

STAR TREK

RENAISSANCE

"All For Romulus"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD

A densely packed asteroid field. There are multiple small ships milling about, Cardassian in design. We pan to a particularly large asteroid that has structures built into it. There are some old beat-up Galor-class ships moored near it, as well as several more small ships.

CLOSE ON ASTEROID BASE

We can see inside some of the windows, and see the occupants inside. They're all Cardassian, and many of them seem to be doing some sort of military exercise. We peer into another window and see several people working on a strange device inside a torpedo casing. In yet a third window, a large crowd of cardassians have gathered and seem to be shoving rifles into the air and yelling a war cry that we cannot hear.

We hear the faint whine of something approaching. The sound gets gradually louder until a gigantic green EXPLOSION engulfs our view.

BACK TO SCENE

We hear a torpedo tube firing, and see a giant green slow-moving PLASMA TORPEDO come seemingly out of nowhere. We pan to follow the torpedo smash into what is left of the base, obliterating it. The Galors moored nearby scramble to evade the asteroid base as it breaks apart.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

Spartan and very Romulan in design. It is vaguely similar to a Starfleet bridge with three command chairs. The two side command chairs have rather large consoles next to them. In the center chair is COMMANDER KORILIM (from "Dance"), wearing a sly grin as he surveys the carnage he and his ship have wrought. To his right is a human, MARCUS ANNAN, dressed in a Romulan military uniform.

ANNAN

Primary target destroyed. The asteroid is breaking up and at least two Galor class destroyers have been struck by debris.

KORILIM

Excellent. Plot an exfiltration course.

ANNAN

Aye, sir. Helm! Plot course one-four-three mark zero-eight-one and engage!

HELMSMAN

Aye!

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD

We can see the bedlam that the still-invisible Lukan has sown in the background. We pan slowly to follow... nothing. A small ship rushing towards the disaster area is abruptly blown to pieces by a pair of quantum torpedoes coming out of nowhere. We suddenly see a starship-sized shimmer as it goes through a less densely-packed portion of the field.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

OPS OFFICER

Commander, we've ran into a detection grid!

The officer turns to face Korilim and Annan.

ANNAN

(stern)

Why didn't we detect it before?

Annan stares the officer down.

OPS OFFICER

(nervous)

I... ah...

KORLIM

(disappointed, stern)

Annan, relieve him.

The ops officer gets up and sheepishly stands aside. Annan takes the ops console. The ship then suddenly SHAKES from weapons fire.

ANNAN

Two incoming Galor class ships in attack formation on our aft quarter!

KORILIM

Disengage cloak. Raise shields and fire aft disruptors at the lead ship.

The tactical officer, MARIUS, nods and starts entering commands into his console.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD

We see the Lukan decloak, revealing itself to the naked eye for the first time. It is a magnificent ship, the most raptor-like Warbird ever constructed by the Romulans. Its wings are swept back like a diving eagle, and its tail fans out like that of a bird's. Underneath, there is a belly-like protrusion housing a nav deflector similar to that of one of Starfleet's slipstream-capable ships. Two phaser beams strike the Lukan's shields, and the Lukan issues forth a disruptor beam from the base of its tail in retaliation.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

Korilim presses a button on his arm rest.

KORILIM

Bridge to engineering, we need
slipstream in...

Korilim turns to face Annan, who is looking away, intently watching the readings his console is feeding him. He holds up his hand and raises his index finger.

KORILIM

...one minute.

INT. LUKAN -- ENGINEERING

Also Spartan and Romulan in design. In the center, there is a giant glowing ball with a thin crystal in the vertical axis; the Lukan's Quantum Induction Core. Surrounding it are several large control panels.

It seems there was a small mishap down here, an engineer is flat on his back with a burn, and it appears a wall panel had exploded. Medics are tending to him. A Romulan woman with neck-length hair and a headband surveys the room. This is DECIA, the chief engineer.

DECIA

That may be a problem, Bridge. Those
last few hits took out the ion
dispersal unit on the cloaking device.
It'll take a moment to lock it down.

KORILIM'S COMM VOICE

I want slipstream ready, not excuses.
Bridge out.

Decia lets out an exasperated sigh. She motions one of her subordinates toward her. The subordinate is HORVHAN (from "Dance").

DECIA

Horvahn, we're going to have to secure the dispersal unit while in slipstream. Take teams beta and gamma, I'll stay here to prep for slipstream.

Horvahn nods and heads off to his task.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD RIM

The Lukan flies at flank speed out of the asteroid field, with the two Cardassian ships still in hot pursuit.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

HELMSMAN

Slipstream drive is ready, sir!

KORILIM

Plot a course for the Dessica system, sixty thousand TSL. Engage.

EXT. SPACE

The Lukan vaults into slipstream, leaving her pursuers eating stardust.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The swirling tunnel of Slipstream fills the main viewscreen.

KORILIM

That went well. Annan, give me a mission report.

ANNAN

Destroy their base of operations, primary objective, complete. Attack targets of opportunity; two Galor class ships damaged, secondary objective, complete. Escape back to Romulan space... in progress.

Korilim smiles an arrogant smile.

INT. LUKAN -- ENGINEERING

The induction core is more lively than it was before. Several engineers rush about, monitoring slipstream readings. Decia is at the center console looking straight at the core.

HORVHAN'S COMM VOICE

Horvhan to Engineering, the damage to the cloaking device was worse than we thought. We have a major particle leak here.

DECIA
Understood. Get it locked down
quickly and get back--

Decia is cut short by a wailing SIREN. She looks down at her console, and becomes alarmed at what she reads.

DECIA (CONT'D)
(alarmed)
Decia to bridge, we have a
catastrophic slipstream failure in
progress! We need to drop out of
slipstream now!

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The alarm is wailing loudly in here as well.

KORILIM
Understood! Helm, disengage
slipstream!

The helmsman complies, but the console gives a negative beep.

HELMSMAN
(panicking)
I can't!

KORILIM
(cursing)
D'vor! Engineering, cut power to
the slipstream! We can't disengage!

The entire ship BUCKS hard, sending everyone flying. The viewscreen flashes a brilliant white before shorting out.

EXT. SPACE -- SLIPSTREAM

The Lukan's slipstream tunnel is now so frighteningly narrow, she can barely fit through it. Portions of the hull begin to peel off, and a few explosions spew forth from underneath.

EXT. SPACE

The Lukan is violently ejected from Slipstream. An energy shockwave issues forth from the unstable Slipstream event and fades into space. Venting gases trail behind the Lukan from several wounds on her hull. She begins listing off-course.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

All the bridge occupants are either on the floor clamoring to get back up, or are holding on to their seat for dear life. Many panels have exploded and several conduits have ruptured and are venting steam.

Annan's face is smashed up against his console, his nose bleeding. He comes to quickly, wipes the blood from under his nose and assesses the state of the bridge.

ANNAN

Damage report!

Marius is already up on his feet and back at Tactical.

MARIUS

Warp drive inoperative, slipstream drive inoperative. Seven hull breaches, structural stress levels are in the red. We have casualty reports in from all over the ship.

While Marius reading off the damage report, Annan looks for Korilim. He finds him in a heap on the floor, burned badly and bleeding green blood out from several wounds. Annan rushes over to him.

ANNAN

(shocked)

The Commander's down!

Annan feels for Korilim's pulse as the medic on the bridge goes over to check the Commander. He lets out a sigh of relief, as he can feel a pulse.

As we study the mauled face of KORILIM we...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise at warp, gracefully cruising by.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TALORA'S QUARTERS

Talora is at her desk, talking to someone on her desktop terminal. This someone is SENATOR AMANNIUS, Talora's father (from "The Public Eye").

TALORA

...So I decided to stay on the Enterprise.

AMANNIUS

I see. It's a pity you couldn't come home again. You would make a great boon to the diplomatic corps with your experience in Starfleet.

TALORA

I can't, dad. These are my friends, and I can't just abandon them. Things are getting back to normal around here. Besides, there are more important things than just my career.

AMANNIUS

Like what?

Talora realizes her indiscretion.

TALORA

Important things.

Amannius can read his daughter like a book, even through the com channel. He knows what Talora's talking about.

AMANNIUS

Whatever your career decisions are, your mother and I will still sup----- you.

Talora jumps a little at the static.

TALORA

What the...

Ammanius looks curiously at something off-screen. The static begins getting much worse.

AMANNIUS (O.S.)

Tal---signal---ing up-

The screen blanks out and is replaced with an alert reading "SIGNAL LOST". Talora hits her commbadge.

TALORA

Talora to Bridge, I just lost my comms signal.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

We're aware of it. Report to the bridge immediately.

Talora raises her eyebrow and gets up to leave.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The bridge is bustling with activity.

Talora enters from the turbolift. Cross is hovering over ops while Cale is tapping away at the console.

CALE

As I said, sir, all frequencies on the subspace radio bands are completely drowned out by interference. Nothing's going in or out.

TALORA

So it's not just me then.

Cross turns to face Talora.

CROSS

Apparently not. I was having a chat with Captain Suhrre on the Katana when I was cut off.

CALE

Sir, the static is dying down! I'm receiving signals from relay stations D-47 and D-48 again.

CROSS

Good. Can you find out what caused the comms blackout?

CALE

No, but I may be able to triangulate where it came from by using the two relay stations.

CROSS

(nodding)
Do it.

CROSS WALKS OVER TO TALORA

CROSS (CONT'D)

What do you think?

TALORA

I'm guessing some natural phenomenon.

CROSS

We're in the middle of the most nondescript sector in the Federation's partition of the Cardassian occupation zone. There's nothing within two sectors of here but a few empty star systems, I think something else may be up.

TALORA

We'll have to wait and see until we can find out where it came from first.

CALE

Sir, I've pinpointed the source. Approximately eighteen light-years spinward, inside the Romulan partition of the occupation zone.

Cale's console beeps.

CALE (CONT'D)

Sir, now I'm picking up a distress signal, it's coming from the same place as the source.

CROSS

On speakers.

Cale presses a button, routing the distress signal to the speakers.

ANNAN'S COMM VOICE

This is Subcommander Marcus Annan of the IRW Lukan to any Alpha Quadrant Alliance starships. We have suffered a catastrophic slipstream failure and are in need of assistance.

CROSS

That would explain the comms blackout. Bridge to Engineering, prepare for slipstream.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Aye, sir.

CROSS

Helm, plot a course to the Lukan's position and engage as soon as slipstream is ready.

Stolt nods and enters in commands to the helm.

TALORA

Sir, I'm sure there's a Romulan ship nearby.

Cross sits down in the command chair.

CROSS

There are no other ships in the Romulan fleet with crews knowledgeable about slipstream drives, Commander.

TALORA

I see.

CROSS

The Federation has instilled a lot of trust in the Empire to give such a revolutionary technology such as Slipstream Drive. There are plenty of rogue elements out there that would love to get their hands on something as fast as a slipstream drive.

Talora nods grudgingly, as if her pride were at stake.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise, still at warp, suddenly accelerates sharply, and then is enveloped by a slipstream tunnel. The tunnel bends slightly to the side and the Enterprise follows it through the bend.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, Stardate 80505.5. We are answering a distress call from the new Romulan flagship, the Lukan. Admiral Delfune seemed rather eager about keeping this discrete from the rest of the captains in of the Rapid Reaction Force.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Cross is talking to Admiral Delfune through his desktop viewer. The pile of PADDs on the side of his desk is smaller than usual.

CROSS

...Really?

DELFUNE

I'm serious, Captain. I want you to deal with this one alone.

CROSS

Why?

Deflune looks away from the screen for a second. The screen goes blank and then reads "SWITCHING TO SECURE CHANNEL" before returning Deflune to view.

DELFUNE

Can you keep this between us?

Cross contemplates for a moment.

CROSS

Yes.

DELFUNE

I have reason to believe that Janus is against the sharing of technology with the Romulans, and may have had several failed attempts to sabotage the Lukan's development.

CROSS

Not surprising.

DELFUNE

I can't send Joel in on this one. I need you to deal with this one quietly. I have contacts within the Romulan government that I trust more than I do many of my own subordinates, ironically. The last thing I need is to have them lose that mutual trust because Joel's crew "accidentally" botches the repair job on the Lukan.

CROSS

Is that all?

DELFUNE

Yes. Delfune out.

The comm channel closes just as the doorbell chimes.

CROSS

Come in.

BOYLE enters the ready room.

BOYLE

I'd like to speak to you about the upcoming away mission.

CROSS

You're rather quick on the uptake, lieutenant.

BOYLE

I have a master of gossip for a
boyfriend, you know.

CROSS

What are you here for?

Beat.

BOYLE

I'd like to join the away team.

CROSS

From what I understand, Commander
Grey kicked you off the engineering
staff, you'll have to speak to him
about it.

BOYLE

He likely won't listen. He kicked
me out because of his own personal
feelings towards me!

CROSS

(reading something
off his terminal)

I have a feeling it was more than
just his personal feelings towards
you that got you the boot.

BOYLE

He's throwing a perfectly good
engineer out the window, sir. I
think it's a waste of my skills. I
easily have the second greatest amount
of field experience with Slipstream
drives in all of Starfleet next to
Erik. All my skill is wasted just
mulling about in Mission Ops, taking
orders from Lieutenant Cale.

Cross nods, still looking away from Boyle.

CROSS

You raise an interesting point.

BOYLE

So can I?

Cross briefly mulls over the decision and finally faces Boyle.

CROSS

You will have a probationary position
on the away team. Once this mission
is over, I will review Grey's decision
to remove you from his staff, with
input from Grey. Understood?

BOYLE

(giddy)
Yes sir!

CROSS

Dismissed.

Boyle leaves the ready room gleefully. As the doors shoosh close, Cross sighs.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I have a feeling I'm gonna lose all
the respect I gained back from Erik...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Lukan floats listlessly, still immobilized in space, still bearing the ugly wounds from her near-death experience.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The bridge is cleaned up a bit, but is still a mess. Annan is now seated in the command seat, talking.

ANNAN

All I need to know is how soon you
can get warp or slipstream capability
back, Decia.

DECIA'S COMM VOICE

That's what I've been trying to tell
you, we probably won't for a long
time. The zero-point energy converter
was completely destroyed when we
forced the slipstream to shut down,
the spare we had was in Cargo Bay
Three which was blown open by a hull
breach, and the industrial replicator
is disabled. We're going nowhere
soon, Bridge.

OPS OFFICER

Sir! I'm detecting an incoming
slipstream event! A Starfleet Phoenix
class starship!

Annan grins.

ANNAN

Which one?

OPS OFFICER

The Enterprise.

Annan's smile disappears.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise emerges from slipstream and takes station next to the Lukan.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

OPS OFFICER

Receiving hail signal from the Enterprise.

ANNAN

On speakers.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

This is Captain Neil Cross of the Federation Starship Enterprise. We detected your distress signal and have come to render assistance.

ANNAN

Thank you, Enterprise, your assistance will be appreciated. We require medical and engineering assistance.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CROSS

Acknowledged, Lukan. We will send over a four-man team for preliminary assessment. Enterprise out.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Talora, take Elris, Grey, and Boyle over to the Lukan to see what needs to be done, and report back to me.

TALORA

Aye sir.

Talora gets up and heads to the turbolift.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TRANSPORTER ROOM

Talora, Grey, and Elris are all preparing their field gear, when Boyle enters with her own gear. Grey is stunned to see Boyle.

GREY

(surprised)

Wha? You!

Boyle grins wryly.

GREY (CONT'D)

How did you get on the away team? I thought I kicked you off the Engineering staff!

BOYLE

(smug)

I had a little talk with the Captain.

Talora and Elris exchange glances. Grey looks incredulously at Boyle.

GREY

(angry)

Oooh, you little shrew, going over my--

TALORA

(interrupts)

We should be getting underway.

Grey looks like he's about to tackle Boyle, but he controls himself. They step on to the transporter pads.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Energize.

Grey gives Boyle an angry stare while they shimmer away into the transporter beam.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The four shimmer back into existence. Annan turns to face them. Talora's and Annan's eyes meet, and Talora raises her eyebrow.

TALORA

Commander Marcus Annan, I presume.

ANNAN

Subcommander in the Star Navy, Commander. I believe you had a similar issue with your rank when you took part in the Officer Exchange.

TALORA

Of course -- my apologies, Subcommander. What is the status of your warp drive?

ANNAN

Key parts are destroyed and we have no means to replace them.

GREY

I'll head down to Engineering.

Grey heads off.

BOYLE

I will too!

Grey cringes as he hears Boyle say that.

TALORA

Where is Commander Korilim?

ANNAN

The Commander was gravely injured when we were forced out of slipstream, he's down in the medical quarters. We have several other wounded as well.

ELRIS

Then I'll head down there to see what we can do.

Elris heads off.

Only Talora and Annan are left, other than the other bridge crew members. The short silence is broken by Talora

TALORA

So... my Starfleet counterpart found his way to the Praetor's Flagship. Sounds similar to my career.

ANNAN

Not quite. I'm still the executive officer on a flagship.

Talora winces.

TALORA

Well... I try not to dwell on the past.

Another short silence.

TALORA (CONT'D)

So what was the Lukan doing that resulted in the slipstream failure?

ANNAN

We were conducting a surprise attack on a Black Henoix terrorist base in the R'Homeaux system's asteroid belt.

TALORA

Sounds pretty routine. What happened?

ANNAN

We ran into a tachyon detection grid on the way out, and took weapons fire to the cloaking device. The ion dispersal unit on the cloak was damaged, and leaked ions all over the hull. Our chief engineer believes that is what caused the slipstream failure.

TALORA

You're extremely lucky, you know. The one and only time the Federation experienced such a failure was on the Phoenix prototype, and all four hundred and fifty crew members were lost with the ship. The subspace shockwave it created disrupted the subspace comms network almost three sectors in every direction.

ANNAN

I'm aware of the Phoenix catastrophe, Commander.

TALORA

I see. Why were you taking out a Black Henoix base? The Star Empire never deemed them a big enough threat to take action against.

ANNAN

That's classified information.

Talora raises her eyebrow.

TALORA

I do have D'Arayan-V5 security clearance, you know.

Annan sighs.

ANNAN

The Tal'Shiar has reason to believe that the Black Henoix may have transphasic torpedoes.

Talora looks surprised.

MARIUS

I'm sure you knew, right? Or were you too busy flying about the Federation to read up on Romulan intel reports?

Annan looks at Marius out of the corner of his eye.

ANNAN

(annoyed)

Centurion Marius, I believe you can be of assistance down in engineering.

Marius leaves the bridge with his head held high in contempt.

TALORA

Transphasic torpedoes? How?

ANNAN

They don't know. They noticed a lot of chatter about some new weapon they acquired and managed to match descriptions of how these weapons worked in several communiqués they intercepted to how transphasic weapons work, but there was no sign of how or where they got them.

TALORA

I see. I'll have to include the information about the Henoix in my report back to the Enterprise.

ANNAN

I understand. Oh, and don't mind Marius. He's always out to put people down.

TALORA

I can understand. "Marius" is a name used more often in common-blooded Romulans. He probably isn't too fond of me.

ANNAN

Because of your aristocratic heritage.

TALORA

Perhaps. He probably doesn't like me simply because I've been "influenced" by Starfleet. I've had to deal with that attitude before.

ANNAN

So did I. His contempt for you is probably rivaled only by his contempt for me. It took me weeks to get him to fall in line and respect my authority, and I still had to have Korilim's help to do it.

Beat.

TALORA

Why did Korilim choose you as his executive officer?

Annan smiles.

ANNAN

Because he saw how well you, a loyal servant of the Star Empire, managed to toe the line without committing outright treason during the negotiations at Sangeatten Three.

TALORA

Korilim wanted the same for his new crew on the Lukan.

ANNAN

Very astute.

TALORA

Have you had to do anything that would question your loyalty to the Federation?

ANNAN

Not yet. I'm hoping I never do. But I'll deal with it when and if the time comes, trust me. I didn't make it into the Officer Exchange on looks alone.

Talora softly laughs.

TALORA

I suppose I should check in on my officers now.

She taps her commbadge.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Talora to Elris, status report.

INTERCUT:

INT. LUKAN -- MEDICAL QUARTERS

Elris is eyeing a rather nasty set of tools, their purpose is probably as sinister as their look.

ELRIS

We have about eighty-five casualties down here, Commander. They've already lost seven crew members from severe trauma.

Elris turns to face the rest of the medical quarters. All the beds are filled with Romulans with various degrees of injury, and there are more on makeshift beds on the floor.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

What about Commander Korilim?

ELRIS

Doctor Licinis informs me that he's stable for the moment. He had some internal bleeding, but it's been stemmed.

We pan to a Romulan man wearing a medical tunic, looking over the battered body of Korilim. He looks rather serious and amoral. This is DOCTOR LICINIS.

LICINIS

(without a smile)

Do not worry, subcommanders. Korilim is in capable hands.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Will you need any more personnel from the Enterprise, Doctor?

ELRIS

Most definitely. The medical quarters are swamped, the wounded have spilled over into the corridor, and many of the Lukan's medical staff were on the casualty list. They're short-handed down here. I'd like Alpha and Beta EMT teams over here on the next beam-over.

INTERCUT:

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

TALORA

Understood. Talora to Grey.

Beat.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Talora to Grey, please come in.

BOYLE'S COMM VOICE

Commander Grey is a bit busy at the moment.

TALORA

Doing what?

INTERCUT:

INT. LUKAN -- ENGINEERING

The engine room is in a similar state of repairs as the Bridge. There is a large black pock-mark behind the Induction Core. We can hear shouting in the background.

BOYLE

He's throwing a conniption fit at the Romulan engineers.

We can now hear Grey yelling at Decia.

DECIA

(apologetic)

The field strength of the attenuators is still within safety tolerances, Mister Grey!

GREY

(shouting, angrily)

I don't give a damn what the Romulan safety tolerances are, what the hell are you people thinking! Are you trying to cause an induction overload every time you jump to slipstream? This is insane, I can't fix something like this only to have it blow up the instant you fire up the slipdrive!

BOYLE

Erik! Commander Talora is calling for you!

Grey resumes a professional calm and taps his commbadge.

GREY

This is Commander Grey.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

I assume your tirade is over?

Grey looks guiltily to the side.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)

Let's have a status report.

GREY

They were right about the zero point converter, it's completely shot. We're either going to have to make a new one in the Enterprise machine shop, or repair their industrial replicator. They already have damage control teams out fixing the hull breaches, though.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Will you need any extra personnel
from the Enterprise?

GREY

Yes, bring over the structural
engineering team to help with
repairing structure damage, and bring
over Beta team to help with repairs
to their warp drive.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Understood. Talora out.

Grey faces Decia again.

GREY

I'm not going to fix your engines
unless you alter them so it's not a
flying deathtrap.

DECIA

Then we have a problem.

GREY

How so?

DECIA

I'm not going to reconfigure my
engines and lose valuable performance
because some worrisome Starfleet
human is sweating about them blowing
up!

Decia shakes her head condescendingly at Grey and walks away.
Grey turns to face Boyle and sighs.

GREY

And I thought my day was bad enough
with you coming along...

With those words, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is still keeping station near the Lukan. The Lukan is looking a bit better, there are no longer gases being vented, and some of the hull breaches have been covered over with hull grafts.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross and Quinlan are listening intently to something, wearing very concerned faces.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

...And it's unknown how many such devices they have, or how they got them.

CROSS

Why didn't the Tal'Shiar inform Starfleet Intelligence of this?

Beat.

ANNAN'S COMM VOICE

I... don't know, sir.

CROSS

Nevermind. We may have another problem, however. The comms blackout that was caused by the Lukan's accident probably tipped the Black Henoix off to our location as well. We will need to get the Lukan out of here.

INTERCUT:

INT. LUKAN -- ENGINEERING

There are now several Starfleet engineers at work here in addition to the Romulan engineers. Grey is standing off to the side, apparently taking part in this conference call.

GREY

I don't think that's a good idea, sir.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

Explain.

GREY

The ship's superstructure still isn't strong enough to withstand high warp on its own, even now that we've restored main power. I wouldn't recommend towing them with a tractor beam either.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

Can they ride piggyback on our slipstream?

GREY

That wouldn't be a good idea. The hull ionization still has yet to subside, it would disrupt our own slipstream event while they rode along.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CROSS

So we're stuck here with them, essentially.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

That would sum it up, sir.

CROSS

Thank you, Mister Grey. Focus on getting their warp capability back up to par, we need to get out of here as soon as possible. Doctor, how are things in the medical quarters?

INTERCUT:

INT. LUKAN -- MEDICAL QUARTERS

Elris looks rather disgusted, though not from the green blood caking her medical tunic. There is a Starfleet nurse next to her preparing for an operation.

ELRIS

We seem to be having differences of opinion over here, sir.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

In what way?

ELRIS

They seem to have a different triage system than ours, sir.

(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

They seem to be prioritizing according to the importance of the crew member to the ship. Doctor Licinis seems preoccupied with treating Commander Korilim at the moment.

As she says this, she looks over her shoulder at Doctor Licinis, still tending to Korilim and largely ignoring all the other patients.

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

How are you and your people managing?

ELRIS

We've managed to treat many of the ones the Romulans have left behind, even deemed three of them fit to return to duty. Doctor Licinis doesn't seem too happy with our efforts down here.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CROSS

Understood. Cross out.

Cross turns his chair to face Quinlan at Tactical.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(aghast)

Transphasic weapons. What the hell?

QUINLAN

Your guess is as good as mine as to how they got their scaly hands on them.

CROSS

Not even a slight idea?

QUINLAN

I've been out of that loop for over two years, sir. Hell, for all we know, they've infiltrated the weapons research operations of both the Romulan Navy AND Starfleet. Cardies are good at being sneaky, and you don't need to be a pirate to know that.

CROSS

Hmm.

Cross scratches his chin.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Bring up the dossier on the Black
Henoix, and put it on the main viewer.

A short moment later, the main viewer is filled with text
and pictures on the Black Henoix.

QUINLAN

They're a rogue offshoot of the
Obsidian Order that was formed after
their downfall during their little
"Destroy the Founders' Homeworld"
stunt. They blame the coordination
with the Romulans in the operation
as the cause of its spectacular
failure.

CROSS

Disposition?

QUINLAN

They've been known to send suicide
strikes against their targets, but
have also been known to strategically
withdraw if things don't turn out
well for them.

CROSS

So they're fanatical but not stupid.
What about their forces?

QUINLAN

Their small fleet is comprised mainly
of salvaged or mothballed Galor or
Hideki class ships as well as various
models of fighters, all in usually
poor condition. They're also under-
manned in many cases.

CROSS

They still may be packing transphasic
torpedoes. That's why I want to get
the Lukan out of here as soon as
possible.

QUINLAN

I agree. I'll man the crow's nest,
and inform Ensign Lesmi to keep a
look out next shift.

CROSS

Out of the pirate loop, you say...

QUINLAN

What, sir?

CROSS
(chuckling)
Nevermind. Keep watch.

CUT TO:

INT. LUKAN -- MEDICAL QUARTERS

The room is still abuzz as both Romulan and Starfleet medics go about treating the wounded. It's much less hectic than before. Elris is finishing surgery on an injured Romulan. She is again caked in green blood.

ELRIS
Whew, eighteen shards. He must have been right next to the conduit when it ruptured.

ROMULAN NURSE
We need to clear the operating table for the next patient.

ELRIS
I still need to suture him up.

ROMULAN NURSE
We're operating on Commander Korilim next.

ELRIS
The man still has an open incision, and you're thinking of moving him to a biobed?

LICINIS
The commander needs fifteen skin grafts to replace burned skin tissue, doctor. Move this patient to biobed twelve.

Elris gives off an exasperated sigh, and helps the nurse move the patient. She then sets to work with a laser suture to close the incision. Suddenly, the biobed monitor beeps.

ELRIS
He's going into defib! I need a crash cart here!

Dr. Licinis turns around from the operating table and emotionlessly looks at the biobed readout over the Romulan that Elris is tending. He picks up a hypospray and hands it to a nurse. The nurse takes it to Elris.

ROMULAN NURSE
Give him this.

Elris hyposprays her patient. The biobed's readings start normalizing again. Elris looks suspiciously at the hypospray.

ELRIS

That was interesting... What did I just hypo him with?

LICINIS

Phimloctyn.

Elris shudders, and tosses the hypospray at the biobed in surprise.

ELRIS

(incredulous)

WHAT???

LICINIS

(emotionless)

He was in defib, so I prescribed Phimloctyn.

ELRIS

Are you insane? That stuff can cause cardiovascular degeneration even with a single dose! It's failed to get FDA approval in the Federation!

LICINIS

It is in regular use in the Star Empire. It's quite effective, as you just saw. The Romulan heart will eventually regenerate any lost tissue over time, as it would in most other humanoid races. And I suppose electrocuting him to restart his heart is somehow safer than phimloctyn, Doctor?

Elris seethes at the Romulan Doctor's comment, and sets off to another patient.

CUT TO:

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

Annan and Talora appear to be talking with someone over the comm.

ELRIS'S COMM VOICE

The man is insane, Commander. He's just abandoning patients that can be saved, that NEED to be saved, to treat the ones more important to the ship!

ANNAN

That's the way it's done in Romulan medicine, Doctor. Believe me, I was just as surprised at it as you were.

INTERCUT:

INT. LUKAN -- MEDICAL QUARTERS

ELRIS

He's the antithesis of every medical ethic standard I know! I can't treat people with bruises over people with life-threatening injuries simply because the lesser injured one is an officer!

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

You're going to have to deal, Doctor. I know this may seem harsh to you, but you're treating Romulan soldiers on a Romulan ship in Romulan territory. There's not much you can do about it. I'm sorry. Talora out.

Elris slumps her shoulders and looks dejectedly at the ceiling, and then puts her facemask back on to get back to work.

CUT TO:

INT. LUKAN -- ENGINEERING

We find Boyle and Decia working within a few feet of each other. Various other Romulan crew members mull about, testing systems and doing their jobs.

Boyle gazes at the viewer in front of her in disbelief. She gasps quietly, then sighs and shakes her head. Decia notices, but says nothing. As Boyle works, she does this several more times until Decia, already on edge from her earlier conversation with Erik, finally gets sick of it. She glares at Boyle for a few moments. Boyle feels the eyes and turns.

BOYLE

Problem?

DECIA

I was about to ask you the same question. For the past ten minutes you've done nothing but gasp, sigh, shake your head, then start at the beginning and do them all again. (beat; silence) I suppose our engine room doesn't meet with your standards either.

Boyle is about to retort, but remembers what the captain told her and thinks the better of it.

BOYLE

Your engine room is just fine.
Different from the way we do things,
but to each their own.

Decia seems to lighten up.

DECIA

Good.

The women return to work. Boyle checks another system and her face contorts into a mask of disbelief and contempt.

BOYLE

Shit. Tell me you're joking.

DECIA

What is it now?

BOYLE

(with urgency)

We have to balance out the quantum
resonance variance of the zero-point
plasma. The initiator will burn out
too quickly if it's outside of twelve
percent.

DECIA

That won't be necessary.

BOYLE

The hell it won't! It just jumped
five percent!

DECIA

Of course it did. I intentionally
increased it.

BOYLE

It's too high! You're leaving less
than a six percent overhead. That's
not enough.

DECIA

Of course it's enough. It's a
perfectly acceptable margin of error.

BOYLE

(losing control)

Margin of error, my ass! We have to
lower the variance or we'll risk
blowing the slipstream initiator
when slipstream is engaged.

DECIA

And if we do that, slipstream efficiency will be cut by a third. That is unacceptable.

BOYLE

Unacceptable!? What the hell do you call drifting around the quadrant in two hundred little pieces?

DECIA

A necessary risk.

BOYLE

You're crazy! You're a certified lunatic. You should be locked up in a padded white room somewhere so you can't hurt anyone!

DECIA

(bristles at Boyle's comments)

You people haven't changed a bit in the past twenty years. You're still as pretentious and arrogant as you've always been. You sneer at us and call us arrogant, a race of political opportunists who are not to be trusted. Nothing we do measures up to the almighty Federation. You're convinced that the Starfleet way is the only right way.

Boyle slams her fist on the console, wheels on Decia, and lets her have it with both barrels.

BOYLE

Listen to me, you obnoxious little bitch. I don't give a rat's ass about Starfleet's way OR the Romulan way. The only way that concerns me is MY way. And my way does NOT include blowing myself halfway across the quadrant to fix this piece of Romulan crap. You wanna throw out the rulebook to improve performance? Fine with me, I don't like it either. But if you wanna throw common sense out the window and blow your ship to hell, you're going to do it by yourself. Your precious performance isn't worth my life.

By now, a few Romulan and Starfleet engineers have stopped to listen, while others work all the more fervently, pretending they can't hear the screaming.

DECIA

How dare you, you insufferable,
noxious little... cunis!.

(Boyle glares)

This is MY engine room and I will
NOT stand for this kind of behavior.

BOYLE

Well don't worry, because if you
keep running things the way you do,
you won't be standing anywhere.
You'll be floating outside the ship!

DECIA

We have operated under these same
procedures since the Lukan was
launched! It is an acceptable margin
of error!

BOYLE

If it's so damned efficient, then
why are you sitting here with no
slipstream?

DECIA

The detection grid was a variable we
weren't expecting.

BOYLE

Well, welcome to the big leagues,
sister. The universe is FULL of
unexpected variables.

DECIA

(drops her professional
attitude)

Which is preferable to what YOU are
full of!

We pan to pay attention to Horvahn, who looks eager to get
out of the room and away from the altercation. He ducks
into a nearby Jefferies tube with a tool kit and crawls a
bit until he meets Grey, who is tinkering with something in
the wall.

HORVAHN

That's one testy woman you brought
with you.

GREY

You don't know the half of it.

Horvahn opens up a panel nearby and gets to work.

HORVAHN

What exactly were you having a problem with earlier, with the induction attenuators?

GREY

Their maximum output is easily double that of the one on the Enterprise's. It could overexert the zero-point membrane and cause an induction overload.

HORVAHN

We have a few modifications to the slipstream initiator that require more power from the induction core. The only way we could increase the power output was to increase the attenuator field strength.

GREY

Seems like a risky venture for just a bit more speed. I wouldn't be surprised if you eventually have an induction overload that blows out Engineering, God forbid one that blows up the entire ship.

HORVAHN

Because of the modifications, we can outperform any Federation starship in terms of slipstream speed. Even the Leviathan.

Grey pauses, surprised at Horvahn's claim.

GREY

I guess I have to concede that putting performance first has its benefits at times.

HORVAHN

If things should happen to go wrong, an engineer usually can correct the problem in short order.

GREY

Like the problems we have right now?

Horvahn is about to say something, but decides not to.

The short silence is broken by a wailing SIREN. Grey and Horvahn look at each other

GREY (CONT'D)

What's that mean?

HORVAHN

(worried)

That's a combat alert.

GREY

(tapping his commbadge)

Grey to Talora, what's going on?

INTERCUT:

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The siren screams here as well, and people are scrambling all over the bridge.

TALORA

We've been spotted by an advance scout.

The viewscreen shows a small Hideki class Cardassian corvette flying towards them. It shoots a phaser, which results in the entire ship shuddering.

ANNAN

Shields are still out! Where did that hit?

MARIUS

(reading from Tactical)

Starboard wing, nothing in the impact area but an expanse of armor.

EXT. SPACE

The corvette veers off and flees. The Enterprise turns to pursue, shooting phasers and torpedoes at it. The corvette then goes to warp, followed by the Enterprise. On that, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Hideki is fleeing at warp, weaving left, right, up, and down as quantum torpedoes fly past it. As it flies past, we see the Enterprise in hot pursuit, firing torpedoes.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The Bridge is at red alert.

CROSS

Quinlan, your marksmanship today is appalling.

QUINLAN

Sorry, sir, he's weaving all over the place.

Quinlan contemplates for a moment.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Helm, accelerate to bring us within five kilometers. I'm gonna try to shoot out his engines with phasers.

STOLT

That's cutting it a bit close, isn't it?

CROSS

We need to take that ship out before it reports back. Do it.

STOLT

Aye, captain.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise looms behind the Hideki, getting closer, closer...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

QUINLAN

Gotcha!

She jams down the fire button.

EXT. SPACE

One of the phaser arrays on the prow of the saucer issues forth a brilliant orange phaser beam straight ahead. The phaser strikes the aft shield of the Hideki.

It breaks through the shields in short order and then hits the Hideki. It stutters to the side and stops weaving.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CALE

I'm picking up a transmission from the Hideki!

CROSS

Is it a hail?

Beat.

CALE

No, it's an SOS, they're broadcasting our position!

CROSS

Dammit! Quinlan, take that ship out now!

Quinlan is furiously tapping commands into her console.

QUINLAN

Feel this hot love up your tailpipe!

As she finishes her exclamation, she jabs the firing button again.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise issues forth a volley of five quantum torpedoes. They careen unerringly towards the hobbled Hideki and annihilate it.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The ship shudders slightly as it passes through the debris from the ship.

CROSS

Helm, double back to the Lukan's position.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Lukan is still stationary in space, still in a state of repair. The Enterprise emerges from warp and resumes her station keeping nearby.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, supplemental.
(MORE)

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

We've been spotted by an advance scout of the Black Henoix, and we'll probably be seeing the rest of them soon. We're still stuck with the Lukan, as she's still unable to escape. I've ordered repairs to the Lukan's tactical systems in case things go for the worst.

INT. LUKAN -- ENGINEERING

The engine room is more active than usual, as engineers repair the ship with greater urgency due to the turn of events. Grey is in the back, talking with Horvahn.

CROSS (Cont'd, V.O.)

I've received reports from Commander Talora about several... culture clashes between our and the Lukan's crew, ideological differences that are making it hard for our two crews to work cohesively. I can only hope this doesn't bog down repairs to the Lukan now that we're in a critical situation.

GREY

Horvahn, this power coupling could have easily handled twice the surge as it did. Why did it burst?

HORVAHN

We may require it to conduct more power than you seem to think it's capable of. It is the main feed for the cloaking device, shields, and forward disruptors.

GREY

I seriously doubt you're going to have both the shields and cloaking device on at the same time. This thing burst because of the surge from getting kicked out of slipstream. It probably wouldn't have if it was more surge-tolerant.

Grey tweaks something on the conduit.

GREY (CONT'D)

There. One surge-tolerant power coupling.

HORVAHN

I hope you're aware you cut its capacity down by a quarter in the process.

GREY

One quarter of its capacity that it didn't really need. Come on, we need to go fix the cloaking device if the Lukan is to be of any use in combat.

Grey walks off. Horvahn takes a short moment to contemplate the coupling, and then heads off after Grey.

CUT TO:

INT. LUKAN -- MEDICAL QUARTERS

Licinis is cleaning up after surgery on Korilim. Korilim seems to be coming around.

KORILIM

(weakly)
Doctor...

Licinis quickly goes to Korilim's side.

KORILIM (CONT'D)

Wha... what happened?

LICINIS

The ship was thrown out of slipstream. The Starfleet vessel Enterprise answered our distress call.

Korilim doesn't seem to like what he's heard. He lays his head back down, closes his eyes, and sighs.

KORILIM

Of all people...

Beat.

KORILIM (CONT'D)

What's the situation?

LICINIS

The Black Henoix have made our position. We were trying to repair the ship to get out of here, but now we're preparing for engaging the Henoix.

Korilim sighs, still closing his eyes.

KORILIM

We should just cloak and leave the area.

LICINIS

(grinning for the first time)

Now, Commander, you know that the Federation wouldn't look kindly on us abandoning our rescuers, would they?

Korilim chuckles slightly, then cringes in pain.

KORILIM

(recovering from the pain)

What happened to me?

LICINIS

You got badly burned by a console overload during deceleration. Over a third of your skin had to be grafted.

Korilim looks to the side and sees Elris and a Starfleet nurse tending to another patient.

KORILIM

The Starfleets are on my ship, Licinis.

LICINIS

Indeed. Their crew seems to be more hassle than help, at least here in medical quarters. They've been treating that operations crewman for severe head trauma for the past hour when the engineering officer next to them has a broken leg bone that needs to be set.

KORILIM

They should know that the engineers need to repair the ship as soon as possible. He could be back up on his feet with a leg bracer right now.

Korilim tries to get up, but hisses in pain and lies back down. Licinis turns quickly to tend to him.

LICINIS

Korilim, there's no time for that, your body still is recovering.

KORILIM

I need to get to the bridge, Doctor.

LICINIS

Annan and Talora have things under control up there, Commander. They're probably a better choice to liaise with the Enterprise crew anyway.

Korilim is catching up with his breath.

KORILIM

(reluctantly)

Yeah... I suppose.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The bridge is at yellow alert. Ensign Lesmi is at tactical when her station beeps. She hits a button to bring up a small viewscreen on her console, showing a starry field. A Galor emerges from warp and approaches whatever is feeding the video to the viewscreen and destroys it with a phaser shot. Lesmi sighs nervously and taps her com badge.

LESMI

Captain Cross to the bridge,
Lieutenant Quinlan to the bridge.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross is awoken from a nap he was taking in his chair.

CROSS

On my way.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Quinlan and Cross enter the bridge through the turbolift

CROSS

What do you have?

LESMI

About two minutes ago, our recon probe was destroyed by a Galor class ship.

Cross nods.

CROSS

Then they're getting close. Red alert!

The alarms and klaxons go off throughout the ship.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise and Lukan await their foes. We cut to an area of space nearby, where several warp flashes appear, and a front of Cardassian ships appear. Mostly fighters, some Hidekis, and three Galors.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CROSS

Hail the lead ship.

The speakers give the hailing chirp. Cross gets up and prepares himself to speak.

CROSS (CONT'D)

This is Captain Neil Cross of the Federation Starship Enterprise. You are in violation of the Armistice Treaty of 2375. You are to stand down immediately and await disarmament by the Romulan Star Empire.

The viewscreen switches to display a Cardassian in the metallic Cardassian military uniform, wearing an arrogant face that was thought to have been erased from all of Cardassia years ago.

LAMAC

I am Gul Lamac of the Black Henoix. You are hardly in a position to make demands in Romulan territory, Starfleeter.

Cross raises his eyebrow.

LAMAC (CONT'D)

(arrogant)

Why aren't your Romulan friends making these demands? Are they not capable of backing your ultimatums up?

CROSS

You have your orders. Stand down immediately.

Gul Lamac laughs condescendingly at Cross's insistent demand.

LAMAC

I don't think you realize just what we're capable of, Captain. We can easily destroy both your ships with our new weaponry.

CROSS

If you even fire one transphasic torpedo at us, both the Romulan Empire and the Federation will hunt you down until there's none of you left.

LAMAC

Hah! We are the Black Henoix, masters of the shadows. I find your threats laughable at best, Human.

The two men stare each other down through the viewer.

LAMAC (CONT'D)

Surrender your ships at once.

CROSS

Not gonna happen.

LAMAC

Then prepare to meet your maker.

The viewscreen blinks out and returns to a starfield view.

EXT. SPACE

The Cardassian fleet marches forward towards the two ships.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Black Henoix armada, flying in formation at the Enterprise and Lukan.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The bridge is at red alert.

QUINLAN

The first wave will be entering extended range in forty seconds.

CROSS

Helm, bearing 345 mark 320. Tactical, open up with a broadside volley as soon as they're in range.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise turns her side towards her incoming foes and lifts her side up slightly. The two phaser strips on the edge of the saucer issue forth two bright orange phaser beams.

ANGLE ON THE CARDASSIAN SHIPS

The first wave, made up of mostly fighters. The two phaser beams strike two fighters, causing them to subsequently explode. The two phaser beams then sweep throughout the formation, leaving exploding fighter craft in their wake. The remainder of the fighters spread out more and increase their speed.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

QUINLAN

The fighters have accelerated to flank speed, we'll be within their weapons range in ten seconds.

CROSS

Understood. Enterprise to Lukan, do your thing.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The Lukan is at combat alert. Talora is still on the bridge.

ANNAN

Acknowledged, Enterprise. Tactical, engage cloaking device. Helm, bring the ship around to the flank of the first wave.

EXT. SPACE

The Lukan breaks station with the Enterprise and cloaks.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The viewscreen shows stars whizzing by as the ship turns. The viewscreen then slows down and stops as the wave of fighters appears on screen.

ANNAN

Queue up your targets, Marius.

Marius types away at his console.

MARIUS

Ready!

ANNAN

Fire!

EXT. SPACE

Out of nowhere, a flurry of pulse disruptor bolts fly forth and take out several more fighters. Some of the fighters still remaining turn their sights on the phantom that attacked them from the side, and fire wildly. A few strike the unseen Lukan.

Behind them, the second wave is already well on their way. In this one are a pair of Galor class destroyers, a few Hidekis and many more fighters.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

QUINLAN

Second wave inbound.

CROSS

All right, let's move it out. Helm, move to intercept the center of the second wave's formation. Open fire on the lead Galor once we're in range.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise departs from her stationary position and moves to engage. We cut to where the Enterprise enters weapons range. She opens up with a volley of torpedoes and several phaser shots. The lead Galor loses its front shields in the barrage, and veers to the side to avoid any more direct hits than it's already taken. A second Galor in the wave, located near the rear, fires a single, yellow torpedo.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

QUINLAN

Oh Jesus, they just fired a
transphasic torpedo!

CROSS

Where!?

QUINLAN

The second Galor!

CROSS

Load a countermeasure torpedo and
fire it as soon as it's ready! Helm,
evasive action!

QUINLAN

One step ahead of ya...

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise breaks its attack run, and fires a single torpedo into the formation. We follow this torpedo as it intercepts the transphasic torpedo and then EXPLODES in its path. The explosion is filled with exploding gas, plasma trails, and small chunks of debris. The transphasic torpedo emerges from the other side of this cloud spiraling out of control, but still in the general direction of the evading Enterprise.

The torpedo EXPLODES! A giant sphere of warped, shimmering space erupts from the flashpoint, expanding towards the Enterprise. Several Black Henoix craft are caught in the explosion, and whole portions of the ships begin disappearing and reappearing. They fall apart and explode inside the sphere within seconds.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The viewscreen displays the aft of the ship, looking at the giant ball expanding towards the Enterprise.

CROSS

(yelling)

Nathan, floor it!

Stolt clenches his teeth as he frantically issues commands into his console.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise flees the transphasic explosion. Just as it is about to reach the Enterprise, it stops expanding, and nicks the tail end of the Enterprise's aft shields. The shields flicker and shimmer as the aft shield collapses.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CROSS

Damage report!

QUINLAN

Aft shield arc has been completely disabled. Other than that, nothing. We lucked out big.

Cross lets out a relieved sigh.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Hold that, sir. Several fighters are inbound, they'll be at point-blank range in ten seconds.

CROSS

Fire at will.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise turns to move away from the giant sphere of space the transphasic explosion has enveloped. A swarm of fighter craft envelop the Enterprise. She responds by firing at some of them with the vast number of smaller phaser strips dotting her hull. A few are swooping in from behind through the hole in their shields and strafing the hull directly.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The bridge shudders from weapons fire.

QUINLAN

Dammit, there's too many of them! They're sneaking in through the hole in our shields!

CROSS

Armor up! Switch the point-defense phasers to auto-targeting. We need to focus on the bigger ships.

QUINLAN

Sir?

CROSS

They're the only ones that are able to fire a torpedo as big as a transphasic. We need to take them out so we don't have another near-miss with them.

EXT. SPACE

The phaser fire from the smaller phasers is now much more frequent, and much more accurate.

The Enterprise, still surrounded in the swarm of fighters, moves to engage a nearby Galor. The Enterprise's initial barrage on the ship is followed up unexpectedly by a bombardment of disruptor and torpedo fire from the invisible Lukan.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

CROSS

Good, I was wondering where they went off to. Enterprise to Lukan, focus on the larger ships, they're the ones that are going to be carrying the transphasics.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

ANNAN

Acknowledged, Enterprise. Marius, swing around for another pass at that ship, fire at targets of opportunity on the way.

The ship SHUDDERS from weapons fire.

TALORA

Annan, you shouldn't be using outgoing comms while the cloak is engaged! They may be able to track it.

The ship bucks hard from another hit.

ANNAN

Damage report!

MARIUS

Direct hit to the engineering hull. There's a surge buildup in the EPS.

ANNAN

Bridge to engineering, get that surge under control!

INT. LUKAN -- ENGINEERING

There are still several Starfleet engineers interspersed through the room as well as Romulan engineers. There is a frantic air about the room as they lock down damage.

DECIA

Acknowledged, bridge!

Horvahn is looking at something on a console near the induction core.

HORVAHN

Primary power coupling is reaching
80 per cent surge capacity.

DECIA

We're gonna have to shut it off!
Bridge, prepare to decloak, we have
to shut off the-

GREY

(interrupting)
Wait! Let it happen!

DECIA

What?

GREY

Watch...

They all watch Horvahn's console, which is showing a graph.
A line on the graph begins inching closer to a red line near
the top. Gradually, it starts fading back down again.

GREY (CONT'D)

There. See, Horvahn? Increased
surge tolerance. Now we don't have
to pull the plug.

Grey smiles and goes off. Decia has since left to go deal
with something else, leaving Horvahn to contemplate.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

The ship shudders again from weapons fire.

TALORA

Annan, your sustained firing is making
it easy to track the ship.

ANNAN

Talora, if we're to get rid of these
guys, we need--

TALORA

That's not the point, Annan. You
don't know how to use a Romulan ship
to its full advantage. You may be
able to act like a Romulan, but you
have yet to learn how to think like
one.

ANNAN

Marius, cease fire.

Annan leans over to Talora.

ANNAN (CONT'D)

(softly)

Then what should I do?

TALORA

If you sustain fire as you move, they'll track the source of the weapons fire and return fire in our general vicinity. You need to unleash heavy bursts of fire, and then move to another target without firing.

ANNAN

It could take far too long to wait for an opportunity like that. The Enterprise is up to her neck in fighters and is contending with three other ships at once.

TALORA

The Enterprise is a tough ship, Marcus. Captain Cross can handle himself. We are most useful to the Enterprise by striking at the Cardassians when they least expect it.

ANNAN

Hmmm...

Annan contemplates the situation.

ANNAN (CONT'D)

What is the Enterprise engaging right now?

MARIUS

They're focusing fire on a Galor off our port bow.

ANNAN

Helm, turn to face that Galor.

TALORA

What's your plan?

ANNAN

The Galor will eventually turn to face a less-damaged shield facing towards the Enterprise. When they do, the more damaged facing that the Enterprise was hitting will be toward us. Then we strike.

Talora smiles.

TALORA

That's more like it.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise, still afflicted by the swarm of fighters, is squaring off against the Galor. Exactly as Annan expected, the ship does an about-face.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

ANNAN

(shouting)

Fire!

EXT. SPACE

A giant swarm of quantum torpedoes and a single plasma torpedo erupt out of space. The first torpedoes in the wave impact the weakened shields of the Galor, which give way almost immediately. The now unprotected hull is showered by torpedoes. The giant plasma torpedo completely blows the Galor's wing blade off.

The Enterprise turns to directly face the crippled Galor, and finishes it off as it swoops overhead. Several fighters are caught in the explosion the Galor gives off in its death throes.

INT. ENTERPRISE--BRIDGE

CROSS

Enterprise to Lukan, nice assist.

QUINLAN

The next Galor is on our stern. I think he's lining up for another shot with a transphasic.

CROSS

Damn. Prep another countermeasure torpedo.

EXT. SPACE

The Galor in question fires another transphasic torpedo at the Enterprise. Out of nowhere, a single disruptor bolt fires, and hits the torpedo. The torpedo spirals a bit, and then EXPLODES, creating another sphere of distorted space. The expanding sphere envelops the Galor and all the ships around it.

INT. LUKAN -- BRIDGE

ANNAN

Lucky shot, Marius.

MARIUS

One more Galor to go.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise seems to have swatted the majority of the fighters plaguing her. She is barreling towards the last Galor left, firing phasers and torpedoes. The Galor turns to face the Enterprise in a last-ditch charge when it's hit from behind by the Lukan. As it's raked by weapons fire from both the front and the rear, the ship breaks apart. We cut to the bulk of the remaining armada turning tail and running.

We cut back to the Enterprise, taking potshots at the fighters now fleeing her. The Lukan decloaks behind the Enterprise and takes position next to her, joining in taking potshots at the fleeing rabble. We pan to see the two giant tumultuous spheres that the transphasic torpedoes created.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

QUINLAN

The last one just fled into warp. They're heading back to the asteroid field.

CROSS

Thank God that's over with. Quinlan, launch hazard buoys to mark the transphasic fallout. Enterprise to Lukan.

ANNAN'S COMM VOICE

This is Lukan.

CROSS

Get me in touch with Grey.

Beat.

GREY

This is Grey.

CROSS

Give me some good news about the Lukan's warp drive.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Still no slipstream or high warp. However, the ionization has subsided enough that we can take her out on the Enterprise's slipstream.

CROSS

Good. Beam over and prep the Enterprise for slipstream, so we can get the hell out of here.

Cross relishes his last few words.

GREY'S COMM VOICE
With pleasure, sir.

EXT. SPACE

We get a good comparison shot of the Enterprise and the Lukan as the Enterprise takes position overhead so the Lukan can ride piggyback. The Lukan is a good 25 percent longer than the Enterprise, and also wider because of its wings. The two ships dash off into slipstream.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- SLIPSTREAM

The two ships are in slipstream.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Cross is talking with Commander Korilim on his desktop viewer. Korilim bears a few vague disfigurements from his injuries, he's apparently not fully recovered.

KORILIM
Repairs to our own slipstream will be complete soon, we'll be able to re-enter Romulan space under our own power.

CROSS
(jokingly)
You don't feel like riding the rest of the way home on us?

KORILIM
I'm sure you're aware that relying on you for the ride home would be hard on the pride of Romulus.

Cross nods.

KORILIM (CONT'D)
On another note, my chief engineer had a complaint she wanted to pass on to you. Your Lieutenant Boyle caused a disturbance that impeded repairs, a difference of opinion that degenerated into a heated argument.

CROSS
Oh really?

KORILIM

Your officers should learn to have more self-control than that.

CROSS

She's been a problem officer for some time, actually. I'll be addressing the issue soon.

KORILIM

I see.

Beat.

KORILIM (CONT'D)

You sure had a lot of nerve to come over to rescue us, you know.

CROSS

(smiling)

You're welcome. We'll be arriving at the Romulan border in a few minutes, you'll be free to continue on your way from there.

KORILIM

Actually, Captain, I've received a communiqué from Command that we're to escort you to Romulus.

Cross reacts.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Grey is in a side alcove talking with Horvahn through a video link.

HORVAHN

I've managed to convince Decia to leave your little changes alone for the time being.

GREY

That's amazing in itself. I would have thought she'd remove them in a heartbeat while muttering about worrywart Starfleeters.

Horvahn laughs softly.

HORVAHN

How are things on the Enterprise? I would imagine your ship is in a sad state after the skirmish.

GREY

(sarcastic)

Ahh, give it a fresh paint job and tighten a few stembolts and no one will know the difference. Seriously though, she's built to take as much as she gives.

HORVAHN

I see. Your ship and crew really risked a lot to come and rescue us.

GREY

Hey, it's what allies do.

HORVAHN

Well, duty calls, Mister Grey.

GREY

Same here. It's been an honor.

HORVAHN

Indeed.

The comm signal ends. Grey checks the clock reading on the console.

GREY

It's time for the little chat with the Captain.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Grey and Cross seated on their respective sides of the desk, discussing something, when the doorbell chimes.

CROSS

Come in.

Boyle enters the room. Grey turns to face her with a determined look.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Lieutenant Boyle, I've considered your request to be reinstated to the engineering staff.

BOYLE

And?

CROSS

I have declined your request.

BOYLE
(surprised)
What?

CROSS
Commander Grey thinks you incite too much friction and strife within the engineering staff.

Boyle looks angrily at Grey.

BOYLE
How could you do this?

GREY
I can do it the exact same way I fired you in the first place, Lieutenant. I want you off my staff. Permanently. You're not a team player, you're always looking out for number one, without giving a care as to who you step on.

Boyle starts getting fidgety.

GREY (CONT'D)
Did you know that Commander Korilim lodged a complaint with the Captain over your little incident with the Lukan's chief engineer? I'm sure your little outburst didn't help elevate Decia's already low opinion of Starfleeters.

CROSS
With that said, I have decided to keep you on the Operations staff under Lieutenant Cale.

Flustered and furious, Boyle searches for something to say.

BOYLE
I'm... I'm gonna file for an unfair dismissal case against you, Erik.

GREY
Go right ahead.

Boyle leaves in a hurry. Cross and Grey both let out a sigh of relief as she leaves the room.

CROSS
Good riddance.

GREY

(jokingly)

You think it was really necessary to remind her that Brian is her department head now?

CROSS

(smiling)

Yes.

Beat.

CROSS (CONT'D)

So who are you going to choose for your new deputy chief?

GREY

I don't know, really. The only good officer I got to keep after the Enterprise was reinstated a year ago was Boyle. Ensigns Blake and Simone got the hang of slipstream drives pretty quickly though. I recommend them for promotion to deputy chiefs.

CROSS

(nodding)

I'll see what I can do.

The comm system cues in.

QUINLAN

Quinlan to Cross, we will be arriving in orbit of Romulus in five minutes.

CROSS

Acknowledged. I'll be on my way to the transporter room.

Cross gets up and heads out the door. Grey follows him out.

GREY

Where are you going?

CROSS

Senator Amannius has invited me to meet him in person.

Beat.

GREY

(surprised)

Wow.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

A small Romulan civilian ship flies past as the Enterprise and Lukan emerge from slipstream. We pan to follow them as they take orbit around the beautifully green planet Romulus, surrounded by many other small Romulan civilian ships, and a few Warbirds docked at a nearby Starbase.

EXT. ROMULUS -- SENATE OFFICE COMPLEX

Like most of the Romulan edifices surrounding it, it is a greenish grey, looking like a cross between modern and Roman architecture. We can see the dome of the Senate Chamber nearby.

INT. AMANNIUS'S OFFICE

Amannius is reading a padd, when his intercom chimes.

SECRETARY'S COMM VOICE

The Starfleet captain is here to see you, Senator.

AMANNIUS

Send him in.

Seconds later, Cross enters the room.

AMANNIUS (CONT'D)

Ahh, Captain Cross, welcome. I assume you had an uneventful trip here?

CROSS

The escort was a bit pushy in getting me here, but other than that, no.

AMANNIUS

Ah, you must excuse them, the only time we have Starfleet ships in orbit of Romulus is when you run errands to your embassy here.

Amannius and Cross sit down at the desk.

AMANNIUS (CONT'D)

So, how is Romulus for you?

CROSS

Well, from what I saw of it on the way here, it's very green.

Amannius chortles at Cross's friendly jab.

AMANNIUS

(retorting)

From what I've seen of Earth, you humans seem to have an equal obsession with the color beige.

Amannius pours himself a drink.

AMANNIUS (CONT'D)

Do you know why you're here, Captain?

CROSS

I assume to accept thanks for rescuing the Lukan?

AMANNIUS

In a way, yes.

Cross is intrigued.

AMANNIUS (CONT'D)

Admiral Delfune spoke of a Romulan contact she trusts greatly.

Cross is surprised that Amannius knows of this, but quickly realizes what Amannius insinuates.

AMANNIUS (CONT'D)

You're a smart man, Captain. I can see you're already catching on. Yes, I am Admiral Delfune's Romulan contact.

CROSS

(surprised)

I didn't expect her Romulan friends to be so high up... or close to home for that matter.

AMANNIUS

Yes, about my daughter...

CROSS

Yes?

AMANNIUS

She cannot know.

CROSS

Why?

AMANNIUS

The best place Talora can help the fight against Janus is on the Enterprise.

(MORE)

AMANNIUS (CONT'D)

If she knew that the Empire was already aware of the severity of this threat, I feel she would most certainly come back home looking to fight them here.

CROSS

You have little faith in your daughter's loyalty to the Enterprise.

AMMANIUS

Not at all, Captain. She is fiercely devoted to your ship, and to you. But A Romulan's first loyalty, first duty is to Romulus. Despite her ardor of the Enterprise and her shipmates, Talora is no exception. If she knew her home was threatened, she would fight. Just as you would.

Beat.

CROSS

Just as I am.

AMMANIUS

Indeed.

Amannius takes a sip of his drink.

AMANNIUS

I'm taking a great risk involving myself in this secret alliance, Captain, but I did it because I think that Janus is as grave threat to us all. His influence and power continues to grow, and I do not believe he will stop with the Federation. He is just as great a threat to us as he is to you. What I do, I do for Romulus. All I do is for Romulus.

CROSS

Die all, die merrily.

AMANNIUS

(smiling)

Sometimes I wonder if your Shakespeare is of Romulan descent.

Amannius gets up and the two men shake hands.

AMANNIUS (CONT'D)

Well, Captain Cross, your ship awaits. I hope we meet each other again in the future.

CROSS
(smiling)
As do I.

Cross exits Amannius's office.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise breaks orbit of Romulus and goes to warp as
we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END