STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION "The rook"

By

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STAR TREK
by Gene Roddenberry
SECOND DRAFT
MARCH 29, 2017

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"the rook"

CAST
PICARD       JACOBS
RIKER        LASSET
GEORDI       TIVEK
BEVERLY      
TROI         
DATA         
WORF         
GUINAN       
non-speaking 
ENGINEERS   
CREW MEMBERS 
WAITER

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SETS
INTERIORS      EXTERIORS
MAIN BRIDGE    USS ENTERPRISE
CAPTAINS READY ROOM    DOMEL FOUR
OBSERVATION LOUNGE  GALORS
TURBOLIFT
TEN FORWARD

(CONTINUED)
EXT. SPACE— THE ENTERPRISE

The ship flies gracefully past.

PICARD
(v.o.)
Captains log, star date 47925.2.
Our survey of the Folendra nebula is complete. we are heading to star base 26 to drop of our samples. In the mean time, myself and the crew are enjoying some well deserved leisure time.

CUT TO.
INT. TEN FORWARD

In which there is the usual hustle and bustle and merriment.

lieutenants ANNIE JACOBS and TIVEK(a Vulcan) are having a rather heated debate, as they drink. Guinan stands behind the bar in the B.C listening intently.

TIVEK
the colonists are making their situation worse by taking to terrorism.

JACOBS
I have a brother in the demilitarized zone.
(beat)
If you had heard the stories, you wouldn’t judge them so harshly.

TIVEK
I am sure the Cardassians are quite inhospitable. That, of course does not change the fact that it was colonists choice to remain.

JACOBS
They’re being brutally harassed everyday. They live in fear.

TIVEK
It was still illogical for them to remain in the first place.

JACOBS
(appalled)
Illogical!
(beat)
They built their lives on those colonies, raised their children there, made their homes there. Of course they didn’t want to leave!

TIVEK
The colonies were ceded to prevent against further conflict with Cardassia. That may have saved many lives.

JACOBS
Alright, i grant you that. But it was still wrong to placate the Cardassians at the expense of our own people.

(CONTINUED)
A waiter brings drinks. they take them.

    JACOBS
    (to waiter)
    Thanks.

    TIVEK
    It served the needs of the many.

    JACOBS
    Well, maybe sometimes what’s best
    for the many, isn’t what’s actually
    for the best.

    TIVEK
    (dumbfounded)
    That is highly illogical.
    (beat of thought)
    Do you support the Maquis,
    Lieutenant?

Jacobs is caught of guard by this question. she looks down at her drink.

    JACOBS
    I think that the Maquis are
    fighting against injustice.

    TIVEK
    By way of murder and terrorism.

Jacobs looks up.

    JACOBS
    Forgive the cliche, but one mans
    terrorist is another mans freedom
    fighter.

    TIVEK
    Does that excuse killing for you?

    JACOBS
    I don’t know.
        (beat)
    Maybe.

    TIVEK
    (smug)
    Vulcan’s believe that violence, in
    all forms is reprehensible.
        (beta)
    That is what i believe.

Jacobs drinks the last of her drink.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JACOBS
(placidly)
And you might be right Tivek.
(getting up to leave)
Think though. Think really carefully. What if we hadn’t of fought the Borg? What then?
(beat)
I’ve gotta go. see you later.

She leaves ten forward.

C.U OF GUINAN

she watches as Jacobs leaves.

ANGLE ON TIVEK

Off Tivek’s contemplative expression—

CUT TO.

INT. PICARD’S QUARTERS


PICARD
You always did have a knack for strategy i lacked.

RIKER
(smiling smugly)
Nonsense.

PICARD
No really, I’ve never beaten you. (jokingly)
Actually it’s rather frustrating.

RIKER
(smiling wider)
My apologies. (sarcastic)
I’ll try to go easy on you.

ANGLE ON CHESSBOARD

A few beats of deliberation on Picards part. he moves his Rook out of danger of Rikers Knight.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
How are those crew rotation reports coming along.

RIKER
(despondent)
Oh, don’t ask me.

PICARD
(grinning)
Too late.

RIKER
Well if we do one thing, most of the crew gets better hours and more rec time. But one rotation is always left with extra hours.
(beat)
We do nothing and everyone has too many hours.
(beat)
So what do i do. Either way it isn’t fair on someone.

PICARD
I trust in your judgment number one.
(beat)
on the Stargazer i almost went insane organizing crew rotations. i swore I’d never do them again when i became Captain.

RIKER
I’d better become Captain then.

PICARD
(chuckling)
it’d be about time.

Picard makes a move, while O.C we hear a hissing sound. Then a hand from O.C comes into view and checkmates Picard.

Q
(O.C.)
Checkmate Picard.

ANGLE ON Q
who has replaced Riker in his seat.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Q
(continued. mocking)
You should’ve sacrificed your rook.
(beat)
you really do need to learn to make
sacrifices.
(beat)
and you may have to sooner rather
than later.

ANGLE ON PICARD

Off Picard’s reaction.

END OF TEASER

FADE OUT:

ACT ONE

INT. PICARD’S QUARTERS

CONTINUED:

Picard stands up.

PICARD
(angry and suprised)
Q!

Q
(sarcastic)
It’s delightful to see you too
Jean-Luc.

Q picks up Picard’s rook and examines it. He then holds it up
to Picard.

Q
(continued. mocking)
it’s nice to see you keep yourself
busy. albeit with these child’s
playthings for the limited
creatures that you are.

PICARD
(impatient)
What are you doing here, Q?

(CONTINUED)
Q

(Matter-of-factually)
why to visit my old friend of
course.

PICARD
(scoffing)
to visit me.

Q
(fake insult)
Picard don’t you trust me?
(beat)
after all these years.

PICARD
no

Q
(clasping his hands over his
chest)
you wound me sir.

PICARD
leave Q. I’ve played your games too
many times. I’m not doing it again.

Q
Games Picard, games.

Q gets up and moves close to Picard.

Q
(CONTINUED)
there’ll be no games today, i
assure you.

PICARD
then why are you here?

Q
well that’s the question isn’t it.
(beat)
I’ve come to your little star ship,
to preform an experiment and you
picard are too be my little rat.

Q clicks his fingers and with a flash Picard finds himself
in-
INT. BRIDGE

in which RIKER, PICARD, TROI, GEORDI, DATA, WORF and CRUSHER are now standing looking very confused. JACOBS stands at her post in the B.G. theirs a few beats of confusion.

RIKER
(to picard)
captain how-?

Q then flashes in existence wearing a star fleet admirals uniform.

Q
(interrupting riker)
STAND TO ATTENTION CREWMEN! lets make this briefing quick shall we.

PICARD
get out of that uniform Q! you are not a Starfleet admiral!

Q
(sarcastic)
oh captain, for man whom claims to love Shakespeare, you really are dreadfully tone deaf to theatricality.
(beat)
very well.

he clicks his fingers and his uniform is replaced with a captains uniform.

Q
better.

ANGLE ON PICARD
he looks unfazed.

ANGLE ON RIKER

RIKER
why are you here Q.

ANGLE ON Q AND VIEW SCREEN

Q
(enthusiastic)
YES Riker, to business!

Q waves his hand at the view screen. on it appears a star map of the area. two star systems are highlighted.

(CONTINUED)
Q (continued)
twelve hours from now, these stars are going to go supernova.
(to data)
tell me Mr Data, do you recognize these systems?

Data looks at the view screen.

DATA (perplexed)
one star system is the Domel system and the other is the Levit system.

ANGLE ON BEVERLY

BEVERLY
there’s a federation colony in the Domel system. there are around 800 colonists.

C.U OF JACOBS
she recognizes this system.

ANGLE ON RIKER

RIKER
if memory serves, there’s a Cardassian colony in The Levit system.

ANGLE ON DATA AND Q

DATA
correct Commander. population 2,046.

Q (smiling devilishly)
yes.

Q walks up close to Picard.

ANGLE ON PICARD

Q (continued)
I present you with a choice captain. The continuum and I will save the colony of your choosing.
(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
Q (cont’d)
pick one and we will prevent it’s
destruction.
(beat)
you need only take your ship into
the orbit of the world you choose.

PICARD
what?! you can’t expect really me
to choose between lives like that.

Q
yes i do Picard, because you must.
(beat)
you have twelve hours to decide, or
they both Burn.
(beat)
if i were you i would contact the
colonies soon. ships leaving or
entering those systems other than
this one, will be met with a rather
sudden end.

he clicks his fingers and vanishes in a flash. there’s a few
beats of silence and-

PICARD
Mr Data, is what he said true.

DATA sits at his console and taps the controls.

DATA
affirmative captain, long range
sensors detect the stars in
question have become unstable.
(beat)
they will go nova in eleven hours
and fifty eight minutes.

a few beats of silence

PICARD
(To Riker)
number one, contact the Domel
colony and the cardassian
government. apprise them of the
situation.

RIKER.
yes sir.

(continued)
PICARD
(to GEORDI and DATA)
i want options, find me some.

GEORDI
aye sir

PICARD
(to all)
i will contact Starfleet.

PICARD turns and enters-

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM

PICARD sits at his desk and activates his console. he taps his communicator.

PICARD
Mr Worf, patch me through to admiral Hewitt at star fleet Command.

WORFS VOICE
aye sir.

a star fleet admiral appears on the screen, turned away from the viewer.

PICARD
admiral th-

PICARD is cut off when the admiral turns to reveal Qs face.

Q
your not going to shift the burden on to Starfleet Jean-Luc. this is your choice and yours alone.

Q terminates the transmission. off PICARD’s reaction-

INT. BRIDGE

C.U. OF JACOBS

She looks disturbed by the recent events.

FADE OUT.
INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

PICARD, RIKER, DATA, CRUSHER, TROI, GEORDI and WORF sit around the table.

PICARD
Well, it seems we have a problem.

DATA
indeed.

PICARD
the Domel colony and the Cardassian government have been informed.
(beat)
The Cardassians are sending a liaison. with three Cardassian Galor warships.

ANGLE ON TROI

TROI
three?! that’s a little excessive.

ANGLE ON RIKER

RIKER
they probably want to scare us.
they’re showing us what they’ll be wiling to do to save their colony.

ANGLE ON GEORDI

GEORDI
at warp nine, we could outrun them.
We could get to the Domel system in a few minutes. same with the Levit system.

WIDE SHOT

PICARD
i don’t intend to choose between anyone and no ones fighting yet.
(beat)
options?

ANGLE ON GEORDI AND DATA

GEORDI
Me and data have been thinking. we think we could outfit two probes with re-enforced shielding and Graviton emitters.

(CONTINUED)
DATA
we can fire these probes into the stars and use the graviton emitters to relieve the internal gravitational pressure, stabilizing them for a limited time.

GEORDI
we could delay the stars decay by about two weeks. that should be enough time to evacuate the colonists.
(beat)
but i can’t stress enough, this is real long shot. There’s a big possibility it won’t work. also if it takes too long we might not have enough time to get to either colony.

ANGLE ON WORF

WORF
then we should consider the possibility that it doesn’t work. what then?

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD
then Mr Worf, it seems i will have to choose.

ANGLE ON BEVERLY

BEVERLY
how are we going to choose?

ANGLE ON DATA

DATA
their are significantly more individuals on the Levit colony. would that not be the logical choice?

ANGLE ON WORF

WORF
(appalled)
they are Cardassians.
(to picard)
we cannot abandon federation citizens.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON RIKER

RIKER
federation/Cardassian relations are already strained with the Maguis situation. if we let an entire colony die now, it could mean full scale war.

ANGLE ON BEVERLY

BEVERLY
the Domel 4 colony is famous for its medical and terraforming research facilities.
(beat)
the researchers there helps to save thousands of lives every year.

RIKER
But if theirs war, millions could die. maybe hundreds of millions if it gets bad enough.

PICARD
(to Data)
what do we know of the Levit colony?

DATA
the levit 6 colony, is prolific for it’s mass cultivation of the ingredients for Cardassian Yamak sauce and alcoholic beverage Kanar.

WORF
(scoffing)
they make sauce and drink.

DATA
(correcting)
they grow the ingredients. there is a large market in the Cardassian union for non-replicated Yamak sauce and Kanar.
(beat)
the Cardassian government will no doubt be displeased if such a... (choosing words) lucrative colony were to be lost. (beat) that is possibly why they are showing as much interest as they are.
WORF
(angry)
they only want to save their colony
for it’s monetary gain, like bunch
of Ferengi!

DATA
that is a possibility but it is
only supposition.

WORF
Pah! Cardassians have no honor!

PICARD
this debate will obviously be quite
divisive, so i think we should
focus our efforts on a more
universal solution.
(to Geordi)
how long will it take to outfit
those probes?

GEORDI
we’ll be cutting it close, about
ten and a half hours. probably
longer.

Picard considers for beat.

PICARD
make it so.

we hear the intercom chime.

CREWMAN VOICE
(over intercom)
captain, the Cardassians have
arrived. Gul Laset is requesting to
come aboard.

PICARD
(to intercom)
inform transporter room 3.
(to all)
dismissed.

the officers get up and file out the room.
we see the enterprise confronted by three Cardassian Galor cruisers.

CUT TO.

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM
C.U. OF REPLICATOR.

PICARD
(O.C. speaking to replicator)
tea, Earl Grey, hot.

a cup of Earl Grey tea appears in the replicator. as we see PICARD’s hand take the cup we pull out reveal Gul Laset. An imposing cardassian military man.

PICARD
(continued)
would you care for something, Gul.

LASET
no thank you Captain.

PICARD
(polite)
very well.

Picard sits at his desk.

PICARD
(gesturing to chair)
please sit.

Laset does so.

LASET
I’m not sure i believe this Q character. it is inconceivable that anyone could have the power destroy two entire star systems.

PICARD
the limits of the Qs ability’s have proved... rather illusive.

LASET
i am also skeptical about your plan. my people say that it has a 40% chance of succeeding. those odds worry Captain.
(beat)  
they worry me deeply.

PICARD  
i will do everything in my power to save both colonies. i promise you that.

LASET  
I’m glad to hear that Captain.  
(beat)  
but i must know this. should you fail, which colony will you choose?

PICARD shuffles uncomfortably. he doesn’t answer. he doesn’t know the answer.

LASET  
(you don’t know)  
i see.  
(beat)  
our colony is the obvious choice. it’s population almost triples that of Domel 3. you’d be a fool to choose otherwise.

picard looks a laset. he try’s to level with the Cardassian.

PICARD  
please Gul Laset, if our roles were reversed...?

Laset thinks for a few beats.

LASET  
(conceding)  
I would damn the federation colony and save my own.

PICARD  
Be glad I’m not you.

ANGLE ON LASET

LASET  
I am.

PICARD  
tell me, are you here to ensure the safety of the farmers or their farms.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LAS ET
I don’t much care if the Central command wants me to save their profits or our people. I’m here to save that colony.
(beat. with weight)
therefore i must inform you captain, if the time comes, i will have my troops commandeer this vessel and take it Levit 6.
(beat)
i have my orders.

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD looks worried but not entirely surprised.

PICARD
(with weight)
understood.
(with forced politeness)
we’ve prepared quarters for you during your stay. i hope you’ll be comfortable.

ANGLE ON LASET

LAS ET
(also with forced politeness)
thank you Captain.

CUT TO.

INT. ENGINEERING

we see JACOBS and TIVEK in engineering. they are working on the probes which are set up in the middle of the room. JACOBS and TIVEK tinker inside the probes as they talk. we reach them in the middle of conversation-

JACOBS
i just think this is a little irresponsible.

TIVEK
irresponsible?

JACOBS
we’ll be cutting this really close. (worried)
if something goes wrong...

(Continued)
TIVEK
what alternative would you suggest.

JACOBS
i don’t have an alternative.

TIVEK
then why object?

JACOBS
what if we keep trying to save both colonies until it’s too late to save Domel 4...

TIVEK
why do you think that the captain will choose Domel 4? he could very possibly choose Levit 6.

JACOBS
he wouldn’t, he wouldn’t just leave federation citizens.

TIVEK
it would be logical to save the Cardassain colony. It has a larger population and it’s destruction through our inaction could start a war.

JACOBS
(appalled)
it would be logical?!
(beat)
it would be illogical to leave some of the best minds in medical research to die.

TIVEK
and that is why we are attempting to save both.

a few beats pass in silence.

JACOBS
do you really think the Captain would choose the Cardassian colony over ours.

TIVEK
i think that it is a probability.

off JACOBS reaction-
EXT. SPACE– ENTERPRISE AND GALOR’S

we see the three Galor class ships, looming menacingly in front of the Enterprise.

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM

the captain is sitting alone in his ready room, sipping tea while examining reports. Q flashes into the room, sat on the guest sofa. he is holding the Rook chess piece from the teaser.

ANGLE ON Q

Q

so who’s to be the rook Picard?

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD

there will be no rook. I’m not bowing to your whim. not this time.

ANGLE ON Q

Q

(mocking)
oh yes, your probes.

(smiling)
what an amusing little idea.

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD

(impatient)
go away Q.

ANGLE ON Q

Q

(ignoring picard)
well, i suppose if your probes fail you’ll have to choose anyway. i wonder how you’ll choose? it’s a difficult decision.

(grinning)
but then what would be the point in anything less.

Q examines the rook, looking at it in great detail. a couple of beats pass as he does this. then he grins again as he gets an idea.

(CONTINUED)
Q
(continued. pressing)
didn’t the Cardassians torture you? do you remember?

ANGLE ON PICARD
Picard reacts, remembering the terrible experience. He goes quickly back to working.

ANGLE ON Q

Q
(continued)
oh yes. you do remember. wasn’t a pleasant experience i wager?

ANGLE ON PICARD
PICARD tries to ignore Q

ANGLE ON Q

Q
(continued)
if memory serves, they like to humiliate their prisoners.
(Enjoying the irony)
dehumanize them.
(with great pleasure)
how did that feel picard, to be striped and brutalized. to be taken to the brink of your endurance.

ANGLE ON PICARD
he grinds his teeth as he attempts to blot out Qs words.

ANGLE ON Q

Q
(continued)
and it’s not just what they did to you. no. they’re guilty of much much more. the occupation of Bajor. fifty years of oppressing a peaceful people. strip mining, Labor camps, rape and executions. all manner of horrors. 
(beat)
oh, lets not forget border wars. They ruthless weren’t they. I wonder how many federation soldiers
(MORE)
Q (cont’d)
died? a thousand maybe. they didn’t
care about civilian lives either.
they killed just as many.

ANGLE ON PICARD
picard takes a sip of tea, pretending Q isn’t getting too
too him. it’s painfully obvious.

ANGLE ON Q

Q
(continued)
and most recently they’re
harassment of colonists in the
demilitarized zone.
(beat)
yes. they’re guilty of a great
deal. you must hate them.

ANGLE ON PICARD
he is not able to mask his distaste for that last remark.

ANGLE ON Q
pressing on.

Q
(continued)
I wonder if they deserve to die,
after all they’ve have done. To the
galaxy and to you.

ANGLE ON PICARD
Picard shuffles. it’s getting much more and more difficult
to ignore Q.

PICARD
this will not work Q.

ANGLE ON Q

Q
(grinning)
oh come now picard, don’t tell me
their isn’t something deep within
you that wouldn’t smile at the
thought of Cardassians burning.

ANGLE ON PICARD

(CONTINUED)
PICARD slams the pad he’s working on, on the desk. Qs finally done it.

PICARD
i am a star fleet officer, i do not have the luxury of personal prejudice!

ANGLE ON Q

Q
(shouting)
Pish posh Picard! i bet Locutus wouldn’t have a problem with this decision.

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD
I AM NOT LOCUtUS!

WIDE SHOT

a beat passes. calm returns.

ANGLE ON Q

Q

maybe not
(beat)
but we will see.

ANGLE ON PICARD

Q flashes away. Off Picards expression-

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT 1

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND GALOR’S

we see the enterprise and the Galor’s facing each other.

PICARD
captains log, supplemental. while commander LA FORGE and Mr DATA prepare the probes i have been in
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
PICARD (cont’d)
communication with the Domel 4 colony.
(beat)
i regret that my relationship with
the administrator is somewhat
deteriorating.

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM

C.U. of PICARDS personal monitor. displayed on it it is
administrator VOT (Bolian). he is quite distressed.

VOT
(angry and sacred)
you are putting this entire colony
at risk, Captain!

PICARD
(O.S. )
Administrator, you must understand
that i cannot simply ignore the
Cardassian lives that are at stake.

VOT
(icy)
not twelve years ago they were our
enemy!

PICARD
(V.O. PICARD)
not anymore.

VOT
are you sure Captain.
(beat)
you see we are on the border with
the demilitarized zone. And we’ve
been hearing some very disturbing
stories. the colonists that decided
to stay have been brutalized. their
replicators poisoned, mobs
organized against them. The
Cardassians want them to suffer.

PICARD
i sympathize with those colonists
but they knew the risks of living
under Cardassian rule.
no Captain, they didn’t want to
leave their homes. So they were
forced to live under Cardassian
rule after the government that was
supposed represent them, abandoned
them!

PICARD doesn’t know how to answer. a few beats of tension.

(continued)

if your plan fails Captain, you’ve
doomed us all to die.

VOT closes the transmission. Picard sighs.

CUT TO.

JACOBS enters her quarters. she walks over to her monitor
and activates it. the screen turns on. C.U. of JACOBS, she
is worried. nervous. she taps some of the controls and the
words-

SECURE TRANSMISSION

appear on the screen. An image of a JACOBS brother appears
on the screen (BEN JACOBS). he looks surprised.

BEN

Annie?

JACOBS

Ben i-

BEN

(delighted)
it’s been a while since we spoke.
how have you b-

JACOBS

Ben, i don’t have time. i need to
ask you something.
  (a beat of hesitation)
Are you part of the Maquis?

(continued)
CONTINUED:

Ben looks suddenly tense.

ANGLE ON JACOBS

    JACOBS
    (continued)
    it’s a secure channel.

ANGLE ON BEN

a few beats pass. Ben stares at her while grinding his teeth.

    BEN
    (suspicious)
    how did you know?

ANGLE ON JACOBS

    JACOBS
    (smiling)
    the way you talk about them.

ANGLE ON BEN

    BEN
    are you gonna turn me in.

ANGLE ON JACOBS

    JACOBS
    no, of course not.
    (beat)
    but i need to tell you about something.

ANGLE ON BEN

    BEN
    what?

CUT TO.

INT. ENGINEERING

DATA and QEORDI work on the probes.

    DATA
    Geordi?

(CONTINUED)
GEORDI

yeah.

DATA
i have noticed some of the crew are unhappy, that we are not simply taking the enterprise to the Domel colony. Why?

GEORDI
they think we’re wasting time.
(beat)
they don’t like that we are putting our people at risk to save Cardassians.

DATA
then they are prejudiced.

GEORDI
yeah i guess. but it’s not as simple as that.
(beat)
some of the people on board fought the Cardassians in the border wars. when you’ve fought someone, your perception of them becomes...
warped.
(beat)
they’re always the enemy.

DATA
they cannot see the value in Cardassian lives?

GEORDI
no not that. they just can’t see them as anything but the enemy.

Off Data’s perplexed expression-

INT. JACOBS QUARTERS

ANGLE ON of JACOBS monitor. BEN is still displayed on it. he is distressed.

BEN
(angry)
it’s just like star fleet to bend over for the Cardassians.

(CONTINUED)
JACOBS
i don’t know if he’ll actually pick the card-

BEN
that doesn’t matter. he’s risking federation citizens!
(beat)
he needs to be stopped.

BEN looks JACOBS right in her eyes. an idea. she sees it.

JACOBS
no, i-i can’t.

BEN
if he isn’t stopped it could mean the deaths eight hundred federation citizens.

JACOBS
I’m not Maquis.

BEN
but could you do something? do you know how?

ANGLE ON JACOBS
she looks tense.

JACOBS
there are things i could do but i won’t be able to escape. they’ll court Marshall me, ill be sent to prison.

BEN
i can’t do anything from here. we won’t be able to get near the enterprise without being detected.
(beat)
the only one who can do anything, is you.

Off JACOBS reaction-

FADE OUT.
INT. BRIDGE

RIKER, TROI and WORF are on the bridge at their stations. PICARD and LASET enter from PICARD’s ready room. They are in the middle of a conversation.

LASET
my government is not patient. they want this situation dealt with.

PICARD
it will be. the probes are being outfitted by my chief engineer as we speak. he will complete his work.

LASET
i would like to see--
the sound of a sensor alert.

WORF
captain, there is a Cardassian freighter attempting to leave the Levit system. warp 2.

RIKER
crew compliment?

WORF
eight.

PICARD  
(to WORF)
open a channel.

WORF
done.

PICARD  
(to freighter)
This is captain Jean-Luc Picard of the federation starship enterprise to Cardassian freighter. please reverse course and return to the Levit colony. your lives are at risk.

PICARD looks at WORF.

WORF
no response.

PICARD looks at LASET.

(CONTINUED)
LASET
(authoritative)
this is Gul Ilin Laset of the third
order. you will power down your
engines or return to the Levit
colony immediately!

Worf shakes his head.

WORF
still no response.

LASET
I ORDER YOU TO RETURN!

ANGLE ON the view screen. the ship is displayed moving a warp.

ANGLE ON the bridge.

RIKER
(to WORF)
transporter range?

WORF
they are out of range. they will
pass through the Oort cloud of the
system in twenty seconds.

PICARD
(to WORF)
could we disable their engines with
torpedo?

LASET
absolutely not!

PICARD
(to LASET)
we must stop that ship for it’s own
good.

LASET
you will not fire on Cardassian
ship!

PICARD
Gul Laset if we could just disable
them w-

another sensor warning.

(CONTINUED)
WORF
sir, i am detecting a warp core breach!

PICARD thinking quickly.

PICARD
(to Freighter)
Cardassian freighter, power down your engines-!

ANGLE ON VIEW SCREEN.
the freighter explodes.

ANGLE ON LASET
who’s face is bathed in orange light from the explosion. a beat of silence.

LASET
life signs?

WORF
none.

a few beats of silence. LASET’s imposing figure droops a little.

LASET
(to PICARD)
it seems, this Q character was serious.
(beat)
I’ll be on my ship.

he walks, into the Turbo lift looking a little shaken.

there is a few more beats of silence after he leaves. then Q flashes into the room. just behind Picard.

Q
(delighted)
I was quite serious.
(beat)
that’s eight less people you need worry about Mon capitaine.

picard looks round at Q.

Q
(continued)
Is it even worth it to save them if they just kill themselves.
Q grins as he flashes away. Off PICARDS reaction.

CUT TO.

INT. TEN FORWARD

where in we see JACOBS standing at the back of ten forward staring out of the large windows into space. she holds a drink, nervously playing with the glass. we linger on her conflicted expression until, GUINAN appears next to her.

GUINAN
(joking)
you know, most people usually like to drink their drinks.

JACOBS
(a little startled)
Guinan.

GUINAN
Lieutenant Jacobs, isn’t it?

JACOBS
yeah.

a beat.

GUINAN
(gesturing to the window) looking for something.

JACOBS
no... I don’t know.

GUINAN
a lot of people look for stuff outside this window.

JACOBS
do they.
    (beat.)
I’m sorry but why are you asking me?

GUINAN
you look like someone who wants to be asked. i also heard your conversation earlier with lieutenant Tivek.

(CONTINUED)
JACOBS
(a little irritated)
you listen into a lot of peoples conversations?

GUINAN
I’m a good listener. it’s a gift.
(beat)
i was thinking after recent events,
you might disagree with the captain
on some things.
(quoting)
do you think the Captains
"placating the Cardassians"?

JACOBS
(a little more irritated)
does it matter what i think?

GUINAN
well of course it does.

JACOBS
then i think we shouldn’t be so
accommodating to a people that have
never been accommodating to us.

GUINAN
well that’s one way to look at it.
(beat)
but i think the way the captain
sees it, is that we should do whats
right. you know. Set an example.

JACOBS
and while we set an example we
throw our own people to the wind.
(sarcastic)
what a great example.

GUINAN
i think the captain agrees with
you.

JACOBS
what!?

GUINAN
I’ve known the captain a very long
time. he didn’t want to leave
people in the DMZ as much as you or
i.
(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
GUINAN (cont’d)
and in the case of today he doesn’t want leave anybody behind, whether their Cardassian or Federation.

JACOBS
and in doing so he might kill them all. we should just save our own people. it’s what the Cardassians would do to us.

GUINAN
but we’re not Cardassian, are we.

Jacobs thinks for a few beats.

JACOBS
that dosen’t matter. Federation lives at risk. If the probes don’t work, it’s just won’t be worth it to save Cardassians.
(beat. to herself)
Ben was right.

GUINAN
Cardassians are people too lieutenant, you shouldn’t forget that.

JACOBS
well they sure as hell don’t act like it.
(beat)
they don’t deserve our charity, but those colonists on Domel four do.

Jacobs walks away and leaves Guinan looking concerned. for a couple of beats we linger on Guinans expression until she to walks away. and we-

CUT TO.

INT. ENGINEERING

which is full of commotion. everyone is rushing to prepare the probes. PICARD enters the room and walks over to DATA and GEORDI.

PICARD
(to GEORDI)
How are things coming?

(CONTINUED)
GEORDI
on schedule captain. it’s been
difficult to configure the shields
and emitters to be effective in two
different stars, but we’ll have
them for you on time.

PICARD
you have three hours lieutenant
commander.

GEORDI
they’ll be done sir.

PICARD
I know. your doing fine work.

PICARD nods at GEORDI. he turns and walks out of engineering
passing JACOBS whom enters from the corridor. they share a
glance. PICARD exits.

While all the engineers work diligently, JACOBS discreetly
walks up to the probes and places a device within the
casing. a bomb.

without warning GEORDI appears behind her. she jumps.

GEORDI
(apologetic)
hey, sorry. didn’t men to sneak.

JACOBS
i-it’s fine sir. sorry.

GEORDI
(politely curious)
what were you doing?

she thinks fast.

JACOBS
i was checking the phase variants
in the graviton emitters. just
being sure.

GEORDI
oh, no need i just did that.

JACOBS
oh, okay. I’ll do a sub micron scan
on the hull plating.

(CONTINUED)
GEORDI
Good idea. Carry on lieutenant.

Geordi walks away. JACOBS looks relieved.

She makes her way to the main engineering console. With discretion as before, she taps the controls.

A force field activates, cutting her off from the rest of engineering. DATA notices.

DATA
lieutenant Jacobs why have you-

Jacobs continues to work the controls. Suddenly behind Data the probe that she had sabotaged explodes, knocking multiple engineers to the ground including Geordi. An energy surge comes blasting out of the Damaged probe and hits the other, damaging it as well.

Data looks around at the carnage. He taps his comm badge.

DATA
medical teams to engineering.

INT. BRIDGE

The helm officer gets an alert on his console. He turns to PICARD whom is sitting in the Captains chair next to RIKER and TROI. WORF stands at his station.

HELM
captain, we are moving! I can’t stop it!

PICARD
what!?

EXT. SPACE— ENTERPRISE AND GALORS

The enterprise suddenly begins to turn a move towards the camera.

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

DATA’S VOICE
Data to bridge, we have an emergency.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PICARD
whats going on!?

INT. ENGINEERING

we see data at a computer console. he is tapping the controls at an unbelievable speed. behind him medical teams surround the wounded.

DATA
i believe that lieutenant JACOBS is attempting to take control of the enterprise. she has erected a force field around herself. i am attempting to block her access now.

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

HELM
sir, we are now on a heading for the Domel colony. she’s blocked me out from the controls. we’re accelerating to warp one.

PICARD
Mr Data if you would please make haste.

INT. ENGINEERING

CONTINUED:

DATA
i am attempting to do so captain, but she has redirected much of my control to her console. it will take a moment.

ANGLE ON JACOBS

She is concentrating deeply on the controls. she taps away at the console with great speed and skill.
INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:

LASSET’S VOICE
(over subspace)
Captain! what are you doing!?

Off PICARDS confused and alarmed expression—

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE— ENTERPRISE AT WARP, GALORS IN PURSUIT

the Galor’s fire two shots of phaser fire at the enterprise. the shields take it.

INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:

the bridge is rocked.

WORF
the Cardassian ships have opened fire! they are targeting our warp nacelles!

PICARD
damage report?

WORF
minimal. shields down to seventy percent.

they are hit again. the ship shakes.

INT. ENGINEERING
CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON Data as he continues to attempt block Jacobs from the controls.

(CONTINUED)
ANGLE ON

Jacobs as she continues to operate the ship. Data manages to deactivate the force field. Jacobs notices. she pulls out her phaser and fires at Data. he doges. he returns fire and hits her. she is stunned.

Data runs over to the Jacobs console. with great speed he taps at the controls.

INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:

HELM
fifteen seconds to the Domel system.

INT. ENGINEERING
CONTINUED:

Data taps his communicator.

DATA
helm, drop out of warp now.

INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:

Helm officer frantically taps at his console.

HELM
dropping out of warp!

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE

the enterprise slows to impulse.

INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:

their a few beats of stunned silence.
PICARD
Picard to engineering. what the hell happened?

INT. ENGINEERING
CONTINUED:
ANGLE ON DATA AND DAMAGED PROBES
DATA
Captain, the probes have been damaged.

INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:
ANGLE ON PICARD AND RIKER
DATA
(continued)
if find it unlikely that they can be repaired in the allotted time.

Picard and Riker share a concerned look.

LASET’S VOICE
(over subspace)
Captain, i thought you said you would try to save all the colonists.

PICARD
(to Laset)
we are Gul but we just had an...
(thinking for a beat)
incident. we’re returning to our previous location.

INT. SICK BAY
DATA, PICARD, CRUSHER and Geordi are in the Sick bat. Geordi is sat on the biobed as Dr Crusher uses a medical device to heal some cuts on his forehead.

PICARD
how long do you do think it will take to repair the probes.

(CONTINUED)
GEORDI
i don’t know Captain. two maybe three hours.

PICARD
you have one a a half.

CRUSHER
Captain could please not surround my patient.

PICARD
I’m afraid doctor that we haven’t the time for politeness. (to Geordi) can you do it.

Crusher finishes. Geordi gets up and thinks for a beat and sighs.

GEORDI
I’ll get it done for you Captain.

PICARD
(smiling) i don’t doubt it.

Data and Geordi leave.

CRUSHER
what are you going to do if they can’t?

Picard sighs and doesn’t answer. he’s starting think he may have to choose. he walks out of sickbay. Crusher looks concerned.

INT. CORRIDOR

Picard walks into the corridor. Q flashes beside him as he walks.

Q
well Mon Capitaine, it seems things aren’t going your way.

Picard ignores him. they stop at a turbolift. picard taps the button. the door opens and they step in.
INT. TURBOLIFT

Q is again fiddling with a Rook chess piece. the door closes.

    PICARD
    brig.

the turbolift activates.

    Q
    (continued)
what will you do Picard? choose i suppose. but whom? if you choose
your own people you start a war. if you don’t you kill them. And lets
not forget those colonists are
giants in field of medicine and the
Cardassians are just little
framers.
    (beat)
all the pieces are set out for you
picard. how will you play?

    PICARD
i thought you said there would be
no games?

    Q
oh well, what’s life without games.
and it seems today that all the
galaxys a chess board. accept you
can never fully win
    (with delight)
but you can most certainly lose.

Q flashes away. the turbo lift stops and picard steps out.

INT. CORRIDOR TWO

picard walks until he reaches the brig door.

INT. BRIG

JACOBS is pacing in her cell, her arms crossed. PICARD enters the room. he walks over to her cell looking
apprehensive.

    JACOBS
captain.

a beat of silent tension.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD lieutenant.

there are a couple of beats as Picard gathers his thoughts. he puts in an air of authority.

PICARD
(slowly)
what you have done has endangered the lives of thousands.
(beat)
i am truly astonished that someone of your immaculate record would do such a thing. why?

she doesn’t reply. more long beats.

PICARD
(quickly)
you will be dropped off at star base 26, where you will be subject to a court marshal.

he starts to walk away until-

JACOBS
captain.

he looks around.

JACOBS
(continued)
i just thought that we were making a mistake.
(beat)
i thought that putting federation citizens lives at risk to save Cardassians was...

She can’t think of words.

PICARD
was what? wrong.

yes

JACOBS

why?

JACOBS
(a little angry)
because they were our enemy.
they’ve been doing everything they

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JACOBS (cont’d)
can to hurt federation citizens in the demilitarized zone, for as long as they’ve been there!
a beat as picard thinks of a response.

PICARD
tell me lieutenant, do know of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

JACOBS
well, yes of course.

PICARD
okay then. tell me (beat) where those bombings right?

JACOBS
well... no- but that has nothing to do with with situation.

PICARD
it has everything to do with this situation. (beat) the Japanese where the enemy of the allies during WW2 yes?

JACOBS
yes.

PICARD
they posed an enormous threat?

JACOBS
yes.

PICARD
and did that justify the deaths one thousand seven hundred civilians.

JACOBS
(beginning to see the point) no.

a few beats pass. Picard begins to pace from side to isde of the cell.

PICARD
(authoritative) as starfleet officers it is our duty preserve life, all life and (MORE)
PICARD (cont’d) 
life in every form. we are out here 
to seek out new life and new 
civilizations, not judge them. the 
cardassians government is a violent 
and authoritarian regimme but that 
does not diminish the value of 
their civilians lives. 
(beat) 
as a starfleet officer i cannot and 
will not place value on lives based 
on species and politics. 
(beat) 
The colonists on the Levit colony 
have just as much right to live as 
any federation citizen. i will not 
turn my back on them simply because 
they are Cardassian!

Jacobs sits down and doesn’t look at Picard, ashamed.

PICARD 
(continued) 
It seems that you may get what you 
wanted anyway. that device you 
planted damaged both probes, so i . 
i do hope that that comforts you.

Picard walks out leaving Jacobs to reflect. we linger on her 
shamed expression.

INT. CAPTAINS QUATERS

PICARD sits in his quarters, looking at the untouched 
chessboard he from the TEASER. we hear the door chime.

PICARD 
come.

GUINAN walks in smiling. Picard sits up a little.

PICARD 
what can i do for you Guinan?

GUINAN 
(pleasantly) 
I just wanted to see how you were 
doing. 
(beat) 
some of the crew aren’t happy with 
you.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
Yes I’m quite aware.
(beat)
as long as they do their duty, they
can disagree. If they choose.

GUINAN
they might be right. for the wrong
reasons.
(beat)
but they might be right.

Picard looks confused but curious.

PICARD
what are you are trying to tell me?

Guinan sits on the guest settee.

GUINAN
have you heard the ancient Ferengi
legend of Tolstat?

PICARD
Guinan I’m not really in the mood
to hear Ferengi-

GUINAN
(interrupting)
It’s a great story.
(beat)
Tolstat was an amazing business
man. he earned more Latinum than
any other Ferengi ever before. he
owned a massive business empire
that bankrupt everyone else on
Ferenginar.
(beat)
he was the richest Ferengi of all
time.

PICARD
Well that’s certainly Ferengi
folklore for you.

GUINAN
Tolstat’s miners found a huge cave
full of wonderful jewels and gem
stones, but the cave was deep in
the center of a mountain range. it
would be extremely expensive to
extract them.
(beat)

(MORE)

(continuing)
GUINAN (cont’d)
around about the same time his
archeologists found an ancient
flooded city. It had huge numbers
of priceless artifacts. but it was
deep under water so those artifacts
were equally expensive to extract.
(beat)
Tolstats advisers told him he
couldn’t extract goods from both of
them. he wouldn’t make a profit. It
would be too expensive. he had to
pick one. but Tolstat said "no"! he
wanted it all. he didn’t want his
enemies to acquire his profit.
(beat)
so he had them both extracted and
do you know what happened.
(beat)
it drove his business into
Bankruptcy.
(beat)
his empire fell. he had nothing
left. all because he held his
values over what was best.
(beat)
Ferengi values but values all the
same.

PICARD
Guinan, i know what you’re trying
to tell me but you must understand
my position. i cannot ignore the
Cardassians.

GUINAN
And i wouldn’t want you to. but
you’re using your position as an
excuse for not making a decision.
or at least not thinking about it.

PICARD
I will not allow any one colony to
be destroyed and i will not choose
between the lives of sentient
beings. i don’t need to think about
it.

GUINAN
and what if you can’t save them
both?

Picard doesn’t have an answer.

(CONTINUED)
GUINAN
(continued)
i think Tolstat might warn you
about doing bad business.

PICARD
who would suggest i choose? are you
trying to say i should choose
Domel?

Quinan gets up and walks to entrance. she looks round at Picard.

GUINAN
(smiling)
i don’t know. that’s for you to decide.
(beat)
Goodbye captain.

she leaves and Picard is left in silence. a few long, silent
beats pass. and suddenly-

ANGLE ON PICARD

GEORDI
(over comm badge)
la forge to Captain.

PICARD
go ahead.

GEORDI
we’ve repaired the probes. they’re ready.

Picard is pleasantly startled.

PICARD
(relieved)
excellent work Mr La forge.
excellent work.
(beat. to himself)
or maybe i won’t have to decide at all Guinan.

Picard gets up and walks out of his quarters.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. BRIDGE

PICARD and RIKER enter the bridge through the turbolift. TROI and WORF stand are at their stations. Picard and Riker sit in their seats. Picard taps his comm badge.

PICARD
Picard to Mr La forge. when can we launch the probes?

GEORDI’S VOICE
about three minutes captain.

PICARD
wonderful work lieutenant commander.

GEORDI’S VOICE
your very welcome.

PICARD
(to riker)
well number one, shall we settle this now.

RIKER
i hope Q’s watching.

Picard smiles. he shares the sentiment. he then turns to face the viewer.

PICARD
open a channel to Gul Laset’s ship.

WORF
channel open. they are responding.

PICARD
on screen.

ANGLE ON VIEWER

LASET’s face appears.

LASET
what Captain?

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
Our probes a have been repaired and are ready to launch.

LASET
good but if they don’t work, you know what i must do.

PICARD
I have much confidence in my chief engineer. they will work.

LASET
for your sake, i hope your confidence is well placed.

Laset closes the channel. DATA enters from the turbo lift and relieves the operations officer.

RIKER
that’s gratitude for you.

PICARD
(to riker)
I think we can go on without gratitude.

GEORDI’S VOICE
captain, the probes are ready to launch.

Picard looks around the bridge at his officers, glad that this soon will be over. he straightens his uniform.

PICARD
Mr Worf prepare to launch.

WORF
probes are loaded sir.

a beat.

PICARD
fire.

EXT. SPACE– ENTERPRISE

the Probes are fired out of the torpedo bay consecutively. they zip past the camera.

ANGLE ON THE PROBES
As they move away, they head on different courses. One to either star system.

INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:

    WORF
e the probes have reached their targets.

    RIKER
lets hope this works.

EXT. SPACE—PROBE AND STAR

we see one of the probes reach it’s star. it’s shields begin to spark as they take the heat. it stops and fires it’s graviton beam into the star. the star begins to glow with less intensity.

INT. BRIDGE
CONTINUED:

    WORF
graviton emitters have activated.

    DATA
the gravitational pressure within the star is diminishing.

picard grins a little.

    DATA
(continued)
the stars will be stable enough for colony evacuation in three min-

Q flashes suddenly into the middle of the bridge.

    Q
there will be no cheating in this game Picard. A penalty must be exacted.

ANGLE ON VIEWER.

Q clicks his fingers at the stars.
EXT. SPACE- PROBE AND STAR

the star begins to glow brighter than before. the shields on the probe collapse. it explodes.

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON DATA.

DATA
sir, the internal gravitational pressure in the stars have begun to increase exponentially. i estimate two minutes until they go nova.

ANGLE ON PICARD AND RIKER.

Riker flashes out of Existence and is replaced by Q. Q puts a hand on picards shoulder. Riker appears where Q was standing.

Q
it’s time to decide captain. who lives, who dies. it’s your choice. But I’d be quick about it if i were you.

Picard stares at the viewer. a couple of beats pass. he doesn’t know what to do.

LASET’S VOICE
(over subspace)
it seems your plan has faild. I’m sorry captain but i must do what i have to do.

the transmission is closed and the ship shakes.

WORF
Captain the cardassian ships have opened fire! they are attempting to collapse our shields.
(beat)
Captain?

Picard gets up and walks to the middle of the room. still deliberating. the ship is rocked again.

ANGLE ON Picard and Helm officer. Worf in the B.G.

a few more beats pass. while the ship continues to shake.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WORF
  captain! we must act now!

Picard swallows.

PICARD
  Helm, lay in a course for Levit six
  and engage at warp nine.

HELM
  (shocked)
  captain!?

PICARD
  that’s an order!

HELM
  (reluctant)
  yes sir.

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND GALORS

The enterprise flies past the Galors and goes to warp.

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

the entire bridge is bathed in a bright light until nothing
is visible and the hissing sound of Q’s powers can be heard.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN FROM WHITE:

EXT. DOMEL FOUR GARDEN. DAY

Picard finds himself in a garden with lots of colourful
plants and flowers, with a small pond. Q stands in the
middle of this magnificent sight. Picard is panicked. he
doesn’t know where he is.

PICARD
  (panikd and angry)
  where is this Q? take me back to
  the enterprise now!

(CONTINUED)
why captain, don’t you recognize the planet you’ve just doomed.

Picard catches on and looks up at the sky.

ANGLE ON THE STAR

it is normal.

PICARD
why isn’t this planet vapourized.

Q
we in the Continuum aren’t in the business of destroying two perfectly good star systems just make you child species dance.

a few beats as Picard processes this information.

PICARD
it was an illusion.

(beat and with anger)

why?!

Q
don’t have a cerebrel cortex to figure that out, or do i have to make everything blatantly clear for you.

PICARD
you terrorised two colonies! you made them believe they may die! and you made me think i was had to choose between them!

(beat)
i am not amussed in the slightest by this Q!

Q
And nor should you be.

(beat)
this was a test of you picard.

PICARD
A test of me.

yes.

Q starts to walk toward Picard. after a beat-

(CONTINUED)
Q
(continued)
we wanted to see what you would do
and we wanted to see what you
learned from it.
(beat)
you made a most interesting
decision Picard. their were many in
the continuum that thought you
would simply save your own. instead
you chose to save the cardassians.

PICARD
(thinking for a beat)
War was too unpleasant an option.
(beat)
if i had let that colony die, there
would have been war.

Q
yes. you did somthing that not many
of your species could do. you saw
the bigger picture. you saw that if
there was war there would there
would have been inclcuable losses
on both sides. you were not only
concerened for your own but also
the Cardassians. it’s that
nonpartisan, cosmopolitan,
unprjudiced view that shows
(beat. choosing words)
some advancment we didn’t quite
expect.

PICARD
it seems we keep suprising you.

Q
arogance Picard! your species still
has a long way to go.

PICARD
and we will keep advancing.

Q
but we’ve not got to the impotant
part yet Picard. the real question
is how did it feel, to doom this
world’s people to destruction. can
you really say that felt rightous.

ANGLE ON PICARD
he looks queazy.
PICARD

no.

ANGLE ON Q.

Q

yes. you are beholdent to your idea
of morals and ethics, but when it
comes down to it, it’s not as easy
as simply doing what’s right.
(beat)
that is what you have learned
today. it’s not as simple as the
needs of the many outweigh the
needs of the few.
(beat)
and it never will be.

Q smiles, clicks his fingers and there is a flash and Picard finds himself in-

INT. BRIDGE

RIKER, TROI, WORF, DATA, CRUSHER and LA FORGE are on the bridge when Picard appears. he looks around, not all that surprised.

RIKER

Captian?

Picard doesn’t answer for a beat.

PICARD

(to Data)
Mr Data i think a long range scan
would be prudent.

Data taps his console. a perplexed look appears on his face.

DATA

(surprised)
The Domel star is stable. The
colony is undamaged.

Picard grins a little.

PICARD

i thought so.
(to riker)
it was a trick.

Riker looks annoyed but not all that surprised.
PICARD
(continued)
i think it would be a good idea to contact Domel four and the Cardassians and inform them. in the mean time, we should get under way.

RIKER
Helm. Set course for star base 26. warp six.

Picard walks to the Captians chair and sits. with the signture gesture with his hand-

PICARD
Engage.

CUT TO.

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE
The enterprise flies at warp through space.

PICARD
(V.O)
Captains log, supplemental. We have dropped off the folendra nebula samples at star base 26-- along with lieutenant Jacobs. We are now underway to sector four three eight to map unexplored space.
(beat)
Thankfuly the crew has calmed after the recent events. But i am afriad to say i’m still troubled by my own descions.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTIANS READY ROOM
The room is dark. Picard is reading from a pad, while seated at his desk. A cup of Earl Grey tea is sat on the desk. the rook is also sat on his desk.

ANGLE ON THE ROOK CHESS PIECE
we hear the door chime.

ANGLE ON PICARD

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
Come.

ANGLE ON DATA.
The door opens and Data enters.

PICARD
(pleased)
Mr Data.

DATA
Captain.

PICARD
Is there something you need Commander?

DATA
I would like to make an inquiry. About recent events.

PICARD
Of course. sit down.

Data sits on the guest sofa.

DATA
Why did you pick the Levit colony over the Domel colony?

Picard makes a uncomfortable but contemplative look. That is a difficult and complicated question.

PICARD
(simplyfing)
war was not an option.

DATA
do you think your choice was moraly right? despite there being no consequences.

PICARD
Data, whatever decision i made would have been good enough reason for sleeples nights.
(beat)
i had to reduce setient beings down how useful they were to the federation and to the galaxy. i had to forget about their lives and familys.

(CONTINUED)
(beat)
i had to forget that they were
people. i think that was what Q was
trying to tell me. at one time i
though what was good for the
majority was what should be done,
while on the other hand i believed
that you can’t simply let numbers
decide whom lives and dies.

DATA
A contradiction.

PICARD
yes.

(beat)
this time i tried not to think
about it. i tried so hard to make
myself believe that the probes
would work and i wouldn’t have to
face that contradiction. i could
either save the cardassians and do
what’s best for the many or save our
colony and save those closer to me.
who do you sacrifice to save the
other?

DATA
you chose to do what was best for
the majority.

PICARD
yes, but that doesn’t necessarily
make my decision correct.

DATA
(perplexed)
then... which philosophy was
correct?

PICARD
i think Mr data, that that depends
on whom you ask.

WIDE SHOT
Picard and Data linger in silence for a beat.
EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE
the ship flies away into the vastness of space.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END