

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

Skin of Evil
"f.k.a.'The Shroud'"

#40271-122

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REVISED FINAL DRAFT

FEBRUARY 1, 1988

STAR TREK: "The Shroud" - 2/1/88 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Shroud"
CAST

PICARD ARMUS (THE SHROUD)
RIKER
BEVERLY
DATA
TROI
TASHA
WORF
GEORDI
WESLEY
LIEUTENANT COMMANDER LELAND T. LYNCH
NURSE
LIEUTENANT BEN PRIETO [PRONOUNCED: "PREE-ET-TOE"]

Non-Speaking
TWO MEDICAL TECHNICIANS
TRANSPORTER CHIEF

Voice-Over
COMPUTER VOICE

STAR TREK: "The Shroud" - 2/1/88 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Shroud"

SETS

INTERIORS

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

USS ENTERPRISE

MAIN BRIDGE

MAIN ENGINEERING

SHUTTLECRAFT

TRANSPORTER ROOM

SICKBAY

VAGRA 2 [PRONOUNCED: "VAY-GRA"]

OBSERVATION LOUNGE

PASTORAL AREA

SHUTTLECRAFT

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"The Shroud"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as it travels through space on impulse power.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, stardate 41801.3.
We are crossing through the Zed
Lapis sector, where we will
rendezvous with Shuttlecraft
Thirteen carrying Deanna Troi,
who is returning from a
psychology conference.

2 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

The usual CREW is in place, except for Troi and Wesley.

PICARD (V.O.)

(continuing)

Because Engineering is taking this
opportunity to complete preventive
maintenance on dilithium
crystals, we are traveling on
impulse power.

Tasha and Worf are at the Aft station, working the
console.

WORF

Routine deep sensor probe
indicates no obstacles, no vessels
within a range of three light
years.

TASHA

Short-range sub-space radar
confirms.

Worf turns to her.

WORF

The martial arts competition is
in three days. Are you prepared?

2 CONTINUED:

TASHA

If you'll meet me on the Holodeck later. I need your help on the Mishiana wrist-lock and break. If it works on you, I can use it on anyone.

WORF

A valid assumption. Who is your first competitor?

TASHA

The aikido match is with Science Officer Swenson.

WORF

You will defeat him easily.

TASHA

(nodding)

I'm more concerned with Lieutenant Minnerly's kick-boxing.

WORF

You are favored in the ship's pool.

Tasha just looks at him, then smiles, surprised.

TASHA

You bet on me.

WORF

A sure thing.

2A ANOTHER ANGLE

GEORDI

Sir, estimated rendezvous with the shuttle in one hour, ten minutes.

PICARD

Very good, Lieutenant.

(to Riker)

It's not the same around here without Counselor Troi, is it, Number One?

Riker's not sure if Picard's needling him.

2A CONTINUED:

RIKER

No, sir. It seems...

WORF

... Sir! I am receiving an emergency transmission from the shuttle!

PICARD

Put it on the Main Viewer.

GEORDI

I can't. We are receiving audio only.

PICARD

Then open the frequency.

GEORDI

Aye, sir.

BEN'S COM VOICE

(crackling; calm)

... what a jolt!

PICARD

Position report.

BEN'S COM VOICE

Sir, I have an onboard systems failure. You'll have to tell me where I am.

GEORDI

I read coordinates three-zero-seven mark one-two-six. Confirm!

BEN'S COM VOICE

Can't confirm. My instruments are haywire.

The bridge crew REACTS with concern.

PICARD

Lieutenant Prieto, is Counselor Troi all right?

BEN'S COM VOICE

Yes, sir. Just a little shaken. We're being buffeted a bit...

A GREAT STATIC ECHOES through the bridge.

2A CONTINUED: (2)

BEN'S COM VOICE
(continuing; slightly
panicked; breaking up)
... losing more power! My flight
control computer's fried.

PICARD
Main Engineering!

3 INT. MAIN ENGINEERING (INTERCUT WITH MAIN BRIDGE AS
NECESSARY)

where LIEUTENANT COMMANDER LELAND T. LYNCH and his
crew are working on DILITHIUM CRYSTALS. The door to
the chamber is OPEN. Lynch touches his insignia.

LYNCH
Engineering. Lieutenant
Commander Leland T. Lynch
reporting, sir.

PICARD
How long will it take to return
to warp power?

LYNCH
Captain! I'm in the middle of
realigning the dilithium
crystals.

PICARD
There's an emergency, Lynch. I
need warp drive. How long?

LYNCH
Twenty minutes. Maybe more.

PICARD
We don't have it.

LYNCH
I'll align it by hand. Then
power up the core.

PICARD
Whatever it takes.

A frustrated Lynch starts to move quickly.

LYNCH
Aye, sir.
(to his workers)
Let's go!

4 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

the crew is very tense.

GEORDI

Shuttle, this is the Enterprise.
Coordinates now read two-thirty-seven
mark one-oh-one. You're
moving in too close towards a
large mass.

BEN'S COM VOICE

I can see it. The planet's
getting closer.

More STATIC fills the bridge.

DATA

The planet is Vagra Two of the
Zed Lapis system. Uninhabited.

PICARD

Lieutenant, report!

TROI'S COM VOICE

This is Counselor Troi. I'll
relay, sir. The pilot is...
busy. We've lost most of our
impulse power.

PICARD

Engineering! Status report!

LYNCH'S COM VOICE

Working on it. Three minutes,
Captain. But there are no
guarantees.

PICARD

Deanna, we'll be right there.

Riker and the crew become very anxious as the STATIC
again fills the bridge.

TROI'S COM VOICE

... We're spinning around...

BEN'S COM VOICE

We're caught in the planet's
gravity.

TROI'S COM VOICE

(very controlled)
We're going to crash.

4 CONTINUED:

The faces of her friends reflect their fear and
anguish, as WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

still on impulse power.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental.
We've lost all contact with
Shuttlecraft Thirteen -- and can
only assume they've crash-landed
on Vagra Two. Main Engineering
is working at top speed to return
us to warp power.

6 INT. MAIN ENGINEERING

where Lynch places the dilithium crystals on their
proper tray.

LYNCH

Forget the final check.

7 CLOSER ANGLE

as the tray with the crystals is placed within the
chamber and the door CLOSES. Lynch WALKS to the
Computer.

7A LYNCH AT THE COMPUTER

LYNCH

Computer -- initiate start-up
sequence.

COMPUTER VOICE

Beginning check list.

LYNCH

Override. We are going directly
to start-up.

COMPUTER VOICE

That procedure is not recommended.

7A CONTINUED:

LYNCH

Understood. Now. Prime
matter/antimatter injectors. Set
ratio at twenty-five to one...

COMPUTER VOICE

Ratio set.

LYNCH

Power engine core. Inject
reactants.

At which point the SOUND WHINES AND BUILDS TO A RUMBLE.
The ENGINE LIGHTS BRIGHTEN AND BEGIN THE FAMILIAR WARP
DRIVE EFFECT.

LYNCH

(continuing)

Captain, this is Lieutenant
Commander Leland T. Lynch. You
have minimum warp drive.

8 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

as Geordi watches his console closely. He waits for
Data's signal.

DATA

Computer indicates alignment of
matter-anti-matter completed, sir.

GEORDI

Course plotted and set for Vagra
Two.

PICARD

Warp eight.

LYNCH'S COM VOICE

Minimum warp drive, Captain.

PICARD

You heard the order. Make it so.

9 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as the ship MOVES OUT IN WARP SPEED.

10 OMITTED

11 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

The crew calmly but rapidly performs their duties.
Riker sits almost immobilized next to Picard. Beverly
puts her hand on his arm.

GEORDI
Approaching Vagra Two.

DATA
Strange, sir. No emergency
signal from the shuttle as yet.

RIKER
(reassuring himself)
They're designed to withstand
almost any impact.

WORF
Beginning a deeper probe, sir.

PICARD
What is this place, Mister Data?

DATA
There is no information in the
library computer, sir, other than
the fact of its existence. No
signs of any known higher life-form.
Virtually no vegetation.

RIKER
Atmosphere?

DATA
Minimum for our needs.

PICARD
Standard orbit.

GEORDI
Standard orbit, aye.

11A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL) (FORMERLY SC. 10)

as it ENTERS orbit around Vagra 2.

12 CLOSE ON PICARD AND RIKER

Riker's scared for Troi.

12 CONTINUED:

RIKER

I could have set up the rendezvous
in a dozen alternate sites.

Picard knows what he's really saying.

PICARD

She means a lot to all of us.

RIKER

She's not dead. I'd know it.

13 WIDER ANGLE

INCLUDING Worf.

WORF

I've located the shuttle!

PICARD

Life signs?

WORF

Not yet, sir.

Riker REACTS to the possibility that Troi is dead.

WORF

(continuing)

Still probing. It appears to be
buried under a lot of debris.

Worf shakes his head, then sees a FLICKER on the
console.

WORF

(continuing)

I may have something, sir!

He makes an adjustment on his instruments. Riker's
out of his chair instantly, looking over Worf's
shoulder.

WORF

(continuing)

Faint life signs. Very faint.

RIKER

How many?

13 CONTINUED:

WORF

There's no way of telling from here.

PICARD

Can we beam up the injured?

DATA

No. Our sensors are not fully penetrating whatever the debris is, sir. I cannot explain it.

A puzzled concerned REACTION from Picard.

PICARD

That's very unusual.

DATA

Yes. I cannot explain it.

Picard gets a call.

LYNCH'S COM VOICE

Captain, this is Lieutenant Commander Leland T. Lynch. Can I shut down the warp drive now for a full realignment?

PICARD

(distracted)

Yes.

LYNCH

Thanks. That's fine...

PICARD

No. Wait.

(something is picking at him)

Not yet.

LYNCH

You'll have full impulse.

PICARD

I understand, but for the moment I want all systems at full readiness -- especially propulsion.

LYNCH

As you wish, Captain.

13 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Assemble your team, Number One.

RIKER

Right away.

BEVERLY

I'll meet you in Transporter Room
Four.

Riker gets up quickly.

RIKER

Yar, Data.

They're already halfway out of their positions and
HEADING for the Transporter Room.

14 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM FOUR (OPTICAL)

The team is assembled on the pad when Beverly COMES
IN with TWO MEDICAL TECHNICIANS and gear. They MOVE
ONTO the pad.

RIKER

Do it.

The Transporter Chief works the console and the away
team DISAPPEARS.

15 EXT. VAGRA 2 (OPTICAL)

Vagra 2 is arid, desolate, with very rocky terrain.
It's always dusk. The team BEAMS IN about ten meters
from the crash site. The shuttle appears to have
crashed into a hill. It's almost completely buried,
obscured by ROCKS. There is an eerie stillness, a
deadness about the place. Tasha takes readings.

TASHA

Ben must have had no control
left, otherwise he would have
picked a better spot.

BEVERLY

Let's go. The life signs are
weak.

Tasha starts to lead the team quickly and cautiously
towards the shuttle.

16 ANOTHER ANGLE

As they near the shuttle, they run into an obstacle - a BLACK, SHINY, VISCOUS MASS lying on the ground.

16A ANGLE ON THE AWAY TEAM

They STOP for a beat and look at the slime. Data takes a tricorder reading.

RIKER

What is it?

No one has an answer.

TASHA

No idea. We'll go around. Just to be on the safe side.

16B ANGLE ON TASHA

As she leads the away team around the slick, it MOVES PARALLEL with them so it stays between them and the shuttle. The team STOPS.

TASHA

We'll go the other way.

16C ANOTHER ANGLE

The away team CIRCLES AROUND the other way. And again, the slick stays between them and the shuttle.

RIKER

(touching his
communicator)

Enterprise, this is Riker. We've got a problem.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

What kind of a problem, Number One?

RIKER

I'm not sure yet. There's some kind of a slick blocking our path. We'll keep you apprised.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Maintain an open frequency.

16C CONTINUED:

RIKER

Aye, sir.

17 CLOSER ANGLE

RIKER

Analysis, Mister Data.

Data takes readings.

DATA

Inconclusive, sir. I cannot tell you what it is -- only what it is not.

RIKER

Explain.

DATA

There is no evidence of neural or circulatory systems. No internal organs. Cellular structure unknown. It does not have any proteins which are known to us.

The slime remains SILENT and STILL... Until:

BEVERLY

It's narrower over here. Can we get over it?

They try -- but it EXPANDS, so they can't pass.

RIKER

Wait, Beverly. How is it moving, Data?

DATA

I do not know, sir. It does not appear to have any skeletal framework or musculature.

RIKER

Then what's causing it to move?

DATA

Perhaps we are. It appears to be following us, sir.

18 WIDER ANGLE

The slime continues to BLOCK THEIR PATH, BLOCKING ANY WAY THEY TRY TO APPROACH the shuttle.

RIKER

No readings of intelligence.
No brain as we know it. But
evidence of thought, Mister Data?

DATA

Insufficient information.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Number One, can you beam around
it?

RIKER

Negative, not enough room, sir.
It seems to be trying to keep
us away from the shuttle.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Data, is it alive?

19 THE CREATURE

DATA

It is possible. It possesses
two of the requisites for life.

20 WIDER ANGLE

A SHRIEK is emitted, and the BLACK SHROUD, ARMUS, LIFTS ITSELF off the ground and blocks the away team's path.

ARMUS

Very good, tin man.

They STEP BACK, startled... phasers ready. Riker gathers himself and steps forward. Tasha's alert.

20A INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard and the others listening.

PICARD

What is it, Number One? What are
you seeing?

20A CONTINUED:

RIKER

I wish I had an answer, Captain.
The truth is... I'm not sure.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

A21 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as the ship orbits the planet.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental.
While on the planet Vagra Two to
rescue members of the crew who
were injured in a rather strange
and unexplained shuttle crash,
the away team, lead by Commander
Riker, has encountered a strange
creature which seems to be able
to take many forms, including
something which is humanoid.

B21 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard touches his arm panel.

PICARD

Go easy, Number One. Let's find
out what it is we are dealing with
here.

RIKER'S COM VOICE

Agreed, Captain.

PICARD

And Number One, I don't believe
the location shuttle crash and
the proximity of this creature
is necessarily a coincidence.

C21 EXT. PLANET VAGRA 2

Riker moves a STEP CLOSER to the creature.

RIKER

I am Commander William Riker of
the USS Enterprise.

ARMUS

I am ARMUS. Why do you intrude
into my space?

C21 CONTINUED:

RIKER

We mean you no harm. We have an injured crew in that shuttlecraft. We need to get to them. May we pass?

ARMUS

That is important to you? That they live?

RIKER

Yes. Preserving life -- all life -- is very important to us.

ARMUS

Why?

RIKER

We believe that everything in the universe has a right to exist.

ARMUS

Interesting. Irrelevant. But you may now leave if you wish.

Riker and the crew are startled.

TASHA

We won't without the shuttle crew.

The shroud REMAINS SILENT as Tasha makes a slight MOVE TO GO AROUND IT.

ARMUS

You will not like it here.

TASHA

What are you saying -- that you are going to try and deny us access and attempt to force us to leave without our comrades?

ARMUS

I told you what you can do. You can leave.

Tasha has had enough of this and starts to move toward the narrowest strip of slime.

TASHA

Enough. We have people who need attention. We mean you no harm, but do not interfere.

21 ANOTHER ANGLE (OPTICAL)

as ARMUS FLICKS HIS FINGER, sending an ENERGY FORCE towards Tasha, JERKING HER BACK and SLAMMING HER DOWN to the ground.

22 ON THE TEAM (OPTICAL)

Everything from here on must happen in a blur of action. Beverly and the medical personnel jump to Tasha's side. Riker and Data MOVE BETWEEN the others and BLAST ARMUS with their phasers.

23 OMITTED

24 ANGLE ON THE CREATURE (OPTICAL)

who appears to thrive and grow on the energy.

24A ANGLE ON RIKER AND DATA

They BACK AWAY - still FIRING.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Number One?

RIKER
The creature attacked us.
Lieutenant Yar is down.

DATA
It appears to feed on our phaser
energy.

RIKER
We have no effect on it.

24B INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard and the others are monitoring.

PICARD
Transporter Room. Get them up.
Now!

24C ANGLE ON TASHA AND THE OTHERS

Beverly quickly takes a reading. She can't believe the instruments.

BEVERLY

She's dead.

24CC ANGLE ON THE BRIDGE CREW

stunned.

24D ANGLE ON RIKER AND DATA

They REACT to the words. Then look back at ARMUS.

24E ANGLE ON ARMUS

watching.

25 ANGLE ON BEVERLY AND TASHA

There is a piece of slime on Tasha's face. Beverly digs at it, desperate to remove it.

25A ANGLE ON AWAY TEAM (OPTICAL)

The lock on is complete -- the away team is BEAMED UP. Leaving only Armus and the shuttle.

26 OMITTED

26A INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (OPTICAL)

as the away team BEAMS IN. Beverly and the Technicians are still working on Tasha. Beverly gives her an injection in the neck. Riker and Data can REACT for the first time.

BEVERLY

I need her in Sickbay right now!
Get a gurney.

27 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard is out of his seat -- the whole crew is alert.

27 CONTINUED:

PICARD
Yellow Alert, Lieutenant Worf.
I'll be in Sickbay.

REACTIONS from the bridge crew.

28
thru OMITTED
29

30 INT. SICKBAY

The medical team is easing Tasha onto the operating table as Picard ENTERS. Beverly barely glances up at him. He MOVES OFF TO THE SIDE and watches silently, with Data and Riker, as:

31 CLOSE ON DIAGNOSTIC SCREEN

which shows her bodily readings to be totally askew.

32 WIDER ANGLE

Beverly and the Nurse work together as if they'd done this a hundred times before, attaching the clamshell device onto the bed, over Tasha's body.

PICARD
Status, Doctor?

BEVERLY
She's dead.

PICARD
Bring her back.

BEVERLY
I'm trying.

PICARD
You've saved people before. You
can save her.

BEVERLY
Neural stimulator.

32 CONTINUED:

The Nurse immediately helps her attach the device, which clips onto the bed and slips over Tasha's head like a loose headband. As soon as both devices are activated, Beverly and the Nurse anxiously watch the diagnostic screen. A FEW KEY INDICATORS APPROACH NORMALITY. Picard is anxious and impatient.

RIKER

There. You did it.

BEVERLY

No. I've got her on total support. There's no independent brain activity.

Beverly grimly and quickly works the neural stimulator. She pushes programming keys furiously, then hits the start button. No reaction.

NURSE

She's not responding, Doctor. Her synaptic network is breaking down.

BEVERLY

No! Inject norep.

The Nurse complies as Beverly reprograms the stimulator. Nothing happens.

BEVERLY

(continuing)

We're going for direct reticular stimulation.

NURSE

Risky.

PICARD

What does that mean?

BEVERLY

Doesn't matter! Do it!

The Nurse punches it in, and Tasha's body TWITCHES SLIGHTLY. Picard looks hopefully at Beverly.

PICARD

She moved!

32 CONTINUED: (2)

NURSE

Neurons are beginning to
depolarize.

Beverly is desperate, but calm.

BEVERLY

Increase to seventy microvolts.

The Nurse complies. Beverly pushes the button. Tasha
MOVES SLIGHTLY -- VERY SLIGHTLY. Beverly checks the
readout. Data and Riker looks at each other -- it's
not good.

PICARD

(urgently)

Doctor?

BEVERLY

Eighty-five microvolts.

They quickly try again. And again. Finally, there is
NO MOVEMENT in Tasha at all.

33 ON BEVERLY AND PICARD

She slowly turns to him.

BEVERLY

She's gone.

PICARD

Gone?

BEVERLY

There's too much synaptic damage.
That thing just sucked all the
life out of her. There's nothing
I can do...

Picard, Riker and Data seem rooted to the spot.

34 ANOTHER ANGLE

Beverly reluctantly pushes in a code on the overbed
life support clamshell. She and the others look up
at the big diagnostic wall screen and watch all the
LIFE FUNCTION INDICATORS FALL TO ZERO. They REACT
to the finality of this.

35 EXT. VAGRA 2

as ARMUS SLITHERS AND SLIDES close to the shuttle.

36 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

It is greatly damaged. The PILOT, LIEUTENANT BEN PRIETO, is slumped forward, unconscious. Troi tries to move, but is in a great deal of pain. She touches her communicator, but it doesn't work.

36A EXT. VAGRA 2 (FORMERLY SCENE 39)

ARMUS has slithered up the shuttle and covered the little bit that isn't buried by rubble.

36B INT. SHUTTLECRAFT (FORMERLY SCENE 40)

Troi is startled. She feels very uncomfortable and looks around, seeing nothing, but feeling -- an intimate sense of evil.

ARMUS (O.S.)

Your friends have deserted you.
They're not coming back.

TROI

You're wrong.

ARMUS (O.S.)

I killed one of them.

Troi is very sad.

TROI

Yes. I know.

ARMUS (O.S.)

How could you be in there and know that?

TROI

I felt her die.

ARMUS (O.S.)

Do you want to know why I killed her?

TROI

Meaningless. That act had no reason.

36B CONTINUED:

ARMUS (O.S.)

Exactly. I did it because I could.

TROI

But you felt no satisfaction.

ARMUS (O.S.)

No, none. It was too easy.

TROI

You wanted her to suffer. You have a great need.

ARMUS (O.S.)

I need nothing.

TROI

Liar.

(there is a pause)

End this. Let us go.

ARMUS

Not yet.

TROI

They won't give you what you want.

ARMUS (O.S.)

And what is that?

TROI

To break their spirit.

ARMUS (O.S.)

Oh, is that what I want?... Then that's what I will have.

TROI

Never.

37 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as it orbits Vagra 2.

38 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

The bridge crew GATHERS around the table.

38 CONTINUED:

BEVERLY

(enraged)

She didn't do anything, Captain.
Her phaser was lowered. She only
wanted to get to Troi and
Lieutenant Prieto.

RIKER

There was nothing provocative
about what she did.

Riker slams the table and fights back tears of outrage.

BEVERLY

It just killed her. No reason.
No justification. A senseless,
brutal act.

Picard waits, while the members of his crew purge their
anger.

PICARD

All right. This is very emotional
for all of us, but we still have
members of this crew down on that
planet, so, until the shuttle
crew is safely aboard this ship,
our feelings will have to wait.

There are QUIET MURMURS OF ASSENT.

PICARD

(continuing)

Lieutenant Worf, you are now chief
of security.

WORF

I will do my best, sir.

PICARD

Doctor, what is the status of
the shuttle crew?

BEVERLY

We're still receiving faint life
signs. But the sensor readings
are fluctuating -- and I don't
know how accurate they are.

38 CONTINUED: (2)

DATA

ARMUS is capable of creating undefined forcefields. In effect, we are powerless to communicate or use our transporter unless it allows us to.

PICARD

A powerful creature against whom we seem to have no defense. Number One.

Riker begins PACING.

RIKER

This creature that calls itself ARMUS is down on that planet waiting for us to come back. It wants us to come back. It killed Tasha. It could have just as easily killed us all. It didn't. Troi and Ben Prieto are still alive. For a reason. It wants something -- and it knows we will not leave so long as Troi and Ben are alive.

PICARD

What does it want?

RIKER

The only way we're going to find out is to go back down.

The crew REACTS.

DATA

Sir, request permission to accompany Commander Riker. He may need help -- and ARMUS may allow us through its forcefield only once.

BEVERLY

I am going too. There are injured people down there.

GEORDI

Captain, perhaps I can see something in the creature which will be helpful.

(to Worf)

Worf -- are you coming?

38 CONTINUED: (3)

WORF

I will remain on the ship.

Everyone is mildly surprised.

WORF

(continuing)

The object here is not to engage this creature in battle. The goal is the safe return of Counselor Troi and Lieutenant Prieto. I can best accomplish this from the Tactical Station.

Picard admires his courageous choice.

PICARD

Agreed, Lieutenant... Number One, I see no other choice. Prepare your away team.

39
thru OMITTED
40

40A INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (OPTICAL)

Riker, Data, Beverly and Geordi prepare to beam down.

RIKER

Is there anything left to say?

SILENCE.

RIKER

Energize.

41 EXT. VAGRA 2 (OPTICAL)

as the away team BEAMS DOWN near the shuttle, which is lying there, quiescent, waiting for them.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

42 EXT. VAGRA 2

The away team MAKES ITS WAY, very cautiously, towards ARMUS. The shroud is still on top of the shuttlecraft. Riker and the team take an involuntary STEP BACK when they see this.

RIKER

Enterprise.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Number One.

RIKER

We're approaching the shuttlecraft. The creature's covering it.

42A INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

Troi feels the presence of the away team.

ARMUS (O.S.)

I lied to you. They came back.

TROI

Let me talk with them.

ARMUS (O.S.)

No.

TROI

Why not? Does the thought of my having contact with them make you uneasy?

ARMUS (O.S.)

No, it makes them uneasy. They are worried.

TROI

Yes. Yes, they are worried.

ARMUS (O.S.)

They care for you. You must be very special.

42A CONTINUED:

TROI

We are members of a community.
We all care for one another.

ARMUS (O.S.)

Equally? None more than another?

TROI

Yes, equally.

ARMUS (O.S.)

Now it is you who lie. There is
one who is loved more.

Troi changes the direction of this conversation.

TROI

You were really surprised that
they came back.

ARMUS (O.S.)

Yes.

TROI

Why? Because the others did not?

ARMUS (O.S.)

(now it is the creature
who is uncomfortable)

What others?

TROI

You can't hide the emptiness from
me. The others. The ones who
hurt you. Who left you -- alone --
rejected. The ones who make you
so angry.

ARMUS (O.S.)

What do you know of them?

TROI

Only what you tell me.

42B EXT. SHUTTLECRAFT

ARMUS SLITHERS OFF the craft and MOVES TOWARDS the away
team.

RIKER

Enterprise, Armus is moving
towards us.

42C INT. MAIN BRIDGE (FORMERLY SC. 45)

WESLEY and Worf lean over the Aft console. On the bridge they spot the change -- and again...

WORF

Captain. Look at this.

Picard APPROACHES the Aft station.

WORF

(continuing)

The force of the energy field around the shuttle just took a dip. It was almost low enough for us to beam them out. Now, as the creature approaches the away team, the energy field increases.

Picard is pensive for a moment.

PICARD

Chart it.

43
thru OMITTED
44

44A ANGLE ON AWAY TEAM (FORMERLY SC. 43)

The shroud is half-standing near the team.

ARMUS

She said you'd be back, but I didn't think so.

RIKER

We have no choice.

ARMUS

I sense anger directed at me.

Riker deflects the statement.

RIKER

I'm here to negotiate. What is it you want?

ARMUS

Maybe I want nothing.

RIKER

Then you would have killed us all.

44A CONTINUED:

ARMUS

I still might.

RIKER

Do you want something? Tell me.
Maybe we can reach an
accommodation.

ARMUS

You would do that even after what
I did to the fair one?

RIKER

Yes.

ARMUS

If I tell you what it is... will
you give it to me?

RIKER

I don't know... I guess it
depends.

ARMUS

Not good enough.

45 OMITTED

46 ANGLE ON BEVERLY AND THE SHROUD

as she APPROACHES it.

BEVERLY

I'm a doctor. I need to treat
our injured friends.

ARMUS

Say please.

BEVERLY

Please.

ARMUS

Again.

BEVERLY

Please.

ARMUS

You ask nicely. I will allow it.

46 CONTINUED:

The team starts to move forward.

ARMUS
(continuing)
Stop! Only the "Doctor."

Beverly STARTS TO MOVE FORWARD.

ARMUS
Stop. I've changed my mind. Talk
to her from here.

BEVERLY
How?
(into com)
Troi, can you hear me? Troi?

47 OMITTED

48 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

BEVERLY'S COM VOICE
Deanna? Are you all right?

Troi touches her communicator.

TROI
Beverly...

49 EXT. SHUTTLECRAFT

Beverly relaxes with relief for a moment.

BEVERLY
Are you all right?

50 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT (INTERCUT AS NECESSARY WITH EXT.
SHUTTLECRAFT)

TROI
I'm not sure. Ben's really bad
-- I can barely feel his pulse.

BEVERLY
We have to get you out. It has
a forcefield preventing us from
transporting you.

TROI
I know.

51 EXT. VAGRA 2 - NEAR ARMUS

Riker makes a reflexive MOVE TOWARD THE SHUTTLE.

RIKER

She needs our help.

ARMUS

You have no permission to pass.

BEVERLY

There are people suffering a few meters away, and you block our path. Why?

ARMUS

You asked to talk. I allowed it. Wasn't that enough for you?

BEVERLY

No. I need help to get to them.

ARMUS

You are ungrateful.

BEVERLY

You are evil and disgusting. What are you made of?

DATA

It does not register on my tricorder, Doctor.

ARMUS

"It?" Does that mean I am not alive?

DATA

No. Clearly you are some kind of intelligent form.

ARMUS pulls the tricorder out of Data's hands and sails it over the horizon.

ARMUS

Then your instrument lies. It is useless. Perhaps all your instruments are useless.

The shroud instantaneously RIPS OFF GEORDI'S VISOR. Data immediately REACTS to assist.

ARMUS

(continuing)

Don't help him.

51 CONTINUED:

Geordi helplessly MOVES TOWARDS THE VISOR. ARMUS MOVES IT. Riker puts his hand on Beverly's arm. They stay out of it -- both furious.

DATA

One meter to your left, Geordi.

Geordi moves that way, bends down and almost reaches it when the shroud MOVES IT again, behind him.

DATA

(continuing)

Behind you.

Geordi turns and feels his way. The Shroud MOVES IT again. Data says nothing more while Geordi searches.

ARMUS

Aren't you going to lead him to his sight again, robot?

DATA

No. You will just move it again. I will not help you hurt him.

RIKER

None of us will help you.

ARMUS

(disgusted)

Then give it to him. I will find something else to do. Wait right here.

51A EXT. SHUTTLECRAFT

as the away team watches ARMUS surround the shuttle.

51B INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

Troi moves. She can feel that he's back.

ARMUS (O.S.)

You said I wouldn't enjoy it. You were wrong.

TROI

Still the great emptiness remains. You sound so alone.

51B CONTINUED:

ARMUS (O.S.)

I am alone. I am the discarded
skin of a creature whose beauty
dazzles all who see it. But I
am its refuse -- left here.

TROI

You have my pity.

The shuttle SHAKES with the creature's rage.

ARMUS

Your pity! Save that for
yourself.

For the first time -- the first time -- WE SEE a ripple
of FEAR on Troi's face.

51C EXT. PLANET

ARMUS HAS MOVED OFF THE SHUTTLE AND as it APPROACHES
THE GROUP, Riker suddenly feels a great force pull him.
He calls out. Data MOVES to help him.

ARMUS

Touch him and he dies.

As the away team watches, Riker - fighting with all
his might -is pulled inexorably toward the slime. From
the other direction, Armus also MOVES toward the hole.
As the creature's SHRIEK joins RIKER'S SCREAM, the two
SLIP INTO THE SLIME HOLE and DISAPPEAR. For a beat
there is nothing. Then: WE CAN SEE only RIKER'S FACE
PRESSED AGAINST THE SKIN.

DATA

Enterprise, ARMUS has enveloped
and attacked Commander Riker.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

I'm beaming you up!

ARMUS

If any of you leave now, he dies.
And so do the survivors of the
crash.

As they REACT, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

52 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit around Vagra 2.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental.
There is grave danger to the crew
on Vagra Two. My first officer
is missing - attacked by this
entity known as "ARMUS."

53 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Wesley and Worf working on a solution to the ARMUS
energy problem.

WORF

Captain, perhaps you should look
at this.

Picard STEPS OVER and studies the graphic display.

WORF

(continuing)

We have a chart of the energy
field surrounding the shuttle.

PICARD

There are a great deal of
fluctuations.

WORF

Yes - but there is a pattern.
Here is when it killed Lieutenant
Yar, and here is when it absorbed
Commander Riker.

PICARD

(indicating points on
the graph)

And here -- and here? Where the
energy is lowest?

WORF

Both times it had enveloped the
shuttle and was involved with
Counselor Troi.

53 CONTINUED:

PICARD

So when it is provoked in a certain way its forcefield is weakened... Troi must have the answer. I'm beaming down. You have the Conn, Lieutenant.

WESLEY

Sir, I'd like to...

PICARD

... Go with me? No, Wesley. You can be of more help to Lieutenant Worf.

WESLEY

But...

PICARD

...No.

WESLEY

Tell my Mom... I'm not worried.

PICARD

I'll tell her, Wes.

54 OMITTED

55 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT

It's as if Troi realizes something else is wrong and feels the pain Riker is in.

TROI

Imzadi. No... Stop hurting him!

ARMUS (O.S.)

What will you give me if I stop hurting him?

TROI

Nothing. I can give you nothing.

ARMUS (O.S.)

You still resist. Not for much longer.

56 EXT. THE SHROUD (OPTICAL)

At that moment Picard BEAMS DOWN next to the away team. The team REACTS to Picard's arrival.

ARMUS

Ah. Another human has arrived.
A very bold one, too. Perhaps
the party is complete.

The shroud LIFTS ITSELF TO ITS TORSO to greet the Captain. At that moment A LIKENESS OF RIKER'S FACE PUSHES THROUGH AND STRAINS AGAINST THE SHROUD, AND THEN DISAPPEARS again. They see it and control themselves. They will never mention what they've seen to ARMUS. The captain and the creature face each other.

ARMUS

You must be the chief.

PICARD

Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the
Enterprise. Is Commander Riker
dead?

ARMUS

Guess.

DATA

(to Picard)

I would guess that death is no
longer sufficient entertainment
to alleviate its boredom.
Therefore, Commander Riker is
alive.

ARMUS

Maybe.

Picard stares closely at ARMUS.

ARMUS

(continuing)

Don't you want to ask me what I
want?

PICARD

No.

56 CONTINUED:

ARMUS

Then, to protect your own existence, maybe you'd better give me a reason. Entertain me. Be creative. Then perhaps I won't kill your assistant. You do care very much about that, don't you?

PICARD

Yes.

The shroud looks in Data's direction and suddenly -- completely against Data's will -- an unseen force causes Data's hand to take his phaser and point it at Picard.

ARMUS

Robot, how would you feel if you were the instrument of death for your leader?

PICARD

Don't struggle, Mister Data.

Data relaxes into it.

DATA

I have no control over what you do with the phaser. Therefore, I would not be the instrument of his death.

ARMUS ignores him - and TURNS THE PHASER ON BEVERLY.

ARMUS

Perhaps the kind doctor would engender more feeling?

He SWINGS DATA'S ARM VIOLENTLY AROUND so the phaser points at his own temple.

ARMUS

How does it feel facing your own extinction? I won't call it death. You're not alive.

DATA

It feels -- curious.

ARMUS stops the game - and DROPS THE PHASER. The others REACT with quiet relief. Data stares at it.

56 CONTINUED: (2)

DATA

You are capable of great sadism
and cruelty. Interesting. No
redeeming qualities.

ARMUS

So what do you think?

DATA

I think you should be destroyed.

ARMUS

A moral judgment from something
that isn't even alive?

Before Data can answer:

PICARD

Mister Data...

(then:)

ARMUS, we are through dealing with
you.

ARMUS

I have your man in here... and
the others.

PICARD

It doesn't matter. We will no
longer amuse you.

ARMUS

I can kill them.

PICARD

Yes. You can. But only I can
make them perform. They follow
my orders.

ARMUS

Then it is you. Amuse me.

PICARD

Not until I know if the ones in
the shuttle are still alive. I
must see them.

ARMUS

Not possible.

PICARD

Then our business is complete.

56 CONTINUED: (3)

ARMUS

And you claim you care about your
comrades.

PICARD

I do care.

ARMUS is silent.

PICARD

(continuing)

Shall I tell you what true evil
is? It is to submit to you. It
is when we surrender our freedom,
our dignity instead of defying
you. Do what you will. We will
take the consequences.

He and the others turn their backs on ARMUS and begin
to WALK AWAY slowly.

ARMUS

Wait!

57
thru OMITTED
58

59 ANGLE ON ARMUS

as it SPITS RIKER OUT in front of the away team. He
is covered with black slime and we can't tell if he's
dead or alive.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

60 EXT. VAGRA 2 - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Beverly and Picard lean over the fallen Riker. His skin looks like he received a bad sunburn. She takes readings as Data and Geordi stand slightly back.

BEVERLY

He's alive.

PICARD

But is he all right?

Riker shudders and opens his eyes. For a moment he looks around wildly, not knowing where he is. When he realizes he's free, he struggles to get up.

BEVERLY

Don't move.

(to Picard)

Everything shows normal, except his skin sustained a mild form of acid bath.

RIKER

(weakly)

So much distortion, so frustrated... it had to get rid of me.

PICARD

I want you all out of here.

(into com)

Enterprise, beam up the away team -- immediately.

ARMUS

You need my permission.

PICARD

Do I have it?

ARMUS

Yes. Are you going?

PICARD

No. Not yet.

60A ANOTHER ANGLE (OPTICAL)

PICARD

Enterprise, four to beam up.

WORF'S COM VOICE

Aye, sir.

The four BEAM UP, leaving Picard. Picard APPROACHES ARMUS.

PICARD

I want to see my people on the shuttle.

ARMUS doesn't answer. ARMUS makes a very slight motion and Picard DISAPPEARS. (NOTE: This should not look like our transporter effect. the OPTICAL should be BLACKISH.)

61 INT. SHUTTLECRAFT (OPTICAL)

Picard APPEARS.

PICARD

Troi.

TROI

Captain Picard.

PICARD

We registered a weakening of ARMUS' energy while he was talking to you. What was going on?

TROI

ARMUS is very needy, but he can't deal with that. He denies his rage. I confronted him with it. That must have been when he reacted.

Picard REACTS thoughtfully.

62 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit.

63 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

where Wesley anxiously works with Worf.

63 CONTINUED:

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Lieutenant Worf, I'm going to try and break this impasse. Monitor carefully.

WORF

Aye sir.

(to Wesley)

Set the computer. When the energy level reaches two point six point two-oh-five, automatically beam up Troi and Prieto. We'll do a parallel transport of the captain.

64 EXT. VAGRA - NEAR ARMUS (OPTICAL)

The captain MATERIALIZES and faces ARMUS.

PICARD

How long have you been on this planet?

ARMUS

Since they left.

PICARD

Someone was here before?

ARMUS

Long ago.

PICARD

They abandoned you. Who were they?

ARMUS

A race of titans. So they thought. Together, they perfected a method of bringing to the surface all that was evil and negative within them. All this erupted on the outside, spread, and connected. In time, it formed a second skin, dank and vile. They found a way to rid themselves of it, leaving them free of the bonds of destructiveness. Then they left. And here I am.

64 CONTINUED:

PICARD

It must be very lonely.

ARMUS

You cannot trick me by pretending compassion, captain.

PICARD

Haven't you seen we humans are capable of compassion?

ARMUS

Oh, yes. It is revolting. Time and again you rise from despair into hope. From hate into understanding. From aloneness into love. But you are puny. Weak. Vessels that die from a flick of my power.

PICARD

But our spirit soars. A great poet once said "all spirits are enslaved which serve things evil."

ARMUS

Picard, it is impossible for you to accept that I am truly evil.

PICARD

Because you are not.

ARMUS

I am a skin of evil.

PICARD

Nothing in the universe is the same as anything else -- but everything has light and dark.

ARMUS is SILENT.

PICARD

(continuing)

They did not leave you because they hated you. They didn't understand you.

ARMUS

You don't know that.

65 EXT. THE SHROUD (OPTICAL) (INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

Picard moves back a little bit from the shroud. The next actions happen almost simultaneously.

WORF

(checking his readings)

Energy shields are way down!

Computer is beginning transport.

65A INT. THE SHUTTLECRAFT (OPTICAL)

Ben and Troi begin the BEAM UP.

65B EXT. THE SHROUD

as Picard begins to BEAM UP. The ARMUS REACTS slightly late. All he can do is lean back his head and SHRIEK. He's been left again.

66 EXT. SHUTTLECRAFT (OPTICAL)

As the Enterprise uses PINPOINT PHASER POWER TO completely DESTROY THE SHUTTLE.

67 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as it LEAVES ORBIT of Vagra 2.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental. The shuttlecraft has been destroyed to prevent any possibility of Armus leaving the planet. Vagra 2 has been declared an off-limits planet, but the damage has been done. One of the saddest duties I have to perform is ahead of me.

68 INT. ENTERPRISE - PASTORAL AREA (OPTICAL)

It is set up as a kind of glade, filled with people who loved Tasha. The bridge crew FILES IN, one by one. Beverly ENTERS first. Troi is pale, and weak, but recovering. She leans on Riker, whose face still shows some effects of the shroud. Geordi and Worf COME IN, followed by Data. Wesley is leading them to their assigned seats.

68 CONTINUED:

WESLEY

(to Data)

This is where you're supposed to sit.

DATA

Why?

WESLEY

I don't know. The captain gave me a seating plan.

He sits down next to his mother, who smiles at him and puts her arm around him. He moves in closer to her, needing her comfort. Picard goes to the front. Everything is quiet.

PICARD

We are here together to honor our friend and comrade Lieutenant Natasha Yar. We will have much time to grieve for her in the days ahead, but for now, she has asked that we celebrate her life -- with her. She has left a living will.

He moves to sit in his assigned seat in the middle of the front row. The LIGHTS DIM. And as a HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE OF TASHA APPEARS in front of the group, there are gasps of surprise -- each of the bridge crew REACTS to the Image in front of them.

TASHA

Welcome, my friends. You are here now watching this image of me because I have died. It probably happened while I was on duty, and quickly, which is what I expected, and what I wanted. Never forget I died doing exactly what I chose to do.

As Tasha speaks, she looks out at the gathering as if she's really a part of it.

TASHA

(continuing)

What I want you to know is how much I loved my life... and each of you who shared it with me. You are my "family."

(MORE)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

TASHA (Cont'd)

Whoever I was before Starfleet,
where I came from, isn't
important. I have been blessed
with your friendship and your
love.

She looks directly at Riker.

TASHA

(continuing)

Will Riker, you are the best.
From the moment you beamed on
board, you never failed me. You
trusted me, you encouraged me
and most of all, you made me
laugh.

She smiles right at him and he can't help but smile
back. Troi holds his hand tightly.

TASHA

(continuing; looking
at Troi)

Deanna... you are capable of so
much love, you taught me without
ever having to say a word. I
realized I could be feminine
without losing anything --
something I never thought I could
achieve.

Troi wipes a tear from her cheek.

TASHA

(continuing; looking
at Worf)

Ah, Worf. I hope for your sake
I met death with my eyes open.
We are so much alike, you and
I, both warriors, orphans who
found ourselves this family.

Worf stares at her image, unbelieving and pained.

TASHA

(continuing; to Beverly)

My friend, Beverly. True to
yourself, your ideals. Your
fierce devotion comes from within.
It can't be diminished. From
you I have learned to strive for
excellence, no matter what the
personal cost.

68 CONTINUED: (3)

Beverly and Wesley hold tight to each other.

TASHA

(continuing; to Wesley)

Wesley, I'm sorry that I won't be able to see you grow into the exceptional man you'll be. But I have my vision of who you are and your kindness and innocence is ageless.

The Tasha hologram turns to face Geordi. Who knows how he sees her in this half-state?

TASHA

(continuing)

Geordi, in those moments I felt the most despair, you took my hand and made everything better. Your innate joy taught me to look beyond the moment.

Geordi looks down -- he can't bear to see/not see her.

TASHA

(continuing)

Mister Data. Android... automaton... robot.

(shakes her head)

No. You see things with the wonder of a child, and that makes you more human than any of us. I love you just the way you are.

The Tasha image turns to Picard.

TASHA

(continuing)

Captain Jean-Luc Picard. I can't say you've been like a father to me, because I never had one and I don't know what it feels like. But if I could choose someone in this universe to be like, someone who I would want to make proud of me, it's you. You who have the heart of an explorer and the soul of a poet. So you will understand when I say "Death is that state in which one exists only in the memory of others... which is why it is not an end."

(MORE)

68 CONTINUED: (4)

TASHA (Cont'd)

(beat)

No good-byes. Just "au revoir,"
my friends.

Picard waits a moment, and as Tasha's IMAGE FADES:

PICARD

Au revoir, Natasha.

He gets up before the group.

PICARD

(continuing)

The service is concluded.

As everyone FILES OUT, Data gets up and WALKS OVER to where the Tasha image was standing. He looks puzzled. Picard WALKS OVER to him.

DATA

Sir, the purpose of this gathering
has eluded me.

PICARD

Oh? How so?

DATA

My thoughts are not for Tasha,
but for myself. I keep thinking
how empty it will feel without
her presence. I missed the point.

PICARD

No, you didn't, Data. You got
it.

Picard TURNS AND WALKS OFF. WE PULL BACK, leaving Data
alone.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE
THE END