

## Nibiru

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## Nibiru

by [Hawku](#)

### Summary

"I suppose we should all get to the space thing that's usually a one-ship space thing." - Unofficial Literary Challenge 20: In the early 25th century, Captains Menrow, Iviok, Reynolds, Samya and McCary of Task Force Epsilon cross into the Kelvin timeline to investigate the disappearance of Captain Seifer.

### Notes

Author's notes: This was written in February 2016, as part of the Star Trek Online Forums Unofficial Literary Challenge #20. This entry didn't follow the prompt exactly, instead reinterpreting it and mashing up all Captains I had used for the ULCs so far as a 'big finale' to them.

Unofficial Literary Challenge #20: Prompt #2: Planet X. The Ten Planet. Nibiru. Throughout Earth's history, the tale of a mythical ten planetoid has both intrigued and confounded scientists for eons. The rumors of the mysterious "Grey Aliens" has been connected to the legend as well. According to Vulcan research, Klingon folk lore and many other ancient myths from across the quadrants, the Greys were considered to be a phantom race, a myth. But with so many mentions across thousands of cultures all across all four quadrants, the evidence that the Greys existed is staggering, and with it comes proof that Nibiru exists. Soon, the planets of the Sol, Qu'onoS and New Romulus systems will all align at the exact same time. Three gateways will open into one single dimensional anomaly. The path to Nibiru. Starfleet, the KDF and Romulus Command all want to investigate this lost world. Your mission: Orbit Nibiru, make contact with the Greys and, if need be, prevent the cataclysmic event Nibiru's appearance is said to bring. You have 24 hours before the planets fall out of alignment and close the dimensional anomaly. But be careful, Captains. The Greys were so secretive not even the Iconians had concrete knowledge of them. Anything that could hide from Iconians cannot be good news. It's almost here. The planets are aligned. Nibiru...is coming."

# Nibiru, Part I

## Unofficial Literary Challenge #20

"Nibiru, Part I"

In the unlit, nearly empty Operations center of Starbase 55, Captain Samya sat working diligently at an Ops console not in any state of awareness for the overly windy swooshing sounds of the nearby turbolift.

"Burning the midnight oil?" asked Admiral Cloud, slyly, more sure than anything that he was being original with the use of that phrase.

Ignoring the failed attempt and his sudden creep-like presence, the second Human replied, "Huh? Oh, no. I'm reinforcing local systems so that we can finally get back to Tier V construction."

"Damn that computer virus hologram that knocked us all the way back to Tier II," Cloud cursed to himself and at his holographic Intelligence officer. "How is Mayhem even still in Starfleet?"

Breaking off her lean from her console, Samya paused. "More to the question: Where'd all the extra decks go? Never mind. I'm sure the answer is as comprable as the premise."

"Don't you mean comparable?" Cloud tilted his head, slightly in confusion, suddenly gaining a view of her console. "Wait. That's not local system reinforcement at all? You're accessing intel on the Solanae to find your lost sister!"

With the jig up, Samya looked straight away. "Fine. But can you blame me? I don't exactly maintain a social roster for interpersonal proxy. Besides, you're no Starfleet boy scout yourself. How does a starbase operate without a night shift?"

"The shift rotation is easier this way! You know how I hate too many PADDs on my desk. Why are you even on this station all the time? Don't you have your own starship?"

Turning to him, Samya threw up her arms. "The *Dropzone* is a *Defiant*-class! That's like asking a balding Lurian to do his drinking on a Klingon shuttlepod!"

"Ah, perfect analogy," Cloud appraised. "Anyway, I came here because I need you to join your task force in the Azure Sector to investigate an alarming set of pseudo-anomalies."

Sighing, the tactical officer turned in her seat. "Fine. But, why us? Why not Captain Shon and the *Enterprise-F*, since everyone seems to love them so much? They think they're so good."

"Unfortunately, they're in the Bajor system, catching up with all the new Mirror Leeta stuff. It's quite confusing, timeline-wise; they're there, but they're here, but they're there? Non-time travel mechanics gives me such a headache."

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Later, the *Steamrunner*-class U.S.S. *Tsunami* exited warp and joined the *Dropzone* in the Azure sector near several small, spinning black holes.

"*Burning the midnight oil, Captain Samya?*" came the sly hail from Captain McCary on the *Tsunami*.

The *Dropzone* answered back, relieved. "I know it's the middle of the day, but you hit the nail on the head with that phraseology."

"*The last time we were all together, we were ambushed by the Seventh Fleet,*" the one-quarter Klingon commented with a hint of concern at his joining her. "*They suspected we were Changelings masquerading as masquerading Undine.*"

Samya waved it off, deftly. "Yeah, but we set them against Battle Group Omega after we masked Omega's signatures as Borg ships. They were attacking each other for weeks!"

Just then, the *Akira*-class U.S.S. *Hijinx* dropped out of warp and approached. "*Well, this is a sight of implausibility to be had. Any preliminary scans or snarky one-liners yet?*" came Captain Reynolds' hail from her ship as she split everyone's screens two-ways.

"You know as well as we do that we're supposed to form a giant arrow in the direction of the anomalies, first," Samya reminded.

Rolling her eyes, the Betazoid replied, "*Great. I see we're maintaining typical Task Force Epsilon procedure. Why don't we just paint targets on our hulls while we're at it?*"

Next, the *Centaur*-class U.S.S. *Jenova* dropped out of warp and took first position near them. "*What?*" Captain Iviok asked, splitting the screens three-ways. "*Are we not doing the pointy thing?*"

"*Task Force Epsilon is going to forego the pre-mission formation this time around,*" suggested McCary. "*Also, let's not broadcast the royal fanfare either.*"

The Andorian threw up his arms. *"So we worked triple shifts on our Tier 1 engines for nothing? I lost two men to excess technobabble! Anyway, why are we even called Task Force Epsilon? Aren't the Greek letters re-assigned per crisis, per grouping?"*

At that, the *Intrepid*-class U.S.S. *Crucial* dropped out into normal space right next to the other ships. Captain Menrow hailed from his Bridge, splitting all screens four-ways. *"To answer your question, which I am just assuming since I was at warp at the time, Starfleet has put us and several other grouped starships on long-term task over the Federation's rehashed storyline ambitions. Thus, we will likely never be disbanded until something original comes along."*

*"Then I suppose we should all get to the space thing that's usually a one-ship space thing,"* McCary concluded.

Reynolds replied, *"We're still missing our command vessel, the U.S.S. Phoenix-X. Anyone see them?"*

*"Uh, it's been forever since we heard anything from Captain Seifer,"* Iviok answered. *"I just figured they died from that undead-like virus thing. Seemed like screaming in sheer pain and horror was a good way to go."*

McCary stepped up. *"Actually, Samya and I ran into him in a hacked incarnation of Winter Wonderland, recently, after which he reportedly returned to his ship just fine."*

*"In our off-hours, we investigated his second sickness and found no signs of malevolence,"* Samya reported. *"As for the ailment itself, we still don't know where it's coming from."*

Reynolds tapped her chin in thought. *"Is this because the LCs are dead? Oh, LCs are what I call Last Calls, which they stopped doing at 602 Club ever since we got hit with, like, three wars at once. Anyway, who's in charge if there's no Phoenix-X?"*

*"According to Starfleet Regulation 191, Article 15, in any situation involving more than one ship, command falls to the vessel of the Intrepid-class variation,"* said Iviok.

Widening his eyes in shock, Menrow replied, *"That's me! I knew this spoon-beast would come in handy. And everyone said I was just asking to be lost in some random Quadrant of complete absurdity."*

Rubbing his hands together in excitement, Menrow brought up the space visual, splitting every screen, now, five-ways.

*"So, what have we got here? A bunch of black holes?"* Menrow observed before processing. Then, in disgust and a sudden dash of hopes, replaced with frustration, he declared, *"That makes no sense!"*

Reynolds chimed in. *"He's right. Normally, they're collapsed stars and too concentrated to co-exist without orbiting or merging themselves."*

*"My ship is reading an inconsistent flow of thermal radiation coming from those swirly-curlies. They appear to be sputtering in and out of the space-time continuum!"* Iviok reacted. *"Oh, and they're all drifting toward us."*

Everyone watched as their ships became immobilized under intense gravimetric suspensions. Then, all of a sudden, out of the blue, the *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* coasted, just far enough from out behind the black holes and slowly began passing the group, on a nose-down, 60-degree angle.

*"That's Captain Seifer's ship!"* exclaimed Reynolds in shock.

Menrow sighed in alleviation. *"Phew. Well, that's a relief. All this task force commanding was making me thirsty. Margaritas, anyone?"*

*"Hold that indispensable thought. I'm not reading any lifesigns on-board the vessel,"* reported Samya. *"It's as if the polygons didn't spawn at all-- er, I mean, everyone evacuated for some reason."*

Iviok crossed his arms. *"And here we were, ready to dismiss that over-nacelled-mashup because we wanted to break standard procedure. Seems when people are grouped, they come to poor conclusions."*

*"This is why our task force was used as cannon fodder during the Iconian War,"* McCary stated. *"We told everyone we wanted to negotiate each battle with diplomacy, and that group-think got our comm signals all entangled."*

Reynolds added, *"My ship still blasts microphone feedback every time I hail someone."*

*SCRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!*

Everyone quickly turned down their volume controls.

*"Would it be better if we weren't near each other? Would that make things right?"* interjected Captain Menrow. *"As Epsilon's acting commanding officer, I hereby rule we do all we can to work autonomously, in far proximity from one another, however vexing it may be to accommodate, to complete whichever mission we perchance be assigned."*

As they nodded in agreement, all five Captains were suddenly beamed off their ships and onto the Bridge of the *Phoenix-X*.

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There, together, on the *Prometheus*-class vessel, they found holographic virus and Starfleet Intelligence officer Lieutenant Commander Mayhem standing over an operations console.

"Oh, hello," Mayhem greeted, turning to take notice of them. "Are you familiar with the Nibiru? Well, they're this week's alien of the week."

TO BE CONTINUED

## Nibiru, Part II

### Unofficial Literary Challenge #20

"Nibiru, Part II"

In the flickering, run-down Bridge of the *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X*, all five Captains looked on in awe and shock at the virus hologram standing before them.

"Qu!" barked Samya. "I mean, Mayhem! Sorry, that just seemed natural."

The Intelligence officer stepped around the railing and approached them. "There's no time for your signature randomness! You see, those small artificial black holes are orbiting each other on chaotic paths, threatening to lock us in gravitational suspension between them forever!"

"In English, holo-man!" ordered Iviok.

Mayhem rolled his eyes. "That was as dumbed-downed as I could get it. I one-time beamed you all here, the so-called brains of your ships, so that you could get the *Phoenix-X* online, faster, before certain eternal destitute."

"What about our own ships? They're already trapped inside that system-disabling, space-time mish-mash!" argued Menrow. "And what happened to this ship??"

Activating the main viewscreen, Mayhem, replied, "We'll be back for your crews once we're online and done." He replayed an image of an attacking Breen vessel. "In the meantime, the *Phoenix-X* was ambushed by these popsicle mystery men, who were trying to obtain supplies to get home in some sort of full-body-armored Janeway rip-off."

"Our engines are completely offline," Iviok noted as he accessed a nearby console. "The Breen version of Tom Paris must've over-clocked an energy dissipator."

Nodding, the hologram continued, "Yes, and all while I and the crew of *Phoenix-X* were on a mission from Starfleet Intelligence to render the phenomenal activity on these black holes inert."

"What kind of activity?" asked McCary.

Mayhem answered, "Highly volatile space-time warping— which we were warned about, from a lone signal long ago, by an unknown species called the Nibiru— which I successfully stopped by using purple matter."

"Dammit! You can't just make up matter and assign it a color!" Reynolds declared.

Shaking his head, the virus finished, "Unfortunately, your precious Captain Seifer agreed and had his entire crew hijack that Breen vessel in search of another cluster of artificial black holes... for something called a 'redo'."

"He's mad," realized Menrow. "It's that obsession of his with a 'magic reset button' all over again. Odd, though, that he reported that so we would all know."

Crossing her arms, Samya said, "And let me guess, we know nothing about the Nibiru because your program is infecting the Federation database."

"I need to infect something!" Mayhem defended. "That's like asking a Bolian not to be a hairstylist."

Menrow turned to the other Captains. "Seifer is our mission now, considering he could cause untold damages to all that is good and safe in the galaxy."

"Like the time you enslaved the Takarians in the Delta Quadrant?" Reynolds reminded.

The Captain waved it off. "Ferengi possession doesn't count! Besides, my body is still recovering from tube grub overdose." He then addressed each one, down the line, his stomach aching. "Iviok, go to Engineering and get the engines into safe mode. Samya, check the status of the weapons. McCary, update life-support systems. Reynolds, run a diagnostic on the deflector dish. I'll ensure main power holds up."

"You do realize we're playing right into the do-not-work-together reversal, don't you?" Samya clarified.

Menrow countered, "I realize that pointing out something's a trope is itself a trope! Dismissed!"

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*Captain's Log, Stardate 87446.9. As Acting Commanding officer of Task Force Epsilon, I, Captain Menrow, have taken command of the abandoned U.S.S. Phoenix-X. It turns out Captain Seifer littered his entire Ready Room with leola root tart wrappers. How can one man eat that much junk food? Anyway, we've engaged warp in safe mode and are following the last known coordinates of the Breen Chel Grett warship Darkseid. As odd as it is attempting to acclimatize myself to this new role over my peers, I am fairly certain we will not succeed as a team. In fact, it's more likely we'll buckle under our own incompatibilities. The only question is how soon?*

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Reynolds entered Engineering where Iviok was hard at work, managing the engines by himself.

"Damn the *Phoenix-X*! Where does the X even come from?" she asked. "Are they just trying too hard to be what they used to call 'cool!'"

The Andorian examined the intermix chamber. "Judging by this conglomeration of engine core, it would appear the vessel was being used as the test ship for everyone's on-again, off-again transwarp ability. The engineers must've burned through twenty-four other *Phoenix*-named ships to get here."

"Makes sense— Which is the least I can say about my own senses. You see, my Betazoid mind has been hearing high-pitched drilling noises ever since I beamed onto this Admiral-approved flying-shovel." She massaged her temple. "Ohhhh. I'm nearing full-Troi."

Iviok moved to another console. "At least you don't have to rebuild major components everyday of your life. On my Tier 1, *Centaur*-class starship, interstellar dust gets into the cracks and then wedges our hull plating right off into space."

"Clearly deserving," she added. "You command a ship that uses a crank to power up its transporters."

Pointing back, Iviok replied, "Hey! We save on environmental energy waste that way. Though, we do over-compensate in excess antimatter."

"I'm just going to pretend this conversation never happened," Reynolds said seconds before she was interrupted by a nearby console. It displayed her now released deflector controls. "Whoa. I think those black holes have been hitting the *Phoenix-X* with psionic energy??" She checked her data. "No wonder I've been considering putting my head into a food decompiler!"

The other Captain perked. "That would only take your hair, by the way." And then, "Hmm. Using that correlating data, we may be able to build a defense into our shields using a modulated delta wave frequency."

"This better work, unlike that one plan we had to hog-tie Captain Menrow."

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Samya entered the Conference room to find Menrow at a wall panel, fixing a main power circuit.

"Is it just me, or is there an entire deck floor completely cracked and broken?" she asked.

Menrow stepped away from his work. "Oh, yes, that's from Seifer's pet Horta Hatchling. You get used to the randomly warped gravity." He sighed. "Which is the least I can say about being in command of fellow-ranked officers."

"With all due respect, Captain, but I believe I should have been the one in command here." She stepped up. "I'm not susceptible to body-switching and I'm quicker at making decisions."

Rolling his eyes, Menrow answered, "Oh, please. You're reckless and have been self-involved ever since your sister went missing. You're probably looking for her right now!"

"How dare you?" she started seconds before an incoming hail from a Yridian information dealer came through the wall screen, indicating her search request for her sister garnered no results. "Well, can you blame me? What makes my own blood less relevant than Seifer's?"

Menrow gave in. "Now that I've had a chance to review all the stolen Forcas III trophies in this room, I'm certain nothing does. But, this is our current mission and we have an obligation to do what is right and utilize available sources to complete it."

"Huh," she paused after typing in the request onto the touch screen. "The Yridian is saying he did hear something about a Breen ship in the sector. I'm sending him a billion energy credits to tell us where. It's not much, but it's all I'm willing to part with."

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As the *Phoenix-X* changed course, Mayhem entered Sickbay, where McCary was accessing a console in the dark.

"Captain? I just came here to infect the EMH like I do on every ship I visit?" Mayhem entered slowly, trying to get a view of what McCary was doing.

Then, turning in shock, McCary revealed himself to be covered in random patches of fur, sticking out of his sleeves, tearing through the Odyssey uniform front and white shoulder cut. "Don't look at me!"

"By my programming god, some guy named Lester, the rumors of you turning into a tribble are true!?" Mayhem was taken aback.

Breathing heavy, McCary continued. "That's just the thing. We did reverse the transformation on ourselves and the crew of the I.K.S. *Rotog*, in time, with the cooperation of both ship's Doctors, resulting in minimal hair spread." He attempted to turn to address the hologram. "But ever since you beamed me onto this disease-drenched dirt-ship, psionic energy has been resequencing me all over again."

"Oh, ugh—!?" Mayhem began puking holographic numbers and mathematic symbols all over the floor as he took in the realization of cross-

cultural teamwork. "Working with Klingons? You organics disgust me!"

The now rainbow-colored-hairy one-quarter Klingon, three-quarter Human stepped toward Mayhem. "Tell me the truth. Were the Nibiru targeting the *Phoenix-X*? Is this what caused their Calibus VII disease to resurface?"

"Of course!" Mayhem held up his photonic arm in disgust-filled defense. "The purple matter may have settled the artificial black hole clusters from becoming erratic, but it wasn't enough to stop their psionic radiation."

Picking off loose pink fur, McCary realized, slowly but surely, "The Nibiru are causing the clusters and Seifer is going after them."

Then, a communiqué from the Bridge broke through. "*Menrow to all Captains. We've engaged... the Borg—I mean, the Darkseid.*"

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Dropping warp in the Qo'Nos sector, the *Prometheus*-class *Phoenix-X* approached the Breen *Chel Grett* warship *Darkseid*.

On the *Darkseid's* massively, smoky Bridge, Captain Seifer and his partially-deteriorated crew operated the vessel before a series of artificial black holes.

"Captain, how are we even still alive??? Also, we have the target in sights," Armond reported from tactical.

Kayl turned from her Operations console. "The canister is loaded. We'll only get one shot at this."

"Did anyone check out the Breen quarters? Even their beds are covered in environmental containers?" Doctor Lox questioned, perplexed. "They leave everything to the imagination."

Kugo entered the Bridge, "Engineering checks out as I expected—a complete nonsensical configuration. I touched nothing."

"Ah, you guys. After all our forced on-and-off bed-rest, it's good to be working with you again," Seifer sighed, truthfully.

Turning from helm, Ensign Dan asked, "Even me?"

"You're relieved!" the Captain yelled, upset.

Menrow's hail from the *Phoenix-X* broke in, and the screen clicked on, interrupting them. "*Your ship to Seifer. We know you've been severely affected by these clusters and we have a solution: Iviok has lined this ship's shields with a modulated delta-wave frequency. We know it works because it has stopped McCary's tribble-ing. That's a thing now.*"

"Whoa! The whole *Task Force Epsilon* team is here?" Captain Seifer reacted. "We never got along? Remember that Klingon troop we ambushed, only to turn all our weapons on each other instead? The troop just left us, laughing."

The other Captain sighed. "*You promised never to speak of that again! Besides, we figured out how to work together, like we were supposedly trained to do. I believe the activator was immediacy.*"

"Uh, you fell right into a reversal, is what you did. Well, it doesn't matter anyway. A ship modification is not enough as we're going to use blue matter to transform these clusters into a portal to the Nibiru." Then, chuckling, "Can you believe how easy it is to create matter and assign it a color? *Darkseid* out!"

Armond tapped at his controls, scanning the *Phoenix-X's* next actions. "Sir, they're preparing their own colored matter in response..... red!?"

"What? Those Cap-slacks really did overcome their inevitable, collective failure," Seifer bemused. Then, realizing, "They're going hit our blue matter with red matter and make purple matter!?"

Kayl replied, "That'll disable this cluster like the last one."

"Not if I can help it. We've been suffering through life without our LCs— oh, Lissepian Candies, to clarify— for far too long. Target the *Phoenix-X* and prepare the Breen Tom Paris'd energy dissipator."

Kugo turned from her controls. "It's ready."

"Sorry, *Epsilon*. You did good, but not Third Fleet-good. —Fire."

Seconds later, a white fizz of energy was shot out from the *Darkseid* and into the *Phoenix-X*, knocking all its systems offline, once again.

The Breen ship turned to the cluster of black holes and ejected a canister of blue matter into it, forcing the holes together and opening a large tunnel in space-time. The *Darkseid* then flew through, somehow circumventing all forms of spaghettification, gravitational lensing or loss of electrons.

TO BE CONCLUDED

## Nibiru, Part III

### Unofficial Literary Challenge #20

#### *Nibiru, Part III*

In the exhaust-filled, spark-flinging darkness of ship-interior-ness, Menrow, Reynolds, Iviok, Samya and McCary found themselves just waking off the floor, together, from simultaneous unconsciousness.

"Damn! We failed our self-given mission worse than Riker mounting an uncalculated bar stool," cursed Menrow.

Samya gripped her head as she sat up. "Please don't bring that up. Ever. Again."

"Our lack of visual is messing with our references. Let me get the light." Iviok felt around for a control panel in the dark.

But, instead, he flicked a switch which let out the floor beneath them. All five Captains fell through and out of the ship onto a red, grassy land: They were crashed on Planet Nibiru, in a forest, and the ship they were in was the Breen *Chel Grett* warship *Darkseid*!

"That wasn't the light," countered Reynolds. "And outer space has dirt now?"

A nearby shuffling sound was followed by Seifer's voice. "You're on an alien world, Reynolds. One, the likes you have never seen! I'm guessing. It's not like I can read your mind. Welcome to Nibiru!"

"Captain??" Samya, followed by the others, turned to behold a nearby area of forest where Seifer was caught in an elaborate trap.

Walking over, the group viewed that Seifer was being suspended above them by a complex system of primitive red bamboo-like sticks.

"After we went through the black hole portal, I realized Mayhem had transferred himself over to the *Darkseid's* Bridge," Seifer explained. "He must've beamed you guys over, last minute, to help stop me. Well, I took care of him."

Seifer revealed a mobile emitter in his left suspended-arm's palm.

"He actually stole this from *Voyager's* Doctor out of holographic competition. Typical Section 31! Am I right?"

Menrow's jaw dropped. "That's the second time he transported us!? And he's with Section 31!?"

"Oh, come on. Like you couldn't see through that pretentious elitism? He's like a message board user who nauseates from your writing any chance he gets," Seifer explained. "You see, Section 31 does whatever they want. It's they who have Geordi's VISOR."

Samya clutched her head. "This is too much to process. What is it *you* want out of all of this then?"

"I just want to negotiate the release of my crew's Calibus VII re-disease-ening. The Nibiru somehow reactivated it; they can stop it."

Iviok began examining the bamboo-like contraption. "Oh, they can do anything, can they? Like, capture Captain Seifer? At least now we have you, the same way the *Enterprise-D* was able to hold on to Doctor Tolian Soran."

"Maybe if we had built a defense against that dissipater instead of some pointless psionic shielding, we wouldn't be crashed on this planet right now," countered a hairy McCary.

Reynolds began massaging her temples from a resuming barrage high-pitched telepathic noise. "What do you mean? That's how we stopped you from going full Tribble in the first place!"

"The fault lies in our commanding officer. I should have been the one to lead us, my sibling-search notwithstanding," Samya turned to face Menrow.

Shaking his head, Menrow erupted. "You know what? You're all on a time-out! I want each of you to find a red tree and stand, facing it, to think about what you all have done!"

All five Captains began talking over each other in anger until their raised volume activated a mechanism on the trap, erupting a strange alien call out from a bamboo-like tube.

"It's the prophesied ones!" came an alien voice, freezing *Task Force Epsilon's* energized discussion. Its speaker, a Nibiru with white skin and black lines around his head, approached. "I am First Leader Nune and we have been calling to you through the Heavens!"

In no time, the group was surrounded by more Nibiru. They collectively deactivated the trap and let Seifer down to be free.

"These traps are for the untamed naked drakoulias. They eat the delicious flesh of anyone in the Red Forest," one of the other Nibiru explained. "My name is Cela and I am Second Leader."

Seifer was freed. "Your 'calling' has somehow reactivated a sickness in me. Who targets a starship with copious levels of psionic energy from a



planet anyway?"

"Oh, we do! Our psychic powers are amplified through the Heavens, and their Heavens' Heavens, eternal," Nune said while one of the other Nibiru played around with the mobile emitter. "And its use of the genetically-altering power of ones mind acts to reveal you as our God! We are all now the Great Birds of the Galaxy!"

Then, Mayhem was suddenly activated prompting Menrow to react in shock.

"Oh, for the many alien loves of James T. Kirk! Whoever the actual Great Bird is must be spinning in his bird grave."

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As the group was escorted to a small pre-industrial village, fashioned together in red structures, they came upon a giant crystal at the center of the town. There, several Nibiru Priests were knelt, ritualistically feeding psionic energy into it.

"This is all our fault," Menrow said to his team of four Captains while Seifer and Mayhem were drifted away by the locals. "If we could only maintain a work-together paradigm like we were supposed to via the reversal, we could have taken Seifer back to the *Darkseid* and out of here by now."

Samya sighed. "I hate to admit it, but Margarita-Head is right. What's more, is that we let Mayhem get the best of us, twice."

"Perhaps, instead of allowing fate or tropes to define us, we should define ourselves," Iviok suggested. "I accept that our group has a clichéd Captain's team hand-stack ritual before every mission."

As he held out his hand, waiting for the others to join him, everyone decided to just nod in awkward agreement instead.

"I can read that you are all not happy with circumstances at present." They were then approached by Cela, the Second Leader. "Only a small portion of my people have mental powers, and I use mine to survey social cliques."

Reynolds nodded. "As one should. But what's it to you, Stripe-Face?"

"I, too, do not believe we need a 'God'," Cela replied. "To me, there is no such thing, and what we witnessed over a century ago does not correlate to our definition of who we are now."

McCary was taken aback. "An atheist?? A pox on thee!"

"Yes," the Nibiru woman rolled her eyes. "Not all us Nibiru are as foolish as our head-tilting ancestors, just 151 years ago, when they gazed the saving of our world by an obese metal bubble-bird."

Menrow tapped his chin. "I kind of want to know what that is, but I also kind of don't. Also, can we leave on our own free will?"

"Yes, but your friend Seifer will likely be executed when he disavows being our God," Cela answered. "Our mental powers are highly developed, but only at sacrifice to our maturity levels."

Samya shrugged, contemplating it. "Well. I mean, he had a good run with those LCs that one time, right? Oh, Leola Crepes."

"And there is another problem," Cela continued. "Your non-mind holo-friend has gone somewhere with Nune, the First Leader. Nune seeks mortal power over all Nibiru Countries-- even the weird ones."

Iviok added, "We're two for two! Now Mayhem can do all the evil schemes he wants here. It's in his programming after all."

"You know what?" Menrow started. "You two are on a time-out! Go stand next to the psionic crystal!"

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Later, Menrow, Samya and McCary approached Seifer and a group of Nibiru, just outside the red forest. Seifer was preparing for a run.

"Captain, once you disavow your God-hood, the Nibiru will kill you," warned Menrow. "And, according to B'Elanna Torres, the correct afterlife is the Klingon one."

Seifer smirked. "Who in their right minds would disavow something like that? Also, are you going to join me in the chase ritual? It turns out, everything here is high-octane and adrenaline-running!"

"I haven't run since my Academy days. Twisted my ankle chasing mini-Q after mini-Q," McCary added, raising his tribble-fur-covered arm, as his body had resumed transformation.

Seifer looked at him. "You're weird. Well, anyway, *Task Force Epsilon* belongs to all of you now." He addressed the three. "If you could not-ruin her with Warp 10-salamandering or anything, that would be great." Then, interrupting himself, he added, "And, GO!"

"Didn't a Klingon named Menchez do that once?" Samya asked before realizing Seifer and the group of Nibiru jumped into a run for their lives through the red forest.

Menrow, McCary and Samya looked at each other in reacting-shock and then decided to run after them!

"Does-- my-- speaking-- in labored-- breaths--- constitute-- as 'done-to-death'--?" McCary asked during the sprint.

Menrow and Samya replied, "YES!"

As red trees whipped by their fields of vision, sounds of naked drakoulias could be heard all around them.

---

Reynolds and Iviok secretly followed the holographic virus, Mayhem, and the Nibiru leader, Nune, toward the tall volcano in the distance. Inside the hole, within the depths of the mountain's innards, it appeared as if an entire lava explosion was frozen and hardened in place.

"This is where we avoided death, oh great one," Nune said. "Our lives are renewed thanks to your Starfleet kind-- the Great Birds of the Galaxy!"

Mayhem agreed, as he carried a Breen device with him. "That's actually true since most of Starfleet is run by Aurelians now. Anyway, we must complete your renewal here with one of our own rituals, as reciprocation." And then, to add, "An eternal reciprocation..."

"Hold it right there, Mayhem," Reynolds called out as she and Iviok stepped around one of the many tall, hardened lava spews, to reveal themselves. "You're planning on destroying the planet!?"

The holographic virus double-taked. "Damn! How could that one self-indulgent line be my undoing? And to answer your question, Yes."

He took the time to explain everything.

"You see, a few months ago, the Nibiru began infusing the Vulcan sector with space-time psionics that initiated micro black holes, in an unwitting intent on terraforming half the quadrant into a shared space."

Iviok's jaw dropped. "That's when Seifer's diseasening started! Not that I'd know of such things."

"Precisely. They think they're merging and connecting with Heaven and even communicated with our telepaths so. But when I stopped the clusters with purple matter, I didn't suspect two more locations would arise: one in Romulan space's Azure sector, and one in Klingon space's Qo'noS sector. Section 31 sent me, your neighborhood hologram, a preprogrammed directive to stop the Nibiru by any means necessary. Since I'm also a virus, that means I distort that programming to any interpretation I see fit."

Reynolds grumbled in anger. "You know, we couldn't boot up the *Hijinx's* main computer for two weeks after you left us? We ended up replacing it with Undine organics!"

---

As Menrow, Samya, McCary, Seifer and the group of Nibiru reached the cliffs at the edge of the forest, Samya was busy kicking a naked drakoulias off her mouth-engulfed foot. Everyone else dismounted their own beasts, elegantly.

"You're supposed to ride them, Captain," repeated Menrow.

Samya finally kicked her naked drakoulias away from her. "I'll do it my way; you do it yours!"

*SPLASH!* Suddenly, a giant red-bamboo like structure arose from the ocean, revealing a makeshift, home-made imitation Federation starship.

"This is a part of their ritual. Using their eidetic memory, they reconstructed the obese metal bubble bird that saved them from an erupting volcano, long ago," Seifer explained.

On its side, was labeled U.S.S. *Enterprise*. And to that, everyone gaped in shock!

"Wait. What? Is that supposed to be a *Constitution*-class starship??" Menrow asked. "It looks like a swollen mash-up of fan-boy perversion? The nacelles make no sense whatsoever!"

Samya stared at it. "It's possible the Nibiru got the details wrong?"

"Or, perhaps we are in an alternate reality," McCary added. "Which is more likely after passing through a black hole? Think about it!"

Menrow began to realize the odds which McCary was playing. He quickly turned to Seifer. "This is utter madness! High-octane adrenaline-runs? Giant, bulgy Starfleet ships?? We are in an alternate reality!"

"I suspected as much when we entered that singularity in perfect form," said Seifer. "But then again, we don't have the same detailed understanding of black holes we used to back in the early 21st century."

Samya interrupted, taking a fighting stance. "That's it! I'm cutting our losses, and taking these Nibiru-abominations out while we still can. I used to kill a lot, but alternate reality murder doesn't count. Right? It's on a heavily edited wiki somewhere, I'm sure."

"No! We do this every time; rejecting some random trope or mishap. We have to stop that cycle and instead embrace their hokey alternate thing for what it is: A confusing nonsensical hack job full of rehash-- similar to *Task Force Epsilon*, if one were to bring it back home," Menrow said, before turning to the Nibiru. "We are no different than you. An imitation reality can be reality itself. Complete your final ritual."

The group of Nibiru nodded and began a mental communication with the elders around the crystal, back in town. A giant shockwave of psionic energy blasted out from the crystal and through everyone, causing Seifer's sickness to recede.

"You knew they were going to cure you," Menrow turned to Seifer in understanding. "You had no intention of remaining here as their God."

Seifer nodded. "I John Harriman'd it; as in, I faked it till I made it. Only, I was more successful." Then, "Unfortunately, the only way to stop my crew's transformation was for the Nibiru to ritualistically cancel out their own abilities. For you, that means no more new Nibiru-brand micro-black holes."

"And no more destroying of our world either!" came Nune's mixed-upset response while Reynolds and Iviok pushed out a defeated Mayhem, approaching the group.

Mayhem grumbled. "What? I can't take five minutes to info dump without some alien native and two Starfleet Captains foiling me? You know everyone's a Fleet Admiral now, don't you? That doesn't make sense!"

"We caught Mayhem trying to destroy the planet using a Breen warm fusion device," Iviok reported. "Nune, here, let the best of greed get a hold of him as he's been using all this for a second goal to foothold power over his neighboring countries."

The First Leader nodded, humbly. "It's a lesson I am the first of my kind to learn. But, without OP mental abilities, our primary goal, the search for the true Great Bird, literally or thematically, will be more difficult than ever."

"And, as for myself, well, I gleaned a lesson about the ire's of sentient technology," Iviok stated. "So, that may be a No from me on holographic equal rights. Just, No."

Seifer stepped around to acknowledge the new arrivals, and Nune's intentions. "Even an alternate reality existence can go too far with its crutches into our Prime timeline. Whatever crazy, non-canon antics your Starfleet gets into, here, they're who you should be forcing an encounter with."

He then stopped and looked at the over-sized, imitation alternate reality *Enterprise*. He began to feel sick to his stomach again.

"Ugh. So weird. How could they mess up something we so firmly established?" Seifer tapped his commbadge, quickly cutting off that thought. "Anyway, Seifer to crew. Seven to beam out!"

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Later, with the *Darkseid* repaired, the Breen *Chel Grett* warship re-entered the portal back to the Prime universe and towed the paralyzed *Phoenix-X* back to the Azure sector. There, the disabled starships *Crucial*, *Hijinx*, *Jenova*, *Dropzone* and *Tsunami* were rescued from their orbiting gravity conglomeration threat.

"Well, with everything you've done, it's unlikely Starfleet will put you back in command of *Task Force Epsilon* any time soon," Menrow said to Seifer as the group of Captains stood in the *Intrepid*-class U.S.S. *Crucial*'s briefing room.

Seifer nodded. "The price for my reset buttoning; a price I've paid before, only, this time, for less-selfish reasons. But, at least I've got two partly-working starships, and, like Sela, I didn't get arrested. That's fair, right?"

"Perhaps you should be the new task force commander, after all, Captain," Samya said, turning to Menrow, in response to Seifer. "A reality like what we just witnessed, or an over-the-top narrative, if you will, is not what I signed up for."

Then McCary spoke in a reassuring tone to her. "Captain Menrow will still need you by his side."

"Whoa!" reacted Reynolds as she and everyone turned their heads, for the first time, to behold a McCary who was now basically a fully transformed giant oval of multi-colored tribble fur.

McCary decided this gathering was the pristine opportunity he'd been waiting for, to make the announcement he was dreading for so long now. "Well, I suppose this is as good a time as any. Guys, I'm pregnant!"

Everyone looked at him in shock.

"Oh, yeah. That's the stuff," replied Seifer. "It's good to be back."