

Gates of Sto'vo'kor – Messages From the Outback: Part 1

Korrath – Mike Medeiros

Karn – Alan Clifton

Deyvid – DeyvID HoQIn

Hauk – Mike Tripp

Sskald – Ross Bullock

G'hargh – Michael Coleman

Sklood – Adrienne Grady

Krang – Mike Medeiros

Valkara – Lacy Bennett

Purina – Michelle Heiner

Jessup -- Darqun

To'jet – “Hippie” John Scheuerman

Messenger – Anthony Battles

Cholaq – Zadok

ANN-D – Avi Kerensky

Melk – Elio Lleo

(Inside the Gates of Sto'vo'kor bar. It's a slow night at the bar. There are not a lot of people around. Even the waitresses and the bartender are bored. G'hargh is asleep, quietly snoring. Hauk is working on some new poetry. Korrath is filling out paper work. Deyvid is listening to an episode of Battlecruiser Vengeance. Karn is ever vigilant. Sskald hasn't arrived yet. It's quiet.)

1. G'hargh: (mumbles in his sleep)
2. Korrath: G'hargh, you're talking in your sleep again.
3. Hauk: You'll have to speak up Korrath, if you want to wake him.
4. Korrath: I've got to much work to do without having to deal with G'hargh's foolishness right now.
5. Deyvid: What are you working on?

6. Korrath: I'm trying to balance HIS (Kicks G'hargh who groans mumbles in return) accounts. How about you?
7. Karn: I don't know why he works so hard to keep that old targ out of Rura Penthe?
8. G'hargh: (mumbles in his sleep)
9. Deyvid: What was that Karn?
10. Karn: Nothing. I'll just keep watch.
11. G'hargh: (mumbles in his sleep)
12. Hauk: Anyone know of a word that rhymes with QIdaq?
13. Korrath: No. What are you doing?
14. Hauk: I'm writing poetry for Lady Selei.
15. Deyvid: Quiet down. I can't hear my stories.
16. G'hargh: (mumbles in his sleep)
17. Karn: What are you listening to?
18. Deyvid: I've been listening to old episodes of Battlecruiser Vengeance.
19. Hauk: By Kahless, I haven't listened to an episode in a long time. Not since I was a little warrior on my grandpappy's knee.
20. Korrath: I remember that show when it aired live.
21. G'hargh: (mumbles in his sleep)
22. Deyvid: I am Captain Koth. Koth of the Vengeance. And this ship is my prize.

(They all laugh)

23. G'hargh: (mumbles in his sleep)
24. Korrath: Good times.
25. Hauk: Is it me or does the bar seem empty tonight?
26. Deyvid: It does. I wonder where everyone is.
27. Korrath: I do not know. However, it's still early. Perhaps, it'll pick up.
28. G'hargh: (mumbles in his sleep)
29. Karn: That waitress doesn't think it will.
30. Korrath: What makes you say that Karn?
31. Karn: The cute one is trying to convince the bartender to let her go home early.
32. G'hargh: (snaps a wake) What? Cute one? Where?
33. Hauk: Figures G'hargh would wake up for that. He was looking at the blue one, with the scales.
34. G'hargh: (Makes a disgusted noise) Karn, your idea of beauty is questionable at best.
35. Karn: There is more to beauty than outward appearance, you lecherous old fool.
36. G'hargh: Bah! What other kind is there?
37. Deyvid: Why am I not surprised.

(Sskald walks up to the table. He doesn't seem to be himself)

38. Karn: Sskald, you're late. Where have you been?
39. Sskald: I've been down at the correspondence center.
40. Korrath: Did the latest issue of Holography Digest arrive?

41. Sskald: No. I was retrieving a message from my mate.
42. Korrath: You're married?
43. Sskald: In a manner of speaking. Is that so hard to believe Korrath?
44. Korrath: Well, you're not the most attractive Gorn I've met.
45. Deyvid: Have you met a lot of Gorn, Korrath
46. Korrath: I've met more than my fair share.
47. Hauk: Pay no attention to Korrath. Why don't you tell us about her?
48. Sskald: She's third officer and science department head aboard the IKS Kradec.
49. Deyvid: The Kradec? Isn't that General Valkara's ship?
50. Korrath: The same Kradec that is exploring the 'awtbaq?
51. Sskald: It is.
52. G'hargh: I don't get it. What's the 'awtbaq? That doesn't sound very Klingon to me.
53. Karn: Don't you pay attention to the Harbinger News Service?
54. G'hargh: Bah! Why should I? All they ever talk about is bad news.
55. Deyvid: You don't know what you're missing.
56. Karn: It's true, G'hargh. I can't get enough of their news reports.
57. G'hargh: Alright. You've piqued my interest.
58. Sskald: The Kradec is a BortaS qu' captained by General Valkara. The ship was sent out to deal with the Tholian problem on our borders, but when it was lost through a Tholian rift, the Empire assumed they were lost and died in glorious combat.
59. Karn: Yah. Yah. I know that part. What did she say in her letter?
60. Deyvid: I hate to say it but I agree with our Lethean friend. What can you tell us about the Kradec that isn't in the Harbinger reports?
61. Sskald: So, you're just interested in the gossip, then.
62. Hauk: Don't put it like that. You make us sound like a bunch of Denobulans playing Rigellian Bridge.
63. G'hargh: Wait a minute. I'm confused. You said that the ship was lost? How ... Why ... Just start at the beginning please.
64. Sskald: Very well, then. I will start at the beginning for G'hargh's benefit.
65. G'hargh: Get on with it then. It's not like there is anything else to entertain us here tonight.

(We transition to the Kradec with Sskald narrating as we go along)

66. Sskald: The Kradec was fresh from the Imperial Shipyards, her imperial markings still red hot from their engraving. Valkara and her first officer, Commander Krang, are given command of the vessel and the mission to investigate Tholian activity along the Neutral Zone. Many of the crew coming aboard the ship, including Sklood, had not worked with Valkara and Krang before.
67. Sklood: Commander Sklood reporting for duty.
68. Krang: Welcome aboard. I am Commander Krang, First Officer of the IKS Kradec and I speak for the crew. If you have any concerns or problems, I want to know about them immediately.
69. Sklood: Yes, Commander.

(Break back to the warriors)

70. Hauk: Wait a minute. That's just wrong.
71. Sskald: What is the matter?
72. Deyvid: Your impression of Commander Krang makes him sound just like Korrath. Why?
73. Sskald: Do you think so? I do not hear it.
74. Korrath: Who cares if he sounds like me, just get on with it.

(Back to the Kradek)

75. Krang: According to the crew database, you will be heading the Science Department. I am assigning you to the bridge's primary science station for shift *Wah*.
76. Sklood: As you say, Commander.
77. Krang: Come. Let me give you a tour of the ship. We have one of the most diverse crews in all of the Empire. You will be expected to work side by side with Klingons, Orions, Ferasans, and aliens from all over the quadrant. I assume this will not be a problem for you?
78. Sklood: I do not foresee any issues. I will do my duty.
79. Sskald: After showing her around the ship, meeting her staff and the rest of the bridge crew, Sklood and Krang went to the mess hall to socialize with the rest of the crew. While Krang introduced her to the subtleties of warnog, Sklood noticed a distinct pattern taking shape within the mess hall among the crew – they were congregating along racial lines.
80. Sklood: Does the General disapprove of inter-species fraternization?
81. Krang: Of course not.
82. Sklood: Can you tell me why it appears that every table seems to be claimed by members of the same species?
83. Krang: (laughs) Is this the first time you've served on a ship on its maiden voyage?
84. Sklood: It is.
85. Krang: I thought so. For a lot of these crewmen, it's their first time as well. I have dealt with it before. It's a common occurrence under these circumstances. It's my job to bring them together under the General's command. You can rest assured that in a matter of weeks, this crew will be united and running like a well-tuned warp core.
86. Sklood: That is good to hear, Commander. I can only imagine the issues that would arise if this situation is left to fester on its own.
87. Krang: (smiling) Very observant, Sklood. I think you will be a great benefit to the crew of the Kradec. And, please call me Krang.
88. Sskald: A few days later, the Kradec pulled out of space dock for the first time and left Qo'noS for the Neutral Zone. They did not get far before something got Sklood's attention.
89. Sklood: General, I'm detecting a strange energy reading on long range sensors. Its signature is a match for a Tholian Interspatial Rift. Distance, 12 light years.
90. Valkara: Purina. Adjust our heading to investigate.
91. Purina: Aye General.
92. Valkara: Sklood, are you detecting any Tholian ships in the area?
93. Sklood: We are too far out.

94. Valkara: Keep an eye on it. To'jet, I want the element of surprise. Cloak us the moment we drop out of Slipstream. It is time to see what this Bortas class Battle cruiser can do! They will learn not to trespass in Klingon space.

95. To'jet: Yes, General!

96. Valkara: Jessup, how is engineering? I hope you are ready to take the ship into battle.

97. Jessup: All systems are ready. I am eager to see what she can do.

98. Valkara: (laughs) You will get your chance, my friend.

99. Sskald: When the Kradec reached the interspatial rift they found a Tholian Tarantula waiting for them. As ordered, the Kradec cloaked and got into position for their first strike. However, the Tholians were ready for them and opened fire the moment the Kradec decloaked.

(ship decloaking, followed by heavy weapon's fire from both vessels).

100. Sskald: Both vessels took heavy damage.

(explosions are heard from the Kradec's bridge)

101. Jessup: We've got a hull breach! Damage Control Teams are responding.

102. To'jet: The Tholians are retreating through the rift.

103. Valkara: Stay with them. We cannot let them escape.

104. Purina: Yes, General! Laying in a pursuit course.

(more explosions are heard)

105. To'jet: The Tholians are gone. They have disappeared through the rift.

106. Valkara: Follow them in.

107. Krang: We do not know what is on the other side. I suggest we launch a probe to make sure that we are not being led into an ambush.

108. Valkara: (torn between decisions) The Empire is counting on us. Jessup, launch a probe.

109. Jessup: Yes General. ... The probe is ready.

110. Valkara: Launch.

111. Sklood: Telemetry is coming in. The signal is strong.

112. To'jet: The probe has entered the rift.

113. Sklood: Scan underway. ... General! The Tholians just destroyed our probe.

114. Valkara: What is on the other side?

115. Sklood: I am reviewing the data, but it appears the Tholian vessel is alone.

116. Valkara: Take us into the rift.

117. Sskald: And the IKS Kradec entered the rift in pursuit of the Tholians, unaware that it would be the last time the homeworld would have contact with them.

118. Valkara: **BaH!** Fire everything! That ship must not be allowed to defy the Klingon Empire's sovereignty.

(more explosions)

119. Sskald: After several minutes of intense combat, the Tholians were destroyed. (distant explosion followed by a moment of silence.) Although, the Kradec had taken moderate damage, there was another matter of even greater importance.
120. Valkara: Report our position?
121. Sklood: Analyzing star charts. ... No match. ... Verifying marker stars and Imperial waypoint relays...none detected. That puts us at least 2 thousand light years from our previous position. However, without reference stars to guide from, we could be much further out than that.
122. Purina: So this is what unexplored space looks like.
123. To'jet: Shut up feline, before I skin you and hang your hide on my wall!
124. Valkara: Jessup, do we have any more probes? I want to collect all the information we can get before returning to Klingon space.
125. Jessup: I've got two more probes ready.
126. Valkara: Launch when ready. Sklood, I want you to keep an eye on that interspatial rift. I want to know how long we can safely remain here.
127. Sklood: It is too late, General. The rift is collapsing. The Tholians must have been keeping the rift open. When we destroyed them the rift began to collapse.
128. Krang: Purina, Get us out of here!
129. Purina: Right away!
130. Sklood: We are not going to make it. It is collapsing too quickly.
131. Valkara: We need more speed!
132. Jessup: You have it, my General!
133. Sskald: But it was not enough. The rift closed and they were stranded with no obvious way to return home. Their only hope of getting back and continuing their original mission was to find out what the Tholians were doing in that area. However, before heading out, they received an unexpected visitor.
134. Jessup: General, the engines have gone offline.
135. Krang: What happened?
136. Jessup: I don't know. There is no reason for it.
137. To'jet: Intruder Alert!
138. Messenger: (melodious voice) Stop!
139. Sskald: Involuntarily, they obeyed the command as if a stasis field had descended upon them. They couldn't move. They couldn't speak. All they could do was listen to the Messenger's song
140. Messenger: I am the Messenger. I sing on behalf of the Choir. We know all that reside in this place, and yet, your kind is unknown to us. You vanquished one of those that seek to disrupt our harmony. You have our gratitude and may remain, while the choir composes a new verse to our song – your verse.
141. Sskald: As suddenly as the Messenger had appeared, it was gone and the stasis field with it.
142. Valkara: What was that?
143. To'jet: I do not know, but it seems we have gained their approval.
144. Krang: I do not care for their approval. I just wish to know if they are friend or foe.
145. Valkara: It seems only time will tell.

146. Sskald: As the Kradec searched for the Tholians and a way home, they began referring to the region as Vo – vo – the Klingon word for somewhere.
147. Deyvid: The word is pronounced “Vogh.”
148. Sskald: As the days stretched into weeks, the Tholians seemed to play a game of cat and mouse with them. Whenever a Tholian vessel or an interspatial rift was detected in the region, it was gone before the Kradec could arrive. Tensions aboard ship mounted and Krang’s hope to integrate the crew began to slip through his fingers as many blamed General Valkara for stranding them in the Vogh. Arguments and infighting increased.

(sounds of a fist fight rises up)

149. Torq: Break it up you two.
150. Hathar: Let go of me. I’m going to kill him.
151. Melonar: Let him try. It’s the most action I’ve seen since we’ve been in the Vogh.
152. Torq: What happened here?
153. Hathar: He’s a clumsy idiot. He nearly pushed me into an open plasma relay I was working on.
154. Melonar: I told you it was an accident.
155. Hathar: Liar!
156. Torq: That’s enough. I’m putting the two of you on report. Expect a visit from Commander Krang.
157. Hathar: Why am I being punished? He tried to kill me.
158. Melonar: You threw the first punch!
159. Torq: That’s it! Krang will have to sort it out from the brig. You’re both coming with me.
160. Sskald: Krang and the other department heads did what they could to keep the ship from degenerating into chaos, but their situation was unique and extreme. They obtained a much needed reprieve when the Messenger returned singing the choir’s song once again.
161. Messenger: Hold! It is I, the Messenger of the Choir, and I have returned with a request.
162. Krang: How dare you show your face here again?
163. Valkara: What is it?
164. Krang: General, it has taken hold of us. This cannot be tolerated.
165. Valkara: What do you intend to do Krang? Neither of us have use of our arms and legs, but at least it has allowed us to speak. So, I ask it once again. What is your request?
166. Messenger: You are but one instrument, when the Choir requires an orchestra to rid this space of those that infest it. They are willing to open a passage to your space, but they need to learn more of your people first.
167. Krang: You mean to say you could have sent us home all along?
168. Valkara: Now is not the time Krang. What does the Choir want from us?
169. Messenger: A song sung in one voice.
170. Krang: A song. A song? General, we are dealing with madness.
171. Valkara: Quiet, Krang. Messenger, what song do they want?
172. Messenger: A song that will tell the Choir about your people.
173. Valkara: Is that all?

174. Krang: Which song shall we sing?
175. Valkara: What you ask is not a simple task. The Empire is made up of many worlds with just as many diverse cultures and even more styles of music.
176. Messenger: The Choir awaits your song.
177. Valkara: (opens a channel): Attention crew. The entity known as the Messenger has returned and it has a request. It asks us to sing a song so they can learn about us. We may be warriors of the Empire, but our cultures are uniquely our own. Therefore, I will not choose a song for you. Instead I ask you to sing the song that reminds you of your homes. Sing it now!
178. Sskald: And, they sang – Hundreds of voices, each with a different song. Klingon operas and Nausicaan dirges; Orion serenades and Gorn Hymns; Ferasan metal and San Taran chants; Ferengi jingles and countless other songs emerged from the bowels of the ship as a cacophony of noise but a harmony of purpose. The Messenger smiled in gratitude at the melody it heard emerging from the racket as it echoed throughout the vessel, giving the Messenger strength.
179. Messenger: It is done.
180. Sskald: And, with those final words, the Messenger evaporated into the ether, lifting the paralysis and leaving them with yet another surprise.
181. To'jet: General, I'm detecting subspace transmissions. They're Federation.
182. Valkara: Federation? How can this be?
183. Sklood: I'm analyzing the com traffic. I've locked onto the source of the transmissions. There seems to be a passage through the anomaly field eight light years away, bearing 185 mark 350. It maybe our way home.
184. To'jet: General, I'm also detecting a large concentration of Tholian vessels a dozen light years in the opposite direction.
185. Krang: We should investigate this passage and use it to return home.
186. Valkara: How many vessels?
187. To'jet: I don't know hundreds?
188. Valkara: Hundreds ... Duty to our original mission requires us to investigate this gathering.
189. Krang: We should not pass up this opportunity to return home. Who knows how long the passage will remain open.
190. Valkara: I understand your concerns, Krang, but honor requires us to continue onward. Open a secure channel with a level **Cha** encryption algorithm to the home world.
191. To'jet: Channel open. It is secure.
192. Valkara: Command, this is General Valkara of the IKS Kradec. Come in Command.
193. Cholaq: (static rolls through) General Valkara? Confirm your identity now!
194. Valkara: Valkara – **vagh – wej – loS – loS – jav.**
195. Cholaq: (static rolls through) Identity confirmed. Where have you been General? We believed you and your crew had gone to **Sto-vo-kor.**
196. Valkara: Rest assured that we are very much alive and well. We are transmitting our logs. We have a lead on the Tholians. We are going to remain here in the **vogh** for the time being, but we need immediate back up.
197. Cholaq: Acknowledged. I must inform the Chancellor and issue the necessary orders. You will not be alone for long *Kradec. Qapla'*

198. Sskald: While the *Kradec* moved toward the Tholian sensor contacts, Command went over the *Kradec's* records. They pinpointed the *Kradec's* location as within the Outback, a region of unexplored space surrounded by impassible anomalies bordering the Federation and dozens of light years from Klingon space. The Empire could not respond to the *Kradec's* call for assistance without revealing their intentions to the Federation. As they prepared a small fleet to join the *Kradec*, Command classified aspects of her records before releasing the bulk of them to the Harbinger News Service. As the records hit the news net, Klingon Intelligence discovered that Starfleet had learned about the passage into the Outback on their own, and was actively preparing for a mission of exploration into the region. It was time for the diplomats to get involved. Meanwhile, the *Kradec* closed on the Tholians.
199. Purina: Commander Krang, we have reached the designated coordinates. The Tholian sensor contacts are just ahead. They are concentrated around a **Fek'lir** Class planet.
200. Krang: (opens a com) General Valkara to the bridge. We have arrived. (channel closes) To'jet, have they detected us?
201. To'jet: If they have, they don't seem to be concerned.
202. Krang: That is not an answer.
203. Valkara: (steps from her office) Cloak and take us in for a closer look.

(the *kradec* cloaks)

204. Sskald: As the *Kradec* approached the **Fek'lir** class world, it scanned the planet's surface.
205. Sklood (gasps in surprised disbelief) ...
206. Krang: Report the scan results, Sklood.
207. To'jet: Transferring sensor data to main view screen.
208. Sskald: A Hush fell over the bridge. The planet was not just some world the Tholians were investigating; or had even colonized. This world was theirs. There were dozens of metropolises with billions of Tholian lifesigns scattered over the planet's inhospitable surface. Hundreds, if not thousands, of cities with millions of inhabitants, and tens of thousands of other settlements. The *Kradec* had discovered another Tholian home world.
209. Valkara: (whispered) Get us out of here. (when Purina fails to obey the order, she yells) **HeD!**
210. Sskald: The unexpected order to retreat woke everyone from their stunned stupor. The *Kradec* jumped to warp and made way for the passage home quickly. Valkara, meanwhile, went directly to her ready room without another word. Command needed to know what they had found. She needed new orders.
211. Cholaq: The Empire is staking a claim on the 'awtbaq and establishing a permanent presence. By the time the fleet reaches the passage, you must have somewhere to send them. Do I make myself understood?
212. Valkara: We will be ready for them when they arrive.
213. Cholaq: Make sure you do. *Qapla'*! End transmission.
214. Valkara: (opens a com to the bridge) Krang, Sklood, To'jet. Get in here.

(door opens and the trio step inside)

215. Valkara: We are not leaving.
216. Krang: What? Why not?
217. Valkara: The Empire has given us new orders. We're to remain here.
218. Krang: I hope they're sending a fleet to back us up.
219. Valkara: They won't be here for almost three or four months.
220. Krang: Do they understand what we have found?
221. Valkara: They do Krang, which is why we are to find allies and a suitable world in which to establish a planetary starbase – a stronghold within this region of space in which to operate from. Sklood, I need your department to begin searching for class M planets with the necessary resources to facilitate this endeavor. That is our top priority.
222. Sklood: Yes General.
223. Valkara: We will continue our investigation of what the Tholians are doing here in the Vogh, or 'awtbaq as the Federation is calling it. By the way, that is where we are – not as far from home as we had originally believed. So, To'jet, if you detect any Tholian activity, I want to know about it immediately.
224. To'jet: Yes, General
225. Valkara: Krang, I am going to need your strength now more than ever. How's the crew?
226. Krang: They will not be happy to hear that we will remain here a little longer. However, it will be easier to handle knowing that we are still in the Alpha Quadrant and not in some far flung galaxy. I will keep them in line, General.
227. Valkara: Good. Now, we all have a lot of work to do. Get out and get to it.
228. Sskald: As the *Kradec* began their search, the Klingon Diplomatic Corps was hard at work hammering out an agreement with the Federation. The Federation agreed that the Klingons were the first to enter the Outback and after revealing some classified information were responsible for opening the passage back to the Alpha Quadrant – though the specifics about the Messenger were purposefully left vague. However, Starfleet refused to allow the Empire to claim the entire space for themselves. After weeks of heated negotiations, a treaty was signed granting the Empire free and unencumbered access to the outback through the passage near New Australia near Romulan space. It also stipulated that neither party can rightly claim the whole of the outback for themselves; however, it did allow both factions to stake claims on worlds and other resources as long as they did not hinder access to the outback by the other party. The final provision of the treaty was a non-aggression pact between the two warring factions for anything involving the Outback, New Australia, and the passage. By the time, the treaty was signed; The Federation ship *Starfinder* had already begun the exploration of the Outback.
229. To'jet: I've got a sensor hit, General. It's the Tholians.
230. Valkara: Purina set a course.
231. Purina: Course laid in.
232. Krang: I do not intend for this one to get away. Jessup, throw everything we've got into the engines.
233. Jessup: Done and done, Commander.
234. Sklood: I'm reading a Starfleet vessel. They are under attack by the Tholians

235. Krang: At least they're keeping the Tholians busy. I just hope they save some for us.

236. Valkara: They are unaware of the threats that await them in the Outback. The least we could do is lend them a hand and open a dialog. Our mission would be easier if we are not actively working against each other.

237. Krang: I have to agree.

238. To'jet: It's decided then.

239. Sskald: The *Starfinder* was taking heavy damage when the *Kradec* dropped out of warp and quickly destroyed the Tholian carrier.

240. To'jet: The Federation vessel, identified as *USS Starfinder* is hailing us.

241. Valkara: (laughs) Krang, you know what to do.

242. Krang: (laughing) Of course.

243. Valkara: Open the channel.

244. To'jet: Channel open.

245. Valkara: This is General Valkara of the Klingon War Cruiser *Kradec*. I am not here as your friend Starfleet! The Tholians created Interphasic rifts that appeared in Klingon space! When we sent probes in, we realized it led to this uncharted region! I was ordered to begin an extensive survey of the potential threat of the Tholians use of this region.

246. ANND: Understood. We did not come here through a rift, the subspace anomalies that blocked the Outback vanished mysteriously. My orders are to explore and investigate, but we had no idea the Tholians were here. It's in the best interests of both our peoples to cooperate in this manner, wouldn't you agree?

247. Valkara: No! I doubt our goals match up! We are here to defend the Empire from whatever it is the Tholians are doing!

248. Krang: General! The Federation ship has taken moderate damage, her shields are failing! We should finish what the Tholians started!

249. Valkara: I do not consider this a fair fight. It would be dishonorable to attack a defenseless vessel. Besides, they may prove useful later.

250. Krang: Useful?

251. Valkara: (growls) Do you wish to challenge me for command of this vessel, Krang?

252. Krang: General. As you command.

253. ANND: oH ngechlj'e' !

254. Valkara: Your knowledge of the Klingon language does you credit, Captain. Thank you. I am quite proud of them, myself! You are pleasing to the eyes, for a non-Klingon. I may have to keep my eye on you. You may go about your "exploring", just stay out of our way! *Qapla'*!

255. Sskald: Krang saw the fire that burned in Valkara's eyes. He knew that look all too well, though it had never been directed at him. Something broke within Krang.

256. To'jet: Channel closed.

257. Valkara: (laughs) Gullible Federation *petaQ*. Now they owe us a favor in the spirit of friendly cooperation. But, I will say their Captain is something quite nice to behold, and his Klingon was impeccable. I may have to call in that favor sooner than later. Krang, I'm going to my ready room. I do not wish to be disturbed. Make sure battle damage is repaired and resume our previous course.

258. Krang: (mumbles something incomprehensible under his breath before saying with a twinge of contempt) Yes General.

(Valkara exits the bridge and the doors close).

259. Krang: I need a drink. To'jet you heard the General's orders. You're in charge. I'll be in the mess hall. (he stomps off the bridge.)

260. To'jet: What's gotten into him?

261. Sklood: He's a mammal. I don't understand half the things your phylum does.

262. Purina: To'jet, you are going blind in your old age. The Commander's heart just broke.

263. To'jet: Did your voodoo tell you that?

264. Purina: (rising to her feet) Listen up you, mangy mutt. I'm getting tired of your snide remarks about my telepathic abilities. If you're not careful, I'll give you an up close and personal demonstration that you'll never forget.

265. To'jet : (growls angrily) If we were not on duty, I'd show you an experience you'd never forget.

266. Sklood: Stop it you two. We have our orders.

267. To'jet: You're right Ssklood.

268. Sskald: Krang never made it to the mess hall. He ended up in his quarters instead. He unpacked the case of bloodwine he had been saving for just the right occasion and started drinking. That night he drank himself into a stupor, and began carrying a flask under his jacket that he would sneak a drink from every time *Starfinder* and its Captain were mentioned by Valkara and the rest of the crew. He began neglecting his duties, by spending every off moment in his quarters drinking alone. When he was on duty, he was easy to provoke and would often turn his anger and resentment towards the crew. The harassment from the first officer allowed the crew's self-imposed segregation to take root, for they had no one else to turn to with their concerns.

269. Krang: (Angry Klingon smash roar) Uhhh-Ahhhhhhhh!

(we return to the Gates of Sto'vo'kor.)

270. G'hargh: What happened next?

271. Deyvid: Yes, don't keep us in suspense.

272. Sskald: I do not know. I just received her next message. I have not had a chance to read it yet.

273. Hauk: What are you waiting for? Read it to us now.

274. Sskald: No. It is private, unless you're interested in the finer details of Gorn relationships and mating.

275. Karn: That's a sight that cannot be unseen. Trust me, you do not want those images in your head.

276. Korrath: So, that's the way it's going to be?

277. Sskald: I'm afraid so. You'll have to find out what happens next time.

278. Melk: Tune in next time to Star Trek: Starfinder for the further adventures of General Valkara, Commander Krang, and the crew of the IKS Kradec in the 'awtbaq.