

I Thought I Heard the Colonel Crying

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1644) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/1644>.

Rating: [Mature](#)
Archive Warning: [No Archive Warnings Apply](#)
Category: [Gen](#)
Fandom: [Borderlines](#)
Character: [Ensemble Cast - BAN](#), [Saavik](#), [Azetbur](#), [Kerla](#)
Additional Tags: [The Lost Era \(2293 - 2364\)](#), [Border Patrol](#), [Intrigue](#), [Section 31](#)
Language: English
Series: Part 4 of [Borderlines: Book III - Visigoth](#)
Stats: Published: 2024-06-26 Words: 4,137 Chapters: 1/1

I Thought I Heard the Colonel Crying

by [B_Radley](#)

Summary

The Empire is still relevant. The infiltrator strikes, but not the one you're thinking. The inquiry. Changes coming to the Border Dogs. Breaching. The Way of Absolute Candor.

The Chancellor's Trust

Azetbur stares at the screen for several moments as she gathers her thoughts. K'hrella's report had not reassured her of the upcoming project's continued success. She closes her eyes, thinking of her father. Of staring down at his corpse after gravity had been restored on the ship. Murdered by a conspiracy reaching over three empires.

One that seems to be rearing its ugly head again, in all three of those empires. She opens her eyes and looks up at the shattered brightness of Praxis. Her eyes can just make out the stabilizing frameworks as the Federation had called them after Khitomer. Even in only three years, the framework covered nearly a quarter of the moon, helping to slow the destruction, while Federation and Klingon scientists undertook the repair—the 'terraforming', for lack of a better word to bring the moon back to where it wouldn't destroy their homeworld.

But her intelligence apparatus—her own, not the Empire's or the High Council's—had detected a situation in which every attempt to save Qo'noS and its inhabitants was being jeopardized by that uniquely Klingon character trait of being willing to destroy themselves, in order to expand and conquer.

She herself still wasn't convinced of the plan to stabilize the moon, as well as working to stabilize the ozone layer of her world, but if the traditional homeworld of the Klingons could be saved, she would try it.

Along with continuing to draw up plans for the mass evacuation.

The door to her private chamber opens. General Kerla walks in, as only he is allowed to. As the door closes, she stands and falls into his arms, placing her face against his broad chest. His hand moves down to her cheek with surprising tenderness.

She feels the even, rapid heartbeat in his chest under the armor. "Are you alright, my Chancellor?"

Azetbur smiles against the armor. "I am, love," she replies.

"K'hrella has reported in?"

"Yes. I think that we'll still be able to bring the Project forward, but it will be close."

"And our operative on Leelix III?"

"We'll keep them in place. They are our only direct communication with the Qowat Milat woman."

"Are we going to be able to make overtures with someone in the Federation government, as well?"

"That is the trickier proposition. We have to be careful about that. We're still not sure if the conspiracy that nearly got me killed three years ago, hasn't continued."

He nods. "We were never able to prove, nor was the Federation, that Cartwright and his ilk were part of Section 31."

She nods thoughtfully. "I know. And I'm not sure what the appetite in certain parts of the Federation government are truly willing for Section 31 to be implicated. They like having that organization that can do anything—that can be a blunt, ungovernable instrument if needed—in their

pockets.

“Do we trust K’hrella? She is half-Romulan. And she has the blood of someone who doesn’t always march to the beat of the High Council’s drum.”

She smiles. “I’ve always trusted a Dahar master. He and his two compatriots are loyal to the Empire, as well as to our race.”

As she and Kerla prepare for bed, she thinks of all that has happened in the last three years. Kirk, the human admiral who had been an unlikely ally for peace, had died under mysterious circumstances. Spock, his first officer, had disappeared from public view.

The Klingon Free Systems, as they styled themselves, had nearly started another war with the Federation, by taking a large contingent of Starfleet personnel captive, and taking a Klingon Imperial battlecruiser.

She closes her eyes as Kerla removes her gown. All thoughts of interstellar diplomacy disappear as they fall into bed.

Spacing

Security Lieutenant Storeel feels the soon-to-be late first officer’s weight shift as they move towards the airlock. On the other side of Saavik, who they carry like they would a drunk, the human woman, one of only two in their security force, looks with loathing at the half-breed.

“Why couldn’t we just disintegrate this Romulan piece-of-shit?”

“Because we were given orders to release her into space. It might send a message to the crew.”

“Who cares about the message?” she replies. “They’re all under Stivek’s thumb. Like sheep.”

Storeel wonders idly if anyone would mourn this woman if she was to accompany Saavik into the void. None of the other crew know that she and the other human exist, only the five other Section 31 loyalists in the security force.

He dismisses that thought, suppressing his own prejudices against humans aside.

Leaving only his hatred for Romulans intact. He was sure that the ones who had left Vulcan in the Diaspora had been the ones that Vulcan society did not need. They turn the corner to the airlock.

It is abandoned, except for the other human who had come aboard at the start of this voyage, where the one helping him to shoulder his burden had been on board for a year at least.

This woman looks at him with amber eyes of a particular shape, not quite what the humans would call Asian. With her dark hair and somewhat swarthy complexion, as well as her calm countenance, she could almost pass for a Vulcan, except for the ears.

She nods at the other Vulcan standing opposite her and opens the inner door of the airlock. Storeel feels the half-breed shift against him, moaning slightly.

Emotional, he thinks. *She can’t even suppress pain.*

He feels a slight smile come over his face. *You’ll never feel pain again.*

The smile freezes on his face as he feels her hand move up to his shoulder. His nervous system lights up as she finds that particular spot so well known to Vulcans.

Saavik manages to keep her feet as both of her would-be executioners fall into the airlock. She whirls as she hears a phaser blast. The Vulcan guard slumps against the panel.

She realizes that in his fall, he has struck the emergency purge button. The inner airlock door closes. There is the sound of a large explosion as everything in the airlock is slammed into space. Alarms start to sound.

The human moves over to the heavily stunned Vulcan, disarming him, as well as securing the airlock. She looks at the door.

“Oops,” she says. Saavik feels herself dropping to her knees.

The human is next to her, quickly pulling Saavik’s tunic off. She lifts up Saavik’s shirt, applying pressure to the wound, which is mostly cauterized, but still oozing slightly. Saavik feels the cloth pull against the wound. She suppresses the pain; she is surprised by the concern on the face of the young human woman.

“Bondarenko,” she says. “Federations Security, Investigations Directorate.”

Saavik opens her mouth to speak, but closes it against the pain of her wound. “Let’s get you up, and find a place to hide you, so that you can maybe start a healing trance.” Saavik feels her eyebrow go up at that.

“My mother worked in the Vulcan Embassy on Earth. Spent time with your people.”

“Are you Counterintelligence?”

“Nope. On loan. I’m a Triangle Deputy.”

Saavik steels herself, then gets up. “I can’t enter a trance, now,” she says. “Vice Admiral Walsh is being held prisoner.”

She catches a glimpse of irritation on the human's face. "Well, if you go against the crew without any evidence, they'll probably kill you for inciting a mutiny."

Saavik stops, then closes her eyes, sighing. "Then what do you suggest we do, Deputy Marshal?"

"Inspector, actually," she replies. She reaches into her Starfleet NCO's uniform. Saavik realizes that her cover might be the only non-commissioned technician or operator on this ship, the entire crew is made up of at least ensigns with a few midshipmen and cadets sprinkled in.

She pulls out a data plaque. She makes sure that Saavik is resting against the bulkhead, then gets up and inserts the plaque into the slot at the airlock controls. As it cycles through, she pulls out a pair of magnetic cuffs and busies herself searching the unconscious guard, then binding his hands behind him.

Saavik rests her head against the bulkhead behind her, closing her eyes for a brief second. She hears a noise in the passageway. A young Vulcan woman, wearing the silver arrowhead with silver tab in the middle of a midshipman stares at them.

She moves immediately to assist Saavik, but pauses as the intercom comes on. "This is the captain. Commander Saavik is a fugitive; she has attempted mutiny. She has killed two of our crew. She is to be taken by any means necessary. Lethal force is authorized."

The midshipman stares at Saavik, she is about to move when Bondarenko speaks. "No, dear," she says. "We're not going to do that."

She holds her phaser on the young woman. Saavik waves her away. "No. Mr. T'Veel," she addresses the young woman. "We won't hold you against your will."

The intercom comes on again. "This is Captain Prandi of the *Constitution*. I'm acting on orders given to me by Starfleet Security. *Intrepid*, you are ordered to power down engines, shields, and weapons. Captain Stivek is subject to arrest. Commander Saavik is to take command."

The young woman looks at Saavik. She can feel her vision graying. T'Veel raises her hands to the mindmeld position. She raises an eyebrow, asking permission. Saavik feels Bondarenko tense slightly.

Saavik nods. As the young woman touches her face, she feels the warmth pervade through her body.

The warmth of something like a healing trance.

Inquiry

Decker makes sure that her uniform shirt for the Service Dress Alpha uniform is straight. Siobhan hands her the jacket and she pulls it on, buckling the belt. Siobhan smiles at her; she pulls the flap up and fastens it.

She closes her eyes for a moment, then opens them. Siobhan, Chandra, and her two mothers are clad in their Alphas are well.

Support for the condemned woman, she thinks. She rolls her eyes at her dark thoughts.

"It's only a hearing, babe," her birth-mother says. "They have the testimony of your crew. It happens whenever there is the loss of a ship."

She looks at Mary, then smiles and nods. She winces as both her injured ribs and her injured head seem to choose that time to remind her that they are injured.

The hatch to the sickbay opens. She stops, her eyes widening at the sight there.

The crew of the *Aerfen* line the passageway, all dressed in newly issued Alphas of their own. She feels her eyes prick as they all snap to attention. A bosun's pipe sounds. "*Aerfen*, departing," the speaker intones. Only the ship's captain is marked by the name of the ship, when leaving or arriving in an official capacity. The ship's bell adds to the surreal feeling.

As she walks down to the entryport, she wonders if this will be the last time ever she will have these honors rendered.

She is soon standing at attention, with Chandra, as her CO and advocate next to her, in front of two grim-looking officers.

One, the grimmest of the two, a human male, his head shaven and glinting in the light stares at her. "I'm Rear Admiral Vance Horton, Captain. I've been appointed as the new Commander of Border Patrol Zone Red, in the new reorganization of the Patrol. This is Commodore Ahava Rosen, your wing commander for all of the Special Operations Capable corvettes."

A human woman in her early fifties, her dark eyes fixed on Decker, suddenly smiles at her, warming the atmosphere considerably.

She feels Chandra start at the last word Horton had said. She glances at Chandra out of the side of her eye.

Corvettes?

"Please be seated, Captain," Rosen says in a slight accent that Decker can't place. "We realize you've been injured."

"Have you been advised of your right to counsel?" Horton asks.

Decker nods.

"I am acting as Captain Sinclair's advocate," Chandra says.

Horton fixes her with that damned stare. After a moment, he nods, still unreadable.

“Captain, we’ve read and heard testimony from your crew, as well as data from the Aerfen. This is a hearing, to determine if further action is needed, at the order of the convening authority, Rear Admiral Lawrence Styles, Chief of Staff of the Special Operations Command.”

She can almost feel the curse that Chandra is thinking at the mention of his name. She stands.

“A point of order, Admiral,” Chandra says.

He stares at her, then nods. “Speak.”

“Rear Admiral Styles is no longer in that position, as it was posted in the Starfleet Gazette. He is now the Commodore of Starbase 99. He can’t be the convening authority.”

Horton nods. “True. However, the new acting commander of the Border Patrol, has taken over as convening authority for the hearing.”

Decker sees Chandra’s delicate eyebrow rise. Horton stares at her, then says, “It hasn’t been posted in the *Gazette*, yet. Rear Admiral Hunter is now acting as the Commander, Border Patrol. It is expected that she will be confirmed in her promotion to Vice Admiral.”

Chandra slowly smiles, then sits. Decker wonders if she should feel hope.

She isn’t sure, with Horton’s stare.

“Ordinarily, we would ask for any clarifying testimony. But your logs are clear and concise, and as you were unconscious for most of the time, we feel that we don’t need your testimony to render a decision. However, you will be able to rebut the decision at an appeal.”

Decker feels her heart sink at those words. She rises, bracing herself. She can feel Shiv, Mary, and Kim standing behind her.

Until they move up beside her, along with Chandra.

“Brevet Lieutenant, junior grade Decker Jane Sinclair, it is the judgement of this inquiry that there be no further action taken in this matter. Your crew were unanimous in their testimony that your actions kept them alive during the incident. They felt that you have acted in the highest traditions of the naval service.”

She feels herself sway.

“However,” he continues. “The head of BUPERS has ordered that you report to Starfleet Academy on Earth to undergo a hearing to determine whether you will continue in your brevet rank, or be returned to your probationary rank of Midshipman.”

This time, Chandra doesn’t conceal her curse. “Fuck,” she says eloquently.

“Silence,” Horton says, glaring at her, which isn’t too different from his apparently normal expression.

Chandra closes her mouth, but soon opens it.

“May I ask who the head of the Bureau of Personnel is?”

“It’s a new appointment,” Rosen says dryly. “Vice Admiral Harriman.”

Decker sees and feels Chandra grind her teeth again.

A Conversation

Chandra steps aboard the *Ayoan*, a newer *Miranda*-class light cruiser. An ensign, who looks even younger than Decker, greets her as the bosun’s pipe, bell, and speaker fade. She follows the young woman from the transporter room. She passes the ship’s crest and smiles. The representation of a Tellarite with long, flowing, white hair, fierce tusks, holding a telescope, standing in water can be seen as the centerpiece of the crest. *Ayoan*. Tellarite patron saint of arguments and exploration.

Those two go together, she thinks.

The door to the flag quarters slides open. She steps in. Ahava Rosen rises from the table in the center of the room. A PADD and computer are open; her jacket hangs off of her chair.

The two women embrace, with the easy familiarity of officers with experience in the Patrol.

Ahava’s dark eyes look Chandra up and down. She reaches up and gently touches the scar on her head. Chandra smiles, then shakes her head at the pained expression.

“I’m okay, Ahava,” she says. She points to the new insignia on the uniform tunic. “Congratulations, Commodore.” She looks around the quarters. “Are they going to let you keep the *Ayo*?” she asks.

Ahava smiles. “Yeah. Hunter thinks that the SOC wing should have a starship backing them up. I’ll be getting a flag captain, though. I think my headquarters may be on Leelix III, at Merlin.”

She grins at Chandra’s expression. “Don’t worry. You’ll probably be in space most of the time. We only got two SOC groups, another is training up. You’re going to be putting out fires, since we don’t have enough groups for a reserve.”

“We’re down to eight?”

Ahava nods. She sits and pours coffee from the pot for both of them. As they are fixing them, she continues. “We’re going to have three wings. Two reg wings with three groups each, just like before, one for the Klingons and one for the Romulans. Since the Romulans are more active, you’ll probably be spending more time there, along with the rest of the SOC ships.”

“What about the divisions?”

“There aren’t going to be any. That would take 9 wings of 27 groups to make three divisions. I’m not sure we’ll ever get that strength again. Hunter feels this is a more efficient reorganization. I’m not even sure about any more for a true reserve group. They haven’t decided yet to manufacture any more Cohort cutters—excuse me, corvettes.”

“What the hell is that all about?”

“The term cutter is going to be strictly limited to those in the Revenue Service, supporting Treasury, and the Rescue Service, supporting Transportation.” She purses her lips. “They’re designing new ships to replace the ones they’ve got. They’ll all still be classed as light scouts, with lieutenants as COs.” She looks at Chandra. “That was Harriman’s parting shot. I think that I might rescind it. These light scouts are corvettes, but Border Patrol has always had them classed as cutters, as well.”

Chandra exhales as another thought comes into her head. “So one wing per zone? That’s pretty goddamned thin if the balloon goes up.”

“We’ll still have the rotating task forces of heavies—31 and 51, but I’m not sure if they’ll continue to have one for the Red Zone,” Ahava says, giving the name for the Klingon Neutral Zone. “They may just have one, or put both in Gold.” She shakes her head. “Admiral Horton will command the Red Zone and Mandala Flynn will command the Gold. They can each take reinforcements if serious shit happens and build out as needed. They’ll be it, until the numbered fleets and their task forces can get formed and on-scene.”

“Not a great beginning for Hunter,” Chandra observes.

“No. But the plans for the zones and the abolishment of the divisions were her idea. So she’ll probably take the heat from the troops for the consolidation.”

“I’ll fucking quash that pretty quick. It’s been awhile since we’ve had a pure Border Dog—one who came up from the ranks, no less—as Bulldog 6.” She stops. “So I guess I’m reporting to you?”

“Don’t sound so thrilled,” Ahava says with laughter in her voice.

Chandra snorts. “And who are you reporting to? ‘Horton-Hears-a-Who?’”

Ahava shoots her a sour look, but only says, “I’ll report directly to Bulldog 6.”

Chandra looks serious. “Is that going to be a problem with me reporting to you?”

“No. One level between you and her. Plus I’ll have no trouble reaming your ass if needed.”

“Oh, you can try,” Chandra says.

Their laughter is contagious. They stop after a moment of relief. “So what is this BUPERS hearing?”

“Rumor has it, Harriman is feeling his oats, since he got bounced. Some day we might learn the full story, but the President, CINCFLEET, and the FSA, through the auspices of Pavel Chekov, got tired of some flavor of bullshit of his.”

“So, Decker may suffer?”

Ahava doesn’t answer, which is an answer in itself.

Investment

Saavik manages to make her way back to the flag bridge. If there is any chance of saving Admiral Walsh, this will be it. She and Bondarenko, as well as the young midshipman, T’veel, are headed towards the flag bridge, via the quickest route. Along the way, they had picked up a few crewmembers who actually realized that they were duty bound to get involved.

They round the corner and stop short. Standing there are twelve security guards, all dressed in their armor. Saavik recognizes the Security commander, a young lieutenant named T’runja. She stares at Saavik. For a moment, no one says anything.

Then a Vulcan male, dressed in medical whites and greens, steps out from behind T’runja.

“Commander,” says Dr. Stovar.

“Doctor,” Saavik replies calmly, as if there weren’t twelve beings standing there who could turn the three of them to ash.

“I can treat your wound, Saavik,” Stovar says.

Saavik nods, looking down at the makeshift bandage. “I thank you, Doctor. But it will have to wait, until this ship is secure.”

He nods, then steps back. Saavik turns to T’runja. The diminutive, but muscular woman stares at her impassively, her dark eyes steady. Something about her remind her of Chandra, though T’runja doesn’t seem to have the propensity for lust and joy that Chandra does.

The joy at least present before Vostus. The lust appears to be returning, at least according to mutual acquaintances.

"I stand with the Federation, Commander," T'runja clarifies. "We have a breaching plan."

"Very well. Report."

"There are four prisoners and three mutineers," she says. "We've got them pinpointed through infrared. Also, Captain Stivek's codes have been locked out, but we don't know what he has at his disposal."

"Activity inside, Commander," says one ensign, watching a PADD's screen.

"I think they may be about to shoot a hostage. A cadet, as near as I can tell," he says.

"Breach," Saavik says quietly. She lifts her phaser, then nods at her two companions. "Wait here."

Bondarenko shakes her head. "Only if you do, sister," she says sharply.

"You're not trained in Starfleet procedures."

"You're fucking broken, so I got you beat."

T'runja finishes the argument. "Neither one of you are going," she says. She lifts her comm. "Transporter room. Execute the surprise."

They just manage to hear the hum of a transporter, then there is a sharp explosion, as well as a burst of pitch darkness through the cracks at the bottom of the hatch.

"Blacklight stun-bomb," T'runja says quietly.

There is a roaring noise as well.

"Breach," T'runja says tersely.

The security officers watch as one of their number pulls the hatch away; it was blown at the same time. They file through the door in a tactical formation.

"Three targets down. Friendlies have control."

Saavik moves through the hatch. She sees the flag staff all standing around, looking down at the three minions. All with makeshift weapons.

Stivek stands with his hands up. Walsh holds a phaser on him.

Saavik looks at Stivek. "I relieve you captain," she says.

"You'd never be able to do that," he says.

She smiles slightly. "You'd be surprised."

Her vision grays, then turns black from the edges. She feels herself falling.

The Priory

Tiyana t'Lorcana opens her eyes, coming back into herself. She realizes that her comm is beeping. She pulls it to her, then activates.

The hybrid stares at her. "Force Leader," she says.

"Mother," K'hrella replies. "Has the package been extracted?"

"Yes. The *package* has," Tiyana replies dryly.

K'hrella narrows her eyes. "Be careful, Mother. You can irritate me."

"I'm quaking, half-breed."

K'hrella apparently decides to let it go. "Are you sure you're on board?"

"We are," Tiyana says. She smiles. "We believe in lost causes. It's the only type of quest we'll take on."

K'hrella nods in something like satisfaction. "I have to go. We'll be in touch."

Tiyana stares at the comm. She rises and moves into the back chamber. The younger woman stares into the flames of the brazier.

"So you're already planning my future?" she asks.

"Perhaps," Tiyana says.

"What if I'm done?" she asks. "I don't want to be part of any of this. I just want to stay here."

"And that is an option, sister. But there may come a time when your sisters need you. The ones who have taken you in. Who made sure that you were dead to the universe and that none of your former masters and mistresses can find you." She turns and leaves.

The woman who once had two names, in two different worlds stares silently into the blue flames of the brazier. She'd also had two faces in her lifetime.

D'aina t'Sonrees, for the first time in a long time, isn't troubled by anything as she shifts her view to her human face in the reflection of the small water feature near the brazier.

She knows that her goal of being restored to the face she was born, with is closer than it has been in a long time.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!