



STAR TREK COURAGEOUS

1x06 "ECHOES OF MEANING"

Written By Alex Matthews

Based on 'Star Trek'
created by Gene Roddenberry

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STAR TREK COURAGEOUS

1x06 "ECHOES OF MEANING"

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

LT. ELYSE KARRIN	Madelaine Mantock
LT, J.G, AVERY FISCHER	Hugo Johnstone-Burt
DR. DANIEL WHITAKER	Van Hansis
ENSIGN MEGAN KINGSLEY	Elizabeth Lail

SPECIAL GUEST STAR

CAPTAIN SCOTT JAMIESON-HILL	Henry Cavill
LT. COMMANDER ZYNEESA ZH'LAAN	Kristen Wiig
LIEUTENANT SUVAK	Elliot Page

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. BOREAS VI, BOREAS SYSTEM

A DUSTY MIASMA of browns, grays and burnt orange. Every so often, light hits at just the right moment and angle to make specks of crystal SPARKLE.

From it emerges the classic, instantly recognizable form of a *CONSTITUTION*-CLASS STARSHIP. Leaving the main bulk of the cloud behind at an almost leisurely pace.

As it moves away from the obscuring wafts of interstellar debris, the name and registration become legible. This isn't any old *Constitution*-class vessel - it's the original.

U.S.S. *CONSTITUTION*. NCC-1700.

The majestic-looking ship cruises on for several moments--

--until the illusion of peace is shattered by a barrage of GREEN DISRUPTOR BLASTS scorches a decent-sized section of the forward half of the *Constitution's* saucer section!

ZH'LAAN (PRE-LAP)

We've lost forward shields three and four! Structural integrity field is compromised on decks 2 through 5.

INT. BRIDGE, U.S.S. *CONSTITUTION* - CONTINUOUS

The bridge is in shambles. Several workstations along the port bulkhead burned out. So much useless slagged metal now. ND CREWMEMBERS help the injured to the aft turbo-lift.

Standing at the only remaining auxiliary control console that is still operational is a lithe Andorian woman, LT. COMMANDER ZYNEESA ZH'LAAN. The gold uniform of command is a sharp contrast to her blue skin and white hair.

She looks over her shoulder, brushing hair out of her eyes.

ZH'LAAN

Another hit like that, we loose hull pressure.

She meets the gaze of the individual she is delivering her damning report to. The *Constitution's* commanding officer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN SCOTT JAMIESON-HILL. A strapping Englishman whose uniform hugs the contours of his body well. Dark hair just as mussed as his XO's. Dirt streaks his face, while blood trickles from his nose.

JAMIESON-HILL

What do these bastards want? We've
already taken out two of their ships!
(shakes head, growls)
Suvak, once we're clear, get a target
lock! We're done running!

The Vulcan officer manning the Helm, LIEUTENANT SUVAK, nods briskly. A press of a control quickly deploys his targeting scope from a recess in the console.

SUVAK

Attempting phaser lock now, sir.

On the MAIN VIEWSCREEN, the wicked-looking form of two QUGH-CLASS DESTROYERS swoop past. From their aft sections, each fire a spread of torpedoes.

JAMIESON-HILL

(snaps, instinctive)
Evasive! Keep our weak-spot covered.
(snarls)
Return fire!

EXT. BOREAS VI, BOREAS SYSTEM - CONTINUOUS

The *Constitution* angles upward just in time. Torpedoes smack into the defensive screens, erupting on impact but doing little in the way of damage.

In return, PHASER BEAMS lance out and strikes both ships in their aft sections. The destroyers' shields are insufficient to withstand the volley of a Starfleet ship-of-the-line.

Within seconds, the weapons find their marks. Both ships are quickly consumed by antimatter fire as their cores breach.

INT. BRIDGE, U.S.S. CONSTITUTION - CONTINUOUS

A CHEER erupts as those bridge personnel still at the posts celebrate their victory. Only Suvak remains indifferent. His attention remaining focused on his scope.

SUVAK

Both targets destroyed, Captain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIESON-HILL
(relieved)
Thank God.

He shoots a quick look to the ENSIGN at COMMUNICATIONS.

JAMIESON-HILL (cont'd)
Stand down to yellow alert. Get the
damage control teams on the forward
hull. We don't want to rip a hole in
it when we go to warp.

As the ensign complies, Zh'Laan steps down into the command
well. Leaning in close. For Captain's Ears Only.

ZH'LAAN
Once we can send a signal to Starbase
19, I take it you're sending a report
to Sector Command?

Jamieson-Hill gives her an 'are you kidding?' look.

JAMIESON-HILL
Klingons - a race Starfleet hasn't
dealt with in a century - send out a
squadron into the Federation core?
(grunts in disbelief)
What do you think?

ZH'LAAN
(unfazed)
The question is why they were here.
Our scans didn't reveal any mineral
wealth to risk such action.

JAMIESON-HILL
We don't know enough about Klingons
to even attempt trying to figure out
the psychology of this attack.
(beat, sighs)
Better to leave that to the analysts
at Starfleet Intelligence. I'd rather
get back to being an explorer.

Off Zh'Laan's pursed lips, not quite as eager as her captain
to simply write off these events...

EXT. SPACE, BOREAS SYSTEM - CONTINUOUS

The *Constitution* limps onward. Setting course back home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIESON-HILL (V.O.)

Captain's Log, stardate 1207.4: We've repaired what damage we could from our skirmish with the Klingons. The first of many, from what I'm hearing.

(beat, appalled)

I can't quite believe that we're now at war with the Empire. That a dozen starships have already been destroyed in the opening volleys.

(beat, weary)

So much for being an explorer. For now, it looks like every Starfleet officer is being called upon to be a soldier. Who knows how long it will be before we can go back to what we joined Starfleet in the first place.

(beat, sadly)

It looks like the mysteries of Boreas IV will have to be explored by another crew some other day.

The *Constitution's* warp nacelles glow for a moment, before the ship JUMPS TO WARP. Leaving behind the large expanse of dust and debris behind it.

Off that sight, we PULL BACK...

DISSOLVE TO:

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

The SAME IMAGE, now displayed on the LCARS TERMINAL screen. Being observed by the *STARSHIP COURAGEOUS's* senior staff.

At the head of the table sits T'SARA FROST. She presses a control on the tabletop. The image transforms into a WIRE-FRAME GRAPHIC. Showing the PLANET deep within the cloud.

She looks at assembled officers - DAMIEN ERICKSON, R'NARA KELLINNIN and LEONARDO DA COSTA. Grinning as widely as the proverbial Cheshire Cat - very much letting her human emotions run wild.

T'SARA

That's where we come in, people.

Off her infectious excitement, we:

BLACKOUT:

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

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

AS BEFORE. But now, the four senior officers are joined by NYIA LANJAR, ALEXIS MATTHIAS, HROVIIN BHRASH and a new face, a young woman in a science-division uniform.

This is ENSIGN MEGAN KINGSLEY (26, eager to make her mark, not as naive as people think). She hides her nerves well at being surrounded by so many superior officers. Sitting next to Da Costa, trying to emulate his relaxed demeanor.

T'SARA

Our assignment is simple enough, but it's also a fair change of pace from everything else we've done of late.

She looks to Da Costa, passing the baton to him to explain. However, he instead turns to Megan.

DA COSTA

Actually, I think our resident A&A expert should deliver the briefing.
(beat, oh-so-sweetly)
With your permission, Captain..?

T'Sara offers the briefest hint of a smile at the game her dear husband is playing. Simply nods in response.

Megan, looking very much like the proverbial deer caught in headlights, swallows nervously. Taking position in front of the LCARS DISPLAY, she offers a somewhat nervous smile. *She's not used to getting any kind of spotlight on missions.*

MEGAN

Well, I'll start with the basics.

She presses a control. The WIRE-FRAME GRAPHIC zooms in to show the model of the planet in more detail with SENSOR DATA scrolling down the screen in smaller windows.

MEGAN (cont'd)

Just before the Federation/Klingon war, the *Constitution* began a basic archaeological survey of Boreas VI.

Another press brings up SURVEY IMAGES. They show a broken landscape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Decimated by asteroid impacts that have left deep craters. Shattering the remains of buildings that stood for who knows how many years before.

MEGAN (cont'd)

They discovered the planet was called Varos'ii. Equivalent to pre-warp era Earth in many ways, but with more focus on literature and arts.

Growing more confident as she speaks, in her element now, Megan looks back to the assembled officers.

MEGAN (cont'd)

We have a good starting point for our own follow-up, but still plenty of work to keep our science teams busy.

She looks to Da Costa, who beams with avuncular pride. As Megan takes her seat, he presses a control on the table. The screen revert back to the GRAPHIC of the debris cloud.

DA COSTA

There's a dense circumplanetary disk, fallout from which devastated the surface. Keeping a stable orbit can be tricky, and interference from the disk ionizes shields and screws with subspace comms. That's why it's been so long since any kind of follow up.

ERICKSON

Why send a team out now, though?

DA COSTA

Stellar winds have thinned the disk. Enough for a well-shielded vessel to hold position without any undue risk.

BHRASH

(nods)

The old *Constitution*-class was built to last, but their shielding was nothing like ours. We'll handle it.

Intrigued, R'Nara looks back at the display screen.

R'NARA

It will be interesting getting to know more about these people.

Erickson scrutinizes the screen, a tad more dubious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERICKSON

I'm a little concerned it's going to more than just a navigational hazard.

DA COSTA

Fair point. Its mainly made of an unknown crystalline mineral both native and common to the system.

With another press, the image zooms away from the planet to show the system's ASTEROID BELT.

DA COSTA (cont'd)

The *Constitution's* science officer had a theory that the debris cloud is the remains of at least three large asteroids pulled into high orbit from the system's asteroid belt.

T'SARA

Mining for resources, perhaps?

DA COSTA

(not convinced)

Maybe. But the mineral don't seem to have any unique properties that would make them important.

R'NARA

Unless it some kind of cultural or even religious importance.

DA COSTA

(shrugs, unconcerned)

That could be. But all we can say for certain is that something cataclysmic occurred during the mining.

ERICKSON

(realizing)

A Praxis-level event? It caused some kind of chain reaction?

DA COSTA

(nods)

The fallout of which was devastating. The remains have enveloped the planet for at least five hundred years.

(beat, solemn)

The Varos'ii'a never recovered. They weren't advanced enough to combat the climate change effects.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DA COSTA (cont'd)

They wouldn't have lasted long once
the nuclear winter effect kicked in.

A sombre silence falls over the briefing. Mourning the end
of a race of beings from centuries ago. It seems almost
criminal to break the mood of remembrance--

--until the chirp of the INTERCOM does just that.

CH'LENE (OVER INTERCOM)

Bridge to Captain Frost. We're on
final approach to Boreas VI.

Off the glint of anticipation in T'Sara's eyes...

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

Manning the Ops and Conn stations are JHISHINSHER CH'LENE
and ASEEMA SINGH respectively. AVERY FISCHER stands ready at
Tactical. From the rear egress by the MSD, the port-side
door opens allowing the senior officers onto the bridge.

Da Costa quickly takes over monitoring the Science station
displays. Eyes quickly become glued to the readouts. Megan
seats herself at Mission Ops.

T'Sara takes position standing in front of her command chair
while R'Nara stands nearby. Erickson moves to look over the
auxiliary tactical readouts.

T'SARA

Alright, then.

Lowering herself into her seat, the only sign of her own
eagerness to begin exploring is her leaning forward ever-so-
slightly.

T'SARA (cont'd)

(quietly excited)

Let's see what we can do to answer
the questions our forebears had.

(beat)

Shields up. Continue on course.

EXT. SPACE

The *Courageous* approaches Boreas VI, pushing forward into a
thick curtain of particulate matter that shrouds the planet
from view...

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

An ALARM on Da Costa's console beeps for attention. Quickly silencing it, he looks up at one of his display screens.

DA COSTA

The debris ring is filled with a few pockets of relatively low saturation. If we travel through them, it'll help ease the abuse the shields will take.

SINGH

(nods)

I see them. Adjusting course now.

Erickson moves back to stand next to T'Sara as she continues to eye the viewscreen.

ERICKSON

(wistful)

An actual science mission is a nice change of pace. Also an interesting way to mark six months since we set out from Starbase 19.

T'Sara's eyes widen. Completely taken aback. *Has it really been that long already?* Quickly regaining her composure, she offers Erickson an almost-smile.

T'SARA

It beats playing mother goose to freighter, liberating colonies or chasing pirates. That's for certain.

(beat, humble)

I appreciate the reminder, Commander.

Erickson, a jovial smile forming, nods briskly before schooling his features back to a more professional mien.

ERICKSON

Anything more on the planet?

DA COSTA

(harrumphs, off-put)

The debris's playing merry havoc with sensors, just like I was afraid of. Reconfiguring the arrays, stand by.

Abruptly, the ship SHAKES AND BUCKS wildly for several long seconds. Everyone standing stumble but do not fall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA

(curt)

Report!

CH'LENE

Our passage is causing energized turbulence within the debris!

(beat, calms)

Increasing power to shields now.

SINGH

Hang on, we're almost through it!

Within moments under Singh's gentle touch, the *Courageous* levels out and remains stable.

DA COSTA

We have visual feed of the planet.

(astounded)

Dear God.

T'Sara's stoic facade hardens in place. Preparing for the worst.

T'SARA

On screen.

The screen blinks from the almost-hypnotically serene cloud, colored by the occasional low discharge of energy, to show BOREAS VI.

Or, rather, what's left of it.

The entire bridge crew's attention is drawn to the forward viewscreen and the image of a cratered and lifeless world. A DEAD WORLD...

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI

The *Courageous* maintains position. The field of debris ebbs and flows around the *Excelsior*-class starship. Shields flare randomly from contact with asteroid remains every so often.

T'SARA (V.O.)

(unusually tense)

Captain's Log, Stardate 54384.6: We have made good use of the last three days. Due to the heavy atmospheric ionization, we've used shuttles to ferry science teams back and forth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The TYPE-11 *SHUTTLECRAFT WHITSON* exits the *Courageous's* main shuttlebay at the ventral rear of the ship's secondary hull.

The sleek auxiliary craft carefully descends into the cloud-covered atmosphere, soon disappearing from view...

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

T'Sara enters from the port-side aft egress. Passing AVERY FISCHER at Tactical, who offers a brisk nod. He silences an abrupt alarm as she takes her center seat.

T'SARA

Still getting stress alerts on the shields, Mr. Fischer?

FISCHER

Yes, ma'am. The particulate matter is weakening overall shield strength.

Proving his point, the *Courageous* jostles ever-so-slightly.

T'SARA

Adjust orbit to reduce the effects, Lieutenant Singh, but I don't want to lose the sensor lock on our away teams, either.

SINGH

Aye, Captain.

T'Sara leans back in her chair. Trying to appear calm and confident. *But something is eating at her.* She fidgets a little. Rubs at the back of her neck. Irritated.

T'SARA

Mr. ch'Lene, how are the sensor scans of the circumplanetary disk coming?

CH'LENE

Our mineralogical analysis has yet to find anything significant about why the Varos'ii'a might have been so motivated to mine them.

T'SARA

(considers)

Forward your reviews to Dr. Lanjar.

CH'LENE

(surprised)

Captain?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA

Maybe she'll see something in them
from a medical viewpoint, Lieutenant.

The Andorian officer nods, not totally understanding, but getting to it nonetheless...

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - DAY

The *Whitson* is parked in a landing zone near base-camp. A basic set-up of one-story prefab shelters. Reinforced to deal with relentless and intense winds plaguing the surface.

They have been erected near the remains of a SPRAWLING CITY. Once-tall buildings lay shattered and broken from the many impacts of space-borne debris.

Except one. A medium-size TOWER of sorts. The uppermost part shows only hints of damage, compared to everything else.

DA COSTA (PRE-LAP)

So, this was the *Constitution* crew's
area of focus before they pulled out.

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - DAY

Erickson, clad in a heavy-weather jacket, makes his way past various SCIENCE PERSONNEL as they potter around, all focused on their tasks paying little heed to their X.O.

He makes his way over to join Da Costa and Megan examining a large HEXAGONAL CONTROL CONSOLE. Thick with dust and grime, but somehow still *active*. Holographic displays shimmer with ethereal light hover above it, but they flicker. Unstable.

ERICKSON

(impressed, dubious)
So much for this place being dead.
But after what, five centuries?

MEGAN

It's not that unheard of, Commander.
A lot of ancient technology was well
engineered. Designed to last. Look at
the Iconians, or Promellians. Both
species gone for eons, but we've seen
that their equipment still worked.

ERICKSON

(grins, convinced)
Fair point, Ensign.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Da Costa gives Megan a playful nudge. Pleased to see that she is coming into herself now.

DA COSTA
Half a millennium is barely anything
in the grand scheme of the universe.

The displays FRITZ OUT for several long seconds. Da Costa grimaces with dissatisfaction.

DA COSTA (cont'd)
Commander, I'd like to have Chief
Bhrash or Mr ch'Lene come down. Maybe
figure a way to hook our own power
source to this? Keep it more stable
while we figure its system out?

Erickson seems somewhat doubtful, but Da Costa is quick to assuage his concerns.

DA COSTA (cont'd)
We'll follow normal precautionary
procedures, don't worry. A cursory
scan confirms it will handle it.

Still a little wary, but mostly convinced, Erickson nods...

INT. C.M.O.'S OFFICE, SICKBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

Lanjar only has eyes for her desktop monitor. Attention so focused that the Betazoid doesn't notice T'Sara's approach until she gently raps on the door frame.

T'SARA
Have you got a moment?

Offering a tired smile as hello, Lanjar nods and gestures at one of the chairs across from the desk.

As T'Sara sits, Lanjar observes her for a long moment. Brows furrowing. Picking up on the subtle cues that something is bothering the half-Vulcan woman.

LANJAR
I looked over the data you sent me.
I'm not sure what it is you want me
to look for.

T'Sara fidgets. This is uncomfortable for her. Lanjar is one of the only people she'd allow to see her like this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA
Have you ever heard of Trellium-D?

Sympathetic understanding dawns on the other woman.

LANJAR
You're concerned about something in
the unknown mineral deposits?

T'Sara, restless, finally gives voice to her concerns.

T'SARA
The last few days, I've felt...
(looks for word)
Off.., I guess. I've haven't been
able to meditate as easily as normal.

Lanjar picks up her tricorder. With a look, she asks - and receives - permission to conduct a scan. She makes a few passes with the scanner attachment over her captain's head.

LANJAR
What made you think of Trellium-D?

T'SARA
(lost in thought)
My grandfather's brother served on a
Vulcan cruiser in the 22nd century.
The crew died from exposure to it.
(shudders, unnerved)
The video footage of the crew loosing
control of their emotions? It's like
one of those old horror movies that
Leo's favorite aunt always enjoyed.

LANJAR
It's odd you mention feeling 'off'. I
had Daniel do a scan on me earlier
because I've not been able to sleep
as well as normal.
(beat)
In fact, there have been a few other
complaints about restless nights.

T'SARA
Should we be worried?

Lanjar studies the small tricorder screen. After a moment, she shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LANJAR

I don't think that's the case here.
There no degradation indicative of
that kind of contamination.

(smiles)

Maybe we're all little jumpy being so
close to such a massive loss of life.

This is just what T'Sara needed to hear. She lets out a
strained breath she didn't even realize she was holding.

T'SARA

Maybe. Still, could you keep looking
over the scans? Put my mind at ease?

LANJAR

For you, always.

The intercom CHIRPS.

CH'LENE (OVER INTERCOM)

Bridge to Captain. We're picking up
odd readings from the surface.

T'Sara and Lanjar lock eyes. Each mirrors the sudden burst
of concern the other one is feeling. Whatever issues T'Sara
has are pushed aside as she slips back into 'work-mode'. She
stands, tapping her communicator.

T'SARA

(crisply)

On my way, Lieutenant.

Without another word, she EXITS...

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - DAY

Da Costa, Erickson and Matthias rush in as alien ALERT TONES
echo. Megan, once so excited, now grows more worried with
each passing moment as she studies blinking holo-screens.

ERICKSON

Ensign, what the hell is going on?

MEGAN

(desperate, panicked)

I have no idea, sir!

ERICKSON

(irritated)

What did you say, Mr. Da Costa, about
following precautionary procedures?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DA COSTA
(defensive)
Don't jump to conclusion yet, sir.
(to Megan, soothing)
Easy, Ensign. Walk us through it.

MEGAN
I swear, I didn't touch anything. I
ran some molecular scans, to get a
read on the crystalline components--

She gestures wildly at flashing displays and loud alarms.

MEGAN (cont'd)
When all this started!

Da Costa steps closer, frowning at one particular screen. He
picks up a LINGUISTICS PADD, scanning the screen. The
display auto-translates - it is a COUNTDOWN INDICATOR. Less
then 90 seconds to go.

DA COSTA
Uh oh.

He shows the PADD to Matthias and Erickson.

MATTHIAS
Counting down to what, though?

DA COSTA
Do we stay to find out? It must have
been a pre-programmed sequence keyed
directly into the hardware, maybe?

T'SARA (OVER COMM CHANNEL)
Courageous to away team. Report!

Erickson slaps his communicator.

ERICKSON
We're not sure what's happening right
now, Captain. Standby.

Da Costa, his attention drawn to the POWER CELL hooked up to
the console, notices it flicker. He scans it with his
tricorder, eyes widening with alarm.

DA COSTA
It's draining the power cell dry!

He points to one console display in particular, a schematic
of the tower structure. Power indicators steadily rise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DA COSTA (cont'd)
It's all being channeled toward an
assembly at the top of the tower.

ERICKSON
A weapon?

Da Costa shrugs, anxious fear playing across his face. *He hasn't got a clue.* But Erickson isn't willing to chance it.

ERICKSON (cont'd)
Captain, divert all power to shields!

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - DAY

The tower's apex opens. Blossoming like a flower. Nestled inside is a large, delicate looking, crystalline apparatus.

It begins to crackle with energy, burning with ST. ELMO'S FIRE. Growing stronger and faster with each intense pulse--

--until it EXPLODES outwards in a massive wave that spreads up and out as far as the eye can see...

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - DAY

The room radiates with energy. Passing through everything and everyone.

As the energy wave passes through them, the members of the away team each clutch at their heads. Their expressions tell of the extreme agony they are enduring. Screaming silently.

Finally, like dominoes, one by one, they drop to the ground. Unconscious. Barely breathing.

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI - CONTINUOUS

The energy wave spreads across the planet before continuing on into space itself. The dust and debris that makes up the circumplanetary ring is awash in radiant color.

Even the *Courageous* isn't safe. The energy wave washes over the *Excelsior*-class starship. The shields not even offering the merest token of resistance.

Everything GLOWS with a verdant fire... which begins to fade almost as quickly as it came.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Within seconds, it's over. Space is as it was before. The *Courageous* hangs here, all external lights flickering. Even the impulse engines and warp nacelles have gone dark...

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

The bridge is still and darkened. Emergency lights come on, begrudgingly.

The crew do not move. Each lies where they fell or sprawled over inactive consoles. Fischer. Ch'Lene. Singh.

Even T'Sara. The commanding officer of the *Courageous* sits in her chair. Head lolling to one side.

On the sight of emerald blood slowly trickling from her nose and ears, we:

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT ONE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - DAY

Consciousness returns reluctantly to ERICKSON, groaning in appreciable pain. He carefully pushes himself up. Gingerly presses the heel of his hand against his left temple.

As he regains his senses, his gaze lands on the unconscious away team; DA COSTA, MATTHIAS and MEGAN. Training kicks in. His own discomfort forgotten as he tend to them.

ERICKSON

Da Costa? Leo? You with me?

DA COSTA

(moans softly)

Damn. My head hasn't hurt this bad since my bachelor party on Argelius.

Erickson can't help but grin with relief. Relief that grows as Matthias and Megan stir as well. He taps his comm-badge.

ERICKSON

Erickson to *Courageous*, come in.

What little thanks he felt at finding his people seemingly unhurt vanishes when there is no response. He taps again.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(firmly, concerned)

Erickson to *Courageous*, come in.

Off the away team's growing anxiety at the lack of answer...

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - DAY

The *WHITSON* lifts off. Kicking dust up as thrusters fire.

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)

We'll clear atmosphere in 30 seconds.

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT WHITSON - CONTINUOUS

Erickson handles the helm with ease, taking the *Whitson* up as quickly as he can. The dusty atmosphere of Boreas VI soon gives way to the debris of the circumplanetary ring.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Da Costa mans the co-pilot station, while Matthias works at one of the ancillary consoles.

MATTHIAS

Still no response from *Courageous*.

As WHITAKER enters from the aft section via the port-side egress, no-one pays him much heed as he slips into the last vacant seat opposite Matthias.

WHITAKER

Aside from a nasty headache, we all check out, Commander. At least as far as I can tell with just a tricorder scan, anyway.

Erickson barely spares a nod in reply. His eyes are glued to the sight of the *Courageous* through the viewport. Looking as bad as it did earlier.

Da Costa's jaw drops as he takes it all in.

DA COSTA

(breathless, fearful)

Dear God...

ERICKSON

(firmly)

Get me a full scan, Mr. Da Costa.

After a moment, Da Costa shakily nods. Silently inputting commands into his console.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

Matthias, keep broadcasting. Make sure they can hear us. We woke up, so someone over there will as well.

Matthias's face says it all. She's not convinced, and it's clear that even Erickson isn't totally certain of the truth of his words...

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

A groggy R'NARA stumbles from the starboard-side turbolift. Catching herself on the railing as she shakes it off.

The soft, insistent beeps from behind gets her attention.

MATTHIAS (OVER COMM CHANNEL)

Repeat, this is *Shuttlecraft Whitson* to *Courageous*. Can anyone hear me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The first soft groans and grunts of the bridge crew coming to are heard as R'Nara taps a communications control.

R'NARA
Whitson, Courageous. We read you.

ERICKSON (OVER COMM CHANNEL)
(relieved)
Counselor? Thank God. Is everyone else okay?

R'Nara hesitates, unsure how to reply and still feeling a little out of it. She looks around. Notices CH'LENE seeing to a confused SINGH. Watches FISCHER as he uses the tactical station to pull himself up--

--then her gaze falls on the all-too-still form of T'SARA. On the thin trickles of blood coming from her nose and ears.

R'NARA
(hushed, aghast)
Oh, Merciful Gods, no.
(snaps out of it)
Sickbay, medical team to the bridge!

ERICKSON (OVER COMM CHANNEL)
(anxious)
Counselor? R'Nara? What is it?

Completely oblivious to the query, R'Nara rushes forward to check on T'Sara for herself, as the rest of the bridge crew begin to notice their fallen captain...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI

With reluctance, the *Courageous's* exterior lights stabilize. Impulse engines and warp nacelles remain inactive...

WHITAKER (PRE-LAP)
She's stable for now, as is everyone else who was affected.

INT. SICKBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

T'Sara lays on a bio-bed. The status indicators on the bio-monitor do not paint a happy picture. Far too low.

Clutching her hand tightly, seated next to her, is Da Costa. Unable to look away from the comatose figure of his wife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They're not alone, either. The other beds of the ward are occupied. One of them is LANJAR.

Watching over them, standing by the diagnostic monitor, are Erickson and Whitaker. The latter frazzled and overworked.

WHITAKER

There were some injuries sustained when people fell unconscious. Falls in the engine room, and the like. But they've been handled.

ERICKSON

But what happened?

WHITAKER

(shrugs, no clue)

I'm hesitant to say one way or the other right now. Not without further scans I'm waiting on.

He indicates the monitor which displays a wire-frame graphic scan of a HUMANOID BRAIN. Next to it, a list of names.

WHITAKER (cont'd)

What I can tell you is that I think I know why only some of the crew were affected.

He points to the list of names.

WHITAKER (cont'd)

This is all the patients currently comatose. Listed by their species.

(beat)

Notice anything?

Erickson gives Whitaker a dubious look. Studies the screen.

ERICKSON

(reading, to himself)

Vulcan. Betazoid. Halian...

(trails off, gets it)

Wait a second. They're all telepaths?

WHITAKER

(nods)

Or at least they come from a species that show a high degree of telepathic sensitivity. Humans can too, on rare occasions, but apparently not enough to be affected by whatever this was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERICKSON

(uneasy)

Which probably kept the majority of us from ending up like the others.

Neither man notices Da Costa softly kiss T'Sara's forehead before heading over towards them.

DA COSTA

Thank heavens for small mercies.

ERICKSON

(surprised, gentle)

Commander? If you want to stay here--

DA COSTA

(interrupts, firm)

Thank you, Commander, but that won't be necessary.

(beat, wryly)

Besides, she'd be pissed at me for sitting this out for a bedside vigil.

Erickson offers a supportive and encouraging nod as the intercom chirps.

BHRASH (OVER INTERCOM)

(antsy, serious)

Bhrash to Erickson. I need to see you in Engineering right away.

Off the look of concern between the three men...

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

Engineering is abuzz with activity, with personnel moving from one terminal to another with alacrity. The main focus of attention is the barely-active WARP CORE. Pulsing in a clearly lethargic manner.

BHRASH stands at the master systems display going through a series of diagnostics with ELYSE KARRIN and Erickson.

The Bolian keys in a sequence that brings up schematics of an *Excelsior*-class starship and its warp core.

BHRASH

The pulse that hit us? It acted like an EMP, causing our dilithium matrix to go dark. Thank the eggheads at R&D for putting in the extra shielding, otherwise we would be dead in space.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KARRIN

Unfortunately, that isn't the only thing the pulse did.

Another control pressed shows a scan of the circumplanetary disk. Within it, PATTERNS OF ENERGY FLOW. They ebb and flow all throughout the disk. Surrounding the small STARFLEET DELTA that represents the *Courageous*.

KARRIN (cont'd)

The exotic minerals within the field have been energized. It's creating a dampening field throughout the entire circumplanetary ring.

BHRASH

We've got primary power back to just over 50%. That gives us shields, life support. Plus enough for the primary sensor array to keep going.

ERICKSON

Impulse engines?

KARRIN

Fusion reactors took a hit too, but have enough juice to get us moving at a little under over half-impulse.

Erickson visibly sags as he sighs with relief.

ERICKSON

(thankful)

Okay, I'll have Singh plot a course out of range of the dampening effect.

What relief Erickson feels diminishes as he notices the look being exchanged between the two engineers.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

What? What is it?

BHRASH

Right now, we're in an area that has relatively low mineral density. We're only being exposed to a low level of the dampening effect.

ERICKSON

(hits him)

But the circumplanetary ring is made up of higher densities of those same exotic minerals.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(resigned)

Which means the effect would be a lot stronger, I'm guessing?

BHRASH

(nods gravely)

Even at full impulse, we'd be dead in space before passing even a third of the way out. Without shields, debris will tear the hull apart in seconds.

ERICKSON

(under his breath)

Dammit.

(clears throat)

Okay. Any suggestions?

KARRIN

Actually, we were thinking we go to the source of the problem.

ERICKSON

You mean, back to the planet?

BHRASH

Exactly. That tower was the point of origin. If we study it, we might be able to modulate shields. Neutralize the dampening effect.

ERICKSON

(doubtful)

It's a long shot.

(sighs raggedly)

But it's the only one we have at the moment. So, go for it.

BHRASH

Finally! A chance to go planet-side.

He shares a cheeky conspiratorial look of excitement with Karrin, as Erickson, smiling with grim amusement, heads off and lets them get organized...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - NIGHT

Large FLOODLIGHTS provide illumination around the make-shift base camp. The strong winds have died down, reducing the ambient level of dust in the air, improving visibility.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Three SHUTTLECRAFT, the *Whitson* and two type-9 vessels, the *Fawcett* and the *McAuliffe*, are parked nearby. Engineers in heavy-weather gear move equipment into the tower...

DA COSTA

(exasperated)

Two days. Two whole days since that pulse and we've barely started to begin understanding what this all is!

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

Clearing at the end of his proverbial rope, Da Costa is on the verge of losing what little patience he has left.

Watching him with compassionate concern is Megan. She winces as Da Costa stabs at the PADD he's holding briefly before carelessly tossing it onto a worktable.

The eyes of everyone else, engineers and scientists alike, who are busy with their own work, studying scans or setting up more tables or equipment, studiously avoid the temptation to witness the Chief Science Officer's minor meltdown.

DA COSTA

(breathes raggedly)

This is why I stick with cartography. The 'slowly-slowly' with archaeology drives me crazy.

MEGAN

(gently)

Sir, you're no good to anyone if you burn out. Go get some sleep, some food. I'll keep you updated.

Da Costa looks at her, grateful. Nods slowly, acknowledging how on the nose her point is. He takes a calming breath. Casts his gaze around, taking in all the work going on.

DA COSTA

You know, you've really stepped up here, Megan. I'm very impressed.

MEGAN

(modest, embarrassed)

You put the team together, Commander.

DA COSTA

You who kept things focused, on track and organized. That's why I approved your transfer to the *Courageous*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN

(shakes head)

But this was a team effort, sir. We all want to figure this place out. So we can help the captain and the rest in Sickbay.

Her expression falters. She bites her lip. Da Costa picks up on her nerves instantly.

DA COSTA

What is it? You can speak freely.

MEGAN

(wistful)

Well, this is my first time on an alien world since I graduated.

(ashamed)

I feel guilty that I actually get to explore and study an ancient and long dead civilization.

DA COSTA

(chuckles, wryly)

A chance to dig into, pardon the pun, something like this isn't a usual day in the Astraeus sector, admittedly.

(pointedly)

But there's no shame in taking some enjoyment in that.

Megan, despite niggling doubts and guilt, is relieved that Da Costa gets it. Finding comfort and assurance in it...

INT. MEDICAL RESEARCH LAB #2, U.S.S COURAGEOUS

Inside the small but well-appointed lab, Whitaker works at a data station. Displayed on wall screens are a plethora of DETAILED BRAIN SCANS.

Whitaker absently sips some coffee - only to recoil. It's long since cold. As he heads on over to the replicator, the doors open and R'Nara walks in.

WHITAKER

Morning...

(not sure)

At least, I think it's morning.

R'NARA

(chuckles)

More or less? Another all-nighter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHITAKER

(shakes head)

I got a few hours of sleep, but you get what I'm like in 'research-mode'.

R'NARA

All too well. How's it going? Or should I not ask?

Whitaker lets out a strained sigh as he inputs commands into the replicator. Unwanted cup and drink dematerializing.

WHITAKER

I'm just going round in circles.

He points at the displays.

WHITAKER (cont'd)

I keep coming back to those initial scans. Comparing and contrasting the trauma to the areas of their brains that regulate telepathic activity.

R'NARA

(understanding)

That's why they're all unconscious.

WHITAKER

(nods)

Something there was susceptible to whatever the pulse was made of.

(concerned)

What worries me is what long-term effects might manifest when they wake.

(beat, anxious)

Of, should I say, if?

R'NARA

Is that a genuine concern?

WHITAKER

With brain trauma, it's a waiting game. Even in this day and age.

(resigned)

Dammit, I wish Nyia was awake. She'd have a better grasp on this. She has studied this kind of thing for years.

R'NARA

Well, I've got experience with the mysteries of the humanoid brain. Use me as your sounding--

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

R'NARA (cont'd)
 (yawns, embarrassed)
 Sorry! I didn't sleep great either.

Whitaker lets out a mirthless laugh.

WHITAKER
 Yeah, I've heard a fair people saying
 the same lately. We're all a little
 shaken, I guess. I doubt anyone will
 get a good night's sleep for a while.

He turns back to the replicator.

WHITAKER (cont'd)
 Two hot *raktajinos*, extra sweet.

Once the coffee appears, Whitaker hands one to a grateful R'Nara. She takes a moment to savor the smell.

R'NARA
 It might be my second of the day, but
 frankly, after last night, I need it.

She notices the sly look Whitaker shoots her over his own mug as he sips his drink. The Orion mock-glares at him.

R'NARA (cont'd)
 (mock-affronted)
 Nothing like that, thank you!
 (chuckles)
 Just, a lot of bizarre and intense
 dreams. Like, beyond vivid.

WHITAKER
 (surprised, intrigued)
 Really? What kind of dreams?

R'NARA
 Just that there were colors, smells
 that were sharp, almost overpowering.
 (thinks)
 I was on this beautiful planet. Green
 meadows, dazzling waterfalls.

She smiles ruefully. Almost nostalgic as she tries to find a way to describe what she 'saw'.

R'NARA (cont'd)
 A city with these huge, magnificent
 sculptures. Like it had grown from
 the ground, made from--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WHITAKER

(interrupts, stunned)

From some kind of crystal. That it
glowed almost iridescent in the sun?
That it would pulse with light almost
like it was alive in some way...

R'Nara's contented, nostalgic smile fades as she stares in
open surprise at Whitaker. *How did he know that?*

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)

What do you mean by a 'shared dream'?

INT. LANJAR'S OFFICE, MAIN SICKBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

R'Nara and Erickson sit opposite Whitaker, who is seated in
Lanjar's usual chair. He rests his elbows on the desk.

WHITAKER

First, let me ask you a question. How
did you sleep last night?

ERICKSON

('are you serious')

My captain and a dozen more crew are
comatose. My ship's stranded in the
middle of a giant dust storm in space
around a dead planet.

(deadpan)

I slept great, all things considered.

R'NARA

(soothing)

We wouldn't ask you this if it wasn't
important, Damien.

ERICKSON

(sighs, contrite)

You're right, that was out of line.

(considers, shrugs)

I got a decent enough night, I guess.

R'NARA

(carefully)

Did you dream?

ERICKSON

(reacts, caught out)

Actually, I did. I don't normally
remember much of my dreams. But this
one... it was...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHITAKER

(finishing sentence)

So incredibly vivid it's like it was
burned into your memory?

Erickson stares at him, wide-eyed. *It's like Whitaker was
reading his mind.*

R'NARA

Describe the crystalline sculptures.

ERICKSON

(answers instantly)

Beautiful, like they'd grown out of
the ground itself. The way light--
(cuts himself off)

I don't know where that came from.
(realizing)

Wait! How did you even know..?

WHITAKER

Because we aren't the only ones who
have had the same dream. We have got
reports from half the ship, at least.

R'NARA

It's not a 'shared dream' in the true
sense. We didn't see or interact with
each other in the dream-space, as it
would happen in a true mutual dream.
(considers)

This is more that we all saw the same
thing in our minds when we entered a
state of REM-sleep.

ERICKSON

Some kind of effect from the pulse?

Whitaker turns his desk-top monitor around to show Erickson
a humanoid BRAIN SCAN. Highlighted is a particular area.

WHITAKER

This is a level-5 neurographic scan
of my hippocampus. The main area of
the human brain that can deal with
memory. Only, somehow it's undergone
very minute restructuring.

ERICKSON

Let me guess. Everyone you've scanned
has the same type of result?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Whitaker nods gravely. Erickson's expression hardens. He's pissed and not afraid to show it.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(fierce)

I loathe the idea of anyone rummaging around and putting things in my, or anybody's, head. Let me know--

TECHNICIAN (OVER INTERCOM)

(panicked)

Security alert! Immediate assistance required, outside Transporter Room 3!

Erickson reacts with utter disbelief at the cry for help. He's on his feet and out of the office like a shot, quickly followed by R'Nara as a stunned Whitaker remains seated...

INT. CORRIDOR, DECK NINE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

A FULL-SCALE PROTEST is in full swing. A large mismatched mob push back against a squad of SECURITY PERSONNEL. Lead by Lt. Fischer, they're struggling to keep them away from the closed doors to the transporter room.

FISCHER

(loosing patience)

Back, all of you! That's an order!

It's a loosing battle. The mob has strength on their side--

--until a PHASER BURST leaves a sizeable mark on the deck!

A mixture of surprised cries and shouts of fear is followed by an abrupt but pregnant silence as Alexis Matthias stalks toward the group. Her phaser still in hand. Aim unwavering.

The nearby turbolift opens to allow both Erickson and R'Nara to witness the mob cower timidly from Matthias's fiery gaze.

MATTHIAS

All of you. Stand down.

Appropriately mortified, they back off. Matthias holsters her sidearm as a terrified TECHNICIAN (human, barely in her 20s) timidly exits the transporter room.

TECHNICIAN

(quivering)

Is-- is it over?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

R'Nara quickly moves in, comforting the shell-shocked young noncom. She sags into the Orion's arms as it all hits her.

TECHNICIAN (cont'd)

They-- they wanted me to beam them down to the planet! They just kept screaming at me!

(sobs)

I couldn't, I'm just a systems tech!

R'NARA

It's okay, you're alright. That's what matters.

Erickson contains his fury until R'Nara gently leads the technician away before he spins the shame-faced group.

ERICKSON

What in Hell where you all thinking? Do you want your molecules spread all over a 100 kilometer radius?!

He whirls on Fischer and his team.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

Confine every one of them to quarters until I feel like letting them out.

FISCHER

With pleasure, sir.

Fischer and his team none-too-gently 'escort' the group down the corridor. As Matthias joins him, Erickson spots the mark on the deck. He shoots her a look that screams 'really?'

MATTHIAS

(shrugs)

With respect, sir, it *did* work.

Erickson rolls his eyes before tapping his communicator.

ERICKSON

Erickson to Whitaker. It's worse then we realized.

WHITAKER (OVER INTERCOM)

What do you mean, Commander?

ERICKSON

I don't think dreams are the only thing that's been put in our heads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He pointedly ignores Matthias's uncomprehending, quizzical look as he continues speaking.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

I don't care if you have to scan the whole crew. Get your people on it.

(sighs)

I have a feeling this is going to get worse before it gets better.

Off Erickson, growing more worried with each passing moment as the danger they're facing becomes more evident, we:

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT TWO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI

The *COURAGEOUS* hangs in orbit, not looking much better. Warp nacelles dark. Impulse engines glow weakly. External lights off-line. Only a few viewports lit up inside...

ERICKSON (V.O.)

Ship's Log, supplemental: After more incidents by crew desperate to head to the planet, I've had transporters, including emergency evacuation pads, shut down. Hanger bays sealed with each shuttle under security lockout.

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

The WARP CORE pulses sluggishly. Technicians and specialists monitor it. The lights from consoles and stations provides the only real source of ambient illumination.

BHRASH, collar open, looks like he hasn't had a good night's sleep in far too long. Absently nibbling on a ration bar. Seated at his station, he stares at the core forlornly. The beating heart of the *Courageous* is slowly giving out.

ERICKSON (V.O.)

Chief Engineer Bhrash continues to analyze the dampening field. All decks are on Gray Mode to conserve energy.

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - DAY

Establishing shot. *Shuttlecraft Fawcett* gently lifts off.

CH'LENE (PRE-LAP)

Thanks to shuttle flybys, we now have detailed scans of the whole area.

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - DAY

CH'LENE, antennae sagging with exhaustion, stands behind one of the worktables.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A mobile HOLO-PROJECTOR displays a 3-D RENDERING of the ruins. DA COSTA, MEGAN and KARRIN, all just as tired, watch with interest.

CH'LENE

What they've found *under* the ruins is the main item of interest.

Ch'Lene presses a control. The image pulls back, rendering out new details. A HUGE CHAMBER underneath. A large and complex latticework forms, the scans filling in details.

DA COSTA

(blown away)

The original power source, perhaps?

CH'LENE

Uncertain, sir. They seem to be solid crystalline structures. Their design and growth pattern suggest they were artificially guided into this shape.

KARRIN

(ponders, curious)

It reminds me of a cross-section of an isolinear circuit chip.

CH'LENE

(nods, pleased)

As I was thinking, yes.

(beat, fascinated)

Perhaps the structure isn't a weapon, but a kind of data storage facility?

Da Costa slowly turns around to look over at the now-inert control console. *The cogs are turning in his mind...*

DA COSTA

(pieces come together)

The consoles have crystal interfaces.

(gets it)

And beneath us is the storage medium!

He whirls back around, the delight of discovery all over his face, beaming with exhilaration.

DA COSTA (cont'd)

It's one giant computer core!

CH'LENE

(pleased)

Exactly my theory, sir.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CH'LENE (cont'd)
 (resigned)
 However, what information it stores
 and how to access it is still beyond
 our current understanding.

He strides over to the portable interface. Activates it with
 a touch on the screen.

CH'LENE (cont'd)
 It may be possible to create a hard-
 line connection. Access data stored
 within the core and circumvent the
 main console.

MEGAN
 Is that wise? After what happened
 before? If we put power into it, what
 if it does the same thing?

CH'LENE
 (nods)
 A valid concern. But we will not be
 using the console directly itself.

Da Costa purses his lips. Scientific curiosity waging a war
 against doing the right thing. He squares his shoulders as
 he comes to a decision. Shakes his head.

DA COSTA
 No. At least, not yet. I'll run it by
 Commander Erickson and Dr. Whitaker.
 I'm heading up there shortly.

His antennae dropping further, a disappointed ch'Lene can
 only nod in acceptance...

INT. KELLINNIN'S QUARTERS, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

Sleep seems to be anything but peaceful for R'NARA. Covers
 kicked away as she tosses and turns. Eyes closed tightly as
 she DREAMS...

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - DAY

R'Nara, still in her nightwear, finds herself looking up at
 the tower's highest point. The crystalline apparatus as seen
 earlier. It pulses gently with that same energy--

--as around her, everything begins to change. Gone is the
 base-camp and shuttles. Fading away as if never there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Within moments, it is no longer a ruin. Instead, it is the centerpiece of a THRIVING CITYSCAPE. Buildings stretch high into the sky. Crystal designs of architectural and artistic genius dotted at various locations to be admired by all.

ETHEREAL SHADOWS of the people who once lived there walk by, without a care in the world. R'Nara not visible to them.

Loosing herself in the moment, R'Nara allows herself to bask in the brilliant day-light, closing her eyes--

--until DARKNESS begins to envelop her and everything around her. Opening her eyes, she sees the ghostly shades around her running, screaming silently as they look up. She follows their gaze - and gasps in horror!

The sky, clear moments ago, rains death and destruction. MASSIVE CHUNKS OF BURNING ROCK fall from the heavens.

Buildings are smashed to rubble. Sculptures shattered into a billion pieces. Terrified people run for their lives despite the utter futility of it. Nowhere is safe.

The ground shakes fiercely from constant bombardment. R'Nara is knocked to the ground by the sheer force of it.

A shockwave of debris and rubble races towards her, head on as she SCREAMS--

INT. KELLINNIN'S QUARTERS, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

A SCREAM that echoes throughout R'Nara's cabin as she bolts upright in bed, sweat beading on her forehead.

She pants for breath, trying to calm her racing heart and collect herself. Arms crossed over her knees as she pulls them in tightly. 'Freaked out' barely describes her mood.

She JUMPS in fright as the intercom chirps. Blushing with embarrassment at her frazzled nerves.

ERICKSON (OVER INTERCOM)
Erickson to Kellinnin.

R'NARA
(pulls it together)
Kellinnin here. Go ahead.

ERICKSON (OVER INTERCOM)
Sorry to disturb you, Counselor. But Dr. Whitaker and Chief Bhrash have asked to see the senior officers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Off R'Nara's open curiosity, as she climbs out of bed...

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

Stood at the forward wall's LCARS DISPLAY TERMINAL, Whitaker confers quietly with Bhrash. Sat at the room's rectangular conference table are Da Costa and ERICKSON.

Each holds a steaming-hot mug of coffee, fighting through tiredness. More than a little strung out. Erickson takes a grateful sip of his drink as R'Nara, now in uniform, enters.

R'NARA
(apologetic)
Sorry if I held anything up.

Da Costa pushes a drink towards her as she sits down.

DA COSTA
You might need this. I think they're
going to techo-babble us.

R'Nara smirks softly, as Whitaker and Bhrash face them.

WHITAKER
(having overheard)
We'll try not to bore you all to
tears, we promise.
(grows serious)
But we've figured a few things out.

With a press of a control, the LCARS screen brings up the previously-shown BRAIN SCAN.

WHITAKER (cont'd)
I went back and looked over the brain
scans, examining further.

He taps in a command sequence, which brings up a series of BRAIN-WAVE ACTIVITY SCANS. One on top of the other. Each of them appears wildly different on first look.

WHITAKER (cont'd)
A deeper bio-molecular scan found
something that has been left behind.

Now, Whitaker adjust the view. SPECIFIC SEGMENTS are zoomed into--

--which look identical to one another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHITAKER (cont'd)

Brain-wave patterns are, as a given, unique and distinctive.

(points at screen)

This chain of aberrant and fragmented memory engrams shows up in everyone that I've scanned.

R'NARA

The source of the dreams?

WHITAKER

(nods)

We've undergone a crude engrammatic imprinting. But the scans show the imprinting on our unconscious crew isn't as invasive as the rest of us.

ERICKSON

(confused)

If they were less affected by it, why are they all still comatose?

R'NARA

(realizing)

Because this was, in essence, a kind of telepathic assault. However it was made to happen, that's what it boils down to. Their telepathic abilities must have acted as a kind of...

(hunts for word)

A 'fail-safe', I guess you'd call it?

WHITAKER

(shrugs, clueless)

It's as good a theory as any, which fits what we know so far.

BHRASH

(clears throat)

As for how, this is where I come in.

His fingers skip across several controls. SENSOR SCANS of the circumplanetary debris field are displayed.

BHRASH (cont'd)

I've run every conceivable type of scan on the circumplanetary field, in order to combat the dampening field.

He points to one particular WAVEFORM SCAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BHRASH (cont'd)

A multi-spectral analysis picked up an ambient energy pulse within the debris itself. Broadcast at extremely low intensity. If I wasn't looking for any kind of clue, I would have missed it.

DA COSTA

The waveform looks familiar...

BHRASH

Good eyes, Commander. It matches the frequency of the energy wave that hit us a few days ago.

He brings up another scan. This shows a COMPUTER MODEL of the planet, with the TOWER STRUCTURE high-lighted. A PULSE of energy leaps from it and up into space. Enveloping the representation of the DEBRIS FIELD.

BHRASH (cont'd)

The entire debris ring was saturated with this unknown energy.

ERICKSON

This is causing the dampening effect?

BHRASH

I believe so, yes. It's also self-propagating.

The MODEL continues to play out. Showing more pulses, at a weaker intensity than the previous ones, that surge through the entirety of the debris ring.

BHRASH (cont'd)

It seems the crystalline mineral has somehow recorded the pulse, acting in the same way a subspace repeater will boost a comm signal.

WHITAKER

But what is really concerning is that our analysis of the field discovered that it has a distinct frequency.

(beat)

A *neuro-electrical* one.

Both R'Nara and Da Costa understand the implications of this at once. In fact, it's the last piece of the puzzle Da Costa needed. Erickson, a little slower off the mark, gets there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ERICKSON

Wait a second, are you're saying the dampening field isn't a separate issue? That the mental assault and the power drain are tied together?

BHRASH

Essentially, yes, sir.

DA COSTA

(triumphant)

I think I might know the 'why' to this whole thing as well. It's that damned crystalline mineral. I've read about similar substances in the past.

Moving over to the terminal, he punches in some commands. It brings up a series of images - each with their own label. A VULCAN KATRIC ARK. A HALIIAN CANAR. AN ARRETTIAN RECEPTACLE.

DA COSTA (cont'd)

These are all examples of telepathic storage mediums or a way to enhance weaker telepathic abilities.

(beat)

I think we're dealing with something of a similar vein here. It's just a theory at the moment, I admit, but still..?

WHITAKER

(considers)

Even before this all happened, Dr. Lanjar mentioned in her medical log that some of the crew were feeling 'off'. Each one is now unconscious in our main ward. So, before the pulse, something about the crystalline mineral was affecting psi-sensitives.

(beat, worried)

I have one major concern. The pulse was the vector that transmitted the memory engrams. By being exposed to this frequency, it's reinforcing the new data into our brains.

R'NARA

That would fit with what I've been hearing from the crew. The dreams are becoming more intense. Recalling more in our waking moments. An increasing level of correlation from one person to the next.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

R'NARA (cont'd)
 (shivers)
 I can attest from my own experiences
 that they're growing more disturbing.

WHITAKER
 (grave, anxious)
 Disturbing isn't the word, Counselor.

He brings up several more BRAIN SCANS. Highlighted in them
 are small areas of DEGRADATION in each brain.

WHITAKER (cont'd)
 These engrams are so alien that it
 causing severe neurological stress.
 (beat)
 If we don't find some way to shield
 ourselves, very soon we're going to
 suffer irreversible damage.

A silent pall of fear descends upon the senior officers, as
 they realize they're running low on time. With this in mind,
 Erickson looks to Bhrash.

ERICKSON
 Do you have any ideas on how to
 combat this?

R'Nara frowns, almost imperceptibly. His choice of words
 giving her cause for concern.

BHRASH
 (hedging his bets)
 Maybe. It's a bit of a Hail Mary, in
 all honesty. It could save us or kill
 us.
 (beat)
 We channel remaining power to our
 deflector and send out our own pulse.
 Projecting a resonance burst on an
 inverse frequency. It should act as a
 cancellation wave.

DA COSTA
 (dubious)
 Can we produce something like that?

BHRASH
 It'll burn out our deflector, but we
 can jury-rig once we're out of the
 debris. Enough to go to minimal warp.

ERICKSON
 You said it could save us or kill us?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BHRASH

Unfortunately, yes. See, if it's not powerful enough to completely cancel out the dampening effect, then we're stuck here. It will take every last kilowatt of power we have to do this.

Many anxious glances are shared by the senior officers. They are very much caught in a 'rock and a hard place' situation.

Erickson abruptly stands, pushing his chair back with more force than necessary. The sudden movement catches everyone by surprise as they look to him. He stands there, jaw set and eyes gleaming with fierce resolve.

Without another word, he stalks out of the conference lounge, to the growing concern and confusion of his staff...

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

Erickson strides towards the command chair. Seconds later, the other senior officers follow. FISCHER mans Tactical.

R'NARA

Commander, what are you thinking?

ERICKSON

(determined)

We need to act while we still can.

(beat)

Mr. Fischer, open a channel to our people on the surface.

FISCHER

Yes, sir.

A few swift commands are entered before Fischer gives the signal to Erickson that the channel is open.

ERICKSON

Courageous to Lieutenant Karrin. How long will it take for everyone to get back to the ship

KARRIN (OVER COMM CHANNEL)

If we start packing everything up now, sir? About 45 minutes.

Erickson considers her reply. A range of emotions playing over his face in the seconds he spends coming to a decision. Finally, a mask of grim resolve settles over him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON

Leave it all behind. I want all the shuttles on board ASAP.

KARRIN (OVER COMM CHANNEL)

(unsure but complying)

Understood, Commander. Karrin out.

The confusion of the bridge crew is evident. Da Costa makes his way to Erickson's side, more than a little wary. *He has a bad feeling he knows what Erickson has planned.*

DA COSTA

Care to share with the rest of us?

Erickson meets his gaze levelly. Not a single flicker of doubt in his mind.

ERICKSON

We're out of time. So, if the debris field is the source of our problems, then I am going to deal with it.

He looks to Fischer.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

Prepare a series of torpedo spreads.

(beat)

As soon as our people are on board, we're going to shoot our way out.

Off the stunned reactions at the brazenness of Erickson's 'solution'...

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - DAY

The *Shuttlecraft McAuliffe* takes off with all undue haste with the *Shuttlecraft Fawcett* soon lifting off, and speeding away to join its fellow type-9 companion.

Stood at the base of the *Whitson's* open hatch, Megan barely reacts to the dust kicked up. Instead, her woeful gaze takes in what might be her final view of the area.

She remains oblivious as Karrin and MATTHIAS walk out from the shuttle's interior. They watch as the other two shuttles soon vanish into the upper atmosphere.

KARRIN

That's everyone else accounted for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATTHIAS

Where's Lieutenant ch'Lene. He should be finished by now.

KARRIN

You know how hyper-focused he gets. I'll go get him.

Karrin pointedly looks over in Megan's direction. Making a point to draw Matthias's attention to the younger woman.

KARRIN (cont'd)

This is the quietest she's been the whole time we've been down here.

Matthias exhales slowly, getting her girlfriend's point loud and clear. Nodding in answer to the unasked question. Karrin thanks her with a gentle smile then heads towards the tower.

After a moment, Matthias joins Megan. The science officer absently glances up at her.

MEGAN

(upset, defensive)

I get why we need to leave, but...

MATTHIAS

(understands)

You don't like leaving questions unanswered. I get that.

Megan looks to Matthias, wide-eyed. Surprised to find that a security officer understand where she's coming from.

MATTHIAS (cont'd)

We're all explorers, Megan. No matter what color uniform we wear.

MEGAN

(sighs, sadly)

If only we had the time to learn--

KARRIN (OVER COMM CHANNEL)

(whispered frantic)

Karrin to *Whitson*, emergency!

Matthias, instantly on alert, slaps at her communicator.

MATTHIAS

Matthias to Karrin, report.

(beat, on edge)

Elyse, answer me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Silence is the only response. Matthias exchanges a worried look with Megan, then pulls out her phaser, rushing forward.

MATTHIAS (cont'd)
Stay here. That's an order, Ensign.

She sprints to the ruins, leaving a bewildered and worried Megan on her own...

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

Bhrash and Fischer talk in lowered tone at Tactical. R'Nara, arms crossed over her chest, bites her lip nervously, beside the command chair. She shares a look with Da Costa. Both unable to mask how unsure they feel with their preparations.

Erickson enters from the port-side egress, the tension level on the bridge going up another notch. Everyone attempts to look busy as he stands in front of the command chair.

ERICKSON
Are we ready, Mr. Fischer?

FISCHER
Forward launchers loaded. *Fawcett* and *McAuliffe* on final approach.
(beat, checks panel)
The *Whitson's* last report states that they were readying for launch.

Erickson nods curtly. R'Nara takes note of his stance and overall demeanor. Detached. Reserved. Hands clasped behind his back. Unconsciously mimicking the absent T'SARA.

ERICKSON
Senior officers to duty stations. All decks, yellow alert.

His matter-of-fact orders and seemingly-nonchalant manner is belied by the clenching of his fists. A muscle tensing in his jaw as the crew respond to his orders...

INT. SECONDARY SHUTTLEBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

The smaller of the *Excelsior*-class starship's hanger decks, located at the rear of the dorsal 'tail'. It hosts two small TYPE-8 SHUTTLES, along with four TYPE-15 SHUTTLEPODS.

With the hanger decks locked down, there are no maintenance technicians on duty. The lights are dimmed, with the deck duty stations on stand-by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a hiss and a loud click, a Jeffries tube access hatch on the deck comes loose. A figure skulks out before dashing towards the closest auxiliary vehicle - a type-15.

Several hastily input commands on the shuttlepod's port-side hatch quickly pop it open. As the cockpit comes to life, the face of the figure is illuminated--

--revealing ASEEMA SINGH. Eyes burning with an almost manic desperation...

KARRIN (PRE-LAP)
You don't want to do this, Jhish.

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - DAY

Karrin stands stock still. Biting her lip in an unconscious gesture of nervousness. Hands raised up and away from her body, doing everything she can to appear non-threatening. Eyes only on the individual aiming a phaser directly at her.

Ch'Lene. But this isn't the calm and controlled Andorian we are used to. This version we've never seen before. His skin glisten with sweat. Shaking with nervous agitation.

KARRIN
This isn't you. Not really. It's
because of what's been done to us.

CH'LENE
(overwrought)
Don't act like that! You want to stay
here just as much as I do!

KARRIN
What we want doesn't matter, Jhish.
Leaving could help everyone.
(pleads)
You understand that, don't you?

Ch'Lene wavers. The phaser, already quivering as he listens to his better judgment, slowly starts to lower--

--only for Matthias to run. The security chief pulling up short and bringing her own phaser to bear as she takes it all in. Face a picture of uncomprehending disbelief.

Close to losing it due to his mounting panic, ch'Lene turns his aim towards Matthias. A stand-off.

KARRIN (cont'd)
No!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Karrin quickly moves herself in between the two. Neither can get a clean shot at the other without firing *through* her.

MATTHIAS

What the Hell..?! Elyse--

KARRIN

(brokers no argument)

We're good here, Lieutenant. Just go.

Matthias shakes her head. She's not budging. But she does lower her aim slightly. A move ch'Lene thankfully mirrors.

MATTHIAS

Mr. Ch'Lene? Want to explain just what is going on here?

CH'LENE

(agitated, nervous)

I'm not going back, ma'am. I want to stay here on the planet.

KARRIN

(gently)

You know you can't, Jhish. This is no place to call home.

CH'LENE

(loosing control)

But I have to! I need to!

Ch'Lene, trembling fiercely now, the phaser dropping lower and lower, until it finally falls from his numb fingers. He sinks to his knees, weeping softly.

CH'LENE (cont'd)

(inconsolable)

Why? Why do I feel like this?

Matthias swiftly kicks the phaser out of reach as Karrin kneels down alongside ch'Lene, putting an arm around him, as she tries to offer what emotional support she can...

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

Erickson sits in the command chair, stony-faced. He listens to his officers report in, white-knuckle grip on the armrest controls tightening.

MATTHIAS (OVER COMM CHANNEL)

The situation's in hand. Preparing for immediate lift-off, Commander.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON

(terse)

Acknowledged, Lieutenant. Double-time
it back to the ship. *Courageous* out.

A tense silence falls across the bridge. It's evident that, as much as they are preparing to follow orders, many of them are conflicted. A fight between what they know they *have* to do and what they *want* to do

From the aft of the bridge, out of the way, R'Nara observes. Concern for Erickson growing with each passing moment. She's on the verge of stepping forward, help ease his burden--

--when an ALARM from the Science console goes off.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(sotto voce, weary)

Now what?

(normal)

Report, Mr. Da Costa?

Da Costa frowns in confusion at his display.

DA COSTA

There's activity in Shuttlebay Two.

(beat, in disbelief)

We've got a launch in progress!

Erickson is on his feet in an instant, practically leaping the distance between the command chair and console.

ERICKSON

What the Hell? Shut it down!

Da Costa struggles futilely with his console for a moment, before shaking his head.

DA COSTA

I can't! They've bypassed the damned
safety interlocks.

R'Nara finally heads down into the command well, approaching Erickson as he steps back.

R'NARA

(incredulous)

Who would know how to override the
systems like that?

Erickson doesn't answer. Instead, his suspicious gaze is drawn to the ND ensign manning the CONN CONSOLE...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

...and the conspicuous absence of his chief flight control officer, despite his earlier summons of senior officers to their stations.

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI

The shuttlepod shoots away from the *Courageous*, on a direct course towards the planet's surface. The shields flare and burn brightly as it heads into denser pockets of debris...

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLEPOD DECKER - CONTINUOUS

Inside the cramped, utilitarian cockpit sits SINGH. Skin clammy and pallid, eyes burning with need and excitement. Her fingers dance over controls, but they lack their usual confidence and skill. She fumbles every other input.

ERICKSON (OVER COMM CHANNEL)
(pissed but contained)
Shuttlepod Decker, return at once.

Singh falters. Bites her lip. Caught in a abrupt realization at just what she is doing. Guilt washing over her despite her best efforts to ignore it.

ERICKSON (OVER COMM CHANNEL) (cont'd)
(calmer)
Aseema, please. Talk to me.

The use of her given name breaks down what little resistance Singh has left. A timid touch opens the channel. On the viewport HUD, a visual comm-link to the bridge activates.

ERICKSON (ON SCREEN)
(trying to be patient)
Aseema, what are you doing?

SINGH
(overwhelmed)
I'm sorry, Commander, but I--
(almost in tears)
I have to do this! I need to get down to the planet!

ERICKSON
Think this through, Aseema. You know our minds have been messed with.
(beat)
Do you really believe that you're in a good state to fly right now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Singh offers a small grin. A glimmer of the cockiness and pride in her own abilities we've come to expect.

SINGH

Please, Commander, I've flown through plasma storms and supernova remnants, I can handle a little--

THWACK! A series of CONCUSSIVE IMPACTS to the shuttlepod exterior hull shake the *Decker* hard. A SCREAM escapes Singh just before her head is slammed against the console!

She is thrown back in her seat, blood trickling from a nasty gash, unconscious, as the shuttlepod continues shaking...

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI - CONTINUOUS

The small and compact form of the *Decker* is pulled into a STREAM OF PLANETARY DEBRIS. Pulled wildly off course, sent careening through with little sense of direction.

The already-weakened shields immediately begin to falter as they are assaulted by the intense barrage it's fallen into.

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

On the main viewscreen, for all the bridge crew to behold, the spectacle plays out in full detail.

As both Erickson and R'Nara, standing together in front of the command chair, watch helplessly - unable to lend any assistance - what they each realize could very be the final moments of Aseema Singh, we:

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT THREE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI

From the *Courageous's* bow, a TRACTOR BEAM reaches out to try and grab hold of the plummeting *SHUTTLEPOD DECKER*.

For the briefest of moments, it is able to maintain a lock--
--only for the beam to waver in and out of existence before abruptly terminating completely.

FISCHER (PRE-LAP)
We lost the tractor beam, Commander.

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

FISCHER's fingers move at dizzying speed, trying every trick he knows, but its a loosing battle. Finally, he shakes his head in frustration.

FISCHER
Background interference is making a lock impossible.

R'NARA, standing in front of the command chair, looks to ERICKSON, who is hurriedly working at Mission Ops.

R'NARA
Can't we just beam her out?

ERICKSON
(harried, distracted)
Even at this range, there's still too much signal degradation.

He finishes inputting commands, but the console only beeps negatively at him.

ERICKSON (cont'd)
(irate)
Dammit, I can't get a remote link up. The guidance systems must have been shorted out by the initial impact.

R'NARA
(loosing hope)
Then... there's nothing we can do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The burning fire in Erickson's glare - sheer determination to make sure his officer survives - says otherwise...

EXT. LOW ORBIT, BOREAS VI - MOMENTS LATER

The *SHUTTLECRAFT WHITSON* streaks through the upper ranges of the planet's atmosphere on full thrusters, heading out into space as quickly as it can manage.

MATTHIAS (PRE-LAP)

We're on course now, Commander.

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT WHITSON - CONTINUOUS

Sitting at the helm, MATTHIAS watches her instruments like a hawk as she guides the type-11 vessel through the thickening debris. Sat at the ancillary consoles are KARRIN and MEGAN.

MATTHIAS

We'll intercept in two minutes.

ERICKSON (OVER COMM CHANNEL)

The *Decker's* in free fall. We can't establish communication with Singh.

MATTHIAS

What about bio-signs?

ERICKSON

Still active, but weak. Once you're in range, you'll be able to get a cleaner transporter lock then we can.

A series of SENSOR ALERTS go off. Karrin quickly silences them as she studies her display.

KARRIN

I've got the shuttle on sensors! Her re-entry angle is too steep!

MEGAN

(aghast)

Confirmed! Shields are practically gone and hull temperature has already passed the upper limits of tolerance!

Karrin abruptly points out the forward viewport.

KARRIN

There she is!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Through the transparent aluminum, the three of them watch with fearful fascination. Surrounded by a fiery nimbus of superheated air, the *Decker* continues its death-plunge.

MATTHIAS

Can you get a fix on her?

MEGAN

(panicked)

I-- I'm trying! There's so much static from the atmospheric friction! It's making it difficult to get any kind of reading!

CH'LENE (O.S.)

(subdued)

I can do it.

All eyes turn to look at CH'LENE as he steps in from the aft section. He looks terrible, antenna laid flat on his white hair. Far too pale and emotionally drained, but he's putting that all aside for the moment.

MATTHIAS

(not convinced)

Are you sure? You're still--

CH'LENE

(firm but polite)

All due respect, Lieutenant, but we don't have time to discuss this. Not with Aseema's life on the line.

Matthias still has her doubts. But after a quick glance to Karrin, who shows her support with a small encouraging nod, is enough to convince her.

MATTHIAS

Get to it, Lieutenant.

Ch'Lene moves with alacrity to the aft wall displays that serve as controls for the cockpit transporter platform.

CH'LENE

I can boost sensor gain to maximum and hone in the annular confinement beam on its narrowest margin. Just get as close as possible and match course for as long as you can.

MATTHIAS

(confident)

On it.

EXT. LOW ORBIT, BOREAS VI - CONTINUOUS

With surprising grace, the *Whitson* maneuvers itself as close as it can to the burning hull of the shuttlepod...

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT WHITSON - CONTINUOUS

The atmospheric turbulence grows, causing the interior to tremble as Matthias fights to keep it steady.

MATTHIAS

I can't keep us here for long!

CH'LENE

Boosting sensors to maximum now.

KARRIN

I'm giving you as much power as I can but I need to keep some for inertial dampeners and structural integrity.

MEGAN

The *Decker's* coming apart!

MATTHIAS

Get her out of there, Jhish!

Ch'Lene slams a palm down on the activation trigger...

EXT. LOW ORBIT, BOREAS VI - CONTINUOUS

Pushed beyond tolerance, the *Shuttlepod Decker* IMPLODES, the hull completely collapsing from the beating its taken.

As fragments of the craft are strewn in all directions, the *Whitson* pulls back, avoiding a similar fate...

MATTHIAS (PRE-LAP)

Mr. Ch'Lene, did we..?

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT WHITSON - CONTINUOUS

The PLATFORM remains empty for several tense seconds--

--until the TRANSPORTER EFFECTS kicks in! Moments later, the dazzling light fades away leaving the prone form of ASEEMA SINGH laying on the platform.

MEGAN

Oh, thank God!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Megan quickly dashes over, grabbing a MED-KIT from the wall. She uses the tricorder within to scan the still-unconscious pilot as both Karrin and Ch'Lene assist in turning her over.

She's not come away unscathed. Patches of uniform have been burned away. Livid red welts mark normally flawless skin. Blood trickles from the head wound she sustained earlier.

MEGAN (cont'd)

(concerned)

She's alive, but in a bad way. Burns to 20% of her body, and it looks like she has a grade-2 concussion.

(shakes head)

We need to get her back to *Courageous* as soon as we can.

Matthias, having maintained her position, begins punching in commands. The dust-filled sky outside the viewport starts to give way to the relative darkness of space...

ERICKSON (V.O.)

Executive Officer's Personal Log, supplemental: Dr Whitaker confirms that Lieutenant Singh will make a full recovery from her injuries.

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI

The *COURAGEOUS* remains on station. The power reserves are practically exhausted. There isn't long left in her...

ERICKSON (V.O.)

We are preparing to execute my plan to create 'dead zones' in the debris. We will be underway in ten minutes.

INT. X.O.'S OFFICE, DECK TWO, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

Erickson, seeking sanctuary in his own private space, looks out the small viewport. Deep in thought. The phrase "heavy lies the head that wears the crown" comes to mind.

The room itself still maintains a spartan, professional air. This is a place to work, after all. The only concession to whimsy are several model starships - a *Walker*-class, *Nimitz*-class and *Shepard*-class - on a bench behind his desk.

ERICKSON (V.O.)

I hope to be recording a follow up to this log once we're free and clear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door chime announces a visitor. Squaring his shoulders, Erickson turns away from the viewport and his introspection.

ERICKSON

Come in.

He offers a polite smile as R'Nara walks in. She remains silent. Dark eyes study him for a long moment, enough that his smile begins to falter.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

Something on your mind, Counselor?

R'NARA

(probing)

Funny. I was about to ask you that.

ERICKSON

(impatient)

I'm in no mood to be counseled today, R'Nara.

R'NARA

(taking no prisoners)

Tough. Because I think that's what you actually do need right now.

Her crossed arms and defiant pose meets his frustrated glare with ease. She's not backing down. After a moment, the fight leaves Erickson as he lets out a ragged breath.

ERICKSON

I'm a soldier, R'Nara. A fighter. That's what I trained for. What I'm good at. It got me through the War and awarded me this posting.

R'Nara, as is her way, remains silent. Allowing Erickson to work this out in his own way. She simply listens.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

I get why I didn't get the *Fearless*. I wasn't ready. I was still too much in the mindset of war. That's what we needed when we first started cleaning up this sector. What Captain Windsor needed from me.

(beat)

But that's not me anymore. Captain Frost helped me remember why I joined Starfleet. Not just to kick butt and keep my crew safe but to be part of the push into the great unknown.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(resentful)

But I'm just a warrior with delusions of being some noble explorer. Because just like that, I'm back to solving my problems with weapons and taking a risk that could get us all killed.

R'NARA

(almost taunting)

Didn't someone once say "Risk is our business"?

ERICKSON

(smiles wryly)

Don't quote James Kirk at me. I wrote my dissertation on his command style.

(gets it)

But then, you knew that, didn't you?

R'NARA

(coy)

Maybe. But any good Starfleet officer understands that we aren't just one thing or another. We're both. If not more. It's all part of what we do. What we trained for.

She approaches him, keeping her gaze level with his, not breaking eye contact as she drives her point home.

R'NARA (cont'd)

It's okay to feel conflicted about this plan of yours. Because you're not arrogant enough to believe that everything will work out just because the great Damien Erickson says so.

Erickson can't help the small smile her words bring forth. She offers a wry one of her own. Before she can offer any more words of support, the door chime sounds again.

ERICKSON

It's open.

They both look over as a harried Da Costa rushes in, waving a PADD at them.

DA COSTA

We have a big problem. I--

He pulls up short as he notices how close together the two are standing. Realizes he's not Erickson's only visitor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DA COSTA (cont'd)
 (embarrassed)
 Oh. Sorry. Did I interrupt something?

R'NARA
 (quickly, shakes head)
 Not all all.

ERICKSON
 (clears throat)
 What kind of problem?

Da Costa looks briefly at the PADD, almost regretful, before meeting Erickson's gaze.

DA COSTA
 Your plan. It won't work.

His grave pronouncement seems to almost resonate throughout the office. Both R'Nara and Erickson are floored by the sure certainty Da Costa has...

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

The senior officers, alongside Megan and WHITAKER, are seated at the table as Da Costa outlines his concerns.

MEGAN
 Our theory is that the Varos'ii'a used the crystal as a way of sharing ideas and thoughts. It was a medium of intellectual exchange.

R'NARA
 (realizing)
 That would explain why they were so keen on mining the asteroids for it.

MATTHIAS
 But why won't Commander Erickson's plan work? If we can destroy enough of the minerals around us--

DA COSTA
 (interrupts)
 Because it isn't just neuro-electric energy the crystals absorb. They can store all kinds of energy.

BHRASH
 (brainwave)
 Holy Mother... That's what happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He jumps up and beginnings programming instructions into the LCARS terminal. A COMPUTER-MODEL plays out as he narrates.

BHRASH (cont'd)
There must have been an accident on
the mining platforms, or maybe they
just miscalculated explosive yield.

On the screen, ONE of the THREE ASTEROID suddenly EXPLODES silently. Energy washes out from the point of detonation and strikes the other two. In short order they BOTH EXPLODE. The REMNANTS rain down on the unprotected planet surface.

R'NARA
(horrified)
That-- that's what I've been seeing
in my dreams.

ERICKSON
(focuses on point)
So, what are you saying? Photons and
even quants won't cut it?

DA COSTA
(shakes head)
It's not about the detonation. It's
how the mineral will react.

He joins Bhrash at the terminal. Brings up the same WIRE-FRAME GRAPHIC of the debris field showing the energy pulse's effects on it.

DA COSTA (cont'd)
Our torpedoes will clear a path, yes,
but the reaction from the detonation
will just supercharge what's left.

ERICKSON
(it hits him)
We'd be drained of power in moments.

The mood of the room drops. Whatever hope they were holding onto that a solution was coming has just been devastated.

R'NARA
So... is there nothing we can do?

MATTHIAS
What about launching a comm buoy?
Have it on standby mode and drift out
of the debris field. Call for help?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BHRASH

If it's standby mode, it won't have any shielding. It would be smashed to bits within minutes.

WHITAKER

Send out a shuttle? Or use them as a tug fleet to pull us out?

BHRASH

(shakes head)

No, same problem, only different. The field effect will get stronger as we go deeper into the field, remember? The shuttles would be drained dry...

He trails off, eyes widening as an idea blossoms. *You can practically see the cogs turning*, the brain synapses firing on all thrusters.

BHRASH (cont'd)

Shuttles...

(beat, inspired)

I think you've just given me an idea.

Everyone reacts to the Bolian's hopeful pronouncement. His eyes burn bright with the fervor of genius, grin widening. *He's a man with a plan...*

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

Bhrash, Karrin and Da Costa work like maniacs around the central 'pool table'. Ideas and suggestions flow freely as they implement changes to programs and command sequences...

BHRASH (V.O.)

We use a shuttle to initiate my resonance burst plan. To invert the neuro-electric signal's frequency.

DA COSTA (V.O.)

How would a shuttle have enough power for that to affect the entire field?

BHRASH (V.O.)

Because it won't focus on the field.

HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - DAY

Ch'Lene and Matthias connect a POWER CELL to the console. Delicate work not to be rushed but they're under pressure...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BHRASH (V.O.)

We use the tower itself. Just enough to create another pulse. But one our burst will alter the frequency of as it's being transmitted.

DA COSTA (V.O.)

(intrigued, excited)

Given what we saw before, it could dissipate the field within minutes.

(hedges his bets)

Theoretically, anyway.

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

Erickson conducts an exterior check of the other type-11 shuttlecraft, the *HARRIMAN*.

As he finishes his inspection, he takes a calming breath. Mentally preparing for the task that he has set himself. Once ready, he turns and makes his way into the shuttle...

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT HARRIMAN - MOMENTS LATER

Erickson enters with purpose and determination in his stride but is pulled up short when he realizes he's not alone.

Da Costa sits at the co-pilot station, running the standard pre-flight checks. Oblivious to Erickson's confusion.

ERICKSON

Leo? What are--

DA COSTA

(cuts him off)

If you think I'm letting you do this on your own, think again. They don't need me up here and someone should be watching your six.

ERICKSON

(not having it)

I appreciate the thought, but be--

DA COSTA

(firm, resolute)

Commander, this isn't up for any kind of discussion.

He finally turns to face Erickson. His face a mask of quiet resolve and stubbornness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DA COSTA (cont'd)
(not budging)
I'm *going* with you. End of story.

He turns back to the console. To him, the matter is settled.

Realizing he has no hope in Hell of winning this argument, Erickson smiles as he heads to the pilot station. Quietly impressed and touched by the older man's actions...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI

The *Harriman* passes through the atmospheric force-field and gently banks as it sets course for the planet.

As it speeds off at half-speed, a TYPE-8 SHUTTLECRAFT passes by on final approach to the *Courageous*...

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - DAY

The *Harriman* maintains altitude on its anti-gravs, while thruster make minute adjustments to its position...

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)
In position, *Courageous*.

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT HARRIMAN - CONTINUOUS

Erickson handles the helm with ease, while Da Costa busies himself at the co-pilot station. Double-checking all sensor readouts and power levels.

ERICKSON
We're ready to go. How about you?

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

The bridge, while abuzz with activity, operates at minimum power levels. Overhead lights darkened. Communications, Auxiliary Systems and Environment stations are all inactive to conserve power. Even the MSD is dark.

Bhrash hovers over the shoulder of ch'Lene, sat at Mission Ops. Matthias keeps vigil from the Tactical post.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BHRASH

Almost there, Commander. Putting the last bypass links in place to make sure this goes off without a hitch.

Bhrash claps ch'Lene on the shoulder.

BHRASH (cont'd)

All set, Lieutenant?

CH'LENE

(shakes head)

Sir, if this goes wrong... If I make another mistake--

BHRASH

(interrupts, firm)

Enough of that, mister. I wouldn't have you on this if I didn't think you were the best person for the job.

Emboldened by Bhrash's vote of certainty, ch'Lene nods, his antenna standing tall with buoyed confidence. His work done, Bhrash takes position in front of the command chair. Presses a control on the armrest panel.

BHRASH (cont'd)

You're on ship-wide, Commander.

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT HARRIMAN - CONTINUOUS

Erickson sits back. Although he knows the crew can't see him, he makes an effort to project an aura of command and tenacious determination. He wants - needs - them to hear it in his voice.

ERICKSON

(firm)

Attention all hands on all decks. You know the plan. As our pulse spreads, Chief Bhrash will create a static warp shell to reinforce the shields against the impact.

He falters. Looks to Da Costa, who meets his gaze and offers a nod of encouragement. As if to say 'you've got this'.

(gentler, genuine)

I know we're all not exactly firing on all thrusters lately. We're tired and scared. So am I.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON (cont'd)
 (beat, steadfast)
 But we've got a job to do, so let's
 do it. Erickson out.

He closes the channel, slumping back. Drained by the effort of maintaining the facade of command. Da Costa, having been a witness to this many a time with his wife, waits silently as Erickson pulls himself together.

ERICKSON (cont'd)
 (clears throat)
 Okay, here we go.

INT. CONTROL HUB, TOWER STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

The POWER CELL sits silently. The energy within it throbs occasionally. The CONNECTION LINE that runs between it and the console remains inactive...

...until it abruptly begins to pulse. Power is fed directly into the console. The holographic displays begin to come to life once again....

INT. COCKPIT, SHUTTLECRAFT HARRIMAN - CONTINUOUS

Da Costa watches the sensor returns like a proverbial hawk. He nods in satisfaction.

DA COSTA
 It's working. Just like before.

ERICKSON
 Priming deflector array. We'll only
 get the one shot at this.

Through the viewport, they watch as once again, the UPPER-MOST PART of the tower BLOSSOMS into view. Already pulsing with emerald light.

Da Costa's fingers hover over the trigger switch. Erickson eyes him nervously.

ERICKSON (cont'd)
 Whenever you're ready, Mr. Da Costa.

DA COSTA
 (shakes head)
 No, it has to be done at just the
 right moment, otherwise it could end
 up losing signal strength and we'd
 be right back where we started.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Erickson grimaces. Growing more anxious by the moment as the crystal emitter burns bright as a star. Brighter still, as verdant lightening seems to crackle around it--

DA COSTA (cont'd)
Here it comes!

His fingers press down onto the console...

EXT. ANCIENT RUINS/DIG SITE, BOREAS VI - CONTINUOUS

The *Harriman's* twin DEFLECTOR ARRAYS, mounted just above the nacelle struts, PULSE WITH BLUE ENERGY--

--which fires out as TWIN BEAMS OF BRIGHT BLUE LIGHT fired directly into the crystal emitter--

--which creates a BLINDING EXPLOSION OF WHITE/BLUE LIGHT, enveloping the *Harriman* before spreading onward and upwards throughout the atmosphere...

CH'LENE (PRE-LAP)
Picking up a massive pulse wave!

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

All eyes are on the viewscreen as the BLUE/WHITE RADIANCE surges forward, spreading like an azure wildfire...

...which is rushing straight towards the *Courageous*.

BHRASH
All decks, brace, brace, brace!

Bhrash's bellowed order practically reverberates throughout the bridge. Everyone grabs a hand-hold, be it a console, chair or railing. Counting down the seconds until impact.

Bhrash snaps his head around towards Mission Ops.

BHRASH (cont'd)
Activate the static warp shell!

Ch'Lene, antenna twitching with nervous anticipation, slams two fingers down on the console...

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI - CONTINUOUS

The nacelles of the *Courageous*, inert for the last few days, slowly begin to come to life once again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alight with power that has long been denied. The pulses grow stronger. Brighter. Faster.

Energy dances along the length of each nacelle, lashing out randomly. Each strike against the interior of the invisible bubble formed by the *Courageous's* shields has an effect, as the shields become completely opaque in seconds--

--just as the ENERGY WAVE hits!!

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

The crew ride it out as the deck bucks and jolts all around them. The bridge is awash in an ethereal cerulean light.

Whereas before, people were writhing in pain, this time it seems that no-one is being affected that same way. Beyond a few grimaces of discomfort and a pained ch'Lene who gingerly reaches up to massage his quivering antennae.

CH'LENE

Static warp shell holding, but the warp coils are being stressed beyond their limits!

BHRASH

(reluctant)

Keep it going as long as you--

The shaking STOPS abruptly. Everyone present remains tensed and ready. Not quite believing it's over.

Bhrash looked to Matthias, quizzical. *Is it done?* She checks her readings. Offers a curt nod.

MATTHIAS

Wave effect has passed us by.

BHRASH

Ch'Lene, disengage warp shell. Get a repair crew to each nacelle to assess how badly they're--

The OVERHEAD LIGHTS return to full intensity so suddenly that the crew are left dazzled. Consoles that were on stand-by mode return to active mode. The MSD schematic flickers into existence.

R'NARA

(hopeful)

Does that mean..?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bhrash dashes over to the unmanned science console. Looks over the newest scan data before turning back, beaming a big smile back.

BHRASH

We're back in business! The dampening field has completely gone.

A cheer of genuine relief - that at least that part of their nightmare is over - passes over the few personnel manning the other stations.

Bhrash shares a jubilant smile with R'Nara, both of them enjoying it for a moment. Until R'Nara notices the unsmiling Matthias. Instead, the security chief is frowning at what her console is telling her.

MATTHIAS

I'm not getting any response from either Commander Erickson or Mr. Da Costa on the *Harriman*.

Bhrash's expression hardens with dread realization.

BHRASH

Get them back up here. Now.

All mood of celebration is gone from R'Nara, as she tries not to think about what kind of state both Erickson and Da Costa may be in...

EXT. HIGH ORBIT, BOREAS VI - MINUTES LATER

A tractor beam guides in the *Harriman*. Looking no worse for wear. But it is well known *appearances can be deceiving...*

INT. MAIN SICKBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Laying on a bio-bed is Da Costa. Actually looking peaceful, the gentle thrum of the monitor affirms he's still alive.

Consciousness returns slowly and begrudgingly. He stirs as he wakes. Blinking lazily before fulling opening his eyes...

...to see T'SARA, beaming with relief and joy down at him, sat next to his bed-side.

She looks exhausted, the few odd lines and wrinkles of age etched that little bit deeper. But somehow through all that, she still manages a smile for her husband.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA
Hey there, sleepyhead.

DA COSTA
(tiredly, concerned)
Hey yourself.

He manages to push himself up on his elbows, enjoying the fact his wife is awake and about. But then his face falls as it all rushes back to him.

DA COSTA (cont'd)
Damien. Is he--?

T'Sara silences him with a 'stop' gesture, before looking over her shoulder. Da Costa follows her gaze and sees that Erickson is also on a bio-bed, sitting up as a NURSE checks him over. He offers Da Costa a mock-salute and a wry smile.

Da Costa exhales in relief. Then, his attention turns back to T'Sara. He slowly extends two fingers outward.

Smiling a tad more coyly, T'Sara mirrors the gestures. Their fingers caress lovingly, intimately. While Sickbay might be busy, in that moment, the only thing this husband and wife see is their beloved...

T'SARA (V.O.)
Captain's Personal Log, supplemental:
We are leaving the Boreas system, on
course for Star Station Charlie.

EXT. SPACE, BOREAS SYSTEM

The *Courageous* emerges from the debris, finally free of the miasma that had held them for far too long.

T'SARA (V.O.)
It's bizarre, waking up from dreams I
can barely remember, to discover the
experience my crew has been through.

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

Nurses and junior doctors tend to an assorted variety of PATIENTS, many of whom are now sitting up. Submitting to the many scans needed to make sure they are indeed 'okay'.

One such being NYIA LANJAR. She impatiently fidgets, waiting for WHITAKER to finish his latest examination. Living up to the old adage about "doctors being the worst patients".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA (V.O.)

They are shaken but recovering. I hope the trip will give everyone time to process what they went through.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

The place that T'Sara and Da Costa call home. It's decorated in a way that merges and balances both their unique styles and tastes.

An old-fashioned TELESCOPE on a stand looks out one of the viewports, while a VULCAN MANDALA hangs on the bulkhead.

Da Costa hands out a glass of wine to each guests; R'Nara, Erickson, Bhrash, Lanjar and Whitaker. Each of them dressed in casual wear.

When T'Sara walks in, in an elegant but practical one-piece bodysuit, everyone starts to stand but she is quick to wave the formality aside.

T'SARA

Please, after everything, I think we can dispense with all that.

She sits down next to Da Costa, rests a hand on his knee as he lays an arm across her shoulders. A moment of reassurance that the other is still there.

T'SARA (cont'd)

I wanted to meet here so we could be somewhere a little more relaxed.

LANJAR

Well, I think I understand why some of our patients complain about the bio-beds, now.

(grimaces, stretches)

My back has been in knots since I woke up.

T'SARA

(laughs)

I'll see if I can requisition you some new ones for our next refit.

The group share a brief, needed laugh. Some of the tension of the past week being released among friends. Family. The mood turns somber as T'Sara's good humor fades.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA (cont'd)

But I understand that isn't going to be an experience any of you will just be able to shrug off. That's why I've composed a dispatch for Starbase 19 once we've moved beyond the range of subspace interference.

(beat)

I've asked that a team of trauma counselors come to meet us at Star Station Charlie.

(quickly)

This is by no means a comment on your skills, R'Nara, but--

R'NARA

(interrupts, sincere)

It's an excellent idea, Captain. I would appreciate any help Starfleet could send our way.

T'Sara nods, very glad that her counselor understands her position. She picks up her glass. Toys with it.

T'SARA

You have all done an amazing job keeping the ship together and crew safe while under a great deal of pressure.

She looks to her silent First Officer, pointedly.

T'SARA (cont'd)

Especially you, Damien.

Erickson, more than a little uncomfortable with the praise, is still pleased for the endorsement.

ERICKSON

I appreciate that, Captain. It means a lot.

Smile returning, T'Sara raises her glass. Offers a toast.

T'SARA

As Christopher Pike once said; 'Be Bold. Be Brave...'

Everyone else raises their glasses and completes the well-known quote.

ALL

'Be Courageous'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They push their glasses together, meeting with a satisfying *clink* of contact...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE.

The *Courageous* leaves Varos'ii and its secrets behind. Some of the mysteries of the sixth planet answered, while others remain enshrouded - at least, for now.

Aiming her bow away from the Boreas system, the *Excelsior*-class starship's nacelles power up...

...before launching the ship into warp. Heading home.

END OF ACT FOUR

END OF EPISODE