

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"Samaritan Snare"  
#40272-143

Written by  
Robert L. McCullough

Directed by  
Les Landau

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3RD REVISED FINAL DRAFT

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STAR TREK: "Samaritan Snare" - 3/7/89 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Samaritan Snare"

CAST

PICARD	GREBNEDLOG
RIKER	REGINOD
DATA	
PULASKI	SURGEON
TROI	BIOMOLECULAR PHYSIOLOGIST
GEORDI	
WORF	
WESLEY	
SONYA	Non-Speaking SEVERAL PAKLEDS
TRANSPORTER CHIEF (V.O.)	NURSES
	MEDICAL TEAM
Non-Speaking	ANESTHESIOLOGIST
N.D. CREWMEMBERS	ORDERLIES

STAR TREK: "Samaritan Snare" - 3/7/89 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Samaritan Snare"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

MAIN BRIDGE

SICKBAY/PULASKI'S OFFICE SHUTTLE TWO

SHUTTLE BAY TWO

CORRIDOR

TRANSPORTER ROOM

OBSERVATION LOUNGE

MAIN ENGINEERING

MONDOR

BRIDGE

WEAPONS BAY

SHUTTLE TWO

STARBASE SCYLLA 515

SURGICAL SUITE

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

MONDOR

STARBASE 515

MEDICAL COMPLEX

STAR TREK: "Samaritan Snare - 3/7/89 - PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Samaritan Snare"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

RHOMBOID DRONEGAR SECTOR	Romboyd DRAWN-i-gar
PAKLED	PACK-led
GREBNEDLOG	Greb-NED-log
REGINOD	REGG-in-odd
BONESTELL	BONE-stel
NAUSICAAAN	NAW-sik-can
THORACIC POLYCHROMATICS	thu-RAS-ik poly-kro-MAT-iks
HETEROCYCLIC DECLINATION	het-ah-row-SYK-lik dek-lah-NAY-shun
MYOCARDIAL ENZYME	my-ah-CARD-ee-el EN-zime

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Samaritan Snare"  
TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Cruises at warp speed as we hear:

PICARD (V.O.)  
Captain's log, Stardate 42723.8.  
The Enterprise is en route to the  
Epsilon Nine Sector for  
astronomical survey of a new  
pulsar cluster. In the meantime,  
Ensign Crusher will be diverting  
to Starbase five one five for  
progressive Starfleet exams...

2 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - THE TURBOLIFT DOORS

open and WESLEY enters the bridge, where RIKER, DATA,  
and WORF are at their usual stations, supernumeraries  
filling in as needed. Wesley steps up to Riker, who  
hands him a Starfleet communications rectangle.

RIKER  
This just came in from Starfleet--

WESLEY  
(taking the disk)  
The testing parameters?

Data steps up to them:

DATA  
Do not be apprehensive. I found  
the Academy examinations quite  
elementary.

WESLEY  
You would.

2 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Your earlier test results were good enough to get you Academy credit for your work here. I don't think you have anything to worry about.

WESLEY

But those Academy cadets are pretty competitive, you know.

RIKER

They don't have your practical experience, Wes.

DATA

Commander Riker is correct. While the information imparted to cadets at the Academy is unquestionably vital for prospective Starfleet officers, it nevertheless requires a significant period of supplementary systems training and situational disciplines.

RIKER

Data... isn't that what I just said?

DATA

Yes, Commander. But not quite as perspicuously.

Riker and Wesley react to that as we GO TO:

3 INT. SICKBAY/PULASKI'S OFFICE - PICARD

paces in front of PULASKI, obviously being evasive:

PICARD

I won't have you telling me what course to set!

PULASKI

As chief medical officer, I am ordering you to report to Starbase five one five immediately!

PICARD

Oh, please. I feel fine.

3 CONTINUED:

PULASKI

The truth is, you've neglected  
this far too long.

PICARD

This ship has a mission to carry  
out.

PULASKI

An astronomical survey to be  
conducted by the science officers,  
I believe.

PICARD

I've been looking forward to  
seeing the Epsilon Pulsar Cluster  
for myself.

PULASKI

Then we'll perform the procedure  
right here.

PICARD

Absolutely not.

PULASKI

My staff and I are perfectly  
capable of giving you the  
replacement.

PICARD

That's not the point. Not only  
am I in splendid health, but it  
would be inappropriate for you  
to perform the procedure.

PULASKI

Why Captain Picard, I had no idea.  
You do have an ego, don't you?

PICARD

Clarify.

PULASKI

You're concerned about your image.

PICARD

I never said that.

3 CONTINUED: (2)

PULASKI

Don't worry. Get yourself down  
to Starbase five one five and your  
image will be safe with me.

He reacts to that, exiting as we GO TO:

4 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - THE TURBOLIFT DOORS

open and Picard steps out, nearly bumping into Wesley  
who was about to enter the turbolift:

WESLEY

Captain... excuse me.

PICARD

I understand you're heading for  
Starbase five one five.

WESLEY

Yes, sir. I was just on my way  
to Shuttle Bay Two.

PICARD

Good. I have some business of  
my own there. I shall accompany  
you.

Wesley reacts, eyes widening, his voice cracking:

WESLEY

You will?  
(then, composing  
himself)  
I mean, yessir!

PICARD

Prepare the shuttle for immediate  
departure.

WESLEY

Aye, sir.

Wesley exits via the turbolift; Riker reacts to all of  
this, steps up to Picard.

RIKER

Is there something I can take care  
of for you at Starbase  
five one five?

4 CONTINUED:

PICARD

I'm afraid not, Number One.

RIKER

But you'll miss the Epsilon Pulsar survey.

PICARD

I'm very well aware of that. You have the bridge. Carry on.

With that, Picard turns and exits into the Ready Room. Riker considers all of this, shares a concerned glance with the other bridge officers and then follows Picard into the Ready Room as we GO TO:

4A INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM - PICARD

turns to face Riker, as the door slides shut behind them:

PICARD

What is it, Number One?

RIKER

Is something wrong? This trip to Starbase five one five seems rather unexpected.

Picard smiles awkwardly, goes about the business of picking up some reading material for his journey:

PICARD

Not to worry. Ensign Crusher and I will rendezvous with you on your return from the Epsilon Pulsar Cluster.

RIKER

Forgive my saying so, sir, but you're being rather enigmatic.

PICARD

Consider it captain's privilege.

RIKER

As first officer, I have complete security clearance--

4A CONTINUED:

PICARD

This has nothing to do with ship's  
business.

(then, with a sigh)

Suffice it to say that this is  
strictly a matter of ...vanity.

Picard heads for the door with his books and exits as  
we GO TO:

5 INT. CORRIDOR - GEORDI

is on his way to Engineering with SONYA, walking with  
Wesley, who is obviously worried about something:

GEORDI

Starbase five one five's not  
exactly around the corner, Wes.  
You have quite a trip ahead of  
you.

WESLEY

Yeah. I know.

GEORDI

Relax. You'll do fine on your  
exams.

WESLEY

It's not the exams I'm worried  
about. It's Captain Picard.

SONYA

Why? He's not taking the exams.

WESLEY

He's coming with me to starbase.  
Just the two of us. Nearly a  
six-hour transit. What am I going  
to talk to him about for six  
hours?

SONYA

Archaeology...semantics...  
literature... art... you can learn  
a lot from Captain Picard.

Just then, Picard approaches:

5 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Nice day for a little trip,  
Captain?

PICARD

Hardly.

Picard and Wesley head off down another corridor as  
Geordi and Sonya react to Picard's mood as we GO TO:

5A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

comes out of warp, decelerating to impulse speed while

6 OMITTED

7 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - DATA

is in his "Ops" chair as he hears:

PICARD (V.O.)

Shuttle Number Two ready for  
departure.

DATA

We are at impulse speed and you  
are cleared for departure.

8 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL)

the shuttle exits the Shuttle Bay.

9 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS (OPTICAL) - RIKER

enters from the Ready Room, looking up at the  
viewscreen now to see the shuttle streaking away. He  
crosses to Data:

RIKER

Data... wasn't the captain looking  
forward to this mission to the  
Epsilon Pulsar Cluster?

DATA

So he had said.

9 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Then what would make him change  
his mind? Why would he leave the  
ship now?

Data reacts to that, exchanging a concerned glance with  
Riker. Suddenly, Worf pipes up with:

WORF

Receiving a Mayday on all  
frequencies, sir!

RIKER

Source?

WORF

Rhomboid Dronegar Sector  
zero-zero-six--

RIKER

Detail.

WORF

Ship...unidentified...distress.  
Nothing more.

RIKER

Set course for Rhomboid Dronegar  
zero-zero-six at warp seven.

Data looks to Riker, quietly concerned:

DATA

Sir... Rhomboid Dronegar sector  
will put us at considerable  
distance from Captain Picard.

RIKER

I know, Data. I know.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

9A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

flashes past at warp seven while

10 INT. THE BRIDGE - RIKER

is in his chair while Data and Worf man their stations  
as:

DATA

Entering Rhomboid Dronegar Sector  
zero-zero-six.

WORF

I have a ship on target path.

RIKER

Slow to impulse speed.

10A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

decelerates

10B INT. THE BRIDGE - RIKER

rises now:

RIKER

Viewer.

Data taps his console appropriately and

11 THE MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

comes alive with the image of an unusual alien ship.  
Hardly aerodynamic, this craft appears to be something  
of a throwback when contrasted to the Enterprise. It's  
dead in the water. Riker approaches the screen,  
curious while Worf remains cautious:

11 CONTINUED:

WORF  
Deploy shields, sir?

RIKER  
Hold fast.  
(then)  
Data?

DATA  
(re: the ship)  
Basic early design capable of  
sub-light travel only.

WORF  
Commander, we are being hailed.

RIKER  
On screen.

The VIEWSCREEN image glitches for a split-second and then comes alive with the interior of the Pakled ship. It looks like an analog throwback to the late twenty-first century. A number of slothful, droopy-eyed humanoids appear to be working with great confusion on some engineering control panels in the b.g., as their commander, GREBNEDLOG, steps into foreground.

RIKER  
I am First Officer William Riker.  
This is the USS Enterprise,  
responding to your distress  
signal--

Grebnedlog arches his massive brow, his eyes opening just a bit wider as he responds with typically wistful Pakled hypoplastic speech, almost a sense of hopeful longing in their every word:

GREBNEDLOG  
Uh-hunh.

Riker exchanges a curious glance with Data, then back to screen:

RIKER  
What is your problem?

GREBNEDLOG  
We are far from home.

11 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

So are we, but you sent out a  
Mayday--

GREBNEDLOG

Uh-hunh

RIKER

Do you need help?

GREBNEDLOG

We are Pakleds. Our ship is the  
Mondor.

(re the work in the  
b.g.)

It is broken.

Riker sighs impatiently, turns to Data:

DATA

Sensors indicate engineering  
problems.

RIKER

Lieutenant La Forge to bridge...

DATA

They have experienced total  
guidance system failure and they  
have less than twenty-four hours' reserve  
power.

RIKER

(to viewscreen)

What brings you so far from home?

GREBNEDLOG

(wistfully)

We look for things.

RIKER

What were you looking for?

GREBNEDLOG

Things we need.

RIKER

Can you be more specific?

GREBNEDLOG

Uh-hunh.

11 CONTINUED: (3)

RIKER

Then please do so.

GREBNEDLOG

Things that make us go. We need help.

In the b.g., the turbolift doors open and Geordi steps onto the bridge, spots the viewscreen. He looks at the Pakleds, grins wryly:

GEORDI

Let me guess: their rubber band broke, right?

RIKER

(to viewscreen)

What is the nature of your mission?

GREBNEDLOG

(nodding slowly)

We look for things.

RIKER

(aside; to Data)

Do you hear an echo?

(then, back to viewscreen)

Understood. Our chief engineer will beam aboard to help you--

(to Worf)

Out.

Geordi reacts to that as all eyes turn toward him:

GEORDI

Wait a minute... me?

And as Riker pats him reassuringly on the back, Worf turns from his station, concern etched all over his Klingon countenance:

WORF

(re: the viewscreen)

Do we truly need to send our chief engineer over to them?

RIKER

They obviously need our help.

11 CONTINUED: (4)

WORF

Why do we not simply give them  
the information they need to make  
their repairs?

RIKER

Do you honestly think they could  
handle our technical  
specifications?

WORF

We don't know that much about  
them. I urge caution.

RIKER

Acknowledged, Worf... but we have  
an obligation to render aid.

(turns to Geordi).

Report to the Transporter Room  
with all necessary gear.

GEORDI

Aye, sir.

With that, Geordi exits. Worf remains concerned, leans  
in to Riker with:

WORF

We need more information.

Riker turns to Data:

RIKER

Do you have anything else on them?

DATA

They are a relatively benign  
species.

RIKER

Don't they seem a little... slow?

DATA

They may merely have  
poorly-developed language skills.

Worf leans in with:

WORF

What about weapons?

11 CONTINUED: (5)

DATA

Our scan shows very limited armaments.

RIKER

I think we can relax, Worf. They can't even get their ship moving without our help, and we certainly have them outmanned and outgunned.

Worf can't argue with that as we GO TO:

12 EXT. SPACE - PICARD'S SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

hurtling past us at impulse speed while:

13 INT. THE SHUTTLE - WESLEY

handles the controls with confidence and aplomb. Picard checks the instruments with a scowl:

PICARD

E.t.a. thirteen-thirty hours.

WESLEY

Not exactly warp speed, sir.

PICARD

More like a late twenty-second century interplanetary journey.

WESLEY

Sir?

PICARD

You should read more history, Ensign.

WESLEY

Yes sir.

PICARD

(mumbling to himself)  
Complete waste of time...

WESLEY

Pardon, sir?

13 CONTINUED:

PICARD

I shouldn't be taking this trip at all. I belong back on the Enterprise.

WESLEY

Why are you going with me to Starbase five one five, Captain?

PICARD

(snappish)

It's certainly not my idea!

Wesley reacts, afraid to probe further. Picard glances over at:

PICARD

(continuing)

I'm sorry. I don't mean to take it out on you.

(then)

I just hate going through another damned cardiac replacement.

WESLEY

Cardiac replacement? I didn't know...

PICARD

Now you do.

WESLEY

A parthenogenetic implant?

PICARD

What else would it be?

(then, a bit softer)

My own heart was injured and a replacement was necessary. That would have been it except that the replacement is flawed and must now be put right.

WESLEY

Why would anyone use a flawed replacement?

Picard ices over at that, glaring out at the stars ahead now:

PICARD

Just pilot the shuttle, Ensign.

And on Picard's obdurate countenance, we GO TO:

14 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as it maintains its position near the Mondor while

15 INT. THE BRIDGE - RIKER

turns his attention to the viewscreen where the Pakleds continue with their ineffectual attempts at repair.

RIKER

All right. Let's get these repairs made so we can all be on our way.

(then)

First officer to La Forge...

16 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (OPTICAL) - GEORDI

is on the transporter platform, "tool kit" in hand:

GEORDI

Aye, Commander. Ready for transport.

RIKER (V.O.)

Proceed.

GEORDI

Energize...

And as Geordi DEMATERIALIZES, we GO TO:

17 INT. THE PAKLED SHIP "MONDOR" (OPTICAL) - GEORDI

MATERIALIZES, startling the Pakleds who react with their own brand of anxiety:

GEORDI

Hey, hey, it's okay. I'm here to help. Take it easy.

Grebnedlog approaches tentatively with what appears to be profound, heartfelt sincerity:

GREBNEDLOG

We are far from home.

Geordi reacts to that non-sequitur, eager to get down to business:

17 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

What seems to be the problem?

GREBNEDLOG

Our ship is the Mondor.

GEORDI

Right. I got that already.

(then, looking around)

Who's in charge of engineering?

GREBNEDLOG

My friend. His name is Reginod.

GEORDI

(looking around)

Think I could meet him?

Another Pakled steps up. Grebnedlog makes the "introduction":

GREBNEDLOG

We have an engineer.

GEORDI

Great...

GREBNEDLOG

He is Reginod.

GEORDI

Yes, I think you mentioned that.

REGINOD

We look for things.

GEORDI

So I've heard.

REGINOD

(re the ship)

It is broken.

GEORDI

Well... maybe I can fix it.

GREBNEDLOG

Can you make our ship go?

GEORDI

I think so.

17 CONTINUED: (2)

GREBNEDLOG

(to Geordi)

We look for things to make us go.

Geordi reacts, feeling like somebody's "got their needle stuck". He smiles patiently:

GEORDI

Fellas... why don't you show me where your guidance system is?

Geordi starts wandering toward the back of the ship. Reginod turns to Grebnedlog, smiling:

REGINOD

He is smart.

Grebnedlog returns the salivary smile as we GO TO:

18 INT. ENTERPRISE'S MAIN BRIDGE-TURBOLIFT DOORS (OPTICAL)

open and Troi enters the scene, immediately riveted by what she sees up on the viewscreen. She steps over to Riker and Data, who regard the scene with Geordi with bemusement:

TROI

Commander... Lieutenant La Forge is on an alien ship?

RIKER

Yes. We're rendering assistance to some curious throwbacks.

DATA

How they ever mastered the rudiments of space travel is a genuine curiosity.

TROI

Commander... Those aliens... what they feel is not helplessness ... Lieutenant La Forge is in great danger!

Riker and Data react to that new input as

18A GEORDI

goes about his work, unaware of any hazard as we

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

19 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

remains in position, in some proximity to the Mondor.

20 INT. THE MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL) - TROI

remains transfixed, Riker, Data and Worf reacting as she stands there, staring at the viewscreen:

TROI

Danger... great danger...

RIKER

Can you be more specific,  
Counselor?

TROI

They are insincere... It is not  
our help they want.

RIKER

Help is all they're going to get.  
They certainly can't force  
anything upon us, can they?

TROI

You feel they are weak.

RIKER

(re: the viewscreen)  
Look at them. Not exactly Jarada  
or Romulans.

Data looks over at Riker, shares her concerns now:

DATA

Our Betazoid counselor is often  
aware of things beyond our  
perceptive abilities.

Riker reacts to this, exchanges a glance of concern  
with Worf as we GO TO:

21 EXT. SPACE - PICARD'S SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

continues on its journey while

22 INT. THE SHUTTLE - PICARD

appears to be reading, ignoring Wesley. Then, putting his reading down for a moment:

PICARD

Van Doren's technique has been perfected to two point four percent.

WESLEY

Sir?

PICARD

The cardiac replacement procedure. It has a very low mortality rate. Two point four percent.

WESLEY

Those are pretty good odds.

He considers that for a beat, then admits:

PICARD

The fact is, I'm not interested in having my innards become the subject of Starfleet gossip.

WESLEY

Of course, sir. But why didn't you have Doctor Pulaski perform the operation? You could've trusted her to keep it quiet.

PICARD

Let's just say I have personal reasons and leave it at that, shall we?

Picard returns to his "reading". Wesley reacts, his curiosity stifled now as we GO TO:

23 INT. THE MONDOR - GEORDI

is hard at work on the Pakled guidance system, really enjoying himself. Several Pakleds including Grebnedlog and Reginod hover nearby, observing him as he explains:

23 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

The power needs to be rerouted through this venturi chamber before it can be channeled through the engine coils.

REGINOD

It is broken.

GEORDI

But not for long. See? We're going to reconfigure these separators here...

Reginod looks to Grebnedlog, who nods in agreement:

GREBNEDLOG

It is broken.

REGINOD

(to Geordi)

You are brilliant.

Geordi reacts, flattered, but realistic:

GEORDI

Actually, any first year engineering intern could do the same thing--

Just then, Geordi reacts to his communicator as he hears:

RIKER (V.O.)

Lieutenant La Forge, this is Commander Riker...

Geordi taps his communicator and responds:

GEORDI

Yes, Commander. Go ahead.

24 INT. THE ENTERPRISE MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Riker and Troi stand before the viewscreen, observing Geordi aboard the Mondor:

RIKER

Are you all right?

24 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Sure. Why do you ask?

RIKER

Counselor Troi has expressed  
misgivings about your absence from  
The Enterprise.

In the b.g., Grebnedlog and Reginod exchange an  
uncharacteristically alert glance by way of response  
to that while:

GEORDI

I don't think there's much to  
worry about.

RIKER

Understood. But as soon as the  
repairs are completed, I want you  
back here.

GEORDI

Aye, sir, I should be done  
momentarily.

Riker looks to Troi who remains unshaken in her  
convictions while:

25 INT. THE MONDOR - GEORDI

twists the last framiss on the final spigot, looks up  
with a smile:

GEORDI

There. Guidance is up and  
running.

Suddenly, the lights flicker, dim, and go dark. A  
GROAN is heard as reserve power kicks in, lights come  
up one-half and Geordi smiles:

GEORDI

Main power failure?

GREBNEDLOG

Will our ship go now?

GEORDI

The guidance system's repaired,  
but you're not going anywhere  
without main power.

25 CONTINUED:

GREBNEDLOG  
(to Reginod)  
It is broken.

REGINOD  
(to Geordi)  
Can you make it go?

Geordi looks at the Pakleds, sighs heavily, then taps his communicator:

GEORDI  
Commander Riker, it looks like this might take a little longer than I anticipated...

And as Geordi returns to this new problem...

25A INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - RIKER AND TROI

react to that with mutually mounting concern as we go to...

26 EXT. SPACE - PICARD'S SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

continues its impulse-speed journey while

27 INT. THE SHUTTLE - PICARD

finally puts his reading down. Rubs his eyes. It's a long trip. He seems lost in his thoughts, somewhat unfocused as he studies the passing starfields. At his side, Wesley checks his instruments carefully, takes a deep breath as all seems well. Then, building his courage for a beat, he turns to Picard:

WESLEY  
You don't really care much for people, do you?

PICARD  
What?

WESLEY  
It's okay. You can just do without most people. I can understand that --

27 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Ensign...Wesley. That's not true.  
I have great regard for you, for  
example. You're a fine young  
man.

WESLEY

You don't have to say that.

PICARD

I do not say what I do not mean.

WESLEY

Well, it's pretty obvious how you  
feel.

PICARD

Is it? How so?

WESLEY

Well, everyone knows. You don't  
like kids.

PICARD

I simply have... other priorities.

WESLEY

That's too bad.

(then)

You might've made a pretty good  
father.

PICARD

Thank you.

WESLEY

Didn't you ever wish you had kids  
of your own?

A moment of silence as Picard considers that. Then:

PICARD

Wishing for a thing does not make  
it so.

Wesley ponders that reality as we GO TO:

28 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

remains positioned near the Pakled ship Mondor while

29 INT. THE MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Worf, Data, Troi and Riker are all in position. Riker is beginning to lose his patience as he turns to Data:

RIKER

We send him over there for one set of repairs and now they need him for more.

DATA

Their ship is apparently quite fragile.

Riker steps forward to the viewscreen where he can see the Pakleds working on their ship, Geordi in the distant b.g., hard at work in a console panel:

RIKER

This is Riker on board the Enterprise.

The Pakleds ignore Riker's summons, continue milling around looking for the solution to their myriad problems:

RIKER

(continuing)

I repeat. This is Commander Riker of the Enterprise.

Geordi looks up from his work briefly, calling to Riker from the b.g.:

GEORDI

Almost got it, Commander--

He returns to his work as Grebnedlog turns to face the viewscreen now, his eyes almost completely disinterested:

GREBNEDLOG

We look for things.

RIKER

Apparently your ship is in need of more than minor repairs.

GREBNEDLOG

Things to make it go.

RIKER

We will use our tractor beam to tow you to your nearest base.

29 CONTINUED:

GREBNEDLOG  
(re: Geordi)  
He can make it go.

RIKER  
Yes, but we need our chief  
engineer back on board our ship--

Just then, all power is restored to the Pakled ship,  
and as lights come full-up, Geordi pulls himself out of  
the console panel in the b.g. to hear:

GREBNEDLOG  
He is smart.

Geordi steps up beside Grebnedlog.

GEORDI  
All done, Commander.

RIKER  
Prepare to beam over.

29A INT. MONDOR BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

GEORDI  
Yes, sir.

Reginod steps up behind Geordi with:

REGINOD  
You are good.

GEORDI  
Thanks. We aim to please.

REGINOD  
We need you.

GEORDI  
I'm flattered. Now I hate to  
repair and run, but if you'll  
excuse me...

And Geordi steps away from the others, announcing to  
Riker:

GEORDI  
One to beam aboard--

29A CONTINUED:

Suddenly, Grebnedlog reaches over and with surprising sleight-of-hand, deftly snatches Geordi's small phaser away from him.

GEORDI

Hey!

And as Geordi reaches to take the phaser back, Grebnedlog fires with the stun setting, knocking Geordi back, slamming him into a bulkhead, knocking his VISOR off:

29B RIKER (OPTICAL)

reacts immediately, calling out:

RIKER

Transporter room, beam La Forge over immediately.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF (V.O.)

Aye... negative response, sir!

RIKER

Try again!

TRANSPORTER CHIEF (V.O.)

Negative response!

DATA

The Pakled ship has a shield up, sir!

RIKER

A shield? What kind?

DATA

It appears to be beyond their technology... similar to Romulan shields!

Riker clenches his jaw, commands the Pakleds now:

RIKER

Do not interfere with our transporter beam. Repeat. Drop your shield--

Suddenly, the viewscreen glitches and goes to exterior view of the Mondor.

29B CONTINUED:

RIKER

Status!

WORF

Viewer transmission terminated  
and blocked.

Riker shares a look of mounting concern with his crew  
as we,

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

30 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

remains in view of the Pakled's Mondor.

31 INT. THE MAIN BRIDGE - RIKER, DATA, WORF, TROI

are all in position as Riker commands his crew:

RIKER

Hail on all frequencies.

DATA

Running frequency search...  
negative response.

RIKER

They're ignoring us!

DATA

Apparently so, sir.

WORF

Phasers ready, sir.

RIKER

Shields up.

Worf responds, activating his security station console,  
reporting:

WORF

Shields up.

RIKER

Sensors at maximum sensitivity.

Data responds with precision, then reports:

DATA

Sensors at maximum.

WORF

Phasers ready, sir.

31 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Hold fire. Lieutenant La Forge  
is on that ship.

And as Riker and his crew contemplate that grim  
reality, we GO TO:

32 EXT. SPACE - PICARD'S SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

continues cruising at impulse speed while

33 INT. PICARD'S SHUTTLE - WESLEY

carefully probes, eager to learn more about Picard:

WESLEY

Were you ever married?

PICARD

My career always came first. I  
never had time.

WESLEY

Don't you ever get lonely?

PICARD

There have been certain costs  
involved.

WESLEY

Well, I'll bet you've broken your  
fair share of hearts along the  
way...

PICARD

A man needs to be careful about  
that sort of thing.

WESLEY

Don't worry about me. Where women  
are concerned, I'm in complete  
control.

PICARD

Really? I've always had to work  
at it.

WESLEY

Have you always known what you've  
wanted... been so disciplined?

33 CONTINUED:

PICARD

No.

(re his chest)

That's why I'm going in to get  
this thing replaced.

WESLEY

I don't understand.

PICARD

Well... I was a young Starfleet  
officer. Just a few years older  
than you are now. Green as hell.  
Top of my Academy Class, and oh,  
so proud. Too proud, as it turned  
out.

WESLEY

What happened?

PICARD

Several of us were on leave at  
Far Space Starbase  
Earhart... something of a galactic  
outpost in those days--

WESLEY

Before the Klingons joined the  
Federation?

PICARD

That's right. My mates and I were  
at the Bonestell Recreation  
Facility, which was nothing more  
than a crossroads at the time.  
A trio of Nausicaans came in.  
They were spoiling for a  
confrontation with some  
fresh-faced young Starfleet  
officers like ourselves. Everyone  
in our group had the good sense  
to back away and give these  
Nausicaans wide berth. Everyone  
but me, that is. I stood  
toe-to-toe with the nastiest of  
the three and let him know what  
I thought of him, his partners,  
and his planet. I probably even  
made some passing reference to  
his questionable parentage.

(MORE)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD (Cont'd)

The next thing I knew, I had all three of them on me and I was fighting for my life. Acquitted myself quite well for several furious exchanges, I'm proud to say.

WESLEY

You fought them? And won?

PICARD

I had this one Nausicaan down on the floor in a particularly devious joint-lock when before I knew what was happening, one of his cohorts drew his weapon and impaled me through the back. Strange sensation, actually. Not much pain. Shock, certainly, at the sight of serrated metal coming out of one's chest, and then a certain giddy warmth. As I recall, I actually laughed aloud. It pierced my heart, of course, and if we hadn't been so near a medical facility I would surely have died.

WESLEY

Really? Really? Then what?

PICARD

Then nothing. I was no hero. I was an undisciplined, opinionated, loud-mouthed young man who was far out of his league. It was a great and painful lesson, but I learned it well. I only hope you won't need to learn it as I did...

Wesley reacts with a gulp, realizing that he does indeed have a lot to learn as we GO TO:

34 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE AND THE MONDOR (OPTICAL)

are as before while

35 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - RIKER

paces, doing his best to keep his temper in check as he looks to Data:

RIKER

Data, come on...

DATA

I am programming the comm system to scan the interference patterns, but a full analysis will take time.

Data reacts, his hands dexterously flying over his console like nothing we've ever seen him do before as we GO TO:

36 INT. THE MONDOR - GEORDI (OPTICAL)

is hit by yet another phaser stun, slams back into a bulkhead and then struggles to his feet, shaking off his phaser's stun effects:

GEORDI

Please... no more.

GREBNEDLOG

This is fun.

Geordi reaches out, groping for his VISOR:

GEORDI

My VISOR...

Reginod picks it up, studies it:

REGINOD

This does something.

Geordi reacts, realizes the Pakled has the VISOR now:

GEORDI

Yes. It allows me to see.

Reginod and Grebnedlog react curiously. They wave their digits in front of Geordi's face. He doesn't react, reaching out for the VISOR as they keep it away from him:

GEORDI

Where is it? Give it to me--

36 CONTINUED:

GREBNEDLOG

Can you make us go now?

Geordi lunges for him, stumbling. Reginod realizes:

REGINOD

He cannot make us go.

GREBNEDLOG

He is not smart.

(re: the VISOR)

This is smart.

He hands the VISOR back to Geordi, and he clicks it back into place, reacting now at the sight of his phaser in Grebnedlog's mitt:

GEORDI

(re: the phaser)

Be careful with that thing.

GREBNEDLOG

You want to hurt us.

GEORDI

What? I came here to help you.

(re: the ship)

I fixed your guidance system and the main power generator, didn't I?

REGINOD

(re: the phaser)

We can make more.

Geordi reacts, realizing:

GEORDI

You have a replicator?

GREBNEDLOG

(with pride)

It is not broken.

GEORDI

I didn't come here to give you weapons.

GREBNEDLOG

(re: the phaser, points

it at Geordi)

You will make more.

36 CONTINUED: (2)

Geordi reacts to that threat, considering his options  
now as we GO TO:

37 INT. THE ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE - WORF

crosses to Riker with:

WORF

Commander, a photon torpedo may  
penetrate their shield.

RIKER

Any hostile move on our part  
would only jeopardize Geordi.

WORF

But what do the Pakleds want?

Riker glances over at Troi, hoping she has an answer:

RIKER

Counselor?

TROI

They have what they want... for  
now.

Riker reacts to that as we GO TO:

38 INT. PICARD'S SHUTTLE - PICARD (OPTICAL)

thumbs through one of the books he's brought along.  
Then, turning to Wesley:

PICARD

Did you read that book I gave  
you?

Wesley reacts, barely concealing a grimace as he  
recalls:

WESLEY

Some of it.

PICARD

That's reassuring.

WESLEY

I just don't have much time.

38 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(re the book in his  
hand)

There is no greater challenge than  
the study of philosophy.

Wesley glances over at Picard's book:

WESLEY

William James sure won't be on  
my Starfleet exams.

PICARD

The important things never will  
be. Anyone can be trained to deal  
with technology, and the  
mechanics of piloting a starship.

WESLEY

But Starfleet Academy--

PICARD

It takes more than just that.  
Open your mind to the past... to  
history, art, philosophy. And  
then...

(re: the stars)

... this will mean something.

Wesley considers this, almost embarrassed as he  
realizes Picard does truly care about him. Then:

PICARD

(continuing)

Just consider James' wisdom:  
"Philosophy... is not a technical  
matter... it is our sense of what  
life honestly means... our  
individual way of feeling the  
total push and pressure of the  
cosmos."

(then)

That's what I want for you.

Wesley reacts to that and as they move closer to  
starbase, we GO TO:

39 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

hasn't moved, still in sight of the Mondor while

40 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - TROI

steps up to Riker as she reports her feelings:

TROI

It is all deception. Lies.

RIKER

Everything? What about the  
distress call?

TROI

Nothing the Pakleds have said or  
done has been sincere.

Data looks up from his console:

DATA

Intensified scan shows their  
guidance system is perfectly  
intact, as is their power  
generator.

RIKER

Then what was Geordi repairing?

DATA

Apparently, the putative  
malfunctions were carefully  
programmed into their ship's  
computer.

RIKER

I didn't think the Pakleds had  
that kind of technology.

DATA

They seem to have made some  
technological leaps forward,  
Commander.

RIKER

But why would they go through  
the charade of needing our help?

TROI

For the sole purpose of making  
Lieutenant La Forge their prisoner.

RIKER

Options?

40 CONTINUED:

WORF

Tactically speaking, we have three choices: we can negotiate, attack, or simply abandon Lieutenant La Forge.

Riker reacts to these uncomfortable options as we GO TO:

41 EXT./INT. STARBASE 515 MEDICAL COMPLEX

Picard and Wesley approach the entrance to this high-tech Starfleet facility:

PICARD

You don't want to be late for your exams, Ensign.

WESLEY

I've still got some time, sir.

PICARD

Why do I get the feeling you're acting like some kind of escort?

WESLEY

Doctor Pulaski asked me to make sure you actually went inside.

PICARD

That woman. She would.

WESLEY

Sir?

PICARD

What is it?

WESLEY

I enjoyed our trip together.

Picard's momentarily taken aback; the young man actually cares about him.

PICARD

So did I.

After a brief, moment of mutual feeling, Picard turns and heads into the medical facility as we GO TO:

41A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

hovers squarely in front of the Mondor.

42 INT. THE ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Riker and the others react as Data monitors his panel:

DATA

They are initiating visual  
contact--

RIKER

Maybe we'll find out what the hell  
they really want.

The viewscreen comes alive with the image of Grebnedlog holding Geordi's phaser in his mitt. Reginod and the other Pakleds all hold replicated versions of the original now. Geordi is in the background, slowly struggling to his feet once again, propped up by Reginod as other Pakleds play recklessly with their phasers. One of them takes a shot at his comrade, missing him, like children playing with dangerous toys. Grebnedlog turns to face the viewscreen:

GREBNEDLOG

Enterprise.

RIKER

We demand the immediate return  
of our crewmember.

GREBNEDLOG

Request denied.

RIKER

Lower your shield!

GREBNEDLOG

Request denied.

With that, he turns back toward Geordi, gives him a quick stun blast from the phaser, and as Geordi is slammed back into the bulkhead again, he collapses in a heap.

42A RIKER (OPTICAL)

reacts, truly beside himself with anger now:

42A CONTINUED:

RIKER  
Stop it! What do you want?

GREBNEDLOG  
(re: the phaser)  
Your ship has bigger ones.

RIKER  
For defense against attack.

GREBNEDLOG  
Your ship is strong. Smart.

RIKER  
Our strength contributes to peace  
in this region of the galaxy.  
We mean no one harm.

GREBNEDLOG  
You think we are not smart.

RIKER  
I think you need to continue to  
develop --

GREBNEDLOG  
We are smart.

RIKER  
Prove it. Return our man to us.

GREBNEDLOG  
(re: Geordi)  
You want him?

RIKER  
Yes, dammit!

GREBNEDLOG  
Good. We want all computer  
information from your ship.  
(aims the phaser at  
Geordi again)  
Now.

Riker and the others react to this frightening demand  
as we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

43 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

maintains its position within sight of the Mondor while

44 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Riker, Data, Worf, Troi and Pulaski are gathered around the table. All are grim, tense:

RIKER

We've got a man held hostage by alien forces and all I have are non-option options! I'd like some input...

PULASKI

Is Geordi all right?

WORF

(bristling)

They've already hit him with multiple phaser stuns.

PULASKI

(to Riker)

He could need medical attention.

WORF

Security team stands ready to take the initiative, sir.

RIKER

Data?

DATA

Our options have not changed. We can either respond to the Pakled demand or not. We can either use force or not.

RIKER

I've already answered their demand. Allowing access to the Enterprise computers by alien forces would be a complete breach of Starfleet security.

44 CONTINUED:

WORF

Then force it must be.

Riker reacts, considering that more seriously than ever before now as we GO TO:

45 INT. STARBASE 515 SURGICAL SUITE - (OPTICAL)

Picard lies on an operating table, surrounded by twenty-fourth century surgical equipment as NURSES prepare him for his procedure. Off to one side, a MEDICAL TEAM preps the replacement heart. The SURGEON steps up to PICARD, reassures him:

SURGEON

Ready?

PICARD

Get on with it, Doctor. I've got work to do.

The surgeon nods to the ANESTHESIOLOGIST:

SURGEON

Activate Sterile Field. Neural calipers.

The anesthesiologist places a silver wire caliper to Picard's head. The caliper receives a signal from a small console, which the anesthesiologist now attends to. A beat later, Picard calmly closes his eyes in perfect repose. The surgeon looks to his team:

SURGEON

This will be a secondary cardiac procedure with mid-line entry and excision of the early model unit. I anticipate no complications as the patient has had positive primary results and exhibits extraordinary physical condition.

(then)

We'll all be home in time for dinner.

(holds his hand out,  
palm up)

Tissue mitigator.

A nurse responds by slapping a small, glowing glass rod in his hand as we GO TO:

46 INT. THE ENTERPRISE OBSERVATION LOUNGE - RIKER

and his crew are still between the proverbial rock and a hard place as Data informs them:

DATA

There is very little information available on Pakled culture, but the eclectic range of their equipment would suggest that everything they have has been stolen from others.

TROI

And now they have become militant.

DATA

So it would seem.

RIKER

Rationale?

TROI

They are unwilling to wait for the timely evolution of their species' intellectual capacity. They seek instant knowledge, instant power and gratification.

PULASKI

You make them sound like petulant children.

TROI

Yes. Infantile humans are known for responses of a similar nature.

RIKER

Then suppose we treat them like children.

DATA

Sir?

RIKER

It's time we set some limits.

DATA

To what effect, sir? We are faced with an impossible conundrum.

46 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Not if we let Geordi give them something they want... and then create the right moment for him to take it away.

TROI

Would you be suggesting a ruse of some sort?

RIKER

I would.

PULASKI

And what if it fails? What'll happen to Geordi then?

RIKER

We don't have any choice. We have to try.

47 INT. STARBASE 515 SURGICAL SUITE - PICARD

lies in repose, the surgical team calmly carrying out the cardiac replacement procedure. Hovering over Picard now is a large praying mantis-like piece of equipment that seems to reach down into his chest cavity:

SURGEON

There has been some capillary reaction here... let's proceed carefully... we'll need sharper focus on the thoracic polychromatics and verification of myocardial enzyme balance.

The team attends to the equipment as the Surgeon continues his delicate work and now we GO TO:

48 INT. THE PAKLED MONDOR BRIDGE - GEORDI

steels himself against the effects of the phaser shots he's already endured, looks up at the Pakleds:

GEORDI

Let me talk to them. I'll get you their computer banks.

48 CONTINUED:

GREBNEDLOG

We want to be smart.

GEORDI

So open the hailing frequency.  
They'll listen to me.

GREBNEDLOG

(to Reginod)

We are smart.

REGINOD

We need their computer things.

GREBNEDLOG

Yes.

(then, to Geordi)

Yes.

Grebnedlog turns an analog dial on a console and now

49 INT. THE ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - THE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

comes to life with the image of the Mondor bridge.  
Riker steps up, flanked by Data, Worf, Pulaski, and  
Troi, reacting to:

GEORDI

Commander Riker?

RIKER

Yes, Lieutenant. We're here.

GEORDI

The Pakleds seem pretty sincere.

GREBNEDLOG

We want what we want.

RIKER

Our computer banks are  
non-negotiable.

GEORDI

Excuse me, Commander, but let's  
consider that for a minute. The  
Enterprise's protected memory  
storage is so extensive that it  
would take well over twenty-four  
hours just to access.

(MORE)

49 CONTINUED:

GEORDI (Cont'd)

In that time, maybe we could all reach a more acceptable resolution to our little misunderstanding here.

GREBNEDLOG

We want to be smart.

GEORDI

(to Riker)

Belive me, they're nothing if not persistent.

GREBNEDLOG

We want to be nothing if not persistent.

GEORDI

(to Riker)

Nobody ever said they were great conversationalists.

RIKER

Where did they get their shields?

GREBNEDLOG

Yes. We like shields.

GEORDI

From what I've seen, half the systems on this ship have been stolen from Romulans, Jarada, Klingons, just about anybody they ever came in contact with.

GREBNEDLOG

We like to be smart.

RIKER

Confirmed, Lieutenant La Forge. They steal technology.

DATA

But they lack the ability to use it properly.

Riker considers that, exchanges a conspiratorial glance with his crew, then clears his throat and intones:

49 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

(back to Geordi)

You're an excellent chief  
engineer, Lieutenant.

GEORDI

Thank you, sir.

RIKER

And of course, your knowledge  
of phaser and photon weaponry is  
unmatched.

GREBNEDLOG

(chiming in mindlessly)

We like phasers.

GEORDI

That's kind of you to say, sir,  
but Lieutenant Worf --

RIKER

(cutting him off)

Our missions are always inherently  
dangerous. Any of us could be  
called upon to make the ultimate  
sacrifice at any time.

GEORDI

Uh... yes, sir, but --

RIKER

Speaking of time, Lieutenant,  
this may be your time. I shall  
personally miss you.

Geordi reacts to that with confusion. Grebnedlog and  
Reginod glance at each other, concerned as Data steps  
up to speak to Geordi:

DATA

You will always be in my memory.

GEORDI

Data... wait a minute. Can't  
we.. ?

DATA

I shall miss you at weapons  
systems analysis.

49 CONTINUED: (3)

Geordi wrinkles his brow as he considers that for a beat, then something begins to dawn upon him:

GEORDI

Weapons system analysis?  
(then, tentative, trying  
it out)

I guess you'll just have to carry  
out the photon torpedo countdowns  
without me.

DATA

Exactly. Fond farewell.

GREBNEDLOG

(to Reginod)  
He knows about weapons.

REGINOD

He is smart.

GREBNEDLOG

(to Geordi)  
You can make us strong.

GEORDI

(with "humility")  
It's not something I like to talk  
about --

Just then, Worf steps up to face the viewscreen:

WORF

Lieutenant La Forge.

GEORDI

Worf... my old friend.

WORF

Any classified weapons knowledge  
you share with your captors will  
be considered treason.

GEORDI

(re the Pakleds)  
I may have no choice.

WORF

You will die without honor.

GEORDI

I know. Just my luck.

49 CONTINUED: (4)

WORF

You will never attain the  
twenty-four levels of awareness.

Geordi reacts to that, making specific mental notes:

GEORDI

Twenty-four? That's quite a  
challenge.

WORF

Indeed. Twenty-four is the  
gateway to heroic salvation.

With that, Grebnedlog reaches over to the console,  
twists the analog switch and cuts off further  
communication and the viewscreen goes black. Pulaski  
steps to Riker:

PULASKI

Do you think he understands?

RIKER

He'd better.

TROI

He is afraid.

RIKER

We all are, Counselor.

50 INT. THE MONDOR BRIDGE - GREBNEDLOG

now turns to Geordi with new appreciation:

GREBNEDLOG

You are smart.

GEORDI

Not smart enough. I'm still here.

GREBNEDLOG

Make us strong.

GEORDI

I thought you wanted me to help  
you... "go". Why don't we work  
on that guidance system, okay?

Grebnedlog levels Geordi's phaser at him:

50 CONTINUED:

GREBNEDLOG

Make us strong. Or die.

Geordi reacts to that, suppressing a mischievous smile as he surrenders to their commands while we GO TO

51 INT. STARBASE 515 SURGICAL SUITE - (OPTICAL)

Picard remains motionless, even more awesomely technological gear in the room now. The surgeon perspires heavily; tension hangs in the air:

SURGEON

The metabilation occlusions aren't holding.

A nurse hands him another set of metabilators; these have even more contractile expediators on them. The surgeon tries them, reacts angrily:

SURGEON

Damnit! I can't stop the heterocyclic declination! Fuse!

A sharp BEAM flashes down from overhead, sending up a puff of smoke from Picard's thorax,. It doesn't work. The surgeon looks up, commanding now:

SURGEON

Again!

The BEAM flashes again. Another puff of smoke. The surgeon sags as he realizes:

SURGEON

We need a Biomolecular Physiologist in here! This man is dying!

With that, one of the nurses reacts, bolts for the doors and we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

## ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

52 EXT. SPACE - THE MONDOR (OPTICAL)

remains in position. The Enterprise in proximity while

53 INT. THE MONDOR ARMAMENT BAY - GEORDI

is ushered to their relatively primitive "gun turrets"  
by Grebnedlog and Reginod. Geordi reacts:

GEORDI

You've gotta be kidding.

GREBNEDLOG

Make us strong.

GEORDI

(re: the armaments)

There isn't enough juice in these  
to blow off a passing asteroid.

GREBNEDLOG

Do it. Make us strong.

Geordi studies the situation carefully, finally  
acknowledging:

GEORDI

I suppose we could increase the  
anti-matter charges.

REGINOD

Yes. We like power.

Grebnedlog points to a set of weapon-force meters and  
lights:

GREBNEDLOG

Do not try to trick us. We can  
tell.

53 CONTINUED:

And as Geordi starts to work, we GO TO

54 INT. STARBASE 515 SURGICAL SUITE - PICARD

appears to be losing his battle for life, his face increasingly ashen now as the surgeon and a BIOMOLECULAR PHYSIOLOGIST crowd around the patient:

BIOMOLECULAR PHYSIOLOGIST  
Metabilation?

SURGEON  
Negative.

BIOMOLECULAR PHYSIOLOGIST  
Heterocyclics?

SURGEON  
Failing. And capillary integrity too unpredictable to attempt a resect.

BIOMOLECULAR PHYSIOLOGIST  
You're unwilling to make the attempt??

SURGEON  
I'm not qualified.

BIOMOLECULAR PHYSIOLOGIST  
I know someone who is.

With that, the biomolecular physiologist touches a communications panel on the wall and we GO TO:

55 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

hangs close to the Mondor while

56 INT. MAIN ENGINEERING - SONYA

looks up from the glow of the pool table to look incredulously at Riker and Data:

SONYA  
Are you sure he can do it? He's an engineer, not a weapons specialist.

56 CONTINUED:

RIKER

True. But if anyone can  
improvise, it's Geordi.

SONYA

What makes you think the Pakleds  
even have that kind of gear on  
board?

DATA

Ongoing scanning indicates  
progressive weapons potential.  
(then, to Riker)  
The timing will be crucial. He  
must correctly interpret our  
intentions.

RIKER

Geordi's up to speed. I trust  
his instincts.

DATA

The Pakleds did hear our little  
fiction about Geordi's "weapons  
knowledge."

RIKER

Exactly. And since they obviously  
equate intelligence with strength,  
they won't pass up this chance  
to use that knowledge.  
(then, to Sonya)  
Can you do it?

SONYA

Count on it.

Suddenly, Sonya's interrupted by the urgency of

WORF (V.O.)

Bridge to Commander Riker!

RIKER

Go ahead, bridge --

WORF (V.O.)

I am receiving an emergency  
summons from Starbase  
five one five... Captain Picard  
is close to death!

Riker reacts, stunned as he looks to Data:

56 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER  
(to Sonya)  
Be ready!

Riker and Data exit and Sonya goes to work on the anti-matter blender as we GO TO:

57 INT. THE MONDOR - GEORDI

crawls out from the weapons bay. He's had better days, and he dusts himself off as he turns to Grebnedlog and Reginod who react with delight as their weapons-force meters and lights surge with new life:

REGINOD  
(re the meters)  
We are strong.

GEORDI  
You're now armed to the teeth.

GREBNEDLOG  
Teeth are for chewing.

GEORDI  
(with a patient sigh)  
You have photon torpedoes. You are strong.

Grebnedlog "smiles" at Reginod now:

GREBNEDLOG  
We are strong. We have power.

And as the two Pakleds contemplate how to use their newfound might, we GO TO:

58 INT. THE ENTERPRISE MAIN BRIDGE - RIKER

is in command position, Pulaski at his side, Worf at his station, Troi nearby as Data looks up from his scanner console, announcing:

DATA  
Positive indication of armed photon torpedoes, Commander.

RIKER  
Geordi did it.

58 CONTINUED:

Worf turns from his security station, calling out:

WORF

Starbase requests we proceed to  
base at warp nine --

PULASKI

We've got to go!

TROI

Yes. Captain Picard needs our  
help.

RIKER

We can't leave Geordi behind --  
(then, to Data)  
I want the Pakleds on that screen  
and I want them now!

DATA

Forced spectrum communications  
are spotty at best, sir.

RIKER

Do it.

58A THE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

comes alive with the very fuzzy, forced-spectrum image  
of the Mondor bridge where Grebnedlog and Reginod are  
settling into their command chairs as Geordi stands in  
the b.g. and now

58B RIKER (OPTICAL)

quickly steps before the viewscreen:

RIKER

This is the Enterprise. Return  
our personnel or face immediate  
reprisal.

GREBNEDLOG

We are strong now. We have better  
weapons.

RIKER

Are you prepared to use them?

58B CONTINUED:

REGINOD

We are a force now. We will have  
respect. Power.

TROI

They feel confident.

RIKER

We don't have time for this. You  
want power? This is power...

(to computer)

Bridge to Ensign Gomez...

59 INT. ENGINEERING - SONYA

reacts, responds as she works furiously at some  
heavy-duty anti-matter work:

SONYA

Ready, Commander Riker --

RIKER (V.O.)

Initiate sequencing.

Sonya hits some new panels and now the engine core  
begins to react with a massive ROAR while

60 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - RIKER

glares at the Pakleds and calls their bluff with:

RIKER

Begin firing sequence countdown  
from twenty-four.

60AA THE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

The Pakleds react, startled at Riker's aggressiveness  
as Geordi takes his cue, leans back into the weapons  
bay to make some "adjustments," assuring Grebnedlog:

GEORDI

They mean business. Let me just  
check something.

60A INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN ENGINEERING - SONYA

moves quickly, efficiently, as she works to boost hydrogen output, as we hear:

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Twenty-one... twenty...  
nineteen... eighteen...

60B INT. MAIN BRIDGE - RIKER

stands before the viewscreen, Worf ready at his station as they hear:

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Seventeen... sixteen...  
fifteen... fourteen...

WORF

Firing sequence proceeding, sir.

RIKER

Hold fast.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Eleven... ten... nine...

60C INT. THE MONDOR BRIDGE

The Pakleds debate the wisdom of their choices now, then turning to face Riker while Geordi works in the b.g. furiously making his "adjustments."

GREBNEDLOG

We will attack.  
(re the weapons meters)  
We are strong.

REGINOD

(to Grebnedlog)  
We should attack now.

GEORDI

Just another second here...

GREBNEDLOG

Hurry.

60D INT. THE ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE - RIKER

reacts to what he sees on the viewscreen, looks to Worf as they listen to:

COMPUTER (V.O.)  
six... five... four... three...

Tension mounts as

60E OMITTED

60F INT. ENGINEERING - SONYA

is taut, poised over her console waiting:

COMPUTER (V.O.)  
...two... one...

RIKER  
Fire!

she hits the appropriate controls now and

61 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

fires a heretofore unseen, unimagined blast of crimson energy field from the leading edge of the nacelles, fairly enveloping the Mondor in a huge, daunting shaft of red light, accompanied by a ghostly ROAR and now

62 INT. THE MONDOR BRIDGE - GEORDI

looks up from his work in the weapons bay, shouts at Grebnedlog:

GEORDI  
Now!

Grebnedlog pulls the weapons lever but suddenly, the entire bridge is awash with a BRIGHT RED LIGHT.

GEORDI  
Oh no! Too late!

REGINOD  
We have fired! They will be destroyed.

62 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

But they used the crimson  
force-field --

He looks toward the weapons bay and now it emits a low  
GROAN. Grebnedlog looks at the weapons meters, reacts  
with a sag as he realizes:

GREBNEDLOG

It did not shoot.

GEORDI

Their crimson force-field disarmed  
us.

REGINOD

(re the Enterprise;  
awed)

They are smart.

GEBNEDLOG

We are not strong.

63 INT. THE ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - RIKER (OPTICAL)

gives the final warning as he stands before the  
viewscreen:

RIKER

Drop your shields and let us  
transport Lieutenant La Forge  
immediately.

Grebnedlog waves a trembling hand to a minion who pulls  
a switch.

DATA

Shields are down.

RIKER

Transporter Room. One to beam  
to the bridge.

Geordi immediately DEMATERIALIZES on the viewscreen. A  
beat later, he MATERIALIZES beside Riker, turns to his  
officer at CONN:

RIKER

Set heading for Starbase  
five one five. Warp nine.

64 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

streaks off at warp nine as we GO TO

64A INT. THE ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - RIKER

stands before the viewscreen where Grebnedleg appears,  
truly humbled.:

RIKER

We leave you in peace.

GREBNEDLOG

We want to be strong.

RIKER

Weapons alone do not create  
strength. You must learn  
restraint.

GREBNEDLOG

Yes. We will learn restraint.  
Then we will be strong.

Riker reacts to that with a sigh.

RIKER

Off.

The viewscreen goes dark as Geordi steps up:

GEORDI

What was that red blast?

RIKER

Hydrogen exhaust through the  
Bussard collectors. Harmless,  
but a nice light show.

GEORDI

Very impressive.

RIKER

Did you disable their photons?

GEORDI

Just in time. That's why you're  
all standing here...

64B EXT. STARBASE FIVE-ONE-FIVE - ESTABLISHING

The medical center

65 INT. STARBASE FIVE-ONE-FIVE SURGICAL SUITE - PICARD

stirs now, his eyes slowly fluttering open. A beat.  
He's alive. And then he scowls as he grumbles:

PICARD

What in the hell are you doing  
here?

65A ANGLE - PULASKI

stands over him, pulling her surgical mask down,  
snapping her gloves off smartly with:

PULASKI

Saving your life.

PICARD

Oh come on. This is a routine  
procedure. Quite commonplace.

PULASKI

True. But you are not a  
commonplace man. You'll be out  
of recovery in four hours.

PICARD

I didn't want you involved in  
this.

PULASKI

You're welcome.

He regards her obliquely. Then:

PICARD

If you're here... the entire crew  
must know...

PULASKI

You're still the captain.  
Invincible.

PICARD

Thank you.

She gives him a reassuring wink now as we GO TO:

66 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

cruises in orbit above Starbase five one five while

67 INT. THE MAIN BRIDGE - RIKER

is in command position, Data, Worf, Geordi, Troi, and Wesley all in their respective positions; the engineering station is up. The turbolift doors open and Picard steps out. A round of applause erupts, and Picard glares at them gruffly:

PICARD

I beg your pardon.

They fall silent. Geordi looks at Worf, comments:

GEORDI

Looks like things are back to normal...

Picard walks down to his chair, stands before it. A beat. Then he announces:

PICARD

I'm pleased to report that Ensign Crusher's Starfleet exam results will enable him to continue with his studies on board the Enterprise. Furthermore, any rumors of my brush with death are greatly exaggerated. Is that clear?

RIKER

Yes, sir.

PICARD

Good. Set the course for Epsilon Sector.

(to Wesley)

Warp five, Ensign.

Picard assumes his command position now and

PICARD

(continuing)

Engage.

68 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

warps out of orbit as we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END