

The Fall of the House of Ardana

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by [Gibraltar](#)

Summary

Sometimes despite the best of intentions, diplomacy fails. There should and must be... contingencies.

USS *Reykjavik*

Captain Nandi Trujillo strode into the briefing room, triggering her assembled senior officers to rise in unison until she had taken her seat. "This briefing is now in session," she advised, seating herself and prompting them to resume theirs.

"There's been a disaster on Ardana," Trujillo began. "Tensions between the Stratos and Troglyte castes have erupted again after a half-century of Federation sponsored diplomacy. This morning, at zero-four-hundred hours Zulu-time, Troglyte militants who had infiltrated the Stratan sky-city of Telieul detonated explosives in the city's anti-gravity generator plant, while simultaneously overriding the city's numerous backup systems. The city of Telieul plunged nearly four kilometers to the surface, killing somewhere in the vicinity of sixteen thousand people."

There were frowns, gasps, and muttered curses from around the table.

She continued, "The Federation ambassador who was overseeing negotiations between the two factions has been taken hostage by a resurgent Disrupters movement and several members of his security detail have been killed or wounded. The diplomatic courier *U Thant* was seriously damaged by surface fired Troglyte weapons before they could raise their shields and has been forced to break orbit."

Lieutenant Commander Glal, *Reykjavik*'s Tellarite first officer, sat forward in his seat, his tusks fairly quivering in anger and anticipation.

"Given the dire nature of the circumstances, and the fact that Stratan reprisals may well imperil our ambassador, we've been tasked with responding to this crisis."

"How liberally may we interpret our orders, Captain?" Glal asked eagerly.

"Admiral Th'Arvann's exact words were, 'Bring our ambassador home and make sure both factions know how seriously we take our people's welfare,'" Trujillo replied, suppressing the dark smile that threatened to form on her lips.

Lieutenant Jarrod, the Security chief, asked, "Which side of Teddy Roosevelt's policy do we find ourselves on, Captain?"

Trujillo fixed her gaze on the younger man. "Ambassador Dax spoke softly, and it appears that was insufficient in this circumstance. We, collectively, are to be the 'big stick.'"

Everyone at the table sat a little straighter, and there were nods of approval.

"Let's hammer out the details," Trujillo said, "before we bring that hammer down."

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