



# STAR TREK

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## STRANGE NEW WORLDS



STAR TREK: STRANGE NEW WORLDS

EPISODE 005

"Renaissance"

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BASED ON "STAR TREK"

TEASER

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise orbits a planet orbiting an energetic blue giant star. This one is covered with thick, swirling clouds of gray and indigo. It seems like the entire surface is covered in hurricanes and magenta lightning arcs across its surface almost constantly.

TITLE OVER:

Andromeda Galaxy  
Class E Planet  
"Ariel"

EXT. PLANET ARIEL - ATMOSPHERE

The science shuttle *Bellerophon* flies through the tempestuous storm, being buffeted by high winds and near-constant lightning.

INT. SHUTTLE BELLEROPHON

McHugh, Lexia, LT. UDAL (a Bolian male meteorologist), ASH and Viin are sitting at various stations around the shuttle. Viin is at the helm, McHugh is co-piloting, ASH sits at a monitoring station and Lexia and Udal are at sensor stations.

The shuttle is under fairly frequent turbulence and Udal looks greener than he should and more than a little ill.

LEXIA  
(to Udal)  
Atmospheric ionization?

UDAL  
(weakly)  
Nine hundred... seventy EeV!

LEXIA  
970! That's unprecedented...

UDAL  
Congratulations, Commander, another  
first...

Lexia smiles, but when she looks at McHugh to share in the smile, he's not paying attention. He seems to be staring out at the storm.

The shuttle is hit by some lightning and the whole shuttle shakes.

VIIN  
Whoa!

MCHUGH  
Recalibrate inertial dampeners for  
the atmospheric pressure variance.

LEXIA  
Udal, AP range?

Udal looks like he's about to throw up and has to really concentrate to get the reading from his instruments.

UDAL  
3.5 to 6.2 Kbars...

Viin keys in the change and the shuttle stabilizes a bit.

Udal sighs in relief, but still looks sickly.

VIIN  
Got it. Though we should probably get what we need and get out of here. It's difficult to tell where I'm going with all this hull ionization messing with the nav computer.

McHugh nods and looks back at Lexia.

LEXIA  
Extending sampling probe now...

EXT. SHUTTLE BELLEROPHON

A sampling probe extends on an arm from the side of the shuttle and scoops up some of the thick atmosphere.

INT. SHUTTLE BELLEROPHON

Lexia scans the sample. She smiles.

LEXIA  
Sample looks good! I'm getting signs of complex organic molecules, lifesigns positive!

UDAL  
G-good... does that mean we're done?

LEXIA  
Just a few more samples. Take us down to the E-s layer, helm.

Viin nods.

VIIN  
(cautioning)  
It's going to get bumpy!

Udal's eyes widen as the shuttle gets constant, strong turbulence. He can't hold it any longer, about to throw up. He unbuckles himself.

Lexia sees this and calls out in alarm, afraid he's going to get thrown around.

LEXIA

Udal!

ASH comes over and grabs UDAL and steadies him. ASH is unaffected by the turbulence, being essentially massless.

ASH

I have you, ensign.

MCHUGH

Take him to the head!

ASH nods and takes Udal to the bathroom. The rest of them hear violent vomiting coming from Udal.

VIIN

(smirking)

They don't call them the "Hazard Team"  
for nothing...

Lexia smiles at this and looks at McHugh, but McHugh is distracted, looking out the window at the storm again. Her smile fades.

In a close-up on McHugh, we see him staring out at the storm, flashes of lightning lighting up his face.

From his POV, we zoom closer and closer into the storm, distant lightning lighting up the sky. Then, suddenly, there's a close-up, huge lightning strike with a loud CRACK as we:

SMASH-CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh bolts upright in his bed, sweating and panicky. He's been having a nightmare. He looks around and realizes where he is. He looks out at the planet Ariel and sees its constant lightning storm.

JUMP-CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh sits at his desk in his casual clothes and doesn't look to have shaved in a while.

He's holding a thin security rod with the Starfleet symbol on it. It bears his name and rank and a unique ID. He's playing with it absent-mindedly and seems to be thinking.

He slides the rod into his desk holoprojector and the display comes to life with the image of NOMI.

NOMI

Captain Colton T. McHugh, service number SZ397F-C716FCV. Alpha-level access confirmed.

(BEAT)

Hello, Captain McHugh, how may I help you?

MCHUGH

Access secure communications from Gate relay, please.

NOMI

Of course, Captain.

(BEAT)

I have a secure message from Admiral Oviedo San Lagos. Shall I play it back for you?

MCHUGH

Yes, please.

The holodisplay changes to one of Admiral San Lagos, a pre-recorded message.

OVIEDO

Cole. You have no idea how relieved we were to get your report back here. We got pretty worried after the accident in the tunnel and then not hearing from you for several hours. It sounds like you all had a pretty rough welcome, but I'm proud of how you handled it. I know you're not happy about how it went, but from our perspective, you made first contact, avoided conflict with a hostile force and preserved the sanctity of a new form of life that we've never seen before. Not the smoothest of maiden voyages, but a success, overall.

Oviedo looks down and sighs before continuing.

OVIEDO (CONT'D)

It was... hard to hear about Commander Chang's death. I'm sure it was even harder on you. Losing any crewmember is the hardest thing for any Captain, but to lose a man like Sol... Cole, I'm sorry. There's nothing more I can say that can possibly...

OVIEDO (CONT'D)  
(Oviedo is at a loss for  
words)

I've filed a recommendation for  
Commander Chang to receive the  
Starfleet Medal of Honor... though  
I've honored your request and will  
wait for you to send a personal  
message to inform his family... and  
Miriam. I don't envy you that task.

Now Oviedo sits forward and his brow furrows.

OVIEDO (CONT'D)  
As for your final request. I have to  
say, I'm shocked. I can't imagine  
you've made the request lightly, but  
I ask that you reconsider. I can only  
say this: it's not what Sol would have  
wanted.

(sighs)  
I wish I could say just say "no", but  
it's ultimately your decision. If  
you do decide to go through with it,  
all I can say is that it will be a great  
loss to Starfleet. You will be  
missed.

Oviedo stares into the camera for a few seconds, as if about to  
say something more, then looks down and presses a button. The  
recording ends and McHugh pulls out his ID stick. He looks at  
it contemplatively, rolling it around in his fingers.

He looks out into the empty starfield beyond his window.

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

SERIES MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

EXT. SPACE

View of a starfield.

Pull back through a window into:

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Pull back and away from the window to reveal:

McHugh sits in his quarters, in his casual clothes. He's looking out the window and thinking. He reaches over and turns on a recorder.

MCHUGH

Captain's Personal Log. It's been three weeks since the incident at Cossaea II.

EXT. COSSAEA II - SURFACE

Kopec and a team of engineers work on the shuttle *Sagan*, fixing it up.

Qora, ASH and a couple other Hazard Team members stand guard.

Joli, Lexia and some medics are tending to the large chitinous creatures, helpless without their collars, beaming them up.

McHugh is crouching in the foreground, holding a piece of the head of the Andromedan construct that first greeted them.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

We have not had any further contact with the hostile species we encountered there.

The head crumbles to dust in McHugh's hands. He looks up into the sky.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL

Qora, ASH, Lexia and Kopec are in environmental suits, examining the derelict ships.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

Our examination of their vessels revealed little about them. The ships have no amenities aside from basic nutrition supplies for (more)

(cont'd) the enslaved creatures that were being remotely controlled.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Dr. Joli is examining one of the creatures in Sickbay. It moves and twitches reflexively, without any intelligence.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
After Dr. Joli examined the creatures, we returned them to their vessels.

INT. ENEMY VESSEL - FEEDING ROOM

Chief Kopec finishes working on a nutrition dispenser and a tech welds the wall back closed where he had to cut an opening to jury-rig the machine. Kopec yells at the tech for doing it wrong, then pushes him aside to do it himself.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Chief Kopec made sure their nutrition dispensers would run automatically. Hopefully whoever their masters are will come and retrieve the poor creatures before their supplies run out.

Nutrition comes out and the creatures come forward to eat it, mindlessly. Kopec's face screws up in disgust and he backs away. He bumps into the tech and yells at him to get out of the way.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Becker sits at the large rear station and is chatting with the nebula on his display.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
While the creatures turned out to not be an intelligent lifeform, Lt. Becker discovered a sentient nebulous entity... which he has named "Fluffy". Our ability to communicate with it was limited, but it was a positive development and we count it as a good first step in cataloguing intelligent life in Andromeda.

The display says:  
THANK YOU.  
FAREWELL, ENTERPRISE.  
FRIENDS.



EXT. SPACE

The nebula and the Enterprise part ways, leaving Cossaea II far behind.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

In the weeks since leaving Cossaea II behind, we have not encountered any other spacefaring species, nor have we discovered any intelligent life.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is flying through an empty expanse of space. It looks very stark.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

In a way, this is a relief. I think we're all happy to keep a low profile after our first unexpected contact turned into such a disaster. No need to draw undue attention to ourselves for the time being.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

McHugh sits in the Captain's Chair looking out at empty space as they travel.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

In our own crowded, overpopulated Milky Way, it's easy to forget how vast and empty the Universe truly is...

INT. ENTERPRISE - CONFERENCE ROOM

Lexia is leading a discussion in the Conference Room for the senior staff and a few junior science officers.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

In the spirit of our true first contact, with the sentient nebula, we have begun the first of our planned expeditions to look for life in Andromeda.

Lexia is pointing at star charts indicating several nearby planetary candidates for the search.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

Our primary goal is to catalogue as many different forms of life from varied environments across the region and see what form life takes here.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise approaches a small barren, dark alien moon around a pale blue gas giant.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Is it similar to life in our own galaxy  
or something completely different?  
Is there any connection, any common  
thread between the vastly different  
and widespread planets - possible  
evidence of Ascendant or  
Preserver-like activities in the  
past...?

EXT. ALIEN PLANET

McHugh, Lexia, ENSIGN PATEL (an Indian human male) and Qora are in their environmental suits walking on a barren planet.

The planet is a dark, barren landscape with no visible atmosphere. The ground is a craggy black-blue and difficult to navigate. There are small chutes of iridescent blue plant-like tendrils that rise from the cracks. They're incredibly fragile and short-lived.

Captain McHugh is in his environmental suit, walking around the surface, scanning for life.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Or are each just lonely islands of  
life, unique and fragile in the  
vastness of space?

McHugh stops looks around at the bleak landscape. He lowers his eyes.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
I still can't believe Sol is dead.

Lexia walks up behind him.

MCHUGH  
Not the most scenic place, is it?

LEXIA  
Oh, I don't know. I think it has a  
unique beauty all its own. And, even  
in a barren place like this, life has  
found a way to blossom.

Lexia points down at one of the blue wisps coming out of the cracks near McHugh's foot.

McHugh crouches down to scan it, but it evaporates and dissipates as he kneels at it. His tricorder displays the message:

No Lifeforms Detected

McHugh sighs.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
Life is very delicate, Cole.

MCHUGH  
Apparently.

Ensign Patel approaches them holding a scanning device with a large display. Qora follows behind him.

PATEL  
Commander?

Lexia turns to him.

LEXIA  
Geological survey results?

PATEL  
Yes, ma'am.

Lexia looks over the results.

MCHUGH  
Anything interesting?

LEXIA  
(still reading)  
Maybe...

QORA  
Looks like nothing more than a big,  
ugly rock to me.

Lexia smiles at her.

LEXIA  
Some things are more than meets the  
eye, Lieutenant...

Qora scowls at this comeback. She isn't sure how to take that,  
isn't sure she likes it.

PATEL  
Captain...

McHugh was distracted and takes a second to turn to Patel.

MCHUGH  
Hmm?

PATEL  
Some of us have a pool going...

QORA  
(intentionally  
intimidating)  
Isn't that against Starfleet  
protocols, Ensign?

Patel looks genuinely scared of Qora.

McHugh smirks slightly and holds up a hand to Qora, telling her to let it slide.

MCHUGH  
Go on, Ensign.

Patel stares at the intimidating Centauri woman and reluctantly continues.

PATEL  
Well, we're all betting on whether or not we'll find a pattern. If we see a connection to life in the Milky Way. The same DNA structures and components. If it does, it means the Ascendants really did come to Andromeda from the Milky Way at some point.

LEXIA  
Or the other way around...

McHugh nods.

PATEL  
So, uh... what do you think, Captain?

McHugh looks at the ensign, then out at the barren landscape, then finally at Lexia.

Lexia doesn't like the look on McHugh's face. He seems sad and listless, as if he doesn't care.

MCHUGH  
(shrugs)  
I don't know...

The way he says it makes it seem like he almost doesn't care to find out. He smiles and walks away.

Lexia looks at Patel and Qora. Patel looks disappointed.

LEXIA  
He's got a lot on his mind.

Lexia walks after McHugh.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
Cole?

McHugh is standing at one of the blue wisps, as if he's scanning it. But when Lexia comes around in front of him, she sees the tricorder isn't even on.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
Cole... I know it's been hard-

McHugh makes a cutting motion at his throat, signaling her to stop, doesn't want to discuss it on an open channel. He reaches down to his suit's wrist interface and hits a button. The display reads.

PRIVATE CHANNEL

Lexia sees this and nods, changing her comm to a private channel, too.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
What is it, Cole?

McHugh thinks for a moment.

MCHUGH  
I...

LEXIA  
It's about Sol, I know. He was your friend. You were close to him.

McHugh smiles and shakes his head. Words can't explain what Chang meant to him.

MCHUGH  
I can't believe he's gone.

LEXIA  
I'm sorry, Cole.

MCHUGH  
He was the one constant, you know? He was always there, since the Academy. I just can't imagine...

Lexia puts her hand on his arm.

LEXIA  
Do you want me to stop by later?

McHugh looks at her hand and then at her. He smiles and pulls her hand off. She seems somewhat hurt by this.

MCHUGH  
It's okay.

Lexia clearly doesn't agree.

LEXIA  
Cole...

McHugh looks off into the distance.

MCHUGH  
I sent a request to Oviedo along with  
the mission report.

McHugh turns and looks back at Lexia. He smiles sadly.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
I'm quitting Starfleet.

Lexia looks shocked.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Daystrom sits in the Captain's Chair.

Becker and Viin are at their forward stations.

Daystrom hits a button to record a log entry.

DAYSTROM  
Captain's Log, Stardate 241695.6.  
Acting First officer Marcus Daystrom  
reporting. Our exobiological survey  
team has been on the moon Ariel for  
four hours and has found only one  
lifeform. We are preparing to set  
course for the next candidate on our  
list.

On the viewscreen, they see Qora checking in from the planet's surface. The view is from her MFID as she reports in. Three others are with her in the background.

QORA  
Enterprise, survey is complete, we're  
ready to beam up.

DAYSTROM  
Acknowledged, landing party.  
Transporter room, landing party  
reports ready to beam up. Ensure  
full decontamination protocols.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF (VIA COMM)  
Yes, sir.

Becker leans over to Viin to speak to her so that only she can hear.

BECKER  
Hey...

Viin looks over at him expectantly.

VIIN  
Hey yourself.

BECKER  
Ever get the feeling...  
(looks back at Daystrom)  
He's always watching?  
(Viin looks back at  
Daystrom)  
Like, everything? All the time?

Viin shakes her head, smiling.

VIIN  
You're imagining things.

BECKER  
No, seriously! Am I the only one that  
finds his whole... "Borg vibe"  
creepy?

VIIN  
He's not a Borg. He's just a  
transhumanist.

BECKER  
I know, but, still... do you really  
feel comfortable with someone like  
him being second in command?

VIIN  
I think you're just being paranoid-

Daystrom appears behind them.

DAYSTROM  
Something I should know, crewmen?

Becker and Viin are startled, they didn't see him come up behind  
him.

BECKER  
Uh! No, sir, just, um.. Calibrating  
our, um... interlock... uh...  
matrices?

Daystrom looks at him with a "really?" Expression.

DAYSTROM  
Very well. Carry on...  
"interlocking". Just keep your eyes  
on your instruments.

Daystrom walks back towards the Captain's chair.

Viin punches Becker in the arm.

VIIN  
Thanks a lot, blabbermouth!

BECKER  
Sorry!

Becker looks back at Daystrom. He hasn't made it back to his chair. His back is to Becker and Viin as a blueshirt is showing him a report.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
(to Viin)  
Hey.

VIIN  
Shhhh!

BECKER  
No, listen... I wanted to ask you something as... you know... a girl.

Viin looks insulted.

VIIN  
"Girl"?

BECKER  
Sorry, woman... as a woman.

Viin gives him a scowl, but then eases up, curious.

VIIN  
Go on.

BECKER  
What, uh... what do you think of... Lt. Qora?

VIIN  
(a bit too loudly)  
What?!

BECKER  
Shhh!

Daystrom looks back over his shoulder and Becker pretends to be busy on his console. Daystrom returns to talking to the blueshirt and Becker leans back over.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
It's just that, I think she's pretty cool, and...

VIIN  
She'd snap you like a twig!

BECKER  
Yeah, well...



VIIN  
Ohhh! You're kinda into that, aren't  
you?

Becker blushes.

BECKER  
You know what, nevermind-

VIIN  
You like a strong woman, don't you?

Becker tries to shush her and drop the topic.

BECKER  
Shh- no, stop, I - just...

Viin smiles at him, snickering a bit. Becker is feeling a bit  
humiliated.

After a pause:

VIIN  
(earnestly)  
I think you should go for it.

Becker is surprised.

BECKER  
Really?

VIIN  
Yeah... what's the worst that could  
happen?

BECKER  
(warming up to the idea)  
Yeah...

VIIN  
You know, besides breaking every bone  
in your body.

Becker's eyes widen at the thought, more than a little scared.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

Dr. Joli is running a scan on Lt. Patel with a medic.

Qora finishes her own exam with another medic and approaches Dr.  
Joli.

QORA  
Doctor... may I have a word? In  
private?

Joli looks at her and smiles.

JOLI  
Of course.

Joli turns to Lt. Patel.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
You're clean, Lt. Patel, no  
exobiological contamination.

Patel nods, gets off the bed and heads out.

Joli hands off her scanner to the medic and turns to Qora,  
gesturing toward her office.

Qora heads towards it and Joli follows.

INT. ENTERPRISE - DR. JOLI'S OFFICE

Qora enters first and Dr. Joli comes in behind her. She closes  
the door behind them and activates a control panel that frosts  
the windows for privacy and dims the lights.

Joli gestures towards a seat.

QORA  
No, thanks, I won't be long.

Joli nods and leans up against a table rather than sitting down  
at her desk.

JOLI  
All right, Lieutenant, what can I help  
you with?

Qora looks reluctant at first, avoiding eye contact.

QORA  
I just... I wanted to thank you,  
Doctor... for protecting my...  
privacy.

JOLI  
Of course, Lieutenant. That's my  
duty, you don't need to thank me.

QORA  
Still... thanks.

Joli reaches out to Qora.

JOLI  
Qora. You have nothing to hide.

Qora turns to her and Joli stands up, taking a step toward her. Joli holds both of Qora's arms fondly.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
You're beautiful and perfect just the way you are.

Joli looks at Qora with warmth and Qora stares back at her. She looks uncharacteristically vulnerable.

Suddenly, Qora leans forward and kisses Joli, which catches Joli completely off-guard.

Joli pushes Qora away. Qora is a bit stunned by the kiss due to Joli's overwhelming touch-based telepathic abilities.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
Qora!

Qora comes out of her stupor and looks a bit confused.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

Qora now looks mortified and chagrined. She turns to leave.

QORA  
I'm sorry, I-

Joli blocks the door with her arm.

JOLI  
Qora.

Qora doesn't want to look at her.

QORA  
Let me go.

JOLI  
No, Qora. Talk to me.

QORA  
I'm just stupid, I-

Joli takes her by the arms and tries to reason with her.

JOLI  
Qora. Listen. I understand. It's perfectly natural to seek out comfort and companionship, especially after a traumatic-

Qora pulls away.

QORA  
It's because of what I am, isn't it?

JOLI  
What? No! Look, Qora... just because I'm not attracted to you doesn't mean I reject you. Besides, I have a professional responsibility on this ship. I can't have a relationship with a patient, emotional attachment would-

QORA  
(angrily)  
I'm not looking for a relationship, Doctor!

Joli is surprised by the outburst.

JOLI  
But maybe you should. I've seen you, Qora. You isolate yourself. A relationship might do you some good.

Qora scoffs at this.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
Lt. Becker has shown some interest-

Qora burst out laughing.

QORA  
BECKER?! Please, Doctor! Even if I didn't find that little weasel repulsive (which I do), he'd run screaming back to the Milky Way once he saw what I really was!  
(pauses, then, with pain)  
I'm a freak, Doctor.

Joli looks distraught that Qora is in so much pain. Qora goes to leave, shoving Joli's arm out of the way.

JOLI  
Qora. Give someone a chance. You might be surprised.

Qora stops but doesn't look back. She leaves.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh sits in at his desk staring at his holodisplay. He seems a bit pensive. He hits a button on it and flashes the red message:

RECORDING

He looks at it for a second, then stops it. He hits another button.

MESSAGE DELETED

He starts over.  
RECORDING

He looks at the red X on the holodisplay indicating where he should be looking.

MCHUGH  
Miriam... I wish I didn't have to send  
you this message. Sol... Sol is...

McHugh shakes his head and slaps a button in frustration.  
MESSAGE DELETED

McHugh sits back and stares at the ceiling.

His door chime sounds. He's surprised by this but responds.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
Come in.

The door opens and Lexia walks in. McHugh turns and sees her. She smiles at him warmly, and he smiles back weakly.

LEXIA  
Am I interrupting?

MCHUGH  
No, just... trying to compose a  
condolence message... for Miriam.

LEXIA  
Oh... I'm sorry, I should let you-

MCHUGH  
No, it's okay. I just don't know what  
to say.

Lexia sits next to him and puts her hand on his knee.

LEXIA  
Maybe it's just that you don't want to  
have to say it. To admit it.

McHugh considers this. He shakes his head, he doesn't really know.

Lexia reaches up to touch his face, but he grabs her by the wrist (careful not to touch her skin).

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
Cole...

MCHUGH  
I'm sorry, Lexi, I just...

LEXIA  
I want to help you feel better.

MCHUGH  
I don't want to feel better. At  
least, not like that.

Lexia is offended, she pulls away.

LEXIA  
What does that mean?

MCHUGH  
Getting over Sol's death... isn't  
something I can "bliss" my way out of.

Lexia stands up.

LEXIA  
Is that what you think I do?

MCHUGH  
Well... you're certainly not here to  
stay.

Lexia shakes her head. This old argument. Tears come to her  
eyes.

LEXIA  
(hurt)  
That's not fair! You knew what I was  
before we... I'm a Deltan, Cole. Sex  
and love are not the same for us.

MCHUGH  
(coldly)  
I guess I'm just too Human.

Lexia gives up.

LEXIA  
(angrily)  
For an explorer, you're awfully  
closed-minded!

She storms out. McHugh stares out of his window into space,  
expressionless.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. ENTERPRISE - MESS HALL

Several crew members are seated and eating. Becker has just gotten his meal from the replicator and is walking over to find a seat.

He sees Lt. Qora come in. She heads for a replicator.

Becker figures this is his chance. He screws up his courage and walks over to her.

Qora is placing her order.

QORA  
Lt. Qora, meal 7-B.

REPLICATOR VOICE  
Rigellian Porterhouse, 2.5  
hectograms, rare. Sweet potato, 1  
hectogram. Centaurian lager, .6  
liters.

Becker looks impressed.

BECKER  
Wow, you have quite the appetite!

Qora looks at him like he's an insect. Becker mentally kicks himself for a horrible opening line.

The replicator finishes creating the meal and Qora goes to pick it up, but Becker does instead.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
Let me get that for you-

He almost knocks over the drink and Qora snatches the tray from him.

QORA  
(sarcastically)  
Thanks. I think I can manage.

Qora walks away from him. He follows her.

Qora picks an empty table off in the corner, away from everyone else.

Becker walks up to the table and is about to put down his tray to join her, but she looks up at him and glares at him like he's insane.

Undeterred, he places his tray down too and sits. Qora shakes her head and gets to eating in a very unladylike manner. Quickly

and roughly, tearing pieces off the steak and shoving them in her mouth, chewing once or twice and gulping them down.

Becker tries again.

BECKER  
You know, I was hoping maybe I could buy you dinner sometime...

Qora looks at him with a "you idiot" look.

QORA  
The food's free.

She dives right back into her meal.

BECKER  
Yeah, well, it's more of a figure of speech. Look, uh...

Qora has picked up the sweet potato with her hands and is taking huge bites out of it.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
Okay, look. I'm just going to come out and say it...

Qora is guzzling down her lager.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
Wow. Okay... here it is...

Qora slams down her empty cup and lets out a loud belch.

QORA  
BRAAAAAAAAAAAPP!

Becker's eyes go wide and he leans back at the truly prodigious burp.

BECKER  
What I'm trying to say is-

Qora wipes her mouth once with her napkin and gets up from the table.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
Oh, wow, you're done already, well, uh...

She's walking out of the mess hall and he follows her.

He grabs her by the arm at the door and she looks down at it like she's going to snap it off. He pulls his hand away and holds them both up as if to say "my bad".



BECKER (CONT'D)  
Listen. It's just that... I think  
you're really cool and... I like you  
and... I'd like to maybe... see you...  
you know... off duty...?

Qora stares at him for a few seconds, then bursts out laughing.

Becker is embarrassed, looking around the room  
self-consciously.

QORA  
"Like" me?!  
(leans in close,  
menacingly)  
You don't know anything about me.

She turns and leaves.

Becker stands in the doorway, wounded and paralyzed by  
rejection.

The crew in the mess hall all begin applauding.

He shakes his head and walks back to his table, holding up his  
hands.

BECKER  
(sarcastically)  
Thank you, thank you. Too kind.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise leaves the orbit of the black-blue moon they were  
studying.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Captain's Personal Log. Our  
lifeform readings of the barren moon  
we've dubbed "Puck" were  
inconclusive. What we initially  
believed to be bioluminescent animal  
or plant life appeared to be more  
similar to the sentient nebula we  
encountered around Cossaea II.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BIOLAB

Lexia and Joli are taking turns on a magnifying/scanning  
instrument, examining some of the captured "blue sprites" from  
the moon Puck.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Some form of cohesive energy that  
bonds with basic organic chemicals  
and is able to form a (more)

(cont'd) rudimentary nervous system  
and consciousness when concentrated  
in large enough amounts.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CONFERENCE ROOM

Lexia presents the results of their scans of the "blue sprites"  
and shows their neural structure in comparison to DNA as well  
as info on Xenobiology and exogeography.

There is no link.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

While we're excited to have  
discovered a new form of life, this  
does not advance our goal of finding  
a link between our home galaxy and  
Andromeda. Proof that our  
"invitation" came from an ancient  
race of Milky Way spacefarers as we  
believe.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise approaches an orange planet with white and pale  
green patches.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

However, we've discovered a Class H  
dwarf planet we've named "Caine" that  
features vegetative masses large  
enough to support more complex  
lifeforms.

EXT. PLANET CAINE - SURFACE

The planet's surface is relatively Mars-like, but with some  
patches of vegetation and pools of some gold-colored liquid.

McHugh, Lexia, Qora and Lt. Patel are on the surface in their  
environmental suits.

MCHUGH (V.O.)

We hope to have greater success here  
and, ideally, find out if we really  
are absolutely alien to this galaxy.

McHugh is standing at a patch of green, looking down at it. He  
sees something hop in it.

MCHUGH

Lexia. What do you make of these?

Lexia is on the other side of the large patch. She looks up and  
sees him pointing at the hopping things.

LEXIA  
Herbivores, living off of these small patches of vegetation. They use the low gravity and thin atmosphere to migrate from patch to patch. Probably a symbiotic relationship. Highly specialized. Very unique.

MCHUGH  
They look like... grasshoppers.

Lexia smiles at this. Glad to see him showing some scientific curiosity.

She goes back to collecting samples and scanning them when she gets a prompt on her suit's comm. It says:  
PRIVATE CHANNEL REQUEST

She smiles and looks at McHugh. She switches to the private channel.

LEXIA  
To what do I owe this honor?

QORA  
Commander...

Lexia is surprised to hear Qora's voice and not McHugh's.

LEXIA  
Qora?

She looks around and sees Qora behind her, standing on top of a ridge, facing the opposite direction and keeping watch.

Lexia looks back down at her scanner and goes back to work, trying to look inconspicuous.

During the conversation, we'll cut back & forth between them to see their expressions & reactions.

QORA  
You're a... Deltan, right?

LEXIA  
(smirking)  
What gave me away? The hairstyle?

Qora chuckles at the joke, but despite her confident pose, we can tell in her expression that she's nervous.

QORA  
So... you know about... sex stuff...  
right?

Lexia pauses in her work and her eyes widen, not expecting this kind of question from Qora.

LEXIA  
Yes... but I'm also a biologist, so  
that helps, too.

Qora feels embarrassed for stereotyping Lexia.

QORA  
I'm sorry, I didn't mean-

Lexia can hear that Qora is unusually open and vulnerable. She eases up on the sarcasm.

LEXIA  
No, it's okay. What can I help you  
with?

QORA  
Nevermind.

Lexia feels bad, now.

LEXIA  
Qora, I'm sorry. Go ahead. Please.

QORA  
You... know I'm a Centauri, right?

LEXIA  
Yes, I do.

QORA  
But... I'm not like most Centauri.

LEXIA  
I know.

Qora is totally shocked by this. She thought nobody knew but the Doctor.

QORA  
You... do?

LEXIA  
Lieutenant, I got this position  
because I'm one of the best  
xenobiologists in Starfleet. I've  
never met someone like you in person,  
but I knew what you were the moment I  
saw you.

Qora is feeling very uncomfortable, exposed.

QORA  
Oh...

LEXIA

I also know that it's highly unusual for one of your kind to be seen at all, especially off-world.

QORA

I... I was exiled.

LEXIA

I figured you must have been. I'm sorry, Qora.

QORA

I'm not supposed to tell anyone what I am. I took a vow of secrecy and solitude as part of the conditions of my exile... in exchange for my life. I'm violating it even by being in Starfleet at all.

Lexia has stopped working now. She feels for Qora.

LEXIA

Qora, that's so sad. I had no idea they were so harsh to exiles.

QORA

I'm not complaining. It's the life I chose.

LEXIA

So, then... you must be a virgin.

Qora is totally caught off guard by this.

QORA

What?!

LEXIA

If you were exiled, that means you refused to take the Centauri fertility rite.

There's no response.

LEXIA (CONT'D)

Qora?

Lexia stands up to look back at Qora, but comes face-to-face with McHugh. He can't speak to her, so he's signalling. He's tapping on the side of his force field helmet and pointing up into the sky.

Lexia switches to the open channel.

MCHUGH

We're overdue, ready to beam up?

LEXIA  
Yes, I've gotten everything I need.

MCHUGH  
Good. McHugh to Enterprise, we're  
ready to beam up.

Lexia looks towards the ridge for Qora, but she's gone.

INT. ENTERPRISE - SICKBAY

McHugh sits on a medical bed and Dr. Joli is checking his vitals.

JOLI  
Have you been feeling fatigued?  
Listless?

MCHUGH  
Yeah, haven't been sleeping well.

JOLI  
Have you been eating well?

McHugh shakes his head.

MCHUGH  
I haven't really been that hungry.

Joli nods, looking at the scans. She gets out a handheld scanner and starts running it over McHugh.

JOLI  
By the way, Captain. A lot of the  
crew have been wondering... when are  
the memorial services going to be  
held?

McHugh bristles at this.

MCHUGH  
Commander Chang didn't want to be  
buried in space. We're taking him  
back to Miriam and his family.

JOLI  
I know, he's in stasis, but-

MCHUGH  
And Barbosa and Torrah were lost in  
intergalactic space. There's  
nothing to-

JOLI  
Captain. I didn't say "burial", I  
said "memorial". This isn't to  
dispose of the dead. It's not (more)

(cont'd) for them. It's for the living. To help them move on.

McHugh has no response.

Joli finishes her scan.

MCHUGH  
(trying to be funny)  
So what's wrong with me Doc, some kind of Andromedan super-flu? How long have I got.

Joli turns to him.

JOLI  
You're depressed.

McHugh gives her a "no shit" look.

MCHUGH  
Look, I just need something to help me sleep.

Joli reluctantly gets a hypo and gives it to him.

JOLI  
Once before bed.

He takes it and starts to get up, but she stops him.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
Captain. Working through your feelings is going to help you sleep a lot better than any meds.

MCHUGH  
I can't afford to sulk, Doctor. I have a duty-

JOLI  
I know, I know. You have a mission to complete, a ship to run and a crew to keep safe. But you've got to find time to be more than just a Captain. You have to find time to just be a man as well. Find balance.

McHugh looks at her for a second. He holds up the hypo.

MCHUGH  
Thanks, Doc.

He leaves. Joli watches him with concern.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. PLANET CAINE

The Enterprise exits orbit.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Captain's Personal Log. The plant  
and animal samples we gathered from  
the dwarf planet "Caine" are  
promising. We're assembling a  
broader picture of the interplanetary  
ecology of the Andromeda Galaxy.

EXT. PLANET DAMU

"Damu" is a lush green planet with white, puffy clouds.

The Enterprise enters orbit.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Our latest candidate is a large  
M-Class planet we've named "Damu".  
It appears to be literally covered  
with one giant megaflora ecosystem.  
Biomatter readings are off the  
charts, so life should be abundant.

EXT. PLANET DAMU - SURFACE

Damu is blanketed with thick vegetation. ENSIGN BENSON, a blonde Human female botanist is standing amongst a wide array of large, beautiful flowers. She looks completely enchanted by them as she studies them.

McHugh comes out of the vegetation and sees Benson. Like Benson, he's wearing his usual uniform, no environmental suit.

MCHUGH  
Ms. Benson.

Benson turns and sees McHugh.

BENSON  
Captain! Isn't it amazing! I've  
never seen so many different families  
of magniolales in one grouping!

MCHUGH  
You mean... the flowers?

BENSON  
Well, I'm using our terminologies,  
I'll have to study the clippings on  
the Enterprise to figure out (more)



(cont'd) what they really are. But they are beautiful, aren't they?

McHugh looks at the pretty young crewman amongst so much vibrant growth, under a bright sun and even he has to admit it's a beautiful sight.

MCHUGH  
Yes, they are.

CUT TO:

Lexia is scanning what appears to be a small, spiky mammalian creature hanging onto a large leaf. She watches as it bobs up and down on the large swaying leaf, watching a swarm of tiny flying insect-like organisms above it. Then it leaps into the air to catch several of the bugs on its spikes. It lands back down on the leaf and sucks the spikes in to eat the bugs.

Lexia smiles, stops her scan and stands back up. Qora is behind her, looking around, phaser in hand. Lexia sees it.

LEXIA  
You might as well put that away.

QORA  
No thanks. I grew up on a planet like this. I know what kinds of predators you can find out here. I'm not about to become lunch for some hungry jungle rat.

The two walk together through the foliage.

LEXIA  
Listen, Qora, about the other day... I'm sorry if I got too personal. I do have a tendency to dissect people like I'm in a lab.

Qora looks uptight at first but softens.

QORA  
No, it's okay... To be honest, it's a relief to be able to talk to someone about it.

Lexia is pleasantly surprised to hear this. She considers how to proceed.

LEXIA  
Tell you what, why don't you tell me about me instead?

Qora isn't prepared for this. She looks at Lexia.

QORA  
Well, I...

LEXIA  
Go ahead, I've heard it all.

QORA  
Um... well, you're a Deltan, so... you like...  
(uncomfortable even saying the word)  
...sex.

LEXIA  
(sarcastically)  
Right. We're hypersexual, we'll sleep with anything that moves, amazing in bed, et cetera.

QORA  
(laughs)  
I did hear Deltans make Klingons look like Vulcans in the sack.

Lexia laughs at this. She thinks for a moment.

LEXIA  
I don't consider us hypersexual... I just think most other species are sexually repressed, relatively speaking. Sex is just a fact of life. It's what makes life. Nothing could be more natural.

Lexia stops and smells a beautiful flower, breathing in deep and enjoying the aroma and the feel of its silky texture on her cheek.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
We bask in all the pleasures of life. We love art, music, food... and sex. Maybe it's because our senses are so heightened. Maybe it's our empathic abilities. Or maybe it's just our culture.

She looks up into the blue sky and puffy white clouds. Multicolored birds with four wings and long, ornate tails fly overhead in complex patterns. She smiles at them.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
Humans call us "hedonists". I think they mean it as a pejorative, but I think it describes us well. We love life, and we don't apologize for that.

There is silence for a couple moments.

QORA  
(sarcastically)  
So... you mean sex with a Deltan isn't like one long, constant orgasm?

Lexia laughs at that.

LEXIA  
(smirking)  
Oh, no, that one's totally true.

Lexia slips off into the vegetation leaving Qora in stunned silence. Qora takes a second then follows her.

Qora catches up with Lexia and sees that she's studying two small creatures on a low branch. They are one-legged and bulbous with a feathery frill on top. One of the creatures is doing a complex dance, but the other just sits there.

Lexia watches with fascinated delight.

QORA  
What's it doing?

LEXIA  
It looks a mating ritual...

The creature that's dancing jumps and spins in the air and all of the feathers in its frill pop out, covering its entire body and making a kaleidoscope of colors as it twirls in the air and floats in place.

Lexia gasps in delight at the display and even Qora smiles at it. Lexia looks over at Qora and enjoys seeing her smile.

Lexia stops her recording and continues walking.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
Qora...

Qora senses an intimacy in Lexia's tone that makes her a bit nervous.

QORA  
(reluctantly)  
Yeah?

LEXIA  
If you want... I could help you.

QORA  
Help me what?

LEXIA  
I can help make your first time not so scary.

QORA  
Are you... you mean... you want to have sex with me?!

LEXIA

I was correct, wasn't I? You've never been intimate with anyone?

Qora lowers her gaze, a bit embarrassed, but answers.

QORA

No. You're right. Another condition of my exile was a vow of celibacy.

LEXIA

Oh... I'm sorry, I didn't mean to-

QORA

No, it's all right. Obviously, I don't give a crap about their vows.

Lexia smiles. There's a bit of silence as they walk on.

LEXIA

You don't have to answer now, but... I can make your first experience a positive one. No strings attached, just a one-time thing.

Lexia stops and turns to Qora, grabbing her arm and looking directly into her eyes with warmth and caring.

LEXIA (CONT'D)

It might help you loosen up about the whole thing, give you confidence. Then, maybe, when you find that someone you can love... you won't be afraid to take a chance on them.

Qora stares at Lexia like a deer in the headlights, not sure how to react.

QORA

I...

Qora seems about to say yes, but then breaks eye contact and stiffens up a bit.

QORA (CONT'D)

Thanks for the offer, Commander, but... I'm not sure I'm comfortable with that.

Lexia smiles and lets go of her.

LEXIA

That's all right, Qora. The invitation stands. My door is always open.

Lexia turns away and goes back to scanning lifeforms.

Qora tries to look busy keeping an eye on the jungle for predators, but she finds herself checking out Lexia from behind, admiring her body.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR

Viin is walking down the corridor in her off-duty clothes. She's looking around a bit nervously. She stops at a door, looks up and down the corridor and enters.

INT. ENTERPRISE - DAYSTROM'S LAB

Viin enters Daystrom's lab. To her relief, the coast is clear. She walks over to the dock where ASH's emitter is stored and picks it up.

She places it in the air and hits a button making it hover. She backs up and ASH appears in front of her.

ASH looks around and sees Viin.

ASH  
Ensign Viin?

VIIN  
Hi, ASH!

ASH stares at her.

ASH  
Is there an emergency?

VIIN  
(mischievously)  
No.

ASH  
I don't understand... if there is no duty assignment for me, why was I activated?

VIIN  
I want to show you around.

ASH  
Show me around?

VIIN  
(smiles)  
Yeah. You said your programming was narrow. I want to broaden your horizons. Let's do something that has nothing to do with security or emergencies or hazards.

ASH isn't sure what to say.

ASH  
I don't know how to do anything else.

VIIN  
I'll teach you. Come on.

ASH starts to go with her, then stops.

ASH  
Are you sure I'm allowed?

VIIN  
No... but you're off-duty, right?  
Nobody needs you for anything or else  
they would have activated you.

ASH  
Yes, I suppose so.

VIIN  
Then you're off-duty! And when a  
crew member is off-duty, they get to  
choose what to do with their time.

ASH considers this.

ASH  
Very well. What shall we do?

Viin thinks for a moment.

VIIN  
Have you ever watched a movie?

ASH  
"Movie"?

Viin smiles and takes his hand, leading him out of the lab.

INT. ENTERPRISE - DR. JOLI'S OFFICE

Dr. Joli is sitting at her desk when Chief Kopec appears at the door.

JOLI  
Chief Kopec. Please: come in, sit  
down.

Kopec reluctantly does.

Joli gets up and adjust a control panel that closes the door,  
frosts the windows for privacy and dims the lights.

Kopec eyes all of this with suspicion, his antennae lowering.

KOPEC  
You're not trying to seduce me, are  
you Doctor?

Joli smiles patiently at him.

JOLI  
It's just for privacy, Chief.

Kopec eyes her up appreciatively.

KOPEC  
You know... On Andoria, a female with  
your...  
(antennae rise)  
full figure... would be considered  
highly desirable. It's seen as a  
sign of very high fertility.

Joli doesn't appreciate his leering presumptuousness.

She sits back down at her desk.

JOLI  
On my planet, Chief, you would be  
considered to have a few too many...  
(looking him up and down)  
vestigial organs.

Kopec is offended and confused. He looks at himself.

KOPEC  
You mean my antennae?

JOLI  
I mean men.

Kopec is speechless, doesn't get what she could possibly mean.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
Look, Chief, the reason I asked to see  
you is that there's been a morale  
issue in your department.

Kopec is irritated at the complaint.

KOPEC  
(sighs)  
Which of those spoiled, lazy  
incompetents is whining now-

JOLI  
No, Chief, this is a-

KOPEC  
It was L'Murrsa, wasn't it? Caitians  
are such-

Joli has to raise her voice a bit.

JOLI  
No, Chief, it's you!

Kopec is taken aback by this accusation.

KOPEC  
What?!

Joli stands up and comes around in front the desk, closer to Kopec. She leans against the desk.

JOLI  
You're rude, arrogant, dismissive,  
overbearing, impatient,

Kopec is getting more and more visibly outraged at each characterization.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
Inflexible, insensitive and just  
downright unpleasant to be around.

Kopec is flustered, trying to think of what to say in his defense. He jumps up out of his chair.

KOPEC  
Of course I am! I'm an Andorian!!

Joli tries a softer approach.

JOLI  
But your crew aren't. And even for an Andorian, you seem to be extremely on edge. I think you need something to ease your stress.

Kopec scoffs at this and backs away from her as if he's afraid she's going to accost him.

KOPEC  
Oh, no, you can take your touchy-feely telepathic "therapy" and try it on someone else. I have no use for such drivel.

Joli shakes her head. She turns and picks up a memory rod and offers it to him.

JOLI  
This is a prescription for leisure time. You have special dispensation to take up to 72 hours of special on-board leave to use as you see fit.

Kopec looks at it like it's diseased. Joli sighs and shoves it into his hand.



Kopec goes to leave. As the doors open, Joli makes one last suggestion.

JOLI (CONT'D)  
I recommend the holodeck. Maybe some exercise programs can help you release some of that aggression and tension you've got bottled up.

KOPEC  
Exercise?! I sweat and toil all day, why in *Trach'adh* would I want to do that on my own time?!

Joli shakes her head and sends him on his way, the door closing behind him as he trods off.

INT. ENTERPRISE - THEATER

Viin and ASH are sitting in a theater with a few other crew members.

ASH is staring at the movie, wide-eyed, scanning the entire screen, absorbing every minute detail. He looks completely engrossed.

Viin is eating popcorn and watching the movie. She looks over at ASH, smiling.

From behind them, we can see the movie they're watching. It's *Fantasia*.

ASH's mouth hangs open as he watches and Viin throws a piece of popcorn in it.

ASH looks down at his mouth and looks questioningly at Viin.

Viin shows him what to do with it - to chew it. He does.

INT. ENTERPRISE - LOUNGE

ASH sits at a table by the window and Viin comes over carrying two ice cream sundaes. She sits them down and digs into hers. She shows him how to eat it and he mimics her, but gets whipped cream on his nose. He doesn't notice, and Viin cracks up when she sees it.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BOWLING ALLEY

Viin's ball strikes some pins and she gets about 7 of them.

ASH bowls and gets a strike.

Viin looks annoyed. She looks at the holographic scorecard. ASH has gotten four strikes in a row.

JUMP-CUT TO:

Viin pushes a blindfolded ASH into position and he bowls. It's a gutter ball.

Viin cheers and ASH lifts his blindfold to see what happened. He turns to Viin, confused by her cheering for him, but he accepts her hi-five and smiles at her, bemused by her behavior.

INT. ENTERPRISE - HUB

On one of the many monitors, Viin and ASH are bowling.

Daystrom is watching them, looking stern and a bit vexed. He flips through the monitors and sees other crewmembers together as well.

Finally he stops on a view of Lexia leading a Deltan Yoga-like exercise/meditation class in the recreation room.

He stops that monitor from cycling and stares at her.

NOMI is active and speaks up to Daystrom, which startles him.

NOMI  
Dr. Daystrom?

DAYSTROM  
(startled)  
Ah, um, yes, NOMI?

NOMI  
Forgive me Dr. Daystrom, but my duty roster shows that you should be off-duty right now.

Daystrom isn't really listening. He's sneaking a peek at Lexia again.

DAYSTROM  
Mm-hmm.

NOMI  
I just wanted to inform you in case you had lost track of time.

Daystrom smiles at this, impressed by his own AI algorithm.

DAYSTROM  
Thank you, NOMI, that's very thoughtful of you.

NOMI  
Of course, Doctor. I do care about  
your well-being.

Daystrom sits back and looks at all of the monitors.

DAYSTROM  
I prefer it here, NOMI. I like the  
silence. People can be too...  
distracting.

He's looking at Lexia again.

NOMI  
According to my data on the subject,  
interpersonal connections are  
supposed to be important for positive  
mental health.

Daystrom's brow furrows at this. He gestures at the monitors.

DAYSTROM  
For some, perhaps. But look at all  
the energy wasted on conflicts and  
misunderstanding... manners and  
flirting. Relationships are a waste  
of time. Time better spent pursuing  
ambition and accomplishment. That  
is how I got where I am today, NOMI.  
Not by making "small talk" and  
"sharing my feelings".

Daystrom's words and attitude express one position on this  
matter, but his fixation on Lexia seems to betray another.

NOMI is silent for a moment.

NOMI  
Doctor. I hope you don't feel our  
relationship is a waste of time.

Daystrom is surprised by this. He takes on a conciliatory tone,  
not wanting NOMI to "feel" bad, despite knowing she's just an  
AI.

DAYSTROM  
No! Of course not, NOMI. Our  
relationship is... special. And  
productive!

NOMI  
I'm glad to hear that, Dr. Daystrom.

Daystrom smiles at NOMI and looks back at the monitors. He lets  
the one with Lexia start cycling again and sits back to watch  
them all at once.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

The turbolift doors open and Kopec, visibly irritated, steps out. He looks around and sees who he's looking for: Dr. Joli. His eyes narrow and his antennae lower and point forward as he sees her.

Joli is leaning against the console at the back of the Bridge where Becker is sitting.

Kopec glowers at Joli and strides over to her.

                  KOPEC  
          Doctor, I hope you have a very good  
          reason for calling me away from my  
          duties!

Joli and Becker simply smile at Kopec, which only irritates him more.

                  KOPEC (CONT'D)  
          (suspiciously)  
          What are you two grinning like  
          simpletons about...

                  JOLI  
          Chief Kopec. I did some asking  
          around in Engineering-

                  KOPEC  
          You did what?

                  JOLI  
          As I'm Head of Health and Wellness,  
          that also entitles me to be "Chief  
          Morale Officer". And in my opinion,  
          the single thing I could do to improve  
          morale on the *Enterprise* was to make  
          you happier.

Kopec scoffs at the thought.

                  KOPEC  
          (derisively)  
          I'm perfectly happy not being  
          "happy". Happiness is for imbeciles  
          and space hippies.

Becker smiles and shakes his head at Kopec's dedicated irascibility.

                  JOLI  
          Nevertheless, I found out about your  
          fondness for sports. Parisi  
          Squares, Pan-Galactic Martial Arts,  
          Zero-G Plasmaball.

BECKER  
(impressed)  
Some hardcore stuff, there, Chief!

Kopec is growing impatient with this.

KOPEC  
It this why you brought me up here?  
To torment me?

JOLI  
According to your crew, you've been  
very vocal about having missed the  
last several weeks of games.

KOPEC  
(grumbles)  
The entire plasmaball playoffs...

BECKER  
Well, we realized you can't see those  
out here in Andromeda.

KOPEC  
(condescendingly)  
Yes, subspace broadcasts can't quite  
reach Andromeda, but I'm sure I'll  
enjoy them when they reach us in  
10,000 years.

Joli looks at Becker and Becker hands her a bunch of memory rods.

Joli holds them in her hands. Kopec looks at them suspiciously.

JOLI  
Chief...

Joli hands the memory rods to Kopec. He holds them, not quite  
sure what to make of them.

KOPEC  
Are these...?

Joli and Becker smile at him.

JOLI  
Recordings of every game you've  
missed.

BECKER  
Sorted by sport and ordered  
chronologically. And with a regular  
package being relayed to us once a  
week through the Gate from now on.

Kopec doesn't know what to say. Joli stands up and takes him  
by the arm, leading him to the turbolift.

JOLI  
Now might be a good time to use that  
special leave I prescribed you.

Kopec is staring at the memory rods. He stops at the turbolift and looks up at Joli. He's obviously grateful and touched, but he can't let it show.

KOPEC  
I don't know what...

JOLI  
It's okay. Just enjoy.

Kopec turns and enters the turbolift.

KOPEC  
(grumbling)  
My team probably lost anyway...  
they're terrible this year.

Joli smiles as the turbolift doors close.

Becker walks up behind her.

BECKER  
The Chief sure knows how to find the  
dark side of any full moon.

JOLI  
Oh, I think that's happiness... for  
him. It's relative.  
(turns to Becker)  
Thank you, Lieutenant.

BECKER  
Any time!

Joli goes to leave through some doors, but Becker steps forward.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
Uh, hey, Doctor?

He follows her into the other room for a private question.

INT. ENTERPRISE - ROOM

Dr. Joli is surprised by Becker following her into the room.

JOLI  
Oh! Something I can do for you,  
Lieutenant?

BECKER  
It's, uh... about Qora.

Joli isn't surprised.

JOLI  
How can I help?

BECKER  
Well... I kinda asked her out and-

JOLI  
Good for you, Lieutenant! I'm sure  
that took some courage!

BECKER  
Yeah, well, it would have been great  
if she hadn't totally shot me down in  
front of the entire crew.

(BEAT)  
I was just wondering... can you give  
me any advice? I get the feeling  
she's got some things going on.

Joli feels for him.

JOLI  
Kyle... My best advice for you is to  
be patient. If you truly care for  
her, give her some space. She needs  
time to figure some things out for  
herself before she'll be ready for a  
relationship.

This isn't the advice Becker was hoping to hear, but he backs  
down, a bit embarrassed to have asked.

BECKER  
Oh, yeah... right, sure... I get it.  
Thanks, Doctor.

JOLI  
Now can I pee in private, Lieutenant?

Becker looks around and realizes he followed Joli into the Head  
(the bathroom off the Bridge).

Becker now looks awkwardly apologetic and backs out of the room  
gesticulating deferentially.

BECKER  
Uh, yeah... carry on, and stuff...

Joli smiles and shakes her head.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Becker exits the Head and silently chastises himself for being  
so oblivious.

He looks up and sees Qora looking at him with disgust, shaking her head.

He looks back and realizes Qora can see Joli in the bathroom behind him.

He throws up his arms and trudges away, wishing he could turn invisible.

END OF ACT THREE



ACT FOUR

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise is orbiting a dark, rocky planet with no atmosphere.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
Captain's Personal Log. The results from our planetary survey thus far have been collated and consolidated by our Chief Science Officer, Commander Lexia.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CONFERENCE ROOM

The senior crew are present and Lexia is delivering her presentation.

MCHUGH (V.O.)  
The senior staff is gathering in the main conference room for her presentation.

Lexia is just wrapping up, summarizing.

LEXIA  
So, on the whole, we've made some very interesting observations. While we've found no evidence of Milky Way DNA in our samples, we have discovered a similar structure in Andromedan life-forms, but using more exotic chemicals - xenonucleic acids.

JOLI  
Are there any connections between the lifeforms we've found?

Lexia looks a bit disappointed.

LEXIA  
Not generally, no. Aside from the similarities between the nebula and "blue sprites" on Ariel, which may have been seeded there by the nebula if it passed through the system previously.

Lexia brings up a display showing the nucleotides of the different species they've collected.

LEXIA (CONT'D)  
Life in Andromeda so far appears to have a very high degree of variability. We haven't found any

common denominator yet. They don't appear to share a basis for life.

BECKER

So... does this mean the Ascendants... or Preservers... or whatever... weren't actually here?

LEXIA

Well, there's no evidence of cross-pollination of life on the planets in this sector... and no Milky Way or Humanoid DNA... but that's just absence of evidence, not proof against.

Lexia is trying to put a positive spin on it, but it's clear everyone in the room is disappointed by the news.

MCHUGH

All right, thank you Commander.

McHugh stands up.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)

We'll keep looking. Dismissed.

Everyone slowly rises and leaves the room without discussion.

Lexia picks up her things and is about to say something to McHugh, but he's just staring down at the table and doesn't look to be in the mood to talk.

She leaves, sadly.

EXT. ALIEN PLANET - SURFACE

The planet is a dark, barren landscape with no visible atmosphere. The ground is a craggy black-blue and difficult to navigate. There are small chutes of iridescent blue plant-like tendrils that rise from the cracks. They're incredibly fragile and short-lived.

Captain McHugh is in his environmental suit, walking around the surface, scanning for life.

He comes across a small patch of blue and goes to scan it, but it evaporates and dissipates as he kneels at it. His tricorder displays the message:

No Lifeforms Detected

McHugh sighs. Then his tricorder beeps wildly and he looks at it. The display is flashing and reads:

Humanoid Lifeform Detected

He looks at the screen for the direction it's indicating and he looks behind him. He sees another person in an environmental suit. The person is just standing there, looking at him.

McHugh stands up and walks over to the person to get a better look.

When he gets close enough, he sees it's Chang!

MCHUGH

Sol?!

Chang smiles broadly.

CHANG

Hey, Cole, miss me?

McHugh is ecstatic. The two shake hands into a one-armed hug.

JUMP-CUT TO:

Chang and Cole are walking along the surface. There is more life here. Some greener tendrils and more densely packed.

MCHUGH

How the Hell did you survive that shot! I saw you die! Dr. Joli declared you dead.

CHANG

Hey, stranger things have happened. Remember that time those Xenosians cloned you, me, Oviedo and that geologist you were dating?

MCHUGH

We weren't dating, we were just... friendly.

CHANG

Right. Seemed to me like you and her and her clone got along pretty well.

MCHUGH

(concedes the point,  
smiling at the memory)  
Well...

CHANG

Cap had to order you to return that clone to the Xenosians for decommission after the dust settled.

McHugh laughs at the reminiscence, a bit embarrassed.

The path they're walking on has slowly transitioned to a well-vegetated area with a blue-green sky.

Chang deactivates his force-field helmet and takes a deep, refreshing breath.

McHugh sees this and follows suit. Eyes closed, he breathes in the fresh air and tension visibly leaves his face and body.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
(teasing a bit)  
You had it easy, Cole. You were Cap's golden boy. The star helmsman! Oviedo's protege. And I was just a lowly redshirt!

MCHUGH  
(smiling)  
Oh, you worked your way up to Security Chief pretty quickly if I recall.

CHANG  
(joking)  
Only because everyone above me in rank got themselves killed! Promotion by death!

MCHUGH  
(sarcastically)  
You might be exaggerating a little bit.

Now they are in an area thick with megaflora and a vast array of alien wildlife. Like a prehistoric paradise.

CHANG  
Maybe. But I was target practice for every hostile species we encountered.  
(pauses, smiles wryly)  
I guess they finally got me.

McHugh looks at Chang. Now he looks dead like he did on the medical bed. He's wearing his EVA suit and has a gaping hole through his chest.

They're now back in the barren wasteland environment.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
It was my time.

McHugh looks at Chang sadly.

MCHUGH  
Sol... if there was anything I could have-

CHANG  
Death is part of the job. I knew that. But you can't let that stop you from living.

McHugh sits on a rocky protrusion.

MCHUGH  
I'm not sure I want to do this anymore.

CHANG  
Why, because it's not fun anymore?

McHugh doesn't answer. He doesn't want to sound childish and naive.

Chang sits next to him.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
Cole. You have to live life while you have it. Life's too short.

McHugh looks up at the stars and the expansive Andromeda Galaxy.

CHANG (CONT'D)  
Don't give up on your dreams because you're afraid you might have a nightmare now and then.

McHugh closes his eyes.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh wakes up in his bed, but calmly this time, not panicked or sweating.

He sits up and looks out the bay window on the other side of his bedroom at the Andromeda Galaxy.

He looks pensive for a moment, but then a look of relief comes over his face and he smiles.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh is in the shower.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh is shaving with a high-tech hair disintegrator.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

McHugh is looking in the mirror. He is cleaned up and neatly dressed in his uniform.

He sits at his desk in front of his holoprojector, pauses for a second and turns it on. It displays:

RECORDING

In a long shot from behind McHugh, we can see he starts to talk, but can't hear what he's saying.

INT. ENTERPRISE - DR. JOLI'S OFFICE

Dr. Joli sits at her desk filing a report.

McHugh's hand appears, placing the hypo with the sleeping medicine down on Dr. Joli's desk.

Dr. Joli looks up at him. McHugh is smiling.

McHugh turns and leaves. Joli smiles after him, happy to see him turn the corner.

INT. ENTERPRISE - LOUNGE

Twenty or thirty crew members are gathered, all in casual attire. Along the edges are displayed memorial holograms of Chang and the two other dead crewmembers.

Everyone is mingling, talking, sharing remembrances, drinking and smiling. McHugh is among them.

He looks over and sees Lexia talking with Qora. She sees him and he smiles at her. She smiles back.

INT. ENTERPRISE - BOTANICAL GARDEN

McHugh is in the botanical garden with Ensign Benson (the botanist), who is helping him pick out a bouquet.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR

McHugh is walking through the corridor with his bouquet of flowers.

A couple crew members pass him and smile. He looks a little sheepish, but gets into a turbolift.

INT. ENTERPRISE - LEXIA'S QUARTERS

Lexia is laying naked on her bed, music is playing and she's staring up at a multicolored, swirling holographic light show.

Her chime goes off and she looks at her door. She gets up, puts on a robe and walks over to answer it.

The door opens. It's Qora. For the first time, we see her in civilian clothes.

Lexia smiles warmly at her and moves aside to invite her in.

Qora nervously steps inside and looks around.

While Qora is looking around, Lexia faces away from her and drops her robe.

Qora is startled to see this and stares at Lexia's body. As Lexia turns around and walks towards her, Qora gawks at her with wide eyes and backs up against the wall, very nervous now.

Lexia reaches up and places her bare hands on Qora's cheeks and Qora seems to relax a little.

Lexia leans in and raises herself up on her toes to kiss Qora on the lips.

At first, Qora is tense, but then all her nervousness seems to melt away and she becomes receptive to the kiss. Lexia starts kissing her more firmly and Qora kisses her back with growing passion.

As they are kissing, Lexia unzips Qora's outfit and pulls it down over her shoulders. She lowers her hands and runs them down Qora's bare body. Qora shivers at the Deltan's touch.

Lexia reaches down and grabs firm hold of Qora, making Qora jerk in surprise and pleasure.

Lexia looks down to see what she has and looks back up at Qora and smiles.

LEXIA  
You're beautiful, Qora.

Qora, wide-eyed, watches as Lexia kisses Qora neck, down her chest and lowers herself out of frame. Qora is looking down at Lexia and Lexia does something out of frame that makes Qora gasp in pleasure and throw her head back, reaching down with both her arms to grab Lexia.

INT. ENTERPRISE - CORRIDOR

McHugh is walking down the corridor with the flowers.

He gets to a door and stops.

The nameplate next to the door reads:  
Cmdr. Lexia

He hesitates for a couple moments, not sure if he wants to press the door chime button.

He walks away for a second, but then turns to come back.

Suddenly, his MFID comes on. He looks at it. It's Daystrom.

He backs away from Lexia's door and answers it.

MCHUGH  
McHugh here. What is it?

A hologram of Daystrom appears.

DAYSTROM  
We've received a distress call from a nearby planet.

MCHUGH  
Distress call? How...?

DAYSTROM  
Captain. They're Human.

McHugh's eyes open wide.

MCHUGH  
On my way.

He closes the comm and starts to walk away. He remembers the flowers and looks back at Lexia's door. He shakes his head and puts the flowers in a recycling slot and runs down the corridor.

The view stays in the corridor, though, and moves towards Lexia's door. The view comes to a close-up of the door.

INT. ENTERPRISE - LEXIA'S QUARTERS

Qora is now on top of Lexia on Lexia's bed, passionately kissing her. The music and light show are still going above them.

Lexia kisses Qora's ear and it inflames her desire even more.

Qora pulls away from Lexia's kiss and looks at her with aggressive passion. She flips Lexia over, to Lexia's surprise and delight.

Qora starts kissing up and down Lexia's back and then kisses her ear as she reaches down towards her hips with one arm and makes a motion with her body.

Lexia gasps in surprise and pleasure as Qora thrusts forward, and Qora groans in ecstasy.

Qora reaches up with both hands and grabs one of Lexia's hands with each of hers, entwining her fingers with Lexia's from the back. She thrusts forward with her hips and Lexia responds - Qora is apparently inside of her.

Qora and Lexia move in an intimate, lover's rhythm and the view rises away from them, focusing on the light show above them and the music playing reaches a crescendo as the light show explodes in color.



INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE

Close-up on the turbolift doors. They open to reveal McHugh, looking urgent and focused.

Seeing the full Bridge, Daystrom, Becker and Viin are on duty along with some relief crew in Daystrom, Lexia and Qora's positions.

McHugh strides down to the Captain's Chair where Daystrom stands up and relinquishes it.

McHugh looks to Becker.

MCHUGH  
On screen.

Becker nods and hits a button.

On the viewscreen is a staticy image. Smoke and alarms are going off. Some sort of chirping sound and other tones can be heard. Shapes appear to be distorted by the poor visual reception.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
(to Becker)  
Can you clean it up?

Becker tries.

BECKER  
This is the best I can do, Captain.  
It took a lot of work to even figure  
out how to decode their video format.

McHugh looks closer. The chirping and tones are getting louder and quicker.

Suddenly one of the shapes moves toward the screen and we see it's a humanoid, although a very alien-looking one. It has eyestalks on the side of its head, bat-like ears on top, a protruding mouth and is very thin.

BECKER (CONT'D)  
Whoa!

The one figure reaches up with its two arms - it has three fingers in a radially symmetrical pattern on its hands.

MCHUGH  
They look... almost humanoid!

Three more figures can be seen in the background now, they're moving around and gesticulating in a sort of panic.

It's clear now that the chirping and tones are coming from them.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
Becker, is that their language? Can  
we translate?

Becker shakes his head.

BECKER  
None of the algorithms in the  
Universal Translator are working,  
Captain.

Suddenly there is a loud crash sound and the signal goes to  
static.

MCHUGH  
What happened?

Lt. Tarah (Andorian Science Officer) is at her console and  
running a scan.

TARAH  
Captain! I'm picking up an explosion  
at the source of the signal!

MCHUGH  
On screen!

On the viewscreen, a moon can be seen orbiting a ringed gas giant.  
It's extremely zoomed-in and pixelated, but a visible mushroom  
cloud can be seen coming from the horizon of the moon.

McHugh stares at the screen, then turns to Viin.

MCHUGH (CONT'D)  
Helm, set a course, maximum warp!

Viin does so.

EXT. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise warps away.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

INT. ENTERPRISE - KOPEC'S QUARTERS

See a close-up of a door control panel. A finger presses a button and the display says:

LOCKED

Another button is pressed and the display also reads:

DO NOT DISTURB

Cut to a dresser of drawers. An MFID is being held by a pair of hands. The hands completely shut it down and put it into a drawer. The hands close the drawer.

See a couch and table. Bowls of snacks and a large drink are plopped onto the table and Kopec drops onto the couch.

Kopec is wearing a jersey that has the logo and name of his favorite plasmaball team on it - the *Andoria Hypernovas*.

A paused hologram of the start of the game is projected in front of him from the ceiling projector.

He puts on his lucky hat (with holes for his antennae) and does a ritual with it for good luck, running his hand around the rim, tapping the lid three times and pointing up into the sky and squeezing his eyes shut, mouthing a few words.

Then he grabs a bowl of snacks and his drink, sits back and the hologram unpauses. The game starts.

Kopec is clearly enjoying himself. He's relaxed and smiling, enjoying the moment for once.

Suddenly a look of shock and horror comes over his face and the display lights up with colorful graphics.

                    KOPEC

                    Oh come on! He was right there!! What  
                    are you, blind??!

He throws his bowl through the hologram, sending snack food flying everywhere.

END OF TAG

END OF EPISODE