FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The ship is orbiting a planet that has BLUE oceans and RED continents.

CROSS (V.O.)
Captain's log, Stardate 78512.2. The Enterprise has arrived in the Phelan System to host a diplomatic conference between several worlds who have expressed an interest in joining the Federation. In the current situation, with Starfleet still relatively weak and the Klingon situation becoming increasingly unstable, acquiring new allies is quickly assuming a top priority, which is the reason the flagship has been dispatched. Amongst the ambassadors due to attend the conference are the aforementioned Phelans, the feuding Kolaks and Bolshaks, and the apparently benign Jolans, the latter being particularly proficient in technological matters. On a personal note, I am looking forward to welcoming Admiral Portman, an old friend of this ship and her Captain, back on board to host the meeting.

INT. SHUTTLEBAY

A SHUTTLE comes in and lands. After a moment a FORCEFIELD activates at the entrance, and CROSS and a welcoming committee begin to file forward as the shuttle doors open. The first to emerge is PORTMAN. The welcoming committee SALUTES.

PORTMAN
At ease, gentlemen. Captain.

CROSS
Admiral, it's good to see you again.

PORTMAN
Likewise.

They EMBRACE.

INT. CORRIDOR

As Cross and Portman walk down it, there are a lot of people going about, some in civvies and some obviously not sure where they are going.
PORTMAN
You didn't need to put on a reception committee, you know.

CROSS
Just like to show our new friends our respect for you.

PORTMAN
Oh? And who was watching?

CROSS
Erm... no one, but that's not the point. It never hurts to remind the crew of correct protocol.

PORTMAN
Correct protocol? That doesn't sound much like the Neil Cross I know. You all right? You've had a double whammy recently -- the conference, then the Reformists.

CROSS
It has certainly been an interesting year. I wanted to thank you for supporting Talora taking command while I was... absent. I know there was some debate about what to do

PORTMAN
Delfune. It was mainly Delfune.

Cross makes a face.

CROSS
No surprise there. I suppose she wanted to go in with all guns blazing?

PORTMAN
She did. If the Reformists hadn't fled when they did, I'm sure she would have got her way too. Funny how they just disappeared like that. Can't imagine how they would have got away without the Enterprise noticing anything.

CROSS
Yes... I think the last thing the people on that planet needed at that point was a Starfleet armada bursting in with phasers blazing.

PORTMAN
Quite.

(MORE)
PORTMAN (CONT'D)
(beat)
Neil, are you sure you're okay?

CROSS
I'm fine, honestly.

PORTMAN
You seem a little... on edge.

CROSS
I'm always on edge. You should know that more than anyone.

PORTMAN
Yes, but this time it's even more so.

They enter a turbolift.

INT. TURBOLIFT

Cross and Portman enter.

CROSS
Deck Ten.

The turbolift starts moving.

PORTMAN
Hold.

The lift STOPS.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)
Neil?

CROSS
I'm just concerned how my crew will react to this mission.

PORTMAN
How so?

CROSS
Well, it's just... how can I put this...?

PORTMAN
They don't like change?

CROSS
No, not exactly...

PORTMAN
They'd rather be out saving the galaxy?
CROSS
Definitely not.

PORTMAN
Then...?

CROSS
Put it this way. This mission calls for tact and occasional ass-kissing. I'm just not sure that my staff are... very diplomatic.

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Y'LAN is standing by the door, blocking the way in to a LARGE, LUMBERING HULK of a man. This is AMBASSADOR BARKE.

Y'LAN
If you do not leave, I will be forced to do something unpleasant, possibly to your teeth.

BARKE
That's not very friendly.

Y'LAN
Ambassador...?

BARKE

He pauses and looks smug.

Y'LAN
Does that mean anything?

BARKE
It means I'm very important, so let me in.

Y'LAN
No.

BARKE
Please.

Y'LAN
No.

BARKE
Oh go on.
Y'LAN

No.

BARKE
Just a little look.

Y'LAN

No.

BARKE
I won't stay long.

No.

BARKE
Why not?

Y'LAN
Ambassador Barke, with your slurring speech and unsteady gait, I believe letting you near my equipment would be a foolish and reckless move and would result in damage.

BARKE
I wouldn't touch your table!

Y'LAN
The damage would not be to the table.

BARKE
Fine. Didn't want to see your table anyway, stupid talking spider.

He turns and staggers down the corridor. Y'lan watches him for a moment, then turns. The second he does, Barke rushes back and pushes past him into the lab.

BARKE (CONT'D)
Ha ha! I'm in. Now what you going to do? Hit me?

He looks smug again.

Y'LAN
Yes.

Y'lan WHIPS out a tentacle, which gives Barke a sharp blow to the head. Barke collapses unconscious.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)
Y'lan to security. There has been an unfortunate occurrence in my science lab. One of the Ambassadors got in my way.
DOJAR'S COMM VOICE
I'm on my way.

As we look at Barke's body, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
INT. SICKBAY

ELRIS is administering to an unconscious BARKE, while QUINLAN, Cross and Y'lan look on.

CROSS
Y'lan, why didn't you just call for Security when he was causing trouble?

Y'LAN
As you can see, Captain, I did not need Security.

CROSS
That's not the point. You can't just go round hitting Ambassadors.

QUINLAN
Not until they've signed the treaty, anyway.

CROSS
Quiet, Quinlan. Doctor, how is he?

ELRIS
Our medical records have only very scanty records of Jolan physiology, but I think he's all right.

CROSS
How can you tell?

ELRIS
He's still breathing.

CROSS
Good enough. Let me know when he wakes up, I have some groveling to do.

Cross' badge CHIRPS.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE
Captain, the last shuttle of diplomats is coming in now.

CROSS
Understood. Quinlan, you ready?

QUINLAN
I'll follow you in a minute.

Cross nods.
CROSS
Y'lan, with me.

They both EXIT.

INT. CORRIDOR

Cross and Y'lan walk along it.

CROSS
Y'lan, I would appreciate it if you stayed well away from our guests the next few days.

Y'LAN
Captain, I did not seek to cause a confrontation.

CROSS
No, well, just stay out of the way. And if you do meet another one, and get itchy tentacles, please try and restrain yourself.

Y'LAN
I will try.

CROSS
No, Y'lan, you will succeed.

INT. SICKBAY

Elris and Quinlan as before.

ELRIS
Why are you going with him?

QUINLAN
I've been given escort duty.

ELRIS
What, you mean like prostitutes?

QUINLAN
No, like showing one of the ambassadors round the ships.

ELRIS
Neil must be desperate.

QUINLAN
Thanks for the vote of confidence. I have a Mr. Tooey to look after.

ELRIS
Mr. Tooey? Sounds like some kind of exotic vermin.
QUINLAN
Yes, well, I might not mention that to him. So... you two seem a little happier.

ELRIS
Hmm?

QUINLAN
You and our great captain.

ELRIS
Oh, right. Well, we sorted some things out.

QUINLAN
What like?

ELRIS
Just... things. I don't think we'll be at each other's throats anymore. I think he has enough on his plate at the moment.

QUINLAN
Sounds intriguing.

ELRIS
That's all there is to it. Seriously. Go on, Gossip Officer. Your ambassador awaits.

Quinlan GRINS and EXITS.

INT. ENGINEERING

TALORA is showing Ambassador J'lak and his wife and son around the ship. GREY, KINNAN and various SUPERNUMERARIES are busy at their stations.

TALORA
And this is Engineering.

PROUT
Dad! Engineering! Ask now!

J'LAK
All right, son, in a minute.

PROUT
Now, Dad!

J'LAK
Commandor Tricorder...

TALORA
It's Talora.
J'LAK
Oh is it? I'm terribly sorry, what have I you been calling you?

TALORA
Tricorder.

J'LAK'S WIFE
Don't mind him, Commander, he's as deaf as a post.

TALORA
That's okay.

J'LAK
Sorry. Anyway, Commander Patora, my son here is a big engineering freak...

J'LAK'S WIFE
He loves playing with his equipment back home. He's at it for hours.

J'LAK
And we were wondering if it might be possible if he could have a tour of Engineering.

TALORA
Of course. Lieutenant Grey?

Grey comes over.

TALORA (CONT'D)
LtLieutenant, this is Ambassador J'lak and his wife, Madame J'lak, and his son Prout. This is Lieutenant Grey, Chief of Engineering. They've just arrived for the conference.

J'LAK
Delighted to meet you, Lieutenant Gay.

GREY
Welcome on board the Enterprise.

TALORA
Mr. Prout here would like a tour of Engineering.

Beat.

GREY
Delighted to. Kinnan, come...
TALORA
Lieutenant, I think a tour would be better coming from the Chief of Engineering.

GREY
Oh. Right. Yes. Of course.

PROUT
Yay!

J'LAK
We'll pick him up in a few hours. Now, Commander Petunia, I'm very interested in seeing your Astrometrics Lab...

They leave, leaving Prout and Grey staring at each other.

GREY
Hello. My name is Lieutenant Erik Grey. You may call me Lieutenant Grey.

PROUT
Sup.

GREY
Pardon?

PROUT
Can I press the buttons?

GREY
No.

PROUT
Oh go on.

Grey leads him over to a console.

GREY
You may press that one.

He points.

PROUT
This one?

He PRESSES the console. The LIGHTS go out.

GREY
No, that wasn't the one I was talking about.

The lights come back on again. Prout has vanished.
GREY (CONT'D)
Now try again, this time... Prout? Where are you?

Kinnan taps him on the shoulder. Grey looks. Prout is standing by the warp core, giving it a good kick.

PROUT
Ours is much bigger than this old thing.

GREY
(panicked)
Please don't kick the warp core!

INT. SHUTTLEBAY

There are a few scattered SHUTTLES around, but only one rather bored looking SUPERNUMERARY doing something. QUINLAN dashes in.

QUINLAN
Oh crap. Have I missed them?

SUPERNUMERARY
Yep.

QUINLAN
The ambassadors?

SUPERNUMERARY
Gone.

QUINLAN
The captain?

SUPERNUMERARY
Not happy.

QUINLAN
Dammit.

She goes to run out again when her comm chirps.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE
Cross to Quinlan.

QUINLAN
Captain, I'm sorry, I got waylaid.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE
If you can find the time, we're having an informal get together in Ten Forward for the ambassadors. It would be nice if you could get there, but only if you can fit it (MORE)
CROSS'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)
into your busy schedule. I expect Mr. Tooey will be waiting in his quarters to be picked up.

QUINLAN
Captain, I...

CROSS'S COMM VOICE (interrupting)
I don't want to hear it. Cross out.

SUPERNUMERARY
Busted.

QUINLAN
Oh, shut up.

INT. TEN FORWARD

There are several people standing round in AMBASSADORIAL GARBS, including the J'LAKS, while the Starfleet personnel are in their ceremonials, including TALORA, CROSS, and PORTMAN. HAL is behind the bar as always, and is playing the raconteur.

HAL
And the Bolian said: "Banana? I thought it was a..."

PORTMAN
Thank you, Hal, that will be all.

He moves two of the AMBASSADORS away, and goes over to Cross.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)
I've never known anyone who had so many jokes about Bolians.

CROSS
Yes. I did warn you about my crew.

PORTMAN
Yes. Speaking of tact, watch this...

Portman goes up to one of the ambassadors, NENLI.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)
Ambassador Nenli, I think this might be the perfect time to speak to Ambassador Skottry.

NENLI
That son of a...
PORTMAN
(interrupts)
Yes, yes, but I think it might time
to bury the hatchet. Unfortunate
term of phrase, actually...

NENLI
I will not.

PORTMAN
Listen. I know you are a reasonable
man. A good man. And it's people
like you we need in the Federation
at the moment.

NENLI
Really?

PORTMAN
Absolutely. People with your
intelligence are sorely lacking in
the hierarchy at the moment.

NENLI
Well, yes, I imagine they are...

PORTMAN
But a sign of good faith would be if
you were to try and resolve your
world's differences with the Kolaks.

NENLI
But they dishonoured...

PORTMAN
I know, I know, but they didn't do
it on purpose.

NENLI
But still...

PORTMAN
Please. You would be showing yourself
to be the bigger man here.

Beat.

NENLI
All right.

He walks over to where Ambassador SKOTTRY is standing. Portman
returns to Cross.

CROSS
Delicately done.
PORTMAN
Thank you.

CROSS
I'm not entirely clear why those two worlds are at war.

PORTMAN
I don't think it's technically possible for two pacifist worlds to be at war. Two more peaceful people you couldn't imagine.

CROSS
So...?

PORTMAN
It's more a playground spat. The Bolshak ruler, as a symbol of devotion to his new bride named an asteroid that encircles their two worlds after her.

CROSS
That's nice. Why did the Kolaks object?

PORTMAN
They didn't. They just blew it up.

CROSS
Why?

PORTMAN
They have a sport based around it. Imagine a world with no warfare, they have to work off aggression somehow, the Kolaks do it by blowing up asteroids.

CROSS
And the Bolshaks?

PORTMAN
Were not happy. It was a deadly insult.

CROSS
So what did they do?

PORTMAN
The worst punishment they could deal out.

CROSS
Which was?
PORTMAN
They refuse to speak to them anymore.

CROSS
That's it?

PORTMAN
It's a big thing in their world. Still, they appear to be speaking to each other now.

They watch the two Ambassadors for a moment. It soon becomes clear that they are not discussing the weather. Voices start being raised.

CROSS
They appear to be yelling at each other.

Finally, Nenli strikes out at Skottry, and floors him, before stomping out. Cross and Portman rush over.

CROSS (CONT'D)
I thought you said they were pacifists?

PORTMAN
See what happens when a world joins the Federation? Ambassador, are you all right?

SKOTTRY
He hit me.

PORTMAN
Yes he did.

SKOTTRY
On the nose.

They help him into a chair.

PORTMAN
There, there.

SKOTTRY
It hurts.

PORTMAN
Yes, yes.

Turns to Cross and whispers:

PORTMAN (CONT'D)
Might be a good idea to go and have a word with Nenli.
Cross hurries along it, and as he does so his comm chirrups.

**ELRIS’S COMM VOICE**
Elris to Cross.

**CROSS**
What is it, Doctor?

**ELRIS’ COMM VOICE**
It's Ambassador Barke, sir, he's awake, and he's not happy. He wants to speak to you.

**CROSS**
Now?

**ELRIS’ COMM VOICE**
I'd say so. He's going quite red with fury.

Over her comm channel we hear a ROAR.

**CROSS**
Right. I'll be right there. Cross out.

He changes direction, and as he does so runs into QUINLAN.

**QUINLAN**
Captain.

**CROSS**
You haven't seen an Ambassador along here, have you?

**QUINLAN**
I was about to ask you the same thing.

**CROSS**
What?

**QUINLAN**
You know Mr. Tooey, the ambassador I'm meant to be watching?

**CROSS**
Yes...
QUINLAN
No one's seen him. The shuttle manifest shows he was on it, but no one's seen him since he came on board. He's vanished.

OFF CROSS' REACTION WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
INT. SICKBAY

Barke is pacing around angrily while Elris and AGOLIVE are in the background. Cross enters.

CROSS
Ambassador Barke...

BARKE
Who are you?

CROSS
I'm Cross.

BARKE
Yes, I'm cross too. Can you imagine what that octopus did to me?

CROSS
I know, I'm sorry about that.

ELRIS
Ambassador Barke, if you'll just...

CROSS
Doctor, please leave this to me.

ELRIS
Fine. Good luck.

BARKE
All I wanted to do was look at his lab. It's my field, you see. I'm a scientist.

CROSS
As you know, Y'lan comes from a species... very different from most. He thinks differently, and

BARKE
He insulted me too. Said I had slurring speech, and an unsteady gait. I, Cornelius Barke. Esquire. Of the Galactic Consortium of Jolans, ruler of the third house of Barke on Jolan Prime, holder of the sacred keys of Loki from time immemorial.

As he has said this, he has slowly FLOATED up to the ceiling, much to Cross and Elris's amazement. Barke suddenly stops his spiel and looks around.

BARKE (CONT'D)
Why am I on the ceiling?
CROSS
I don't know.
(taps his comm badge)
Cross to Engineering, are you having
some problems with environmental
controls?

INT. ENGINEERING -- CONTINUOUS

Grey is in the foreground, looking harassed, while in the
background we see Prout has erected a FORCEFIELD round one
corner, behind which he is taunting Kinnan and several others,
sticking his tongue out.

GREY
Yes, we're just trying to reroute
now.

PROUT
NER NER ne NER NER!

KINNAN
Just wait 'til we get hold of you,
you little brat!

GREY
Hang on, Captain, we'll have them
back in a minute.

INT. SICKBAY -- CONTINUOUS

Cross, Elris and Agolive are all hanging onto things to stop
them floating up. Barke THRASHES about wildly on the ceiling.

BARKE
Getmedowngetmedowngetmedown...

CROSS
Just a second, Ambassador.

GREY'S COMM VOICE
All right, gravity coming back on...
now.

Barke comes to earth with a resounding BANG.

BARKE
OWWWWW!

CROSS
Doctor.

Elris rushes forward and administers to Barke, who landed on
his head, and is now sitting up, ruefully rubbing it.

ELRIS
That's going to be a nasty lump.
She runs a tricorder over him.

ELRIS (CONT'D)
I can settle it, though, it'll take about half an hour. There's been no permanent damage done.

BARKE
Damage? DAMAGE? That's it, I'm leaving right now!

CROSS
No, no, no, no. Ambassador. Ambassador Barke, how would it be if I arranged a special tour of Y'lan's lab for you? I promise he won't hit you again. A special treat. On us.

Barke considers.

BARKE
Very well. But I'm warning you, if I get injured one more time, I'm leaving.

CROSS
I don't think anyone can be that unlucky, Ambassador.

INT. ENGINEERING

Grey and Kinnan are still working to lower the forcefield. Prout continues to wave at them behind it.

KINNAN
Charmer, isn't he?

GREY
We have to be diplomatic, he is an honored guest.

KINNAN
I'd like to give him a smack on his honored bottom. There.

The forcefield goes pzzt, and DISAPPEARS.

GREY
Right, Mr. Prout. I think our tour has...

PROUT
Awww. NO! I promise I'll be good. Hey, what's in here?

He sees an OPEN JEFFERIES TUBE HATCH, and scurries in.
KINNAN
Think we can get him a tranquilizer?

GREY
This is not what I imagined I would be doing when I signed up.

KINNAN
Go get him, sir.

INT. JEFFERIES TUBE

Prout has scrambled a little way along it. He opens his pocket, and produces from it a RAT, which looks around. Prout sniggers as he lets it go.

PROUT
Go, little guy, go!

The rat runs off as Grey appears at the other end.

GREY
Hey Prout. Come out of there!

PROUT
Why?

GREY
Erm... There's a very interesting gel pack out here.

PROUT
I'm tired of Engineering.

GREY
Oh.

INT. ENGINEERING

GREY turns to KINNAN.

GREY
What else do kids like?

KINNAN
Eating.

GREY
Brilliant. Hey, Prout, how about we go and get something to eat?

PROUT
(from inside the Jefferies tube)
What like?

Grey turns to Kinnan again.
GREY
What like?

KINNAN
I dunno. Jelly?

GREY
No. I know, I remember being a child quite well, we used to eat ice cream. All kids love ice cream. Hey, Prout, how about some nice ice cream?

PROUT
(from inside the Jefferies tube)
What's ice cream?

Grey groans.

INT. CORRIDOR
Quinlan and Cross are walking along it.

QUINLAN
We can't contact Tooey's world by subspace.

CROSS
I've had a communication from Tooey's personal aide, but I can't reach him at the moment. Because of the space on the shuttle, he couldn't join him, so is having to wait until the next shuttle leaves. He was a little concerned -- it would seem the Ambassador has some communication problems?

QUINLAN
In what way?

CROSS
In that he can't, without his medicine.

QUINLAN
And let me guess -- he doesn't have any with him?

CROSS
Right. So he won't be able to call for help.

QUINLAN
Terrific. The odd thing is no one can remember Tooey being on board the shuttle.
CROSS
Quinlan, there were thirty four people on board that shuttle, no one was going to notice anyone they didn't know.

QUINLAN
Where can he have got to?

CROSS
His aide said something about communication difficulties as well. The comm link was very weak, I could hardly see him. I've alerted Dojar, although I should point out if you'd been at the shuttle when it arrived...

QUINLAN
Yes, thank you Captain.

CROSS
I don't want a stranger wandering around my ship. I haven't told the Admiral yet we've lost one of our Ambassadors, and I don't want to tell him. I have enough to worry about with Ambassadors fighting each other, let alone this.

QUINLAN
I will find him, sir.

CROSS
Make sure you do.

He enters a TURBOLIFT. Quinlan sighs. She leans against the wall for a moment, and then frowns. Running down the corridor as fast as possible is the RAT. It disappears around a corner. Quinlan quickly follows it, but it has gone by the time she arrives. She taps her comm badge.

QUINLAN
Quinlan to Dojar.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE
No, we haven't found him yet.

QUINLAN
No, we have another problem.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE
DOJAR walks quickly towards the door, and calls to two guards who seem to be working at a console.

DOJAR
You two. We have a new problem.
GUARD 1
What?

DOJAR
We have a rat loose on the Enterprise. Find him.

GUARD 2
What about the missing...?

DOJAR
Find the rat. He was seen on Deck 5.

GUARD 1
What about you, sir?

DOJAR
No, I think I'll stay here.

GUARD 1
You're not scared of a rat, are you?

DOJAR
Of course not.

They look at him, disbelieving.

DOJAR (CONT'D)
Right, I'll come too.

(beat)
Well, go on, get moving. We can't have vermin on this ship with all these VIPs about!

They quickly hurry out.

INT. SICKBAY

Elris is tending to Barke's lump.

BARKE
How much longer will this take?

ELRIS
Not much longer. Nearly done...

Grey hurries in with Prout, who is covered in a RASH and BOILS, and is looking most disgruntled.

GREY
Doctor, sorry to interrupt, but we have a problem.

PROUT
He's poisoned me!
ELRIS
(to Barke)
Excuse me a minute.

She goes over and runs a tricorder over Prout.

ELRIS (CONT'D)
What happened?

GREY
No one told me this species was allergic to ice cream.

PROUT
Wait until I tell I tell my Dad you tried to kill me!

ELRIS
This isn't a problem. Hang on.

She goes over to get a HYPOSPRAY.

PROUT
You are so fired now.

GREY
Please don't tell him.

PROUT
Why not?

GREY
I'll -- I'll -- I don't know what I'll do, but I'll do it if you don't tell him.

Elris returns and INJECTS Prout.

PROUT
OW!

ELRIS
Oh, don't be such a baby.

Almost immediately his rash begins to clear and his boils start to dissipate.

ELRIS (CONT'D)
It'll be all gone in a few minutes.

BARKE
Nurse!

ELRIS
I gotta get back to him. You okay?
Prout
No.

Elris
Tough. Lieutenant, no dairy products.

Grey
Well, I know that now.

Elris goes back to Barke.

Prout
I'm going to my father now.

Grey
No. I'll do anything.

Beat.

Prout
Anything?

Int. Conference Room

Nenli is glaring out of the window. Cross enters, followed by Skottry.

Skottry
Oh no, I'm not meeting him again. He'll hit me.

Nenli
You asked for it, you bounder!

Cross
Gentlemen, please. Now calm down, both of you. I've asked you here now to try and resolve this dispute. For supposedly peaceful people, you spend a lot of time bickering.

Nenli
We have nothing to say to each other.

Cross
And yet you spend a great deal of time saying it. Now look. You both want to join the Federation. The Federation wants you to join. But we can't sanction your membership if you are still squabbling about this. Now surely, you can find some way to resolve this problem?
NENLI
I don't see how until they apologize,
they dishonored our great leader's wife.

SKOTTRY
Us, apologize? I like that! You started it.

NENLI
We did not!

SKOTTRY
Yes you did, you invaded Polant!

NENLI
Rubbish.

CROSS
Could someone explain what you are talking about?

SKOTTRY
Captain, for many millennia, our two worlds have had a centennial sunship race. But in the last race, the Bolshaks cheated.

NENLI
Lies, lies, lies.

How?

SKOTTRY
They took a short cut. Through the Polant Nebula.

NENLI
You can't prove that.

CROSS
So, in retaliation you blew up their comet?

NENLI
Asteroid.

CROSS
Sorry, asteroid.

SKOTTRY
We didn't know it was theirs.

NENLI
But you just said we started it when we went through Polant.
SKOTTRY
So you admit it!

NENLI
I admit nothing, you cad!

SKOTTRY
You jackanapes!

NENLI
Say that to my face.

SKOTTRY
You...

CROSS
(interrupts)
GENTLEMEN.

He looks very annoyed.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Let me get this straight. You guys
are at war because one of you cheated
in a race?

SKOTTRY
Yes.

NENLI
No.

CROSS
Fine. Then we have to, we have to...

He suddenly stops, as he sees running under the table the
rat. He pauses, staring at it.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Ambassadors, would you mind awfully
if you came out of here for a minute?

NENLI
Why?

CROSS
I, erm, want to show you something.

SKOTTRY
I have no objection.

NENLI
Me neither.

Cross quickly hurries them out, blocking their view of the
rat.
INT. CORRIDOR

Cross continues to push Nenli and Skottry out from the room, but stops again when he sees Dojar crawling along the floor of the corridor, with a tricorder.

CROSS
Lieutenant?

DOJAR
Ah, sir. We're just, erm...

CROSS
I think you may want to look in there.

He points into the conference room.

DOJAR
Thank you sir.

Dojar goes in.

NENLI
How extraordinary.

CROSS
Don't mind him, he's from Cardassia. I assure you, not all my crew crawl around on their hands and knees...

PROUT (O.S.)
Whheeee, horsey!

Grey and Prout appear round the corner, Grey giving Prout a piggy back, while Prout whips him energetically. Grey's face is a picture of suffering as he runs past Cross and the ambassadors.

GREY
Captain. Ambassadors.

PROUT
Faster, horsey!

They disappear again round another corner. The Ambassadors turn to Cross.

CROSS
So... can we arrange to meet up a little later again?

The Ambassadors both harrumph and walk off in opposite directions. Cross closes his eyes as Dojar comes back out.

DOJAR
He's not there now, sir. Are you all right?
CROSS
Some days I don't know why I get out of bed...

He walks off as Dojar stares after him as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise continues in orbit of Phelan.

CROSS (V.O.)
Captain's Log, supplemental. Concerns are mounting for the safety of Ambassador Tooey, who still remains missing. Add to this the continuing problem of the Bolshak/Kolak situation, and this conference is turning into more of a headache than we anticipated.

INT. ENGINEERING

BOYLE ENTERS, and walks over to Kinnan.

BOYLE
Robert.

KINNAN
Afternoon, Boyle. Shift starting?

BOYLE
Yep. Where's Erik? I mean, Lieutenant Grey?

KINNAN
Erik, is it?

Beat. Boyle is not amused.

KINNAN (CONT'D)
I don't know. He was looking after one of the ambassador's children, but that was hours ago. I doubt he's still with him.

BOYLE
Oh.

KINNAN
So, you two are getting on well, eh?

BOYLE
I guess.

Her comm badge chirrups.

GREY'S COMM VOICE
Ensign Boyle, will you please report to my quarters at once.
BOYLE
On my way.

KINNAN
Going to his quarters? He's keen. Don't be too long, will you?

Boyle goes BRIGHT RED.

BOYLE
I'm sure it's not -- I mean...

Kinnan looks at her, grinning. She turns around and quickly exits.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Cross, Portman, Nenli and Skottry are present.

PORTMAN
Gentlemen, we are not leaving this room until we reach a solution to this problem.

NENLI
Then we will be here a long time. Skottry never admits when he's wrong.

SKOTTRY
That's the kettle calling the pot black.

CROSS
We are not going to get anywhere here until people start giving ground. Ambassador Nenli, I am going to ask you this once, and once only. Did you cheat at this race?

NENLI
Certainly not! (beat)
We just took a shortcut.

SKOTTRY
HA!

CROSS
And Ambassador Skottry, did you in fact know that that comet...

NENLI
Asteroid.

CROSS
...that that asteroid was a special one to the Bolshaks?
Long pause.

SKOTTRY
We might have done.

NENLI
You damn well did, you rotter.

CROSS
Okay, okay. I think I know the only way we can get back on track here.

NENLI
What's that?

SKOTTRY
Do tell us.

CROSS
We should hold the race again.

The Ambassadors look at each other.

INT. CORRIDOR

Boyle arrives outside Grey's quarters and rings the bell.

GREY (O.S.)
(sounding strained)
Come in!

She opens the door, and a PADD flies past her into the hall. She enters cautiously.

INT. GREY'S QUARTERS

Normally Spartan living area, but now a real mess. Prout has upended the bed, behind which Grey is cowering, while Prout flings whatever he can get hold of at him, namely a lot of padds.

GREY
Quick, get down!

Boyle crouches down behind the bed with Grey.

BOYLE
What's going on?

GREY
We're reenacting the last moments of the Dominion War.

BOYLE
It wasn't like this in my history book.
GREY
No, it wasn't -- sssh.

He holds up a finger. There is silence. Cautiously, they peer over the top of the bed. Prout jumps at them.

PROUT
Foo!

GREY
Oh geez. Well, at least you've stopped throwing things... what?

He stops, as he sees Prout has gone wide eyed at the sight of Boyle.

PROUT
Hello.

GREY
Erm. Prout, this is Ensign Boyle. Boyle, this is Prout.

PROUT
I like you.

BOYLE
Why thank you, Prout.

Prout runs forward and gives Boyle a big hug.

BOYLE (CONT'D)
Well, I'm pleased to meet you too. You're a friendly little fellow, aren't you? Where are you from? Okay, I think you can let go of me now.

Prout is still hugging her, and copping a feel of her ass at the same time. Grey spots this.

GREY
Hey, stop that!

He pulls him off her.

GREY (CONT'D)
Right.

BOYLE
Oh, Erik, he's only a kid. Where's he from?

GREY
His father's J'lak. I have to look after him for a few hours. I'm running out of things to do.
BOYLE
Why don't we take you to the holodeck?

GREY
I don't know about that, there aren't any suitable programs there.

BOYLE
I have a personal one I take everywhere with me, might do the trick.

GREY
You know you're not meant to use the holodeck for recreation...

BOYLE
(warningly)
Erik.

GREY
Holodeck. Sounds a good idea. What you say, Prout?

PROUT
I love you, Boyle.

INT. CORRIDOR
TWO SECURITY GUARDS are running along, and out of a TURBOLIFT comes DOJAR, who joins them quickly.

GUARD 1
We picked it up in section 12. One life form, small, isolated. Must be the rat.

DOJAR
Good work. Forcefield?

GUARD 2
Yes, but I think we caught him as we raised it, it stuttered.

DOJAR
Well, if we fried him, all the better.

They turn the corridor to find the FORCEFIELD activated. Behind it is BARKE, with a BIG BURN on his uniform and front of his face. He does not look happy.

BARKE
Your Captain will hear about this! How dare you imprison me, Cornelius Barke, of the Galactic Consortium of Jolans, ruler of the third house of (MORE)
BARKE (CONT'D)
Barke on Jolan Prime, holder of the sacred keys of Loki from time immemorial?

Beat.

GUARD 1
That doesn't look much like our rat.

DOJAR
Ambassador, I'm terribly sorry.

BARKE
Not half as sorry as you will be when this forcefield is lowered, my scaly friend.

GUARD 2
Got a way with words, hasn't he?

DOJAR
(whispers)
On the count of three, lower the forcefield.

GUARD 1
And?

DOJAR
On four, run like hell.

INT. TEN FORWARD
It is nearly empty, after the Ambassadorial party. Hal is behind the bar, cleaning some glasses. Quinlan enters.

QUINLAN
Hey, Hal.

HAL
We're closed, Quinlan.

QUINLAN
I'm not here for a drink, Hal.

HAL
Really? Wow, first time for everything.

QUINLAN
I don't appreciate the sarcasm. I was just wondering if you've seen an ambassador about?

HAL
What's he look like?
QUINLAN
I don't know.

HAL
Well, what's his race look like?

QUINLAN
I don't know. They've only recently made themselves known.

HAL
What was he wearing?

QUINLAN
I... don't know.

HAL
So... you don't know what he looks like, and you don't know what he's wearing. It's not a lot to go on, is it?

QUINLAN
Hal, I'm not in the mood.

She turns and starts to go out.

HAL
Oh, well then, you won't want to see that guy over in the corner, then.

He POINTS and we see in a darkened corner a SMALL, seemingly bald figure, staring out into space.

QUINLAN
Is that him?

HAL
He's one of the ambassadors.

QUINLAN
Thanks.

She goes over to him and as she does so, she SNIFFS the air. She winces slightly.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Ambassador Tooey?

NIB
No.

QUINLAN
Oh. Sorry to disturb you.
NIB
That's okay. I didn't think you'd be looking for me. Nobody does.

Quinlan makes a face and SIGHS. She goes over and sits by him, trying not to react to the smell.

QUINLAN
Why's that?

NIB
Nobody ever does. Even on my homeworld, nobody bothers with me. At conferences they always forget I'm there. Not much call for an off-world Ambassador on a world like ours. We don't tend to mix with other people much.

QUINLAN
Why's that?

NIB
Because of our odor. It seems to be offensive to other races.

QUINLAN
Really? I... I hardly noticed.

NIB
And so my work doesn't get me out much. I spend most nights at home, working on my memoirs. (gloomily) This is the most excitement I've had in four decades.

QUINLAN
Well... I'm glad you're enjoying yourself.

NIB
Yes, it's nice to be ignored by a totally different set of people to normal.

QUINLAN
Actually, I kind of know what you're talking about.

NIB
Really?

QUINLAN
Yeah. Being an outcast, alone. Sometimes you feel people don't understand you at all.
Nib
They understand me, they just don't care. I'm not interesting enough to be disliked.

Quinlan
There, there. Now you're joining the Federation, I'm sure you've got an exciting future ahead of yourself. Maybe even a second volume of your memoirs, eh?

Nib
I doubt that, the first volume is only seven pages long, and three of them are the index.

Quinlan
Yes, well, I really have to be going...

Nib
Wait. Won't you join me in a drink? This is the longest conversation I've had since I had my house repainted.

Quinlan
Erm... okay, why not?

Nib hands her a flask.

Nib
It tastes better than I smell.

She smiles weakly and takes a swig. She looks surprised.

Quinlan
Not bad. It tastes kind of like... like... Woah, I feel dizzy...

She goes cross-eyed, and falls off her chair. As she lies there, she sees our rat scurrying across the floor towards the door.

Quinlan (cont'd)
(whispers)
Rat...

She closes her eyes as she passes out. Nib bends over her.

Nib
(to Hal)
Oh, quickly, she's fallen over.
As he says this, he PALMS Quinlan's COMM BADGE into his pocket, and then hurries over to the bar, where Hal is wiping a glass.

NIB (CONT'D)
She's passed out.

HAL
It's not the first time. I'll let her sleep it out for a bit.

NIB
Okay.

He hurries out.

INT. READY ROOM

Barke is PACING UP AND DOWN YELLING at CROSS, who is behind his desk.

BARKE
This ship is a deathtrap, a veritable deathtrap! It's not safe for man, woman or miscellaneous sexes! How the Federation had the nerve to host this conference here is beyond me. I fully intend to compile a full report to my people, recommending we cease all communications with you immediately!

CROSS
Ambassador Barke, I cannot apologize enough.

BARKE
Damn straight you can't. How I've been treated is an outrage, an outrage! Do you hear me?

CROSS
Loud and clear.

BARKE
I will not tolerate it! I, Cornelius Barke. Esquire. Of the Galactic Consortium...

CROSS
(to himself)
Oh spare me.
(out loud)
Ambassador, please

BARKE
What is it?
CROSS
Surely there must be some way to
persuade you to stay?

BARKE
To stay a further day would be to
risk life and limb, and I wouldn't
want to deprive my world.

CROSS
I can assure you, life is not normally
this dangerous on the Enterprise.
Well, not like this anyway. What's
happened to you has just been a series
of unfortunate accidents.

BARKE
Accidents? That spider hit me!

CROSS
That might not have been an accident.

BARKE
I cannot believe a ship like this
continues to function. I'm surprised
it hasn't blown up by now. I know
Enterprises have a habit of doing
that anyway...

CROSS
We intend to be the exception to
that rule.

BARKE
Well, you're not going about it very
well from what I've seen.

CROSS
Look, I have an idea.

BARKE
What is it?

CROSS
You wanted to see the science lab,
am I right?

BARKE
Indeed. As a man of science, I am
always interested in xenotechnology.
I came third in

my year on the subject.

CROSS
Impressive. How many were in your
year?
BEAT.

BARKE
Many people.

CROSS
Listen, before the accident in sickbay, I was going to have Y’lan show you around it. How about if we still go ahead with that?

BARKE
Y’lan is the scorpion, correct?

CROSS
I believe he prefers to be referred to as a Q’tami.

BARKE
He is a strange fellow alright. Can you guarantee my safety?

CROSS
Absolutely.

BARKE
It won’t try and hit me again?

CROSS
Absolutely not.

BARKE
Well then, I accept.

CROSS
Thank you.
(taps comm badge)
Y’lan, report to my ready room immediately.

Y’LAN’S COMM VOICE
Now is not a convenient time, Captain

CROSS
It was not a suggestion, Y’lan, it was an order. Cross out.

BARKE
Very gracious of me in the circumstances, don’t you think?

CROSS
Oh, exceedingly so. You have been most cooperative, Ambassador.
BARKE
Actually, to tell you the truth, I have another reason for staying.

CROSS
Why's that?

BARKE
The race. I am always a keen spectator of the Sunship races. Won quite a few grotzs over the years too, I can tell you.

CROSS
Gosh. Well, the race is this evening. Even now, the two competitors are powering up their ships...

INT. NENLI'S SHIP -- ENGINEERING
Nenli and his NUMBER TWO are sitting at a console.

NENLI
What do you mean, we don't have enough energy for mach twelve?

NUMBER TWO
I'm sorry, sir, I didn't know we were going to be racing. There just isn't enough solar energy here to get the power we need in time.

NENLI
Dammit! We cannot forfeit to that miscreant. Think!

NUMBER TWO
Thinking...

Nenli starts to PACE.

NENLI
Now, let me get this straight. We need power.

NUMBER TWO
Yes.

NENLI
Does it necessarily have to be solar?

NUMBER TWO
No. That's just our source, the energy is converted for our needs.
NENLI
So, we could get it from elsewhere, then?

NUMBER TWO
Yes.

NENLI
From, say... the Enterprise?

NUMBER TWO
Ambassador, we couldn't do that! They'd notice.

NENLI
Not if we were clever and took it from a non-vital system.

NUMBER TWO
Like what?

NENLI
Something where a lot of power is used but isn't necessary...

INT. BRIDGE

GUER at helm, SUKOTHAI at tactical, Talora in charge. Cross's ready room door opens and Cross, Y'lan and Barke enter, walking towards the turbolift.

CROSS
And if there's anything else you need...
   (brief hesitation)
...please don't hesitate to let me know.

BARKE
Thank you, Captain, but I'm sure me and Mr. Caterpillar here will get on fine now.

Y'LAN
Y'lan.

BARKE
That's right.

The turbolift door opens. Barke and Y'lan enter and the door closes. Cross breathes a sigh of relief.

TALORA
Trouble, Captain?
CROSS
Yes, but I think it's sorted out now. The Ambassador has given me a headache.

INT. TURBOLIFT
Barke and Y'lan standing still.

BARKE
So having all those long limbs must be very useful, eh?

Y'LAN
Yes.

BARKE
Bet the ladies love you, eh? Ha ha!

Y'LAN
Why would females prefer me more than males?

BARKE
Well... oh. You're one of those, are you? Great. Well, no funny business with me, I can see you coming. Not that I want to see you... how long does this lift take?

INT. CORRIDOR
There is a turbolift door at the end. Nenli is by it with a small BOX with flashing lights, by an OPEN CONDUIT. Number Two stands at a junction a little away.

NUMBER TWO
Right, all clear!

NENLI
Good!

He presses the box into the conduit and presses a button. His box starts to hum.

INT. TURBOLIFT
Barke and Y'lan as before. Suddenly the lights begin to fade.

BARKE
What the...?

Suddenly a red alert starts to flash.

COMPUTER VOICE
Emergency, emergency. Loss of power imminent. Evacuate immediately -
BARKE
What's happening? The lift's stopped.

Y'LAN
I believe it will start to move again in a moment. I would hold onto something.

BARKE
Why?
The lift suddenly LURCHES...

INT. TURBOLIFT SHAFT

We see the lift PLUMMETTING down, before smashing into the bottom with a resounding CRASH.

INT. CORRIDOR

Nenli and Number Two as before. Nenli reacts to the noise.

NUMBER TWO
What was that?

NENLI
I think we should get out of here.

NUMBER TWO
Agreed.

They quickly run away, Nenli forgetting to put the conduit back on.

INT. BRIDGE

As before. Cross looks at Sukothai.

CROSS
What was that?

SUKOTHAI
Turbolift 3, sir. It lost all power, fell five decks...

CROSS
Tell me that wasn't the one...

Sukothai looks at him and nods. Cross taps his comm badge.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Cross to Y'lan. Are you two okay?

Y'LAN'S COMM VOICE
I am fine sir, I was able to brace myself.
SHAKESPEARE: "One of Our Ambassadors..." - ACT THREE

CROSS
And the Ambassador?

INT. TURBOLIFT -- CONTINUOUS

It is dark and smoky, with only RED emergency lighting. Y'LAN has his many tentacles about the lift, and amongst them is BARKE, who is semi-unconscious, suspended by the Q'tami. He has evidently hit his head again, as there is a small trickle of blood coming from his forehead.

BARKE
(delirious, singing)
I am the seal, cooo, cooo...

Y'LAN
The Ambassador appears to be delirious, Captain. He is making a strange noise.

INT. BRIDGE -- CONTINUOUS

As before. CROSS winces.

CROSS
Oh bloody hell, not again.

OFF HIS ANXIOUS EXPRESSION WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
INT. SICKBAY

Elris and ATKINSON are tending to Barke, who is lying flat on a bed. Y'lan is in the background. Cross and Portman hurry in.

CROSS

How is he?

BARKE

I'm tickety-boo, Captain, and thanks for asking, I really appreciate it. What a nice man you are. A gentleman...

CROSS

Doctor?

ELRIS

He has concussion.

BARKE

That's right, I have con-con-concussion, wheeeeee!

PORTMAN

Ambassador Barke, I am so sorry this has happened.

CROSS

We are doing everything in our power to find out what happened.

PORTMAN

From now on, you are having an armed guard

BARKE

Wait, wait, wait, wait. Now. Who are you again?

PORTMAN

I am Admiral Portman.

BARKE

Admiral Portman? Ha ha, what a stupid name. Not like me. My name is Barke. That's spelt B-L-R-Z- erm... how does it go?

PORTMAN

Doctor, how long will this last?
ELRIS
He'll be all right in a few hours,
I'm going to give him a sedative
until it wears off.

CROSS
A shame, I prefer him like this.

PORTMAN
Neil?

CROSS
At least he's not complaining and
spitting in my face. Keep us posted,
Doctor.

ELRIS
I always do.

Portman and Cross turn to go, and they are walking out the
door

BARKE
Don't worry about me, Porters old
chum, I'll be as right as reign,
with this pretty nurse...

He looks at Elris. BEAT.

BARKE (CONT'D)
Actually, scrub that, she's an ugly
old cow. Ha ha ha!

Elris shoves a HYPOSPRAY into his arm.

INT. CORRIDOR
Portman and Cross walk down it.

PORTMAN
Poor guy.

CROSS
Well, you know as well as I do, you
board the Enterprise, anything can
happen. And usually does.

PORTMAN
You discovered what caused the power
drain?

CROSS
It wasn't an accident. Somebody
deliberately tapped into the conduit.
We found DNA at the scene so it
shouldn't take too long to find out
who it was...
He stops as he sees the RAT running along the floor. Swiftly, Cross turns Portman and starts walking him the other way.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Actually, there's something I have to show you.
(taps comm badge)
Dojar, Deck Ten.

PORTMAN
What's that?

CROSS
Nothing.

INT. QUINLAN'S QUARTERS

The lights are off, but the place is quite neat. Suddenly, the door OPENS and Nib ENTERS. He closes it behind him. He walks over to a computer console, and turns it on.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Level four access requested. Please enter clearance code.

And takes out Quinlan's COMM BADGE. He connects it to a special-looking TRICORDER, and presses a couple of buttons. The tricorder speaks in Quinlan's voice.

QUINLAN'S VOICE
Clearance code Quinlan One-Seven-Alpha-Gamma.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Access granted.

NIB
Computer, show me areas containing caesium gas. List one at a time.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Areas containing caesium gas.
Engineering.

NIB
Too crowded. Next.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Sickbay.

NIB
Nope. Too many sick people, I can't stand sick people. Next.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Science lab, deck seven.
NIB
Hold. Who is in science lab at present?

COMPUTER'S VOICE
The science lab is empty at present.

NIB
Perfect. Thank you, nice computer.

He stands up and goes out the door. On the screen we see a schematic of Y'lan's science lab.

INT. CORRIDOR

Just outside the holodeck. Boyle is downloading a program from her padd into the console with Prout holding onto her leg. Grey is standing by them.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Program complete.

BOYLE
There. I think you'll like this, Prout.

PROUT
Yes.

The door opens. They walk into...

INT. HOLODECK -- CLOWN WORLD

The scene is a circus ring, with clowns everywhere. There are posters on the wall saying WELCOME TO CLOWN WORLD! The clowns are doing everything you can imagine clowns doing, including juggling, climbing up stepladders with buckets of water, unicycling and throwing custard pies at each other. Boyle enters, followed by Prout and Grey.

BOYLE
Welcome to Clown World!

GREY
You've got to be kidding.

A clown approaches them.

CLOWN
Welcome to Clown World! I'm Chuckles, your guide.

BOYLE
Chuckles!

She hugs him.
GREY
Oh my God...

Prout has run off at this point.

CHUCKLES
What's wrong with him?

BOYLE
He's just not in the mood.

CHUCKLES
Oh, he's a grumpy grogs then. Smile!

Chuckles grabs Grey's lips and pushes them up to make them smile.

GREY
Computer, delete character: Chuckles.

Chuckles SHIMMERS into nothing.

BOYLE
Oh, Erik, you're just like Frowns, the clown who forgot how to smile.

GREY
I cannot believe you come here for fun.

BOYLE
It's great, isn't it?

Prout reappears with a water pistol and SQUIRTS Grey straight in the face with it. He laughs and runs off again.

GREY
Oh yes, it's fabulous.

He wipes himself down.

BOYLE
He seems to be enjoying himself, anyway.

GREY
I do not appreciate this at all.

BOYLE
Oh, where's your sense of humor?

GREY
I'm sorry, I do not find clowns amusing.
BOYLE
Oh come on. Lighten up. If you're a good boy, I'll show you my special place behind the bleachers.

She's looking at him sexily now.

GREY
Your special place, huh?

BOYLE
Uh huh. Not even Brains, the clever clown, knows about it.

GREY
Sounds intriguing...

She leads him off as Prout POURS water over another clown.

INT. TEN FORWARD

Hal is sitting Quinlan up, trying to wake her up. She is making small grunting noises, but is still pretty out of it. Dojar enters.

DOJAR
Hal, you haven't seen a rat... What's going on?

HAL
Miss Quinlan had another episode.

DOJAR
Oh no.

He walks over to them.

DOJAR (CONT'D)
Quinlan, Quinlan?

HAL
She's moaning every so often, but I can't seem to bring her out of it.

DOJAR
Hmmm, I know an old Cardassian remedy. Can I use your replicator?

HAL
Sure.

Dojar walks over to it.

DOJAR
Rakitjino, with membari spices and essence of Kalayla root.
It SHIMMERS into view. He takes it and walks back over.

    DOJAR (CONT'D)
    Stand back. Quinlan, drink this.

Quinlan mumbles but takes a sip. Then another. Suddenly her eyes open wide.

    QUINLAN
    Water. Water. NOW!

Hal hurries off and gets a jug. He brings it back. Quinlan downs half of it, and shakes her head vigorously.

    QUINLAN (CONT'D)
    Phew, what the hell was that?

    DOJAR
    It's good, isn't it? Come on, let's get you to bed...

    QUINLAN
    Wait. Where's the guy that was here?

    DOJAR
    What guy?

    QUINLAN
    Small, bald, smelled funny. He was the one that did this to me.

    DOJAR
    What?

    QUINLAN
    He gave me something to drink and, bang, I'm out.

    DOJAR
    Odd. Crewman?

    QUINLAN
    No. Ambassador.

    DOJAR
    That description doesn't match any of the Ambassadors I've seen. Was it your missing one?

    QUINLAN
    No.
    (she feels for her comm)
    Damnit, my comm badge isn't here!
DOJAR
I'll get security onto it. We'll find him.

QUINLAN
Yeah, like you've found my missing ambassador?

DOJAR
Well, at least we have a description of this one.

QUINLAN
And like you found the rat?

DOJAR
I wish I hadn't woken you up now.

INT. READY ROOM

Nenli is standing before Portman and Cross, while to one side Skottry stands looking pleased.

NENLI
I don't know what you're talking about.

CROSS
Rubbish. You endangered the life of one of my crewmen, and a fellow Ambassador.

SKOTTRY
And what's worse, you were cheating again!

NENLI
I was not!

SKOTTRY
You were too! It is expressively written in the rules you only use your own steam in the race.

NENLI
Rubbish. Where does it say that?

SKOTTRY
Paragraph seven, point C. I'll have a copy sent to you. If you can read them, that is.

NENLI
How dare you! You insolent...
CROSS
Ambassador Skottry, I think it might be better if you leave.

SKOTTRY
Am I to take it the Ambassador forfeits the race?

NENLI
I will not. Captain, it is entirely unfair

CROSS
Shut up! Both of you! I cannot tolerate much more of this. The race will go ahead, if only to stop this arguing. However, Ambassador Nenli, you will be punished.

SKOTTRY
Give me a five minute start.

NENLI
Five minutes? Five minutes? We might as well not bother racing at all! Five minutes, my foot is what I say to that sir.

SKOTTRY
And you say it so well.

CROSS
Ambassador Nenli, Admiral Portman and I believe your world should not be punished for the actions of one individual. As such, talks to allow your world's entry to membership to the Federation will continue. However, you are no longer welcome on this ship. You must stay on board your own from now on. Do I make myself clear?

NENLI
Perfectly.

SKOTTRY
Ha! You got in trouble.

CROSS
Thank you, gentlemen, that will be all.

They both nod stiffly and walk out.
CROSS (CONT'D)
I don't think this day is ever going to end.

Portman smiles, and then frowns slightly.

PORTMAN
Neil. Was that a rat I saw in the corridor before?

INT. SICKBAY
It is quieter than before, with just Elris and Barke around. Elris checks the sleeping ambassador and then walks through to her office for a moment. She sighs, takes a sip from her mug. Then she frowns, as she sees the RAT scampering round and behind a table in her lab. She follows it, but as she does so ATKINSON comes in, and the rat runs out.

ELRIS
Damn. Elris to maintenance, we have a rat down here.

SUPERNUMERARY'S COMM VOICE
We're on it, Doctor.

ATKINSON
A rat? I don't believe it.

ELRIS
Today I'll believe anything.

She walks back through into sickbay's main area. She stops and stares for a minute.

ELRIS (CONT'D)
Oh no...

Barke is nowhere to be seen.

INT. CORRIDOR
Dojar and Quinlan are walking along quickly.

DOJAR
With all these strangers wandering around, it's imperative we find this Nib of yours.

Suddenly the rat runs into the corridor and stops, staring at them.

QUINLAN
Oh my God. Don't move.

DOJAR
I wasn't planning on it.
They stare at the rat and the rat stares at them.

DOJAR (CONT'D)
Now what?

QUINLAN
I don't know.

The three continue to stare at each other for a moment.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
I think we're going to have to move again.

DOJAR
But if we move, he'll run off again.

QUINLAN
Good point.

BEAT.

DOJAR
I have a plan.

QUINLAN
What?

Dojar suddenly whips out his PHASER and shoots at the rat. It SQUEAKS and runs like hell again down the corridor.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Don't shoot it!

DOJAR
Don't shoot it? It's a rat!

QUINLAN
Poor little fella.

DOJAR
Poor little...?! We have to get him, he's vermin.

QUINLAN
You don't like rats very much do you?

DOJAR
No. When I was young, my brother tried to make me eat raw vole. I think that's where it comes from.

QUINLAN
Come on, let's get after it.

AS THEY START TO GO:
COMPUTER'S VOICE
Intruder alert! Intruder alert!

DOJAR
What now.
  (Taps comm badge)
Security team, report.

GUARD 1'S COMM VOICE
We have an unauthorized entry into Y'lan's security lab.

DOJAR
On my way. That could be your bald friend now.

QUINLAN
Or Ambassador Tooey.

DOJAR
Or the rat.

QUINLAN
Hell, let's be honest, it could be anyone.

They move out quickly.

INT. Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

With red alarms still flaring, Nib is very calmly continuing to place what looks like a small BOMB under Y'lan's table. He finally pushes a button, and hurries to the door. As he exits it, Barke appears.

BARKE
Greetings kind sir. You appear to have lost your hair. Well, never mind, you know what they say, hair today, gone tomorrow, ha ha!

Nib pushes past him and out. Barke grunts and walks in.

BARKE (CONT'D)
Ah-ha! Spiderman's lair. Terrific.

He staggers around for a moment, blearily eyed. He reaches the table just as a SECURITY TEAM, headed by Dojar, appears. Quinlan is in the background, as is Y'lan. Dojar walks in, and points a phaser at Barke.

DOJAR
Stand away from the table, Ambassador.

BARKE
Hello, Ambassador.

(MORE)
BARKE (CONT'D)
I was just examining this table. It has flashing lights, look.

DOJAR
Ambassador, please.

Barke stands up to his full height, trying to look impressive.

BARKE
Don't address me in that uncouth way. I, Cornelius Barke. Esquire. Of the Galactic Concussion of Jacobites, ruler of the third house of Barke on Joker Prime, holder of the sacred keys of Lucky from time immemorial. So treat me with respect.

DOJAR
You're not well.

BARKE
I am fine. Look.

He stands up again, sways suddenly, and falls over. As he does so, he grabs at the table, but instead presses the bomb's button. It goes BLEEP and EXPLODES hurtling him across the room and out the door. He lands in a blackened heap by Y'lan. There is a moment's horrified pause as everyone looks at him and Y'lan.

Y'LAN
That's most peculiar. My table has never done that before.

OFF THEIR EXPRESSION WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR
EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise continues in orbit. There are several smaller craft around it, buzzing around.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

Hello, and welcome to the seventeenth annual solar ship race between the Kolaks and the Bolshaks. I'm your announcer, Curtis Moss.

And the crowd is getting very excited as last minute preparations are being made for this most vital of contests. I can tell you, the atmosphere out there is really building.

INT. SICKBAY

Barke is on the operating table as Elris, Agolive and others run around, administering hyposprays and running scans over him. Dojar and Quinlan watch anxiously as Cross enters.

CROSS

How is he?

QUINLAN

Not good, Captain. Lea doesn't look too happy.

CROSS

Do we know who did this?

Dojar holds up a PADD, on which is a picture of Nib leaving Ten Forward.

DOJAR

This guy. We've identified him as Harrum Nib, a local black marketer. He's involved in a smuggling ring between the Bolshaks and Kolaks.

QUINLAN

I knew something smelled funny with him.

CROSS

Why would he do this?

DOJAR

His ring has profited enormously from the dispute between the two worlds -- with normal trade suspended, he has been able to make a fortune (MORE)
DOJAR (CONT'D)
in contraband. I guess he wanted to
make sure this conference didn't go
ahead.

CROSS
This is impressive work. How did you
find out about him?

DOJAR
We asked him.

CROSS
Pardon?

QUINLAN
We have him down in the Brig. It was
easy to trace him, he was still
carrying my comm badge.

DOJAR
We were lucky in a way, thanks to
Mr. Barke over there, his bomb was
triggered early and so hadn't finished
priming itself. Another few minutes
and we'd have lost the ship.

CROSS
I'm sure Mr. Barke will be thrilled
to have been so helpful.

Elris comes over. Agolive and the other technicians move
away from Barke to their instruments along the wall, running
further tests.

ELRIS
He's stable. The blast didn't do as
much damage as we'd feared, it was
mostly peripheral.

CROSS
He's indestructible, isn't he?

ELRIS
I'm going to keep him under sedation
for a few hours.

CROSS
To help him heal?

ELRIS
Captain, while he's under sedation
he can not be wandering around the
ship getting blown up or attacked by
a forcefield or plunging to his death
in a turbolift.
CROSS
Good point. Thank you, Doctor.
(beat, stares)
Erm, Doctor.

ELRIS
Yes?

CROSS
I know I'm not a medical man, but I can't immediately see the practical applications of having a rat on Ambassador Barke's face.

They turn round, and look. The RAT is sitting on Barke's face, washing itself.

QUINLAN
I know they say opposites attract, but it would appear likes do as well.

CROSS
Dojar, get the rat. Now.

ELRIS
Computer, seal off sickbay, all exits.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Acknowledged.

ELRIS
Just in case.

Dojar painstakingly tiptoes up to the rat. Everyone holds their breath. Suddenly Dojar lunges at the rat, which jumps. Dojar sprawls over Barke, and nearly knocks him off. Elris hurries over.

ELRIS (CONT'D)
Please don't climb over my patient.

DOJAR
Where'd he go?

QUINLAN
There!

She hurries into a corner.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
I got him! I got him! Someone give me something to hold him in!

Elris hurries over with a beaker.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Don't be ridiculous.
ELRIS
That's all I've got. Here.

She grabs the struggling rat and shoves it into the beaker. Dojar comes over.

DOJAR
Here. Stand back.

Elris puts the beaker onto the table, the rat struggling to get out of it. Dojar aims his phaser at it.

ELRIS
Wait, that's not a non-breakable...

Dojar FIRES. The rat is knocked out, and the beaker is shattered, bits of glasses flying everywhere.

DOJAR
Everyone all right?

They all pause, and then as one turn and look at BARKE, still blissfully asleep on his biobed. They walk over slowly and peer at him.

QUINLAN
You see any?

ELRIS
There's a bit.

She gently picks up a piece of glass from Barke's chin, which has made him bleed slightly. They inspect some more.

ELRIS (CONT'D)
All clear.

They all breathe a sigh of relief.

QUINLAN
Now that wasn't so hard, was it?

They all stare at her.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE
Talora to Quinlan. Your Mr. Tooey's aide has arrived in the shuttlebay. He wishes to speak to you.

QUINLAN
Oh, dammit. All right, put him through down here.

She goes over to a screen and presses a button.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)
Quinlan here.
A biped male appears on the screen, with a long snout, raggedy ears and whiskers. In short, a rat on two legs.

TOOEY'S AIDE
Ah, hello. Miss Quinlan? I was just wondering whether you had had any luck in tracking down Mr. Tooey yet?

Quinlan turns and looks at the unconscious rat on the table.

QUINLAN
Do you know, I think I might have. I'll be right down.

INT. HOLODECK -- CLOWN WORLD

We are behind the bleachers. Grey and Boyle are cuddled up together. In the distance we can hear the clown circus continuing.

GREY
I'm beginning to see the attractions of Clown World.

BOYLE
I knew you would. Do you think we should check on Prout?

GREY
No, I'm sure he's fine.

PROUT (O.S.)
I can see your boobies.

They look up, aghast. Prout is watching them from above.

PROUT (CONT'D)
I saw everything!

GREY
That's it! Come here, you little...

He gets up as Prout runs off. Boyle pulls the angry engineer back.

BOYLE
Erik! Remember, he's an Ambassador's son.

GREY
I know, I'm just fed up of him. All day, he's been at me, at me, at me. It's like being in the war all over again.

BOYLE
Come on. We'd better go get him.
GREY
I'll go and get him. You should have seen his parents, they were all over him. Spoiled little brat.

They walk round into the main circus ring. They look around.

GREY (CONT'D)
Prout? Prout?

BOYLE
Come on, honey, we've got to go.

Suddenly they hear a CRY, Grey turns round and receives a CUSTARD PIE straight in his face. Prout laughs as he runs off again.

PROUT
You won't want to kiss him again now!

GREY
(beyond angry now)
Dammit, I don't care if his father is President of the Galaxy, that's it! Computer, arch.

The arch SHIMMERS into view.

BOYLE
(warningly)
Erik, what are you doing? Erik, be careful. Don't do anything you'll regret now. What are you doing?

GREY
Just making some modifications to the program. There.

He turns back to Boyle, smiling evilly.

GREY (CONT'D)
Now we wait.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is sitting in space, with the two SOLAR SHIPS just in front of it. Another little ship, the COMMENTATOR'S POD, circles around.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE
Here we go. The contestants are primed, the ships are ready, and we are now just awaiting the signal from the starters.

(MORE)
COMMENTATOR'S VOICE (CONT'D)
The race takes place over ten klacks,
and the ships will be going at speeds
of up to four hundred klicks an hour,
an impressive speed by anyone's
standards.

INT. TEN FORWARD

A LARGE CROWD have gathered to see the race. Cross and Portman stand there too, watching.

PORTMAN
This had better go to plan.

CROSS
I'm sure it'll be fine.

Portman gives Cross a scathing look.

INT. HOLODECK -- CLOWN WORLD

Boyle and Grey stand in the center of the ring, Grey looking smug.

GREY
Oh Prout, it's time to go. Come on, son.

BOYLE
Here he is.

Prout appears, holding something behind his back. He walks up slowly to the two of them.

GREY
(whispers to Boyle)
Here we go. Three.

EXT. SPACE

A small BUOY above the two markers has three lights on it. The first goes out.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE
Here we go! Get ready for action! Three!

The second light goes out.

INT. NENLI'S SHIP -- ENGINEERING

Nenli and Number Two stand poised.

NENLI
Here we go.
INT. SKOTTRY'S SHIP -- BRIDGE

SKOTTRY looks tense too.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

Two.

INT. HOLODECK -- CLOWN WORLD

BOYLE and GREY as before, PROUT almost up to them now.

GREY

One.

INT. TEN FORWARD

Same as before. We can hear the commentator's voice over the comm system.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

Go! And they're off.

People lean forward, peering out of the window.

INT. HOLODECK -- CLOWN WORLD

As before. PROUT is almost up to GREY and BOYLE.

GREY

Now, computer!

He pulls Boyle back as an AVALANCHE of CUSTARD falls down onto Prout, absolutely drenching him in the stuff. He screams out as Grey grins.

INT. TEN FORWARD

The crowd as before. Cross and Portman frown.

PORTMAN

Has the race actually started?

CROSS

I... think so.

They peer out.

EXT. SPACE

The two SOLAR SHIPS are moving extremely slowly.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

There they go! The Kolak ship is in the early lead, going roughly three hundred clicks to the Bolshaks two seven five. My goodness, look at them go!
INT. TEN FORWARD

The crowd cheer as they are from the Ambassador's races, they are used to this speed. Portman watch.

PORTMAN
How far are is the course?

CROSS
Half a light year.

PORTMAN
But that'll take them

CROSS
Six years, four months and seven days. Mr Skottry informs me they change crews every two months.

Portman looks at him.

CROSS (CONT'D)
Well, while they're racing, they're not feuding, and they can join the Federation.

PORTMAN
And what happens when they win?

CROSS
Oh, we'll worry about that when we come to it.

See you in six years?

PORTMAN
Absolutely.

INT. HOLODECK

Prout is still blubbing, Grey is looking pleased with himself and Boyle is amazed.

BOYLE
Erik, what have you done?

PROUT
Wah! You just wait until I tell my father. You are going to wish you'd never been born!

GREY
That's fine. We'll call him now. Computer, open a line to Ambassador J' lak.
COMPUTER'S VOICE
Comm link established.

J'LAK'S COMM VOICE
J'lak here.

PROUT
Daddy! He's covered me in boo! I'm head to toe in poo!

J'LAK'S COMM VOICE
What? Who has? What's going on?

GREY
Ambassador, could you come down to the holodeck, please,

J'LAK'S COMM VOICE
On my way, and you had better have a good explanation for this. J'lak out.

BOYLE
Erik, I Grey holds up a finger.

GREY
Computer, end program.

The holodeck scene SHIMMERS into nothing. Everything disappears, including of course the custard covering Prout. He looks around.

PROUT
What the...?

GREY
Oh dear, oh dear, Prout. Your Dad's not going to be very happy when he finds you've been making a fuss about things is he?

PROUT
But the holodeck...?

GREY
Prout, as a keen technical wizard, you should have known that everything would disappear. You don't want to look stupid, do you?

Silence. Prout pouts. The holodeck door OPENS and AMBASSADOR J'LAK and his WIFE enters.

J'LAK
Now, what is... Prout? Is everything alright?
Grey raises an eyebrow at Prout.

PROUT  
(mumbles)  
It's fine.

GREY  
We were just having some fun and games. Your son is quite a shot with a water pistol.

J'LAK  
Ah yes, takes after his old man. I'm well known for how I handle my pistol.

MADAME J'LAK  
Did you thank Lieutenant Fey for having a nice day?

PROUT  
(still mumbling)  
Thank you.

J'LAK  
Good man. Thank you very much, Lt, I'm sure he learned a lot.

GREY  
Yes, I'm sure he did. Good day.

The J'laks lead Prout out.

BOYLE  
Bye, Prout.

She blows him a kiss. Prout looks at her and BEAMS again. The door closes.

GREY  
What'd you do that for?

BOYLE  
You are very mean.

GREY  
I know, but I couldn't stand it. I had to do something.

BOYLE  
Well, I'm glad you enjoyed Clown World in the end.

GREY  
In the end? Are we finished here yet? There were some areas I don't think we explored fully yet.
He wraps his arm around her.

BOYLE
Computer, start program again.

As Clown World shimmers into view again, they walk together towards the bleachers.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise, still hanging space. The two SOLAR SHIPS are still fairly close by, moving almost imperceptibly away.

CROSS (V.O.)
Captain's Log, Stardate 78516.9. The conference is over and, after a few...
(beat)
...minor mishaps, I think we can say it was a success. Ambassador Tooey is reunited with his translator, who has restored the Ambassador's medicine to him, so he is no longer confused. But then, confusion hasn't been exactly rare this weekend...

INT. CORRIDOR

Ambassador Barke, on crutches, is being led down the corridor by Elris, with Cross and Portman walk alongside.

BARKE
(uncertainly)
And I saved the day?

CROSS
Yes, Ambassador, without you the ship would have been blown up.

BARKE
And before that? I can't remember a thing since stepping on board of this ship.

CROSS
Nothing happened. At all.

BARKE
The conference?

CROSS
Oh no, you were good at the conference. A big help.

PORTMAN
I think it's fair to say that your oratory skills be not be forgotten in a hurry.
BARKE
Well, I'm not surprised. After all,
I am Cornelius Barke. Esquire. Of
the...

BARKE, CROSS AND ELRIS
(in unison)
...Galactic Consortium of Jolans,
ruled by the jester's house of Barke on
Jolan Prime, holder of the sacred
keys of Loki from time immemorial.

BARKE
Oh. Did I mention that?

CROSS
Yes, I think you might have done.
Once or twice.

They stand at a junction.

CROSS (CONT'D)
This is where we part company. Good
luck, Ambassador Barke.

They SHAKE hands, as do Barke and Portman. Elris leads him
off down one corridor...

BARKE
And who was that again?

...while Portman and Cross go down another.

CROSS
Thank God he's gone.

PORTMAN
Oh, I don't know. I think his bark...

CROSS
(warning)
Don't say it.

PORTMAN
...was worse than his bite.

He CHUCKLES at his own joke.

CROSS
How long have you been waiting to
say that?

PORTMAN
All weekend. Come on, Neil, I'll buy
you a drink.

He puts his hand round Cross's shoulder as they walk off.
EXT. SPACE

We see Ambassador's Barke's SHUTTLE leave as, in the distance the SOLAR SHIPS continue to make their snail like progress...

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE
And the Bolshak ship appears to be trying to cut in front of the Kolak ship. My goodness, I haven't seen a maneuver like that since the great land race of 2391.

There is the sound of a CLICK. The screen goes black instead of our usual...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END