

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"Conspiracy"
#40271-125

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2ND REV. FINAL DRAFT

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STAR TREK: "Conspiracy" - 3/8/88 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Conspiracy"

CAST

PICARD	CAPTAIN WALKER KEEL
RIKER	TRYLA SCOTT
BEVERLY	CAPTAIN RIXX
DATA	ADMIRAL SAVAR
TROI	ADMIRAL AARON
WORF	ADMIRAL GREGORY QUINN
GEORDI	LT. COMMANDER DEXTER REMMICK
Voice-Over	Non-Speaking
COMPUTER VOICE	CEREMONIAL GUARD TRANSPORTER OPERATOR (EARTH)

STAR TREK: "Conspiracy" - 3/8/88 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Conspiracy"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

MAIN BRIDGE

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

SICKBAY

TRANSPORTER ROOM

CORRIDOR

OBSERVATION LOUNGE

QUINN'S GUEST QUARTERS

CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

GREAT HALL OF STARFLEET - EARTH

HALLWAY

RECEPTION AREA

DINING ROOM

TRANSMITTER ROOM

TRANSPORTER ROOM

MINING TUNNEL - DYTALLIX B

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

DYTALLIX B

STARFLEET HQ

EARTH

STAR TREK: "Conspiracy" - 3/8/88 - PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Conspiracy"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

TRYLA SCOTT	TRY-la
ADMIRAL SAVAR	suh-VAAR
DYTALLIX B	die-TAL-icks Bee
TAU CETI III	tow (rhymes with cow)
	- set-ee 3

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Conspiracy"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

sweeps by majestically at warp. WE CLEARLY SEE THE
REGISTRY NUMBER on her wing -- ten foot tall navy blue
letters reading NCC-1701D.

RIKER (V.O.)

First officer's log, stardate
41775.5. We are en route to the
ocean world known as Pacifica...

2 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

The mood is relaxed. RIKER is at Command with TROI
beside him. WORF'S at Security, DATA and GEORDI at Ops
and Conn.

RIKER (V.O.)

(continuing)

Our mission is routinely
scientific in nature. We look
forward to seeing the warm blue
waters and fine white beaches that
make Pacifica a treasured jewel
of the galaxy.

3 ANGLE ON DATA

intently listening to the punchline of a joke Geordi's
telling...

GEORDI

(grinning)

... So the guy staggers to his
feet and goes back to the girl.
She smiles, looks him right in
the eye and says "Just try that
in hyperspace!"

Geordi LAUGHS at his own joke, but Data is simply
reflective.

3 CONTINUED:

DATA

(thoughtful)

Ah, I see. So the difficulty in attaining such complex positioning in a zero gravity environment, coupled with the adverse effect it would have on the psychological well being of the average human male, is what makes this anecdote so amusing. Yes. Very humorous indeed. Hysterical, in fact.

The look on his friend's face tells Data that something is missing. Suddenly, he realizes what it is and bursts into STIFF, FORCED LAUGHTER. It comes out awkwardly and ends much too abruptly.

4 BACK TO WIDE ANGLE

Riker is smiling, having overheard.

RIKER

What's our e.t.a. at Pacifica, Mister La Forge?

GEORDI

Twenty two hours, fourteen minutes.

RIKER

Increase to warp six.

GEORDI

Aye sir.

RIKER

(to Troi, mischievous)

Think anyone'll mind if we arrive a little ahead of schedule?

TROI

(warm smile)

I know I won't. I've been looking forward to a nice swim.

4 CONTINUED:

DATA

You are aware Counselor, that the
Holodeck can be programed to
recreate an oceanic environment.

TROI

It's just not the same, Data.
Have you ever gone for a real
moonlight swim?

DATA

(deeply puzzled)
One can swim in moonlight?

Troi rolls her eyes and turns to Worf...

TROI

How about you, Worf?

WORF

(shaking head)
Swimming is too much like bathing.

DATA

-- Commander Riker.

Data is monitoring something, looking concerned...

DATA

(continuing)
I am receiving a Code Forty-Seven.

Riker frowns, instantly concerned...

RIKER

Verify.

Data rechecks his console...

DATA

(astounded)
It is a Code Forty-Seven, sir.
Starfleet emergency frequency.

Riker and Troi exchange worried glances...

TROI

Code Forty-Seven... Captain's eyes
only.

5 INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - SLOWLY MOVING TOWARD BED
(OPTICAL)

The room is DARK, Picard is sleeping. THE SCREEN by
his bed COMES TO LIFE, awakening the Captain...

RIKER

Riker on the bridge, Captain.
I'm sorry to disturb you.

Picard is still a bit groggy.

PICARD

What is it, Number One?

RIKER

An incoming message -- Code Forty
Seven, sir.

Picard REACTS to the news. He sits up in bed, wearing
a form-fitting sleepsuit (warm and extremely
comfortable).

PICARD

Pipe it through.

A YELLOW LIGHT above the screen FLASHES on and off
signifying that an urgent message is coming through.

6 OMITTED

7 ON SCREEN

RIKER'S IMAGE IS instantly REPLACED BY THE official
SEAL OF STARFLEET and the United Federation of Planets.
A FEMALE COMPUTER VOICE addresses Picard...

COMPUTER VOICE

This is an emergency communique.
It is not to be discussed with
fellow officers unless deemed
absolutely necessary. There will
be no computer record of said
transmission.

PICARD

Understood.

COMPUTER VOICE

Proceed with voice print
identification.

PICARD

Picard, Jean-Luc. Captain, USS
Enterprise.

7 CONTINUED:

The screen HUMS momentarily...

COMPUTER VOICE

Voice print verified.

The SEAL FADES OUT and a FACE FADES IN... It's the noble face of WALKER KEEL, a striking middle-aged man in a Starfleet captain's uniform. He is tall, with piercing grey eyes and long brown hair just going silver at the temples.

Picard is clearly shocked, though not displeased, to see him...

PICARD

(half-whisper)

Walker...

KEEL

Hello, Jean-Luc. Been a long time.

PICARD

Too long, my friend. Why are you contacting me on this frequency?

KEEL

It was a difficult decision. I felt it was worth the risk.

PICARD

Risk?!

KEEL

It's about Starfleet... about something we've always considered to be impossible.

8 MOVE IN ON PICARD

grimly stunned by his friend's powerful words...

9 OMITTED

10 INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - PICARD (CONTINUOUS ACTION)
(OPTICAL)

10 CONTINUED:

PICARD

I don't understand.

KEEL

I can't explain it now. We need to talk, face to face.

PICARD

You're using a Code Forty-Seven! I have to know what this is all about.

KEEL

Not over subspace. No.

PICARD

For God's sake Walker, you know this is a secure channel --

KEEL

-- No!

For the first time, Keel looks a little over the edge.

KEEL

(continuing)

I want you to meet me on Dytallix B.

PICARD

(thinking it over)

When?

KEEL

Immediately.

PICARD

Impossible. We're expected at Pacifica --

KEEL

-- That can wait.

Keel's face grows hard...

KEEL

(continuing)

You owe me. And you owe it to yourself to hear what I have to say.

Picard is flustered and thoroughly confused. Still, he is mesmerized by the bleak urgency in Walker's voice...

10 CONTINUED: (2)

KEEL
(continuing; slow,
measured)
Something's beginning... Have you
felt it?... Creeping out of the
woodwork...
(whisper)
An infestation.

10A BACK TO TWO SHOT

PICARD
What is?

Keel looks long and hard at Picard -- as though
studying his face for some reason.

KEEL
Don't trust anyone. Remember
that, Jean-Luc. Don't take
anything for granted.

PICARD
Walker --

KEEL
-- Dytallix B. We'll be waiting.

KEEL'S IMAGE VANISHES as he ends the transmission.
Picard is left staring at the BLANK SCREEN -- the
YELLOW LIGHT REFLECTING OFF HIS FACE.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

11 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

The same crew is on the bridge. Picard EXITS the turbolift and addresses them from the railing...

PICARD

(to Geordi)

Are you familiar with Dytallix B, Lieutenant?

GEORDI

Uh, well...

DATA

If I may, sir? Dytallix B is one of seven uninhabited worlds mined for the Federation by the Dytallix Mining Company. I believe B is in the nearby Mira system.

PICARD

Fine. Chart a course for it immediately, warp seven. And there will be no records or logs mentioning any aspect of this diversion.

RIKER

Captain, they're expecting us at Pacifica. Shouldn't we contact them to let them know --

PICARD

-- Negative, Will. Nothing goes out without specific orders from me.

12 ANGLE ON TROI

watching the captain, concerned.

PICARD (O.S.)

Hopefully our delay will be minimal.

13 BACK TO SHOT

The captain EXITS to the Ready Room without another word, leaving behind a concerned group of officers...

14 OMITTED

14A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

at warp.

15
thru OMITTED
16

17 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE - WORF AND GEORDI

at Conn and Ops, Riker in command, Data at Science One.

DATA

I have the readout on Dytallix
B, Commander.

RIKER

On screen.

18 ANGLE TO INCLUDE SCREEN

where a solar system CHART is laid out with the correct
planetary dimensions.

DATA

Dytallix B is the fifth of six
planets circling the red giant
known as Mira.

The CHART IS REPLACED BY a closer look at the
REDDISH-BROWN WORLD, Dytallix B.

DATA

(continuing)

One side always faces the sun --
where temperatures reach up to
one hundred and eighty degrees
Celsius. The mines line the
temperate zone between the day
and night sides, but they are
long deserted.

18 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Why the devil would we be going there? Are there any miners or indigenous life forms on the planet?

DATA

I believe the answer is negative to both questions, sir. In a manner of speaking, it is nothing but a lifeless hunk of rock, a useless ball of mud, a worthless chunk of --

RIKER

Thank you, Data. I get the idea.
(into com)
Captain, we're approaching Dytallix B.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Very good, Number One. I'm on my way.

19
thru OMITTED
20

20A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

coming out of warp.

21 OMITTED

22 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

as Picard ENTERS.

WORF

Captain, sensors are detecting three Federation starships already in orbit around the planet.

Picard raises his eyebrows in surprise...

PICARD

Identify.

22 CONTINUED:

WORF

Two are frigates: the Renegade
commanded by Tryla Scott, and the
Thomas Paine, Captain Rixx
commanding.

DATA

(studying his console)
The third is just coming into
range now, sir... It is an
Ambassador Class heavy cruiser...
The USS Horatio.

RIKER

Horatio?
(to Picard)
Isn't that Walker Keel's ship?

Picard looks at him but doesn't answer.

WORF

Attempts at communication have
been ignored by all three vessels.

PICARD

You will make no further attempts,
Mister Worf. Any life-form readings
on the surface, Mister Data?

DATA

Three sir. All gathered inside
what appears to be the entrance
to a mining tunnel.

PICARD

(moving toward
turbolift)
Very well. Relay those
coordinates to the Transporter
Room. I'm beaming down.

RIKER

(a bit alarmed)
Alone, Captain?

Picard ENTERS the lift and turns to face Riker...

PICARD

Alone, Number One.

The door slides SHUT, accentuating Picard's response.

23 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit around Dytallix B.

24 INT. MINING TUNNEL - PICARD (OPTICAL)

MATERIALIZES into a narrow shaft which opens out to the surface behind him. The entire TUNNEL IS BATHED IN VIVID RED SUNLIGHT from Mira. WE CAN HEAR THE WIND BLOWING like a hurricane outside.

24A PICARD'S P.O.V.

The tunnel is DARK and forboding.

24B BACK TO SHOT

As Picard moves forward, THREE FIGURES STEP OUT of the shadows.

KEEL (O.S.)

(monotone)

Good to see you, Jean-Luc. Thanks for coming.

25 ANGLE ON THE THREE FIGURES

as THEY STEP INTO THE LIGHT. Walker Keel is flanked by a HANDSOME BLACK WOMAN and a BLUE-SKINNED BOLIAN. Each is aiming a phaser directly at Picard's heart...

26 INT. THE TUNNEL - ON PICARD

under the barrel of the phasers.

PICARD

This is some greeting, "old friend."

Keel ignores the comment -- instead STEPPING FORWARD, empty hands at his sides...

KEEL

Tell me Jean-Luc -- where did we first meet?

Picard doesn't reply, thinking it ridiculous...

BOLIAN

(tense, waving gun)

Answer the question!

26 CONTINUED:

Picard remains cool -- a thin smile on his lips.

PICARD

On Tau Ceti III. It was a bar --
Quite an exotic one at that.

(looks at Bolian)

What do I win?

KEEL

Do you recall the night you
introduced Jack Crusher to
Beverly?

PICARD

You know full well I hadn't even
met Beverly then. You introduced
them.

KEEL

My brother introduced them.

PICARD

(losing patience)

You don't have a brother -- two
sisters, Anne and Melissa. Now
what the hell's this all about?!

Keel takes a deep breath and nods at the others.
Slowly, they lower their weapons...

RIXX

Apologies, Captain. We had to
make sure you were really you.

PICARD

Walker, what's going on?

KEEL

Captain Picard, meet Captains
Scott and Rixx.

The Bolian offers Picard his pale-blue hand...

PICARD

I believe we've met... The
Altairian conference?

Rixx smiles and bows slightly. At last he too is
convinced that Picard is Picard. Our captain turns
his gaze to the woman...

26 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD

Tryla Scott. It's said you made
captain faster than anyone in
Starfleet history, present company
included.

(pause)

Are you that good?

26 CONTINUED: (3)

TRYLA

Yes. I am.

Picard is impressed by her unblinking honesty. She comes off confident, not arrogant. Picard addresses all of them...

PICARD

Starfleet's finest.
(looks around shaft)
Fancy meeting you here.

RIXX

We all came secretly, Picard.
To discuss the threat.

PICARD

What threat?

TRYLA

Have you noticed anything about
Starfleet Command lately?
Anything unusual?

PICARD

(thinking about it)
No. We've been on the outer rim
for awhile. Haven't had much
contact with them.

The other captains look at one another. The RED
SUNLIGHT CASTS EERIE SHADOWS across their faces...

KEEL

Some of us have seen strange
patterns emerging. Unusual orders...
High-ranking officials backing
irrational proposals --

RIXX

-- Starbase twelve was completely
evacuated for two full days! No
explanation given.

TRYLA

And what about the deaths?
Mckinney... Ryan Sipe... Onna
Karapleedeez...

26 CONTINUED: (4)

PICARD
(quietly stunned)
All dead?

TRYLA
(nodding)
A series of "accidents".

KEEL
Or so they say; it's hard to be
certain of anything. Interfleet
communications are at a minimum.
But something is happening.

TRYLA
And we fully expect the Enterprise
to be targeted soon.

PICARD
(incredulous)
Targeted for what? By whom?

KEEL
We're not sure yet.

Picard is clearly skeptical. These people seem to be chasing shadows. Walker Keel addresses him with renewed intensity...

KEEL
(continuing)
Dammit Jean-Luc, I tell you that
some of Starfleet's top command
people are changing! This could
affect the very core of our
organization. Officers I've known
for years are bluffing their way
through talk of old times!

RIXX
That's their weakness! A lack
of memory.

Picard turns away, troubled by the picture they're painting.

TRYLA
(scornful)
He doesn't believe us. He thinks
we're crazy.

26 CONTINUED: (5)

PICARD

(turning, angry)

You've given me nothing to believe in! Just vague talk of wild schemes. Who's behind it, and for what purpose? How are people being changed?

KEEL

(softly)

I can't say exactly. But I think its spread to my own ship.

The WIND MOANS AND HOWLS outside the tunnel, ROCKS AND SAND CAN BE HEARD SCRAPING against the walls...

KEEL

(continuing)

My first officer hasn't been the same since we stopped off at Earth. Our medical officer says he's perfectly normal, but I don't think I trust him either.

PICARD

(exasperated)

Walker --

TRYLA

-- We know we don't have all the answers. All we ask is that you keep your eyes open.

PICARD

That's sound advice at any time, Captain.

KEEL

Stay in touch with us -- covertly. This meeting never took place as far as Starfleet is concerned.

Keel can tell that Picard is clearly uncomfortable with this.

KEEL

(continuing)

Please... I'm asking you as a personal favor.

Reluctantly, Picard gives a slight nod, indicating agreement. Keel grasps him warmly by the shoulders...

26 CONTINUED: (5)

KEEL

(continuing; warm,
intense)

I'm glad, Jean-Luc... Glad you're
still one of us.

Keel smiles sadly and steps back...

KEEL

(continuing)

Tell Beverly... I said hello.

RIXX

(sly smile)

And watch your back, Picard.

At this moment, the WIND REACHES ITS MOST VIOLENT PEAK
-- viciously assailing the mine shaft and adding
emphasis to the Bolian's words.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

27 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit.

28 INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM - PICARD AND TROI

TROI

It seems you're in turmoil.

PICARD

Friends... close friends, are few and far between. I'm a private man, Deanna. My Starfleet duties have shielded me from social circles. My two oldest and closest friends were Jack Crusher, may he rest in peace, and Walker Keel. Until various missions split us apart, we were almost inseparable.

(pause)

I trust Keel completely. If he felt it necessary to violate regulations, I know he must have a good reason.

TROI

And you are about to put your career at risk for him.

PICARD

Isn't that what friendship's all about, Counselor?

TROI

-- They illicitly used the emergency channel to draw you here. Then they asked you to keep secrets from your superiors. Effectively, to disobey Starfleet regulations.

28 CONTINUED:

PICARD

The people involved are all of the highest caliber. If I didn't believe in their loyalty, I wouldn't have gone this far.

TROI

Don't you think you should tell the rest of the crew?

PICARD

No. I won't risk implicating them. Not until we have solid evidence that something really is wrong.

29 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Riker at Command, Worf at Security, Data at Science One, Geordi and Wesley at Conn and Ops. The turbolift door OPENS and Picard and Troi ENTER the bridge.

PICARD

(moving to Command)

Take us out of orbit, Mister La Forge.

29 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Aye, sir.

PICARD

Resume heading to Pacifica, warp factor eight.

GEORDI

Aye sir, warp eight.

DATA

At that speed sir, we should arrive nine point six three hours behind the original schedule.

PICARD

Very well. Data, I have an assignment for you. One especially suited to your talents.

30 INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM - DATA (OPTICAL)
(FORMERLY "DATA'S QUARTERS")

is staring at a computer terminal with a gleam in his yellow eyes. He sits down in front of it and almost lovingly touches its top...

DATA

Computer -- this is Lieutenant Commander Data. Access all Starfleet Command orders to starships, starbases and colonies, for the past six months.

COMPUTER VOICE

Working.

The screen begins to HUM and the ORDERS FLASH before Data's eyes. For anyone but him, this could take months to sift through.

31 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

Beverly ENTERS and walks to Picard...

BEVERLY

(serious)

I understand the Horatio was in orbit around Dytallix. Did you see Walker?

31 CONTINUED:

Picard thinks before answering.

PICARD

Yes. He asked me to say hello
to you.

BEVERLY

I would have liked to have seen
him --

PICARD

(stern)

-- That wasn't possible, Doctor.

There's an awkward silence between the two of them.
The memory of Jack Crusher is intrinsically linked with
Walker Keel. Old wounds are easily reopened...

WORF

(puzzled)

Captain... I'm picking up an
unusual disturbance in a nearby
quadrant.

GEORDI

Confirmed, sir. Sector
sixty-three.

PICARD

Specify. What kind of
disturbance?

WORF

Hard to say at this distance,
Captain.

Picard looks to his first officer, who breaks into a
small smile...

RIKER

I suppose Pacifica can wait a
little longer.

PICARD

Yes. Let's investigate. Maintain
speed and alter course
accordingly.

GEORDI

Aye sir, changing course to
three-five-one mark four.

32 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

A flyby at warp as she moves toward the spot of the disturbance.

33 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

GEORDI

Approaching Sector sixty-three,
sir.

PICARD

Slow to impulse, Mister La Forge.

GEORDI

Aye sir, slowing to impulse.

WORF

Sensors beginning to pick up small
objects, Captain.

PICARD

On screen.

34 SWITCH TO ANGLE FAVORING SCREEN (OPTICAL)

where WE CAN SEE SMALL BOULDER-SIZED THINGS floating
toward us...

RIKER

Doesn't look natural.

PICARD

(concerned)

Agreed.

(to Worf)

Enlarge and identify.

WORF

(checking scanners)

It looks like... debris.

(looking up, surprised)

From a space vessel of some kind.

RIKER

It could be one of the ships that
was orbiting Dytallix.

GEORDI

Agreed, sir. This sector is
in close proximity to that planet.

35 ANGLE ON WORF

PICARD (O.S.)
Any identifying marks, Worf?

WORF
(checking scanners)
Nothing so far... Sensors not
detecting any bodies in the
flotsam... but judging from the
amount of wreckage...

36 BACK TO WIDE ANGLE

as Worf looks up at the captain, speaking hesitantly.

WORF
... I'm sorry sir.
(pause)
It can only be the Horatio. She's
been totally destroyed.

37 MOVE IN ON BEVERLY AND PICARD

both deeply shocked by the news...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

A38 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

through space on impulse.

38 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - TRACKING SHOT

SLOWLY CIRCLING THE TABLE where Picard and Riker are seated.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's personal log, stardate 41776.1. The death of my friend Walker Keel, has had a powerful impact on me. I now believe there may be a cancer growing within the ranks of Starfleet.

39 MOVING IN ON PICARD

at the head of the table.

PICARD (V.O.)

(continuing)

I've decided to alert my executive officer to the suspicions voiced by Keel and the other two captains.

RIKER

There is no proof of anything.

PICARD

The last time I saw Admiral Quinn he tried to warn me of a subversion inside the Federation. Then Walker tried, and now he's dead.

RIKER

Subversion? Personally I don't believe in conspiracy theories.

39A OMITTED

40 INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM - DATA (OPTICAL)
(FORMERLY "DATA'S QUARTERS")

is still glued to the console. As the information on the screen passes by, we can sense his growing concern and fascination...

DATA

Startling. Quite extraordinary, in fact.

COMPUTER VOICE

Directions unclear. Please repeat request.

DATA

That was not a request. I was simply... talking to myself.

(smiles, pleased)

A human idiosyncrasy triggered by fascination with a particular set of facts. Or sometimes brought about by senility. Or, used as a means of weighing information before reaching a conclusion. Or, as a --

COMPUTER VOICE

-- Thank you, sir. I comprehend.

41 CLOSE ON DATA

taken aback. Even the computer has learned to interrupt when he is rambling.

COMPUTER VOICE

Continuing with record scan.

Data leans forward as the renewed flow of INFORMATION ON THE SCREEN REFLECTS OFF HIS FACE...

DATA

Intriguing.

42 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - BACK TO THE OFFICERS
(FORMERLY "BRIEFING ROOM")

sitting around the table.

42 CONTINUED:

PICARD

I do not think the explosion of the Horatio was an accident. It was sabotage.

RIKER

But we can't be certain.

DATA (O.S.)

Perhaps we can.

43 ANGLE ON DATA

all eyes turning to him as he ENTERS the room. He looks toward Picard for permission to speak. Picard grants it with a nod.

DATA

My orders were to search for abnormal patterns in Starfleet's directives. I believe I have found just that.

44 WIDE ANGLE FAVORING DATA (INCLUDES SCENE 45)
(OPTICAL)

as he ACTIVATES THE SCREEN. WE SEE a layout of part of THE GALAXY which includes Earth, with certain Starbases and defense posts HIGHLIGHTED IN GLOWING RED...

DATA

These are various outposts and starbases where I have detected unusual activity over the past few months.

PICARD

What sort of activity?

DATA

An unc customary reshuffling of personnel, usually in the command areas. The new officers have had abnormally frequent contact with the highest levels of Starfleet Command.

44 CONTINUED:

RIKER

(concerned)

Why hasn't anybody noticed this before?

DATA

The orders were given with great subtlety. To use an aphorism, Starfleet's left hand did not know what its right hand was doing.

PICARD

Can you speculate as to the purpose of these reassignments?

DATA

I believe it is a clandestine attempt to control vital sectors of Federation territory.

A stillness hangs over the room as the implications of Data's bold statement sinks in...

RIKER

It could be a prelude to invasion. But who's behind it?

DATA

There is insufficient data to make such an assesment.

RIKER

What do you suggest we do, warp over to Starfleet headquarters and demand to know what's going on?

DATA

Why not?!

PICARD

Yes...

(thoughtful pause)

... Why not indeed?

44 CONTINUED: (2)

All eyes turn to Picard to see if he's serious.

PICARD

(continuing)

We're talking about a threat to the entire future of the Federation. I don't think any of us can rest easy until we've gone to the source.

45
thru OMITTED
46

47 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

at warp speed.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's personal log, supplemental. We have altered course and are traveling toward Earth. I have apprised the remaining bridge crew of our situation.

48 OMITTED

49 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - ON RIKER

as he ENTERS and walks to Command, where Picard is seated in the Command Chair. Troi stands by the railing, while Data and Geordi man Ops and Conn. Worf stands at Security.

GEORDI

Approaching Earth, sir.

PICARD

Standard orbit, Mister La Forge.

GEORDI

Standard orbit, sir.

PICARD

Any word from Starfleet Command, Mister Data?

DATA

Nothing so far, sir.

PICARD

Strange...

49A EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

going into orbit around Earth.

50
thru OMITTED
51

52 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

DATA

I have a message coming in from
Starfleet Command, Captain.

Picard and Riker exchange glances. This is a moment
they've been thinking about for three days.

PICARD

On screen.

CROSSCUTTING FROM BRIDGE TO VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

where a trio of admirals APPEAR. SAVAR (suh-vaar) is a
regal Vulcan. AARON is old and lean -- hollow cheeks
and cold, piercing eyes, beneath a shock of white hair.
QUINN looks much the same as he did in "Coming Of Age."

The three senior admirals are seated at an impressive
looking table with a Starfleet banner on the wall
behind them. Throughout this sequence, Savar always
speaks with the calm, cool rationality we expect from a
Vulcan...

SAVAR

Greetings Enterprise. I am
Admiral Savar. This is Admiral
Aaron, and I believe you know
Admiral Quinn.

53 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Yes. Good to see you again,
Admiral.

QUINN

(smiling)

And you, Captain.

SAVAR

Of course. We are always delighted
when the Enterprise returns to
the nest. Yet we are puzzled by
the timing of your visit.

PICARD

Yes sir, I can imagine you would
be.

AARON

(harsh sounding)

Governor Delaplaine of Pacifica
informs us that you canceled your
scheduled stop there. Is this
true?

PICARD

It is, sir.

AARON

Explain yourself, Captain. Why
have you returned to Earth?

PICARD

That... is something I'd rather
discuss in person, Admiral.

Lieutenant Commander Dexter Remmick ENTERS the room,
walks to Savar and WHISPERS something in his ear.

SAVAR

Please excuse us a moment,
Captain.

The SCREEN GOES TO THE STARFLEET LOGO.

RIKER

They seem normal enough.

PICARD

On the surface. Any thoughts
counselor?

53 CONTINUED: (2)

TROI

Hard to say, sir. I sense that someone is hiding something, but I can't tell who or what.

RIKER

I can't say I'm overjoyed to see Remmick again.

GEORDI

Considering what we've done, their response has been pretty temperate.

WORF

I don't like it, Captain. We can't trust --

Worf cuts off in mid-sentence as THE THREE ADMIRALS REAPPEAR ON SCREEN. Remmick is gone.

SAVAR

Forgive the delay, Captain Picard. We'd be delighted if you and your first officer would join us for dinner.

AARON

Yes. Delighted.

SAVAR

This should give you a good opportunity to expatiate your viewpoint.

AARON

(nodding)

To elaborate upon whatever it is that's troubling you.

PICARD

(smiling after a brief hesitation)

We accept your gracious offer.

SAVAR

Excellent. Preparations are already underway.

AARON

We'll greet you in the reception area in say... twenty minutes?

PICARD

Fine.

53 CONTINUED: (3)

QUINN

I, uh, won't be able to attend the dinner I'm afraid. But I would like to see the ship and say hello again, Captain.

PICARD

Of course. Looking forward to seeing you. Enterprise out.

54 ON SCREEN

a view of the EARTH from orbit REPLACES THE ADMIRALS.

55 CLOSE ON PICARD

PICARD

(quietly to Riker)

Quinn wants to see us alone -- at least we know he's still on our side.

56 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM ON EARTH - A MAN

is about to step onto the platform. WE CANNOT SEE who he is. We barely glimpse the living thing he places inside the small briefcase he is carrying. Looking something like an oversized silverfish, it wriggles violently just before he shuts the case. A door OPENS and Remmick ENTERS and addresses the man (who we still cannot identify).

REMMICK

Are you ready to beam up to the Enterprise sir?

57 PULL BACK TO SEE THAT QUINN

is the man.

QUINN

Yes, Commander, quite ready.

Briefcase in hands, Quinn STEPS ONTO the platform.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

A58 OMITTED

58 INT. ENTERPRISE TRANSPORTER ROOM - PICARD AND RIKER
(OPTICAL)

are awaiting the arrival of Admiral Quinn. He MATERIALIZES and steps off the platform. Quinn's warm smile is in marked contrast to the cold businesslike look he had on Earth.

59 OMITTED

60 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (CONTINUOUS ACTION)

PICARD

Welcome aboard, Greg. You remember Commander Riker.

QUINN

(warmly)

Yes, hello again Commander.

The old admiral shakes Rikers hand vigorously. Something begins to strike Picard as slightly odd, but he masks his feelings...

PICARD

I must say, you're looking well.

QUINN

Never felt better in my life.

PICARD

Last time we met you told me how tired you'd been feeling.

QUINN

(laughing)

Tired of life, I was. But not anymore. I look forward to new challenges now.

(pats Picard on the back)

I'd sure like to see some more of the ship.

60 CONTINUED:

Picard shoots Riker a quick glance.

61 INT. CORRIDOR - TRACKING SHOT - RIKER AND PICARD

flank the admiral as they WALK down the hallway. He is taking in the architecture with wide-eyed appreciation...

PICARD

Remember what you told me back at Relva 7? About the threat you perceived to the very fabric of the Federation?

62 ANGLE FAVORING QUINN

as he STOPS in his tracks. He gives both officers a long look before breaking into a slow smile...

QUINN

Is that why you're here? Because of what I said?

PICARD

That's one of the reasons.

QUINN

(grinning broadly)

Jean-Luc! You took me far too literally. I was only referring to the difficulty involved in assimilating new races into the Federation.

63 REACTION SHOT OF RIKER AND PICARD

QUINN (O.S.)

It's an ongoing and tumultuous process that can cause stress and strain on all aspects of our alliance.

PICARD

(quietly)

I'm sorry... I must have misunderstood.

64 BACK TO SHOT

QUINN

(boisterous)

I'm the one who should be
apologizing.

(chuckles)

If I led you down the garden path,
I humbly ask forgiveness.

PICARD

(softly, thoughtful)

Of course.

Quinn BEGINS TO WALK AGAIN. Picard and Riker FOLLOW
suit.

QUINN

Now gentlemen, I believe you have
a dinner to attend, while I would
like to freshen up a bit before
looking around some more.

RIKER

We have a guest accommodation at
your disposal, sir.

QUINN

Outstanding.

PICARD

(still a bit dazed)

I should be getting down to the
planet. Commander Riker will be
at your disposal to show you
anything you'd like to see.

Riker and Quinn both seem surprised to hear this...

QUINN

That's really not necessary --

PICARD

-- I insist.

(to Riker)

You can join me on Earth when the
admiral's tour is completed.

QUINN

I may want to stay a while,
Jean-Luc.

64 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(eyes narrowing)

Of course, Admiral. Stay as long
as you wish.

65 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM - PICARD AND RIKER (OPTICAL)

ENTER together.

PICARD

(adamant)

That's not Gregory Quinn. He may
look like him and sound like
him... but it isn't him.

RIKER

Can you be absolutely certain,
sir.

PICARD

I am certain, Number One. I want
you to go back to that cabin and
keep your eye on his every move.
Have Beverly concoct a reason for
a complete medical examination.

RIKER

How?

PICARD

I don't care how! Just do it!
Use force if necessary.

RIKER

He's a senior admiral.

PICARD

(grasping Riker's
shoulders)

It's not him, Will. I know that
now. What we need to find out
is how he's been duplicated.

(pause)

And who or what's behind it.

Picard hands Riker his phaser and STEPS UP onto the
platform. Riker goes to the transporter controls.

RIKER

Captain... if you're right --

65 CONTINUED:

PICARD

-- I am right.

RIKER

-- Should you be beaming down
alone? Unarmed?

PICARD

I'll take care. Find out what
you can, and then join me -- in
force if you believe it's
warranted.

(nods at Riker)

Energize.

Riker calls out as the captain BEGINS TO DEMATERIALIZE.

RIKER

Good luck, sir.

Riker stares at the empty spot where Picard just stood,
wondering when he'll see him again.

66 EXT. STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS (OPTICAL)

ESTABLISHING SHOT.

67 INT. GREAT HALL OF STARFLEET (OPTICAL)

Picard MATERIALIZES into the impressive hallway. Savar
and Aaron are there to greet him. LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
DEXTER REMMICK stands in the background, but the hall
seems strangely empty...

SAVAR

Welcome home, Captain Picard.

PICARD

Thank you, sir. My first officer
will be joining us shortly.

SAVAR

Yes, I'm sure he will.

Picard thinks this an odd line.

AARON

You've met Commander Remmick,
haven't you?

67 CONTINUED:

Picard nods toward Remmick...

REMMICK

(soft, friendly)

Under less than ideal
circumstances. It is nice to see
you again, Captain.

Savar and Aaron lead Picard down the hall, with
Remmick a few strides behind.

SAVAR

I hope you have a healthy
appetite. We've prepared a
special meal in your honor.

PICARD

I'm honored.

(pause)

Tell me, why is it so quiet here?
The last time I saw this corridor
it was bustling with activity.

REMMICK

It often is. Tonight's a quiet
night.

SAVAR

Yes, a quiet night.

68 CLOSE ON PICARD

feeling that this is a very strange conversation.

69 BACK TO SHOT

AARON

Let's have some Andonian tea while
we wait for your Riker. Then you
can tell us what's brought you here.

PICARD

I see you keep up with our duty
roster.

AARON

(cool smile)

Of course, Captain. The
Enterprise is very important to
us.

70 EXT. SPACE - EARTH SEEN FROM ORBIT (OPTICAL)

the Enterprise slowly COMES INTO FRAME, crossing between us and the Earth as she continues to orbit.

71 INT. QUINN'S GUEST QUARTERS - QUINN

is sitting on the sofa, blankly staring into his slightly opened briefcase. Riker ENTERS, catching him off guard...

RIKER

Ready for your tour, Admiral?

Quinn quickly stands, but Riker has seen the briefcase...

QUINN

Quite ready, Commander.

RIKER

What's in the case?

From where he stands, Riker can barely see a few delicate-looking tendrils coming out of its opening... He looks at the Admiral somewhat suspiciously...

QUINN

(thoughtful)

Actually... I brought this for Doctor Crusher. But perhaps you'd like you to see it first?

RIKER

(slowly moving closer)

What is it?

QUINN

A form of life. Discovered quite accidentally by a survey team on a distant uncharted planet.

RIKER

Why haven't we heard anything about that?

QUINN

Oh, you'll be hearing more about it shortly. But first there is much scientific study to be done. After all, this is a superior lifeform.

71 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Superior?

QUINN

Totally.

(voice grows hard)

Now come, Riker. Take a good
look.

Riker stands where he is, uncertain of what to do.

RIKER

I think I'll summon our science
officer --

QUINN

It won't like your science
officer. It likes you.(rises, grabs Riker's
arm)

Now look!

Riker looks down at his arm and grimaces; Quinn is squeezing it with tremendous force. Riker grasps the old man's wrist and tries to pull it off him... he can't.

QUINN

(dark smile)

Vitamins. They do wonders for
the body.

RIKER CRIES OUT -- it feels like Quinn is crushing his arm. Unable to break free, HE RAISES HIS OTHER ARM TO STRIKE the admiral. Riker's BLOW IS BLOCKED and QUINN responds by effortlessly THROWING HIM backwards toward the wall. The FIRST OFFICER hits it at breakneck speed and CRUMPLES TO THE FLOOR, severely dazed...

QUINN

(dry -- evil smile)

Ahh, your life is so painful now.
But soon you'll be one of us.

Before Riker can clear his head, QUINN ATTACKS again -- rapping him across the chin WITH A KARATE KICK. Riker staggers to his feet -- Quinn swings from the heels with a sure knockout blow... RIKER DUCKS under it and puts all his weight behind a powerful PUNCH to THE ADMIRAL'S solar plexus.

71 CONTINUED: (2)

For a moment, Quinn seems affected, sucking in his stomach and gasping for air... But it quickly passes and he straightens and smiles at a disbelieving Riker, before DEALING HIM A vicious double fisted BACKHAND.

Riker hits his communicator.

RIKER

(pained, weak)

Riker to Security. Emergency --

QUINN'S final blow KNOCKS RIKER OUT before he can say another word...

72 INT. ENTERPRISE CORRIDOR - WORF AND GEORDI

run down the corridor.

72A OMITTED

73 EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS (OPTICAL)

74 INT. RECEPTION ROOM OUTSIDE DINING ROOM - PICARD

Aaron and Savar are all holding glasses filled with amber colored liquid. Remmick continues to quietly look on from a distance...

PICARD

I'd like to begin the discussion of why I'm here.

AARON

In time Captain, in time. First, a toast.

Aaron and Savar raise their glasses... Finally, Picard does the same.

AARON

To the Horatio, gentlemen.

SAVAR

The Horatio.

The captain warily clinks glasses with the others. They sip the liquid, but Picard simply lowers his glass...

AARON

(faintly sarcastic)

What an awful tragedy. Such a terrible loss of life.

PICARD

It's interesting you mention the Horatio. That's one of the things I wanted to discuss.

AARON

(dry)

Really?

PICARD

Has the cause of her destruction been ascertained?

SAVAR

Absolutely.

(looking straight at Picard)

Implosion, due to extreme negligence on the part of her captain.

74 CONTINUED:

Picard wants to cry out in defense of Keel, but he realizes that would be a foolish thing to do at the moment. Aaron gleefully senses his discomfort...

AARON

Drink up, Picard. I believe you'll find it an excellent aperitif.

75 INT. QUINN'S QUARTERS - QUINN (OPTICAL)

is sitting calmly on the sofa with the unconscious Riker at his feet when the door OPENS. Worf and Geordi BOLT IN.

QUINN

It's good that you're here. He slipped and hit his head.

GEORDI

(into intercom)

This is Lieutenant La Forge in Guest Quarter Sixteen. We have a possible medical emergency.

QUINN

Your Doctor Crusher is most capable; I'm sure he'll be all right. Now if you'll excuse me, my time here is limited...

Quinn MOVES TOWARD THE DOOR, but Geordi blocks his path. Quinn looks to Worf as though he's about to question what is going on, then quickly flies into action, LEAPING TOWARD GEORDI. The blind man BACKPEDDLES, FIRING HIS PHASER directly into the old Admiral's chest.

Quinn halts, temporarily. Then Geordi and Worf are stunned to see Quinn BRUSH OFF THE EFFECTS OF THE PHASER with a simple shake of his head. With amazing quickness, HE LIFTS GEORDI AND brutally THROWS HIM into the door. GEORDI GOES OUT the door and HITS THE FLOOR, unconscious.

This leaves Quinn and Worf to face off over a gaggle of comatose bodies...

QUINN

(evil smile)

Come on, Klingon. It's just you and me now...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

76 INT. QUINN'S QUARTERS - WORF AND QUINN (OPTICAL)

are about to fight it out. Quinn is savagely smug and barely breathing hard after mopping the floor with Geordi and Riker. Worf must get over the shock of seeing an old man with the strength of ten.

The Klingon psyches himself up and CRIES OUT LIKE A WARRIOR as he makes a move on Quinn. WORF THROWS A PUNCH that would knock the head off Mike Tyson... It lands squarely on Quinn's chin, jerking his head to the side.

Worf can't believe his eyes when QUINN'S HEAD SNAPS BACK INTO PLACE -- the Admiral is smiling, seemingly unaffected by the punch.

QUINN

Do Klingons fear death as much
as humans? I could snap your neck
in a second, but that wouldn't
be as much fun.

QUINN GRABS WORF'S STOMACH -- his hands digging deep into the flesh. WORF BELLOWS in pain as QUINN LIFTS HIM off the ground by his stomach muscles. The old man's strength is mind-boggling.

Suddenly a PHASER BLAST HITS QUINN dead on. Mildly stunned but still standing, he lets go of Worf and turns to face his new adversary.

77 ANGLE ON BEVERLY

standing in the doorway, phaser in hand.

78 ANGLE TO INCLUDE QUINN (OPTICAL)

disregarding Worf and moving toward her. SHE FIRES AGAIN... Halted for an instant, HE MOVES FORWARD... SHE FIRES AGAIN... Though slowed, HE KEEPS COMING... SHE FIRES AGAIN... He stiffens, the phaser blasts are starting to take a toll -- he still moves forward, nearing her now.

78 CONTINUED:

Beverly fires again and again, DRIVING HIM TO HIS KNEES. WORF'S FIST FLIES INTO FRAME, catching the side of Quinn's head with a powerful smash. QUINN SLUMPS to the ground, incapacitated at last.

Beverly and Worf are breathing hard, shellshocked by the battle. Quinn lies quivering at their feet -- his metabolism racing crazily even though he's unconscious.

Geordi is coming around.

WORF

Are you all right?

GEORDI

(groaning)

If I could see... I'd be seeing stars.

Geordi sits up. Behind him, Beverly is kneeling over the unconscious Riker. Worf indicates the twitching admiral lying before them. The Klingon rubs his sore stomach and speaks with detectable awe...

WORF

Who... what is he?

Beverly stares at "Quinn" before answering.

BEVERLY

Let's find out.

79 INT. SICKBAY - QUINN

lies on a Sickbay bed. Riker can be seen lying unconscious on a bed in the background. Beverly stands over Quinn with Worf and Geordi beside her...

BEVERLY

(disturbed)

Retinal scans are an exact match
... It really is Quinn!

GEORDI

How can that be? He picked me
up like a rag doll.

80 ANGLE FAVORING QUINN

tossing his head back and forth in restless sleep.
Beverly administers a hypo before he can reawaken.
He calms down a bit, his head resting on its side.

BEVERLY

I'm going to run a complete
internal scan.

GEORDI

Keep me posted, Doctor. I'll
be on the bridge.

Geordi EXITS. Beverly is transfixed by something she
spots on the back of Quinn's neck...

BEVERLY

(to Worf)

What is this?

It's a small blue splinter-like thing protruding
slightly from the base of the neck...

Beverly leans down to get a closer look... She
hesitantly reaches forward to touch it... and it moves!

81 INT. RECEPTION AREA, EARTH - PICARD

and the two admirals are still waiting to enter the
dining room.

AARON

(trace of a smile)

What do you know of conspiracies,
Captain?

PICARD

(surprised by the
question)

Not nearly enough I suppose.

AARON

But that's the charming thing
about them, isn't it? When a
machination is real, no one knows
about it. And when it's
suspected, it's almost never real.

81 CONTINUED:

SAVAR

Except of course, in the paranoid delusions of those who believe.

The dining room doors swing OPEN and Remmick STEPS OUT and addresses them...

REMMICK

Sorry to interrupt. Dinner is served.

AARON

Wonderful! Bantering with the captain has given me quite an appetite.

They start to move toward the dining room, but Picard lingers in the hallway...

PICARD

I'd like to contact my ship. To inform Commander Riker that we're ready to sit down.

Aaron is about to object to this but Savar cuts him off, nodding graciously...

SAVAR

Of course, Captain. We'll wait for you at the table.

Picard waits until the two admirals have gone inside, before activating his communicator. He speaks in hushed tones with one eye on the dining room door...

PICARD

Picard to Riker.

82 INT. SICKBAY (INTERCUT AS NEEDED) - RIKER

is still dead to the world. Beverly answers for him...

BEVERLY

Doctor Crusher here, Captain. May I speak freely?

PICARD

(looking around)
I suppose we have no choice. Where's Riker?

82 CONTINUED:

BEVERLY

He was attacked by Quinn. Or what
We thought was Quinn.

PICARD

Specify, Doctor.

83 ANGLE TO SEE QUINN (OPTICAL)

resting fitfully on the bed -- and a large diagram of
his body on the medical screen above it. WE CAN SEE
A STRANGE INSECT-LIKE ANIMAL IS LIVING INSIDE HIM.
It's tendrils have wrapped themselves around the stem
of Quinn's brain.

BEVERLY

A parasitic being has invaded his
body. It has complete control
over all brain functions. It
seems to breath through a small
"gill" protruding through the back
of Quinn's neck. Look for this,
Captain. I believe it will be
visible on anyone who has been
compromised.

PICARD

Any idea what it is or where it
comes from?

BEVERLY

Negative. I've never seen
anything like it before.

WE HEAR GEORDI'S INTERCOM VOICE summoning Worf to the
bridge.

GEORDI'S COM VOICE

Lieutenant Worf. If the situation
is under control, we could use
you on the bridge.

BEVERLY

(looks to Worf)

It's okay. He won't be waking
up for a long time.

Worf EXITS, leaving Beverly alone with the unconscious
forms of Quinn and Riker.

PICARD

Continue, Doctor.

83 CONTINUED:

BEVERLY

By the placement of the tendrils,
the parasite appears to stimulate
the vicim's adrenal glands which
generate great strength and
resistance to --

PICARD

-- Spare me the medical details,
Doctor. Just tell me if you can
remove it.

BEVERLY

Not without killing the patient.

Unseen by Beverly, Riker bolts upright in the bed
behind her. Wild-eyed and seemingly disoriented, he
slowly begins to rise...

BEVERLY

You must set your phaser on kill,
Captain. Stun has little effect --

PICARD

Doctor, one does not beam into
Starfleet Headquarters armed.

Just then, Remmick EXITS the dining room and walks by
Picard...

REMMICK

(as he passes)

Your food is getting cold,
Captain.

PICARD

About to go to dinner now, Doctor.
Have Riker join me when he's
available. Picard out.

Beverly is anxious and doesn't want to terminate the
conversation. Riker is moving up behind her... She
turns and GASPS just as he puts his hand on her
shoulder --

84 INT. DINING ROOM - PICARD (OPTICAL)

is seated across from Aaron and Savar at a polished black table. Three other settings are unattended -- in front of each is a silver bowl-like covering that conceals the entree.

A ceremonial guard lines the wall beside the table...

AARON

Go ahead and start, Captain. We don't stand on ceremony around here.

Picard removes the lid and is repulsed to find a plate full of squirming worm-like things -- moving around like living spaghetti.

Picard quickly pushes his plate away and watches in abstract horror as Savar and Aaron greedily use their hands to down their portions of the same living meal.

The Guard MOVES FORWARD and wolfs down a bowl of the stuff.

AARON

(continuing)

Oh do eat up, Picard. Just raise your hand if you want seconds.

The admirals and the guards laugh salaciously. The sight of a Vulcan giggling as he chews on live worms is too much for Picard to bear.

Jumping to his feet, he turns and runs right into Number One. Riker roughly shoves the captain back into his seat.

RIKER

You're not going anywhere.

Picard closes his eyes in dull shock as Aaron walks to Riker and reveals the blue splinter on the back of Riker's neck...

RIKER

(continuing;
to Picard)

You'll be one of us soon.

Riker nods at the others as he sits down at the table.

AARON

(angry)

You were meant for the doctor.

84 CONTINUED:

RIKER

It couldn't be helped. Riker
walked in on us unexpectedly.

SAVAR

No matter. The doctor will soon
be joining us. All in good time.

A door OPENS and Tryla Scott WALKS IN and takes her
place at the table.

SAVAR

Ah, Captain Scott. Good, the
setting is now complete.

It's a bitter blow to Picard when her evil smile lets
him know that she's been one of them all along. She
takes a strand of "live spaghetti" and delicately gulps
it down.

AARON

(to Picard)

You didn't really think we were
in the dark about your intentions,
did you?

SAVAR

Patience is one of our virtues,
Captain. Instead of going after
you, we allowed you to come to
us.

AARON

More dramatic this way, don't you
think?

TRYLA

Yes... one thing both races share
is a love of theatre. And you've
put on a fine show.

PICARD

(shellshocked)

What exactly is your race? Where
do you come from?

SAVAR

It's not important. Let's just
say... we've come a long way to
join you.

84 CONTINUED: (2)

TRYLA

(grinning)

It's a perfect match. We're the
brains and you're the brawn.

RIKER

(cold)

You'll understand soon, Picard.

SAVAR

Indeed. We've been moving slowly,
cautiously, for many months now.
Careful to cover our tracks.
Careful not to arouse suspicion,
until it's too late.

RIKER

(to Picard)

And it is too late. For you, that
is.

AARON

Well said, brother. Picard and
Riker control the Enterprise.
Which means we control the
Enterprise.

Dejected, Picard watches as Riker removes the lid and
takes a big handful of living spaghetti. He tilts his
head back and prepares to swallow it.

SAVAR

(smiling)

Eat hearty, brother! Relish your
new body!

Just as the worms are about to touch his tongue, RIKER
shocks everyone by PULLING A PHASER AND FIRING at the
guard. HE quivers before DROPPING like a fly.

Tryla fires at Riker and misses. Picard seizes the
moment, grabbing the phaser from the unconscious
Guard. Aaron pushes Picard to the ground and BOLTS
FOR THE DOOR. Before Picard can pivot to pick him off,
TRYLA SCOTT JUMPS UP AND takes aim on him. SHE FIRES,
barely missing his head. RIKER CUTS HER DOWN before
she can fire again. Scott quivers and drops. A
PARASITE quickly FLEES her open mouth...

84 CONTINUED: (3)

Meanwhile, Savar has charged Riker and has him in a death grip around the throat. PICARD FIRES INTO THE VULCAN'S BACK...

The VULCAN drops to his knees, finally releasing his grip. He falls over, dead.

Still holding his throat, Riker reaches back and removes the counterfeit splinter from his neck. Suddenly, both he and Picard have the same thought...

PICARD

Aaron!

85 INT. GREAT HALLWAY - AARON (OPTICAL)

is desperate, running straight toward us down the long hallway. Far behind, Picard and Riker come around a corner and take aim...

RIKER

(calling out)

Hold it, Aaron!

Aaron spins and FIRES -- Picard and Riker dive out of the way. The Admiral keeps running... he's almost at the end of the hall... RIKER AND PICARD FIRE, scoring two direct hits. AARON WINCES AND GOES DOWN. His momentum sends him sliding along the smooth floor.

86 ANGLE ON PICARD AND RIKER (OPTICAL)

running up to the body. They get there just in time to see the PARASITE evacuating it. Before they can fire, it SCURRIES AROUND THE CORNER and out of sight.

PICARD

(to Riker)

Come on!

87 INT. ANOTHER SECTION OF HALLWAY - PICARD AND RIKER

cautiously turn the corner. In the distance, they see the CREATURE SLITHER UNDER A DOOR...

Hurrying to the door, they give each other a long look, knowing that anything could be behind it. At last, Riker touches a wall panel and the door slides OPEN...

88 ANGLE INTO THE ROOM

where Remmick is tapping on an unknown object similar to a typewriter. A HIGH-PITCHED BEEPING SOUND is emanating from it... Remmick looks up at Riker and Picard, his face a mask of calm innocence.

REMMICK

Can I help you, gentlemen?

Picard and Riker aren't sure just what to make of this. Remmick seems so placid and unconcerned.

REMMICK

Is there any trouble? Perhaps
if you'd tell me what it is --

PICARD

-- Remmick!

Picard is pointing to a PARASITE that is beginning to CLIMB UP REMMICK'S LEG. Riker raises his phaser, preparing to fire on it, but Picard blocks that with his forearm

PICARD

No, Will!

88A ANGLE FAVORING REMMICK (OPTICAL)

looking on wide-eyed, as the Parasite climbs up his arm and onto his shoulder. Picard and Riker are momentarily paralyzed, unsure of what to do.

Remmick looks from the creature to the two Officers with a stoic expression on his face. Then, in a strange almost lizard-like movement, he rolls his head to the side and opens his mouth. In an instant, the PARASITE SCAMPERS INTO HIS MOUTH and down his throat.

Remmick addresses the stunned Picard and Riker as though nothing of consequence had happened...

REMMICK

(calm, sincere)

You don't understand.

As he speaks, his NECK BULGES as some of the creatures dart around inside it...

REMMICK

(voice distorted)

We mean you no harm. We seek
co-existence.

88A CONTINUED:

Remmick is slowly starting to rise... Picard and Riker look at each other as if to say "freak this!" They OPEN FIRE, DRIVING REMMICK BACK down into his chair.

The upper half of REMMICK'S BODY BEGINS TO DISSIPATE under the phaser fire... A bizarre form is taking its place. Shaped vaguely like a man, IT LOOKS LIKE A liquidy BUBBLE WITH HUNDREDS OF PARASITES swarming around inside it.

The BUBBLE BEGINS TO COLLAPSE down into what used to be Remmick's lower abdomen. Another SHAPE IS REVEALED as the gooey mass collapses. It is dull yellow -- looking LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN A PARASITE AND A HUMAN FETUS.

It looks at Picard and Riker and CRIES OUT WITH AN ANGRY ROAR. Picard and Riker concentrate on its head and SCORE A DIRECT HIT between the eyes... The FETUS-CREATURE EXPLODES AND THE PARASITES DISSIPATE into nothingness...

Picard and Riker CEASE FIRING. All that's left before them is a smoldering mass -- a pair of legs and part of a spine that used to be Dexter Remmick...

89 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

orbiting Earth.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, stardate 41780.2.
Admiral Quinn is expected to make
a full recovery...

90 INT. SICKBAY - QUINN

is sitting up in bed, being fed liquid by Beverly. He seems weak but in general okay as he flashes her a small smile.

PICARD (V.O.)

(continuing)

There is no trace of the parasite which took control of him. We'll never know how many of these life-forms infiltrated Starfleet, but it seems they could not survive without the "mother creature" which had taken over Commander Remmick...

91 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

PICARD (V.O.)

(continuing)

... Still, the haunting question remains... Who were these beings... and will we ever have to face them again?

RIKER

(to Picard)

It was Doctor Crusher's idea to simulate the blue splinter. We had to make sure it would fool everyone, including you.

PICARD

That it did, Number One. Rest assured.

DATA

I have attempted to trace the message Remmick was sending. I believe it was aimed at an unexplored quadrant of our galaxy.

GEORDI

Any idea what the message was, Data?

Data seems reluctant to answer.

DATA

Well... I believe it was a beacon.

PICARD

(half-whisper)

A beacon?

DATA

Yes, Captain. A homing beacon... sent from Earth.

92 EXT. ENTERPRISE - DEEP SPACE (OPTICAL)

The great ship roars past us... PAN away from her and toward the endless black void of deep space... WE HEAR a sound... AN INCREDIBLY HIGH-PITCHED BEEPING SOUND that repeats its intricate pattern over and over.

A sound waiting for a reply...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END