



# STAR TREK COURAGEOUS

1x04 "STRATEGIC MANEUVERS"

Written By Alex Matthews

Based on 'Star Trek'  
created by Gene Roddenberry

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Executive Producer: Alex Matthews

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# STAR TREK COURAGEOUS

1x04 "Strategic Maneuvers"

## CAST

CAPTAIN T'SARA FROST .....	Lena Headey
LT. CMNDR DAMIEN ERICKSON .....	Tyler Hoechlin
LT. CMNDR R'NARA KELLINNIN .....	Diane Guerrero
COMMANDER LEONARDO DA COSTA .....	Peter Davison
DR. NYIA LANJAR .....	Aisha Hinds
LT. CMNDR HROVIIN BHRASH .....	Paul McGillion
LT. ALEXIS MATTHIAS .....	Karen Gillan
LT, J.G, JHISINSHER CH'LENE .....	Sam Witwer
LT, J.G, ASEEMA SINGH .....	Anjali Mohindra

## GUEST STARRING

VARRAK-SAR .....	Ryan Guzman
LT. CMNDR RAVIN ULYN .....	Manu Bennett
LT. ELYSE KARRIN .....	Madelaine Mantock
LT, J.G, AVERY FISCHER .....	Hugo Johnstone-Burt
RE'KAN .....	Nonso Anozie
MAYA CALDERON .....	Alana De La Garza
HANK ORMOND .....	Rodney Rowland
THERESA TRENT .....	Rena Owen
RAYNEEL LORVAK .....	Eddie McClintock
COMMAND DUTY OFFICER DAVID .....	
SCOUT #1 PILOT .....	

# TEASER

FADE IN:

## EXT. DENSE ALIEN JUNGLE - DAY

RICH GREEN FOLIAGE fills the screen. A lush and thick canopy of leaves filters just enough sunlight through to allow us to see where we are.

In the shadows of the trees lurk TWO FIGURES. Both dressed in form-fitting black clothing, carrying PHASER RIFLES. As we push in closer, we see it's DAMIEN ERICKSON and ALEXIS MATTHIAS. Dressed in BLACK TACTICAL UNIFORMS.

Matthias keeps her rifle up and forward, grip firm and her aim unwavering. Erickson quietly removes a COMBAT TRICORDER (black, like his uniform, more muted and streamlined than a regular one) from a holster. Flips it open.

ERICKSON

Half a dozen life-signs, dead ahead.  
Orions and Nausicaans.

(pauses, frowns)

Look's like they're guarding a large  
installation.

MATTHIAS

Our target?

Erickson nods briskly. Frowns at his tricorder readings.

ERICKSON

Some kind of dampening field inside  
is blocking my scans of the building.

He swaps the tricorder for his phaser rifle.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

We need to get closer. Follow me.

Matthias nods, adjusting the grip on her rifle--

--before a FAINT RUSTLE OF LEAVES grabs her attention.

MATTHIAS

Wait. Did you hear--?

The air shimmers - a figure clad head to toe in an ORANGE-RED ISOLATION SUIT appears out of thin air. A DISRUPTOR RIFLE already up and aimed--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--a BLAST OF GREEN ENERGY leaps from it, striking Matthias hard in the chest. Sending her flying backwards with an inarticulate cry of pain!

ERICKSON  
(horrified)  
Matthias!

Erickson manages to pull his attention away, aiming his weapon at the attacker--

--only to have the rifle kicked out of his hands! He looks up in surprise as ANOTHER FIGURE fades into view, their own disruptor aimed squarely at his face. It hits Erickson that *this is it...*

ERICKSON (cont'd)  
(disappointed)  
Oh, shit.

Off the FLASH OF GREEN filling the screen--

INT. HOLODECK THREE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The stark, dark walls of the holodeck, broken up by strips of yellow lighting, fade into view.

Erickson pushes him up from his crouching position. He drags his feet in shame as he moves towards the unharmed and very-much alive Matthias. Helps her to her feet. A look of great embarrassment shared between them.

RAVIN (O.S.)  
Congratulations.

They both look over at LT. COMMANDER RAVIN ULYN, leaning casually against the holodeck's control arch, arms crossed against his chest. Smiling smugly at them.

RAVIN  
You're both dead.

OFF Erickson and Matthias coming to the glum conclusion that they're not going to be allowed to forget about this failure for a long while, we:

BLACKOUT:

END OF TEASER

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The *STARSHIP COURAGEOUS* cruises majestically at warp speed, the stars streaking by her as she makes her way forward...

T'SARA (V.O.)  
 Captain's Log, stardate 53710.6: We are currently on course for a set of coordinates approximately three AUs outside the Zephyrus system.

INT. MAIN SHUTTLEBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

Of the two hangers the *Excelsior*-class starship has, this is by far the largest. Split into two distinct levels, smaller size SHUTTLECRAFT atop a high deck while larger ones are on the bottom deck.

A WORK CREW swarms around a *DANUBE*-CLASS RUNABOUT. Access panels have been removed all across its hull, as engineers and technicians work away.

T'SARA (V.O.)  
 Thanks to our 'consultants', the *Huang He* has been modified to slip by Orion sensor undetected.

One of the team pulls himself out of the crawlspace he's in, revealing a grimy but grinning VARRAK-SAR KELLINNIN...

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

It's a slow night shift, lights dimmed appropriately. The crew go about their regular business quietly. The WARP CORE pulses eagerly as the ship continues through the void.

At the 'POOL TABLE' stand HROVIIN BHRASH and RE'KAN, joined by ELYSE KARRIN and AVERY FISCHER. Checking and re-checking readouts and displays.

T'SARA (V.O.)  
 Modifications that our engineering and tactical teams are implementing to the *Courageous* herself to assist us in our part of the mission.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They confer in hushed voices, handing PADDs back and forth between them. *In the zone.* Totally focused on their tasks...

INT. RESIDENTIAL CORRIDOR, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

Several off-duty crewmembers mill about at one of the junctions in the corridor, chatting amiably, enjoying their down time.

T'SARA (V.O.)

Meanwhile, the rest of the crew are taking advantage of what little time we have before we go into a possible combat scenario.

They all politely nod as R'NARA KELLINNIN exits a turbo-lift and makes her down the corridor. She smiles a welcome as she heads out of sight...

INT. LOWER DECKS MESS HALL, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - LATER

A small, interior room, for junior officers and enlisted crew to mingle and relax. It's starting to get busy, with the advent of the morning shift change.

Apart from all of them sit Varrak-Sar and Re'Kan, at a table of their own. Neither notice (or really care) the occasional curious glances that are surreptitiously aimed their way.

The doors open, and R'Nara walks in, casting a brief look around, before spotting both her brother and his Klingon shipmate. She makes her way over to them. Quickly takes note of their distinct separation from everyone else.

R'NARA

Sorry I'm late. Had to rearrange my morning schedule at short notice.

VARRAK-SAR

No problem, Nara.

He points to a plate, on which sits a blueberry muffin. R'Nara sits next to him, as Varrak eats some bacon. Neither acknowledge Re'Kan as he eats some kind of Klingon dish.

R'NARA

Everything ready for the mission?

VARRAK-SAR

Pretty much. Not much more to do until we launch now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

R'Nara absently picks at her breakfast. Varrak takes note of her silence. Puts his hand on top of hers.

VARRAK-SAR (cont'd)  
We'll be fine. Not like I haven't run plenty of these missions before.

R'Nara nods shakily. Offers a halfhearted smile. Putting on a casual air. She looks over her shoulder. Smile wavering as people looking over turn away, hoping she didn't see. She turns to look at Varrak.

R'NARA  
You do realize you're the center of attention, right?

Varrak nods, completely disinterested. Continues to eat.

VARRAK-SAR  
Oh, yeah. Pretty much from the second me and the big guy walked in.

Re'Kan looks up, grinning wickedly. His breakfast hanging from his sharp, crooked teeth.

RE'KAN  
(mouth full)  
I find it amusing. Your colleagues seem to fear us.

R'Nara rolls her eyes. *Typical Klingon reaction.* She looks to Varrak, getting a playful wink as his only comment...

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HOLODECK THREE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

The large heavy-duty doors open, allowing an exhausted and sweaty MATTHIAS and ERICKSON out. RAVIN follows behind them, decidedly much fresher-looking, chuckling to himself.

RAVIN  
So... how many times did I kill you two today?

ERICKSON  
Not funny, Ulyn.

RAVIN  
(grins)  
It's a little funny, Damien. Come on, at least you two made your best time in that last go-around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATTHIAS

We still died though, sir. Not exactly the ringing endorsement of our tactical abilities.

Erickson nods. Shoots Ravin a withering look.

ERICKSON

It doesn't help when the man behind the curtain throws in things like the bad guys wearing isolation suits.

RAVIN

(shrugs, nonchalant)

It could happen. We know for a fact that the technology has been stolen by Syndicate members before. I want everyone going planet-side to be ready for anything.

The INTERCOM chirps.

T'SARA (OVER INTERCOM)

All senior staff, please report to the Observation Lounge.

The three officers share of a look of concern, before they head further down the corridor to the closest turbo-lift...

T'SARA (PRE-LAP)

We've received a mission update from Commander Nazir back at Starbase 19.

INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

T'SARA FROST sits at the head of the conference table. Erickson, Matthias, Ravin, R'Nara, Bhrash, LEONARDO DA COSTA and DR. NYIA LANJAR sit around it. Joined by Varrak, Karrin and Fischer.

T'SARA

Her contacts have managed to put word out a Rolixi cartel ship is trying to gain intel on *Trey'shiin* activities on Zephyrus IV.

VARRAK-SAR

(approves)

Sneaky. I'm guessing the *Courageous* will be filling that role?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

BHRASH

(nods, grins)

Thanks to you, anyone scanning us  
will think we're a Rolixi Marauder.

T'SARA

Which will hopefully get them to send  
a portion of whatever ships they have  
left at Zephyrus to come after us.

DA COSTA

The Ro'Dana Nebula is only a couple  
of light years away. It will serve as  
good cover from their sensors. We'll  
lead them on a merry chase.

ERICKSON

And while you're playing the role of  
a wild goose, our team will head down  
to the planet on the *Huang He*.

VARRAK-SAR

Just remember, those modifications  
aren't a cloaking device, but they'll  
help us get there without being  
detected.

(grins)

Just hope we're got a good pilot.

RAVIN

(mock-smug)

I think I'll manage, thanks.

OFF the good-natured, playful moment of camaraderie...

SINGH (PRE-LAP)

Okay, let me run through this again.

INT. STAR-VIEW LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

JHISHINSHER CH'LENE squirms under the confused curiosity of  
ASEEMA SINGH. They sit by of the large forward facing view-  
ports, comfortable on one of the smaller sofas.

SINGH

Ky Varanja, the Chief Constable on  
*Star Station Charlie*. He's been  
flirting with you?

CH'LENE

(nods emphatically)

Every time he sees me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SINGH

(grins)

He's cute. So what's the problem?

CH'LENE

(incredulous)

The 'problem' is that he won't stop, See! I mean, he keeps making excuses to have me come over and fix one thing or another.

Singh wiggles her eyebrows suggestively.

SINGH

Maybe he likes the way you handle your tools, huh?

(laughs)

Come on, what's the harm? I mean, you're single. So is he. Go for it!

That's not what ch'Lene wants to hear. He shakes his head. Looks at Singh with disdain.

CH'LENE

Do you even know me? In all the time we've known each other, have I ever come across as someone who enjoys meaningless dalliances.

(icily)

I'm not you, Aseema.

Singh recoils. That stung. She pulls back, her grin gone in an instant.

SINGH

Okay, that was a little uncalled for.

Ch'Lene's flare-up of anger dissipates as he sees how much his words have hurt his friend. He stands abruptly.

CH'LENE

(flustered)

I-- I'm sorry. I should go, I have a ODN relay diagnostic to check on.

Singh, troubled by what she just witnessed, watches ch'Lene practically warp his way out the lounge. *What the hell..?*

EXT. SPACE

The *Courageous* drops out of warp, slowing down to a snail's pace, moving on low impulse.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MAIN SHUTTLEBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

The turbo-lift door opens, allowing Matthias and Karrin to exit into the corridor. Hand in hand, they walk down it.

KARRIN

(softly)

Do I have to ask you to be careful?

MATTHIAS

(just as gentle)

No. But you know I like it when you do ask.

KARRIN

Be careful, Alexis.

Matthias smiles lovingly. Kisses her girlfriend chastely on the lips.

MATTHIAS

Same to you, Elyse. Don't forget you aren't exactly sitting idle.

(teasingly)

Just don't waste your time being the acting Chief Engineer, while Bhrash is up on the bridge.

KARRIN

(mock-affronted)

Hey, I can run that engine room with my eyes closed. But sometimes it pays to not be the boss.

MATTHIAS

(nostalgic)

There was definitely less paperwork.

OFF Karrin laughing gently, as they finally approach the large interior doors labeled "MAIN SHUTTLEBAY"...

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)

We're almost ready, Captain.

INT. MAIN SHUTTLEBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - MOMENTS LATER

Erickson steps down from the open hatch into the runabout's interior. T'Sara stands nearby, waiting.

ERICKSON

Commander Ravin is almost done with the pre-flight checklist.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON (cont'd)

The others are just stowing the last few pieces of our gear.

T'SARA

We'll be at the drop-off coordinates in a few minutes.

(pauses, sincere)

Good luck, Commander. To you and your team.

ERICKSON

(smirks)

I'm tempted to say something about how we don't need luck, but honestly, I'll take whatever the Great Bird of the Galaxy can send our way.

T'Sara allows herself an indulgent smile of amusement.

T'SARA

We'll do our best to fulfill our own part in the plan.

ERICKSON

Likewise, Captain.

Varrak, clad in a TACTICAL UNIFORM of his own, pops his head out of the hatch.

VARRAK-SAR

We're good to go here.

Erickson looks over his shoulder at the Orion. Offers a nod in reply. Varrak offers T'Sara a jaunty mock-salute before heading back inside.

Erickson faces T'Sara once again. There's nothing more to be said. He stands a little straighter. Gives her a crisp nod. She responds in kind.

As Erickson makes his way inside the *Huang He*...

BHRASH (V.O.)

Runabout *Huang He*, you are cleared for departure. Opening bay doors.

EXT. SPACE

At the lower rear underside of the secondary hull of the *Courageous*, the HANGER DOORS slowly lift open, revealing the cavernous shuttlebay interior. The atmosphere held in place by the FORCE-FIELD.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON (OVER COMM CHANNEL)  
Acknowledged, *Courageous*. Take care  
out there. We'll see you soon.

The *Huang He* slowly rises up on anti-gravs, before thrusters push it forward and through the force-field, out into space. It slows to a dead stop, holding position...

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

Da Costa turns around from his Science station screens.

DA COSTA  
The *Huang He* is holding station 100  
kilometers of our aft, Commander.

Bhrash stands in front of the command chair, R'Nara beside him. Ch'Lene and Singh man their forward stations, while Fischer stands at Tactical. The Bolian nods in response.

BHRASH  
Thank you, Mr. Da Costa.

Everyone looks around as T'Sara exits the turbo-lift and moves to the center of the bridge.

T'SARA  
Are we ready, Mr. Bhrash?

Bhrash nods rapidly. Moves over to the Engineering station.

BHRASH  
Give the word, Captain. With one more  
adjustment to our warp signature and  
transponder frequency, we'll light up  
every Syndicate sensor net within two  
light-years.

T'SARA  
The word is given.

She takes her seat, as Bhrash works away at the console.

T'SARA (cont'd)  
Lieutenant Singh, take us to warp.

Singh nods briskly. Ignores the strained look ch'Lene shoots her way as she works her console...

EXT. SPACE

The *Courageous* adjusts her heading, her nacelles glowing with unimaginable power. She seems to stretch into infinity for a long second, before vanishing as she JUMPS TO WARP.

The *Huang He* sits solitary in space for a few moments, before it's impulse engines glow BRIGHT RED. As it sets off on her own mission, we:

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### EXT. HIGH ORBIT, ZEPHYRUS IV

The gorgeous, Earth-like planet slowly turns. A seemingly peaceful view, no hint of the problems happening on its almost perfect surface...

ERICKSON (V.O.)

Mission Update: Having secured our landing site, Commander Ravin has managed to contact surviving members of the resistance cell that he set up during his time here.

### EXT. FORESTED AREA, ZEPHYRUS IV - DAY

In an overgrown clearing, hidden from view of prying eyes, sits the *HUANG HE*. Engines inert. Systems in stand-by mode.

ERICKSON (V.O.)

He and Matthias have left to meet with them, get the lay of the land.

VARRAK-SAR, holding a PHASER RIFLE, maintains a vigil a few meters from the open hatch. Keeping his eyes peeled for any interlopers or threats in the vicinity. Ready for whatever might come his way.

Through the large forward viewport of the runabout, ERICKSON watches him with concern...

RE'KAN (PRE-LAP)

You made the right decision.

### INT. COCKPIT, HUANG HE - CONTINUOUS

Erickson looks quizzically over his shoulder at RE'KAN. The Klingon holds an extra-large cup of raktajino as he leans on the free-standing console.

RE'KAN

Sending the others alone was the only correct choice.

ERICKSON

Your boss didn't seem to agree.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RE'KAN  
(dismissive)  
That is just Varrak's way.

ERICKSON  
Because he still blames himself for  
what happened?

RE'KAN  
(nods)  
Can you blame him?

ERICKSON  
(considers)  
I guess not. I'd probably feel the  
same if it happened to me.

RE'KAN  
Our being here on this mission will  
not help you make many friends here.

ERICKSON  
(shakes head)  
We better hope they can move past it,  
otherwise this mission will be a hell  
of a lot harder.

Re'Kan keeps silent. Taking a long gulp of his drink...

EXT. WOODLANDS, ZEPHYRUS IV - DAY

MATTHIAS and RAVIN, their phaser rifles held ready, slowly and carefully make their way through the thick clusters of trees. She checks the MAP SCREEN on her tricorder.

Ravin takes a moment to look back at Matthias. Studies her serious mien, her intent focus.

RAVIN  
While we have some time, Lieutenant,  
I just wanted to tell you that I was  
very impressed with how you handled  
yourself during training sessions.

Matthias cocks an eyebrow in amused surprise. Smiles.

MATTHIAS  
You mean the few times you didn't  
kill me, sir?  
(shrugs)  
I think I could have done better, but  
you definitely made them a challenge.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

RAVIN

(grins)

Ask Damien about the scenarios I used during his time at A.T.T. School.

(pauses)

Look, I know I'm the new guy on the *Courageous*, but I want you to know that I have no intention of upsetting the status quo you've got going.

MATTHIAS

(sincere)

I appreciate that sir, but I know you served as Chief of Security on four ships before you taught at the A.T.T. School. Any suggestions or opinions you have, I'm willing to listen.

Ravin nods. Impressed with her humble self-insight. Goes to speak--

--but stops. Senses on high alert. He brings his rifle up, looks around carefully, intently. Matthias follows his lead.

RAVIN

(voice lowered)

Someone up ahead.

Matthias runs a scan. Shakes her head in confusion.

MATTHIAS

I'm screening out the masking of an isolation suit, but I'm not picking up anything.

Ravin grins knowingly.

RAVIN

They're not using isolation suits.

(calls out)

Knight to Rock's level two.

Matthias looks to Ravin, stunned he would blow their cover like that. He holds up a hand, forestalling whatever she was about to say. His intense gaze screams "*trust me*".

CALDERON (O.S.)

Pawn to Knight's level three.

Matthias brings her rifle to bare as a stern-faced woman, MAYA CALDERON (42, means business, doesn't take shit from anyone, life has made her harsh) steps out from trees she is using as cover, holding an outdated PHASER RIFLE of her own.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALDERON

Hello, Ulyn. Good to see you're not dead.

RAVIN

Likewise, Maya. Nice to see you used the toys we got hold of.

Calderon looks down at the DEVICE strapped around her arm. Small, like an emergency transporter armband.

CALDERON

It does the trick.

Her stern demeanor cracks, a huge grin breaking out on her face, as she lowers the rifle, and rushes forward to embrace Ravin in a tight, comradely hug. He returns it just as much affection.

They pull apart, as Ravin gestures to the confused Matthias.

RAVIN

Maya, this is Lt. Matthias of the U.S.S. *Courageous*. Matthias, this is Maya Calderon.

Calderon dips her head tersely by way of greeting.

CALDERON

Lets save the introduction for when we're on the move. Come on, the bolt-hole's not too far now.

Gesturing with her rifle, she heads back into the trees. Ravin and Matthias following close behind...

EXT. ABANDONED MINING BASE, ZEPHYRUS IV - DAY

Establishing shot. A simple affair, a standard Federation facility set-up, long since closed and left behind as the colony grew and developed.

CALDERON (PRE-LAP)

It's not much, but it's home for now.

INT. MAIN CARGO AREA, ABANDONED MINING BASE - DAY

A dozen tired people in worn, dirty but functional clothing, similar to how Calderon is dressed, keep busy, organizing what little supplies and armaments they have, as she leads Matthias and Ravin inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ravin looks around, despairingly. He doesn't like what he's seeing.

RAVIN  
Where's everybody else? Carter? Kwan?  
Verol?

Calderon looks him in the eye. Allows herself a brief moment to feel and show her grief at hearing those names. Ravin recoils. It hits him hard. *They're dead.*

CALDERON  
A lot has happened since you and the others left. We did our best to hold out against these assholes, but we just weren't good enough.

ORMAND (O.S.)  
Doesn't help when the only guy who actually knows what he's doing goes and leaves us.

They all turn to look as a grizzled older man, HANK ORMAND (mid-50s, a survivor, seen death up close, lived to talk about it) approaches.

CALDERON  
(not in the mood)  
Stow it, Hank. We all agreed that Ulyn was the only one with the skill to get our families out of harms way.

RAVIN  
(snarky)  
Good to see you too, Ormand.

Ormand ignores him. Leers at an unflinching Matthias.

ORMAND  
Who's your friend?

CALDERON  
She's Starfleet. From the *Courageous*.

ORMAND  
So, she's next to useless, then?

He closes the distance between them. Glares hatefully at her as he sneers in disgust. Matthias stands her ground. Not about to let this loudmouth intimidate her.

ORMAND (cont'd)  
Where were you guys when it mattered?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAVIN  
Back off, Hank!

Ravin furiously pushes Ormand. He stumbles back a few steps, keeps his balance. Grins with pleasure at getting under the Bajoran's skin.

He lifts his hands in mock-surrender as he slowly backs up, before heading off the way he came. Matthias watches him go, her lips pursed in distaste.

MATTHIAS  
Nice guy.

CALDERON  
His social skills may be lacking, but he's a damn good fighter. I'd say that counts more in the here and now.

Calderon stretches out a kink in her neck, massages it for a moment, before focusing back on Ravin.

CALDERON (cont'd)  
I'm assuming you're here with some kind of last-minute play?

RAVIN  
You could say that. But this mission, for the moment, is purely recon.

CALDERON  
(sighs, not surprised)  
Kinda saw that coming, but I guess I can understand.

Ravin and Matthias exchange a concerned, knowing, look.

RAVIN  
First, there's something we need to discuss. Can we talk somewhere a bit more private, Maya?

OFF Calderon's suspicious look of worry...

EXT. RO'DANA NEBULA, DEEP IN THE ASTRAEUS SECTOR

The RO'DANA NEBULA, a thick, swirling miasma of dark red and purple colors. Barely visible through the dust clouds is a familiar shape - the *COURAGEOUS*.

As it slowly pushes through the nebula on thrusters only...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LANJAR (PRE-LAP)  
Where's your head at, Leo?

INT. STAR-VIEW LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

DA COSTA, his gaze looking out the windows at the beauty of the nebula, distractedly faces his companion, LANJAR.

DA COSTA  
Huh?

LANJAR  
(concerned)  
What's going on with you?

DA COSTA  
I've just been thinking about things,  
that's all.  
(sighs)  
This assignment. I'm wondering if  
coming here was such a good idea.

Lanjar's frown deepens. Da Costa shakes his head wearily.

DA COSTA (cont'd)  
These Syndicate cartels mean serious  
business. But it's not what I joined  
Starfleet for.

He gestures at the interstellar gases outside.

DA COSTA (cont'd)  
I came out here to study space  
itself. But with everything going on,  
I'm getting the feeling that maybe  
this isn't the right place for me.

Lanjar offers a sympathetic smile. Understanding where he's coming from all too well.

LANJAR  
When T'Sara asked me to sign on as  
C.M.O., I had doubts. I promised  
myself I was finished with combat  
medicine.

DA COSTA  
You never did tell me what changed  
your mind.

LANJAR  
She did.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LANJAR (cont'd)

(pauses)

She reminded me that what I love  
about medicine is healing people.

Da Costa frowns. *Not getting it.*

LANJAR (cont'd)

That's how I want to see our mission.  
We're doing what we can to help heal  
this sector of the damage caused by  
the Orion Syndicate.

(sadly)

That means, sometimes, we fight to  
protect others and ourselves.

She takes his hand. Squeezing tightly with affection.

LANJAR (cont'd)

But I have faith that our brave and  
smart commanding officer is the type  
of captain who solves problems with  
words long before needing weapons.

(pauses)

Maybe you should too?

Da Costa slowly smiles. Nods in agreement, as the INTERCOM  
sounds a shrill whistle.

FISCHER (OVER INTERCOM)

All hands, Yellow Alert. Senior  
Officers, report to your stations.

Da Costa's smile crumbles. *So much for that.* He and Lanjar  
stand, as the smattering of crew present make their way to  
their duty positions...

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - MOMENTS LATER

T'SARA stands with FISCHER behind the Tactical station, both  
studying the readings with intent. BHRASH checks a tactical  
status display behind them.

FISCHER

Their scans are being impeded by the  
nebula gases, but sooner or later,  
they'll detect us.

T'Sara presses her lips tightly together.

T'SARA

Keep an eye on them, Mr. Fischer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Fischer nods, working his console, as Da Costa exits the turbo-lift. He heads straight for his Science station as T'Sara and Bhrash approach.

DA COSTA  
What's going on?

T'SARA  
Those Marauders that we lured away?  
They've entered the nebula.

DA COSTA  
(stunned)  
Varrak said they wouldn't do that!

BHRASH  
Tell them that. Apparently, they've  
tweaked their shield just enough to  
do it.

T'SARA  
Can you re-calibrate our sensors to  
keep us one step ahead of them?

Da Costa nods confidently, taking his station, relieving the duty officer there, who moves to the Mission Ops station.

T'Sara approaches SINGH, sitting at Conn. Rests a hand on her shoulder.

T'SARA (cont'd)  
I know this soup is going to make  
maneuvering difficult, but do the  
best you can, Lieutenant.

SINGH  
I won't be able to push the engines  
any harder than half-impulse, ma'am.  
Otherwise we'll overtax the manifold  
assembly.

T'SARA  
Understood.

T'Sara steps back up to her command chair, lowering herself into it, taking a moment to put her calm facade in place.

Singh turns back to her console, face twisted with doubt, too focused on her own concerns to notice the worried glance CH'LENE gives her out of the corner of his eye, his antennae curling with nervousness...

EXT. FORESTED AREA, ZEPHYRUS IV - NIGHT

Ravin and Matthias lead Calderon into the clearing. She surveys the lone runabout with disappointment. Looks back to Ravin.

CALDERON

Kinda was hoping for something more.

RAVIN

We're going to do everything we can to get Starfleet to come in full force, Maya. I promise.

CALDERON

(shakes head)

I'm surprised you'd put that uniform back on, Ulyn.

RAVIN

It wasn't the uniform I had an issue with, it was the decision made by the people higher up.

CALDERON

(nods, takes a breath)

Come on, let's get this over with.

They head towards the runabout as its HATCH opens. Out step Erickson and Varrak. A tense silence fills the clearing.

CALDERON (cont'd)

Never thought I'd see you again, Kellinnin.

VARRAK-SAR

(strained)

Chief Calderon. Good to see you're still alive.

CALDERON

(venomous)

No thanks to you, you snake.

Varrak opens his mouth to defend himself, but Erickson silences him with a look. Stares Calderon down.

ERICKSON

Look, I get you have a problem, but right now, we need to bury that and work together so we can figure out how to get the Syndicate off this planet for good. Agreed?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Calderon fumes silently for a moment. Nods briskly. *She gets it.* Not happy, but she gets it.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

Good. So, maybe we can--

A BLAST OF RED PHASER FIRE slams into Varrak's shoulder. He is sent sprawling to the ground, crying out more in surprise than in pain.

Erickson and Matthias whirl around instantly, phasers drawn and aimed--

--as ORMAND steps out into view, leaving the shadows of the trees. Fury twists his face into an ugly visage. He holds an 23rd-century style phaser, the emitter still glowing.

ORMAND

What the hell is that green-skinned bastard doing here?

CALDERON

(pissed)

Hank, drop the phaser, damn it!

Ravin quickly moves to check on Varrak. Helps him sit up, as he tries to assess how much damage has been done. Erickson slowly approaches Ormand.

ERICKSON

Don't know who you are. Don't care.  
Drop the weapon, or I drop you.

Ormand barely flinches. A sneer pulling his lips back. OFF the stand-off...

EXT. COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING, SONGHAVEN - NIGHT

A functional, plain looking building. 5 stories, situated by a lovely looking plaza with a sprawling, albeit inactive, water-feature. A place to come and relax, hang out...

...that is conspicuously empty, despite the lovely weather.

LORVAK (PRE-LAP)

I think you'll be very pleased.

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A WELL-DRESSED MAN, his back to us, stares out of the office windows. Looking out onto the deserted plaza below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man turns - to reveal RAYNEEL LORVAK. Just as smarmy and confident as always (seen in the video seen in 1x03). He has a small AUDIO TRANSCIEVER in place in his ear. He's in full 'salesman' mode, an easy smile in place.

LORVAK

We'll start operations in the next few days. As soon as the last of our problems is taken care of.

A nervous looking TECHNICIAN (Orion, 28, always wondering when someone will stab him in the back) steps through the open doorway. The small, mostly unmanned OPERATIONS HUB can be glimpsed behind him.

Lorvak fixes him with an irate glare. Not in the mood for an interruption.

LORVAK (cont'd)

Of course, yes. I understand. I will speed things up. Goodbye.

He yanks out the transceiver, tosses it onto the table. Glaring at the younger man.

LORVAK (cont'd)

This better be good.

TECHNICIAN

Sir, I think you need to see this.

He hands Lorvak a PADD. Has it snatched away by the Farian, who studies it. His frown deepening with mounting worry and concern. Whatever he's reading, it's not good news.

LORVAK

*Grozit!* This is the last thing we need to happen.

(to assistant)

Have the satellites re-tasked to confirmed this, immediately.

The technician nods eagerly, scampers back into the Ops Hub to complete his orders.

Lorvak looks at the PADD. On the display is a TEXT MESSAGE: "STARFLEET IS HERE".

As Lorvak considers his options, we:

BLACKOUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. AFT SECTION, RUNABOUT HUANG HE - NIGHT

VARRAK-SAR sits, shirtless, grimacing with pain as MATTHIAS gently treats his WOUND. The red and blistered skin fades as the dermal regenerator does its work.

MATTHIAS

How's that feel? It still hurt?

Varrak remains silent. Eyes staring ahead, unfocused. More looking inward than out. Matthias frowns, concerned.

MATTHIAS (cont'd)

Varrak, you with me?

VARRAK-SAR

I can't blame him.

He shakes his head. Looks up at a quizzical Matthias.

VARRAK-SAR (cont'd)

Ormand. He's got every right to be angry. Just like those people back at *Charlie*.

MATTHIAS

(not buying it)

Angry or no, he's got no right shooting you or anyone on this team. We're in this together, remember.

Varrak nods. None too convincingly, though...

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)

What the damn hell was that?!

EXT. WOODLANDS, ZEPHYRUS IV - NIGHT

ERICKSON glares at ORMAND, who displays no remorse or regret at his actions. CALDERON stands at her subordinate's side, while RAVIN restrains a fuming RE'KAN, who glares daggers at the man who just shot his shipmate.

RE'KAN

Filthy *taHqeq*! I should kill you where you stand for what you did!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORMAND

(spits in rage)

He's damn lucky I wasn't aiming for his head! I have every right to, after you and your lot screwed us!

Re'Kan growls low in his throat, struggling against Ravin's solid hold on him.

VARRAK-SAR (O.S.)

Re'Kan, that's enough!

All eyes turn to Varrak as he steps out of the runabout. He pulls his jacket on with some difficulty, flinching as he flexes his still-tender shoulder.

VARRAK-SAR

We've got a mission to finish. Lets just get to it, huh?

Ormand spins on Calderon, disgusted.

ORMAND

Why the hell are you working with these asshats, if they've brought *him* back here?

CALDERON

(defensive)

Look, I'm not happy about it, but they vouched for him. They wouldn't be here without the help Varrak-Sar and his crew gave them

ORMAND

And we wouldn't still be mourning all those of us who've died if it wasn't for what these bastards did to us!

RE'KAN

We did nothing! We have no idea why the defense array failed! We were just as shocked as you were!

ORMAND

(outraged)

Really? Didn't stop you from cutting and running, did it?!

He spits on the ground in front of Re'Kan's boots, before turning his back on the group, and storming off into the woods. Disappearing from sight in seconds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Calderon shakes her head miserably. Looks to Ravin.

CALDERON  
Why'd you bring them here, Ulyn?

RAVIN  
Because they offered to come, and we  
need all the help we can get.

Assured Re'Kan has calmed down, Ravin releases his hold on him. Approaches Calderon slowly.

RAVIN (cont'd)  
We need to get past this, otherwise  
we'll never force the Syndicate out  
of Songhaven.

Calderon grimaces. Sees the sense in his words, hates it all the same. She glares darkly at a stone-faced Varrak.

CALDERON  
I'll do what I can to convince the  
others, but no promises. All I care  
about now is taking my home back from  
these scumbags.

She closes the distance between them in a few steps. Thrusts a finger into his chest. Sneering at him.

CALDERON (cont'd)  
But if I find you or any of your  
people are behind what happened, I  
will be coming for you.

Varrak remains stoic. Unwilling to be intimidated. Meets her gaze steadily.

VARRAK-SAR  
Then I guess we have nothing to worry  
about. Because we didn't do *anything*.

Calderon scoffs, shaking her head as she turns away from him and moves off...

EXT. RO'DANA NEBULA, DEEP IN THE ASTRAEUS SECTOR

The *COURAGEOUS* pushes through the ever-thickening interior of the Ro'Dana Nebula. Like a sea-bound cruise ship on its way through a heavy patch of fog...

DA COSTA (PRE-LAP)  
They're gaining on us.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

T'SARA hovers over DA COSTA's shoulder, both scrutinizing his station's upper screen.

DA COSTA

Whatever they did to their shields, it's allowed them to push in a hell of a lot closer than I'd like.

T'SARA

(antsy)

I was hoping they'd lose interest in us and go home with their tail tucked between their collective legs.

(sighs)

Keep an eye on their position, let us know if they get too close.

Da Costa nods, gaze never wavering from the readout. T'Sara steps away, approaching FISCHER and BHRASH at Tactical.

T'SARA (cont'd)

How are the shields holding?

BHRASH

Ordinarily, they can handle whatever the nebula throws at them, but all this constant motion is creating a lot of wear and tear on them.

FISCHER

There's also the problem of the electrostatic interference it's kicking back. If we go into combat, I'm not sure our targeting sensors will be very reliable.

T'Sara purses her lips in dismay. Considers things.

T'SARA

Hopefully that will go both ways.

(to Bhrash)

Head down to Engineering, see if you and Karrin can reinforce the shields or eliminate the interference.

BHRASH

(mock-vainly)

Hell, maybe we'll figure out both?

With a confident nod, he heads to the turbo-lift. T'Sara heads forward to where SINGH and CH'LENE work diligently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA  
How are you two holding up?

SINGH  
(wavering)  
Walk in the park, Captain.

CH'LENE  
The impulse engines are badly clogged with nebula particulates. We'll need to purge them completely once we're clear of it.

T'SARA  
(realizing)  
Which will delay our return to meet with the away team. Damn.

She looks to the VIEWSCREEN, which currently displays a TACTICAL PLOT. Two BLIPS - the Orion Syndicate ships - are far too close for comfort.

T'SARA (cont'd)  
Better they are coming after us than after them, I suppose.

As she stares at the screen, unable to do anything more...

INT. DINING AREA, ABANDONED MINING BASE - NIGHT

What once was a place for people to come together and talk as they ate has been converted into a 'war room' of sorts. Whatever tactics or actions the resistance make, this is the place that they are planned.

Calderon stands around a long makeshift table with Erickson, Ravin and Ormand. An assortment of PADDs and portable work stations fill the table.

CALDERON  
We don't have much, but it's at your disposal while you're here.

ERICKSON  
Where do we stand on current intel?

CALDERON  
Pretty good, all things considered.

RAVIN  
(pleased)  
All the hacks are still in place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Calderon smirks. Nods in pride. Ravin notes Erickson's quizzical look.

RAVIN (cont'd)

One of the first things we did was make a back-door into the colony's computer. Totally clean, completely untraceable. Allows us access to the colony's security surveillance array.

ERICKSON

But if you have access to the entire mainframe..?

ORMAND

(shakes head)

No go, hotshot. Think of it as the proverbial 'fly-on-the-wall'. We can look around, but we can't change a damn thing in it.

ERICKSON

Still, having that is a bonus.

Erickson picks through several of the PADDs. More than a little impressed.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

Extensive surveillance, intelligence gathering, while operating with so few resources and manpower? You've done great work.

CALDERON

(shrugs, modest)

Just putting the last six years as Chief of Police to good use. Having Hank, our chief computer technician, at my back was a huge boon.

(derisive)

The Syndicate people are arrogant, they didn't bother to wipe our access codes. We're not any serious kind of threat to them.

RAVIN

That's all going to change now, Maya.

Erickson shoots Ravin a quick, wary look. Ravin takes note, straightening his shoulders slightly.

RAVIN (cont'd)

But we can't do this on our own.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

Calderon meets his level gaze. Gets his meaning.

CALDERON

The Orion and his pet Klingon? You really think they can help?

RAVIN

Commander Erickson does. That's good enough for me.

ERICKSON

He's saved my life twice in the last few weeks. That's earned him my trust to a certain degree.

(pauses)

Can you just hear what they have to say, okay?

Calderon, despite her better judgment, relents with a weary nod...

EXT. RO'DANA NEBULA, DEEP IN THE ASTRAEUS SECTOR

The *Courageous* continues its inexorably slow path through the nebula. Not too far away, just about visible through the dust-cloud, are the two ORION INTERCEPTORS. Looking around with difficulty, refusing to admit defeat...

BHRASH (PRE-LAP)

It's the little things, really.

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

Bhrash works at one of the wall-mounted DIAGNOSTIC SCREENS, staring at the myriad of algorithms and equations on it.

BHRASH

That's what really counts, like this old girl having sensors good enough to read through all this interference and keep us one step ahead of those cartel ships.

(smirks)

I doubt they can see a dozen or so kilometers ahead of them, huh, Elyse?

He looks over at KARRIN, sat at the master systems 'POOL TABLE'. Staring blankly at its monitor. Not listening to a single word he's been saying.

He frowns. Not impressed her attention is elsewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BHRASH (cont'd)

Elyse? Hey!

Karrin *jolts*. Snapping out of her thoughts. Blinking rapidly as she realizes how far away her mind was.

KARRIN

Sorry! Sorry, Chief. What were you saying?

Bhrash joins her at the 'pool table', sitting down across from her. She squirms under his scrutiny.

BHRASH

(firmly)

I'm not the chief at the moment, you are, so get it together, okay?

She nods, apologetic. Tries to get back on task, her fingers dancing over the controls. Bhrash watches her for a second, his demeanor softening.

BHRASH (cont'd)

She'll be okay, Elyse. Alexis knows how to take care of herself. Not to mention she's got a lot of back-up.

He offers her a gentle smile. Karrin mirrors it. Reassured. Bhrash clears his throat, focusing back on task. Embarrassed at his moment of softness.

BHRASH (cont'd)

So, any ideas?

Karrin, smiling softly, plays along. Nodding as she gets to the work...

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

The lights are dimmed for the late hour. Most stations are manned by junior officers or non-coms. The only Alpha-shift crew left are T'Sara and Singh.

The port-side turbo-lift opens to allow a cadre of PERSONNEL to exit - the GRAVEYARD SHIFT. A human Lt. Commander, the COMMAND DUTY OFFICER, approaches T'Sara.

COMMAND DUTY OFFICER

Time for the shift change, Captain. I relieve you.

T'Sara nods, standing. Fighting a yawn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA

It's all yours, Commander David.

She steps back, as David seats himself in the big chair. Takes note of how Singh waves away her relief, sending them to man the Auxiliary Systems console instead.

With a concerned frown, T'Sara steps down to the lower command deck, standing at Singh's side.

T'SARA (cont'd)

You've been at your station for 16 hours, Lieutenant. Take a break.

SINGH

(shakes head)

I'm fine, Captain. I'd rather be here where I can be useful.

T'SARA

(unconvinced)

You're no good to anyone at the helm if you're exhausted, Lieutenant.

Singh meets T'Sara's gaze, ready to protest - but it dies on her lips when she sees T'Sara's in no mood for arguments. She nods with resignation.

SINGH

Understood, Captain.

T'Sara allows a small smile. Looks up at Auxiliary Systems.

T'SARA

Ensign Weatherly, please take your post at the helm.

The young ensign nods, moving back down from the upper deck. Singh surrenders the console, then heads to the turbo-lift. T'Sara watches until the doors close and Singh disappears from sight before she makes her own EXIT...

INT. TURBO-LIFT, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

Singh, giving up any pretense now she's clear of the bridge, loosens her collar, and yawns deeply.

SINGH

Deck 5, Officers Quarters.

The turbo-lift HUMS and begins to move downward. A sudden thought occurs to Singh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SINGH (cont'd)  
Computer, locate Lieutenant ch'Lene.

COMPUTER  
Lieutenant ch'Lene is in the Star-View Lounge.

Singh considers the answer. Biting her lip anxiously. Makes a decision.

SINGH  
Destination change: Star-View Lounge.

She takes a breath, readying herself for what be coming...

INT. STAR-VIEW LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - MINUTES LATER

The lounge is quiet, only a few people enjoying the social surroundings, a couple of non-com wait-staff at work.

Ch'Lene sits by himself, at peace in his solitude. A glass of water in hand, barely touched. Staring out at the nebula.

SINGH (O.S.)  
So, we need to talk.

Ch'Lene looks up to find Singh standing at his side. She takes the seat next to him, as he watches silently.

SINGH  
You're one of my closest and dearest friends, but in all the time we've known each other, I've never heard you be deliberately mean.

Ch'Lene merely nods in response, wracked with guilt. Singh's expression softens. She takes his hand. Squeezes it.

SINGH (cont'd)  
Jhish, I want you to be happy, but sometimes I forget that you're not as *uninhibited* as me. So I'm sorry I pushed you like that.

Ch'Lene offers a sad smile. His antennae unfurling as he relaxes a little.

CH'LENE  
I prefer the term 'fun-loving'. It fits you better.

Singh grins. *She couldn't agree more.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CH'LENE (cont'd)  
 I'm sorry, too. But you're right.  
 (sighs)  
 It's been a long time since I had a  
 relationship. My last one... it  
 didn't end so well. For anyone  
 involved.

Singh looks at him askance. He shakes his head.

CH'LENE (cont'd)  
 I'm not ready to talk about it. I'm  
 sorry. But I'm just a little unnerved  
 about being in that kind of situation  
 again.

SINGH  
 Ky is a nice guy, I mean, he's got a  
 fantastic sense of humor.  
 (cheekily)  
 Not to mention a killer bod.

Ch'Lene grins, shakes his head in amusement.

CH'LENE  
 He does, doesn't he?  
 (shrugs)  
 Maybe when we get back to the  
 station, I'll take him up on the  
 offer of a drink.

SINGH  
 Hey, if you're not ready, for  
 whatever reason, it's your call. If  
 he likes you, he'll understand that.

She stands. Puts a hand on ch'Lene's shoulder.

SINGH (cont'd)  
 And if you do ever want to talk, just  
 know I'm here.

Ch'Lene offers a nod in response. Turns to look back out the  
 viewport as Singh leaves him be...

EXT. ABANDONED MINING BASE, ZEPHYRUS IV - MORNING

Establishing shot. The harsh light of day does nothing to  
 make the place look any less run-down...

VARRAK-SAR (PRE-LAP)  
 Our priority should be the Ops Room.

INT. DINING AREA, ABANDONED MINING BASE - CONTINUOUS

Calderon angrily shakes her head, glaring at the fighting-to-stay-calm Varrak.

CALDERON

If we don't secure the people they're holding hostages first, they're as good as dead! That's what we need to get first!

VARRAK-SAR

(gritting his teeth)

If the Syndicate people still hold control of the colony, we can't make any kind of move to take it back. If we get the hostages first, we lose any element of surprise we have.

ORMAND (O.S.)

(snorts, derisive)

Figures.

Varrak shoots an acid look over at Ormand, leaning against the far wall.

ORMAND

Makes sense you'd be willing to let innocent people die.

His jaw clenching, Varrak steps away from the table. Needing some distance. Calderon takes a strained breath.

CALDERON

We've been at this for hours. Let's take a break for now, okay?

VARRAK-SAR

(frustrated)

Whatever.

He stalks off, ignoring the nasty smirk Ormand wears...

INT. CARGO LOADING, ABANDONED MINING BASE - CONTINUOUS

Erickson stands with Ravin and a couple of the colonists, checking their stockpile of ENERGY WEAPONS. He looks up as Varrak storms past them, anger radiating of him in waves.

ERICKSON

Varrak? Everything okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Varrak ignores him, heading towards the open loading bay doors as quickly as he can.

OFF Erickson's concerned frown...

EXT. ABANDONED MINING BASE, ZEPHYRUS IV - MORNING

THWACK!! A GREEN FIST collides into the solid outer wall of the base.

As Varrak pulls his hand back, flexing his fingers, enjoying the release of his anger, but not the pain, Erickson quietly joins him. Letting Varrak speak in his own time.

VARRAK-SAR

Coming here was a mistake.

(sighs)

They don't want to hear what I have to say.

ERICKSON

Because it's wrong?

VARRAK-SAR

Because it's practical. They're too invested, emotionally.

ERICKSON

Can you blame them?

(beat)

Besides, I think you're also pretty invested, wouldn't you? After what happened back on *Charlie*?

Varrak flinches. Not wanting to think about it. He whirls on Erickson, suspicious.

VARRAK-SAR

Why did you follow me out here? Why do you even care about how I feel?

Erickson meets his gaze steadily. Varrak soon answers his own question, rolling his eyes in realization.

VARRAK-SAR (cont'd)

Nara asked you to keep an eye on me, didn't she?

ERICKSON

Are you really surprised? She just found her baby brother, she doesn't want to lose you again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Varrak can't help but smile. Shakes his head, laughing softly...

INT. CARGO LOADING, ABANDONED MINING BASE - CONTINUOUS

Ravin watches the conversation with caution, arms crossed against his chest, from his position inside. He spares a brief look at Re'Kan as the burly Klingon joins him.

RAVIN

You two took a hell of a risk joining this mission.

RE'KAN

Perhaps. But it was the right thing to do. For us, and for the people of Songhaven.

(beat, ashamed)

We are not what they think us, but we *did* fail them. We must make it right.

Ravin looks to him. Taken aback by the emotional weight in his voice. He opens his mouth, trying to think of something to say in response...

...but the shrill sound of a TRANSPORTER EFFECT grabs his attention. Several meters away, materializing from a green haze, is a floating round object.

RAVIN

What the hell..?

Small dotted lights on it blink on, They get faster and faster with each repetition--

RE'KAN

(realizing)

Get down!

He lunges at Ravin--

EXT. ABANDONED MINING BASE, ZEPHYRUS IV - CONTINUOUS

KABOOM!! A massive WALL OF FLAME explodes out of the open loading bay doors, tearing them free from their mountings. Scorching the ground.

The sheer force of the BLAST slams into the unsuspecting Varrak and Erickson, tossing them to the ground, stunned.

As Erickson tries to stand, Matthias runs over, aghast.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MATTHIAS

Are you two okay?

She helps pull the dazed Varrak upright, as Erickson takes in the devastated loading bay, coughing hard and nursing his right arm, bruised from his impacting the ground.

ERICKSON

(whispered)

Dear God...

He races forward, his injury forgotten, no thought to his own safety, rushing past the blackened, twisted doors...

INT. CARGO LOADING, ABANDONED MINING BASE - CONTINUOUS

Ravin, nursing several nasty cuts to his face, gently eases a pained Re'Kan into a sitting position, taking great care.

RAVIN

How bad does it hurt?

Re'Kan gives him the 'stink eye', before he takes a ragged breath, and hisses through gritted teeth.

RE'KAN

It hurts a *great deal!*

RAVIN

Yeah, I've survived being blown up a few times, I've been where you are.

RE'KAN

How reassuring!

Erickson joins them, dropping to one knee at their side.

ERICKSON

Glad to see you two in one piece.

RE'KAN

Just about, it feels.

Ravin and Erickson help Re'Kan to his feet. As they slowly make their way out of the loading bay...

EXT. ABANDONED MINING BASE, ZEPHYRUS IV - MOMENTS LATER

Ravin holds a tricorder over a fidgeting Re'Kan, sat against a tree trunk, giving him a once over. Varrak stands with them, trying to not let his concern show. Failing badly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAVIN

Second-degree burns, but nothing too serious. We'll fix you up back at the runabout.

RE'KAN

That cannot come soon enough.

VARRAK-SAR

(smirks)

What's the matter, big guy? Doesn't a warrior like you enjoy pain?

As Re'Kan opens his mouth to deliver a scathing retort--

MATTHIAS (O.S.)

We need help over here!

They look around as Matthias and Erickson exit the loading bay carrying a prone figure - Calderon. Following wobbly at their rear is a dazed Ormand.

They gently lay her down on the ground. She stirs slightly, moaning in pain. Covered in cuts and scrapes. Ravin rushes over to lend any aid he can. Looks at Erickson, anxious.

RAVIN

Did anyone else...?

He leaves the sentence hanging. Sadly, Erickson shakes his head. Ravin swallows the sudden lump in his throat, focusing on the task at hand. He checks his tricorder screen.

RAVIN (cont'd)

Cranial contusion, from a blunt force impact. Minor lacerations.

ORMAND

(shakily)

She-- she got pretty banged up when that explosion went off.

Ravin aims the tricorder at him, but Ormand smacks it away.

ORMAND (cont'd)

Don't worry about me, I'm fine!

He angrily points toward Varrak and Re'Kan.

ORMAND (cont'd)

The only thing I need to feel better is seeing those bastards in chains!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VARRAK-SAR  
Are you *frelling* kidding me?!

Varrak storms forward. Gets in Ormand's face. He's had it.

VARRAK-SAR (cont'd)  
How the hell are you blaming us?

ORMAND  
We've stayed under the Syndicate radar for weeks, but then you show up and suddenly we're being bombed?  
(spits)  
You do the math!

RAVIN  
(explodes)  
Enough, both of you! This pissing contest can wait until we've buried our dead.

ORMAND  
(scoffs)  
'Our dead'? You wear that uniform and still think you're one of us, Ravin?

Ravin flinches. *That touched a nerve.* Erickson steps between them, in an effort to prevent it escalating further.

ERICKSON  
Stow it, all of you. Let's just regroup and get our heads together.

He looks to Ravin and Varrak.

ERICKSON (cont'd)  
You two, go see if any of the cargo sleds are still intact. We can use it as a stretcher for Calderon to get her to the runabout.

He points to a series of CRATES nearby.

ERICKSON (cont'd)  
There were a couple parked with the weapons and explosives cache.

RAVIN  
(somber)  
Understood.

He and Varrak silently make their way over to the crates, as Erickson looks to Matthias.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ERICKSON  
Lieutenant, can you--

A GREEN STREAK OF DISRUPTOR FIRE blasts through the air--  
--and a huge FIREBALL erupts as the crates EXPLODE!

Erickson and the others recoil from the heat and debris, as the fireball dissipates, leaving nothing but scorched earth. No sign of Varrak or Ravin. They're gone.

ERICKSON (cont'd)  
(horrified)  
Ulyn!

Matthias jumps to her feet, phaser in hand, looking for the origin of the weapons fire--

-- as the air shimmers, three ORION STEALTH-SCOUTS (bird-like, menacing and well-armed) de-cloaking high above them!

SCOUT #1 PILOT (OVER SPEAKER)  
Stand down, Starfleet. Or die.

Erickson's face twists with fury, his hand resting on his phaser. Fingers flexing, desperate to wrap around its grip. Matthias shoots him a determined look. Ready to follow his lead...

...until his better judgment kicks in. With great care, he pulls his phaser loose. Drops it to the ground. Swallowing a lump, Matthias follows suite.

As they both lift their arms in surrender, we:

BLACKOUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

What was once a room for talking to suspects or witnesses has been converted into something much more *nefarious*.

From a make-shift hook in the ceiling hangs ERICKSON, his hands bound, holding him suspended. Shirtless, sweaty and bruised in a dozen or so places across his torso. His chest is a patchwork of old scars.

*THWACK!* A large fist slams into his jaw, snapping his head around. A trickle of blood comes from his split lip.

His assailant, a large, hulking NAUSICAN, backs off as RAYNEEL LORVAK approaches. Appraising Erickson, impressed with his fortitude.

LORVAK

You do Starfleet proud with how long  
you've gone silent, Commander.

Erickson looks up, eyes burning with anger as he glowers at his captors. Spits out a mouthful of blood with a grimace.

ERICKSON

You think Starfleet will let you get  
away with what you're doing here?

LORVAK

(smirks)  
You think I fear the oh-so-mighty  
Starfleet?  
(shakes head, amused)  
Please. You can't even track down the  
people responsible for the death of  
your previous captain!  
(snidely)  
Do you even know which cartel that  
the ships belonged to?

Erickson's face twists with hate. *He did not just go there!* Lorvak's grin widens. Enjoying the pain the taunting brings.

LORVAK (cont'd)

I didn't think so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Satisfied, he looks to the Nausicaan. Nods. The henchman cracks his knuckles.

As Erickson braces himself for what's coming...

INT. SECURITY COMPLEX, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

*FZZT!* With a wince of pain, Matthias pulls her stung fingers back from her testing of the force-field that's keeping her confined inside a holding cell.

Stepping back, she looks over at a determined RE'KAN, as he works to pry off a wall panel.

MATTHIAS

Think you can get us out of here?

RE'KAN

(scoffs)

From this child's play-pen? Please. I just need a few minutes to see what I am working with.

Matthias nods, encouraged by his words, leaving him to his work as she checks on a pale, shell-shocked CALDERON keeping watch on any activity outside the cell.

MATTHIAS

How're you feeling?

Calderon shrugs. Trying to act nonchalant, but she's not at all convincing.

CALDERON

My head's still ringing, but I'm not sure if that's from the explosion or from what you told me.

(shakily)

I can't believe Ulyn's gone.

MATTHIAS

(not very convincing)

We don't know that they are.

She balks a little at Calderon's dubious stare. Re'Kan turns away from his work to fix them with a defiant glare.

RE'KAN

I may not know your Commander Ravin, but I do know Varrak-Sar. Do not be so quick to write either of them off.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RE'KAN (cont'd)  
If anyone could find a way to survive  
that, it's Varrak.

As Matthias considers his words, hoping...

EXT. FORESTED AREA, ZEPHYRUS IV

Two ORION GUARDS guard the inactive *Huang He*. Keeping a wary eye on the perimeter--

--until a PHASER BLAST strikes one, sending him to the ground, unconscious. As the second pulls his weapon up and desperately looks around for a target, a SECOND BEAM hits him square in the chest!

From the trees, sporting phaser rifles and assorted cuts and bruises, walk RAVIN and VARRAK-SAR. A little worse for wear but very much alive!

Ravin quickly gets the entry hatch open, as Varrak checks to make sure the guards are out for the count...

INT. COCKPIT, HUANG HE - MOMENTS LATER

Ravin works the forward console with haste as Varrak joins him, hefting another phaser rifle over his shoulder, along with the one he already holds.

VARRAK-SAR  
We won't have long before someone  
tries to contact them when they don't  
report in.

RAVIN  
(nods, curt)  
I've got the computer scanning for  
the others. Here's hoping Re'Kan is  
the only Klingon around.

Varrak frowns, noticing the controls Ravin is working

VARRAK-SAR  
Why are you accessing the subspace  
transmitter? You'll give us away!

RAVIN  
(shakes head)  
Something I picked up when I was in  
the Resistance. Masked the signal so  
only someone on the *Courageous* would  
know what it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRAK-SAR  
(grins, impressed)  
Sneaky. I approve.  
(sighs)  
But telling them that this mission  
has gone FUBAR won't get them here  
any quicker.

RAVIN  
(scowls)  
Or solve our more immediate problem.

He turns to face a questioning Varrak.

RAVIN (cont'd)  
Someone gave our position away. It's  
no coincidence that the day we arrive  
the Syndicate made this move.

Varrak's brow furrows. Bristling at the Bajoran's underlying  
accusation. Ravin is quick to cut off his protestations.

RAVIN (cont'd)  
I'm not pointing a finger at you,  
Varrak. But I do think it has a link  
to what happened when you and your  
crew were here before.

VARRAK-SAR  
(confused)  
How do you mean?

RAVIN  
Think about it. You built a defense  
system that should have worked fine,  
but it fails just when a Syndicate  
force shows up?

Varrak's eyes go wide as the light-bulb goes off.

VARRAK-SAR  
You think someone is working against  
us? A Syndicate plant?

As Varrak's face twists in anger as he realizes the sense in  
Ravin's theory...

EXT. RO'DANA NEBULA, DEEP IN THE ASTRAEUS SECTOR

The *COURAGEOUS* pushes its way through the growing-denser  
nebula. Her shields spark and fritz with effort.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

At its heels are the two ORION MARAUDERS. Far too close. Inexorably moving in to attack...

T'SARA (PRE-LAP)

Report.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

T'SARA turns to look over at DA COSTA, consulting displays.

DA COSTA

They're at 20 thousand kilometers. Closing fast. Their weapons are hot.

T'SARA

Go to Red Alert.

The bridge lights DIM. The alert lighting bathes the crew in a red tinge. The ALERT KLAXON sounds briefly before shutting off as the crew busy themselves at their posts.

BHRASH leaves the Engineering station to join T'Sara at her command chair.

BHRASH

Shields are up to 79%, Captain. We've eliminated most of the interference to the sensors and reinforced the structural integrity fields.

A beep from Ops pulls T'Sara's attention to CH'LENE silences it, checking his readings before turning to face her.

CH'LENE

Captain, I'm receiving a comm signal.

T'SARA

From the Marauders?

CH'LENE

No, ma'am. From Commander Ravin on his designated 'panic' frequency.

T'Sara's expression turns stony. She looks to FISCHER at the Tactical station.

T'SARA

Shield status of the Marauders?

FISCHER

Their engineers aren't as good as ours, they're at less than 40%.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FISCHER (cont'd)  
A couple of hits and they'll be down  
for the count.

T'Sara allows herself a small smile. Takes her seat, as  
Bhrash heads back to his post.

T'SARA  
Lets go get our people. All hands to  
battle stations.

Ch'Lene turns to address T'Sara. His eyes burn bright with  
inspiration. Antennae quivering with anticipation.

CH'LENE  
Captain? I've been studying the  
flight path of the Marauders, and I  
have an idea. With your permission?

T'SARA  
(nods, intrigued)  
At your discretion, Lieutenant.

With a brief nod, ch'Lene turns back to his console, sparing  
a look over at a curious, quizzical SINGH.

CH'LENE  
Remember that story you told me? That  
class in Federation history?

Singh's looks at him in amazement as she gets his drift. A  
mischievous glint appears in her eyes.

SINGH  
Oh, I'm liking the way you think.

As she turns back to her console, grinning like the cat who  
got the cream...

EXT. RO'DANA NEBULA, DEEP IN THE ASTRAEUS SECTOR

The *Courageous*, engines burning hot, slips into a cloud of  
dust and particulates, disappearing from view.

The MARAUDERS follow behind, resolute and determined to find  
their target.

They pass through the cloud, emerging into a clearer, but  
still hazy, pocket of the nebula.

The *Courageous* is nowhere in sight! As far as the eye can  
see is nebula, nebula and more nebula.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Marauders move on, pulling away from each other as they break into a grid search. Hunting for their elusive prey--

--both caught completely unaware as a BARRAGE OF PHASER FIRE strikes their aft hulls. Punching through their shields in seconds. Their engines sputtering and giving out under the assault.

As they slowly start to drift and list, powerless...

...the *COURAGEOUS* rises from below, emerging from a bank of cloud below, like a proverbial phoenix from the ashes!

FISCHER (PRE-LAP)  
(enthused)  
Engines disabled on both ships!

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

Fischer looks up from his readings, wearing a grin from ear to ear.

FISCHER  
They're dead in the water, Captain!

T'SARA  
(approving)  
Excellent shooting, Mr. Fischer.

Fischer sheepishly grins, accepting the compliment.

DA COSTA  
Their life support and environmental systems are still up and running, they'll be fine as they make repairs.

T'SARA  
Understood. Set course for Zephyrus IV, Lieutenant Singh. half-impulse, then take us to warp 8 as soon as we clear the nebula.

Bhrash, eyes fixed on his displays, shakes his head in annoyance.

BHRASH  
Sorry, Captain, but impulse engines are too clogged to go faster than one-quarter right now.

He looks over his shoulder to T'Sara, apologetic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BHRASH (cont'd)  
We'll only manage warp 6 as well,  
until I purge the intake manifolds.

T'SARA  
(miffed)  
Very well. Best speed, then.

She leaves her chair, stepping down to ch'Lene and Singh at their lower level. Puts a hand on ch'Lene's shoulder.

T'SARA (cont'd)  
Nice three-dimensional thinking, Mr.  
ch'Lene.

Ch'Lene's antennae lay down in embarrassment, as he swallows in nervousness.

CH'LENE  
Thank you, Captain. But it was really  
Lieutenant Singh who deserves credit.

T'SARA  
(eyebrow cocked)  
Learn to accept praise, Lieutenant.  
(grins)  
Take the win.

Ch'Lene offers a small, but sincere, smile in response. Nods in gratitude. T'Sara offers a small, amused smile of her own as she heads back to her command chair.

Singh catches ch'Lene's gaze. Offers a playful wink and a quick 'thumbs up'. As ch'Lene beams with pride...

INT. CORRIDOR, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

BEEP! A green light activates on a door access panel. The door in question slides open, and Varrak quickly steps through, phaser rifle at the ready.

He casts his gaze around, confirming they're alone. He moves out of the way, allowing Ravin to follow. He pulls out his tricorder. Taps it for several seconds.

VARRAK-SAR  
(hushed)  
Do we actually have a plan here or  
are we going on instinct?

RAVIN  
Find the others. That's the plan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRAK-SAR  
(shrugs, grins)  
I can work with that.

The tricorder beeps in warning. Ravin quickly uses a set of hand signals to silence Varrak, then usher him out of the way around a nearby intersection. Each hold their weapons at the ready.

VOICES grow in volume, joined by a set of FOOTSTEPS.

LORVAK (O.S.)  
I'm surprised that Starfleeter has  
held out as long as he has.

LORVAK enters the corridor from a junction farther down, accompanied by two burly ORION BODYGUARDS, and an obsequious HUMAN HENCHMAN - KLEIN.

LORVAK  
I've never had a high opinion of most  
humans, Klein, but I have to admit,  
this Erickson has challenged that.

KLEIN  
He has lasted a long time. I don't  
think I've ever known Kranic not to  
break any of his, uh... 'guests'.

LORVAK  
(laughs, cruel)  
It has annoyed him. Perhaps you'd  
better get back, make sure he doesn't  
do anything too severe.  
(chuckles)  
Perhaps instead he should move onto  
the esteemed former Police Chief?

Ravin's grip tightens on his phaser rifle. Seething at what he's hearing. Every fiber of his being is screaming at him to race over and introduce his fist to Lorvak's smug face.

Varrak carefully lays a hand on Ravin's tensed shoulder. Forcing him to look around, meet his level gaze. A slight shake of the head, meaning clear - *don't do anything stupid.*

Silently grinding his teeth, Ravin curtly nods. Allowing Lorvak and his cronies to pass into another junction without further incident.

Alone again, Ravin consults his tricorder one final time, before leading the way down the corridor...

INT. SECURITY COMPLEX, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

A drained Erickson is unceremoniously pushed into the cell. Stumbles, falling to the floor. Struggling to push himself up, the 'interrogation' having sapped his strength.

His two Nausicaan escorts leer at him as he pushes himself to his feet, waving off Matthias and Calderon as they start forward to lend aid.

Re'Kan stays motionless, standing with arms crossed against the wall. Watching with admiration as Erickson stands tall, wobbly but unaided.

ERICKSON

(suavely)

Same time tomorrow, fellas? I'm looking forward to it.

The Nausicaans sneer in disappointed. One keeps his weapon trained on the group as the other slaps at the wall control, reactivating the cell's FORCE FIELD.

Once they stalk off, Erickson's charade collapses, as he sags, exhausted, to the ground again. This time accepting the aid of his comrades.

Re'Kan, who has been stood against the wall, arms crossed, steps away and removes the access panel, reaching into the wall. Erickson, trying not to wince as he is tended to, nods in approval.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(weakly)

Good to see you've been busy.

RE'KAN

Give the word, I will overload the generator and shut down the field.

CALDERON

Just one thing. When he does, it will light up the security display in the main ops hub.

ERICKSON

Which won't give us much time, not with me like this.

(resolute)

You need to leave me behind.

MATTHIAS

No way in hell, sir!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON

(resigned)

I'll slow you down. You need to get out of here. Do what you can to get out of here. I'll make my own way.

Matthias shakes her head in disbelief, not wanting to hear the logic in what her superior officer is saying. Erickson coldly stares her down.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

That's an order, Lieutenant Matthias.

MATTHIAS

(defiant)

One I have no intention of following, sir, so I suggest you--

FFTZ! All heads snap around as the force-field deactivates!

CALDERON

Re'Kan, did you--?

RE'KAN

It was not me!

VARRAK-SAR (O.S.)

Don't just stand there, people!

Matthias bolts out of the cell, jaw dropping at the sight of a cocky-looking Varrak standing at the duty station.

VARRAK-SAR

Don't you know a rescue when one happens?

OFF his playful wink...

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)

I'm glad you're not dead.

INT. CORRIDOR, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Ravin helps an unsteady Erickson to walk down the corridor. Varrak and Calderon take the lead in front, while Matthias and Re'Kan cover the rear. All hold phasers at the ready.

RAVIN

(chuckles)

You and me both, friend. But we got damn lucky.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAVIN (cont'd)  
The blast threw us into the  
underbrush. We came around a little  
bruised but alive.

VARRAK-SAR  
As fun as this bromance reunion is,  
we have other matters to focus on.

CALDERON  
You found out where the others are  
being held?

RAVIN  
Top floor conference suite. Guarded  
by a small contingent. But we have  
seven floors and Prophets knows  
however many Syndicate people between  
us and them.

ERICKSON  
Then we split up. Myself, Matthias  
and Calderon will find the hostages.  
They need a familiar face there to  
help coordinate their evac.

VARRAK-SAR  
(getting it, grins)  
While the rest of us do our best to  
distract everyone else? I like it.

RE'KAN  
(growls)  
Agreed. I look forward to breaking  
the skulls of many of them.

RAVIN  
I've already have the computer locked  
onto our transponders. When you're  
clear, signal us and we'll break off  
for transport.

ERICKSON  
Understood. Good hunting.

RAVIN  
(grins)  
Same to you, Damien.

Erickson offers a resolute nod. Lets Calderon take the lead,  
he and Matthias quickly following behind.

Ravin, Re'Kan and Varrak share brief look. Determined to  
play their part as damn good as they can...



INT. CONFERENCE SUITE, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

A large, long room designed to hold meetings and conferences has been re-purposed for a more nefarious task.

A DOZEN CIVILIANS gather in a tight group at one end of the table that takes up most of the room's space. Most sit on the floor, curled up, sobbing and fearful as they flinch away from the THREE ORION GUARDS that patrol around them.

One figure sits in a chair, head held high, facing down her captors with grace and fearlessness - THERESA TRENT, the erstwhile-Governor of Songhaven.

She unflinchingly meets the gaze of any guard that looks her way, staying strong for the sake of her people. Doing what she can to offer comfort and support for those around her.

Two guards look around in surprise when someone KNOCKS on the suite's door. Share a look of confusion.

Holstering his weapon, the second guard approaches and opens the door--

--and is nailed by a PHASER BLAST! Sent flying into the wall where he slumps to the ground.

Trent is on her feet in an instant, taking a protective stance in front of those closest to her, who cry out in fear and shock at what they've just witnessed.

Before they react, Matthias pushes her way into the suite and takes out the other two guards in quick succession. Sweeps the area with her eyes, weapon at the ready.

MATTHIAS

(satisfied)

All clear.

She steps forward, allowing Erickson and Calderon entry. Trent watches them wearily until she recognizes Calderon.

TRENT

Maya? What--?

CALDERON

It's okay, Governor. They're with Starfleet.

A wave of relief washes over the captive colonists. Sobs of joy and tight embraces are shared. Trent, though, remains dubious, as she appraises her rescuers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRENT  
Starfleet? After all this time?

CALDERON  
Yeah, I didn't believe it myself, but Ulyn's with them, vouched for them.

TRENT  
(astounded)  
Ulyn? He made it? That-- that means--

ERICKSON  
(bluntly)  
We haven't the time to answer all your questions now, Governor Trent. We need to focus on getting everyone out of here as quickly as possible.

Trent scrutinizes the young man, noticing how bedraggled and rough-edged he's looking. Understanding quickly.

TRENT  
This 'rescue' isn't exactly going to plan, is it?  
(nods)  
Well, I've had my fill of Syndicate hospitality. I'm eager to put it all behind him. We'll follow your lead.

Erickson nods, impressed with the presence of the woman in front of him...

INT. WEST CORRIDOR, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

DISRUPTOR FIRE paints the corridor wall, burning it away as Varrak and Re'Kan sprint down it. Both men dodge and weave frantically to avoid being hit.

Varrak manages to squeeze off a couple of shots, badly aimed but enough to give them enough breathing room to make it around the corridor bend.

They come to an abrupt stop, taking a moment to get their collective breath back. Varrak grins with relish, adrenaline surging through his veins with the thrill of the chase.

VARRAK-SAR  
Now this is what I call a work-out!

Re'Kan glares at him, incredulous, shaking his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RE'KAN  
I hope our Bajoran friend is faring  
better then we are.

Varrak's grin fades with concern, as Re'Kan drops down and  
fires off several shots back down the corridor...

INT. EAST CORRIDOR, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ravin, moving with careful and deliberate patience, makes  
his way down the corridor, eyes peeled. Tricorder out and  
scanning for the first sign of trouble that may be heading  
his way.

BEEP, BEEP! Checking the display, Ravin's eyes widen in  
surprise at what it's telling him...

INT. ROOM, COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The darkened room is briefly illuminated as Ravin opens the  
door, light from the corridor spilling in...

...which allows Ravin see the bloody and quivering figure of  
a MAN slumped in a chair.

RAVIN  
(horrified)  
By the Prophets..!

He rushes forward, gently lifting the man's head up - to  
reveal ORMOND. One eye swollen shut, face beaten to a pulp.  
He wheezes heavily, barely able to draw in breath, his one  
good eye focusing on Ravin.

ORMAND  
(sobbing, whispers)  
I'm... I'm so-- so sorry.

RAVIN  
Hey, hey, you're going to be fine, I  
just need to get you out of here.

ORMAND  
(weakly, fading fast)  
No-- no point, dead already. Just--  
(coughs wetly)  
Just tell them, I'm sorry.

RAVIN  
(confused)  
Who? Tell who? Sorry for what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORMAND  
 (weeping, ragged)  
 The-- the Syndicate, they made me do  
 it, I... I didn't have a choice.

With a final, rattling gasp, Ormond's head slumps limply to the side, the light fading from his eyes as they stare ahead blankly. He's gone.

Ravin grimaces. Gently closing the dead man's eyes...

LORVAK (O.S.)  
 He's right, you know.

Whirling around, Ravin finds himself staring at the business end of a DISRUPTOR. Held by a sneering, smug, LORVAK.

LORVAK  
 We really didn't give him much choice  
 in working for us. Not if he wanted  
 to keep his son out of harm's way.

He gestures with the disruptor, leaving Ravin little choice but to raise his arms in surrender before walking out of the room...

INT. EAST CORRIDOR, GOVERNMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Lorvak pushes Ravin forward, nudging him with the tip of the disruptor. Ravin scowls in anger as he puts it all together.

RAVIN  
 He was your mole.

LORVAK  
 (superior)  
 He was, and so much more. A piece of  
 intel here, a faulty ODN relay there.  
 (grins)  
 We couldn't let that defense platform  
 get up and running, could we?

RAVIN  
 You had him sabotage it so you could  
 waltz in and take the place over?

LORVAK  
 (scoffs)  
 And it would have been completely  
 effortless if you hadn't shown up and  
 stirred up ideas of rebellion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAVIN  
 (dead-pan)  
 Sorry I threw your evil plans into  
 disarray.

Ravin stops abruptly, turning around to face the Farian.

RAVIN (cont'd)  
 Oh wait, no, I'm not.

LORVAK  
 (loosing patience)  
 You know, I'm not normally one to get  
 my hands dirty, but my people are too  
 busy running around chasing after you  
 and yours.

He lifts the disruptor higher. Aiming for Ravin's head.  
 Ravin doesn't flinch. Refusing to give him the satisfaction.

LORVAK (cont'd)  
 (coldly)  
 Guess I'll take care of you myself.

As he starts to squeeze the trigger--

--a PHASER BLAST send the disruptor flying from his grip!

Lorvak hisses in pain, gingerly holding his blackened and  
 burnt hand. Looks hatefully at an approaching Varrak. His  
 phaser unwavering. Rage exuding from every pore.

VARRAK-SAR  
 You bastard. All this time we've been  
 blaming ourselves for what happened.

LORVAK  
 (smug)  
 Just the way we wanted it.

With an insincere, knowing smile, Lorvak activates a DEVICE  
 on his wrist, and is instantly enveloped by a TRANSPORTER  
 EFFECT--

VARRAK-SAR  
 (pissed)  
 Dammit!

Varrak fires his phaser, but it's too little, too late. The  
 beam harmlessly passes through the Farian's fading form...

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING, SONGHAVEN - DAY

From a roof-top landing pad, a ORION CARGO SHUTTLE lifts off and banks to the horizon, taking off fast...

MATTHIAS (PRE-LAP)  
Everyone's secured in the crew cabin,  
Commander.

INT. COCKPIT, HUANG HE - DAY

Through the viewport, the forest gives way to blue sky as the runabout lifts into the air. Erickson works his console as Matthias takes the seat next to him, barely settling in before she checks on a flashing display.

MATTHIAS  
Sir, we're being hailed by Colony  
Central Operations. Audio, only.  
(gasps)  
It's Commander Ravin!

Erickson allows himself a moment of sheer relief before he slips back into 'command mode', He nods.

ERICKSON  
This is Erickson. Go ahead, Ravin.

RAVIN (OVER COMM CHANNEL)  
The Syndicate's through here, Damien.  
We've secured Central Ops but Lorvak  
has cut and run. It looks like he's  
took off in a cargo shuttle.

Matthias checks her readings. Points to a SENSOR READOUT she pulls up on one of the monitors.

MATTHIAS  
I have him on sensors. He's making a  
break for orbit.

ERICKSON  
(determined)  
I'm setting a pursuit course.

RAVIN (OVER COMM CHANNEL)  
We've got things under control here.  
Go get that son-of-a-bitch, Damien.

Off Erickson's resolute, dogged expression...

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, ZEPHYRUS IV

The CARGO SHUTTLE pushes its engines hard as it heads into open space--

--until a PHASER BLAST impacts its shields, knocking it off course, adjusting wildly!

As it falters, the *Huang He* comes up from behind...

MATTHIAS (PRE-LAP)  
Direct hit, shields down to 87%.

INT. COCKPIT, HUANG HE - CONTINUOUS

Both Matthias and Erickson work their consoles with precise and practice motions. Focused on their task in the heat of battle.

ERICKSON  
What's his tactical status?

MATTHIAS  
He's got redundant shields but no weapons to speak of.

*THROOM!* The runabout JOLTS from a sudden impact! An inactive console behind Erickson spits sparks into the air.

ERICKSON  
What the hell?

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, ZEPHYRUS IV - CONTINUOUS

Two STEALTH SCOUTS pound the *Huang He's* shields with strike after strike of photon torpedoes.

PHASER FIRE lances from rear-mounted emitters, but misses their target, as the scouts bob and weave.

INT. COCKPIT, HUANG HE - CONTINUOUS

Matthias shakes her head, slaps her console in frustration.

MATTHIAS  
They're too damn fast, I can't get a lock on them!  
(grimaces)  
Our shields are buckling, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another JOLT pitches them both forward, as the cockpit goes DARK for several seconds, before power is restored.

ERICKSON

Damn, they took out primary power!

Through the viewport, Erickson glares at the scouts as they overtake the runabout, pulling ahead and joining up with the cargo shuttle.

Erickson can only watch helplessly as they vanish in a flash of warp drive...

FADE TO:

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, ZEPHYRUS IV

The *COURAGEOUS* slowly orbits Zephyrus IV...

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)

We let Lorvak get away from us.

EXT. COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING, SONGHAVEN - DAY

T'SARA walks alongside a fully-recovered Erickson, no hint of the beating he took evident. She shoots him an annoyed look as they pass the water fountain.

T'SARA

Your mission was a simple recon. You did that and so much more.

Erickson shakes his head, not satisfied. T'Sara rests a hand on his shoulder, in comfort and comradeship.

T'SARA (cont'd)

The Syndicate has lost their hold here and you sent Lorvak running. You did great work here, Damien. Got it?

Erickson, still not totally convinced but getting her point, sighs. Nods, offering a slight smile.

ERICKSON

Yes, Captain.

She mirrors his smile, as they look over at some CIVILIANS working with engineering and medical personnel from the *Courageous*. Among them are R'NARA and Governor Trent.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

T'SARA  
Governor Trent spoke very highly of  
the entire away team.

ERICKSON  
(half-jokingly)  
Even Varrak and Re'Kan?

T'SARA  
(grins)  
Especially them! Finding out one of  
their own was responsible for the  
defense network failure? Well, it  
seems to have redeemed the *Lucky Shot*  
crew in her eyes.

ERICKSON  
I just hope that's an indicator of  
how willing the Songhaven people are  
to forgive the Federation. There is  
still a lot of animosity there.

T'SARA  
(sadly)  
So I've seen, and it's not entirely  
unjustified. But what you did today  
will help begin that process, I hope.

As the two officer look on, the slow beginning of rebuilding  
continuing on as they watch, we:

FADE TO BLACK:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**END OF EPISODE**