

STAR TREK: RENAISSANCE

"Between Two Worlds"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. READY ROOM

Dimly lit. CROSS is standing, staring out of his window, although we cannot see what he is looking at.

CROSS

Begin Captain's Personal Log, Stardate 78296.1. When Y'lan first came onboard the Enterprise, there were many who were wary of him. He came from a previously unknown race, and his appearance was, at best, unusual. But I defended the decision to include him in the crew, even going to a tribunal over it, because I believed it was important for our two cultures to learn more about one another. Over the three months he's been aboard, I have heard the odd remark about him, how he makes people feel uncomfortable when he is around, slightly unsettled -- even I, I admit, found him odd at times -- but I just put it down to good old-fashioned xenophobia. He has been nothing but helpful during our missions, and, if he was, at times, a little insensitive to us, particularly in regards to our privacy, it could be argued it was just him adapting to our culture's way of thinking. However, events of the past thirty six hours have made me re-evaluate my opinion of him, and have me wondering whether our fears were not, indeed, well founded. Many thousands of innocent people have died here, and all because of the Q'tami. It has brought home to me that we know very little about them, just what they have deigned to tell us.

(beat)

Are they really our friends, or are we making a very serious mistake?

We finally get a glimpse at what he is looking at out of his window: a PLANET, with a bottom third like Earth, with green continents and blue seas.

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2.

The top two thirds though, are orange and brown, like Jupiter, with a withered and decayed look. This part of it looks decimated.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is travelling at warp.

A caption reads: "TWO DAYS PREVIOUSLY".

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, Stardate 78290.7.
The Enterprise has picked up a
distress call from a group of
Starfleet xenobiologists, currently
stationed on the planet Macana, in
the Petos system. Their message was
heavily distorted and I currently
have Y'lan working on trying to clean
some of it up.

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Y'LAN is hunched over his table, tapping away at his controls.
CROSS enters.

CROSS

Report.

Y'LAN

The message has been corrupted by
subspace distortion, possibly due to
an influx of alpha waves on the...

CROSS

(interrupts)

I don't like technobabble, Y'lan.
In English, please.

Y'LAN

I am not progressing rapidly. I
have managed to isolate the cleanest
part of the data though, however,
it's only a few seconds' worth.

CROSS

Let's hear it.

Y'lan presses some buttons and on the screen appears a still
fuzzy image of SPINER, one of the scientists. The image
keeps breaking up.

SPINER

The planet is changing, before our
eyes almost. Everything is dying.
We need...

The screen blips off.

CROSS

Not very encouraging.

Y'LAN

No.

CROSS

The Petos system is in your neck of the woods, what do you --

Y'LAN

My... "neck of the woods"?

CROSS

Sorry, old expression. I mean, it's close to Q'tami space, right?

Y'LAN

Comparatively speaking, yes.

CROSS

Well, it's only a few hundred light years from where we picked you up.

Y'LAN

True, but so are several other systems.

CROSS

Do you know anything about Macana itself?

Y'LAN

Only what you do. Pre-industrial society, flora and fauna not unlike your own planet, I believe, a wholly unremarkable sounding world.

CROSS

Not worth Q'tami attention, huh?

Y'LAN

Captain, when you've studied as many planets as we have, you soon begin to grow weary of the same old things time and again.

CROSS

Nowhere is exactly the same, Y'lan. Every new world has something different to offer.

Y'LAN

The Q'tami do not get excited about different kinds of microbes, Captain.

CROSS

I had you pegged as explorers too,
Y'lan.

Y'LAN

Explorers, yes. Botanists, no.

CROSS

I guess there's still a lot we don't
know about you.

Y'LAN

That is an understatement.

CROSS

Alright, well keep me informed how
you progress on the message. Our
ETA is four hours, and I'd like to
have some idea of what we're going
to find.

Y'LAN

Understood.

Cross nods, and departs. Y'lan continues to work for a
moment, and then looks around.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Computer, seal door.

COMPUTER VOICE

Door sealed.

Y'lan begins to assume the blank expression of a Q'tami
communicating telepathically.

Y'LAN

Y'lan to K'Par. The Enterprise is
coming...

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is in orbit around MACANA. The planet is as
in the teaser, but the red areas are noticeably smaller,
although still covering a large proportion. It looks like
huge red blemishes are spreading across the land, almost
like some kind of bacteria.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, supplemental. The
Enterprise has entered orbit of
Macana. Initial scans show some
kind of massive biological devastation
across a large area of the main
continent, but what is causing this
cannot be ascertained from preliminary

(MORE)

CROSS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
scans. We are picking up a few weak
lifesigns in the area where the
scientists were camped, and I am
sending an away team down to
investigate, albeit after taking
sufficient precautions.

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

QUINLAN, DOJAR and TALORA are receiving inoculations from
ELRIS. They are all wearing SPACE SUITS. OZRAN is behind
the console.

QUINLAN
This is pretty pointless, since we
don't know what's causing this.
These inoculations can't be very
effective. Besides, we have these
suits.

TALORA
I need not remind you that we don't
know what caused the destruction.
If our suits are damaged, we need to
have protection.

QUINLAN
Yeah, yeah, I know, no need to lecture
me.

ELRIS
At least these will protect us against
the common things.

The last person she inoculates is herself.

TALORA
All right, chief, when ready.
(to comm)
Talora to Cross, beaming down now.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE
Understood.

As they prepare to transport, the door opens and Y'LAN enters.

TALORA
Y'lan?

Y'LAN
I am accompanying you to the surface.

TALORA
I see. Did you ask the captain?

Y'LAN

No. But the readings from this world intrigue me and with my superior knowledge I will be able to assist your studies.

TALORA

(taps comm badge)

Talora to Cross, Mr - sorry, JUST Y'lan, wants to join the away team.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

I thought microbes didn't interest you, Y'lan?

Y'LAN

They don't, but my readings tell me microbes will not enter into our investigations.

CROSS

Do you need protection?

Y'LAN

No. With my biology, contamination will not be a problem.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

Fine. Good luck, away team.

TALORA

Acknowledged. Beam us down.

As they mount the podium they all, with the exception of Y'lan, put on their helmets.

EXT. A NATIVE SETTLEMENT -- DAY

There are a few wicker huts centered around what looks to be a totem pole of some kind. BODIES lie strewn everywhere, people clothed in simple garments, just crumpled where they fell. The impression you get of the place is one of complete aridity. TALORA, QUINLAN, ELRIS, DOJAR and Y'LAN all appear near the totem pole. They look around, taking readings from their tricorders.

QUINLAN

My God, what's happened here?

TALORA

That is what we are here to find out. Asking pointless questions when you know we don't know the answers is a fruitless exercise.

QUINLAN
(under her breath to
Elris)
Heartless cow.

ELRIS
The tricorder's picking up no harmful
bacteria in the air. Whatever did
this isn't in the atmosphere.

QUINLAN
Great!

She removes her helmet.

TALORA
Quinlan!

QUINLAN
What?

TALORA
You do not know it is safe yet to
remove your helmet.

QUINLAN
But Elris just said--

TALORA
It doesn't matter. Besides, I did
not give you permission to.

QUINLAN
Fine. Want me to put it back on?

TALORA
Doctor?

ELRIS
There's nothing in the air that can
harm us.

TALORA
Very well, away team, you may remove
your helmets.

QUINLAN
How very gracious.

The team does so. Elris bends down by one of the bodies,
which is lying on its front. She turns it over. It is a
WOMAN, but her face is misshapen, with growths and lumps.

Her expression is one of acute pain. The effect is quite
grotesque.

ELRIS

Ugh. Poor woman. I should take some samples.

TALORA

Check the dwellings.

DOJAR

Right.

QUINLAN and DOJAR enter one of the huts.

INT. THE WICKER HUT

DOJAR AND QUINLAN enter, and balk immediately at the smell. There is a small bed with a child lying on it, and an adult figure, knelt beside it.

DOJAR

Do you smell that?

QUINLAN

It's hard not to. Ugh. I wish I hadn't taken it off now.

DOJAR

It reminds me of my childhood.

Quinlan looks at him. She bends down beside the two bodies.

QUINLAN

Poor little mite.

DOJAR

There's nothing we can do here.

QUINLAN

No.

She looks around again, obviously affected by the scene.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's get out of here.

EXT. THE VILLAGE

QUINLAN and DOJAR emerge, as do TALORA and ELRIS from two other huts.

QUINLAN

Anything?

ELRIS

No. I'm not picking up any lifesigns at all in the immediate vicinity.
(pointedly)

AT ALL.

DOJAR

What?

ELRIS

Listen for a minute.

They all stop for a moment.

DOJAR

I don't hear anything. It's eerie.

ELRIS

Exactly. No birds, no insects,
nothing.

QUINLAN

I'd say it was as quiet as the grave,
but that's not appropriate.

ELRIS

It looks like some kind of radioactive
weapon has gone off, only there's no
radiation above normal levels.

TALORA

We need to try and find the
scientists, that is our priority
here. You can study this effect
later when we have established their
condition.

DOJAR

We'll cover more ground if we split
up.

TALORA

Agreed. The science team had two
camps near here, I suggest we head
for them. Dojar, with me, Quinlan,
you go with the doctor... Y'lan...

They look around, but Y'lan is already disappearing off into
the distance.

QUINLAN

Where's he going in such a hurry?

Talora looks at her.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, that was another pointless
question, wasn't it?

TALORA

Keep comm links open at all times.
If you start feeling unwell, report
in at once.

QUINLAN

Gee thanks, where would we be without you?

DOJAR

Be careful.

They split up. ELRIS and QUINLAN head in the roughly similar direction to Y'lan, towards some rocky outcrops.

ELRIS

These readings are very strange.

QUINLAN

What are they saying?

ELRIS

That woman back there, her cellular readings were -- well, bizarre is the only word for it. I've only seen something like this once before, and it can't be the same thing.

QUINLAN

Can't be what?

ELRIS

In medical school, I remember we devoted one afternoon to the subject of transporter accidents. We were shown several rather grisly films with people who had been, well, mangled. The reason why this happened, we were told, was that the transporters, when reassembling the person, for whatever reason got the DNA sequencing wrong, in effect trying to rewrite the person from the inside out. It knew what the basic shape should be, just not how to achieve it. So it tried to improvise. Obviously, it couldn't do that, so you ended up with a lumpy mess.

QUINLAN

And you're saying it's like that here?

ELRIS

Yes. Something had rewritten that woman up until a point her body just couldn't take it. And it's not just her, either.

She bends down, and runs her tricorder over a small withered-looking plant.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Everything here has been affected.
Nothing with a cellular structure
has been left untouched.

Her comm badge chirps.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Talora to Elris. Please join us, we
have found the scientists. Y'lan,
do the same.

ELRIS

Acknowledged.

QUINLAN

I notice she didn't ask for me.

ELRIS

I notice she didn't say whether they
found them alive or dead.

EXT. THE SCIENTIST'S CAMP -- DAY

It is by a rock formation, and consists of a few scattered
tents and work cabins. As in the village, a few bodies are
lying around, but these have STARFLEET UNIFORMS on. Talora
and Dojar are bending over one body.

Elris and Quinlan arrive.

DOJAR

Doctor, over here. This one's still
alive.

Elris rushes over and begins scanning him. It's Spiner, and
he has the same deformations as the other people. He is
barely conscious, murmuring incoherently.

ELRIS

What's his name?

TALORA

His badge says John Spiner.

ELRIS

Doctor Spiner, can you hear me?

SPINER

Bleugh...

ELRIS

We need to get him to the Enterprise.

She taps her comm badge.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Elris to sickbay, we need to set up an emergency quarantine area, we have one patient coming in.

NURSE'S COMM VOICE

Understood, doctor.

QUINLAN

Can you save him?

ELRIS

If I find out what's wrong with him, maybe. I think I'll give him --

Spiner suddenly sits BOLD UPRIGHT and starts SCREAMING.

He points past the group, gesturing wildly. Then he slumps down, unconscious. Elris's tricorder begins bleeping urgently.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Damnit, he's gone into anaphylactic shock. I have to get him up there now. Sickbay, this is Elris again, medical emergency, beam us up.

They DISSOLVE away into nothingness.

QUINLAN

What the hell prompted that little outburst?

They slowly turn round. Y'LAN is standing there. They look at each other as we.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is orbiting the planet, as before.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental. With only one of the science team having been found alive, I have ordered the away team back to the Enterprise until we can establish what it is we are dealing with.

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

GREY and Y'LAN are working at it as Cross enters.

CROSS

What have you got?

GREY

Nothing conclusive as yet, Captain. One thing we can say though, whatever it is, it's spreading.

CROSS

Show me.

Grey triggers some buttons, and we see a large three dimensional hologram of the planet appear before them, with the significant red areas noticeable on the surface.

GREY

This is what the planet looked like when we arrived three hours ago. Now look at it.

He presses another button, and the blotches seem to spread further across the hologram.

GREY (CONT'D)

It's spread by three percent in those three hours.

CROSS

Do we know where the centers of population are?

GREY

I've uploaded some data from the science teams records. The village you found them near was an isolated tribe, not representative of the people as a whole.

(MORE)

GREY (CONT'D)

They just wandered into the wrong place at the wrong time. The majority live on the southern-most continent, here.

He triggers the hologram and it spins around to display the continent, which only has a few small blemishes.

GREY (CONT'D)

Those lights mark the main concentration of people. As you can see, this blight has yet to reach them, but only just.

CROSS

How long do they have?

GREY

Given its current rate of propagation, we estimate it, whatever IT is, will hit them in just under twelve hours time.

CROSS

Y'lan, did you pick up anything at all that might indicate what's going on?

Y'LAN

No.

BEAT.

CROSS

Do you have any ideas?

Y'LAN

I do, but I will require more time to develop them. I request permission to return to the surface.

CROSS

All right, take Talora with you again.

Y'LAN

No, I will go alone.

CROSS

Why?

Y'LAN

I fear anyone else's bioreadings may hamper any readings I gather. My equipment is very delicate, Captain, and can be put off by the slightest disturbance.

CROSS

I said exactly the same thing to Lea once.

(beat)

Never mind. All right, agreed, but the moment you find anything, let me know.

Y'LAN

Understood.

Y'lan turns and goes to exit the room.

CROSS

Oh, Y'lan, just one more thing.

Y'LAN

What?

CROSS

The away team reported that Doctor Spiner was quite calm until he saw you. It was only then he went into shock.

Y'LAN

Yes, that is so.

CROSS

Any ideas why?

Y'LAN

It is not the first time someone has reacted strongly to my appearance.

CROSS

No. Thank you, Y'lan.

Y'lan nods and exits.

CROSS (CONT'D)

You too, Lieutenant. Lieutenant, why are you here?

GREY

Captain?

CROSS

You're not a scientist.

GREY

Y'lan and I have been working together to make the Q'tami instruments more adaptable for bipedal species.

CROSS

How are you progressing?

Grey proudly taps a control, and the planet hologram spins around 180 degrees.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Very good.

GREY

That's nothing. Watch this.

He taps another button, but the hologram disappears with a pszzt noise, and the table goes dark.

GREY (CONT'D)

I think I'm needed in engineering.

CROSS

Agreed.

They both guiltily move out.

INT. SICKBAY

Elris and AGOLIVE work on Spinner behind a containment field as Quinlan watches. Cross enters.

CROSS

How's he doing?

QUINLAN

He hasn't regained consciousness yet, but Lea doesn't look as worried as she did a while back.

Elris sees Cross standing there, and comes through, walking through the containment field.

CROSS

Report.

ELRIS

Well, he hasn't improved at all since we got him here, but he hasn't deteriorated either. His cellular degradation isn't as advanced as the other bodies we scanned down there.

CROSS

What do you think protected him?

ELRIS

Best guess at the moment, we turned up in the nick of time. He stabilized as soon as we brought him up here. Taking him away from the planet seemed to halt the process.

CROSS

If he'd stayed down there...

ELRIS

I think he'd be dead by now.

CROSS

All right, thank you Doctor. I have sent Y'lan back to the surface, he thinks he might be able to figure this out. I'll keep you informed of anything he finds.

ELRIS

Thank you, Captain.

CROSS

Inform me if he wakes up. I'll be on the bridge.

He nods stiffly, and walks out.

QUINLAN

Glad to see you two are getting along so well.

ELRIS

I prefer it this way. Strictly professional. At the moment.

QUINLAN

I thought I'd detected some a bit of a thaw between you.

ELRIS

Did you?

(beat)

Anyway, why you still hanging around here, you must be tired?

QUINLAN

I am, but I don't fancy facing my quarters at the moment. The image of that kid.

ELRIS

I know, horrible. The death of children...

(beat)

is always painful.

(quickly recovers)

You know the best cure for the blues?

QUINLAN

One of Hal's special concoctions?

ELRIS

I was going to say a long soothing bath.

QUINLAN

I prefer my suggestion.

ELRIS

You know what happened last time.

QUINLAN

That was a one off.

Elris looks at her disapprovingly.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Don't worry about me, I can hold my drink.

INT. TEN FORWARD

QUINLAN is face down on the table, several glasses surrounding here. HAL gently taps on her shoulder.

HAL

Excuse me?

Quinlan looks up, bleary eyed.

HAL (CONT'D)

I'm closing up.

QUINLAN

That's fine. Carry on.

HAL

You have to leave.

QUINLAN

That's not so fine.

INT. CORRIDOR

QUINLAN staggers along, swaying every time she stops.

QUINLAN

Bloody Hal.

She rounds a corner and bumps violently into TALORA.

TALORA

(coldly acknowledging)
Quinlan.

QUINLAN

(mockingly)
Talora.

They move past each other, but then Quinlan turns round.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Talora. What was with all the snide comments down on the planet before?

TALORA

I do not think now is a good time to discuss--

QUINLAN

(interrupts)

I think it's a very good time to discuss, ACTUALLY. So, what's up?

TALORA

I did not think your reactions were appropriate to the situation we were in.

QUINLAN

In what way? How was I meant to react?

TALORA

I expect members of Starfleet to act in a professional manner. We do our jobs as quickly and efficiently as we can, that is why we are here. We are not here to make inane chatter.

QUINLAN

"Inane chatter"?

TALORA

"My God, what has happened here?"

"That was another pointless question wasn't it?"

(beat)

"Heartless cow." "How very gracious."

QUINLAN

What do you expect? It was a stressful situation. How do you expect me to react?

TALORA

You shouldn't have reacted at all.

QUINLAN

Yes, well, not all of us are as cold as you are. Some of us have feelings.

TALORA

To be an effective member of this crew, you have to bury those feelings.

QUINLAN

Oh, don't give me that crap, Talora.
No one does that, except for you.

TALORA

Tell me, Miss Quinlan, did you see any of the others of the away team chattering away like you did? No, you did not.

QUINLAN

It's just the way I deal with things.

TALORA

I believe a Starfleet officer is meant to "deal with things" once they are off duty. Although looking at your current inebriated state, it would seem how you deal with things off duty is no better. Certainly not befitting a real officer.

QUINLAN

Meaning?

TALORA

You know as well as I do you are not really a member of this crew and you don't belong on this ship.

QUINLAN

It wasn't my idea to stay aboard.

TALORA

No, it was the Captain's, and I told him then it was a mistake, and I am justified in having done so. You don't deserve a place here. Your actions with the helmet besides anything else showed that.

QUINLAN

No, no, don't hold back. Tell me what you really think.

TALORA

The people who actually earned their place on this ship showed today why they are on the flagship on the Federation. You may have been a commander once, but you would not even have made junior grade on the Enterprise. Today we saw who were the real professionals, and who were the amateurs. Now, if that is all?

QUINLAN

That's all.

TALORA

Very well.

She turns and continues on her way, as Quinlan stares after her, still swaying.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

CROSS stares at a book, not really reading it. He stands up and taps his comm.

CROSS

Cross to Y'lan, report.

Silence.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Cross to Y'lan, please report.

Still nothing.

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Cross enters with a bleary eyed Grey.

CROSS

I'm sorry to wake you so late.

GREY

That's all right, we hadn't gone to sleep yet.

CROSS

Can you raise him from here?

GREY

I -- think so.

He taps away at the table.

GREY (CONT'D)

Lieutenant Grey to Y'lan, come in please.

Y'LAN'S COMM VOICE

Yes?

GREY

Just a minute, I have the captain here.

He moves away and Cross steps forward to speak. During their following conversation, Grey taps away at Y'lan's console.

CROSS

Y'lan, I tried to raise you on the comm.

Y'LAN'S COMM VOICE

I deactivated all Starfleet equipment, it was interfering with mine.

CROSS

Do you have any news?

Y'LAN

No. I told you I would report if I had anything.

CROSS

All right, Cross...

GREY

(interrupting)

Captain? I'm picking up some kind of weird signal here.

CROSS

Where?

GREY

Here, fairly close to the village the away team was it. Very odd energy signatures too.

CROSS

Why didn't the Enterprise's sensors pick them up?

GREY

They're just not configured to this kind of reading. Whatever they are, they are definitely not natural.

CROSS

It's close to the epicenter of this blotch, too. Y'lan, we're going to send you some coordinates, we want you to investigate some readings we're getting.

Y'LAN'S COMM VOICE

Captain, I am extremely busy, it will have to wait until I am finished here.

CROSS

I remind you we are working to a tight deadline here.

Y'LAN'S COMM VOICE

Which is why I do not wish to be
disturbed again. Y'lan out.

His comm goes dead.

CROSS

I'm not putting up with that. Grey,
you're with me.

EXT. WASTELAND -- NIGHT

CROSS and GREY materialize. They look around. There are
several rocky outcrops around them.

GREY

The readings were from this direction.

As he consults his tricorder, Cross walks around one of the
outcrops. Grey follows him, and finds the captain staring
ahead of him.

GREY (CONT'D)

Captain?

CROSS

Look.

Grey looks, and sees a valley sinking down away from them.
At the base is a metallic ARRAY, with a blue aura around it,
that reaches up to several stories.

GREY

What the...

CROSS

Grey, what kind of technology does
that look like to you?

Y'LAN's voice cuts him off.

Y'LAN (O.S.)

Yes, it is. It's Q'tami.

Cross and Grey both turn and look at Y'lan standing there as
we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. WASTELAND

CROSS, GREY and Y'LAN as before.

CROSS

You care to explain, Y'lan? What is it? Is it responsible for what is happening here?

Y'LAN

Yes, Captain, it is. That array is a Q'tami terraforming base. The Q'tami set them up on planets that they wish to inhabit, and the array generates a biological effect that results in the planet's biostructure being altered to be suitable for Q'tami habitation.

CROSS

Did you know this was here?

Y'LAN

Yes.

CROSS

Why didn't you tell us? Were the Q'tami not aware that this planet was inhabited, that inflicting this on their ecosystem would kill them?

Y'LAN

The Hegemony are aware that placing an array on a planet such as this would result in the effects we've seen.

CROSS

Then what is it? They just don't care about the people? Are they beneath you?

Y'LAN

Technically, yes, they are, just as you are beneath us, Captain. But we do respect inferior life forms.

CROSS

If that's so, why have the Hegemony done this?

Y'LAN

It is not the Hegemony's work.

CROSS

Explain.

Y'LAN

The Q'tami like to present to outsiders a united front, but the truth is somewhat different. There are -- groups within our world that think differently from us.

CROSS

Go on.

Y'LAN

We call them the Faction, although that implies a unity amongst them where none exists. I believe this array is the property of the Faction.

CROSS

What do they do?

Y'LAN

The Faction have managed to break away from the collective mind of the Hegemony, and as such have been completely isolated from our culture. In our world, anyone not part of the Hegemony is a pariah, an outcast.

CROSS

Not everyone likes thinking as one mind?

Y'LAN

As I have explained to you before, Captain, we do not think as one mind. However, we can communicate as one when we wish.

CROSS

Go on.

Y'LAN

Members of the Faction find living on our homeworld intolerable, if not impossible. The closest comparison I can think of for you to understand is if you lost your sight and hearing at the same time, and still had to function, with no assistance and much hostility. Everyone who joins the Faction leaves our planet.

CROSS

Where do they go?

Y'LAN

Anywhere they can. But not many planets are tailored to our race's needs. Hence, they have to alter them.

CROSS

So where are they now?

Y'LAN

The Faction places an array on a planet and then leaves it to carry out its work, returning only when they know the terraforming will be sufficient for them to inhabit the world.

CROSS

Leaving everyone on the planet to die in the meantime?

Y'LAN

The Faction are an essentially antagonistic group. They feel they are abandoned by the Hegemony for non-conformity. As such, they are rather amoral in their outlook towards others.

CROSS

Do unto others what has been done unto you? I see. Do you know how these arrays work?

Y'LAN

Yes.

CROSS

Can you stop it?

Y'LAN

Yes, but I will not.

CROSS

What?

Y'LAN

Captain, the Hegemony place a high priority on capturing members of the Faction. If I deactivate this array, it will signal to them Q'tami are present on this world, and will not return.

CROSS

And what about those people who will die?

Y'LAN

Regrettable, but necessary. It was not I who started this problem. But I can take steps to ensure it does not happen again.

CROSS

Now listen, Y'lan. I'm sorry these guys are treading on your toes, I'm sorry if by turning this damn thing off we're stopping you play cops and robbers, but I will not allow innocent people to die. If you do not start work on shutting it down, I will find someone who can.

Y'LAN

They would not succeed. Beside their lack of knowledge of our technology, that array will be heavily guarded with traps designed to keep malcontents out.

CROSS

That may be so, but we would have to try.

BEAT.

Y'LAN

I would not want your crew wasting their lives, Captain. I will do as you wish.

CROSS

Thank you. How long will it take?

Y'LAN

It will take eight hours to shut down completely.

CROSS

That's no good, those people on the southern continent have less than four. Why does it take so long?

Y'LAN

Q'tami technology is not like yours where you just press a button and everything resets itself every week. It is complex. If another Q'tami was here, I would be able to work quicker, but--

GREY

Captain, I could help.

(MORE)

GREY (CONT'D)

You know the work I've been doing with Y'lan's technology on the Enterprise.

CROSS

Y'lan, what about the effects of this thing on humans? How long before the cellular changes start to affect him?

Y'LAN

You have to be exposed continuously for several days before the effects start to show.

L CROSS

Alright, Grey, you stay and help Y'lan. That acceptable, Y'lan?

Y'LAN

I suppose I could assign him simple tasks.

CROSS

Right, get to work. Time is of the essence. Do you have any idea when the Faction may return?

Y'LAN

No. The terraforming is already in an advanced stage, so I would estimate it will not be too much longer before they return to assess its effectiveness. I have informed the Hegemony, though, so you do not need to fear. Two of their vessels will be here in approximately twenty four hours.

CROSS

Wait a minute, you informed the Hegemony, but not me?

Y'LAN

Captain, if I had informed you, you would have reported it in your logs, and attempted to do sooner what you are insisting on doing now. The Faction may be able to scan your databases. I could not risk it. At least by this time.

CROSS

You've delayed me long enough that the Faction may turn up before they realize what's happening?

Y'LAN

Correct.

CROSS

Y'lan, I--

(beat)

we don't have time to debate this now. You and Grey get to work. Erik, you alright? You've just come off a double shift.

GREY

I'll be fine, captain. Nothing like hard work and the threat of Q'tami booby traps to keep you on your toes.

CROSS

All right, keep me informed. Cross to Enterprise, one to beam up.

He SHIMMERS into nothing.

GREY

Exactly what kind of booby traps are we talking about?

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

CROSS nods briefly to OZRAN who has beamed him up.

OZRAN

Captain.

As Cross reaches the door, his comm chirrups.

ELRIS'S COMM VOICE

Elris to Cross.

CROSS

Yes, Doctor?

ELRIS

I'm sorry about the late hour, but Doctor Spiner has woken up. He's asking to see you.

CROSS

On my way.

INT. SICKBAY

Spiner is sitting up on his biobed behind the forcefield. Cross enters and finds ELRIS working on a PADD.

CROSS

You can drop the forcefield, Doctor. He doesn't have anything contagious.

Elris deactivates the forcefield.

ELRIS

Don't be long with him, he's a little highly strung about what he's been through.

CROSS

It's understandable.

Cross walks over to the biobed.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Doctor Spiner? I'm Captain Neil Cross.

SPINER

Captain, thank God. I needed to talk to you -- we tried to call for help, but...

CROSS

We picked up your message, we got here as quickly as we could.

SPINER

You don't understand, these things were there...

CROSS

Things?

SPINER

Yeah, weird shaped, all over the place.

CROSS

The Q'tami, yes we know.

SPINER

They've destroyed the planet, they built this thing.

CROSS

Doctor Spiner, we know what's been going on. We have people down there now, trying to stop any further damage.

SPINER

But that's the thing -- we helped them build it.

CROSS

What?

SPINER

The thing, that does the damage. We helped them construct it. We didn't know what it was. They told us they were scientists too. Oh my God.

CROSS

It's okay, you weren't to know.

SPINER

Evil beings, they didn't care...

CROSS

Not all of them. We have a Q'tami aboard this ship, as a matter of fact, and he's in charge of dismantling this array.

SPINER

You have one here?

CROSS

He's on the planet at the moment. His name is Y'lan.

SPINER

You can't be serious. He won't do anything to stop this, he'll just continue it.

CROSS

We have someone with him.

SPINER

But Captain, they won't know. I worked with these -- these things on that array. I know some of how it works. Let me go down and make sure this Y'lan is doing what he says he is.

Cross looks across at Elris, who shakes her head.

CROSS

I'm sorry, Doctor Spiner, you are not well enough to go anywhere at the moment. But let me assure you I have confidence the array is being taken care of. Now, you need to get some rest. I'll see you in the morning.

He begins to walk away, but Spiner yells after him.

SPINER

They're evil!

Cross spins round and faces him.

CROSS

I don't think the ones you saw were representative of their species.

SPINER

(shouting with fury)

They lied to us, they manipulated us for their own ends, and they were completely callous to the people they were affecting. They cannot be trusted!

Cross looks at him. Spiner has struck a nerve. After a moment, Cross composes himself again.

CROSS

I assure you, first thing in the morning, I will check up on them.

SPINER

It'll be too late by then! The planet will be dead!

Cross pulls Elris to one side as Spiner continues yelling in the background.

CROSS

I think some sedation might be in order.

ELRIS

You're telling me what to do with my patients now?

BEAT.

CROSS

You're the Doctor. Have a good night.

Cross walks out again.

SPINER

Captain! Captain, come back, please!

Elris stares at him for a moment, and then goes to her hypospray.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross enters, and breathes deeply. His lights are off, so the only light comes from the red reflection of the blotches from the planet below. He taps his comm badge.

CROSS

Cross to Grey. How's it going?

EXT. THE ARRAY -- NIGHT

Y'LAN is beavering away at a panel, while Grey is standing by him with a tricorder.

GREY

Y'lan's just checking for wires. He thinks we'll be inside in about ten minutes.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

Understood. Cross out.

GREY

Are you sure me counting these flashes is useful?

Y'LAN

Yes. I need to know how quickly the current is moving.

GREY

Fine. One... two...

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross slumps into his sofa, staring out at the planet below him. His eyes betray deep worry, but even they can't fight his weariness. He slowly slumps down, asleep.

INT. QUINLAN'S QUARTERS

Quinlan pacing up and down in her cabin, MUTTERING to herself.

QUINLAN

Professional, my ass.

She stops and stares out of the window at the planet too, thinking.

EXT. THE ARRAY -- NIGHT

Y'lan and Grey as before.

GREY

Seventeen... eighteen...

INT. SICKBAY

The lights here are dimmed too. ELRIS is in her office, dozing. AGOLIVE comes in.

AGOLIVE

Elris, I'm just going on my break.

Elris nods sleepily. Agolive exits. Elris sits up and looks around.

She stands up, and walks out into the main area of sickbay. She frowns, and walks around to Spiner's bed. It's empty.

ELRIS

What the hell?

She turns round and is STRUCK from behind. She CRIES OUT as she falls to the floor.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

CROSS is sleeping on his sofa, as before.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE

Security alert! Security alert! We have an unauthorized person loose on the ship!

Cross wakes instantly.

INT. CORRIDOR

Cross RUNS along it, to find two GUARDS standing outside Sickbay. He pushes past them.

INT. SICKBAY

Agolive is attending to a gash on Elris's forehead. Dojar stands by. Cross enters.

CROSS

What happened?

DOJAR

It's Spiner. He's gone AWOL.

CROSS

Has he beamed off the ship?

DOJAR

No.

CROSS

I think I know where he's heading for, then.

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Spiner is hunched over Y'lan's science table, frantically tapping away at the system. The HOLOGRAM of the planet hovers over it. Dojar, Cross and three GUARDS enter, and cover him with phasers.

CROSS

Step away from the table, doctor.

SPINER

You think you can trust your Q'tami,
Captain? Then why's he been hiding
these?

He activates a final button and on the hologram TWO Q'TAMI
SHIPS shimmer into view.

SPINER (CONT'D)

He'd wired your sensors to shield
their cloaks. From this table.

DOJAR

When the hell did they arrive?

SPINER

Arrive? Don't you see, they were
always here... They never left.

Off Cross's reaction we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Talora, Dojar, Elris, and Spiner are filing in and sitting down. Quinlan is already there, staring out of the window.

QUINLAN

It's incredible, not even a shimmer.

CROSS

I've asked Doctor Spiner to attend this meeting, and he assures me he will not assault anybody else.

Spiner still looks annoyed.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Suggestions?

ELRIS

Are they not answering hails?

CROSS

No, we haven't tried.

QUINLAN

The Enterprise would be no match for those two vessel's firepower. We thought it best we didn't let them know we know they're there, so to speak, until we find out what they're doing.

SPINER

We know what they're doing there, they're trying to destroy...

CROSS

(interrupts)

Yes, thank you Doctor. Our priorities stay the same, we have to deactivate that array.

DOJAR

Why can't we just blast it from here?

QUINLAN

We don't know what effect it would have on the planet -- it may trigger a reaction that would make things even worse.

TALORA

Unlikely.

QUINLAN

But possible. If that thing has some kind of nuke attached to it, we could be condemning those people to an even worse death than the one they face now.

TALORA

An even worse death?

QUINLAN

Suffering comes in many forms, Talora.

CROSS

I agree, we can't risk it.

ELRIS

Any word from Y'lan or Grey?

CROSS

None, although what Y'lan is really doing down there is anybody's guess.

ELRIS

How do we know these ships aren't from this Faction? Y'lan might be as in the dark about this as the rest of us.

SPINER

No, he had deliberately covered those ships up. He knew they were there.

TALORA

I fail to see why you are surprised by this turn of events, captain. This is not the first time Y'lan has misled us. Do I need to remind you all of his slowness in deleting his collected data?

QUINLAN

No, but you did anyway.

TALORA

Pointless comments are a specialty of yours, aren't they?

QUINLAN

I'm so sorry, it must be another example of my amateurish nature.

Cross is deep in thought, and doesn't appear to have heard this exchange.

CROSS

I'm concerned about Grey. If, and I still say if, Y'lan is working to help the Q'tami, goodness knows what he's done with our engineer. We need to get down there, we can't risk trying to contact him by the comm. And, should the need arise, we need to get Y'lan away from there.

QUINLAN

He won't like that.

CROSS

Yes, well, I don't like being lied to, so we'll be even.

TALORA

Captain, I believe I have warned you in past about Y'lan's trustworthiness.

QUINLAN

Oh yeah, Talora, you're so smart, aren't you. I don't notice you coming up with any bright ideas.

CROSS

Enough! Dojar, assemble a security detail. We beam down immediately.

SPINER

Captain, I would like to accompany you down.

CROSS

Doctor Spiner...

SPINER

I know what you're going to say, I'm hysterical, unreliable, whatever, but that was only because you wouldn't listen to me.

CROSS

Actually, I was going to say you're still too sick to come down; returning to the surface may start you off again. Doctor?

ELRIS

I can't guarantee it won't.

SPINER

Please, captain. I want to help these people.

BEAT.

CROSS

All right. Dojar, meet us with your team in Transporter Room 2 in ten minutes.

DOJAR

Understood, captain.

CROSS

Dismissed. And keep on your toes.

Everyone starts standing up and leaving, but Cross hangs back.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Talora, Quinlan, a moment please.

They hang back as the rest file out.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Whatever's going on between you two, sort it out. I don't need my second in command and tactical advisor bickering during a time like this.

TALORA AND QUINLAN

Captain...

Cross raises a finger.

CROSS

Ah-ah. I don't want to hear it. Just get over it. NOW. Understood?

QUINLAN

Sir.

TALORA

Yes, Captain.

CROSS

Good. We have enough to worry about at the moment.

He nods, and walks out. Talora and Quinlan look at each other.

EXT. THE ARRAY -- PRE-DAWN

Cross, Dojar, Spiner and two guards, HARRIS and JONES beam down. All but Spiner have phasers drawn. There is no sign outside of anybody, but the array's door is now open. From inside there is the same faint blue glow that emits from its outside.

CROSS

Dojar.

Dojar motions to the guards, and they cautiously approach the door, both guards wielding flash lights. They stand either side of the door.

DOJAR

On three. One, two, three.

The two guards swing in.

INT. ARRAY -- GROUND FLOOR

Although dim, it is lit by various panels and displays around the walls. It is fairly big, with a METALLIC WALKWAY leading up on one side to a higher level. There is no sign of Y'lan, but GREY is slumped in one corner, snoring gently. The two guards look around.

HARRIS

Clear.

Cross, Dojar and Spiner enter. Cross walks over to Grey.

CROSS

Lieutenant, Erik, can you hear me?

Grey awakes with a SNORT.

GREY

Captain, what?

He looks around.

GREY (CONT'D)

I don't remember falling asleep.

CROSS

Where's Y'lan?

GREY

He was upstairs. Doing something to shut down the traps or something. What's going on?

CROSS

I'll explain later. You two, stay with Grey. Dojar, you're with me.

They begin to ascend the walkway.

INT. ARRAY -- FIRST FLOOR

It looks practically the same as the ground floor, but the walkways both descends below the floor and rises above it. Y'LAN is working away at a panel on the opposite side to the walkway, facing away from Cross and Dojar as they enter, both with their phasers pointing towards the Q'tami.

Y'LAN

(not turning round)
Captain. Lieutenant Dojar.

CROSS

Step away from the console, Y'lan.

Y'LAN

I know why you're here. You've detected the ships in orbit. I am not happy about this.

CROSS

Funny, that was my reaction too.

Y'lan suddenly SPINS AROUND, angrily.

Y'LAN

Don't you realize what you've done? Those ships were shrouded, waiting for the Faction to return. Now you've exposed them, the Faction will read them too. The whole plan will fall apart.

CROSS

I'm not buying it anymore, Y'lan. If that were so, you should have told us before now the ships were in orbit.

Y'LAN

It is none of your concern! This is a Q'tami matter! This is not a Starfleet problem.

CROSS

I don't give a damn about Q'tami matters, I'm trying to save the lives of thousands of people.

Y'LAN

And what do you think I am doing here? I agreed to disable this array, against my wishes, and the wishes of the Hegemony. I do my best to satisfy your needs, but your actions just show why I have been trying to keep this operation secret from you. If you had just rescued your people and left, then we would have captured the Faction. If you had just left the array for another few days we would have captured the Faction. If you had left my laboratory alone, we would still have a chance, but now you have ruined it.

CROSS

I don't like being kept in the dark.

Y'LAN

We are protecting you!

CROSS

No, you are protecting your own selfish interests, Y'lan, and you know it.

Y'LAN

Captain, please reinitiate the cloak and erase all records of it from your computers. There is still a chance that the Faction will be too far away to detect it.

CROSS

I can't do that.

Y'LAN

Then I apologize, Captain, but I cannot continue my work here either. Those people will die.

BEAT.

CROSS

Then we'll just have to try and do the best we can without you. In the meantime, I want you to order those ships to leave this planet.

Y'LAN

I do not have that authority.

CROSS

Dammit, Y'lan, what the hell...

Cross' comm CHIRPS.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Captain, Talora.

INT. BRIDGE

Talora sits in the captain's chair, Quinlan standing behind. On the viewscreen, a firefight is going on, a Q'tami ship seemingly firing at the two other Q'tami ships.

TALORA

Another Q'tami ship has just dropped out of warp and has engaged the other two vessels.

CROSS
The Enterprise?

TALORA
They don't appear to be bothering
about us at the moment.

INT. ARRAY -- FIRST FLOOR

Cross, Dojar and Y'lan as before.

CROSS
Okay, keep our of their way. Cross
out.
(to Y'lan)
I suppose this is the Faction?

Y'LAN
We would hardly fire on our own ships.
I would advise you to leave this
area, the Faction will do their best
to ensure this array stays
functioning.

CROSS
What about you?

Y'LAN
I will stay and continue this work.
Now that the Faction know that we
are here, I may as well try and save
these people. Hopefully the Hegemony
will keep them occupied long enough
for me to complete the task.

CROSS
Will they attack you?

Y'LAN
Undoubtedly.

CROSS
Then we'll leave a security detail...

Y'LAN
No. I did not want you involved in
the first place, and I still don't.
Despite what you may believe, I don't
want to cause the death of anyone.

BEAT.

CROSS
All right. Good luck.

He taps his comm.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Cross to Jones and Harris. We're leaving.

No answer.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Jones? Answer.

Still nothing. Cross motions to Dojar.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Dojar.

They cautiously approach the walkway, and peer down.

Below they can see THREE Q'TAMI, leveling weapons at the two guards and Spiner. Cross and Dojar pull back.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Looks like your concern may be too late, Y'lan. We've got company.

Y'LAN

How many?

CROSS

Three.

Y'LAN

Captain, if the Hegemony learns the Faction are already on the array, they will not hesitate to destroy it from orbit.

CROSS

All right. What will the Faction's plan of action be?

Y'LAN

I have completed my work on the lower level, but it is imperative you stop them reaching these higher levels.

DOJAR

Why haven't they already done so?

Y'LAN

Because of the electrobiotechnology on these levels, the only safe way of ensuring a successful transport is to the lowest level, where the systems are minimal.

DOJAR

They don't want their molecules scrambled.

Y'LAN

Correct.

CROSS

No, they just allow everything else's on this planet to be. That means we can't get any more guards in here without them having to go through there.

Y'LAN

I wouldn't advise contacting the ship, anyway, Captain. You don't want to give the Faction any more clues to your whereabouts.

K'PAR

(from below, calling)
Captain Cross.

BEAT.

DOJAR

Our men wouldn't have told him your name.

CROSS

Spiner.

K'PAR

(from below)
Captain Cross, I know you're up there, somewhere. If you don't appear, I will kill your men.

CROSS

Y'lan?

Y'LAN

His name is K'par, he is known to be merciless. However, they're only security, they're expendable.

CROSS

No one is expendable, Y'lan. Dojar, stay with him.

DOJAR

Captain, I should go.

CROSS

Thank you, Dojar, but it's more important you guard Y'lan.

INT. ARRAY -- GROUND FLOOR

K'PAR, the leader of the three Q'tami, walks around as the other two have weaponry pointed at the kneeling Grey, Harris, Jones, and Spiner, who is whimpering.

K'PAR
Captain, I will give you exactly--

CROSS
(interrupts)
I'm here.

Cross appears on the walkway, pointing his phaser at them. Spiner continues blubbering.

K'PAR
Put that weapon down, Captain, I seriously doubt you're going to use it.

Cross stand still.

K'PAR (CONT'D)
Or would you prefer Mr, what is it, Spiner, here, executed?

Cross reluctantly put his phaser down. Spiner's weeping increases.

CROSS
It's no good. Your ship is heavily outgunned up there, there's nowhere you can go.

K'PAR
I don't care. My responsibility is to make sure this array completes its job, so that those who follow me will be able to use this planet.

CROSS
We won't allow it.

K'PAR
We? The Federation? Don't tell me you're so naive. The Federation has absolutely no idea what's going on here, let alone any clue on how to control it.

Spiner is sobbing away in the corner.

K'PAR (CONT'D)
Oh will you shut up, you irritating little creature?

For a brief moment, he turns his back. Cross quickly rolls himself down the walkway, grabbing his phaser as he goes, and shoots one of the Q'tami guards, who slumps to the floor. The other is distracted, and receives a punch in the face from Grey, which sends him flying. As this second guard is dazed, Grey grabs Spinner, and runs over to where Cross has ducked behind a console. Harris and Jones run for it too, but K'par shoots Jones in the leg, who falls, screaming. Harris hesitates, and K'par turns his phaser on him, shooting him square in the head. They both fall down. K'par spins round.

K'PAR (CONT'D)

Very good, captain. Two down for you, one for me.

The Q'tami Grey punched gets back up. Behind their console, Cross and Grey confer quietly.

CROSS

Y'lan's still working upstairs. We have to stop them getting up there.

GREY

I should go up.

CROSS

Dojar's up there.

GREY

Dojar doesn't know anything about Q'tami tech. Permission to risk my life, sir?

CROSS

(hesitating)

All right. I'll cover you.

Cross shoots a warning shot over to K'par, and runs from one console to another, leaving Spinner alone. As the two Q'tami shoot at him, Grey heads up the walkway. The Q'tami underling spots him and shoots at him as Grey runs for it. Cross stands up and shoots again at the guard, bringing him down as Grey successfully reaches the next level and disappears. K'par spins round and points his phaser at Cross, who is pointing his at K'par. They have reached a Mexican stand off.

K'PAR

Well, well. This is certainly proving to be an interesting day. Who has the fastest trigger finger, Captain?

As they glare at each other, we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is continuing to orbit the planet. In the background, we see two of the Q'TAMI SHIPS maneuvering around each other as they shoot at each other, the third Q'tami ship hovering a little apart.

INT. BRIDGE

Talora in the captain's chair, Quinlan still standing behind her. Ensign WOODS is at the helm, SUKOTHAI at mission operations.

QUINLAN

The second Q'tami ship is powering its weapons. About time they chipped in.

TALORA

It doesn't look to me as if they're "chipping in" -- look.

They watch the screen. The Q'tami vessel not involved in the battle is moving around slowly so it seems to be facing the planet. Quinlan checks a console.

QUINLAN

They are aiming their weapons directly at the array.

TALORA

(taps comm badge)

Talora to Cross. I would advise you to take whatever action you are going to quickly, Captain.

INT. ARRAY -- GROUND FLOOR

CROSS and K'PAR as before, still facing each other with phasers.

CROSS

Now is not the best time, Commander. What's happening?

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

The second Q'tami vessel is aiming its weapons directly at the array, captain.

CROSS

You hear that, K'par? If you don't surrender, we're all dead.

K'PAR

Listen to me, Talora, whoever's in charge up there. I have your captain down here, and I would advise you to--

INT. ARRAY -- FIRST FLOOR

Dojar is standing guard by the walkway as Y'lan and Grey work feverishly at the controls. They can all hear K'par through the comm.

K'PAR'S COMM VOICE

tell the Q'tami to hold off their attack if you want to see him live again.

DOJAR

How much longer?

GREY

We're getting there. Y'lan. Y'lan, what you doing?

He looks over at the console, then looks worriedly at Y'lan.

GREY (CONT'D)

Hey, that's communications equipment. You're sending, what, results from this array up? What the hell are you doing that for?

Y'lan ROARS and spins round, knocking Grey flying across the room. Dojar turns, but by the time he has aimed his phaser, Y'lan has shot him, knocking him out cold too.

Y'LAN

Y'lan to lead ship, we are nearly done.

INT. BRIDGE

As before.

TALORA

Q'tami vessel, we have people down on that array, attempting to disable it as we speak, please hold off your attack.

QUINLAN

Still nothing. Their weapons are nearly fully activated. It can't be long now before they fire.

TALORA

Estimate?

QUINLAN

Another minute at the most.

TALORA

Talora to Y'lan, how long left?

INT. ARRAY -- FIRST FLOOR

Y'LAN works on, ignoring Talora's hails.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Y'lan, how long?

INT. BRIDGE

As before.

TALORA

Do none of these Q'tami answer their hails?

INT. ARRAY -- GROUND FLOOR

K'PAR and CROSS, still in their standoff.

CROSS

You know as well as I do that those ships up there won't care about me. They want you, and they will do anything to get you. Do you really want to die like this?

K'PAR

I knew this was a suicide mission the moment I accepted it. It is you who are deluded, Captain. If I have to die, I will.

INT. BRIDGE

As before.

QUINLAN

Their weapons are now fully online. Talora.

TALORA

We have to block them, give the captain more time. Move us in front of them. Now.

QUINLAN

Talora, those weapons will destroy us.

TALORA

I don't think they'll fire on us.
We're not the enemy.

QUINLAN

Are you sure about that?

TALORA

We're about to find out. Woods, do it.

WOODS

Commander, are you sure...

QUINLAN

Oh, for goodness sake.

She sprints across the bridge and pushes Woods to one side.

TALORA

Miss Quinlan?

QUINLAN

Work together, Talora, remember?
Besides, I can't think of anything better.

TALORA

You surprise me.

QUINLAN

Actually, I'm lying, I can, I just want to see you proved wrong.

TALORA

I remind you if I am proved wrong, we will die.

QUINLAN

Yes, but at least I'll die smugly.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise streaks to below the Q'tami ship, blocking its aim.

INT. BRIDGE

As before.

QUINLAN

Hold your breath.

Long BEAT.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

They're powering down their weapons.

She and Quinlan exchange a relieved glance. The comm beeps.

SUKOTHAI

It's the Q'tami.

TALORA

Now they want to talk.

INT. ARRAY -- GROUND FLOOR

K'par and Cross as before.

CROSS

Why did you do this?

K'PAR

The Q'tami need somewhere to live, captain, it's as simple as that.

CROSS

Is it worth dying for?

K'PAR

For the good of the many, captain.

Suddenly there is a cry, and Spiner appears from a corner, and RUSHES at K'par.

SPINER

Liar! You murdering --

CROSS

Spiner, no!

K'par spins round and instinctively shoots at him, as Cross shoots K'par. Both K'par and Spiner drop down.

Cross hurries across to Spiner, checks him for a pulse, and looks grave. He runs over to Harris and Jones, who lie in the corner.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Enterprise, medical emergency. Three to beam up.

The two guards and Spiner shimmer and vanish. Cross runs up the walkway.

INT. ARRAY -- FIRST FLOOR

Y'LAN is still tapping away, as GREY and DOJAR are lying unconscious. CROSS runs in.

CROSS

Y'lan we...

(beat)

what happened here?

Y'LAN

One of the consoles exploded. They were overcome. They will be fine.

CROSS

How you doing?

Y'LAN

Last details, now.

He presses a final button, and immediately everything begins to go dim with a whirring sound.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

I believe it would be now safe to beam up.

CROSS

The array?

Y'LAN

Can now be destroyed safely.

CROSS

Well done, Y'lan. Cross to Enterprise. The array is now safely shut down. Four to beam up.

They all shimmer into nothing.

INT. BRIDGE

As before.

TALORA

Understood, captain.

QUINLAN

Look.

They watch on the screen as one of the Q'tami ships, presumably the Faction ship, turns tail and heads into warp.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Tail between its legs.

TALORA

Yes, quite. I think we can step aside now, Miss Quinlan.

QUINLAN

Yes, sir.

EXT. SPACE

The ENTERPRISE moves away from its position, and the Q'tami ship FIRES down to the surface.

EXT. WASTELAND -- MORNING

The beam blasts through the morning sky and the array EXPLODES in a coruscate of color.

EXT. SPACE -- LATER

The Enterprise is orbiting peacefully now, with the two Q'tami ships alongside.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's log, stardate 78295.3.
The Faction ship has disappeared from long range sensors, and the Q'tami vessels are leaving immediately in a pursuit course. They assure me that our little disagreement over how to proceed in this matter will not harm Federation-Q'tami relations. I am sad to report we lost the one remaining survivor of the science team, Doctor John Spiner, but let the record show he died bravely, protecting his fellow officers. The rest of our crew involved on the planet's surface, however, are expected to make a full recovery, and are currently convalescing from minor wounds in sickbay.

As Cross speaks, the Q'tami ships move away from the planet, heading off in pursuit.

INT. SICKBAY

Grey and Dojar are lying, still unconscious, on biobeds.

Elris potters about. Y'lan enters.

Y'LAN

How are the patients, doctor?

ELRIS

They just suffered mild concussion, I'm letting them sleep it off.

Y'LAN

Can I see them?

ELRIS

You won't get anything out of them.

Y'LAN

It would increase my knowledge of human consciousness, I would like to scan them with my own equipment.

ELRIS
Will it harm them?

Y'LAN
No, on the contrary.

ELRIS
Alright.

Y'lan walks over, watched by Elris. He runs a scanner-like device which emits a red glow over both Grey and Dojar.

INT. TEN FORWARD

Quinlan is at the bar. Talora walks in.

QUINLAN
Commander. One drink only tonight,
I swear.

TALORA
Quinlan. Impressive piloting skills
today. To be that exact, that fast.

QUINLAN
Yes. They were.

BEAT. Talora turns to go.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Worth at least a junior grade.

Talora stops, but doesn't acknowledge her further, walking out. As she does so, Dojar and Grey walk in.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Hey, you two, how you feeling?

GREY
Splitting headache, but that's all.

QUINLAN
Still can't remember it, huh?

DOJAR
I don't even remember arriving at
this planet.

QUINLAN
What did Y'lan say happened again?

GREY
Console blew up. A booby trap we
missed.

QUINLAN

That's funny. I don't remember Lea saying you had burns when you beamed up.

DOJAR

Maybe Q'tami consoles blow up differently.

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Cross is with Y'lan.

Y'LAN

The Hegemony believe they will capture that vessel. Now they have lost their captain, they will be disorganized, weak.

CROSS

Good.

(beat)

Y'lan, while I appreciate you felt you were doing what was best by keeping us in the dark, please don't do it again.

Y'LAN

Captain, I --

CROSS

If you had explained the situation to me from the first, I would have done whatever you requested within reasonable parameters.

Y'LAN

Captain, what you term reasonable and what I term reasonable may not be the same.

CROSS

I cannot have someone on my crew withholding information from me.

Y'LAN

I am not on your crew. I am simply an observer.

CROSS

I'm sorry, Y'lan, but if it happens again, I will have to reconsider your position on this ship. Understood?

Y'LAN

Captain, let me assure you, if there is a next time, I will ensure you do not even realize it.

CROSS

Is that a threat?

Y'LAN

No, just an observation. Now, if you will excuse me, I am very busy.

Cross looks at him for a moment, and then walks out.

INT. READY ROOM

The reprise from the teaser. Cross walks in, and looks out of the window at the planet, still decimated by the effect of the Q'tami array.

CROSS

Begin Captain's Personal Log, Stardate 78296.1. When Y'lan first came onboard the Enterprise, there were many who were wary of him. He came from a previously unknown race, and his appearance was, at best, unusual. But I defended the decision to include him on the crew, even going to a tribunal about it, because I believed it was important for our two cultures to learn more about one another. Over the three months he's been aboard, I have heard the odd remark about him, how he makes people feel uncomfortable when he is around, slightly unsettled -- even I, I admit, found him odd at times -- but I just put it down to good old fashioned xenophobia. He has been nothing but helpful during our missions, and, if he was, at times, a little insensitive to us, particularly in regards to our privacy, it could be argued it was just him adapting to our culture's way of thinking. However, events of the past thirty six hours have made me re-evaluate my opinion of him, and have me wondering whether our fears were not, indeed, well founded?

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Y'lan is present, but no one else. We continue to hear Cross's log entry.

CROSS (V.O.)

Many thousands of innocent people
have died here, and all because of
the Q'tami.

It has brought home to me that we
know very little about them, just
what they have deigned to tell us.

We see that Y'lan is working at his table. On the hologram
appears the planet again, with the words transcribed on it:
"TRANSMITTING BIOLOGICAL DATA NOW."

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

Are they really our friends, or are
we making a very serious mistake?

Off Y'lan's ever so blank expression, we --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END