

# Tales of the USS Bluefin Vendetta

By The Lone Redshirt

*Author's Note: For readers of "Tales of the USS Bluefin," you may recall a shift in the future timeline from the story, "Ghost in the Machine." From that point, there was a fork in the road, so to speak, of two possible futures for the Bluefin characters. This is a story from one of those future timelines, or, to quote the immortal Yogi Berra, "when you come to a fork in the road, take it."*

*I leave it to you, the reader, to decide to which future this tale belongs. Regardless, you should know that there is someone that Solly Brin has hated for many, many years.*

*And payback is a bitch. Especially when seen from Solly's point of view . . .*

**Sometime in the early 25<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Gh'Rhunni-Prebo Casino  
Rigellia City, Rigel IV**

I watched you come into the restaurant as I finished my second Tanarian Sling. I wasn't worried about getting a buzz, though. The bartender is a Ferengi and he adds extra seltzer and lemon juice to save on the booze.

That's fine with me. I'm not here for the liquor.

Your two goons probably make you feel safer. And why shouldn't they? Most folks are intimidated by the sight of genetically enhanced, three-meter tall green Orions.

But then, I'm not most people. Your body guards just make it easier to track your movement. Most folks see a couple of giant, scary security hacks.

Me, I see targets.

I have to hand it to you though, at least you take your safety seriously, unlike those other *Ahmet'surs*, particularly Griborn and Heqlun. But then, *they* weren't expecting me.

Unlike you. You've probably been expecting me for about 70 years .

Oh sure, I left our homeworld and lived in a frozen hell-hole that even your kind won't visit. Too bad for you. If you had sent someone to take care of me and my mother, the way your old man killed my father, you could still be back in that gods-awful glitzy fortress that the Elix cartel has called home for 500 years.

Your old man probably never expected me to survive childhood, much less escape to the Federation and join the Border Service. I guess Tranji was lucky though – he died of Y'rusan syphilis before I could visit him. Bet you didn't know I knew that, did you?

I put a pause on reminiscing as the green Orion waitress stops by my table again. I think my knife sheath has more material than her entire outfit. She offers to refill my drink and starts to say something else, but then she sees the look in my eyes and her smile freezes and her breath catches.

I grab her arm and pull her into the booth with me. Nobody notices; hell, roughing up the servers and Dabo girls is normal behavior in this dive. I whisper that I'm not going to start any trouble, at least not here.

She nods and I see relief on her face. Good. 'Course I won't be getting anymore refills or anything else she has to offer tonight. Not a problem.

I was telling her the truth, though. I don't plan to start anything here. That's why Lortho frequents crowded places like this. He knows that I won't risk hurting any innocent bystanders. Of course, I use the term "innocent" loosely in a place like this, but I've no quarrel with the lowlifes in Rigellia.

My quarrel is with Lortho Elix.

Look at him. He's laughing it up with the Dabo girls, stealing a pinch and a feel here and there. They'll put up with it, too, so long as he flashes the gold-pressed latinum and keeps their glasses filled. He thinks he's safe now, surrounded by the crowds and his over-sized body guards.

I watch from the glass balcony level above the gaming floor, from a booth in the corner. It's in shadows, so I doubt he could see me if he looked right at me, but Lorho's never been terribly bright. He thinks I'm light years away right now.

Thinking has never been Lortho's strong point.

I do feel kinda bad about messing up the upholstery in his limo. Too bad his driver wasn't more cooperative – it's a bitch cleaning blood out of Hruntha fur. At least the driver won't have to clean it. I left him in so many pieces a transporter couldn't put him together.

The ice in my untouched drink melts and clinks, leaving beads of water droplets on the side of the glass and table. I take the lemon wedge from the glass and chew it slowly as I watch my prey. For some reason, the tart taste of the lemon reminds me of the *Bluefin*. I guess it's 'cause Cookie used to keep lemon wedges in the galley for tea and such.

Dammit, now I'm thinking about Joe. I don't need this.

The last time we spoke was – what? Six years ago. I can still hear him say it: *"Don't go down this road, Solly. Don't stoop to their level. You're not one of them."*

But that's where Joe was wrong. I am one of them.

Before I was rescued by my near-father, Kaldo Brin, and learned from him things like honor, respect and compassion, I was Solly Elix, son of Tarlo. I took Kaldo's name – yeah, I know it's a Human tradition, but I wanted to honor him for all he meant to me and my mother. Deities, I still miss him.

Kaldo was a better near-father to me than I ever was to K'lira.

As I think of my lost near-daughter, I feel my pulse quicken. A red haze falls across my vision and everything around me slows down. No . . . too soon. Too soon.

It's battle fever – I've embraced it many times before. But now is the time for stealth and patience. The violence I anticipate . . . lust for . . . must wait a while longer. I close my eyes and slow my breathing. It helps, though I still hear the dull *thud . . . thud . . . thud* of my pulse in my ears.

My hand moves to the Andorian knife hidden in the forearm sheath under my cloak. It was a gift from K'lira when I made Senior Chief – just before she graduated from the Academy.

I move my hand away. I won't need it tonight. This blade is too good for the likes of Lortho Elix. I won't sully her memory by defiling it with that *slis'jaka's* blood. Tonight, my hands will suffice.

He's standing up now – moving away from the Dabo tables. My hand moves to another inner pocket and caresses the compact needle gun. It's for the body guards. No, I don't plan on killing them, but when they wake up in several hours, puking their guts out, they'll be unemployed and wondering what just happened. Assuming things go to plan. If not, well . . .

I watch as the bodyguards (I've come to think of them as Tweedledee and Tweedeldum from a Terran story I once read to K'lira when she was a little girl) move aside the crowd to allow Lortho to pass.

I toss three strips of gold-pressed latinum on the table as I stand to follow. It's an overly generous tip for watered down drinks, but the server reminded me a little of K'lira.

Lortho and his goons head out the front as I slip out the back. I disabled the alarm hours ago.

It's raining steadily as I slip out the back and into the alley. Lortho is probably pissed that the driver hasn't pulled up. He'll be too mad to smell a trap.

Sure enough, here they come. I stand in the shadows, the needle gun in my hand as Dee and Dum trudge toward the limo. One of them is holding his cloak over Lortho, so the *Amet'sur* doesn't get wet.

I've seen rocks with better situational awareness.

Dee is shouting for the driver to unlock the limo. It's raining too hard for him to see that the driver is gone. He might want to look in the 'cyclor bin. Not that there's much left to identify as a Rigellian.

Dum is still behind Lortho, gamely holding his cloake over the boss. I take aim and squeeze. The dart hits Dum in the throat and he goes down like he'd kissed a Capellan Powercat.

Lortho still hasn't a clue. Now he's cursing and kicking Dum in the ribs. I guess he thought Dum tripped? What an idiot.

Dee is just standing there with his mouth open. This is just too damn easy. I put a second dart in him and he slides down the side of the limo, face-first into a puddle of water. He might drown. Too bad.

Deities! Lortho still doesn't know what's going on. I walk out of the shadows. Maybe I should tap him on the shoulder.

Lortho finally turns to face me. How 'bout that? He actually has a gun in his hand. Maybe he's not quite as dumb as I first thought?

Nope. He forgot to prime the firing diodes. Too bad.

Elix points the useless disruptor in my face. He sounds more angry than frightened at this point. Lortho always was a bully when he thought he had the upper hand. He made a hobby out of abusing women – especially women with green skin.

Like K'lira.

I step closer and pull a cigar from my cloak – a Ferengi Macanudo. When I light it, I see the change in his expression. His gun hand suddenly begins to tremble.

"Solly." His throat makes a funny clicking noise – kinda like my lighter. Interesting coincidence.

It's a pretty good cigar for a Ferengi-made Cuban clone. Too bad it's raining so hard I won't be able to enjoy it long. I blow out a plume of smoke in his face.

"Lortho," I reply. "Time to pay the reaper."

He says something I don't quite understand, although I get the jist of it. He manages to steady his hand enough to pull the trigger, which accomplishes nothing. If he had waited another five seconds, he could have taken my head clean off. Lortho was never much on patience. Me – I had all the time in the world.

I slap the disruptor out of hand and kick him in the crotch. Hard. He goes down in a stinking puddle of filthy water. I don't think his suit will ever be the same. At this point, I don't think he cares.

A clap of thunder drowns out his high-pitched keening. He's curled up in the fetal position. The mewling abruptly ceases as I kick him in the kidneys and lift him up out of the slimy pothole by the neck.

I see it in his eyes now. Fear. Understanding. Resignation. Yet, there's still a spark of the old hatred burning in his yellow eyes.

I wouldn't have it any other way.

Lortho's hands frantically claw at me as my hands tighten around his neck. I feel my knuckles pop and the fading thrum of his pulse as I crush his trachea. As his eyes begin to bulge and turn glassy, I think of my near-daughter.

Gods, how I miss you K'lira.

**END**