

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"Where Silence Has Lease"
#40272-128

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REVISED FINAL DRAFT

SEPTEMBER 27, 1988

STAR TREK: "Where Silence... " - 9/27/88 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Where Silence Has Lease"
CAST

PICARD	NAGILUM
RIKER	
DATA	Non-Speaking
PULASKI	TWO ALIEN WARRIORS
TROI	
GEORDI	
WORF	
WESLEY	
TRANSPORTER CHIEF HASKELL	
Voice-Over	
COMPUTER VOICE	

STAR TREK: "Where Silence... " - 9/27/88 - SETS

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Where Silence Has Lease"

SETS

INTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

MAIN BRIDGE

HOLODECK

GEORDI'S OFFICE

GEORDI'S AFT BRIDGE STATION ROMULAN VESSEL

TRANSPORTER ROOM

OBSERVATION LOUNGE

CORRIDOR

MAIN ENGINEERING -

COMPUTER ROOM

PICARD'S QUARTERS

CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

USS YAMATO

CORRIDOR

MAIN BRIDGE

SECOND BRIDGE

EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE

USS YAMATO

STAR TREK: "Where Silence... " - 9/27/88 - PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Where Silence Has Lease"

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

NAGILUM nah-GHEE-lum

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Where Silence Has Lease"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

It is moving gracefully at full impulse.

2 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

JEAN-LUC PICARD is in the command chair. TROI is beside him. DATA is at Ops; WESLEY at Conn. Neither Worf nor Riker is on the bridge. Picard appears to be on edge.

TROI

You're worried.

PICARD

With reason.

TROI

About Worf, or about Commander Riker?

PICARD

Both.

(pauses)

I think perhaps it is best to be ignorant of certain elements of the Klingon psyche.

Off Troi's reaction.

3 INT. HOLODECK - DEMOLISHED AREA

Everywhere there is evidence of a desperate battle, fought on a very primitive level by creatures of consummate rage.

4 CLOSE ON WORF

His eyes blaze with controlled fury as he moves carefully around a semi-demolished wall and peers inside the battle-damaged room. He coils as he hears the eerie sound of a low moan, then cautiously steps forward.

5 RIKER

is a few paces behind. He is very tense as he moves closer to the large Klingon warrior. Riker touches the tear in his uniform and massages the bruise on his shoulder.

6 ANOTHER ANGLE - RIKER AND WORF

WORF touches RIKER's shoulder, signals him to move to the right. Riker moves off. Worf pauses a beat, then slips away to the left.

7 WIDER ANGLE

carrying them to the edge of the rubble-cluttered room. Careful not to touch anything, Worf is moving like a panther. He freezes as the CLICKING SOUND OF METAL ON METAL is barely heard. He waves his arm to Riker, motioning him back, then slowly he also backs away painstakingly, trying to fit his toes back into his exact footsteps. We HOLD on these moves a beat and then suddenly:

8 RIKER

spins and looks upward, calls over to Worf.

RIKER
Above, look out!

9 NEW ANGLE

A man-sized boulder drops down from overhead. Worf dives to the side as the boulder smashes the ground in the place where he just stood.

10 ON WORF

As he rolls catlike to his feet, the massive form of an ALIEN WARRIOR leaps onto his back bringing him back to the ground. The alien raises a club-like weapon over his head and swings down at Worf's head.

11 RIKER

Catches the alien's arm just before the club makes contact and drives him off his feet. He kicks him and follows after him to the other side of the room as:

12 Worf

turns to face the charge of ANOTHER ALIEN who wields a battle axe and swings it in a deadly arc. Worf ducks under the axe and gets a grip on the alien's arm and they press against each other's strength.

13 CLOSER

Worf, grunting in a half-roar, slowly forces the alien back, then with a bellow and a gargantuan heave, Worf throws the alien to the side.

14 SCENE

Worf leaps at the alien who is caught in half-stride. Worf drives his forearm into his opponent's throat and as he becomes limp, drives a double-handed blow to the back of the alien's head. Worf's enemy drops.

15 RIKER

ducks under the alien's club and drives a blow to the lower extremities of his opponent. The attacker doubles over and Riker hits him on the way down. But he no sooner hits the ground than he is back on his feet, charging Riker. Our first officer steps to his side and strikes at the alien as he goes by, heading straight at Worf.

16 NEW ANGLE

Worf turns to face the onrushing alien. He thunders out his challenge, picks up the club from the prone alien, swings it at the new rival.

17 REVERSE

The alien ducks the blow and swings back.

18 RIKER

about to enter into the fight, then he holds a beat, stops and watches somewhat in awe.

19 Worf / ALIEN

The alien connects with a savage blow to Worf's body. Worf takes the blow and returns his own.

They trade blows, one for one, taking the pain and returning it. Then slowly the alien sinks to his knees, then rolls over on his side.

20 ON Worf

as he steps over the alien warrior, roars out his victorious celebration chant, and lifts the club for the final fatal blow. His eyes are on fire. He smashes it down on his opponent, then spins around for a new battle.

21 RIKER

Suddenly a little unsure of Worf's intentions, he backs a step, waits.

22 Worf

Worf sounds out a new challenge. He scans the room for his next adversary -- he's still coiled and in need of action. Suddenly he swings his club at the wall. Pounding it with rage. Broken bricks and mortar fly. His fury is all consuming. He rips and slashes at everything standing.

23 NEW ANGLE

Riker watches -- still concerned. He thought he knew the power and fury of this Klingon. Worf continues to exercise his rage around the room. Anything that stands, hangs, bulges, protrudes, or is suspended, is demolished until there is nothing left to flatten. Nothing left upright except... Worf turns -- his eyes still blaze as they fall upon...

24 RIKER

The only thing left standing. Riker tenses.

RIKER
It's over.

25 Worf

This seems to have no effect on Worf who seems almost out of control. A snarl -- low and vicious -- pushes out of his twisted mouth. He takes a step forward.

RIKER

The exercise is over.

26 SCENE

Riker calls more sternly.

RIKER

At ease, Lieutenant!

Worf is almost upon Riker before beginning to regain control of himself. He takes a deep breath, forcing himself to become calmer. He flexes his muscles, then seems pleased.

27 EMPHASIZING RIKER (OPTICAL)

RIKER

Exit Holodeck.

The EXIT APPEARS as Riker turns to Worf.

RIKER

(continuing)

You do this every day?

WORF

No -- usually my calisthenics are more...

(he searches for the
right word, then
settles for)

... intense, but those sessions
are too personal to be shared.

RIKER

(dryly)

I'll bet they are.

28 RIKER (OPTICAL)

takes a look around at the devastation on the Holodeck and is thankful that Worf is on his side.

28 CONTINUED:

WORF (O.S.)
Computer. Program complete --
save.

Before Riker's eyes, THE BATTLE SCENE FADES, and all that is left is the empty Holodeck. Worf pauses at the door.

WORF
(continuing)
Coming Commander?

RIKER
Right behind you.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

29 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

is moving through deep space. No large planets or suns nearby... just a Milky Way of distant suns spread across space like a tightly woven blanket of lights.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, Stardate 42193.6.
We are on a long reach toward the Morgana Quadrant, a section of the galaxy which has yet to be visited by a manned Federation vessel. We are using the time to further detail the charts of this region.

30 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Jean-Luc Picard and Riker stand beside Data as he moves his fingers across the console. The SOUND VARIES, SLIDING UP AND DOWN ERRATICALLY IN PITCH AND INTENSITY. Troi stands nearby listening thoughtfully.

DATA

There it is again. An area of "blackness."

RIKER

It appears, then disappears, then reappears. There is no predictable pattern -- no sequence.

Data moves his fingers across the console again.

PICARD

On screen.

They all turn to look.

31 FULL SHOT FAVORING THE MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

The picture on the Main Viewer shows a field of stars.

RIKER

There it is.

31 CONTINUED:

PICARD

I can't see anything. Magnify
section two-eight-five.

The viewscreen changes. Now we can see a slight "spot"
on the Main Viewer.

WESLEY

There -- it looks like a "hole"
in space.

PICARD

We're acquainted with the
"wormhole" phenomenon. This
appears quite different.

32 ANOTHER ANGLE (OPTICAL)

Picard studies the Main Viewer for a beat, then:

PICARD

What do sensors indicate?

DATA

Nothing.

RIKER

Nothing?

PICARD

I'm sure you must mean it's empty
of matter, Mister Data. There
is always some energy form at
work...

DATA

Sir, our sensors are showing that
to be an absence of everything.
It is a void without matter or
energy of any kind.

RIKER

Yet, this "hole" has a form, Data.
It has height, width...

DATA

Perhaps. Perhaps not.

32 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(to Data)

That is hardly a scientific observation, Commander.

DATA

Sir, the most elementary and valuable statement in science... the beginning of wisdom... is: "I do not know."

(indicates viewscreen)

I do not know what that is.

WESLEY

Captain, if this were any ordinary kind of hole in space...

(indicates)

... wouldn't we be able to see what's behind it?

Obviously, this is a very good question. Picard turns to Troi.

PICARD

Counselor?

TROI

I can feel nothing from it, sir, if that's what you're asking.

Picard eases himself down in his chair, and sits studying the viewscreen... puzzled.

RIKER

Data -- is there any record of any occurrence even vaguely similar to this?

PICARD

"Similar" in even the slightest way.

DATA

Accessing.

(he pauses a moment)

Negative. There is no record of any Federation vessel encountering anything remotely like this.

PICARD

I believe we have time for a closer look, Number One.

32 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER

Concur.

(to Wesley)

Ensign, slow to one-half impulse.
Adjust course to intercept this...
this whatever it is.

PICARD

Scanning and recording as we go.

WESLEY

Changing course to intercept in...
in twelve minutes, sir.

33 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

moves slowly forward under impulse power toward the
large black area in the field of stars.

34 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard stands watching the viewscreen as the void on
the screen grows larger. Riker is at the science
consoles in the Aft Station. Data is busy at Ops.

PICARD

Let's send a probe into it.

RIKER

Worf, prepare a scanner probe.
Let's see what's in there.

PICARD

(to Wesley)

Close enough, Ensign. Hold this
position.

WESLEY

Aye, sir. Holding this position.

Picard gives Riker a slight nod.

RIKER

You may launch the probe when
ready, Mister Worf.

Worf makes the necessary moves on his console to launch
the probe.

35 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

floats off the outer edge of the void. The probe is launched. It heads straight into the center of the great emptiness.

36 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard, Riker and Worf stand watching the viewscreen as the fiery tail of the probe diminishes in the distance. Data monitors the instruments. We can HEAR THE FAINT HISS OF THE TELEMETRY as it is received.

DATA

All the probe's systems are functioning perfectly.

Suddenly the probe just disappears. The SOUNDS OF TELEMETRY STOP.

WORF

It's gone.

PICARD

What happened, Data?

DATA

Unknown.

WORF

(to Picard)

Recommend we go to a Yellow Alert, sir.

PICARD

(puzzled)

Why?

WORF

(hesitates, then)

Sorry, sir, it's...

PICARD

Explain.

Worf is definitely uncomfortable now. Clearly, he would like to avoid this entire subject now. Picard continues gently:

36 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(continuing)

This starship operates best,
Mister Worf, when we all know what
is on each other's minds.

WORF

(uncomfortably)

My thoughts... were of an old
Klingon legend of... of a gigantic
black space creature which was
said to devour entire vessels...

RIKER

(genuinely surprised)

Devours vessels?

WORF

Sorry, Commander. I agree that
these are thoughts hardly worthy
of a trained and practical
security officer.

There is a round of silence. Worf is completely
miserable. Then to Worf, ignoring his previous
statement.

PICARD

Launch another probe, Mister Worf.
This time a Class One with full
sensor array.

Worf does something on his panel, then:

WORF

Launching, sir.

37 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as the second probe is launched. It too disappears
even sooner after it enters the void.

38 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

All are still studying the viewscreen.

RIKER

Happened even more quickly.

38 CONTINUED:

WORF

Recommend we fire a photon
torpedo, Captain.

PICARD

(eyes Worf, then)

Negative.

WESLEY

Captain, based on where the probes
disappeared... I have been able
to plot the outer boundaries.
I could move in closer.

Picard thinks about it, then decides.

PICARD

Take us in, Mister Crusher.
Thrusters only.

39 OMITTED

40 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard stands looking at the viewscreen.

PICARD

Data?

DATA

Still no readings of any kind,
sir.

Picard paces to where Riker stands in the Aft Station.
The black void almost fills the screen of the Main
Viewer.

PICARD

Number One?

RIKER

I'll agree with Worf at this
point, sir. Let's be careful.

Worf looks grateful. Picard paces forward, studying
the viewscreen.

41 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

moves closer to the dark, dead, void.

42 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard stands looking at the dark screen, then around the silent bridge.

The dark void filling the screen. The familiar SOUNDS OF THE BRIDGE BEGIN TO FADE... RADIO SIGNALS, TELEMETRY, EVERYTHING...

RIKER

What's happened?

PICARD

Data?

Data looks at his console for a moment, then...

DATA

Whatever it was... or whatever it is... we seem to be inside of it.

Picard returns to his Command Chair, as Riker takes the chair beside him.

RIKER

Didn't that happen a bit suddenly, sir?

PICARD

All stations, report!

43 ANGLE - THE COMPUTER MONITORS

Some of the screens fade and go blank. Reactions as:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

44 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

is isolated in a void, totally empty of stars.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental.
While exploring a strange area
in space without any form of
matter or energy...

45 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Data at Ops, somewhat puzzled by the feedback he is
receiving. Riker is busy at a panel while Picard
stands looking at the viewscreen.

PICARD (V.O.)

(continuing)

... a total void, we have
unexpectedly seemed to enter it.
Apparently we moved past its
mysterious outer boundary.

Riker looks up from the panel.

RIKER

All stations have reported,
Captain. There seems to be no
immediate threat to our ship or
crew.

As Riker stands looking at the dark viewscreen, Picard
moves up to stand beside him.

PICARD

In which case, let's hold position
for awhile, Number One. This is
worth studying.

RIKER

Incredible. It's like looking
off into... infinity, sir.

(turns to Picard)

Remember the course in ancient
history at Starfleet Academy?
Back to the time when men still
believed the Earth was flat?

45 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(smiles)

And that the sun revolved around
the Earth...

RIKER

And if a ship sailed too far out
into the ocean it would fall off
the edge of the world...

Riker turns back to look at the empty void on the
viewscreen.

PICARD

"Beyond this place there be
dragons."

RIKER

Data -- how long to complete your
scans? Let's not stay any longer
than we have to.

Riker starts for Science One as PULASKI enters from the
turbolift and stands looking at the activity on the
bridge. Pulaski crosses to stand beside Picard.

WESLEY

Captain, we have no communications
outside of the void.

WORF

Confirm! We are now receiving
no signals of any kind.

PICARD

Hello, Doctor. You've been
briefed on what's happened?

PULASKI

I've heard, Captain. But I don't
understand it.

PICARD

I wish I could say I did.
(to Data)
Increase magnification by ten.

Data punches in the command. The viewscreen remains
dark.

45 CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD
(continuing)
By one hundred!

Nothing. The viewscreen remains dark.

PULASKI
I'm not a bridge officer, but
isn't this... "impossible," sir?

Picard gives Pulaski a "be my guest" gesture.

PULASKI
(continuing)
Increase by one thousand, Mister
Data.
(waits)
By ten thousand.

There's no change on the Main Viewer. Pulaski turns
to Picard.

PULASKI
(continuing; indicates
Data)
It does know how to do these
things, doesn't it?

PICARD
Commander Data knows precisely
what he is doing.

Pulaski looks up quickly at Data, then turns to see
that the Captain's expression is as cold.

PULASKI
Forgive me, Mister Data. I'm not
accustomed to working with... with
non-living devices that...
(stops, bites off her
words)
Forgive me again. Your service
record says that you are alive
and I must accept that.

PICARD
Engineering!

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
Engineering, aye.

46 INTERCUT - GEORDI'S OFFICE AS NECESSARY

PICARD

Lieutenant, are your systems functioning?

GEORDI

Yes, sir. Wherever we are, sir, it seems to have no effect on any Engineering function.

PICARD

Thank you, Lieutenant.

47 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard's interest in this occurrence is waning fast.

PICARD

Data?

DATA

Difficult to make a judgment based on the absence of information.

PICARD

Speculate.

DATA

The obvious hypothesis is equivocal. This void has a total lack of dimension. Therefore by any accepted standard it does not exist, yet being within it denies that conclusion.

Picard looks to Pulaski.

RIKER

Then maybe we've moved into another dimension?

DATA

Could a lack of dimension be another dimension in itself?

Pulaski gives Data a quick look of respect.

PULASKI

That's an interesting question.

47 CONTINUED:

PICARD

For a later discussion. It's time we got on with our mission, Number One. Starfleet can send out a science vessel to investigate further. Let's move back out of this.

RIKER

Aye, sir.

(to Wesley)

Reverse our direction and set a course for the Cornelian star system. Warp two.

WESLEY

Reversing direction, sir.

(adjusts controls)

Course laid in.

RIKER

Engage.

Wesley punches in the command.

48 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

We can see only the ship and the darkness of space.

49 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard seems to relax a little, leaning back to watch for the reappearance of the stars. Nothing happens and he looks questioningly toward Riker.

RIKER

(to Wesley)

Our engines have engaged, haven't they, Ensign?

WESLEY

Aye, sir.

50 INT. GEORDI'S OFFICE

Geordi, moving between the wall panel and the center block computers. He waits as if expecting something. Then he turns to his intercom:

50 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

Everything all right up there,
Captain?

PICARD'S COM VOICE

Are the engines operating
normally, Engineer?

GEORDI

Everything looks fine here, sir.

PICARD'S COM VOICE

We're increasing to warp four,
Engineer.

We HEAR a slightly higher level of engine sound, then:

GEORDI

We now show warp four, Captain.

51 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

The situation is still the same. The viewscreen is completely dark with Picard, Riker, and the others looking toward it nervously, puzzled.

PICARD

We should be seeing stars by now,
Data. How far have we come?

DATA

Inertial guidance shows seven
parsecs traveled, Captain.

PICARD

Ensign Crusher?

WESLEY

Confirm, sir. Exactly what my
readings say.

52 ANGLE ACROSS MAIN BRIDGE

to include GEORDI entering, crosses to his bridge
Engineering Station.

GEORDI

Engineering, transfer to bridge.

52 CONTINUED:

The engineering console lights up. Geordi now looks up to Main Viewer.

GEORDI

(continuing)

What's happening, sir? I thought we should have broken clear.

53 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

ON Picard.

RIKER

We should have. We're on a reverse course.

PICARD

Full stop, helm.

WESLEY

Full stop, sir.

Picard rises and paces for a moment. Picard looks down at Wesley's console.

PICARD

According to this we're well past the point we entered the void.

DATA

Except that we are still in it, sir.

54 WIDER ANGLE

Data works his console for a moment...

DATA

Captain... if we dropped a stationary beacon and navigated straight away from it, we would have a fixed point of reference to confirm speed and distance.

PICARD

Make it so, Data. Lock onto the beacon, and keep it dead astern.

Data and Wesley punch in the instructions. A moment later the SOUND OF THE ELECTRONIC SIGNAL is heard.

54 CONTINUED:

DATA

The beacon is in place, Captain.

PICARD

Dead ahead. Impulse power.

Picard settles back in his chair as Geordi punches in the commands and the ship begins to move. The ELECTRONIC SIGNAL FROM THE BEACON BEGINS TO DIMINISH IN AMPLITUDE as the ship moves away from the beacon.

DATA

The beacon is falling astern.

PICARD

Engineering, report.

55 GEORDI'S AFT BRIDGE STATION (OPTICAL)

Geordi, at his instruments, taking readings.

GEORDI

All systems normal, sir.

Everyone looking to Picard.

PICARD

Prepare to increase to warp two.

WESLEY

Aye, sir.

A moment later we can HEAR THE SOUND OF ANOTHER ELECTRONIC SIGNAL overlapping the beacon. It is a different frequency. (Caused by the Doppler Effect.)

DATA

Captain, we are receiving a signal from dead ahead.

PULASKI

Maybe you've found the door out of this.

As the FIRST SIGNAL DIMINISHES, the SECOND SIGNAL INCREASES in intensity.

DATA

We are closing on the new signal, Captain.

55 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Identify.

Data does a check... and recheck of the signal.

DATA

Captain, it is the stationary
beacon we just released.

RIKER

We must have come full circle,
sir.

WESLEY

We couldn't have, sir. I've shown
us steadily moving away from that
beacon.

PICARD

All stop; hold position again.

RIKER

(indicating the
viewscreen)

Look.

Picard moves toward the Main Viewer. The nothingness
of the void has been replaced. The Enterprise is now
bathed in a soft ever-changing glow, which is beautiful
to look at and somehow very comforting.

56 WORF

His head comes up from his sensors.

WORF

Captain, sensors indicate a
disturbance in sector one-zero-
eight. Possibly a vessel.

Reactions from Picard and the others.

PICARD

Perhaps some answers at last.
On screen.

WORF

The ship is equipped with a
cloaking device.

56 CONTINUED:

RIKER

Romulan!

WORF

It's closing.

RIKER

Shields up. Go to Red Alert!

PULASKI

I'll be at my duty station in Sickbay.

She exits.

57 FAVOR MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

There is a distortion --

WORF

It's uncloaking.

RIKER

Arm your photon torpedoes, Mister Worf.

PICARD

Hold for my orders.

WESLEY

There!

As the Romulan vessel becomes visible, IT FIRES -- without warning.

58 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

as the ship is rocked by the barrage.

WORF

Direct hits, sir. Our shields are weakening.

PICARD

Warn them we'll return fire.

WORF

Transmitting.

Picard waits; Riker throws him a concerned look.

58 CONTINUED:

WORF

(continuing)

They've armed another full spread,
sir.

PICARD

Fire torpedoes.

59 OMITTED

60 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

The PHOTON TORPEDOES streak toward the Romulan ship.
THEY HIT, as the Romulan ship explodes.

61 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

alone again in the void.

62 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

There is a moment of victory.

PICARD

That was too easy.

RIKER

Yes.

DATA

Captain, sensors can locate no
debris from the Romulan ship.

Before the captain can respond...

WORF

Captain, there is another vessel
approaching -- sector zero-nine-
one, mark, two-six.

PICARD

Specifics.

WORF

On screen.

63 ANGLE - INCLUDING MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

The picture of a ship MATERIALIZES on the viewscreen.

PICARD

Magnify.

RIKER

It's a Federation ship.

(reading the number)

N-C-C... one-three-oh-five dash

E. It is the USS Yamato, our
sister ship.

WESLEY

The Yamato is nowhere near this
quadrant.

PICARD

Open a hailing frequency, Data....

Data punches in the information.

DATA

This is the USS Enterprise to...
USS Yamato. Respond, please...

Nothing.

DATA

(continuing)

This is the USS Enterprise calling
USS Yamato. Please respond on
this frequency.

They all watch the Main Viewer.

DATA

(continuing)

No response, Captain.

PICARD

Make a full scan.

DATA

Life support system -- engineering
and propulsion all seem
functional.

(turns; reacts at a
reading)

But there are no life signs over
there, sir.

63 CONTINUED:

PICARD

Can we be getting a false
reading, Data?

DATA

Since we know nothing at all about
these circumstances, that is...
at least, conceivable, sir.

RIKER

(to Picard)

You look doubtful, sir.

PICARD

I'm not anything right now, Number
One. I'm just a man looking for
answers.

GEORDI

(to Data; quietly)

Like the rat said -- "Keep the
cheese, I just want out of the
trap."

Picard overhears and flashes Geordi a look that
silences him.

RIKER

Captain, request permission to
board the Yamato with an away
team. There might be something
onboard -- in the logs -- which will
at least tell us what happened.

PICARD

Granted. Minimum complement.

Riker stands, heads for the turbolift.

RIKER

Worf. You're with me.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

64 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE AND THE USS YAMATO
(OPTICAL)

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, supplemental. We remain like a fly in amber trapped in the void. We have encountered a vessel which appears to be the USS Yamato. All its systems are shown as functioning, yet it seems devoid of life. Commander Riker is leading an away team -- hopefully the answer lies over there.

65 INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM (OPTICAL)

Worf steps onto the Transporter Pad. Riker, checking the transporter console, speaks to the TRANSPORTER CHIEF.

RIKER

Do you have a lock on that other ship?

TRANSPORTER CHIEF

Aye, sir. No problems at all.

Riker crosses to the raised platform to join Worf.

RIKER

Can you put us on the bridge?

TRANSPORTER CHIEF

Anywhere you say, Commander.

WORF

I am acquainted with the Yamato, Commander. Recommend the Aft Station of their bridge. When in doubt, surprise them.

RIKER

Them? Who's them?

WORF

Whoever may be there.

65 CONTINUED:

RIKER
Sensors show no life signs.

WORF
Still, the tactic is sound.

RIKER
Agreed.
(to Transporter Chief)
Aft Station.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF
Aye, sir.

RIKER
Phasers on stun, Lieutenant Worf.

Phasers are set.

RIKER
(continuing; to
Transporter Chief)
Energize.

Riker and Worf SPARKLE AWAY.

66 INT. USS YAMATO - CORRIDOR (OPTICAL)

as Riker -- without Worf -- STACKS UP. It looks like the Enterprise, as it should because it is the sister ship -- but the lighting is weird -- and:

RIKER
(the obvious)
This isn't the bridge.

He turns, expecting to see Worf -- but he's alone. Almost before Riker can react he hears a sound down the darkened corridor. A growl -- above which he hears Worf's roar.

66A ANOTHER ANGLE

as Riker heads down the corridor -- the lighting here is much darker. Very ominous -- in the shadows -- we see FORMS. Threatening -- again WE HEAR WORF. This time IN PAIN. Riker, without hesitation -- charges forward. Ready to combat whatever attempts to block his path. It looks like a gauntlet of terror.

66B RIKER

moves forward -- phaser ready. Suddenly, in the darkness a large form appears. It's armed and moving toward him. Riker hesitates -- then screams out:

RIKER
No -- don't fire.

The figure is on him -- the light hits the creature's face. IT'S WOLF!

WOLF
I heard you screaming. I was coming to help.

RIKER
Help me? But I heard you cry out.

Riker realizes something bizarre is going on.

RIKER
(touches his communicator)
Transporter Chief, where do you show us over here?

TRANSPORTER CHIEF'S COM VOICE
We show... as approximately...

The communication garbles and cuts out.

RIKER
Captain, do you read me?...

67 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

Picard becomes concerned, as:

RIKER'S COM VOICE
... having difficulties...

The communication garbles and cuts out.

PICARD
Number One, come in!

He pauses -- there is no response.

67 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(continuing)

Transporter Room, this is the captain. We are out of contact with the away team. Beam them back, immediately.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF'S COM VOICE

I have lost the lock on them.

68 INT. USS YAMATO - CORRIDOR

Riker, inspecting the corridor walls closely with his tricorder. Worf, touching his insignia.

WORF

Nothing on my communicator, sir.

Worf steps over to a com panel on the corridor wall.

WORF

(continuing)

Computer, on.

Nothing happens.

RIKER

(looks around)

Let's find a turbolift to the bridge.

69 OMITTED

70 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

Picard is at his command station, very concerned.

PICARD

Transporter Room -- have you been able to establish a lock?

Picard gets no answer. Then suddenly the bridge goes DARK. Every system shuts off -- the emergency lights come on. Everyone remains at their station -- tension but no panic.

PICARD

Initiate full check -- all systems.

71 ANGLE ON GEORDI

at bridge Engineering Station.

GEORDI

Engineering section, report. What
is our situation?

There is no response.

72
thru OMITTED
83

A84 INT. USS YAMATO - CORRIDOR

As Riker and Worf approach the turbolift, Riker scans
the corridor wall with his tricorder.

RIKER

This isn't a Federation ship.
The walls are not tritanium...
close, but it's a material beyond
our technology.

(he then leads the way
to the turbolift)

Let's get to the bridge.
Somewhere there must be an answer
to all of this.

As they approach, the turbolift doors open. Instead of
it being the turbolift, it's the bridge, weirdly
lighted. It's identical to the Enterprise, but devoid
of people.

Worf and Riker exchange looks. They cautiously enter.

B84 INT. USS YAMATO - MAIN BRIDGE

The turbolift doors close behind them. Riker then
turns as if to re-enter the turbolift. The doors open
-- but it's not the turbolift... it's a duplicate of
the bridge.

Riker and Worf again exchange looks.

RIKER

Wait -- if you go through there...
where will you be?

WORF

On the bridge.

B84 CONTINUED:

RIKER

But we are on the bridge.

WORF

Should I continue?

RIKER

Yes -- move out. Let's see what happens.

They both step through the door.

C84 ANOTHER ANGLE - USS YAMATO SECOND BRIDGE

They have in effect:

WORF

Is it the same bridge?

RIKER

... Or did we just step from one bridge to another bridge?

Worf crosses to another door, as Riker moves to the center of the bridge.

C84A INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Illuminated by the emergency lights, everyone's remaining very calm, under control. Suddenly some of the bridge stations return to normal.

DATA

Captain! I have a star fix.

PICARD

On screen.

A small swarm of stars appears in the center of the dark screen.

WESLEY

It's an opening, sir.

DATA

Confirm, navigation is possible.

WESLEY

Should I set a course?

C84A CONTINUED:

PICARD

Transporter Room. Do you have
a fix on the away team?

TRANSPORTER CHIEF'S COM VOICE

Negative.

D84 INT. USS YAMATO BRIDGE - WORF

as he approaches the second set of doors. The doors
open -- and once again it's the bridge. Worf pauses.
Then steps through.

E84 RIKER

As he watches the door close behind Worf, he hears from
behind him:

WORF (O.S.)

Commander.

Riker turns. It's Worf, standing in front of the doors.
The frustration of this bizarre -- whatever it is -- can
be seen on Worf's face.

F84 IN A SERIES OF SHOTS - INTERCUT WITH RIKER'S
REACTION

Worf turns and exits - only to appear on the other side
of the bridge. He roars... rushes to another set of
doors. Exits, only to again reappear coming out of
another set of doors. Worf's emotions quickly escalate
to rage. He turns and throws himself at the doors --
hoping somehow by force to change the sequence. But
the doors open and he once again bursts out of the
doors on the opposite side of the bridge. Worf charges
for another set. He's on the verge of being out of
control. He is about to continue his manic charge,
when he catches himself.

WORF

(to himself)

At ease, Lieutenant! At EASE!

His own words calm him. He stops... but his
frustration is more difficult for him to control.

G84 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

DATA

The star fix is fading.

PICARD

Haskell, lock on to the Yamato with the tractor beam. We leave together.

HASKELL manipulates some controls.

HASKELL

I can't make the lock.

DATA

Captain. The star fix is fading.

PICARD

Let it go, Data.

HASKELL

But, sir, we can get out.

PICARD

Let it go.

On the viewscreen, stars fade.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF'S COM VOICE

Bridge, I've re-established contact with the away team.

WESLEY

(indicating Main Viewer)

The Yamato's beginning to fade out, Captain.

On the Main Viewer, the USS Yamato is beginning to grow HAZY.

85 INT. USS YAMATO - MAIN BRIDGE

Riker and Worf hurrying INTO SCENE. Riker is touching his emblem for intercom use.

RIKER

Come in, come in Enterprise.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF'S COM VOICE

Hold position, away team. I've got you. We are bringing you home!

86 INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

On the Main Viewer the image of the USS Yamato FADING AWAY.

PICARD
Transporter Room, hurry!

WESLEY
Captain, it's almost gone.

Suddenly the Yamato FADES OUT.

87 OMITTED

87A INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

as Riker and Worf STACK UP. Riker steps instantly off the pad and heads for the exit.

87B INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

as Riker and Worf step off the turbolift.

RIKER
What the hell's going on?

PICARD
Are you all right, Number One?

RIKER
Yes, but I've had it. Let's put all this technology and computers to work -- figure out what's going on -- and get the hell out of here.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

88 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - WIDE ANGLE

Picard, Wesley and Troi seating themselves -- as Riker, Data, Worf, and Pulaski seat themselves.

RIKER

(angry)

A ship that was almost the Yamato,
existing in a "hole in space,"
no crew aboard -- what's the
purpose?

DATA

Add to it an attack by a
nonexistent Romulan vessel, it
does suggest an interesting
question: "Was our away team even
over there?"

RIKER

If we weren't over there, where
the hell were we?

HASKELL

Captain, I have re-established
the star fix.

They look at the viewscreen which shows a cluster of
stars -- TWINKLING in the distance.

RIKER

Great.

Looks to Picard, who nods his approval.

RIKER

(to Wesley)

Set course -- velocity -- warp two.

WESLEY

Course and speed set.

PICARD

Engage.

There is a moment of relief as everyone feels that this
has at last come to an end.

88 CONTINUED:

DATA

I have lost contact.

PICARD

What?

HASKELL

The star fix is gone.

There is a pause as Data inputs on his computer.

DATA

Sir, it is not in the same sector.
But another opening has appeared.

PICARD

On screen.

88A ANOTHER ANGLE (OPTICAL)

to favor the viewscreen. A patch of stars appears
in the swirl.

PICARD

Set a course for those stars.
Warp six.

WESLEY

Yes, sir -- warp six.

As they watch, the starfield -- which should be getting
larger -- begins to fade, and finally disappears.

DATA

I have lost the signal.

RIKER

Damn it.

PICARD

All stop.

As they watch the screen, a third and even larger field
of stars appears on the viewscreen.

DATA

Captain...

PICARD

I know Data, I can see it.

88A CONTINUED:

RIKER

This game is now wearing very thin.

PICARD

Hold this position.

(to Troi)

Counselor, you have said you sensed no intelligence behind all of this. You haven't changed in that belief?

89 OMITTED

90 EMPHASIZING TROI

She takes a moment, apparently considering Picard's question at many levels. Then:

TROI

I'm not so certain of that now, Captain. I do sense something unusual about all this...

She is puzzled, troubled.

PICARD

Perhaps a different level of consciousness?

TROI

An intelligence so vast it eluded me? Yes, perhaps.

91
thru OMITTED
93

94 ANGLE - INCLUDING TROI AND PULASKI

both intent upon the Main Viewer image, where the star window continues to twinkle.

PULASKI

(almost to herself)

Rats in a maze.

Troi looks over at the Doctor.

94 CONTINUED:

TROI
(quietly)
Exactly!

PICARD
Explain.

PULASKI
Everything we've been through
reminds me of a laboratory
experiment. As though something
were testing our responses to
stimuli.

PICARD
Are you suggesting we're in some
kind of laboratory?

PULASKI
Yes.

Reactions.

95 ANGLE - INCLUDING MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

where the starfield grows larger.

WESLEY
The opening seems closer,
Captain.

PICARD
We're finished with being led
about this way.

RIKER
Agreed, Captain. Hold present
position.

96 OMITTED

97 COMMAND AREA

as the images try to tempt Picard away from his
decision. Troi nods.

TROI
Good. Don't satisfy its
curiosity.

98 EMPHASIZING MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

Suddenly, a visage like the bridge crew has never seen! A great human eye is peering in.

99 PANNING WORF (OPTICAL)

who has leapt down from his bridge level, major phaser in hand as if to protect the rest of the bridge crew. But now facing the strange IMAGE with phaser in hand, Worf seems uncertain what to do next.

NAGILUM

Why are you so alarmed when I've gone to such trouble to look just like you?

100 ANOTHER ANGLE (OPTICAL)

Riker speaks calmly to the security lieutenant.

RIKER

Return to your position,
Lieutenant.

WORF

Sir... ?

DATA

Captain, sensors show nothing out there. Absolutely nothing.

GEORDI

(half to self)

It's a damned ugly nothing.

PICARD

I am Captain Jean-Luc Picard of
the USS Enterprise.

(firmer now)

... representing a Federation of
planets in this part of the
galaxy.

(waits)

Can you identify whoever or
whatever you are?

NAGILUM

NAGILUM!

100 CONTINUED:

GEORDI

(to Data; quietly)

Speaks right out for something
your sensors say isn't there,
Data.

PICARD

We've still no idea of what you
represent.

Nagilum's eyes have seemed to center on Data. Its
voice MODERATES.

NAGILUM

"Data."

DATA

Nagilum?

NAGILUM

You are of different construction
than the others. Interesting.

Worf has lowered his phaser, but stays very alert as
he returns to his security position. Meanwhile,
Nagilum's eyes seem to move from one bridge crewmember
to another.

NAGILUM

(continuing)

Picard... Riker... Geordi...
Wesley...

Pulaski is suddenly moved forward as if shoved by an
invisible hand. Whatever the nature of the force, it
twirls her around for inspection.

NAGILUM

(continuing)

What are you? Your construction
also differs.

PULASKI

My "construction"... ?

DATA

Perhaps referring to your gender.

100 CONTINUED: (2)

PULASKI

Yes, I see...

(toward the viewscreen)

There are minor differences. I
am what we call a "female."

Pulaski is "shoved" forward as suddenly, then turned
around for inspection.

NAGILUM

I understand. The masculine and
the feminine.

PICARD

It is the way in which we
propagate our species.

NAGILUM

Please demonstrate how this is
accomplished.

PULASKI

Not likely.

PICARD

Whatever you are, your actions
are not welcome.

WORF

Let me put up the shields, sir.

DATA

Our sensors do not show anything
there, Worf.

101
thru OMITTED
102

103 INCLUDING MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

where Nagilum still seems to peer in through the Main
Viewer. Its eyes now move to Picard.

NAGILUM

Your life-form surprises me more
and more. Is it also true that
you have only a limited existence?
(waits, then)

Answer!

103 CONTINUED:

PICARD

What information do you want?
I don't understand the question.

NAGILUM

You exist -- and then you cease
to exist. Your minds call it
"death."

At that moment, there is a CRY OF PAIN from the Aft
Section -- and they turn. Holding his head as though
it were about to explode, HASKELL staggers back from
the damaged console. He screams again.

NAGILUM

(continuing)

How interesting.

104 ANGLE - FAVORING HASKELL

Haskell sinks to his knees, moaning in agony... then
pitches forward and lies still. Doctor Pulaski has
been hurrying toward him, now kneels and checks his
vital signs. She uses a power-hypo on him once, twice.
Then she shakes her head to Picard.

105 ANOTHER ANGLE

Worf has moved in fast too, kneels.

WORF

Sickbay?

PULASKI

It won't help. The body is
already cold.

106 ANGLE - FAVORING PICARD AND NAGILUM (OPTICAL)

as Picard turns angrily toward the Main Viewer.

PICARD

We cannot allow you to do that!
We'll fight you...

106 CONTINUED:

NAGILUM
(interrupting; VOICE
BOOMING)

To understand death, I must amass
information on every aspect of
it, every kind of dying. The
experiments shouldn't take more
than a third of your crew, maybe
half.

OFF reactions:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

107 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

with the same distant cluster of stars.

PICARD (V.O.)

Captain's log, Stardate 42194.7.
It is obvious that whatever we
have met sees no value in our kind
of life-form. How do we fight
something that both is...

108 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Picard, Riker, Data, Geordi, Troi, Pulaski, and Worf
are in conference.

PICARD (V.O.)

(continuing)

... and is not there?

TROI

I can sense this much. We are
unimportant to it.

WORF

In a battle for survival, Captain,
thirty to fifty percent
casualties...

PULASKI

... Would be appalling...

WORF

... But within acceptable limits.

RIKER

This is not a battle, Lieutenant.

TROI

A "laboratory experiment" would
be the closest comparison.

PICARD

Is there any reason for not
believing this Nagilum?

108 CONTINUED:

TROI

No.

DATA

All evidence indicates he is willing and able to do what he proposes.

PICARD

Agreed. Under the circumstances -- there is only one decision. I will not stand by and watch while half of my crew is slaughtered.

DATA

Sir... I do not believe there is anything you can do to prevent it.

PICARD

No. But I can control it.

PULASKI

How?

PICARD

By destroying the Enterprise.

PULASKI

(to Picard)

Isn't that like curing the disease by killing the patient?

RIKER

At least it's better than standing by helplessly and dying.

PULASKI

Why do I feel this may not have been the best time to join this ship? I'll be in Sickbay if I'm needed.

Pulaski exits. Data, Troi and Geordi rise and go out after her. Wesley and Worf start out. Worf pauses at the door:

WORF

I will be at my station, Captain.

108 CONTINUED: (2)

Picard and Riker remain at the table... each with his own thoughts. Then they both rise and go out...

109 INT. CORRIDOR

The door to the turbolift opens. Picard and Riker step out.

110 INT. MAIN ENGINEERING

Picard and Riker enter the Engineering Section and move to either side of the console. After a beat, Picard reaches out and places his hand on the panel.

COMPUTER VOICE

Recognize Picard... Jean-Luc...

Riker places his hand on the opposite panel.

COMPUTER VOICE)

(continuing)

Recognize Riker... William T.

PICARD

Initiate auto-destruct sequence.

COMPUTER VOICE

Does Riker... William T. concur?

RIKER

I do. Initiate auto-destruct sequence.

COMPUTER VOICE

What is the desired time interval?

PICARD

Stand by.

(turns to Riker)

Interesting question. How long to prepare to die?

RIKER

Which is the least painful to our crew? Move to it quickly? Or take time to prepare for it thoroughly?

They sit silently for a moment.

110 CONTINUED:

RIKER)

(continuing)

Hell, twenty minutes sounds like
a nice round figure. Can we do
that?

PICARD

The latest program allows it.

They exchange a look. Picard turns to the computer.

PICARD)

(continuing)

Initiate auto-destruct in twenty
minutes.

Picard and Riker turn to leave as the clock begins its
electronic countdown to auto-destruct.

COMPUTER VOICE

Twenty minutes to auto-destruct,
mark.

They exit. Then, in the empty room:

COMPUTER VOICE

(continuing)

Nineteen minutes, fifty seconds...

111 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

hovering in space with the still-distant star
patterns.

112 INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS

The captain is lying on his bunk, staring at the
ceiling as DEBUSSY'S "CLAIR DE LUNE" PLAYS. CAMERA
MOVES IN to examine the expressions passing over
Picard's features as he listens. After several moments
of this, his door CHIME SOUNDS.

PICARD

Come.

113 TO INCLUDE TROI

entering as if hesitant to disturb the captain at this time. Picard straightens into a sitting position, looks questioningly at her.

TROI

Our destroying ourselves won't change its mind. I could feel that.

PICARD

(somewhat surprised)

You didn't mention you were that certain.

TROI

I was wrong not to tell you, Captain. And your decision may also be wrong.

Picard starts to say something, but it's INTERRUPTED BY ANOTHER SOUND from the door.

PICARD

Yes? Come in, please.

114 TO INCLUDE DATA

as he enters, hesitant too.

DATA

I have a question, sir.

(sits)

What is death?

PICARD

You've picked probably the most difficult of all questions, Data.

There is the beginning of a twinkle in Picard's eyes again. It is the sort of question that his mind loves.

114 CONTINUED:

PICARD

(continuing)

Some explain it by inventing gods wearing their own form... and argue that the purpose of the entire universe is to maintain themselves in their present form in an Earth-like garden which will give them pleasure through all eternity. And at the other extreme, assuming that is an "extreme," are those who prefer the idea of our blinking into nothingness with all our experiences, hopes and dreams only an illusion.

DATA

Which do you believe?

114A CLOSE ON PICARD

considering the question.

PICARD

Considering the marvelous complexity of our universe, its clockwork perfection, its balances of this against that... matter, energy, gravitation, time, dimension, pattern, I believe our existence must mean more than a meaningless illusion. I prefer to believe that my and your existence goes beyond Euclidian and other "practical" measuring systems... and that, in ways we cannot yet fathom, our existence is part of a reality beyond what we understand now as reality.

A moment of silence, then:

TROI

We should not let ourselves die,
Jean-Luc!

Picard is startled by the fact this statement comes from Troi of all people. Geordi has ENTERED as:

114A CONTINUED:

DATA

I agree with her, Captain.

TROI

If only half of us live, I prefer
to take my chances on being one
that does.

GEORDI

Yes. It's wrong of you to force
us into this...

DATA

It is wrong...

PICARD

(interrupting)

Yes, this is very wrong. None
of you should be reacting like
this.

115 PICARD

as he strides to the Companel on his cabin wall. CLOSE
ANGLE - as he touches it:

PICARD

Computer, locate Commander Data.

COMPUTER VOICE

Commander Data is on the bridge.

Picard turns.

116 WIDER ANGLE - PICARD AND ENTIRE CABIN

No one is there! There's a look of astonishment on
his face. Except for himself, the cabin is empty.

PICARD

It's not going to work, Nagilum.

Picard stands there, for a beat.

DATA'S COM VOICE

Captain, we are clear. We are
out of the void.

116 CONTINUED:

RIKER'S COM VOICE

It's gone, Captain -- we can abort
the auto-destruct.

PICARD

Hold, Number One.

RIKER

But...

PICARD

Hold.

As Picard exits.

COMPUTER VOICE

Fifty seconds to auto-destruct.

117 OMITTED

117A INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

There is the familiar starfield on the viewscreen as
Picard enters from the turbolift.

COMPUTER VOICE

Thirty seconds to auto-destruct.

DATA

Captain, we are clear of the
void. You may stop the
auto-destruct.

PICARD

Data, on any heading -- warp six
-- now!

117B
thru OMITTED
117C

117D EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

stretches into warp.

117E INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard's resolve is undiminished.

117E CONTINUED:

RIKER

Captain.

PICARD

I don't believe it, Number One.
It could still be part of the
illusion. Data, report.

DATA

All navigational systems confirm
-- we are at warp six -- on
course...

No one even breathes for a long moment...

COMPUTER VOICE

Ten seconds to auto-destruct.
Nine seconds. Eight seconds.
Seven seconds... Six seconds...

DATA

... to the Morgana Quadrant.

COMPUTER VOICE

Five seconds. Four seconds...

PICARD

Troi?

TROI

It's gone, Captain. I no longer
sense its presence.

PICARD

Abort auto-destruct sequence.

COMPUTER VOICE

Three seconds. Two seconds...
Riker, William T. Do you concur?

RIKER

(relieved)

Yes! Absolutely! I do indeed
concur! Wholeheartedly!

PICARD

A simple "yes" would have been
sufficient, Number One.

RIKER

I didn't want there to be any
chance of a misunderstanding.

117E CONTINUED: (2)

Picard nods, then calmly exits to his Ready Room.

GEORDI

He sure held that bluff to the
last second.

RIKER

(laughs)
What bluff?

117F INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

Picard is at his desk.

PICARD

Well, Nagilum... I hope you got
what you needed.

A moment, then the Intruder MATERIALIZES on the small
viewscreen. The image is filled with static.

NAGILUM

You have provided me with much
more than I needed...

PICARD

Why did you release us? You
could have seen how we faced
death.

NAGILUM

It wasn't necessary. I have
learned all I needed to know.
Would you like me to share some
of my conclusions?

PICARD

I'm not interested.

117F CONTINUED:

NAGILUM

Of course you are. You are too inquisitive not to want to know.

(he pauses)

You seem to find no tranquility in anything. You struggle against the inevitable. You thrive on conflict. You are selfish, yet you value loyalty. You are rash, quick to judge, slow to change. It's amazing you've survived. Be that as it may -- as species, we have no common ground. You are too aggressive. Too hostile. Too militant.

PICARD

During this period, you too have been evaluated. It would seem we have at least one thing in common.

NAGILUM

Oh?

PICARD

Curiosity.

NAGILUM

The point is well taken, Captain. Perhaps that is a trait we share.

PICARD

Then perhaps we'll meet again. But next time, it will be out here among the stars.

The STATIC CRACKLES Nagilum off and Picard stands for a beat at the blank screen.

117G INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard takes his command chair.

PICARD

Put us back on course, at warp three.

WESLEY

Warp three, sir...

117G CONTINUED:

RIKER

And Ensign -- let's give any holes
a wide berth.

118 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

as it accelerates to warp three and disappears in the
distance.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END