"Descent"

FIRST DRAFT

MARCH 31, 1993
STAR TREK: "Descent" - 03/31/93 - TEASER

STAR TREK: The Next Generation

"Descent"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. DATA'S ROOM/ HOLODECK (OPTICAL)

Seated around the poker table clockwise are DATA, STEPHEN HAWKING, ALBERT EINSTEIN, and ISAAC NEWTON. Everyone has chips and cards in front of them -- a small device is holding Hawking's cards for him. Hawking is telling the last few lines of a very esoteric joke.

HAWKING
... but then I said, "In that frame of reference, the perihelion of Mercury would have precessed in the opposite direction."

Einstein laughs uproariously, Data looks amused, and Newton looks puzzled.

EINSTEIN
That is a great story!

DATA
Quite amusing, Doctor Hawking.
(to Newton)
You see, Sir Isaac, the joke depends on an understanding of the relativistic curvature of space-time. If two non-inertial reference frames are in relative motion --

NEWTON
(irritated)
Do not patronize me, sir! I invented physics. The day that apple fell on my head was the most momentous day in the history of science.

HAWKING
Not the apple story again.

DATA
That story is generally considered to be apocryphal.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NEWTON
(outraged)
What? How dare you?

EINSTEIN
Perhaps we should return to the
game.
(thinks, to Hawking)
Let's see, you raised Mister Data
four, which means the bet is seven
to me.

NEWTON
The bet is ten! Can't you do
simple arithmetic?

Einstein pushes out the correct number of chips.
Newton matches the bet.

NEWTON
(grumbling)
I don't even know why I'm here in
the first place. What's the point
of playing this ridiculous game?

DATA
(matches the bet)
Call. When I play poker with my
shipmates, I often find that it is
a useful forum for exploring
different facets of humanity. I
was curious to see how three of
history's greatest minds would
interact in this setting. So far
it has proved most illuminating.

Einstein looks down at his own immense stack of chips.

EINSTEIN
And profitable.

NEWTON
Can we get this over with, please?
(to Hawking)
It's your bet.

HAWKING
I raise fifty.

Data pushes out some chips for him. Newton reacts and
throws his cards down in disgust.

NEWTON
Blast! I fold.

(CONTINUED)
EINSTEIN
(to Hawking)
The uncertainty principle will not help you now, Stephen. All the quantum fluctuations in the universe won't change the cards in your hand. You are bluffing and you will lose.

HAWKING
Wrong again, Albert.

RIKER'S COM VOICE
Red Alert. All personnel report to duty stations.

DATA
(stands)
We will have to continue this at another time.
(to com)
End program.

The room VANISHES, revealing the Holodeck walls. Data EXITS.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

PICARD ENTERS from the aft Turbolift and moves toward RIKER, who is standing at one of the aft science stations. WORF and TROI are at their stations. Data ENTERS from the forward Turbolift and moves to Ops. The ship is on Red Alert.

RIKER
(to Picard)
We've received a code three distress call from the USS Saladin.

PICARD
Code three... under attack and being boarded.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RIKER
We haven't been able to raise them since the initial call.

WORF
We are nearing their coordinates.

Picard and Riker move toward the Command area.

RIKER
Raise shields. Prepare to go to impulse power.

PICARD
Any other vessels in the area?

DATA
No, sir. Sensors show only the Saladin.

PICARD
(to Con Officer)
Bring us out of warp, Ensign.
(to Worf)
Put the Saladin on screen.

INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)
The screen now shows the SALADIN, a Nebula-class ship drifting in space. There are several scorch marks apparent on the hull, but no major damage.

WORF
(off console)
Their warp engines have been damaged and defensive systems are off-line... but they still have main power... and there is no major structural damage.

DATA
(work)
Captain... sensors show no life signs aboard the Saladin.

RIKER
(shocked)
None?

DATA
No, sir. They are all dead.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Off everyone's stunned reaction...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

(Note: Episode credits fall over opening scenes.)

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & SALADIN (OPTICAL)

The two ships hang in space.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's Log: 46772.4.  Commander Riker's Away Team has
completed its survey of the
Saladin and they have returned to
the Enterprise. But we still have
no idea who attacked the Saladin,
or why.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Riker and Geordi are reporting to Picard. Data and
Worf are at their stations. Riker is grim.

RIKER
We found bodies everywhere: at
duty stations... in corridors...
near escape pods... even some who
were lying in their own beds.

(beat)
It was like walking through a
slaughterhouse.

Picard ponders this grim image for a moment.

PICARD
You said the ship itself is
relatively undamaged?

GEORDI
That's right. The computer core
is intact, no equipment is
missing... in fact, with the
exception of the defense systems,
The ship's still fully
operational.

PICARD
There had to be some motive for
this... some reason to board a
Federation starship and kill its
crew...

(CONTINUED)
RIKER
Or maybe killing the crew was the motive.
   (off Picard's look)
Those people were killed methodically... efficiently... with very few wasted shots... and they did it in less than fifteen minutes. They wanted to kill every single person aboard that ship... and they did.

PICARD
Even terrorist raids have some rationale behind them.
   (beat)
If we can determine who did this, we might also learn why...

GEORDI
Well... from the blast patterns and (TECH) residual traces, we saw on the bulkheads, I'd say they were using some kind of (TECH)-weapon....
   (beat)
The Ferengi use (TECH)-weapons.

RIKER
This doesn't seem like the work of the Ferengi...

PICARD
This doesn't seem like the work of anyone in this region... perhaps we're dealing a splinter group or a --

WORF
(urgent)
Captain. We are receiving a distress call from the outpost on Ohniaka Three. They are under attack.

PICARD
(urgent, to Con)
Red Alert. Set course for the Ohniaka system and engage at maximum warp.
   (to Worf)
Can they identify who's attacking them?
continuation: (2)

Worf

(works)

I have lost contact with them, sir.

Off their frustrated looks...

Cut to:

EXT. SPACE – THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship is racing along at maximum warp.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Everyone is tense.

Data

We are entering the Ohniaka system.

Picard

(to Con)

Bring us out of warp, Ensign.

Worf

Sensors detect one ship orbiting the third planet... its configuration does not match any in our records.

Riker

Shields up, lock phasers on target, stand-by photon torpedoes.

Picard

Hail them, Mister Worf.

Worf

(works)

No response.

Picard

Put them on screen.

Include viewscreen (OPTICAL)

The screen shows an alien vessel in orbit around a planet. The ship is unlike any other we've ever seen. It has very little markings or decoration, but it is clearly menacing.

(continued)
DATA
Sir, I am unable to scan the
interior of the alien ship, but it
does not appear to be attacking
the outpost at this time.

RIKER
They might have completed their
attack before we arrived.

PICARD
Or they might be another victim
that was caught in orbit.
(beat, to Data)
What about the outpost on the
surface?

DATA
(works)
There is a great of (TECH)
interference... I am unable to
determine whether there are any
lifeforms still living on the
surface.

Riker looks to Picard, who thinks for a moment, then
nods. Riker stands and heads for the Turbolift.

RIKER
Data, Worf, you're with me.

Riker, Data, and Worf EXIT.

INT. OUTPOST (OPTICAL)
A typical Federation science station which has recently
been attacked. There are DEAD BODIES everywhere, and
a few scorch marks are visible on the walls, but the
physical damage is actually minimal. Riker, Data,
Worf, and THREE N.D. SECURITY GUARDS MATERIALIZE.
Everyone is wearing phasers, and Data and Worf have
tricorders. Riker reacts to the sight of the dead
Starfleet officers.

RIKER
Just like the Saladin...

Data and Worf begin to scan with their tricorders.

(CONTINUED)
DATA
(off tricorder)
The (TECH)-interference is still making it difficult to get precise sensor readings, but the intensity and pattern of the attack is very similar.

RIKER
How many people were assigned to this outpost?

WORF
Seventy-four.

Riker takes a deep breath... he's not looking forward to this.

RIKER
All right... we'll have to go room to room... maybe this time we'll find some survivors. Worf, you Corelki, and Peterson start searching the north wing, we'll search the south.

WORF
Aye, sir.

Worf and two of the N.D.s EXIT the room. Riker, Data and the other N.D. begin to move toward a door at the opposite side of the room. Data tries to operate a panel next to the door, but it doesn't open right away.

DATA
The mechanism appears to be jammed. I will attempt to by-pass the main system.

Data works a computer control on the wall and Riker looks around at the chilling sight surrounding them.

RIKER
Nothing missing... nothing damaged... they just wanted to kill people...

A long beat, then Data turns to Riker.

DATA
I believe I can open the door now, sir.

Data works for a moment.
NEW ANGLE - INCLUDING DOOR (OPTICAL)

The door suddenly OPENS and reveals a BORG STANDING IN THE DOORWAY. They all react with shock, but before they can do anything, the Borg FIRES at the Security Guard and kills him. Riker and Data dive for cover just as SEVERAL OTHER BORG start to rush in, FIRING their weapons.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & ALIEN SHIP (OPTICAL)

The Alien ship suddenly FIRES on the Enterprise.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard and Geordi are on the Bridge. The ship ROCKS with the impact.

PICARD
Evasive maneuvers, Ensign! Return fire.

INT. OUTPOST (OPTICAL)

A full-scale fight is underway. Riker and Data are behind some consoles trying to hold off the Borg who keep coming at them. These Borg are not acting like the calm, neutral automatons that we've become used to seeing. They are quick-footed, cunning, and ferocious. Their faces are twisted into expressions of fury and hatred... and they take care to hide behind objects to avoid being shot -- in short, they are behaving like individuals instead of mindless worker ants.

Worf and his Security Guards come rushing INTO the room and FIRE at the Borg, the Borg return FIRE, forcing them to take cover. But even with these reinforcements, Riker can see that they are outnumbered and outgunned.

RIKER
Worf, cover us! We need to fall back and regroup!

Worf nods and he FIRES another blast. Riker and Data make a run for Worf's position, but the Borg are too quick... with a terrifying SCREAM, the Borg rush the Starfleet officers physically and a hand-to-hand fight breaks out.

The following happens very quickly:
DATA

Is immediately set on by two Borg. He quickly dispatches one of them with well-placed kick, but the other Borg is a more serious challenge.

RIKER

takes some brutal shots from a Borg and looks like he might go down at any second.

WORF

Is barely holding his own against two Borg.

DATA

Suddenly a change happens during Data's fight with the Borg... the expression on his normally neutral face begins to harden... his features twist into a snarl... and without warning, he suddenly PICKS UP the Borg and snarls into his face, his voice loud with rage and anger...

DATA (a shout)

Stop it!

He SLAMS the Borg against the wall and then hits him again and again.

DATA

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!

The Borg finally slams to the ground, dead.

WIDER (OPTICAL)

As all the Borg suddenly break off their attack. They take a step back and then DEMATERIALIZE. Riker and Worf look at each other for a moment... then pick themselves up off the ground and look at Data with shock. Data looks confused... the rage and violence we saw only a moment ago is now gone and he seems puzzled by what's happened.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Geordi reacts to something on his console.

(CONTINUED)
20 CONTINUED:

GEORDI
Captain, they're breaking out of orbit.

PICARD
(to Con)
Set an intercept course, Ensign.
(to Tactical)
Continue firing, transfer auxiliary power to the shields.

21 EXT. SPACE - ALIEN SHIP (OPTICAL)
The ship is moving at impulse... suddenly a LARGE VORTEX APPEARS in front of the ship and it quickly VANISHES INSIDE. Once the ship is gone, the Vortex also disappears.

22 INT. MAIN BRIDGE
As before. The Viewscreen shows only an empty starfield. Picard stares at the screen and frowns in frustration.

PICARD
What happened?

GEORDI
I'm not sure, Captain. It looked like some kind of energy-vortex opened up.

Picard stares at the screen for another moment, then turns to the Con Officer.

PICARD
Take us back to Ohniaka Three.

CUT TO:

23 INT. OUTPOST
As before. Riker moves over to Data, who still looks shocked.

RIKER
(gently)
Data?
(beat)
Data, are you all right?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DATA
Yes, sir.

RIKER
What happened?

A long beat, then Data turns to Riker with a completely stunned look on his face.

DATA
I got angry.

Off their reactions...

END OF ACT ONE

FADE OUT.
FADE IN:

INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Picard, Riker, Worf, TROI, and BEVERLY are seated around the table.

RIKER

They were vicious... fanatical... almost crazed. There was a... passion in them that I've never seen in a Borg.

Picard is disturbed by this notion.

PICARD

Passion and emotion should be foreign concepts to the Borg. They don't have any "feelings" about what they do... they simply carry out their mission: to acquire technology and assimilate other cultures.

RIKER

Well, the one that nearly took my head off wasn't interested in assimilating me or my technology... he just wanted to kill me.

WORF

Their tactics were also different. They attacked us individually instead of working together as members of a single unit.

BEVERLY

(surprised)

You mean they didn't seem to be part of the hive?

WORF

I cannot be certain... but that is how it appeared to me.

TROI

But how can that be? The Borg operate as one large consciousness. The only Borg who ever broke away from the hive...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She trails off in shock as she suddenly realizes the implications.

TROI

Oh my, God.

There is a quiet beat. Picard finally finishes Troi's thought.

PICARD

(quiet)
The only Borg who ever broke away from the hive... was Hugh.

Picard stands and moves to the windows.

PICARD

(continuing)
Who we sent back to the Borg in the hope that he would have an impact on them... that he would change them.
(beat)
And now, it would seem that the Borg have changed...

BEVERLY

Are you saying that Hugh is somehow responsible for these attacks?

Picard says nothing, continues to stare out the window... his mind turning over the dark implications of all this.

WORF

It is a possibility, Doctor. He could have... infected the other Borg with his sense of individuality.

TROI

But it's only a possibility, Worf. There might be other explanations for the change in the Borg. We shouldn't jump to any conclusions.

But Troi's words seem hollow... they're all afraid that Hugh is the cause of the horrors they've seen. A silence falls in the room... Picard continues to stare out into space. Beverly finally breaks the quiet and changes the subject.

(CONTINUED)
BEVERLY
What about Data... do you have any idea what happened to him?

RIKER
Geordi's checking him out right now.

(beat)
I don't know what to make of it... but for a moment, it certainly looked like he was angry.

Picard finally speaks... his voice is quiet and somber, and he doesn't turn away from the window.

PICARD
If we encounter the Borg again... we may be boarded like the Saladín. Mister Worf, from this moment on, we will maintain security condition two. Have armed security officers posted on every deck and give defense systems priority over everything except life support.

WORF
Aye, sir.

PICARD
Number One, analyze our sensor readings of the Borg ship... try to ascertain whether it's something they constructed or if it's an alien ship they captured. Then, begin a study of this "vortex" that the Borg used to escape. I want to know if it's a naturally occurring phenomenon or if it's something the Borg are creating.

RIKER
Aye, sir.

Picard takes a final beat.

PICARD
I'm going to contact Starfleet Command.

Picard turns away from the window and EXITS without making eye contact with anyone in the room.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

The others all rise and head for the doors.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING

Geordi is checking out some circuitry inside the panel on Data's head with a tool. He shakes his head after a beat and then puts the tool away.

GEORDI
Your positronic net checks out... everything looks fine.

DATA
That is consistent with my internal diagnostics.

Geordi closes up Data's head.

GEORDI
I don't know what to say, Data. There's nothing here to indicate any kind of power surge or (TECH) that would cause a behavioral anomaly.

DATA
I agree.
(beat)
Geordi, I believe I experienced my first emotion.

Geordi is dubious about this.

GEORDI
Data... no offense, but how would you know an actual flash of anger from some kind of odd power surge?

DATA
You are correct in that I have no frame of reference with which to positively confirm my hypothesis.
(beat)
In fact, I find myself unable to provide a verbal description of the experience. Perhaps you could describe what it feels like when you get angry... I could then use that as a standard by which to judge myself.

(CONTINUED)
Geordi thinks about this... struggles with an answer.

GEORDI
Well... when I angry, first I... begin to feel... hostile...

DATA
Could you describe feeling hostile?

GEORDI
It's feeling... belligerent... combative...

DATA
Can you describe feeling angry without referring to other feelings?

Geordi struggles with this for a moment... finally gives up.

GEORDI
No. I guess not. I just... feel angry.

DATA
That was my experience as well. I simply... felt angry.

GEORDI
Let's say that you're right... that this was an emotion. Why now?

DATA
I do not know. Perhaps it is because I have evolved to the point where emotions are within my ability to experience. (beat) Perhaps I will experience more emotions as time goes on.

Geordi smiles and shrugs as he begins to put away the tools.

GEORDI
I hope you're right. I'd hate to think that anger is all that you're capable of feeling.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

Data frowns slightly at this thought. Off his reaction as he begins to think about this...

CUT TO:

INT. READY ROOM (OPTICAL)

Picard is talking to ADMIRAL NECHAYEV (from "Chain of Command") on the Viewscreen.

NECHAYEV
In the past twelve hours there have been Borg attacks on the Gramidia Colony, the Dorvian research facility, the Nahrik outposts and the starship Excalibur.

PICARD
Survivors?

NECHAYEV
None.

(beat)
We're deploying forty-seven starships to the border immediately.

PICARD
You believe the Borg are about to make a full-blown invasion.

NECHAYEV
It wouldn't be their first attempt.

That's an uncomfortable subject here and Nechayev seems to immediately regret saying it. There is an awkward beat.

NECHAYEV
(continuing)
I'm taking command of the fleet aboard the Farragut this afternoon. We should be at the border in two days. The Enterprise, the Crazy Horse and the Valiant are the only ships currently in the area, and you'll be in tactical command until we arrive.

PICARD
Understood.

(CONTINUED)
Nechayev pauses for a moment... glances down at a PADD on her desk.

NECHAYEV
Jean-Luc... I've re-read your report on the Borg you called "Hugh"...

PICARD
(tight)
Yes, Admiral?

NECHAYEV
(quiet)
If a similar situation should arise in the future... and you capture another Borg... I want to make it very clear that you are under orders to bring it back to Starfleet headquarters... regardless of... your personal feelings.

PICARD
Yes, sir.

The transmission ENDS. Picard contemplates the screen for a moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)
The ship at impulse power.

INT. TROI'S OFFICE
Troi and Data are sitting in the office.

DATA
In the past six hours, I have attempted to produce an emotional response by subjecting myself to various stimuli.

TROI
Like what?

(CONTINUED)
DATA
I have listened to several musical compositions known to elicit melancholy feelings, I watched three Holodeck programs designed to be humorous, and I made several attempts to induce fear by subjecting myself to horrific imagery.

TROI
What happened?

DATA
Nothing.

TROI
I'm curious... why are you ignoring the one emotion you've already experienced? Why aren't you trying to make yourself angry again?

DATA
Anger is a negative emotion. I wanted to concentrate on something more positive.

TROI
Feelings aren't positive or negative Data, they simply exist. It's what we do with those feelings that becomes good or bad.

(beat)
For example, feeling angry about an injustice could actually lead someone to take a positive action to correct that injustice.

DATA
But my study of humanity indicates that there are some emotions that are harmful, such as prejudice, hatred, or sadism. Should I not avoid those feelings if possible?

These are difficult areas to deal with, even for Troi, and she takes moment to grapple with this.

(Continued)
TROI
Those are very... strong emotions, and you're right -- there's very little good that can come out of them. But, I don't think that an exploration of anger necessarily leads to feelings of hate or malice.

DATA
But what if it does, Counselor? What if it turns out that those are the only emotions I am capable of experiencing? Will that make me a... bad person?

Troi looks at him for a moment... finally she gives him a gentle smile.

TROI
Data, let me say something from a personal standpoint. We've served together a long time... and I've gotten to know you pretty well... I have to believe that if you ever do become human... that you won't become a bad one.

(beat)
And from a professional standpoint, I don't see any reason to think that either.

Data pauses, thinks for a moment. He seems troubled by something.

DATA
There is another reason why I am concerned. (off her look)
When I was fighting the Borg, I felt angry... but when I think back on that incident, I experience a different sensation. It is not the same as anger, but I think it might be an emotion.

TROI
Perhaps it's guilt. It would be a very natural response to feel remorse about killing someone...

There is a long beat as Data thinks about this.

(CONTINUED)
DATA
I do not believe it is guilt,
Counselor.
(beat)
I believe it is pleasure.

Off Troi's reaction...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

29 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship is moving at impulse power.

30 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Riker in Command, Worf at Tactical. Riker is just turning away from Worf.

RIKER
Red Alert! All hands stand to battle stations.
(to Con)
Lay in a course and engage at warp nine.

N.D. CREWMEMBERS start ENTERING from the Turbolifts. Picard ENTERS from the Ready Room. Data ENTERS in the b.g. from a Turbolift and goes to Ops.

RIKER
(to Picard)
We have a distress call from the New Berlin Colony. They're under attack by the Borg.

PICARD
(to Data)
What's our ETA?

DATA
At present speed, we will arrive in fifteen minutes, thirty seconds.

PICARD
(to Worf)
Contact the Crazy Horse, tell them to stand-by in case we --

Worf's console suddenly BEEPS and he turns to answer it.

WORF
Incoming message, Captain. It's the New Berlin Colony.
(beat)
They are... cancelling their distress call.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
WORF (Cont'd)
A Ferengi trading ship entered
their system and someone
panicked... again.

Everyone reacts on the Bridge.

RIKER
That's the third time today.
(to Con)
Reduce speed to warp six and bring
us back to our patrol route.

Picard barely manages to restrain his temper.

PICARD
Mister Worf... stand down from Red
Alert. Acknowledge the signal
from New Berlin, and then transmit
a copy of our ship recognition
protocols... and make sure they
study it this time.
(to Riker)
Number One, may I see you in my
Ready Room?

Picard and Riker EXIT to the Ready Room.

INT. READY ROOM (OPTICAL) - CONTINUOUS
Picard and Riker ENTER. Picard is clearly agitated...
his manner and tone are brusque.

PICARD
What's the status of our
investigation into the vortex used
by the Borg?

RIKER
Our current theory is that it's
some kind of artificial transport
conduit... conceptually similar
to a wormhole, but on a much
smaller scale.

PICARD
Is it generated by the Borg ship
or is there another point of
origin?

RIKER
We don't know yet.

(Continued)
PICARD
What about their ship?

RIKER
We don't know about that either.
They need more time to --

PICARD
(hard)
That's not good enough. We have
to know what we're dealing with
before we engage the Borg again.

Riker stiffens at the tone in Picard's voice and Picard
instantly regrets snapping at him.

PICARD
(softer)
Sorry, Number One.

Picard takes a few steps around the room... there is a
long beat.

PICARD
He was right here, Will... in this
very room. And I let him go.

There is a quiet beat as Riker realizes what Picard is
talking about.

RIKER
You're talking about Hugh...

PICARD
(nods)
All I had to do was give the
order... Geordi would have
implanted the invasive program in
Hugh's memory... Hugh would have
carried it back to the Borg
collective... and it would have
destroyed them.

RIKER
Hugh wasn't part of the collective
anymore... he was an individual...
a person. It would've been wrong
to use him to kill his own people.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
Oh, I remember the arguments for
letting him go... the moral and
ethical reasons why it would be
wrong. I made a reasoned and
deliberate decision based on moral
principles to send him back
without the invasive program.

(beat)
And five hundred men, women, and
children have died. That's a high
price to pay just so I could feel
good about making... a moral
decision.

Riker has no answer for that and there is a long somber
beat.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTPOST/HOLODECK (OPTICAL)

The Holodeck has recreated the destroyed Outpost as
seen in Act One. Data is FIGHTING a Holo-Borg in the
same manner as seen earlier. Data defeats the Borg
again, and the Holo-Borg slumps to the ground. Data's
expression remains carefully neutral during the fight,
and after the Borg goes down, Data pauses and seems to
think for a beat.

Geordi ENTERS from the Corridor, carrying a PADD. He
looks around in surprise.

GEORDI
Data... am I interrupting
something?

DATA
Yes. But it is all right. Do you
need me?

GEORDI
(re: PADD)
Well, I just wanted you to take a
look at this (TECH) analysis of
the vortex.

Data takes the PADD and looks it over. Geordi looks
down at the Borg lying on the ground.

GEORDI
What are you doing in here?

(CONTINUED)
DATA
I am attempting to recreate the experience which led to my initial burst of anger.

GEORDI
Any luck?

DATA
None so far.
(beat, re: PADD)
I believe that the preliminary results are correct. However, we will still have to wait another three hours for the computer to finish the calculations.

GEORDI
That's what I thought, but I wanted to check.

Geordi takes back the PADD... there is an awkward beat.

DATA
Do you need me for anything else, Geordi?

GEORDI
No... there's nothing for us to do but wait for the computer. I'll see you at fifteen hundred.

Geordi heads for the door, but then stops and turns around in concern. He watches as Data resumes his program.

DATA
(to com)
Computer, reset Borg simulation to time index two point one.
Increase Borg strength by twenty percent.

The Holo-Borg on the ground DISAPPEARS, and then RE-APPEARS in front of Data.

DATA
Run program.

They immediately begin to FIGHT. The Borg is stronger and more powerful this time and he is able to beat back Data for a moment. Geordi watches with concern... but Data again is able to defeat the Borg. There is still no trace of emotion on Data's face.

(CONTINUED)
DATA
(to com)
Computer, restart Borg simulation
at time index two point one.
Increase Borg strength by thirty
percent.

The Borg again DISAPPEARS and REAPPEARS in front of
Data, but Geordi steps in before Data can begin.

GEORDI
(concerned)
Whoa, wait a minute. You better
be careful... increasing the
strength of a Holodeck character
by that much is almost enough to
override the safety routine.

DATA
I have already disabled the
Holodeck safety routine.

GEORDI
(appalled)
That could kill you.

DATA
During the original incident the
Borg presented a genuine danger to
my life. With the Holodeck safety
routine in place, I know that my
life is not in danger. Since I am
trying to duplicate the conditions
of the original incident as
closely as possible I must attempt
to duplicate my state of mind as
well.

Geordi is angered by the casual attitude of his friend.

GEORDI
(angry)
Data, We're talking about an
experiment. You can't put your
life on the line just to prove a
theory.

DATA
This is extremely important to me,
Geordi. I have questions that
must be answered.

(Continued)
GEORDI
(firm)
This is crazy. There's got to be another way. Why don't you try some other way making your self angry...

DATA
I have tried other scenarios, but they have been unsuccessful. I understand your objections, but it is my life and I have the right to risk it if I so desire.

GEORDI
Well, I'm your friend and I'm not going to just stand by and let you --

Suddenly, without warning, Data's temper flares.

DATA
(angry)
Leave me alone, Geordi!

Geordi is so shocked that his mouth drops open and he can't even think of something to say. The moment passes, and Data's expression quickly returns to his neutral self. Data also seems shocked.

GEORDI
Data...?

DATA
(surprised)
It happened again. I was angry.

Before Geordi can respond, Riker's Com Voice interrupts.

RIKER'S COM VOICE
Red Alert, all hands stand to battle stations.

Geordi and Data head for the EXIT.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE – THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

Racing along at warp.
INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard and Riker at the aft science station, with Worf at Tactical. Data ENTERS and goes to Ops.

RIKER
It's confirmed. The colony is definitely under attack.

DATA
We are nearing the Borik system.

WORF
I have located the Borg ship. It is leaving the colony... heading out of the system.

PICARD
(to Con Officer)
Bring us out of warp near that ship.

RIKER
Shields up, load torpedo bays.

WORF
We are within visual range.

PICARD
On screen.

The alien Borg ship seen earlier is heading away from the Enterprise.

PICARD
Lay in an intercept course, full impulse power.
(to Worf)
Lock phasers on target.

WORF
We are closing... we will be within phaser range in thirty seconds.

Data reacts to something on his console.

DATA
Captain... sensors detect a temporal distortion forming directly ahead of the Borg ship.

(CONTINUED)
RIKER
The vortex.

PICARD
They're not going to get away this time.
(to com)
Picard to Engineering. Transfer auxiliary and emergency power to the impulse engines.

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
Acknowledged.

DATA
Impulse engines now at one hundred twenty-five percent of rated power output.

WORF
Ten seconds to phaser range.

The Borg ship on the viewer gets closer. Suddenly the VORTEX opens up in front of the Borg ship and the ship VANISHES INTO IT.

The Enterprise ROCKS suddenly.

DATA
We are caught in some kind of energy (TECH) from the vortex.

RIKER
All engines back full.

WORF
Shields are failing.

DATA
We are being pulled inside.

They all react to the sight of the vortex looming ahead of them on the Viewscreen.

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & VORTEX (OPTICAL)

The ship is PULLED INSIDE and then the vortex VANISHES, leaving no trace of the Enterprise.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
FADE IN:

37 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE IN THE VORTEX (OPTICAL)

The ship is hurtling through the vortex, a myriad of colors and shapes whipping by at incredible speeds.

38 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

As before. The ship is shaking.

DATA
(urgent)
Inertial dampers failing.

WORF
Main power off-line, switching to back-ups.

PICARD
(to com)
Picard to Engineering, can you boost power to the warp nacelles? Maybe we can break out by using the --

Suddenly the ship is ROCKED VIOLENTLY, almost knocking everyone to the deck, but then the shaking stops altogether.

DATA
We have left the vortex and returned to normal space.

PICARD
Where are we?

DATA
Navigational systems are still off-line... I will attempt to make a celestial fix using analog systems.

Worf suddenly reacts to something on his console.

WORF
Captain, the Borg ship is directly ahead and closing!

PICARD
On-screen.
39  INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

The Borg ship is now getting closer.

RIKER
Evasive maneuvers.

PICARD
Worf?

WORF
(worked, frustrated)
Shields still inoperative,
Captain.

Helpless, they watch as the Borg ship gets inexorably closer on the screen.

40  EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & ALIEN SHIP (OPTICAL)

The Borg ship FIRES on the Enterprise.

41  INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

The ship ROCKS under the impact of the shot, but before anyone can react, THREE BORG MATERIALIZE on the Bridge. They immediately FIRE at our people, who dive for cover.

42  WORF (OPTICAL)

returns FIRE at a Borg, killing him.

43  DATA

throws himself at a Borg... who is named CRESIS... and they fall to the ground in a hand to hand fight.

44  RIKER

is knocked to the ground by a Borg.

45  WORF (OPTICAL)

FIRES at the Borg attacking Riker, and kills him.
DATA (OPTICAL)

manages to throw off the Borg and Worf FIRES at him, knocking him down.

WIDER

As everyone recovers from the attack.

PICARD
Is everyone all right?

WORF
Security reports no other intruders aboard ship.
(works, then puzzled)
Captain... the Borg ship is gone.

Picard looks at the Viewscreen, but there is nothing but an empty starfield.

WORF
It doesn't appear on any long-range scanners.

PICARD
They beamed aboard as a diversion, to give their ship time to escape.

RIKER
(re: Borg)
Here's another change in Borg behavior... they left their comrades behind instead of vaporizing them.

Data bends down to examine the Borg (Cresis) that fell near him.

DATA
Captain... this Borg is still alive.

Off Picard's expression...

CUT TO:

INT. BRIG (OPTICAL)

Data and Picard watch as Beverly treats the unconscious Borg on a bed which is inside the Brig. Worf is also standing in the cell with her, his phaser at the ready. An N.D. BAJORAN SECURITY GUARD stands outside the cell. Beverly finishes and then turns to Picard.

(CONTINUED)
BEVERLY
I've stabilized his condition for now. He's still pretty weak, but he should make a full recovery.

PICARD
Can you wake him?

BEVERLY
Yes, but I don't think it's a good idea. His blood pressure and heart rate are --

PICARD
Do it.

BEVERLY
(tight)
That's not in the best interests of my patient, Captain.

PICARD
I'm not concerned with his best interests, Doctor. We need information, he has it, and that's an order.

Beverly looks at him for a moment... but Picard's expression is steady. Her expression hardens, but she acquiesces.

BEVERLY
All right.

Beverly moves to apply the hypo to the Borg's neck. Worf stands closer to her, ready for anything.

PICARD
(to Security Guard)
Lower the forcefield.

The Guard works the control and the forcefield GOES OUT. Beverly applies the hypo and then Worf quickly moves her out of the Brig, his phaser always trained on the Borg. The Guard works the control again and the forcefield COMES ON. Inside the cell, the Borg slowly regains consciousness. He sits up on the bed, dizzy and unsure of his surroundings.

PICARD
What is your designation?

The Borg looks up with contempt. He is not a faceless member of some vast collective -- he is an individual.

(CONTINUED)
But he is an individual whose life is solely devoted to serving some higher cause... a fanatic. His voice is still filtered through the same electronic Borg sound we're used to hearing.

CRESIS
I do not have a designation any longer. My name is Cresis.

PICARD
Cresis...? How did you get that name?

CRESIS
It was given to me by the One.

PICARD
Who is the "One"?

CRESIS
The One who knows all... the One who will destroy you.

Everyone exchanges a glance... this is definitely not what they've come to expect from a Borg.

PICARD
You are Borg... isn't your goal to assimilate us into the collective?

CRESIS
We do not assimilate inferior biological organisms. We destroy them.

PICARD
Tell me more about the One... does the One have a name?

(beat)
Is the One called Hugh?

The Borg ignores his question... peers at Picard for a moment.

CRESIS

Picard won't be baited. He tries a different tack.

PICARD
Why does the One wish to destroy biological organisms?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

The Borg turns to Worf.

CRESIS (TECH)-sapien. Klingon. Puncture (TECH) ventricle of heart. Death is immediate.

Worf stiffens. Picard tries one more time.

PICARD (hard)
I am Locutus of Borg. You will respond to my inquiries.

The Borg is unfazed. He turns to the Security Guard.

CRESIS (TECH)-sapien. Bajoran. Fracture cranial-(TECH) behind right ear. Death is immediate.

Picard turns to the others in frustration.

PICARD
This is going nowhere. Doctor, I want autopsies performed on the other two. Compare the results to what we learned about Hugh's anatomy... see if there are any recent modifications which could explain the behavioral differences.

(to Data)
Run a bio-spectral analysis... see if this Borg is trying to send a subspace signal to the others.

DATA
Aye sir.

Picard, Worf, and Beverly EXIT. The Guard moves to the security desk and Data pulls out his tricorder and begins to scan the Borg.

The Borg intently watches Data work for a moment. When Cresis finally speaks, his tone and demeanor are quieter... almost seductive. He seems like a different person -- his single-minded "Borg" persona gives way to a more sophisticated one.

(CONTINUED)
CREESIS
(to Data)
You aren't like the others. You
don't need to be destroyed. You
can be assimilated.

DATA
I do not wish to be assimilated.

CREESIS
The One can offer you what you
have always wanted... he can give
you emotions.

Data keeps working.

DATA
Your knowledge of me is based on
my previous encounters with the
Borg. It will not affect my
decision to resist you.

Cresis now surreptitiously touches a control on his
artificial arm. Data's head tilts slightly in
response. This should be very subtle.

CREESIS
Resistance is futile. You will
not fight against what you've
wanted all your life.

Data frowns as if distracted for a moment by the Borg's
words, then he moves to a wall panel near the cell door
and begins working it and checking the readings on his
tricorder. The Borg presses on.

CREESIS
Have you ever felt a real emotion,
Data?

Data continues working, but for some reason he feels
compelled to answer Cresis' questions.

DATA
Yes. During a battle on Ohniaka
Three, I was forced to kill a
Borg... and I got angry.

CREESIS
It felt good, didn't it?

(CONTINUED)
DATA
It would be unethical to take
pleasure from another being's
death.

CRESIS
Then you must feel guilty about
what you did... you must feel
remorse...

For some reason, Data is struggling here... the Borg's
words are having an effect on him that they normally
wouldn't. He stops working with the panel.

DATA
(difficult)
No.

CRESIS
It's unethical to kill and not
feel regret. You must be a very
unethical person, Data.

DATA
That is incorrect. My creator,
Doctor Soong, gave me a program
which defines my sense of right
and wrong. In essence, I have a
conscience.

Data returns to work.

CRESIS
Do you? Then why wasn't it
working on Ohniaka Three... when
you felt good about killing that
Borg?

Data looks at him for a moment, tries to ignore what
he's saying.

DATA
Step away from the forcefield.
Your proximity to the field is
interfering with my scan.

The Borg is relentless. He bores in on Data... his
voice is almost hypnotic.

CRESIS
You enjoyed the rush of anger...
the surge of emotion that welled
up inside you as you watched the
life drain from your victim... it
was unlike anything you've ever
known...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (6)

Data is like a junkie being offered another hit of a narcotic... for reasons that Data can't understand, (and which will be explained in Part II) he is drawn along by the Borg... unable to stop this journey into the dark.

DATA
It was... a very... potent experience...

CRESIS
You'd like to feel that way again...

Data struggles, but there is only one answer.

DATA
Yes.

CRESIS
You'd do anything to feel that way again... even if it meant killing someone.

Data tries to fight back... but his answer is weak and hollow sounding.

DATA
No. That would be... wrong.

CRESIS
You don't sound very sure of yourself. Are you sure your ethical program is working?

Data is confused, unsure of himself -- in desperation, he tries to leave, but the Borg's voice stops him before he reaches the door.

CRESIS
Data... do you have a friend?

DATA
Yes... his name is Geordi.

CRESIS
Imagine Geordi standing in this room...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (7)

CRESIS (Cont'd)
if it meant that you could feel
emotions again... the way you did
on Ohniaka Three... would you kill
Geordi? Would you kill your
friend?

There is a long beat as something dark and horrific
moves across Data's face. He turns back to the Borg.

DATA
Yes. I would.

Off the look on Data's face...

CUT TO:

INT. DATA'S QUARTERS

Data ENTERS. He seems distracted... unfocused... as if
there is something barely contained just beneath the
surface. He sits at his desk, lost in thought.

ANGLE

Data's cat, SPOT, ENTERS the room and jumps up on the
desk. Data looks down at his cat.

ON SPOT

The cat suddenly HISSES and SPITS in response to Data.
The cat immediately runs away.

ON DATA

Who thinks about this for a moment... and then a
twisted look of satisfaction comes over his features.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship hangs in space.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard, Riker and Geordi are at the aft science
station. Geordi is indicating an OKUDAGRAM graphic
showing several segments of a "pipe" through space.
Worf is at Tactical.

(CONTINUED)
GEORDI
We think the Borg have established (TECH) energy conduits throughout subspace. Each of these conduits is essentially a big pipe... which allows one or two ships to move several light years in a few seconds. They're similar to wormholes, but they cover much smaller distances... something like twenty light years at most.

PICARD
How do they gain access to the conduits?

GEORDI
The Borg ship emitted some kind of (TECH) pulse just before we saw the vortex open. I'd say the vortex is keyed to respond to a particular (TECH) frequency.

RIKER
Is there any way for us to emulate the --

An alarms SOUNDS on Worf's panel and he interrupts.

WORF
Captain. There is a shuttlecraft leaving the bay.

PICARD
Who authorized that launch?

WORF
There is no authorization.

PICARD
Picard to shuttlecraft. You are ordered to identify yourself and return to the ship immediately.

There is no response.

PICARD
(to Worf)
Lock onto the shuttle with a tractor beam and bring it back.

Worf works for a beat.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

WORF
The tractor beam has been disabled... command overrides are not functioning.

RIKER
Can you determine who is aboard?

WORF
There is a (TECH) field interfering with the sensors...

GEORDI
Captain, I'm picking up a (TECH) surge... I think they're trying to trigger the vortex.

WORF
(shocked)
The Borg prisoner... and Commander Data... they are aboard the shuttle.

EXT. SPACE - SHUTTLE & VORTEX (OPTICAL)
The small two-man shuttle is moving through space. Suddenly the VORTEX opens in front of it and the shuttle goes inside. The Vortex then DISAPPEARS.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE
As before.

WORF
The vortex has closed. They're gone, sir.

Off their reactions...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

57 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

As before.

PICARD
Mister La Forge, can we follow them into the vortex?

GEORGI
I think so... our sensors got a good fix on the (TECH) pulse they sent. We should be able to duplicate it.

RIKER
(to Picard)
The Borg could be waiting for us on the other side of that conduit... just like last time.

There is a long beat as Picard considers his options.

PICARD
If the Borg gain access to Data's memory... they could get technical information on every ship in the fleet... that would give them a far greater advantage than even the information they took from me.

(beat)
We can't let that happen. Prepare to enter the vortex.

RIKER
Red Alert. All hands stand to battle stations.

The ship's condition goes to RED.

PICARD
(to Con)
Bring us to the shuttle's last coordinates.

WORF
Shields up... weapons ready.

PICARD
Mister La Forge?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GEORDI
Ready to send out the (TECH) pulse, Captain.

PICARD
Proceed.

Geordi begins working at the console.

GEORDI
Emitting (TECH) pulse at (TECH) frequency...

WORF
Sensors show no subspace distortion.

GEORDI
Okay... now shifting to the (TECH) bandwidth...

WORF
Still nothing. Correction -- subspace distortion forming directly ahead.

INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)
The VORTEX forms directly in front of the ship.

PICARD
(to Con)
Take us in, Ensign. One half impulse.

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & VORTEX (OPTICAL)
The ship ENTERS the Vortex and then disappears.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE
As before. The ship is SHAKING.

WORF
Power levels dropping to sixty-seven percent.

GEORDI
Compensating with auxiliary power.
61 EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL)
An empty starfield. Suddenly the VORTEX APPEARS and the Enterprise EMERGES into normal space.

62 INT. MAIN BRIDGE
As before. The shaking has STOPPED.

PICARD
Report.

RIKER
Navigational sensors show we've traveled seventeen light years from our previous position.

WORF
Captain... I am picking up the shuttle's residual (TECH) trace.

PICARD
(to Con)
Lay in a pursuit course and engage.

GEORDI
Captain, you should take a look at this.

Picard moves to the aft station.

GEORDI
(continuing)
I've scanned several star systems within sensor range... there's been a lot of phaser fire in the area recently... heavy radiation patterns... but there are no life readings anywhere.

PICARD
(grim)
The Borg have been busy.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & PLANET (OPTICAL)
The ship is entering orbit.
INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard, Geordi, and Riker are at the aft station. Riker points to an Okudagram of the planet on the screen.

RIKER
The shuttle's trail leads to these coordinates... but there's too much interference to scan that location.

PICARD
Are they intentionally jamming our sensors?

GEORDI
It looks more like a natural phenomenon... the atmosphere contains an unusually high percentage of (TECH) and (TECH) for a class-M planet.

PICARD
Can we transport down through the interference?

GEORDI
We should... but there could be fifty Borg standing down there waiting for us and we'd have no way of knowing it until we actually beamed down.

Picard considers for a moment.

PICARD
It's a risk we'll have to take.
(beat)
Number One, take a well-armed Away Team and beam down to those coordinates. Have the Transporter maintain a continuous lock on your signal so we can beam you out of there at the first sign of trouble.

RIKER
Aye, sir. Mister Worf.

Riker and Worf EXIT.

CUT TO:
EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAY (OPTICAL)

The abandoned shuttlecraft is sitting in the middle of a wide open expanse of green rolling hills with a great deal of vegetation in evidence. Riker, Worf, and FOUR N.D. SECURITY GUARDS MATERIALIZE on the surface. They are all facing outward in a defensive circle and they all have their phasers drawn. After a beat, they relax a little. Worf pulls out his tricorder and tries to scan the area.

RIKER
(hits combadge)
Riker to Enterprise. We're on the surface... no sign of the Borg or Data.
(moves to the shuttle)
The shuttlecraft has been abandoned.

INTERCUT:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

As Picard listens to the report of the Away Team.

WORF
The (TECH) interference is limiting the tricorder range... it is useless beyond one hundred meters.

Riker looks around the desolate area.

RIKER
There's no obvious direction for them to go. They could've gone anywhere, Captain.

PICARD
(to com)
Can you determine how long ago they left the shuttlecraft?

Riker leans into the shuttle and looks at the console.

RIKER
The engine's been shut down for a little over three hours.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
(to com)
Stand-by, Number One.
(to Geordi)
How far could they have traveled in that amount of time?

GEORDI
(work)
Data can move pretty fast even over rough terrain... assuming the Borg can move just as fast... they could be anywhere within (TECH) square kilometers by now.

Picard takes a long beat to think about this.

PICARD
It'll take a lot of Away Teams to cover that much territory on foot.
  (beat)
But... I see little choice at this point.
  (to com)
Picard to Riker.

RIKER
Riker here.

PICARD
I'm going to start sending down search parties to your coordinates, Wil. Set up a command post and begin mapping out a search plan. We're going to have to do this on foot.

END INTERCUT ON BRIDGE.

RIKER'S COM VOICE
Understood, sir.

PICARD
Picard out.

Picard turns to Geordi.

PICARD
I want to use the shuttlecraft to carry out low-level aerial reconnaissance. Have all qualified pilots report to the main shuttlebay.

(Continued)
GEORDI
Aye, sir.

PICARD
All available officers -- you and I included -- will begin assembling four man Away Teams. Arm each team with three hand phasers and one phaser rifle. We'll leave a skeleton crew aboard the ship, but the search effort has top priority.

GEORDI
Right. Who'll be in command here?

PICARD
It'll have to be a senior officer... someone with a lot of Starfleet experience...

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON BEVERLY
BEVERLY
I understand.

NEW ANGLE
Revealing Beverly talking to Picard on the Bridge several hours later. The other positions are filled by N.D. CREWMEMBERS. Picard is wearing a phaser.

PICARD
If the Borg should attack... don't wait for me or anyone else to get back to the ship. Take the Enterprise to the conduit, activate the vortex and return to the Federation.

BEVERLY
Got it.

There is a beat as they look at each other.

BEVERLY
Good luck, Jean-Luc.

PICARD
Good luck... Captain.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

They share a smile and then Picard EXITS, leaving Beverly in command.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLANET SURFACE - DAY (OPTICAL)

Riker and Worf have set up a small table with a console near the shuttlecraft. Several other N.D. OFFICERS are heading off in different directions and Two N.D. ENGINEERING OFFICERS wait by the shuttle.

Picard, Troi, Geordi, and an N.D. SECURITY OFFICER MATERIALIZE nearby. The Security Officer is carrying a phaser rifle while the others are armed with hand phasers. Geordi has a tricorder. They move to Riker and Worf.

RIKER

I've sent out twelve search teams so far.
(points to console screen)
This is your sector...
(points in direction)
... which is that direction. Worf and I will be heading that way once the final team is down.

PICARD

Who's manning the command post?

Riker indicates the two Engineering officers.

RIKER

Wallace and Towles.

Picard nods, everything seems to be in order. He turns to Troi and the others.

PICARD

Ready?

They all nod and Picard, Troi, Geordi and the Security Guard head off in the indicated direction. Follow them for a few beats.

CUT TO:
A few hours have passed and Picard's team stops for a break. They're all pretty tired. Troi moves to one side and sits down.

PICARD
Anything, Mister La Forge?

GEORDI
Nothing, sir.

Picard looks off toward a distant hill.

PICARD
If we climbed that point, we might be able to increase the tricorder range by a hundred meters.

GEORDI
Maybe... but the increase in range would be off-set by a decrease in accuracy --

Troi suddenly interrupts.

TROI
Captain. (she looks in another direction)
I think there's something over there.

Picard and Geordi move to where she is and they push through the brush.

Through the brush, they can just make out the top of some kind of structure in the distance.

RESUME SCENE

PICARD
Come on.

He leads them in that direction.

CUT TO:
EXT. PLANET SURFACE - BUILDING - DAY

The Away Team climbs a hill and discovers a Large Alien Building. The building is covered with strange runes and lettering. Picard pulls his phaser and the Away Team approaches cautiously. Geordi begins scanning with his tricorder.

GEORDI
I'm having trouble scanning the interior... but I don't see any external (TECH) traces that would suggest it's inhabited.

PICARD
Can you tell if it's a Borg structure?

GEORDI
I don't think so. The rock and other materials used in the construction are all native to this planet... and I don't see any Borg energy signatures. (looks at tricorder for a moment. I think there's a door or a hatch or something about twenty meters that way.

They go around the building in the indicated direction.

CUT TO:

INT. BORG HALL

The Hall is an immense open space, like a concert hall without the chairs. A platform dominates one end and there are doors and corridors suggesting other rooms. The entire hall is dark and foreboding, but a couple of lights pierce the gloom.

Picard, Troi, Geordi, and the Security Guard ENTER the Hall from the outside of the building. They look around carefully.

TROI
It looks like some kind of meeting hall.

PICARD
No dust, no wild vegetation of any kind... it can't have been abandoned that long.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Geordi aims his tricorder at one of the lights.

GEORDI
(off tricorder)
Something's wrong... I can't get any kind of energy signature from this light.

Picard moves and looks at the tricorder screen. There is a quiet beat before Picard realizes the implications of this.

PICARD
(urgent)
A dampening field. The whole building could be shielded from our sensors. Let's get out of here.

NEW ANGLE (OPTICAL)

They begin to run for the door, but it's too late. TWENTY BORG come SCREAMING into the room from the doorways and corridors. It's like an attack of banshees and the Away Team has no chance to escape.

The Security Guard whips up his phaser rifle and manages to get off one shot, but then FIVE BORG PHASERS kill him on the spot. Picard looks around in desperation, but there doesn't seem to be any way out as the Borg now start to close in on him, Geordi, and Troi. They grip their phasers tightly... prepared to make a final stand against overwhelming odds. Suddenly a VOICE from o.c. stops the Borg in their tracks.

LORE'S VOICE
(o.c.)
Stop!

INCLUDE PLATFORM

The Borg stop instantly and the Away Team looks up to see what they think is Data standing on the platform in the room. He is wearing what could be a military uniform.

PICARD

Data...?

The man on the platform smiles at this and Troi suddenly reacts as if she sensed something horrific.

(CONTINUED)
TROI
That's not Data...

LORE
You should listen to her, Captain. She's way ahead of you.

PICARD
(shocked)
Lore...

LORE
Very good... and I'm not alone.

Lore looks off to one side. Picard and the others follow his look.

NEW ANGLE
Revealing Data as he comes through the crowd. He is still wearing his Starfleet uniform, but his entire demeanor and bearing have changed... he now seems malevolent, dangerous... evil.

DATA
The Sons of Soong have joined together...
(beat)
... and together, we will destroy the Federation.

The Borg SCREAM their approval with a shriek that fills the hall with noise... Lore and Data smile... and as Picard looks around at this scene of madness...

FADE OUT.

SUPER: "TO BE CONTINUED"

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END