



STAR TREK FOUNDATIONS

“One Small Step... Part I”

Story By

CJ Sitter, Jimi James, and PG15

Screenplay By

CJ Sitter, Rigil Kent, and Daegan A. Haller

Star Trek and related names are registered
Trademarks of Paramount Pictures, Inc.
This original work of fiction is
Written solely for nonprofit purposes.
Copyright 2006 by Foundations Group
All Rights Reserved

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI – CAPITOL CITY – PUBLIC SQUARE

We see a large public square, not unlike the Roman Forum, with an elevated stage area set in front of a large neo-classical governmental building. An ORATOR stands in front of a podium with a microphone, surrounded by several others in business suits. A large crowd has gathered to listen to the speech already in progress, which we can vaguely hear over the loudspeakers. We SLOWLY ZOOM IN, and the words of the orator become clearer.

ORATOR

Tragically, it appears that they don't even seem to be aware how oppressive their tyrannical rule is to us or to any of the other colonies. I literally cannot comprehend how a government formed on democratic principles can even entertain the idea of using military force to replace an elected government in an illegal coup.

We finally get close enough to see who the orator is, GOVERNOR DWIGHT FRANKLIN, the governor United Earth had appointed as governor of Alpha Centauri.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

It is obvious now that United Earth has lost touch and that our interests are no longer their interests. We are all Humans, but we are different from the Humans born on Earth, or on Mars, or anywhere else in the galaxy; we are Centaurians, and as such, we have the right of self-determination separate from Earth.

(beat)

It is our duty to declare independence from Earth, and our responsibility, for our children's future, to make our way in the universe free from Earth rule!

A voice comes from the crowd, but without a loudspeaker, we strain to hear him.

DISSENTER'S VOICE

And what good will that do? We tried to do that once, and they sent the military to install you! Why should we even trust you? You work for them!

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

My appointment as governor is proof of how out of touch United Earth is!
(scornful)

They saw me as simply another in a long line of failures, as simply another rank-and-file senator who would toe the party line! They thought that my Centaurian heritage would help pacify my fellow colonials.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

DISSENTER’S VOICE

So what’s to keep them from just sending the military again to install another governor?

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

They’ll send the military, of that I have little doubt, but we also have our own military.

DISSENTER’S VOICE

The Colonial Guard would be no match for the United Earth Military, even if you could guarantee that they’d fight, and Earth knows it. Even if they did stand a chance, do you honestly expect anything other than more death and hardship to come from firing on them?

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

History has shown that there are times when it is necessary to go to war for the greater good, and this is no different...

EXT. SPACE – CLOSE ORBIT OF ALPHA CENTAURI

A large ship of unfamiliar design slowly makes its way into our shot of the pristine planet below. A shuttlebay door opens and a sizable shuttle leaves the interior of the ship, making a bee-line to the planet. We focus on the shuttle as it hits the atmosphere, becoming engulfed in flame, and leaving a bright red trail behind it as it descends to the large city we can see in the distance.

EXT. ALPHA CENTAURI – CAPITOL CITY – PUBLIC SQUARE

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN (CONT’D)

...I understand you’re worried about the possibility of war, and our young sons and daughters dying in vain, but if all goes according to plan, we won’t need to fire a shot.

Suddenly, we hear a distinctive “pop-pop” of a high altitude sonic boom from the shuttle entering the atmosphere at high speed our location. Governor Franklin smiles heartily and looks skyward with the crowd and his bodyguards.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN (CONT’D)

This time, we aren’t alone.

The shuttle flies into view among the city’s skyscrapers; several people in the crowd point up at the shuttle as it approaches. The shuttle quiets as it slows down on its final approach, deftly maneuvering into the open space of the square until it stops in a perfect hover over the stage. The shuttle is practically silent as it hovers, reminiscent of UFO stories of old, drawing murmurs from the crowd. Governor Franklin motions for his bodyguards to clear the rear portion of the stage. This seems to be what the shuttle was waiting for, as it slowly lowers itself until it has set down on the stage. The doors open, and a squad of black-clad soldiers quickly pours out of the

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

shuttle and forms up on the stage, as if for inspection, drawing more murmurs from the crowd. Finally, one last black-clad figure leisurely steps out onto the stage. Unlike the others a helmet does not obstruct his head, and his porcine features stand out proudly in the sunlight as he walks up to Governor Franklin and extends his hand. Governor Franklin smiles and accepts it, generously shaking his hand before turning back to his podium.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

My fellow Centaurians, allow me to introduce our new friends.

Governor Franklin steps to the side and motions for ADMIRAL KRAV to take a turn at the podium. He clears his throat briefly before speaking.

ADMIRAL KRAV

I, Admiral Krav, hereby swear the support of the Tellarite Conglomerate for your independence.

(beat)

Nothing the Earth military has can harm us; our mere presence is enough to achieve victory.

Governor Franklin leans over to the microphone.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

Earth will have no choice now but to grant us our independence.

At first the crowd is silent, making Governor Franklin smile nervously, the way any politician who thinks they just put their foot in their mouth does. Just when he starts to seriously rethink his position a few people in the crowd start to clap, and it builds exponentially until the entire crowd is clapping and cheering. We PAN to look among the crowd, and though it’s difficult at first, we can see one sole member of the crowd who is silent. We ZOOM IN to get a closer look at him, and see that it is the sole dissenter who had challenged Governor Franklin, a man named TITUS CHEET.

TITUS

(softly)

It looks like history might repeat itself again...

Titus looks bleakly at the stage as Governor Franklin and Admiral Krav raise their hands in celebration of their new friendship as we...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE – HIGH ORBIT OF EARTH

Earth’s latest triumph, *UES Enterprise*, EX-01 is hard-docked to a spindly dry dock structure, which is attached to a small space station that has a similar structure on its other side. Several small work-pods buzz about the structure and the *Enterprise*, most of which transfer parts and supplies from the station to the ship.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

MAJOR MALCOLM REED of the United Earth Military Security Forces sits at tactical, his station on the starboard side of the bridge, running weapons diagnostics. Next to him, at Damage Control, sits one of the United Earth Space Probe Agency’s most skilled engineers, COMMANDER CHARLES “TRIP” TUCKER III. Both men are visibly fatigued, and it’s obvious just from looking at them that they’ve been up for hours working, but they’re still trying to make the best of it. Trip laughs as if he’d just told a joke, but Reed is keeping a straight face as he turns back to Trip.

REED

What? Honestly, it should be “EnterpriZe”, with a “Zed”. That’s the proper British spelling.

TRIP

Right, ‘cept this ship isn’t named after some ancient sailing ship, it’s named after the first reusable spacecraft used by Earth.

REED

What about that experimental warp ship a few years back?

TRIP

Right, that one too, considering that this is another experimental ship.

REED

So it’s named after all the other ships that previously went by this name...

(beat)

And that includes the His Majesty’s Ship *Enterprize*.

TRIP

Yeah, but none of the others that followed were spelled that way.

(beat)

Crazy Brit.

Reed smirks but doesn’t look up from his panel.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

REED

Bloody Yank.

Trip can't help but laugh a little; he likes the way Reed says that, in an even heavier British accent than normal. He collects himself after a moment and gets back to business, checking the ship's systems displayed on the panel in front of him. He sighs heavily.

TRIP

Looks like we're about ready to go again; anything that's left we can fix on the way.

REED

Good, I can't wait to get out of here; I'm surprised so many problems cropped up on the shakedown.

TRIP

I've seen worse; any new ship like this is going to have a few bugs to work out.

ENSIGN TRAVIS MAYWEATHER has been sitting impatiently at the helm during this discussion.

TRAVIS

For once I actually agree with Major Reed; I can't wait to get out there.

(beat)

Although for me it would be to explore, not to shoot at everything that moves.

Again, Reed doesn't even look up from his panel, but his voice makes his displeasure plain.

REED

(sternly)

That will be quite enough of that, Ensign.

TRAVIS

You know, I don't even understand why we need the military on here anyway.

REED

So you don't get yourself killed, foolishly steering the ship into the nearest hostile alien.

TRAVIS

That's if you don't go shooting up anything that moves before we can check it out.

(beat)

Sir.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Reed swivels in his chair and glares down at Travis at the helm. Before he can say anything though, Trip cuts both of them a look. ENSIGN HOSHI SATO, sitting across the bridge at the communications panel watches on with growing impatience.

TRIP

Hey now, we don't need to be havin' another one of them civilian versus military arguments again.

TRAVIS

Why not, Sir? I have a legitimate point here; traditionally, *civilians* have explored space, not the military.

REED

Welcome to the future, Ensign.

TRIP

(sternly)
Knock it off now, both of you.

HOSHI

Should I call the captain, Sir?

All of them miss the sound of the door to the corridor open because of Trip's next line.

TRIP

I don't think that will be necessary, I'm sure these two will calm down on their own.

(beat)
Right?

Before either of them can reply, they are interrupted by CAPTAIN JONATHAN ARCHER, who is still standing in the doorway.

ARCHER

They better, or they'll both find themselves in the brig.

Everyone's eyes widen in surprise at Archer's sudden appearance.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

This needs to stop; I need everyone thinking clearly and doing their jobs.

TRAVIS

Understood Sir.

Reed nods his understanding and goes back to his panel. Archer takes a moment to make sure the situation has been resolved, then steps into the Bridge and sits down in his command chair.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

So how are those repairs coming, Trip?

TRIP

We could go right now if we wanted to Cap'n, there're just a few little things left.

Archer smiles at Trip.

ARCHER

Not bad, we're ahead of schedule. I hope you and your staff will take this opportunity to catch up on some lost sleep.

TRIP

(jovial)

Nah! I'll sleep when I'm dead.

ARCHER

I thought you might say something like that.

The old friends grin at each other.

ARCHER

Ensign Sato, open a channel to Command please, Admiral Forrest's office.

HOSHI

Aye Sir.

Hoshi turns to her panel and puts her earpiece back in. She flips a switch on her panel and focuses on the speaker/microphone next to it.

HOSHI

UESPA Command, this is *Enterprise*, come in please.

Hoshi pauses for a moment, listening to the response from UESPA Command. Archer turns back to Trip.

ARCHER

So, have you met our new Denobulan Doctor yet?

Trip rubs his eyes, showing his fatigue.

TRIP

Nope, haven't had a chance yet; been too busy fixing my ship.

(beat, thinking)

I've been pretty much everywhere but Sickbay, or my quarters for that matter.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ARCHER

(concerned)

You really should get some rack time then.

(beat)

And it's my ship.

Trip smiles as he gives Archer a critical look.

TRIP

Com'mon now, Cap'n, you know me; I never could rest as long as there's work to be done.

Archer leans towards Trip in his chair and gives him the most serious, deadpan look he can manage.

ARCHER

That wasn't exactly a suggestion; I can't have my First Officer and Chief Engineer falling asleep at his post.

(beat, lighter)

Besides, we're still in dry dock; this is the best time to get some sleep before we head out again.

Trip loses his joking demeanor and caves.

TRIP

I suppose they can do without me for a few hours.

Trip stands up and stretches, and we can hear several of his joints popping very audibly as he does so.

TRIP (CONT'D)

I might even stop by Sickbay on the way.

ARCHER

You should, he's quite personable, if a little odd. He definitely knows his field though.

TRIP

Sounds interesting...

Trip makes his way the small turbolift and enters, reaching for the control panel of the lift. As the door slides shut, he has parting words.

TRIP

And it's my ship, Cap'n.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

The door slides shut before Archer can reply and he shoots a slight smile at his departed friend; this is clearly a running joke between the two of them. A brief moment later, Hoshi looks up from her panel and faces Archer.

HOSHI

I have Admiral Forrest standing by, Sir.

ARCHER

Put him on screen.

Archer swivels his chair to face the main viewscreen as FLEET ADMIRAL MAXWELL FORREST appears on it, looking rather glum.

ARCHER

Admiral, I'm happy to report that *Enterprise* is ready to disembark on its next assignment.

FORREST

I'm happy to hear that, Jon.

(beat, abruptly sober)

Unfortunately, *Enterprise* won't be going anywhere yet. The Vulcan Consulate has lodged an official complaint with the Senate, and Command wants to you to stay on-station while we negotiate with them.

Archer's face hardens at the news.

ARCHER

(spiteful)

And what exactly are they protesting?

FORREST

(flatly)

Your lack of experience and the fact that there are no Vulcan exchange officers aboard.

ARCHER

(tense, but biting back his anger)

As if we've ever needed their help before...

(beat, anger surfacing slightly)

It's not like they ever actually helped, for that matter.

FORREST

I agree, but to be fair, they have been allowing humans aboard their ships for years.

(MORE)

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

FORREST (CONT'D)

(beat, sighs)

It doesn't matter though. The Senate is going to hear them out so until further notice, you're on standby.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Jon.

Archer doesn't try to hide his disappointment as he nods his acknowledgement at Forrest. Forrest gives him an understanding look before ending the transmission. The drydock structure on the viewscreen almost looks like a prison now, which Archer glares at, stone-faced yet again.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO – UESPA COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

It's late afternoon in San Francisco. We pan to get a good view of the city and its tall, futuristic glass skyscrapers. Panning further, we can see the famous Golden Gate Bridge, and on the North side, the sprawling, unobtrusive headquarters of the United Earth Space Probe Agency.

INT. UESPA HQ – MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM

The Main Conference Room is cavernous, with a second-story ceiling, a large rectangular table, and stadium seating along the sides of it. A large view screen displays pictures and information on *Enterprise's* senior officers on it from its location on the wall, behind the podium at the head of the table. Senior officers from both UESPA and the United Earth Military fill the room, wearing full service dress uniforms that set them apart from each other as well as from the United Earth politicians and the Vulcan delegates among the crowd. We can't help but notice that the green-clad UEM is keeping to itself in one area of the room. A pounding over the comm. system brings our attention back to the podium. REAR ADMIRAL UTTAN NARSU taps the tiny microphone attached to the podium again, bringing the buzz of conversation filling the room to an abrupt end. He looks sternly at the crowd, ensuring that he has their full attention before speaking in his typically militaristic tone.

NARSU

Just to make it crystal clear, the argument over which organization the *Enterprise* is assigned to has been made; both the Senate and the President have made it clear that the Space Probe Agency reflects the best interest of a deep space explorer, which is not to have any military concerns to interfere with its primary mission.

GENERAL NATHAN SUTHERLAND, an imposing looking man despite his age clears his throat to get Narsu's attention before speaking into his own mic.

SUTHERLAND

Admiral, you were a General with us once, try to look at it from our perspective. What we're talking about here is a lone ship going out into the unknown, with the possibility of encountering any number of dangers.

(MORE)

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

SUTHERLAND (CONT'D)

(frowning)

And, with all due respect to the Vulcans, any aliens *Enterprise* makes contact with could very well be hostile.

(on a roll now, very forceful)

Only a military commander has the expertise to know how to deal with these situations and not lead potentially hostile aliens back to Earth!

From his expression and tone, Admiral Narsu has had this conversation a number of times.

NARSU

The ship has already been built, and to address your concerns, General, she has been armed more heavily than any explorer built by UESPA before and is the first of our ships to have a military security force aboard.

(beat, less confrontational)

Even if I were still in the military, Nathan, my opinion on this would not be any different.

(beat, friendlier)

I do agree with your concerns regarding the choice of commanding officers. UESPA should name someone other than this Jonathan Archer to command *Enterprise*, someone more qualified and experienced.

(beat, grimly)

Archer is dangerous.

Narsu doesn't notice Forrest enter the room, and Forrest waits until he's almost right next to Narsu before speaking. His voice is so loud that he doesn't need a microphone.

FORREST

Captain Archer has been selected to command *Enterprise*, and that decision is final.

Narsu doesn't flinch the way a softer man might, but he isn't able to hide his surprise at Forrest's sudden appearance.

NARSU

But Admiral, the man has no real practical experience, and from what I've seen of him, he's not qualified to command this ship! Archer is exactly the sort of man General Sutherland was talking about!

(beat, firm and scornful)

There is no doubt in my mind that he could lead a group of hostile aliens here out of a misplaced sense of good will.

FORREST

(mildly annoyed)

You've met him once.

(MORE)

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

FORREST (CONT'D)

(frowning)

For all of five minutes from what I recall.

NARSU

All I need is five seconds to size someone up.

FORREST

Really?

(beat, not impressed)

It took me years to understand him.

(beat, to the audience)

No one has been more dedicated to this program than Jonathan Archer. His entire career has been focused on reaching this moment, of following his father's dream.

(beat, completely without doubt)

If anyone deserves to command the first warp five ship, it's him, and he has my full support.

The implication is clear; Forrest is throwing his considerable gravitas behind Archer. Narsu and Forrest glare at each other, but neither says anything. Before it can turn into an awkwardly long silence, SOVAL, the Vulcan ambassador to Earth leans toward his mic.

SOVAL

If I may interject, Admiral Forrest?

FORREST

(nodding)

Absolutely, Ambassador...

SOVAL

The Vulcan High Command concurs with several of Admiral Narsu's points. It is our belief that Captain Archer is too inexperienced for this job.

(beat)

Though, to be blunt, his appointment as commander of *Enterprise* is the least of our concerns.

There is a brief murmur among the humans in the crowd. We FOCUS on Sutherland as he leans toward one of his aids sitting next to him.

SUTHERLAND

(whispering sarcastically)

Here it comes.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

SOVAL (CONT'D)

The Vulcan High Command has been observing Earth's development with great interest and greater concern. It is an impressive feat to have recovered so quickly from the near extinction of your civilization, but we wonder if perhaps Earth is attempting to go too far, too quickly.

(beat)

Shortly after your Space Probe Agency was formed, you sent a series of probes into unexplored space, all of which have disappeared and all of which could have disastrous consequences upon an unprepared civilization

(beat, ominous)

Or upon Earth.

(beat, calm once more)

More recently, you've sent ships far less capable than the *Enterprise* out on long-range missions, a number of which simply disappeared. Not knowing what became of them should be cause for great concern.

(beat)

In our experience, we have discovered that, while many races are not belligerent, there is always the chance that you will discover a species that is aggressive and may lead them back to Earth.

(beat, upon the agreeing nods of many members of the military)

Alternatively, a peaceful race may mistake your attempts at exploration as the precursor to an invasion and act to defend themselves.

(beat)

Humanity, as a whole, is not yet ready for the deep exploration of space and someone like Captain Jonathan Archer, who lacks any practical experience, is hardly the logical choice to command such a mission.

NARSU

(sarcastically)

And, of course, by experienced you mean having served on one of your ships.

Soval either ignores or does not recognize the tone in Narsu's voice. Forrest does though, and cuts him a disapproving look.

SOVAL

Indeed, one of the reasons we began the exchange program with Earth, to give your people experience so they might some day explore the stars on their own terms. However, Earth has hardly reached that point yet, and we are concerned for your welfare.

(beat)

And for our own.

SUTHERLAND

Your own? It's not your problem if Earth is attacked.

(MORE)

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

SUTHERLAND (CONT'D)

(darkly)

Your government has already gone on record stating it wouldn't defend Earth if we were attacked.

SOVAL

No, Vulcan would not defend Earth from an outside invader again.

(beat)

It is our opinion that, in the event that such an attack did occur, it would be because of Earth's unnecessarily rapid expansion beyond your own borders.

(beat)

As to why this matters to Vulcan, we feel that is the logical course of action to advise species that have gained the ability to travel outside of their own home systems.

(beat, a slight hint of frustration in his voice)

Your continual disregard for our suggestions, no matter the subject, is troubling.

Forrest becomes mildly annoyed himself, as if he's heard this argument dozens of times before.

FORREST

Look, Ambassador, I don't care what the High Command thinks.

(beat, firmly)

We are ready and Captain Archer is going to lead the way.

SOVAL

It is obvious that you cannot be swayed from the course of action, no matter what our recommendations.

(beat, steepling his fingers)

Therefore, I would like to readdress the subject of Vulcan advisors being placed aboard.

NARSU

(hotly)

Absolutely not! The last thing we need on one of our ships is a bunch of Vulcans running around, questioning every task its crew performs and second guessing every decision its commander makes!

SOVAL

The advisors would be present to ensure the safety of the ship and its crew, not to interfere with daily operations.

Forrest shakes his head.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

FORREST

No, they would interfere, just like the advisors on every other one of our projects have interfered.

(beat)

The advisors on the Warp Five Project told me something every time I asked for their help, something that I've always remembered: we need to learn for ourselves.

(beat)

Enterprise has no room for people who have no purpose other than 'advising' and we both know they'll just get in the crew's way.

SOVAL

What then of the exchange program?

FORREST

(confused)

What about it?

SOVAL

Vulcan has had an exchange program with Earth for decades to provide Humans training and experience; it is only logical that the time has come to place Vulcan exchange officers on Earth ships.

NARSU

For what purpose?

(beat)

The experience you've given to our officers has been invaluable, but I don't know how that would work aboard our ships. These “exchange officers” sound like nothing more than advisors under a different name.

Soval raises both his eyebrows briefly in frustration.

SOVAL

(coolly)

If Earth feels it no longer needs Vulcan advice and needs to learn everything on its own, then there is no further need for the exchange program.

FORREST

(quickly)

Now let's be reasonable Ambassador...

SOVAL

I am being reasonable, Admiral. Earth feels that it needs to gain experience on its own terms, so logically there is no longer a need for an exchange program.

Forrest thinks for a moment, sighing heavily when he makes a decision.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

FORREST

You're putting me in a tough spot, Ambassador; I can't make that kind of decision without authorization from the full Senate.

SOVAL

Nonetheless, I must insist on a decision.

(beat)

In order for this to be a true exchange program, it must work both ways or it will be discontinued as an unnecessary expenditure of Vulcan resources.

(beat)

It is unfortunate to place you in this position Admiral, but I feel I have no other alternative.

(beat)

I believe three officers would satisfy my superiors.

FORREST

You're asking me to drop out officers already serving in their posts in favor of a Vulcan exchange officer.

There is more murmuring among the crowd, unhappy murmuring.

SOVAL

I understand and sympathize, Admiral; perhaps we can negotiate a compromise.

Soval begins working at the small laptop computer in front of him.

FORREST

(slowly, as if sensing a trap)

I'm not sure how.

SOVAL

It's my understanding that many of your senior officers serve in two or more positions.

FORREST

Yes, we do that to reduce the size of the crew, but... I don't really see how...

SOVAL

A single Vulcan exchange officer would be acceptable, providing he or she were part of the command crew, preferably the first officer.

(beat, ignoring the angry murmurs of the crowd)

According to your crew manifest, *Enterprise* does not yet have a science officer.

(wryly, he's got Forrest boxed in and knows it)

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

An important person to have on a mission of exploration. A Vulcan would be an ideal candidate to act as a science officer, particularly an experienced member of the Ministry of Science.

There is a long pause as Forrest considers his options.

FORREST

(resigned)

I'll see what I can do.

Soval steeples his fingers and inclines his head in appreciation. Forrest looks Soval right in the eye and nods in return, but his expression makes it crystal clear to Soval that he isn't pleased. He turns and briskly walks out of the uncomfortable room, on his way now to tell Archer the bad news. We change angles and focus on him as he walks past us.

FORREST

(mumbling to himself)

Jon and Trip aren't going to like this...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO – VULCAN EMBASSY

It's well into the evening, with the lights of the embassy grounds working hard to illuminate the impressive building and its small garden. T'POL, Soval's aid, is exiting the front doors of the large building after an especially exhausting day of work. She admires the garden on her way out, especially a small Bonsai-like tree. She only dully notices Soval making his way up the sidewalk toward her, but she manages to put on her best face for him.

T'POL

(in Vulcan)

[You are here late, Ambassador.]

(beat)

[Is it work related?]

SOVAL

(in Vulcan)

[In a manner of speaking.]

(beat)

[I have something I need to discuss with you. Walk with me, T'Pol.]

Soval turns and the two of them walk slowly down the sidewalk.

SOVAL

[I thought I might find you here.]

T'Pol nods.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

T’POL

[My work with the Human politicians has become quite time consuming.]
(beat)

[Today, their Senate was particularly ... obtuse regarding the placement of one of our officers on their newest ship.]

SOVAL

[Did you complete the transfer documents for the exchange officer?]

T’POL

[Yes. They are ready for the applicant.]

SOVAL

[Excellent.]
(beat)

[Tomorrow morning I want you to fill them out for yourself.]

T’Pol stops suddenly and raises a questioning eyebrow at Soval.

T’POL

[Myself?]
(beat)

[Has my work become unsatisfactory enough to warrant this transfer?]

Soval looks at T’Pol with as much concern as a Vulcan can display.

SOVAL

[No.]
(beat)

[Your dedication to your duties is impressive and it is this dedication and your experience with the Humans which makes you uniquely qualified for this role.]

(wryly)

[In addition to your previous assignment with the Ministry of Science.]

T’Pol looks down in what is very clearly disappointment.

SOVAL

[I need you to do this, for me, T’Pol.]

T’Pol looks back up at her mentor stoically.

T’POL

[I will perform my duties to the best of my ability, Ambassador.]

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Soval nods his head in approval.

SOVAL

[You have been reinstated to your former rank, Sub-Commander. Report to me tomorrow at 0800 hours to complete your transfer documents.]

Soval turns and walks away, leaving T’Pol alone on the sidewalk. She looks up at the stars, wondering what difficulties now lay ahead.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – SICKBAY

Trip strides into Sickbay, a smile on his face. DOCTOR PHLOX, tending to one of the living members of his medical supplies, returns the smile. DOCTOR JEREMY LUCAS, working on the large CAT-scan like IMAGING CHAMBER, looks grumpy and doesn’t even acknowledge Trip’s presence.

TRIP

Well Doc, I don’t know what you gave me last night, but it sure did the trick.

Phlox opens his mouth to answer, but having taken a look at the wriggling creature Phlox is feeding, Trip stops him.

TRIP

No, wait, maybe I don’t want to know.

Phlox laughs heartily, which helps Trip regain some of the color in his face.

PHLOX

As you wish, Commander, though it wasn’t anything from one of my little helpers here if that’s what you were thinking.

Trip smiles again.

TRIP

Call me Trip.

PHLOX

So, Trip, am I to understand that you slept well last night?

TRIP

Hell yeah, that’s the best sleep I’ve gotten in as long as I can remember.
(joking)

I don’t suppose you could give me some of those for every night could ya?

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

PHLOX

(teasing)

Are you sure you want me to?

Lucas takes this moment to finally look up, glaring at Phlox a moment before looking angrily at Trip and interrupting.

LUCAS

Regulations forbid that, Sir, to prevent addiction to the sleep aids.

Trip loses a little of his cheeriness as he briefly turns his attention to Lucas.

TRIP

Whatever you say, Doctor.

Lucas shakes his head and goes back to the imaging scanner. Trip watches him a moment before bringing his attention back to Phlox.

TRIP (CONT'D)

Anyway, I was pretty interested in what we talked about last night; I had no idea that marriage could be so complicated.

(beat, shaking his head)

Wow, I can't imagine having three wives.

PHLOX

Hmmm... Well, it can be trying at times, but it certainly has its rewards.

Trip chuckles.

TRIP

I don't doubt it.

(beat)

I'm not knocking it, it's just that I think I'd be lucky to get one woman who'd put up with me.

PHLOX

Oh come now, Trip, surely there has to be someone out there who would love being with a dashing young engineer such as yourself.

Trip grins, a smart retort on the tip of his tongue, but the sound of Archer's voice over the comm. system interrupts him.

ARCHER (COMM VOICE)

Archer to Commander Tucker.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Trip walks over to the nearest comm. panel and flips the “talk” switch to “on”.

TRIP

Tucker here, go ahead, Cap’n.

ARCHER (COMM VOICE)

I need you to report to my office.

(beat)

Something important has come up.

TRIP

(concerned)

Okay, I’m on my way.

Trip switches the comm. off, pausing a moment to wonder what could have come up before turning back to Phlox.

TRIP

Sorry Doc, duty calls.

PHLOX

Stop by the mess hall later if you get a chance.

TRIP

I’ll do that, thanks, Doc.

Trip turns and exits the room. Phlox goes back to tending his “helper”.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – ARCHER’S OFFICE

Archer’s office is small almost to the point of being uncomfortable, space on a ship like the *Enterprise* being at a premium. Archer sits behind his desk, facing the main entrance, which we focus on as Trip enters the room. He walks up to one of the two chairs in front of Archer’s desk and looks at his friend and captain with concern.

TRIP

What is it, Cap’n?

ARCHER

(sympathetically)

You’re going to want to sit down for this one, Trip.

Trip does so, his concern deepening.

TRIP

Uh-oh, don’t tell me something else is broken and I have to go fix it.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ARCHER

No, it's not like that, it's...

(beat, sighing)

We're getting a Vulcan exchange officer and she's going to be here this morning. And I thought I better tell you before she got here that...

Archer is clearly frustrated and doesn't want to hurt Trip, but Trip desperately wants to hear it now.

TRIP

Tell me what? How much worse can it get than having to put up with a Vulcan?

ARCHER

She's going to be our new Science Officer, and as part of the compromise Command made with the Vulcans last night, she's also being assigned as First Officer, or we would have had to start bumping people to take on more Vulcans.

Trips face turns beet red as his anger swells.

TRIP

What!? This Vulcan is taking my spot? How the hell could they have done this over politics?

ARCHER

I know, Trip, you're the only one who deserves to be my first officer after all the work you've done on this project, but it's out of my hands. If there was anything I could do...

TRIP

I know.

(beat, calming)

It doesn't make it any easier though.

ARCHER

Hey, if you think you have it hard, I'm the one who probably has to put up with a spy to second-guess my every decision.

The comm. panel on Archer's desk beeps. Archer switches it on.

ARCHER

This is the Captain, what is it?

SHUTTLE CONTROLLER (COMM VOICE)

The shuttle is aboard now, Sir. She's on her way up.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

Very well.

Archer switches the comm. off, leans back in his chair and sighs heavily.

TRIP

(sarcastically)

Well this should be interestin'...

ARCHER

Yeah...

We focus on the main entrance, watching and waiting, until the door chime sounds.

ARCHER

Enter!

The newly reinstated SUB-COMMANDER T'POL, now dressed in a Vulcan uniform, cautiously enters the room. She immediately senses the hostility directed at her from Trip and Archer and tenses up. She stands in front of Archer's desk and clasps her hands behind her back.

T'POL

Sub-Commander T'Pol reporting for duty, Captain.

ARCHER

(not sounding very welcoming)

Welcome aboard, Sub-Commander. I trust you've been briefed about your new duties.

T'POL

Yes, Captain; I was told I'd be responsible for the science staff, as well as your executive officer.

ARCHER

That's right.

(beat)

Let me introduce you to the ship's Chief Engineer, Commander Charles Tucker the Third.

Trip stands up and faces T'Pol, who is almost a head shorter than he is.

TRIP

And former first officer...

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Trip offers his hand to her. T’Pol merely looks at it a moment, raises an eyebrow, and faces Archer again.

T’POL

If that is all, Captain, I’d like to meet my new department heads, and familiarize myself with the ship.

ARCHER

I guess we’re done here.
(beat, coolly)
Dismissed.

T’Pol turns on her heel and quickly exits the room, leaving Trip and Archer to fume over their new Vulcan crewmate. As the door slides shut, Trip shakes his head in annoyance.

TRIP

(sarcastically)
Yep. This is goin’ to be real interestin’...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE – CLOSE TO JUPITER

We watch as the *Enterprise* slowly approaches, then PAN as the ship passes us, getting a good look at the new ship with the giant gas planet coming into view and taking up most of the background. The ship heads away from us now as we finish our pan, Jupiter moving out of sight to the left side of the screen.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

The full bridge crew is present and accounted for, including T’Pol, now sitting at the Science station, her new post. There is also a Junior Lieutenant serving as Navigator and a full Lieutenant monitoring the ship’s Operations in their shared niche at the back of the Bridge. Those who can see the main viewscreen watch it, and those who can’t watch on smaller monitors at their stations. We focus on the main viewscreen and see that it’s Zefram Cochrane giving a speech at a podium – a documentary film.

COCHRANE

Today is a momentous day, as we, the people of Earth unite together for a common goal...that of exploration. We are at the very brink of exploring beyond the confines of this system, out into the deep recesses of space...in search of the unknown.

We watch the different crew members as they react to Cochrane’s words, finishing with T’Pol as she considers what the Human has to say, and what it might mean for her new crewmates.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – MESS HALL

The Mess Hall is pretty well packed with a mixture of both UESPA and UEM crewmembers, but we notice that no one is eating, and those still in the chow line have stopped. We PAN to see what they are all looking at, and see that a projection screen has been pulled down along one of the walls with Cochrane on it.

COCHRANE (CONT’D)

When I look up at the stars I can't help but dream, and I wish I was a poet so I could convey to you those dreams. Then I realize, I don't have to be a poet, because we've all had those dreams; the desire to reach out, to discover, to learn! Those things that drive us to make these great accomplishments that allow us to further ourselves and our great civilization.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – ENGINEERING

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

We get our first look at the impressive engine room, which, though technically the largest room on the ship after the cargo bays, is actually quite cramped, filled with the huge matter/antimatter injectors that flank the large dilithium reaction chamber, as well as various other conduits carrying vital fuel and power in and out of the room. There are monitoring stations everywhere that have at least one engineer at them. Trip sits at the large, main monitoring console at the front of the room, with his trusted assistant, LIEUTENANT JACOB KELBY, standing next to him as they both listen to the comm. system. There is no viewscreen here, but everyone has still stopped what they were doing to listen.

COCHRANE (CONT'D, COMM VOICE)

Behind me is a building, one that will contain the hundreds of minds that will work day and night to make those dreams come true. To create, for the people of Earth, ships that will take us to distant stars, so that we might fulfill our destiny. I promise you that I will not rest until this goal is accomplished, and I ask that all of you struggle right alongside me. Through hard work and dedication, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

Trip looks up towards the ceiling, smiling as he beams with pride at the fruits of his own labor, all around him.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

Reed's expression remains rather dubious and unenthusiastic.

REED

(flatly)

Very inspiring, Sir.

T'Pol glances at Reed, then at Archer, but remains unreadable. Having seen whatever she was interested in, she turns in her seat and focuses on the Science panel. Archer rolls his eyes and switches on the comm. panel.

ARCHER

Nearly a century after his historic flight, we're finally living up to Doctor Zefram Cochrane's vision. Though we might not be going to the most glamorous place in the galaxy, we're still reaching out to the stars and exploring.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – SICKBAY

Phlox and Lucas stand in Sickbay listening, with a noticeable distance between them.

ARCHER (COMM VOICE, CONT'D)

We're living up to our credo of seeking out new life and new civilizations, and boldly going where no Human has ever gone before.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

LUCAS

(mumbling sarcastically)

More like boldly going where probes have gone before.

Phlox looks at his colleague with a somewhat confused look on his face, not at all understanding why Lucas shouldn't be as excited as he is.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – ENGINEERING

Trip and Kelby continue to listen in front of the large main console.

ARCHER (COMM VOICE, CONT'D)

We have a lot of great expectations to live up to, and I expect the best out of everyone.

(beat)

Mister Tucker, it's time to stretch our legs.

Trip turns on his comm. panel.

TRIP

Aye Cap'n, and let's see if we can't break a few speed records while we're at it.

ARCHER (COMM VOICE)

Promise?

(beat)

Let's see what she's got. Archer out.

Kelby immediately starts adjusting the various controls and throttle-like levers on the main console. Gauges come to life and start registering higher levels as the energy audibly builds up in the warp core. Trip gets up and leans on the railing facing aft to address his fellow engineers.

TRIP

Alright, let's get to work! Let's show the cap'n what we can do!

Inspired by Trip's own version of a pep talk, the engineers go to work, some standing at consoles, working them, and others scrambling to other parts of the room, climbing up ladders and using catwalks to get at various components to make adjustments and to monitor them as they run at full capacity.

EXT. SPACE

The *Enterprise* flies away from us in open space, then suddenly stretches out, disappearing in a flash of light as it goes to warp.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Although most of them have seen it before, the Humans watch with a certain sense of awe at the streaks of light on the viewscreen as they continue to accelerate. Only T’Pol remains unimpressed, and keeps herself busy at the Science console. Hoshi and Travis are T’Pol’s complete opposite, as the most excited crewmembers on the Bridge. Travis manages to take his eyes off the viewscreen to watch the electronic needles on the gauges in front of him continue to rise, well past anything he’s ever seen before.

TRAVIS

(excited)

Warp two-point-five....warp three.....warp four.....warp five...warp five-point-two!

(beat)

We’ve stopped accelerating Captain.

Archer permits himself a smile.

ARCHER

(to himself)

Quite a ship you’ve built here, Trip.

Hoshi can’t take her eyes off the viewscreen, her eyes like saucers.

HOSHI

(in awe)

It’s so beautiful; I never imagined it’d be anything like this.

ARCHER

And its beauty never fades, Ensign.

(beat)

So, is it as bad as you thought it would be?

Hoshi shakes her head, never looking away from the viewscreen. Travis turns and looks at Hoshi, then at Archer with a dumbfounded look on his face.

ARCHER

Oh, that's right, you don't know.

(beat, smiles)

This is Ensign Sato's first time outside of the system, and her first trip at warp.

Hoshi finally looks away from the viewscreen, blushing. Archer just smiles and gives her a wink. Everyone else, including T’Pol, looks at Hoshi, not sure what to say. This only makes Hoshi feel even more embarrassed at her wetness behind the ears, and she blushes another shade of red before turning to her console. Archer frowns, reconsidering his little announcement. Everyone’s a little surprised by who finally breaks the silence.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

REED

Well, there’s a first time for everything.

Hoshi turns and looks at Reed. He gives her a comforting smile.

REED

Hope it’s a memory to last a lifetime.

Hoshi laughs a little nervously.

HOSHI

Somehow I think it will be.

EXT. SPACE

The *Enterprise* flies by us at warp speed.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – MESS HALL

There’s a different bunch of people in the Mess Hall than last time, and it isn’t as full. We see a few faces that we will come to recognize as regulars, including FIRST LIEUTENANT GEORGES PICARD, Reed’s Vice Commander for the UEM Security Forces, FIRST LIEUTENANT SUN CHEN, FIRST LIEUTENANT ALESSANDRA “OLIVE” ALVES, and SECOND LIEUTENANT AMANDA COLE, who sit in their own corner of the room along with a few more enlisted SFs. Reed sits at a table away by himself, working on a PADD as he eats. There are a few UESPA crewmembers scattered throughout the room, including the Navigator and Ops Manager. T’Pol sits unobtrusively in the corner farthest from the SFs, herself working on a PADD as she eats a salad. We pan to see Phlox enter, followed closely by ENSIGN ELIZABETH CUTLER.

CUTLER

(excited)

...Actually I wouldn’t mind a look at that little menagerie you have there in Sickbay.

PHLOX

Well, stop by Sickbay later and I’ll see what I can do.

(beat)

Anything to get you interested in medicine.

Cutler pretends to be insulted and gives his arm a playful little push as they stand in the chow line. She fails to notice the slightly uncomfortable look on his face at the physical contact.

CUTLER

Now we have been through this, Doctor; I’m an exobiologist, not a nurse.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Phlox smiles innocently as the white-clad dining services people behind the serving counter dish them up.

PHLOX

I don't recall saying anything about being a nurse.

Cutler gives him an amused look and shakes her head. The two of them turn and look for a place to sit down. They can't help but notice T'Pol sitting in self-isolation. Cutler exchanges a sympathetic look with Phlox.

CUTLER

(softly)

She looks so lonely.

PHLOX

Vulcans do tend to be somewhat self-isolating, but I don't think it would hurt if we gave her a little company.

Phlox and Cutler walk up to T'Pol's table and wait for her to look up from her padd.

PHLOX

May we join you, Sub-Commander?

T'Pol considers the two of them for a moment; honestly surprised that anyone on this ship would want anything to do with her.

T'POL

I can tolerate your presence.

PHLOX

(jovially)

Well, that's a start.

Phlox plops down without a fuss, but Cutler is visibly uncomfortable as she takes a seat at the simple round table.

CUTLER

You looked a little lonely over here by yourself.

T'Pol goes back to her padd before answering.

T'POL

Loneliness is a Human emotion; Vulcans do not share such weaknesses.

(beat)

It was logical for me to use this time accomplish certain unfinished work; companionship is unnecessary.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Cutler starts on her dinner, taking small, tentative bites and nibbling at them. She looks nervously at Phlox. Phlox just eyes T’Pol thoughtfully.

PHLOX

I find that a little hard to believe that you are completely without any emotion. I haven’t been around Vulcans for very long, but from what I’ve seen they can be quite emotional, if somewhat aloof.

T’Pol’s eyebrows go up in shock and surprise, and she looks up from her padd at the Denobulan doctor with wide eyes. Her “emotional” display doesn’t last too long, but it’s enough to prove Phlox right, and if we look close enough, we can tell that T’Pol is actually a little insulted by his assertion.

T’POL

(forcefully)

Vulcans learned long ago the dangers of allowing emotions to rule us. Before Surak brought logic, we devastated our planet and nearly caused our own extinction.

(beat, calmed down)

Since that time, all emotions have been suppressed.

(beat)

Only then were we able to advance as a species.

Cutler is a little unsure if she’s been insulted or not. Phlox sits back and watches with interest.

CUTLER

Humans have come pretty far since First Contact.

T’POL

Indeed. Your progress in such a short span of time is quite impressive if a little disconcerting.

CUTLER

(confused)

Disconcerting?

T’Pol considers her answer, but she never gets a chance to respond.

PHLOX

(thoughtfully, with surprising insight)

So you isolated yourself from the rest of the crew, intending to stay out of their way.

(beat)

Why is that?

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'Pol again considers her answer, as if she hadn't really given it much thought.

T'POL

I couldn't help but sense a certain amount of... hostility directed toward me.

(beat)

It is likely due to my abrupt assignment to this vessel. I did not wish to exacerbate the situation by...

(beat, slightest of frowns)

I did not want the crew to think that I was forcing them to accept my presence.

Phlox smiles.

PHLOX

No one forced us to socialize with you, Sub-Commander. We simply thought you could use the company.

T'Pol is a little surprised, but in a pleasant way. She looks at Cutler, who smiles herself in between bites of her dinner.

T'POL

(raising an eyebrow)

You don't find my presence offensive?

PHLOX

On the contrary, I'm actually finding you to be quite interesting.

CUTLER

I'm actually looking forward to working with you, Commander; I haven't worked with any Vulcans before.

T'POL

(matter-of-factly)

Sub-Commander.

CUTLER

Pardon?

T'POL

I am not a full Commander, as I have not yet earned that rank; I hold the rank of Sub-Commander.

CUTLER

Right, but I thought I'd call you Commander for short.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

T’POL

It’s a matter of protocol; much in the same way I wouldn’t refer to you by another rank, or by a contracted name.

CUTLER

(confused)
A nickname?

T’POL

As I understand it.

CUTLER

Right, but this isn’t a Vulcan ship...

T’POL

A fact of which I am painfully aware.

Cutler flinches, which doesn’t escape T’Pol’s notice; she almost seems to regret saying that.

CUTLER

I just meant that around here when we verbally address someone informally, we normally don’t use full rank.

T’Pol considers what Cutler said for a brief moment.

T’POL

Still, I must ask that you address me by my proper rank, Ensign.

CUTLER

(disappointed)
Okay...
(beat, more upbeat)
I’m still looking forward to working with you though.

T’POL

(ambiguously)
Indeed...

We change angles, now viewing the trio from across the room. They continue to talk, but we can’t hear them from this far away. We pan to see the group of SFs silently watching them as they eat. We focus on Olive in the foreground as we continue to pan, leaving only the SFs in view.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

OLIVE

(sarcastically)

Well, they seem to be getting along well.

There are a few grunts of agreement from around the table.

PICARD

(darkly)

I can't believe UESPA actually agreed to put a Vulcan on the crew.

(sourly)

Guess I shouldn't be surprised though; it's not like UESPA is actually effective.

(softly)

Naïve morons.

CHEN

And of course it's up to us now to baby-sit them.

COLE

And now this Vulcan.

Cole eyes T'Pol suspiciously.

COLE

Damned Vulcans. They're so condescending and-

REED'S VOICE

That's about enough of that.

We pan to follow as everyone's heads turn to look at the origin of the voice, and see that Reed has put down his padd and is looking sternly at his SFs.

REED (CONT'D)

We have a job to do, and it's time to accept that fact or this is going to be the longest tour you have ever served. It doesn't matter what we think of it, or if we like it, we have our orders, handed down to us from our Commander-in-Chief, and we will obey them.

(beat)

We work for this ship now, and its crew, and we will do our job to the best of our ability, without complaint. Am I making myself clear?

PICARD

(grudgingly)

Yes Sir.

We focus for a moment on the SFs' faces, which have hardened with the reality of the situation, which not one of them likes.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – CAPTAIN’S PRIVATE DINING ROOM

SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER MARCUS “MIDAS” LAFAYETTE, the senior chef on the *Enterprise*, enters the room, carrying four trays. We pan to follow him the short distance to the small rectangular table in the cramped room, which Archer, Trip, Hoshi, and Travis sit at.

LAFAYETTE

Order’s up!

TRIP

(joking)
‘Bout time too!

Trip rubs his hands in anticipation, but he certainly isn’t the only one looking forward to the chef’s cooking. Lafayette starts placing the trays on the table.

ARCHER

More of the same great cooking Midas?

Lafayette smiles broadly.

LAFAYETTE

Oh, always.
(beat)

And you better enjoy this catfish while it lasts, Commander, I didn’t have room for many of them in the freezer.

TRIP

Don’t worry, Chef, I’ll do my best.

Trip grabs his knife and fork and eagerly starts cutting his roasted catfish into smaller pieces.

TRAVIS

It sure was exciting hitting that throttle and seeing the numbers get that high that fast.

(beat)
I’ve lived my whole life on starships, but I’ve never been on one this fast and responsive.

Trip looks up from his catfish at Travis. He finishes chewing and swallows before replying; obviously, his mother taught him manners.

TRIP

(proudly)
I do what I can.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Hoshi gives an expression of distaste directed toward Trip's catfish, but quickly turns her attention back to Travis.

HOSHI

(confused)

You've really lived your whole life in space?

Lafayette grunts and jerks his thumb towards Travis.

LAFAYETTE

This kid has been out in the black almost as long as I have.

Travis laughs at Lafayette's joke, but Archer notes Hoshi's growing confusion.

ARCHER

Ensign Mayweather here is a “boomer”; he was born on a starship and grew up on one. He's also a damn fine pilot.

TRAVIS

And to think my brother told me I'd never amount to anything.

(grins broadly)

I learned how to fly on the old rust-bucket cargo ship that I grew up on, but now I can fly anything from a shuttlepod to a ship like this.

Travis looks about the room with pride at how far he's come. Hoshi takes the opportunity to start making small talk that we can't quite make out, but no doubt dealing with Travis's childhood. Archer lets them get to know each other and turns his attention back to Trip and smiles as he sees his old friend hungrily devouring his catfish. Lafayette watches with him and shakes his head.

LAFAYETTE

(idly)

I guess I should take that as a compliment.

ARCHER

Oh, of course, why do you think everyone calls you Midas? Everything you touch turns to gold.

LAFAYETTE

(grumbling)

I still have some reservations over that old nickname. It's good that they all like my cookin', but back in my day all the head cooks were called “cookie”, and I always thought that sounded better. But someone decided that sounded too “military” so they had to come up with something else for me.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ARCHER

(thoughtfully)

Speaking of...

(beat)

What do you think of our new arrangement with the military?

Lafayette sighs heavily and rolls his eyes.

LAFAYETTE

Can you believe I almost joined the military? Something to get me out in space and away from home of course. I just wanted to see the stars, but the military doesn't seem all that interested in really taking the time to do that.

(beat, sighs)

I guess I still don't think much of them, and this bunch is no different. They have this attitude towards us I just can't stand, like standing around “running security” makes them better than all of us somehow.

Travis and Hoshi have stopped talking and are now listening. Trip has even stopped eating and is now intently listening to Lafayette talk. It's not hard to tell that everyone in the room agrees with him.

LAFAYETTE

Oh well, at least they seem to like the food.

(smirks)

It's probably ten times better than the crap they serve on UEM ships.

Archer chuckles.

ARCHER

Yeah... I can't say I much care for having them on my ship either; it's like having someone constantly looking over your shoulder.

(beat, frowning)

And then there's that Vulcan...

LAFAYETTE

She's not too bad from what little I've seen of her. Real quiet that one, and keeps to herself when she's in the mess hall.

Archer shakes his head, obviously not agreeing with the resident “old man” on this one. Archer decides to change the subject and notices that Trip is no longer eating.

ARCHER

So how's my ship holding up Trip? Any signs of the trouble we had before?

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TRIP

Nope, my ship is doing pretty good this time around. I hope it keeps up like this for a while.

Trip smiles and spears another chunk of catfish with his fork.

TRIP (CONT'D)

I almost don't know what to do with myself.

Archer smiles.

ARCHER

I'm sure you'll think of something.

(beat)

Can we keep this speed up indefinitely?

Trip shakes his head.

TRIP

Not indefinitely, but we'll be able to hold it 'til we get to where we're going.

(beat)

And before you ask, no, I wouldn't keep doing this all the time. Probably more like something between warp four-point-five and-

COMM OFFICER (COMM VOICE)

(interrupting)

Captain, Command is calling over subspace; they say it's urgent.

Archer gets up and goes to the room's comm. panel, which is next to a small monitor on the wall. He switches it on.

ARCHER

Put it through down here.

The monitor changes form its normal status display to show Archer two familiar faces: Forrest and Narsu.

ARCHER

Gentlemen, something I can do for you?

FORREST

Something for Earth, Jon; something you're not going to like any more than I do.

ARCHER

What is it?

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

NARSU

Alpha Centauri has rebelled and declared its independence.

ARCHER

(sarcastically)

Again?

NARSU

(sternly)

Yes, again. You need to pay attention now, Captain.

(beat)

This time they have expelled all ships and local personnel not loyal to their cause, and have brought in an alien force to do their fighting for them.

Archer’s features grow concerned.

FORREST

The military is assembling a fleet to retake the system, but it will take them some time to get organized. In the mean time, *Enterprise* is the most capable ship anywhere near Alpha Centauri. You’re armed, and you have a security detail on board.

(beat)

The President has authorized you to take a police action if necessary, but until the UEM task force gets there, you’re on your own. Attempt to negotiate a peaceful resolution, but make it clear that they must stand down if bloodshed is to be avoided.

(beat, sighs)

If necessary, land your contingent of Security Forces, along with as many crewmembers as you can spare and arrest the Centaurian government officials.

ARCHER

What about the aliens they’ve recruited?

NARSU

We’re hoping they are just posturing, but if they do fire on you, defend yourself with any force necessary until the task force arrives.

ARCHER

(grimly)

You’re right, Admiral Forrest; I don’t like this, not one bit.

FORREST

I understand, Captain, but this comes straight from the President; they’re forcing his hand.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

FORREST (CONT'D)

Contact us after you've established a presence in the system, and give us any intelligence you learn about those aliens.

ARCHER

Understood, *Enterprise* out.

The monitor goes back to its status report. Archer turns to the others, whose expressions mirror his own concern.

ARCHER

I'm sorry to cut dinner short, but I need all of you to report back to your posts.

(beat)

Ensign Mayweather, alter course and take us to Alpha Centauri.

TRAVIS

Aye Sir.

Travis gets up and exits the room, followed closely by Hoshi.

ARCHER

Trip, I need you down in Engineering; make sure this ship doesn't fly apart on us because I want you to push the engines as hard as you can.

TRIP

I'll see what I can do, Cap'n.

Trip pushes himself away from the table, but stops and looks at Lafayette.

TRIP

Can you...

Lafayette puts his hand up to stop him.

LAFAYETTE

Don't worry; I'll take care of your damn fish for you so you can finish it later.

Trip grins broadly and finishes getting up, brushing himself off as he heads out of the room. Lafayette loses his hardened expression for a moment as he regards Archer.

LAFAYETTE

Don't worry, Captain; I'm sure everything will work out, you'll see.

ARCHER

I hope you're right, Midas.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Archer turns and exits the room, leaving Lafayette to clean up.

EXT. SPACE

The *Enterprise* flies by us at warp speed, somehow looking menacing now as it goes to its new mission.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

Everyone is at their posts again, all of them working intently on their consoles. We watch over Archer’s shoulder as the Navigator checks his “pool table” navigation chart.

NAVIGATOR

Captain, we’re closing on the system.

We focus on Archer’s grim features.

ARCHER

Helm, go to impulse.

(beat)

Let’s see if we can approach unnoticed.

TRAVIS

Aye Sir.

We watch the main viewscreen as the streaking stars slow down and become simple points of light again.

ARCHER

Sub-Commander, do we have any readings on the alien ships yet?

T’Pol leans over her console, looking into her holographic scanner and activating it. We can see the bluish light of the scanner shine across her eyes as she squints into it.

T’POL

Scanning....

(beat)

Yes Captain, initial readings indicate twenty ships of various sizes.

T’Pol straightens and makes eye contact with Archer.

T’POL

Energy signatures suggest Tellarite vessels.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

(confused)
Tellarites?

T'POL

A humanoid race the Vulcan Science Ministry made contact with over a century ago.

(beat)
They are a... crude species, ruled by emotions.

ARCHER

(critically)
You mean like Humans.

T'Pol raises an eyebrow.

T'POL

Human behavior is significantly more logical than Tellarite behavior.

ARCHER

(cynically)
I guess I should take that as a compliment.

T'POL

Indeed. However, Tellarite technology is far more advanced than Human technology; they've undoubtedly detected our presence by now.

As if on queue, a beeping comes from Hoshi's panel. Hoshi puts her hand to her ear, listening over her earpiece briefly before turning to face Archer.

HOSHI

The Tellarites are hailing us Captain, and demanding that we leave the system.

ARCHER

(to himself)
Fat chance.
(beat)
Put them on screen, Ensign.

The angry porcine face of the TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN appears on the main viewscreen.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

Withdraw at once Earther, or we will destroy that puny ship of yours.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Archer is momentarily surprised at the fact that the Tellarite speaks English but his surprise is quickly replaced by anger that he keeps in check...barely. He isn't able to hide it completely.

ARCHER

This is Captain Jonathan Archer of the United Earth Ship *Enterprise*. You are the invader here, interfering in an internal matter. Your presence here is construed an act of war against United Earth, and you are ordered to withdraw immediately. If you do, this incident will be overlooked, and no further action will be taken on our part.

The Tellarite laughs at Archer.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

Are you trying to confuse me with your fancy talk Earther? We have a contract with the Alpha Centauri and we intend to keep it.

(beat, aggressively)

Any incoming Earther ships are to be expelled, and your pathetic little toy ship is no exception. Get out of here if you know what's good for you.

ARCHER

We are not a violent people...

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

What!? Pathetic....

Archer begins to lose his temper, and he strains his voice to keep a professional tone.

ARCHER

...But we will use any and all force at our disposal if you force us to. Comply with our orders or face the consequences.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

What consequences? Are you delusional Earther? Do you think you command a battleship?

The Tellarite bellows with laughter again, making Archer's brow furrow with his anger at having to deal with this insulting character.

ARCHER

I've heard enough; Ensign Sato, end transmission.

Hoshi complies and the viewscreen returns to the starfield. Archer gives T'Pol a frustrated look.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

Crude?

(beat)

Boy do you ever understate.

T'POL

As I said, they are ruled by their emotions. The only way to successfully negotiate with them is to out-insult them without resorting to personal attacks. Once their leader has become sufficiently impressed, headway can be made with them. However, if you fail to impress him, he will consider you weak and attack.

ARCHER

(critically)

Are you kidding me? I have to out-insult him?

T'Pol says nothing but inclines an eyebrow at Archer's tone; it is the only indication of her annoyance with his aggressive behavior toward her. Archer turns his attention back to Hoshi.

ARCHER

Get that Tellarite Captain back on screen.

The Tellarite Fleet Captain appears again, looking smug.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

What is it now, Earther? Back to make more idle threats?

Archer stands up for emphasis, glowering at the Tellarite. He's a little smug himself, thinking that he knows the game now.

ARCHER

I'm giving you one last chance to leave before I have to blow apart that rickety tub you call a ship.

The corners of Archer's mouth curl slightly upwards as the Tellarite on the viewscreen actually looks a little impressed.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

It's up to you, Captain; back down or I'll put your ship on the junk heap where it belongs.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

(enjoying the game)

I hear a lot of talk, Earther, but we have shuttles that are tougher than that garbage scow you're flying around in.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

(cocky)

Don't let that thick skull of yours keep you from making the right decision, Captain. If I have to, I'll come over there and kick your fat ass myself.

The Tellarite is obviously insulted by Archer's personal barb. Insulting one's ship is one thing, but Archer crossed the line.

T'POL

(warning)

Captain....

Archer gives her the briefest of glares, silencing her without words. She watches the situation develop with a sense of helplessness.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

(suddenly dangerous)

What did you say, Human?

Archer continues, oblivious of his mistake.

ARCHER

You heard me. Or are your ears not working either?

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

(coldly)

You have one minute to vacate this system.

The viewscreen goes blank again and Archer glances at T'Pol who is already working her scanner.

T'POL

They are charging weapons, Captain.

Archer glares at her for a half-second.

ARCHER

(under his breath)

Dammit.

(louder)

Major Reed, sound battle stations.

Reed stares back at Archer for a moment, finding it hard to believe that this civvie is actually prepared to do what he agrees is necessary. He's already reconsidering his view of Archer as he works his console. The bridge dims, illuminated now only in red light. Reed sounds the appropriate klaxon three times before switching on his comm. panel.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

REED

Attention all hands, report to battle stations; all hands to battle stations.

Reed checks his console.

REED

Laser cannons and plasma batteries coming online, Captain.

ARCHER

Polarize the hull and load missile launchers.

Reed works his console again.

EXT. SPACE

We focus on the *Enterprise's* hull as blast shutters slide closed over all the viewports. To finish it off, much larger doors slowly slide closed over the exposed warp coils of the nacelle, leaving only the bulky plasma injectors exposed.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* - BRIDGE

REED

Hull armor fully polarized; missile launchers ready to fire. Fire control teams report plasma batteries also ready to fire.

T'Pol grows more worried by the moment.

T'POL

Captain, I highly recommend against this course of action; Tellarite offensive and defensive capabilities far outstrip this vessel's.

(beat)

The logical course of action is to retreat.

Archer cuts T'Pol a look.

ARCHER

This isn't open to discussion anymore.

(beat, soft but dangerous-sounding)

Mind your panel and do your damn job, Sub-Commander. If and when I want your opinion I'll ask for it. Understood?

T'Pol blinks, totally taken off guard by Archer's outburst. Her face hardens; she isn't going to forget this anytime soon.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL

(tightly)
Yes Captain.

Archer sits down in his command chair again, and pulls out the four-point seat restraints, buckling them at his chest. Reed frowns as he pulls on his own restraints, his opinion of Archer continues to be somewhat mixed; as career military, he knows that disagreements between the commanding officer and the executive officer should take place behind closed doors, not in plain sight of everyone else. He turns to give Archer a disapproving look, but the captain has his mind on the coming battle and doesn't notice. Travis has been staring at the viewscreen the entire time though, a little shell-shocked by the growing seriousness of their situation.

ARCHER

(calmer)
You better get your restraints on too, Ensign Mayweather.

Travis slowly becomes aware of his surroundings again, and fumbles with his restraints. An uncomfortable silence fills the room.

ARCHER

What are they up to?

Reed checks his holographic viewer, even though T'Pol is already checking her own.

REED

Two ships are breaking off and moving to intercept.

ARCHER

On screen.

The viewscreen changes, offering a closer view of the two black ships moving in formation toward the screen. Both of them look more than a match for *Enterprise*.

ARCHER

Tactical analysis?

REED

Multiple particle weapons, indeterminate missile capability.

ARCHER

Stay on course.

REED

(warning)
Captain, I'd rather not wait to see what their weapons can do to us.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ARCHER

This isn't a warship, Mister Reed; it would exceed our orders to fire the first shot.

Reed can only frown – the use of 'Mister' doesn't sit well with him – and go back to his console.

REED

They're targeting us...

An alarm sounds on Reed's panel.

REED

(off console)

They're opening fire!

EXT. SPACE

Both Tellarite ships fire gold beams of light, and we PAN to see them strike *Enterprise*. Electricity arcs over the portion of the hull the beams hit, which is now blackened. The beams fire again, and chunks of the armor break off, turning into dust as it drifts away. More electricity arcs over that section of the hull.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – ENGINEERING

Trip holds on tight to the railing lining the front of the main console; it's all he can do to keep from being thrown out of his chair. Others aren't as fortunate, as several crewmen and SFs are thrown to the floor. We pan to look down at the lower level just in time to see one of the many monitoring panels glow brightly and explode, spewing sparks everywhere. A nearby engineer scrambles to assess damage. We pan back to Trip and see that he's looking in horror at a schematic of the ship. The part of the hull that had been hit flashes in red, while power indicators fluctuate at the bottom of the monitor. Trip switches on his comm. panel.

TRIP

I don't know what those bastards are using, but it's wreakin' havoc on the hull! I don't know how many more hits we can take!

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

Archer stares down the Tellarite ships on the viewscreen while his crew struggles to do their jobs.

ARCHER

Lock laser cannons and return fire. Ready forward launchers and prepare to fire.

EXT. SPACE

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

The laser cannons swivel to face the Tellarite ships and open fire, the scarlet laser beams instantly connecting to their black hulls. The forward missile launchers pop up out of the hull and each swivels to target a Tellarite ship.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

ARCHER

Missiles... Fire!

EXT. SPACE

Four missiles steak out of each launcher at their targets, their sleek bullet-like shapes barely visible to us as the light gleams off of them.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

We watch the eight points of light fly towards the Tellarite ships, an instant later hitting them and exploding in orange fireballs.

ARCHER

Damage assessment.

REED

That hurt them Captain, but not much.

The dust clears from the explosions and we can see that the Tellarites are indeed damaged, with large chunks missing from their armored hulls, but we can also see that there’s more armor underneath. More beams lash out from the Tellarite ships, followed by several flashes from tubes lining their hulls. The ship bucks from the impact of the beam weapons. Sparks erupt from part of the Science panel; T’Pol shields herself with her arm.

REED

Missiles!

ARCHER

Evasive action!

The viewscreen turns sharply and begins to spin.

EXT. SPACE

The *Enterprise* banks sharply and rolls, dodging the missiles streaking towards her. The plasma batteries open up, firing wildly at the incoming missiles. Most of them miss or are destroyed, but one hits her port nacelle, breaking off a segment of armor along with a thruster assembly. The impact makes the bow whip around, and the ship starts to tumble out of control. The Tellarites close and continue to fire.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

The stars on the viewscreen seem to spin as the ship continues to tumble sickeningly. We focus on Hoshi, clearly having a hard time keeping what little dinner she had down as she clings to her console.

ARCHER

Maintain fire!

Archer turns to T’Pol, who is somehow remaining a vision of serenity in all the chaos.

ARCHER

Damage report!

T’Pol gets up and makes her way across the Bridge to the Damage Control console with great difficulty. She manages to plant herself in the seat and starts to work the console. Schematic images of the ship show us where the damage is.

T’POL

(calmly, despite the situation)

Hull armor has lost its integrity. There is severe damage to the port nacelle, as well as the maneuvering thrusters.

(beat)

Short range sensors are experiencing heavy interference.

REED

She’s right, Captain! I can’t get a decent shot at them anymore!

TRIP (COMM. VOICE)

We need to get out of here, Cap’n, we’re comin’ apart at the seams!

Archer slams his fist into his console.

ARCHER

Damn!

(beat, reluctantly)

Helm, take us out of this system, best possible speed.

Travis, already busy trying to dodge incoming fire, doesn’t bother to acknowledge the command and simply follows through with it.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

EXT. SPACE

Enterprise performs one last maneuver to avoid another salvo of gold energy beams, then straightens out and speeds away from their origin. The blast shutters on the nacelles open, and the ship streaks away at warp just as several missiles reach its former location.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The *Enterprise* hangs in space, and we can finally see the full extent of her battle damage. There is scarring in several places along her hull, with chunks of armor missing in several places, but she is still none the worse for wear.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIEFING ROOM

Archer and T’Pol stand in front of the large monitor that dominates the small briefing room, facing the imposing images of Forrest, Narsu, and Sutherland. Narsu seems to be the most upset of the three.

NARSU

You did what!?

Archer stands his ground, not even flinching at Narsu’s tone.

ARCHER

We didn’t have much choice, Admiral; *Enterprise* was no match for those ships.
(frustrated)
Would you rather I’d gotten this brand new ship destroyed in a feeble attempt to get past them?

Narsu grumbles something under his breath that earns him a brief glance of surprise from both Forrest and Sutherland; he clinches his fists at his sides and barely keeps himself from lashing out at Archer.

FORREST

I’m sure you did everything you could, Captain.
(beat)
What’s your no BS assessment of the situation?

Archer glances at T’Pol but she says nothing, remains an impassive, unfeeling statue.

ARCHER

The Tellarite ships have armor at least as good as our best heavy cruisers, and their weapons are more than a match; probably closer to what we’ve seen on Vulcan ships.
(beat, not wanting to admit it)
We could really use some help, Sir.

Forrest nods his head, while his two companions remain dubious.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

FORREST

I’ll talk to the President, but somehow I doubt the Vulcans are going to get involved in this one.

Archer glances at T’Pol again, but she remains unreadable.

ARCHER

What are our orders in the meantime, Sir?

FORREST

How’s the *Enterprise* doing?

ARCHER

We took quite a beating, but we still have warp drive and power to most systems. Our armor is next to useless though, and we took some sensor damage.

(beat, swallowing)

We also took a few casualties; burns and broken bones, things of that nature, but nothing critical. We lucked out.

Forrest sighs as he thinks the situation over.

FORREST

Conduct repairs and remain in the area unless the Tellarites come after you again.
(beat)

Keep an eye on the situation over there, but when the UEM task force gets there, get yourself to the nearest drydock so you can finish repairs and get back on mission.

SUTHERLAND

We’re still waiting on a few ships, so it will be a while before we get there. Hang tight.

ARCHER

Understood, *Enterprise* out.

Archer steps forward and flicks a switch on a nearby panel, making the monitor go blank. He pauses a moment, then turns his attention to T’Pol.

ARCHER

You know, I didn’t just have you in here to stand there and look pretty.

T’Pol raises an eyebrow.

T’POL

I believe you said you would ask for my opinion when and if you wanted it.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Archer grits his teeth, his words coming back to haunt him.

ARCHER

I'm asking for it now; will the Vulcan High Command help us?

T'POL

Admiral Forrest was correct; it's highly unlikely that the High Command will interfere as this qualifies as an internal conflict.

ARCHER

But the Tellarites are involved now, surely...

T'POL

(interrupting)

The Tellarites were brought into this by your colony, which classifies this as an internal conflict, and not our place to interfere.

(beat)

Even if it were an invasion by an outside force, the High Command would not interfere because Vulcan must look to its own defense. It is also the position of my government that such an event would be of Earth's own doing by attempting to expand too quickly, against our advice on the matter.

ARCHER

Don't even go there.

T'Pol blinks again, unsure if that was a threat.

ARCHER

So your government will probably refuse to help. Fine. I guess I've come to expect that from our so-called allies, but what can I expect from you?

T'POL

I can do nothing more and nothing less than my normal duties. I cannot get involved in this conflict.

ARCHER

Dammit! I need a first officer I can count on, not some half-assed advisor!

(beat)

I need to be able to trust you, and the quickest way for that to happen is for you to do anything you can to help this ship and this mission. If you can't do that, then I don't care what Command says, you're going to be off my ship.

T'POL

Is that a threat?

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

No, those are my orders, and the price for disobeying them.

(beat, less forceful)

I need everyone here to do their best, and I need to be able to trust them to do it. Anyone who can't do that doesn't belong here.

(beat, lowering his voice)

If you think it's bad now, imagine what the crew will think of you if you don't help us now; you'll never earn their trust, and all you'll be is deadweight.

(beat)

Am I making myself clear?

T'POL

Indeed.

(beat)

However, my report will reflect my objection to these orders, and your treatment of me.

ARCHER

You do whatever you have to do after this is over.

(beat)

Right now, I need to know everything you know about the Tellarites, and what we can do to beat them.

Archer motions at the table and the two of them sit down at it. Archer waits attentively while T'Pol considers her answer.

T'POL

As I said before, the Tellarites are a crude species, but they are also highly advanced. Vulcan made first contact with them one hundred twenty-two years ago, but they elected to remain isolated.

(beat)

As you surmised, their weapons are nearly as advanced as Vulcan ships. They have no shielding technology, however, and depend on a thick armor plating to protect their ships instead.

(beat, considering)

The Tellarites advanced at a far more rapid pace than Earth, and soon made contact with the Andorians, an equally passionate species likewise driven by emotion, and with whom they've been in conflict ever since.

ARCHER

These Andorians, are they friendly?

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL

Not especially towards aliens. They will deal with them on a limited basis, but they tend to have a mistrust of all non-Andorians, especially after their initial contact with the Tellarites.

Archer becomes disappointed at the information.

ARCHER

I don't suppose we could talk them into helping us out the way Alpha Centauri got the Tellarites to help them, could we?

T'POL

The Tellarite Defense Force was undoubtedly hired out by your colony.

ARCHER

(confused)

Their military is made up of mercenaries?

T'POL

In a sense, yes, as they are driven by the acquisition of wealth.

(beat)

However, the Andorians have a clan-based society that revolves around community-owned property rather than personal ownership.

ARCHER

So, basically, they're communist.

T'POL

As I understand your reference...yes.

Archer's brief moment of hope is quashed, but he gives it one last effort.

ARCHER

Just out of curiosity, might the Andorians be convinced to help us if they thought it was in their own best interest?

T'POL

In what way?

ARCHER

How close are we to Andorian space?

T'Pol stands up and activates the large monitor, bringing up a star chart of the area, which is labeled in Vulcan before being quickly translated into English. She points at one of the dots on the screen.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

T’POL

This is their closest outpost, at least according to the latest Vulcan intelligence I am aware of. It has been fought over by both species for decades as it is a strategic position on their shared border.

ARCHER

(musing)

What if we could convince them the Tellarites are only using our situation to strategically position themselves to strike at that outpost?

T’Pol considers Archer’s plan for a few moments.

T’POL

It is...possible, but there is no guarantee the Andorians will believe you.

Archer allows himself a small, barely detectable smile.

ARCHER

Still, it’s something, and that’s better than our other options look right now.

(beat)

Thank you, Sub-Commander, that will be all for now.

T’POL

I must advise caution when making contact, Captain; their weapons are a match for Vulcan technology, and they might misinterpret your presence at that outpost as a threat.

ARCHER

I’ll take that under advisement. You may report back to your post.

T’Pol takes that as her hint to leave and does so, leaving Archer to plan his next move.

EXT. SPACE

Enterprise hangs in space, making her battle-damage clearly visible. Small figures can be seen on the hull working with some work pods, trying to patch up what little they can.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – ENGINEERING

The room is a mess, which Archer is clearly taken aback by. He weaves his way through dangling wires, open panels, and the engineers trying to work on them. Finally he finds Trip, rooting his way through the innards of an open panel with a pen light clinched securely between his teeth.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

(sympathetically)

Please tell me it's better than it looks.

Trip turns to look at Archer, his brow furrowed in anger and frustration, and takes the pen light out of his mouth.

TRIP

Sorry, Cap'n, I can't do that. Those damn Tellarites really worked us over good.

(beat, sighs)

I almost can't tell that this is a brand new ship. And to think I just got done puttin' this all back together.

Archer grimaces.

ARCHER

How long until we can get back underway?

TRIP

Technically we could go right now if we wanted to. Propulsion wasn't damaged, but I'd like to give my people another couple hours on the hull to try and patch it up some.

(beat)

Why? We goin' somewhere?

ARCHER

I'm still trying to decide that actually. Our resident Vulcan has informed me that the Tellarites have some pretty bitter enemies, and you know that old saying...

TRIP

Yeah, you know how often it's not true? Not to mention we'd be invitin' more aliens to get involved in our mess.

(beat)

Besides, how much do you think we can trust this information?

ARCHER

I think we can trust it.

(beat, harrumphs)

It was pulling teeth just to get past the usual non-interference speech.

Trip and Archer both roll their eyes and smile.

TRIP

But do we really want to get more aliens in the mix? Do we even know anything about them?

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ARCHER

Just what the Sub-Commander told me, and their name, the Andorians.

(beat)

I guess they're communist to the Tellarites' rabid capitalist system.

TRIP

(sarcastically)

This just keeps getting more and more interestin'...

(beat)

Well, it's your call, but I don't think we should stick our noses in this one.

(beat, resigned)

I guess we're not exactly doing anything though, and the worst they can tell us is no.

ARCHER

Right before they blow us out of the stars...

Archer starts to walk away, not feeling any better about the decision he's essentially already made. Trip shouts after him.

TRIP

Hey, don't go and get us into anymore fights!

(beat)

I'm runnin' out of duct tape!

Archer can't help but laugh at that one; he faces Trip and gives him the thumbs up, then exits the room.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – ARCHER'S OFFICE

Archer sits at his desk, facing his monitor and the images of Forrest, Sutherland, and PRESIDENT THOMAS VANDERBILT.

VANDERBILT

I don't think that I really like the idea of involving more aliens, Captain, even if they are able to drive them off.

(beat, frowning)

The best case scenario that I can realistically see is that we have two alien fleets battling it out in orbit of our colony.

ARCHER

With all due respect, Mister President, the scenario we're looking at now is to have our military engaging the Tellarites, with our people getting killed in the process.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER (CONT'D)

I'm also not convinced how well any of our ships will do against theirs. Our best efforts couldn't even get through their armor, and their weapons are much more powerful. If these Andorians agree to help, our chances of success without heavy losses get much better.

Sutherland strokes his chin thoughtfully.

SUTHERLAND

You're assuming an awful lot here, Captain. How do we know these Andorians can be trusted? I've never even heard of them before.

ARCHER

Sub-Commander T'Pol expressed concern over a certain isolationist tendency they have, but she didn't indicate that they were anything but trustworthy. If anything she compared them to us, which does give me a little hope.

Sutherland turns to Vanderbilt.

SUTHERLAND

Based on what he's told us, I think it would be a worthwhile effort to at least try, Mister President.

(beat)

We've tried with the Vulcans already and they turned us down flat.

VANDERBILT

(frustrated)

But we know nothing about these Andorians; we aren't in any kind of position with them like we are with the Vulcans!

Vanderbilt gets flustered and sighs heavily.

VANDERBILT (CONT'D)

But this has gone on long enough; Franklin won't even answer any of our transmissions anymore.

(beat)

Fine. You have my permission to seek military assistance from these Andorians, but if they do agree to help, limit their involvement and try to draw any engagements away from the Alpha Centauri system.

Vanderbilt turns and leaves in a huff. Forrest and Sutherland briefly exchange glances.

FORREST

I'm sure the Admiralty and the Senate would be just as torn about this, Captain. I can't order you to go on this mission.

(MORE)

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

FORREST (CONT'D)

In fact, I'd rather you not, but the President has made his feelings clear.

(beat)

I'm leaving this under your prerogative, but keep in mind that regardless what the outcome is, you will be held ultimately responsible.

ARCHER

I understand, Admiral.

(beat, nods)

General.

Sutherland nods in return and the monitor goes blank. Archer exhales, as if he's been holding his breath.

ARCHER

(to himself)

Well Jon, you're really getting yourself into it now.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

Archer steps out of the turbolift and immediately goes to the navigation table. He brings up the same map T'Pol brought up in the briefing room earlier and points out the appropriate system to the Navigator.

ARCHER

Plot a course for here, the Dratus system, and send the information to the helm.

T'Pol is the only one present who doesn't look at Archer questioningly.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

It's time to stick our necks out again.

The Navigator looks uncomfortable, but he nods and begins to do as he's been told.

NAVIGATOR

Aye, Captain.

Archer bounds up the short staircase and sits down in his command chair. The feeling on the bridge is tense while we wait for the Navigator to finish.

NAVIGATOR

Course is set.

ARCHER

Helm, best possible speed.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TRAVIS

Aye, Sir.

Travis smiles and works his console, then starts pushing the throttles forward.

EXT. SPACE

Enterprise jumps to warp.

INT. *LEXINGTON* – COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER

We find ourselves in a large control center that dwarfs the *Enterprise*'s bridge; it's easy to believe that this is a much larger ship, but the room itself is crowded with enough people and equipment to befit a military vessel.

A line of text appears on the lower portion of the screen:

United Earth Military Task Force Command Ship
UEM Lexington, CH-24

We PAN until we see the figure of MAJOR GENERAL APRIL BERNARD, a mature woman whose expression and posture leave no doubt to her command ability. She stands next to the *Lexington*'s Helmsman, watching the stars streak by out of the narrow windows at the front of the room.

BERNARD

ETA?

The Helmsman checks her panel.

LEXINGTON HELMSMAN

Ten minutes, Ma'am.

BERNARD

Good. Signal the fleet when you're ready to drop out of warp.

Bernard walks back to her command chair, sits down, and straps in.

EXT. SPACE

We watch as the fleet of warships drops out of warp. The fleet itself is made up mostly of frigates and destroyers, along with a few light cruisers. The *Lexington*, a heavy cruiser, is the largest ship and our focus at the center of the formation. We watch as nacelles are retracted and hidden behind armored shielding.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

INT. *LEXINGTON* - COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER

Bernard turns toward the *Lexington*'s Comm. Officer, who waits attentively for her command.

BERNARD

Get me the fleet.

LEXINGTON COMM. OFFICER

Yes Ma'am; establishing connection.

The Comm. Officer works his console, then nods at Bernard. Bernard activates the comm. panel on her console.

BERNARD

All ships spread out into combat formation and ready all weapons.

(beat)

Go to battle stations.

The lights dim as her own ship goes to battle stations, bathing everyone in red. A klaxon sounds briefly in the background as a few people rush to get to their stations.

LEXINGTON OPS MANAGER

Fire control teams report main batteries ready, General.

(beat, off console)

Missile batteries are loaded and laser cannons are charging.

The communications panel beeps and the Comm. Officer reads something on one of his monitors.

LEXINGTON COMM. OFFICER

All ships reporting ready, General.

BERNARD

Very well. Let's see what we're up against.

(beat)

Give me a visual on the hostile fleet.

The center window flashes as it becomes a viewscreen, showing us the black silhouettes of the Tellarite fleet. There's another beeping from the comm. panel.

LEXINGTON COMM. OFFICER

We're receiving a hail from the lead hostile ship.

BERNARD

Put them on screen.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

The Tellarite Fleet Captain appears on the viewscreen, glowering at Bernard just like he did at Archer.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

Earth vessels, withdraw your pathetic smattering of driftwood or we'll blow you out of the stars.

Bernard stares down the Tellarite Fleet Captain, completely unfazed.

BERNARD

This is Major General Bernard of the United Earth Military. You are ordered to withdraw from our territory at once or we will use all the force at our disposal to remove you.

The Tellarite Fleet Captain laughs.

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

The other Earther threatened me too, right before he ran away like a coward.

(beat, mockingly)

Save yourselves the embarrassment and just run away now, before anyone gets hurt.

BERNARD

(coldly)

You have thirty seconds to comply.

Bernard motions to the Comm. Officer and the Tellarite's mocking face vanishes.

BERNARD

Get a firing solution on the lead hostile. Signal fleet: lock targets and stand by.

EXT. SPACE

The large main rail guns come out of their storage positions and move to target the distant Tellarite ships. Missile racks open and large laser cannons target what they can, and even the small plasma guns that line the hulls of the warships come to life, waiting for a target to come into range.

INT. LEAD TELLARITE SHIP – BRIDGE

The mood on the bridge of the Tellarite ship is tense as the Tellarite Fleet Captain stares down the approaching Earth fleet.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

(in Tellarite)
[Get me Admiral Krav.]
(beat)
[Now!]

A crewman fumbles around with his panel in the background. Soon, the face of Admiral Krav appears on the small viewscreen.

ADMIRAL KRAV

[What is it?]

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

[The Earther fleet isn't backing down, Admiral; they aren't going to go without a fight.]

ADMIRAL KRAV

(angry)
[Argh, you incompetent fool.]
(beat)
[Very well, this will no doubt cost us more than chasing one ship away, but our weapons are stronger than theirs.]
(beat, thinking)
[How many ships?]

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

[Twenty-two of lesser classes.]
(beat)
[We can beat them, but it will be a hard and costly fight.]

ADMIRAL KRAV

[So be it, fight them until they withdraw or are all destroyed. We'll just have to pass along the cost of this investment to our clients.]

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

[Prisoners?]

Admiral Krav shrugs.

ADMIRAL KRAV

[If possible; we could always sell them back to help recover our losses.]

The viewscreen goes blank, leaving the Tellarite Fleet Captain to stare down the Earth fleet again.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TELLARITE FLEET CAPTAIN

[Order all ships to prepare to open fire.]

INT. *LEXINGTON* – COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER

As if a reflection of the Tellarite Fleet Captain, Bernard stares down the Tellarite ships as they grow closer on the viewscreen.

LEXINGTON OPS MANAGER

Their time has expired, General.

BERNARD

I know.

(beat)

Are we still connected to all ships?

LEXINGTON COMM. OFFICER

Yes Ma’am. All ships report ready to fire.

BERNARD

Very well. Helm, get ready to....

An alarm starts sounding from a one of the panels.

CREWMAN’ S VOICE

General, we’re being targeted!

BERNARD

Countermeasures!

EXT. SPACE

Gold beams of light lash out from the distance, focusing on one of the frigates. It tries to maneuver, but it’s too late, its polarized hull fails after the first few seconds of concentrated fire from multiple Tellarite ships. The beams rake across its hull, making their way to one of the frigate’s large impulse engines. The engine explodes, sending the small ship listing off to the side. More gold beams lash out, striking nearly every grey warship, including the *Lexington*, but they fare better.

INT. *LEXINGTON* – BRIDGE

Bernard switches on her comm. panel in a flurry.

BERNARD

All ships return fire!

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

EXT. SPACE

The large rail guns on the warships open fire with a thunder, sending their projectiles toward the Tellarite ships. We watch as some of them explode as they make contact with the black hulls, and others explode among the ships, spewing shrapnel with mixed results. Red laser beams flash between the ships, scoring the black hulls. The Tellarites scramble into an attack maneuver and return fire. We resume our position among the Earth ships and watch as hundreds of missiles are launched and streak toward their targets as we.....

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. GOVERNOR FRANKLIN'S OFFICE

Governor Franklin sits at his desk, clearly distraught over recent events as he reads through casualty lists on his desk monitor. He looks up at the door slamming open suddenly as Admiral Krav barrels his way into the room, his brow furrowed and his teeth bared.

ADMIRAL KRAV

I thought you said that they wouldn't fight! That our mere presence would be enough!

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

(flustered)

I don't know what to say.

(beat, swallows)

I didn't think they'd be this desperate just to hold onto us.

Admiral Krav changes his tone, but he still isn't happy with the situation, or Governor Franklin.

ADMIRAL KRAV

The Earther fleet was much stronger than anticipated. They dealt a heavy blow before we finally forced them to retreat.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

(stunned)

I never meant it to come to this.

(beat, horrified)

So many deaths, and it's all on my hands.

Admiral Krav sneers at Governor Franklin.

ADMIRAL KRAV

What happened to the man who was making that fiery speech as I landed? You pathetic whimpering weakling! You've lost your nerve!

(beat)

If you ever had any.

(beat)

Your impatience and petulance brought us to this and now you want to cower in a corner like an animal!

(beat, disgusted)

I can't believe I saw anything worthy of respect in scum like you.

Governor Franklin stands up and glares at Admiral Krav.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

(angry)

You hypocrite! You didn't have to engage them, let alone fire the first shot!

(beat)

I didn't give you half of our refined goods for the year so you could kill Humans!

Admiral Krav steps up to Governor Franklin, so they are face to face over his desk.

ADMIRAL KRAV

It was either fight them or stand back and let them come in on a whim.

(beat)

We had a contract, and we lived up to our part of it. Now it's time for you to live up to yours.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

(angry, confused)

What the hell are you talking about? We've already arranged payment; all you have to do is load it and leave. Your people could do it now, if they wanted to.

(sullen)

In fact, I insist. Your services are no longer required.

ADMIRAL KRAV

You're even more of a fool than I thought, Human.

Franklin's expression grows confused, despite the insult.

ADMIRAL KRAV (CONT'D)

(astounded, darkly amused)

You didn't read the terms of our contract before signing it, did you? It was all there...

The gravity of the situation still hasn't dawned on Governor Franklin; Admiral Krav loses patience and sighs, shaking his head in disgust.

ADMIRAL KRAV (CONT'D)

In the event of armed conflict, all damages incurred in resulting combat shall be passed along to the contract holder.

(beat)

We have most definitely sustained heavy damages, both in equipment and manpower. Your original payment will be insufficient now.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

What!? But this kind of risk is supposed to be part of the job...

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ADMIRAL KRAV

Risk, but not loss on this scale.

(beat)

No, you’ll be repaying Tellar for a few cycles at least. Consider yourself a colony of Tellar for now.

GOVERNOR FRANKLIN

You can’t do that!

ADMIRAL KRAV

Yes. I. Can. You agreed to it when you signed your contract.

(beat)

You had an admirable cause but your own stupidity and foolhardiness has led us to this.

Admiral Krav turns on his heel and leaves before Governor Franklin can get himself back together to respond. Governor Franklin can only stare after him for a few moments before sitting back down, a defeated man.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIEFING ROOM

Archer sits at the conference table, watching the news stream in on the large monitor with a growing sense of helplessness, visibly fatigued. T’Pol stands nearby and watches with him, feeling somewhat out of place and uncomfortable. She’s about to say something in an attempt to quell the tension when Trip enters the room. Trip glances at the monitor and then at each of them in turn.

TRIP

It doesn’t look good, does it?

ARCHER

Four ships lost, over a thousand killed in action, even more injured.

(beat)

No, it doesn’t look particularly good at all...

(beat, angry)

Dammit! I feel useless!

Trip cuts T’Pol a quick glance.

TRIP

(wryly)

At least you’re actually tryin’ to do something instead of just sittin’ back and watchin’ the fireworks.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

T’Pol glances sideways at Trip, but otherwise doesn’t react, continuing to watch the news stream in. Trip is disappointed at this and it shows just beneath the surface. Archer notices and decides to nip it in the bud.

ARCHER

How’s the ship holding up?

TRIP

We’re holding steady at warp five-point-two. I’m pushing her as hard as I can, and so far she’s taking it, but it’s pretty rough on her...

(beat)

She’ll need a rest when all this is done.

Archer slowly nods.

ARCHER

We’ll be putting in at the nearest starbase that can handle us.

(beat, forcing a smile)

Don’t worry Trip; she’ll look like new again.

Trip looks at Archer with concern; Archer looks like he’s on the verge of passing out from his fatigue.

TRIP

Speaking of rest, when was the last time you had some sleep?

Archer rubs his eyes.

ARCHER

Couple of days.

Trip crosses his arms.

TRIP

Jeez, even I’ve made myself get some rack time over the past few days.

(beat, concerned)

You’re not much use to us asleep on your feet.

ARCHER

(joking)

This is why coffee was invented.

(beat, more serious)

Besides, I can’t sleep anyway.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

TRIP

I seem to remember someone giving me a lecture not too long ago about not sleeping.

ARCHER

That's different.

(beat)

I'm the Captain.

Archer smiles wryly at Trip.

TRIP

(pointedly)

You should still try to get some sleep.

(beat, off Archer's unrelenting expression)

At least talk to Doc Phlox. He might be able to fix you with something to help you sleep.

(beat, off Archer's deepening frown)

Or stay awake. Your call.

Archer nods slowly again.

ARCHER

I might have to do that.

(beat)

Don't worry about me Trip; I'll be fine.

Trip considers Archer for a while, then acquiesces with a small nod. It's clear from his expression that he's not entirely happy.

TRIP

Okay....

(beat)

I'll be on the Bridge for a while if you need me.

(beat, trying to lighten the mood)

Somebody's gotta take care of my ship.

Archer gives Trip a half smile and a roll of the eyes. With that, Tucker turns and exits the room, leaving Archer and T'Pol alone again. Archer is content to go back to watching the news stream in on the large monitor, but T'Pol uses this opportunity to give her attention to Archer; she turns and looks him over, and is disappointed by what she sees.

T'POL

Commander Tucker is correct, Captain; you should get some rest.

(beat)

I'll notify you if anything important happens.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

Archer glares at T’Pol for an instant, but calms down right away.

ARCHER

Like I said, I can’t sleep anyway.

(beat)

I’ll be fine; I’ll just go down to Sickbay and see if I can get some stims or something.

Archer gets up to leave, but T’Pol stops him briefly.

T’POL

Vulcan has observed the Tellarites become involved in actions like this before. Now that there has been open conflict, they will be demanding a higher price for their services.

(beat)

They may insist that Alpha Centauri become a protectorate under their control.

ARCHER

(frowning)

I’ll keep that in mind when I talk to these Andorians.

(beat)

Speaking of, has there been any response to our hails?

T’POL

No.

Archer’s face falls in disappointment.

ARCHER

Very well.

(beat)

I’ll be back in a few minutes.

(grudgingly)

You have the conn.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – SICKBAY

Archer makes his way into sickbay and finds Phlox finishing up an exam on a slightly wounded crewmember using one of his “helpers.” Archer gives the crewman a professional nod but guilt is lurking in Archer’s eyes as he studies the young woman’s minor injuries. Phlox smiles pleasantly at Archer as the crewman departs; still holding a jar with the large eel-like thing in it.

PHLOX

And how can I help you Captain?

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

I need some stims or something similar. Anything that will help me stay alert.

Archer glances at the eel with touch of disgust on his face.

ARCHER (CONT'D)

Preferably something that's not alive.

Phlox thinks for a moment.

PHLOX

I might have some pills that you could take.

ARCHER

That'll do.

Phlox starts looking through one of his medicine cabinets.

PHLOX

Never had much use for these myself; Denobulans only need to sleep six days a year.

ARCHER

(wryly)

Sometimes I wished I had it that easy.

PHLOX

Oh, it has its disadvantages to be sure.

Phlox pauses to study a bottle for moment, then replaces it with a shake of his head.

PHLOX (CONT'D)

I've often wondered what it would be like to sleep only a few hours each day instead of being forced to enter a state of hibernation for six days.

Archer's eyes widen in surprise.

ARCHER

Wow.

PHLOX

Mmmm, it can be rather inconvenient at times.

Phlox finds the appropriate pill bottle and holds it up to check its label.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

PHLOX

Ah... Here they are.

Phlox turns to face Archer and gives the bottle a little shake for emphasis.

PHLOX

(with a hint of reproach)

From what I've learned of Human physiology, this is no substitute for a few hours of rest.

Archer takes the bottle from Phlox and looks at the label himself briefly.

ARCHER

Sleeping right now isn't an option, Doctor. I need to be as alert as possible.

PHLOX

Take two pills every four hours. There are enough pills in that bottle for 12 hours maximum. After that, I must insist that you get some sleep.

Archer nods absently as he opens the bottle and shakes two pills out of it. Phlox quickly gets some water from a small dispenser in the wall. Archer shoves the pills into his mouth and accepts the glass of water from Phlox, using it to wash the pills down. He hands the glass back to Phlox when he's done.

ARCHER

Thank you Doctor.

Phlox smiles.

PHLOX

Always happy to lend a helping hand.

Archer gives Phlox a small smile in return as he re-closes the pill bottle and pockets it.

TRIP (COMM. VOICE)

Bridge to Captain Archer.

Archer activates the room's comm. panel.

ARCHER

Go ahead, Commander.

TRIP (COMM. VOICE)

Cap'n, you should get up here; there's something I think you might want to see.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

I'll be right up. Archer out.

Archer switches off the comm. panel and turns his attention back to Phlox.

ARCHER

See you around, Doctor.

Phlox nods and Archer is on his way.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

Archer steps out of the turbolift and joins Trip next to the command chair. Archer looks at the viewscreen to see what Trip was talking about, and is amazed at what he sees; a small star is dying a slow death as it is drawn into a black hole that was once its companion star. Archer barely notices T'Pol as she gets up from the command chair and relieves an ensign at the Science station.

ARCHER

(to anyone)

Is it safe?

T'POL

We are a safe distance away, Captain.

Archer slowly sits down in his command chair, still enthralled by what's playing out on the viewscreen.

TRIP

(excited)

No one's seen anything like this, Cap'n, not even the Vulcans.

Archer glances up at Trip in surprise, then at T'Pol.

ARCHER

Really?

T'POL

There is nothing on record to my knowledge.

Archer turns his gaze back to the viewscreen.

TRIP

This is why we should be out here, Cap'n. Not to chase after some phantom aliens we've never heard of, and definitely not to fight with each other.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Trip's words don't really seem to register with Archer, who just nods dully as he continues to stare at the viewscreen. We focus on T'Pol as she considers what Trip said, small evidence that Humans might show some promise after all. We then pan slowly around until we are behind Archer and Trip, looking at the viewscreen in wonder along with the rest of the crew.

EXT. SPACE

We PAN slowly from left to right, and watch as a streak of color and light quickly forms into *Enterprise* as she drops out of warp. We continue to pan, *Enterprise* at the center of the screen, until a pale-colored planet comes into view and takes up most of the screen. We watch as *Enterprise* approaches the planet, growing smaller as it moves away from our vantage point until it's just a speck above the clouds.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

Time has clearly passed since the previous scene. Archer, much more alert than before, holds his chin as he tries to look through the hazy clouds that cover the planet.

ARCHER

Open a channel.

Hoshi works her console for a moment.

HOSHI

Channel open, Captain.

ARCHER

This is Captain Jonathan Archer of the United Earth Ship *Enterprise*, calling the Andorian outpost on the planet below us, or any Andorian vessel that can hear me.

Hoshi listens and watches her console. A LONG BEAT passes.

HOSHI

No response, Captain.

T'POL'S VOICE

And I believe I know why.

We pan to look at T'Pol with Archer. T'Pol looks up from her scanner.

T'POL (CONT'D)

The Andorian outpost has been reduced to rubble.

(beat, studies her readings again)

All structures within sensor range have also been destroyed, Captain.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

What? Can you tell how?

T'POL

The majority of it appears to be the result of weapons fire.

(beat)

I am unable to conduct more detailed scans due to residual interference, likely from the weapons used.

ARCHER

Can you tell who did it?

T'POL

No.

ARCHER

(frustrated)

It looks like we may have come all this way for nothing.

(beat)

Are there any other Andorian outposts nearby?

T'POL

Not to my knowledge.

(beat)

We are on the fringes of their territory; it would take a minimum of seven days of travel to reach the next manned Andorian outpost...

(beat, with a barely noticeable glance toward the Damage Control station)

...providing *Enterprise* could maintain maximum warp during that time.

ARCHER

Well, we're here now.

(beat)

I suppose the Andorians might like to know who destroyed their outpost. Maybe we could use it as a peace offering.

(beat)

You say you can't get a clear reading on the type of weapons used here?

T'POL

That is correct. There is too much interference present to use shipboard sensors effectively.

ARCHER

Would portable sensors be able to get a better reading on the surface?

T'Pol cocks an eyebrow.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL

Possibly.

(beat)

However, there is no guarantee that they will perform any better even with proximity.

ARCHER

I'm willing to take that chance.

(beat)

Assemble a landing party. I want you, Trip, Major Reed, Doctor Phlox, and a few others to provide support.

Reed straightens up at the mention of his name.

REED

How many SFs should I bring with me, Sir?

ARCHER

However many we can fit in the shuttlepods with us.

Reed nods his head and goes about contacting his people using the comm. panel on his console.

ARCHER

Ensign Sato, tell the Hanger Deck to prep all shuttlepods for launch.

Hoshi turns to do as she is told. Archer stands up and turns his attention to the Operations Manager.

ARCHER

Hold down the fort while we're gone, Lieutenant.

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Aye, Captain.

The Ops Manager makes her way to the command chair and sits down as Archer, T'Pol, and Reed get into the turbolift. Archer touches the appropriate button on the small control panel and the door closes in front of them.

EXT. PLANETARY ATMOSPHERE

We watch as the four shuttlepods make their way through the hazy clouds, until they break through to see the devastation below. The countryside is almost completely devoid of vegetation, with only a few of the more stout trees and shrubs managing to barely cling to life.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

As the shuttlepods approach the distant city in a loose formation, we can see that there isn't much left of it.

EXT. OUTPOST CITY

The shuttlepods fly among the skeletal remains of what were once tall skyscrapers, with rubble strewn about them on the ground. We can just make out the ruins of several smaller buildings, almost completely hidden by the debris from the larger buildings. Ahead, we can see a clearing, which the shuttlepods turn for.

EXT. OUTPOST CITY – COURTYARD

The shuttlepods set down in what has to be one of the few areas in the city clear of debris. Close by, we can see the ruins of several low buildings of an alien design, which is different from the rest of the city.

INT. SHUTTLEPOD 01

T'Pol, Archer, Trip, Cole, a Sergeant, and a Corporal sit in the back of the cramped shuttle, with Travis sitting up front piloting, all of them in environmental suits.

T'POL

Scans have indicated the presence of unidentified biological and chemical agents in the atmosphere. Do not – under any circumstance – remove your helmet or any other portion of your environmental suit.

Everyone exchanges nods of acknowledgement with each other.

ARCHER

Let's get our gear ready and get going.

Travis joins them in the back part of the shuttle and helps them take several cases of equipment out of storage, then opening the cases and pulling out the equipment itself, including several portable (handheld) sensors. Cole and the other SFs get their plasma rifles ready, and when their UESPA colleagues are ready, they hand them each a plasma pistol.

ARCHER

Are these really necessary?

COLE

Major Reed's orders, Sir. Better safe than sorry.

T'Pol eyes the weapon being offered to her like it is some disgusting, foreign object before reluctantly taking it and clipping it, holster and all, to her suit.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

EXT. OUTPOST CITY – COURTYARD

Trip opens the large door on the side of the shuttlepod and the seven of them pile out, joining the rest of the team that has started to emerge and gather around the shuttlepods. Trip and T’Pol take a brief moment to look up at the sky, shielding their eyes from the shafts of eerie white sunlight that poke through the murky clouds.

TRIP

A white dwarf?

T’Pol’s face shows a flicker of surprise as she takes a quick sideways look at the engineer.

T’POL

Indeed. This system appears to be of significant age.

Archer squints across the horizon, looking over the remains of the city around them.

ARCHER

Was this entire city the Andorian outpost?

T’POL

No. There are several cities of this size upon the planet in addition to numerous smaller settlements. All appear to be in similar condition.

(beat)

The Andorians possessed several bases in the largest cities of this planet, in this case, those buildings...

(beat, indicating nearby structures)

...are what remains of the largest of those bases.

REED

(sarcastically)

Not much to look at anymore, are they?

ARCHER

Let’s get moving. Split up into teams of four and spread out; take as many scans as you can and report back here in two hours.

(beat)

Reed, Phlox, Travis, you’re with me.

The four men start moving off, with Trip watching them in momentary surprise.

T’POL

Commander Tucker?

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Trip recognizes that her invitation is actually an order and he sighs heavily, really not wanting to accompany the Vulcan, but not having an excuse not to either. Cole is standing close by with the Sergeant from Shuttlepod 01; Trip leans close to her as he passes by them to join T'Pol.

TRIP

(quietly)

Could you come with me please?

Cole motions at the Sergeant and the two of them follow Trip to join T'Pol. The teams quickly form and they move off toward the remains of the Andorian base.

EXT. ANDORIAN OUTPOST BUILDING 1

Trip and T'Pol scan the area as they have a heated argument; Cole and the Sergeant follow unenthusiastically behind them, with a good fifteen feet between them.

T'POL

You misunderstand my intentions, Commander; I am not "looking down my nose" at Humanity.

TRIP

Sure you are. Every chance you get, you talk down about how "immature" we are and go on about how we're pushin' out into space faster than you think we ought to.

T'POL

But I believe that Humanity is attempting to progress at an ill-suited rate.

(beat)

While it is impressive that Humanity has recovered so quickly from your own self-inflicted near extinction, the Vulcan High Command is concerned that Earth has unrealistic expectations for itself.

TRIP

See, there you go again, raggin' on Humanity.

(beat)

Just out of curiosity though, what expectations do you think are realistic for Humanity?

T'POL

You should pace yourselves more slowly.

(beat)

It took the Vulcan Alliance centuries to grow to the level that it is presently at.

(beat)

Your... emotional drive to push out into the unknown has already led to numerous ships being destroyed or disappearing.

(MORE)

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL (CONT'D)

The potential for Humanity to bring disaster upon itself is incalculable...

(beat)

...discounting, of course, the damage Humanity could cause other cultures.

Trip stops where he is and turns sharply toward T'Pol, giving her a fierce glare. T'Pol stops and meets his gaze, unfazed.

TRIP

(angrily)

Excuse me? What the hell are you suggestin'? That Earth would try to conquer other races?

T'POL

Nothing so aggressive Commander, although the potential does exist as you well know.

(beat, off Trip's dark look)

Since my assignment to Earth, I have noticed that Humanity tends to ... push its culture upon others without truly considering the ramifications. It is for this reason that the Vulcan High Command has very specific protocols regarding contact with other species.

(beat)

It is a policy that Humanity would be wise to adopt.

Trip shakes his head in disgust.

TRIP

You are such a hypocrite.

T'Pol is taken slightly aback.

T'POL

To what do you refer?

TRIP

Here you are, lecturing me on Humans pushing their culture on other people and then the very next words out of your mouth are about how we should do things the Vulcan way.

T'POL

(with slightly inclined eyebrow)

The comparison is flawed.

(beat)

Vulcan concedes that Humanity has significant potential but your species still has much to learn before it is ready to expand into the galaxy.

(beat)

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL (CONT'D)

One could even use your current situation with your Alpha Centauri colony as an example.

Trip rolls his eyes, turns, and goes back to scanning.

TRIP

Whatever....

T'Pol is about to continue her argument when Trip's scanner goes off.

TRIP

Hold on.... I think I might have something here folks.

Trip is facing the general direction of the entrance to the building they are next to. He starts to walk inside when T'Pol scans the structure, sounding an alarm from her scanner.

T'POL

Wait! Commander!

Trip disappears inside the building.

INT. ANDORIAN OUTPOST BUILDING 1

T'Pol cautiously enters the building, finding Trip several paces inside, inspecting what's left of the interior structure, which doesn't look good.

T'POL

Commander, this building is highly unstable.

TRIP

(sarcastically)

Really? You figure that out all on your own?

(beat)

Don't worry about it, besides, I'm getting some pretty strong readings in here.

T'Pol's brow furrows slightly.

T'POL

Commander, I do not appreciate your tone.

Trip carefully continues into the building, following his scanner.

TRIP

I don't particularly appreciate you coming in at the last minute and taking my job so I guess that makes us even.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL

(consulting her scanner and looking around)

Commander, we need to evacuate this building at once.

(beat, off his continued ignoring of her)

It is not structurally sound.

Trip loses his temper and quickly turns to face T'Pol down again.

TRIP

Listen, lady, I'm the damned engineer around here...

Trip takes a step toward T'Pol, brushing against a fallen structural member, which causes it to fall on another structural member that's holding part of a fallen ceiling, and starting a chain reaction that collapses the part of the room they are in. Trip knows he's screwed up as soon as he feels the first structural member shift. His eyes widen, and he immediately pushes T'Pol toward the doorway but it's already too late as they are covered by falling debris. Cole and the Sergeant rush into the room, not sure what they'll find.

COLE

Commander!?

Cole starts to feebly dig through the pile of debris when we hear some coughing. Suddenly a portion of the debris pile shifts as Trip stands up, followed by T'Pol.

TRIP

(weakly)

Don't do that, Lieutenant.

Cole and the Sergeant help Trip and T'Pol up and out of the debris.

EXT. ANDORIAN OUTPOST BUILDING 1

The four of them walk out of the door as it billows dust, stopping just outside. Trip and T'Pol look over each other's environment suits, which have been damaged in several places. T'Pol looks very unhappy for a Vulcan.

T'POL

Our suits have been breached; we need to return to the ship.

TRIP

Not much arguing that one.

Trip reaches up and activates his suit's communicator.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

TRIP

Commander Tucker to Captain Archer.

ARCHER (COMM. VOICE)

Go ahead.

TRIP

Sub-Commander T'Pol and I had a bit of an accident and we need to go back to the ship.

ARCHER (COMM. VOICE)

(concerned)
Anything serious?

TRIP

Don't know, Sir. Our EV suits were torn and-

ARCHER (COMM. VOICE)

Okay. Head back.
(beat)

Have the rest of your team join us just outside the compound, our sensor scans have picked up some unusual energy readings that seem to be coming from beneath the planet's surface.

TRIP

Aye, Cap'n, Tucker out.

Trip deactivates his suit's comm.

TRIP

Let's get going...

The four of them walk back in the direction they came from.

EXT. OUTPOST CITY – COURTYARD

Trip and T'Pol make it back to the shuttlepods. Trip gestures at T'Pol.

TRIP

(sarcastically)
After you, Sub-Commander.

Without a word T'Pol climbs into Shuttlepod 1, but we can tell that she's a little annoyed, though she conceals it well. Trip follows after her and closes the hatch.

EXT. OUTPOST CITY – EDGE OF COURTYARD

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

The rest of the away team is near the remains of one of the skyscrapers, making their way toward it. Archer catches the glint of light off of the shuttlepod, and turns to watch as it flies by, on its way back to *Enterprise*.

INT. ANCIENT SKYSCRAPER - LOBBY

The inside of the ancient skyscraper shows its age; rust covers every surface, and there is hardly any semblance to its former function. Several doors lead off in different directions. Archer and a few others are lead by their scanners to a corridor lined with doorways on both sides, some of which are partially open. Reed and Cole pry one of the doors open the rest of the way with a nails-on-chalkboard screech. Inside we can see the telltale cables that identify these doors as elevator shafts. Reed peeks inside, shining his flashlight down the shaft. His light is barely able to pierce the darkness, and we can barely make out the wreckage of the elevator car at the bottom, five stories down. Archer sticks his scanner through the open door.

ARCHER

(frustrated)

We need to get down there somehow.

TRAVIS

I don't think we can risk trying to repel down these shafts.

One of the Science Officers toward the back of the group is looking around the rest of the lobby, and finds a door marked with a simple line drawing of steps. Cautiously pushing the door open, she looks inside and sees a staircase that travels much further than we can see in the darkness.

SCIENCE OFFICER

Captain, I found something...

Archer and the others look to see the Science Officer holding the door open and motioning inside.

INT. ANCIENT SKYSCRAPER – STAIRCASE

Reed and Cole take point, leading the twenty-six member away team down the wide staircase, which wraps around an even wider stairwell.

TRAVIS

How deep are we?

REED

I'd guess at least a klick.

(beat)

That's just a rough estimate, mind.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

ARCHER

(off scanner)

At least we're getting closer to ... whatever this is.

CORPORAL

I hope it isn't much further.

As if on cue they reach the bottom of the stairs on a landing that looks like it was very roughly carved out of the surrounding rock.

REED

Looks like your wish has been answered...

The group moves through a narrow opening....

INT. LARGE CAVERN

...and into a large cavern, so large that we can't see anything but the wall around the opening the away team has come in through.

ARCHER

The reading is pretty strong in here; split up into your teams again and try to localize it.

(beat)

Lieutenant Cole?

COLE

Sir?

ARCHER

Since your team was split up you might as well join mine.

The teams split up again, and we watch as the beams from their flashlights lead off in different directions.

INT. NARROW TUNNEL

Archer, Reed, Travis, Phlox, Cole, and the Sergeant make their way through a narrow tunnel, which leads deeper underground.

REED

(jokingly)

I sure hope no one is claustrophobic.

SERGEANT

I never really was before, but I think I might be after this.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Cole laughs, taking that as a joke. The Sergeant's expression as she looks back at him silences her.

SERGEANT

I'm not kidding.

COLE

Oh. Sorry, Sergeant.

The six of them continue down the tunnel until they come to another opening.

INT. SMALL CAVERN

This cavern isn't nearly as large as the other one; we can see the rock that surrounds the team faintly reflect the light from their flashlights, though there is an unusual dark area to one side that the light can't penetrate, which the floor angles down toward.

REED

Is that reading getting any better, Captain?

ARCHER

Yes and no.

(beat, off scanner)

It seems to be getting stronger in this general direction, but...

Just then the cavern begins to shake around them, throwing them all off balance. Archer, the closest to the mysterious black area, steps on some loose rocks and falls. The shaking ground sends him rolling into the darkness. He lets out a gasp as he grips onto the edge, barely keeping him from falling into the void. We PAN to look over the edge at him, and watch as the dim lights of his scanner soon disappear.

REED

Captain!

Reed scrambles toward Archer and grabs onto his hands. He attempts to get a better grip through his bulky gloves and tries to pull Archer back up. Cole and the Sergeant manage to get to Reed and grip him around his abdomen, adding their strength to the rescue effort. They grunt with effort, but the rock beneath them begins to crumble.

COLE

Pull!

The three of them give one last effort, but just as Archer starts to get up and over the ledge, it collapses, and falls away. Reed loses his grip as they both begin to fall. Cole and the Sergeant manage to stop Reed from falling, but Reed loses his grip on Archer. Reed can only stare in

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

horror as Archer falls without a sound into the darkness. Cole and the Sergeant haul Reed back over the edge. Then, just as mysteriously as it started, the shaking stops.

REED

Doctor!

Phlox and Travis run over to the edge and scan with their portable sensors.

PHLOX

I'm not picking up any lifesigns.

Travis shakes his head.

TRAVIS

The bottom is out of this thing's range.

REED

We've got to go after him!

PHLOX

I'm sorry, Major; even if we could find a way down, it's extremely unlikely that Captain Archer survived the fall.

REED

I'm taking command of this mission now and we're going to find him again.

(beat, grimly)

Even if it's just to recover his body.

COLE

Sir, is that really...

REED

No one is left behind. Understood?

Cole immediately understands the reference and concedes.

COLE

Yes, Sir.

REED

We need to head back to the surface and report this to the ship.

(beat)

And get some climbing gear from the shuttlepods while we're at it.

TRAVIS

Major Reed, with all due respect, we should continue on our mission.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

REED

(contempt)

I don't think chasing after some phantom energy signature is really a priority anymore, Ensign.

TRAVIS

(angrily)

Don't you think it's just the least bit odd that that quake only started when we came in here? And that it stopped right after the Captain fell?

REED

Not really. It was just a coincidence for all we know.

TRAVIS

Do you really want to take that chance?

Reed is about to tell Travis off again, but he stops, and rethinks the situation.

REED

No, I can't take that chance.

Reed switches on his suit's communicator.

REED

Major Reed to *Enterprise*.

There's some static, but that's all.

TRAVIS

We probably can't get through all this rock.

Reed gives him a “no duh” look, and adjusts his communicator. Travis returns his gaze with a look of contempt, which Reed simply ignores.

REED

Reed to landing party leaders; anyone who can hear me.

There's some static for a moment, but soon a voice breaks through it.

CUTLER (COMM. VOICE)

This is Ensign Cutler; what is it, Major?

REED

(somberly)

We've lost the captain; he fell off of a precipice.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

CUTLER (COMM. VOICE)

What!? But how?

REED

Didn't you feel that quake?

CUTLER (COMM. VOICE)

Yes, but...

REED

I need you to contact the other landing parties and have everyone head back to the surface.

(beat)

Contact the ship and tell them what happened, and get as much climbing gear as you can and come back down here.

CUTLER (COMM. VOICE)

But where are you?

REED

We went down the narrow tunnel.

(beat)

I'm going to activate a homing beacon and leave it here while we continue our search; someone may have been behind that quake.

CUTLER (COMM. VOICE)

Understood. Cutler out.

Reed switches off his communicator and reaches into his equipment belt. He pulls out a small cylindrical device and pushes a button that activates it. A small strobe light starts flashing in sync with an audio tone that sounds. He places it on the rocky floor and stands back up, motioning sarcastically at Travis.

REED

Lead on, Ensign.

Travis rolls his eyes and goes back to his scanner, leading them to another tunnel entrance.

INT. VOID BOTTOM

We slowly approach a floating form, eerily bathed in a faint light. As we get closer we can see that the light is from built in sources on a standard UESPA environmental suit. It's Archer, floating mere inches off the floor, though by what isn't readily definable. He doesn't move, and his eyes are closed as we look through his suit's faceplate; we can't really tell if he's alive or dead.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. SHUTTLEPOD 01

Trip sits in the pilot’s seat and guides the shuttlepod back to *Enterprise*. T’Pol sits behind and to the left of him so we can see both of them in the frame, and they both look quite unhappy.

T’POL

On the contrary, your actions serve as an excellent example of Humanity's impulsive nature. You entered the building without thought, even for your own safety.

TRIP

I was perfectly fine until you came in there and started flappin’ your jaw at me.
(beat)

I had something dammit, right there on my scanner and I was close to isolating it until you distracted me.

Trip motions with a free arm to emphasize his frustration.

T’POL

Yet any information you found would have been useless if you had been killed in your... over-enthusiasm.

Trip sighs heavily in frustration.

TRIP

I’m an engineer, Sub-Commander, and not just because I work on engines.
(beat)

I spent seven years of my life in college so I could earn a Masters Degree, and believe it or not part of that involved learning a thing or two about structural mechanics.

(beat, sighs)

But because I'm not a Vulcan, you couldn't just trust me, could you?

Everything that she’s been subjected to on *Enterprise* is really wearing on T’Pol, and with Trip’s last comment, we can tell that she’s hurt. She narrows her eyes.

T’POL

Why do you insist on taking an insulting tone with me?

Trip is oblivious to any change in her tone.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TRIP

Maybe because I don't like someone constantly second-guessin' me and patronizin' me for every single action I take, or better yet for bein' too emotional.

Though already somewhat hurt and upset by Trip's accusations (among others'), she takes on an almost apologetic tone and expression.

T'POL

I'm not here to patronize you, Commander Tucker, or anyone else on your crew.

Trip pauses for a moment before answering, taken a little off guard by the barely perceptible change in T'Pol's voice. He starts to look over his shoulder at her, but stops himself, regaining his earlier resolve and anger.

TRIP

Doesn't seem that way from where I'm sittin'.

T'Pol regains her earlier tone and composure, leaving barely a hint of what we've just seen.

T'POL

Perhaps your present emotional state clouds your perception.

TRIP

Don't even go there again; I'm gettin' tired of arguin' with you.

Trip activates the shuttlepod's comm. panel before T'Pol can reply.

TRIP

Shuttlepod One to *Enterprise*.

OPERATIONS MANAGER (COMM VOICE)

Shuttlepod One, this is *Enterprise*, go ahead Commander.

TRIP

Request permission to dock.
(beat, wryly)
Better have decon standin' by.

OPERATIONS MANAGER (COMM VOICE)

Granted, Shuttlepod One. We're clearing the way for you now.

We look over Trip's shoulder through the canopy as the shuttlepod lines up on *Enterprise*. The launch bay door opens as Trip gives the shuttlepod one last roll, matching up perfectly with *Enterprise*.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

EXT. SPACE

Shuttlepod 01 closes the short distance between it and *Enterprise* and slowly sets down in the launch bay. The door closes behind them.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – DECONTAMINATION & QUARANTINE ROOM

Trip leads T’Pol through the narrow entryway and they set down the equipment they carried with them from the shuttlepod. They begin to take off their damaged environmental suits.

TRIP

This might not even be necessary. Biosensors should let us know.

He misses the flat look T’Pol gives him; clearly, she knows something about decon. As if on cue, Dr. Lucas opens the hatch covering the small window between the D & Q room and the small observation room next to it.

LUCAS (COMM VOICE)

You’ve come up positive for both chemical and biological agents.

(beat, sympathetically)

We’re going to need the both of you to run through full decon; clothes, equipment, and everything.

Trip definitely doesn’t look thrilled by the idea, but he accepts the necessity. T’Pol is somewhat unreadable, but we can tell that she isn’t looking forward to the procedure either.

TRIP

Then you better have a team clean out the shuttlepod too in case we left any of it behind in there.

Lucas nods in agreement.

LUCAS (COMM VOICE)

I was thinking the same thing.

Lucas starts to turn away when Trip starts grumbling what could be some very non-PG-13 words under his breath, though we can’t quite make it out. T’Pol hears it though, and it’s obvious that she doesn’t approve. Lucas doesn’t know whether to crack a smirk or to grimace, but he decides it’s none of his business.

LUCAS (COMM VOICE)

I’ll give you two some privacy.

Lucas pushes an unseen button and the hatch slides shut again.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

LUCAS (COMM VOICE)

(sarcastically)

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

T'Pol raises an eyebrow, not quite sure what to make of that, or Trip's reaction, which is decidedly not one of amusement. The two of them begin to place their equipment and their environment suits in bank teller-like drawers in the wall, and push them shut to have them irradiated and cleaned. This leaves them in essentially their skivvies. Trip takes a seat on one of the benches and starts to reluctantly take off his socks. T'Pol, on the other hand, not suffering from any of the embarrassment Human modesty inflicts, simply begins by taking off her top and placing it in another drawer. Trip notices this and gawks at her briefly in surprise along with admiration for her beauty, but goes back to his socks when she turns around to look at him. We, of course don't really get to see anything “special”, as this is a PG-13 show and the kiddies might be watching.

T'POL

I have to say that I'm thoroughly disappointed in you, Commander.

Trip looks back up at her, completely forgetting about anything else. For a moment, it looks like he thinks she is referring to his brief once-over of her.

TRIP

(confused)

What?

T'POL

Despite your intelligence, you allow your emotions to control you.

(beat, flatly)

They will be your downfall.

The two of them continue to strip and place their clothing in the drawers throughout.

TRIP

(sarcastically)

Oh God, not this crap again...

(beat, sighs)

I thought we were done arguin' about this.

T'POL

No, you simply interrupted me and I waited until I had an opportunity to continue our discussion.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TRIP

Well this must be a pretty one-sided conversation then, ‘cause I seem to remember pointin’ out all kinds of flaws in your arguments, even before all this fun started in that building.

Trip raises his arms and motions about the room in an exaggerated fashion.

T’POL

If anything, I believe you have proven my arguments about Humanity’s shortcomings.

T’Pol, finished stripping, pushes the drawer containing her clothing shut and walks over to the room’s small multi-headed shower, giving us a few gratuitous looks at her shape. She steps into the shower and gives Trip one last look. Trip finishes stripping as well and closes the drawer with his clothes in it before stepping rapidly toward T’Pol to face her down.

TRIP

Now wait just one damn minute. How can you say that after insistin’ that you’re not tryin’ to push your culture on us?

(beat, frustrated)

So much for not lookin’ down on Humans.

T’Pol is losing patience. She pushes the button that activates the blue UV lights in the shower to begin the decontamination sequence.

T’POL

You nearly got us killed today by allowing your emotions to rule you.

The water in the shower begins to spray, enveloping T’Pol in its fine, high-pressure mist. Trip loses his temper at her accusation. T’Pol closes her eyes, puts her arms up, and slowly turns to let the shower and UV lights do their work, further upsetting Trip, who takes this as her cutting him off.

TRIP

I’ve about had it with your patronizin’! You know that ain’t-

Trip stops; he notices something that had somehow escaped his notice while the two of them were arguing – T’Pol looks pretty good when she’s naked. He tries not to stare, being a Southern gentleman and all, but he’s also a heterosexual Human male and it’s very difficult not to. To make matters worse, he starts having a certain involuntary reaction to T’Pol’s wet, naked body mere feet from him, and he blushes with embarrassment. Luck seems to have left Trip, because while he’s busy trying to cover himself and look away, the decontamination sequence has ended and T’Pol faces him again, opening her eyes to see him trying to turn away so she can’t see, but she does. Her eyebrows shoot up in surprise and she steps out to confront Trip, her curiosity getting the better of her.

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

T’POL

Fascinating. I don't believe I've ever witnessed that sort of reaction to my presence among Humans.

(beat)

Why have you lost your composure?

Trip’s face is red with embarrassment, and he struggles to cover himself.

TRIP

(muttering)

It's a natural reaction...

T’Pol frowns in disappointment, and Trip’s face goes pale as he starts to forget about his problem.

T’POL

Are Humans so immature that they can’t handle nudity, even in the most clinical of settings?

T’Pol turns and grabs a sterile towel to begin drying herself off with. Trip now completely forgets about his problem; his anger with T’Pol overcoming his embarrassment. He takes a step closer to T’Pol for emphasis.

TRIP

It has nothin’ to do with immaturity; it’s just a natural reaction and that’s all there is to it! I’m as Human as the next man after all!

T’POL

(dryly)

Indeed.

(beat)

Your emotion overrules any logic.

Now Trip really loses it and steps right up to her, just inches from making physical contact. This takes T’Pol a little off guard and actually flusters her a little. Her eyebrows shoot up in surprise again, and only the most observant viewer might catch her eyes glancing downward very quickly before making eye contact with Trip. The size difference between them is very apparent now, Trip standing almost a full head taller than T’Pol, but she stands her ground.

TRIP

Now that is enough of that. I’m not immature because I happen to find you attractive, and Humanity isn’t too immature either.

T’POL

(awkwardly, eyes flickering)

Commander...

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

TRIP (CONT'D)

(interrupting, angry)

Is that going to be your argument now? Since Trip can't keep it down, he and every other Human must be ruled by raw emotion? Humanity can't explore space because I got an erection?

T'Pol opens her mouth to say something as Trip pauses to sigh with frustration, but she doesn't manage to get anything out by the time Trip starts up again.

TRIP (CONT'D)

You know what? Now I'm disappointed in you, Sub-Commander; as arrogant and hypocritical as I think Vulcans can be, I at least thought they had some sense in 'em, enough to know not to make leaps in logic like that.

(beat)

I'm sorry we don't quite live up to your unrealistic expectations of us, but that's no reason to go and rub our faces in every little mistake we've made.

(beat)

I bet you Vulcans made mistakes when you were first startin' out too. Nobody's perfect; we just do our best with what we've got.

An ambiguous expression flashes very quickly over T'Pol's face, one that could easily be taken as respect.

T'POL

You should go through the decontamination cycle, Commander, before your exposure causes any further complications.

T'Pol turns and walks away to the other corner of the room, leaving Trip standing there in mild shock and confusion. He watches with bemusement as T'Pol finishes drying off and pulls a hospital gown out of another drawer. Finally, Trip takes his place in the small shower and starts the decontamination cycle. He closes his eyes to go through it and we lose track of T'Pol along with him. We focus on his face and the sound of the running water as he tries to forget about what just happened.

T'POL'S VOICE

I've been cleared to access the rest of the ship.

Trip eyes fly open with surprise, having lost track of time apparently. T'Pol stands a few feet away watching him with her usual unreadable expression.

T'POL (CONT'D)

I will be on the Bridge. I suggest that you return to Engineering as soon as time permits.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Trip doesn't say a word, just staring after T'Pol as she leaves the room. He can't help but wonder exactly how long she'd been standing there before she spoke up.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – CORRIDOR

Trip steps out of his quarters, dressed in a fresh uniform. He only gets one step down the corridor when the battle stations klaxon sounds, just as the ship is rocked by a massive impact, throwing Trip into the wall.

PICARD (COMM VOICE)

All hands to battle stations!

Trip eyes widen in horror, but it doesn't take him long to recover and run down the corridor like he has a purpose.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

Trip stumbles out of the turbolift as the ship takes another hit.

TRIP

Who the hell is shootin' up my ship!?

T'Pol, sitting in the command chair, looks over her shoulder at him to note his presence, then quickly goes back to her console.

T'POL

Three Andorian cruisers have dropped out of warp and have started firing on us.

TRIP

(shocked)

What?

Trip rushes to the Damage Control station.

TRIP

Did you try to hail them?

T'POL

(ignoring Trip)

Helm, break orbit and continue taking evasive actions.

The helmsman's hands fly over his console to make a few adjustments, then he grabs onto the control yoke and the impulse throttles.

ENT HELMSMAN

Breaking orbit...

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

On the viewscreen, the planet jerks off to the side and disappears as the Helmsman wildly maneuvers the ship. Trip watches on in growing concern; he doesn't like how things are developing with T'Pol in command. Even as reports come in over his panel he keeps looking over at T'Pol.

TRIP

(angrily)

Hey, don't you think we should try hailin' them, or at least try to talk to the captain about this!?

Hoshi has been white knuckling the grip bar on the front of her console this whole time, but Trip's adamant question brings her out of her fear-induced shock...well, a little bit anyway.

HOSHI

We already tried! They won't answer our hails and they jammed all ship-to-shore transmissions!

Trip shakes his head in disbelief.

TRIP

We need to go back and get the captain and the landing parties; we can't just leave them!

Picard, his frustration growing makes his extreme displeasure at having T'Pol in command known in the form of a deadly glare at her before he turns his attention to Trip.

PICARD

Commander, I agree with you, but we can't get stuck around here in orbit while those damn Andorians blast away at us.

Trip stares blankly at Picard, then glares at T'Pol himself.

TRIP

Why aren't we returning fire!?

Picard allows himself a small smile/grimace, wondering the same thing himself.

T'POL

Firing on them would be useless, Commander, and it may destroy any hope we have of recovering from this situation.

TRIP

And it might destroy us if we don't!

T'Pol, already having her hands full with the situation, is quickly losing her patience with Trip.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL

(warning)

Commander, Engineering requires your attention.

(beat)

Helm, prepare to go to warp.

The ship takes another heavy hit; alarms blare at all the stations. Trip has had enough himself; he gets up and stands right next to T'Pol, glaring down at her, full of anger and fear. T'Pol's eyes narrow as she returns his glare.

T'POL

Commander Tucker, return to your station!

TRIP

No. I don't recognize your authority to command this ship. You're a Vulcan officer, not-

T'Pol swivels her chair and starts to quickly rise as she speaks.

T'POL

Commander, I was appointed this position by your superiors, and we do not have time to debate this. Engineering needs you to affect repairs...

The effect of her standing so quickly and standing nose to nose with him (as best as she can anyway) does intimidate Trip for a very brief moment, despite her small size, but it doesn't last long.

TRIP

(interrupting)

The ship needs me, or at least a decent commander who won't leave their shipmates behind.

(beat)

No way would Captain Archer have left his people behind! I sure as hell won't!

Picard looks up from his panel at the two of them.

PICARD

If we're going to shoot back we better do it before they manage to take out our weapons.

Trip doesn't even take his eyes off T'Pol as they continue to glare at each other.

TRIP

Do it!

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

T'POL

Belay that order, Lieutenant!

Picard ignores T'Pol and works his flashing console.

PICARD

Loading missile launchers.

T'POL

I am in command here!

(beat)

Commander Tucker, report to Engineering or you will be escorted to the brig.

The bridge crew is shocked, and save the Helmsman, who is far too busy to take his eyes off his controls, all of them stare in disbelief at what is transpiring. The ship takes another hit, and it takes everything Trip and T'Pol have to keep from falling down.

Another alarm blares, this time from the helm.

ENT HELMSMAN

(shocked, frustrated)

It doesn't matter now anyway; we can't go to warp and the Andorians are gaining fast.

KELBY (COMM VOICE)

Engineering to Bridge! Do you know where Commander Tucker is? We really need him down here right away!

Trip is torn between the duty to his ship and the duty to his best friend. His eyes lose their harshness as he comes close to tearing up.

TRIP

(desperate)

We can't just leave Jon down there....

T'Pol's expression also loses its harshness, but she loses none of her resolve. Trip recognizes this, and quickly heads for the turbolift.

PICARD

Commander!?

Trip enters the turbolift without saying another word. He hits the turbolift's panel a lot harder than he needs to as the door slides shut after him. T'Pol watches after him in surprise.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

PICARD

Damn!

(beat)

Sub-Commander, our only choice now is to fight!

T'Pol resumes her seat and furrows her brow. She doesn't answer Picard right away, instead resting her arms on the command chair's armrests and steepling her forefingers. Picard glares at her, but T'Pol doesn't budge.

T'POL

Prepare to fire.

Picard is actually a little surprised by her reply, and turns back to his panel.

PICARD

Yes Ma'am, preparing to fire.

EXT. SPACE

Enterprise dodges one more barrage of blue beams lashing out at her. Suddenly, all three of her missile racks come out of their stored positions, and turn to point at the approaching Andorian cruisers. We pan quickly to focus on them, looking just as they did on ENT.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

We focus on Picard with T'Pol over his shoulder in the background.

PICARD

Missile batteries ready to fire, Ma'am.

Picard looks into his targeting viewer and puts his finger on the firing button. We refocus on T'Pol.

T'POL

Fire.

EXT. SPACE

All twelve missiles fly out of their launch racks, four to each Andorian cruiser.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

T'POL

Open a channel.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Hoshi, still white knuckling it, doesn't respond right away. T'Pol glares at her, bringing her back to reality. She quickly does as she was told.

HOSHI

Channel open, Sub-Commander, but they may not receive any message we send.

T'POL

We will have to take that chance...

T'Pol switches on her comm. panel.

T'POL

(sternly, in Vulcan)

[Attention Andorian vessels; I hereby command you to stand down under the cease-fire agreement signed by your government with the Vulcan High Command.]

Leaving the comm. on, she pushes another button on the panel and holds it.

EXT. SPACE

The Andorian ships are trying to evade the incoming missiles, but the missiles are seeking them. Suddenly, they explode, only a few thousand meters away from the Andorian ships.

INT. *ENTERPRISE* – BRIDGE

T'Pol releases the button. We pan up to see Picard dumbstruck.

PICARD

(disbelief)

You've detonated the missiles early...

Picard turns and glares at the Vulcan woman.

PICARD

Why!?

T'POL

(coolly)

They were a warning, not an attack.

(beat)

Ensign, bring us to a full stop.

ENT HELMSMAN

(confused)

Aye, helm answering full stop.

FOUNDATIONS: "One Small Step... Part I"

Hoshi eyes T'Pol, drawing her attention.

HOSHI

You have some kind of agreement with them?

Picard becomes very suspicious of T'Pol.

PICARD

What!? What kind of agreement?

T'POL

(coolly)

All will become apparent soon, Lieutenant.

Picard reaches for his sidearm.

PICARD

I don't think I want to wait around to find out.

Suddenly, there is a hum as six columns of bright blue light appear in the forward part of the room. Everyone but T'Pol shields their eyes, and is taken completely off guard when armed Andorian soldiers appear out of the light. Picard pulls his sidearm as he hits his comm. panel.

PICARD

Intruder alert! Security detail to the Bridge!

The Andorian closest to him points his rifle at Picard while the others spread out to cover the room.

ANDORIAN FARRIER

(in Andorian)

[Surrender! Put down your weapon!]

Picard's face turns stony; he's not sure what the Andorian Farrier just shouted at him, but body language truly is universal. He keeps his weapon trained on the Andorian Farrier.

PICARD

All hands, stand your ground.

Picard's eye twitches slightly as he faces his impending death.

A line of text appears in the lower portion of the screen:

To Be Continued.....

FOUNDATIONS: “One Small Step... Part I”

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

END OF PART I