

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"The Price"
(f.k.a. "A Price Far Above Rubies")
#40273-156

Written by
Hannah Louise Shearer

Directed by
Robert Scheerer

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REVISED FINAL DRAFT

SEPTEMBER 25, 1989

STAR TREK: "The Price" - 9/25/89 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Price"

CAST

PICARD	SETH MENDOZA
RIKER	DEVINONI RAL
DATA	
BEVERLY	Barzan
TROI	PREMIER BHAVANI
GEORDI	
WORF	
WESLEY	Caldonian
COMPUTER VOICE	LEYOR
	Ferengi
	DAIMON GOSS
	DOCTOR ARRIDOR
Non-speaking	
TWO MEDICAL ASSISTANTS	non-speaking
WAITERS	ROJAY
FIVE OFF-DUTY CREWMEMBERS	KOL
TECHNICIAN	

STAR TREK: "The Price" - 9/25/89 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Price"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE
 MAIN BRIDGE
 CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM
 OBSERVATION LOUNGE
 TURBOLIFT
 CORRIDOR
 TRANSPORTER ROOM
 TEN-FORWARD
 SICKBAY

EXERCISE ROOM
 TROI'S QUARTERS
 FERENGI GUEST QUARTERS

SHUTTLECRAFT
 INTERIOR

FERENGI POD
 INTERIOR

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE
SHUTTLECRAFT

FERENGI SHIP
 FERENGI POD

WORMHOLE EFFECT

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Price"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

MENDOZA	men-DOE-zah
DEVINONI RAL	DEV-in-on-ee Raal
BHAVANI	bah-VON-ee
LEYOR	LAY-or
DAIMON GOSS	DAY-maun GOSS
KOL	COAL
ARRIDOR	ARE-eh-door
ROJAY	ROE-jay
FERENGI	fir-ENG-ee
BARZAN	BAR-zan
CALDONIANS	cal-DOAN-ians
CHRYSALIANS	chris-AL-ians
WORMHOLE	WORM-HOLE
MESON	MAY-zahn
LEPTON	LEP-tahn

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Price"
TEASER

FADE IN:

1 CLOSEUP OF O'BRIEN

Sitting.

O'BRIEN

The truth is I'm a career man...
you know, married to my job...
Mitzi doesn't understand that...
I like her a lot... but I just
don't think I'm ready for two
marriages if you know what I
mean...

2 REVERSE OF TROI - TROI'S OFFICE

She's placid as usual, listening, or perhaps on
automatic pilot.

O'BRIEN

(continuing)

But at the same time, you know
I wouldn't want to lose her...

TROI

Maybe you should come in with her
and talk about it together.

O'BRIEN

Oh, I couldn't ask her to do
that...

TROI

Sure you could. Why don't I make
another appointment for you...

And as she calls up her schedule on a PADD.

3 INT. CORRIDOR

Troi walking, looking very tired... Wes sees her,
calls... moves down another corridor to her...

WESLEY
Counselor Troi... ?

She takes the fatigue off her face, stops and turns...

TROI
Yes, Wesley...

WESLEY
Can I talk to you a minute... I
have a real problem with my
mother.

4 ON TROI

who listens patiently as Wesley continues...

WESLEY (O.S.)
She's being completely
unreasonable... see there's a
party on Holodeck Four tonight...
and all the other kids are staying
overnight... well, most of them
and...

As she nods...

5 INT. TROI'S QUARTERS

Troi ENTERS, exhausted, starts to take off her
jacket...

TROI
Computer, dispatches...

COMPUTER
A research inquiry from the
Manitoba Journal of
Interplanetary Psychology and
three communiqués from your
mother...

TROI
(reacts, three?)
Transfer my mother's letters to
my viewer...
(MORE)

5 CONTINUED:

TROI (Cont'd)

(beat)

... and computer, I'd like a...
a real chocolate sundae.

COMPUTER

(beat)

Define "real" in context, please.

TROI

Real... not one of your perfectly
synthesized, ingeniously enhanced
imitations... real chocolate ice
cream, real whipped cream...

COMPUTER

This unit is programmed to provide
sources of nutritional value.
Your request does not fall within
current guidelines.

Losing patience...

TROI

Listen, computer...

COMPUTER

(continuing)

Do you wish to override program?

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Picard to Counselor Troi.

TROI

(frowns, to herself)

Now what?

(keys insignia)

Yes, Captain?

INTERCUT:

6 INT. TEN FORWARD

A casual party in progress... PICARD, WORF, RIKER,
DATA.

6 CONTINUED:

In the background, MENDOZA, a Federation negotiator, chats with several aliens including BHAVANI, the leader of Barzan, and LEYOR, the Caldonian representative. PICARD is smiling, jovial. A WAITER refills his champagne glass and not for the first time.

PICARD

The pleasure of your company is requested, Counselor. We're having an impromptu reception for the arriving delegates.

TROI

(reacts, not tonight)
Captain, I'm not dressed for a reception...

PICARD

Oh, just throw on any old thing. We're about to get our first look at the wormhole.

BACK TO:

7 INT. TROI'S QUARTERS

TROI

Of course, Captain. I'm on my way. Troi out.

EXITING, frowns...

TROI

(to herself)
God forbid, I should miss the first look at the wormhole.

8 INT. TEN FORWARD (OPTICAL)

GEORDI and BEVERLY have joined the fun now too... waiters serve hors d'oeuvres... Troi ENTERS, smiling, serene, our Troi... Riker goes to meet her... offers an arm...

RIKER

May I escort you in, Miss Troi...

Moving with them...

8 CONTINUED:

TROI

Just tell me there's some
chocolate here...

PICARD

Ah, Counselor Troi... allow me
to do the introductions... Premier
Bhavani of the Barzan...

Bhavani is a strong, no-nonsense, elderly woman; an
able judge of people. She wears a breathing device.

TROI

Your discovery has certainly
produced a great deal of
excitement, Premier.

BHAVANI

Hopefully, it will also produce
a new era of prosperity for my
people.

MENDOZA

We'll see to that...

PICARD

You know Mister Mendoza, the
Federation negotiator...

MENDOZA

A pleasure to see you again,
Counselor Troi.

Mendoza is a middle-aged man with intelligent eyes and
confidence.

PICARD

One of the Federation's worthy
competitors in the bidding, Leyor
of the Caldonians.

LEYOR

Madame.

The Caldonian is more reserved -- with a quietness that
comes more from academia than from shyness. Joining
them is DEVINONI RAL, a well-dressed, strikingly
attractive man with a disarming smile. On his arm is a
stunning woman, an accessory.

DEVINONI

And I am Devinoni Ral.

8 CONTINUED: (2)

TROI

Ship's Counselor Deanna Troi.

And it's already there between them in the moment, they both feel it. Introducing his lady friend as a pro forma aside --

DEVINONI

My traveling companion, Rojay.

The woman, bored, barely acknowledges.

MENDOZA

My good friend, Ral, is the best hired gun in the business.

TROI

Hired gun?

DEVINONI

My "good friend", Mendoza means that I am a negotiator who serves a variety of clients... on this occasion I represent the Chrysalians.

BHAVANI

I believe it's almost time, isn't it Captain?

PICARD

Indeed. It will be visible directly ahead...

The crowd moves to the windows...

MENDOZA

Is it always on time, Bhavani?

BHAVANI

Always. We see it every two hundred and thirty-three minutes... our scientists say it's due to radiation buildup in the accretion disk. The visible burst is very brief..

On her last line... the sky lights up with a dramatic revelation... a wormhole... reactions.

8 CONTINUED: (3)

BHAVANI

There it is, ladies and gentlemen.
The Barzan Wormhole. The first
and only stable wormhole known
to exist. It's yours... for the
right price.

The group is overwhelmed at the spectacular sight
before their eyes... except as we see Troi, she senses
something else and as she turns, she sees Devinoni is
not looking at the wormhole, but at her. Her eyes meet
his... and he grins... and as the rest of the room sees
stars... they see only each other as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

9 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit around the Barzan planet.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, Stardate 43385.7.
We are in orbit around Barzan,
a planet which is entertaining
bids for control of
what appears to be a most unique,
stable wormhole. It could
conceivably provide a permanent
shortcut within our galaxy.

10 INT. OBSERVATION DECK (OPTICAL)

Picard, Worf, Bhavani, Mendoza, Leyor, Devinoni.
Bhavani is at the head of the table, addressing the
others...

BHAVANI

And as you all know, the
environment on my planet is
completely inhospitable to most
other life forms. So I'd like
to express my appreciation to you,
Captain Picard, and your fine crew
for hosting these negotiations
aboard the Enterprise.

(Picard acknowledges)

Remember, Mister Mendoza, it
doesn't give the Federation an
advantage.

Chuckles around the table. Mendoza acknowledges.
Devinoni studies his competition around the table.
He deliberately plays back throughout the scene. But
he's working.

10 CONTINUED:

BHAVANI

(getting serious)

The Barzan has been a society dependent on others for generations. We want that to end. The appearance of this stable wormhole in our space provides us with our first true natural resource. We have neither the experience nor technology to exploit it. You do.

Riker ENTERS, with some concern on his face...

RIKER

Excuse me, a delegation of... Ferengi... wishes to be beamed aboard...

PICARD

You were not expecting the Ferengi, Premier... ?

BHAVANI

No, but I do not wish to create ill will, Captain. If they are interested in bidding, I have no objection.

Picard thinks about saying he does... but realizes it's not his place. Very well...

PICARD

(keys insignia)

Chief O'Brien, this is Picard. Beam the Ferengi directly to the observation lounge.

O'BRIEN'S COM VOICE

Aye, Captain...

Three Ferengi MATERIALIZE near Riker. Their leader is GOSS. The others are KOL AND ARRIDOR.

GOSS

On behalf of all Ferengi, I protest... why were we not invited to these negotiations...

10 CONTINUED: (2)

Riker exchanges a glance with Picard...

BHAVANI

My apologies. We did not anticipate your interest. You are welcome to join us.

GOSS

I am DaiMon Goss. These are my consuls... Kol and Doctor Arridor.
(to Riker)
We'll need chairs...

Standing... and this must all be a quick exchange --

PICARD

DaiMon, I am Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the Enterprise... I'm serving as host for these proceedings...

GOSS

Good, then see to it that we get chairs at once.

PICARD

(with an edge)
Perhaps you misunderstood...

GOSS

Fine, fine, just have your Klingon servant...

WORF

(pointed)
I am in charge of security.

GOSS

Then who gets the chairs?

PICARD

DaiMon, due to the intimate nature of these negotiations, all parties agreed that one representative would suffice. I will be happy to provide your consuls with accommodations... and you may have my chair...

GOSS

Very well. Kol, the bag...

10 CONTINUED: (3)

Kol hands Goss a sack... Riker leads Kol and Arridor out. They EXIT. Picard moves toward the door as Goss exchanges places with him.

GOSS

We can handle all the pleasantries later. I'm sure I'll never remember your names anyway, eh?
(laughs)
Enough of this foolishness. Let's get down to business.

He turns the sack upside down and a pile of gold bars spills out across the tabletop.

GOSS

I'll match anyone's best offer...
and add the gold on top of it.

He holds out his hands in a fait accompli motion. Sits back in his chair, with a confident grin. Bhavani reacts, nonplussed. Picard EXITS...

11 OUTSIDE THE DOOR - CLOSEUP

a beat as the doors slide closed behind him and his eyes look skyward with a my-God reaction...

12 INT. TROI'S OFFICE (OPTICAL)

She is studying personnel files of O'Brien and his girlfriend... but her mind drifts for a moment and she smiles to herself...

TROI

Computer... show me the file on
delegate Devinoni Ral...

On her screen, a very good picture of Ral appears with a read out...

12 CONTINUED:

COMPUTER

Devinoni Ral, human, age forty-one,
born Brussels, European
Alliance, relocated at age nineteen
to Hurkos Three, a non-aligned
planet...

There is a chime at the door... she presses a button to
pause the readout...

TROI

Come in.

The doors slide open to reveal Devinoni... she reacts.
He ENTERS, smiles...

DEVINONI

Should I call for an
appointment... ?

TROI

No... I... was just looking over
some personnel files...

Which she casually clears off the screen...

DEVINONI

Too bad. I had hoped you might
be thinking about... me.

Which of course she was. She smiles...

TROI

I thought you'd be deep into
negotiations by now...

DEVINONI

In recess. I never play the
opening rounds, anyway.
Inconsequential.

He sits on her desk, looking down at her.

DEVINONI

Besides there are more interesting
things to negotiate on this ship.
Like dinner tonight?

TROI

What about your... traveling
companion?

12 CONTINUED: (2)

DEVINONI

My traveling companion... is traveling.

(off her look)

I sent her home.

TROI

Why?

DEVINONI

You know why.

She does. Almost as a defense mechanism...

TROI

Weren't you getting along?

DEVINONI

Don't do that.

TROI

What?

DEVINONI

Don't do "Counselor" Troi.

TROI

Was I?

DEVINONI

(nods, beat)

When you leave this office, who are you?

She reacts. How do you answer a question like that?

DEVINONI

(an insight about her)

Oh. So that's how it is.

He stands... studying her... moving around her chair...

DEVINONI

You never do. You never leave the office.

He hits home. Uncannily. He's behind her now... his hands are in her hair... what the hell?

TROI

What are you...

12 CONTINUED: (3)

DEVINONI

Sssh...

His fingers begin to unpin her hair... and we begin a ballet of long hair and fingers and hands in constant motion --

13 HER HAIR

cascading free...

14 HIS HAND

guiding the long strands down the back of her neck...
stroking it... moving it...

15 HER HAND

moving hair out of her eyes... finding his hand which
takes hers... and turns her in...

16 THE SWIVEL CHAIR - REAR ANGLE

long hair flowing over the back of the chair to face...

17 HER FACE

twisting to meet...

18 HIS FACE

and he takes her hair in both hands and moves it away
from her mouth... and everything says he's going to
kiss her but he doesn't...

DEVINONI

Dinner at eight?

A quick gentle grin... and he's gone... we stay on
Troi's face... we can hear the doors hiss open and
closed... and Troi suddenly looks down and we move to
find as she realizes her hands are gripping the arms of
her chair as though she's on a perilous ride. And she
is.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

18A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

19 INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

Picard, Riker, Data and Mendoza are studying the viewscreen where charts and graphs of the wormhole are displayed.

DATA

The data from the Barzan's probe into the wormhole is impressive, Captain. The wormhole delivered the probe beyond the Denkiri Arm, in the Gamma Quadrant.

PICARD

It would take us nearly a century at warp nine to cross that distance...

DATA

The same distance could be achieved in a matter of seconds through the wormhole.

Riker groans. Off their looks...

RIKER

I was just imagining the Ferengi collecting tolls in front if we lose to them...

MENDOZA

I don't think the Ferengi are the greatest threat at the table... with all of DaiMon Goss' bluster, they don't have the resources the Barzans need.

RIKER

I'd say that fellow Devinoni's the one to watch out for...

MENDOZA

(reacts)

An accurate observation... what made you recognize that?

19 CONTINUED:

RIKER

He's the most comfortable man in the group...

MENDOZA

(appreciating)

You must play poker, Commander...

RIKER

(grin)

Poker, isn't that a game of some sort?

PICARD

Commander Riker teaches poker.

MENDOZA

Our skills are not dissimilar, Commander.

PICARD

Mister Mendoza, if this lives up to its billing... it is a discovery of extraordinary value... but it is a big "if"...

RIKER

Wormholes are here one moment, gone the next... a stable wormhole is unheard of.

MENDOZA

(reacts)

Are you saying this may not be what it seems?

DATA

The Barzans do not have manned space travel, so they had to resort to an automated probe. Its findings are limited. It cannot be determined from these charts how stable the wormhole really is or how long it will remain intact.

19 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

The Federation could wind up
"buying" itself the proverbial
lemon, Mister Mendoza.

MENDOZA

And once the contract is
negotiated and closed, we would
be obliged to fulfill the terms.

19 CONTINUED: (3)

RIKER

We really ought to see for ourselves.

MENDOZA

I don't think Bhavani could object to that...

RIKER

Geordi has continuous visual contact with the wormhole, Captain. He's the logical choice...

DATA

I would also like to volunteer, Captain...

PICARD

(acknowledges)

Before anyone goes in there, we're going to conduct a full sensor analysis. I want to do everything possible to determine that it's safe.

(beat)

If we're satisfied, Data, you and Commander La Forge will enter the wormhole tomorrow.

20 INT. GUEST QUARTERS

Goss and his aides, Kol and Arridor are huddled together, up to no good. Arridor has a syringe and is extracting from Goss's neck (with considerable pain to Goss) some fluid.

ARRIDOR

Just a moment of discomfort for a good cause, DaiMon.

Arridor takes his fluid and does some quick work with it in a dish...

ARRIDOR

You understand this will not be lethal.

20 CONTINUED:

GOSS

Doctor, you surprise me. I have
no wish to kill anyone. A short
term crippling will suffice.

ARRIDOR

Then, this will be just fine.

He moves over and takes from his work a small (silver?)
drop of fluid and squeezes a drop on Goss's left
palm... it immediately changes color.

ARRIDOR

A distillation of your own blood
pyrocytes... harmless to you...

(MORE)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

ARRIDOR (Cont'd)
undetectable by the ship's
bio-filters... but when absorbed
through your victim's skin, it
will provoke an extreme allergic
reaction.

GOSS
I'd say it is time to extend the
hand of the Ferengi to the
representative of the Federation.

21 OMITTED

22 INT. CORRIDOR - AT TROI'S DOOR

Devinoni rings the chime. The door slides open to reveal a very sexy lady... Deanna Troi, her hair still down, a lovely dress...

DEVINONI
Much... better.

TROI
Thank you. Come in for a drink?

He ENTERS.

23 INT. TROI'S QUARTERS (OPTICAL)

Looking around with a critical eye.

DEVINONI
Ah, Federation decor...

TROI
Not your style?

DEVINONI
Conformity is not my style.

At the food dispenser...

TROI
What would you like?

He considers that for a moment... then leans in and kisses her gently on the lips.

DEVINONI
I'd even like another.

She turns slightly with a "hold on"... takes a deep breath...

23 CONTINUED:

DEVINONI
(teasing)
There she is again... Counselor
Troi...

TROI
I am not... computer, champagne...

DEVINONI
... for two...

A beat. The champagne arrives. He looks at her. She
doesn't quite meet his eyes.

DEVINONI
(tongue-in-cheek)
Am I moving too fast for you?

TROI
No, I'm moving too fast for me.

DEVINONI
Mmm, I like that better...

TROI
(and now she looks at
him)
I haven't been able to stop
thinking about you all day...

Upon which she kisses him... passionately.
Afterwards...

DEVINONI
You must've had a nice day.

TROI
Anticipation is fun.

They kiss again.

TROI
We'll be late for dinner.

DEVINONI
Very late.

And as he picks her up in his arms and moves toward the
bedroom...

23A INT. SICKBAY (FORMERLY 29)

Mendoza ENTERS, walking unsteadily... sweating, looks a bit dizzy. Beverly notices, steps up.

BEVERLY
Mister Mendoza?

MENDOZA
I seem to be a bit warm...

He stumbles -- and passes out. Beverly's right there; holding him, calling to a near-by MEDICAL SUPERNUMERARY...

BEVERLY
I need some help here...

And as the assistant rushes to help her, supporting Mendoza to a bed...

23B INT. CAPT. READY ROOM (FROM SCENE 32)

Picard and Riker are with the three Ferengi.

GOSS
You attempt to gain every unfair advantage, Picard...

PICARD
Premier Bhavani has no objection...

GOSS
Well, I most certainly do...
First, you conveniently arrange to play host... now you plan to send your own manned probe into the wormhole... the Federation thinks it can do anything it wants to. And I will not tolerate it any longer...

23B CONTINUED:

PICARD

We will gladly share the results
of our exploration with all the
delegates...

GOSS

And you expect us to believe what
you report?

RIKER

Then send in your own probe, Goss.

GOSS

That's exactly what I intend to
do. And I strongly suggest you
stay out of our way.

They EXIT in a huff.

PICARD

Tell Data and La Forge to do
themselves a favor and stay out
of their way.

Riker acknowledges.

BEVERLY'S COM VOICE

Captain Picard, please come to
Sickbay...

PICARD

(keys insignia)
Acknowledged, Doctor.

24
thru OMITTED
32

33 INT. SICKBAY

Mendoza is unconscious on a diagnostic bed. Two
MEDICAL ASSISTANTS tend to him.

BEVERLY is working a computer, and not getting
satisfaction from its readout. Picard and Riker stand
over Mendoza's bed. Picard shakes his head at what
seems an unfortunate turn of events.

BEVERLY

Whatever he's got is obviously
not life threatening -- it's some
kind of system-wide histaminic
reaction. He certainly can't go
back to the negotiations for
several days.

33 CONTINUED:

PICARD
(a beat)
Keep us advised.

Moving with Picard and Riker out of Sickbay...

PICARD
The Federation's top negotiator
taken out by a mysterious ailment.
Suspicious?

RIKER
With the Ferengi around, always.

34 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

PICARD
Well, I guess you'll have to fill
in for him, Number One.

RIKER
Me?

PICARD
I am the designated host. It
would be a most awkward
transition. The next likely
choice is you. Mister Mendoza
would agree. He was quite
impressed with your natural
instincts.

RIKER
Excuse me, sir, but those weren't
natural instincts... they're poker
instincts... A parlor game
doesn't exactly prepare me for
this...

PICARD
Yes, the stakes are higher. But
then... that's when the game gets
interesting, doesn't it,
Commander.

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34 CONTINUED:

He pats Riker on the back... and on the commander's
reaction...

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

35 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard, Worf, Wesley at their usual stations.
Supernumerary at OPS.

WESLEY

The wormhole will reappear in
thirty seconds.

PICARD

Shuttle nine, stand by...

WORF

Ferengi pod is moving into
position, Captain...

36 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL)

The Ferengi pod moves into position beside the
Enterprise shuttle.

37 INT. SHUTTLE

Data and Geordi. Data is piloting. Looking out the
window...

GEORDI

(transmitting)

Ferengi pod, this is Lieutenant
Commander La Forge in the
Enterprise shuttle.

INTERCUT:

38 INT. FERENGI POD

Kol is the pilot... Arridor beside him.

ARRIDOR

This is Doctor Arridor, go ahead.

38 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Would you care to take the point,
Doctor?

ARRIDOR

We will gladly yield that honor
to you, Lieutenant Commander.

39 EXT. SPACE - THE WORMHOLE (OPTICAL)

As it suddenly blinks into existence in the center of the accretion disk. The subspace anomaly is itself a reflective half-sphere. It is rather like a soap bubble resting on the surface of a table, and can be entered from three planes.

40 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

PICARD

Proceed when ready.

41 EXT. SPACE - (OPTICAL)

As the Enterprise shuttle noses into the bubble and VANISHES. The Ferengi pod follows a beat later.

42 EXT. SHUTTLE AND FERENGI POD (OPTICAL)

The spectacular ride through the light show. A spectrum of primary colors are flowing in waves at the shuttle. There is a beautiful symmetry to these effects. A sense of something perfectly in balance.

43 OMITTED

44 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

WORF

Contact with the shuttle, sir.

PICARD

Pipe it in, Lieutenant.

Data's voice comes over the speakers, but it is gradually getting very slow, finally so distorted that he cannot be understood... until it is mere broken sounds, no longer even connected.

DATA'S COM VOICE

Captain, we have penetrated the outer event horizon of the wormhole. Sensors read severe doppler shifts...

(distorted)

What the bridge crew is hearing is gibberish. Picard frowns.

WESLEY

It's the relativistic time dilation, sir. Time is moving more slowly inside their part of the wormhole. I can process the audio to compensate...

PICARD

Make it so.

44 CONTINUED:

Wesley makes his adjustments, and now as Data's message becomes understandable... although it comes out with gaps between words, as though the computer is storing up and processing material and then playing it back.

DATA'S COM VOICE
... and intense energy fields which appear to be stabilizing the wormhole. It is not clear why...
Now approaching the singularity...

The voice fades out... static...

WESLEY
They've passed beyond our communication capabilities, sir...

Picard acknowledges and...

45 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Riker is at the table with the delegates, settling in... Devinoni studies Riker, senses his discomfort, decides to exploit it... but very, very cordially.

DEVINONI
Commander, I appreciate what a difficult position this is for you. If you don't understand something, I hope you won't be embarrassed to ask me...

Riker recognizes the ploy... responds to it.

45 CONTINUED:

RIKER

I think I have an idea what the rules are.

DEVINONI

That's what makes it so interesting... the rules of the game change to fit the moment.

RIKER

In that regard, it's not unlike commanding a starship, Mister Ral.

They nod to each other, formal adversaries.

BHAVANI

Commander, Mister Mendoza has already presented many of the details of the Federation proposal. Is there anything you would like to add?

RIKER

A complete analysis of our bid is available on the ship's computer for your consideration, Premier... If I may summarize...

Riker rises, goes to the viewscreen, calls up, a complex graph showing the specifics of the proposal... we don't need to see it in detail, but Riker will refer to it for illustration...

RIKER

Our proposal includes technology that will enhance your food production, your mining capabilities, and space travel.

46 DEVINONI

watches Bhavani's reaction

46 CONTINUED:

RIKER (O.S.)

(continuing)

We offer scholars and scientists to investigate the wormhole's potential. And perhaps most critical of all, we offer Starfleet. The security of this passage must never be compromised. We offer protection of the wormhole in perpetuity.

Riker sits, feeling he's done pretty well for the first time up. Devinoni stays seated... his eyes still on Bhavani. Her eyes meet his...

BHAVANI

Mister Ral... ?

DEVINONI

(a beat, as though reluctant)

Mister Riker's placed a great deal of emphasis on defense... a subject he obviously knows well, having served Starfleet in many a conflict.

And Bhavani unconsciously barely nods... a tell... Devinoni catches it... stands...

DEVINONI

(continuing)

The Chrysalians are enemies of no one... and choose to remain that way. Neutral.

RIKER

Neutral. And uninvolved, sir, in virtually all interstellar matters of consequence.

Devinoni moves over to Riker's chart on the viewscreen as though to study it...

46 CONTINUED: (2)

DEVINONI

(interrupting)

No one would claim that the
Chrysalians are as powerful as
the mighty Federation, but we have
resources and technology and
scientists too. We have also had
peace for ten generations.

Riker reacts. Devinoni nods to him.

46 CONTINUED: (2)

DEVINONI
This is a fine proposal,
Commander.

He turns off the viewscreen. Overlapping... the groan
of Deanna Troi...

47 INT. TROI'S QUARTERS - CLOSE ON HER FOOT

is shiny with oil... as his hands work, slowly,
methodically massaging it...

DEVINONI (O.S.)
I was just thinking...

TROI (O.S.)
Mmmm?

DEVINONI (O.S.)
Maybe I could stretch out these
negotiations a few extra days.

TROI (O.S.)
Mmmm.

DEVINONI (O.S.)
Would you like that?

TROI (O.S.)
(yes)
Mmm-hmmm.

His hands continue to work... then her foot pulls away
and after a beat, Troi's face lies in the same spot...
(the camera can be locked)... his hands begin to
massage oil into her fingers... looking up off
camera...

TROI
Devinoni Ral, who are you?

48 NEW ANGLE - WIDER

as he continues to massage her fingers... they are
dressed in sexy nightclothes... his pajama top is
off.

48 CONTINUED:

DEVINONI

What do your Betazoid senses tell you about me?

TROI

Not very much...

(smiles)

My human physical response must be blocking them out.

DEVINONI

Good.

TROI

It's never happened before.

DEVINONI

I rather like it that I'm more difficult to read than your other men...

TROI

I don't have any others... currently.

DEVINONI

How about Commander Riker?

Mood breaker. She sits up.

TROI

Who have you been talking to... ?

DEVINONI

No one. I just sensed something when I saw the two of you together.

TROI

(reinstates the mood)

Will Riker and I are good friends.

DEVINONI

Uh huh...

She sort of pushes him playfully down on the bed, he rolls on his stomach and she climbs on his back... begins to knead oil across his back...

TROI

It was once a little more than that.

48 CONTINUED: (2)

DEVINONI

Mmmm-hmm...

TROI

And how come we're talking about
me and not you?

DEVINONI

Don't you have enough people
telling you about their lives?
Who counsels the counselor?

She smiles, he has a point.

TROI

Uh uh, I want to know about you
now...

He turns over. She's sitting on his lower chest.

DEVINONI

I am a man of commerce. And I'm
what you see right now. No games,
no strategies. Just me, wanting
to run away with you.

(she reacts)

And knowing that if I asked you,
you'd never leave this damned
ship.

Yes she would... right now, in this moment, she
would... but she knows better than to trust the moment
and avoids responding.

TROI

When I first saw you, I felt as
if I'd been waiting for you. I've
been trying to understand why or
how that's possible.

DEVINONI

Does it matter?

48 CONTINUED: (3)

She shakes her head, no.

DEVINONI

It will... when I tell you. But
you must promise never to tell
anyone else.

TROI

What?

DEVINONI

I am partly Betazoid too.
(she reacts)
My mother was half... I am one
quarter.

TROI

You're empathic?

DEVINONI

The only one of five children.
I must admit I was never as
comfortable sensing emotions as
you seem to be...

TROI

That's why you left Earth...

He acknowledges.

DEVINONI

I've learned to live with it, use
it... as you have... but still,
it isolates us, doesn't it... ?
(she acknowledges)
I thought it would always be that
way for me. Now, all of a sudden
the rules I live by don't mean
anything any more. I had tucked
my heart away... didn't need it,
didn't want it. At the
negotiating table it can be fatal
to have a heart... but I never
realized how much I missed it
until I looked at you.

And as she stretches out on top of him, leans down to
be with him...

48A EXT. WORMHOLE (OPTICAL)

The shuttle continues to move through the light show.

49 INT. SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

GEORDI

I'm picking up an increase in accretion matter filtering in from the terminus.

50

thru OMITTED

51

51A EXT. SPACE - WORMHOLE EXIT (OPTICAL)

Calm. Quiet. A sharp contrast to the excitement of the last shot. No visible sign of the wormhole... and then suddenly the shuttle bursts out of "nowhere" ... a beat later, the Ferengi pod follows...

51B EXT. SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

As it stabilizes.

GEORDI

We made it...

DATA

Monitors are functioning normally again.

GEORDI

(to com)

Ferengi pod, everybody in one piece over there?

51C INT. FERENGI POD

ARRIDOR

Our condition is no concern of yours, Enterprise shuttle. We are competitors in this venture, not partners. Ferengi pod, out.

51D INT. SHUTTLE

GEORDI
(to himself)
Happy landings to you too.

DATA
(re: readings)
Curious.

GEORDI
Huh?

DATA
We are not where we are supposed
to be.

GEORDI
What do you mean... we're on the
other side of the wormhole, aren't
we... ?

DATA
According to the Barzan probe,
we should be in the Gamma
Quadrant... but the readings
clearly indicate we are nearly
two hundred light years away.
In sector three-five-five-six of
the Delta Quadrant.

GEORDI
Maybe the Barzan's readings were
wrong...

DATA
Maybe their readings were
correct. Their probe could have
exited the wormhole at a different
location.

51E ANGLE - WINDOW (OPTICAL)

to see outside... the wormhole is still invisible.
Geordi adjusts his VISOR, reacts to something he
sees...

GEORDI
Data, I'm picking up a subatomic
fluctuation... meson and lepton
activity is increasing...

51E CONTINUED:

As Data reacts, runs a check of the monitors...

DATA
Gravitational acceleration is also
increasing...

Push in on Geordi staring out...

GEORDI
Something very strange is
happening to this wormhole.

As his concern grows...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

52 INT. EXERCISE ROOM

The room is mirrored, set up for exercising. Beverly is stretching as Troi ENTERS late...

TROI

Sorry.

She's clearly up and bouncy, does a liberating stretch, and shakes with good feelings... and Beverly has to notice...

BEVERLY

You're unusually "limber" this morning.

TROI

(smiles)

I'll say.

BEVERLY

Uh huh... ?

TROI

Devinoni Ral.

They begin dance stretching. Off Beverly's look --

52 CONTINUED:

TROI

It's ridiculous. And wonderful.
I feel... completely out of
control. Happy. Terrified.
There's nothing rational about
this.

BEVERLY

Who needs rational when your toes
curl up... ?

TROI

I'm afraid I'm going to lose
myself... I can't get enough of
him. Is it possible to fall in
love in one day?

BEVERLY

I did.

They change into another stretch.

TROI

It was like this for you and
Jack?

BEVERLY

No, it was another fellow. Fell
in love in a day. It lasted a
week. But what a week.

(beat, remembers)

Then I met Jack... took months
to figure it out with Jack.

TROI

Maybe I should slow down... catch
my breath, not let this get out
of control...

They look at each other a beat. Both shake their heads
at the same time...

BEVERLY & TROI

Nah.

53 INT. TEN-FORWARD

A few off-duty crew members are scattered throughout.
Goss is putting a few moves on a good-looking woman at
the bar... she finally tires of him, walks out.

54 DEVINONI AND LEYOR SIT

by themselves. Leyor sips juice.

DEVINONI

To be honest, I was surprised to see the Caldonians here at all, Leyor...

LEYOR

You must think Caldonia very insular, Mister Ral.

DEVINONI

Not at all... on the contrary, I've respected your world's commitment to pure research. It's just that, well...
(maybe I shouldn't)

LEYOR

Go ahead, please...

DEVINONI

Well, scholars don't always enjoy administrative demands...

Leyor takes a beat... his eyes give Devinoni the tell... he feels the rest...

DEVINONI

And certainly we've seen here that the administration of the wormhole...

LEYOR

Yes... I must admit I have begun to feel some trepidation about that...

DEVINONI

(he's got him)
I'm sure you have. I'm sure we all have, Leyor...
(beat)
Do you realize that during the next century, the number of ships...

55 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

All parties are seated with distance between them around the table. Bhavani brings the meeting to order.

55 CONTINUED:

BHAVANI

Gentlemen, this open session is called by request of the Caldonian delegation.

She nods to Leyor, who stands.

LEYOR

Madame Bhavani, Caldonia withdraws from these proceedings.

Riker's eyes narrow... mind working...

BHAVANI

For what reasons, Leyor?

LEYOR

It has been made very clear that the maintenance and administrative requirements are beyond our ability...

RIKER

Leyor, the Federation would like to negotiate a trade agreement to acquire your planet's rich deposits of Trillium 323 which we will add to our bid, Premier Bhavani...

LEYOR

My apologies. We have already reached an agreement with the Chrysalians...

As Leyor exits, Riker exchanges a look with Devinoni... who nods as the baron who just shot down a Federation bi-plane.

RIKER

Mister Ral, you either had very good instincts -- or foreknowledge of the Caldonian withdrawal.

DEVINONI

Some people just don't wish to transact business with the Federation, Commander.

(to Bhavani)

The Chrysalians hereby add the Caldonian Trillium 323 to its bid, Premier...

Off Riker's reaction...

56 EXT. SPACE - THE TWO SHUTTLECRAFT (OPTICAL)

At the other side of the wormhole... which is still not visible...

56A INT. FERENGI POD

Picking up in the middle of an argument...

ARRIDOR

I have no intention of leaving yet. We are not finished taking our readings...

INTERCUT:

57 INT. SHUTTLE

GEORDI

I'm telling you, it's changing... Look, your readings must be showing you the same things we're getting... this is not the Gamma Quadrant.

ARRIDOR

I will not confirm your speculations...

DATA

It is not a speculation, Doctor. We are not where the Barzans said we should be... which would indicate that this side of the wormhole is not stable.

GEORDI

There are meson and lepton fluctuations... local gravitational fields are increasing exponentially... everything says we better get the hell out of here...

ARRIDOR

It will be visible again in forty seconds... we will make our own judgments then...

57 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

I can see it now... and I'm
telling you that you don't have
time to wait... not even forty
seconds...

57 CONTINUED: (2)

ARRIDOR
Ferengi pod, out.

GEORDI
Dammit, Arridor, we're seventy
thousand light years away from
our ships... follow us... we'll
lead you in...

No response.

GEORDI
Idiots.

57A ANGLE - (OPTICAL)

to include the windows. Geordi takes the controls...

GEORDI
It's getting worse. I'm taking
us in, Data... with or without
them...

Increasing speed...

DATA
Thrusters at half power...
three-quarters...

GEORDI
Entering outer event horizon...

Outside the windows, the light show begins... they're
back inside the wormhole...

58
thru OMITTED
59

59A EXT. FERENGI POD - SPACE (OPTICAL)

Alone in space.

60 INT. FERENGI POD (OPTICAL)

ARRIDOR
They panic quickly under
pressure.

60 CONTINUED:

The wormhole appears outside.

ARRIDOR

There, precisely as scheduled,
right where I expected it to be.

And a beat later, the hole suddenly twists into an odd
shape and cracks away at super-warp speed... and
disappears. On the Ferengis' open-mouth reaction...

61 INT. TROI'S QUARTERS

A romantic candlelight dinner alone. They are dressed in nightclothes... he wears a robe, she is in her sexy nightgown... there is a little tension from Troi...

TROI

Everyone's talking about the way you absorbed the Caldonian bid today...

DEVINONI

It was there for the taking...
(shrugs)
So I took it...

TROI

Commander Riker didn't know how you managed it...

DEVINONI

Let me tell you something, Will Riker's good... the most dangerous man in the room to me... he has every instinct of a fine negotiator...

TROI

... he just doesn't have an edge. Your edge.

DEVINONI

Our edge... and you make it sound unethical.

TROI

Isn't it?

Devinoni smiles, this is not a conversation he wants to have.

61 CONTINUED:

DEVINONI

Deanna, it's just business...

TROI

(beat)

Why haven't you told anyone that you're an empath?

Disturbed that she won't let it go.

DEVINONI

I find it makes people uncomfortable.

TROI

I think you don't tell them... so you can gain an advantage.

Trying to joke it away --

DEVINONI

I used it to gain an advantage with you... and you didn't mind...

But she won't be had... she looks at him. He puts down his fork. Okay, you want it? You got it --

DEVINONI

The point of negotiating is to take advantage, Deanna. I don't know what the other side is offering, they don't know what I'm offering. We dance around each other until someone wins. I never cry foul when I lose.

TROI

But you're reading their emotional states, their inner selves, then using that to manipulate them.

He becomes slightly impatient.

DEVINONI

Deanna, people have been doing that for thousands of years, by listening carefully, by watching body language. I just happen to be better at it. You do it.

61 CONTINUED: (3)

TROI

I do it to help my crew, not
outmaneuver them. And I don't
hide that I'm an empath.

DEVINONI

You announce it to every alien
culture you encounter? Or do you
use it to give your side an
advantage. Do you tell the
Romulan in the ship about to
attack that you can feel that
he's bluffing or do you just tell
it to your captain?

Troi reacts, on the defensive...

TROI

That's different. It's a matter
of protection...

DEVINONI

Your protection... your captain,
your crew... your edge.

(beat)

Yes. It's a matter of life and
death when you take the advantage.
Me, I deal in property, in
exchange... no one gets hurt.

(beat)

Which of us would you say has the
greater problem of ethics?

He rises from the table... leaving Troi alone to think
about his question. She has no easy answers.

FADE OUT.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

62 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

63 OMITTED

64 INT. TEN-FORWARD

Riker is at a table alone, making some notes for his next round... Devinoni arrives with a drink in his hand.

64 CONTINUED:

DEVINONI

May I join you, Commander?

Riker motions to him to sit.

RIKER

Bought out the Ferengi yet, Ral?

DEVINONI

Think I should try?

RIKER

No. But I think you will. One way or another, it'll come down to you and me.

Devinoni smiles.

DEVINONI

You know, you're very good at this... better than you realize.

RIKER

I hope I'm better than you realize, Ral.

DEVINONI

(smiles)

The last mile of the marathon is always the toughest. That's when the winners are willing to take the big risks... are you ready to do that?

RIKER

We'll see, won't we...

DEVINONI

Well, let's see right now... I'm prepared to reach a firm agreement with Bhavani before we learn the results of your probe's expedition. Are you?

Riker hesitates...

DEVINONI

Mmmm, that would not be looked upon favorably by the Federation, I'd imagine.

(MORE)

64 CONTINUED: (2)

DEVINONI (Cont'd)
See, you have to be willing to
take that last step alone...
or it isn't worth playing.

64 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

Your point of view, not mine.

DEVINONI

Oh, I see that, Commander...
otherwise you wouldn't be second
in command of this ship.

Devinoni gives Riker no time to react.

DEVINONI

You know, I feel responsible for
you in a way... related.

(smiles)

Deanna. We both love Deanna...
in different ways, of course.

RIKER

I'll remove the burden of that
responsibility right now. My
relationship with Deanna stands
on its own. Without help from
you.

DEVINONI

Of course it does. She's an
extraordinary woman. Lovely,
brilliant --- very passionate.

He leans closer to Riker, still smiling.

DEVINONI

She could have been yours, Will.
But you didn't do enough to keep
her, and now, I'm here and I'm
going to take her too.

Riker really looks at Devinoni, as if he's seeing him
for the first time. He relaxes back into his seat and
smiles.

RIKER

You know, I think this is the
first bad play I've seen you
make...

Devinoni reacts.

64 CONTINUED: (4)

RIKER

If you bring happiness into Deanna's life, nothing would please me more. You're not really a bad sort, Ral, you just don't have any values... beyond the value of today's bid, that is. She's just the one to give some meaning to your sorry existence... if you're smart enough to take it. I doubt that you are.

Standing, toasting him --

RIKER

To the last mile.

Riker leaves, feeling better than he has in days. Devinoni watches him unhappily. Glances over to see...

65 ANGLE - GOSS

at a table trying to pick up a couple of sexy crew women... but as he sits, they exchange a look and leave. Goss is disappointed.

66 DEVINONI

gets up, and joins Goss at his table...

DEVINONI

Federation women have a game they call "playing hard to get".

GOSS

Yes, I do not at all find it amusing.

DEVINONI

On Chrysalia, the women outnumber the men four to one. They virtually throw themselves at your feet...

As Goss' interest perks up considerably...

67
thru OMITTED
74

75 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

As before.

WORF

Sir, the Ferengi vessel is moving
out of orbit, impulse power...

(beat)

They are approaching the entry
to the wormhole, sir.

PICARD

(to com)

Computer, is the Ferengi Goss
still aboard the Enterprise?

COMPUTER

DaiMon Goss departed the
Enterprise at fourteen hundred
hours.

WORF

Ferengi are powering forward
missile launchers...

PICARD

Yellow Alert. Hail the Ferengi.

WORF

DaiMon Goss responding.

PICARD

On screen.

76 ANGLE - VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

Goss is in the Ferengi captain's Ready Room.

PICARD

Request an explanation for your
actions, DaiMon Goss.

GOSS

I have learned from informed
sources that the Federation has
manipulated these negotiations
from the very beginning... and
has already signed a secret
agreement with the Barzans.

76 CONTINUED:

PICARD

That is not true...

GOSS

The Ferengi offer was never
seriously considered.

76 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Premier Bhavani welcomed you to these proceedings, Goss... despite my better judgment...

GOSS

We will be ignored no longer.

WORF

They've fired a missile directly at the opening, sir!

PICARD

Destroy it.

WORF

Firing phasers.

77 ANGLE - VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

Seeing the Ferengi torpedo... as the Enterprise phaser hits it. It EXPLODES.

78 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Riker with Bhavani and Devinoni...

BHAVANI

Your offers both have merit, gentlemen... if I could find a deciding factor...

Red Alert. Riker reacts, keys his insignia...

RIKER

Riker to Picard. What's happening, Captain?

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Goss has fired a missile at the wormhole... I need you on the bridge, Number One...

RIKER

(on the move)

Excuse me.

78 CONTINUED:

He EXITS. Bhavani and Devinoni exchange a concerned glance...

DEVINONI

Excuse me for saying so under the circumstances, Premier... But this fight is really between the Federation and the Ferengi... it is unconscionable that your wormhole is being used as a pawn in their power struggle.

Off her reaction...

79 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Riker arrives as does Troi...

PICARD

(to viewscreen)

You must know we will not allow you to do this, Goss.

GOSS

If the Ferengi cannot have the wormhole, no one will...

Picard signals Worf to mute the viewscreen.

PICARD

Can he possibly believe that a missile will have any destructive effect on a wormhole?

And focus on Troi... as she begins to realize something is dreadfully wrong...

RIKER

One of those missiles would have a destructive effect if it exploded near our shuttle...

Riker steps forward, signaling Worf to resume voice contact.

RIKER

Goss... don't you realize we both have shuttlecraft in there?

79 CONTINUED:

GOSS

Casualties of war, Commander.
My men are prepared to die. Are
yours?

TROI

Captain...

PICARD

(off her look)
Viewscreen off.

TROI

He's lying. I'm almost sure of
it. He does not mean what he
says.

79 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

Why... what is he doing it for
then?

Push in on Troi, realizing...

80 ANGLE

at the turbolift... Bhavani and Devinoni...

BHAVANI

Permission to enter the bridge,
Captain...

PICARD

Premier, with all due respect...

DEVINONI

Captain, I believe I am in a
better position to settle this
with DaiMon Goss than you are...

(Picard reacts)

May I address him?

Picard motions for them to come forward...

81 ANGLE - VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

DEVINONI

DaiMon Goss, this is Devinoni
Ral...

Goss reappears on the viewscreen.

GOSS

I have nothing to say to you, Ral.

DEVINONI

Then, just listen. The planet
of Barzan has reached an agreement
with the Chrysalians for long term
control of the wormhole.

(Riker reacts)

On behalf of the Chrysalians, I
am prepared to offer the Ferengi
free access to the wormhole in
perpetuity...

And stay on Troi as she follows this...

GOSS

I have your word on this?

81 CONTINUED:

DEVINONI

My word, sir. In return for some Ferengi convoy privileges to be negotiated in good faith.

GOSS

This is an acceptable offer.

WORF

Ferengi vessel has shut down forward missile launchers.

PICARD

Stand down, Red Alert.

BHAVANI

Commander Riker, I'm sorry you had to learn about my decision this way. You represented the Federation well. But I have come to believe that the Chrysalians' neutrality and tradition of peace is more desirable to my planet.

TROI

Excuse me, Premier. There is something you should know...

And Devinoni flashes a look at Troi... who reacts...

TROI

I'm sorry, was there something you wanted to say, Mister Ral?

DEVINONI

No... not at all...

TROI

I sense you are uncomfortable suddenly...

DEVINONI

Well, after all, this was a tense situation...

TROI

But that's what is so odd about it... it was not tense at all... I sensed no tension from DaiMon Goss... or you...

81 CONTINUED: (2)

GOSS

I was tense... I was ready to
blow it up... I strongly
protest...

PICARD

(enough already)
Off screen.

Goss' image disappears...

TROI

It was almost as though... you
both were performing a scene for
all of us...

DEVINONI

Excuse me, Captain, I think
there's a slight conflict of
interest here...

TROI

I agree. Entirely. Devinoni
asked me not to tell anyone about
his empathic powers... which he
uses to manipulate competitors
in a negotiation.

Reactions.

TROI

Certainly, that put me in a
conflict of interest which I hope
I have now resolved. Premier,
I believe Ral has used your fear
of continuing aggression between
the Federation and its enemies
to undermine our position. I also
believe this incident was staged
by Ral and Goss to provide you
with a reason to decide in favor
of the Chrysalians.

And Troi and Ral exchange a long look... and he finally
grins at her... shrugs, well, it's just another deal.
Wesley, who has been monitoring the sensors... reacts
to something he hears.

WESLEY

(excited)
Captain...

81 CONTINUED: (3)

PICARD
(knows by the sound in
his voice)
On speaker.

At first, it's just broken phrases and hiss, slowly
coming together...

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
Shuttle nine to Enterprise...
Shuttle nine to Enterprise...

PICARD
Shuttle, this is Picard... do you
read...
(no response)
On screen...

82 ANGLE - VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

The wormhole is not visible... but a tiny image of the shuttle suddenly appears out of nowhere...

83 OMITTED

INTERCUT:

84 INT. SHUTTLE

GEORDI

This is Shuttle nine... reporting back... barely.

PICARD

The Ferengi pod?

GEORDI

They're trapped on the other side, sir. In the Delta Quadrant. We tried to warn them. They wouldn't follow us.

PICARD

Elaborate.

DATA

Captain, this end of the wormhole is currently stable but the other end apparently shifts position periodically. The Barzan probe had no way to recognize this. Eventually, both sides will be unstable.

GEORDI

It's a dry well, Captain. Worthless.

84A INT. MAIN BRIDGE

PICARD

Acknowledged, Shuttle nine. Main Shuttlebay, prepare for final approach.

84A CONTINUED:

WORF

Captain, DaiMon Goss is demanding
to know where his men are.

PICARD

Advise him to set his coordinates
for the Delta Quadrant,
Lieutenant... He might run into
them in eighty years or so.

Riker crosses to Devinoni.

RIKER

Mister Ral, I congratulate you
on winning the rights to the
Barzan wormhole...

DEVINONI

(tight)

I take the risks. I stand by my
agreements.

Off Riker's half grin...

85 OMITTED

86 INT. CORRIDOR - AT TROI'S QUARTERS

As the door opens to reveal Troi. She reacts as she sees...

87 REVERSE - DEVINONI

A look.

TROI

Come in...

88 INT. TROI'S QUARTERS

TROI

When do you leave?

DEVINONI

Soon. I've... been recalled by the Chrysalians... explanations demanded and so forth.

TROI

I'm sorry.

DEVINONI

(shrugs)

I've done all right for them over the years... they know the stakes. It'll be fine.

They look at each other a long beat. "Fine" is not in their faces.

DEVINONI

I had to do it, Troi...

Troi looks at him... can't accept that...

88 CONTINUED:

DEVINONI

Bhavani was ready to go with the
the Federation. I sensed it.
And I'd used up every card in the
deck... I had to change the rules.

TROI

You must have known that I
couldn't allow you to do that...

DEVINONI

(beat, grins)

My human physical response must
have blocked out my Betazoid
senses.

She knows, acknowledges.

DEVINONI

(beat)

In a way, I'm glad you did it.
It's made me take a hard look at
who I am. I don't like what I
see.

He moves to her... she allows it.

DEVINONI

Deanna... I once asked you to
run away with me. I'm asking you
again. I need you. You could
help me change. You could be my
conscience.

He kisses her. After they break...

TROI

I already have a job as a
counselor.

88 CONTINUED: (2)

He reacts. He slowly retreats to the door, shrugs...
and EXITS. On her expression, with no regrets, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END