

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

"SAGE"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - GELIN SPACE STATION

A large SPACE STATION with six identical GELIN SHIPS parked around it, orbit a barren planet. The station's large hangar doors are fully retracted to the side. Voyager is jammed inside, nose first. Gangways, like airport gates, stretch between Voyager's hatches and the station wall.

INT. VOYAGER - CORRIDOR

CAPTAIN JANEWAY walks along the corridor with TUVOK. NEELIX is just a step behind.

NEELIX

Captain, we have been here for days, they have shown nothing but generous hospitality, if we ban them from the ship they will be highly insulted, they may even ask us to leave!

TUVOK

With the warp drive off line for an extended period Voyager is uniquely vulnerable.

JANEWAY

Are you telling me that you now believe these people should not be trusted?

TUVOK

No.

JANEWAY

This is only the second time we've been able to do a space dock overhaul, we can't afford to straddle the fence.

The group rounds the corner to find CHAKOTAY waiting at the Briefing Room door. The Captain stops and taps her com badge.

JANEWAY

Janeway to Engineering, how's it going down there?

TORRES COM VOICE

As we expected Captain, we've finished the treatment and started to assemble components, we're looking at forty eight hours.

JANEWAY

And if we need the core up in an emergency?

TORRES COM VOICE

Uh, at least thirty six hours, the core is in pieces down here. Is there anything I should know about?

JANEWAY

No B'llana, Janeway out.

(to Tuvok)

We need their good will, we can't search them going on and off the ship. Beef up the security escorts.

Janeway takes several steps forward to converse with Chakotay. Neelix turns to Tuvok.

NEELIX

You just don't believe in serendipity do you?

TUVOK

Serendipity or not, the current circumstances warrant caution. Your Starfleet security training should..

NEELIX

Commander, I traded with the Kazon. If there was anything going on, I'd know about it. There's nothing to worry about.

TUVOK

I am not worrying, and I distinctly remember..

Neelix moves away towards Janeway and Chakotay. Tuvok grimaces and walks back from whence he came.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Neelix, the man of the moment, leads Janeway and Chakotay INTO the room. The PRIME of the Station Colony stands next to the table and turns to Neelix. The Prime does not look like a refined politician. Despite his impeccable dress, he's built like a refrigerator and his appearance is quite rough.

PRIME

Ambassador Neelix!

NEELIX

Wonderful to see you Sir, may I introduce you to Captain Janeway and Commander Chakotay.

(to Janeway and Chakotay)

Captain, Commander, the Prime of Gelin colony.

JANEWAY

Prime.

The Prime bows to Janeway and nods to Chakotay.

PRIME

Captain, Commander. You have a magnificent ship, I must admit, I am envious.

JANEWAY

It's our home. I want to thank you for your generous hospitality.

PRIME

I'm glad we are able to be of some assistance.

(shakes head)

If you hadn't brought our supplies to us...

JANEWAY

I'm pleased we've had the opportunity to help each other and establish this relationship between our peoples.

PRIME

As am I. You have quite a diplomat in your Neelix here.

JANEWAY

We like to think so.

Neelix beams and grows ten feet tall with the flattery.

NEELIX

(holds up a Padd)

I'm afraid duty calls. I'll leave you to get acquainted.

Neelix floats OUT through the door.

INT. CORRIDOR

A panel from off the wall lays on the floor exposing an EPS ENCLOSURE. Two N.D.'s squat next to ENSIGN KIM assisting him as he inspects their work inside.

KIM

Good, I think that's does it.

A Gelin technician TECH ONE, loaded down with supply boxes, walks up to the group.

TECH ONE

(to Kim)

Where should I put this?

Kim turns to the approaching technician. As Kim stands Tech One looses his grip and drops his load. The resultant clatter prompts the two assisting N.D.'s to stand and face Tech One who sputters with embarrassment.

TECH ONE

Oh no! ...clumsy...

KIM

That's all right.

While they are preoccupied, Gelin TECH TWO comes up behind the group. He carries a box with both hands.

ANGLE - TECH TWO

With his arm hidden by the box, he quickly slides one hand along the bottom of the box. A hidden slot opens and something drops into his hand. With a deft movement he throws it through the panel opening.

ANGLE - EPS ENCLOSURE

A dark gray BOMB with a small blinking red light grips the back wall of the enclosure. It snails itself further behind

some objects. The light disappears as it chameleons to the surrounding environment. It's virtually invisible.

ANGLE - CORRIDOR - REPAIR TEAM

Tech One finishes retrieving his load.

TECH ONE

Sorry.

Tech Two rattles his box attracting their attention.

TECH TWO

I think this goes with that.

Kim turns back to Tech One.

KIM

(to Tech One)

It's Ok.

(to both)

Go back down this corridor, turn left, starboard side.

TECH ONE

Back that way.

Kim nods and kneels down. The technicians walk off. Kim takes one last glance into the opening, and closes it up.

INT. CORRIDOR - BRIEFING ROOM DOOR

Janeway, Chakotay, and Prime exit the briefing room.

PRIME

...I'm afraid a civil servant's work is never done. Now, if there's anything you need, you know where I'll be.

Tech One and Tech Two walk by the group as they bid their fond farewells.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. CARGO BAY

A mechanical part sits on the shelf in the cargo bay. TECH THREE pushing a CART stops next to the shelf. He looks around, is anyone watching? He reaches down and slides a false panel on the side of the cart to reveal a part that looks exactly like the one on the shelf. He quickly swaps the two, closes the false panel, a casual glance, and pushes his cart away.

INT. ENGINEERING

A SECURITY TEAM escorts three GELIN TECHNICIANS who carry boxes through engineering. One JOSTLES another as TECH ONE passes an Impulse Engine console. He gives a slight shake to his right arm. A blunt cylinder falls into his palm. He fluidly places it on the underside of the console as he passes. The cylinder sprouts legs and scurries along the underside of the console into the corner and then chameleons.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER - SPACE STATION - GANGWAY

Tech Three, pushes his cart down the gangway, away from Voyager. Just short of where the gangway meets the station wall he hears a thump in the cart. He stops, and slides open the false panel and checks the stolen parts. Out of the corner of his eye he catches sight of Neelix chatting merrily with the Prime as they make their way towards him. He quickly closes the false panel and strides around the gangway corner into the station hallway and out of site.

Suddenly next to the cart appears HERODOTUS. He resolves in, in a manner similar to the way a hologram does. He is athletic, 60ish, gray hair, and wears a belted cloak. His belt has numerous controls and buttons. He quickly goes to the cart, slides the panels open, and glances in Neelix's direction.

Neelix and Prime are now almost alongside the cart, but Herodotus has vanished. The Prime catches sight of the exposed theft and tries to divert Neelix's attention as they pass, but Neelix catches sight of the thieved equipment out of the corner of his eye.

NEELIX

...You can imagine how the Captain...
(jerks his head around, beat)
What's this? These shouldn't be out
here.
(starts to turn to the Prime)
What are you do...

Prime swings his blaster into the back of Neelix's head. Neelix crumples to the floor. Tech Three hurries back around the corner. Prime gives him a cold hard stare.

TECH THREE

I didn't leave it like that!

Prime stares another beat. He slaps the blaster into the Tech Three's hands and jerks his head at Neelix.

PRIME

But you're going to fix it.

Prime strides around the corner to the right. Annoyed the Tech looks at the blaster, and jams it in his waist band. Looking back down the gangway towards Voyager, he grabs Neelix and drags him around the corner to the left and out of sight. He comes back and pushes his cart around the corner also.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER STATION - HALLWAY ADJOINING GANGWAY

Neelix's eyes twitch as he slumps against the wall at Tech Three's feet. The cart, with its panels still open, is to Neelix's left. As the Tech pulls his blaster and sets it to atomize Neelix's eyes flicker. The Tech takes a couple of steps backwards into a stance. Neelix's eyes open as the Tech aims. Neelix dives towards the cart barely dodging the beam!

The beam burns a hole in the wall and a pipe. A geyser erupts at the Tech's face. He shakes it off and blinks his eyes clear as Neelix claws for something in the cart. Neelix heaves a part at the Tech who has already taken dead aim. He fires, but the part hits the beam inches from the muzzle, and in a blinding flash it DETONATES!

The blast hurls the Tech down the hallway and flips Neelix backwards over the cart. The Tech caroms off the wall, hits the floor, and slides to a stop. Neelix, in a heap next to the cart, fights for consciousness and hits his com badge.

NEELIX

Neelix to Voyager emergency beam out!
Neelix... to... emergency..

Neelix DEMATERIALIZES.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - GANGWAY AND HALLWAY

Herodotus DISSOLVES in on the gangway facing Voyager. Running down the hallway Tech Two passes the corner, and sees Herodotus. He backpedals behind the corner to watch. Herodotus glances left and right along the length of Voyager while working the buttons on his belt. A heads up display appears in front of his face which shows a schematic of Voyager. Lights are blinking at various points. With his finger he highlights most of them and hits a button.

INT. VOYAGER - INSIDE REPLICATOR

Blue crackling electricity goes over a CAMOUFLAGED BOMB revealing it and its blinking red light.

INT. CARGO BAY

Electricity arcs over the surface of the fake MECHANICAL PART.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - VOYAGER GANGWAY

Herodotus shuts down his display and vanishes. Tech Two runs to the wall COM PANEL and jabs the button.

TECH TWO

Command! I saw the Old Man! The Old Man was in the gantry!

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER STATION - COMMAND

The perimeter of the dimly lit COMMAND ROOM is cramped with work stations. In the center, light shines up from a TACTICAL MAP TABLE. Prime sits at it. Several TROOPS in black battle armor stand. SECOND, a tall lean man with angular features, leans over the COM STATION.

PRIME

That explains it. I was just down there, one of our carts had all the panels open.

SECOND

But, he set this up.

PRIME

He's changing the deal. We go now.

SECOND

We aren't ready, we need more time!

PRIME

We don't have it, get moving.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - HALLWAY

A door slides open, and a squad of very rough looking soldiers in black assault armor with blaster rifles march through.

INT. BRIDGE

Red alert. Tuvok at station, Kim, PARIS, and Chakotay take theirs. Janeway strides out of the ready room.

JANEWAY

Harry, get everyone back aboard NOW.
They tried to kill Neelix on the station.

TUVOK

Explosive devices have appeared all over the ship. EPS conduits, replicators, many of our vulnerable points. I am attempting to disable them.

KIM

Captain, you are being hailed.

JANEWAY

Onscreen.

ANGLE - VIEWSCREEN

Prime sits at the Tactical Map Table in the Command Room.

PRIME

Captain Janeway. Surrender your vessel
and evacuate your ship or...

Janeway motions to cut off the communication.

JANEWAY
(sarcastic)
Civil servant indeed.

TUVOK
The devices are now deactivated.

KIM
All away teams have returned.

JANEWAY
Mr. Paris get us out of here.

PARIS
We've still got hard dock, they won't
release.

JANEWAY
Be persuasive.

PARIS
Aye, Captain, brace yourselves.

Paris punches his controls and the bridge LURCHES.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - SPACE DOCK

The gangways buckle and explode as Voyager tears itself away.
The ship pivots 180 degrees smashing off pieces from the
station's interior. Blasters fire from the walls.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - COMMAND

Prime and Second LURCH around with the impacts.

PRIME
Detonate now and close the doors!

INT. CORRIDOR

The EPS panel EXPLODES and the crew goes flying.

INT. ENGINEERING

The Impulse Engine console is ripped apart by a massive
EXPLOSION and more crew are airborne!

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - VOYAGER

Voyager moves towards the door but it's closing!

INT. BRIDGE

The bridge SHAKES with more internal explosions.

CHAKOTAY

We have internal explosions, engineering,
decks three, five and eight.

PARIS

Someone's trying to close the door!

JANEWAY

Tuvok!

Tuvok works his controls.

TUVOK

Targeting.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - DOORS

Phasers hit four points on the doors, explosions, doors
screech and jam. Voyager rolls 90 degrees and passes through
the narrow vertical opening, tearing off pieces of the door.

EXT. SPACE - GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION

Voyager pulls away past the Gelin ships.

INT. BRIDGE

Chakotay looks up from his display.

CHAKOTAY

We can't allow those ships follow.

JANEWAY

Propulsion and weapons.

TUVOK

Firing.

EXT. SPACE - VOYAGER

Phasers strike out from Voyager hitting Gelin ships. They jerk and tilt with explosions but remain intact, adrift.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Tuvok scans his console.

TUVOK

All enemy ships, weapons, warp and impulse engines off line.

JANEWAY

Get us out of here.

EXT. SPACE - VOYAGER AND STATION

Voyager zooms away.

INT. GELIN/PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - COMMAND

Second is at his station, Prime is at the Map Table.

SECOND

They're away.

The Prime growls and slams the table top with his fist.

INT. BRIDGE

Neelix, hunched over and holding the back of his head, ENTERS the bridge. Chakotay rises from his seat.

CHAKOTAY

Their ships are easy to repair, it won't be long before they're after us.

PARIS

We're maxed out at one quarter impulse.

JANEWAY

If we can't run we'll have to hide. Harry, look for someplace close by.

KIM

There's a small system loosely coupled to this one about two light-hours away.

Kim works his station a bit.

KIM (Cont'd)

An inhibited brown dwarf. Big enough to be a star, but it's hardly fusing. No signs of civilization, no planets, just a huge ring system of asteroids. No minerals or resources, a real wasteland.

(looks up)

But just enough [tech] in the rocks to confuse sensors.

JANEWAY

Sounds made to order. Tom?

PARIS

The brown dwarf system, Aye.

JANEWAY

(to Tuvok)

Apparently your reservations were well founded.

Tuvok merely raises an eyebrow. Hurting and humiliated, Neelix hobbles forward to address the Captain and Tuvok.

NEELIX

Captain, I am sorry. I saw a cart full of our equipment on the gangway. I think the Prime hit me from behind.

(to himself)

Never saw it coming.

Chakotay steps over to Neelix and examines his injury.

CHAKOTAY

I don't like the look of that head wound, you'd better have the Doctor treat it.

NEELIX

I have some cold packs in the mess hall.

JANEWAY

Get that taken care of now.

NEELIX

Yes, Captain.

Dejected and miserable Neelix shuffles off.

EXT. SPACE - VOYAGER

Voyager zooms into the distance towards the expanding Brown Dwarf system. The ring system is so large the "brown" dwarf looks like a glowing marble sitting at the center of a CD.

INT. SICK BAY

Neelix, ragged and hunched over with a cold pack on the back of his head, leans in through the door to call out to the Doctor.

NEELIX

Doctor, I've received a bump on the head, but I'm o.k. I've got a cold pack on it.

The Doctor comes around the corner.

DOCTOR

Come in Neelix. What is the matter with you lately? Trying to get you down here for anything more than a routine check up or hypo spray is like pulling teeth.

NEELIX

Funny you should put it that way.

Neelix comes in and sits down on a medical bed. He sets the cold pack down at his side.

NEELIX

If it's all the same to you, I'd rather not be on the business end of those... tools.

As Neelix talks the Doctor scans him. The Doctor then goes to work with an instrument.

DOCTOR

It's not. You had a fractured skull, now you are fine. These medical instruments don't cause your injuries, they heal you from them.

NEELIX

I certainly should know - missing lungs, plasma barbecue, and then a therapeutic Borg probe infestation. Every time I'm looking up at that ceiling, its because some disaster has overwhelmed me.

Neelix stands up straight, experimenting. The pain is gone, but the depression isn't.

NEELIX (Cont'd)

Forgive me Doctor if this isn't my most favorite place on the ship.

Neelix leaves the Sick Bay. Disgusted the Doctor puts the instruments away.

DOCTOR

Never mind killing the physician if Pharaoh dies, blame him if Pharaoh falls off the chariot.

EXT. SPACE - VOYAGER AND BROWN DWARF SYSTEM

Voyager moves above a giant disk of asteroid trash that spreads across the horizon. In the distance the wanna-be sun glows like a large red ember.

INT. NEELIX'S QUARTERS

Neelix enters his quarters and sags with depression. He slowly sets his Padd down on the end table, and sinks down into the chair like an old man. A birthday cake with a single unlit candle sits on the table. Neelix just stares at it.

He tries to shake off his depression and looks over at Alixia's picture.

NEELIX

It's... It's your birthday today Alixia, I made your favorite cake.

Neelix forces a brittle smile.

NEELIX (Cont'd)

I'll sing you a song in the human tradition.

(voice cracking)

Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy...

Neelix's voice trails off to nothing.

NEELIX (Cont'd)

(soft)

I miss you all very much.

(MORE)

NEELIX (Cont'd)

Kes is gone for good.

Sometimes I don't think I can stand it.

These people are my family now. I try,
but I can't help them anymore. They seem
to be towing me to the Alpha quadrant.

Neelix looks down in shame.

NEELIX (Cont'd)

Father would not be proud.

Neelix sighs, calming down, and leans back to think.

NEELIX (Cont'd)

(sarcastic)

Ambassador... I barely know more about the
people we meet than the rest of the crew.

(thoughtful)

How can I be an Ambassador?

HERODOTUS

How indeed.

Herodotus stands behind and to the side of Neelix. Neelix
gasps, and jumps up, almost falling over his chair.

NEELIX

Who are you?

(taps com badge)

Neelix to security, there's an intruder
in my quarters... Neelix to Tuvok...

HERODOTUS

My name is Herodotus, and I may have an
answer to your question, but now you are
invited to be a guest at my home, I'm
afraid attendance is mandatory.

As Herodotus speaks he pushes a control on his belt. Two
golden glowing energy rings about three feet in diameter
appear. One is above Neelix's head and one is around his
feet. The top one scans down and the bottom one scans up.
Where they pass by Neelix's body, he VANISHES until the rings
merge in the center. The ring flares, shrinks, gone. Then
Herodotus DISAPPEARS.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

Barely drifting asteroids of all sizes surround Herodotus' PLANETOID. On the surface of the planetoid there are a few, very few artificial objects that poke through the surface.

INT. PLANETOID - HERODOTUS CHAMBER

The large high vaulted rectangular room has one door on the far end. On the near end of the room is a large MACHINE that runs from the floor to the ceiling. On its face are several green health monitors, the rest is very plain. On the right wall that runs between the door and the machine is a single long console with many controls. Above the console is a wall filled with screens, all carrying different moving images. Opposite the screens, the left wall is mostly featureless.

Neelix crouches next to the door and fiddles with the door mechanism. He gives up, straightens, and slowly walks from the door threshold over to the wall of screens. One screen shows a room with Ocampo in it. The image is from an odd angle as if from a surveillance camera. As Neelix walks he sees screens that show Vulcans, Klingons, Horta, Borg, Kazon, Jem'Hadar, Talaxians. Peoples and places scattered all over the galaxy. Every few moments the scene displayed on the screen changes. Neelix studies at the displays intently.

HERODOTUS

Interesting isn't it.

Herodotus is to the side of Neelix. Neelix gives a surprised start, then turns.

NEELIX

Where am I!?

HERODOTUS

This is my home, and you are my guest.

NEELIX

Don't patronize me, I'm hardly your guest. I demand to be returned to Voyager.

HERODOTUS

I can see you are still unsettled, I'll give you some more time to yourself. Feel free to look around.

Herodotus disappears.

NEELIX

Wait! Wait.

Herodotus reappears. Neelix looks at Herodotus, and then looks at the wall of screens.

NEELIX

These, transmissions, Ocampa, Vulcan, Borg, Jem'Hadar, are from all over the galaxy.

HERODOTUS

(nods)

Stealthy satellites and relays, mini and micro, and nano-operators, lots of them.

NEELIX

You're running some kind of spy network here.

HERODOTUS

Intelligence gathering... No, it's been a long time since that was the case.

Neelix turns to the screens and throws a dubious look back at Herodotus.

HERODOTUS

You'll find that my... windows on the galaxy are not trained on the right locations or people, or are too far from real time to fulfill that purpose. With the necessary exception of Voyager.

NEELIX

If you're not spying, what are you doing?

HERODOTUS

History.

INT. ENGINEERING

Smoke hangs in the air. The wall where the Impulse Controls used to be is a wreck of twisted and burnt metal. Gas roars out from a hole, but gradually shuts down. Debris litters

the floor along with the large disassembled components of the warp core that sit near the center of engineering.

The crew swarms over the mess working frantically. TORRES, her hair disheveled, smudges on face and uniform, drags a heavy piece of structure out of the rubble. Her crew joins her to pull it out. They look worse than she does.

JANEWAY'S COM VOICE

Janeway to Engineering, report.

TORRES

(looks around)

Well, it isn't pretty. We've lost three impulse engines and we might lose the last one. We have to reroute controls... Fortunately none of the warp components were damaged.

INT. READY ROOM

Janeway works a Padd at her desk.

JANEWAY

B'lanna, I need full impulse as soon as possible, and we still need warp power.

Janeway waits for the answer.

TORRES' COM VOICE

(sighs)

I need Harry, Seven of Nine, and everyone you can spare.

JANEWAY

Done.

The door CHIMES.

JANEWAY

Enter.

The door opens and Tuvok ENTERS.

TUVOK

Neelix is missing from Voyager.

Janeway looks up.

JANEWAY

What?

TUVOK

Neelix has not been aboard Voyager for the last hour. There are signs that he was transported off.

JANEWAY

The Gelin couldn't possibly have transported him from this range.

TUVOK

No. It appears that there is a third party involved.

Janeway sets down her Padd sits back in her chair.

JANEWAY

Explain.

TUVOK

Despite our having taken adequate security precautions, the Gelin mounted a devastating attack. Yet it is unlikely that their technology was capable of gathering the required intelligence.

JANEWAY

Their attack failed.

TUVOK

Due to a highly coincidental disruption of their dampening fields.

JANEWAY

You're saying someone used the Gelin to set us up, and then spoiled the trap?

TUVOK

That is the most likely scenario.

JANEWAY

But what would they want with Neelix?

TUVOK

He is, quite possibly, the only Talaxian within several thousand light years. It is probable that his physiology is the determining factor.

JANEWAY

Several of our crew are in the same position. What would they want a Talaxian for?

TUVOK

Unknown. However these actions demonstrate a dangerously high level of technical capability.

Janeway gives this some careful thought.

JANEWAY

Find out who our "meddler" is. Make it your top priority.

INT. PLANETOID - HERODOTUS' CHAMBER

Neelix's moves towards a control looking at Herodotus. Herodotus nods and Neelix works the console, nothing.

HERODOTUS

I'm sorry, try again.

This time there are noises and screen changes.

NEELIX

Fascinating, history as it happens.

HERODOTUS

I forget, all of this is, even myself, a simulation, not unlike your holotechnology.

Neelix turn to Herodotus.

NEELIX

You're a hologram?

HERODOTUS

Yes. No. What you see is a synthetic projection, I have a real physical body, but not standing in front of you.

Herodotus points at the large machine at the end of the room.

HERODOTUS

I am over there, in the machine. I haven't been able to live outside it for... a long time.

NEELIX

You must be accumulating an enormous amount of information. Where do you store it all?

HERODOTUS

Right here.
(taps head)
Or rather there.

He gestures to the machine.

NEELIX

Why are you watching so many places? You can't possibly keep track of a fraction of what you're collecting.

HERODOTUS

I see, hear, and even smell all of these places, even those you don't see here. And I remember it all, in every detail.

Neelix squints at Herodotus.

NEELIX

That's an awful lot to remember.

HERODOTUS

There have been... certain modifications made to my brain.

NEELIX

What, iso-linear or cybernetic implants?

HERODOTUS

Hah, Borg. Risky, too easily slaved or hacked. No. Molecular biological surgery, I have natural cellular features that greatly extend my capability to observe and remember.

NEELIX

This is all very interesting, but what do you want with me?

Herodotus pauses to think.

HERODOTUS

Why do you study Klingon, Vulcan, and Earth traditions?

NEELIX

You have been keeping an eye on us.
(thinks)
Well, to help me understand my friends, my family.

HERODOTUS

And they likewise study your culture?

NEELIX

Yes. Well... no. But on Talaxia we're taught the importance of tradition.

HERODOTUS

So your knowledge of Talaxialzais, the old tongue dialect, is common?

NEELIX

Ah... No. I've always thought history helpful to understanding the present, to avoid the mistakes of the past.

HERODOTUS

An admirable sentiment that the Talaxian High Command ignored to its demise.

(beat)

Why do you continue to study cultures that you have passed by hundreds, even thousands of light years ago?

Neelix is getting irritated by such close scrutiny.

NEELIX

You certainly don't shrink from invading one's privacy.

(explaining)

I am Voyager's diplomat...

HERODOTUS

(interrupting)

Mr. Neelix, you eat history as if it were food. You are a habitual historian. Your interests and methods are a closer match to mine than anyone in four thousand light years.

NEELIX

(incredulous)

You want to talk shop? We...

HERODOTUS

I am very old, I may look healthy but this is only a projection, every day it takes more and more to hold on. I can't keep it up indefinitely.

NEELIX

I'm sorry. But I'm not sure what I...

HERODOTUS

Talaxian brain structure, your brain structure, and mine are very similar, making certain "procedures" possible.

I need your mind Mr. Neelix.

INT. VOYAGER - ENGINEERING

SEVEN OF NINE walks through the doors of engineering. The place is still a mess. Next to a console an engineering team is gathered around Torres as she examines a Padd. They look smudged and tired. Those who can, sit or lean on something. Torres nods and dismisses the crew to their duties.

SEVEN OF NINE

Lieutenant Torres, Captain Janeway instructed me to report to engineering.

TORRES

Good. I need the warp core reinstalled but I've got my hands full, I want you to take the core team and keep them going.

SEVEN OF NINE

Very well.

TORRES

But I want to know what you're doing every step of the way. Every time you've got a decision, you ask me first. Got it?

SEVEN OF NINE

Affirmative.

INT. PLANETOID - HERODOTUS' CHAMBER

Neelix is almost spitting his words, Herodotus is perplexed.

NEELIX

...maniac scientists, want my brain? Take it! Want my lung too? It's all I have left of Kes. Despite your scholarly pretensions you're no better than the dissecting Vidians!

HERODOTUS

What!? No, Why would I want to remove your brain?

NEELIX

To download your consciousness into it,
how should I know?

HERODOTUS

How would I do such a thing? The
concepts of software and hardware are
meaningless as far as the mind is
concerned. The mathematics of mental
structure is amazingly complex.

NEELIX

You said you were dying, maybe you want
to live forever.

HERODOTUS

That would be a very grim vision of
immortality. I fear you have traveled
too long in the shadow of the Borg, or
have seen too much bad fiction.

Neelix feels foolish and shifts uncomfortably.

NEELIX

Well, I'm glad to hear it.

HERODOTUS

I'm offering you the fruits of my labor.
The histories of over one hundred leading
civilizations in the galaxy. To amplify
your own understanding ten thousand
times.

Herodotus extends his arm towards the screens.

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

To see what I have seen and learn what I
know. The revolutionaries, despots, and
philosophers. Zixian arguing in the
courts of ancient Talaxia...

NEELIX

(interrupting)

You saw Zixian?

HERODOTUS

I witnessed his first debate. I've read
his thesis that anticipates his work.

NEELIX

But that's been lost to antiquity.

HERODOTUS

Not to me.

NEELIX

(eager)

How do I get this? Do you have a data core I can take, or could you download to Voyager?

HERODOTUS

(shakes head)

My memories would take too long to send and would encumber the ship's core. My insights would take more than a century to log. It requires a direct memory transfer, from my mind to yours.

This makes Neelix think, but he's still game.

NEELIX

(interested)

From your brain to mine, how?

Herodotus leads the way to the featureless wall opposite the screen console. The wall dissolves away revealing the MOLECULAR SURGERY. Lined with equipment the rectangular room has one wall shaped as a concave hemisphere from which protrude numerous objects resembling projector lenses. At the focus of this hemisphere is a massive machine and table combination resembling a MRI scanner, the MENTAL INDUCTION INTERFACE (MII)

HERODOTUS

A mental induction interface.

The MII is spherical with ports that face the protrusions in the hemisphere wall. Neelix shrinks back in alarm.

NEELIX

(gasps)

It looks like a Haakonian neural rack!

Herodotus steps toward the Surgery as Neelix backs away.

HERODOTUS

I suppose there is a superficial resemblance to that butcher table.

NEELIX

I won't go into that... that thing!

HERODOTUS

The MII is perfectly safe. I've used it myself. I had to run the whole process...

NEELIX

No.

HERODOTUS

But this will help you to be a much better diplomat...

NEELIX

No!

HERODOTUS

...for Voyager. The Federation will be very impressed by what you have to offer...

NEELIX

NO! The Vidians tore out my lungs! I've been VIOLATED by Borg nanoprobes! And now you want to cook my Brain!? NO!

HERODOTUS

But... But...

Herodotus emits two horrible hacking coughs and drops to his hand and knees. He AGES quickly, deep wrinkles form and bags appear under his eyes. He's aged from sixty to a hundred in a moment.

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

My life's work, one thousand seven hundred years...

Neelix crosses his arms, turns away from Herodotus and faces the screen and console wall.

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

How can you turn your back on my treasure?

(to himself)

I can't hold on any longer, this is my last chance.

A CANE appears in Herodotus' hands, he uses it to struggle to his feet and shuffles towards the screen console

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

Surely there must be something that you are interested in. My work would give your adopted family a much better chance.

As Herodotus crosses Neelix's view on the way to the console, Neelix shakes his head and turns away again to face the door.

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

Talaxia, probably one day the backbone of a great trading Republic, I have watched it closely. Talaxia and Haakonia do you...

Herodotus glances at Neelix who turns his head in a negative.

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

No... You used to teach Kes, now you think those days are lost forever. With my knowledge those days could come again.

Now he's hitting Neelix where it hurts. Neelix's face is stony, his jaws clench and unclench. The screen displays keep changing as Herodotus desperately searches.

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

There must be... must be... there is something I remember, something to do with the war. Yes, your father backed up your family's home net to a hardened storage facility.

Neelix looks over his shoulder at Herodotus.

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

I have letters, visual records...

Neelix turns to face Herodotus

HERODOTUS (Cont'd)

...and an audio/visual diary by Alixia...

NEELIX

Alixia? My sister?

HERODOTUS

(nods and turns)

It seems she was quite diligent in her application, there are years here.

Neelix walks over to the surgery and stares at the equipment, his face a mask of grim determination.

NEELIX

What do I have to do?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. CORRIDOR

Captain Janeway walks through the corridor and stops at the door to Tuvok's quarters. She she pushes the door panel, nothing, again, nothing.

JANEWAY

Tuvok, it's me...

Tuvok?

Vulcans and their cognitive fugues.
Computer open this door, authorization
Janeway Zeta Epsilon four-eight.

The door slides OPEN and she ENTERS.

INT. VOYAGER - TUVOK'S QUARTERS

The lights are very dim. Tuvok sits, facing the screen, his hands form a steeple in front of his face. The screen displays 3D maps, graphs, and data. After a moment Tuvok blinks and turns to Janeway.

TUVOK

Captain?

JANEWAY

You weren't answering your door. I'm
interested in the progress you're making.

Tuvok looks at the floor and then back at Janeway.

TUVOK

I must apologize for being ineffectual in
my duties. It is apparent that our
course through these sectors has been
manipulated for at least, the past twenty
three days.

JANEWAY

Twenty three days?

Janeway sits.

TUVOK

An opportunity hinted at here, a threat implied there, rumors heard at our various ports of call, and we end up not at the Gelin colony, but a Privateer outpost. I was played as a fool.

JANEWAY

The old carrot and stick, and none of us realized it.

TUVOK

I saw, but failed to recognize.

Janeway looks at Tuvok for further explanation.

TUVOK

Vulcan training provides an instinctual use of logic. From time to time I sensed statistical peculiarities, barely above the random noise of events, they were intermittent, and vanished quickly, only revealing themselves as the trap was sprung. He played the game as a Vulcan Grand Master.

JANEWAY

However much you would like, you can't win them all. It doesn't sound like there's much more you could have done.

TUVOK

If I had been more diligent, examined more data...

Neelix may have already paid the price for my feeble efforts, more may yet still.

JANEWAY

(stern)

Tuvok, you are nothing if not diligent. I'm surprised to see you wasting your fuge on self recrimination and...

(realizing)

There's more going on here than just being out-foxed.

Tuvok remains silent.

JANEWAY

I think I detect some of that fierce Vulcan loyalty.

TUVOK

Am I so transparent to you?

I find Neelix naturally irritating.
However, his illogic regularly sheds
light on defects in my own reasoning.

Furthermore he has shown solidarity at
times when he need not. On Vulcan,
friendship tried in the fires of
adversity, is sacred.

Tuvok looks at Janeway. She realizes he's talking about her
also. After a few moments she rises.

JANEWAY

(upbeat)

As soon as you find those responsible,
We'll put them in check and get Neelix
back.

EXT. SPACE - PRIVATEER STATION

PODS move back and forth between the station and the WOLF
PACK CLASS SHIPS. Each is about one third the size of
Voyager. These are the ones that were previously thought to
be GELIN SHIPS.

INT. PRIVATEER SPACE STATION - COMMAND

The Prime stands at the Tactical Map table which eerily
illuminates his face. Second sits at a perimeter console.

SECOND

We've been able to repair four. Weapons
fully functional, impulse, but warp only
up to one point eight.

PRIME

Beats Voyager's zero.

SECOND

We've got a good haul, let the Old Man
have them.

PRIME

You'd be satisfied with his morsel after
smelling the feast? I'm finished with
that old goat's meddling.

SECOND

That "old goat" is dangerous.

Prime looks off into space, remembering.

PRIME

When my family was slaughtered.. My parents begged for their lives.

I vowed I would never be in that position. Never. I would rule or die.

Six have fallen before me, the Old Man will be the seventh, and Voyager is the key.

EXT. SPACE - PRIVATEER STATION AND SHIPS

The four Privateer ships, ALPHA BETA GAMMA and DELTA, swing a large arc leaving the station and move briskly away.

INT. PRIVATEER FLAGSHIP ALPHA - BRIDGE

The cramped bridge is about the size of the Delta Flyer's. Prime sits command on a five seat bridge crammed with weapon systems. Down and front Second mans tactical next to the PILOT.

PILOT

We're at one third impulse.

PRIME

All ahead, warp one point six. Proceed to last point of contact.

SECOND

Brown dwarf system in eight minutes.

EXT. SPACE - DWARF AND INNER ASTEROID RINGS - VOYAGER

The "brown" dwarf now looms huge above the asteroid disk, its red ember curvature zooms up and out of sight as Voyager drifts to a stop above the innermost rings.

INT. BRIDGE

Paris takes a break from his controls. Chakotay and Kim are at their posts. Janeway stands in front of her chair.

JANEWAY

We should be close. This is where I'd be if I wanted readily available power.

PARIS

I hope Tuvok finds him soon. It'll be a whole lot easier to get there if we can stay clear of that mess.

KIM

Captain, Four ships approaching at warp.

JANEWAY

Red alert. It looks like we'll have to do it the hard way.

EXT. SPACE - DWARF AND INNER ASTEROID RINGS - VOYAGER

Voyager pitches nose down and dives into the asteroid field.

INT. PLANETOID - HERODOTUS' CHAMBER - MOLECULAR SURGERY

Neelix lays on the table with IVs in both arms. He wears a surgical cap on his head which lies in the center of the MII. A dozen IV tubes run out of a conduit, up around the sides of his face, over his head, and out of sight in the Interface. Herodotus stands at the side of the table monitoring the procedure.

HERODOTUS

The molecular scalpels and the viral operators have finished preparations, we're ready to start. Now time is beginning to be a factor, so you'll have to make a concentrated effort.

NEELIX

(lightly sedated)

Give me my sister and family first.

HERODOTUS

No. If my legacy is at risk, then the family memories will be also.

NEELIX

Please.

HERODOTUS

After you absorb all of my work, then you will receive your sister and family. You run the procedure, it's up to you.

INT. MENTAL SPACE

Neelix is alone in a black void. Then, as if he stood on a beach, there appears in front of him a sea of colored lights, glowing strands of vaporous color mixing and moving.

NEELIX

Where am I?

Herodotus sits, several yards to Neelix's right.

HERODOTUS

Let's call it mental space, an analogy designed to help you control the process.
(points at sea)

Those are my memories of galactic history, seventeen hundred years of literature, science, and the arts. I'm not giving you any technical knowledge exceeding the Federation's. It'd simply turn you into a target.

NEELIX

What do I do?

HERODOTUS

Take a step.

After a moment Neelix takes a tentative step. Suddenly some vaporous strands of color whirl and sweep out of the sea, and stream by Neelix in a flash! He flinches but they are gone.

HERODOTUS

Well?

NEELIX

(remembering)

William Shakespeare...

HERODOTUS

Yes, now a line from, King Lear, lets hear something from... Edgar.

NEELIX

I heard myself proclaimed
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunter...

HERODOTUS

Good, an important Federation author and a personal favorite. Everything tests out fine, you're ready to start.

Neelix turns from Herodotus towards the sea, squares his shoulders and starts walking forward. As he moves the glowing smoke like strands sweep out of the sea and blow by him. The more steps he takes towards the sea the faster they go. He squints into the breeze and the wind blows his hair.

INT. PLANETOID - HERODOTUS' CHAMBER - MOLECULAR SURGERY

Neelix, his eyes closed, is alone on the table. One beam shines out of a protrusion on the hemisphere wall and into a port on the MII. Gradually a few more beams are added until a meager handful of the numerous projectors are at work.

EXT. SPACE - DWARF AND INNER ASTEROID RINGS - PRIVATEER SHIPS

Where Voyager was just previously, four Privateer ships in formation hang above the plane of the asteroid field.

INT. FLAGSHIP ALPHA - BRIDGE

Second is conducting a search, Prime sits in the command chair.

PRIME

Everyone keep an eye out, this is the Old Man's territory, we need Voyager first.

SECOND

This is where she entered the field, but sensors are a mess, nothing but noise.

PRIME

Delta, you stay here, Gamma proceed to the south side of the accretion disk. Alpha and Bravo will grid pattern until we flush Voyager out one side or the other.

EXT. SPACE - VOYAGER IN ASTROID FIELD

Up above, the Privateer ships start their search. Below, a distant Voyager dives slowly into the asteroid field, unseen.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Kim and Paris, are at stations, Janeway and Chakotay sit.

KIM

I've managed to get limited use of our sensors, but there's something strange about these rocks. They seem to drift right through our shields.

JANEWAY

(to Chakotay)

Our meddler certainly has an interesting backyard.

(to Kim)

That suits me just fine, we have thicker skin than they do. Mr. Paris, direct course to the accretion disk equator. Keep it quiet

PARIS

Aye Captain.

Paris works his controls.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER

Voyager threads its way through the multitude of rocks.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Paris works the controls harder than before. Janeway stands in front of her chair.

JANEWAY

How are you doing Mr. Paris?

PARIS

(dryly)

It's keeping me busy, the deflector would help.

JANEWAY

Silent running for now.

INT. VOYAGER - ASTROMETRICS

Tuvok steeples his hands in front of his chest. The big screen displays a schematic of space. Three smaller views overlay the schematic and play scratchy surveillance

recordings of Herodotus' appearance at the cart, in the gangway, and in Neelix's quarters.

TUVOK

Computer, search sensor logs for anomalies occurring during event one.

COMPUTER VOICE

There are 8,298 recorded anomalies during that time period.

TUVOK

Repeat for event two and compare.

COMPUTER VOICE

There are 292 recorded anomalies that occur during both time periods.

TUVOK

Search the sensor logs at the time that Neelix left Voyager, plus or minus five seconds. Do any of the anomalies match the previous results?

COMPUTER VOICE

There are 5 anomaly matches.

TUVOK

Plot direction vectors for all five and attempt to triangulate.

COMPUTER VOICE

There is one anomaly that produces a solution.

The overlays disappear. On the space schematic a line extends out from the station and another line from a point on Voyager's course. The two lines cross at a point in the innermost ring of asteroid accretion disk. The map zooms to that point. Another symbol blinks Voyager's position and its distance to the target.

Tuvok crosses his arms in Vulcan triumph.

TUVOK

QED. I have you sir.

Tuvok strides through the door.

INT. MENTAL SPACE

Neelix, his hands up guarding his face, is being buffeted and pushed around by gusts of wind. The glowing vaporous streamers are flying by. He stumbles slightly and backs off, the wind and colors cease.

NEELIX

There's too much.

Herodotus sits slumped over, weary, old, and upset.

HERODOTUS

No there is not! Your mind is fully capable, you're too tentative, concentrate, grab it with force and determination.

NEELIX

Concentration, determination. Maybe if you gave me my family now, it would help spur me on.

Herodotus despondent, leans on his cane. He shakes his head and looks up at Neelix.

HERODOTUS

No, if I lose all I have worked for my entire life, you will share in that loss.
(looks down)
And it appears that we both have lost.

NEELIX

What?

HERODOTUS

Your friends and enemies are coming for you, and I am dying.

Defeated, Herodotus' breaths are labored, he looks like he's dying. Neelix grows alarmed and desperate as he looks back and forth between Herodotus and the sea of memories.

NEELIX

(soft)

Nooo. Alixia.

Neelix turns back to the sea and plants his feet.

NEELIX

Alixia.

Neelix lunges at the sea, the glowing colors leap at him, and become a gale.

NEELIX

ALIXIA!

Neelix leans into the torrent clawing his way forward with his hands and fingers. The sea is now a shapeless whirling torment that funnels down on Neelix with a roar. Herodotus looks on in amazement as Neelix disappears into the rocket plume.

INT. PLANETOID - HERODOTUS' CHAMBER - MOLECULAR SURGERY

More and more beams shine out from the sphere wall into the interface. As all of the numerous beams turn on, the entire room fills with a whine and a low rumble as the machines take up the strain. Neelix, eyes closed, face covered in sweat, takes in a ragged breath and howls in agony.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER AND SHIP GAMMA

In the distance Voyager passes through the asteroids. Suddenly Gamma, running a parallel course, rises into the foreground.

INT. GAMMA - BRIDGE

The bridge is identical to the Flagship's. GAMMA'S PILOT and NAVIGATOR are down front, a COMMANDER sits above them.

COMMANDER

Gamma to Alpha, we have visual contact.

PRIME'S COM VOICE

Stay with them, don't fire till we are there.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Tuvok is at his station. Kim works his controls.

KIM

Captain, there's a Privateer ship pacing us, twenty kilometers off the port stern.

JANEWAY

So much for silent running, full power to the deflector. Mr. Paris if you please.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER AND GAMMA

Voyager pulls ahead, the asteroids sweep by between the ships. Gamma gives chase.

INT. GAMMA - BRIDGE

Gamma Pilot flies the ship with the control yoke.

NAVIGATOR

...I don't know, she must have tremendous deflector power.

COMMANDER

Then move into her wake, let her shove
some rocks out of our path too.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER AND GAMMA

Voyager's course weaves an erratic wavy tunnel of a wake that
Gamma moves into, well behind and out of range.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Tuvok, Kim, and Chakotay. Janeway stands behind Paris.

JANEWAY

Mr. Paris, is the emergency brake on? We
want to make them sweat.

His teeth are clenched, he has his hands full working the
controls.

PARIS

It certainly has me sweating.

CHAKOTAY

We have to shake them before we get to
the target. I'm adjusting the deflector
to allow the smaller rocks through.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER - HULL CLOSEUP

Small basketball sized rocks sweep by Voyager. A few bang
off the hull and spin as they go by.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - GAMMA

GAMMA is jinking hard to avoid the rocks but one hits and
tears off a plate.

INT. GAMMA - BRIDGE

An alarm bleeps. The ship LURCHES about as Gamma's Pilot
wrestles with the yoke.

COMMANDER

...then fix the shields!

NAVIGATOR

We're losing her!

COMMANDER

Gamma to Alpha, Voyager is pulling away,
repeat, Voyager is pulling away.

PRIME'S COM VOICE

We'll never catch you at this rate,
you've got to slow her down!

Hand on his chin, the commander tries to solve the problem.

COMMANDER

O.K. Move directly astern of Voyager and
close in. Target aft nacelles.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER AND GAMMA

Gamma weaves in on Voyager and beams strike out hitting the
shields over Voyager's nacelles. Gamma drops back.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

The ship LURCHES. Paris battles the controls.

TUVOK

Direct hit, aft shields are holding.
Target now out of range.

PARIS

They're going to steer us into a rock!

JANEWAY

Let's throw some rocks at them. Tuvok,
target the closest asteroids and fire
after we pass.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER AND GAMMA

Phasers strike out from Voyager and blast several asteroids.
They explode and rock shards fly everywhere.

INT. GAMMA - BRIDGE

The pilot heaves back on the yoke.

GAMMA PILOT

AAARRGGHH!

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - GAMMA

Gamma maneuvers wildly in a vain attempt to escape. The flying rock perforates the ship like a shotgun blast through a soda can. It tumbles briefly, tearing apart, and explodes.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Tuvok scans his instruments.

TUVOK

Target destroyed. Our objective is directly ahead.

INT. VOYAGER - JEFFERIES TUBE

Two ND's are next to an open panel in the side of the Jefferies tube. Torres is laying on her back buried so far underneath the equipment that only her legs below the hips are showing.

ANGLE TORRES - IN MACHINERY

The equipment hangs just above Torres as if she were working on the underside of a car. The machinery emits a HUM that gradually climbs the scale. Torres scans with her tricorder and punches buttons on a small panel above her.

SEVEN OF NINE'S COM VOICE

Seven of Nine to Lieutenant Torres.

TORRES

(preoccupied)

Yes...

SEVEN OF NINE'S COM VOICE

We've finished assembling the core components. Do you want us to test and calibrate now or after installation?

Torres turns her head away from her work, trying to shift mental gears and grinding them. Suddenly there's a strange noise and off to her side gas begins to spray.

TORRES

Shut it down! Shut it down!

The gas subsides. In weariness and frustration she thumps her head back down on the ground. Her eyes are closed as she slowly shakes her head.

TORRES

What do you think?

SEVEN OF NINE'S COM VOICE

I would like to run the basic tests first, but wait until installation for the rest.

TORRES

That sounds... fine.

(beat)

Seven, I need you to handle it. Don't come to me for every decision, just keep me posted.

SEVEN OF NINE'S COM VOICE

Understood.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER AND PLANETOID

Voyager comes to a stop facing Herodotus' Planetoid.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Tuvok works his controls.

TUVOK

The small planetoid seems to be the nerve center for a stealthy network that extends throughout the accretion disk.

KIM

No answer to hails.

JANEWAY

Can we transport to the interior?

KIM

No, it's shielded and... wait. There's a small opening in the shields, we can transport through it.

JANEWAY

It looks like someone left the door open.

(to Tuvok)

Take an away team and have a "talk" with our... meddler.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - PLANETOID AND VOYAGER

Truck in on planetoid surface

INT. PLANETOID - TUNNEL AND DOOR

Tuvok and security team, all packing phaser rifles, approach through a rough hewn tunnel. Tuvok scans with his tricorder while the others cover. The tunnel terminates in a heavily reinforced door. Tuvok sweeps the door and switches from tricorder to phaser rifle. He backs up and aims, but before he fires the door slides open revealing Herodotus' chamber. The group walks through.

INT. PLANETOID - HERODOTUS' CHAMBER

The security team takes positions around the door. Tuvok hurries over to Neelix. He scans Neelix, the MII, the beams, and the projectors. He comes to a console on the wall and stops. He finds a control and tries to activate it without success.

He looks back at Neelix and then over to the door. He takes a few steps back, carefully aims at the control console, and...

HERODOTUS

Now that may kill your friend.

Tuvok swings around ready to fire. Herodotus sits near the screen console leaning on his cane. He now looks ancient but his voice is still clear and his eyes bright. Tuvok lowers his rifle but keeps it trained on him. So does the team.

TUVOK

I am Lieutenant Commander...

HERODOTUS

(interrupting)

Commander Tuvok of the Federation et cetera, et cetera. I've seen your Starfleet dossier, no need to introduce yourself.

TUVOK

You have me at a disadvantage.

HERODOTUS

Proper craft for your profession, wouldn't you say? Mine too, long ago.

TUVOK

You are responsible for abducting Neelix?

HERODOTUS

And luring your ship off course,
thwarting their trap, and... here we are.
Herodotus, resident Research Historian at
your service.

Herodotus gives them a disarmingly humorous bow.

TUVOK

What are you doing to him?

HERODOTUS

Your friend is in no danger, he has
chosen to undergo a safe medical
procedure.

TUVOK

Medical procedure?

HERODOTUS

Memory transfer, I'm entrusting Neelix
with my research into the history of the
major civilizations of the galaxy. Very
valuable to Voyager, and the Federation.

TUVOK

The Privateers, whom you provoked, may be
here any moment. If you have any regard
for Neelix or Voyager you must release
him immediately.

HERODOTUS

(stalling)

Your Mr. Neelix is quite brave. When he
knew there was little time left he pushed
the MII to its absolute maximum. I've
never heard of that before, it must be
extremely painful.

(beat)

But, I can see that our time is up.

The beams shining out of the wall cut out, the MII moves away
from Neelix's head, the IV tubes fall away and the table
opens up.

HERODOTUS

Your friend and your ship will be fine
provided you get as far away as you can,
as fast as you can.

TUVOK

The Privateers may take exception.

HERODOTUS

Leave them to me. My death will be more of a problem to you than they are.

Tuvok and another security member lift Neelix from the equipment. Neelix remains unconscious supported by his arms draped across Tuvok and the other's shoulders. The group hurries out the door.

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Janeway sits in her chair. Kim, Paris, Chakotay at stations.

JANEWAY

(to com)

B'lanna, we're leaving immediately.

TORRES' COM VOICE

We need to slave impulse engine two to engine one's controls, just a few minutes and I can give you half impulse.

Janeway weighs the added speed vs. the delay.

JANEWAY

We'll give you what we can, no guarantees.

INT. SICK BAY

Neelix is lying on a medical bed. Tuvok stands by the Doctor who places the hypospray on Neelix's neck and revives him. His eyes fly open and he starts to sit up.

NEELIX

Alixia!

The Doctor places a hand on Neelix's shoulder.

DOCTOR

Relax Mr. Neelix, you are back on Voyager. Tuvok retrieved you a couple of minutes ago.

Neelix blinks and sits up.

NEELIX

Doctor, Tuvok. I'm a little dizzy.

DOCTOR

No doubt. The Commander tells me you decided to take some elective surgery. Why, after objecting to a minor medical procedure, would you subject yourself to some exotic experiment in memory expansion?

TUVOK

I am curious to know as well.

For a few moments Neelix stares into the past, remembering.

NEELIX

When I left home, I never dreamt that would be the last time I'd ever see my family. I just jammed some clothes and credits in a bag and took off. When I came back there was... nothing...

No home, no sign that it ever even existed.

Herodotus offered me memories of my family. My sister's visual diary.

(beat)

I would have traded parts of my body for that treasure.

Neelix sadly shakes his head.

NEELIX (Cont'd)

I tried so hard to get those memories, but I can't remember anything new about my family.

DOCTOR

Herodotus, the name of an ancient Federation historian. Hasn't anyone told you to beware of Greeks bearing gifts?

(comforting)

I wouldn't count on being able to remember anything dependably for awhile.

NEELIX

Doctor I apologize for my earlier behavior. I was in a very poor state of mind.

DOCTOR

Apology accepted.

NEELIX

I should have listened better to my friend Tuvok.

Neelix looks at Tuvok.

TUVOK

Security is my responsibility. We are very fortunate that you are unharmed.

Suddenly the ship SHUDDERS and the sick bay lights flicker.

TUVOK

Excuse me I must get back to the bridge..

Tuvok trots out the door. The Doctor escorts Neelix off the bed and walks him towards the door.

DOCTOR

Your brain has been extensively altered on the cellular level, your neurons have extra mitochondria and several types of internal structures I've never seen before.

The ship SHAKES again, the Doctor and Neelix stumble.

DOCTOR

Get plenty of sleep, it will help your mind sort itself out.

(grim humor)

Now if you'll excuse me I'm expecting new patients at any moment.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER - PLANETOID - PRIVATEER SHIPS

Alpha, Beta, and Delta fire as they roar in on an attack run. They are in an upright triangle formation. Alpha above and the other two ships below, catch Voyager in a 3D crossfire. Voyager returns fire as it turns and flees.

Now it's a running fire fight with the Privateers flying formation while chasing Voyager. They slug it out as the treacherous asteroids pass between and around them.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Tuvok, Kim, Chakotay, Paris, busy! The ship SHAKES with an impact, Janeway leans forward in her chair.

JANEWAY

Mr. Paris!

PARIS

We're plowing as much rock as we can, any faster and we'll be bouncing off them!

CHAKOTAY

Diverting power to the deflector, we need to break their attack pattern.

JANEWAY

Tuvok, the asteroids closest to those ships!

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER AND PRIVATEER SHIPS

Phasers lance out from Voyager and strike the asteroids in front of the Privateer ships. The storm of rock shards forces the Privateers to veer away.

INT. FLAGSHIP - BRIDGE

The pilot is heaving on the yoke, the crew are tossed by violent control maneuvers.

PRIME

Beta, Delta, widen formation...

SECOND

Prime! The Old Man's shields have collapsed! His shields are down!

Prime looks at Second, calculating furiously.

SECOND

We can take the Old Man's planetoid, Voyager isn't going anywhere.

PRIME

Beta and Delta, break off attack, I say
break off attack, vector back to the
planetoid. Prep for ground assault!

INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE

Tuvok checks his screens.

TUVOK

Privateers are veering off and returning
to the planetoid.

KIM

He's powered down his shields!

Janeway stands up from her chair.

JANEWAY

Luring them in. Tom ease off a bit.

TUVOK

Captain, it is imperative that we leave
this region in all possible haste. I
believe that "Herodotus," is beginning
his endgame.

JANEWAY

Endgame?

TUVOK

Herodotus is dying. I believe he is
planning to use a self destruct device so
powerful that it will challenge our best
efforts to escape.

JANEWAY

Wonderful. Mr. Paris?

PARIS

Yes ma'am, to the firewall. This will
put me off my race car for a month.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - VOYAGER

Voyager weaves through the asteroid field at top speed.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - PLANETOID AND PRIVATEER SHIPS

The Privateer ships hold station above the planetoid.

INT. PLANETIOD - HERODOTUS' CHAMBER

Herodotus faces the closed door which rings with repeated explosions. He pants, leans heavily on his cane and barely stays in his chair. He looks over his left shoulder at his machine and the health monitors on its face. They are yellow and bleeping. He turns back to his right and looks at the screen above the console, a schematic shows Voyager still far inside the danger zone.

HERODOTUS

Too close... still much... too close.

He hangs his head in defeat and gasps his last breaths. With an explosion the door slides open and the Privateers in their battle armor pour in. Prime, hefting a rifle, swaggers up to Herodotus who still looks at the ground. Prime takes his rifle puts the barrel under Herodotus' chin and raises it until Herodotus looks in his eyes.

PRIME

Your time is up, Old Man.

HERODOTUS

As is yours, young lion.

Prime frowns. With a long exhale Herodotus dies, collapses to the floor and vanishes. Then everything in the room, besides the machine, the surgery, and the door vanishes. On the machine, the displays all turn red, and it emits a continuous flat-line tone. There is an ominous rumble.

PRIME

Get out! NOW!

The Privateers rush towards the door but it closes them in.

EXT. SPACE - DWARF AND INNER ASTEROID RINGS - VOYAGER

Below, the asteroid ring slants across the diagonal to the horizon. Emerging on the opposite diagonal, the huge red ember crescent of the "brown" dwarf arcs above the ring. Voyager drives out of the asteroid ring like a submarine breaching the surface. It swings around towards the foreground and rolls.

Looking forward along the hull as Voyager rolls upright, the stars spin and the vast asteroid disk rises from below.

INT. BRIDGE

Janeway stands. Chakotay sits at his station. Neelix stands by the rail. Ensign Kim checks his instruments.

KIM

The fusion rate in the brown dwarf is increasing exponentially!

(looks up)

It's becoming a star.

Janeway trades looks with Tuvok. She turns to Neelix.

JANEWAY

Neelix, you spent some time with the gentleman. Do you know anything about this?

About to profess ignorance, a puzzled look crosses his face.

NEELIX

Yes. You'll never outrun it on impulse, not from here. And stay close to the asteroid disk, it may buffer the shock wave... somewhat.

JANEWAY

Tom, milk those engines for all their worth.

A tired and worried Paris leans into the helm.

EXT. SPACE - ACCRETION DISK AND BROWN DWARF - VOYAGER

As Voyager swings about, the brightening orange dwarf falls in behind. As the asteroids race by below and the dwarf/star recedes it becomes a bright yellow.

INT. BRIDGE

Chakotay runs calculations on his console.

KIM

I have a massive shell of plasma being ejected from the star!

Chakotay looks intensely at Janeway.

CHAKOTAY

It'll crush us like an egg shell.

INT. VOYAGER - ENGINEERING

Torres and crew work on a cleaned up but still damaged Impulse engine console.

JANEWAY'S COM VOICE

B'lanna! We need warp power. Any kind of warp power. Now!

Torres extricates herself from the impulse area and hurries over to Seven of Nine's team at the warp core.

TORRES

Captain, we haven't even finished the control system let alone...

JANEWAY'S COM VOICE

(interrupting)

There's a stellar shock wave on the way, we can't outrun it on impulse. We have to have warp or...

TORRES

Stand by.

Torres looks to Seven of Nine.

SEVEN OF NINE

The control system is only partially installed.

Torres goes to the warp core console and pushes buttons. She shakes her head.

TORRES

Half of these readouts aren't active. There's some tricks we can pull, but we have to be able to tell what it's doing.

Seven of Nine looks at the warp core.

SEVEN OF NINE

I may be able to see the warp field.

Torres turns to Seven.

SEVEN OF NINE

My ocular implant. I occasionally catch brief glimpses of the field at start-up.

Torres stares at Seven of Nine's implant, gears turning.

TORRES

It must be at very low power.

Torres turns to the console and starts working while talking.

TORRES

(rapid)

All right, here's what we're going to do. I'll use the controls we have, slave and lock out the others... Your controls will require your view of the core...

SEVEN OF NINE

Me?

JANEWAY'S COM VOICE

B'lanna...

TORRES

Captain, stand by for very low warp power at any moment.

SEVEN OF NINE

I have never done anything like this before. Borg warp systems were totally self contained.

TORRES

You think I have? Common, lets see those Borg reflexes you're always bragging about.

Tentatively Seven takes her place besides Torres, and they both work the console.

EXT. SPACE - STAR, ASTEROID DISK AND VOYAGER

The STAR, and the expanding STELLAR SHOCK WAVE, glare over the back of Voyager as she races over the asteroids.

EXT. ASTEROID FIELD - PLANETOID AND PRIVATEER SHIPS

Below, the Privateer ships hang above Herodotus' planetoid. Asteroids fill the background. The stellar shock wave sweeps into view. It's a vertical wall of boiling pyroclastic cloud that stretches off into infinity.

Suddenly the shock wave smashes through the planetoid like an atomic blast shredding a wood barn. The ships are pulverized instantly, even their explosions are crushed and swept away.

Tumbling small cores, all that's left of planetoid and largest asteroids, are shoved away by the continuing blast.

EXT. SPACE - STAR, ASTEROID DISK AND VOYAGER

Voyager, fleeing across the asteroids, slowly falls back towards the pursuing shock wave. It hungrily devours the asteroid disk and nips at Voyager's nacelles.

INT. BRIDGE

In their chairs, Janeway and Chakotay brace for impact.

KIM

...seven, six, five...

PARIS

We have warp! Warp one point zero two, one point zero three.

EXT. SPACE - STAR, ASTEROID DISK AND VOYAGER

The stars are streaked with warp speed but hardly move. The asteroids roar by in a solid blur. The shock wave falls rapidly behind.

INT. ENGINEERING

Torres' and Seven's fingers fly over the console as if vigorously playing the piano. Seven continuously scans the core, squinting and blinking with the strain.

SEVEN OF NINE

This is becoming extremely difficult.

TORRES

I know, it's the power drain, and I can't stop the build up of...

Suddenly a bolt of blue warp plasma arcs out striking the console. The explosion throws Seven and Torres.

INT. BRIDGE

Paris looks up from his controls.

PARIS

We've lost warp, back to half impulse.

KIM

The shock front will catch us in eight seconds.

CHAKOTAY

It's beginning to dissipate.

KIM

Five, four, three, two...

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID DISK AND VOYAGER

The shock wave slams into Voyager jerking it around. Voyager rolls, pitches nose down, losing attitude control.

INT. BRIDGE

The bridge SHAKES hard with the impact! Janeway, Chakotay, and Paris are almost thrown from their seats. They crawl back. Neelix hugs the rail. The SHAKING continues.

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning. Structural limits are being exceeded. Structural failure in eight seconds.

CHAKOTAY

I'm routing everything to structural integrity!

But the SHAKING increases. Everyone struggles to holds on.

COMPUTER VOICE

...seven, six, five, four...

Everything SHAKES VIOLENTLY. Everyone is thrown to the floor. Consoles blow out

COMPUTER VOICE

...three, two, three, four, nine.. Warning canceled, structural failure no longer imminent.

The SHAKING moderates and dies away. Smoke and dust hangs in the air, everyone picks themselves up off the floor.

JANEWAY

Now that's a self destruct device.

INT. ENGINEERING

The dirty exhausted engineering crew labors up off the floor. Smiles first and then whoops build from the punchy crew as they realize they made it. They begin cheering. Torres grins ear to ear. No one celebrates like a Klingon, Torres gives a surprised Seven of Nine a bear hug that rattles her teeth.

INT. MESS HALL

Neelix and Tuvok sit at a table with drinks in hand. Neelix faces the window. Instead of being his usually chatty self, he just stares out into space, a billion miles away.

TUVOK

Are you well?

Neelix continues to stare, then suddenly he registers the question. He struggles to focus and turns to Tuvok.

NEELIX

Excuse me?

TUVOK

Are you well, you are usually more... talkative.

NEELIX

Oh, just sorting through my new memories.

Neelix looks into his drink.

NEELIX

His people abandoned him, it was convenient... He lived a very lonely life. No one to keep him company but the people he was watching.

Neelix stares back out the window.

NEELIX

(quoting)

The weight of this sad time we must obey,
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to
say.
The oldest hath borne most; we that are
young
Shall never see so much nor live so long.

TUVOK

An epitaph?

Neelix looks down into his drink and nods.

NEELIX

Shakespeare. I picked up the full volume set as part of the deal.

(beat)

It seemed appropriate.

TUVOK

It was a fine sentiment.

Neelix chuckles.

NEELIX

You sure surprised him.

TUVOK

Me?

NEELIX

(nods)

He had a very hard time sneaking around you, trying to lure Voyager without making you suspicious or tripping your alarms. Thought you were a credit to Starfleet security.

TUVOK

(surprised)

Indeed?

Tuvok looks off in thought. Neelix becomes melancholy again and stares out the window.

NEELIX

It's a terrible mess out there. Hope, despair, exultation, anguish, conquest, ruin... a very mottled tapestry.

TUVOK

Does this knowledge disturb you?

NEELIX

(shrugs)

It certainly changes one's perspective. The destruction of Rinax was monstrous, but it's hardly unique.

TUVOK

You have received a great gift.

NEELIX

I'd surely appreciate it more with memories of my family.

TUVOK

Do you know that you do not have new memories of your family?

NEELIX

No. There is an enormous amount of stuff in here.

TUVOK

It is illogical to regret a loss that may not, in fact, exist. Until you are able to make a determination I suggest you follow the Doctors orders and get some rest.

Rising, Neelix smiles and pats Tuvok on the shoulder.

NEELIX

Good ol'e Tuvok, there with a stiff jolt of logic just when you need it. Good night.

Neelix leaves.

INT. NEELIX'S QUARTERS

The cake still sits on the table in the darkened room. Beyond, Neelix is in his bed sleeping.

INT. NEELIX'S TALAXIAN HOME - ALIXIA'S ROOM

The fish-eye view of a young Talaxian girl, ALIXIA, changes to normal as she adjusts the lens.

ALIXIA

Nooo. That's not right.

INT. NEELIX'S BED

Neelix sits bolt upright.

NEELIX

Alixia!

Blinking, sleep still clouds his eyes. After a moment he calms down, lays back down, his eyes droop and close.

INT. NEELIX'S TALAXIAN HOME - ALIXIA'S ROOM

Alixia makes some more adjustments.

ALIXIA

There, that's better. Is this thing working? Yes I think so.

(official announcement)

Dear diary, today is the first day of my diary and I want to tell you something that happened. It was really funny and I guess...

INT. NEELIX'S BED

Pull back from Neelix. His face glows faintly with a serene smile.

ALIXIA (VO)

...I was kind of naughty, but Neelix, he's my older brother, he's so overprotective, and NOSY, well any way I...

EXT. SPACE - VOYAGER

Voyager slowly pulls away

ALIXIA (VO)

was with my best friend Violixi, we were outside playing,

(sings)

Operaaa! It's kind of a silly game we made up and...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END