



# Qapla'!

(Success)

A Klingon Primer for Obsidian Fleet Commanding Officers

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## Foreword and Dedication

**T**he Klingons are a very rich and diverse culture. When asked to compile this information for future reference by commanding officers, I was originally skeptical. How could people really, in the close of the 24th century, have doubts as to what the Klingons are really all about? Then I began to think about some of my closer friends and acquaintances, specifically K’Palla, a woman who quite literally carried me out on her back from a dangerous situation. I owe her my life and the thought of someone believing K’Palla to be little more than a brute warrior who does nothing but grunt all day was enough to jar me into realizing I *had* to write this manual. It was the least I could do for my dear friend.

That said, I would like to dedicate the writing of this manual to my dear friend K’Palla, the best Klingon Elvis impersonator this side of the Typhon Expanse. (She has the other side pretty well covered too).

## **An Introduction to Klingons**

**tlhIngan maH!  
(We are Klingons!)**

**A** simple tautology if there ever was one. The Klingon heart yearns for battle, beats with honor, and the blood boils at the prospect of a glorious death worthy of a song or two. Grand operas extol the virtues of fierce and savage warriors that revel in the thrill of a battle. Merely stating that you are biologically Klingon means nothing. BEING a Klingon is what is important, and there is no greater way to prove that than by honorable action. Meeting your foe head on, attacking with courage, and dying with dead enemies at your feet, a bat'leth in hand, and a defiant howl to scare away the Fek'lhr is the dream of every great warrior of the Klingon Empire. The way of the Klingon Warrior is not something that can be merely taught by reading a book. It must be acted out and lived and breathed. However, from time to time it is good to write things down. Even the most battle oriented warrior realizes this, and so this guide is being published as an effort to help young warriors learn the glory of what it means to be a Klingon.

## **Chapter 1: Mythology and History**

### **tIqDaq HoSna' tu'lu' (Real power is in the heart)**

**T**o begin the discussion of the Klingons, we must begin our investigation with the very creation of the Klingons. According to Klingon legend, the Klingon gods created a beating heart. A bestial creation ruled by passion and fire. The heart beat so loudly and so fiercely that the Klingon deities believed they had achieved perfection until the heart began to lose its life out of loneliness. The deities of the Klingons then formed a second heart which beat louder and more fiercely than the first. The two hearts joined together, realizing that two Klingon hearts united could never be stopped. The two Klingon hearts attacked and destroyed their gods, conquering and reveling in the slaughter of the deities that had created them. One of the Klingons, Kortar, became the ferryman for Gre'thor, the Klingon version of hell, where the souls of dishonored warriors spend eternity, guarded by one of the only celestial entities remaining, the Fek'lh'r. It is said that when a Klingon warrior dies honorably in battle, his or her soul is released along with the screams and keening of his or her fellow warriors, howling to the heavens to warn Sto-Vo-Kor of the honorable warrior's approach into the afterlife. Much like the Norwegian Valhalla, Sto-Vo-Kor is a place filled with the souls of warriors and is guarded by Kahless.

### **Suvbe'chugh SuvwI' tluHbe' SuvwI'. (If a warrior does not fight, he does not breathe.)**

**T**his is the essence of the Klingon. It has been since the Klingon Empire's foundations in approximately the 9th Century with the defeat of Molor, a tyrannical dictator who ruled over Qo'nos. Kahless the Unforgettable killed Molor in a fight with a new type of sword known as the bat'leth. Kahless' exploits merge with legend, as none of them were handed down in printed form, only through oral tradition. With the Klingon Empire being formed under Kahless, the Klingon way of life began to change. Kahless set down a strict moral warrior code for all people of the Klingon Empire to follow. It is important to note that this code encompassed women as well as men. The Klingon Empire slowly expanded, conquering neighboring worlds. It faltered after a brief sack of the Klingon Empire by a race known as the Hur'q (Klingon for Outsider).

The Klingon Empire went through several turbulent periods as the Imperial lines died out, much like Earth's Roman Empire or later European Monarchies. It was apparently during the Second Empire era that the Klingons first met the Breen and sent a fleet out to destroy them that was never heard from again. During the interim times of these turbulent periods between Imperial lines, Chancellors were invested with the power of ruling over the Empire, until the

present day of the Third Empire, in which all power rests in the Chancellor and the Council made up of representatives of the most powerful Klingon houses. The Emperor is little more than a public figurehead for the Klingon people.

First contact between the Klingons and the Human race happened in the early 23rd century, approximately around 2218. First contact had been disastrous between the two races, and it was not long after that the cold war began between the two powers of the United Federation of Planets and Klingon Empire. In 2269 that cold war would come to a head in a few short days at the planet of Organia where the very powerful noncorporeal beings inhabiting Organia intervened and stopped the conflict, imposing the Treaty of Organia.

In 2268, the Klingon Empire gained cloaking technology from the Romulan Empire in a brief alliance. The terms of the alliance were mostly limited to a technology exchange of Klingon D-7 Battlecruisers in exchange for Romulan cloaking devices which were fitted to Klingon vessels. By 2272 the relations between them were dissolved after the battle of Klach D'Kel Brakt.

By 2293, the Khitomer Accords were underway, and necessity demanded that the Klingons and Federation work very closely with one another. Slowly the relations between the Klingon Empire and the Federation improved as the Neutral Zone was dismantled piece by piece and increased contact between the two peoples led them into the 24th century. Relations truly jumped forward in 2344 when the USS Enterprise-C under Captain Rachel Garret responded to a distress call from a Klingon listening post at Narendra III that was under attack from three Romulan cruisers. The noble and honorable sacrifice of the Federation flagship to save the Klingons at Narendra III so impressed the Klingons that only a few years later the Treaty of Alliance was signed between the Klingon Empire and the Federation.

The mid 24th century saw turmoil with the Klingon Empire, which descended into a very bloody civil war waged between rival factions, one led by Gowron, and the other led by the Duras family. When it was exposed, due in no small part to Federation assistance, that the Duras house was being backed and aided by the Romulan Empire, hated enemies of the Klingons, the Duras Family lost their support and Gowron took over Chancellorship.

Relations between the Klingon Empire and the Federation were fairly steady after that, with the exception of early in 2372 when the Klingon Empire withdrew from the Khitomer Accords under the direction of a changeling. The Klingon Empire declared war with the Cardassian Union and the Federation denounced the attack. The Klingon-Federation relations faltered in later 2372 when, amid rising tensions with the Dominion, the Klingons invaded the Federation under the direction and advice of a changeling who had infiltrated the Klingon Empire as General Martok after the real General had been kidnapped. The war was short-lived as it ended when the Klingons realized the infiltration.

The Klingons acted swiftly after this realization and quickly worked with the Federation in the ensuing Dominion War, showing great solidarity with their allies, the Federation, and even working with their hated enemies, the Romulans. Since the end of the Dominion War, the Klingon Empire has focused on rebuilding itself, and according to some estimates, the Klingons are back on schedule with the ascendancy of Martok to the role of Chancellor and by 2385 have rebuilt their prior numbers and ship totals.



Chancellor Martok, head of the Klingon Empire

## Chapter 2: Ships and Tactics

### HlvmeH Duj So'lu' (A ship cloaks in order to attack)

The Klingon phrase regarding cloaking and attacking seems to go against the Klingon code of honor by facing your foe and attacking with a howl in your throat, but there is a subtler side to the Klingon battle psyche that calls for planning and tactical concerns. A well planned victory shows the battle prowess of a warrior just as much as a bloody battle against worthy enemies. After the Klingon Empire gained cloaking technology from their brief technology exchange with the Romulan Empire, the Klingons devised very new cultural shifts around this new technology. No longer were their tactics based solely on frontal assaults with overwhelming firepower (though this tactic would continue to be revered and used whenever it was deemed possible). Now ships could cloak and surround their enemies, dropping the cloak to come out and fire, catching the unfitting enemies of the Klingon Empire unawares and granting great victories without massive death tolls of good Klingon warriors.

Klingon ships are as varied as the Klingons who serve aboard them. Everything from the Bird of Prey up to the mighty Negh'var, Klingon ships have their functions and purpose, and tactics that go according to each vessel. In this section we will evaluate those tactics and discuss the varied types of vessels.





Starting with the Bird of Prey, one of the workhorses of the Klingon fleet, the Klingon Empire has used the Bird of Prey to great effect. Well armed, extremely maneuverable, and quick. It is truly a shark in terms of space craft, albeit a small one. There are two real divisions between the Bird of Prey body style, the B'Rel which is smaller and more lightly armed, and the K'Vort which is about four times as large as the B'Rel and twice as armed. The K'Vort and B'Rel birds of prey are both fitted with a cloaking device, though their tactics differ greatly.

The B'rel can't hold up in a fight against a superior armed foe, which even the old Constitution Class ships are more heavily armed than the B'Rel. Does it mean that a B'Rel is useless in the late 24th century? Hardly. Extremely quick rates of fire on the two disruptor cannons and her torpedo launcher mean she's still a force to be reckoned with. Combining that with the B'Rel's fast speed, high maneuverability, and cloaking ability makes this a prime hit and run vehicle. Able to drop out of cloak while in an attack run, fire off several shots and pull away only to cloak and set up another attack run makes this ship a match for vessels it normally would not be able to handle. Put several ships in an attack group and you've got a big problem if you're the target. The B'Rel is fast, light, and maneuverable with a crew of anywhere from the bare minimums of a dozen officers and crew to three dozen. The B'Rel is also rated on atmospheric flight and performs quite well.

The K'Vort is a bit more heavily armed and slower in its maneuverability as well as her flight speed. It's better suited to fleet actions and support roles as a cruiser, adding disruptor and torpedo fire in a wall of Klingon military power, though in a small group or as a solo ship, it can still perform well. With 1500+ Flight crew and Klingon Warriors, the K'Vort makes an excellent troop drop ship, flying in and beaming down Klingon warriors into a battle, although the K'Vort is far too large for atmospheric flight.



**T**he D7 or K't'inga class battlecruiser was a mainstay of the Klingon fleet throughout the 23rd and well into the 24th century. Much like the Federation's Excelsior class, these ships have a long and very proud lineage with only a few refits from the much older D7 class into the more modern K't'inga class ships. A cruiser on the order of a medium grade starship, the K't'ingas are equipped, as with most Klingon ships, with a cloaking device. Six disruptor banks and two torpedo launchers, one fore, one aft, give the K't'inga quite a bit of firepower considering the age of the craft. Her large size means that the K't'inga can't engage in the hit and run tactics typical of smaller vessels. The cruiser is far more suited to fleet actions, adding its firepower to a larger whole. The K't'inga is relegated, in the 24th century, to patrols, supply runs, and internal stability duty, much like the majority of Excelsior and Miranda class cruisers in service in the Federation. The K't'inga is slowly being phased out in favor of the Vor'cha class cruiser, however, that hasn't finished yet, with much of the Empire just finishing the rebuilding efforts from the wars of the 2370's against the Federation, Cardassians, and Dominion.



**T**he Vor'cha is a shark among the stars. Fast, heavily armed, maneuverable, and given a cloaking device, this vessel is quickly becoming a mainstay of the Klingon fleet. Designed to outperform and take the place of the K't'inga class ships, the Vor'cha is akin to the Akira class in terms of performance. She's large enough to serve in the capacity of a flagship as happened during the Klingon Civil War, and yet the Klingon 'Spartan' living conditions and crew amenities make this ship cheap for the Empire to produce. The Vor'cha is one of the Klingon vessels that works well alone or in large fleet actions. Considerable firepower allows Vor'cha class cruisers to act on solo long range missions, and provides a massive advantage to 'wolf pack' tactics, hunting for the Empire's enemies in groups of 3-5 ships.



**T**he Negh'var is the crown jewel of the Klingon fleet. She's also the largest ship the Empire produces. Armed to the teeth with extremely powerful shields, the Negh'var is easily one of the most fearsome battleships in the Alpha Quadrant, rivalling the Romulan D'Deridex class battlecruiser. Carrying 2500 officers and crew members, the Negh'var is truly massive. Though not nearly as maneuverable as the smaller vessels in the Klingon fleet, the Negh'var is mostly suited for large fleet actions where destroying heavily fortified targets is required. With a group of smaller ships to provide wing support, the Negh'var as a centerpiece and fleet command ship is unparalleled, on the order of Excalibur and Sovereign class battlecruisers from the Federation.

## Chapter 3: Honor and Society

### **batlh potlh law' yIn potlh puS. (Honor is more important than life)**

**T**o wrap this up, one needs to discuss Klingon Honor and Society. Honor in the Federation mind is VERY different than what Klingons consider it. The martial side of the Western old chivalric code coupled with a Spartan lifestyle and Japanese Samurai civilization lead to an amalgamation that becomes a close approximation to the Klingon honor code. Things we would consider dishonorable, to a Klingon are perfectly acceptable.

Warriors carry many marks of honor. From battlescars to medals given to them by the Chancellor to their hair. Yep. That's right. A Klingon's hair is a mark of honor. There are no bald Klingons. Why? Because Klingons wear their hair long with beards. Long hair and beards in a close combat situation yield a large advantage to the enemy, who can grab onto them and pull hair back to expose the throat, or pull down on a beard to force the head down and expose the neck and spinal column. The fact that Klingons wear their hair long with full beards is a testament that a Klingon warrior is willing to give their opponent the upper hand, trusting in their ferocity and skill in combat to carry them to victory. Like the Spartan and Samurai ideology, falling before a superior foe is not a dishonor, and to be defeated and die at the hand of a superior foe is a great honor. This does not mean that Klingon warriors rush pell mell to reach their deaths at the hands of an enemy. On the contrary, a Klingon warrior dies with a blade in his hand and a defiant scream in his throat, but that is only after considerable planning has been done. "Suvlu'taHvIS yapbe' HoS neH", which means "Brute strength is not the most important asset in a fight.

Does this mean that Klingons never retreat from battle? Or never surrender? Of course not. In large battles one must remember another Klingon proverb which Kahless himself gave to the Klingons, "moH QapmeH wo' Qaw'lu'chugh yay chavbe'lu' 'ej wo' choqmeH may' DoHlu'chugh lujbe'lu'." translated meaning "Destroying an Empire to win a war is no victory, and ending a battle to save an empire is no defeat." If it is tactically better to consolidate a position and withdraw or retreat in the face of an overwhelming enemy, then it is not a defeat by Klingon standards.

So does this mean that Klingons make it a point to fight against only inferior enemies? Not at all. "pujwI' Hlvlu'chugh quvbe'lu'." Or "There is no honor in attacking the weak" shows a clear cut deliniation, much like the old chivalric code in Earth's distant past, that the weak are not to be preyed upon simply because it would be an easy victory.

Also, much like the old chivalric code, women in the Klingon Empire are held to a different standard than men. Does this mean that women aren't warriors? Or that they can't fight

alongside a man? On the contrary, women are among some of the most prolific warriors in the Klingon Empire. However, women have a place in Klingon society, and that place is given great honor by that society. Women may not be heads of Klingon houses except in cases where “Special Dispensation” is granted to the leading woman of that particular house when the lead Klingon male dies without an heir. Property and assets are summarily passed along an almost always unbroken male line except of course, in these cases of special dispensation. Women are not merely happy housewives sitting at home, no, like a medieval queen they are almost entirely in charge of the household and who is in it. Without the matron of the House, no marriages can be approved, and even new members being adopted are subject to their say so. A house is just as much controlled by the woman who runs the day to day business and oversees it as it is by the man who leads its members in battle and participates at the High Council.

## Afterword (OOC)

**W**hy didn't I put more ships in there? Why not more info from the Enterprise Era? What about the part about Klingons looking different as a result of the Augment Crisis in the 22nd Century? Those questions and more are probably running around in your head. But there is a simple answer to all of it with just one simple word. Canon. That's right. Canon. The ships shown in here and discussed are ships that have been seen in TOS, TNG, DS9, and Voyager. The Historical events discussed are also events taken from those four series. Enterprise goes against those series in many ways. Everything from the date of first contact to other such nuances. When faced with conflicting canon sources, both cannot be held true, so I am forced by the fact that TOS, TNG, DS9, and Voyager were all produced first to side with their canon fact over ENT. Since the Augment Crisis was explained during Archer's time in ENT, and Klingon contact didn't occur until 60 or so years after the events depicted in ENT, one must presume that they are part of an alternate universe and thus cannot be considered canon for the normal trek universe.

## **Bibliography**

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