

Star Trek:
Bearer of Burdens

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FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Federation starship Enterprise NCC-1701 orbits a planet.

KIRK (V.O.)

Captain's Log, stardate 6025.6:
Starfleet has assigned the Enterprise
to investigate raider activity in the
Kaytor system. The inhabitants have
declined invitations to join the
Federation.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

JAMES "JIM" KIRK sits at a desk, somber.

KIRK

Addendum personal log: Starfleet has
offered me a promotion. I am loathe to
leave but somehow eager to embrace the
next challenge.

He sighs, rubs his forehead.

ELEVATOR - MINUTES LATER

SPOCK waits inside as Kirk enters.

SPOCK

(to computer)
Bridge.

He scrutinizes Kirk.

SPOCK

Are you all right, Captain?

KIRK

Nothing a good night's sleep can't
fix.

The levels go by.

SPOCK

Perhaps, the doctor could help.

They reach bridge level.

KIRK

Spock, I --

The elevator door slides open, TWO CREW MEMBERS enter.

CREW MEMBERS
Captain. Mister Spock.

KIRK
-- will talk with you later.

Spock arches an eyebrow.

BRIDGE

MONTGOMERY "SCOTTY" SCOTT sits in the captain's chair. The crew consists of HIKARU SULU, NYOTA UHURU, PAVEL CHEKOV and JANICE RAND.

Kirk and Spock enter. Kirk strides to the chair as Scotty vacates it. Spock and Scotty stand next to Kirk.

KIRK
Status, Mister Scott.

SCOTTY
Aye, Captain. Everything is in top form, sir. We're orbiting Kaytor, waiting for your instructions.

KIRK
Thank you, Mister Scott. Uhuru, get the Viceroy. Mister Spock, report.

SPOCK
Kaytor and the surrounding systems are rich in resources including dilithium crystals.

On ship's screen: A schematic image of Kaytor and the neighboring systems.

SPOCK
The Kaytorians have a peaceful yet competitive merchant society.

On ship's screen: A number of spots appear on the schematic.

SPOCK
The number of raids indicate a well-organized operation.

Rand carries a grey metal clipboard to Kirk. He signs it without looking.

KIRK
Anything else?

SPOCK
The dilithium deposits do not allow a scan of the planet but will not interfere with the transporter.

UHURU
Captain, I have the Viceroy on comm.

KIRK
On screen.

On ship's screen: VICEROY GARETH, thin, 50s, stands in a modern office. Kaytorians look Earth normal except their heads are covered in form-fitting feathers.

INTERCUT between Kirk and screen.

KIRK
Viceroy, I am Captain James T. Kirk of the Federation starship Enterprise. We are looking for raiders reported in nearby Federation settlements.

VICEROY
Ah, the Federation. If you don't like the answer the first time, try, try again?

KIRK
We are here on assignment and would appreciate any information you have.

VICEROY
I assure you, raiders we can deal with. Federation membership we cannot. No profit in it.

The Viceroy looks away for a moment. Nods his head.

VICEROY
Captain, we have made changes to our security. Why don't you come to my country lodge and we can talk about it? Coordinates to follow.

INT. VICEROY'S OFFICE

The office screen goes blank. The Viceroy turns to an unidentified hooded figure. The hood lifts to reveal...
HORVATH, 50s, Klingon.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Kirk stands.

KIRK
Why the sudden change?

CHEKOV
It's a trap.

SCOTTY
Aye.

SPOCK
Captain, I respectfully ask to go in
your place.

KIRK
Denied. Sulu and Chekov, let's go.
Scotty, you have the con.

Scotty sits in the command chair. Spock stands immobile.

KIRK
Well, come on, Spock. Let's see if you
inherited any diplomatic skills.

TRANSPORTER ROOM

Kirk, Spock, Sulu and Chekov stand on the circular pads. Sulu carries a phaser rifle.

A TRANSPORTER CHIEF stands at a console, slides the handle controls. The four crew members transport in a field of glittering lights.

EXT. KAYTOR - FOREST CLEARING

Kirk, Spock, Sulu and Chekov materialize. Sulu dashes into the brush. Kirk and Chekov draw their phasers. Spock reads a tricorder.

CHEKOV
This isn't a country lodge, sir.

KIRK
We knew that when we beamed down here.
Focus, ensign.

SPOCK
Captain, a life form directly in front
of us. It is a --

Leaves shake, the men aim their weapons at the spot.

SPOCK

Klingon.

Out of the forest leaps NEEYUN, late teens, a Klingon female, scantily clad, armed with a nasty looking knife. Her Klingon facial features are not as pronounced as a male Klingon.

NEEYUN

Federation! You not be here. I hunt tecklar not you.

KIRK

What are Klingons doing on Kaytor?

She moves her eyes from side to side.

NEEYUN

What you do here?

KIRK

Raiders are stealing cargo loads from Kaytor --

She continues to look from side to side. Chekov spies movement in a bush.

CHEKOV

Captain!

He shoots. The phaser emits a laser-like beam with a sizzling intensity into the forest covering.

KIRK

No!

Neeyun throws her knife arrow straight, strikes Chekov in his shooting shoulder.

Chekov collapses. Spock catches the bleeding Chekov.

CHEKOV

Ah! That stings like... like...
Russian bee.

SPOCK

If I pull the knife out, you'll bleed to death. I can slow your heart.

CHEKOV

How?

Spock grabs Chekov's shoulder. Chekov's body goes limp.

SEVERAL KLINGON WARRIORS burst through the forest covering beside Neeyun. JUNOK, late 20s, big Klingon, speaks first.

JUNOK

Neeyun, your father worries. Go.

NEEYUN

My hunt. They ruin it.

JUNOK

I will tell the warriors your knife is deep in Federation flesh.

NEEYUN

Mine to kill.

JUNOK

Go! Horvath waits.

Neeyun departs, frustrated.

KIRK

I ask again, what are Klingons doing on Kaytor?

JUNOK

You not welcome here.

KIRK

Mister Sulu?

SULU

Here, Captain.

Sulu pokes his phaser rifle out of the brush. Junok sneers but does nothing.

SULU

Waiting for your order, sir.

SPOCK

Chekov needs medical attention.

KIRK

Go.

Spock flips his communicator open.

SPOCK

Enterprise. Two to beam up. Medical alert.

Spock and Chekov beam up.

SULU
More Klingons on the way, sir.

Sulu breaks cover, walks toward Kirk. His rifle aims at the warriors.

SULU
Captain, time to go.

KIRK
Enterprise, two to beam up.

They dematerialize. The Klingons grumble and return back to the forest. Neeyun peeks out from her hiding spot.

INT. ENTERPRISE - TRANSPORTER ROOM

A TRANSPORTER CHIEF works the controls.

Spock and Chekov materialize. Chekov slumps as the beam turns off. A hellish knife protrudes from his shoulder.

DOCTOR LEONARD "BONES" MCCOY strides in. NURSE CHRISTINE CHAPEL rolls in a gurney. Spock places Chekov on it. McCoy waves a tricorder over the wound.

MCCOY
Chekov's heart rate has slowed down so
loss of blood was minimal. What did
you do?

Chapel rolls Chekov out of the room.

SPOCK
I simply applied pressure to a nerve
cluster in the right shoulder.

MCCOY
Now, I'll have to stop short sheeting
your bunk.

The chief works the transporter again, beams up Kirk, Sulu.

MCCOY
Jim, what happened down there?

KIRK
Ambush, Bones. Spock, bridge in five
minutes.

Kirk strides to the door, stops. His shoulders sag.

KIRK
How is Chekov?

MCCOY
Just a scratch, Jim. He'll survive.

Kirk continues out the door.

BRIDGE

Kirk sits. Crew Sulu and Uhuru. Spock stands by Kirk.

KIRK
Why try to kill us? If not us, another ship will come. And why are the Klingons here? Thoughts?

SPOCK
The Klingons were hoping to catch us off guards. Why, I don't know.

KIRK
Well, we won't find answers up here.

SPOCK
Orders?

KIRK
Pick up the doctor and meet me in the transporter room. Mister Sulu has con.

INT. VICEROY'S OFFICE

The Viceroy sits at a desk. Kirk, Spock and McCoy stand.

VICEROY
Captain, I am appalled by your actions. I forbid you to bring your Federation squabbles to Kaytor. I will complain to Starfleet --

KIRK
One of my men has a knife in him because we beamed to a location of your choosing --

Horvath enters. Kirk, Spock and McCoy draw their phasers.

VICEROY
This is Horvath, leader of a group we've contracted to protect our cargoes from raiders.

MCCOY
 You hired Klingons as mercenaries?!
 Are you crazy?

Horvath ignores McCoy's outburst.

HORVATH
 I prefer "hired security."

He studies the group.

HORVATH
 My daughter was surprised by your team
 while hunting. That clearing is not
 far from the lodge. The stabbing was
 unfortunate but you fired first. There
 is no squabble.

VICEROY
 Since Kaytor does not wish to be a
 part of the Federation, are you
 violating your Prime Directive?

KIRK
 The Prime Directive applies to worlds
 who have not developed space flight.

HORVATH
 I am for hire and carry no flag for
 the empire. We are mercenaries.

Horvath nods at McCoy.

SPOCK
 Perhaps the Viceroy would like to show
 us his good will --

The Viceroy looks as if he will deny the request.

VICEROY
 Absolutely --

KIRK
 We accept.

HORVATH
 I also accept.

The Viceroy's face looks puzzled.

KIRK
 (to Spock)
 Excellent diplomacy.

MCCOY

Pushy is what I'd call it.

Kirk's communicator signals. He flips it open.

KIRK

Kirk, here.

UHURU (V.O.)

A distress signal from a Kaytorian freighter three hours away.

MCCOY

More coincidences than fleas on a hound dog.

Kirk hesitates. Looks at Horvath and the Viceroy.

KIRK

We will provide assistance to the cargo ship. I don't want any further mishaps.

HORVATH

I will inform Junok.

KIRK

(to Uhuru)

Lay in an intercept course. Full impulse power. Three to beam up.

UHURU (V.O.)

Yes, sir. Relaying commands now.

EXT. SPACE - ONE HOUR LATER

The Enterprise.

KIRK (V.O.)

Captain's Log, supplemental. We are currently on our way to assist a cargo ship. We are aware of the Klingons. While enroute, I have to do one of the hardest tasks of my position.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICK BAY

Chekov lies on a bed with monitors above the head of the bed, McCoy checks Chekov's vital signs. Kirk walks in.

KIRK

How's Chekov doing?

MCCOY
See for yourself.

KIRK
How you feeling?

CHEKOV
Embarrassed, sir.

KIRK
Next time, wait for my order. We had
a man in the bush. I am noting this on
your record. If any --

CHEKOV
But Captain, I saw Klingon warrior.

Kirk sets his jaw.

KIRK
Wait for my order.

CHEKOV
Understood, sir.

Kirk locks eyes with Chekov.

KIRK
Mister Chekov, report to the bridge as
soon as the doctor approves.

McCoy leads Kirk to a corner.

MCCOY
Jim, was that necessary? There were
Klingons in the area.

KIRK
No matter how well intentioned the
act, I can't have my orders ignored or
disobeyed. The records show we fired
first.

MCCOY
You're right. I still don't like it.

KIRK
Bones... I've been offered a promotion
at Starfleet.

MCCOY
So, this is why you're in a mood?

KIRK

I can't turn it down.

MCCOY

Because Starfleet says so? You've got two years left.

KIRK

But, I don't want to leave either.

MCCOY

I think you're missing her before you're gone.

Kirk contemplates.

MCCOY

Congratulations, Jim, whatever your decision.

BRIDGE

The elevator opens, Chekov enters.

CHEKOV

Permission to resume duty, sir.

KIRK

Granted.

Chekov resumes his position.

On ship's screen: The stars are stationary points of light.

KIRK

How long before visual contact?

SPOCK

One minute.

KIRK

Long range scan?

CHEKOV

A Kaytorian freighter and a second ship not yet unidentified.

KIRK

Weapons status?

SULU

Photon torpedoes and phasers ready.

SPOCK
Forty-five seconds.

Kirk shifts in the chair.

KIRK
Let me know the instant a Klingon
battle cruiser shows.

SPOCK
Thirty seconds.

CHEKOV
Sir, I am still reading two ships in
close proximity to each other.

SPOCK
We should be able to see it on screen
now.

On ship's screen: A Klingon warship hovers near a cargo ship.

KIRK
Battle stations. Shields at full
strength.

The alarms flash.

CHEKOV
I knew it. We caught them robbing the
cargo.

KIRK
Mister Chekov, send this visual
sequence to the Viceroy.

CHEKOV
Yes, sir.

SPOCK
Another ship is hiding behind the
Klingon.

On ship's screen: The Enterprise creeps past the cargo ship
and the Klingon warship to reveal a motionless ship.

CHEKOV
What in the name of Mother Russia is
that?

Spock gazes into a scanner.

SPOCK

The second ship is a predecessor to the Bird of Prey design. The ship is dead. No survivors.

On ship's screen: The dead Klingon ship, black burn marks on the hull. The view changes to reveal the interior of a ship's command center.

JUNOK

Captain. Your turn to be late to the hunt. Our brothers tried to claim this cargo for themselves and had to pay as every traitor does.

SULU

Klingons killing Klingons?

The crew of the Enterprise looks on in disbelief as the Bird of Prey leaves. Spock examines the displays in front of him.

SPOCK

The Klingons transported something over to the dead ship.

Spock studies the displays again.

SPOCK

Captain, it's a bomb. We should evacuate.

KIRK

Uhuru, get that cargo ship out of there. Red alert.

Uhuru lifts her hand to an ear comm unit.

KIRK

(to intercom)
Engineering, full reverse now.

SCOTTY (V.O.)

Aye, Captain. Full reverse it is.

KIRK

(to intercom)
All decks, brace for reverse thrust and explosion.

The reverse thrust kicks in. The bridge crew braces. The bridge shakes.

On ship's screen: The cargo ship and the dead Klingon ship remain in place.

UHURU
 Kaytorian cargo ship, this is
 Enterprise. We advised you to evacuate
 the area. Do you require assistance?

She listens.

UHURU
 Understood.

Kirk gazes at her.

UHURU
 The pilot insists he can make it to
 port. He made it clear that he didn't
 want help from "no Feds."

SPOCK
 Time --

KIRK
 Emergency beam out!

On ship's screen: The dead Klingon ship explodes in a blast of
 debris and light. The cargo ship explodes next.

SCOTTY (V.O.)
 We got the pilot, Captain!

KIRK
 Have him checked out in sick bay.
 Spock and I will meet him there.

Kirk turns to Spock.

KIRK
 You realize that explosion makes it
 impossible to verify their claim.

SICK BAY

McCoy and Chapel examine CLUTCH, 50s, a short, squat Kaytorian
 with short feathers. Kirk and Spock enter.

Clutch breaks away from the med team, struts to Kirk and
 Spock.

KIRK
 I'm Captain Kirk and this is Mister
 Spock.

CLUTCH

Thank you, thank you. I never thought I'd be saying thank you to a profit gulping Federation man. But here I am.

He sticks his hand out. Kirk shakes his hand with an unsure smile.

CLUTCH

Anything you need. You just let me know and I am there.

KIRK

Mister Spock will ask you some questions about the raid. I need to get back to duty.

SPOCK

This way, please.

CLUTCH

Spock? Spock. I like the name. Kind of stoic. Short and to the point. Spock. I'm on a cargo ship so much, I'll talk to anyone...

EXT. KAYTOR - VICEROY'S COUNTRY LODGE

Rustic construction. TWO KLINGONS stand at the entrance.

HORVATH (O.S.)

Neeyun! No more hunting. I forbid it.

INT. HORVATH'S QUARTERS

Once a tastefully decorated room. Several broken tables lie in a corner. A collection of weapons. Horvath leans on a desk.

HORVATH

You, of course, will disobey me...

NEEYUN

It was my hunt. Not much of one. The tecklar are pathetic creatures.

She picks a knife from a collection of weapons on the wall.

HORVATH

Junok says you threw well, though I wonder, why did you not kill the human?

She plays with the knife -- flipping, balancing and spinning.

NEEYUN

I chose to embarrass the warrior by sparing his life.

Neeyun throws the knife...

NEEYUN

Ha!

And sticks it in the desk by Horvath's hand. Horvath grunts his approval.

HORVATH

You will make an excellent warrior.

NEEYUN

Father, someday I would like to see all the planets of the Federation.

He's heard it before.

HORVATH

You will as a conquering hero for the glory of the empire.

She's heard it before.

NEEYUN

Will I still dance tonight?

HORVATH

Yes. Now go with Junok and get ready. And wear some clothes!

Neeyun passes Junok as she exits. Junok notices her, looks at Horvath.

JUNOK

She flirts with the weakest of the warriors. She makes me crazy!

He smashes a small table, tosses it to a pile of broken tables.

HORVATH

Junok, calm yourself. She will choose when she chooses. Tell me the look on Kirk's face when you told him about our traitorous brothers.

INT. ENTERPRISE - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Clutch walks along with Spock.

CLUTCH

I hope you get the cargo thieves. No one likes the Klingons, not really talkers, they just grunt at you.

Clutch stands on the transporter pad, inhales.

CLUTCH

And I'll take some vacation time before I go back to work. Good idea, the grandkids will love it. Live long and prosper, Mister Spock.

Clutch fumbles with the fingers for the Vulcan aloha.

CLUTCH

If you ever need something --

SPOCK

Energize.

INT. VICEROY'S OFFICE

The Viceroy sits at his desk. Horvath waits also. Kirk and Spock materialize in the spacious office.

VICEROY

I'm not sure what I can tell about two explosions in space other than the cargo ship is missing.

KIRK

We detected a transporter beam just before the explosion --

HORVATH

Klingons destroy ships before they fall into enemy hands. Surely, you do the same?

KIRK

We do. And we also warn noncombatants so they can move to safety.

The Viceroy shoots out of his chair.

VICEROY

I feel like I'm being interrogated by the monarch's auditors.

HORVATH

Relax. They want to see my crew and armaments so they can report back to Starfleet.

VICEROY

Will access to Kaytor satisfy you? Horvath?

HORVATH

Look where you will, Kirk.

EXT. KAYTOR - FOREST CLEARING

Neeyun and Junok walk. Neeyun wears armor, carries a knife.

JUNOK

I would have killed the human.

NEEYUN

My hunt. Are you deaf? I chose to shame him by not killing him.

JUNOK

Humans do not understand. He will be well enough to fight by tomorrow. You did him a favor.

NEEYUN

Do you think I will be a great warrior?

Junok growls, grabs her by the arms, shakes her hard.

JUNOK

Your father wastes his time by letting you dream. A female warrior?! You are a distraction to the warriors.

He throws her to the ground. Kneels.

NEEYUN

Will you take me to see the planets of the Federation?

He reaches for her, stops.

JUNOK

Why would I do that?

He looks down, her knife is at his stomach. The blade threatens to pierce his clothing.

NEEYUN

I am Neeyun the Knife. Tell the other warriors I choose, I choose!

CITY STREET

Spock and Kirk stroll on a pristine, modern walkway. TWO KAYTORIANS, complete with head plumage, pass by. They each hold an oversized communicator.

KAYTORIAN #1

(into communicator)

Purchase the entire production run.

KAYTORIAN #2

(into communicator)

Sell, sell it all. They can worry about the raiders.

Kirk grins.

KIRK

You did say they were competitive.

Serious now.

KIRK

Spock, Starfleet offered me a promotion.

SPOCK

Logical and prestigious to accept. Congratulations, Captain.

KIRK

But...

SPOCK

I am not convinced it is in your best interest.

KIRK

Continue.

SPOCK

You are an excellent leader, mentor and strategist. To have you move on before you have maximized your contribution, is not logical.

KIRK

I'll think about what you said. Back to the task at hand.

SPOCK

It occurs to me, that the Klingon are what they claim to be: Mercenaries.

KIRK

Logical as always, Mister Spock. But does this seem like the way an Imperial warrior would choose to live?

Kirk waves his hand at their surroundings.

A Klingon male voice is heard yelling O.S. Spock and Kirk walk around a corner to see Junok.

He argues with a storekeeper, BRINK AJED, 70s, with a head of white feathers. A pile of Klingon armor lies at their feet.

JUNOK

I want this armor to shine, merchant. It must be ready tonight.

AJED

Yes, Junok.

Spock and Kirk approach.

JUNOK

Federation.

Junok spits a gob of Klingon mucous at Kirk's feet. Kirk and Spock ignore it.

Ajed looks at the Klingon, the Vulcan and the human; picks up the armor, shuffles back into the store.

JUNOK

Klingons have others do burdens of being a warrior. That leaves us free to fight anytime.

KIRK

Very Klingon of you. Like letting a teenage girl get first blood --

Junok growls and punches Kirk. Spock steps in, pushes the Klingon back with surprising effectiveness.

JUNOK

We fight later.

Junok retreats. Spock examines Kirk's face. Kirk winces.

SPOCK

If you continue to antagonize
Klingons, please learn to duck.

KIRK

I was getting tired of the nice
Klingons. Have you ever known a
Klingon to take an insult like that?
He should have killed me.

AJED (V.O.)

Could be some use to having the
Federation around.

Kirk and Spock turn to face Ajed.

AJED

Around here, you take away the profit
you take away the man. The Viceroy's
been around a long time now, about
time for a change.

Ajed gazes at them.

AJED

Captain, meet me here late tonight.
Now go, before Junok comes back.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Kirk, Spock and McCoy stand on the front steps.

MCCOY

I have a bad feeling about this.

VICEROY

We have arrived at our finest opera
house to enjoy a special presentation
of a Klingon opera. Follow me.

Kirk and McCoy look uncomfortable.

INT. OPERA HOUSE

The classic design mirrors that of Earth. A KAYTORIAN HOSTESS
circles with a tray of green drinks.

SPOCK

I am told that Klingon opera is highly
regarded.

MCCOY

Where? On prison planets?

SPOCK
On the Klingon homeworld.

MCCOY
So now you're a Vulcan comedian?

KIRK
That's enough you two. Try to gather
some intelligence while we're here.

A poster displays a picture of Neeyun and Junok together on stage. The Viceroy frets as he looks at it.

VICEROY
It appears that Neeyun is now called
Neeyun the Knife after the encounter
with your crewman.

MCCOY
Not good.

VICEROY
And the performance has been changed
to include your unfortunate
interruption of her hunting foray.

MCCOY
That's definitely worse.

VICEROY
I'm too busy to see an opera. Costs to
cut, labor contracts...

SPOCK
Not all Klingons work well with
others.

The Viceroy frets.

VICEROY
Horvath and I work well enough
together.

The Viceroy grabs a drink from a nearby hostess, downs it in one gulp. McCoy nods at Kirk, steers the Viceroy away. Grabs another green drink.

MCCOY
Say, Viceroy, you do have a first
name? Mine's Leonard.

LATER

Horvath enters with TWO KAYTORIAN SERVANTS. He hands his cloak to a servant. The other servant gets a drink.

HORVATH

Where is the Viceroy? It's his first opera. My daughter is quite compelling in her role.

Horvath motions the group to follow.

HORVATH

We will sit up front in the place of honor. Can't see anything from the balconies.

AUDIENCE SEATING

The Viceroy sits in the middle of the front row, flanked on one side by Kirk, Spock and McCoy, flanked on the other side by Horvath. Klingons and locals comprise the remaining audience.

SPOCK

I expect the Klingons to cause an incident here.

KIRK

Agreed. Keep a close eye on them. Bones, what did you get out of the Viceroy?

MCCOY

More profits. More perks. One big race. He claims he never sleeps.

The curtain draws open, Neeyun stands dressed in her simple hunting attire, armed with a knife.

KIRK

I don't remember the knife being so... so...

MCCOY

Beautifully crafted?

A Klingon sits to the side of the stage with a small input keyboard, provides music. The first note is a bone crunching bass note, followed by an assortment of unnerving noises.

Klingons stare at the stage, entranced.

SEVERAL KLINGONS portray the crew of the Enterprise. Neeyun dances with grace and agility. Horvath looks proud. Junok enters, chases after the beauty. An ear splitting noise from the orchestra of one.

MCCOY

This is going to do permanent damage
to my hearing.

SPOCK

I prefer this to the ramblings of a
ship's doctor.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Scotty sits. The crew performs their duties.

On ship's screen: The Klingon performance.

CHEKOV

It is beautiful.

SCOTTY

Aye, she is a pretty lass.

CHEKOV

No, the whole experience.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - AUDIENCE SEATING

Neeyun jumps off the stage and approaches the Viceroy. She motions for him to come along. The audience claps.

The Viceroy looks for a way out. He grabs Kirk's arm.

VICEROY

Please, I have no idea what to do.

Kirk looks for a way out too. The audience claps louder. The Klingons chant.

WARRIORS

Kirk! Kirk! Kirk!

MCCOY

Jim don't.

Neeyun looks at Kirk.

NEEYUN

I need you help, Captain.

Kirk's bravado takes over. He jumps on stage and offers Neeyun his hand. She refuses. He motions to Spock and McCoy to stay.

STAGE

A theatrical replica of a forest clearing.

NEEYUN

I tell you what do. Big scene.

Neeyun moves quite close. Junok watches, moves towards Kirk.

NEEYUN

You push him away now.

Kirk looks up at a huge armored body of Junok. The Klingon bares his teeth.

KIRK

Me?

NEEYUN

(whispers)

The Viceroy and my father...

She gives Kirk an exasperated look. Kirk pushes Junok. At first Junok resists then falls back.

The Klingons boo. Neeyun rushes to Junok's side as her rescuer. She looks at Kirk.

NEEYUN

Now, hit me in face.

Kirk looks uncertain.

KIRK

I never hit you.

NEEYUN

No worry, Captain. You not hurt me.

Kirk hesitates.

NEEYUN

I tell Junok you want mate me.

Junok glares at Kirk, strides towards him. Kirk still hesitates, looks at the oncoming Junok.

Kirk pushes Neeyun.

She falls to the ground. The audience boos. She breathes heavily as she gets up.

NEEYUN

Why you not hit me?

Kirk takes a defensive stance. He doesn't answer.

AUDIENCE SEATING

The Klingons stand, shout. McCoy worries.

MCCOY

Should we get him out of there?

SPOCK

What do you suggest? The captain appears to be enjoying himself.

STAGE

Neeyun moves closer to Kirk.

NEEYUN

Now, I will stab you with knife.

Kirk looks uncertain.

NEEYUN

Take me on the starship and I will tell you everything.

She leaves Kirk by a tree prop, walks twenty paces. She prepares to throw the knife.

NEEYUN

Deal?

She throws the knife... It hits the tree prop next to Kirk's inner thigh. The Klingons roar.

KIRK

Depends on the information.

Neeyun bares her teeth, grunts. Kirk pulls the knife out, returns it to Neeyun.

NEEYUN

There are no raiders.

The curtains close.

NEEYUN

Catch me, Captain.

She falls backward into Kirk's arms.

KIRK

This didn't happen...

NEEYUN

In my head, it did.

Junok spies the move by Neeyun, smashes any prop nearby.

AUDIENCE SEATING

Kirk joins Spock, McCoy, the Viceroy and Horvath.

The Viceroy shake hands.

VICEROY

If thanks were money, you would never
be better paid.

Kirk nods at Horvath.

KIRK

My respects to your daughter.

Kirk, McCoy and Spock step to the side.

KIRK

Let's get out of here before Junok
catches up with me.

SPOCK

Did you gather any intelligence from
her?

Kirk flips open his communicator.

KIRK

Three to beam up.

Horvath scrutinizes his daughter. Junok smashes more props.

CITY STREET - NIGHT

The same street as earlier. No activity. The shops are dark
except one.

AJED'S SHOP

Several tables with sets of armor. Not much space. The glow of
the transporter beam fades as Kirk dematerializes.

KIRK

(to comm)

Uhuru, keep channel open.

AJED

About time. This way. The dock workers are getting cranky.

Kirk follows him to a back door.

STORAGE ROOM

A small room with THREE KAYTORIANS, of various head plumage and ages, dressed in coveralls, sit.

AJED

This is the man I told you about. He's Federation but I saw him take a punch from Junok just because. That makes him okay by me.

A GRUFF KAYTORIAN, 50s, looks around gets nods from the others.

GRUFF

What are you going to do about the Klingons?

KIRK

We in the Federation --

GRUFF

No speeches!

KIRK

We can't do anything unless they do something first.

GRUFF

If we were members of the Federation, could you get rid of them?

KIRK

Your Viceroy has contracted... invited the Klingons. What can you tell me about the raiders?

LATER

Junok and another KLINGON WARRIOR enter.

GRUFF

I knew it. The Feds have turned us in.

Kirk looks around for Ajed.

AJED

Sorry, he knows where my family lives.

JUNOK
Finally, we can fight --

The lights go out. An unseen guide leads Ajed, the cargo workers and Kirk. When they are outside, their helper grunts.

NEEYUN
Go, quick. Hide.

She turns to Kirk.

NEEYUN
Take me with you.

KIRK
Neeyun --

UHURU (V.O.)
(on communicator)
Emergency beam out.

The light from the transporter field fades. Junok comes to the front room, suspicious.

JUNOK
What are you doing here?

Neeyun hesitates.

NEEYUN
I came to tell you I am ready.

Junok turns to the other warrior.

JUNOK
I will be first!

NEEYUN
Tomorrow.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Kirk looks at Chekov. The rest of the crew consists of Uhuru and Sulu. Spock stands by Kirk.

KIRK
Russian pirates?

CHEKOV
Of course, even then we were well known as navigators.

KIRK

Any words of wisdom from someone who had plundering in his blood?

CHEKOV

Follow the booty.

KIRK

Booty?

CHEKOV

Where do they hide the treasure? You know, the spoils.

UHURU

Captain, a distress call from a Kaytorian freighter being approached by two raiders.

SULU

The Klingons are moving to intercept.

KIRK

I don't like being number two or walking into another trap. Lay in an intercept course. Full impulse power. Spock analysis.

SPOCK

I need more information to make a logical analysis.

KIRK

With the information so far... both known and suspected.

SPOCK

Horvath is not a mercenary and is allied with the Viceroy.

KIRK

His daughter claims there are no raiders. The cargo workers also say the Klingons are robbing the cargoes.

Kirk paces.

SPOCK

We assume the Viceroy collects money for the original owner and again from the black market buyer.

KIRK

And his only additional cost is a crew of Klingon mercenaries.

SPOCK

Klingon mercenaries may be a way for the Empire to invest minimal troops for maximum advantage.

KIRK

The Klingons are here to take over the sector and dilithium crystal mines. Same goal as always, different scheme.

SULU

Captain, the long range scan is picking up three ships.

KIRK

They must all be --

SULU

Klingons. They must have been hiding by one of the planets.

KIRK

Battle stations. Shields at full.

The alarms flash.

CHEKOV

Shields at full.

On ship's screen: Three Klingon ships. The view changes to Horvath and his daughter.

KIRK

Like father, like daughter.

HORVATH

Captain, my ships have an array of photon torpedoes aimed at Enterprise. Surrender.

On ship's screen: The third ship drifts with a halo of arcing bolts of electricity.

SPOCK

The third ship has been disabled.

NEEYUN

Beam me now, Federation.

KIRK
Scotty, got her?

HORVATH
Neeyun! No!

TRANSPORTER ROOM

Scotty sweats, slides the transporter controls.

BRIDGE

On ship's screen: A KLINGON WARRIOR approaches Neeyun.

The Enterprise crew watches.

KIRK
Mister Scott.

TRANSPORTER ROOM

Scotty still sweats.

SCOTTY
I'm sorry, Captain. The transporter simply can't punch through multiple screens and debris at such close proximity.

Scotty moves various controls on the transporter.

SCOTTY
I can try once more with more power but the shields will be at seventy-five percent.

BRIDGE

McCoy and Spock stand next to Kirk.

SPOCK
Are you sure this is wise? She may be dead already.

MCCOY
It's the right thing to do! Just because it's logical, doesn't make it desirable.

Kirk looks at both of them. Spock returns the look with calm and McCoy's eyes look like they will bulge until they explode.

KIRK
Do it, Scotty --

TRANSPORTER ROOM

Sweat streams down Scotty's face.

SCOTTY
-- time is running out. I know, I
know!

BRIDGE

On ship's screen:

A large warrior pulls out a knife. It shines in the garish light of the warship as the warrior raises and plunges it into Neeyun's chest. She collapses, lies bleeding, raspy voice.

NEEYUN
Sorry, father.

Neeyun gasps, her dead eyes stare as the transporter beam focuses on her then fades.

The transporter beam focuses on her again.

HORVATH
Target the shields. They are
vulnerable.

An image of Junok appears. He sits in a Klingon battle bridge.

JUNOK
I hate you, Kirk.

A view of the two Klingon warships.

Kirk diverts his attention from the ship's screen.

KIRK
Evasive action, Mister Sulu.

Sulu presses buttons on a command console.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise veers away. The two warships concentrate their fire at the Enterprise's shields. An outline of energy surrounds the Enterprise.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Spock stands next to Kirk.

SPOCK

The communications array is the target.

KIRK

Scotty, Sulu get us out of here.
Chekov fire phasers at will.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise fires phasers at the warships. The phasers strike the Klingon shields in a spray of energy. The Klingon shields hold.

The Klingon warships release photon torpedoes which strike the Enterprise's shields in a stream of detonations. One torpedo gets through.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

CHEKOV

Incoming.

On ship's screen: A photon torpedo blazes toward the ship.

SPOCK

Shields at seventy percent.

KIRK

Brace.

A muted explosion. The bridge rocks back and forth. The crew recovers.

KIRK

Damage report, Mister Spock?

SPOCK

Minor damages except for the communications array.

UHURU

Outside communications are offline.
Onboard comm remains functional.

KIRK

Return to Kaytor. We are going to talk with the Viceroy. Uhuru, get Mister Scott up here. I have an idea.

INT. VICEROY'S OFFICE

The Viceroy stands in his office with a Klingon disruptor. Kirk and Spock materialize. The Viceroy takes their phasers and communicators, puts them on a desk.

VICEROY

I suspected the Klingons would mishandle your ship's destruction.

KIRK

But they haven't mishandled you.

VICEROY

Don't try distracting me.

The Viceroy reminds them who has the disruptor.

KIRK

Not so easy to hide the Klingons from your people. I know one storekeeper who isn't happy about the Klingons.

Horvath and Junok materialize, weapons drawn.

HORVATH

Captain, I did not expect you. Your ship ran home without you? What no communications?

Junok grunts from Horvath's side, glares at Kirk.

VICEROY

Finish them!

Junok walks to Kirk, turns and in one fluid motion disarms the Viceroy.

HORVATH

We have business with Kirk first. Then we want you to surrender Kaytor, then we hunt Enterprise.

The Viceroy sneers.

VICEROY

I hated the opera almost as much as I hated sitting next to your stench. And your views on sharing profits with the people, truly distasteful.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise. Jagged metal where the Klingon torpedo hit.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Scotty sits. Sulu, Uhuru and Chekov. McCoy stands.

MCCOY

Shouldn't you be fixing something?

SCOTTY

Are you referring to the comm array?

MCCOY

You know damn well that's what I am talking about.

SCOTTY

Easy problem to fix. Actually, the comm array is gone. But the comm unit on the Galileo is working just fine.

MCCOY

The Klingons forgot about the shuttle craft. Does the captain know?

SCOTTY

Who do you think pointed it out? Uhuru, have you patched into the shuttle comm system?

SHUTTLE BAY

The Galileo shuttle. A crew woman plugs a thick cable into a receptacle on the outside of the shuttle.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise moves toward a large planet.

BRIDGE

UHURU

Yes, sir. We can't reach Starfleet but we have enough range for what the captain wants.

SCOTTY

Proceed.

Uhuru presses the comm link into her ear.

UHURU
This is Federation starship
Enterprise...

EXT. SPACE

Two Klingon warships orbit Kaytor.

INT. VICEROY'S OFFICE

Junok glares at Kirk. Horvath nods. Junok throws down his
gloves, armor and weapons.

JUNOK
Finally.

SPOCK
Since you are fighting for Horvath, I
will fight for Kirk.

KIRK
I can fight my own fights.

JUNOK
I fight for Neeyun.

Junok and Kirk circle each other.

KIRK
One of your warriors stabbed her.

Junok rushes Kirk. Kirk steps to the side.

JUNOK
You trick her into help you.

Junok grabs Kirk, squeezes. Kirk breaks the hold.

JUNOK
She was to honor me tonight.

Kirk punches Junok in the face then the gut. No effect.

KIRK
Spock, some help here please.

Horvath shakes his disruptor at Spock. Junok lands a solid
punch. Kirk waivers, falls to his knees.

KIRK
Junok, Neeyun wanted to leave. She
wanted to see the worlds.

Junok kicks Kirk to the floor. Kirk rolls on his back.

KIRK

She was willing to die to leave.
Didn't she ask you? Her father?

Junok roars. Kirk sweeps his feet under Junok, dumping him on the floor. Kirk gets back on his knees, delivers a quick strike to Junok's neck. Junok chokes, remains on the floor.

KIRK

She must've asked you?

Junok responds, gurgles louder as he pounds his fists on the ground.

KIRK

Horvath, she must have asked you?

HORVATH

She did and that is my burden.

KIRK

We all have our --

HORVATH

You talk too much. The Klingons will rule this sector.

Kirk stares at Horvath. Spock moves closer to the desk with the phasers on it.

KIRK

There is a fleet of ship coming this way. All the planets you stole cargo from are going to be here. I expect you'll both have questions to answer.

VICEROY

You didn't have time.

Spock grabs a phaser off the desk. Aims it at the Klingons.

SPOCK

Orders, Captain?

Horvath receives a message on his comm link. He grunts.

HORVATH

My crew reports multiple targets at the edge of our scan

Horvath and Junok glare at Kirk. The Viceroy looks bewildered.

HORVATH

Viceroy, since you have no fondness for Klingons, I am sorry we do not have room for you. Unless you bring universal credits?

The Viceroy shakes his head.

KIRK

Spock, it's a standoff.

HORVATH

Junok and I will declare that Neeyun gave her life so that we could get through your shields.

Horvath gazes at Kirk.

HORVATH

We bid her well on her journey after death.

The Klingons dematerialize.

VICEROY

I am without hope or ship.

He looks at Kirk eye-to-eye. Kirk shakes his head. Kirk's communicator signals. He flips it open.

UHURU (V.O.)

Captain, we're here... and we brought friends.

EXT. SPACE

A wave of ships, similar in design to the first cargo ship, approaches Kaytor. The Enterprise leads the ships.

CLUTCH (V.O.)

Captain, I told you I'd be here.

INT. CARGO SHIP

Cramped. Clutch pilots a cargo ship in the convoy, cries.

CLUTCH

This is beautiful. All cargo ships.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Scotty sits in the chair.

SCOTTY

The Klingons are leaving. The Viceroy has an invitation to visit the monarch after he's done with the auditors.

SICK BAY

Kirk strides in. A patient struggles with the restraints, argues with Chapel and McCoy. They move, reveal Neeyun.

CHAPEL

She keeps trying to find you.

MCCOY

I could give her three more sedatives

NEEYUN

Thank Scotty for beam me up.

McCoy coughs.

NEEYUN

Thank doctor for revive me.

Kirk smiles Neeyun.

NEEYUN

Big scene thank you James Kirk. I knew you catch me, like before. Where go next? You punch Junok at end? I no like him. You too old...

McCoy places a small silver module on Neeyun's shoulder, she falls asleep.

BRIDGE

Kirk sits. Spock, McCoy and Scotty stand. Sulu, Chekov and Uhuru crew.

KIRK

I am going to accept Starfleet's promotion offer... when my five years are up.

SCOTTY

Congratulations, Captain on not taking a promotion. The Enterprise and her crew thank you.

Chekov approaches.

CHEKOV
Congratulations, sir.

Chekov salutes.

MCCOY
Congratulations, Jim.

SPOCK
Wise decision.

KIRK
But you advocated for and against.

SPOCK
Did I?

CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - LATER

Kirk records his log entry, melancholy smile.

KIRK
Captain's Log, stardate 6035.2: Kaytor
is receptive to a diplomatic mission
next year. The Klingons are gone.
No promotion and I have unleashed
Neeyun on an unsuspecting universe.

FADE OUT.

THE END.