

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"The Nth Degree"

#40274-193

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FINAL DRAFT

STAR TREK: "The Nth Degree" - 1/25/91 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Nth Degree"

CAST

PICARD	REGINALD BARCLAY
RIKER	ALBERT EINSTEIN
DATA	VOICE OF THE PLANET
BEVERLY	
TROI	
GEORDI	
WORF	
ENSIGN APRIL ANAYA	
LIEUTENANT LINDA LARSON	
ENSIGN BROWER	
COMPUTER VOICE	

Non-Speaking

N.D. ENGINEERS
N.D. SECURITY OFFICERS
SUPERNUMERARIES

STAR TREK: "The Nth Degree" - 1/25/91 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Nth Degree"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

MAIN BRIDGE

CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

OBSERVATION LOUNGE

SICKBAY

ENGINEERING

CORRIDOR

HOLODECK

EMPTY

SHIP'S THEATRE

17TH CENTURY FRENCH DINING ROOM

UNDRESSED STAGE

SHUTTLECRAFT

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

SHUTTLECRAFT

"SUPERSPACE"

SUPER PLANET

STAR TREK: "The Nth Degree" - 1/29/91 - PRONUNCIATION

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"The Nth Degree"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

ANGSTOM	ANG-strum
AXONS	ax-ONS
CORPUS CALLOSUM	CORE-pus kuh-LOW-sum
CYTHERIANS	sigh-THEAR-ee-n
DENSITOMETER	dense-uh-TOM-uh-ter
GIGAWATTS	GIG-uh-watts
ICONIC	eye-KAH-nick
INTERROGATIVE	in-ter-ROG-ah-tiv
PERMEABILITY	per-mee-ah-BILL-uh-tee
POST-SYNAPTIC	POST sin-AP-tic
SERO-AMINO	SEHR-oh uh-MEAN-oh
TERAWATTS	TEHR-uh-watts

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Nth Degree"
TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. 17TH CENTURY FRANCE - DINING ROOM

A very spare, period dining room -- simple wooden table and two chairs, more functional than fancy. BEVERLY CRUSHER wears a beautiful dress; REGINALD BARCLAY, has the clothes of a duellist -- and a LARGE NOSE. They are doing CYRANO DE BERGERAC.

BEVERLY

-- You were like a brother to me. We played in the park near the lake.

BARCLAY

Of course -- Every summer you came to Bergerac!

BEVERLY

You used to make swords out of the reeds -- And when you cut your hand, you would run to me, and I would say --
(taking his hand)
"Let me see --"

She sees real blood on the hand from a cut, and reacts.

BEVERLY

Oh! How did you do that?

BARCLAY

"Playing" near the Porte de Nesle.

She wets a handkerchief and starts to wash his hand.

BEVERLY

And how many were against you?

BARCLAY

No more than a hundred.

BEVERLY

Tell me!

1 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY

No... Let it go. You tell me
what you were going to say. Do
you dare?

BEVERLY

(still holding his hand)
I do dare... I love someone.

BARCLAY

Ah!

BEVERLY

But he does not know.

BARCLAY

Ah!

BEVERLY

Not yet. He is proud, noble,
brave and beautiful --

BARCLAY

(turns pale, quickly
rises)
Beautiful!

BEVERLY

What's the matter?

BARCLAY

(smiling to cover it)
With me? Nothing. Just my hand.
(beat)
He is in the Guards?

BEVERLY

Since this morning. Baron
Christien de Neuville. In your
own regiment.

BARCLAY

Ah...

BEVERLY

Promise to be his friend.

BARCLAY

I promise.

BEVERLY

And never let him fight a duel.

1 CONTINUED: (2)

BARCLAY

God forbid.

BEVERLY

Oh, I love you.

(standing)

I must go now. You never told
me what happened last night.
And tell him to write me. A
hundred men against one. To
write, remember. A hundred men!
What courage!

BARCLAY

(aside to audience)

Oh... I have done better since...

Barclay holds the moment in character. He is met with
applause.

2 INCLUDE AUDIENCE

RIKER, DATA, GEORDI, TROI, WORF, and a few supernumeraries still clapping.

RIKER
Bravo.

TROI
Wonderful.

Data reacts with puzzlement to the applause. He himself has not joined in.

DATA
(to Riker)
Lieutenant Barclay's performance was superficially adequate but clearly not rooted in The Method approach. As a result, his customary anxiety was evident. I do not understand why...

RIKER
(still clapping)
-- Because it's polite, Data.

Data considers for a beat, and joins in the applause as it finishes. Beverly and Barclay step off the "stage" area to meet their friends, who stand to greet them.

GEORDI
(re: Barclay)
Not a bad showing after only six weeks of lessons.

BEVERLY
Not a bad showing period.

BARCLAY
(sheepish, re: Beverly)
I... we have a very... patient teacher.

Beverly eyes Worf.

BEVERLY
There's an opening in my workshop... Worf.

Worf grunts his disapproval of the suggestion, and the others laugh as the group begins to break up.

3 ON TROI AND BARCLAY

TROI

Well done.

BARCLAY

Thank... thank you...
Counselor...

Barclay is more confident than we saw him in his debut episode, but still a far cry from Enterprise norm (he still has trouble meeting another's gaze). And he's noticeably even less sure of himself than he appeared in the acting scene only moments ago.

TROI

You've come a long way, Reg.

BARCLAY

After... more rehearsals than I
can count.

TROI

I don't just mean your acting
ability. It takes a great deal
of courage to put yourself on
display like that.

BARCLAY

You think so...

TROI

(acknowledges)

There was a time when nothing
could have dragged you onto a
stage in front of an audience.
You've made tremendous progress.

BARCLAY

I... I guess...

He's hesitant. She picks up on it, encourages him.

TROI

Don't you think so?

BARCLAY

Well...

She waits him out for a beat. He indicates his
costume.

3 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY

(continuing)

I still feel more... more comfortable playing somebody else. Maybe all this is no better than escaping into a holodeck fantasy.

TROI

I disagree. This isn't fantasy -- it's theatre. You used to withdraw into the holodeck. You isolated yourself inside your own imagination, avoiding contact with real people.

She indicates the stage.

TROI

(continuing)

Look at yourself now... and look at all the other people you're with... you're not just acting, you're inter-acting. Give yourself some credit, Mister Barclay!

He nods.

BARCLAY

Maybe... you're right.

Troi smiles and goes out the door. Stay on Barclay, alone in costume, audience gone. Despite some progress, we get a sense of just how painful it still is to be Barclay.

4 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The Enterprise hovering in front of the ARGUS ARRAY. It is a huge subspace radio telescope -- a series of panels, resembling several very long box-kites stacked one on top of the other. It looks absolutely immense.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, stardate 44704.2. We have arrived at the Argus Array, the remote subspace telescope at the very edge of Federation space.

(MORE)

4 CONTINUED:

PICARD (Cont'd)

The unmanned structure
mysteriously stopped relaying its
data nearly two months ago.

5 INT. BRIDGE

PICARD, Riker, Worf, Data, Geordi and ENSIGN APRIL
ANAYA.

DATA

The fusion reactors that power
the array are extremely unstable.
The risk of overload is high.

RIKER

What about the computer systems?

DATA

(testing panels)
They do not seem to be functioning
at all.

WORF

(off instruments)
Captain! I am picking up an
unidentified device! One point
eight kilometers from the array!

PICARD

Onscreen.

6
thru OMITTED
7

8 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN -- THE PROBE (OPTICAL)

We see a panel of the Array, and hanging in front of
it, a silent, probe-like device.

PICARD

Magnify.

The image on the viewscreen is replaced by a highly
MAGNIFIED VIEW of the probe.

RIKER

Some kind of probe. I'll bet
that's what damaged the array.

8 CONTINUED:

PICARD
(to Worf)
Is it emitting any signals,
Lieutenant?

WORF
Negative, sir. I show no
activity.

PICARD
Mister La Forge, why don't you
go out and take a closer look.

GEORDI
(exiting)
Aye, sir.
(to Com)
Mister Barclay, report to
Main Shuttlebay.

As the turbolift closes behind Geordi, OFF Picard as
he stares at the viewscreen...

9 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The shuttle is already in space... moving away from the
ship.

10 INT. SHUTTLE

Geordi at the helm, Barclay at his station.

GEORDI
Enterprise, this is Shuttle Five,
in position. Ready to begin
short-range scan.

RIKER'S COM VOICE
Proceed, Shuttle Five.

11 INCLUDE SHUTTLE WINDOW (OPTICAL)

At this close distance, the Array can be seen only as a
grey, metallic backdrop. Hanging motionless in front
of it, only meters from the shuttle, is the alien
probe, vaguely cylindrical, about ten meters tall and
three wide.

11 CONTINUED:

GEORDI
(to Barclay)
Let's start with the passive high
res series.

Barclay is a little nervous, but it's combined with an excitement about being there.

BARCLAY
Electromagnetic band?

GEORDI
Give it a try.

Barclay nods and touches his instrument panel.

BARCLAY
I'm picking up visual wavelengths
only. Between forty-five...
forty-five hundred and seven
thousand angstroms.

GEORDI
Try the neutron densitometer.

Barclay touches the panel.

BARCLAY
Nothing.

GEORDI
Hmmm. Doesn't seem to want to
give up any secrets. Let's go
to active scan.

Barclay keys it in. They're both surprised at the instruments.

BARCLAY
No... No modulation.

GEORDI
(to probe)
You are definitely not from our
neighborhood.
(to Barclay)
Increase to three point zero.

Barclay does so. Glances over at Geordi.

11 CONTINUED: (2)

BARCLAY
(hesitantly)
Commander?

GEORDI
Yeah, Reg?

BARCLAY
Thanks for... for assigning me
to this mission.

GEORDI
Don't mention it. You're one of
my top engineers. It's about time
you started to do the interesting
stuff.

(re: situation)
This is why I'm in Starfleet.

BARCLAY
(off instruments)
Still no modulation.

GEORDI
Hit it with the positron emission.

Barclay touches his panel -- the probe responds with a
BLINDING FLASH of white light that lights up the entire
inside of the shuttle for an instant before shutting
down again.

GEORDI
(continuing)
What was that?
(looking at instruments)
Our computer is down!

He glances over -- Barclay is slumped back in his
chair, unconscious. Geordi is alarmed. He shakes
Barclay.

GEORDI
Reg! Reg!

Geordi puts a finger on Barclay's neck to feel for a
pulse. OFF the concern on his face.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

12 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship maintaining position near the Array.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental. An intense energy surge from the alien probe has severely disabled the shuttle's onboard computer. The away team has been transported directly to Sickbay.

12A INT. BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, Data, Worf, Ensign Anaya.

RIKER

Any indication of the probe's energy source, Data?

DATA

No sir. Power emissions do not match any known radiation patterns. We have not encountered this technology before.

PICARD

Very well. Isolate the probe and place it in tow. We'll take it to Science Station Four-Oh-Two in the Kohlan system...

WORF

(interrupting)

Captain. The probe has begun to move. It is approaching the Enterprise.

RIKER

Shields up!

WORF

Aye, sir.

OFF Picard's reaction...

13 INT. SICKBAY

Barclay is sitting up on a diagnostic bed, looking completely normal. Beverly and Geordi are standing next to him. Crusher turns to Barclay.

BEVERLY

(to Barclay)

There was enough energy in that flash to overload your optic nerves. It knocked you unconscious.

GEORDI

My VISOR must have filtered it out.

BEVERLY

Exactly.

(to Barclay)

Well, there's no apparent retinal damage and the cornea looks fine. But I'm still waiting for the full sero-amino readout. I'll call you when it comes in.

Barclay takes this as a dismissal, and gets down off the bed, joining Geordi. Beverly heads for another part of Sickbay. Barclay thinks for a moment, then hesitantly calls after her.

BARCLAY

You shouldn't have to... wait so long for the results...

Beverly stops and turns back to him, puzzled.

BEVERLY

What do you mean?

BARCLAY

Couldn't you use a global mode in your scanner... It would be a lot faster.

She's a bit taken aback by the suggestion, and by who it's coming from. So is Geordi.

13 CONTINUED:

BEVERLY

That's not possible.

(a smile)

These are human cells we're talking about, not isolinear circuits.

(kiddingly)

You'd better stick to engineering.

Barclay, still a bit sheepish about bringing it up, thinks for a second.

BARCLAY

The cells have a... an electromagnetic signature... just like a circuit element does... Conceptually, it should work... with a few adjustments...

She's interrupted by the RED ALERT lights and klaxons sound. Geordi quickly heads for the door, Barclay follows. On the way out he looks back toward Beverly over his shoulder.

BARCLAY

(continuing)

I could set it up for you if you'd like...

HOLD a moment on Beverly as Geordi and Barclay disappear out the door. Despite the Red Alert, she's still curious about his suggestion.

14 INT. BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, Data, Worf, Ensign Anaya at their positions. RED ALERT klaxons and lights in background.

WORF

Probe now closing at fifteen point three meters per second. Collision course.

14A INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN

The Array is in the distance. We gradually discern the probe approaching from its direction.

It is miniscule by comparison.

14A CONTINUED:

DATA

Captain, sensors are reading no particulate emissions or subspace field distortions.

Picard reacts.

PICARD

Then how is it able to move?

DATA

The method of propulsion is unknown.

RIKER

Ensign, take us away from it. One quarter impulse.

ENSIGN ANAYA

Aye, Sir.

She touches her controls.

15 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The probe continues hanging before them as they move, inert -- no blinkies or indication of any activity -- but threatening in its silence.

15A INT. MAIN BRIDGE

WORF

The probe is matching our speed and course.

DATA

Captain, an energy field is forming around the device. Intensity is three point two terawatts, and increasing.

WORF

Sir, the shuttlecraft shields did not provide sufficient protection for its computer. Our computer may also be vulnerable. I recommend withdrawal to a safe distance.

15A CONTINUED:

PICARD

Ensign Anaya, full about, go to
one-half impulse.

ENSIGN ANAYA

(touching panel)
One-half impulse.

WORF

The probe is following.

Reactions.

16 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

at impulse. The probe moving parallel.

17 INT. BRIDGE

PICARD

Options, Number One?

RIKER

We can't use photon torpedoes.
An explosion this close to the
ship could cripple us.

WORF

Sir, recommend full phasers.

PICARD

Proceed.

WORF

Firing phasers.

Worf fires the phasers.

18

thru OMITTED

19

20 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

The phasers fire point blank on the probe. Nothing
happens.

21 RESUME

The staff reacts.

WORF

No effect, Captain.

DATA

(off instruments)

The probe's field intensity is continuing to build... we are in danger, Captain...

RIKER

(to COM)

Riker to La Forge. Can you increase phaser power?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

22 INT. ENGINEERING

Geordi is at his controls, Barclay a couple of panels down, other N.D. engineers including LIEUTENANT LINDA LARSON hurrying around to various panels, checking readings and making adjustments. The RED ALERT continues. Barclay appears to be working furiously.

GEORDI

(to COM)

Attempting to now, Commander.

(to Barclay)

Isolate phasers eighty through one twenty and shunt all plasma...

BARCLAY

... to the emitters, yessir, I'm already on it... ready.

Geordi glances at the instrument panel with some surprise at how quickly Barclay anticipated the move. Everything appears to be ready.

GEORDI

(to COM)

Captain! Phasers are as hot as we can make them!

23 INT. BRIDGE

The RED ALERT continues.

23 CONTINUED:

PICARD
Mister Worf.

WORF
Aye, sir.

Worf fires the phasers.

24 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

A narrow, intensely bright burst of phaser fire strikes the probe for several seconds, then stops -- no change.

25 RESUME

RIKER
Nothing.

PICARD
Go to warp two.

ENSIGN ANAYA
Aye, sir.
(beat)
Warp two.

25A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

at warp. The probe still alongside.

25B INT. BRIDGE

WORF
The probe is still with us, sir.

RIKER
At warp two?

WORF
Yessir.

DATA
Captain. The probe's energy output is overloading our shields. Failure anticipated in forty-seven seconds.

Picard looks around.

25B CONTINUED:

PICARD
I'm willing to entertain
suggestions...

WORF
(interrupting)
Captain! We're dropping to
impulse.

26 INT. ENGINEERING

The RED ALERT continues. Barclay is still working feverishly at his instrument panel.

LARSON
(puzzled)
Commander, warp power has been
transferred to the shield grid.

Equally surprised, Geordi glances at the instruments. Then looks over at the cause -- Barclay.

GEORDI
Barclay, what are you doing?

Barclay holds up a "hold-on" finger, leans back from the instrument panel as if finished with something, hitting his insignia.

BARCLAY
(keys insignia)
Lieutenant Barclay to Captain
Picard. You can fire photon
torpedos. Maximum yield, full
spread.

27 INT. BRIDGE

RIKER
We're too close.

BARCLAY'S COM VOICE
Our shields will hold.

Picard and company react to the suggestion.

PICARD
(to COM)
La Forge?

28 INT. ENGINEERING

Geordi is pouring over Barclay's instrument panel,
amazed.

28 CONTINUED:

GEORDI
(to COM)
I don't know how Barclay did it,
but shield strength has been
increased by over three hundred
percent. It should be enough.

29 INT. BRIDGE

Continue RED ALERT as Geordi's words sink in.

PICARD
Mister Worf. Photon torpedos.
Maximum yield, full spread.

WORF
Aye.

Worf touches the panel as though it's his final act.

30 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

A full spread of photon torpedos fires away, hitting
the probe. There is a tremendous explosion.

31 INT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The ship is buffeted terribly for several seconds, then
everything calms suddenly down.

32 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

Only the background -- the probe has vanished.

33 RESUME

Everyone reacts to the narrow escape. A beat as they
collect themselves.

PICARD
(to Com)
Thank you, Mister Barclay...

34 INT. ENGINEERING

Geordi and Barclay.

34 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY
(to COM)
You're welcome, Captain. Barclay
out.

Barclay turns to Geordi, who is looking at him.

BARCLAY
(continuing)
I'm sorry if I overstepped my
authority.

A beat.

GEORDI
Don't mention it...

OFF Geordi's still stunned reaction.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

35 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Holding position in front of the Argus Array.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, stardate 44705.3.
The Enterprise has destroyed the
alien probe. But now we are left
with the difficult task of
repairing the Argus Telescope.
Failure to do so would represent
an irreplaceable scientific loss.

35A INT. CORRIDOR

Barclay is walking slowly along towards a turbolift,
lost in thought as he glances over a PADD.

RIKER (O.S.)

Mister Barclay.

35B INCLUDE RIKER

catching up to Barclay, heading the same direction,
smiling with obvious admiration.

RIKER

(continuing)

... Everyone's still trying to
figure out exactly how you did
it.

BARCLAY

It... it just occurred to me that
I could set up a frequency
harmonic between the deflector
and the shield grid... using the
warp field generator as a power
flow anti-attenuator and that of
course naturally created an
amplification of the inherent
energy output. (TECH?)

Riker lost him a long time ago.

35B CONTINUED:

RIKER

Uh huh.

(beat)

Nice job.

36 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Picard, Data, Geordi, Troi. Barclay and Riker ENTER.

PICARD

Mister Barclay, I'm glad you could join us.

(to Geordi)

Your report, Mister La Forge.

Geordi steps over to a schematic representation of the Array on the monitor.

GEORDI

Each of the telescope's subspace antenna clusters is powered by its own fusion reactor. But a single computer controls them all.

RIKER

So, all eighteen reactors were affected when the computer was damaged... ?

GEORDI

(nods)

They're starting to overload, and could eventually go critical. If that happens, the explosion would destroy the Array. And I wouldn't want to be next door if that happens.

DATA

A standard isolation procedure would be advisable.

GEORDI

(nodding)

I agree. We'll cut off each reactor from the damaged control system and repair them one by one.

RIKER

How long will that take?

36 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Two, three weeks -- at least.

PICARD

Alright then, Mister La Forge --

BARCLAY

(O.C.)

I don't agree.

A beat. Reactions. Everyone turns to Barclay. A beat, as he rises, steps over to the schematic. There is a steadiness in his voice we've never heard before.

BARCLAY

We could repair all the reactors simultaneously instead of one by one.

PICARD

(reacts)

Simultaneously? All eighteen?

BARCLAY

Yessir.

GEORDI

But the Argus computer is inoperable.

BARCLAY

Not entirely. The core memory is still intact. We could program a completely new control system.

DATA

That is an interesting suggestion, Lieutenant. However, such an approach would require more time than our original plan, at least seven weeks.

BARCLAY

(studying the schematics)

-- I can have it ready in two days.

RIKER

(incredulous)

What?

36 CONTINUED: (2)

BARCLAY
(to Geordi)
If you could assist me in the
morning, Commander...

Geordi glances at Picard -- they share a reaction.

GEORDI
(awed)
Sure, Reg.

Glances at the others... the staff reacts with shock.
A beat.

37 ANGLE ON TROI

OFF the curiosity on her face.

38 INT. UNDRESSED STAGE

Same area as previous CYRANO scene, but with only a
chair. Barclay is sitting on it, not in costume but
in character. Beverly is not in character, but is
observing as instructor.

This is an acting class and it's much looser than the
scene we saw played previously. A few more students
are watching and waiting their turn. One of the
spectators is Troi, standing off to one side. This
time, Barclay is the consummate actor as he rehearses
the death scene.

BARCLAY
The moon -- yes, that will be my
home. My paradise. I shall find
there, all the souls I love --
Socrates, Galileo...

BARCLAY
(continuing)
"But what the devil is he doing
among us?"
(he raises himself,
declaiming)
Philosopher. Scientist. Poet,
musician, duellist -- Here lies
Hercule-Savinien De Cyrano de
Bergerac.

38 CONTINUED:

He falls back into the chair, half fainting. When he gathers himself, he stares straight into Beverly's eyes.

BARCLAY
(continuing)
I would not have you weep any less for that charming, good, handsome Christien. I only ask this: that as the great cold surrounds my bones, you allow a double meaning to your mourning veil. And when your tears fall for him, some few will be... for me.

The scene ends. Beverly has genuine tears in her eyes. Troi is also impressed.

BEVERLY
(understatement)
That was... a real improvement.

Barclay comes out of character.

BARCLAY
Thank you, Doctor. Same time day after tomorrow?

BEVERLY
Same time...

Barclay nods, smiling, and leaves the room. Beverly is still moved -- and now, puzzled. She glances over at Troi and they exchange a look -- they're both feeling the same way.

38A INT. TEN-FORWARD

Barclay is sipping from a glass at a table, studying a PADD. Troi steps over to his table, a cup of tea in hand.

TROI
May I join you?

BARCLAY
Of course. Please... Sit down, Counselor.

38A CONTINUED:

TROI

Hard at work?

BARCLAY

(re: PADD)

Getting prepared for tomorrow's meeting in Engineering. We're planning our repair strategy.

A beat.

TROI

I enjoyed the scene you just performed.

BARCLAY

(laughs)

You're a very forgiving audience.

TROI

Not at all.

(a beat)

I thought you were brilliant.

Barclay smiles in response. Another beat as Troi studies him carefully.

TROI

You've... changed.

BARCLAY

Is that a professional opinion?

TROI

Pure observation.

Barclay studies her for a moment.

BARCLAY

It's true. I can't explain it. But in the last few days I've found a confidence that I never knew was there.

TROI

I'm proud of you, Reg... and I'm glad for you, too.

He gives her a meaningful look -- not like a lounge lizard, but like someone who has always had a crush and is finally confident enough to act on it. Noting the sexual tension, she decides it's time to leave.

38A CONTINUED: (2)

TROI
(stands)
Well, I'd better be going.

BARCLAY
Must you?

TROI
I... think so...

BARCLAY
(stands)
Wouldn't you like to take a walk
with me through the arboretum?
The zalnias should be in bloom...

TROI
Reg, as your former counselor...
I... don't think it would be
appropriate...

BARCLAY
-- I don't need a counselor. What
I need is the company of a
charming, intelligent woman.

Troi stares at him for a beat -- the offer is not
without its appeal. She decides against it. She rises
and Barclay follows suit.

TROI
(with a smile)
Goodnight, Mister Barclay.

He nods and returns her smile -- not at all feeling
rejected. Then sits back down as she leaves, watching
her go.

39 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Holding near the Array.

40 INT. ENGINEERING

BROWER and Larson are waiting around the pool table as
Geordi steps in with a PADD. Notices they're one
short.

GEORDI
Where's Lieutenant Barclay?

40 CONTINUED:

LARSON

I stopped by his quarters on my way over. He wasn't there.

GEORDI

Computer, location of Lieutenant Barclay.

COMPUTER VOICE

Holodeck Three.

Geordi scowls. Turns and quickly heads for the exit.
OFF the look between Brower and Larson.

41 INT. HOLODECK - CLOSE ON

a man who appears to be ALBERT EINSTEIN, writing a long equation on a blackboard in the undressed holodeck. The board is already covered with mathematical symbols.

EINSTEIN

G sub I J of t as t approaches infinity...

A hand reaches in and rubs out the appropriate symbol.

BARCLAY (O.S.)

That's G of t over G -naught.

42 INCLUDE BARCLAY

standing next to Einstein, chalk in hand. He makes the correction on the board as the great physicist watches.

EINSTEIN

So it is, so it is.

Barclay points to a different part of the formula.

BARCLAY

I still don't see how you can incorporate the quantum principle into general relativity without adjusting the cosmological constant a lot more than you're doing here.

42 CONTINUED:

EINSTEIN

If we increase the value as you suggest, we must face the possibility of twenty-six dimensions, instead of ten!

BARCLAY

(laughs)

I'm not sure if I'm ready for that.

EINSTEIN

(good humored)

I certainly am not.

Barclay thinks a moment. Points to the board.

BARCLAY

But if this semiset was curved into the subatomic, the infinities might cancel each other out.

Einstein gives Barclay an amazed look.

EINSTEIN

Gruss Gott. They just might.

As Einstein feverishly continues writing on the board, the two hear someone CLEARING HIS THROAT. As they turn towards the sound --

43 INCLUDE GEORDI

standing in the doorway, staring at the board -- clearly unable to decipher it.

GEORDI

We had a meeting at Oh-seven hundred...

BARCLAY

I'm sorry, Commander.

(to Einstein)

Thank you, Professor.

(to computer)

End program.

Einstein DISAPPEARS in mid-chalk stroke. Barclay quickly joins Geordi and they walk together out of the holodeck.

43 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

What was that all about?

FOLLOW them outside and into corridor.

44 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Geordi and Barclay walking away from the holodeck.

BARCLAY

I had some ideas late last night... I needed to consult the computer about some quantum electrodynamic calculations. A holodeck Einstein program seemed like the best way. I guess I went a little overboard.

GEORDI

A little? Most of the stuff on that blackboard was way out of my league. Yours too.

BARCLAY

Not really. I just never thought along those lines before. It's all pretty evident now... I'm sure if you put your mind to it --

Geordi stops, interrupting him.

GEORDI

-- Ever since our run-in with the probe, something's been different about you.

A long beat as Barclay looks at Geordi.

BARCLAY

Because I'm starting to behave a little more like the rest of the crew? With confidence in what I'm doing?

GEORDI

(continuing)

You just spent the entire night arguing Grand Unification Theories with Albert Einstein!

44 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY

Yes, but --

GEORDI

-- Something's happened to you,
Reg. We can't ignore that.

Barclay pauses, looks at Geordi.

BARCLAY

I've finally become the person
I've always wanted to be. Do we
have to ask why?

A moment between them.

GEORDI

(reluctantly)
Yeah, I think we do...

45 INT. SICKBAY

Barclay is on a diagnostic bed, Beverly and Geordi standing next to him. Beverly is looking at the data displayed on the readout above the bed. She is stunned by what she finds.

BEVERLY

Incredible. The production of
neurotransmitters in your brain
has jumped by over five hundred
percent. Pre and postsynaptic
membranes have increased their
permeability to match it.

(a beat)

I couldn't even guess at an I.Q.
level.

BARCLAY

Probably somewhere between twelve
hundred and fourteen fifty.

BEVERLY

But that isn't all.

She indicates a readout on the wall.

45 CONTINUED:

BEVERLY

(continuing)

The corpus callosum -- the connecting bridge between the two sides of the brain. It's so active that the hemispheres have essentially become one.

GEORDI

So it's not just raw intelligence we're talking about.

BEVERLY

Creativity, imagination, resourcefulness, inspiration -- it's all been enhanced.

A beat as they consider the implications.

BEVERLY

(continuing)

Lieutenant, you are the most advanced human being who has ever lived.

OFF everyone's reactions.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

45A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

By the Array.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log; supplemental.
Apparently as a result of his
exposure to the alien probe,
Lieutenant Barclay has gained an
extraordinary new level of
intelligence. The question now
is -- how are we to deal with it?

46 INT. READY ROOM

Picard, Beverly, Geordi, Troi, and Riker.

RIKER

We could confine him to his
quarters.

GEORDI

How can we do that? What's he
done? You're talking about
locking him up for being too
smart.

RIKER

If he's under an alien influence,
doesn't that put us all at risk?

BEVERLY

Not necessarily. For all we know
it could be more like a simple
allergic reaction to a bee
sting...

PICARD

(a beat)

Has Mister Barclay done anything
that could be considered
potentially threatening?

TROI

He did make a pass at me last
night.

They react. Riker particularly, raises an eyebrow.

46 CONTINUED:

TROI
(continuing)
A good one.

GEORDI
I wouldn't exactly call that a
threat.

TROI
No, but it's definitely unusual
behavior for Barclay.

BEVERLY
(corroborating)
He taught violin technique at the
music school last night.

RIKER
I didn't know Barclay even played
the violin.

BEVERLY
He didn't... until last night.

A beat.

GEORDI
Look... if we want to save the
Array, we need Barclay... It's
as simple as that...

Picard considers for a beat.

PICARD
Until he does something more
menacing than what's been
described -- I see no reason why
we should prevent him from
continuing his work.

LARSON'S COM VOICE
Larson to Commander La Forge.

GEORDI
(to COM)
Go ahead, Lieutenant.

47 INT. ENGINEERING

Barclay, Brower, and Larson are at their respective
consoles, working as quickly as possible.

47 CONTINUED:

LARSON
(to COM)
We're having trouble containing
reactor nine, sir. It's starting
to chain.

48 INT. READY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Geordi glances at Picard, who nods his permission.

GEORDI
(to COM)
I'll be right there.

Geordi takes off towards the door. As the others begin to leave, Riker moves next to Deanna -- with a twinkle in his eye; no jealousy intended...

RIKER
You said he made a pass... you
forgot to mention whether it was
successful or not...

Deanna controls a grin, EXITS without answering...

49 INT. ENGINEERING

Barclay, Larson and Brower at their respective control panels. Geordi is quickly moving between them and other stations, coordinating the work. It's damage control time.

BARCLAY
Thermal levels up one hundred
seventy seven percent. Comparable
increase in neutron emissions.

GEORDI
Is the interface between our
computer and the Array still in
operation?

BARCLAY
Yes.
(re: instruments)
But our computer is just too slow
to direct the repairs; the
parameters are changing too
quickly for it to keep up.

49 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

We'll have to try a remote
shutdown from here.

LARSON

Transmitting commands to the Array
now, Sir. Starting close down
sequence.

BARCLAY

(to Brower)

Brower, increase the intake of
liquid Helium Three into the
reactor wall. We've got to cool
it off.

BROWER

(working panel)

Transmitting commands...
(alarmed)
Thermal levels increasing!

Geordi rushes over.

GEORDI

What happened?

BARCLAY

Unclear... the interface isn't
fast enough.

Barclay's fingers are flying over the keyboard. He's
frustrated.

LARSON

Commander La Forge! Overload
indications on Argus generator
Five...

(a beat as he looks at
instruments)

Seven and Fourteen.

La Forge quickly moves over to Larson.

GEORDI

Damn.

50 ON BARCLAY

thinking out loud.

50 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY
Can't do anything from here...
I've got to have a better
interface...

Barclay pushes away from the console.

51 RESUME

GEORDI
(to COM)
La Forge to Bridge. We're looking
at a cascade reactor failure on
the Argus.

In the background, Barclay disappears unnoticed out
the door.

52 INT. BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, Data, Worf, Ensign Anaya.

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
I don't think we're gonna pull
this one out.

DATA
(off instruments)
Reactor Nine will reach critical
in ten minutes, forty three
seconds. The subsequent explosion
will create a chain reaction along
the entire length of the Array.

53 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

As Picard considers the vast structure for a beat.

RIKER
(to COM)
La Forge. You've got ten minutes.

PICARD
(to Anaya)
Ensign, standby for a jump to warp
two.

ENSIGN ANAYA
Yes, Sir.

53 CONTINUED:

RIKER
Mister Worf, Red Alert.

WORF
Aye, Commander.

Worf touches he panel and the RED ALERT KLAXONS and LIGHTS begin.

54 INT. CORRIDOR

Barclay is hurrying along the corridor, RED ALERT alarms blaring around him. He reaches a door marked HOLODECK THREE.

The door opens and he heads through it. FOLLOW him inside.

55 INT. HOLODECK - CONTINUOUS (OPTICAL)

Barclay steps quickly into the bare room.

BARCLAY
Computer.

COMPUTER VOICE
Standing by.

BARCLAY
Begin new program. Create as follows: Work station chair.

A chair MATERIALIZES in front of him. He sits down in it.

BARCLAY
(continuing)
Create a standard alpha-numeric console positioned for left hand.

A console MATERIALIZES on his left.

BARCLAY
(continuing)
... Now, an iconic display console positioned for right hand.

Another work station console MATERIALIZES to his immediate right. Barclay sits in the chair, begins testing both consoles...

55 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY
(continuing)
Tie both consoles into the
Enterprise main computer core,
utilizing a neural scan interface.

COMPUTER VOICE
(a beat)
There is no such device on file.

BARCLAY
No problem. Here's how you build
it...

56
thru OMITTED
57

58 INT. BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, Data, Worf, Ensign Anaya. As the RED
ALERT continues.

DATA
Argus Reactor Nine is twenty-eight
seconds to critical.

RIKER
Let's get out of here.

PICARD
Warp two, Ensign.

ENSIGN ANAYA
Yes, Sir.

Before she can execute the command, several of the
console and display lights suddenly GO OUT on the
Bridge.

ENSIGN ANAYA
Helm is not responding.

WORF
Captain! We have lost computer
control!

RIKER
What?

DATA
Twelve seconds to critical, Sir...

58 CONTINUED:

PICARD
(quickly to Anaya)
Go to manual.

Ensign Anaya attempts in vain to manually engage the helm...

ENSIGN ANAYA
I'm attempting to, sir... but
it's...

RIKER
There's not enough time...

The console lights suddenly brighten back to normal.
As everyone reacts to these unexpected events --.

WORF
The computer is coming back on
line, sir.

DATA
(puzzled; off
instruments)
Captain, the Argus reactors are
shutting down.
(to Picard)
We are no longer in danger.

PICARD
What happened?

DATA
(checking)
Unknown, sir...

RIKER
La Forge, what did you do?

59 INT. ENGINEERING

GEORDI
Wasn't me, sir.

60 INT. BRIDGE

PICARD
Computer, how were the Argus
reactors shut down?

60 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY'S VOICE
A neural interface was created
to expedite the repairs.

Reactions.

RIKER
Barclay?

Puzzled reactions.

PICARD
Computer! Respond.

BARCLAY'S VOICE
I am responding, sir. I'm sorry
if I caused you any alarm. It
was necessary in order to secure
the Array.

Everyone is stunned.

RIKER
Barclay?

BARCLAY'S VOICE
Yes, Commander...

61
thru OMITTED
62

63 INT. HOLODECK

Barclay is in his chair, the two consoles around him.
Hovering above is a massive half-globe shaped laser
scanner that continuously plays tiny laser lights over
Barclay's head. Conduits of all sizes and shapes lead
away from the device to the walls of the holodeck,
effectively wiring Barclay in.

His LIPS DO NOT MOVE when he speaks.

BARCLAY'S VOICE
(continuing)
It's me...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

(NOTE: Red Alert ends during the act break.)

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

64 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Motionless in space next to the Array.

65 OMITTED

66 INT. HOLODECK

Picard, Riker, Geordi and Worf are staring at Barclay in his interface chair, the tiny lasers continuously scanning his head. His lips are not moving as he speaks. Red Alert has been cancelled.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I was only trying to help. Our computer was too slow to compensate for the overload on the Array. So I created an interface that communicated my thoughts directly to the central processing unit.

RIKER

Exactly what does that mean?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

My body is as you see it here. But much of my higher brain functions and memory have been transferred to the starboard computer core.

A beat as the officers all look at each other. Picard turns to Barclay.

PICARD

Mister Barclay, please remove yourself from the computer system and leave the holodeck.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I'm afraid I can't, Sir.

PICARD

Why is that?

66 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY'S VOICE

My primary cerebral functions
are now operating almost entirely
from within the computer. They
have expanded to such a degree
that it would be impossible to
return to the confines of my
human brain.

A beat.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

(continuing)

Any attempt to do so would mean
my death.

OFF the reactions.

66A
thru OMITTED
67

68 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - ON GEORDI

finishing up at a wall panel that has been removed to
expose some circuitry beneath.

GEORDI

That's it.

69 INCLUDE SENIOR STAFF

Picard, Riker, Worf, Data sitting at the conference
table. Geordi replaces the panel.

GEORDI

(continuing)

I disconnected the visual and
audio pickups. We can talk
without being monitored by...

(hesitates)

the computer...

WORF

By Barclay.

Geordi joins them at the table.

PICARD

(to Geordi)

Report, Commander.

69 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

It's now almost impossible to tell where Barclay ends and the computer begins. He's actually rewriting the isolinear chips each time he extends himself a little further.

RIKER

How do we get him out of there?

GEORDI

We don't. Not without killing him.

PICARD

(beat)

This is an intolerable situation... I have no wish to harm him, but we cannot allow Mister Barclay to continue to act as the ship's computer... I don't care how smart he is.

DATA

Lieutenant Barclay has not yet extended himself into the Engineering subsystems. It may be possible to establish an ODN bypass directly to the Bridge.

PICARD

That won't give us control of the ship.

GEORDI

No... But we would have access to the propulsion systems. Enough to get us to the nearest Starbase.

RIKER

How long would it take to set it up?

GEORDI

A few hours.

PICARD

Make it so.

All rising...

69 CONTINUED: (2)

GEORDI

Should we... discuss this with
Barclay, Captain?

PICARD

I think not.

70 INT. JEFFRIES TUBE

Geordi is working in a Jeffries Tube.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

Commander La Forge?

A pause, as Geordi debates whether to respond. He
keeps working.

GEORDI

Yeah, Reg?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I thought you would be in your
quarters.

GEORDI

Just catching up on some work.

(lying)

That level-3 diagnostic we
talked about.

(beat)

How're you doing?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

(a beat)

I wish I could convey to you what
it's like for me now. What I've
become...

GEORDI

Give it a try.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I can conceive almost infinite
possibilities, and can fully
explore each of them in a
nanosecond. I perceive the
universe as a single equation,
and it is so simple, I...
understand...

70 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Understand?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

(beat)

...everything.

GEORDI

Do you understand how this happened to you?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I believe it is a gift... that I have been chosen to fulfill a great purpose...

GEORDI

(concerned)

Uh huh.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

(a beat, suddenly concerned)

Do you suppose all this has changed the way people think about me?

Geordi is touched for a moment -- it's still the real Barclay somewhere in there.

GEORDI

I'll be honest with you. We don't know what to think.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I've been concerned about that.

(a beat)

But soon everyone will understand what I can do for humanity.

GEORDI

They will... ?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

We have always perceived the maximum speed of the Enterprise as a function of warp... but I know now there are no limits...

(MORE)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

BARCLAY'S VOICE (Cont'd)

We will explore new worlds that
we could never before have reached
in our lifetime. I will take us
to them...

Off Geordi's reaction...

71 INT. BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, Data, Worf, Ensign Anaya. Worf looks up
in alarm from his instruments.

WORF

Captain! I am picking up a
subspace distortion.

72 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

where the stars appear to be stretching away from the
Enterprise.

PICARD

Mister Data?

DATA

(off instruments)

This disturbance is the result
of a highly charged graviton field
emanating from our warp nacelles.
It is creating a severe bias in
the subspace continuum.

Everyone reacts. A beat.

PICARD

Lieutenant Barclay, are you
responsible for this graviton
field disturbance?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

Yessir, I'm altering subspace
in a way that's never been
conceived of before. I'm fairly
certain it will allow us to travel
half-way across the galaxy in a
matter of only...

72 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Mister Barclay, I'd like you to hold off on this experiment for now.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

Captain, if you'd only allow me...

PICARD

Lieutenant, this is a direct order. Discontinue whatever it is you're doing.

A beat.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I really would rather not, sir. I'm positive you'll be pleased with the result once I've finished.

Picard glances at Worf, gives him the CUT OFF sign. Worf touches the controls.

WORF

Audio is disconnected. We may speak freely.

RIKER

(to Data)

How soon before the ODN bypass is in place?

DATA

I have been monitoring Commander La Forge's progress. It will be operational in approximately seventeen minutes.

TROI

(to Picard)

Captain, let me go to the holodeck. Try to talk to him.

WORF

(off instruments)

Sir, the subspace distortion is continuing to increase...

Picard nods to Troi... she EXITS.

72A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship hovering near the distortion.

72B INT. HOLODECK (FORMERLY SCENE 72A)

The door opens and Troi ENTERS. She is taken aback by the sight of Barclay all plugged in. As before, when he speaks, his mouth does not move.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

Hello, Deanna.

TROI

Reg...

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I'm sorry that we can't take that walk in the Arboretum.

TROI

So am I.

(beat)

Reg, you've frightened everyone...
I can't imagine that is your intent.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

Young children are sometimes frightened of the world. That doesn't mean their parents should let them stay in their cribs.

TROI

Are we children to you, now?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I can see so much more than you are capable of. You should trust that.

A beat.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

(continuing)

Deanna, I've always wanted to earn your respect.

TROI

You've got it... From all of us.
We don't need any more convincing.

(MORE)

72B CONTINUED:

TROI (Cont'd)

Please obey the Captain's
orders... stop whatever you're
doing...

BARCLAY'S VOICE

You must trust me...

TROI

How are we to trust an officer
who doesn't follow orders... ?

BARCLAY'S VOICE

Trust me...

A beat as Troi gives up.

TROI

The Captain will do everything
in his power to stop you.

She waits a beat, there is no further replay... she
turns and EXITS.

73 INT. JEFFRIES TUBE

The RED ALERT SOUNDS. Geordi reacts.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Picard to La Forge. Status?

Geordi makes one final adjustment in his work.

GEORDI

Ready now, Captain.

PICARD

Proceed.

GEORDI

Acknowledged.

He quickly puts his hand to an interface and works the
controls.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

Commander?

GEORDI

(startled)

What.

73 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY'S VOICE
You're too late.

74 INT. BRIDGE

Troi is back on the Bridge. Data looks up from his console.

DATA
(surprised)
Captain, the ODN bypass to the Bridge has been blocked. We have not regained control of the propulsion systems.

75 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

The intense horizontal curvature of space is beginning to glow.

RIKER
(to computer)
Barclay!

BARCLAY'S VOICE
Yes, Commander Riker?

RIKER
(re: viewscreen)
Shut that thing down!

76 OMITTED

77 RESUME

No response. All are facing the viewscreen.

WORF
Captain. We are going in.

78 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

as the ship begins to move slowly toward the distortion.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

79
thru OMITTED
81

82 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship is inexorably heading towards the disturbance -- which has now begun to assume a more tunnel-like appearance. The stars inside and along the edges look stretched.

83 INT. BRIDGE

PICARD
Mister Barclay!
(beat)
Respond at once!

Still no answer. Picard motions Worf to cut the audio...

WORF
Audio is disconnected.

PICARD
(to Worf)
Lieutenant, take a security team
to Holodeck Three.
(beat)
Disconnect Mister Barclay from
the computer.

WORF
(understanding
implication)
Aye, Captain.

Worf quickly heads for the door.

84 OMITTED

84A INT. HOLODECK

The door opens and Worf and TWO N. D. SECURITY MEN ENTER, phasers in hand.

85 INCLUDE BARCLAY

plugged into the interface. He seems to be in a higher state of consciousness... hardly acknowledges Worf's arrival. The ship suddenly SHAKES. Worf and his men steady themselves, then head quickly towards Barclay, BOUNCING OFF a force field directly in front of him. They quickly recover.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

I want you to know, Lieutenant Worf, that I understand your duty in this matter...

WORF

Phasers. Maximum setting

All three pull their phasers.

BARCLAY'S VOICE

(continuing)

... and that I in no way will take your actions personally.

WORF

The conduits.

They aim at the interface unit above Barclay's head. Again, the ship SHAKES.

WORF

Fire.

They fire -- with no result. The force field holds. Suddenly, the entire room JOLTS violently to one side, then back. Worf and the others fall...

86 OMITTED

87 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship has been drawn into the 'tunnel'... the ship moves incredibly fast -- stars blur by at an extraordinary rate...

88
thru OMITTED
91

92 INT. BRIDGE

SHAKING. The staff is holding on... watching the
viewscreen. There is a change becoming apparent --
as everything on the Bridge, including personnel and
voices, starts to distort. The effect continues
through Scenes 92 and 96.

RIKER
(to Con)
La Forge! Initiate stabilization
procedure!

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
Resetting stabilizers to match
subspace flow matrix... stand
by...

Slowly, the ship STABILIZES...

PICARD
Mister Data... ?

DATA
(off instruments)
We are experiencing a quantum
level oscillation delay...
Doubling in intensity, every
twelve point three seconds...

Worf ENTERS from the turbolift...

WORF
(reporting)
He is protected by a force
field... we could not disconnect
him.

RIKER
Data, how long can we take this?

DATA
Bio-cellular disruption is
imminent.

Everyone holds on for a few difficult beats.

ENSIGN ANAYA
(re: viewscreen)
Sir!

93
thru OMITTED
95

96 INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

Where all the star lines converge into one bright mass,
which we approach at immense speed, until it engulfs
the screen, and we burst through... with a WHITEOUT...

97 RESUME

Everything on the Bridge is suddenly normal. Everyone
reacts.

RIKER

Where are we, Ensign?

ENSIGN ANAYA

(off instruments,
amazed)

Unless something is wrong with
the sensors... We're almost
thirty thousand light years from
where we were.

Everyone reacts with astonishment.

98 OMITTED

98A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

surrounded by more stars than we've ever seen before
-- there's more light than the blackness of space.

98B INT. BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Include viewscreen... Everyone stares in amazement
at the countless stars.

PICARD

(awed)

The center of the galaxy.

ENSIGN ANAYA

Sir, our heading has been altered.
Approaching a planetary cluster.

98B CONTINUED:

DATA

(off instruments)

Captain, all systems are back
under helm control. The computer
has resumed normal functioning.

Suddenly, directly in front of the viewscreen appears
a holographic-type image of an alien being. It is an
odd combination of intense curiosity, lightheartedness,
quickness and benevolence.

WORF

Captain!

Worf quickly moves to position himself between it and
Picard, pulling his phaser.

ALIEN

(re: Worf's action)

Emotive. Electro-chemical
stimulus-response.

(a beat)

Cranial plate.

Picard puts out a hand, holding Worf off. Worf stops.
They all watch the alien as it takes them in, glancing
quickly around the Bridge.

ALIEN

(continuing)

Bipedal locomotion. Endoskeletal.
Contiguous external integument.

PICARD

I am Jean-Luc Picard, Captain of
the Federation Starship
Enterprise.

ALIEN

(aha!)

Hierarchical collective command
structure!

PICARD

Who are you?

ALIEN

(still describing what
it sees)

Interrogative.

Picard realizes it's describing him.

98B CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Yes. I am interrogative... And
I would appreciate an
explanation...

BARCLAY (O.C.)

I believe I can help with that,
Captain.

98C ANGLE - BARCLAY

has arrived from the turbolift... walking toward
command... He is returning to normal... a little
rattled by the experience.

RIKER

Mister Barclay. I thought it
would be fatal if you left the
holodeck.

BARCLAY

The Cytherians have reintegrated
me, sir.

ALIEN

(affirming)
Cytherians.

BARCLAY

The probe was designed to instruct
outsiders on how to reach this
system. But the technologies
aren't always compatible. It
failed with the Argus computer,
and with the computer on the
shuttle. But it was able to
reprogram... me.

PICARD

(to the alien)
What do you want of us?

ALIEN

The same as you.

PICARD

(explain)
Mister Barclay... ?

98C CONTINUED:

BARCLAY

You both have the same mission,
Captain...

PICARD

Mission... ?

BARCLAY

Yessir. The Cytherians are
exploring the galaxy just as we
are... The difference is they
never leave their home -- they
bring others here. They only wish
an exchange of knowledge...

(beat)

They want to know us.

The alien hologram nods and grins at Picard. Picard
glances at Riker, who smiles -- he knows what Picard's
decision will be.

99 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

At impulse speed through normal space.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, stardate 44721.9.
The Cytherians have returned the
Enterprise to Federation space.
We bring back knowledge of their
race that will take our scholars
decades to examine. Lieutenant
Barclay is apparently no worse
for his experience.

100
thru OMITTED
102

103 INT. TEN-FORWARD

Geordi, Troi, and Barclay are standing at the bar.
Several couples and others dot the lounge, including
two crew members playing three dimensional chess.

Barclay seems basically his pre-transformation self.

TROI

How much do you remember?

103 CONTINUED:

BARCLAY

I can still remember doing
everything -- I just can't
remember how or why.

There's a melancholy in his look... he can't disguise
it. Troi and Geordi exchange a glance.

TROI

And how do you feel now?

BARCLAY

(sad chuckle)
Smaller...

GEORDI

Just plain old Barclay, huh...

BARCLAY

It always seems to come back to
that, doesn't it..

TROI

Most everyone has a moment in
their lives when they exceed their
own limits... achieve what seems
to be impossible...

GEORDI

The tricky part is what happens
afterwards.

TROI

(nodding)
You almost always feel a sense
of loss. But it's possible to
carry something of that experience
through the rest of your life --
in ways that you're not even aware
of now.

BARCLAY

I... I think I see what you're
saying...

GEORDI

Either way, you're an important
part of this crew.

(rising)
In fact, I could use your help
tackling that level-3
diagnostic...

103 CONTINUED: (2)

Barclay and Troi rise too...

BARCLAY

Sure...

TROI

Excuse me, Commander... but I believe Mister Barclay and I had a date scheduled for a walk in the Arboretum... ?

Barclay reacts, walks into a chair, stumbles a tad... she supports him...

GEORDI

The diagnostic can wait. See you later...

He EXITS.

BARCLAY

You don't... don't have to do this, you know...

TROI

(grins, takes his arm, leading him)

I know.

He smiles and as they walk past two players at the chess game... he glances and pauses. He looks at one of the players.

BARCLAY

May I?

The player nods, giving a look of: "go ahead, I'm losing anyway." Barclay moves a piece on the board.

BARCLAY

(continuing)

Checkmate in nine moves.

The players react... so does Troi, and Barclay leads the way out...

TROI

I didn't know you played chess.

103 CONTINUED: (3)

BARCLAY
(surprised)
I don't.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END