

## Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Record

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## Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Record

by [Hawku](#)

### Summary

"That was clearly dark for dark-sakes and we were punished by proximity." - Trek BBS 7, January/February 2023 Challenge: In the late 24th century, Commander Seifer of the U.S.S. Phoenix-X discovers his crew is abandoning ship due to stagnant rank progression.

### Notes

Author's notes: This was written as part of the Trek BBS January/February 2023 Challenge and takes place in the late 24th century.

January/February 2023 Challenge: Pets. Any Star Trek series, era, canon, non-canon, ships, crews or characters welcome.

### *Trek BBS: January/February 2023 Challenge*

"Pets: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Record"

The *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* drifted, seamlessly through space, with no explanation nor justification whatsoever. Commander Night Seifer and Doctor Lox took to the corridors until they found themselves in the Cargo Bay where the interim senior staff was busy stuffing various backpacks, duffle bags and moving boxes.

"So, the inter-ship Talaxian news was, for once, actually worth listening to, huh?" Seifer sputtered in confirmation. "You're all leaving the *Phoenix-X* for your other postings! Perhaps the U.S.S. *Titan* or the U.S.S. *Enterprise* then?"

Kugo dropped her bags for a moment. "Commander, do you even know what letter the *Titan* or the *Enterprise* is on right now?"

"Probably A or F, or something. Honestly, we're so far ahead, all other ships are babies to me," Seifer admitted. "But I never expected to be abandoned by the progress-partners who helped maintain said amplitude in the first place!"

Armond stood up from his packing. "Well, you should have, sir. You keep calling us back to this ship for the exact same stations, in the exact same ranks, for the exact same no-recognition/no-praise! The crew of the *Stargazer* keeps saying our existence breaks Starfleet canon because we haven't ranked-up since the Dominion war."

"Oh, those were the days," Kayl lilted. "Jem'Hadar with constant identity issues, Bajorans teaching Cardassians how to rebel? The irony was priceless. Also, how similar-looking was Benjamin Sisko's father to 23rd century Admiral Cartwright? Anyone?"

Seifer face-palmed. "Alright, fine. Things have gotten a little stale, I admit. We all seem to be trapped in a Typhon Expanse-style time-loop while other crews on other ships have promotions every seven seasons or so." And then, "Oh, 'seasons' is another word for years in the command circles. Upper-level lingo. You wouldn't understand."

"That's very syndication-worthy, Commander. But what's worse is that every time this staff is up for rank advancement, an apparent crew transgression always, always prevents us from unlocking said achievement unlocks," Red added. "And I'm not even in Starfleet."

Ensign Dan took a stand, finally. "Yeah, and all my relieves-of-duty have flooded my record with red flags!"

"You're relieved!" countered Seifer. After he watched the Ensign exit, he took a breath and re-addressed the others. "Look. I hear you. But Starfleet/Klingon bureaucracy necessitates humanoid sluggards. Besides, that first transgression was our fault anyway."

Everyone hesitated in an attempt to recall.

"The Typhon Pact? We diverged into the *Destiny*-timeline during an umpteenth Borg incursion and emboldened them to build a horrible metallic monstrosity that was their *Frontier*-class Deep Space 9 (II) rebuild," reminded Commander Seifer.

Kayl shuddered in sudden memory of that high school-level team building exercise. "Oh, yeah. That should be the last time we design anything as a group. Just thinking about those X-Y-Z rings still gives me vertigo."

"Yes, but that ridiculousness remained contained to an alternate timeline," re-established Kugo. "If Spock traded universes and had high-octane adventures with slightly different and younger versions of his crew, vetted by him as if they looked anything alike, no one would ask questions."

Seifer did a double-take at that concept. "Uh, the subspace message boards would be lit and who's to say that didn't happen?" Also, "Besides, what about our second transgression? Oh, how I count the computer purges."

Everyone furrowed their brows in their shared failed attempts at specificity.

"When we covertly helped those two androids make first contact with the U.S.S. *Ibn Majid*?" Seifer queried of their mental databanks.

Armond snapped his fingers. "Right! It led to the *Majid*'s Captain black-flag shooting them and himself in the most contrived way possible."

"That was clearly dark for dark sakes and we were punished by proximity in an effort to stop us from adopting a dark style of episodic situations," Red added.

Seifer gestured. "Point being, it's our fault we're as stagnant as Geordi's sex life, Ash Tyler's vocal range or a bunch of rando kids abandoning childhood to operate a proto-warp drive."

"This crew has kept its youth, anyway," Doctor Lox reminded. "By the various Son'a face-stretchers, cellular regeneration entertainment chambers and basic time travel mixed with Spock's-brain-style brain-exchanges."

Armond rolled his eyes at the old crank. "And you're any different? You've been hypo-spraying your age back to McCoy-elderly every week!"

"If anything, our longevity elicits the allure of consistency to outsiders," Seifer reassured. "It's the *Phoenix-X* forever and ever, for all time. Always and more, with additional prepaid minutes on top of that. Second star to the right and straight on to interminability!"

Kugo's travel PADD suddenly beeped a completed hack before she checked it and interjected, "Wait. It is terminable! This says that Commander Seifer broke invariability by taking part in a remote intern program with Admiral Theseus on fleet reassignments!"

"Didn't that guy die?" Red queried. "Or at least get boot-faced off a cliff by the Klingon version of curly-haired Kirk? Kor, perhaps, before he went bug-eyed?"

Seifer deadpanned. "He, a lot of things in the vein of classic Badmirals. But all I remember doing for him was implement a ship coordination algorithm to Picard and Riker's upcoming Romulan stand-off at Planet Coppelius."

"Well, said stand-off is actually happening at this very moment, and reports say the *Phoenix-X* has diverted nothing but *Inquiry*-class after *Inquiry*-class starships to them, enabling a copy-paste fest of boundless repetition!" Kugo revealed, thrusting the PADD results into his hands.

The Commander looked it over in shared shock. "What?? But I based the algorithm on my clone sensibilities and that of the U.S.S. *Zheng He*? Ohhhh." And then, to explain, "Being a joined Trill and a clone is how I stayed young."

"Aha!" Armond j'accused. "You're the lead bungle to our collective follies."

Seifer continued reading the evidence as confirmation. "How'd any of us get through the Academy? But, you're right. I was careless and I've now proven that it's my fault we can't maintain successful perpetuity." He looked away. "I let you all down."

"Sometimes people like to keep a good thing going, even if that means running it stale and into the bottom of some kind of metaphorical breadbasket," Kugo capitulated. "Universal matter is the bread."

Kayl furrowed her brow. "We weren't exactly Red Angels ourselves, Commander. This isn't all you. Perhaps it's better we all go back to our other postings after all. The *Voyager* Museum is expecting a lot of us on its actionless Bridge."

Lox began opening a bunch of his crates in a concession of communal verdict. "Seeing as they are, you should know I was going to chaotically discharge these lower life forms unto the decks in celebration of the *Phoenix-X*'s 25th anniversary. But since said-vessel has fallen into trendy distaste, I guess they're sehlat food now."

Everyone watched as he released a smorgasbord of Beagle and Pitbull puppies, American short-hair orange tabby kittens, *Lycosa* tarantulas and Bajoran palukoos.

"Yeah, my alt-Genesis Device/multi-creature amalgamator from the last thing fizzled out and sputtered its corrugated tube residual animal reserve the following week," Lox explained to a room full of blanks. "Look. We either read the thread of our things or we all just go with the flow."

All staff suddenly began to burst in excitement! They then started choosing and collecting their own pets: Armond, a Pit bull, Kugo, a tarantula, Red, a palukoo, Kayl, a tabby, and Seifer found himself scoping out a Beagle. "They are really cute!" Seifer admitted before addressing his capture. "I'm going to feed you so many illegal sliced cheeses."

"Screw the other postings," announced Kayl. "I'm staying here and teaching this cat how to open doors, jump on tables and change genders. Also, how to annoy Klingons."

Red growled his Klingon teeth instinctively at it before turning to his palukoo arachnid. "A lesser species would consume you. But you will become a great warrior."

"I will stay as well," Kugo admitted as her own arachnid crawled onto her shoulders. "Others may classify this as a wolf spider, but we will fight them."

Armond was kneeling and petting his new Pitbull, enthusiastically, before noticing the looks from the others. He stopped. "Well, I suppose the answer is clear. We have to stay for at least a week or so to contend with any unfair stigmas against our pet breeds. Pitbulls have grown a reputation as party dogs by the 24th century."

"So, pets, huh?" Seifer ascertained while picking up his Beagle. "That's our big third rank-stopper? Well, alright then." He then looked to everyone else. "We may be inhibited by our own operational shortcomings, but that doesn't extend to our familial corona. Translation: We make sense to us from a self-contained/tunnel-vision point of view."

Lox closed his containers. "At that, shall we all get our rabies shots, then? None of these creatures have been vaccinated, de-venomized nor un-plucked of fleas and severe disease."

"That would be agreeable, Doctor. Thank you," Commander Seifer conceded in shared interest with the others before everyone dumped-out their own duffle bags and packs of personal belongings, sat their new fur babies inside and carried them along out into the corridors to go to Sickbay.

After the coast was clear and the excess pets ran wild into the corridors to find new owners, the Commander and his new Beagle took notice of the nearby wall-screen showing the long-range results of the Romulan force disengaging from the Starfleet copy-paste fleet at Coppelius for merely being faced with unadulterated redundancy.

"Ah!" Seifer recoiled before reflexively shutting it off as fast as he could. It was clear no one associated with the U.S.S. *Phoenix-X* would rank up due to this agrarian blunder, but the pet thing would be easier to digest. "Let's pretend that never happened." He cuddled his new friend and left.

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