

Les Bottes Solitaires

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Les Bottes Solitaires

by [Gibraltar](#)

Summary

Some things, seemingly innocuous, can stay with you forever.

Notes

This short story is a response to the 'Boot Up' Weekly Challenge #53.

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Technicians swept hand-held sensors over the bodies, the strewn furniture, the coagulating blood and the various equipment littering the floor of the suite.

Captain Trujillo stepped into the controlled chaos, the ballet of forensic activity that sought to collate the aftermath of tragedy so that the sterile details of this bloody mess could be expressed to Starfleet and Federation leadership without making those worthies queasy.

Lieutenant Commander Glal stood from where he had been kneeling next to the body of one of *Reykjavik*'s security personnel. He approached, his grim Tellarite visage an all-too-familiar harbinger of calamity.

"Report," Trujillo ordered, her voice unnaturally soft as though she were afraid to violate the macabre hush that accompanied the almost silent work of the forensics team.

"It appears that they weren't after our ambassador after all," Tark explained, gesturing to a line of blast marks stitched into the hotel suite's southern wall. "It looks like this was a targeted strike against the Ulari trade delegation. Ambassador Arnaud just picked a really bad time to visit Minister Krixel."

"Our people?"

"One dead, two wounded from our security detail, Captain. And the ambassador's aide was also a fatality." Glal gestured to a nearby doorway where the faux-wooden door had a scorched hole blown through the middle of it. "The separatists beamed in, and opened fire, striking Lieutenant Jarrod, who appears to have interposed himself between the attackers and Ambassador Arnaud. Jarrod apparently tackled Arnaud as he was hit, carrying the both of them through the doorway and into the bedroom. Specialist Jallaxx fell back while returning fire and facilitated an emergency beam-out of our personnel. He was wounded just before the transporter's confinement beam enveloped him."

Trujillo walked over to where Glal had knelt moments earlier, where a human female in a Starfleet uniform lay face down on the plush carpet, now soaked a deep burgundy beneath her body. An assault-style phaser pistol was still clutched in one hand.

Unconcerned with the forensic faux-pas, Trujillo kneeled and turned the body over until she could identify the individual, a young woman of African heritage. One of the scanning team moved to object to disturbing the body and was silenced by an icy glare from the captain.

"Ensign Katleho," Trujillo observed sadly.

"She blocked the doorway and gave the others time to escape," Glal clarified. "Stunned two of the attackers in the process," he added.

Trujillo noticed the ensign's feet, clad only in socks, and glanced around; her expression puzzled.

Glal pointed to a spot in front of the doorway where two Starfleet-issue boots lay. One remained upright while the other was on its side. They appeared as though someone might have simply kicked them off hastily, an afterthought following a long shift.

“The Andorians were using Klingon disruptors,” Glal said by way of explanation. “The impact...”

Trujillo gently returned Katleho to her original position and emitted a pained sigh. “How many times in our careers could this have been one of us, Commander?” Trujillo said suddenly.

“Too many to count, sir,” he replied somberly.

Trujillo sat back onto her butt, sprawling awkwardly next to the body. “Clear the room.”

A lieutenant from the starbase’s forensic team stepped forward, data-slate in hand. “Captain, we only require a few mome—”

“She said clear the fucking room!” Glal barked, causing the younger man to stiffen, go pale, and then quickly usher out his team with the Tellarite XO following suit.

When they were alone, Trujillo leaned forward to place a gentle kiss on the crown of the woman’s head. “You fulfilled your duty, Ensign. Bless you for that, Jamila Katleho. I’m so sorry it ended like this for you.”

Trujillo entered the corridor and ordered the forensic team to finish their duties. She beamed back to the ship shortly thereafter.

She would think of the incident often in the coming days, weeks and months, and without fail the image that persisted was of those empty boots and all they had once contained.

* * *

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