

Equal Parts Light and Dark

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Equal Parts Light and Dark

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

"You guys ever think we're a little too cheery at times?" -- Weekly Challenge 61: In the late 24th century, the U.S.S. Phoenix-X is attacked by Cardassian hunter probes.

Ad Astra: Weekly Challenge #61

"Equal Parts Light and Dark"

The *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* moved expertly through space, dodging nothing with no objects in their way.

"That's some good flying, Lieutenant Hachi," complimented Commander Seifer from the command chair as the Bridge crew were at the ready.

The Coridanite helmsmen nodded whilst in mid-maneuver. "Thank you, sir. I trained countless hours for this. Didn't waste my life at all."

"You guys ever think we're a little too cheery at times? Is it because we're striving for utopia?" Tong queried from tactical. "The fact I've got an itchy trigger finger this morning has nothing to do with it."

Veker shrugged from science. "Perhaps you're right. Yesterday, I complimented Kortos for aggressively shoving me aside to make room on the tubrolift."

"Dude. Minus two points for engaging in push-over," Seifer criticized. "But, you're all right about this. Starfleet enacted an excessive light demeanor protocol, for everyone, to compensate our dwindled exploration objectives."

BOB shook his fist. "Curse that Mars attack that made everything dark. Well, at least there is a balance." Then, noticing, he pointed, "Hey. Did you take us close to Cardassian space?"

KZZTT! All of a sudden, a cluster of several small dark-yellow devices moved toward the *Phoenix-X* and half of those clung onto the hull. A few of them exploded. "They're Cardassian hunter probes!" reported Veker in shock.

"The creatures are born into realization of their dark, dark demise," came the sudden appearance of a Cardassian hologram, in full military uniform, upon the Bridge. "I am the Prin hologram, of Silaran Prin."

Elly took position and trained her phaser. "Right. Silaran was the guy, twenty years ago, who killed Major Kira's Occupation resistance group and tried to steal the O'Brien's baby from her pregnancy."

"They learn I was his decoy hologram, whom Kira fired at, and that phasers have no effect on me," Prin continued. "Silaran drilled me with ideologies and purpose, so that those in the dark must be converted to light."

BLAM! The rest of the clung-hunter probes exploded on the hull, forming breeches. "Shields up. Target the probe cluster." The *Phoenix-X* stopped and took its own position. "The Federation may be in a dark place, but how is killing us not just making it darker? Ohhh, if I had a Vulcan here, your logic would be done for." And then, "Tong, trigger finger."

"Yes!" Tong slipped as he fired phasers at the cluster. After vapourizing a few, the cluster was quick to disperse out of the way and swarm the ship. "Having trouble getting a lock. The finger is not triggering. I repeat, the finger is not triggering."

Several more probes moved to the *Phoenix-X* shields and exploded, weakening them, while the cluster replenished its size through self-replication. "Dammit, Prin. What if we told you we were sneaking in a few exploration missions despite Starfleet protocol? We found a colony of Evora living about with no headwear. You see, we're so imperfect, our expedition and survey obsession outweighs Federation folly."

"You know you're just conceding to my point of view?" Prin deadpanned. "Damn! The creatures broke the third-person narrative. This breach is acceptable. You have proven light in the darkness."

To that, all the hunter probes disengaged from the shields and Prin's projected form disintegrated. The *Phoenix-X* watched as the probe cluster flew off into space. "Commander, what's even the point of me if the only answer ever is to solve our problems through talking?" Tong disapproved. "Oh well. I got some in."

"You are needed, Tong," the Klingon exchange officer Kortos reassured as he entered the Bridge. "As for you, Lieutenant Commander Veker. I have come to apologize for shoving you on the tubrolift the other day."

The Kelpien countered, "petaQ!" before reactively force-palming Kortos with enough impact to knock the Klingon off his feet. "Oh, crap. I had that in the barrel and was not thinking."

"The point is, it doesn't matter how dark things are, we determine our own version of light, be it exploration or excessive, over-the-top, illegal killing," Seifer concluded, before realizing. "Wait. Not that second thing."

Hachi perked. "And I learned my flying was not actually good. Back toward Federation patrolling, it is," he said as the *Phoenix-X* turned and low-warped through space. "I just pressed a button. I did not need training for this."

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