

Cookies

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Cookies

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

"Ah, succeeding: The winning of achievements." - Episode 4: In the late 24th century, the U.S.S. Phoenix-X is saved from a hijacking, but the crew learns there have been two drone fleets building in secret on behalf of one last Maquis cell.

Notes

Author's notes: The original of this was done sometime in the late 90s as an edited RP chat. It was originally terribly off-mark and I later added the Tosk Hunters. This rewrite retconned a lot of the original to try to fit it in better with the timeline, but also kept a lot of things. Completed in January 2022. Enjoy!

Cookies, Part I

Star Trek: Phoenix-X

"Cookies, Part I"

The *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* held, stitched within the cold confines of interstellar space. Its commanding crew sat diligently at their stations on the Bridge as Lieutenant Wallace bumped his way off the turbolift.

"Hey-low, Starfleet memba's!" Wallace frumped in pure elating bliss.

Both Captain Daniel, from his command chair, and Commander Gotens, standing nearby, took notice of the euphoric officer. "Ah, Lieutenant Wallace. To what do we owe the pleasure of your presence?"

"Yeah, and it better be worthwhile!" Daniel snapped.

Wallace then held up a tray of baked cookies. "Well, I made these cookies Armond asked for, and I thought I could bring some to the Bridge for everyone, Cap'n."

"You mean, replicated," Red, from the helm, amended.

The other officer chuckled. "Aheuh, heuh! Why, no. I baked them myself, Cap'n."

"Very well. Proceed with the pre-established baked goods dissemination that so many office workplaces toil on and on," Daniel consented as Wallace began generously handing them out to the senior staff. He then leaned into a whisper with the Commander. "Why does he keep calling everyone Cap'n??"

Gotens followed suit. "It's a new trend with the kids to call everyone Cap'n. I found it when I was browsing the *Urban Space Dictionary*."

"Yous twos Cap'ns are m'favourite," Wallace leaned in after he was done. Then, noticing Lieutenant Commander Kugo enter the Bridge, he offered her a cookie. "Here you go, Cap'n!"

Accepting it, Kugo then turned to her commanding officers and spoke while chomping. "Cap'ns, I just wanted to report the preliminary updates to the transwarp are done and we are ready for stress testing."

"I'd like to protest the fact we're toying with our transwarp when it's obvious said likewise-manipulations are what destroyed all previous *Phoenix*-ships and accelerated us to the -X postfix?" Kayl interjected from Ops.

Red turned as well. "Also, how is our current transwarp not fast enough for us? It's already 20 times the speed of warp?"

"It's never enough!" Daniel snapped. "We must at no time fall into complacency and always push the limits of being OP! Always and forever onward!"

Gotens addressed everyone as well. "Yeah, and everyone is to eat their cookies as a concession to never question authority ever again—Especially if there are ethical uncertainties."

"Oh man, I hate those. Anyway, let's begin," Daniel offered, now pleasantly to Kugo while the crew began eating their treats.

As the *Phoenix-X* sped into transwarp, a Klingon and an Andorian passenger found themselves unnoticed in a hectic Main Engineering.

"Did you put the chilled-out substance in the baked goods?" the Klingon, Ragon asked.

The Andorian nodded. "Right next to the nutmeg. I've also implemented our own modifications to the transwarp stress test. We are now going towards our—"

"Ah-ah-ah-ah!" Ragon hushed. "You know better than to explain everything in plain sight. Now, when I push this button, everyone who ate a cookie will be knocked unconscious."

As Lieutenant Kayl was entering Engineering, she just barely caught that. "What did you just say?"

"Oh, uh, when I push this button, everyone playing hooky will be caught in conscience!"

She smirked before continuing passed. "Hah! That'll be hilarious. Carry on, you sketchy, no-clearance guests-in-a-restricted zone."

"The computer reports that everyone on the ship has eaten a cookie," Kotah examined when she was gone. "Luckily, everyone agreed to have their stomachs data-tracked for a previous synthejuana blind test."

Ragon nodded in deviation. "It's going to be so weird when Starfleet approves that."

Meanwhile, on the Bridge, Ensign Dan found himself unsettled by the consumption of his cookie. The Captain took notice and quickly snapped.

"Ensign Dan, you are relieved!"

And a second later, the Bajoran toppled over, unconscious.

"Well, you don't have to take it that bad. You know what? On second thought, you're back on duty," the Captain rescinded, excitedly, a minute before he realized the entire Bridge crew had fallen over as well. "Computer, is anyone moving on the ship?"

The computer replied, over-air, "*One Andorian, one Klingon, and the Captain are the only non-motionless forms on the Phoenix-X.*"

"I'm so glad we installed those porch light motion detectors on every deck," Daniel digressed. He checked a few pulses to ensure his subordinates were still alive then went to a control panel to track the intruders. His display indicated a turbolift moving toward the Bridge. "What!? That thing is programmed to jam during hijackings!"

Captain Daniel took the shape of a hard-edged wooden chair, seconds before the doors opened, dispelling Ragon and Kotah.

"Ahhh, the legendary *Phoenix-X*. I've always wanted a ship like this," Ragon consumed quite vigorously while taking a seat in the command chair. "Although, it is rather too comfy. The coarseness of the executive officer's perch is more my style," he added while appreciating the nearby, out-of-place wooden chair.

Kotah checked the Operations console. "Ship systems are good, as well as weapons."

"Excellent," the Klingon replied. "Set course for the Maquis cell at Moghren III. Never thought I'd be helping a dying terrorist group, but money is how I will honor my House."

The Andorian popped. "How is the mistress?"

"She wants me to pick up some blood milk on the way home."

Kotah nodded. "Ah, domestic life. Also, internal sensors are saying not all personnel are accounted for. The Captain never had a cookie!"

"What!? They are delicious!" Ragon countered. "The nutmeg, alone." And then, "Okay, let's find him. And while you're at it, I want you to check on our Cardassian prisoner. That's right. You can do two things!"

After a thorough perusing over unconscious bodies, Ragon made it to the Messhall for a break. There, Kotah joined him to report his own findings.

"Meloneus rattled off several backstories about his past almost immediately," the Andorian noted. "But I did learn that I could perform two things, as you said."

Ragon slapped the bar table. "I told you! Let's prematurely celebrate such revelatory multi-tasking by layering in a toast in a momentary dropping of our guards."

"Surely, that's a terrible idea," offered Daniel, stepping out of the shadows to reveal himself. "A person can only do so many things at once at the behest of the main operation."

Kotah's jaw dropped. "Holy crap. He's right. That shadowy corner was one of the last spots we had to check!" The Andorian then took out his phaser as Ragon pulled the bat'leth off his back.

"*Mooooooooohhhaaaa!*" Daniel transformed himself into an Adamantaimai, a giant hard-shelled, heavy-limbed beast, scaring Kotah away before smacking Ragon across the room. "*Ah. I'm just remembering I left the kettle on.*"

In haste, Kotah made his way toward the Bridge, in the turbolift. The doors opened and he ran to the helm to check ETA to the Maquis base.

"Holy crap! Starfleet employs Changelings now?? I really have been living in my mother's basement for too long."

Ragon awoke, groggily, got up and made his way to the Shuttle Bay. He boarded the Class-2 shuttle *Roche*, ejected into mid-transwarp space, and locked clamps onto the outer hull of the *Phoenix-X*.

"Shapeshifters are Dominion leaders, so either this vessel has been compromised, or he just works here?"

When the ship dropped back into normal space at Moghren III, the Klingon observed they had arrived earlier than predicted.

"Also, Kotah lied for the purposes of double-cross!" the scrag-monster realized. "Could it be? First the Captain is morphogenic, then my partner is in cahoots with the buyers, while all I ever had going for me was my last place Forcas III trophy selling on Klingon eBay?"

On the Bridge, Captain Daniel took the shape of a Pollensalta, a giant poisonous flower, approached Kotah and pressed his lethal petals against the Andorian.

"You will feel the wrath of my delightful wonder or suffer the pollen-sneezing consequences!"

Kotah struggled under the pressure. "Aah! My brother was killed by a giant Edosian orchid. It punched his lights out!"

"There are entire planets where flora go to war with each other and have unspeakable relations!"

The Andorian recoiled. "Okay, okay! We tricked Wallace into duping your crew and planned to deliver everyone to the surface where you would be fed cookies and offered bovine milking opportunities all day. It's one of the last, secret Maquis cells and good bakery/farms this side the Alpha Quadrant."

"Impossible? The Maquis were wiped out by the Dominion-Cardassian joint forces last year?"

Kotah almost regurgitated at the sight of him. "The cell was previously planted as an out-of-bounds, off-radar coordinator for proxy-world fleetyards to produce attack fighters and *Peregrine*-classes. Your ship was to be their flag vessel and prize for their most recent success."

"Curse those rebellious, low-budget Bajoran Resistance copy-catters."

The Andorian retched, slightly, but held it in. "No! We're an annexed ex-Federation group who want revenge against the Federation for being annexed!"

"Aaand there goes my reproductive leaves," the Daniel-flower said as they both watched them fall to the floor, prompting Kotah to involuntarily upchuck. *"Yeah, I missed pollination season again."*

Meanwhile, Captain Aeris met with Captain Cid and Admiral Cloud in the Observation lounge aboard Starbase 55.

"My ship reports a fleet of vessels forming in Sector 309," Aeris said, dropping the PADD onto the table. "The ships are near-unidentifiable, as we are reading signs of Federation and alien."

Cid pointed at the wall monitor displaying an external visual of the Moghren system. "Residual warp trails indicates this as the likely location of the last, last known Maquis cell. Not that we don't say that about every cell now."

"Stop beating around the bush, Captains," the Admiral spread. "Your analysis from the *Xena* indicates Tosk Hunter technology. You believe the pre-Maquis stealth-acquired it during the Gamma Quadrant Hunter's one and only incursion at Deep Space 9 and replicated it from Moghren into a fleet of ships."

Aeris shrugged. "Well, it's either that or said Hunters have somehow crossed into our Quadrant and amassed in Sector 309 under the tutelage of the Angry Humans."

"Seems wildly implausible, but I like it! Alert the writers!" the Admiral began before realizing. "Damn. Forgot this was real life. Never mind."

Elsewhere, on the Cardassian *Hideki*-class C.U.V. *Isotope*, the recently dejected Gul Dukat sat in its darkened Conference room, reading Bajoran texts when an officer entered with a report.

"You said we got them all," Dukat erupted. "The Maquis are a dreck on the backside of your Cardassian freedom."

Mag, a female and rank Glinn, flipped the screen to a view of the Moghren system. "Our intel indicates one last cell here. In fact, it wasn't really intel so much as they contacted us and told us out-right."

"Seems like terrible tactics," Dukat raised a brow. "If you don't get them, their own ineptitude will." And then he realized, "They want to offer the Dominion something in order to let them be, don't they?"

The Glinn nodded. "They're so last-resort that they've relinquished their obsession with their past Cardassian-acquired worlds and desire only to focus their fight with the Federation now."

"I respect the eleventh-hour concessions of a broken group that I broke with my unrelenting vengeance," the towering scaly man asserted. "We should humor them, but only as a first resort. Then ensure things to go sideways, fast."

Later, the *Phoenix-X* sped through transwarp as the crew were slowly revived, one by one, by the efforts of the ship-wide-accessing Emergency Medical Hologram.

"Please state the nature of the medical emergency," he would chirp every time he woke someone. "Please state the nature of the medical emergency."

On the Bridge, Daniel, back in humanoid form, frustrated, "Ugh! Computer, delete EMH from the ship, immediately!"

"Deletion subroutines have been deleted," came the reply over-air.

Gotens sat up, groggily. "Yeah, sorry about that. That cookie threw me for a loop and I half-woke, slapping the consoles trying to order tequila."

"Dammit, Commander, you know we have a mini fridge under the helm," Daniel argued. "Never mind. Wallace, take that Andorian to the Brig and never talk to strangers again."

Wallace frumped as he got to his duties. "I am sad. I am going to read more books!"

"How is that going to make a difference? Never mind. Just do the things," Daniel sanctioned. "Red, tractor beam that shuttle, and do it with a vindictive attitude."

Red attempted to get a locator on the vessel to no avail. "It has landed on the planet where there is too much interference in the atmosphere to even get a transporter lock. These Maquis have diseased this world to hide themselves."

"Oh, now they're okay with poisoned atmospheres?" Daniel criticized before a nearby console alert went off, prompting him to check it. "Long range sensors are picking up a massive fleet of ships in Sector 309?" And then he remembered what the Andorian said. *"A prize for their most recent success."*

Gotens perked. "Ah, succeeding: The winning of achievements."

Down in the depths of the Klingon home world Qo'noS, two warrior officials congregated at an iron table in a dark, unclean conference room.

"There is a traitor from our midst that has come into contact with this last Maquis cell and their new fleet," Bahah, a thick haired soldier summarized. "Federation intel reports it outrageously large."

Logtow, a lean build official with a braided goatee, erupted, "Foolish miscreants, always trying to boost themselves for amplifications sakes!"

"Right? It's an obvious compensation for a lack of equanimity," Bahah added. "Either way, in light of our own intel, a team of skittish Klingon half-warriors always fidgeting their heads in all directions, we must stop them."

Logtow nodded. "Also, those guys give me the nehret freak outs."

TO BE CONCLUDED...

Cookies, Part II

Star Trek: Phoenix-X

"Cookies, Part II"

As the *Phoenix-X* docked at Deep Space 9, its crew worked tirelessly to ensure systems were ready for battle. The senior staff took seats in the Conference room.

"All personnel are accounted for," Gotens reported. "Even Heelix, our off-brand Talaxian knock-off chef not based on anyone that we'd be overly familiar with at this point."

Daniel nodded, appreciatively. "He's really trying, and that's what counts."

"Captain, confirming ship's systems are back to optimal conditions," Kugo reported. "Even the multi-vector mode is running over peak efficiency, despite that one time they went flying in all directions."

The shapeshifter pressed his forehead. "Oh, that was bad." Then he straightened his gaze. "Armond, Kayl, how are our two new blitzkrieg projects coming along?"

"Sir, more non-canon weaponry is just going to make us even more OP than before!" Armond argued.

Gotens perked. "Except that, according to new intel from the *Xena*, the Phengroth system contains two fleet yards being coordinated from Moghren III."

"You see? Like a Balok marionetting a creepy alien puppet but there's two of them and they're facilitating an outrageously impossible invasion force," Daniel analogized. "Meaning, we need to become ridiculously over-powered as a backup, per Starfleet tradition, which was my whole point to begin with."

"Fine, but you have to let us call new strangers we meet 'friend', sarcastically, no matter how cliché you think it is," Kayl conflated.

The Captain frustrated, "A week's pass, and that's it! Now go, before I next agree to purple birthday cakes or forced-comradery at unsanctioned staff parties."

Down in Engineering, Ensign Dan and BOB were on a special guest tour, observing the stations and taking photos of the warp core for their scrapbooks.

"Can't believe we offer this, considering the highly classified nature of this transwarp," the Ensign observed. "But I am relieved of duty, so I might as well take in the sights."

The Ferengi shrugged. "And they're always telling me I'm not an officer, so I'm willing to tag along," he added before reading the brochure more closely. "Oh, this is a *Safety Inspection Tour* for the Corps of Engineers."

"Cookie?" came the ask from Wallace as the two suddenly found him at another station with an open oven door above it. "I just kid. This is a redemption project without the knock-out drug, for my own rehabilitation."

Ensign Dan was taken aback. "Your speech pattern? It's getting coherent!"

"I told you, I read more books now," the other officer said as he held one up. "Ever hear of defragmenting a hard drive? They're the soothing baked goods of the files world!" The three then noticed the book was completely wet. "Oh, the library used to be Cetacean ops."

Elsewhere, Daniel sat in his Ready Room on communications with Admiral Cloud from Starbase 55 in front of his desktop viewscreen.

"...And that's how I convinced Admiral Leyton I was a figment of his LDS trip," the Captain concluded. "We vacuumed everything the next day."

Cloud shook his head, impressed. "*I kind of like him more now, traitor-to-the-Federation notwithstanding.*" Then he straightened. "*Now, you must know you will have the support of the Klingons and a rag-tag group of Vulcan ships who have deemed assistance logical.*"

"Them, plus the 7th Fleet will ensure we square things off before the Kot'baval Festival where I will triumphantly unveil my new Molor look."

The Admiral held up a halting-palm. "*You might want to read the room first. Also, I know this upcoming battle is detrimental, but unfortunately said available fleet has been called to Romulus for a Dominion wartime welcoming ceremony.*"

"Who convinced *them* to join? Must've been one hell of a good episode," Daniel surmised. "Either way, even with the guest non-Dominion-occupied fleets, we now don't have enough for this?"

Cloud sent over some data. "Not exactly. You'll have the *Xena*, *Defiant* and the *Enterprise*. At least two of those are protected by plot armour."

"I know what they are!" Daniel snapped before cutting the transmission. "Stupid *Enterprise*, only exploding when it's cinematically convenient."

The three-nacelled *Galaxy*-class U.S.S. *Xena* sped through warp for the Phengroth system. Captain Aeris paced her Bridge in anticipation of the imminent battle.

"Here's hoping the few of us can take them all on," Aeris graved. "The fate of the Alpha Quadrant lies here."

"I mean, there is that whole war with the Dominion too, right?" Onegera asked from tactical. "We're not just ripping off a previously established scenario for no reason, are we?"

The Captain snapped. "You're relieved!" Then realizing, "Oh, sorry. I was having Ensign Dan flashbacks. Man, it's so much nicer now that he's transferred to the *Phoenix-X*."

"Approaching bogey cluster," Wing reported as the *Xena* dropped warp next to the all-ready Klingon/Vulcan flotilla and the few Starfleet vessels. "There are enemy fleets in orbit of Phengroth V and Phengroth VI."

Aeris stood. "Open a channel to the ridiculously overpowered Maquis." After a moment, she began, "To the vessels amassing in this system, you are in a violation of Federation space and are to stand down or be faced with the might of Starfleet arrogance."

"They're powering up weapons in response," Onegera reported. "One of their energy signatures is forming in the shape of a giant middle finger!"

The Captain turned. "Are we still on the UPN family network?" After checking, she realized. "Holy shit. It's streaming! We can do anything!" But the crew just looked perplexed. "I mean, engage 4K battle sequence."

The joint Klingon/Vulcan group split off towards the fifth planet while the Starfleet vessels veered towards the sixth and started opening fire on the attack-ready enemy. Captain Sisko sat in the command chair of the *Defiant*-class U.S.S. *Defiant* while his crew worked through the chaos.

"Are we really helping the *Phoenix-X* with one of their episodes after what they did to us?" O'Brien lamented from his console. "Knocking Deep Space 9 into the Wormhole was the dumbest concept ever!"

Kira raised a brow. "Enlisted officers don't hold grudges, Chief. At least, not until we can nudge those lackadaisies into that ship-shrinking subspace compression anomaly."

"I think you should think again, Major," countered Sisko. "It's payback on whomever wormhole-planted that Cardassian gravitational probe that we should be after."

As the *Defiant* phaser-pulsed ship after ship, Bashir added, "I second that, and I think this last Maquis cell is having a double existential threat with their sudden death by Dukat and the war, so they're acting out."

"Whatever the case, I want that planet's atmosphere rendered uninhabitable for the next 50 years," Sisko stood before checking and realizing they were out of trilitium resin. "Damn! Well, next time."

Explosion after explosion flamed passed the hull of the *Sovereign*-class U.S.S. *Enterprise-E* as the Federation ships plowed through enemy vessels like grishnar cats in the tail-end of mating season. Captain Picard held his stance steady as the ship reverberated from action.

"Sir, I'm getting a message from the Diplomatic Corps that they now want to regulate us to a diplomatic role?" Riker reported from his chair console.

Picard pointed to tactical in a fire-order as console debris slow-mo blew passed his side hair. "And waste this sleek movie-level cruiser on budget effects and well-thought-out story-telling?" He shook his head. "No, the *Phoenix-X* was there to assist in defeating the backup Borg in utmost redundancy, so we'll be there for their nonsensical Tosk Hunter/Maquis mashup."

"I feel that you are too agreeable, sir," Troi observed seconds before a zombie look overtook Picard, prompting him to try to assimilate the nearest officer.

Riker immediately grabbed the Captain and slapped him back and forth a few times. "You are out of line, Jean-Luc! Snap out of it!"

"Okay, okay!" Picard awoke. "Must've been my Borg implants, Commander. Beverly said they would act up again in high-level combat situations."

The Commander nodded. "Perhaps the diplomatic regression wouldn't be so bad after all. I could have time to install that Bridge joystick I've always wanted."

"Very well," Picard conceded in mid-combat. He paused. "Will, while I was in that trance, I got an image of someone. It was a she. Her name was Seven of Nine?"

Meanwhile, in the Delta Quadrant, aboard the *Intrepid*-class U.S.S. *Voyager*, Seven of Nine in her cove found herself suddenly spasming out while disabling the ship's warp core.

"What the hell? We're fighting the Hirogen!" Janeway erupted as she ran in to catch the ex-Borg drone from falling. "You know we're still expelling our frustrations from when the *Phoenix-X* inexplicably knocked us back to the Delta Quadrant."

Seven shook her head to regain focus. "Sorry, Captain. It's no secret I share the crew's discontent, but I suddenly experienced an out-of-body stasis. I had an image of someone. A he. This male goes by the name, Jean-Luc Picard?"

"Huh!" Janeway reactively gasped, a second before the Hirogen destroyed *Voyager*. The holodeck then shut off, ending the exercise.

Anyway. Back at the battle at Phengroth VI, the *Phoenix-X* was now split into three multi-vector mode sections, spiralling and phasing around enemy ship after enemy ship, popping them like divine popcorn kernels.

"Ahhh. Just like the movie nights on the NX-01 *Enterprise*," Daniel speculated before he noticed the Beta vector take out several enemy vessels. "Right! The battle. Gamma section, prepare the blitzkrieg weapon: The Transwarp Flare."

"*Can't believe we voted that name in? Now we're just being facetious,*" declared Armond as his vector dropped a volatile energy bolt from its rear into a group of enemy starships, exploding a sporadic bubble around them and knocking them out of normal space. "*It worked, despite the nomenclature! Too bad that was our only one and we can't make any more.*"

Suddenly, with the warped space breaking down communications barriers, a static energy was then heard over speakers. "Because you stole the resin from the *Defiant*?" Kugo asked. "Oh, and also, it caused the transmission layer between enemy ships to become discernable."

"She's right! Comm traffic indicates they are computer-piloted starships?" Kayl noticed. "Like the Romulan drone ships of the 22nd century, or the Section 31 drone ships of the 23rd century, or our bland O'Brien-repelling cargo drone ships from present day?"

A monotonous voice then bellowed through the speakers. "*This is the Draï Hunter AI of a new type of drone ship to be recorded for your archives and listing purposes. You are in violation of our sacred attack frequency. You will disconnect and find your own cherished connections to whatever you revere for yourselves. I don't know, like, bags of Kelpien meat or something?*"

"Haven't tried it. Never will," Daniel announced as he watched the depleted Maquis-Hunter ships from each world begin moving to reform between the intervening space. "This is the U.S.S. *Phoenix-X*, and you simply must know that you've been repurposed in a way that contradicts your people's Hirogen-copying ideals."

The AI erupted, "*We were the original hunters! Now this rando-species from a completely contrived Quadrant gets multiple appearances? Like they could ever be as compelling as us!*"

"They've switched frequencies and sent us an invite to their home world," Kugo reported. "Not that they stopped trying to kill everyone. So, backup blitzkrieg?"

Daniel nodded. "Activate the Vectoral Quandifier!" he declared before his three vectors moved into a triangular formation to feed a flow of quantum particles to the middle of their arrangement. An electrifying beam then shot out from it to the bulk of the Maquis-Hunter ships, disintegrating less than half of them and leaving onboard ship systems vulnerable for the rest. "So, this is what happens when superabundance meets extravagance."

"*It is clear to us that you have matched our aggressively over-poweredness with your own absurdity,*" the AI called. "*Which we now realize is beyond Draï Hunter original purposes. Unfortunately, our Maquis programming cannot be appetized.*"

When Wallace entered the Bridge with a new tray of cookies, he began accessing a nearby control panel. "Hey-low, Starfleet memba's! Did somebody request delectability? Allow me to initiate Cookie Modifier Omicron, the third blitzkrieg and a redemption project from I, me."

"Sure, but you just appeared out of nowhere with no explanation or any set up from my point of—" Daniel started seconds before Wallace transmitted a virtual cookie program to the now susceptible Maquis-Hunter ships, causing their aggressive programming to be tampered by palatable and flavorful cookie-shaped algorithms, and the AI to reclaim control and stand-down the fleet. "Whoa! You did stuff!"

The Lieutenant bit a celebratory bite into one of his treats as the allied ships also stood down and the AI called again. "*Indeed. Such a delicious and savoury modification in the form of us accepting cookies. In the old days, such acceptings would merely have saved login information and browsing history. We now concede and desire seconds.*"

"Done! Also, let us know if you'd like a virtual milk, or simulated ice cream?" Daniel offered. "I'm told the artificial chocolate cake is to die for."

Meanwhile, the *Isotope* took orbit of Moghren III, and Gul Dukat, sitting in the command chair, looked up from his old book to the view screen.

"The volatile interference of the planet's atmosphere is in a patterned flux," Eldora reported from her console. "Like a swarm of synchronized Bajoran locusts."

Mag turned. "It's weird how you can train them on some worlds. Well, variety, I guess. As for the atmosphere, the window for transport will open for us in five Earth minutes, the only minutes everyone goes by, so long as nothing interrupts us."

"Sir, I.K.S. *Roku* is decloaking off the port bow by way of contradiction!" Tellus announced amongst the alert beeping. "Quite sneaky if you ask me. Veryyyyy Romulan."

The screen clicked away from the *K'Vort*-class bird of prey to the view of its commanding officer, a Captain Wulg. "*Don't bother comparing us to those pointy-eared Vulcan-fails. And, if you're wondering how we knew what you were saying, we assumed it, as it is always what Cardassians say when Klingons decloak in front of them.*"

"It's a mandated banter that I reinstated when I got back into power," Dukat offered. "Now, aside from the fact I went into a one-ship war with you people and am now in a quadrant-wide war with the same, it's my understanding that I have one of your men to thank for this monotonous trade."

Wulg nodded. "*Ragon. Like us, he is against the current High Council and will assist us in one day overthrowing it, as is the tradition for us Klingons. He pretends to be a family man and is good at faking Cardassian signatures in prison cells. You are mostly kanar-based, I am told.*"

"It's like how humans are 60% water," Dukat confirmed. "Very well. We get our man, you get yours, and whatever is left of this sad, little version of the Maquis gets a free pass. Not that I plan to be around to enforce it or anything. I'm into Bajoran mythology now."

The Klingon shrugged. "*Ah, character development.*" After the screen clicked off, Ragon was transported to the *Roku*, and Meloneus was transported to the *Isotope*.

"Wow. There was, like, one guy for that whole last Maquis cell down there. Just a programmer, remote deploying hybrid Maquis-Hunter ships for the Draai AI. His name was Spencer," the returning Cardassian commented. "His office chair was squeaky and everything. Anyway, now that I'm back, I declare that I will have my revenge on that *Phoenix-X* crew."

Dukat turned, similarly. "And, I'll have my revenge on that Sisko."

"We're a lot alike," Meloneus realized. "Even our haircuts. It's weird, but I'm okay with it." The *Isotope* then turned in space and jumped into warp, returning back to the elaborate, well-executed Dominion plot line that no other war would ever do as well, ever again.

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