STAR TREK: "Home Soil" - 12/2/87 - CAST

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION
"Home Soil"

CAST

PICARD             KURT MANDL
RIKER              ARTHUR MALENCON
BEVERLY            LUISA KIM
DATA               BJORN BENSEN
TROI
TASHA
WORF
GEORDI
WESLEY
ENGINEER (FEMALE)

Voice-Over
COMPUTER VOICE
TRANSLATOR VOICE
TRANSPORTER CHIEF
STAR TREK: "Home Soil" - 12/2/87 - SETS

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SETS

INTERIORS                          EXTERIORS

USS ENTERPRISE                    USS ENTERPRISE
  MAIN BRIDGE
  CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM            VELARA III
  MEDICAL LAB
  LUISA'S QUARTERS
  CORRIDOR BY MEDICAL LAB DOOR

  ENGINEERING
  OBSERVATION LOUNGE

TERRAFORMING BASE
  CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HYDRAULICS ROOM
  HYDRAULICS ROOM
  MAIN CONTROL ROOM
FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE - VELARA III IN B.G.

The ship is ENTERING a parking orbit of the yellow-ochre, featureless planet.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, stardate 41463.9. We are mapping the Pleiades Cluster which has many young planets and we've been asked by the Federation to visit a group terraforming Velara III, which we would very much like to see. Communications have been erratic and there is some concern about their welfare.

2 INT. MAIN BRIDGE (OPTICAL)

PICARD, RIKER, DATA, TROI, TASHA, GEORDI and WORF -- at their respective stations -- all study Velara III on the Main Viewer. As Velara III SETTLES INTO PLACE on the Main Viewer:

GEORDI
Entering standard orbit -- now.

PICARD
It takes special people to live in such desolation.

TROI
Visionaries, who don't see this planet as it is, but as it will be.

RIKER
I've always wanted to see terraforming in operation.

PICARD
Hailing frequency, Lieutenant Yar.
CONTINUED:

TASHA
Hailing frequencies open, sir.

PICARD
Velara III base, this is Captain Picard of the starship Enterprise.

No response.

PICARD
(continuing)
Lieutenant Yar...?

TASHA
No equipment malfunction on either end, sir. They are receiving.

PICARD
Velara III, this is the Enterprise. Come in please.

Still nothing. Some tense glances among personnel.

GEORDI
(after a beat)
Maybe nobody's home.

ANGLE ON MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

ZOOM IN until WE CAN MAKE OUT the ribbed dome of the Terraforming Station.

DATA
We are sensing life-forms, sir.

PICARD
(concerned)
Velara III, do you copy?

Then the IMAGE of PROJECT DIRECTOR KURT MANDL APPEARS, somewhat disheveled. He is Picard's age, and appears to be taken off guard. He could be of German decent, somewhat stiff.

MANDL
Velara Base to Enterprise. Uh... yes, Captain. Director Mandl here. Sorry for the delay. We weren't expecting visitors.
4 ANGLE ON TROI

just enough to ESTABLISH that a small alarm bell is ringing, but not enough for a comment.

5 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

PICARD
Terraform Command has asked us to see how you were getting along.

MANDL
... We were a little behind, but we're back on schedule.

6 CLOSE ON TROI AND PICARD

watching and listening intently.

TROI
(quietly)
We alarm him for some reason.

PICARD
(a pause)
Your staff is all well, I presume, Director?

MANDL
Understandably tired. We're all working very hard, Captain.

PICARD
Is there anything we can do to help?... You and your staff are welcome aboard for a change of scene and some rest. We have some Holodecks you might enjoy.

MANDL
No disrespect, sir, we can't afford to take the time.

Troi touches Picard, indicating he should CLICK OFF. Picard DOES SO.

TROI
His fear is escalating.
6 CONTINUED:

MANDL
If you'll excuse me, I must get back to work.

TROI
I sense deliberate concealment, sir.

Picard takes it in, concerned.

7 FEATURING PICARD -- INCLUDE VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

While Picard delivers the following, Mandl seems distracted.

PICARD
(to Troi)
Of what?

TROI
I don't know, but it's intense.

Picard nods and CLICKS BACK ON.

PICARD
We've heard so much about your remarkable achievements in terraforming, that my staff would very much appreciate looking around.

MANDL
(hesitant)
... It's not really the best time. We are at a critical phase just now.

PICARD
We do not require any special attention.

MANDL
(softer)
I'm trying not to be rude, sir, but it would be inconvenient just now.

Pause. Troi signals Picard to CLICK OFF again.
CONTINUED:

TROI
He's concealing something and it's more than just being too busy.
Your announcement about coming down has pushed him almost to the point of panic.

PICARD
Whether he wants us or not...
(touching his com)
Director Mandl, unless you are absolutely refusing permission for us to land on your station, please prepare to receive my away team.

MANDL
(curly)
As you wish.

Riker, Tasha, Data and Geordi rise and head for the door. Worf and another crewmember replace Data and Geordi.

PICARD
Stay on your toes, Number One.
Counselor, perhaps you should go along. A man this tense is unpredictable.

Troi rises and JOINS the away team.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)
in orbit.

INT. TERRAFORMING BASE (OPTICAL)

Riker, Data, Geordi, Troi and Tasha BEAM IN.

Present in the room are ARTHUR MALENCON, LUISA KIM and BJORN BENSEN, Hydraulics Specialist, Biosphere Designer and Chief Engineer, respectively. Expecting the visitors, Malencon, and Bensen are guarded. Luisa on the other hand is friendly and open.

LUISA
Welcome to Velara III. Remember it as it is now, because in a couple of decades you won't recognize the place.
(steps forward)
Luisa Kim. Gardener of Edens.

RIKER
Commander William Riker, USS Enterprise. This is Lieutenant Commander Data, Counselor Troi, Lieutenant Yar and Lieutenant La Forge.

The other two members of the terraforming team reluctantly move forward -- both are tense.

LUISA
This is Bjorn Bensen, Chief Engineer, and Arthur Malencon, our Hydraulics Specialist,

Bensen steps over to Data. He looks him over.

BENSON
An android.

Data nods.

TASHA
And third in command of the Enterprise.
CONTINUED:

After a look of surprise, Bensen takes Data's offered hand and examines both sides of it, as if he's checking out a new piece of remarkable equipment.

BENSEN
Where were you manufactured -- are there others like you?

DATA
Both matters are subjects of protracted discussion.

BENSEN
Remarkable.

Bensen turns and joins Malencon at their work. The team members take in their surroundings. We are in a twenty-fourth century power and hydraulics facility, more square-cut and mechanical than the Enterprise. Large, working machinery, on which "the bolts show." The computers are more heavy duty and their jumper cables show. This room is the hub of the operation, with corridors and doors leading off in four different directions. Beneath it all is the LOW RUMBLE of HYDRAULIC EQUIPMENT at work.

LUISA
We don't get visitors. It's exciting to have you here.

RIKER
We weren't sure how we would be received. Director Mandl seemed less than enthusiastic about our interest.

LUISA
(warmly)
I should apologize for him. We are at a critical phase. Usually he's quite charming.

Riker returns her smile.

RIKER
We'll stay out of your way, it's just that we've never seen a terraforming station, and couldn't resist the opportunity.
CONTINUED: (2)

LUISA
How much do you know about the process?

DATA
The theories -- the reports -- but nothing firsthand.

LUISA
Oh, wonderful. Then let me show you around.

As she turns and leads them to a screen, Troi moves to Riker.

TROI
(sotto voce)
The other two are as veiled and secretive as Mandl, but she is not.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE LUISA'S SCREEN (OPTICAL)

As the away team watches, the screen SHOWS a lifeless, uniformly brown, dead planet.

LUISA
What we're doing is so exciting, so -- inspiring. We take a lifeless planet and little by little transform it into an M-class environment, capable of supporting life. Terraforming makes you feel a little godlike.

(beat)
Is that a terribly arrogant thing to say?

DATA
Not at all. It is accurate.

INTERCUT

with REACTIONS and COMMENTS of the away team. During this, Luisa seems attracted to Riker.
CONTINUED:

LUISA

The first phase is selecting the planet. That's very important. It must have the right mass and gravity, the correct rate of rotation, and a balanced day and night. The planet must also be without life or having the prospect of life developing naturally. The Federation makes that decision. Then...

(she pauses a beat for emphasis)

... we take over.

Riker and the others are taken by her ingenuous enthusiasm.

LUISA

(continuing)

What you see here -- this station -- is Phase Two. Phase Three involves the water. Usually we create basins, using hydraulic landscaping, but the water on this planet is subsurface, and extremely high in salt content. We are just about to begin pumping and filtering that water, removing the salt, oxygenating and replacing. Next we introduce micro-organisms, and when the process is complete...

Her screen now SHOWS several large separated areas of green. The away team exchange looks of admiration.

LUISA

(continuing)

... eventually, we'll have a lush, arable, biosphere.

While this goes on, Data's attention is caught by Malencon.

RIKER

You make it sound poetic.

LUISA

(brightly)

I think it's the best occupation in the universe.
Data CROSSES to Malencon's work station and glances at his blueprints.

Malencon is working near a computer screen FILLED with hydraulics plans -- pipes, sprayers, probes, plans for channels, rivers and bays. Geordi STEPS UP beside him.

DATA
The efficiency of your hydraulic landscaping is elegant.

How could Malencon not be flattered?

MALENCON
It isn't yet -- but it will be. Right now, I'm disturbed by erratic power surges in several of the servomechanisms that control the hydraulic probes.

GEORDI
Could it be the increased conductivity caused by the high saline content?

MALENCON
(with the enthusiasm of one scientist to another)
That was my first thought, but..

Bensen puts a cap on the conversation.

BENSEN
Arthur.

Malencon catches himself.

BENSEN
(continuing; curtly)
We checked that out. That wasn't it.

TROI AND RIKER
They exchange a glance at this behavior.
14 ANOTHER ANGLE

as Mandl ENTERS the room.

MANDL
I'm Director Mandl. I am sorry about being so abrupt during our initial contact, being isolated one tends to forget the social graces. Are you seeing everything you want?

TROI
What you are doing here is miraculous.

MANDL
What we are doing here is working on a difficult, demanding timetable, and there will be no miracle unless Malencon gets the hydraulic probes back on line. We are set to step up to full conversion, immediately.
(crisply; to Malencon)
Shouldn't you be in the hydraulics chamber, Arthur?

Malencon is caught off guard.

MALENCON
Now?

15 TROI
She picks up on the tension.

16 MANDL
He steps toward Malencon for emphasis.

MANDL
Yes.

MALENCON
(rising, nervous)
All right, Kurt.

Malencon HURRIES OUT.
17 ANOTHER ANGLE
Troi and Riker exchange a glance at this behavior.

18 GEORDI
indicating Malencon's computer screen.

GEORDI
That must be the master subsurface pump. Impressive.

DATA
(indicating another area on the computer screen)
This is interesting. How the water table is a thin ribbon between the sandy surface layer and the rock below.

GEORDI
And it follows the contour precisely.

DATA
(nodding)
Which would require extreme precision from the probe controls.

Mandl ENTERS SHOT, on guard as he hears this. He goes to the computer and calls up another program.

MANDL
Here's something which should interest you. The vegetation graphs are really the key element to successful terraforming.

CAMERA BACK as everyone steps closer to look, except Troi.

RIKER
Incredible. It's planned month by month, decade by decade.

MANDL
Every single thing we do is specific and exacting. You see grand, romantic concepts. I see unyielding rock under an ocean of sand.
She suddenly registers a severe emotional shock.

TROI
(overlapping, alarmed)
Commander...!

as all hear the alarm in her voice. Her internal sensors are scanning the facility.

RIKER
What is it, Deanna?

Her face suddenly registers emotional shock.

TROI
(almost in pain)
Malencon. He's in trouble.

A perception immediately followed by a WARNING SIREN and the o.s. SOUND of LASER BLASTS. Reactions. Riker is first OUT of the room, FOLLOWED by Data, Geordi and Tasha. Mandl is NEXT, FOLLOWED by Troi, Bensen and Luisa, exchanging a look, BRING UP THE REAR.

The o.s. LASER BLASTING is LOUDER, accompanied by SHOUTS and CRIES of PAIN by Malencon on the other side of the closed door. ANGLE ADJUSTS as Riker and the group CONVERGE ON the sliding door. Riker tries the handle -- locked. He alone... and then he and Data pull at the handles -- no go. Mandl SQUEEZES UP.

RIKER
Can you open it?

Mandl presses the auto-decoder pad, tries the door. But it still won't open.

MANDL
It's jammed.

TASHA
Let me try.

The o.s. SCREAMS STOP. The LASER BLASTS CEASE. Reactions: "Is the threat over?" Troi looks sad.

TROI
We're too late.

Mandl tries the auto-decoder pad again, and this time the door OPENS.
INT. HYDRAULICS ROOM - MANDL'S POV

The central monitoring column, from which laser arms extend and sink laterally into the "surround," has been trashed. On the floor is the equally trashed body of Arthur Malencon.

REVERSE ANGLE

as folks CROWD INTO the doorway. Mandl has a look of fear etched across his face. Luisa, very emotional, covers her eyes, turns away. Bensen is sick. Our away team looks from the body on the floor to Mandl back to the body. Tasha stares at Mandl.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

23 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

In orbit.

PICARD (V. O.)
Captain's log, supplemental. What began as a routine visit to the Federation group terraforming Velara III has become a serious situation. Arthur Malencon, the hydraulics engineer, has been killed in an extraordinary accident.

24 INT. TERRAFORMING BASE - HYDRAULICS ROOM

as before, with Malencon's body. PAN the mess of twisted metal until WE SETTLE on the doorway where Data waits with the others, except for Geordi and Bensen.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Situation report, Number One.

RIKER
(tense, trying to save a life)
For safety reasons, we're shutting off all power to the hydraulics room before entering to recover the body. Then we'll beam him up to Sickbay, but from the look of his wounds, it's probably hopeless.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Keep me informed.

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
Data...?

Data taps his communicator.

DATA
Go ahead, Geordi.
INT. MAIN CONTROL ROOM/HYDRAULICS ROOM
(INTERCUT AS DESIRED)

Geordi stands before an array of computer panels examining a display SHOWING the FLOW CHART of the operation, AND a DIAGRAM OF THE CROSSED-HUB LAYOUT as Bensen works some controls, then nods to Geordi.

BENSEN
All set.

GEORDI
We have your section powered down now. Bensen has locked the master servomotor drive system. It should be safe in there now.

TASHA
I'm going in.

DATA
I will go with you.

Data and Tasha ENTER the room, moving to Malencon's body. She quickly affixes a communicator to the body, touches it, says:

CLOSE ON TASHA AND BODY (OPTICAL)

TASHA
Transporter Room, this is Lieutenant Yar. Two to beam up to Sickbay.

Concerned to get the body to Sickbay as soon as possible, she waits as she and the body DEMATERIALIZE.

BACK TO DOORWAY (OPTICAL)

LUISA
I want to go. We should be with him.

(to Mandl)
Kurt, please come too.

Mandl shows reluctance, but, seeing the looks on everyone's faces, he acquiesces. Riker touches his com.
CONTINUED:

RIKER
Transporter Room, this is
Commander Riker. Beam up four
at my coordinates.

Luisa, Mandl, Troi and Riker DEMATERIALIZE. Data now
moves into the room proper, prying his way through the
wreckage.

DATA
(on com)
I have seen malfunctions, but
this is unprecedented. Almost
as if the laser drill attempted
to tear itself apart.

BENSEN
(off Geordi's look)
I can't explain it.

DATA
(into com; reflecting)
The laser blasts seemed to end
when the yelling stopped.

Data goes to the room's computer control console.

BENSEN'S COM VOICE
Maybe Arthur stopped it -- only
not in time.

DATA
Not possible.

GEORDI'S COM VOICE
Then what are you suggesting?

Data studies at the control panel.

DATA
Uncertain.
(to Geordi)
Geordi, would you please return
power to the control console in
this room. I want to reactivate
the program.

Geordi and Bensen do as requested, systematically
toggling a bank of switches. (END INTERCUT)
DATA'S ANGLE - CONSOLE

A localized panel LIGHTS UP. Data pushes buttons. The laser drill begins its normal functioning. Data watches it for a beat as it systematically blasts into the bore holes. He then turns his attention back to the console.

DATA
(into com)
I am running the base drilling program.

ANGLES - VARIOUS (MECHANICAL EFFECTS) (OPTICAL)

While Data is preoccupied with the computer program, the firing head on the laser drill, lifts and turns -- no longer sighting down the bore holes -- it is now taking dead aim on Data. The NOISE from the arm alerts Data who TURNS and DODGES the BLAST which it WHISTLES BY his ear. Again IT FIRES.

DATA
Servos OFF!

INT. MAIN CONTROL ROOM

Geordi and Bensen scan the panels. Nothing in here has changed.

BENSEN
They are off!

GEORDI
Data, what's happening?

DATA'S COM VOICE
Too much to explain.

OMITTED

INT. CORRIDOR

Geordi and Bensen RUN toward Data's location hearing the SOUND of LASER BLASTS. Geordi touches the Communicator.

GEORDI
La Forge to Enterprise. We have a problem!
33 INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE HYDRAULICS ROOM

The door is closed as Geordi and Bensen RACE TO it.

GEORDI
Open the door!

DATA
STAY OUT! It is under control.

WE HEAR THRASHING, BLASTING, CLATTERING, sounding like a battle skirmish. WE PLAY OFF the REACTIONS of Geordi and Bensen. They look at each other, astonished, unable to comment. Suddenly -- SILENCE.

GEORDI
Data --

For a beat there is no answer. Then the door OPENS.

34 INT. CORRIDOR - HYDRAULICS ROOM DOOR

Geordi ENTERS, FOLLOWED by Bensen, happy to see Data in good shape.

GEORDI
Are you injured?

DATA
No.

34A BENSEN'S POV INTO HYDRAULICS ROOM

He has eyes only for the wreckage that was once sophisticated equipment.

34B BACK TO SHOT

BENSEN
A year's work destroyed!

DATA
I had no choice.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
Away team report now! What is happening?

35 INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

Picard, Tasha and Geordi are staring at a perfectly calm Data. Mandl stands in a corner.
DATA
(to Picard)
... We were attempting to trace the source of the malfunction when it attacked me.

MANDL
How much more of this fantasy must I listen to?

PICARD
None at all, Mr. Mandl. Until this is sorted out, I've provided temporary quarters for you and your crew. I suggest you use them.

MANDL
You're overstepping your authority, Picard! You have no right to interfere.

PICARD
An attack on one of my crew gives me the right, Mr. Mandl.

MANDL
I have a schedule to meet!

PICARD
Your schedule is on hold, until I have a satisfactory explanation of what happened.

Mandl, seeing that argument is useless, turns to exit. Picard stops him with:

PICARD
(crisp)
Director Mandl. Wait.
(to Tasha)
Escort the director to his quarters.

TASHA
Aye, sir.

Mandl and Tasha EXIT.

PICARD
Proceed with your report.
DATA
It would appear that the laser drilling systems had been reprogrammed.
(beat)
As soon as its memory bank received power, it turned itself on and went after me. Fortunately, I was able to cope with it.

GEORDI
(bank shot)
Not by much, from what I saw.

DATA
I believe it was programmed to destroy any person moving in that room.

PICARD
Speculation or certainty?

DATA
Certainty.

GEORDI
It would have required the talents of a master programmer.

DATA
But it was done.

PICARD
Then the question is not who, because obviously it was one of the three remaining terraformers. The question is why. What are they hiding? What is so important it could make one of them, or all of them desperate enough to take a life?

GEORDI
Shall I have them brought in, sir?

PICARD
Not yet.

Picard rises and they FOLLOW him to:
INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

as they RETURN FROM the Ready Room. Riker, Tasha, Troi and Worf at their stations. BEVERLY is also present.

PICARD
Doctor Crusher?

BEVERLY
Malencon never had a chance. The injuries were too severe, the damage too extensive.

Picard nods sadly.

RIKER
The entire Velara III facility has been powered down, Captain.

WORF
We've just completed a remote power feed to the life support systems.

PICARD
Good. Data, I want you and Geordi to return for a more careful inspection.

DATA
What are we to look for, sir?

PICARD
Evidence of tampering, negligence, sabotage... whatever. I don't know, but the answer's there, on the planet.

Data and Geordi EXIT.

PICARD
(continuing)
Tasha, I'd like you to provide Counselor Troi and me with complete personnel files on our three guests. Psych profiles, training, everything. I'm looking for motive, intent... the psychological capacity to commit one murder and attempt another.

TASHA
Aye, sir.
CONTINUED:

Tasha turns to the aft station.

PICARD
(continuing, to Riker)
It seems we've become policemen, Number One.

Riker reacts, not enjoying the forecast.

INT. HYDRAULICS ROOM (OPTICAL)

DIM interior ILLUMINATION filters in through the translucent dome. Data and Geordi MATERIALIZE among the apparently inert junk. They move cautiously at first, but everything does seem to be inert.

VARIOUS ANGLES

as Data probes among the junk. Then, eventually, he examines the opening to the tubular tunnel which had been occupied by one of the sensor arms.

POV - SMALL FLASHES

It doesn't last for more than half a second at a time, but something about the size of a rice grain BLINKS several times.

ANGLE - DATA

Unaccustomedly startled, he draws back. He looks around to make sure nothing else is happening. Then, he gets close and looks again. ANOTHER BLINK or two. He scans the little thing with his tricorder. Nothing. Shaking his head, he touches his communicator.

DATA
Geordi. I need some visual assistance.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Geordi JOINS him. Data indicates the "rice grain," BLINKING in a rapid, non-repetitive pattern, looking like HIGH SPEED MORSE CODE in LIGHTS, with pauses and breaks, like language syntax.
CONTINUED:

GEORDI
What is it?

With a very puzzled look at Data and the lights and back again, Geordi applies his Tricorder.

GEORDI
(continuing)
Inorganic. Nothing but basic elements. No carbon... sandy texture... But the flashes are almost... musical. I see color variations and rhythms which are like a melody.

DATA
Speculation. Could it be alive?

CLOSE ON GEORDI

stunned. He looks down at the FLASHING LIGHT.

GEORDI
How could it be alive? It's inorganic.

DATA
Whatever this is, it could be what they are covering up -- and the reason someone killed Malencon.

As though in answer, the "rice grain" BLINKS FASTER, and in a fancier pattern than ever. Off Geordi's and Data's reactions, WE:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO
FADE IN:

43 EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, supplemental. On
my order, Data's startling
discovery of a possible indigenous
and inorganic life-form --
something hitherto thought
impossible...

44 INT. ENTERPRISE - MEDICAL LAB

Beverly is preparing an elaborate scan, its object
being the contents of a basketball-sized, transparent
bell jar, anchored to a stable base, on a platform
under a scanner.

PICARD (V.O.)
(continuing)
... has been beamed aboard so that
its true nature might be
uncovered.

WESLEY hovers over her shoulder, as do Picard, Data,
and Geordi.

45 ANGLES

From the BLINKING CONTENTS OF THE SPHERE, WE RECOGNIZE
Data's discovery. The BLINK is rapid, like a visual
hum. They crowd around.

46 BEVERLY

She lowers the overhead device until it covers the bell
jar.

BEVERLY
(to Computer)
Activate.

There is a pause as the device is activated.
CONTINUED:

BEVERLY
(continuing; to group)
Let's be sure of what we have here.
(to the scanner)
Is the sample organic?

COMPUTER VOICE
Negative carbon. Negative known life components. Substance inorganic.

DATA
Recheck analysis.

COMPUTER VOICE
Rechecking... Analysis verified. Not organic.

BEVERLY
Magnify to screen.

Beverly and the others glance up to a screen situated atop the scanner (WHICH WE CANNOT YET SEE) as the machinery responds to her commands.

BEVERLY
(continuing)
Magnify -- factor rate five.
(beat, and:)
Hold surface. Rate ten.
(beat, and:)
Hold.

Everyone leans in for a closer look.

POV - THE SCREEN

WE SEE A NETWORK of tiny BEAD-LIKE THINGS, connected by a WEB, like the synaptic structure of brain tissue. This structure SPARKLES DAZZLINGLY as energies flow along its "CIRCUITRY." We have isolated about FIVE OR SIX OF THE "BEADS."

PICARD (O.S.)
What are we looking at?

WESLEY (O.S.)
It's really beautiful. Whatever it is...

A HUMMING SOUND BUILDS... then LEVELS OFF.
as all react to the sound.

PICARD  
(rhetorically)  
What's causing that hum?

BEVERLY  
Computer, what is the magnification?

COMPUTER VOICE  
Twenty five thousand diameters and holding.

BEVERLY  
Analysis. The pattern of the flashes.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Not random or repetitive or sequential. Pattern not recognized.

BEVERLY  
What is the source of the flashes?

COMPUTER VOICE  
Unable to specify. Theoretically not possible from this substance.

BEVERLY  
Disregard incongruity and theorize as to source?

Pregnant pause, and:

COMPUTER VOICE  
Life.

On the collective "take," especially from Data:

49 INT. CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

Picard is already verbally engaged with Mandl. Riker, Troi and Tasha are in the b.g.

MANDL  
What do you mean a life-form?!  
What life-form?! A Federation recon expedition certified Velara III lifeless.
PICARD
Understandable, given this particular life-form's novel nature.

MANDL
And just what is that nature?

PICARD
Doctor Crusher is still making her determination.
(beat)
I presume you know the Prime Directive, Mr. Mandl.

MANDL
Are you saying I knowingly defied it?

PICARD
I don't know. But I intend to find out.
(level beat)
You're a man obsessed with what he does. Who knows what an obsessed man would do to keep going? Kill, perhaps?

MANDL
(exploding:)
I create life! I don't take it!

Mandl STORMS FROM the room. Tasha FOLLOWS him. A pause, and then:

PICARD
What do you think?

RIKER
You hit him pretty hard, Captain.

PICARD
Counselor?

TROI
It was useful.
(to Picard)
I felt two levels. He knew about the life-form. The idea of murder seemed to shock him. I couldn't tell if it was the whole idea, or just being accused of it.
PICARD
What about his file, Lieutenant Yar? Could he have accomplished the reprogramming that Data says took place?

TASHA
Mandl holds advanced degrees in Computer Science as well as Artificial Intelligence. It's possible.

PICARD
What about the others? Including the victim.

TASHA
Only the victim had the required expertise. But Malencon did work where the... whatever-it-is... was found. Trying to suppress that knowledge would be motive for murder... if Mandl were obsessed enough.

TROI
Terraformers are often obsessive. It goes with the career profile.

RIKER
How do you read the designer?

TROI
Possessed of a highly abstracted reality. Lovely visions, little data.
(smile)
You might do better than I.

INT. LUISA'S QUARTERS
She is lying on her sofa, her arm over her eyes. She wears a tasteful robe. There is a gentle KNOCK on the door. She seems not to hear it.

RIKER (O.S.)
Luisa... are you all right?

She seems reassured by his voice. She sits up and wipes away the tears the arm had been covering.
Continued:

LUIZA

(Flatly)

It isn't locked.

Riker enters.

Riker

Mind a visitor?

She shakes her head and indicates a comfortable seat. He sinks into it. She looks at him, on the edge of hysteria. Just the edge. She is about to become either the world's greatest liar or its greatest innocent.

LUIZA

Is it true... did you really find a life-form?

Riker

It's still being debated in some quarters. But I think so, yes.

LUIZA

What's it like?

Riker

We have nothing to compare it to, but it's microscopic... seems colonial... simple... and inorganic.

(gentle)

That's why the recon scouts missed it. This one wasn't your mistake.

She rises and faces him.

LUIZA

Everything I've worked for is falling apart.

She starts to cry.

Riker

It's very beautiful. I'll arrange for you to see it, if you like.

She forces a softening on herself, returns his gaze.

LUIZA

Perhaps later.

He nods warmly, and exits.
51 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - ANGLES (OPTICAL)

Picard, Worf, Tasha, Troi. Other crewmembers filling in for Data and Geordi. The MED SCANNER SCREEN IMAGE is on the Main Viewer. All those who haven't yet seen it are having their minds appropriately blown.

BEVERLY'S COM VOICE
Captain, this is Doctor Crusher. I think you'd better come to the Medical Lab.

52 INT. MEDICAL LAB

Data, Geordi, and Beverly are working with the analytical apparatus. Wesley watches. Picard ENTERS. Data and Geordi are peering into the bell jar.

PICARD
What is it?

BEVERLY
Geordi observed movement.

GEORDI
It's not exactly movement, it's a shift in the energy pattern.

DATA
Without external influence.

WESLEY
Couldn't coordinated static charges promote the shift?

Data registers intrigue at the thought.

DATA
Yes, if any were present in the jar, but none is.

Geordi suddenly reacts to something he alone is seeing.

GEORDI
It's changing.

They all move close to the Jar. Their faces almost right against it.

PICARD
I can't see any difference.
CONTINUED:

GEORDI
The infrared range is increasing.

Picard glances at the scanner screen.

POV - SCANNER SCREEN
It's BRIGHTER. The surface starts to OSCILLATE.

ANGLE - GROUP AROUND BELL JAR
As they move still closer -

ANGLE - BELL JAR (OPTICAL)
The "rice grain" EMITS a bright LIGHT which fills the lab. Geordi seems almost blinded.

COMPUTER VOICE
Warning. Input overload. Input overload.

The COMPUTER VOICE ZAPS OUT. The HUM from the container gets slowly LOUDER.

ANGLE - OUR PEOPLE
REACTING to the increasing hum.

DATA
It is projecting an energy field!

GEORDI
And it's increasing!

The BRIGHT LIGHT denies a chance to clearly see the contents of the bell jar, but:

THE SCANNER SCREEN
is now completely FILLED WITH a SPARKLING CHAOS. The ROOM LIGHT shows PATTERNED INTENSITY CHANGES.

BACK TO SCENE
Beverly is alarmed.
CLOSE POV - BELL JAR CONTAINER (OPTICAL)

The WHITE LIGHT DIMinishes enough to REVEAL the SINGLE GRAIN HAS BECOME TWO SMALL GRAINS, joined like Siamese twins.

BACK TO SCENE (OPTICAL)

DATA
Only life can replicate itself, Doctor. Inorganic or not, it is alive.

BEVERLY
Activate quarantine field.

A tinted FORCE FIELD attempts to SURROUND THE CONTAINER, at her command. Then the field weakens, its GLOW DIMMING as the LIGHT from the Siamese grains BRIGHTENS. It then REVERSES, as the force field attempts to assert itself.

BEVERLY
(continuing)
Quarantine field full!

It stabilizes for a moment, then the quarantine field slowly DIMS.

BEVERLY
(continuing; more imperative)
Full shield backup!

COMPUTER VOICE
Translation request being patched.

PICARD
Translation? From whom?

BEVERLY
Evacuating lab.

As they EXIT, WE HEAR:

COMPUTER VOICE
Full shield backup in place but weakening... translation grhjkj wljkdh...
CONTINUED:

WESLEY
What's going on with the
translator circuit?

INT. CORRIDOR - MEDICAL LAB DOOR

as it SLIDES CLOSED. Beverly, Data and Geordi look
at each other. Picard touches his communicator.

PICARD
(into communicator)
bridge, this is the captain.
Request emergency power to
increase lab quarantine seal...

INT. MAIN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Riker turns to Worf:

RIKER
Do it, Mister Worf.
(into com)
What's the nature of the problem,
Captain? We've lost visual.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
We have confirmed Data's discovery
is life, but more than that - it
is intelligent.

RIKER
How do you know?

PICARD'S COM VOICE
(beat, and:)
It has just taken possession of
the Medical Lab.

INT. CORRIDOR - MEDICAL LAB DOOR

PICARD
Because it's trying to communicate
with us!

Riker and the rest REACT as we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE
FADE IN:

63  EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

In orbit.

    PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, supplemental. We
are attempting to deal with the
aggressive inorganic life-form
which Data brought up from the
planet. It has taken over the
Medical Lab, and is apparently
attempting to communicate with
us.

64  INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

Picard, Riker, Worf, Geordi and Troi are at their
stations. Other crew members fill in at the other
posts. Beverly and Data standing by.

    WORF
It generates enough energy to
interfere with surrounding
systems.

    PICARD
Mr. La Forge -- can we see into
the lab yet?

    GEORDI
Negative, Captain. But, reducing
backup to the quarantine seal
might help.

    PICARD
(to Beverly)
Doctor?

    BEVERLY
I wouldn't.

    PICARD
Continue backup to shield,
Lieutenant.

    TASHA'S COM VOICE
Director Mandl and the others are
in the Observation Lounge as you
requested.
CONTINUED:

PICARD
Counselor, I'll need you.
(to Riker)
You have the bridge, Number One.

INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE

Seated around the table are Mandl, Luisa, and Bensen. Tasha stands at the door and steps aside to permit Picard's and Troi's ENTRANCE as Picard takes control of the room.

PICARD
(to Mandl)
What do you know of this life-form?

The mention of "life" gets curious reactions from Bensen, Luisa and Mandl.

MANDL
Nothing.

PICARD
You knew of its existence.

Mandl returns Picard's stare.

MANDL
Yes.

LUISA
(shocked)
Is this true?
(turning on Mandl)
You knew there was life on Velara III?

MANDL
(hot)
I knew there were random energy patterns -- I knew that. But that's not life. Not by any definition I have ever heard.

PICARD
But, you tried to hide that knowledge from us.
65 CONTINUED:

MANDL
They're meaningless silicon crystals, which rebroadcast sunlight. This is absurd.

PICARD
They are not only alive but they have intelligence.

Mandl is stunned.

MANDL
Why do you say that?

PICARD
They're trying to communicate with us.

MANDL
(astounded)
Communicate with you?

PICARD
I need information, now. When did you first see them? What were they doing? Why did you think they were alive?

Mandl hesitates. Bensen starts to respond.

BENSEN
... There were patterns, in the sand, appearing and disappearing --

RIKER'S COM VOICE
Captain, we've regained a visual on the lab.

PICARD
(into Com)
Patch visual to Observation Lounge...

All look toward the small viewscreen in the lounge.

66 POV - VIEWSCREEN - MEDICAL LAB IN VIEW (OPTICAL)
as the bell jar, and whatever is in it, SHIMMERS.
INT. ENTERPRISE - MAIN BRIDGE

Data, Geordi, and Worf are working together at the aft Science Stations looking at the same SHIMMERING image. Each tapping keys at consoles, reading info. All eyes are on individual displays.

WORF
I cannot understand the patterns.

GEORDI
Neither can I.

DATA
Please show me the spectral analysis.
Magnification twelve K.

Now Geordi is operating the console. With each entry he makes, the computer voice responds. The following should play very FAST.

COMPUTER VOICE
Silicon... Germanium...

DATA
Transistor material.

COMPUTER VOICE
Gallium arsenide...

GEORDI
Emits light when charged.

COMPUTER VOICE
Cadmium selenide... sulfide...

DATA
Emits charge when lit.

COMPUTER VOICE
Water... impurities...

WORF
Conductor.

Sodium salts...

WORF
But is it alive?!

COMPUTER VOICE
Probability positive...

WORF
(to computer)
I wasn't asking you.

FEMALE COM VOICE
Engineering to bridge.

ANGLE - COMMAND AREA

Riker responding.

RIKER
This is Commander Riker, go ahead.
STAR TREK: "Home Soil" - 12/2/87 - ACT FOUR

68 CONTINUED:

FEMALE COM VOICE
The backup on the lab seal is fluctuating, sir. I think you should come down here.

RIKER
On my way.
(on his EXIT)
Data, you have the bridge. Inform the captain.

Data moves to his new station. Riker ENTERS the turbolift.

69 INT. ENGINEERING - COMPUTER CONSOLE

The ENGINEER, female, and very much into the job, is busy operating the computer. Riker ENTERS.

RIKER
Status, Ensign?

ENGINEER
The quarantine seal is getting weaker. Every time I try to redirect backup... it goes somewhere else.
(Feeling crazy)
I think I've... it's... locked three people in a turbolift and two more in the programmers' rest room.

RIKER
(indicates panel)
If that's reading right, there is no seal.
(Beat)
Give me a lab interior image.

They both look at a viewscreen over the computer console, and to their amazement,

70 POV - VIEWSCREEN (OPTICAL)

On which is clearly seen a very benign LAB INTERIOR.

RIKER (O.S.)
Magnify.
On the platform sits the bell jar container, within which is a relatively tranquil globular cluster of "rice grains," about the size of a golf ball, pulsing mildly. The PULSING is contained in the bell jar.

Riker touches his communicator.

RIKER
Captain, this is Riker.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
We see it too, Number One.

Suddenly, a BOLT of LIGHT shoots from the bell jar toward the Medical Lab computer console.

PICARD'S COM VOICE
(imperative)
Get that seal back up!

While the Engineer struggles:

ENGINEER
(a little scared)
No matter what I do, the energy goes somewhere else. What if it hits the Nursery... Or Sickbay... ?

RIKER
(nods)
Hold off.
(into com)
Impossible, Captain. We haven't got the power.

The full complement, including Mandl, Luisa and Bensen -- all with eyes on the viewscreen. Suddenly, WE HEAR A DISSONANT TUNED NOISE trying to make itself intelligible.
continued:

Data
The universal translator is coming on line.

The noise becomes something more recognizably verbal, though still unintelligible.

Angle to main viewer (optical)

The beautiful, radiating rice ball in the container, its lights pulsing in sync with the sound. A tirade begins, clumsy at first, but unmistakably angry. Inter cut reactions.

Translator voice
Ugly... Ugly... Giants... Bags of Mostly Water...

Picard
Bags of mostly water?

Data
An accurate description, sir, of humans. You are, after all, over ninety per cent water, surrounded by a flexible container.

Picard
(after reacting)
Do you understand me?

Translator voice
We understand. We ask you be gone... We call... We talk... You not listen.

Riker enters from the turbolift, hurrying to join his captain as:

Picard
We didn't hear you. We come in peace.

Translator voice
Ugly Bag of Mostly Water... we try at peace... you still not listen.

(getting clearer)
Bag in Dome on Sand of Home... we killed.
CONTINUED:

RIKER
It killed Malencon.

TROI
(telepathically)
We see and hear you now. We
didn't know you were there. You
are beautiful to us. All life is
beautiful.

TRANSLATOR VOICE
Bag in dome did know. Made some
of us die. Made us kill. War is
now with you.

ANGLE - TO INCLUDE MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

The bell jar Image FADES, REPLACED by the featureless
Velara III.

PICARD
Can you hear me?

As a reply, the ship BUFFETS and SHUDDERS.

PICARD
(continuing)
Duty stations! Report!

GEORDI
(checking console)
Restabilizing, sir.

ANGLE FAVORING PICARD

scanning the bridge, seeing the consoles LIGHT UP.

DATA
Sir...

PICARD
What is it, Data?

DATA
That chaos in the lab, when we
were studying it... must have
been the energy surge of a
reproductive cycle.
(beat)
It is now a colony of single cells
which organize as a computer.
CONTINUED:

PICARD
(nods)
More is stronger.

BAM. The ship is BUFFETED again, harder. OFF everyone's REACTION, WE:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR
FADE IN:

79 EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)

in orbit.

    PICARD (V.O.)
    Captain's log, supplemental.
    We've stumbled on a life-form...

80 INT. MEDICAL LAB

on the bell jar and the golf ball cluster of "grains" contained within. There is a LIGHT FLICKER from the life-form as:

    PICARD (V.O.)
    (continuing)
    ... biologically and psychologically difficult for us to fully understand.
    (beat)
    The only thing totally clear is that this microbrain, as we've come to call it, has declared war on us.

81 INT. MAIN BRIDGE - ANGLES (FORMERLY SCENE 83)

Everyone at their stations.

    RIKER
    Their range of influence appears to be concentrated in the Medical Lab, Captain.

    TASHA
    All non-essential personnel have been moved to the most distant areas of the ship, sir.

    PICARD
    Data -- any analysis of those bolts of light they emit?
DATA
That seems to be their method of reprogramming, Captain. Each bolt of light consists of negatively and positively charged ions. A series of program instructions, as it were.

(disturbed)
They seem to have a quicker rapport with our computers than we do.

WORF
What do you expect? They are computers.

PICARD
Have we disabled the Medical Lab computer console?

RIKER
Aye, sir, as soon as Data determined the microbrain's method of operation.

GEORDI
I am picking up a decrease in the infra-red intensity.

WORF
Maybe the life-form has reached its own energy limit.

BEVERLY
Or maybe this is not the end of it.

(at their looks)
With single-celled life-forms... at least organic ones, cell division can be preceded by a resting state.
CONTINUED:

RIKER
The calm before the storm.

PICARD
Let's use the calm. Medical Lab on main viewer.

Tasha moves to comply.

MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

WE CAN SEE THE bell jar on its pedestal in the Lab. The golf ball cluster of "grains" is BARELY FLICKERING. No rays, no bolts of light.

DATA
It does seem dormant.

PICARD
Lieutenant Yar - set coordinates to beam it back where it came from.

TASHA
(hits buttons, and:)
Coordinates set.

PICARD
Energize!

She hits the button. WE GET the SOUND OF THE TRANSPORTER. The BEAM even COMES PART WAY toward the bell jar and its microbrain occupant. But the damn thing won't dematerialize.

NEW ANGLE

EXCLUDING the viewscreen. Riker reads a console.

RIKER
Transporter power has been redirected, sir. We are unable to affect it.
87 CONTINUED:

PICARD
Life-form or not... intelligent or not -- the safety of this ship and all on her are my primary responsibility.
(moment, and:)
Data -- evacuate the air from the Medical Lab. I want a vacuum in there.

Data punches in the command... reads his panel.

DATA
Environmental systems fail to respond to commands, Captain. It appears the microbrain has successfully interfaced with our computer.

Picard considers his alternatives.

PICARD
Suggestions?
(silence)
Anyone?

88 OMITTED

88A INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE - ESTABLISHING
(FORMERLY SCENES 81 AND 82)

Picard, Data and Beverly are with Mandl, Luisa, and Bensen. The lounge viewscreen will eventually put referenced IMAGES ON A SCREEN.

PICARD
I need your help. We have communicated with the life-form discovered on Velara III.

MANDL
You have what?!?

PICARD
It has told us that it attempted to communicate with you, and you ignored it.

MANDL
If it was trying to communicate with us, we didn't understand that.
BENSEN
We didn't try.

PICARD
What you were doing was so threatening to them that they killed your hydraulics engineer to stop it. They have declared a state of war.

MANDL
A state of war?!

PICARD
Yes, and we're on the defensive. I need your help. I have to find some way to fight them. We no longer have control of the Medical Lab, or the computer. At this moment they have the power to destroy this ship and everyone on it.

MANDL
Unbelievable. What can we do to help?

PICARD
They said you killed some of them. I need to know how.

MANDL
I -- I don't know.

PICARD
Exactly what was Malencon doing when he was killed?

Luisa responds.

LUIZA
There is a very thin layer of highly saline water under the sandy topsoil. He was siphoning that off.

PICARD
Why would that kill some of them?

For a beat no one has an answer.

BEVERLY
Liquid supports life. Perhaps somehow, that saline water sustained them.
DATA
It connected them.

LUISA
I don't understand.

BEVERLY
The microbrains are like our brain cells. Individually a cell has life -- but not intelligence -- yet when interconnected their combined intelligence is formidable.

LUISA
So that saline fluid is their circuitry.

PICARD
And to prevent its loss, they killed Malencon.

LUISA
(depressed)
If we had continued to remove the water... we would have destroyed them all.

PICARD
Reason enough for anyone to go to war.

RIKER'S COM VOICE
Captain -- it's happening again!

PULL BACK from Main Viewer to SEE the recently dormant GOLF BALL starting to GLOW again. The GLOW is STEADY and POWERFUL. WE ALSO SEE A QUIVERING of the surface. But then the entire image is SHROUDED in LIGHT, OBSCURING OUR VIEW. The bell jar suddenly RUPTURES. The LIGHT DIMINISHES. Everyone is at their stations. Luisa, Bensen and Mandl are also present.

RIKER
If this keeps up, that thing will tear the Enterprise apart!
DATA
Captain -- sensors indicate the microbrain expends a tremendous amount of energy during its reproduction cycle. Yet, there is no discernible power drain from our own systems.

PICARD
Then what's feeding the damn thing!?

GEORDI
Data and I found traces of cadmium salts. Cadmium is a conduit for converting infra-red into electricity.

PICARD
Meaning?

DATA
Meaning the microbrains might be photoelectric.

PICARD
Okay, let's see if darkness will neutralize them. Kill the lights in the lab, Mr. La Forge. We can at least do that.

Geordi tries, but to no avail.

GEORDI
Sorry, Captain, can't do it by remote.

PICARD
Number One...

He's already dashing to the turbolift.

RIKER
On my way.

Riker EXITS. Luisa, eyes on the Main Viewer, moves close to Picard. As much to herself as to him:
89 CONTINUED: (2)

LUISA
(seeing it all now)
The creatures must have evolved
at that narrow layer where the
light got through the sand to the
water... Drop the water a
centimeter below the light
penetration level and they starve.

90 INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE MEDICAL LAB

as Riker ARRIVES. He opens a wall panel near the door,
finds the right switches.

RIKER
(into com)
Kill lab lights -- now!

91 INT. LAB - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The golf ball-sized microbrain FLICKERS SLIGHTLY. The
LIGHTS GO OUT. In the resulting DARKNESS, all WE CAN
SEE is the PULSATING WHITE GLOW of the microbrain.

92 INT. MAIN BRIDGE

All eyes on the Main Viewer. A beat, and:

TASHA
It's slowing down.

93 ANGLE - MAIN VIEWER (OPTICAL)

The PULSING SLOWS. And seems to get DIMMER at the same
time.

GEORDI (O.S.)
Getting dimmer, too.

Then, a surprise. SOUND from TRANSLATOR.

TRANSLATOR VOICE
We copy fine now... more light
please...
BACK TO SCENE

favoring Picard as.

TRANSLATOR VOICE
Darkness death terrible. Go home
to warm sand...
(finally)
War over.

Picard allows himself a smile, his first in a long
time.

PICARD
We are happy to agree with you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE MEDICAL LAB

Riker looks into the darkened lab through the open
doorway.

INT. MEDICAL LAB

Riker ENTERS in the DIM LIGHT.

RIKER
Riker to Transporter Chief. Pick
up the coordinates of the bell
jar in the Medical Lab for return
to Velara III.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF'S COM VOICE
... Coordinates entered, sir.

RIKER
Riker to bridge. Captain, we're
ready to beam it back to the
planet.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE

Picard, Data, Troi, Tasha, Geordi, Worf and Wesley are
at their stations.

DATA
I wish we were able to learn more
about them.
CONTINUED:

PICARD
In time, Mr. Data. When we're better prepared.

TROI
(to microbrain)
Our apologies.

PICARD
And our respect.
(then)
Lieutenant Yar...

TASHA
Coordinates set, sir.

PICARD
Energize!

The microbrain DEMATERIALIZES. As all watch:

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, stardate 41464.2.
Declaring indefinite quarantine for the Velara System...

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE (OPTICAL)
in orbit.

PICARD (V.O.)
(continuing)
... Returning to starbase with surviving Terraformers.

And then she's GONE.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END