

Blood & Honor: The Klingons - Narrating in Klingon

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Klingons and the Klingon Empire can be involved in your Star Trek: The Next Generation RPG series in several ways, from their traditional role as uneasy allies or open adversaries to the unique challenge and excitement of a Klingons-Only campaign, where the pursuit of glory and honor for the Empire, not the goals of the United Federation of Planets, shape the stories that are told. With the information provided in this boxed set, the Narrator can also build a series around non-Klingon infiltration into the empire (perhaps to control the potential ravages of the Klingon/Cardassian war) or even Klingon infiltration into the Federation, from the perspective of Klingon Intelligence agents. The possibilities are many.

Regardless of whether you make the Klingons the focus of the series, or simply of an interesting arc or subplot, this chapter may be of value to you. In addition to its role as a Narrator's tool, this chapter will also be useful to players; the themes discussed here are meant to inspire character ideas as well as stories!

To these ends, we examine what makes an episode of the Star Trek: The Next Generation RPG "feel Klingon." Klingons have an aesthetic, outlook, and a strongly-held code of ethics that is markedly different from that of the UFP or Starfleet, and episodes or series featuring them are richer and more engaging if those differences are highlighted and explored. The exploring we leave to you; the highlighting starts here.

Klingon Axioms

In the Star Trek: The Next Generation RPG rulebook, we described four axioms, fundamental ideas that sit at the core of Star Trek, that must be present for your series to reflect the ethos of the TV show. Things change, however, when examined from the Klingon viewpoint! While each of the Next Generation axioms apply to Klingon stories to some degree (especially "Cinematic Action!"), there are two fundamental Klingon axioms that should sing through the blood of any episode or series in which the sons and daughters of Quo'noS take part:

Honor is Everything!

And honorable behavior in the game should be rewarded. By the same token, dishonorable behavior should never go unpunished. While Klingons, like humans and others, may certainly find redemption for their dishonors, a tale can not be truly Klingon if dishonor has no price. What is "honorable" behavior, then, in terms that apply to writing and narrating good Klingon episodes? Honor doesn't exist in a vacuum; there must be something to be honored. The most vital forms of honor among the Klingons can be lumped into four broad

categories, each of which overlaps. A particularly rich and exciting Klingon series is one that reflects the value of each of them from time to time.

- **Personal Honor:** Klingons have no patience for liars, cowards and weaklings. They have a strong sense of virtuous responsibility, and personal honor is about standing up and accepting the negative consequences of personal action (if the consequences are deserved), demanding the recognition for personal triumph when it is due, and defending choices that the Klingon knows to have been the right ones, even in the face of adverse opinion or mortal danger.

- **Ties of Blood:** Honor does not stop at a Klingon's skin; it extends to his brethren, his trusted companions, and most especially to his name and his blood. A dishonored Klingon dishonors every Klingon that will be descended from him, for many generations to come. And any threat to the honor of a Klingon who's name you bear even if that Klingon is long free from the confines of mortal life is a serious attack on your personal honor. Familial honor is personal honor, extended to an entire bloodline.

- **Duty to Superiors:** It is honorable in fact, commendable for a Klingon to advance in rank by killing a weak or ineffectual superior. Such an act strengthens the chain of command by culling out the weak links in the chain. But a worthy superior is to be respected and obeyed, and this form of honor extends from a warrior's immediate commander all the way up the ladder to the leadership of the Klingon Empire. Honoring the Empire and the will of those who rule it is vital to the survival of the species, the glory of all worthy warriors, and the personal honor of any who benefit from the Imperial might and prestige.

- **Ancient Tradition:** Honor of self, family and Empire are in many ways facets of a much larger concept, that of honoring the many traditions that have built the Empire and made it thrive. This is why honor is such a vital axiom in Klingon stories: Klingons are as they are for reasons ancient reasons, tested by time and blood and fire and proven in expansion and prosperity. Klingon stories should recognize this and sing with the truth of it. Klingons aren't just "hung up" on honor, honor is an essential part of being Klingon, and something to be celebrated.

When devising episodes, it's often handy to remember that honor is often best defined in negative terms. That is, it's often easier to see what's honorable by defining what's dishonorable. Nearly any ordinary, productive life can be said

to be "honorable," but that's not of much use when you're scratching your head with your pencil, trying to come up with an interesting story to challenge your Klingon Crew!

Think about a few distinctly dishonorable acts, and work from their mirror image: Cowardly attack (by poisoning, for example) is highly dishonorable, to the point of being unthinkable for most Klingon warriors. So, an adventure that has an obvious "solution" via similar covert action makes an appropriate challenge for a Klingon group; they must find the more honorable, which in this case means the more direct, course of action. Honorable adventure is never about the simplest or most comfortable path; it should often be about tricky choices, and should require cunning and creativity.

Victory is Everything Else!

Another essential Klingon axiom, this shouldn't be interpreted as "the Crew always succeeds." Rather, it means that there should always be the opportunity for victory.

Klingons are not content to engage in passive tests of skill. In fact, Klingons don't consider such things "tests" at all. A Klingon seeks honorable conflict with worthy foes; only the presence of an enemy validates a test. The Klingons, a race of proud warriors, need foes, either aliens or other Klingons.

This axiom sets Klingon episodes in an entirely different direction than more traditional Federation-oriented Star Trek, in which "success" can take on many satisfying forms without ever including the satisfying thrill of a willing opponent. While the crew of a Galaxy-class vessel might be thrilled to solve a complex problem of a planet's ecology by performing tests, using their intuition, and then mounting an expedition into a deadly storm to set up a device to fix the problem, such an adventure would test a Klingon's patience more impressively than it would test his skills. Certainly, there are Klingon scientists and Klingon philosophers, and Klingons must solve mundane problems to survive, but Klingons aren't really happy or excited unless there is a foe to exchange words with, to exchange blows with, to battle for victory.

So, an ecological-disaster story isn't "out of bounds" for Klingon tales, far from it. To make the story feel properly Klingon, however, the ecological disaster must either give rise to a foe (a saboteur causing the disaster, perhaps, or a treacherous villain who profits from it and wants to insure that the problem isn't solved), or be combined with another plot that provides the necessary thrill of an enemy. Perhaps the suffering caused by the disaster simply attracts unsavory types who are a threat to the prosperity of the Empire, and who must be dealt with appropriately.

Applying the Axioms in Design and Live Play Mixing It Up

For a change-of-pace episode in a Klingon series, it can be fun every once in a while to briefly subvert the Klingon axioms when a Klingon Crew is forced to come to grips with alien problems. By using an episode written explicitly for the crew of a Federation starship, and putting your Crew of Klingons there first, you can create an exciting game of "what-if?" where a problem that is presumed to be best solved by peaceful negotiation, compromise, tolerance and understanding is encountered by a people who find negotiation to be less preferable than an honorable fight, compromise to be a sign of weakness, and tolerance and understanding to be sometimes difficult concepts, rarely worth the effort when more important issues of the Empire are at hand.

Such adventures can make for an episode where the Klingons expand their horizons, where they find that it's essential to understand, at least for a time, more "alien" approaches to their situation. But what can make this kind of episode even better is when the Klingons can find a distinctly Klingon solution! The Human way works for the Federation, but it isn't the only way, and there are times when it's fun to show that the Klingon way can cut to the heart of the matter (sometimes literally!) much more quickly than talking and compromise. If you ever find yourself writing an episode designed to "teach" a Crew of Klingons that the Federation way is better, it's probably time to put the Klingon characters aside for a while and just run a Federation Crew instead. As a Klingon, it's no fun to encounter "lessons" like that - it's much cooler to show the galaxy that the Klingons have an ancient empire for a reason. The Klingon way works.

Klingon Themes

Star Trek in general, and Klingon Star Trek in particular, is grounded in its axioms but given life by its themes. Like any other form of science fiction, Star Trek seeks to answer questions, explore issues, and expand the personal horizons of those enjoying it. This is no less true in the Klingon Series of the Star Trek: the Next Generation RPG, although some of the "questions" asked by the story will be very different. Episode Themes embody those questions.

Unlike the axioms, the themes are not each present in every episode; there are too many of them! Rather, a typical episode focuses primarily on just one theme, with a few others "playing around" in the subplots. Many of the themes are specific facets of the axioms; others seem contradictory (to each other, to the basic nature of Klingons, or to the axioms), but aren't really. Some of them overlap. All of them make for good stories.

The themes examined here are just some of the most outstanding examples; there are many more. While they aren't

essential components of your episode; you'll find that being aware of them and remembering to include them according to taste will go a long way toward giving your Klingon episodes the right "feel."

Peace and Identity

Since the Organian Treaty and (perhaps especially) Khitomer, Klingon culture has seen a good deal of upheaval, changes in their relationships with their interstellar neighbors that have rocked the foundations of Klingon society. In particular, many decades of peace had a lot of Klingons pacing the deck, anxious to get back to battle. "Warriors fight," as Worf said, and that's the most straightforward explanation we're likely to find for the war with the Cardassians. This is a theme that has manifested in many forms throughout the show and the films, however, the idea that in peace, Klingons lose something vitally Klingon. That peace dilutes the Klingon identity, creates an atmosphere where it is difficult for them to thrive, to be happy. It could be said that a Klingon warrior cannot be at peace with himself unless he is at war with others. This theme contains more than one question, so it can be explored in your series in different ways. Do Klingons really need conflict, or is peace a scapegoat, something to blame for an uneasy populace or an ailing economy? Do Klingons hunger for the fight itself, or do they most need the confirmation of their own abilities that can only come from being tested in battle? Do Klingons fight to discover the truth, or to avoid it? To taste victory, or in hopes of meeting a truly superior foe who will defeat them? After all, the Klingons hold as truth that there is no dishonor in defeat by a superior foe, and that a slain warrior isn't a loss to be mourned, but rather a Klingon finally freed of the prison of mortal life.

Applications of this theme to episode design can be subtle (with opportunities for in-character reflection on "enforced" or otherwise undesired moments of peace) or it can be overt. There will be, naturally, times when peace is essential to survival, and most Klingons are smart enough to recognize when peaceful action is both preferable and honorable. Other Klingons not familiar with their situation might not be so clear-minded, however, and the Crew may find themselves mocked as being something less than true Klingons! The resulting scene can be rich in good hearty Klingon dialogue, since after all, vocally (and, if need be, physically) defending one's honor is the kind of things your players will want to enjoy now and then it's a big part of what makes a fun Klingon story.

The Need to Expand

While Klingons need to fight in order to feel truly Klingon, they feel the need to expand their boundaries if they are to live. Clearly, the two principles are linked, since if both are literally true then war becomes more than a matter of identity, it becomes an essential survival trait. Mara's observation that

"we must push outward if we are to survive" continues to ring true though the years. Many of the Klingon worlds are resource-poor, and the proud race of warriors has had to take extreme measures to deal with poverty and starvation. Usually the Klingon martial tradition has dictated a simple and consistent plan: conquer, expand. When the land is overcrowded or can't produce enough food, find some enemies and take more worlds. Even in times of prosperity, this has remained a strong Klingon tendency, since conquest is not only often necessary, it is glorified. After all it built the Empire!

Again, part of the question raised by this theme is the validity of its premise. Do Klingons really need to expand to survive, or do they do it because they're too busy fighting to become good farmers, or because they let personal matters of ego interfere with effective government? The answers are unlikely to be clear-cut and simple, and which answers the Crew's adventures imply will depend a good deal on the personal character of the Crew, and the point of view from which the story is told. In general, Klingons don't spend a lot of time bragging about their need to expand Mara's expression of it was almost a confession. Rather, they take pride in the success that they've had in expanding, the resulting Empire. When faced directly with the question of need, even many proud Klingons might be given pause.

Of course, the best way to introduce this theme into an episode is to explore those times when the outward movement of the Empire is being thwarted or slowed in some way. This includes the Klingon answer to the exploration themes common in more Federation-oriented Star Trek, where Strange New Worlds await the Crew with sometimes-deadly, sometimes-enlightening (often both!) secrets to be encountered and dealt with. On the outer reaches of Klingon space, far from the Federation's meddling influences, there are worlds that know nothing about the galaxy around them, waiting to be met! Of course, this theme can be used metaphorically, too the need to expand boundaries extends to the personal and professional level, especially for a Warrior, who stands to benefit from broadening his influence and prestige, and stands to suffer if he stagnates.

Corruption

The Klingon Empire is old and, in some ways, brittle. The Klingons themselves are prideful, and when pride goeth before a Klingon's fall, that fall is often hidden behind a web of lies. Fools, as Klingon proverbs teach, do not survive their folly, but they often manage to take many others with them when they go, and the weakness of a few has invited corruption into the heart of the Empire.

Corruption stories are stories about the dangers of personal weakness. Typically, they will involve the Crew working to

undo the damage caused when a Klingon with some measure of personal power (or the means to attain it) gives in to his weaker side. There are always two negative forces to be reckoned with. The first is The Corrupted, the Klingon who has been overcome by fear, or ignorance, or shame, or a desire for personal gain at any cost. The second is The Outside Force, the "corrupter" that has either opportunistically zeroed in on the weakness of The Corrupted, or unwittingly provided the tools for his corruption. The third vital element of a corruption story is the victims, those hurt directly by the corruption. Typically, the victims are the ones who bring the Crew into the story (via a plea for help of some kind), and they sometimes contain the keys for the plot's resolution, as well. So, building a corruption episode is all about "casting the roles" in those three vital parts. Note that the "corrupter" needn't be a person or group sometimes, it's just an opportunity.

Those who are corrupted are often tired, aging Klingons in positions of military or governmental authority, surviving in positions of power through manipulative political means, rather than as honorable warriors and leaders. Filled with self-loathing and well aware of their own weaknesses, they are corrupted because they are too tired, or too scared, to face the consequences of a more honorable approach to their loss of strength. Such characters are powerful because they are both dangerous and sad many were once well respected, and the Crew may have to come to grips with tearing down an "idol" of sorts. Since such things must be done in a way that preserves the honor of the Empire and affected families if possible, this can add an additional wrinkle to the plot. Other potential candidates for corruption include the mirror image of the above: Young, brash Klingons who reject the ancient traditions and seek a quick path to power or glory are often seen indulging their weaknesses, and entirely unexpected sources of corruption (the faithful family handmaiden, the respected old historian and battle instructor) can add an extra flavor of conspiracy to an episode. See what happens if the Crew's own commander succumbs to weakness! This makes for a good (if somewhat tragic and bittersweet) scenario when the Narrator decides that it's time the Crew themselves earn command of their vessel.

The outside, corrupting force can be as dramatic as a bed of Romulan spies, or as simple as a shipment of weapons that tempts the corrupted into taking dishonorable action. The corrupter can also be another Klingon, possibly the next "layer" in a web of corruption leading deeper into the halls of power. The corrupting element, whether it's an inanimate object or a cunning villain, seldom has any motives in common with the corrupted. If it has any motives at all, they are selfish and dangerous. In some stories, the corrupter is the "real" villain of the tale. The choice of victims can have the most profound impact on the feel of the story, and are often

chosen first. For one thing, they determine the scale of the action: If the victims are an isolated Klingon colony, then the corrupted Klingon can be anyone from a colonial governor to the commander of a visiting warship to a higher-up back on Qo'noS. If the victims are the crew of a single ship, the corrupted is likely a ranking officer. If the victims are the inhabitants of entire worlds, the corrupted may be very powerful, indeed.

Old Soldiers

Not all aging Klingon warriors weaken and open themselves to dishonorable corruption, even in the most pessimistic Klingon series. Some go out with honor taking on a vital role that ends in their death, glorious in battle. Some continue in denial, refusing to face that they are no longer fit to command, and become an innocent and tragic liability. Any of these and more can make for good Klingon drama, because Klingon warriors while they celebrate the possibility of honorable death loathe the idea of growing old and useless. Stories involving "old soldiers" explore a fundamental and unspoken fear common to the Klingons: What will I do if I somehow survive to the point where I am no longer fit to be a warrior?

Of course, this theme can be explored directly through flash-forward stories or "phenomenon" plots that age the Crew, but most stories exploring this theme put the Crew into contact with one or more aging Klingons who have faced the burning question in their own way. This can sometimes be a less sinister cousin of the corruption story, where the Crew must deal with the fact that a Klingon they admire is now a problem. As with a corruption plot, there are typically victims, but no outside agent or overtones of conspiracy or espionage. This is a dramatic way to "retire" a Klingon NPC without leaving a black stain on his memory or family honor. Other versions of the story can be fun adventure tales, as the Crew works to aid an "old soldier" or two as they undertake their mission with a clear intent to go out with a bang.

Pride and History

These two concepts seem almost inseparable in the Klingon-oriented episodes of Star Trek: the Next Generation and Deep Space Nine. From the challenge to Mogh's honor in "Sins of the Father" to the "resurrection" of Kahless the Unforgettable in "Rightful Heir," we have been shown many times that Klingons take pride in their history, and will go to extreme measures to maintain and protect that pride. Conversely, an old shame is a deep shame, and when delving into the past reveals dishonor, it can threaten the reputations of many generations of Klingons. Klingon history is a double-edged sword of sorts, something that all Klingons turn to for inspiration, solace, and a sense of self-worth, but carrying with it the potential to savagely undermine all those things and more.

This theme shows sharp contrast between Humans and Klingons, at least in dramatic terms. In a Human-oriented story about history and pride, the implied question is often "Is history part of what makes a man who he is?" There is no such question in the hearts of the Klingons; the answer is so strongly affirmative as to render the question redundant! Klingons are one with their history as surely as they are one with their living relatives, in a way that few non-Klingons understand. By exploring the questions that that raises, you and your Crew can come to understand Klingons even more, and have a great time doing it! What does honor demand when the spirit of the truth differs from the literal facts of the past? To what extent is it right to re-write history to preserve the state of the present? How will your deeds today be viewed tomorrow, and by future generations? And remember that not every look into the Klingons' past needs to be a trek of disillusionment and pathos. There is greatness there, too, and your series will benefit if you have stories that explore all sides of the concept.

Strength in Unity

Klingons draw strength from many sources; from their reverence for their traditions, from their strong sense of duty and honor, from their skill as warriors, even from their anger. But the most constant wellspring of Klingon strength is their unity. Klingons, at their best, are noble comrades-in-arms, living by oaths and allegiances as strong as their bonds of blood, fighting and shouting together, emerging victorious or finding their deaths as a single Empire, focused on doing what is right and honorable and necessary. When a Klingon rises through the ranks by killing a superior, it isn't because Klingons are treacherous far from it! It's because Klingons destroy the weak links that might do harm to the greater whole. Only the most able survive, as it should be, and the Empire is more glorious for it, and that much more deserving of undying loyalty and powerful unity.

Like any positive principle, the concept of Klingon Unity is best suited as a dramatic theme when it is tested, questioned or openly threatened. Have fun making the test personal: If the Crew is tempted by opportunities that would grant each one personal gain over the good of their comrades, will they take the bait, or hang together? Or trying working it into something with a grander scope: If the Empire suffers from dissention within, what can be done to heal it, to bring Klingons together as they should be? If the unity of the whole is weakening, giving itself over to selfishness, apathy and dishonor, is seeking out a new external enemy the way to make Klingons Klingon again? Nothing pulls any species together like a common enemy, after all. This is a theme that "scales" well; it can be explored in anything from a story of personal vendettas to an epic, galactic-scale series arc.

Vengeance

One of the most common Klingon themes explored on the air in *The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine*, the right (and even the responsibility) to avenge a wrong is a powerful and deeply-rooted Klingon concept. This is a very useful theme for Narrators, because it provides strong motivation for action. Fighting is well and good, but fighting to alleviate a terrible itch is much better every blow has meaning; the outcome is something to be celebrated, or mourned. Given a reasonable motive for honorable revenge, your players may astonish you with their ability to roleplay a driving passion. Anger excites Klingons, and roleplaying anger excites players who like playing Klingons.

There are several questions burning in this theme. "What requires vengeance?" is a big one: The Klingons hold that an honorable death never requires vengeance, and for good reason. Any other approach would threaten to crumble the Empire in a tangle of messy blood-feuds. Acts of dishonor from cruelty to cowardice do justify vengeance, and dishonor that causes the death of the honorable essentially demands it. While Klingons believe that dishonor is ultimately paid for, they tend not to leave it up to fate, preferring to quench the fires of anger in the blood of the deserving. Many other questions deal with the appropriate nature of the vengeance. While Klingons don't insist on a poetic "fitting the crime" approach to revenge, they do demand that vengeance itself must be pursued with honor methods that threaten the innocent or methods that use dishonorable tactics are just as bad as the act that inspired the quest for revenge in the first place, and are not tolerated by most Klingons.

The most obvious way to bring vengeance into an episode as a Theme is to give the players cause for pursuing a little vengeance of their own, or to put the dagger in the other hand, and have the players sought out as the targets of another Klingons seeking revenge against them. In the latter case, the crimes that the Crew are accused of may be misunderstandings, and the goal of the adventure may be to convince the offended party of the wrongness of their pursuit (without making things worse by harming his pride!). But then again they may not be. If the Crew ever acts carelessly or dishonorably, let them feel the sweat on the back of their necks as they must deal with the consequences (but give them a chance to redeem their honor, too). Also, since Klingons are held responsible for the actions of their family (and vice-versa) they may be sought out for vengeance for the deeds of another which can lead to issues of self-preservation in the face of standing Klingon tradition about the role of familial responsibility, and questioning such basic principles is one of the things that makes *Star Trek* great. Of course, vengeance stories can be told from the outside, too. Interfering, for whatever reason, in the blood-oaths of other Klingons (who are, perhaps, overstepping the bounds of honorable vengeance)

can make for exciting Klingon/Klingon conflict.

Inner Demons

In "The Heart of Glory," Worf said that the true test of a warrior is not without it is within. This final theme that of the warrior doing battle with his own nature while working hard to remain true to it, seems to at least sit at the edges of every Klingon drama, and it occasionally takes the forefront. Worf and other Klingons have spoken of "listening to their blood" and "the voice of the Warrior" as well. These more positive metaphors still point to a strong issue of importance to Klingons. They outline the idea that there is much of importance on the inside. A warrior must deal successfully with his inner self embracing some urges, rejecting others before he can come into his own as an individual, and as a contributor to the causes he fights for. When does a good Warrior know when the voices he hears in his head and heart are honorable passions to be obeyed, and when they are inner demons that need to be defeated and purged from the blood? Tradition, ritual, and past experience are the guideposts, but the territory can still be rough, and the consequences of a wrong answer can be fatal (and worse, shameful).

This is a theme best explored with a well-defined Crew with a few episodes under their belt. As the Series progresses, pay close attention to how each character develops, in order to pinpoint the internal issues that are most likely to work with your group. This is a very individual exercise, which means it's difficult to lay down simple rules for it, but also that it's potentially far more rewarding than any of the other themes discussed above. At first, introduce this theme as a minor one, subordinate to stronger plot-points (it's easy to tie this one directly to the larger themes, too). This will put the development in the hands of the players, where it belongs, and the way they roleplay the "minor" looks at their Klingon Crews' inner conflicts will lay the groundwork for building episodes which explore the issue in detail.

It's important to remember that while this theme is a rich vein to be mined that will make your Klingon series more exciting on every level, it should never be about simple introspection! Star Trek should always be action-packed, and that means that the inner conflicts should arise when stimulated by external choices, choices with real and preferably dangerous consequences!

It Is A Good Day to Die!

Here's one last topic, not quite an axiom or theme, for Narrators to think seriously about. Narrating a Klingon series requires a fresh attitude towards the concept of character death. Klingons don't mourn the death of a warrior, they celebrate it. They howl a warning into the realm of the dead, to let it be known that a Klingon warrior is on the way, freed of the flesh and triumphant. To what extent should this be

reflected in your players' attitudes toward the death of their characters?

The loss of a cherished RPG character isn't something that anybody can take entirely lightly. As role-players, we invest pieces of ourselves into our fictional personae, no matter how different from us they might be (even the most "alien" entity needs a few points we can identify with, after all, or we won't care about it). That said, the dramatic, and meaningful death of a character can be one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences you can have involving pencils and dice, and what better way to explore that idea than with a Klingon? Honorable death in battle is said to be the wish of any true Klingon warrior. Is it?

The words "dramatic" and "meaningful" bear repeating. There are many times in a game when it's very appropriate to ignore the rules and let the story go where it needs to, and the death of a Klingon warrior is certainly one of those times. If a Klingon dies unexpectedly in a pitched battle, don't simply say "You're dead now; would you mind refilling my Coke as long as you're up?" the instant his wound level drops to "Killed." If the prevailing mood is right for it, let the slaughtered warrior perform a single, meaningful act before he dies a lusty curse, at least, or perhaps a killing blow to the one who has slain him, so they can die together, as foes. Comparably, if a Klingon is obviously willingly sacrificing himself for an honorable goal, don't require a lot of die-rolls to let him get the deed done. If he's making that kind of choice, let him make it, and let him succeed unless it's entirely unreasonable that he could (and maybe even then)! Deaths that have a real effect aren't mourned by most gamers any more than they are mourned by most Klingons. Rather, they are celebrated, and spoken of time and again in tales around the gaming table for years to come.

Of course, while all this potential for drama is very real, it's unwise for the Narrator to deliberately plot to bring about the death of a character, or to design an episode that requires a member of the Crew to lay down his life at some point. A notable exception to this rule is when a player must leave the Series for real-life reasons then it can be fun to write him a good, dramatic "last episode!" Normally, though, the best path is to let such instances occur naturally, since in the violent world of the Klingons, they will certainly happen eventually. Klingon characters most likely will die more often than Federation ones, and it's a good idea for everybody to understand that fact, embrace it, and explore the dramatic potential of a Klingon's final path to freedom.