

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"Shades of Gray"
#40272-148

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REVISED FINAL DRAFT

MAY 1, 1989

STAR TREK: "Shades of Gray" - 5/1/89 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Shades of Gray"
CAST

PICARD
RIKER
DATA
PULASKI
TROI
GEORDI

O'BRIEN

Non-Speaking
MEDICAL TEAM (2)

STAR TREK: "Shades of Gray" - 5/1/89 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Shades of Gray"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE
TRANSPORTER ROOM
SICKBAY
PULASKI'S OFFICE

EXTERIORS

PLANET SURFACE

STOCK OPTICALS

USS ENTERPRISE

PLANET

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Shades of Gray"
TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (STOCK OPTICAL)

in orbit around a planet.

2 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAY

GEORDI is moving through some underbrush.

GEORDI
Commander?

RIKER (O.S.)
I'm over here, Geordi.

3 ANOTHER ANGLE

As Geordi rounds a bend and comes upon RIKER who is frowning.

GEORDI
What's wrong?

RIKER
Something jabbed me in the calf...

Riker inspects his leg. There's a spot of blood.

GEORDI
(touches his
communicator)
O'Brien -- Commander Riker's been injured -- lock on and bring him up.

O'BRIEN'S COM VOICE
Stand by.

Riker protests:

RIKER
Geordi, it's just --

3 CONTINUED:

GEORDI
(finishes it)
A scratch. Right. Sorry,
Commander, but we can't take any
chances. We're the first survey
team to set foot on this planet...
we don't know what the risks are.

4 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

O'BRIEN inputs the coordinates but when he attempts to
beam them up, an ALARM SOUNDS on the console.

5 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAY

Geordi impatiently touches his communicator.

GEORDI
What's the hold up, O'Brien?

6 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

O'Brien is working on his control panel.

O'BRIEN
The transporter has detected
unidentified microbes in
Commander Riker's body.

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
Can't the biofilters screen them
out?

O'BRIEN
Apparently not.

7 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAY

As Geordi and Riker listen.

O'BRIEN'S COM VOICE
Doctor Pulaski has been notified.

GEORDI
Acknowledged.

Riker treats it lightly.

7 CONTINUED:

RIKER

I didn't want to leave just yet,
anyway.

8 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

PULASKI is now present with full medical kit. O'Brien is filling her in, showing her a readout on the console.

O'BRIEN

Here's the biofilter's analysis
of the microbes.

PULASKI

Not much to go on...

O'BRIEN

I can override and beam Commander
Riker aboard...

Pulaski gives it thought, shakes her head.

PULASKI

No. I'd better go down and make
an evaluation there.

Pulaski strides to the transporter pad, steps onto it, looks around at the transporter with distaste. O'Brien picks up on this, feigns uncertainty as he sets the coordinates:

O'BRIEN

Hmm... I hope these are the right
coordinates...

Pulaski gives him a sharp look. O'Brien grins.

O'BRIEN (cont'd)

Just kidding, Doctor. I know how
much you love the transporter...

PULASKI

About as much as I love comical
transporter chiefs...

9 OMITTED

10 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAY (OPTICAL)

Riker and Geordi as before. Pulaski MATERIALIZES, takes a beat to check that she's still in one piece, takes out her medical tricorder, and steps over to Riker.

PULASKI

Fill me in.

RIKER

I was walking along, minding my own business, making a simple geological sweep... and something stuck me in the leg.

PULASKI

Any pain?

10 CONTINUED:

RIKER

No -- a little numb, that's all.

PULASKI

Do you know what it was that stuck
you?

Riker shakes his head.

GEORDI

We've been looking for it, but
no luck.

Pulaski continues her scan.

PULASKI

Well, whatever it was, it left
something behind... I'm going
to bring you up to Sickbay.

11 OMITTED

12 NEW ANGLE

Pulaski rises and touches her communicator.

PULASKI

O'Brien, this is Doctor Pulaski.
Medical override is authorized.
Beam us directly to Sickbay.

O'BRIEN'S COM VOICE

Acknowledged.

13

thru OMITTED

15

15A INT. SICKBAY (OPTICAL)

Two MEDICAL CREWMEN are standing by. Geordi, Riker,
and Pulaski MATERIALIZE. The medical crewmen cross
to Riker's side to help him over to a medical table.
Riker waves them away.

RIKER

I can walk to the table, thank
you.

15A CONTINUED:

PULASKI

Commander, don't start acting heroic.

RIKER

Doctor, for personal reasons, I'll walk.

PULASKI

May I ask why?

RIKER

I've always had the notion that if I was ever so injured that I couldn't make it on my own two feet... it would be over.

PULASKI

Medically speaking, that's ridiculous.

RIKER

You'll get no argument from me, but... that's how I feel.

Riker takes a step toward the bed. His leg gives out on him; he falls. Riker's more surprised than anything else.

RIKER (cont'd)

Whoa --

The medical crewmen pick Riker up and put him on the table.

RIKER (cont'd)

This is the strangest feeling. My whole leg just went -- dead.

Off Pulaski's concerned reaction:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

16 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (STOCK OPTICAL)

The ship is still in orbit.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, Stardate 42976.1.
During a geological survey of
Surata Four, Commander Riker has
become infected by an unidentified
microbe.

17
thru OMITTED
19

20 INT. SICKBAY

Riker is on the center table. Pulaski is off to the
side studying her instruments. PICARD ENTERS.

Through all of this there is a great deal of tension
even though those in the room maintain a detached,
scientific demeanor. Picard approaches the center
examining table.

PICARD

Number One.

RIKER

Captain.

PICARD

Put your foot where it didn't
belong, did you?

RIKER

(nods)

The doctor's been getting bored
lately. I thought I'd find her
a challenge...

PULASKI

That you did.

21 ANOTHER ANGLE

Pulaski leaves a work station and steps over to the
wall panel.

21 CONTINUED:

PULASKI

The commander's nervous system has been invaded by an unknown microorganism. Not a bacteria, not a virus -- but with elements of both.

She activates the wall panel.

22 PULASKI AND WALL PANEL (OPTICAL)

Displayed on the wall panel is a rendering of Riker's body. Pulaski touches the panel, and the injury to Riker's leg becomes highlighted.

PULASKI

(indicates)

There's the point of entry...

23

thru OMITTED

24

25 SCENE (OPTICAL)

Pulaski turns back to the examination table. She holds a sophisticated scanner.

PULASKI

The microbes have infected the great sciatic nerve... they're multiplying at an incredible rate.

She moves the scanner near his leg.

PULASKI (cont'd)

(indicating the screen)

There.

The nerves in Riker's injured leg are now highlighted. The highlighting extends up the major nerves into Riker's thigh.

PICARD

Can you remove it?

PULASKI

Not surgically. The organisms fuse to the nerve, intertwining at the molecular level.

25 CONTINUED:

RIKER

That's why the transporter's
biofilters couldn't extract them.

PULASKI

There's no evidence of nerve
damage, but the organisms are
impeding nervous function.

RIKER

(nods)

My leg's still asleep.

PICARD

(to Pulaski)

Your prognosis?

PULASKI

The infection is spreading. It
will eventually reach the brain.

PICARD

And if it interfered with neural
activity there...

PULASKI

Commander Riker could die.

Riker takes it stoically.

PICARD

How can I help?

PULASKI

I need to know more about its
composition.

PICARD

And for that, you need a sample.

PULASKI

Exactly.

Picard touches a com panel:

25 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Mister Data, Mister La Forge -- prepare
to beam down to the planet.

26 OMITTED

27 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

DATA and Geordi are preparing to mount the platform.
Each carries a tricorder and a large phaser. O'Brien
is behind the console.

DATA

I must reiterate that it would
be better if I went alone.

GEORDI

Don't like my company?

DATA

Your company is not at issue.
Your vulnerability to this
microorganism is.

GEORDI

I'll watch where I step. Besides,
how do we know that this bug
doesn't like androids even more
than it likes humans?

DATA

Possible, but highly unlikely.
In any event, why risk both of
us?

GEORDI

Because I know exactly where
Commander Riker was when it
happened.

Data accepts the logic, and they climb onto the
transporter pad.

28 OMITTED

28 OMITTED

29 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAY (OPTICAL)

Data and Geordi MATERIALIZE. Because of what happened to Riker this place is ominous.

GEORDI

He was right over here.

Geordi is very careful where he steps as --

30 ANOTHER ANGLE

-- he and Data move to the spot and hunker down. Geordi examines the area with his VISOR while Data begins a meticulous scan with his tricorder.

DATA

I detect no animal life within fifty kilometers. Merely vegetation.

(a beat)

However, I am reading extensive animal remains -- mostly fossilized.

GEORDI

A graveyard?

DATA

I do not know.

They keep looking.

GEORDI

Look at this.

Geordi indicates an unusual-looking vine. Data turns his attention to the vine.

DATA

The structure is rhizomatous.

Data reaches down to touch the vine.

GEORDI

Be careful.

DATA

I am always careful.

31 ANOTHER ANGLE

As Data lifts the vine up off the ground. The vine looks dead -- harmless.

DATA

It appears to be dead.

Geordi examines the vine with his VISOR.

GEORDI

I'm not so sure. I can see thermal variations...

(gets an idea)

Data, set it down. Let's try something.

Data does so.

31 CONTINUED:

GEORDI (cont'd)

Perhaps it likes humans more than
androids.

Geordi slowly extends his hand to the vine, inviting it
to "strike."

DATA

If you are correct, you are
placing yourself in grave danger.

GEORDI

I'm counting on those great
android reflexes of yours...

32 CLOSER ANGLE

as Geordi's hand nears the vine. All at once, the vine
moves -- springing toward Geordi's hand. But Data
moves faster, grabs the vine and holds it.

33 THE VINE

Data turns the vine over -- and we can now see a meanlooking
thorn protruding from the underside of the
vine.

34 DATA AND GEORDI

As they study it.

GEORDI

I'd say that's what we're looking
for.

DATA

I would tend to agree.

Geordi makes an adjustment to his phaser as Data holds
the vine.

35

thru OMITTED

36

36A CLOSE ON THE THORN (OPTICAL)

as Geordi fires up a pinpoint phaser beam to cut loose
the thorn. But the moment the beam touches the vine:

36B WIDER

The area around Geordi and Data begins to move. Large clumps of vines vibrate. It is as if they are standing on a great living thing, which has just awoken, and is very angry.

GEORDI
(touches communicator)
O'Brien! Stand by!
(to Data)
Hold it still.

Data has to make an effort to keep the vine in his hands from moving as the vines around them continue their frantic oscillation. Geordi finishes his task, slaps his communicator:

GEORDI (cont'd)
Got it. Energize!

36C INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (OPTICAL)

O'Brien is behind the console. Picard ENTERS as O'Brien hits the button. Geordi and Data MATERIALIZE on the platform.

36D NEW ANGLE

as Geordi looks himself over. No blood anywhere.

GEORDI
Thanks, O'Brien. Another minute,
and we'd've been fossils
ourselves.

DATA
Not precisely, Geordi. True
fossilization requires several
millennia.

Geordi strides off the platform, shows Picard the thorn he's carefully holding.

GEORDI
Captain, here's your sample.

PICARD
Get it to Sickbay right away.

Geordi EXITS with the thorn. Picard crosses to Data.

36D CONTINUED:

PICARD (cont'd)

Report.

DATA

Captain, the commander's injury was not accidental. Certain vines on the planet evidently seek out warm-blooded beings and deliberately infect them.

PICARD

To what end?

DATA

Unknown. It is conceivable that there is a symbiotic relationship involved...

Data hesitates. Picard prompts him:

PICARD

Go on.

DATA

There were numerous animal remains in the area, leading me to hypothesize that the vines could be predatory.

PICARD

Then they infect animals in order to kill them.

DATA

It is possible.

(a beat)

For Commander Riker's sake, I hope my hypothesis is in error.

PICARD

Unfortunately, Mister Data, your hypotheses rarely are.

Off Picard's concern:

37 OMITTED

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

38 OMITTED

38A INT. PULASKI'S OFFICE

Pulaski is at a library console, entering data. Picard is looking over her shoulder. One of the medical crewmen enters, hands Pulaski a chip which she inserts into the console. She's not pleased with what is displayed.

PULASKI

All negative.

PICARD

There's nothing that will cure this infection?

PULASKI

This microorganism is very mysterious. I can't even figure out what's keeping it alive.

PICARD

Or how to kill it.

PULASKI

Oh, I can kill it... but not without destroying the nerves it's inhabiting.

Pulaski takes a breath. Her frustration is evident.

PICARD

I know you're doing your best...

PULASKI

My best may not be good enough.

39 INT. SICKBAY

Riker, lying on the bed as before, flexes his right arm by making a fist and then spreading his fingers wide. His look of concern tells us the numbness is spreading.

Picard ENTERS from Pulaski's office. Riker relaxes his hand and covers his anguish with a smile.

39 CONTINUED:

PICARD
Comfortable?

RIKER
How could I not be comfortable?
I'm being waited on hand and foot.

Riker puts his left hand behind his head -- a "kickback-and-relax" gesture.

RIKER (cont'd)
My only worry is that they'll find
out I'm faking it.

But, of course, Picard knows this is no charade.

PICARD
I wish you were faking it. I've
seen the thorn, Number One.

RIKER
The doctor showed it to me, too.
Harmless-looking thing, isn't
it?

Picard can't help but feel pride at the stoic, almost cheerful outlook of his subordinate.

PICARD
But deadly.
(a beat)
I'm sorry.

RIKER
These things happen.

PICARD
When you least expect them.

RIKER
I'm surprised they don't happen
more often. After all, we are
exploring the unknown.

Picard's frustration begins to show:

PICARD
And now and then we are humbled...
reminded that the universe
contains much that is beautiful...
and much that is malevolent.

39 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

Captain, I hardly think the vine
that struck me did so out of
malice.

(a beat)

If I've learned anything aboard
this ship... from our voyages...
from you... it's that most life
forms act out of an instinct for
survival -- not out of evil.

Picard smiles at his protege.

PICARD

A worthy lesson. I admire your
lack of rancor, Number One.

RIKER

Captain, if you drop a hammer on
your foot, it's rather useless
to get mad at the hammer.

Picard looks at his friend with admiration, then EXITS
into Pulaski's office.

39A INT. PULASKI'S OFFICE

Pulaski is still working away at her console as Picard
ENTERS.

PICARD

Anything?

PULASKI

Not yet.

PICARD

Doctor, we're running out of time.

39A CONTINUED:

Pulaski turns, gives Picard a glare. Picard backs off.

PICARD (cont'd)

You're right. I don't need to remind you of your duties. I didn't mean to give offense.

PULASKI

(smiles)

None taken.

Pulaski turns back to her work.

PULASKI (cont'd)

Now get out of my hair.

PICARD

Aye aye, Doctor.

And Picard EXITS.

40 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (STOCK OPTICAL)

in orbit around the planet.

41 OMITTED

42 INT. SICKBAY

One of the medical crewmen is running the scanner over Riker's body. Riker's weak; his arms and legs are so much dead weight, and it's a bit of an effort for him to speak. Still, he's at his most charming:

RIKER

This bug's persistent, I'll admit.
But I'm not worried. We Rikers
are ornery, too...

The crewman can't help cracking a smile. In b.g., TROI ENTERS. Riker doesn't see her.

RIKER (cont'd)

In fact, my great-grandfather was
once bitten by a rattlesnake.
After three days of intense pain
-- the snake died.

The crewman's smile widens.

43 ANOTHER ANGLE

as Troi steps forward. Riker sees her, doesn't change expression -- but falls silent. The crewman completes the scan, puts away the scanner, EXITS... leaving Troi and Riker alone in the room.

A long beat. Troi crosses to Riker's side.

TROI

You're a very entertaining patient.

RIKER

I try.

TROI

Yes. You're making quite an effort to be cheerful.

It's almost an accusation. Riker stares at her, drops all pretense.

RIKER

You of all people should know...

TROI

You feel what anyone in your place would feel.

RIKER

But I'm the first officer of this ship. I have to set an example.

TROI

Even now?

RIKER

Now most of all. Deanna, facing death is the ultimate test of character. I don't want to die -- but if I have to, I want to do it with a little pride.

TROI

And a lot of impudence.

RIKER

(smiles)

You bet. Dying is bad enough -- but losing my sense of humor? Forget it.

43 CONTINUED:

Troi looks at him with love and compassion, gently reaches out, touches his face.

TROI

Imzadi...

43A NEW ANGLE

A shared moment. Then Riker's devil-may-care manner returns:

RIKER

I haven't given up yet. The best medical team in Starfleet is on the case... I'm sure they'll...

And suddenly, Riker's voice trails off -- and he loses consciousness. Alarmed, Troi looks at the diagnostic readouts -- Riker's vital signs are falling fast.

44 PULASKI

ENTERS quickly and examines Riker.

45 ANGLE ON THE WALL PANEL (OPTICAL)

as Pulaski punches up the display of Riker's nervous system. The highlighting has expanded and now reaches the spinal column.

PULASKI

It's spread to the spinal column.
It's weakening his autonomic nervous system.

45A ON PULASKI

as she picks up a hypospray, gives Riker a shot. Riker doesn't respond, but his vital signs stabilize -- still quite low.

45A CONTINUED:

PULASKI

Judging by its present rate of growth and infiltration pattern, the infection will reach his brain within an hour.

On Troi's reaction:

CUT TO:

46
thru OMITTED
56

57 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (STOCK OPTICAL)

Orbiting the planet.

PULASKI (V.O.)

Medical log, Stardate 42976.2.
I can't keep the alien infection from spreading to Commander Riker's brain.

58 INT. SICKBAY

Riker is unconscious. At the head of Riker's bed is a strange device -- a tunnel-shaped apparatus designed to encircle the patient. On one side is a binocular eyepiece somewhat like an electron microscope's. Troi looks on as Pulaski and the two medical crewmen position the device. Over this:

PULASKI (V.O., cont'd)

Once there, it will kill him by dampening neural impulses. The only way I can keep him alive is to force the neurons to stay active -- by stimulating them directly with electrical impulses.

59 NEW ANGLE

as the crewmen prepare the device.

PULASKI

Let's proceed.

60 ON RIKER

His head has been clamped to the table to keep it perfectly motionless. The device slides slowly into place, surrounding his head.

61 ON PULASKI

as she puts her eyes to the eyepiece and operates the controls of the device.

62 ON RIKER

as his head is bathed in light. Two thin, needletipped probes extend from the device. The probes break the skin of Riker's temple, keep moving until about three inches of the needle tips have been inserted into Riker's head.

63 ON PULASKI

keeping her eyes to the eyepiece and making fine adjustments to the device.

64 OMITTED

65 ON RIKER

as two more probes appears, insert themselves into Riker's forehead.

66 ON PULASKI

nodding with satisfaction.

PULASKI

Good...

She makes more adjustments.

67 ON RIKER

as two more probes insert themselves into Riker's head from underneath, entering at a point underneath the ear. Once those probes are in place, two more probes appear and insert -- making a total of eight.

68 ON PULASKI

taking her eyes from the device's eyepiece, checking Riker's vital signs monitor, and turning to one of the medical crewmen:

68 CONTINUED:

PULASKI

Stand by with five milligrams of
tricordrazine in case of seizure.

(takes a breath)

Here goes...

She presses a panel on the device.

68A

thru OMITTED

70

71 A SLOW PUSH IN

on Riker's face as Pulaski activates the current.
Riker's face twitches involuntarily as current is
applied to the probes -- and then he is motionless.
Then a variation of the ripple dissolve...

DISSOLVE TO:

71A EXT. PLANET SURFACE (STOCK FROM #107 SCENES 34 TO 37)

Dimly lit, a twilight world of overcast, turbulent
skies hanging heavily over a strange landscape of
coral-like "trees." LIGHTNING explodes above, as a
dull THUNDER echoes through this eerie labyrinth.

In a relatively clear area, Riker suddenly
materializes... alone! He's woozy, but in one piece.
He looks around, perplexed, worried.

RIKER

Tasha? Data? Geordi? Worf?!

No answer. Riker scrambles toward a nearby rise,
through the "forest," and up the incline... reaching
the top.

He surveys the surrounding area, with no luck.

Landscape. No sign of anything lifelike.

More THUNDER o.s.

RIKER

Anybody?!

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

71B INT. SICKBAY (OPTICAL)

CLOSE on Riker's sweating, tormented face. WIDEN to include Troi and Pulaski. Pulaski punches up the view of Riker's nervous system. The highlighting now includes part of the brain. Pulaski then examines the vital signs monitor:

PULASKI

We've stimulated random wave activity, but the patterns are dangerously erratic.

TROI

(under her breath)
Hang on, Will...

On Troi's expression of concern, we --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

72
thru OMITTED
74

74A INT. SICKBAY

CLOSE on an unconscious but highly agitated Riker.
WIDEN to include Troi and Pulaski. Pulaski makes a
series of adjustments to the device.

PULASKI

The wave patterns are still too
irregular.

TROI

Why won't they stabilize?

PULASKI

Wait -- I've found the proper
amplitude --

Pulaski makes a small adjustment. After a beat:

PULASKI (cont'd)

There. The patterns are steadier.

TROI

Is the stimulation preventing the
infection from taking hold?

PULASKI

For now.

Pulaski studies the monitor.

PULASKI (cont'd)

The vertex waves indicate a K-complex
corresponding to an R.E.M.
state.

TROI

He's dreaming.

74B ON RIKER

his expression less agitated than before...

DISSOLVE TO:

74C INT. HOLODECK CORRIDOR (STOCK, #102 SC. 133-140)

The Parkland hidden at this moment by a WILD SECTION OF
CORRIDOR WALL AND HATCHWAY which, when the hatch is
opened, will REVEAL PARKLAND.

COMPUTER VOICE
(continuing; without
delay)
And if you care to enter,
Commander...

RIKER
(snaps; interrupting)
I do.

Immediately, the hatch slides open and WE SEE THE
PARKLAND (LOCATION). It looks (and is) real, including
land contours, trees, and even a small stream nearby.
Beyond that the Parkland stretches off for what appears
to be miles and miles away to the horizon.

74D ANGLE BACK TOWARD HATCHWAY

as Riker ENTERS through it and stands inspecting the Parkland scene with genuine appreciation and then HEARS SOMEONE WHISTLING A MELODY, but doing it rather badly and laboriously.

74E ANGLE PAST RIKER INTO PARKLAND

as he MOVES AWAY, seeking the source of the WHISTLING which will begin to grow LOUDER now.

74F ANGLE AT STREAM

as Riker crosses, stepping from rock to rock. He makes a misstep, almost falls, then recovers and gets across. He looks back at the stone which caused it.

74G CLOSER ON RIKER

As he walks, the WHISTLING is nearby now. He stops, calls:

RIKER

Hello!

The WHISTLING has continued without pause. Riker cocks his ear, corrects his direction slightly.

74H EXT. WOODLAND GLEN

Riker ENTERS SHOT through shrubbery, sees something and stops.

74I ANGLE ON DATA

Lying there, cushioned by deep grass. He's totally absorbed in certain melody notes he's attempting -- and keeps missing.

74J PANNING RIKER

Moving onto TWO SHOT where he stops, and WHISTLES the same melody, hitting the correct notes. A startled Data looks up blankly, then comes quickly to his feet, but Riker waves him back down, sits beside him.

74J CONTINUED:

DATA

Marvelous how easily humans do that, sir. I still need much practice.

Riker hesitates, then:

RIKER

There are some puzzles down on the planet that Captain Picard wants answered. He suggests I take you on the away team I'll be leading.

DATA

I shall endeavor to function adequately, sir.

Riker hesitates, wanting to say something but not sure how to begin.

RIKER

Uh, yes. And when the captain suggested you I, uh, looked up your record...
(hesitates)

DATA

Yes sir, a wise procedure always.

RIKER

Then, your rank of lieutenant commander is honorary.

DATA

No, sir. Starfleet Class of '78; honors in probability mechanics and exobiology.

RIKER

But your files... they say you're a...

DATA

(waits; then)
Machine? Correct, sir. Does that trouble you?

RIKER

(hesitates)
To be honest... yes, a little.

74J CONTINUED: (2)

DATA

Understood, sir. Prejudice is very human.

RIKER

Now that troubles me. Do you consider yourself superior to us?

DATA

I am superior in many ways. But I would gladly give it up to be human.

RIKER

(studies Data; then)
Nice to meet you, Pinocchio.

Data seems uncomprehending.

RIKER

(continuing; explains)
A joke.

DATA

(straight-faced)
Ah! Intriguing.

RIKER

(big grin)
You're going to be an interesting companion, Mister Data.

75
thru OMITTED
78

79 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (STOCK FROM #128 SCENE 45)

Riker looks up from a panel.

RIKER

All stations have reported, Captain. There seems to be no immediate threat to our ship or crew.

As Riker stands looking at the dark Viewscreen, Picard moves up to stand beside him.

79 CONTINUED:

PICARD

In which case, let's hold position
for a while, Number One. This
is worth studying.

RIKER

Incredible. It's like looking
off into... infinity, sir.

(turns to Picard)

Remember the course in ancient
history at Starfleet Academy?
Back to the time when men still
believed the Earth was flat?

PICARD

(smiles)

And that the sun revolved around
the Earth...

RIKER

And if a ship sailed too far out
into the ocean it would fall off
the edge of the world...

Riker turns back to look at the empty void on the
viewscreen.

PICARD

"Beyond this place there be
dragons..." It was even said that
crews would threaten to hang their
captain from the yardarm if they
refused to turn back.

RIKER

I'm sure no one here has that in
mind, sir.

PICARD

How comforting, Number One.

79A
thru OMITTED
80

80A INT. TEN-FORWARD (STOCK FROM #136 SCENE 28)

Wesley sits with Riker at the bar. Guinan watches them
from behind the bar.

80A CONTINUED:

WESLEY

But what do I say? How should
I act? What do I do?

Riker turns to Guinan and motions toward a nearby empty
table.

RIKER

Guinan, I need your help. Could
you sit over there?

GUINAN

That seems simple enough.

Guinan walks around the bar and heads for a table.
Riker and Wesley follow. Guinan sits. Riker sits
beside her. Wesley stands off to one side.

RIKER

(to Wesley)

The first words out of your mouth
are the most important. You could
start by saying something like...

(turns to Guinan)

... "you're the most beautiful
woman in the galaxy."

Riker holds the look for a moment, then turns back to
Wesley.

RIKER

(continuing)

But that might not work.

GUINAN

Yes it would.

Riker is relieved and amused. This is going to be fun.
He turns to Guinan.

RIKER

If you only knew how much I wanted
to tell you that.

GUINAN

But you were afraid.

RIKER

Yes.

GUINAN

Of me?

80A CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

Of us. Of what we could become...

WESLEY

Commander Riker...

They ignore him.

RIKER

... and that you might have
thought it was a line.

GUINAN

Maybe I do think it's a line.

RIKER

Then you think I'm not sincere?

GUINAN

I didn't say that. There's
nothing wrong with a line. It's
like a knock on the door.

RIKER

Then you're inviting me in?

GUINAN

I'm not sending you away.

RIKER

That's more than I expected.

GUINAN

But is it more than you hoped?

RIKER

To hope is to recognize the
possibility. I had only dreams.

GUINAN

Dreams can be dangerous.

RIKER

Not these dreams.

He looks into her eyes.

RIKER

(continuing)

I dream of a galaxy where your
eyes are stars... And all the
universe worships night.

80A CONTINUED: (3)

GUINAN

Careful, if you place me too high
on a pedestal, you won't be able
to reach me.

RIKER

Then I'll learn to fly. You are
the heart in my day and the soul
in my night.

Wesley taps Guinan on the arm.

WESLEY

I don't think this is my style.

GUINAN

Shut up, kid.
(to Riker, dreamily)
Now, tell me more about my eyes.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

81 INT. SICKBAY (OPTICAL)

Riker's face is calmer. WIDEN to reveal Pulaski and
Troi. Troi is concentrating.

TROI

He's relaxed... experiencing
feelings of warmth. Friendship.

PULASKI

He's reliving memories. That's
a natural side effect of the
neural stimulation.

Pulaski punches up the diagram of Riker's body with
the organism highlighted. To her surprise:

PULASKI (cont'd)

Look at this! The organisms'
metabolism has changed. I wonder
if the stimulation is affecting
them somehow...

Pulaski again adjusts the device.

PULASKI (cont'd)

I'm going to refocus the impulse
pattern on the interpretative
cortex.

81 CONTINUED:

TROI

Will that intensify the
commander's memories?

PULASKI

Exactly. And we'll see if that has
an effect on the microbes...

Pulaski activates the device --

81A ON RIKER

as we PUSH IN again and

DISSOLVE TO:

81B OMITTED

81C INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS (STOCK FROM #109 SCENES 12-13))

The kind of place you'd like to visit. No particularly formalized furnishing plan -- it includes just about any way anyone would like to sit or loll. The same sort of revealing but sensible garb here too -- along with good humor. In fact, joy is what is mainly present here. Lots of fruit, nuts, food and drink selections. A MUSIC GROUP of harpists in sight -- admittedly strange looking harps on which they compose, and now and then PLAY LILTING MUSIC which, like everything else, is not taken too seriously here either.

RIVAN

Everyone! We've brought the
visitors!

LIATOR

(gesturing to away team)
Please enjoy what we have!

81D EMPHASIZING ENTERPRISE PEOPLE

as they are taken charge of with great hospitality.

81E INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS (STOCK FROM #109 SCENES 31-31A)

TRUCKING WITH RIKER as he passes through the Council Chamber bemused at the sight of the Edo of all ages and both sexes enjoying music, food, and each other. He comes to three who are playing a game with what appear to be marbles, each holding one to five of them hidden in the hand, then all of them simultaneously revealing how many each of them holds. We don't have to know the rules -- they know them and two of them will LAUGH delightedly at the total of marbles exposed. One will HANG HIS/HER HEAD in mock despair. Then when they look up to find Riker watching, they extend marbles to him, an offer to let him play too.

EDO MARBLE PLAYER

This will please you. Join us!

RIKER

(grins; shakes head)

Another time. Thanks.

Riker moves on a couple of steps to where an Edo man and woman, partially unclothed, are laying on a couch locked in an embrace. If they're not actually making love now, it is clear they will be doing it any moment now. As Riker pauses a female EDO SPECTATOR passes through, patting him on the backside.

EDO SPECTATOR

Joy and happiness!

RIKER

Certainly is.

Riker smiles again, moving on through the room.

81F ANGLE ON WORF

as Riker moves into TWO SHOT with him.

RIKER

The good life, Worf.

WORF

I am not concerned with pleasure, Commander. I am a warrior.

RIKER

Even Klingons must need love now and then.

81F CONTINUED:

WORF

For what we consider love, sir,
I would need a Klingon woman.

RIKER

(eyes Worf curiously)
How about plain old basic sex?
You must have some need for that.

WORF

Of course. But with the females
who are available to me... Earth
females... I must restrain myself
too much. They are quite fragile,
sir.

RIKER

(eyes him again)
Worf, if anyone else said that,
I'd suspect he was bragging.

WORF

(puzzled)
"Bragging," sir?

81G INT. HOLODECK (STOCK FROM #116 SCENES 21 THRU 27)

This three-dimensional, computer-generated image is
so beautiful it takes Riker's breath.

81G CONTINUED:

RIKER
(to the Bynars)
Gentlemen, if this is what you
call "enhancement" you have a gift
for understatement.

He CROSSES to the beautiful WOMAN.

81H ANGLE ON WOMAN'S TABLE

As Riker sits down, the IMAGES COME TO LIFE. The combo
BEGINS TO PLAY, the woman (Minuet) MOVES.

81I RIKER AND WOMAN

He looks at her with interest.

RIKER
What's your name, and tell me you
love jazz.

MINUET
My name is Minuet. I love all
jazz except Dixieland.

RIKER
Why not Dixieland?

MINUET
Because you can't dance to it.

RIKER
My girl.

81J ANGLE ON TABLE WITH RIKER AND MINUET (OPTICAL)

A slight change occurs in Minuet. The way she looks
at Riker is more personal.

RIKER
(slyly)
What's a knockout like you doing
in a computer-generated joint like
this?

MINUET
Waiting for you.

81J CONTINUED:

Her voice is deeper, sexier. Her eyes are warm,
liquid, inviting.

RIKER

Waiting for me?! You can't be
serious?

MINUET

Oh yes, Will -- I've never been
more serious in my life.

Riker is knocked a little off balance by her look and
her directness.

DISSOLVE TO:

81K INT. HOLODECK (STOCK FROM #116 SCENES 41 THRU 42)

Riker APPROACHES the table. Minuet smiles a greeting.

RIKER

I am going to have to leave you
for a while and see to my duties.

MINUET

Your work is very important to
you.

RIKER

It is me -- it's what I am.

MINUET

Can we dance once before you
leave?

The invitation is so effortlessly offered -- and the
woman so appealing -- who could resist?

RIKER

Sure, why not.

She rises. He leads her to the little dance floor.

81L ON THE DANCE FLOOR

As they STEP ONTO the dance floor, Minuet turns and
folds herself into his arms. They dance. It's slow
and sexy.

81L CONTINUED:

RIKER

How did you learn to dance so well?

MINUET

From following you.

Riker is puzzled and amused at the same time.

MINUET

I can anticipate your lead. Tell me more about your work -- what is it about it that consumes and enthralls you?

RIKER

What an interesting choice of words. That's exactly what it does.

MINUET

You are very fortunate.

RIKER

I know that.

MINUET

At this point in your life to be exactly where you want to be... And it's wonderful that you realize it.

RIKER

I'd be a fool not to know how lucky I am to be on this ship serving with this group of people. It's a dream come true.

She snuggles in a little closer.

RIKER

(continuing)

Just like this.

MINUET

A dream? Is that what this is? Is that what I am?

She fills up his senses. He holds her away, to look at her. Her fragrance -- the lightness of her touch. Her movement. Riker is becoming captivated by her.

81L CONTINUED: (2)

As a woman can, she senses what he's feeling and leans back to look in his eyes.

RIKER

I know you are a computer-generated image... but your smell, the way you feel, your touch, even the way you talk and think is so real.

MINUET

Thank you.

RIKER

How far can this relationship go? I mean, how real are you?

MINUET

As real as you need me to be.

Then a look. To underline her words, she molds herself against him.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

82
thru OMITTED
82A

82AA INT. SICKBAY

CLOSE on Riker's face. PAN up to Troi's face -- which is a bit flushed. Pulaski notices.

PULASKI

Something wrong?

TROI

No... it's just that... Commander Riker's emotions are rather... passionate.

PULASKI

As in -- erotic?

TROI

(nods)
Very much so.

Pulaski smiles. PAN back to Riker's face and

DISSOLVE TO:

82B INT. RIKER'S QUARTERS (STOCK FROM #144 SCENE 24A)

BRENNA

William, is something wrong?

RIKER

What do you mean?

BRENNA

Do you not like girls?

RIKER

Of course I like... Oh... is there
a technique to this foot washing?

Brenna approaches him. Unhooks her skirt. It puddles
about her feet, and she steps out of it wearing a
pretty petticoat.

BRENNA

You generally start at the top...
and work your way down.

Riker reaches up and pulls the pins from her long hair.
It cascades over her shoulders.

RIKER

I think I can handle that.

They are in each other's arms now.

BRENNA

I was hoping you might.

They embrace...

83 INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE (STOCK FROM #115 SCENE 42)

Beata touches his chest.

BEATA

I like the way your eyes pick up
the color of your tunic.

He shifts his body to avoid her hand.

RIKER

It's not our place to interfere
in the domestic affairs of other
societies.

She reaches across him to pick up the bottle of liquor
and freshen his drink.

83 CONTINUED:

BEATA

But you can interact, can't you?

RIKER

Of course. Otherwise, how can we learn?

BEATA

And that's why you're here, tonight, with me... to learn?

RIKER

Yes.

BEATA

... About our society.

RIKER

Yes.

BEATA

In our society, it's men who are the fortunate ones, enjoying all that life has to offer, while we women devote ourselves to the obligations of making life work.

RIKER

In our society we share the responsibilities and the pleasures equally.

BEATA

Don't be defensive. I'd be the last to imply that men are inferior.

RIKER

Or I, that women are. That's why I can be here with you while the women on the away team go to find Ramsey.

BEATA

I must remember to thank them when they return for giving us this time.

She moves closer. She touches him and kisses him softly on the cheek.

83 CONTINUED: (2)

BEATA

You resist... Why? Do you not
find me attractive?

RIKER

Oh... Yes I find you very
attractive.

BEATA

Don't you feel you know me well
enough?

Riker hesitates, bemused.

BEATA

You attract me like no man ever
has.

RIKER

I'm flattered. I don't know what
to say.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

84
thru OMITTED
85

86 INT. SICKBAY (OPTICAL)

CLOSE on Riker. WIDEN to reveal Troi composing
herself as Pulaski punches up the highlighted view of
Riker's body and nervous system. To Pulaski and
Troi's dismay, the highlighting is stronger than ever.

PULASKI

The organisms responded, all right.
Their growth rate has doubled.

Troi's frustration surfaces as she looks from Riker
back to the wall panel.

TROI

Then all we've done is make things
worse...

On Pulaski's grim expression:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

87 OMITTED

88 INT. SICKBAY

Pulaski moves from the monitor to Troi's side.

PULASKI

Now we know the organism's growth rate is related to the memories he's experiencing.

TROI

Or the emotions they produce.

PULASKI

Different mental processes generate different chemicals. Perhaps the organisms are sensitive to brain endorphins.

TROI

And if some types of endorphins attract them...

PULASKI

(nods)

... others will repel them.

Pulaski's fingers fly over the controls of the device.

PULASKI (cont'd)

I'm going to change the differential current pattern and see what happens.

The device is activated --

89 CLOSE ON RIKER - PUSH IN

DISSOLVE TO:

89A
thru OMITTED
89B

89C EXT. PLANET SURFACE (STOCK FROM #122 SCENE C21-22)

Riker moves a STEP CLOSER to the slime creature.

RIKER

I am Commander William Riker of
the USS Enterprise.

ARMUS

I am ARMUS. You are in my space.

RIKER

We mean you no harm. We have an
injured crew in that shuttlecraft.
We need to get to them. May we
pass?

ARMUS

You haven't given me a good enough
reason yet.

RIKER

Preserving life -- all life --
is very important to us.

ARMUS

Why?

RIKER

We believe that everything in the
Universe has a right to exist.

ARMUS

An interesting notion which I do
not share. You may now leave if
you wish.

Riker and the crew are startled.

TASHA

We won't go without the shuttle
crew.

The Shroud REMAINS SILENT as Tasha makes a slight MOVE
TO GO AROUND IT.

ARMUS

I warn you. You will not like
it here.

TASHA

What are you saying -- that you
are going to deny us access to
our comrades?

89C CONTINUED:

ARMUS

I told you what you can do. You can leave. I have no interest in any further discussion or argument.

Tasha has had enough of this and starts to move toward the narrowest strip of slime.

TASHA

Enough. We have people who need attention. We will not harm you, but we must help them.

ARMUS FLICKS HIS FINGER, sending an ENERGY FORCE towards Tasha, JERKING HER BACK and SLAMMING HER DOWN to the ground.

Everything from here on must happen in a blur of action. Beverly jumps to Tasha's side. Riker and Data MOVE BETWEEN the others and BLAST ARMUS with their phasers.

89D EXT. PLANET SURFACE (STOCK FROM #122 SCENE 24C)

Angle on Tasha's body and the others around her. Beverly quickly takes a reading. She can't believe the instruments.

BEVERLY

She's dead.

89E INT. SICKBAY (STOCK FROM #122 SCENES 30 THRU 34)

The medical team is easing Tasha onto the operating table as Picard ENTERS. Beverly barely glances up at him. He MOVES OFF TO THE SIDE and watches silently, with Data and Riker, as:

PICARD

Status, Doctor?

BEVERLY

Unchanged.

The diagnostic screen shows her bodily readings to be totally askew. Beverly and the nurse work together as if they'd done this a hundred times before, attaching the clamshell device onto the bed, over Tasha's body.

89E CONTINUED:

PICARD
Can you bring her back?

BEVERLY
I'm trying.

RIKER
(hopeful)
You've saved people before. You
can save her.

BEVERLY
Neural stimulator.

The nurse immediately helps her attach the device,
which clips onto the bed and slips over Tasha's head
like a loose headband.

As soon as both devices are activated, Beverly and the
Nurse anxiously watch the diagnostic screen. A FEW
KEY INDICATORS APPROACH NORMALITY. Picard is anxious
and impatient.

RIKER
There. You did it.

BEVERLY
No. I've got her on total
support. There's no independent
brain activity.

Beverly grimly and quickly works the neural stimulator.
She pushes programming keys furiously, then hits the
start button. No reaction.

NURSE
She's not responding, Doctor.
Her synaptic network is breaking
down.

BEVERLY
No! Inject norep.

The nurse complies as Beverly reprograms the
stimulator. Nothing happens.

BEVERLY
(continuing)
We're going for direct reticular
stimulation.

The nurse looks at her sharply. It's risky.

89E CONTINUED: (2)

BEVERLY
(continuing)
Doesn't matter! Do it!

The nurse punches it in, and Tasha's body TWITCHES SLIGHTLY. Picard looks hopefully at Riker.

NURSE
Neurons are beginning to
depolarize.

Beverly is desperate, but calm.

BEVERLY
Increase to seventy microvolts.

The nurse complies. Beverly pushes the button. Tasha MOVES SLIGHTLY -- VERY SLIGHTLY. Beverly checks the readout. Data and Riker look at each other -- it's not good.

RIKER
(urgently)
Doctor?

BEVERLY
Eighty-five microvolts.

They quickly try again. And again. Finally, there is NO MOVEMENT in Tasha at all. Beverly slowly turns to Picard.

BEVERLY
She's gone.

PICARD
Gone?

BEVERLY
There's too much synaptic damage.
That thing just sucked all the
life out of her. There's nothing
I can do...

Picard, Riker and Data seem rooted to the spot.

Beverly reluctantly pushes in a code on the overbed life support clamshell. She and the others look up at the big diagnostic wall screen and watch all the LIFE FUNCTION INDICATORS FALL TO ZERO. They REACT to the finality of this.

89F INT. PLANET DISASTER AREA (STOCK, #111 SC. 70 TO 84)

The away reserve team MATERIALIZES. They are in a passageway which has been severely damaged by explosions. Water SPRAYS from the ceiling and is already ankle deep on the floor. Data scans the area with his tricorder.

DATA

This way.

They push ahead.

89G ANOTHER ANGLE - CORRIDOR

as they ARRIVE at a doorway. The door has been jammed by the explosion. Data steps over and with his great strength -- rips the door off its hinges and clears the opening.

The survivors are here. ABOUT A DOZEN of them, huddled together on the far side. Beverly and her teams wade through the water to them.

89H ANGLE ON BEVERLY AND SURVIVORS

As she kneels beside an injured WOMAN.

BEVERLY

You are going to be all right,
now.

RIKER

Where are the others?

The woman shakes her head.

WOMAN

Gone. It's just us.

GEORDI

(urgent)
Commander!

Riker turns.

89I ANGLE ON GEORDI

CAMERA MOVES IN TO E.C.U. Geordi is staring at a pile of rubble.

GEORDI

There's someone there!

89J ANGLE ON DATA

With great strength he moves huge rocks with remarkable rapidity.

89K ANGLE ON GEORDI AND RIKER

They stand and look for a beat, then:

89L ANGLE ON DATA

as he lifts and carries the limp body of a child.

89M ANOTHER ANGLE

Beverly rushes over and while Data holds the child, she quickly examines him.

89N ANGLE ON BEVERLY AND CHILD

From her expression it is clear the child is dead. All of her skill will not help.

BEVERLY

She's dead. If we'd only gotten here a little sooner... !

89O ANGLE ON RIKER

He steps closer. A dead child. A moment of truth.

DATA

Sir, if you indeed have "Q"'s power...

89P ANGLE ON RIKER

He is fighting his emotions.

89Q ANGLE INCLUDING BEVERLY

Puzzled.

BEVERLY

(to Riker)

I don't understand. Certainly you can't bring her back to life?

89Q CONTINUED:

RIKER
(long beat)
I'm prevented from that by a
promise.

Beverly is surprised and puzzled; Riker is very
troubled.

89R INT. TROI'S QUARTERS (STOCK, #127 SC. 81 THRU 84)

as Pulaski leads the others to Troi's quarters.

TROI
It's Ian. Please... please hurry.

Pulaski moves quickly to the unconscious child, pulls
back the covers. She removes an instrument from her
smock and makes a scan of the child's body. In the
b.g., Picard enters with Riker and Data.

TROI
(continuing)
Save him, you must save him.

PULASKI
What happened? Did he eat
anything? Did he fall?

TROI
No.

Data, using his tricorder, confirms with a nod to
Riker.

DATA
The child is the source of the
unusual radiation.

TROI
He said he's the reason the ship
is in danger.

DATA
That analysis is correct.

Pulaski injects the child with hypospray.

PULASKI
I'm losing life signs.

89R CONTINUED:

Troi stands by helplessly. Like any mother in this situation, she is beyond grief. Tears streak her face.

TROI

Oh, please. Please save him.

89S PULASKI

resets the injector and again she administers a dose of hypospray. She waits for a reaction. There is none.

89T ANOTHER ANGLE (OPTICAL)

The room is very quiet. Pulaski stands.

PULASKI

I'm sorry.

Troi moves next to the cot on which the child is lying. She is beyond despair. Her heart has completely broken. The others allow her a moment alone, then as Riker is about to move to Troi's side, a LIGHT -- the glowing energy which we saw at the beginning -- gathers from within the child and slowly rises. As it does, the body that was Ian fades away until there is only the LIGHT.

89U INTERCUT REACTIONS (OPTICAL)

Troi reaches out and with cupped hands she collects the LIGHT, cradles it gently and brings it to her. As she holds it close, it makes her face all aglow. Slowly the pain and despair drain away, and through the tears she smiles. The joy she now feels shines from her eyes. The Betazoid within her, embraces the essence of the entity before her and she knows now why he came and what he wanted. Then, in an act of pure love, she releases the glowing energy as she would a dove. For a beat the LIGHT seems reluctant to leave. Then it does. It passes effortlessly through the wall of the ship and away. Troi stares after it for a beat.

GEORDI'S COM VOICE

(excited -- relieved)

Captain. The containment field has stabilized.

89U CONTINUED:

PICARD

Thank you, Lieutenant.

Troi turns and looks at her captain and shipmates.

TROI

Then Ian was right. He was the cause.

PICARD

Apparently so.

Troi pauses, gathering her feelings and picking her words carefully. She settles her emotions.

TROI

He is a life-force entity... as we passed each other in space he was curious and wanted to know about us, and he thought the best way to learn was to go through the process. To be born, to live as one of us and in that way to understand us.

She pauses, then:

TROI

(continuing)

Captain, he never meant any harm.

Picard nods -- he knows that is true.

RIKER

There was a moment when you smiled.

TROI

(she smiles again)

He said thank you.

(she pauses)

I told him we will miss him -- and I will.

The others will also miss him.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

90
thru OMITTED
94

95 INT. SICKBAY (OPTICAL)

CLOSE on Riker; WIDEN to include Troi and Pulaski, who are encouraged as they observe the panel showing Riker's nervous system. The highlighting has dimmed just a bit.

PULASKI

The growth rate has definitely slowed. What is he feeling? Can you tell?

TROI

Sadness.

PULASKI

Just the opposite of before -- and it's having the opposite effect on the infection.

TROI

Then your theory is correct. The organisms are sensitive to different types of endorphins.

PULASKI

And negative emotions...

TROI

Such as sadness...

PULASKI

... produce endorphins that inhibit the organisms' growth.

TROI

Then we've found a way to repel the infection.

PULASKI

Assuming we're not already too late.

TROI

How much time do we have?

PULASKI

I'm not sure. His vital signs are getting weaker. I don't want to risk another dose of tricordrazine unless I have to...

95 CONTINUED:

Pulaski watches the vital signs for another beat, makes a decision. She adjusts the device.

PULASKI (cont'd)
I'm refocusing the pattern again.
We need to isolate memories that
generate stronger negative
emotions.

95A ON RIKER

A quick, reflexive movement as the pattern of current changes --

DISSOLVE TO:

95B
thru OMITTED
95D

95E INT. PAGH - MAIN BRIDGE (STOCK, #134 SC. 33-33E)

Riker and his escort enter onto the bridge.

The same sparse but functional look. The bridge is manned by FIVE CREWMEMBERS at varying stations. Captain Kargan is seated in the Command Chair. SECOND OFFICER KLAG stands next to him. They are businesslike in their appraisal of Riker. Firm but not harsh. Riker steps forward.

RIKER

I am Commander William Riker of the Starship Enterprise.

KARGAN

That is incorrect.

RIKER

(beat)

I don't understand.

KARGAN

You are Commander Riker, first officer of the Klingon Cruiser Pagh, or do you intend to disobey Federation orders?

RIKER

I have no such intentions, Captain.

KARGAN

Exactly where are your loyalties, Commander?

RIKER

I'm afraid I still don't understand.

Kargan explains carefully in a low, calm voice.

KARGAN

This ship is equipped with our best weapons and our finest warriors. Although we are on a peaceful mission we are prepared to go into battle instantly.

(more)

95E CONTINUED:

KARGAN (cont'd)

I know I can count on every
Klingon warrior in this crew to
serve and die in that battle.
So I ask again Commander Riker,
(beat)
where are your loyalties?

RIKER

I have been assigned here to serve
this ship and to obey your orders.
I will do exactly that.

KARGAN

Will you take an oath to that
effect?

RIKER

(meets his gaze)
I just did.

Klag interjects firmly to Captain Kargan.

KLAG

yI-Har-Qo! nep-we' ghaH! (Do
not believe him! He lies!)

KARGAN

(to Klag)
Hol-chaj yI-jatlh. (Speak in
their language.)
(to Riker)
This is your second officer,
Lieutenant Klag.

RIKER

Was there something you wanted
to say to me, Lieutenant?

KLAG

Yes sir.
(beat)
I don't believe you.

RIKER

Then I take it you challenge my
authority over you.

KLAG

Correct.

95E CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER
(to Kargan)
And your position in this,
Captain?

KARGAN
(with disdain)
I would call it your first command
decision.

Riker looks around the Main Bridge at the other
crewmembers.

95F RIKER'S POV

The Klingon crewmembers watch him, waiting to see his
reaction to this challenge.

95G SCENE

Riker eyes the arrogant stance and size of Klag who
gives him an insubordinate snort. Riker realizes he
has no choice. He deftly, with no advance warning or
aggressive motion, swings a two-handed blow with his
full strength and lands a monstrous blow across the
chest of Klag.

95H SERIES OF CUTS

The sound of the blow against Klag's chest armor echoes
through the bridge and is followed by the roar of his
breath leaving his body, and then his bulk smashing
against the bulkhead and slipping to the ground.

Riker calmly steps around the still-seated captain and
steps in front of Klag who is struggling to his feet.

Klag is almost to his feet when Riker swings again,
this time taking the legs out from under Klag who drops
to the ground again.

The crewmembers are animated and watch the fight with
relish, not caring who wins or loses but that there is
combat.

Riker looks over to the captain.

Captain Kargan simply sits back and allows it to
continue.

95H CONTINUED:

Riker turns back to the dazed but still active Klag who is once more attempting to get to his feet.

Riker eyes the combatant with a calculated but astonished eye. Klag can barely stand but bravely fights for balance. Riker shrugs, and rams his fist into Klag's stomach, then drops him with another double-handed blow over the head.

95I SCENE

Kargan applauds with a grunt and a motion of his head.

Klag is awake but prone. He struggles to his feet, manages to prop himself against the wall. Klag gives Riker as much a look of respect as he is able...

95J ON RIKER

RIKER

My oath is between Captain Kargan
and myself. Your only concern
is how to obey my orders.

(beat)

Or do you prefer the rank of
prisoner over that of lieutenant?

Klag calculates Riker carefully, then:

KLAG

I will take your orders.

Riker nods his acceptance. Klag returns it. Kargan interjects:

KARGAN

And you, Commander Riker, will
obey my orders.

RIKER

Agreed, Captain Kargan.

Riker turns away from the captain, and when no one can see him he lets his breath out.

95K INT. QUINN'S GUEST QUARTERS (STOCK, #125 SC. 71)

Quinn is sitting on the sofa, blankly staring into his slightly opened briefcase. Riker ENTERS, catching him off guard...

95K CONTINUED:

RIKER

Ready for your tour, Admiral?

Quinn quickly stands, but Riker has seen the briefcase...

QUINN

Quite ready, Commander.

RIKER

What's in the case?

From where he stands, Riker can barely see a few delicate-looking tendrils coming out of its opening... He looks at the admiral somewhat suspiciously...

QUINN

(thoughtful)

Actually... I brought this for Doctor Crusher. But perhaps you'd like you to see it first?

RIKER

(slowly moving closer)

What is it?

QUINN

A form of life. Discovered quite accidentally by a survey team on a distant uncharted planet.

RIKER

Why haven't we heard anything about that?

QUINN

Oh, you'll be hearing more about it shortly. But first there is much scientific study to be done. After all, this is a superior life-form.

RIKER

Superior?

QUINN

Totally.

(voice grows hard)

Now come, Riker. Take a good look.

Riker stands where he is, uncertain of what to do.

95K CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

I think I'll summon our science officer --

QUINN

It won't like your science officer. It likes you.
(rises, grabs Riker's arm)
Now look!

Riker looks down at his arm and grimaces; Quinn is squeezing it with tremendous force. Riker grasps the old man's wrist and tries to pull it off him... he can't.

QUINN

(dark smile)
Vitamins. They do wonders for the body.

RIKER CRIES OUT -- it feels like Quinn is crushing his arm. Unable to break free, HE RAISES HIS OTHER ARM TO STRIKE the admiral. Riker's BLOW IS BLOCKED and QUINN responds by effortlessly THROWING HIM backwards toward the wall. The FIRST OFFICER hits it at breakneck speed and CRUMPLES TO THE FLOOR, severely dazed...

QUINN

(dry -- evil smile)
Ahh, your life is so painful now.
But soon you'll be one of us.

Before Riker can clear his head, QUINN ATTACKS again -- rapping him across the chin WITH A KARATE KICK. Riker staggers to his feet -- Quinn swings from the heels with a sure knockout blow... RIKER DUCKS under it and puts all his weight behind a powerful PUNCH to THE ADMIRAL'S solar plexus.

For a moment, Quinn seems effected, sucking in his stomach and gasping for air... But it quickly passes and he straightens and smiles at a disbelieving Riker, before DEALING HIM A vicious double fisted BACKHAND.

Riker hits his communicator.

RIKER

(pained, weak)
Riker to security. Emergency --

QUINN'S final blow KNOCKS RIKER OUT before he can say another word...

95L EXT. PLANET SURFACE (STOCK FROM #122 SCENE 51C)

ARMUS HAS MOVED OFF THE SHUTTLE AND as it APPROACHES THE GROUP, Riker suddenly feels a great force pull him. He calls out. Data MOVES to help him.

ARMUS
(as slime)
Touch him and he dies.

As the away team watches, Riker -- fighting with all his might -- is pulled inexorably toward the slime. From the other direction, Armus also MOVES toward the hole. As the creature's SHRIEK joins RIKER'S SCREAM, the two SLIP INTO THE SLIME HOLE and DISAPPEAR.

For a beat there is nothing. Then: WE CAN SEE only RIKER'S FACE PRESSED AGAINST THE SKIN.

DATA
Enterprise, ARMUS has enveloped
Commander Riker.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
I'm beaming you up!

ARMUS
If any of you leave now, he dies.
And so do the survivors of the
crash.

The team REACTS.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

96
thru OMITTED
106

107 INT. SICKBAY

CLOSE on the unconscious Riker, under terrific stress -- his muscles tensed, his face sweating.

108 WIDER (OPTICAL)

to include Pulaski and Troi. On the wall panel, the highlighting showing the organism's presence has remained the same.

PULASKI
We've reduced the growth rate
even further... but not enough.

109 ON PULASKI

checking the monitor. She's concerned about Riker's low and erratic vital signs.

PULASKI

And his vital signs are deteriorating.

TROI

But we've isolated the specific areas to stimulate. The feelings were very primal... survival emotions.

PULASKI

They must be producing a type of endorphin that's poisonous to the organisms.

TROI

Can you intensify those emotions?

PULASKI

(nods)

I can refocus the impulse pattern even tighter.

She glances again at the vital signs monitor.

PULASKI (cont'd)

But I don't know if he can withstand it. He's extremely weak.

TROI

Do we have a choice?

Pulaski moves to the device, prepares to activate it once again.

PULASKI

No. If we don't neutralize the infection within half an hour, he'll be dead.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

109A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (STOCK OPTICAL)

In orbit.

PULASKI (V.O.)
Medical log, supplemental.
Commander Riker's condition is
still critical.

110 INT. SICKBAY

Pulaski is preparing to give Riker another zap from the
device.

PULASKI (V.O., cont'd)
I've discovered a way to reverse
the infection's growth rate --
but I may be too late.

Everything's ready. Pulaski glances at the monitor
as she works. Troi can see that Pulaski isn't pleased
with Riker's vital signs:

TROI
He's getting weaker, isn't he?

PULASKI
(nods)
Respiration shallow, heartbeat
extremely irregular.

She shakes her head.

PULASKI (cont'd)
But we can't delay any longer...

Troi nods agreement. Pulaski activates the device.

111 PUSH IN ON RIKER

unconscious, but growing rigid as the current is
applied.

DISSOLVE TO:

111A
thru OMITTED
111B

111C INT. GUEST QUARTERS (STOCK FROM #123 SCENE 56B)

T'Jon then turns and grabs Riker's shoulder in a death grip. WE SEE Riker immobilized by an ELECTRICAL CHARGE.

T'JON

Take us to our planet -- leave us
there with our medicine or this
person dies.

Picard takes a STEP FORWARD, then STOPS.

111C CONTINUED:

T'JON

(continuing)

Don't you see -- I have no choice. We were sent to bring back the Felicium. The suffering on my planet is too great. People are dying. It doesn't matter any more whether we are entitled to the Felicium... we have to have it.

PICARD

Let him go.

T'JON

Take us there now -- or give us a shuttle -- but we must have the medicine... if you refuse, this person dies.

PICARD

I will not be coerced.

T'JON

I'll do it. I'll kill him.

The strain of the pressure is all over T'Jon.

PICARD

(calmly)

No you won't. You're not a killer.

T'Jon releases Riker, who sags a little, then catches his balance. Beverly goes to his assistance.

111D EXT. PLANET SURFACE (STOCK, #121 SC. 13A-22)

Riker and Captain Rice.

RICE

Commander Riker, those answers make no sense.

RIKER

You haven't used my first name once, Paul.

There is a slight hesitation.

111D CONTINUED:

RIKER
(continuing)
You remember it, don't you?

No response. Rice looks confused.

RIKER
(continuing)
You don't, because you don't even
exist. You're a fake -- an image
of the original! Aren't you?...
Answer me!

Rice twitches -- a slight REACTION, then SUDDENLY:

111E NEW ANGLE (OPTICAL)

The image of Captain Rice DISAPPEARS and is REPLACED BY
A WEAPON-LIKE OBJECT. IT QUICKLY MOVES several meters
away.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Report, Number One.

RIKER
The image of Rice has been
replaced by something which is
hovering several meters away.

111F EXT. PLANET SURFACE (OPTICAL)

Riker and the others set to beam up.

RIKER
Prepare to beam up.

TASHA
Commander.

He looks as she indicates a direction. The WEAPON IS
MOVING toward them. Before anyone can answer, THE
WEAPON FIRES.

111G CLOSE ON RIKER (OPTICAL)

The BEAM HITS HIM. He STIFFENS -- and BECOMES ENCASED
IN AN ENERGY FIELD.

111H EXT. PLANET SURFACE - ANGLE ON TASHA (OPTICAL)

She FIRES ON THE WEAPON AND DESTROYS IT.

111I FULL SHOT - AWAY TEAM

Picard's VOICE is heard.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
(tense, tight)
What just happened down there?
Number One! Report!

111J EXT. PLANET SURFACE (OPTICAL)

Tasha and Data APPROACH him. They monitor the energy field with their tricorders.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Report! Report!

Tasha and Data examine the energy field.

TASHA
He can't answer you, Captain.

DATA
Commander Riker has been encased
in some kind of energy field.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Is he alive?

Data and Tasha continue to examine the energy field containing the inert form of Commander William T. Riker.

DATA
Unknown.

111K POV (STOCK, #107 SC. 42-43)

Backlit by LIGHTNING, THREE SMALL, HAIRLESS HUMANOIDS with protruding cupped ears, dressed in strange clothing. They are armed with odd whip-like weapons.

RIKER (V.O.)
Who are you?

At that, the leader snaps his whip toward them, unleashing a rippling electro-plasmic WAVE that races TOWARD CAMERA (OPTICAL).

111L CLOSE - OUR TEAM

Riker, Data and lucky-day Geordi are whacked with the WAVE all together... putting Geordi back to sleep. Data falls unconscious, too. Riker fights it but is hit again, and falls, unconscious.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

112
thru OMITTED
114

115 INT. SICKBAY - ON RIKER

his every muscle taut.

116 WIDER (OPTICAL)

Pulaski examines the wall panel. The highlighting showing the organisms' progress hasn't changed.

PULASKI

The growth rate's down to seven percent.

She checks the monitor. The vital signs are going crazy.

PULASKI (cont'd)

But the organisms are still impairing his neural functions. Respiration is erratic, pulse grossly irregular, blood pressure almost nil.

She makes a decision, turns to a medical crewman:

PULASKI (cont'd)

Tricordrazine.

The medical crewman hands her the hypospray. Pulaski injects Riker, looks at the monitor, shakes her head -- vital signs are better, but still not good.

TROI

Can we tighten the pattern further?

Pulaski considers, nods, and makes an adjustment to the device, intensifying the pattern of current.

117 ON RIKER

sweating more profusely.

DISSOLVE TO:

117A INT. ENGINEERING (STOCK FROM #116 SCENE 70)

The destruct computer is separate from the main computer and is used for this type of emergency only.

COMPUTER

Recognize Picard, Jean-Luc,
Captain...

(pause)

Recognize Riker, William T.,
Commander.

PICARD

Set auto-destruct sequence.

COMPUTER

Does the first officer concur?

RIKER

... Yes. Set auto-destruct
sequence -- now!

A small sign ILLUMINATES "AUTO-DESTRUCT IN (TIME)."

COMPUTER

Auto-destruct will detonate in
four minutes and fifty-nine
seconds... four minutes and
fifty-eight seconds... four
minutes and fifty-seven seconds...

PICARD

Let's go. The only place we can
stop the count is from the bridge.

117B INT. MAIN BRIDGE (STOCK FROM #128 SCENE 117A)

There is the familiar starfield on the viewscreen as
Picard enters from the turbolift.

Geordi and Pulaski are not present. The AFT PANELS
FLASH that AUTO-DESTRUCT is ENGAGED.

COMPUTER VOICE

Thirty seconds to auto-destruct.

117B CONTINUED:

DATA

Captain, we are clear of the void.
You may stop the auto-destruct.

PICARD

Data, on any heading -- warp six
-- now!

117C EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (STOCK OPTICAL)

stretches into warp.

117D INT. MAIN BRIDGE (STOCK FROM #128 SCENE 117E)

Picard's resolve is undiminished.

RIKER

Captain.

PICARD

I don't believe it, Number One.
It could still be part of the
illusion. Data, report.

DATA

All navigational systems confirm
-- we are at warp six -- on
course...

No one even breathes for a long moment...

117E INT. MAIN BRIDGE - (STOCK FROM #143 SCENE 60B & 60D)

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...

117E CONTINUED:

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:

QUICK CUT TO:

117F INT. BATRIS - ENGINEERING (STOCK, #120 SC. 47-56)

The Klingon, KORRIS, moves forward to begin formalized greetings.

KORRIS
I am Korris.

RIKER
We'll handle the formalities later
-- right now we have to get off this
ship. Are there any others still
alive?

KORRIS
No.

Data APPEARS in the torn hatchway.

DATA
I believe there is a quicker way
out of here.

GEORDI
Let's go.

Riker indicates a third figure on the floor.

RIKER
Check him Data.

Data steps over and scans the figure with his tricorder.

DATA
He is alive -- but just barely.

RIKER
Pick him up and let's get out of
here.

117F CONTINUED:

Data starts to lift the stricken man. Korris steps up beside Data.

KORRIS

No. I will carry him.

DATA

As you wish.

INT. BATRIS - CORRIDOR

as the group hurries through the debris. There is a BOILING, RUMBLING EFFECT on the ship.

GEORDI

We're out of time, Commander -- the ship's going to blow.

RIKER

Transporter Room, have you got a lock on us?

TASHA'S COM VOICE

Not yet. Too much interference. You have to get farther away from the Engineering section.

Behind them there is an ominous change in the GAS BUILDUP.

INT. BATRIS - CORRIDOR

They come to a bend in the corridor, turn the corner and bump into a solid wall of debris.

RIKER

End of the line. Transporter Room, we've gone as far as we can. Get us off -- now!

The away team and the Klingons stand ready to beam.

INT. BATRIS - CORRIDOR (OPTICAL)

The BEAM OUT BEGINS, then STOPS, then TRIES TO START again.

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

Tasha shakes her head in frustration, makes an attempt to fine-tune her equipment and tries again.

117F CONTINUED: (2)

INT. BATRIS - CORRIDOR

A CLOUD BOILS up at the end of the corridor. There is a CRACKLING SOUND, followed by a RUMBLE.

ANGLE ON THE AWAY TEAM

They REACT.

EXT. SPACE - THE BATRIS (OPTICAL)

As it BLOWS UP.

QUICK CUT TO:

117G EXT. SPACE (STOCK, #103 SC. 108-130)

The Enterprise and the Tsiolkovsky are still tied by the tractor beam, motionless. Riker's voice reveals the strain he is under.

RIKER'S VOICE

Ship's log, First Officer Riker.
The star has begun disintegrating.
Enterprise will be destroyed
unless it can be moved out of the
path of the star material
hurtling...

EXT. SPACE - EXPLODED MASS OF MATERIAL (OPTICAL)

It is large, irregularly shaped, moving very fast as it was hurled off the star's surface with more power than a hydrogen bomb. To gain a sense of size, it should BLOCK OUT A WHOLE SECTION OF THE STARFIELD as it PASSES CAMERA.

RIKER'S VOICE

(continuing)

... toward us. Our only hope is
for Lieutenant Commander Data in
the time we have left, to regain
his senses and reconnect engine
power to the bridge.

INT. ENGINEER'S OFFICE - ON MACDOUGAL

She is on her knees on the floor, vainly trying to sort out which optical chips belong where.

117G CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON RIKER AND DATA

as they ENTER FAST. MacDougal looks up at Riker, helplessly indicates the chip chaos. Data smiles at Wesley, who grins back cheerfully. Both are still smashed.

WESLEY

Hi, Mister Data.

DATA

Nice to see you, Wesley. What... ?

RIKER

(overlapping; urgently
indicating)

Data! We need the engines on-line
in a hurry, remember?

Meanwhile, Riker is now beginning to perspire like others who have been "infected."

WESLEY

Oh yes, I remember too.

(to Data)

So, Data, if you don't mind...

RIKER

(fast; to Wesley)

We've no time for courtesy!

(fast; to Data)

Get those damned control chips
back in place, Data! In the
correct order!

Data hesitates, surprised at Riker shouting at him.

RIKER

(continuing)

NOW!

WESLEY

(to Data)

It's like a game of "how fast can
you do it?"

DATA

Ah, a game!

Data begins selecting chips, beginning to move more and more rapidly. Wesley moves to the Engineering Room viewer, adjusts the controls there.

117G CONTINUED: (2)

WESLEY

I think I can switch this to the
Main Viewer, sir...

ANOTHER ANGLE - VIEWER (OPTICAL)

as it switches to a SHOT OF THE STAR MATERIAL IN
DISTANCE BUT RACING TOWARD THEM.

ANGLE EMPHASIZING RIKER

turning from viewer to Data.

RIKER

We've got eight or nine minutes,
at most, Data. Can you finish
by then?

ANGLE EMPHASIZING DATA

If necessary, UNDERCRANK CAMERA now to show Data's
hands are moving very fast. He seems to be calculating
Riker's questions, then shakes his head without looking
up:

DATA

No. This will take slightly more
time than we have, sir.

Riker becomes aware that his hand is wet, realizes he
is "infected" too.

RIKER

Dammit, NO! I can't afford to
get it!

He stands, sways, grabs for support.

EXT. SPACE - MASS OF MATERIAL FROM STAR (OPTICAL)

hurtling through space -- too fast.

CLOSE ON DATA AND HIS HANDS

UNDERCRANK CAMERA. His hands are flying -- almost a
blur. More and more of the isolinear optical chips
are set in the command computer board.

DATA

If we had just a minute more,
sir...

117G CONTINUED: (3)

ANGLE ON WESLEY

He looks up toward Engineering Room viewer.

CLOSE ON VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

The mass of star material closer, hurtling toward them.

WIDER ANGLE

as Picard bursts in, presses his hypo against MacDougal, then Riker, then another person, etc.

RIKER

We didn't make it, Captain. If
we had just a minute or so more...

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE, TSIOLKOVSKY (OPTICAL)

with the star material looming large as it rushes down upon them.

INT. ENGINEER'S OFFICE - ON WESLEY

His fingers begin to dance on the panel.

WESLEY

Yes, then reversing power leads,
back through the force
activator... repulser beam hard
against the Tsiolkovsky...

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE, TSIOLKOVSKY (OPTICAL)

The Tsiolkovsky now begins drifting to one side,
beginning to spin clear with the Enterprise moving away
from it.

INT. ENGINEER'S OFFICE - WIDE ANGLE

Riker eyes the viewer in surprise.

RIKER

We're pushing away!

Data lifts his hands from the command computer board.
The isolinear optical chips GLOW on the board.

RIKER

(continuing; into
communicator)
Bridge, engage engines!

117G CONTINUED: (4)

EXT. SPACE - TSIOLKOVSKY AND MASS OF MATERIAL

The mass of material crashes into the Tsiolkovsky. Her warp and impulse engines EXPLODE SIMULTANEOUSLY on impact in a mighty BLAZE OF LIGHT. But Enterprise is accelerating out of trouble.

CUT TO:

117H EXT. SPACE (STOCK OPTICAL FROM #137 SCENES 5 & 6)

as a galaxy class starship (USS Yamato) explodes in a blinding flash. When the flash subsides, we have a forward view of space and a barrage of fiery objects hurtling toward us. Suddenly the saucer section, engulfed in flames and explosions, sails past us...

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

118
thru OMITTED
120

121 INT. SICKBAY (OPTICAL)

CLOSE on Riker, pale and deathly. WIDEN to reveal Troi and Pulaski. Troi looks at the wall panel:

TROI
(optimistic)
The growth rate's almost zero.

Pulaski shakes her head with determination --

PULASKI
That's not good enough.

-- and makes one more adjustment to the device.

122 RIKER

He looks like a fighter after a series of hard jabs, and the memories now rush at him.

DISSOLVE TO:

123 RIKER'S MENTAL POV

A BLINDING CACOPHONY of juxtaposed IMAGES -- VOICES --
PIECES OF SCENES. The tempo quickens, builds to a
climax, and --

SMASH CUT TO:

124 INT. SICKBAY - CLOSE ON RIKER

as his body jerks in a massive convulsion --

125 WIDER ANGLE

as Riker's vital signs jump -- then slowly begin returning to normal levels. Pulaski, surprised, turns to the wall panel --

126 CLOSE ON THE WALL DISPLAY (OPTICAL)

The highlighting is gone.

127 ON PULASKI AND TROI

astounded. Pulaski runs the scanner over Riker's body to confirm. She taps a com panel:

PULASKI

Sickbay to bridge.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Go ahead, Doctor.

PULASKI

We've eradicated the infection.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

I'm on my way.

127A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (STOCK OPTICAL)

Yes, still in orbit.

128 INT. SICKBAY - CLOSE ON RIKER

as the device is rolled away. His eyes open. He's exhausted, but aware.

129 OMITTED

130 WIDER

as Riker sees Troi looking at him with concern. He smiles at her to reassure her.

130 CONTINUED:

RIKER
You still here?

TROI
(relieved)
I could ask you the same question.

130 CONTINUED: (2)

Pulaski steps up.

PULASKI

How do you feel?

RIKER

Beat. You wouldn't believe the dreams I've been having...

TROI

Yes, we would.

PULASKI

You'll be pleased to know that we've terminated the infection.

RIKER

Great work, Doctor.

Riker tries to move, realizes his head is nailed down.

RIKER (cont'd)

Now, if you'll let me get out of here and back to work...

PULASKI

Lie still. I have a few dozen tests to run first.

In b.g., Picard and Data ENTER.

RIKER

Why? I feel fine.

PULASKI

There may be some residual memory loss. I just want to make sure you still know who you are.

RIKER

Of course I know who I am. I'm Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the USS Enterprise.

131 ON PICARD AND DATA

stepping up to Riker.

131 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Delighted you're feeling better,
Captain.

(re: Data)

The admiral and I were worried
about you.

Data gives Picard a confused look.

DATA

Sir, I do not believe you have
the authority to promote me to
the rank of admiral.

As Picard and Riker exchange a smile, we --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END