

Star Beagle Adventures Episode 1: The Eye of the Beholder

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Star Beagle Adventures Episode 1: The Eye of the Beholder

by [Lord Robert Bruce Scott \(LordRobertBruceScott\)](#), [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Summary

The U.S.S. Beagle, as part of a task force of three ships, is assigned to assist the Ferengi Alliance with a dangerous biohazard that has re-emerged within Alliance space...

Introduction to Star Beagle Adventures



These are the adventures of the U.S.S. Beagle, an advanced science ship and its small task force, tasked with exploring outside of Federation space in search of new worlds and new civilizations. The Beagle task force is assigned to identified potential threats identified outside of Federation space.

This series features an all original crew. The only series character is Pel from Deep Space 9. Star Beagle Adventures immediately follows the end of the Dominion War and ship and crew will occasionally check in at Deep Space 9.

The series is about science and biology and non-violent solutions to violent problems.

The series features a variety of romantic relationships, but, while important, these are not the focus of the series. Star Beagle Adventures will include frank discussion of sex from cultural, emotional and biological perspectives, but will never be sexually explicit. It is rated as Teen instead of General for this reason and also because of the graphic horror/violence.

The U.S.S. Beagle is named after the H.M.S. Beagle that carried Charles Darwin to the Galapagos Islands. The series name is inspired by Cejay's series: Star Eagle Adventures.

This is the pilot episode and first run of Star Beagle Adventures - your comments will be greatly appreciated and will be used to help me shape the series.

Thanks!! rbs

SBA Episode 1, Prelude: Tyr'phoyx 8

Chapter Summary

Prelude to Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: The Eye of the Beholder

Prelude: Tyr'phoyx 8

Prelude Tyr'phoyx 8

Project Manager Kiasias Tidun wrestled desperately with the computer, trying in vain to undo what she had just done. But she couldn't remember the command codes - nothing worked. She seemed to remember scrambling them, but her memories were rapidly fading. She was fading. It was like her spots were fading - she didn't even feel like a trill anymore. And she wasn't just any trill.

Tidun had clawed her way to the top of the Tyr'phoyx exo-mining operation - from ore processor to mine construction engineer to prospector and eventually project manager. It was extremely rare for an unjoined trill to move up through so many different hierarchies so quickly - or even at all. Layers of tradition and racial prejudice tended to block trills from her background from climbing out of the lowest, dirtiest, most menial jobs, not to mention into project management - which, for the purposes of this operation, essentially meant captaining a mining ship.

But all of that was slipping away. She could barely remember any of it. She remembered setting the self-destruct and scrambling the codes so that she could not undo it. She could barely remember how to use the controls at all - only that she had to - even as her memories were slipping away.

She couldn't stop the overload in the warp core. Somewhere in her mind, the tiny part that was still Kiasias Tidun went into the same problem solving mode that had won her this job; she jettisoned the warp engine and hit it not with a torpedo - which would tear the ship apart - but with a tractor beam from a mining skiff to carry it away from the ship at maximum speed. The explosion was enough to rock the Tyr'phoyx 8, sending a few of the trill mining engineers to their knees, but not enough to harm them otherwise.

Not that any of the trill miners could remember who they were anymore. Not even Project Manager Tidun. Their minds had finally been assimilated. Not by the borg, but by another collective. The more minds they could link, the more they began to feel... something... like there was something it was like to be them. 127 trill minds pulling together - that was enough for them. More than enough. Supergenius material...

But Tidun wasn't finished yet - even though nothing was left of her personality. There was one more trap to spring - a countdown she had put in place in case she could not stop the assimilation of her crew - and herself. Most of the crew was currently locked in the main ore processing floor - originally called there to await an announcement from their project manager. When Project Manager Tidun failed to enter the failsafe codes in time, the compartment vented to space, blowing most of the former trills out of the back of the ship. The collective was now restricted to only 18 survivors scattered in other compartments on the Tyr'phoyx 8.

It was still more than they had had in centuries. It would be enough...



SBA Episode 1, Scene 1: The Beautiful Vulcan

Chapter Summary

A beautiful vulcan boards the U.S.S. Mako with an unusual mission into the Klingon Empire...



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 1: The Beautiful Vulcan

1.1 The Beautiful Vulcan

Ensign Tara Peterman found Transporter Chief Stephanie Wales just standing in Corridor H-6, eyes unfocused, mouth slightly open. Peterman couldn't look at Wales without being somewhat envious. Most of the nearly 80 women aboard the U.S.S. Mako were envious of Wales' looks and perfect figure - this in a culture of physical fitness maintained by Captain Yui Song.

"Chief, why are you not at your station?" Ensign Peterman did not make it a habit to harass enlisted crew, but Wales was just standing, as if in a trance, seemingly unaware of the junior security officer walking up in front of her.

No reaction.

Peterman raised her voice: "Chief?"

Wales shook herself, then looked about. "Where is he? What?" She seemed to gradually notice the ensign's presence. "Sir?"

"Are you all right, Chief?"

Wales shook herself again. "Yes sir." She still looked confused.

"Your station, Chief?" Peterman said gently, more to help the transporter chief than to scold her for being away from her station. It still took a moment for Wales to reorient herself.

"Aye, sir," Wales responded, then turned toward the transporter room, only a few feet down the corridor.

Peterman paused only a moment to observe the transporter chief returning to her station before returning to her own assignment, a conference room nearby. A single security crewman was on guard outside the door - one of Peterman's charges. "You are relieved, Crewman Lin. You may return to your patrol."

Crewman Lin Jiang came to attention, saluted, then left his post to continue his duties as Ensign Peterman took his place.

"To Qo'noS with a cloaked escort?" At 83, Captain Yui Song was one of the oldest captains in Star Fleet. At least one of the oldest humans. She regarded the vulcan across the table from her with a mixture of suspicion and empathy. Vulcans had often been compared to the Chinese - at least in terms of inscrutability and utilitarian morality. Both were unfair comparisons, but there was one thing that truly was similar - underneath a veneer of emotional self-control lurked a passion as strong as that of any human. And she had no doubt that the vulcan across the conference table was concealing a lot of it.

"A gift from the Federation. Do not allow the klingons to characterize it otherwise," Lt. Commander Senek replied. "We are removing an embarrassment for them and obtaining a valuable asset for the Federation. At least that is what my captain believes."

"Am I to understand this embarrassing asset has a name?"

"Captain Howard has requested that he be treated with the respect due a hero of the Klingon Empire. And that your crew address him as

'General' when they encounter him."

Captain Yui's eyes narrowed. "General..."

Senek's oddly large, forest green eyes registered no change - just a mournful world-weariness uncharacteristic of vulcans. "Star Fleet has requested the temporary services of General Krank as a military analyst, and Chancellor Martok has graciously leant him to us. Indefinitely."

Captain Yui suppressed any reaction, but, truth be told, her internal response was admirably mirrored in the habitual expression of mournful world-weariness of the vulcan across the table from her. "And your ship could not be dispatched for this mission because?"

"This mission is outside the U.S.S. Beagle's mission profile," Senek responded.

Yui Song allowed the silence to stretch long enough to confirm that the Beagle's science officer was not going to elaborate - was quite probably under orders not to. She took a deep breath. "We have prepared quarters for the General according to your captain's request. Now I understand why. A klingon warrior with post traumatic stress. I can understand why the klingons are willing to part with him. A hero of the empire who must be hidden from the empire. But why the cloaked escort?"

"To prevent open contact with any klingon vessels while unofficially granting passage through imperial space for your ship," Senek replied. "My captain believes the klingons will do their best to pretend that we are not there. He has provided me a response formula for any communication we may have with our escort."

Captain Yui watched Senek's face closely, but the vulcan betrayed no hint that there was any humor in his words. "So you are charged with conducting diplomatic relations with the klingons for this mission."

Lt. Cmdr. Senek did not respond. If anything, he managed to look slightly more morose.

Yui Song took a breath, then stood up. "Thank you, Lieutenant Commander. Ensign Peterman is waiting outside to escort you to your quarters." She watched as the Beagle's 2nd officer rose, bowed and exited. He was an exceptionally unusual looking vulcan. Fair skin was very unusual among a people from a sunwashed planet and golden-blond hair was even more unusual. Senek's hair fell straight and fine to his waist. And he was, simply put, stunningly beautiful. Yui had put this persistent, uncomfortable observation out of her mind while talking with him, but it was the most powerful impression left behind in his absence. That and a lingering sense of mournful world-weariness.

"Ensign..."

Ensign Tara Peterman's beleaguered brain had not yet registered that she was being addressed by a superior officer.

"Ensign," Lt. Cmdr. Senek repeated.

"Yes sir?" Peterman managed.

"You were assigned to escort me to my quarters?" It was phrased as a question.

"Yes sir? Oh, yes sir," Peterman replied. She shook herself and managed to pry her eyes away from the vulcan in front of her. Men weren't supposed to be that beautiful. And vulcans were famous for not trying. She tried not to stare at him while they were in the turbolift. He was too tall and too pretty for a vulcan - if someone had been casting for Frey, god of the elves, they couldn't have done better. Except for the perpetually mournful expression.

Peterman stopped in the doorway for Lt. Cmdr. Senek's temporary quarters aboard the U.S.S. Mako.

"Ensign..."

"Sir?"

"You appear to be... drooling."

Peterman shook herself in embarrassment and wiped her face with her sleeve. "I'm sorry, sir. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

If anything, Senek seemed even more morose. "I know you are not in my command, but as a superior officer, I'm going to give you an order."

Peterman's heart skipped a beat, desperately hoping for some illegally naughty order.

"Return to your quarters, regain your composure and... um... freshen up before returning to your post."

"Sir?"

"Your scent, Ensign. Strive to return it to neutral. As much as that is possible."

SBA Episode 1, Scene 2: General Krank

Chapter Summary

The U.S.S. Mako picks up a traumatized hero of the klingon people...



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 2: General Krank

1.2

General Krank

Ensign Tara Peterman had almost run back to her quarters, but it felt a bit more like swimming - her pants had gotten a little boggy. For the next several days, as the U.S.S. Mako traveled toward the border with the Klingon Empire, Lt. Cmdr. Senek (to the dismay of the female crew members as rumor of his extreme beauty grew) remained isolated in his quarters, apparently impervious to the growing, largely feminine traffic in the corridor outside.

Peterman had, herself, deliberately included this corridor in her patrol route. She found herself regularly shoos other crew, including a few young lieutenants, out of the area where they had been lingering, hoping for a glimpse of the elusive vulcan. She had just finished assigning a particularly recalcitrant pair of young, female crewmen to clean out the nastiest bio dump in sick bay and sternly sending them on their way when Senek finally emerged from his quarters.

“We are required on the bridge, Ensign.”

Peterman fell in step behind the gorgeous vulcan and was somewhat disturbed to find herself on the turbolift with him.

“Discipline your mind, Ensign,” Senek said quietly.

“Sir?”

“Your... urges are... leaking... from your mind.”

The words “leaking” and “discipline” made things much worse for Peterman as now she had to add images of the gorgeous vulcan decked in tight leather and wielding a horse whip to the dozens of things she was desperately trying to not think about. She panicked momentarily when he touched her forehead with two fingers - until she felt his mind briefly in contact with hers, lending her some of his discipline. Underneath the discipline, she could feel immense sadness and world-weariness.

“Thank you, Sir,” Ensign Peterman said. She took a deep, shuddering breath. Then: “I suppose you have to deal with this a lot, Sir...”

Lt. Cmdr. Senek turned his enormous, soulful, forest green eyes on her - his calm, seemingly emotionless voice managed to convey a depth of feeling that shot all the way through to her soul:

“It’s so annoying...”

Then he stepped off the turbolift onto the bridge. The doors closed before Peterman recovered her composure and by the time she had managed to re-route the lift back to the bridge, the doors opened only to reveal Lt. Cmdr. Senek standing, along with Captain Yui Song, waiting to re-enter the lift. Ensign Peterman accompanied them to Transporter Room 1, where Chief Stephanie Wales was, once again, on duty.

“Energize,” Captain Yui ordered.

With a familiar whine and whirring of lights, an ancient and evidently horribly crippled klingon appeared on the transporter pad.

“Welcome aboard the U.S.S. Mako, General Krank,” said Captain Yui.

“Do not call me that!” the klingon croaked in a loud, badly damaged voice.

“My apologies, General,” Lt. Commander Senek responded, “But by order of Captain Yui of this vessel, and Captain Howard of the U.S.S. Beagle, and at the request of Chancellor Martok, we are to address and refer to you exclusively by your rank.”

General Krank grunted unhappily and hobbled off the transporter pad, leaning heavily on a large, black cane.

“Please follow me,” said Senek.

Peterman and Wales watched as their captain and the beautiful vulcan led the severely damaged klingon out of the transporter room.

“That’s Krank?” Wales asked. “He was supposed to be some legendary fighter - killed hundreds of jem’hadar with his bare hands during the battle for Selem VI - the only allied war leader who defeated the Dominion in every battle...”

“They captured him,” Peterman responded. “And returned him to the Klingon Empire after they got their revenge - years of systematic torture. They wanted to make him an example... Psychological warfare.”

“I was having a hard time dealing with Lieutenant Commander Gorgeous, but... wow...”

“Do not pity a klingon, Chief. Not good for your health,” said Ensign Peterman.

“Neither is lusting after vulcans...” Wales responded, and was rewarded with a snort and a laugh.

And a new friendship was formed aboard the U.S.S. Mako.

SBA Episode 1, Scene 3: Skip Howard

Chapter Summary

Captain Skip Howard of the U.S.S. Beagle visits with Captain Yui Song aboard the U.S.S. Mako.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 3: [Skip Howard](#)

1.3

[Skip Howard](#)

Captain Yui Song was beginning to understand she might well have encountered the most eccentric crew in Star Fleet as she observed her counterpart seated on the sofa in her captain's lounge. If Captain Yui was one of the oldest captains in Star Fleet, Captain Ronald Howard XIV, was easily the youngest. And, undoubtedly, the most controversial. And, quite possibly, the weirdest. The Howard family were Star Fleet legends, having produced four admirals over the past three centuries that Star Fleet had been in existence. And none of them, including the current Admiral Ronald Howard XII, would have approved of the admiral's grandson.

Captain Howard had the characteristic thinning red hair, early baldness, freckles, and irrepressible smile that seemed to be baked into the family's genetic code. He was also oddly feminine in behavior, wore his thinning hair long to the shoulder and played with it often, revealing long, well-tended fingernails complete with glossy black nail polish. His hazel eyes were oddly accentuated by green eye shadow.

"We will be delighted to provide a tour for you and your science officer," Howard said with the warm, folksy charm that also seemed to be part of his genetic inheritance. "Of course, there are some assurances for you to sign. The Beagle is a joint project among Star Fleet, the Vulcan Science Academy and Nakamura Enterprises. Lots of top secret stuff - corporate secrets - vulcan secrets - I'm really not sure which is worse."

"If you don't mind the question, Captain," Yui Song asked, maintaining a light tone, "How did the Beagle come to be *your* top secret assignment?"

"Skip, if you don't mind, Captain."

"Skip?"

"That's what people call me," Howard replied. "And the Beagle is my dog by special request of Nakamura Enterprises. I wouldn't have gotten my third pip, much less the fourth if it hadn't been for them. Not that any other captain in Star Fleet would want this assignment. I'm not widely envied. The Beagle is one really annoying dog."

Captain Yui found herself laughing merrily. "Song," she said.

"Song." Howard repeated. "I love Chinese names. So beautiful." He produced a tri-corder. "The forms you need to review are here. I'm not even allowed to download these to your computer." He touched a control on the device and a complex legal document was displayed holographically. "Your science officer will need to read and sign as well... In my presence, I'm afraid. I'm not even allowed to hand this tri-corder to you."

"That does sound quite annoying, Skip," said Yui.

Howard giggled lightly: "Ohhh, you have no idea..."

SBA Episode 1, Scene 4: The U.S.S. Beagle

Chapter Summary

Captain Yui boards the U.S.S. Beagle for the first time.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 4: [The U.S.S. Beagle](#)

1.4

The U.S.S. Beagle

The U.S.S. Beagle was a complete surprise to the crew of the U.S.S. Mako. It wasn't built by Star Fleet - or any human endeavor... The Beagle was a renovated and re-christened Vulcan Science Academy cruiser - formerly the D'Metlesits. It was one of the largest cruisers the Vulcan Science Academy had ever constructed, but small by Star Fleet standards - somewhat smaller than Intrepid class cruisers.

The Beagle was shaped somewhat like a tri-bladed arrowhead interrupted about 1/3 from the rear by three interlocking rings that constituted the warp nacelles. A central strut, jutting out from the primary hull into the center of each of the rings, housed separate warp engines that powered each nacelle - a completely alien configuration from Star Fleet engine design. Vulcan ships were generally considered to be extremely fat on sensor equipment, lean on weaponry and not quite as fast as Star Fleet ships - but comparable in speed to pretty much everyone else.

An odd party materialized in the Beagle's primary transporter room. It wasn't so much a room as a node in a vast nerve center, with large openings leading variously to areas dedicated to cargo, medicine and security, each secured by large, translucent overhead doors. A large security force of heavily armed United States Marines stood watch behind these various doors and within the transporter room.

A lovely Japanese woman in a silk, flower-print dress, stepped out from behind the transporter console. "Welcome back, Skip, Senek. And welcome to the U.S.S. Beagle, General Krank, Captain Yui and Lieutenant Commander Clark. I assume you have signed your confidentiality agreements and liability waivers?"

"I signed nothing," croaked the damaged klingon general.

"Nor were you asked to," rejoined Captain Skip Howard, turning to the general as he stepped off the transporter pad. "Those forms are for our visitors. You're one of us, now." He giggled lightly and minced away.

The Hero of Al Selem VI drew himself painfully to full height, filled his lungs to deliver a retort, then looked around and realized there really was no point. He deflated visibly with a long, audible sigh and a look of mingled pain and annoyance.

Captain Yui Song couldn't keep a sad smile of sympathy from her face. But it was Lt. Cmdr. Senek who caught the klingon general's eye:

"So you understand already. That should make things slightly less unbearable for you."

"Is he always this way?" Krank grunted.

"Oh no," Senek replied, his large, forest-green eyes as mournful as ever. "No. Today, he is on his best behavior."

The klingon general managed to look even more pained and annoyed. He hobbled painfully after the gorgeous vulcan. Captain Yui and her science officer, Lt. Cmdr. Gregg Clark, followed and were themselves followed by a rather large contingent of heavily armed U.S. Marines.

"I don't understand how Skip Howard got a command," Clark whispered to his captain. "His grandfather opposed him even getting a commission. They called him 'Skip' because he skipped classes."

"This is Captain Howard's ship, Lieutenant Commander," Yui warned. Quietly.

They caught up to Lt. Cmdr. Senek and General Krank. The vulcan turned to his counterpart from the U.S.S. Mako: "Skip Howard was requested by Nakamura Enterprises. It was their condition for involving Star Fleet in this project. Which, in their opinion, gives them enormous influence over him."

“Surely there’s more to it than that,” Captain Yui responded.

“You are correct, Captain. He has demonstrated a reliable instinct for self-preservation that will hopefully serve this crew well. But the larger reason is that Skip Howard is quite probably the only person in the Milky Way who can give Commander Dutch Holland an order.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 5: Dr. Tentis Uto

Chapter Summary

General Krank meets Dr. Uto.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 5: Dr. Tentis Uto

1.5

Dr. Tentis Uto

It was a short, but slow and painful hobble from the transporter junction to the U.S.S. Beagle's Medical Center. Painful for General Krank and slow for everyone except Captain Skip Howard, who had pranced ahead and was waiting for the tour in Medical, along with a number of doctors.

"General Krank," said Howard, "Please allow me to introduce Dr. Tentis Uto." He indicated the doctor standing next to him - a short, bald, pale man with enormous brown eyes and a thin, greying goatee. "Your part in this tour ends here," he added as Lt. Cmdr. Senek stepped up behind the ancient klingon and delivered a nerve pinch, then caught the suddenly unconscious general.

"That's going to hurt when he wakes up," said Dr. Uto. "It hurts right now."

"That would be your department, Ten," Howard replied. "Time to work your magic. I want him fully mobile and ready for a fight." He turned away and muttered, "Klingon medicine is a disgrace."

Dr. Uto grunted empathetically as his medical staff collected the unconscious Krank from the beautiful, blonde vulcan and lifted the inert general onto a hover-gurney.

"And the tour is this way, people!" burred Captain Howard, leading a stunned Captain Yui Song and her science officer out of the medical center. The friendly, but firm presence of a half-dozen heavily armed U.S. Marines made it eloquently clear that remaining with the doctors and the unconscious klingon would not be an option.

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"Okay people, I'm going to need him conscious for this," said Uto. "Wake him up. I'm going to have to feel his pain..."

General Krank woke to see his son breaking his fingers - removing them one by one, shattering them, then re-attaching them - the nerve endings enhanced to deliver mind bending pain that cycled from one finger to the next. As his son was slowly removing the fingers of his other hand, the familiar face gradually transformed into the familiar form of a changeling.

"Ah, you're awake again, General," the changeling said. "Of course, you know that you have been replaced. Would you like to see your son again? Or perhaps your wife?"

Krank said nothing. Only to find that it was his mother that was now cutting directly into his organs. Whatever the Dominion knew about klingon physiology, they definitely understood how to deliver unendurable agony.

It was this moment, after months of slow torment, periods of recovery only long enough to prevent him from adjusting to the trauma, that Krank finally broke. He cried out. He told them every truth that was in his head. He told them every lie he thought they wanted to hear. There was no attempt at disinformation. His only motive, his only tactic, his only thought was to make it stop.

So he could finally die the death of a dishonored traitor.

And they had denied him even that.

If Krank's arms had been free, he would have throttled the life out of Dr. Uto.

"What have you done to me?"

"What my captain ordered," Uto replied. "And we're not done. You have many painful operations ahead. For now, I'm focused on enabling you to walk without that thing." The betazoid doctor gestured with his bald head at the general's heavy, black cane leaning in the corner.

"I CAN walk without the cane!" the klingon croaked loudly.

"Correction," said Uto. "You can walk without the cane... now. We will work on your voice next. Then your hands. Then your back. Then your internal organs. We have a very long way to go."

"Why?" Krank asked.

"Because Chancellor Martok wants you ready for a fight. And so does Skip Howard."

"You like him?" the klingon general asked.

Uto had a serious expression. "He is the best captain I have ever served with."

"How many captains have you served with?"

SBA Episode 1, Scene 6: Dutch Holland

Chapter Summary

The tour enters engineering and encounters Commander Dutch Holland.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 6: Dutch Holland

1.6

Dutch Holland

Captain Yui Song put her hand on her science officer's arm to prevent him from asking the same question she desperately wanted to ask: What was Captain Skip Howard planning to do to General Krank? She was intent on asking that question, but it could only be addressed captain-to-captain and only privately. And Lieutenant Commander Gregg Clark knew it. He chose to ask a different question:

“So who is Dutch Holland and why are you the only man who can give him an order?” It was phrased lightly and presented with a smile, but it went to the heart of Skip Howard's strange career.

It was Lt. Cmdr. Senek who responded. “The Captain's father was instrumental in securing a commission for Commander Holland. And it was Skip's idea to create a new division within Star Fleet just to accommodate the commander's unorthodox uniform requirements. They have been close friends for a very long time.”

“Dad's a lawyer,” Captain Howard added. “It was grandpa who asked him to come up with a way to allow Star Fleet to keep the most brilliant engineer of our age in the service, given his... frankly odd requirements. Dutch and I spent a lot of time together when I was a kid. He encouraged me to be me...” Howard added, gesturing with his hand, emphasizing his long, carefully manicured and polished fingernails. “And I encouraged him to be, well, him. I probably spent more time with Dutch than I did with dad.”

“The answer to your question, Mr. Clark, is that anyone can give an order if they have the trust of those under their command,” Howard added as the party stepped into engineering, only to be flabbergasted first at the bizarre, mind-bending layout of the engineering department, then even more so at the giant, masked wrestler who was clearly running this operation - his entire body covered with a gold uniform embellished with flames - a uniform that covered every part of his body - even his face and hands. Subtle gold flames decorated his mask. Far less subtle was the Star Fleet engineering emblem on his forehead, identical to the communicator pin on his left breast.

“But it's not just anyone who can win the loyalty of a 300-pound Mexican luchador named Dutch.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 7: Teacup Tiger

Chapter Summary

The U.S.S. Beagle and the U.S.S. Mako are joined by the U.S.S. Escort



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 7: Teacup Tiger

1.7

Teacup Tiger

The U.S.S. Mako traveled with the U.S.S. Beagle for three days before handing off escort duty to a more appropriately designed (and named) ship - the U.S.S. Escort under the command of Captain Rhonda Carter. Carter's career had been lackluster and she probably would never have made 1st Lieutenant if it hadn't been for the War with the Dominion.

Star Fleet had needed fighters and in Rhonda Carter, they had found one. In the span of two years she was promoted four times and decorated five for valor. Because of her diminutive size and combative personality she had been nicknamed the Teacup Tiger in Star Fleet Basic Training. She had owned this nickname and an artist had painted the image of a tiger leaping out of a teacup onto the Escort's hull.

The three captains met, along with General Krank and Lt. Cmdr Senek, in the Beagle's large conference room. Carter, at age 48, still looked like a teenage tomboy - only 5' tall and maybe 100 pounds. Her mousey brown hair was long, fine and straight. She stood immediately when the Hero of Al Selem VI entered the room.

The change in General Krank was nothing short of astonishing. He still carried the heavy black cane, but it was now more weapon than support. He was still gaunt and haunted looking, but he could walk and stand up straight. "wamwI' mach?"

Carter's aggressive features grew more aggressive and her blue eyes blazed. "blQ Duj puy ngo'!" she responded.

The two heroes of the Dominion War glared at each other for a long moment. Captain Yui Song leaned back in her chair, an unreadable, passive expression on her face. Captain Skip Howard sat forward in his chair, a mischievous grin on his face, his fingertips pressed together. He had switched from black to a turquoise blue fingernail polish, with matching eyeshadow.

Krank grunted in satisfaction and took a seat next to Captain Howard.

Carter broke into a smile and resumed her seat.

"Captain Carter," intoned Howard, "It appears Star Fleet has chosen to have the tiger watch over the dog. I am sure you have been thoroughly briefed on your assignment?"

"You mean that I am to destroy this ship before allowing it to fall into the hands of an ally, much less an enemy? And similarly her crew?" Rhonda Carter was a study in raw aggression.

"Let's hope it never comes to that, but yes," Howard responded. "As a last resort. The Beagle's technology - and the knowledge about it - are that highly sensitive. And while this dog is not entirely without teeth and claws, my standing orders are to escape, not to protect our escort, should it come to that."

"Then I have no doubt Star Fleet chose the right man for the job," Carter rejoined.

Captain Howard took the backhanded compliment with a slight giggle. "Everyone has to be good at something," he rejoined. "Even skipping out." Howard took a breath, then plowed into the purpose for this meeting:

"Our three ships have been formed into an ersatz task force with a hybrid mission. Tyr'phoyx Mining Consortium, a corporation formed under the laws of the Trillian Senate and therefore recognized by the Federation, has violated Federation treaty law, lost a mining exploration ship with a complement of 127 combined crew and mining engineers, and caused a crisis with the Ferengi Commerce Authority in a single act of

brehtaking stupidity.”

Howard tapped a control on the conference table in front of him with a bright, sparkly, turquoise fingernail and a planetary system in orbit of a red dwarf star appeared as a holographic projection above the conference table. The image continued zooming in to a moderate size planet, 6th from its sun, then to a grainy image of a small, apparently derelict ship in orbit. “The ship is Tyr’phoix 8. The FCA has prohibited the company from mounting a rescue mission - and they have more than adequate firepower to ensure compliance.”

“I recognize that system from long-range telemetry,” said Captain Yui Song. “The FCA designation for it translates to D, Red South 179 - well inside Ferengi territory - on the other side of their homeworld. Am I correct?”

“You are, Song,” Howard replied.

“I have never seen it in such close detail. How did you obtain this telemetry?” Yui asked.

Skip Howard smiled. “The Ferengi gave it to us.”

“Surely you mean they sold it to us,” remarked Captain Rhonda Carter.

“Gave,” Howard replied. “Gifted. Free. No charge. No negotiation. No gold-pressed latinum. No paperwork. Offered it up to us on a silver platter, along with free passage through their space to run a rescue mission...”

General Krank grunted. “Beware ferengi bearing gifts. Those commodities carry the greatest price.”

“You couldn’t be more right,” Howard intoned. “But this is a very unusual case. The ferengi are terrified. I don’t know why and they’re trying their best to hide it, but it’s written all over everything they’re doing.”

“How are you so certain of that?” Carter asked.

“Hello...” Howard gestured toward his face by wiggling all 10 of his turquoise fingernails: “The Skipper knows fear. They’re not just frightened - they’re completely terrified. They tried to cover it with ferengi bluster, but they were acting like people facing certain doom. Whatever those trills got mixed up in at D, Red South 179, the ferengi clearly think that they won’t be able to contain it. They came to us hoping for a miracle. Senek, analysis please...”

The gorgeous, blonde vulcan spoke up for the first time - his large green eyes as mournful as ever: “Ferengi telemetry registers 19 life forms active aboard Tyr’phoix 8, in orbit of D, Red South 179. Specifically, 18 trill and one unidentified. Life support is minimal, although there are no outward signs of damage. Apparently the trill deliberately vented all of their antimatter, dilithium, ejected and destroyed their warp core and their impulse engines, leaving only the thrusters. Readings of the planet are obscured by electromagnetic interference from a very strong magnetosphere, however there are some indications of concentrations on the surface that may indicate a rudimentary power grid.”

“Whatever has the ferengi spooked, it must have frightened the trills pretty badly too,” Carter mused.

“That is not the only possible explanation of the facts extant,” grumbled Krank. “Infiltration.”

“A reasonable assumption, General,” Senek intoned. “However, there are other possibilities that need to be considered.”

“We have three ships full of war veterans and scientists,” said Skip Howard. “And one week for them to process all of this data and come up with recommendations. Let’s reconvene in two days to consider their progress and prepare to greet the ferengi as we should shortly thereafter arrive at their border. It will be another 6 days from there to D, Red South 179. We should have a plan no less than 2 days out.”

“Before we recess, I want to make a temporary reassignment,” said Captain Yui Song. “I’d like General Krank to coordinate with Captain Carter aboard the Escort. At least for the next few days to develop defense models for our tactical configuration. Skip, because you’re the biologist and this situation appears to be driven by biology - specifically that unidentified lifeform aboard that trill mining ship - you’re in charge of the scientific investigation. Rhonda, if we get into a tactical situation, it’s going to be you, with support from the General. As ordered by Rear Admiral Ho, as senior captain in situ, I will maintain executive authority. My intent is to use each of you according to your strengths. We reconvene in 2 days.”

When Captain Yui stood up, everyone else stood up as well: “Dismissed.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 8: Project Director Pel

Chapter Summary

Pel. F.C.A.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 8: [Project Director Pel](#)

1.8

[Project Director Pel](#)

Captain Yui Song rose from her captain's chair on the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako as the federation task force approached ferengi space. The Ferengi Alliance did not lay claim to a large amount of space, unlike the Cardassian Union or any of the other regional powers. Only 12 star systems strategically arranged around the Ferenginar homestar. D, Red South 179, was the most remote of these systems from pretty much anywhere else in the Milky Way.

Ferengi space was protected by a combination of ferengi marauders and FCA brick fighters - small, fast, powerful fighters almost never seen outside of frengi space.

"We're being hailed," said Lt. Kykena Oroht, the Mako's bolian tactical officer, from her post behind the captain's chair.

"On screen," Captain Yui responded.

An unusually small and delicate looking ferengi appeared on the viewer, but his voice was low, crisp and strong despite his apparent youth: "Pel, F.C.A. I am to accompany you on this mission."

Only 10 minutes later, Captain Yui was surprised to discover that Pel was even smaller than she had thought he was. For several reasons, Yui had decided to present the Mako as the lead ship in the invited investigation. Neither she nor Captain Howard wanted the ferengi to see anything on the U.S.S. Beagle - to all outward appearances, the Beagle was just a restored antique vulcan cruiser. And the U.S.S. Escort was clearly not a science vessel. So Captains Yui and Howard were meeting Pel in Yui's ready room, just off the Mako's bridge.

"The Ferengi Commerce Authority has designated me as project director for D, Red South 179," said Pel.

"You're the canary." Captain Skip Howard followed his observation with a light laugh. "So what did you do to piss them off?"

Pel turned toward Howard with some heat, but the hot retort died on his lips.

Yui watched alertly. The diminutive ferengi was clearly disturbed by Captain Howard. Of course, lots of people might be put off by their first meeting with the Beagle's strange skipper, especially given that he had chosen a light lavender nail polish and eye shadow that perfectly matched the dominant color of Pel's - surprisingly not-as-tasteless-as-most-ferengi-attire - vest. Yui had no doubt Skip Howard's choice of color was deliberate.

"Skip is right," Yui said. "They're sending you in to determine the threat level. To see what impact this has on you. What are we looking for - what are they looking for, specifically?"

Pel looked trapped. His movements had become more and more furtive and he was clearly particularly unnerved by Captain Howard. He looked like he was about to panic. "Okay! Okay! I wasn't supposed to tell you this... But I don't know how we can move forward without it. We don't have a copy of the broadcast, but... Okay..." Pel started rubbing his hands over and over - as if he were washing them. "I'm sure you figured out that we went to that planet long ago. It was very long ago. So long ago that the entire Ferengi civilization has fallen back almost to a primitive state and been rebuilt since then. We don't have much in the way of records from the homeworld from before the 2nd Eugenics War, nearly 900 years ago. But we do have a few absolute ironclad rules. Absolutely no genetic engineering. And absolutely no travel allowed to D, Red South 179."

Captain Yui Song registered considerable surprise at this revelation about ancient Ferengi civilization. At a glance, however, she could tell that this was not news to Captain Howard.

“I had heard about that,” Skip Howard said. “Apparently the Ferengi had faster than light travel nearly fifteen hundred years ago. They had colonized a few planets and then the entire civilization was demolished by a series of civil wars. Only one of the colonies escaped...”

“The Faulkerst Prison Colony. Exiles,” Pel continued. “Most of them were killed in the 2nd Eugenics War. After they rebuilt, it took them more than a hundred years to build a spaceship capable of obtaining orbit and another 60 years to travel at sublight speed to find one of our few surviving cruisers, adrift just outside the system. They recolonized and completely reinvented our civilization. No one knows for certain if the D, Red South 179 transmission was really responsible for the 2nd Eugenics War. The stories about it are - I would say unbelievable, but I’ve seen a lot of unbelievable things. I’m a little more widely travelled than most ferengi.”

“Nice history lesson,” Captain Yui concluded. “The transmission?”

Pel sighed, looked down, then back up. “It wasn’t the kind of transmission you get on your viewscreen or in your comm system. That’s why we don’t have a copy of it. It was like a space itself opened and something was trying to get through. It started with just a few disruptions. But people recognized the face of the leader of the D, Red South 179 expedition - like she was trying to push through...”

“She??” Yui Song was clearly confused.

“The ancient ferengi civilization was matriarchal,” Skip Howard replied. “Do you want more side notes on Ferengi history... or...”

Yui shook her head and made a dismissive wave of her hand toward her fellow captain. “Please continue, Director Pel.”

Pel was on the edge of his seat, talking quickly, the story tumbling out of him. “Every time the transmission happened, more of her got through. And it drove the people who saw her into some sort of frenzy. They started building machines, sending ships toward D, Red South 179... And a little more got through and some of it stayed. But when the portal closed, what had gotten through... a hand... an arm... her face... it was like... cut off...” Pel shuddered. Captain Yui found herself shuddering too, empathizing with Pel’s fear. “And it wasn’t ferengi...”

Pel drew a deep, shuddering breath. Even the telling of this story was clearly disturbing him. “Tiny eyeballs. Eyeballs that floated... that attacked... burrowed into peoples’ skin. Turned them... Got into computers. Entire cities were cordoned off, then destroyed with photonic weapons. Self-destruct instructions sent to the ships. The D, Red South 179 Project Ship was remotely ordered to attack the planet it was orbiting - D, Red South 179-6. And the transmissions finally stopped. But then there were the monsters. The ferengi whose genetic code had been altered by the aliens - it was like they had become horrible genetic experiments. Which led to research on how to stabilize their genetics, which, allegedly, led to the 2nd Eugenics War.” Pel shuddered again. “We have had tracking satellites and special tactics groups stationed to cordon the system off. I’m not even sure how that trill mining ship even got to that star system.”

Pel stopped speaking, took another deep breath, calming himself. “The F.C.A. wants to make sure this never happens again. Ferenginar is vulnerable. The F.C.A. wants the threat identified. And eliminated. Star Fleet is good at that sort of thing.”

Both Captains Yui and Howard tried, with varying degrees of failure, to conceal their displeasure at Pel’s parting shot. Captain Yui Song stood up, provoking Pel and Skip Howard to stand as well.

“Thank you, Director,” Yui said. “Ensign Peterman will show you to your guest quarters. Captain Howard, you wanted to meet with me about another matter?” The captain of the U.S.S. Mako had a slightly sour expression.

The captain of the U.S.S. Beagle waited until their ferengi guest exited Captain Yui’s ready room.

SBA Episode 1, Scene 9: Song Tea

Chapter Summary

Yui Song serves tea to Skip Howard



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 9: [Song Tea](#)

1.9

[Song Tea](#)

“Song...” Skip Howard started, only to be interrupted.

“I am disinclined to discuss my decision to remove General Krank from your care.” Yui Song had a cold expression and a dismissive sound.

“Captain, you are intervening in a medical and psychological situation that you may not fully understand - and at the risk...” Howard raised his voice over Yui’s attempt to interrupt him again: “And at the risk not only to the General’s recovery, but of provoking a diplomatic incident by contravening Chancellor Martok’s specific instructions with regard to his care.”

“Captain Howard, I will not allow that betazoid doctor of yours to continue to torture this man!”

“Are you certain you sufficiently understand klingon physiology and psychology to make such a determination?” Skip Howard took a breath, deliberately calming himself. “Krank is not human, Song. You cannot apply human medical and psychological standards to him. At least, please fully read Doctor Uto’s analysis before you endanger our patient further.”

Yui Song bit off a retort and deliberately calmed herself. She turned away from Captain Howard. The man had gotten under her skin - he was far less than half her age and while he was far from the only human male in Star Fleet to wear feminine cosmetics, he was the only human male command officer she had ever seen do so - or senior officer, for that matter. He made no pretense or excuse for having gotten his command almost exclusively by way of nepotism. Yui could not allow any of these annoyances to influence her decision. She walked to the replicator as much to give herself time to calm down and think as for refreshment: “Green tea, personal blend, slightly sweet, warm... Service for two.”

The platter that materialized appeared to be made of delicate, intricate china - two empty teacups and a small teapot. “Have a seat, please, Skip,” she said, then carried the tea service to a side table between two chairs in a far corner of her office. She sat and slowly, deliberately - almost ceremoniously - poured out two cups of tea. She did not look up at Captain Howard until she placed a cup on the tea service in front of him.

“Please accept my apology, Captain Howard. While I am the senior captain here, I am not certain I have the authority to overrule you when it comes to General Krank’s care. And I do not doubt your motives or your belief in Doctor Uto’s methods. I will review his recommendations more carefully. Until then, may I offer a compromise? I still believe that spending time with Captain Carter, whom Krank both admires and likes, is strongly therapeutic for him. You saw how he reacted to her - one war hero to another. I will allow you to transfer Dr. Uto to the U.S.S. Escort to monitor General Krank’s condition and intervene, if medically necessary.”

Captain Howard closed his eyes and buried his nose into his steepled fingers - which action brought Captain Yui’s attention to his matching lavender eye-shadow and fingernail polish. Skip Howard took a couple of deep breaths, then reached for his teacup. The tiny cup did not have a handle. The delicate floral design on the cup had colors that complemented his nail polish. He held the teacup in his fingertips, raised it, then looked into Captain Yui’s eyes. She lifted her cup as well.

“Thank you, Song. Your apology is unnecessary, but very much appreciated. I agree with your comments about Captain Carter - being around her is good for him. I will counsel Dr. Uto to develop a somewhat less aggressive treatment regimen and dispatch him to the Escort to monitor Krank’s condition.” Howard raised his teacup and he and Yui drank simultaneously. He made an appreciative noise.

“On one condition...” Howard continued, unexpectedly.

Yui Song looked up, deliberately and easily disciplining her apprehension from her expression.

“You absolutely must transfer a copy of your tea service program to the Beagle.” Skip Howard smiled and set his empty teacup next to the teapot.

Yui Song smiled and poured him and herself another cup. “Ancient family recipe - a bit of a secret, I’m afraid. But in the interest of friendship, I will provide you a copy of the program, conditional on your promise to not share the recipe with anyone else.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 10: Kranked

Chapter Summary

General Krank hits the deck.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 10: Kranked

1.10

Kranked

Captain Rhonda Carter sat bolt upright in her bed. She leapt into her uniform, grabbed her boots and was in the hallway leading toward the bridge. General Krank was right behind her - fully armed and armored. Only a slight body movement gave away that he, too, had dressed hastily - and there were a lot of buckles to fasten - all fastened. Her head was pounding - actually - no - the red alert klaxon was pounding her head.

She bounded onto the bridge to find all of her bridge officers lying crumpled about the bridge - all but one - her vulcan first officer, Lt. Commander Straiv, who stood up from the pilot's console as she entered. "Report..." Captain Carter simply didn't have time to react as Straiv discharged a phaser at her. The ancient klingon behind her reacted much faster, knocking her aside so that the beam only grazed her shoulder.

But it had been set to kill. Deadly radiation began flooding her system even from the slight wound and she lost consciousness immediately. Krank slapped her communicator and croaked, "Medical Emergency!! Beam the captain into stasis!" The phaser beam struck him squarely in the back and he went down just as the captain was dissolving into a transporter beam.

General Krank lay perfectly still. Tactically, that was the correct thing for any human to do. He could hear the vulcan entering commands in the pilot's console, evidently unaware of the additional protection provided by updated klingon armor. The radiation was poisoning him, too, but it would take some few moments to work its way through his armor.

This was disgraceful. Krank lay still where he was. He should have leapt to his feet and braved certain death to exchange his life for that of the traitor who had shot and very probably killed his own captain. The radiation would probably kill him anyway. In a few minutes, it would almost certainly incapacitate him.

What was there to be so terrified of? Death? His time had come and gone - he should be overjoyed at the prospect of an honorable death. In his mind he could feel his mother slowly removing his primary sex organ - one tiny slice at a time - just to prolong not only the pain but the humiliation. It was that damned changeling. But it kept morphing - taking the form of his son. His wife. His mother. His first commanding officer - all just to humiliate him.

In a sudden, single movement that his body should not have been capable of, General Krank drew a mveq (small throwing knife) from his boot, whirled to his feet and hurled the knife into Dr. Tentis Uto's skull - right into the betazoid doctor's temple. The doctor didn't have a chance to pick up the phaser again - had only begun to notice - hadn't managed to turn his head.

"QI'yaH Uto!" Krank croaked, then crashed to the deck, unconscious.

Lt. Commander Straiv lay crumpled across the pilot's console, a small throwing knife buried to the hilt in his temple.

It was only seconds later that Dr. Uto came onto the bridge to view the carnage. Aside from the dead vulcan at the pilot's console, the bridge crew had only been stunned and remained unconscious. General Krank was holding on by only a thread. Uto ordered medical staff to beam Krank into stasis. If either Krank or Captain Carter were to have a chance, Uto knew he needed to get them back to his medical bay aboard the U.S.S. Beagle. The U.S.S. Escort had nowhere near the medical equipment needed to save their lives.

SBA Episode 1, Scene 11: Kicking Sand

Chapter Summary

Captain Yui Song kicks up some sand



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 11: [Kicking Sand](#)

1.11

[Kicking Sand](#)

Captain Yui Song sat bolt upright in her bed. She had no clue how Skip Howard had gotten into her quarters: “Song! Get to the bridge! Get dressed! Move!”

The holographic image of Skip Howard vanished. To be immediately replaced by the whooping howl of the red alert klaxon. But Yui Song was already dressed and moving. She had no idea how a hologram had gotten projected into her quarters where there was no holomatrix to support one, but she had been a starship captain more than long enough to know when to act no matter how weird things might appear.

The captain’s quarters were located directly beneath her ready room and in the most recent re-design of Intrepid class ships, a dedicated, high speed lift had been installed, which carried Captain Yui to her ready room before she had her left boot pulled on. She strode onto the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako less than a minute after the klaxon started sounding. 48 seconds faster than expected response time: “Report!” She took her seat at the center of the bridge.

Lt. Commander Gabisile Natal, a lean South African woman who had the 4th shift command duty, responded from the tactical station behind the captain’s chair to starboard. “Escort has gone rogue - warp 6 toward the star system against your orders. Beagle is hailing.”

“On screen,” Yui ordered.

Captain Howard was evidently not on the Beagle’s bridge. He appeared to be in one of the three engine rooms. “Mako, I’m getting Escort back, but I need you to look away.”

“What are you talking about, Beagle?”

“A miracle, Song, but I need you to kick sand in the ferengi’s eyes. Do everything you can to keep them from seeing what I’m about to do. You have two minutes.”

Captain Yui bristled at the use of her given name in an official communication, but she didn’t have time to worry about that. “Two minutes to do what?”

“Sing a song, do a dance, flood their systems with radiation - anything to keep the ferengi sensors from getting a clear read on me. And tell your people to avert their eyes - top secret. One minute forty-five now.” The transmission from the U.S.S. Beagle’s engine room cut out.

Captain Yui took a quick breath. “Gabby, how far to the nearest ferengi ship?”

“300,000 kloms.”

“Helm, hard about, bring us to face the ferengi,” Yui ordered. “Gabby, Four photon torpedoes 45 degrees nadir port, zenith port, nadir starboard, zenith starboard - we’re not shooting at them. Detonate when they hit 50,000 clicks.”

To her credit, Lt. Cmdr. Natal had the first two torpedoes away before her captain had finished the order.

Captain Yui looked over her left shoulder at the communication station. “Ensign Broras, broadcast with every sensor we have between us and the ferengi - every channel. Tie in the deflector array and feed them static.”

The bolean ensign responded as quickly: “All sensors projecting, communications pushing static through the deflector array. We are 100%

blind and all deflector screens are down except emergency navigation screens.”

“Acknowledged, Ensign,” Yui responded. “Helm, all stop.”

“Helm responding to all stop, Captain,” reported Chief Flight Specialist Ho River, a middle-aged Vietnamese man seated at the pilot station directly in front of the captain.

Captain Yui looked over her left shoulder again. “Ensign, can we talk to the ferengi?”

“Affirmative. We’re screaming our head off - we can definitely modulate that signal.”

“Initiate,” Yui Song turned toward the viewscreen (currently displaying only static.) “Ferengi vessels, do not approach. Repeat do not approach. We have lost control of one of our ships and cannot guarantee that the same will not happen to you if you get within range. Repeat - this region of space is dangerous. Recommend you pull back from our position at least double your current distance. Ensign, set that message on repeat.” Yui looked over her right shoulder. “Lieutenant Commander - how long do you think that will hold them off?”

Lt. Cmdr. Natal responded immediately. “Two minutes, maybe, under most circumstances.”

Captain Yui dropped her fist to the arm of her chair, activating shipwide internal communications. “All hands, do not look out the back windows. Disobey my order under potential of court marshal. I need as many eyes looking out the front windows as possible. Contact the bridge as soon as you can see the ferengi approaching. Director Pel to the bridge.”

Moments later, a distorted hologram of Captain Skip Howard appeared on the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako. “Song, open your eyes and get your shields up. Escort secured. Ferengi coming in hot! Retreat to rally point #1, warp 8, configuration Lambda, then Xi!”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 12: Daimon Ubok

Chapter Summary

Daimon Ubok grunts.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 12: [Daimon Ubok](#)

1.12

[Daimon Ubok](#)

“All ships halt! Hold your fire! We’re following them. Keep your weapons hot!”

Daimon Ubok was the head of one of the wealthiest families on Ferenginar, which made him cautious, conservative, and the top choice for this assignment. Grand Nagus Rom did not want a hothead making decisions about what was apparently the greatest hazard in Ferengi space in the past several centuries. And he had made it clear this mission was under the joint discretion of Director Pel and Daimon Ubok. Quark’s brother could be quite terrifying when he wanted to be.

Ubok watched the viewscreen intently, noticing that the Star Fleet vessels organized themselves into flowing field tactics to keep the larger, Intrepid class U.S.S. Mako closest to the ferengi shipping - then the refurbished and rechristened antique vulcan cruiser, the U.S.S. Beagle - both ships conspiring to place the U.S.S. Escort farthest from the ferengi cohort.

“Daimon,” said one of the bridge officers aboard the F.M.V. Avretta, “Director Pel is hailing from the Mako.”

Ubok made a grunt which his communication officer correctly interpreted and within a moment the screen displayed Project Director Pel seated next to Captain Yui Song on the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako.

“Daimon, we have telemetry from the bridge of the U.S.S. Escort,” said Pel. “You will want to rebroadcast to all ships.”

Ubok found that he was pleased to see a ferengi in an official role for his government sitting confidently on the bridge of a Federation starship. Even though the seat was way too big for the unusually small project director, he owned it. It wasn’t lost on Ubok that it was the ferengi who spoke first, not the ancient Star Fleet captain.

Ubok came up with another grunt that everyone, including Pel, correctly interpreted and the image of the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako was replaced with a recording of the bridge of the U.S.S. Escort, with the ship’s vulcan first officer in the captain’s chair. A sphincter opened in mid-air in front of the camera and a large, reddish ball emerged, obscuring the face of the vulcan as he stood up. The ball moved toward the pilot, seated in front of the now standing vulcan, allowing a sense of scale - it was about the size of a baseball. The pilot got out of her seat quickly and stepped back. She had retrieved a hand phaser from under her console, but did not raise it.

The ball rotated, revealing itself be a baseball-sized eyeball - white, shot with a lattice of red blood vessels - the iris a mixture of hazel and grey. It surveyed the room as the bridge crew started locking their stations and arming themselves. Only the vulcan commanding officer was unarmed. “Remain calm and keep your weapons lowered....” At that moment, the eyeball slammed headlong into the vulcan’s forehead... And disappeared. Lt. Commander Straiv resumed his seat in the captain’s chair as if nothing had happened. He looked around at his stunned bridge crew. “Secure your weapons and resume your stations.”

While most of the bridge crew, reluctantly, obeyed, the bridge tactical officer did not, choosing instead to aim his phaser at his commanding officer.

Without turning, the vulcan said, “That is an order, Lt. Anderson.”

“All due respect, sir,” the tactical officer started, then a brilliant flash of the bridge’s weaponry blanked out the video feed for just a second, tripping the red alert klaxon, and when the picture came back, only the first officer was still upright. He rose, walked forward to the pilot

station, shoved the inert pilot out of her seat, entered a few commands into the pilot console, picked up the phaser dropped by the pilot, adjusted the settings and without turning to look, fired it into the hallway behind the bridge just as the door opened, hitting the ship's captain. He turned and fired again when he heard the ancient klingon who had pulled the captain back into the hallway calling for her to be transported out.

The vulcan returned his attention to the pilot console as the ship's captain dissolved into a transporter beam. The klingon collapsed and was motionless for a few heartbeats, then suddenly, in a single motion, turned, came up to one knee and hurled a small knife that embedded itself into the vulcan's temple just as he was turning back toward the hallway.

The scene of the chaotic bridge was replaced with the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako. "Did any of that look familiar to you, Daimon?" asked Pel. "I think you can understand why Star Fleet ordered a retreat of 50 light years. Currently, all systems on the U.S.S. Escort are under review to find out just how much they had been compromised. And Star Fleet is reviewing the other two ships in their task force for evidence of compromise. I strongly recommend you do the same with our ships and report back any findings," Pel concluded.

Ubok emitted a rather sour grunt that the his communications officer correctly interpreted, and the transmission was cut.

"He's ordering a review of all ship systems now," Pel said to Captain Yui Song. "You should see them backing off and changing from a surround configuration to a ready-chase configuration."

Is Pel a terrible liar?



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 13: Terrible Liar

1.13

Terrible Liar

“You are terrible at keeping secrets, Pel. The hoo mons were not to know about the history of this thing. You have no idea how much you may have damaged our security... And worse, reduced our profit potential over the next few quarters - possibly several cycles..”

Damon Ubok had boarded the U.S.S. Mako to conference with Captains Yui Song and Skip Howard about the events aboard the U.S.S. Escort. The Star Fleet captains had left the conference room ostensibly to tend to the needs of the Escort and her crew, but also to allow the ferengi to discuss their own issues. Ubok had placed a distortion field generator on the table. Federation science could probably descramble the sounds and review their private conversation, but he wasn't going to make it easy for them.

Pel bristled. “Do you care more about the future of our people or our traditions?”

“Do not speak to me in...” Ubok started.

“You are not a fool Daimon! And do not think to give orders to a Liquidator!” Pel responded with more than a little heat, his tiny frame shaking with sudden anger. Pel calmed himself deliberately. “The Grand Nagus gave you command of the task force, but this is my project. I have full authority to tell the humans what they need to know to successfully deal with this threat.”

“Be careful about taking on airs, Project Director,” Ubok grumbled. “Grand Nagus Rom gave you an assignment, not a lineage.”

“Enough!” Pel slapped his diminutive hands on the conference table. “You saw what awaits us if the humans fail. And they will fail if they don't know what they're walking into.”

“I never liked the idea of inviting them in to try to solve this problem in the first place. Why does the Nagus trust them?” Ubok asked.

“The Nagus spent a lot of time living among them,” Pel replied. “They like solving problems just out of curiosity. At least some of them do and their leader is one of those.”

“I do not see that in her,” Ubok observed. “She is a Federation operative through and through, always looking to turn every mission to the advantage of the hoo mans.”

“Do not be deceived, Daimon.” Pel leaned in conspiratorially. “Captain Yui is the senior captain, but for some reason Captain Howard is in charge of this mission. I think because of his training as a biologist. Be careful around that one. It is very difficult to keep secrets from him.”

Ubok digested this analysis, then grunted his disapproval. He paused for a moment, took a deep breath, then looked Pel in the eye. “You be careful around these hoo mans, Project Director. It is very easy to be contaminated by their culture. Many ferengi have lost fortunes after having too much contact with these Federations.”

1.13

SBA Episode 1, Scene 14: Prognosis

Chapter Summary

Dr. Uto provides the prognosis for Captain Carter and General Krank.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 14: [Prognosis](#)

1.14

Prognosis

“I am afraid I may have set Krank’s recovery back significantly - at least his psychological recovery. But I really had no choice - I did what I had to do to stop Lieutenant Commander Straiv.”

Dr. Tents Uto was meeting with Captains Yui and Howard in the medical conference room aboard the U.S.S. Beagle. Behind a transparent wall, the two captains could see the stasis units that held Captain Carter and General Krank.

“How are they, physically?” asked Captain Yui Song.

Dr. Uto took a deep breath, then a sip of sog, a thick, extremely bitter, purple drink that only betazoids seemed able to drink without gagging. The smell of the drink was enough to put both the human captains off their lunch and they kept their distance. “Captain Carter will probably recover in a few days. Before I wake her, I will have to replace a lot of the destroyed tissue in her right shoulder and rebuild her ball and socket. I had to remove most of her right shoulder to stop the radiation from poisoning the rest of her system. We’re growing the replacement tissue now. Full recovery will take months of exercise.”

“And Krank?” Captain Skip Howard was worrying his long red hair.

“His armor absorbed a lot of the radiation, but the hit was close to his minor heart. It is still functioning, but I have routed his blood through a purifier to remove the radiation before it goes back into his body. I will replace the minor heart with a prosthetic. Heart replacement with prosthetics is common enough for betazoids and, well, most Federation species. But it will be the first time for a klingon, which means there are lots of hazards that we can only imagine. I have no idea how long his recovery will be. Hours if it goes well. Could be months. Might be never...”

Yui Song finally got to the question that was burning on her mind: “But you’re more concerned about the psychological damage?”

Uto toyed with his greying goatee and looked upset. “One of the worst things the changelings did to him was to block his ability to kill - you can imagine what kind of torment that is for a klingon. If he had had the strength to kill Straiv without my help, it would have been a breakthrough. As it was, I had to force him to relive some of the worst of the torment the changelings put him through and convince him that Straiv was me to goad him to action. He killed an enemy who had fired on him - that counts for something. But he knows he couldn’t have done it without my help and that is going to set him back. Worse because of the memories I had to force on him to make it happen. He wasn’t ready to relive those moments. Not yet.”

Skip Howard waved his hand impatiently. “Cut to the chase, Ten. What are we up against? You got a taste of the thing that took over Lieutenant Commander Straiv. What is it?”

Uto shuddered. “Utterly alien.” He stopped for a long pull of sog, which caused both Howard and Yui to shudder. “I tried to make contact with it and it immediately tried to take control of my mind. I had to lock it out and focus on Krank. It was a very near thing. Our autopsy of Lieutenant Commander Straiv confirmed that what we saw was a physical presence that entered his cranium and physically changed his brain structure. It had not completed taking him over, but it evidently had gotten control of his motor functions very quickly. Here’s the weird thing...” Uto paused for another drink of sog. “The remnants of the creature that entered Straiv’s brain conform largely with the readings we have of the unidentified lifeform aboard the Tyr’phoyx 8. But it also has trill DNA.”

Captains Yui and Howard exchanged surprised glances.

“Trill DNA? Are you certain?” Yui Song asked.

“To a surprising degree, actually,” Dr. Uto responded. “The majority of the creature consisted of neural matter. But it looked like an eyeball

because the neural matter was encased inside an eyeball. A trill eyeball. A trill eyeball about the size of a baseball, which is about three and a half times the size of the average trill eyeball. But one endowed with sight. I cross referenced with the biometric readings the internal sensors took of that thing before it merged with Lieutenant Commander Straiv. It was quite literally a brain inside an eyeball.”

“Okay,” said Skip Howard, rubbing his eye with a finger (but careful not to smudge his green eyeshadow). “So how does an actual physical brain inside an actual physical eyeball slam at a few dozen KPH into a vulcan’s forehead and just go inside and start rewiring his brain without leaving a mark?”

“Now you’re asking something,” said Uto.

A biologic hitched a ride.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 15: [Signals](#)

1.15 [Signals](#)

“In our opinion, the creature that appeared on Escort’s bridge hitched a ride from our subspace telemetry signal from the probe we sent ahead to obtain sensor readings.”

Sakura Nakamura Holland was wrapped in a white kimono decorated with cherry blossoms. The analysis meeting was being held in the U.S.S. Beagle’s largest conference room, located just fore of the Engineering section, which could be viewed through the transparent rear wall of the conference room.

Engineering was a large, open space from which all three warp cores could be viewed, each projecting down toward a central engineering deck that was, itself, an equilateral triangle in shape and allowed engineers and other scientists to step seamlessly from one center of gravity to the next, changing their center of gravity by a 60 degree angle. This created the dizzying effect of engineers working and interacting with their crewmates who were relatively nearly upside down to them. Worse yet, sections of catwalk surrounding each of the three warp engines had gravity plating on both sides, allowing engineers to literally be upside down in relation to each other.

This mind bending layout created a visual effect that looked like something from one of M.C. Escher’s more lurid nightmares. It was very difficult for the visitors to the Beagle, which now included Pel as well as a few officers from both the U.S.S. Mako and the U.S.S. Escort, to tear their eyes away from it.

There was only one thing in sight that was even stranger than the mind-bending engineering section. The engineer: “We confirmed self-destruct of our probe.” Commander Dutch Holland had a thick, Mexican accent. What little of his skin could be seen under his luchador mask was dark brown. The mask matched his golden uniform with subtle flames described in slightly darker gold around his eyes and the Star Fleet engineering emblem repeated on his forehead and the left breast. “Those trills did not want whatever it is on that planet to get its hands... or whatever it uses for hands... on a warp core, so the moment we realized they were making use of the probe’s carrier wave, we sent the self-destruct order. But before it blew up, the probe picked up some very interesting telemetry.”

The U.S.S. Mako was represented by its science officer, Lt. Cmdr. Gregg Clark, as well as Captain Yui Song. The only officer present from the U.S.S. Escort was its second officer, Lt. Cmdr. Vranran zh’Kathar, an andorian woman who seemed the perfect counterpart for her currently incapacitated captain.

The majority of the U.S.S. Beagle’s crew were civilians associated with various scientific institutions. The department directors were at the table, starting with Sakura Nakamura Holland, the project dean for (and heir apparent to) Nakamura Enterprises. Dr. Tentis Uto, a director for the Betazed Royal School of Medicine sat next to her. Seated in various locations around the table were the director of Astrophysics & Stellar Cartography, Proctor T’Eln of the Vulcan Science Academy, Federation Envoy Serafina Novikova from the UFP Diplomatic Corps - a Czech woman who headed up the Social Sciences Department, and the Major Janet Carter, whose unit of United States Marines provided security and a small ground force if needed.

But the departments most affected for this part of the mission were Planetary System Science, provided by the Denobulan Planetary Society, and Life Sciences, provided by the Tellarite Biological Survey. Several members of both departments were present. The tellarites were clothed in brown denim bib overalls over heavy, dark, flannel shirts - a fashion they hotly claimed to have invented.

“There were 18 trills on that mining ship, along with an unidentified lifeform - we’ll get back to the alien later.” Drisk javWalirsh had so much hair on his face that he looked more like a werewolf than a tellarite, as did his daughter and assistant director of Life Sciences, Chauv bavTlitch. Both wore their heavy flannel shirts unbuttoned beneath their bib overalls with their sleeves rolled up, revealing bushels of chest and arm hair. Both had very pronounced snouts and unusually large tusks. Drisk’s voice included a fair amount of snarling sounds - which was a feature of the tellarite accent.

“Until that eyeball started to rewire that hapless vulcan, those trills were barely moving. They were starving - their bodies were beginning to

shut down. Moments after that eyeball entered the vulcan noggin, the trills got up, figured out how to use the replicators and started feeding themselves. They were starting to access other ship's systems when the probe blew itself up. The flower over there..." javWalirsh gestured toward Nakamura Holland, "can explain what they were doing. But we learned something about the alien as well."

"It's fungal," said Norkaond Vef, a very different looking tellarite. She was nearly hairless except for a fluffy white tuft on the top of her head. Her skin was bright pink and her tusk almost non-existent. Vef was the Fungi Team Leader for javWalirsh's department. Her voice was significantly higher and she was oddly cute for a tellarite. "Both the telemetry on the alien onboard the Try'phox 8 and the alien neural matter we dug out of pointy-ears' skull - fungus. Just like what half of you have growing under your toenails just now."

Captain Howard laughed lightly and said, "Clean your hooves before you say that, Norkie." This remark provoked some snuffling sounds from the tellarites, which might have been annoyance, disgust, or amusement (or some combination thereof.) He made a dismissive motion with his left hand, flashing black polished nails at them, which provoked more snuffling - but this was not so much reaction as communication among the tellarites and in particular, the young Norkaond Vef signaling submission to Director javWalirsh.

It suddenly struck Yui Song that Skip Howard was using the color of his nail polish and eye shadow as a subtle means of communication and influence.

Howard turned toward a pair of denobulan women. "Tetri, Risl, tell us about D. Red South 179, 6."

Tetri Phynyx gestured toward a young black man sitting on the other side of her sister. "Phillip has headed up the research on the 6th planet. But let's get an overview of the system first..."

SBA Episode 1, Scene 16: Brains!!!

Chapter Summary

Brains!!!



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 16: Brains!!!

1.16

Brains!!!

A large holomatrix was built into the middle of the conference table. Control panels for this device were distributed around the table in recessed panels with transparent covers. This cover was flipped open in front of the Assistant Director of Planetary Science Systems from the Denobulan Planetary Society, Risl Phynyx. She brought up holographic images of the D. Red South 179 star system as her older sister and director was explaining.

“D. Red South 179 is a red dwarf and its planets are all in close orbit.” Terti Phynyx had a high, gravelly voice. “There are no gas giants. All 18 planets are small, rocky and with the exception of the 6 inner planets, covered with large amounts of ice. Icy asteroids have delivered water to the inner planets, most of which boiled off with the exception of the 6th planet. We have divided planetary studies across our department with our Planetary Systems Team Leader, Phillip Gorman, taking the lead on the 6th planet. Phillip?”

Gorman was a very dark-skinned human with a pronounced West African accent. “The home planet for our alien eyeball is tidally locked, with a pronounced wobble in its orbit. Like most planets, it is not exactly spherical. In fact, it’s far less spherical than average, which may account for the orbital wobble. This causes the weather pattern in the thin habitable strip that borders the day side from the night side.”

Sakura Nakamura Holland interrupted. “What did you learn about the electrical grid on the day edge of this twilight zone?”

Risl Phynyx responded by zooming in on a section of the planet where the day side and the night side met. A ring of clouds seemed to provide a perpetual storm with rain and lightning.

Phillip Gorman gestured toward the hologram in the center of the table. “Considering how regular and steady the generation of electricity is across the entire dayside edge of the twilight zone, it was very tempting to assume this was evidence of an artificial electrical network. However, this perpetual storm front would dissipate without its biological component.”

The holographic representation continued to zoom in to the ground at the base of the storm. The lightning was striking something that looked like a very large jellyfish that seemed to extend seamlessly along the edge of the twilight zone.

“This plant has adapted to attract lightning and continually recycles water back and forth into the storm front, which has stabilized the climate across the twilight zone, apparently for centuries,” Gorman said.

“And that’s where your little brain fungi live,” Norkaond Vef piped up. “They swim all around the planet inside that jellyfish toenail. The water inside is highly saline and filled with electricity, so it is possible, from their behavior likely, that they’re functioning as a collective intelligence even though they are distinct organisms.” Vef seemed much more restrained than she had been earlier. She was still quite excited. The pink tellarite flipped up the transparent cover over the holographic control pad embedded in the table in front of her. “You’ve got to see this...”

Risl Phynyx slowly closed the cover over her own control pad and placed her hands on top of it as Vef took control of the holomatrix. The image zoomed in further - right into the innards of the lightning rod jellyfish to look at the lightning bolts striking the outside of the jellyfish diffusing into tiny tongues of electricity. Little knots of fungi were swimming through the creature they lived inside. Energized and connected by tiny forks of lightning.

The image continued to zoom in, providing a chemical, molecular analysis of the electric jellyfish and its fungal denizens.

The U.S.S. Mako's science officer, Lt. Cmdr. Gregg Clark, spoke up for the first time. "Just how close did that probe get to that planet?" His captain put her hand on his arm.

"And that would be classified," responded Sakura Nakamura Holland.

"Quite a bit further off than your probes would have to be," added Captain Skip Howard.

"Do these fungi constitute an intelligence?" asked Pel.

"Clearly," Howard responded. "That doesn't mean they're conscious - or at least that they were before the trill showed up. They're biological, so they will take advantage of any opportunity to occupy a new niche. So what just recently arrived near their environment that provides an environment of saline fluid excited by small electrical charges?"

All three tellarites responded at once, accentuated with the snarling, growling sound typical of their accent, creating a rather creepy sound reminiscent of 20th Century zombie movies:

"Brains!!!"

SBA Episode 1, Scene 17: Paint

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Paint can make a difference...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 17: [Paint](#)

1.17

Paint

Only five people were left in the large conference room and they had not moved from where they had been for the general meeting with all the scientists. Project Director Pel was completely dwarfed by the conference table even though his chair had been adjusted to full height, leaving the minuscule ferengi's legs dangling some distance from the floor.

Captain Yui Song of the U.S.S. Mako and Lt. Cmdr. Vranran zh'Kathar, the second officer and acting captain of the U.S.S. Escort sat next to each other. Captain Skip Howard and the U.S.S. Beagle's corporate officer, Sakura Nakamura Holland, were nearly on opposite sides of the table from each other.

"Daimon Ubok is getting restless, and I'm starting to get unfriendly questions from my superiors in the F.C.A.," Pel said. "They see a lot of sitting and talking and not a lot of doing something about those trills. Can't you use a long range weapon to destroy that ship?"

"That is one of many options," Sakura Nakamura Holland replied. "But we need to evaluate what the repercussions might be of such an attempt. We don't want to give this life form more weapons than it already has..."

"We're nowhere near there, yet," Captain Howard interrupted from across the table. "This is still a rescue mission."

"Do you seriously think you can rescue those trills after what happened on my ship?" Lt. Cmdr. zh'Kathar asked. Her voice was sharp and aggressive. Her antennae were standing straight up and almost vibrating. "We need to kill that thing before it breaks loose..."

Captain Yui Song interrupted. "Nobody is killing anything until I give the order." The authority in her voice was enough to silence everyone in the room. She turned toward the Beagle's captain. "Skip, this thing rode in on a subspace carrier wave. That constitutes superluminal travel. And you seem to think it is intelligent. Doesn't this seem to you like a first contact situation?"

Howard shook his head, brushed back his long, reddish hair. "This is a superluminal parasite. It is not intelligent on its own. I think we can reliably infer that from those starving trills. The creature did not know what to do with them until it took over another mind. It was able to make better use of Lieutenant Commander Straiv because it was sated. It gobbled up those trill minds in a hurry, and in the process failed to learn what it needed to learn to be able to effectively use their bodies."

"I will want more opinions on that question," Captain Yui responded. "Poll your scientists and let me know. If you still believe this is a rescue mission, I will want to see a plan. Consider how to respond if the consensus is that this is a first contact. And I want a plan around threat elimination. I want options to choose among and arguments in favor of each course of action. I will make the final determination. Dismissed."

"Captain Howard," said Pel as everyone, with the exception of Sakura Nakamura Holland, was rising to leave, "That andorian has a point. What makes you think there's anything more left of those trills to rescue than quivering piles of trill meat?"

Howard strolled over to join the diminutive ferengi. He was a small, slender man, but Pel was much smaller. He smiled, put his hand on Pel's shoulder and said very softly, "Because they're trills. Now, if you will excuse me, Project Director, I believe Sakura wants a word with me."

Nakamura Holland had maintained a slight smile and was outwardly calm, but it was clear to anyone paying attention that the lovely Japanese woman was not happy. She was the only person who had remained seated.

“You put your foot down pretty hard, Skip. You don’t want to forget who this ship belongs to.”

“Who could possibly forget, Sakura?” Howard said lightly, with a smile. He patted her shoulder as he strolled by and said, very quietly, “The Beagle is Star Fleet’s dog. It’s painted right out there on the hull for everyone to see.” He made good his exit before Nakamura Holland had a chance to stand up. She stood and whirled in time to see the conference room door closing behind him.

1.17

Chapter End Notes

Author’s note:

I wrote the first few scenes, introducing Senek, Krank, Skip and Uto around the beginning of 2023. I developed the logo and wrote the prelude in March and posted the logo to my personal blog on March 31.

I started posting Star Beagle Adventures to Ad Astra beta on July 2, 2023. At that point, I only had the first 7 scenes and the prelude written.

As of tonight, 7/30/2023, I have written the final scene. This episode is much longer than I had anticipated - in no small part because the first 7 scenes are largely devoted to introducing the main characters. There are, at this point, 33 scenes in all for Episode 1.

Future episodes are, at this point, only dimly imagined. A few visual details - environments, critters. That’s really all it takes to serve as the seed for an episode. This story started with the critter.

Please, if you see typos, grammatical errors or plot-holes, let me know and I will go back and correct them. I’m a good writer, but editing my own work is tricky and I rely on my readers to keep me honest.

Thanks!! rbs

SBA Episode 1, Scene 18: Relapse

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

General Krank under suicide watch



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 18: [Relapse](#)

1.18

[Relapse](#)

"I have confined General Krank to medical under suicide watch." Dr. Tentis Uto did not appear any more concerned about the general's condition than he was about what he might order for lunch.

Uto was meeting with Captains Skip Howard, Yui Song, and a clearly exhausted and drawn-looking Rhonda Carter in his office in the U.S.S. Beagle's medical center. Captain Carter looked like she had aged several years and the gray in her hair was somewhat more pronounced. She sat forward in her chair and kept working and massaging her right shoulder.

"He was doing so well," Carter said.

"It is quite the setback," said the bald, betazoid doctor. "But I had anticipated something like this. While I have reversed much of the physical damage, the psychological damage will take much longer to address. Sooner or later he was going to be faced with the need to kill and find out that he had been psychologically blocked from killing - or even fighting to protect another person. I am impressed he was able to take action to save your life. That, alone, is quite the breakthrough and he should be made aware of it. By you."

Captain Carter nodded her head. "I owe him my life." She continued working her shoulder.

"Don't be too aggressive with that shoulder," Uto chided. "That's reconstructed tissue and it needs time to bond into your existing tissue. You can separate it if you're not careful and if you do it will never grow back as strong as you need it to."

"What treatment do you think Krank needs at this point?" Captain Yui asked.

"I still need to completely rebuild his fingers and his sex organs," said Uto. The nerve damage in those areas is quite severe. I'm frankly astounded he had sufficient sensation in his hands to throw his knife so accurately when he killed Lieutenant Commander Straiv. A testament to the quality of klingon martial arts training."

Dr. Uto paused for a drink of sog. Simply lifting the cup disturbed the foul-smelling betazoid drink sufficiently to cause the three captains in his office to wince. "I will need to be in his mind while my team is working on repairing those nerves. The torture to his fingers and particularly to his sex organs were the key moments in his reprogramming. I am going to have to relive those moments with him - help him turn defeat into victory."

Captain Yui grimaced at this, but she could see both Captains Howard and Carter nodding as if this additional psychological torment made perfect sense.

"nentay," said Carter.

"Exactly," said Uto. "A klingon who fails nentay, but survives, may take the ritual again and again - as many times as needed to turn defeat into victory. I think each of you should speak with him before we get started. Help him understand what he's about to experience in its proper light."

"I will do anything, anything at all to help him beat this," said Carter, some of her native aggression returning to her expression. "I owe him my life."

SBA Episode 1, Scene 19: Message In A Bottle

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Pel puts a message in a bottle.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1 : [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 19: [Message in a Bottle](#)

1.19

Message in a Bottle

While the captains were conferencing aboard the U.S.S. Beagle, Project Director Pel had returned to the U.S.S. Mako and was in the galley, enjoying a large platter of live tube grubs. The diminutive ferengi was playing with his food - chasing the wriggling grubs back onto his plate and into a foul smelling sauce that made sog seem appetizing by comparison. With the predictable result that he was afforded a wide perimeter - even the sight of him toying with his food was enough to cause the Mako's stalwart crew to avert their eyes in order to not be put further off their lunch.

As he seasoned his squirming food, his delicate fingers moved a series of tiny switches on the bottle - switches too tiny to be visible to the unaided eye for most species. Upending the bottle and shaking it hard over his food to get out a few drops of seasoning caused those controls to recess seamlessly into the bottle. The best place to get away with secret operations was in public.

Pel set the bottle carelessly aside and savored his food. Maybe savoring it a bit more in light of the evident, poorly disguised disgust of the mostly human crew who had relegated themselves to the edges of the room as his table was deliberately smack in the middle of the room.

It was only three minutes later, as the spice bottle sat carelessly perched near the edge of the table, that the device activated - right as the diminutive ferengi had his fingers full of tube grubs and the thick, putrid sauce - licking both off his fingers. Even if the Mako's alert crew were to notice the ship's sensors being used for just a micro-second to transmit a signal, the security feed would show the ferengi behaving as innocently as a ferengi possibly could.

The compressed file being sent was a thorough report, encoded, encrypted, and set up to use the ship's warp bubble to to create a subspace carrier wave to send the report to a relay station that would then send it to Pel's secret task master in the Grand Exchequer on Ferenginar.

1.19

SBA Episode 1, Scene 20: Unmasked

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Dutch, in being unmasked, is masked.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1 : [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 20: [Unmasked](#)

1.20

Unmasked

“You’re not sleeping. Your mind is clearly still in a conference room somewhere...”

The lights were off and so was the luchador mask.

Dutch Holland had married the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. And she had married him, never having seen his face. In the nearly 15 years they had lived together since she might have glimpsed his face without the mask - he didn’t sleep or bathe with it on. There was nothing wrong with his face - he was quite normal looking for a middle-aged Mexican - if a bit on the large and muscle-bound side. But both he and Sakura knew that wasn’t really his face. The real Dutch Holland wasn’t to be found under the luchador mask. It was the luchador mask.

Holland knew he had to be the luckiest of men. Finding a beautiful Japanese woman who was crazy about wrestling was rare. Finding one who desperately wanted to be regularly ravished by a champion luchador was rare beyond belief. Her family had nearly disinherited her for agreeing to marry one. Until they had discovered that this particular luchador was also a genius level engineer.

And what a family... Sakura was the heir apparent to the heir apparent of Nakamura Enterprises, currently run by her grandfather.

Dutch Holland turned carefully. Sakura wasn’t tiny, but she was a little slip of a thing compared to him. She turned as well, facing away from him.

“Your friend, Skip,” she finally said.

Holland was surprised. His wife and his closest friend usually got along famously.

“I don’t think he understands the situation here. I am responsible for the safety of this ship and he wants to take it on a rescue mission - straight off to that horrible place...”

Dutch Holland disciplined the smile away from his face. He didn’t want her to hear it in his voice: “You are not going to get a fair test of this ship and the faculty you worked so hard to put together without a real captain. I know your grandfather agreed to Skip because he thought you could keep him in a box... Skip’s a Howard. They don’t fit in your grandfather’s little boxes.” Holland could tell from his wife’s breathing that she was beginning to relax. He wrapped an enormous, muscle-bound arm around her. “My Flower, if Skip thinks he can safely take us there and rescue those trills, then we’ll go there. And we’ll rescue those trills.”

Sakura Nakamura Holland let out a long, slow breath and relaxed back into her husband’s embrace and entwined her arms around his. Her voice was softer, more optimistic: “Yeah... we’re all going to end up mindless zombies with mushrooms for brains...”

1.20

SBA Episode 1, Scene 21: Vengeance

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Krank and Carter discuss vengeance.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 21: [Vengeance](#)

1.21

Vengeance

General Krank and Captain Rhonda Carter were recuperating in the same room in the U.S.S. Beagle's medical center. Actually, to call it a room was a bit of a misnomer. It was more of a hallway with 20 beds lined up on one side and an open walkway along the other with doors leading to various medical offices. Each bed could quickly be moved through a doorway in the wall behind it into a number of surgical bays, which could be defined by a number of movable walls. Privacy was not a high priority in the Vulcan Science Academy's design. Efficiency was.

Carter had been sharing her memories of her late first officer with a silent Krank. "Straiv had served with me longer than anyone else on the Escort. He must have saved my life a dozen times. And I his. And in all that time, I never saw him cry, never saw him laugh, not even smile. Not once. But I got to know his moods pretty well..."

"I do not regret killing your friend!" Krank finally croaked, his back still turned to Carter.

"General, my friend was dead before you and I reached the bridge," Carter said quietly, passion and anger evident in her voice. "What you killed was the monster that had killed him. If there was anything left of Straiv in that vulcan skull, your mveq gave him mercy by ending it for him. Believe me, I knew him well enough to know that."

Krank finally, painfully rolled over to look Captain Carter in the eye for the first time since they had both been shot - wounds that neither of them should have recovered from. "You're happy that I killed him?"

Carter's face was a study in bitter anger. Her blue eyes blazed. Her voice was still quiet, but venomous. "No! I am not glad you killed that thing! I wanted to kill it myself! You owe me, General. You denied me my vengeance. It is a debt I fully expect you to repay." Carter had been lying on her left side and had been warned not to lay on her right until the new shoulder ball joint had time to bond to her existing tissue. She had lost nearly half of her hair - long hairs lay strewn on her pillow where they had fallen out. She rolled onto her back and fell silent. The bitter expression remained on her face - she was living with the grief of losing her friend. But she could tell her words had their desired impact from Krank's breathing.

The klingon general was no longer thinking about his own humiliation. Now he was thinking about hers. And about what honor required him to do about it. It would not be an easy debt to redress.

1.21

SBA Episode 1, Scene 22: Watching and Waiting

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

What Captains Yui Song and Skip Howard are doing.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 22: [Waiting and Watching](#)

1.22

Waiting and Watching

Captain Yui Song was not happy with Captain Skip Howard. Again.

They were in the U.S.S. Beagle's security center along with the Beagle's chief security officer, Major Janet Carter of the United States Marines. Major Carter was a first cousin to Captain Rhonda Carter, but looked nothing like the Escort's captain. Her features were strongly African American. Her short, curly, black hair was mostly hidden by her uniform hat. Her frame was large, muscular, and ramrod straight. Everything about her from her strong, set jaw, to her precise, powerful movements, to her crisp, precise accent, screamed career military.

Her second in command, Captain Osollaa sh'Zhiathis, a short but muscular andorian woman from Alaska and one of her NCO's, Sgt. Tommy Richards, another African American with a pronounced Texas drawl, were operating the security monitors. Which were displaying, among other things, a recording of Pel messily enjoying tube grubs in the U.S.S. Mako's galley.

"And just how long have you been monitoring the internal security feeds from my ship?" Captain Yui wasn't bothering to ask how. This was just more evidence of the advanced surveillance technology Nakamura Enterprises was famous for.

"You might as well get over it, Song," Skip Howard replied with a warm smile. "This isn't new technology. It's been standard equipment on every Vulcan Science Academy vessel since before first contact. The vulcans have always been listening in on us whenever they've been within a parsec. We're currently listening in on all the ferengi ships as well. Every internal feed that is within range."

"But the security codes..." Yui started.

"Vulcans. Vulcan sensors. Vulcan math. Vulcan decryption techniques. Vulcan ethics. Vulcan standard operating procedure." Skip Howard's irrepressible smile managed a hint of sadness. "Sorry to burst your bubble," he added as he watched the magnitude of this revelation causing Yui Song to rearrange her mental furniture. "The engine room too - standard layout for this class of ships for well over a century. Vulcans are extremely effective at keeping secrets."

Captain Yui felt her anger gradually fading into the background noise of irritated disillusionment that was standard issue for any Star Fleet command officer - something that seemed to be handed out along with the fourth solid pip for every officer on their promotion to captain. She felt comfortable enough in present company to express this emotion with a heavy sigh of resignation. She could almost feel her iron gray hair finally beginning to turn snowy white. "Okay Skip, so why did you bring me here and show me this..." She gestured to the viewscreen that displayed Pel and his disgusting lunch.

It was Major Janet Carter who responded. "What you are looking at is not some unfortunate junior liquidator for the F.C.A. What you are looking at is a highly trained intelligence agent." She gestured toward Sergeant Tommy Richards and the young marine N.C.O. quickly entered commands which backed up the image and then focused tightly on Pel's fingers, moving with odd precision against the bottom of a rather innocuous looking spice bottle.

"A very clever device," Carter continued. "Almost certainly ferengi technology. Precisely 4 tumvor (or a little over 3 minutes) after the Project Director set the bottle down, the device emitted a signal that hijacked the U.S.S. Mako's background warp shell to send a compressed, directed signal not toward Ferenginar, but directly to a ferengi listening post."

"Thank you, Major," said Captain Yui. She directed her attention to the Beagle's captain. "I take it you are disinclined to confront our guest with this evidence?"

“Pel is doing one of two things out here,” Skip Howard replied. “Either he’s part of the conspiracy that managed to infiltrate ferengi security to allow those trills safe passage to D, Red South 179, or…”

Yui Song finished Howard’s thought: “Or he’s trying to get to the bottom of it and expose the conspiracy.” She shook her head and smiled grimly. “So we watch and we wait.”

Skip Howard nodded. “We wait, and we watch.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 23: Chicken Liver

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Skip Howard is a chicken liver.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 23: [Chicken Liver](#)

1.23

Chicken Liver

Captain Yui Song's head was spinning with technical details. She had expected Captain Skip Howard to lay out each of the three options for this mission: Rescue, First Contact, Threat Abatement.

But it was Sakura Nakamura Holland, who had the odd title of being the Dean of the Ship, who had arranged for the three presentations.

The case for Threat Abatement was presented by Major Janet Carter and even though it had been thoroughly discussed, the essential elements were the destruction of the Tyr'Phoxyx 8, still in orbit of D, Red South 179-6, necessarily causing the death of the 18 trills aboard and almost certainly the unidentified fungal lifeform as well.

Ferengi attempts to use long range weapons had ended with the weapons self-destructing at the first sign of infiltration by the lifeform to take them over. All other options for threat abatement at long range involved illegal weaponry and almost certain ecocide - destruction of all life on the planet.

The case for First Contact had been presented by Arthur Rush, one of the sociologists for the United Federation of Planets Diplomatic Corps and an expert at First Contact. This was complicated by the lack of any conclusive evidence that the life form was intelligent. There was no evidence of language use and all the observed activities of the life form were more congruent with the activities of a parasite altering the behavior of a commandeered host in order to obtain greater resources than with intelligent behavior.

"It is remotely possible that the creature, or collective, is beginning to approach intelligence by hijacking the brains of its victims and also the ship's computer system," Rush said. "That would not constitute a first contact situation. If anything, allowing the life form to continue to use its hostages that way would constitute a violation of the Prime Directive. Not to mention a failure of empathy for the trills."

The case for rescue was presented by the sarcastic, pink-skinned, oddly cute tellerite, Norkaond Vef. The prospects for this course of action were not much better than the other two. Use of the transporter would be an invitation for the spores to take control of the ship's computer system - assuming that had not happened already by the time the ship got close enough to mount such an operation.

"We cannot risk that lifeform getting control of the Beagle..." Sakura Nakamura Holland was clearly worried.

"I quite agree," said Skip Howard. "And the Mako cannot go anywhere near that planet. The beholders have already shown they are capable of invading a normal computer according to ferengi telemetry. The Mako, like all Intrepid class ships, uses biological neural gel packs throughout the ship that would be extremely vulnerable to the beholders."

"Beholders?" Captain Rhonda Carter had recovered to some extent, but had lost most of her hair and was clearly not recovered entirely from her brush with death.

It was the Beagle's first officer and primary engineer, the masked Dutch Holland, who responded: "A monster that consists largely of a floating eyeball."

“We cannot risk any of the ships,” Howard continued. “We’re going to use the Puppy.”

“Puppy?” Carter asked wearily. She seemed to not have quite grasped the concept of a beholder.

“The Beagle has a large, versatile, task shuttle. The plan is to fill it with fungicide, coat all the relays with fungicide and for the rescue team, wearing EVA suits coated with fungicide to breach in four locations on the Tyr’phoyx 8 and physically rescue the survivors.”

“And that great big beholder squatting in the center of that ship?” asked Captain Yui Song.

“That beast is why I will be leading this mission,” Howard responded. “Evade, avoid, run away from - try to negotiate if possible - countering it with fungicide is the last option. I will breach with the team closest to the beholder. I will be the first in and the last out. I’m going to start with, ‘Hello’.”

Captain Carter was seated next to her cousin, Major Janet Carter. Rhonda Carter seemed to have revived somewhat. “Remind me to never tease you about cowardice again...”

“No, Rhonda. I’m the biggest, yellowist chicken-liver there is,” Skip Howard replied. “I’ll be relying on that instinct to keep everyone else alive. The last thing we need anywhere near that beast is a hero.”

“If that’s the case, are you so certain you want Janet and her team on this mission?” Carter asked, somewhat disparagingly.

Major Carter put a hand on her cousin’s shoulder, helping to steady her. “We’re not heroes, Rhonda.” She turned to look at Skip Howard. “We’re United States Marines.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 24: 1st Pup

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Pup #1 is launched.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 24: [1st Pup](#)

1.24 [1st Pup](#)

The large runabout launched from the U.S.S. Mako, then docked with the U.S.S. Beagle before leaving the rally point toward D, Red South 179. Two Star Fleet ships followed at some distance and at a further distance still, their ferengi escort awaited, consisting of the F.M.S. Avretta and 9 small but powerful F.C.A. brick fighters.

On the bridge of the Ferengi Merchant Vessel Avretta, Daimon Ubok watched a tactical display on his main viewscreen. The U.S.S. Mako remained with the ferengi shipping at the rally point. The U.S.S. Escort and the U.S.S. Beagle followed the runabout at a great distance - more than a light year. Ubok had been advised of this plan by Project Director Pel.

The runabout was to approach the planet at a leisurely warp 3. An increase in speed would be interpreted as evidence of the runabout and crew having been taken over, giving the more heavily shielded Escort and Beagle the opportunity to catch the runabout and destroy it before it got too close.

“What is that?” Ubok stood up and walked toward the screen as another icon appeared on the screen, almost on top of the runabout.

“Sensors detect weapons fire,” reported his tactical officer, then: “That is a klingon bird of prey! Sensors show the runabout’s shields holding. The klingons are coming about for a second run...”

Ubok could read the sensors well enough to know that neither of the two Star Fleet vessels were anywhere near enough to provide support to the hapless runabout.

“Runabout destroyed with all hands,” reported his tactical officer, then: “The klingons are cloaking... wait... more weapons fire from both Star Fleet vessels. The bird of prey is disabled...”

“What???” Ubok asked in incredulity. The icons representing the U.S.S. Escort and the U.S.S. Beagle seemed to have jumped well over a light year in less than a second in order to engage the klingon ship. An impossibility. “Is your equipment malfunctioning? How did they close that distance so quickly?”

“Tactical systems are functioning correctly, Daimon. They just... blinked... wait... the klingon ship is exploding...”

“Did they fire on it again?” Ubok asked.

“No! It was self-destruct...”

On the bridge of the U.S.S. Mako, Project Director Pel, seated to Captain Yui Song’s right, was astonished first when the klingon bird of prey decloaked, then again when the Escort and the Beagle leapt over a light year in less than a second in order to impossibly attack the klingon vessel.

He quickly bottled up his reaction because something sounded strange. It was Captain Yui and her bridge crew. Crew members from 4

different federation member species were currently on the bridge, and none of them were vulcans. But from their emotional reaction to the astonishing things happening on screen, they might as well all have been. Not a single raised heartbeat. Not a single quickened breath. Not the slightest indication of surprise.

Given his superior hearing, Pel did not need to look around to realize that Captain Yui and her crew were paying more attention to him and his reactions than they were to the miracle playing out on their sensors.

A chill ran up the tiny ferengi's spine.

He turned to see Captain Yui conferring with her science officer, Lt. Cmdr. Gregg Clark, both of them reviewing information on a reader that Clark had brought to her.

Pel was extremely nervous. "What are klingons doing here and how did you know they were going to be here?"

Captain Yui held up the reader, then handed it to Pel: "Readings from the U.S.S. Beagle on that bird of prey, specifically the life signs detected aboard it before it self-destructed. Care to explain this, Project Director?"

It took a moment for Pel to process what he was reading. He finally read it aloud: "Sixteen lifesigns. All ferengi. Females." He shook his head in disbelief, looked up at Captain Yui in complete confusion. "Sixteen ferengi females??"

SBA Episode 1, Scene 25: The Real Pup

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

The real thing.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 25: [The Real Pup](#)

1.25

[The Real Pup](#)

“So how did you know the Puppy would be attacked?”

2nd Lt. Piper Akerele, the Puppy’s pilot, was clearly of mixed heritage, but she seemed well matched to her Swahili surname: small but tough. She and Captain Howard were the only Star Fleet officers aboard. The other 20 passengers were U.S. Marines - 20 marines to rescue 18 trill miners. Everyone aboard was wearing a full EVA suit with only their helmets removed.

Captain Skip Howard turned to the marines in his care. “Any of you care to speculate?”

Lance Corporal Maria Salas looked to her Sergeant, Chavez Lone Wolf, and said, “With permission?”

It was Major Janet Carter who answered, amusement evident in her voice: “Speak up, Lance Corporal.”

Salas addressed Captain Howard directly. “Sir, the Ferengi Alliance has deployed several layers of security to enforce the ban on travel to D, Red South 179. A number of sensor buoys, attack drones and manned listening stations had to be taken offline in order for that trill mining ship to even get close to that system. Trill technology, including the manifest and manual for the Tyr’phoyx 8, is not anywhere near sophisticated enough to counteract ferengi security technology. This suggests an ally. An ally that would be very much interested in preventing a competent agency, such as Star Fleet, from mounting an expedition to that system.”

Howard smiled. “You studied the manual and the manifest for the Tyr’phoyx 8?”

“We all did, sir.” Lance Corporal Salas replied. “As soon as they became available, we committed them to memory.”

“Well I had heard that Marines are not encouraged to speculate,” Howard drawled, the sound of his native southern California coming through. He could tell from Salas’ accent that her home was likely close to his. “But your speculation was our speculation. It cost a Star Fleet runabout and a lot of computer equipment to verify it, and evidently the ferengi on that klingon bird of prey were willing to sacrifice their own lives rather than be captured and interrogated.”

“I hope there isn’t another of those lurking out there,” Lt. Akerele opined.

“Well, we’re not completely out of surprises for them if there is another,” Howard said.

The remainder of the voyage toward D, Red South 179 passed largely in silence. With only 10 minutes to go, Howard spoke up. “Update on the tactical situation. We now have five targets. The majority of the trills, 11 of them, are in engineering, sections E5 and E6, attempting repairs. That’s where our monster is as well - squatting right on the warp core shell. One trill is in the medical center, section M2. Two more are in O1, the ore processing floor. Another three are in the mess, section G1, leaving one alone on the bridge. Major?”

“Lance Corporal Salas, you have the captain’s six. He is your one and only responsibility.” Major Carter gestured toward each marine as she called them by name: “Lieutenant Ayn, your team takes engineering. Eleven of you to look after the Captain and rescue 11 trills. The remainder will be teams of two. Sergeant Lone Wolf, you and Bishop take the mess. Pushkin and Young take the bridge. Glick and Cho take medical. Private First Class Young, you with me at O1. Richards, you stay here and take care of our ride and our driver. Take your injections now. Keep each other covered. Phasers set on heavy stun. Stun on sight, drug them as soon as you get them, grab them and return. Gear up!”

Captain Howard and each of the marines took an injection to their necks, then donned their helmets and stood up. Although she remained seated, Lt. Akerele also injected herself, donned her helmet and checked her phaser. There was no transporter pad in the Puppy’s cabin.

“Energize!” said Howard.

Lt. Akerele had already programmed the transporter. She enacted the entire program, sending each group to their separate targets, by pressing a single control. With the slightly lower-pitched whine and somewhat more green spectrum lights characteristic of vulcan transporter technology, the Puppy was emptied of all except Sergeant Tommy Richards and Lt. Akerele.

The moment the transporter enacted, the Puppy’s shields came down to allow for the transport, and as the marines were beaming out, hundreds of thumb-sized eyeballs streamed into the vulcan-designed shuttle from all sides. Richards and Akerele were immediately up and back-to-back, firing their phasers at the hundreds of intruders even as dozens of eyes slammed into their EVA suits, vanishing on impact...

SBA Episode 1, Scene 26: Command Presence

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Layers of command presence.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 26: [Command Presence](#)

1.26

Command Presence

Captain Rhonda Carter refused to slouch in the captain's chair of the U.S.S. Escort. She had cropped her remaining hair down to a fine stubble. New hair was coming in to replace what had fallen out - all gray.

She had taken a chance putting General Krank at the weapons console, but he had not hesitated to fire on the bird of prey when she gave the order. Dr. Uto had cleared the assignment and had indicated that because Krank wasn't shooting to kill, the psychological block should not be a problem.

It had been a problem. Carter had seen Krank forcing himself to respond to her order to fire - as if he had been pushing his hand through thick mud.

Now that Captain Howard had taken his vulcan-built shuttle full of marines, including her cousin, on a rescue mission, Carter was now the front line, 50 light years out from D, Red South 179. Her new job was to verify the Puppy gave the proper readings on its return before allowing it to move any closer to the U.S.S. Beagle.

Escort's bridge crew watched their instruments in silence. They were the first line of defense if the Puppy came back as a hostile.

The U.S.S. Beagle, stationed 20 light years away from the Escort, was the second line. Beagle's bridge was located just ahead of engineering and adjacent to the large conference room. Like so much of vulcan ship design, the room was laid out in an equilateral triangle with the captain's chair in the center, able to turn toward three wall-sized screens.

Sakura Nakamura Holland, wrapped in a forest green kimono decorated with white and dark red leaves, was seated in the chair, but it was her husband, standing behind her, who was in command. While the majority of the Beagle's crew were civilians, typically only Star Fleet and Marines entered the bridge. Sakura, as the Dean of the Ship, was the exception.

"I thought Star Fleet captains were not to go on risky away missions," Sakura said. "I didn't expect Skip to lead this mission."

It was Lt. Cmdr. Senek, seated at the telemetry station behind her, who answered. "There is still the potential that this is a first contact situation. Given his training as a biologist, Captain Howard is the person best able to make that determination and best positioned to make first contact."

"He seemed fairly certain that he's going to face a monster, not an intelligent alien," Sakura said. She shuddered at the memory of the video from the bridge of the Escort. "It looked like something from a nightmare. It's his first away mission in a hostile situation. Do you really think he's ready for it?"

Commander Dutch Holland made an amused noise, landed an enormous, gloved hand lightly on his wife's shoulder. "He's going to find out in a hurry. But he's with the 1st recon of the 1st of the 54th. Space Hounds. I think he's going to be okay."

"That's something else I don't understand," Ensign Susan Tribe added from the pilot's station. "I'm glad she's here, but doesn't a major in the U.S. Marines usually have thousands of marines under their command? How did we rate a major, a captain and two lieutenants for a unit of less than 50 marines?"

"Expeditionary forces," Sakura replied. "Major Carter and her officers are also trained for first contact and high level threat assessment. If our

expedition is fully authorized, United Earth Governments wants a military command presence. The recon company isn't just here to fight and secure the ship. Their primary mission is reconnaissance and threat assessment.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 27: Pel's Left Ear

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Pel digs in his left ear.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 27: [Pel's Left Ear](#)

1.27

Pel's Left Ear

Star Fleet's last line of defense for this mission was the U.S.S. Mako, stationed 100 light years away from D, Red South 179. Captain Yui Song had summoned Project Director Pel to her office. The minuscule ferengi was fidgeting nervously, constantly digging in his left ear.

Captain Yui pressed a comms control on her desk. "Dr. Moorman, please send a med tech to my office with an antipruritic."

"Aye, captain," came the response over the comm.

Pel looked at the captain in puzzlement, his finger still in his ear.

"For your ear, Project Director," Yui said.

"What?" Pel responded, then turned and seemed to notice his finger in his ear for the first time. He slowly removed his finger, then looked at it. "Sorry, nervous habit. You can call off the doctor."

Yui's voice was cold and her face a mask of inscrutability. "Our telemetry indicates that the bird of prey was sending a masking signal, designed to make it appear there was one male ferengi and 23 klingons on board. Our sensor equipment saw right through that. Tell me about 16 ferengi females, apparently wearing klingon armor, operating a bird of prey and attacking federation shipping that was on a mission authorized by your government."

"That is some powerful sensory equipment. The Beagle is not just a refurbished Vulcan Science Academy ship. It's much more than that." Pel had calmed noticeably.

"And you are not what you appear either," Captain Yui replied.

That statement made Pel nervous again. His finger went back into his ear just as the door to the captain's office opened to admit an orderly carrying a medkit.

"Our guest's ear appears to be itching," Captain Yui said.

Pel's finger came out of his ear and he leaned away as the med tech held up a warbling scanner to his ear. The tiny ferengi waved the tech away in irritation. "Can't you make scanners that don't make so much noise? That's painfully loud!"

In response, the tech touched a control on his tri-corder and the device, while still lit up, stopped producing sound. Pel grimaced as his ear was scanned again. The tech opened a small tube, which Pel whisked away from him.

"It's my ear, I'll do it!" He shooved the med tech away. "If you don't have sense enough to silence that thing around a ferengi, you have no business touching our ears!"

Yui almost looked amused. "Dismissed, specialist."

Pel closed the tube without applying the contents. He sighed heavily. "Okay, there have been rumors of a religious cult among ferengi females, wanting to restore the matriarchy. Old times way beyond their memory. I don't know what they would be doing out here messing around with that star, but it does have a historical connection to the end of the matriarchy. That's the only guess I have at the moment."

Chapter End Notes

I have begun work on the second episode and have rough outlines for a number of subsequent episodes. At the moment:

Episode 2: Astral Traveler

Episode 3: Yours is No Disgrace

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Episode 5: All Good People

Episode 6: Perpetual Change

If this works, I have dozens of inspirations for future episodes, including Long Distance Runaround, Gates of Delirium, Circus of Heaven, City of Love, Shoot High - Aim Low, Order of the Universe, Mind Drive, Universal Garden, Magnification, and The Ice Bridge - among many, many others. (alert prog rock fans might figure out what I'm up to...)

SBA Episode 1, Scene 28: The Back of Their Heads

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

The trills have eyes in the back of their heads.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: Eye of the Beholder

Scene 28: The Backs of their Heads

1.28

The Backs of their Heads

PFC Sean Young quickly took his bearings, then got down to the deck as Major Carter signaled him. They had beamed in on a scaffolding overlooking the ore processing floor, the largest area on the trill mining ship, Tyr'phox 8. The two trills were dismantling the primary ore processing machine, clearly intent on something located deep inside the machine.

Carter was surveying the area and observing the trills with field glasses - which consisted of a filter she could attach directly to the visor on her EVA helmet. As Young started to get up, she grasped the handle on the front of his EVA suit, pulling him back down to the scaffolding. She pressed her helmet against his so that he could hear her: "No sudden movements. They have eyes in the back of their heads. Three of them." She handed Young the field glasses.

Young felt a chill run up his spine as he viewed the trill mining engineers - a triangle of eyes in the backs of their heads moving independently - looking about as the bodies they had merged with - or grown out of - were completely engaged in disassembling the machine they were working on.

Carter signaled him. For centuries, the U.S. Marines had refined a complex and rich sign language for field tactics that every marine was required to be fluent in. And like the other marines on this mission, Young had committed the manual for the trill mining ship to memory.

Their targets have eyes in the backs of their heads? Okay. There was a solution for that.

Carefully, quietly, Young and Carter moved in different directions. Young set his hand phaser for heavy stun, field effect and his phaser rifle for a 1-inch diameter, solid cutting beam. He checked his position, checked Carter's position, then, using the sights on his phaser rifle, carefully measured the opposite wall. Carter was measuring the floor. He found his spot and could verify from her movements that Carter had found hers. They fired nearly in unison - Young at the opposite wall and Carter at the floor. Carter rolled to her back, found her secondary target, hit it, and the lights went out.

The marines' helmets automatically adjusted to infrared combined with a heads up tactical display (HUD). At the same time the visors in their helmets became opaque to prevent the HUD lights from being visible to the enemy.

Young crawled four feet, then stood, grasped the railing of the catwalk and leapt over it. The gravity boots in his EVA suit counteracted the ship's artificial gravity to slow his fall just enough for a safe landing. He rolled and charged through the darkness toward the trills.

Both Young and Carter lobbed golfball sized power sinks as the trills turned flashlights on them. And the flashlights went out. The trills rushed forward toward where they had last seen the marines. But both had moved out to flank. Young and Carter hit the trills with heavy stun from their hand phasers - which seemed to have little effect on the trills. In the next moment they grappled, used injectors in the third finger of their left glove to inject the trills and with that, triggered the shuttle's transporter, and both the marines and the two 5-eyed trills vanished in the transporter beam.

1.28

SBA Episode 1, Scene 29: Hell's Engine Room

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

The engine room from hell.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 29: [Hell's Engine Room](#)

1.29

Hell's Engine Room

While the teams that beamed onto the bridge, into medical and the mess had a much easier time than Carter and Young, their plans going off without a hitch, this was not the case for the much larger team that beamed into the main engineering section for the Tyr'phox 8.

Unlike the ore processing floor, a few well placed shots to the power conduits would not be able to put out the lights in engineering. While the warp core had been jettisoned, the impulse power plant had no shortage of power and the lighting was directly connected.

The trills were scattered about the room, diligently building what could only be a replacement warp core. Where they would obtain the drive plasma or the antimatter remained a mystery, but one that would need to be solved later.

The away team from the Puppy beamed in in two groups of five, located on either side of the engineering section. Captain Howard and Lance Corporal Salas beamed in to the center of the room, just in front of the walled off space where the original warp core had been before it was ejected. A large biomass was attached to this wall - the captain's first in-person view of the so-called jellyfish he had seen in the telemetry from the planet. The plant was feeding directly on energy being generated in this room - little tongues of electricity could be seen inside along with swarms of mushrooms...They looked more like thumb-sized cauliflowers.

But the most prominent feature of the creature was an enormous eye, the size of a basketball - swarms of smaller eyeballs could be seen swirling inside.

Captain Howard activated the external speaker in his EVA suit: "Hi there! I know you can hear me and understand me through the trills. I am Captain Ronald Howard the 14th of the United Feder....woah..."

Lance Corporal Maria Salas had beamed in holding the handle on the back of the captain's EVA suit. She pulled him back and neatly stepped around him as swarms of thumb-sized eyeballs spewed out of the pupil of the gigantic eye. Instead of splattering onto the captain's suit, they splattered onto Salas's suit, vanishing as soon as they hit.

The other teams of marines were swarmed with eyeballs, slamming into their EVA suits, impeding their attempt to get to the trills, who themselves were reaching for weapons. The marine weapons were set to heavy stun, wide effect, which knocked down any eyeballs caught in the beam effect, but did not seem to have much effect on the trills. As quickly as the trills armed themselves, they responded with cutting beams that started to ablate the marine EVA suits, eating through the layers of armor.

Lance Corporal Salas lifted a weapon that looked like a flare gun. A billowing plume of flame issued out of the barrel, enveloping the flying eyeballs and turning them into shrieking, hissing balls of purple flame. She stepped forward, the plume from her weapon reaching out for the giant eye that was attached to the warp core shell wall... when the giant eye detached itself and tried to escape the flames by sailing straight up... Salas tracked the creature with her weapon and hundreds of flaming eyeballs exploded out of it. What was left of the giant, flaming eye crashed and splashed and glooped down on her, merging with her suit and entering it, setting her on fire inside her suit.

Flaming eyeballs shrieked around the room, slamming indiscriminately into trills, marines and Captain Howard. Howard clicked a control inside his suit, triggering the transporter to retrieve the marines and himself from the growing inferno. Some of the marines were holding onto trills. Three marines were down, including what was left of Lance Corporal Salas, incinerated inside her own EVA suit.

Scant seconds after the transporter beam had evacuated the Puppy's away team, the heat in engineering reached a critical point, igniting the

thruster fuel, overcoming the firewalls in their fuel cells.

The Puppy pulled away from the Tyr'phox 8 just as the trill mining ship began to rip itself apart from series of explosions. A stream of eyeballs followed the task shuttle as it accelerated away from the planet and the exploding remnants of the trill mining ship.

Inside the vulcan-designed shuttle, the transporter activated, causing the inert figures of Sergeant Tommy Richards and 2nd Lt. Piper Akerele to vanish, leaving only a swirling mass of eyeballs in the cabin. Green gas quickly filled the cabin, causing the eyeballs to fall to the floor, inert. The rear hatch opened, evacuating the cabin of atmosphere, green atomized fungicide and inert eyeballs as the shuttle pulled away from the swarm of following eyeballs. The rear hatch closed again as the vacant ship enacted its program and entered warp, headed back toward the waiting Star Fleet and Ferengi Alliance task forces.

A volley of five micro-photon torpedoes issued from the rear tube - the entire complement carried by the shuttle. Two went to destroy the abandoned mining skiffs. The remainder were aimed at the Tyr'phox 8's already nearly demolished engineering section.

SBA Episode 1, Scene 30: Countersign

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

The Escort seeks the countersign



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 30: [Countersign](#)

1.30 Countersign

“Beagle, this is the U.S.S. Escort, Rhonda Carter commanding.”

“Escort, this is the U.S.S. Beagle, Dutch Holland commanding, we read you, go ahead.”

“Commander Holland, we have eyes on the Puppy. It is arriving along the expected vector, Warp 3. Telemetry indicates no life signs aboard. The rear hatch is open, along with all interior bulkheads, leaving the interior of the shuttle entirely exposed to space. We are reading no atmosphere and no organic matter.”

“Understood, Captain Carter. How about those buffers?”

“Stuffed to the gills and bulging.”

“Escort, you are clear to signal the Puppy.”

“Signal away. Countersign received. The Puppy is now coming out of warp and responding to all stop off our starboard bow. Sensor readings confirm the telemetry. No life signs, no atmosphere, no organic matter present, the rear hatch is open and the entire interior exposed to space. Sending visual and all sensor readings. No other contacts present, no anomalous readings. Commander, you are clear to come pick up your progeny.”

“E.T.A. 15 minutes, Captain, thank you for the assist.”

“Good luck, Commander. We all hope you find what you are looking for.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 31: 68 Seconds

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

A lot can happen in 68 seconds.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 31: [68 Seconds](#)

1.31 [68 Seconds](#)

General Krank and Captain Rhonda Carter had spent so much time together that they might as well have gotten married. Both had lost their wives to the jem'hadar in the war. They found Captain Skip Howard in the well - a zero gravity sensor nexus in the forward section of the U.S.S. Beagle that was not generally populated except during maintenance cycles.

The room was a long corridor defined by three walls, essentially creating a triangular space. There was no general lighting - but illumination from dozens of colored indicators created a variety of shadows and illuminated the occupants of this area with patches of different colored light.

There was sufficient room in this area to sit, cross-legged, without touching any of the walls or machinery - which is what Captain Howard was doing. It was a position that General Krank could not assume, so he stabilized himself with a hand against one wall and a foot against another. Captain Carter was small enough to simply float in the area. For a long moment, no one spoke.

General Krank was surprised to find himself breaking the silence. "I knew we were only firing to disable that bird of prey. But it was like pushing my fingers through heavy clay to reach the firing controls."

It was a few seconds before Howard turned to look at the elderly klingon. His green eyeshadow was heavily smudged and his eyes looked haunted. "How are you, Krank?"

"Concerned about you, Captain Howard," Krank replied.

At this point, the aft door into the maintenance corridor opened and Major Janet Carter pushed off and floated into the area. She was much bigger than her older cousin. She took up a position similar to Krank's.

"How many?" Howard asked.

"Sir, we rescued 11 trills and lost 4 marines," Major Carter replied.

"All in my group?" Howard asked.

"You took the most dangerous assignment, sir. I took the second. Not an optimal use of command personnel."

"I didn't go to war like the rest of you," Howard said. "I had no idea. This wasn't war, but it felt like it. I've never lost people before."

Major Carter took a breath. "I reviewed the video we captured in there. It's so chaotic that you really can't learn much from it. That thing you were trying to make first contact with - it looked like something straight out of a nightmare. And it was not friendly."

Howard was no longer looking at her. Major Carter maneuvered around General Krank, then around her cousin. She assumed a seated position, cross legged. She steadied herself against a wall to keep from spinning in the zero gravity and ended up oriented slightly differently than Howard.

“They’re calling it ‘Hell’s Engine Room.’ Captain, you were in that place for 68 seconds. You went in with 11 marines. You came out with 11 marines. In a situation like that, that is what is expected of a commanding officer.”

“Four of them died,” Howard responded, hollowly.

“You can’t always bring all of them home alive, sir,” Major Carter replied. “But you are bringing all of them home. It was your planning and your understanding of what we were getting into that made that possible. They’re speaking very highly of you. And they’re proud of bringing back so many of those trill miners. It was a successful mission.”

“Doesn’t feel like a success to me.”

“Don’t ever let them hear you say that, sir.”

“Lance Corporal Salas?” Howard asked.

“Exchanged her life for yours,” Carter replied. “Private First Class Monica Johnson. Private First Class Susan Taylor. Private First Class Jeremy Stoltz.”

“I will write to their families.” Howard steepled his fingers, buried his nose in them. Black fingernail polish. Smudgy green eyeshadow. “I won’t forget them.”

Janet Carter put her hand on his shoulder without looking at him. “You never do.”

SBA Episode 1, Scene 32: The Grand Nagus Rom

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Grand Nagus Rom makes an offer that Star Fleet cannot refuse.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1 : [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 32: [The Grand Nagus Rom](#)

1.32

The Grand Nagus Rom

Daimon Ubok was very upset that the results of the mission did not include sterilization of the 6th planet in the D, Red South 179 system. And he was coldly making the captain of the U.S.S. Mako, Yui Song, aware of his intense displeasure.

“Considering that your mission did not include eliminating the threat, we will have to assess our costs in this effort. You got what you came for and have not repaid us for allowing your ships into our space and the accompanying costs for this mission. My accountants estimate...”

The image of an apparently bored Captain Yui Song was suddenly replaced with the face of the Grand Nagus, Rom - or rather the image of his face, expressed in gold on his staff of office. The announcement was not in his voice, but in the voice of a powerful and widely disliked director for the Ferengi Commerce Authority, Brunt, whose new job was to be Rom’s emissary from the FCA. Rom had chosen well - Brunt’s voice and his reputation tended to cause opposition to the Grand Nagus’ wishes to wither like dry brush in a firestorm.

“Stand by for a message from the Grand Nagus!” came Brunt’s voice.

Rom had obtained superb political advice and had become extremely careful with his public image. The screen faded to black slowly around the image of his golden face, which gleamed more brightly.

“We congratulate our friends from the Federation and thank them for removing the threat posed by the Tyr’phox 8 and its inhabitants in proximity to D, Red South 179. We understand a certain level of reporting will be required, but we request that all information regarding this mission be treated as diplomatic top secret, in keeping with the requirements of the 2nd Treaty of Deep Space 9. We wish you safe passage from our home space, but ask that you remain a few moments longer.”

The golden face was replaced by an image of the space just outside of Ubok’s ship, the F.M.V. Avretta and the U.S.S. Mako. Into that space, a much larger ferengi cruiser shimmered into view as it decloaked.

Rom’s voice continued. “We request to dock with the U.S.S. Mako so that Project Director Pel, and only Project Director Pel, may board for debriefing, then return to the U.S.S. Mako with a special offer from the Grand Nagus.”

1.32

SBA Episode 1, Scene 33: Asylum

Chapter by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Chapter Summary

Pel requests asylum.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 1: [Eye of the Beholder](#)

Scene 33: [Asylum](#)

1.33

Asylum

“I knew your secret the moment I met you.” Captain Skip Howard was meeting with Captain Yui Song and Project Director Pel in Yui Song’s ready room following Pel’s return to the U.S.S. Mako.

“How did you know?” asked Pel.

“One old girl to another,” Howard said. “I have an instinct for when I’m being lied to. And your entire life is a lie. Don’t worry, I won’t expose you here, although Song will probably figure it out in time.”

Captain Yui looked quite annoyed, but kept her silence.

Pel was clearly ashen. The tiny ferengi took a deep breath. “I am here to formally request asylum, and safe passage to your first port of call outside of ferengi space.”

Yui answered with a single word: “Why?”

Pel seemed to deflate - making him seem even smaller than usual. He sighed. “There is a political movement among ferengi females, seeking increased rights. Clothing. Managing capital. Business ownership. Honored Mother - that’s what the movement is called. But there’s a splinter group, an apocalyptic religious cult that wants to restore the ancient matriarchy. Honored Grandmother. They believe our civilization has to fall back to a barbaric state before they can build their utopia. Intelligence says those females on that bird of prey were HG terrorists. They’ve been blamed for a lot of cybercrimes, taking down the exchange. But if they’re behind this...” Pel shuddered. His voice trailed off.

“That still does not explain why the Nagus is sending you into exile,” Yui observed.

Pel had a far away expression. “It has come to light that I facilitated a few business deals for some of the Honored Mothers who have now been identified as members of the Honored Grandmother cult. I made a profit, which has been confiscated. Most of my holdings have been frozen. The Nagus is a good man. If everything settles down in the next five years, he will allow me access to some of my accounts. Maybe someday I’ll even get to go home.”

Yui Song’s expression softened.

Pel took a deep breath and looked up. “So how did you do it? Jump a light year in less than a second to attack that bird of prey? Survive those brain thingies slamming into your bodies?”

“I’d like a few of those answers too, Skip,” Captain Yui added.

“Well, the technology behind those apparent ship movements is classified,” Howard said. “But I suppose you guessed that we had programmed the Puppy’s computer to return to the task force and surrender control to the U.S.S. Escort. We, the trills and a whole bunch of baby beholders were stored in the transporter buffer. Just before we beamed over to the trill ship, we injected ourselves with fungicide. At that point we had no more than an hour to live before that poison killed us too, but it killed the beholders on contact. Which was a good thing.”

Howard removed a grain from the corner of his eye with a lavender polished fingernail. “When they recovered us from the pattern buffer, each

one of us had gained 3 to 5 pounds. That's how many of those little eyeballs passed through our EVA suits and right into our bodies. Dr. Uto and his team extracted the fungicide out of us too, but we're still in for a few weeks of medical treatment to manage the toxic shock - and, in the case of the survivors of Hell's Engine Room, 2nd and 3rd degree burns. It has not been pleasant."

"I've heard the trills are recovering," Yui song observed. "So now they can stand trial when they get home."

"How did you know they would recover?" Pel asked.

"Like I told you," Howard replied, "They're trills. Their species co-evolved to share their consciousness with an intelligent parasite - the symbionts. If anyone can recover from infestation by an intelligent parasite, it would be a trill."

Yui stood up, turned her attention to Pel. "Ensign Peterman will escort you to your quarters, Project Director."

Pel stood up. "Not Project Director anymore. I'm afraid it's just Trader Pel, now." He walked to the door out of the captain's ready room, turned just before exiting: "Thank you, Captain."

Skip Howard stood as Pel exited. "Trader Pel," he echoed.

"More like Agent Pel," said Yui. "His left ear is a prosthetic. It includes a sophisticated transmitter..."

"Prosthetic ear," Howard echoed. "You don't say..."

Yui's eyes suddenly opened wide. "You... He..." She facepalmed, then shook her head. "Am I blind? Or just that stupid? You knew right away, didn't you?"

Howard giggled. Then sighed. "Humans tend to think of gender as something fixed. Immutable. Even when the biology of gender fluidity is staring us all right in the face. Our species has a marked deafness toward biology when it tells us something we aren't ready to hear. And the follies that arise from those misunderstandings are many and not always amusing." He lightly brushed his eyebrow with a lavender nail. Matched to his eyeshadow.

Yui continued shaking her head. "Well, our next port of call is Deep Space 9. We're to turn the trills over to representatives from the Federation Tribunal and await our various new assignments. It has been quite the adventure, Skip."

Skip Howard smiled. "Somehow, I don't think the adventure is over with just yet."

The Eye of the Beholder

Chapter End Notes

This is the final scene for Episode 1.

The adventure continues in Episode 2: Astral Traveler.

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