

The Delta We Left Behind

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The Delta We Left Behind

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Summary

"This is the true path of evolution! The science checks out!" - Literary Challenge 67.1: In the early 25th century, while in the Delta Quadrant, the I.K.S. B'Cnrah is overrun with salamander-type offspring from the Warp 10-caused mutated forms of Lieutenant Tom Paris and Captain Kathryn Janeway of several decades earlier.

Notes

Author's notes: This was written in August 2014 as part of the Star Trek Online Forums Literary Challenge #67. This is also my sequel to Star Trek: Voyager's "Threshold".

Literary Challenge #67, Prompt #1: The news has spread throughout Starfleet, the High Council, even amongst D'Tan's Republic. They are going back to the Delta Quadrant. Back to clean up Janeway's mess? To finish off the Borg? Or to draw more attention to the Alpha and Beta Quadrants? The Voyager crew made first contact with more species than any other in the Federation's history. Not all of them were so eager to befriend them. But now they make the call for you and I to join their expedition. To reestablish old ties, and perhaps strengthen new ones. What lies ahead for the Captain's of STO in Delta Rising? What mysteries and pitfalls await you, and your crew as they take a leap of faith halfway across our galaxy?

Literary Challenge #67

"The Delta We Left Behind"

The *Vor'cha*-class IKS *B'Cnrah* sped through space in the Delta Quadrant at incalculable speeds! Captain Menchez entered the Bridge.

"What is our status?" he asked.

Ulkegh tapped at tactical. "Captain, our status is boredom and irreparable frivolity."

"That's not a thing! Besides, not two days ago, we fought a lost Vidiian starship several sizes larger than ourselves," Menchez countered.

Ch'Tong turned from helm. "That vessel was already on fire— in space, mind you— from an Hirogen attack. Also, have you noticed how this quadrant is a quadrant of complete absurdity?"

"Whether that is true or not is not for you to decide! It may, in fact, redeem itself. So, don't dispose your unliving gagh all over it so quickly!" The Captain then composed himself. "But, just as a reminder of our orders from the Klingon High Command, we are not to reference that Starfleet *vessel-of-which-shall-not-be-named* in conversation at any point, in any place, for any reason during our time here."

Tayana raised her hand. "Are the rumors true, that they endured coincidence so often that it made them invincible?"

"Yes," Menchez replied. "Though, it is usually agreed, by most in the scientific community, that that was due to magic— a radical phenomenon leaked by a cross-dimensional shift originating in the alternate universe planet Megas-Tu."

Ch'Tong nodded. "Seems legit. That's a short-form for the word legitimate. Permission to continue using it?"

"Denied!" Menchez ordered. "Now, what is going on with those disturbances on Deck 5? Is it true there have been reports of Klingon's yelling? How is that even—?" He crossed his arms. "The stopping of my sentence short was intentional."

Suddenly, Derok ran onto the Bridge, yelling with a slimy-green creature clung onto his arm. "AAAHHH!!!" He ripped it off, threw it to the floor and stomped on it several times.

"What is that? You know Ferengi Food Friday is not until tomorrow," Menchez stated. "That William T. Riker-looking chef we have is always one for surprises."

Derok then kicked the dead creature away. "I killed that chef last week, actually, in anticipation of gaining one of those Talaxian ones."

"You fool, Derok!" Ch'Tong pointed.

Derok approached the Bridge crew. "Anyway, the entire lower half of the ship is rife with these salamander things. They came off our salvaged Vidiian haul. According to the Vidiian database, they captured several amphibian-like mammals from a distant jungle world. But before they were able to control the creature's on-board population, the creature's took over and attempted to alter the ship, thus leaving them defenseless to the Hirogen."

"That still doesn't explain the flames in space," Ch'Tong interjected.

But, before anyone could continue, the Bridge was surprised-ambushed by the hiding creatures. Small, green, slimy quadrupedal amphibian-like aliens emerged from the shadows, all over the place.

"Greetings, humanoids," one of them opened. "My name is Venice, of the Paris Tribe. We are human-salamander descendants of your quadrant's Lieutenant Tom Paris and Captain Janeway. We've been commandeering vessels for a long time, in an attempt to return our species to a humanoid shape."

Menchez pulled out his knife. "By the illegal Dancing Clone Troop of Kahless! You are all a collective abomination! And, I'm pretty sure you are at an advanced level of evolution? Not to undercut my mighty Klingon yelling."

"Indeed we are advanced— slimily-advanced, if you will. But we've come to realize this era was made for bi-pedal creatures with access to chairs and hover-cycles, so we would like to revert. Also, we swim in water, but we cannot drink it. It's an odd future, I'll admit," Venice explained.

Ch'Tong crossed his arms. "Why, again, did that *ship-to-not-be-named* choose to just leave new life— babies, by the way— behind? Aren't Starfleet crew's supposed to be interested in things like that? Oh, yes, they had to get 'home'— What a pathetic, cry-baby ship-goal."

"Fool! Their first officer could not risk ruining his chances of mating with his Captain by preoccupying her with motherhood!" Menchez snapped.

Another human-salamander squandered up. "My name is Marseille, for reference. We've been manipulating your crew for some time now, by remote orders sent via text, with various engineering tasks written in short-message-form. We have made your crew adapt a new type of dilithium and had them alter your ship's engines and structural integrity to that of a Warp 10 capable ship. You see, our salamander scientists have determined that evolution is cyclical, and have concluded that another warp-jump will advance our DNA forward back to you."

"That is insane!? Everyone knows the steps are: Wesley, Traveler, Changeling, Organian, Trelane's parents and then Q! We Klingons will not stand for this blatant disregard for real-life canon!" Menchez ejected the side blades of his knife, but was stopped.

Ulkegh held him back. "Captain, no! Our blades are still dull from last week's time-travel-Xindi-Avian massacre!"

"I told you to have them re-sharpened!" Menchez stopped to examine his weapon. "Look at this. There are still Avian feathers on mine." He tried to unsuccessfully wipe them off.

Venice sluggishly hoisted himself onto a control panel, and slapped it with his fin. "You Klingons are too late anyway! We initiated the Warp 10 protocol half an hour ago and will soon be travelling at speeds you haven't even imagined!!! The delay is due to our salamander-operative in Engineering, who has to climb himself up onto the correct console."

"Just putting this out there, but the *Enterprise-D* was doing these speeds way before *the-ship-that-shall-not-be-named*," Menchez commented. "Also, your existence presents an aura of story-anti-climax! Who wrote you!??"

He frustratingly reached for the salamander, and attempted to choke it.

"AAaaahhh! My beautiful slimy neck!" Venice cried, worried he was going to get a proper hold.

Not really succeeding in grip, and before he could finish, the Captain was beamed away.

Menchez found himself rematerializing in the *B'Chah's* Sickbay.

"Sorry to cut your non-Cryptic-approved festivities short, Captain," Terek walked over. "But, when the Galley started receiving requests for

pepperoni pizzas with Kavarian olives, I knew evolved salamanders were coming."

Captain Menchez nodded. "It is always that."

"In just a few minutes, when they initiate Warp 10 with their modifications, we are all going to advance-evolve, but the transformation will be immediate— due to their altered calculations and also for time-sakes." Terek activated a spinning test-tube centrifuge, but instead of test-tubes, there were Klingon knives spinning around. He continued, "I've determined that you will require a phase discriminator arm band to protect yourself from any unbridled science you may encounter."

Menchez furrowed his brow. "Very good, Doctor. But, do you have something more Klingon?"

"Way ahead of you," the centrifuge stopped and Terek tossed over one of the knives. "Cut that into your blood, and you will be safe from any kind of salamadolution. Do not, I repeat— Do not try to mate for at least 24 hours."

The Captain cut his palm immediately. "You have been more than helpful, Terek."

Suddenly, the *B'CNah* entered Warp and sped up to Warp 10. In a bright flash, everybody was everywhere at once. But with the salamander's pre-focus, everyone, and the ship was brought back to its original plain of existence.

Menchez entered the Bridge to find his crew evolved into Klingon salamanders, but with spikes on their backs, and the Paris-Janeway offspring evolved into naked Human forms. "Actually, the spikes make it not so bad. Though, I'm certain this future lacks the proper appendages to hold a Klingon pain-stick. Also, Warp 10 isn't the same as transwarp?"

"We did it," Venice muttered, half-disoriented, climbing himself up onto a control panel. "No more trial-and-error consumption of whatever happens to be near our salamander heads! No more guessing games during group mating sessions!"

Captain Menchez pushed Marseille's slowly waking Human body off her control panel. "If you are representative of what the Delta Quadrant will have to offer, I am confused and bewildered!"

He then hit a control button and the *B'CNah* entered into Warp 10 again. The ship then exited, not too long after, on Menchez's command.

"As you are aware, it doesn't matter what you do. We can just flip the cycle over again," salamander-Venice interjected as he noticed he was a salamander again. "We are not to be denied our ability to do squats."

Shocked and appalled, Menchez hit the Warp 10 button again, causing another bright flash and everyone to change back.

"You see?" now-human-Venice called out. "This is the true path of evolution! It just goes back and forth from humanoid to salamander to humanoid to salamander! The science checks out!"

Menchez hit the button again and again, and after each flashy Warp 10 jump, everyone except Menchez was switched to either humanoid or salamander. "This can't be?? It's a complete contradiction. Whoever thought of this must've been on something?? Perhaps studio pressure to have something good— but at what cost? Compromising the universe??"

Menchez grabbed a nearby salamander, Marseille, and threw her at a lowly Bekk in frustration.

"Aahhh!" screamed Bekk Rinn in fear.

Venice jumped onto another panel and switched it again. "It's too late, Captain. The research has been done. The metaphorical 'episode' has been aired. The ability exists!"

The Captain then accessed the database. "Not if I delete the in-progress documentation," he continued. "That, and destroy the modifications! Your divergence has caused far too much pain and suffering on message boards and holo-chat rooms. You are not to be a catalyst for temporal reset buttons any longer! Except this one last time." He switched everyone back and then programmed a feedback loop into the modified systems, destroying the Warp 10 function.

"NNOOOOOO!!!" the salamander-Venice screamed. "I was going to take up Russian dancing!"

Menchez completed the system purge and then held his knife at surrounding salamanders. "You can all forget about your planned shoe shopping ambitions, you salamander-petaQ!" He watched as his dizzying crew got back to their feet.

"Captain," Ch'Tong started, groggily. "Am I to assume we are in our next evolutionary-form, which just happens to be exactly like we were before, rather than a sixth or eighth more different form?"

"Indeed," Menchez answered. "And, as such, each of us must endeavor to stop all hints of Warp 10 anywhere from now on."

Venice squiggled his way for the door, but was blocked by Derok's foot. "Permission to murder most foul, strange and unnatural, Captain?"

"Collect them all and bring them to the Galley. They will await our new chef," Menchez commanded.

Ulkegh got up, slowly. "Sir! You cannot really mean to eat those things??"

"It is the only way to prevent from further Warp 10 incursions, Lieutenant. We may be saving the Delta Quadrant from scientific incongruity, but we are still Klingons! It is our duty to do horrifying deeds and then ask questions later!"

Ch'Tong nodded. "He's got a point. Everything we do should feel unsettling to outsiders."

"Very well," Ulkegh turned. "Although, it is odd we are speaking from that perspective. Also, perhaps such an example will assist in toughening this Quadrant up a bit more."

Menchez accessed a nearby drawer and started handing out Klingon forks and knives. "From what I have seen, I will agree with that necessity. Now we just need a cook. —Ch'Tong, set a course for the nearest Talaxian colony!"

The *B'Chah* turned and jumped to warp, the hunger imposing in on their mighty bellies.

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