

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"Peak Performance"

#40272-147

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2ND REVISED FINAL DRAFT

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STAR TREK: "Peak Performance" - 4/17/89 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Peak Performance"

CAST

PICARD	SIRNA KOLRAMI
RIKER	
DATA	
PULASKI	FERENGI-TSA
TROI	BRACTOR
GEORDI	TACTICIAN
WORF	
WESLEY	

ENSIGN BURKE  
ENSIGN NAGEL  
N.D. CREWMEMBERS

STAR TREK: "Peak Performance" - 4/17/89 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Peak Performance"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE  
  MAIN BRIDGE  
  OBSERVATION LOUNGE  
  
  MAIN ENGINEERING  
  CORRIDOR  
  WORF'S QUARTERS  
  DATA'S QUARTERS  
  CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM  
  TEN-FORWARD

USS HATHAWAY  
  BRIDGE  
  ENGINE ROOM

KREECHTA  
  (VIEWSCREEN P.O.V. ONLY)

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE  
  
USS HATHAWAY

KREECHTA

BRASLOTA IV

STAR TREK: "Peak Performance" - REV. 4/20/89 - PRONUNCIATION

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Peak Performance"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

KOLRAMI	cole-ROM-ee
ZAKDORN	ZACK-dorn
KREECHTA	CREECH-tah
NAGEL	NAY-gull
BRASLOTA	brass-LOW-tah
TARLOW	tar-low
YAROOPA	yah-RUE-pah
KUMEH	koo-mah
STRATEGEMA	strata-JAY-mah
GRENTHEMEN	grenth-ah-men

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION  
"Peak Performance"  
TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Shuttle coming in.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, Stardate 42923.7.  
We are en route to the Braslota  
System, site of the first  
Starfleet battle simulation.  
Joining the Enterprise as observer  
and mediator is the Zakdorn Master  
Strategist, Sirna Kolrami.  
Despite misgivings, I have agreed  
to Starfleet's request that we  
take part in these wargame  
exercises.

2 OMITTED

3 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

DATA is at Command, supernumeraries at Conn and OPS,  
and WORF and ENSIGN BURKE confer at Tactical. All  
heads turn as the forward turbolift opens and RIKER and  
KOLRAMI, a slender weasel-like creature, ENTER and  
cross to the Observation Lounge.

3A INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

PICARD

(rising, extending his  
hand)

Mister Kolrami -- Captain Jean-Luc  
Picard. Welcome aboard.

KOLRAMI

Captain. I bring greetings from  
those at Starfleet Command.

3A CONTINUED:

PICARD

Would you care to be shown to your quarters?

KOLRAMI

I require little rest, Captain.  
I would prefer to commence our mission.

Picard and Riker share a glance -- "pushy little guy, isn't he?"

3B INT. BRIDGE

Worf crosses to Data.

WORF

Despite their reputations, this Zakdorn does not appear to be a very formidable warrior.

DATA

In the game of military brinksmanship, individual physical prowess is less important than the perception of a species as a whole. For over nine millennia potential foes have regarded the Zakdorns as having the greatest innately strategic minds in the galaxy.

WORF

And no one is willing to test that perception in combat.

DATA

Exactly.

WORF

Then the reputation means nothing.

4 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

A magnificent view of the galaxy surrounds them as they take their seats at one end of the table. Kolrami keys the screen, and the DIAGRAM of a solar system appears.

4 CONTINUED:

KOLRAMI

The Braslota System. In orbit around the second planet is the eighty-year old Starcruiser, Hathaway.

(nodding at Riker)

He is still your choice?

PICARD

Commander Riker will captain the Hathaway.

KOLRAMI

(to Riker)

You will have forty-eight hours to ready the vessel before the Enterprise attacks.

RIKER

And we'll be experiencing actual battle conditions?

KOLRAMI

Correct. Engineering will disconnect the Enterprise's weapons and link the system with the modified laser-pulse beam. All "hits" will be recorded electronically. If the computer registers "damage," it will react accordingly -- shutting down the affected areas for the appropriate "repair" time. Additional questions?

Riker and Picard share a look and shake their heads.

KOLRAMI

Captain Picard, I understand that you initially resisted Starfleet's request for this simulation.

PICARD

Yes.

KOLRAMI

May I know why?

4 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Starfleet is not a military organization. Our purpose is exploration.

KOLRAMI

Then why am I here?

PICARD

Because with the Borg threat, I have decided that my officers and I need to hone our tactical skills.

(MORE)

4 CONTINUED: (3)

PICARD (Cont'd)

In a crisis situation, it is prudent to have several options.

RIKER

I still prefer brains over brawn.  
(to Kolrami)

I think it's a waste of effort to test our combat skills -- it's a minor province in the make-up of a starship captain.

KOLRAMI

Your objection is noted. Let us hope your distaste for the exercise will not affect your strategic abilities.

There is a moment as Riker absorbs the words and the underlying contempt with which they were delivered.

RIKER

Mister Kolrami, when I agree to do a thing. I do it.

(to Picard, lighter)

Care to surrender now, Captain?

Picard gives Riker a warm, small smile, then looks to Kolrami as if to say, "see what a hell of a fellow he is?" Off their various expressions --

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Plying deep space at impulse.

6 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, Data, PULASKI, and Kolrami are present. Supernumeraries at Conn and Ops. Burke at Tactical.

PICARD

Well, Number One, you are allowed a complement of forty. Select whom you will. Save Data, who will serve as my first officer in your absence.

Before Riker can respond, Kolrami jumps in -- leaving Pulaski slightly taken aback by his rudeness.

KOLRAMI

(to Picard)

I had envisioned you defining the crew.

PICARD

On my ship, the leader of an away team has total control of the mission. If you want to judge "leadership" -- why not start at the beginning?

Kolrami sagaciously nods his assent, eyeing Picard as if he, too, were under scrutiny.

KOLRAMI

Very well, Captain.

With a curt bow, he glides to the turbolift and disappears.

PULASKI

My, what a charmer.

PICARD

(admonishingly)

Now, Doctor...

6 CONTINUED:

PULASKI

Captain, he needs an attitude adjustment.

DATA

The Zakdornian culture is replete with self-assuredness and confidence. It is seldom undeserved. For example, Kolrami is a third level grand master at the game of Strategema.

Fine, but it doesn't make Pulaski feel any better.

7 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN ENGINEERING

Geordi and an ASSISTANT toil at aligning the warp engine's dilithium chamber.

GEORDI

(giving directions)  
Another millimeter... little more... there! Excellent.

RIKER (O.S.)

Lieutenant.

Geordi straightens to find Riker looking on.

GEORDI

Commander.

RIKER

You've heard of the simulation aboard the Hathaway?

As they talk, Goerdi takes Riker on a walking tour of Engineering, checking "this" here, tweaking "that" there.

GEORDI

Yes, sir, and the best of luck to you. I've researched the old Avidyne engines -- archaic by our standards, very touchy.

RIKER

Anticipating the worst, do you think it can be whipped into shape in forty-eight hours?

7 CONTINUED:

Geordi stops walking and hefts a tool kit.

GEORDI  
(smiling broadly)  
I've taken the liberty of packing  
a few necessities.

At this, Riker breaks into a grin, also.

8 INT. ENTERPRISE - WORF'S QUARTERS

The room has been modified into a Klingon haven. The lighting is subdued with a ruddy overtones. There is a powerful sculpture of a Klingon man, bare to the waist taming a horse-like beast with a long snaking neck, and two twisted horns springing from above each eye.

Worf is seated at his desk working on a model of an antique Klingon sailing vessel.

A CHIME signals someone is at the door.

It startles Worf, and he breaks the masts on his ship. A rumble of fury.

WORF  
Enter!

The door opens and Riker steps in, looking around curiously. This is his first time in here.

RIKER  
Am I disturbing you?

WORF  
Just finishing, Commander.

Worf opens a drawer, and sweeps the ship into it. Shuts it firmly.

RIKER  
"Interesting" quarters.

WORF  
Thank you.

8 CONTINUED:

RIKER

You know of the simulation. What do you think?

WORF

Waste of time.

RIKER

It's just designed to be an exercise.

WORF

Useless. If there is nothing to lose -- no sacrifice -- then there is nothing to gain.

RIKER

(playing him)

You mean -- besides "pride."

(caught his attention)

Well, it's a good thing in this case, because I probably don't have a chance.

WORF

(alien concept)

There is always a chance.

RIKER

Slim. The Hathaway's most sophisticated weapon-systems -- even in a computer mock-up -- can't hope to defeat the Enterprise.

WORF

Still...

RIKER

Worf... when you're out-gunned, out-manned, and out-equipped -- what else do you have left?

WORF

(long beat)

Guile.

RIKER

Join me.

8 CONTINUED: (2)

WORF

The honor is to serve.

Riker allows himself another smile -- this crew is pulling together nicely.

9 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Zooming along at impulse.

10 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

Riker ENTERS to find Picard in the Command Chair, Data to his right, Pulaski on his left, Wesley at Conn, Burke at Tactical, and Kolrami examining Science One.

PICARD

Begin long-range scanning of all sectors within three light years of Braslota.

(seeing Riker)

How is your crew shaping up?

RIKER

It's complete, but I would like to request an addition.

PICARD

(playing along)

Anyone in mind?

RIKER

With your permission, I would like Acting Ensign Crusher aboard for educational observation.

Picard nods. Riker, in turn, gives Wesley a "c'mon" head move. Wesley's enthusiasm can hardly be muted as he leaps from the Conn -- to be quickly replaced by a CREWPERSON.

RIKER

(as if an afterthought)

Oh... since we have some time before reaching Braslota --

(deferentially to

Kolrami)

I was hoping that you would agree to play me in a game of Strategema.

10 CONTINUED:

KOLRAMI

Although I am intrigued by the audacity of your request, I can't fathom why you wish the encounter.

RIKER

I enjoy a challenge.

KOLRAMI

Very well, an opponent of "limited dimensions" can often be quite diverting.

RIKER

Thank you.

11 INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR - TRACKING

Geordi and Riker on their way to Ten-Forward.

GEORDI

So you're going to beat him?

RIKER

Nope.

GEORDI

Oh, then it's going to be a close one.

RIKER

No.

GEORDI

But you have got a chance?

RIKER

Nah.

GEORDI

(a little sarcastic)  
Are you planning to show up?

RIKER

Sure, Kolrami is the best at Strategema. To even get to play him is a privilege.

11 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Other than you being privileged,  
is there anything else I can  
look forward to?

RIKER

Nope.

GEORDI

This is going to be exciting.

12 INT. ENTERPRISE - TEN-FORWARD

Riker and Kolrami are seated at opposite ends of a  
large table. Worf helps Riker prepare for the game  
while Troi performs the same function for the Zakdorn.

13 ANGLE - GEORDI, DATA AND PULASKI

PULASKI

Against an opponent of approximate  
skill -- Strategema can last well  
over one thousand moves.

GEORDI

I wouldn't bet on us being here  
that long.

13A ANGLE ON WORF AND RIKER

WORF

(confiding to Riker)

I have wagered heavily in the  
ship's pool that you will take  
him past the sixth plateau.

13A CONTINUED:

RIKER

What if I don't?

WORF

I will be... irritated.

During the above, each contestant inserts his fingertips into METALLIC RECEPTACLES (think overly-long thimbles).

14 DATA, GEORDI AND PULASKI - TROI JOINS THEM

DATA

Forever curious, this urge to "compete."

PULASKI

It's a human response, that inborn craving to gauge your capabilities through conflict.

DATA

Doctor, there are other ways to challenge oneself.

PULASKI

Perhaps... but they all lack a certain -- thrill!

TROI

Data, sometimes humans find it helpful to have an outsider set the standard by which they're judged.

DATA

(catching on)

To avoid deceiving oneself.

PULASKI

Maybe you should challenge Kolrami to Strategema.

DATA

(surprised)

Why?

14 CONTINUED:

PULASKI

Because when someone is that smug,  
you occasionally have to deflate  
them just a little.

GEORDI

Yeah, Data, I'd like to see your  
neural-flecks tear him down a peg.

DATA

To what end?

Reactions from the humans. Once again the toaster  
isn't "getting" it.

15 WORF (OPTICAL)

presiding over the contest.

WORF

Computer -- actuation positions  
for Strategema.

A base containing the digital counter sits on the  
table.

WORF

Ready?

Riker nods. Kolrami nods.

WORF

(continuing)

Begin!

Wow! "Thimble"-encased fingers twitch and goggled-eyes  
shift. Correspondingly, the holographic cone springs  
to incredible life. Breathtaking! Impossible to  
follow or explain, Strategema nonetheless presents an  
awesome spectacle even to those who have seen it  
before.

Wondrous! Gases swirl, pinpoints move, grids bend and  
sway, sparks and "lightning" streaks fly! And above,  
the counter begins to register: 001, 002, 003, 004,  
005...

VARIOUS ANGLES show the crew reacting to the unfolding  
marvel... 016, 017, 018, 019...

15 CONTINUED:

... 021, 022, 023, ... Suddenly, startlingly abrupt,  
the images freeze! It's as if Strategema died. No one  
moves, no one breathes, no one reacts. Stunned  
silence.

PULASKI

That's it?

Riker slowly removes the goggles from his head.

RIKER

(numb admiration)

I'm afraid so.

PULASKI

But... but you only made  
twenty-three moves.

RIKER

Yes.

(to Kolrami)

Congratulations.

Off Kolrami's smug smile and Riker's expression --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

16 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Moving in synchronous orbit with an unlit, eighty year-old starship around a dusty orange planet.

17 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

The dark, lifeless Hathaway dominates the Main Viewer. Picard, Riker, Data, Burke at Tactical, supernumeraries at all other stations, and Kolrami are in attendance. The Zakdorn periodically makes notes on a PADD.

PICARD

(keeping it light)

Commander Riker --

(re: Hathaway)

There is your next challenge.

WORF'S COM VOICE

Away team assembled and ready to transport, Commander.

PICARD

(playful)

Until we test our mettle on the field of honor.

He extends a hand, and Picard and Riker shake.

RIKER

(with a grin)

I may get over there and want to come right home.

Kolrami sniffs at this display of levity.

PICARD

(chuckles)

Good luck, Number One... Captain.

KOLRAMI

The simulation will commence in forty-eight hours.

As Riker EXITS.

18 INT. U.S.S. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE - DARK

As Riker, Worf, Geordi, Wesley, and Ensign Nagel (female) ENTER. They take a moment to familiarize themselves with the surroundings as Geordi moves to an old style panel, studies it for a moment, and presses. AUXILIARY LIGHTS snap on, revealing --

19 AN UNHOLY MESS

Panels have been ripped out, science stations gutted, etc. This ship does not look like it will fly. Riker steps down to the captain's chair in the DIM LIGHT as the others move to check out various stations.

WORF

Not good.

RIKER

Oh, Mister Worf, you're wrong.  
It's fantastic... and it's ours  
--

Riker sits and indicates the seat beside him.

RIKER

(continuing)

Mister Worf.

Worf reacts and glances at Geordi.

WORF

Sir, Lieutenant La Forge is a superior officer. The honor should be his.

RIKER

Worf, this is a battle simulation, and you're our tactical officer. Mister La Forge and I agreed, you need to be at my side.

GEORDI

And if the engine room is anything like the bridge, I'm going to have my hands full.

Worf nods and sits. Riker scans the instrument arm of his chair for the proper panel.

19 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Attention crew of the USS  
Hathaway -- this is your captain.  
(boy, he likes the sound  
of that)

I can promise you that two days  
from now we will have missed a  
lot of sleep. But with your skill  
and your stamina, we'll have this  
old lady ready to fly.

(hard beat)

I want hourly progress reports  
from every station. Riker out.

20 INT. HATHAWAY - POV - ENGINE ROOM - DIM LIGHTING

A disaster area of proportions as to make the bridge  
look comfy.

20 CONTINUED:

The impulse engines have several main pieces disconnected, and the warp drives are virtually terminal -- having been raped of dilithium crystals.

21 REVERSE

of the open-mouthed Wesley, and the deeply concerned Geordi, who slowly lowers his tool-carrier to the floor.

21A INT. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE

GEORDI'S COM VOICE

It's a real mess down here, but we'll get to work on it.

RIKER

I'm sure you'll perform your usual miracle.

22  
thru OMITTED  
24

25 INT. HATHAWAY - ENGINE ROOM - DIM LIGHTING - CONTINUOUS

Wesley toils in the empty dilithium crystal chamber, Geordi puts the finishing touches on the patched-together impulse engines. Geordi presses a panel and the impulse engines SPRING TO LIFE, filling the ship with a healthy HUMM and THROB.

CUT TO:

25A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE AND THE HATHAWAY (OPTICAL)

establishing the two in proximity. Suddenly the Hathaway's lights come up.

26 INT. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE (INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

RIKER

(continuing)

Nice work, Geordi, now what's the possibility for warp drive?

26A INT. HATHAWAY - ENGINEERING (INTERCUT AS NECESSARY)

GEORDI

There are only minute dilithium fragments left in the holding clamps. And even if we had intact crystals, there's no anti-matter to fuel the drive.

RIKER

Any recommendations?

GEORDI

No, sir.

WESLEY

We don't have a prayer.

RIKER

(thoughtful beat)

Would you care to transfer back to the Enterprise, Mister Crusher?

WESLEY

(quickly)

No, Sir!

RIKER

(gentler)

Remember Wes, the purpose here is to improvise. It's the effort that counts.

Geordi gives Wesley a playful "have you learned your lesson" look.

27 OMITTED

28 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

Picard and Data are seated. Pulaski ENTERS from the aft turbolift. Burke is at Tactical, supernumeraries at Conn and Ops.

PICARD

Open.

29 THE MAIN VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

Switches from an exterior of the Hathaway to Riker on the bridge of the Hathaway. Worf and Nagel are effecting repairs in the background.

29 CONTINUED:

KOLRAMI

(to Picard and Riker)

I believe the rules are understood  
by all.

PICARD

The weapons conversion, Lieutenant  
Burke?

BURKE

(pressing a panel)

Complete, Captain.

WORF

(on viewer)

Signal received... locked on.

RIKER

She's really been stripped down,  
Captain.

KOLRAMI

The only offensive systems you  
need will be simulated by  
computer.

RIKER

What's the Zakdornian word for  
"mismatch?"

KOLRAMI

Challenge! We do not whine about  
the inequities of life.

(off taken-aback looks)

And how you perform in a  
"mismatch" is precisely what  
interests Starfleet. After all

--

(a look to Picard)

-- when one is in the superior  
position, one is expected to win.

PICARD

Screen off. Data, you have the  
bridge.

Picard EXITS to his Ready Room as Kolrami moves to  
Data.

29 CONTINUED: (2)

KOLRAMI

Lieutenant Commander Data -- I  
am intrigued by your challenge.

Data turns, puzzled.

KOLRAMI

(continuing)

Doctor Pulaski informed me of your  
desire to play a game of  
Strategema.

Data becomes aware of all other eyes on the bridge  
waiting for his reaction.

DATA

But I have expressed no such  
interest.

Pulaski hurries down to join them. She knows that  
Data's honesty is about to blow her beautiful plan.

PULASKI

What Commander Data means is that  
he would never have had the nerve  
to ask you himself, but I know  
he is very interested in pitting  
his skill against yours.

Data has learned enough about humans to know this is a  
moment to keep his mouth shut.

KOLRAMI

Play a machine? Why should I wish  
to?

PULASKI

I don't blame you. It's no fun  
going into a game when you know  
you're going to lose.

KOLRAMI

But I wouldn't lose, and now  
you're no doubt going to make  
me prove it to you.

She turns to Data who is standing like he's been  
stuffed.

PULASKI

Come on, Data, you can't let that  
pass.

29 CONTINUED: (3)

DATA

Indeed I...

He eyes Pulaski's expression. He also hasn't lived among humans this long, and not developed a strong sense of self-preservation.

DATA

(continuing lamely)

...Cannot.

KOLRAMI

Then you will play for the honor of your ship.

Kolrami EXITS.

PULASKI

Honor of the ship. It's your reputation that's on the line.

HOLD ON Data's expression.

30  
thru OMITTED  
31

32 INT. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE

Riker and Worf confer. Nagel works in the b.g.

WORF

With my knowledge of the Enterprise's security override, we may be able to convince the sensors that an enemy ship is approaching. Their instruments would "lie" to them.

RIKER

If you can pull that off, Mister Worf, it might just give us the edge we're looking for.

NAGEL

But what about the viewscreen?

WORF

If I am successful, the computer will project a false image of the enemy ship on the main viewscreen.

RIKER

And unless they run to a window and look out....

NAGEL

(jovially)

... They're going to fall for it!

33  
thru OMITTED  
34

35 INT. HATHAWAY - ENGINEERING

Wesley and Geordi are on their stomachs, peering into the currently empty anti-matter warp drive chamber.

WESLEY

The lining is still smooth, and we ought to be able to do something with the dilithium chips we scavenged.

(looks at Geordi)

35 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Sure the system is functional,  
but without antimatter what  
difference does it make?

35 CONTINUED: (2)

Wesley's face goes tight with concentration.

WESLEY

(continuing)

Geordi, I have to return to the Enterprise.

GEORDI

Wes, we've only got thirty-two hours.

WESLEY

(as he exits)

This is important.

GEORDI

This isn't?  
(re the engines)

36 INT. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE

Wesley ENTERS from the turbolift, Worf is pointing out a section of science station to Nagel.

WORF

Attempt the routing bypass here!  
If it works, they will be surprised.

NAGEL

Where'm I gonna get the opti-cable?

Worf reaches a giant hand upwards and grabs several fiber-wires dangling from the ceiling. With a mighty YANK, they come free amidst showering dust and material.

WORF

Anywhere.

Wes crosses to Riker at the command chair.

WESLEY

Sir, I left an experiment running on the Enterprise. May I go back and shut it down?

RIKER

(a little distracted)

It's that important?

36 CONTINUED:

WESLEY

It has to be monitored. And it  
is my final grade in plasma  
physics.

Off Riker's frown, and Wesley's too casual expression:

37 INT. ENTERPRISE - TEN-FORWARD (OPTICAL)

Troi helps Data prepare for Strategema. Opposite,  
Kolrami is set, waiting. Pulaski smiles with  
match-maker satisfaction while other CREWMEMBERS look  
on.

DATA

(re: Pulaski)

In the present context, what did  
she mean by, "Bust him up?"

TROI

Doctor Pulaski, in her own way, is  
instructing you to take the  
shortest route to victory.

DATA

As opposed to what?

Lieutenant Burke stands before the participants, who  
both signal their readiness.

BURKE

Begin!

As before, Strategema unfolds in shimmering glory! The  
counter registers 001, 002, 003, 004, 005 --

Troi, Pulaski and the others watch with interest as the  
pace accelerates-- Data and Kolrami build to a furious  
crescendo of jerking fingers and head feints.

096, 097, 098, 099, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106,

107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114115116117118119

120121122123124125126127128129130131132133 --

The counter suddenly stalls at 133! Without a word  
being spoken, it quickly becomes unambiguous to all  
that Data has been defeated!

37 CONTINUED:

PULASKI

(stepping forward, awed)  
I can't believe it. The  
"computer" was beaten by flesh  
and blood.

TROI

(delicate)  
You advanced quite far against  
such a worthy opponent.

KOLRAMI

(overly gracious)  
Thoroughly enjoyable, Mister Data.  
I am at your disposal for a  
rematch.

Data rises and shakes his outstretched hand.

DATA

Thank you, but there would be no  
point.

PULASKI

How can you lose? You're supposed  
to be infallible!

DATA

Obviously I am not.

Off Data's expression --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

38 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard is in the Command Chair, while Kolrami sits to his left. Burke is at Tactical, supernumeraries at Conn and Ops. Data is conspicuously absent.

BURKE

Message from the Hathaway, sir.

PICARD

On screen.

The Main Viewer reveals Riker on the older ship's bridge.

RIKER

I'd like to request permission for Ensign Crusher to reboard the Enterprise, Captain.

PICARD

Why?

RIKER

Apparently he was in such a hurry to be part of the away team, he left several critical experiments unattended.

Picard looks to Kolrami, since this concerns the simulation.

PICARD

Have you any objection?

KOLRAMI

He should be escorted, and have no contact with anything save his research.

PICARD

(to Riker)

Permission granted.

(to Burke)

Mister Burke, handle that.

Burke EXITS --

38 CONTINUED:

KOLRAMI

(an aside to himself,  
but loud enough for  
Picard to hear)

I saw no sense in Riker choosing  
him anyway -- he is just a  
non-commissioned child.

Though irritated, Picard holds his tongue --

39 INT. ENTERPRISE - ENGINEERING - TIGHT ON ANTI-MATTER  
CONTAINMENT DEVICE

The magnetic chamber is round, about the size of a  
human head -- a clear orb with a snowball-sized piece  
of anti-matter suspended in the center. Long,  
intricately-cabled pieces of clear tubing extend out  
from opposite sides of the orb -- generating the force  
which keeps the anti-matter from escaping and wreaking  
havoc. Attached to the end of the tubes are  
finger-friendly handles.

TWO VERY CAREFUL HANDS now wrap themselves around these  
grips. WIDEN to reveal Wesley -- in the company of  
Ensign Burke -- delicately maneuvering the orb from  
his personal experimental station.

Throughout this scene Wesley is talking just a little  
too much. Nervous chatter as he tries to cover that  
he's doing a naughty. Burke is equally anxious to be  
back on the bridge.

WESLEY

I can't believe I forgot about  
this. Good lesson not to let  
excitement cloud your thinking.

BURKE

Yeah.

WESLEY

This is really delicate ... I  
spent six weeks setting it up.

BURKE

Lot of work.

A beat as Wes studies the gizmo.

39 CONTINUED:

WESLEY

Oh, no. It's ruined.

BURKE

That's too bad. Look, is this going to take much longer?

WESLEY

I have to dispose of it safely... This is really volatile... I better beam it off the Enterprise and leave it particalized.

BURKE

Fine, let's just do it.

Wesley crosses to a panel

WESLEY

I'll transfer the coordinates to the Transporter Room.

Off Wesley's secret little smile as we CUT TO:

39A INT. HATHAWAY - ENGINEERING (OPTICAL)

Geordi is hard at work with his back to the gizmo as it MATERIALIZES. It falls onto its side with a CLUNK. Geordi looks over his shoulder and gapes at the gizmo.

40 OMITTED

41 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

The crew is hard at work, watched over by Picard and Kolrami.

PICARD

Where is Commander Data?

BURKE

He has temporarily removed himself from bridge duty, sir.

41 CONTINUED:

KOLRAMI

(admiration)

Your crew is excellently trained,  
Captain. A tribute to your  
leadership. Though I doubt their  
extensive preparation will be  
needed.

PICARD

How so?

KOLRAMI

I do not expect "Captain" Riker  
to present much of a challenge.

41 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Mister Kolrami -- may I speak with  
you in private?

Kolrami's look is of acquiescence and genuine  
innocence.

42 INT. ENTERPRISE - PICARD'S READY ROOM

No sooner has the door closed behind Kolrami when --

PICARD

I would like to know the root of  
your prejudice for my  
second-in-command.

KOLRAMI

Captain, I don't --

Picard's upraised hand ends that bit of bull-stuff.

PICARD

Mister Kolrami -- you have been  
nothing but denigrating and  
abusive of Commander Riker since  
boarding this ship. I should like  
an explanation.

KOLRAMI

Having studied William Riker's  
file prior to this assignment --  
I have found him wanting.

PICARD

In what regard?

KOLRAMI

His record is exemplary, but as  
you well know, a starship captain  
is not manufactured -- he, or she,  
is born from inside -- from the  
character of the individual.

(beat)

My interviews have revealed a man  
who displays circumstantially  
inappropriate joviality, belying  
the seriousness of his station.

42 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(ice frosting the words)

Don't confuse style with intent.  
Only a fool would question  
Commander Riker's dedication to  
Starfleet and the men and women  
under his command. Riker is the  
finest officer I have ever served  
with.

KOLRAMI

We shall see if your faith is well  
founded.

PICARD

The test is if a crew will follow  
where Commander Riker leads. His  
joviality is the way he creates  
that loyalty. And I'll match his  
command style against your  
statistics anytime.

Off their cold stares --

42A INT. ENTERPRISE - DATA'S QUARTERS (FROM SCENE 47)

Data is viewing the wall monitor on which incalculable  
amounts of technical information fly by at incredible  
rates of speed. There is a CHIME.

DATA

Come in, please.

Troi ENTERS.

TROI

(softly)

Data?

Data freezes the computer screens.

DATA

Counselor. Is something wrong?

TROI

That was going to be my question.

There is a moment of silence. If he were human, Data  
would try and wriggle off the hook. But he's not.

42A CONTINUED:

DATA

With my repository of knowledge,  
I expected to perform better  
against a humanoid life-form.

TROI

Some of our greatest advances have  
come from analyzing failure.  
While it can be ego-bruising --

DATA

Counselor -- I do not have an  
"ego."

Troi is floundering. She uses her empathy to counsel,  
and she can read nothing of Data, and she knows  
intellectually that he doesn't really "feel" anything.  
She tries again.

TROI

Yes... well, a loss... can be  
disheartening --

DATA

Counselor -- I do not have a --

TROI

Data! There are two ways to  
handle defeat. You can lose  
confidence or you can learn from  
your mistakes.

DATA

That is what troubles me. I made  
no mistakes.

(beat; very matter of  
fact)

Hence, I have conducted a  
diagnostic check of all of my  
programs, and now I am cross-checking  
with the ship's computer.

TROI

Is all of that necessary?

42A CONTINUED: (2)

DATA

I believe so. I have proven to be vulnerable, and at the present time, skepticism must be awarded my deductions.

TROI

That is why you haven't been on the bridge.

DATA

Yes, the captain would be ill advised to rely upon my judgement.

TROI

Data, I think you're really overreacting. I'm sure you're all right.

DATA

I, however, am not sure.

He resumes his research and Troi EXITS.

43 OMITTED

44 INT. HATHAWAY - ENGINEERING

Riker ENTERS to find Geordi and Wesley hard at work installing the orb in the anti-matter chamber.

RIKER

What's that?

WESLEY

My experiment from the Enterprise.

RIKER

(a little suspicious)

Wes?

WESLEY

It dealt with high-energy plasma reactions --

(points to the globe)

-- with anti-matter.

It's clicked for Riker.

44 CONTINUED:

RIKER

You went back to the Enterprise  
just to get this... Wes, you  
cheated.

WESLEY

No, sir. You told me to  
improvise.

Riker struggles to hold the stern fatherly mien, but it  
cracks, and he breaks into a broad grin.

GEORDI

(grinning)

The hard part's gonna be  
calibrating the thermal curve  
required to start a controlled  
reaction.

RIKER

Assuming you can -- can you  
regulate the reaction?

Wesley steps over to --

45 INSERT - DILITHIUM CRYSTAL CLAMPS

Just barely visible -- wedged into the fingers of the  
clamps -- are MINUTE CHIPS of the valuable mineral.

WESLEY (O.S.)

There's just enough crystal to  
do it.

46 BACK TO SCENE

WESLEY

We plan to channel the reaction  
through the chips.

GEORDI

(smiling broadly)

Are we good?

RIKER

(impressed)

Better than good. Great.  
Brilliant.

(MORE)

46 CONTINUED:

RIKER (Cont'd)  
(almost to himself)  
This is going to be fun.  
(back to business)  
Carry on.

Riker EXITS.

47 OMITTED

47A INT. ENTERPRISE - DATA'S QUARTERS

Data is still viewing the wall monitor. There is a  
chime.

DATA  
Come in, please.

Pulaski ENTERS.

PULASKI  
All right, Data, enough of this.

DATA  
Doctor?

PULASKI  
How long are you going to sit  
sulking like Achilles in his tent?

DATA  
I am running diagnostic --

47A CONTINUED:

PULASKI

You might be able to sell Troi with that story, but not me. You're smarting because you got beat. Well, it happens.

DATA

No, Doctor, this is not ego. I am concerned about giving the captain unsound advice.

Pulaski looks at his earnest expression, and softens. She realizes he really is deeply confused.

PULASKI

I wish I'd never maneuvered you into playing that damn game. I'm sorry.

DATA

For what? It is done, and perhaps just as well. This has indicated that I am damaged in some fashion. I must find the malfunction.

He returns to his analysis, and Pulaski, after a last look at him, EXITS.

48 OMITTED

49 INT. HATHAWAY - ENGINEERING - CONTINUOUS

Geordi, Wesley and their TEAM are hard at work. Riker  
ENTERS.

RIKER

The simulation begins in one hour.

GEORDI

You'll have warp drive, Captain,  
though it may not be what you  
expected.

RIKER

I'd say that calls for an  
explanation.

GEORDI

Sir, we'll be able to give you  
warp one...  
(a glance to Wesley)

WESLEY

-- for just under two seconds.

RIKER

(making the best)

Well, not enough for an escape  
but used as a surprise, sufficient  
for gaining a strategic advantage.

GEORDI

Sir, all of this is "theoretical."

RIKER

And if the theory fails to pay  
off?

49 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Ever driven a Grenthemmen Water  
Hopper?

RIKER

Yes.

GEORDI

Ever popped the clutch?

RIKER

You're telling me we'll stall  
the Hathaway.

WESLEY

... and the Enterprise will waltz  
over and pulverize us.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

50 OMITTED

50A INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

Picard, seated at his desk, stares in frowning amazement at Troi and Pulaski. Their expressions are serious and intent.

PICARD

Now, let me see if I fully understand this. You're suggesting that Commander Data is suffering from a profound loss of confidence, and you feel that only I can restore the balance.

TROI

Yes, sir.

PULASKI

Both Deanna and I have tried, Captain, and we're not getting through to him.

PICARD

Don't you think you both might be overreacting? Data is not capable of the emotions you are assigning to him.

PULASKI

The effect is the same whether it's caused by human emotions or android algorithms. Data's not on the bridge, and I don't think he's going to be on the bridge until we find some way to address his problem.

PICARD

I am less than an hour away from a battle simulation, and I must handhold an android?

PULASKI

The burdens of command.

Off Picard's expression as we CUT TO:

50B INT. DATA'S QUARTERS

As before -- Data hard at work. There is a CHIME.

DATA  
Come in, please.

Picard ENTERS.

PICARD  
Commander, I require your presence  
on the bridge.

DATA  
Captain, with all due respect,  
perhaps it would be better if you  
choose another to serve as your  
first --

PICARD  
(interrupting)  
Data, you are my first officer.

DATA  
I have not been able to isolate  
the problem. I might make a  
mistake.

PICARD  
Yes, you might. But that does  
not alter your duty -- to this  
ship, and to me.  
(a beat)  
Do you know how to formulate a  
premise?

DATA  
Yes.

PICARD  
Then formulate one now: How do  
I handle Riker and the Hathaway?  
I'll await your answer on the  
bridge.

Picard starts to exit then looks back.

PICARD  
(continuing)  
Commander, it is possible to  
commit no mistakes -- and still  
lose.

(MORE)

50B CONTINUED:

PICARD (Cont'd)  
(strong beat)  
That is not a weakness. That is  
"life".

DATA  
Thank you, Captain, I believe I  
understand.

PICARD  
And Data, leave the hesitation  
and self-doubt in your quarters.

Data shuts off the monitor, rises, and follows Picard  
as they EXIT.

50BA EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

50C INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Troi and Data.

DATA  
I have several examples of  
Commander Riker's battle  
technique. At the Academy, he  
calculated a sensory blind spot  
on a Tholian vessel and hid  
within it during a battle  
simulation. And as a lieutenant  
aboard the Potemkin, his solution  
to a crisis was to shut down all  
power, and hang over a planet's  
magnetic pole, thus confusing his  
opponent's sensors.

TROI  
And from these specifics, what  
general conclusion can you  
extrapolate?

DATA  
Only twenty-one percent of the  
time does he rely upon traditional  
tactics.

Data is up, pacing slowly.

50C CONTINUED:

DATA

(continuing)

So the captain must be prepared  
for extreme cunning.

(pausing as a new  
thought intrudes)

Counselor, Commander Riker will  
assume that we have made this  
analysis, and knowing that we know  
his methods, he will alter them.

(a new equally bad  
thought)

But knowing that we know that he  
knows that we know he might choose  
to return to his usual pattern.

TROI

You're over-analyzing. Human  
nature cannot be denied.

(a beat)

What kind of man is Commander  
Riker?

DATA

He is a fighter.

TROI

Yes.

DATA

The weaker his position, the more  
aggressive will be his posture.

TROI

And he won't give up.

DATA

Then despite whatever logical  
choices he is offered, he must  
be --

TROI

-- The man that he is. Yes.

DATA

Is that a failing in humans?

TROI

(rising)

You'll have to decide that for  
yourself.

They EXIT.

51 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard stands in front of his chair, Data seated at his side, Kolrami hovering nearby. Burke is at Tactical, supernumeraries at Conn, Ops, and other stations.

PICARD

Screen on.

The Main Viewer shows Riker resplendent on his bridge.

PICARD

The hunt begins, Number One.

RIKER

(playful bravado)

We're ready -- just remember,  
Enterprise -- Captain Riker has  
never lost.

The two leaders smile and nod affectionately as Kolrami presses a button on his computer.

KOLRAMI

Begin!

PICARD

(to Conn)

Screen off. Set course  
two-two-three mark two-five-seven,  
full impulse power. Initiate  
Kumeh maneuver.

51A  
thru OMITTED  
53

54 INT. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

as they monitor, on a screen, a graphic simulation of the Enterprise moving behind a planet.

GEORDI

The Kumeh maneuver -- why are they  
starting out with such a  
recognizable ploy?

RIKER

He's teasing -- wants us to reveal  
our tactics on his terms. Worf?

54 CONTINUED:

WORF

Counter with Talupian stratagem  
on instrument sighting.

RIKER

Agreed. Three-quarters impulse,  
full on my command. Ensign Nagel,  
maximum shields.

(to Worf)

Mister Worf, prepare your little  
surprise.

Worf moves swiftly to join Nagel at the rear station.

55  
thru OMITTED  
57

58 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS

PICARD

Course three-one-seven mark  
seven-three. Present minimal  
aspect. Ready warp one, optimal  
spread on simulated torpedoes.

The Hathaway is on the main screen.

BURKE

(urgent alarm)

Captain -- Romulan warship  
approaching fast from astern!

PICARD

What the -- ?!

BURKE

He came from nowhere, sir!

PICARD

(standing; to Conn)

Bring us about, Ensign -- maximum  
shields!

DATA

Disengage modified beams.

We go to Red Alert. As we swing around, a ROMULAN  
WARSHIP fills the viewscreen.

58 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Weapon-systems full -- lock on!  
Open a hailing frequency.

BURKE

I can't, sir.  
(chagrined)  
There's nothing there.

In that instant, we hear the incessant SQUEAL of electronic "hit" after electronic "hit."

59 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS

The Hathaway (spatially "behind" Enterprise) is firing beam after beam at the bigger ship.

60 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Picard realizes he's been had! Picard presses a button and Red Alert is cancelled.

PICARD

Warp three, evasive!  
(the "scores" stop)  
Disengage weapons, re-engage  
modified beam.

KOLRAMI

He is quite good.

PICARD

He is the best!

DATA

Computer reports simulated damage  
to several aft decks. Repair time  
three-point-six days.

BURKE

How did he do that?

PICARD

Mister Worf must have overridden  
our sensor codes and played some  
holographic games. Data, input  
a new code.

(MORE)

60 CONTINUED:

PICARD (Cont'd)

(beat)

Attack posture, circumvental  
attitude. Prepare beams for  
photon mode.

BURKE

(to himself)

Bye-bye, Hathaway.

61 INT. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Their delight is infectious, it leaps off the screen.

WORF

Computers report heavy damage to  
Enterprise, sir.

WESLEY

They're moving off. Why not go  
after them?

RIKER

(not buying it)

Because they're not through coming  
after us! Geordi, Wesley --  
prepare warp jump.

GEORDI

(nervous)

There are no guarantees here, sir.

RIKER

There never are, Lieutenant. I'm  
going to trust your expertise.

Geordi and Wesley glance at one another -- what the  
hell!

RIKER

(continuing; a true  
captain)

Secure your stations, gentlemen.  
Stand by for my signal.

62 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

PICARD

Ready photon torpedoes.

62 CONTINUED:

BURKE

Captain, sensors picking up a  
Ferengi warship closing at warp  
five.

PICARD

Did you input that new code?

BURKE

Yes, sir!

PICARD

Mister Worf -- I didn't give you  
enough credit, continue the  
simulation.

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE!

Wham! Wham! Wham! Wham! The Enterprise is jolted  
off her gyroscope by massive hits from the real Ferengi  
craft. The INTERCOM EXPLODES in a tangle of crosstalk  
as the ship goes to Red Alert.

PICARD

Divert all power to shields!

DATA

Sever modified beams, engage  
phasers and target!

PICARD

Stay between the Hathaway and the  
Ferengi!

63 INT. HATHAWAY - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Incredible tension.

NAGEL

That's no ghost attacking the  
Enterprise. That's real!

WORF

We must assist, sir!

RIKER

With what?! We have no offensive  
weapons!

63 CONTINUED:

The chilling reality of their situation is reflected in the faces of the crew.

64 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS

On viewer, a vicious Ferengi warship hurls attack after attack at our perspective. Picard tries to maintain order while the Red Alert continues. The pace quickens, overlaps!

PICARD

Where are my weapons?

BURKE

(taut)

Unavailable, sir! We cannot disengage the modified beams -- the connections have been fused!

KOLRAMI

We must retreat!

PICARD

Unacceptable! I have crew on the Hathaway.

On the Main Viewer, the Ferengi have stopped firing.

DATA

Captain, the Ferengi have broken off their attack.

(to Burke)

Drop shields. Transport the away team aboard.

BURKE

Transporter functions gone, sir!

DATA

Shields reduced to one-fifth intensity.

KOLRAMI

Use their moment of indecision to escape!

PICARD

I have forty crewmembers --

64 CONTINUED:

KOLRAMI

-- Who should be sacrificed to  
save a thousand! Acceptable  
tactical losses, considering the  
circumstances.

PICARD

Not to me!  
(to Burke)  
Notify Starfleet -- priority.  
Hail Ferengi on my command.  
(to Data)  
Formulate alternatives.

KOLRAMI

(objecting)  
As the Starfleet observer I am  
ordering you to withdraw!

PICARD

(thundering)  
I am the captain of this vessel!  
Your order is nullified!

Stunned by the force of Picard's directive, Kolrami  
falls silent and moves away.

PICARD

(continuing)  
Ferengi on Main Viewer.

65 MAIN VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

The image of the looming Ferengi craft is replaced by  
the visage of TWO ENEMY OFFICERS.

PICARD

I am Jean-Luc Picard, Captain of  
the Federation Starship, USS  
Enterprise. Why have you attacked  
my ship?

65 CONTINUED:

BRACTOR

Why was your ship combative with another Federation vessel of "lesser" design? Why do you now protect your former target? What is its value to you?

TACTICIAN

Our probes indicate you were aware of our approach, yet took no action.

BRACTOR

Your answers will dictate our response.

PICARD

I have refrained from launching a counter-attack in the hope that we can resolve this peacefully.

BRACTOR

("liar")

Our probes indicate that you are crippled, and the ship you protect has no weaponry, no light-speed drive, and only scarce crew.

TACTICIAN

This makes no sense to us.

(a beat)

Unless it contains something very valuable?

BRACTOR

I am Bractor, leader of the Ferengi attack vessel Kreechta. I shall have the secret of the other Federation ship. If you surrender it to me, I will allow your Enterprise to leave unharmed.

(beat)

You have ten of your minutes.

The screen returns to exterior of Ferengi ship.

65 CONTINUED: (2)

BURKE

Sir, they're massing a surge of  
power. We're being scanned...  
they've locked on!

PICARD

Data?

DATA

Our shields will not  
withstand another assault.

The tension is palpable.

KOLRAMI

Then there are no options.  
Retreat or die.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

66 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS

showing the relationship of the three ships -- the Enterprise between the Hathaway and the Ferengi craft.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental. Due to a grave miscalculation on my part, the Enterprise has been subjected to a withering attack by the Ferengi. I find myself with little time to decide the fate of forty of my crew stranded aboard the derelict Hathaway.

67 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS  
(FROM SCENE 68)

Picking up where we left off -- incredible tension.

67 CONTINUED:

PICARD

I'm open to suggestions.

BURKE

Captain, we are now capable of launching a limited number of photon torpedoes.

KOLRAMI

I have given you my advice, Captain. The Hathaway is expendable.

BURKE

Commander Riker is hailing, sir.

PICARD

On screen. Have you been monitoring communications, Number One?

The Main Viewer switches from the other ships to Riker on the Hathaway bridge.

RIKER

Yes, sir. And Kolrami's right. You must save the Enterprise.

PICARD

You will be left defenseless.

67 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

When Bractor closes in, we'll hit  
our warp drive and take our  
chances.

PICARD

Your what?!

RIKER

(with pride)

We have a limited, two-second warp  
capability.

KOLRAMI

(stunned)

Impossible! That ship was  
rendered warp inactive!

PICARD

(formulating an idea)

I told you he was the best.

(to Riker)

I should wish to hear about this  
later, but now I need to work  
something out with Data.

CUT TO:

68 OMITTED

69 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE (INTERUCT AS NEEDED)

Picard, Data, and Kolrami --

69 CONTINUED:

DATA

Premise: The Ferengi wish to capture the Hathaway believing it to be of value. Therefore, we must remove the ship from their field of interest.

KOLRAMI

(scornful)

They will soon relocate it after a two-second warp and --

PICARD

(cutting him off)

There is a way. Are you with us, Number One?

RIKER

Yes, sir. We're all here -- anxiously waiting for you to pull another rabbit out of your hat.

PICARD

Data.

DATA

At the captain's signal, we will fire four photon torpedoes directly at the Hathaway. A millisecond before detonation, the computer will trigger your warp jump.

GEORDI

(lightly)

I think I hate this plan.

(sobering)

Data, we don't even know for sure if our warp jump will work.

DATA

If the warp engines should fail to function, the result could be... unfortunate.

WORF

Very unfortunate... we will be dead.

69 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Captain Riker, I can't order you  
to do this...

RIKER

(a beat)

What the hell. Nobody said life  
was safe.

PICARD

The advantage is that it will  
appear from the Kreechta's  
perspective -- as though you were  
destroyed in the explosion.

WORF

That will only deceive them for  
a few minutes. Their sensors will  
soon locate us.

RIKER

A few minutes is all we need,  
Mister Worf, because you're going  
to prepare a surprise for them.

PICARD

Then we are agreed; on my mark  
in four minutes.

DATA

Remember, Geordi, if the  
implementation is off by a  
millisecond, the Hathaway will  
not survive.

GEORDI

Data, that's the one part of this  
plan that we're all absolutely  
sure about.

Linger for a moment on the concerned faces.

70 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL)

As the three ships continue to hold position.

71 OMITTED

72 OMITTED

73 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)  
(INTERCUT AS NECESSARY)

Everybody has settled down into their positions.

PICARD

Are we ready, Number One?

Both Data, to Picard's right, and Riker respond.

DATA

Ready, Captain.

RIKER'S COM VOICE

Ready, Captain.

Everybody pauses to smile.

PICARD

Good luck to both of you.

(beat; to Burke)

Bractor.

The viewscreen fills with the sneering Bractor and tactician.

BRACTOR

I will wait no longer, Picard.

PICARD

You needn't, Bractor. The answer  
-- is "no."

(beat)

Your actions have been wholly  
criminal, and you will not profit  
by them.

BRACTOR

You are a fool.

TACTICIAN

How can you stop us?

PICARD

You feel the Hathaway has value?  
Well, I deny you your prize.

(MORE)

73 CONTINUED:

PICARD (Cont'd)  
(to Burke)  
Fire!

74 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS

The Enterprise fires FOUR PHOTON TORPEDOES directly at the Hathaway. The torpedoes EXPLODE violently.

75 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS -  
(INTERCUT AS NECESSARY)

Bractor is barely-controlled raw fury on the viewer.

TACTICIAN  
Destroy your own rather than  
endure the ignominy of defeat and  
capture?

BRACTOR  
I did not think the Federation  
had such iron.

PICARD  
You had no claim to that ship --  
it was ours to destroy.

BRACTOR  
As you are ours to destroy!

PICARD  
(unperturbed)  
You can try.

TACTICIAN  
Enterprise targeted, Leader.  
(a long beat then with  
stunned alarm)  
Leader! There is another  
Federation ship closing -- a  
starship!

BRACTOR  
Maximum shields! We've been  
outmaneuvered. Retreat!

The image of Bractor on the Main Viewer is replaced by the Kreechta, which almost instantly bolts into the Ferengi version of warp nine, and is absolutely gone!

75 CONTINUED:

BURKE

Captain, our sensors show no  
Federation starship nearby.

RIKER'S COM VOICE

Of course not, Mister Burke. That  
was Klingon guile.

Great relief as the Main Viewer reveals Riker on  
the Hathaway bridge.

PICARD

You made it, Number One. Smooth  
ride?

On the screen, Riker, Worf, Geordi, Wesley and Nagel  
share a look -- it was obviously a bitch!

RIKER

(wryly)  
Different!

PICARD

We'll lock on and pick you up.

RIKER

With pleasure.

The viewscreen returns to the Hathaway in space.  
Picard turns to Kolrami.

KOLRAMI

(begrudgingly)  
I must admit -- your Commander  
Riker has acquitted himself  
quite... admirably.

Picard's look and silence is all "I-told-you-so."

75 CONTINUED: (2)

KOLRAMI

(continuing)

And Captain... so have you. My  
report to Starfleet will be quite  
favorable.

PICARD

Thank you, Mister Kolrami.

(to the crew)

Initiate recovery procedures,  
continue repairs, plot a course  
for the nearest starbase.

75 CONTINUED: (3)

With a self-satisfied smile, Picard ENTERS the turbolift.

76  
thru OMITTED  
78

79 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

with the now dark Hathaway IN TOW VIA TRACTOR-BEAM.

PICARD (V.O.)  
Captain's log, supplemental. With the transporter repaired and my crew safely back aboard, we have officially ended the first Starfleet battle simulation.

80 OMITTED

81 RIKER AND PULASKI AS THEY ENTER TEN-FORWARD

where the atmosphere is anything but relaxed -- the place is near bedlam. It takes Riker and Pulaski a moment to absorb what is happening.

82 DATA AND KOLRAMI (OPTICAL)

are once again playing Strategema surrounded by a surging VOCAL CROWD -- including Worf, Geordi, Wesley, Troi and Burke. Riker does a double-take as he gapes at the --

83 DIGITAL COUNTER (OPTICAL)

which now rips through the 26,000 mark! Before Riker can blink, 27,000 rolls over! Even Pulaski can sense the magic of the moment.

84 THE ANDROID AND THE ALIEN (OPTICAL)

sit ramrod-straight as their fingers and heads twitch and rock with incredible speed. 33,000. 34,000. 35,000. The counter stops at 35,693! Kolrami tears his fingers free and goggles off.

85 SCENE

DATA

Why have you suspended the game?

Kolrami is beside himself with anger, humiliation, self-doubt and confusion. He doesn't know whether to drop dead or order pizza.

KOLRAMI

(shaking with rage)

Because this is not a rematch --  
you have made a mockery of me.

He storms out of Ten-Forward with an urgency that could only be borne of public disgrace.

86 DATA

is swarmed by the CHEERING CREW. Riker and Pulaski push their way through to join Worf, Geordi, Wesley and Troi in the inner-circle.

RIKER

Data, you beat him!

DATA

No, sir -- it is a stalemate.

WORF

No game of Strategema has ever gone this high.

GEORDI

What did you do?

DATA

I simply altered my "premise" for playing.

RIKER

Explain.

DATA

Working under the assumption that Kolrami is attempting to win, it is reasonable to assume that he expects me to play for the same goal.

WESLEY

You weren't?

86 CONTINUED:

DATA

No. I was playing only for a  
standoff -- a "draw." While  
Kolrami was dedicated to winning,  
I was able to pass up obvious  
avenues of advancement and settle  
for a balance.

(android pride)

Theoretically, I should be able  
to challenge him indefinitely.

PULASKI

Then you have beaten him.

Data demurring, but with a little preen.

DATA

A matter of perspective. In the  
strictest sense I did not win.

Troi and Pulaski lean in close with a "Come on, cut  
the bull-stuff" attitude.

TROI/PULASKI

Data!

DATA

I busted him up.

The CROWDED ROOM ERUPTS once again, and amidst the  
congratulatory noise and the outstretched hands of  
patting approval, PUSH IN on Data's satisfied  
expression as he absorbs this new sensation, and --

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END