

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"Identity Crisis"
#40274-192

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FINAL DRAFT

STAR TREK: "Identity Crisis" - 1/11/91 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Identity Crisis"

CAST

PICARD	SUSANNA LEIJTEN
RIKER	HICKMAN
DATA	BREVELLE
BEVERLY	
GEORDI	Non-Speaking
WORF	TWO ALIENS
	MENDEZ

TRANSPORTER CHIEF HEDRICK
NURSE ALYSSA OGAWA
ENSIGN GRAHAM
COMPUTER VOICE

Non-Speaking
SUPERNUMERARIES
SECURITY GUARDS

STAR TREK: "Identity Crisis" - 1/11/91 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Identity Crisis"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE
 MAIN BRIDGE
 OBSERVATION LOUNGE
 SICKBAY
 BEVERLY'S OFFICE
 TEN FORWARD
 ENGINEERING
 GEORDI'S OFFICE
 CORRIDORS
 TRANSPORTER ROOM
 HOLODECK
 TURBOLIFT

HOLODECK
 TARCHANNEN SURFACE

SHUTTLECRAFT

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

SHUTTLECRAFT

TARCHANNEN
 OUTPOST
 CLEARING

STAR TREK: "Identity Crisis" - 1/11/91 - PRONUNCIATION

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Identity Crisis"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

CRECHE	CRAY-sh
LEIJTEN	LIE-ten
MICROPHAGE	MICRO-foj
TARCHANNEN	tar-CHAN-in

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Identity Crisis"
TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. TARCHANNEN - RECORDING DEVICE POV (OPTICAL)

A VISUAL OVERLAY, complete with ticking stardate, is superimposed over a dark, desolate landscape of spindly black plants and shadowy dunes... a world of perpetual twilight.

BREVELLE (O.S.)
Tarchannen Three Investigation.
Stardate 40164.7. Ensign Anthony
Brevelle Recording. Lieutenant
Susanna Leijten in command.

Then the recording device pans to include a small, futuristic structure... and LIEUTENANT SUSANNA LEIJTEN. Late twenties, striking, dynamic. She faces the camera.

SUSANNA
You up and running, Brevelle?

BREVELLE (O.S.)
Yes, Lieutenant.

GEORDI moves into view, holding a Tricorder. (Note: Geordi is younger here, wearing a slightly different, earlier version of his VISOR.)

GEORDI
(baffled)
I've checked buildings Four and
Five... they're like all the
others... no phaser hits, no sign
of a fight. Looks like the entire
outpost just... vanished...

HICKMAN (O.S.)
(from a distance)
Lieutenant Leijten...

The recording device pans back out into that gloomy landscape to reveal two palm beacons in the distance. One is held by ENSIGN PAUL HICKMAN, the other by ENSIGN EMILITA MENDEZ.

1 CONTINUED:

HICKMAN
(continuing)
You'd better come see this...

2 FOLLOW SUSANNA AND GEORDI (OPTICAL)

As they hurry toward Hickman and Mendez.

HICKMAN
No footprints... no vehicle
tracks. The wind probably erased
them... but look...

Then as Hickman lifts a dirty, torn Starfleet uniform
into view, a disembodied voice is heard...

SUSANNA (O.S.)
Freeze visual.

Everything and everyone FREEZES as we REVEAL...

3 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE (OPTICAL)

This has all taken place on the wall MONITOR. A
slightly older Susanna stands beside it, pointing to
their images as she speaks...

SUSANNA
That's Hickman on the right...
that's Mendez on the left...
and as already noted, the
recording was made by Ensign
Brevelle... five years ago...

As she turns to face PICARD, RIKER, and GEORDI...

PICARD
Commander Leijten, you said
Brevelle was ill last week for
several days before he...
deserted. What about Mendez?

SUSANNA
Mendez was last seen aboard the
Aries an hour before she
disappeared. According to
witnesses, she seemed completely
normal.

3 CONTINUED:

RIKER

And Hickman?

Susanna shakes her head.

SUSANNA

He just passed a routine
physical... with flying colors.

GEORDI

(skeptical)

I know Paul Hickman. He's a
family man... two kids. I can't
believe he'd steal a shuttle and
desert...

Susanna sits down in the chair beside him.

SUSANNA

Believe it, Geordi. He was
spotted by a Federation supply
ship yesterday... on a course
toward Tarchannen Three.

Everyone ponders this for a moment. Then...

PICARD

The original Tarchannen
disappearances were never solved,
were they?

SUSANNA

No... we never learned what
happened or why. Forty-nine
people... gone...

Riker contemplates the monitor...

RIKER

And now, five years later, members
of the away team that investigated
the disappearances... have started
disappearing themselves.

3 CONTINUED: (2)

SUSANNA
(acknowledges)
Geordi and I are the only two
left.

And off this ominous statement...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

At warp speed.

PICARD (V.O)

Captain's log, Stardate 44664.5.
We have set a course to intercept
Lieutenant Hickman's stolen
shuttlecraft... and, hopefully,
to discover the whereabouts of
the other missing officers...

5 INT. TEN FORWARD (OPTICAL)

Geordi and Susanna at a table, drinking drinks.
There's a subtext here... both have to wonder if
they're in some kind of danger... but they try to mask
it with casual humor and small talk...

SUSANNA

And then I almost married Paul
Bogrow...

GEORDI

Bogrow... which one was he?

SUSANNA

You remember... with the thin
moustache...

GEORDI

(remembering)
Not Bogrow...

SUSANNA

(laughs)
I know.

GEORDI

The one who used to drive you
crazy... you thought he was so
full of himself...

SUSANNA

(acknowledges)
Well, I decided I prejudged him
unfairly...

5 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Uh huh...

SUSANNA

And then I decided I'd been right
in the first place.

GEORDI

(laughs, shakes his
head)

Bogrow...

SUSANNA

And what about you... how come
you never found the right girl?

GEORDI

I enjoy the bachelor's life too
much...

SUSANNA

That doesn't sound like my "little
brother" who always wanted advice
on women...

GEORDI

Well, you were obviously a great
advisor...

Susanna nods. Suddenly somber.

GEORDI

What do you think, Suz?

SUSANNA

I don't know. But I'm not ashamed
to tell you...

(beat)

I'm a little scared, you know?

5 CONTINUED: (2)

GEORDI

Yeah, I know.

A beat as Susanna tries to lift their spirits out of the dip...

SUSANNA

Well, if anybody's gonna figure this out, it'll be the Leitjen and La Forge Show, right? We always made a good team...

GEORDI

A helluva team...

RIKER'S COM VOICE

Commander La Forge, Commander Leijtjen, report to the Bridge. We have a fix on the missing shuttle.

Geordi and Susanna exchange a look as...

GEORDI

(keying insignia)
On our way, Commander.

6 OMITTED

7 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, WORF, DATA at their positions; ENSIGN GRAHAM at the helm; SUPERNUMERARIES as needed.

GRAHAM

Entering the Tarchannen system,
sir.

PICARD

Slow to impulse power. Mister
Worf?

WORF

Long range sensors holding on the
shuttlecraft... bearing zero one
zero, mark two seven one.

PICARD

Hail the vessel.

WORF

Lieutenant Hickman is not
responding, sir.

PICARD

Put a repeating message on all
sub-space channels. Make it a
Priority One communique -- order
the Lieutenant to come about and
stand to.

As Geordi and Susanna ENTER from the turbolift...

WORF

Still no response, sir.

GRAHAM

The craft is now within visual
range.

PICARD

On screen.

8 ANGLE ON VIEW SCREEN (OPTICAL) (INTERCUT)

A Federation shuttle speeding through space. Susanna watches the view screen, takes a nervous breath.

8 CONTINUED:

This is it -- the investigation is at a critical moment...

DATA

The shuttle's acceleration is increasing... its trajectory is moving directly into the planet's atmosphere.

9 EXT. SPACE - THE SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

Approaching TARCHANNEN THREE, a grey orb visible in the distance.

10 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Riker's on his feet. Geordi stands by Data at Ops.

DATA

He will reach an atmospheric interface at an altitude of two hundred and ten kilometers.

RIKER

At his current speed, he'll self-destruct.

DATA

That is correct, Commander.

PICARD

How soon, Data?

DATA

(checking panels)
Fifty-three seconds.

PICARD

Options?

GRAHAM

He's out of transporter range.

GEORDI

And he's too far away for a positive lock with the tractor beam.

PICARD

(quickly, to Worf)
Open a channel.

WORF

Open.

PICARD

Lieutenant Hickman, listen carefully. I am Captain Picard of the Enterprise. You are in danger. You must slow your rate of approach.

10 CONTINUED:

DATA
(reacting to console)
The shuttle is approaching the
outer thermosphere, Captain.

RIKER
He's panicking...

DATA
At current rate of acceleration,
the shuttlecraft will be destroyed
in twenty-eight seconds.

11 EXT. SPACE - THE SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

The shuttlecraft continues on toward Tarchannen at
faster speed.

12 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Data responds to his console...

DATA
Sixteen seconds to impact.

PICARD
(to com)
Lieutenant Hickman, you must do
as I tell you. Reduce your
velocity and bring your craft to
a positive pitch of twenty
degrees... now.

DATA
The shuttle is entering the lower
ionosphere...

13 EXT. SPACE - THE SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

It flies toward the planet and burns into the
atmosphere. A spectacular FLASH, some stray sparks...
then nothing.

14 INT. BRIDGE - CLOSE UPS - VARIOUS

Riker, Worf, Picard, Geordi, and finally Susanna...
shocked. Then...

14 CONTINUED:

WORF

Sir, sensors detect two more
Federation shuttlecraft on the
planet's surface... no life signs.

Reactions...

PICARD

Ready an away team, Number One.

RIKER

Geordi, Data, Worf...

Riker looks at Susanna, nods.

RIKER

(continuing)

And Commander Leijten.

Then as they all head for the turbolift...

15 EXT. TARCHANNEN OUTPOST - ESTABLISHING

After five years, sand dunes have begun to encroach
upon the abandoned facility.

16 EXT. TARCHANNEN SURFACE - NEARBY (OPTICAL)

A dark and gloomy landscape... trapped in a perpetual
twilight. Riker, Worf, Data, Geordi and Susanna
MATERIALIZE in a clearing near a SHUTTLECRAFT. They
flick on their palm beacons and move toward it, Susanna
in the lead.

RIKER

Commander Leijten, La Forge, check
the shuttle... Worf, Data, you've
got the perimeter.

17 SUSANNA

Checks the side of the shuttle for identification...
finds it.

SUSANNA

It's the shuttle pod Mendez stole
from the Aries...

Geordi pulls the shuttle's doors open and ENTERS it.

18 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

Geordi looks around the cramped interior, then glances down... and picks up a Starfleet uniform... torn to shreds.

19 EXT. TARCHANNEN SURFACE

Susanna inspects the ground in front of the shuttle, sees something, shines her light on it and discovers...

20 FOOTPRINTS

Scattered in the dirt... footprints which are clearly not human...

Susanna's expression turns blank, as if something inside her has clicked on. She follows the prints out into the darkness.

21 ON WORF

Close by, examining the ground with his beacon. He looks up, suddenly wary. His eyes shift with a warrior's alertness as he slowly shines his light out into the darkness.

22 ON RIKER AND DATA

Data is scanning the area with his Tricorder.

DATA

No life signs, sir.

Worf approaches them, looking uncomfortable...

WORF

(low)

Sir... I am certain that we are being watched.

Reactions. Riker sweeps his beacon through the darkness. Data performs a quick scan with his Tricorder. Nothing. They exchange a look -- this is nothing short of creepy...

23 ANGLE - THE SHUTTLE DOORS

Geordi EXITS the shuttle to meet with the others. He shows them the torn uniform.

GEORDI
Commander Riker...

A beat as they all react. Then...

GEORDI
Where's Commander Leijten?

They look about. No sign of her.

RIKER
(keys insignia)
Susanna, report.

Nothing. Riker exchanges a grim look with the others.

RIKER
Fan out. Let's find her.

They move off in different directions.

24 ANGLE - IN FRONT OF SHUTTLE

Geordi stops and looks around...

GEORDI
(calls out)
Susanna?

No response. He spots Susanna's footprints in the dirt and follows them...

GEORDI
(keys communicator)
La Forge to Leijten...

Somewhere close in the darkness, a whisper --

SUSANNA (O.S.)
Over here...

Geordi whips around, startled, and discovers Susanna nearby, her beacon turned off, standing stock still, as if listening for something.

24 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Where have you been?

SUSANNA

Mendez... Brevelle... they're
alive. You saw the footprints?

GEORDI

Yes... but they're not human...

SUSANNA

(interrupting)

They're here. Stand still...
listen... and you can feel it...
they're here...

A beat. He scans with his Tricorder. Then...

GEORDI

I'm not picking up anything...

Susanna ignores him, walks forward into the darkness.
Geordi moves for her, gently takes her arm...

GEORDI

Where are you going?

She jerks away from him. Geordi is taken aback. For
an instant, Susanna looks equally surprised... then
she starts backing away from him...

GEORDI

Susanna... ?

Geordi reaches for her, nice and slow... and she turns
to run. Geordi grabs her, holding her tight as she
thrashes in his arms like a trapped animal.

GEORDI

(hits communicator)

La Forge to Enterprise, medical
emergency, two to Sickbay.

And off Susanna's wildly panicked face...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

25 INT. SICKBAY

Susanna lies in the diagnostic bed, Geordi and Beverly standing on either side of her. She opens her eyes, dazed for a moment, then quips...

SUSANNA

Do I look as bad as I feel?

GEORDI

You look fine... now.

As Beverly scans her with an instrument, Susanna sits up, manages a weak smile.

SUSANNA

What happened?

BEVERLY

Your blood chemistry is way off. And you had a histamine response, to what I don't know.

(a beat)

I'll run a complete blood and tissue analysis.

Picard ENTERS... overhears...

SUSANNA

I need to get back to the surface.

BEVERLY

Uh uh... until we find some answers, I don't want you to leave the Enterprise.

SUSANNA

But I have work...

BEVERLY

(interrupting)

Look, Commander, you may simply have had an anxiety reaction down there. But we've got to make sure.

25 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

(to Susanna's look)

Probably wouldn't hurt to take
it easy for a while...

SUSANNA

I'm not going to stay locked up
on this ship while the
investigation...

PICARD

Your devotion to duty is
admirable, Commander... but Doctor
Crusher is right. You will remain
on the Enterprise until we know
whether or not this is connected
to the disappearance of the
others.

SUSANNA

(protesting)

Captain...

PICARD

(firm)

We have completed our survey on
the surface. Analyzing that data
will keep all of us busy for some
time.

His tone is clear... and Susanna heeds it.

SUSANNA

Of course, sir. I understand.

GEORDI

(gently stepping in)

Data has a preliminary report...
if you feel up to it...

SUSANNA

Sure... what're we waiting for?

As Geordi and Susanna EXIT, Picard faces Beverly.

PICARD

Doctor... what about La Forge?

25 CONTINUED: (2)

BEVERLY

I gave him a complete bioscan.
Everything says he's in perfect
shape.

PICARD

But according to all reports...
so were Mendez and Hickman before
they disappeared.

Beverly nods, acknowledging their shared concern.
They've lost one Starfleet officer today... and they
don't want to lose any more.

26 INT. CORRIDOR

Geordi and Susanna walk along. She is clearly
agitated, talking a little too fast...

SUSANNA

Captain Picard's wrong. The way
to handle this is to get back down
there with a dozen away teams...
fan out from the shuttle... We
can cover a lot of ground in a
hurry... use proximity detectors
and infrared sensors...

GEORDI

(a warning)

Susanna...

And then she notices it, too. Her hand is shaking.
Trembling badly. Almost palsied. After a beat...

SUSANNA

Geordi... it's started...
whatever happened to the others...
it's happening to me, too...

He takes her hand in his. Holds it tight.

26 CONTINUED:

GEORDI
Suz... I'm here...
(a beat, a smile)
I'm not going to let anything
happen to you.

Susanna manages a small grin in response. As they
ENTER the turbolift.

GEORDI
Main Bridge.

And as the doors close.

27 OMITTED

28 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Data, Geordi, and Susanna are at an aft science
station, studying the greatly magnified image of a
single cell.

DATA
During microscopic examination
of the torn uniform, I discovered
these alien skin cells.

SUSANNA
Source?

DATA
Undetermined.

GEORDI
(shakes his head)
Without something else to
cross-reference, it would take
weeks to try and identify them...

DATA
Fortunately, there is more
evidence...

Data taps a control and the monitor displays a computer
graphic of a strange, alien footprint.

28 CONTINUED:

DATA

We have been able to determine that the footprints we found by the shuttle were not made by any known Tarchannen life form.

SUSANNA

If we're pursuing a theory that somehow unknown aliens are involved... I should tell you we didn't find tracks like that during the original investigation.

DATA

The planet is subject to frequent sandstorms. Footprints could have been obliterated prior to your arrival.

Geordi stares at the monitor... Data taps a control and an image of the skin cell appears next to that of the footprint.

DATA

Doctor Crusher and I will begin to search the medical database... and attempt to match these with a known life form.

As Geordi and Susanna study the image...

28A
thru OMITTED
28B

29 INT. TURBOLIFT

Geordi and Susanna riding in it. Thinking. Then...

SUSANNA

Aliens or no aliens... why would
our people start returning after
five years to be... abducted?

As they talk, Geordi and Susanna click back into an old
mode... an enthusiastic team searching for answers.

GEORDI

Some kind of compulsion... like
a post hypnotic command... ?

SUSANNA

(acknowledging)

Something that happened while we
were down there the first time...

GEORDI

We can go back to the mission
record... construct a log of
everyone's movements...

SUSANNA

And look for a commonalty.
Something we all touched... maybe
a plant... the sand...

GEORDI

Or something we ingested... could
be in the air itself...

And as the turbolift doors open and they EXIT...

30 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

In a synchronous orbit over Tarchannen.

31 INT. BEVERLY'S OFFICE - TO INCLUDE WALL MONITOR
(OPTICAL)

Data and Beverly study the data on a monitor. Then he taps it and a series of images begin flashing by.

BEVERLY

(not hopeful)

The parameters are pretty broad,
Data... any match we make is going
to be inconclusive at best.

DATA

I am aware of that. However, I
see no other reasonable course
of investigation available to us.

(beat)

And we may not have much time.

This last statement hangs in the air. Then...

BEVERLY

You're worried about Geordi,
aren't you?

DATA

(reminding her)

I am an android. It is not
possible for me to feel anxiety.
Starfleet personnel have
vanished... others may be at risk.
We must do the best we can to find
out why.

A beat.

DATA

However...

He pauses, seeming to search for the correct words.

DATA

I am strongly motivated to solve
this mystery.

Off her reaction...

32 INT. ENGINEERING - GEORDI'S OFFICE - ON WALL MONITOR
(OPTICAL)

Footage of Tarchannen from the Teaser... without audio.
The away team (including Susanna and Geordi) search
the area where the uniform was found.

GEORDI (O.S.)
Freeze visual.

Everything and everyone FREEZES as we reveal...

33 GEORDI (OPTICAL)

Watching the monitor. Susanna sits at a nearby
console, studying the image of a spindly Tarchannen
plant. It's been a long session... and Susanna's
clearly frayed at the edges. She frowns and nervously
rubs her hand.

SUSANNA
We're wasting our time.

GEORDI
(surprised)
You didn't feel that way before...
it was your idea to look for some
sort of commonality.

SUSANNA
Well... I was wrong.

Susanna stands, begins pacing. Restless.

SUSANNA
We're not going to find anything
this way. We should go back to
the planet... it's all down
there... everything we need to
know.

33 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

That's not an option... not until
the Captain says it is...

He turns back to the monitor...

GEORDI

Computer resume.

34 ON WALL MONITOR (OPTICAL) (INTERCUT)

Which begins playing the images from the opening of
the Teaser. As Geordi watches this...

35 SUSANNA (OPTICAL)

Crosses back to the console and stares at the image
of the plant... then abruptly switches the viewer off.

SUSANNA

I can't look at this anymore.
It hurts my eyes... I can't think.
My brain feels like it's wrapped
in a blanket.

GEORDI

Take a break. I'll work for a...

SUSANNA

I don't need a break... I...
(hushed)
... I need to get off this ship.

Geordi reacts... knowing what this could mean.

GEORDI

(gently)

I think... we should go see Doctor
Crusher...

SUSANNA

Forget Crusher... forget your
logs. Tarchannen's down there,
Geordi. It's waiting for us.
That's where we should go.

GEORDI

Susanna... you can't leave...

35 CONTINUED:

Susanna glares at him... whatever she's caught up in is rapidly consuming her. Then she whips around and heads toward the office door.

GEORDI

Susanna...

She ignores him, leaves the office. Geordi quickly follows her out into Main Engineering. They draw the attention of startled SUPERNUMARIES as...

GEORDI

SUSANNA!

She finally stops, faces him -- unable to speak -- her body trembling uncontrollably... and then she collapses.

Geordi rushes to her. The Supernumeraries gather around them as he takes her head in his hands...

And her hair brushes aside to reveal the dark BLOTCHES peppered along the back of her neck. Susanna reaches for him, clutches his shoulders, fighting back a sudden jolt of pain. Geordi looks at her hand...

36 CLOSE ON SUSANNA'S HAND

Her two middle fingers are FUSED together...

37 ON GEORDI

As he reacts...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

38 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

In orbit around Tarchannen Three.

39 INT. SICKBAY

The room is dimly lit. Susanna's shadowy form lies in an emergency medical bed. As NURSE OGAWA stands by, Beverly passes an instrument over the patient...

BEVERLY

(tense)

Her blood pressure's still
falling...

(to the Nurse)

Apply the T-cell stimulator.
We've got to stabilize her immune
system.

Picard and Geordi ENTER the dark room. As Geordi reacts to the low light level, Beverly explains...

BEVERLY

She's developed an extreme
sensitivity to light... we're
trying to make her more
comfortable.

Geordi nods, approaches the bed.

40 ANGLE - FAVORING SUSANNA

The changes are startling... her skin is mottled with intricately woven black patches and veins... her hair, oily and black. Geordi stares at Susanna... shocked.

40 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

My God...

Susanna regains a hazy consciousness and looks up at Geordi with eyes which are no longer human.

SUSANNA

(softly)

Geordi...

He gently takes her hand. Beverly catches Picard's eye and nods toward her office. As they EXIT...

GEORDI

Hold on, Susanna. Doctor Crusher will help you. Just... hold on.

SUSANNA

It's inside me, Geordi... I can't fight it... it's winning...

GEORDI

Don't give up... do you hear me, Suz? You can't give up...

But she's lost consciousness again...

41 INT. BEVERLY'S OFFICE (OPTICAL)

Picard and Beverly watch a wall monitor as a greatly magnified image of a single cell appears on the screen.

BEVERLY

This is one of Susanna's altered skin cells...

She presses a control and a second cell appears next to the first.

41 CONTINUED:

BEVERLY

And this is one of the alien cells
Data found.

PICARD

Almost identical. How do you
explain it?

BEVERLY

Captain, I think the people who
disappeared from Tarchannen Three
weren't abducted... they were
transformed into another
species...

That's when they realize Geordi has quietly entered.

GEORDI

(even)

Can you stop it, Doctor?

BEVERLY

(not hopeful)

The T-cell stimulator will slow
the rate of change... but until I
find the cause...

She shakes her head. Then, after a pause...

PICARD

Doctor Crusher... is this a threat
to the Enterprise?

BEVERLY

No. I've tested the cell wall
integrity. It's viability is
extremely low. It's not possible
for Susanna to transmit it.

GEORDI

Then how did she get it?

41 CONTINUED: (2)

BEVERLY

That's a good question. And it
would be a great help if I knew.

(turning to Geordi)

The only thing I do know,
Geordi... is that it's very
possible you'll be next.

Geordi is stunned, tries to deny the possibility.

GEORDI

I had two full bioscans today.
You said I was fine.

BEVERLY

I gave Susanna a bioscan, too.
I didn't find anything wrong with
her, either.

A beat. Geordi moves from denial... to acceptance.

GEORDI

How long?

BEVERLY

I don't know what we're dealing
with. Brevelle was sick for days
before he left... Mendez was
normal an hour before she
disappeared. You may have
weeks... or just a few hours.

GEORDI

(after a thoughtful
beat)

Then there's no time to waste.
I've got to get back to work.

BEVERLY

Geordi... until I know exactly
what we're dealing with, you're
staying here. In Sickbay.

GEORDI

Doctor, you said it would help
if you knew the source of this...

(MORE)

41 CONTINUED: (3)

GEORDI (Cont'd)

If I could finish my analysis of the mission records... I might find an answer.

PICARD

(stepping in)

And what if you begin to change... and feel compelled to return to the planet like the others?

GEORDI

Program the computer to monitor my movements... that way you can be sure I don't leave the ship.

Geordi takes Picard's silence as a refusal... becomes more impassioned in his argument.

GEORDI

What would you do, sir? Sit it out in Sickbay... or try to learn what it is that's got you... and maybe stop it?

Picard thinks about this. Knowing exactly what he would want to do if he were in Geordi's place. He exchanges a look with Beverly... she understands.

PICARD

All right, Mister La Forge... proceed with your investigation. But report to Doctor Crusher for another bioscan at the start of day watch.

BEVERLY

In the meantime, if you have symptoms of any kind -- I want to know. Immediately.

Geordi smiles. Relieved and thankful.

GEORDI

Understood.

And as he rushes out of the room...

42 INT. ENGINEERING - GEORDI'S OFFICE - ON WALL MONITOR
- (OPTICAL)

And a scene from the visual record we haven't seen before: Illuminated by the stark camera lights, Susanna, Geordi, and Mendez stand outside Building One, watching as Hickman lifts an evidence case.

HICKMAN
(keying insignia)
One to transport.

As Hickman DEMATERIALIZES, Susanna turns to the others.

SUSANNA
I want to make another sweep of the perimeter. Mendez, Brevelle, start at Building Two. La Forge, you and I will begin at Four.

They move out of the scene, casting dark shadows across the building behind them as they all head off in different directions... then the record ends and the screen is abruptly filled with static.

GEORDI (O.S.)
Okay, computer...

43 ANGLE TO INCLUDE GEORDI

Alone in his office... head aching from hours of fruitless effort, pushing himself hard. As he stares at the wall monitor...

GEORDI
(continuing)
Analyze audio elements from time index fourteen four seven to fifteen five eight. List all anomalies.

COMPUTER VOICE
No audio anomalies present.

GEORDI
Any subspace projections... z particle emissions... or interferometric frequencies?

COMPUTER VOICE
No subspace projections present.
No z particle emissions present.
(MORE)

43 CONTINUED:

COMPUTER VOICE (Cont'd)
No interferometric patterns
present.

Another dead end. Geordi sighs with frustration as
Data ENTERS.

DATA
Geordi... may I inquire how your
investigation is proceeding?

GEORDI
It's not.

DATA
Have you done an audio analysis...

Geordi impatiently interrupts Data in mid-sentence --
a strong indication of how tired and frustrated he is.

GEORDI
And a spectrographic analysis and
a screen for ionizing radiation...
and I even ran an enhancement for
micro-seismic disturbances. I've
tried it all.

A beat. Geordi shakes his head.

GEORDI
I'm sorry, Data.

DATA
There is no need for an apology.

Geordi just nods. Data observes him for a moment.

DATA
Perhaps if you indulged in a short
rest period, you could approach
this problem with what humans
commonly refer to as a fresh point
of view...

This is as close to human concern as Data can
express... and Geordi knows it. He manages a smile.

GEORDI
You're probably right, Data. But
I've got to finish scanning these
records... while I can.

43 CONTINUED: (2)

DATA

Is there some way I can assist
you?

GEORDI

(shakes his head)

If I knew what I was looking
for...

(sighs)

I think it's just down to going
over it, Data... maybe find
something I forgot... I'll let
you know if I come up with
anything... anything at all.

Data acknowledges and as Geordi goes back to the wall
monitor, Data EXITS...

44 INT. SICKBAY

Beverly is met by Nurse Ogawa as she ENTERS.

OGAWA

Sorry to disturb you, Doctor...

BEVERLY

It's alright. What's happened?

OGAWA

I thought you should see this.

They approach the unconscious Susanna, who has changed
further. Her skin, slick with an oily coating, bears
an even more elaborate network of black swirls and
patterns.

Nurse Ogawa shines a penlight on Susanna's face...

45 ANGLE - FAVORING SUSANNA (OPTICAL)

As the beam glides across Susanna's cheek a quickly
fading phosphorous trail is left on the skin.

BEVERLY

(what the hell)

Her skin's simulating the light...
a radiant reaction...

(musing)

Some sort of mimetic ability?

45 CONTINUED:

OGAWA

That's not all. Her body
temperature is dropping.

Beverly waves a Tricorder over Susanna...

BEVERLY

(puzzled)

It's as if she's generating a
disruptive field... I can barely
get readings off her now... What
about her rate of transformation?

OGAWA

It's increasing.

BEVERLY

That's not possible. It should
have been inhibited by the
T-cell stimulator... unless...

(thinking hard)

If there's a foreign body inside
her that's producing these
changes... something like a
viral creche...

OGAWA

A very small one if our scans
haven't found it.

BEVERLY

(let's get to it)

I want a full genetic analysis.
We're going to examine any
abnormality we find... no matter
how insignificant it seems.

And as they go to work...

46 INT. ENGINEERING - GEORDI'S OFFICE - MONITOR (OPTICAL)

The visual record PLAYS... beginning with the entire
team at Building One again.

HICKMAN

One to transport.

GEORDI (O.S.)

Computer, delete the audio.

47 INCLUDE GEORDI (OPTICAL)

As he watches, the record continues silently. Hickman DEMATERIALIZES. Susanna and the others move out of the scene, their shadows following after them. Then Geordi suddenly frowns...

GEORDI

Wait a minute... freeze visual.

The image freezes. We see the bare wall of the outpost building... and a single shadow.

GEORDI

(after a beat, puzzled)

Whose shadow is that?

COMPUTER

Please restate question.

He taps a console... a grid appears over the image on the monitor.

GEORDI

Computer... the shadow currently displayed in section B-eleven... what is its source?

COMPUTER

Unknown.

Geordi sighs, shakes his head.

GEORDI

It's gotta belong to somebody...
(to viewer)

Computer... return to time index
fourteen five eight...

The image flashes backwards... and starts again. Geordi watches as the away team moves off in different directions, leaving that single shadow prominently displayed on the wall...

GEORDI

Okay... Brevelle's behind the camera... Susanna and I head off in that direction. Mendez moves off that way...

(softly)

... so whose shadow is it?

47 CONTINUED:

Geordi thinks about it... a tired man with a very hard question in front of him. He drums his fingers on his desk nervously... a subtly uncharacteristic gesture.

GEORDI

Computer... replay visual from
last time index. No audio.
Slow to fifty percent.

On the monitor, the away team moves in SLOW MOTION, their shadows close together on the wall behind them. As they walk off...

GEORDI

Freeze visual.

48 CLOSE ON MONITOR (OPTICAL)

And that shadow remaining on the building wall.

GEORDI

Magnify four times... apply
spectral enhancement.

The visual MAGNIFIES, becoming fuzzy in a digital, blocky false color manner... then resolves into a sharp, normal color image... showing a close-up of the mysterious, vaguely humanoid, shadow.

49 GEORDI (OPTICAL)

Stares hard at the screen... rubs his forehead. Annoyed. Impatient. And then the idea hits him... driving him on to an even greater effort... despite his fatigue...

GEORDI

(urgent)

Computer, do you have sufficient
data to compile a Holographic
simulation of this Visual Record?

COMPUTER VOICE

A simulation would be limited to
areas scanned by the visual
recording device.

49 CONTINUED:

Geordi stands, paces excitedly, ever fiber of his being convinced he is on the verge of a breakthrough.

GEORDI

Good. Fine. Scan the entire
record... then recreate it in
Holodeck Three.

Geordi EXITS, almost on the run.

50
thru OMITTED
54

55 INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE HOLODECK THREE

Geordi hurries up and hits the companel.

GEORDI
Computer, is the Tarchannen
simulation ready?

COMPUTER VOICE
Affirmative. Program complete.
Enter when ready.

Geordi moves for the doors. Then stops and holds out his hand. It's trembling... badly. Like Susanna's.

Geordi frowns, reaches for his insignia... then hesitates. He knows he should contact Beverly, but he's driven to solve this mystery... to save Susanna.

After a beat, he presses a series of buttons on the control panel. The doors slide open and Geordi ENTERS the holodeck...

56 INT. HOLODECK

Geordi stands near the door, studying...

57 ANGLE - HOLODECK/TARCHANNEN OUTPOST

A re-creation of Building One... complete down to Tarchannen's perpetual twilight. Holograms of Susanna, Mendez, and Geordi, frozen in place... their shadows clearly visible on the wall behind them...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

58 INT. HOLODECK

As before. Geordi stares numbly at the facsimile of a healthy, vibrant Susanna... then charges on...

GEORDI

Computer, scan Starfleet records
and create a simulation of
Brevelle... place him where he
stood while recording this...

59 ANGLE - FAVORING BREVELLE (OPTICAL)

A hologram of BREVELLE APPEARS between the real Geordi and the holograms of the away team. Brevelle holds a recording device with a bright light mounted on it...

60 GEORDI

Steps up beside Brevelle... looks over at the holograms of the away team standing by the wall... so intent on his investigation that he is unaware of the increased trembling of his hands... or the sweat beading on his brow...

60 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Good. Computer, based on their speed and direction, can you extrapolate each officer's movements as they walk out of the recording device's field of view?

COMPUTER

Affirmative. With an increasing probability of error, reaching ninety-five percent after ten seconds.

GEORDI

Understood. Run simulation.

61 THE SIMULATION

Comes to "life." Susanna turns to Mendez and Geordi...

HOLO-SUSANNA

I want to make another sweep of the perimeter. Mendez, Brevelle, start at Building Two. La Forge, you and I will begin at Four.

They walk off in different directions...

62 THE "REAL" GEORDI

Observes intently as...

63 ANGLE ON OUTPOST WALL

Geordi, Mendez and Susanna's shadows move off the wall... leaving that one strange shadow in place.

But as Geordi moves closer to examine it...

64 THE HOLO-BREVELLE (OPTICAL)

Turns off his camera's light... and the shadow abruptly DISAPPEARS.

Geordi shakes his head. Frustrated.

GEORDI

It's happening too fast.

(a beat)

Freeze program.

The holograms all freeze in place.

GEORDI

Computer, reverse simulation...

run it back to... time index

fourteen five eight.

65 OMITTED

65A BREVELLE (OPTICAL)

His camera light comes back on... and...

66 THE HOLOGRAMS OF SUSANNA, MENDEZ, AND GEORDI (OPTICAL)

Walk in reverse back toward the building. Their shadows reappear on the wall... moving backwards... rejoining the mysterious shadow that was left behind.

67 THE "REAL" GEORDI (OPTICAL)

Reacts... interrupts...

GEORDI

Freeze.

The holograms all freeze in place. Geordi walks up to the wall... stares at the jumble of shadows on it. He nervously rubs his hand. Then...

GEORDI

Computer... remove Leijten...

67 CONTINUED:

Susanna and her shadow VANISH. The unexplained shadow remains.

GEORDI
Remove La Forge...

Holo-Geordi and his shadow VANISH... the unexplained shadow remains...

GEORDI
... and now remove Mendez...

Mendez and her shadow DISAPPEAR, leaving Brevelle, his camera, its light and that one, unexplained shadow behind.

Geordi moves closer... studying the shadow's indistinct, vaguely human shape.

He steps still closer... right between the camera and the wall... the shadow falls over him.

67A ANOTHER ANGLE

Geordi turns and faces Brevelle's camera... squinting at its bright light... there is clearly nothing between him and the light which could be casting the shadow.

He steps to one side and the shadow falls on the wall again.

67A CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Computer, using vector analysis,
identify the source of this
shadow.

COMPUTER VOICE

There is no object in the program
which could generate the shadow.

Geordi puts a hand to his head, feeling a wave of
dizziness. It subsides as quickly as it came.

GEORDI

There must be something else
here... something between the
camera lights and the wall.

Geordi paces back and forth. Thinking furiously.

GEORDI

Computer, given the distance from
the lights to the wall... can you
determine the most likely shape
and position of the object casting
this shadow?

COMPUTER VOICE

There is insufficient data to
reconstruct the requested object.

GEORDI

Okay... let's assume the height
of our friend here is about my
size... say one hundred seventy
centimeters... now can you
extrapolate its shape and
position?

COMPUTER VOICE

Affirmative.

GEORDI

Do it.

68 HOLODECK/SHADOW (OPTICAL)

A gray figure MATERIALIZES right in front of the
shadow... taking shape bit by bit until it becomes a
roughly defined humanoid CREATURE.

69 GEORDI (OPTICAL)

Reacts with astonishment as he approaches the humanoid hologram and slowly circles it... there was something there...

Then he is struck with a sudden, intense jab of internal pain. Geordi drops to his knees... clutching at the back of his neck.

70 HIS HAND

The middle fingers have fused together. As his hand slides away, we see the first mottled blotches of the transformation on his neck.

71 GEORDI

Stares at his hand... at the horror of it.

72 OMITTED

73 INT. SICKBAY (OPTICAL)

Susanna is still in bed, further transformed, and barely conscious.

Beverly and Nurse Ogawa are at a wall monitor, studying a diagram of Susanna's upper chest and throat. A small light begins pulsing in the region of the thymus.

BEVERLY
(at last)
There... in the thymus...

Beverly taps on some panels... some data flashes on the monitor.

BEVERLY
(studying the figures,
puzzled)
Some kind of parasite. It's using
Susanna's immune system to spread
genetic instructions...

73 CONTINUED:

OGAWA

How did it get there?

BEVERLY

She could have been infected during the original mission. It's small enough to have entered through any of the mucous membranes...

She taps the wall monitor again and a graphic display of cells undergoing rapid transformation comes up.

BEVERLY

(continuing)

But it certainly isn't acting like a typical parasite... it's not feeding off her -- it's actually transforming her DNA to match its own...

Ogawa crosses to Susanna, scans her with an instrument.

OGAWA

There's not much of her original DNA left.

BEVERLY

(acknowledges, urgent)

And we're going to need unaltered genes... or we'll never get her back. We've got to get that thing out of her. Now.

And as they prepare for surgery...

73A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

In orbit over Tarchannen Three.

74 OMITTED

75 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - SCIENCE STATION

Data is working the panels... checking further analysis... Picard is at command, Worf at Tactical, and Riker stands near Graham at the helm. As Riker crosses to Data...

RIKER

Any luck?

DATA

Negative, Commander. Nothing in our survey suggests the source of a parasitic infection...

He breaks off as...

BEVERLY'S COM VOICE

Crusher to Bridge.

75A NEW ANGLE

PICARD

Go ahead, Doctor.

BEVERLY'S COM VOICE

The surgery was successful...

INTERCUT:

76 INT. SICKBAY

Beverly "coming out" of surgery... the strain is clearly showing.

BEVERLY

(continuing)

... but it will be a few hours before we know how her regenerative systems are responding... In the meantime, I'd better get Geordi in here.

76 CONTINUED:

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Very good, Doctor. Keep us
advised.

BEVERLY
(keying insignia)
Crusher to La Forge...

No response.

BEVERLY
Computer, locate Commander La
Forge.

COMPUTER VOICE
Commander La Forge is not on board
the Enterprise.

A moment of stunned silence... then...

BEVERLY
Bridge, the Computer says Geordi
isn't on board... ? Is that
correct?

76A INT. BRIDGE

Reactions.

DATA
I show no transporter activity.

76A CONTINUED:

WORF

All shuttles are secure.

RIKER

Negative, Doctor. There is no indication he left the ship.

PICARD

Computer, what was Commander La Forge's last known location?

COMPUTER VOICE

Holodeck Three.

Riker and Picard exchange a quick look. Then as Riker heads toward the turbolift...

RIKER

Worf...

As Riker and Worf EXIT...

76B INT. SICKBAY

BEVERLY

Captain, if Geordi has transformed, he may be virtually a chameleon -- the skin develops mimetic capabilities... he could still be onboard...

76C INT. MAIN BRIDGE

BEVERLY'S COM VOICE

... but undetectable to our sensors...

Off Picard's reaction...

77 INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE HOLODECK THREE

Riker and Worf rush up from one end of the corridor; two N.D. SECURITY GUARDS from the other. Worf presses a series of buttons on the control panel and the doors slide open.

78 INT. HOLODECK (OPTICAL)

One Security Guard stays in the doorway as Riker, Worf, and the other Guard ENTER. As they react to the Tarchannen simulation...

WORF
(to guard)
Search the structure... I will
take the perimeter...

As Worf and the Guard move off, Riker approaches the frozen, humanoid hologram. What the hell is this thing... and what part does it play in this mystery?

WORF (O.S.)
Commander...

Riker turns toward...

79 WORF

Who holds up Geordi's abandoned VISOR and torn uniform.
Off Riker's reaction...

80 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM SIX

TRANSPORTER CHIEF HEDRICK is at his station, running a routine maintenance program. The door opens and he reacts to...

81 A HUMANOID BLUR - AT THE DOOR (OPTICAL)

Shaped like the hologram Geordi created; almost invisible thanks to its incredible chameleon-like skin.

HEDRICK
(keying insignia)
Security...

But before he can call for help, the humanoid form lunges at Hedrick in a RIPPLING BLUR... knocking the surprised man off his feet.

82 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Data reacts to his console...

82 CONTINUED:

DATA

Captain... the security lockout
on Transporter Room Six has been
broken.

PICARD

Re-engage... now.

DATA

I cannot, sir... The transport
cycle has already begun.

83 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (OPTICAL)

Hedrick sprawled on the floor; the humanoid blur on
the pad. As the DEMATERIALIZATION finishes, an energy
silhouette of the Alien/Geordi is briefly visible on
the pad. Then we...

84 OMITTED

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

85
thru OMITTED
89

90 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Worf and Data at their positions; Riker, and Picard in the command area.

WORF

I do not read any life signs on the surface.

A moment of worried silence... then...

PICARD

Our sensor array is useless... we have to find another way of locating him.

Data processes this for a moment, then turns toward Picard and Riker.

DATA

Captain, if we can get close enough to Geordi... we can read his absorption spectrum with an ultraviolet light.

RIKER

Can you modify an emergency beacon to operate on UV?

DATA

Yes, sir.

PICARD

Make it so. Number One, as soon as Data is ready, I want you to lead an away team.

90A OMITTED

90B INT. ENGINEERING

Worf and Riker ENTER to discover Data at a work station, the various components of an emergency beacon laid out before him.

90B CONTINUED:

RIKER
How long, Mister Data?

DATA
(continuing to work as
he talks)
I still must replace the emitter
module and reconnect the power
supply. It will take
approximately two minutes to
complete the modification.

Then Riker reacts to the Transporter Chief's voice
as...

HEDRICK'S COM VOICE
Hedrick to Commander Riker.

RIKER
(keying insignia)
Go ahead.

90C INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

Hedrick is back at his console... recovered from his
encounter with the transformed Geordi.

HEDRICK
I've been able to determine La
Forge's transport coordinates.

90D INT. ENGINEERING

HEDRICK'S COM VOICE
(continuing)
He beamed down next to the Aries
shuttle.

RIKER
Acknowledged.

Riker and Worf cross to the pool table. As Riker
punches up something on its monitor...

RIKER
He's on foot... couldn't have
gotten far by now. Let's assume
a radius of ten kilometers...

90D CONTINUED:

WORF

That is still a search area of more than three hundred square kilometers.

Riker hears this... knows what they're up against...

RIKER

We've got to narrow it down. What's happening with the enhanced sensor arrays?

Worf punches up something else on the pool table, studies it... then shakes his head.

WORF

All scans are still negative.

Riker frowns with frustration.

RIKER

There has to be some way to track him.

(new thought)

What about the high resolution EM scans?

WORF

We are adjusting the sensors to read Commander La Forge's absorption spectrum... but it will take several hours.

RIKER

(beat)

Geordi doesn't have several hours.

Data approaches... carrying the now assembled, baton-like emergency beacon.

DATA

I have completed the modifications, Commander.

On the move.

RIKER

(keying insignia)

Doctor Crusher... meet us in Transporter Room Six. Immediately.

90E INT. SICKBAY (FORMERLY 90A)

Beverly is readying her medical kit for the Away Team...

BEVERLY

(to Ogawa)

... And I'm going to need a
sedative for him... Get me ten
cc's of kayolane...

Ogawa acknowledges, leaves as...

SUSANNA (O.S.)

Doctor Crusher...

91 ANGLE

To reveal Susanna who has regained consciousness... still part alien but her eyes once again clear and human.

BEVERLY

You look a lot better than you
did an hour ago...

SUSANNA

(weak)

What did you do?

BEVERLY

We removed some kind of parasite
from your thymus...

SUSANNA

(interrupts)

No.

(off Bev's look)

It wasn't a parasite, Doctor.

(with new found inner
knowledge)

It's their method of
reproduction... to plant a DNA
strand in a living host... that
causes a metamorphosis.

(beat)

... Geordi?

Beverly barely has time to react... when Susanna's alien instincts tell her. Sitting up, alarmed...

91 CONTINUED:

SUSANNA

He's gone...

BEVERLY

Yes...

SUSANNA

He's on the planet...

BEVERLY

Don't try to get up yet...

SUSANNA

We have to find him...

BEVERLY

An away team is about to start
a search.

SUSANNA

You'll never be able to find
him...

(beat)

I'm the only one who can.

Off Beverly's reaction...

92 EXT. TARCHANNEN THREE - THE OUTPOST

The dark, gloomy landscape... the deserted buildings.

93 BY THE SHUTTLE (OPTICAL)

Riker, Beverly, Susanna, Worf, and Data MATERIALIZE near the abandoned shuttle. Data holds a foot long, baton-like emergency beacon. As they all turn on their individual palm beacons... Susanna reacts to the light, blinks, uncomfortable, turns away...

SUSANNA

No... you must turn them off...
the light frightens them...

Riker nods to the others, all turn off the beacons.

RIKER

(to Susanna; re: the
emergency beacon)
What about the ultraviolet?

93 CONTINUED:

SUSANNA

That is beyond their visual spectrum... they will not run from it.

WORF

He could be several kilometers away by now.

Susanna shakes her head.

SUSANNA

No... he's here... they're all here...

Susanna moves into the underbrush. The others follow...

93A FAVORING SUSANNA

As she slowly surveys the grey, spindly plants... the deserted dunes.

SUSANNA

There.

Data raises the emergency beacon. Its filament GLOWS, flooding the area with an intense BLUE RADIANCE.

94 OMITTED

95 WIDE (OPTICAL)

The bright light reveals TWO TARCHANNEN CREATURES. Even in the fuzzy, fluorescent glow, their appearance is more extreme than Geordi's was... more alien.

Susanna looks around, reacts as she sees...

96 THE ALIEN/GEORDI

Partially hidden in nearby underbrush; silhouetted by the vivid blue light, barely recognizable. Reactions.

BEVERLY

Geordi...

THE TWO ALIENS (OPTICAL)

Suddenly rush off, shoving the underbrush aside as they vanish into the darkness. Worf and Riker rush the Alien/Geordi, but he darts past them.

SUSANNA

Geordi... stop...

98 DATA

Pursues Geordi, beacon held high, moving at top, android speed as...

99 WORF AND RIKER

Move in pursuit... Beverly and Susanna following...

100

thru OMITTED

101

101A DATA - IN THE UNDERBRUSH

He runs into a secluded area... stops. Pans the beacon... no Geordi. The others arrive.

SUSANNA

Wait here...

Susanna moves toward some rocks... looks past them... seeing only indistinct shapes at first...

Then she steps closer... and discovers the three aliens huddled in the shadows behind the rocks... vaguely outlined by the beacon's blue light.

SUSANNA

(gently, quietly)

Geordi, my voice is familiar...
listen to it... you can feel that
we share this... you know I am
not a threat...

She slowly moves closer...

SUSANNA

The others... Mendez, Brevelle,
they no longer exist as humans...
but a part of you still does.
You are not one of them... not
yet. I can help you... if you'll
just trust me...

101B ANGLE - THE AWAY TEAM

Watches when...

101C RESUME - SUSANNA AND ALIEN/GEORDI

She reaches out a hand... The other two scramble away but Geordi stays...

SUSANNA

I know what's going on inside you... the war you're fighting with yourself... the humanity slipping away... the instinct to run... It's overpowering, but they know how to beat it now...

Geordi shakes his head, moves as if to follow the other two aliens. Susanna stops him with...

SUSANNA

Look at me... I've come back... Let me take you back, too.

Slowly, Geordi emerges... bathed in the blue light...

SUSANNA

Just take my hand... please...

She continues to hold out her hand... and finally he reaches out and takes it with his hand. A long beat.

101D ANGLE - THE AWAY TEAM

BEVERLY

(taps insignia)

Crusher to Enterprise. Lock on to Commander Leitjen's signal... prepare to transport two directly to Sickbay.

101E RESUME - GEORDI AND SUSANNA (OPTICAL)

SUSANNA

We're going home, Geordi.

And they DEMATERIALIZE...

102
thru OMITTED
107

108 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Still in orbit over grey, murky Tarchannen Three.

108A INT. SICKBAY

Geordi, clearly on the road to recovery... though his skin is still patterned with a few blotches.

108A ANGLE

Picard, Beverly and Susanna at his beside... Susanna is completely back to normal.

PICARD

Is there no hope for the others?
Brevelle, Mendez...

SUSANNA

(shakes her head)
None.

Geordi moves and regains consciousness... he's without his VISOR so he can't see...

GEORDI

(slight panic)
Susanna...

She takes his hand...

SUSANNA

I'm here, Geordi. So's Doctor
Crusher and Captain Picard.

Beverly puts on his VISOR... Geordi sighs, keeps his head down on the pillow...

GEORDI

(weakly)
Lieutenant Commander La Forge
reporting for duty, Captain.

PICARD

Welcome back, Mister La Forge.

BEVERLY

(to Susanna)
This species... can we communicate
with them?

But Geordi answers...

GEORDI

No. They act on instinct alone.
(beat)
In another few minutes, I wouldn't
have responded to you at all,
Susanna.

108A CONTINUED:

PICARD

Then we shall leave them be. I'll
order warning beacons placed in
orbit and on the surface.
Hopefully, no one else will have
to go through what you did.

He exits. Beverly moves away with him, leaving Geordi
and Susanna alone.

GEORDI

Down there, I didn't know who you
were... and yet somehow I
believed you... trusted you...

SUSANNA

(grins)

Must've been all the good advice
I used to give you...

Geordi almost laughs... but a shudder rolls across his
body... he pulls her close to him and hugs her
tightly... he takes a deep unsteady breath and whispers
in her ear...

GEORDI

Thank you.

As she comforts him...

FADE OUT.

109 OMITTED

110 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

In orbit around Tarchannen Three.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END