

As much as I might want to, I'd better stay here and hold down the fort. I'll wrangle either Leigh or Eli into my office and tell it to them.

CONNERLY

Nonsense. You want to come along. You could have debriefed us over the comm., but you chose to do it face to face.

EVORI

You know me too well, Patrick Michael.

CONNERLY

Years of working together will do that to you. So, which ship was this on?

SOUND: Flashback music.

SCENE 2 – VO:

BRADSHAW

Captain's log: USS Potemkin, stardate 726.3. We have just received word from the Caleb II outpost that a strange ship has arrived and is attacking. No description of the ship was given before communications were cut off. Without more information to go on, I must assume the worst; that the outpost has been destroyed and that we are flying headlong into a deadly confrontation.

CUT TO INT.: Bridge – USS Potemkin

SOUND: Bridge background noise.

GIBBS

Is there anything you want to add, Captain?

BRADSHAW

I think I covered the bases, Yeoman.

GIBBS

What I mean to say is....

BRADSHAW

I know what you mean, Emily. Walden knows how I feel, and if I sent him a "if this is my last dispatch" letter every time we flew into a dangerous situation, I'd never get anything done. I don't want

him always worrying about me and...

GIBBS

He knew what he was getting into when he married a Starfleet Officer, yes ma'am.

BRADSHAW

If it would make you feel any better, you can always send him one.

GIBBS

No ma'am. If I did that, next thing I'd know, he'd be calling our folks and they'll start pressuring me to leave Starfleet.

BRADSHAW

Not to mention the hell I'd face at Christmas. Best we keep the imminent danger to ourselves then. Agreed?

GIBBS

Agreed.

BRADSHAW

Very good then, Yeoman. Dismissed.

SOUND: Footfalls walking away.

BRADSHAW

Mr. Massad. How much longer before we reach Caleb II?

MASSAD

Five minutes, Captain.

BRADSHAW

Are we picking up anything on the sensors, Mr. Oldfield?

OLDFIELD

Nothing conclusive, ma'am. The asteroid is still there, but I'm not picking up any energy signatures in the area.

SOUND: A light thumping begins in the background – Starkey thrumming unconsciously.

BRADSHAW

Do you have any thoughts, Commander?

EVORI

Well, it's pretty hard to ignore that we're so close to the Klingon border. The fact that they didn't identify their attackers leaves a bit too much to the imagination.

BRADSHAW

I agree.

FINNEGAN

I hate walking into a situation without all the intel.

BRADSHAW

I can agree with that as well. Are we ready, just in case?

FINNEGAN

Phasers are at one hundred percent and all torpedo bays are loaded.

BRADSHAW

Guess I can't ask for any better than that.

FINNEGAN (under breath)

I would.

SOUND: Thumping gets a little louder.

BRADSHAW

Ra, has there been anything over subspace?

RA-TEVNAREM

Nothing since the original communication, Captain. The USS Conestoga has been dispatched to provide us with support, but they're a full day's journey behind us.

FINNEGAN

A fat lotta good they'll do us, then.

BRADSHAW

We'll take what we can get, Mr. Finnegan.

SOUND: Thumping gets a little louder again.

EVORI

Mr. Starkey.

SOUND: Thumping stops.

STARKEY

Sorry Commander.

FINNEGAN

You should be.

EVORI

We all need to release pent-up energies somehow. Just try to keep the volume down, OK?

STARKEY

Yes sir.

OLDFIELD

I'm getting some more definitive readings, Captain.

BRADSHAW

And?

OLDFIELD

There aren't any ships in orbit, Captain, but there also doesn't appear to be much left in the way of the outpost either.

BRADSHAW

The outpost's population?

EVORI

It was manned with twenty-three personnel, Captain.

BRADSHAW

Any signs of survivors?

OLDFIELD

Not yet, Captain, but we're not quite close enough for a detailed sensor scan.

BRADSHAW

I'd call down to Barkley for more if I didn't already know he was giving us everything she's got.

FINNEGAN

You know those engineers, Captain. They always hold back a little bit, afraid to push their engines too hard.

EVORI

Not Barkley, Mr. Finnegan. If he says he's giving us all he's got, then he's giving us all he's got.

FINNEGAN

If you say so, Command.... I'm picking up an alien vessel on fast approach, Captain. Bearing 174 mark 12.

STARKEY

I see it, Captain.

EVORI

Put it on screen.

SOUND: Main viewscreen activated.

BRADSHAW

Is that a Klingon ship?

FINNEGAN

I've been hearing rumors that Klingons have a new warship.

EVORI

Ra. Try hailing frequencies.

OLDFIELD

Energy readings match what I've been able to pick up on long-range scans of Caleb II.

STARKEY

Whoever they are, they got their nose pointed right at us and are ridin' for all it's worth.

BRADSHAW

Take us to Red Alert.

SOUND: Red alert claxons.

RA-TEVNAREM

No response yet, Captain.

EVORI

It looks a little bit like the Klingon's D5 battle cruiser, but....

FINNEGAN

They're raising shields and readying disruptors, Captain.

BRADSHAW

Punch through a signal, Ra. This is Captain Lenna Bradshaw of the Earth starship Potemkin. You have entered Federation space and it appears that you have taken hostile actions upon at least one of our outposts. Please answer and explain yourselves before we are forced to respond with equal hostility.

RA-TEVNAREM

They are responding, Captain.

BRADSHAW

Put them on-screen.

SOUND: main viewscreen changing.

K'BACH

A woman? I set out to wage war against the mighty Federation, and the best they can send to meet me is a woman?

SOUND: K'BACH laughs.

STARKEY

Oh, he really shouldn'ta autta done that.

BRADSHAW

Identify yourself and explain your actions, Captain.

K'BACH

It would be dishonorable for me to destroy an inferior ship with a woman in command. Why don't you go home and make warriors. I'll wait here until a real challenge arrives.

STARKEY

Oh, he really shouldn'ta autta done that.

BRADSHAW

Mr. Finnegan. Show the Klingon Captain how much of a challenge we can be.

SOUND: Torpedoes launch, followed by transition music.

ACT II

SCENE 1 – ENTER INT.: Bridge – USS Potemkin

SOUND: Red alert claxons and two torpedo bursts.

BRADSHAW

Report, Mr. Finnegan.

FINNEGAN

Whatever that ship is it's got a bit more going on than the D5's, Captain. Torpedo volleys knocked their shields down to seventy-eight percent, but weapons systems and engines are still online.

SOUND: Disruptor bolts impacting with shields.

FINNIGAN

Our shields are down to sixty-eight percent.

EVORI

Barkley has already started repairs.

BRADSHAW

A few more of those, though, and we'll be in serious trouble.

RA-TEVNAREM

The Klingon captain is asking for our surrender.

BRADSHAW

Well, he's definitely self-confident. Any suggestions on how to take a bit of the wind out of his sails?

FINNEGAN

Double up on phasers and photon torpedoes until we punch a hole in their shields.

EVORI

There's no guarantee we'll get through before he gets through ours.

STARKEY

There's an asteroid field a half light year away. We could lead the bull into the corral, then get behind him and brand him a good one.

BRADSHAW

I like it. Plot the course, gentlemen.

MASSAD

Ready when you are, Captain.

BRADSHAW

Mr. Finnegan, lay down some cover fire. Something to give us some distance and encourage him to come after us.

FINNEGAN

Aye Captain.

SOUND: Phaser fire accompanied by increase in engines.

FINNEGAN

They managed to avoid most of that last volley, but I also destroyed some of their torpedoes before they made contact with us.

STARKEY

We'll make sure to give you a pat on the back later.

FINNEGAN

Keep it up, boyo.

EVORI

Now is not the time, you two.

BRADSHAW

That asteroid field looks kinda tight, Mr. Starkey.

STARKEY

No worries, Captain. Nader can handle threading that needle.

MASSAD (under breath)

Glad one of us is confident of that.

BRADSHAW

Just try not to scuff the paint, Ensign.

MASSAD

I'll do my best, Captain.

OLDFIELD

These asteroids are full of mineral deposits that should help mask us, Captain, but it may make keeping a sensor lock on the Klingon ship difficult as well.

BRADSHAW

A chance we'll have to take, Lieutenant. Keep your eyes open, gentlemen.

FINNEGAN

The Klingon ship isn't following us in, Captain.

BRADSHAW

He's a smart one. Probably smells a trap, but at least we'll get a bit of breathing room.

OLDFIELD

We will be losing sensor lock in thirty seconds, Captain.

EVORI

Should we hold up here so we can still see them?

BRADSHAW

No, take us in deeper.

FINNEGAN

We're not going to just sit in here and hide.

BRADSHAW

Not likely, Lieutenant Commander. Once we're deep enough in, adjust our course to exit out of their line of sight and prepare for an end run.

STARKEY

Aye Captain.

OLDFIELD

We're out of range, Captain.

BRADSHAW

Bring us about, Mr. Massad.

FINNEGAN

Shields are back up to ninety-three percent.

BRADSAW

Say what you will, but Barclay knows his engineering.

SOUND: Asteroid collides with shields.

BRADSHAW

What did I say about the paintjob, Ensign?

MASSAD

Sorry Captain. Just a glancing blow.

FINNEGAN

Maybe some extra time in a flight simulator would do ya some good, Nader-me-boy.

EVORI

Shields still look in good condition. He's right; it just tapped us.

RA-TEVNAREM

If that was a tap, I'd hate to feel a direct impact.

FINNEGAN (under breath)

He'd never see it coming.

RA-TEVNAREM

I heard that.

STARKEY

Exiting asteroid field.

BRADSHAW

Find the Klingon battle cruiser and disable her when you have a lock, Mr. Finnegan.

FINNEGAN

Scanning the area, Captain. <beat> He's good.

EVORI

I don't like the sounds of that.

FINNEGAN

He's changed heading; maybe speed.

BRADSHAW

Find him, Mr. Finnegan.

OLDFIELD

I've got him, Captain. He's using a large rogue asteroid on our starboard bow to mask his presence.

FINNEGAN

Got him, Captain.

MASSAD

Coming around.

RA-TEVNAREM

We're being hailed, Captain.

BRADSHAW

I wonder what he wants. Put him on screen.

SCENE 2 – SOUND: Main viewscreen activated.

K'BACH

A merry chase, Captain. A far better game of hunter and targ that I was expecting.

BRADSHAW

Not bad for a woman, you mean.

K'BACH

Not bad for Federation.

EVORI

I can't be sure, but I think that may have been a complement veiled within an insult.

BRADSHAW

You might be right.

K'BACH

As such, I will give you a chance to save yourselves. Tell me what you have done with my son, and I will let you and your crew live to sing of your encounter with the great Captain K'Bach and the Warbird Da'nal.

EVORI

His son?

BRADSHAW

I'm sorry, Captain, but we don't know anything about....

K'BACH

Do not lie to me! cha ylghuS!

BRADSHAW

Whoa, Captain. Slow down a second. If you explain what's going on, maybe we can help rather than have you continue attacking our outposts.

K'BACH

A Klingon does not need help from humans!

FINNEGAN

After all, your current plan of action has been so effective.

EVORI

Quiet, Mr. Finnegan.

K'BACH

My son was taken three weeks ago. My sources say that he was taken by Federation petaQ. Return him to me now and I will spare your lives.

BRADSHAW

I give you my word that we don't have any idea where your son is, but if you will allow us, we will aide you in your search.

SOUND: Silence – 1 beat.

K'BACH

On your honor?

BRADSHAW

That's what I said.

K'BACH

Then I will hold you to that, Bradshaw, because you have proven yourself on the field of battle.

BRADSHAW

Good enough. Let's start with your evidence. You said you have sources that pointed you at us. Who are they?

K'BACH

Klingons.

BRADSHAW

I kind of gathered that. Are they trustworthy?

K'BACH

They are Klingons.

STARKEY

I think that means more in their society than it does in ours.

MASSAD

Obviously.

BRADSHAW

OK, did you have anything else to go on? I mean, the Federation is a big area of space.

K'BACH

They gave us a warp signature, but we lost the trail soon after leaving the homeworld.

BRADSHAW

And therefore you decided to just start hitting outposts until you drew someone's attention.

K'BACH

It worked, did it not?

FINNEGAN

Are you sure you don't want me to blow this guy out of the sky.

EVORI

Something tells me that's far easier said than done.

BRADSHAW

Perhaps we can start at the beginning and work together on tracing the signal.

K'BACH

Allow you to enter Klingon space? I don't think so.

BRADSHAW

Well, if we don't follow the warp trail, the chances of you recovering your son aren't very high.

K'BACH

Oh, I will find my son, and send those responsible straight to Gre'thor, along with any who get in my way.

EVORI

May I make a suggestion, Captain.

BRADSHAW

By all means.

EVORI

Perhaps the Da'nal can return to the source and attempt to pick up the trail while we search along the border for the warp signature. If we find any sign of the ship, we can signal Captain K'Bach and give him rendezvous coordinates.

K'BACH

And you will aid me in the hunt, even if it means one of your own is the prey?

BRADSHAW

If a Federation ship is truly responsible for this, we will want to see them brought to justice just as much as you do. Right now, our primary objective is to rescue your son.

K'BACH

If you succeed in this, your debt to me will be repaid.

BRADSHAW

Our debt?

K'BACH

For showing you mercy and not killing you when I had the chance.

SOUND: Transition music.

ACT III

SCENE 1 – ENTER INT.: Bridge – USS Potemkin

SOUND: Bridge background noise.

BRADSHAW

How long until the Da'nal catches up with us, Commander?

EVORI

His ETA is about twelve minutes, Captain.

BRADSHAW

None-too-soon, if you ask me. I can't say I enjoy hovering around out here in the Romulan Neutral Zone. Oldfield, are you sure we've got the right warp signature. I don't want to tick off K'Bach any more than he already is by leading him on a wild goose chase.

OLDFIELD

According to what the Da'nal gave us, yes ma'am.

BRADSHAW

And are we still alone out here? No signs of unwanted guests?

OLDFIELD

According to the long-range scans, the only thing we're picking up is the Da'nal.

EVORI

What about on the planet? Have you had any luck picking up life signs?

OLDFIELD

Thousands of life signs, Commander, but so far no luck in picking out the one we're looking for.

STARKEY

Is it as abysmal down there as it looks?

FINNEGAN

You should be used to dry barren land.

STARKEY

I know you're not taking a shot at Texas, sir.

EVORI

Riley, there are two things you never do to a Texan. You don't insult his horse or his state.

FINNEGAN

I never said I was speaking to the lieutenant.

MASSAD

Actually, it does kind of remind me of pictures of home, from before the reclamation.

FINNEGAN

Doesn't look that much better after the reclamation.

STARKEY

Maybe you should make a few disparaging words about Texas, *sir*.

EVORI

That's enough, you two.

FINNEGAN

Sorry, Commander. I didn't realize that it was only the lower-ranking officers that were permitted to crack jokes.

BRADSHAW

Mr. Evori, Mr. Finnegan, I want the two of you to put together a landing party to accompany Captain K'Bach to the surface. If there are Federation people involved, I want to know it and for them to be taken into custody, not executed on the spot. We need proof as to what has been going on here.

OLDFIELD

I sincerely doubt that the Federation has had anything to do with this situation, Captain.

BRADSHAW

That's good to hear, but on what do you base your theory?

OLDFIELD

Not a theory, Captain, but an empirical observation. After careful analysis, the warp signature we were given was disguised to look like Starfleet's, but it was a bad imitation. After conferring with Chief Barkley, he confirmed that there is no such signature in use and that it was masking a Klingon signature.

STARKEY

Why in tar-nation would Klingons want to point the finger at us?

EVORI

Probably for the same reason they're hiding on a planet in the Romulan Neutral Zone; to get K'Bach to chase wild geese.

BRADSHAW

Maybe you boys can ask them why before K'Bach puts a disruptor bolt through them.

GIBBS

Captain. I'd like to ask for permission to accompany the away team on this mission.

BRADSHAW

Forget it, Yeoman.

GIBBS

But Lenna....

BRADSHAW

Don't even try it, Emily. The chances of things turning ugly down there are around one hundred percent. I'm not going to let your first away mission be your last.

GIBBS

Every mission is too dangerous.

BRADSHAW

And you are the Captain's Assistant, not a member of security.

EVORI

Quit arguing, Yeoman. It's not going to happen.

GIBBS

Well, I had to give it a shot.

SOUND: Transition music.

SCENE 2 – CUT TO EXT.: Surface Encampment – Nimbus III

SOUND: Transporter beams fading out.

K'BACH

Surround the building. I want no one to escape.

EVORI

Let's go easy, Captain. We need to make absolute sure that this is the place.

K'BACH

If what you have told me is true, then these PataQ must suffer for what they have done.

FINNEGAN

But first we need to make sure you're going to kill the right guys.

K'BACH

Today is a good day for them to die.

FINNEGAN

Do you think you could have brought a few more men? Between my half dozen security officers and your dozen men, we only have them outnumbered seven-to-one.

K'BACH

If you want, cha'Dich, you and your men can wait here. After all, I did not ask for your aid.

EVORI

We're firm believers in finishing what we start. We're here to give you backup, but this is your party.

K'BACH

Very well then. Qapla'

EVORI

Qapla'

FINNEGAN

You understand that stuff?

EVORI

Used to be a communications officer, remember?

SOUND: A door is broken down.

K'BACH

gik'tal!

CUT TO INT.: Hut – Nimbus III

SOUND: Disruptor blasts and yelling Klingons.

FINNEGAN

Get down on your knees, hands on your head!

EVORI

Captain! Over here!

K'BACH

Is he uninjured?

FINNEGAN

I told you to get down!

K'BACH

D'lorak? You?

EVORI

Get away from the child!

D'LORAK

Withdraw your men, K'Bach, or lose your only heir.

K'BACH

PataQ! You hide behind a child rather than face your death with honor!

D'LORAK

Do not talk to me about honor! Our honor was stolen from us

decades ago!

K'BACH

We were boq! We went through the Age of Ascension together. Why do you do this to my family?

D'LORAK

I do this to your house! A house that has no right to have as much influence as it has.

K'BACH

I have earned that influence. I have fought with honor and spilled much blood for the Empire and you tell me you are envious of the influence I have earned?

D'LORAK

Stolen! You have stolen influence that rightfully belonged to me and mine!

FINNEGAN (whispered)

Are you following all of this?

EVORI (whispering)

I think so. Just keep him covered.

D'LORAK

The Da'nal was to be mine to command. It is my ancestors who used to serve on the High Council. The prototype battle cruiser was mine to turn into the fleet flagship and lead us into victory against our enemies. You are a lowly Bekk from a lowly house that has ridden on the coattails of others to greatness!

K'BACH

Do you wish lies to be on your lips as you greet Kortar aboard his barge? I earned the right to command the Da'nal; a right I have put in jeopardy to track you across the galaxy.

D'LORAK

But it was not enough! You were supposed to fight the Federation, start a war over a child you would never find and return home honorless. Instead, you align yourself with our enemy and turn traitor to our people.

K'BACH

If anyone has betrayed our people, D'lorak, it is you. Our honor was not stolen from us, but we allowed it to slip away, and one day we will regain it and become the warriors we once were.

D'LORAK

You will be nothing, K'Bach. You will be childless and without honor. You may send me to Gre'thor, but at least I go there with your son's blood on my hands!

EVORI

Don't!

SOUND: Phaser fire and a body drops. Silence – 1 beat.

EVORI

Is he dead?

FINNEGAN

Kill setting through the head, yes sir.

K'BACH

You had no right.

FINNEGAN

He was about to slit your kid's throat. I had the shot and I took it.

K'BACH

He was mine to kill. He was like a brother to me, and while he died in dishonor, he at least had the right to die by a fellow Klingon's hand. And now, you have taken even that away from him.

EVORI

Go check on your son, Captain. That's what is important now.

K'BACH

Modar.

SOUND: Footfalls walking to the other side of the room.

EVORI

Mr. Finnegan. Did you have to use lethal force? Why wasn't your weapon set for stun?

FINNEGAN

For the record, Commander, in some databases, it says that normal stun settings are not always effective against Klingons.

EVORI

Once upon a time, that was true.

FINNEGAN

And off the record, sir, he was a kidnapper and was about to kill that kid. I did what I had to in order to ensure it wasn't going to happen.... ever. Besides, we weren't following Federation guidelines here. You said it yourself. We were following K'Bach's lead and one way or the other D'Iorak was a dead man. I just made sure he didn't take the kid with him.

EVORI

I suppose you're right, but it still doesn't mean I have to feel good about the outcome.

SOUND: Footfalls returning.

EVORI

How is your son, Captain?

K'BACH

He will survive.

FINNEGAN

You're welcome.

SOUND: Quick movement followed by Finnegan getting grabbed.

K'BACH

Let me make one thing perfectly clear, tera'ngan. If not for my promise to your Captain, I would kill you where you stand for what you have done today.

EVORI

Captain! We have made great progress today in bridging the gap

between your people and ours. Let's not ruin it.

K'BACH

We have done nothing here, Commander, but save my son and, in return, your ship. Once we leave this Kahless-forsaken planet, we return to being enemies and, if we ever face one another again, you will all die. <beat> Do I make myself perfectly clear?

EVORI

But Captain....

K'BACH

If I ever lay eyes on you or this PataQ again.... On my honor, I will kill you.

EVORI

I understand, Captain. Now please put down my Chief of Security.

SOUND: Finnegan drops to his feet and gasps for air.

FINNEGAN (gasping)

Oh, it's on now, boyo.

EVORI

Stand down, Lt. Commander. We're done here, for now.

SOUND: Klingon communicator activates.

K'BACH

'jol!

SOUND: Transporter activates.

FINNEGAN

I could have taken him, Commander. Keep us from having any future trouble from him.

EVORI

We don't work that way, Finnegan.

FINNEGAN

Maybe sometimes we should.

SOUND: Transition music.

EPILOGUE

SCENE 1 – ENTER INT.: *Bridge – USS Aurora*

SOUND: Bridge background noise.

CONNERLY

What's the Warbird doing, T'Minear?

T'MINEAR

Still sitting there, Captain, as though it's waiting for us to arrive.

TOBIN

Well, they won't have to wait much longer.

CARD

Preparing to drop out of warp, Captain.

CONNERLY

Make it so, Mr. Card.

SOUND: Engines decrease as they drop out of warp.

CONNERLY

Care to do the honors, Admiral.

EVORI

Your ship, your show, Captain. I just came along for the conversation. I'll be off in the corner.... listening.

CONNERLY

As you wish. Open hailing frequencies, Knorre.

KNORRE

Aye Captain.

SOUND: Main viewscreen activates.

CONNERLY

This is Captain Patrick Michael Connerly....

WARBIRD COMMANDER

Of the Federation starship Aurora, yes Captain. I remember.

CONNERLY

Good. It's always better to deal with a familiar face.

WARBIRD COMMANDER

Indeed, though it did take you an exorbitant amount of time to get here. We crossed into the Neutral Zone two hours ago. If our intent was to attack, your lack of a timely response could be disastrous.

CONNERLY

I apologize if our tardiness was an inconvenience, but as it stands it's my duty to inform you, Commander, that you're in violation of the Treaty of Algeron.

WARBIRD COMMANDER

I am fully aware of this, Captain. I am here to deliver a message.

CARD

What, did we leave the phone off the hook?

TOBIN (warning)

Mr. Card....

CONNERLY

Go ahead, Commander.

WARBIRD COMMANDER

As of twelve hours ago, the last of your Federation ships left Romulan space. We are here to tell you that they are to be the last to cross the Neutral Zone.

CONNERLY

Are you saying, Commander, that the Romulan Star Empire is formally withdrawing its request for relief aid?

WARBIRD COMMANDER

Technically speaking, Captain, the Romulan Star Empire never issued any such request. Your Federation just took it upon themselves to start giving it.

CONNERLY

Well, with your Senate blown to kingdom come by Shinzon, we thought you could use a helping hand.

WARBIRD COMMANDER

And your assistance was useful for its time, Captain. But that time is now over.

CONNERLY

And you speak for the entire Romulan Star Empire?

WARBIRD COMMANDER

I speak for those now in charge of the Romulan Star Empire, yes.

CONNERLY

So it is safe to assume that the Romulan Senate has been rebuilt and back in session?

WARBIRD COMMANDER

You may assume whatever you wish, Captain.

CONNERLY

You're not going to provide us with any other useful information, are you?

WARBIRD COMMANDER

Nonsense, Captain. I will give you the most useful piece of information available.

SOUND: Main viewscreen disconnects.

TOBIN

That was pretty veiled.

CONNERLY

I have a feeling things just went from bad to worse.

T'MINEAR

The warbird is turning around, Captain, and heading back for Romulan space.

KNORRE

Captain, I am reading distortion fields on the Romulan side of the Neutral Zone.

TOBIN

Put it on screen.

SOUND: Main viewscreen activated.

CONNERLY

Is that what I think it is?

T'MINEAR

Yes Captain. Twelve Romulan Warbirds are decloaking on their side of the Neutral Zone.

CARD

What does it mean?

CONNERLY

I think that should be extremely clear, Mr. Card. They're saying, "Do not enter."

CUT: Ending music and credits.

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