



# STAR TREK

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## STRANGE NEW WORLDS



STAR TREK: STRANGE NEW WORLDS

EPISODE 004

"Some Disputed Barricade"

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1st Draft

12/16/2013

BASED ON "STAR TREK"

TEASER

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise orbits Cossaea II. The nebula surrounds them as do three large alien vessels. The energy storm is relatively quiet.

DAYSTROM (V.O.)  
Captain's Log, Commander Daystrom reporting. The signal we received from Cossaea II has been revealed to be a lure to draw us into a trap where a hostile species was waiting to ambush us.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL

Chang is in his EVA suit, arms raised, being led down a corridor at gunpoint by three of the beetle-like aliens.

DAYSTROM (V.O.)  
Commander Chang has negotiated a surrender with the enemy vessels in order to give us time to find a peaceful resolution.

They lead him into the main control room where he comes face-to-face with the commander of the alien ship.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Daystrom sits in the Captain's Chair. Relief crew man the primary stations.

Becker sits at a large console along the rear wall of the Bridge, working diligently. Joli is leaning against the console, awaiting nervously.

DAYSTROM  
Lt. Becker is attempting to communicate with the nebula to ask it to stop the energy storm so that we may retrieve our landing party.

EXT. COSSAEA II - SURFACE

McHugh, Viin, Lexia, ASH and the grievously wounded Qora sit inside a forcefield dome near their shuttlecraft. They are surrounded by 6 of the aliens, all holding weapons.

DAYSTROM (V.O.)  
The Captain and the landing party are being held captive on the (more)

(cont'd) planet and one of our crew is gravely wounded. Time is of the essence, and it is rapidly running short.

McHugh holds Qora, whose wound is gaping and is not healing as quickly as her previous, more minor wounds. ASH and Lexia sit nearby. Viin sits alone, not wanting to see it.

MCHUGH

ASH, is there anything you can do?  
First aid?

ASH

I'm sorry, Captain. Dr. Daystrom did not have time to fully prepare me for duty. I have not had any combat medic subroutines programmed as of yet.

QORA

(straining, through  
gritted teeth)  
Transporter... buffer... First  
aid...

McHugh doesn't understand. He looks at Lexia, who shakes her head.

ASH understands, though, and reaches down to Qora's belt, activating a round, hockey-puck-shaped device on it.

ASH

All Hazard Team crew members carry a portable transporter buffer for storing equipment. A first aid kit is standard issue.

McHugh holds up a hand to make him wait until he can reposition himself so that he's blocking the guard's vision. Then he nods.

ASH taps a couple buttons on the buffer and a handheld medical device appears in his hand.

McHugh takes it.

MCHUGH

I've had to use one of these before...

McHugh runs it over Qora's wound and it helps staunch the bleeding, but it cannot close the wound.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

Dammit!

LEXIA

Those are just made to stop blood loss and help stabilize casualties.

MCHUGH  
Then why isn't it working?

LEXIA  
The wound's too deep. Normally a  
wound like that would have been fatal.  
I think Qora's regenerative ability  
is just managing to keep her alive.

McHugh curses under his breath and throws the device down on the ground.

QORA  
(groans)

McHugh looks at her, then at Lexia.

MCHUGH  
Lex... can you at least make her...  
more comfortable?

Lexia looks down at Qora. Qora looks confused.

Lexia reaches out to touch Qora on her exposed skin around the wound. Qora looks down at her hand apprehensively.

LEXIA  
Don't worry, Lieutenant...  
everything's going to be okay.

Lexia closes her eyes and calm comes over her as she touches Qora's midsection, bare skin to bare skin.

Qora's eyes light up in alarm at the touch and she tenses up. But almost immediately, her facial expression changes to one of surprise, then calm. Her eyes become heavily lidded as she has an almost blissful expression and her whole body relaxes.

ASH watches with fascination.

Qora's eyes close now, and she seems to slip into unconsciousness.

Lexia's eyes open.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
She should rest for a while now.

MCHUGH  
Thank you, Lexi.

Lexia nods.

McHugh looks at the aliens. They don't seem to care about anything that has transpired.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL - CONTROL ROOM

Chang stands in the control room, but it's very sparse. There are no monitors, no readouts, no controls.

His helmet's HUD shows a breathable atmosphere and he removes his helmet and looks around the control room.

He appears a bit confused by the sparseness, but he is trying to be very observant, pick out any tidbit of information that might come in handy.

He turns to the larger, painted alien.

CHANG

So, you're the biggest and ugliest.  
I take it that means you're in charge?

The alien turns to face him. His collar lights up and a voice comes from it - the same voice they've heard since their first hail.

ALIEN VOICE

You wish to discuss terms of  
surrender.

Chang tries to change the subject.

CHANG

Impressive ship. Very big. But not  
all that comfy on the inside.  
Very... utilitarian.

ALIEN VOICE

You are wasting time-

CHANG

How do you fly this big crate anyway?  
I don't see any controls or  
viewscreens or anything. Wish real  
hard?

ALIEN VOICE

Our vessel is not your concern, you  
are here to discuss-

Chang pokes at the alien, tapping his finger on his hard exoskeleton.

CHANG

What are you guys, anyway? Some kind  
of... dung beetle?

ALIEN VOICE

Commander-

Chang gets a disgusted look on his face.

CHANG  
Do you eat dung?

ALIEN VOICE  
Your attempt to-

He sniffs and his nose wrinkles up.

CHANG  
'cause it sure smells like you do...

ALIEN VOICE  
Enough!

There is a slight delay and Chang looks around. None of the aliens move for a couple seconds.

Suddenly, the large alien reaches out to swing at Chang, but Chang anticipates it and easily evades it.

CHANG  
You guys are kinda slow, aren't you?  
I saw that coming a mile away.

ALIEN VOICE  
Do not be a fool, Commander-

The aliens raise their weapons to aim at Chang.

CHANG  
But I'm guessing you guys can't sense  
the future. So I bet you didn't see  
this coming!

Chang drops a bunch of round silver balls from his left hand and they roll across the floor under the aliens. They don't seem to respond at all.

ALIEN VOICE  
What?

Chang jumps out of the way and the room flashes with bright light, knocking the aliens down. When the light fades away, Chang is gone.

ALIEN VOICE (CONT'D)  
What's going on! Stand up, you  
fools!

The aliens slowly and awkwardly rise to the feet and look around. Chang is nowhere to be seen.

ALIEN VOICE (CONT'D)  
Find him!

The aliens march out of the control room.

As they leave, the view shifts up to reveal Chang hanging from the ceiling, using his magnetized boots to hold him to it.

END OF TEASER

SERIES MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The *Enterprise* sits in orbit around Cossaea II, the alien ships surrounding it. The nebula and storm are in the background.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Lt. Becker sits at a large rear console. Daystrom and Joli are standing behind him.

LT. BECKER

I don't understand, the nebula isn't responding.

DAYSTROM

Are you certain it's receiving our transmissions?

LT. BECKER

Yes, I'm using the same frequencies as before.

JOLI

But before all you did was repeat its message back to it. Maybe it just doesn't understand us?

LT. BECKER

I guess it's possible. But I was sure I translated correctly. We can understand it, but... maybe its vocabulary is more limited. Or its syntax more complex.

DAYSTROM

Perhaps it is time we considered Chief Kopec's torpedo.

LT. BECKER

No!

JOLI

Burn the nebula away?! Mr. Daystrom, you're talking about killing a sentient life-form unlike any we've ever encountered before!

DAYSTROM

I understand your concern, Doctor. And I share it. But we do not know enough about this nebula to be making judgments about its sentience nor the ethics of disrupting it.



Joli and Becker can't believe this.

Daystrom steps away and looks at the viewscreen.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)

We must be careful not to project our own biases onto the facts. Here is what we know for certain:

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)

One: We are surrounded by a nebula of unknown nature.

Lt. Becker opens his mouth to say something, but Daystrom continues.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)

Two: an energy storm in this nebula has continually endangered our ship and interfered with our systems.

BECKER

I explained that - the nebula is communicating with us using the energy bolts-

DAYSTROM

Three: We received a message from something out there. We cannot be certain if it came from the nebula, or if it was yet another false message from the hidden enemy vessels.

Becker wants to debate this, but the thought had actually never occurred to him.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)

Four: The enemy vessels that surround us either will not or cannot destroy us. They are of little immediate concern.

Joli and Becker look at each other.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)

And finally: Our captain and landing party are in mortal, immediate danger on the planet below. We cannot beam them up due to the interference from the nebula's energy storm.

Daystrom turns back and looks at them.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)

If we were to consider all of this data objectively, the one course of action with the highest probability of saving life is the most direct. (more)

(cont'd) Disrupt the energy storm with the torpedo, beam up the Captain and retreat to the Gate. As Commander Chang ordered us.

BECKER  
But the nebula is alive!

DAYSTROM  
So you believe, Lt. Becker. But we have no empirical proof it is either alive or sentient.

JOLI  
But what if it is?

Daystrom is getting exasperated.

DAYSTROM  
We cannot base our decisions on supposition, Doctor. Do you know of Occam's Razor?

Joli knows what's coming.

JOLI  
Don't you-

Daystrom addresses Becker.

DAYSTROM  
Occam's Razor states that, when presented with the unexplainable, the best theory to explain it is the one that makes the least presumptions.

Becker sags in his seat. Daystrom turns to Joli.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)  
Shave away the assumptions from your own personal biases, Doctor, and what are you left with? The simplest explanation is that the nebula is not alive.

Joli and Becker look crestfallen. Daystrom has successfully brow-beaten them with his objectivistic logic.

Daystrom activates his holographic comm unit implanted in his temple.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)  
Chief Kopec.

A holographic image of Kopec appears.

KOPEC  
Yes? Daystrom? Where's Chang?

DAYSTROM  
Chang is no longer in command.  
Prepare your countermeasure for  
launch.

KOPEC  
Finally! We'll be ready to launch in  
5 minutes!

The hologram disappears.

Daystrom looks at Joli and Becker, both are disappointed. He seems to feel sympathy for them.

DAYSTROM  
We don't know for certain that Chief  
Kopec's torpedo will completely  
destroy the nebula.

Joli looks at Daystrom with disgust.

JOLI  
This is why we never should have come  
here.

She turns to head for the turbolift.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
I'll be in Sickbay. When you beam  
them up, beam them directly to me.

Joli steps into the turbolift.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
Then you can come down and explain to  
the Captain yourself how brilliant  
you are.

The turbolift doors close.

Becker, defeated, goes to turn off the monitor.

DAYSTROM  
What are you doing, Lieutenant?

Becker is confused.

BECKER  
You said... what's the point?

DAYSTROM  
Lt. Becker, we must never neglect the  
opportunity to collect more data.  
Only with the most complete data  
possible can we hope to make the  
correct decision.

Becker is confused.

BECKER  
But, the torpedo-

DAYSTROM  
You have 5 minutes to change my mind,  
Lieutenant.

Daystrom walks away to return to the Captain's chair.

Becker, stunned, quickly turns back to his monitor and works feverishly to try to rewrite his translation program.

EXT. COSSAEA II - SURFACE

McHugh is studying the alien guards. They are standing perfectly still.

He regards them with a thoughtful expression. Lexia sees this.

LEXIA  
Cole...?

MCHUGH  
(whispering)  
Does something seem... off to you  
about them?

Lexia looks at them.

LEXIA  
The do seem to be very... still.

MCHUGH  
What do you make of those collars?

Lexia considers them.

LEXIA  
Translators? Life support?

MCHUGH  
Have you noticed... when they speak,  
their physical mouths don't seem to  
move. Sometimes their mouths move  
and they don't speak.

LEXIA  
Telepathic translation?

MCHUGH  
Maybe.

McHugh thinks for a second, then yells out, startling Lexia.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
HEY!

The aliens do not respond.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
HEY!!

McHugh picks up a rock and throws it at the force field, right where one of the aliens is standing.

LEXIA  
(whispering)  
Cole, what are you-

McHugh suddenly stands up and starts walking towards one of the aliens. Viin and ASH are surprised by this as well.

McHugh walks right up to the edge of the force field and looks right into the face of one of the creatures, then down at the collar. He looks left and right at the other ones.

VIIN  
(whispering to Lexia)  
What's he doing?

Lexia shrugs.

McHugh comes back over and crouches by the group, motioning to gather closely. They do.

LEXIA  
Cole, what-

MCHUGH  
I have a hunch.

He looks at Lexia.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
Let's try something.

He gets a smile on his face that makes Lexia uneasy. He turns to ASH.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
ASH, can you deactivate yourself?

ASH looks confused.

ASH  
Yes, sir.

MCHUGH  
And can you reactivate?

ASH thinks for a moment.

ASH  
I can start a shut down and reboot  
process with a pre-set delay, if  
that's what you need, Captain.

MCHUGH  
Perfect. Give me 30 seconds.

ASH  
Aye, sir.

Lexia looks at him like he's about to do something really stupid.

LEXIA  
You're about to do something really  
stupid, aren't you.

McHugh gives her a wry smile.

MCHUGH  
Only if it doesn't work!

McHugh holds up his hand and looks around to make ASH wait for  
a signal.

He turns to Viin and starts to talk.

CUT TO:

Close-up on one of the aliens. It is looking straight ahead with  
no apparent interest.

Close-up on a lens on the collar. Reflected in it is McHugh and  
the landing party. McHugh is talking to ASH and Viin.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL - CORRIDOR

Chang is sneaking through the corridor, looking left and right  
for a promising room. He comes to two doors, one on either side.

He hears some of the aliens coming and looks anxiously at both  
doors, trying to decide which one to go into.

He closes his eyes and focuses, taking a deep breath.

SEE quick, sketchy FLASHES of his immediate future, turning into  
the left room and the right room. In the left room, the aliens  
come in and find him. In the right room, he sees three  
rectangular shapes.

Suddenly he opens his eyes and turns into the room on the right.

The aliens come into the corridor and walk down it. Some pass  
both doors, but two enter the other door, on the left.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL - PORTAL ROOM

Chang looks around and sees that there are three rectangular devices in the room that look like they could be stepped through. He walks up to them.

CHANG  
Jackpot!

Chang walks up to the rectangular structures and touches them, investigating them.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
... these have to be some kind of  
transportation device... ones that  
work despite the storm...

He looks around the room frantically. There are no other features of any kind in the room.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
(in frustration)  
But where the Hell are the controls?!

EXT. COSSAEA II - SURFACE

McHugh is walking towards one the aliens at the edge of the force field, blocking its view of the gathered landing party behind him.

Behind McHugh's back, he gives a hand signal.

ASH suddenly disappears his emitter drops. Viin catches it.

Viin looks around, but none of the aliens react!

McHugh looks directly into the lens of the collar on the alien he's standing in front of.

Behind his back, he motions with his hand for Viin to head for the edge of the force field.

Viin quickly does, but not so quickly as to seem suspicious.

When she gets to the edge, she crouches down, looking back at McHugh and the alien guards.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL - CORRIDOR

Chang is sneaking down another corridor and passes a door. Then he stops and has a feeling about the door. He slips inside.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL - HUB

In the room is a huge central machine hanging from the ceiling. It's the most active, complex thing Chang has seen on the ship. The rest of the ship is extremely utilitarian and bare, almost like a shell. But this object clearly has a very important purpose.

The central machine is lit up and has many small flickering lights on it. They turn on and off intermittently.

There are several smaller machines hanging down in a circle around the central machine - 8 of them. Each connected to the main machine by thick cable of many entwined smaller wires.

The entire room is being kept cool by a cooling system.

Chang's face lights up with pleasant surprise.

CHANG  
(in discovery)  
Hello...

Chang inspects the large machine, trying to figure out its purpose.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
You look important...

Chang is searching the object for any kind of controls or a display monitor. He takes off his gloves and feels around for any kind of hidden latch or opening.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
Come on, there has to be a panel or  
something...

Suddenly, Chang senses something and he looks around, concerned. There's no place to hide and only one exit. Chang closes his eyes in resignation.

He hears the doors to the room open and makes no move to escape.

ALIEN VOICE (O.S.)  
You won't find any controls,  
Commander.

Chang turns and sees that the alien leader and two of his subordinates have started entering the room. He turns to face them, putting himself between them and the large machine.

ALIEN VOICE (CONT'D)  
Because there aren't any.

Chang takes a neutral stance, hands down at his side. He's watching the leader carefully.



ALIEN VOICE (CONT'D)  
You disappoint us, Commander. We  
thought you were going to choose the  
smarter, easier option.

As the leader says this, Chang notices the collar's light flashes  
in perfect sync with one of the lights on the smaller machine  
hanging above its head.

CHANG  
Don't worry, once you get to know us,  
you'll know better.

Chang looks around at the smaller machines, something finally  
making sense for him.

ALIEN VOICE  
You leave us no choice. Your  
crewmates will now die.

Chang looks back at the leader.

CHANG  
No, wait. You win. I give up.

Chang raises his hands and puts them behind his head.  
Surreptitiously he activates his MFID. A red light begins  
flashing on its display and it reads:

RECORDING

The two other aliens start to approach him.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
So how do you fly your ships, then?  
Telepathy?

The two aliens grab Chang by the arms and hold them.

ALIEN VOICE  
Your minds are so limited.

The leader alien approaches him.

CHANG  
This thing isn't an engine, it's a  
communication device, isn't it?  
Some sort of network-

The leader zaps Chang with his weapon and Chang cries out in pain  
and collapses.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
AAGGHH!!

The two other aliens drag him away.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. COSSAEA II - SURFACE

Wide establishing shot, showing the shuttlecraft, the forcefield bubble, the 6 alien guards standing around it and McHugh and the landing party inside.

EXT. COSSAEA II - SURFACE

Viin is at the edge of the forcefield bubble, digging frantically, trying to hide what she's doing.

McHugh is glancing at her, then turns to look back at the alien. To his surprise, it lowers its head to look directly at him!

Its collar lights up as it speaks to him, loudly, startling McHugh and the others.

ALIEN VOICE  
(to McHugh)  
What are you doing?  
(BEAT)  
Stand back from the field!

McHugh stays put.

MCHUGH  
Who's in charge here? I want to speak  
to your leader.

ALIEN VOICE  
Stand back!

The alien raises its weapon at McHugh. McHugh raises his hands and takes a cautious step back, but still blocking its view.

MCHUGH  
(playing for time)  
Let me talk to your leader! We can  
work this out, it doesn't have to be  
this way-

Another alien's collar lights up and the voice comes from it.

ALIEN VOICE  
Where is the other one?

MCHUGH  
(feigned ignorance)  
What?

The alien in front of him replies.

ALIEN VOICE  
There are only four of you. There  
were five before!

McHugh looks around, then back at the alien.

MCHUGH  
(deadpan)  
No there weren't.

The aliens seem confused, looking around at them. One of them notices Viin.

ALIEN VOICE  
You! What are you doing?

Viin looks back and sees one of the aliens has spotted her.

She quickly shoves ASH's small, spherical emitter into the tunnel she's dug under the shield and fills the hole back up with dirt.

ALIEN VOICE (CONT'D)  
Back away from the field!

The alien holds up its weapon and points it at Viin as it walks over to her.

Viin pats down the dirt, then raises her hands and crawls back a couple feet.

MCHUGH  
Relax, relax, there's nothing to get  
upset about-

The alien in front of McHugh speaks.

ALIEN VOICE  
It is a shame your crew is so stubborn,  
Captain. Your usefulness is at an  
end.

The alien raises its weapon at McHugh and it begins to charge. McHugh starts stepping away. He looks back at Viin. The other alien is approaching her and comes to stand where she was digging.

McHugh is silently counting, mouthing the numbers. He gets to 30.

MCHUGH  
GET DOWN!

McHugh dives for cover behind a rock. Viin scrambles away from the edge of the field. Lexia pulls Qora down and lays flat with her.

Gora's eyes flutter open and she starts to stir, but Lexia holds her down tightly.

Suddenly, right in front of the alien near Viin, ASH's holographic emitter bursts out of the ground, outside of the force-field, and shoots up to chest-height.

The alien doesn't react immediately and ASH's hologram instantly coalesces right in front of it.

ASH quickly grabs the alien's weapon with one hand and punches the alien directly in the collar with the other, hurling the alien backward.

The other aliens finally react to this and turn to see ASH holding one of their weapons.

Quickly, ASH turns and fires at them - directly through the force field. The shots go right through, as their weapons are attuned to pass through the field.

His shots hit the collars, making them explode and causing the aliens to fall over backward, incapacitated.

ASH takes out four of them before they can react.

The fifth one's weapon is charging up and about to fire. Viin sees this.

VIIN

ASH!

ASH turns towards the final alien just in time to see it fire at him! But the shot passes through him as he drops his weapon and starts sprinting at full speed around the force-field at the alien.

The alien fires at him a few more times as ASH quickly approaches him. Each shot goes through him.

ALIEN VOICE

Impossible!

ASH reaches the alien, puts his hand inside its collar and solidifies inside it, making the collar explode and sending the alien reeling back, falling over, finally lying still.

ASH looks around at each alien, quickly verifying that they are all defeated.

McHugh, Viin and Lexia raise their heads to look around.

ASH picks up the weapon of the last alien he took out, aims it at the forcefield generator and shoots it, destroying it and lowering the forcefield.

Gora's eyes are half-open, having seen it all. She looks at ASH in fatigued awe.

QORA  
(weakly)  
Holy crap...

INT. ENTERPRISE - TORPEDO ROOM

Kopec oversees engineers loading a torpedo into its tube and he does some final checks on it, tapping on its control panel.

He nods and the engineers close the tube and lock it.

Kopec activates his MFID comm.

KOPEC  
Kopec to Bridge. Torpedo loaded and  
ready, Daystrom.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Daystrom is sitting in the Captain's Chair. He answers the hail.

DAYSTROM  
Acknowledged, Chief.

He stands up and looks at the viewscreen.

KOPEC (VIA COMM)  
Ready to fire at your command!

Daystrom looks back at Becker, who has heard this and looks to Daystrom.

Daystrom stares at Becker for a moment. Becker holds his gaze, pleadingly, but then lowers his head, having failed.

DAYSTROM  
Lt. Ktimba...

Daystrom raises his hand, ready to give the fire command.

Lt. Ktimba works her console and places her finger above the "fire" button.

Suddenly there is a chirp at the Comm station and the Jem'Hadar Communications Officer checks it.

KETAN'DAGA  
Commander! Incoming transmission  
from Captain McHugh!

Daystrom is shocked. He lowers his hand.

DAYSTROM  
On screen!

Ketan'Daga presses a button on his console and McHugh appears on screen, inside his shuttle with Viin, Lexia, Qora and ASH behind him. Viin is working on getting the shuttle running.

The audio and video is patchy, but good enough to see and understand McHugh.

Weapons fire can be heard and the shuttle is shaking, smoking and sparking. The lights in the shuttle are flickering. McHugh has to yell over the noise.

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
Enterprise, come in!

DAYSTROM  
Enterprise here, Captain!

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
Daystrom?

McHugh is surprised to see him, wondering where Chang is. But he doesn't have time to ask.

MCHUGH (VIA COMM) (CONT'D)  
We've escaped our captors, but they've sent reinforcements! The shuttle is too damaged to take off and our emergency transporters won't work!

DAYSTROM  
We cannot beam you up, Captain, the energy storm is interfering-

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
What about the ship?

DAYSTROM  
The ship?

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
Are you under attack?

DAYSTROM  
We're surrounded by three enemy vessels, sir. We're attempting to-

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
Forget us! Take the ship and retreat to the Gate!

Daystrom is surprised by this, he wasn't expecting it.

DAYSTROM  
Captain, we can-

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
Do it, Daystrom! That's an order!

Daystrom is at a loss, paralyzed by indecision.

DAYSTROM  
I... I don't...

Becker is watching this, agonizing over the crisis. Behind him, text begins to appear on his monitor. He hears the sound of the text appearing and looks confused.

He turns and sees the text. He reads it as McHugh and Daystrom continue to debate.

On Becker's monitor appears the message, character by character:  
Hear you.  
Understand.  
Silent now.

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
Daystrom, you have to save the ship!  
The five hundred lives on that ship  
are all that matter!

DAYSTROM  
Yes, but... I...

The meaning of the message dawns on Becker. He looks at the viewscreen.

BECKER  
Commander!

Daystrom turns and looks back at him. He's not sure what Becker wants, then sees the message on the monitor!

BECKER (CONT'D)  
It heard us!

EXT. ENTERPRISE

Around the Enterprise, the energy storm suddenly comes to a halt - the flashes of light cease and the nebula darkens and gets quiet abruptly.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

The Andorian Science Officer is checking her console.

LT. TARA  
The energy storm has stopped,  
Commander!

Daystrom is shocked by this. It takes him a moment to realize what's happened. Suddenly, he turns to the viewscreen.

DAYSTROM  
Captain! Prepare to beam up!

MCHUGH (VIA COMM)  
What?!

Daystrom's NEM gets very active.

DAYSTROM  
NOMI!

NOMI's hologram appears in front of him from his temple projector.

NOMI  
Yes, Dr. Daystrom.

DAYSTROM  
Emergency site-to-site transport!  
Beam the Captain and the landing party  
directly to Sickbay!

NOMI  
Right away, Dr. Daystrom.

INT. SHUTTLE SAGAN

McHugh and the landing party dematerialize just as the door gets blasted in and aliens step into the empty shuttle.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Daystrom stands, waiting expectantly.

DAYSTROM  
NOMI, are they aboard?

NOMI  
Yes, Dr. Daystrom, the landing party  
is aboard.

The Breen Helmsman turns and speaks to Daystrom.

MR. GOR  
Should I set course for the Gate?

Daystrom looks down at him, wide-eyed, trying to process everything that's going on.

DAYSTROM  
No...

MR. GOR  
But-



DAYSTROM  
No, just - just wait!

Kopec appears on Daystrom's comm.

KOPEC  
Daystrom, what's going on up there?  
The torpedo's loaded and ready!

Daystrom sits back in the Captain's Chair.

DAYSTROM  
Abort, Chief.

Daystrom looks at Becker. Becker smiles at him.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)  
Abort.

INT. ENTERPRISE - TORPEDO ROOM

Kopec looks baffled and irate.

KOPEC  
Abort?!

Daystrom looks at him through the MFID holographic display.

DAYSTROM (VIA COMM)  
We don't be needing it, Chief. Stand  
down.

Kopec glares at the MFID and the comm channel closes,  
deactivating the hologram.

Kopec stands there dumbfounded for a second, scowling at thin  
air. He looks around and sees his engineers staring at him. He  
angrily waves them off.

KOPEC  
What are you standing around for?!  
You heard him! Get it out of here!

The engineers look at each other for a second, then hurriedly  
set about unloading the torpedo.

Kopec's antennae point forward and he storms out of the room  
grumbling to himself.

KOPEC (CONT'D)  
No way to run a ship...

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Qora lies on a medical bed. McHugh and Lexia stand beside it. Lexia is holding Qora's hand.

ASH and Viin stand further back, against a wall, trying to stay out of the way.

Dr. Joli is running around, getting a medical cart and pushing it over to a bed that Qora is lying on. She's yelling to other medics and directing them.

JOLI  
(to a medic)  
Get the cardiostimulator!

The medic runs to a medical shelf and grabs it.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
(to another medic)  
I need 5 liters of Centauri blood,  
stat!

The medic runs over to a biomedical replicator.

Joli pulls up the cart next to the bed and uses a laser scalpel to cut away Qora's uniform.

Qora reaches up and grabs her arm.

Joli, in crisis mode, looks at Qora, not understanding.

Qora stares into her eyes, pleading.

Joli looks at her questioningly.

Qora looks at McHugh and Lexia for emphasis, then down at where Joli is cutting, then back at Joli.

Joli takes a second, then understands.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
Clear the O.R.!

Medics not involved in the procedure clear out.

McHugh and Lexia look around, confused. She looks at McHugh and Lexia.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
I've got this, Captain, you need to  
leave.

MCHUGH  
But-

JOLI  
Captain. Commander Chang needs you.

McHugh suddenly realizes that Chang wasn't on the Bridge for a reason. He turns to Lexia who looks back at him with concern.

McHugh bolts for the exit and leaves. Viin and ASH follow.

Lexia hesitates before leaving.

LEXIA  
Are you sure-

Joli nods and gestures for her to leave.

JOLI  
She'll make it.

Lexia nods and heads for the exit.

She stops before leaving, looking back.

Joli looks at her and raises an anti-contamination "clean field" around the operating area and adjusts it so that it turns an opaque white.

Lexia looks concerned about this, but then quickly turns and leaves as well.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR

McHugh runs down the corridor, concern and urgency on his face. He pushes past other crewmembers who are surprised to see him.

He runs into a turbolift.

INT. ENTERPRISE - TURBOLIFT

He quickly turns to see ASH and Viin coming around the bend down the corridor. He doesn't wait for them.

MCHUGH  
Bridge!

Lexia comes around the corner and stops as she sees McHugh in the turbolift, the doors closing. She sees him long enough to make eye contact before the doors close and she sees a worry on his face that makes her sick with worry herself.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

McHugh bursts out of the turbolift and onto the Bridge. On the viewscreen he can see the enemy ships.

Daystrom is surprised to see him and bolts up out of the Captain's Chair.

DAYSTROM  
Captain!

Becker stands up from his station in the rear and goes to the Ops station, calling down to McHugh and pointing at his monitor where the message from the nebula is displayed.

BECKER  
Captain, you won't believe this!

McHugh waves Becker off. He turns on Daystrom, serious, angry.

MCHUGH  
Where is Sol?!

Daystrom's mouth opens, but no words come out. He isn't sure how to say it.

McHugh searches his face for some clue, frantic.

The Jem'Hadar Communications Officer interrupts.

KETAN'DAGA  
Captain!

McHugh turns to him, then to the viewscreen as it comes to life.

On the viewscreen are several of the chitinous aliens standing in their control room. The leader stands at the front. He is holding a weapon aimed at Chang, who's in front of the leader, on his knees and facing the screen. Chang looks beaten and worn out, weak. Two aliens hold his arms.

MCHUGH  
Sol!

McHugh spins and turns to Daystrom.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
(so only Daystrom can hear)  
Beam him out of there, now!

Lt. Tarah answers so that only McHugh can hear.

LT. TARAH  
Their hulls are too thick, our sensors  
can't penetrate them...

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM)  
Surrender your ship, Captain McHugh.  
Or this one dies.

McHugh turns back to face the viewscreen. He steps forward.

MCHUGH  
We come in peace! There's no need-

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM)  
No!! You are intruders! We watched  
your probes come through and build  
your invasion gate!

Viin and Lexia come onto the Bridge and see the situation. Lexia audibly gasps at the sight of Chang, beaten and captured on the enemy ship.

McHugh looks back at her, exchanging worried expressions with her. He turns back to the alien leader.

MCHUGH  
Please... you misunderstand...

Viin takes her station and Lexia heads for hers.

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM)  
But we outsmarted you! We listened  
to your pathetic messages, learned  
your language, waited for you. We  
knew your technology would be greater  
than ours, but we gave you what you  
wanted, fooled you - trapped you!

MCHUGH  
Listen to me! This is not-

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM)  
Now you will surrender or he dies!

MCHUGH  
We're not invading!  
(BEAT)  
If you don't want us here, we'll  
leave!

The Bridge crew are surprised to hear this.

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM)  
We don't want you to leave. We want  
your ship!

McHugh is grasping at straws, trying to find a way to resolve this without conflict.

MCHUGH  
Release him and we can talk-

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM)  
No more talk!!!

Chang weakly speaks up.

CHANG (VIA COMM)  
Cole...

MCHUGH  
Sol...

CHANG (VIA COMM)  
Don't worry...

MCHUGH  
Wait-

CHANG (VIA COMM)  
It's my time...

McHugh blanches as he realizes what Chang means.

MCHUGH  
No-

CHANG (VIA COMM)  
Save the ship.

McHugh is about to say something, but Chang lashes out at the guards holding his arms, hitting one back and kicking the other.

Taking advantage of the confusion, Chang starts to do something on his MFID.

The aliens seem surprised at first but Chang is quickly shot through the chest by the leader. He has a gaping hole in his chest and falls to the ground, eyes wide open. Dead.

McHugh cries out in anguish.

MCHUGH  
NO!!!!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

On the viewscreen, Chang lies dead on the enemy ship.

McHugh falls back into his chair. He's in shock, gaping wide-eyed at the screen.

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM)  
This is your fault, Captain McHugh.  
All of this could have gone much  
easier.

The alien leader and other aliens turn to face the viewscreen.

ALIEN VOICE (VIA COMM) (CONT'D)  
Surrender your ship, Captain, or we  
will destroy it.

McHugh looks blankly at the screen. There is a long pause.

MCHUGH  
No.

ALIEN VOICE  
What?

MCHUGH  
No. You want this ship. If you  
destroy us, you will get nothing.

ALIEN VOICE  
We will learn what we can from your  
scraps, if we must.

McHugh is angry now. He stands up and steps forward.

MCHUGH  
Do your worst.

McHugh motions to the Jem'Hedar Comm Officer to cut communications. The screen deactivates and returns to a view of the nebula.

LT. KTIMBA  
They are not firing, sir.

McHugh looks back at her.

MCHUGH  
They're thinking about it.

Lexia is still in shock about Chang's death.

LEXIA  
Why did he do that?

McHugh looks back at the viewscreen.

MCHUGH  
To take away their leverage. They  
have no bargaining chip left.

DAYSTROM  
Captain. Commander Chang's last  
orders were for us to retrieve you and  
retreat to the Gate.

McHugh nods. He's thinking.

LEXIA  
We can't just leave him over there!

DAYSTROM  
I don't want to sound insensitive,  
but... Commander Chang is dead. We  
cannot change that.

LEXIA  
We don't know that! He might-

Daystrom gives her a look like she should know better. She cuts herself off, knowing he's probably right.

DAYSTROM  
Remaining here will serve no further  
purpose. The most prudent course of  
action is to retreat.

McHugh shakes his head.

MCHUGH  
And then what?

Lexia and Daystrom look at him questioningly.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
We return to the Gate, go back to our  
own galaxy and then what? What do we  
tell them? That we lost three  
crewmen, maybe four? That our first  
contact was a hostile species? That  
there are no answers here? That we  
should just give up?

McHugh looks back out at the viewscreen, walking towards it. He stares out at it for a few seconds, then turns and faces the entire Bridge crew.



MCHUGH (CONT'D)

We are not going to give up on this mission. This is not why we came here! There are answers out there, waiting for us!

He looks back at the screen, then back at the crew, resolute. He starts walking back toward the center of the Bridge, ready to act.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

Chang wouldn't want us to run away. He bought us some time, now let's make the best of it and figure out a way out of this.

Daystrom and Lexia look at each other.

Becker speaks up, a bit weakly.

BECKER

Captain, this isn't our only first contact...

McHugh looks at Becker, then Lexia and Daystrom quizzically.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

The Sickbay is relatively quiet now. Only a couple people are present and the room's lighting is dimmed.

Lt. Qora lies under a blanket on a medical bed behind her. One medic is monitoring her, keeping an eye on the medical display over her bed.

INT. ENTERPRISE - DR. JOLI'S OFFICE

Dr. Joli is sitting at her desk in her office adjacent to Sickbay. She can see Qora's bed through her window. She finishes typing her report and closes the file and leans back, sighing. She's mentally and emotionally exhausted.

Joli looks over at a small black dome on her desk. She thinks for a second, then reaches over and waves her hand over it.

The dome activates - it's a holoprojector, like a 25th century desk frame, only it projects a hologram of loved ones.

The hologram shows at least a dozen women of all ages (from child to elderly) all gathered together, smiling, laughing and hugging. One of them is Dr. Joli. This is her family.

Dr. Joli smiles at the sight of them. But there's a sadness to her smile. She misses them and she's worried she might never see them again.

MEDIC (O.S.)

Doctor!

Joli looks up to see the medic calling her through her window, from Qora's bed. She deactivates the hologram and exits her office.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Dr. Joli walks up to the medical bed and sees that Qora's woken up. She puts her hand on the medic's arm.

JOLI

I have this Paul, thank you.

The medic nods and leaves. Now only Joli and Qora are in the Sickbay.

JOLI (CONT'D)

How are you feeling, Qora?

Qora rises up to her elbows.

QORA

A little sore, but...

Qora looks down at herself. She pulls the blanket down and sees a clear bandage over her wound. It's mostly healed now, it only looks like a fresh scar around a small hole.

JOLI

You're healing well. You should recover fully.

Qora sighs, wincing a bit.

QORA

Thank you, Doctor.

JOLI

Can I get you anything?

Qora avoids eye contact.

QORA

No...

Joli looks at her with concern, she knows something's bothering her.

JOLI

Qora?

Qora avoids her gaze.

QORA  
Doctor... did...  
(pause)  
Did anyone... see?

Joli looks at her with sympathy.

JOLI  
You mean...?

Qora looks directly at Joli. There's a mixture of apprehension and anger in her eyes.

Joli shakes her head with sympathy.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
No, Qora. Nobody saw. I cleared the  
O.R.

Qora shows visible relief, releasing some tension.

QORA  
Thank you, Doctor.

Joli puts her hand on Qora's arm. Qora looks at it, but doesn't pull away.

JOLI  
It's nothing to be ashamed of, you  
know.

Qora doesn't look at her.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
There's no need to hide what you are.

There's a long pause.

QORA  
You have no idea.

Joli doesn't understand.

JOLI  
(empathetically)  
Tell me.

Qora shakes her head. She's not ready to discuss this.

QORA  
It's not important.

Qora sits up and goes to get out of the bed.

Joli looks at her with surprise and alarm.

JOLI  
What are you doing?!

QORA  
I've got to get back to duty.

Joli comes around in front of Qora and tries to restrain her, but Qora is too strong.

JOLI  
Lieutenant, stop! You need more  
time-

QORA  
Doctor, the ship is at red alert.

Qora gestures to the flashing red lights on the wall.

QORA (CONT'D)  
We're either in battle or about to be.  
My place is on the Bridge.

JOLI  
They'll do fine without you!

Qora grabs a medical smock.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
You're going to get yourself killed if  
you-

Qora stops her, putting her hand on Joli's arm firmly.

QORA  
I'm a "redshirt". That's my job.

Qora moves past her and Joli lets her go, knowing there's no arguing with her. She watches, worried, as Qora leaves.

Behind Joli, on a desk projector, NOMI's hologram flickers on.

NOMI  
Excuse me, Dr. Joli.

Joli turns and sees NOMI, a bit surprised. She walks over to it and sits down.

JOLI  
Yes?

NOMI  
There's a senior staff meeting in the  
Deck 1 Conference Room in 5 minutes.

JOLI  
Thank you, NOMI, I'll be right there.

NOMI  
Very well, Doctor.

NOMI flickers off and Joli looks a bit thoughtful before standing back up and heading for the door.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise sits in orbit around Cossaea II, surrounded by three large enemy ships and the nebula, now silent and dark.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Captain's Log, supplemental. We're caught in a stalemate with an enemy force around Cossaea II. Their weapons can't penetrate our shields and we could easily destroy them but have no desire to start a war.

The view gets closer and closer on the ship until we can see through a window.

Captain McHugh stands at the window looking out at the enemy ships, which are reflected in the window.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
We have lost one of our own. My First Officer, Commander Chang. My best friend. I find myself torn between my duty to protect this crew and my duty to complete this mission.

Behind him, as the view moves to show the rest of the windows in the conference room that he's in, we can see his senior staff. They all appear very animated and arguing. He turns away from the window to face them.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CONFERENCE ROOM

The scene is somewhat chaotic. Some are standing, some are sitting. Everyone is talking over each other and seems to be arguing with everyone else in the room.

QORA  
-strike now, before they figure out a way to get through our shields!

DAYSTROM  
-prudent course of action is to retreat to the Gate!

LEXIA  
-can't just kill the first lifeforms we discover!

KOPEC  
-anything that we could easily outrun  
them!

BECKER  
-still think the nebula is the key!

JOLI  
-just come in here and do whatever we  
wanted without consequence!

McHugh turn to them and holds up his hand, but nobody notices.

MCHUGH  
(yelling over the noise)  
People!

Everyone quiets and looks at McHugh.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
This is getting us nowhere. I've  
heard all the arguments.

McHugh turns to Kopec and Daystrom.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
(to Kopec and Daystrom)  
We are not abandoning our mission.

KOPEC  
We don't need to abandon it, we can  
simply outrun them and-

MCHUGH  
So you say, Chief. But we don't know  
their capabilities. And I'm not  
going to have this conflict hanging  
over our heads while we run and hide  
across this galaxy. We're resolving  
this now.

DAYSTROM  
Captain, there is no benefit to  
exacting revenge-

Lexia is shocked at Daystrom's gall.

McHugh turns on Daystrom with a barely contained rage.

MCHUGH  
This is not about revenge!

McHugh gestures towards the ships outside.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
This is about our mission! Our duty!  
We came here on a mission of peace and  
discovery and that's what we're going  
to do!

Everyone is a bit shocked into silence by the outburst.

JOLI  
Is it worth all our lives, Captain?

McHugh looks at her. He understands and he clearly thinks it's  
not.

MCHUGH  
No. If it comes to that, we leave.  
But I don't think it's come to that  
yet.

QORA  
Captain, with a surgical strike, we  
could-

McHugh looks to Qora.

MCHUGH  
(to Qora)  
A counter-attack is off the table,  
Lieutenant.

QORA  
But-

MCHUGH  
Off the table.

Qora reluctantly accepts this.

McHugh leans back against the wall and thinks for a few moments.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
(to Becker)  
Lieutenant, you say you can  
communicate with the nebula?

BECKER  
Not perfectly, but yes, sir, we have  
made contact.

MCHUGH  
Do you have any understanding of its  
position on all of this? Would it  
take sides?

Becker is a bit surprised to hear this and Joli obviously thinks  
this is a terrible idea.

BECKER  
I... well, it has called them evil...  
"destroyers".

MCHUGH  
Do you think it would help us if we  
asked?

BECKER  
I... I don't know. I could try to  
find out.

JOLI  
Captain... should we really be  
putting another lifeform in harm's  
way?

McHugh knows she's right. He waves off the idea.

MCHUGH  
You're right. There's got to be  
another way.

Qora has been thinking and offers something.

QORA  
What about the collars?

McHugh is listening. Kopec is out of the loop.

KOPEC  
What collars?

McHugh nods to Daystrom and he brings up a video from the planet  
below.

MCHUGH  
On the planet, we noticed that our  
captors became essentially dormant  
during the time they were attacking  
the Enterprise.

McHugh points to one of the aliens and Daystrom zooms in on the  
collar.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
I figured they must have some sort of  
central intelligence that was getting  
overtaxed, trying to do too many  
things at once. And that the collars  
were their means of communication.

JOLI  
Like a hive mind?

KOPEC  
(alarmed)  
Like the Borg?!



DAYSTROM

No. I believe the collars are telepresence devices.

(pointing to parts on the collar)

This appears to be a camera and microphone, and a speaker here. The creatures are not talking, someone else is, through the collar.

LEXIA

That would make sense. The creatures guarding us appeared to be simple animals with no apparent brain mass. Most likely simple autonomous nervous systems.

MCHUGH

When ASH destroyed the collars, the creatures were completely inert, but still alive.

DAYSTROM

(nods)

Likely the collars also serve as remote control devices.

QORA

That explains their delayed reaction time.

Becker thinks about this.

BECKER

If they're being controlled... who's controlling them?

MCHUGH

That's the big question. Who and where are they?

(looking out at one of the ships)

They've got to be somewhere on one of those ships!

LEXIA

(in frustration)

If only our sensors could penetrate their hulls!

Daystrom has a sudden thought.

DAYSTROM

If they are being remotely controlled, there must be a control signal.

Lexia lights up.

LEXIA  
Of course! I could do a full spectrum  
sweep with our sensors, see if there's  
any powerful, ordered signals on any  
frequencies.

McHugh is liking this direction, he turns to Becker.

MCHUGH  
Lieutenant. If they find the signal,  
can you jam it?

BECKER  
I can try!

McHugh slaps his hands down on the back of his chair with purpose.

MCHUGH  
That's our best option. Get on it.  
We don't know how long this stalemate  
will last.

The crew all disperse.

As McHugh exits the room into the corridor, Lexia follows him.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR

Lexia catches up with McHugh.

LEXIA  
Cole?

McHugh looks back at her but keeps walking.

MCHUGH  
Commander.

Lexia walks beside him now, worried about him.

LEXIA  
How are you-

McHugh holds his hand up to her as a crewman passes. He stops  
and turns to her.

MCHUGH  
Not now. Not here.

McHugh turns and walks away. Lexia is deeply concerned for  
McHugh, seeing he's obviously deeply wounded by the death of his  
closest friend.

Lexia turns and heads back to the Conference Room where she sees  
Joli standing just inside the door, watching them.

Lexia approaches her.

JOLI  
How's he holding up?

Lexia shakes her head, starting to cry.

LEXIA  
(in anguish)  
I don't know!

Joli takes Lexia in her arms and comforts her, like a mother to a child.

Lexia lets her do this for a moment, but gathers herself and separates.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
I have work to do.

Joli understands.

JOLI  
Whenever you need...

Lexia nods and heads out the other side of the Conference Room toward the Bridge, wiping the tears from her eyes.

Joli looks out of the Conference Room into the empty corridor.

The doors close on a close-up of Joli, looking concerned.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh sits at his desk a bottle of some kind on it and an empty glass. This uniform is undone a bit.

He is slouched in his chair and in deep contemplation.

He turns on a display and plays back the last communication with the enemy ship.

He watches Chang get killed again. Then again. McHugh shakes his head, can't believe Chang is dead. He watches it once more.

This time, McHugh notices something and bolts upright in his chair. He plays it again and leans it closely and pauses it.

We see Chang has just taken out two guards and is messing with his MFID.

MCHUGH  
(under his breath)  
What are you doing...?

McHugh zooms the view in for a close-up on the MFID, but he can't clearly see the face of it. He plays the recording forward in slow-motion.

Chang's fingers do a couple quick actions on the MFID's flat display and a green light comes on it, just as he is shot and killed.

McHugh stares at it, trying to figure out what the Hell it means.

Suddenly, McHugh's MFID lights up. It's Daystrom.

DAYSTROM  
Captain! You'd better come see this!

McHugh, in alarm, jumps up from his chair and runs out of his quarters as he fixes his uniform.

On the screen, we can see in close-up the picture of Chang, lying dead, his MFID lit up green.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

The Bridge crew are all watching the viewscreen anxiously.

McHugh bolts out of the turbolift as it opens and comes down to the Captain's Chair where Daystrom is sitting.

MCHUGH  
What's going on?

Daystrom gets out of the chair and gestures to the screen.

VIIN  
Visual contact!

McHugh turns and looks at the screen. The enemy vessels are still out there. But as he squints, he sees dark shapes in the clouds. They get larger.

McHugh's eyes widen as he sees what the shape is. Another alien ship emerges from the clouds and joins the one in front of them. Then a second one emerges on the other side.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

Each of the three enemy ships is flanked by two new alien ships coming out of the nebula. The Enterprise is now surrounded by 9 enemy ships!

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise sits in orbit around Cossaea II, surrounded by 9 enemy ships. The nebula is still dark and silent.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

McHugh and the bridge crew stare out at the ships.

MCHUGH  
How many?

QORA  
Nine.

MCHUGH  
Dammit...

QORA  
Captain! Energy build-ups in all  
nine vessels!

McHugh looks back at her.

LEXIA  
I'm picking up spikes in graviton  
emission!

McHugh looks out at the ships. Energy arcs between all of them and a field begins to extend above and below them.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

A large spherical force field forms around the Enterprise, generated by the 9 ships.

INT. ENTERPRISE

MCHUGH  
What is it?

LEXIA  
... some kind of force field... like  
a tractor beam, but spherical.

QORA  
We're trapped.

DAYSTROM  
Captain.

McHugh doesn't want to hear it.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)  
Captain, we've lost every advantage  
we had. We are now outgunned and  
penned in.

McHugh is trying to wave him off, he's figured this out already.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)  
Captain, the stalemate has broken.  
Our only option that remains is-

MCHUGH  
I know, Commander. Return to your  
station.

Daystrom bristles a bit at being dismissed, but he returns to his station, exchanging glances with Qora and Lexia.

Becker sees an indicator on his console.

BECKER  
Captain...

McHugh nods. He turns and points to Lexia.

MCHUGH  
Keep looking for that signal!

Lexia goes to work, Daystrom joins her.

McHugh turns and nods to Becker and prepares himself.

The aliens appear on screen. The leader is there, flanked by a few others.

Chang still lies on the floor where he fell, dead.

McHugh sees this and it affects him strongly, but he holds it together.

ALIEN VOICE  
Captain. Now you see that your  
situation is hopeless. Your  
weakness and inaction have given us  
the advantage.

MCHUGH  
I admit, you have the upper hand.

The Alien Voice takes on a condescending, almost pitying tone.

ALIEN VOICE  
Your ship is lost, Captain.  
Surrender now and spare your crew the  
same.

McHugh looks at Chang's corpse. Then he sees the MFID, still on, still green.

MCHUGH  
You'll let my crew live if I  
surrender?

The Bridge crew are shocked to hear this. Lexia pauses momentarily, but quickly returns to her scanning.

ALIEN VOICE  
Lower your shields and we will board  
you. Then we can... "negotiate".

McHugh knows what this means, but he pretends to go along. He takes a deep breath, then:

MCHUGH  
Give me a moment to consult my senior  
officers.

The Alien Voice seems to almost sigh in annoyance.

ALIEN VOICE  
Very well. Make it quick.

McHugh turns his back to the viewscreen and faces the crew. He motions to Becker to mute the audio and Becker does.

McHugh looks at the Bridge crew, but talks to Becker.

MCHUGH  
Becker. Do you see Chang's MFID?

Becker looks at it on the screen and his eyes go wide, but then he looks down, trying to hide his expression.

BECKER  
Yes, sir. It's transmitting.

MCHUGH  
Can you pick up the feed through the  
open channel?

Becker works a few of his controls.

BECKER  
Yes, sir, it's on the same carrier  
frequency.

MCHUGH  
Do it. I want to know what he was  
trying to tell us.

Becker nods in silent acknowledgement and gets to work.

McHugh looks at Lexia and Daystrom who are running the scan on her console.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

Lexia.

Lexia looks at him.

LEXIA

It's going to take some time, Captain,  
but we're narrowing it down.

McHugh looks at Qora.

MCHUGH

Lt. Qora. Prepare to drop shields on  
my command.

QORA

Captain-!

McHugh holds up a hand to stop her.

MCHUGH

Post armed crewmen at in every  
corridor, 3 man teams. Tell them to  
aim for their collars.

McHugh now looks at Daystrom.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

Daystrom, inform the rest of the crew  
to gather in secure locations then,  
raise all containment fields.

Daystrom nods.

ALIEN VOICE

Captain. Surely even you have had  
enough time to make your decision.

McHugh turns back to the viewscreen and motions for Becker to  
unmute it.

ALIEN VOICE (CONT'D)

And, to be honest, Captain, it does  
not matter if your crew agrees or not.  
The decision has been made for you.

MCHUGH

I understand.

McHugh looks back at Daystrom and Qora. Both nod. McHugh looks  
back at the viewscreen.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

Lt. Qora. Lower shields.

Qora lowers the shields.



INT. ENTERPRISE - VARIOUS ROOMS

Series of shots in various rooms and corridors. Armed crewmen take up positions in doorways and behind cover as force-fields are raised cutting off one section from another.

INT. ENTERPRISE - ENGINEERING

Kopec guides engineers out of Engineering as a security guard hands out phasers from a crate to a couple engineers who will remain behind to fight. Kopec takes one of them and then ASH walks in. Kopec looks at him with surprise and disdain, but he nods and ASH comes in and joins them.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Dr. Joli and a medic are helping a wounded crewman on a medical bed. Lt. Ktimba comes in.

LT. KTIMBA  
Doctor, come on! You need to  
evacuate this area!

JOLI  
We can't move Ensign Sanders. His  
condition is too fragile.

Lt. Ktimba looks around. She pulls the patient's privacy wall across to conceal him and points to a good spot for cover behind another medical bed.

Lt. Ktimba pulls out her spare phaser and offers it to Joli or the medic. Joli reluctantly takes it.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

QORA  
Shields down, Sir.

ALIEN VOICE  
Very good, Captain. I can see your  
people will be easily dealt with.  
You have no stomach for sacrifice.

McHugh's face is set in firm resolve.

INT. ENTERPRISE - ENGINEERING

Kopec, a security guard, a couple armed engineers and ASH are all hiding around the room behind cover, in anticipation.

Kopec looks at ASH. ASH nods back at him. Kopec's eyes narrow and he lowers his antennae down almost flat with his head, ready for combat.

Suddenly, three portals open up in the large room and several aliens begin to step through!

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Dr. Joli, the medic and Lt. Ktimba are hiding behind a medical bed as a portal appears and three aliens step through.

INT. ENTERPRISE - VARIOUS ROOMS

In several different rooms, the rectangular portals appear and aliens step through them.

The armed crew are hiding, waiting.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Daystrom reads his console.

DAYSTROM  
Captain, several decks confirm: we  
have been boarded.

McHugh nods.

MCHUGH  
(shouts)  
Now, Qora!

Qora hits a button on her console.

INT. ENTERPRISE - VARIOUS ROOMS

In all the different boarded rooms, the portals have closed and the crew pop out of hiding and fire on the aliens, exchanging fire. They miss once or twice and the aliens fire back.

But the armed crew start hitting their collars and disabling them. The aliens fall to the ground, helpless.

INT. ENTERPRISE - ENGINEERING

Kopec and a couple engineers pop up and fire on the aliens. Kopec hits two of them, but has to duck back down as the aliens fire back.

ASH pops up on the other side of the room and quickly fires on all of the aliens with two phasers, one in each hand. The aliens

are too slow to react and he takes them all out before one even hits the ground.

Kopec stares at ASH in amazement. Then nods in appreciation.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Lt. Ktimba fires at the aliens and takes out two of them, but the last alien manages to fire back and hit Lt. Ktimba. She falls to the ground, wounded. Dr. Joli rushes over to check on her. It's just an arm wound, she'll live.

A medic picks up the phaser and is about to fire back, but Joli stops him just as the alien begins firing over the top of the medical bed over and over.

Joli and the medic are pinned, but Joli sees in a reflection where the third alien is. In the Operating Room area. She nods to the medic and the medic reaches up over the bed to blind-fire and distract the alien.

Joli dashes out and hits a control panel and a medical stasis field drops around the remaining alien, freezing it in place.

Dr. Joli sighs in relief and collapses against the wall, spent from the adrenaline.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

The aliens on the enemy ship show no reaction, but the voice yells in surprise.

ALIEN VOICE

What?!

MCHUGH

Shields up!

QORA

Shields up, Captain!

McHugh turns to the viewscreen.

MCHUGH

Care to try that again?

ALIEN VOICE

You fool! You've accomplished nothing! Those soldiers mean nothing to us, they're as expendable as your own worthless husks. All you have accomplished are your own deaths.

MCHUGH

You want us? Come and get us.

ALIEN VOICE  
So be it. If you will not give us your  
technology, we will make sure no-one  
else gets it.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

All 9 ships simultaneously open fire on the *Enterprise*.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

The Bridge rocks as the *Enterprise* is hammered by enemy fire.

VIIN  
I think we pissed them off!

McHugh turns to Lexia.

MCHUGH  
Lexia, I need that frequency!

LEXIA  
Trying, Captain!

QORA  
Shields won't last long under this  
kind of fire, Captain!

McHugh opens his MFID comm.

MCHUGH  
Engine Room, reroute all nonessential  
power to the shields!

KOPEC (VIA COMM)  
What in *Trach'adh* have you done,  
Captain?!

MCHUGH  
Just keep those shields up!

McHugh's MFID flickers and Kopec is replaced with Dr. Joli.

JOLI (VIA COMM)  
Captain!

MCHUGH  
Doctor, what is it?

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Dr. Joli is standing in front of the captured alien in stasis.

JOLI  
We've got one of the aliens in stasis.  
And his collar is intact!

JUMP-CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE - ENGINEERING

Close-up on the collar as it's slammed down onto a table. Kopec and Daystrom are scanning it with handheld tools.

In a wider shot, we can see that McHugh and Lexia are present as well. McHugh is pacing impatiently.

KOPEC  
The construction is primitive, we  
should easily be able to disassemble  
it... here.

Daystrom sees this, too.

DAYSTROM  
(nods)  
Yes.

The two work at the same time and the device pops open to reveal its inner workings.

McHugh sees progress and steps forward. He stumbles a bit as the ship is still under attack, but he catches himself on a chair.

MCHUGH  
(impatiently)  
Well?

Daystrom and Kopec are investigating.

DAYSTROM  
Just a moment, Captain...

The ship shakes again.

MCHUGH  
We don't have many moments left!

Kopec is searching.

KOPEC  
There!

Daystrom moves his scanner to see what Kopec is looking at.

DAYSTROM  
Yes!

Daystrom stands up and looks at McHugh. Kopec does too, antennae raised with excitement.

DAYSTROM (CONT'D)  
We found the receiver!

MCHUGH  
Great! What's the frequency!

Daystrom and Kopec look at each other awkwardly. Kopec's antennae sag.

DAYSTROM  
Uh...

They both start scanning it again. McHugh throws up his arms in frustration.

Becker comes over McHugh's MFID.

BECKER  
Captain! I have the feed from  
Chang's MFID.

McHugh and Lexia exchange glances.

MCHUGH  
On my way.

McHugh turns off his MFID and heads out. He turns to Lexia and motions for her to come.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
(to Kopec)  
As soon as you get that frequency,  
send it to us on the Bridge!

Kopec nods and gets back to work with Daystrom.

JUMP-CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Close-up on a display, darkened. Reflected in it are McHugh and Becker.

BECKER  
Commander Chang's transmission  
contained only one short video  
recording.

He presses a button and it plays back. The video shows a POV from his MFID as he was in the "hub" room on the enemy vessel, just as he was captured.

CHANG (O.S.)  
So how do you fly your ships, then?  
Telepathy?

ALIEN VOICE (O.S.)  
Your minds are so limited.

CHANG (O.S.)  
This thing isn't an engine, it's a  
communication device, isn't it?  
Some sort of network-

An audible zap is heard and the recording turns to static and abruptly ends.

McHugh has been watching, leaning in. He sits down in a chair next to Becker, perplexed.

MCHUGH  
That's it?

Becker nods solemnly.

McHugh leans forward, thinking.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
He asked how they're flying the  
ships... that must mean there's no  
controls.

BECKER  
The creatures don't fly the ships,  
they do. By remote control.

McHugh reaches over and runs the recording back and freezes it on a still image of the machine.

MCHUGH  
And that machine is the hub, but...

LEXIA  
Captain, I've got the results from  
Chief Kopec!

Lexia looks concerned. Becker and McHugh come over to look at it.

MCHUGH  
(to Becker)  
Can you jam the signal?

Becker looks suddenly mortified.

BECKER  
Oh no...

McHugh doesn't like this.

MCHUGH  
What is it?

BECKER  
That's a transliminal frequency,  
Captain.

Lexia joins in.

LEXIA  
It's used for very long distance,  
ultra-secure communications in  
Starfleet. The frequency is kept in  
a state of quantum flux precisely so  
that it cannot be jammed.

McHugh steps up to the console, thinking quickly.

MCHUGH  
Can you trace it back to its source?  
Which ship is it coming from?

Lexia looks at her console, presses a couple buttons and looks unpleasantly surprised.

LEXIA  
It's not coming from any of the ships.

MCHUGH  
(confused)  
The planet?

Lexia looks up from her console at McHugh.

LEXIA  
Cole... it's not even coming from this  
solar system!

McHugh backs away from the console and looks at the viewscreen.  
He didn't expect that.

Lexia and Becker look at each other, they have no ideas.

QORA  
Captain, our shields are down to 10%.

McHugh looks at her accusingly - like he needed more problems.  
He looks toward the viewscreen, thinking.

Daystrom comes back onto the Bridge and sees McHugh, Lexia and  
Becker standing around. He looks at Lexia and she nods.  
Daystrom sees McHugh has gotten the bad news.

McHugh is staring out at the ships and the nebula. Something  
occurs to him and he looks back at Chang's message, frozen in  
the middle on the image of the machine.

McHugh points at the display.



MCHUGH

That machine Chang sent us an image of... it's the hub, right? The machine that routes all of their commands?

Becker nods but he doesn't get what McHugh's after yet.

Daystrom sees the machine on the display for the first time and goes over to get a better look at it.

BECKER

It looks that way, yeah...

MCHUGH

And these spatial coordinates show their exact position in the ships?

Daystrom inspects the numbers.

DAYSTROM

Yes...

MCHUGH

Can we communicate with those hubs, sending a signal directly to their positions, using the same frequency?

Lexia thinks about this.

LEXIA

Theoretically, yes, but-

BECKER

We wouldn't know what to send, Captain-

DAYSTROM

We don't know their network protocols, we'd only be sending gibberish.

McHugh is on a roll now, though.

MCHUGH

Yes, but: if we can send a strong enough signal to the hubs on each ship, using the same frequency, maybe we could burn all of the hubs out! Overload them!

Lexia, Becker and Daystrom all suddenly realize that he's right.

But Daystrom realizes something else.

DAYSTROM  
There's only one problem, Captain.  
We can't possibly generate enough  
power to penetrate their hulls and  
overload their machines. No  
transmitter on this ship has that much  
broadcasting power.

McHugh smiles.

MCHUGH  
Not on this ship!

McHugh looks at Becker.

Becker realizes what McHugh means and looks out at the  
viewscreen. At the nebula.

Becker and McHugh run over to the rear console and Becker opens  
up his comm channel with the nebula.

BECKER  
Nebula entity, this is the  
Enterprise, are you still listening?

There's a slight delay and the display lights up with text:  
YES  
ENTERPRISE DANGER

McHugh sits down to speak to the nebula.

MCHUGH  
Will you help us?

The nebula responds.  
YES  
HOW HELP

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
The enemy ships... the "destroyers".  
We need you to talk to them, tell them  
to stop.

There's a delay and the nebula responds.  
TRIED TALKING DESTROYERS BEFORE  
NOT HEAR ME  
HURT ME

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
We know how to talk to them. They  
will listen. We will send you their  
frequency and the locations of their  
receivers.

He nods to Becker and Becker sends the frequency and coordinates  
to the nebula.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
Tell them to stop. Do you  
understand?

There's a long pause as the Enterprise shakes and the lights  
flicker.

QORA  
Shields failing, Captain!

MCHUGH  
Do you understand?

The nebula responds.  
I UNDERSTAND  
BUT THEY WILL NOT LISTEN

McHugh smiles.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
Make sure they hear you. Yell as loud  
as you can!

EXT. NEBULA

The enemy ships are firing on the Enterprise and its lights are  
flickering and it's beginning to drift.

The nebula lights up with sudden activity, the entire area  
erupting in an energy storm that dwarfs the entire planet.

Suddenly, energy bolts from all directions strike each of the  
9 ships simultaneously, coursing through them and penetrating  
their hulls.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL - HUB

The network hub is hit by the energy bolt and overloads,  
exploding violently, completely destroying it.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

All nine ships stop firing and the force field bubble drops  
immediately.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

QORA  
Captain, it worked! All nine ships  
have ceased firing and the  
containment field has dropped!

Cheers break out on the Bridge. McHugh beams and turns to Becker, pointing at him.

MCHUGH  
Becker, send the nebula our thanks!

Becker smiles and turns back to his console.

McHugh strides down to the center of the Bridge. Viin is watching the ships.

VIIN  
They look dead in space, Captain.

McHugh nods and sits back in his chair.

MCHUGH  
Stand down from red alert, go to yellow.

Daystrom makes the announcement.

DAYSTROM (ON SPEAKERS)  
All hands, stand down from general quarters, maintain ready stations.

McHugh is smiling, then his smile fades as he remembers Chang.

In a close-up, while everyone else is celebrating, we see McHugh's face grow somber and serious. He looks back up at the viewscreen, his somberness turning to resolve.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR

McHugh is running through a corridor. Other crewmen look happy as they pass him, but he has a somber, serious look to him.

He turns and enters Sickbay.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Qora and Lexia stand at a medical bed, still in their environmental suits (though without helmets). They're laying someone down on the bed and Joli and two medics are gathered around, getting to work on the person.

McHugh walks up and we see it is Chang. He has a large wound right in the center of his chest. His eyes are closed.

Joli and the medics are scanning him for lifesigns, but come up with nothing.

Joli looks at McHugh. She shakes her head.

JOLI  
It's too late, Captain. There's  
nothing we can do.

Lexia looks at McHugh, tears streaming down her face. Qora, too, is affected, but she looks angry rather than sad.

McHugh simply stares at Chang, sorrow on his face, but he is unwilling to show any more in front of his crew.

Lexia starts to move toward McHugh, but he turns and leaves.

Lexia, Qora and Joli look at each other as he walks out.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR

Looking into Sickbay, McHugh exits and we can see Joli, Qora and Lexia standing around Chang's body.

The doors close on them.

FADE OUT

END OF TAG

END OF EPISODE