

The Tiloniam System

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The Tiloniam System

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Summary

"Sneaking in exploration during this war is like a drug these days. It's risky but oh does it feel so good." - Episode 1A: In the late 24th century, Commander Gotens is ambushed by the Dominion, prompting the support of several Starfleet ships.

Notes

Author's notes: This takes place in the late 24th century. My cousin and I began this as random RP chats, collecting them as episodes. Through the years they've been tweaked and edited and retconned. My best guess is the original of this was done sometime in 1996. I did another chatfic rewrite of this in 2007, and this specific rewrite incorporates both incarnations. This rewrite was done in December 2020.

Star Trek: Phoenix-X

"The Tiloniam System"

Somewhere, out in the far-off cosmos of the unknown, the Class 2 shuttle *Lime* chugged through the cold out-reaches of space while its two occupants, Gotens and Dan tackled the controls like two inexperienced high school students.

"So, say if this control panel were a lady, I'd slowly tap her buttons until her inertial dampeners were recalibrated. Then, boom! Warp speed baby," Dan bragged.

Night Gotens recoiled in disgust. "Ugh! Enough already! I have two hours of fan fiction reading to do. This writer supposedly copies the story and character types, but the difference is that there's an added fork."

"That's the worst thing I've ever heard."

The Commander held up his PADD. "Hey, writers nowadays don't create their own material. They add on to other people's." He sat up. "Now let's get back to work, data-collecting this system and so on."

"I finished an hour ago," the Ensign explained. "You know, if the Federation and the Cardassians would stop increasing their allies, we wouldn't have to data-collect these star systems."

Commander Night Gotens was taken aback. "Did I say you could state your opinion? No! In fact, I specifically said that you were to change your opinions to match my own!"

Meanwhile, the *Nebula*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix* trekked itself upon the vacuum of else-wise-space. Its Commanding officer sat diligently on the Bridge.

"Sir, are you okay?" Armond, a Human and the Tactical officer asked. "You seem to be squinting a lot."

Daniel adjusted his posture. "Yes, I'm quite fine, Lieutenant. Thanks for your concern. If you must know, I was merely admiring space itself

and the universe as a whole."

"I completely understand, Admiral. Just the other day I was saying to GoyCho that space was the final frontier and that these were the voyages of the starship— Well, I don't want to bore you with all the details."

But before they could go on, Commander Avery stepped off the turbolift. "What's going on here? Are you guys socializing? We have a command structure for a reason!"

"Oh, lighten up, Avery," Daniel dismissed. "You need a girlfriend or something."

Back on the shuttle, Gotens and Ensign Dan found themselves slap-fighting for the helm controls.

"We're not leaving until you admit you had a good time with your old Commander!"

Ensign Dan struggled mid-combat. "But, I haven't. We serve aboard the U.S.S. *Xena* and I do all these ship chores so that I can finally get that promotion, but you never give it to me!"

"Aww. I can sense the denial in your words," Gotens stopped. "Okay, we can go now."

As the shuttle *Lime* warped out of there, the *Phoenix* suddenly picked them up on sensors.

"They've just gone to warp," Armond reported.

Daniel perked. "What? How rude. Hail them!" After a communications beep, he began, "You think you can escape from me? My ship is the fastest in the fleet. If you don't respond, I will have to ask you to lower your shields, and board your little shuttlecraft."

As the shuttle received the hail, the two officers found a lag in communications before dropping warp and being overtaken by the *Nebula*-class starship.

"I recognize that voice," Gotens recalled. "I met him years ago in a previous Trill host. He's really friendly and understanding."

When the *Phoenix* loomed over their windows, Daniel appeared on screen. "*How come you ignored my hail? We detected no malfunction in communications.*" And then, "*Security, I want your men to be ready to board that shuttle.*"

"Oh. No, wait. The opposite of that."

Meanwhile, the *Galaxy*-class U.S.S. *Xena* drifted listlessly through the empty confines of space. Its Captain paced the Bridge.

"Where are those two? That Ensign has my favourite travel mug! You know, the one with the coffee nebula that appears when it heats up?"

Her Tactical officer, Onergera, tapped at the controls. "They get the Tiloniam system mapping mission, while we get patrol."

"Sneaking in exploration during this war is like a drug these days, it's risky but, oh does it feel so good," Captain Aeris shuddered. "As long as we don't get any surprises, we'll be good."

An alert beeping on Onergera's console snapped them out of it. "Captain, I'm receiving a distress signal from the U.S.S. *Ixion*. A fleet of Jem'Hadar attack cruisers is heading towards the location of the shuttlecraft!"

"What!? I said no surprises!"

In the Tiloniam system, several Jem'Hadar attack ships dropped warp and opened fire upon the *Phoenix*. Daniel quickly beamed Gotens and the Ensign aboard and raised shields.

"Okay. Let's prepare battle," Daniel gloomed before witnessing the shuttle exploding from fire. "Wow. More rudeness."

Avery turned to him. "The only coarseness here is yours, Admiral. I've received intel about you in a way that decides I'll be taking command."

"Now's not the time for one of your posturing dance sessions, Commander. Remember that waltz for a promotion and you kept stepping on my feet?"

The Human pointed accusingly. "I mean I intend mutiny! For far too long has the crew been silent about the truth of what you are." And then,

"A Changeling!"

"Well, I never," Daniel clutched his chest, defensively.

But a crescendo of an experimental torpedo hit and a console explosion suddenly knocked Avery to the floor. "Shields down to 10 percent!" Armond reported.

"Engineering to Bridge. The warp core is experiencing multi-fluctuations all of a sudden. The core is emitting a pink glow."

The operations officer Kayl shrugged. "I like pink."

As the *Xena* and *Ixion* dropped warp to join the fight, the head Vorta and Jem'Hadar First, aboard the Jem'Hadar lead ship *Lyngon-938*, checked on the status of everything.

"The experimental J3 torpedo seems to be launching just fine. Although, it should have destroyed the *Phoenix*," reported First Mata'Katan.

The Vorta, Feylou, stepped over. "The Dominion will fix it. Then it will exact vengeance upon the Federation. Oh, how I loathe and despise that white-picket fence organization."

"Why do we not just annihilate them and be rid of them?"

Feylou looked at him. "Right??"

"Listen, Vorta master. There is something I must confess I have been finding myself thinking about lately. They are not thoughts I am proud of. What if we, the Dominion, just learned to get along with the Federation? I'm sure we could, you know, work out some treaties, or perhaps a peace?"

The shorter alien spat. "You fool! You've been in the Alpha Quadrant too long! Someone shoot him quickly!" He watched as Third Vak'Natak pulled out a polaron compression pistol and blasted a purple energy bolt into the First's chest. "Now you will be the First."

"But, what about Second Lat'Takteka?"

Feylou nodded. "I'll be pitting you two to a death match. Then we will complete our suicide mission! Priorities."

Meanwhile, as several Jem'Hadar attack ships changed course for the sun, the Captain of the U.S.S. *Ixion* was prompted to set its sights on their actions.

"It looks like those clone babies are firing modified torpedoes into the Tiloniam star," Nadine reported from tactical.

Wasyati turned. "There's only one conceivable result from any firing of any modified anything into any star: Boomy-boom boom!"

"How are we going to assist the population of the inhabited planet in this system?" Grot asked from the helm. "Assuming we're on that end of the Starfleet spectrum."

Dale popped up from a console. "We could assist those transport ships in its orbit by boosting their transporters!"

"Punch it!" Wasyati ordered. "That's a new thing I hope catches on."

As the *Ixion* warp-jumped within the system, the crew on the *Phoenix* worked tirelessly to combat who was left while finding a workaround for the J3 torpedoes.

"Captain. I've been studying the effects of these experimental weapons and I believe they're repellant to nadiion particles," Armond explained. "If we can reroute phaser energy into the shields, then any torpedo coming this way would be ricocheted. Fantastically."

Daniel nodded. "Seeing how that is techno-babble, then you're probably right. Make it so!"

"Engineering to Bridge. The warp core is overloading. We have to eject??"

The Admiral sat up. "Of course! The pink warp core is a result of matter/anti-matter infection! Techno-babble!"

"Yeah, I'm done with pink," Kayl bookended.

The circular hatch slid open from under the *Phoenix*, jettisoning its reaction chamber while a veritable onslaught of Starfleet ingenuity by Armond led the ship to begin ricocheting J3 torpedoes left and right, hitting attack ship after attack ship.

The *Xena* destroyed a besieging Jem'Hadar attacker and turned its sights on the *Phoenix* as the Tiloniam star began to bulge and erupt in the background.

"Is it just me or is it getting really hot in this star system? Also, poor Jem'Hadar. Does no one care about them?" Lieutenant Commander Wing teared up.

Aeris snapped. "They went to war with us! Never mind. Is that the *Phoenix*? They look badly damaged." The crew observed as a Jem'Hadar ship exploded near Daniel's ship.

"Affirmative," Wing scanned. "Their warp core has been deep-sixed and their shields are down from some over-the-top Starfleet-jury-rigged-backwarding."

The Captain stood. "As we do. Like, every time. Beam everyone over before that star goes explodey bam-bam! Damn. Language gets thin during high-stakes action."

The last transports around Tiloniam III warped away with the *Ixion* alike as the star's unnatural, accelerated shockwave moved to envelop everything in the system.

A monitor in Admiral Vincent Cloud's office aboard Starbase 55 displayed the *Xena* beaming all crew off the *Phoenix* and warping out of there. An ominous Admiral Theseus reviewing a PADD was joined by an unobtrusive Cloud and Captain Cid.

"This is it," Theseus realized. "The first day of a new era."

Cloud squinted. "What are you talking about? All that top-secret tech talk from the secret meetings you keep having in here? How does that relate to the crew of the *Phoenix*? Is this line of questioning some kind of backdoor connection to be realized at a later date?"

"Guards, by order of Starfleet Command, escort Admiral Cloud to Sickbay."

Two security officers apprehended the over-bearing Human Admiral in his own office, dragging him away. "What!?! No! Let go of me!"

"To have his memory erased."

Cid glanced over, unphased. "While the *Phoenix* has been in service, we've secretly tested and burned at least twenty-four *Phoenix*-named ships in a short time span. The latest one has shown the most non-explodey tendencies." He paused. "You're going to deploy the *Phoenix-X*?"

"Affirmative. Contact that Admiral Daniel, or should I say, Captain Daniel? I'm not demoting him. Starfleet Command is." Theseus smirked. "You'll think of a reason. Muahahahaha!"

"Captain's log, Stardate 51599.7: The ship has been damaged horribly! But instead of waiting for repairs, I am to take command of the latest in a line of fatal transwarp-project ships coincidentally of the same name. The Starfleet naming guy was out of office."

With the *Xena* and the newly-launched *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* docked at Deep Space 9, Commander Gotens joined Captain Aeris and an accumulating crew on the Promenade.

"So, I'm getting transferred to the new ship? But I didn't do anything that whole conflict?" Gotens queried after the fact. "I literally got lost and ended up in Shipping and Receiving."

Aeris shrugged. "They probably concluded your lack of action would free up room to keep an eye on Daniel."

"Well, I do excel at nothing," Gotens realized. "Except for that one time. What I'm saying is, I'm proud to have been under your slacker-enabling command."

She smiled before they both turned to see Captain Daniel take his place over a pedestal to address the crew.

"Remans! Lend me your ears," he started. "Sorry, that's a holodeck thing for later. I mean, greetings. I've just received a message from Starfleet. Apparently, I've been too rash and pushy as an Admiral of late."

Ensign Dan chimed in. "This isn't the only time Daniel's gone hot. The Federation is upset of him."

"You're relieved of duty!"

The Ensign sputtered. "But I'm not on duty?"

"Then," Daniel calculated. "When you go on duty, you'll be relieved!" He next composed himself. "As I was saying. The *Phoenix-X* is the accumulation of a classified project collecting and testing new tech, which we are now a part of. Our recent Dominion interaction has made us necessary, and possibly other hidden reasons."

Kayl raised her hand. "What about the Changeling thing that only a select few of us know about? Is it true you're not being jailed and flogged?"

"Yeah, Lieutenant," Daniel deadpanned. "It's called tolerance. We don't discriminate based on species in the future."

Ensign Dan raised his own hand. "But doesn't the fact you're from our wartime enemy raise a bunch of red flags and cause more questions than ___"

"No! You're relieved!" Daniel snapped.

As the Ensign stomped off, frustrated, and everyone else returned to talking excitedly amongst themselves about their new assignment, Gotens finally observed a moment of peace from the war. His reverie was quickly dashed when Commander Avery stepped over.

"So, you're the pathetic one that took my place?" Avery scoured. "I'll be watching you, Gotens. When I'm done with you, your career in Starfleet will be forgotten."

Gotens opened his arms as Avery walked away. "Can't scare a slacker, Avery. Failure is our wheelhouse. If I have any say, the *Phoenix-X* is going to be synonymous with failure! We'll be failing all the time! Yeah!"

"He's gone," Daniel walked over. "Want to mash up your stoner style with an Orwellian marshal law type of command?"

The Commander shook his hand. "Yes! We'll switch between them like Good Cop/Lazy Cop. Sir, I think this is going to be the start of a beautiful codependency."

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