

Election Year

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Election Year

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Summary

"It's usually the other party that takes the next Presidency, and they're puppy-killing jerks." - Unofficial Literary Challenge 32: In the early 25th century, Captain Deloss of the I.K.S. *Masamune* goes on a crystal hunt mission with Okeg, the President of the Federation.

Notes

Author's notes: This was written in February 2017 as part of the Star Trek Online forums Unofficial Literary Challenge #32.

Unofficial Literary Challenge #32: Prompt #1: Federation presidential elections take place every six years (barring delays due to national crises), meaning President Aennik Okeg's third term is coming to an end. Is he running for a fourth term or stepping down? Who else is running, and what issues are important in the campaign: entanglements in the Delta Quadrant, the refugee crisis at home, economic chaos from the Iconian War? And does your captain prefer any particular candidate?

Unofficial Literary Challenge #32

"Election Year"

Captain Deloss sat at the Bridge of the *Bortasqu'*-class I.K.S. *Masamune* as it trekked through space, carelessly and haphazardly on nothing but whims and fancy and lollipops and dreams.

"Are we actually going in any specific direction, or are our movements based on the positioning of gagh all over the helm?" the Gorn and Commanding officer Deloss asked.

Grough scavenged his own scaly Gorn hands over the mess, trying to grab one of the squiggly worms as best as he could. "Hey, I just got into these things! It's forced, but we all find our ways to assimilate into obnoxious Klingon culture."

"It is the repulsiveness of moving food we admire. We actually wouldn't even touch gagh if not for that," added Ronin, an old Klingon and the tactical officer.

Deloss grasped his head. "Why can't we be more concerned about things that matter? I feel as if we are wasting precious ship resources on cultivating targ manure! I don't even know what it's used for?? We spent an entire month stock piling it in our cargo bay???"

BLAM! Suddenly the *Masamune* slammed its nose into a rogue asteroid. The object appeared to be unaffected by the impact.

"Ugh. Did anyone get the number of that asteroid?" Deloss quipped, hilariously. "Hahaha. Seriously, though, anyone who didn't laugh is being transferred."

Then Ronin looked up from his console. "Sir, I'm detecting a Federation escape pod latched onto the side! There are survivors on it!!"

"Calm down Ronin. It's always drama with you. The Federation, huh? They're perpetually concerned about bigger issues. Beam them directly to the Bridge," Deloss ordered before a group of injured people appeared before him. "Ew! Beam them back. No, wait. Beam them to Sickbay to be medically adjusted and such. Seems like that's a thing. Is that a thing? It probably is."

A human and Captain stood up. "Wait. You must set course for my ship the *Crucial* and destroy it. My name is Menrow."

"You dare give me orders, human!" Deloss argued. "Anyway, now that the hostile tone is out of the way, what happened to you?"

Menrow gestured to his people. "We were escorting the President, here, home from Casperia Prime when our ship came under attack by an alien life-draining entity. Systems went down and my crew was forced to evacuate, but we fear it may strike again."

"That sounds like a big issue," Deloss surmised. "Perhaps it warrants a continued perusal."

The other Captain shrugged. "I'd like to think so."

"Quiet, human! You forfeit your right to any form of dignity and more of my compensation-by-loud-shouting! Also, did you know Kirk? He's just soooo huggable."

Later, the *Masamune* dropped warp before the near-completely ruined, but still in-tact, *Intrepid*-class U.S.S. *Crucial*. Deloss, Menrow, Okeg, Ronin and Thunk beamed onboard aiming rifles.

"Seriously, Deloss? We were supposed to destroy this thing!" argued Menrow. "I've had so many alien relations here that it's just ugh now. Even this hallway. Just last week."

Deloss rolled his Gorn eyes as limited as he could. "Come on, man. That's just wasteful. In the Klingon Defense Force, we learn to salvage what we have. We're not all as rich and entitled as you Federation yuppies with your yacht ships and your space martinis."

"And what about the President?? I specifically told you not to put him in a militaristic situation," Menrow continued. "The government just likes to talk about those things, not actually have anything to do with them."

The Gorn scoffed. "Honestly, I stopped listening to you after you started dictating how my crew should tug at their uniforms more. Your President is a grown man who can do whatever he wants and listen to as much rock and roll music as is required."

"Ugh. I need this distraction so badly," Okeg said. "It's election year again and I have to decide whether I want to run or drop out of the whole politics thing for another person—probably a man—to take over and rule with an iron fist. It's usually the other party that takes the next Presidency, and they're puppy-killing jerks. Like, real life puppies in front of your face when they do it sort of thing."

Deloss widened his eyes. "You have a chance at making a difference and you're on the fence??"

"Oh yeah. You just don't know the pressures of being a political figure," Okeg said. "You think it's all bowling in the basement, uniting minority groups and hilarious sketches with a holographic Keegan Michael-Key. Instead, you're constantly defending provable climate science and martial arts fighting birther movementers. It's madness!"

Ronin added, "Not to mention that you've been President for 18 years. Some countries on early 21st century Earth could have sorely benefited from those kinds of margins." He noticed everyone suddenly looking at him with detached expressions. "I once did a study when I was looking to compare J'mpok with other worst political leaders in Milky Way history."

"Anyway, I think you're disregarding an important juxtaposition for continued change and activism for things that really matter," Deloss said. "Like how we ignored the approach of these giant floating fragments."

Before the group, in the corridors, were several broken and ready-to-attack hovering shards appearing to be from a crystalline entity.

"So, you were taken down by a Large Crystalline Fragment, crippling your ship," surmised Thunk. "Then these baby fragments were spawned to hunt your crew down one by one."

Menrow continued, "Which is why we should destroy this filthy, ineffective Delta Quadrant-loving ship. These things will suck the life out of us and are probably into the gel packs! Still don't know how they work, but they're there."

"Fool; the Defense Force has a hunt-first protocol. Besides, you can make change without completely wiping the slate and starting over," explained Deloss as he aimed his disruptor rifle and fired. "If there were a health care system in place but some fool wanted to erase it with whatever he fancied, for example. Now, let us murder by way of educational correlation!"

The others, including Okeg, followed suit and opened fire upon the shards, following a trail throughout the ship. Separating, the group finally reconvened in Main Engineering.

In Engineering, the group found the main Crystalline Shard, merged-in with the warp core, feeding off its energy.

"Fine," conceded Menrow. "Perhaps a salvageable methodology is a more rational approach. But it's more work, for what, continuity? Some people reboot entire realities for less."

SKKKK!!! The entity surrounding the warp core screeched. It was angry and intending to consume any and everything it could get its reach on

for the destruction of its shards. The group opened fire upon it, shattering its pieces all over the place.

"Oh, Klingon-bollocks," Deloss said, observing the fractured warp core. "This ship will never reach near-perfect operational status again. Perhaps I was wrong about everything. How can we protect ourselves without radical ship-exploding change? I'd even ban an entire group based on their religion if it meant I was right."

The Human clutched his face in regret of his now ruined ship. "Dammit!"

"No, this is a good thing," Okeg countered the two Captains. "Change, albeit in the form of full or partial effect is worth it if it means saving lives and maintaining values. I believe I've made my decision on whether I will run again or not."

Ronin turned to him. "You mean this crystal hunt helped you instead of your mind-off vacation at Casperia Prime? Perhaps there is some Klingon in your Federation after all."

"Don't forget Gorn. He's got Gorn in him too, somehow. Don't ask what, specifically. It's just there," Deloss added, quickly and awkwardly. "So, yeah."

He then turned to Menrow.

"Now, Captain," Deloss continued. "Since the Iconians made us allies for some reason, I shall leave you and your President to your ship, so you may find your other escape pods and return him home. We shall be transporting a considerable bulk of our much-sought-after targ manure as a gesture of honorable kinship and reflection of the themes we explored here today."

The other Captain retracted in disgust. "What? Don't do tha—"

"Deloss to *Masamune*! Transport: Gift Protocol Delta-Janeway-Serve-Up!" the Gorn announced after slapping his communicator. Seconds later, the *Crucial* was graced with their generosity. He turned back to the human. "You're welcome."

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