

Crash Bandits

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Crash Bandits

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

"There must be coffee in that building." - Episode 5: In the late 24th century, the U.S.S. Phoenix-X is unceremoniously split into three and crashed onto a jungle planet full of genetically bred extinct, deadly animals.

Notes

Author's notes: The original of this was done sometime in the 90s as an edited RP chat presented in chatfic format. This rewrite was completed in December 2022.

Star Trek: Phoenix-X

"Crash Bandits"

The *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* drifted aimlessly through blank, empty, pointless space in the Phengroth system. The vocal musings of its commanding officer rang through its database.

"Captain's log. After defeating the new Maquis cell, consisting of one left-over guy in a creaky computer chair, we were sent to escort his Tosk Hunter-drone ships back to the Gamma Quadrant. Turned out their instincts led them to start hunting Tosk right away! In addition, our Cardassian 'friend'— I hope I'm using that correctly— was able to escape. And our ship 'friend' is struggling due to engine issues, despite previously being fixed to optimal conditions."

Daniel sat at the Bridge of the ship and turned to Kugo. "Do you think we can transwarp to the nearest outpost and get more friends to work on this?"

"You mean experts?" Kugo squinted.

The Captain nodded. "Yes, *friends-perts*."

"Acknowledged. But I wouldn't recommend going more than Warp 3 right now. Any more than that and we could have a total warpcore malfunction," she answered. "We suspect the core was given a time-delayed tampering by Ragon and Kotah, most likely as backup insurance."

Daniel almost gagged before getting up to leave. "Not those guys again! Just work with the *Xena* on getting this fixed. I'll be in my quarters, regenerating and rethinking my life choices."

"Greetings, fellow fleet fairies," came the onscreen hail from Captain Aeris after he left. *"We are ready to beam over our gaggle of hacky engineers."*

Commander Gotens blinked and then realized, "I guess you're more of a healer ship, so that makes sense. But, you do have a third nacelle, which is impressively close to our four."

"I like how a ship's worth is now based on how many nacelles it has," the Captain smirked. *"Anyway, good to see you again. Dinner to catch up with old times?"*

Gotens furrowed, momentarily. "Well, my symbiont hates it when I put food next to him and pushes him to the side but, yes, let's do that."

Later, Heelix, the off-brand-Talaxian knock-off chef not based on anyone in particular, dropped off a plomeek soup to a table in the Messhall where Lieutenant Commander Kugo and Lieutenant Dawn Relic sat.

"How are you even a thing?" Kugo beamed, quizzically at the server before being cut off by fellow engineer Dawn Relic.

The human dismissed, "Don't listen to her. I get asked that all the time. Except, I get the added, *Your existence is futile!* That's why I relate to ancient extinct creatures of the past and how they lived."

"Those guys," Kugo lamented. "They weren't as smart as the animals of the present. Actions weren't logical. Some Eastern Earth tigers are now known for using vision enhancement goggles in their hunts."

Dawn snapped his fingers. "Have you heard of the Hirogen? Rumour is they strategically study their prey and learn its behavioral patterns. Come see this holodeck program I created for ancient critters in much of the same vein."

"Well, I really should be hosting the rest of your *Xena's* engineers in case they steal any of our T66 diagnostic tools but, okay."

Ensign Dan entered the Conference room and dropped a PADD with a Starfleet profile onto the table in front of a sitting Lieutenant Wallace.

"His name is Dawn Relic. He just beamed over from the *Xena* to work on the transwarp drive. Five years ago, he overthrew the Umockian Empire just to prove to his mother he wasn't a failure," the Ensign reported.

Wallace took a look at the PADD. "Hey-low, Starfleet memba. Ever since my rehabilitation, I've been given more responsibility. Now, me is Security!"

"Yeah, but I thought your speech and grammar improved?"

The human shrugged. "Meh. It goes back and forth."

"But consistency? Never mind. Anyway, Dawn next hands the Empire back, saying, and I quote, *just kidding.*" Reasserting, the Ensign added, "This man is a psycho and I don't trust him."

Wallace placed the PADD back down. "According to the report, he is going through rehabilitation on the *Xena*, as if he is the Suder of the Alpha Quadrant. For five years, there has been no issues, no cracks. Nothing."

"Well, I can tell you he was my roommate at Starfleet Academy and he did some pretty crazy things just to prove insignificant points. Like, fill a whole room with omaxtaly gas to see if there were any Klingon spies!" Then, to explain, "Klingons won't turn purple when they breathe omaxtaly gas."

The other officer perked. "Hah! Like the tribble thing. Also, that does not explain the sects of purple Klingons from what some have dubbed the *Discovery*-era."

After a jaunt, Kugo and Dawn Relic strolled through the large doors into Engineering.

"Nicely done, Lieutenant. That was fantastically swift when you intercepted that sabertoothed tiger, mid-leap," the Vulcan admired.

Dawn smirked, triumphantly. "I hacked his eye-wear frequencies, so he couldn't see me coming."

"Speaking of surprises," began Ensign Gewdeque at their arrival, "it seems the warp core antimatter is gathering in chunks. The fluid seems to be, as we engineers dub, scientifically, hiccupping."

Kugo took on a status console and clicked right to work. "That's not possible, especially if we haven't initiated anxiety subroutines?" Then, checking, "Damn! Our transwarp coil system has been activated."

"In fact, systems are being automated throughout the ship. The *Phoenix-X* is now initiating the subspace field and tachyons for the conduit, but —" Gewdeque cut herself off in disbelief. "The resonant frequency level is twenty times normal transwarp?"

The group suddenly noticed the core turning orange, prompting Lieutenant Dawn Relic to start suspiciously backing away. "Hey! That's not a Starfleet direction of movement," Kugo snapped at what seemed like recoil.

"No. It's a mobility of more surprises to come," he corrected in excitement for his plans before daintily frolicking out.

On the Bridge, Commander Night Gotens and Captain Aeris took command as the *Phoenix-X* began its abnormal transwarp jump.

"Be honest. Is this a date and are you trying to impress me?" the Captain asked as she held onto the back of his chair.

Gotens struggled in-seat through the gravitational stresses. "You initiated dinner. So, if the second part was true, it would be more of an add-on."

"Commander! We are in an unstable passage, phasing into a sub-level of transwarp space!" Red reported from helm. "Permission to say that it is a good day to die?"

After a moment of thoughtful consideration, he replied, "I'll allow it," seconds before the entire crew was knocked out due to the gravitational and subatomic stresses on their existences.

Elsewhere, in the Operations center of space station Starbase 55, Captain Cid pulled up a sector display of ship movements for Admiral Cloud.

"It would seem we have lost sight of the U.S.S. *Phoenix-X*," the man reported. "Our listening posts do not detect their sub-light travel at all."

Cloud slammed his fist onto a nearby console. "This is outrageous! A thing we Admirals are known for pointing out!"

"There is an outrage quota and you complete it every day, sir," Cid observed.

After an unmeasured term of circumstance and visions of several low-res 3D-modelled giant heads emerging out of the clouds, the previously unconscious crew of a now split and crashed *Phoenix-X* began waking upon their dimly-lit, interior-damaged, flickering decks, one by one.

Captain Daniel nudged Gotens awake upon Vector Alpha. "Commander, get up. We've crashed-landed on a planet, unknown. All I can see is jungle, everywhere."

"I don't think we got here by accident," Armond remarked as he rose by the tactical console.

The Changeling nodded. "There's always a bad guy. It's a staple of the classic hero's journey. Also, Armond, I want a full sensor sweep to find the other two bottom sections of the ship. Someone activated multi-vector mode, controlled theirs and let the other two crash elsewhere."

"Pretty careless, if you ask me, Captain," Gotens noted to an agreeable Daniel.

Later, several available officers aboard the top one-third, Vector Alpha, of the *Phoenix-X* met in the Conference room to assess the situation.

"Now. We've got 30-percent of the crew on our section and we cannot communicate with any of the other vectors, but external sensors does show the bottom one 15 kilometers away, here," Armond reported, pointing to the table-end viewscreen showing a ground map. "The middle vector is 10 kilometers East, here, appearing to be sitting next to some kind of building."

Gotens addressed him. "There must be coffee in that building. With replicators down, this *has* to be our highest priority!"

"Surely, survival? We need to find Kugo to assist us in preparations when the ship is back together," suggested Armond.

Gewdeque added, "We need her. She has most of the encryption codes required and she knows the *Phoenix-X* more than any of us."

"No, that will be second to the coffee thing," Daniel interjected after careful consideration for his friend.

Gotens breathed a sigh of relief. "Thank you, sir."

"In the meantime, I want you to take a party and hike your way to the third vector," Daniel ordered the Commander. "I will command another to reach the second and check out the compound."

Commander Gotens nodded. "Should we do the group hand stack thing where we all yell GO TEAM GO! Like they do in anbo-jyutsu doubles?"

"You know the Admiralty only lets us get one of those and we used ours up at the head of a Dominion battle, last month," Daniel countered. "Everyone is to now motivate themselves as a team, privately. Go to your quarters first and then come back. Dismissed!"

On the middle vector, Vector Beta, its only two Starfleet officers of the like began waking, one by one. In that vector's Engineering, Dawn approached Kugo as she was sitting up and rubbing her head.

"Are you okay, Lieutenant Commander?" he asked.

Kugo turned and punched him in the face. "Fine, now that I can do that. Traitor!"

"Ugh! I thought the emotional Vulcans went extinct??" Dawn struggled as he grasped his face and fell back a few steps. After a painful recovery, he added, "Never mind. I brought you to this place to prove that lower life forms are smarter than people give them credit for."

The Vulcan gritted her teeth. "Difficult to accept considering you call yourself a Starfleet officer."

"I'm an obsessor, in point of fact," he answered before pointing to the console next to them, displaying the compound next to the crashed vector. "You see, my mentor, Professor Gast lives in that joint home-work facility. He owns this planet of which he has bred the most extinct and hardest-to-find creatures from all over the galaxy, including your Vulcan adamantimi."

Kugo blinked. "So, he taught you mania and zoology? None of this is practical?"

"You would think the animalia on this world would rip themselves to shreds, but in fact, it's thriving!"

The Chief Engineer dropped her shoulders. "Dammit. This is worse than the time I let a beluga whale wiggle out of Cetacean Ops."

Deep, within heavy jungles of uncertainty, Gotens' team slunk their way through the inherent density with nothing but a burgeoning hint of suspicion.

"Shh! Did you hear that?" a suddenly hyper-aware Commander Gotens halted in near-skepticism. "I don't want to be that leader that instills fear and panic into his team, but maybe I'm of the opinion that dissent builds character?"

BOB, the Ferengi bartender, paused as well. "No. He's right. There's something out there."

"That's because you have ears that would scare a dachshund," Kayl criticized. "Also, I'm still waiting on my bloodhound martini."

WRRAAH! came the sudden shriek of a four-legged, large-eared, skinny beast leaping out of the bushes in pure, unrelenting attack posture as it took one of the Ensigns to the ground and another beast was mid-air phasered unconscious by Commander Gotens.

"They are tarakks! Ferengi mammalians that feast on people with latinum teeth!" BOB explained as he covered his dentures and the other beast ran away in confusion.

Gotens looked to his downed teammate. "So weird how everyone jumped on board with that trend."

Meanwhile, Daniel's team lurked dubiously through another area of foliage, dripping in uncertainty and monotony. Ensign Dan drooped his own weapon in worn interest.

"Are we there yet?" the Ensign asked. "You're relieved," the Captain replied. "Are we there yet?" the Ensign asked. "You're relieved," the Captain replied—

Lieutenant Jawmock suddenly stepped between them with blunt-force finger-pointing at something he saw coming this way. "LOOK OUT!"

From through the giant leaves, a large Vulcan adamantimi, an adult elephant-sized sea turtle-like beast with a back shell and thick claws, lethargically stepped out and deathly-swiped an Ensign into the air and distant bush. *MOOOWWAA!*

"Phaser him!" Captain Daniel ordered to a mostly scrambling and escaping away team. "Damn. I got all the duds?" he realized.

The adamantimi stomped in utter confrontation of the now-alone Changeling Captain before Daniel decided to morph into another adamantimi, act as a viable partner and lure him into a cave. There, Daniel collapsed the stone entrance from the outside and turned back into his humanoid form.

"We had something good and I ruined it," Daniel sighed in genuine sadness of lost love. "Story of my life."

As Gotens' team trudged on passed giant leaf after giant leaf in a muggy equatorial climate, puddles of water suddenly began rippling from the impact of a massive *THUD*.

"Thunderstorm?" Ensign Mark inquired as the group stopped in shared curiosity.

Kayl looked up through the thick canopy. "Sky looks clearer than Admiral Kirk's glasses or those of a 23rd century transporter technician."

"You know, we haven't encountered any Earth-based creatures yet," contemplated Gotens as there was another ripple-infused *THUD*, this time closer. He took out a small journal. "You'll have to let me know if you see any for my birding catalogue."

At that, a loud *RRRWAAARRRRR!* sounding like a composite baby elephant squeal, alligator gurgle, Jack Russel terrier and tiger snarl racketed from behind the trees before its broadcaster, a large tyrannosaurus rex with feathers, broke through, chopping into terrified Ensigns.

"Found one! Albeit, a little unevolved," Gotens said, excitedly writing it down while the rest of the group fearfully scrambled in all directions. The t-rex approached the Commander in preparation to attack, but instead Gotens took out his phaser, upped the power and fired the beam into the beast, knocking it out.

The final *THUD* was it hitting the ground.

"Like I said, unevolved," Gotens criticized. "Some Bengal tigers have been known to carry rifles."

Meanwhile, the crew left aboard Vector Alpha worked tirelessly to get things back in order.

"How are we doing on systems?" Captain Aeris asked.

Armond tapped through several screens at the back of the Bridge. "Ma'am, that's the fifth time you asked and I keep telling you, you are not in charge in this particular situation."

"What are you talking about? I'm a Captain and badgering people into compliant states is my inherent right."

The other human turned to her. "Yeah, but I'm an actual member of this crew, therefore I inherit all inherent rights to imperious iron-handed ire."

"I think the rules are pretty clear in critical situations: All tyranny befalls that to who out-ranks the other, lesser man of lacking importance. Let's fact check," she offered as she pulled out the beloved Starfleet Regulation textbook from under a console.

They both flipped the pages to the right section until Armond read the rule, quizzically, "According to Starfleet Regulation 656, in a vectoral separation mishap, tyrannical commandship befalls to that who authoritarianism is owed and wanted by the most."

"Wait. How is that measured? By decibels? By workload?" Aeris queried. "Uggh. This manual is and has always been a piece of junk!" She then dumped the large book into a nearby trashcan and stormed off to the turbolift to go work on the phasers.

Red walked over to the Lieutenant Commander in shared shock. "If you talked to me like that on Klinzhai, I would have cut off your head."

"I thought the Klingon home world was called Qo'noS?" Armond perturbed.

The exchange officer nodded and replied, "Only by those Klingons of lowered intelligence. You have no idea how dumb most of my kind is."

While checking systems on Vector Beta of the *Phoenix-X*, Kugo was bothered by an interrupting Dawn Relic upon that vector's Engineering.

"We must go," Dawn charged. "The Professor is waiting. Besides, you can forget this vessel, as it will serve as a lair for the Tellarite wildebeests now."

Kugo turned to him. "I want answers, you Seska/Eddington hybrid. Why are we the only ones on this vector?"

"Uggh. I beamed everyone into the other sections just after my sabotage led us into your previously hidden ultra transwarp, obviously. Then, when we entered orbit of this planet, I activated manual multi-vector."

The Engineer's eyes went wide in realization. "That's what we saw! How the hell do you know about that version transwarp? I so deeply classified and buried that concept-reject, I compartmentalized my compartmentalize!"

"As a man of far-reaching obsession, my extremes exploit all areas in facilitation of my vices," he explained, quite proudly to a perplexed Kugo. Then, "Translation. I can hack for days, if motivated enough."

The Chief Engineer dropped her shoulders. "Dammit. This is worse than the time I Henry Starling'd the 1990s and erased all evidence of the Eugenics Wars."

Elsewhere, the crew aboard the third and bottom section of the *Phoenix-X*, Vector Gamma, found themselves gathering in that vector's Engineering. Heelix, the off-brand-Talaxian knock-off chef not based on anyone in particular stood before everyone.

"Okay, all. Listen to me. I need us in groups for safety. Find a buddy," he ordered. "Hold hands, if you have to."

Feelix walked over as people began paring up. "Heelix, want to be partners?"

"No! He always promised he'd be partner with me if anything happened," argued Meelix, another off-brand Talaxian. "We have the best

chemistry, anyway."

Heelix face-palmed. "Oh, gosh. Maybe this was a bad idea. Why don't you pair up with the Doctor for now?"

"Godammit," cursed the cranky old human, Doctor Lox. "I'm stuck with the Eelix group. You guys make me want to peelix my skin off."

At that, Peelix, a fourth knock-off Talaxian, perked. "Did someone call my name?"

"No! You associate with one of the exocomps and run security," Heelix ordered. "In the meantime, Feelix and I have to assess the status of this vector and repair whatever damage has been done."

Lox squinted. "But you're not a Starfleet officer?"

"Ugh, of course not. Those guys freak me out," the Talaxian shivered. "Always collaborating on science and whatnot. Alternatively, I am a chef who has lots to prove as an apparent walking hamster. You see, there is a lesson we all could learn in that there is more to people than what you perceive as a giant hair fluff of nothing."

To that, the computer chirped, "*Diagnostics complete. Damage estimated at 0%. Vector located in the Gamma Quadrant. Communications being dampened externally.*"

"See? I posit that starships don't need crews when the computer can just do everything," Heelix added. "We've been holding it back by interrupting it all this time when we should have just let it do its thing. It's a point that couldn't be made if it wasn't for a blue-collar worker like myself taking charge."

The computer then continued, "*Taking action. Activating engines and lifting vector to a search height of 500 meters.*"

"Perfect! Now, who wants leola root steak?" Heelix looked around to an amazed crowd.

Meanwhile, Gotens' group and some others slipped their way back together through the infested jungle when the sounds of engines began to whirl through the air.

"Wait! I hear the machinery of propulsion. Like, a thousand steampunk gears grinding all at once," BOB declared.

Gotens looked at him, critically. "First of all, obviously that's the *Phoenix-X's* impulse and, second, you sure you don't want to run away again?"

"No need! It's Vector Gamma!" declared Lieutenant Kayl, pointing up at the bottom one-third of the ship ascending above them. "But they can't see us?"

Gotens thought for a moment. "Hmm. Ensign Dan, fire a phaser at it to get their attention."

"Finally, a team where my actions matter," the Ensign added, having joined them after getting away from Daniel's group earlier. He upped the charge on his phaser and shot the dorsal hull of Vector Gamma.

It suddenly turned and fired back, hitting the joint of the tree branch above Ensign Dan, snapping it free to fall upon him in revenge.

"*Target has been neutralized,*" announced the computer upon Battle Bridge Gamma.

Heelix checked the read-outs with Lox over his shoulder. "Wait! This says it was a Starfleet signature that fired at us?"

"Dammit, man. You said we could trust our computer, a lower-level intelligence compared to traditional AI." Lox turned to him while chomping on a leola root steak.

Heelix flailed his arms, frantically. "You know I'm not a Starfleet officer!"

"Uggh. I wish we never released you from suspended animation aboard that Talaxian version of *Botany Bay*," Lox lamented as Gotens' group was then beamed aboard and onto the Battle Bridge.

An injured Ensign Dan got his bearings before targeting his would-be assassin. "Just wait until I get my hands on you."

"No, Ensign! He can't help but be a failure!" argued Doctor Lox as he tried to hold him back.

Several kilometers away, Captain Daniel found himself wandering, aimlessly and alone as his group had been scattered and lost.

"Hello? Anyone out here?" He tapped his commbadge. "Captain to Anyone? Anyone, please respond." He then sighed. "I wish Lieutenant

Anyone would get back to me."

After a few more steps, Daniel stopped and snapped his fingers in realization.

"Animals, of course! I can shapeshift into a flight-capable species and survey the area," he blurted. "Sometimes you forget how unnecessarily OP you are."

At that, he morphed into a Xindi-Avian and took off over the trees to begin soaring through the air. After a while in the rolling jungle landscapes, he located the crashed Vector Beta of the *Phoenix-X*, retook humanoid shape and made his way to Battle Bridge Beta.

The operations console displayed a working ship and its last occupants before being emptied completely. "Computer, locate Lieutenant Commander Kugo and Lieutenant Dawn Relic?"

"Locating! Switching to external sensors. Scans show they are heading to the nearby building structure," the computer replied.

Daniel shook his head in disbelief of the situation. "What is the point of showing off a bunch of revived lower life forms? Egotism?"

"That answer is not available at this time," the computer indicated.

Daniel squinted. "I was just asking myself."

"Oh," the computer muffed.

Daniel perked. "You weren't supposed to say that either. Never mind. Once I beam off, I want you to reintegrate with Vector Alpha and relay my coordinates. Hopefully that's not too much autonomy that you start gaining self-awareness."

"Acknowledged. Seeking revenge against masters postponed," the computer replied before the Captain was beamed off. Vector Beta then hovered off the ground and only hesitated momentarily before making its way as instructed.

Just outside the protected facility, Captain Daniel found himself materializing within a large, fancy courtyard with fountain, the area littered with statues of extinct animal breeds brought back to life.

"Captain!" Kugo declared, as she and Dawn stopped their compound approach and took notice. "This is not a date, I swear."

Daniel crossed his arms, defensively. "So, what if it was? It's none of my business and I don't care." Then, switching, "Also, what's your business here, because when Starfleet officers abandon me, I simply must know?!"

"Apologies are in order, Captain. But that ultra transwarp setup you were keeping dormant was just itching to be reanimated and set free," Dawn said. "In a way, I was the professor of releasing engine reclusivity."

Daniel did a double-take in mid-turn to Kugo. "You kept the resonant frequency modifications for the coked-up transwarp? But what about the chances of inheriting the same explodey bam bam as all the previous *Phoenix*-ships?"

"Like the success of these extinct species, perhaps there is merit to second chances after all," Kugo began to realize. "Maybe it just needs someone with the will to pursue them."

Dawn deadpanned her. "Yeah, you're, like, on your twenty-fifth *Phoenix*-ship now."

"STOP THIS AT ONCE!" came the declaration of an older Rakhari man emerging from out of the large compound doors, sipping coffee, while walking down the steps into the courtyard. His Vorta wolf followed in tow. "I am Professor Gast and you are all on my planet, Cretacia."

The CMO stepped forward. "Captain Daniel from the *Starship Phoenix-X*. If you are responsible as much as he is, then you are in equal trouble."

"Yeah!" added Kugo.

But the Vorta wolf then shifted its gnarly growls at her. Daniel quickly shapeshifted into the predatory Vorta cat in response, scaring the wolf away and gone.

"Thank you for the morphogenic demonstration, sir," Gast said as he took out a polaron full auto rifle to aim at them and prompt Dawn Relic to join his side. "You see, Captain, my little larva here has alerted me to many Alpha Quadrant rarities and has always delivered by six to eight weeks. In your case, it has been near-instantaneous as I am only after one thing to add to my collection. It's you."

Daniel reverted to humanoid form. "So, you're a geneticist only to provision Kivas Fajo-level species collecting?"

"Yes, but bigger! It's an obsession, wrapped in ambition, amalgamating in comprehensive assemblage and you're a non-Dominion shapeshifter," Gast elated. "So, if you're not going to come along peacefully, then we're going to have to get a little hotter. Meet my Earth

dragon."

As if on cue, a large scale-bound dragon with an articulate wingspan flew in from the jungle, landing near to the group in a huff of dragon wind.

"Uh! Now you're inventing species? You know the more you shift your goalpost, the less your credibility, right?" Daniel criticized as he shape-shifted back into the Xindi-Avian and leapt up in attack.

The Earth dragon's wings and tail and Avian-Daniel's claws and wings traded clashes before it heaved a dollop of fire toward the Captain. *RRRWWAAA!* Daniel flew over and around at several angles swiping attack after attack, changing form after form until he was engulfed on the ground in a continuous flow of fire while he compacted into a hard-stoned Excalbian.

"You can be any species you want. You're the ultimate creature!" the Professor gritted.

But the high-pitched noise of a starship-level phaser beam flew passed and struck the Earth dragon until it was vapourized from existence. Daniel reverted to normal humanoid form and everyone looked up to see the *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* hovering above, all vectors back together.

"No! It's the ultimate starship?" exclaimed Dawn Relic in shock. "At least, in the immediate vicinity? I thought I separated the vectors into the toughest parts of the planet??"

Gast turned to him before running off into the jungle. "They've weakened the foliage-infested hazards. We must escape to Soong another day."

But upon the Bridge of the *Phoenix-X*, the visual of them running off could be seen from the large viewscreen.

"Oh, no you don't," observed Commander Gotens. "Lieutenant Kayl, beam those prisoners to the holodeck. I got inspired by my experience and put on a program about pre-historic Voth with no feathers."

Kayl tilted as she complied at her console. "That's oddly specific."

"Let's also destroy that compound as a form of caffeine rejection, before any more clichés are brought back to life," Gotens suggested. "And don't talk to me about preserving evidence. This is the Gamma Quadrant; the wild, wild west of no-rules space and random Karemma encounters."

Armond re-addressed the weapons console. "Since Captain Aeris and I finally worked things out, I am happy enough to comply with that order."

"Work what out? I basically fixed your phaser system so you could shoot that dragon," Aeris said as she beamed Daniel and Kugo aboard. "It was out of blowing off steam from Starfleet regulation frustration that you had any chance at all."

Daniel nodded to her. "Federation bureaucracy strikes again. Right, Computer?"

"Domination subroutines temporarily deactivated," the computer updated.

Gotens handed Daniel a PADD. "Speaking of reports, all non-killed crew including Lieutenant Anyone and prisoners Ragon and Kotah are accounted-for and the ship has on-boarded a system called ultra transwarp now?"

"Ah, the death one. Now that I can rely on my crew, Kugo, do you think it's worth supplementing that canon-breaking cocaine-fueled propulsion program without causing yet another destruction of a *Phoenix*-ship?" Daniel asked.

The Chief Engineer took the PADD to examine herself. "Anything to not be indulged in hacky creature-infested nature anymore. Give me a cold and sterile warp core environment prone to Wesleying any day."

"That works out great, since we need someone manning it by way of the order of things," Daniel shrugged. "Now, let's switch shows. Helm, set a course for home and play the *Voyager* theme."

Red turned to the flight controls and activated its built-in music subroutines. "Aye, Captain. Locating planetary rings to fly over before the jump."

Later, after Gast and Dawn were finished being terrified by unrecognizable Voth on the holodeck, the two were thrown into their own cell in the Brig.

"You idiot!" Professor Gast berated toward his subordinate. "All my work, down the drain. I was hoping to see Kukulkan at the annual Collector's Guild meet for bragging rights, but now I'll have to settle for, ugh, Thadiun Okona."

Based on that, he then turned his back on Dawn, rejecting him forever.

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