

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"The Royale"
#40272-138

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FINAL DRAFT

JANUARY 10, 1989

STAR TREK: "The Royale" - 01/10/89 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Royale"

CAST

PICARD	BELLBOY
RIKER	ASSISTANT MANAGER
DATA	TEXAS
PULASKI	VANESSA
TROI	DEALER
GEORDI	MIKEY D
WORF	CROUPIER
WESLEY	
O'BRIEN	Non-Speaking
	ROYALE HOTEL GUESTS
Non-Speaking	
CREWMEMBERS	

STAR TREK: "The Royale" - 01/10/89 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Royale"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

MAIN BRIDGE

CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

TRANSPORTER ROOM

OBSERVATION LOUNGE

THE ROYALE HOTEL

LOBBY

CASINO

SEVENTH FLOOR HALLWAY

RICHEY'S SUITE

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

PLANET THETA EIGHT

SURFACE

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Royale"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit around an ice-green planet with swirling white cloud patterns.

RIKER (V.O.)

Ship's log, stardate 42625.4,
First Officer Riker reporting.
We have achieved orbit around
Theta Eight...

2 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - ON WESLEY

at helm, DATA at Ops, WORF at his Tactical position.

3 MOVE PAST THEM SLOWLY

as RIKER walks from Command to the Aft Science Station where GEORDI is studying a sensor readout screen of the planet's atmosphere and surface.

RIKER (V.O.)

(continuing)

... the planet furthest from its sun in this previously unmapped solar system. It is a world of ruthless realities: particularly harsh, barren, and inhospitable...

4 ANGLE UP ON GEORDI'S FACE

reflecting the screen's amber light. Riker STEPS INTO FRAME behind him...

RIKER (V.O.)

(continuing)

Our reason for being here -- a passing Klingon cruiser reported discovering pieces of a strange vessel in the upper atmosphere. We've come to investigate...

4 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

(studying the screen)

Nasty. Nitrogen... methane...
liquid neon. Surface temperature
minus two hundred and ninety-one
degrees Fahrenheit. Winds up to
three hundred and twelve meters
per second.

RIKER

Not exactly a vacation planet,
eh?

GEORDI

Uh uh. Not unless you like
ammonia tornadoes. Or orange
lightning bolts for that matter.

RIKER

(smiling)

Not my cup of tea. Found anything
artificial in the atmosphere?

GEORDI

Nothing so far. We're just coming
around to the night side now.

RIKER

Keep me informed. The sooner we
identify what the Klingons think
they saw, the sooner we can get
the hell out of here.

GEORDI

Sounds good to me.

5 STAY ON GEORDI

as Riker walks away. He shakes his head as more data
return from the surface of Theta Eight...

GEORDI

(to himself)

Nasty.

6 INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

PICARD sits on a chair staring at a tabletop viewer.
It has a number of equations and theorems on it -- like
a present-day blackboard. The door CHIMES.

6 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Come.

Riker ENTERS, looks at the viewscreen.

PICARD

(continuing)

Fermat's last theorem. Familiar with it?

RIKER

No. I'm afraid I spent too many math classes daydreaming about being on a starship.

PICARD

It's intriguing. When Fermat died they found scrawled in the margin of his notes that he had found a "remarkable proof."

(beat)

Unfortunately he never lived to write it down. And for the last eight hundred years people have been trying to rediscover it.

RIKER

And that includes you?

PICARD

I find the process relaxing.

RIKER

(changing the subject)

We've detected debris of some sort in a loose orbit.

PICARD

Can you identify?

RIKER

I suggest we beam a section aboard for analysis.

PICARD

Make it so, Number One.

7 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM - PICARD (OPTICAL)

ENTERS and goes to where Riker is standing by the platform. He nods to O'BRIEN standing at the console.

7 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Energize.

Riker explains as a piece of the debris begins to MATERIALIZE:

RIKER

We've locked onto something with markings on it.

PICARD

What sort of markings?

RIKER

Uncertain, sir.

A large chunk of jagged metal MATERIALIZES on the platform. It seems featureless, the color of brushed aluminum. Picard is intrigued -- he touches it and spots something as he turns it over...

PICARD

There's something here.

Riker goes to see what Picard has found.

PICARD

(continuing; frowning)

That symbol... Do you recognize it?

RIKER

(quietly stunned)

Yes sir. I -- I think I do.

8 REVERSE ANGLE

to see what they're seeing.

9 MOVE IN ON THE SYMBOL

a white five-pointed star on a dark blue circular background intersected by red and white horizontal lines on either side.

It is the insignia of the United States Air Force...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

10 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

seen from a different angle, still in orbit around Theta Eight.

11 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - PICARD

Riker, Data and TROI are gathered to discuss the debris...

DATA

Metallic analysis bears out that the object in question was terrestrial in origin. Most likely late twenty-first century.

PICARD

But that's not possible. No ship of that time period could have come this far.

DATA

Nevertheless, that is what our tests indicate. And the markings we discovered are consistent with this hypothesis.

TROI

Any idea what destroyed it? An explosion of some sort?

DATA

Unknown.

PICARD

The question is, how did it get here?

Picard's train of thought is interrupted by the INTERCOM...

WESLEY'S COM VOICE

Captain. We've detected a large structure on the planet.

12 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - CLOSE ON SCREEN

Wesley and the others are studying the sensor readout screen.

DATA

It is a building of some sort, situated on a plane of frozen methane, smack in the middle of a tremendous storm belt. It is incongruous; it simply should not be there!

PICARD

Are you certain it's artificially constructed?

DATA

Absolutely. The structure is surrounded by breathable air.

Picard steps back, taking it all in.

RIKER

It's hard to accept...

PICARD

Yet it does seem to be down there. Is there a connection between the structure and the ship?

No one seems to have an answer to this.

PICARD

(continuing)

Suggestions?

RIKER

(small smile)

Only one, sir. Suggest we go down and have a look.

PICARD

Form an away team, minimal complement.

13 MOVE IN

on a thoughtful, determined Picard.

PICARD

Let's see if we can find the architects.

14 OMITTED

15 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM - ON DATA AND WORF

checking equipment, standing on the transporter platform. Over at the transporter panel, O'BRIEN looks up.

O'BRIEN

Give me a moment, gents. We're dealing with an extremely narrow access point.

16 OMITTED

17 RIKER (OPTICAL)

steps on platform.

RIKER

We're ready when you are...
(then to Worf)
Phasers on stun.

They adjust their phasers. Riker looks to O'Brien. O'Brien nods.

RIKER

(continuing)
Energize.

O'Brien complies, and the party of three is BEAMED AWAY.

18 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DATA, WORF AND RIKER (OPTICAL)

MATERIALIZE in a featureless black void. It is completely still, no sound, no movement. The calm is unnerving.

RIKER

(tense)
Where are we?

Data checks his tricorder.

DATA

Exactly where Geordi said we would be. The structure is directly behind us.

18 CONTINUED:

They all turn and look behind them. All they can see is blackness...

DATA

(continuing)

I am detecting vast ammonia storms raging mere kilometers away. Yet they do not appear to penetrate this breathable zone.

RIKER

(soft, awed)

It's like the eye of a hurricane.

Data has wandered toward where he believes the structure to be. He looks up, as though sensing the hugeness of the thing.

DATA

It is here. It must be here, yet we cannot see it.

19 INTERCUT WITH PICARD ON THE MAIN BRIDGE

RIKER'S COM VOICE

Enterprise, this is Commander Riker. We have arrived in a very unusual place... it is like being in the eye of a hurricane. It is completely calm, no sound, no movement, yet a few meters away a storm, which we can neither see nor hear, is raging.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Describe the structure.

RIKER

We can't see it.

WORF

Commander, over here. I see something!

Data and Riker hurry over to Worf. The Klingon has discovered an old-fashioned revolving door, seemingly situated in the middle of nothing. It turns slowly, as though beckoning them...

19 CONTINUED:

WORF
(continuing)
What is this thing?

PICARD'S COM VOICE
What is it, Commander?

RIKER
(to Picard, amazed)
I think it's a door. An antique.

DATA
Judging by its location, it may
be an entrance to the structure
we seek.

The three of them exchange wary glances...

RIKER
Well... this is what we came here
for.
(to Picard)
Captain, we are entering the
structure.

Riker cautiously steps in and the revolving door
automatically turns to the right. Riker disappears
into the darkness, and when the door stops revolving he
is gone. Worf looks at Data and then follows suit.
Data follows him...

20 INT. ROYALE LOBBY - DATA

steps out of the revolving door and joins the others
inside the structure. They are standing on a garish
carpet, scarlet with gold trim. All are looking around
incredulously as we HEAR THE SOUND OF A SLOT MACHINE
hitting a jackpot and the tumult of a casino in full
swing.

21 ANGLE TO REVEAL THEIR WHEREABOUTS

inside the lobby of a small Vegas-style hotel, roughly
our time period. To their right is a front desk beside
some elevators. To the left is a modest casino with
blackjack tables, crap tables and roulette wheels, all
flanked by a row of slot machines and a lounge with a
piano player.

21 CONTINUED:

There is a bustle of activity on all sides. People are gambling, hotel workers are scurrying about. No one is paying much attention to the three stunned strangers. Riker touches his communicator.

RIKER

Riker to Enterprise. We have entered the structure.

(then, realizing)

We're not getting through.

22 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - PICARD

stands between Wesley and an n.d. crewmember at Conn and Ops. Troi can be seen sitting at the Command Section with Geordi still at the Aft Station.

PICARD

Where's that interference originating?

GEORDI

From the source, sir. Cause... unknown.

PICARD

Lock onto the landing party. Have the Transporter Room prepare to beam them up.

Geordi shakes his head as he studies the screen...

GEORDI

We can't distinguish them as long as they're inside that structure.

PICARD

Can they hear us?

GEORDI

We've got to recalibrate all frequencies.

PICARD

Make it so.

23 INT. ROYALE LOBBY - RIKER

is touching his communicator, frustrated.

23 CONTINUED:

DATA

Without radio contact, we should
leave immediately.

RIKER

Agreed. We'll make a preliminary
sweep of this environment and then
return.

A BELLBOY, a Latino in his mid-twenties, nervously
looks them over as if he is expecting someone else.

BELLBOY

Checking in, gentlemen? You'll
have to go to the front desk.

He indicates the front desk and then moves off before
our people can respond. What follows plays off the
point of view of Riker and the others. Riker thinks
about what he said and then heads for the front desk.
Worf and Data follow him, still looking around in
wonder.

A SLIGHTLY BUILT MAN WITH PERFECT HAIR stands behind
the counter, underneath a sign that says REGISTRATION.
The name tag on his lapel reads "ASSISTANT MANAGER."
He's the type of assistant manager we've all met at
one time or another: polite in a routine, impersonal
and annoying way, fastidious and slightly effeminate.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Welcome, gentlemen. Have a nice
trip?

Riker looks at Worf quizzically.

RIKER

Uh... Do you know us?

ASSISTANT MANAGER

We've been expecting you. A trio
of foreign gentlemen.

RIKER

We're from the United Federation
of Planets --

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Of course. Welcome to The Hotel
Royale...

23 CONTINUED: (2)

The Bellboy comes up beside the assistant manager, interrupting:

BELLBOY

(urgently)

Did Rita call?

ASSISTANT MANAGER

No -- and for your own good you had better quit thinking about Rita.

BELLBOY

I'm not afraid of him.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Then you're a fool. Everybody with any sense is afraid of Mikey D.

BELLBOY

(waves off the thought
of Mikey D)

If Rita calls -- you let me know.

He then turns and walks away.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

(confidentially to
Riker)

The kid's just askin' for trouble -- Rita's too much for him to handle, and Mikey D will plant his face in the pavement.

(then, handing them
to Riker)

Now, here are your room keys and some complimentary casino chips. Enjoy!

Riker and Worf don't know what any of this means.

WORF

What is this place? How did a being like you get here?

The assistant manager finally looks up.

23 CONTINUED: (3)

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Why this is the Royale, of course. And my personal life is really none of your business, thank you.

He looks back down again...

RIKER

What he means is, what planet is this?

The assistant manager SIGHS and faces Riker...

ASSISTANT MANAGER

I beg your pardon?

RIKER

This planet. What do you call it?

ASSISTANT MANAGER

(rolling his eyes)

Earth.

(very dry)

What do you call it?

Riker and Worf are stunned to hear him mention Earth.

WORF

We call it Theta Eight.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

How charming.

This time the assistant manager spins and begins to EXIT the area behind the desk.

DATA

Commander...

RIKER

Yes Data?

DATA

(reading from his tricorder)

None of these people... are emitting life signs.

WORF

You mean they're not alive?

24 OMITTED

25 MOVE IN ON RIKER

looking around at the "people" moving about the lobby
with more than a little concern.

RIKER
(more to himself)
Then what are they?...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

26 INT. ROYALE LOBBY - THE AWAY TEAM

are still examining their unexpected surroundings -- studying the movements of the hotel's seeming inhabitants.

WORF

(to Data)

These beings... are they machines,
(eyes narrow)
or mere illusions, designed to
deceive us?

DATA

(studying tricorder)

Not illusions, Lieutenant. They
do exist, but they do not register
as either man or machine.

Just then, a cheerful, burly, MIDDLE-AGED MAN wearing a huge tan-colored Stetson (we'll call him TEXAS) comes out of the elevator behind Data. The android turns his tricorder on him...

DATA

(continuing)

For example, this creature
exhibits no DNA structure.

Texas overhears and replies in a Texas twang...

TEXAS

Look who's talkin'.

(to Riker)

He sounds just like my ex-wife.

Texas shakes his head and mutters to himself as he hobbles OUT OF FRAME. We can hear him BELLOW OUT as he reaches the casino O.S.

TEXAS

(continuing)

Aaaaall right!! Time to get back
to business!

DATA

What sort of business do you
suppose he is getting down to?

26 CONTINUED:

Curious, Data wanders toward the casino. Worf and Riker wander with him, as we:

GO TO:

27
thru OMITTED
29

30 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard stands and walks to the Aft Station, where Wesley and Geordi are working on something together.

PICARD
Status report?

WESLEY
We're attempting to employ alternate encoding schemes.

GEORDI
There are hundreds of possible combinations, Captain.

PICARD
Is there an intelligence causing the interference?

GEORDI
Impossible to tell, Captain.

Troi looks at Picard, concerned.

31 INT. ROYALE CASINO - ENTRANCE - THE AWAY TEAM

are standing at the edge of the casino. We can hear occasional SHOUTS OF ENTHUSIASM AND DESPAIR from the gaming tables. Data quietly walks up to a table where TWO HIGH-ROLLERS are playing blackjack surrounded by onlookers and supporters.

THE DEALER is a twenty-eight year old black man, cool and laid back. Texas sits to his right, while VANESSA sits to his left.

Texas notices Data and motions him to come up beside him. The dealer shuffles his decks as Texas converses with the android, Data holding his complimentary chips in his hand.

31 CONTINUED:

TEXAS

You're new around here, aren't you?

DATA

Yes. I have certainly never visited this place, or its true counterpart, before.

TEXAS

(re the game)

Sit down, boy. I'll show you how this game is played.

(re Data's chips)

Go ahead. Ante up.

Texas does just that; Data follow suit. The dealer has just finished shuffling. He slides the deck toward Data... and waits.

DATA

(to Texas, frowning)

It seems he expects something of me.

VANESSA

He wants you to cut the cards.

DATA

Ah, is this poker?

TEXAS

No, it's blackjack.

DATA

Also known as twenty-one, a number which defines the object of the game. Tens and picture cards are worth ten, ace -- one or eleven -- the other cards face value. The dealer must hit seventeen -- five cards under pays double.

TEXAS

Not at this joint -

(to dealer)

Run 'em, boy. And make 'em friendly. There's no bread in the house.

32
thru OMITTED
37

38 WIDE ANGLE

The dealer deals. The other players look at their two cards and the dealer shows a ten.

TEXAS

(to Vanessa)

Aren't you going to look at your hand?

(aside to Data)

Poor girl needs to win.

Vanessa has a ten and a five.

VANESSA

Fifteen - do I hit, Texas, or stand?

TEXAS

If you've got to win -- then you've got to hit.

VANESSA

Hit me.

The Dealer slides her a new card -- a jack.

VANESSA

(continuing)

Damn!

She flips her cards toward the dealer; she's gone over. Vanessa's spirits sink.

TEXAS

Hit me.

Dealer flips over a nine; Texas nonchalantly turns his cards - a ten and a deuce.

TEXAS

(continuing)

Twenty-one -- a winner.

RIKER (O.S.)

Having fun, Data?

39 ANGLE TO INCLUDE RIKER

now standing with Worf among the onlookers. Data is quickly self-conscious.

39 CONTINUED:

DATA

Fun, sir? While there is a certain amount of enjoyment involved I was mainly conducting research into --

RIKER

-- Save it, Data. We're getting out of here.

DATA

Understood, sir.

DEALER

Hey, you're holding up the game.

RIKER

Our apologies. Come on, Data.

Riker and Worf turn to exit the casino. Data follows after, nodding at the other players and remembering to take his two chips.

40 INT. ROYALE LOBBY - THE AWAY TEAM

approach the revolving door through which they came into the Royale. Riker enters it first, followed by Data and Worf. Much to their surprise, they find themselves exiting right back into the lobby. They are all disconcerted...

RIKER

Try it again.

And they try again... and come back out in the lobby again.

DATA

Sir, there is no other exit point. Unless we can find another way... it seems we are trapped here.

Worf reacts, frustrated, claustrophobic; Riker puts a steadying hand on his shoulder as he fights his own fears, as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

41 OMITTED

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

A42 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit around the planet.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental. We
remain in orbit around Theta
Eight, still out of contact with
the away team.

42 INT. ROYALE CASINO - RIKER AND DATA

stand at the edge of the casino, watching the goings on
from afar; Riker's concerned, Data's interested. Worf
approaches, frustrated.

WORF

Phasers are totally ineffective
on all surfaces.

DATA

(to Riker, showing his
own variety of concern
now)

I am checking options... they
seem quite limited --

RIKER

We don't have any. If we're ever
going to get out of here, we'll
have to do it on our own.

(then, heading off)

I'm going to get some answers out
of that desk clerk...

Riker strides off toward the front desk, as we:

GO TO:

43 INT. ROYALE LOBBY - FRONT DESK - THE BELLBOY

is beside himself with anxiety, waiting for the proper
moment before he does what he has to do. Finally, all
eyes are diverted and he steps behind the bell
captain's stand, opens a small drawer, and pulls out a
snub-nosed .38. He checks the load, snaps the cylinder
shut and slides the revolver into his waistband.

43 CONTINUED:

He sighs with satisfaction, suddenly starting as the assistant manager puts a hand on his shoulder.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Are you crazy?

BELLBOY

Wrong. I'm finally getting some smarts --

Riker approaches, quickly intrigued by the obvious intensity of the conversation.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

You think you're gonna scare Mikey D with that thing?

BELLBOY

I'm gonna make him leave Rita alone.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Kid, she's a big girl... and she's Mikey D's girl.

BELLBOY

Not any more. Not after tonight.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Look. I like you. I don't want to see you get hurt... especially over some dame --

BELLBOY

(bristling at that)

Don't call her that!

(then, eyes welling up with anger)

You'll see! You'll see how tough Mikey D is! He's nothin'!

With that, the bellboy stomps off; Riker seizes the moment, quickly steps up to the assistant manager.

RIKER

I want some answers!

ASSISTANT MANAGER

The concierge can help you with any --

43 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

We want out of here. Now.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

I'm afraid you've missed your check-out time. We do have our rules, you know.

RIKER

I mean out of the building. We want to get outside --

ASSISTANT MANAGER

The Royale's exits are clearly marked.

RIKER

That's not good enough.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

If you have a complaint about the service you've received during your stay, you can always take it up with the manager.

RIKER

Fine! I'd like to see him immediately!

ASSISTANT MANAGER

(calm smile)

I'm afraid the manager is very busy.

Before the assistant manager gives one of his typical non-answers, RIKER'S COMMUNICATOR UNEXPECTEDLY COMES ALIVE.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

(heavy static)

... Riker, can you read me?

Riker hits his communicator:

RIKER

Yes, go ahead.

Then, nothing. He tries again:

RIKER

(continuing)

Enterprise?... Enterprise?...

44 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - ON PICARD AND TROI

standing behind Wesley and Geordi.

RIKER'S COM VOICE
(through static)
... Enterprise...

PICARD
(into com)
Why haven't you left the
building, Number One?

RIKER'S COM VOICE
(through static)
... Tried... Trapped here... No
immediate danger...

45 INT. ROYALE LOBBY - NEAR ELEVATOR - RIKER

is conversing with the Enterprise; behind him, the
assistant manager is peering over, covertly listening
in.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Something at your location is
interfering with our exchange...
Working on the problem...

Picard's voice is completely drowned out by the static.

46 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - PICARD

is frustrated.

WESLEY
These frequencies aren't
working.

PICARD
(sharply)
Then find another.

WESLEY
Yes sir.

Picard returns to Command -- sighing with exasperation
as he sits down.

PICARD
(to himself)
What is going on down there?

47 INT. ROYALE LOBBY - NEAR REGISTRATION DESK

Data is back at it with his tricorder, aiming it up toward the ceiling...

DATA

(studying tricorder)

Commander... I am picking up something most unusual in another section of this structure. Indications of DNA.

RIKER

Where?

DATA

Thirty-one point nine meters above and to the right of us.

WORF

(indicates elevators)

Perhaps those turbolifts could take us there.

48 INT. ROYALE - SEVENTH FLOOR HALLWAY - THE AWAY TEAM

move down the hallway -- Data using his tricorder like a Geiger counter. He pauses in front of a door marked "727."

DATA

The reading I got is behind this door.

49 ANGLE ON THE DOOR TO ROOM 727

Riker's hand COMES INTO FRAME. It hesitates for a moment... and then knocks... and knocks again. There is no response, so he opens the door.

50 INT. ROYALE - RICHEY'S SUITE

is typical of what you'd find in a Vegas hotel. The lights are on, the shades drawn, there is no sense of movement; however, there is someone apparently sleeping in the bed (we can see hair on a pillow as well as a body buried under the covers).

DATA

My reading is intensifying.

50 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Life signs?

DATA

None.

Riker moves forward and pulls the cover off the body.

51 CLOSE ON WHAT IS SHOCKINGLY REVEALED

a skeletal figure -- long dead and decaying. Riker recoils...

DATA

Definitely human. Male.

RIKER

Looks like the poor devil died in its sleep.

WORF

What a terrible way to go.

Worf has moved to the window...

DATA

He has been dead for two hundred eighty-three years. The lack of any advanced decomposition is attributable to the sterile environment.

WORF

Commander, look here.

Worf pulls back the drapes, revealing a garish neon sign blinding us to anything beyond its surreal imagery of a long-legged cowgirl. Data crosses to a closet in b.g.

WORF

Is that... this "Las Vegas" you spoke about?

RIKER

I believe that's what the illusion is meant to be.

51 CONTINUED:

RIKER

(moving, looking around
the room)

Why would anyone go to all this
trouble? It's all just... window
dressing for a dead man.

Data pulls out a pale-blue, sleek, one-piece space
suit. There's an American flag stitched on the right
sleeve.

DATA

Is this significant, sir?

RIKER

American. Fifty-two stars -- that
would date it between 2053 and
2079 A.D.

Riker examines the suit and finds a name embroidered
on the chest area.

RIKER

(continuing;
reading name)

Colonel S. Richey.

Riker looks at the skeleton and somehow feels sad...

RIKER

(continuing; soft)

Rest in peace, Colonel.

Riker's communicator comes alive again and Picard can
be heard clearly now.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Picard to Riker.

RIKER

Finally.

(touches communicator)

Riker. Go ahead.

52 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard and Troi are standing behind Wesley and Geordi
at Science Two.

PICARD

What's your situation?

52 CONTINUED:

RIKER

We are locked in a structure made to resemble twentieth century Earth -- all efforts to exit have failed.

PICARD

We can't transport.

RIKER

I assumed as much. Captain, we have located the remains of a human.

53 INT. ROYALE - RICHEY'S SUITE - ON RIKER

RIKER

Request identity scan on a Colonel Richey, American, first initial S., roughly same time period.

54 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - SAME SETTING

RIKER'S COM VOICE

We also need a computer library check on hotel known as the Royale; possible location, Las Vegas, Nevada, circa twenty-first century.

Static overwhelms Riker's voice, terminating communication. Picard turns to Geordi and Wesley...

PICARD

Get on it.

55 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit.

56 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WESLEY

calls over to Picard:

WESLEY

Information retrieved, Captain --

56 CONTINUED:

Picard steps over to a search/file screen which is sizzling with readout. He studies it for a beat, then intones:

PICARD

Colonel Stephen Richey was the commanding officer of the explorer ship Charybdis which had a terrestrial launch date of 7-23-2067. It was the first manned attempt to travel beyond the confines of the Euclidian solar system. Its telemetry system failed and it was never heard from again...

(then, intrigued)

Why is this of interest, Number One?

There is no com response from Riker:

GEORDI

The frequency scramble remains unpredictable, sir...

Picard sighs with the frustration of being out of touch with his away team while:

57 INT. ROYALE - RICHEY'S SUITE - RIKER AND DATA

react to the information they just got on Richey as Worf steps up with something in his hands.

WORF

Commander? Some curiosities...

RIKER

(taking them from Worf)

Books... A novel...

(reading the cover)

"The Royale Hotel"...

(hands it to Data)

Summarize.

Data smiles, takes the paperback, stares down at it as he literally lets the pages fan past his eyes. That done, he looks up at Riker with:

57 CONTINUED:

DATA

The story of a group of compulsive gamblers caught up in the web of crime, corruption and deceit spun by nefarious lothario Mikey D who appears only at the climax to be brought to his knees by a heartbroken bellboy. There is a subplot about an older man conspiring with a younger woman to murder her husband while squandering her inheritance. The writing is elementary, the plotting predictable, the characters one-dimensional. The only thing of interest, quite honestly, is the intriguing setting, that of a Las Vegas gambling casino-hotel --

RIKER

(interrupting)

This novel... and everyone in it you've just described... that's this hotel...

Riker picks up the other small book now.

RIKER

(continuing)

This... this appears to be a diary... but with only one entry...

(reading from it with great interest now)

"I write this in the hope that it will someday be read by human eyes... I can only surmise at this point, but apparently our exploratory shuttle was contaminated by an alien life-form which infected and killed all personnel except myself. I awakened to find myself here in The Royale Hotel... and for the last thirty-eight years I have survived here.

(MORE)

57 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER (Cont'd)

"I have come to understand that this place was created for me out of some sense of guilt, presuming that the novel we had on board was in fact a guide to our preferred lifestyle and social habits. Obviously, they thought this was the world from which I came. I hold no malice toward my benefactors... they could not possibly know the hell they have put me through, for it was such a badly written book, filled with endless cliché and shallow characters. I shall welcome death when it comes... "

Riker looks up at Data and Worf, who realize:

RIKER

Then that is why... all of this is here. But why can't we get out?

And as they all react to that, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

58 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit around the planet.

59 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Picard is there with Geordi and PULASKI.

PICARD

Suppose we phaser a slice in the field which surrounds the structure?

GEORDI

Yes...

PULASKI

That would mean the atmosphere of the planet would instantly rush in.

PICARD

How long would they live under those conditions?

PULASKI

A minute -- maybe less.

PICARD

But you could revive them.

PULASKI

Well, that would depend on how long they were exposed, how soon I got to them, but Captain realistically... I wouldn't give them much of a chance. I'm a doctor -- not a magician.

PICARD

I understand the risk, but I will not warp off and leave them.

(to Geordi)

Make your preparations.

GEORDI

Yes, sir.

Off Pulaski's reaction:

60 INT. ROYALE - RICHEY'S SUITE

The away team is searching the room for any other clues when the PHONE RINGS. Worf looks to the others and then awkwardly picks it up after figuring out how to separate the receiver from the rest of the phone.

WORF

(into phone)

Yes?

(listens, frowns, turns
to others)

There is a female voice asking
if we want... "room service."

Data and Riker look at one another -- they have no idea how to answer that question.

DATA

I believe they are asking if we
want the room cleaned.

RIKER

Tell them no.

WORF

(into phone)

No.

Worf listens to the response, shows surprise, and then hangs up.

RIKER

What'd she say?

WORF

She said... "The kitchen's open
twenty-four hours if we change
our minds."

Data cocks his head, puzzled.

RIKER

I'm going to explore the other
floors; you two go down to the
lobby, see if we've missed
anything. Talk to the other
"guests" -- try and find out who
and what they are.

61 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit.

62 INT. ROYALE CASINO - BLACKJACK TABLE - THE DEALER

looks up from his deal toward the entrance to the casino.

63 ANGLE ON DATA AND WORF

just walking into the casino. Data turns to Worf...

DATA

I suggest we separate and blend in with these beings. Casual queries offered in an inconspicuous manner might prove most fruitful.

WORF

What?

Data shrugs.

DATA

Mingle, Worf. Mingle.

Data walks off into the casino leaving Worf to ponder just how he plans to mingle.

64 INT. ROYALE CASINO - DATA

has wandered up to the "21" table where Vanessa and Texas are still playing. Data comes up beside Texas. Vanessa is looking more desperate, Texas more confident, just as the dealer reveals his hole card. Blackjack. Vanessa sags:

VANESSA

How much do I have left?

TEXAS

Honey, it's bad luck to count your chips at the table...

Data sits beside Texas, cocks his head.

DATA

If I might inquire, where are you from, sir?

TEXAS

Lubbock, Texas.

64 CONTINUED:

DATA

How did you get here?

TEXAS

To Vegas? Drove. Got a
ninety-six caddy with only eighty
thousand miles on her.

DATA

And where is your automobile now?

The Dealer deals a round. Comes to Vanessa.

DEALER

Hit?

She slides her cards under her chips; she's pat.

TEXAS

It's out front, I suppose. What
the hell difference does it make?

DATA

Could you take me there?

The Dealer reveals his hole card. Blackjack again.

VANESSA

(to Texas)

I'm losing my shirt here --

TEXAS

(ignoring her; to Data)

Now son, why would I wanna do
that? Can't you see I'm tryin'
to to help this little lady?

DATA

I do not believe you could go to
your car, even if it truly exists.
You are trapped inside the Royale,
just as I am.

64 CONTINUED: (2)

TEXAS

(chuckling)

Sure does feel that way when you're losin', doesn't it? But right now we're tryin' to turn this lady's wagon and win back some lost change. Otherwise she's goin' to be in a desperate situation with nowhere to turn.

(with a wink to Data)

Well, almost nowhere.

The dealer deals again while Texas lets his hand run suggestively down her arm.

65 SCENE

Vanessa looks at her cards. She's got thirteen. The dealer has a five showing.

VANESSA

I stay, right?

TEXAS

I wouldn't.

The woman is so desperate now -- all her money -- what little that's left -- is on the line.

DATA

The odds favor standing pat.

Texas is confused -- it's as though no one has ever interfered before.

VANESSA

What do I do?

The dealer is getting impatient.

DEALER

You want a card or what?

Vanessa looks from Data to Texas. Then she looks at the dealer and nods "yes." The dealer lays down a card -- it's a king.

VANESSA

Too many.

She turns and looks at Texas.

65 CONTINUED:

VANESSA

(continuing)

That's everything I had. I've
lost it all. What am I going to
do?

Texas puts his arm around her shoulders and pats her
gently.

TEXAS

There, there...

Then he looks up at Data with another knowing wink.

66 INT. ROYALE LOBBY

Worf joins Riker at the registration desk. The
assistant manager is talking with the bellboy. Both
are agitated -- nervous -- expectant. Suddenly both look
at the door. Their eyes widen.

67 RIKER AND WORF

turn to see:

68 DOORWAY

Through the revolving door comes a hard-looking man --
MIKEY D -- it's obvious he's got murder on his mind.

69 RIKER AND WORF

as they look from Mikey D to the bellboy.

70 SCENE

The bellboy moves off to the side -- he's young and
scared, but he's not the kind to back down. (All of
this has to be played through the eyes of Riker and
Worf.)

MIKEY D

You were told.

The bellboy nods.

70 CONTINUED:

BELLBOY

It's not for you to make the
call... it's for Rita.

MIKEY D

She sent me to tell you.

Mikey moves slightly to the side -- a gunfighter looking
for an edge.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Boys -- we can't afford to have
any trouble here -- take it
outside.

MIKEY D

Yeah -- I like that... come on,
baggage man... let's you and me
take it outside.

The bellboy hesitates.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Watch yourself.

BELLBOY

Don't worry.

The bellboy moves his hand back to where he has stashed
his gun.

71 RIKER

He looks from the bellboy to Mikey D.

72 MIKEY D

He smiles. His hand also moves.

73 RIKER AND WORF

Worf smells a firefight coming and his hand goes to his
phaser. With a look, Riker tells Worf to stay out of
this.

RIKER

It's all part of the novel. Don't
interfere.

74 SCENE

As the bellboy moves toward the door... Mikey D makes a little circling move -- just enough to get the angle. Without warning -- Mikey D pulls his gun and fires. It's loud and smoky. The bellboy falls. Mikey D quickly turns his attention on the room.

75 RIKER AND WORF

Neither moves -- they are both mesmerized by what they are watching.

76 SCENE

Mikey D looks over at the bellboy.

MIKEY D

You should have listened, kid
no woman is worth dying for...
killing for... but not dying for.

Mikey D then turns and walks OUT of the hotel as Data walks up to:

77 RIKER AND WORF

Riker reacts.

RIKER

(re Mikey D)
How can he leave?

DATA

It is on page 244.

Riker reacts, realizing:

RIKER

The book... Then... how does it
end?

DATA

A bad love affair ends in a bloody
shoot-out, the hotel gets bought
out and life goes on... such as
it is --

RIKER

The hotel gets bought? By whom?

77 CONTINUED:

DATA

(re the book)

It is not very specific. The
acquiring party is simply referred
to as "foreign investors." Sale
price, twelve point five million.

RIKER

That's how we're getting out.
We're buying this place.

Riker leads Data and Worf off and we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

78 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit around the mysterious Theta Eight.

79 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - PICARD

is in his Command Chair, weighing the impossible situation.

PICARD

(sighs with
frustration)

Number One... If we don't take some action, make some attempt -- however dangerous it may be -- to rescue you, you may very well be lost to the confines of that conundrum for all eternity. That is certain death for you all... and that...

(building angrily now)

... that is unacceptable! We have set phaser focus with energy ratios sufficient to penetrate the structure --

RIKER

Hold on that. There may be another way. I'll keep you informed.

80
thru OMITTED
83

84 ANGLE - DATA, RIKER, AND WORF AT THE CRAP TABLES

where Data studies the action with curious intensity, taking it all in:

DATA

It is a question of decimal percentages. Quite simple, really if one bets with any sequential consistency.

84 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Can you do it?

DATA

Certainly.

Just then, someone moves aside to reveal Texas and Vanessa standing beside the away team.

TEXAS

C'mon, sugar, seven-come-eleven
and we're on easy street --

Vanessa rolls the dice and a monotone tells us:

CROUPIER (O.S.)

Snake eyes.

Texas sags; she shoots daggers at him.

VANESSA

I'm almost broke!

TEXAS

Baby, relax! It's only money --

VANESSA

But if I lose it all, I won't
even have a place to sleep.

TEXAS

(protective)

Don't worry your pretty little
head. I'd never let that happen.

The croupier passes the dice to Data.

CROUPIER

It's your roll, sir...

Riker urges him forward.

RIKER

Go to work.

Data places one of his chips on the pass line.

TEXAS

Maybe this turkey'll change our
luck --

84 CONTINUED: (2)

She sighs heavily; Texas shoves several chips out behind Data's and now Data picks up the dice and awkwardly rolls them down the length of the table. The croupier barks out:

CROUPIER

Six. The point is six --

TEXAS

Six! Hell, my blind grandmother can make a six! Let 'er rip, boy!

Data picks up the dice and rolls again, his face reflecting a sudden realization as we hear:

CROUPIER

Seven. Seven and out...

Data's eyes widen as he sees his chips swept away by the croupier. At his side, Vanessa tries to pull away from Texas.

VANESSA

So much for your new turkey --

Texas pulls her back to the table.

Data turns to Riker and Worf as he picks the dice up again:

DATA

These cubes are improperly balanced. I believe that their final resting position is adversely affected --

Riker reacts, realizing:

RIKER

Loaded dice.
(then, to Data)
Can you... "repair" them?

DATA

I believe so...

85 ANGLE - DATA'S FINGERS

begin to apply android pressure to the dice.

86 DATA

blows on the dice and rolls again and now his face lights up with the sound of:

TEXAS (O.S.)

Seven! A winner!

Data's money is quickly doubled; so is Vanessa's. They both like it.

TEXAS

Attaboy! Just do that a few more times and everybody's gonna get well --

And as Data prepares to roll again now, we:

GO TO:

87 THE ASSISTANT MANAGER

as he walks to the table with a tray of \$100,000 placques. Data has quite a crowd around him now as he continues his hot streak.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

(to croupier)

Who has the dice?

The croupier nods toward Data. At his side, Vanessa is doing just fine, with more money in front of her than she ever dreamed. Now, of course, Vanessa is all over Texas like a cheap suit.

VANESSA

Oh, Tex, darlin', you're brilliant!

TEXAS

Yeah. An' good lookin' too, huh?

Worf studies the action, leans over to his comrades.

WORF

(to Riker)

Isn't that enough?

RIKER

Almost. I don't want to be short, that's for sure...

(then, to Data)

You are keeping count?

87 CONTINUED:

Data reaches down, touches the stack, pauses for a moment, then whispers:

DATA

Eleven point three million.
(then, whimsically)
Perhaps I will bet it all --

Riker leans in to him, whispering urgently:

RIKER

No! Simply reach twelve million.

DATA

As you wish...

With that, Data rolls one last time and we hear:

ASSISTANT MANAGER (O.S.)

The man has the touch.

The croupier shoves more chips over to Data; Riker leans in to Data with:

RIKER

Now.

DATA

(to the Croupier)
I would like to cash out, please.

The croupier blanches; he turns to the assistant manager who steps up.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

I'm afraid you've broken the bank.
That's over twelve million --

RIKER

Twelve point five million to be exact. The purchase price of this hotel.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

That's impossible --

Riker smiles, holds up the novel.

87 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

Wrong. We're the "foreign
Investors" on page 244. We're
buying you out, lock, stock, and
barrel.

(slides the chips toward
the pit boss)

Consider it a "done deal."

The assistant manager reacts, stupefied, not knowing
how to react. Texas turns to them, wide-eyed.

TEXAS

Hey, y'know what? Y'all got
style! I like that! Let me buy
y'all a drink --

Riker smiles at him, reaches into Texas's coat pocket
and pulls out a big cigar. As he twirls it in his own
mouth:

RIKER

Enjoy the game, friend. And don't
let 'em change the dice on you.

With that, Riker leads Worf and Data away through the
crowd. The assistant manager, sweating nervously,
shouts out:

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Wait! You can't leave!

RIKER

Oh yeah? Watch us.
(then, wagging a finger
at him)
Don't forget, we own the joint.

Riker leads them toward the revolving door in the
distance. Worf looks a bit worried, puffs himself up,
anticipating a struggle with strange physical elements
beyond his ken.

WORF

You're confident about this,
Commander?

RIKER

Focus. Concentrate. See only
where we want to BE, not where
we are.

87 CONTINUED: (3)

DATA

Ancient philosophical overtones
of thought process... "Zen", I
believe --

RIKER

We own the place... and we're
walking through that door...

88
thru OMITTED
91

91A ANGLE - THE REVOLVING DOOR

And as they approach the door, we see each of our away
team members steel himself for the impossible... and
they step into the revolving door and we:

GO TO:

92 EXT. PLANET SURFACE - THE BLACK VOID

envelops them once again. Riker smiles confidently as
he intones:

RIKER

I think it's time to go home...

93 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - PICARD

smiles in relief as he hears those words. He turns to
his crew.

PICARD

Transporter Room, we have a fix
on our away team. Beam them up...
and please be quick about it!

Troi comes over to his side and shares his moment of
relief as:

93A EXT. PLANET SURFACE - THE AWAY TEAM (OPTICAL)

BEAMS UP and:

93B THE REVOLVING DOOR

continues its perpetual motion as we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END