

Anthology of Ragnarok

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/563) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/563>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Star Trek: Phoenix-X
Character:	Oroku Seifer
Additional Tags:	Action/Adventure , Mystery
Language:	English
Series:	Part 30 of STO Phoenix Compendium
Stats:	Published: 2016-08-09 Completed: 2018-12-22 Words: 8,812 Chapters: 5/5

Anthology of Ragnarok

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

"It's impossible to make arbitrary assertions based on feeding ones ego anymore." - Anthology of Ragnarok: In the early 25th century, Captain Seifer of the U.S.S. Ragnarok and his crew investigates a matter of ancient origins with the Deferi.

Notes

Author's notes: On the Star Trek Online Forums, I wanted to do a thread that just focused on Captain Seifer and his new ship. Unlike the previous entries, these weren't motivated by any prompts, or played as an RP, but rather, I was going to try standalone shorts masking connective-story. I also seeded a bunch of new crew for the Ragnarok in the Earth Spacedock RP for eventual pay-off in these. These shorts were done a-la carte, around my ULC entries and other RP posts, so these more "pop-up" every once in a while. Started in August 2016.

Tabletop Beginnings

Anthology of Ragnarok #1

Tabletop Beginnings

Captain Oroku Seifer spent the better part of his morning at the Synthbar located within Earth Spacedock's Club 47. But instead of drinking martinis, he had several PADDs in a mess before him, working on a few at a time.

"Can I just ask you something?" approached the El Aurian bartender who had already made a big deal about Seifer not drinking and taking up bar space. "Why couldn't you just compress all your data into one device? What is the point?"

Seifer looked up, aimlessly, and in momentary realization that the bartender was speaking again. "Huh? Oh, the point is that's how we Starfleet officers organize our information. Sure, there's a minor strain on bulkhead material resources, but the more PADDs, the more clutter, the more Starfleet one is! It's well-established, standard officer tradition, actually." And then, a second realization, "Bartender! Another PADD!"

"Ugh," Nelan moaned as he turned away to replicate one more, finally giving up on freeing that spot.

Commander Allura, in command of Spacedock's operations division, approached the bar and sat next to Seifer. "Congratulations on your new command, Captain. That of the U.S.S. *Ragnarok*," she said by way of exposition and greeting.

"Thanks," Seifer answered, pleasantly surprised by the blind Aenar's presence. "I've been finalizing the paperwork for my new Bridge officers. Much of it crossing t's and dotting i's as is the style of this incomplete font we're using now."

She nodded. "It was implemented as punishment for our reluctance to arrest Sela after the Iconian War. What we were on, I will never know." Then, "Oh, and by the way, you're taking up bar space when you should be working in an office, or, at least your ship's Ready Room."

"Since I've been grounded and working here at Spacedock by the malfunction of my old ship, hit by two Breen dissapators, I've come to think of this place as a second home. I know this station is massive, but it turns out all 1000 guest offices are currently being used by equal segmented groups of an Evora delegation."

After Allura was handed a drink, she slammed it on the table for dramatic effect. "Damn! What the Evora lack in height, they make up for in pure, unrelenting numbers. The truth is, they're here for another head-bead ritual, only, this time, the entire station has to partake in it."

"Phew! Perfect timing, since I'll be heading out into sectorized space with the *Ragnarok* soon. I skipped my ship and crew inspection due to excitement-paralyzation. That's a thing in this century, you know."

The Aenar gestured to what she sensed as two Tellarites in a single trench coat, one standing on the shoulders of another, both behind Seifer. "This is our seat, buddy!" the double man argued, both completely identical.

"Tomsin and Tomsin??" Seifer turned in shock and surprise. "I thought you were reassigned to the *Valhalla*?"

The bottom Tellarite grumbled in his own realization at whom he had just encountered. "They wouldn't accept us as a single officer, claiming we were two separate entities now!"

"Captain, please don't tell me you had something to do with this?" Allura interrupted.

Seifer began stacking his PADDs neatly for a possible quick exit. "Well, after more of the overtly dark, unaided whodone-it mystery from the attack at Caldos III, Starfleet wanted me to focus back on the science and weirdness of our original theme. As usual, the Admirals took excitement in the 'return to our roots' thing— an odd obsession of theirs— and when I attempted to initiate artificial atmospheric distortions in a small patch of Earth's atmosphere to lure anaphasic lifeforms, a transporter confinement beam, whence doubled, containing Tomsin, interacted with it and Riker-duplicated the Tellarite back to Earth's surface."

"And we would've been able to live a normal life if Seifer hadn't promised us a position on Admiral Cid's ship! Now we've got no where to go and our acts of illegally boarding the *Valhalla* are on our permanent records!" the top Tomsin argued.

The bottom Tomsin added, "Yeah! And the duplicate thing too."

"Hey! You'd better watch how you speak to a superior officer, Ensigns!" argued Seifer, annoyed.

Top Tomsin slammed his drink down on the table next to the Captain in yet another dramatic effect. "Well, we've been drinking, so our aggressiveness is easily excused through a bar-based social paradigm! How many have you had, *sir*?"

"Err," Seifer looked at his space, which contained PADDs and no drink as not preferred, apparently. He saw no way to play into the suggested cliché. Instead, he pointed at the seemingly unmoving line to the club's lavatories by way of distraction. "Whoa! Did they just move up one!?!"

Both Tomsins, actually interested in that, turned in hopes to witness, when Seifer suddenly took the opportunity to activate an emergency transport unit he had held in his hand this whole time. Allura sensed and heard the dematerialization beam take Seifer away.

Meanwhile, on the Bridge of the *Pathfinder*-class, with *Discovery*-class pylons, U.S.S. *Ragnarok*, the new crew had just finished preparing everything and all systems for departure. Seifer beamed in, unexpectedly, and took his place at the center.

"We have to exit immediately. No time to explain! Just trust me whoever you all are!" he commanded in a general non-direction at who-knows who.

Aramaki walked over and handed him a duty roster PADD. "Admiral Cid used his connections and had two Ensigns, a Tomsin and Tomsin, transferred to us before we were to leave. Just waiting on that before we go."

Suddenly the tactical officer's console beeped, confirming another transport.

"Oh, that should be them!" Aramaki confirmed, happily. "Yes, we're ready to go now. Shall we, Captain? We polished the holo-consoles and everything. Not that they needed to be polished, since they're holographic."

Caught, suddenly mis-sorted, Seifer lost his train of thought and patience, quickly. "Ugh! Those guys again?? Can't I be one of those Captains that just runs away from things? We literally don't have any Captains that do that." And then, "Well. I suppose it's going to be up to me to be a different kind of Starfleet commanding officer, completely off from the Picards and Kirks of the past! All of a sudden, I no longer feel that combo excitement-paralyzation syndrome my old chief medical officer, Doctor Lox, diagnosed me with. I'm just left with just the excitement."

"Should I have the Tomsins meet you on the Bridge for assignment?"

Captain Seifer just waved it off. "Just post them in a corridor somewhere. In the meantime, I'm going to replicate myself a celebratory martini. It would seem our adventure, to hopefully be accompanied by a powerful orchestra-based melody, is just beginning! Seifer out."

Since he wasn't on comms to begin with, he just turned and headed to his Ready Room. The 25th century, in whatever fashion he would be meant to find it in, was now his to command.

Department Heads

Anthology of Ragnarok #2

Department Heads

The *Pathfinder*-class with *Discovery*-class pylons U.S.S. *Ragnarok* trekked through space, aimlessly and haphazardly. Captain Oroku Seifer met with his senior staff in the ship's briefing room. Everyone's attention settled and turned to the Joined Trill.

"Now, I'd like to go around the table and have everyone introduce themselves and say one thing interesting about you," ordered Seifer.

Lieutenant Commander Winry, human and chief engineer, raised her hand. "Sir, permission to not engage in such a lame exercise?"

"It's not lame. They do it on the *Enterprise*, someone once told me once, while smirking, at a party," defended Seifer.

Lieutenant Edward, human and helm operator, added her own remark. "Yeaah, it's a little dumb."

"Uh, it's not that bad," Lieutenant Commander Aramaki, human and tactical officer, interjected. "It's a way for us to get to know each other. Am I right, Cetra?"

The telepathically suppressed Betazoid and ship's doctor, replied, "I don't care. I just want this conversation over with."

"Ugh!" Everyone then looked over to the science officer and Caitian, Lieutenant Commander Moggs, who, instead of adding to the discussion, coughed up a hairball. "Ack! Sorry. Note: Do not have the replicated soufflé after a self-bath."

Seifer waved all the kafuffle away. "No, no. You guys are completely right. It's the poster child of annoying team exercises. I move we all look up each other's profiles on the Federation social media network. All those in favor?"

"Aye!" the rest of the group rung in unison.

The Captain activated the presentation screen behind them and brought up everyone's entrance test results. "Next item on our list, your aptitude numbers. Now, I know there is only so much one person is capable of, but we have to compete with other ships and then gloat about it in their faces, a-la LaForge and his warp engine addiction."

"Aptitude, sir? Is that really necessary? We all aspire to be more than the sum of our parts— that is, our organic parts," said Winry, trying not to subconsciously mimic an android.

The Captain nodded. "Although we have only been together for a short time, I know that you are the finest crew in the fleet and I would trust each of you with my life."

"That is crazy. How would you even just know that out of nowhere unless you've been time traveling? Are you saying you're from the future, Captain?" asked Moggs.

Seifer crossed his arms defensively. "I very well could be. Would that make you comply? Is time travel still fresh and new to you?"

"Quite the opposite, sir. I feel like it's been done to death, gone back into the past, and done to death again," argued Winry.

Aramaki nodded. "Actually, I would interject that it's gone into the future, seen its death, and tried to reassert itself in the past."

"Okay, that's enough. Time travel is never dead. Never so long as there's a selfish desire to crossover things!" the Captain refuted.

Winry continued. "But that's just it. The self-indulgent use of it has only now soured our tastes and any such mention of going forward or back is anything but exciting."

"I suppose I used to think just like you, recoiling at the thought of a quick jump or temporal reset. But, in my dragging days or weeks aboard Spacedock— I don't even know— without a ship, I've grown to appreciate the access we now have to such madness. Together we can make it fresh again!" Seifer preached.

Edward pulled out an ancient alien statue out from underneath the table and placed it on the top for everyone to see. "Ahhhh, fresh like this?"

"Sir??" Doctor Cetra said. "Are you pro-time-travel because you couldn't figure out this really old artifact?"

Seifer looked at the turn of events, perplexed. "Huh? Oh, somewhat. But that's a statue from the Verath system. It's a depiction of one of their sub-ossemites. Captain Terry acquired it before he blew himself up during my Spacedock days."

"It appears to be eating a baby ossemiter," observed Moggs.

The Captain tilted his head. "Wait. You know about this stuff?"

"Ehhh, I don't know about you guys," started Winry, "But I eat ancient architecture papers for breakfast. Helps with engine indigestion. This

Verathan top likely rotates to align one of the three sub-ossemitic statue sides with the baby at its bottom."

Moggs pointed. "That baby's head looks like a bilitrium jewel. It's a highly powerful mineral."

"Well, yeah, actually, the Verathan inscriptions on its side depict the baby as a power source," Seifer explained. "I suspected the second sub-ossemitic to be the power consumer, so I switched it to him before you all entered the briefing room."

Aramaki leaned in to take a look. "You would be correct, had the second one been wearing the energy symbol, but according to what we know of their upper-class society, sometimes their energy responsibilities lay with the third sub-ossemitic."

"Of course!" Seifer snapped his fingers. "Wait. You study anthropology?"

The tactical officer shrugged. "It ties into behavioral performance. That, and there's this smoking hot Tellarite chick who's into it too."

"Well, I'm not going to comment on that last part, but your logic is perfectly acceptable, I assume," Seifer agreed.

Everyone watched as the Captain took the statue and rotated the upper half until the side with the third sub-ossemitic aligned with its open mouth over the jewel-headed baby. The object then started to emanate a low-level glow from its cracks, and the baby's head began to emit hovering, short-range clumps of energized matter.

"Something inside of that thing activated the bilitrium," reported Moggs as he scanned with his tricorder. "Harmful radiation levels are rising."

Seifer placed his commbadge onto it. "Captain to transporter room. Lock on to my signal and beam it out into space."

"Right away, sir! Except, I can't get a lock due to some kind of interference," Ensign Khalid answered over air. *"Huh. I guess any of us can fall victim to the 'some kind of' trope after all."*

The Captain took his commbadge back and unsuccessfully rotated the statue, whilst perplexed. "Why'd they make a device that powers up like this?"

"Uhhh, huh. Worship reasons, me thinks," spoke up a quirky Lieutenant Edward. "Yep. I know religions. You offer your statue praise. Praise it, yes!"

Cetra sighed. "There was once a supposed Verathan event where massive offerings of flower pedals, native to their planet, was unloaded at one of their power-shrines." Then, to explain: "Doctor and occasional history buff. Don't ever ask me why."

"A Saurian flower comes close to what some botanists believed was the molecular construct of Verathan flowers," offered Moggs. "Though, there wasn't much by way of confirming this."

Seifer put the statue on the table and went over to the replicator. "Well, there is now. Anyone want a coffee or tea while I'm up here?"

"Sir, the radiation will pass the kill-us threshold within seconds," continued Cetra. "Seconds!"

The Captain nodded at her over-acting as he brought the replicated flower before the statue. The matter around it then began to fade and the flower started to wither.

"Levels dropping," reported Moggs, who then eyed the flower. "Anyone going to eat that?"

Winry sat up. "You know, we could have all just gotten up and left the room. Basic Survival 101."

"In the middle of a briefing?? That's crazy talk, Winry," argued Aramaki. "That goes on our permanent records, you know."

Seifer sat down and examined the statue. Its glow completely faded. "Fascinating. Since it only took one flower, this thing could be a mini-home version of something much larger. Perhaps something at that event Cetra mentioned."

"Captain, you were right about the madness," offered Winry. "Perhaps such things are worth it after all."

The Trill put the statue down. "And we make a pretty good team. —Computer! Delete the crew's aptitude information."

"Acknowledged," the computer chirped. *"Crew academic records deleted from the Federation-wide database."*

Aramaki threw up his hands. "Now we'll never be able to transfer to another ship!"

"Is that all for this meeting, sir?" asked Winry. "Are we ever going to do space stuff?"

Seifer changed the presentation screen. "Well, there is this request from a Deferi colony world for Starfleet assistance. But I told them to stop being whiny babies. Now that we're a well-oiled machine, we can say those things."

"Oooh! Gonna make ship go, go, go!" Edward sat up, excited.

The Captain rolled his eyes. "Oh, alright. We'll go check it out. But after that, you all have to develop a poker routine, where I come in at the

end of seven years and you all love it."

"Fine. But no time travel, ever," bargained Winry. "Especially if that's the result of your planned-poker-reluctance."

Seifer sat uneasy. "Uggh. I guess. But you'd all better have an unrelenting affection for me by the end of it all." Then he turned to the crew, excited for the future and their adventures. "Dismissed!"

Neutrality for Beginners

Anthology of Ragnarok #3

Neutrality for Beginners

The *Pathfinder*-class, with *Discovery*-class nacelles, U.S.S. *Ragnarok* approached the small Deferi colony world of Covalence. There, a Breen Sarr TheIn warship, the *Leinstien*, stood in orbit staring down the forlorn colonists in anger.

Captain Oroku Seifer sat in his chair on the Bridge, observing the visual. "They always seem so menacing. Or, is that just me anthropomorphizing a ship with attitude? Because I've done that before. I once characterized a smaller Klingon Bird of Prey as 'cute and precious', but it turned out their disrupter shots stung like a bee. I don't know how, but I had red marks on my skin for weeks."

"ZZKRRTSDDDDKKkrrrrRRkkT!" came the angry hail from Relk Marcel over the viewscreen. "VVKKRRRTzzzzkkkkdddDD!"

Seifer was taken aback. "Uh, wow. Could you be any ruder? Anyway, do you know that you are impeding upon the freedom of having empty space around a planet to the Deferi? That is a thing many species find annoying. Also, atmospheric hygiene, man. Think before you idle."

"MMDDKKKSSZZZZzzzEERrRRRk!" Marcel said. "VEVVEEERRKk! KkdddDDDKRRT!"

The Trill shrugged. "Obviously, you don't know anything about cats, because a cat would never do what you are suggesting. At least, none of the Android-owned ones."

"VVRRRKT! KRGGGTTVV!?" the Breen argued.

Seifer nodded. "That is certainly something we can agree on. The Dominion War was clearly well done. If anything, it was one of the best wars ever and the viewers loved it. Anyway, *Ragnarok* out."

"Captain, I didn't have my universal translator aligned," the tactical officer and Human, Lieutenant Aramaki, admitted as soon as the screen cut off. "What did he say?"

Oroku Seifer shook his head. "That he would never choose Picard over Kirk. I mean, who does that? I think the choice is clear. Diplomacy and calmness is the epitome of high road."

"Uh, I think we'd like to know what he said about his position over the planet. They are clearly overstepping their boundaries," the science officer and Caitian, Lieutenant Commander Moggs, corrected. "And the answer is Kirk."

Rolling his eyes, Seifer replied. "Well, we'll talk about that. As for the Breen, they said they can do whatever they want because that's just how they operate. I couldn't argue too much with that logic, because their claimed track record on said operation was quite accurate."

"Gonna speak to the Deferi? Huh? Huh?" perked the helmswoman and human, Lieutenant Edward.

Seifer pointed at her. "I like the way you think! Let's do that thing you said. Whatever it was. Ice cream?" And then. "No. That's right, the colonists."

Seifer, Aramaki and Moggs transported down to the outdoor 'welcoming area' at the centre of the Deferi town. There, they were greeted by a Deferi leader named Cassen.

"You are both welcome and not welcome here. We lean neither one way nor the other," he said with open arms, before he realized how even that would be perceived as over-welcoming.

Seifer crossed his own arms. "Uh, you sent us a distress signal, so why wouldn't you be pleased to see us?"

"My feelings over the response of such a signal are neither positive nor negative. But, yes, you see, the Breen have been bullying us and won't go away."

The Captain nodded. "Any idea why?"

"We believe it to be our neutral nature, which invites aggressiveness in the most negative of forms from any neighbouring species."

Then Seifer asked, "Well, what about positive interactions? Wouldn't a non-leaning, greyed-out attitude invite an equivalent measure of friendship and camaraderie?"

"That seems impossible, since the galaxy is currently being permeated by a pessimistic fourth dimensional energy force," Cassen explained.

Nodding, Seifer said, "Ah, the Q put that there as a joke. It's been hanging around a while. Anyway, I'll see what I can do about the Breen. But they were very convincing to me about their need to stay here, and I'd be hard-pressed to confront people so clearly better than us."

"But, but...?"

Captain Seifer laughed. "Just kidding. We'll destroy them for you. It's a new Starfleet thing we do."

Upon retreating with his group, Seifer, Aramaki and Moggs came to convene off to the side of the town square with themselves.

"Thoughts?" the Captain asked.

The tactical officer replied, "I kind of agree with the Breen. Might as well bully the weak while you can. I mean, you only live once."

"We could take their quadrotriticale grain while we're at it," Moggs added. "It's quite delicious."

Seifer shook his head. "No, I mean how to defeat the Breen! You know we can't go back on decisions we've already committed to. It's counter-productive, and that, more than anything, is what we need to maintain. Oh, and ethical behaviour of a certain measure, I suppose. Nothing too outrageous."

"Right!" Aramaki agreed. "Well, we could fire upon the *Leinstien*, thus proving who has the biggest torpedo tube. We have a science ship, but I think it's not about size, but, rather, how you use it that matters."

Moggs turned to him. "Might I remind you, the Prime Directive prevents us from interfering with the development of substandard cultures, and the Deferi are, well, I don't want to get nasty, but, well, you know; implications by tangent statements and all."

"What? They're the filth of Quadrant? Might I remind you, that you clean yourself using your tongue?" Seifer accused.

The Caitian pointed at him. "That has never been proven, nor is that appropriate commentary from upper management! Now, where do we take our midday nap?" Then, admitting, "I need to, uh, lick... something unrelated."

"How about we focus on the Breen? Apparently, they are in a perpetual state of searching for Preserver-Progenitor technology: The technology of the people who directed the formation of all humanoid life in our galaxy."

Seifer thought for a moment. "So, creationism is our thing and not evolution?"

"Now that you say it out loud, it sounds ridiculous!" Moggs said. "Anyway, should we not just ask and/or follow them?" He redirected his perpetual pointing finger at a group of Breen transporting into a distant field, visible and far off from the town square.

The Captain took notice. "This will prove my theory that the Breen were up to no good from the very beginning. Sooooo untrustworthy."

"You clearly love the Breen. Did you forget they joined the Dominion once?" Aramaki added. "That's a Gul Dukat level of insolence not even Evil Kes could have ever matched."

Seifer waved it off. "Pfft! She was doomed to begin with. A seven-year lifespan? Clearly her makers didn't know how to handle that. Not that it was rocket-science."

As the three approached the area of the field which the Breen had just breeched, they came to find no one there and a two foot-high stone-bricked platform sitting in the middle of nowhere.

"This appears to be a remnant of a past culture," Moggs observed. "But that doesn't explain where those men went, nor do dry facts have any place in everyday conversation."

Moggs pushed in a protruding brick and the platform opened into stairs that descended into the ground. Seifer, Aramaki and Moggs walked down the steps, deep into the history of the world to find an open cavern of a large alien-shaped pyramid that the four Breen soldiers were scanning with their devices.

"Hold it right there!" Seifer called out as he and his team aimed phasers. "How dare you do things and such? Don't you know getting out of bed is a hassle in and of itself? I can't even go into the thought of breakfast at this point."

The angry disturbance of Relk Marcel turned in his direction. "*KKZZSSKklvvvVVGgGrK! ZZZrrrKF!*"

"Well, no, we don't have permission to be here either. But who are we to mess with the status quo? You're here and clearly that's a thing that's happened at least once," Seifer answered.

Then Marcel added, "*TTTKzzZZZRKVVVV! VVVVVKTTT! GGGV!*"

"Obviously, I read up on Captain Archer's temporal exploits and am as confused as anyone how Temporal Cold War incursions still happened at certain points despite the war being later prevented by Archer himself."

The Breen agreed, then continued, "*ZZKKRrRRRRrrrVVVvvvVSZDDDDKRR!*"

"There is no evidence to back up Janeway's attempts at teaming up with Borg to destroy another race. It's all just hearsay, as far as I know," Seifer said. "Anyway, you have yourselves a great day."

At that, the Breen walked passed them, to exit the underground cavern the way they came in.

"Sir, did you just repeat that communication-bit you did at the very beginning? My thirteenth brother always did that. Drove me crazy," Moggs said. "Also, you appear to have let them off the hook again?"

Seifer nodded. "Indeed. The Breen's talk-mock is all there is out of a race of distorted yap-chappers, through of which they explained claims of dissident Deferi and Deferi pre-knowledge to underground ancient structures of such and that."

"What is the point of being so neutral??" complained Aramaki. "You're neither Picard or Kirk! You're just blank! You know I was supposed to look up to you, right?"

The Captain held up a finger. "Oh, you'll be in the complete opposite end of *that* spectrum by the end of the week."

Returning to the surface, Captain Seifer, Lieutenant Commander Moggs and Lieutenant Aramaki met with Cassen who was being confronted by Marcel and his three rifle-aiming Breen soldiers.

"VRRKKVVVvvvVVT!" Marcel said, in anger.

Cassen held up his hands. "Yes, so we did know about the caves, but we didn't have any obligation to tell you about them. Isn't that right, Captain Seifer?"

"Uh, you didn't even tell *us*," the Trill countered. "How are we supposed to assist you with partial information? My science officer has way too many siblings to stand for that."

The Deferi crossed his arms. "Hey, doesn't Starfleet work on a need-to-know basis? You are clearly aware of the kind of work-methods which require stratagem."

"KRRGGgzZZrKrrrrrGGG! Gkrk!" Marcel added.

Seifer held up his hand. "Hey, I'm more on the Deferi's side of things, but I haven't completely signed off on the Breen's either. So, basically, indecisiveness is its own reward. That's going in my log for sure."

"If you gentlemen must know, the pictographs on those underground structures have just recently been deciphered as Ancient Deferi," Cassen explained. "It took us a while to work it out because our neutral nature wouldn't accept the results one way or the other. We couldn't even decide what to have for our post examination snack timeslot."

Marcel growled. "VVRRRKKLLggGGrrRRKr!"

"Yeah, the Breen are right. You really need to stop being so neutral. In fact, because I've been engaged in similar, but differently motivated, behaviour, I'm going to make my own decision here and now: And that is that I believe the Breen need to leave this world alone," Captain Seifer declared. "I just invented it as a possible course of action. What do you think?"

Marcel growled even more as his men turned their rifles to aim at the Starfleet officers. "VVggGGGGrRRRTTKRR!"

"What? I thought you'd be happy with my following through with your side-choosing task??" Seifer said in shock. "Also, none of these ruins are Preserver-based, the Archive of which was already revealed and fought over with Thot Trel on Lae'nas III, so you should be done with all of this."

The Breen added. "VRKRRRRLGGGGggRKe!? DRRRRrrGGTTttkkWWNXX! STTtKKRTGGGXXChhHRgG! VVVvLRRGkKM!"

"Seriously, when do Moggs and I get our universal translators fixed?" interrupted Aramaki. "I keep hearing a ringing noise in addition and it may be destroying me, physically."

Moggs spoke up. "Also, how does an Ancient Deferi culture make its way all the way out into space to colonize this world? I've barely come to grips with my own genetic relations."

"We suspect we are an off-shoot of their evolutionary branch," Cassen added. "But more research is needed, as, apparently creationism is a thing now? And the Breen have yet again concluded much more than is here, as is the style of their kind, which my colony must now adapt to, thanks to your example, Captain Seifer."

Behind Cassen was now a large group of Deferi, ready to confront Marcel in any way possible. The gathering caught Seifer and the Breen off guard.

"Whoa! I never thought of you as the doing-kind??" Seifer said. "Just wait until you try breakfast!"

Cassen nodded. "I will. But, to be honest, this congregation is causing us a much anticipated heavy dose of anxiety, so it would be appreciated if the Breen could react quickly before we all collapse under our own shaky feet."

"VRRRRKKZZRRCCHHMRRR!" Marcel's men turned their weapons to the group, but, instead, the Relk ranked individual held up his hand to signal them 'stop' in lost patience from all the madness they have been going through. *"BBTTTTVVrrRRRGGGhhLKR!"*

Having enough of it, Marcel ordered his Breen soldiers and himself to transport back up to the *Leinstien*. After they dematerialized, the *Ragnarok* hailed the Captain below.

"Sir, it looks like the Breen are departing. They've just gone to warp," reported Winry. *"Also, their warp effect leaves residual snowflakes for some reason."*

Captain Seifer tapped his commbadge. "Acknowledged, Lieutenant Commander. Like the buzzing noise of the two-reason-incessant Talaxian fur fly, the Deferi have annoyed the Breen away and to no end."

"A tactic we could all learn from," she said, before she cut the transmission, unsure at why she said it.

The Trill then turned to Cassen. "One more thing: Were the Breen right? Is there something more to the origin of these structures?"

"Definitely not," Cassen replied. "And you know we aren't lying, because we could never take a position on something. Well, except when it comes to the Breen now and that's only for, at most, three to four minutes at a time."

Observing a fainting and knees-buckling crowd of Deferi, Seifer somehow was only partially convinced. "Very well then, Cassen. We'll be in orbit for a little while longer, in case they return. There are plenty more communication-bits to be had between them and I. So, if you need anything, let us know."

"Thank you, Captain," Cassen replied. "As we learned during the Borg conference on Deep Space 9, sometimes action is required more than inaction."

Seifer nodded and Cassen watched the Starfleet officers dematerialize away. Then Cassen narrowed his brow in more confidence, appreciative of all the obstacles finally out of his colony's way in order for them to pursue what they previously had intended to go after.

"The find will be ours now."

Finders, Not Keepers

Anthology of Ragnarok #4

"Finders, Not Keepers"

The *Pathfinder*-class, with *Discovery*-class nacelles, U.S.S. *Ragnarok* trekked altruistically through space. Captain Oroku Seifer entered the Bridge to begin yet another day of saving the universe.

"You know, I think it's about time the universe owed us one," he said, thinking back to his adventures.

Aramaki looked up from his tactical station. "That's quite a Kirk-level claim, sir. You ready to back that up with evidence?"

"Ugh. The obsession people have with truth and verifiable sources is appalling," the Captain deviated. "It's impossible to make arbitrary assertions based in feeding ones ego anymore." He sighed, before looking over to one of the Tomsins. "I retract my earlier statement."

The Operations officer, and Tellarite, suddenly found himself caught off-guard and fearful he made a mistake somewhere. "Huh? Was I supposed to be taking stenography this whole time?"

"Captain! I'm reading a distress signal from Covalence! It's been coded just for us!" claimed Moggs from his science station.

Seifer smiled, warmly. "Aw, that means they care. Moggs, return message with a digital Thank You Card; one of those animated ones where our heads are placed over a bunch of dancing Orion slave girls."

"Done," the Caitian and science officer replied.

Edwards turned from the helm. "Uhhh. Shouldn't we go help them?"

"Oh, fine. But remember, I was against this," the Captain conceded.

Later, the *Ragnarok* hung in orbit of the Deferi colony world of Covalence, while Seifer, Moggs and Aramaki beamed down to the subsurface. They joined the leader, Cassen and several of his scientists who were scanning the destroyed underground pyramid.

"Our intensive scans reveal this to be the work of the Breen, as you can see here with the residual polaron energies in the rubble," commented the lead Deferi.

Moggs did some scans of his own and confirmed with a nod. "It is accurate."

"Well, of course it is!" countered Segg, one of the Deferi scientists. "You think we've been neutral in our actions here the whole time??"

The Caitain turned to them. "That reaction in itself lacks neutrality."

"That's besides the point!" Segg retorted before going back to whatever it was he was doing.

Seifer looked to Cassen. "Strange that the Breen would feel the need to destroy all this after they had already taken their scans here. Have you been able to translate the pictographs?"

"Unfortunately, no," replied the alien man. "This form of Ancient Deferi language appears to be assembled in a way that doesn't adhere to our standards of communicative structures. It's like the words and letters were positioned at random for jocularities sakes. But I'm unaware of our peoples having any senses of humor, nor the understanding of what that would entail?"

The Trill man then reacted to Cassen's meaningful and long look. "There's a Data Stand-Up Comedy program that everyone raves about. It's practically why they brought him back in that old body." He shuddered in fear. "Soooo old."

"If the Breen came back here to destroy the evidence, then we won't have much time left to track their residual warp trail," Aramaki spelled out.

Seifer nodded. "Agreed. All those in favor of checking out one of those Deferi neutral coffee clubs and then moving into search mode, say Aye?"

"Doubtful that course of action is anything remotely productive right about now," Moggs interjected. "And 'Aye' has become agonizingly cliché."

The Captain sighed. "You guys need to get out more. It's all I'm saying. Wesley saw more social time than either of you."

Later, the U.S.S. *Ragnarok* dropped warp before the Breen *Sarr Theln* warship *Leinstien*. The Breen were hailed immediately.

"Enemy vessel, you are in violation of normal-speak," came the hail from Oroku Seifer. "Oh, and the preservation of Deferi ancient sites and such."

"XXrrrrzzZZZkrrrRRRrTTTT!" Marcel replied.

"Exactly! Also, what do you mean, Cassen is a lair? He's the most trust-worthy Deferi I've ever met. Not that I've met many. But you get my point, which I may have self-defeated through deconstruction."

"TTEEFXXSSsvvvv GGhhhvkvKttt!" Marcel interjected.

"What do you mean I don't sound convincing and you think I lack self-honesty as a personal trait? That's awfully specific? Also, our space adventures, which are our livelihoods, hinge on mission-givers like him. Never mind. What are you doing here anyway? Plotting things, no doubt," Seifer claimed, with no evidence what-so-ever. "I mean, just look at you, however you are interpreted to be situated."

"GGDDDDVVVvvvKTTtttZch!" Marcel explained.

"Fascinating. Well, I can't argue with that. The mating patterns of the Regulus Eel-bird are highly complex. —Very well, crew, let's help them," the Captain said, turning to his Starfleet officers. "Do the things!"

Aramaki looked almost panicked. "But, sir, we don't even know what he said? None of us have our universal translators updated!"

"Still? Oh, fine: They translated the inscriptions from that Ancient Deferi site which describe an ancient planetoid, hidden here by said people. If sayings of words can somehow be translated into truth, then our mission was a lie and these Breen were the good guys all along. — Dominion War excluded, obviously."

The two ships veered off and began scanning around the cold, blank, emptiness of space. Soon, a planetoid was discovered, hidden in a mass of anti-particles. Both groups then beamed into a cavern, with the Starfleet Away Team wearing EV-suits.

"Captain, I'm detecting more Ancient Deferi pyramids," Moggs said, as the group suddenly entered into a large cavern where many more of them existed.

Seifer looked at him. "Mr. Moggs, you know I like to be pleasantly surprised using the classically effervescent 'You better come see this' statement."

"Uh, 'you better come see this' statement," said Aramaki before realizing that Seifer was standing right next to him. "What the? How long have you been right here?"

The Captain waved him off. "Forget that. It looks like more Breen, but I don't recognize this group," he said while examining a second plethora of soldiers inside the cavern with them.

"VVVRRRRrKKkkkZZ jvvvvrrtt!" exclaimed Kovan, the leader of the new Breen group as he approached and stepped on an embossed stone-tile in the ground.

Seifer translated. "Kovan is the leader of a pack of Breen Rebels, who also want what Marcel and the Deferi are looking for."

"GRRggh!" agreed Marcel as he witnessed the effects of the stone-tile prompting several ejecting spears to be shot out at everyone.

Both the Starfleet Away Team and the two Breen groups scrambled around giant rocks for cover. The ejecting spears continued being fired from the cavern's extraneous internal walls. In the distance, under a giant, blank wall, was a switch and carved images of a man holding a spear.

"Must be the mechanism to stop this," Seifer presumed, his back to the rock, alongside Marcel. "Or, a lever to fire even more ammunition at us. I'm sure it could go either way."

Marcel then declared, "VVrrrKGGgghTTTK nmKTTt!" ordering he and his men to go for it.

"Captain, no!" Seifer countered, all but too late, as everyone watched the Breen men from the second group, run, dodge and leap over incoming spears. One of the Breen were immediately impaled, and then another: Then another, and another, until Marcel himself reached the end.

The Breen Captain was the last to be impaled before he was able to pull the ancient lever. Everyone watched in awe as the eons-old defense system halted while triggering another mechanism in the wall, causing the blank area to rotate around and reveal pictographs on what was its opposite side.

"VVKRRRRDDDxxzzVVrrtttTTT MrrxsssDDDDdd!" said Kovan, reading the inscriptions. "Vrrt."

Seifer translated for his crew. "This was a city led by the Druids of the Deferi, who were apparently managers of something akin to being called the Deferi Powered-Man. Also, run." He then attempted to process that last part. "Run from what?"

Suddenly, the entire cavern began to shake ever more. Rocks from the ceiling began to fall, threatening everyone, and prompting Kovon to contact his ship and beam he and his group out.

"Well this is an odd turn of events," admitted Aramaki. "This whole thing was about a man?"

The Captain nodded. "Men have been the movers and shakers of the galaxy for eons and eons to come, as well as women. It's about equal actually, if not, more-leaning on the women-side. Besides, Marcel was right about the Deferi, invalidating our very purpose here, and now he's dead, proving the Breen are much cooler than we thought. Pun intended." He then tapped his commbadge. "Seifer to *Ragnarok*: KKKVVVvvZZZzrrk! VVrrrrkkk!! BBbvvrvt!!!?%\$^!!"

"Uh, what?" came the reply from Winry over comms.

Seifer snapped. "You were supposed to learn Breen while we were gone! Anyway, get us out of here. No rush, though. Nothing bad ever happens during a hasty beam-out."

At that, the group dematerialized along with several giant rocks as the cave collapsed all around.

"Aw man, I just got Tuvix'd!" Seifer said as he and his team beamed onto the transporter pad of the *Ragnarok*, finding several rocks fused to all-over-his-body. "Well, I won't do what Janeway did and reverse it. Rock body stays, everybody," he reassured. "Rock body stays."

The Deferi Powered-Man

Anthology of Ragnarok

"The Deferi Powered-Man"

The *Pathfinder*-class, with *Discovery*-class nacelles, U.S.S. *Ragnarok* drifted aimlessly in space, rotating endlessly for what seemed like all foreseeable time.

Captain Seifer, laced with fused rocks throughout his body, entered the Messhall and approached the replicator.

"One redbat stew, please," he requested before the bowl materialized and he took it to a table. His left hand was just a rock, causing him to accidentally smash the bowl when reaching for the spoon. "Ah, it's just as well. I heard this stuff was cancerous to non-Andorians."

Aramaki, Winry, and Moggs walked over and sat with the Captain. "Sir, some of the crew and I are worried about you," Aramaki said. "You refuse to reverse a transporter accident, you left the lights on in the Cargo Bay, and our entire payload of replicated chocolate has been depleted."

"What do I eat!? WHAT DO I EAT!??!" screamed the Betazoid officer Cetra as she ran by.

Seifer looked impressed. "I'm glad when examples present themselves immediately following the set-up."

"On the other hand, we've been examining our scans of the Deferi Druid wall depictions," Moggs said, while taking out a PADD with their work. "They're just like two other Deferi planetoids, found in the last three centuries with similar depictions."

Seifer grabbed the PADD with his one good hand and examined the data. "This says these are Deferi breakfast menus. It's a recipe for a grey paste with no flavor whatsoever!"

"They're neutral in their foods. Is that surprising?" Winry asked. "Except the portions in these instructions are massive. More than one army of complacent doltish simpletons could ever eat."

The Captain put the PADD down. "The Deferi Powered-Man. All these ancient colonies, were somehow working together to supplicate this thing. Because they worshiped it?"

"Yep! Yep! Thoughts and prayers and paste! Yep!" came the excitement of Lieutenant Edwards as she sat down with a bowl of her own redbat stew and began sipping it.

Seifer panicked. "Edwards, no!"

"It's okay," interjected Doctor Cetra as she sat down with an open bag of coffee beans. "I regularly modify her DNA with Andorian so she can eat that."

The Captain sighed. "Ever since I messed things up by duplicating all those unnecessary Tomsins, I've been stressing about my missions going bad. Losing Marcel just solidified those fears and keeping my transporter accident was going to be my reminder. But seeing you guys come together now gives me hope." He stood up. "Let's find this thing."

"Hey guys, did we miss an impromptu meeting?" asked one of two Tomsins, approaching the table.

Seifer snapped at them. "Yes you did. You're relieved of duty!"

"Dammit, I told you we should've got our haircuts from that Bolian, second," one of the Tomsins said to the other.

The other felt his copy's head. "He's dead now."

Later, the *Ragnarok* approached a derelict, rogue planet, orbited by the Breen vessel *Nokoda* and the Deferi ship *Sannaska*.

"Both vessels are completely empty, sir," reported Aramaki from tactical.

Moggs checked his PADD. "It would seem the Breen and the Deferi came to the same conclusion we did. The locations of each wall inscription were pointing to a world in this vicinity."

"Everything is constantly moving in this galaxy," countered Cetra. "How did you extrapolate celestial history without knowing exact dates?"

The Science officer Moggs just shrugged. "Eh, I just pointed randomly at the map. Starfleet! Am I right?"

No one answered him.

"I'm right."

A now whole-Seifer, Aramaki, Moggs and Winry beamed down to a large, underground cavern with enormous sections of lower-level areas: One side filled with Breen soldiers and the other Deferi.

"Here are all the lifeforms we detected," said Aramaki as he scanned with his tricorder. "I just love scanning for lifeforms."

The Captain shook his head in disapproval when Aramaki looked at him for permission to sing. Meanwhile, a Breen away team and a Deferi away team on the same upper level as them, hurried over.

"Hold it right there," said the Deferi leader Cassen as he aimed a phaser at them. "Yes, that's right. We have taken a not-neutral stance, and we are not fainting as one would think."

Winry crossed her arms. "You're using Osmotic eels, aren't you? They cure anything."

"Pretty much all of us are," Cassen replied. "As you can see, we have the situation under control."

But the Breen commander, Kovan, felt otherwise. "*SKKZZTTkkt!*"

"Well, except for them," the Deferi seceded. "You see, you were supposed to take out the Breen and get them out of the way for us."

Seifer tilted his head. "You lied to us Cassen. You used us!"

"I'm pretty sure I just admitted to that," he said. "That you're here now suggests a meddling of unexpected proportions."

The Captain shrugged. "That's pretty much our unspoken philosophy. As for you, it's apparent now that all you wanted to do is bring back your Deferi Powered-Man. But it didn't work out the way you'd have hoped, did it?"

"Some mechanism in this cave transported all of our crews off our ships and into these chambers after we triggered one of the traps here," Cassen admitted. "A force field of some kind prevents us from freeing them."

Suddenly, the entirety of Seifer's crew were transported into an open lower-area section, much to his surprise. "What!? But we didn't trigger any traps?"

"Oh, that's just going to keep happening with any ship that approaches," the Deferi replied. "There are sections for crews for the whole planet. Who knows why?"

Aramaki turned to him. "What's the point of all this? Why bring back some ancient behemoth?"

"Because I'm tired of being the neutral species with no power what-so-ever. It's opened us up for bullying by the Breen and any species that comes by! Seriously, even the Pakleds. They made us dress them??"

Kovan added, "*KKrrTTjjjvvvVVt!*"

"He says he just wants power," Cassen translated. "Man, that's one dimensional. Get with the character development, Kovan."

Seifer walked over to a giant stone circle embedded into the side of the cave, appearing to be ancient with engravings and movable sections. "This is how you get him, isn't it? The Deferi Powered-Man?"

"Precisely. But any wrong move, and we could lose everyone," Cassen said. "Not that I care about what happens to the Breen. Hah! This taking-sides thing is giving me an adrenaline rush!"

The Captain pointed to some engraved pictographs. "According to these depictions, rotating these stone parts a certain way will open the forcefields."

"Sir, are you sure about this?" questioned Moggs. "You could literally lose your whole crew! Or duplicate them. I'm sure either scenario is as plausible."

Seifer shook his head. "No, but I can't let that possibility hold me back anymore. I'll make quadruple Tomsins if it means we progress in some way."

"I recognize these engravings. They're the recipes found on the other worlds," Aramaki said in surprise. "We can align them to match the layouts of the other cave inscriptions."

Nodding, Seifer replied, "Make it so."

As the group of three away teams got to work, rotating the interior circles to line up properly, Seifer, Cassen and Kovan took a step back to get a wider view of their progress.

"This is it! We will finally have some gravitas!" belted Cassen. "This is what I was thinking: The Breen gets him Mondays and Tuesdays, the Federation gets him Wednesdays and Thursdays, and we Deferi get him the rest of the week. What do you think?"

Kovan agreed. "FFVVVKKRRRTT!"

"Hold on a second," interrupted Seifer. "Those rectangle engravings we just rotated represent the areas our crews are in. They appear below the main creature figure."

Cassen tugged his elongated alien ear. "Huh. It looks like... it's eating them?"

VVVRRRRTTTT!!! came the loud noise of the cave as the stone circle was complete. The entire area shook while the circle moved to the side to reveal a giant 20-foot creature within. It began to move, restlessly.

"Our crews are its meal!" Cassen realized.

Seifer took out his phaser and aimed it at the giant being. "Those areas are probably where your people put your boring grey paste. Only, the one ingredient it was missing was people."

"Haaa! People are food. I like it," said Aramaki. "Oh, but not right now."

The enormous creature stepped out and prompted the away teams to scatter. "RRRRRAAAAAOOOORRRRR!!!!" came its piercing scream while it flung its fists into the ground, smashing into the floor.

"Open fire. We have to destroy that living piece of history!" Captain Seifer commanded. "Oh man. The Federation Historical Society is going to kill me."

The Breen complied, but the Deferi held back.

"Don't!" Cassen ordered his people. "We must remain neutral until it is in our power once again. Sure, our crews will die, but they have been trained to have no reactions either way when being eaten."

The Deferi Powered-Man moved to the force fielded sections with the crews inside and began smashing his large fists, draining the power of the fields with each attack.

"I have an idea," Seifer said, snapping his fingers. "Can we replicate an equivalent portion of Ancient Deferi grey paste and beam it down here?"

Moggs began running the calculations on his PADD. "That would require all the *Ragnarok's* replicators running at once until all decks were flooded with that gobbledy-gook!"

"Did I say 'make it so' yet? I think I did. But it's such a good one. I'll have to write Picard a 'thank you' note, wherever he is, whatever he's doing. They should make a series about that. I'd call it Make it So."

Suddenly, aboard the U.S.S. *Ragnarok*, all the replicators were activated remotely and began spewing out grey food-paste, non-stop. The paste poured out of everyone's quarters and onto the decks.

Meanwhile, sections of the grey paste began beaming down into the cavern, catching the Deferi Powered-Man's attention and causing him to stop smashing the forcefields.

"GGGrrggg!!!"

It turned and ran off toward a lower-level section where the paste was filling up from transports, and fell in face-first.

"Oh no," worried Winry as she tapped frantically at her own PADD. "The ship is producing more grey, boring content than we asked it to. One of the algorithms must be clogged in a redundant unofficial literary code net!"

Seifer turned to her. "Are you making this an analogy thing? What the hell? Don't do that!"

"It's too late," said Aramaki as he pointed to the giant pool of grey paste the large creature was previously revelling in. "The Powered-Man is drowning!"

Cassen stepped forward. "No! My return-to-inaction has wrought terrible consequences!"

"VVVffffKkrrRttkk," agreed Kovan.

Everyone watched as the giant creature choked and died on its own gluttony.

The Breen away team opened fire upon the forcefields covering each of the crews until the energy barriers were depleted. All the Breen then transported back up to their ship to go home.

"I guess the Breen stopped being interested after the opportunity for power was gone," Seifer postulated. "A hard-learned lesson for all of us about motivation."

Cassen looked at him. "What are you talking about? We already could predict their actions! That's how one-dimensional they were!"

"Well, then the Breen lesson is that losing someone like Marcel leads to terrible replacements," concluded the Captain.

The non-neutral Deferi leader grumbled as he walked away to tend to his people. Meanwhile, the now-free crew of the Ragnarok began beaming back to the paste-filled ship to open all the bay doors.

"And what's our lesson, Captain?" Moggs said turning to him.

Seifer thought for a moment. "That death accompanies all things from the ancient past, because that's how we got things done back then."

"Yeah, we're much more civilized now," agreed Winry. "Tea earl grey hot is the Federation's intergalactic drink now."

Aramaki put his PADD away. "And what of the 'mission,' sir?"

"The mission to seek out old life and murder it? Yes, that will continue, especially since I have one of the most effective Bridge crews in the fleet," confirmed Captain Seifer. "You should've saw my last crew. They were obsessed with fizzbin for some reason."

Winry put her hands on her hips. "You mean that group of officers you put in our Brig? They were still on the ship when we filled it with paste."

"Hm. Hopefully they're still alive. Either way, everything else relevant is resolved here. Let's leave and not acknowledge that we'll be establishing a Federation presence in this cavern, because the details after the situation never really matter."

The group nods.

"Seifer to *Ragnarok*. Let's get out there and seek out old life and old civilizations. Let's boldly go where many ancient peoples have abandoned before."

The comm reply from Cetra rang through the air. "*Captain, we're all drowning in grey boring paste up here! Don't come up! Don't!*"

"Too late. I activated the transport remotely, thus eliminating someone's job," he countered, tapping his commbadge.

Seconds later, the Away Team beamed up and into a mucky, unresolved situation. The U.S.S. *Ragnarok* drifted aimlessly in space, rotating endlessly for what would likely be all foreseeable time.

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