

STAR TREK - LEGACY -

"Empire of Dust"

EPISODE 1.0D

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Fade In.

EXT. SPACE

The Drift appears as a gray cloud against the black backdrop of space. Dim and diffuse, it is massive yet elusive. The eye wanders off it for lack of contours to follow and the contrast between the surrounding darkness and the massive dust cloud is so slight it takes a staunch effort of concentration to see it at all.

We PULL BACK to reveal...

INT. BIRD OF PREY - BRIDGE

...we're looking at the main view screen of a Romulan Bird of Prey. The bridge has a typical layout with Romulan style controls and interfaces.

The Romulan Subcommander, TITH sits in the center chair. A typical looking Romulan female. She holds a cup in her hands, watching on the view screen as the ship gets closer to the Drift. At a nearby console a young male Romulan looks up, BINAL.

TACTICAL OFFICER BINAL
A dense deposit of tetryons,
Subcommander.

SUBCOMMANDER TITH
Satisfying news.

BINAL
High Command will want to hear
from us.

TITH
(coldly)
Shocking notion.

BINAL
...This Drift extends beyond
sensor range. We could follow
and survey its extremities for
density and cartography.

Tith sips at a dark drink in the delicate cup. Pink steam rises off the surface of the liquid while frost etches the cup. She stares intently at the viewer.

TITH
So much wealth, Binal.
(to Bi'Nali)
And here it is just laying around
for us.

BINAL
The Corporation will be grateful.

TITH
(bitterly dismissive)
As will Senator Yiatoch, no
doubt. The proper incentives
will see this place exploited
soon enough.

She sips her drink again, then places it down on a nearby
table.

TITH (CONT'D)
(purring)
Conduct your survey, Binal.
Those tetryons may have drifted
here since the beginning, but
Romulus is impatient to have them
all.

BINAL
Helm, change heading to parallel
the long axis of the Drift.

EXT. BIRD OF PREY - SPACE

We watch as the Bird of Prey changes direction and flies
along the diffuse cloud.

INT. BIRD OF PREY - BRIDGE

As before.

BINAL
Tetryon density is increasing.
I'm seeing an increase in latent
energy of the particles as well,
Subcommander.

TITH
What are you suggesting?

BINAL
We may be approaching a source.

TITH
(quietly thoughtful)
Indeed! Fascinating potential if
you're right. The Senator may
deem it an auspicious enough a
phenomena to annex this vacant
sector for the Empire.

BINAL

If no one claims it already.

TITH

(dismissive)

I doubt such details will trouble his decision.

The bridge begins to shake. Sound is languid in the charged air of the bridge so the small, sharp noise of Tith's cup breaking against the floor sounds incredibly brittle and harsh.

BINAL

(off console)

We just passed through a subspace eddy. It appears there is a tear in the curvature of space directly into subspace inside the drift.

TITH

(annoyed)

Why didn't you detect that earlier?

BINAL

It opened up just before the eddy struck us. I'm detecting a massive concentration of tetryons flowing out of the rift.

TITH

This would be the source you were speaking of?

BINAL

It would appear so.

TITH

What is the quality and quantity of tetryons emanating from this source?

BINAL

(beat; off console)

Reactor grade TTY-702: I detect...

HELM OFFICER

(shocked)

Is that possible?

BINAL

It's off the meters. There is at least fifteen solar masses worth of pure TTY-702 within a light year of this location.

TITH

Does that include the vein we followed to get here?

BINAL

No. That was TTY-731. The reactor grade material is all within the sweep of our sensors at the present time.

TITH

(crafty)
How lovely.

BINAL

(smiling)
It would be a shame if this lode were discovered by another firm.

TITH

Indeed it would. Bidding for this contract in the Senate would rival the Quaath strike on the Rim Frontier.

She turns to Communication officer, Uzbek.

TITH (CONT'D)

Wouldn't it?

UZBEK

The bid for that contract was on TTY-731. They must refine the tetryons before market it. I am unaware of any sources of naturally occurring reactor grade material.

TITH

There isn't any....What a fortunate freak of the cosmos for us.

BINAL

There's enough here to outfit the combined Fleets for centuries.

TITH

That won't make Senator Algrath happy. A find like this will set singularity research back indefinitely.

BINAL

(snide)

Singularity research has enough setbacks without this for competition. I understand an entire lab, planetoid and all, was destroyed last year.

TITH

(dismissive)

And they tell us this technology will "Mature" with time.

BINAL

Algrath would put in a hansom bid for this strike.

TITH

He must if he intends to remain solvent afterward. Whoever controls this source of tetryons will shape the Empire for the next decade at least.

She turns to Uzbek.

TITH (CONT'D)

Report back to High Command on the progress of the survey. Tell them we have found an extensive strike and... Wait! I'll file the report... Binal, if you need me I will be in my quarters.

She walks from the room.

UZBEK

(to Binal)

Lieutenant, should I send a survey report to Senator Yiatoch?

BINAL

(coldly thoughtful)

No, but send one to the Chamberlain Speaker.

He adds a note of bitter sarcasm.

BINAL (CONT'D)

This is worthy of the whole Senate floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - THE DRIFT - MONTHS LATER

Many months have past since the last scene. A vast space station occupies the space in front of the mysterious Drift.

Clouds of Romulan Birds of Prey drop out of cloak and begin buzzing about the station like a swarm of fat bees. They spread out and fly along the Drift followed by cargo harvesters.

INT. ROMULAN STATION - STATION CONTROL

Station Control is a spherical room encompassing many levels. Imagine the lobby of Lloyds of London with a Romulan twist.

One wall fifteen meters high is nothing but an open viewing portal to the drift. The centerpiece of the room is a sculpture in yellow reactor light designed to resemble Romulus cast in liquid gold.

INT. ROMULAN STATION - OFFICE

We find Binal, now a COMMANDER, Senator TEEK an elderly Romulan man Director ALGRATH, a mid-aged Romulan in civilian garb.

BINAL

There it is, Senator: the future
of the Empire.

SENATOR TEEK

I am impressed to see it before
me... Commander. It is gratifying
to see your claims were not
exaggerated.

DIRECTOR ALGRATH

(angry)
We should proceed.

TEEK

(indulgent)
No need to rush things, Algrath.
We can wait until Subcommander
Tith informs us she's ready.

ALGRATH

(angry)
This is a waste of resources,
Teek, and you know it! Even this
vein will give out in...

TEEK

(haughty)

That's "Senator Teek," Algrath. Don't make me remind you of your manners in the new order of things.

ALGRATH

(sullen)

I agreed to manage this project to insure the minimum of waste, Senator Teek. If I allowed you and Commander Binal free reign, this strike would be squandered in short order.

TEEK

(airily)

A common enough cry we hear from our critics, Algrath. Critics, I might add, you stirred up before you were voted out.

ALGRATH

You know I'm right, Senator.

TEEK

(flatly)

Then shoulder the burden of public relations for a time, give me an Empire saturated with tetryons, and later on I'll shift your employment back to all that troublesome research you're so insistent we need.

ALGRATH

Singularity power will push us into the next century. We're already developing the next generation of Cloaking Devices based on the technology. Give me the resources now, and I could refit the entire Fleet in twenty years.

TEEK

Ever the optimist, Algrath. I must confess it's always been a facet of your character I've admired.

ALGRATH

Then you should be listening to me, Senator.

(MORE)

ALGRATH (cont'd)

Abandon this tetryon technology before the Empire is rendered obsolete by the Klingons and the Federation.

BINAL

We have already received reports that the Federation's flagship has been heavily damaged by a mere energy fluctuation in space. They would appear to be somewhat clumsy with the so called "advances" you described.

Algrath is about to speak when Teek smoothly interrupts him.

TEEK

(cheerfully)

Well said, Commander. I have it on good authority much of their fleet is of a defensive nature since all the new technology they've introduced into their cruisers is so problematic.

BINAL

(scoffs)

Any good defense is vulnerable to a strong offence. With the resources of this drift we could crush them by this time next year.

TEEK

(laughs)

You belong in the Klingon sector, Commander. That kind of aggressive spirit would overwhelm the Federation in short order. But for now would you check on the status of the ceremony? I'd like a private word with Director Algrath.

BINAL

Of course, Senator.

He walks from the room. Teek waits for the door to close before he allows his cheerful smile to falter.

TEEK

(grim)

They're getting younger and more aggressive every year.

ALGRATH

Fools like him will be the death
of us.

TEEK

(angrily)

Fools like him are all we have!
Next time watch what you say in
front of the officers!

ALGRATH

I haven't misstated a single word
so far.

TEEK

Don't start this argument again,
Algrath! You know what's at
stake.

ALGRATH

I presented a comprehensive plan
to refit the Fleet without
risking the security of our
frontiers, and your faction
stonewalled it in favor of this
outdated energy source.

TEEK

The alternative you presented is
immature. We need power now
before the Federation and the
Klingons become a cohesive power
against us.

ALGRATH

The Klingons are crippled by that
Praxis incident a few years ago.
The resources the Federation is
shunting their way can't become
offensive any time soon. Now is
the time to rebuild before they
become integrated.

TEEK

And what about the other threat?

Algrath Stares levelly at Teek for a long moment.

ALGRATH

We can keep them content.

TEEK

You don't know that!

ALGRATH

The military won't attempt a
coup.

(MORE)

ALGRATH (cont'd)

We eliminated all the demagogues during the last attempt and shifted control to the Senate.

TEEK

The information I've seen would disagree with you.

ALGRATH

Senator, I was on the Senate floor while they tried to storm the chambers. Even the Patricians agree there was no danger.

TEEK

A strange claim for a man in your current position. It would seem they feel a lingering disquiet over the matter.

ALGRATH

You had me and Yiatoch ousted, Teek. I imagine a great many bribes will be processed across my desk before long to pay for that move.

TEEK

(smug)
"Bribes" is such an ugly word, Algrath.

ALGRATH

(mutters)
So be it!

TEEK

Commerce assumes many misleading guises, Director Algrath. I would think a former Senator would recognize the distinction.

ALGRATH

Don't sidetrack the issue, Senator. The Fleets are ageing. The crews are dissatisfied. They can look across to the Federation and see technology designed to counter their equipment and tactics, and all we have to offer them is large quantities of outdated ships, weapons, and suffocating regulations.

TEEK

Those regulations are unavoidable if the government is to survive into the coming war.

ALGRATH

Did you hear that man a minute ago? He thought the Enterprise ran into a simple fluctuation in space! Our Heavy Cruisers would have been crushed under that kind of strain! The first time he faces one of their new ships he'll know just how thick our blanket of propaganda is.

TEEK

And you're suggesting what?

ALGRATH

Refit the fleet with singularity power to deter aggression instead of building up outdated Fleets to defend against a combined Federation-Klingon invasion.

TEEK

(dismissive)

Short-sighted and flawed thinking as ever, Algrath. I wonder how the Empire ever survived your influence on the Senate floor.

The door opens and Binal walks back in.

BINAL

The ships are in position, Senator.

TEEK

Splendid! Proceed with the ceremony.

Binal waves a hand at a subordinate who marches from the room.

EXT. SPACE

Birds of Prey begin to converge around the Station, preparing for the ceremony.

We FOCUS on one of the closest ones, the Glave.

INT. GLAVE - BRIDGE

We find Tith, who sits in her command chair watching the display with mild contempt.

TITH

As if this is necessary!

EXT. SPACE

Birds of Prey fire torpedoes into the drift, not to destroy it, but to backlight it. The diffuse cloud of dust is suddenly lit like a thunderhead and glows green.

The true scale of the Drift is exposed for all to see, and the massive Romulan force of ships is reduced to mere specks next to this enormous, green cloud that spans the horizon for light years like a huge billowing wall.

Harvesters begin to dive into the cloud in practiced unison. They seem to troll along the surface of the backlit cloud for an instant before their hoppers become full and they must make their way back to the station.

INT. GLAVE - BRIDGE

As before. The bridge crew watch the ceremony on the viewer.

TITH

(bitter)

Look at them! The deposit is so rich they are filled to overflowing in less time than it takes to make it back to the station.

HELM OFFICER

Someone will make his entire family wealthy for the next millennia today.

TITH

(sullen)

While others are ruined for all time.

INT. ROMULAN STATION - OFFICE

Algrath watches on a monitor as tetryons begin to flow into large pressurized tanks monitored by technicians. Teek sits in front of the large window watching the tanks fill on the outer arms of the station.

ALGRATH

Well it would seem the initial survey was not exaggerated. Pure, industrial grade tetryons. Not so much as a stray photon we can't use. The refinery department may have to stand down and tend to shipping all this out to Romulus.

TEEK

Impressive. I suppose your reservations are somewhat mollified, Director?

ALGRATH

You aren't listening, Senator. This may be a prime source, but...

There's a buzz on his desk and Algrath turns to see it.

ALGRATH

The Drift is distorting.

TEEK

I imagine so. The amount one hopper carries is quite large I've been told.

ALGRATH

That's not it. The Drift is expanding.

TEEK

Perhaps the plasma torpedoes blew some of the drift this way. I'll order the ships to fire another volley over the Drift to stabilize it.

EXT. SPACE

The Birds of Prey fire in unison again. This time the detonations occur over the cloud instead of inside it, and the Drift gains an eerie patchwork of flashing light and deep shade as the folded contours of the cloud tuck away from the blasts.

The harvesters dive gleefully into the Drift again like children swimming in a deep pool. They begin making their way back to the Station when the steady line of them coming out of the Drift stops cold.

A few dozen of the harvesters vanish into the cloud before the line of them going in comes to a stop and hovers nervously over the faintest fringe of the diffuse dust.

INT. ROMULAN STATION - OFFICE

As before.

TEEK
(exasperated)
What now?

ALGRATH
Forty harvesters are in the Drift
and not responding to control.
The Subcommander of the closest
harvester is trying to hail the
others in the drift... They are
not responding.

TEEK
(impatient snap)
Send someone to investigate!

EXT. SPACE

Three Birds of Prey dive into the Drift, displacing the
gaseous appearance of the Drift. Beat. Flash! And then
another! And another!

INT. GLAVE - BRIDGE

Tith leans forward curiously, watching the Drift on the
view.

TITH
What happened to them?

SCIENCE OFFICER
(off console; nervously)
Unknown.

EXT. SPACE

The Drift begins to change color from the backlit green to
a sky blue. Then nothing. Everything seems calm,
everything seems fine.

Like the calm before the storm the Birds of Prey, the
harvesters, the station, and the cloud they face grow
nervously still. Then the clouds part and the Drift
disgorges a massive ship. It tears towards the Romulan
Station and the accompanying ships.

Several vessels turn to intercept it and as the ship passes over each ship, a stream of what appears to be BLUE LIGHT hits the Romulan ships. A heartbeat later their power is gone.

INT. GLAVE- BRIDGE

Worried now, Tith turns to her Science Officer.

TITH
What is that?

Before the Officer has a chance to reply, a startled yell comes from the front of bridge. Tith turns to the viewer just in time to see the mammoth ship fill the screen.

Then DARKNESS.

We can make out the vague outline of Tith standing.

TITH (CONT'D)
Lights!

Before anyone has a chance to say anything, a glowing globe of blue light emerges through the view screen. The crew turns towards the globe, their curious and worried faces lit up by its soft blue light.

Our focus falls onto Tith. She glares at the object angrily; trying to impose her will or intimidate the thing. The globe is not impressed.

TITH'S P.O.V

The globe rushes straight at Tith as she steps into the charge and we...

SMASH TO BLACK

Screams echo in the background and as they FADE AWAY the credits roll.

The End