

STO Halloween

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STO Halloween

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

"Did the hokey gathering of uniformed personnel degenerate into fear-themed Halloween occultism already?" - Literary Challenge 68:
In the early 25th century, Captains Menchez of the I.K.S. B'Cnah and Seifer the U.S.S. Phoenix-X are forced to work together against an undead plague infecting both crews.

Notes

Author's notes: This was written in October 2014 as part of the Star Trek Online Forums Literary Challenge #68. It generally takes place around the Iconian War time, where the KDF and Federation were forced back into being allies. It's still 2410. This three-parter was inspired by an appreciation for zombie flicks and has origins from the 2011 IDW comic series Infestation that crossed over various franchises.

Literary Challenge #68: The ancient tradition of Terran Fall Harvest Celebrations, Spirit Worship, and the practice of 'Trick or Treat' has long been studied by allies of the Federation. With our favorite holiday fast approaching, we want to see what great stories you can come up with that celebrate the concept of Halloween, either from a human perspective, or from that of any of the species in STO. Do the Klingons or Romulans have similar cultural traditions? Do the Bajorans? The Caitians? The Orions? The Talaxians? Now is your chance to invent something special just in time for the holiday.

STO Halloween, Part I

Literary Challenge #68

"STO Halloween, Part I"

The *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* sat out in deep space, completely unmoving, as Captain Seifer sat focused, staring at the sea of stars on his viewscreen, intently.

Kayl approached, easing into an awkward observation, as she handed him a report. "Uh, if you don't mind, why are you just glaring at nothing? Also, what's our mission?"

"Lieutenant," Seifer broke his trance to address her. "You don't need to always have a mission, or be doing something, or have a purpose. Just enjoy existing for once."

Armond turned from tactical. "Captain, as a social gesture of conversation between colleagues, will you be attending the fall harvest festivities in the mess hall this evening?"

"Dammit, I don't know. It's just that being forced to use a dank mess hall isn't as glamorous as a 10-Forward, like the kind you find on a *Galaxy*-class starship, for example."

Armond replied, "But tables and such?"

"Forget it! You can have your pumpkin spice pie cakes lattes— those weirdly meat-filled desserts that are also dinner and a coffee all in one."

A proximity alert went off and Ensign Dan called it. "Captain, a Klingon *Vor'cha*-class cruiser is de-cloaking off the port bow!"

"Destroy it, immediately!" Seifer called out.

Armond tapped at his controls. "Ah, sorry, I wasn't ready. Besides, it's just the I.K.S. *B'CNah*."

"Greetings," the viewscreen blinked on to a view of the Klingon Captain, Menchez.

Seifer stood. "Armond, destroy them! Follow my orders without question!"

"Only if you come tonight, sir. Only if," Armond bargained.

The Captain then sat back in his chair, frustrated. "Ugh. Never mind." Then addressed the Klingon. "What do you want, Menchez? Is this about that Klingon civilian transport ship we fired upon before knowing who they were as it de-cloaked in front of us?"

"What?" Menchez didn't catch that.

Seifer replied quickly, "Nothing."

"Whatever! We have apprehended a Human criminal for hijacking a Klingon Pach-class starship during the honoured and mostly forgotten Kot'aval Festival. He did the most hurtful Kahless impression using a hauntingly otherly-franchised, Outer Limit-like voice."

Seifer watched as the human, an ex-Starfleet officer, Avery, was shoved on to the Bridge for Seifer's benefit. "Dammit!" the Captain cursed, recognizing him. "You're right about that specific Human. You see, he dropped out of Starfleet after being sorely, and whine-ily, unsatisfied with how his Starfleet message board suggestions were being ignored and verily argued against."

"It's amazing I even got a Starfleet commission," Avery commented, suddenly being aware of his unrealistic luck.

Captain Seifer threw up his hands. "Don't you Klingons kill people who wrong you? Why is he still alive— which, for the record, I am glad about— but only for the record."

"Since our Iconian-forced allying, the High Command has ordered me to pursue acts of diplomacy with you goodie-goodie-full-body-pajama-wearers whenever possible, for the acquisition of something called Diplomacy Points. So far, I have 0."

Seifer turned away. "Forget it, Menchez. The last time I dealt with criminals, I was given to tracking Lore parts— aka, the evil-Data who, by his very existence, trumped the *Enterprise-D* crew from ever having a proper Mirror universe experience."

"You petaQ! We still haven't resolved our discourse over you accidentally time-sending my ship to the 21st century Xindi homeworld!"

The Captain forced-smiled in nervous recollection. "So, you'll beam the prisoner over then?"

Later, Seifer entered Transporter Room 4 with Armond, where Menchez, two of Menchez's crew, Derok and Ch'Tong, and the Human traitor, Avery, beamed in.

"So, Avery, we meet again?" Seifer eyed him.

Avery smirked. "Your precious little Starfleet has very little time left, Captain. I hope you're ready to say goodbye to your ship."

"Ugh," Seifer half-rolled his eyes and addressed the Klingons. "All he ever did was mothball starships when he had power." He turned to Avery, "You know we can un-mothball things, right? And you don't actually fill the ships with actual mothballs."

Derok shoved Avery into Armond's custody, who then turned and took Avery out into the corridors. "That was my calling card!" Avery yelled just before the doors closed on him.

"Sorry about that," Seifer continued. "By the way, why did you guys beam over? Are you invading? If so, I want in."

Menchez stepped off the transporter pad. "We were extended an invitation to a harvest festival in your mess hall. It is rare we Klingons get to check out a Federation starship mess hall. Also, Diplomacy points."

"What the hell? Messhalls are the worst! Never mind. Just come with me," Seifer gave in, reluctantly.

They followed him out into the corridors. "So, here's a question, why do you eat targs but also keep them as pets?"

"Long ago, Klingons realized the usefulness of targs in all aspects of our culture. They're our friends, our farming mules, our upper class food trough delicacies," Menchez explained.

Derok nodded. "They're also great for pre-courting jitters."

"I'm just..... I'm just going to stop trying to learn about your culture," Seifer concluded.

After a short trip, Seifer, Menchez and his two officers arrived at the *Phoenix-X's* Messhall. Inside, was a décor of orange and black streamers, pumpkins and hay bales everywhere.

"What the Shinzon is going on here? Didn't we jettison those Bringloidi farmers out into space??" Seifer said, shocked.

Kugo, the Vulcan Chief engineer, approached. "Uh, no. This is the party that celebrates a seasonal change even though space does not have seasons. Also, you're thinking of an *Enterprise-D* mission."

"Sorry, it's just that Picard did all the best stuff," the Captain conceded. "Except that time, around Surata IV, he allowed Riker to under-go flashbacks. Nothing but flashbacks!"

Crewmembers filled the Messhall, drinking and chatting with each other, merrily. The Klingons joined the festivities and Ch'Tong attempted to head-butt Ensign Dan as a sign of goodwill.

"Captain, permission to be relieved of duty so I can go to Sickbay?" Ensign Dan walked over, clutching a gaping wound in his forehead.

Seifer was taken aback by the question. "How dare you trump my relieving you of duty, especially when you aren't even on duty to begin with. You're relieved!"

"Oh, thank you," Ensign Dan ran out quickly.

Seifer glanced over at Derok. "He's a good kid. Horrible at duty."

Down in Sickbay, Doctor Lox and Armond were examining Avery, who was lying on a biobed, seemingly unconscious and pale. Ensign Dan entered.

"Lox, I've got a thingy here," the Ensign interrupted. "It's thinging my cranium thing in the most thingful way."

The Doctor glanced over. "Oh, the EMH will take care of that for you."

"You do realize the drain on resources the EMH tolls on the ship by being run all the time, don't you?" Armond criticized in Lox's general direction as the EMH took Ensign Dan to another section of Sickbay, on the opposite side of Lox's office.

Lox snapped. "Hey, I have far too many lobe enlargements on my schedule! Oh, I forgot to mention that I'm temporarily contracted to work for the Ferengi to replenish Starfleet latinum reserves. Admiral Quinn went a little overboard with the Dabo addiction last month."

"Anyway, are we even allowed to be talking to each other without a main in the room?"

The Doctor paused. "What? Never mind. What I was about to say is your prisoner, here, is dead. I'm going to have to do an autopsy to find out what killed him. The question is, do I go laser scalpel, or this new pen-knife I got as a free sample in the mail?"

"I will leave that to you, Doctor. In the meantime, I'll inform the Captain of the situation, even though he hates being notified of situations," Armond nodded just before leaving.

Doctor Lox went around to prepare his tools for the surgery. As he was focused on wheeling his table around, he was delayed in noticing the suddenly empty biobed.

Gasping abruptly, he turned to observe a pale, deathly-eyed Avery slowly walking toward him. Too close and too immediate to respond, Lox was collided-into by the sleep-walking man who also gaped open his mouth and bit right into Lox's shoulder: Blood gushed out in painful abundance. "AAAAaaggghh!"

STO Halloween, Part II

Literary Challenge #68

"STO Halloween, Part II"

Captain Seifer and Captain Menchez stood in the mostly empty *Prometheus*-class Engineering room of the U.S.S. *Phoenix-X*, staring up at the unusually large transwarp coil.

"So, wait— Your series of vessels were precursors, but it took you twenty-four consecutive ship-explosions to get it right?" Menchez asked.

Seifer nodded quickly. "A lot of the hulls were made of low-grade titanium. That, and they kept putting the go button right next to the doorbells."

"Shall we return to the festival then?" Menchez suggested. "Derok gets anxious and bitey around Humans. It's the lack of ridges that spooks him."

Seifer nodded again and they both left for the corridors. "Good idea. We only have low-grade synthehol on board and its anti-debilitating effects are hit and miss."

"So, here's a question," Menchez started as they walked. "Why do you celebrate harvest and the dead in both an equally edifying way?"

The Starfleet Captain started. "Long ago, people realized celebrating things, no matter the thing, was the best way to express themselves in a collective, group, pie-filled mindset."

"That," Kugo said as she joined their walk, "And avoiding the fear of being afraid of the things."

Menchez furrowed his brow at their awkward Federation ways. "I'm just..... going to pretend you are Klingons from now on."

As they turned a corner, they instinctively averted their eyes from a couple who, from their half-cornered quick-glances, seemed to be 'making out'.

"Ugh!" Seifer covered his peripheral with his hand. "You know you're not supposed to do that on this ship. You two report to anywhere but public! Now!"

Menchez turned to Seifer as the three of them continued on. "Shouldn't you ensure they follow your orders?"

"Nah," Seifer brought down his arm in relief. "The last thing I want to see, even the remnants of, is a human side to my crew. Makes it harder to order them around in a hardcore militaristic style."

As they gained distance from the section, the two officers remained in the state they were in: One female Engineering officer biting right into a slowly slumping, passed-out male Sciences division officer.

When the female officer finished feeding, she slowly limped away.

Half paying attention, Ensign Belm walked by and flipped the fallen Science division officer a slip of latinum. "Get a job, lazy!"

Seifer, Menchez and Kugo entered the Messhall, but instead of finding the festive activities of celebratory fall-times, they were presented with a desolate sarcophagus of forsaken season.

"Just FYI, this is not a reflection of Federation autumn celebrations, which, I imagine to be completely tame in comparison to Klingon autumn celebrations— if those even exist," Seifer reassured in a questioning sort of way.

Kugo glanced around, confused. "Did the hokey gathering of uniformed personnel degenerate into the fear-themed STO Halloween occultism already?"

"And exactly *what* does STO stand for?" Seifer asked.

Kugo glanced at him. "Space-Time October, the month our plain of existence intersects this time of year."

"I'm certain none of that made sense," Menchez started. "Also, it appears your security is not doing their job." He pointed to a smear of blood on the floor, leading to behind an over-turned table.

Seifer and Kugo went over to see what the blood led to, followed by Menchez. They discovered a fallen officer, Lieutenant Tong, impaled by a table leg from another table on its back. But Tong was not seemingly unmoving as they would have expected: With a deathly glare at no one in particular, Tong tried, continuously and unsuccessfully, to get up.

"Tong!" Seifer called out. "You look unwell." And then, "Seifer to Sickbay. We need a medical team in the Messhall, STAT." But the commbadge chirp from his tap went flat. "Seifer to security? Seifer to anyone? Seifer to my Horta hatchling?" But there was no response. "Ah, he can't talk yet."

Kugo pulled out a tricorder from a nearby cabinet and began scanning. "It appears there is a deficient dampening field in the vicinity."

"Menchez to *B'Cnah*," the Klingon slapped his wrist communiqué, but he did not get a response either.

The emotional Vulcan engineer looked at him. "What did I just report?"

"Huh? Oh, sorry. To be honest, I have not paid attention to a thing you've said since you joined us."

As Seifer approached Tong, Tong became aware of his proximity and snapped at him in an animalistic way. But being restrained by the impaling, as before, he did not get up.

"He looks infected with something," Seifer observed. "I probably should've suggested this wayyyy earlier, but why aren't we all wearing breathing masks?"

Kugo continued scanning. "If it was airborne, we would've seen the effects by now, probably. I just made that up. By the way, this is curious," she began. "It appears that the dampening field is originating from Tong himself." She turned to scan through the walls. "As well, there are more people emanating dampening fields too."

She walked closer to the doors to shift her scanning range when suddenly the lights flickered. The doors opened and two seemingly undead-like officers straggled in and collided into her. Not expecting the attack, Kugo fell and was bitten in to.

"Oh, come on. Moving near the doors was clearly a set up," Seifer criticized no one in particular. He grabbed a frying pan from the kitchen and whacked the two officers off Kugo. Menchez kicked the two out into the hallway and locked the door.

Kneeling and tending to Kugo was too late for Seifer, as Kugo fell unconscious from her wounds.

"Dammit," Seifer remarked. "She owed me, like, ten strips of latinum."

Menchez addressed him. "It is odd how we are all always owing each other money."

"Well, anyway, I assure you this is not how our fall-time gatherings typically go, but it is on-the-button on sentiments."

Not too long later, Kugo awoke in an infected gaze. She attempted to bite into Seifer, but the Captain force-palmed her head back. He and Menchez then wrestled her into a nearby food storage closet and locked its door.

"You and I work well together. Like the time I teamed up with Obisek on Brea III to defeat Hakeev," Seifer offered.

Menchez was taken aback. "What the Gre'thor? But I thought it was I that teamed up with Obisek to defeat Hakeev??"

"You know what. Let's just say we both did," Seifer compromised before he picked up a phaser from a nearby closet. They both then exited the Messhall through the back doors.

Discovering the tubolifts offline, Seifer and Menchez elected to take a jeffery's tube to the Bridge— a seemingly empty wasteland of malfunctioning consoles.

"According to what's left of these interfaces, the dampening fields are intensifying in certain areas and effecting shipboard systems," Seifer explained while hitting one of the consoles in an attempt to maintain its response.

Menchez looked around. "Is it just me, or is your Bridge bigger, and thus not to spec, than to what it's supposed to be?"

"Yeah, the devs kind of..... kind of rushed it," Seifer replied.

The Klingon changed subjects, annoyed by the constant failures. "Anyway, what is the point of all this? All you can seem to do is justify our immediate horror as being in-sentiment with your culture's Space-Time October celebration."

"Uh, yeah, we use light-hearted attitudes to face our fears. So what if Doctors call that denial? Besides, you Klingons live for this stuff."

Menchez shook his head. "There may be comfort in the danger, but there is nothing honorable about losing yourself to an infection that rips off the Borg!"

"You're lucky Seven of Nine isn't here. She loves those massively numbered cybernetic bee-like assimilators and everyone supports her in that," Seifer argued with passion.

But before they could continue, an odd moan developed from the Captain's Ready Room. "Mmmhrruhhh....."

"I thought the Federation banned cows from starships after that Barclay incident?" Menchez said, confused.

The two slowly made their way over to the Ready Room doors, which were trying to close, repeatedly, except that the torso of a headless and armless corpse was wedging it.

In the corner was Armond on the floor, his sides being eaten into by a mindless Klingon automaton-- though his upper body appeared to be conscious.

"Armond!" Seifer blurted in shock. "Why aren't you screaming, or dead yet?"

The weak tactical officer held up a hypospray. "Uggh..... Got one of these pain relievers on my last trip to— Sickbay, where Avery died. Don't bother— going there, though; it's flooded with infected —just wandering around. Is my— speech pattern— throwing you off?"

"Yeah, a little," Seifer confirmed. "Damn. The dampening fields put the phasers offline too." He tried firing at Derok, but the weapon returned flat-chirps. "Oh, sure, but it's got enough power to make those noises."

Menchez pulled Derok off Armond and angrily moved the seemingly bland Klingon to the far wall. "Qovpath!!" He then impaled a tajtiq through Derok's shoulder, pinning him against the surface. Menchez stepped back to observe his own chief of security, in shock.

"—Communications are —offline as well," Armond continued. "I couldn't— get to you— so I came here, just in case—"

Seifer knelt down at him, "Great; thanks. You knew I'd survive out of anyone else."

"Seemed— likely— since you're a... Captain—" Armond then pointed to the desktop monitor, "Inform—ation..... Infection introduced at — Calibus VII." But the action of pointing weakened him and he passed out.

The Captain closed Armond's eyes. "I hate it when people die with those open. It's like, come on, finish the job."

"Calibus VII is the planet we captured Avery in orbit of," Menchez reported. "The colony was holding a Klingon 'honor of the dead' ceremony during Kot'baval and invited nearby ships."

Seifer recoiled. "Ugh. You mean your Halloween is a ceremony??? Well, I can't say I'm surprised."

"The point is it was Avery that infected your crew! Next time, we need to listen to any person that says: 'say goodbye to your ship'."

Seifer tried accessing the monitor. "Come to think of it, that really was blatant, in-your-face foreshadowing." Then there was a half-beep. "I think there's a cure on here." But the monitor blinked as he tapped at the controls. "What the hell? It's also saying the main database is failing! And I can't even log in to access local memory without it??"

"A Klingon does not try to understand how computers work— We just conquer them and hope for the best," Menchez explained. "And, you were right about my need to embrace all this," he conceded, "As such, I've come to believe this is where we must die. Dishonor is our destiny."

The monitor blinked off from the infection, "Okay, wow. Someone obviously needs jamaharan." Seifer then ejected an isolinear chip. "Anyway, this chip has the local information Armond loaded."

"What is relevant about that? Perhaps we should start over: Hi, I'm Menchez—"

Seifer lit up. "No! What I mean is: Don't you see? We have the magic reset button!" He walked in front of his desk. "Every horrible thing that ever happens to Starfleet vessels, anywhere, no matter the far-fetchy-ness, always gets a quick-turn-around master reset button— Whether it's a Krenim temporal wave, an *Enterprise*-D T-cell de-evolution or magic Kahn-blood— don't ask me where I got that last one from— there is always a guarantee we will to go back to the way things were!"

"That is preposterous!" Menchez countered. "We'd end up with stale repetition, enough to bore our minds into the deck plating, and don't get me started on the abnormal after effects. In fact, I once encountered Warp 10 salamander descendants. One of them was named Venice."

The Starfleet Captain opened his tricorder and was about to walk passed Menchez. "Well, I've already made up my mind, sir. Since our Sickbay is flooded, I have to get to yours and use the *B'CNah* facilities to develop an antivirus. I imagine it's a lot like baking a cake."

"The answer is no," Menchez out-stretched his arm. "We die here, as it is meant to be."

After a moment to weigh the consequences, Seifer quickly knocked the arm away and force-pushed Menchez back for space. The Captain then ran out onto the Bridge, which was quickly being flooded with physically deteriorating, mindless officers.

Menchez ran out, but was too late. He did not see Seifer anywhere. "That petaQ!" He then addressed the inbound crew, quite matter-of-factly, "You are all in need of analgesic cream."

Down in Transporter room 4, Seifer struggled the doors open and bee-lined it to the control deck. With the door left half-open, slow-moving undead-like officers began to squeeze their way in.

"GGrrrrggghh..." the infected version of Ensign Dan managed his way through, hungry for humanoid flesh. He then tripped and fell at Seifer's feet.

Seifer tapped at the controls. "Just enough juice to beam me over. As long as more of you don't enter." Ensign Dan bit into Seifer's left ankle, forcing Seifer to kick Ensign Dan away. "AAAugh! You're relieved for real this time!"

As a gold shirt officer drooled his way in to join the festive party, Menchez's d'k tahg pierced his head from behind, sending the officer to the floor and allowing the Klingon to step in, himself. "Huh. Turns out you've got to aim for the head." He then changed focus, noticing the wound on Seifer, "Captain! If you go over there you will infect my crew!"

"I disagree. The reset will negate that paradigm. Resets for everyone!" Seifer exclaimed. He then began accessing a quickly deteriorating transporter system, "--Computer, beam me out as soon as I'm on the padd."

The computer acknowledged with a half chirp.

Menchez intercepted Seifer on his way and launched a fist to which Seifer coldly stopped by snatching Menchez's forearm. Seifer returned the favor with his free hand, but Menchez leaned back and grabbed that in much the same manner. Clinging to each other in a struggle for dominance, they began to be the target of slow-moving, incoming, drooling officers.

"That's it. I'm a vegetarian from now on!" Seifer said, finally.

Menchez observed the approaching horror, which was tripping and stumbling to his boots. "Uh, I will consider such a commitment."

As he was pushed into, Seifer tripped backward over a crawling brute and Menchez lost his hold. The Klingon was taken down by grabby-infected-hands and he glimpsed Seifer falling backward onto the transporter padd.

The Starfleet Captain was beamed away.

STO Halloween, Part III

Literary Challenge #68

"STO Halloween, Part III"

Captain Seifer beamed into a dimly lit, dank, empty corridor aboard the *Vor'cha*-class I.K.S. *B'Cnah*. In the distance, the deadpan moans of an infected Defense Force officer could be heard coming his way.

"Dammit. The Klingons too??"

As the foaming-at-the-mouth warrior turned the corner for Seifer, another Klingon, Ch'Tong, approached from behind and sliced a mek'leth through the infected's head.

"Yes, the Klingons!" Ch'Tong took notice of the Captain as the body hit the floor between them. "I assume you were remarking in such a fashion before I arrived here. It's just a general response I call out on occasion, hoping it applies."

Seifer nodded. "It does."

"That would mean the *Phoenix-X* is being plagued with the same bitey-bitey-snatch-snatch! After I transported back here, the whole ship started falling apart."

The Captain looked at him. "We learned that Avery was the original carrier, and that it can only spread through attempts at cannibalism."

"No Klingon shall eat another: That has always been one of our people's most influential sayings."

Seifer took out an isolinear chip. "We can ensure that remains true. You see, I have a cure on this, but need to get to your medical bay to read the information and manufacture it."

"That's going to be tough. There are infected all over the decks from here to there and the lifts are offline," Ch'Tong explained. "Besides, where's Menchez? Is he standing right behind you?" He leaned slightly to change his viewing angle to no avail.

Captain Seifer hesitated, unsure how to explain things. "Uhh, well, you know how people can sometimes trip over things? Well, we were being bombarded by drooloids and that spike in Menchez's boot happened to hamper certain foot over foot movements— and, well, you can imagine the rest."

"That sounds unnecessarily step-by-step, unless, of course, you're covering up someth— Wait. By the gre'thor of gre'thor?? You allowed him die so you could escape??" He then pointed in vile accusation. "You're a betrayer!"

Seifer held up his hands. "Nah, bro. It ain't like that."

"And what is that vernacular you speak? It is utterly horrible!!" But in Ch'Tong's increasing cloud of passion, he failed to notice a door prying open next to him, where grabby-infected-hands lurched out and clung on. "Arrgh!" As he was being taken in and bitten into, he spat out in pure strain at Seifer, "You petaQ! You better help me right now! We both have to die here right nowww!"

But Seifer was locked in complete shock as Ch'Tong was taken through the doors, too late to act on the request even if he wanted to. "Dammit. That didn't work out so good." He then attempted to call out to Ch'Tong as he picked up the mek'leth, "I'll make use of this. Thanks!"

As he took a step forward, his weakening leg set off pain detectors in his head. Seifer pulled out one of Armond's hyposprays and shot his shoulder with it.

"Ohhhh yeah. Better than ketrecel white."

The doors from the corridor to the Shuttle bay on the *Phoenix-X* were pried open by a herd of infected. Menchez, covered in blood, tore his way through the bodies with his d'k tahg and approached the *Danube*-class runabout U.S.S. *Iroh*. Inside was Kayl, trying to get it online.

"Captain Menchez?" she said, shocked, as she opened a hatch for him. "I thought Klingons hated slow, steadily-paced violence?"

Menchez helped her close the door as the shuttle bay began to flood with dreary dead-heads. "We do. But violence is violence, and when murdering comes-a-calling, Menchez-comes-a-knocking. In times like these, it is okay to fight like a rabid-unfocused-Ferengi."

"Anyway, if things don't start working out for us, rabid-unfocus is all we'll have left," she explained, gesturing to the windows. The entire shuttle was hauntingly being surrounded by clawing and crying infected. "By the way, what happened to Captain Seifer? Did he die from doing nothing? He likes to do a lot of nothing."

The Klingon clenched his fist. "That petaQ left me to be fed to the wolves while he transported to the *B'Cnah*. We are to head over there and stop him from his arrogant attempt at mundane-ity."

"I'm not sure how I deciphered that, but are you saying he has a cure? Are you saying you have a death wish??"

Menchez gritted his teeth. "I intend on killing your Captain for that one shred of honor within the vacuum of dishonor we've all been mandated. His attempts at reset are harmful and presumptuous!"

"Uh, reset is a Starfleet tradition. I'm sorry, sir, but I can't let you go through with your openly explained planned actions," she went over to a storage container and rifled through it in search of a weapon.

Just standing there, waiting, Menchez began to lose his patience. "Oh, for the love of Sto-vo-kor. Just take my mevak!" He threw her the weapon.

Kayl caught it and launched it toward him. Menchez knocked her arm away and jabbed his d'k tahg at her. Dodging, she grabbed his arm with her free hand and elbowed him. The two stopped when the console next to them beeped.

"I had a program running, which I wrote to counter the dampening effects around the ship," she glanced at the display. "It worked! I knew the Delta Rising subroutine would over-power everything."

But, Menchez, breathing heavy and weak from something else, quickly lurched his head into Kayl's shoulder and bit right into her!

"Aah!" Kayl screamed, pulling back and falling to the floor, bleeding. Her skin started to turn pale. "How dare you do that and not take me out to dinner first??"

The Klingon pulled out a hypospray and shot himself with it. "Ahhh, perfect. It's a good thing Armond had several of these, off-screen." He then turned to Kayl. "My apologies. Your honor will be joining our dishonor, if that makes any sense word-wise." He then activated the *Iroh's* impulse engines, hovering it off the bay floor and knocking several brain-dead officers back.

One of them was Bekk Rinn, visiting for the festival. "Heyyy! I'm not infected?? I'm just camouflaged in blood and guts!" The other lazy-eyed officers turned to his direction. "Ah, I shouldn't have talked."

Seifer, crawling through the maintenance tubes of the *B'Cnah*, had teamed up with several surviving Klingon Defense Force officers: Ulkegh, Necktos, Tayana — all of which he unintentionally betrayed to sudden influxes of infected, brain-thirsty warriors.

Kicking out a service hatch, Seifer entered the medical bay, which was yet to be technologically compromised. "Dammit. What are the odds that all three of them would get 'Seifered'? That's what I'm calling it until the reset."

"If I heard your self-deprecation correctly, most of the crew is dead," Terek, the tall and old Klingon medical officer emerged from the shadows.

Seifer approached and handed him the isolinear chip. "Indeed. I also discovered that the *B'Cnah's* infection originated through Avery's Klingon jackal mastiff, which he acquired on that *Pach*-class ship and likely infected on purpose for you guys and— well, it was this whole side-mission thing. I'm trying to get to Level 60."

"I admire a thorough man in the face of death! But you do know I still cannot ignore the betrayals, right? Killing is the most conflicting and confusing thing a Klingon Doctor must do."

The Captain shook his head. "You're too late anyway. I'm already dying." He took out a hypospray and shot his arm with it... but this time there was no effect. "Bloody hell. It stopped working? This is what I get for being a bad Captain, and I was hoping the reset would patch that."

"Huh? Oh, sorry, I have a tendency to block out other people's personal issues. Also, I was busy reading your data. This appears to be a cure," Terek said, having plugged in the isolinear chip and began scanning through the medical monitor. "According to this, in 2273, your very own Admiral Kirk, Mr. Spock and Doctor McCoy encountered this disease on the previously quarantined Calibus VII. The epidemic was a hybrid organic-cybernetic infection leading to attacks of desperate-franchise-crossing proportions."

Running out of energy, Seifer leaned against a medical bed. "That's.... impossible... I've seen every historical database-episode, even the Pike one."

"Oh, this was cataloged as sequential imagery, a 'comic' if you will— titled, 'Infestation'— Likely nobody read it," he confirmed. "What an obscure and odd reference, though," Terek commented. "Even so, I can actually replicate this quite quickly. It's likely Avery added the dampening effects to the infection for his commendable anti-Federation efforts, so we should distribute in gagh form."

As he began replicating the cure, Seifer found himself confronted with the reality of the 23d century. "That Klingon bastard..... was right. We're just ripping off Kirk...?" He struggled toward Terek in altered-resolve. "We.... have to.... stop.... the reset....."

But the sudden banging on the medical bay doors over-noised him. Terek walked over to the entrance. "Who is it?"

"It's Menchez, you fool!" came the familiar voice.

The Doctor attempted to work the door's unlocking mechanism. "Captain!" But he had trouble unhinging the archaic metal handle, "You'd think we'd have advanced these things by now."

"Terek," Menchez started, recognizing the delay. With his body getting weak and tired, his mind began to drift out of the moment. "I've come to the conclusion that the only way we can all ever be sure of our... deaths... is if they are..... in dishonor....."

Doctor Terek paused. "Sir, you already know I'm impervious to personal issues. Besides, it sounds like you're forcing death for peace-of-mind — despite that being the actual nature of it all."

As he opened the door, Menchez surpassed the unconscious stage and immediately turned into an infected walking corpse— the Klingon Captain charged at Terek, colliding into him while biting right into his neck.

"Aughh!" falling to the floor, the bite shocked-still Terek's motor functions. "This has been— an eventful— Klingon-Halloweeeeennnnngghh!"

Seifer's vision blurred and he turned as well. After a moment of painful screams from Terek, Menchez finished feeding and stumbled over to Seifer.

The two undead-like, drooling, Captains, unable to acknowledge each other, remained pacing around the medical bay having partook and surpassed in one of the most sacred Klingon-Halloween ceremonial traditions ever: the sharing of a near-death experience. Happy Halloween!

The *Soveriegn*-class U.S.S. *Zephyra* came upon the two adrift vessels, the *Phoenix-X* and *B'Cnah*.

"Ma'am," Kuri started, "It appears that both crews have endured a viral, living-death-inducing infection! Captain Seifer and Captain Menchez are walking around aimlessly around what seems to be vats of a gagh-cure. I believe it should be easy to administer if we feed it to everyone in much the same way a mother bird feeds her baby hatchlings."

Captain Aeris, ignoring her tactical officer, gritted her teeth in utter annoyance of what was before her. ".....Those idiots!"

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