

## Star Beagle Adventures Episode 4: Starship Trooper

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## Star Beagle Adventures Episode 4: Starship Trooper

by [LordRobertBruceScott](#)

### Summary

Four young U.S. Marines are on a supply run, bringing themselves and a fully loaded runabout to the Beagle Task Force.

### Notes

Throughout this episode, snippets of lyrics are quoted. These are from the song, "Starship Trooper" by Jon Anderson, Steve Howe, and Chris Squire. The song first appeared as track 3 on "The Yes Album", 1971, Atlantic Records.

#### Author's Note:

I am using songs by the progressive rock group, YES, as inspiration for these stories. I am not trying in any way to interpret the lyrics. More like riffing on the song titles and playing with some of the rich and detailed imagery in YES lyrics.

Which is fair game, as YES, in writing the song "Starship Trooper," was riffing on Robert A. Heinlein's 1959 novel of the same name.

Complete lyrics are easily found online for all YES songs. If you have never listened to these songs, set aside some time just for that purpose and give the music and the lyrics your full attention... Wonders await.

Thanks!! rbs

## SBA Episode 4, Scene 1: Sister Bluebird

### Chapter Summary

Sister bluebird, flying high above...  
Shine your wings, forward to the sun...

### Chapter Notes

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



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: [Starship Trooper](#)

Scene 1: [Sister Bluebird](#)

#### 4.1

##### [Sister Bluebird](#)

"We're living in the trees... And we're flying in the breeze... We're the bluebirds..."

Guz Maxwell was absurdly handsome with dark skin and a straight nose that made him look more Italian than Spanish, a sparkle in his light brown eyes, a thick, close-cropped mop of coal black hair and the effortless athleticism and flawless skin of a teenager. As if all that wasn't enough, he had a sweet, natural tenor voice and played the electric guitar as if he had been born with one in his hands.

It was a generic instrument, designed to link into any comm system. Guz hadn't bothered to detach the control panel, which could be placed on the floor for foot control.

Raanda Habib would have jumped his bones in a hot second, but, alas, Guz didn't swing her way. So she had to content herself with enjoying his voice. At 19, she was a few months older than him and felt a little protective. She was, herself, another dark-skinned beauty - not perfect features, but deep brown eyes, a Persian nose and the flawless skin and effortless athleticism of youth - none of which she adequately appreciated.

She and Guz were relaxing in the back of the Bluebird, which had brought the song to mind. Spike and Sasha were up front. Guz had finished the song and was now casing the guitar despite her pleas for another song.

"I could go on for hours, but grandpa told me to never sing more than one song at a time," Guz said. "That, and never let anyone hear you sing a song more than once if you can avoid it."

"Can you teach me how to play guitar?" Raanda asked.

"I can," Guz replied. "But I won't."

"Why not?" It was delivered with a pout.

Guz laughed easily. "Because you don't want to know. You may think you do. But you really don't. If you wanted to know how to play, you would already be doing it." He handed her the guitar, which he had already carefully snapped into its case, then got up and stretched.

The Bluebird did not have windows in the rear compartment. There was a viewscreen, a couple of cots, and some of the crates had been

stacked to create a sort of standing table for taking meals while standing.

The rear compartment was fairly cavernous - the Bluebird was a standard sized Star Fleet runabout - but there was very little room to move about because it was heavily loaded with supplies: Spare parts. Top quality sensors. Field gear. And weapons. Lots and lots of weapons...



4.1

#### Chapter End Notes

The song Guz is singing at the beginning of this episode is "Bluebird" by Paul and Linda McCartney. The song first appeared as track 3 on the Paul McCartney & Wings album: "Band on the Run", 1973, Apple Records.

## SBA Episode 4, Scene 2: That Smell

### Chapter Summary

Hide the moment from my eager eyes...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 2: That Smell

#### 4.2

#### That Smell

“Your nose will make the difference between you being a live marine and a dead marine.”

Lance Corporal Petra Spitzke was a survivor. She had refused promotion because she did not want to be a leader. But she didn't want to be a buck private either. She had been everywhere during two wars, fighting first against the klingons, then alongside klingons against the Dominion. She wore bright red lipstick, British Racing Green eyeshadow, and while most of her hair was in a jarhead cut, there were a few tufts that stood up in front that were dyed bright red, pink and green, giving her a little the look of an exotic bird. She insisted on being called “Spike.” Her three young companions had no idea why.

The Bluebird was on autopilot. The three young privates were up front in the flight cabin with Spike, hanging on her every word. Spike had survived and survived, often the only marine to come back from desperate fights and she had a lot of stories to tell. Moscow, Songbird, and Boyfriend (as she called them) saw her as amazing, and ancient, and wise. She was 25.

“You get about 2 seconds at the most, then you go nose-blind. You have to own your sense of smell. Your human brain is designed to notice smell first. It's your warning sign. Always pay attention to it.” Spike tapped her nose. Marines rarely wore fingernail polish, but it was allowed for any rank above private. Spike's nails were a glossy black. Her eyes appeared blue sometimes - hazel at others.

“Close your eyes. I'm going to expose you to some different smells. When you notice the smell, tell me what it is you think you smell.”

Spike entered commands into a small tri-corder.

PFC Sasha Soko said, “Rancid pizza.”

PFC Guz Maxwell added, “Kind of like a rotten hotdog?”

PFC Raanda Habib's voice was definite: “Cardassian.”

“Boyfriend got it right. But if rancid pizza or a rotten hotdog works for you, just remember to associate that smell with the smell of a cardassian, specifically a male cardassian. It's not actually their body odor. Cardassians don't shower. Their skin doesn't react well to water. They clean themselves with scented oils and this scent is the most popular with males. Females use a stronger scent that adds kind of a bad cherry smell to it. Like children's medicine. It really helps to be able to associate familiar smells and tag them to important smells. Okay - eyes closed again...”

“Wet dog?” asked PFC Maxwell at almost the same moment the other two said, with complete conviction, “Klingon!”

“Looks like Songbird has never met a klingon,” Spike said. “You don't forget that smell. And when they're hunting you, they can be very quiet and stealthy. That smell was the only thing that saved my life. Just two klingons killed my entire platoon within seconds. They normally don't hunt at night because their night vision is nowhere near as good as ours. I survived because I hid in a hole and pulled a box over me. And I stayed there and stayed quiet for hours.”

Spike took a drink. “They didn't leave until sunrise. They didn't make a noise - not a single sound. They were just sitting there, waiting for more of us to come by. The only way I knew they were still there was I could smell them. It was so itchy - I was getting bitten by greeworms. I was terribly sick for a week - it took forever for the doc to get the greeworm eggs out of me. But if I had made any noise - even just to scratch,

they would have heard me and they would have killed me.”

“Okay - one more smell - eyes closed again...”

The three young privates closed their eyes.

“Burnt plastic?” asked PFC Raanda Habib.

“Yeah,” added PFC Sasha Soko. “But a little medicine kind of smell too...” Soko wore his blonde hair in a jar-head cut, but also had a thick worm of a blonde mustache, regulation cut at the corner of his lips. At 6'4" and 240 lean, muscular pounds, he had the look of a U.S. Marine.

Like his comrades, he was wearing the gray and brown fractal camouflage uniform with three subdued flags on the left shoulder and a subdued beagle-patch (used only by the Space Hounds) on his right. His uniform hat, a quarter-bill cap made of the same material, was hanging on a set of hooks that had been added to the back of the flight cabin.

“Good Moscow... How about you, Songbird?”

PFC Guz Maxwell ran his fingers through his short brush of coal black hair. “Kind of like a guitar pick when I’m chewing on it.”

“Good - remember that smell. That’s the smell that will save your life. Saved my life twice. My sergeant taught me that smell...”

The three PFC’s opened their eyes, looking at Spike expectantly.

“That is the smell of metabolized ketracel white. The jem’hadar metabolize a lot of it just before they de-cloak to attack...”

## SBA Episode 4, Scene 3: Knowledge of the Land

### Chapter Summary

I still remember the talks by the water...  
The proud sons and daughter...  
That knew the knowledge of the land...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 3: Knowledge of the Land

### 4.3

#### Knowledge of the Land

“They’re kind of like squooshy medicine balls, about 5 foot in diameter. At first we treated them as if they were rolling dogs. But gradually we realized they were far, far more intelligent than that.”

Sasha Soko was stretched out on a cot in the back of the Bluebird, hands behind his head, fingers laced. Guz Maxwell had refolded the other cot into a chair and was relaxing, guitar in hand. From time to time he would strum a chord, or fingerpick a neat figure, using the most mellow sound the instrument could produce to coax the story out of his fellow marine.

Spike and Raanda Habib were up front.

“Fender Marsh was a perfect paradise for them. They were the apex species. So we thought we had discovered a paradise for us,” Sasha continued. “Instead of resisting us, the foozies observed us, befriended us, and only gradually allowed us to realize that the paradise that was Fender Marsh was of their making.”

“How could they make anything if they had no arms? No hands? Not even eyes?” Guz asked, with a musical sting.

“They had a hundred mouths. They would swallow seeds and germinate them, selecting them for specific traits. They would swallow fish eggs, amphibian eggs, insect eggs, and select them for specific traits. They weren’t just farming. They were transforming the biosphere - the entire biosphere. They communicated biochemically, not just by pheromones, but even by the plants and animals they chose to nurture instead of digest. They bred stinging insects and poisonous snakes to exterminate any predators they were afraid of. And if they had wanted, they could easily have gotten rid of us.”

“I thought you said you were from Ohio,” said Guz.

“Akron, Ohio,” Sasha confirmed. I was born there and I graduated high school there just before I joined up. But we lived on Fender Marsh from the time I was 3 until I was 15. We moved back to Earth just in time - just before the Dominion destroyed the planet. There’s not even an atmosphere there anymore. The foozies welcomed us to their home. Then they lost their home because we were there.”

Guz played a few more chords and passages. The guitar was set to a particularly mellow sound - surf guitar. The sound just dripped out of the instrument. Guz paused. “So did any of them survive?”

“There’s a colony in Arkansas and another somewhere in Congo. I think there’s a colony somewhere on Bajor. Maybe a few other worlds. They wanted to, in their words, “taste the stars.”” Sasha rolled onto his side and watched as Guz cased up his guitar, then began field stripping a phaser rifle.

In Star Fleet, no one would dare open a phaser unless they were an engineer, specifically trained to work on such weapons. Not so with marines. All United Earth Governments marine services, from the United States to India to Ivory Coast to Cuba, followed a single military doctrine. No marine could carry or use a weapon that they could not field strip, repair, and reassemble.

“So are they why you joined up?” Guz asked, not looking up from his task. His fingers moved with the same surety of purpose as they had on the guitar. The standard issue phaser rifle contained within its housing every tool needed to field strip it. Small parts were designed to fit securely in the right side of the housing, which also contained a spare power pack, a spare refractor crystal and a few spare lenses - the parts

that most often needed replacement.

Sasha watched with some admiration. Guz was really good with his hands. He was the youngest of their group, only a few months out of basic training and already picked for the Space Hounds - the most elite service within the U.S. Marine Corps.

Sasha took a deep breath. "Yeah. That entire world was a wonder. A biosphere shaped by an intelligent life form without hands, without eyes. But great minds. Destroying that world was one of the worst of the Dominion's many war crimes, so yeah, definitely part of why I joined up. My unit was en route to the front when word came through that the war was over."

Guz cased the phaser rifle and uncased a bullpup and began field stripping the fully automatic projectile weapon. The rifle was designed to catch its bullet casings and feed them into a separate compartment of the 150-round magazine, which clipped into the top of the rifle.

"How about you, Guz? Why did you join up?"

"Dick," Guz replied.

"What?"

Guz laughed. "There's no one who can give a guy a good hard time like a horny marine. And I can tell within seconds which guys are willing to take me out for a drive."

Sasha laughed. Hard. Then: "I suppose I'm a little envious. The girls don't make it quite so easy."

"Don't worry, Sasha," Guz replied. He cased the bullpup, then looked into his comrade's eyes. "You're gorgeous. Just tell every girl in every port that you're a virgin and they'll tear your clothes off just to get to be the first. If you can keep that wide-eyed innocent, slightly desperate look, you can probably lose your virginity to at least 20 or 30 different women."

Guz and Sasha shared a laugh.

"So seriously, you just joined to get laid?" Sasha asked.

"You grew up on Fender Marsh. I grew up in Burley, Idaho," Guz replied. "There are still some very backward people there. I got beaten up a few times for being, well, me. That's never going to happen again. Not to me. Not to anyone in my sight."

## SBA Episode 4, Scene 4: Dark and Grounded

### Chapter Summary

Hide the mysteries of life on your way...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 4: Dark and Grounded

#### 4.4

#### Dark and Grounded

The four young marines had put their heads together.

They were seated on the floor of the Bluebird's flight cabin, which was currently completely dark. And void of air. And flooded with radiation. Which their EVA suits were easily able to protect them from for at least 20 hours. They had their helmets touching so they could hear one another without transmitting any signals as their comm systems were currently disabled. Their voices sounded distant and distorted to one another.

"Do you really think they saw us?" asked Sasha.

"Put your brains on it," Spike suggested.

"We saw them," Raanda observed.

"Yeah, but they're like, 100 times as big as we are," said Sasha.

"Far more than that," Guz added.

"And their sensors are easily 100 times as powerful as ours," Raanda said. "That and we turned tail and ran here like a scared rabbit."

"Be glad there was a here for us to run to," said Spike.

"What do you think they're going to do?" asked Sasha.

"They know we're in a class A runabout," said Raanda. "And they probably know standard Star Fleet EVA suits can sustain the wearer for 48 hours. There are far too many highly radioactive asteroids in this system for them to closely inspect every one of them."

"It depends on their mission," said Guz. "If they want us really badly, they will wait a couple of days. Sooner or later we have to come out of hiding. But if they're on a schedule, they won't be able to wait that long. They might drop a probe to alert them when we emerge."

"That is not my plan," said Spike.

"So what is your plan?" asked Guz.

"We don't have to come out of hiding," Spike responded. "But in less than 18 hours I have to engage minimal navigational shields to protect us against further radiation and flush the cabin. Then we'll have to re-engage life support, decontaminate our suits, get out of them and don fresh suits, which are currently in protective cases. All of that can be done in a sustained burst of about 20 minutes. We'll plan each step out. We want to do it quickly, but we absolutely must get every step completed correctly."

"Won't all that be like turning on a big neon sign and saying, 'Here we are - come get us!'?" Sasha asked.

"Suit decontamination will take place in the shielded crates, so that shouldn't give off much signal," Guz observed.

“Almost none at all,” Spike agreed. “They’re definitely looking for power readings to indicate things like life support and navigational shields right now...”

“Assuming they’re looking for us at all,” said Raanda. “And that’s assuming they’re hostile...”

“Assume those things, Marine,” said Spike. “Even if we were inside Federation space we would be vulnerable to them, despite treaty law. But we’re far from home now. Fair game as far as they’re concerned. And they’re pretty far afield as well. Hostility is the safe assumption.”

“The neon sign?” Sasha prodded.

“This rock is putting out a lot of radiation,” said Spike. “They would have to be looking right at it to notice the nav shield and life support. As long as we minimize the amount of time that we’re exposed, we have a chance of escaping detection.”

“So how long do we stay here?” asked Raanda.

“I think Songbird hit it on the nose. They’re probably going to figure that if they don’t see us in 48 hours, we’re either dead and hidden too well or long gone. So I’m planning 64 hours,” said Spike.

“That’s going to put us pretty far off-schedule,” said Sasha. “Will Beagle wait for us?”

“No,” Spike replied. “I’ve got a friend on that boat, Sergeant Chavez Lone Wolf. We came up together. He told me Captain Howard doesn’t leave marines behind. If we’re late, they’ll come looking for us. Now settle in. It’s going to be a long week...”

## SBA Episode 4, Scene 5: You May Follow

### Chapter Summary

As I see a new day in me, I can also show...  
If you and you may...  
Follow...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 5: You May Follow

#### 4.5

#### You May Follow

“Definitely ferengi in manufacture,” said Spike. “You can tell by the periodic waggle on the tail end.” She tapped on the sensor readout with highly polished, glossy black fingernails.

“Some sort of manufacturing defect?” asked PFC Guz Maxwell.

“An advantage,” said PFC Raanda Habib. “Each probe has a number of natural blind spots for each component of its sensor array. Can’t be avoided at superluminal speeds. The waggle is designed to give each part of the sensor array a chance to look into its blind spot, make sure it’s not getting followed - or shot at.”

“Which is why shooting at it would just be a waste of power and ammunition,” Spike rejoined. “Since we don’t know who put that tail on us, I’d prefer for them not to know for sure what our capabilities are.”

“I thought you said they were ferengi,” said PFC Sasha Soko.

“Could be anyone,” Raanda Habib replied. “The probe is ferengi manufacture. Which means any number of actors might have purchased it - or traded for it. Ferengi tracking technology rivals even the Vulcan Science Academy.”

“Is there any way we can shake it?” asked Guz. There was a nervous edge to his voice.

“Nope,” said Spike. “Better we don’t even try. Right now I’m trying to pretend it isn’t there and not let it change anything we’re doing. It’s the only advantage I can think of at the moment. We’re nowhere close to a star system or anywhere we can hide. So all we can do is hide our capabilities.”

Lance Corporal Petra Spitze looked around at her young charges. They were nervous. They desperately needed a lesson in how to be marines at this moment. She stretched, yawned widely, laced her fingers behind her head.

“So what is your plan?” asked Sasha. He was nervously playing with his mustache.

Spike got up slowly, fluffed the brightly colored tufts in the front of her hair. “Yeah... I’m thinking a turkey sandwich and a nap. Wake me up if anything interesting happens.” She turned and ambled toward the rear compartment, leaving the three young privates in the flight cabin.

The replicator was located in the passage between the flight cabin and the rear compartment. Spike paused at the replicator. “Turkey on rye, tomato, onion, brown mustard. Hold the mayo. And a cup of sog, cold.”

As she walked with her tray into the rear compartment, she smiled as she heard Raanda Habib saying, “Sog? Ugh... How does she drink that stuff?”

Spike laid down on a cot, placed her food on the floor and nibbled at it. The sog was a horrible tasting betazoid drink, even more disgusting than saurian brandy and without either the restorative or intoxicating effect of the infamously foul-tasting liquor. But despite the nasty smell and far worse taste, sog was oddly soothing without being a tranquilizer. It helped her turn her brain off so she could sleep.

There was no way of knowing how long the probe would follow them, but at some point whoever was controlling that probe was very likely to show up.

And that was unlikely to be a pleasant encounter.

She would need her strength. And hopefully the young marines would learn the lesson she was teaching them the best way she could.

Don't worry about what you can't control.

Gear up. Get ready. Rest while you can.

And most importantly, be at peace until it comes.

## SBA Episode 4, Scene 6: Staying Alive

### Chapter Summary

Mother life, hold firmly on to me...  
Catch my knowledge higher than the day...  
Release as much as only you can show...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 6: Staying Alive

### 4.6

#### Staying Alive

“Oh, I love a good probing... but you’re just too crass... So won’t you please just get off of my ass...”

Spike was laughing. “Where do you come up with that shit?”

PFC Guz Maxwell took a dramatic bow with his guitar. “Yeah, well, you know...” He started casing his guitar.

“The probe is still following us, 320 kilometers,” said PFC Raanda Habib. She was trying to keep the nervousness out of her voice.

“The computer will tell us whenever it does something different, Boyfriend,” Spike replied.

The probe had been tailing the Bluebird for nearly 2 days, always at 320 kilometers (precisely out of sensor range of the previous generation of runabouts for a probe of that size and configuration - only visible to the Bluebird because of a recent upgrade.)

Spike had, in turn, made a number of preparations. All of the cargo was firmly lashed down and had been moved as far forward as possible, leaving the only open area in the very back of the rear compartment. Several crates had been moved into the flight cabin, constricting that space as well. Guz had developed a compartment for securing his guitar - was putting it there now.

Spike had worked with her team to develop contingency plans depending on whomever had set the probe to follow them. Oddly, the contingency planning included some dance instruction from PFC Guz Maxwell.

It was another 5 hours before their hunter was revealed...

“Orions. Shit.” Spike picked up a device that clearly looked as if it had been cobbled together by ripping a tricorder in half and jamming a communicator pin (or most of a communicator pin) into the bottom half. She had two of these. She activated them and attached one to each side of her belt.

Her team followed suit.

“I hope to crap these things work,” said Raanda Habib.

“Way to fill us with confidence there, Boyfriend,” said Sasha Soko. “Especially considering you’re the one who made them...”

“Enough chatter,” said Spike. “Into your combat suits.”

By the time the marines had donned their EVA suits they were closing on the large orion ship, which lay waiting ahead of them.

“Flank speed!” said Spike.

In response, Guz poured everything into the engines in order to get to the orions sooner than expected.

A net of short range fighters was just deploying as the Bluebird shot just above the orion ship, the shields on the underside taking a couple of

glancing phaser shots as the Bluebird's speed spoiled the gunner's aim.

"Slow to warp 7.5," Spike ordered. "We'll need those shields now. They're in a hurry - they're not slowing to pick up their fighters. Which means we'll get about 15 minutes with only the mothership before the fighters can get to us."

"And in battle," Sasha started.

"Do whatever you have to do to survive the next 15 minutes," Raanda completed.

It took the mothership nearly 10 minutes to get turned around and catch up with the Bluebird. The fighters were much slower.

Guz's wild maneuvers were able to evade the orion phaser fire for only a few minutes and the Bluebird dropped out of warp. And pooped out a micro photon torpedo, which drifted, powerless, behind the runabout.

The Bluebird jerked to a stop as it was captured by a tractor beam from the mothership. The Bluebird's engines struggled against the tractor beam...

The micro photon torpedo did not, and was quickly drawn into the mothership's main bay, where it exploded, destroying all the landing craft inside the bay and causing secondary explosions within the mothership. But it failed to take out the tractor beam...

"I feel it!" said Sasha. All four marines got up and started dancing about wildly. Guz Maxwell hit a control on the pilot panel and the Bluebird began broadcasting disco music and playing it loudly in the cabin - dangerously loudly - enough to severely damage the hearing of anyone not wearing an EVA suit. Classic disco. Bee Gees.

Guz got caught for just a second in a transporter beam until Sasha pulled him out of it.

"Okay," said Spike. "They've given up for the moment, but they might try again before they decide to come over here after us... Keep dancing..."

The song was Staying Alive. And the dance steps came straight from Saturday Night Fever. Which looked particularly odd when performed by marines in space suits. Guz knew the moves. The others did their best to imitate him.

Then the interior lighting went to light blue, flooding the cabin with blue light.

"Here they come," said Spike. She and Sasha (who was, conveniently, left handed) took up positions behind shielded crates that barricaded the flight cabin from the rear compartment. Raanda and Guz were at the controls again.

The disco music in the cabin was dangerously loud, so loud that the marines could feel the bass frequencies pounding straight through their EVA suits.

There was only one area in the Bluebird that was open enough for beam-in - just in front of the rear hatch. The orions sent two giant males for muscle and three women. One of the giant orion males tried to squeeze into the narrow corridor between the crates and immediately got hit on the stun setting by both Sasha and Spike.

One of the green-skinned orion females vaulted neatly over the unconscious (and stuck) giant, deftly avoiding phaser fire with tremendous athleticism, despite the deafening disco music and shrieking voices of the Bee Gees at 130 decibels.

"Blow it Songbird!" Spike yelled.

PFC Guz Maxwell hit a control on his panel and the rear hatch blew open, expelling the air in the cabin and at least three orions with it.

Instead of allowing their boarding party to die in the vacuum of space (and the airless void inside the Bluebird), the orions beamed their boarding party back... Meaning their shields were still down...

A second micro-photon torpedo from the Bluebird destroyed one of the orion nacelles, causing the tractor beam to release and the Bluebird took off just as the fighters arrived.

"Crap," said Maxwell. "We took some damage. I can't hold warp 7 very long..."

"Drop to 6.5," said Spike. "Those fighters have a maximum speed of warp 6. If we can get them to exceed that long enough, we just might get out of this..."

"Mothership is going to warp and they're coming for us," said Raanda Habib. "Warp 5... Warp 6..."

"On only one working nacelle?" asked Sasha.

"We won't last long at 6.5," Maxwell warned. "And those fighters are catching up..."

Spike put her gloved hand on his space-suited shoulder. "Can you give me 15 minutes?"



# SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 7: Frying Pan

## Chapter Summary

Setting up of other roads...



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 7: Frying Pan

#### 4.7

#### Frying Pan

“I have a shot,” said PFC Raanda Habib. “Fighter coming in hot - warp drive overheating...”

“Take the shot!” Lance Corporal Petra Spitze (Spike) ordered.

The Bluebird’s phasers were not very powerful, not even strong enough to get through the shielding for a short-range orion fighter. But in this case simply adding to the load on the one-man craft’s overheated warp core was enough and the orion fighter exploded. Another fighter was disabled by the shrapnel.

“That leaves three,” said PFC Sasha Soko. “Micro photon?”

“Save them,” said Spike. “We only have 3 left in the bay. Never use them unless you are 100% certain they’ll do the job.”

“Our warp core is overheating,” said PFC Guz Maxwell. “If I don’t power down now...”

“All stop!” Spike ordered.

The three fighters that had been close on the Bluebird’s tail swept past at warp. But the enormous mothership slowed. It had clearly sustained damage - the forward landing bay door was damaged and could not close and the port warp nacelle was pretty much shredded.

The voice of an enraged Orion captain came through all of the marines’ EVA suit comm systems and his green visage was displayed on all of the Bluebird’s monitors.

“Stand down, drop your shields, and surrender, Star Fleet!”

The orion’s visage on the monitors was suddenly replaced with that of a grinning klingon. “Yes, Star Fleet, stand down and surrender. And you too, orion scum!”

Two birds of prey decloaked on either side of the orion mothership. One of the birds of prey was immediately swarmed by the three returning orion fighters, getting inside the weapons screen and lacing the klingon ship with close-range phaser fire.

“I can get one of them,” said Raanda.

“Take the shot,” Spike ordered.

The phaser beam from the Bluebird hit just as the orion fighter was swinging around for another run, sending the fighter spinning out of control. At the same moment, both birds of prey fired on the orion mothership, disabling both its weapons and its shields.

The bird of prey that had been targeted by the fighters flew off at high warp, easily shaking them, then turned and came back in, destroying both the remaining orion fighters within seconds.

The klingon commander on the Bluebird’s monitors was not amused. “I told you to stand down and surrender! Shields down now or you're

space dust!”

Spike reached over Raanda’s shoulder to hit the control, lowering what was left of the Bluebird’s shields. She took a breath, shook her head, and muttered almost to herself, but her voice coming through the other marines’ EVA helmets:

“Out of the frying pan...”

## SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 8: Picasso

### Chapter Summary

All I know can be shown by your acceptance of the facts  
They're shown...  
Before you...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 8: Picasso

4.8

Picasso

“be’ Qo’ nalqaD!”

Lance Corporal Petra Spitze drew a painful breath and spat a heavy load of mucous and blood at the klingon who had just slapped her. She followed that with a squeak and a grunt as she received a punch in the stomach. She made a quick sign behind her back for the benefit of the three young privates in her charge - all of whom were chained to the wall behind her: “Keep your mouths shut!”

“Stop trying to speak thlingn Hol!” The klingon who had been punching and slapping Spike now lifted her by her collar, his face close to hers. He growled quietly, his voice full of menace: “This is not a mating ritual. But what I choose to do with your empty shell...”

“Tarron Rerg!!” Spike said - and was promptly thrown across the room for it. She landed in a crumpled heap on the floor against one of the barred walls of the cage she and her marines were being held in. She slowly, painfully got to her feet again. “I have a gift from General Krank for Colonial Shozek!”

“Enough!” Her interrogator swept out a d’k tagh and activated the side blades.

The cage door banged open, admitting a much smaller and older klingon into the cell:

“How do you know my name, human?”

Spike had been beaten badly and could barely stand. Her face was swollen and bleeding. She barely managed, “Gift... for... Colonial Shozek...” She drew another painful breath... “From... General... Krank.” She slumped heavily against a wall, but managed to stay on her feet.

The older klingon, Tarron Rerg, stopped and assessed the scene. He had brought two klingons with him. There were six others in this room, including Spike’s tormentor. After a moment, he said, “You will come with me.” He turned to leave.

Spike managed to push herself back to her feet. “My marines.”

Rerg started to respond again, then stopped and looked around. Selected two different klingons with his eyes. “Get them down. They come too.”

Both klingons hesitated, apparently doing math in their heads. At a slight hand signal, the two klingons Rerg had brought with him drew their disruptors - something none of the other klingons in the room had.

The other klingon still had his d’k tagh drawn. He was also doing the math. “They are mine! I captured them on my patrol!”

“How did this one know my name? How does she know the colonial is here?” Tarron Rerg asked as the other marines were released and lead out of the cell along with Spike. He turned and walked away.

“It’s a human trick!” The klingon with the d’k tagh lunged at the older klingon, who whirled and expertly took the knife and threw the younger, larger klingon back into the cell. He slammed the door shut and locked his attacker inside.

“If she is playing a trick, she will pay with her life.” Rerg closed the side blades on the captured d’k tagh and tucked it into his belt. “If she is not, you will pay with yours.”

Spike wheezed as the older klingon marched her and her 3 young charges rather quickly through the large holding area. Several cells. Many prisoners - most of them orion. Some romulan, some human, some cardassian, some ferengi, other species Spike and her marines did not recognize. This place was far too large to be a ship, but Spike did not remember being anywhere near a planetary system.

They stepped into a room at the end of the hall, a door slammed shut and Spike could see her new captor was visibly relieved. The room was a lift.

It took a few minutes for the lift to carry them to another level. This was clearly a medical center - a sprawling medical center. They were brought to a small surgery room. Most of the medical equipment was federation surplus.

“Do what you can for her face,” Rerg said more or less to Raanda Habib. “You have about an hour.”

The older klingon left, along with one of his guards. The other took up station just outside.

When Spike regained consciousness, she was only barely aware of having passed out. She was reclining at an angle, not laying flat, which was good... and she could breathe. Her jacket and shirt had been removed (but not her bra) and three bone knitters were adhered to her chest and belly. She could literally feel her ribs being mended. She could tell that her face and jaw had been treated as well.

“Hands off your face, Lance Corporal,” said PFC Guz Maxwell.

“This...” Spike croaked, pointing at her face. She coughed and started again... “This your handiwork, Songbird?”

“I made a few improvements,” Maxwell said.

“I didn’t realize you were such a fan of Picasso,” Raanda Habib quipped.

“Looks more like Salvador Dali to me...” Sasha Soko mused.

Spike laughed and coughed: “Owww... Stop it!” she croaked. “You’re literally killing me...”

# SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 9: Mating Ritual

## Chapter Summary

Take what I say in a different way and it's easy to see that this is all...  
Confusion...



### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 9: Mating Ritual

## 4.9

### Mating Ritual

The four young marines had at least been allowed to adjust their uniforms before the chains and leg irons were applied. This time they were put into a cart on the back of a hover car. Two armed klingon guards were standing on the tailgate. Tarron Rerg sat up front next to the driver.

The car whizzed along broad metal corridors lined with closed metal doors. None of the klingons that they saw were wearing standard issue armor - instead they wore a variety of armor styles. Some had a very makeshift, home made look. Others were clearly family designs or more formal house designs.

The car delivered them directly into a large banquet hall. There were more non-klingon servants - slaves - than klingons. A young klingon sat on a throne at the end of the hall. The quality of his armor and his general bearing screamed wealth and power in a silent language that anyone could read.

The marines were led out of the car, across the banquet hall between rows of tables and up to the throne.

“So where is this gift you bring me from General Krank?”

“I need my hands to be free,” said Spike.

The young klingon glanced at Tarron Rerg, who, in turn retrieved a key and freed Spike’s hands.

She reached up, removed her hat and sorted through the three tufts that flopped down over her forehead - the pink one was in the middle. She plucked out a single hair.

“I am not amused, human,” warned the klingon colonial.

“A data rod is attached to this hair,” Spike said.

“And you know what is on that rod?” asked Terron Rerg.

“No,” Spike replied. “It is keyed to Colonial Shozek’s blood.”

Shozek came down from his throne and stood directly in front of Spike. Looked aggressively into her eyes. He took the hair, examined it, then turned and left, followed by Tarron Rerg, leaving the marines to stand, still chained, between the banquet tables and the elevated throne.

It was 20 minutes before one of their guards received a call and in turn removed the marines’ chains and allowed them to sit at one of the tables.

It was another 30 minutes before Shozek and Rerg returned. Both appeared to be in a far more jovial mood than they had been when they had left.

Spike and her marines got out of their chairs and stood at attention as the two klingons approached.

“You hunger, humans,” said Rerg. “In less than one hour, we feast. You will join us. You have much explaining to do...”

Colonial Shozek interrupted by putting his finger on Spike's forehead. His voice was quiet, but amused. "Did you actually tell Commander Garse that his wife would prefer to mate with another woman?"

"I was trying to tell him that I would never mate with him," Spike said.

Both Rerg and Shozek burst into raucous laughter. "You have the heart of a warrior," said Shozek. "And the tongue of a wild Targ!!"

## SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 10: Lessons

### Chapter Summary

Loneliness is a power that we possess to give or take away forever...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 10: Lessons

#### 4.10 Lessons

The four young marines had been captured by klingons, they had been terrified by klingons, they had been chained by klingons, and now they were being feted by a huge banquet room full of klingons. Each marine had to tell the story over and over of how they had, with nothing but a Star Fleet runabout, managed to hold their own for nearly 40 minutes against an orion slaver mothership and its small coterie of short range fighters.

The klingons took particular delight in PFC Guz Maxwell's description of how the marines had frustrated orion attempts to beam them out of the Bluebird.

"A historic cultural dance?" Colonial Shozek asked, amidst a storm of laughter.

"The inhibitors we rigged up created a feedback loop to help prevent their transporters from locking on, but we had to keep moving or the transporter would override the inhibitors," PFC Sasha Soko explained.

Guz Maxwell got out of his chair and demonstrated the signature dance moves made famous by John Travolta centuries ago, which threw a room full of laughing klingons into near total chaos as several klingons got up and imitated the move.

But one person in the room was quite clearly not enjoying the merriment the young marines had brought to this feast: Commander Garse. The klingon who had appeared on the Bluebird's viewscreens and who later had meted out a ferocious beating to Lance Corporal Petra Spitze. His evident grumpiness got him called out.

"Commander Garse," said Colonial Shozek. "Why did you not tell me about this magnificent battle? Why did I have to learn about it from your crew and from your ship's recordings? Did you not think their story an important lesson in valor for your fellow warriors in this hall?"

The room grew silent - there was a menace underlying Shozek's seemingly light-hearted question.

Garse shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "They're Star Fleet Intelligence. They have to be! Do you really think a mere foot soldier could have done what they did?"

Tarron Rerg, who was seated close to Shozek, laughed quietly. "You have never been a foot soldier, have you Garse? I have. It was long ago, but I remember it well - the terror - the determination to keep my soldiers together. The Lance Corporal's story rings true to me. These people are not intelligence agents. They're terrified children, just barely managing to hold it together and trying desperately to survive for another 15 minutes. I remember that feeling."

Guz Maxwell sat down and focused on his meal. He was terribly hungry. Fortunately, the marines had been trained on klingon food - what they could safely eat. Exactly how much bloodwine they could drink. He began to shake a little as the truth of Rerg's words sank home. He had been running on adrenaline. For a moment, this had been a room full of allies enjoying his story.

Now it was suddenly grim and quiet and serious. A room full of the most dangerous adversaries humanity had ever faced. Guz was terrified that he had forgotten that - even if only for a moment.

"Garse..." said Shozek. "You have served me well. You are one of my best hunters and you have never held back on me before. You have been a particularly useful commander. Did Tarron Rerg make you a promise?"

"I did indeed," said Rerg.

Col. Shozek was immediately enraged. "You made that promise out of your own anger and arrogance, Rerg!" Shozek shook his finger at the

older klingon “Those things will be your undoing! And this man is useful! He produces!”

“Every klingon has a purpose,” Rerg said quietly.

“So said Kahless,” said Shozek. “Even if that purpose is to serve as an example.” The young colonial rolled his head back, then turned to look at the older klingon. “I hate it that you are right. Because you are right for the wrong reasons. Now you must keep your promise.”

In response, Tarron Rerg stepped in between the banquet tables. “Choose your weapon, Garse.”

Tarron Rerg was somewhat smaller and slighter of build than most klingons. He did not appear to be an imposing figure, unlike Commander Garse - large, fierce, and full of angular movements.

“I want a bat’leth,” the klingon commander said.

Colonial Shozek rose. “You may carry mine today, Garse. You will not find a better weapon.”

One of Shozek’s bodyguards stepped around the table, bringing the curved klingon sword to Commander Garse, who appreciatively put it through a few quick motions.

“Choose your weapon, Rerg,” said the klingon commander.

“You misunderstand, Garse,” said Colonial Shozek. “This is not a battle. It is an execution.”

For the first time since he had entered the banquet hall, Commander Garse smiled. He flipped the borrowed bat’leth easily and expertly: “Today is a good day to die!”

“I’m glad you think so,” Rerg calmly replied.

Garse attacked like a whirling forest of blades.

Rerg stood, completely relaxed, and then moved with what appeared a slow and inevitable grace. In a series of connected moves, he evaded the blade, captured the back of the sword, broke Garse’s grasp on it, took it from Garse, slid behind his opponent and brought the sword down on Garse with so much force that it separated Garse’s head and right shoulder almost entirely from the rest of his body. Rerg rocked the blade back, bringing it out of Garse’s body, launching a spray of thick, gooey, pink blood that splashed onto Sasha’s plate, Guz’s hands, Raanda’s face and Spike’s uniform, leaving all four marines shaking with pure terror.

Colonial Shozek shouted in anger: “Remember this lesson! When you steal anything from me, this will be your fate and your due. And there is no thievery worse than hiding the truth from me. This man died today because he lied to me! Howl for him if you will. Not long ago he was a man of honor and perhaps that will be enough.” Shozek nodded toward Tarron Rerg.

Rerg knelt quickly, turning Garse’s nearly severed head up toward him as more of his blood pooled onto the floor. Rerg held open Garse’s dead eyes and stared into them, then raised his head and began the death howl. Every klingon in the room, including Shozek, joined him in the death howl - deafeningly loud - a sound that would have lions fleeing in fear.

Spike was just as terrified as her three teenaged charges. The four of them sat seemingly glued into their chairs, trembling with shock. Hyperventilating.

Raanda threw up.

Tarron Rerg was the first to notice. He looked at the young marines - there was almost a look of compassion in his eyes.

Then his expression hardened as he looked to someone behind them and said, “Shoot them.”

## SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 11: Illumination

### Chapter Summary

Though you've seen them, please, don't say a word...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 11: Illumination

#### 4.11 Illumination

PFC Sasha Soko woke up and immediately regretted it. His spine felt like it had been hit between the shoulders with a 9-pound sledgehammer. Pain whipped up and down his spine and rang his skull like a bell. Waking up was definitely a bad idea.

“Ugh... Lights... dim...”

Surprisingly, the lights, which were far too bright, dimmed in response to his voice.

Not enough.

“Dimmer...”

Still too bright...

“Off...”

That was much better. There was still illumination, coming from a viewscreen that displayed a moving field of stars. Sasha couldn't look at them. They made him nauseous... More nauseous...

He reached out and touched Spike's shoulder. “Spike?” He shook her very gently.

“I don't wanna go to school, Mommy...” Spike mumbled. “I feel sick...”

Sasha reached over to his other side, squeezed Raanda Habib's shoulder. “Raanda - you okay?”

“Give me a few definitions of okay and I'll let you know... Tomorrow...” Raanda responded.

“Guz?” Sasha asked.

“Did anyone get the registry number of the starship that ran us over?” PFC Guz Maxwell was squeezing his temples between his palms.

Lance Corporal Petra Spitze - Spike - sat up straight suddenly. “Report, Private!”

It was only at this moment that it registered to Sasha that the four of them were in the flight cabin of the Bluebird. He ran a diagnostic. “All systems nominal, responding to warp 7.5 and we are on course for our rendezvous, but 103.6 hours behind schedule.”

“All of the crates are where we left them, and lashed down...” Guz reported.

“Ewww... There's still blood on my face,” said Raanda.

“And some vomit on your uniform,” Sasha added.

“Um, Spike?” said Guz. “There's a button over here with a note on it that says “Push this when you are all awake...” Should I push it?”

“Push it, Songbird,” Spike said.

The image of Tarron Rerg appeared on one of the side screens.

“Star Fleet Intelligence is aware of this station, which is why you are still alive. When you submit your reports, they will be classified. Whenever you are tempted to talk about your experiences here with anyone other than your authorized superior officers, I encourage you to remember Commander Garse.”

“Your ship is repaired and my soldiers have verified that all of your cargo has been returned. We have analyzed your logs and put you on course for your rendezvous.”

“You will find a case in the back of the flight cabin with four pints of saurian brandy. I know you humans don’t like the taste of it...” Rerg looked down for a second. “No one likes the taste of it. Not even the saurians. But drink up. It will help with the pain and speed healing. It will also impair your judgement, but not any more than the pain is already impairing it.”

By this point, Sasha was handing out pint bottles of the famously foul-tasting liquor.

“Lance Corporal Petra Spitze...” (Spike almost came to attention.) “A data rod has been adhered to one of your green hairs. It is keyed to General Krank’s blood - in case you run across my old teacher. And one more thing... We intercepted the probe that was following you. Commander Garse was reading its telemetry and following you under cloak to see who was tracking you.”

“The orions were also reading the probe’s telemetry. But it was not their probe.”

“Someone else is hunting you.”

"I would count on them being not friendly."

Tarron Rerg’s image vanished from the side screen.

## SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 12: Donation

### Chapter Summary

Speak to me of summer...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 12: Donation

#### 4.12 Donation

The sleeping cots had been moved all the way to the back of the Bluebird's rear compartment. They were lashed firmly to the cargo, as a precaution so they would not be lost if another hostile boarding party were to need to be vented to space. Given the recent traumatic events they had endured, none of the marines wanted to be alone in that area.

Raanda slept only fitfully. Spike's presence was comforting. Guz and Sasha were in the flight cabin up front. Raanda could tell that Spike wasn't sleeping either.

"You all right there, Boyfriend?"

"Yeah. Can't sleep..." Raanda Habib rolled over - which was a delicate operation on the cot. "Did they do klingon week when you were coming up?"

"They've been doing that for hundreds of years now," Spike responded. "The first hundred or so prisoners of war the klingons took among us died from diseases they caught from eating the food. The lucky ones died from food poisoning."

"Yeah... I used to gross the other trainees out by chowing down on the gagh," Raanda snorted. "Turns out it's the safest klingon food for humans - especially if eaten live. I kind of aced klingon week..."

Spike made an amused noise. "Your family... mostly doctors?" she asked. "Why did you join up?"

"All the United Earth Governments military forces are the same... They're fielded by the old nation states, but they're all UEG, you know?" Raanda patted the subdued UEG flag on her shoulder - just above the subdued U.S. flag and below the subdued United Federation of Planets flag. "But at the same time, they're not. Each service still has a lot of its historic traditions..."

"Mmm hmmm," Spike responded.

"Same thing with the way the old nation states work. I was born Israeli. Became American when I was 12. Americans are really proud of their military tradition, but most of them don't ever serve. Israelis all serve. I never thought of not serving. Everyone in my family serves. My parents served. Their parents. All my uncles and aunts, cousins, my sisters, my brothers... All military. Most of them Israeli Army, but for me and my siblings, it's the U.S. Marine Corps..."

"Yeah, but you could have chosen planetary duty," Spike rejoined. "Quartermaster. JAG. Military Police. Port duty..."

Raanda rolled into a position where she could see the older marine. "Not for me. I figured I'd go out for the easy duty. Space Hound. Travel the galaxy. Meet interesting people..."

Spike laughed.

"My family never went for port duty. Kind of something unspoken among us. We serve on the front line. A lot of us died there. I've lost two sisters and my oldest brother is still missing. Whatever we do with our lives... I have an uncle who just sits on a beach and stares into the bottom of one beer bottle after another. Another who is a champion bicyclist. Whatever we do with our lives... we earn it on the front line. How about you... why did you sign up?"

“I didn’t,” Spike replied. “I was born a U.S. Marine. Seriously,” she added in response to Raanda’s suppressed guffaw. “Mom’s a master gunnery sergeant. Granny’s still alive - she was the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps - highest NCO position.”

“What about your father?”

“Don’t have one,” Spike responded. “Our family tradition. Men are good for a weekend of sport and sperm donation. That’s it. I have no idea who my sperm donor was. Could have been any of a dozen guys. Same way for Mom. And Granny. And Great Grandma.”

“You don’t want to get married? Have a family?” Raanda asked.

“Family, yes. Marriage, no.” Spike picked her canteen up off the floor, unscrewed the lid and had a drink. “When it comes time that I want a pup, I’ll screw a lot of different men so that none of them ever get to pretend to have a right to me or my child. Sperm donors. Nothing more.”

“You’re serious,” Raanda said, letting it sink in.

“Like Mom said, never sleep with a man. Ride them till they pass out and try to arrange it so that they never see you again.” Spike yawned cavernously. “I know you’re still seeing that klingon commander’s blood... how gross his body was when that scary guy about carved him in half. How scary that klingon was... Tarron Rerg...”

“Yeah...” Raanda squirmed a little. Uncomfortably.

“Bastard beat the shit out of me. Was a heartbeat away from spilling my guts all over his d’k tagh. Garse. That was his name. Bastard deserved what he got.” Spike’s voice dripped with venom.

Raanda shuddered a little. “And the scary one - Tarron Rerg?”

“He likes us. I guess we remind him of his kids or something. I don’t know. He’d kill us without hesitation if he thought that’s what he needed to do. But all things being equal? He’s just as happy not to.” Spike made an amused (if sleepy) noise. “Damn I’d love to be able to fight like that...”

Spike turned to look at Raanda. “Remember them telling you a klingon feast is incomplete until the first dead body hits the deck? Not so funny now, is it?”

Raanda’s response was very quiet: “Nope. Not so funny now...”

## SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 13: Interesting People

### Chapter Summary

What I don't know... I have never shared.



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 13: Interesting People

4.13

#### Interesting People

“I don’t know why,” said PFC Guz Maxwell. “Everything just... stopped. The warp engine is running, but we’re not going anywhere.”

“Shut it down,” ordered Lance Corporal Petra Spitze. “We’re feeding something. Stop feeding it.”

“It’s down,” Guz reported.

“It’s a web,” PFC Raanda Habib, said. She touched a control and a series of interconnected white lines appeared in front of the stars on the viewscreen.

“Oh crap...” said PFC Sasha Soko. “I recognize that pattern... Tholian...”

“Is the web fully formed?” asked Spike.

“Looks like they’re closing it now,” Raanda Habib responded. “We didn’t see them because they were on the other side of it.”

“It’s a small web,” Sasha observed. “Tailor made for a ship this size. Would the tholians be using a ferengi probe?”

“Unimportant,” Spike rejoined. “They’re about to vent heat into this cabin. Everything in the crates will be fine, but we’re about to get roasted. We’re going to them. No phasers, no spitfires, no explosives - we don’t want to ignite their atmosphere. Arm yourselves with bullpups and can openers.”

“Combat suits?” asked Sasha.

“We’re going to have to use the replication circuit and hope that new program works,” said Spike. “I’ll program it. Get me a bullpup and a can opener.”

Raanda Habib was already at the crates. She handed bullpups (small, automatic rifles that looked like two largish pentagons jammed together - a short barrel sticking out one end and a shoulder pad on the other) and can openers (heavy, triangular maces that could be used either as an axe or a sledge hammer) back to Guz, one at a time.

Guz passed these weapons on to Sasha, who in turn handed them to Spike, who looked back, confirmed everyone was armed, then hit the transporter control.

The transport sensation was the oddest any of them had ever experienced. They arrived, empty-handed, in a hellish, poisonous soup of a red environment. But because they were still in transit, the transit field held the environment back as a EVA combat suit was replicated around each marine. Their weapons transported last, arriving in their gloved hands.

The bullpups came equipped with clips that allowed them to be clipped to a tether on the front of their combat suits. The marines were just securing their weapons when two tholians entered the rear compartment.

The tholian ship was about twice the size of the runabout. The marines had beamed into what was apparently a storage compartment. The walls were divided into a honeycomb of hexagonal compartments - several of which contained brightly glowing gems.

Someone in Star Fleet had dubbed the tholians "Crystal Lobsters," but they looked more like glowing ants... glowing red ants with a white stripe that included their eyes that glowed even more brightly.

One of them raised something that looked like a gun.

"Scatter!" Spike ordered as a visible wave of force pulsed through the atmosphere. Guz had dived forward and spread out flat on the deck. The others had leapt to the sides and the wave of force sent them to the corners of the room.

Guz had his bullpup in front of him and was the first to open fire, shattering the head of the tholian who had fired. Raanda and Spike fired next - a burst of about 20 bullets converged on the head of the second tholian, shattering its head.

Both newly headless tholians immediately charged forward. Guz concentrated his fire on the chest of the first one - dozens of armor-piercing rounds chipping and shattering what were, apparently, layers of crystal.

Sasha let his bullpup hang by its tether. He stepped out with the can opener (kind of a cross between a tomahawk and a hammer) in his left hand, knife in his right. Spike, who had been next to him, switched her bullpup to her left hand and hefted her can opener with her right. On the other side of the room, Raanda stopped firing, but did not lower her bullpup.

Despite their layers of crystal, the headless tholians weren't much slower than their human intruders. Guz kept firing until Sasha kicked the bottom of his foot. The tholian in front of him unlimbered a pair of scythe-like weapons as Guz rolled to the side. Sasha stepped forward and brought the cutting edge of his can opener through the creature's chest, then reversed the weapon to cut back upward again, causing the front half of the creature to split. It fell, inert, to the deck.

Spike used a downward blow with her can opener to open the hole in the 2nd tholian's neck, then jammed the barrel of her bullpup into it and sprayed armor-piercing rounds directly into the creature.

"Okay," said Sasha. "They can survive getting their heads blown off and still see us somehow. Aim for the chest."

"These might help," said Spike, picking up the weapon dropped by the first tholian. She tossed it to Sasha and unlimbered another from a holster on the second tholian. "We have to get to the flight cabin."

The door at the front of the bay was a sphincter that opened in response to a touch, leading to a long corridor with a single door opening off each side and another sphincter-like door in the ceiling at the front.

Spike knelt beneath this sphincter with her bullpup pointed directly up. Sasha reached up, touched the control and stepped back as the door opened - directly under another tholian. Spike fired a burst directly up at it, then rolled out of the way as the tholian fell out, landed heavily on the floor and thrashed about a moment before collapsing.

Spike didn't hesitate - climbing over its body up into the flight cabin. Guz followed her up to look at the utterly alien controls.

Guz pointed at a control. "That one?"

"No," Spike replied. "That one." She pushed and twisted the control and the ship jerked as it released the webbing that had extruded from the back. At the same time, lights throughout the ship started flashing, faster and faster...

Spike entered a series of controls on a panel on the inside of the left arm on her space suit and the marines beamed out just as the ship started to self-destruct.

The Bluebird's transporter beamed the marines into the back of the other tholian ship.

But this bay was crawling with tiny tholians...

"Babies?" asked Raanda.

"Hatchlings," said Spike. "They'll burrow through your suit and start eating you." She lifted the weapon she had taken from the other ship, aimed it at the floor in front of them and activated it. Waves of force scattered the tiny tholians across the deck, shattering dozens of them.

"RUN!!!"

Spike ran forward, leading the four young marines to the door. She touched the control, but this door appeared to be locked. She stepped back and aimed the tholian pulse weapon at it and the door blew open enough for her to push through. Guz, Sasha and Raanda followed suit - into a corridor that was swarming with more baby tholians. Guz swatted a few from Sasha's suit. Raanda swatted a few from Guz's suit.

Spike made it to the front and activated the tholian weapon as Raanda started screaming. She turned around and Sasha used his knife to sweep a number of hatchlings from the back of her suit, where they had started burrowing in, causing a leak that was widening.

The tholian pilot fell out of the cockpit, dead from a point-blank blow from the tholian weapon. The recoil from the weapon dislocated Spike's right shoulder. "Guz - I need you up here!"

Guz ran forward and scrambled up into the cockpit. Sasha was using the other tholian weapon to blow the tiny tholians back toward the rear of the corridor - it was a losing battle.

"Got it," Guz called just as the lights started flashing.

Spike managed to activate a number of controls on her EVA suit and the marines were transported back into the rear compartment of the newly freed Bluebird as the second tholian ship self-destructed. A large number of baby tholians transported back with them.

"Hang on to something!" Sasha shouted. He sprinted up to the flight cabin and activated a control, blowing the rear hatch open again, venting the overheated internal atmosphere and a number of tiny tholians into space. Guz was vented out the back as well.

Dozens more somewhat larger juvenile tholians had previously been transported into the Bluebird. With the atmosphere vented, the temperature inside the runabout dropped to well below freezing. The internal lights went out inside the juvenile tholians as they instantly froze to death - their red crystalline bodies turning blue before shattering, leaving only shards.

Guz used the attitude controls on his spacesuit, little jets of gas, to steer himself back toward the runabout, grasped the top of the rear hatch and crawled back into the craft.

A few hours later, the Bluebird was underway again. The cots had been moved into the flight cabin. No one wanted to be next to the rear hatch at this point.

"Those ships are hatcheries?" asked Raanda.

"And we were to be their first meal," Spike answered. Her shoulder had been popped back into place and she was exercising it very gently.

"Why don't they carry food with them?" Guz asked.

"They probably do," Spike mused. "But if that was a second round of hatchlings, they might have run out. I suspect any adults on that second craft had locked themselves away from the hatchlings."

"Could they have been the ones using that probe?" asked Sasha.

"They were definitely not friendly," Spike responded.

"But they were so interesting..." said Raanda. There was some grief in her voice.

"Join the Space Hounds..." Guz started.

"Travel the Galaxy..." Sasha continued. They were looking at Raanda.

Raanda shook her head slowly: "Meet interesting people..."

"Kill them," Spike concluded.

She paused for a moment, then: "Not so funny now, is it?"

"Nope," Raanda replied. "Not so funny now..."

## SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 14: Cavalry

### Chapter Summary

Spoke to me in sweet, accustomed ways...



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 14: Cavalry

#### 4.14 Cavalry

“These guys again?” asked PFC Sasha Soko. “I guess now we know who tagged us with that ferengi probe that told every miscreant in the galaxy just where we were...”

“I thought we had a treaty with these guys,” said PFC Raanda Habib.

“Yeah,” said Lance Corporal Petra Spitze. “The only ones who pay attention to that treaty are the ones that can read. And if they can read, they probably noticed that treaty doesn’t protect us when we’re outside of Federation space...”

“One good shot and they’ll have us,” said PFC Guz Maxwell. “Shields are already down to 68% and they haven’t managed to get a direct hit on us yet. Most of that’s just due to the load on the engines.”

“We’ll last longer running than if we were to try to turn and fight them,” said Spike.

At that moment something buzzed the Bluebird, drawing disruptor fire from the four large, square ships that were in pursuit. It passed close to two of the ships, causing them to briefly fire on each other.

“What was that and where did it come from?” asked Sasha.

“NCC 75601 - it’s the Escort!!!” exclaimed Raanda.

The U.S.S. Escort was significantly faster and more agile than the square ships that had been chasing the Bluebird. It had passed close, dived below the group, then came back up, phasers firing in pulse configuration, passing within meters of one of its targets, pouring phaser fire directly in contact with the larger ship’s shields and escaping ahead of the shrapnel of the exploding ship.

“Bluebird this is the U.S.S. Beagle, Sakura Nakamura Holland commanding. Drop your shields, route all power to inertial dampeners and structural integrity and prepare for emergency docking.”

“Beagle this is the Bluebird, Petra Spitze commanding, copy that!”

“Got it,” said Guz. “But they’re still a light year away... what???”

The vulcan-built craft came out of nowhere and painted one of the square ships briefly with its tractor beam, pushing it off course and into the line of fire of another of the ships, which had been firing at the Bluebird.

Only a heartbeat later, the Bluebird was captured by a tractor beam from the Beagle and jerked into one of the Beagle’s shuttle bays.

Although cut off from the external views of the scrum, the four young marines in the flight cabin of the Bluebird could hear the Star Fleet side of the battle chatter.

“Package secured and the Beagle is away!”

“Escort is also clear!” came another female voice.

A third female voice could be heard: “General Krank, you are go to light them up.”

The voice from the Beagle - Sakura Nakamura Holland - could be heard again: “It worked... Confirming the two surviving targets are disabled and dead in space.”

“Deleter vessels,” came the third female voice, “This is Commodore Yui Song. Surrender and prepare for rescue operations...”

Sakura Nakamura Holland’s voice came through again: “Mako, Escort, get clear! Reading plumes in the deleteri engineering sections. Overload imminent...”

The Bluebird, now latched down inside the Beagle’s shuttlebay, bumped slightly.

“This is Commodore Yui Song, confirming all hostiles destroyed, no survivors. Report any damage.”

“This is the U.S.S. Escort, Rhonda Carter commanding, reporting no damage, no casualties.”

“This is the U.S.S. Beagle, Sakura Nakamura Holland commanding. We have the Bluebird in our primary hangar. We took a hit to our port ventral shield and have partial damage to one of our emitters in that array. We should have repairs completed in the next 20 minutes. No other damage, no casualties.”

## SBA Episode 4: Starship Trooper, Scene 15: Surrender

### Chapter Summary

Starship Trooper, go sailing on by...

### Chapter Notes

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



#### The Star Beagle Adventures

Episode 4: Starship Trooper

Scene 15: Surrender

### 4.15 Surrender

“Bluebird, this is Captain Osollaa sh’Zhiathis, United States Marine Corps,” came an unfamiliar voice over the Bluebird’s comm system. “Power down all systems, open up and prepare to surrender cargo and personnel.”

“Copy that, sir,” Lance Corporal Petra Spitze replied. The only systems still operating aboard the Bluebird at this point were communication and life support. These automatically transitioned to the U.S.S. Beagle as the rear hatch opened, to reveal the four marines standing at attention in the rear of the runabout. The Bluebird was an extremely tight fit inside this shuttlebay - barely a foot clearance from the rear gate to the hangar doors.

Three humans and an andorian were waiting. Spike recognized Sergeant Chavez Lone Wolf. The andorian was in marine uniform bearing captain’s bars. A Japanese woman wearing a flower print dress.

And a Star Fleet captain - Spike felt her entire body tense and her stomach turned over. Seven years in the Marine Corps and she had occasionally been in assemblies that were addressed by a Colonial. She had never been introduced to one. A Star Fleet Captain was equivalent rank.

“Lance Corporal Petra Spitze...” This captain had an irrepressible smile - almost built into his face. Long, reddish hair that was thinning at the top. Bluish green eyeshadow and black fingernail polish. “You must be Spike.”

Spike gave a second’s side-long glance to Lone Wolf - certainly he hadn’t revealed a marine’s nickname to someone not in the service? Sgt. Lone Wolf gave the tiniest shake of his head. She quickly returned her attention to the captain. Her mouth was dry. She knew she was supposed to say something, but her mind was completely blank. The only thing that came out was a slight squeak.

“Allow me to introduce our Dean of Ship, Sakura Nakamura Holland. Sakura directs all civilian activity aboard this vessel and by ship’s policy, is to be treated as though she carries the rank of Lieutenant Commander. She is fourth in command whenever I and my first and second officers are otherwise engaged. I see you recognize the authority of Captain Osollaa sh’Zhiathis...”

“You may respond, Lance Corporal,” sh’Zhiathis said.

“Sir, I stand ready to surrender the Bluebird to you...” Spike started.

“I am not authorized to accept this vessel,” Captain Howard replied. He took a half-step forward. “Lance Corporal, Star Fleet provided a newly constructed runabout in mint condition to the United States Marine Corps for use in this resupply mission and Commodore Yui Song will accept surrender of same tomorrow at 1400 hours - that is just under 21 hours from now. If you need to polish the fenders, you may use this facility to do so, however, Star Fleet personnel are not authorized to assist.”

“Understood sir!” Spike had a cold feeling growing in the pit of her stomach - there was a lot of repair work to do. She wanted to steal a glance at her three young charges, but did not dare to.

Sakura Nakamura Holland spoke up. Spike recognized the voice she had heard over the comm system during the battle. She had never heard so much authority in the voice of a civilian. “Why don’t you introduce your crew to us?”

“Um... Ma’am...” The word was unfamiliar and uncomfortable to Spike: “Private First Class Guz Maxwell...”

“The guitarist,” Captain Howard remarked, drawing surprised looks from Sakura and from all the marines. Howard shared a look with Sakura. He raised his right hand and briefly waggled his fingers.

She returned her attention to the young marines, then her face lit up with epiphany: “Ah!”

Spike continued: “Private First Class Sasha Soko...”

“That has to be a Russian name,” said Sakura. “Did your family change the name from Sokoloff?”

“Sokolov, ma’am,” Sasha replied.

“And Private First Class Raanda Habib,” Spike concluded.

“Habib? Huh. Boyfriend,” Howard observed, earning panicked looks from both Raanda and Spike.

“So it appears you had a few adventures on your way here, Lance Corporal,” Sakura observed.

“Just a few minor bumps, ma’am,” Spike replied. She still knew she was missing something.

“I look forward to reading your detailed reports,” said Captain Howard. “Which are due at 800 hours tomorrow. Captain sh’Zhiathis, you will ensure your new marines are familiarized with our report formats?”

“Aye, sir,” the andorian marine captain responded.

“Very well,” said Captain Howard. He turned to leave, then turned back toward Spike and her marines, still standing at attention in the rear of the Bluebird. “Oh, you are permitted to board the U.S.S. Beagle, marines. Carry on.”

Spike nearly came unglued - she had forgotten to ask permission to board.

She could hear the ship’s captain and the dean of ship talking and laughing as they walked out of the hangar.

“Get down from there,” Captain sh’Zhiathis ordered, finally getting Spike and her terrified marines to move. The andorian turned toward Sgt. Lone Wolf: “Sergeant, you recommended her. Handle this situation. I’ll clear the entire unit to work on this runabout - we have a lot of work ahead of us... I want these four working on their reports...”

In the corridor outside of the hangar, Sakura Nakamura Holland lightly flicked Skip Howard’s shoulder. “You were pretty tough on those kids, Skip...”

“Got to make sure they start on the right foot,” Howard replied. “They’re going to work out. They’re a lot tougher than they look. A lot tougher than they think they are.” He took a breath. “They’re going to need some serious help fixing up that runabout. Star Fleet personnel cannot help them. But I’d like all your Nakamura Enterprises civilian staff to drop whatever they’re doing and go help those kids.”

Sakura smiled. “You got it, Skip. We’ll have it spick and span before those kids turn it over to Song.”

### Starship Trooper

#### Chapter End Notes

This is the final scene for Episode 4.

The adventure will continue in Episode 5: All Good People.

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