

Life or Death

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Life or Death

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

"How dare you say words and things and stuff?" - Unofficial Literary Challenge #28: In the early 25th century, the I.K.S. Baetal is infiltrated by a rogue Klingon, only to be used for revenge against a group of Kazon.

Notes

Author's notes: This was written in October 2016, as part of the Star Trek Online forums Unofficial Literary Challenge #28.

Unofficial Literary Challenge #28: Prompt #1: Your Captain is forced to make a life or death decision for someone else. Explore the moral quandaries and complications that this decision could lead to.

Unofficial Literary Challenge #28

"Life or Death"

The *Kurak*-class battlecruiser I.K.S. *Baetal* sat out in deep space, while a massive party was being held in its cramped Messhall. Captain Sigon walked over to his reptilian-like tactical officer and head-butted him.

"Yaaarrghh! You are the Gorn. Am I right? You are the Gorn!" Sigon chanted, completely drunk.

Gozer grasped his head in minor pain. "That wassss not necessary, Captain."

"Oh, you need to lighten up, Commander," suggested Sigon. "We have done the impossible: Averted permanent tribblefication, maintained the annual invasion of Raatooras, wrecked the Federation starship *Tsunami*, and established pants-free Fridays."

Tenough walked over. "Sir, that last one is not very Klingon to partake in."

"Exactly! We are the ultimate, out-of-norm ship that every Warrior wants to be a part of. I don't even know what class this vessel is, but who cares!" Sigon preached.

Gozer nodded. "Very well, Captain. But be forewarned that boassssting leads to immediate comeuppance in this timeline, which many have coined as the Prime Timeline."

SMASH!

Suddenly, a Klingon at the other end of the Messhall broke in from the ceiling vent and began speed kneeling, kicking and force-palming all the other drunk crew out into unconsciousness.

"What in the Unbearable Gardens of Grethor is going on??" Sigon attempted to squint his vision so he could see who it was. "Wait a second. That is Captain Menchez!"

The attacking Klingon took out his disruptor and shot Gozer and Enough down, prompting Sigon to dive behind a table. Menchez then ran out the Messhall to continue his work.

Menchez made his way down the corridors and was confronted by Lu'Kava. She took out a Klingon pain stick and launched a close-range jab at the Captain.

"You think you can just take on the crew of the *Baetal* and get away with it?? We once feasted on 50 targ in one night!" she claimed a second before Menchez caught her extended arm and countered with a kick and a knee. "Next-day lunches were obliterated!"

The Captain then double-punched her, took out his mek'leth and cut the pain stick in half. "This crew gets away with far too much to begin with. You've all gotten lazy and entitled. I heard you have a trained Fek'Ihri Hordling that sharpens all your teeth??"

"How dare you say words and things, and stuff!? I'd defend us further if I wasn't so full of gagh!" she fired a forced-palm toward his head, but he moved slightly to the left, spun in full reverse-circle and elbowed her out in her ridges.

The Klingon infiltrator entered the Bridge and fired his disruptor into an attacking Bekk Tars. The Bekk was sent over a console and Sigon entered the Bridge completely out of breath.

"Why... are... you..... doing this??" Sigon panted. "Just.... one second...."

Menchez rolled his eyes. "I told your security officer why. Ugh. This is what I hate about take-overs. You have to explain yourself again and again."

"Glorified baktag! You think we are a failure as a Klingon crew, don't you? That all we do is hold celebrations??"

The older Klingon nodded. "Precisely! I am taking over command of this ship as a result. Do not even think about performing an induction ceremony."

"yIntagh! I would fight you to the death, but I am way too inebriated and, unlike other, more foolish Klingons, I do not engage in technical combat while drunk."

Menchez nodded. "It is our version of Earth's historic anti-'drinking and driving' initiatives. I commend you for safe Klingoning. In the meantime, I do not plan to remain in command of your ship. I am merely here for a mission to honorable death."

"Hu'tegh!? You lost your old vessel and crew in shame?? It just seems the most likely reason."

He took a pained breath. "Indeed. And now I risk my House being dishonored and dismantled for my actions." He shook his head in regret. "I should have never told my crew to go into that cave on Hanon IV; the same cave Neelix ordered Lieutenant Hogan to die in."

"I never realized the extent of your dishonor!" Sigon said in shock. "Not to mention, the time and volume of group-traffic it would take to complete such a task."

Captain Menchez approached the helm and altered course. "Several Kazon and a Cardassian woman who is a Seska-wannabe took my ship and never looked back. I am now in pursuit of them, and will destroy them through infiltration. The *Baetal* was my practice-run."

The *Baetal* then dropped warp and confronted two Kazon Raiders, a Cruiser and a Klingon *Vor'cha*-class vessel.

"Kazon-Rokka, this is the Captain of that ship you stole. You know, the one with the fuzzy targ hanging from the view screen? Prepare to be destroyed for your insolence!" hailed Menchez. Then he turned to Sigon before leaving the Bridge. "Hold them off while I do the thing. You know. The thing."

Sigon gawked. "Don't be a fool, Menchez! You don't have die to reclaim your honor; just get cut a little; like across the face or something. The Council would be satisfied either way."

"*I am the leader of this Sect,*" came the hail of the Cardassian woman. "*You may call me SesKahn.*"

Captain Sigon double-taked. "Why?? Why are you trying so hard to be a known villain?"

"*I am an augment, here to fill a void. The first Cardassian Kazon leader was an inspiration to Cardassian women everywhere. It's up to me to maintain her legacy! Are you saying you are against Cardassian women-augments having power??"*

The Klingon held up, defensively. "No! I'm not saying that. Never mind. Let's just fight already. But, it is not motivated by speciest-sexism. In fact, just take my ship."

"*Fool! You have to stand up for yourself too! Klingon men should have equal self-worth! Learn from my genetically engineered example!"*

Gozer and Tenough struggled onto the Bridge, with smoking disruptor blasts in them, as the screen cut out. Sigon turned to them. "Take your stations, open fire, and hold the line!"

"The line of one, sssir?" Gozer asked.

The commanding officer waved him off. "Yes, the line of one. Do you want another head-butt from me? Because I will do that."

A minute later, Captain Sigon transported onto the *Vor'cha*-class starship I.K.S. *B'Cnah*. With the ship now under attack, he followed a trail of bloodied Kazon to the Bridge. There, Menchez was pinned to the floor by five Tsunkatse Falchion swords, their blades sinking into him from five Kazon-Rokka scavengers.

"Death," coughed Menchez, "Shall be mine. Tell my wife she was a horrible wife. She'll take it as a compliment. It's a thing we do. Not sure how it will sound coming from you though."

Sigon took out his disruptor and shot, five times, each Kazon down. He then turned to SesKahn and aimed for her.

"No! I haven't even done any Shakespeare quotes yet! What was that one? Oh yeah. 'From Hell's heart, I stab at thee!'" she accessed a console and transported herself out.

The other Kazon ships suddenly turned to the *Vor'cha*-class attack cruiser and opened fire.

"You fool! I was to die! Now I must deal with the consequences of being alive!?" Menchez argued as he got up and pulled the swords out of him. "Not only that, but this vessel is far beyond repair. The fuzzy targ are inoperable!"

Sigon shook his head. "SesKahn taught me to stay in the game, and so did you. Pretty much anyone could have taught me that, but the lesson remains. You must do the same, despite the Empire's absurd actions. They will still grant you another ship, though, just so they have you around to direct their gloating."

"I hate it when they do that! Also, I'm going to have to deal with the dismantling of my House and sooo many claims of dishonor," Menchez groaned, suddenly realizing. "It is more going to be annoying than anything else. Mortifying, if that 'anything else' was to be defined further."

He went over to operations control, beamed Sigon back to the *Baetal*, and both ships turned and fired upon the Kazon ships. After what seemed like forever, one of the Kazon Raiders exploded and the two other ships turned and warped out of there.

Sigon sat in his chair and watched as the completely-ruined Klingon ship turned and warped for the Jenolan Dyson Sphere.

"Do you think he'll make it without exsssploding, sir?" Gozer asked.

The Captain shook his head. "I hope not! Because then I will have to live with what I just did. This is why Klingons should not drink and fight! Let this be a lesson to you kids at home."

"Who are you talking to, Captain?" Tenough asked.

Sigon threw up his arms. "I don't know! That's the problem! You have the Bridge. I'm going to soak in a targ bath with Bolian scented candles for two hours."

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