

L'amour est Parmi les Étoiles

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L'amour est Parmi les Étoiles

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Summary

"If I don't get us out of this convenience-machination, we'll all be descending into NX-01 Decon Chamber debauchery." - Unofficial Literary Challenge Annual 1-2: In the early 25th century, Captain Seifer and the crew of the U.S.S. Ragnarok encounters a love-at-first-sight anomaly.

Notes

Author's notes: This was written in February 2017, as part of the Star Trek Online forums Unofficial Literary Challenge Annual #2.

Unofficial Literary Challenge Annual #2: During a quick detour from your duties to watch a rare spacial anomaly of a brand new nebula, your ship is caught within the anomaly! Systems shut down for a few minutes and a strange pink aura fills the ship. Though it seems no permanent damage has been done to the ship and all your crew members seem to be alright, you cannot help but notice everyone is acting rather strangely. Klingon crew members are singing happy songs, Andorians touching feelers, Ferengi giving one another Oo-mox. For some strange reason, everyone aboard the ship is giving into amorous feelings. Write a log about how you plan to cure this plague of love before it threatens to render your crew useless or worse: before you fall prey to your feelings as well....if you haven't already.

Unofficial Literary Challenge Annual #2

"L'amour est Parmi les Étoiles"

Captain Oroku Seifer sat in command of the *Pathfinder*-class with *Discovery*-class pylons U.S.S. *Ragnarok* as it approached a giant, anomalous nebula in space.

"Ah, interstellar matter, the wrath of Kahn of the universe in gaseous, fragmented, non-racially confused form," Seifer said in pleasing and comforting way.

Aramaki turned in his chair to observe the view screen. "Except we never planned to check this thing out; just ran into it. And it's not a harmless anomaly, but a Zanthi-class nebula. The kind that infects people and Betazoids and transmits feelings of love and affection to everyone on the crew or space station— whichever the plot device conveniently provides."

"Ugh, Lieutenant, that is such a set-uppy thing to say," criticized the Captain. "You're on break early, but stay out of the coffee room. Someone's been stealing the filters and I have a hidden camera set up that I don't want you to accidentally block because you don't know where it is."

Suddenly, the Zanthi nebula moved toward the *Ragnarok*, enveloping it completely and infecting the entire senior staff and crew.

"Aaaahhh! It's on me. It's all over me!" Moggs reacted in panic as he tried to brush the pink dust off his Caitian fur. "Everything sticks. You don't know what it's like to be a giant cat. None of you get me!"

Edward watched him from her helm position. "Awww. He's so cute when he's angry. I just want to squish him."

"Oh, no. Seifer to Engineering, what's the status of the engines??" the Captain said, suddenly sitting up in his chair in fear.

Winry's reply came over the air. *"Just what you expected, sir. The warp core attracted the nebula to the ship and now it's neutralized our engines completely beyond operational recognition."*

"How do you know what's going on from down there? There aren't any windows? Also, I removed several key ceiling pot lights that I thought could save us power in the long run."

The Chief Engineer replied, *"We have a Traveler down here who is constantly expanding his mind to the Bridge and describing everything that's going on. He knows that all you sickos taste-tested heart of targ yesterday. You know who you are."*

"What's going on?" asked Captain Aeris as she entered the Bridge. "I was just checking out the forbidden back-room lavatory when I was suddenly assaulted by an unusual mixed aura of Deanna Troi brand lust and self-arousal."

Seifer slouched, defeated. "Gah. We ran into a Zanithi nebula and now everyone on the crew is going to suffer the Love at First Sight trope like nobody's business."

"You know, you could have waited to do this when we weren't going to go to the Starfleet Headquarters Captain's Bowl of Worms Dinner together. That's the last time I abandon my ship for a shortcut with you," she disputed.

But, while she was talking, Seifer couldn't help but draw a sudden, unwarranted affection and appreciation for her as she stood before him explaining her backstory and what she was doing there.

"Are you listening to me or Kirk-staring at me?" Aeris interrupted herself, impatiently. "You know he gained, like, 30 pounds by the end of his five-year mission."

It was then she and Seifer noticed the other Bridge officers drooling over each other in reaction to the Zanithi infection, with Edward trying to leap onto Moggs without hesitation. "Aauughh!" Moggs yelped, struggling to get away. "She's found a way to purr as a Human, which should be physically impossible?!"

"Damn, it's already started," Seifer said, getting to his feet. "If I don't get us out of this convenience-machination, we'll all be descending into NX-01 Decon Chamber debauchery. What's more is the possibility of reaching Vulcan neuro-pressure levels."

He fought his unrelenting urge to confess his lust for Aeris, covered his vision, and entered the turbolift as fast as he could.

Entering Engineering, Seifer was quick to lock the doors behind him, securing the area from any extraneous intruders. Winry was busy staring at a PADD before she noticed him.

"Oh, don't mind me. I was just admiring how attractive Aramaki was in his profile picture," Winry said. "His image popped up when I *Voyager's*-Doctor-view-screened the Bridge, looking for you. Being confined to one spot on the ship has its quirks, video-calling-people-wise, at least."

Seifer furrowed his brow at her. "You're not a hologram; you're Human and you're free to go anywhere you want on the ship?"

"Yeah, but my dedication to the job force-marries me to one spot, which is the least I can say about my desire to force-marry Aramaki. But he'd better provide for me, because I have my out-dated, ostracized fetishes that don't fit in with today's updated world views."

The Captain gritted his teeth. "Too much info, Winry. And it's that damn nebula that's causing us all to fall into licentious sexism disguised as delightful quirks that are borderline-safe for the whole family. We have to get the engines online and us out here as soon as we can."

"Oh, Captain, if only you knew how I felt and how much my libido is controlling me like Data being possessed so many times on the *Enterprise*," she said, taking his hands into hers.

Seifer's eyes widened. "You have feelings for your old Captain, too, huh? It's nothing to be ashamed of, considering Tasha Yar once came on to Picard when Q put her in that non-visible, non-existent penalty box farce."

"What? I don't mean you. I'm talking about Lieutenant Aramaki! I just have a thing for Asian-descent men."

The other man threw up his hands, channeling annoyance and sarcasm. "Well, thanks for the rest of us! Never mind. We have to find a way to forget our love obsessions and focus on the weird, convenient-sciencey problem at hand."

"But is love even real to begin with, or are we falling for a chemical reaction that merely compels our animal-kind to breed?"

Seifer deadpanned her. "Of course it's real. It's magical and mystical and unexplained in all facets of spiritual mindfulness."

"That's not scientific at all, Captain. In fact, I think you're just mashing words together to make it sound more brazen than it really is."

Pointing accusingly, Seifer replied, "Only non-enchanted, non-miraculous, magic-lacking Odo-talkers speak like that! Where is your sense of wonder and that rose-colored VISOR I got you for your birthday?"

"I keep telling you that's not a Chief Engineer thing and that Geordi was *blind*! Just because there was never an explanation or plot point about

his changing to eye implants out of nowhere doesn't mean he was doing it for fashion."

Seifer reassured her, "Still, though, everyone's doing the tech-on-face thing now. Seven of Nine gets it. Gaius Selan totally gets it."

Later, the two found themselves in the Holodeck within Vic's lounge in 1961 Las Vegas, with holographic representations of Aramaki and Aeris.

"Now, when Vic was trying to shake Odo's frigidness, he used a Kira-lookalike hologram to melt his cold, non-physically-existent heart with an amorous rendition of Little Willie John's Fever," Seifer explained as he sat next to Winry at the piano. "If a duet by these two heart-throbs doesn't scream 'spellbinding' then you've got nothing in you and you're the Devil!"

Suddenly, the holographic representations of both officers began singing, with Aeris first: *"Never know how much I love you; Never know how much I care."*

"When you put your arms around me; I catch a fever that's so hard to bear!" Aramaki continued, lying across the top of the piano as sultry as a man could trying to imitate Lola Chrystal.

Winry halted the music and stood up. "Not that this isn't convincing enough to make me want to jump this brilliant man's bones, but all that you're demonstrating here is lust, which only serves to reinforce my point about people just being breeding machines."

Seifer, suddenly unable to pull his frozen gaze from the holographic Aeris, murmured, off-track, "The who in the what now?"

Later, Seifer trapped Winry with the real Aramaki and Aeris in the *Delta*-class shuttle *Mako*.

"When Tom Paris and B'Elenna Torres were racing the Trans-Stellar Rally, Tom stopped the Delta Flyer II to confront her skewed feelings, confess his love and eventually ask B'Elenna to marry him," Seifer explained. "If you refuse similar compulsions, you're a pariah!"

Winry was cramped up against the other three as the shuttle was full of excess cargo: Packaged worms for the Starfleet dinner, later.

"What's going on again?" Aeris asked, confused, also cramped and struggling. "And why do you keep your original pylon parts in your cargo bay, forcing your normal cargo into shuttles??"

Aramaki attempted to nudge a cargo container jutting into his back. "Oh, targ manure," he said in shock. "I just opened one of the compartments!"

"Ugh! Worms??" panicked Winry as a large chunk of wiggly creatures poured onto her shoulders.

Seifer backed away but hit another container, opening it, and pouring even more worms out onto his own shoulders. "This was a bad idea! I see that now."

Later, Seifer, Winry, Aeris and Aramaki found themselves in the Arboretum, where it was brimming with plant life; so much so that its growth continued out into the rest of the corridors, turning the entire deck into a jungle.

"When Worf and Jadzia had to rendezvous with a spy on Soukara, Jadzia became injured in the jungle and Worf was forced to choose between his duty or his beloved," Seifer explained just before he took out a phaser and fired a beam into both Aeris and Aramaki's legs. "If you choose duty, you're a ne'er-do-well!"

The victims both then screamed in pain. *""AUGHH!!""*

"And now, our mission: I order us to reach Section 28 and leave our love interests behind, for duty, except if, perchance, our hearts take over and force us to go back to save their lives," the Captain continued just before he and Winry ran off into the jungle that was Deck 14.

As the pair were running and panting in a breathless panic through the foliage, Winry stopped them both just a few meters before their appointed goal. "Hold on a second. This is crazy? We should go back for them because this is just a fake order and the Dominion War is not at stake!"

"Or, are you so lost in fear for Aramaki's life that you would abandon any order to save him for his well-being and the power of love?" Seifer criticized.

Winry deadpanned him. "You know he's the only one on this ship who can fire the torpedoes, right?"

"My precious Attack Pattern Delta!" Seifer panicked, abandoning all arguments of any kind. He then ran back for the injured parties, followed by Winry.

By the time they reached them, Aeris was already wrapping a bandage around her leg wound. Winry glared at Seifer, critisizingly. "You left

her a first aid kit, cheating your own test??"

"Yeah," Seifer shrugged, guiltily. "I couldn't allow her to suffer or lose her life. That in itself proves my point from the very beginning."

Aeris glanced at him and smirked, finally catching on. "So, you do have a thing for me, huh? I thought as much."

"Fine. I'd like to specify that my claim of a chemical-reaction extends to delusions of love and that, thanks to my observations of your actions and my internal reactions, perhaps it's all the same in the end," Winry finalized. "It all does or doesn't matter."

The Captain nodded. "I can live with that middle-ground."

"Auugggghh! Is anyone going to help me??" Aramaki complained, seething in physical discomfort. "I'm literally bleeding out all over these asclepias curassavicas."

Aeris turned to the group. "Speaking of 'out', what about leaving this Zanthi nebula? Weren't you guys working on that problem before you shot us in a very sociopath-driven way?"

"Oh, that? A frequency modification of -04.7 to our warp core reaction should cause a rejection of the matter surrounding the ship," explained Winry. "Like Geordi, I was so distracted by this love obsession, I lagged in the actual situation at hand."

Seifer's eyes widened in shock. "In effect, we poison the milk! No one's ever thought of that!"

"So, Captain, they say these forced-attraction love spells stem from latent pre-existing feelings," Aeris began. "Are you sure that's how you want to start things, by proving that you're so layered and deep that I should, by default, be interested in you?"

Seifer recoiled. "Ugh. That's inherently predictable and over-done. How about I drop a stack of PADDs and when we both reach for them our hands accidentally touch?"

"That's just as over-done, but not as layered and, thus, less looming," she said as they both began walking out of the Arboretum. "Count me in."

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