

STAR TREK

RENAISSANCE

"The Last Temptation"

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TEASER

EXT. SPACE -- NEAR CARVERS WORLD

We open in space; off in the distance is a blue-and-green planet -- Carver's World.

Into our view comes a small starship; not too much bigger than a runabout -- it has no markings to identify it, but we can see that it's armed.

As it swoops past our POV, the ship fires phaser blasts behind it, at an unseen pursuer...

And then the pursuer blasts into view: the USS Enterprise, NCC-1701-G.

The Enterprise dwarfs its quarry, and the phaser shots are harmlessly absorbed by her shields.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE (V.O.)

Enterprise to unidentified ship.
You are ordered to surrender and
prepare to be boarded. This is your
final warning!

The fleeing ship ignores the order, and continues firing, ineffectively, at the Enterprise. The Enterprise closes the distance, and lashes out with its own phasers.

The unidentified ship's shields hold for about half a second and then collapse. The Enterprise's phasers smash into the ship, causing multiple explosions. The beleaguered ship quickly comes to a full stop.

PIRATE CREWMAN'S COMM VOICE (V.O.)

Enterprise, we surrender! I repeat,
we surrender! Please cease fire!

A tractor beam zaps out from the Enterprise, pulling the pirate ship in, and as it does, we cut to:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross sits in the center seat, watching the disabled pirate ship as it's taken into custody.

CROSS

Lieutenant Dojar, please inform the
planetary defense command that we've
caught yet another pirate, and they
can take custody of the crew at their
earliest convenience.

DOJAR

Yes, sir.

(MORE)

DOJAR (CONT'D)

(his panel bleeps)

Sir, they're hailing US. Councilor Mariel is ready for transport.

CROSS

It's about time. Tell them we'll be in orbit in...

He looks at the helm officer.

HELM OFFICER

Four minutes, sir.

CROSS

Four minutes, and they can send her up. I'll be down in Transporter Room One to greet her. The Bridge is yours, Talora.

Talora takes the center seat as Cross heads for a turbolift, and we...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TRANSPORTER ROOM

Cross is here, with Narv Ozran. Ozran operates the transporter controls, and the transport stage shimmers with transporter effect.

A moment later, Federation Councilor Kariann Mariel of Betazed appears on the transport stage. She's tall, with long dark hair that goes halfway down her back, and she's wearing at least a dozen precious stones on her various jewelry. Cross moves to greet her, and the Councilor allows him to shake her hand.

CROSS

Councilor Mariel. Welcome aboard the Enterprise.

MARIEL

Thank you, Captain. I must admit, I'd much prefer not to be here. No offense intended, of course, but there's important business to discuss at the conference down there.

CROSS

No offense taken, Councilor. But orders are orders. Starfleet Command feels that with the pirate situation out here, your safety was compromised.

MARIEL

You mean that Admiral Delfune is concerned for how it would look on her record if anything happened to me.

CROSS

(barely suppressing a grin)

I'm sure I couldn't say, Councilor.

MARIEL

I'm sure you could, Captain, but as a politician, I of all people can respect your discretion.

(beat)

Do I get a tour of the ship? I've never actually been aboard a Phoenix-class starship. I'm curious to see what exactly it is that we've been funding all these years.

CROSS

Of course, Councilor.

Cross escorts the Councilor out of the transporter room.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Talora's still in command, staring out at the void of space on the viewscreen. As she does, Dojar's console bleeps.

DOJAR

Commander, I'm detecting a ship, just coming into sensor range. It's coming it at high warp, projecting its course... heading out of Federation space. But it'll pass within five billion kilometers of us.

TALORA

On screen, Mister Dojar. And scan it, please.

Dojar works, and the viewscreen shows a small merchant ship, one we've seen before, way back in "Living in the Shadows" and "Dead and Buried."

TALORA (CONT'D)

Mister Dojar... is that the ship I think it is?

DOJAR

Yes, Commander.

We close in on Dojar's console to see what he's looking at: a detailed scan of the merchant ship, along with Starfleet records on the ship, which clearly shows the name of the ship: the Tears of the Jackal. On the display, we see the image of the Tears docking at a spacedock in Earth orbit, escorted by a pair of old Ambassador-class ships, followed by the image of Cross, Talora and Quinlan being escorted off the Tears by a squad of Starfleet Security personnel.

TALORA

How long before it crosses the border?

DOJAR

Twenty six minutes.

TALORA

Red alert! Captain Cross to the
Bridge immediately!

(beat; to herself)

What the hell is that ship doing
HERE?

And on that, we

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

We enter the scene in mid-conversation; Cross, Talora, Dojar and Grey are here. Cross sits behind his desk; everyone else is standing. Cross and Grey are going at it; Dojar in particular, standing off by himself, looks distinctly uncomfortable.

GREY

...to do nothing?

CROSS

Lieutenant, I want to get my hands on that ship as much as anyone here.

(beat)

More.

(beat, he takes a moment to calm himself)

But we have orders. And a member of the Federation Council onboard.

GREY

(incredulous)

Now you concern yourself with politics? You have spent the last two years making enemies at every turn, offending your superiors, alienating your friends, and taking the most difficult and controversial choice at every opportunity, and NOW you are worried about orders and propriety?

Cross looks more stunned than angry, and Dojar looks like he wants to crawl into a hole. Grey mentally counts to ten and continues:

GREY (CONT'D)

(bitterly)

With all due respect, Captain.

CROSS

No, it's not with due respect, Lieutenant.

(Cross stands, turns his back on his crew)

Your comments are noted. You're dismissed, Lieutenant.

Grey stares daggers at Cross but says nothing. There's silence for a moment, before he turns on his heel and leaves. There's another moment of silence, finally:

TALORA

He's wrong, Captain.

CROSS

I hope so.

TALORA

(quietly)

So do all of us, Captain.

CROSS

Yes. Well. I have...how did the Lieutenant put it? Alienated my friends and offended my superiors. This would be a good time to change that, I think.

(turns back to face
his officers)

You don't know... Talora, how well do you keep up with Federation politics?

TALORA

It is difficult enough to keep up with Romulan politics, and I grew up as the daughter of a Senator.

DOJAR

Captain, you're talking about Councilor Mariel's campaign for the Presidency, aren't you?

CROSS

Yes, Mister Dojar. I imagine you know more about that than I do.

Dojar winces in pain for a moment before answering. Neither Cross nor Talora seem to notice.

DOJAR

Probably, sir. She has an excellent chance of winning.

TALORA

Captain, I apologize. You are quite correct, it would be most unwise to offend or endanger a future President.

CROSS

Thank you, Commander. But that still leaves us with a problem. I do want that ship. How the hell do we get it?

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is in orbit above Carver's World. It's clearly a very busy little planet; ships fly to and fro all around, as we close in on the Enterprise.

We move in, closer... closer... closer... Until we can make out individual windows on the primary hull, and we close in on one in particular, with three figures... as we close in, we see that they are Talora, Dojar and Quinlan, and we push in and through the window...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TALORA'S QUARTERS

Talora's quarters are in an uncharacteristic mess; there are PADDs everywhere, and clutter all around.

QUINLAN

The Captain won't cross the border?

TALORA

Not without orders.

QUINLAN

He's picked a fine time to start listening to Starfleet Command.

TALORA

Yes, we discussed that exact point.

Dojar stands a little bit away from Talora and Quinlan, lost in thought. He's wincing just a bit. After a moment of uncomfortable silence, something comes to him:

DOJAR

What if Starfleet Command did order us to go after them?

QUINLAN

And what if I spontaneously evolve into an Organian and teleport the Jackal here with my newfound godlike powers? It's about as likely.

DOJAR

What if someone asks them to do it? Someone whose good side they want to stay on?

(staring intently at
Talora)

An ally that they wouldn't dare to offend right now?

TALORA

(angry)

No!

(calmer now)

No. I will not trade on my family.
I have never done that, and I do not
intend to start now.

QUINLAN

Talora, it's not for personal gain.
Believe me, I understand that you
don't want to cross that line. But
we have to get that ship, and I don't
see any other way. Unless you'd
like to steal a shuttle and go after
them yourself... God only knows how
you'd find them anyway.

DOJAR

(distantly)

They're on Zelos Prime.

QUINLAN

Oh, hell!

TALORA

Lieutenant, what do you know about
Zelos Prime? And, Gril, HOW do you
know about it?

Dojar just taps a finger to his head, trying not to grimace
as he does so. Quinlan watches that, shakes her head, and
then explains:

QUINLAN

The Orions... the Orion Syndicate,
they run the place. They control
it, they control everything there.

TALORA

I suppose I would not want to steal
a shuttle and go there alone to find
the Tears of the Jackal, then.

QUINLAN

You wouldn't want to go there with
us as backup either. But with the
Enterprise...

DOJAR

Commander... Talora... you must do
it, and soon. We don't have any
other options.

Talora sighs.

TALORA

Very well. I would prefer to do this in private, if it has to be done...

Dojar and Quinlan both nod, and leave without a word.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Computer, I require an encrypted subspace channel to Romulus. Security code Alpha-three-nine-four...

As Talora reads off her clearance code...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross is in the center chair, with Talora sitting next to him. Dojar's at the helm, and off to the side are Councilor Mariel, preparing to be interviewed by Lewis Carter.

Carter's trying to position her just so, to get the perfect shot, when Dojar's console beeps.

DOJAR

Captain, we're receiving a transmission from Starfleet Command. It's Admiral Delfune.

Cross turns to look at Councilor Mariel, who gives him a quick wink and the hint of a grin before turning her attention back to Carter.

CROSS

Put her on screen.

The face of Admiral Delfune fills the viewscreen.

DELFUNE

Captain.

CROSS

Admiral. It's an honor, as always, sir.

Delfune is surprised for a moment, but she shrugs Cross's sarcasm off.

DELFUNE

I have new orders for you, Captain.

CROSS

Yes?

DELFUNE

We've received a request from the
Romulan government.

Cross looks over at Talora, who stares back with an unreadable
expression.

CROSS

Really.

DELFUNE

(annoyed)

Yes, Captain. Really. It appears
that the crew of a merchant ship,
the Tears of the Jackal, is wanted
for smuggling and a variety of other
crimes against the Empire, and they've
tracked the ship to the Federation
border.

CROSS

We detected a private starship heading
out of Federation space at high warp
about two hours ago, Admiral.

DELFUNE

The Romulans have asked for our help
in capturing the ship and bringing
her crew to them for trial. As the
Enterprise is the only starship in
range...

CROSS

Understood, Admiral.

DELFUNE

Understand this, Captain. If you
screw this up, if you pull any of
your usual stunts, I promise you,
I'll have your head on a plate. Am
I clear?

CROSS

Transparent, Admiral.

DELFUNE

I'll expect a report in 24 hours.
Starfleet Command out.

As Admiral Delfune vanishes from the viewscreen, Carter takes
his opportunity and begins recording Councilor Mariel.

CARTER

Councilor Mariel, you're one of the
leaders of the Federation, and rumor
has it that you're going to throw

(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

your hat in the ring in the upcoming Presidential race. What do you think about this new assignment for the Enterprise?

MARIEL

I think it's an excellent example of interstellar cooperation. It's the kind of thing that the Federation should be doing more of. We need to build bridges with our Romulan friends. And if we can do so and crack down on criminal elements within the Federation at the same time, so much the better.

CARTER

Are you concerned about being onboard the Enterprise during such a mission? Especially with the ship's somewhat checkered reputation?

MARIEL

I have the utmost respect for the Starfleet, and the brave men and women who serve in it. I have every confidence in their abilities, and I gladly trust my safety to them...

As the interview continues...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- GREY'S QUARTERS

Grey is alone, watching the end of Carter's interview on a small viewscreen. As we hear Carter's last question and Councilor Mariel's answer in the background, Grey narrates:

GREY (V.O.)

Personal Log, Lieutenant Erik Grey, Stardate 79642.5. The Captain has gone too far. I don't know what lie, what deception, what trickery he's resorted to, but it's clear to me now. He won't stop until he gets all of us killed and the Enterprise destroyed. Or worse. This madness can't go on much longer.

As Grey speaks, he changes the viewscreen to a live view of the bridge, and, seething, watches Cross as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise cruises through deep space, at warp. We linger on the starship as Cross narrates his log.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, Stardate 79642.9.
The Enterprise has been ordered outside Federation space in pursuit of a fugitive starship. Our destination is the planet Zelos Prime, a world controlled by the Orion crime syndicate. I am less than completely optimistic about the outcome of this mission.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Talora, Dojar, Quinlan, Grey and Councilor Mariel are seated around the briefing table.

CROSS

Lieutenant Quinlan, you're our resident expert on this corner of the galaxy. Tell us about Zelos Prime.

QUINLAN

You already know the Orions are running the planet. That ought to tell you exactly what kind of a place it is. It was a pretty boring little planet, humanoid species, early atomic-age technology, they were just getting around to launching orbital satellites...

MARIEL

And then the Orions arrived.

QUINLAN

Exactly. They found out that Zelos Prime had massive deposits of duranium ore. The gods only know how, but they found out, and they came in and took over. They bombarded the Zelosians from orbit until they surrendered... That was about twenty years ago.

A display lights up showing a pretty blue-and-green, very Earth-like planet spinning slowly.

DOJAR

This was Zelos Prime before the
Orions...

The display changes, showing the same world, but now it's
more black-and-gray than blue-and-green.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

And here it is now. The result of
two decades of strip-mining.

GREY

The Federation's known about this,
and we've done nothing?

MARIEL

The Prime Directive applies,
Lieutenant Grey. Not to mention
that it was outside our territory,
and we had other concerns... the
Dominion, the Sheliak, the Klingons...

There's a communicator bleep.

CROSS

Go ahead.

CALE'S COMM VOICE

Captain, this is the Bridge. We'll
be coming out of warp in the Zelos
system in two minutes, sir.

CROSS

Very well. We'll be there
momentarily.

(beat)

That's it. Let's get to work.

The briefing breaks up, and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

The Enterprise cruises into orbit of Zelos Prime. The planet,
as we saw on the display, is a nightmare, with ugly black
streaks through the atmosphere. Even from high orbit, we
can see the massive mining works and gouges in the surface
of the planet.

We can also see several large facilities in orbit, all of
which are bristling with gun ports.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

All the senior officers are on the Bridge, along with
Councilor Mariel, and Lewis Carter.

MARIEL

My God.

CROSS

I'll second that.

We see Carter in the background, recording with his camera.
We close in on him:

CARTER

(whispering)

We have arrived at the world of Zelos Prime. You can see the horrifying conditions that the criminal Orion Syndicate have subjected the innocent native people of Zelos to.

MARIEL

(speaking in Carter's direction)

It IS horrifying. And I have no doubt that this mighty starship could remove the terrible blight of the Orions from this world. But we cannot. It is difficult to watch a scene like this and stand by, but that is what our principles require. Our PRIME Directive is called that for a reason.

(quieter)

Do be sure that makes it to broadcast, Mister Carter.

CROSS

Mister Carter, are you quite finished?

CARTER

(weakly)

Yes.

CROSS

Good. Then maybe we can get to work. Mister Dojar, any sign of the Tears of the Jackal?

DOJAR

No, Captain. There are over eight hundred orbital spaceports, and nearly all of them are shielded to block any scans.

CROSS

Keep trying.

QUINLAN

It won't do any good, Captain.

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

We're going to have to negotiate
with the Orions.

CROSS

Really.

QUINLAN

Captain, I've dealt with the Orions
before. The Jackal and its crew
could not hide here without the
approval of the Orions. The Orions
do nothing for free.

TALORA

You are suggesting that we need to
make the Orions a better offer.

QUINLAN

That's exactly what I'm suggesting.

DOJAR

How do we know what the Jackal's
crew gave the Orions in the first
place?

QUINLAN

We don't. We'll just have to take
our chances. It's their planet,
their rules. We don't have any choice
but to play by them.

CROSS

You'll forgive me if I don't find
that idea thrilling.

QUINLAN

You'd be insane if you did, Captain.

Councilor Mariel clears her throat.

MARIEL

What do you intend to do, Captain?

CROSS

I don't see any choice here. We
have to negotiate with the Orions.
(beat)

May I ask, Councilor, what is your
opinion?

Every eye on the bridge is on her. She takes a deep breath,
then:

MARIEL

I dislike the idea, Captain.

(MORE)

MARIEL (CONT'D)

I dislike it immensely.
Unfortunately, I see no alternative.
You don't require my approval,
Captain. But you have it nonetheless.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

The Enterprise orbits Zelos Prime, as ugly black clouds spin beneath us. As we watch, a massive ore-hauler blasts up from the atmosphere and rumbles past the Enterprise.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Quinlan and Talora are here, all seated at the table.

CROSS

You know this world, Lieutenant.

QUINLAN

I knew it several years ago.

TALORA

(patiently)

That is still more than anyone else
on the ship can say.

QUINLAN

Well, when I was here, there was a
bit of a turf war going on. A
Tellarite named Bargast Rin, he was
a real climber in the Syndicate, and
from what I heard he was trying to
take over from the local boss.

(grinning)

They were so busy fighting each other,
it was relatively easy for us to get
in and --

TALORA

(interrupting)

Your point, Lieutenant?

QUINLAN

None really. By the time we left,
it looked like Rin had the upper
hand. As far as I know, he's running
the place now.

CROSS

So what do we do?

QUINLAN

We deal with him directly.

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

The Syndicate does respect force, if it honors nothing else. The Enterprise is one hell of a big ship, and... uh...

CROSS

Yes?

QUINLAN

Well, Captain, with your reputation... they'll probably be afraid of what you might do. Which... uh... is a good thing.

TALORA

As distasteful as I find it, I must agree with Lieutenant Quinlan.

CROSS

So you're saying I should brag about being the Butcher of Coular.

QUINLAN

I wouldn't have phrased it quite that way, Captain... but, yes. The Syndicate... that's really the only sort of thing they will respond to.

Cross looks almost ill.

CROSS

I need to think about this. I'll let you know what I've decided in an hour... Quinlan takes that as her cue to leave. Talora lingers for a moment.

TALORA

Captain... Neil?

CROSS

Yes?

TALORA

I am sorry. I truly am.

CROSS

So am I, Talora. So am I.

On that, Talora exits, and Cross buries his head in his hands, as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

As before, the Enterprise orbits Zelos Prime. We can see several small ships flitting about the Enterprise.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE (V.O.)
USS Enterprise to all local spacecraft. You are ordered to maintain ten kilometers distance from this ship, and to cease high-power scans immediately. Failure to comply will be regarded as a hostile act, and we will respond accordingly.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The senior Bridge crew are all on duty.

CROSS
Have they backed off, Lieutenant?

DOJAR
All except one.

CROSS
On screen.

The viewscreen shows a small ship, maybe the size of a runabout or a bit smaller, covered with weapons ports and antennae.

QUINLAN
Persistent little buggers, aren't they?

CROSS
They've been warned. Mister Dojar, I want that ship out of our hair.

DOJAR
(smiling)
How far out, Captain?

CROSS
Out of our general vicinity, if you please. Not out of existence.

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

The smaller ship continues to buzz the Enterprise.

The Enterprise opens up with phasers, hitting the smaller ship and collapsing its shields almost instantly.

The ship backs off quickly.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE (V.O.)
USS Enterprise to all local
spacecraft. We will enforce our ten
kilometer traffic limit with all
necessary force. The next violation
of that limit will result in the
destruction of the offending
spacecraft. Enterprise out.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- MAIN BRIDGE

Cross stands up, paces a bit.

CROSS
Mister Dojar?

DOJAR
They've all backed off. They're
well outside the ten kilometer limit,
and they've all stopped scanning us.

CROSS
Good. If any of them do cross the
line again, blow them out of the
sky. That's a direct order.

DOJAR
Yes, sir!

Cross heads for a turbolift.

CROSS
Commander Talora, Lieutenant Quinlan,
will you please join me?
(at the turbolift
door)
Mister Dojar, the Bridge is yours.

Cross, Talora and Quinlan step into the turbolift.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TRANSPORTER ROOM

Cross, Talora and Quinlan enter. We note that each of them
is wearing a sidearm. Narv Ozran stands at his console,
staring at Councilor Mariel, who stands next to him.

CROSS
Councilor Mariel?

MARIEL
I didn't mean to surprise you,
Captain.

(MORE)

MARIEL (CONT'D)

But I wanted to discuss this...
negotiation... with you before you
transport down.

CROSS

(to Narv)

You're dismissed, Chief.

Narv, looking relieved, heads for the door. As it closes
behind him, Cross continues.

CROSS (CONT'D)

What did you want to discuss,
Councilor?

MARIEL

I don't need to remind you how
delicate this situation is, do I,
Captain?

CROSS

No. You don't.

MARIEL

Good. As I said earlier, I don't
like this course of action, but I
don't see any alternatives. I know
you have a difficult job, Captain.
I understand that you're sometimes
faced with situations where your
only options are bad and worse.

(beat)

But we can't afford a black eye here.
Not everyone in the Federation Council
is as... reasonable... as I am,
Captain.

CROSS

What exactly are you saying,
Councilor?

MARIEL

I'm saying that you need to get that
ship, and its crew, and it needs to
look clean and by-the-book.
Appearances matter, Captain.

CROSS

I see, Councilor. I think.

MARIEL

Excellent. Good luck to you down
there, Captain.

With that, Councilor Mariel leaves. Cross sets the transporter controls, steps on the platform next to Talora and Quinlan.

CROSS

Good luck to all of us..

And on that, they vanish in a shimmer of transporter effect.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZELOSIAN CITY -- RECEIVING AREA -- DAY

Cross, Talora and Quinlan shimmer into existence in a fenced-off receiving area. As we pan around, we can see that we're in a small settlement nestled into a hillside, overlooking a large, sprawling city. There are no skyscrapers, although we can see the shattered remnants of what might have been a beautiful skyline before the arrival of the Orions.

There's a brown-black haze over the city; from our vantage point, we're just above the pollution layer.

Behind us is a military-looking compound, with weapons emplacements trained skyward and both fences and forcefields surrounding the entire complex.

The receiving area itself is about 20 meters square. The only obvious entrance to the compound itself is a heavy door that also appears to have a forcefield protecting it.

Our heroes look around and then at each other.

TALORA

This is not encouraging.

QUINLAN

It's to be expected. I'd guess that any facility the Syndicate uses is shielded against transporters.

CROSS

The better to keep control of any visitors.

The forcefield covering the door fades away, and the door swings open, revealing an Andorian male, SHALEV. He's missing one of his antennae; it's cut off right at the base.

SHALEV

You are the party that contacted us?

Quinlan steps forward.

QUINLAN

(surprised)

Shalev?

SHALEV

(bored)

Do I know you?

QUINLAN

Not personally, no. But I know who's got your missing antenna. I believe it's mounted in a display case somewhere in an estate on Ferenginar. If you'd like to keep the one you've still got, you'll take us to Bargast Rin.

Shalev looks very uncomfortable, but he tries to keep up a brave face.

SHALEV

What makes you think Administrator Rin will want to talk to you?

QUINLAN

We wouldn't be talking to you if he didn't. The only reason you're here is that he ordered you to check us out first. Lackeys like you don't get to make any actual decisions. And we're not going to pay you off for doing your master's work. So just take us to Rin already.

As Quinlan verbally abuses Shalev, Cross and Talora stare at her. Shalev turns on his heel, and goes back inside the compound, leaving the door open. Quinlan follows, with Cross and Talora behind her.

CROSS

(whispering)

What happened the last time you were here?

QUINLAN

(also whispering)

It's a long story...

TALORA

Is it ever NOT a long story with you, Lieutenant?

As they enter the compound, the door closed behind them, and we hear a buzzing sound as the forcefield goes back into operation.

We follow our heroes inside, as they make their way down a corridor, and another, until they get to a door with a com panel next to it. Shalev taps the panel.

SHALEV

The Starfleeters are here, sir.

The door slides open, to reveal...

INT. BARGAST RIN'S OFFICE -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS

A large and well-appointed office, with a floor to ceiling window taking up one entire wall. The window looks out on the hillside; it's a beautiful view, if you ignore the haze of pollution covering the city off in the distance.

At a desk sits a Tellarite who's short and stocky even by the standards of his species. This is BARGAST RIN.

RIN

Welcome. Please, sit down and relax...

Shalev takes his leave, and the door slides closed behind him.

Rin waves expansively, motioning Cross, Talora and Quinlan to three comfortable-looking chairs. Quinlan sits, as does Talora, but Cross continues to stand.

RIN (CONT'D)

As you will, Captain Cross. But you would be more comfortable sitting.

CROSS

I'm not here to be comfortable, Mister Rin.

RIN

No, you're here to do business, yes?

CROSS

Yes.

There's silence for a moment as Rin looks at his guests and grins. Finally, Quinlan breaks the silence:

QUINLAN

What are you smiling at?

RIN

Nothing. I was just reminded of a joke I heard once... a Tellarite, a Human and a Romulan walk into a bar, and...

Rin notices that Cross isn't listening; Cross's attention is focused on the view behind Rin, outside the window.

RIN (CONT'D)

Rally, Captain, you're being quite
rude..

Cross pays him no attention. He -- and we -- are looking
intently at something, at first a tiny dot, then growing
larger, until we can see that it appears to be a Starfleet-
issue shuttlecraft, heading straight towards us.

CROSS

Get down!

And on Cross's shout, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. BARGAST RIN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Continuous action from the end of Act Three.

Cross, Talora and Quinlan all drop to the floor. Rin, in a remarkably agile move, is over the desk in two bounds, and as he leaps over it, he tips it over and lands behind it.

Phaser beams lash out from the shuttlecraft, straight at us. For a moment, they're deflected by a forcefield outside the window, but after a couple of seconds, the forcefield shorts out, and the window shatters.

Wind rushes in, and the roar is deafening. The shuttle ceases fire and rotates, a hatch opening on the side, just as a pair of atmospheric fighters come zooming in towards it.

As the shuttle turns, we can see on the side is written:
"USS ENTERPRISE NCC-1710-GREY"

Grapple guns fire from the shuttle, trailing rope behind them, and three figures in body armor and carrying phaser rifles slide into Rin's office a moment before the fighters blow the shuttle out of the sky.

Some of the shuttle debris is blown into the office, right behind the three invaders, who come in firing.

Cross, Talora and Quinlan all open fire on the invaders; their first shots are absorbed by the armor; without a word, Our Heroes concentrate their fire on the lead attacker, and the combined power of three phasers burn through the armor and fell him.

Rin's managed to produce a phaser of his own, and is also firing back. One of the two remaining invaders is blasted by four phaser beams, and the combined impact drives him right out the window and to his death.

The third invader drops his rifle and throws up his hands just as the door opens and a squad of Rin's personal guards enter.

RIN

(to the newly-arrived
guards)

A little late, gentlemen.

(gesturing to the
surrendered attacker)

Take our friend here away. I think
he probably has some things he'd
like to tell us.

(MORE)

RIN (CONT'D)

Do whatever you have to do with him,
but I want him kept alive until I
can have a personal chat with him
later.

The guards comply, roughly grabbing the attacker and leading
him away.

RIN (CONT'D)

(to Cross)

I think we should continue this
conversation elsewhere...

And on that, we...

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

A small, sparsely furnished meeting room. Rin sits at the
head of a table, with a pair of his personal guards also
Tellarites, wearing body armor and carrying extremely large
phaser rifles behind him. Cross, Talora and Quinlan sit
together at the table as well.

RIN

That was a fairly clever trick they
pulled. Lucky for you someone made
a mistake painting the hull number
on that shuttle they used.

We see on the table is a chunk of debris, with "NCC-1710-G"
clearly visible on it.

QUINLAN

They were using us as the fall guys.
Makes sense.

CROSS

Who exactly would "they" be, Mister
Rin?

RIN

The Karballa Syndicate. They've set
up operations on the fourth moon of
Zelos Nine. I was wondering when
they'd get around to pulling something
like this.

(beat)

Incidentally, thank you for your
help back there. It was most timely.

CROSS

Speaking of that...

RIN

Yes, yes. I am most grateful. And as a token of that gratitude, I'm willing to listen to whatever offer you wish to make to me. Isn't that generous?

On Cross's annoyed expression...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

The Enterprise cruises along in orbit. Surrounding her are a dozen or more smaller ships, all carefully obeying the ten kilometer traffic limit. We see a small debris field floating near the Enterprise as well; clearly someone decided to ignore the Enterprise's orders.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, Supplemental. We were able to convince Bargast Rin to agree to hold negotiations aboard the Enterprise. Considering the unsuccessful attempt on his life, it's not surprising that he agreed..

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Quinlan, and Talora sit on one side of the table. Bargast Rin sits on the other side, with two bodyguards (possibly the same two as earlier; with the body armor, it's impossible to be sure) standing silently behind him.

RIN

You've come awfully far out of your way to visit me. What exactly are you looking for that you can't find anywhere else in the galaxy, Captain?

Cross grimaces; it's obvious that Rin already knows what they want.

CROSS

What makes you think this is anything more than a courtesy...

(beat)

One you don't really deserve, but let that go. What makes you think we can't just take whatever we want from you?

Rin cuts him off with a wave of his hand.

RIN

What makes me think that is, if I recall her name correctly, Councilor Kariann Mariel of Betazed.

CROSS

If you think...

RIN

Please, Captain. I'm not a fool. I'm merely pointing out that it's unlikely that you'll engage in a repeat of the Coular Incident with a possible future President of the Federation onboard your ship to watch it firsthand.

(beat)

So.

(smiling)

I suspect you're interested in a certain starship that arrived here yesterday, yes?

On that, and Cross's defeated expression...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

The lounge is mostly empty, but Councilor Mariel is here, sitting by herself and looking out at Zelos Prime.

Grey enters Recreation Lounge, spots Mariel, and heads straight for her. She catches his reflection in the window, and turns to face him.

MARIEL

Lieutenant Grey. Please, join me.

GREY

(surprised)

Yes, ma'am.

Mariel laughs.

MARIEL

Please, Lieutenant... Erik. Call me Kariann. And please sit down, will you?

Grey sits.

GREY

How did you know...?

MARIEL

Aside from being a politician, and making a point of studying the Enterprise's crew files, I am a telepath, you know. That's a surprisingly useful talent at times.

GREY

Not surprising at all, ma... Kariann.
(beat)
May I ask you...

MARIEL

(laughing)

A question? Yes, I am well aware of Captain Cross' reputation. No, I don't believe his disgraceful actions will negatively affect my campaign for the Presidency. No, Captain Cross is not lying about this mission nor is he engaged in any subterfuge. And last but not least, the reason I sound so sure about that is, as we've already established, I'm a telepath.

(beat)

That was four questions, Erik. Now I have one for you...

On Mariel's words...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIEFING ROOM

We rejoin the negotiations, with a smiling Bargast Rin on one side of the table, and a stressed Cross, an exasperated Talora and a too-calm Quinlan across from him.

RIN

The ship you want is called the Tears of the Jackal, am I correct?

Cross nods sullenly.

RIN (CONT'D)

I thought as much.

There's a bleep from a comm panel.

CROSS

(very angry)

What is it?

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE

A communication from the planet,
Captain. Someone called Shalev.

(MORE)

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)
He's requesting to speak to Bargast
Rin.

Cross looks ar Rin.

RIN
I'll take it here. You can go ahead
and put him on the viewscreen.

CROSS
(deeply annoyed)
Transfer the signal here, Mister
Dojar.

DOJAR'S COMM VOICE
Yes, sir.

The viewscreen on the wall lights up to show Shalev.

RIN
This had better be important, Shalev.

SHALEV
It is, Administrator. There's been
a major work stoppage at the Retjor
mining facility. Several hundred
miners are refusing to go in. They're
complaining of safety concerns and
dangerous conditions.

Rin sighs. Our Heroes watch him curiously.

RIN
Will these fools never learn that
their behavior has consequences?
(beat)
Standard procedure, I suppose.
Shalev, what's the nearest city to
Retjor?

SHALEV
Tarval Bay. It's got a population
of about two million Zelosians.

RIN
Two million? I think...
(calculating in his
head)
Let's say five hundred kilotons ought
to do the trick. Does that sound
about right?

SHALEV
Yes, Administrator. I'll take care
of it immediately.

The viewscreen flickers off. Cross and Talora are horrified; Quinlan looks shaken as well.

CROSS

You can't...

Rin cuts him off with a wave of his hand.

RIN

There are still three and half billion Zelosians, give or take. Two million won't make much of a difference to our operations. But it might teach them a lesson.

TALORA

What... lesson... is that?

RIN

Disobedience is unacceptable and will be punished severely. Don't act so shocked. You employ the same principle. When one of my ships disobeyed you, you destroyed it. I understand that, and I respect it. You made the rules clear, one of my pilots ignored you, and he paid the price. That's just business. So is this. And it is not YOUR business, so let's not discuss it any further.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

As the Enterprise orbits the once-beautiful planet, we see a small, sleek craft zoom away from a nearby orbital spacedock and streak down into the atmosphere. For a moment, nothing happens, and then we see a bright, almost blinding flash on the planet below.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Grey and Mariel are still sitting together. Neither of them is looking out the window -- but we can see through it a massive atmospheric disturbance on the planet, the aftermath of the bombing.

As we close in on Grey and Mariel, they're chatting away, until Mariel suddenly shudders, and goes pale.

GREY

Kariann?

MARIEL

(still shaking)
Something's happened.

Mariel turns to look out the window. Grey follows suit.

GREY

My God...
(turning back to Mariel)
You felt it?

MARIEL

I still feel it. I can hear them.
I've never felt... millions of people,
all at once.

GREY

Let's go find out what the hell
happened down there.

MARIEL

(a bit calmer)
No. Not yet.
(standing, taking
Grey's hand)
There's somewhere else we need to go
first. Both of us.

On her words, we pull back, through the Rec Lounge window and into space, and as we do, we see Grey following Mariel towards the door, together...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

The Enterprise orbits over the planet, and we can still see the massive storm caused by the bombing.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- GREY'S QUARTERS

Grey and Councilor Mariel sit together on a small couch. Grey's in uniform, while Mariel is wearing a robe that might once have belonged to Sarah Boyle.

GREY

I suppose you've already made the
answer obvious, but, are you feeling
better?

MARIEL

Yes.
(puts her arm around
Grey)
Absolutely. What happened... it's
not something I can just forget or
put out of my mind... but I don't
hear the screaming now. Or not quite
so loudly, at any rate.

(MORE)

MARIEL (CONT'D)

(offhandedly)

That's why most of my people are pacifists, you know.

GREY

I see... I think.

MARIEL

What about you, Erik? Are you still angry?

GREY

No, I'm... there's no point lying to a telepath, is there?

MARIEL

(with a slight grin)

No, there really isn't. She betrayed you. You have every right to be angry. But you might want to consider that just because you have the right to be angry, that doesn't mean being angry does you any good.

GREY

Why do you care?

MARIEL

Erik, I've been sensing you from the moment I came on board.

GREY

You said you didn't pry into...

MARIEL

I wasn't. You were radiating such anger, I had to concentrate to put it out of my mind. I had to do something.

GREY

Why?

MARIEL

Because that's how I was raised. I'm a politician, but I'm also a Betazoid, and it's something that's drilled into all of us from childhood.

GREY

And why...?

MARIEL

Because you're handsome, and we both clearly needed to. It's what we call a win-win situation.

(MORE)

MARIEL (CONT'D)

(beat)

By the way... this robe, it belonged
to the woman who...

Grey nods.

MARIEL (CONT'D)

It's rather... tight. I gather her
build is somewhat...?

Grey snorts with laughter. Mariel laughs with him. After a
moment:

MARIEL (CONT'D)

I hate to ask this, but I am a
politician, so I have to... I suppose
I have your vote now?

On their laughter...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Talora and Quinlan all have looks of disgust on their
faces.

CROSS

You...

RIN

...took care of business on my planet.
Which is not within your Federation,
and none of your affair. I suggest
you forget about it and get down to
what is your affair. Which, I
believe, concerns what you're going
to give me in return for the Tears
of the Jackal and its crew. Including
Captain Brody.

Talora and Quinlan try not to react; Quinlan is more
successful than Talora. Rin smiles like the cat who ate the
canary.

CROSS

What do you want?

RIN

Direct. I like that. I'll be equally
direct. I need to deal with the
Karballa Syndicate's incursion into
this star system. I don't presently
have the firepower that would make
such an operation quick and clean.
You do.

TALORA

We will not be your hired mercenaries!

RIN

No one is asking you to. If you could see your way clear to providing me with...

(thinking)

Say, six quantum torpedoes, with the updated fire control modules... version 6.63, I believe it is. And one type-thirteen phaser emitter. Oh, and a series-beta high energy multiple-frequency shield generator. I believe you've got all that equipment to spare.

CROSS

How do... never mind. I can't give you that.

RIN

Yes, you can, Captain Cross. If you want the Tears of the Jackal, you can give it to me within twenty-four hours. After that... well, accidents happen all the time, and it would be most unfortunate if the Jackal had some sort of catastrophic antimatter containment failure, or if its crew all suffered heart attacks...

QUINLAN

Or spontaneous molecular disintegration.

RIN

Or that. I understand that kind of thing happens all too frequently.

(beat)

I'm going to go back home. I need to supervise the upgrades to my security. I'll be waiting to hear from you... I'll wait until 1900 hours tomorrow. Good evening, Captain.

And on Rin's words...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross, Talora, Quinlan and Dojar are here. All are seated, except Cross, who's pacing back and forth restlessly.

DOJAR

We've come this far. I don't see that we have much choice but to accept his terms.

TALORA

Entirely aside from the merits of betraying the secrets of advanced technology, we would be giving powerful weapons to a criminal sociopath.

QUINLAN

Don't you think Rin can get similar firepower on the black market? It's not a question of denying him the technology. It's just that he's in a position to get it for free.

TALORA

And that justifies handing it over to him?

QUINLAN

The things we might find on the Tears justify it.

DOJAR

I agree.

TALORA

I loathe this. I loathe every aspect of this mission.

QUINLAN

You may not believe this, Talora, but so do I. Unfortunately that doesn't change the situation.

CROSS

Sometimes your only choices are bad and worse...

TALORA

Councilor Mariel did say that. Shall we ask her advice on this decision?

CROSS

I don't think so.

(beat)

I believe I've made up my mind. I just want to sleep on it before I officially sell my soul.

And on that note, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

The Enterprise continues in orbit of the ravaged planet, now surrounded by at least twenty small ships, keeping a respectful distance from the starship.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Talora and Quinlan are here.

CROSS

We're clear? Neither Starfleet Command nor Councilor Mariel is to know anything of this. Assuming all goes well and we get what we want, the official story is that it was a gift in return for saving Bargast Rin's life.

QUINLAN

Makes sense to me.

TALORA

I agree. Lieutenant Dojar can be trusted to remain silent on the matter as well.

QUINLAN

What about the rest of the crew?

CROSS

The only one who'll need to know is Lieutenant Grey. We'll require his assistance.

Before anyone else can speak, Cross quickly continues:

CROSS (CONT'D)

I know how he feels about me. But I imagine his pride and his principles will keep him from talking about any of this.

The viewscreen flickers to life, displaying Bargast Rin.

RIN

Captain? You called?

CROSS

We'll make the trade. The weapons you requested in return for the Tears of the Jackal and her crew. Alive and unharmed.

RIN

Agreed, Captain Cross. I'll send a shuttle over to pick up the equipment I requested in one hour. It's been a pleasure doing business with you.

The viewscreen flickers off.

CROSS

Does anyone else feel like they need a shower?

(before anyone can answer)

Lieutenant Grey, please report to the Briefing Room immediately.

(beat)

May as well get this over with. I'll do this alone; Grey doesn't despise the two of you yet, there's no reason for him to start now...

On that, Talora and Quinlan exit, leaving Cross alone to pace.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- PRIME

A large cargo shuttle slowly floats towards the Enterprise.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross is sitting at the table as Grey enters. Grey looks considerably more relaxed than we've seen him in a while.

GREY

Captain?

CROSS

Please sit down, Lieutenant. I have a job for you.

Cross slides a PADD across the table to Grey. Grey picks it up, studies it.

GREY

That's quite a bit of firepower. What about it?

CROSS

I need you to have everything on that PADD in Cargo Bay One within the hour... and before it's there, I need you to make some modifications..

On Grey's surprised expression...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- RECREATION LOUNGE

Quinlan and Talora sit at a table. Councilor Mariel is a few tables away, sitting by herself and staring out the window, as before.

TALORA

Dojar is late. That's not like him.

QUINLAN

He said he was going to his quarters. Said he had an awful headache. I was going to stop by later, see how he's doing.

TALORA

I will accompany you.

Quinlan's about to make a snappy retort, but thinks better of it:

QUINLAN

That's a good idea. He'd like that.

TALORA

I hope so.
(looking at Mariel)
She is just sitting there, staring out into space... I wonder...

On Talora's words, Mariel turns away from the window, stands, and heads for their table.

MARIEL

(not quite shouting)
What I'm thinking?

TALORA

(shrugs)
Yes.

MARIEL

Nothing really, Commander Talora. Just that it's odd... the Captain seems to be avoiding me.

QUINLAN

No, he's just busy.

MARIEL

He is busy, that's true enough. He also has terrible control over his thoughts -- he's broadcasting like a subspace transmitter.

(MORE)

MARIEL (CONT'D)

Since he doesn't want to see me, you
can tell him for me that his...
your... secret is safe with me.

(beat)

It has to be, doesn't it? It
certainly wouldn't do for a Federation
Councilor to know about clandestine
weapons trades with the Orion
Syndicate, would it? If I knew, I'd
have to put a stop to it, wouldn't
I?

TALORA

If you knew about any such activity,
I am certain you would take the
appropriate action.

MARIEL

Exactly right.

(beat)

Do what you have to do. Accomplish
the mission. Just don't screw it
up, that's all I ask.

With that, Mariel leaves Recreation Lounge, and a stunned-
into-silence Talora and Quinlan watch her go.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross is still sitting at the table, while Grey is standing,
and his relaxed expression is long gone.

GREY

No! I will not do this!

CROSS

It's an order, Lieutenant.

GREY

It's an illegal order! To take part
in an illegal and immoral operation!
It's also the height of foolishness.
Do you honestly believe that the
Orions won't notice our sabotage?
Do you think that when their weapons
don't work, they'll just smile and
say "oh, well, better luck next time?"

CROSS

(getting angry)

What will they do? You're obviously
the expert here.

GREY

They'll be another enemy, as if we need one more. I have no idea what that'll mean, but it won't be good, not for you, which doesn't matter, your career is a disgrace already, but it will follow everyone else on this ship, and there are a lot of fine men and women who don't deserve to be dragged down with you!

CROSS

Are you finished, Lieutenant?

GREY

No, but what's the point? You're beyond reason anyway.

CROSS

Very possibly. I just want you to consider one thing. We are making this trade regardless of your objections. If you don't help modify the weapons, they will be used. If you do modify them, they won't be. You'll be saving lives. It's your choice.

GREY

It's a choice, not an order now? My answer hasn't changed, Captain. My principles aren't as... flexible... as yours.

And on that, Grey turns on his heel and leaves. Cross is left to stare out into space.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- PRIME

The cargo shuttle we saw earlier is approaching the Enterprise's shuttle bay.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CARGO BAY

A squad of Bargast Rin's men -- a dozen Tellarites in body armor are moving equipment loaded on anti-grav pallets. Cross and Talora are watching the operation with disgust. We watch with them for a moment.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross and Talora watch out the window as the cargo shuttle floats slowly away from the Enterprise.

As it does, the viewscreen flickers to life, and we see the smiling face of Bargast Rin

RIN

My pilot informs me that he's just undocked from your ship. He reports that all the equipment checked out. That completes your end of the bargain.

CROSS

Yes, it does.

RIN

No need to be so testy, Captain. It's just business. And as to that...you'll find the Tears of the Jackal in Orbital Dockyard 103. That's on the other side of the planet from you. I'll be transmitting clearance codes to you momentarily. You'll find the Jackal's crew there as well. My people will be waiting for you to collect them.

(beat)

I'm transmitting the codes now. It's been a pleasure, Captain Cross. Next time you're out this way, we'll have to do business again.

With that, the viewscreen flickers off.

TALORA

We should get this... business... over as quickly as possible.

CROSS

I agree completely, Commander.

On that, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS PRIME

The Enterprise breaks its standard orbit and accelerates around Zelos Prime.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross is in the center seat; the rest of the senior Bridge crew is on duty as well.

DOJAR

I've been scanning the spacedock. It's shielded against transport. We'll have to send a shuttle over.

CROSS

Commander Talora, you'll go, along
with Lieutenant Quinlan and Lieutenant
Dojar.

(beat)

And a fully armed boarding party.
You'll take possession of the Tears,
fly it out of the dock, and into our
shuttle bay.

QUINLAN

It'll be a tight fit.

CROSS

I trust you'll be able to manage it,
Lieutenant.

QUINLAN

Yes, Captain.

Quinlan, Talora and Dojar head for the turbolift. As they
do, the lift door opens, and Councilor Mariel enters the
Bridge.

MARIEL

Captain Cross, it appears you've
accomplished your mission.

CROSS

Don't jinx it, Councilor. If I've
learned anything on this ship, it's
not to count your chickens before
they hatch.

MARIEL

We don't have chickens on Betazed,
Captain... but I understand.

CROSS

I'm glad someone on this ship does...

On that, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The shuttlecraft Plato zooms away from the Enterprise and
towards Orbital Dockyard 103. The dockyard is a large
cylinder, maybe five kilometers long, with antennae and other
protrusions up and down its length. There are no windows,
but we can make out space doors at one end of the dock.

INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

Quinlan pilots the shuttle. The dockyard looms large in the
main window.

As she flies, alarms suddenly begin to go off.

QUINLAN
What the hell...?

TALORA
Lieutenant?

QUINLAN
The dock is radiating energy, all
across the spectrum. Something's
going on in there...

Outside the window, we see an explosion that tears open the space doors of the dock. A small craft, about the same size as the Enterprise's shuttle but heavily armed, flies out, and as it does so, it fires several phaser blasts back into the spacedock.

TALORA
Raise the shields!

QUINLAN
Already done!

EXT. SPACE

The escaping ship fires phasers at the Enterprise shuttle, but just a few shots, all of which glance off the shields. The fleeing ship then goes to warp and vanishes from view.

TALORA
Enterprise, come in!

CROSS'S COMM VOICE
We saw it, Commander. What's your
status?

TALORA
We're fine. But I suspect that was
the crew of the Tears in that ship,
and we have no idea how much damage
they did to it in their escape.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE
Go in there and check it out,
Commander. We're going after that
ship.
(beat)
And, Commander, please... be careful.

TALORA
We will, Captain.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise zooms off in pursuit of the escaped ship, while, unseen by either the Enterprise or Talora's shuttle, a small ship undocks from the other side of the spacedock, shimmers into cloak, and vanishes.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross is staring out at the ship that escaped from the spacedock. It's held in a tractor beam. Councilor Mariel stands just behind him.

CALE

No life signs, Captain. It was running on remote control.

CROSS

(trying to control
his temper)

We fell for it.

(beat)

Mister Cale, scan every inch of that ship. If there's anything there at all, I expect you to find it.

MARIEL

I see what you meant about chickens, Captain. Let's hope your people find something of value back at the spacedock.

CROSS

Yes, let's hope so.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Plato slowly enters the spacedock through the damaged doors. We can see inside that the Tears has been heavily damaged, but it's still in one piece.

INT. TEARS OF THE JACKAL -- CORRIDOR

We're in a corridor onboard the Tears of the Jackal. There is debris everywhere, and the lights flicker on and off.

An airlock opens, and into the corridor step several armored Enterprise security personnel, followed by Dojar, Quinlan and Talora, all in spacesuits and carrying flashlights.

DOJAR

What a mess!

QUINLAN

At least they didn't destroy it completely.

TALORA

Quinlan, you head for the Bridge. See what you can find there. Mister Dojar and myself will check out the personnel quarters...

Quinlan heads off towards the Bridge, and Talora and Dojar head the opposite way, all accompanied by security troops.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Quinlan heads off towards the Bridge, and Talora and Dojar head the opposite way, all accompanied by security troops.

CUT TO:

INT. TEARS OF THE JACKAL -- CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

As everywhere else on the ship, there is debris and damage everywhere. We pan around the quarters of the Jackal's captain, and then we hear a loud grunt of effort, and the door slowly is pulled open.

Talora and Dojar enter, shining flashlights around. The security forces stand outside, waiting.

DOJAR

It's just like the other rooms. A complete disaster.

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE

The Bridge is a complete loss. Computers are crashed, I can't do anything up here.

TALORA

Come down here and help us search the Captain's quarters, then.

Talora and Dojar go through the room, sifting through the mess, picking through wrecked equipment. Finally, Dojar notices something, just as Quinlan appears in the doorway.

Dojar has spotted a slightly recessed panel in one wall behind a desk.

DOJAR

It's a safe!

TALORA

Step back, Gril.

Dojar does as he's told, and Talora raises a phaser. Quinlan joins her. They fire, and the wall glows red, before there's a small explosion and the door to the safe slides open.

Dojar goes to the opened safe, looks inside... sees a PADD, pulls it out, examines it...

DOJAR

Look at this!

Talora and Quinlan approach, and all three stare intently at the PADD. We don't see what's on it, just their reaction...smiles all around.

QUINLAN

What do you think?

TALORA

I think -- I hope -- this is something we can actually use.

QUINLAN

We were overdue for a lucky break, weren't we?

DOJAR

I agree with both of you. Can we please get out of here before our luck turns bad again?

On Dojar's word, we...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross is in the center seat, and the rest of the senior staff is also on duty. Councilor Mariel is on the Bridge as well.

MARIEL

It wasn't a complete loss, Captain. Something may come of the computer cores recovered from the Tears of the Jackal. The Romulans will be satisfied with that.

CROSS

I hope so, Councilor.
(to Talora)
Commander, have we finished our business here?

TALORA

Yes, Captain. We've done all that could be expected of us here.

CROSS

Then let's get the hell out of here,
and get the Councilor back home and
safe, shall we? Mister Dojar, take
us out, full impulse speed, please.

DOJAR

Yes, Captain!

And on Dojar's words...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise cruises away from the ugly little world of
Zelos Prime, accelerating to full impulse...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ZELOS NINE

The Enterprise zooms past the gas giant Zelos Nine, and then
blasts away into warp, vanishing from sight.

A moment later, we see several small, heavily armed spacecraft
some of the same ships that were harassing Enterprise earlier
zoom into view, and head straight for one of the moons of
Zelos Nine. A few seconds later, the ships are too small to
be seen, but we can see massive, blinding flashes on the
fourth moon, and on that image we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END