

Star Beagle Adventures Episode 2: Astral Traveler

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Star Beagle Adventures Episode 2: Astral Traveler

by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

Summary

The Beagle task group docks at Deep Space 9, awaiting individual assignments.

A mysterious entity communicates with persons aboard each of the 3 ships, guiding them to an abandoned Cardassian space station.

Ezri Dax finds her counseling abilities tested in an interesting way.

Episode 2: Astral Traveler, Scene 1: Organ Chord Voice

Chapter Notes

Throughout this episode, snippets of lyrics are quoted. These are from two songs: "Astral Traveler" by Dave Hewson, which appeared as track 7 on "Time and a Word", the 2nd album by the progressive rock band, YES, 1970, Atlantic Records; and from "Yours Is No Disgrace" by Jon Anderson, Chris Squire, Steve Howe, Bill Bruford, and Tony Kaye, which first appeared as track 1 on "The Yes Album", the third album by YES, 1971, Atlantic Records.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 1: [Organ Chord Voice](#)

2.1

Organ Chord Voice

Trader Pel panicked. The tiny ferengi was without clothes. Without disguise. Without cover. Also, it appeared, without skin. Naked, directly in the line of sight of... Something... Not a human... the eyes were too big. It didn't have skin either. Pel couldn't even tell if it was male or female. Just a figure, pulsating with inner light - orange, blue, yellow, purple...

Which is how the ferengi must have appeared to it as well. Neither male nor female. A vaguely humanoid shape pulsing with light.

Was it speaking? Every time it opened its mouth, the sound was like an organ - rich, majestic, Every word a chord. They were standing inside a room-sized wicker basket woven with strands of orange and blue light. The light-man spoke more loudly as a flame burst up between them. Organ chord words. None of them made sense. But among them, something sounded familiar. Two words.

The glowing being with the organ chord voice noticed that Pel found those words familiar and repeated them: "...Nor..."

A roaring flame between Pel and Organ Chord Voice leapt up, obscuring Organ Chord Voice's further attempts at communication. Organ Chord Voice cried out more loudly, but could not compete with the flame.

Oddly, Pel couldn't feel the heat. To the tiny ferengi's left, a mass of some sort of fabric started to rise... inflating... Pel noticed for the first time that the flame was roaring up into a huge ring above, to which the fabric was attached, causing the fabric to slowly expand, lifting it off the ground...

At the same time, machines in the background all around and above - outlined in various hues of blue light - were operating - cogs turning - levers moving - spheres rotating...



2.1

Chapter Summary

Pel could only remember one word.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2 : Astral Traveller

Scene 2: Nor

2.2

Nor

Pel woke in a panic. This wasn't his bed in his small guest quarters aboard the U.S.S. Mako. This bed was in the far from private medical center aboard the U.S.S. Beagle. He disciplined himself not to touch his ears - the instinct was so strong that his arms ached and he was afraid the sudden movement would give his fear away. Miraculously, he could hear that someone had attended to this issue. He desperately wanted to check the application, but that would have to wait.

At this moment, the minuscule ferengi was the center of attention - exactly the last thing he ever wanted to be.

Captain Rhonda Carter of the U.S.S. Escort was still recuperating from radiation poisoning, as was General Krank. The radiation of a phaser set to kill had affected each of them differently. Krank had picked up a nervous twitch. Carter had lost her long, brown hair, which was now replaced with a thin brush of iron gray. Both looked emaciated, as they could not keep much food down at any time.

Captain Skip Howard and the disturbingly beautiful vulcan, Senek, were seated next to each other on another bed, watching a few of Dr. Uto's medical staff worrying over Pel and Carter.

Pel waived off the doctors impatiently and sat up.

"Well, you're awake," said Skip Howard with his irrepressible smile. "How are you feeling?"

"Why am I here?" Pel asked.

"Your vital signs dropped to near death levels during the night, causing the Mako's internal security system to register a medical alert," answered one of the betazoid doctors. Pel read the name on the surgical tunic - Mistroya Utru.

"You're not the only one," Captain Howard added. "Captain Carter was affected, as was her chief engineer on the Escort, Lieutenant Kresid. One person on each ship. Was something trying to communicate with you?"

Now that he was sitting up, Pel could see a roylan - much smaller than himself - propped up on a bed behind General Krank. Pel took the opportunity to casually stroke his own ears, checking the seams. Perfection. Skip Howard winked at him.

"Yes," said Pel. "I could only make out one word: 'Nor.' I don't know what it means."

2.2

SBA Episode 2, Scene 3: Patches

Chapter Summary

Project Manager Tidun only remembers patches from her time under the control of the lifeform at D, Red South 179.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 3: [Patches](#)

2.3

Patches

The task force, consisting of the U.S.S. Mako, under the command of Captain Yui Song, the U.S.S. Beagle, under the command of Captain Skip Howard, and the U.S.S. Escort, under the temporary command of Lt. Cmdr. Vranran zh'Kathar (whose captain, Rhonda Carter, was still recovering from a phaser wound aboard the Beagle), was headed toward the Deep Space 9 space station.

The rescued trill miners, following extensive decontamination in the Beagle's medical center, had been removed to the Mako under security and were confined to quarters. They were to be handed over to Star Fleet security at DS9, there to await transport to their homeworld for trial.

Project Manager Kiasias Tidun was being interviewed by Captain Yui Song of the U.S.S. Mako in her captain's lounge. Lt. Cmdr. Senek, the U.S.S. Beagle's science officer, was also present. Tidun could barely keep her eyes off the gorgeous vulcan.

Senek's mournful expression made it eloquently clear that he was well aware that at the moment he was a useful interrogation tool, his simple presence distracting the trill project director and bringing down her defenses.

"I was given the commission by Market Director Sala Vax," Tidun said, in answer to Captain Yui. "He negotiated it with a ferengi merchant shipmaster named Dalt."

"Did he look anything like this?" Lt. Cmdr. Senek pressed a control on his tricorder and the image of a ferengi was projected.

"I never saw Daimon Dalt," Tidun replied. She tore her eyes away from Senek long enough to look at the image. "But I do know this one. That is Blik. He was our guide. He had hired a klingon ship for safety. Apparently several ferengi factions had competing claims on the planet. They were hiring us with the intent that we were to get there and establish mining operations first. Blik and his klingon ship cleared the way for us."

"And what was so valuable that you would risk your crew, Federation treaty law and Ferengi Alliance space to stake that claim?" Captain Yui asked.

"We were told that the system was rich in dilithium, bauxite, strontium, but most importantly, a trove of bio-generated information processing nodules," Tidun responded. "Mushrooms." She closed her eyes and shuddered. "We plugged them into the computer and they learned the computer. Then we found out they could move on their own - travel through subspace. Then they started taking over crew members... I realized what a threat they were and initiated self-destruct... I don't remember much after that - just flashes - until waking up in the medical center on that other ship. Even since then to now... everything's really patchy. I remember the room with the others, but I don't remember how I got from there into this room."

2.3

Chapter End Notes

For some reason, this story is starting to tumble out of my word processor. Like Star Trek Hunter, the first episode was a little wonky, but I'm starting to get a feel for these people and hopefully the rest of this episode will start to reach the quality I feel I achieved with Star Trek Hunter.

Thanks for reading!! rbs

SBA Episode 2, Scene 4: Doppler Tunneling

Chapter Summary

Yeah... no one who isn't working on the device itself or part of Nakamura Enterprises was supposed to hear that term...



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 4: [Doppler Tunneling](#)

2.4

Doppler Tunnelling

Dr. Tentis Uto had summoned his captain and his three patients to the medical conference room aboard the U.S.S. Beagle. Pel, the minuscule ferengi trader and disgraced former F.C.A. agent, the even smaller roylan chief engineer for the U.S.S. Escort, Lt. Ki Kresid, and Escort's captain, who had been once again recuperating in the Beagle's medical center, had joined Captain Skip Howard for this conference. General Krank was uninvited, but considering that he rarely left Captain Rhonda Carter's side, his presence was pretty much inevitable.

Commander Dutch Holland and his wife, Sakura, the Dean of the Ship, were also present.

"At the same moment that your patients' life signs plummeted to next to zero, we were running an experiment in engineering with the doppler tunneling... ooofff..." The engineering director's explanation was cut short by a sharp, Japanese elbow to his ribs.

"As my husband was explaining," Sakura Nakamura Holland continued, "we were running a classified experiment in engineering with classified equipment and, as he was no doubt about to explain, we received some very unexpected readings that occurred at the exact moment that the anomalous health readings were recorded for all three of your patients. Considering the nature of the experiment and the nature of your patients' experiences, not to mention the timing, we find it more than likely these phenomena are closely related."

"Something hitched a ride on our, um, wave," Dutch added, clearly having altered his wording at a glance from his wife.

"I will need considerably more technical detail than that to be able to provide an informed decision or even determine a direction for further diagnosis," Dr. Uto opined.

"And you will have it, in all it's rich detail, Ten," Skip Howard promised. "Just not in present company. For now, I have one small hunch I would like your advice on. I ran a quick check for the complement of all three ships and it appears our mysterious wave-hitchhiker selected the smallest person on each ship. Even though roylans are considerably more massive than they appear, and Lieutenant Kresid is considerably heavier than either Captain Carter or Trader Pel, she was, at the time, easily the lightest person on the Escort. As Pel was the lightest on the Mako and Rhonda the lightest here."

"And there's that other similarity," Uto added.

"And everyone wants to discuss sensitive information in the presence of unauthorized persons," Howard opined, with a laugh and a smile. "Focus, Ten. What we need everyone present to hear is the experiences of our three, um, well, if Dutch's surmise is correct, our three travelers."

"But we didn't go anywhere," Pel objected. "It was just a strange dream."

"A joint dream from your statements," Howard observed. "Each of you described an interaction with a somewhat amorphous being of light that spoke an unrecognizable language with a musical voice."

"It sounded like an organ, playing chords," said Captain Rhonda Carter. "The only word I could make out was 'Dolnok.' No idea what that means."

"There was a fire," Pel continued. "It seemed to inflate some sort of large bag. It was between us, but I wasn't afraid of it. It was controlled somehow. Like part of a big machine."

Lieutenant Ki Kresid, the tiny roylan chief engineer for the Escort, spoke up - a thin, reedy voice and for some reason she was unable to create the 'g' sound: "It was speaking a formal greeting request. It wanted to meet me somewhere. We were in some sort of basket - part of the

traveling, greeting invitation. It's a ceremony I recognize from the ancient aerid civilization."

"Pel," said Skip Howard, "You said the word you recognized was 'Nor?' Correct?"

The diminutive ferengi nodded.

Howard turned toward Sakura Nakamura Holland. "Dolnok Nor?"

Sakura caught her breath. "The abandoned cardassian space station. A myth, I thought. Kind of the cardassian version of the Marie Celeste."

"Not exactly," Captain Howard replied. "It's a real place and there were survivors - two of them. The cardassians abandoned it before it was completely assembled. There's an entire cardassian space station out there, but the installation was not complete and the cardassians made no attempts to return to it. So it seems we have been invited to a haunted, abandoned, unfinished cardassian space station. Who could resist an invitation like that?"

Chapter Summary

Ezri Dax provides counseling to a Star Fleet captain for the first time in her career.



The Star Beagle Adventures

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Scene 5: [Dax](#)

2.5

[Dax](#)

“I’m sorry, Captain Yui, but in my opinion, Project Manager Tidun is competent to stand trial.”

Ezri Dax had established her offices in a previously unused storefront on the second floor of the Deep Space 9 promenade. Storefront space in the promenade was at a premium, but Colonial Kira Nurys had agreed that the counselor’s office should be a warm and inviting space separate from the medical center. Not a place you go because you’re sick, but a comfortable resource for a quick word with a willing listener.

“As project manager, she is the only one being charged,” Dax continued. “The other trills will be called as witnesses. And while I’m no fan of the trillian justice system, Manager Tidun will have the ability to appeal her case to the Federation Tribunal.”

“What is wrong with trillian justice?” asked Yui Song. “I was under the impression the trill had one of the most advanced ethical and legal systems encountered by the Federation.”

Ezri Dax almost regretted inviting the question. Almost.

Following her interview in Ezri Dax’s office (or salon as Dax preferred to both characterize and present it), Kiasias Tidun had been remanded into custody in the station’s rather barbaric brig. The other 10 surviving trill miners had been moved into guest quarters on the habitat ring - only two small apartments with 5 trill each.

Dax indulged in a deep sigh. “For trill like me, yes. Only the best. But did you notice Tidun’s spots?”

“Rather faint,” Yui observed. “I found myself checking the transporter log just to verify she wasn’t half-trill.”

Dax shook her head. “The real thing. She’s a southern plains trill. Very little spotting. You might not have seen equatorial trills either - almost all spots. Or if you saw them, you might not recognize they were trills. Humans tend to think that all trills look like me.” Dax brushed her nails against her neck to emphasize her spots.

Clear lacquer nail polish. Yui realized suddenly that she had become acutely aware of such things. Such as Ezri Dax’s light, tasteful application of blue eye-shadow.

“Forest trills,” Ezri continued. “That’s what I am. When Dax required a new host in extremis, the Sanctuary passed over a far more qualified candidate because he wasn’t the proper race. By choosing me instead, they took a gamble with Dax’s life. But equatorial trills never get symbionts. Especially not a historically significant symbiont like Dax.”

“Surely the trillian justice system is not so racially biased,” Yui said.

“Officially, legally, legislatively, no,” Ezri Dax replied. “But a justice system is only as good as the people running it. There are still quite a few judges who are racially biased - some of them without even realizing it. And you can bet that the judges in the Tidun case will be forest trills. I really don’t like Tidun’s chances in that system. But since the Treaty of Trillus Prime has made our government a full member of the Federation, our court system now falls under the Federation Tribunal for ultimate authority. So even if Tidun doesn’t get a fair trial, she will get a fair appeal.”

SBA Episode 2, Scene 6: Battleships

Chapter Summary

Battleships confide in me and tell me where you are.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 6: Battleships

2.6

Battleships

This time Rhonda Carter was meeting Organ Chord Voice on a battleship - a strange battleship. It looked like something from Earth's 2nd World War, but the colors were all wrong. A purple battleship floated on a gunmetal gray ocean.

Organ Chord Voice had three faces this time. All speaking in unison, but with different pitches so that each word was a triad. Major, minor, diminished, augmented - not following any recognizable or predictable musical pattern, but musical nonetheless. The three faces were appended to the ends of the three guns of a large gun turret - gigantic gun barrels that flexed and swayed and danced in unison.

Organ Chord Voice had not been appended to a battleship. Organ Chord Voice was a battleship.

Two other large gun turrets also had flexible gun barrels that danced in unison with the turret that was speaking to Captain Carter. These other guns were not crowned with faces, but the ends of the guns were hatched, like the pipes of a great pipe organ. The barrels writhed and flexed and danced joyfully, but the three faces were theatrical masks of sadness.

As the music swelled, Organ Chord Voice, who seemed almost indistinguishable from the entire battleship, cried out in sorrow as the other guns joyfully launched broadside after broadside, gleefully shelling a far away shoreline, burning dully in the distance.

Organ Chord Voice was apologizing for this joyful attack and the unseen terror and carnage of those huddling on the shore, seeking scant refuge from the tonnage of blazing, exploding terror and death raining down on them.

Organ Chord Voice was sad about this, but it was in the battleship's nature. This was, after all, the reason for its existence. And there was a deep, undeniable satisfaction in fulfilling its nature.

All the battleships.

Organ Chord Voice was not alone, but was only one among a vast armada of purple battleships - each with a different design. All designed to create a reign of terror - no - an ending. Gleefully fulfilling their purpose, yet somehow sorrowful in their overwhelming success.

"Dolnok Nor," sang Organ Chord Voice.

Rhonda Carter looked up as Organ Chord Voice's cannon launched a cannonade directly skyward with deafening, thunderous report.

The explosion took the form of an antique cardassian space station in the atmosphere-less sky. Not unlike Deep Space 9. But different stars than those visible in the starscape around Terok Nor.

Different stars.

Rhonda Carter, like most starship captains, had developed the ability to create a star map in her head. She committed the star map she was being shown to memory.

Chapter End Notes

I hit on the idea of taking inspiration for this series from my favorite lyricist (Jon Anderson of YES). "Astral Traveler" is Track 7 on YES's 1969 album, Time and a Word. The next episode will be "Yours Is No Disgrace," which is track 1 on YES's 1970 album, The YES Album.

The lyrics for Astral Traveler inspired this episode. Two of my favorite lines from "Yours Is No Disgrace" appear as foreshadowing in this episode:

"Battleships confide in me and tell me where you are...
Shining, flying, purple wolfhounds show me where you are..."

SBA Episode 2, Scene 7: Giving a Hand

Chapter Summary

The parting gift of the departed marines.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: Astral Traveller

Scene 7: Giving a Hand

2.7

Giving a Hand

“I’m really surprised - and pleased - that you came,”

Ezri Dax was more than a little mystified on meeting Captain Skip Howard. She noticed that his eyeshadow and nail polish matched her shade of light blue (although as usual, her own nail polish was clear lacquer.) She was even more astonished to have provided her services to two Star Fleet captains in two days.

Star Fleet captains were famous for avoiding counselors and Dax had never before seen one in her professional capacity. Captain Yui Song was understandably concerned about the trills she had helped rescue. Captain Howard had a more conventional reason for seeking counseling - he had lost people under his command. Given that, Howard seemed oddly relaxed and at ease.

“But as I understand it, Dr. Uto is certified both as a surgeon and a psychiatrist by the Betazed Royal School of Medicine,” Dax continued. “Is there a reason you did not feel comfortable bringing your concerns to him?”

Skip Howard smiled. A warm, relaxed, genuine smile, in Dax’s opinion. “Ten is a friend. In the field, when no one else is available, I have no problem turning to him. But it’s nice to talk to someone that I’m probably not going to go camping with. I’d like to keep the friendship from getting tangled with the counselor/patient relationship. And you’re not a telepath, which makes things easier.”

Dax nodded at this. At least for humans, having a telepathic - even mildly telepathic therapist could often be counterproductive. People need time to process things by talking them out. Telepathy provided an inconvenient shortcut that could interfere with normal human emotional processing.

“So do you feel that you have already processed the loss of the soldiers under your command?” Dax asked.

“Marines,” Howard corrected. “I have a private space on the ship, kind of away from everyone, zero gravity, no general lighting. I went there to have a good cry over it. Unfortunately, my all-too-well-intentioned crew found my hiding spot and a few people came to be with me. I try not to cry in front of klingons.” The Beagle’s captain chuckled slightly. “It feels undignified to cry openly in front of anyone - especially a klingon. And I don’t think anyone feels comfortable watching their captain cry. So I kind of had to bottle it back up.”

“You went somewhere to cry in private?” Dax was surprised - it wasn’t something she expected to hear from a Star Fleet captain.

“I’m not a vulcan,” Howard said with a smile. “I don’t want to be hindered by emotions coming back in an inopportune moment. Humans, especially Americans, are taught that there’s something wrong with crying. That doesn’t feel healthy to me. I just don’t want to do it in front of other people if I can avoid it.”

Dax shook her head slowly and smiled. “Star Fleet captains have a reputation for closing themselves off emotionally because they’re expected to be tough.”

“Grandad’s that way. Probably most of my ancestors, especially the Star Fleet captains and admirals among them. But it skipped over Dad and he didn’t pass that along to me either,” Howard said.

“So what are you hoping to achieve here with me?” Dax asked.

“I think I’m okay with the grief,” said Howard. “There really wasn’t much I could have done to save them. I was right there with them. We were in that environment for 68 seconds. I pushed the button the moment I realized it was hopeless and we were just going to get slaughtered in there. It was hell.” Howard took a deep breath. He had gone from being relaxed to being somber. “I’m okay with the grief for my part. It’s

the creepiness that's getting to me.”

“I saw the video you took in there,” said Dax. “It looked like a nightmare. Creepy as hell. Giant flaming eyeball...” she shuddered. “Stuff of nightmares. Has it been getting into your dreams?”

“Yeah, no, that's not the issue I was talking about,” Howard responded. “Ever since first contact with the vulcans, there has been a growing trend for humans to have our remains reclaimed - pulped - and planted with a sapling as fertilizer. To give our bodies back to the Earth - or whatever planet we live on. This has become really popular among the marines - among most United Earth Governments military forces.”

“We have similar ceremonies on Trillus Prime,” Dax offered.

“Yeah, that's all well and good,” Howard rejoined. “It's just that the United States Marines - or at least those attached to deep space vessels that have arboretums - have this new tradition of donating their right hand after death to their ship's arboretum. So tomorrow, in a rather grotesque ceremony, I'm going to have to accept the disembodied right hand of each of those four dead marines, and arrange to have them pulped and planted in the U.S.S. Beagle's arboretum along with some sort of plant... You know, I could use some horticultural advice...”

SBA Episode 2, Scene 8: Shining, Flying, Purple Wolfhounds

Chapter Summary

Shining, flying, purple wolfhounds show me where you are...



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: Astral Traveller

Scene 8: Shining, Flying, Purple Wolfhounds

2.8

Shining, Flying, Purple Wolfhounds

Shining, flying, purple wolfhounds chased Lieutenant Ki Kresid from one end of Dolnok Nor to the other. The roylan's ancestors had always been prey and her instincts served her well to keep her out of reach of the predators. Even though these predators could fly. Their howls sounded like rich, strange organ chords.

Royslans were quite rare in the federation, despite being scattered all over the Alpha Quadrant. They had never developed technology much more complicated than the bow, but found themselves hunted vigorously by the Orion Syndicate for the slave trade and the tiny humanoids had quickly gained expertise with orion technology. Orion slavers deliberately bred royslans in captivity and their off-world population had quickly outgrown their numbers on their home planet, which had fallen under Federation protection and was no longer available to the slave hunters. The vast majority of royslans lived in slavery to orions and to any number of their paying customers. The tiny humanoids carefully hid the breadth of their unique physical and mental skills - using them in secrecy to escape their captors and trickle back into the federation.

Lieutenant Kresid was relying on those skills now. She leapt effortlessly from the floor of the unfinished promenade to the second floor - clean over the protective railing - then seemed to disappear as her shining, flying, purple, canine hunters flew up to the second level. As the wolfhounds stalked about the second floor of the promenade, the U.S.S. Escort's engineering director crawled, hanging underneath the second floor, then neatly and lightly dropped to the first floor in front of the detention area, slipped inside and closed the doors.

But the station was without power and there was no lock to hold the doors together. The wolfhounds had discovered her. They howled and brayed like distorted organs, and rammed into the door, trying to open it. Ki Kresid backed up, then scrambled behind the security desk and started looking for a weapon. Nothing. Not even a solid rod for a workable truncheon. If the station had power, she could have cobbled together a weapon out of conduit and a few other items, but there was no power. The station was lit only by her glowing body and the bodies of the wolfhounds. Shining, flying, purple wolfhounds.

After banging into the door enough times, they managed to open it a little and that was enough for them to wedge their way in. Kresid scrambled over the top of the security desk, leapt neatly onto the back of the first wolfhound, grasped its fur and neatly pirouetted her body around into a riding position.

And everything changed.

She was no longer the hunted. She was part of the pack. With their organ chord howls, the wolfhounds immediately turned and thundered through the station and seamlessly right through one of the walls.

There was a tracking beacon and the lead wolfhound, with Kresid astride, rode the tracking beacon. Stars streamed by at an incredible speed. Easily warp 9.6, then faster, and faster, and impossibly faster. Lt. Kresid memorized the streaks, quickly gathering her bearing. The tracking beacon was a straight line. Straight from Dolnok Nor into her temporary quarters in Terok Nor - Deep Space 9.

And in her bed, at the other end of the tracking beacon, was her inert body. A startled Skip Howard and Tentis Uto were both looking at her. And the shining, flying, purple wolfhound. The beacon drew Kresid off the back of the enormous beast and she snapped back into her body and sat straight up. Howard and Uto had followed her progress, then all three of them turned back to look at the wolfhound.

They could see through the shining, purple beast, a table, chair, and wall behind it. The beast first snarled, then opened its translucent mouth wide and emitted a deep, mournful howl. A howl that sounded more like an organ chord. But the mournfulness came through - a deep, powerful sadness emanating from the animal, riding the sound wave of its mournful, organ chord howling.

Something recalled the animal and pulled it back through the wall at enormous speed, doing no damage to the wall and leaving nothing in its wake other than the stunned looks of confusion on Captain Skip Howard, Dr. Tentis Uto, and Lt. Ki Kresid.

SBA Episode 2, Scene 9: My Shadow

Chapter Summary

General Krank has become a shadow of his former self...



The Star Beagle Adventures

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Scene 9: [My Shadow](#)

2.9

[My Shadow](#)

If someone had told Dax that she would counsel three Star Fleet captains in three days, she would have laughed in their face. Star Fleet captains were famous for denying themselves counseling until their personal emotional baggage made them dangerous to their own crews, and even when they did seek counseling, it was usually from their own ship's counselor.

All that, and since the end of the war and the loss of Captain Sisko, Star Fleet captains were a bit of a rarity at Deep Space 9.

While Captain Yui Song had been seeking counsel about a trill prisoner she was concerned about (making it natural for her to seek out a trill counselor) and Captain Skip Howard had, for all of his eccentricity, seemed exceptionally emotionally self-aware and well balanced, the captain sitting across from Ezri Dax today had clearly gone through significant physical and emotional trauma and her need for counseling must have been evident to anyone who had seen her walk into Dax's salon.

Captain Rhonda Carter was out of uniform, having chosen to wear faded blue jeans and a simple white tee shirt. Ezri could tell this was her favorite casual wear, but Carter had the gaunt, emaciated look of someone recovering from radiation poisoning. And she was a slim woman to begin with - her breasts were so small they were almost non-existent. She had no need for a bra. A short bristle of gray hair covered the captain's head. From the case notes Dr. Uto had provided, Dax knew that this was new growth to replace recent hair loss from radiation poisoning. Still, considering she had been recently snatched back from the jaws of death, Carter had a determined look and surprisingly relaxed, athletic posture.

"Welcome to my salon, Captain," said Dax. She smiled just a little more on realizing that Carter was attracted to her. It was just a momentary smile and a slight look of pleasant surprise in the captain's eyes, but Dax had centuries of experience with humans - easily enough to read Carter's body language.

"So first, thank you for asking Dr. Uto to forward your case file. You've been through quite a lot. I'm actually a little bit of a fan. I heard about some of your exploits during the war. I have to admit I'm a little flustered," Dax admitted. "I suppose I should thank you for your service."

Carter relaxed into her chair just a bit more and smiled just a bit more. "Flattery will get you everywhere with me, counselor," she replied. Ezri Dax was achingly cute. Carter rolled her head back and sighed, giving herself a moment to orient into her purpose for being here. "I need some advice about how to help a friend. I think I've made some mistakes."

"That friend wouldn't be a certain klingon general who saved your life?" Dax asked.

"Skip and Song both told me you're a smart one," Carter replied. "They both said you're cute as hell too. I've come to trust their judgement."

Ezri Dax laughed and felt some of her tension draining. "You humans just keep surprising me. And by me, I mean Dax. I've known hundreds of humans and more than a few Star Fleet captains. Believe me, the last thing I expected was to see any Star Fleet captains in my professional capacity - much less three of them in three days. And I've never seen a friendship among captains like yours. It's really remarkable."

"Complete surprise to me, too," Carter admitted. "I couldn't imagine three people - or at least three humans who are more different from each other. We're here awaiting our next assignments. I'm really going to miss working with them. That's part of why I'm here."

"You're afraid of being separated from General Krank?" Dax asked.

"Not for me. For him. He's kind of become my shadow. I mean, I adore him, but I'm worried. You don't know what those changelings did to him. They..." Carter took a deep breath. The tears in the corner of her eyes were tears of rage and she was shaking just a little. "They unmanned him!" Carter fell silent, her lips trembling, her face a grimace of mingled sorrow and rage.

Dax let the silence do its work. She found herself more than a little stunned. Not only had she seen three captains in three days, but each had so easily let down their guard with her. The last thing she expected was for Star Fleet's toughest fighter to become so completely vulnerable with her so quickly. She waited until she could tell that Rhonda Carter was just a little too lost and needed some permission to help her find her way:

"This is about you, isn't it?"

Carter looked up. "He needs to be a man again. God, I want to do that for him. He... It's not just that he saved my life. He was my hero during the war. And having met him..."

"You love him," Dax stated simply.

"Yes," Carter admitted. "And I would do anything for him. But I'm just not wired that way. I mean, I love him, but not that way. I mean, I've been attracted to men before, kind of on the surface. With him it's emotional. But it's not..."

"Sexual?" Dax asked.

"I don't know if you can understand. I don't want to be a man. I like being a woman. And I love being with women. To be with a man, just the thought of it feels all wrong. Unnatural."

Carter was so completely vulnerable. Dax could easily see how women who had never harbored any lesbian fantasies could fall for her. The impact of Carter's unique combination of strength and vulnerability was a natural aphrodisiac. Dax had to slow her breathing. It was dangerous to become so quickly sexually attracted to one of her patients.

"God, I so much want to give him that, though," Carter continued.

"But you know you can't," said Dax.

"There's no way I could do that," Carter said. "It would just end up hurting us both more. Even though we're probably going to end up assigned to different quadrants of the galaxy - it would still end up hurting him. He's a klingon. They get so attached."

"I found that out the hard way," Dax admitted. "My former host was married to a klingon and I made the mistake of being with him once. It really hurt us both so much."

Carter registered surprise. "You look so young. It's hard to think of you as someone who has lived a dozen lifetimes." She stood up suddenly. Dax could almost feel the wave of heat coming off of her. For such an enormous personality, Captain Rhonda Carter was a very small woman - 5'0" and 90 pounds of pure rocket fuel. "You know what I need? I need a good screw. It's been way too long." She turned to leave.

"Rhonda?"

Carter stopped, turned toward Dax.

"Be careful out there. The mood you're in right now... you're about to rip your way through this space station, probably seduce four or five women, ravish them and leave them all wanting more." Dax wasn't smiling. "Just... Just be careful how many hearts you break trying to fix yours."

Carter gave Dax a look of raw sexual aggression. "God damn it I wish you weren't my counselor. The things I would do with you... Mmmh!" It was a guttural sound.

Captain Carter whirled and strode out of Ezri Dax's salon, leaving Dax breathing hard and feeling more than a little boggy. Ezri shook her head slowly, trembling more than a little, and said to herself, very, very quietly, "Boy is Julian going to get it tonight..."

SBA Episode 2, Scene 10: Quark's Quarters

Chapter Summary

Pel visits Quark for the first time in years.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: Astral Traveller

Scene 10: Quark's Quarters

2.10

Quark's Quarters

Trader Pel was getting dressed. Very, very quietly.

But ferengi had the most sensitive hearing of any of the known races in the Alpha Quadrant and even the slightest sibilance of Pel's silk jacket sliding over silk shirt sleeves was enough to wake Quark. His breathing changed, providing noisy (to a ferengi) evidence that he was awake and watching.

"So you're just going to put those clothes on and walk out of here." Quark was sitting up in bed.

"I can't sleep here," Pel explained. "Strange dreams. Sleep disorder."

"This is all wrong," Quark rejoined. "You're getting dressed. I'm completely naked here." He got out of bed, making his point obvious.

Pel smiled and turned and leaned up to kiss Quark.

Quark enjoyed the kiss for only a second, then backed off. "It's just... so wrong! I'm not that kind of guy..."

"Evidently you are," Pel laughed. "The evidence is all over both of us..."

Quark came up with a scandalized expression, causing Pel to laugh again. "You know you love it... The taboo... That feeling of being so very, very naughty..."

Quark wrapped his naked body in an expensive, silk robe that managed to blend leopard spots with a subtle plaid. "You know, if you think you can just come in here and use me for sex..." He shook his head slowly. "Well, I guess I'm okay with that, really..."

Pel paused at the door, turned and smiled at the ferengi bar owner. "Same time tomorrow?"

"I really hope so," Quark replied, with feeling. "You know, I've missed you..."

Pel smiled more broadly, nodded slightly. "I could tell..." The minuscule, exiled ferengi trader dodged quickly out of the door as Quark retrieved a pillow and threw it.

Laughing.

SBA Episode 2, Scene 11: 12, 13, 14

Chapter Summary

12, 13, & 14 get together.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: Astral Traveller

Scene 11: 12, 13, 14

2.11
12, 13, 14

“FOURTEEN!!!!”

A small, slim, bald man in his late-50's, wearing a business suit, was standing on the Deep Space 9 promenade next to an older man who was quite clearly his father - their look and build was so similar. The older man wore the uniform of a Star Fleet admiral. His son, who had shouted, took off running as if he were a teenager.

Captain Skip Howard turned around and his face lit up like the morning sun. “THIRTEEN!!!” He broke into a run, slowing just enough that he didn't bowl himself and his father over in the middle of the DS9 promenade. Their boisterous tackle-hug made them the center of attention as Admiral Ronald Howard XII walked up to join them, slowly shaking his bald head.

“So much undignified drama from my descendants,” Admiral Howard intoned in a mock dramatic soliloquy, shaking his head. “Where did I go wrong?” The admiral gathered his grandson into a rough, athletic hug, then held him at arm's length and looked at him. “Janet Carter had some very high praise for you. She told me what you went through - the people you lost. You seem to be holding together well.”

Skip Howard looked pensive for a moment. “Except for this rather grim ceremony where I will accept their severed body parts to enrich the soil of my ship's arboretum.”

The admiral patted his grandson's shoulders, then stepped back slightly. “Don't ever let them hear you say it like that, son. It's a big point of pride and honor thing for them.”

“What are you planting?” asked the middle Howard.

Skip Howard turned toward his father, smiled easily. “Hands and hydrangeas. I felt it was important if they're hand-feeding a plant, that it should be a terrestrial species.”

“Tall, noble, colorful...” Ronald Howard XIII ruminated. “A rich history with Imperial Japan and the way of the samurai... conveying at once sorrow and gratitude...”

“And they're inedible,” Admiral Howard observed.

Captain Howard snapped his fingers and pointed. “And it's grandpa for the win!”

Three generations of Howards shared a laugh.

“So both of you have already seen the Beagle,” Captain Howard said. “Fly fishing on Bajor?”

“Actually, I've been engaged to represent the interests of some trill miners that you recently brought back from ferengi space,” said the middle Howard.

Skip Howard flexed his entire body and made a triumphal motion with both fists. “Yes! Dad to the rescue! So do you have some time for lunch? There's a ferengi who has hired some high quality chefs...”

“Actually, the three of us have a date with the station commander and a few other notables in the banquet room,” said Admiral Howard. “Call it a brass quintet,” he added, tapping each of the four pips on his grandson’s uniform. “Your fellow captains, and Vice Admiral Ho.”

“VICE Admiral?” Skip Howard asked.

SBA Episode 2, Scene 12: Ho Lan Thao

Chapter Summary

Vice Admiral Ho Lan Thao makes an offer to Captain Yui Song.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 12: [Ho Lan Thao](#)

2.12 [Ho Lan Thao](#)

“Nice brass, sir.”

Captain Yui Song had risen when her commanding officer entered the banquet room. At the moment it was just the two of them.

Vice Admiral Ho Lan Thao was, in build, similar to Captain Rhonda Carter, if even a little smaller and with very nice, womanly curves. But her features, dark skin and gracefully demure demeanor were those of a Vietnamese woman. “An assignment I have always wanted,” she said. “I was seriously considering retirement until they offered it to me.” Even though she was nearly 70, there was only the slightest hint of gray in her long, thick black hair.

Yui Song found herself envious of her commanding officer’s graceful aging. She looked like she might be in her 40’s.

“I’ve been thinking about retirement too,” Song offered. “My commission expires in two months.”

“You’re 83? That’s rather old for a captain. At least for a human,” Vice Admiral Ho observed. “Nearly 50 years in the service, two tours at the helm of a starship. 15 years as a professor at the academy.”

“The Cardassian War and the Dominion War,” Yui Song said. “I signed up to be an explorer. I’ve been a soldier, and I’ve been a teacher.”

“That’s the nature of service, Song,” Ho rejoined. “We answer the call. And you acquitted yourself exceptionally well in both roles. One of our best fighters. One of our top teachers. Hundreds of people owe their lives to you. Thousands. Some because of how you led them. Far more because of what you taught them. So what will you do with your retirement?”

“I really don’t know.” Yui Song sighed. “My family was on Fender Marsh. There’s not even an atmosphere there anymore.”

“None of them survived?” Ho asked.

“One of the most egregious of the atrocities of the Dominion. The banality of evil...”

“We were concerned that you might go on a vengeance tour,” said Ho. “But you only became a better soldier.”

“I didn’t want to kill them,” Captain Yui responded. “I wanted to defeat them. Utterly. Our way. I wanted them to truly be sorry for what they did. If we just savagely killed them...” Yui fell silent for a moment, then: “I wanted to prove our way is better. To win the peace. I wanted them to learn contrition.”

“You would have made a great admiral,” Ho observed. “Are you certain I can’t talk you into staying under my command? I could use another five years. We lost a lot of high quality officers in this war.”

“I want to fly a ship, sir, not a desk.” Yui’s voice had the firm sound of resolve.

“Skip Howard adores you, you know,” Ho rejoined. “He had very high praise.”

“He’s unique. And he’s a Howard born and bred. Doesn’t walk like one or act like one, but he has that Howard charm. He is a little on the green side, though.”

“My thoughts as well,” said Ho. “He acquitted himself really well on the ferengi mission, but I’m not really comfortable sending him out there in that bizarrely advanced ship by himself.”

“Out there... where?”

Vice Admiral Ho gave Captain Yui a direct look - for the first time truly seeming like a Star Fleet Admiral. “Since first contact with the Dominion went so horribly wrong, United Earth Governments and the Federation Council want an expeditionary force outside of Federation space to identify potential threats. A voyage of discovery, which is what the Beagle was built for. But they don’t want that high technology out there by itself with a green, freshly promoted captain at the helm. Even if he is a Howard.”

“You’re not going to try to supplant him?” Yui asked. “I think that would be a mistake, especially now. That crew is invested in him.”

“Agreed,” said Ho. “I want to send along a strong, right arm. Some muscle for him to rely on.”

“Captain Carter would jump at the chance,” Yui observed.

“And I want to send along a mentor. Someone whom he respects and will listen to. What do you say, Commodore Yui? Care to leave it all out there on the field? Five years to explore outside of Federation space? Strange new worlds and new civilizations? To boldly go where no man has gone before?”

SBA Episode 2, Scene 13: And In The Ruins

Chapter Summary

Three astral travelers compare their shared experiences.



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 13: [And In The Ruins](#)

2.13

And In The Ruins

Pel had sought out Captain Rhonda Carter and Lt. Ki Kresid. They were to be found in Lt. Kresid's temporary quarters aboard Deep Space 9, along with General Krank.

They hadn't called this meeting. It was more like the meeting had called them.

Even though the rooms were among the smallest available on DS9, they seemed enormous compared to Ki Kresid, who was up and wandering around, clearly enjoying the feeling of space - needing it. The minuscule roylan casually scrambled up an apparently featureless wall to make use of the replicator, clinging to the wall with her left foot and right hand like a spider while she retrieved a tiny, freshly replicated, square cup of something called teka teka nectar.

The fact that Kresid was comfortable being seen doing this was striking. Pel was aware that roylans preferred to conceal their abilities so that they would come as a surprise when needed to escape predators.

General Krank was in a corner, sitting absolutely still, eyes closed, doing his best impression of furniture. Furniture decked out in highly polished klingon armor.

Kresid slid down the wall from the replicator, walked across the room and effortlessly hopped backward onto her bed, dangling her tiny legs over the side.

Captain Rhonda Carter sprawled comfortably all over the divan. She was in dress uniform - her dress uniform jacket carelessly folded over the back of a nearby chair.

"Well," said Pel, "We're all here..."

Kresid flicked her long, thin, clearly prehensile tongue down into the nectar with a slight clicking sound. Her eyestalks clicked slightly as she focused first on Trader Pel, then on Captain Rhonda Carter.

"All three of us shared each of three dreams... visions... journeys..." Rhonda Carter offered. "But do either of you know what an ocean-going battleship from Earth's 20th Century looks like?"

"I do now," said Pel.

"No, you don't," Carter rejoined. "But you know what a bizarre caricature of one looks like. Can you crawl upside down on a metal ceiling?"

"No," Pel responded. "But now I have an idea what it feels like."

"Krank seems to think we're communicating with their souls. That's why so much emotion and context seems to be coming through," Carter added. "Not direct experience... more subjective... dreamlike. As if we're sharing their dreams."

"According to Captain Howard, some physical part of us is actually traveling," said Pel. "He and Dr. Uto saw it - right here in this room. Skip called it, 'astral projection,' whatever that means."

"They're reaching out to us," said Carter. "Baring their souls to us, as much as they can. They might not even be consciously aware they're doing it."

"They want our help." Ki Kresid seemed garrulous for the normally reticent roylans. "They don't want to hurt us. But they will kill us if at all

they can.”

“Because that is their nature,” Pel said, only realizing it in that moment.

“It’s what they were made for,” Captain Carter concluded.

“They are machines,” said Krank. “War machines. Machines created to end the race that built them.”

He opened his eyes to see the three small astral travelers looking at him.

“My people have history with this,” the elderly klingon general added. “There are great swathes of my home planet, Qo’nos, that are completely uninhabitable. Because of the machines our ancestors built to do their fighting for them. There is an ancient myth that we klingons killed our gods because they were meddling... querulous... troublesome. We had created them to be exactly that. It is why we became warriors. And why we will never again allow anyone, or anything, to do our fighting for us.”

There was a long silence.

Captain Carter got up. Put on her dress uniform jacket. Smoothed it down.

General Krank rose. His armor wasn’t different. But it was spotless. They had a banquet to attend. He followed Captain Carter to the door.

“So what do they need our help for?” Pel finally asked.

Krank turned at the door and fixed a steely gaze on the tiny ferengi:

“They need our help to die.”

SBA Episode 2, Scene 14: The 16th Fleet

Chapter Summary

The 16th Fleet is reconstituted.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2: [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 14: [The 16th Fleet](#)

2.14

The 16th Fleet

General Krank was an unusually quiet natured klingon, preferring to observe and assess rather than boisterously joining and dominating any conversation. He had not always been this way. It was part of an enormous personality shift following his years of torture and reprogramming at the hands of the changelings. A coping strategy he had developed and now considered an asset.

In fact, it was more reflective of the man than the facade of boisterous klingon bravado he had previously employed to fit in. As a warrior, he won because he took his time, observed and assessed the situation, and applied his assets strategically. Even in hand-to-hand combat.

On the surface, General Krank was the celebrity of this banquet - easily the most famous person in the room. Kawa, the klingon chef, had been tapped to provide the cuisine and had blended authentic klingon foods for the general with more human-influenced dishes designed to provide klingon dishes that were appetizing to (or at least safely edible for) humans, along with some authentic bajoran foods that had also become favorites among humans.

The absence of any indigenous human cuisine was one of many subtle markers of human dominance, even this far from Earth. Most of the attendants were human, but more subtly, in a way, all the cuisine was human cuisine, meaning there was no need for hamburgers or potatoes. Human culture was the ultimate cannibal. It ate other cultures whole and crapped out more human culture. It was not lost on Krank that by selecting him, his culture and cuisine as the celebrity for this banquet, all of these were not-so-subtly subsumed into human culture.

Kawa was aware of this too. He had become the klingon humans felt comfortable around. Which spoke of his emotional control and intellect. The klingon chef and the klingon general communicated their understanding to each other by not communicating at all. No eye contact. No acknowledgement of each other's presence at all. It was the most eloquent communication they could have managed.

Perhaps most damning of all, no humans were involved in planning this banquet. It was planned by Colonial Kira Nurys and her new Star Fleet 2nd in command, a bolian named Voll Waht. The additional labor was all provided by the Bajoran Army. And the humans didn't notice it at all.

Except, perhaps, Rhonda Carter, who might have garnered some inkling by paying attention to the klingons.

Another bolian was the next to arrive - Lt. Cmdr. Zizira Gross introduced herself to Captain Carter. Krank was grateful that Carter's attention was now demanded for developing her relationship with her new executive officer.

The humans showed up last. Another subtle signal of their understated dominance. Skip Howard and his father were completely relaxed. Captain Yui Song and Vice Admiral Ho were more reserved, but having gotten a sense of Captain Yui, Krank could see that she was more relaxed, even happy, in a guarded way.

Sakura Nakamura Holland and her husband, Commander Dutch Holland, took seats next to the Howards and were quickly engaged in lively, light-hearted conversation with Captain Howard and his father.

Major Janet Carter, now in U.S. Marine dress blues, found a seat on the other side of Krank from her cousin. The concept of dress uniforms for formal occasions seemed odd to the elderly klingon general. But the large, muscular African American woman was no less impressive in dress blues. She was, in much more than skin color, the polar opposite of her older cousin - alert, erect, naturally intimidating because of the precision of her movements combined with evident athleticism. A trained and tested warrior.

Admiral Ronald Howard XII was the last to arrive. He was not an intimidating man in appearance - he had the same warm, irrepressible smile as his son and grandson and was rather slight of build. But he completely owned everything and everyone in the room, the entire space station

and pretty much anything else nearby. Not smug, but entirely self-possessed.

“General Krank,” the admiral said, “We are very grateful for your company and I hope you will accept my personal thanks for looking after my grandson and for agreeing to share in his adventures.”

Admiral Howard was not asking Krank for a speech. Just providing the opportunity.

Krank stood up.

“Admiral, I lost my family in the war. My wife. My sons and daughters. My grandsons and granddaughters.” Krank paused for a moment. “Retrieving me, rehabilitating me, bringing me back into service was your idea. Everything that happens here today, it was your plan. The Romulans only think they are clever and manipulative. They are backward, helpless children compared to you humans, and to you in particular, Admiral Howard. I will protect your grandson with everything I have and everything I am. You have left me no other honorable choice.”

Krank sat down.

Admiral Howard was, probably for the first time in several decades, completely flustered - completely at a loss for words.

The tension in the room was almost a physical presence.

And was broken by a stage whisper from Captain Skip Howard - he was leaning in toward his father, but his whisper was precisely pitched to be heard across the room: “See Dad, I told you he’s awesome...”

The room exploded with laughter. Even Krank couldn’t keep from laughing. The entire mood of the banquet changed. It wasn’t until after several dishes of everything except Earth food and nearly an hour of small talk that Admiral Howard stood to speak again.

“I stand both humbled and enthused. I did not come here expecting anyone could take me down a peg and fill me with joy in the same moment.” The admiral gestured and bowed to the elderly Klingon general. “Any pride I may have is nothing compared to the safe-keeping of my family. Especially in this moment.” He turned to the Vietnamese woman seated next to him. “Vice Admiral Ho Lan Thao, you were promoted for a purpose. I am pleased at this moment to confirm your appointment as the Director of Deep Space Exploration and simultaneously, the recomposition of the 16th Fleet and its rededication for that purpose under your command. Vice Admiral?”

Vice Admiral Ho stood as Admiral Howard resumed his seat. “I am pleased to announce the retention and promotion of Yui Song to Fleet Captain, a commission informally known as Commodore. Commodore Yui will remain with the 16th Fleet, and will keep her flag aboard the U.S.S. Mako. We are placing the Beagle task force under Commodore Yui’s command. The task force may be expanded at need, but at its core will include the U.S.S. Escort, under the command of Captain Rhonda Carter, and the U.S.S. Beagle, under the command of Captain Ronald Howard XIV.” Ho Lan Thao resumed her seat.

Admiral Howard did not stand, but addressed the gathering more informally. “We learned a bitter lesson about the need for this deep space exploration. First contact with the Dominion was disastrous and we have all suffered the consequences. Both the Federation Council and United Earth Governments have made it clear that Star Fleet must dedicate more resources and, as we had in the past, make deep space exploration a professional, ongoing service to ensure potential threats such as the Dominion and the Borg are identified, analyzed, understood, and managed for the protection of the Federation and our allies. The U.S.S. Beagle was designed, built and staffed for this purpose. The Beagle task force will be the first of six task forces dedicated to long range exploration and discovery. And I understand you already have a target identified and a fascinating and dangerous voyage of discovery awaits you...”

Chapter End Notes

The U.S.S. Mako is named after the late, great American actor, Makoto Iwamatsu, beloved by a new generation of fans for his voicing of Uncle Iroh in *Avatar, The Last Airbender* television series.

SBA Episode 2, Scene 15: Sprites

Chapter Summary

The sprites of Dolnok Nor

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 2 : [Astral Traveller](#)

Scene 15: [Sprites](#)

2.15 Sprites

A warm, pink glow warped space inside an incomplete space station, the warping evident as walls, struts, flooring, ceiling, furniture and debris flexed and stretched as the glow moved by. As the glowing moved out from an unfinished apartment and into the hallway, its color changed to a combination of orange, red and yellow, which then separated into three amorphous glows as they entered the promenade.

The three glows slowed, moving close to the floor to linger over the corpse of a long-dead cardassian. Then a couple of long-dead bajorans. Each glow gradually fused with one of these, animating long dead, dilapidated muscle and sinew.

Long dead bodies wandered about, limbs dragging, flopping, only playing at walking, like marionettes prancing across a stage. Ill fitting clothing for the brightly glowing, colored sprites. Eventually, one by one, the long dead bodies slid off; the freed sprite warping toward the ceiling - one passing through it. Another bounced off the ceiling back toward the floor. The glow fell apart and dripped in streams that melted the steel flooring. Hissing columns of poisonous steam arose from the holes burned into the floor.

As the glowing strands dripped through the floor, mingling with molten metal, the glows dissipated. Without their luminescence, the interior of the station gradually faded to the deepest black.

Large pieces of metal buckled and collapsed in the pitch darkness. Then the slight rattling of smaller objects... Then silence. A few moments later and low-pitched groaning grew and then gradually subsided...

Astral Traveller

Chapter End Notes

This is the final scene for Episode 2.

The adventure continues in Episode 3: Yours Is No Disgrace.

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