

Bri(d)ge Over Troubled Water

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Bri(d)ge Over Troubled Water

by [LordMcCoveyCove](#)

Summary

Prequel Short to Star Trek: Delta, Stars, & Anchor!

Stardate 46040.35: During Marine Corps basic training, Brigid Kelley receives a letter from her best friend, Bertie.

Notes

Historian's Note: The events in this story take place between episodes "Time's Arrow, Part II" and "Realm of Fear" of Star Trek: The Next Generation. The colony world of Kessik IV is also the home of B'Elanna Torres from Star Trek: Voyager.

*Sail on, silver girl, sail on by. Your time has come to shine.
All your dreams are on their way; see how they shine.
Oh, if you need a friend, I'm sailing right behind.
Like a bridge over troubled water, I will ease your mind.*

Paul Simon - "Bridge Over Troubled Water"

Andor

Marine Corps Recruit Depot

Stardate 46040.36 (January 15, 2369)

Recruit Barracks E

Private Recruit Brigid Geraldine Kelley enjoyed her private bunk in the corner of the barracks assigned to her platoon. The weeks ticked by at a fast pace; since the first week of September the previous year, along with seventy-nine of her fellow recruits in the platoon, only six more weeks left in the training cycle. Sixty-three recruits remained.

Kelley worked harder than everyone else in her platoon, earning her the role of "Guide." If she held that role through to the end of training, she would carry the guidon for her platoon at the parade during graduation. To date, no one even approached her level of excellence; a fact of which she took pride in, especially under the circumstances of her arrival at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Andor.

"Mail call!" shouted the platoon drill instructor, Corporal Hamakua. Known to the recruits as "Mother," as her full name was Millicent Okalani Teagan Hamakua, she walked down the long aisle between the sets of bunks where each recruit lay their head.

In the months following her arrival, Kelley never received nor sent a single letter to anyone outside of the marine corps. So, Mother's unexpected call of her name, "Kelley!"; surprised her and the nearby recruits.

A quick press of her PADD in the corporal's hands released the message to Kelley's device, which beeped at her with insistence.

"Guess someone out there likes you, Kelley," Mother said; her tone much softer than before.

She nodded, then wasted no time in accessing the message.

Kelley's interest peaked as she started reading the message sent by her childhood friend, Alberta "Bertie" Neng, from Kessik IV.

Dear Brige,

I hope this finds you well. I've just started the Winter Quarter here at UCLA, and it has been an exhilarating and overwhelming experience in all the best ways. I've made friends here, and the campus is active. Classes push me, but history is still my love. It's everything that we talked about and more.

Despite it all, I miss you. And I'm sorry that I haven't written you until now. Please know that you've been in my thoughts, especially when I find myself out of my depth and need someone to turn to. I knew I'd miss seeing you when you left for Andor. But I didn't understand how much until I went off on my adventure to Earth.

I wish you were here with me. I hope that someday, we can see each other and catch up. By now, you must have become a four-star general, decorated with medals! If not, something is amiss with the marine corps for not recognizing your value.

Kelley stopped reading as she felt her throat constrict and her eyes misting over. Loss of emotional control in full view of the recruits might damage her reputation. She glanced around and found several of them studying her, wondering who might reach out to their senior recruit after weeks of nothing during previous mail calls.

She composed herself and departed into the platoon's briefing room. A privilege of her role allowed her free access to the training rooms at her leisure; opening them for use and locking them at the end of each day. She passed through with her access and locked the sliding door closed behind her. She sat in the room and went back to her spot in the letter.

I didn't know how to contact you. I asked my mother to contact your mother, and she passed the question to your father... who now claims he's never heard of you! Shocked, my mom sought the sergeant at the recruitment center and got the information.

I don't know what happened between you and your parents. I can guess. Living nearby, I had suspicions, but you evaded every question. Then, my mom asked Riley, and she told her you left them all behind. That you abandoned the family. I know you well enough to know it's false.

I am so sorry, Brige. Whatever happened, it must have been the last straw. You are the strongest person I know, but even you must have reached your limit. Running off in the middle of the night, as she says, suggests unbearable circumstances. I feel devastated picturing you alone on that rainy night.

Despite the vast distance, I remain by your side. Our bond is unbreakable. Never forget that.

I promise to write frequently, and please write to me at school. Stay in touch, so I can be the friend you deserve.

I love you, Brige. No matter where we are, you are not alone anymore.

Bertie

Teardrops dotted the PADD's display in rapid fashion as Kelley leaned over. Her body wracked with the sobs pent up since her race out of the door to her family's home on Kessik. She tried to keep her gasps and vocalizations to a low volume.

To little success.

As outside the room, those who held her in high esteem stood and listened to their Guide's sobs within; concern written on each of their expressions.

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