

S T A R  T R E K
THE ATLANTIS CHRONICLES

“The Scout, Part I”

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A
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PRODUCTION

TEASER

FADE IN:

BLACKNESS

SUPER-IMPOSE: *It is 2260. The people of the Federation are coming to the end of a golden age - The Great Expansion...*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE

The void is serenely silent. As we focus in on the darkness amongst the stars, a grey-green object shoots into view from the bottom left. This is an iconic Klingon D7-class battlecruiser, spewing warp plasma from the starboard nacelle.

A jazzed-up version of the Klingon Battle Anthem from '*The Motion Picture*' is played over this.

CUT TO:

INT. KITUMBA -- BRIDGE

CAPTAIN BORAL is sat in his chair, staring tactically at the viewscreen. He is built like a warrior, but his facial features suggest that he is more of a tactician than a brute combatant.

Around him are various officers going about their jobs at damaged consoles. There is a blue hue emanating from the screen, which conflicts with the deep red of the Klingon consoles and lighting. The ship is obviously at battle stations.

BORAL
(in Klingonese)
Damage report.

The female First Officer, COMMANDER D'TREYAH, responds from her station.

D'TREYAH
(in Klingonese)
Warp drive inoperable. Torpedo launchers offline. Severe hull fractures on the upper decks.

BORAL
(in Klingonese)
What *is* that thing out there!?

He slams a fist into his armrest. We pan around to face the viewscreen that currently displays a field of swirling blue gas.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The wounded battlecruiser Kitumba moves away as fast as it can from a seemingly beautiful and harmless CLOUD.

As we watch, an arc of electricity like lightning lashes out of the gas and strikes the cruiser on the stern. Causing no damage, the energy tendrils branch out along the hull, dancing from section to section.

CUT TO:

INT. KITUMBA -- BRIDGE

The mostly flat-foreheaded crew try to shield themselves as the electricity ripples through the submarine-like bridge. Every console becomes a fountain of sparks, but none explode. After a moment, the power goes out.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Kitumba lists forward at an angle. Soon, the edges of the Cloud begin to touch the ship.

CUT TO:

INT. KITUMBA -- BRIDGE

Pitch black.

BORAL (O.S.)
(in Klingonese)
Switch to the auxiliaries, now!

Dull red lighting activates, casting a hellish glare onto warrior and console alike. We focus on D'Treyah as she tries a console.

D'TREYAH
(in Klingonese)
All the main systems are dead!

A loud thud is heard. Boral rises from his chair.

BORAL
(in Klingonese)
What was that?

D'TREYAH
 (in Klingonese)
 It sounded like something on the
 hull...

More thuds. The twisting of metal can be heard. A KLINGON CREWMAN draws out his disruptor.

KLINGON CREWMAN
 (in Klingonese)
 It's cutting into the ship!
 (panicking)
 What is it? What sort of enemy
 are we dealing with!?

Boral slaps the Crewman hard across the face.

BORAL
 (in Klingonese)
 Silence! We are Klingons!

His inspiring words do nothing to comfort the Crewman.

KLINGON CREWMAN
 It isn't natural! A monster of
 gas...a deity from the time
 before Kahless, back to reclaim
 this universe and all who-

He is cut short as Boral blows a pink hole in his chest with a disruptor pistol. The other officers fall silent.

BORAL
 Anyone else wish to express fear?

The crew respond by brandishing their own weapons - disruptors, d'k tahg (knives) and even a bat'leth. The thudding around them suddenly stops.

A beat.

A piercing, metallic scream! The sounds of weapon fire emanate from the bowls of the ship. All the Klingons on the bridge tense up as Boral walks slowly towards the main doors at the rear, disruptor held high.

BORAL (CONT'D)
 Hold this posit-

Before he can finish his sentence, a ventilation shaft above his head smashes open as a blur of grey snatches him up and drags his flailing body away out of sight.

Then the lights go out.

The crew all scream battle cries as combat begins. All we can make out in the darkness are glimpses of the warriors shooting, slashing and grappling at silver, snake-like objects. Each disruptor flash provides the only illumination.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The dead cruiser is enveloped by the Cloud. As this happens, we can just see the tips of what look like tentacles taking hold of the ship and pulling it away to its doom. On this:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

A STREAM

Crystal clear water trickles across the smooth rocks it has spent centuries eroding. As we watch, three mountain hares hop together over the stream. We then pan up, revealing:

EXT. WEST FAMILY RESIDENCE

A 23rd century family estate house: three stories high, and designed much like the log cabins of old. There is a range of snow-topped mountains behind. Patches of snow cover the ground and pine trees around the house, suggesting that we are already quite high up.

SUPER-IMPOSE: *West Family Residence. Banff, Canada, Earth. Sixteen Years Earlier...*

CUT TO:

A WHISKY GLASS

Brown liquid splashes over chunks of shattered ice from the neck of a bottle. Once the glass is half-full, the bottle is withdrawn. A hand takes a firm grip of the glass and lifts it away

CUT TO:

INT. WEST FAMILY RESIDENCE -- LOUNGE

A large, oak-lined room. Warm and inviting. The curtains are drawn and a burning fire place offers out the only light. A grandfather clock chimes away in one corner.

ALEX WEST, handsome, nineteen-years old and wearing civvies slumps down into a leather chair between two display cases. The cases are filled with models of exploration vessels past and present: an Earth sailing ship, the Ares IV command module, a Bonaventure-type galactic surveyor etc.

He rests the whisky down on a nearby table before examining a sheathed sword he is holding tightly in his other hand. The handle is engraved with the old United Earth seal. His eyes then wander from the sword to a wall full of paintings: his ancestors, all in Admiral-type Starfleet uniforms.

West himself looks lost. He downs the draught of whisky in one go and starts to prod the floor with the scabbard-covered tip of the sword.

NATHAN (O.S.)
(frustrated)
Where is he? Is he in here?

The young West looks up briefly. The door to the corridor is pulled open by a HOUSE ATTENDANT. She nods, indicating into the lounge. A man storms past him: NATHAN WEST.

Nathan is slightly shorter than Alex and more physically well-built, but the family resemblance is strong. He is also younger by a couple of years. He wears the dark green training shirt of the Starfleet Marine Corps Officer Academy.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
You! What the hell do you think you're doing?

He grabs the glass from Alex and throws it against a wall. It shatters. Alex looks up at him, shocked.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
This isn't the time to be drowning your sorrows. The family needs you and for once in your life you're going to be there for us.

ALEX
Like Dad is?

Nathan tries to ignore that.

NATHAN
You're the eldest. Step up to the plate, for god's sake!
(indicates the room)
I'm not prepared to let all of this go down the drain because of what...whatever the hell it is Dad's thinking.

ALEX
This never mattered to you, Nathan.

NATHAN
Family has always been important to me. You know that.

ALEX
I know that you like the name and where its gotten you. Where its going to get you.

Nathan is angry, but he's keeping his composure.

NATHAN

I don't expect anything in return
from being a West. I've worked
hard to get where I am right now...

ALEX

Go on. Say it. Say it.

NATHAN

No.

(beat)

I won't argue with you. Not today.

Alex stands, paces a little.

ALEX

You know, I think I finally
understand Dad. I never quite
'got' him up until now, but
looking at you...I can see
exactly what type of person he
is.

(beat)

A coward. Just like you-

Nathan pivots around, landing his fist square into Alex's
jaw. Alex, not expecting the blow, is floored instantly.
Nathan towers over him, tensing his muscles.

NATHAN

Get up.

Alex nurses his bleeding lip.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I said get up!

He pulls Alex to his feet and pushes him up against the
wall. The family portraits jolt at the impact.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(seething)

You! You have no right to call
me that, you little shit! You've
coasted through the Academy so
far, riding on the wave of
expectation that came with your
name-

ALEX

At least I was here, goddamnit!
At least I was trying! You always
disappointed Mom with all your
talk of joining Federation
Security or the Naval Patrol.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

And then when you finally did show a little interest in the service, you signed up to the Marines!

(beat)

You couldn't take the pressure of being a West, so you ran. Coward.

NATHAN

Starfleet was what *she* expected of us. I didn't want that for me, but you always followed her and her wishes.

ALEX

And you always followed Dad and whatever he wanted.

(beat)

I guess we're both failures, then, aren't we?

A beat. Nathan lets go of Alex, calming slightly. Alex wipes the blood from his lip.

NATHAN

At least I'm here for everyone. What are you doing? Getting pissed and hoping everything turns out okay.

(beat)

The family needs you, Alex. Right now.

ALEX

And where exactly am I need, hmm? Through there, in that room? Mourning over Mom's coffin?

(points with sword)

Or over there, at Headquarters, helping the fleet hunt down Dad?

Nathan is silent.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm just a man, Nathan. I'm not Admiral material. Hell, I'll probably never even make Captain.

(beat)

Do you think that I've enjoyed being the "Admiral's Boy" at the Academy? Every lecturer automatically expecting me to be a kind of super-cadet?

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Some even passing me anyway for sub-standard performances when my friends work day and night to get just a C on their exams?

(beat)

The difference between you and me is that I didn't run away. I stayed and fought, just like Mom did.

NATHAN

Mom died because she stayed.

A beat.

ALEX

Go back to the wake. I'll be through in a minute. But not because you want me to.

He turns and walks over to the window, peering out between the curtains. Behind him, Nathan silently turns and walks out of the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GARDENS

A path, running between the fringe of thick, lush vegetation and a large lawn. In the distance we can see Starfleet constructions: futuristic buildings, similar in style to the ones we saw at Starbase 11 on TOS *'The Menagerie'*.

Alex West, now in his mid-thirties, sits on a bench wearing a gold uniform with Commander stripes. Despite a few seasoned lines here and there, his face still looks young. His assignment patch is a 5-pointed star shape, made up of an arrowhead and two triangular wings.

ROWLEY (O.S.)

I thought I might find you here, Commander.

West turns to find a man in his late fifties approaching him, arms clasped behind his back in a very official manner. He has blonde hair that is now mostly grey, and a warm, friendly face. This is VICE ADMIRAL ADAM ROWLEY. West stands.

WEST

Admiral. Good to see you.

They grin as they shake hands, before sitting on the bench together.

ROWLEY

Sorry I haven't had time to see you this week. Things have been quite hectic.

(beat)

You look well.

WEST

I feel it.

(smiles)

Much more than the last time I saw you.

ROWLEY

That's good to hear.

Rowley looks to his left, noticing something long and thin propped up against the side of the bench furthest away from West: the sword. Rowley rests a hand on its hilt.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)

How is Nathan?

WEST

Ah, you know. He's a career man front and centre with nothing on the sides. I think he made Major the other month.

(beat)

We barely speak.

Rowley nods, understanding.

ROWLEY

It must be difficult for you both.

A long beat as West shifts uncomfortably on the bench.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)

I miss her too, you know.

(beat, carefully)

Your father is up for parole next month-

WEST

I'm not attending.

ROWLEY

Alex-

WEST

No. He deserved what he got.

(beat)

I'm not going to help him run away from something else in his life.

ROWLEY
Is that what you think he was
doing? Running away?

West says nothing. Before Rowley can further his point,
he is cut short by the sound of an electronic bosun's
whistle.

OPERATIONS (OVER COMM.)
Admiral Rowley to Operations
immediately. I repeat, Admiral
Rowley to Operations immediately.

Rowley sighs as he stands.

ROWLEY
(shrugging apologetically)
The galaxy calls.

West nods. Rowley starts to walk away, then stops and
turns back.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)
Why don't you come with me?

WEST
Sir?

ROWLEY
We can talk more on the way.
Unless you have something better
to do...?

A beat, then West nods, smiling slightly. He stands up
also, following Rowley.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)
Aren't you forgetting something?

West looks confused. Rowley points back to the bench where
the sword lays. Almost half-heartedly, he retrieves it.

They walk together down the path some way, passing by
several officers and crewmen who are relaxing on the grass
lawn, enjoying the brilliant day. Before reaching a small
lake, Rowley and West turn down another path that takes
them into the thick foliage.

A few feet inside, they come upon a large cylinder that
extends up into the sky. As the two men approach the door,
it opens, revealing a turbolift inside. They step in.

CUT TO:

INT. TURBOLIFT

The doors close. The outside of the turbolift is visible
through the small viewport in the side.

Rowley and West place their hands on the wall toggles.

ROWLEY
Command Ops.

The lift begins to move. We can see the gardens disappear below outside of the viewport as the cart rises through the shaft towards the sky.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)
You know, for a man assuming his first command, you don't seem all that...enthusiastic.

WEST
I'm happy.

ROWLEY
I didn't say you weren't happy. I said you weren't enthusiastic.

West sighs.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)
I saw Tom the other day. He's worried about you.

WEST
Did he say why?

ROWLEY
He said you've seemed a little...distant this past week. Since you transferred off the Yeltsin.

(beat)
You *do* want to be a starship captain, don't you?

WEST
Yes. Of course.

ROWLEY
Then what?

WEST
I'm...it's just...
(beat)
Sir, why did you give me this command? I've only been a First Officer for three and a half years. Surely there are more qualified pe-

ROWLEY
Should I offer the ship to someone else?

WEST

What? No. No, it's just that...it's just so soon. I didn't even think about *thinking* about a promotion for-

ROWLEY

Listen to me, Alex. You wouldn't be here if I didn't think you were the right man for the job.

(beat)

You're ready for this. You always have been. The Atlantis is yours.

Rowley lays a reassuring hand on West's shoulder. They both turn and look out of the viewport as the cart approaches the cloud layer. Just as we are about to enter the wispy white...

WHOOSH! A metal construction envelops the turboshaft. Within seconds, the usual yellow lights of the shaft interior are flashing by. We pan down to look at the floor, then quickly pull out through the cart roof and up through the shaft. Dozens of decks pass by, until we pull out to:

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- STARBASE 39

A titanic saucer floating in deep space. Two spheres are attached to the very centre of the saucer, one above and one below. Around the outer edge is a docking ring with six larger spheres placed at even points around the circumference. These are the internal drydocks.

The occasional work bee, shuttlecraft, and runabout fly to and fro as a couple of larger vessels orbit.

SUPER-IMPOSE: Starbase 39, Mark-III-A Headquarters-class Star Facility, Deep-Space Configuration.

Location: Lyria System, Sector 005471. Distance From Klingon Border: 47 Light-years. Distance From Tholian Border: 194 Light-years.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- COMMAND OPS

A giant, circular room. Many console stations are placed around three tiers operated by dozens of officers. There is a command table atop a raised island in the centre, where we find the forty-something ginger-haired female portmaster: CAPTAIN EMMA RIESS.

Rowley and West enter from a middle-tier entrance, quickly crossing one of the bridges that leads to the central island.

ROWLEY

What do you have for me, Emma?

RIESS

An emergency signal, sir.
(glances at West)
From the Atlantis.

Rowley and West exchange worried glances.

ROWLEY

Status?

RIESS

A Force-8 ion storm unexpectedly changed direction and moved into their flight path, half-way between here and Kubrick Station. They couldn't alter course in time.

WEST

Force-8? By the Bird...

RIESS

Their transmission was somewhat garbled, but we managed to piece together most of it.

(beat)

Severe hull damage. Several key systems gone, including warp drive, deflector shielding and long-range sensors. We've tried to hail them back, but they're not responding.

ROWLEY

Casualties?

RIESS

(sighing)

Twelve dead, sixty-three wounded.

WEST

Gods...the Atlantis only had one-hundred and ninety-seven aboard...

Rowley snaps into action, studying the starmap of the sector currently being displayed on the command table in the centre.

ROWLEY

What have we got out there?

RIESS

The starship Relinquent was only two light-years away. They should be arriving on scene very shortly. Shuttles from Kubrick are also en route.

ROWLEY

Good. I see that the freighter Liberty is in port. Have her loaded up with emergency medical and engineering supplies, and get her out there as soon as you can.

RIESS

Aye sir.

Riess starts tapping away at the table's controls. Rowley turns to the somewhat stunned-looking West.

ROWLEY

Sorry, Alex. It looks like you might have to wait a while longer for that command.

WEST

My first starship...wrecked in a storm.

Riess listens hard to the earpiece she is wearing.

RIESS

Admiral, we've also got an incoming priority one communique from Starfleet Headquarters.

(beat)

They're signed by the Commander-in-Chief himself, sir.

ROWLEY

(under his breath)

If it's not one thing...

(to West)

I need to take this, Alex.

WEST

Sure. I'll, uh...I'll...

ROWLEY

I'll have Emma keep you posted. As soon as we hear something about the Atlantis, we'll let you know.

West nods. He takes one last look at the starmap, then walks away across one of the bridges. Rowley watches him go for a moment, before turning to Riess.

ROWLEY (CONT'D)
Have that transmission piped
through to my office.

RIESS
Right away, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- ROWLEY'S OFFICE

Large, comfortable, and well lived in. Antique bookcases line most of the walls, filled with texts from many different galactic cultures. There is one area set aside for a table and some couches, but we pan over this to focus on the main desk.

Rowley is sat in his chair, with Riess stood over his shoulder. Behind them, one wall affords us a view of the gardens we saw earlier, while another is affixed with the Starfleet Command insignia.

The desk monitor is playing a recording of a portly KLINGON AMBASSADOR standing behind a Federation podium.

KLINGON AMBASSADOR
The Klingon warship Kitumba went missing near *your* space, Madam President! Make any excuses you like, but if it is not found within the deadline set, the Federation of Planets will be held fully accountable for the deaths of her crew!

The sounds of a crowd's negative uproar can be heard before the transmission changes to an older, clean-shaven man in a golden flag uniform. This is FLEET ADMIRAL ARTHUR DAVENPORT, Commander-in-Chief, sitting in his pot-planted office. He speaks with a posh British R.P. accent.

DAVENPORT
As you can see, Admiral, the situation between the Klingons and ourselves has just taken a turn for the worse. President Thoma is doing all she can to smooth things over with the High Council, but this could escalate faster than a Tiberian climbing flame at any moment. I'm not sending out a fleet-wide Code One alert just yet, but I *am* placing you and all the other Starbases near Klingon space at Condition Yellow for the time being.

(MORE)

DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

(beat)

Mobilise your ships, but keep it discreet. We don't want to force the Empire's hand. Davenport out.

The recording ends. Rowley and Riess exchange glances.

ROWLEY

What do you make of that, Emma?

RIESS

I think the Klingons are making a huge mistake if they feel we're going to back down from this.

(beat)

We've had no reports of a confrontation between one of our ships and the I.K.S. Kitumba.

ROWLEY

I don't think for a second that the Klingons believe we're really responsible. They just want to turn a random starship disappearance into an opportunity for non-aggressive expansion.

RIESS

You think they'll ask for territory as compensation?

ROWLEY

(nodding)

And they'll probably get it. They know we'd bend over backwards to avoid open war.

RIESS

Your orders, sir?

ROWLEY

Inform all Federation shipping along the Klingon border to be extra vigilant and to stay a good light-year or so away from their space.

(beat)

As for our vessels...inform them as well, but don't raise their alert level.

RIESS

(confused)

Sir?

ROWLEY

I'm not prepared to go to war just yet. If we put out a Code Two, the Klingons will notice and think we're gearing up for combat.

(thinks)

We may need a bit of extra firepower along the border, though. Get me Matt Decker.

Off his determined face, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE -- THE VENTURE STAR

Deep in space, we find the civilian liner S.S. Venture Star NFT-4590. It is a long, sleek ship with many windows and a look that suggests a cross between the space shuttle, a jumbo jet and a cruise liner from the 21st century.

We pan down to reveal that the ship is arriving in orbit of a dazzling blue gas giant.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

The bridge has more in common with a cruise liner command deck than that of a starship control room. All of the crew wear uniforms of white and silver, with the occasional cap.

We quickly find the man in the command seat. This is CAPTAIN EDWARDS: a tallish, experienced male whose look and posture remind us of a salty sea captain. A Kreetassan named DELEELOS approaches carrying a civilian-style PADD. He is a 3-stripe First Lieutenant.

DELEELOS

Captain, we've picked up a multi-band priority transmission from Starfleet intended for all shipping along the Klingon border.

EDWARDS

Let's see it.

Deleelos hands over the PADD. Edwards scans it for a moment, raising his eyebrows slightly.

DELEELOS

Anything serious, sir?

EDWARDS

Doesn't look like it. Nothing more than an awareness alert.

(beat)

Make sure navigation keeps our course well clear of the border, Leftenant. At least half a light-year.

DELEELOS

Only...half a light-year?

EDWARDS

I won't change course just to indulge the Starfleet in their games, Lieutenant. Our passengers have paid to see this corner of the universe and that's exactly what they're going to get.

He hands back the PADD and smooths out his uniform.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Now. How do I look?

DELEELOS

Killer, sir. I take it Ms Zaharis will be there tonight?

EDWARDS

(coyly)

Oh yes. Do you think I'd have brought out my dress uniform for a ball otherwise?

DELEELOS

(winking)

Good luck, Captain.

Edwards smiles and heads for the back of the bridge.

EDWARDS

You have the bridge, Mr Deleelos.

DELEELOS

Aye aye sir.

Edwards exits through one of the aft doors.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BALLROOM

A large Victorian-esque ball room, but with alien patterns included in the decor. Rows of circular tables are beautifully laid in a crescent moon shape around the dance floor. One whole wall contains a large set of windows that look out onto the deep-blue planet.

Edwards enters the room to find it is already full with people dressed up in ball gowns and tuxedos (and other such attire for the non-humanoid guests). The vast majority are sat at the tables being attended to by waiters. Pleasant music plays softly in the background.

A young female Boatswain - we'll call her LIZA - notices the Captain's entrance and hurries over to greet him.

LIZA

Good evening, Captain. May I show you to your table?

EDWARDS

Of course, my dear.

She leads him swiftly through the mass of tables towards a slightly larger one at the edge of the dance floor. Three couples are already sat around it: two TELLARITES (both males), an Andorian (a female, ATHRUNE), a Denobulan (male) and a Tiburonian woman in her early fifties named ZAHARIS. Edwards nods and smiles at the latter.

Also sitting amongst the guests is a humanoid whose species we've never seen before. His skin is slightly silvery and all the edges of his face are somewhat squared-off, giving him an almost chiseled look. His hairline is far back, but it doesn't look out of place. Wearing a dark grey wraparound suit, this is NIKKON.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

The gathered crowd nod and greet the Captain before returning to their conversation. Athrune, a 2-stripe Lieutenant, picks up her wine glass and swirls it mischievously.

ATHRUNE

I was just telling the Tellarites here how much of a rebel you are, Captain Edwards.

Everyone feigns shock. Edwards chuckles before waving his hand in comical disregard.

EDWARDS

Please, Leftenant, you always make it sound like I...take joyrides or something.

(beat)

No, I just sometimes deviate slightly from our pre-planned course. Like here for instance. We've dropped out of warp around Kintuki II.

(at Zaharis)

In all my years amongst the stars, I don't think I've ever seen anything quite as beautiful as her majestic glow.

Zaharis blushes slightly.

ZAHARIS

I must say, that is very thoughtful of you Captain. I think this is a wonderful place to eat.

(at guests)

Don't you agree?

They all raise their glasses.

ALL

Here here!

LIZA

Captain Edwards, may I introduce Doctor Nikkon?

Edwards stands.

EDWARDS

Ah yes, the Starfleet Doctor!

The gathering all emit noises of impressed warmth.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)

I don't believe I've had the pleasure.

NIKKON

The pleasure is mine, Captain, thank you.

They shake hands. Edwards then takes his seat at the head of the table.

EDWARDS

(to Liza)

Some wine for the Doctor, bosun.

LIZA

Aye aye, Captain.

(to Zaharis)

Ms Zaharis, I have a message from your daughter. She has picked up your son from the ship's child care facility, as requested.

ZAHARIS

Oh, good! Thank you.

Liza moves off.

EDWARDS

Is your husband not aboard, Ms Zaharis?

ZAHARIS

Oh no...he, uh...he passed away
many months ago.

EDWARDS

I'm terribly sorry.

ATHRUNE

You have my condolences also.

TELLARITE 1

And ours.

ZAHARIS

Thank you, thank you...really.
(quickly, to Nikkon)
So Doctor...you're in Starfleet,
yes?

NIKKON

That's right. I...served on Earth
at Starfleet Medical until just
a few weeks ago.

TELLARITE 2

What happened?

NIKKON

Oh nothing. I just took an
extended leave of absence so I
could travel a little and...and...

He trails off. Across the room, he spots a man looking at
him. The figure wears a grey suit and dark-coloured gloves.

Before we can see the figure's face, a moon begins to pass
between the ship and the planet outside. The shadow sweeps
across the ballroom to the symphony of inspired 'ooh's'
and 'aaah's'. When the eclipse is over, the man is gone.
Nikkon looks confused. Concerned.

ZAHARIS

Doctor?

NIKKON

Hmmm?

ZAHARIS

You were telling us about your
leave of absence?

NIKKON

Oh, yes. Of course. I left
Starfleet Medical so I could
travel. I want to
investigate...well, myself. Who
I am. Where I come from.

ATHRUNE

You want to 'find yourself'?

NIKKON

In a manner of speaking.

Liza returns with a red bottle.

LIZA

Your wine, sir.

She shows Nikkon the label. He nods. Liza then swiftly uncorks the bottle and pours some of it out into Nikkon's glass.

NIKKON

Thank you. What's your name?

LIZA

Liza of The Third.

NIKKON

Ah, from the Kasimar colony?

LIZA

(surprised/impressed)

That's right, sir. Most people don't recognise our traditional naming system.

NIKKON

I've been around a lot of worlds in my time, Liza, many of them Earth colonies like yours.

(beat)

I'm from Alpha Centauri myself.

The gathering react, glancing at each other. Nikkon smiles, expecting this.

EDWARDS

Forgive me, Doctor, but you don't look like any Alpha Centaurian that I've ever met.

NIKKON

(chuckling)

I get this all the time. No, I'm not human. And I'm not native of the system either.

ZAHARIS

Then...what species are you?

Nikkon looks at her, staring deeply into her eyes.

NIKKON

I don't know.

He glances at the guests sat around the other tables. They are an eclectic group, from races all across the galaxy.

NIKKON (CONT'D)

That's why I'm out here, going from place to place. I want...I need to find who I am and if there are others, somewhere...anywhere, like me.

He smiles, sipping his wine. The others are silent.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- STARBASE 39

Re-establishing the space city, all alone in the black.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- ROWLEY'S OFFICE

As last act. Rowley is sitting in one of comfortable couches, reading a book. It is *'The Man in the High Castle'* by Philip K. Dick (foreword by H. Tusa). Just as he goes to turn a page, he is interrupted by the bosun's whistle.

RIESS (OVER COMM.)

Operations to Admiral Rowley.

Rowley puts down his book and thumbs the intercom button on the nearby table.

ROWLEY

Go ahead.

RIESS (OVER COMM.)

Sir, message from the Relinquent. The Liberty has arrived on scene and is rigging the Atlantis for tow.

ROWLEY

Is it as bad as early reports indicated?

RIESS (OVER COMM.)

Captain Tycho doesn't say in his report.

Rowley sighs.

ROWLEY

Thank you, Emma. Keep me apprised.

He closes the channel. It takes him a moment before he can return to his book.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD

On the edge of a dense field of asteroids, we focus in towards a facility built around and into the largest rock visible. It is clearly of Starfleet design, with a sizable antenna array protruding from one side.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD -- CONTROL ROOM

A hexagonal room with several control consoles, a viewscreen, a central command table and two sets of doors that lead to corridors. Walking through one of these is MIDSHIPMAN GRANT JAMESON, a perfect specimen of Starfleet officerhood. He is young, though: perhaps seventeen or eighteen.

He marches over to a side station where an attractive Enolian Ensign is sitting, monitoring a sensor display. Like all personnel here, she wears an oval-shaped assignment patch with a stylised design inside.

JAMESON

I relieve you, Ensign.

The Ensign nods as she yawns, standing up and walking away towards one of the doors. As Jameson sits down in the chair, he notices a small piece of paper lying at the bottom of the sensor screen. He picks it up, examining it. Written across is: '17.00 HOURS - MY QUARTERS'.

Jameson glances over to nearest doorway. The Enolian Ensign winks at him as she exits. Smiling to himself, Jameson folds up the paper and places it away. As he does so, a female Aurelian appears at his side. This is LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ISIIT-DA, the officer in charge.

ISIIT-DA

Forty-five seconds early,
Midshipman. A good start.

JAMESON

Sir, thank you, sir. It is the
duty of an officer to be as
efficient as possible.

ISIIT-DA

Keep a close eye on your scanners
today. We picked up some distant
subspace disturbances just over
an hour ago that looked like warp
engine trails.

JAMESON

Aye, Commander. Do you suspect
unregistered starship activity?

ISIIT-DA
 I didn't say that, Midshipman.
 (pats him on shoulder)
 Just watch your screen.

She moves on to the next station. Jameson turns to the large display ahead of him, quizzical.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- STARBASE 39

The imposing facility, spinning gently.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- PROMENADE -- FIFTH LEVEL CAFE

On the fifth level of this massive structure (and by no means the top), the cafe is built into an extended balcony. As we pan past the bar area, we notice that several viewscreens are displaying a broadcast from the Federation News Network. The ANCHORWOMAN narrates today's headline:

ANCHORWOMAN

Early reports suggest that the Klingon Ambassador has already left for Qo'noS, refusing to listen any further to the President's pleas. Though unconfirmed, the rumour seems to have merit enough for the Arcturian Ambassador to question whether or not Starfleet has stepped up to Code Two alert. So far, neither the Federation Council nor Fleet Admiral Davenport has commented in response.

(beat)

In other news, Starfleet has just this morning released a statement to the press concerning the crew of the missing explorer U.S.S. Pollux-

The channel is abruptly changed to display a game of hoverball. As several of the punters cheer at the game's score, we move to the end of the bar where West sits, nursing a cappuccino. His sword sits on the bar in front of him.

WILLS (O.S.)

I thought I might find you here.

THOMAS WILLS appears at his side. He is a human in his late forties, wears Lieutenant Commander insignia and looks very fit for his age (despite a slight 'beer belly').

WEST
Am I that predictable?

WILLS
Yep. It's a Tuesday. Tuesday is
cappuccino day.

West smiles. After a brief beat, he and Wills laugh. The latter takes a seat beside him.

WILLS (CONT'D)
I heard about the Atlantis.
(sighs)
All those people...and to a storm.
Such a waste.

WEST
It's going to put our dock time
up significantly. We could be
here for weeks.
(beat)
You up to fixing her?

WILLS
Hell, yeah. I haven't held a
hyperspanner in weeks. I'm having
withdrawal symptoms.

He pretends to shake. West smirks.

WILLS (CONT'D)
And how are you?

WEST
Good. Mostly.

WILLS
Good. It's good that you're good.

A group of Rigelians cheer as their team score a hoverball point on the broadcast. Wills picks up West's sword, examining it. He starts to slide the blade out of the scabbard, but West takes it off him and puts it back on the bar.

WILLS (CONT'D)
Right. Sorry.

WEST
Can I tell you something?

WILLS
Shoot.

WEST
I'm anxious.

WILLS

Yeah, I know. Is it the Atlantis?

WEST

In a way.

(beat)

Through most of the Academy, I used my prestigious family name to get me my commission. I was lazy, and arrogant. But after my mother died and my dad went crazy, I realised that if I was going to be one of those Admirals and Generals that decorated my lounge wall, I was going to have to earn it.

Wills scratches his head, not seeing where this is going.

WILLS

Yes, you've told me this story before. Many times.

WEST

So I changed. I started working hard, flying straight...

(awkwardly)

Not sleeping with every woman that loaned me a pencil.

WILLS

(suggestively)

Pauline didn't loan you a pencil.

West shoots him a look. Wills shuts up.

WEST

The point is I passed my final exams with flying colours because I *deserved* it. I worked hard, and I got what I wanted as a result. From then on, I was a changed man. A better man. But now, the Atlantis...

(beat)

I don't think I'm ready for this command, Tom.

WILLS

But you're a great officer. One of those 'by-the-book' types.

WEST

Oh yes. I know that I *can* command. But I also know that I'm not ready for.

WILLS

(confused)

Sorry, what? You've lost me.

WEST

I was only a First Officer for three and a half years. Doesn't it strike you as odd that I'm being promoted and given a ship of my own so soon at the order of a man I've barely seen in years?

WILLS

I thought you and Rowley go way back?

WEST

All the way back, to when I was born. But since my mother died, I haven't seen much of him at all, yet suddenly he makes me a Commander and gives me a destroyer?

WILLS

It's because he knows you're good. It's nothing personal. Captain Richards even recommended you for the posting.

(beat)

Look. Some people out there will be thinking just as you are. The name West is a double-edged sword, pun intended. It can bring you praise, but also bring you contempt. A lot of people don't like 'old navy' families like yours. You just have to ignore those people. They can't see your real talents because they're too busy hating you for being the posh little bastard that you are.

West cracks a smile.

WILLS (CONT'D)

Repeat after me: I deserve the Atlantis. I am a starship captain today not because I am a West, but because I am a good officer.

WEST

I deserve the Atlantis. I am a starship captain today not because I am a West, but because I am a good officer.

WILLS

There. You keep repeating that.
In your head. Do it out loud and
people will think you're nuts.

WEST

(laughing)
Want a drink?

Wills glances at a wall-mounted chronometer.

WILLS

Give me ten minutes. I just have
to go get my dress uniform from
the dry cleaners.

He pats West on the shoulder then moves off.

WEST

I'll be waiting.

West takes another sip of his beverage. Glancing over to the tables across the promenade level, he finds a woman sat alone near the railing. We cut over to her. This is REBECCA HART: a dark-blond Chief Petty Officer in her early twenties. She does not look lonely, however, as she gulps down the last of her exotic drink with a smile.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Excuse me. May I have this seat,
miss?

Hart glances up.

HART

Sure. It's a free Federation.

The man sits down. Very quickly, we recognise who he is. With a cheeky face and a large coat over his plump body, CYRANO JONES is the model trader.

CYRANO

Jones is the name. Cyrano Jones.

HART

Rebecca Hart. What are you selling?

CYRANO

(mock offended)
Why, dear lady? Can't a man just-

HART

What are you selling?

Cyrano grins.

CYRANO

Can I interest you in some Spican
flame gems?

HART

What are they?

Cyrano produces a small, red ruby-like stone from one of his many pockets. As he holds it up to the light, the inside of the stone glows like fire. Hart looks amazed. She takes it off him, examining it with tender care.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- COMMAND OPS

As before. Captain Riess is leaning on the railing of the central island when a bulky Chelon PETTY OFFICER walks up to her with a PADD.

PETTY OFFICER

Captain, message from the
Relinquent. They're only five
minutes out.

RIESS

(sighing)

Thank you, Yeoman. I'll inform
the Admiral.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- PROMENADE -- FIFTH LEVEL CAFE

As previous. Hart is still giving the flame gem in her hand a good examination.

HART

It's beautiful...

CYRANO

That it is, that it is. How many
can I put you down for?

HART

None.

CYRANO

None!? But my dear lady-

HART

But my dear sir, I'm not about
to buy something from a man under
the watch of a Federation Marshal.

CYRANO

F-F-F-Federation M-Marshal? Where?
Where!?

She nods over towards the bar. Cyrano follows her gaze towards West, who keeps glancing over at their table in a concerned manner.

CYRANO (CONT'D)

(worried)

H-How do you-?

HART

Isn't it obvious? Look at him. The way he's been nursing that Arcturian fizz for the past five minutes suggests he's not here to drink. And those shoes? Man, Corinthian leather loafers haven't been in fashion this side of O'Ryan's Planet since the early 50's. He doesn't come to this kind of establishment often.

(beat)

Also, see that bulge in his left-breast pocket? That rectangular shape is most obviously his identification card.

CYRANO

Y-you think?

HART

(winking)

I know. Trust me, I'm in the Starfleet.

Cyrano glances over again. West is looking right at him, but quickly turns away.

CYRANO

(panicking)

Uh, well...I uh...I have to be going. Thank you, my dear lady.

(beat)

Here, with my compliments...

He quickly unloads a whole pocketful of flame gems onto the table, before making a dash away from the cafe and out of sight. Hart, looking smug, crosses her legs and leans back in her chair, examining the clearly illegally-owned gems. West then appears at her table.

WEST

You alright, Chief?

HART

Yes, sir. I'm fine.

WEST

Was that man bothering you?

HART

Oh, no.
 (glances at gems, smiles)
 Not at all.

WEST

I'm sure I've seen him before.
 But that's the trouble with
 traders: they all look alike to
 me.

(beat)

Can I, uh, buy you a drink?

HART

(smiling)

Yes. Yes, you can. I'll have an
 Aldebaran whisky and tonic.

West sits down. He presses a button on a control pad set
 into the centre of the table. A text message on the screen
 confirms what he has ordered.

WEST

(nods at Hart's insignia)
 You're going to the Atlantis?

HART

Yeah. My first space assignment.
 (beat)
 Well, it was to be. You heard
 about that ion storm? Glad I
 wasn't aboard. Tore the ship
 several new airlocks.

West nods. Hart looks at him through squinted eyes, before
 her face lights up in recognition.

HART (CONT'D)

Hey, you're Commander East! The
 Admiral's son.

WEST

West.

HART

Sorry?

WEST

Alex West, your new commanding
 officer.

HART

Ah, so it's true then.

WEST

What's true?

HART

That you were given the Atlantis.

Hart nods. A waitress arrives, placing a drink down in front of Hart. But West barely notices her.

WEST

What have you heard about me and the Atlantis?

HART

(shrugs)

Nothing. Just that you were given the ship and...such.

WEST

'And such'?

Hart glances around awkwardly, hoping to find something that will help her change the subject. At that same moment, Wills dashes up to the table, panting for breath.

WILLS

Alex! Hey, Alex!

West looks up.

WILLS (CONT'D)

She's here. Dock four.

West, Wills and even Hart exchange concerned looks.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- SPACEDOCK 4 OBSERVATION CORRIDOR

A standard corridor with viewports inserted all along one wall. A crowd has gathered; a mix of civilians, dock technicians and crew from other starships. They are all trying to get a good view out of the windows.

West, Wills and Hart push their way to the front. The viewports look out across the inside of one of the large spherical drydocks fixed to the side of the station. This one is currently empty.

WILLS

Quite an attraction, I see.

HART

It's not everyday you see a storm-damaged starship.

WILLS

Sorry, I don't think we've met.

HART
(smiling)
Rebecca Hart, Commander West's
new Yeoman.

We hear a thud and a clank. Slowly, the space doors begin to open. Rows of lights along the four petal-like sections serve to guide in whatever awaits on the other side.

HART
Look, here she comes!

The crowd gasp in shock. Through the doors drifts a burned and wrecked Saladin-class starship: the U.S.S. Atlantis NCC-959. The design consists of a Constitution-class saucer connected to a single nacelle by a slightly thicker-than-usual warp pylon.

The skin of the saucer has been scorched and twisted. The warp pylon has hull panels missing. The single warp nacelle is dark and dead. It is a mess.

Wills just places a hand on West's shoulder. On this, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

[This scene should be slightly over-exposed.]

The void is serenely silent once more. As we focus in on the darkness amongst the stars...

...BOOM! The saucer section of a Constitution-class starship tears past our view, spewing flames and bodies from scars in the hull.

As three streamlined fighter aircraft swing by, we pan around to see that we are in amongst a massive fleet battle. At least a dozen Starfleet vessels fire weapons at obscure shapes moving indistinctly inside the same swirling blue gas of the Cloud that we saw in the teaser.

We follow the fighters as they dart between a large three-nacelled vessel coming apart in an inferno of red. They dodge a broken deflector dish before unleashing a barrage of pulse phaser fire at the Cloud. It impacts on a snake-like silver body that moves very suddenly.

VOICES (V.O.)

(varied, over radio)

Defiant and Bonhomme-Richard,
fall back to defensive position
one!...Acknowledged...A hit! A
hit on number four
deflector...Venting drive
plasma...The mains are gone,
switching to batteries!...Great
Bird, I've lost my attack
wing!...Where the hell's the
Soval? We need cover on the
ventral flank!...No response from
flagship - I think the Admiral's
dead!...

We pan again to view a Saladin-class starship as she darts through the confusion, firing weapons as best she can.

VOICES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hard axis rotation to port, one-
eighty. Keep our dorsal on
target...Mr Scott, I need full
power to the phasers...I cannae
do it, Captain!

(MORE)

VOICES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The mains are out and she just
dinnae have the power!...All
ships, casualty reports!...Ninety-
seven dead, forty-two wounded on
the Kal'Tan!...Lexington? Does
anyone have a fix on the
Lexington!?!...

The battle rages, but the fleet appear in no danger. They
fire at the Cloud, but it does not fire back...

As the Saladin-class makes a bank past the edge of the gas,
three grey tentacles shoot out and wind around the warp
nacelle with enough ferocity to stop the vessel in her
tracks. The saucer doesn't stop, however, and is torn
asunder as the momentum of the impulse engines continues
it forward.

We focus in on the upper hull as it breaks apart. A large
chunk flies off, with 'NCC-959' stenciled on. Finally, we
pan around away from the carnage. In the distance sits a
familiar orb of green, white and blue - Earth.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- NIKKON'S CABIN

Nikkon's eyes open wide in shock as he sits blot upright
in his bed. The well-furnished room is awash with a red
warning light.

NIKKON

Wha-what-?

The ship suddenly jolts, sending a vase crashing to the
floor from his bedside table.

DELEELOS (OVER COMM.)

Captain Edwards to the bridge,
please. I repeat, Captain Edwards
to the bridge immediately!

Concerned, Nikkon throws off his covers and runs over to
the window. He looks outside in all directions, trying to
see what is going on. The front of the starboard nacelle
is just visible.

A salvo of green energy bolts arrow in and strike the
engine. The entire purple buzzard collector explodes
outwards. Nikkon dives to the deck as a chunk of debris
smashes into the reinforced glass, cracking it.

DELEELOS (OVER COMM.)

All passengers, please remain in
your cabins...

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

The crew cling to their consoles as the ship is rocked back and forth. Deleelos is talking into a microphone at a side station.

DELEELOS
...I repeat, all passengers are
to remain in their cabins.

Edwards, looking more than a little sleepy, stumbles in from the main aft entrance.

EDWARDS
Report, Lieutenant!

DELEELOS
We're under attack, Captain.

EDWARDS
Attack!? From who?

DELEELOS
No positive ID yet. Sensors have
taken some damage...they're re-
aligning now.

(beat)
It happened so fast. They came
at us from the shadow of the
fifth moon. We didn't see them
until it was too late.

The ship jolts again.

EDWARDS
Deflector shields?

DELEELOS
Down. Their first volley took out
the power couplings to that system.

EDWARDS
Use the auxiliaries. And start
some evasive maneuvers, for
goodness sake!

DELEELOS
Aye aye sir.

He reaches out over his console and flicks a few switches. Edwards moves over to the helm.

DELEELOS (CONT'D)
Captain, sensors are coming back
in line...
(shocked)
Oh. Oh no...

EDWARDS
What? Who are they?

Deleelos looks up at Edwards. There is fear in his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- THE VENTURE STAR

The cruise liner makes some fancy, though rather ponderous erratic maneuvers. As she does, another vessel darts past our view, firing out more salvos of disruptor bolts.

A Klingon Bird-of-Prey - a perfect hybrid of the vessels seen on '*Star Trek: Enterprise*' and '*Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*' - flies past the Venture Star as it completes its attack run. The civilian liner is venting a lot of plasma from her starboard nacelle.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

As before.

EDWARDS
Klingons. Goddamn animals...
(beat)
Where are my shields, Lieutenant?

DELEELOS
(into microphone)
Engine room. Auxiliary status?

ATHRUNE (OVER COMM.)
Just a few more seconds, bridge.

On the viewscreen, we can see the Bird-of-Prey making a menacing turn...

EDWARDS
Lieutenant...?

DELEELOS
(into microphone)
Engine room...?

ATHRUNE (OVER COMM.)
Nearly there...

The Bird-of-Prey fires a torpedo out of the bow launcher.

ATHRUNE (OVER COMM.)
Done!

DELEELOS
Deflector shields snapping on!

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- THE VENTURE STAR

The shields raise just as the Klingon torpedo is crossing the threshold. The warhead is detonated, but a small section of the weapon was inside the bubble. As a result, part of the explosion is forced inwards, damaging the liner's bow where the deflector dish is.

The Bird-of-Prey sweeps over the dorsal hull, firing its disruptor cannons. The blots are absorbed by the liner's shields.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

The ship jolts and shudders at the impact. Lights and monitors flicker on and off for a moment as the crew struggle to remain standing at their posts. It is clear that the liner herself nor the officers in charge are not used to combat situations. Except for Edwards, that is. He remains steadfast, standing beside the helm.

EDWARDS
Damage report.

DELEELOS
Long-range sensors: offline.
Short-range sensors: severely
damaged. Subspace antenna array:
damaged. The deflector dish...
(worried)
Gone.

Edwards stares at the viewscreen; his face suggesting that his brain is going a mile a minute.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- THE VENTURE STAR

A close-up on the bow. The entire 'nose' of the vessel has been blown clean off, taking the deflector dish along with it.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- CORRIDOR

As the vessel shakes again, Nikkon stumbles out of his cabin, hastily dressed in the same suit that he wore to the ball, only without the jacket.

As he starts to make his way down the passage, he passes by the door to another cabin where a Senior Deckhand is trying to reassure the Tellarite couple.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. TROPICAL ARCHIPELAGO

[This scene should be slightly over-exposed.]

The two Tellarites, now elderly men, hike up a steep path together that is set into the side of a hill. They pause beside an alien plant and turn to face the ocean behind them. The island chain stretches out as far as we can see. In the clear blue sky above, a mushroom-shaped space station of a 2300s-era design orbits.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- CORRIDOR

As before. Nikkon smiles slightly as he rounds a corner, stumbling right into Liza.

LIZA

Oh! Doctor Nikkon, you shouldn't be out here.

NIKKON

Liza, please, you must take me to the bridge.

LIZA

I can't do that. The ship is on emergency alert.

Everything jolts again.

NIKKON

Look, I'm a Starfleet officer. I think I can help.

(beat)

Please.

Liza notes the determined look in Nikkon's eyes. She nods.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

On the viewscreen, the Klingon ship is circling around for another attack run.

DELEELOS

Shields are holding, Captain. We can probably take a few more passes.

EDWARDS
 We're sitting ducks out here.
 (thinks)
 Open hailing frequencies.

DELEELOS
 Sir...they're Klingons. Marauders.
 They won't respond.

EDWARDS
 Do it anyway.

Deleelos nods to the Boatswain manning the communications station. He flicks a few switches.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)
 This is Captain Edwards of the
 White Dwarf liner S.S. Venture
 Star. We are a civilian cruise
 ship, and do not carry valuable
 cargo. Please, cease your attack.

A beat. On the viewscreen, the Bird-of-Prey comes to a halt. The torpedo launcher still glows, however, ready to fire. Edwards and Deleelos exchange surprised glances.

EDWARDS (CONT'D)
 Klingon vessel. Would you...care
 to state your intentions?

CUT TO:

KLINGON CONSOLE

A target display shows that all weapons are still locked firmly onto the Venture Star. We pan across the console some more to reveal the hands of a male Klingon resting next to a speaker.

EDWARDS (OVER COMM.)
 I repeat: Klingon vessel, please
 state your intentions.

We travel up the Klingon's arm to his face. This is DARJ. He slowly turns around to face the rest of the room.

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

A small bridge built in the usual Klingon manner. Their are exactly six crewmembers on duty at the various controls around the room. Currently, they all have their heads turned towards the central command chair.

Sat there is COMMANDER MORGA: an aging warrior with battle-scarred ridges and a silvery mane. He is leaning forward, deep in thought.

EDWARDS (OVER COMM.)
 We are a civilian space liner,
 carrying four-hundred passengers.
 We have nothing of material value
 aboard our ship.

(beat)
 Please, we are of little
 consequence.

DARJ
 (in Klingonese)
 Commander, they are enemies of-

Morga raises a hand. Darj is immediately silenced. The
 damaged Venture Star sits ahead on the viewscreen.

MORGA
 (in Klingonese)
 Open communications channel.

KAVAGH (O.S.)
 (in Klingonese)
 My lord, is that wise?

As he speaks, KAVAGH steps into view around the large
 command chair. This Klingon is thin and physically
 unimpressive. Sporting no forehead ridge, he does have
 tanned skin, thick eyebrows and a circular beard.

KAVAGH (CONT'D)
 (in Klingonese)
 We should continue as planned.
 Disable her shields. Board her
 and take what we want at the
 point of a bat'leth.

MORGA
 (in Klingonese)
 Do you feel there is a need to
 take such action?

KAVAGH
 (in Klingonese)
 Of course. They are enemies of
 the Empire. That should be reason
 enough.

MORGA
 (in Klingonese)
 They are civilians. Unarmed.
 Untrained for combat-

KAVAGH
 (in Klingonese)
 But they are not Klingon.

A beat. Morga swings his chair around so that he may look
 Kavagh directly in the eye.

MORGA
 (in Klingonese)
 So because they were not born of
 our blood we should not show them
 mercy?

KAVAGH
 (in Klingonese)
 Precisely, my lord.

MORGA
 (in Klingonese)
 You are QuchHa. A descendant of
 the Augments. Your veins pulse
 with the blood of humans. Should
 I show you no mercy?

Kavagh stiffens, glancing around at the rest of the bridge
 compliment. Judging by their facial expressions, we can
 tell that they are all on Kavagh's side and not Morga's.

KAVAGH
 (in Klingonese)
 Lieutenant Darj, open a
 communications channel to the
 Federation vessel.

DARJ
 (in Klingonese)
 At one!

Darj presses some buttons. Morga swivels back around to
 face the screen.

MORGA
 Federation vessel! This is your
 assailant speaking.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

The crew are a little stunned. In the background, Liza
 escorts Nikkon onto the bridge.

EDWARDS
 This is Edwards. Who am I talking
 to?

MORGA (OVER COMM.)
 My name is of no importance, nor
 is the designation of my ship.
 We are Klingons. That is all you
 should need to know.

Liza and Nikkon cross to where Edwards is standing.

EDWARDS
What do you want here, sir?

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

As before.

MORGA
We have fought, and I have
defeated you. You are beaten.
Concede to my demands, and I will
allow you to go free.
(beat)
Do you agree to this, Captain?

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

All eyes turn to Edwards.

EDWARDS
That depends on the demands, sir.
I cannot agree to-

MORGA (OVER COMM.)
You have little choice!

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

Morga is leaning forwards towards the screen.

MORGA
The alternative is that I blast
away your shields, transport my
warriors over there and take what
I want from you by force.
(beat, threatening)
Believe me, Captain, you do not
want me to do that.
(beat, softer)
You have a great deal to lose if
you refuse. It would be a pity
to let those tourists under your
charge be slaughtered for
refusing to acquiesce to my
measly request.

Hold for a beat:

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

Edwards is leaning on the helm station, hanging his head.

EDWARDS
Make your demands.

The crew look frightened, deflated and disappointed all at once.

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

Morga breathes out heavily, relaxing back into his tall-backed chair.

MORGA
There is a passenger aboard your ship. He is an alien, to both you and I. And he is a doctor.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

Everyone looks at an utterly surprised and bewildered Nikkon.

MORGA (OVER COMM.)
He goes by the name of Nikkon.
Stewart Nikkon.
(beat)
Give him to me, and I will take my leave of you without further action.

Nikkon is stunned into silence.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- SPACEDOCK 4

The Atlantis, sitting silently as engineers in EV-suits work to heal her wounds. She now faces the space doors and is attached to the roof of the dock via an umbilical clamp.

We can just make out officers and crewmen walking to and from the vessel via a main gangway attached to the lower airlock at the bottom of the single warp pylon. Slowly, we focus in towards this area.

CUT TO:

INT. ATLANTIS -- DOCKING PORTS

A dual corridor, shaped like the inside of the warp pylon. The place is in a state of upheaval, with circuit panels open and temporary wiring running across the deck.

Several technicians are working away at them with various forms of engineering tool.

West, Wills and Hart step onto the ship from the attached gangway, looking about in silent awe. West still carries his sword in one hand.

WILLS
(whistling)
They've jury-rigged this place
up some.

HART
An ion storm did all this?

WEST
(nodding)
Damage to the hull can be
repaired with ease. It's the
damage you can't see that can
cause the most problems.

Wills looks at a section of temporary wiring.

WILLS
I'll have to have a talk with the
Chief Engineer. Whoever he is,
he's good.

The turbolift at the end of the corridor opens up as a man hurries out and over towards the three newcomers. He is a human, of Indian decent, in his very early thirties. He speaks with a British accent and wears a gold uniform. This is LIEUTENANT SIMON HAYES.

HAYES
(at attention)
Commander West, sir?

WEST
Yes.

HAYES
Welcome aboard the Atlantis,
Commander. I'm Lieutenant Simon
Hayes, Chief Helmsman and current
duty officer.

WILLS
You're in charge?

HAYES
Yes sir. Starbase Control only
just informed us that you were
coming aboard.

WEST
Where is the senior staff?

HAYES

All ashore, with the exception of Commodore McCarthy. They have to coordinate the repair effort, see to the wounded...

(beat)

And tend to the dead.

WEST

We're deeply sorry for your loss, Lieutenant.

WILLS

Yeah. Ion storms can be a real bitch when they come at you like that.

HAYES

I know. I threw her down as hard as I could, trying to get under the wavefront, but it was no use. The storm was just too quick. All I could do in the end was point her into the flow and let her fly free.

WEST

What's the status of the ship?

HAYES

Surprisingly, she's not as bad as she looks. Commander Collins assures me that we'll only need about two weeks in dock.

WILLS

Wait...Lieutenant Commander Collins? Hailey Collins?

HAYES

That's right, sir. She's our Chief Engin-

WILLS

Well spank my ass and call me Surak! I'm taking over the engine room of *the* Hailey Collins...

WEST

I take it she's a good engineer?

WILLS

The best. She's like...the Charles Tucker of our generation.

(to Hayes)

You mind if I go and have a look around main engineering?

HAYES

Of course not, sir. Go right ahead.
Wills has already disappeared into the turbolift.

WEST

He does that a lot.

HAYES

(indicating)
Nice sword, sir. What is
that...United Earth?

West holds it up, rubbing his thumb over the United Earth seal on the hilt.

WEST

Yes.

HAYES

I know that blade design. Those were forged for the ceremony surrounding the signing of the first United Earth treaty. Only eighteen were made, and handed out to the most prominent government officials and military leaders.

(beat)

You must have quite the blood in you, sir, if that's a family heirloom.

West turns the blade over in his hands.

WEST

(nonchalantly)
I do, Lieutenant, thank you.

An awkward beat.

HAYES

Well. I was told to take you to the captain's office if you came aboard. The Commodore would like to meet you.

WEST

Lead the way.

Hayes turns and walks off towards the turbolift doors. West follows behind.

HART

Right. Well, I'll...go do something else, then.

She starts to back away towards the gangway, but her boot heel catches on a temporary circuit line and yanks it out of its connection. Somewhere off screen, we can hear a piece of machinery power down to confused shouts of 'Dammit!' and 'What the hell?'. Glancing over her shoulder, Hart makes a very swift exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- THE VENTURE STAR

The space liner still faces off against the fearsome Bird-of-Prey, I.K.S. T'Kegan. Both vessels are bathed in the enthralling blue glow of the gas giant Kintuki II.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

As before, only now engineer Athrune is present. Edwards is pacing across the deck as Nikkon leans against a bulkhead.

LIZA

Doctor...what could the Klingons want with you?

NIKKON

I...really have no idea. I've only ever met a small selection of Klingons face-to-face.

(beat)

Granted, most of them probably do want to kill me, but for no reason other than the fact that I'm a Starfleet officer.

Deleelos steps close to Edwards.

DELEELOS

(quietly)

Sir, are we to hand him over?

Edwards pauses, looks over at Nikkon, then sighs.

EDWARDS

(also quietly)

No. I'm not going to sacrifice a passenger like that. These people paid good Credits to explore the galaxy aboard a White Dwarf Star Lines cruise ship in comfort and in safety. It is our duty to protect them *all* with equal measure.

DELEELOS

But if we don't hand him over, they'll board and kill us.

Edwards nods, sharing in his First Lieutenant's grim assessment of the situation.

NIKKON

Captain, I'll willingly go over there if it'll save the lives of everyone else on your ship.

EDWARDS

You won't be doing that, Doctor. We'll find another way out of this somehow.

LIZA

Couldn't we run?

EDWARDS

With the deflector dish gone, we can only travel at sublight speeds. The Klingons would overrun us in seconds.

ATHRUNE

We could hide in Kintuki II's upper atmosphere. The static forces created by the friction of gas movement could be enough to throw off their scanners.

EDWARDS

We could, but then what? Try and outwait them? Hope they lose interest and move away?

(shakes head)

No, they wouldn't give up so easily. Besides, the atmosphere of that planet is laced with dangerous hyperonic particles. Prolonged exposure is deadly to most humanoids.

NIKKON

I'd say about three hours from direct exposure before the most susceptible species aboard start to fall critically ill. That period could be extended, of course, depending on how well-shielded this ship is against radiation.

ATHRUNE

Captain, we could use that time to get the subspace antenna array back online.

EDWARDS

Do you think you can repair it?

ATHRUNE

I certainly can. Whether or not I can do it in Mr Nikkon's predicted three hours is another thing entirely.

Edwards rubs his stubble-encrusted chin.

EDWARDS

The Klingons could track us in, and just bombard that area with weapon fire.

NIKKON

Unless we knocked out their tracking sensors. Does the Venture Star have any external weaponry?

DELEELOS

Yes; a high-yield plasma turret. But it's just a popgun, designed for smashing through asteroids. It would be useless against their shields.

NIKKON

Not if we got them to *lower* their shields.

Edwards' eyes sparkle: he sees where the doctor is going with this.

EDWARDS

Leftenant Deleelos, re-open the channel to the Klingon vessel. Tell them that I agree to their terms and that Doctor Nikkon is being prepared for transport.

DELEELOS

Aye aye, sir.

Edwards walks over to a station at the side of the room.

EDWARDS

Helm, plot a course for Kintuki II. Prepare to execute on my mark.

He presses a few buttons, activating a small monitor screen. It displays a schematic of the T'Kegan. Edwards proceeds to tap several more keys, highlighting specific areas along the Klingon vessel's ventral surface.

DELEELOS

They're responding, sir.

MORGA (OVER COMM.)
 A wise choice, Captain Edwards.
 A very wise choice.

EDWARDS
 Well, gosh darn it. There wasn't
 a whole lot that I could have
 done otherwise.

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

As previous.

MORGA
 No. I suppose there wasn't. Have
 Nikkon ready for transport in
 thirty seconds.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

As before.

EDWARDS
 He's right on our transporter pad
 now, sir. Standby to lower your
 shields.

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

Morga raises a commanding hand.

MORGA
 (in Klingonese)
 Deflector screens-

Kavagh leans in close.

KAVAGH
 (in Klingonese, quietly)
 My lord, they shall be lowering
 their own shields as well. We
 should seize the opportunity and
 attack!

Morga just glares at him. Wisely, Kavagh backs away a few feet.

MORGA
 (in Klingonese)
 Deflector screens...deactivate!

Darj presses a dark green button.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

Deleelos looks up from his station.

DELEELOS
Their shields are down.

EDWARDS
Firing!

He presses some keys.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- THE VENTURE STAR

A small turret deploys from beneath the 'nose' section of the Venture Star. As we watch, it fires out a burst of plasma bolts that strike hard into seven different places across the T'Kegan's upper hull. The lights on the Klingon craft flicker on and off as power systems fluctuate.

We then pan with the Venture Star as she makes a swift turn to port and steams off at full impulse towards Kintuki II.

Explosions rip through the top of the Klingon ship. It begins to drift.

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

Major damage. As Morga clings to his chair, sparks fly up into Darj's face from his smashed controls.

MORGA
(in Klingonese)
They have deceived us!
(slams fists into armrests)
Switch to auxiliary power.
Prepare to pursue!

DARJ
(in Klingonese)
My lord, we cannot. Several key systems have been damaged and will need to be repaired before-

MORGA
(in Klingonese,
restrained anger)
Fine. Assess the damage quickly,
repair the components only
necessary for battle and then get
me after that starliner.
(to Kavagh)
Now we try it your way, Kavagh!

Kavagh smiles in a smug and satisfied manner. On the
determined face of Morga, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE -- OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD

The asteroid base again, slowly spinning.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD -- CONTROL ROOM

We pan across several control stations that have large sensor displays built into them. The NCOs watching them all look incredibly bored: a Latino woman, a Deltan female, an Arkenite male and a young Rigelian who is passing the time by flicking a ball of paper around his angled display screen.

The next station along is manned by Midshipman Jameson. He sits rigidly in his chair, diligently monitoring his sensors. Looking at the screen in front of him, he suddenly seems to notice his own reflection.

A hair is out of place on his neatly-parted head. Startled, he quickly licks his palm and proceeds to matt it down. As we watch his reflection, a large fuzzy shape appears above his head. At first puzzled, it takes Jameson a second to realise that it is in fact a large blip on the scanner and not something above his hair.

JAMESON

Uh, Commander...?

Isiit-Da walks over to his side. Jameson points at the object.

ISIIT-DA

(chirps)

Focus your bilateral emitters.

Jameson manipulates a few of the control knobs placed down the side of the screen. A wedge closes in around the fuzzy object on the scope. As it does, the greyness of the shape morphs into a wonderful spectrum of colours. Data starts to appear on smaller monitors above Jameson's head.

ISIIT-DA (CONT'D)

As I thought; a storm front.

(calling over shoulder)

Mr Sowards, your attention please.

LIEUTENANT J.G SOWARDS, a young human scientist, wanders over from the central command table.

He is eating a slice of pizza.

SOWARDS
(while chewing)
Commander?

ISIIT-DA
What type of storm would you say
that is?

Sowards leans in closer to the readouts, frowning his brow. He takes another bite of his pizza slice, sending a sprinkling of crumbs down onto Jameson's tunic. Restraining his temper, Jameson wipes the flakes away.

SOWARDS
A big one.
(laughs)
Sorry. No, erm...probably ionic.
That's what the polyatomic
sensors are telling me, anyway.

ISIIT-DA
An ion storm? That would make two
around here within one day.

SOWARDS
(from screens)
Some of these readouts are very
unusual, though. Look at the
level of fluorine...and
petrisoxide! I didn't know that
could even maintain stability
away from a heavy water
environment...
(to Isiit-Da)
Can we launch a probe? I'd like
to get a detailed analysis of the
storm's collective structure.

ISIIT-DA
Afraid not, Lieutenant. That
storm is quite far inside Klingon
space.

Sowards sighs in disappointment.

SOWARDS
You could make it my birthday
present?

ISIIT-DA
We will monitor it from here for
as long as we can.

SOWARDS
Alright. Pipe the data through
to my lab, would you?

ISIIT-DA

Of course.

(to Jameson)

Midshipman, keep your sensors tightly focused on that storm. Feed all recorded data straight down to the science levels.

JAMESON

Sir, yes, sir.

Sowards and Isiit-Da move off. Jameson returns to his watch, flicking the last of the pizza crumbs from his shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- SPACEDOCK 4

The Atlantis still sits in dock. Some of the scorched hull panels have been replaced with newer ones, but not many.

CUT TO:

INT. ATLANTIS -- CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

This is a rectangular room split into two equal sections by an orange grill partition: one half the office and the other a lounge atrium, containing the door to the corridor and the door to the captain's quarters. Though the room is sizable for a vessel of this era, the partition makes it look quite cramped.

We focus in on the office area. It contains an imitation oak desk, some shelving and a picture of the Atlantis on the wall. Commander West (still with his sword) is sat on the visitor's side, facing a man standing opposite who has his back to us. He is a human, wearing a blue uniform. His hair is curly and silver, and he looks to be in his mid-sixties. This is COMMODORE MARCUS B. MCCARTHY. He is packing some books away into a box.

MCCARTHY

(grumbling)

I hate packing things away. They never seem to fit back into the boxes you brought them in.

WEST

No, sir.

McCarthy sighs and turns to face West, waving the book he is holding.

MCCARTHY

Do I have to make that an order, Commander?

WEST

Sir?

MCCARTHY

(smiling)

I told you not to call me 'sir'
or 'Commodore'.

WEST

Well...I could call you 'ma'am'.

McCarthy laughs, stuffing the book away into the box and slapping the lid on as best he can. Slowly, he returns to his chair opposite West. We notice that his assignment patch is a diamond shape with a Vulcan IDIC symbol inside - not the Atlantis patch, as we would expect.

MCCARTHY

What's with the sword?

WEST

Oh, it's just a family heirloom.
I was going to hang it on the
wall in here.

MCCARTHY

Hmm.

(reading off
monitor screen)

So...Commander Alexander M. West,
thirty-six years old, born in
Banff, Canada, Earth, 2224. Son
of former Captain Liam M. West
and...the late Vice Admiral Carly
Eloise West.

(beat)

My belated condolences. I served
under your mother at the First
Battle of Horok. She was a good
woman.

WEST

(nodding)

She was a military commander,
through and through. We all said
she was born in the wrong era.

MCCARTHY

The Dego incident was a tragedy.

WEST

My mother saved the lives of
thousands of colonists before she
went down with her ship. It's the
way she would have wanted to go.

MCCARTHY

Doesn't make it any easier on you, though, does it? Not with that and the disgrace of your father weighing down upon your career.

A pause. West glances around the room, wanting to change the subject.

WEST

Nice office. Few ships have one this large.

MCCARTHY

I expanded into an adjacent storage room. And yes, I am leaving you the furniture.

Another pause. McCarthy continues to stare at West, who soon shifts uncomfortably.

WEST

Sir, may I speak freely?

MCCARTHY

Always.

WEST

You don't like me much, do you?

McCarthy leans back in his chair.

MCCARTHY

Commander, I have utterly no idea what to make of you.

(beat)

This may come as a surprise, but I'm first and foremost a scientist. The Great Bird only knows why I've spent most of my career aboard cruisers and destroyers like this one, but there you go.

(taps assignment patch)

I'm going to be spending the last decade of my service as head of the Starfleet section of the Non-Corporeal Biology Science Directorate on Vulcan, hence the new rank and uniform, but I need to know that I'm leaving these people...my people in good hands.

(indicated monitor)

All I see here is the spoilt child of two pieces of formerly distinguished Starfleet brass.

West stiffens.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

I've heard the rumors, Commander. Admiral Rowley was close friends with your mother, and it's his signature on these transfer orders and promotion commission.

McCarthy taps a leather-bound folder sitting atop the desk. Slowly, he opens it and picks out a sheet of paper from the files within.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)

I even have a letter of recommendation from your former commander, Captain Richards on the Yeltsin...also a friend of Admiral Rowley's, I believe?

(reading)

'A fine officer with natural leadership ability. He is the type of man I would have been honoured to serve under in my youth.'

(beat)

How long did you spend as First Officer under Richards, Commander?

WEST

Three years.

MCCARTHY

Three years. I'm sorry, but that's hardly long enough to garner the experience necessary to be given a command of your own.

(beat)

This may sound harsh, but it looks to me that the 'who's who' of Starfleet want you up into the Admiralty faster than a Romulan to a shadow. And why? Simply because your last name is West.

(beat)

I don't know Rowley, so I don't know if he's the sort of man to pull that kind of stunt. And frankly, I don't care. I *do* care about my crew, and I want to know that they are going to have the right person sitting up there in that chair when I leave.

The two men stare at each other for a moment. Before West can respond, we hear the chirp of the communication's intercom: the bosun's whistle.

RURA (OVER COMM.)

Bridge to Commodore McCarthy.

McCarthy taps a button on the desk near the monitor.

MCCARTHY
Go ahead, Kriss.

RURA (OVER COMM.)
Sir, your presence is requested
in engineering level two.

MCCARTHY
On my way, Lieutenant. McCarthy out.

He closes the channel.

MCCARTHY (CONT'D)
You'd better come along too, son.
I'm not done with you yet.

West nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINTUKI II -- THE VENTURE STAR

The upper atmosphere of the gas giant. The various gases, each a different shade of blue, continuously meld together by the forces of the convection currents.

The Venture Star fades into view as it slowly drifts towards us, like an old sailing ship pushing its way through fog. We zoom in towards the bow area where the 'nose' of the ship used to be. Floating there are five figures in civilian EV-suits.

They are working on a piece of equipment that is sticking out from the torn-off bow. It is cylindrical in shape, with grid-like panels attached along its length. Some of the engineers present are welding on a new panel as we watch.

EDWARDS (OVER COMM.)
Bridge to Leftenant Athrune.
Chief, what's the word on the
subspace antenna?

One of the figures reaches for a button on her wrist controls and presses it. This is Athrune.

ATHRUNE
Athrune here, Captain. It's going
well. The damage was less severe
that we first thought. We should
have it up and running within the
next half hour.

She looks up to where the bridge is located. Standing at one of the windows is Edwards.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

As we last saw it. Edwards is watching the engineers outside through one of the two windows that flank the central viewscreen. He talks into a communicator:

EDWARDS

Very good, Lieutenant. Keep me posted. Bridge out.

He closes the channel. Deleelos walks over to him.

DELEELOS

Sensors are still useless inside this atmosphere, sir. All attempts at boosting them have failed.

EDWARDS

Then we need to use our eyes, Mr Deleelos.

(to Liza)

Bosun, gather up as many Deckhands as you can and issue them each a hand-held communicator. I want them posted to as many windows, portholes and viewports as possible. They are to keep watch, understood? They must report anything that they see outside.

LIZA

Understood, Captain.

She nods and exits.

NIKKON

The Klingons *will* try to find us. They failed to get me, and to add insult to injury, were defeated in battle by a cruise liner with a popgun.

EDWARDS

I know. If they return home now, they'd probably be eaten for dinner by their superiors.

NIKKON

I'm sorry for the trouble I've caused. I have no idea why they would-

EDWARDS
 (raising a hand)
 That's alright, Doctor. This
 isn't your fault.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD

Re-establishing the outpost station.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD -- CONTROL ROOM

As before. Jameson is still watching the storm blip on his radar-like sensor screen.

Suddenly, the blip changes direction. It is now moving towards the centre of the display. Puzzled, it takes Jameson a second to react:

JAMESON
 Commander! Commander, sir.

Isiit-Da turns from the central table.

ISIIT-DA
 Mr Jameson?

JAMESON
 The storm, sir. It's...changed direction.

ISIIT-DA
 Storms do that, Midshipman.

JAMESON
 Sir, yes sir. But they don't alter their course like this.

Isiit-Da crosses over to his side. She looks down at the display, squinting her solid blue eyes.

ISIIT-DA
 That can't be. It must have made a ninety-eight degree pivot.

One of the smaller screens above Jameson's head activates. Sowards appears, standing in his laboratory.

SOWARDS
 Hey, Control. Are you getting this? That thing out there made a hard turn to port!

ISIIT-DA

Are we sure that it did not just switch direction?

SOWARDS

No. It made an actual, bonafide turn.

Jameson is still watching his display.

JAMESON

Sirs, the storm seems to be...speeding up.

In the laboratory, Sowards turns to one of his own consoles.

SOWARDS

Confirmed, Control! It's increasing in velocity...one-half impulse...

(excited)

Three-quarter impulse...warp factor one! My stars, warp factor one!

ISIIT-DA

Some storms do travel at faster-than-light speeds. Neutronic wavefronts, for example.

SOWARDS

Yes, but they don't exhibit this kind of...unnatural behaviour. Turning on the spot, increasing speed in such a manner-

ISIIT-DA

What are you saying, Lieutenant?

SOWARDS

I'm saying, Commander...
(takes a deep breath)
I'm saying that it could be alive. Or at least have some kind of intelligence controlling it.

A dramatic pause.

ISIIT-DA

That's quite a claim.

SOWARDS

I know, and I obviously can't be certain. I'd need to study it in far more detail and run an entire spectrum of tests close-up.

JAMESON
 You may just have that
 opportunity, sir.

ISIIT-DA
 And why is that, Midshipman?

Jameson points to the large blip on his display.

JAMESON
 Because the storm is coming right
 at us.

Isiit-Da looks both surprised and concerned at this
 development.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBASE 39 -- SPACEDOCK 4

The magnificent dock interior once more. The Atlantis exterior is still a hive of activity, with groups of EV-suited dockworkers affixing new hull sections or working inside open conduits. Half a dozen work bees deliver fresh pieces of plating, while another three maneuver the new deflector dish into place. Powerful spotlights shine onto key areas from all around the inner dock frame.

CUT TO:

INT. ATLANTIS -- ENGINEERING

Though with elements the same as aboard a Constitution-class vessel, main engineering on the Atlantis is of a slightly different configuration. The upper level, for example, is slightly larger, and contains an enclosed booth with a door inside to a corridor.

Down on the main floor, adjacent to the dilithium crystal hatch, is the command 'pool table'. Around the walls are more control stations, including the master circuit display. To the port side is the the lower entrance, overhung by a plethora of pipes running across near the ceiling; some marked with numbers, others marked 'GNDN' and 'COOLANT'. The latter one leads to a tank sat in the aft-port corner. Finally, near the forward wall is a small, dingy office area partitioned off from the main floor by drab grey fences.

Amidst the many technicians (some from the Starbase) stands an impressed-looking Wills. Judging by his facial expression, we can see that he finds the engine room most to his satisfaction, even in its current state of disarray.

WILLS
 Yep. Ms Collins is a goddess.

Over his shoulder, a very attractive female Vulcan is talking to a base technician. She is petite, and unlike many Vulcans she wears her hair down to shoulder level, though it is tied well back and does sport the familiar square fringe of her kinsman. She wears a red uniform with trousers. This is LIEUTENANT T'PAN.

T'PAN

Increase the PTC flow charge by three percent. That should make up for the distribution deficit on decks six and eight.

The technician nods and moves off. Noticing Wills hanging around, T'Pan walks over.

T'PAN (CONT'D)

Can I help you, Commander?

WILLS

Hmm? Oh, no. I'm just sightseeing.

T'Pan raises a confused eyebrow.

T'PAN

Please, we are very busy. I'm afraid that we do not have the time presently to give you a tour of the engine room.

WILLS

A tour? Ha! I could show you parts of this engine that you probably never knew existed.

T'PAN

You are familiar with the Saladin-class design?

WILLS

You could say that.

(offers hand)

Thomas Wills, former Chief Engineer of the starship Yeltsin.

T'Pan shakes his hand.

T'PAN

Ah, yes. The Yeltsin. The inefficiency of her warp drive is well-known throughout the destroyer fleet.

Wills double-takes.

WILLS

Ineff-!?! Listen here, you copper-blooded grease monkey. The Yeltsin's engine is one of the best in the fleet! We ran her at ninety-eight point three percent efficiency.

T'PAN

The Atlantis runs at ninety-nine point five.

Wills is stunned, mouth hanging open.

WILLS

R-right. Well. I mean, I knew Collins was good...

(beat)

Who are you, by the way?

T'PAN

Lieutenant T'Pan, Deputy Chief Engineer.

WILLS

Ha. And...I take it you're not transferring off?

T'PAN

No sir.

WILLS

(sighing)

I haven't made a very good first impression, have I? I *always* do this...

T'Pan shakes her head. At the same time, West and McCarthy enter from the lower door.

MCCARTHY

It was dreadful. Ionised lightning everywhere, cutting into the hull. I'm surprised we made it out alive. Hell, we probably wouldn't have if it weren't for the navigation talents of young Ensign Park.

WEST

I thought you said that Mr Kayle was the Chief Navigator?

MCCARTHY

She didn't get to the bridge in time.

(to T'Pan)

Ah, Lieutenant. We were just up on engineering level two. There's a problem with the impulse vents there that really need your attention.

T'PAN

I'll get right on it, sir.

(to Wills, West)

Excuse me, Commanders.

T'Pan exits the room. McCarthy turns to Wills.

MCCARTHY

Tom Wills, isn't it?

WILLS

I see that my reputation precedes me.

They shake hands.

MCCARTHY

Welcome aboard. I must admit, I was rather surprised to hear that both you *and* Mr West were transferred from the Yeltsin at the same time. It seemed almost too coincidental.

Wills glances at West, who just indicates for him to say nothing. Before Wills can respond at all, though, we hear the chirps of the bosun's whistle.

RURA (OVER COMM.)

Bridge to the Commodore. Sir, I have a transmission on hold from Admiral Rowley. He says it's urgent.

McCarthy moves across the room into the office area. West and Wills follow. Pressing a button beside a desk-mounted monitor screen, he talks:

MCCARTHY

McCarthy here. Pipe it through to the engineering office.

The monitor activates, displaying Admiral Rowley sat in his Starbase office.

ROWLEY

Commodore.

MCCARTHY

Admiral. What can I do for you?

ROWLEY

We've just received an interesting report from the Igumi Field outpost. It's a scientific matter, and I'd like you to take a look at it.

MCCARTHY

Of course, sir. I'd be happy to.

ROWLEY

Good. Come to my office as soon as you can. Rowley out.

The transmission ends.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINTUKI II -- THE VENTURE STAR

The liner still drifts along, with the engineers outside working on the subspace antenna.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

As last time. Edwards paces up and down the deck. Nikkon is leaning over a Boatswain manning a side station.

NIKKON

Your surgeon reports that all anti-radiation packs have been distributed and administered. That should give us an extra forty minutes or so in this atmosphere.

Deleelos sits at the sensor station, tapping his finger nervously on the side. A light flashes beside his hand. He leans over to it, checking the readings. Suddenly, he breathes in sharply.

DELEELOS

Captain, I think the Klingon have found us.

EDWARDS

What? I thought you said scanners were useless in here.

DELEELOS

Yes, they are, but we've just been pinged by an active sensor sweep. They must have generated it from above, in the Kintuki II mesosphere.

EDWARDS

Dammit!
(into communicator)
Bridge to Athrune. We've been detected. How much longer-?

ATHRUNE (OVER COMM.)

Three minutes, Captain. Give me three more minutes.

DELEELOS

Sir, shall we start tacking maneuvers?

EDWARDS

We can't. The engineers out there aren't attached to the ship.

CUT TO:

T'KEGAN PERISCOPE

The gunsights of the Bird-of-Prey. They pan around, scanning the turbulent clouds of Kintuki II.

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

Morga is sat in his command chair with the gunnery rig lowered and attached to the seat. With his eyes to the periscope, he slowly turns the rig from port to starboard, sweeping the area in front of the ship.

MORGA

(in Klingonese)
I see nothing.

Aft of the bridge, Kavagh is sat at his station.

KAVAGH

(in Klingonese)
They are in there, my lord.

MORGA

(in Klingonese)
Ping them again.

Kavagh presses a red button. Darj watched a sensor display.

DARJ
 Contact, my lord. Bearing; Zero-
 Two-Four-Mark-Zero-Three-Five.

CUT TO:

T'KEGAN PERISCOPE

The sights move down to a new location in the clouds.

MORGA (O.S.)
 (in Klingonese)
 Switch to thermal!

The view changes to a Klingon version of thermal imaging. Just to the left of centre, a roughly-cylindrical shape appears. Swiftly, the crosshairs focus onto it.

CUT TO:

INT. T'KEGAN -- BRIDGE

A close-up on Morga. His thumb moves to the fire trigger, but pauses. Kavagh notices.

KAVAGH
 (in Klingonese)
 We have to force them out. This
 is the only way.

A moment passes as Morga deliberates. Then, with sudden resolve, he presses the trigger.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- THE T'KEGAN

The Klingon attack ship hovers over the Kintuki II atmosphere. A torpedo fires out of the bow launcher towards the clouds below.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BALLROOM

As the last time we saw this magnificent room, only now the tables have been moved aside. Four Deckhands are standing beside the large windows, watching the thick gasses outside. Liza is here as well, and appears to be in charge.

Something red flashes briefly in the distance. Liza's eyes are drawn to it.

LIZA
 Did you see that?

The Deckhands shake their heads.

LIZA (CONT'D)
I could have sworn I saw-

Out of the clouds, the Klingon torpedo arcs towards them!

LIZA (CONT'D)
(into communicator)
Torpedo incoming, starboard side!

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

Edwards shouts into his own communicator:

EDWARDS
All decks, brace for impact!

Everyone grabs a hold of something solid.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINTUKI II -- THE VENTURE STAR

The torpedo slams into the starboard shielding.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- ALL DECKS (MONTAGE)

A series of shots as the ship is violently jolted to port. Deckhands fall over in corridors, the Tellarite couple are thrown onto the deck in their cabin and everyone in the ballroom, including Liza, are sent skidding across the polished floor. Tables and chairs go with them, and in the kitchens, piles of dinner plates topple over and smash to the deck.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

Chaos. People get back on their feet as Deleelos reads off a damage report:

DELEELOS
Shields are gone! The jury-rigged systems have overloaded...we won't be able to get them back online without a week or two in dock.

NIKKON
Casualties reported on decks two through seven.

ATHRUNE (OVER COMM.)
 Athrune to bridge. That's it: the
 subspace antenna is back online.

EDWARDS
 (into communicator)
 Well done, Lieutenant! Get your
 men back inside.
 (to Deleelos)
 Divert as much power as we can
 spare to the communications
 systems and send out a distress
 call.

Deleelos nods and works away at his controls.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINTUKI II -- THE VENTURE STAR

Another torpedo vectors in. We follow it down through the
 clouds until it hits home on target: the Venture Star's
 central hull.

THOOM! The lower middle part of the ship disappears in a
 blossom of flame and debris. As we watch, the upper middle
 section starts to buckle inwards.

CUT TO:

INT. VENTURE STAR -- BRIDGE

The power is now out, and the room is lit only by weak
 emergency lighting. On a wall screen above Deleelos's head,
 a schematic of the ship reveals the damage inflicted.

DELEELOS
 (indicating schematic)
 Sir!

Edwards sighs, then nods.

EDWARDS
 Issue the order. Abandon ship.

Deleelos flicks a switch, activating a loud alert klaxon.

DELEELOS
 (into microphone)
 All decks, emergency procedure
 one. Abandon ship. Abandon ship.
 (beat)
 Man the lifeboats, children first.
 I repeat: man the lifeboats,
 children first.

EDWARDS

(to bridge crew)
 You've all done your duty to an
 exemplary level of competence,
 and for that I thank you. Now get
 yourselves to a lifeboat.

The crew begin to file out of the aft exits. Deleelos gives Edwards a final nod of respect, then moves to leave also.

NIKKON

Captain, what about you?

Edwards, alone at the front of the bridge, bows his head.

DELEELOS

He's staying. Come on, Doctor.

Shocked, Nikkon hurries over to Edwards' side.

NIKKON

Don't do this.

EDWARDS

I have to. It is my duty. This
 is my command, and I lost her.

DELEELOS

Doctor, we have to go. The ship
 is breaking up.

NIKKON

Alright, fine.

In one fluid move, Nikkon lands a judo-like chop to Edwards' neck. He is instantly knocked out cold, and Nikkon catches him before his limp body collapses onto the deck.

NIKKON (CONT'D)

I won't be responsible for your
 death too, Captain. Deleelos,
 help me with him.

Nikkon slides under one of Edwards' arms as Deleelos moves under the other. They hoist him up and carry him away toward the exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINTUKI II -- THE VENTURE STAR

A close-up on the hull. Little hatches blow away as several dozen rectangular lifeboats boost out of their ports. With thrusters at maximum, the group of pods blast away into the surrounding clouds.

Finally, with a dying groan, the valiant Venture Star breaks in two. Both sections slowly disappear, sinking to the depths of the planet below.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD

Re-establishing the asteroid base once again.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD -- CONTROL ROOM

As last we saw it. Isiit-Da and Sowards are standing beside Jameson at his station. They are facing the large wall-mounted viewscreen across the room, on which is displayed Rowley and McCarthy in the Admiral's office from Act Two. The gardens over their shoulders are now simulating a nighttime environment.

MCCARTHY

This is truly fascinating data. I've never seen a natural storm act like this before. And look at the materials its made up of; only thirty-three percent of them are known to our science.

ROWLEY

Commander, you said the storm would hit you any minute now. Are you confident that the base can withstand the force of the wavefront?

ISIIT-DA

Mr Sowards has assured me that we are in no danger from that, sir, but I've diverted all auxiliary power to the deflector screens as a precaution.

SOWARDS

Of course, if this thing is *more* than a simple storm...

He trails off. The others all understand what he is implying.

ROWLEY

If...*if* that thing is anything more than a storm, standard first contact regulations apply.

ISIIT-DA

Understood, sir.

Jameson's station bleeps. He looks at the sensor display.

JAMESON
Sirs...it's here.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD

The entire starfield ahead of the outpost disappears from sight as a wall of bright blue bursts into view and blankets out the distant worlds.

It is the Cloud, just as we saw in the Teaser.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD -- CONTROL ROOM

As before. The communication from Starbase 39 starts to wave on the screen and emit static noises from the speakers.

ROWLEY
Comma...also watching you from
Kubrick...and the outpost on
Mytre III. We'll try and...

Sharply, the transmission is cut off. Sowards glances at some wall displays.

SOWARDS
There's some kind of subspace
disruption field emanating from
the cloud. That's why we've been
reading it as a fuzzy area of
static on our scanners.

JAMESON
Sirs, the storm has stopped. It
isn't moving.

Isiit-Da looks at the Cloud on the viewscreen. It is beautiful, ethereal and enchanting.

ISIIT-DA
That is no storm, Midshipman.

SOWARDS
I can't get any readings from
inside it. Scans won't penetrate
any deeper than exactly three-
hundred metres beneath the outer
edge.

(thinking)
Mr Jameson, open a radio channel.

ISIIT-DA
Lieutenant?

SOWARDS
I'm going to try and communicate
with it.

Jameson taps a few keys on his panel.

JAMESON
Channel open, sir.

SOWARDS
This is Lieutenant Dean Sowards
of the United Federation-

SKREEEEEE! A horrible, high-pitched wail bursts out of the speakers. The outpost crew cover their ears, trying to block the sound out, but it does no good. They collapse onto the floor, writhing in terrible pain.

We cut through several close-ups of Jameson, Isiit-Da, Sowards and the NCOs. Their ears begin to bleed.

Then, just as abruptly, the sound stops. There is only silence. Everyone lays still on the deck. We can't tell if they are alive or dead.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE -- OUTPOST IGUMI FIELD

A lightning tendril lashes out of the Cloud. It strikes the centre of the base, arcing out and bouncing all across the asteroid surface.

The lightning stops. The outpost is dead, drained of any power.

Slowly, the Cloud moves forward and begins to encompass not just the base, but the entire asteroid field. Several seconds pass, then the Cloud moves off.

We look back at the asteroids. None of them are harmed, except for the largest one where the Starfleet outpost was located.

It is gone. On this silent image, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

END OF PART I

TO BE CONTINUED...

S T A R ★ T R E K
THE ATLANTIS CHRONICLES

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Star Trek: The Atlantis Chronicles was created by Adam Murray Briggs.
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