

The Strange Glue That Held Us Together

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The Strange Glue That Held Us Together

by [nostalgia](#)

Summary

“I shall tell you a secret, if it goes no further.” Julian nods and Martok leans in close to speak quietly against his ear. “There are no good days to die.”

The Jem’Hadar want Martok to fight to provide them with exercise and entertainment. Protesting this demand is an obviously fatal mistake but Julian does it anyway. Sometimes he just can’t help himself.

The two of them are surrounded by angry Jem’Hadar and there isn’t the slightest chance that they’ll survive this fight, so he doesn’t even bother trying to calculate the odds. He looks at Martok and wonders if this counts as an honourable death. “What do you think,” he asks, resigned to his fate, “is today a good day to die?”

Martok regards him carefully. “I shall tell you a secret, if it goes no further.” Julian nods and Martok leans in close to speak quietly against his ear. “There are no good days to die.” He steps forwards. “I’ll fight,” he tells the Vorta.

“You can’t just -” But Julian is on the ground with a bloody nose before he can finish the sentence.

Martok looks down at him, sympathy in his eyes. “Save your strength, my impulsive friend. There will be other battles.”

Julian wipes blood onto his sleeve and watches the Jem’Hadar lead Martok away.

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Even in Hell bodies still have needs, and so do minds and hearts.

There’s not even a pretence of privacy in the prisoners’ barracks, which makes Julian hesitate even when his body is traitorously heated and his mind is begging him for a distraction. But he knows that the others will deliberately ignore the noises from the bunk in the furthest corner, and talk amongst themselves as they pretend that nothing untoward is happening – he’s done that enough times himself, after all.

Martok is matter-of-fact about the offer of physical relief and with no better solution to his problems Julian ends up beside him in the bunk, inadequately hidden from observers by the thin and dirty blanket.

He has to admit that soft and leisurely touches aren’t what he expected from a Klingon, and not just because he’s patched up Jadzia and Worf so many times. It’s a touch of prejudice, he supposes, and he’ll do his best to leave it behind. Martok assumes that he is fragile, and Julian does nothing to dissuade him from that because at the moment he really is. Nobody’s been this careful with him since he got here, no one has touched him so gently and with such tender affection.

He falls in love, just a little.

He doesn’t know the first thing about how Klingons view adultery. For all he knows this sort of behaviour gives Martok’s wife the right to arrange to have the two of them killed.

He could ask, of course, but they’ll probably die here anyway, sooner or later, and then the issue will be moot.

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It happens again, and then again. It becomes something to look forward to somewhat in the bleakest place he has ever been forced to stay for an extended period.

Martok is one-eyed now, and they've already had the unpleasantly necessary conversation about the fact that the injury can never be healed even if they somehow escape this desolate rock – Klingons heal quickly and Martok's body has already built enough scar-tissue to make a transplant impossible.

"I've already seen everything worth looking at, anyway" declares Martok, loud and hearty.

Julian knows him well enough to see through the act. "Even so," he says, "I'm sorry I couldn't do more."

Martok pats him on the shoulder, holding back from unleashing his full strength. "You make as fine a medic as you do a bedmate, Doctor." It's obviously intended as a compliment and he decides to take it in that spirit.

Martok pulls him closer and runs a hand through Julian's hair as though attempting to soothe an injured animal. The contact is welcome and it does, in fact, make him feel just that little bit better about everything.

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And then, absurdly, they are free and on their way home. Julian is busy on the journey back to the station patching everyone else up with the medical supplies on the runabout. The available equipment is limited to life-saving essentials but after weeks of trying to practice medicine with not much more than determination and hope it feels like uncovering an unexpected hoard of luxuries.

Martok takes him aside in the sleeping quarters to thank him for his work at the camp, for keeping him alive long enough to get here. Julian waits for a lowered voice and a request that he keep *certain intimacies* between the two of them, but it never comes. He doesn't know if that means Martok is assuming his discretion or if the tale will be told to a crowd of drunken warriors over a barrel of bloodwine, but he's willing to bet that it's the former.

So he, too, says nothing on the subject, and lets the sorry string of incidents remain behind them, lost and forgotten in Dominion territory.

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A month later, on the station, Martok grumbles and grouches his way through an examination – apparently his tolerance for doctors is limited when he has the freedom to come and go as he pleases.

Julian conducts a final scan, running a tricorder over Martok as the general sits impatiently on the biobed. "I'm almost finished," he says, placating, well-versed in handling difficult patients.

As he moves the device over the Klingon's heart Martok catches hold of his wrist, holding him in place. A thumb strokes his skin, very gently, and Julian's stomach flips over with the fear that Martok's about to break the unspoken agreement never to mention what passed between them at Camp 371. At least, Julian assumes that they have such an agreement. Certainly he's been doing his best to forget the entire affair.

With the instrument still beeping in his hands he clears his throat. "Is there a problem?" he asks, pulling on the comfortable facade of clinical detachment.

After a worrying pause, Martok lets go. "I was just admiring your bedside manner," he says, a note of bitter disappointment in his voice.

It's over. It's in the past. He's not going back to that camp and he's not going back to Martok's bed. He shrugs as carelessly as he can manage. "It's part of the standard training. You'd get the same treatment from any other Federation doctor."

Martok's next words are quieter, contemplative. "I doubt it." Their eyes meet and they stare at each other for an uncomfortably long moment.

Julian thinks, rather desperately, *What do you want me to say?* The fact that they were briefly lovers – if that term is even remotely applicable – is surely not something that can be allowed to affect their working relationship. They were lonely, and brutalised, and the circumstances will haunt their nightmares until they die. What use is there in remembering the times they looked for desperately-needed comfort in each other's arms?

It's Martok who breaks the silence, which would surely have lasted forever if it were left up to Julian to end it. "A bond between warriors can never be broken," he says, and now his voice is firm and reassuring.

And finally Julian understands. They're connected now, for better or worse, comrades who survived adversity and found some minimal spark of good in the worst of situations. He nods, and it's time to stop pretending that what they built together isn't going to affect them for the rest

of their lives. “Nor forgotten,” he concedes, with a nod and a pained attempt at a smile.

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