

Stardate 67587.4401 [3 August 2390, 13:30:00]

Wednesday 1330 hours

“General Dunross, there is a call from Starfleet Headquarters for you” came the disembodied voice over the 1MC (Main Channel Loudspeaker) on the Classroom Wall.

“Tell whomever it is, I am in the middle of a class, they can call back in an hour”, came the gruff reply, as Dunross turned back to the shocked look on the cadet’s faces. The Old Man may be the Commandant of the Academy, but you don’t tell SFHQ to go away.

“General, Fleet Admiral Akaar, asks that you call him when you are finished with class, if you could call him at home.”

“Tell LJ, that I’ll call him as soon as I’m done with these pups”, and Dunross turned back to the class, again the shocked faces, the General called a Fleet Admiral “LJ”. One student raised her hand

“Yes Miss Stanley?”

“Sir, you call a Fleet Admiral by his initials?”

“Yes Miss Stanley I do, you should hear some of the endearments he calls me, you would be surprised how many ‘four’ letter words there are in the Capellan Language. Now back to our topic, Mr. Hmmm Krulak, tell me what mistakes Colonel Ralph Smith-Webber made during the battle at New Sarasota?”

As the promising Cadet with visions of leading Starfleet Marines in the future stood, Dunross mind drifted to what LJ Akaar could possibly want, and what new liquors the good Fleet Admiral would have in stock now.

Wednesday 1830 hours

As the screen lit up in Commandant Dunross home office, he saw the huge bulk of Fleet Admiral Akaar answer from his home, “Hey LJ what can I do for you brother?”

“Hey Fur ball, I’ve gotten an interesting request from Capella, and opportunity so to speak to deal with a problem they have, and maybe even improve relations between the Federation and my Home Planet.”

“Oh? And my role in this would be? I’m no diplomat”

“Marc, that is the biggest understatement ever. Your role is as a hunter, and as a historian. I’ll be the Diplomat”

“Love you too bro, what are we hunting?”

“A Capellan Power-Cat, an Albino!”

“An albino, oh shit, and are we bringing tanks, photo-torps, and the entire first fleet?”

“No fuzzy, it will be just you and me. The council of Teers was very explicit. If I came, bringing ONE companion to help carry the carcass back, AND if I swore to the council on my honor my Abdication as High Teer we would be allowed to hunt, and if successful, they would re-establish diplomatic relations with the Federation.”

“And if we died?”

“They would honor our corpses with a burial on the Plain of Shadows, and re-establish diplomatic relations with the Federation.”

“Sounds like fun, when do we leave?”

“You did not ask if we failed yet lived”

“Is that an option?”

“No,” came Akaar’s reply.

“Then why should I ask?” Dunross queried with a twinkle in his eyes.

“The beast has apparently killed over a hundred head of Capellan livestock, and seventeen villagers, and twelve bounty hunters sent to get it, you know the council’s superstitious nature, once twelve tries were made, they decided they had to do something else before there were thirteen failures. If they had to go to the unlucky 14, it could actually cause sever sociological upheavals.”

“Which is why Starfleet Command, agreed to let you try?” Dunross, asked.

“Affirmative, can you meet me at my office on Monday, and we will get a Diplomatic Courier to fast lift us to Capella by the end of the week? I can talk to the Commander, Starfleet if you need the authority to take off.”

“I’ll be there I’ll just reassign my classes to one of the Historian Instructors in training, probably Dr. Butcher.

“See you after the weekend then tiny”

“See you smiley.” And Dunross signed off. “Now what do I need to pack, my boots, my knives, my binocs, my last-will-and-testament. Sheesh, an Albino Power Cat, last one I heard of was killed when LJ was only ten, and it was five meters tall, and considered only a young specimen, if this current beast is full grown and able to recharge its shock spines,

this is going to be quite the battle, I better bring the Batleth too.” Dunross went about packing for the upcoming trip.

Monday 0900 hours

Dunross walked from the transporter pad at the entrance to SFHQ, past the Marine Guards at the door, “Hello Captain Rogers, Gunny McNeil” he said to them as he awaited the scan to complete and then passed into the facility. Walking up to the receptionist at the juncture of the lifts, he looked down, “Hello Mildred, Fleet Admiral Akaar wants to see me”

“Take lift three General, he’s waiting for you, wanted to know why you weren’t here at O Dark Thirty,” she replied, winking at him. Dunross walked over to the Lift doors, which quickly open and he entered. On the ride up another scan was done, a system that Dunross himself helped design to make sure imposters and Founders did not get further than the lift - if he had failed the scan, he would have been quickly transported through EPS relays straight to a high security holding facility in New Zealand.

The doors opened and Dunross walked out and was met by Akaar’s Flag Aide, Commander Jessica Grimm, who took him down the corridor to the Fleet Admiral’s office, “Go right in General, you’re expected and coffee is on the table.” The commander then disappeared into another office.

General Dunross walked in and was immediately assaulted by the smell of the best Arabica Coffee he had smelled in years. “Damn LJ, you grind that yourself?” he asked, grabbing a cup, while greeting the large officer in the even larger desk chair.

“Fuzzy, do you think I would trust anybody else in this building to grind and not crush the beans, much less try to get me some of the replicated bilge. It’s all your fault anyways, if you and Tania hadn’t introduced me to Latte’s back in the 90’s I would have still been a tea drinker.”

Dunross winced only slightly at the name of his long dead wife, realizing that the Capellan meant no harm, but was rejoicing in their long friendship. “Tania liked tea too, you remember, and she liked you, then again she like any junior officer who could pick me up and throw me around the gym as easily as you did,” Dunross replied grinning.

“Still can, you little shrimp, just because you skipped seventy plus years of aging doesn’t mean I can’t take you”

“Only if I let you get close - I’m ugly, not stupid... about this mission, you sure we only get two of us, what about a guide, Computer maps are great, but a man on the ground is always more useful.”

“The council is way ahead of you, they even had volunteers, and they picked an interesting lad to be out guide. Hagan Maab, the great-grandson of the man who

murdered my father and then sacrificed himself to save our people from the Klingons. He wants to vindicate his family name, by serving the house that his house destroyed, and by helping to destroy the Albino.”

“Interesting, and dangerous, so tell me about the Albino, how big, and what weapons do we get to use.” Dunross asked.

“Bladed weapons only, swords, daggers, bows...” (Akaar smiled at the new weapon used by his people, introduced barely a century before). “The Cat itself is reported to be over 7 meters tall, probably past adolescence and its charge is estimated at over 20,000 volts from the signs of the burns and scarring on the remains and metal around the strike sites.”

“So you and I are going to carry a 7 meter tall, cat, that we somehow survive hunting back over how much territory? That thing is going to weight a couple of tons.”

LJ smiles, “We only have to kill it the traditional way, we can bring anti-grav palette-handles to attach to the carcass, any other questions Tiny?”

“When do we leave?”

“As soon as we finish our coffee, we will transport up to McKinley Station - one of the newer Prometheus Class Vessels, the USS Calliope, has just completed a refit of its slipstream and is ready for a short hop to test its engines. Capella has been set as that test destination. I assume your gear is waiting at SFHQ Transport?”

“Affirmative,” Dunross finished his coffee and stood. “Let’s go have some fun.”

The two men stood and proceeded to the door, two “elderly” flag officers, grinning like teenagers out for a rabbit hunt. If the Rabbits were 22 feet Tall, had fangs three feet long, and had an electric shock that could fry a battle tank.

Monday 1130 hours

“Attention on Deck! Fleet Admiral Akaar arriving, General Dunross arriving, all hands presents honors” came the call from Calliope’s new XO, Lt. Colonel Kevin Manley.

“Belay that Colonel,” Akaar grumbled, “What is it with your jarheads fur ball? Attention this, snap to that? And who the hell thought that Marines should command starships, they are supposed to go planet side and break things?”

“That would be Starfleet Command’s Decision Admiral, after two minor and two major wars in less than twenty years, did their best efforts to wipe out the command qualified non-marines.” The answer came from the Calliope’s Commanding Officer, Brigadier General Diana LaCroix, a beautiful blonde officer, who had the look of both quiet competence and eternal mischievousness. “Now if you would follow me, or do I need to get someone to carry your bags gentlemen, considering your advanced dotage?”, as she

turned and walked away.

“What the hell is that Tiny?” asked Akaar, impressed and bewildered.

“LJ that is one of my former protégés, Diana was my Flag Colonel when I ran the Fifth Fleet, back in the war.”

“Is there anyone in this fleet, who you didn’t corrupt with your attitude?”

“Not a one LJ, at least not the ones worth wasting my time on”

The two officers followed the CO down the passageway, while Akaar thought back over 80 years to another ship, and another tough female officer.

Thursday 1330 hours

The slipstream journey across the quadrant to the Klingon Border was quick and the pair prepared for the their transport to the planet below, Capella IV, home to a fierce and violent race, but one with its own highly developed culture and history.

“Ready Fuzzy?” Akaar asked Dunross, and following a nod turned to the Transporter Chief, and Brigadier LaCroix. “Permission to disembark your ship Madam?”

“Permission granted Fleet Admiral,” and winking at General Dunross, Brigadier General LaCroix continued “and you too General Fuzzy, get off my ship”

The two beamed down, hearing the echoes of Diana’s laugh as they left.

As the pair materialized at the designated area outside the temporary village where the Council of Teers were gathered, they were immediately surrounded by thirteen Capellan soldiers, each of which even larger than Akaar, and each of with their kligats drawn. Behind them were the ten Teers of the Council of Teers, no one standing any more to the front than the others. Akaar, followed by Dunross placed his right fist on his heart, then extended the arm and opened his hand palm up to the Teers. “I salute the Council of Teers and the ten tribes,” Akaar boomed.

As one the Teers nodded, then one stepped forward, “Greetings Leonard James Akaar, and greetings to your guest, we are prepared to extend to you the hospitality of the council, but the beast has attacked again, this time rampaging through a school not twenty of your kilometers from here, seven children have been killed, their teacher gave her life as well. Maab is ready to lead you to the attack,” a young Capellan man in traditional garb, but loaded with gear and weapons stepped forward. “Are you prepared to make your oaths son of Akaar?”

The admiral shifted his feet, and again saluted the council, “I am Leonard James Akaar, son of the High Teer Akaar and Eleen of the tribe of Nolog. I henceforth swear to

renounce all claims to being Teer of my Tribe, all claims to a seat on the council of Teers, and all claims to be the High Teer. I am a citizen of Capella, and a citizen of the United Federation of Planets, no more and no less. I am Leonard James Akaar.” Akaar then let his hand drop to his side, instantly the guards relaxed and moved off.

“Leonard James Akaar, you have not much time to waste, Maab will lead you to the village where the school was, we hope you and your companion can deliver our people from this beast. If you fail, we will bury the three of you with honors of our people, if you succeed you will honor us with the tale of your victory.” With that the Teer stepped back to the line of Teers and as one they turned and followed the soldiers back to the camp, leaving Akaar, Dunross and Maab alone.

“Ok Furball, load up and let’s get out of here, Maab lead the way.” Dunross and Akaar both grabbed their harness packs and slung them over their shoulders as the young man set off towards the village and their prey at a steady but brisk pace.

“Twenty Klicks LJ, at this kids pace, we’ll be there in 6 hours, I’m going to put on a HUD set to review what the Starfleet Database has on the power cat, so I don’t have to waste anybody’s energy with a lot of talking.” Dunross then placed a VISOR looking device on his head, but instead of a wrap around over the eyes, a single ocular piece was situated over the left eye, and a small earpiece fit in the left ear.

CAPELLAN POWER CAT

From the Starfleet Xenobiological Database

The Capellan power cat resembles a large terrestrial cougar with diamond shaped orange markings. Native to Capella, the species' natural habitat is primarily highland terrain.

The Strength of a full-grown power cat (ranging in height at the shoulder from two to three meters and massing around 180 kg) rivals that of a Terran Kodiak Grizzly or Vulcan Sehlat. Intelligence observations put their intelligence at the level of a Terran Canine.

Highly agile and able to accelerate to speeds of 50 kph in a matter of seconds.

In addition to claw and bite attacks, the power cat has a series of spines on its back that hold and can deliver electrical shocks in excess of 3000 volts.

Subspecies note

Apparent regressive mutation of an Albino power cat produces a larger than standard creature ranging from five to eight meters in height and massing around 500 kg. These creatures are apparently not afraid of contact with Capellan humanoids, will attack and destroy for no apparent reason besides territoriality and can deliver electrical shocks in

excess of 15,000 volts.

Hunting a power cat is a typical rite of passage for a male of the Ten Tribes, though the current Council of Teers is trying to limit the practice in order to not endanger the power cats.

Dunross whistled low to himself and thought, “Well this is going to be interesting”. He marched on, following the untiring Maab.

Thursday 1915 hours

The trio of hunters arrived at the now deserted village, around fifty semi-permanent tents are empty of all life, a few cooking fires still smoldering, at the far end of the village, across a small creek lays the smoking remains of the wooden school house. After crossing over a sturdy footbridge, they surveyed the scene, the fleeing villagers had removed the bodies, but the blood and other detritus told the tale anyway. The composure on young Maab’s face nearly broke, while Akaar looked as sad as a man who has outlived his last child. Dunross meanwhile started searching and sniffing through the wreckage. Using his Caitian abilities and his Marine training, he quickly found the trail where the cat departed from the scene. “LJ, this way, when we are ready to go, I have the trail, its about ten hours old.”

Akaar and Maab took one last look around, and then slowly and in synch with each other, saluted the school, bringing their fists to their chests and then opening the hand out to each of the sites where a body obviously fell. Then they walked to the blown out wall, and kneeling down to the bloodstained floor, they touched the stain and saluted again, to the courage of the teacher who placed herself between the Cat and the children. “We are ready now Marc, let us go”

Dunross noted the use of his proper name, and understood how shaken up his large friend was, and he quickly moved up towards the small cliff alongside the creek about 100 meters distant.

Friday 1730 hours

Maab finally halted and called for a break, “Old men and aliens are not supposed to be able to walk this long without tiring. Akaar you are the son of Capella, but this Alien is very strange.”

“He is strange even for a human, young Maab, and a little crazy, but he is a good hunter, and will not rest when children are threatened, it is his way. I am impressed with you as well, even for one of our people you do not complain or tire, I heard tales of your ancestor, before he and my father ... ‘differed’, he was also a tireless warrior, and honorable in the end, you do not need to worry about your honor this day young...” Akaar was interrupted by a piercing scream, and suddenly a large shadow moved across the even higher cliff face above them. Two kligats flew away from the pair to where the

shadow appeared to be heading, but only managed to embed themselves in the rock face.

“Smiley, it seems the Albino has found us, now its time for battle,” Dunross pulled the Bat’leth off his back, and opened up the vest of his harness to show a myriad of throwing blades from the small shuriken to two larger throwing axes of definite Nordic origin. “It’s begun, Maab, go left, LJ right, I’ll go straight up the middle.” As Dunross leaped up the side of the cliff, like a cat himself, chasing its prey, the two Capellans followed his directions, preparing their second kligats for throwing.

Just as Dunross reached the top, he leaped high to his right, as a tree he was about to reach exploded as if hit by lightning, showering splinters and debris both on Dunross and less on his companions, again the kligats flew, and this time both struck their target and another scream was heard and the predator, turned prey, ran into the dense trees atop the ridge.

Maab and Akaar reached the top as well, and the three started chasing the wounded cat through the forest, spread out and ran silently as possible, and prepared for the cat to turn on them at any time. And it did, as Dunross passed a large oaken tree trunk, he did a back flip, just as a giant clawed paw swiped where he was standing. Instantly one of the two axes embedded in the paw, the cat’s scream came louder and the oak trunk was shattered both from the withdrawing paw and another electrical bolt. Dunross was knocked sideways by a massive piece of charred wood, and the cat moved away quickly. Akaar passes Dunross pausing long enough to see the General cursing at and shoving the wood aside and regaining his feet. Maab, never breaking stride, began to gain on the now hobbled creature.

As he began to overtake the cat, it again turned and lashed out, Maab ducked the attack and threw two kligats up into the cats throat, the cat roared in pain, and hit Maab with its other paw, knocking him back twenty meters and stunning him for a period of time. The cat moved to finish off Maab, when suddenly an arrow, then another and another impacted its left eye. Akaar dropped the short bow he had been carrying and moved to throw another kligat when he was hit by a weakened electrical bolt, knocking him also senseless.

The cat, now severely hurt, hesitated before following up on its attack, and lost the initiative, as Dunross leaped over Akaar and swung his Batleth, embedding the blade in the cat’s already damaged neck. As the cat began thrashing about, Dunross held on and began kicking the creature so as to cause the blade to do more damage. Electricity began surging through the cat and by extension Dunross, the beast had began its death throes.

As the Cat finally died, it flung off Dunross and the Batleth with a huge surge of Blue Fire electricity. Dunross bounced off a large boulder, shattering the stone, his body completely inert. Akaar and Maab shook off their own damages and moved to Dunross, no pulse, no breath - the cat and the Caitian apparently had both expired.

Maab moved to make sure that the power cat was completely dead, and picking up the

fallen axes, beheaded the beast. Akaar reached over to close the eyes of his friend and mentor, when suddenly Dunross' body arched and he gasped for air. "DAMNIT!!!! I hate being electrocuted, one of these times it's going to be fatal!!!! Hell, my back hurts," Dunross moaned as he rolled over to his side.

Akaar raises one eyebrow, "Ok fuzz ball how did you manage to survive that, you've used up twenty lives already, I thought you only had nine?"

"Oh that? I've been electrocuted dozens of times, this time wasn't so bad, as I wasn't properly grounded, is the beast gone?"

The two looked at the remains, and watched Maab, put the head carefully onto a cloth to be tied up and returned to the Council of Teers. The now inert carcass still looked huge and deadly.

Sunday 1000 hours

The Celebrations over, Dunross, now tightly bandaged, waited at the beam out site as Akaar proceeded through the departure rituals, with him a new Eleventh Teer, Maab, Teer to the Aliens, was to be the Capellan ambassador to the Federation. Joining the Federation was still not yet right for the planet, but association with the galactic community was a fact whose time had come for the Capellans.

"Calliope, Akaar here three to beam up."