STAR TREK: RENAISSANCE

"Between Two Worlds"

Story by
William Jasper and James Sampson

Teleplay by James Sampson

This teleplay is originally from
www.startrekrenaissance.com

"Star Trek" and related names are registered trademarks of Paramount Pictures, Inc.
This original work of fiction is written solely for non-profit purposes.
Copyright 2001 by The Renaissance Group
All rights reserved
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.
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
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
Bleurgh...

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
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.

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 Spiner 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.

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
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.
RENAISSANCE: "Between Two Worlds" - ACT THREE

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
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 electobiotechnology 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 blubbinging.

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 Spiner, 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 Spiner 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
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
Allright.

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