

STAR TREK

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RENAISSANCE

"The Lost"

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Episode #: 3x01  
Published September 8, 2003

This teleplay is originally from  
[www.startrekrenaissance.com](http://www.startrekrenaissance.com)

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: STASIS CHAMBER

A BLUR smashes against the side of the glass, complete with a roar. The camera pans out...

INT. ASTEROID -- CAVERN

...to cover the other stasis chambers. In each one, the Q'tami is beginning to show signs of life, at different stages of waking up. We pan round more to see CROSS, QUINLAN, BRODY and the six guards arranged in a semicircle, watching.

CROSS

(quietly)

How long do we have?

No answer.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(sharply)

Brody!

Startled, as if in a reverie, Brody jumps.

BRODY

I... I don't know, Captain. The Q'tami at the compound took maybe a minute to break loose, maybe more, I just don't know.

QUINLAN

Prudence would suggest we fall back, Captain.

CROSS

To?

QUINLAN

Brody's shuttle is a hundred fifty meters along the passage.

CROSS

And then? It's not like we can just fly out of here at the moment.

The Q'tami slams against the glass again. A small crack splinters into the glass.

QUINLAN

(quickly)

Captain, I really think the Leviathan is less of a threat at the moment

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)  
than six angry Q'tami. I -- what  
are you doing?

Cross has begun to slowly walk towards the nearest status chamber. His eyes are fixed pointedly on the Q'tami.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)  
Captain!

Cross reaches the chamber. A small amount of bioliquid has begun to seep through the crack. The Q'tami, however, has stopped its thrashing and is staring at Cross, apparently transfixed. Cross puts his hand to the glass and looks up. Quinlan, rather nervously, approaches him.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)  
What on Earth do you think you're  
doing?

CROSS  
Trying to do what every member of  
Starfleet has done since Zefram  
Cochrane. Communicate.

He continues to stare at the creature, who stares back.

QUINLAN  
Captain, I really don't think now is  
the time...

CROSS  
(quietly)  
Make your way back to the shuttle.  
Stay there. Keep a channel open to  
Grey. If I don't follow you within  
twenty minutes, get out of here.

QUINLAN  
No way, I'm --

CROSS  
That's an order, Lieutenant Quinlan.

Quinlan opens her mouth to protest, and then shuts it again. She turns and nods quickly at the guards, who shepherd Brody ahead of them. As they leave the chamber, she and one of the guards glance back.

GUARD 1  
What's he doing?

QUINLAN  
I have no idea.

They turn to leave, as we have another close up on Cross's face. The Q'tami stares at him...

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

DOJAR, floating in mid air, suddenly ceases screaming. His eyes fly open, and he whispers:

DOJAR

Captain.

His eyes close again, as we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE -- ASTEROID

The ENTERPRISE hangs in the air and is joined by the LEVIATHAN, coming out of slipstream.

JOEL (V.O.)  
Captain's Log, Stardate 79993.5. We  
have intercepted the Enterprise.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

GREY, CALE and supernumeraries as before.

CALE  
We're being hailed.

Grey turns to the screen.

GREY  
Here we go. On screen.

The viewscreen changes from the exterior image to Joel's bridge, complete with JOEL and, in the background, DELFUNE. She is momentarily startled to see Grey, but covers up almost immediately.

JOEL  
Erik Grey. This is unexpected.

GREY  
Captain Joel. What can we do for  
you?

Joel adopts a tone of mock sweetness.

JOEL  
I was hoping to speak to Captain  
Cross.

GREY  
I'm afraid he's not on board.

JOEL  
Really. Can you tell me why not?

GREY  
Yes.

Silence.

JOEL  
Please tell me why not.

GREY

He's on shore leave.

JOEL

Shore leave. That's nice. Where is he on shore leave?

GREY

I'm afraid I can't tell you that.

JOEL

And why is that?

GREY

He asked me not to. I don't think he likes you very much.

JOEL

You break my heart. However, I am afraid his orders don't really matter. As you can see,  
(gestures to Delfune)  
he is outranked.

She looks at Delfune, who walks forward.

GREY

Admiral Delfune.

DELFUNE

Where is he, Commander?

GREY

He's on board the shuttle Pegasus.

DELFUNE

And where is that?

GREY

I have no idea. He didn't say.

JOEL

(breaking in)  
Dammit Grey, don't play games. Where is he really?

Grey ignores her and looks at Delfune.

DELFUNE

Commander?

GREY

I told you.

DELFUNE

What about Commander Talora?

GREY

She has taken personal leave. I believe her mother just died.

They look at each for a long time. Finally, Delfune turns away and almost whispers:

DELFUNE

It is out of my hands.

Joel takes her place.

JOEL

It's not that we don't believe you, Erik, but we don't believe you. Prepare to be boarded.

GREY

Captain, I --

JOEL

We know that less than ten hours ago you launched an attack on Starfleet Research Facility Chi-13. We know that your purpose was to assassinate the Q'tami prisoners held there. For these actions we are placing your vessel and its crew under arrest, pending trial. Now surrender and prepare to be boarded.

GREY

No.

JOEL

Excuse me?

GREY

I said no. We have done nothing wrong. I will not surrender the Enterprise.

JOEL

You are disobeying an Admiral's orders? This surprises me.

GREY

It surprises me too, but here we are.

JOEL

You realize what this means?

GREY

I do.

Joel looks at him for a moment.

JOEL

So be it.

The screen cuts off.

GREY

Red alert, battle stations! Raise shields.

The bridge is bathed in red light.

CUT TO:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Joel marches back to her chair.

JOEL

Arm quantum torpedos, prepare to fire on my mark.

Delfune whispers in her ear.

DELFUNE

Are you sure about this? The Enterprise is a hot issue as it is...

JOEL

Then it's about to get much hotter, Admiral.  
(looks steely ahead)  
Fire.

EXT. SPACE -- ASTEROID

The LEVIATHAN lets rip on the Enterprise.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The bridge shakes violently. Cale looks at Grey.

CALE

Direct hit. Port shields are down to 47%.

GREY

Torpedoes across their bow, let's see if we can scare them off...  
(double take)  
Did you say 47%?

CALE

Torpedoes fired. Aye, sir, 47% -

GREY

What the hell are they firing with?

CARTER (O.S.)  
Their new weapons system, I would  
presume.

CARTER has walked onto the bridge.

GREY  
Excuse me?

CARTER  
Surely you saw the broadcast. The  
Leviathan has had some modifications  
done. I hear she's nearly  
indestructible now.

GREY  
Thank you for the information, Carter,  
now get the hell off the Bridge.

The bridge shakes again.

CALE  
Starboard shields 36%

GREY  
Repeat same firing pattern!

CARTER  
I hardly think you have the time to  
worry about my presence here.  
Besides...  
(holding up minicam)  
Surely you want a record?

GREY  
Record?

CARTER  
Yes. It's not every day you see the  
great ship Enterprise brought to her  
knees. I want to be here to catch  
every gory moment, provide an  
eyewitness account.

Grey opens his mouth but the ship shakes again.

CALE  
Shields are --

GREY  
(furiously)  
Return fire! And get this asshole  
off the bridge. Now!

A supernumerary is more than happy to provide. As Carter is  
pushed off...

CARTER

Adding blocking the press to your  
crimes won't help your case any when --

The turbolift door shuts.

GREY

Thank you.

The Bridge shakes again.

CALE

Shields --

GREY

I know --

CALE

-- are down, around the lateral sensor  
array. If you'll allow me to say it,  
sir, I don't think our current  
strategy is working.

Grey nods grimly.

GREY

Agreed. Fire everything we've got.  
Let's hurt them this time.

CALE

Aye, sir.

He lets loose.

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

TALORA and TORAN are looking anxiously as Y'LAN looks on.  
Around them, Q'tami are scuttling past on every available  
surface -- floor, wall and ceiling.

TALORA

Y'lan, what's going on? Was that  
Dojar?

Y'LAN

I do not know, something is wrong.  
I --

He falters. They step forward, concerned.

TALORA

Y'lan? What is it?

Y'lan turns and looks at her.

Y'LAN

My connection to the Hegemony... it  
is uncertain.

TORAN

Why? Are they blocking you?

Y'LAN

No, I -- I do not know what is  
happening.

At this point a Q'tami stops by them.

Q'TAMI

Y'lan, you must come with us.

They turn to go.

TALORA

Wait!

Y'lan turns back.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Is it about Dojar?

Q'TAMI

It is.

TALORA

(determinedly)

Then we're coming with you.

Q'TAMI

Your presence matters little one way  
or the other.

Disinterestedly, he turns and begins to scuttle away again  
with Y'lan close behind. Talora looks at Toran, who shrugs,  
before they follow.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ASTEROID

The Leviathan, remarkably agile for a ship her size, comes  
swooping at the Enterprise above her, firing down onto her  
saucer. The Enterprise's shields flicker, but hold.

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Joel is looking positively triumphant, as Delfune watches.

TACTICAL OFFICER

Direct hit on the secondary deflector.

JOEL

Same again.

Delfune pushes forward.

DELFUNE

What are you doing? You keep hammering the ship like this, you'll destroy her.

JOEL

Not destroy her, Admiral, just ensure she never flies again.

DELFUNE

I hope you know where to draw the line.

She pulls back again concernedly. Joel smiles.

JOEL

(whispering)

I don't think it really matters.  
Fire again!

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

As before; Grey and Cale. The room shakes.

CALE

We lost forward aft shields that time. We cannot take much more of this.

GREY

We can't abandon the Captain.

CALE

If this goes on much longer, there won't be a "we" left.

GREY

I will not surrender the Enterprise.  
(he turns to look at  
the viewscreen)  
Come on, Captain, what's going on?

CUT TO:

INT. ASTEROID -- CAVERN

Cross is still before the Q'tami status chamber. He and the Q'tami don't seem to have broken their gazes from each other.

CROSS

Can you hear me? What are you thinking?

The Q'tami blinks at him, and bends his head to one side, almost like a puppy trying to work it all out. It raises a tentacle to the cracked glass. On it we can see welts and sores. Cross looks down and presses his palm against the other side.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(whispering)

What have they done to you?

He looks up again into the Q'tami eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Dojar, floating in mid air. Q'tami are now filing into the area, and again swarming over every available surface. We see Y'lan enter, followed by Talora and Toran. Talora starts forward.

TALORA

Dojar!

Y'lan holds her back.

Y'LAN

Do not break the field.

TALORA

Y'lan, what's going on? What is he doing up there?

Q'TAMI

Silence! Y'lan, you know what you must do.

Y'LAN

I do.

He steps forward.

TORAN

No, wait! You can't just kill him like this. There has to be another way!

Y'LAN

They are not executing me. They wish me to communicate with Dojar.

TALORA

Communicate? Why... why isn't he communicating with us?

There is no answer. As they watch, Y'lan slowly floats up until it looks as though he is standing next to Dojar. He lays his tentacles on him. Despite the fact the Q'tami are still scuttling all over the place, complete silence suddenly descends. We slowly focus in on Dojar's head with a tentacle laid on, to...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

The same as in the last episode, but in a more advanced state of decay. The flames that burnt so prominently last time have now died, replaced by crumbling ash. Y'lan makes his way to where Dojar is standing, an open doorway of one of the few buildings that is still standing. Dojar doesn't look away as Y'lan approaches.

DOJAR

This city is dying.

Y'LAN

It is your mind. It is slowly closing down.

Ce looks but cannot see into the building.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

What do you see?

DOJAR

They're scared.

Y'LAN

What are?

DOJAR

The Q'tami. From the facility. They're here.

Y'lan looks in. Inside the building, in the shadows, the six Q'tami cower, making small whining noises. Dojar's dusty face has lines where tears have run down. He also looks older than we have seen him.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

They don't understand what's happened. They're lost.

Y'LAN

They are no longer with the Hegemony.

DOJAR

Why? What did they do?

Y'LAN

I am uncertain, but I believe when they entered stasis their connection was severed.

DOJAR

What does that mean?

Y'LAN

A Q'tami's life force is contained in its connection to the Hegemony. All the knowledge, all the experience, is channeled through it. It would be as if you had every single memory erased.

DOJAR

You'd go insane.

A small rumble shakes the ground; Dojar's balance looks uncertain for a moment, then recovers.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

How long do I have?

Y'LAN

Based on the rapid degeneration of this mindscape, I would say hours, perhaps less.

DOJAR

(looks at him)

You can't die. I've seen the future. I know your role.

Y'LAN

The Hegemony are willing to forsake that future.

DOJAR

But I am not. The Enterprise needs you.

Y'lan stays quiet. Dojar turns back to the Q'tami.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

(quickly)

What about them? Can they be recovered?

Y'LAN

I do not know.

Dojar walks forward and kneels in front of one of them. He reaches out a hand, but the Q'tami shrinks away.

DOJAR

Why are they here, Y'lan? Why are they with me?

He looks at Y'lan full in the face.

Y'LAN

A Q'tami naturally reaches out for another Q'tami to connect to. Coming out of stasis in their confused state, it is possible they mistook your mindframe for the Hegemony.

DOJAR

Because of what happened?

Y'LAN

Because of what happened.

Dojar closes his eyes.

DOJAR

What will become of them?

Y'LAN

If the Hegemony do not find them, their minds will never recover from the shock of separation. They will suffer a complete mental breakdown, and eventually expire. I believe the only thing keeping them stable at present is their mistaken belief that you are Q'tami.

DOJAR

How long before they realize?

Y'LAN

Unknown. But not too long --

Suddenly there is a loud Q'tami screeching noise. Both Y'lan and Dojar look up, as we see ghostly images of other Q'tami appearing around them.

DOJAR

What's going on?

Y'LAN

The Hegemony are trying to get in.

The Q'tami in the building start to become agitated, and start screeching too, beginning to move.

DOJAR  
(speaking louder)  
They don't seem to like it very much.

Y'LAN  
The Hegemony sense they are here,  
but cannot get to them.

DOJAR  
(yelling now)  
But you can! Y'lan, you can't help  
me but you can help them...

Suddenly Dojar is knocked over, as one of the Q'tami from the building hops out, and roars up at the heavens. Behind it, the others start getting agitated too. It stares at Y'lan for a moment as the latter begins to fade...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ASTEROID -- CHAMBER

The Q'tami bashes against the stasis chamber again. CROSS reacts, and back away.

CROSS  
What...?

The other Q'tami start doing the same. Their shrill wailing echoes around the chamber. Their attempts to escape become more violent. Cross stares wild eyed for a moment, but turns tail and runs for it.

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

As Talora and Toran watch, Y'lan breaks his connection with Dojar, who has begun shaking again. He floats down to them. Around them, the Q'tami move as if caught in some kind of centrifugal force, their noises all but deafening.

TALORA  
Y'lan, what is it?

Y'LAN  
The Q'tami are attempting to break  
into Dojar's mind, to contact the  
Q'tami from the facility.

TORAN  
Won't that harm him?

Y'LAN  
Quite possibly. The humanoid mind  
is not equipped to deal with the  
bombardment.

TALORA

You've got to stop them.

Y'LAN

I cannot.

Talora looks up fearfully, as Dojar's shaking increases...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ASTEROID

The ENTERPRISE and LEVIATHAN still pummeling each other.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

The Bridge is now filled with smoke. Grey and Cale looking desperate. The room shakes.

CALE

We've lost shields on the starboard quarter now.

GREY

(taps commbadge)

Grey to Cross. We're getting pummeled up here.

INTERCUT:

INT. ASTEROID

Cross is running along as fast as he can. Behind him, we hear the smashing against the chambers echo.

CROSS

Stand firm, Commander. I suspect it won't be for much longer. Quinlan, what's your status?

INT. BRODY'S SHUTTLE

Brody has landed his shuttle in a small canyon. He and the guards are watching as Quinlan works the controls.

QUINLAN

We're at the shuttle Captain, do you need assistance?

CROSS'S COMM VOICE

Negative, Lieutenant, just be ready to leave when say so.

QUINLAN

Aye, sir.

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)  
(she starts tapping  
in commands)  
Setting flight plan... what were you  
doing on Bajor?

BRODY  
It's where the shuttle came from.

QUINLAN  
Oh well, finders keepers.

She types in and we see on the console "Flight Plan" vanish.

CUT TO:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Joel has a gleam of battle lust in her eyes.

TACTICAL OFFICER  
The Enterprise now only has forward  
shields remaining, Captain.

DELFUNE  
Hail them.

JOEL  
Just a minute...

DELFUNE  
(angrily)  
I said hail them!

Joel looks startled. She nods to her comm officer.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cale looks up at Grey.

CALE  
We're being hailed.

GREY  
No reply. Send them static back.  
Let them think they took out our  
comms.

CALE  
Sir, I think --

GREY  
Just do it!

INTERCUT:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

As before, Delfune and Joel.

TACTICAL OFFICER

No reply. We're getting interference,  
but I'm not convinced.

Joel shrugs at Delfune.

JOEL

(smugly)  
Resume firing.

CUT TO:

INT. ASTEROID -- CAVERN

With one final effort, one of the Q'tami smashes its way through the stasis chamber, cutting itself as it does so. Roaring with rage, it whips its tentacles around, breaking two other chambers. These Q'tami get free, and in turn break the final ones. They look round for a moment, predators trying to ascertain where their prey went. Suddenly they make a move, almost flying in the direction Cross went.

CUT TO:

INT. ASTEROID

Cross gets to Brody's shuttle. The airlock opens.

QUINLAN

Captain.

CROSS

(breathing heavily)  
Why couldn't he park somewhere closer?

She offers her hand to pull him in when we hear a screeching... and a Q'tami blur streaks out of the darkness and smashes into the side of the shuttle, knocking Cross away from the door.

QUINLAN

Captain! Help him!

As the other Q'tami file in, the guards come up with phasers blazing. The Q'tami react angrily and defensively cower, as Quinlan hurries over to Cross, who is half dazed, having hit his head on a rock.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Captain.

CROSS

Ow, I...

Three Q'tami in a coordinated attack, strike at the guards, sending them flying as well all over the chamber.

INT. SHUTTLE

Brody, ducking, watches as the phaser fight continues. Suddenly he thinks, and dives for the console. He begins to type frantically at it.

INT. ASTEROID

The guard closest to the shuttle is lost as a Q'tami seizes him and rips him apart.

QUINLAN

Merrick!

She opens fire on the creature, and the force of the blast propels the Q'tami inside the shuttle.

INT. SHUTTLE

Brody turns round to find himself face to face with the insane creature.

BRODY

Oh shit.

The Q'tami roars and with one whip of his tentacle beheads him. Brody's body, spurting blood, slumps forward, knocking against the console, which begins to beep. We see on the readout "Flight plan initialized" appear again.

COMPUTER VOICE

Automatic flight plan initiated.

The door behind begins to move. The Q'tami, squealing, begins to yell in confusion as it thrashes round, like a creature in the dark, trying to find the way out of the confined space.

INT. ASTEROID

The other Q'tami suddenly stop and react. Instinctively they head towards their trapped mate.

QUINLAN

Oh my God, the shuttle! Don't let them..

But the phaser fire from the guards only helps the Q'tami along, as they disappear in. The door closes behind them and immediately the shuttle flies up and out, while the others watch in horror.

CUT TO:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

As before, Joel and Delfune.

TACTICAL OFFICER

Captain, a shuttle just launched  
from the nearest asteroid. No life  
signs aboard.

JOEL

Weak attempt at diversion, ignore  
it.

CUT TO:

INT. ASTEROID

Quinlan helps Cross to his feet. They both look shocked.  
Cross looks at Quinlan.

CROSS

We have to stop that shuttle.  
(he taps his commbadge)  
Cross to Grey.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

As before, Grey and Cale.

GREY

Captain?

INTERCUT:

INT. ASTEROID

As before, Cross, Quinlan, and the remaining guards.

CROSS

The shuttle that's just launched,  
you have to go after her.

GREY

We're not really in a position at  
the moment to do that, sir. The  
Leviathan has us pinned down.

Cross closes his eyes.

QUINLAN

Captain?

CROSS

(makes a decision)

Grey, signal the Leviathan.

(beat)

Tell them we surrender.

We get a close up of his grim face as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE -- ASTEROID

The Enterprise and the Leviathan.

GREY (V.O.)

Chief Engineer's Log, Supplemental.  
We have lost the Enterprise. Captain Erika Joel has assumed command as of oh twenty three hours, and will remain so until we reach spacedock. Captain Cross is to be taken into custody on board the Leviathan, where he will remain.

INT. LEVIATHAN -- TRANSPORTER ROOM

Joel marches in, Delfune following, with three security officers and curtly nods to the chief, who energizes. On the platform Cross materializes and immediately steps forward, but the guards raise their rifles.

CROSS

Admiral, I --

JOEL

Don't move, Captain, my men are very trigger happy.

CROSS

Joel, listen, we need to --

JOEL

(reciting)

Captain Neil Cross, you are hereby placed under arrest for the charge of treason. You will be taken into custody and taken to the nearest Starbase where you will await --

CROSS

We don't have time for this bullshit.

JOEL

Captain, I --

CROSS

The shuttle that just left, the Pegasus, had on board six Q'tami, taken from Starbase Facility --

JOEL

Oh, so you kidnapped them as well, did you? What were you --

CROSS

(ignoring her)

Admiral, we need to catch them, they are out of control. I don't know what the hell's been done to them, but I pity anybody who runs across them while they are like this. Now, the shuttle --

JOEL

Take him away.

CROSS

Admiral! You can't --

He is taken away by the guards. Joel turns to Delfune.

JOEL

Shall we add resisting arrest to his list of charges?

DELFUNE

Perhaps you should add endangering life.

JOEL

Meaning?

DELFUNE

Meaning you had better get that shuttle back. Otherwise you might be needing a charge sheet of your own, with causing death by negligence at the top.

She turns and walks smartly out. Joel looks smugly after her.

JOEL

(mocking)

I'll get right onto it, Admiral.

There is an unpleasant stress on the word Admiral.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Only Cale and supernumeraries are there.

GREY (V.O.)

With the Captain under arrest and Commander Talora God only knows where, there is a sense of shock, and a deepening sense of realization as the events of the past twelve hours begin to sink in.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

People walk along looking almost dazed.

GREY

The Captain, the Commander, Lieutenant Dojar, Y'lan. Their absence is felt, and the ship feels no longer complete. The crew are acting as though they are at a wake... and for all I know, they are.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Grey and Boyle are working at a console.

GREY

We have been ordered by Captain Joel to stand down until such time as she sees fit to move. I have attempted to tell her the danger posed by the Q'tami, but my messages have gone unanswered, and I get the feeling she doesn't want anything to detract from this moment. In the meantime, myself and Lieutenant Boyle are attempting to find some way to track the shuttle.

Watching them work, you would never know that Boyle and Grey were ever anything but total professionals around each other they have a set purpose to them.

BOYLE

Brody could have used a tachyon pulse.

GREY

Yeah, but then there'd still be residual markings. Damn that bloody ship to hell, why did they have to target the sensor array?

BOYLE

Calm down, we'll figure it out. Now what if we reconfigure...

Carter and Quinlan stand in the foreground, watching the two engineers at work, standing casually -- they're there simply because they have nothing better to do. The dim lights indicate it is nighttime.

Carter bends his head slightly.

CARTER

She's got a nice bottom, hasn't she?

QUINLAN

What?

CARTER

Sarah. Got a cute bottom.

Quinlan rolls her eyes. Carter looks at her speculatively.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Not that yours isn't very nice as well.

Disgusted, Quinlan walks over to Grey and Boyle.

QUINLAN

How's it going?

GREY

Slowly. There's some kind of cloak at work on the shuttle's trail, we're having problems getting at it.

He looks up.

GREY (CONT'D)

I could really do with some Y'lan magic right around now...

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Y'lan floats by Dojar. The noise has subsided, and now only a few Q'tami scuttle about the place. One drops next to Y'lan.

Q'TAMI

We were unable to penetrate his mind fully.

Y'LAN

Were the Lost still there?

Q'TAMI

They were. But they are attempting to break free of his mind. They sense he is not what he appears to be.

Y'LAN

What do you intend to do?

Q'TAMI

We must recover our brethren. He is our only link to them.

Y'LAN

And I am your only link to him?

Q'TAMI

You must find them. We cannot continue until you do.

Y'LAN

You cannot execute me until I do.

The Q'tami stares at him.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

I believe the Humans would call that irony.

Q'TAMI

I believe you have spent too much time with them. You must hurry. I do not know how long the humanoid's mental processes can stand the strain before he expires.

Y'lan looks at Dojar, who is frowning but otherwise at peace for the moment.

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Talora sits on the steps of the shuttle. Inside, Toran is fiddling with a medkit. Talora lets out a sigh.

TORAN

You all right?

TALORA

I'm just frustrated. It's so hard, leaving him in the hands of the Q'tami.

TORAN

He's a good friend isn't he? I mean, I haven't known him too long, but he seems a good guy.

TALORA

I think he's the closest friend I have on the ship. He's the one I always go to when I need to yell about the Captain's latest misadventure.

(looks at Toran wryly)

You didn't hear that.

Toran holds his hands up.

TORAN

Deaf as a targ.

TALORA

I don't want anything to happen to him. The Enterprise has a hard enough time, but without him...

She shakes her head. As she does so Y'lan emerges. She stands.

TALORA (CONT'D)

How is he?

Y'LAN

Stable.

TALORA

What's going to happen?

Y'LAN

The procedure will commence soon.

She closes her eyes.

TALORA

I'm sorry, Y'lan, I -- are you sure there is no other way?

Y'LAN

I am. If you wish you may spend some time with him before we begin.

She looks at him quizzically.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

I have observed in the Enterprise's medical bay Doctor Elris often allows patients a final word with their associates before a hazardous procedure. Do you wish to do this?

Talora is shocked, but nods.

TALORA

Thank you.

Another Q'tami alights next to them.

Y'LAN

Ce will take you.

The Q'tami nods once and scuttles off again, Talora following. Toran looks up at Y'lan.

TORAN

That was very kind. Very thoughtful.  
Not like you at all.

Y'LAN

If the procedure is to be successful  
then every effort must be made to  
make Dojar comfortable. I believe  
he will be aware of Commander Talora's  
presence.

Toran nods.

TORAN

Whatever you say.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- ASTEROID

The Leviathan continues to orbit the asteroid, with the  
Enterprise in the background.

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIG

Cross has been accompanied down by the guard and is being  
put into his cell.

GUARD

Stand away from the field.

Cross stands at the back of the cell, and the field fizzles  
into place. As it does so, Delfune enters.

DELFUNE

Leave us.

The guard looks uncertain.

GUARD

Captain Joel was very specific...

DELFUNE

Last time I looked, Admiral outranks  
Captain.

She raises an eyebrow. The guard hesitates, and then marches  
out. Delfune walks over to Cross.

CROSS

Come to gloat? Because, as much as  
I appreciate having yet another chance  
for us to spit at each other, we  
really don't have the time. That  
shuttle --

DELFUNE

I know.

(beat)

You know Captain, a week ago I'd have been delighted if I'd known I'd find you in the situation I find you in now.

CROSS

A week ago?

DELFUNE

A week is a long time in Starfleet, Captain.

CROSS

What happened?

She produces a small device and runs it round the brig. It bleeps twice, and she presses a button, which sends out a high pitched whine that soon goes silent.

DELFUNE

Supersonic frequency. Blocks out any listening devices. We can't hear it, but it would drive dogs wild.

CROSS

Handy.

DELFUNE

I have it on constantly in my office. Every week I have it swept for bugs, and every week I find they have put new ones in.

CROSS

"They"? Who are "they"?

DELFUNE

(smiles)

They, Captain, the invisible people who really run our lives.

CROSS

What do you want?

DELFUNE

What do I want? I want a Federation free from fear. I want a Federation that no longer faces threats from Borg or Sheliak or Reformists or any of the other threats who seem intent to destroy us.

CROSS

Is that possible?

DELFUNE

No. But that doesn't mean we should stop trying.

CROSS

I agree.

DELFUNE

No.

CROSS

Excuse me?

DELFUNE

Oh, you agree in principle, you agree that we should have peace, you agree that our citizens shouldn't have to worry about being torn apart or blown up by some alien threat.

(beat)

But what you don't agree on is methodology.

CROSS

Oh?

DELFUNE

You are impetuous where I am methodical, you are passionate where I am clinical, you are a lawbreaker where I am a lawmaker. I don't like you and I don't like your methods.

CROSS

Consider the feeling reciprocated.

DELFUNE

But one thing I cannot deny, and believe me when I say this pains me to say it, you are a good man.

Cross's eyes widen.

CROSS

I think the Reformists might disagree.

DELFUNE

True. But you and I both know that there was more to that than the official report.

CROSS

(surprised)

Do we?

DELFUNE

I think we do. And I think we both know that the events, and the aftermath, were, shall we say, not entirely surprising to people in certain quarters.

Cross walks to the edge of the forcefield, staring at Delfune.

CROSS

Admiral, I --

DELFUNE

Did you know that the Reformist people on Coular were only stopping over?

A long BEAT.

CROSS

No.

DELFUNE

That the non-military personnel were only meant to stop over there on the way to their new base, out in the Adhara System?

CROSS

I didn't.

DELFUNE

And that it was only a strange quirk of fate a complete system breakdown, that ensured the vessel that was to take them needed heavy repairs?

CROSS

(whispers)

That's why there were no records of civilians there.

DELFUNE

Oh, there was one report. But, by another strange quirk of fate, it was erased from our databanks.

Cross closes his eyes.

CROSS

My God.

(he suddenly looks  
angry)

Why didn't you tell me this before?

DELFUNE

Because I didn't know which side you were on. For all I knew you were with them. For all I knew you were the ringleader. I could have believed it of you.

CROSS

Ring leader? You mean, you thought I was Ja -- ?

DELFUNE

(quickly shushes him)  
The thought crossed my mind.

Cross bursts out LAUGHING. Then he looks serious again.

CROSS

How do you know I'm not?

DELFUNE

Because five days ago he contacted me.

Cross's eyes widen further.

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Dojar, now lying on a slab. Talora is led in by the Q'tami who stands by her. She looks at it, annoyed.

TALORA

Could I have a few minutes?

Q'TAMI

Time is not mine to give out.

TALORA

I mean, can you leave me alone, please?

The Q'tami turns and leaves. Talora goes up to Dojar, and kneels by the slab.

TALORA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Dojar?

No reply. She sighs, and then, rather nervously, takes his hand in hers.

TALORA (CONT'D)

This feels peculiar. Speaking to you like this in this vessel.

(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

Between you and me, I don't like these Q'tami very much. I thought Y'lan was passive, but it's nothing compared to them.

(beat)

Y'lan tells me they're ready to help you. I don't know how he can be so calm about it all. Makes the Vulcans look positively ebullient. I certainly don't know what to say to him. But then, I don't know what to say to you either.

(another beat)

Oh Gril, how did we get here? How did it happen? I don't understand. But then, that's par for the course these days, isn't it? It's like you said to me, the extraordinary is ordinary with us. Sometimes it feels like it's just you and I who are grounded in reality.

She falters.

TALORA (CONT'D)

And that's how I like it. I like how you do that. Whenever the rest of the world goes insane, I know you're always there, down to earth, ready to keep my feet on the ground. I don't want to lose that.

(beat)

I don't want to lose you, Gril. Do you hear me? I don't want to lose you. Gril!

Nothing. She sighs.

Behind her, Y'lan approaches. He lays a tentacle on her shoulder -- an almost-Human gesture.

Y'LAN

It's time.

She nods and slowly stands up. She starts to turn away, but then turns back, and lightly kisses Dojar on the head. Y'lan looks at her.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Now is not the time to initiate copulation.

Talora smiles wearily and shakes her head.

TALORA

No, it's not -- never mind, it doesn't matter.

(beat)

Y'lan, I want to say --

Y'LAN

You must leave now.

TALORA

But --

She doesn't have time, as a Q'tami leads her forcefully out the chamber. Y'lan turns back to Dojar, and lays his tentacles on him again. We hear another Q'tami, scuttling round the ceiling.

Q'TAMI

You must find them.

We look down at Dojar...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

Y'lan walks down the street. Dojar is standing, staring off into space. He is now noticeably older, middle-aged, lined, weary. The ground shakes under their feet every so often.

DOJAR

Thank you for that.

Y'LAN

We have little time.

The ground shakes beneath their feet.

DOJAR

How long do I have?

Y'LAN

We must work quickly if we are to identify this place. Come.

They start to move off.

CUT TO:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIG

As before; Cross and Delfune.

CROSS

Who contacted you?

DELFUNE

You know who.

CROSS

What did he want?

DELFUNE

He was sounding me out, seeing if I would play ball.

CROSS

Really.

DELFUNE

He told me that within the next week I would begin to see the fruits of his labor. That I would understand what was going on.

CROSS

And do you?

DELFUNE

I don't know. Tell me. How did you learn about the Q'tami prisoners?

CROSS

We found a PADD with details on it.

DELFUNE

A PADD? Doesn't that seem a little convenient?

CROSS

It wasn't easy to come by.

DELFUNE

And yet you did, and now you find yourself in this mess. Interesting, no?

CROSS

What are you saying?

DELFUNE

I'm saying perhaps it's time you looked before you leapt. First Coular, and now here.

CROSS

Admiral.

DELFUNE

I can't fight alone, Captain.

CROSS

Why come to me? I would have thought I was the last person you would want to.

DELFUNE

Because now I know that you are one of the few people that isn't involved. That you, are in fact, a bane in their life.

CROSS

It's nice to feel appreciated. But why am their target so much?

DELFUNE

I think they have the same problem with you that I do. They don't like what you do.

CROSS

I'm just doing what I feel is right.

DELFUNE

And, apparently, so are they. Now I wonder... which one of you really is right?

CROSS

I have a pretty good idea.

DELFUNE

Do you? I wonder.

CROSS

What's that supposed to mean?

DELFUNE

Before he disconnected our comm channel, our friend said something I found rather peculiar.

CROSS

What was it?

DELFUNE

He said "there wouldn't be any need for me if people like Cross didn't exist." What do you suppose that meant?

CROSS

I don't know.

DELFUNE

Perhaps it's time you figured that out. For all our sakes.

She turns and begins to walk out. Then she turns and looks back.

DELFUNE (CONT'D)

Unlike you, I am careful where I tread. I know the Q'tami are out there. I also know he is out there. Unlike you, Captain, I do look before I leap. He wants us to go after them.

Cross looks at her.

DELFUNE (CONT'D)

And until I work out why, or know for certain, I refuse to walk into this particular scene he's provided us with.

She turns and walks out. Cross sits back on his bed very confused.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Boyle and Grey are still beavering away. Carter has gone, but Quinlan is slumped on a console, fast asleep. Both engineers look tired.

GREY

Dammit!

He thumps his hand down on the table in frustration.

GREY (CONT'D)

I don't know what the hell he's done to this shuttle, but there's nothing here at all. They've vanished into thin air.

BOYLE

Q'tami do have a habit of doing that. If only we had a smelloscope.

GREY

(annoyed at her trivial remark)

What?

BOYLE

A smelloscope.  
(beat, off Grey's confused expression)  
Oh come on, surely you've noticed. You can tell Y'lan's coming a kilometer away -- he stinks.

GREY

I don't think it's very nice to accuse a fellow crew member of having bad odor.

BOYLE

Sorry. I was just -- what is it?

Grey's face has suddenly lit up.

GREY

That's it. Sarah, you're brilliant.

He grabs her and kisses her full on the lips before returning to his console. She looks uncertainly at him.

BOYLE

Are you feeling all right?

GREY

If we can't track the shuttle, we can track the Q'tami!

BOYLE

Only, you didn't kiss me like that for the last three months of our relationship.

GREY

Dojar wrote a thing about Q'tami physiology, after that time he spent with Y'lan last year.

BOYLE

(overlapping)

I mean, if you had, we might still be together.

GREY

(overlapping)

There was something in it about the macrochondria organs, if I can calibrate the ship's sensors, we can trace that.

BOYLE

Lewis never kisses me... wait. How will you find that amongst all the background radiation?

GREY

The energy signals are unique enough. I can block out the QIC drives, filter the background noise, and hopefully we can see the trail left by the Q'tami. Just a minute.

BOYLE

Okay. Afterwards, do you want to have sex?

CUT TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

Dojar and Y'lan are trawling among the debris.

DOJAR

Everything's so blurred, it's impossible to identify this place.

Y'LAN

Q'tami future echoes are usually accurate down to the last atom. I can only presume that the Lost's mental state is such that the images have been distorted.

DOJAR

Where are they now?

Y'LAN

They are hiding. They do not understand you.

DOJAR

Neither did my father.

Y'LAN

And as such they are afraid of you.

DOJAR

Why don't they just attack?

Y'LAN

Because you are their link to each other and, they believe, to the Hegemony. They cannot attack their own.

The ground shakes again. Dojar stumbles, but rights himself.

DOJAR

They won't have to if this goes on much longer. I -- wait a minute.

He has spotted something in the pile of rubble he fell against. He bends down, and starts to pile away the rubble to get at it.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

I wonder...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Grey is working feverishly while Boyle looks on. Quinlan still sleeps.

GREY  
Got it! Jennifer, wake up!

No response.

GREY (CONT'D)  
Wake her up.

Boyle goes over and bends by Quinlan tenderly.

BOYLE  
(screaming)  
WAKE UP YOU LAZY BITCH!

Quinlan wakes up, and immediately lashes out at Boyle who leaps back. Quinlan looks cross.

QUINLAN  
What the hell did you do that for?

GREY  
Jen, come and look at this. I've traced the Q'tami.

Quinlan, still glaring, goes over to Grey.

QUINLAN  
Excellent.

GREY  
Give it a minute, and it'll be able to tell us where they're heading.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

Dojar is still digging frantically, while Y'lan watches on.

DOJAR  
I've nearly got it. Nearly got it.

He begins to pull at it.

DOJAR (CONT'D)  
It's stuck.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

The computer beeps. Grey, Quinlan, and Boyle all look on.

GREY

There, it's done. Let's see the  
flight plan. Hey, wait a minute...

CUT TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

DOJAR finally wrenches the masonry free.

DOJAR

There!

It is the large head of what was evidently a statue. He  
looks at it for a moment. He goes pale as he sees what it  
is.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Oh my God. We're on...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Grey, Quinlan and Boyle. All have gone white.

GREY

Bajor.  
(looks at the other  
two)  
They're heading for Bajor.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

We see now what Dojar has pulled out -- a bust of KAI OPAKA.  
As we zoom in on it, we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE -- BAJOR

We see the planet glimmering in the distance, as in the foreground, the shuttle comes into view. Inside, we see one Q'tami, staring out the cockpit window.

EXT. TAMULNA MARKET

The city is bustling again, as we saw it in the beginning of last season's finale. People move through the main thoroughfare, looking at the various wares on the kiosks. Around them, the buildings that make up the city -- none more than four stories high, but with a more high-tech look about them than we are used to in Bajor. Through the crowd, the BEGGAR WOMAN moves, hurrying along. Suddenly she stops, and looks up.

BEGGAR

(softly)

They're coming...

INT. WAREHOUSE

The stall-holder lies dead. We pan along from his still-undiscovered body to a dusty console a few meters away. On it, an alert suddenly starts to flash silently: HOMING BEACON INITIALIZED.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The LEVIATHAN in slipstream, towing the ENTERPRISE with a tractor beam.

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Joel is pacing up and down while Grey and Quinlan watch her, all bathed in the red alert lights.

JOEL

How long?

HELM OFFICER

We'll be in the Bajoran system in four minutes.

Delfune enters, followed by Cross.

JOEL

(quickly)

Oh no, I don't want him on my Bridge.

DELFUNE

I do, and I am the senior officer here.

JOEL

But he is under arrest!

DELFUNE

He has also had more experience with Q'tami than any of us. I thought he might come in useful.

The two women glare at each other before Joel turns away, harrumphing. Cross sidles over to Grey and Quinlan.

CROSS

What have we got?

GREY

The shuttle seems to have followed a preset course for Bajor.

QUINLAN

Erik thinks it's probably the place Brody traveled from.

CROSS

The Q'tami inside?

GREY

We can't get any hails.

DELFUNE

Bajoran authorities have been alerted.

CROSS

So what's the plan?

JOEL

The plan is you keep quiet and stay out of our way.

CROSS

(mocking)  
Yes, Captain Joel.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- BAJOR

The SHUTTLE enters orbit...

EXT. TAMULNA MARKET

The blind Beggar turns her head to seemingly gaze up at the sky.

BEGGAR

(pointing)

Look!

As people turn to follow her gaze, the shuttle comes careening down at a forty five degree angle over the heads of the market patrons, clipping the top of one building then barreling straight through another before smashing into the warehouse. The warehouse goes up in a roar of FLAME as people begin screaming. Debris falls from the skies.

CUT TO:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

The tactical officer looks up.

TACTICAL OFFICER

We just got a message. The shuttle has crash landed.

JOEL

Where?

TACTICAL OFFICER

In the center of Tamulna.

Cross, Quinlan and Grey exchange worried glances.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAMULNA -- WAREHOUSE

As people begin to gather, careful to stay out of the reach of the flames engulfing the building, BAJORAN authorities begin to arrive in hovercars and shuttles. They start to marshall the people.

BAJORAN SOLDIER

Back, back!

One shuttle is evidently a fire truck of some sort, as two men begin unrolling a hose. Overhead a shuttle hovers.

INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE

The twenty fifth century equivalent of a helicopter, an open shuttle. There is a PILOT and two more soldiers, one working on a console.

SOLDIER

(shouting)

I can't read anything through the heat!

SOLDIER 2

What's that?

EXT. WAREHOUSE

As the people watch, a dark silhouette begins to emerge through the flames -- a very familiar silhouette. Then another one, and another one. Like spectral spiders walking out of hell itself, they come slowly forward.

PASSERBY

What the hell are they?

Suddenly there is an ear-splitting SCREECH. Instantly, the nearest Q'tami leaps forward, landing in the middle of the crowd. Whirling around its tentacles, which are on fire, it sends people flying up into the air, and across the ground. The others follow, leaping through the people, who are now screaming and making a run for it.

BAJORAN SOLDIER

Pull back, pull --

He suddenly looks down. Around his waist blood starts to spill down. His top half slides one way, his bottom the other, both falling to the ground.

Behind him a Q'tami, tentacles both aflame and now dripping with blood, ROARS in triumph. It looks round, and then leaps forward again.

EXT. TAMULNA

We follow the helishuttle's point of view, as we see the Q'tami rampaging through the town. The soldier shouts:

SOLDIER

Mayday, mayday, we have a code red situation! Six hostile BEMs, in the center of town. We need backup immediately.

PILOT

Look!

They stare as a couple of the Q'tami scamper up the side of buildings, leaping across, seemingly oblivious to what they are doing, all still burning.

SOLDIER

We have to go down. Shoot them.

PILOT

Sir, it is not advisable to shoot in a civilian area.

SOLDIER

(shouting)

People are dying! Do it!

PILOT

Aye sir.

The shuttle swoops down between the buildings and opens fire on the two nearest, who are making their way down the main thoroughfare. They squeal, and the soldiers smile relieved at each other -- they're making progress when:

SOLDIER 2

Argh!

A Q'tami has leapt from the side of the building onto the shuttle. It sweeps its tentacles inside and seizes the nearest soldier, sweeping him out and throwing him clear into the air. It looks like he's too high, but another Q'tami leaps up and seizes him, tearing him to pieces. The Q'tami on the helishuttle attempts to get in. Its weight is causing the shuttle to loll to one side, taking it off course. It starts to spin, and goes into the side of a building, tearing along its insides. It is evidently an apartment building as inside there are people sitting, caught in the shuttle's path. The last thing we hear is:

PILOT

Mayday, jettison the fuel...

But it's too late. The shuttle explodes, sending a huge fireball to sweep across the town, catching the buildings around it in the blast.

The Q'tami is thrown clear and lands a little way away while behind it the buildings burn.

EXT. TAMULNA

In another area two of the creatures are smashing through the market stalls. They react as they see the flames from the explosion, and roar. Around them, their victims lie. Round the corner a mother shoulders her baby, breathing deeply but trying to stay silent. We hear the Q'tami pacing, and she closes her eyes. The Q'tami walks past... and the baby starts crying. Immediately the Q'tami turns.

MOTHER

No!

She begins to run, with the Q'tami in pursuit. She veers round one corner, then another.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Prophets no, no, don't let it be,  
protect my baby.

She heads round a third corner, but it is a dead end -- three sides of a building with no entrance. She turns as the Q'tami enters the alleyway and begins to walk towards her.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Please don't, please, I beg you.

The Q'tami leaps... and is knocked off course by a phaser blast, smacking it in the side of the building.

VOICE

OI!

Out of the shadows QUINLAN emerges with a heavy duty carbine rifle with a grenade launcher underneath, wearing a headset.

QUINLAN

Pick on someone your own size.

The Q'tami, infuriated, leaps at Quinlan but Quinlan blasts it high into the sky, flying through the air away from them. She turns back to the sobbing mother.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

You okay? Your baby?

MOTHER

Yes, thank you, thank you.

QUINLAN

Get out of here while you can.

The mother makes a run for it. Quinlan taps her comm. badge.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Quinlan to Grey. These rifles pack quite a wallop.

GREY'S COMM VOICE

Leviathan's finest.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAMULNA -- STREET

Grey is hurrying down a street with a group of Bajoran militiamen and a squad of the Enterprise's security forces.

MILITIAMAN

(gabbling)

We've only got three shuttles and one of them's gone down already. We're not equipped for this kind of emergency.

GREY

Evacuations?

MILITIAMAN

We're working on it. I can't believe this is happening.

GREY

It's okay, we're going to --

Before them a Q'tami bursts out of a window, carrying the severed abdomen of some unfortunate person.

GREY (CONT'D)

Fire!

The forces open fire, knocking the Q'tami back. It squeals at them, and throws the abdomen at them, knocking one off its feet. It attempts to leap at them, but is knocked back by the rifles. Giving up, it hurries off. A couple of the guards attempt to chase it but it's too fast. Grey frowns.

GREY (CONT'D)

Hmm. I think we're going to need some kind of transport.

CUT TO:

INT. ARES MUSEUM

A series of small, hovercar-like vehicles, called Ares, hover above the ground. There is the sound, and a hole appears in the wall, through which GREY and company quickly hurry. The militiaman points to them.

MILITIAMAN

There.

GREY

Perfect.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAMULNA -- STREET

A Q'tami runs along chasing a hapless young guy, when suddenly out of the air an ARES swoops, knocking into the Q'tami and sending it off course. QUINLAN cheers as she steers it.

QUINLAN

Woohoo! Take that!

She fires her weapon at the Q'tami, who leaps at her. She pulls the vessel out of the way just in time, and it careens through a store's front window.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Sorry!

She pursues the Q'tami in on her Ares...

INT. TAMULNA MALL -- CONTINUOUS

It's a large shopping mall area, made almost entirely of glass. There are several levels, with a fountain in the middle, and stairs and escalators. People run for cover as Quinlan flies through and stops, looking.

QUINLAN

Where did it go?

Nobody answers as they run. She turns round. Behind her, the Q'tami rises out of the waterfall and raises a tentacle to grab her. As it does so, another Q'tami comes crashing through the roof and lands on the first one.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Shit!

She turns and speeds quickly out. The two Q'tami begin to follow her.

EXT. TAMULNA -- STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Quinlan drives down it as fast as she can, with the two Q'tami in hot pursuit. She taps her commbadge.

QUINLAN

I could really do with some assistance here..

One of the Q'tami jumps on the Ares, knocking its orientation out of kilter. It turns ninety degrees and starts to scale a building, with Quinlan holding on for dear life. The Q'tami claws at her, and she slips down, grabbing hold of the bottom edge of the craft. For a moment she locks eye with the creature, which raises its tentacle. As it swings, she lets go, luckily landing on the roof.

She gets up and watches -- the vessel continue on its upward trajectory with the Q'tami still on. She pulls out her carbine and fires a grenade upward, which lands in the vessel's footwell. It explodes, sending the Q'tami falling back to the ground with a screech.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

I hope they were insured.

She looks back over the city. The center is just a mass of flames, and buildings everywhere are wrecked from the Q'tami's passage... In the streets people lie injured or dying.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Jesus.

EXT. TAMULNA -- STREET

Grey is pursuing another Q'tami relentlessly. It smashes through one building, he flies through following it, it emerges and leaps onto another, he does the same, trying to get a clear shot. The Q'tami suddenly veers to the left and lands in the middle of a group of people who have gathered there. Screaming, they try and scatter, but the Q'tami seizes tentacle-fulls of them and throws them in Grey's passage.

GREY

Dammit!

He tries to swerve but the people bounce off him. Meanwhile, the Q'tami is running rampage through the park, trees and people falling equally to its might. Grey raises his vehicle again and dives straight at the creature. The Q'tami jumps in the air again, and smashes into the vehicle, throwing Grey clear.

He lands with a thump and watches the vehicle flying off with the Q'tami on board. The Q'tami leaps off, and sends the Ares zooming down into another area of the park, crushing people under it.

GREY (CONT'D)

(tears in his eyes)

Dammit.

(presses his commbadge)

Grey to Quinlan, Jen?

INTERCUT:

EXT. TAMULNA -- ROOFTOP

Quinlan is making her way down a fire escape.

QUINLAN

Erik?

GREY'S COMM VOICE

What do you think?

QUINLAN

I don't know. Nothing's working!  
They're just getting blown about.

She looks around helplessly.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

I don't think we have the resources  
to defeat them.

CUT TO:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Joel, Cross, and Delfune.

CROSS

Quinlan, you have to keep trying,  
you --

TACTICAL OFFICER

Captain, we're picking up something.

JOEL

What?

TACTICAL OFFICER

Some kind of energy -- oh my God.

EXT. SPACE -- BAJOR

The LEVIATHAN and ENTERPRISE are suddenly dwarfed by a massive energy distortion, the same slipstream whirlpool seen in the last episode. Through it a massive Q'TAMI SHIP, the same style as seen in "Aftermath," emerges.

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Cross gasps, and Delfune and Joel react.

CROSS

It's a Bucket.

DELFUNE

It's a what?

CROSS

Bucket. A Q'tami vessel.

JOEL

Perfect, more to join in. Open fire --

DELFUNE

(interrupting)

Belay that order. Captain?

CROSS

It's the Hegemony.

TACTICAL OFFICER

We're being hailed.

JOEL & CROSS

On screen.

Joel glares at Cross. On the viewscreen, TALORA appears. Everyone reacts.

JOEL

Commander Talora. I thought your mother had just died.

TALORA

(ignoring her)

Captain, I believe you need some assistance.

CROSS

You could say that. Are the Hegemony going to relieve us of their strays?

TALORA

I believe so...

CUT TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

We're in Dojar's mind again. The city is now all but disintegrated -- the fires have burnt out, there is nothing but a dull husk where once a city stood. It is on the point of death. The ground shakes every few moments.

TALORA (V.O.)

...but it might be more tricky than you think.

We see Y'lan scuttling across the ground. Against one of the buildings, Dojar sits. His face is old and withered now, and his breathing is labored. Y'lan goes over to him and bends down.

DOJAR

(finds it hard to breathe)

Y'lan. What's going on?

Y'LAN

The Q'tami. I have to get to them before you die.

DOJAR

(weakly raises a finger)

They're over there. But... I don't think... they'll be very happy to see you...

Y'lan looks up. In the middle distance, the six Q'tami are grouped, watching. Y'lan stands up.

Y'LAN

(to the Q'tami)

You must end what you are doing and come with me.

They don't look very happy about this. One Q'tami flexes its tentacles.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

One way or the other.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAMULNA -- CENTRAL MARKET

Grey stands waiting with Quinlan and some guards, as TALORA materializes. She looks around at the city on fire, the people lying dead in the streets while the medics attend to them, her eyes wide open.

TALORA

Oh my God.

GREY

Commander, it's good to see you.

TALORA

Where are they now?

QUINLAN

They're all over the place.

TALORA

We need to drive them back here.

GREY

Why?

TALORA

The Hegemony are constructing a portal to relink the Q'tami and take them back to the Worldship, but we need to drive them in. That portal will be here.

QUINLAN

Wait a minute, wait a minute. Why here? It would be much safer to do it out of town.

TALORA

They can't leave the town.

GREY

Why not?

TALORA

I don't really understand it, but it's something to do with Dojar.

GREY

What?

Talora shrugs.

QUINLAN

Why can't the Hegemony just beam them up?

TALORA

They can't get a lock on them. They're not joined. And it's not as though we can.

QUINLAN

And how are we proposing to get them where we want? They're kinda resistant to everything we throw at them.

TALORA

We have someone working on wearing them down...

CUT TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

Y'lan slams against a wall. Two Q'tami leap onto him again, but he manages to swing them away with his tentacles. Another jumps him but he jumps away and the Q'tami smashes into it. The ground shakes. Y'lan holds the advantage as he is coordinated, whereas their movements are random. Dojar lies, almost oblivious, against the wall.

CUT TO:

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Cross, Delfune, and Joel watch. We hear cross communications.

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE

Do we have sightings of all the creatures?

ENTERPRISE GUARD'S COMM VOICE

Aye.

LEVIATHAN GUARD'S COMM VOICE

Aye.

INTERCUT:

EXT. TAMULNA

Grey climbs back onto another Ares, eyeing one of the creatures, who is for the moment standing still.

GREY

Aye.

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE

Then let's do it!

Grey lets loose with his carbine. The creature, in a dazed state, roars but is knocked back. It begins to run from Grey.

EXT. TAMULNA -- STREET

Another area. Quinlan drives her two Q'tami back on her Ares.

QUINLAN

It's working!

EXT. TAMULNA

We watch over head as in four different directions we see the Q'tami starting to be driven.

EXT. TAMULNA

Grey's Q'tami suddenly looks sharp and attempts to leap out of the field of Grey's fire...

INTERCUT:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

...but Y'LAN brings them down, slamming them to the floor. Another earth tremor shakes them all.

INTERCUT:

EXT. TAMULNA

The plan seems to be working. We swoop up and see from five different directions the Q'tami starting to be herded back towards the flaming ruin that is the center of town.

CUT TO:

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Toran stands by the shuttle, monitoring a console. A Q'tami stands near him.

TORAN

Toran to ground force, the portal will open in three minutes.

INTERCUT:

EXT. TAMULNA

Quinlan, working on another Q'tami.

QUINLAN

How long do we have?

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Cross, Delfune, and Joel, listening to the exchange of communications.

TORAN'S COMM VOICE

The portal will remain open for thirty seconds.

QUINLAN'S COMM VOICE

Thirty seconds? Why so short?

Q'TAMI VOICE

We do not wish the Hegemony to be exposed for any longer.

Joel looks up.

EXT. TAMULNA

The Q'tami makes a break for freedom, leaping in the air away from Quinlan towards the outskirts again.

QUINLAN

No you don't.

She shoots a grenade up in the air in front of it, and detonates it with her phaser. The blast sends the Q'tami back to earth towards them with a jolt.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Why is that again?

EXT. TAMULNA

Another part: Grey and company. The Q'tami in front of them reaches an intersection, where another crashes into it, sending both creatures sprawling. From down that street we see Quinlan.

TORAN'S COMM VOICE

The portal will relink the Q'tami to the Hegemony, that's how they link them back up.

QUINLAN

Hey Erik, going my way?

GREY

I believe I am.

They both look at the sprawled Q'tami on the floor, slightly dazed.

GREY (CONT'D)

Shall we?

QUINLAN

I think we should.

They both fire at them.

EXT. TAMULNA -- MARKET SQUARE -- CONTINUOUS

The area has been cleared, as a wind begins to pick up. We see crackling of energy. It has begun.

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Toran at the console.

TORAN

Forty seconds to portal opening.

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

Y'lan flies through the air, propelled by the Q'tami. They leap after him, and land on him, smacking him about with their tentacles. With a super-Q'tami effort, he flails his tentacles, and sends them flying. They land near Dojar, as the ground shakes again. Cracks in the ground begin to appear...

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Joel walks across from her tactical officer's station to the front of the room. She, Delfune and Cross all look tense.

EXT. TAMULNA -- MARKET SQUARE

We see the six Q'tami now down the thoroughfare in the distance. Behind them, the Ares continue to bear down on them, driving them forward with their phasers.

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

The ground shaking has increased. The cracks grow bigger. The Q'tami start to stir again, and look angrier than ever. They start to cross to Dojar, the weak link in the chain. Y'lan reacts.

Y'LAN

Leave him!

They ignore this. The ground shakes more.

EXT. TAMULNA -- MARKET SQUARE

They're getting closer... The portal suddenly erupts open, all crackling energy and whirling winds.

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Toran at the console.

TORAN  
Portal's open!

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

One Q'tami leaps at Dojar, but Y'lan leaps on him. The Q'tami lands on the ground, which gives away. It tumbles down, and, like a domino effect, the ground around him crumbles too. The stunned Q'tami all disappear down. Just as the ground by Dojar crumbles, Y'lan leaps and grabs him, taking him away. Ce lands just on the edge of the ground, and lays Dojar down. Dojar, now a withered old man, looks up at him.

DOJAR  
Y'lan...

He reaches out his hand, and Y'lan, uncertainly, takes it.

DOJAR (CONT'D)  
(his dying breath)  
Thank you...

Behind him on the edge, a tentacle reaches out...

EXT. TAMULNA -- MARKET SQUARE

Grey and Quinlan.

GREY  
Now!

They fire, and blast the Q'tami into the portal...

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Cross, Delfune, and Joel.

JOEL  
Now!

Cross realizes...

CROSS  
No!

Too late.

EXT. SPACE -- BAJOR

The Leviathan fires multiple phaser beams down onto the planet.

EXT. TAMULNA MARKET SQUARE

As the Q'tami enter, the Leviathan's phasers blast down on it. A heart-wrenching squeal goes up, and the portal, almost like a plate of glass, seems to SHATTER into a million pieces. Everyone ducks, but there is nothing tangible there.

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

As the tentacle grabs Dojar, we hear the squeal, and the three -- Dojar, Y'lan and the tentacle who are all joined, GLOW bright white. Dojar opens his mouth and screams...

INT. ORGANIC VESSEL

Dojar sits bolt upright, gasping. Next to him, Y'lan breaks free of him, and stares. Around them, the Q'tami start squealing, and running about. Y'lan looks about.

DOJAR  
(breathing deeply)  
What...

Y'LAN  
We need to leave. Now.

He grabs Dojar and runs for it.

EXT. TAMULNA -- MARKET SQUARE

Quinlan, Grey, and the guards all stare at where the portal was. Now there is just a scorch mark on the ground, with no sign of them. The two officers get off their bikes, and walk over, not saying anything, while around them the city burns. Then they look up at the heavens.

INT. LEVIATHAN -- BRIDGE

Cross is in a rage, as is Delfune, while Joel stands her ground in front of the viewscreen, almost placidly.

CROSS  
How the hell could you do that?

DELFUNE  
Captain Joel, you have overstepped  
your authority. This is --

JOEL  
The Q'tami are a threat. I simply  
saw a chance to lessen it. So I  
took it.

CROSS  
You have just --

DELFUNE

(cutting across)

Captain Cross, I feel it is time you  
returned to your ship.

TACTICAL OFFICER

Sir, something's happening. The Q'tami  
vessel is powering up...

EXT. SPACE -- BAJOR

Another slipstream vortex begins to appear around the Q'tami  
ship.

INT. ORGANIC SHIP

While other Q'tami swarm around them completely ignoring  
them, Y'lan purposefully carries Dojar through the ship.  
They reach Toran at the shuttle.

TORAN

Y'lan? What's going on? What  
happened?

Y'LAN

Get in.

They quickly get into the shuttle.

INT. SHUTTLE -- COCKPIT -- CONTINUOUS

Toran quickly powers up as Y'lan and Dojar settle down.

TORAN

Powering up.

DOJAR

(weakly)

Hurry, the ship's leaving.

TORAN

Okay, here we go.

He engages...

EXT. SPACE -- BAJOR

The Q'tami ship disappears into the vortex, and in a blazing  
FLASH, there is suddenly nothing... except for a barely-  
visible Starfleet shuttle floating in space.

INT. SHUTTLE -- COCKPIT

Toran, Y'lan, and Dojar, as before.

TORAN

This is Doctor Toran, requesting  
emergency transport to Sickbay for  
three.

COMPUTER VOICE

Acknowledged.

They all shimmer...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

They appear, but no greets them as everyone is dashing about,  
collecting medkits. Toran grabs Elris, who hugs him.

ELRIS

You got back.

TORAN

I did. Dojar needs --

DOJAR

Nothing.

He is standing straight up, next to Y'lan.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

They need you down there.

Elris looks at him.

ELRIS

I'll be back up in a bit to look you  
over.

She turns and she and Toran head out.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAMULNA -- MARKET SQUARE

The first medical teams materialize amidst the carnage.  
Dead and dying lie at the sides, while the buildings are  
still ablaze. The first fire crews have arrived while Grey  
and Quinlan help. Elris and Toran look around in horror, as  
a thin gauze of rain starts to pour.

ELRIS

Prophets...

They look at each other as we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. TAMULNA -- DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

The camera pans across the devastation. What were buildings are now just piles and rubble, smoke hangs in the air from fires yet to be put out. People stand back, some weeping, some just staring, unable to comprehend what has happened. Medical and rescue teams continue their work, to find people trapped, to help in the field those who are injured.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, Stardate 80002.6.  
The Q'tami are gone. The Hegemony left without a word. We should be celebrating. But there is no reason to. Bajor is a planet violated, one of her major cities raped. I do not know how they will be able to cope.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Dojar is sitting up on a biobed, fully alert, with Elris, whose puffy face indicates she has been crying, running a medical tricorder over him. Y'lan, Talora, and Cross are hovering nearby, watching.

DOJAR

I feel fine.

ELRIS

Yes, and I don't know why, which worries me. Lie back a minute.

DOJAR

Doctor, please, really, this isn't necessary.

CROSS

Dojar, do it. That's an order.

Dojar lies back, muttering. As Elris continues her scan, Cross turns to Y'lan.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I suppose you're going to be your usual inscrutable self and be completely unhelpful in explaining what's happened here?

Y'LAN

Yes.

TALORA

Will he be all right?

Y'LAN

I hope so.

Cross looks at him, and finally shakes his head. Elris concludes her scan and shakes her head.

ELRIS

Apart from a couple of bruises, he's physically in peak health.

DOJAR

Thank you.

He sits up, making as if to go. Elris puts a hand on him.

ELRIS

Not so fast, I have a few results I want to see before I discharge.

Y'LAN

I appreciate your concern, but it's not necessary.

Cross and Elris both react and stare at Y'lan.

ELRIS

(uncertainly)

I'm sure it's not, but I'd still like to do some.

(looks at Cross)

Captain, Commander, may I have a word with you?

CROSS

Of course.

They walk off to one side.

TALORA

What's going on?

ELRIS

Look at this.

She brings up what looks like an ECG on her console.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

This is Dojar's electric brain patterns immediately after he was beamed over from the shuttle.

TALORA

Okay.

ELRIS

More out of habit than hoping anything useful would come out of it, I did Y'lan's as well, as well as Talora and Toran's. Look.

She brings up a second set of graphs. Cross's eyes widen.

CROSS

They look almost --

ELRIS

(interrupts)

Not almost. Exactly.

She presses a button and the two lines converge on each other they are a perfect fit.

CROSS

My God.

TALORA

What does that mean?

ELRIS

It means they're having exactly the same thoughts. And given the odds of that happening at random are about a trillion to one...

CROSS

(eyes widen)

He's still linked to him.

Elris nods.

ELRIS

And vice versa. They are, in effect, thinking as one.

Cross peers at Dojar and Y'lan who are standing next to each other, almost immobile.

TALORA

Are they aware of this?

ELRIS

If you suddenly started thinking like a Q'tami, wouldn't you notice?

CROSS

So what do we do?

ELRIS

I have no idea. I --

She suddenly jumps. Dojar and Y'lan are standing right there.

DOJAR

It's all right, Doctor, we know.

ELRIS

How...?

DOJAR

Q'tami hearing is exceptionally good.

Elris looks from one to the other.

CROSS

Y'lan, what should be done about this?

Y'LAN

Unknown at present. We will work on it, and report back to you.

TALORA

(to Dojar)

Will you be all right?

Dojar nods.

DOJAR

I would request one thing though.

CROSS

Go on.

DOJAR

Some leave to work on this, and become adjusted.

CROSS

(nods)

Of course.

DOJAR

I don't think I would function as well as I might at the moment, while I'm trying to sort out which thoughts are mine and which are Y'lan's.

ELRIS

I don't blame you.

(Y'lan reacts)

No offense.

Y'LAN

None taken. If you will excuse us, we have work to do.

ELRIS

The tests --

DOJAR  
-- will show nothing.

Elris opens her mouth again to object, then closes it. She nods. Dojar smiles.

DOJAR (CONT'D)  
It'll be fine. I'll see you later.

And with that, he and Y'lan move, almost in perfect synchronism, out of Sickbay. Talora follows, into...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Talora calls to Dojar and Y'lan.

TALORA  
Dojar.

They stop and Dojar looks back.

TALORA (CONT'D)  
I -- I'm glad you're okay.

DOJAR  
Thank you.

He turns away. Talora opens her mouth to speak, but can't. She turns away but Dojar calls back to her.

DOJAR (CONT'D)  
I heard you, you know.

Talora stares at him, as he smiles slightly, before turning and walking away. Talora sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Cross and Elris look at each other.

CROSS  
I don't envy him.

ELRIS  
Which one?

Cross smiles. Elris sighs and rubs her nose.

CROSS  
I don't know what to say to you.

ELRIS  
There's nothing to say. Now all I can do is help my planet recover. Try and help it heal.

CROSS

You're good at that.

ELRIS

Perhaps. It may heal, but the scars will always be there.

CROSS

You sure you don't need anything?

ELRIS

I'm on duty. I have to be all right. Tonight, tonight in my quarters... might be a different story.

CROSS

Don't bottle it up. I know what you're like.

ELRIS

(smiles)

I won't.

(she sighs again)

I'm worried about Toran. He looked shattered when he saw it.

CROSS

I know, I saw you...

Just as he's about to say something the door opens, and Delfune enters. Elris, who was about to react, closes her mouth again.

DELFUNE

Captain. Doctor.

CROSS &amp; ELRIS

Admiral.

DELFUNE

Captain, if I may speak to you?

CROSS

Of course.

He smiles at Elris, and they leave.

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

Y'lan enters, followed by Dojar. He's about to say something when he stops and looks around, as though seeing things in a new way.

Y'LAN

You are correct.

DOJAR

Pardon?

Y'LAN

You are seeing the laboratory in a new way because you are now more aware of its function.

Dojar frowns, and shakes his head.

DOJAR

I don't like this.

Y'LAN

We do not need to use oral communication any more. Our thoughts can communicate for us.

DOJAR

I think I'd prefer to stick to it at the moment if you don't mind.

Y'LAN

Cumbersome, but as you wish.

Dojar slumps on a stool.

DOJAR

How long will this last? I mean, what are we talking? Days, weeks...  
(swallows)  
...years?

Y'lan looks at him.

Y'LAN

At this present moment, I do not foresee a time when our link will be severed.

DOJAR

But why? I don't understand why this has happened.

Y'LAN

You do. You must just search our thoughts.

DOJAR

(angrily)  
No! No, I will not. I will not become some sort of Q'tami Borg. I want to know and I want you to explain it to me.

Y'lan doesn't say anything.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Y'lan! Y'lan!  
(calms down)  
...please.

Y'lan nods once.

Y'LAN

Very well.

He comes over to where Dojar is and lays his tentacles on him.

DOJAR

Not this again.

Y'LAN

Come with me... They both close their eyes...

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- BAJOR

The Enterprise sails past our perspective, in orbit. Below, we can see a dark SCAR on the surface, and a massive, dark plume of SMOKE drifting away in the atmosphere.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Cross is behind his desk, reading a PADD, while Delfune stands in front of him.

CROSS

A full pardon?

DELFUNE

Technically not a pardon, as technically you didn't do anything.

CROSS

I ignored an Admiral's orders.

DELFUNE

An Admiral who has chosen not to press charges.

Cross smiles and drops the PADD on his desk.

CROSS

Bet Joel's delighted.

DELFUNE

Captain Joel made her opinion on the matter perfectly clear to me.

CROSS

I'm sure she did. And what about her little stunt?

DELFUNE

She will face no disciplinary hearing for that. It was considered that she took an appropriate course of action in the circumstances.

CROSS

She has friends in high places.

He breathes in deeply and looks her squarely in the eyes.

CROSS (CONT'D)

So what now?

DELFUNE

What now? You give the Bajorans all the assistance they require, and then resume your mission.

CROSS

And that's it? No consequences, no follow up, no... response?

DELFUNE

I feel your pardon will be response enough to the parties concerned.

CROSS

(nods)

And so we wait until the next time.

DELFUNE

Indeed.

CROSS

You've got nothing more to say?

DELFUNE

I cannot. But I assure you that you are not the only one fighting on this side of the fence.

CROSS

Can't we coordinate somehow?

DELFUNE

(shakes her head)

Not until we know what it is we are fighting.

Cross nods.

CROSS

Thank you, Admiral.

She nods, and turns. As she is about to exit, she turns back...

DELFUNE

You know, I didn't think it was possible that anyone could dislike you as much as I do. But I'm beginning to feel that perhaps that is erroneous. They really are going to a lot of trouble to get you.

(she looks Cross square  
in the eye)

Make sure they keep missing.

A trace of a smile emerges on Cross's lips as he nods. Without another word, she turns and walks out the room. He sighs and leans back in his chair, closing his eyes. After a moment his commbadge beeps.

CALE'S COMM VOICE

Captain, there's an incoming message for you from Bajor.

CROSS

Who's it from?

CALE'S COMM VOICE

I'm not sure, sir, it's encoded.

CROSS

(frowning)

Put it through.

VOICE

(the same as spoke to  
Brody)

Hello, Captain.

Cross's eyes open wide.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

There are massive holes in the ground, but there are still places to walk. Dojar and Y'lan walk through it.

DOJAR

Why here again?

Y'LAN

This is where we were fused.

DOJAR

I don't get it.

Y'LAN

The moment the Q'tami entered the portal, ce was touching you, and I was touching you. If things had gone as they were meant to, that would have meant you were joined to the Hegemony permanently.

DOJAR

But it didn't. Joel's shot --

Y'LAN

-- disrupted the connection. The Hegemony themselves were cut off.

DOJAR

But the actual process of fusion still happened. Linking us?

Y'LAN

Correct.

DOJAR

But I was dying, Y'lan. This city, it was dying. Why am I not dead?

Y'LAN

In the Hegemony, we are part of a single life force -- the closest you humanoids have is the concept of a soul. It is when the soul dies that the body dies.

DOJAR

And?

Y'LAN

You did die. Or rather, your soul did. But because you linked to me at the moment before death, your body was fused with my soul.

DOJAR

So I'm now you?

Y'LAN

Not quite. Your personality still remains because your brain still remains active. But your life force no longer exists.

DOJAR

Besides living in each other's heads, what does that mean?

Y'LAN

You rely on me to live. Should I ever expire, for whatever reason, you will cease to be as well.

DOJAR

(closes his eyes)

I... I don't think I can cope with that.

Y'LAN

You can, because I can. And you will, because I will.

Dojar sighs.

DOJAR

What happened to the Q'tami in the portal then? The one we're linked to?

Y'LAN

Look.

He gestures. In the distance they see a completely different landscape -- mountainous, lush, under a red sky. Through it the Q'tami runs, squealing all the time.

DOJAR

Where is it?

Y'LAN

Unknown. Somewhere in the universe. The disruption to the vortex means the Q'tami could have ended up anywhere.

DOJAR

So they're still out there? Somewhere?

Y'LAN

They are.

DOJAR

And still as insane?

Y'LAN

They no longer have any connections, bar this one with you. They will be more confused than ever.

DOJAR

And this one?

Y'LAN

I do not know.

DOJAR

Will the Hegemony try and search for  
them again?

Y'LAN

They will.

DOJAR

Through me?

Y'LAN

No, they cannot risk trying to use  
you again, as if you expire I will  
too.

DOJAR

And they can't have that because...  
(beat; doesn't know  
how to say it)  
because of your --

Y'LAN

(shortly)  
Correct. I am too valuable a  
commodity.

Surely there is not a trace of bitterness in ces voice?

DOJAR

I should tell the crew about that...

Y'LAN

But you realize why we cannot --

DOJAR

Yes.

(beat)

I guess I'm already beginning to  
think like you...

He frowns at Y'lan, as they watch the Q'tami in the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAMULNA -- DEVASTATED CITYSCAPE

Quinlan is walking through pouring rain, carrying a medkit. Around her, people lie on stretchers or on the ground, waiting to be attended. The rain has washed the dust away, but fires still burn amongst the wrecked buildings. She finally reaches Grey, who is cradling the old woman's head in his lap. She is trembling violently, but her eyes are closed.

QUINLAN

Here.

She reaches in and pulls out a tricorder, but Grey shakes his head.

GREY  
She's dying, Jen.

He points and we see for the first time she is lying in a large pool of blood.

GREY (CONT'D)  
She's lost too much blood. Her trembling's due to lack of oxygen in the brain. I saw it a lot during the Sheliak campaign.

He reaches in and pulls out a hypospray. He administers it, and slowly her trembling stops. He closes his eyes, fighting back tears. Quinlan puts her arms around him and holds him to her, saying nothing. They remain for a few moments, before Grey looks up.

GREY (CONT'D)  
Look.

Quinlan looks up. Cross is walking through the rain towards them. He comes over.

CROSS  
Another one?

GREY  
Aye, Captain.

He stands up with Quinlan.

CROSS  
Jen, could I have word please?

QUINLAN  
Sure.

They begin to walk away, but Cross turns back. He looks at Grey.

CROSS  
Thank you.

GREY  
Captain?

CROSS  
For defending me and my ship.

GREY  
You're welcome, Captain.

Cross hesitates.

CROSS

I'm sorry.

GREY

Captain?

CROSS

I'm sorry. For acting in a way that meant you could no longer respect me. I'm sorry that I disgraced the good name of your ship. But I am fighting on the same side as you.

GREY

KNOW, CAPTAIN. THAT'S WHY I FIRED BACK ON  
the Leviathan.

CROSS

The enemy is getting closer all the time. This --  
(he looks around)  
is only the beginning. I hope we can find a way to work together.

He holds out his hand. Grey looks at it and then shakes it, firmly.

GREY

I do, too, Captain.

They lock eyes, and understanding passes between them. The threat they face is greater than the enmity between them.

CROSS

And now, Jen, can I have a word with you?

QUINLAN

What can I do for you, Captain?

CROSS

Lieutenant Dojar is taking a leave of absence while he adjusts to his new circumstances.

QUINLAN

Okay, I get that.

CROSS

I was wondering whether you would like to take his place, as Head of Security.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

(Quinlan looks shocked)

I know you've been frustrated at helm, and I feel with your various connections that I don't want to know about, plus your tendency to go round shooting things, you would be ideal.

(leans in close)

Plus, it would annoy Talora.

(stands back)

Give it some thought, anyway, I

QUINLAN

I don't need to. The answer is yes.

Cross breathes a sigh of relief.

CROSS

Excellent, I will --

He trails off, as he spots in the shadowy ruins of a building the silhouette of a MAN, waiting patiently. Cross looks at him for a moment, and then stands up.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Jen. Erik.

QUINLAN

Captain.

Cross walks across. The man, who is wearing some kind of twenty fifth-century equivalent of a hat, is watching an elderly woman. She is slowly picking through the rubble of what is evidently her home. She is setting up the house for the night. Cross has reached the man.

MAN

It's extraordinary, isn't it Captain. Even in the most dire circumstances, when all seems lost, when there is nothing left to live for, somehow people find a way to survive, to continue. Find an inner strength to themselves.

(he looks Cross in the face squarely)

I find it heartwarming, don't you?

CROSS

There is always a reason to go on. Even when the odds tell you otherwise.

MAN

Quite. Walk with me, Captain.

They slowly make their way down a back alley, away from the main area. Here and there is just detritus, piles of rubble. No one has come down here, and no one is likely to in the near future. Dust hangs in the air.

CROSS

Mister Janus, I presume?

MAN

I think the "mister" is a little out of place, don't you?

CROSS

But you are Janus?

MAN

That is one of the names that people know me as. Others know me as Isimud, others Geminus -- I have a great love of mythology, Captain. Of the times when Gods walked the Earth, when we were but their puppets, their playthings, designed only to amuse, to be tossed aside when the novelty has worn off.

CROSS

And you see yourself as one of the Gods?

MAN

Not at all, Captain. In fact, I don't see myself as much of anything. But then, it is not our own perceptions that matter, is it? It's how other people see us that counts in the end.

(slight beat)

You, for example. You see yourself as a good man, an honest man, a man constantly trying to do what is best, to protect those you love and uphold the pillars of justice and strength you have been inured to believe in so passionately.

(slight beat)

Whereas others see you as the Butcher of Coular, a racist, an out of control maverick who is of as much danger to his own side as to his enemies...

(turns and looks at him again)

whoever he perceives them to be.

CROSS

Like you said. A matter of perspective.

MAN

Exactly. And just as others see you as that, so some people see me as a... conduit, if you like, through which they can hope to walk amongst the gods.

CROSS

And you? How do you see yourself?

MAN

Oh, I am but a concerned citizen, Captain, very very concerned about our future.

CROSS

Our future?

MAN

Yes, Captain, yours and mine both. You see us as on opposite sides of the fence, but in reality we are not. It is just that our methods of reacting to the other side are slightly different. And occasionally slightly conflicting.

CROSS

I don't want conflict.

MAN

Neither do I. However, occasionally your actions do demand that certain... interventions be employed.

CROSS

My actions? What about yours? I think on the grand scale of things, my actions are nothing compared to what you are trying to do.

The man stops and smiles sadly at Cross.

MAN

Oh Captain, Captain, I see you really believe that.

He stops -- his attitude is that of a doctor who has to tell a patient his condition is terminal.

MAN (CONT'D)

I think you need some help in externalizing your perspective. You see me as a threat to the Federation, an insidious cancer attacking many different organs simultaneously,

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

ultimately destroying the body from the inside out. However, your view of me is opaque, clouded over by the necessity of certain actions and decisions being obscured from your sight. You cannot possibly know why certain things are done and not done. You just can't. I, on the other, have a perfectly clear picture of you and I think perhaps am in a better place to judge the true source of the peril facing us.

Cross snorts.

CROSS

I hardly think a man who stage manages the destruction of a Starbase supposedly on his side has much ability to judge other people.

MAN

I beg to differ. Consider the evidence. Two years ago the Klingon Civil War was tearing the Empire apart. The effects were spilling over into our lives -- trade was affected, the Klingons were becoming more isolationist, people were dying... innocent people. Something had to be done. The attack on the Starbase was a terrible, terrible decision to have to make. But the people that died onboard were soldiers. Their entire adult lives they had been trained and prepared for the possibility of dying on the battlefield. They knew the risks of their work, in fact it was the very thing that inspired them, kept them alive. They were ready to die for the greater good, and the greater good was making sure that more innocent blood was not shed. And it worked -- the Reformists were forced to concede, the treaty was signed.

Cross is silent.

MAN (CONT'D)

Now consider your role in it. You, the Captain of the flagship of the Federation, the very Federation those men and women died to protect, blindly walking in and almost completely

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

annulling their sacrifice. By attacking them, you gave the Reformists back the moral high ground, gave them a reason to keep fighting. You did the very thing we were striving to stop, attacking the innocent, massacring those that could not defend themselves. If it hadn't been for you, the peace on Qo'noS would have lasted, there would still be peace. The Reformists would have been relegated to the pages of history. But no. People are still dying today, good people, and all because you couldn't see the bigger picture.

Cross is silent.

MAN (CONT'D)

Next, Stardate 79214.2. The attack on the shipyards...

CROSS

You cannot --

MAN

(firmly keeping going)  
...initiated by a rogue Q'tami faction that you antagonized. You meddled in affairs you had no understanding of, basing your decisions on hearsay and speculation, condemning all those people to death on the word of an alien being we can't even pretend to understand.

Cross says nothing.

MAN (CONT'D)

Do you wonder with a record like this that we try and eliminate you from the picture? Do you wonder that we try and stop you bumbling headfirst into another catastrophe? Trying to stop something like this...

He sweeps his arms round in a grandiose gesture, at the devastation before them.

MAN (CONT'D)

...from happening again? Can you honestly say that your actions have been less harmful to the Federation than mine have?

Cross is silent.

MAN (CONT'D)

The Q'tami in that lab... they wouldn't have been there if it wasn't for you. Brody would not have had his panic attack, and we would not be standing here now, with once more your crew cleaning up the mess you left.

(getting angrier)

So don't you dare think you have the right to judge me, or what I do. Don't you dare think for one moment that you are better than me, that somehow you are the hero and I am the villain. For the truth of the matter is, Captain, it is you that have been the criminal, and we have been trying to clear up your messes.

(walks up to Cross)

I admit our methods can be extreme. But you must never lose sight of the simple truth: the good of the many outweigh the good of the few, or the one.

He turns and looks away.

MAN (CONT'D)

And it is that simple maxim that is the only reason I do not kill you now. We know that, some time in the future, the Q'tami will attack, and that you and the crew of the Enterprise will be instrumental in repelling them. At this moment we need you. But you can sure, as soon as we develop an effective weapon against them, your time will come. You are living on borrowed time, Neil Cross, and I will say when that time is up.

He stops.

CROSS

Why are you here, speaking to me?

MAN

An attempt, in vain no doubt, to try and stop you from doing any more damage.

CROSS

And what if I agreed, said yes?

MAN

Then I would ask you to retire from your post, and we would trouble you no longer.

CROSS

Leaving you free to manipulate the Federation, the puppet master pushing the show to his intended conclusion?

MAN

Exactly.

CROSS

No way. What gives you the right to say how things should be?

MAN

Would you rather it was left up to chance? Left to fate. That's not what people want. People want to be controlled. From the earliest days, man invented a higher power so that they did not have any responsibility, so they didn't have to worry. Now that science denies them that comfort, they are lost, on their own. They don't want that. They want, no need someone there, someone to tell them what to do, someone who can make it all better. And that person is me. And that is why I am here, and must do what I do.

CROSS

And that's why I am here, and must do what I do. We make mistakes, I make mistakes, but that is how we learn, and what makes us who we are. We can take responsibility for our own lives. It's time for the puppets to cut their strings.

MAN

You might find storming heaven harder than you think.

CROSS

Harder. But by no means impossible.

MAN

Perhaps, perhaps.

He turns and begins to walk away.

MAN (CONT'D)

It should be an interesting year really. A lot rests on the upcoming election. I do hope my candidate wins.

He smiles at Cross again.

MAN (CONT'D)

That is, if you don't kill them first.

He turns and continues to walk away.

CROSS

We will beat you, you know.

The man turns and looks at him for a final time.

MAN

Excuse me?

CROSS

In the end. We will defeat you. That I guarantee.

MAN

Then let battle commence.

He turns and disappears into the shadows. As Cross watches him go, the camera pans up and out, so we see the devastation of the city through the rain, with Cross in the center of the screen, as we slowly...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END