

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION "The rook"

By

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STAR TREK

by Gene Roddenberry

SECOND DRAFT

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STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"the rook"

**CAST**

PICARD	JACOBS
RIKER	LASET
GEORDI	TIVEK
BEVERLY	
TROI	
DATA	

**WORF**

GUINAN

**non-speaking**

ENGINEERS

CREW MEMBERS

WAITER

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

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**SETS**

**INTERIORS**

MAIN BRIDGE  
CAPTAINS READY ROOM  
OBSERVATION LOUNGE  
TURBOLIFT  
TEN FORWARD

**EXTERIORS**

USS ENTERPRISE  
DOMEL FOUR  
GALORS

(CONTINUED)

SICKBAY

PICARD'S QUARTERS

MAIN ENGINEERING

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

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**PRONUNCIATION GUIDE**

LASET	LA-set
TIVEK	tiv-EK
MAQUIS	MAW-kee
CARDASSIAN	car-DASS-ee-en
DOMEL	DOM-el
LEVIT	lay-VIT
GALOR	GAL-aur

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE- THE ENTERPRISE

The ship flies gracefully past.

PICARD

(v.o.)

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

CUT TO.

INT. TEN FORWARD

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

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

TIVEK

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

JACOBS

I have a brother in the demilitarized zone.

(beat)

If you had heard the stories, you wouldn't judge them so harshly.

TIVEK

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

JACOBS

They're being brutally harassed everyday. They live in fear.

TIVEK

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

JACOBS

(appalled)

Illogical!

(beat)

They built their lives on those colonies, raised their children there, made their homes there. Of course they didn't want to leave!

TIVEK

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

JACOBS

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

(CONTINUED)

A waiter brings drinks. they take them.

JACOBS  
(to waiter)  
Thanks.

TIVEK  
It served the needs of the many.

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

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

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

JACOBS  
I think that the Maquis are  
fighting against injustice.

TIVEK  
By way of murder and terrorism.

Jacobs looks up.

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

TIVEK  
Does that excuse killing for you?

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

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

Jacobs drinks the last of her drink.

(CONTINUED)

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

She leaves ten forward.

C.U OF GUINAN

she watches as Jacobs leaves.

ANGLE ON TIVEK

Off Tivek's contemplative expression-

CUT TO.

INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS

Where Picard and Riker are playing a friendly game of three dimensional chess. Picard is losing. Badly. Riker makes a cunning and devastating move. Picard frowns.

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

RIKER  
(smiling smugly)  
Nonsense.

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

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

ANGLE ON CHESSBOARD

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

(CONTINUED)

PICARD  
How are those crew rotation reports  
coming along.

RIKER  
(despondent)  
Oh, don't ask me.

PICARD  
(grinning)  
Too late.

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

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

RIKER  
I'd better become Captain then.

PICARD  
(chuckling)  
it'd be about time.

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

Q  
(O.C.)  
Checkmate Picard.

ANGLE ON Q

who has replaced Riker in his seat.

(CONTINUED)

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

Off Picard's reaction.

END OF TEASER

FADE OUT:

ACT ONE

INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS

CONTINUED:

Picard stands up.

PICARD  
(angry and suprised)  
Q!

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

Q picks up Picards rook and examines it. He then holds it up  
to picard.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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

PICARD  
(scoffing)  
to visit me.

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

PICARD  
no

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

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

Q  
Games Picard, games.

Q gets up and moves close to Picard.

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

PICARD  
then why are you here?

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

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

INT. BRIDGE

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

RIKER  
(to picard)  
captain how-?

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

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

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

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

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

Q  
better.

ANGLE ON PICARD

he looks unfazed.

ANGLE ON RIKER

RIKER  
why are you here Q.

ANGLE ON Q AND VIEW SCREEN

Q  
(enthusiastic)  
YES Riker, to business!

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

(CONTINUED)

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

Data looks at the view screen.

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

ANGLE ON BEVERLY

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

C.U OF JACOBS

she recognizes this system.

ANGLE ON RIKER

RIKER  
if memory serves, there's a  
cardassian colony in The Levit  
system.

ANGLE ON DATA AND Q

DATA  
correct Commander. population  
2,046.

Q  
(smiling devilishly)  
yes.

Q walks up close to picard.

ANGLE ON PICARD

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

PICARD  
 Mr Data, is what he said true.

DATA sits at his console and taps the controls.

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

a few beats of silence

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

RIKER.  
 yes sir.

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

GEORDI  
aye sir

PICARD  
(to all)  
i will contact Starfleet.

PICARD turns and enters-

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM

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

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

WORFS VOICE  
aye sir.

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

PICARD  
admiral th-

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

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

Q terminates the transmission. off PICARD's reaction-

INT. BRIDGE

C.U. OF JACOBS

She looks disturbed by the recent events.

FADE OUT.

INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

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

PICARD  
Well, it seems we have a problem.

DATA  
indeed.

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

ANGLE ON TROI

TROI  
three?! that's a little excessive.

ANGLE ON RIKER

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

ANGLE ON GEORDI

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

WIDE SHOT

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

ANGLE ON GEORDI AND DATA

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

(CONTINUED)

DATA

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

GEORDI

we could delay the stars decay by about two weeks. that should be enough time to evacuate the colonists.

(beat)

but i can't stress enough, this is real long shot. There's a big possibility it won't work. also if it takes too long we might not have enoughh time to get to either colony.

ANGLE ON WORF

WORF

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD

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

ANGLE ON BEVERLY

BEVERLY

how are we going to choose?

ANGLE ON DATA

DATA

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

ANGLE ON WORF

WORF

(appalled)

they are Cardassians.

(to picard)

we cannot abandon federation citizens.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON RIKER

RIKER

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

ANGLE ON BEVERLY

BEVERLY

the Domel 4 colony is famous for its medical and terraforming research facilities.

(beat)

the researchers there helps to save thousands of lives every year.

RIKER

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

PICARD

(to Data)

what do we know of the Levit colony?

DATA

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

WORF

(scoffing)

they make sauce and drink.

DATA

(correcting)

they grow the ingredients. there is a large market in the Cardassian union for non-replicated Yamak sauce and Kanar.

(beat)

the Cardassian government will no doubt be displeased if such a...

(choosing words)

lucrative colony were to be lost.

(beat)

that is possibly why they are showing as much interest as they are.

(CONTINUED)

WORF

(angry)

they only want to save their colony  
for it's monetary gain, like bunch  
of Ferengi!

DATA

that is a possibility but it is  
only supposition.

WORF

Pah! Cardassians have no honor!

PICARD

this debate will obviously be quite  
divisive, so i think we should  
focus our efforts on a more  
universal solution.

(to Geordi)

how long will it take to outfit  
those probes?

GEORDI

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

Picard considers for beat.

PICARD

make it so.

we hear the intercom chime.

CREWMAN VOICE

(over intercom)

captain, the Cardassians have  
arrived. Gul Laset is requesting to  
come aboard.

PICARD

(to intercom)

inform transporter room 3.

(to all)

dismissed.

the officers get up and file out the room.

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND GALOR'S

we see the enterprise confronted by three Cardassian Galor cruisers.

CUT TO.

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM

C.U. OF REPLICATOR.

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

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

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

LASET  
no thank you Captain.

PICARD  
(polite)  
very well.

Picard sits at his desk.

PICARD  
(gesturing to chair)  
please sit.

Laset does so.

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

(beat)  
they worry me deeply.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Laset thinks for a few beats.

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

PICARD  
Be glad I'm not you.

ANGLE ON LASET

LASET  
I am.

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

(CONTINUED)

LASET

I don't much care if the Central command wants me to save their profits or our people. I'm here to save that colony.

(beat. with weight)

therefore i must inform you captain, if the time comes, i will have my troops commandeer this vessel and take it Levit 6.

(beat)

i have my orders.

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD looks worried but not entirely surprised.

PICARD

(with weight)

understood.

(with forced politeness)

we've prepared quarters for you during your stay. i hope you'll be comfortable.

ANGLE ON LASET

LASET

(also with forced politeness)

thank you Captain.

CUT TO.

INT. ENGINEERING

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

JACOBS

i just think this is a little irresponsible.

TIVEK

irresponsible?

JACOBS

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

(CONTINUED)

TIVEK  
what alternative would you suggest.

JACOBS  
i don't have an alternative.

TIVEK  
then why object?

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

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

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

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

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

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

a few beats pass in silence.

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

TIVEK  
i think that it is a probability.

off JACOBS reaction-

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND GALOR'S

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

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM

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

ANGLE ON Q

Q  
so who's to be the rook Picard?

ANGLE ON PICARD

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

ANGLE ON Q

Q  
(mocking)  
oh yes, your probes.  
(smiling)  
what an amusing little idea.

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD  
(impatient)  
go away Q.

ANGLE ON Q

Q  
(ignoring picard)  
well, i suppose if your probes fail you'll have to choose anyway. i wonder how you'll choose? it's a difficult decision.  
(grinning)  
but then what would be the point in anything less.

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

(CONTINUED)

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

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

ANGLE ON Q

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD tries to ignore Q

ANGLE ON Q

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

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

ANGLE ON Q

Q  
(continued)  
and it's not just what they did to  
you. no. they're guilty of much  
much more. the occupation of Bajor.  
fifty years of oppressing a  
peaceful people. strip mining,  
Labor camps, rape and executions.  
all manner of horrors.  
(beat)  
oh, lets not forget border wars.  
They ruthless weren't they. I  
wonder how many federation soldiers  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Q (cont'd)  
died? a thousand maybe. they didn't  
care about civilian lives either.  
they killed just as many.

ANGLE ON PICARD

picard takes a sip of tea, pretending Q isn't getting too  
him. it's painfully obvious.

ANGLE ON Q

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

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

ANGLE ON Q

pressing on.

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

Picard shuffles. it's getting much more and more difficult  
to ignore Q.

PICARD  
this will not work Q.

ANGLE ON Q

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

(CONTINUED)

PICARD slams the pad he's working on, on the desk. Qs finally done it.

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

ANGLE ON Q

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

PICARD  
I AM NOT LOCUTUS!

WIDE SHOT

a beat passes. calm returns.

ANGLE ON Q

Q  
maybe not  
(beat)  
but we will see.

ANGLE ON PICARD

Q flashes away. Off Picards expression-

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT 1

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND GALOR'S

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

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

(CONTINUED)

PICARD (cont'd)  
communication with the Domel 4  
colony.

(beat)  
i regret that my relationship with  
the administrator is somewhat  
deteriorating.

INT. CAPTAINS READY ROOM

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

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

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

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

PICARD  
(V.O. PICARD)  
not anymore.

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

PICARD  
i sympathize with those colonists  
but they new the risks of living  
under Cardassian rule.

(CONTINUED)

VOT

no Captain, they didn't want to leave their homes. So they were forced to live under Cardassian rule after the government that was supposed represent them, abandoned them!

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

VOT

(continued)

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

VOT closes the transmission. Picard sighs.

CUT TO.

INT. JACOBS QUARTERS

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

SECURE TRANSMISSION

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

ANGLE ON BEN

BEN

Annie?

JACOBS

Ben i-

BEN

(delighted)

it's been a while since we spoke.  
how have you b-

ANGLE ON JACOBS

JACOBS

Ben, i don't have time. i need to ask you something.

( a beat of hesitation)

Are you part of the Maquis?

ANGLE ON BEN

(CONTINUED)

Ben looks suddenly tense.

ANGLE ON JACOBS

JACOBS  
(continued)  
it's a secure channel.

ANGLE ON BEN

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

BEN  
(suspicious)  
how did you know?

ANGLE ON JACOBS

JACOBS  
(smiling)  
the way you talk about them.

ANGLE ON BEN

BEN  
are you gonna turn me in.

ANGLE ON JACOBS

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

ANGLE ON BEN

BEN  
what?

CUT TO.

INT. ENGINEERING

DATA and QEORDI work on the probes.

DATA  
Geordi?

(CONTINUED)

GEORDI

yeah.

DATA

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

GEORDI

they think we're wasting time.

(beat)

they don't like that we are putting our people at risk to save cardassians.

DATA

then they are prejudiced.

GEORDI

yeah i guess. but it's not as simple as that.

(beat)

some of the people on board fought the Cardassians in the border wars. when you've fought someone, your perception of them becomes... warped.

(beat)

they're always the enemy.

DATA

they cannot see the value in cardassian lives?

GEORDI

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

Off Data's perplexed expression-

INT. JACOBS QUARTERS

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

BEN

(angry)

it's just like star fleet to bend over for the Cardassians.

(CONTINUED)

JACOBS  
i don't know if he'll actually pick  
the card-

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

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

JACOBS  
no, i-i can't.

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

JACOBS  
I'm not Maquis.

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

ANGLE ON JACOBS

she looks tense.

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

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

Off JACOBS reaction-

FADE OUT.

INT. BRIDGE

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

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

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

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

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

RIKER  
crew compliment?

WORF  
eight.

PICARD  
(to WORF)  
open a channel.

WORF  
done.

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

PICARD looks at WORF.

WORF  
no response.

PICARD looks at LASET.

(CONTINUED)

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

Worf shakes his head.

WORF  
still no response.

LASET  
I ORDER YOU TO RETURN!

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

ANGLE ON the bridge.

RIKER  
(to WORF)  
transporter range?

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

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

LASET  
absolutely not!

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

LASET  
you will not fire on Cardassian  
ship!

PICARD  
Gul Laset if we could just disable  
them w-

another sensor warning.

(CONTINUED)

WORF  
sir, i am detecting a warp core  
breach!

PICARD thinking quickly.

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

ANGLE ON VIEW SCREEN.

the freighter explodes.

ANGLE ON LASET

who's face is bathed in orange light from the explosion. a  
beat of silence.

LASET  
life signs?

WORF  
none.

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

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

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

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

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

picard looks round at Q.

Q  
(continued)  
Is it even worth it to save them if  
they just kill themselves.

(CONTINUED)

Q grins as he flashes away. Off PICARDS reaction.

CUT TO.

INT. TEN FORWARD

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

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

JACOBS  
(a little startled)  
Guinan.

GUINAN  
Lieutenant Jacobs, isn't it?

JACOBS  
yeah.

a beat.

GUINAN  
(gesturing to the window)  
looking for something.

JACOBS  
no... I don't know.

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

GUINAN  
well of course it does.

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

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

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

GUINAN  
i think the captain agrees with  
you.

JACOBS  
what!?

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

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

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

GUINAN  
but we're not Cardassian, are we.

Jacobs thinks for a few beats.

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

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

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

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

CUT TO.

INT. ENGINEERING

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

PICARD  
(to GEORDI)  
How are things coming?

(CONTINUED)

GEORDI

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

PICARD

you have three hours lieutenant commander.

GEORDI

they'll be done sir.

PICARD

I know. your doing fine work.

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

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

without warning GEORDI appears behind her. she jumps.

GEORDI

(apologetic)

hey, sorry. didn't men to sneak.

JACOBS

i-it's fine sir. sorry.

GEORDI

(politely curious)

what were you doing?

she thinks fast.

JACOBS

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

GEORDI

oh, no need i just did that.

JACOBS

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

(CONTINUED)

GEORDI

Good idea. Carry on lieutenant.

Geordi walks away. JACOBS looks relieved.

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

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

DATA

lieutenant Jacobs why have you-

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

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

DATA

medical teams to engineering.

INT. BRIDGE

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

HELM

captain, we are moving! I can't stop it!

PICARD

what!?

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND GALORS

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

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

DATA'S VOICE

Data to bridge, we have an emergency.

(CONTINUED)

PICARD  
whats going on!?

INT. ENGINEERING

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

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

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

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

PICARD  
Mr Data if you would please make haste.

INT. ENGINEERING

CONTINUED:

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

ANGLE ON JACOBS

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

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

LASET'S VOICE  
(over subspace)  
Captain! what are you doing!?

Off PICARDS confused and alarmed expression-

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AT WARP, GALORS IN PURSUIT

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

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

the bridge is rocked.

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

PICARD  
damage report?

WORF  
minimal. shields down to seventy  
percent.

they are hit again. the ship shakes.

INT. ENGINEERING

CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)



PICARD

Picard to engineering. what the hell happened?

INT. ENGINEERING

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON DATA AND DAMAGED PROBES

DATA

Captain, the probes have been damaged.

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON PICARD AND RIKER

DATA

(continued)

if find it unlikely that they can be repaired in the allotted time.

Picard and Riker share a concerned look.

LASET'S VOICE

(over subspace)

Captain, i thought you said you would try to save all the colonists.

PICARD

(to Laset)

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

INT. SICK BAY

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

PICARD

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

(CONTINUED)

GEORDI  
i don't know Captain. two maybe  
three hours.

PICARD  
you have one a a half.

CRUSHER  
Captain could please not surround  
my patient.

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

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

GEORDI  
I'll get it done for you Captain.

PICARD  
(smiling)  
i don't doubt it.

Data and Geordi leave.

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

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

INT. CORRIDOR

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

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

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

INT. TURBOLIFT

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

PICARD

brig.

the trubolift activates.

Q

(continued)

what will you do Picard? choose i suppose. but whom? if you choose your own people you start a war. if you don't you kill them. And lets not forget those colonists are giants in field of medicine and the Cardassians are just little framers.

(beat)

all the pieces are set out for you picard. how will you play?

PICARD

i thought you said there would be no games?

Q

oh well, whats life without games. and it seems today that all the galaxys a chess board. accept you can never fully win

(with delight)

but you can most certainly lose.

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

INT. CORRIDOR TWO

picard walks until he reaches the brig door.

INT. BRIG

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

JACOBS

captain.

a beat of silent tension.

(CONTINUED)

PICARD  
lieutenant.

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

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

she doesn't reply. more long beats.

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

he starts to walk away until-

JACOBS  
captain.

he looks around.

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

She can't think of words.

PICARD  
was what? wrong.

JACOBS  
yes

PICARD  
why?

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

(CONTINUED)

JACOBS (cont'd)  
can to hurt federation citizens in  
the demilitarized zone, for as long  
as they've been there!

a beat as picard thinks of a response.

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

JACOBS  
well, yes of course.

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

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

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

JACOBS  
yes.

PICARD  
they posed an enormous threat?

JACOBS  
yes.

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

JACOBS  
(beginning to see the point)  
no.

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

PICARD  
(authoritative)  
as starfleet officers it is our  
duty preserve life, all life and  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PICARD (cont'd)  
 life in every form. we are out here  
 to seek out new life and new  
 civilizations, not judge them. the  
 cardassians government is a violent  
 and authoritarian regimme but that  
 does not diminish the value of  
 their civilians lives.

(beat)

as a starfleet officer i cannot and  
 will not place value on lives based  
 on species and politics.

(beat)

The colonists on the Levit colony  
 have just as much right to live as  
 any federation citizen. i will not  
 turn my back on them simply because  
 they are Cardassian!

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

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

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

INT. CAPTAINS QUATERS

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

PICARD  
 come.

GUINAN walks in smiling. Picard sits up a little.

PICARD  
 what can i do for you Guinan?

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

(CONTINUED)

PICARD

Yes I'm quite aware.

(beat)

as long as they do their duty, they  
can disagree. If they choose.

GUINAN

they might be right. for the wrong  
reasons.

(beat)

but they might be right.

Picard looks confused but curious.

PICARD

what are you are trying to tell me?

Guinan sits on the guest settee.

GUINAN

have you heard the ancient Ferengi  
legend of Tolstat?

PICARD

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

GUINAN

(interrupting)

It's a great story.

(beat)

Tolstat was an amazing business  
man. he earned more Latinum than  
any other Ferengi ever before. he  
owned a massive business empire  
that bankrupt everyone else on  
Ferenginar.

(beat)

he was the richest Ferengi of all  
time.

PICARD

Well that's certainly Ferengi  
folklore for you.

GUINAN

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

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GUINAN (cont'd)

around about the same time his archeologists found an ancient flooded city. It had huge numbers of priceless artifacts. but it was deep under water so those artifacts were equally expensive to extract.

(beat)

Tolstats advisers told him he couldn't extract goods from both of them. he wouldn't make a profit. It would be too expensive. he had to pick one. but Tolstat said "no"! he wanted it all. he didn't want his enemies to acquire his profit.

(beat)

so he had them both extracted and do you know what happened.

(beat)

it drove his business into Bankruptcy.

(beat)

his empire fell. he had nothing left. all because he held his values over what was best.

(beat)

Ferengi values but values all the same.

PICARD

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

GUINAN

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

PICARD

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

GUINAN

and what if you can't save them both?

Picard doesn't have an answer.

(CONTINUED)

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

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

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

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

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

GEORDI  
(over comm badge)  
la forge to Captain.

PICARD  
go ahead.

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

Picard is pleasantly startled.

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

Picard gets up and walks out of his quarters.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. BRIDGE

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

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

GEORDI'S VOICE  
about three minutes captain.

PICARD  
wonderful work lieutenant  
commander.

GEORDI'S VOICE  
your very welcome.

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

RIKER  
i hope Q's watching.

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

PICARD  
open a channel to Gul Laset's ship.

WORF  
channel open. they are responding.

PICARD  
on screen.

ANGLE ON VIEWER

LASET's face appears.

LASET  
what Captain?

(CONTINUED)

PICARD

Our probes a have been repaired and are ready to launch.

LASET

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

PICARD

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

LASET

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

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

RIKER

that's gratitude for you.

PICARD

(to riker)

I think we can go on without gratitude.

GEORDI'S VOICE

captain, the probes are ready to launch.

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

PICARD

Mr Worf prepare to launch.

WORF

probes are loaded sir.

a beat.

PICARD

fire.

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE

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

ANGLE ON THE PROBES

As they move away. they head on different courses. one to either star system.

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

WORF  
the probes have reached their  
targets.

RIKER  
lets hope this works.

EXT. SPACE- PROBE AND STAR

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

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

WORF  
graviton emitters have activated.

DATA  
the gravitational pressure within  
the star is diminishing.

picard grins a little.

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

Q flashes suddenly into the middle of the bridge.

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

ANGLE ON VIEWER.

Q clicks his fingers at the stars.

EXT. SPACE- PROBE AND STAR

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

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON DATA.

DATA

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

ANGLE ON PICARD AND RIKER.

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

Q

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

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

LASET'S VOICE

(over subspace)

it seems your plan has failed. I'm sorry captain but i must do what i have to do.

the transmission is closed and the ship shakes.

WORF

Captain the cardassian ships have opened fire! they are attempting to collapse our shields.

(beat)

Captain?

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

WORF  
captain! we must act now!

Picard swallows.

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

HELM  
(shocked)  
captain!?

PICARD  
that's an order!

HELM  
(reluctant)  
yes sir.

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE AND GALORS

The enterprise flies past the Galors and goes to warp.

INT. BRIDGE

CONTINUED:

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

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN FROM WHITE:

EXT. DOMEL FOUR GARDEN. DAY

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

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

(CONTINUED)

Q  
why captain, don't you recognize  
the planet you've just doomed.

Picard catches on and looks up at the sky.

ANGLE ON THE STAR

it is normal.

PICARD  
why isn't this planet vapourized.

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

a few beats as Picard processes this information.

PICARD  
it was an illusion.  
(beat and with anger)  
why?!

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

PICARD  
you terrorised two colonies! you  
made them believe they may die! and  
you made me think i was had to  
choose between them!  
(beat)  
i am not amussed in the slightest  
by this Q!

Q  
And nor should you be.  
(beat)  
this was a test of you picard.

PICARD  
A test of me.

Q  
yes.

Q starts to walk toward Picard. after a beat-

(CONTINUED)

Q

(continued)

we wanted to see what you would do  
and we wanted to see what you  
learned from it.

(beat)

you made a most interesting  
decision Picard. there were many in  
the continuum that thought you  
would simply save your own. instead  
you chose to save the cardassians.

PICARD

(thinking for a beat)

War was too unpleasant an option.

(beat)

if i had let that colony die, there  
would have been war.

Q

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

PICARD

it seems we keep surprising you.

Q

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

PICARD

and we will keep advancing.

Q

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

ANGLE ON PICARD

he looks queasy.

(CONTINUED)

PICARD

no.

ANGLE ON Q.

Q

yes. you are beholdent to your idea of morals and ethics, but when it comes down to it, it's not as easy as simply doing whats right.

(beat)

that is what you have learned today. it's not as simple as the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

(beat)

and it never will be.

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

INT. BRIDGE

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

RIKER

Captian?

Picard doesn't answer for a beat.

PICARD

(to Data)

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

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

DATA

(suprised)

The Domel star is stable. The colony is undamaged.

Picard grins a little.

PICARD

i thought so.

(to riker)

it was a trick.

Riker looks anoyed but not all that suprised.

(CONTINUED)

PICARD

(continued)

i think it would be a good idea to contact Domel four and the cardassians and inform them. in the mean time, we should get under way.

RIKER

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

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

PICARD

Engage.

CUT TO.

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE

The enterprise flies at warp through space.

PICARD

(V.O)

Captains log, supplemental. We have dropped off the folendra nebula samples at star base 26-- along with lieutenant Jacobs. We are now underway to sector four three eight to map unexplored space.

(beat)

Thankfully the crew has calmed after the recent events. But i am afriad to say i'm still troubled by my own descions.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTIANS READY ROOM

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

ANGLE ON THE ROOK CHESS PIECE

we hear the door chime.

ANGLE ON PICARD

(CONTINUED)

PICARD

Come.

ANGLE ON DATA.

The door opens and Data enters.

PICARD

(pleased)

Mr Data.

DATA

Captain.

PICARD

Is there something you need  
Commander?

DATA

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

PICARD

Of course. sit down.

Data sits on the guest sofa.

DATA

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

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

PICARD

(simplifyng)

war was not an option.

DATA

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

PICARD

Data, whatever decision i made  
would have been good enough reason  
for sleepless nights.

(beat)

i had to reduce sentient beings down  
how useful they were to the  
federation and to the galaxy. i had  
to forget about their lives and  
families.

(CONTINUED)

(beat)

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

DATA

A contradiction.

PICARD

yes.

(beat)

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

DATA

you chose to do what was best for the majority.

PICARD

yes, but that doesn't necessarily make my decsision correct.

DATA

(perplexed)

then... which philosophy was correct?

PICARD

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

WIDE SHOT

Picard and Data linger in silence for a beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE- ENTERPRISE

the ship flies away into the vastness of space.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END