

STAR TREK: RENAISSANCE

"Land of the Free"

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TEASER

INT. KLINGON D7 -- BRIDGE

The bridge, with panels flickering and conduits exposed, rocks with a torpedo hit. KORTAK sits in the Captain's seat, barely holding to the sides. There are three other crew members present on the bridge, K'ATZ, the male navigation officer, B'EVRYL on Operations, and a male officer on tactical; a skeleton crew by any measure. The "officers" are all wearing civilian garb, not the traditional Klingon uniforms.

A red alert klaxon is drowned out by the noise of the battle.

KORTAK

B'evryl, try hailing them again.

Another console explodes.

B'EVRYL

It's no use.

(beat)

We're losing life support on all decks.

KORTAK

Reroute life support to the cargo bay and evacuate all decks. We've come too far to lose...

K'ATZ

Captain, they're coming about for another pass.

KORTAK

Tactical, do we have any energy left in the disruptors?

Before he can respond, the tactical officer's console explodes, throwing the officer out of his chair. He's knocked out, and appears dead. Kortak runs over to the tactical station and checks the officer's pulse. By the time he stands up at the station he is wearing a grim face.

KORTAK (CONT'D)

Qey! Disruptors are down to 20 percent. I'll do what I can. Firing.

EXT. SPACE

We see the exterior of the Klingon cruiser, with smoke pouring out of gaping holes in the hull. It fires a weak shot at a larger, pristine Vor'cha class cruiser, which bounces off the stronger ship's shields.

The Vor'cha fires a shot at the D7, directly hitting the port nacelle.

INT. KLINGON D7 -- BRIDGE

The ship shakes violently.

B'EVRYL

Direct hit on our port nacelle. And now we have an incoming torpedo.

KORTAK

Brace for impact. I'll try to knock it off course. B'evryl, how's the evacuation going?

B'EVRYL

(flustered)

Stand by-not used to handling so many things at once.

(beat)

Everyone's either dead or in the cargo bay.

KORTAK

(divided attention)

Stay focused, B'evryl. Now shut down life support on all other decks. Allocate the freed up power to shields and impulse. How far are we from Federation space?

K'ATZ

About 90 seconds at present speeds.

Another explosion. Smoke pours from the ceiling.

KORTAK

Can you do any better than that?

K'ATZ

If you give me some power from the shields, I can get it down to 45.

KORTAK

Do it. Can we send a distress call across the border?

K'ATZ

We only have short-range communications on line. The nearest Federation ship is out of range.

(short beat)

We're nearing the border.

(urgent)

Incoming torpedo.

A torpedo grows bigger on the screen.

KORTAK
(fingers flying over
console)
Allocating additional power from
shields to the disruptors. Firing.

Seconds pass. The torpedo looms larger. A first disruptor blast bounces off the torpedo. Disruptor shots from the Vor'cha continue to rock the ship.

B'EVRYL
Kortak, how are you with manual
targeting?

KORTAK
(catching on)
Good idea. Transfer power from
sensors to disruptors.

K'ATZ
10 seconds to the border.

As the torpedo looms closer...

EXT. SPACE

...a disruptor blast shoots out from the D7 and hits it directly, throwing exploding debris at the ship.

INT. KLINGON D7 -- BRIDGE

As the crew fall to the floor from the shockwave produced by the explosion we...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BRIDGE

The Bridge of the Enterprise is quiet. Present are CROSS, TALORA, DOJAR, QUINLAN, and SUKOTHAI.

SUKOTHAI

Captain, I'm picking up a Klingon dogfight. One of the other ships looks like it's going to cross the border.

CROSS

Who's attacking? The Reformists?

SUKOTHAI

I'm not sure. A Vor'cha -- could be a Reformist ship -- is chasing down an old D7.

CROSS

Klingons, running? And in a D7? Even the Reformists can do better than that.

SUKOTHAI

They're coming up on the border quick.

CROSS

Open a channel.

(beat)

This is Captain Cross of the Enterprise. You are ordered not to cross the border into Federation space. Hostile vessel, under interstellar law, you must stand down immediately.

SUKOTHAI

No response, Captain.

DOJAR

The D7 is falling apart. Multiple hull breaches. Life support almost completely offline. Shields and weapons barely have enough to deflect space dust.

SUKOTHAI

Captain, the D7 is crossing the border.

(MORE)

SUKOTHAI (CONT'D)

(beat)

The Vor'cha has moved 20 kilometers away. They're still not answering hails.

CROSS

I'd hoped to avoid situations like this.

QUINLAN

You're going to turn them back, aren't you? They come for help and you turn them back?

CROSS

(sighs)

Lieutenant, I want to help them. But the Immigration Act of 2398 strictly prohibits us from accepting any refugees into Federation space. We're required to turn them back. It's one of the hazards of patrolling the border -- nasty ethical issues.

DOJAR

I've heard about this. Crewman Daroon --
(explaining)

he's a Cardassian I write to on the Huntress --

(back)

He told me his captain had to send back a dozen Yridian refugees last year.

CROSS

I knew this could come up.
(resigned)

But there's nothing I can do. We have to send them back.

DOJAR

(protesting)

It can't even make it back by itself. It's in pretty bad shape, Captain.

Cross agonizes, but his mind is made up.

CROSS

Then we'll have to push them. The law's the law, and I can't afford to be making enemies back home.

QUINLAN

I remember a Federation where sending them back could earn you a court-martial.

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

The Federation won't last too long
with "laws" like this.

TALORA

The Federation certainly is changing.

CROSS

Enough. If you've got a problem,
take it up with the Council. We
don't make the law, and we can't
afford to second-guess it.

(beat)

Sukothai, hail the D7.

SUKOTHAI

One moment. I'm unsure if they have
enough power to respond.

After several seconds, the viewscreen changes, and is replaced
with Kortak. His image is full of static, but the message
is coming through.

Kortak is clearly injured, as is K'atz and Bev'ryl, both of
whom are still on the bridge.

KORTAK

(weakly)

Captain, I need to request asylum
for my crew.

CROSS

(curtly)

I'm sorry, but that won't be possible.
Federation law prohibits us from
providing refugees with any
assistance.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

(beat)

Can you make it back into Klingon
space on your own?

KORTAK

Even if we could, it would be suicide.
We only barely managed to escape.
There was a battle. Thousands of
civilians are dead. You can't send
us back.

CROSS

Why are they attacking you?

KORTAK

We haven't had time to ask them,
they just started attacking us.

(MORE)

KORTAK (CONT'D)

(breaking up)

We're the only survivors of the colony.

(defiant)

If you want us out, you're going to have to move us yourself. Can you live with yourself for killing more than 30 civilians, Captain?

CROSS

(angry, upset)

Close the channel.

The viewscreen returns to an image of the ship, still heavily damaged.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Sukothai, open a channel to the attacking ship.

SUKOTHAI

I'm trying, Captain, they're not responding.

CROSS

Dammit. What can I do?

SUKOTHAI

I had Mission Ops do a quick survey of the law. You can treat their injured, but if they have operating life support, you can't bring any healthy civilians onboard.

CROSS

(points to the viewscreen)

I'm supposed to just leave them in that mangled thing? What kinds of heartless bastards wrote these laws?

(beat)

Open a channel.

Kortak appears on the screen.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I can treat your wounded -- but then you must go back. And the rest of your crew needs to stay on your ship.

KORTAK

I accept your offer. And it will buy us more time. Healing us and then sending us to our deaths -- the Federation is as stupid as they say.

CROSS

(exasperated)

My hands are tied, sir. How many wounded do you have?

KORTAK

Just the three of us on the Bridge. The cargo bay shielded the rest. But they're not doing too well down there.

CROSS

Like I said, as long as life support is up, I can't bring them aboard.

(taps comm badge)

Bridge to Transporter Room -- lock onto the Klingon bridge and beam the three occupants directly to Sickbay. Cross to Elris, prepare for Klingon casualties, Doctor. Dojar, get a security team down there.

OZRAN'S COMM VOICE

Yes, sir.

DOJAR

Aye, Sir.

ELRIS'S COMM VOICE

Understood.

OZRAN'S COMM VOICE

Transport complete.

CROSS

(taps comm badge)

Cross to Elris. Do you have the wounded?

ELRIS'S COMM VOICE

Yes, Captain. They're pretty beat up.

CROSS

They're refugees from Klingon space. We're going to have to send them back under the Immigration Act, but we are allowed to treat them.

ELRIS

I'll do what I can. But I've got to tell you, knowing that they may be dead in a few hours anyway doesn't give me a real incentive to speed up the healing process.

CROSS

You can take your time, Doctor. And don't release them a moment before you have to. There may still be something that we can do.

(taps comm badge)

Cross to the senior staff -- meet me in the Conference Room immediately. Doctor, you're excused.

(to staff on Bridge)

Dojar, Talora, Quinlan -- you're with me. Sukothai, you have the Bridge.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Cross, Talora, GREY, Dojar, and Quinlan are sitting around the conference table.

CROSS

We have a limited amount of time to deal with this situation. Doctor Elris is taking her time with our Klingon guests, but that only buys us a few extra hours.

TALORA

Captain, I don't see that we have much choice here. You said yourself that we can not second-guess the Federation Council no matter how much we may want to.

CROSS

(saddened)

I know.

(beat)

But there must be something we can do.

GREY

I don't see how, Captain. The law's the law. And regardless of how you may feel, they wrote it for a reason.

QUINLAN

And what reason is that? Making sure of the death of hundreds of innocents? I can't believe this. What the hell has happened to Starfleet?

CROSS

You will watch your tone, Lieutenant.

Quinlan harrumphs. Cross shoots her a look, before Quinlan changes her mind, and prepares to fight back.

QUINLAN

This isn't about law, Captain. It's about morals and ethics, life and death. These people, as far as we know, they've done no harm and...

CROSS

So far as we know, yes. But we don't know everything, we only have their word.

Quinlan nods, deciding not to push the point, but still looks deep in thought.

TALORA

Laws are written for a reason.

CROSS

And rules are made to be broken.

DOJAR

Captain.

(beat)

I agree that we're going to have to follow the law, but maybe we can find some way around it.

GREY

With all due respect, laws aren't written to "find a way around" them.

TALORA

Perhaps not, Lieutenant, but we only need to follow the letter of the law. We are going to need to be sure not to anger Starfleet.

CROSS

Normally, I'd say that we need to follow the spirit of the law too. But under these circumstances...

(beat)

I think we can at least try to do the right thing.

GREY

(defeated)

They passed that law for a reason. We can't just...

He trails off as Cross shoots Grey a look.

CROSS

It's so easy to pass horrific laws.
I'd like to see one of the politicians
who passed this bill send these people
to their deaths. I have to doubt
that they'd be this cruel in the
field. In the end it's not them,
but us who have to enforce what they
sign.

TALORA

Still, what can we do?

CROSS

Okay...

(pauses)

Here's what we're going to do.

(beat)

Doctor Elris will hold off on
releasing her patients as long as
she possibly can. In the meantime,
I'd like you to do some research
into the law -- see if there's
anything we can do. Take whatever
personnel you need, and don't sleep
until you've found something.
Sukothai will continue to try and
hail the attackers. Everyone else,
return to your stations.

Everyone but Grey begins to stand up and leave the room.
Once the staff have left Grey looks up at Cross.

GREY

What are you going to tell Starfleet?

CROSS

Nothing, yet. I'm going to hold off
contacting them for a while.

GREY

You can't be serious. They will
find out about this sooner or later,
sir, and you can not possibly --

CROSS

(interrupts)

Can't possibly do what? I'm the
captain of this ship, Lieutenant,
and I'll run it as I see fit.

(beat)

And you will follow my orders.
Understood?

GREY

I never questioned them, sir.

CROSS

Good. You're dismissed.

Grey is surprised at Cross's terse tone, but does not step in to question him this time. Grey looks at Cross unsure what to say. Cross indicates the door. Grey stands up, and leaves the room in a very formal manner. As the doors close, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SICKBAY

Kortak, K'atz, and B'evryl are sitting on their biobeds.

KORTAK

K'atz, did the message to your wife
get through?

K'ATZ

Unfortunately, I can't be sure. I
sent it as we were boarding the escape
transport, and there was a lot of
interference.

B'EVRYL

(soothing)

I hope it got through.

K'ATZ

(raises his voice)

We will die anyway.

(sighs and returns to
normal)

And today is not a good day to die.
I still have too much I want to do.

KORTAK

None of us are warriors, K'atz. We
didn't sign up for battle -- battle
sought us out. But now I fear we
will never see our homes again.

K'ATZ

I don't think there's much left of
our homes, Kortak. Sensors picked
up stray torpedoes slamming into all
of the big cities on the colony...

(beat)

Including Geplak.

Kortak is shocked. It's the first he'd heard that cities
had been destroyed.

KORTAK

Kahless...

(beat)

They've killed them all. Our
families. Our friends.

B'EVRYL

We must be strong, Kortak.

(MORE)

B'EVRYL (CONT'D)

They can kill our families, but they can't take away our dignity -- unless we let them.

KORTAK

What's the point? The Federation is about to send us back to our deaths! What does staying strong prove if we're going to die anyway?

K'ATZ

You know what's even worse? For all their lofty rhetoric, neither the Reformists or the Imperialists cared enough to keep their battle away from a populated planet.

(beat)

Makes me wonder how much they really care.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR

Cross is walking down the hallway. As he walks, Elris turns into the hallway from another corridor.

CROSS

Doctor.

ELRIS

Captain.

CROSS

I'm going to speak to Kortak. Where are you headed?

ELRIS

Also to Sickbay. Do you think speaking to him is such a good idea?

CROSS

Why not?

ELRIS

Well, you're already committed to sending him back. I don't think that you should put a face to the people you're going to send to their deaths.

CROSS

With all due respect, Doctor, I don't like it any more than you do.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

But I don't have a choice if I'm going to keep this command. Tell me the truth, do you think the next person Delfune sticks on this ship would be any better?

They're nearing sickbay.

ELRIS

Well, chances are he'd just blindly follow orders. Right now, I can't really tell the difference.

Cross is visibly hurt.

CROSS

It's not the job of starship captains to make policy. It's our job to follow it.

They have reached Sickbay. They pause outside the door for a moment.

ELRIS

If that's what you need to think to sleep at night, Neil. But you should take a look at who's making those policies -- and why.

There is a beat before Elris sighs and looks Cross in the eyes.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Open your eyes to the world around you, Neil. Look at how others see you and how others see the world. You might learn something.

She turns around and enters Sickbay.

INT. SICKBAY -- CONTINUOUS

Kortak, B'evryl, and K'atz are still talking. They become silent as Cross walks in.

KORTAK

I don't suppose you've changed your mind?

CROSS

I have my first officer doing research to see if there's anything we can do. But I'm not holding out too much hope.

KORTAK

I don't understand. Why would the Federation pass such a law? It's not as if there's limited space within Federation borders.

CROSS

I can't speak for the Council, but I believe it has to do with the aftermath of the Sheliak War.

K'ATZ

So we're being punished for another one of the Federation's wars. How typical.

CROSS

Like I said, I can't speak for the Federation.

B'EVRYL

Convenient.

CROSS

I need to ask you a few questions.

KORTAK

(mock politeness)
Go right ahead.

CROSS

Are you Reformist or Imperialist?

KORTAK

Neither.

CROSS

So how did you get involved in this battle?

KORTAK

One of their battles got too close to our planet. One of their ships started using it for cover, and stray blasts started shattering our towns.

K'ATZ

We were some of the lucky few to escape the planet before the cities were destroyed.

KORTAK

If you can call us lucky.

CROSS

Well, what did you do to provoke the Vor'cha into firing on you?

KORTAK

Again, nothing. We just tried to escape the carnage. I guess they didn't want any witnesses to get away.

CROSS

Who exactly is they?

KORTAK

The ship attacking is a Vor'cha. That means they are most probably Imperialist.

CROSS

I can't believe they would do that to their own people.

(abruptly)

I need to leave now.

KORTAK

Captain, you must let us in. How can you send us back to our deaths?

CROSS

(exasperated)

I have no...

He trails off.

KORTAK

(interrupts)

You've said that. There are women -- and children on that ship. Their families lie dead in the burning ruins of our home. How can you send them back?

CROSS

(snaps)

You think I don't know that?

He regains his composure.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I will do everything in my power to help you, but you must understand that there are higher powers in play here than just on the Enterprise.

KORTAK

Your superiors?

CROSS

They don't know... yet.

KORTAK

Then why do they need to know?

There is a LONG BEAT.

CROSS

(intensely)

I need to leave.

He gets up and walks to the door, a mix of frustration, anger, and confusion on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. READY ROOM

Cross is still agitated. He's sitting at his chair.

CROSS

Computer, get me Admiral Portman on a secure channel.

COMPUTER

Working. Channel established.

Portman appears on the screen.

PORTMAN

Neil. What can I do for you?

CROSS

I thought you'd be busy.

PORTMAN

Not so much since I've been transferred to this ghost town. A ship hasn't flown past us in weeks, let alone docked with us. What can I do for you?

CROSS

We have a situation here.

(beat)

A ship of Klingon civilians -- refugees -- just crossed the border into Federation space. There's a ship on the other side just waiting to blow them out of space.

PORTMAN

And let me guess, you don't want to send them back?

CROSS

Exactly. But the Immigration Act doesn't leave me much choice.

PORTMAN

Have you contacted Admiral Delfune yet?

CROSS

I was hoping to avoid having to contact her. My experiences with her haven't exactly been the most pleasant.

PORTMAN

(half-laugh)

Well, I don't know too many people that have a pleasant time speaking to Admiral Delfune. But policy is policy.

Cross realizes that Portman's words echo what he's been saying.

CROSS

That it is.

PORTMAN

You must send them back, Neil. Saving these lives now will undermine our entire effort.

CROSS

Effort?

PORTMAN

I put you on the Enterprise for a reason, Neil. The Federation is heading into a dark age. I need you on that ship to keep things straight. I know you have the morals to get through what's coming. Hell, the fact that we're having this conversation proves it. If you let these few people live now, billions could die later.

CROSS

Is that what I tell the Klingons sitting in my sickbay? I'm sending them to their deaths to save hypothetical lives of the future? They're not even Federation citizens, let alone Starfleet... how can I order them to their deaths just like that? I don't have any authority over them, hell, neither do you, Admiral!

PORTMAN

They're in our territory and under our jurisdiction. The job of a Starfleet captain isn't easy.

CROSS

That's what I've been telling myself. But this is still impossible...

PORTMAN

Contact me if you need further assistance. Portman out.

CROSS

Admiral?

PORTMAN

Yes?

CROSS

What would you do?

PORTMAN

Off the record?

CROSS

Off the record.

PORTMAN

I'd do what my heart tells me to do.

CROSS

Even if it mean... twisting the law?

PORTMAN

Follow your heart, Neil. Follow your heat. Portman out.

The screen goes black, leaving Cross staring at the Federation logo, confused at his mentor's advice.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. READY ROOM

Same as before. Cross is pacing up and down. The door chimes.

CROSS

Come in.

Elris enters.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming.

ELRIS

Captain?

CROSS

I need some advice.

ELRIS

About?

CROSS

I just don't know what to do.

I don't want to send the refugees back, but I don't know what else I can do.

ELRIS

It's good to see you're coming around. But like you said, it isn't the job of a Captain to make policy. It's the job of politicians.

CROSS

That's true, but what can I do? I can't just send dozens of civilians to their deaths.

(torn)

But I also have a responsibility to the rule of law. And to my ability to command this vessel.

ELRIS

Is your command more important than innocent lives?

CROSS

Of course not. But...

ELRIS

(interrupting)

But what? Because that's what it seems like you're saying. Choose now, Neil, what's more important: your career, or innocent lives?

CROSS

(more frustrated)

You're not helping.

ELRIS

I am trying to help you. But if you want my help, you're going to have to get your priorities in order, Captain.

CROSS

You think it's easy being Captain? You think these kinds of decisions are just black and white? What exactly do you want me to do?

ELRIS

I want you to recognize that the cargo bay on that Klingon ship is filled with people, not political checkers.

(beat)

Do I think it's easy? No. But whether to let someone live or die -- these questions transcend political realities. I'm a Doctor. I'm bound by oath to make one, and only one, of these decisions every day of my life. Sometimes, you can fight your way around it, but perhaps today, it's time you looked at it from the morally correct point of view. You used to know that.

CROSS

I used to be naive. Becoming a starship captain has a way of stripping away the naivete.

ELRIS

Or maybe you're getting entangled in the corruption that you claim to hate. Sending that ship back to its death -- forcing those people to commit suicide -- how can you even consider that option?

CROSS

Doctor, I suggest you return to treating your patients, where your expertise is needed. We're done here. Dismissed.

Elris is pained, but she's still very angry at Cross. Likewise, Cross is angry at Elris.

ELRIS

(sternly)

I hope you make the right choice, Captain.

She stands up and walks out of the ready room. The doors close.

CUT TO:

INT. MISSION OPS

The normally bustling room is empty except Talora, Dojar, LESMI, and JONESS.

LESMI

Commander, we've been going at this for hours. We need a break.

TALORA

Agreed.

The four of them stand up, practically stretching. It's clear none of them got any sleep since the beginning of the refugee situation, and it's beginning to show.

Joness walks over to the replicator on the wall.

JONESS

Water, cold.

Water materializes. Joness drinks it.

JONESS (CONT'D)

Ahhhhh. At least the replicators do water right.

LESMI

You know, I really can't understand the purpose of this law. What exactly were they thinking when they wrote it?

DOJAR

Well, from what I remember, they wrote it to pacify the general public.

(MORE)

DOJAR (CONT'D)

(beat)

During the war, the Sheliak used the "refugee trick" more than once.

JONESS

Yeah. I heard that they destroyed entire starships.

DOJAR

That's what I heard too.

LESMI

But why stop all refugees from coming through? The amount of people that have died because of this one law...

She trails off.

TALORA

We can't second-guess the Council. They have reasons for what they do.

LESMI

I'd like to see them tell those reasons to the Klingons sitting on death row in their cargo bay.

(beat)

I'd like to see them explain it to however many thousands of people have died because of it.

TALORA

We're Starfleet officers. Our job is to follow the rules.

DOJAR

(interrupting)

And speaking of the rules, we still need to find that loophole. Let's get back to work.

LESMI

Well, finding that loophole would be more helpful to those Klingons than complaining about the law.

(sits back down)

Let's get back to work.

All four of them begin working again, poring over thousands of pages of law, rulings, and precedent.

CUT TO:

INT. KLINGON D7 -- CARGO BAY

Twenty seven Klingons, mostly women and children, are in the cargo bay. It is a filthy place, and most of the civilians, having been unable to keep up with personal hygiene, are filthy as well.

The cargo bay isn't pristine either, with smoke pouring from one corner, and sparks flying on another side.

The bay door opens. Kortak, K'atz, and B'evryl enter. The people become silent. Kortak reacts to the scene with shock.

KORTAK

(horrified)

Where are all the men? And everyone else? I only see about 30. Are they all...

He trails off.

KLINGON WOMAN

(soothing)

Dead. We were only able to get 27 of us in here. Without the men

(beat)

I doubt any of us would be here. They saved our lives.

KORTAK

(still horrified)

What have I done?

B'EVRYL

You saved their lives, Kortak.

KORTAK

(quietly, to B'evryl)

How do I tell them they're all going to die? After this.

B'EVRYL

You must. You need to let them make their peace.

There is a long pause. Kortak surveys the crowd who are gathering around him, the crowd who are looking up to him, asking him what to do next.

KORTAK

(pained)

Friends...

(MORE)

KORTAK (CONT'D)

(beat)
I have bad news.

KLINGON MAN

(spits)
How much worse can it get?

KORTAK

Worse. The Federation isn't going to let us stay. They're making us go back.

KLINGON MAN

That's suicide!

KORTAK

I know. But they're not giving us much choice.

KLINGON MAN

How do they expect us to get back across the border? In this?

KLINGON WOMAN

I don't understand.

K'ATZ

Neither can I. I had thought the Federation was sympathetic. Our warriors called them soft.

KORTAK

I don't know what to say. But we all need to make our peace. Sto-vo-kor awaits.

KLINGON MAN

If there is such a place.

KORTAK

While I don't have traditional Klingon beliefs, I would like to believe that there is an afterlife.

(beat)
Do you not find it reassuring that your essence will live on into another stage of existence?

KLINGON MAN

If it is even possible.

KORTAK

Forgetting that. We will live on.
(nods)

I may not be a warrior, but I do believe in vengeance...

(MORE)

KORTAK (CONT'D)

(beat)

And we will have vengeance on those
who attacked us... Even if death is
the barrier separating us.

The Klingon man seems slightly reassured by this, but not
much. Kortak gives him a half smile.

CUT TO:

INT. SICKBAY

Elris is doing work at her desk. Cross enters.

CROSS

Doctor.

(beat)

The Klingons have gone.

ELRIS

I held on to them as long as I could.
I'm sorry.

CROSS

Dammit. We're running out of time.

ELRIS

(cold)

I though you'd made up your mind?

CROSS

I was hoping Talora would find
something. I don't want to do this.

ELRIS

Then don't.

CROSS

If we can't find a loophole, I don't
have a choice. We can't second-guess--

ELRIS

I've heard this before. Tell me,
what great Captain hasn't second-
guessed Command from time to time?
Kirk, definitely one of the greatest,
must have defied policy dozens of
times.

CROSS

Times are different now. We're coming
out of one war, and trying very hard
to stay out of another. It isn't
the time to be playing the hero.
Command expects me to follow the
rules.

ELRIS

Somehow I doubt Henry Portman put
you here so you could blindly follow
the rules.

CROSS

(raises voice slightly)
Who are you to say what Portman wants?
Who are you to judge if you don't
have all the facts? I have no choice,
Doctor.

ELRIS

I know enough to know that I don't
know how you'd live with yourself.

Cross sighs, realizing he's raised his voice and that Elris
is trying to help, not just start an argument.

CROSS

If you'll excuse me, I need to see
the Klingons.

Cross walks out of the room, leaving Elris brooding.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. GREY'S QUARTERS

Grey and Boyle are sitting across from each other, eating dinner. Grey is his usual exacting self, eating some form of ration or other, while Boyle is eating a steak. A bottle of wine is between them. We appear to be coming in, in the middle of a conversation...

BOYLE

Ever since we started going out you've ate nothing else but those rations. It kind of puts a damper on a romantic dinner.

GREY

Ever since the war, I've been hooked on them. They provide the perfect balance of nutrients to keep me doing my job.

BOYLE

That's exactly it. This isn't about your job. It's about...
(frustrated)
us.

Grey pours a cup of wine. He takes a sip. He is obviously uncomfortable with the tension that Boyle has brought between them and there is a pause before he changes the subject.

GREY

So what do you think about those Klingons?

BOYLE

From what I remember, we were taught in the Academy to always give assistance to ships in need.

GREY

We've got to follow the rules, Sarah. Where would the Federation be if we didn't?

BOYLE

I'd agree if the rules stayed the same from year to year. But here...

GREY

Times change. Rules change. We're officers. It's our job to follow the rules.

BOYLE

I guess that's what I should expect
from you,
(mocking)
Lieutenant Grey. Always following
the rules. Even when they don't
make any sense.

GREY

This isn't my decision. I was just
trying to make conversation.

BOYLE

Yeah. Conversation about work. I'd
have thought you'd have learned by
now.

GREY

I'm...

Grey trails off, and the two continue to eat in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. MISSION OPS

Talora, Dojar, Lesmi, and Jones are still poring over their
screens. It's been several more hours, and cups of various
beverages litter the area.

LESMI

(intrigued)
Whoa.
(beat)
Computer. Review previous text,
last fifteen lines.
(pause)
Play again.

There is a pause, as the rest of them sit waiting for
something.

LESMI (CONT'D)

I've got something. It seems that
in the debates on the bill, there
was quite a bit of discussion on the
issue of repairing a refugee vessel.

TALORA

Repair? I didn't see that anywhere
in the text of the Act.

LESMI

It isn't -- explicitly.
(MORE)

LESMI (CONT'D)

But there were quite a few Councilmen that felt passionately about the issue of repair. A few of them even threatened not to pass the bill if it stopped Captains from offering humanitarian assistance.

TALORA

But the act explicitly says that captains may not provide any aid --
(stresses)
including humanitarian, to help a ship remain in Federation space.

LESMI

Exactly. They put in the words "including humanitarian" to pacify the few councilmen who wanted a stricter bill. But they never passed language that would stop us from repairing the ship, and then turning it back.

JONESS

Donna, I never knew you were a lawyer!

LESMI

(laughing)
Law was my second choice if I didn't get into the Academy.

TALORA

I see I picked the right person. Let's keep on looking. See what else we can find. I want our case to the Captain to be as solid as a rock.

LESMI

All right.
(beat)
Computer, cross reference Immigration Act with humanitarian assistance and repair.

More text begins to scroll down her screen.

CUT TO:

INT. KLINGON D7 -- CARGO BAY

Several of the Klingons, including K'LEY, a male, and B'KEG, a female, are yelling at Kortak.

KORTAK

There's nothing we can do. We're in no condition to oppose the Federation!

K'LEY

What exactly do we have to lose? If we die, let's at least die with dignity!

KORTAK

What's the dignity in dying fighting someone who's not even our enemy? If we die at the hands of that ship out there, then we will have died with honor.

B'KEG

Not our enemy? They are more cruel than even our enemy. Our enemies kill us for some political goal. Why does Captain Cross send us to our deaths?

(snorts)

Not our enemy.

KORTAK

We have nothing to gain by attacking the Enterprise. Captain Cross has assured me that they are looking for a way to help us. However slim that chance may be, it's better than our chances against a ship full of trained men.

K'ATZ

We must be calm, and accept what will come. Let's hope Captain Cross makes the right decision.

K'LEY

Somehow, I doubt it.

The cargo bay doors open and Cross enters.

B'KEG

We were just speaking of you, Captain.

CROSS

It looks like I'm going to have to send you back into Klingon space.

Commotion erupts.

K'LEY

Why, captain? Don't you have any pity? We have no weapons -- no armor.

(MORE)

K'LEY (CONT'D)

We will die within seconds. How can you do this? There must be a way you can help us!

CROSS

I wish there was something I could do, I swear on my honor that if I could help I would. But I need to follow my orders.

K'ley walks to the other side of the room and grabs a small child, ten years old, back to where Cross is standing.

K'LEY

Tell that to him.

CHILD

(scared)
What's happening?

CROSS

(tries)
I'm going to have to send you back over the...
(beat)
...back over the border.

CHILD

What happened to my mommy?

Kortek tries to calm the child.

KORTEK

Your mommy is in Sto-vo-kor.

CHILD

Are you sending us to Sto-vo-kor, Captain?

Cross can't take what he's doing, but he's convicted.

CROSS

(half to himself)
I'm sorry. I don't make the rules.

Cross' comm badge beeps. He taps it.

TALORA

(over comm)
Captain.
(beat)
I think we've got something.

Cross looks up at the ceiling and closes his eyes, hoping he may be able to take the burden off these people.

CROSS

Thank you, Commander. I'm on my way.

(to Kortek)

Let me see what I can do.

Kortek nods gratefully and looks at the child who smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. MISSION OPS

The four researchers are still sitting at their chairs. It's clear that none of them have slept in some time, as they're all weary.

Cross enters, and the four sit up straight.

TALORA

Captain.

CROSS

Please tell me you've got some good news. I can't go back there again with bad news.

LESMI

Well, the bottom line is this: you can't let them into Federation space, but you're allowed to repair their ship, so long as it's solely a civilian ship.

CROSS

I think we can be sure of that.

LESMI

There's one catch.

CROSS

Let's hear it.

LESMI

The admiralty can order you not to repair the ship if they find out you're going to.

CROSS

And I can keep this a secret from them?

LESMI

Well, not technically. But you can't be court-martialed for failing to inform them.

CROSS

Interesting. Are you sure about this?

TALORA

Everything seems to point in this direction. But I don't think we can be sure of anything. The councilmen made sure of that when they were writing this law.

CROSS

Well, I'll take this under advisement. But it seems like a good solution. You four did an excellent job. Go get some sleep.

DOJAR

Thank you, Captain.

All five of them leave the room.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR

Cross is by himself, walking down the hallway.

CROSS

Cross to Grey.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Grey here.

CROSS

What have you learned about the Vor'cha across the border?

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Not much. Except that it's armed to the teeth. My guess is that it's an Imperialist ship, but there's not much to distinguish the two.

CROSS

All right. Commander Talora has found me a loophole allowing us to repair the refugees' ship. Get on it immediately.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Captain?

CROSS

Start repairing their ship.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Yes, Captain. But I've got to say --
there's not much I can do that'll
make it a match for the Vor'cha.

CROSS

Understood. But it's the best we
can do.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Understood. I'll get my people on
it right away.

CROSS

And Lieutenant

(beat)

You only have about 5 hours before
people back home will start asking
questions.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

(uncomfortable)

I'll do my best.

CROSS

Thank you, Lieutenant. Cross out.

Cross walks past the camera, leaving us with a view of the
empty corridor.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. KLINGON D7 -- BRIDGE

The Bridge is back up and running. There are still a few problems, but it appears to be a fully functional bridge.

Kortak, B'evryl, K'atz, and K'ley are on the bridge.

KORTAK

How are we doing?

B'EVRYL

Warp core is back online. Matter-antimatter reaction at peak efficiency. Hull breaches are repaired. Life support is restored...

KORTAK

(interrupting)

Are there any significant problems?

B'EVRYL

Not particularly. Everything's working as well as can be expected, given the short time we had for repairs.

KORTAK

All right. Order everyone back to the cargo bay, and seal it off.

K'ATZ

(taps button)

K'atz to all passengers.

(beat)

Return to the cargo bay immediately. We are sealing off the rest of the ship to conserve energy. Repeat. All passengers return to the cargo bay.

KORTAK

Thank you. B'evryl, what's the status of our weapons?

B'EVRYL

They're all online. We've replicated a full complement of torpedoes, and our disruptors should be working at full power.

K'ATZ

It's still not going to be enough to escape, is it?

KORTAK

(somber)

Probably not.

(long pause)

But it's the best we're going to be able to do. We were granted a second chance. Let's do our best with it. Our families demand it.

K'LEY

Everyone's reporting in the cargo bay.

KORTAK

Seal off the rest of the ship, and cut life support to all areas except the bridge and the cargo bay. Transfer excess power to the shields and tactical systems. I'm going down to the cargo bay.

The bridge doors open, and Cross walks in. He has a slightly happier disposition.

CROSS

Captain, is everything in order?

KORTAK

Yes. All of our systems are operational, thanks to you and your crew. We owe you a great debt, Captain.

CROSS

We did what we could. I only wish we could have brought you into Federation space.

(beat)

You understand that if you survive, you can't tell anyone about this repair.

KORTAK

I understand.

CROSS

When will you be ready?

KORTAK

Give me a half hour. I need to speak to the rest of my "crew."

CROSS

No problem. Take as long as you need.

Cross' comm badge beeps. He taps it.

SUKOTHAI

(over comm)

Captain, the Vor'cha class ship is hailing us.

CROSS

Unbelievable, after all this time. I'll be right there.

Cross nods at Kortak who nods back and some what unsure of himself, punches his chest.

KORTAK

Qa'pla, Captain.

Cross does the same movement.

CROSS

Qa'pla, Captain.

Cross looks around the battered ship, before looking at the occupants of the bridge.

CROSS (CONT'D)

You have a fine crew... maybe you will get out of this alive.

KORTAK

Maybe we will. Thank you, Captain.

Cross nods and takes one last look at the Klingon bridge, before exiting.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE

Sukothai and several unknown crewmen staff the bridge.

The doors slide open and Cross steps in. He quickly takes his seat.

CROSS

On screen.

The screen changes, and K'rev, the captain of the VOR'CHA cruiser appears.

K'REV

(mock pleasantness)

Captain.

CROSS

Captain, we've been trying to contact you.

K'REV

I can see that you are repairing the refugee ship that has entered your space. I must demand that you stop immediately!

CROSS

By what authority?

K'REV

Your own Immigration Act demands that you send them back so we can take care of them.

CROSS

Why don't you let us take care of interpreting our own laws?

K'REV

I demand that you cease all assistance immediately.

CROSS

Well, you're in luck. We've completed our repairs, and they're going to return to your space momentarily.

K'REV

(suspicious)

You would do well not to lie to us, Captain. I'm sure your Admirals would like to know what is going on here. You are harboring known terrorists.

CROSS

You don't know that they're terrorists.

K'REV

And you don't know they're not.

CROSS

Be patient, Captain. They'll be crossing the border momentarily.

K'REV

Excellent. Then we can finish the job we started. They will be no match for us.

CROSS

Just out of curiosities sake, Captain; what did they do to warrant an attack on their vessel?

K'REV
Curiosity killed the targ, Captain.

CROSS
(sighs)
You had no reason to attack them.

K'REV
How could we not finish our attack?

CROSS
A misguided attack! You didn't even
intend to fire on them.

K'REV
(coldly)
But we did. And now for honors sake
the cowards must be killed!

CROSS
Klingons never cease to amaze me...

Cross shakes his head.

K'REV
If you're fin--

CROSS
(interrupts)
I despise your culture. I find it
cowardly and quite frankly immature
that once you've started your...
game, that you take it upon yourselves
to finish it.
(beat)
I'm glad that I am not a Klingon.

The Klingon looks aghast at Cross's powerful attack on his
culture, he doesn't know what to say, and after a beat:

CROSS (CONT'D)
(coldly)
Cross out.

Cross' comm beeps.

GREY'S COMM VOICE
Captain, we've completed repairs.
They can leave at any time.

CROSS

(preoccupied)

Thank you, Lieutenant. Cross out.

CUT TO:

INT. KLINGON D7 -- CARGO BAY

The cargo bay is much improved from the last time we saw it, with the smoke and sparking we saw repaired. The people are huddled into the corner, no longer willing to fight, or even talk.

KORTAK

We're about to leave back into Klingon space.

(beat)

The Enterprise has repaired our ship, so we may be able to fight off that cruiser for long enough to get to friendly territory.

WOMAN

Honestly, Kortak, what are the chances of that?

KORTAK

It's hard to tell, but we may have a chance. I need all of you to stay in here. We'll do what we can from the Bridge. Pray for the best.

(beat)

If all else fails, I wish you a safe journey to Sto-vo-kor.

WOMAN

If that's all you can offer us, go back to the Bridge. You have more to do there.

Kortak looks around, trying to get someone to listen. He has no success.

KORTAK

The Federation refuses to help us, and you turn your back on them. The Federation help us and you turn your backs on me.

(shakes head)

Is there no pleasing any of you? If there was a way I could make things better, I would. But I ask you, would you appreciate that as much as you have the Federation's generosity? They have improved our chances of survival much more than we would have had originally.

There is a long silence.

KORTAK (CONT'D)

What would you have me do? Go up
against those who helped repair us?
We are taking the...

(beat)

...honorable alternative.

(beat)

It appears that our beliefs about
being warriors were wrong. We are
warriors. We are taking the honorable
way out and we will more than likely
go out fighting. But to say that we
tried to defeat our enemies is a
victory! To say that we went up
against a ship, five, maybe ten times
more powerful than us is an
achievement in itself! I ask you,
my friends... are we not victorious?

There is another long silence. No one stirs. Dejected, he
turns around to head back to the turbolift. Before he does,
another child steps forward, a male in his mid-teens.

BOY

Qa'pla, Kortak!

Kortak turns around, and smiles.

KORTAK

Qa'pla!

With that Kortak exits, leaving the Klingon boy looking on
at a great, honorable warrior, preparing to enter battle.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE

Cross, Sukothai, and nondescript bridge officers in their
places.

SUKOTHAI

Captain, the refugees are releasing
mooring clamps.

(beat)

They are heading toward Klingon space.

A long pause.

SUKOTHAI (CONT'D)

Five seconds to the border. The
Vor'cha is moving in to intercept.

CUT TO:

INT. KLINGON D7 -- BRIDGE

B'EVRYL

Two seconds to border.

KORTAK

Prepare to engage that ship.

K'LEY

Loading torpedoes. Powering
disruptors.

A blast rocks the ship.

B'EVRYL

We have crossed the border.

KORTAK

Fire at will.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE

CROSS

Magnify viewscreen to the battle.

The refugee ship is firing at the Vor'cha, but making little
progress. It is attempting to escape, but the Vor'cha
follows, quickly draining its shields.

SUKOTHAI

Captain, Admiral Delfune is hailing.

CROSS

I can't speak to her. Buy me some
time.

SUKOTHAI

How?

CROSS

Use your imagination, Lieutenant.

CUT TO:

INT. KLINGON D7 -- BRIDGE

Smoke is pouring from the ceiling. The ship is doing very
poorly.

KORTAK

How are our warp engines?

K'ATZ

They're still online.

KORTAK

Set a course away from here, and go.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE

The viewscreen shows the devastation in the Klingon battle. A torpedo punches a hole in the refugees' hull. The refugee ship tries to go to warp but the Vor'cha follows, firing a torpedo.

Before it can make it to warp, the torpedo catches up with it, punching through its starboard nacelle. Another torpedo comes in, hitting Engineering. In seconds, the entire ship explodes, lighting up the bridge.

Cross watches, in horror.

In the background:

SUKOTHAI

(muted)

Captain, Admiral Delfune insists on speaking to you.

As Cross moves back to his seat and slowly drops into it, the realization that all of the work, all of his brooding over what to do sinks into him. We remain like this for a LONG BEAT before we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END