

STAR TREK: RENAISSANCE

"In Sickness and in Health"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

We open on a scene of total chaos. A large conference room set up for diplomatic talks has become a battleground. PHASER BEAMS and ENERGY BOLTS crisscross the screen. There are two groups of aliens firing at each other, and also taking potshots at a Starfleet contingent in the middle, off to one side.

CROSS, DOJAR, plus two N.D. security guards, and a wounded crew member lying on the floor. The unhurt officers are all FACING OUTWARD in DEFENSIVE STANCE, trying to keep the aliens at bay, FIRING OVER A TABLE that's used as a barricade. (They are using small hand phasers, not the full-sized models.)

CROSS

(shouts)

Cross to Enterprise!

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Enterprise here.

CROSS

The situation's gone to hell,
Commander! They've started shooting
at each other, and we've got wounded.
We need an emergency beam-out!

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

(cool)

Acknowledged, Captain. Stand by.

A long BEAT. Cross and the others keep firing, but Dojar is getting nervous.

DOJAR

Come on, come on...

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Away team, there's a problem.
Someone's set up an energy shield in
the room. We can't beam you out.

Cross CURSES.

CROSS

Acknowledged, Enterprise. Stand by.

(to others)

All right, we've got to get out of
here. Dojar, give me some cover.
Anderson, with me.

Dojar LEANS OVER their makeshift barricade, and lays down DEFENSIVE FIRE. Cross and Anderson DIVE OUT from cover, FIRING AS THEY GO, RUNNING towards the conference room door. They make it and lean up against the wall, taking cover against the aliens who are suddenly focused on them. Cross LEANS OUT to fire back, providing cover as the rest of the away team follows.

INT. HALLWAY

The door OPENS, and the away team rushes out one by one. One guard carrying the wounded officer first, then Dojar. As Dojar makes it out of the room, there's a sudden FLURRY OF PLASMA BOLTS heard from inside the conference room, and a sort of HALF-SCREAM as someone is hit. Dojar TURNS BACK to look.

INT. SICKBAY OFFICE

ELRIS is working at her desk, TYPING SOMETHING into her monitor when the comm beeps.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Talora to Sickbay. The away team's been ambushed. Stand by to receive casualties.

Elris springs in to action.

ELRIS

Acknowledged, Commander. Any specifics?

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

None, Doctor.

Elris is already out the door.

INT. SICKBAY -- CONTINUOUS

Elris RUSHES IN, calling orders as she goes.

ELRIS

Agolive, help me prep the surgical bay. Configure the dermal regenerators for unspecified energy burns, and have the cardiac support unit standing by. Atkinson, clear ward two for any auxiliary cases. Thayer...

Elris is interrupted by the comm.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Sickbay, stand by. The away team is beaming in now.

Elris is in the surgical bay, configuring the controls on the diagnostic bed, with Agolive behind her setting up equipment. We hear the away team BEAM IN behind her, and the sickbay staff hurries to assist.

Elris rushes back into the main part of the room, ready to call orders to the nurses and other doctors. But when she sees the away team, she freezes.

ELRIS

Neil...

CUT TO:

A wounded Neil Cross, supported by Dojar, with a MASSIVE PLASMA BURN on his chest...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. SICKBAY

Continuous action from the teaser. Dojar is CARRYING Cross to the diagnostic bed, as Elris pauses in shock nearby.

AGOLIVE

Doctor!

Elris snaps out of it, and quickly takes charge of the situation.

ELRIS

What happened?

DOJAR

He was hit by an Antican plasma blast.
He was covering our exit from the
room...

Elris cuts him off, she's got what she needed to know.

ELRIS

Atkinson, pull up our data on Antican
plasma weapons. We've got to stabilize
his system. What's his blood pressure?

AGOLIVE

Dangerously under normal levels.

ELRIS

We've got to get that back up. Ten
CC's of tricordrazine.

Agolive PUTS A HYPOSPRAY to Cross' neck and injects it into his system. Cross starts VIGOROUSLY SHAKING and Elris CALLS DOJAR over.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Hold him.

Dojar looks on.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Dojar!

DOJAR

Yes, Doctor.

Dojar PRESSES down on Cross trying to stop him from shaking.

ELRIS

(to herself)

What the hell's happening?

AGOLIVE

(reading a monitor)

I think I've got something, Doctor!

ELRIS

Don't keep it to yourself, Agolive!

AGOLIVE

It looks like the plasma bolt infused some kind of chemical into his system. Anything we inject...

ELRIS

(interrupts)

Will be counteracted by the chemical.

AGOLIVE

Exactly.

ELRIS

I need some information on that chemical!

AGOLIVE

I don't have much...

ELRIS

(shouts)

Then get some, damn it! What can we do to stabilize him?

Agolive is frantically reading the monitor, trying to get any useful information.

AGOLIVE

Leave him.

ELRIS

What!

AGOLIVE

Whatever we give him is going to be infected by the chemical and will spread around his system more than if we do nothing.

ELRIS

He'll die!

AGOLIVE

And it will be even sooner if we try and treat him.

Elris pauses for a moment, clearly weighing the options.

ELRIS

All right! I want a good look at that chemical so we can develop a drug of our own! Let's start with something small, like a sedative and work our way up.

AGOLIVE

Yes, Doctor!

CROSS IS STILL SHAKING. Elris seems to have a sudden thought.

ELRIS

Agolive!

AGOLIVE

Doctor?

ELRIS

What if we put a drug of our own through an electric current? It won't stop the other chemical, but it might stabilize him.

AGOLIVE

Is that possible?

ELRIS

Well, there's one way to find out. I need an electromagnetic pulse generator!

Agolive goes over to a TROLLEY and picks a piece of equipment off it and HANDS IT to Elris. Elris presses some buttons on it and keeps looking up at the display.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Damn!

She seems to RESET the device and start again. Her hands are SHAKING slightly. She finally programs the device correctly and puts it on Cross' chest.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

I'm going to set the pulse for total cardiac reset.

Agolive and the other nurses look up, shocked.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

We're going to be making the Captain clinically dead for twenty to thirty seconds, so I want people on standby on resuscitation units in case this doesn't work.

NURSES

Yes, Doctor.

ELRIS

Okay then, let's do this!

Elris PRESSES some keys on the side of the bed Cross is on and he STOPS SHAKING. There is a LONG SILENT BEAT where no one speaks. Cross is dead. Elris watches the monitor impatiently.

INT. A MEDICAL BAY (FLASHBACK)

Cross and Elris stand side by side looking at a monitor which displays no life signs. Elris turns to Cross and BURIES HER HEAD in his arms.

INT. SICKBAY

AGOLIVE

It's been twenty seconds, Doctor.

ELRIS

Resuscitation team, stand by.

More time passes. Still nothing.

AGOLIVE

Twenty five seconds.

ELRIS

We'll wait until...

Suddenly the readings SPRING TO LIFE and Cross begins breathing again, albeit slowly, but he is no longer shaking. Elris CLOSES HER EYES in relief.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Good work, everyone. Let's get working on that drug.

TALORA ENTERS, and walks up to Dojar as Elris WALKS BY.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Commander, you just missed the fireworks.

TALORA

Fireworks?

DOJAR

(slowly)

The Captain was dead on the table for twenty five seconds.

Talora LOOKS SHOCKED for a second before regaining her composure.

TALORA

The Captain was injured?

DOJAR

Yes.

TALORA

How is he?

DOJAR

I'm not sure. It looks like he'll be all right.

Talora walks into the surgical bay. She glances at Cross on the diagnostic bed, looking slightly unsettled. Elris is still working on Cross, occasionally referring to a nearby monitor.

TALORA

What's his condition?

ELRIS

(distracted, still working)

Not good. I've got his system stabilized for now, but he's still unconscious, and he's not likely to improve much unless we can get some information on the properties of the chemical.

TALORA

(confused)

What chemical?

ELRIS

Ask a nurse, Commander. I don't have time to stand around chatting.

TALORA

Understood.

Sickbay is still A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY as NURSES tend to the other injured Crewman, others attend to Cross and others work on a chemical. Talora WALKS OVER to Dojar.

TALORA (CONT'D)

(back to business)

What's the status of the conference?

DOJAR

The Selay and the Anticans decided to turn on each other. We were caught in the crossfire.

TALORA

How was it possible for the Captain to be shot? Both sides agreed to leave their weapons.

DOJAR

They must have smuggled them in somehow. Our sensors didn't pick them up.

TALORA

I take it the conference didn't turn out the way we had planned?

DOJAR

Neither side agreed to stop searching the other's ships on trade runs.

TALORA

This is becoming more ridiculous then when the Humans had trade ships under attack by Nausicaans.

DOJAR

Agreed.

TALORA

(fuming)

If the Romulans had their way they would have let both sides fight it out until they had destroyed one another and left two less powers in the galaxy for us to worry about.

DOJAR

And that's why the Federation is here instead of the Romulans.

TALORA

To stand in the line of fire when both sides decide to go back to their primitive instincts?

DOJAR

You know what I mean, Commander.

Talora NODS. She is obviously annoyed at the shooting of Cross. Elris WALKS OVER. She looks more RELIEVED then she did earlier.

ELRIS

It looks like we've got him stabilized...

TALORA

(interrupts)

Good work, Doctor.

ELRIS

Unfortunately it's not all good news. It looks like if we don't find a way to neutralize the chemical that was in the plasma bolt, he'll be dead within the next sixty hours.

TALORA

How is he responding to the medication you gave him?

ELRIS

Not well. I don't know why, but he's not responding to the treatment. There's something strange about the chemical's molecular structure, but I can't quite figure out what.

TALORA

Any suspicions?

ELRIS

None. But if you let me get back to work I might be able to find something a lot quicker.

TALORA

Dismissed.

ELRIS

Thank you.

Elris heads back to the surgical bay.

TALORA

Lieutenant.

DOJAR

Yes?

TALORA

You're needed on the bridge.

DOJAR

I know.

BEAT. Dojar is still standing in place.

TALORA

Do you require medical treatment?

DOJAR

No.

(beat)

I don't think so.

TALORA

Then we'll be on the bridge.

Dojar seems to snap out of his trance, and he and Talora EXIT.

INT. BRIDGE

GREY, Y'LAN and QUINLAN are all present. Dojar's expression is grim as he EXITS the turbolift and Talora looks as Romulan as ever.

QUINLAN

What's happened?

DOJAR

The Captain's been shot.

STUNNED LOOKS all around, as the crew reacts to the news.

GREY

How is he?

TALORA

Critical, but stable. Doctor Elris is working with her team now.

QUINLAN

Is there anything we can do?

Talora looks annoyed at the pointless question, but lets the matter pass given the circumstances.

TALORA

Not at the moment. Mister Dojar, hail the Antican Embassy. I want to speak to someone in charge down there, and get some information on just what they're infusing their plasma weapons with.

INT. SICKBAY

Elris is working on a display in the surgical bay, when she hears Cross GROAN behind her. Elris goes over to check on him.

ELRIS

(looking concerned)
How do you feel?

CROSS

(looking terrible)
Great. Couldn't be better.

Elris gives him a serious LOOK.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Okay, so I'm not so great. What happened?

ELRIS

Dojar says you were hit by an Antican plasma weapon. The bolt infused some kind of chemical into your system. We're trying to find a way to counteract its effects now.

CROSS

So what's the prognosis?

ELRIS

As long as you stay in bed for the next couple of days, you should be fine. I'm working on a treatment regimen to counteract the chemical in your bloodstream now.

Algolive is working on a console nearby, and has overheard the exchange. She LOOKS UP, concerned at Elris's lie.

CROSS

(grateful)

Well, that's good to know. Thanks, Lea.

Elris is about to reproach him for using her given name, but she stops herself, and smiles instead.

ELRIS

You're welcome.

Elris EXITS. Cross settles back on the bed with a SIGH.

EXT. SPACE

A shot establishing the Enterprise in orbit of a Class-M planet.

INT. SICKBAY OFFICE

Elris is sitting at her desk, working away at the display. Her posture should indicate that she's been at this for quite a while. Talora ENTERS, carrying a PADD.

TALORA

I've got some details on Antican plasma rifles. The ambassador was... kind enough to provide it, and expresses his sincere condolences regarding the incident.

Talora's expression indicates that she doesn't believe those words one bit. Elris similarly gives a SNORT of derision.

ELRIS

Generous of them.

(picks up the PADD)

Thanks for this. Maybe there'll be something useful.

TALORA

How is the Captain?

ELRIS

He's regained consciousness, but I still can't figure out what to do about that chemical. None of this makes any sense...

(points to the display)

I've isolated it's molecular structure, but I can't understand how it's progressing through his system. Neil...

(hesitates)

The Captain shouldn't have regained consciousness I didn't administer any stimulant to wake him.

Talora nods, but this is out of her league.

TALORA

May I speak to him?

ELRIS

Sure. He's still in the surgical bay.

TALORA

Thank you, Doctor.

Talora EXITS.

INT. SICKBAY

Cross is still in his same position on the diagnostic bed when Talora walks up.

TALORA

Captain. How are you feeling?

CROSS

You know, Commander, everyone keeps asking me that, and I keep saying the same thing: I feel terrible.

TALORA

My apologies.

(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

It is a rather common greeting for a situation such as this, however.

CROSS

Right. Sorry.

BEAT. Talora seems to be at a loss for words, seeing her Captain in this position. Normally projecting a commanding presence, Cross now appears withdrawn and exhausted.

CROSS (CONT'D)

This hasn't happened to me before, you know.

TALORA

Excuse me?

CROSS

I've never been shot before. For that matter, I've never been bedridden like this, either. Never been injured, never been sick, never been...

(he interrupts himself)

Well, except for just after I was rescued from the POW camp. But that was more like a welcome rest, anyway.

(Another thought occurs to him)

And to have Lea as my doctor...

TALORA

(somewhat surprised)

You've never been under her care?

CROSS

Well, sure, while we were... still together. But now...

BEAT.

CROSS (CONT'D)

It's funny... it's almost as if she's avoiding me. Ever since we had dinner together a few weeks ago we've been talking more and more. Something's wrong. I know it.

TALORA

It is a new experience for both of you. You yourself have realized that. It may be that Doctor Elris feels that spending a large amount of time together may cause your relationship with her to take a step back, rather than forwards.

Cross NODS in agreement and there is a LONG BEAT. Talora UNCOMFORTABLY looks around the room.

CROSS

Is there something bothering you,
Commander?

TALORA

No, Captain. But I believe that I
should be comforting you and wishing
you well whilst you are incapacitated,
yet I am not the comforting type. I
apologize.

CROSS

Are any Romulans the comforting type?

TALORA

I don't think so, Sir.

CROSS

Then you have nothing to worry about.
Just make sure my ship's in one piece
when I'm back on the Bridge.

Another LONG AWKWARD BEAT.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Don't feel like you have to stay.

Talora looks RELIEVED and quickly nods, turns her back and
is about to exit, when she turns around again.

TALORA

I wish you a
(beat)
good recovery, Captain.

CROSS

(smiles)
I'll be back on the Bridge before
you know it.

Talora gives Cross a HALF SMILE back before QUICKLY EXITING.

EXT. SPACE

Enterprise in orbit of the same planet we saw earlier. The
sun is in a different position, showing the passage of time.

INT. SICKBAY OFFICE

Elris's eyes are GLAZED. She has BAGS UNDER HER EYES and is
EATING some type of food off a small plate, which she keeps
picking at every now and then.

She is SQUINTING at the display and taps a control on the computer, before hearing an off putting BEEP and WHACKING the computer with the hand her food is in, realizing too late and resulting in FOOD SPLATTERING across the room just as QUINLAN enters. She dodges a piece of food before SHOOTING ELRIS A STRANGE LOOK.

QUINLAN

(seriously)

Hey! What did that food ever do to you?

ELRIS

Ugh. It tried to infect my ridges.

QUINLAN

So how's it going?

ELRIS

(defensively)

How's what going?

QUINLAN

The captain's still injured, isn't he?

ELRIS

Oh... yes.

(quickly)

But nothing to worry about.

(normally)

Aren't you supposed to be working?

Elris goes back to WORKING on the computer screen.

QUINLAN

Yeah, but I just thought I'd stop by. And it looks to me like it's a good thing that I did. You need a rest.

ELRIS

What makes you say that?

QUINLAN

You're snappy and quite obviously frustrated.

ELRIS

Well, someone has to do this.

QUINLAN

Take a break for a while. You need one.

Elris finally SNAPS.

ELRIS

(shouts)

Look, Quinlan! When I need a break,
I'll go for a break. I don't need
you to tell me otherwise.

QUINLAN

(surprised at the
outburst)

Woah! Calm down, Doctor. I'm only
trying to help!

Elris sits back and begins to calm down, after doing some
SMALL BREATHING EXCERSISES.

ELRIS

It's just having Neil as my patient.
I've never had to care for him like
this before. It's tough having any
Captain as your patient, let along
the captain and my husband.

QUINLAN

I feel your pain, my friend.

ELRIS

Believe me, you don't. I feel like
I've got the entire ship riding on
my back.

QUINLAN

You're the ship's Doctor, you have
that burden to carry, just like the
crew rely on Grey to make sure that
the ship doesn't blow up.

ELRIS

You're not helping.

QUINLAN

And you're not relaxing.

ELRIS

(distressed)

And that's because I can't!

QUINLAN

What?

ELRIS

He's dying, Jennifer!

QUINLAN

(shocked)

WHAT?

ELRIS

I've been lying to Neil. He's going to be dead within forty-eight hours, unless I can find a cure. Talora knows, some of the medical staff know, but no one else.

QUINLAN

This isn't the type of thing you can just keep to yourself, Elris.

ELRIS

Then what do you suggest that I do? Tell the captain that he's going to be dead soon if I don't find a cure?

QUINLAN

Then take the pressure off of yourself! You have a full medical team at your disposal -- they can help.

ELRIS

But then how long will it be before the rest of the crew know? Do you have any idea how hard it is for me to look him in the eyes and tell him that he'll be on his feet in a couple of days? How do you think they will react?

QUINLAN

I don't know but you need help, Elris. You can't do this on your own.

From Elris's PAINED EXPRESSION we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. SICKBAY

Elris walks from her office and into the bay where Cross is, carrying a tray with hyposprays and a few other pieces of med tech. Elris goes in and seems to GLARE at Cross who REACTS:

CROSS

What have I done this time?

ELRIS

Excuse me?

CROSS

You haven't given me that look since we were still living together, after I'd done something that you weren't too happy about.

ELRIS

(quickly)

I've got no time to dwell on the past, Captain.

CROSS

Well it looks like we're going to be stuck in here for a while.

ELRIS

What makes you think that?

CROSS

Well, it looks like you're about to give me some kind of complicated treatment. You have that look in your eyes.

ELRIS

How would you know? You've never had anything like this given to you before, let alone from me.

Elris picks up a hypospray and injects Cross. Over the following dialogue, she continues to run scans, takes a sample of blood, and places a medtech device on his forehead, which emits a BEEPING sound.

CROSS

I've seen you give it to others.

ELRIS

How does it make you feel? You've never been in this situation before.

CROSS

Like my life is in your hands. That's
a new experience as well.

ELRIS

I was talking to Jennifer earlier. I
told her I've never had a captain in
my care... let alone my husband.

Cross lets out a SMALL CHUCKLE.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Try not to move. The procedure is
very delicate.

CROSS

I'll try.

They both fall into an awkward silence, as Elris continues
to do her work.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(trying to make
conversation)
Are you all right?

ELRIS

(innocent)
Me? I'm fine. Just tired.

CROSS

I know what you mean. But I'll be
out of your hair within a couple of
days.

Elris subtly REACTS to Cross's seeming innocuous comment.

ELRIS

(distant)
Of course...

The beeping noise the medtech device is making STOPS, and
Elris takes it off Cross. She ABRUPTLY EXITS without saying
a word to him.

CROSS

Elris?

No reply.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(slightly louder)
Elris?

Still no reply.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Guess I'm on my own then.

We move back to a WIDE SHOT of Sickbay, of Cross laid on the bed, alone.

INT. MESS HALL

Dojar sits at a table, alone, when Talora ENTERS and moves to join him.

TALORA

Good evening, Lieutenant.

DOJAR

Commander. How's the captain?

TALORA

I haven't been to see him since this morning. I'm planning on visiting later.

DOJAR

Is Doctor Elris allowing visitors?

TALORA

I believe so. She says that his condition is stable, for now.

DOJAR

I think I'll go and visit him.

TALORA

If you think that will help.

DOJAR

What do you mean?

TALORA

The captain's injury had an effect on you in Sickbay when you beamed in. Do you believe that by visiting him again you will have a different reaction?

DOJAR

Actually, yes I do. It was more of the shock of seeing him laid there, dead. I've seen a lot of deaths, Commander, but it was as if Elris was murdering him in cold blood.

TALORA

She was doing her job, Lieutenant. The Anticans and the Selay are the murderers.

DOJAR

I'm glad I'm not a doctor.

TALORA

In ways, being a Doctor is just as difficult as being a commanding officer. A captain has the safety of the entire crew in his or her hands...

DOJAR

(interrupts)

And it's the doctor who has to make the life or death decisions. They have to make the final call.

TALORA

Exactly.

DOJAR

But on the other hand, it was my job to protect him. I was the one who let him cover the rear -- it should be me on that biobed.

TALORA

There was nothing that you could have done. And I'm certain that the captain will fully recover.

DOJAR

It still doesn't justify what happened. I failed in my job as security officer. I should have detected those weapons!

TALORA

Does that mean that you didn't do your job?

DOJAR

(defensive)

Of course not! But that's... not the point.

TALORA

I believe it is. You fulfilled your duty, Dojar. There's nothing you could have done about it.

DOJAR

You've never done that before.

TALORA

Done what?

DOJAR

Called me Dojar. It's always been
Lieutenant.

TALORA

And does that make you feel
uncomfortable?

DOJAR

(smiling)

I'd be more worried if you called me
Gril.

Talora SMILES BACK.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Well, if you'll excuse me Commander,
I have a visit to make.

Talora NODS, and Dojar EXITS.

INT. SICKBAY OFFICE

Elris is still working at her desk. Dojar pokes his head
around the corner.

DOJAR

Doctor. I didn't expect to see you
still working.

ELRIS

(sighs)

So people keep on telling me.

DOJAR

How long have you been up?

ELRIS

That is none of your concern. I have
work that needs to be done, and I'm
doing it.

DOJAR

You sound like Talora.

ELRIS

(looks up)

If you've come to insult me,
Lieutenant, you've picked a bad time
to do it.

DOJAR

(looks confused)

Actually, I've come to see the
Captain.

ELRIS

(sighs)

Just go right through.

DOJAR

(uneasy)

Thanks. Is there anything I can do for...

ELRIS

(interrupts)

I'm fine.

(looks up)

I'd be a lot better off if you just left me alone.

Elris FORCES A SMILE, and Dojar EXITS.

INT. SICKBAY -- CONTINUOUS

Dojar walks over to see Cross in the surgical bay. Cross is ASLEEP, but Dojar does not realize this from the angle he is approaching him at.

DOJAR

Good evening, Captain!

Cross JUMPS and looks up at Dojar, a sudden look of FEAR shooting into his eyes.

CROSS

Get away from me, Cardassian!

DOJAR

Captain? It's me, Dojar.

Cross suddenly realizes where he is, and a look of REALIZATION and SHAME come upon him.

CROSS

Dojar...

(beat)

I'm... sorry. I didn't realize it was you.

There is an AWKWARD SILENCE.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Every time I've been asleep while I've been in here I've been dreaming of the POW camp. I'm sorry, Dojar.

DOJAR

(looking unsettled)

It's all right. I just came to see how you're doing.

CROSS

(sighs)

Not great. Elris has been giving me treatments, but they don't seem to be working so far.

DOJAR

(uncertain)

I'm sure it's normal. It's probably taking a while to filter that chemical out of your bloodstream.

CROSS

Right.

BEAT.

DOJAR

Is there anything I can get for you?

CROSS

Actually, I suppose there is. Would you mind... arranging for some ship's status reports or something finding their way down here? Elris doesn't want me exerting myself, but I've been bored senseless down here.

DOJAR

(smiles)

Of course, Captain. I'll ask the Commander if there's anything suitable.

CROSS

Thanks, Dojar.

DOJAR

I'll be back later.

CROSS

(sighs)

I won't be going anywhere...

Dojar EXITS. Cross settles back in bed, alone again.

EXT. SPACE

Establishing the Enterprise still in orbit of the class-M planet. The sun disappears behind the curve of the planet, giving the effect of a peaceful sunset.

INT. SICKBAY OFFICE

A shot from behind Elris's desk, showing her monitor is slowly scrolling data. PAN AROUND the desk to show that Elris is actually ASLEEP in her chair, having dozed off while reading.

Agolive ENTERS, reading a PADD as she walks in.

AGOLIVE

Doctor, I've got the latest analysis
of...

(notices Elris is
asleep)

Doctor?

Elris SNAPS awake suddenly.

ELRIS

(quickly)

I'm awake, I'm awake...

(gradually becoming
aware)

What's wrong?

AGOLIVE

Nothing's wrong, I've just got the
latest analysis of the chemical.
I've finally managed to identify it --
it's a derivative of the neural
inhibitor resoprexahin.

Elris brightens. Finally, some good news.

ELRIS

Great work, Kathryn. Thanks. I'll
get started on running a...

AGOLIVE

(interrupts)

Excuse me, Doctor, but wouldn't you
be better of getting some rest? How
long have you been on duty?

ELRIS

I'm not sure... but I'm okay.

AGOLIVE

You've been working since the Captain
was first injured, haven't you? That
was at least twenty hours ago.

ELRIS

(tiredly)

Really, I'm fine.

AGOLIVE

(insistent)

Doctor, I can get started on running
the structural analysis and reactive
tests in the lab. Why don't you try
to get some sleep?

Elris looks like she's about to continue arguing, but then thinks better of it.

ELRIS

All right, Kathryn, you win. I'll see be back in six hours.

AGOLIVE

Good night, Doctor.

Elris EXITS.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise continues in orbit of the planet. In the distance, the sun emerges, giving the effect of a sunrise on the Enterprise's sleek hull.

INT. MESS HALL

The room is crowded with officers this is apparently a busy meal time for the crew. Elris ENTERS, looking more well-rested than she did in the previous scene. She walks over to a REPLICATOR.

ELRIS

Two Ktarian eggs, scrambled, an icoberry torte, and a glass of orange juice.

The tray of food MATERIALIZES in the alcove. Elris picks the tray up and WALKS OVER to a table where Quinlan, Grey, and Dojar are sitting.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Good morning.

Various MURMURS of greeting from the trio already seated. Elris digs into her breakfast, and the others all continue eating in silence for a minute.

QUINLAN

(making conversation)

So... any news on the Captain?

ELRIS

Not recently. The nurses forced me out of Sickbay about eight hours ago, and I haven't heard anything since. So no. No news.

QUINLAN

(grins)

So you've got an upstart staff, huh?

Elris smiles.

ELRIS

You know, I've been so buried with work in Sickbay that I haven't had a chance to poke my head up lately. How's the crew been taking things?

QUINLAN

Not too badly. It was a big shock, but they've been handling it rather well. Although a lot of people have seemed rather preoccupied in the past day.

BEAT.

GREY

Everyone in Engineering has been distracted lately, too. It seems that everyone's been worried about the Captain. The warp core efficiency rating has fallen nearly a full percent in the past day. Of course, losing your commanding officer is a huge blow at any time.

QUINLAN

(sharp)

We haven't lost him yet, Grey.

GREY

(quickly)

I know. I mean... having your Captain injured.

DOJAR

A group of my officers asked me about sending an away team down to the surface, to beat some answers out of the Anticans when they heard the news.

ELRIS

Can't say that I blame them. The information that they gave us yesterday was practically worthless. So much for their regrets...

The group falls silent again.

GREY

Well at least he's going to make a full recovery -- then he can go and beat something out of the Anticans himself.

Elris EYES Quinlan, who looks down at the table.

ELRIS

Yeah. Of course.

Quinlan SLOWLY NODS. Grey looks SUSPICIOUS.

GREY

How is the captain's treatment going, Doctor?

ELRIS

Great.

GREY

And when do you expect him to be up on his feet?

ELRIS

(shouts)

God damn it, Grey! I'm a Doctor, not a psychic!

A number of other officers nearby are staring at Elris, and whispering to one another. Elris notices this, and calms down. Grey, though, seems to be getting angrier.

GREY

To be a doctor you must foresee patients recovery. In my opinion, Doctor, you are neither a good psychic, nor a liar.

ELRIS

Excuse me?

GREY

Every word you just told us was a lie; I can see it in your body language.

ELRIS

(deadly serious)

If you would like, Lieutenant, I will give you a medical tricorder, and you can make that judgment for yourself.

GREY

Well played, Doctor, but I still do not believe you.

With that Grey STANDS and LEAVES leaving Dojar looking on in a state of semi-shock, while Elris and Quinlan look in various directions attempting to look inconspicuous.

DOJAR

Doctor?

ELRIS

Don't you start too, Dojar.

Dojar exercises the better part of valor and EXITS. Quinlan just gives Elris a LOOK before leaving as well. Elris SIGHS, and returns to her nearly-forgotten breakfast.

INT. SICKBAY

Elris walks in, and goes over to the surgical bay to check on Cross. He's lying in bed in his usual position, reading from a PADD.

ELRIS

(sharp)

Where'd you get that PADD?

CROSS

And a good morning to you too, Doctor. It's just a ship's status report from Talora. Something to keep me occupied here. I've been going stir crazy.

ELRIS

You shouldn't be working in this condition at all.

CROSS

Well, it's either that or just lie here and do nothing, so my options are rather limited, Doctor.

ELRIS

It won't help your condition any if you keep exerting yourself. The strain on your system...

CROSS

(interrupts)

What strain? I'm just lying in bed, reading a PADD. And I've been here a whole day now, and I'm not feeling any better.

ELRIS

(slightly sarcastic)

Don't worry, Captain, I'm doing everything I can to get you out of here as quickly as possible.

Elris EXITS. On Cross's pained and angry expression, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. MEDICAL LAB

A work table is set up with a futuristic microscope, a sample container, other medical equipment. Elris and Agolive are busy examining data, peering into the microscope, and consulting a computer display. It appears that they've been at this for a while, and we're entering mid-conversation.

AGOLIVE

Look... there. I think I've isolated the contact point.

ELRIS

(interested)

Let me see.

AGOLIVE

(explaining)

It looks like the resoprexahin has been modified to react with the transfer neurons instead of the base neurons. As it spreads throughout the system, it latches on to whatever neural cells it can reach, and depolarizes them.

ELRIS

(understanding)

Which then disables the entire section of the nervous system. It could disrupt anything... including autonomic functions. Once enough of the system has been depolarized, the entire neural net starts to collapse.

Elris pauses, thinking.

AGOLIVE

Now we know how it works... the question is, how can we stop it?

ELRIS

(still thinking)

We know that the agent reacts with the neural cells. That gives us a starting point. What if... we were to synthesize a counter-agent that would be specifically designed to neutralize the chemical, break it up into its base components?

Agolive is doubtful.

AGOLIVE

Would that be effective enough? The chemical's spread throughout his entire system... it would take forever to get it cleared with a counteragent like that.

(another thought occurs
to her)

Besides, any agent that's likely to interact with the chemical would probably also react with his own blood chemistry. It would tear his system apart!

ELRIS

It's all we've got to go on. Forward the results to my office, I'll start working on the reactive testing.

Elris starts to leave.

AGOLIVE

Doctor? Before you go... I wanted to ask why you haven't told the captain how serious his condition is.

Elris STOPS. This is a sore point with her.

ELRIS

Kathryn, that's not your business.

AGOLIVE

(defiant)

I believe it is. I heard what you told him yesterday. You lied. He has no idea that he could be dead in twenty-four hours I caught him trying to walk around the surgical bay this morning! He barely made it three feet before he collapsed. He has a right to know the truth.

Elris looks anguished at Agolive's words.

ELRIS

Don't you think I know that? We've had more than our share of problems, but I can't look at him and tell him that he's going to die... if I can't find the cure.

She pauses, regains her composure.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

In the end, it won't matter. We'll find a solution, and he'll be fine. Soon.

AGOLIVE

Doctor, he may be the Captain, and he may be your husband... but he's also a person, and your patient. It doesn't matter if he's going to be all right he still needs to know. Tell him.

BEAT. Elris seems to be fighting an internal battle. Finally, she nods.

ELRIS

(resigned)

I will. If I can find the words...

INT. QUINLAN'S QUARTERS

Elris ENTERS.

QUINLAN

So, what's up?

ELRIS

I've come to talk.

QUINLAN

What about?

ELRIS

Neil.

Quinlan GRITS HER TEETH. She knows she's going to be in for a hard talk.

QUINLAN

Ah. How's it going?

ELRIS

We've come up with something.

(beat)

But I don't think it's going to work.

QUINLAN

Why?

Elris SHAKES HER HEAD.

ELRIS

I've been outwitted by it, Jennifer. I...

(beat)

The chemical is my enemy, it's Neil's enemy.

(beat)

I never thought it would come to this, but... there are just some things medicine can't cure.

(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Not yet, and not in time.

QUINLAN

(bluntly)

Then he'll die.

Elris TAKES THIS IN and there is a LONG BEAT.

ELRIS

What is there to try?

QUINLAN

I don't know. I'm not a Doctor. You are. You have a job to do, Doctor. You can't stop now.

Elris SIGHS.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

You still haven't told him yet, have you?

ELRIS

Agolive thinks that I should.

QUINLAN

Are you going to?

ELRIS

From the way people are speaking to me it sounds like I don't have much choice.

QUINLAN

That sounds different from the Elris Lea that I spoke to earlier.

ELRIS

I didn't say that I would.

QUINLAN

Then how would you feel if you were in his position? If you didn't know what was happening to you and died without having a chance to say goodbye? You have a choice to make, Elris, and its one that only Neil knows the answer to.

The camera CLOSES IN on Elris and as it does the truth seems to draw on her through Quinlan's words.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

You know him better than anyone on this ship. You have to make that decision for him not based on what you want but what he wants. Remember that.

ELRIS

You're right. You have an annoying habit of doing that, especially for an ex-convict.

QUINLAN

I'm always right. Where do you think I picked that up?

ELRIS

Where?

QUINLAN

Lawyers.

Elris lets out a SMALL LAUGH.

ELRIS

Thank you.

QUINLAN

(grins)

What are friends for?

INT. SICKBAY

Elris gathers some equipment up and walks into Cross' surgical bay once again.

She takes a look at Cross who is SLEEPING. She STIRS at him, not knowing what to do. She slowly SHAKES HIM and he WAKES UP.

ELRIS

(softly)

Hey. How are you feeling?

CROSS

(sounds weak)

Not good.

ELRIS

You should be starting to feel better.

CROSS

(aggravated)

Well I don't, Doctor.

ELRIS

I've come up with some more medication.

(smiles)

I've been working on it for hours -- if this doesn't do any good, I don't know what will.

CROSS

It doesn't sound as simple as you originally thought.

ELRIS

It isn't. It's... complicated.

CROSS

How complicated?

Elris doesn't speak.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Well?

Elris LOOKS HIM IN THE EYES, suddenly, the truth begins to dawn on Cross. Cross OPENS HIS MOUTH as if to say something but STOPS.

Elris NODS.

ELRIS

(reluctantly)

If I don't find a cure... you'll be dead in less than a day.

Cross JUMPS at this news.

CROSS

What?

ELRIS

(firm)

I'm sorry Neil. I didn't know how to tell you.

(beat)

I couldn't tell you.

CROSS

(disbelieving)

Your scans can't be right. I can't die. Not now!

ELRIS

I'm doing all that I can, Neil.

CROSS

You keep saying that.

ELRIS

I should have told you earlier.

CROSS

(flatly)

You're right.

ELRIS

You don't sound as annoyed as I thought you would.

CROSS

Well, in case you haven't noticed you've got me drugged up so much since my little escapade this morning, I couldn't raise a finger if I wanted to.

ELRIS

So you are annoyed.

CROSS

(sarcastically)

Well done, Doctor. For once you seem to have at least one prognosis correct.

(beat)

You should have told me.

ELRIS

(shouts)

I know!

Elris WALKS TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BED, where Cross can't see her as well. Cross seems to calm down, but we can tell from the AGITATION on his face that he is far from happy.

CROSS

What are my chances?

ELRIS

It's... complicated.

CROSS

Complicated? That's all you have to say? Your and my relationship is complicated, Doctor. Am I going to live?

ELRIS

(slowly)

I don't know.

Cross SHAKES HIS HEAD.

CROSS

I honestly don't believe you. First you neglect me, then you...

ELRIS

Neglect you?

CROSS

You've hardly come in to see me apart from when you've been giving me treatment.

ELRIS

And why do you think that is?

CROSS

Because you still can't talk to me. Because you still believe that I'm not worthy of you.

ELRIS

That's pathetic, Cross! Don't you think that it might be because I've been working around the clock to find a cure? That it's been too hard for me to talk to you? To look you in the eyes and say that you're going to be all right more than I have to?

CROSS

You should have told me!

ELRIS

I couldn't! Anyway, on the subject of neglect, you'd know quite a lot about that, wouldn't you?

CROSS

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

ELRIS

You're career always came first, didn't it?

CROSS

(retaliatory)
And so did your faith.

ELRIS

And you didn't even try to help me in it. You didn't even try to understand it or appreciate it.

CROSS

And where would that put me as a Starfleet officer?

ELRIS

(interrupts)

See, there you go again.

CROSS

You're people worship aliens in a wormhole. I appreciate that I really do, but it's not something that I can see myself believing in, Elris.

ELRIS

Why, because of your past?

CROSS

That has nothing to do with it, and you know it!

ELRIS

You've always been tied to the past, Neil. You've never let it go.

CROSS

Fine. Let's see how you deal with being stuck in a POW camp for three years of your life and we'll see how you hold up, shall we?

ELRIS

You forget, Neil, I lived on Bajor for eleven years during the occupation. The whole planet was practically a POW camp.

CROSS

(weakly shouts)

You know that's not what I meant.

(regains breath)

It was never the same. You didn't have to live in constant fear of being beaten... of being the next person on the Jem'Hadar's hit list.

ELRIS

No? I just had the Cardassians... not quite the same is it? Even though you still fear Dojar.

CROSS

Fear him?

ELRIS

He told me what happened when he came to see you this morning.

CROSS

I gave him a valid reason why.

ELRIS

But you still harbor animosity towards him. You're hanging on to the past.

CROSS

And I always relied on you to be there for me when I needed you. But you weren't then and you certainly aren't now.

ELRIS

You're relying on me to survive, Neil!

CROSS

Really? Because a few hours ago I could have sworn I was going to be fine.

ELRIS

You're still relying on me.

CROSS

Of course I'm relying on you! My life is in your hands! And you've been manipulating the situation to suit your own feelings. You're treating the situation in the same way you did with Daniel!

Elris FREEZES and STARES at Cross, right in the eyes.

ELRIS

You have no right to bring up our son like that.

CROSS

Oh I think I do. His life was in your hands just like mine is now. You ignored the situation then, too! All the way, until it was too late. I didn't have a chance to say goodbye, Lea!

(softly)

Are you going to just let me die, too?

ELRIS

You know that I did everything in my power to save our son!

CROSS

You kept on pushing me away, I didn't have a chance to even see him until it was too late.

ELRIS

There was nothing you could have done.

CROSS

How about letting the specialist near him? How about taking a break? How about telling me? How many people on board know this time, huh? Two? Three?

ELRIS

Enough.

Cross NODS. It's the answer he expected.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

There was nothing I could have done to save him, Neil.

CROSS

Nothing you could have done.

ELRIS

Stop telling me what I already know! There's nothing I can do, I can't go back in time and change what happened. No one can.

CROSS

That still doesn't make things right.

ELRIS

Don't you think that I know that? I lie awake in bed nearly every night thinking about what could have been, what life might have been like. If I could pay to have Daniel brought back I'd give my life. My life, Neil. But I can't.

CROSS

So you save other peoples lives every day, instead?

ELRIS

Like you said. It doesn't make things right.

CROSS

Maybe one day you will get to repay your debt. I guess your beliefs got you through that part, you'll die and he'll be there with the Prophets.

ELRIS

You know my beliefs aren't what they were ten years ago.

CROSS

I know.

ELRIS

So you're mocking me? Mocking my religion?

CROSS

You don't believe in a religion any more.

ELRIS

Is this is what this is about? My faith?

CROSS

What makes you think that?

ELRIS

You seem to keep bringing it up a lot.

CROSS

You know this is about you and me.
(almost begging)
You have to save me, Lea. Don't make the same mistake twice. Please.

Elris EYES Cross and doesn't know what to say. We can see her MOUTH MOVING as though she is about say something, she looks awkward and unsure of herself. She tires to say something one last time, before turning around and EXITING.

INT. CORRIDOR

Elris TURNS and PUSHES HER BACK AGAINST A WALL before SLIDING DOWN IT, with her HEAD IN HER HANDS and begins to CRY.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

INT. CORRIDOR

Same as before. Talora APPROACHES. Elris LOOKS UP before quickly REGAINING HER COMPOSURE and STANDING UP.

ELRIS

Commander.

TALORA

Are you fit for duty, Doctor?

ELRIS

Yeah... I'm just tired. That's all.

Talora NODS, seeming to understand.

TALORA

Have you made any progress?

ELRIS

Not since my last report.

TALORA

That was over an hour ago, Doctor.

ELRIS

I've been busy examining the patient.
I haven't made any progress.

TALORA

No progress. In an hour?

ELRIS

Unless eliminating possibilities
from how to cure the captain is your
idea of progress, than the answer is
yes.

TALORA

The captain has twenty-four hours to
live, and you're telling me that you
have not made any progress. We do
not have hours to waste, Doctor.

ELRIS

(irritated)

I'm doing all that I can, Comma-

TALORA

(interrupts)

Not good enough.

(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

(beat)

It is standard procedure that doctors do not take care of their relatives. I was willing to make an exception in this case, but it is clearly misguided.

ELRIS

(accusingly)

What are you implying? That I'm impeded because I'm his wife?

TALORA

(cold)

I am not implying, Doctor. I am stating a fact.

ELRIS

It is not your job to interfere in a case like this. I am doing all that I can for my husband -- the Captain -- and there is nothing anyone else could do better.

TALORA

On the contrary, Doctor. I can relieve you from duty.

ELRIS

You have no grounds for removal.

Talora remains impassive. Elris realizes there is nothing she can do.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

You can't take me away from him, Commander.

TALORA

I can, and I will. You are relieved of duty.

ELRIS

(furious)

Commander!

TALORA

I am not going to change my mind, Doctor.

Elris SHAKES HER HEAD at Talora.

ELRIS

He'll die.

TALORA

Perhaps. But his odds of survival
may be considerably better without
you in charge.

ELRIS

I'll remember this, Commander.

TALORA

As will I.

Elris takes one last LOOK towards Sickbay, before heading
down the corridor.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

TALORA

Commanders Log, Stardate 78412.9.
Since relieving Doctor Elris of duty
the captain's condition has continued
to deteriorate. Doctor Atkinson has
informed me that the captain is
paralyzed and that his chances of
survival are slim.

INT. SICKBAY

A male Doctor, ATKINSON is LOOKING OVER Cross, giving him
treatment.

ATKINSON

I think we're beginning to make some
progress. The last treatment we
tested in your blood sample began to
work. We should have something that
resembles a cure very soon.

CROSS

Are you just trying to make me feel
better?

ATKINSON

It's part of my job description,
Captain. But we really are making
progress.

CROSS

(grimly)
But not fast enough.

Atkinson SLOWLY NODS, and gives Cross a HYPOSPRAY.

ATKINSON

If anything, this should slow the
chemical down.

CROSS
Thank you, Doctor.

Atkinson NODS and EXITS.

There is a couple of seconds were we just look down on Cross from above. He closes his eyes and tries to sleep, before HEARING the familiar SQUELCH of Y'lan ENTERING.

CROSS (CONT'D)
(still with eyes closed)
Hello, Y'lan.

Y'LAN
Captain.

Cross OPENS HIS EYES.

CROSS
I didn't expect to see you.

Y'LAN
I have come to observe and give
(beat)
Lieutenant Grey mentioned... comfort.

Cross gives a WEAK SMILE.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)
But mainly to observe.

CROSS
(sarcastically)
Thanks for coming.

Y'LAN
How are you dealing with your
condition?

CROSS
The same as anyone else would, I
suppose. Just waiting for the medical
staff to find a cure... or to die.

Y'LAN
Not a pleasant length of time.

CROSS
You're right there.

Y'LAN
What do you think about?

CROSS
Life. Death. What comes next.

Y'LAN

What do you believe the answer is?

CROSS

I'd like to believe in an afterlife. But it doesn't make any sense to me. How can we think if our brains cease to function, if our hearts cease to beat.

(shakes head and smiles)

I'd like to believe in a soul.

Y'LAN

It is not something that you should be so doubtful of, Captain. You have nothing to worry about.

CROSS

The Q'tami know something about death?

Y'LAN

We do not. It is one event which will eventually happen to each individual in the universe, something which can only be put on hold. We prefer to wait, to have the experience of a life time.

CROSS

So you believe in a soul?

Y'LAN

We believe in ourselves, Captain.

CROSS

I never thought of death like that before. Thank you, Y'lan.

Y'LAN

It is the least I can do, Captain. I wish you well.

Cross LOOKS SURPRISED.

CROSS

Y'lan, I want you to do something for me.

INT. ELRIS' QUARTERS

Elris is WEARING CIVVIES and Y'lan AWKWARDLY SITS on a couch next to her on a wall opposite a window looking into space.

ELRIS

I didn't think you were the social type, Y'lan.

Y'LAN

I am not. I was asked to come and visit you.

ELRIS

By Neil?

Y'LAN

Correct.

ELRIS

Great, now that he can't come and do his own dirty work, he's getting you to come and do it for him. Can't I escape that man?

Y'LAN

I am sorry, Doctor, but he asked me to convey a message.

ELRIS

(softly)

A message?

Elris TURNS HER BACK to Y'lan and looks out of the window, seemingly ignoring him.

Y'LAN

He wants you to get on with your life. Don't dwell on things past -- he says that you were correct. There is nothing that you can do to change the past. It's the present that matters, and the future that counts.

Elris remains FACING THE WINDOW, IN HER REFLECTION we can see TEARS IN HER EYES, though Y'lan can not see this. There is no trace of this in her voice when she speaks.

ELRIS

Thank you, Y'lan.

Y'LAN

Anytime, Doctor. I will be leaving now.

Elris just NODS.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

It is strange that you humanoids are attached to the past more than anything else. The future does not seem to be apparent to you unless it is your life which is at risk or an objective that you wish to achieve.

(MORE)

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

You attach yourself to the captain as he is a part of your past, and now that there is a chance that he may be taken away from you, you wish to consider the future. It is a strange society which you live in.

Elris just REMAINS SILENT and Y'lan EXITS. Elris TURNS AROUND and we the DISTURBED EXPRESSION on her face.

INT. CARGO BAY

Quinlan STANDS CATALOGUING cargo containers, whilst a disturbed Elris stands next to her.

ELRIS

(angry)

Why can't he just leave me alone? Even from his death bed he's telling me to go and get on with my life and forget about him.

(calmer)

Anyway, I stopped caring for him a long time ago.

QUINLAN

Then you have nothing to worry about, do you?

ELRIS

Exactly.

QUINLAN

So how's he doing?

ELRIS

Same as before, less time left. Atkinson's looking after him, but I don't think he's found a cure yet.

QUINLAN

Uh-huh.

ELRIS

I mean, why should Talora kick me off the medical team anyway? I'm the best Doctor she has on the ship and she's taking the odds of saving the captain's life away by having me off the team.

QUINLAN

Maybe... it's for the best.

ELRIS

What do you mean?

QUINLAN

Your emotions were getting in the way of your decisions. They were hardly the best ones that you could have made.

ELRIS

How do you expect me to react? To sit back and treat him like any other patient? He's been my husband for thirteen years, Jennifer, I can't just treat him like any other patient. When I first saw him after he beamed in I...

(beat)

...froze. I've never seen him like that before, I've never seen someone close to me...

(beat and then slowly)

...like that before.

(depressed)

I should never have lied to him, I should have told him the truth from the beginning... maybe I thought that if I didn't tell him and kept it from as many people as I could it would all go away and go back to normal.

(beat)

Maybe I wanted him to die.

Quinlan REACTS.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Maybe... maybe I've just had all I can take from him and need to move on.

QUINLAN

Don't be ridiculous! You worked around the clock to try and find a cure for him! There's no way you'd have done that if you wanted him to die.

ELRIS

(shouts)

Then why couldn't I find a cure? Why couldn't I save him? He's done so much for me over the years and the only thing that I've done is to push him away.

(begins to cry)

When I first came aboard I pushed him away, when he wanted us to just be friends I pushed him away. I talked to him earlier about neglect... but

(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

I didn't and still don't deserve
him.

(trying to regain
some composure)

Now here I am pushing him away. Again.

QUINLAN

Do you still love him?

Quinlan WORKS ON. Elris is caught off guard.

ELRIS

What?

QUINLAN

Do you still love him?

There is a LONG BEAT where the two women both STARE AT EACH OTHER. Elris LOOKS CONFUSED and thoughtful as she comes to a REALIZATION.

ELRIS

(quietly)

I can't answer that.

Quinlan REMAINS SILENT.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

(emotional)

I really don't know. There's so
much between him and me... so much
we've been through and now I'm
throwing all of that away. My life
has become the living embodiment of
someone who has lost everything that
she once held dear. I've lost my
husband, my faith... my...

(holds herself back)

I've lost too many parts of my life
to lose someone else, and now there's
nothing I can do about it. He's going
to die, Jennifer.

(crying)

He's going to die.

Quinlan MOVES IN TO SUPPORT ELRIS, but Elris PUSHES HER AWAY.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

I have to go.

QUINLAN

Go where?

ELRIS

I have to go and see him. Now. Before
it's too late.

And with that Elris LEAVES, leaving Quinlan standing at her post cataloguing crates.

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Elris EXITS the cargo bay and BREAKS INTO A JOG as she RUNS THROUGH THE CORRIDORS of the SHIP and into a TURBOLIFT.

INT. TURBOLIFT -- CONTINUOUS

Elris stands WITH TEARS IN HER EYES.

ELRIS

Sickbay.

Elris LEANS BACK AGAINST THE WALLS and CLOSES HER EYES.

Note: Between each flashback, cut to a graphic of the turbolift moving through the Enterprise.

INT. CORRIDOR (FLASHBACK: "AFTERMATH")

Elris holds up a PADD and shoves it to Cross.

ELRIS

Here's my official request to be transferred off this ship.

CROSS

I can't accept this.

ELRIS

Either that or my resignation, Captain. One way or another, I'm out!

(sharply)

Sir.

INT. SICKBAY (FLASHBACK: "AFTERMATH")

Elris patches up the final patient of the day, gives an approving nod to the nurses. Another job well done, another life saved. She sits down in her SMALL OFFICE, exhausted from the day's work. Notes a FLOWER on the table, with a FOLDED NOTE and a PADD attached to it. Elris unfolds the note and something SLIPS OUT. She reads the text:

We may not be able to forget, but maybe we can forgive? I am sorry. For everything.

-- Neil

She looks at the PADD, her resignation she shoved to Cross earlier. Then she takes the small item that slipped out.

It's a traditional BAJORAN EARRING.

INT. CORRIDOR (FLASHBACK: "CONFIDENCE IN PRINCES")

CROSS

I'm a Captain of a starship, Lea,
and at the moment I have more pressing
matters to attend to than that of
some experiment or a certain Commander
trying to patch up our relationship.
My career's on the line!

ELRIS

It was always on the line! What do I
have to do before you put others
before that? You neglected me, you
neglected yourself and you
neglected...

She doesn't finish the sentence. Both of their faces tell
that she appears to have inadvertently struck a chord.

CROSS

I'm sorry.

ELRIS

No, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have
brought that up...

INT. SICKBAY (FLASHBACK: "DAY IN...")

ELRIS

Us? You think that there's an us
still here?

CROSS

Not a relationship, but I'd like to
think that we could eventually be
friends.

ELRIS

I don't think I'm ready.

INT. ELRIS'S QUARTERS (FLASHBACK: "...DAY OUT")

ELRIS

So what is there to talk about?

CROSS

What we used to talk about. As
friends.

ELRIS

But we're not friends, captain.

We're shipmates, and as much as I'd like to be friends, right
now, I can't.

EXT. TURBOLIFT

The lift COMES TO A STOP.

INT. TURBOLIFT

Elris OPENS HER EYES and BEGINS TO JOG to Sickbay.

INT. CORRIDOR

As she reaches the doors, they PART OPEN, giving her a view of the CHAOS INSIDE. Elris ENTERS SICKBAY.

INT. SICKBAY

NURSES FRANTICALLY RUN AROUND THE ROOM gathering up equipment and taking it into the surgical bay where Cross is. We see ATKINSON WORKING ON an UNCONCIOUS CROSS with NURSES all around him. Elris PULLS AGOLIVE ASIDE.

ELRIS

What's happening?

Agolive just SLOWLY SHAKES HER HEAD and LOOKS ELRIS IN THE EYES before TAKING SOME EQUIPMENT into the surgical bay. As Agolive WALKS OFF we slowly SLOW DOWN into SLOW MOTION as Elris WATCHES the DOCTORS WORK ON CROSS.

We see a CLOSE UP ON CROSS, A CLOSE UP ON ELRIS and a WIDE SHOT OF THE BAY as TIME SLOWLY ROLLS BY. We go back to a CLOSE UP ON ELRIS.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

(very softly)

It's too late.

From this we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

SMASH CUT IN:

INT. SICKBAY

Continuous from end of act four.

CLOSE ON ELRIS. She looks TOTALLY BROKEN and seems to be stood in a moment that she can't get out of, just stood watching the Doctors and Nurses trying to help her dying husband. She's finally reached an epiphany, and now her chance to try to make up with Cross may be taken away. TEARS RUN DOWN HER FACE as she WATCHES IN SILENCE, unable to do anything unable to help.

Elris WATCHES AS CROSS BEGINS TO FLAT LINE, and NURSES RUSH BY HER with RESUSCITATION UNITS.

INT. A MEDICAL BAY (FLASHBACK)

Cross and Elris stand side by side looking at a monitor which displays no life signs.

Elris LOOKS DOWN AT THE DEAD BODY OF A BABY BOY, still wrapped in a blanket, still with color in his face... still warm.

Elris turns to Cross and BURIES HER HEAD in his arms and CRIES OUT LOUD, a TEAR ROLLS DOWN CROSS'S FACE as he HOLDS ELRIS and looks down at his baby son, motionless. Dead.

INT. SICKBAY

Elris CONTINUES TO WATCH THE RESUSCITATION EFFORT. She looks at the MONITOR BEHIND CROSS which displays NO HEART BEAT, NO LIFE SIGNS. Atkinson LOOKS AROUND at the staff and nods.

ATKINSON

That's it. It's over. Does everyone agree?

The MEDICAL TEAM NOD.

ELRIS

No! How can you give up on him like that?

Again, into SLOW MOTION. Elris RUSHES OVER TO CROSS'S BED and JUMPS ON TOP OF IT, and begins to MANUALLY TRY TO RESUSCITATE HIM. She BEATS HIS CHEST begging him to breathe before: -

INT. SICKBAY

Elris CONTINUES TO WATCH THE MEDICAL TEAM, less rushed working on Cross, the medical display behind them STILL SHOWING LIFE SIGNS.

Elris is SWEATING and TEARS CONTINUE TO ROLL DOWN HER FACE as she watches. Atkinson WALKS OVER.

ATKINSON

Doctor.

Elris NODS.

ATKINSON (CONT'D)

I think we've got a treatment...

ELRIS

(interrupts)

Then what are you waiting for? Give him it!

ATKINSON

If you'd let me finish, Doctor.

Elris QUICKLY NODS.

ATKINSON (CONT'D)

I think we may have a treatment. But... I'm not holding out much hope for success.

ELRIS

Why?

ATKINSON

(slowly)

Two reasons. I'm unsure whether or not the treatment will be effective and it may already be too late.

There's a BEAT. Elris REMAINS SILENT.

ATKINSON (CONT'D)

We're going to give him the treatment... but that's all we can do for now. We just have to wait and see what the outcome is.

Elris NODS.

ELRIS

Of course.

Atkinson NODS and is about to walk away, when:

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Doctor?

ATKINSON

Yes?

ELRIS

Is there anything I can do?
(expecting him to say
no)
I mean... anything.

ATKINSON

Yes.

ELRIS

Just taking readings, loading
hyposprays... anything. I just want
to help.

ATKINSON

I said yes, Doctor.

ELRIS

You did?

ATKINSON

Monitor the Captains readings, let's
see how he reacts to this treatment.

Atkinson WALKS AWAY, leaving Elris STANDING ALONE, looking
at the room Cross is in. She SWALLOWS, and SLOWLY WALKS INTO
THE SURGICAL BAY, where Cross is unconscious.

She takes a LOOK AT HIS READINGS and takes a SEAT NEXT TO
HIM, and HOLDS HIS HAND.

ELRIS

So... you finally got what you wanted,
you and me alone for a few hours. I
know this won't be the same, but I'm
going to talk to you anyway. I have
to.

(beat)

I can't just let you die without
telling you how I really feel.

(beat)

What I've never told you before.

(A long beat)

You know? This would be a lot easier
if you talked back.

(another beat)

Guess not, huh? So... where do we
start?

(beat)

Daniel.

(beat)

You would have been a great father,
you know. You'd have always been
there for him... taught him how to
survive. Not like me. I killed him.

(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

I killed our son because I was stubborn enough not to let anyone else help him.

(shakes her head)

I never even let you see him again until it was too late. I've never been able to understand that. I've always been... so proud of myself that I haven't let anyone else's pride or self confidence get in the way of that.

(beat)

And look where we are now because of it. I suppose if you were really here you'd be just encouraging all of this... but I remember a time when you used to pull me back out of these... self inflicted guilt trips.

(smiles)

You'd tell me that I did what I thought was right and that will always be right. The way it was meant to be. But it's never going to be right, is it? Deep down you always knew that. I always knew that.

(beat)

And then we broke up.

(looks grim)

It was never your fault. If we still had Daniel we'd have always been there for each other. We'd have been a real family. We'd have had the best of both worlds. I guess that was what changed it all. What put you back in to work...and

(beat)

what pushed you away.

FADE TO:

A MONTAGE. Elris remains by Cross' bed side, TALKING to him, HOLDING HIS HAND. The camera MOVES AROUND the room for the different shots as we see NURSES OUTSIDE the room APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR as time goes by. We see a nurse come in to see Cross as Elris CONTINUES TO HOLD HIS HAND. And eventually, we finally FADE IN to real time, as Elris CONTINUES TO TALK.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

And now we're here. Everything that we've been through has led us to the Enterprise. To what we have

(beat)

or don't have now. I need you as a friend, Neil. I can't just keep pushing you away time after time.

(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

(frowns)

I always thought it was you who was responsible for us breaking up, but it wasn't. It was me. I was responsible for us breaking up. I finally said it.

(beat)

And you're never going to see anything become of it.

(beat, then defiant:)

You're never going to die inside me, Neil. You mean too much to me whether I like it or not.

(more tears)

You mean more to me than you'll ever know.

Elris CLOSES HER EYES and LEANS DOWN TO HIM, where she RESTS HER HEAD ON HIS CHEST. She LISTENS TO HIM BREATHE. She listens to him live. After a LONG BEAT she finally LIFTS HER HEAD UP, and sees Cross' EYES ARE OPEN.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Neil?

Cross lets out a WEAK GROAN. Elris RUNS OUTSIDE.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Doctor!

Elris GOES BACK INSIDE and sits next to Cross. Cross WEAKLY SMILES. Elris HESITANTLY SMILES BACK as Atkinson REACHES THE DOOR. Elris STANDS and EXITS.

EXT. ENTEPRISE

ELRIS (V.O.)

Medical log, stardate 78418.3.
Captain Cross has been released from Sickbay after two days of recovery. He should be fit to return to duty in the next week.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross is SAT on the sofa looking out into space, with a PADD IN ONE HAND and a CUP OF HOT CHOCOLATE in the other. The door CHIMES.

CROSS

Come in.

The doors OPEN and Elris ENTERS.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Come to check up on me?

ELRIS

Not exactly.

Cross REMAINS SILENT.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

While you were unconscious... at the end. I talked to you.

CROSS

I know.

ELRIS

And you remember what I said?

CROSS

Some of it.

ELRIS

What do you remember?

CROSS

I remember someone who realized some of the mistakes she's made in her life... and how she needs to correct parts of herself to stop them from happening again.

Elris NODS. There is a LONG SILENCE as both LOOK OUT INTO SPACE.

ELRIS

About Daniel?

Cross LOOKS UNCOMFORTABLE.

CROSS

I don't remember. But do you really want to bring it up again?

ELRIS

No. But we have to talk about him.

(beat)

You know that there can never be a full reconciliation between us both, don't you?

CROSS

Perhaps.

ELRIS

But we can be friends.

CROSS

And where does Daniel come into all of this?

ELRIS

He's part of our past... we can't
ever let him go.

CROSS

But it's the future that counts.

ELRIS

And he's part of that. Y'lan told me
that we don't think about the future
as much as we do the past

(beat)

...but the past influences the future
just as much as the present does.
Daniel will always be a part of us...
and that's why we can never fully
make up our differences.

Cross JUST NODS. There is a LONG BEAT as both STARE INTO
SPACE once again, contemplating what may have been.

CROSS

So. Friends?

ELRIS

(smiles)

Friends.

Cross SMILES, but both STILL LOOK UNCOMFORTABLE. Elris is
right, they can't just brush the baby aside, but they can
get on with their lives. Elris STANDS.

CROSS

Going already?

ELRIS

I'm needed back in Sickbay.

CROSS

(nods)

Would you like to meet up later...
for a drink?

ELRIS

Great. Twenty-one hundred?

CROSS

Sounds good.

ELRIS

I'll see you then.

Cross SMILES and goes back to his PADD. Elris takes one last LOOK AT CROSS and then EXITS leaving Cross alone, once again, with a PADD, his chocolate and his thoughts. On Cross looking out into space we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END