

= Kir 'Shara =

" Kir 'Shara " is the ninth episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : Enterprise . It was writer Michael Sussman 's third episode of the season , while it was director David Livingston 's second . The episode was the third in a three @-@ part story arc , following on from the episodes " The Forge " and " Awakening " . " Kir 'Shara " and the Vulcan arc showed themes relating to the Protestant Reformation resulting in comparisons to books such as The Da Vinci Code and The Celestine Prophecy , while the Kir 'Shara itself was compared to the Nag Hammadi library .

Set in the 22nd century , the series follows the adventures of the first Starfleet starship Enterprise , registration NX @-@ 01 . In this episode , Enterprise attempts to avert a war , and is caught in a crossfire between Vulcan and Andorian starships . Meanwhile . Captain Archer , Commander T 'Pol , and T 'Pau aim to take the Kir 'Shara to the Vulcan capital , and use it to reveal Administrator V 'Las ' plot to the rest of the Vulcan High Command .

In addition to the guest stars returning from the previous arc episodes , or the episode " Home " , Jeffrey Combs returned as Shran . The episode was shot across seven days using mostly standing sets , with only an Andorian brig built specifically for this episode . " Kir 'Shara " also saw the return of the Vulcan lirpa , a weapon which had been first introduced in the Star Trek : The Original Series episode " Amok Time " . The episode originally aired on December 3 , 2004 on UPN . It received a Nielsen rating of 2 @.@ 1 / 4 percent , which equalled the highest ratings seen during the fourth season . It was warmly received by critics who praised Combs ' performance and noted that this episode was an indication of the improving quality of the series . However there was mixed opinion regarding the ending of the episode .

= = Plot = =

Enterprise heads to Andoria after Ambassador Soval informs them that the Vulcans believe they have been developing Xindi weapon technology . Soval guides Enterprise to a nebula where the Andorian fleet is hiding . Commander Shran is dubious , and abducts and tortures Soval . After believing him , Enterprise joins a fleet of six Andorian ships to intercept the Vulcans . Commander Tucker attempts to buy time by ordering Enterprise directly between the two fleets ? this works for a while until Administrator V 'Las orders them to be targeted too .

Meanwhile , at The Forge , Captain Archer , Commander T 'Pol , and T 'Pau , having found the sacred Kir 'Shara (which the Syrrannites believe will usher a Vulcan enlightenment) , endeavor to take it to the capital . En route , T 'Pol and T 'Pau discuss the taboo of mind @-@ melds , and T 'Pau offers to mind @-@ meld with T 'Pol . She states the meld is safe when performed by those trained in the art , and that Pa 'nar Syndrome is merely the by @-@ product of an improperly conducted meld . The trio are then attacked by Major Talok and Vulcan commandos , and T 'Pol is captured while the others escape . She tells her captors that they are headed to Mount Seleya in order to mislead them from their true destination .

She is then taken to the capital . Archer and T 'Pau also arrive after T 'Pol 's husband , Koss , provides transporter security codes . They present the Kir 'Shara to the Command and reveal that the embassy bombing was merely a pretext to weaken the pacifist Syrranites prior to the Andorian strike . Visibly angered , V 'Las lunges for the Kir 'Shara , but is stunned by High @-@ Minister Kuvak , who orders the fleet to stand down . Enterprise returns to Vulcan , and Koss visits to release T 'Pol from their marriage . Meanwhile , the Vulcan High Command is dissolved , granting Earth greater autonomy , and the katra of Surak is transferred to a Vulcan high priest . V 'Las , relieved of his post , meets secretly with Talok , revealed as a Romulan agent , who states that the reunification of their worlds is only a matter of time .

= = Production = =

Like " Home " , " Kir 'Shara " was written by Michael Sussman and was his third script during the

fourth season . David Livingston directed the episode , which was his second episode of the season having previously directed " Borderland " . Most of the guest stars had appeared in the previous episode " Awakening " , including Robert Foxworth as Administrator V 'Las , Kara Zediker as T 'Pau and John Rubinstein as Kuvak . In addition , Michael Reilly Burke resumes his role as Koss for the third time , having appeared in the role both in " Home " and " The Forge " . Also appearing , having appeared in " Home " , was Jack Donner as a Vulcan priest . Donner appeared in The Original Series episode " The Enterprise Incident " as the Romulan Commander Subcommander Tal . " Kir 'Shara " also saw the return of Jeffrey Combs as the Andorian Commander Shran for the sixth time as well as Gary Graham as Ambassador Soval , who has appeared as a recurring character in Enterprise since the pilot episode " Broken Bow " .

Filming began on October 4 , 2004 and continued until October 12 . Despite the desert locations , all filming took place on soundstages . These represented a variety of places throughout the Vulcan desert @-@ like Forge . The remaining sets used were either standing sets , or those which had been constructed for the previous two episodes . The exceptions to that were two sets to represent scenes on board Commander Shran 's Andorian vessel . The Andorian bridge set , which had been used previously in the series , had a single wall brought out of storage in order to appear as a backdrop for Shran when he appears on the Enterprise viewscreen . The Andorian brig was built specifically for this episode for scenes with Shran and Soval .

Re @-@ appearing in " Kir 'Shara " were the traditional Vulcan weapon , the lirpa , which was first introduced in The Original Series episode " Amok Time " . The lirpa is a long shaft with a crescent blade on one end and a spiked cudgel on the other . Brand new props were built for this episode , modifying the original design by making them more lightweight . They were wielded in " Kir 'Shara " by Vulcan commandos , who were all played by stunt actors in non @-@ speaking roles . Additional stunt doubles were required for Archer , T 'Pol , T 'Pau and Talok while two puppeteers were needed for the Andorian antennae seen on screen .

= = Themes = =

" Kir 'Shara " followed up the events of the previous two episodes in the story arc as well some of the elements seen earlier in the season in the episode " Home " . " The Forge " sees Captain Jonathan Archer (Scott Bakula) and T 'Pol (Jolene Blalock) travel into the Vulcan desert known as the Forge in order to find a renegade faction of Vulcans , known as the Syrrannites . During the journey , Archer has the katra of Surak transferred into him . In " Awakening " , the duo meet the Syrrannites and find out they are peaceful . After Enterprise leaves orbit , the Vulcans start bombarding the caves where the Syrrannites are located , killing T 'Pol 's mother , T 'Les (Joanna Cassidy) .

Speaking about " Awakening " , show runner Manny Coto had previously said that he envisaged the story arc to be about a Vulcan reformation as a metaphor to the real @-@ world 16th century Protestant Reformation with T 'Pau playing the role of Martin Luther . This view was supported by the 2010 book *Star Trek As Myth* , which saw the original Vulcan religion prior to the Reformation arc seen from " The Forge " onwards as equating to the Catholic Church while the Syrrannites were the Protestants . In doing so , Administrator V 'Las is therefore linked to the anti @-@ Christ in much the same way that the Protestant Reformation saw the Pope as the anti @-@ Christ . In this role , the Romulans in the story take the place of the subversive devils to form an unholy alliance .

It was also suggested that the Kir 'Shara itself was similar in context to the Nag Hammadi library , which was a collection of thirteen codices found in Nag Hammadi , Egypt , in 1945 that date back to between the 2nd to 5th centuries . Unlike those codices , the Vulcan High Council attempts to suppress the revelation of the Kir 'Shara in a similar manner to the Catholic Church 's suppression seen in other fictional works such as Dan Brown 's *The Da Vinci Code* or James Redfield 's *The Celestine Prophecy* .

= = Reception = =

" Kir 'Shara " was first aired in the United States on UPN on December 3 , 2004 . The broadcast saw the episode come in fourth place during the timeslot , with a Nielsen rating of 2 @. @ 1 / 4 percent . This means that it was seen by 2 @. @ 1 percent of all households , and 4 percent of all those watching television at the time of broadcast . It gained higher ratings than The WB , who aired What I Like About You and Grounded for Life . The ratings equalled the highest ratings of the season so far , which were previously achieved by " Borderland " , " Cold Station 12 " and " The Augments " .

TV Guide listed " Kir 'Shara " on its Hot List for the day , while the preview by IGN said that the show " finally grows up and becomes a Star Trek series this week " . It described " Kir 'Shara " as " far from a perfectly executed Trek story but they get enough right to make it a lot easier to overlook the few things they miss . " It said that there had been an overall improvement in the fourth season , and that " this could become some of the best Star Trek ever made " . It gave " Kir 'Shara " a rating of four and a half out of five . In Matthew Kappell 's book Star Trek As Myth , he said that he felt that the revelation that the previous Vulcan administration was working with the Romulans all along " suddenly makes sense of years of previously incomprehensible Vulcan policy " and linked to The Next Generation episode " Unification " .

Herc , in his review for Ain 't It Cool News , praised the reliability of Jeffrey Combs as Shran , but thought that there were no major surprises . Herc did say that the biggest shock was the revelation that the Romulans were behind the bombing of the Human Embassy . He gave it a rating of three out of five . Michelle Erica Green reviewed the episode for TrekNation , calling it an " absolutely gripping episode " except for the " ludicrousness of the ending " . She made the admission about the ending that , " I suppose the Romulans had to show up at some point , I guess Vulcan is as good a place as any . " She thought that the torture scenes were " pointless " , but was pleased with the characterisation seen in Archer , T 'Pol and Tucker . Jamahl Epsicokhan at his website " Jammer 's Reviews " said that the episode was " not perfect , but good " with an " intriguing " ending . He also praised Jeffrey Combs as Shran , and thought that the torture screens were potent but that the ending was rushed . He gave the episode a rating of three out of four . The first home media release of " Kir 'Shara " was in the season four DVD box set of Enterprise , originally released in the United States on November 1 , 2005 . The Blu @-@ ray edition was released on April 1 , 2014 .