“The Pegasus”
FADE IN:

INT. THEATRE

DATA, RIKER, and TROI are rehearsing a scene from "Pygmalion," under BEVERLY'S careful directorial eye. The room is empty except for them. Data is Alfred Doolittle; Riker is Henry Higgins; and Troi is Eliza. Eliza ENTERS stage. Higgins and Doolittle are waiting for her. (Eliza is still speaking with a heavy cockney accent.)

TROI/ELIZA
Garn! Don't you know your own daughter?

Data, while in character, is playing Doolittle a little stiff and restrained -- not at all like Doolittle.

DATA/DOOLITTLE
Bly me! It's Eliza!

TROI/ELIZA
Don't I look silly?

RIKER/HIGGINS
Silly?

DATA/DOOLITTLE
Well, I never thought she'd clean up as good looking as that, Governor. She's a credit to me, ain't she?

TROI/ELIZA
I tell you, it's easy to clean up here. Hot and cold --

Beverly breaks in at this point.

BEVERLY
Hold it. Hold it. Data... what is your character's objective in this scene? What does Mister Doolittle want?

DATA
I hope to extort money from Professor Higgins.

(CONTINUED)
1 CONTINUED:

BEVERLY
Right... but I'm not getting a sense of how important that objective is to you.

(beat)
I have an idea. Let's try an improvisational exercise. Wil, you're in the middle of a narrow road. Your objective is to keep Data from getting by you.

She turns to Data.

BEVERLY
(continuing)
And yours is to get past Wil and continue on your journey. Now you can't go around him, so you'll have to find another way of getting past him.

Data is somewhat puzzled by this, but is willing. Riker plants himself in front of Data and crosses his arms.

BEVERLY
(continuing)
Okay, Data... go ahead.

DATA
(puzzled)
Who am I supposed to be?

BEVERLY
You're not supposed to be in a character here... just be yourself.

DATA
But I do not know what to say. You have not provided me with a script.

BEVERLY
That's the point... you're supposed to improvise the situation -- draw on your own experience in order to find the emotional core of the scene. You see, sometimes it's best to throw out the script and come up with the dialogue yourself.

Data ponders this, nods, and approaches Riker.

(CONTINUED)
DATA
Excuse me. Would you please get out of my way, sir?

RIKER
No.

DATA
(to Beverly)
He is my superior officer. If I am being myself, I would have to respect his wishes.

BEVERLY
That's taking this... a little too literally. Let's say he's just some person blocking your way.

DATA
So I am me... but he is someone else.

BEVERLY
Right.

DATA
(to Riker)
Please get out of my way.

RIKER
No. This is my spot in the road and I'm not moving from it.

DATA
(to Beverly)
If it is truly his spot, then that would seem to be a reasonable objection.

BEVERLY
Data...you have to try harder. You must get past him. Lives are at stake.

DATA
(to Riker)
It is imperative that you move.

RIKER
No.

Without a further word, Data reaches out and GRABS Riker by the shoulders, lifts him high over his head, and then sets him down on the other side of "the road".
CONTINUED: (3)

Troi and Beverly are at first alarmed, then amused.

RIKER
(continuing)
Okay -- you win.

DATA
(to Beverly)
Was that a successful improvisation, Doctor?

BEVERLY
I think you're starting to get the hang of it.

WORF'S COM VOICE
Commander Riker to the Bridge, please.

RIKER
On my way.

Riker smiles at Data and then heads for the EXIT.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

GEORDI is sitting at the aft science station, WORF is standing next to him, N.D. Crewmembers at the other stations. Riker ENTERS from the Turbolift.

RIKER
Report.

GEORDI
We've detected a warp (TECH) signature about three light years away. It looks like a Romulan Warbird.

RIKER
Romulan? What are they doing out here?

WORF
They appear to be conducting sensor sweeps of the Devolin system.

RIKER
Anything of value there?

(CONTINUED)
GEORDI
Not that I know of. It's a proto-star system... no planets, no rare ores or minerals... just a big collection of rocks.

RIKER
It could just be a science mission.

WORF
(with contempt)
The Romulans are not very... scientific.

RIKER
.lightly
Neither are the Klingons, but it does happen.

The console BEEPS and Geordi checks some readings.

GEORDI
I think they detected us... the Warbird just cloaked.

WORF
If they are on a legitimate science mission, there would be no need to hide.

Riker considers this for a moment.

RIKER
(to Worf)
You do have a point.
.beat
Send a copy of our sensor logs to Starfleet Command and ask for any intelligence on Romulan activity in this region. I'll inform the Captain.

WORF
Aye, sir.

Worf moves to Tactical and Riker heads for the Turbolift.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

(NOTE: Episode credits fall over opening scenes.)

3 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & DEVOLIN SYSTEM (OPTICAL)

The ship is approaching the Devolin system -- this is a solar system that never coalesced into discrete planetary bodies, so it looks like a large swirling disc of rock and other matter.

    PICARD (V.O.)
    Captain's Log: Stardate xxxxx.x
    I have delayed our mission to Korgan Three in order to investigate the unusual Romulan interest in the Devolin system.

4 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

PICARD, Riker, Worf, and Data at their stations.

    WORF
    (off console)
    There is still no sign of the Romulan vessel.

    RIKER
    So they've either gone home or they're still hiding.

    PICARD
    Mister Data?

    DATA
    Sensors show no unusual readings or anomalies present in this system. The (TECH) and (TECH) profiles match those taken by Federation survey probes three years ago.

    PICARD
    Is there any indication of what the Romulans were doing before they cloaked?

    DATA
    There is a high concentration of tachyons in the upper subspace bandwidth.

    (MORE)
DATA (Cont'd)
That would suggest that tight-beam subspace sensors had been used recently.

RIKER
Tachyon sensors use a lot of power, I bet they can't use them while the cloaking device is engaged.

PICARD
So we must be delaying their research by our presence. How unfortunate.
(to Data)
Anything else?

DATA
No, sir. Aside from the Romulan presence, there is no unusual activity in this system.

PICARD
Well, as intriguing as it is, they have every right to be here and to conduct whatever research they feel like.
(to Worf)
Send a report to Starfleet and tell them we're continuing on our mission.

WORF
Aye, sir.

PICARD
(to Riker)
Set course for Korigan Five, Number One... but take your time in leaving this system. I think the Romulans can wait a while longer before resuming their... research.

RIKER
(smiles)
Aye, sir.

Picard EXITS to the Ready Room.

RIKER
(continuing, to Con)
Bring us about... slowly.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

OFF Riker's amused expression.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER

An audience, including Picard, Worf, and Beverly, is watching the play. The actors are now in costume -- Troi is wearing jewels, a beautiful, elegant dress, and her hair is in a complex hairdo. Data is much more loose here -- playing the drunken Doolittle to the hilt.

TROI/ELIZA
Don't I look silly?

RIKER/HIGGINS
Silly?

DATA/DOOLITTLE
Well, I never thought she'd clean up as good looking as that, Governor.

Data suddenly gives Troi a big swat on the behind -- clearly an unrehearsed move that takes her by surprise. But it gets a LAUGH from the audience... and Data has tasted the sweet nectar of audience response.

DATA/DOOLITTLE
(continuing)
She's a credit to me, ain't she?

TROI/ELIZA
I tell you, it's easy to clean up here.

As Troi speaks, Data decides to go a step further in his improvisation... he circles around her, inspecting and fingering her garb, her jewels, her hair... he's intrusive and hands-on. Troi is a bit flustered, but tries to stay in character. The audience is thoroughly enjoying this.

TROI/ELIZA
Hot and cold water on tap, just as much as you like, there is. Now I know why ladies is so clean. Wish they could see what it is for the likes of me!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RIKER/HIGGINS
Doolittle, you have brought your daughter up too strictly.

Now, Data suddenly advances on Riker, catching him off-guard. During the following, Data begins poking Riker in the chest, shoving him backwards across the stage and into a few props.

DATA/DOOLITTLE
Me! I never brought her up at all, except to give her a lick of a strap now and again. Don't put it on me, Governor. She'll soon pick up your free-and-easy ways.

TROI/ELIZA
I'm a good girl, I am; and I won't pick up no free-and-easy ways.

RIKER/HIGGINS
Eliza, you say again that --

But now Data steps over and PICKS UP Troi and effectively cuts in on Riker's line, throwing them all off.

DATA/DOOLITTLE
(to Troi)
Don't you give me none of your lip; and don't let me hear you giving this gentleman any of it neither, or you'll hear from me about it. See?

TROI
(whisper)
Put me down.

Riker tries to get back to his own lines.

RIKER/HIGGINS
Uh... Eliza if you say again that you're a good girl...

TROI
(whisper)
We're past that. Go to "any further advice?"

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER/HIGGINS
(to himself)
Further advice... further advice.
(to Data)
Do you have any further advice to
give her before you go, Doolittle?

DATA/DOOLITTLE
No, Governor: I ain't such a mug
as to put up my children to all I
know myself. Hard enough to hold
them in without that.

He reaches out and takes Troi's hand, sits and suddenly
swirls her over his knee, paddling-fashion. He SPANKS
her during the next.

DATA/DOOLITTLE
If you want Eliza's mind improved,
Governor, you do it yourself with
a strap.

He rises, dumping her onto the floor in a heap, and
bows with a flourish.

DATA/DOOLITTLE
(continuing)
So long...

He EXITS, the audience howls with laughter and
cheers... and Beverly puts her head in her hands.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship at warp.

7 INT. READY ROOM (OPTICAL)

Picard is looking over some PADDs and disks on his
desk.

WORF'S COM VOICE
Worf to Captain.

PICARD
Yes, Lieutenant?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WORF'S COM VOICE
There is an incoming message from
Admiral Blackwell, sir. Priority
one.

Picard reacts with a little surprise.

PICARD
Put it through.

The monitor on his desk now shows ADMIRAL BLACKWELL.

PICARD
(continuing)
Admiral.

BLACKWELL
Captain. What is your status?

PICARD
We're passing through sector one-
six-zero-seven, en route to
Korigan Three. All systems
normal, the ship is fully
operational.

BLACKWELL
Good. I'm postponing the mission
to Korigan. The Enterprise is
ordered to rendezvous with the
starship Crazy Horse in the Qualan
Sector immediately. You're
authorized to exceed warp speed
limitations for the duration of
this assignment.

PICARD
I understand. What is our
assignment?

BLACKWELL
I'd prefer not to discuss it over
subspace channels. The Crazy
Horse will have a passenger for
you. He'll brief you on the
mission requirements. Starfleet
out.

The Transmission ENDS. Picard frowns for a moment,
puzzled by the extreme brevity of the conversation.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

PICARD
(to com)
Picard to Bridge, prepare to alter course.

As Picard heads for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & CRAZY HORSE (OPTICAL)

The two ships hang in space.

INT. CORRIDOR

Picard and Riker heading for the Transporter Room.

RIKER
Still no word about who we're picking up?

PICARD
Captain Perin was very careful not to mention his name on the com channel. Whatever's going on, they're taking security very seriously.

They EXIT to...

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS (OPTICAL)

Picard and Riker ENTER. Picard nods to the Transporter Chief.

Energize.

PICARD
The Chief works and after a beat, ADIMRAL PRESSMAN MATERIALIZES. Pressman is a confident, energetic man in his mid-fifties. He reacts with pleasure at the sight of Riker, moves directly to him with a warm smile of recognition and clasps a paternal hand on his shoulder.

PRESSMAN
Mister Riker... bet you never thought you'd never see me again, did you?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Although Pressman's greeting is genuine, Riker doesn't return the affection... in fact, he pales slightly and looks completely shocked. Riker tries to recover from his shock.

RIKER
It's... good to see you again, sir.

Pressman glances at Picard.

PRESSMAN
You must be Captain Picard. I'm John Pressman.

PICARD
Admiral. I see you know my first officer.

PRESSMAN
Know him? I made him.

Pressman heads for the door and Picard follows. OFF Riker's disturbed expression... he's clearly not happy to see this man.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

11 INT. TURBOLIFT

A few minutes later. Picard, Riker, Pressman. Riker seems a little preoccupied during the discussion.

PRESSMAN
I gave Wil his first deep space assignment... asked him to be part of my bridge crew right after he graduated from the Academy.

PICARD
That's quite an honor.

PRESSMAN
It caused quite a stir at the time... there were seven other cadets ahead of him in the graduating list... but I could tell right away he was something special...

Pressman and Picard look expectantly at Riker, waiting for him to say something... but Riker only manages an awkward smile. (NOTE: Riker is very disturbed to see Pressman, but he is trying not to show it -- and we will learn why later.) There is a long, quiet moment... the silence becomes oppressive.

RIKER
That's what happened all right...

Picard nods and everyone waits for the doors to open so they can get out of here.

CUT TO:

12 INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Picard, Riker, Data, Worf, and Geordi are seated at the table as Pressman moves around the room.

PRESSMAN
This briefing will contain information considered extremely sensitive by Starfleet Command and should not be discussed with any personnel outside this room.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
PRESSMAN (Cont'd)

(beat)
The Romulans have found the Pegasus.

That means very little to most of the people here, but Riker sits back in his chair, thunderstruck. Riker seems lost in thought during the following.

PRESSMAN

(continuing)
As some of you may know, the Pegasus was lost in this sector some twelve years ago along with most of its crew. I was the commanding officer and young Wil Riker here was my helmsman.

PICARD
I remember hearing about it. The ship was destroyed by a... warp core breach as I recall.

PRESSMAN
That's right. Wil and I, along with seven others managed to get to an escape pod before the breach reached critical.

Pressman looks to Riker, who suddenly realizes that he is expected to contribute to the conversation.

RIKER
From space, we saw what appeared to be a matter/anti-matter explosion... we assumed that the ship was destroyed.

PRESSMAN
We now believe that at least part of the Pegasus survived and drifted into the Devolin system.

WORF
Devolin? The Warbird we detected...

PRESSMAN
Was looking for the Pegasus. After you alerted us to their presence in this sector, we contacted one of our operatives in the Romulan High Command...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
PRESSMAN (Cont'd)
...he said the Warbird had found a piece of debris in the Devolin system that was definitely from the ship. They're now trying to locate the remaining wreckage.

GEORDI
Why are the Romulans trying to salvage a twelve year-old starship?

PRESSMAN
The Pegasus was a prototype... experimental engine... new weapon systems... some of our designs were even used in constructing the Enterprise. There's a lot of things on board the Romulans would love to get their hands on.

Riker gives Pressman a sharp glance, but Pressman doesn't react to him.

PICARD
What are our orders?

PRESSMAN
We have to find the ship before the Romulans do... salvage it if possible... destroy it if necessary. You'll command the Enterprise while I remain in overall command of the mission.

GEORDI
We'll need metallurgical and (TECH) specs on the Pegasus in order to set up the proper search parameters.

Again, Riker glances at Pressman, but the Admiral seems unfazed by any of this.

PRESSMAN
I'll make the appropriate information available to you.

PICARD
Very well.
(to Riker)
Set course for the Devolin system.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

RIKER
Aye, sir.
They all stand and head for the doors.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)
The ship nears the Devolín system as seen before.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE
Picard, Data, Geordi, and Worf at their stations, Pressman standing near aft science with Riker.

DATA
We have entered the periphery of the Devolín system, Captain.

PICARD
All stop. Any sign of the Romulans?

DATA (works)
No, sir.

PRESSMAN
Oh, they're out there, Jean-Luc... they're just waiting to see what we're going to do.

PICARD
Mister La Forge?

GEORDI
There's an awful lot of (TECH) radiation in this system, Captain. That, combined with the sheer amount of debris, is going to slow down our search efforts.

PICARD
How slow?

GEORDI
Well, I'd say at least --

(CONTINUED)
14 CONTINUED:

WORF
(urgent)
Sir. Romulan Warbird decloaking directly ahead.

15 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & WARBIRD (OPTICAL)

A WARBIRD DECOCKS directly in front of the Enterprise.

16 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

As before.

WORF
They're powering weapons.

RIKER

Everyone tenses on the Bridge as the ship's condition goes to RED. A long moment passes as they look at the image of the Warbird on the Viewscreen... but nothing happens. Finally, Worf sees something on his console.

WORF
Sir... they are hailing us.

PICARD
On screen.

The image of the Warbird is replaced by that of COMMANDER SIROL, a Romulan woman. She gives them a warm and friendly smile.

SIROL
(pleasantly)
I am Commander Sirol of the Romulan vessel Terix. To whom do I have the honor of speaking?

PICARD
I am Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the Federation starship Enterprise.

SIROL
Captain Picard... I've heard so much about you. It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
SIROL (Cont'd)
(innocent)
I hope our sudden appearance
didn't startle you.

Picard decides to return her cool and friendly
demeanor.

PICARD
Not at all.

SIROL
May I ask what you are doing in
this system?

PICARD
I could ask you the same question.

SIROL
We are conducting scientific
research.

PICARD
How interesting. So are we.
Perhaps we could combine our
efforts and share our findings.

SIROL
(smiles)
I doubt our objectives are...
compatible.

PICARD
You are probably right.

The two rivals look at each other with polite smiles
masking the real tension here.

SIROL
This has been a most pleasant
conversation... but we have to
return to our research.

PICARD
Then I won't keep you.
(beat)
However, Commander... unannounced
visits like this can sometimes
lead to unfortunate incidents. It
would be a shame if one of the
Empire's finest ships were
destroyed through a...
misunderstanding.

(CONTINUED)
Sirol's expression hardens slightly, but she keeps her voice light.

SIROL
I am touched by your concern for my ship. But I doubt we are in any danger.

PICARD
Let us hope so.

The transmission ENDS.

PRESSMAN
(to Picard)
Nicely handled.

WORF
They are moving off... resuming their tachyon scans of the debris field.

PICARD
Stand down from Red Alert, but continue to track their movements, Lieutenant.

WORF
Aye, sir.

The Red Alert signal goes OFF.

PICARD
(to Geordi)
Commander, you were saying...?

GEORDI
Oh... I was saying that it'll take at least seven days to cover the entire system.

WORF
And the Romulans already have a two day head start.

Picard takes a deep breath, this is going to be a long process.

PICARD
Then we better get started.
Mister Data?

(CONTINUED)
DATA
(working)
Initiating sensor sweep of grid
zero zero one.

PICARD
(to Pressman)
Admiral, we've prepared some
quarters for you. Commander Riker
will show you the way.

PRESSMAN
Thank you.
Pressman looks to Riker and they EXIT to the Turbolift.

INT. TURBOLIFT - CONTINUOUS
Riker and Pressman ENTER.

RIKER
(to com)
Deck eight.

The Turbolift begins MOVING. There is a moment of
silence.

PRESSMAN
I like the beard.

RIKER
Thanks.

PRESSMAN
Can I interest you in a drink?
Catch up on old times?

Riker hesitates... then forces a smile for Pressman.

RIKER
Maybe later, sir. I'm... still on
duty.

PRESSMAN
Of course.

A long moment.

PRESSMAN
(to com)
Hold.
The Turbolift STOPS. Pressman gives him a very direct
look.

PRESSMAN
(continuing)
You don't seem very happy to see
me.

RIKER
I'm sorry...

(beat)
It's just... seeing you again...
looking for the Pegasus... it's
brought back a lot of memories...
a lot of ghosts...

PRESSMAN
I know. I feel the same way.

Pressman pauses for a moment, then seems more confident
and upbeat.

PRESSMAN
(continuing)
But I think we have an opportunity
to finish what we started back
then.

RIKER
(surprised)
Finish?

PRESSMAN
That's right. Things are changing
at Starfleet... I've made a lot of
friends over the years... they
might be willing to give our
project a chance... but first we
have to find the Pegasus.

RIKER
(quiet)
Admiral... do they know what's
really on the Pegasus?

PRESSMAN
No.

(beat)
But if this mission's
successful... they will. It
won't be like twelve years ago.
This time, no one's going to stop
us.

(CONTINUED)
Riker holds his gaze for a moment... is unsure what to say, then opts not to say anything. He nods in acknowledgement.

Riker
(to com)
Continue.

The Turbolift starts MOVING. Pressman seems confident, upbeat... but Riker's expression is definitely troubled. OFF his expression...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
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ACT THREE

FADE IN:

18 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)
The ship in the Devolin debris field.

19 INT. MAIN ENGINEERING

Geordi and Data are working at the pool table. On the monitor in front of Geordi, there is a graphic display of the Pegasus -- an unusual starship design we have never seen before. (Maybe a saucer with a single, large nacelle slung underneath.)

GEORDI
A lot of this stuff doesn't make much sense...

DATA
To what are you referring?

GEORDI
Well, look at this.

Data moves around to see.

GEORDI (continuing)
The design specs for the Pegasus call for five integrated (TECH) relay systems linking the warp drive to the nacelles... why so many? And look at this -- the power rating on the warp core is fifteen times more powerful than it needs to be.

DATA
It is an unusual design. However, the ship was a prototype and much of the architecture may have been experimental in concept.

GEORDI
Yeah... maybe.

DATA
I thought you were analyzing the metallurgical specifications of the Pegasus in order to narrow our search parameters.

(CONTINUED)
GEORDI
I was... but then I thought maybe
if I knew more about the ship it
might give us a clue as to what
caused the explosion... and maybe
that would give us a better idea
where to look.

DATA
Ah. You are improvising.

GEORDI
I like to think of it as taking
the initiative.

DATA
Perhaps I should analyze the
sensor records of the Pegasus.
They may provide insight into the
ship's last moments.

GEORDI
That's a great idea.

Data moves to a console and begins working. Riker
ENTERS, carrying a PADD.

RIKER
(to Geordi)
I've been looking over the last
search analysis. I think there's
an error in grid zero one five.

Geordi takes the PADD.

GEORDI
Really?

Riker looks down and sees the graphic of the Pegasus.

RIKER
What are you doing?

GEORDI
Oh, just a little extra research.
(re: PADD)
I think we picking up some (TECH)
on the lateral sensors which is --

Riker suddenly explodes in a very uncharacteristic
burst of anger.

(CONTINUED)
19 CONTINUED: (2)

RIKER
You were ordered to perform a metallurgical analysis.

GEORDI
(surprised)
I was, but I thought knowing a little more about the Pegasus would --

RIKER
(harsh)
I'm not interested in what you thought, Commander.

Riker shuts off the monitor.

RIKER
(continuing)
Stick to your orders and stay out of things that don't concern you.

Riker turns and EXITS. Geordi looks after him for a moment, stunned. Data moves to him.

DATA
I am beginning to think that Commander Riker is not a fan of improvisation.

OFF their reactions...

CUT TO:

20 INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS

Picard is pouring drinks for himself and Pressman. The mood is relaxed and casual... two senior officers taking an opportunity to kick back and talk. Mid-conversation.

PICARD
... I actually never met him before he reported aboard at Farpoint Station.

PRESSMAN
(surprised)
You chose your first officer without ever meeting him?

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
I must have gone through the records of about fifty candidates... letters of recommendation... the usual glowing statements that tell you nothing.

(beat)
Then I happened to see a report of an incident on Altair Three where the first officer of the Hood refused to let his captain beam down during a crisis. He disobeyed a direct order and risked a general court martial because he thought he was right. When I read that... I knew I'd found my Number One.

PRESSMAN
You wanted someone with a history of disobedience?

PICARD
I wanted someone who would stand up to me... someone who was more concerned with the safety of the ship and accomplishing the mission than with how it looked on his record.

Pressman takes a drink and studies his glass thoughtfully for a moment.

PICARD
(continuing)
Something wrong?

PRESSMAN
No... it's just interesting how people change over the years.

(beat)
The Ensign Riker who used to sit at my Con was the most by-the-book, what-does-the-regulation-say, straight arrow I'd ever met. I just can't picture him disobeying a direct order.
PICARD
In the seven years he's served on this ship, there have been many times when it was necessary for him to take the initiative... to go beyond my orders or contradict in some cases... to me that's one of the marks of a good officer.

PRESSMAN
Oh, and I'm not disagreeing at all. It's just that there's a fine line between taking the initiative and insubordination.

(beat)
The Wil Riker I knew on the Pegasus, was always aware of the difference.

PICARD
And I can assure you that the Wil Riker I know on the Enterprise... still does.

A silent moment as they both lapse into private thought. Picard finally decides to probe for a little more information.

PICARD
(continuing)
Admiral... the records on the loss of the Pegasus are a bit... vague on the subject of what happened just before you abandoned ship. Can you add anything to the... official account?

Pressman considers Picard for a moment, then gets up and moves to the windows. Pressman would like nothing more than to tell Picard exactly what happened -- he's quite proud of it actually -- but he can't.

PRESSMAN
I'm afraid not... at least not yet. But if all goes well, and we find the Pegasus, all that may change someday.

(beat)
I can tell you this: Twelve years ago, I needed an officer I could count on in a crisis... someone who would support and obey my decisions without question...

(MORE)
PRESSMAN (Cont'd)
...someone willing to trust my
judgement... that someone was Wil
Riker... and without his loyalty,
none of us would have survived.
(beat)
I just hope he hasn't forgotten
that.

OFF Pressman's expression...

CUT TO:

INT. TEN FORWARD

Riker is sitting alone at a table near the window
staring into a drink, obviously lost in thought. Data
approaches him.

DATA
Commander, am I interrupting?

RIKER
No. No. Sit down.

Data sits.

DATA
I wish to apologize for my
improvisational behavior during
the performance.

Riker smiles at him.

RIKER
Don't worry about it. You knocked
'em dead.

DATA
But I believe I... stepped on your
lines.

RIKER
Several of them, actually.

DATA
I thought it was an appropriate
moment to improvise, but Doctor
Crusher has informed me that it
was not.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
21 CONTINUED:

DATA (Cont'd)
(beat)
I find myself uncertain as to when
it is appropriate to... "throw out
the script" and act on my own
initiative.

For some reason, this seems to resonate with whatever
is on Riker's mind... he drops his eyes and his voice
seems a little more distant... focused on something
besides Data's problem.

RIKER
To be honest... I'm having the
same problem myself.
(beat)
I used to think that... following
the script was always the safest
way to go. Never break the
rules... play out the role you
were given... and follow orders.

DATA
(puzzled)
Sir?

Riker breaks out of the moment.

RIKER
Never mind. Just try to... go
with your instincts, Data.

Riker stands up and leaves.

DATA
But I have no instincts...

But Riker doesn't hear him and EXITS.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship is navigating through a large field of rocks
and debris. Some of the rocks are nearby, others
merely points of light in the b.g.

23 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Riker, Worf, Geordi and Data at their positions.

(CONTINUED)
DATA  
(off console)  
Scan of grid one five seven is complete. Moving to grid one five eight.

WORF  
The Romulan ship is still searching grid two seven zero.

RIKER  
They're sure taking their time over there. I wonder if they --

Geordi suddenly reacts to something on his console.

GEORDI  
(excited)  
Whoa... I think we might have just struck paydirt.

Riker moves to the aft station, where Geordi is looking at a graphic display of a large ASTEROID.

GEORDI  
(continuing)  
There's a subspace (TECH) signature emanating from this asteroid.

RIKER  
Could it be a natural phenomenon?

GEORDI  
Not with these (TECH) variances. That's definitely an artificial signature.

RIKER  
(to com)  
Captain Picard to the Bridge, please.

Riker turns to the Con Officer as Picard and Pressman ENTER from the Ready Room.

RIKER  
(continuing, to Con)  
Bring us to within ten kilometers of asteroid gamma six zero one.  
(to Picard)  
Geordi's found something.

(CONTINUED)
Picard and Pressman move to where Geordi is continuing to work.

GEORDI
(to Picard)
There's definitely a subspace (TECH) signature coming from that asteroid, sir.

Pressman looks over the readings.

PRESSMAN
It looks like the Pegasus' impulse reactor signature... I recognize the variance pattern.

PICARD
Put the asteroid on the main viewer.

Geordi works and now the ASTEROID can be seen on the main Viewscreen. This asteroid is pitted with craters, fissures, and canyons all over it's surface... a barren, ugly hunk of rock.

DATA
I have confirmed Geordi's readings, sir. The (TECH) signature is originating from three kilometers within the asteroid.

PRESSMAN
From within?

DATA
This asteroid contains several deep chasms and fissures large enough for a starship to enter. It is possible the Pegasus drifted into the asteroid's gravitational field and was pulled down into one of them.

WORF
Sir, the Romulan warbird has altered course again... they are heading this way.

RIKER
They probably want to see what we're so interested in over here.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
Mister Data, how long will it take to pinpoint the location of the Pegasus?

DATA
At least another five minutes, Captain.

PRESSMAN
They'll be here long before that. If they manage to get to the Pegasus before we do...

WORF
Sir, I recommend we destroy the asteroid with photon torpedoes. It would preclude any possibility of the ship falling into Romulan hands.

There is a beat as they consider that course of action.

RIKER
I tend to agree, sir. Our top priority should be to stop the Romulans.

Pressman gives him a sharp look... we're not sure why, but he definitely doesn't like that advice coming from Riker.

PRESSMAN
(with an edge)
Actually, Commander, our top priority is to salvage the ship. I'll consider destroying it only as a last resort.

RIKER
Yes, sir.

PRESSMAN
(to Picard)
Can you give me a third alternative?

Picard thinks for a moment... then gets an idea.

PICARD
Mister Data, is it possible to... mask the (TECH) signature from the Romulans and prevent them from detecting it?

(CONTINUED)
DATA
(thinks)
It may be possible to saturate the asteroid with baryon radiation. It would block their sensors from penetrating the interior, but would also look like a natural phenomenon.

GEORDI
If we're going to do it, we have to do it quick... the Romulans will be in sensor range in two minutes.

Picard and Pressman exchange a look. Pressman nods.

PICARD
Make it so, Mister Data.

DATA
Aye, sir. Initiating baryon field pulse...

(beat)
Field pulse complete. The asteroid has been saturated with radiation, Captain.

PICARD
We'll have to move off... make it look like we scanned the asteroid, but didn't find anything.

RIKER
Set course one one eight mark two one five, one quarter impulse.

PICARD
Engage. (to Pressman)
If this works, the Romulans will find nothing and we should be able to return here in another twelve hours, without looking suspicious. But if it doesn't...

PRESSMAN
If it doesn't... we'll have handed them the Pegasus.

OFF their expressions as they look at the Viewscreen...
The Enterprise moves away from the Asteroid just as the Romulan Warbird arrives.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
FADE IN:

25 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard, Pressman, Riker, Worf, Data, and Geordi as seen at the end of Act Three. Everyone is watching the main viewer, where the Romulan Warbird can be seen near the Asteroid seen earlier.

DATA
(off console)
The Romulans are initiating a tachyon scan of the asteroid...
(beat)
They have switched to their lateral sensor array... initiating another scan.

Riker
They're certainly being thorough.

DATA
The Warbird has completed its sensor sweep.

PRESsMAN
If they found the (TECH) signature, they should be sending Away Teams any second now...

Everyone watches the screen for a tense beat... then the Warbird begins to move away from the asteroid.

DATA
They are moving off.

A feeling of relief washes across the Bridge.

PICARD
(to Data)
Mister Data, we have to convince the Romulans that we're still looking for the Pegasus. I want you to continue scanning this system as if we did not find that (TECH) signature.

DATA
Yes, sir.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
(to Riker)
I want to be back at this asteroid at zero eight hundred tomorrow. Plot our search pattern accordingly.

RIKER
Aye, sir.

PICARD
(to Pressman)
Admiral, if you'd care to join me for a late dinner...?

PRESSMAN
Thank you, no. I think I'm going to turn in early.

PICARD
(nods)
Very well.
(to Riker)
Number One, you have the Bridge. Oh, and will you bring the search (TECH) report by my quarters when you go off watch?

RIKER
Aye, sir.

Picard EXITS to the Turbolift.

RIKER
(continuing, to Con)
Initiate search of grid one six three.

DATA
Beginning sensor sweeps...

Pressman gives Riker an icy look.

PRESSMAN
(to Riker)
Commander, I'd like to see you in the Observation Lounge for a moment.

RIKER
Of course. Mister Data, you have the Bridge.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

DATA
Aye, sir.

Pressman and Riker EXIT to the Observation Lounge.

INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Pressman and Riker ENTER from the Bridge. As soon as the doors CLOSE behind them, Pressman turns on Riker with anger.

PRESSMAN
What the hell's the matter with you? Destroy the Pegasus? Before we've even taken a look at it?

RIKER
I thought it was more important to keep the Romulans from --

PRESSMAN
(harsh)
Well, you were wrong. We have a chance here to change the balance of power in this quadrant. But we can't do that by destroying the Pegasus, now can we?

Riker is brought up short by the force of Pressman's anger. He backs down.

No, sir.

Pressman lets his anger pass... he considers Riker with a little more sympathy... like a father who's just finished chewing out his son.

PRESSMAN
Look, Wil... I know you're in a tight spot here. I know how difficult it must be to keep your Captain and friends in the dark. But believe me, what we're doing here is right... just like it was twelve years ago.

(beat)
You stood by me back then... you did your duty when a lot of older and more experienced officers turned their backs on me. Now I need you with me again.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

Pressman smiles and puts a hand on Riker's shoulder.

PRESSMAN (continuing)
I know I can count on you.

Pressman EXITS. OFF Riker's troubled expression...

CUT TO:

INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS

Picard is finishing up the remains of a Japanese dinner when the door CHIMES.

PICARD
Come.

Riker ENTERS carrying a PADD.

RIKER (re: PADD)
The (TECH) search report you asked for.

Picard takes the PADD and glances at it.

PICARD
Thank you. Can I interest you in some sashimi?

RIKER
No, thanks.

PICARD
Hmmm. The replicator doesn't do it justice in any case.

RIKER
Well... if there's nothing else...

Riker moves as if to leave.

PICARD
Actually there is.

Picard puts down the PADD, takes a sip of green tea and then picks up another PADD.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
(continuing)
I'd like to discuss something I found in your service record. It's a letter... from Captain Pressman recommending you for the medal of valor following the loss of the Pegasus.

RIKER
(wary)
What about it?

Picard begins to read from the PADD.

PICARD
"Ensign Riker performed above the call of duty..." et cetera, et cetera... "I found his help to be valuable..." and so forth and so on... ah. Here's the interesting passage: "Mister Riker's loyalty during the crisis was a key element in the eventual rescue of myself and the rest of the survivors."

Picard puts the PADD down and looks at Riker expectantly.

PICARD
(continuing)
Your "loyalty"... doesn't that seem like an odd word to use in describing someone's actions during a disaster? Why was loyalty such an important component in that situation?

Riker takes a beat, moves about the room for a moment. He finally makes a decision to tell Picard what he can... but he can't tell him everything.

RIKER
It was only important because there were others who were... disloyal.

PICARD
Disloyal...? You mean there was insubordination?

(CONTINUED)
RIKER
I mean there was mutiny.
(beat)
The First Officer, the Chief Engineer, almost the entire Bridge crew mutinied against the Captain just before we abandoned ship.

PICARD
Why?

Riker hesitates... he's on tricky ground here and trying to do the best he can.

RIKER
They... disagreed with what the Captain was trying to do.

PICARD
Which was...?

RIKER
Something... I can't talk about.

PICARD
Because you're under orders not to talk about it?

Riker says nothing.

PICARD
(continuing)
I'll take that as a yes.
(beat)
There's never been a mutiny on a Starfleet vessel... this must have been a... pretty strong disagreement.

Riker hesitates... but he wants to tell Picard what happened, and if he can do that without violating his orders, he will.

RIKER
You could say that.
(beat)
They felt that the Captain was jeopardizing the ship... and risking war with the Romulans.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
(surprised)
The Romulans...?
(beat)
Were they right? Was he doing something which would risk war?

RIKER
I didn't think so at the time.
(beat)
I was seven months out of the Academy... my head was still ringing with words like duty and honor.
(beat)
When they moved against the Captain, I thought they were nothing but a bunch of self-serving, disloyal officers... I thought they were cowards.

PICARD
So you stood by Pressman...

RIKER
(nods)
When they tried to relieve him on the Bridge, I grabbed a phaser and stunned one of the security guards. Two or three others joined in on our side... there was a running firefight all the way to the escape pod.
(beat)
About five minutes after we left the ship... there was a huge explosion. It looked like a core breach. So that's how we reported it.

Picard takes a long beat... considers all that he's heard, then decides to put the question directly to Riker.

PICARD
(gently)
Why does Pressman want to find the Pegasus? Does it have something to do with why the crew mutinied twelve years ago?

That puts Riker squarely on the spot and his inner turmoil is apparent. Picard waits for an answer until it's clear that one is not forthcoming.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
(continuing)
Technically, you don't have to answer me, of course. Pressman's the senior officer... his orders supersede mine. Disobeying his orders could even make you liable to a formal court martial.

Picard moves closer to Riker, makes eye contact... turning this into a very personal moment between the two of them.

PICARD
(continuing)
But you're my First Officer, Wil. And I don't care who Pressman is or what feelings you may have about him... if he's about to risk the safety of my ship... I expect you to do something about it.
(beat)
And if you can't... then I need a new First Officer.
(beat)
Dismissed.

Riker EXITS. OFF Picard's expression...

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship is moving through the Devoloin system.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard, Riker, and Pressman are standing over Data at one of the aft stations. Worf is at Tactical.

WORF
We are approaching asteroid gamma six zero one, Captain.

PICARD
Mister Worf, any sign of the Romulans?

WORF
No, sir. They are out of sensor range on the far side of the Devoloin system.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
(to Con)
Bring us to within fifteen kilometers and then hold position.

On the monitor at Data's station, there is an Okudagram schematic of the asteroid. Data points to a bright POINT of light which is deep inside the asteroid.

DATA
This is the general location where we detected the (TECH) signature of the Pegasus.

RIKER
So how do we get to it? I wouldn't want to attempt transporting through that much solid rock.

PICARD
Agreed. What about a shuttle? We could send down through one of these fissures in the asteroid's surface.

DATA
I would recommend against that, sir. The shielding on a shuttlecraft would be insufficient protection against the extremely high levels of (TECH) radiation in this system.

A long beat.

PRESSMAN
Sounds like the best solution is to go in ourselves.

Picard and Riker look at him in surprise.

RIKER
You mean take the Enterprise inside the asteroid?

PRESSMAN
That's right.
(points to graphic)
This fissure is more than large enough for us to maneuver in. Besides, if there's any hope of salvaging the Pegasus, we'll need a starship to do it.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
Mister Data?

Data thinks for a moment.

DATA
It is theoretically possible, Captain. But I am unaware of any prior situation where a starship was taken inside a planetary body. There may be unforeseen difficulties in navigation and helm control.

PICARD
Number One?

A long beat as Riker looks from Picard to Pressman.

RIKER
The safety of the Enterprise comes first. I recommend against it.

That moves Picard's confidence in Riker up a notch, but has the opposite effect on Pressman. Picard turns to Pressman.

PICARD
Admiral... I agree with my --

Pressman cuts him off without raising his voice.

PRESSMAN
(smooth)
I've made my decision. Prepare to take the Enterprise in, Captain.

(beat)
That's an order.

A long beat, then Picard speaks to Data without taking his eyes off Pressman.

PICARD
Mister Data, please note in the ship's log that this action is being taken over the explicit objections of the Captain and First Officer.

DATA
It is so noted.

A tense beat, then Picard and Riker move down to the command area. Data goes to Ops.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
Yellow Alert.

RIKER
Shields up, inertial dampers to maximum.

PICARD
Mister Data, plot a course inside the fissure... maneuvering thrusters only.

DATA
(works)
Course plotted.

Beat.

PICARD
Take us in.

Data works. On the Viewscreen, the image of the asteroid, suddenly starts to loom LARGER and LARGER as they approach a dark and deep chasm on the surface.

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE & ASTEROID (OPTICAL)
The Enterprise moves down into a huge CHASM (many times wider than the ship) on the asteroid's surface and the ship disappears from view.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

As before. Everyone is watching the main viewer, which shows a dark view of the interior of a vast and deep tunnel of rock which the ship is traveling through. There are small turns and adjustments that the ship keeps making to its course as it moves through the winding, twisting cavern. Picard is on his feet, moving from station to station, keeping a wary eye on what's happening.

DATA
(off console)
We are now two kilometers beneath the surface of the asteroid.

The ship SHAKES slightly.

WORF
We are encountering gravimetric shifts in magnetic field density.

DATA
As we get closer to the asteroid's core, we will encounter more fluctuations in gravimetric strength.

The ship SHAKES again.

RIKER
Helm, keep us at least one hundred meters away from those canyon walls.

Picard approaches Pressman quietly... his attitude is discreet, but firm.

PICARD
(sotto, to Pressman)
Admiral, if the passage narrows to within six hundred meters, I'm going to abort the mission.

Pressman gives him a sharp look, but Picard is unfazed.

(CONTINUED)
31 CONTINUED:

PICARD
(continuing, sotto)
You can charge me with
insubordination if you wish, but
I won't risk the Enterprise for a
salvage operation.

Before Pressman can respond, Worf sees something on his
console and breaks in.

WORF
Sir... I am reading a large (TECH)
signature directly ahead...
distance: five hundred meters.

RIKER
All stop.

PICARD
On screen.

ON VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)
The screen now shows the starship PEGASUS which has
been FUSED into the rock of the asteroid. It is a
bizarre sight -- the ship is half-in, half-out of the
rock. There is some damage visible, but the ship did
not crash -- it should look as if a Transporter
accident made it materialize partially in rock.

RESUME SCENE

Everyone reacts to the strange image on the Viewscreen.

PRESSMAN
Pegasus...

RIKER
What the hell happened?

PICARD
It looks like some kind of...
bizarre Transporter accident.

DATA
That is an apt analogy, sir.
Sensors show that approximately
sixty-five percent of the ship is
contained with the rock of the
asteroid.

Riker looks at Data's console.
RIKER
As if half the ship materialized inside solid rock.

DATA
Yes, sir. I do not know how this could have happened.

Riker and Pressman exchange a look... evidently they do have some idea, but they're keeping it to themselves.

PRESSMAN
Let's keep the speculation to a minimum. We need to begin salvage operations.

DATA
Admiral, in order to free the ship, it would be necessary to cut it from the rock with phasers. Given the structural instability of the asteroid, that would be extremely dangerous. I do not believe there is a practical method of salvaging the ship.

Pressman takes a beat... seems to think it over.

PRESSMAN
The equipment we need was in main engineering. Can you scan that section of the ship?

DATA
(works)
The starboard bulkhead of Main Engineering is contained within the rock face... but most of the compartment is still intact.

WORF
(off console)
There is a hull breach in that section of the ship. Engineering has lost life support.

PICARD
(to Data)
If we begin a power transfer, can you restore life support to that compartment?

(CONTINUED)
DATA
I believe so. The hull breach can be temporarily sealed by extending our deflectors.

PRESSMAN
See to it. Once you've restored life support, Commander Riker and I will beam directly into Engineering.

PICARD
Admiral, you may want to consider taking some security --

PRESSMAN
There's some very sensitive equipment over there. I don't want anyone else near it.

Picard is clearly getting tired of being overruled by this guy, but he has little choice.

PICARD
Yes. Sir.

Riker exchanges a last look with Picard, and then Riker and Pressman EXIT to the Turbolift.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - THE PEGASUS (OPTICAL)

The ship is still fused into the rock.

INT. PEGASUS ENGINEERING (OPTICAL)

The engine room of the ship looks just as strange as the exterior. The room contains the usual assortment of equipment and consoles, but one entire wall is composed of SOLID ROCK. The floor and other bulkhead meld seamlessly into the rock face as if they were designed that way.

None of the equipment is working and the room is very DARK. But there are several DEAD N.D. BODIES in old-style Starfleet uniforms lying in different positions on the deck and over the consoles.

(CONTINUED)
Riker and Pressman MATERIALIZE. They are both carrying palm beacons and are wearing tricorders and phasers. They react to the room and the sight of the dead bodies around them for a moment before either of them speaks.

RIKER
This room was open to space for twelve years...

PRESSMAN
(nods)
The vacuum preserved everything...

Pressman shines his light on one of the dead bodies. Riker examines the rock face with the aid of his tricorder.

RIKER
Sections twenty-five baker through forty-seven alpha... are back there somewhere.
(beat)
I wonder how many of the crew are back there too...

Pressman decides to get back to business. He points to a wall console.

PRESSMAN
It should be in here.

Pressman moves to the wall and examines it with his tricorder. He seems pleased by what he sees.

PRESSMAN
(continuing)
And it looks like it's still intact.
(closes tricorder)
All we have to do is remove this panel and then disconnect it from the (TECH) relay system.

Pressman sets his beacon down for illumination and then begins to unfasten the clamps on the large Mees panel. Riker comes closer, but makes no move to help Pressman.

RIKER
None of this even bothers you, does it?

(continuation)
PRESSMAN
Keep your self-righteous comments to yourself. I knew most of these people a lot longer than you did... and it's tragic. But it was also their own fault.

Pressman has now completely removed the panel and set it aside. Inside the bulkhead, an exotic-looking DEVICE -- large roughly cylindrical piece of equipment which is hooked up to various conduits. They both react to the sight -- this is what they've been after.

RIKER
You don't know that. Neither of us knows what happened after we left.

PRESSMAN
It's not hard to guess. They tried to shut down an experiment they didn't understand and had no experience with. Something went wrong. And it killed them.

Riker looks at one of the dead bodies and he finally can't hold back his feelings any longer.

RIKER
No... we killed them.

Pressman turns on Riker.

PRESSMAN
That doesn't sound like the young Con Officer who grabbed a phaser and defended his captain twelve years ago.

RIKER
Yeah, well I've had twelve years to think it over. And if I had to do it over again... I'd have pointed that phaser at you instead of them.

PRESSMAN
So on reflection... you'd rather be a traitor than a hero.

Riker closes some of the distance between them... the tension between the two men is definitely heating up.

(CONTINUED)
RIKER
I wasn't a hero and neither were you. What you were doing was wrong and I was wrong to support you... I was just too young and stupid to realize it at the time. You were the captain, I was the ensign... and I followed orders.

PRESSMAN
And if you hadn't, you'd be dead right now along with all the rest. Dead because you listened to a bunch of mutinous cowards who were too blinded by fear to see what I was trying to do.

RIKER
They were brave enough to risk their lives to stop you from violating a treaty the Federation signed in good faith.

PRESSMAN
That treaty has bound our hands and given the Romulans a tactical advantage for sixty years. I was simply trying to level the playing field.

RIKER
What gave you the right to make that decision? What gave you the right to violate Federation policy and gamble with all our lives?

PRESSMAN
I was the captain. That's all the right I needed.

RIKER
And now you're the admiral. So what happens when we take this thing back to Starfleet? Do you already have your supporters all lined up and ready to go? Will there be one of these on every ship in the fleet?

PRESSMAN
Starfleet Command isn't quite ready to embrace such a radical notion... yet.

(MORE)
PRESSMAN (Cont'd)
But I know a few... discreet officers who I can count on to help me continue with these... experiments.

RIKER
Well this is one officer you can't count on anymore.

Pressman and Riker look at each other for a long moment.

PRESSMAN
Fine. But you're still under orders not to talk about what you know... and I expect you to follow those orders to the letter. (beat) I made you... and I can break you just as easily.

Then suddenly the ship SHAKES. Both men are staggered for a moment. The ship SHAKES again.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Picard to Away Team. Prepare to return to the ship immediately.

PRESSMAN (to com)
Stand-by, Enterprise.

Pressman PULLS the cylindrical object out of the bulkhead with one hand and holds it under his arm.

PRESSMAN (continuing, to com)
Pressman to Enterprise. Have a security detail standing by in the Transporter Room. (beat) Energize.

Riker, Pressman, and the piece of equipment all DEMATERIALIZE.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

Picard, Worf, and Data at their stations as Pressman and Riker ENTER (the cylindrical device is gone). The ship is at RED ALERT.

(continued)
PRESSMAN
What's going on?

Picard indicates the main viewer, which shows a solid wall of rock.

PICARD
The Romulans destroyed the entrance to the tunnel with their disruptors. They've sealed us in.

RIKER
That's a pretty bold move.

PICARD
They must've detected us in here... realized we'd beaten them to the Pegasus... and then decided to get rid of both ships at once.

PRESSMAN
So use the phasers and cut us out of here.

DATA
The asteroid's (TECH) structure is highly unstable. Any attempt to cut the rock with phasers could cause the entire asteroid to collapse.

PICARD
The perfect crime... no one knows we're in here and no one will ever blame the Romulans for our disappearance.

PRESSMAN
Well, we can't just sit here.

PICARD
I am open to suggestions, Admiral.

A long beat as they ponder their situation. Finally Riker makes a difficult decision.

(CONTINUED)
RIKER
I have one.
(beat)
We can use the cloaking device from the Pegasus.

Everyone's head turns at that in shock. Pressman's eyes flare in anger.

PRESSMAN
(to Worf)
Lieutenant, remove Commander Riker from the Bridge and place him under arrest.

PICARD
Belay that order. What are you talking about, Wil?

RIKER
There's a device under guard in the Admiral's quarters that we brought back from the Pegasus. It's a prototype for a Federation cloaking device.

Pressman stiffens -- it's all out in the open now. Picard turns to Pressman with a grave expression.

PICARD
The Federation is explicitly forbidden to develop cloaking technology by the Treaty of Cheron.

PRESSMAN
And that treaty is the biggest mistake we ever made. It's kept us from exploiting a vital area of defense that --

PICARD
(hard)
That treaty has kept the peace for sixty years. And as a Starfleet officer, you are sworn to uphold it.

Pressman steps back from Picard's anger, and tries to retake control of the situation.

(CONTINUED)
PRESSMAN
That's enough. I am now taking command of this vessel. Mister Worf, escort the Captain to his quarters.

Everyone looks at Worf, who then very slowly and deliberately folds his arms and does nothing.

RIKER
(to Pressman)
I don't think anyone's going to come to your defense this time.

PICARD
(to Riker)
How can we use the cloak to escape the asteroid?

RIKER
The cloak uses a molecular phase inverter... it changes the structure of matter so it can... pass through "normal" matter and energy.

PICARD
That might explain what happened to the Pegasus... the ship must have drifted through this asteroid while it was phased... then the cloak failed...

RIKER
And then it materialized half-in and half-out of the rock.

PRESSMAN
Can't you see the potential here? The phasing cloak is the greatest advance in weapons technology in fifty years. A starship would not only cloak... it would be impervious to any weapon or defense.

Riker and Picard ignore him for the moment, concentrating on the problem at hand.

RIKER
If we hook the cloak up to our (TECH) relay system, we might be able to phase the entire ship.

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
And let us pass through the asteroid and escape. Mister Data?

DATA
It is theoretically possible, sir. But it will require several modifications to our (TECH) plasma systems.

PICARD
Make it so.

Data EXITS to the Turbolift.

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING

Geordi and Data are hooking up the cloaking device with optical cabling to an open panel near the warp core.

GEORDI
Now connect the (TECH) discriminator to the (TECH) conduit.

Data works.

GEORDI
(continuing, off tricorder)
Okay... that should do it.

They move away from the cloaking device and head for the pool table.

DATA
Data to Bridge, we are ready to initialize the cloak.

INTERCUT:

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Riker is at the aft Engineering station. Picard, Pressman and Worf look on.

(CONTINUED)
RIKER
Watch the phase inducers... they used to send out random power surges... if the power level goes above (TECH) gigawatts, it could blow the entire relay system.

GEORDI
Understood, Commander.
(works)
Initializing primary phase inducer...

They watch the cloak in Engineering as it begins to power up... small lights on the cloak slowly come ON and a low humming sound fills the room.

GEORDI
(continuing)
Power levels holding steady...

DATA
The cloak is on-line and ready to begin phase sequencing.

Riker looks at Picard on the Bridge.

PICARD
Proceed at your discretion, Number One.

RIKER
Aye, sir.
(he works)
Power systems activating... begin phase sequence on my mark. In five... four... three... two... one... mark.

Down in Engineering, Data and Geordi also work and the HUM in the room grows LOUDER.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship is still inside the asteroid. Suddenly, it CLOAKS and disappears.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)


(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PICARD
Report.

WORF
We have cloaked.

RIKER
The ship's matter/mass (TECH) rate should be sufficient to pass through the asteroid.

PRESSMAN
It still works... I knew it.

Beat.

PICARD
(to Shaw)
Take us out... through the nearest rockface. One quarter impulse.

The Con Officer works and on the Viewscreen, one of the rock walls gets CLOSER.

WORF
We will pass through the rock in... fifteen seconds.

A long beat as they watch the Viewscreen. Then suddenly Riker reacts to something on his console.

RIKER
Wait a minute... the matter/mass (TECH) rate is decreasing -- the ship is de-phasing.

PICARD
All stop.

RIKER
Engines at full reverse... but our inertia's going to take us into the wall.

PICARD
(to com)
All hands, brace for impact.

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

The ship DECOLAKS and appears dangerously close to the rock face, then just in the nick of time, it CLOAKS again and vanishes.

CUT TO:
EXT. SPACE - OUTSIDE THE ASTEROID (OPTICAL)

The asteroid is sitting in space. Suddenly the Enterprise DECLOAKS outside the asteroid in normal space.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

As before.

WORF
(off console)
We're clear of the asteroid, Captain.

PICARD
(to com)
Picard to Engineering. Remove the cloaking device from Engineering and secure it.

DATA'S COM VOICE
Aye, sir.

Picard turns to Pressman.

PICARD
Admiral, I hereby charge you with violation of the Treaty of Cheron. As Captain of the Enterprise, I'm placing you under arrest. Mister Worf?

Worf comes down from Tactical and indicates the Turbolift to Pressman.

WORF
Admiral, if you will come with me...

PRESSMAN
I have a lot of friends at Starfleet Command, Captain.

PICARD
You're going to need them.

Worf begins to escort Pressman off the Bridge. Riker suddenly stands up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RIKER
Captain... I was an accomplice. You're going to have to charge me as well.

A difficult moment for Picard, then he grimly nods.

PICARD
Mister Worf... take Commander Riker into custody.

Worf then takes Pressman and Riker off the Bridge.

CUT TO:

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

INT. BRIG
Riker is pacing back and forth behind the invisible forcefield. A N.D. Security Guard sits at the table outside. Picard ENTERS the room and moves to the Brig entrance.

PICARD
I've spoken to Fleet Admiral Shanti. She has decided not to file formal charges against you, but you'll have to testify at Pressman's court martial when we reach Starbase two-four-seven.

RIKER
(relieved)
That's the first good news I've heard in a while.

PICARD
Admiral Shanti has left the question of any further disciplinary action against you in my hands.

RIKER
(beat)
And your decision is?

(CONTINUED)
PICARD
I've decided to leave it up to you. You were there twelve years ago... you know what you did and why. What do you think you deserve?

Riker takes a long moment before answering.

RIKER
Demotion in rank... transfer to shore duty... six months in the stockade.

Picard nods... weighs this.

PICARD
Sentence accepted.
(beat)
But suspended due to the youth and inexperience of Ensign William Riker at the time of his actions.
(beat)
Formal reprimand on your permanent record... thirty days in the brig... and I don't think anyone's going to offer you a captaincy any time soon.

RIKER
I understand.

Picard turns to go, then stops.

PICARD
For what it's worth... you made a mistake twelve years ago... but you did the right thing yesterday. And I'm still proud to have you on this ship.

RIKER
Thank you, sir. I've lived with this for a long time... maybe after this, I can finally let it go.

Picard nods and EXITS. OFF Riker's expression as he sits down to reflect on his experience...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END