

STAR TREK: RENAISSANCE

"...Day Out"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

SEQ: Pivotal moments from "Day In."

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Last time on Star Trek: Renaissance.

EXT. MCKEGGAN WORMHOLE

CROSS (V.O.)

This, is the McKeggan Wormhole.
We've discovered that only the end
we are at is stable.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

CROSS

The other endpoint moves around at a
rapid pace, it has even strayed beyond
our galaxy.

INT. CORRIDOR

Elris and Quinlan slowly walk along the corridor to sickbay.

ELRIS

I notice our valiant Captain left
you out of the mission briefing.

QUINLAN

I'm used to it-- I haven't had
anything to do that's been in my job
description for weeks now. In all
but name I've become the ships gossip
officer.

INT. SCIENCE LAB

Y'lan OBSERVES various crewmen through his science table.

Y'LAN

(into dictation device)

Begin recording. Y'lan, reporting on
the condition of the human species,
their regressive peculiarities and
subculture.

INT. TEN-FORWARD

A table with one empty seat. The rest is occupied by other
crewmembers.

DOJAR
(politely)
Can I sit here?

All the crewmembers LAUGH and move to a neighboring table, leaving Dojar looking distraught, watching them go.

INT. ROMULAN WARBIRO -- FLASHBACK

Talora STANDS in her quarters with BREVOK.

BREVOK
(impassionate)
Sublieutenant, your brother has been killed in action. He died a soldier of your people.

Brevok EXITS.

Talora is stunned. Behind the deeply unreadable and arrogant Romulan visage, we can see pain.

EXT. FIELD -- FLASHBACK

Talora and NELAR.

TALORA
So, how is command? I mean, how is it really?

NELAR
It's the toughest thing I've ever done in my life.

INT. TALORA'S OFFICE

Talora looks at a photo of her brother, Nelar.

TALORA
You told me a lot of things about command, Nelar... but you never told me it was so lonely.

INT. SICKBAY

Cross and Elris.

CROSS
I was thinking that this might be a good time to talk.

ELRIS
Old wounds take time to heal, Captain.

INT. ENGINEERING

GREY shouts at KINNAN.

GREY

Kinnan, you have Command!

CLOSE UP: BOYLE

GREY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It's Boyle. I'm in love with Boyle.

INT. MISSION OPERATIONS

Talora, Cross, Y'lan and SUKOTHAI.

TALORA

We have done a full sensor sweep and spectral analysis of the McKeggan Wormhole. There is no indication whatsoever of what could be keeping the wormhole stable.

Y'LAN

We could send a shuttlecraft. It would have to stop in the middle of the wormhole and avoid exiting it while scanning.

CROSS

(softly)

Alright. We'll do it. But I want this mission to be strictly voluntary.

TALORA

(matter-of-factly)

I volunteer.

INT. BRIDGE

Quinlan, Dojar and Talora. Cross is walking from his ready room.

QUINLAN

(smiles)

I was just leaving.

CROSS

I'm not playing your games anymore, Quinlan. I let you on board my ship, and you do what I say. Nothing else. Is that understood?

QUINLAN

Then give me something to do, Captain!

INT. MESS HALL

Quinlan sits at a table looking particularly drunk, talking to HAL. Quinlan is holding a BOTTLE OF VODKA, or the 24th century equivalent of it.

HAL

I think you've had a few too many
bottles of that.

Quinlan ROLLS HER EYES and takes another sip of her drink.
She then proceeds to collapse on the floor.

INT. SHUTTLEBAY

The shuttlecraft ARISTOTLE is being prepared to fly.

TALORA enters, regarding the shuttle. Y'LAN and DOJAR are
also present.

Y'LAN

I have installed the necessary Q'tami
sensors on board the shuttle. I had
to remove some of your Starfleet
components to make room for the main
array, but it is ready to fly.

DOJAR

Commander. I was hoping that I might
be able to join you on the mission.

EXT. SPACE

The shuttle heads out from the shuttlebay and heads off into
the area where the McKeggan Wormhole is found.

TALORA (V.O.)

Entering the McKeggan wormhole in
five... four...

EXT. SHUTTLE

The shuttle approaches the wormhole, and it opens in a flare
of bright light and swirling colors. Something unlike we've
ever seen before.

TALORA (V.O.)

Three... two... one...

The shuttle enters the wormhole and disappears into its
depths. Seconds after it enters it the area where the wormhole
was EXPLODES into bright flames and a shock wave erupts from
its position which hits the Enterprise.

The Enterprise turns up on its back and flies off backwards
into space, being carried by the shock wave.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

And now, the conclusion.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BRIDGE

RED ALERT LIGHTS FLASH as NEIL CROSS pulls himself up into the Captain's Chair, GUER at Conn, and other CREWMEN at the other stations. On the viewscreen, the McKeggan Wormhole continues to collapse.

CROSS
(nearly a whisper)
My god ...
(beat)
Hail them.

TACTICAL OFFICER
Yes sir.

CROSS
Report!

The tactical officer works at his panel, and then:

TACTICAL OFFICER
Enterprise to Aristotle, respond.

OPS OFFICER
The ship has taken moderate damage,
the ablative armor is offline.

Static.

TACTICAL OFFICER
Enterprise to Aristotle, respond
please.

More static.

OPS OFFICER
Shields are at 60 percent and the
deflector is offline.

TACTICAL OFFICER
It's no good, sir. If they're out
there, we can't contact them.

CROSS
(to Ops Officer)
Ensign, what's the status of the
wormhole?
(to a Crewman)
Get repair crews down there, Crewman!
(to another Crewman)
And get me a casualty report.

OPS OFFICER
I'm scanning that now sir.
(MORE)

OPS OFFICER (CONT'D)

(beat)

Sir, it's like there never was a wormhole. No subspace flux, no emissions, no nothing.

(beat)

For all intents and purposes, it looks like the wormhole has collapsed in upon itself.

CROSS

Are you sure?

BEAT as Ops Officer works.

OPS OFFICER

Yes sir. Mission Ops just forwarded their scans to me. The wormhole definitely collapsed. Either the Aristotle was inside the wormhole when it collapsed, which would mean they are dead...

CROSS

...or they went through the wormhole when it collapsed, and they could be anywhere in the galaxy ... or beyond it.

Cross's face slowly hardens. He stares with a mixed look of anger and impassivity at the screen.

OPS OFFICER

Yes sir.

(beat)

I'm sorry, sir.

CROSS

Cross to Mission Ops. We have a rescue operation on our hands, Lieutenant. Commander Talora and Lieutenant Dojar have been lost in the McKeggan wormhole -- I intend to get them out of there.

Cross out.

Cross looks at the screen and grows silent as the realization that he could have just lost two of his crewmember sinks in.

On Cross we--

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. ENTERPRISE

Establishing shot.

INT. BRIDGE

Same as before. The doors to the back of the bridge part to admit Y'LAN. The Q'tami hurries into the room as fast as his unusual feet can carry him.

Y'LAN

Captain, I need to speak to you at once.

Cross gets out of the Captain's Chair and turns to face Y'lan.

CROSS

What is it, Y'lan?

Y'LAN

The McKeggan Wormhole-- it hasn't collapsed.

CROSS

What? Y'lan... we just saw...

Y'LAN

To be certain of the collapse, I ran a detailed Q'tami sensor scan.

(beat)

The scan may not be able to penetrate the wormhole, but it could reach it. According to my scans, only this endpoint of the wormhole has collapsed. The passage from this endpoint to the other rotating one is still in place.

Y'lan nods in the direction of the screen.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

They could still be in there.

CROSS

Then we've got to get them out of there. Y'lan, you're with me.

Y'LAN

I'd rather not be, sir.

CROSS

(surprised)

Y'lan, we need them out at once! We need your Q'tami technology --

Y'LAN

I have important business to attend to. The affairs of the Hegemony are put above all else. I would prefer not to be disturbed during this duration.

Cross obviously doesn't like Y'lan's stance.

CROSS

And that business is?

Y'LAN

That is none of your concern. It is only of importance to the Hegemony.

CROSS

Whatever you are doing on my ship is of importance to me, Y'lan. It isn't just do what you want around here. Two of my crew are in trouble out there and they need rescuing, now either tell me what you are doing or join me and I'll forgo knowing -- for now.

Y'LAN

Need I remind you that you do not have the authority to order me to do anything? I am on this ship as an observer, not as a member of your crew.

Cross gives Y'lan an ANNOYED LOOK for questioning him in front of his crew, but with no choice in the matter, he realizes that he must carry on without Y'lan.

CROSS

Then join us the moment you are finished this Hegemony duty of yours.

Y'LAN

I will, Captain.

Cross walks towards the door Y'lan entered. Cross and Y'lan exit, and as they do:

CROSS

(not facing Guer)

Guer, you're in command of the bridge.

GUER

Yes sir.

Guer TRIUMPHANTLY TURNS and SITS IN THE COMMAND CHAIR with a SMUG EXPRESSION on his face.

INT. SHUTTLE

TALORA and DOJAR sit in their seats looking at the wormhole around them. It is not like the BAJORAN WORMHOLE, it looks larger, more majestic-- more colorful. Different layers wash through each other creating a distinctive look of liquids and gases pushing against each other and forming new pockets within the wormhole.

TALORA

Have you had any success in communicating with the Enterprise?

DOJAR

Not yet.

TALORA

Then we have two options. We sit here and wait for the Enterprise to find us and get us out, or follow the wormhole to its end point.

DOJAR

And that could be anywhere in the galaxy.

TALORA

Exactly.

DOJAR

So we stay here. For the time being.

TALORA

"For the time being?"

DOJAR

If they can't get to us, we'll have no choice but to leave.

TALORA

That is a possibility. But for the moment, we must wait until the Enterprise finds us. If they cannot--

DOJAR

But the Enterprise doesn't even know if we're still alive or not--
(realistically)
they might not even be looking for us.

TALORA

Pessimism is not a trait which we need right now, Lieutenant.

DOJAR

One thing which I've never been,
Commander is a pessimist. I've always
been an optimist. Unfortunately
that sometimes gets lost somewhere
along the way when I start thinking
realistically.

TALORA

You would make a good Romulan,
Lieutenant.

DOJAR

(not sure how to take
it)
Um... thank you, sir.

Talora nods, CURTLY before getting down to business.

TALORA

Is there anything we can use to help
us get out of here, or be seen by
the Enterprise?

DOJAR

Negative. The Q'tami sensors took
out almost everything we could use
to do anything like that.

TALORA

Then we sit here and do what we came
for.

DOJAR

And that is?

TALORA

Study the wormhole, and attempt to
explain why it is...
(small sigh)
was stable.

Dojar NODS and begins to work and Talora walks back to the
rear compartment.

INT. SICKBAY

Quinlan is LYING ON A BIOBED unconscious, Elris is giving A
LIEUTENANT A PHYSICAL. She is doing some exercises on a biobed
when Cross ENTERS. Elris looks up and then back down at the
Lieutenant.

ELRIS

Do another fifty of these and then
check your heart beat. I'll be right
back.

Elris WALKS OVER to Cross.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

What can I do for you, Captain?

CROSS

I was hoping we could talk.

ELRIS

Now?

CROSS

No. I was thinking about tonight.
One of our quarters.

ELRIS

(surprised)

What!

CROSS

Think of it as a meeting. Nothing
about us unless you want to.

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.

CROSS

Then when are you going to be ready?
I keep trying to help us move along...

ELRIS

There you go with that us again.

CROSS

...but you can't seem to be bothered.

ELRIS

Maybe I don't want to be, Neil!
Maybe I just don't want to.

Elris EXITS to the Lieutenant doing her physical and Cross
sits down in Elris' chair, looking at a PADD on her desk.

CROSS

(loudly)

Well I may as well read your daily
report while I'm here! If you don't
have any objection, Doctor!

INT. ENGINEERING

Various engineers are at work, coordinated by ROBERT KINNAN. Among the Engineers are CHAMBERS and FAO. BOYLE is nearby, and she stands over a monitor. ERIK GREY enters and walks towards Boyle, with a semi-nervous stride.

GREY

Status report, Ensign?

BOYLE

Average efficiency rating is two point two percent above normal, Sir.

GREY

Understood.
(beat)
Boyle...

BOYLE

Yes sir?

GREY

...do you have any engagements this evening?

BOYLE

(surprised)
What?

Grey draws another deep breath.

GREY

I said, do you have any engagements this evening?

BOYLE

Uh
(beat)
no. Sir, why do you ask-

GREY

Ensign, would you join me for dinner tonight? Sixteen hundred hours?

Silence. Grey had spoken slightly louder than before and could be heard across the room. He maintains a degree of dignity. Boyle looks genuinely surprised, as if she'd just been told the Federation President was a tortoise.

BOYLE

Well...
(beat)
Um...
(beat)
sure, why not.

More silence. Kinnan, also surprised, looks at Grey absent-mindedly. Then:

GREY

(annoyed)

Is the Engine Core at maximum possible efficiency?

KINNAN

N-no sir--

GREY

(angry)

Then why are you doing nothing?
Come on, people, move! Kinnan, realign
the Quantum shielding! Chambers,
increase quantum matrix efficiency!
Fao, run a diagnostic check on the
inertial dampeners! Come on, come
on! This ship doesn't run itself!

Grey waves his hands around animatedly during the above dialogue, keeping his back to Boyle. They quickly snap to work.

BOYLE

What should I do, sir?

Grey turns to face her.

GREY

(same as before)

YOU

(beat-- now more gentle)

you check the energy output of the
starboard nacelle and compensate.

BOYLE

Yes, sir.

GREY

Then I'll see you at sixteen hundred
hours.

BOYLE

Is that an order, sir?

GREY

Ye...

(beat)

No. It's dinner. Don't come if you
don't want to.

BOYLE

(nervous)

Um... yes sir.

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Grey watches Boyle move off with a mixed expression of confusion and depression.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. SICKBAY

QUINLAN lays UNCONSCIOUS on a bio-bed. Her eyes begin to slowly OPEN, squinting at the bright lights around her.

The equipment above her head REACTS and ELRIS walks through from her office.

Quinlan slowly sits up and begins rubbing her head, and looks around her, beginning to wonder where she is.

ELRIS

I was beginning to wonder if you'd ever wake up.

QUINLAN

Sickbay?

ELRIS

Yes. You were.

QUINLAN

I don't remember.

(beat)

Do I want to remember?

Elris shakes her head and helps Quinlan sit up.

ELRIS

You have the one problem which I can't do anything about. Nowhere in the quadrant has a proven cure, though I hear the Andorians have had limited success in the past.

QUINLAN

(distraught)

What's wrong with me?

ELRIS

You have a hangover.

Quinlan GROANS.

QUINLAN

What happened?

ELRIS

Hal called me from the Mess Hall. You'd passed out on to the floor and messed up his carpet.

QUINLAN

Great. More community service. Was I bad?

ELRIS

From what I hear.

Quinlan doesn't look pleased.

QUINLAN

And I thought I was the gossip officer.

ELRIS

I think a few people decided to appoint a new one, when they found out that you wouldn't be around for the next few hours.

QUINLAN

How long have I been out?

ELRIS

Seven hours, it was pretty powerful stuff you ingested.

QUINLAN

Don't remind me. So what happened?

ELRIS

Well from what I hear you insulted most of the Bridge crew before heading down to the Mess Hall and complaining about a lack of a life. You were pretty pissed off.

QUINLAN

(winces)

What did the Captain have to say?

ELRIS

Well, he doesn't think any less of you. I think he knew that this day would come.

QUINLAN

You mean he wanted to get me down to this? To the state I'm in now? You have no idea what it feels like to be so depressed and humiliated, Elris!

ELRIS

No, I don't. But Neil does, and that's not what I meant. He knows that you want to be able to do anything but he can't just put you into a position of power right away.

QUINLAN

I just want to be able to do something, to feel normal again, instead of the crew looking at me like some low life, some toilet cleaner. Because that's what I am. I'm the lowest of the low. The toilet cleaner.

And with this Quinlan gets up and STAGGERS out of Sickbay with tears in her eyes. Elris attempts to help her, but is quickly pushed away by a distraught Quinlan.

EXT. SHUTTLE IN WORMHOLE

INT. SHUTTLE

Dojar is still sat at the controls and Talora is in the rear compartment reading information off the Q'tami sensors.

TALORA

The Q'tami sensors are more effective than I predicted. They should have completed the task of mapping and scanning the wormhole within the next half hour.

DOJAR

That's a compliment coming from a Romulan, isn't it?

Talora briefly lets her guard down for a moment and slightly smiles at Dojar.

TALORA

Perhaps.

Dojar does a half smile back and looks up out of the shuttle's windows and into the wormhole.

EXT. SHUTTLE IN WORMHOLE

We can see Dojar looking out.

INT. SHUTTLE

DOJAR

(about wormhole)

One of the colors reminds me of Cardassia's sky.

Talora LOOKS UP.

TALORA

You said something, Lieutenant?

DOJAR

It was nothing.

TALORA

No. Please, go ahead.

Dojar sighs.

DOJAR

I was thinking about how much one of the wormhole's color reminded me of Cardassia's sky.

TALORA

And that is a painful memory for you?

DOJAR

At the moment, yes.

TALORA

How so?

DOJAR

I don't know if I wish to talk about it.

TALORA

Romulans aren't as cold as you think, Lieutenant.

DOJAR

That...

(beat)

that wasn't what I was thinking.

TALORA

Have you talked to anyone else about it?

DOJAR

Not exactly. I find it hard to open up and find people whom I can trust.

TALORA

I am aware of the feeling.

DOJAR

(closes his eyes)

I'm sorry, Commander. It's not that I don't trust you or anything to do with you, yourself. I just never know what to say. I play out conversations in my head but I never get around to speaking them out loud.

TALORA

Then just say what you feel.

DOJAR

Off the record?

TALORA

Off the record.

Dojar TAKES A DEEP BREATH and lets it out in LONG, HEAVY SIGH before returning to looking out of the window at the changing colors of the wormhole.

DOJAR

I feel isolated, alone. I don't feel like I fit in on board the Enterprise. I miss my friends. My family. I miss my home, Commander.

TALORA

You wish to return there?

DOJAR

It's strange.

(contemplates for a beat)

For years on Cardassia I longed to be away from it and in space. It has always been my dream to be out here, ever since I was a child. But now I'm finally here on the Federation flagship, I just want to return there.

TALORA

(walks forward)

Why?

DOJAR

Prejudice, Commander. The war put a heavy burden on some people. It didn't just change the fleet but it changed the way that people think as well. Cardassians used to be respected for our art, our literature. Now we have nothing except a reputation for betrayal.

Talora SITS DOWN next to him.

TALORA

If it is any consolation to you, Lieutenant, I know how you feel. I am in a similar position to you.

DOJAR

You're respected, Commander. That's one thing I'm lacking.

TALORA

I would like to think that I am,
(beat)

but I am not. People consider me a coward and someone who wouldn't think twice if I could live or if it meant performing a mission more efficiently. It is ironic. I am in that position now and I'm hoping that someone will attempt to rescue me, yet if I was in Captain Cross' position I would be willing to leave us here.

DOJAR

You mean like Grey and Ozran?

TALORA

Exactly. I'm rejected because of that -- the only person who I remotely consider a friend on the Enterprise is Captain Cross and he is my superior officer. I report to him and that is the only reason I talk to him.

DOJAR

I think we both need to get out more!

TALORA

It sounds like you are very much like I am, Lieutenant. I always looked forward to a command position and now that I finally have one I have mixed feelings about it.

DOJAR

And it isn't where you thought it would be. You're on a Federation starship rather than one in the Romulan Navy.

TALORA

Exactly. Not many people know about this, but my older brother, Nelar, was killed in the line of duty on board a Romulan Warbird.

DOJAR

I'm sorry.

TALORA

Don't be. He died a soldier of the Empire. I always looked up to my older brother and always wanted to be like him. He was on his first command assignment when his ship was destroyed and I was devastated.

(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

People think of us as cold, harsh creatures, yet some of us are not. My brother meant the world to me and not being able to see him again-- not even a body-- was the worse thing that could possibly have happened to me.

There is a LONG BEAT as both Cardassian and Romulan sit in contemplation, looking out of the windows of the shuttle and out into the wormhole.

DOJAR

I lost my Father when I was a child. During the Dominion War. He was fighting for the liberation of Cardassia, fighting to protect me-- and they killed him. The Jem'Hadar never spared a thought for him. We were made to watch.

(beat -- cold)

They pulled him up with a handful of other prisoners. He had the misfortune of being at the end of the line-- he had to watch all of his friends suffer and die. The pain on his face was something that I will never forget. Pain for us, Commander. He was more upset that he would be taken away from us than over his own death. He relished every millisecond of time he spent with us, I'm sure those final few moments were the most painful of his life. My mother was devastated-- we all were. They shot him in the back and left him in the dirt for days. I went back four days later and found him still laid there. I paid a Cardassian cleaner to give him a proper burial. He was never supposed to die like that. But then, I always thought that he would live forever.

(beat)

He should never have had to die in a prison camp and not shot from behind. There is no honor in that, nothing to be able to tell future generations about in years to come. I will not be able to tell my children that their grandfather died saving the Union, or even in his sleep. He was shot from behind by a genetically engineered monster.

TALORA

Then we both had advantages to our loved ones deaths. I had a brother who died in the line of duty and you had a body to bury. It may not sound particularly pleasant but you can go to a place to mourn, my brother was killed in a nebula-- I have nothing to remind me of him, no permanent marker in the ground.

DOJAR

Your race has dignity! Cardassia has no pride, nobody speaks its name with fear in their hearts -- Cardassians everywhere have no pride for their own heritage. Our world is in ruins over twenty five years since the fire came upon us. You are comparatively very lucky, Commander.

There is a VERY LONG BEAT as neither know what to say in return to Dojar's last comment.

Something BEEPS behind them.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

That was convenient.

TALORA

Very.

She stands up and makes her way to the rear compartment.

She CHECKS A PANEL and she TAPS some buttons.

TALORA (CONT'D)

This can not be right.

DOJAR

What?

TALORA

These readings indicate that something artificial is sustaining the wormhole.

DOJAR

Perhaps wormholes can only be stable when they are artificially created?

TALORA

It would explain why we were cut off from the stable end-point.

DOJAR

Agreed. Can you get any more readings?

TALORA

According to the readings the wormhole is being sustained by beings composed of some kind of energy material.

DOJAR

Like the Bajoran Wormhole?

TALORA

No, these readings are different. The entities energy level appears to be in some kind of flux.

DOJAR

Perhaps why the other end point is unstable?

TALORA

Perhaps.

DOJAR

You don't sound very confident in that theory.

Dojar stands and walks to Talora's position where both look mildly amazed by their findings.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

The entities are sustaining the wormhole themselves-- they appear to be living inside the structure of it.

TALORA

Like a Nagh'kej in its nest.

Dojar looks confused.

DOJAR

(unsure)
Exactly.

TALORA

When we entered the wormhole we must have damaged some of the entities structures, the material they use to maintain the opening of the wormhole.

DOJAR

Then shouldn't it repair itself? That could be why the entities energy readings are in a state of flux.

TALORA

We don't know anything about these creatures, it could take years for
(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

them to heal. I don't plan to wait that long.

DOJAR

What do you have planned?

TALORA

Nothing. I just hope that Captain Cross can find a way out of here before they give up looking for us.

Dojar looks sarcastically optimistic.

DOJAR

There is always hope.
(beat -- serious)
So what do we do now?

TALORA

We sit back and wait. And hope that the Enterprise can find a way to rescue us. And talk.

DOJAR

So where were we?

EXT. SHUTTLE

FROM THIS WE --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. GREY'S QUARTERS

Spartan as ever. GREY is present.

GREY

(to himself)

Music is usually appropriate for something romantic, isn't it?

(beat)

Computer, play Sousa's "Hands Across the Sea."

A LOUD and BLARING rollicking classical piece erupts into the room.

GREY (CONT'D)

That'll do nicely.

Grey walks over to the replicator.

GREY (CONT'D)

Computer, one dish of Htrag rice, Standard Federation Ration issue, and one glass of water.

A plate of pure white flat rice and a glass of water materializes. Grey picks them up and puts them down on the table. He sits down.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

And now, perhaps one of the most regressive and barbaric of human practices. That of courtship. Humans, like all inferior species, need to copulate to continue their race, since they have yet to perfect asexual laboratory reproduction. As is required in all species so primitive, they must feel pleasure from this act in order for it to take place. Like the other human regressive tendencies, it is uncertain as how they will respond to its ultimate elimination and replacement by a higher form. But this is not the real peculiarity to human courtship. Evolved from their primitive and base customs has arisen a complex web of ritual, preference and performance in which humans determine which of their fellow specimens they should copulate with.

(MORE)

Y'LAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This peculiar ceremony has many different ways of being performed and achieved, so many that they all contradict each other continually and profoundly.

Grey moves the rice a millimeter over.

Y'LAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Although the members of this species are generally monogamous. The specimen seen here, "Grey," is about to engage in the first part of this ritual with a fellow specimen called "Boyle." This ritual is commonly known to these creatures as "dating." The situation which the specimen has arranged -- including the inclusion of another human peculiarity, music, on which more can be found in my third report -- is the setup for a "romantic evening," in which the potential mates arrange for a dinner which also, by tradition, includes discussion. This complex and redundant ceremony seems to serve the purpose of introduction or as a preamble to the copulation of which these ceremonies are the ultimate aim of.

A chime sounds.

GREY

Enter.

BOYLE enters, in civilian dress. When she sees that Grey is in uniform:

BOYLE

I'm sorry-- I thought this was informal--

Grey looks blankly at her, and then it dawns on him:

GREY

(nodding to the uniform)
It is informal. I just don't wear anything else.

BOYLE

I see.

Silence. Boyle, who still looks intimidated by her superior, walks over and sits down at the table.

GREY

What would you like?

BOYLE

Ihmel tea and Bor jelly please.

Grey gets up and walks over to the replicator.

GREY

Computer, one Ihmel tea and Bor jelly.

An orange-blue liquid in a cup and a hard, brown lump materialize from the replicator. Grey picks them up and gives them to Boyle.

BOYLE

What are you eating?

GREY

Standard Federation rations.

Grey sits down and spoons a fistful of the rice into his mouth. He seems to enjoy the taste. Boyle is surprised.

BOYLE

Rations?

GREY

Want some?

BOYLE

No thanks.

(politely)

That music is a little loud.

GREY

Computer, cease playing.

The music stops abruptly. In silence, Grey wolfishly shovels down the rice. Boyle cuts a small slice out of the oddly solid jelly and eats it.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

The syndrome which you can see now is often referred to the "worker's relationship." From careful study of the archives this species keeps I have determined that two specimens which work together apparently find some difficulties from progressing from this to copulation.

BOYLE

So... do you like Shakespeare?

GREY

Shakespeare? The 12th century English
writer?

Boyle nods. She's found something to talk about and it's
obviously been a lot easier then she was expecting.

GREY (CONT'D)

Nope, never read them.

Boyle just NODS.

Y'LAN

The peculiar human ritual of "small-
talk" can be seen to be employed
here. Used in awkward or silent
moments, such as this one.

They continue to eat in silence.

GREY

Boyle ... what do you think over the
controversy between Arslan and
Diogenes over the conflicting
arguments for and against a captain
going down with his ship?

BOYLE

(awkwardly)
The what?

GREY

Never mind.

They continue to eat. Boyle takes a sip of her tea.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

The human barbarism of small talk
can be seen to be employed here.
Used during an "awkward silence" or
simply when there is a requirement
to talk and nothing to discuss, "small
talk" is one of the most striking
examples of human social inferiority.
This need to talk, even when there
is nothing to talk about, is as alien
to us as it is backward. Just another
of the many flaws in this race. They
have a long way to go to achieve
perfection, even if we assist.

Boyle awkwardly looks up.

BOYLE

Grey...

GREY

Yes?

BOYLE

What do you... um... what do you...

GREY

Yes?

BOYLE

What do you think of ...

(uncertain)

Hansen's theory on quantum warp cores?

GREY

(self-assuredly)

Most rubbishy document I've ever read. Hansen has never been near the new cores, and using theoretical experiments on the holodeck she claims that she knows how to make a better system! It's ridiculous!

Boyle seems surprised and relaxed.

BOYLE

(interested)

Really? How so? I thought her paper was pretty convincing.

GREY

Convincing! You work on a ship with a QIC and you think it's convincing. You should know better.

BOYLE

Well, I'm open to options. Although it did seem pretty solid to me.

GREY

That's because one flaw, one fatal flaw, was totally glossed over. Holodeck computers still work on the Omegan theory of physics, which recent events has proven that the theory has the flaw in the fact it doesn't account for the new sub-Omegans particles...

Grey and Boyle continue to chat animatedly, but we hear nothing. Then the camera pulls back and reveals--

INT. SCIENCE LAB

-- that the scene is being projected on Y'lan's sensor table-- like the three others in the previous episode.

Y'LAN is present.

Y'LAN

As in many discussions during these "romantic evenings," they are irrelevant and have nothing to do with why the people are here but are part of the long and tiresome ritual of...

Suddenly, Cross enters. Y'lan stops mid-monolog and says:

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Computer, save, continue and shut down.

Q'TAMI COMPUTER VOICE

Instructions shall be carried out.

The images on the sensor table fades.

Y'LAN

Captain, I told you I was not to be disturbed--

CROSS

I'd respect your privacy
(beat)
if you respected ours.

Cross takes a tiny, single-circuit device out of his pocket and puts it on the table.

Y'LAN

How? They were equipped with sensor masking so complex you wouldn't believe it existed!

Cross smiles ironically.

CROSS

We have you to thank for that. I understand you've been instructing Lieutenant Sukothai in Q'tami technology. We're obviously more practical then you think.

Y'LAN

Yes.

CROSS

She was boosting internal sensors using Q'tami technology-- a test run for an attempt to do the same to the wormhole

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

(beat)

and we detected thousands of these.
One in every single room on the ship.
(nods to circuit)

That one there was in mine.

(cold, angry)

Y'lan, this is beneath contempt.
That you would use your technology
for the sadistic pleasure of spying
on us, watching our every move and
cataloguing it like we where some
goddamn specimens in a zoo!

Y'LAN

A zoo you may not be in, Captain,
but specimens you remain.

(beat)

I am an anthropologist. I am here to
study primitive species. Your species
has done the same, has it not? I
have heard of human expeditions to
study Earth apes or Vulcan sehlat.

CROSS

Those beings were not sentient. We
are.

Y'LAN

But you are not transcendent, Captain.
You are to us what those apes and
sehlat are to you. If you can study
un-sentient beings then why can I
not study you?

CROSS

That's not the point. You can collect
information about us if you wish,
you can compile data about our
species... but you will not spy on
us and deprive us of our privacy.
The line has to be drawn somewhere,
Y'lan, and I'm drawing it here.

(beat)

I risked my career to get you on
this ship. But if you ever do
something like this again...

(beat)

I'll throw you off myself.
Understood?

Y'LAN

Without surveillance it will greatly
hinder my ability to collect
information --

CROSS

I don't care if you can't collect any information without it. I won't let you do it. And even if I did, Starfleet Command would overrule me and throw you out of here faster than anything. This stops here, and it stops now. You'll make a public apology to the crew later, understood?

Y'lan's facial expressions contort.

Y'LAN

Yes.

CROSS

But right now, I need you in Mission Ops.

Cross motions to the door, and the two EXIT. From this we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. MISSION OPERATIONS

CROSS and Y'LAN enter. SUKOTHAI is already present.

SUKOTHAI
Captain, Y'lan.

CROSS
Got any idea how we can get them out
of that wormhole, Lieutenant?

SUKOTHAI
No sir. Using artificial verterons
we could create a wormhole in the
area -- but we couldn't reopen the
McKeggan one.

Y'LAN
Perhaps you can.

Y'lan walks over to the console Sukothai is at and starts typing.

CROSS
Y'lan?

Y'LAN
Sukothai, I believe the reason why
you cannot reopen the wormhole is
because you cannot get a stable lock
on the passage, correct?

SUKOTHAI
A wormhole passage is folded in
subspace. It's impossible to--

Y'LAN
It appears, Lieutenant, you still
have a few things yet to learn about
Q'tami technology.

Y'lan finishes typing and moves away.

SUKOTHAI
(surprised)
Captain-- if I read this correctly --
I've located the wormhole.

Sukothai looks at Y'lan with renewed awe.

Y'LAN

Is it possible, using these
"artificial verterons" of yours, to
open the wormhole now?

SUKOTHAI

You know, I think we just might.
Captain, I'll need to reconfigure
the main deflector array for this to
work.

CROSS

Do it.

SUKOTHAI

Yes, sir.

Sukothai works at the panel.

Y'LAN

Sukothai, I'll need to modify the
deflector's targeting systems so it
can detect the McKeggan Wormhole.

SUKOTHAI

Go ahead.

Y'lan works on a console next to Sukothai as Cross watches.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

Same as before. The deflector dish glows to a bright white,
and a beam then crackles out. The electrical beam sweeps
through space and smacks into a single location, where it
encircles itself and TRANSFORMS into a wormhole opening.

INT. MISSION OPERATIONS

Same as before.

Y'LAN

We'll only be able to hold the
wormhole open for a few more seconds,
Captain. And when it collapses, we
won't be able to do it again.

CROSS

(grim)
Understood.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise is facing the area that the McKeggan Wormhole
occupied. The camera pans down to the Enterprise's deflector
as it fires a STRAY OF LIGHT which hits the area the wormhole
occupied. Nothing happens.

INT. SHUTTLE

Something BEEPS on Dojar's console.

DOJAR
Commander, I'm detecting a large
surge of verterons.

TALORA
(taken aback)
Where?

DOJAR
To our port side.

Talora goes to her console.

TALORA
I'm bringing us around. If the
Enterprise succeeds in whatever plan
she has undertaken we may only have
one chance at getting it right.

DOJAR
Agreed.

INT. MISSION OPERATIONS

Same as before.

CROSS
(confused)
Nothing's happening.

Y'LAN
I am aware of that. I am attempting
to increase the output of the
deflector, but your controls are
primitive, at best.

CROSS
That reassures me.

Y'lan TAPS SOME BUTTONS.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

Same as before. This time though the stray of light is
BRIGHTER, MORE POWERFUL. Suddenly in a BRIGHT BURST OF FLAME
AND ENERGY the McKeggan Wormhole reappears.

INT. MISSION OPERATIONS

CROSS
That's it!

Y'LAN

Now we wait.

CROSS

And hope.

EXT. WORMHOLE

Nothing is coming out.

INT. SHUTTLE

The shuttle is SHAKING VIOLENTLY as Talora attempts to maneuver the shuttle out of the wormhole.

DOJAR

Why are we shaking?

TALORA

I have increased our speed to above what Starfleet recommends during wormhole journeys. I believe that we are encountering friction and other forces because of that.

DOJAR

Get us out of here, Commander. I want to go home.

Talora gives him a REASSURING SMILE, though she does not take her eyes away from the controls for a second.

INT. MISSION OPERATIONS

Same as before. Everyone present is glued to the screens which show the McKeggan wormhole.

CROSS

What's taking them so long?

Y'lan checks some controls behind him.

Y'LAN

The wormhole is about to collapse again, Captain.

CROSS

(grim anger)
Understood.

There is a silence as everyone looks at the screens.

EXT. WORMHOLE

As the shuttle glides out, damaged, but flying!

INT. MISSION OPERATIONS

This is also seen on the screens in Mission Ops. as everyone present BREATHES A SIGH OF RELEIF and some even CHEER. Cross SIGNALS for them to shut up.

CROSS

Cross to Aristotle, come in,
Commander.

TALORA

This is Aristotle, Captain. It's
good to see you again.

CROSS

Welcome home, Commander. Welcome
home.

TALORA

We are coming into dock, have a
maintenance team awaiting us in the
shuttle bay. We have taken some
damage.

CROSS

Understood. Cross out.

Cross sighs and pats Y'lan on what passes for his back, before
EXITING into the corridor.

EXT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The Aristotle LANDS.

INT. SHUTTLE

Same as before. Talora wipes some sweat from her brow.

DOJAR

I thought Romulans didn't believe in
luck, Commander.

TALORA

They don't. It was just excellent
piloting skills on my part that got
us out.

Dojar SMILES. Talora STANDS UP and is about to EXIT when:

DOJAR

Commander.

TALORA

Yes, Lieutenant?

DOJAR

Thank you.

TALORA

It is unnecessary to thank me,
Lieutenant. If you were piloting I
am sure that you would have done
just as an exceptional job as I.

DOJAR

Not that. Thank you for giving me
someone to talk to, and listen to
me. I'm honored that you shared your
feelings with me.

TALORA

And I with you. We are in the same
situation together, Lieutenant. If
you need anyone to talk to...

DOJAR

Thank you, Commander. I really do
appreciate that.

Dojar STANDS, and is about to exit when:

TALORA

Lieutenant.

A BEAT.

DOJAR

Yes, Commander?

TALORA

(awkwardly)
I would like to
(beat)
thank you, also.

DOJAR

Me?

TALORA

(nods)
I am surrounded by strangers. Aliens.
Now I realize that I am not alone.
The grey colors of beautiful Romulus
don't seem so far away today.

Dojar looks down at the console and puts his hand on it.

DOJAR

Then you know now, that you never
have to be alone again.

TALORA

Then perhaps I will make a good
Starfleet first officer after all.

Dojar SMILES again, before EXITING the shuttle with Talora.

INT. CORRIDOR

GREY is walking down the corridor. Quinlan comes up from behind him.

QUINLAN

Lieutenant!

Grey looks behind himself as Quinlan catches up.

GREY

What do you want, Crewman?

QUINLAN

How far did it go?

GREY

I beg your pardon?

QUINLAN

Last night. How far it go?

GREY

None of your concern.

Quinlan grins ruefully.

QUINLAN

It is now. So, how far did it go?

GREY

First Y'lan, then you. How many people need to pry into private lives around here?

QUINLAN

People need to know.

GREY

(angry)

They don't need to know anything!

QUINLAN

Look, Boyle isn't talking either. And if you don't talk and she doesn't talk... people will begin to get suspicious... rumors will circulate...

GREY

Perpetrated by you, no doubt.

QUINLAN

Me? Erik, I'm offended you'd even think such a thought.

GREY

That's Lieutenant Grey to you,
Crewman.

QUINLAN

(dismissive)

Whatever. These rumors would get
larger and more exaggerated in each
retelling...

(beat)

they could seriously damage an
officer's reputation...

(beat)

If someone didn't get the facts
straight, you could be looking at
one dead-end career --

GREY

It isn't your concern. It isn't their
concern -- whoever they may be. The
only people that count are me and
Boyle. What happened there was between
us, and does not affect anyone else.
It's times like this I wish gossip
was a punishable offence!

QUINLAN

So something did--

GREY

Yes. Something happened. We had
dinner. Satisfied?

QUINLAN

No.

GREY

Well, that is all you are getting.

With that Quinlan walks off down another corridor and Grey
ENTERS the shuttlebay.

INT. SHUTTLEBAY

CROSS, GREY and Y'LAN stand to meet Talora and Dojar.

GREY

Glad to see you again, Commander.
Lieutenant.

DOJAR

It is good to be back.

Y'LAN

You have me to thank for that.

DOJAR

(nods)

I'm sure there's others as well.

Y'LAN

No. Just myself. And perhaps Lieutenant Sukothai. You should be grateful that we Q'tami are more technologically advanced than you...

Cross NUDGES Y'lan.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

...I'm sure there were others as well.

CROSS

Doctor Elris would like to see you both in sickbay. She wants to give you both a full physical.

DOJAR

Great. Guess I'll be going to Sickbay then.

Grey and Dojar SMILE before EXITING with Y'lan not far behind, trying to keep up with them.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

I'll tell you something, Y'lan. You may be more advanced than us mentally and technologically, but you'd never beat us in a marathon.

Y'LAN

Think what you wish, Lieutenant.

The doors CLOSE leaving Talora and Cross alone.

TALORA

You rescued us.

CROSS

Is that a statement or a question?

TALORA

A question. Why?

CROSS

I'm not in the habit of leaving my crewmen to die or having them lost on the other side of the galaxy.

TALORA

But I was the one who was against rescuing Lieutenant Grey and Ozran a
(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

few weeks ago. I expected the same treatment myself.

CROSS

You've got a lot to learn about the Federation and Starfleet, Commander. We never leave anyone behind unless we have to.

TALORA

The Romulan Navy greatly underestimate the Federation, Captain. They should be more cautious.

CROSS

Because we don't leave our officers behind?

TALORA

No. You are a mystery. We think that we have you worked out and then you do something to surprise us.

CROSS

(grins)

Then you'd better go for Doctor Elris' surprise physical.

TALORA

Agreed.

Talora EXITS. Cross remains, contemplation. Elris ENTERS.

CROSS

I thought you were in sickbay?

ELRIS

Agolive is there, she can give two physicals without me.

CROSS

So it appears.

A LONG BEAT. Both of them stand still, Elris looking at the wall and Cross looking at Elris, differently.

ELRIS

I'm

(beat -- sighs)

sorry for being rude earlier.

CROSS

Rude? You had good reason to be. I never should have provoked you.

ELRIS

No. It was my fault. Entirely.
I've got to stop pushing you away.

CROSS

Really?

ELRIS

(nods)
How would you like to have that dinner
you asked me out for?

CROSS

(surprised)
What?

ELRIS

The Captain-CMO dinner you offered
earlier? Just to talk as officers,
of course.

CROSS

(in agreement)
Of course.

ELRIS

So, -- how does my quarters at 2100
hours sound?

CROSS

Great. I'll be there.

Elris gives him a HALF SMILE before TURNING TO LEAVE. As she
WALKS through the doors of the shuttlebay she turns around
and looks at him, but continues to walk.

ELRIS

Don't be late.

And with that she EXITS, leaving a surprised Cross stood in
the middle of the shuttlebay wondering what just happened.
From this we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. ELRIS'S QUARTERS

The room only partially lit. The main sources of light come from candles dotted in various places throughout the room.

There are no candles on the table, a sign of how Elris wants this meal to be.

Elris herself is at an old fashioned Bajoran stove, dressed in civvies. She is wearing a long dress that WRAPS around her, she looks radiant and happy.

The door CHIMES. Elris takes a DEEP BREATH before moving out of the kitchen area and into the living area.

ELRIS

Come in.

Cross ENTERS. He is also dressed in civvies. A shirt and some trousers. He immediately REACTS TO ELRIS'S DRESS.

CROSS

I haven't seen you wearing that for a long time.

ELRIS

(bitter)

Is there any reason why I shouldn't?

CROSS

I didn't mean it like that. You look beautiful-- I'm glad you kept it.

ELRIS

Thank you. Sorry for snapping.

Elris WALKS BACK into the kitchen area and Cross walks behind her, standing just behind the entrance to it and over a storage cupboard.

CROSS

So what's cooking?

ELRIS

I thought I'd be the typical Bajoran and cook Hasperat.

CROSS

Sounds good.

Elris NODS and CONTINUES TO WORK.

CROSS (CONT'D)

So how's Talora and Dojar?

ELRIS

Fine. A little bruised, but nothing serious.

CROSS

Good.

A LONG AWKWARD BEAT.

ELRIS

This is ridiculous. We're two fully grown adults and we can't even talk to each other properly.

CROSS

Give yourself some time. It will come eventually.

ELRIS

I should never have been the way I was when I boarded the Enterprise, Neil. I was out of line and I'm sorry for that.

CROSS

No hard feelings-- you had good reason to be. I should never have assigned you here without asking you first.

ELRIS

But then I would have said no and I would have missed out on some incredible opportunities. Which I'm glad I've experienced.

CROSS

Such as?

ELRIS

Everything. The Enterprise is a ship that I can do everything I want to do on, I can research, I can help people and I've made new friends. I think I'm starting to enjoy myself.

CROSS

Good. I'm glad you're happy.

ELRIS

But I know some people who aren't Neil.

CROSS

And who would they be?

ELRIS

Yourself and Jennifer Quinlan.

CROSS

Me?

ELRIS

Yes, Captain.

CROSS

And why do you think that?

ELRIS

You never have liked positions of authority, Neil. You've had a hard life and now you've been put in a position that what you do affects an entire galactic power by your actions.

CROSS

I know that. I like that.

ELRIS

Then you've changed a lot since we...

CROSS

I know. There's a lot of things that have changed me since we separated.

ELRIS

Then I guess I'll have to catch up.

CROSS

I think I will too.

ELRIS

Quinlan's not happy.

CROSS

And why are you telling me this?

ELRIS

Because I'm the closest thing she has to a friend on this ship. Everyone else shuns her.

CROSS

What does she expect? She's been brought aboard to do community service.

Elris PICKS UP some food and puts it on two plates and carries it over to a table.

ELRIS

And to be your tactical advisor.

CROSS

And you thought I was being serious when I told her that?

ELRIS

She did. She thought she'd become a valuable member of this crew, someone who the crew would come to respect. Now she just spends her days wallowing in self-pity and doing useless jobs.

CROSS

Someone has to do them.

The meal is placed on the table and the two sit down and begin to eat.

ELRIS

Agreed. But not her. She came on board on the promise that she'd be your tactical advisor. You haven't given her one chance to do that.

CROSS

I can't help it if what Starfleet orders me to do isn't anything that she can help me with.

ELRIS

Then ask them, Captain. She could really do with a morale boost right now.

CROSS

Okay, okay. But we're not here to talk about Quinlan are we?

ELRIS

This is a Captain-Doctor dinner, I don't see why I can't talk about one of my patients.

CROSS

I want to talk about us, Lea.

ELRIS

Don't call me that.

CROSS

You call me Neil all of the time!

ELRIS

(sighs)

You're right. I'm sorry. I'm just not used to it.

CROSS

I know.

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.

CROSS

And I respect that. But I want us to be more than shipmates, if not now then in the future.

ELRIS

I think I can see that happening, yes.

CROSS

(smiles)

Good.

Elris NODS.

CROSS (CONT'D)

So how's sickbay?

The camera pans up to a clock on the wall which slowly DISOLVES TO an hour and a half later.

The camera pans around from the clock and on to the doors where Elris stands inside her quarters, and Cross stands outside, apparently about to leave.

CROSS (CONT'D)

The meal was excellent, Lea. I hope that we can do this again sometime?

Cross pulls back, expecting Elris to bite his head off for calling her Lea, but:

ELRIS

I hope so.

Cross is surprised that she doesn't attack him. Cross checks behind him and see that the corridor is DESERTED.

He looks back at Elris and sighs.

CROSS

I've been wanting to tell you something for a long time, Elris. For some reason the right time has never come so I may as well tell you now.

ELRIS

(confused)
What is it?

CROSS

I'm sorry that our marriage failed. I'm sorry for what I put you through in those last few months-- I never should have been so selfish.

ELRIS

If anyone is to blame Neil, it is me. I turned away from you when you needed help the most. What kind of wife did that make me?

CROSS

A good one -- we were both learning. Our jobs were getting in the way of our personal lives more and more.

ELRIS

Who knows -- maybe another few weeks together and some counseling and we'd still have been together.

CROSS

Who knows?

ELRIS

Maybe we might have another shot at it one day.

CROSS

(his eyes almost pop
out of his head)
Excuse me?

ELRIS

Don't get your hopes up.

CROSS

Oh no... no.
(awkward beat)
I'd never...

ELRIS

(interrupts)

There are always possibilities, Neil. Anything could happen in the next few years, even in the next few minutes.

CROSS

I suppose the ship could blow up, but...

ELRIS

But you have a very good engineer.

CROSS

No worries there then.

ELRIS

Guess not. I think it's time I was in bed. I've got an early shift coming up tomorrow.

CROSS

I guess I'll be going then.

ELRIS

(nods)

Then I'll see you in the morning

(beat)

Captain.

CROSS

And you, Doctor. Good night.

ELRIS

Good night.

And with that Elris taps some controls on her door and the doors close, leaving Cross stood outside looking at where Elris was standing.

From this we pull back to where Quinlan stands behind a corner, grinning.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Present and sitting around the table are TALORA, QUINLAN GUER DOJAR, ELRIS, Y'LAN and GREY. TALORA and DOJAR are sat together.

ELRIS

You were watching us the whole time?

Y'LAN

Unfortunately, despite our vast superiority, we Q'tami can not watch

(MORE)

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

more then one thing at once. I recorded everything and examined what I felt was relevant to my study in turn.

DOJAR

What did you get of me?

Y'LAN

Let me ask you a question, Lieutenant? Do you really want to know?

QUINLAN

The man has a point.

Y'LAN

I am not a man.

QUINLAN

You get the point. Would you really like to know what he caught you doing? I know I wouldn't.

DOJAR

Which is why I'd like all of the information deleted. Anyone who wishes for the information to be kept and be studied like a lab rat is mad.

TALORA

I agree.

Whilst all of this is going on, Cross just sits back and watches the conversation unfold.

CROSS

Unfortunately I can not order Y'lan to do that.

QUINLAN

What?

CROSS

(sighs)

Y'lan's orders came from the Hegemony. The Hegemony is the equivalent to our Federation Council and unfortunately if I make Y'lan delete his data it could set up misfortunes between our peoples.

DOJAR

And Starfleet agrees with this?

CROSS

While they do not agree that what Y'lan was doing was right, there is nothing that they can do about it. The Council has the last word and they've passed it.

Y'LAN

But I would like to apologize for my actions, to all of you. Though you needed my ingenuity to help rescue Commander Talora and Lieutenant Dojar from the wormhole I did not realize how complex you humans are. From watching you over the past few days I have come to realize that you are more than our people thought you are. You are indeed a unique, if not primitive, race.

QUINLAN

And I'm guessing that coming from you, that's a compliment.

Y'LAN

You could say that.

CROSS

I think it could be said that Y'lan has learned to respect humanity more -- and that we are far more than just rats in a laboratory.

Y'lan BOWS HIS HEAD in agreement.

Y'LAN

You are indeed a wise, if not troubled, man, Captain.

Cross and Elris SHARE A GLANCE. Elris SMILES before Cross BOWS his head in thought. There is a LONG BEAT before anyone speaks.

CROSS

I just received our new set of orders from Starfleet Command. They congratulate us all in our success of studying the wormhole and intend to send out a couple of science ships for further investigation.

DOJAR

And when will that be? A month, a year?

CROSS

I can't say, the brass seem to be more intent in militarizing the fleet then sending it out on scientific missions. For now we've been ordered to put buoys around the wormhole warning passing ships of its existence.

TALORA

I'll get to work on it straight away.

DOJAR

Even though the wormhole is no longer active.

CROSS

We don't know how long it will take these aliens to repair their habitat. It could be days, months or years and Starfleet doesn't want to risk an incident with its ships or any others.

Cross NODS.

CROSS (CONT'D)

From here we'll be going over to the Jelley sector to help settle a political dispute. Miss Quinlan --

QUINLAN

(interrupts)

Yes?

CROSS

I need some tactical information on this sector. I understand that you've visited it once or twice.

QUINLAN

(excited)

I'll get right on it, Captain! Thank you.

CROSS

I think it's about time that you put your talents to good use. Don't let me down.

QUINLAN

Don't worry, Captain. You don't have anything to worry about.

CROSS

I hope so. You all have your orders.

Everyone STANDS and heads to EXIT. As they do this, the camera goes out of the window and to:

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Phoenix Class starship in all her glory. She pulls around from the area where the McKeggan Wormhole was and goes into Slipstream and on to her next mission. A new mission with a changed crew. As the ship disappears we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END