

**STAR TREK: RENAISSANCE**

**"Home "**

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

An empty star field. Suddenly, something sweeps into view - a grey mass coming from below the screen on a very tight close up. It turns, and immediately we recognize it as a familiar shape: the Enterprise.

GREY (V.O.)

Home. Home is more than just a place where one lives.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Bustling. Vibrant lights throb through the active nerve center. In the middle of the screen, ERIK GREY is calling people, telling them what to do -- but we hear nothing.

GREY (V.O.)

Home is the place, the people, the environment that one is accustomed living to. Somewhere familiar and constant. Of course, it is never fully constant, but while living in it the changes come gradually, and are accepted.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Also vibrant. Nurses and medics are busy at work treating minor injuries and doing check ups. In the middle of this action is ELRIS LEA, who is also calling out orders in the silence.

GREY (V.O.)

But when one leaves home, those changes still go on. Home is a place you can never return to -- there will always be differences, changes. Home is a state of time. A home revisited is never the home that was left.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- REC LOUNGE

Formerly the MESS HALL. A completely redesigned and remade room. Many people are here, enjoying the variety of new activities available. Not just a bar, the Mess Hall now includes a variety of game tables and a whole second level. And at the counter stands HAL, the ever-present barkeep.

GREY (V.O.)

Some of the changes might be good, some might be bad.

(MORE)

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

But change it does. The place is  
lost. For some of those that return,  
it is disjointing. For others, it is  
appreciated.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The Bridge, active as it's ever been. GRIL DOJAR is back at  
Tactical, JENNIFER QUINLAN at Conn, TALORA is sitting in the  
First Officer's chair, and CALE is at Operations.

GREY (V.O.)

And for some, home is a place  
unwanted...

We close on the vacant Captain's Chair, and...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

DOJAR is walking down the corridor, at a brisk, anxious pace. He seems unnerved, off-kilter. A woman passes by and he jerks away from her, almost stumbling into a man whom he steps aside by. Retaining an outward facade of calm, Dojar continues to rapidly proceed through the corridor.

TALORA (O.S.)

Dojar!

Dojar closes his eyes, curses very lowly. Talora walks up from behind him.

TALORA (CONT'D)

There you are. I was looking for you.

Dojar turns around to face her.

DOJAR

Are there reports you require, Commander?

Talora looks into his eyes, concerned.

TALORA

No, Dojar. It's a personal matter.

DOJAR

(slightly off-balance)

Oh? What kind of personal matter?

TALORA

Dojar, as First Officer it is my duty to investigate and support crew morale. And as a friend, I'm worried. I've got a number of reports from other officers that you seem to be consciously avoiding them or any other social area. You've avoided eye contact, and you've turned down all of their invitations. Hal tells me you haven't even been to the new Recreation Lounge since our talk.

DOJAR

(irritated)

Is that an order, Talora? I intend to spend my free time where I like, and with whom I choose!

Talora frowns.

TALORA

They're concerned, Dojar. I'm concerned.

DOJAR

Then don't be! It doesn't concern you!

TALORA

Gril... this isn't like you. Tell me... what's wrong?

Dojar looks to the ground.

DOJAR

Nothing's wrong. I'm perfectly fine.

TALORA

You know I can't believe that. Is there anything I can do?

DOJAR

I'm fine, Talora, really, I'm fine.

TALORA

Is there anyone else you'd rather talk this about with?

DOJAR

Everything's fine, Talora.

Talora is frustrated, but without any malice.

TALORA

Tell me when you're willing to talk.

Talora turns on her heels and walks in the opposite direction. Dojar doesn't look after her but looks in his original direction. Suddenly he strides off in that direction once again.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TRANSPORTER ROOM

The same as it usually is -- with one noticeable difference. A few panels at the bottom of the transporter console (the part facing away from the transporter pad) are open. GREY and NARV OZRAN both hold engineering devices to the interiors, working on them. Grey is particularly interested in something. Ozran notices.

GREY

(thoughtful)

Hmmm...

OZLAN

(defensive)

I've tried to stabilize the power output there for some time. Believe me, it won't hold.

GREY

Hm?

OZLAN

That is what you were focusing on, wasn't it?

GREY

No. I was realigning the secondary one, here... take a look, this configuration is more power efficient...

But Ozran isn't paying that close attention.

OZLAN

I don't believe it.

GREY

What?

OZLAN

There was a time you'd skin somebody alive for a fluctuation of a tenth of a percentile. You've acted like that one was nothing.

Grey shrugs.

GREY

The effect that system has on the transporter is unnoticeable to any naked eye or practicality. It only makes the transporter one thousandth of a nanosecond slower. Granted, we'll need to replace it not far from now...

OZLAN

Listen to yourself, Grey.

Grey smiles, shrugs.

GREY

Yeah. Yeah, I suppose you're right. A bit of fresh air, I guess... gives a bit of perspective.

They return to their work. Grey, however, seems lost in thought for a few moments. Ozran nudges him.

OZRAN

You okay?

Grey nods.

GREY

Just remembering a thing or two...

(beat, pointing at  
something)

Oh, you'll want to change that.

Ozran looks at his panel, and does something with the device he's holding. They continue to work for a few moments.

OZRAN

You really get to appreciate it here.

GREY

(not looking up)

Hmm?

OZRAN

Here. These power circuits, these converters... I'd check them on every transporter every day. I'd replace them, I'd recharge them... now look at them. Without me many became dry, worn out.

Grey focuses on one thing, moves his device closer to it.

GREY

(still not looking up)

They'll be good as new in a moment.

OZRAN

Oh, they will all right. But other things won't.

Grey looks up, now getting it.

GREY

Yes. That's right. And some people, well, just will never seem the same.

OZRAN

(piqued)

Which people?

Grey shrugs.

GREY

(vaguely)

Everyone, I guess. They'll all have some new chips on their shoulder.

OZRAN

But that's not who you meant -- you meant one person.

GREY

(defensively)

Did I?

OZRAN

I could hear it in your voice. Who?

GREY

I guess I haven't changed for you to not know me, Narv. Yeah, I meant one person. The Captain.

Grey turns his face away and continues to work at his controls and equipment.

OZRAN

Captain Cross?

GREY

(mockingly, but not  
mocking Ozran)

The one and only.

OZRAN

How so?

Grey looks up again. He is now noticeably more serious.

GREY

Isn't it evident? How could he possibly be the same after what he did?

Ozran, somber, nods.

OZRAN

But he's still our Captain.

GREY

(bitterly)

Yeah. Not one I have any love of, though.

Grey returns to his work. Ozran's green brow furrows with concern.

OZRAN

I thought you were glad to have him back.

GREY

I'm glad to have the Enterprise back.

(MORE)

GREY (CONT'D)

He I could do without. Genocide and treason, all in one package. A fine choice for a Captain, don't you think?

OZRAN

He had felt great loss.

GREY

Don't we all? But not all of us take it out on others.

OZRAN

Would you?

GREY

What on Earth do you mean?

OZRAN

What if someone close to you was murdered -- Boyle, maybe? Would you strike back?

Grey begins to answer, catches himself. He thinks for a moment.

GREY

(somber, quiet)

Not like that. I'd get those responsible, but god, not like that. Not with innocents.

OZRAN

What if it wasn't so clean cut? What if the innocents were the killers' shield?

GREY

Yes, things would be less clear cut -- then. But at the very least I'd follow orders. I wouldn't let my emotions carry me forth on some vengeful massacre!

(beat, more quietly)

At least, I hope not.

OZRAN

Maybe you wouldn't think those orders are right --

GREY

Granted, Ozran, I think that there are orders that should not be made. Following them is no excuse. But the orders Cross had in that situation were nothing of the kind!

OZLAN

To you. What about to him?

GREY

He'd know. He might have felt otherwise or convinced himself otherwise, but dammit, he'd know.

OZLAN

Are you sure?

Grey begins to respond, stops himself.

GREY

If he didn't know -- if he didn't consider -- doesn't stop it from being wrong.

Grey puts down his utensils, brushes his hair back, thinks.

GREY (CONT'D)

Maybe I'm not sure of anything anymore, Narv. But I can't abide by Cross's actions.

OZLAN

Did you do anything similar in the Sheliak War?

GREY

Of course not -- all the Sheliak I met were soldiers, and armed. I did to them what they would have just as easily done to me if they'd got the chance.

OZLAN

What if some were soldiers and others weren't, they were the targets, and you thought your orders were wrong?

Grey thinks about that for a long beat. Grey looks up at Ozlan.

GREY

You're playing a damned mind game.

OZLAN

Naturally. Not hard to do, having two.

GREY

Well, I can see where you're coming at with this one, Narv. Yes, justifications and reasoning can be made for what he did, but that makes it no less wrong.

OZRAN

I never said it wasn't wrong.

GREY

Then what was your intent, Narv?

Ozran shrugs.

OZRAN

Nothing sinister. I just wanted to know how you felt.

Grey turns back to his work, shakes his head.

GREY

(over his shoulder)

Next time: Ask.

He continues to work away. Ozran studies him for a moment.

OZRAN

Your bitterness goes deep.

GREY

I can live with it.

OZRAN

And the Captain?

GREY

I don't care what he feels.

(beat)

I'm sorry I'm taking this out on you, Narv, it's just so...

Ozran waves his hand to stop him.

OZRAN

No apology is needed. I understand.

(a bit more light-hearted)

Though I'd rather not become your personal punching bag.

Grey smiles, returns to his work. He directs Ozran.

GREY

(pointing at things)

Put that... there... and that... there. There, that oughta do it.

OZRAN

The configuration won't interface properly if we do it like this.

GREY

I've made a few adjustments on my  
end. It'll work.

Ozran looks to Grey.

OZRAN

If I had eyebrows, I'd raise them.

He turns back makes the adjustments. The panel above glows.  
Grey stands up like a mechanic who has just come out from  
under a car.

GREY

There, see?

Ozran comes up with him, and nods.

GREY (CONT'D)

I better get back to Engineering.  
There's no telling what I'm needed  
for now. Put the ship in Spacedock  
for just a little while and everything  
goes all...

He shrugs, turns towards the door. Then turns back.

GREY (CONT'D)

Oh, and Narv?

OZRAN

Sir?

GREY

It's good to have you back.

OZRAN

Thank you, sir.

With that, Grey exits and we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S LAB

Y'LAN is sitting at his table, leaning over the emitted colors. Behind him, the door opens. He turns around. It's Dojar.

Y'LAN

Lieutenant.

Dojar paces from the side of the door across near the wall, coming closer to Y'lan.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Is there something you want?

DOJAR

(quietly)

You know, it's funny. Until now I never knew that you spoke each sentence of English with a belabored impatience of it, inwardly cursing the inefficiency of the language. But now when I hear you say it, I can't get that fact out of my head.

Y'LAN

It is a very primitive form of communication. Inexact and with multiple unnecessary double meanings, as well as hopelessly simplistic and vague.

DOJAR

(voice rising slowly)

And when I looked at those tentacles, that jumbled mass, never once did I think every twitch, every move, every scratch, every quiver was carefully orchestrated by you to make them readily usable and comfortable. Before it was a mass of coils, but I look now and I see the complex symmetries.

He continues to move closer to Y'lan via the wall as Y'lan tracks.

Y'LAN

We Q'tami do have complete control over our bodies, yes.

(MORE)

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

These natural impulses your body has -  
- demanding you to eat or to sleep  
or to flinch -- quite disgusting.  
And of course we measure our movements  
precisely -- we aim for precise  
effect.

DOJAR

(strangely)

Or your eyes. I never thought about  
your eyes before, but seeing them  
now... Should I call them cameras,  
Y'lan? They record everything they  
see in exact precision, capable of  
automatic frame by frame recall.

Y'LAN

Cameras, given the definition used  
in Cardassian, would not be an  
accurate term. These are indeed  
biological eyes in every respect,  
they merely act more like your cameras  
than they do your eyes. Your memory  
systems are such frail things, loosely  
and incoherently connected, so prone  
--

DOJAR

(shouted)

Dammit, Y'lan, don't you see I don't  
want to know!

Beat.

Y'LAN

You have not expressed these  
observations before.

DOJAR

I know... I think that new memories  
are beginning to surface from while  
I was in the transporter. I don't  
remember such detailed thoughts from  
anyone else except for you.

Y'LAN

Perhaps it is due to the proximity  
of my location when you were  
transported.

DOJAR

Perhaps.

(firmly)

But I have no desire to know!

Y'LAN

You do know.

DOJAR

That's the point. I know about you. I know about Talora, I know about Grey... Elris, Quinlan, Cross -- everybody!

Y'LAN

You knew about everybody. You lost much of that memory.

DOJAR

But as you said yourself, Y'lan, our memories are such incoherent things -- and I do remember things about them and you, whether I want to or not.

(beat)

Damn it, Y'lan, I know their feelings. The kind of feelings they won't tell their closest friends, their families -- I know them all!

Y'LAN

Not all.

Dojar sighs.

DOJAR

No, you're right. Not all. But close enough.

Beat.

Y'LAN

Then I fail to see the problem.

DOJAR

I look at people out there, and I see them completely exposed. I see their darkest thoughts and intentions, their deepest emotion. How can I bear to live with people who have no privacy from me? I have betrayed into their inner sanctums.

Y'LAN

Is not knowledge always a wanted goal?

DOJAR

There is some knowledge we don't want.

Y'LAN  
Interesting...

Dojar goes right over to Y'lan.

DOJAR  
Release me.

Y'LAN  
Release?

DOJAR  
Purge these memories from me! I  
cannot take them anymore!

Y'LAN  
Given the structure of the Cardassian  
brain, I cannot purge these specific  
memories without wiping out your  
memory in its entirety or destroying  
your cognitive process, rendering  
you thoughtless.

Dojar turns away from him.

DOJAR  
(quiet once more)  
If I want to lose my forbidden memory,  
I must lose myself?

Y'LAN  
In essence.

DOJAR  
Maybe that's better. Maybe it's  
better for them to know me better  
than I do, then for me to know them  
better than they know.

Y'LAN  
Which method would you prefer?

Dojar smiles, turns around.

DOJAR  
You know, all of my other friends  
would try to talk me out of that.

Y'LAN  
I am a Q'tami. We have no "friends."

DOJAR  
Oh, as I know well enough. But I  
still consider you mine.

Y'LAN

As you wish. I will not be the first Ambassador to have been initiated by a similar tribal custom.

DOJAR

No doubt you consider my position most unusual? You've already observed and could understand the reasoning behind withholding information, but wanting to rid myself of information must be a fascinating study. So un-Q'tami. So incompatible with your systems.

Y'LAN

That is a reasonably accurate summary.

DOJAR

I'd ask you what you'd do, but I know for you it isn't even an issue. You accept and utilize all information.

Y'LAN

Where it can be used.

Dojar turns around, away from Y'lan again.

DOJAR

I cannot accept either method you proposed to me. All it would do is destroy the life that I am trying to keep sane.

Y'LAN

I see.

DOJAR

I'll tell them. I'll tell them all that I know. Then I can keep a clearer conscience.

Y'LAN

Interesting. Assuming you do not intend to approach each individual and appraise them personally, how do you intend to inform them of the situation?

DOJAR

If that is what it takes. You have a better idea?

Y'LAN

The intercom.

DOJAR  
(reacting)  
Of course! Why didn't I think of  
that?

Y'LAN  
I do not know.

DOJAR  
Thank you, Y'lan.

Dojar turns and LEAVES. Y'lan turns back to his table, and  
begins to work at it once more.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- REC LOUNGE

The same as seen in the teaser. ELRIS is sitting at the  
counter, finishing a drink. It looks like a purple milkshake.  
Behind her, QUINLAN is walking back.

ELRIS  
Jennifer!

Quinlan turns to face her.

ELRIS (CONT'D)  
Want a drink?

Quinlan shrugs, nods, walks over to the counter and sits  
down by it. Elris swallows the rest of the drink whole as  
HAL comes across.

HAL  
Can I get you anything?

ELRIS  
More Melkotsian Tea, thanks.

HAL  
(to Quinlan)  
And let me guess, one--

QUINLAN  
Orange juice.

HAL  
Orange juice. Right.

Hal walks off.

ELRIS  
Orange juice?

QUINLAN  
Very refreshing stuff.  
(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

(beat)  
I don't...

ELRIS

Ah.

Hal returns. He pours more Melkotsian Tea into Elris's flask.

HAL

Here's your Melkotsian Tea...

He hands a glass to Quinlan.

HAL (CONT'D)

And here's your orange juice.

He goes off again. Quinlan glances around the room for a moment.

QUINLAN

It's incredible what they've done to this place. And in such a short time, to boot...

ELRIS

Tell me about it. Hal had bought all this stuff to put into his new bar. When he heard the Enterprise was being recommissioned, it was an offer he couldn't refuse -- but he had to cut his losses...

QUINLAN

That's it, huh?

ELRIS

That's what he's saying.

QUINLAN

It's incredible, anyway.

ELRIS

Indeed. I don't get why he still wants to be here. It's a fine place and all, but...

QUINLAN

You mean you don't know?

ELRIS

Know what?

QUINLAN

Hal has the Federation patenting rights to any delicacies or drinks  
(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

that are made by any alien species  
the Enterprise makes first contact  
with.

Elris whistles.

ELRIS

Not that we're making much in the  
way of first contacts these days...

Beat. They drink at their drinks for a moment.

QUINLAN

Hal wears his reasons for coming  
back on the cuff of his sleeve. He  
didn't have to come, but he's content  
to stay.

ELRIS

You mean you don't like it here?

QUINLAN

I had to come here. I didn't have a  
choice.

Elris, thoughtful, looks around.

ELRIS

If I had a choice... I'd stay anyway.

Quinlan thinks about that for a moment.

QUINLAN

Yeah. To be honest, me too.

ELRIS

You could say those Q'tami did us a  
favor, in a roundabout way.

Elris shrugs.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

I don't really know, I guess. I  
just look at this place and think of  
it as home.

(beat)

Nowhere else I've been has been as  
promising as this is now.

QUINLAN

For me...

She thinks for a moment.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

I suppose it's the only place I can really feel comfortable living in right about now.

ELRIS

Ah.

QUINLAN

You know, I'm surprised.

ELRIS

Hm?

QUINLAN

You'd really stay?

ELRIS

Yeah, that's what I said, didn't I?

QUINLAN

Well... last time you were here you pushed your way off.

Elris takes a thoughtful swig of Melkotsian Tea.

ELRIS

First you want me to stay, then you want me to leave.

QUINLAN

No, that's not what I meant at all.

ELRIS

Then what did you mean?

QUINLAN

I just didn't think you'd stay. I wanted you to stay, but I wasn't getting my hopes up. And now you're comfortable with it?

ELRIS

Yeah. I am.

QUINLAN

You know what I mean. You said even if you didn't...

ELRIS

Yeah, I know, I know. And you're right. I still would be comfortable.

QUINLAN

And that's what I don't get. Why you're so comfortable. It's completely out of the blue.

ELRIS

Like the orange juice?

Quinlan winces.

QUINLAN

Good point.

ELRIS

I take it the clinic did you good, then?

QUINLAN

You could say that.

Elris notes the double meaning.

ELRIS

You are off it, aren't you?

QUINLAN

Yes!

ELRIS

Well, sorry.

QUINLAN

I'm sorry. It's just I don't want to talk about it. You?

ELRIS

Bajor wasn't quite as I remembered it. And I don't want to talk about that, either.

QUINLAN

Oh. You don't have any problem about being here, then?

ELRIS

You mean serving under my ex-husband?

Quinlan shrugs.

QUINLAN

Basically.

ELRIS

It's just the same as before -- except, we're divorced now. He knows how I feel, I know how he feels... I think we're going to be okay. So yeah, I'm happy with it.

VOICE

Mind if I join you, ladies?

Elris and Quinlan turn to face LEWIS CARTER, the reporter. Quinlan rolls her eyes.

ELRIS

Sure.

Carter sits down.

CARTER

Quinlan.  
(to Elris)  
I'm Lewis Carter.

ELRIS

Elris Lea.

QUINLAN

Jennifer Quinlan.

Carter notes both, then:

CARTER

Elris? As in Doctor Elris?

ELRIS

Yes, that's me.

CARTER

I'll be staying with you onboard the Enterprise, reporting. You probably know me from my Rachel Award Winning "Carter Investigates"...

An awkward pause. It's clear that at best the two aren't exactly ardent fans.

ELRIS

Actually, yeah, I think saw an episode of that -- you did the one with the Klingon head ridges, didn't you?

He nods, and it clicks with Elris.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

It was incredible how you got that information.

Carter smiles.

CARTER

The Klingons are still none to pleased about it, though. I've got all reporting privileges in the Empire rescinded for a full year. But it was worth it.

ELRIS

Still, it was pretty incredible. I mean, I heard that there was something odd going on about those head ridges... but that just defied belief...

QUINLAN

I wouldn't have believed it either if I hadn't seen it.

CARTER

You know what they say. The truth is stranger than fiction.

QUINLAN

Is it?

Carter shrugs.

CARTER

Depends on the truth, doesn't it?

Hal approaches him.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(to Hal)

One Aldeberan Whiskey.

Hal nods, moves under the counter.

QUINLAN

How's your work coming along?

CARTER

Oh, just a few notes really. I'm only getting my feet on the whole thing.

(digging)

It must be great to serve on the Enterprise.

QUINLAN

(nonchalant)

You could say that.

Hal comes up from under the counter, places Aldeberan Whiskey on the counter, and moves off.

CARTER

(to Elris)

But enough about me. How are you, Doctor?

ELRIS

I'm fine.

Carter breaks into a wide smile again.

CARTER

There's just such a great air of camaraderie about the whole thing. Everyone seems to get along so well.

ELRIS

More or less.

CARTER

What about you, Lea -- can I call you Lea?

ELRIS

No.

CARTER

Well, Elris, how do you feel working under your ex-husband?

Elris is taken aback for a moment.

ELRIS

Fine, I guess -- I feel fine.

CARTER

There's never been any discomfort?

Elris catches on at what Carter is trying to get at, she immediately puts up a front and it should be noted that she's doing this and only telling Carter what she wants him to know, whether it's true or not, during the interview.

ELRIS

Well, a little, I guess. You know, the kind of thing you'd expect in that kind of situation.

CARTER

I'm afraid I don't quite follow you.

ELRIS

Well...

(beat, at times semi-incoherent)

You see, I wasn't comfortable at first -- uh, that is, shortly before we divorced, before the Enterprise crew was split up -- and I felt, well, that I shouldn't still be there. You know, that I couldn't work with him.

QUINLAN

(to Elris)

Thanks for the juice.

Quinlan excuses herself.

CARTER

So you're still uncomfortable?

ELRIS

No, not at all. Not really, anyway.

CARTER

I see. Did your ex-husband prove to you that he wasn't a problem?

ELRIS

Not really. It just isn't worth it.

CARTER

Worth it?

ELRIS

This is my home. I can live with it.

CARTER

So you'd say that the situation isn't resolved?

ELRIS

(putting up a front)

No, no, it's resolved alright.

CARTER

But there's still animosity?

ELRIS

Why would there be animosity?

CARTER

Are you happy Captain Cross got his command back? What are your feelings about his release?

Elris shrugs.

ELRIS

Not much, really. I'm fine with him as my commanding officer, I can cope. I could live with another one. As for his release, well, I don't know Neil as well as I used to. I guess I didn't give that much thought.

CARTER

Not even when he was put in there to begin with?

ELRIS

Oh, I saw that coming. When the Klingon raid happened I knew he was in for some trouble or another. I didn't know it would be so bad, but...

CARTER

How did you feel about him being put in prison, though?

ELRIS

I really didn't give it that much thought at the time -- I had so many other things to think about. Looking back on it now, though, I guess I did feel a little bit of regret. I don't love Neil -- not anymore -- but I could at least sympathize on some level what he went through, you know?

CARTER

What about the Reformists at Coular? Did you feel sympathetic for them too?

ELRIS

Any loss of life is appalling.

CARTER

And you don't think these views conflict?

ELRIS

Why should they?

Beat as Elris checks her watch.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

My shift begins in a few minutes. I should get going.

She leaves. Carter watches her go with a peculiar look on his face.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S QUARTERS

Now far more accessorized than the rather bland and typical quarters we first saw in "Paintings on a Wall." The bed, the cupboard, and most other accessories the room previously had are absent. Unusual Q'tami devices litter the room. Y'LAN is present, near one of the devices, curled up in what to us would seem comfortable but to Y'lan is probably energy preserving, position. Y'lan's eyes are trained on the device but we can't see what he's seeing, properly.

Y'LAN

Furthermore, the Talosians --

As Y'lan speaks, there's a chime at the front door.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Pause.

An organic Q'tami BEEP, more like a pulse.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

(to door)

Yes?

The door opens. Carter stands at the entrance.

CARTER

Ah, Ambassador Y'lan. If I may have a few words?

Y'LAN

No.

The doors close shut in Carter's face.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

One or two nurses present. Quinlan enters.

QUINLAN

(looking around)

Atkinson?

(beat)

Doctor Atkinson?

VOICE

Who?

Quinlan turns to face a Bajoran male in his early forties, dressed in a Starfleet Medical uniform.

QUINLAN

Isn't Doctor Atkinson on duty?

The Bajoran looks at her for a moment blankly.

BAJORAN

Atkinson?

Then realization hits him.

BAJORAN (CONT'D)

You mean you haven't heard?

QUINLAN

Heard what?

BAJORAN

Atkinson was assigned as Chief Medical Officer of the Endeavour a week ago. I'm his replacement.

The Bajoran sticks out his hand.

BAJORAN (CONT'D)

Doctor Toran. Toran Noa.

Quinlan shakes it.

QUINLAN

Quinlan. Jennifer Quinlan.

Toran reacts.

TORAN

Quinlan? Elris has told me a number of things about you...

QUINLAN

Really? What kinds of things?

TORAN

Oh, quite a bit. Nothing too bad, though.

Quinlan smiles.

QUINLAN

Not that much, then.

(beat)

You have me at a disadvantage, sir.

Toran smiles, warmly, and shrugs.

TORAN

There's not much to tell. I have led a rather... uninteresting life.

QUINLAN

You're one of the luckier ones.

Toran smiles again.

TORAN

So, Ms. Quinlan, I assume you did not come down to Sickbay to small talk with someone you've never heard of before. What can I do for you?

QUINLAN

My medical check-up is due today. Decided I'd get it over with early.

TORAN

Of course. This way, please.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- MISSION OPERATIONS

The same busy center as it always is. Darting into it is Dojar. He ducks and weaves through the crowd of workers, making his way towards...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TALORA'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Talora is at the table, working at a PADD. Dojar enters.

DOJAR

Am I disturbing you? I know you...

He catches himself.

TALORA

You know what?

DOJAR

Nothing, nothing.

Talora looks at him concerned. She knew there was something wrong with him before, but now she knows it somehow involves herself. Dojar avoids her gaze, staring at the floor, or pausing to stare at an item. His eyes lock with the picture of AMMANIUS on her desk (as seen in "Day In..."). He is about to open his mouth and catches himself again.

TALORA

Dojar?

Dojar fumbles around for the right words.

DOJAR

I'm just here to ask you your permission to use the intercom.

TALORA

What for?

DOJAR

Ah, personal business.

TALORA

Personal business? If you had to contact someone, why not use the communicator -- is someone not responding to their communicator?

DOJAR

No, not exactly, it's personal business involving more than one person.

TALORA

How many persons?

DOJAR

Everybody.

TALORA

(incredulous)

The whole crew?

DOJAR

Yes.

Talora stares at Dojar for a moment, making him uncomfortable.

TALORA

For personal business?

DOJAR

(impatient)

Yes.

TALORA

Since I am included in the crew, could you tell me what it is?

A beat. Dojar wants, knows he has to tell her -- he anxiously shuffles, looking around the room. But he doesn't want it to be private -- not now at any rate.

DOJAR

I'd rather wait until the intercom, sir.

(beat)

It's, ah, a surprise.

Talora examines him for a beat.

TALORA

(guarded)

I see. It doesn't matter in any case. I can't authorize the use of the intercom. You'll have to ask Captain Cross.

Dojar looks like he's just been hit by a tidal wave. More than anyone else on the ship, he knows what Cross is like right now.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Is that all, Lieutenant?

He nods, weakly.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Then dismissed.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

The lights are dimmed. We see a chair, its back to us, towards the window. There is nothing but the quiet, background noises of an empty room -- until we hear a chirp.

CROSS'S VOICE

(from chair)

Come.

The doors part. Cautiously, carefully, Dojar walks into the room. His movements are measured and slow.

DOJAR

Captain?

The chair swivels about, in the slow manner of one who is disinterested and preoccupied. On the chair sits NEIL CROSS. He is in his Starfleet uniform, but beyond that he looks little like when he last wore it. Reserved, shadowy. He nods -- barely.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

(shuffling  
uncomfortably)

I would like to use the intercom.  
Sir.

A nod.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Can I take that as permission to do so?

CROSS

Yes.

Cross gazes vaguely for a minute, but he's not looking at Dojar or anything in the room, but into a mind's eye - a mind's eye Dojar can fairly well guess at. Slowly, Cross turns his chair around -- but not fully -- to look at the passing stars, watchful, mourning without admittance. Dojar looks with him, and sees what he sees.

DOJAR

Asante wouldn't have liked it out here in any case.

Cross swivels around rapidly. He glares coldly at Dojar.

CROSS

(coldly)  
Dismissed.

DOJAR

I --

CROSS

(angry)  
Dismissed!

Dojar almost falls out of the room. Cross's smoldering eyes focus on the door and then he swivels the chair back once more.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- REC LOUNGE

A 2-D image is being projected at an upper hand corner of the counter. We can see the end credits of "Carter Investigates," and then Hal presses something beneath the counter, and the image fades. We pan to Elris and Quinlan, with their surprised faces. Elris is more shocked than Quinlan is, who is thoughtfully cradling a glass of orange juice.

ELRIS

I don't believe it.

Quinlan shrugs.

QUINLAN

He's a reporter. They don't have a tendency to keep secrets.

ELRIS

He blew it completely out of proportion! "Do No Harm but be welcoming of those that do?" I never said that!

QUINLAN

You're right. He said it. Did you say anything like it?

Elris doesn't completely register Quinlan's comment.

ELRIS

And what's this about me being hypocritical, showing false interest in the Coular victims but a passion for a man I don't love? What the hell is he on about?

QUINLAN

Do you?

ELRIS

What? Not how he meant it.

QUINLAN

He thinks you do.

She sips the orange juice.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Or should I say, he thinks it'll sell if it's shown that way. But even in that, there's a seed of truth.

ELRIS

A very small seed. And completely distorted.

QUINLAN

Then don't plant the seed.

ELRIS

Believe me, I don't intend to. And I wouldn't be surprised if the other one or two members of the crew he interviewed will be equally noncommittal. Quite possibly a lot of the ship, too.

QUINLAN

I don't doubt it. But he'll probably find his ways.

Elris glances at Quinlan.

ELRIS

You seem incredibly sure of that.

QUINLAN

I am. I've been under that spotlight before.

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

A natural catastrophe doesn't make much in the headlines, no matter how many are lost -- unless there's a bit of suspected treason to spice things up. And then you've got the Nightingale.

ELRIS

Oh... and if you knew so much, why didn't you warn me? I was well into the second question before I even realized what I was getting myself into!

QUINLAN

That was my mistake -- I didn't know you'd give Carter that much ammo.

ELRIS

I gave him barely enough to do what he did!

QUINLAN

But still enough.

Elris sighs.

ELRIS

Yes, you're right. I just find this so...

But Quinlan isn't paying attention right now -- she's spotted someone in the crowd.

QUINLAN

Well, what do you know.

ELRIS

What?

QUINLAN

He's here.

She points, Elris follows the lead.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Keeping diplomatically away from us, I might add.

We pan around to see Carter over near one of the game tables, ably chatting away to crewmembers.

CARTER

(to one)

I'm glad you liked it, Whedon.

WHEDON departs as someone familiar to us but not to Carter walks over.

BOYLE  
(teasingly)  
I liked it, too.

Carter reacts to her approach, sizing her up. He raises an eyebrow.

CARTER  
And who have we here?

BOYLE  
Boyle. Sarah Boyle. And you're  
Carter.

She moves closer.

BOYLE (CONT'D)  
I liked your interviews, too.

Carter grins, a broad, unkindly grin.

CARTER  
Yes. They are rather...  
comprehensive...

Boyle licks her lips.

BOYLE  
Mmmm. Perhaps you should come over  
to my place for an ... interview.

Carter's grin becomes devious.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Less staffed than normal. CREWMAN KERN is at the CONN, LIEUTENANT CALE is at Operations, LIEUTENANT TAYLOR at Tactical, but no one else at a station. Uncertain, a little dodgy, Dojar walks through the room. He goes for the turbolift, pauses, reconsiders. Timidly, but then internally reminding himself, he walks over to Cale.

CALE  
Sir?

Cale is taken aback at the intensity in his eyes, both out of a sense of purpose and knowledge. Dojar straightens himself.

DOJAR  
Put me on the intercom, Lieutenant.

CALE

Yes sir.

He looks around at the bridge for a moment, knowing that now's the time.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- REC LOUNGE

Focus on Quinlan and Elris, still watching Carter and Boyle. Hal is serving drinks in the distance.

ELRIS

I wonder if she knows what she's getting into...

QUINLAN

I wonder if he knows what he's getting into...

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE

Attention, attention, this is Gril Dojar. Ah... um... I have an announcement to make.

The room falls silent as people, including Elris and Quinlan, look up in the general direction of the intercom voice.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)

As most of you are aware, there was a time when I was presumed dead -- but you have since discovered that Y'lan rescued me. Well, something happened to me when he did.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S LAB

Y'lan is working at his table, not seeming to pay much attention to Dojar's voice -- but probably listening and analyzing every word.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE

The Q'tami transporter wasn't compatible for humanoid transport, or so Y'lan's told me. These transporters operate with a partially telepathic method, and humanoid brains are not "attuned" enough for the transporter to transport them properly -- whatever that means. But because of that, my mind was unprotected against what he calls the dimension of thought -- oh, who am I kidding, I don't know what I'm saying.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Same as before. An uncertain pause as Dojar licks his lips. All the eyes in the room are on him.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Silence as people, perplexed and perhaps a bit impatient, listen to Dojar. Grey's expression is one of concern.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE

I saw your minds. Somehow, out of some reason, I peered into the souls of every thinking being in the universe. The information was far too much for my brain to hold in anything approaching its entirety, and I've lost most of it -- but not all of it. And I can remember a lot of information... no

(beat)

Feelings, emanating from a large amount of members of this crew.

There is a distinct surprised and awestruck reaction in the room.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- MISSION OPERATIONS

We pan through the usually bustling room, now deathly silent.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE

I don't know everything about you, and probably not as much as you do, but I know quite a bit -- things I didn't want to know.

We're moving towards Talora's office.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)

For some of you I know your deepest, darkest secrets, secrets I would gladly purge from my mind, but can't. I know far more than I should, and far more than I want to. And I feel you have every right to know that, all of you.

We enter...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TALORA'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Talora is looking up towards the intercom, motionless.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE

Forgive me.

There is a bleep as the intercom goes offline. Slowly, Talora collects her thoughts, now finally registering what Dojar had just said -- the answer to how he'd been acting. She looks up towards the silent intercom with a curious expression, one of instant crystallization, and on that expression we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

The lights are dimmed so that the room is just above barely visible. It is at first glance empty, but one of the chairs has been taken from the table and has been moved away to face one of the windows, its back facing to us. A hand appears from the chair, its back to us, holding a gray cylinder in-between its fingers -- recognizable as a Saurian cigar. It is held in the lopsided way of a cigarette just after a smoke. It returns behind the back of the chair and we hear a faint sucking sound.

There is a hiss as well, and light falls in through the room.

TALORA (O.S.)

We don't need another addict.

The chair half turns around. We can now see the haggard form of Cross is its occupant. He is looking at the cigar he holds in-between his fingers. He rolls it carefully, studying it.

CROSS

(quiet, rasping)

It creates quite a sensation, you know. Nothing so elaborate and unnecessary as a euphoric surge of pleasure. No, no, the Saurians are far more practical, they know what their customers want.

(beat)

It takes away the pain.

Talora steps inside the room, so we can now see her. The door closes behind her.

TALORA

It's only a delusion. And in the long run, all it does is worsen the pain.

CROSS

Worsen? The pain can't get any worse, Talora.

He takes another drag.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I've got nothing to lose.

(beat)

I lost it all already.

Talora takes a seat next to Cross's own.

TALORA

No, you don't. You're Captain of a Federation starship, and you have a duty to your crew. There's something coming, Captain. That's why you're here, that's why you've got your command back, and that's why you have a duty --

CROSS

(interrupting)

Duty? Don't talk to me about duty. I'm sick and tired of duty. I believed in it, once, until I realized just how horrible it can be. How badly it repays you.

With one harsh glance, he tells Talora exactly what he's talking about, exactly what is consuming his mind.

TALORA

That wasn't duty. That was in direct defiance of your orders --

CROSS

(again interrupting)

All in the name of Duty. Or Justice, or Revenge, or whatever other high minded ideal seems to fit. What are these ideals anyway, but euphemisms for murder?

TALORA

Ideals are bent for that use, not made for them. Ideals can be what bind people together. Ideals are the things striven for and maintained to create a better existence.

CROSS

Then what about this ideal, Talora? Punishment. The detainment of criminals. The very fact I'm sitting here before you is proof that that ideal isn't held in high regard.

TALORA

Is that it, then? You want to return to prison?

CROSS

I belong there.

A beat as Cross waves his cigar generally towards the window.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I deserve imprisonment. I am a mass murderer. You know how it feels, Talora, to be a mass murderer? You know how it feels to see each day in the mirror a face universally reviled? You know what it's like to see a monster staring back at you? The souls of the dead gnawing at my own? At least when I was prison there was some sense of retribution. There I'd pay my due, or what I could of it.

(beat)

But now... now I'm out here, amongst the stars. A free man. And you know something? Knowing that makes me feel worse.

Beat. For a moment, Talora is lost for words. Finally:

TALORA

Your own grief shows your compassion.

CROSS

(bitterly)

A bit too late.

TALORA

There are people who would kill thousands, Captain, and go through their lives believing what they did was right. You don't.

CROSS

I'm sure that makes a difference to the Klingons. And their families.

TALORA

No...

(beat)

It doesn't. I'm not saying it ever could. I'm not saying what you did can be undone. We all must bear the burdens of our actions. But it makes a difference about you. You've realized the extent of what you've done.

CROSS

And what difference does that make?

TALORA

Would you kill again?

He shakes his head.

CROSS

No... no... I hope to God not.

TALORA

Then that's a difference. You made a mistake -- a terrible, harsh mistake. But you won't make that mistake again. You don't need to be in prison. Your Federation prisons are places not made for punishment but rehabilitation. If you won't commit that crime again, you no longer need to be there.

Cross snorts.

CROSS

Rehabilitation? It's worse than punishment. All I want to be is back there...

TALORA

Do you?

Cross starts, looks at her. Hardly the answer he'd expected.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Do you need the pain? Is a prison really preferable to being out here? Do you need to be confined in-between four walls? The law doesn't think so. Neither do I.

CROSS

My conscience does.

TALORA

That's not conscience. That's fear.

CROSS

(hoarse)

I have nothing left to fear. I am ready to die.

TALORA

And that's the point. You're ready to die, but are you ready to live?

(beat)

I remember a Neil Cross who could cope with the situations dealt to him. Who might suffer from his personal feelings, but he'd never let them get in the way of his duty -- his duty. The duty he was proud of. And I know, Neil Cross, that you're still in there.

Cross takes another drag.

CROSS

You can only take so many blows,  
Talora, before you fall down.  
Everyone has their limit, and I've  
reached mine.

A long beat.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(quietly)

My son...

(beat)

my family...

(beat)

my wife...

He waves towards the window with the cigar.

CROSS (CONT'D)

and their lives...

He looks up at her.

CROSS (CONT'D)

You can't weather something like  
that, Talora, not for a long shot.

Beat. Cross looks out, mournful.

CROSS (CONT'D)

And I never did weather the loss of  
my son. All I did was kid myself.  
But there was always that hole.  
Always at the back of my mind I could  
see his face...

(beat)

Empty. That's what I was. I was  
empty. There was a hole in my mind,  
my soul, with no sensation. That  
visage you saw Talora, that man you  
call me? A facade. A lie. This,  
Talora, this is how I felt all along.

He moves the cigar close to his face by the side, but doesn't  
use it.

CROSS (CONT'D)

It's just now there are so many holes,  
they're making that mask fall apart.  
I cannot hold it together any longer.

TALORA

It was more than a mask.

CROSS

That's right. It became a skin, I got used to it that much. A false skin. A comfortable protection from the truth. Well, now that skin is shed.

He moves the hand with the cigar away from his face, studying it.

CROSS (CONT'D)

It's amazing I'm still alive at all. Because I've got no feeling, none, within myself.

(beat)

Too many holes.

TALORA

Then what do you intend to do? Wallow away behind closed doors? Be needlessly consumed by your pain? Wait for the end to come?

CROSS

Hasn't it come already? I don't live, Talora, truly, I don't. I breathe, I talk... but life left me long ago. I live a waking death. All I feel now, is pain...

He takes a long, pointed drag on the cigar.

CROSS (CONT'D)

...and its absence.

TALORA

But you can feel and be more than the man you are now. You know that out that door there is a life waiting for you. That there is somewhere you can live.

CROSS

Don't you see? I'm no longer alive. I'm not afraid of living, Talora, I no longer live.

TALORA

But you can. I don't claim to understand what you're going through, but you can. You can enter that world again, live again. You can breathe air into your hollow self.

CROSS

Don the mask again? Yet another skin?

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

(beat)

I don't want to live that lie, Talora.  
Not again.

He holds up the Saurian cigar.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(motioning to the  
cigar)

You think this worsens the pain?

TALORA

It doesn't take a lie to go out there  
and be the man you're meant to be.  
All it takes is strength.

Cross snorts.

CROSS

Strength. It's not a virtue, it's a  
convenience. And for me it's a curse.  
My strength of will killed those  
people out there.

TALORA

Just because you can do something  
bad with your strength doesn't mean  
that you can't do something good.  
And you have. Last year you were  
one of the finest captains in  
Starfleet. You handled the problems  
which came your way with a strength  
of will that brought us through them.  
You made hard decisions that very  
few can. You were a born leader.

She raises his hand before Cross responds.

TALORA (CONT'D)

And I mean before Coular.

CROSS

Perhaps I was, Talora. But not  
anymore. That strength of will you  
talk of has long been sapped. And  
it would be dangerous to put  
confidence in my ability to make  
decisions.

(beat)

I am no longer that man. If I cannot  
respect myself, then why should I  
expect others do to so?

TALORA

But you can respect yourself.

CROSS

A murderer?

TALORA

Is that all there is to you, Captain? Are you only a murderer? Can anyone be only a murderer? That you are is not a reason to respect yourself and is an important part of you, but it isn't all of you. You're a leader. And you're a good one. You have a conscience, and yes, although you've made bad decisions, you've also made a lot of good ones.

CROSS

But which stand out more? The good or the bad?

TALORA

It doesn't matter which ones stand out. What matters is you go on making good ones, and right now, you're not.

CROSS

I have the right to make this decision. It affects only myself.

TALORA

Even if it did only affect you, Captain, it wouldn't make it a right decision -- it's only causing you to suffer. And you should know more than many the importance a starship captain holds. A decision like this doesn't just affect him, but his entire crew.

CROSS

The pain --

TALORA

You can learn to live with it. Any pain of that kind, no matter how harsh, can be lived with -- no matter how barely lived.

(beat)

People need you out there, Neil. You're their Captain. They look to you for guidance. We need you. I need you.

(beat)

I'm not saying the answer to your problems is out that door, but it's a start.

CROSS

There is no answer to my problems.  
Only death.

TALORA

Then you do fear life, if you intend  
to end it.

Cross waves his hand.

CROSS

No, I don't. You're right, I must  
bear this. And I'll bear it alone.

Talora pauses before replying, wondering whether or not to  
say it.

TALORA

No, you won't. We didn't disobey  
your orders when we should have.  
Our inaction holds some of that guilt.

Cross looks into her eyes mournfully.

CROSS

My God... I'd never considered...

She nods.

TALORA

We share your guilt.

Cross looks down at his hands.

CROSS

They don't just stain themselves,  
but they stain the hands of others.  
(beat)

Just one more spot on my soul. I  
don't just butcher, I make butchers.  
And I can't tell which is worse.

TALORA

A ship can't function without its  
Captain.

CROSS

You'd make a good enough one. Better  
then I could.

TALORA

It's not my place. I'm a Romulan  
officer on an exchange, not Starfleet.  
And it's unnecessary -- there is a  
perfectly good captain right here.  
He just won't admit it.

(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Do you remember our first mission?  
The first contact with the Q'tami?

Cross nods.

CROSS

Vividly.

TALORA

Afterward, you talked me into not  
resigning. You told me that I should  
learn from my mistakes.

CROSS

That was different.

TALORA

Was it?

CROSS

You attacked what you thought was  
the enemy.

TALORA

With about as much provocation as  
you did. Less, actually.

CROSS

But I was firing on civilians!

TALORA

And I fired on innocents. And I  
knew far less about their potential  
guilt than you did. All unknown  
aliens.

CROSS

(countering)

Potentially hostile.

TALORA

It beats around the point, Captain.  
You made a mistake you will not  
readily make again, and as that's  
the only truly serious mistake you've  
made as Captain of the Enterprise, I  
believe you're qualified to properly  
resume your post.

(beat)

More qualified, in fact, than you  
were previously.

Beat.

CROSS

I never thought I'd see anyone have  
such trust in me since what I'd done.

TALORA

I don't place my trust lightly, sir.  
I put it only in those I know are  
worthy of it.

Cross looks at her for a long beat, and sighs. He takes a drag on the cigar, stands up, turns towards the window. He looks out into the stars. He stands there, deep in thought. Gradually we can see a change of expression come over him, a confidence, a remnant of the man he once was -- a partial remnant, weak and unsure, but there.

CROSS

(quietly)

I owe a debt to the entirety of this  
crew for staining them with my guilt.  
For blackening them with my name. I  
owe them a service... a duty.

He smiles ironically at his choice of words.

CROSS (CONT'D)

It's probably the only debt I can  
pay. I have done so much wrong. If  
I am still to live out here... maybe  
it's time I started doing things  
right.

(beat)

It's the least I can do.

He turns to face her. Talora is about to respond, but he motions for her not to with a wave of his hand.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(gravely)

But you're also wrong, Talora. Going  
out that door won't return my life.  
I'll be the same man you see now,  
only with purpose. A tool more than  
a man.

(beat)

The knife has cut too deep.

TALORA

Perhaps, someday...

CROSS

There won't be a someday. Just as  
there won't be a someday when those  
families will fully recover from  
their grief.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

Just as there won't be a someday  
when the dead will rise to their feet.  
Not every story has a happy ending,  
Talora. This is as good as this one  
will get.

He points at his heart.

CROSS (CONT'D)

This wound doesn't heal.

Cross, with a BEAT, turns away.

CROSS (CONT'D)

And neither will theirs. That is  
something I must never forget.

She looks up at him with sympathy.

TALORA

(quietly)  
I understand.

Cross looks at her with intensity.

CROSS

No. You don't. I hope you never  
do.

A long beat. Cross turns away from her.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to offload this on you --

TALORA

Don't be. I came in here expecting  
this. And it's my duty, as first  
officer, to ensure the mental health  
of the crew. Now more than ever  
this ship needs her captain.

Cross takes an intake of breath. He steadies himself.

CROSS

Then she shall have him.

He drops the Saurian cigar to the ground and crunches it  
under his foot. It squashes with a crackle and spark. He  
removes his foot and smoke wisps up from the crushed metal.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(nodding to the  
remnants)  
It wasn't that good, anyway. There  
was too much pain for it to remove.

Cross turns towards the door, pauses, turns back to Talora.

CROSS (CONT'D)

You weren't right, but you weren't far wrong, either, you know. I am not fearful of life -- but I don't feel I deserve it. Simply being out here is hard enough to cope with, taking advantage of that fact seemed to make it worse.

Talora glances down at the crushed cigar before responding.

TALORA

You said it yourself, Captain: It can't worsen.

Cross nods, somber, turns towards the door -- and with two short, firm strides, strides out of the room, out of his confinement, out of his self-made prison both physical and mental, and back into the real world, back into the world of lights and sounds, back into Life.

On the door closing behind him we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- QUINLAN'S QUARTERS

Empty, for the most part. A bag at the corner. Quinlan and Elris enter, mid-conversation.

ELRIS  
Well, what is it?

Quinlan goes towards the bag.

QUINLAN  
It wasn't easy to get. I took this  
from the memorial.  
(beat)  
But I felt it was worth it.

She opens the bag. Slowly, gingerly, she takes something out. It is a metal plaque -- we can only see it's back. She hangs it up on the wall, and we turn to look at it -- It's the plaque of the U.S.S. NIGHTINGALE.

Elris reacts. On it we can see a quote:

"Was it a vision, or a waking dream? Fled is  
that music: -- Do I wake or sleep?"  
-- JOHN KEATS

QUINLAN (CONT'D)  
(more to herself than  
Elris)  
I'm surprised nobody else had taken  
it already.

Elris puts a hand on her shoulder.

ELRIS  
You need it more than anyone.

Quinlan turns around to her.

QUINLAN  
Yes. As a reminder...  
(beat)  
For the good times, and the bad.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- GREY'S QUARTERS

Grey has unpacked what little he has, which is still substantially little. He walks over to a TABLE at the corner of the room that we note wasn't there before. He bends over under it, presses one or two things and stands up.

A 3-D image SHIMMERS into a view of a beachhead, the countryside. On the bottom right hand corner there is a floating 3-D label: "Robin Hood's Bay."

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

This time the lights are notably brighter, as was normal. Sitting around the table are Y'lan, Grey, Dojar, Quinlan, Elris and Talora. There is a distinct air of at ease and camaraderie in the room.

GREY

(to Dojar)

All right, wise guy. What was I doing, Earth Standard, on the 3rd of March 2392?

Dojar sighs in mock agitation.

ELRIS

What color was my dress on the first day of school?

DOJAR

I don't remember anything like that.

QUINLAN

What about you, Y'lan? You have anything to ask him?

Y'lan considers for a moment.

Y'LAN

Could you give me an approximate catalogue of the major known sentient species in the proto-galaxy designated Ralcatl-3489?

DOJAR

Hey now -- that's not fair! You never even went to Ralcatl-3489!

Y'LAN

Of course not. Why would I ask about something I already know?

DOJAR

I can't remember anything about all those people and places off in distant galaxies. My memory couldn't hold onto them. The only ones I can are people I've known -- like you.

Y'LAN

Then I have nothing more to ask.

There is a slight burst of laughter, which then dies down.

QUINLAN  
(more somberly)  
You know a lot.

Dojar sighs.

DOJAR  
Yeah. I do.

The door opens from behind them and Y'LAN, QUINLAN, ELRIS and TALORA turn to face him.

CROSS  
Sorry I'm late.

Cross walks through the room as a more serious conversation begins to build and sits down at the appropriate seat -- but we hear nothing. The camera gradually pans up for a bird's eye view.

CROSS (V.O.)  
There's always a part of someone  
that yearns for a home, a familiar  
surrounding to latch themselves to.  
Even when we deny our want, try to  
avoid it, it's always there.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CARTER'S QUARTERS

Quite similar to the quarters throughout the ship, but substantially less lived in -- sterile. Carter is busy at work at the computer terminal as we close in on him. He's typing at an incredible speed, and seems lost to everything else.

CROSS (V.O.)  
Our homes change, of course. They  
evolve, they grow, and the reality  
moves further and further away from  
the memory. But we'll always have  
our homes, even if we can't return  
to them -- and if we can return, not  
fully.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S LAB

Y'lan is busy at work at his table.

CROSS (V.O.)  
But as our homes change, so do we.  
(MORE)

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

Not for the same reasons, of course,  
and not with the same results -- but  
we move through time just as they  
do. And that road offers us many  
paths -- but only one chance to take  
them.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

A busy, bustling room. Grey is darting around the room,  
keeping everything working.

CROSS (V.O.)

And every road has its consequences.  
Every action has its response. We  
may not like the reaction, we  
sometimes do not expect it, but it's  
there -- because of the road we took.  
We may, looking back, have decided  
that another road would have been  
much better and easier to take...

(beat)

But our chance is already over.  
That road is untaken.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Elris and her staff are at work, but not particularly pressed.

CROSS (V.O.)

We can't wish away what we did.  
There is no way to change it. Our  
decisions, however much we regret  
them, are decisions we must live  
with. We must not keep glancing  
over our shoulder at what might have  
been and never will be.

\*

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cale is at Operations, Dojar at Tactical, Quinlan at the  
CONN, and Talora is in the First Officer's chair.

CROSS (V.O.)

Instead, we must look ahead at the  
road that unwinds before us. We  
must look at the opportunities that  
we can take, not the ones we'd like  
to.

(MORE)

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

And we must learn from the errors we make as we go down that road, avoiding a repetition, instead of praying that it had never happened.

The turbolift doors part. Cross enters as the crew turns to face him.

DOJAR

Captain on deck.

Cross nods, walks through the room. He nods to Cale... he walks down the aisle, nodding to Quinlan and Dojar... he walks up towards the center, nods to Talora...

CROSS (V.O.)

Because if we don't, we're in nothing more than a living death.

CROSS

(to Quinlan)

Is our course set?

QUINLAN

(looking at her controls)

Aye, Captain. Course is set.

Cross affirms... and stands in front of his chair. He pauses for a moment, a long moment. Still uncomfortable, and noticed only by Talora, he seats himself.

CROSS

Engage.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ENTERPRISE

The lady sweeps overhead above us, a gigantic, majestic spaceship. We watch her move ahead from her underbelly, and we slowly swing around to face her from behind. There is then a BLAST, and the ship jumps to warp.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END