Prologue One:
Twenty-three years ago....

“Space, a realm of infinite vistas. This is the voyage of the Federal Starship Sundown. Her four year mission: To push back the borders of Union space, to expand Federal knowledge-

And to Boldly go forth as none have gone before...”

...Be careful, Dad. Even at warp-speed, four years is a long time.

Don’t worry, Jannie. I always come back.

What would you like me to bring you?
That's easy.

- Something no one's ever seen before!

HAHAHA!! Okay.

How about you, Jim?

How about a new plant for your collection?

That'd be great!

And you? What can I bring you?

Just yourself in one piece. That's all I want.

We've got to be going, George.
Your timing’s lousy, Rob.

So’s our departure schedule.

Okay, okay...

DAD!!!
Be careful.

Please?

Don’t worry, Kitten.

I’ll see you in four years.
One year later...

Mom! It just came in!

The Academy's accepted...

Uncle Frank? What's going on?

You'd better come and sit down, Jan.

Why? What's happened?
The Sundown missed its scheduled check-in time last month.

A ship was sent to its last known location and couldn't find anything.

Of course not.

They searched a good three lightyears in every direction—there were no traces.

That location would have been at least two months old by the time they got there.

Then they weren't looking in the right places.

Jan—

That is one possibility.

But there's another we have to prepare for.

NO.
Jan-

Dad's not dead.

Starfleet's not looking in the right place, that's all.

Something's gone wrong with their com-system-

-That's the only way this makes sense.

Jan, we can't-

Dad always comes back!

And he will this time!

SLAM!
Prologue Two:

It’s been ten months since the relaunch of the Enterprise and the loss of civilian outpost Zeta Hope 9.

With the Federal Congress’ declaration of war, the Romulan Neutral Zone has become a zone of bloodshed and destruction.

Encounters, skirmishes and clashes between single ships and full squadrons—Union and Romulan, Klingon and Romulan—have left the dead hulks of both ships and lives in their wake.
After the destruction of Zeta Hope 9, Romulan Outpost 648 was targeted for retaliation. A Federal strike force was sent in.

But even then, the Union showed restraint. The outpost’s personnel were allowed to evacuate before the strike force destroyed it.

Since that time, an uneasy quiet has settled over the ‘Zone as each side watches and waits to see who will blink first—and who will be next to die...
The Present

Buzz!

Come.

Swoosh

You wanted to see me, Sir?
Yes, Ensign.
We've received a priority request from your sister.
Commodore Kirk wants you to go home immediately. She said she'll meet you there.

That's strange.
Did she say why?

No.
And when a commodore makes a priority request, it's a good idea to just do it.

I'm having the George Washington prepped for you.
Just make sure you bring it back in one piece.

Sir, that landing on Mica III wasn't my fault.

The landing thrusters-
Did I say it was your fault?

...No, sir.

There is one more thing.

Your sister said specifically, "Tell Tam not to peek".

That means she doesn't want me to open a portal to find out what's going on.

This is weird.

Well, 'weird' or not, you'd best not keep her waiting.

Yes, sir.
...You ever been to Earth?

Once. Six years ago. I took part in a medical exchange program between Earth and Trill.

Met an interesting guy there. Just knew he’d be a doctor.

How’d you know?

Let’s just say he had the hands of a surgeon leave it at that.

Sometimes.

Girl, you’re insatiable.
Earth- The Kirk Ranch: One week later.
Hi.

You mean St. Clair actually trusted you with another shuttle?

Okay, okay. Is that all you've got to wear?

Okay, okay. Is that all you've got to wear?

What's wrong with it?

Well this isn't 1979 Florida.

Don't you have anything more presentable?

Of course I do.

Is that what you called me home for??

Mica III was not my fault!!

It was okay for 1979 Florida.

It was hot that summer.
Then go change.

Why?

Because I'm asking you to.

Okay.

But all of my civilian clothes are twentieth century.

Why didn't you get something when we got back two years ago?

Because I like my twentieth century clothes.
Whatever.

As long as you’ve got something more presentable than that.

Teenagers.

Am not. I’m twenty now.

Our birthday was just last month.

Don’t remind me.

I’m finding more grey everyday.
Three minutes.

Five minutes.

Ten minutes.

What is she doing?
Getting ready for a date?

If you want dressed, you can have dressed-

-But presentable takes time in any century.
That’s Twentieth Century?

That’s nice.

That’ll do.

Do for what?

Once you understood your Gift, did you consider using it to find out what happened to Dad?
I did think about it—
even started to a few
times.

But I never followed
through with it.

I...guess I was afraid
of what I’d find out.

Then too, if I did find
out what happened, I’d have
to tell Starfleet— which means
letting more people in on my
secret.

Why?

We found the
Sundown.

What?!

Where??
Sit down and I'll start at the beginning.

Being in command of Task Force 98, I'm responsible for our patrol routes.

I set up a weekly rotation.

That way, the Romulans don't get used to seeing the same ship all the time.

-And they have no idea where Enterprise'll turn up next.

Three weeks ago, the rotation put us on the far end of the 'Zone—practically on the very edge of Federal space.

"That's where we picked up the first bread crumb..."

Three weeks earlier:
Stardate: 6502.06
Hey, Stranger.

How are your aunt and uncle doing?

Come.

Buzz!

Oh they're fine.

I'm starting to wonder about me though.

Why?

Well, as I was leaving the Hangerdeck, I could have sworn I saw a large rock moving along the corridor!
“A Horta. Spock and I encountered the Mother Horta a few years back on Janis VI. There was something of a disagreement between her and the local miners that needed cleared up.”

“Nalock’s the first of his race to ever leave their homeworld. This is his first training flight. We got him because of our connection to his mother.”
Normally, he’s assigned to Sciences—Geology section.

But he’s so curious about everything, you never know where he’s going to turn up next!

Enterprise has always had a reputation for having the most multi-racial crew in the Fleet.

She’s a living example of what the Union’s all about.

And I’m damn proud of it.

He makes an interesting sight if you’re not expecting him.

You’ve got a real mixed bag of a crew on this ship.

Once I got to my cabin, I checked my messages and saw yours that you wanted to see me.

Yes, I do.

So what’s up?

In fact, based on this, I’m not expecting him to re-up once this tour’s done.

Spock’s put in a formal request to step down as First Officer.

He wants to concentrate on his science duties and his own researches.
Well, you can’t blame him.

I mean, he almost died last time out.

I know.

But that still means I need a new First Officer for the rest of the tour.

Wait-a- You want me?

Counting the Venture, you have the experience—and more seniority than the rest of the bridge crew.

Why not give it to Mr. Scott?

You don’t know Scotty well enough, or you wouldn’t even suggest it.
Before the re-build, getting him out of Engineering long enough to eat and sleep was a major victory.

But now, he has a whole new set of toys to play with.

Trust me, when Trouble rears its ugly head, you want Scotty in Engineering.

Don't tell me you're afraid of the job?

You're damn right I am.

Good. If you weren't at least a little nervous, I'd be worried.

You sure you want to do this?

Spock, Jan. We're picking up an object ahead of us. It's just on the edge of our scans.

Positive.

Kirk here.

Ba-jeep!

On my way. Kirk out.
Are you sure you want to step down as First Officer?

Jan wants me to replace you.

The position of First Officer is not only intended to support the captain, but to also train the one holding it for eventual captaincy- a position I have no desire to achieve.

Therefore, logically, it is time to step aside for someone with such desire.
Being a captain is something I never gave much thought to.

Considering the fact that the Enterprise’s current tour only has eighteen months left—

-I believe it is an option you would do well to consider.

Try to put the object on the screen.

Yes, Ma’am.

It’s right on the edge of our scanning range, Commodore.

Attempting to do so, Ma’am. Searching records for any object that might— got it.

On screen.

Computer, can you clean up this image?
Details?

Unable to provide any at this time due to distance.

Change course to intercept.

Yes, Ma'am.

Keys, alert the Transporter Room. I want that thing beamed aboard as soon as we're in range.

Yes, Ma'am.

The only way to find out if Computer is right or wrong is to get close enough to see it.

We know nothing about it. Computer simply chose the one picture that seemed to match a very blurred image.

Is that wise?
Shev, as the new First Officer, you have the Bridge.

Congratulations.

Swoosh

Since when?

About ten minutes ago.

Thanks-

-I think.
Lock on to the object and beam it aboard, Mr. Kyle.

My God...
Tear it apart, Spock. I want to know everything it knows...

...It didn't take Spock long to download the beacon's information.

So what'd you find out?

As you know, the Sundown was on a star-charting mission. It had just entered an area that was—back then—an unexplored sector...
Captain Robert Armstrong recording. Engineer Baxter reports a loss of power in the warp nacelles.

Despite diagnostic programs and hands-on examinations, he’s been unable to pin down a cause. Seems to have started the moment we entered this sector, but we have no evidence to connect the two...

Captain Armstrong recording. The warp engines are totally drained. Whatever’s going on in this sector soaks up propulsion energy like a sponge soaks up water.

Security also reports an increase in violence on board. Ten people have been put on report and I’ve had to confine three of them to the brig...

Armstrong recording. We’re dead in the water. Even our impulse power is gone. We’re using battery power to maintain our life support.

Outbreaks of violence have spread throughout the ship. Dr. Williams believes the power drain and the madness are connected to this sector, but he can’t pin down how...
First Officer George Kirk recording. Captain Armstrong has fallen to the madness. He's in Sickbay under restraints and sedated.

Engineer Baxter is dead—attacked by his assistant. Dr. Williams is convinced it's this sector of space affecting everything, but he's told me it's getting to the point that he can't trust himself to analyze his own findings...

First Officer Kirk recording. I've ordered the surviving members of the crew to their quarters and activated the emergency bulkheads.

Dr. Williams is dead—suicide. I'm going to jettison the beacon before I'm too far gone myself. Hopefully, someone will find it someday...

Anything else?

Any idea what the beacon's course was?
As far as we have been able to re-construct events, the beacon appears to have come in from this direction—

-Just inside an area of space claimed by the Tholian Assembly.

What do you mean by “Claimed by”? Is it theirs or not?

That is one of the many questions diplomats and soldiers have been debating since the Union first encountered the Tholians, Commander.

So what’s wrong with that sector? What makes it different from the rest of the galaxy?

According to Dr. Williams’ research— which your father attached to the log, space itself seemed to be... shattered.

With the equipment they had at that time, he wasn’t able to clarify his findings any better than that.
What would be our chances if we went in with our newer tech?

Would our shields protect us from that sector's effects long enough to pull the Sundown out?

You want to salvage the Sundown?

If possible.

Why?

What do you mean “Why”?

Jan, the entire crew— including your father— is dead by now. Common sense says they have to be.

Why risk the Enterprise to rescue a coffin?
I admit, the chances of finding anyone still alive aboard the **Sundown** is next to zero. But I'm not the only one with family aboard that ship.

There are at least two hundred and twenty-three other people in the Union that have a right to know what happened—that have a right to some kind of closure.

I can't deny that this one's personal. I've waited twenty-two years for answers to my father's disappearance—

-And I'll have those answers— for me, Tam and those other two hundred people.

Order an evacuation for all non-essential personnel. Put Kyle in charge and make sure he has a full report to give Uncle Frank when they get to Starbase 98.

Have Ensign Keys contact Kang and fill him in. Tell him he's in charge of the task force till we get back.
I can understand your need to know, Jan.

I just hope you’ve made the right choice.

So do I, Leonard. So do I.

Considering the unknowns involved, maybe Dr. McCoy had a point.
But I would have gone in, too.

The answers were out there - and I wasn't going to turn my back on them.

Still, once Kyle and the others had left, I ordered the shields to maximum and we started back-tracking the beacon.

Spock and Shev both insisted on reduced speed - .8 of Sublight - so the sensors wouldn't miss anything.

As a result, it was almost four days later before we finally found her.

...Commodore, something's just come into scanning range.
Sensors say there’s nothing there. Deflectors are reacting as if there is.

Fascinating.

Also, the chronometric readings are off compared to those of the Enterprise.

The passage of time in an area some five hundred kilometers around the Sundown has slowed to half its normal rate.

Spock?

Off in what way?

Is the Sundown trapped in time somehow?

Negative.
And this sector of space?

It is as Dr. Williams suspected. However, with our more advanced sensors, it is clear that space has not been shattered—

—more like the fabric of space has been ripped or torn in some way.

A rip in the fabric of space...

And if the Sundown were caught half in and half out?

That might explain the variance between the sensors and the deflectors.

Shew, what’s our status?

At the moment, all systems are nominal except for a two percent loss of power all across the board. There’s also some kind of interaction between this area of space and the shields. If there were an atmosphere out there, I’d almost call it friction.
What about inside the shields?

With the exception of the loss of power, all other readings are normal.

Distorted outside, normal inside.

Possibly - as long as our power levels do not drop below seventy-five percent.

So, if we could get close enough to extend our shields around the Sundown, could we pull her out with our tractor beam?

Shev, how much further to the Sundown?

After that, we would not have enough power to shield both vessels.

Ten thousand kilometers.
Janice, close the distance one hundred kilometers at a time.

I want a completely new scan of the area each time before we move on.

Yes, ma'am.
Course plotted and laid in.

Let's do it then...

...it felt like it took forever before we were close enough to see her name.

By the time we were five hundred kilometers away, our power levels had dropped ten percent.

I called a halt there, so Spock could fully analyze the readings he'd gotten so far.

I didn't want us trapped like the Sundown...
...Background radiation in this area is higher than normal. It is highest around the "tear" itself.

This would seem to support the theory that a massive explosion or eruption of some sort took place prior to the Sundown's arrival.

So why didn't this "tear" close up after the eruption?

According to our scans it was in the process of doing so.

In point of fact, it would have been closed by now if not for the Sundown—

-which is acting in much the same manner as a splinter would keep a cut from healing properly.

Ship's status?

The shields are stable. But we've got a fifteen percent power loss all across the board.

If we lose another ten percent, we won't be able to shield the Sundown.
Ba-keep!

BRIDGE TO COMMODORE!!!
BRIDGE TO COMMODORE!!!

Ma'am we're receiving a signal-
-from the Sundown!

Kirk here.

Computer- on screen!

...to Federal vessel- at least I hope you're a Federal vessel.

Sensors say you're not there, but the deflectors say you are.

If you're real, please respond. Commander George Kirk to Federal vessel, please be real- Please respond.
If Dad’s alive, there may be others.

Assemble a boarding party with EVA suits. I want them in the Transporter Room in ten minutes.

You have the conn.

You keep working on a way to get the Sundown out of there.

Be careful. You have no clear indication of what his state of mind is.

I know, I know...

...Dad’s alive?!

It was either that or an automated message he’d rigged.

I was determined to find out which...
Start scanning.
We know at least one person's alive—there may be more.

Commodore, picking up twenty-three life forms.

The closest is twenty meters in that direction.
We're in position, Commander.

Extend the shields.

Aye.

Shields are extended.

Noted.

Power levels have dropped nineteen percent.
Shev's extended the Enterprise's shields.

The environment reads ship-normal now, Commodore.

Commodore, the life form we picked up is behind this door.

Keep your helmets on for now—until we're sure it's going to last.
Swooosh

What the Hell-?

NO!

No, no more hallucinations!!

No, Dad-
It's me.

Janie-?
How-?

No!
No, it's not possible.
SLAM!

What the-?

Da-leep!

Shev, Jan.

Kirk to Enterprise-Report!

We're under attack. Two Tholian ships. They opened fire as soon as they dropped out of warp.

So tell them we're in the middle of a rescue operation!

I did.

They wouldn't listen!

BLAM!!

Five to beam back!
Scott to Bridge!

Those devils have knocked out the transporter systems!

Shev to Jan:
The Transporter’s been knocked out. You’ll have to stand by.

Then repair them!

Ready, Commander.

Weapons?

Fire.
Target One’s engines are out.

Target Two has withdrawn out of range.

He’s calling for reinforcements, Commander.

You know I’m still new at this.

Commander, power levels have dropped twenty-one percent.

Any ideas?

There are always possibilities, Commander.

If we try to fight, we may end up losing both Jan and the Sundown.

The question is, which one would be most successful.

I don’t see that we have a lot of possibilities left.
Agreed.

Perhaps, in this particular case, we should apply a human axiom and practise the better part of Valor.

Run? But the Tholians have us blo-

Lewis Carroll?

On the other hand, Mr. Spock maybe we should take a page from Lewis Carroll.

As in “Alice in Wonderland”?

Yes, maybe it’s time to take a trip down the rabbit hole...

Nice to know they teach the classics on Vulcan.
...Of course, I didn't know about any of that till Shev called and told me. With the transporters out, the whole situation was mostly up to her.

All I could do, was take the chance to bring Dad up to date.

While my people check on your survivors, there are a few things I need to tell you.

The medic checked him over and failed to find any readings that matched Dr. Williams' records—of course, Dad was out of the sector's effect now.

By the time the medic was done, he'd recovered enough to accept us as real. He said getting shot at was a hell-of-a wake-up call...

Bet I can guess some of it.

Bet there's a husband.

Yes.

A son or a daughter?

Actually...she's more like a sister.
“...I took it slow, filling Dad in on our lives and Jim and Mom’s deaths. After awhile, he stopped asking questions and turned away to just stand and stare out the viewport...”

Dad?

I'm...sorry, Kitten.

For what?

I broke my promise to you.

I...didn’t make it home this time.

For most of your life...I wasn't there.

Yes, you were.
Lucky, hell.
There's only one way you rise through the ranks that fast, Young Lady.
That's by being damn good at what you do.

So... A Commodore— with your own ship.
I've been lucky.

Glad I lived long enough to see it.

Commander... Kirk here.

Commander Ta'laren, sir. May I speak to the Commodore?

I'm here, Shev. Go ahead.

"...We listened as Shev told us how things stood..."

...In fifteen minutes, our power levels will be too low to protect the Sundown—
— and we can expect Tholian reinforcements before then.
Put Spock on.

Spock here, Jan.

You said earlier that space inside the Enterprise’s shields was normal?

Affirmative.

Then if we could just get the Sundown powered up...

The formula should be basically the same. But with the shuttles gone and the transporter still under repair, we have no way of getting Mr. Scott over to us.

Spock, would the Psy-2000 Cold Start work with the Sundown’s older engines?

Unknown.

Then you’ll have to talk us through it.
"...With only the batteries still on-line, we had to make our way on foot from the habitat sphere to the lower hull...

...By the time we got to Engineering, we barely had ten minutes left...

...With Spock guiding us over the comm channel, Dad and I did our best to man every console in the room...

...All right. We're ready here."
Another Tholian's arrived—and they've started building one of their damned webs.

Damn. That's all we need.

We're not near a viewscreen here. What is it?

Mr. Spock? There's something strange here.

In what way, Lieutenant?

Energy readings of both the rip and the web are almost identical.

The readings are confirmed. It would appear to be a strong possibility.

Could an early weapons test—an early web projector—have malfunctioned, creating the rip?
Which means the Tholians have been trying to keep a lid on the fact that they screwed up the sector by attacking any ship that stumbles across it.

It’s time to get out of here.

Power levels are rising.

Give priority to the shields. I’ve already changed the modulation to match Enterprise.

Shev can tow us out.

All right, Shev. Get us out of here.

Acknowledged. Hang on. It may be a little rough.

Lock tractor beam on the Sundown as we pass her.

Rand, come to course 198, mark 5. Full impulse.

Course 198, mark 5. Full impulse. Aye.
Ta'laren here.

Commander, we've lost the tractor beam!

Power levels are-

-Power levels are at forty-eight percent!

What was that?
The Sundown.

Jan and her father have activated their tractor beam.

The Daedalus-class was the first to be equipped with them.

Spock, tell me we're getting good scans of...this place.
Affirmative.

Between the Enterprise and the Sundown, we will be bringing back enough data to keep analysts and astro-physicists busy for decades to come.

Well, no one will ever get their hands on any of it if we can't get back to normal space.
Weapons, I want a full spread of torpedoes—set them to reproduce the Tholian web’s energy wavelength and detonate one thousand kilometers ahead of us.

Since it seems a weapons test created one opening, let’s see if we can open another.

Yes, Ma’am.

Torpedoes ready, Commander.

Fire.
Commander, our speed's increasing.

It's like something's pulling us out of here.

Cut power.

Cutting power has no effect.

We're up to Warp Four and accelerating.

That's Starbase 98 up ahead. If you can't shut the engines down, reverse them!

Nothing will respond.

It's like everything is frozen—locked up.
Computer!

On it, Commander.


What the hell-?

Swoosh

We've got to reverse the engines!
We've got to use the Sundown like a sea anchor—slow Enterprise down before she hits the starbase.

Reversing engines.

Firing braking thrusters.
Whoah...

Let me introduce you to someone...
The center of my life—
-for a little while longer anyway.

Welcome to the future, Dad.

...And welcome home.
...We missed the starbase by half a meter.

Wheah.

What'd Uncle Frank say?

What would you say if someone almost dropped two starships through your roof?

My ears burned for an hour.

But once he saw Dad, and I had a chance to explain, he agreed not to court-martial me.

We stayed over a few days while the ships were repaired and both ships and crews were checked for any lingering side-effects.

By then, Admiral Stryker had received my report and ordered us to bring the Sundown home.

Counting Dad, there were twenty-three survivors- out of two hundred and twenty-three.

Damn.

So, where's Dad? Starfleet Medical?
Answer the door.

But, Jan-!

Answer the door, Ensign.

Grrrr.
My God.

Jan told me about you. But to actually see you...

What can I say?

I didn't want him to come home and find a bum.

Welcome to the family, Kitten.

Go on.
Admiral Stryker?

Janet. I hate like hell to break in on the reunion, but I need you, your family and your First Officer in my office as soon as possible.

Stryker out.

Jan?

Get your uniform on - Now.

What's going on?

I have no idea.

But he knew this was going to be a special night for us.

So whatever it is, it can't be good.
Somewhere between Earth and Vulcan...

The shuttle is traveling at its maximum speed.
Pacing the deck will not help it move any faster.

"Rayannah."

I am sorry, Sarek.

Over the last two years, I have tried to learn the Vulcan Way.

But right now, if I don't pace, I will explode.

If what you suspect is true, your anxiety is understandable.
It is true—

And if it is not stopped—

The entire quadrant will drown in blood.

There can be no other explanation.
Ten hours ago, the colony on Betitor Nine, was attacked by a strike force of twenty Romulan ships.

There were no survivors.

And coming on top of Zeta-Hope Nine, the President and the Federal Congress have handed me a mandate—

—something they haven’t done in all the years I’ve held this office.

That was an entirely civilian colony—

—even their spaceport was a civilian operation.

What kind of mandate, sir?

They want this insanity stopped before it goes any further.
I've issued orders for the Enterprise and the Sundown to be re-supplied with all the spare equipment they can carry.

There are four Daedalus-class ships mothballed at the Mars shipyard. I've ordered every useable part stripped and sent here. They should arrive in about five hours.

George, you're now Captain of the Sundown. I've put out a call for any remaining personnel with any knowledge of the Daedalus-class. It won't give you a full crew, but you'll have enough to get the job done.

Tamera, you originally trained for the Daedalus. As of now, you're chief helmsman of the Sundown - you can also bring your father up to date on this mess with the Romulans.

Yes, sir.
The Sundown will join up with the Enterprise. The Lydia and the Mara will join up with you at Starbase 98.

Join up for what, sir?

You’re going to Romulus, Commodore.

Short of surrendering the Union, you’re authorized to use any means necessary to end this damn war once and for all.

I don’t like the idea of sending an entire family on a mission of this nature, but you’ve proven yourselves to be fighters and survivors— and that’s what I need right now.

I want you out of orbit and on your way in twelve hours. Dismissed— and good luck.
Ship’s log; Stardate 6502.27.
Commodore Janet Kirk recording.
By the time we broke orbit, the Sundown only had enough crew for two shifts. Volunteers from the Enterprise have made three bare-bones shifts possible.

Note, Assistant Chief Engineer Commander Barker is now serving as the Sundown’s chief engineer.

We expect to reach Vulcan by the end of the day...
...by the time the task force arrived, the Enterprise had taken a lot of damage.

But Jan still had one trick left.

What did-?

My God-!

That was everyone's reaction at first.

We thought both the Enterprise and the Romulan Command Ship had been destroyed till the fires and debris cleared away.
It took Jan two weeks to get Enterprise home—

—and we’ve been at war with Romulus ever since.

Tam, I’m sorry...

It’s okay.

I should have expected it.

Jan didn’t go into a lot of details about the kind of life you lived after Finney messed things up, but there are differences between you.

I’ve got a lot of catching up to do—on a lot of things—and two very special people to get to know—all over again.

It’s just going to take time for me to get them straight in my head.
Have you got a moment?

Is there a problem?

You tell me.

What's the real reason you stepped down as First Officer?

And don't give me that "Scientific research" business. I know you better than that.
Spock, if this has anything to do with when you were wounded-

- I mean, I can’t think of anything else that would bother you like this.

It was...difficult coming out of the Healing Trance- more so than when I was wounded on Neral.

You were dealing with your own injuries at the time-

- and there was the matter of getting Enterprise home.

Why didn’t you say something before now?

You’re not shipping out again when the tour’s over, are you?

...No, I am not.

Will you?

I don’t know. This tour still has a year and a half to go. A lot can happen between now and then.
Could you accept it if I did?

We must each follow the path that is right for us.

My path led me to you. I would wish for no other.

Beep!

At least I got my kiss before it went off this time.

Kirk here.
Shev, Jan.

We’ve got a warp sled with shuttle approaching.

From where?

Vulcan.

The pilot says he has Ambassador Sarek and his assistant on board and they’re requesting permission to come aboard.

Vulcan.

Sarek and his assistant?

Understood.

Kirk out.

All right, Shev. Beam them aboard and have them brought to the main briefing room.

Also see to it that guest quarters are prepared.

Why do I get the feeling your father just saved us a trip to Vulcan?
Sarek. Rayannah.

Father. Your presence honors us.

I could wish for better circumstances, my son.

Rayannah. What's going on?
Have you seen the reports about the attacks on civilian targets?

Of course.

Grand Admiral Stryker briefed us on Betiter Nine.

You saw, but you did not see!

Then he ordered us to Romulus with orders to stop the war any way we can.

Remember the information we brought back from Outpost 648? There were no civilian targets listed.

Then explain it.

Someone else would say they were added later.

But the number of ships in the attacks is wrong-

The ships themselves are wrong.

A strike force is made up of squadrons.

In what way?

A Romulan squadron is made up of three ships.

3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 - 21.

A strike force of twenty ships is not possible!
Has there ever been an exception?

No. That is not our way.

Is that all you have?

No.

When I began to suspect this, I went to Sarek and he used his diplomatic clearances to obtain copies of the scans of the Romulan ships involved in the attacks.

The scans show variances in their construction—differences between them and an official Warbird. Even the coloring of the warbird emblem is slightly off.

None of this would be obvious to a Starfleet officer. But it would be clear to any Romulan officer of command rank, that these ships were not built at any official shipyard.
You're saying that someone else is behind all of this—that the attacks on civilian targets are not officially sanctioned by the Remulan government.

Another faction within the Empire?

Yes.

What would they hope to accomplish?

Perhaps exactly what they are getting.

Indeed.

Without the civilian attacks, the Union's response would not be as aggressive as it is now.
So someone wants the Union to attack...

Oh my god...

Jan?

Whoever's behind this is insane.

Instead of just killing the Praetor and taking his place, they're trying to use the Union to assassinate the Empire.

Fascinating.

They watch as the Empire lies in ruins for a few years, then step forward and miraculously raise it from the ashes.

But to what end?

The survivors would not only hail them as heroes but they'd probably proclaim them Emperor as well.
And in the end, they create a more militant empire—
one more willing to conquer in the name of survival.

Rayannah, who was the most outspoken in favor of renewing the war?

Senator Pa'Luc. But he is what you would call a "loud mouth." He's rarely taken seriously.

If the older senators had not supported the motion, no one would have paid any attention to him.

And who was the quietest supporter?

That would be Senator Bar'len. He sits like an insect in a web—pulls the strings of others.

Likes to plot and plan behind the scenes.
Yes.

He even serves as the Praetor's First Advisor.

Which means, he'd have the clearances to acquire all the military materials he'd need.

He's the second most powerful member of the Imperial Senate after the Praetor himself.

Sounds like he's tired of sharing power.

Kirk to Bridge.

Ta'laren here.

Forget Vulcan, Shev.
Contact the Sundown and set course for Starbase 98-Maximum warp.

Kirk out.

And what will be your next step?

We have to get to the Praetor. He's the only other person on Romulus that can stop this mess.

Otherwise, I won't have any choice but to level the planet.
Personal log; Supplemental.
Janet Kirk recording.
Once we’d set course for Starbase 98, I had Sarek and Rayannah shown to guest quarters. Then I called Dad and told him and Tam to get over here.

They were both shaking their heads in disbelief by the time I’d finished filling them in...

...This whole thing’s turning into a twisted mess.

You just now realizing that?

Things were certainly a lot simpler twenty-two years ago. The Romulans weren’t even in the picture then.

From what I can figure, this Senator Bar’len was planning all of this even back then—

Everyone assumed they were still hiding behind the ‘Zone licking their wounds.

—with so many ships and crews under his control, he must’ve been.
So what happens when we get to Romulus?

How do we find the Praetor when we have no records on him?

Unless Aunt T'Pel has something we can use, I don't know. But he's the key to all of this.

You think once the Praetor's been told what Bar'len's been doing behind his back, he'll stop the war?

Considering where Bar'len's going with this, wouldn't you? Bar'len's after the throne and he's willing to kill half the Empire to get it.

And you think this Romulan female you've been dealing with can be trusted?

I've known her for over two years now, Dad.

Come on. You've seen the Enterprise from the outside-

Yes. Let me show you the inside.
My apologies for interrupting your meditations, Father.

How did you know I would be in meditation?

Allowing for the difference between the Enterprise and Vulcan, it is the usual hour in which you take part.

Logical. But of no matter. I can return to them later.

Spock...

I have not seen you this... ill at ease since you were a child.

The day you struck Sulek for calling you names.
I know that you were not...totally supportive of my decision to join Starfleet.

Correct.

Yet, I have seen you build a successful career-and marriage- based on that decision.

It is possible that my opposition was...incorrect.

And yet, in recent months, I have found myself...reconsidering that choice.

Spock, you have served in Starfleet for over twelve years. I have also seen the report about you being wounded prior to the Battle of Starbase 98.

Mother hasn't seen it, has she?

No. Nor will I show it to her.
Following that kind of experience, considering a change of venues is not illogical, nor does it reflect badly on the career you have already had.

Logically, should you decide to change careers, one would have to assume that the experiences you have acquired in Starfleet, would be beneficial to most other career choices you might consider.

Even the Vulcan Science Academy?

Their...elitist view was totally illogical. It created a division among the faculty for many years after you left.

Now, there are several new members on the faculty and they have inquired several times about your joining them.

And now?

Perhaps it is time to speak with them.

I have not mentioned it before now, because I could see that you were not interested.

Spock, I must ask, what is your logical reason for considering such a move?
I do not know if I have a... logical reason.

When I was wounded, I had difficulty coming out of the Healing Trance - even though a trained physician was on hand.

It was neither.

I... nearly failed to come out of it, Father. I almost died and I do not know if it was a lack of training on my part or my half-human biology.

But I have no desire to face such a situation again.

How can you be certain?

You forget that I over-saw and selected your training. I know how well you handled it.

Many times over the centuries, there have been those who were so severely injured that they failed to come out of the Trance. Nothing available at the time could have saved them.
I, myself was in a similar situation once, before you were born.

Suleg of Sh'gree City felt that we were being too open to the rest of the Union and wanted the post of Vulcan's Ambassador in order to enforce his own ideas of Isolationism.

He challenged me for the office. I defeated him of course—killed him in fact—but not before he had done substantial damage to me...

...It was a week before I came out of the Trance. The doctors had begun to think I never would.

As strange as it sounds, it is...reassuring to know that.

Indeed?

And what of Janet?

Still, I...feel that it is time for a change.

She will follow her career wherever it takes her— as she should.

She is my wife, Father. I will respect her decisions as she respects mine.
Four nights later:  
Stardate 6502.31

Ba-leep!  
Ba-leep!

Bridge to Commodore!

Kirk here.

Inform the Sundown and go to Battle Stations.

Commodore, We're now getting long-range scans of Starbase 98- and they're under attack!

I'm on my way. Kirk out.
...Hard about!
Course 297, mark 4.

Aye.

What the-

Course 297, mark 4.

What the hell is Kirk doing?!
They just came face-to-face with a ghost.

All the remaining Romulans ran.

Why?

Evidently, this faction doesn’t watch the FNF.
Computer, I want a full analysis of those Romulan ships.

Yes, Ma'am. On screen.

More imposters.
Everything is off- just like I said.

More proof of Bar'len's involvement-

Contact the Starbase and see if they need assistance.

-as if we needed it.

Yes, ma'am.
Ship’s log; Stardate 6502.31.
Commodore Janet Kirk recording.
Starbase 98 took some damage—but nothing that can’t be fixed with supplies on hand.

When informed of my orders, Uncle Frank had a fit. He told me in no uncertain terms that the mission was insane and if he’d had the authority to stop me, he would have.
Even after I told him what we’d figured out, he still said it was too much of a long shot.
Maybe it is, but what other choice do we have?

Aunt T’Pel wasn’t able to add much. SFI has been hearing rumors about a more militant faction within the Empire, but they couldn’t get their hands on enough information to do anything with.

With the Lydia and the Mara joining up with us and the Sundown, we have left Starbase 98 and resumed course for the Romulan Neutral Zone.
Once we were underway, I called Dad, Kang and Captain Taylor to the Enterprise. It was time everyone knew how things stood...
...So if we are dealing with a more militant faction, how deeply are they involved?

Computer? Check the records for any other Romulan ships like the ones that attacked Starbase 98.

Yes, Ma'am. On screen.

No Ma'am. There's one more- but you and the Colonel won't like it.

When was it?

Two and a half years ago.

Is this all?
Sd.5930.1 - Two Birds of Prey attack the colonies on Clondar VI and Castus III.

Damn them.

What happened back then?

They were giving support to renegade Andorians. They wiped out both colonies - killing the Colonel's wife, my brother and his wife.*
The problem is, even though we know what is being done, we have no indisputable proof to show the Praetor.

Nothing that will convince him the Empire is being led to slaughter.

What about the scans and records?

We need proof he cannot ignore.

They can claim that everything we have was faked for propaganda reasons.

Yes.

We'll reach the Neutral Zone in two hours.

Dad, you and Captain Taylor can head back to your ships—try to get some rest while you can.

You need rest, too.
Personal Log: Supplemental.
Janet Kirk recording.
Once Dad and Captain Taylor left, I took Kang and Rayannah down to Engineering.

I'll get it. But I need to talk to the Colonel, first.

There was something there I wanted Kang to see...

...It works through the ship’s deflector system.

Scotty, how long to build one?

I don’t know, never havin’ built one.

I would never ask—

...I will help.
All right then. I need it built, installed and functioning aboard the _Mara_ before we reach the Neutral Zone.

-And under any other circumstances, I would not offer.

But if it will end this war and save the Empire, I will help.

That means you’ve got two hours.

What will Stryker say about you sharing captured technology?

He authorized me to use any means necessary to end this war.

If that means sharing technology with our allies, then that’s what I’ll do.

---

Ship’s log; Stardate 6503.01. Commodore Kirk recording. The _Mara_ now has it’s own cloak.

As we approach the ‘Zone, the time has come to put my plan into operation. I just hope it works...
We're now leaving the Neutral Zone.

Now in Romulan Space.

Make sure all sensors and scanners are at max-
Now that's not fair.

Fire at will.
Captain, the shields are down!

SLAM!

How long till it blows?

Direct hit to the warp core!

All of you get to the transporter room. Four minutes.

All of you, Ensign.
Enterprise to Sundown: Stand by.

For What?!

Thrum Thrum Thrum Thrum

HUMMMMMMMMM
Enterprise to Lydia: Take Sundown in tow.

Lydia here. Acknowledged.

Message coming in from Colonel Kang, Commodore.

On screen.
That wasn't exactly according to plan.

Always leave room for a little improv.

Did you get one?

We boarded and disarmed their self-destruct system.

Good. Once we have the Sundown stable, we'll continue on to Romulus.

Both the captain and first officer are still alive.

Kirk out.

Scotty, I need your biggest miracle to date. Think you can build a new warp core for the Sundown?

Are we on any kind of schedule, Commodore?
Not that I know of— but the sooner the better.

I might be able to do something with all the spare equipment that Admiral Stryker provided— but I don’t know how long it’ll last.

Best get to it.

Aye.

Next Morning.
Stardate: 6503.02
Jan was still asleep when I arose. May I join you?

Of course...

I have been curious as to how you’ve been handling life on Vulcan?

On Vulcan or among Vulcans?

Both, perhaps.

They look upon this vulcanoid female and no doubt wonder if I am not, in fact, a human with pointed ears.

In the past two years as Sarek’s assistant, I have made some acquaintances.

Still, I find it easier to deal and reason with Vulcans than I did with my own people.

I am actually looking forward to going home—Back to Vulcan.

Swoosh
Well, do I have competition, Spock?

Of course not. Please join us.

Ba-jeep!

Bridge to Commodore.

Kirk here.

Your father called, Ma’am. He says Mr. Scott is ready to test the new warp core.

Already?

According to what I have heard, Mr. Scott has had the engineering crews for the Sundown, Lydia and the Enterprise working round the clock— as well as the fabrication facilities for all three ships.

He has also been making extensive use of the engineering section of the library computer.
Don’t know why he’d need the computer. He probably has everything he needs in his technical journals.

I’d best go see what he’s built.
...Scotty, what the Hell-?

Aye, it’s not exactly according to Starfleet standards, but it’ll do th’ job.

Makes you wonder what he could do with a couple of matches and a piece of flint!

Whenever you’re ready, Scotty.
All right, Lads, the Dragon's comin' ta life in...3,2,1-

Status, lads?
Power levels rising.

Warp nacelles energizing.

Anti-matter containment holding steady.

Thrumm

Thrumm

Thrumm

Thrumm

Power levels at Fifty percent and rising.

Matter injection nominal.

Anti-matter containment remains steady.

Warp nacelles are powered up and on-line.

All readings nominal.
Ship’s log: Stardate 6503.02
Commodore Janet Kirk recording.
Note commendation for Commander Montgomery Scott.

The Sundown is cruising along at a reliable warp 7- easily keeping up with the rest of this Ad hoc task force.

With luck, we should be approaching Romulus in about five hours. Considering the Militant ship being towed by the Mara, I’m hoping we now have enough persuasion on our side to bring this Second Romulan War to an end...
Kang wanted to go in cloaked-lob a few torpedoes at them and then talk.

But this isn’t an attack. It’s a confrontation, yes. But I don’t want to fire on their capitol if I don’t have to.

You sound as if you are trying to convince yourself of your own intentions.

Maybe I am.

I’ve pushed the envelope before—but I’ve never had it torn open and handed to me like this.

It is always easier to work within a structured operation. It is those that manage to work “outside the box” that rise above the rest.

I like working unsupervised—but unrestricted is something again.

This isn’t improvement—

You have stated on numerous occasions that you wish to leave the universe better than you found it.

You now have the opportunity to do so.

It’s restoration.
Hopefully, improvement will come later.

Romulus has just come within scanning range.

This is strange.

Unless their entire fleet is at station-keeping and cloaked—there are no ships between us and Romulus.

Confirmed. Romulus is totally unprotected.
Are you telling me all of their ships are at the Neutral Zone?!

At the very least, our sensors are not detecting any.

Hold position.

What the hell is Bar'len trying to pull?

Romulus
Praetor?

A word, please?

What is it, Pro'tel?

It's about this war with the Union.
I don't believe it is going as we are being told.

What are you saying?

According to Pa'luc, the Union's retreating all along the Neutral Zone.

Praetor, I have been looking into those reports, and I cannot find anyone who actually made them.
According to them, the invasion across the Neutral Zone was a success—our forces even destroyed the Union’s flagship—Enterprise.

Yet, the reports I’ve just received from my own agents, state that the Enterprise was seen defending Union Starbase 98.

You’re saying Pa’luc wanted a war for no reason?

According to them, the invasion was a failure—In the last two years, No ground has been taken.

I do not believe Pa’luc’s capable of this kind of deception.

He doesn’t have the brains to do more than follow someone else’s orders.

Then who do you accuse?

There is only one among us who is capable of manipulating events of this magnitude.
It’s never been clear exactly what happened to force Senator Tor’mex out—

why he had to suddenly step down and name Bar’len as his successor.

And his death in that shuttle accident was all too convenient coming barely a week later.

If what you say, is true, then Bar’len is guilty of nothing less than Treason against the Empire.
The Senate Chamber!

The Klingons and the Union are attacking—!

No.
You are under attack, Praetor— but not by us.

Someone in this very chamber has been plotting behind your back.

Tell them— or would you rather spend the rest of your life as a guest of the Klingons?

Two years ago, I tried to warn you— To make you understand that renewing the war would only end with Romulus in ruins.

I can promise it will be a short life.

Now, I remember you, Dion Charvon Charvonek.

As well you should. For it was in this chamber that I told you that attacking the Union would only lead to the Empire's suicide.

Now there are four ships in our star system, just waiting for a chance to level this city and everyone in it.
Someone in your Senate has been building their own fleet—and using it against civilian targets.

Is that the Romulan Way? To attack civilians? To kill the defenseless?

Speak up, Damn you!

Is what they say, true?
It doesn't matter, Bar'len. I have his entire crew. I can produce witnesses till your disruptor runs dry. I have their ship, too— with it's poor construction and markings.

What'd you do? Build it under a rock somewhere?

Bar'len's been playing you for a fool! Do you rule this empire or not?
The only reason for it, was to satisfy Bar'len's thirst for conquest!

Of course I do!

Then end the war.

You just couldn't attack like any normal savage—could you?!!

Damn you!

You're the one that's been killing civilians!

BLAM!!
The petaQ transported out—
-Ran like a coward!

Call off the war.

Be at Cestus III in two weeks to put a permanent end to this insanity—

A formal peace treaty— and be ready to make reparations for what Bar'len's done. As a member of your government, you're responsible for him.

I will.
If you don’t show up, I’ll come back and haul you there myself...  Two weeks, Praetor.

Kirk to Enterprise:
Beam us up.

Bar-leep!

What do we do, Praetor?

They could have killed us - and did not do so.

We open our eyes, Pro’tel.

Issue a re-call for every ship in the fleet.

Then start making preparations for going to Cestus III.
My father and the others?

They just arrived in Transporter Room Two, Ma'am.

So now what?

We go home. And if the Praetor doesn't show up, we come back and do it your way.

Agreed.

I would return to my ship.
Anything you'd like to share?

No.

Come on.
Keys, call the other ships. Tell them we're breaking orbit in five minutes. As soon as we join up, we'll set course for Starbase 98.

Yes, Ma'am.

Shev, Janice—

Course plotted and laid in.

Speed, Commodore?

Warp Six. I don't know about anyone else, but I'm ready to go home.

All boards show green.

We can leave anytime.
Let's do it then.

We are now out of orbit—

—and sensors still show no signs of enemy vessels.

Shev, you have the Bridge. I'm going to grab a bite to eat.

Care to join me?

Thank you.

That night.
Stardate 6503.04
Bridge to Commodore!!
Kirk here.

Ma'am, we're under attack by the Romulan Militants.

I'm on my way. Kirk out.

FSS Sundown

Dad, what-?

Unfinished business.

SLAM!
Report!

Shields are up and holding. Phasers and torpedoes are standing by.

Status of the others?

The *Mara* is moving to attack.

The *Lydia* and the *Sundown* are holding defensive positions.

The hell with defense. Open a channel.

Yes, Ma'am. Channel open.
This is Commodore Kirk. It's time to take off the kid gloves. You know the difference between the militant rebels and the Imperial Fleet.

The Praetor's agreed to end the war to negotiate a formal peace. Let's return the favor and take these thorns out of his side.

Engage at will. Lydia, launch the Black Sheep.

Battle Bridge to Flight Deck -
Fighters away!

All right, Tam, bring us about. Course 212, mark 3.

Course 212, mark 3. Aye.

Hard about. Stay with him.
Two warbirds—port and starboard. They're firing again.


Fire!
Aboard the Lydia:
Capt. Taylor: Disengage Synchronized Firing.
Amanda: Sync-Fire is disengaged.
Capt. Taylor: Targets?
Crew: Multiple targets sighted and locked.
Capt. Taylor: Fire!

FSS Enterprise

Commodore, the Sundown’s reporting that their warp core’s become unstable.

Firing...
Open a channel to the Lydia and the Mara.

Yes, Ma'am- channel open.

This is Kirk.

The Sundown's going to blow. Get her crew off.

We'll take the Bridge.

Kirk to Transporter Room.

Kyle here, Ma'am.

Kyle, lock on to the Sundown's bridge. I want that entire bridge crew beamed aboard- Now!

BLAM!!
Kyle, did you get them?

Bridge to Transporter Room.
Mr. Kyle!

SLAM!
HUMMMMMMM
Kyle here, Ma'am. All the Sundown's Bridge crew's accounted for.

Captain and Ensign Kirk are on their way to the Bridge.

Thank you, Mr. Kyle.

Swoosh

CLICK!

SLAM!

YAAAAAAAAAA!

Z-ZACK!!
Tam, the auxiliary station!

On it!

Keys!

Bridge to Sick Bay!
Medical Emergency!
Bridge to Sick Bay...

“Maintain Fire!”

Swoosh

Bones-
It’s Janice.
Sensors are picking up a second Romulan strike force—twenty-one ships.

All right, Cap'n. Let's get her on the stretcher.

They're firing on the militants.

Swoosh

A civil war?

Oh, that's all they need.

Swoosh

The Imperial fleet is taking up position dead ahead.

The militants are breaking off.

Cease fire—But keep the shields up.
Keys, tell the Lydia she can bring in the Black Sheep.

Yes, ma'am.

Maybe there's some hope for them after all.

Guess who's still with us.
Well, I'll be damned.

How in the hell did she survive a warp core breach?!

When I installed the new core, I knew there'd be chance it wouldn't hold up.

So I set things up so the discharge would be released through the nacelles.

Both the core and the nacelles are burnt out now, but the lass is still in one piece.

We'll take her in tow.

With all the decommissioned Daedalus-class ships in the Union, there has to be a restoration outfit somewhere that can put her to rights.

Tam, once we have a tractor beam on the Sundown, set course for Starbase 98.

We'll lay-over there for repairs before heading home.

I'll also talk with Admiral Stryker. After all of this, she must've earned at least one battle star for the Fleet registry.

Yes, Ma'am.
Not good, I'm afraid.

All that raw energy pretty much fried her nervous system.

Bones?

Janice?

Once we got her as stable as we could, we had to place her in suspended animation till we can get her home.

That bad?
From what I can tell right now, it looks like we’re going to have to re-generate almost every nerve in her body.

It may be years before she can even move again - let alone take care of herself.

We’re entering the Neutral Zone.

Would you be interested in switching departments and taking the Alpha Shift Navigator’s post on a permanent basis?

I won’t deny that I have considered changing departments.

Ship’s Services is kind of locked up right now as far as advancement is concerned. When would I have to report for duty?
Come.

Am I interrupting?

No.

We were just getting an early start preparing for the peace talks.

How do you think those will go?

I believe, once everyone understands what Bar'len tried to do, an agreement can be reached without too much difficulty.
Don't let them retreat back behind the 'Zone, Sarek.

We had no idea about any of this until it was too late because we didn't have any contact with them.

You need not be concerned on that count.

It will be made clear to the Praetor that full diplomatic contact will be a mandatory part of any agreement.

That'll be a start.

Three days later:  
Stardate 6503.07.
Admiral, Commodore Janet Kirk is here.

Good. Send her in.

You wanted to see me, Sir?

Yes, Janet.

Did I do something wrong, Sir?

I was just reading your report— for the second time.

No. On the contrary, we couldn’t have asked for a better end to this mess.

Congratulations— Admiral.

Sir?!
Don’t tell me you don’t deserve it.

Anyone that can pull off what you did, deserves it.

Don’t worry, though. You can finish out Enterprise’s final year—there’s no way I’d deprive you of that.

In that case sir, thank you.

Sir, would this be a good time to ask a favor?

Can’t think of a better one. What is it?

Since you’ve read my report, you know that my navigator, Lt. Rand, was badly injured.

Yes—actually, I spoke with Dr. McCoy earlier this morning about that.

You can be certain that Lieutenant Commander Rand will receive the best care Starfleet Medical can provide.
On her behalf, sir, thank you.

But that leaves me without a navigator for this final year.

I'd like to have Tam if I could.

I've been keeping track of young Tamera.

Captain St. Clair's had only good things to say about her.

His final report on that Mica III mess clears her of any liability, by the way.

She'll be glad to hear that sir. She's been a little touchy about it.

Yes sir, officially. But if you'd seen her on this mission, you'd know she doesn't need it.

Understandable. But she's still got another six months doesn't she?

She deserves something for being on this mission - you all do.

All right. I'll see to it she's posted an academy grad - full lieutenant.

You've got her till the tour's done.

Thank you, sir.
How's George settling in?

Commodore George Samuel Kirk assumed his new post as the Head of Long-range Mission Planning at 0800 this morning.

I think he'll be all right.

What about the Sundown, sir?

We have a restoration team already picked out. They expect to have her back up to specs by the end of the year—and Starfleet's already making plans for inducting her into the Fleet Museum.

I also met with the President and he agreed that she's earned three battle stars for the Fleet Registry.

With all due respect sir, not everyone wrote them off.

That's a hell of a turn-around for a ship everyone wrote off twenty-two years ago.

I know—and you've earned the right to tell everyone in Starfleet “I told you so”.

[No speech bubble for this panel]
Thank you, sir. Is there anything else?

Yes, there is one other thing.

The Starfleet Corps of Engineers has come up with a new bridge module.

Since you've set yourself up as the Advocate for Bridge Safety, they want you to use the Enterprise's final year to field test it.

Put my foot in it, didn't I?

I'm afraid so.

You'd best get going so you'll have time to get it installed before you leave to pick up Ambassador Sarek for the peace talks.
Yes, sir.

And Janet?

Sir?

Well done.

Thank you, sir.
Afterward:

The Romulan Praetor and his advisors arrived on Cestus III one day before talks were scheduled to begin.

With Ambassador Sarek, Rayanna and Admiral Kirk serving as the prime negotiators for the Union, talks lasted for a week, before a final peace and cease-fire were signed, effectively ending the Second Romulan War.

This agreement— the first of many in the years to come— would become known to history as the Cestus III Accords, and end all major conflict in the Alpha Quadrant till stardate 36510.03—the Union’s first encounter with the Cardassian Union.

As for the Sundown, she was inducted into the Fleet Museum seven months after her return.

On that day, the Federal Congress met in special session and passed a resolution, awarding the Sundown an honor granted to only one other ship in all of Starfleet history:

Permanent Active Duty Status

Like the Bonaventure before her, the last voyage of the Sundown would never end.
A Funny Thing Happen on the Way to the Peace Talks...

Sensors are detecting an unidentified object materializing on the Hanger Deck.

Let's see what it is.

Have Therran gather his people in the corridor just in case.

Shev, you have the Bridge.

Acknowledged.

WORP!

...localized in this area.

...WORP!

WORP!
Oh, Pardon me.
Is this Heathrow?
I think you took a wrong turn at Albuquerque.

Oh? Sorry.

Worp!

Worp!

Worp!

Fascinating.

“Join Starfleet and see the wonders of the Universe”.

Indeed.
Albuquerque?
How the devil did she know?

Happy 50th Doctor!
...Jan entered the recovery ward in Sick Bay to see their “Find” sitting up in bed.

“You are the captain?” he asked in a deep, rich voice.

“Admiral Janet Kirk,” she said.

“And you?”

He studied her for a moment. “Khan.”

“Just ‘Khan’?”

He nodded. “Just ‘Khan’.”

Jan looked at McCoy, then back at Khan. “Mr. Khan, we do have a few questions...”

He looked to McCoy. “I’m afraid I grow fatigued, Doctor.”

“This won’t take very long,” Jan began.

McCoy spoke up then. “Jan, later might be better.”

Khan glanced at the redhead as he spoke. “Admiral, might I have something to read? I was once something of an engineer. Any technical journals, you might have?”

She met his gaze with narrowed eyes. It was clear to both of them that she wasn’t going to play this game.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Khan. But I have to believe if you’re too tired to answer a few simple questions, then you’re too tired to understand a technical journal written two hundred years after you were born...”

Next time on Nova Trek:

“An Empire to Build”

Coming in 2014
STWOK Jackets -
Space Command for V2 and M2 from RDNA
Converted when need using Wardrobe Wizard
Uniform skirt for V3 is Janette skirt by Morphography
Movie pins by Rduda
Shoulder straps and sleeve stripes by MDBuffy

EVA Suits -
Chest unit and helmet originally by Taranis3DG
Additional suit pieces by MDBuffy
Utility belt buckle by Rduda
Female suit is V4 J-suit converted for V3
Male suit uses M3 jumpsuit

Character base figures used -
V3, M3, V4, M4, P6 James, Dawn

Face morphs for Admiral Stryker,
Capt. Taylor and Romulan Praetor by werts.
Kang and Serek face morphs by MDBuffy

Prop packs created by MDBuffy -
Lydia add-ons for Ptrope's bridge
Amok Time arena
TMP Cabin package
TMP corridor kit
Main Briefing room/officers' mess
Sundown's briefing room
Sundown's Engine Room detail pieces from Heromorph
Kirk House -
Furniture from various sources
Romulan work station
Admiral Stryker's desk and chairs
Horta, anti-grav stretcher
Vulcan sculpture, Pre TOS Viewer
Disaster beacon
Romulan Cloaking Device
Plasma energy burst
Scotty's Warp Core
TMP Era Shuttlecraft

Other Props -
Tam's duffle bag - Rduda
Kang's sash - Little Dragon
Flatcomm - Ptrope
Smart Tablet - Cool Tuna
Praetor's Chair - Jonathan Rich
Tri-Chess set -
J-m@m - Google sketch-up
TMP Tricorder - Grinch

Outfits, Hair and textures -
Tam's Little Black Dress -
Evening dress for V3 textures by MDBuffy
Jan's Vest -
OL Suit for V3
Texture for Sarah's skirt - MDBuffy
Pike uniform textures for M4 Courageous -
Mylochka
Rayannah's outfit #1 - VSciFi Top
Rayannah's outfit #2 - Uzilite 2009 aTNA dress
Converted for V3
Pro'tel's hair - Mylochka
Other female senator's hair - Mylochka
The Doctor's scarf & Hat -
Poserworld
The Doctor's Coat -
CIS Coat from Daz Studio
The Doctor's Hair -
Neftis afro hair M
Sets-
STII Bridge - Rduda
    modified by MDBruddy
STVI Bridge- Rduda
Command Suite -
    Uses structural elements from
    Ptrope's crew cabin.
    Fractal art by MDBruddy
TMP Engine room and
Transporter Room -
    Originally by jnw3D. Coverted
    by Freetsayer
Commander Kirk's quarters -
    Pike's quarters by Ptrope
    Cabin artwork by Robert McCall
Enterprise Sickbay- Patience 55
    some details by MDBruddy
Sundown's bridge- Lucky Dog
    modified by MDBruddy
Sundown's ship corridors -
    Starship Hallways by Bandolin
    at Vanishing Point
Klingon Bridge- Vanishing Point
Romulan Senate Chamber -
    Alan Court from Daz Studio
    modified by MDBruddy
Enterprise refit hanger deck -
    Rduda
Vulcan Shuttle interior -
    Space Plane Cabin by luckybears
    modified by MDBruddy

Ships -
Enterprise -
    Greywolf Starkiller
    Concept Shuttle -
    Foundation 3D
Romulan BOP -
    Jonathan Rich
Spirit of Chicago -
    MDBruddy
Vulcan Shuttle -
    Kenny Mitchell
Damaged Connie refit -
    Google sketch-up
Sundown - DMetlesits
Work Bees- Foundation 3D
Lydia, Locknar, Georgetown -
    Battleclinic
    Conversion and new
    textures by MDBruddy
Tholian ships -
    originally by Kenny Mitchell
    converted by MDBruddy
K'tinga-class Klingon ship -
    Originally by Ben Cantwell
    converted by MDBruddy
Sundown's spaci docking -
    Foundation 3D
USS Constitution -
    Renderosity
Tardis - Imrie

Space backgrounds created using Celestia
    'Other Space' backgrounds created using
    Apophysis
    Explosion effects by Ronexplosions
    Tholian web effect created using Jepes
    Movie props 4
Photon torpedoes by Overseer-d66qnf6
Sundown's energy discharge - BE Creative

Screeencaps of Starfleet Command and the
    planetary capital of Romulus - Trekcore.com

Software used -
Poser Pro 2014
Celestia
PoseRay
3D Extreme Text
Apophysis
Photoshop Elements 10
Paint XP
UV Mapper
Gear Maker
Sketch-up 8