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Star Trek Generations

By Ronald D. Moore

FADE IN:

1EXT. SPACE (VFX-I) 1

A vast and sparkling starfield. A pinpoint of light appears and starts moving toward the camera. A small and distant cylindrical object tumbling end over end, but we can't determine exactly what it is yet.

2EXT. WHEATFIELD- DAY2

A vast and undulating sea of wheat. We become aware that there are two heads sticking out of the stalks of wheat: two men standing and looking up at the sky. As we move towards them, we can see that the two men are SCOTTY and CHEKOV, dressed in civilian clothing.

CHEKOV:

(points to sky)

There he is- there, to the south!

SCOTTY:

(peers upward)

What are ye, blind? That's a bird.

As they stare up at the sky

3EXT. SPACE (VFX-I) 3

The cylinder tumbling through space is now closer, and we can now see that it is a bottle of some sort, and it is tumbling directly toward the camera.

4EXT. WHEATFIELD- DAY4

As before, Chekov and Scotty staring at the sky.

SCOTTY:

(concerned)

Repelling the Crystalline Trench, rafting down lava flows, orbital skydiving. It's like the man is running a bloody decathlon across the galaxy.

Suddenly we hear a double sonic boom.

CHEKOV:

That should be him now. I think he's just crossed the sound barrier.

They shield their eyes against the sun and look up.

5EXT. SPACE (VFX-I) 5

The bottle gets closer.

6EXT. WHEATFIELD- DAY6

A man in a high-tech body harness and parachute lands in the wheat flat on his back. His body-suit is charred, scorched, wisps of smoke still curling off it. There are small thrusters attached to his backpack and boots. Scotty and Chekov move to him. The man removes his helmet. It is

KIRK. He smiles broadly, like a child who has just come off a rollercoaster.

KIRK:

Right on target! I jump out over the Arabian Peninsula and I end up here, right on the dime.

Kirk gets to his feet.

CHEKOV:

Actually, Captain, your precise target area was thirty-five meters (points)that way.

KIRK:

Thanks for pointing that out.

Kirk starts to pull off his suit, reacts to a sudden pain in his back.

KIRK:

Oh

SCOTTY:

I've warned ye about that back of yours. You should have a doctor take a look at it.

Kirk waves him away, and continues to remove his harness.

6A EXT. SPACE (VFX-I) 6A

The tumbling bottle rushes past, and we can now see that it is a champagne Bottle- Dom Perignon, 2265. Follow the bottle as it tumbles through space.

6B EXT. WHEATFIELD- DAY6B

Kirk, Scotty and Chekov as before.

KIRK:

Tomorrow I want to make a tri-elliptical jump. That's where you jump out over Northern China and make three complete orbits before you start re-entry.

CHEKOV:

Captain. Perhaps you have forgotten that tomorrow is the christening ceremony.

This strikes a nerve with Kirk- we see a flash of hesitation and irritation cross his face.

KIRK:

I'm not going (beat) Scotty, help me with this chute.

SCOTTY:

What do you mean, you're not going? We promised.

KIRK:

When I retired, I swore I'd never set foot on a starship again, and I meant it.

CHEKOV:

Captain=8A

KIRK:

(firm)

I don't want to hear anymore about it. I'm not going, and that's final.

7EXT. SPACE (VFX-I) 7

The champagne bottle smashes onto the bow of a Federation starship (Excelsior class) sitting in its dock in orbit around Earth.

7A EXT. SPACE (VFX-I) 7A

Follow the shards of glass from the bottle as they spread over the ship, revealing the name on the hull: U.S.S. ENTERPRISE NCC-1701-B.

8ANGLE ON SPACEDOCK WINDOW8

A large picture window overlooking the starship in its berth. The window is filled with people in Starfleet uniforms, applauding the christening of the ship (but we hear nothing).

8A INT. SPACEDOCK OBSERVATION ROOM (VFX-I) 8A

The people are still applauding and we can see that they are looking out over the ship in its berth.

8B EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B IN SPACEDOCK (VFX-I) 8B

The great ship sits in spacedock.

9INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE9

Close on a set of turbolift doors as they slide open to reveal Kirk, Scotty and Chekov. A bright light shines into their faces and they react. Move to reveal that the bright light is coming from a futuristic camera with a small bank of lights attached to it. The camera is a holographic recorder with two lenses and is worn on an operator's head. There are four JOURNALISTS clustered in front of the turbolift- one associated with the camera, the others using PADDs to make notations. Also clustered around the door are the bridge crew of the Enterprise-B. Everyone is applauding as Kirk and the others blink under the bright lights and ENTER the Bridge.

JOURNALISTS:

(overlapping)

Captain Kirk, how does it feel to be back on the Enterprise Bridge=8A?

Captain, can I have a minute? Captain Scott, do you have any comment on?

Commander Chekov

CAPTAIN JOHN HARRIMAN pushes through the crowd.

HARRIMAN:

Excuse me, excuse me=8A there will be plenty of time for questions later.

The journalists edge away, and the cameraman moves to get a good angle.

HARRIMAN:

(cont'd, to all)

I'm Captain John Harriman. I'd like to welcome you all aboard.

KIRK:

It's our pleasure.

Harriman is young, confident, eager. This is his first command and he takes it very seriously.

HARRIMAN:

I just want you to know how excited we all are to have a group of living legends with us on our maiden voyage. (beat) I remember reading about your missions when I was in grade school.

The original Enterprise officers all stop and give him a look. Harriman looks a little embarrassed- he didn't mean to insult them. But Kirk gives him a little smile, lets it roll off.

KIRK:

Well, may we have a look around?

HARRIMAN:

Please, please.

Chekov sees someone in the background, calls out to her.

CHEKOV:

Demora!

Chekov moves off.

JOURNALIST:

(breezy)

So, Captain=8A this is the first starship Enterprise in thirty years without James T. Kirk in command. How do you feel about that?

The journalist has unknowingly touched a nerve. Kirk's eyes flash for a moment- the longer he's on this Bridge, the more he realizes he doesn't feel good about it at all. He tries to shrug it off with a smile.

KIRK:

Just fine. I'm glad to be here to send her on her way.
He tries to move away from the journalist, who dogs him.

JOURNALIST:

What have you been doing since you retired?

KIRK:

I've been keeping busy.
At this point, Chekov approaches with a young, mid-twenties, attractive, Asian female Ensign named DEMORA.

CHEKOV:

(to Kirk)
Excuse me, Captain. I'd like you to meet the Helmsman of the Enterprise-B. Ensign Demora Sulu- Captain James Kirk.

DEMORA:

It's a pleasure to meet you, sir. My father's told me some interesting stories about you.
Kirk is shocked. For a long moment, he stares at her in amazement.

KIRK:

Your father? Hikaru Sulu is your father?

DEMORA:

Yes, sir.

CHEKOV:

You met her once before, but she was
Chekov holds out his hand and indicates a very short height.

KIRK:

But that wasn't so long ago. It couldn't have been more than...

CHEKOV:

Twelve years, sir.

KIRK:

Yes, well, congratulations, Ensign. It wouldn't be the Enterprise without a Sulu at the helm.

DEMORA:

Thank you, sir. (to Chekov) Let me show you the new inertial guidance

system.

Demora and Chekov move off and Kirk looks after them for a long beat. The expression on his face changes from shock to sadness. Something is clearly bothering him. Scotty moves over to Kirk, with a smile on his face.

SCOTTY:

(to Kirk)

Damn fine ship if you ask me.

But Kirk's mind is still on Demora. He watches her as she moves to the Helmsman's position.

KIRK:

You know, Scotty, it amazes me.

SCOTTY:

And what would that be, sir?

KIRK:

Sulu. When did he find the time for a family?

SCOTTY:

It's like you always said- if something's important enough, you make the time.

Kirk nods absently. Scotty realizes something.

SCOTTY:

So, that's why you've been running around the galaxy like an eighteen-year-old. Finding retirement a little lonely, are we? Kirk gives him a look.

KIRK:

With that kind of tact, I'm glad you're an engineer and not a psychiatrist.

Harriman interrupts.

HARRIMAN:

Excuse me, gentlemen, if you'll take your seats.

KIRK:

Oh, of course.

10 NEW ANGLE10

Revealing that three chairs have been neatly arranged to one side. Scotty, Kirk and Chekov all take their seats. The journalists take

positions on the opposite side of the Bridge. Harriman moves to the command chair and the rest of the Bridge crew go to their stations.

HARRIMAN:

(to all)

Prepare to leave spacedock. Aft thrusters ahead one quarter, port and starboard at station keeping. (beat) Captain Kirk, I'd be honored if you would give the order to get underway.

KIRK:

No, no. Thank you.

HARRIMAN:

Please, I insist.

All eyes on Kirk- he has little choice. He stands uncomfortably. There is a moment of anticipation.

KIRK:

(to all)

Take us out.

Everyone breaks into applause. Kirk sits down in acute embarrassment and annoyance.

CHEKOV:

(sotto)

Very good, sir.

SCOTTY:

(sotto)

Brought a tear to my eye.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B (VFX-I) 11

The great ship majestically leaves the dock and heads out into open space, passing directly overhead.

12 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE12

A short time later. Harriman turns to his guests.

HARRIMAN:

Well, we've just cleared the asteroid belt. Our course will take us outbeyond Pluto and then back to spacedock. Just a quick run around the block. (beat) If we have time, we'll conduct a few tests of the warp- Suddenly the communications console starts to beep. The COM OFFICER hits a few commands in response.

COM OFFICER:

(to Harriman)

We're picking up a distress call, Captain.
This grabs everyone's attention.

HARRIMAN:

On speakers.

We hear the voice of a crewmember who sounds panicked and urgent.

COM VOICE:

(fritzed)

This is the transport ship Lakul. We're caught in some kind of energydistortion. We can't break free... need immediate help... it's tearing us-

The voice is drowned out by static. The SCIENCE OFFICER checks something on his console. The journalist with the holo-camera turns on his light and pans it around to capture the action.

SCIENCE OFFICER:

The Lakul is one of two ships transporting El-Aurian refugees to Earth. Harriman blinks a couple of times, surprised at this unexpected turn of events. Kirk watches him intently. Harriman clears his throat, then turns to Demora.

HARRIMAN:

Can you locate them?

DEMORA:

The ships are bearing at 3-1-0 mark 2-1-5. Distance: three light years.

HARRIMAN:

Signal the closest starship. We're in no condition to mount a rescue. We don't even have a full crew aboard.

The NAVIGATOR checks his console.

NAVIGATOR:

We're the only one in range, sir.

The holo-camera light is shined on Harriman as he shifts in his seat, hesitant to take the plunge. Kirk is drumming his fingers impatiently on his leg. Finally, Harriman takes a breath and straightens his jacket a bit.

HARRIMAN:

Well, then, I guess it's up to us. (to Demora) Helm, lay in an intercept course and engage at maximum warp.

Kirk fidgets in his chair, itching to get in on the action- his instincts taking over. Scotty shoots him a side-long glance.

SCOTTY:

Is there something wrong with your chair, Captain?

Kirk gives him a look.

13 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B (VFX-I) 13

The ship snaps into warp.

14 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE14

A few minutes later. Demora is watching her console.

DEMORA:

We're within visual range of the energy distortion, Captain.

HARRIMAN:

On screen.

15 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (VFX-I) 15

Which now shows a huge ribbon of crackling energy directly ahead of the Enterprise-B. Everyone reacts to the bizarre sight.

CHEKOV:

What the hell is that?

DEMORA:

(off console)

I've found the transport ships.

15AINCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (VFX-I) 15A

The viewscreen now shows two transport ships trapped like insects in the violent torrent of energy. The ships are being buffeted and thrown about by large tendrils of crackling energy.

DEMORA:

(cont'd)

Their hulls are starting to buckle under the stress- they won't survive much longer.

The ship suddenly shakes. The Navigator works his console.

NAVIGATOR:

We're encountering severe gravimetric distortions from the energy ribbon.

HARRIMAN:

We'll have to keep our distance. We don't want to get pulled in, too. Harriman frowns at the screen, trying to figure out what to do. Kirk can barely contain himself- to him the answer is obvious. He blurts out the answer.

KIRK:

Tractor beam...

Scotty quickly elbows him in the side- this isn't Kirk's ship. Kirk shuts up. Harriman glances at Kirk.

HARRIMAN:

We don't have a tractor beam.

KIRK:

You left spacedock without a tractor beam?

HARRIMAN:

It won't be installed until Tuesday. (beat) Ensign Sulu, try generating a subspace field around the ships. That might break them free.

DEMORA:

Aye, sir.

When Kirk hears this order, he shakes his head slightly and mouths the word "no" under his breath. He knows that won't work.

DEMORA:

(shakes her head)

There's too much quantum interference, Captain.

Harriman frowns again, trying to come up with another solution, but it isn't easy- it's his first day in command; his ship is under-manned and ill-prepared. It's a nightmare come true. Kirk is itching to get in on this, his fingers digging into the arms of his chair- but he restrains himself.

HARRIMAN:

What about=8A venting plasma from the warp nacelles? That might disrupt the ribbon's hold on the ships.

NAVIGATOR:

Aye, sir. Releasing drive plasma.

A tense beat. Harriman glances over at the journalists, then glances over at Kirk. Kirk gives him a pained smile, trying to be encouraging even though he knows this is not the right course of action.

NAVIGATOR:

It's not having any effect, sir. I think-

DEMORA:

Sir! The starboard vessel's hull is collapsing.

15BINCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (VFX-I) 15B

Suddenly the right-hand ship on the screen is engulfed by a fiery tendril of energy and it explodes. The other ship continues to be thrown about and buffeted. Everyone reacts with shock on the Bridge.

>>> CHEKOV

How many people were aboard that ship?

DEMORA:

Two hundred sixty-five.

>>> Harriman pales at the sight, seems shell-shocked by the struction of the ship. He's overwhelmed now; at a genuine loss as to what to do next.

DEMORA:

(urgent)

The Lakul's hull integrity is down to twelve percent, sir.

Harriman looks over at Kirk, who has remained quiet during this entire sequence only through great effort and out of deference to the young captain. This is a delicate moment- Harriman doesn't want to look incapable, but at the same time, he needs help.

HARRIMAN:

Captain Kirk, I would appreciate any suggestions you might have.

Kirk is out of his chair like a cork out of a bottle. He moves down to stand next to Harriman.

KIRK:

(sotto)

First, move us within transporter range and beam those people to the Enterprise.

Harriman looks at him with surprise.

HARRIMAN:

What about the gravimetric distortions? They'll tear us apart.

KIRK:

(gently)

Risk is part of the game if you want to sit in that chair.

Kirk gives him a supportive look. Harriman buckles down and grimly looks

at the image on the screen.

HARRIMAN:

Helm, close to within transporter range.

Kirk glances at the cameraman, who's still shining the light on them all.

KIRK:

And second, turn that damned thing off.

The cameraman turns off the light.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B (VFX-I) 16

The ship edges in yet closer to the crackling ribbon. The tendrils from the ribbon lash out at the ship, just missing it.

17 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE17

As before.

DEMORA:

We're within range, sir.

HARRIMAN:

(to lieutenant)

Beam them directly to Sickbay.

CHEKOV:

(concerned)

How big's your medical staff?

HARRIMAN:

(embarrassed)

The medical staff doesn't arrive until Tuesday.

Chekov turns to the two journalists.

CHEKOV:

You and you. You've just become nurses. Let's go.

Chekov and the journalists EXIT to the turbolift.

DEMORA:

Main Engineering reports fluctuations in the warp plasma relays.

SCOTTY:

Bypass the relays and go to auxiliary systems.

The LIEUTENANT is having problems at the aft console.

LIEUTENANT:

Sir, I'm having trouble locking onto them. They appear to be in some sort of temporal flux.

Kirk turns to Scotty.

KIRK:

Scotty?

Scotty quickly moves to look at the transporter console.

SCOTTY:

What the hell...

Kirk moves to him.

SCOTTY:

Their life signs are are phasing in and out of our space-time continuum.

KIRK:

Phasing? To where?

Scotty begins to work.

NAVIGATOR:

Sir! Their hull's collapsing!

18 EXT. SPACE- THE LAKUL (VFX-I) 18

The ship is destroyed by an energy tendril.

19 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE19

All eyes on Scotty.

SCOTTY:

I got forty-seven of them (beat, grim) out of one hundred fifty.

Suddenly the ship is rocked violently. Klaxons and alarms start to wail and the lights flicker on and off. A bulkhead explodes, sending metal fragments screaming across the Bridge and killing the Navigator. Scotty quickly takes over the dead man's console.

KIRK:

Report!

DEMORA:

We're caught in a gravimetric field emanating from the trailing edge of the ribbon.

HARRIMAN:

All engines, full reverse!

20 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B & RIBBON (VFX-I)20

The ship is turning sideways into the wake of the ribbon, but cannot break away. It is clearly being pulled along, out of control. Tendrils leap up from the ribbon, lashing against the ship.

21 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- SICKBAY 21

The room is filled with the survivors of the Lakul. They are all members of the El-Aurian race- humanoid and dressed in distinctive clothing. The survivors are in various states of shock. Many sit on the floor, staring into middle distance. Some lie on tables, unconscious. Others are mumbling incoherently to themselves. Chekov and the journalists are moving from person to person trying to get control of the situation as the ship is rocked and flung about. Chekov has a tricorder.

SURVIVORS:

(incoherent, overlapping)

The colors are touching me. I'm caught in the glass. Help me...I can see the seconds...Over here...

CHEKOV:

It will be all right. We're going to take care of you.
He looks at the tricorder.

CHEKOV:

(off tricorder)

Only minor injuries so far. (beat) But it looks like they're all suffering from some kind of neural shock.

One journalist moves past a man sitting on a biobed with a dazed look on his face. He has a nasty looking wound on one side of his face. (We will learn later that this man is named DOCTOR SORAN.)

The journalist is about to turn away when suddenly Soran grabs him roughly- clearly a man of great strength- and pulls him close. Soran's eyes are suddenly wild, crazed.

SORAN:

Why, why?

JOURNALIST:

It's all right. You're safe-8A you're on the Enterprise.

SORAN:

No, I have to go... I have to get back. You don't understand! Let me go!
Soran begins to attack the journalist, but before he can do any real damage, Chekov injects Soran with a hypospray and Soran falls unconscious.

JOURNALIST:

What was he talking about?

Suddenly a woman with her back toward us stumbles nearby. Chekov quickly grabs her arm and catches her before she falls.

CHEKOV:

Easy there...

The woman turns around and we see her face for the first time- it's GUINAN. She seems dazed and confused. Chekov smiles at her warmly.

CHEKOV:

It's going to be okay. Here, just lie down.

As he guides Guinan onto a table

22 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE (VFX-I)22

Energy ribbon on viewscreen.

DEMORA:

Inertial dampers failing.

SCOTTY:

Engines not responding!

Harriman is gripping the arms of his chair with one hand. His face pales.

HARRIMAN:

(quiet)

I didn't expect to die my first day on the job.

Kirk tries to buck up the young captain.

KIRK:

(sotto)

The first thing you learn as captain is how to cheat death. (beat, then louder) Scotty?

SCOTTY:

(outraged)

There's just no way to disrupt a gravimetric field of this magnitude!

DEMORA:

Hull integrity failing.

Kirk looks at Scotty expectantly for a moment.

SCOTTY:

(cont'd)

But I do have a theory...

KIRK:

I thought you might.

SCOTTY:

An anti-matter discharge directly ahead=8A it might disrupt the field long enough for us to break away.

KIRK:

A photon torpedo?

SCOTTY:

Aye.

KIRK:

(quickly, to Demora)

Load torpedo bays, prepare to fire on my command.

Demora turns to him.

DEMORA:

Captain, we don't have any torpedoes.

Kirk glances at Harriman.

KIRK:

Don't tell me...Tuesday.

Harriman nods, a little embarrassed. The shaking gets worse.

SCOTTY:

Captain, it may be possible to simulate a torpedo blast using a resonance burst from the main deflector dish.

KIRK:

(onto the idea)

Where are the deflector relays?

DEMORA:

Deck 15, section 21-alpha.

HARRIMAN:

(to Kirk)

I'll go. You have the Bridge.

Harriman heads for the turbolift, and there is a moment as Kirk is

sorely tempted to take command of the ship and sit in the Captain's chair one more time. But he pulls himself back before Harriman can exit.

KIRK:

No=8A a captain's place is on the Bridge of his ship. (beat) I'll take care of it.

Harriman nods in acknowledgement. Kirk heads for the turbolift.

KIRK:

(on the move, to Scotty)

Keep her together until I get back.

SCOTTY:

(matter of fact)

I always do.

Kirk smiles as the turbolift doors slide shut.

23 OMITTED 23

24 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- CORRIDOR24

Kirk running down the corridor, opens a door.

25 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- DEFLECTOR ROOM (CONTINUOUS)25

A small control room with a few consoles. Kirk rushes in and rips off one of the large wall panels. He quickly begins to re-route cabling and circuitry.

26 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE26

As before. The ship is shaking badly.

DEMORA:

Forty-five seconds to structural collapse!

Scotty is working the consoles frantically.

SCOTTY:

Bridge to Captain Kirk.

INTERCUT:

27 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- DEFLECTOR ROOM27

Kirk working furiously.

KIRK:

Kirk here.

SCOTTY:

Captain, I don't know how much longer I can hold her together!

Kirk finishes working and slams the wall panel closed.

KIRK:

That's it. Go!

28 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE28

As before.

HARRIMAN:

(to Demora)

Activate main deflector.

Demora works the console.

29 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B (VFX-I) 29

A large burst of energy leaps out of the main deflector dish and explodes in front of the ship. There is an immediate reaction within the energy ribbon, which roils and fluctuates in response.

30 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE30

As before.

SCOTTY:

We're breaking free.

31 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B (VFX-I) 31

The ship now begins to turn away from the crackling ribbon. But just as it's turning, one final tendril of energy suddenly leaps out and hits the ship.

32 OMITTED 32

33 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE33

The ship is rocked so hard that everyone is knocked off their feet. Gradually, the shaking stops. Demora scrambles back into position.

DEMORA:

We're clear.

Everyone reacts with relief.

HARRIMAN:

(excited, to com)

You did it, Kirk! (to Demora) Damage report, Ensign.

DEMORA:

(off console)

There's some buckling on the starboard nacelle. (reacts) We've also got a hull breach in the Engineering section. Emergency forcefields are in place and holding.

SCOTTY:

Where?

DEMORA:

Sections 20 through 28 on decks 13, 14...(looks at Scotty with meaning) and 15.

Everyone turns around and looks at Scotty.

SCOTTY:

(to com)

Bridge to Captain Kirk. (beat) Captain Kirk, please respond.

Still no response. Scotty's face falls.

SCOTTY:

(continuing, to Demora)

Have Chekov meet me on Deck 15.

Harriman, very concerned, gets up and follows Scotty. They EXIT to the turbolift.

CUT TO:

34 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- CORRIDOR34

Scotty and Harriman head down the corridor. They round a bend, and then stop short. They react to something ahead of them.

35 NEW ANGLE (VFX-P)35

Revealing that the corridor ahead of them is gone. A jagged hole has been ripped in the ship and open space can be seen beyond the twisted metal. A forcefield flickers on and off, holding the vacuum of space at bay.

Scotty and Harriman look at the awesome sight for a moment. Chekov comes running up the corridor behind them. He stops and reacts.

CHEKOV:

My God...(beat) Was anyone in there?

A long silent beat as Scotty looks out into space.

SCOTTY:

Aye.

36 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B (VFX-I) 36

A huge chunk has been ripped out of the Engineering section, looking like an open wound. Scotty, Chekov and Harriman can be seen standing inside the small corridor, looking out into space.

37 INT. ENTERPRISE-B- BRIDGE37

A short time later. Scotty, Harriman and Chekov are listening to Demora, who is working the Helm console.

DEMORA:

I've checked the entire ship and the surrounding space, there's no sign

of him.

A silent moment. Chekov looks to Scotty, hoping to hear some sort of miracle. Scotty takes a moment, looks at the empty command chair. Then he shakes his head. A long beat as everyone is forced to accept this terrible truth.

SCOTTY:

(quiet)

Just a quick run around the block.

CHEKOV:

I never thought it would end like this.

SCOTTY:

All things must end, Mr. Chekov.

Harriman finally breaks the stillness of the Bridge.

HARRIMAN:

Let's go home.

Harriman steps down to the Captain's chair and takes command of his ship.

Scotty and Chekov exchange a final look. Off the reactions of these two friends who have just lost someone very dear to them both.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-B (VFX-I) 38

The crippled ship turns and heads away=

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER:

39 CLOSE ON A HALYARD 39

as a flag is quickly hoisted to the top of a mast. The flag reaches the top and is then caught by the wind- the blue and white banner of the United Federation of Planets waves in the breeze.

MOVE TO REVEAL THE LOCATION

40 EXT. SAILING VESSEL- DAY 40

A nineteenth-century three-masted sailing vessel (about the size of a frigate) is hove-to and sitting in the water gently rocking. Across the stern of the ship, we can see the name ENTERPRISE picked out in gold letters.

41 ON THE MAIN DECK 41

Where PICARD and RIKER are standing before the assembled crew of the ship. Everyone is dressed in full-dress naval uniforms of the period,

complete with cocked hats, epaulettes, etc. The crew is standing at attention, the wind whistles through the rigging, the timbers creak. Picard grimly looks over his crew, then nods to Riker.

RIKER:

Bring out the prisoner!

A drummer begins a long drum roll.

42 ON A HATCH 42

as WORF is brought on deck by TROI and LA FORGE. Worf is shackled by hand and leg irons. Troi and La Forge hold him by either arm and shove him toward the Captain. The drum roll stops. Picard moves to Worf and peers at him closely.

PICARD:

Mr. Worf. I always knew this day would come. Are you prepared to face the charges?

Worf doesn't answer and Troi jabs him in the side.

TROI:

Answer him!

WORF:

I am prepared.

Picard looks to Riker, who then pulls out a large, rolled piece of parchment. He opens the scroll and begins to read from it. In the b.g., La Forge removes Worf's shackles.

RIKER:

"We, the officers and crew of the U.S.S. Enterprise, being of sound mind and judgment, hereby make the following charges against Lieutenant Worf: One. That he did knowingly and willfully perform above and beyond the call of duty on countless occasions. Two. That he has been a good and solid officer on this ship for one score less twelve years. And three. Most seriously that he has earned the respect and admiration of the entire crew."

Riker puts away the scroll

PICARD:

There can be only one punishment for such crimes. (beat) I hereby promote you to the rank of Lieutenant Commander, with all the rights and privilegesthereto. And may God have mercy on your soul.

Everyone roars in approval. Picard smiles at Worf and shakes his hand.

PICARD:

(cont'd)

Congratulations, Commander.

WORF:

(smiles)

Thank you, sir.

Picard continues to smile at him for a moment, then Riker steps in.

RIKER:

Extend the plank!!

Worf's face registers surprise as everyone grabs him and hauls him toward the side, where a long plank is being pushed out over the water.

CREWMEMBERS:

Into the sea with him. Feed him to the sharks! Walk the plank!

Picard gives Riker a questioning look.

PICARD:

Don't you think you're taking this a little too far, Number One?

RIKER:

When we went to ancient Rome for Deanna's promotion, we threw her to the lions, remember?

Picard shrugs it off- it's not exactly his cup of tea, but he'll go along with it.

Worf is hustled to the rail where CRUSHER is waiting patiently by the plank, holding a long pike. Worf is put on the plank and Crusher prods him with the pike until Worf is nearly at the end.

Worf finally stops and turns around

WORF:

(a shout)

WAIT!

Everyone falls silent a moment. Worf looks over the side at the water below.

WORF:

(a little embarrassed)

I can't swim.

LA FORGE:

(calmly, to Worf)

The Holodeck safety program is engaged. The computer won't let you drown.

CRUSHER:

But the sharks are quite convincing.

Crusher prods him with the pike and Worf falls into the sea with a huge splash. Everyone laughs and cheers. Reveal DATA, who is standing near the side rail, looking a little confused at the reaction.

DATA:

(to Crusher)

Doctor, I must confess I am uncertain as to why pushing someone into freezing, shark-infested water is amusing.

CRUSHER:

It's all done in good fun, Data. Get in the spirit of things.

DATA:

Ah.

Data thinks a moment, then he lifts Crusher with one hand and hold her over the rail.

CRUSHER:

Data...Data-!

Data lets go and Crusher plummets into the ocean. Data looks around- no one is laughing. They all look a little surprised.

LA FORGE:

Data=8A that wasn't funny.

Data is puzzled by the reaction of the crowd. He's more confused than ever.

43 PICARD AND RIKER 43

are standing on the quarterdeck as a very wet Beverly Crusher comes up on deck.

PICARD:

Well, now that we're all aboard=8A (beat, then smiles) Number One, bring the ship before the wind. (savoring the moment) Let's see what's out there.

RIKER:

Aye, aye, sir. (to Troi) Take the wheel, Commander.

Troi takes the ship's wheel.

RIKER:

(shouts)

All hands make sail! Raise up tacks and stand by the braces!
The crew springs into action, rushing to their places aloft and on deck, grabbing ropes and lines, starting to unfurl the sails, trimming the yardarms, getting the ship ready to sail.

4444

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4545

46 PICARD AND RIKER 46

Picard is drinking in the scene with a look of great satisfaction and contentment.

PICARD:

Imagine what it was like, Will. No engines, no computers, just the wind, the sea and the stars to guide you.

RIKER:

Bad food, brutal discipline. (beat) No women.

But Picard won't let Riker rain on his parade- he's thoroughly enjoying himself.

COM VOICE:

Bridge to Captain Picard.

PICARD:

Picard here.

COM VOICE:

There is a personal message for you from Earth.

PICARD:

(annoyed)

Put it through down here. (to Riker) But the best thing about a life at sea was that they couldn't get to you.

Picard walks toward the bow.

PICARD:

(to com)

Computer, arch.

46AANGLE (VFX-P) 46A

A U-shaped arch with several computer panels visible appears on the forecandle. It's a strange sight to see a piece of the 24th century on the deck of this ship. Picard goes to the arch and activates one of the monitors and waits for the transmission to appear.

46BNEW ANGLE (VFX-P)46B

A text message appears and he starts to read it. After a moment, he reacts with shock and dismay to something on the screen.

47 ON TROI 47

whose attention has been drawn to Picard, at the arch. She reacts with concern at the expression on his face.

TROI:

(to crewmember)

Here. Take the wheel.

Troi moves toward the bow.

48 ON PICARD (VFX-P)48

whose face is now ashen with shock. Clearly he has just read something on the screen which is very disturbing. He stares into the middle distance for a moment. Troi moves to him.

TROI:

(quiet)

Captain, are you all right?

PICARD:

Yes. Fine. If you'll excuse me.

He turns off the screen.

PICARD:

Computer, exit.

48AANGLE (VFX-P) 48A

The Holodeck doors appear within the arch. Picard is clearly distracted as he EXITS to the corridor. Troi looks after him with concern.

49 NEW ANGLE49

favoring Riker. He takes a couple of steps toward Worf.

RIKER:

Set the royals and the studding sails, Mr. Worf.

Worf looks at him blankly for a moment.

WORF:

The royal...studs?

RIKER:

(smiles, points aloft)

You see the top yardarm, now look to the-

Suddenly a com voice interrupts.

COM VOICE:

Bridge to Commander Riker.

RIKER:

Riker here.

COM VOICE:

We're picking up a distress call from the Amargosa observatory, sir They say they're under attack.

RIKER:

(to all)

Red Alert! All hands to battle stations! Captain Picard to the Bridge. Everyone on the ship reacts, and there is a general rush to the bow of the ship.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE-D (VFX-I) 50

The great ship at impulse. We follow it and then see ahead of the ship, a small solar observatory with a complex optical array. The observatory bears scorch marks and other signs of recent battle. (In the b.g., a yellow sun can be seen.)

51 INT. BRIDGE (VFX-I)51

Picard in command. Riker, Troi, Worf and Data at their stations They didn't have time to change, so they are all still dressed in their costumes from the ceremony. The ship is at Red Alert. The image of the burnt-out observatory is on the viewscreen.

RIKER:

It looks like we're too late.

WORF:

(off console)

There are no other ships in the system.

DATA:

Sensors show five life signs aboard the station, Captain.

RIKER:

The station complement was nineteen.

A grim beat. Picard gets up and starts heading for the Ready Room- his attitude is dismissive, almost irritated that this has interrupted some deeper concern of his.

PICARD:

Secure from Red Alert. Number One, begin an investigation. I'll be in my Ready Room.

Troi and Riker exchange a surprised look.

RIKER:

Sir?

PICARD:

(hard)

Make it so.

Picard EXITS. An awkward beat. What's wrong with the Captain? But they have their orders. As Riker and Worf head for the exit,

CUT TO:

52 INT. OBSERVATORY- OPS CENTER (VFX-P)52

The station is a smoking ruin- consoles flickering, lights dim, damage everywhere. Only a few minutes have passed since they were attacked. Riker, Worf, Crusher and two SECURITY GUARDS materialize. They're all back in uniform, holding phasers and palm beacons. Worf has a tricorder and Crusher has a medical kit. The room is cramped, there are fallen bulk-heads and blown- out consoles. The debris makes it difficult to get a clear view of the room.

WORF:

These blast patterns are consistent with Type III disruptors.

RIKER:

Well, that narrows it to Klingon, Breen or Romulan.

Crusher follows her tricorder readings.

CRUSHER:

I'm picking up lifesigns...about twenty meters ahead.

WORF:

That rules out Klingons.

Riker gives him a look.

WORF:

They would not have left anyone alive.

CRUSHER:

Over here.

They pick their way carefully through the carnage of the station and come to the body of a Starfleet science officer. He has taken a

disruptor blast to the back and there is a nasty-looking scorch mark on his uniform. Crusher immediately takes some devices out of her medical kit and begins to treat him.

RIKER:

Worf, you're with me. Paskall, you and Mendez search the upper deck. The security guards climb a nearby ladder while Riker and Worf head down a dimly-lit corridor. Riker stops at two bodies in the hall, checks them over- but they're dead. There is a sudden banging from the far corner of the room. Worf and Riker quickly move to a collapsed bulkhead.

WORF:

Under here.

They both grab hold of a large metal plate, pull it aside and begin to dig through the debris. Finally, a hand can be seen grasping about from within the pile of rubble. Riker and Worf work faster. Worf grabs the man's hand.

WORF:

It's all right. Do not struggle.

Worf holds the man's hand as Riker shoves away a final console. We reveal the head and torso of Doctor Soran, one of the survivors from the Lakul (and last seen in Sickbay aboard the Enterprise-B). Soran has not aged at all over the years but he does have a permanent scar on his face from the earlier wound. He blinks a few times, seems a little dazed.

RIKER:

I'm Commander William Riker of the starship Enterprise.

SORAN:

Soran, Doctor Tolian Soran.

Soran puts a hand to his head, still trying to get his bearings.

RIKER:

Who attacked you, Doctor?

SORAN:

I'm not sure, it happened so fast.

SECURITY OFFICER

(calls out)

Commander- you'd better take a look at this.

Riker and Worf move to the ladder as Crusher begins to scan Soran.

53 NEW ANGLE- UPPER DECK 53

Riker and Worf move over to the two security guards who are kneeling

over a dead body which is obscured from view. One guard turns over the body, revealing a Romulan soldier. Worf looks at him in disgust.

WORF:

Romulan.

Riker and Worf exchange a look. Off their reactions

CUT TO:

54 INT. DATA'S QUARTERS54

Data is sitting in a chair, petting SPOT the cat. La Forge is standing next to him.

DATA:

Is she still angry?

LA FORGE:

No, but I'd stay out of Sickbay for a while if I were you. I still don't know why you dropped her in the water.

DATA:

I was attempting to get in the spirit of things. I thought it would be humorous.

Data frowns, troubled by this recent experience. He puts Spot down and moves to a bulkhead. He activates a control panel and a small compartment slides open, revealing a small computer chip which is suspended in a glass and metal framework. Data looks at the chip for a beat and La Forge moves to him in concern.

LA FORGE:

Data, you're not thinking about using that thing are you?

DATA:

It has occurred to me on several occasions. But I believe this may be the appropriate time.

LA FORGE:

Wait a minute. I thought you've always been afraid it would overload your neural net.

DATA:

That is true. However, I believe my growth as an artificial lifeform has reached an impasse. For thirty-four years I have endeavored to become more "human"- to grow beyond my original programming. And yet I am still unable to grasp such a simple concept as humor. This emotion chip is the

only answer.

La Forge considers a moment, looks at the chip, and reluctantly has to agree.

LA FORGE:

All right.

Data sits down and La Forge moves to stand behind him.

LA FORGE:

But at the first sign of trouble, I'm going to deactivate it. Agreed?

DATA:

Agreed.

La Forge works on Data's head for a moment, and then opens a panel on Data's head, revealing the blinking circuitry within.

CUT TO:

55 INT. READY ROOM 55

Riker is standing next to Picard, who has his back turned and is staring out the window. Picard seems distracted during the scene, his mind clearly elsewhere as Riker finishes his report.

RIKER:

We found two dead Romulans aboard the station. We're analyzing their equipment to see if we can determine what ship they came from. Picard nods absently.

PICARD:

There's still no indication of why they attacked the station?

RIKER:

We think they were looking for something- they practically tore the place apart.

PICARD:

Hmm, (beat) Inform Starfleet Command. This could indicate a new Romulan threat in this sector.

RIKER:

You want me to contact Starfleet?

PICARD:

Is there a problem?

RIKER:

No, sir.

PICARD:

Thank you, Number One.

Picard keeps his back turned, looking out the window. Riker hesitates, awkward.

RIKER:

There is something else, Captain. One of the scientists, a Doctor Soran, has insisted on speaking with you. (beat) I told him you were busy, sir, but he said it was absolutely imperative that he speak with you right away.

PICARD:

Understood. That will be all.

RIKER:

Sir, is there anything wrong?

PICARD:

No. Thank you.

A beat, then Riker turns and EXITS. Off Picard's unreadable face.

CUT TO:

56 INT. TEN FORWARD 56

The room is bustling with patrons and activity. Data ENTERS with an oddlook on his face, his body language subtly altered. He is looking at the world through new eyes. La Forge is following him closely, watching his every move. They move to the bar. Guinan comes over- she has not aged at all since the Enterprise-B. She sets down an exotic-looking container full of dark liquid.

GUINAN:

You two just volunteered to be my first victims. This is a new concoction I picked up on Forcas III. Trust me, you're going to love it. She pours two glasses of the liquid. Data takes one and sniffs it, then takes a drink. La Forge watches him closely. Data frowns.

LA FORGE:

Well?

DATA:

I believe the beverage has provoked an emotional response.

LA FORGE:

Really? What do you feel?

DATA:

I am uncertain. I have had little experience with emotions. I am unable to articulate the sensation.

GUINAN:

Emotions?

LA FORGE:

I'll explain later.

Data finishes the drink, concentrates, tries to make sense of the rush of feelings. His expression is one of disgust.

GUINAN:

(to La Forge)

I don't think he likes it.

DATA:

(excited)

Yes. That is it. I hate it.

LA FORGE:

Data, I think the chip is working.

Data looks at La Forge with a big smile on his face.

DATA:

Yes. I hate this! It is revolting!

Beat.

GUINAN:

Another round?

DATA:

Please.

In the b.g., we see Picard ENTER Ten Forward.

57 FOLLOW PICARD 57

as he walks through Ten Forward and heads toward a table by the windows. Soran is sitting at the table, staring out at the stars, lost in thought. His observatory uniform is distinctive, and sets him apart from everyone else in the room. Picard walks up to the table.

PICARD:

Doctor Soran?

SORAN:

Yes, yes, Captain. Thank you for coming.

The men shake hands and Picard sits down. Soran is an imposing physical presence, but at the moment he seems very much the eccentric scientist consumed with his work. Picard waves away a waiter.

PICARD:

Nothing for me. (brusque, to Soran) I understand there's something urgent you need to discuss with me.

SORAN:

Yes. I need to return to the observatory immediately. I must continue a critical experiment I was running on the Amargosa star.

Picard's reaction is a little impatient- this doesn't sound that imperative to him.

PICARD:

Doctor, we're still conducting an investigation into the attack. Once we've completed our work, we'll be happy to allow you and your fellow scientists back aboard the observatory. Until then-

SORAN:

The timing is very important on my experiment- if it is not completed within the next twelve hours, years of research will be lost.

PICARD:

We're doing the best we can. Now if you'll excuse me...

Picard moves to stand, but Soran reaches out and gently but firmly grabs him by the arm. The unexpected physical contact and the change of intensity in Soran's face stops Picard in his tracks.

SORAN:

(cryptically)

They say time is the fire in which we burn, and right now, Captain, my time is running out. (beat) We leave so many things unfinished in our lives- I'm sure you can understand.

For some reason, Soran's words have struck a deep chord within Picard. He looks away from Soran's compelling gaze and thinks for a long moment. When he finally speaks, his voice is barely above a whisper.

PICARD:

I'll see what I can do.

Picard walks away without a word before Soran can thank him. Soran looks after him with relief, then pulls out an antique pocket watch and opens it. He looks at the watch for a long moment, then snaps it closed and head for the opposite exit from the one Picard took. Follow Soran across Ten Forward until he suddenly stops in shock at something he sees.

58 SORAN'S POV58

of Guinan, who is now back at the bar.

59 RESUME SORAN59

A dark look crosses his face- he is disturbed by the sight of Guinan. He quickly turns and EXITS.

60 ON GUINAN60

she begins to sense something, as though someone is watching her. She turns, looks in the direction where Soran was just standing, but there's no one there now. She shakes off the feeling and goes back to work.

CUT TO:

61 INT. ENGINEERING 61

A short time later. A Romulan tricorder is connected to some diagnostic equipment near a console. Worf is talking to Riker.

Worf activates a monitor which shows a complex diagram of sensor information.

WORF:

One of the dead Romulans had a tricorder. We analyzed its sensor logs and found they were scanning for signature particles of a compound called trilithium.

RIKER:

Trilithium?

WORF:

An experimental compound the Romulans have been working on. In theory, a trilithium-based explosive would be thousands of times more powerful than an anti-matter weapon. But they never found a way to stabilize it.

RIKER:

Why were they looking for it on a Federation observatory? It doesn't make any sense.

Riker considers.

RIKER:

(cont'd)

Have Geordi and Data go over with the next Away Team. Tell them to scan the observatory for trilithium.

WORF:

Aye, sir.

CUT TO:

62 INT. OBSERVATORY OPS62

The station is still a wreck. La Forge and Data are scanning the room with tricorders.

LA FORGE:

(off tricorder)

There's no sign of any trilithium in here.

La Forge continues to scan. Suddenly Data lets out a quiet giggle. La Forge stops and turns to look at him. Data giggles louder.

DATA:

(laughing, to himself)

I get it. I get it.

LA FORGE:

You get what?

Data laughs again.

DATA:

When you said to Commander Riker (imitating La Forge's voice) "The clown can stay, but the Ferengi in the gorilla suit has to go."

La Forge looks blankly at him for a moment.

LA FORGE:

What?

DATA:

During the Farpoint mission. We were on the Bridge and you told a joke. That was the punchline.

LA FORGE:

The Farpoint mission? Data, that was seven years ago.

DATA:

I know. I just got it. (laughs) It was very funny.

LA FORGE:

Thanks.

La Forge indicates a corridor. They EXIT in that direction.

63 INT. OBSERVATORY CORRIDOR- CONTINUOUS 63

A short corridor connecting the Ops Center with other compartments. La Forge suddenly stops in front of what appears to be a standard bulkhead.

LA FORGE:

Wait a minute, there's a hidden doorway here. I can see the joint of the metal with my VISOR.

La Forge runs his finger in a vertical line along what appears to be a smooth bulkhead.

DATA:

(off tricorder)

There appears to be a dampening field in operation. I cannot scan beyond the bulkhead.

La Forge puts his tricorder away and begins looking for a way to open the door.

LA FORGE:

I don't see a control panel, or an access port.

DATA:

(off tricorder)

It appears to be a magnetically sealed.

Data steps forward and opens a small panel on wrist and makes a quick adjustment to the circuitry within.

DATA:

I believe I can reverse the polarity by attenuating my axial servo.

Data completes his adjustment and then moves his wrist over the door panel.

DATA:

(joking)

"Open sesame."

There is a humming sound followed by a loud click. The door slides open.

DATA:

(smiles)

You could say I have a magnetic personality.

La Forge reacts to the bad pun with a grimace. They EXIT to

64 INT. OBSERVATORY PROBE ROOM- CONTINUOUS 64

A small room with several probes stacked in holding racks. La Forge and

Data scan.

LA FORGE:

I'm still not picking up anything. Someone went to a lot of trouble to shield this room.

They put their tricorders away and begin looking around the room. Data continues to snicker and giggle as he tries not to laugh at jokes his mind conjures up. La Forge begins inspecting the probes, finally stops at one probe which has several odd devices attached to the side.

LA FORGE:

Data, take a look at this. (Data comes over) You ever seen a solar probe with this kind of configuration?

Data uses the tricorder as if it were a puppet as he opens and closes it like a mouth.

DATA:

(making tricorder "talk")

No, Geordi. I have not. It is most unusual.

Data giggles and La Forge reacts with the irritation of someone listening to a very bad comedian.

LA FORGE:

Just help me get this panel open.

Data helps La Forge as they try to open a panel on the casing of the probe. They open the panel and La Forge looks inside. He reacts to something.

LA FORGE:

Whoa, my VISOR's picking up something in the theta band. It could be a trilithium signature.

Data suddenly start laughing. La Forge turns in irritation.

LA FORGE:

Data, this isn't the time.

DATA:

(laughing)

I am sorry, but I cannot stop myself. I think something is wrong

64AANGLE (VFX-P) 64A

Data's laughter escalates into hysteria, then Data begins to jerk and shake and goes into a bizarre "emotional seizure." A rush of emotions race across his face: anger, passion, shock. A kaleidoscopic blur of reactions contort his features. Then it stops and he falls to the

ground.

LA FORGE:

Data!

La Forge rushes to him. Data has a look of surprise on his face as he blinks a few times. He sits up.

LA FORGE:

Data, are you all right?

DATA:

I believe the emotional chip has overloaded my positronic relays.

LA FORGE:

We better get you back to the ship (hits combadge) La Forge to Enterprise.

There's no response. La Forge frowns for a beat, then we hear Soran's voice.

SORAN:

Is there a problem, gentlemen?

65 INCLUDE SORAN 65

standing in the room. La Forge didn't hear him come in.

LA FORGE:

Oh, Doctor. Yeah, as a matter of fact, there is. There's a damping= field in here blocking our com signal. (re: Data) Will you give me a hand?

Over the above dialogue, Soran glances over at the solar probe La Forge was inspecting. He notes the opened panel and a disturbed look crosses his face. Soran looks back at La Forge.

SORAN:

I'd be happy to.

Soran moves toward them, and then without warning, he punches La Forge in the face, knocking the VISOR across the room. He whirls around and points a phaser at Data, who suddenly looks fearful.

DATA:

Please don't hurt me.

CUT TO:

66 INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS66

Picard is standing at the replicator.

PICARD:

Tea. Earl Grey. Hot.

The cup of tea appears in the replicator and at the same moment, the door chimes.

PICARD:

Come.

Troi ENTERS. Picard would rather not be bothered right now, but he is polite as always.

PICARD:

Counselor. What can I do for you?

TROI:

Actually, I'm here to see if there's anything I can do for you.

PICARD:

Well, I appreciate your concern, but I'd rather not discuss it right now, thank you.

But Troi won't be brushed away so easily.

TROI:

I'm afraid I can't just leave it at that. The commanding officer of this ship is clearly distraught about something. As ship's counselor, it's my duty to-

PICARD:

As ship's counselor, it's your duty to know not only when you're needed but also when you're not.

TROI:

You can't fool an empath, Captain. I know exactly when I'm needed. Picard is really not in the mood for this. His tone hardens.

PICARD:

Well, with all due respect to your Betazoid senses, I prefer to be alone right now.

TROI:

Very well. I suppose I could make out my weekly report to Starfleet Command without your input. (beat) "Admiral Lusby, regarding the unusual behavior of Jean-Luc Picard: I find him increasingly irritable, remote and uncooperative. I recommend forced shore leave at a Starbase facility

in order to-

PICARD:

All right, all right. You've made your point.

Troi takes a seat and patiently waits. Picard gets up, moves around the room for a moment, and stops. He speaks in a flat, unemotional tone of voice.

PICARD:

The message I received. (beat) My brother and his son- my nephew- burned to death in a fire.

Troi reacts, genuinely surprised.

TROI:

Captain, I'm sorry. (beat) I know there were a lot of unresolved conflicts between you and your brother.

PICARD:

What I can't get out of my mind is the image of Rene- my nephew. I just can't believe he's gone.

He trails off.

TROI:

It's only natural to feel a heightened sense of tragedy when a child dies. (sensing more) But it goes deeper than that, doesn't it? I can sense that Rene meant a great deal to you.

PICARD:

In a way, he was as close as I ever came to having a child of my own. Troi eyes an open photo album on the table. She reaches over and flips through the pages for a moment. There are many photos inside, from many periods in time, including one of Picard's brother standing next to his young son. This is the Picard family album.

TROI:

Your family history is very important to you, isn't it?

PICARD:

(nods)

Ever since I was a little boy, I remember hearing about the family line. The Picards that fought at Trafalgar, the Picards that settled the first Martian colony. When my brother married and had a son...

Picard hesitates- this is difficult for him.

TROI:

You felt it was no longer your responsibility to carry on the family line.

PICARD:

(nods)

My brother had shouldered that burden, allowing me to pursue my own selfish needs.

TROI:

There's nothing selfish about pursuing your own life, your own career. Picard moves to the window, stares outside. A shadow crosses his face. He's getting to the heart of the matter.

PICARD:

You know, Counselor, I'm not getting any younger. For some time now, I've been aware that there are fewer days ahead than there are behind. (beat) But I always took comfort in the fact that when I was gone, my family would continue. But now...

Picard moves back to the photo album, open it to the last page, and then flips through the remaining pages. They are blank.

PICARD:

I've had brushes with death...more than I care to contemplate. I always accepted it as a calculated risk that goes along with wearing this uniform. (beat) But now, the idea of death has a terrible sense of finality to it.

He looks at her.

PICARD:

I'm the last Picard.

A quiet beat as Troi considers him.

TROI:

Captain, perhaps we-

Suddenly, a blinding burst of light from outside the windows washes into the room. Troi and Picard rush to the window and shield their eyes against the glare.

RIKER'S COM VOICE

Red Alert! All hands to duty stations!

CUT TO:

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69 INT. BRIDGE (VFX-I)69

Picard and Troi ENTER from a turbolift. Riker and Worf at their stations. The star is on the viewscreen, getting darker by the second. More=flaming debris is being ejected into space.

PICARD:

Report.

RIKER:

A quantum implosion has occurred within the Amargosa star. All nuclearfusion is breaking down.

PICARD:

How is that possible?

WORF:

Sensor records show a solar probe was launched from the observatory a few moments ago.

RIKER:

The star's going to collapse in a matter of minutes. Something beeps on Worf's console.

WORF:

Sir, the implosion has produced a level twelve shock wave.

TROI:

(shocked)

Level twelve? That'll destroy everything in this system.

TRANSPORTER COM VOICE

Transporter room to Bridge. I can't locate Commander La Forge or Commander Data, sir.

RIKER:

(to Worf)

Did they return to the ship?

WORF:

(works)

No, sir. They are not aboard.

PICARD:

How long until the shock wave hits the observatory?

WORF:

Four minutes, forty seconds.

Picard looks at Riker, who then quickly heads for the turbolift.

RIKER:

Mr. Worf.

Riker and Worf EXIT.

70 EXT. SPACE- THE STAR (VFX-I)70

The star is almost entirely dark. Radiating out from the star is a huge shock wave- a rapidly growing sphere of energy.

71 INT. OBSERVATORY PROBE ROOM (VFX-P)71

Soran is standing at a console watching a graphic depiction of the star's collapse on a monitor when the door suddenly opens. Soran whirls around and fires his phaser at Riker and Worf. They dive for cover just outside the room. (NOTE: The probe La Forge examined earlier is now gone.)

RIKER:

(to Worf)

What the hell's he doing?

Worf dodges another phaser blast and sees La Forge lying unconscious on the deck. Data is nowhere to be seen.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Enterprise to Commander Riker, you have two minutes left.

RIKER:

(yells to Soran)

Soran, did you hear that? There's a level twelve shock wave coming.

We've got to get out of here!

Soran's only answer is another phaser blast.

71A OMITTED 71A

72 INT. BRIDGE 72

As before. ENSIGN HAYES is at Tactical. An alarm suddenly beeps on the Tactical console.

HAYES:

(urgent)

Sir. A Klingon Bird of Prey is decloaking off the port bow.

Shocked reactions.

PICARD:

What?

73 EXT. SPACE (VFX-I) 73

as an old-style Klingon Bird of Prey decloaks near the observatory.

74 INT. OBSERVATORY PROBE ROOM (VFX-P)74

Soran is continuing to shoot at Riker and Worf. Riker suddenly notices something off-camera.

74ARIKER'S POV74A

Data is huddled in a corner of the room, cowering in fear.

74BNEW ANGLE (VFX-P)74B

The firefight continues.

RIKER:

Data! See if you can get to Geordi!

Data looks up at him with a terrified look on his face.

DATA:

I...cannot, sir. I believe I am... afraid.

Suddenly Soran's communicator beeps. Soran reaches down and grabs the unconscious La Forge by the collar and the two of them dematerialize. (Soran has the VISOR in his hand.) Riker, Data and Worf react.

75 EXT. SPACE- THE KLINGON SHIP (VFX-I)75

The Bird of Prey cloaks and vanishes.

76 INT. BRIDGE76

As before.

TRANSPORTER COM VOICE

Transporter room to Bridge. I have the Away Team aboard, sir.

PICARD:

(to Con)

Helm, warp one, engage.

77 EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE & OBSERVATORY (VFX-I)77

The Enterprise warps away just as the shock wave reaches the observatory and vaporizes it in a fiery explosion.

CUT TO:

78 INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- BRIDGE78

On a monitor where we can see a graphic depiction of the darkening star and shock wave. Move to reveal the inside of the old Klingon ship. It's beaten up and patched in several places, obviously not a first-line model.

Watching the viewscreen are LURSA and B'ETOR, two powerful-looking Klingon women. They are sisters; aggressive, seductive and very dangerous. Several N.D. male Klingons man the various stations. The sisters stare at the image of the destroyed sun in awe.

B'ETOR

Toh-pak-cha=8A (Glorious=8A)

LURSA:

HoS qorDu. (A great power.)

Soran now ENTERS the Bridge. His expression is dark and angry. He is clearly not a prisoner here and strides up to the sisters.

B'ETOR

(excited, to Soran)

You've done it, Soran.

But without warning, Soran hits B'Etor squarely in the jaw, knocking her back over a console. Several Klingons leap to their feet, drawing their weapons, but B'Etor holds up a hand as she gets to one knee.

B'ETOR

Wait!

She dabs a trickle of blood at the corner of her mouth. Her expression is angry and threatening.

B'ETOR

I hope for your sake that you are initiating a mating ritual.

SORAN:

You got careless. The Romulans came looking for their missing trilithium.

B'ETOR

Impossible. We left no survivors on their outpost.

B'Etor has now gotten to her feet in the b.g.

SORAN:

They knew it was aboard the observatory. If the Enterprise hadn't intervened, they would have found it.

LURSA:

But they didn't find it and now we have a weapon of unlimited power.

SORAN:

I have the weapon, Lursa. And if you ever want me to give it to you, I advise you to be a little more careful in the future.

B'Etor grabs Soran and holds a wicked-looking knife to his throat.

B'ETOR

Perhaps we are tired of waiting.

Soran is unfazed by this threat.

SORAN:

Without my research, the trilithium is worthless, as are your plans to reconquer the Klingon Empire.

Lursa reaches out and calmly pushes her sister's knife away.

SORAN:

Set course for the Veridian system. Maximum warp.

LURSA:

(to Helm)

Bosh-ta-JaH Veridian (Set course for Veridian)

A KLINGON GUARD ENTERS dragging the unconscious La Forge.

KLINGON GUARD:

What shall I do with this?

Soran moves toward La Forge, a grim look on his face.

SORAN:

Bring him with me. I need some answers from Mr. La Forge.

Soran EXITS.

CUT TO:

79 OMITTED 79

80 INT. CORRIDOR 80

Riker and Worf are on the move down the corridor.

WORF:

I have spoken to the Klingon High Council, sir. They identified the Bird of Prey as belonging to the Duras sisters.

RIKER:

(surprised)

Lursa and B'Etor? This doesn't make any sense. A renowned stellar physicist somehow uses a trilitium probe to destroy a star, kidnaps Geordi and escapes with a pair of Klingon renegades. Why? What the hell's going on?

They EXIT to

81 INT. SICKBAY81

Worf and Riker ENTER. Crusher is closing a panel on the back of Data's head. He is sitting on a biobed, scanning himself with a tricorder.

RIKER:

How is he?

CRUSHER:

It looks like a power surge fused the emotional chip into his neural net.

WORF:

Will that be a danger to him?

CRUSHER:

I don't think so. The chip still seems to be working. I'd feel better if I could take a closer look, but I can't remove it without completely dismantling his cerebral conduit.

RIKER:

(to Data)

Looks like you're stuck with emotions for a while. How do you feel?

DATA:

I am quite...preoccupied with concern about Geordi.

RIKER:

We all are, Data. But we're going to get him back.

DATA:

I hope so, sir.

Data's expression is still one of concern. Crusher pulls Riker aside.

CRUSHER:

Will, I checked into Doctor Soran's background.

Crusher activates the wall monitor and a picture of Doctor Soran along with some biographical information appears.

CRUSHER:

He's an El-Aurian, over three hundred years old. He lost his entire family when the Borg destroyed his world. Soran escaped with a handful of other refugees aboard a ship called the Lakul. The ship was destroyed by some kind of energy ribbon, but Soran and forty-six others were rescued by the Enterprise-B.

RIKER:

(reacts)

That was the mission where James Kirk was killed.

CRUSHER:

I checked the passenger manifest of the Lakul. Guess who else was on board?

She hits a control and suddenly Guinan's face appears on the screen. Riker reacts to the image.

CUT TO:

82 INT. GUINAN'S QUARTERS82

Close on Guinan as she looks up, surprised.

GUINAN:

Soran? That's a name I haven't heard in a long time.

Move to reveal Guinan's quarters, which are unlike any of the others on the Enterprise. None of the standard furniture, consoles or decoration are present. The floor is made of tile, not carpet; the walls are draped in exotic fabric. The lighting is moody and subdued.

Picard is standing before Guinan, who is sitting cross-legged on the floor. They talk to each other with an easy familiarity; two old friends who know each other well.

PICARD:

Do you remember him?

GUINAN:

Oh yes. I remember everyone who was on the Lakul, every face. Even the ones who didn't make it.

Guinan stands and begins to move about the room. She's clearly troubled by the memories. She hesitates, looks off into the middle-distance for a few moments. Picard moves to her.

PICARD:

Guinan. It's important that you tell me what you know. We think Soran's developed a weapon...a terrible weapon. It might give him enough power to-

GUINAN:

Soran doesn't care about power or weapons. All he cares about is getting back to the Nexus.

PICARD:

What's the "Nexus"?

Guinan moves to a table and begins to shift around some exotic-looking alien artifacts, distracting herself. This is difficult for her to discuss.

GUINAN:

It's a place I've tried very hard to forget.
She makes the decision to plunge ahead.

GUINAN:

That ribbon isn't just some random energy phenomenon travelling through space. It's a doorway. It leads to another place- the Nexus. It doesn't exist in our universe and it doesn't play by the same rules either.

PICARD:

What happened to you?

GUINAN:

I can't remember very much - what it looked like or how long I was there. But I do remember how it felt.

She turns to him and her face is filled with some kind of awe at the memory.

GUINAN:

It was like being inside...joy. As if joy was a real thing that I could wrap around myself. I've never been so content.

A long beat as Picard absorbs her words.

PICARD:

But then you were beamed away.

Guinan shows a rare burst of anger.

GUINAN:

I was pulled away. I didn't want to leave; none of us did. I felt like I'd left a part of myself behind. All I could think about was getting back. I didn't care what I had to do.

Guinan moves to a window and looks out at the stars.

GUINAN:

It took a long time, but eventually I learned to live with it. And I began to realize that my experience in the Nexus had changed me. (beat) I knew things about people, about events, about time.

PICARD:

Your "sixth sense"- I've always wondered where it came from. (beat) And what about Soran?

GUINAN:

Soran may still be obsessed with getting back. And if he is, he'll do anything to find that doorway again.

PICARD:

But why destroy a star? (beat) Thank you, Guinan.
He heads for the door.

GUINAN:

Let someone else do it, Jean-Luc.
Picard stops, looks at her.

GUINAN:

Let them send another starship. Don't get near the ribbon. If you go into that Nexus, you're not going to care about Soran or the Enterprise or me. All you're going to care about is how it feels to be there.
(beat) And you're never going to come back.
Picard weighs her words, sees the warning in her eyes, and carefully backs away and EXITS.

CUT TO:

83 INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- QUARTERS (VFX-P)83

A dimly-lit room somewhere in the bowels of the Klingon ship. Like every other room on this decrepit ship, the room looks well-worn and ill-maintained. Soran is seated behind a table, holding the VISOR. A PADD and Soran's pocketwatch sit on the table. La Forge is sitting in a chair across from him- his shirt has been removed. He looks very tense.

SORAN:

(re:

A remarkable piece of equipment, but a little inelegant, wouldn't you say? (beat) Have you ever considered a prosthesis that would make you look a little more...normal?

LA FORGE:

What's normal?

SORAN:

Normal is what everyone else is, and what you are not.

LA FORGE:

What do you want?

Soran takes a moment.

SORAN:

As you may or may not be aware, I am an El-Aurian. Some people call us a race of "listeners". We listen. (beat) Right now, Mr. La Forge, you have my undivided attention. I want to listen to everything you know about trilithium- and me.

La Forge thinks.

LA FORGE:

Trilithium is an experimental compound developed by the Romulans. I think it's a derivative of-

Soran picks up the PADD from the desk and activates it. Suddenly something small, with sharp edges, can be seen moving just underneath La Forge's skin near his chest. La Forge moves his hand to the spot, but then the protrusion is suddenly gone.

SORAN:

I don't want a science lecture. You were on that observatory looking for trilithium. Why?

LA FORGE:

I was ordered to by the Captain.

On the PADD in Soran's hand, we can now see an interior graphic of La Forge's body sitting in the chair. The graphic is interactive, moving as La Forge moves. A blinking dot represents the movement of the probe inside his body. Right now, the dot is in the middle of his chest.

SORAN:

Let's try to move beyond the usual prisoner-interrogator banter, shall we? You have information and I need it. (beat) Did the Captain explain his orders to you? Did he say why you were searching for trilithium?

LA FORGE:

No.

SORAN:

What about Guinan? What has she told you about me?

LA FORGE:

Guinan? I don't know what you're talking about.

On the PADD, we now see the dot has moved to a position next to La Forge's heart. Soran looks up at La Forge.

SORAN:

My instincts tell me you're lying. And I know that can't be easy for you. (off PADD) I can see you have a good heart.

Soran taps a control on the PADD. Suddenly La Forge grabs his chest in pain. Soran watches La Forge for a few seconds, then taps the PADD again. La Forge gasps and starts to breathe.

SORAN:

Oh, I forgot to tell you. While you were unconscious, I injected a nano-probe into your bloodstream. It's been navigating your cardiovascular system, and right now I've attached it to your left ventricle. (smiles) A little trick I picked up from the Borg.

LA FORGE:

(gasping)

Yeah, they're full of great ideas.

SORAN:

I just stopped your heart for five seconds. It felt like an eternity, didn't it? Did you know that you can stop the human heart for up to ten minutes before the onset of brain damage?

LA FORGE:

No, I didn't know that.

SORAN:

We learn something new about ourselves every day. (beat) Now. Maybe I didn't make myself clear. It is very important that you tell me exactly what Captain Picard knows.

LA FORGE:

I told you everything. You might as well just kill me right now. Soran's features soften as he smiles slightly. For a moment, he looks genuinely compassionate- and it's a disturbing contrast to his usual dark intensity.

SORAN:

I'm not a killer, Mr. La Forge. (beat) Let's try thirty seconds. Soran taps a control on the PADD. La Forge gasps and strains against an unimaginable pain.

Soran picks up his pocketwatch and opens the cover, sits back in his chair, watching the seconds tick.

CUT TO:

84 INT. STELLAR CARTOGRAPHY (VFX-P) 84

A room filled with exotic-looking devices, sensors and computers which handle the enormous task of tracking the ship's position in space. The monitors around the room display various diagrams of the energy ribbon (as seen in the beginning of the film).

Data is sitting at a computer console which has a great deal of complex information on the screen. Picard is standing next to him. Throughout the following, Data seems distracted and preoccupied.

DATA:

According to our information, the ribbon is a conflux of temporal energy which travels through our galaxy every 39.1 years

PICARD:

When is it expected back?
Data doesn't answer right away.

PICARD:

Data?

DATA:

Sorry, Captain. The ribbon has already entered the galaxy. It will pass through this sector in approximately thirty-one hours.
Picard moves about the room. He's frustrated, tired, but determined to find out what's going on.

PICARD:

Guinan said Soran was trying to get back to the ribbon. If that's true, then there must be some connection with the Amargosa star.

DATA:

The star's destruction has had numerous astro-physical effects within this sector. However, none of them appear to have a connection to the energy ribbon.

PICARD:

Give me a list of those effects. I want to know every single thing which has been altered or changed, no matter how insignificant.

DATA:

It will take a few moments for the computer to compile the information. Data works the computer and then the computer begins to work. Data sighs- his expression becomes downcast and gloomy. He sits down and puts his head in his hands. Picard finally has to say something.

PICARD:

Data, are you all right?

DATA:

No, sir. I am finding it difficult to concentrate. I believe I am overwhelmed with feelings of remorse and regret concerning my actions on the observatory.

PICARD:

What do you mean?

DATA:

I wanted to save Geordi. I tried. But I experienced something I did not expect. (beat) I believe it was fear.

Picard regards him sympathetically.

PICARD:

Fear is a very difficult emotion to overcome. It's something we all have to learn to deal with.

DATA:

But I did not deal with it, sir. I let it prevent me from helping my friend. (beat) Does that make me a coward?

PICARD:

No. And what you must try to avoid is becoming consumed by another emotion which I believe you're beginning to experience: guilt.

DATA:

(considers)

Guilt. It is a most unpleasant feeling.

84AANGLE (VFX-P) 84A

The computer finishes its calculations and the console beeps. Data works the console. Information appears on screen.

DATA:

According to our current information, the destruction of the Amargosa star has had the following effects in this sector: gamma emissions have increased by .05 percent, the starship Bozeman was forced to make a course correction, a research project on Gorik IV was halted due to increased neutrino particles, ambient magnetic fields have decreased by-

PICARD:

Wait. The Bozeman, why did it change course?

DATA:

(matter of fact)

The destruction of the Amargosa star has altered the gravitational forces throughout the sector. Any ship passing through this region will have to make a minor course correction.

Picard is starting to get an idea, he's onto something here. He moves to

a large table in the center of the room.

PICARD:

(musing)

A minor course correction. (beat) Where is the ribbon now?

84BANGLE (VFX-P) 84B

Data moves to the table to work. After a few beats, an elaborate map of the galaxy springs up on the ceiling of the room. A blinking dot shows the position of the ribbon.

DATA:

This is its current position.

PICARD:

Can you project its course?

Data hesitates, still obsessed with his own emotional turmoil. Picard finally has to lay down the law.

PICARD:

(firm)

Data. I have nothing but sympathy for what you're going through. But right now, I need your full attention on the task at hand. If you can't provide it, then I'll have to relieve you of duty until Doctor Crusher can remove this emotion chip of yours. I'm sorry, but you leave me no other choice.

This snaps Data back. He considers this for a long moment, then looks determined.

DATA:

I do not wish to remove the chip, sir. Although these emotions are proving difficult to deal with, I cannot imagine going back to a life without them. I have taken an important step toward becoming truly human. If I were to turn back now... (beat) I would like to continue in my duties, sir.

Picard smiles at him.

PICARD:

Courage is an emotion too, Data. (beat) Now, can you project the course of the ribbon?

DATA:

I believe so.

84CANGLE (VFX-P) 84C

Data works the console. A red line moves to form an arc through the

starfield. Picard examines the display for a moment and nods. He's excited, on to something.

PICARD:

Enhance grid A-9.

Data works and the display now zooms into a single sector. The red line cuts through the sector.

PICARD:

Where was the Amargosa star?

Data works. A star is highlighted near the red line.

PICARD:

Now, you said the gravitational forces in this sector have been altered, could that also affect the course of the ribbon?

DATA:

(thinks)

I believe so.

84DANGLE (VFX-P) 84D

Data works and holographic display changes again. The red line representing the course of the ribbon now shifts to the right- away from the Amargosa star's position. Picard is beginning to realize what's going on.

PICARD:

That's what Soran's doing, he's changing its course. (beat) But why? Why try to alter its path? Why not simply fly into it with a ship?

Data thinks for a moment.

DATA:

Our records show that every ship which has approached the ribbon has either been destroyed or severely damaged.

Picard thinks about this, then has a flash of insight.

PICARD:

He can't go to the ribbon, so he's trying to make the ribbon come to him. (beat) Data, is it going to pass near any M-Class planets?

DATA:

(works)

Yes, sir. There are two in the Veridian system.

84EANGLE (VFX-P) 84E

The display zooms in on a star very close to the ribbon's path. We now

see a solar system with a single star and four planets. The red line moves directly through the system- it passes very close to the third planet. Picard eyes that planet and points to it.

PICARD:

It's very close to Veridian III, but not close enough. Picard's mind is going a mile a minute. He suddenly has a horrible realization.

PICARD:

Data, what would happen to the ribbon's path if he destroyed the Veridian star itself?

84FANGLE (VFX-P) 84F

Data works. On the display, the Veridian star suddenly darkens and goes out. The red line shifts slightly until it makes an exact intersection with the third planet. They both react to this sight. They're both aware of just how serious this is.

PICARD:

That's where he's going.

DATA:

It should be noted, sir, that the collapse of the Veridian star would produce a shock wave similar to the one we observed at Amargosa.

PICARD:

(grim)

And destroy every planet in the system.

Picard eyes the graphic with a sense of dread.

PICARD:

Are any of them inhabited?

DATA:

Veridian III is uninhabited, but Veridian IV supports a pre-industrial humanoid society.

PICARD:

Population?

DATA:

Approximately two hundred thirty million.

A grim beat.

PICARD:

(to com)

Picard to Bridge.

WORF'S COM VOICE

Worf here, sir.

Picard heads for the exit, a sense of urgency and determination in his every move.

PICARD:

Red Alert, Mr. Worf. Set a course for the Veridian system, maximum warp.

Picard and Data EXIT Stellar Cartography.

85 EXT. SPACE- THE ENTERPRISE (VFX-I) 85

as it goes into warp.

CUT TO:

86 INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- BRIDGE86

Lursa and B'Etor in command as Soran ENTERS.

LURSA:

Did you get anything from the human?

SORAN:

No. His heart just isn't in it.

KLINGON HELM:

(off console)

We have entered orbit of Veridian III.

SORAN:

Prepare to transport me to the surface.

B'ETOR

Wait. When do we get our payment?

Soran hands B'Etor a small computer chip.

SORAN:

This contains all the information you'll need to build a trilitium weapon. It's been coded. Once I'm safely to the surface, I'll transmit the decryption sequence to you. Not before.

KLINGON HELM:

(urgent)

Mistress! A Federation starship is entering the system!

LURSA:

What? On viewer.

86AANGLE (VFX-P) 86A

The Helm works. The viewscreen now shows the Enterprise at impulse entering the system. Reactions.

KLINGON HELM:

They are hailing us.

B'ETOR

Du'cha (On speakers.)

The Helm works.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Klingon vessel. We know what you're doing, and we will destroy any probe launched toward the Veridian star.

Soran's expression darkens.

B'ETOR

What do we do?

Soran checks his watch.

SORAN:

There's no time for this. Eliminate them.

B'ETOR

(reacts)

That is a Galaxy class starship. We are no match for them.

Soran thinks for a moment, then he gets an idea. He pulls La Forge's VISOR out of a pocket. He eyes it with intent.

SORAN:

I think it's time we gave Mr. La Forge his sight back.

Off Lursa and B'Etor's curiosity.

CUT TO:

87 EXT. SPACE- THE ENTERPRISE (VFX-I) 87

nearing Veridian III. The planet's star is visible.

88 INT. BRIDGE88

Picard is pacing. Riker, Data, Worf, Troi, N.D.s at their stations. The ship is at Red Alert. Data's mood has improved. He's making an effort to keep a positive outlook, to stay upbeat.

RIKER:

Maybe they're not out there.

PICARD:

They're just trying to decide whether a twenty year-old Klingon Bird of Prey is any match for the Federation flagship.

TROI:

Or perhaps they're on the surface.

PICARD:

Mr. Data, scan the planet for lifeforms.

Data smiles, delighted at the request.

DATA:

I was hoping you would ask me to do that, Captain. I just love to scan for lifeforms.

As Data works, he breaks into a merry little song.

DATA:

(sings)

"Lifeforms tiny little lifeforms. Where are the lifeforms-"

PICARD:

Commander.

DATA:

Sorry, sir. (works) There is too much interference in the planet's ionosphere for an accurate reading.

Worf turns to Picard.

WORF:

Sir, according to my calculations, a solar probe launched from either the Klingon ship or the planet's surface will take eleven seconds to reach the star. (beat) However, since we do not know the exact point of origin, it will take us between eight and fifteen seconds to lock our weapons onto it.

They exchange a grim look.

RIKER:

(quiet, to Picard)

That's a pretty big margin of error.

PICARD:

Too big. How long until the ribbon arrives?

DATA:

Approximately forty-seven minutes, sir.

PICARD:

(disturbed)

I have to find a way to get to Soran.

An alarm goes off on Worf's console.

WORF:

Captain, Klingon vessel decloaking directly ahead.

88AANGLE (VFX-I) 88A

On the viewscreen, the Bird of Prey decloaks.

WORF:

They are hailing.

PICARD:

On screen.

88BANGLE (VFX-P) 88B

On the viewscreen, Lursa and B'Etor appear.

LURSA:

Captain. What an unexpected pleasure.

PICARD:

Lursa, I want to talk to Soran.

LURSA:

I'm afraid the Doctor is no longer aboard our ship.

PICARD:

Then I'll beam down to his location. Just give us his coordinates.

B'ETOR

The Doctor values his privacy. He would be quite upset if an Away Team interrupted him.

PICARD:

Very well. I'll beam to your ship and you can transport me to Soran.

RIKER:

(urgent)

Sir, you can't trust them. They'll kill you just like they killed Geordi.

Lursa and B'Etor exchange a glance.

LURSA:

(innocent)

We did not kill your Engineer. He's been our guest.

RIKER:

Then return him.

B'ETOR

In exchange for what?

PICARD:

Me. If you let me speak to Soran.

The two sisters appear to consider this for a moment.

B'ETOR

(to Lursa)

The Captain would make a much more valuable hostage.

LURSA:

(to Picard)

We'll consider it a prisoner exchange.

PICARD:

Agreed.

The transmission ends. Picard heads for the turbolift.

PICARD:

Number One, you have the Bridge. Have Doctor Crusher meet me in transporter room three.

Picard EXITS

CUT TO:

89 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (VFX-P) 89

Picard stands on the platform. Crusher and NURSE OGAWA stand nearby. The TRANSPORTER CHIEF works his console.

CHIEF:

Receiving the coordinates, Captain.

PICARD:

Energize.

Picard dematerializes- and at the same instant, La Forge materializes. Crusher and Ogawa rush to his aide, pull out their tricorders and scan him.

La Forge is conscious, and he's wearing his VISOR.

CUT TO:

90 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY (VFX-P) 90

A large plateau ringed with trees and underbrush. A single rockface juts

upward, forming a backdrop for the plateau. Against the rockface, a large scaffolding has been erected- planks and beams forming a complex structure- ladders connect each level. It leads to a narrow ledge a dozen meters above.

Picard materializes on the plateau. (NOTE: Picard's combadge is gone and he is unarmed.) A moment as he looks around. Strange animals and birds can be heard. He turns and sees Soran standing nearby, calmly looking at his pocketwatch. Soran puts the watch away.

SORAN:

You must think I'm quite the madman.

PICARD:

The thought had crossed my mind.

SORAN:

The only possible reason you're here is because you're not entirely confident you can shoot down my probe after all. So you've come to dissuade me from my horrific plan. (beat) Goodluck.

Soran turns his back on Picard and walks away.

90AANGLE (VFX-P) 90A

Picard takes a step to follow him and then is jolted backward by a large forcefield which briefly flashes into view. The field completely surrounds the plateau, enclosing Soran and the scaffolding, with Picard on the outside. Off Picard's surprise.

CUT TO:

91 INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- BRIDGE (VFX-P)91

The Klingon Navigator is working his console.

KLINGON HELM:

I have established the link.

LURSA:

Put it through over here.

Lursa and B'Etora move to one of the consoles with a large monitor. The screen shows static for a few seconds, then clears to a distorted view of a ceiling on the Enterprise- this is La Forge's POV. (NOTE: The POV is slightly fritzed, but free of the usual VISOR effects.)

LURSA:

It's working.

B'ETORA

Where is he?

Suddenly, Crusher's face looms large in the picture, as if she's leaning over La Forge. She smiles and starts talking. We can see her lips move, but we can't hear what she's saying.

CRUSHER:

(silent)

Don't worry, there's been no permanent damage. Your heart is perfectly fine. There's been a little arterial damage...

Lursa and B'Etor pull back in surprise at the image.

B'ETOR

Human females are so repulsive.

CUT TO:

92 INT. SICKBAY- CONTINUOUS 92

Crusher is leaning over La Forge, who is on a biobed. Mid-conversation.

CRUSHER:

...and some myocardial degeneration. I'm going to give you some hematozine, and I want to run more tests, but I think you're going to be fine.

LA FORGE:

Thanks, Doc.

CUT TO:

93 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY 93

Picard is walking the perimeter of the invisible forcefield, looking for some way in. Soran is concentrating on his PADD as Picard tries to engage him on some level.

PICARD:

You don't need to do this, Soran. I'm sure we could find some other way to get you into this Nexus.

93AANGLE (VFX-P) 93A

Soran gets up and works his control PADD. Suddenly a probe launcher decloaks in the middle of the plateau. The launcher is a cylindrical apparatus the size of a small car. Soran goes to the launcher, steps onto it and begins working the control panel.

SORAN:

(calm, distracted)

I've spent eighty years looking for another way, Captain. This is the only one. (beat) Of course, you could always come with me. You fancy yourself an explorer. Here's a chance to explore something no human has

ever experienced.

PICARD:

Not if it means killing over two hundred million people. (beat, then with meaning) I wonder, did your wife Leandra know that she married a man who was capable of mass murder?

This has touched a nerve in Soran. Something dark and ugly flickers across his face.

PICARD:

(pressing on)

When you tucked your children into bed, do you suppose they ever suspected that their father would one day kill millions as casually as he kissed them goodnight?

Soran looks up at Picard, and for a moment we can see that Picard has really gotten to him here. Then he finally smiles a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes.

SORAN:

Nice try.

CUT TO:

94 INT. LA FORGE'S BATHROOM- GEORDI'S POV94

La Forge is taking a bath. We can see his legs and feet sticking out of the water in front of him. He stands up.

Move to reveal

95 INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- BRIDGE (VFX-P)95

Lursa and B'Etor are still watching La Forge's POV on the monitor. They are bored and irritable.

B'ETOR

I thought he was the Chief Engineer.

LURSA:

He is.

B'ETOR

Then when is he going to Engineering?

The POV shows La Forge's view as he stops in front of a mirror, wipes away the steam and reveals his own reflection. Lursa and B'Etor gnash their teeth in frustration.

CUT TO:

96 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY 96

Soran is working intently on the launcher's control panel. Picard is still walking the perimeter of the forcefield. He's also still trying to

engage Soran, find some way to get to him.

PICARD:

What you're about to do is no different from when the Borg destroyed your world.

Soran continues to work. He keeps his voice calm and conversational.

SORAN:

You're right. And there was a time when I wouldn't have hurt anyone. Then the Borg came and they showed me that if there is one constant in this universe, it's death. (beat) Afterwards, I began to realize that none of it mattered. We're all going to die anyway. It's only a question of how and when. You will too, Captain. You might contract a fatal disease; you might die in battle.

Soran now turns and fixes Picard with a penetrating look.

SORAN:

Or burn to death in a fire.

Picard freezes at this. Soran steps off the launcher with a confident look. He moves closer to where Picard is standing.

SORAN:

You looked surprised. But you shouldn't be. I've been to the Nexus, Captain. I know things about people. (beat) Aren't you beginning to feel time gaining on you? It's like a predator. It's stalking you. You can try to outrun it with doctors, medicines, new technologies but in the end, time is going to hunt you down and make the kill.

This strikes home with Picard's own recent concerns. He struggles for a moment.

PICARD:

We're all mortal, Soran. It's one of the truths of our existence.

SORAN:

What if I told you I found a new truth?

PICARD:

The Nexus.

SORAN:

Time has no meaning there. The predator has no teeth.

Soran glances up at the sky expectantly, then turns away from Picard and goes back to work on the launcher. Off Picard's disturbed expression.

97 INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- BRIDGE (VFX-P)97

B'Etora watching the monitor, impatient. The POV shows La Forge's view of walking down a corridor. Lursa walks over to join her.

LURSA:

Where is he now?

B'ETOR

I don't know. He bathed, now he is roaming the ship. He must be the only Engineer in Starfleet who does not go to Engineering!

CUT TO:

98 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY (VFX-P) 98

Picard continues to walk around the perimeter of the forcefield. He sees something on the ground- a gnarled root from a large nearby tree. The root is poking out of the ground, leaving a small arch through which daylight can be seen. Picard's mind begins racing. He glances at Soran and then picks up a pebble and, while keeping his eye on the root, he tosses the pebble into the air, where it hits the forcefield. The forcefield flashes on briefly and Picard can see that the bottom border of the field follows the contour of the root. But it does not extend underneath the arch. Soran turns at the sound of the crackling field.

SORAN:

Careful, Captain. That's a fifty gigawatt forcefield. I wouldn't want to see you get hurt.

PICARD:

Thank you.

Soran returns to working on the launcher, but Picard looks back down at the root, then walks away, planning his next move.

CUT TO:

98AINT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- BRIDGE98A

Lursa and B'Etora are watching the monitor of La Forge's POV with irritated expressions. On the monitor, La Forge rounds a corner and enters Engineering. The sisters lean forward eagerly.

B'ETOR

Finally!

99 INT. ENGINEERING 99

La Forge is talking to an engineer named FARRELL, N.D.s working in b.g. Mid-conversation.

FARRELL:

I'd like to run a Level Three diagnostic on the port plasma relays. I think one of the generators is fluctuating.

LA FORGE:

Okay, let's do it.

They both move to consoles.

100INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY- BRIDGE (VFX-P)100

As before. On the screen, we can now see several of the monitors in Engineering. On the left side of the screen is the large cutaway view of the Enterprise. Lursa suddenly reacts to something on the screen.

LURSA:

That's it! (to B'Etor) Replay from time index 429.

B'Etor works. The image on their monitor runs backward for a moment and then freezes. On the screen, we can see several of the monitors in Engineering. On the left side of the screen is the large cutaway view of the Enterprise. Lursa touches the diagram.

LURSA:

Magnify this section and enhance.

B'Etor works. The picture zooms in on the cutaway graphic and sharpens in focus. There are several blocks of numbers and text visible. Lursa studies the image.

LURSA:

Their shields are operating on a modulation of 257.4.

The sisters exchange an excited glance, then move toward the command area.

B'ETOR

(calls out)

Adjust our torpedo frequency to match- 257.4!

The two sisters smile eagerly.

101INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE101

DATA:

(to Riker)

Sir, I am detecting an anomalous subspace reading in Main Engineering.

It may be-

The ship is suddenly rocked violently. Alarms go off on the Bridge.

102EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND KLINGON SHIP (VFX-I) 102

The Klingon ship is firing four torpedoes at the Enterprise. The torpedoes pass straight through the ship's shields and hit directly on the hull.

103INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE103

Another violent hit.

WORF:

(shocked)

They have found a way to penetrate our shields.

RIKER:

Lock phasers and return fire!

104EXT. SPACE- THE ENTERPRISE & KLINGON SHIP (VFX-I)104

The Enterprise fires at the Bird of Prey, but the phaser shots are stopped by the Klingon shields, which flash on when they're hit.

The Bird of Prey returns fire. The shot carves a jagged tear in the Enterprise's hull.

105INT. BRIDGE105

As before. The ship is jolted again. The Con console explodes and the Con officer is killed.

RIKER:

(to Troi)

Deanna, take the helm. Get us out of orbit.

Troi rushes to the Con and works.

106EXT. SPACE- THE ENTERPRISE & KLINGON SHIP (VFX-I)106

The Enterprise turns and leaves orbit, but the Klingon ship is right on top of them, firing at the defenseless starship.

107INT. BRIDGE107

A jolt.

DATA:

Hull breach on decks 31 through 35.

Another jolt. The Bridge lights flicker. The situation is desperate.

RIKER:

(urgent, to Worf)

Worf, that's an old Klingon ship. What do we know about it? Are there any weaknesses?

The ship is jolted. They all hold on.

WORF:

It is a Class D-12 Bird of Prey. They were retired from service because of defective plasma coils.

RIKER:

Plasma coils...is there any way we can use that to our advantage?

WORF:

I do not see how. The plasma coil is part of their cloaking device.

107AINT. ENGINEERING 107A

There is a sudden explosion on the upper level. La Forge and the other engineers rush to deal with it.

LA FORGE:

Get a stabilizer on that conduit.

107BINT. BRIDGE107B

Riker suddenly gets an inspiration as the Bridge is rocked.

RIKER:

(to Data)

Could we access the defective coil and trigger their cloak?

DATA:

(considers)

Perhaps. (suddenly enthusiastic) Yes! If we sent a low-level ionic pulse, it might reset the coil and engage the cloaking systems.

WORF:

(onto the idea)

As their cloak begins to engage, their shields will drop.

RIKER:

Right. And they'll be vulnerable for at least two seconds. (to Data)

Data, lock onto that plasma coil.

DATA:

(confident)

No problem.

Data goes to work.

RIKER:

Worf, prepare a spread of photon torpedoes. We'll have to hit them the instant they begin to cloak.

WORF:

Aye, sir.

RIKER:

We're only going to get one shot at this. Target their primary reactor. With any luck, their warp core should implode.

Worf works.

108EXT. SPACE- THE ENTERPRISE & KLINGON SHIP (VFX-I)108

The Enterprise rolls and turns back toward the planet, tries to get away

from the Klingon ship. But the Bird of Prey follows its every move.
109INT. BRIDGE109

DATA:

I have accessed their coil frequency, initiating ionic pulse.
The ship is hit again. An aft console explodes.

RIKER:

Make it quick!

110INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY110

Lursa and B'Etor in command, savoring their imminent victory.

LURSA:

(to Navigator)

Target their Bridge.

B'ETOR

Full disruptors.

The Navigator suddenly reacts to something on his console.

KLINGON HELM:

We are cloaking!

B'ETOR

What?

KLINGON HELM:

Mistress- our shields are down!

111EXT. SPACE- THE KLINGON SHIP (VFX-I)111

The ship begins shimmering- engaging its cloak.

112INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE112

RIKER:

Fire!

Worf works.

113OMITTED 113

114INT. KLINGON BIRD OF PREY (VFX-I)114

Lursa and B'Etor react to the sight on the viewscreen as the spread of torpedoes heads directly for them. The two sisters exchange a look. The ship is suddenly rocked hard and we can see the beginning of an explosion.

115EXT. SPACE- THE KLINGON SHIP (VFX-I)115

The ship implodes, completely destroyed. Pieces of the shattered vessel float past the camera.

116INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE116

DATA:

(excited)

YES!!

CUT TO:

117 EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY (VFX-P)117

Picard has made his way back to the gnarled root. He stands a few feet away, a couple of pebbles in his hand. He glances at Soran, who's absorbed with his work on the launcher. Picard then surreptitiously tosses a pebble toward the root. It misses and bounces off the forcefield. Soran looks over his shoulder at Picard, who sits down on a rock. Soran returns to his work. Picard tosses a second pebble- this one also hits the forcefield. Soran turns with a vaguely irritated look.

SORAN:

(as if to a child)

Don't you have anything better to do?

Picard doesn't respond. Soran goes back to work.

Picard waits a moment, then takes aim and tosses another pebble toward the root. This time, the pebble bounces underneath the arch and rolls onto the plateau- inside the forcefield. Picard keeps his expression neutral, but he's found a way in.

CUT TO:

118INT. ENGINEERING 118

The room is a disaster. Wreckage from destroyed consoles and debris are scattered throughout the room. La Forge is desperately working with engineers near the warp core, which is running faster and faster.

LA FORGE:

(to com)

La Forge to Bridge. I've got a problem down here. The magnetic interlocks have been ruptured. I need to get the-
The warp core starts to spew white-hot gas.

LA FORGE:

Coolant leak! Everybody out.

The emergency isolation door comes down and people start rushing out of Engineering. La Forge heads for the corridor.

LA FORGE:

(on the move, to com)

Bridge, we've got a new problem. We're about five minutes from a warp core breach. There's nothing I can do.

119INT. BRIDGE119

Riker is faced with a no-win situation. He makes the decision.

RIKER:

(to Troi)

Deanna, evacuate everyone into the saucer section. (to Data) Mr. Data, prepare to separate the ship.

Troi and Data work and Riker moves to the Captain's chair. He presses a button on the armchair console, a unique and urgent alarm is heard throughout the ship.

Series of shots as the alarm sounds:

120CREWMEMBERS AND CIVILIANS120

rushing through the corridors.

120ALA FORGE 120A

directing people toward the correct doorways.

120BPARENTS 120B

grabbing their children and heading down the corridor.

120CCRUSHER AND A NURSE120C

grab a wounded crewmember and pull him down the corridor.

120DPEOPLE120D

scrambling through Jefferies tubes and closing hatches behind them.

121EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY (VFX-P) 121

Soran is finishing his work on the launcher. On one of the monitors on the control panel, we can now see alien graphics and numbers ticking by- obviously a countdown in progress. Soran finishes and turns off the control panel. He steps down and looks over at Picard, who is standing near the forcefield.

SORAN:

Now, if you'll excuse me, Captain, I have an appointment with eternity and I don't want to be late.

Soran turns and begins to climb up the scaffolding toward the top of the rockface. Picard watches him intently for a few moments, then quickly springs into action.

122INT. JEFFERIES TUBE122

People scramble through the tube and out into a corridor. La Forge is the last man through the hatch. He turns and manually shuts the hatch behind him.

LA FORGE:

(hits combadge)

That's it, Bridge- we're all out!

123INT. BRIDGE123

DATA:

One minute to warp core breach.

RIKER:

(to Data)

Begin separation sequence. (to Troi) Full impulse power once we're clear.

Data works.

124EXT. SPACE- THE ENTERPRISE (VFX-I) 124

Looking forward from behind the rear of the massive ship. A crack appears as the separation process begins.

124AINT. BRIDGE (VFX-I)124A

Everyone is watching the viewscreen with anticipation.

DATA:

Separation complete. Ten seconds to warp core breach.

TROI:

Engaging impulse engines.

125 125

thruOMITTED thru

128 128

129EXT. SPACE- SAUCER SECTION (VFX-I) 129

Moves away from the battle section. Before it can completely escape, the battle section explodes. The force of the explosion hits the saucer section, knocking it toward the planet.

130INT. BRIDGE (VFX-I)130

Everyone is knocked to their knees.

RIKER:

Report.

TROI:

Helm controls are off-line!

They all look at the viewscreen. The planet is rushing toward them.

131CLOSE ON DATA 131

as he reacts to the terrifying image.

DATA:

Oh, shit.

CUT TO:

132EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY (VFX-P) 132

Picard has dropped to the ground and is on his back- he's trying to

wriggle underneath the root. It's not easy; he knows there's not much room between the ground and the invisible field. he just gets his head and shoulders underneath when he accidentally touches the field and it crackles violently around him. Picard is jolted by the shock.

132ASORAN (VFX-P) 132A

turns at the sound of the field, sees Picard, and then draws his weapon. Soran quickly fires at Picard.

132BTHE GROUND (VFX-P) 132B

is blasted apart, creating a cloud of dirt and smoke, obscuring Picard and the whole area momentarily.

Soran jumps down one level on the scaffolding, his disruptor still in his hand, ready just in case Picard somehow survived. Soran peers through the cloud of dust and debris.

The dust from the explosion finally clears but Picard is gone along with several feet of the ground where he was crawling.

132CSORAN (VFX-I) 132C

glances up at the sky and sees the distant energy ribbon just coming into view. There's no time to look for Picard. Soran begins to climb the scaffolding.

CUT TO:

133EXT. SPACE- SAUCER SECTION (VFX-I) 133

Plummets into the planet's atmosphere.

134INT. BRIDGE134

The ship is shaking and rolling violently. Everyone hanging on for dear life.

Series of shots:

135CORRIDOR 135

Teachers and parents lead a group of children toward an intersection. The parents go down one corridor, the teachers and children down another. One child cries out and tries to reach for its mother, but there's no time- a teacher keeps the child moving down the hall.

135ACREW QUARTERS 135A

People are bracing themselves for the crash, taking emergency positions against walls, etc.

136OMITTED 136

137INT. BRIDGE (VFX-I)137

The ground is getting closer on the viewscreen.

DATA:

(off console)

I have rerouted auxiliary power to the lateral thrusters- attempting to level our descent.

RIKER:

(to com)

All hands, brace for impact!

138EXT. PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE- SAUCER SECTION (VFX-I) 138

The leading edge of the huge saucer tilts upward slightly, and then it hits the surface. The saucer begins to plow through the dense rain forest. As the ship continues through the jungle, we intercut the following sequences.

138AINT. BRIDGE138A

Riker and the others hanging on as the ship shakes violently.

138BCREW QUARTERS 138B

A family huddles for protection as the windows are blown inward by debris.

138CINT. READY ROOM 138C

The side window is blown out and Picard's photo album is tossed across the room along with everything else.

138DEXT. SAUCER SECTION (VFX-I)138D

Outside the ship, we see a huge wall of metal crashing through the jungle, uprooting trees, dirt flying, birds scrambling out of the way. An enormous scene of destruction as it tears through the foliage.

139INT. BRIDGE139

The ship continues to jump and shake; every light on the ship goes out in the crash. Finally, it comes to a stop. There is a long, quiet beat, then people begin to stir in the darkened room.

140ANGLE ON RIKER140

who is slumped in his chair. He catches his breath, lifts his face and looks up into sunlight. He shields his eyes and looks up at the ceiling and reacts.

141RIKER'S POV (VFX-P)141

The sun is shining in through the shattered overhead window on the top of the Bridge. There is a fluttering sound as a couple of birds perch on the rim of the window.

142EXT. PLANET'S SURFACE- THE ENTERPRISE (WIDE SHOT) (VFX-I)=

142

The saucer has come to a stop in the middle of a rain forest. The passage of the saucer has gouged a long trail through the forest behind the ship.

Off this startling sight

CUT TO:

143EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY 143

Soran is climbing up the scaffolding. He gets a couple of levels up, and then suddenly a boot kicks him in the face. Picard has made it inside

the field.

A quick fight ensues, during which Picard is knocked a few levels down on the scaffolding. He lands hard and happens to look up into the sky. He sees something.

144PICARD'S POV- THE SKY (VFX-I) 144

The energy ribbon can be seen in the distant sky: a bizarre snake of color streaking across the deep blue sky. Time is almost up.

145RESUME ACTION (VFX-I) 145

Picard avoids a vicious kick from Soran, glances down at the probe launcher, and realizes he's got one chance. He rolls to his feet, runs toward the probe launcher.

There is a thunderous roar as the launcher fires the probe into the sky. The plateau is suddenly quiet as the probe streaks toward the distant sun and disappears from view. Picard gets to his knees, stares after the probe, shocked. He's failed. They watch the sun for a silent moment, waiting.

146THE SUN (VFX-I) 146

begins to darken and collapse, as seen before.

147RESUME PLATEAU147

the scene darkens as the sun goes out and night falls on the planet. Soran, a look of profound elation on his face, makes his way to the top of the scaffolding and looks into the sky.

148PICARD (VFX-I)148

gets to his feet and stares at the onrushing ribbon, the wind whipping up on the plateau. He backs away at the sight, coming to a stop with his back against the scaffolding. There's no where to run.

149NEW ANGLE- THE PLATEAU (VFX-I)149

as the ribbon of energy tears across the scene in a terrifying torrent of light and sound. The scene is washed out by a blinding flood of red light. Then suddenly the ribbon is gone and so are Picard and Soran. The plateau is strangely and utterly silent after the passage of the ribbon. Even the birds have stopped chirping in the trees.

150EXT. SPACE- VERIDIAN III (VFX-I) 150

As the energy ribbon rushes past the camera, a huge shockwave from the destroyed star hits the planet and it explodes in a blast of fiery debris.

CUT TO:

151CLOSE ON PICARD 151

being led through a darkened hallway. He is wearing a blindfold. O.s. hands tug and pull at him, leading him forward down the hall. He's lost and confused, unsure where he is or what's going on. He tries to resist, but can't. The hands keep pulling at him.

He is finally brought out into a larger room, dark. The hands release

him and he stands alone. He takes a beat and tries to take control of the situation.

PICARD:

What's going on? Where am I?

Two hands reach into frame from o.s. and remove the blindfold.

152PICARD'S POV152

The blindfold drops, revealing a blurry kaleidoscope of colors and shapes.

153ON PICARD153

as he blinks and tries to focus.

154PICARD'S POV154

As the room comes into focus. The first thing we see is an enormous, gaily decorated Christmas tree sparkling with hundreds of lights.

155REVEAL THE ROOM 155

A 24th-century French living room. It is beautifully decorated with lights, ornaments, holly. Brightly wrapped presents are clustered beneath the Christmas tree. There are five children standing and sitting in the room, all looking at Picard with bright, smiling faces, waiting for him to say something.

Picard stares at the scene for a moment, unsure how to react. Then we hear a woman's voice and we move to reveal an attractive WOMAN in her forties standing next to Picard.

WOMAN:

Go on, say something. They're waiting.

Picard is stunned.

PICARD:

I, don't know what to say.

One of the children, a young GIRL, speaks up.

GIRL:

Say Merry Christmas, Papa!

PICARD:

(in a daze)

Merry Christmas.

The children break out into applause. The woman kisses him on the cheek, then steers him to a large, overstuffed chair. Picard sits down and the children starts handing out presents with much laughter and chatting.

CHILDREN:

This one's for you. Where's mine? I hope this is the book I asked for.

Take this one to Papa.

As the activity swirls around him, Picard begins to feel an immense sense of satisfaction and happiness. It's like a drug- an overwhelming feeling of joy and contentment fills Picard. It's a wondrous experience. He settles back in the chair and a smile spreads across his face. For reasons he cannot name and does not even want to understand at the moment, he is very, very happy.

GIRL:

(to Picard)

Isn't the tree beautiful, Papa?

Picard answers as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

PICARD:

Oh yes=8A yes, it's astonishingly beautiful. All of it.

All of the children now crowd around the chair with a single large gift and hand it to Picard. One of the younger boys speaks up.

YOUNG BOY:

This is from all of us.

PICARD:

Thank you. I can't imagine what it is.

Picard tears open the box and pulls out a 19th-century sextant- an old-fashioned nautical navigational instrument. It's a beautiful piece with polished and gleaming brass.

YOUNG BOY:

(excited)

It's a sack-tent!

Picard eyes it with delight.

PICARD:

You mean a sextant. And it's a handsome one at that, from about 1820, I'd say. Wherever did you find it?

GIRL:

It's a secret.

PICARD:

(smiles)

Oh, a secret. Well, that makes it a doubly special gift. Thank you.

Thank you all.

The children react with pleasure. They cluster around him, showering him

with hugs and kisses.

CHILDREN:

Merry Christmas, Papa. I love you. etc.

Picard is covered in a blanket of love and affection. The children pull back and return to their own presents. There is a swirl of activity and commotion as a warm and heartfelt Christmas morning is played out.

WOMAN:

(to Picard)

I'll go get dinner ready. They'll be starving in a minute.

Picard nods as the woman EXITS the room. He looks around the scene, utterly happy, utterly content.

The children continue to chatter and laugh among themselves as Picard's eye falls on the glorious Christmas tree. He can't help but smile as he looks over the ornaments and decorations.

156PICARD'S POV156

of the sparkling lights and ornaments- a swirl of color and light.

157PICARD157

His eye is caught by something in particular on the tree. He leans forward slightly and stares at it.

158PICARD'S POV (VFX-P)158

His eye has been caught by an ornament hanging near the top of the tree. It is a large and beautiful glass ball with a tiny light in the center in the shape of a star. As Picard watches, the star suddenly goes out, and it radiates a shimmering light effect that expands outward into the glass sphere.

It's a startling and beautiful ornament whose effect is reminiscent of the star going out, as seen earlier in the film. But this is just coincidence- this is the way the ornament was designed and it's simply one of many ornaments on the tree.

159PICARD159

reacts. The image of the ornament has touched a nerve within him somewhere. It has reminded him of something he'd nearly forgotten- a discordant note in an otherwise wondrous and magical scene. He frowns, the reverie momentarily disrupted. But he tries to push it aside, not wanting the spell to be broken. He stands and turns away from the tree and looks out a nearby window- it's snowing and the beautiful image of snow soothes him for a moment. Then he reacts to something.

160PICARD'S POV (VFX-P)160

reflected on the pane of glass is the image of the ornament- it's still blinking. Picard now realizes that this image is not going to go away- he can't hide from it.

PICARD:

No, this isn't right. This can't be real.

GUINAN'S VOICE

It's as real as you want it to be.

Picard turns to see

161GUINAN (VFX-P)161

standing before him. She is wearing the same outfit seen in the beginning of the film on the Enterprise-B. As they talk, the children and the woman continue to move about their business as if Picard and Guinan aren't there.

Picard is stunned.

PICARD:

Guinan, what's going on? Where am I?

GUINAN:

You're in the Nexus.

Picard looks around.

PICARD:

This is the Nexus?

GUINAN:

For you. This is where you wanted to be.

PICARD:

But I never had a wife, children, a home like this.

GUINAN:

Enjoy them, Jean-Luc.

Picard tries to make sense of it- he focuses on Guinan.

PICARD:

Guinan, what are you doing here? I thought you were on the Enterprise.

GUINAN:

I am on the Enterprise. I am also here. (off his puzzled look) Think of me as an "echo" of the person you know. A part she left behind.

PICARD:

Left behind?

GUINAN:

When the Enterprise-B beamed us off the Lakul, we were partially in the

Nexus. The transporters locked on to us, but somehow everyone left a part of themselves behind.

PICARD:

Soran?

GUINAN:

All of us.

PICARD:

Where is he now?

GUINAN:

Wherever he wanted to be.

Guinan smiles at him.

BOY'S VOICE

Papa, help me build my castle!

Picard glances over at the boy, who is building a play castle out of the 24th-century equivalent of Lego. For a moment, Picard is tempted to drift back to the warm embrace of the fantasy.

PICARD:

(to boy)

In a few minutes.

Picard looks around at the children, the lure to stay here becoming more powerful.

PICARD:

(continuing, awed, to Guinan)

These are my children...my children.

GUINAN:

(smiles)

Yeah. They're great, aren't they? You can go back and see them born, go forward and see your grandchildren. Time has no meaning here.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Dinner's ready! Let's go!

There's a general rush toward the adjacent dining room. The youngest boy looks at Picard, goes over to him and takes his hand.

BOY:

Papa, are you coming?

Picard looks down into the face of his child. His heart swells, the temptation to stay here and live this out is profound. Almost in a

trance, he takes a few steps with the child toward the dining room. His eye is caught again by the unusual ornament on the tree for a moment; he's torn between the two images. And then, in one of the most difficult moments of his life, he bends down to the child.

PICARD:

Go on, go on without me.

The boy looks at him quizzically for a moment, then obeys his father and dashes off toward the dining room to join the others. Picard straightens up and tries to steel his voice.

PICARD:

Guinan, can I leave the Nexus?

GUINAN:

Why would you want to leave?

PICARD:

(insistent)

Can I?

GUINAN:

Yes, where would you go?

PICARD:

I don't understand.

GUINAN:

I told you, time has no meaning here. If you leave, you can go anywhere, any time.

Picard realizes the opportunity before him.

PICARD:

I know exactly where I want to go, and when. Back to that mountaintop on Veridian III, before Soran put out the star. I have to stop him.

GUINAN:

What makes you think things will be any different this time?

PICARD:

You're right. I'll need help. (beat) Guinan, will you come back with me? Together, we could-

GUINAN:

I can't leave. I'm already there, remember?

Picard looks crestfallen for a moment. Guinan gives him an enigmatic smile.

GUINAN:

I know just the guy.

Suddenly there's the cry of a hawk from o.s. Picard turns at the sound.

162EXT. KIRK'S HOME- DAY 162

Picard finds himself standing outside a rustic, but architecturally striking house with spectacular views in the Canadian Rockies. A hawk is circling overhead, making the crying sound that Picard heard. The air is cold, frigid- Picard can see his breath. Picard is just starting to adjust to this sudden change in location when he hears the sound of wood being chopped from around the corner of the house. Picard moves to look around the corner and sees James T. Kirk. He's still in his uniform and looks exactly as he did the last time we saw him aboard the Enterprise-B at the beginning of the film. He is vigorously chopping wood with an axe. He's enjoying himself, lost in the sheer pleasure of the manual labor. He's never felt this good in his life. There's no trace of back pain or any other ailment. Picard recognizes the famous captain- as would any 24th-century Starfleet officer.

PICARD:

James Kirk.

Kirk pauses, looks up at the strange man before him. His expression is wondrous, almost child-like. Like in Picard's Christmas sequence, Kirk is immersed in the sensual feeling of the Nexus. It's like a dream that has overpowered him.

KIRK:

Beautiful day, isn't it?

PICARD:

Yes, yes, it is.

Kirk points to a nearby log on the woodpile.

KIRK:

Do you mind?

It takes Picard a beat before he realizes that Kirk wants him to put the log on the chopping block for him.

PICARD:

Oh.

Picard places the log on the block and Kirk gives it a vigorous chop

with the axe.

PICARD:

Captain, do you realize that-
But Kirk interrupts as he sees something o.c.

KIRK:

Wait a second. I think something's burning.
Picard follows his look to see smoke billowing out of one of the windows of the house. Kirk rushes into the house, and Picard follows.

163INT. KIRK'S HOME- KITCHEN- DAY- CONTINUOUS 163

Kirk rushes in. The kitchen's decor is 19th-century with a few 23rd-century touches- copper pans and an antique stove mixed comfortably with computer consoles and Starfleet paraphernalia. Picard hesitates in the doorway- a little unsure about rushing into some stranger's house. Kirk yanks a burning frying pan of food off the stove. It's very hot- he quickly sets it down near the sink, waves the smoke away with his hand.

KIRK:

Looks like someone was cooking eggs. (to Picard) Come on in, it's all right. This is my house- or at least it used to be, I sold it years ago. Picard comes in and tries to orient Kirk to what's going on.

PICARD:

I'm Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the starship Enterprise.
Before Kirk can react to this remark, an antique clock on a shelf chimes as it strikes the hour. Kirk moves to the shelf and looks at the clock in surprise and wonder- he is entranced by this experience, beginning to connect with things and memories from his past.

KIRK:

This clock, I gave this clock to Bones.

PICARD:

(pressing on)
I'm from what you would consider the future; the 24th-century.
Kirk hears what Picard is saying, but like Picard in his fantasy, he is more interested in the sights and sounds around him. A dog barks from o.c. They both look as a large black dog bounds into the room and greets Kirk with enthusiasm.

KIRK:

(affectionately)
Jake! Jake, you miserable old mutt. How can you be here? (to Picard)

He's been dead seven years.

Kirk is still looking around the kitchen when suddenly we hear a WOMAN'S VOICE from somewhere upstairs that stops Kirk in his tracks. As she speaks, we can see the shock on Kirk's face.

ANTONIA'S VOICE

Come on, Jim, I'm starving. How long are you going to be rattling around that kitchen?

A beat.

KIRK:

(amazed)

That's Antonia!

Kirk looks at the food on the stove. He's beginning to realize something.

KIRK:

Wait a minute.

Kirk glances at Picard.

KIRK:

The future. What are you talking about? This is the past.

Kirk moves to a drawer and opens it. Inside is a horseshoe with a tiny red bow tied to it. This confirms things for Kirk. He picks up the horseshoe.

KIRK:

This is nine years ago, the day I told her I was going back to Starfleet.

Kirk is swept up in the moment, overwhelmed by memories, sensations, feelings. He goes back to the frying pan and looks at the contents with a sudden burst of recognition.

KIRK:

These were Ktarian eggs- her favorite. I was cooking them to soften the

blow. (re:

Picard steps in.

PICARD:

I know how real this must seem to you, but it's not. This isn't really your house. We've both been caught up in some sort of temporal nexus. But Kirk's mind is clearly elsewhere. He's being swept away by the emotion of the moment, realizing the opportunity he suddenly has.

KIRK:

Dill weed.

Kirk indicates a shelf, as if asking Picard to go to it.

KIRK:

There's a bottle of dill weed on the second shelf to the left, right behind the nutmeg.

Kirk moves to the stove and tosses out the ruined eggs. He cracks open two new eggs on the skillet and begins preparing a breakfast. Picard waits for a moment, then goes to the shelf, grabs the dill weed and hands it to Kirk.

PICARD:

How long have you been here?

Kirk takes the bottle and uses it to season the eggs.

KIRK:

I don't know. I was on the Enterprise-B, in the deflector control room...keep stirring these, will you?

Kirk moves to a cabinet and begins putting plates on a breakfast tray. Picard is getting a little impatient, but stirs the eggs anyway.

KIRK:

The bulkhead in front of me disappeared, then I was out there chopping wood. (back to stove) Thanks.

Kirk takes the pan of eggs back from Picard.

PICARD:

History records that you died saving the Enterprise-B from an energy ribbon eighty years ago.

But Picard's words mean almost nothing to Kirk. He is thoroughly enjoying himself and Picard is almost a distraction. Kirk begins serving the eggs onto the plates and grabs a small vase of flowers to put on the tray.

KIRK:

(amused)

So you're telling me this is the 24th-century, and I'm dead?

PICARD:

Not exactly. As I said, this is some kind of-

KIRK:

Temporal nexus, yeah, I heard you. (frowns at tray) Something's missing.

Then he remembers and turns to look at a nearby toaster- as if on cue, two slices of toast pop out. Kirk grins and puts the toast on the plates. Kirk picks up the tray and heads for the door.

PICARD:

Captain, I need your help. I want you to leave the Nexus with me. Kirk goes out of the kitchen and Picard follows.

164INT. KIRK'S HOME- LIVING ROOM- DAY- CONTINUOUS164

Kirk and Picard both on the move. Kirk heading for a staircase.

PICARD:

We have to go back to a planet called Veridian III and stop a man from destroying a star. There are millions of lives at stake.

Kirk tries to keep it light, hoping this man will go away.

KIRK:

You said history considers me dead. Who am I to argue with history?

PICARD:

You're a Starfleet officer and you have a duty to-

KIRK:

(hard)

I don't need to be lectured by you. I was out saving the galaxy when your grandfather was still in diapers. And frankly, I think the galaxy owes me one (beat) I was like you once- so worried about duty and obligations that I couldn't see anything past this uniform. And in the end, what did it get me? Nothing. Not this time.

Kirk brushes past Picard and stops at the foot of the stairs.

KIRK:

(looking up the stairs)

I'm going to walk up these stairs, march into that bedroom and tell Antonia that I want to marry her.

Kirk begins to climb the stairs.

KIRK:

This time things are going to be different.

He goes through a bedroom door and closes it behind him. Picard glances around the room in frustration, then gets a determined look on his face and marches up the stairs after Kirk, grasps the doorknob, opens it and steps through the door into

165INT. BARN- DAY- CONTINUOUS 165

Picard suddenly finds himself standing in the doorway of a wooden barn.

Straw on the floor, farm implements on the walls, sunlight streaming in through the slats. There are stalls in the barn with a few horses visible. Kirk is standing a short distance away. He looks surprised as well- and he is no longer holding his tray of food.

PICARD:

(re:

This doesn't look like your bedroom.
Kirk looks around for a moment, the pieces starting to fall into place. He smiles with a growing realization.

KIRK:

No, no, it's not. It's better.

PICARD:

Better?

KIRK:

This is my uncle's barn in Iowa.
He points to a horse with a saddle on it.

KIRK:

(re:

I took that horse out for a ride seven years ago, on a spring day.
Kirk moves to the barn door and opens it revealing a beautiful spring day.

KIRK:

Just like this. If I'm right, this is the day I met Antonia.
He turns to Picard.

KIRK:

This Nexus of yours is very clever. I can start all over again; do things right from day one.
Kirk grabs the horse, swings up onto the saddle, and rides out of the barn, filled with excitement. Picard watches him for a moment, then looks at one of the other horses in the barn. He makes a decision and then moves toward a saddle hanging on the wall.

CUT TO:

166EXT. COUNTRYSIDE- DAY (VFX-P) 166

Kirk is riding his horse hard over the countryside and across a stream,

through a thicket of trees, and finally out onto a rolling plain. There is a large ravine up ahead. Kirk sees it and smiles tightly. He spurs his horse faster toward the ravine. The horse is tearing along, comes up to the edge of the precipice, and makes a daring leap to the other side. Horse and rider land together and Kirk spurs the horse on. But as he rides, we begin to see a change come over him- a look of doubt crosses his face. Something's not right. He slows the horse to a trot, and then to a complete stop. He sits there for a moment and frowns, turns and looks back at the ravine, which is now a fair distance away. Something about that jump is nagging at him.

He turns his horse around and then digs in his heels. The horse breaks into a gallop, racing back toward the ravine. Kirk grips the reins tight in his hands and then the horse makes the leap across yet again.

This time when Kirk lands, he brings his horse to an immediate stop. We can see on his face that something is very wrong. He turns and stares at the ravine with a mixture of shock and sadness on his face.

In the distance, Picard can be seen approaching on a horse of his own. He stops next to Kirk. There is a long, quiet moment as the two men sit there side by side. Kirk is introspective as he sorts through his feelings.

KIRK:

(re:

I must have made this jump fifty times, and every time it scared the hell out of me. But not this time. (beat) Because it's not real. A quiet beat. Kirk turns and looks toward a particular hill in the distance, shading his eyes against the bright sun. Picard follows his gaze and we can now see the distant figure of a woman walking her horse.

PICARD:

(re:

Antonia?

KIRK:

(nods)

She's not real either, is she? Nothing here is. Nothing here matters. All euphoria is now gone from Kirk. It's a moment of self-revelation. He glances around.

KIRK:

It's kinda like orbital skydiving. Exciting for a few minutes, but in the end, you haven't really done anything. You haven't made a

difference.

Kirk takes a beat, then looks at Picard. And in a way, he's truly seeing him for the first time.

KIRK:

Captain of the Enterprise, huh?

PICARD:

That's right.

KIRK:

Close to retirement?

PICARD:

I hadn't planned on it.

There is a passion and a fervor in Kirk that we haven't seen until now.

KIRK:

Well, let me tell you something- don't. Don't let them promote you. Don't

let them transfer you. Don't let anything take you off the bridge of that ship. (beat) Because while you're there, you can make a difference. The two captains face each other for a moment. Picard hears what Kirk is saying but also knows that's not the whole story. Picard gives him a direct look, and there is something in Picard's eyes- a glint of resolve and determination.

PICARD:

You don't need to be on the bridge of a starship. Come with me. Help me stop Soran. (beat) Make a difference again.

A long, silent beat as Kirk considers Picard. And slowly, unexpectedly, a smile spreads across his face.

KIRK:

How can I argue with the captain of the Enterprise? What was the name of that planet=8A Veridian III?

PICARD:

That's right.

KIRK:

I take it the odds are against us and the situation is grim?

PICARD:

You could say that.

KIRK:

(musing)

Of course, if Spock were here, he'd say I was being an irrational, illogical human for wanting to go on a mission like that.

And for the first time, we can see the twinkle in his eye that tells us Jim Kirk is back.

KIRK:

Sounds like fun.

The two men turn and walk away from Antonia, and as they walk, a roar of color and sound washes out the screen, as seen before.

FADE TO RED:

FADE IN:

167EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- DAY (VFX-P) 167

Soran is standing in front of the forcefield, facing Picard.

SORAN:

Now, if you'll excuse me, Captain, I have an appointment with eternity and I don't want to be late.

We realize we are watching the same events play out again.

Soran turns and begins to climb up the scaffolding toward the top of the rockface. Picard drops to the ground on his back and begins to wriggle underneath the forcefield. Picard accidentally touches the field.

167ASORAN (VFX-P) 167A

turns at the sound of the field, sees Picard, and then draws his weapon. Soran quickly fires at Picard.

167BTHE GROUND (VFX-P) 167B

is blasted apart, creating a cloud of dirt and smoke, obscuring Picard and the whole area momentarily.

Soran jumps down one level on the scaffolding, his disruptor still in his hand, ready just in case Picard somehow survived. Soran peers through the cloud of dust and debris.

The dust from the explosion finally clears but Picard is gone along with several feet of the ground where he was crawling.

167CSORAN (VFX-I) 167C

glances up at the sky and sees the distant energy ribbon just coming into view. There's no time to look for Picard. Soran begins to climb the scaffolding. Suddenly a boot kicks him in the head.

168REVEAL KIRK168

who is attacking Soran in Picard's place. The two men begin to fight.

169NEW ANGLE (VFX-P)169

as Picard rushes to the probe launcher and steps up onto the control platform and desperately begins trying to shut down the launcher.

The following happens very quickly:

*Kirk fights with Soran, hand-to-hand, brutal.

*Picard works the control panel, trying to make sense of it all. It won't respond. The control panel is bizarre and confusing- many different screens and alien graphics. The alien countdown continues to race by.

169ATHE SKY (VFX-I) 169A

the distant energy ribbon can be seen getting closer.

169BTHE MOUNTAINTOP 169B

Soran tries to pull his disruptor, but Kirk knocks it to the ground. There's a struggle for the weapon.

Picard looks helplessly at the control panel. Nothing he does has any effect. He keeps hitting buttons, looking for other control panels, anything to affect the launcher.

169CANGLE (VFX-P) 169C

Suddenly, Picard touches one particular control and the screen changes to an image of the Veridian sun, held in the center of the alien cross-hair.

169DPICARD (VFX-P)169D

begins working the control panel, desperate. He looks at the screen, hits a control. Suddenly the probe cloaks. Picard reacts at his mistake. Picard is left standing on an invisible platform three feet in the air. Picard isn't sure what to do- he can feel the console, but he can't see any of the controls.

Kirk punches Soran and sends him flying backward. Soran lands heavily on the ground, unconscious. Kirk stands over him, breathing heavily. He holds his back in pain- that old back pain from the beginning of the film.

PICARD:

(desperate)

Kirk- there's a control PADD in his right pocket!

169EKIRK (VFX-P)169E

sees Picard standing in mid-air and then reaches down, pulls the control PADD out of Soran's pocket. He begins working it.

170CLOSE ON SORAN170

His eyes open. He sees what Kirk is doing, looks around quickly, sees the disruptor lying a few feet away, just beyond his reach.

171THE PROBE LAUNCHER (VFX-P) 171

Decloaks. Picard goes back to working on the controls.

171AKIRK (VFX-P)171A

he smiles.

KIRK:

The 24th-century isn't so tough.

Without warning, Kirk is blasted forward, shot from behind. Reveal Soran on the ground with the disruptor in his hand. He gets up, whirls around, points the weapon at Picard.

172MOUNTAINTOP- WIDE172

The probe is suddenly launched in a roar of flame. Soran freezes. His eyes follow the probe as it arcs into the sky. The two men watch the probe as it heads toward the sun.

172ATHE PROBE (VFX-I)172A

makes a sweeping turn to the right and arcs back down toward the planet. Soran watches in horror as the probe crashes harmlessly into the distant jungle. We hear a muffled explosion.

172BSORAN (VFX-I) 172B

can't believe his dreams have been shattered. He looks into the sky and sees the distant ribbon streaking overhead. The disruptor falls from his hand as he rushes to the top of the scaffolding.

173PICARD173

moves to Kirk, checks his pulse. The Captain's eyes flutter- he's still holding on, but he's badly wounded.

174SORAN (VFX-I) 174

is standing on the rock ledge. He reaches up toward the sky as if trying to grab the ribbon with his bare hands, but the ribbon passes by and disappears.

SORAN:

No!

His look of shock turns to fury and madness. He turns to Picard.

SORAN:

YOU!!

174BNEW ANGLE (VFX-P)174B

He jumps down a few levels and then dives off the scaffolding at Picard. But Picard is quicker. He grabs the disruptor and fires. The blast catches Soran in mid-air.

Soran drops to the ground a short distance away. Dead. The pocketwatch has been shattered.

175PICARD175

turns back to Kirk, cradles the dying man's head in his lap. Kirk's eyes flick open, and he takes a ragged breath.

KIRK:

Nice shot.

Kirk coughs. His eyes flutter. He's fading fast.

PICARD:

I'll find a way to contact the Enterprise. You're going to be all right.

KIRK:

Did we do it? Did we make a difference?

PICARD:

Yes. (beat) Thank you.

KIRK:

Least I could do for a captain of the Enterprise.

Kirk coughs again.

PICARD:

Try to hang on.

Kirk looks up at the sky, the sunlight is warm on his face. A quiet moment, then, with a last smile on his face

KIRK:

It was fun.

Kirk dies.

Hold the scene for a long moment, the two men in the quiet clearing.

DISSOLVE TO:

176EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- SUNSET 176

Close on Picard's hand

as he places a stone on a large pile of other stones. Move to reveal that Picard is placing the final few rocks on Kirk's grave.

He reaches into a pocket and pulls out Kirk's command insignia pin. He carefully places it on the grave, and stands there silently for a few moments.

A distant whine of engines can be heard. Picard looks up into the sky.

177PICARD'S POV (VFX-I)177

An Enterprise shuttlecraft is flying through the sky toward the mountaintop.

178EXT. MOUNTAINTOP- SUNSET 178

The shuttle has just landed, and the door opens as Picard enters the clearing. Worf, La Forge and N.D. security guards jump out to meet him.

WORF:

Captain, are you all right?

PICARD:

Yes.

LA FORGE:

What about Doctor Soran?

PICARD:

You needn't worry about the Doctor anymore.

Picard moves toward the shuttle, then stops as he notices that the shuttle is damaged. Picard turns and notices for the first time that La Forge has a bandage on his face and Worf's uniform is torn.

PICARD:

Was there a problem with the Klingons?

Worf and La Forge exchange a look.

LA FORGE:

You could say that.

CUT TO:

179EXT. PLANET SURFACE- THE ENTERPRISE (WIDE SHOT) (VFX-I) 179
as seen before.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, stardate 48650.1. The starship Farragut has arrived in orbit and has begun to beam up the Enterprise survivors for transport back to Earth. Our casualties were light, but unfortunately the Enterprise herself cannot be salvaged.

CUT TO:

180INT. ENTERPRISE- CORRIDOR- DAY180

A hive of activity. Crewmembers moving about, carrying personal effects, equipment, etc. Some wounded people being carried on stretchers. The corridor is lit by emergency beacons and a hatch has been opened at one end of the corridor leading to the exterior of the ship. Daylight can be seen outside. Move along the corridor to find Crusher helping an injured crewmember into the arms of a waiting medical N.D. Ogawa walks up to her.

OGAWA:

That should be the last of the wounded, Doctor.

Crusher nods. She looks exhausted.

CRUSHER:

Two hundred thirty-two patients in under two days.
Two medical N.D.s walk past, carrying an empty stretcher. Crusher glances at them.

CRUSHER:

(calls out)
Save that stretcher.

OGAWA:

Is there another patient?

CRUSHER:

No- that one's for me.

CUT TO:

181INT. ANOTHER LOCATION 181

Data and Troi are looking through rubble in a different section of the ship with tricorders. Troi reacts to something on the tricorder.

TROI:

Over here, Data! I think I've found something.
Data moves to her, with a hopeful and excited look.

TROI:

(off tricorder)
One life sign, very faint.
Data hands his tricorder to Troi and then begins to pull debris aside with android strength.
182ANGLE ON DEBRIS 182

As Data pulls aside a large piece of plating, revealing Spot the Cat sitting in the wreckage. She looks at Data and gives a plaintive meow.

DATA:

(relieved)
Spot.
He picks up the cat and holds it close, stroking its fur. The cat purrs happily.

DATA:

I am very happy to find you, Spot.
Troi smiles.

TROI:

Another family reunited.

Data turns, revealing that there are tears in his eyes. Troi is surprised and touched at the sight.

TROI:

Data, are you all right?

DATA:

I am not sure, Counselor. I am happy to see Spot, and yet I am crying. My emotional program must be malfunctioning again. Troi puts a gentle hand on him.

TROI:

No, Data, I think it's working perfectly. Data looks up at her and smiles through his tears. Off the image of Data cuddling his cat.

CUT TO:

183INT. READY ROOM- DAY183

Picard and Riker are sifting through the rubble of what once was the Ready Room, looking for something. Riker sees something in the rubble.

RIKER:

Is this it?
Riker holds up the family photo album seen earlier.

PICARD:

(relieved)
Yes, Number One. Thank you. He takes the album, brushes off the dust and flips through the pages for a moment. Riker looks around the wrecked room.

RIKER:

I'm going to miss this ship. She went before her time. Picard has been rejuvenated by his experience, given a new perspective on the issues of life and death.

PICARD:

It's not how many years you've lived, Will, but how you've lived them. (beat) Someone once told me that time is a predator that stalks us all our lives. But maybe time is also a companion who goes with us on our journey, and reminds us to cherish the moments of our lives because they will never come again. (beat) We are, after all, only mortal. A quiet moment. Riker finally smiles.

RIKER:

Speak for yourself, sir. I kinda planned on living forever.

Picard smiles back at him and the two men EXIT to

184INT. MAIN BRIDGE- DAY (VFX-P) 184

Riker and Picard ENTER from the Ready Room. They look around the wrecked Bridge for a moment. Riker glances at the captain's chair.

RIKER:

I always thought I'd have a crack at this chair one day.

PICARD:

You may still. Somehow I doubt this will be the last ship to carry the name Enterprise.

A beat, then Picard hits his combadge.

PICARD:

(to com)

Picard to Farragut. Two to beam up.

The two men dematerialize.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END: