

STAR TREK

RENAISSANCE

"The Long Night of the Souls"

Written By
James Sampson

Episode #: 2x22
Published April 28, 2003

This teleplay is originally from
www.startrekrenaissance.com

"Star Trek" and related names are registered
trademarks of Paramount Pictures, Inc.
This original work of fiction is
written solely for non-profit purposes.
Copyright 2003 by The Renaissance Group.
All Rights Reserved.

TEASER

SMASH CUT IN:

EXT. SPACE

Three Klingon Birds of Prey swoop past our point of view, coming around for another attack on the beleaguered Enterprise.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CROSS and TALORA are at their usual positions as is CALE. They are looking very harassed as the bridge shakes again from the Klingon shots.

CALE

They're coming round again, Captain.

CROSS

I don't know about you, Commander, but I am getting tired of Klingons attacking us today. Cross to Engineering, why are we not kicking these Klingon's asses?

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

There are frantic scenes as engineers are running in all directions. Steam is issuing from several places, and generally there is chaos. Every so often the ship shakes from another blast from the Klingons. Through this GREY issues, sweat pouring down his front.

GREY

Sorry, Captain, the QIC is still non-operational, we're working on it.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

Then work on it harder, otherwise the Klingons are going to be peeling us off their viewscreens. Cross out.

GREY

(muttering)

Work harder, yeah, why didn't I think of that?

(he looks round)

Boyle, come here.

BOYLE

What is it?

The pace of their conversation is lightning fast, as they have no time to lose.

GREY

The induction core. We need to fix it.

BOYLE

No kidding.

GREY

Work with me here, let's think about this logically. What caused it to blow?

BOYLE

The confinement shells on the Klingon's disruptors had the same quantum oscillation frequency as the quantum membrane in the core.

GREY

The induction attenuators can shift the oscillation frequency in the membrane to control output, right?

BOYLE

Yeah, exactly. But how can we use that?

GREY

(muses for a minute)

We could use the attenuators to alter the frequency and prevent the disruptors from affecting the core again!

BOYLE

We'd be risking induction overload.

GREY

Unlikely, don't forget there's two attenuators for redundancy.

BOYLE

Okay, I'll got the attenuators.

GREY

I'll begin start up.

BOYLE

Optimistic, aren't we?

GREY

I always prefer to think positively. Get moving.

We follow Boyle as she runs through Engineering towards a specific console. As she passes a console, the ensign there, HILLMAN, speaks to her.

HILLMAN

Lieutenant, have you noticed a fluctuation in the nav deflector?

BOYLE

I don't have time. Actually, Hillman, come with me.

HILLMAN

Yes, Lieutenant.

He follows her to a two man console, right by the warp core.

BOYLE

Set the lower attenuator to 650 millicochranes, 400 gigahertz oscillation rate --

HILLMAN

Why?

BOYLE

Don't argue, just do it.

He shrugs and starts working at the console, Boyle next to him.

HILLMAN

We're attempting to reinitialize the core, aren't we?

BOYLE

Got it in one.

HILLMAN

We risk induction overload.

BOYLE

Apparently not.

HILLMAN

(nods)

And once we get it up and running, then I suppose we're going to blast the Klingons out of the sky?

BOYLE

I'm no tactician, but I'd say that was the general plan.

HILLMAN

(shaking his head)

I remember the days when we talked through our problems, didn't solve them with phasers and torpedoes.

BOYLE

Ancient history. Not how the Federation works nowadays.

HILLMAN

Well, it should do. They were better days.

BOYLE

Simpler, anyway.

HILLMAN

(firmly)

Better. People were more decent somehow, less quick to settle arguments with their fists. It was a cleaner galaxy.

BOYLE

Unfortunately, not all of us have the option of adopting the moral high ground.

HILLMAN

More's the pity. There, done.

BOYLE

Me too.

(taps commbadge)

Boyle to Grey, we're ready.

We cut to another part of Engineering as Grey is tapping at a console.

GREY

Acknowledged. Grey to all engineers,
(through the comm his
voice echoes around
Engineering)

Shield your eyes, we're powering up the QIC!

He turns away as the warp core begins to glow a brilliant white...

GREY (CONT'D)

(shouting)

It's working!

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross, Talora, and Cale as before.

CALE
(triumphantly)
Captain, phaser banks are online!

CROSS
Fire, Mister Cale!

EXT. SPACE

Orange beams shoot out of the Enterprise at the Klingon ships, missing completely.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

As before; Cross, Talora, and Cale. The Klingons come round for another attack.

CALE
Captain, I missed.

Cross raises his eyes silently to Talora.

CROSS
Try again, Mister Cale.

EXT. SPACE

Again, the Enterprise shoots at the Klingons, this time hitting one ship a glancing blow.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

As before.

CROSS
Getting better, Mister Cale. At this rate the Klingons will only have destroyed us four times before you get a direct hit.

Cale looks desperate, but at this point:

DOJAR (O.S.)
Move aside.

We see that DOJAR has entered the bridge. He pushes Cale to one side, and takes his position.

DOJAR (CONT'D)
Permission to give the Klingons a taste of their own --

CROSS

Just get on with it!

Dojar nods.

DOJAR

Yes, sir.

EXT. SPACE

This time the Enterprise's beams arc out and hit their target, striking all three ships. After a moment, another three arcs hit their targets again. The Klingon ships spark and shudder, before turning tail and warping away.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

As before; Cross, Talora, Dojar, and Cale.

DOJAR

Sir, the Klingons are retreating.

CROSS

Good shooting, Lieutenant.

HELM OFFICER

I've laid in a pursuit course,
Captain.

CROSS

No, let them go. Let's not tempt
fate, just get the hell out of here.
Stand down, everybody.

The whole bridge seems to breathe a sigh of relief. Cale self consciously adjusts his uniform.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it, Mister Cale,
Klingon ships can be tricky buggers
to hit.

CALE

I'll do better next time, sir, I
promise.

CROSS

I'm sure you will --
(to Talora, quietly)
Couldn't do much worse.
(taps comm badge)
Good work, Erik. How'd you manage
it?

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Grey walks round to where Boyle and Hillman are still working at their console.

GREY

Sir, we had to pull a couple of shortcuts, but it looks like we --

Suddenly alarms start blaring most startlingly all over engineering. Steam appears from the warp core.

GREY (CONT'D)

What the -- ?

BOYLE

(yelling over the alarms)

We've got an induction overload here!

GREY

(yelling urgently)

Induction overload! Everybody out. Now!

Rapidly, the crew file for the exits, but Hillman doesn't move.

GREY (CONT'D)

Hillman, that means you too.

HILLMAN

Sir, I can shut the core down from here.

GREY

Leave it Hillman, we can manage this outside!

HILLMAN

Sir, we'll lose precious seconds, the damage will be much worse if we let the core over --

GREY

I don't care, it's not worth the risk, it could blow any --

ANGLE ON INDUCTION CORE

The warp core suddenly SHATTERS, glass and fire spreading out from it. Hillman is caught in the blast, and goes down screaming in a shower of glass and steam. Fire erupts through the whole of Engineering, Grey diving out of the way of a ball of flame behind a console.

As emergency sprinklers are deployed, the rest of Engineering goes briefly dark, before being lit by emergency lighting, which combines with the fire to create a red, hellish effect. Grey pulls himself up from the console, and looks over to Hillman.

GREY (CONT'D)

Hillman!

He moves towards the ensign, who is covered in glass and blackened from the flames, and is unmoving.

GREY (CONT'D)

Hillman, can you hear me? Dammit!

He moves over to a console, and starts tapping at it.

GREY (CONT'D)

Grey to Elris, medical emergency,
I'm beaming someone straight to --

ELRIS'S COMM VOICE

(interrupts)
Negative, we --

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

ELRIS, TORAN, QUINLAN and HAL are hurrying down a corridor, Elris still speaking. We see the rest of the medical staff helping the various patients along.

ELRIS

-- Are not in Sickbay.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Where should we bring him then?

ELRIS

The recreation lounge.

HAL

(surprised)
You've got to be kidding.

ELRIS

When you think of a better idea, let me know. Erik, did you hear that?

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Recreation lounge, got it. We'll bring him down.

TORAN

I hope you know what you're doing...

ELRIS

So do I...

They walk on.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

As the flames die down, with only the warp core still ablaze, Grey looks at Hillman's prostrate form, still unmoving, in amongst the black billowing plumes of smoke. Sweat pours down his forehead. Behind him, the other engineers slowly begin to come back in, looking at the devastation. He signals to an ensign, BLAKE, who comes over.

GREY

Blake, will you beam up to Doctor Elris with Hillman? Tell them what's happened.

BLAKE

Of course, but why don't you go?

GREY

(looking around at
engineering)

I don't know why, but I've got a feeling I'm going to be needed here...

Off his expression we slowly:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Elris, Toran, and several medical personnel stream in hurriedly. A few carry bits of equipment. Hal follows them in looking worried. The nurses help the rest of the patients.

ELRIS

(indicating with her arms)

Okay, we'll set up areas here, here and here. Can we start pushing tables together, they'll have to double up tonight as beds.

TORAN

I contacted stores, they're bringing up some blankets and first aid kits.

ELRIS

Good. It's not much but it'll have to do. Where are we on Ensign Hillman?

NURSE

He's here.

They look round. Ensign Blake has appeared, supporting the barely conscious Hillman.

ELRIS

Good, bring him over here. Doctor Toran?

She gestures to another table, and Toran pushes it up against the one Elris is by. Blake brings Hillman over and lays him down on it.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

What happened?

BLAKE

He was by the warp core when it finally gave out, got caught in the blast.

ELRIS

Why the hell did the warp core give out,? It's not like we were facing an armada.

BLAKE

Long story.

ELRIS

Figures.

We see the ensign's face for the first time: it is bleeding, with gashes over them, as though many splinters have been smashed into his face. He is groaning slowly. Elris runs a tricorder over him as she speaks.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Ensign Hillman, Todd, can you hear me?

HILLMAN

(weakly)

Yeah...

ELRIS

It's Doctor Elris here, we're in Sick --

(hesitates)

-- in Sickbay. How are you feeling?

HILLMAN

Not too great.

ELRIS

Okay, we're going to try and do something about that. We're going to have to operate on you, try and patch you up.

Hillman nods, then tries to speak again.

HILLMAN

But firstly I need to... I need to speak...

Suddenly the tricorder starts to alarm, at the same time as he throws up -- the vomit is mixed in with a large quantity of blood.

ELRIS

(urgently)

We've got an arrest here, medics, we need a crash cart, now!

A couple of the nurses hurry over to her as well as Toran. We focus on Blake watching the scene helplessly as suddenly everything goes into slow motion, a visual effect, and all sound is lost.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's log, Stardate 79821.6.
The Klingons have fled, but who knows for how long?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Quinlan walking down it slowly, still showing the marks of her exertions from the previous episode. Again, all is in slow motion. She enters her quarters and slumps onto her bed.

CROSS (V.O.)

The crew are shattered, after an emotional twenty four hours, but there is to be no respite for them. The QIC has blown, and we are sitting ducks until it is back up and running. Hopefully, the Klingons will be too busy running away that they don't realize why we're not moving... hopefully. In the meantime, I have ordered all none-essential personnel to rest, while they can.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

GREY is walking along an upper level of Engineering, and then down a ladder.

CROSS (V.O.)

Lieutenant Grey and his Engineering team have been assessing the damage, and he has ordered double shifts for everyone to try and get the core back on line. He assures me it can be done in eight hours, but in the meantime we just sit here, waiting, hoping against hope we are not attacked again. It's going to be a long night.

The sound returns as Boyle fills him in on the damage.

BOYLE

We also have leakage in the coolant bay, a ripped conduit leading to the primary energy converter, and what looks like a medley of EPS conduit ruptures.

GREY

Great. The team's assembled?

BOYLE

Yes.

He gets to the bottom of the ladder where the staff are waiting to be briefed.

GREY

Good. All right, you've all been given assignments, we have to work quickly and efficiently. We're still deep in Klingon territory, so not only do we have to work quickly, we must also be ready for another attack. Our primary concerns are to get the core up and running, and to repair the hull breach up on Deck 8, as at the moment Sickbay is off limits. I don't need to remind you that Ensign Hillman is waiting to get there. Lieutenant Boyle will take teams alpha and delta, I'm with teams beta and omega. Alpha and delta will be working on the breach, while we'll be staying here trying to get the slipstream back on line. Let's get to work.

The teams mumble as they split up.

BOYLE

Alpha and delta, follow me.

They set off, as Grey's teams start to splinter off, heading for their own areas in the main engineering section. As Grey heads to a console, Blake enters.

BLAKE

Lieutenant.

GREY

Blake. Come with me.

Grey enters a Jefferies Tube, followed by Blake.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- JEFFERIES TUBE -- CONTINUOUS

Grey crawls along, followed by Blake.

GREY

How's Hillman?

BLAKE

I don't know, sir. They got his heart going again, and the last I saw was Doctor Elris had just started operating.

Grey stops and looks at him.

GREY

Operating? In the rec lounge?

Blake nods.

GREY (CONT'D)

Christ. We have to work quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Elris and Toran are working over Hillman. After the attack, now things seem more calm, and if it wasn't for the fact they were in the rec lounge, you would think it was a normal operating theater. Around them, several nurses are running tricorders and scanners over him, doing all the things that normally would be taken care of by the biobeds. Several of the tricorders are making a cacophony of noise.

NURSE

Pressure still falling.

ELRIS

Dammit, I can't find where this blood is coming from.

Her hands are shaking as she runs her own tricorder over his body. Toran gently holds her hands.

TORAN

Just calm down, don't panic.

ELRIS

I've lost two patients today, I'll be damned if I'm going to lose another one.

TORAN

If the tear is too small, it could be Elris's tricorder starts to beep.

ELRIS

There. It's there, his right lung. There's something in them, some shard of metal.

TORAN

A shard flying at high enough pressure could penetrate that deep.

ELRIS

Okay, let's go in, get it out.

TORAN

Are you sure you want to go in that deep, here? It's not exactly sanitary.

ELRIS

This man will die if we don't.

(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

We don't have any choice. Nurse, we need a ten micron cutter.

The nurse looks at her.

NURSE

We don't have one.

ELRIS

What do you mean we don't have one?

NURSE

I didn't think we were going to be doing any surgery.

If the situation were less desperate, Elris would have stopped and counted to ten.

ELRIS

(quickly, strained)
Doctor Toran?

TORAN

I got it.

ELRIS

Hurry.

Toran hurries over to where Hal is, sitting miserably.

TORAN

Hal, where are your replicators?

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- QUINLAN'S QUARTERS

She is lying on her bed, tossing and turning. Finally:

QUINLAN

Sod it.

She gets up and walks out of her room.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross and Talora are at their usual stations, as Quinlan emerges from the turbolift.

QUINLAN

Captain, permission to resume my post.

CROSS

(raising an eyebrow)
Permission denied. What are you
doing here?

QUINLAN

Sir, I can't sleep.

CROSS

Lieutenant, I ordered everyone to
get rest, including you.

QUINLAN

I don't think I can, sir.

CROSS

Try. You're dismissed.

Quinlan hesitates for a moment, looking as though she's going
to argue the point, but then nods.

QUINLAN

Yes, Captain.
(she turns back)
Captain, I'm sorry. About what
happened.

CROSS

(softly)
We all have skeletons in our closet,
Lieutenant. I know for a fact that
even Commander Talora here has some
things in her past she's not proud
of -- isn't that right, Commander?

TALORA

(stiffly)
I would prefer not to comment,
Captain.

CROSS

I'll take that as a yes. Get moving,
Quinlan.

QUINLAN

Yes sir. You know where I am if you
need me.

She turns and walks out. Cross looks wryly at Talora.

CROSS

I don't suppose there's any point of
ordering you to do the same?

TALORA

You suppose correctly. What about
yourself?

CROSS

You've got to be kidding. There's no chance of rest until we're out of harm's way.

TALORA

I agree.

They sit quietly for a minute.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Please don't tell Quinlan I have a shameful past.

Cross grins at her.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Quinlan walks down it. Around the opposite corner appears Dojar.

DOJAR

Hey.

QUINLAN

Hey.

DOJAR

Where you heading?

QUINLAN

My quarters, I guess.

DOJAR

Yeah, you need some sleep.

QUINLAN

Some chance.

DOJAR

Worried about the Klingons?

QUINLAN

No, I'm too buzzed. My body's saturated with adrenaline. It's like I've drunk ten cups of coffee straight off.

She notices Dojar's pained expression.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Are you all right? You don't look too good yourself.

DOJAR

It's nothing, just got a killer headache.

Can't shake it.

QUINLAN

Been to see Lea?

DOJAR

No, they're too busy at the moment. Besides, it's more a Q'tami kind of headache.

QUINLAN

Go and pester Y'lan about it then.

DOJAR

I don't like to.

QUINLAN

Why not? Go on. Besides, he doesn't mind.

DOJAR

(correcting)
He doesn't care.

QUINLAN

Same difference.

DOJAR

Yeah, I suppose. Besides, I don't like to talk to Y'lan about it, it makes me... uncomfortable.

(beat)

It just brings back the whole nightmare to me.

QUINLAN

Want me to come with you?

DOJAR

No thanks, I'll be okay. If you're looking for something to do, I think Lieutenant Grey would welcome any assistance you can offer.

Quinlan hesitates, thinking about her recent history with him.

QUINLAN

I'm not so sure about that.

DOJAR

Why not?

QUINLAN

Not something I want to talk about.
We have a... a thing.

DOJAR

Have a fight?

QUINLAN

Kind of.

DOJAR

Doesn't sound like you. Usually,
you have a problem with someone, you
go in with all guns blazing, sometimes
literally. Besides, I really think
they could use your help.

QUINLAN

Yeah, you're right.

She looks determined.

DOJAR

There you go.

QUINLAN

Thanks, Dojar.

DOJAR

Sure thing. I'll see you later.

QUINLAN

You too. Hope your headache clears
up.

She walks on. Dojar looks suddenly tired.

DOJAR

So do I.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ENTERPRISE

Battered and scorched in several places, the Enterprise holds
position... waiting.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Elris and Toran are operating. The nurses continue to run
tricorders over him, but they are bleeping less often. There
is now more an atmosphere of a calm operating room.

ELRIS

Finally. I didn't think that artery
was ever going to stop. Let's have
a look now.

She slowly prods around with her scalpel.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Where are you?

Toran looks on, concerned.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Quinlan walks in, and looks around. People are working quickly but quietly. She goes over to Blake.

QUINLAN

Hey, Blake. How's Hillman doing?

BLAKE

Don't know, Lieutenant. He's in surgery.

QUINLAN

Where's Erik?

Blake gestures to a console, where Grey is tapping away furiously.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

(she walks over to
him)

What did the poor console do to you?

GREY

What?

QUINLAN

The way you're battering that thing,
I guessed it must have done something
pretty bad to you.

GREY

Quinlan, I don't have the time at
the moment.

QUINLAN

That's why I'm here. To offer my
services.

GREY

(looks at her
doubtfully)

Shouldn't you be getting some rest?

QUINLAN

No, I shouldn't, why do people keep
asking me that? I'm here to help.

Blake comes over to Grey.

BLAKE

Lieutenant, omega's just come back from checking out the warp nacelle.

GREY

How's it looking?

BLAKE

Not great. They're going to head back up there now. We could really do with some assistance.

GREY

Yeah, tell them I'll be up in a few minutes, I just want to get this sorted out.

BLAKE

Anything I can do?

GREY

No, it's just there's some lag in the subspace transceiver array. The data flow is extremely bogged down, I just want to right it. It'll bother me if I don't.

BLAKE

All right, sir, see you in a few minutes.

He walks off. Quinlan looks at him.

QUINLAN

Subspace transceiver array?

GREY

Yeah, it's our connection with the outside world, linked up to the subspace comms network. Want to make sure we're getting any information we might need.

QUINLAN

I know what it is, thank you very much. I was wondering why you're bothering with it.

Grey walks over to another console.

GREY

You know, I know I'm not an Engineer, but surely compared to the fact that one of the warp nacelles is busted,

(MORE)

GREY (CONT'D)
the speed of our internet connection
isn't really that important.
(tapping at the console)
You're right.

QUINLAN
Really?

GREY
You're not an engineer. Now please
leave me alone.

He walks off, calling out to Blake as he goes.

GREY (CONT'D)
Blake, I need to take a trip to the
transceiver array. I'll be five
minutes.

BLAKE
All right, sir.

Grey exits, and Quinlan looks around, at a loss on what to
do.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise hangs motionless, dead in the water. There
is a stillness to it that is unnerving.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Toran and Elris breathe a sigh of relief, and walk away from
Hillman's unconscious body, as the nurses bustle around him.
It is evident that the operation is over. Hal walks over to
them.

HAL
All done?

ELRIS
For the moment. Look.

She holds up a tiny shard of metal.

HAL
That was it?

ELRIS
Yeah. That's all it can take, to
snuff out a life. Sobering thought.

HAL

Not a very nice one. Will he be okay now?

ELRIS

We've done all we can for the moment. Now it's up to his body to heal itself, and I don't know whether it's up to the task.

HAL

How soon will we know?

TORAN

We'll know by morning. The next few hours will be critical.

Hal nods and walks over to his bar.

TORAN (CONT'D)

Can I get you a coffee?

ELRIS

Please.

He nods and walks over to Hal's bar. Elris turns back and looks at Hillman's body.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

(echoing Toran, softly)

Yeah, the next few hours will be critical...

On her worried expression we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is still not moving.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Dojar walks along it. He stops at a door and presses the chime. There is a pause, and then the door opens, revealing Y'LAN.

DOJAR

Hi.

Y'LAN

(shortly)

Yes?

DOJAR

Erm... I was just in the neighborhood,
and thought I'd drop by to say hi.

Y'LAN

Do you need me to be able to say
"hi"?

DOJAR

Well, no, but I thought it would be
nice. You know, friendly.

Y'lan stares impassively at him.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Can I come in for a minute?

Y'lan moves aside, allowing Dojar access to...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S LAB -- CONTINUOUS

The room is a mess, with high tech looking bits of equipment strewn all over the place. Dojar looks around, while Y'lan returns to his table.

DOJAR

Wow, what happened here? It looks
like a bomb hit it.

Y'LAN

I am not aware of any explosive device
detonating in the immediate vicinity.

DOJAR

Figure of speech, Y'lan. It means,
this place is a mess.

Y'LAN

Mess?

DOJAR

Yeah, you know, untidy.

Y'LAN

So?

Beat.

DOJAR

I guess there's nothing to say to that.

Y'LAN

Does it offend your aesthetic principles?

DOJAR

Well, no.

Y'LAN

Then I do not see the matter needs any further discussion.

Y'lan continues to tinker at his table, ignoring Dojar. Dojar looks at a loose end.

DOJAR

(trying)

Well, this is... nice...

No response. Dojar sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Blake is busy at the warp core, doing what looks like some futuristic soldering with a laser, when Quinlan approaches, looking cheerful but rather grubby.

QUINLAN

I cleaned out the exhaust pipe. Exactly how long has it been since you've been in there?

BLAKE

By the looks of you, too long.

QUINLAN

What can I do now?

BLAKE

Er... I think we're all right now, thanks, Jen. We're going to be getting up to the nacelle in a few minutes, if Grey ever decides to return.

QUINLAN

He's not still at that relay thing, is he?

BLAKE

Yep. Told us he'd be five minutes, and that was three quarters of an hour ago.

QUINLAN

Hmmm... leave it to me.

She turns and walks away.

BLAKE

I'm not sure that's such a good...

but she has gone

BLAKE (CONT'D)

...Idea.

He sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SUBSPACE TRANSCEIVER ARRAY

Grey is underneath a console, playing with some wiring, when up from a hole in the floor Quinlan appears.

GREY

Blake, I told you I'd be...

He looks up.

GREY (CONT'D)

Oh. It's you. What do you want now?

QUINLAN

Charming.

GREY

I don't have time to be charming at the moment, Jen, I've got too much to do.

QUINLAN

So I've heard, so what are you doing still in here? That warp nacelle won't fix itself.

GREY

I know, but I really need to get this fixed.

QUINLAN

No, you really don't.

Grey comes out from under the console.

GREY

Did Blake send you?

QUINLAN

(hesitates)

No.

GREY

I knew it.
(he taps his commbadge)
Grey to Blake.

BLAKE'S COMM VOICE

Blake here, sir.

GREY

Blake, you're demoted to Ensign.
Grey out.

QUINLAN

Very funny.

GREY

I wasn't joking.

QUINLAN

Well, then, you definitely need to get back then, as there's no ranking officer in Engineering now.

GREY

They'll cope.

QUINLAN

I don't get it, what's the big deal anyway?

GREY

I don't know, I guess it's just irritating me. There's a simple problem here, and I can't figure out what's causing it. It'll just annoy me until I work it out.

QUINLAN

Fine, that'll make two of us.

GREY

What do you mean?

QUINLAN

I'll annoy you too until you figure it out.

I'm not moving until you get out of here.

GREY

I can demote you too, you know.

QUINLAN

I'd like to see you try.

Grey opens his mouth to reply, then thinks better of it. He returns under his console.

GREY

I almost wish the Klingons would attack again.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S LAB

Dojar is still standing watching as Y'lan is doing something with one of his pieces of equipment.

DOJAR

So... how you been? We haven't seen much of you recently.

Y'LAN

I have been occupied.

DOJAR

So I can see.

Y'lan walks over to him, offering him a piece of equipment.

Y'LAN

Hold this.

Dojar holds it. Several cables stretch from it to another large piece on the other side of the room. Y'lan goes over to it and starts tinkering.

DOJAR

What are you doing?

Y'LAN

It is none of your concern.

(MORE)

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

I am just making some modifications
to some of my equipment.

DOJAR

(bluntly)

Y'lan, I've got another of these
headaches.

Beat.

Y'LAN

I know.

DOJAR

How do you know?

Y'LAN

We have a connection.

DOJAR

Right, the whole Q'tami mind thing.

Y'LAN

Yes.

DOJAR

The thing is, you told me they would
be getting better.

Y'LAN

They will, in time.

DOJAR

How much more time do I need? It's
been, what, three months now?

Y'LAN

You forget, the Q'tami have a much
different evaluation of time than
you do.

DOJAR

Yeah but, if anything, they seem to
be getting worse.

Y'LAN

It is just the residual effect. It
will pass. Your mind has been put
under a massive strain, it cannot
recover from that rapidly.

DOJAR

If you say so.

He is beginning to find holding the heavy equipment a bit
much.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

How much longer do I have to hold
this?

Y'LAN

You may put it down when you wish.

DOJAR

Then why am I holding it in the first
place?

Y'LAN

I have noticed that humanoids like
to feel useful. Thus I gave you a
task, to placate your feelings of
inadequacy.

Dojar puts the machinery down.

DOJAR

Great, patronized by a Q'tami, that's
all need. Good night, Y'lan.

He turns to leave.

Y'LAN

I will genuinely require your
assistance if you remain a little
longer.

He stops and turns back.

DOJAR

Really?

Y'LAN

Yes.

DOJAR

Okay, fine. What do I have to do?

Y'lan comes over carrying another piece of machinery.

Y'LAN

Hold this.

Dojar makes a face.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Elris is standing over Hillman's unconscious form, doing
another scan. She administers a hypospray, before returning
to sit by Toran. She sighs, running her hands over her face.

TORAN

How's he doing?

ELRIS

His BP is a little better, that's the only change.

She closes her eyes for a moment.

TORAN

You all right?

ELRIS

Yeah. Long day.

TORAN

I'm sure it's not the first you've had here.

ELRIS

No, and it won't be the last.

She reaches for her coffee cup, and she picks it up to drink, we see her hands are shaking.

TORAN

Here, you're cold, let me get you a blanket.

ELRIS

No, I'm not -- it's not cold, I --

She slowly sinks her face into her hands, fighting back tears tears of tiredness and frustration. Toran puts an arm around her.

TORAN

Hey, come on, come on, this is no good, it's okay, it's going to be all right.

ELRIS

That poor girl...

TORAN

I know, you did everything you could for her.

ELRIS

But I couldn't help her... I couldn't do anything... And now this... I don't want to lose any more patients...

She breaks down, crying, as Toran holds her. As he holds her, Elris's comm chirps.

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE

Quinlan to Elris. Doctor?

Toran grabs Elris's commbadge, and walks away from Elris with it, before speaking to it.

TORAN

It's Toran here, Doctor Elris is busy at the moment with Ensign Hillman.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SUBSPACE RADIO RELAY

Quinlan is standing, and Grey is still under his console.

QUINLAN

Oh, okay, was just checking in to see how he was doing?

TORAN'S COMM VOICE

He's okay, we've finished surgery, and we'll just have to see how he goes.

QUINLAN

All right, doc, thanks a lot. Quinlan out.

She turns to Grey.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

You hear that?

GREY

Yes, thank you, Jen.

He comes out from under his console and sighs.

GREY (CONT'D)

I could really do with him down here at the moment, comm technology is his area of expertise. He's a good kid.

QUINLAN

I don't think I know him.

GREY

No, you wouldn't, he doesn't socialize much. Keeps himself to himself, immerses himself in his work. Got a passion for his job.

QUINLAN

(smiling)

Sounds like someone else I know?

GREY

Who, Lieutenant Flanders?

(realizes)

Oh, me. Yeah, I guess he is like me. He's very old fashioned. Do you know how he spent our extended vacation?

QUINLAN

No?

GREY

Building a new farm house for his parents to retire to -- his father's an engineer on the Pasteur. He was offered a post at Starfleet Academy, quite distinguished, but he was worried his parents weren't going to have anywhere nice to live when they retired. Really nice, honest, genuine guy, who believes right is right.

(ruefully)

Something that's getting rarer and rarer on this ship.

QUINLAN

This really must feel like a voyage of the damned sometimes to you, Erik.

GREY

It can do, led by the high priest of the damned.

QUINLAN

I don't think that's entirely fair.

GREY

Yeah, well, I know I'm the odd man out there.

He disappears under his console again.

QUINLAN

You know, the Captain has had it pretty rough as well.

GREY

What's your point?

QUINLAN

Well, you could sometimes, you know, lay off him a bit, not be so hard.

GREY

Look, if he does something I don't agree with, it's my job to raise objections.

QUINLAN

Do you have to do it with such gusto?

GREY

I don't think we should be pursuing this line of discussion.

QUINLAN

Agreed, let's leave it.

Beat.

GREY

I mean, it's different for you.

QUINLAN

How is it different?

GREY

You don't mind not playing by the rules.

QUINLAN

(indignantly)

I realize -- I -- really can't argue with that.

GREY

Exactly. Your favorite expression is by any means necessary.

QUINLAN

Actually my favourite expression is "Is that a phaser in your pocket, or are you just glad to see me?"... but you don't need to know that.

GREY

I really don't.

QUINLAN

Okay, so I'm the same as the Captain, why don't you have a problem with me then?

GREY

How do you know I don't?

QUINLAN

Well, for one thing you don't snipe at me the way you do at the Captain.

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Look at the meeting today. Was it really necessary to bring up Coular again?

GREY

I was making a point.

QUINLAN

But did it need to be made?

GREY

I thought so.

He reappears out from under his console.

GREY (CONT'D)

The point is, even if you don't always conform, at least I know your heart is in the right place, that you'll do the right thing.

QUINLAN

You mean like Sarah Cage?

GREY

That's different, unfair.

QUINLAN

I was making a point.

GREY

Did it need to be made?

QUINLAN

I thought so.

Beat.

GREY

The bottom line is, I trust you to do the right thing.

QUINLAN

Even after my colorful past?

GREY

Maybe because of your colorful past.
But with the Captain...
(he shakes his head)
...I don't think I do.

He looks sad about this, before returning under his console, and Quinlan looks on, thoughtful.

QUINLAN

I wish you'd hurry up down there,
I'm getting
tired of this cramped hole..

She looks thoughtfully out the window.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise alone, hanging again, like a model, as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

SEQ: MONTAGE

We start with a montage as the night passes: we see Cross and Talora on the bridge, looking restless, we see Dojar and Y'lan in the lab, Dojar doing some basic-looking wiring, we see Grey, still pouring over his subspace array problem, and finally we get to:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Toran injects Hillman with a hypospray. Elris comes in, obviously having just freshened up. She comes over and stands next to Toran, looking at the ensign. She smiles weakly at Toran.

TORAN
Feeling better?

ELRIS
Yes. Sorry about that.

TORAN
Don't need to apologize. Look at this.

He shows her a scan reading.

ELRIS
That's better.

TORAN
It is.

ELRIS
You know, when I was in medical school, I always used to say I would never lose a patient, that medicine has come so far that there is no reason now for anyone to die before their time. How naive was that?

TORAN
I would prefer to look at it as idealistic.

ELRIS
Perhaps. But I will never forget, the first time I did. An ensign, a bit like Hillman here, who had been injured in a skirmish with the Sheliak.

(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

He was brought in with massive internal bleeding -- by the time he got to us it was already too late. His organs were starting to give. And yet, he held on for so long, not willing to let go of the edge of life he was clinging onto. He knew his fingers were slowly slipping, that eventually he would end up falling away, but he was so brave, it was heartbreaking. He didn't stop fighting, right until the end. And all the time he looked at me, as if to say, "I'm still fighting, so why have you given up on me?" And now, every time I have a patient who is dying, I see in them him, asking me, "Why are you giving up on me?"

TORAN

You cannot win all the battles you are faced with. Some things are just meant to be. People tell us that as doctors we play God all the time, but they only say that because they don't want to believe we are just as fallible as anyone else. All the technology in the world, it doesn't make a difference. But that is not your fault. You hear me? It's out of your hands.

ELRIS

It doesn't stop me feeling responsible.

She looks at him.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S LAB

Dojar is putting some wires together while Y'lan is working at a console.

DOJAR

Come on, Y'lan, just a little clue.

Y'LAN

Little clue?

DOJAR

Yeah, about what this is?

Y'LAN

I informed you before, it is beyond your understanding.

DOJAR

Need I remind you that recently I had the highest IQ of any living being that's ever lived, I think I can make a stab at it.

Y'LAN

Don't stab my machine.

DOJAR

Go on, give me a go, you might just be surprised.

Y'LAN

I would be very surprised. Having intelligence is one thing -- knowing how to use it is quite another.

DOJAR

Fine, don't tell me then.

He continues to do his wiring while Y'lan works unconcernedly away at his console.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SUBSPACE TRANSCEIVER ARRAY

Grey is beginning to get wound up with his problem. He slams his fist down on the console in front of him.

GREY

Son of a bitch, why won't you speed up?

Quinlan pokes her head out of the opening in the floor. This is too much for Grey.

GREY (CONT'D)

Oh, Jesus Christ, Quinlan, will you please leave me the hell alone?

She looks chastened but holds out a cup.

GREY (CONT'D)

What's this?

QUINLAN

A peace offering. To help you get through the night.

He takes it, calming down a bit.

GREY

Thank you.

He takes it and has a drink.

QUINLAN

Still having no luck, huh?

GREY

None. I think it's sending me slowly mad.

QUINLAN

What are you talking about, you went mad years ago.

(beat)

I see they've started on the nacelle without you.

GREY

Yeah, I told them to get on with it. They're well up to the job.

QUINLAN

But they really could do with your expertise. I really don't get this obsession with this silly little problem. Why does it matter so much?

GREY

I don't know. It just does.

Quinlan looks at him worriedly.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Toran is checking on Hillman again. He frowns at a reading. As he does so, the ensign slowly begins to open his eyes.

TORAN

Ensign? Can you hear me?

HILLMAN

What... what's going on?

TORAN

Ensign, it's Doctor Toran.

HILLMAN

Doctor? I --

He tries to move, but Toran stops him.

TORAN

No, no, don't try to move at the moment.

You're just coming out of surgery.

HILLMAN

Surgery? What happened?

TORAN

There was an accident in Sickbay. Some shards of metal were imbedded in your lung, we had to go in and get them out.

HILLMAN

Oh. Am I going to be all right?

TORAN

You're going to be fine, you just need to rest for a while. You've lost quite a lot of blood.

Hillman looks around.

HILLMAN

Er, Doctor, I think I must be hallucinating, this doesn't look like Sickbay to me...

TORAN

No, you're not hallucinating. We are in the rec lounge. Long story.

HILLMAN

Oh. Well, while we're here, I'll have a double scotch, on the rocks.

He smiles weakly.

TORAN

You're an engineer all right. I'll see what can do about that.

He smiles back at him, as Hillman closes his eyes again. Toran walks over to Elris.

TORAN (CONT'D)

His blood oxygen levels are dropping a little bit, we have to keep an eye on them. Doctor?

He looks down. Elris has fallen fast asleep on the seat. He sits down next to her and watches her for a few moments tenderly. After a minute, she sleepily opens her eyes.

ELRIS

Doctor? How is he?

TORAN

(softly)

He's doing fine.

She nods, not really awake, and closes her eyes again.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SCIENCE LAB

Y'lan and Dojar are both now involved in some complex wiring.

DOJAR

So anyway, by the time we got to them, the whole place had exploded, we couldn't get near them. Y'lan, are you listening to me at all?

Y'LAN

No.

DOJAR

Why not? It's an interesting story, you should listen to it.

Y'LAN

I am already aware of the facts, just as I am aware of every incident that has ever happened in your life.

DOJAR

Oh great. My life is an open book.

Suddenly the wires Y'lan are working with spark, and flare up. He moves to the door.

Y'LAN

Remain here.

DOJAR

Where are you going?

Y'LAN

To get some tools from Engineering.

DOJAR

All right.

The door closes after Y'lan. Dojar continues to work for a moment, and then cautiously gets up and goes over to the main bulk of the equipment Y'lan's been working on. He gets out his tricorder and runs it over the machine.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Let's see...

The tricorder beeps away happily for a minute. Dojar frowns.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

What the hell? Chronotons?

He looks to the door again.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

(to himself)

What are you building here, Y'lan?

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Toran is working on a PADD, with Elris asleep next to him, when Hal approaches.

TORAN

Hal. What can I do for you?

HAL

(whispering)

Sorry to disturb you, Doctor, but it's the Ensign. He's asking to speak to Grey.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SUBSPACE TRANSCEIVER ARRAY

Grey is talking the problem through with Quinlan.

GREY

The connection is fine, there's no packet loss between us and the SCN. We're sending the data as quickly as ever, but we're getting it back much slower.

QUINLAN

How much slower?

GREY

About fifteen hundred times slower.

QUINLAN

That is slow.

GREY

Very slow.

QUINLAN

Can we stop saying slow now?

GREY

I think we should. I don't understand it, there's no interference from outside -- even this far into Klingon space, it shouldn't matter.

His commbadge chirps.

TORAN'S COMM VOICE

Toran to Grey.

GREY

Grey here.

TORAN

Lieutenant, Ensign Hillman is awake and asking to speak to you.

GREY

Okay, I'll be right up. Grey out.
(he looks at Quinlan)
Don't touch anything while I'm going.

QUINLAN

Yes, I don't want to damage the significant progress you've made.

GREY

You got it.

Quinlan gives him a wry look. Grey gets up and goes to the hatch.

GREY (CONT'D)

Stay here, I won't be too long.

QUINLAN

Okay.

He disappears down the hatch. Quinlan looks around the place for a minute, then walks over to the console Grey's been working on. She stares at it for a moment, and then gives it an experimental kick.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Ouch.

She looks but it has had no effect on the problem. She sighs and slumps down against the wall.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Some nights never seem to end.

She closes her eyes as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross and Talora are sitting, Cale at his post, Lieutenant MACY at helm, when Dojar enters.

DOJAR
Captain, may I speak to you?

CROSS
Of course.

He gets up.

DOJAR
The Commander should probably come
as well.

Cross nods as Talora gets up and they all head to the ready room.

CROSS
Lieutenant Macy, you have the bridge.

MACY
Aye, sir.

We follow Cross and Talora as they head into...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Cross, Talora, and Dojar enter, and the door closes behind them. Talora raises an eyebrow.

TALORA
Lieutenant Macy? Technically
Lieutenant Cale should have been put
in charge.

CROSS
Commander, at this point I wouldn't
put Lieutenant Cale in charge of a
stick of celery, let alone my Bridge.
(aside)
You didn't hear that, Dojar.

DOJAR
No, sir.

CROSS
Now, what's going on?

DOJAR

I've been spending time with Y'lan tonight, sir, in his lab. He's constructing some kind of machine. From what I can see, it's very complex.

TALORA

Y'lan has been spending a lot of time in there recently. It feels like some weeks we haven't seen him at all.

CROSS

Do you know what it's for, Lieutenant?

DOJAR

No, sir, I don't, and Y'lan won't tell me.

CROSS

No surprise there.

DOJAR

The thing is, Captain, I ran a scan on it before. It's emitting high levels of chronotons.

Cross stares for a moment.

CROSS

Oh boy. How high?

DOJAR

About 47 rems per minute.

Cross whistles.

CROSS

Okay, we need to deal with that, we can't have those levels loose on the ship. Where's Y'lan now?

DOJAR

He should be back in his lab.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Y'lan re-enters, carrying a tool. He notes that Dojar is no longer there, and goes over to his console. He presses some buttons, and an image shimmers into view above the table. It is a hologram of the room, evidently from earlier. We see Y'lan and Dojar, and then Y'lan leaving the room. After a moment, we see Dojar going over and scanning the table. Is that a nod we see from Y'lan?

He presses some more buttons.

COMPUTER'S VOICE
Science lab sealed.

He gets back to work.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Grey enters and looks around, before walking over to where Toran is. Elris is still asleep.

GREY
Doctor.

TORAN
Lieutenant.

GREY
How is he?

TORAN
Very weak. He still hasn't
stabilized. How long do you think
it'll be before we get access to
Sickbay again?

GREY
We're working on it, but it'll be a
couple of hours at least. Does he
know how serious his condition is?

TORAN
He's not really aware of much at the
moment.

Try not to tire him out too much.

GREY
Thank you.

Grey walks over to Hillman, who is being ministered by a nurse. She leaves as Grey approaches to give them some privacy.

GREY (CONT'D)
Hey.

HILLMAN
(hoarse voice; he has
difficulty speaking)
Lieutenant. You came.

GREY
Yeah, I did. How you feeling?

HILLMAN

I'm okay, but I... I might not be able... to come into... work tomorrow.

GREY

(smiles)

That's okay, I'll let you off this once.

Pause, as Hillman seems to psyche himself up for another effort at talking.

HILLMAN

How are things... in the boiler... room?

GREY

Chaos, disruption, everything's flying apart.

HILLMAN

Nothing new... then.

GREY

I guess not.

HILLMAN

The doctor --- he smiles at me, but... I don't think he thinks... I'm going to live.

GREY

Nonsense, he didn't say anything like that to me.

HILLMAN

He... wouldn't.

(he swallows)

What... what are you working on?

GREY

Some are working on the nacelle, some on restoring sensor integrity to Deck 11.

HILLMAN

What... are you doing...?

GREY

At the moment, I'm trying to work out why our connection to the SCN is so slow... What?

Hillman's eyes have just opened.

HILLMAN

I... I remember. Just before... the accident...

GREY

What? What is it?

Hillman is looking agitated as he struggles to get the words out.

HILLMAN

I was... monitoring... the nav deflector. It's eff... efficiency was falling.

GREY

What would be causing that?

HILLMAN

I don't know... it's as if... if...

GREY

What?

HILLMAN

...time was running... different speed...

Grey suddenly looks up, his face completely pale.

GREY

Oh my God.

Toran comes over.

TORAN

I think that's enough visiting for the moment.

GREY

(in a far away voice)
Okay, thank you Doctor.
(to Hillman)
Get better, you hear?

Hillman holds out his hand. Grey looks at it.

HILLMAN

It has... been... an honor... to serve you...

GREY

And you. You're a man of integrity.

HILLMAN

Never... never change.

Grey takes his hand and squeezes it.

GREY

Thank you.

Toran nods to him, as Grey turns and begins to walk out of the room, tapping his comm badge as he goes.

GREY (CONT'D)

Grey to Quinlan, please meet me in the Main Shuttlebay. I think we're in trouble.

He hurries off.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Cross walks down it with Dojar. They reach a door, but it doesn't open. Cross looks at Dojar, and rings the chime. There is no answer.

CROSS

Y'lan. Y'lan, it's Captain Cross, please open the door.

No answer.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Computer, security override, Cross four gamma seven delta three.

COMPUTER'S VOICE

Access denied.

CROSS

What?

Y'LAN'S COMM VOICE

You cannot enter, Captain.

CROSS

Y'lan? What the hell are you doing in there?

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S SCIENCE LAB

Y'lan is working pretty feverishly on his machine. It is now slightly glowing.

Y'LAN

I cannot tell you that at this time.
(MORE)

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

However, will inform you I am doing something for the protection of this ship and this crew.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

Then why can't you tell us?

Y'LAN

The information would only endanger you further.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

That's not good enough, Y'lan, I order you to open this door immediately, I --

Y'LAN

Off.

The Captain's voice is cut off mid sentence. He continues to work.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Cross and Dojar as before.

CROSS

Y'lan? Dammit, now is not the time for this. Dojar, how do we access the lab?

DOJAR

Short of cutting our way in with a phaser? I don't think we can.

CROSS

How long would cutting take?

DOJAR

About six hours.

Cross takes out his tricorder and scans, before shaking his head.

CROSS

Even out here, there's a worrying level of chronoton particles. Can you remember anything about what you saw that might be helpful?

Dojar shakes his head.

DOJAR

No, the only thing is that Y'lan
seemed more distracted than usual.

(beat)

Wait a minute, there was something.

CROSS

What?

DOJAR

He kept on touching his head, as
though trying to shake something
off.

CROSS

What the hell does that signify?

DOJAR

I have no idea.

They both look worried.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

Quinlan walks through, and finds Grey powering up a shuttle.

QUINLAN

Going on a pleasure cruise?

GREY

No. I need a good pilot.

He gestures for Quinlan to get in.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE -- CONTINUOUS

Quinlan sits in at helm, Grey beside her.

QUINLAN

You going to tell me what this about
is?

GREY

I'm hoping you're about to see.

QUINLAN

Okay, let's go.

(taps comm badge)

Quinlan to shuttlebay, we're ready
to depart.

COMM VOICE

Acknowledged.

GREY
Here goes nothing...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The doors slowly open onto space. Only there's something wrong. The stars outside look blurred, out of focus. The forcefield keeping the atmosphere in the bay splutters and spits. As we watch, suddenly there appears what looks like a localized warp field, appearing in the opening to space it as though the shuttlebay itself has suddenly gone to warp.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE

Quinlan watches, frowning at what she sees, while Grey is taking readings from his console.

QUINLAN
What the hell is that?

GREY
I'm not sure. Now, Jen, I need you to edge the shuttle right to the opening, reverse out.

QUINLAN
Whatever you say.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The shuttle slowly rises, turns, and begins to edge backwards towards the opening.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE

Grey watches, tense, as Quinlan maneuvers.

GREY
Slowly, slowly. Grey to shuttlebay, get ready to lower the forcefield on my mark. Only for a second, remember.

COMM VOICE
Acknowledged.

QUINLAN
Nearly there...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The shuttle is nearly at the entrance to space...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE

Grey watches, pursing his lips, while Quinlan concentrates.

GREY

Ready... now!

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The forcefield is lowered. Immediately there is a massive, swirling vortex, filling the entire room. Everything is swirling, but at the same time not moving, in a bizarre image. There is no sound, but the whole room shakes.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE

In the shuttle, everything is moving in ultra slow motion. Quinlan frantically taps the console, but each tap takes an age to perform. Grey's eyes are wide, and he very slowly opens his mouth --- his voice too is distorted.

GREY

Raise.... The.... Forcefield....

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The vortex continues to swirl for a minute, before the forcefield is activated again. The shuttle shoots forward at the same time, and there is a screeching of metal. The vortex disappears, and the shuttle comes to a halt.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE

Quinlan is breathing hard, rooted to her seat, but Grey is already up.

GREY

Jen. Jen, you all right?

QUINLAN

What the hell was that?

GREY

Look.

He leans forward, pointing at the viewscreen. Quinlan follows his pointing...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The forcefield is up. On the other side, as if frozen in a moment of time, we can see half the shuttle, hanging, as if stuck to it on the outside. But the shuttle is also inside the bay, where Quinlan has brought it in. The shuttle in the bay opens, and Grey gets out, running to the forcefield, followed by a confused Quinlan.

GREY

Look, do you see?

QUINLAN

What is that?

GREY

That's the shuttle.

Quinlan turns and points at the shuttle in the bay.

QUINLAN

Then what's that?

GREY

That is also the shuttle.

QUINLAN

(uncertainly)

What the hell is going on?

She walks over and looks. You can see right into the back end of the shuttle outside, although we can't see either of them as they were in the front half.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

That is freaky. What the hell is going on here?

GREY

It's the reason the subspace array has been so slow.

QUINLAN

What is?

GREY

We're trapped. Time outside has slowed down, almost to a halt.

QUINLAN

What does that mean?

GREY

What does it mean? It means we're in for a very long night indeed...

On Quinlan's confused reaction, we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The ENTERPRISE hangs in space.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Talora, Grey, Dojar and Quinlan are sitting there.

CROSS

Okay, take me through this again,
slowly. What has happened to time?

GREY

It's slowed down, at least outside.
Inside, we're still at a stable one
second per second, as far as can be
ascertained, but outside time seems
to be traveling as slowly as a
thousandth of a second per second.
That's why you can still the shuttle
out there -- while it's finished
happening to us, out there it's not
over yet.

CROSS

(shaking his head)
Why would Y'lan want to do this?

QUINLAN

Who knows why Y'lan does anything?

TALORA

Dojar, you were with him, did he say
nothing at all?

DOJAR

No, only that he seemed a bit
agitated.

CROSS

Agitated?

DOJAR

As agitated as Y'lan ever gets.

Y'LAN (O.S.)

Agitation is a human set of responses
to circumstance, not Q'tami.

They turn round. Y'LAN has entered the room.

CROSS

Y'lan, what the hell are you playing at?

Y'LAN

I am not playing at anything. I am, however, attempting to rectify an error on my part.

QUINLAN

Which you didn't want us to know about?

Y'LAN

Which, in the circumstances, it would have safer for you if you had not known about. However, little can be done about it now.

CROSS

Why has this happened?

Y'LAN

The device I was constructing had a side effect of producing a high level of chronotons. Although some were leaking out, I had constructed a filter to eliminate most. However, during the last Klingon battle, it was damaged, which resulted in the chronotons leaking out.

DOJAR

Why would that affect the outside?

Y'LAN

It hasn't. Time has not slowed outside the vessel, it has quickened inside. It is just because your perceptive faculties have compensated for this fact that everything appears normal to you.

TALORA

Is it dangerous?

Y'LAN

No, you could live the rest of your lives like this. However, you could never again leave this vessel. Had Lieutenants Grey and Quinlan's body actually left the chronoton field, their bodies would not have been able to adjust to the time change, and their cell structures would have just given out.

(MORE)

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

The accelerated pace would be too much, they would age to death in a matter of minutes.

QUINLAN

I don't want any old maid jokes.

CROSS

We'll do our best to resist.

(to Y'lan)

Okay, we know what's the problem, how do we solve it?

Y'LAN

You can't.

CROSS

What do you mean, we can't?

Y'LAN

You have no ability to solve this problem. You must leave it to me.

CROSS

Can you solve it?

Y'LAN

I don't know yet.

CROSS

Unacceptable.

Y'LAN

There is little you can do to change the situation.

CROSS

(frustrated)

Dammit, Y'lan, how long?

Y'LAN

I should know within the hour...

Cross nods slowly.

CROSS

Okay, report back to me within one hour.

Y'LAN

Yes, Captain.

CROSS

The rest of you are dismissed.

They all get up, and begin to stream out.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Toran is working at a PADD, when a nurse comes up to him.

NURSE

Doctor, the ensign's latest results.

He looks at the PADD she has given him. It is evidently not good news. He sighs, and looks at the sleeping Elris.

TORAN

All right, thank you. Is he still awake?

NURSE

Yes, sir, but he's finding it increasingly difficult to breathe.

Toran nods.

TORAN

I'll come over and see what I can do for him.

The nurse moves away, as Hal approaches.

HAL

Doctor? How is the ensign?

TORAN

(softly)
He's dying, Hal.

HAL

Oh. Is there nothing you can do?

TORAN

No. Sometimes, there is nothing.

He looks at Elris, sighing.

TORAN (CONT'D)

I can't tell her, I just can't. Oh, Prophets...

Suddenly a shadow falls over him, and he looks up.

TORAN (CONT'D)

(surprised)
What are you doing here?

Before we can see what he's reacting to...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Grey walks pensively in, looking round, completely at a loss what to do. Blake comes up to him.

BLAKE
Sir, we're making good progress on
the induction core.

GREY
(distractedly)
Good, good.

BLAKE
You all right, sir?

Grey looks at him.

GREY
Frustrated, Ensign. Very frustrated.

His commbadge chirps.

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE
Quinlan to Grey.

GREY
What is it?

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE
You need to get to the shuttlebay.
Now.

GREY
Why?

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE
Just get up here.

On Grey's expression...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY OPS

Grey enters, and goes over to Quinlan by the window. Down below, through the viewscreen, we see a shuttle powering up.

GREY
Jen, what's going on? Who's in the
shuttle.

QUINLAN
Y'lan... and Hillman.

GREY

What?

QUINLAN

We couldn't stop them.

GREY

Open a comm.

QUINLAN

It's already open.

GREY

Todd, it's Erik. What the hell's going on?

On the screen, Hillman's strained face appears next to Y'lan's. He is very pale, but resolute.

HILLMAN

Erik. I'm glad... I had a chance... to speak with you...

GREY

What do you think you're doing?

HILLMAN

There's no time... Y'lan explained to me... only way to eliminate the chronotons...

GREY

What are you talking about?

Y'LAN

Lieutenant, to eliminate the excess of chronotons in the ship, we need to attract them away from the vessel.

GREY

So?

Y'LAN

The only way to do it is to use a chronoton magnet, something that exists in time and is changed by time.

GREY

You don't mean -- Y'lan, that's inhuman!

HILLMAN

Erik... I am dying... This way... I can save lives...

GREY

I know, but Todd --

HILLMAN

My mind... is made up. Thank you...
and stay true... to your beliefs...

The viewscreen goes blank.

GREY

No, we have to stop them! Don't
lower the forcefield.

QUINLAN

(quietly)

Y'lan's already disabled it. Look.

As they watch, the shuttle starts to fly, and the vortex begins to whirl again, as the shuttle starts to exit the shuttle.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE

Hillman swallows as the shuttle shakes. Y'lan, next to him, sits placidly.

HILLMAN

What... exactly... is going to...
happen?

Y'LAN

As soon as we leave the ship, the
chronotons will be drawn to this
ship and you. Your body will go
into accelerated aging, and you will
die within five minutes real time.

HILLMAN

Great. Can't wait.

Y'LAN

You don't have to. We are leaving
the ship now.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY OPS

Grey and Quinlan watch, as the shuttle leaves. The whole area is shaking, and the vortex is distorting everything they see. Time is slowing and speeding at the same time.

EXT. SPACE -- ENTERPRISE

We see the shuttle leaving the ship, and the vortex, as if tied to it, following, being drawn in.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE

Hillman starts to sweat. We see his skin begin to parch.

HILLMAN
It's happening...

Y'LAN
It is.

HILLMAN
Talk... to me... Take my mind...
away.

Y'LAN
What should I say?

The shuttle is filling with the vortex, and it is congregating on Hillman, who is aging before our eyes.

HILLMAN
What... caused this?

Y'LAN
I cannot tell you.

HILLMAN
What... does it matter... I am
dying... Please...

A long beat.

Y'LAN
I was attempting to sever my link
with the Hegemony.

HILLMAN
Why... would you... do that...
uhhhhhh...

He collapses on the floor, and begins shaking. The density of the vortex is becoming greater. Hillman begins to scream, but Y'lan sinks next to him, and places a tentacle on Hillman's head.

Y'LAN
You will feel no pain. You are safe.
You are safe.

Hillman immediately quiets, and his impression softens, becomes peaceful.

HILLMAN
Thank... you...

Y'lan nods, as Hillman slowly dies before him.

The vortex slowly fades into him, and his body becomes literally dust, dissolving away in front of our eyes. Y'lan slowly rises, and crosses to the console.

GREY'S COMM VOICE
Grey to Shuttle. What's happening?

Y'LAN
It is over, Lieutenant. Real time
has been restored.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY OPS

Grey closes his eyes, as Quinlan looks on. All traces of the vortex have disappeared.

We hold on them for a long moment on their reaction, and then...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise hangs in space, but no longer looks frozen.

CROSS (V.O.)
Captain's Log, supplemental. The
repairs to the Enterprise are nearly
complete.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Grey and engineers move about a much cleaned up Engineering.

CROSS (V.O.)
The ironic thing is the time
acceleration gave us several extra
hours to work in away from normal
time, and as such the induction core
is ready to be used again, in a blink
of an eye to anyone watching outside.
Ensign Hillman's sacrifice will not
go unnoticed -- we plan to rename
the shuttle which he was in after
him, as a mark of respect. His name
will live on.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Elris and Toran come back in, with the nurses and so on. They look around in relief to be back where they belong.

CROSS (V.O.)

The hull breach, too, has been repaired, and the medical staff have returned to Sickbay. I am assured by Hal that the recreation lounge is available at any time to be used again, but Doctor Elris tells me she would rather eat gagh, which I take as a sign she is not taken with the idea.

The medical staff help those patients who still need help onto biobeds as Elris and Toran look around. Toran runs his fingers over the top.

TORAN

They've even cleaned for us.

ELRIS

It's good to be home.

TORAN

Home? Interesting choice of words.

ELRIS

(thinks for a moment)

Yeah, it is. Home is where the heart is and this place...

(she looks around)

This is where my heart is.

She sits down tiredly on a stool.

TORAN

Don't feel too badly for Hillman.

ELRIS

But he was getting better.

TORAN

Yes, he was, but in the end, he had to follow his own path. Like all our patients.

ELRIS

What do you mean?

TORAN

We don't choose people's fates for them, Lea. We are but tools to help them, but sometimes they're just not made right for us tools to fit them. But that isn't the tool's fault.

ELRIS

I know, but Toran takes her and looks in her eyes.

TORAN

You are a good doctor. A great doctor. Every day, you overcome impossible odds, save people that elsewhere wouldn't have a chance. There are hundreds of people alive today that wouldn't be if not for you, and who knows what countless thousands are affected by them, and what they do.

ELRIS

Maybe not always for the best.

TORAN

But isn't that what life is all about?
(beat)
Uncertainty. And nothing we do can change that. You're not God, so don't beat yourself up over it.

Elris smiles.

ELRIS

Thank you.

She suppresses a yawn.

TORAN

Now get and get some shut eye, it's been a long night for all of us. I'm sure this place can function all right without you for a bit.

ELRIS

I'm not sure whether that's an insult or a compliment.

TORAN

I'd take it as a tribute to your inspiration.

ELRIS

Now you're just making me feel sick.

TORAN

Maybe you'd better see a doctor about that.

She grins, and then yawns again.

TORAN (CONT'D)

Now go, before you fall asleep on your feet.

ELRIS

Maybe, just for a bit...

She walks out. Toran looks around, then calls over one of the nurses, the one who looked after Hillman in the recreation lounge.

TORAN

Nurse, get me all of Hillman's readouts. I need to change some readings.

NURSE

Are you sure it's wise, doctor?

TORAN

Nothing is more important to a doctor than peace of mind, Nurse, and at the moment Doctor Elris needs it more than most. She needs to think Hillman would have survived, that she would have saved him.

NURSE

Yes, Doctor, if you're sure.

TORAN

I am.

NURSE

I'll go and get them.

She walks away, and Toran sighs, looking at the door where Elris left.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Cross is sitting at his desk, with Dojar standing in front of him silently, as the door opens and Y'lan enters.

Y'LAN

Captain, you wished to see me.

CROSS

Yes, Y'lan, I did.

He sighs and looks at the Q'tami

CROSS (CONT'D)

You know what I'm going to say to you.

Y'LAN

You are going to tell me that I needlessly jeopardized the safety of the ship and the crew.

CROSS

And what are you going to say?

Y'LAN

I am going to tell you that, far from jeopardizing the crew, I was attempting to make their lives safer.

CROSS

(angrily)

How can you expect me to believe that?

Y'LAN

Whether you believe it or not is immaterial, it is so.

CROSS

Ensign Hillman died a terrible death.

Y'LAN

Ensign Hillman died a peaceful death, which is not what would have happened, if he had remained on board.

CROSS

What were you doing? How could unleashing a shed load of chronotons onto our ship make our crew's lives safer?

Y'LAN

Captain, there are matters going on of which you have no idea. Matters that it is in your best interest to be ignorant of. This ship and I, we are bonded now, linked together in our pasts and in our future. The moment I stepped aboard, our fate was decided. There are days ahead when you will need me, and days ahead when I will need you. There are days ahead when my being here will endanger you and your people, and there are days ahead when my being here will endanger me and my people. It is a dangerous path that we are walking, but it is a path we must walk together. I cannot tell you more, but if it is any consolation, what I was attempting to do was a grave personal risk to my own mental health.

Cross sighs.

CROSS

I am tired of this shroud of secrecy,
Y'lan. I am tired of not knowing
whose side you are on. Time and
again you are in my office, and time
and again things slip by. What can
I do?

Y'LAN

You can be assured I am no more happy
about my presence on this ship than
you are.

CROSS

I have asked Lieutenant Dojar here
to check on you daily again. You
must report to him, tell him what
are you doing, and so on and so forth.
This is not open to discussion.

Y'LAN

Yes, Captain.

CROSS

Okay, you are dismissed, Y'lan.

Y'LAN

Captain.

He turns and begins to leave.

CROSS

Y'lan.

Y'LAN

Captain?

CROSS

Did you succeed? In what you were
trying to do?

Y'LAN

No, Captain. I did not.

He turns and leaves. Cross looks at Dojar.

CROSS

What do you think?

DOJAR

I think he's telling the truth.
He's much less verbose when he's
keeping things from us.

Cross nods.

CROSS

I sometimes wish we'd never dug him
up.

They both share a grim look.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- GREY'S OFFICE

Grey is sitting at his desk, reading something on his PADD.
The door chimes.

GREY

Come in.

Quinlan enters.

QUINLAN

Hi.

GREY

Hi.

QUINLAN

Nice to see the place up and running
again.

GREY

We get there in the end.

Quinlan nods.

QUINLAN

Well, I was just popping in to say
night -- I'm going to bed.

(beat)

Are you all right?

GREY

We got connected to the SCN again.

QUINLAN

Oh, good.

GREY

Do you know what one of the first
messages through was?

QUINLAN

No?

GREY

Look.

He hands her a PADD.

QUINLAN

(reading)

From Helen Jacobi to Todd Hillman.
What is this?

GREY

Helen Jacobi was Todd Hillman's wife.

QUINLAN

I didn't know he was married.

GREY

Neither did I. Apparently they got married when the Enterprise was decommissioned, they decided to take the plunge.

QUINLAN

Why didn't he say something?

GREY

When the Enterprise was recommissioned, he decided it was too dangerous for his wife to come on board with him, after all that had happened.

QUINLAN

Understandable. But why couldn't he request a transfer?

GREY

(almost moved to tears)

Because, because it was his duty. And nothing was more important to him than that. Nothing.

Not even his unborn child.

QUINLAN

What?

GREY

That's what this message was. His wife had just been to the doctor, for her yearly checkup. He's going to be a father.

QUINLAN

Erik, I'm sorry.

GREY

Even though he didn't agree with what the Captain had done, he knew he had to serve under him.

(MORE)

GREY (CONT'D)

Even though he found some of Starfleet's actions nowadays questionable, he still felt he had to serve under them. Even though he didn't always understand why the galaxy was heading the way it is, he had to work within it.

QUINLAN

He seems very loyal.

GREY

Yes, he was. And he was a wizard when it came to communications. He was the one that gave me the key to what was going on.

QUINLAN

I still don't get that, why you were so fixed on that. Why it mattered so much.

GREY

(suddenly angry)

I'll tell you why it mattered, Quinlan. This ship, this Starfleet, this Federation -- it's going to the dogs. You know it and I know it. Hillman, me, we're old fashioned nowadays, not with the in crowd because we believe in things like morals and decency, loyalty.

QUINLAN

I don't think things are quite as bad as you make out, Erik.

GREY

That's just the thing, you don't notice. It's like a mother watching her child grow, it happens so slowly she doesn't notice until one day she looks and he's six feet tall. Small changes, every day. Eventually they build up, but by the time they've become so big that you can't help but notice, it's too late. That is why I had to obsess about this radio array today. It was small, insignificant, didn't matter. But in the end, it did. It was an indication of a much bigger problem. It's by ignoring the small problems along the way that we've let things come to the mess they're in now.

(MORE)

GREY (CONT'D)

The mess that this ship is in, and
this Federation.

QUINLAN

So why don't you just leave?

Grey looks away for a moment.

GREY

Hillman never left because he
believed, ultimately, that things
would get better. That there was
the chance of change. And I'm the
same. Because maybe, just maybe, I
can make a difference, repair the
little rifts in life.

(beat)

Maybe I'll do nothing, maybe I'll
only stem the flow, maybe I'll do
more. But I've got to try, I've got
to keep trying. Because if I don't,
then that will be one more fault in
the system, one more weakness, towards
our end.

He gets up and turns.

GREY (CONT'D)

(throwing the shard
onto the table)

In the end, it's the small things
that make the biggest difference of
all.

Suddenly, he breaks down, and begins crying. Quinlan gets
up, walks over to him, and hugs him, and he collapses in her
embrace, all the frustrations of the past few months finally
welling up and breaking free.

GREY (CONT'D)

Oh God, Jen, what are we in for?

QUINLAN

I don't know, Erik, I don't know.
All I do know is, there is always
hope. There is always hope.

As he continues to cry into her arms, the camera pans to the
shard that killed Ensign Hillman, lying next to the PADD on
the table. On it is an image -- the fetal scan of Ensign
Hillman's baby. On this image, we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END