

STAR TREK

"THE CORBOMITE MANEUVER"

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STAR TREK

"The Corbomite Maneuver"

CAST

THE U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

CAPTAIN JAMES T. KIRK  
MISTER SPOCK  
YEOMAN JANICE RAND  
DOCTOR LEONARD "BONES" McCOY  
SULU  
DAVE BAILEY (NAVIGATOR)  
SCOTT (ENGINEERING OFFICER)  
UHURA (COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER)

ENTERPRISE DUTY PERSONNEL

BALOK

STAR TREK

"The Corbomite Maneuver"

SETS

EXTERIORS:

U.S.S. ENTERPRISE  
OUTER SPACE  
BALOK'S SHIP  
THE CUBE  
FESARIUS (SPACE VESSEL)

INTERIORS:

U.S.S. ENTERPRISE  
BRIDGE  
SICKBAY  
ELEVATOR  
CORRIDOR  
KIRK'S QUARTERS  
TRANSPORTER ROOM

BALOK'S SMALL SHIP  
LIVING QUARTERS

STAR TREK

"The Cormite Maneuver"

"Whereso'er I turn my view,  
All is strange, yet nothing new."  
(Samuel Johnson)

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

The U.S.S. Enterprise moves toward CAMERA from out of the myriad pinpoints of stellar light in the star field b.g.

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - ANGLED ONTO SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN  
past helm and navigation positions, showing stars passing.

EMPHASIZING MISTER SPOCK

At his library-computer station, MISTER SPOCK makes a fine adjustment to a vernier on his control panel, then moves to his hooded viewer. CAMERA DRAWS BACK for WIDER ANGLE TO INCLUDE officers and crewmen at their stations. SULU is at the helm, UHURA at her communications station. At the navigator's position is DAVE BAILEY, a strong-faced young man who will be sharp and competent at first impression. But we will begin to see bit by bit beneath his surface traces of uncertainty and immaturity -- a young officer with a job and responsibility he is not yet seasoned enough to handle. He checks his instruments against what he is seeing on the o.s. screen.

BAILEY

One degree to overlap...

SPOCK

Stand by to photograph... now!

SPOCK

Spock flips a lever; there is a CLICKING SOUND such as a camera would make taking a picture. He looks into his hooded viewer as Bailey joins him, plainly bored.

BAILEY

Three days of this now. Other ships must have made star maps of some of this...

Spock looks up from the hooded viewer, hits a control; his main screen above lights up into nine divided sections of the galaxy with three squares missing on the lower left (or right) side.

Spock hits a button, the photograph just taken dissolves into one of the empty sections. During which, he shakes his head solemnly.

SPOCK

Negative, lieutenant. We're the first to reach this far...

Interrupted by an alarm SOUND, both men turn quickly toward the source of it across the bridge.

ANGLE PAST COMMAND STATION IN F.G.

and toward Sulu, the helmsman, who turns to Spock and Bailey as they go to their stations, Spock to the command post. A red light is flashing on both Sulu's and Bailey's control panel.

SULU

Sir! Contact with an object.  
It's moving toward us.

SPOCK

Deflectors! Full intensity!

We hear the HUM of deflector screen unit.

SULU

It's coming at light speed.

BAILEY

(at his controls)

Collision course!

SPOCK

(fast)

Evasive maneuvers, Mister Sulu.

Sulu quickly works his controls, takes a reading. Their teamwork is rapid fire:

SULU

Object's changing direction, too,  
sir! Keeps coming at us.

Sulu and Bailey continue to work their panels, as:

UHURA

Getting no signal from it.

BAILEY

Still collision course! Our deflectors aren't stopping it!

Bailey's tone is a considerable contrast with Sulu's quiet efficiency.

SPOCK  
Sound alarm! All hands prepare...

SULU  
(interrupting)  
It's slowing down, Mister Spock.

SPOCK  
Countermand alarm; all engines  
full stop!

BAILEY  
Visual contact!

They all look forward to intently view the ship's viewing screen.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The U.S.S. Enterprise is slowing to a stop; star movement halting. Ahead, a pinpoint of light is growing until we see that it is a revolving luminescent cube coming toward us. It stops, hangs some distance away, turning slowly on an axis. There is a strange play of colors on the cube faces as it turns.

BACK TO SCENE

as our principals eye the screen. From ship's viewing screen, luminescence of the cube plays softly but weirdly across the faces of those nearest the screen.

SPOCK  
Ahead, slow. Steer a course around  
it, Mister Sulu.

We hear the low HUM of the ship's engines.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

They watch as the stars begin to move, but the cube then starts to move with them.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - U.S.S. ENTERPRISE AND CUBE

Both the Enterprise and the mysterious cube hang without moving in space, except that the cube continues to turn on its axis.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's log at Star Date 1512  
point 2, on our third day of star  
mapping, an unexplained cubicle  
object blocked our vessel's path.  
On the bridge, Mister Spock...

INT. SICK BAY - ANGLE ON FLASHING RED LIGHT

An ALARM SIGNAL on a communications panel which contains also a small viewing screen. The alarm light continues flashing silently as:

KIRK'S VOICE

(continuing)

... immediately ordered general  
alert. My location, sick bay,  
quarterly physical check.

During which CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL the rest of the sick bay DNO doctor's office, where clad only in shorts, CAPTAIN JAMES T. KIRK lies on his back, working an unusual exercise device. We HEAR a medical o.s. scanner. CAMERA DRAWS BACK FURTHER to include DR. MCCOY, attired in a white smock, checking instruments which reveal varied of Kirk's body functions. Important, Kirk's position is such that he does not notice the flashing red light in b.g. But McCoy does notice it now, hesitates, decides to finish the exam.

MCCOY

Keep it up. Just a few seconds  
more.

McCoy checks the instruments on his medical panel.

INSERT - CLOSE SHOT - BODY FUNCTION PANEL

The pointers indicate Kirk's respiration, blood pressure, heartbeat, temperature, etc.

BACK TO SCENE

McCoy turns off the unique exercise device.

MCCOY

Stop.

McCoy glances to the o.s. panel again as Kirk stands regaining his wind. McCoy turns to Kirk.

McCOY  
(continuing)  
Winded?

KIRK  
You'd be the last person I'd tell.

Kirk turns, then reacts as he sees the flashing RED LIGHT. He turns, moving quickly toward it. Kirk reaches the panel, flicks a switch, the red flasher stopping.

KIRK  
Kirk here. What's going on?

INSERT - SMALL VIEWING SCREEN

showing a view of the Enterprise bridge. Mister Spock's head and shoulders appear.

SPOCK  
(filtered)  
Take a look at this, captain.

Spock moves as if touching a control; the SHOT of Spock DISSOLVES to a view of the slowly revolving cube.

REVERSE ANGLE - SMALL SCREEN O.S.

The dim flickering of the viewing screen reflected on Kirk's intent face. McCoy stands at his table in the b.g., putting his instruments away.

SPOCK'S VOICE  
(filtered)  
Whatever it is, it's blocking our way. When we move, it moves, too.

KIRK  
A vessel of some kind?

SPOCK'S VOICE  
(filtered)  
Negative. More some kind of device.

KIRK  
Be right up.

Kirk snaps the screen off, quickly moving to exit past the table where he grabs up a sweatshirt, a towel, exits slipping his sweatshirt over his head. During which, accusingly:



KIRK

(continuing)

You could see the light from there;  
you could have mentioned it.

McCOY

Finally finished a physical on  
you, didn't I? What am I, a doctor...

But Kirk has already exited. McCoy decides to finish the sentence to himself, as he gathers up his medical reports.

McCOY

(continuing)

... or a trolley car conductor?  
If I jumped every time a light  
came on around here, I'd end up  
talking to myself.

INT. SHIP'S CORRIDOR

Kirk moving down corridor briskly, tightening the towel about his neck. Sulu's FILTERED VOICE is heard: "All decks alert. All hands to general quarters." We go with Kirk, passing others who are moving one way or another with purpose, to the turbo-car elevator where Kirk hits the control button, the doors whooshing open. He steps in.

INT. ELEVATOR

Kirk stepping in, elevator doors closing at once.

KIRK

Bridge.

The vocal instructions are picked up and there is the SOUND of RELAYS CLICKING and LIGHTS WINK on the control panel, the car immediately begins moving up vertically, the elevator HUM surging up as lights seen through the translucent paneling flash by with increasing rapidity. Even so, Kirk chafes at this delay, punches a button on the intercom panel.

KIRK

Kirk to bridge.

SPOCK'S VOICE

Spock here.

KIRK

Any changes?

SPOCK'S VOICE

Negative. Whatever it is, it seems to want to just hold us here.

KIRK

No indication of danger from it?

SPOCK'S VOICE

Negative.

KIRK

I'll stop to change, then.

Kirk shuts off the intercom.

KIRK

(continuing)

Captain's quarters.

Instantly there is the SOUND of RELAYS CLICKING and LIGHTS WINK on the control panel and the turbo-car brakes quickly, the HUM of its engines in descending scale, lights flashing by slowly as it prepares to change direction from vertical, then starts horizontal travel, the HUM surging up, lights flashing by in this new direction.

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - ANGLE ON BAILEY'S INSTRUMENTS

where a light is still flashing red.

SPOCK'S VOICE

All decks have reported, Mister Bailey.

CAMERA BACKS to reveal Bailey sitting tensely watching the screen. Mister Spock is standing at Bailey's elbow. The young navigator AD LIBS a "Yes, sir," turns off his flashing light.

SPOCK

(quietly)

When the captain arrives, he'll expect a report on...

BAILEY

... the cube's range and position.  
I'll have it by then.

Mister Spock nods, turns to move off.

BAILEY

(continuing)

Raising my voice back there didn't mean I was scared or couldn't do my job. It means I happen to have a human thing called an adrenalin gland.

Mister Spock has stopped and turned, surprised, at Bailey's tart rejoinder to what Spock meant as a friendly gesture. The Science Officer nods, gravely:

SPOCK

Sounds most inconvenient, however.  
Have you thought of having it  
removed?

Mister Spock moves off to the command position. Bailey becomes aware of a muffled CHUCKLING next to him.

SHOT ANGLED TO INCLUDE SULU

at the control position next to Bailey. Sulu is trying hard to control mirth; Bailey flashes him a vehement look.

BAILEY

Very funny.

SULU

You try to cross brains with Spock,  
he'll cut you to pieces every time.

BAILEY

If I were the captain...

SULU

(interrupting)

He's even rougher. Ask the man  
who sat in that seat before you.

Sulu turns back to his instruments, continues the readings he was making.

ANGLE ON ELEVATOR DOORS (AT SHIP'S CORRIDOR)

as they snap open, revealing Kirk coming out of the turbo-car elevator, CAMERA FOLLOWING him down ship's corridor.

INT. KIRK'S QUARTERS - YEOMAN JANICE

Laying out one of Kirk's uniforms is JANICE RAND, the captain's yeoman. The sound of the o.s. door opening causes her to turn toward it.

KIRK

coming in, unwinding the towel from about his neck, tossing it on the bed as he joins Janice, CAMERA going with him.

KIRK

(nods)

Thank you, yeoman. Excused.

JANICE

(cool, professional)

Yes sir.

Janice exits. Kirk moves to control panel, flicks a switch on the panel under a small screen (identical to sick bay screen -- same MATTE). Kirk takes off his sweatshirt, starts changing clothes.

KIRK  
Captain to bridge.

INSERT - SCREEN

as it comes to life, revealing Mister Spock turning to us.

SPOCK  
Spock here.

KIRK'S VOICE  
Any signs of life?

SPOCK  
Negative.

KIRK'S VOICE  
Have you tried all hailing frequencies?

SPOCK  
Affirmative. No answer from the cube.

INT. KIRK'S QUARTERS - BACK TO KIRK

as he makes final adjustments to his uniform, speaking to the o.s. viewer.

KIRK  
Have the department heads meet me on the bridge.

SPOCK'S VOICE  
(filtered)  
Already standing by.

Kirk reaches for and switches off the small viewer, starts exiting.

INT. CORRIDOR - AT KIRK'S DOOR

Kirk's door opens. He hurries out.

INT. ELEVATOR - ANGLE TO DOOR

The door whooshes open, revealing Kirk, who steps in, says "Bridge," the doors closing, RELAYS CLICKING, etc., the elevator HUM rising as the levels begin to flash by as we move upwards again.

INSERT - BRIDGE VIEWING SCREEN

The cube turning on its axis.

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - FULL SHOT

ESTABLISHING the bridge. Department heads are standing by and with bridge personnel are intent on the o.s. bridge viewing screen. We can see the flickering light of the revolving cube reflecting from the screen onto those faces nearest it. (NOTE: Faint flickering here, leaving us room for more intensity later.) Elevator doors open and Kirk enters, moving toward his command position. As he crosses:

KIRK

Navigation.

BAILEY

Distance from us, fifteen hundred ninety-three meters, position constant.

KIRK

Helm.

SULU

(easily)

Sir, each of its edges measures one hundred seven meters. Mass, a little under eleven thousand metric tons.

Kirk stops, eyes ship's viewing screen.

INSERT - BRIDGE VIEWING SCREEN

The cube turning on its axis.

BACK TO KIRK

turning to Spock.

SPOCK

Sensor shows it as solid. But its principal substances are unknown to us.

KIRK

Communications.

UHURA

Hailing frequencies still open. No message.

KIRK

Engineering.

SCOTT

Motive power...

(grins; shrugs)

Beats me what makes it go.

KIRK

(smile)

I'll buy speculation.

SCOTT

(dead serious)

And I'd sell if I had any. It's  
a solid cube. How something like  
that can sense us coming, block us,  
move when we move... beats me!  
That's my report.

KIRK

(to McCoy)

Life sciences?

McCOY

Same reports.

(gets look from  
Kirk)

No chance of life existing inside  
a solid cube. But there must be  
some kind of intelligence somewhere  
directing it.

KIRK

Thank you, doctor.

BAILEY

We going to just let it hold us  
here, sir? We've got phaser weapons.  
I vote we blast it.

KIRK

(drily)

I'll keep that in mind when this  
becomes a democracy, Mister Bailey.

The others turn, begin to leave. As Kirk moves off too,  
Bailey is left standing there alone, except for Sulu, who  
turns, motions the navigator back to his position.

SULU

See what I mean?

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - CLOSE ON TABLE VIEWING SCREEN

As we hear a CLICK, and one star map is replaced by another.  
(Switch of transparencies)

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Kirk in a huddle with his weary officers and department heads, poring over the results of their computations and analyses. The table is covered with papers and tapes, maps and graphs.

KIRK

Captain's log, star date... fifteen thirteen point eight. Star maps reveal no indication of habitable planets nearby. Origin and purpose of the cube... still unknown. We've been here eighteen hours.

Kirk puts down his pencil, leans back, stretches. Others stifle yawns, etc.

KIRK

Anything further, gentlemen?

SPOCK

I believe it adds up to one of two possibilities. First... a space buoy of some kind.

(beat)

Or 'flypaper.'

Most of the others look up, puzzled. Kirk nods.

KIRK

And you don't recommend sticking around.

SPOCK

Negative. It would make us look too weak.

UHURA

I thought I'd learned English by now.

Seeing puzzled faces, Kirk smiles.

KIRK

Flypaper... a nineteenth century device...

SPOCK

(interrupting;  
scholarly)

More your twentieth-century, I believe.

KIRK

(smiles)

A paper Earth used to use... covered with a sticky substance which trapped insects which flew into it.



SULU  
Somebody out there doesn't like us?

KIRK  
It's time for action, gentlemen.  
(to Bailey)  
Mister Bailey...

Bailey hits a switch at his panel.

BAILEY  
Briefing room to phaser gun crews...

KIRK  
(hits switch;  
snapping)  
Countermand!  
(to Bailey)  
I'll select what kind of action,  
Mister Bailey.

BAILEY  
I'm sorry, I thought you meant...

KIRK  
(interrupting)  
Are you explaining, Mister Bailey?  
I haven't requested an explanation.

This time, Bailey wisely doesn't comment.

KIRK  
(continuing)  
Now, as I started to say, Mister  
Bailey... plot us a spiral course  
away from the cube.  
(to Sulu)  
Alert the engine room, we'll try  
pulling away from it.

The officers at the table stand; Kirk nods to Sulu, gets to his feet and moves off. During which, Sulu has hit a button and:

SULU  
(filtered; amplified)  
Helmsman to engine room, stand by;  
all decks alert. We're going to  
try pulling away.

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE AND CUBE

The Enterprise motionless, the cube revolving as before.



INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - ANGLE ON BAILEY

at his navigator's course, completing punching in a course, then turning:

BAILEY

Course plotted and laid in, sir.

WIDER ANGLE

The other officers ready at their stations, too. Spock is at his computer-library position, crewmen making adjustments, turning dials, setting switches. Kirk, at his command post, looks around at his men. They are all ready for his orders. He turns to regard the o.s. screen.

KIRK

Engage, Mister Sulu. Quarter speed.

SULU

Point two-five, sir.

We hear the HUM of the ship's engines. Everyone turns to the o.s. screen.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

Stars beginning to slide to the side as the Enterprise moves in a curving course. But the cube moves with the ship.

PAN SHOT - OFFICERS IN COMMAND POSITIONS

They wait, tense, not knowing what to expect.

SULU

Still blocking us, sir.

KIRK

Let's see if it'll give way, then.  
Ahead half speed.

SULU

Point five-oh, sir.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The cube begins to loom larger as the Enterprise moves toward it. And we see it beginning to glow more intently, rotate faster.

CLOSE SHOT - KIRK

peering at the o.s. screen intently, the colors from the rotating cube more vivid on his face now. Kirk turns to the control panels.

## ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - FULL SHOT

Red WARNING LIGHTS blossom on control panels, and varied WARNING BEEPS at individual crew stations begin to SOUND. Various stations try to analyze the reaction.

## INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The cube still nearer, turns still faster and the intensity of its flickering colors is increasing markedly.

## SPOCK - AT HIS POSITION

He makes adjustments as he looks into his hooded viewer. We HEAR him with a CLICKING SOUND such as a scintillator counter makes in the presence of radiation. He tears his eyes from the viewer, turns to his dials.

SPOCK

Radiation! From the short end of the spectrum.

(turning)

It's increasing.

KIRK

keeping his eyes on the o.s. screen. We see now stronger reflections from the cube.

KIRK

All stop, hold position.

Now the engine HUM fades in decreasing pitch as the ship comes to a full stop.

## INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

Though the stars have come to a standstill, the cube continues to move toward ship and CAMERA, turning still faster, color intensity still growing.

BAILEY'S VOICE

It's still moving toward us! Range ninety meters.

## BACK TO SCENE

Kirk, reacting to this announcement, his eyes on the o.s. screen.

SPOCK

Radiation increasing.

KIRK

Power astern, half speed.

SULU

Half speed.

Now the engine HUM is heard again in increasing pitch as the engines start to move the Enterprise backward.

SPOCK - AT HIS POSITION

taking readings.

SPOCK

Radiation nearing the tolerance level!

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

All eyes are on the o.s. screen where the cube continues to grow and glow more brilliantly and rotating more rapidly. The reflections are now bathing the entire bridge with color.

BAILEY

Still coming. Gaining on us.

KIRK

Engines astern, full speed.

SULU

Full speed.

Stronger engine POWER SURGE SOUND is heard as the Enterprise accelerates.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The stars now moving away from us, as the vessel accelerates backwards. But the cube continues to grow in size, glowing brighter and brighter, turning faster and faster on its axis, slowly filling more of the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

Kirk is not so sure now.

BAILEY

Range, seventy-one meters now.

KIRK

Helm, give us warp speed.

We hear the additional SOUND of WARP POWER.

SULU

Warp one, sir.

SPOCK

Radiation at the tolerance level!

SULU

Warp two, sir.

By their faces we see that the cube must be still coming toward them like the deadly top that it is, their faces reflecting its brightness and their own anxiety.

SULU

(continuing)

Speed is now Warp Three...

SPOCK

Radiation is passing tolerance level.

(checking panel)

Radiation entering lethal zone.

BAILEY

Range fifty meters and still closing!

KIRK

Phaser crew stand ready!

The engine POWER SURGE SOUND rises in intensity.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The stars now in swift reverse movement, but the cube whirls faster and moves nearer, color brilliantly intense now.

BAILEY'S VOICE

Phaser crew reports ready, sir.

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE AND CUBE

Stars are rushing reverse past us, but the cube, revolving fast and brilliant, still closes the gap between it and the ship.

SPOCK - AT HIS POSITION

Warning lights flashing.

KIRK

Lock phasers on target.

SPOCK

Growing. We can take only a few more seconds of this.

EMPHASIZING KIRK

Now having to shield his eyes from the reflection as he turns back from the o.s. Spock to look at the o.s. screen. Then he throws a look toward Bailey, snaps:

KIRK

Lock phasers...

BAILEY

(interrupting)

Phasers locked on target, sir.  
Point blank range and closing.

KIRK

Fire main phasers.

EXT. SPACE - FULL ANGLE UP ON ENTERPRISE

Two bright, destructive phaser energy "blips" leap from the Enterprise, out of scene forward out of SCENE toward where we know the cube is.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - ANGLE TO VIEWING SCREEN

The explosion of the cube bathes the bridge in a bright flash of light. Then the bridge is rocked by the blast wave.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

Officers and crewmen grabbing for support as the Enterprise rocks, the explosion flash dying away. The bridge lights dim, and the ship's main ALARM begins FLASHING and SOUNDING, as we:

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise hangs motionless in the f.g. against the endless reaches of star-filled space.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's log, star date... fifteen fourteen point zero. The cube has been destroyed. Ship's damage minor. But our next decision... major. Probe on ahead... or turn back?

INT. ENTERPRISE - SPOCK - AT HIS POSITION

Spock peers into his hooded viewer, works several verniers, adjusts other controls. He is joined by Kirk and, sensing his presence, turns to him.

SPOCK

Nothing, captain. No objects, no contact in any direction.

KIRK

Care to speculate on what we'll find if we go ahead?

SPOCK

Speculate?

(shakes head)

Logic. We'll encounter the intelligence which sent the cube out.

Spock peers into his hooded viewer again, makes an adjustment.

KIRK

Intelligence simply different from ours... or superior?

SPOCK

Probably both.

(turning back)

And if you're asking the logical decision to make...

KIRK

I'm not. The mission of the Enterprise is to seek out and contact alien life.

SPOCK

Has it occurred to you there is  
a certain inefficiency in constantly  
questioning me on things you've  
already made up your mind about?

KIRK

(deadpan)

But it gives me emotional security.

(turning)

Set course ahead, Mister Bailey.

BAILEY

Plotted and laid in, sir.

KIRK

Engage.

We hear the Enterprise engines WHINE UP.

SULU

Warp one, sir.

Kirk moves into CLOSE SHOT to view the o.s. command positions.  
His face is stern. Spock joins him, looks at him question-  
ingly. In b.g. Doctor McCoy arrives via the elevator, stands  
watching, listening.

KIRK

Navigator, phaser crews were sluggish,  
and you were slow in locking them  
into your directional beams. Helmsman,  
engineering decks could have moved  
faster too.

(turning to Spock)

Program a series of simulated attacks  
and evasion maneuvers.

(back to Bailey

and Sulu)

Keep repeating the exercise until  
I'm satisfied, gentlemen.

SULU AND BAILEY

Yes, sir.

Kirk exits toward the elevators.

ANGLE TO ELEVATOR

McCoy still waiting at the elevator doors watching and listen-  
ing. He wears a dour expression as he is joined by Kirk,  
who presses the elevator button.

McCOY

Your timing is lousy, Jim. The  
men are tired.



KIRK

You're the one who always says a little suffering is good for the soul.

McCOY

I never say that.

The elevator doors open as a look passes between them... the doctor, of course, did say that and will again, and they both know it.

INT. ELEVATOR - ANGLE TO DOORS

McCoy and Kirk step in, the doors closing. Kirk says "Captain's quarters," the elevator mechanism clicks, the cab begins descending.

BAILEY'S VOICE

(filtered)

This is the bridge... Engineering and phaser decks, prepare for simulated attack... repeat: simulated attack.

McCOY

(indicates)

And I'm especially worried about Bailey. Navigator's position is rough enough on a seasoned man...

KIRK

(interrupting)

I think he'll cut it.

McCOY

How so sure? Because you spotted something you liked in him, something familiar... like yourself some eighteen years ago....

An irritated look from Kirk. He starts to retort, interrupted by:

BAILEY'S VOICE

(filtered)

On the double, deck five! Give me a green light.

McCOY

Suppose you could have promoted him too fast? Listen to his voice.

A sidelong look from Kirk.



BAILEY'S VOICE

(filtered)

Condition alert... battle stations.

The ALERT SIGNAL begins. The elevator doors whoosh open to reveal a corridor where crewmen (and crew women) are hurrying about. Kirk and McCoy start out.

INT. KIRK'S QUARTERS - ANGLE ON DECANter

Somebody pouring a drink.

BAILEY'S VOICE

(filtered)

Engineering deck five, report.  
Phaser crews, come on, let's get  
with it!

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Kirk seated, fatigued, eyes closed, listening. McCoy is finishing preparing two drinks. He hands one to Kirk, nudges him, Kirk opens his eyes, takes it.

KIRK

What's next? 'They're not machines,  
Jim.'

McCOY

They're...

KIRK

(interrupting)

I've heard you say 'man is superior  
to any mechanical device.'

McCOY

(snaps)

I never say that either!

BAILEY'S VOICE

(filtered)

Engineering decks report ready.  
Phaser station two, where's your  
green light?

A RED LIGHT on the panel in Kirk's quarters starts FLASHING.

KIRK

Kirk here.

SPOCK'S VOICE

(filtered)

Exercise rating, captain. Ninety-  
four per cent.

KIRK

Let's try for one hundred, Mister Spock.

SPOCK'S VOICE

(filtered)

Agreed.

The door has whooshed open to reveal Janice carrying a tray covered by a white cloth. She comes in with it.

ANGLE PAST DESK IN F.G.

and toward Kirk and McCoy and the approaching Janice, who puts the tray on the desk. Kirk has thrown her a questioning look.

JANICE

It's past time you ate something, sir.

Janice removes the cloth; Kirk eyes the tray.

KIRK

What in the devil? Green leaves?

JANICE

(indicates McCoy)

Dietary salad, sir. Doctor McCoy changed your diet card. I thought you knew.

BAILEY'S VOICE

(filtered)

This is the bridge. All decks prepare to better reaction time on second simulated attack.

McCoy takes a nearby chair as Kirk sits at the desk, picks up implements, picks at the food, throws McCoy an irritated look. Janice is assisting, professional, hands him his napkin.

McCOY

(to Kirk)

Your weight was up a couple of pounds. Remember?

KIRK

Will you stop hovering over me, yeoman!

JANICE

I wanted to change it if it's not all right, sir.

KIRK

It's...

(beat; softer)

... fine. Bring the doctor some,  
too.

McCOY

No, thank you. I never eat until  
the crew eats.

Janice remains hovering.

KIRK

(polite with effort)

All right, yeoman. Thank you.

Janice exits cabin.

KIRK

When I find the headquarters genius  
who assigned me a female yeoman...

McCOY

You don't trust yourself?

KIRK

I've already got a female to worry  
about...

(gestures)

She's called the Enterprise. The  
first mistake this yeoman makes...

McCOY

(smiles; shakes  
head)

She won't.

BAILEY'S VOICE

(filtered)

Engineering decks alert. Phaser  
crews, let's...The more strident ALARM SIGNAL sounds, then STOPS. Kirk  
looks up, frowns. The panel's RED LIGHT starts to FLASH.

SULU'S VOICE

(filtered)

Countermand that! All decks to  
battle stations! This is for real.  
Repeat. All decks to battle  
stations. This is for real.

A light on the panel goes red; a buzz SOUNDS.

KIRK

Kirk here!

SPOCK'S VOICE

(filtered)

Sensors are picking up something ahead, captain.

KIRK

(all business)

Coming.

Kirk exits fast.

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - CLOSE ON LIBRARY-COMPUTER

ESTABLISHING instruments blinking, then CAMERA BACK TO REVEAL Spock busy with his hooded viewer, making adjustments, Kirk standing at his side.

SPOCK

Exceptionally strong contact...  
but not visual yet.

Spock appraises his dials and controls, flicks several switches, frowns, punches coordinates, inspects the results.

SPOCK

Distant spectograph... metallic;  
similar to cube... much greater  
energy reading...

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

turning back from Spock, looking toward o.s. screen.

KIRK

Screen on.

Kirk leans forward to view the screen.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

as screen comes on. There is nothing visible yet except stars.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

still waiting to see the oncoming object. Sulu indicates:

SULU

There, sir!

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

On the screen we see the merest pinpoint of light which is growing.

EMPHASIZING KIRK

tensely eyeing the approaching object.

KIRK

Half speed. Prepare for evasive action.

SULU

Reducing to warp two, sir.

Suddenly JARRING CAMERA EFFECT and the Enterprise bridge is shaken as if with a giant hand. In b.g. a standing crewman is knocked almost from his feet, others grab at their stations, hold on. Then the SHOT RIGHTS ITSELF AND SMOOTHS. At his library-computer station, Spock registers hard, turns and calls:

SPOCK

Tractor beam, sir. It's grabbed us... hard!

SULU

Engines overloading, sir!

KIRK

All engines stop!

SULU

All engines stop, sir.

It's happened fast. Kirk looks up at the ship's viewing screen again.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

On the screen we see the pinpoint of light growing larger, becoming a shape.

BAILEY'S VOICE

Object decelerating, sir.

BACK TO SHOT

At his library-computer station, Mister Spock is getting a reading.

SPOCK

Size and mass of object...

(turns controls;  
shakes head)

This must be wrong. I'm getting a faulty reading...

Kirk is torn between asking Spock what he has found out and viewing the object itself on the o.s. screen.

KIRK

Phaser crews stand by.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

As we hear Bailey say, "Bridge to phaser crew, stand by," we see that the object has grown to a size that would ordinarily render an appraisal possible -- but no appraisal is possible because this object, like the cube, is completely alien in appearance, in the shape of a round cluster of balls. It is still growing larger and coming closer. We see now that its cell-like sections pulse with an inner light.

COMMAND STATIONS - FAVORING KIRK - SPOCK IN B.G.

They watch the oncoming object on the o.s. screen with varied reactions, most of them astonishment. Spock eyes the ship's viewing screen.

SPOCK

No, I'm afraid the reading was accurate...

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE

The Enterprise hangs in the lower quadrant of FRAME, a huge ship, and in the distance the other ship -- for it is a ship -- is still small, but growing. Then it is as large as the Enterprise in the opposite quadrant. It continues to grow, and grow and grow until it completely fills the quadrant, twice as large as the Enterprise -- and still it grows until it fills half the FRAME and then the ENTIRE FRAME and still it grows, though more slowly, until it finally stops, completely dwarfing the Enterprise.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The alien vessel so large only part of it can be seen on our screen.

COMMAND STATIONS - FAVORING KIRK

They are awed by what they see in the o.s. screen -- stunned and shocked, too, as they take in the size of this colossus.

KIRK

Mass, Mister Sulu.

SULU

(eyeing screen,  
awed)

Shoooooosh!

Kirk throws a look toward Sulu.

SULU

The reading goes off my scale, sir.  
It must be a mile in diameter.

SPOCK

Fascinating!

KIRK

Reduce image.

Bailey sits awed, stunned. Sulu reaches across, hits a button.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

A CLICK and we DISSOLVE VIEWING SCREEN image of alien ship to a LONGER SHOT, then another CLICK, another DISSOLVE to an image which finally no longer fills the whole screen.

BACK TO SCENE

Kirk continues to watch the o.s. screen and Spock works at his station in the b.g. Bailey flicks a control.

KIRK

Ship to ship.

UHURA

Hailing frequencies open, sir.

KIRK

(filtered;  
amplified)

This is the United Earth Ship  
Enterprise. We convey greetings  
and await your reply.

They wait. Kirk studies the alien ship on the o.s. screen. Bailey has put on an earphone, now sits suddenly frozen, erect, staring straight ahead. His face blanches, his eyes grow larger and his mouth becomes slack. Kirk notices.

KIRK

What is it, Bailey?

BAILEY

Message... coming over my  
navigation beam.

Bailey swallows hard, listening. Kirk cannot waste time with the agitated Bailey. He turns to the communications officer.

KIRK

Pick it up!



UHURA

Switching, sir.

At once we hear the AMPLIFIED REPLAY of the message Bailey heard as Kirk joins Spock. They listen, react to a voice that is deep, a frighteningly strong voice.

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered; mid-sentence)

... and trespassed into our star systems. This is Balok, commander of the flagship Fesarius of the First Federation... Your vessel, obviously the product of a primitive and savage civilization, having ignored a warning buoy of the First Federation, then destroyed it, has demonstrated your intention is not peaceful...

(beat)

... we are now considering the disposition of your ship and the life aboard.

KIRK

Ship to ship.

UHURA

Hailing frequencies open, sir.

KIRK

(filtered; amplified)

This is the captain of the U.S.S. Enterprise. The warning nature of your space buoy was unknown to us; our vessel was blocked and when we attempted to disengage...

SQUEALING FEEDBACK SOUNDS take over; we can see the captain's lips moving but only the SQUEAL can be heard. He motions the communications officer to cut it off. The SOUNDS STOP. Kirk's attention is arrested by Spock who is working frantically at his station over a multitude of FLASHING LIGHTS, clicking switches as if trying to stop something.

SPOCK

Captain... we are being invaded by exceptionally strong sensor probes. Everywhere... our electrical systems ... our engines...

We hear the AMPLIFIED VOICE of the Fesarius commander again:



BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

No further communication will be accepted. If there is the slightest hostile move, your vessel will be destroyed immediately.

Despite the training and discipline of the Enterprise bridge personnel, there is a long moment of silence. Kirk is the first to move, walking to his command position. Stands deep in thought. The crew wait, throw looks to Kirk, obviously hoping he has a solution.

EMPHASIZING KIRK

In b.g. we see console lights at some bridge stations fading and going off. Spock works his panel as if trying to stop it.

SPOCK

They're shutting off some of our systems, sir.

(working controls)

Brilliant! I'd like to study their methods.

Kirk watches this... we hear the HUMMING of the bridge relays and servo-motors going FADE. The bridge goes strangely silent. Finally Kirk, to Spock:

KIRK

Our recorder marker? Does it have all this on its tapes?

SPOCK

Enough to alert other ships.

KIRK

Bailey, dispatch recorder marker.

Bailey blinks, looks at Kirk with anxiety. Kirk turns to him, Bailey wrenching his eyes away to make the proper adjustment on his panel, then pressing a stud. His uneasiness comes through his voice as he says:

BAILEY

Recorder marker ejected, sir.

SPOCK

(checking hooded viewer)

It's on course. Heading back the way we...

Suddenly the bridge is filled with the bright, white light from the o.s. screen, then it is wrenched by a powerful CAMERA TILT SHOCK WAVE and everyone grabs for support.

Bailey exhibits marked agitation at this development. Then, amplified loud, we hear:

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

Your recorder-marker has been destroyed.

(beat)

You have been examined.

Regretfully, your ship must be destroyed.

PAN SHOT - COMMAND POSITIONS

As Balok continues to speak we see the reactions of the men -- some angered, some fearful, particularly Bailey.

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

Your ending will be painless. We make assumption you have a deity, or deities, or some such beliefs which comfort you. We therefore grant you ten Earth time periods known as minutes to make preparation.

(beat)

We will not alter our decision; we will not accept communication. Upon any evasive or hostile move you will be destroyed immediately.

There is silence on the bridge. Kirk stares at the o.s. screen considering what he has heard and thinking furiously.

SPOCK - AT HIS STATION

working quickly at his controls, half to self...

SPOCK

Might be interesting to see what they look like. If I can locate where that voice is coming from...

(trails, working controls)

ANGLE TO ELEVATOR DOORS

They open. Doctor McCoy and Scott hurry out to look toward Kirk, waiting.

BAILEY

recovered somewhat, but still scared. He wets his lips.

SULU

lips tight, jaw clenched.

## EMPHASIZING KIRK

No one can share his responsibility. McCoy moves in, quietly:

McCOY

His message... Balok... it was  
heard all over the ship.

Kirk nods, turns and hits his intercom switch.

KIRK

(filtered;  
amplified)

Captain to crew.

(considering  
right words)

Those who have served for long on  
this vessel have encountered alien  
life forms. You know the greatest  
danger facing us is... ourselves.  
An irrational fear of the unknown.

(considers against)

But there is no such thing as the  
unknown. There are only things  
temporarily hidden, temporarily not  
understood. In... most cases, we  
have found that intelligence capable  
of a civilization is capable of  
understanding peaceful gestures.  
Certainly a life form advanced  
enough for space travel is advanced  
enough to eventually understand  
our motives. All decks stand by,  
captain out.

Kirk turns to communications officer.

KIRK

(continuing)

Ship to ship.

UHURA

Hailing frequencies open, sir.

Now, strongly and with a tone to match Balok's:

KIRK

(filtered;  
amplified)

This is the captain of the  
Enterprise speaking. We came  
seeking friendship... but have  
no wish to trespass. To demonstrate  
our good will, our vessel will  
return the way it came. But if  
attacked...

SQUEALING FEEDBACK TONE again, Kirk having to give up the remainder of his sentence, motioning to communications officer to cut the circuit. Kirk turns to the helm:

KIRK  
(continuing)  
Lay in a course away, Mister Bailey.

BAILEY  
What? Course... uh...

Bailey is too shaken to handle it. Sulu has reached over, hit a couple of controls, and:

SULU  
Plotted and laid in, sir.

KIRK  
Engage. Warp factor one.

SULU  
(at own panel)  
Warp factor...  
(breaks off)

Sulu works controls at his board quickly, whirls toward Kirk.

SULU  
(continuing)  
There's no response!

KIRK  
Switch to impulse!

SULU  
All engine systems show dead. And  
weapons systems.

SPOCK AT HIS STATION

inspecting his control panel, gets some instrument lights on, reacts, hits another switch.

SPOCK  
Switching to screen! I think I  
can get something visual...

EMPHASIZING KIRK

looking expectantly toward Spock.

SULU  
Sir!

Sulu is indicating the ship's screen. Kirk whirls toward it.

## INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The star background RIPPLING, DISSOLVING TO DISTORTED IMAGE which gradually becomes a SLIGHTLY RIPPLING BUT FAIRLY DISTINCT IMAGE OF BALOK! He appears huge, a giant of a being on a giant ship; his face is long and grotesquely grimacing, his eyes are hideous cat-like things. And we see the eyes look toward us and the mouth move:

BALOK

(filtered;  
amplified)

You are wasting time and effort.  
There is no escape.

(beat)

You have eight Earth minutes left.

The picture wavers, blanks out.

## BACK TO SCENE

The officers and crewmen continue to gape at the o.s. screen even though the image of Balok is no longer there. Bailey seems to be the most affected, almost immobilized.

SPOCK

I was curious to see how they  
appeared.

KIRK

(beat; then  
almost smiles)

Yes. Of course you were.

Bailey has turned in a slow, frozen way to eye Spock during this. Now he galvanizes into action, leaping to his feet, loudly:

BAILEY

I don't understand this at all.  
Spock's wasting time, everyone  
else just sitting around.  
Somebody's got to do something!

McCoy quickly moves from Kirk to Bailey:

McCOY

Easy...

BAILEY

What do they want from us? Let's  
find out what they want us to do!

KIRK

They want us to lose our heads.  
Now if...

BAILEY  
(interrupting)  
We've got only eight minutes left!

SULU  
Seven and forty-one seconds.

Bailey whirls, his eyes following Sulu's to the helmsman's instrument panel.

INSERT - TIME CLOCK

set to count off minutes and seconds. We see the minute hand set at "seven;" the second hand ticking off "39... 38... 37..."

BACK TO SHOT

Bailey, a mixture of hysterically fearful and flabbergasted. He indicates Sulu's instrument panel, unbelievably:

BAILEY  
He's doing a countdown!

McCOY  
(taking Bailey's arm)  
Practically end of watch. Why don't...

Bailey whirls, pulling free, almost throwing McCoy to the floor.

BAILEY  
(shouting)  
Are you all out of your heads?!  
End of watch? It's the end of everything!

KIRK  
Bailey!

Sulu tries to restrain him too; Bailey flails free.

BAILEY  
(ignoring it)  
What are you, robots? Wound up toy soldiers?! Don't you know when you're dying? Watch, and regulations and orders, what do they mean when...

KIRK  
(interrupts; strong)  
You're relieved, Mister Bailey!

Bailey whirls toward Kirk, starts to reply, sees the look on Kirk's face. It takes him a long moment to control himself, and the effort leaves him shaking.

KIRK  
(continues now;  
to McCoy)

Escort him to his quarters, doctor.

Bailey strides off toward the elevator, not waiting for McCoy who hurries after him. They enter elevator, exiting. Kirk eyes the ship's viewing screen for a moment, then turns to the communications officer, nods.

KIRK

Ship to ship.

UHURA

Hailing frequencies open.

KIRK

(filtered;  
amplified)

This is the captain of the Earth ship Enterprise. However, it is the practice of Earth people to make every effort...

SQUEALING FEEDBACK TONE AGAIN. But this time Kirk motions for Uhura to hold off cutting communication, waits. A long moment, then the SQUEAL ENDS and Kirk goes on with his thought:

KIRK

(continuing;  
filtered, amplified)

... to avoid misunderstanding with others. We destroyed your space buoy in a simple act of self-preservation. When we attempted to move away from it, it emitted radiation harmful to our species.

PAN SHOT - FACES OF OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

as they wait for Balok's reply. When it does not come:

KIRK

(continuing)

If you have examined our ship and its tapes, you know this to be true...

FEEDBACK SQUEAL again. Then as it fades away:

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

on which we can again see Balok's face wavering into focus.



BALOK'S VOICE  
(filtered; amplified)  
You now have seven minutes left.

COMMAND POSITION - EMPHASIZING KIRK

very close to giving up.

FADE OUT.



ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - GROUP

Kirk's officers and men are clustered about him at his command position, their faces strained, alternately full of fear, outrage, despair and resignation.

SULU

Four minutes, thirty seconds.

SCOTT

You have an annoying fascination  
for time pieces.

Sulu shrugs. Kirk moves over to stand by Spock. Increasingly, the eyes of the crewmen and officers will be on him, waiting for him to act.

KIRK AND SPOCK

Spock, his face almost as immutable as Balok's, looks to the o.s. screen, his mind churning. Away from the others, they speak quietly, privately, frustrated:

KIRK

What's wrong with them?! They must  
know that we mean them no harm.

SPOCK

(half-smile)

They're certainly aware by now we're  
incapable of it.

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered; amplified)

Four minutes.

KIRK

There has to be something to do!  
Something I've overlooked!

SPOCK

(quietly)

In chess, when one is outmatched...

(shrugs)

... checkmate. The game is over.

KIRK

(snaps; quietly)

Is that your best recommendation?  
Accept it?

SPOCK

I'm...

(almost said 'sorry')

I regret I can find no other logical one.

Kirk becomes aware he's being expectantly watched by his men.

ANOTHER ANGLE - TO INCLUDE BRIDGE

where officers and crewmen wait, watching Kirk. In b.g. Doctor McCoy enters from the ship's elevator, crosses in.

McCOY

Assuming we find a way out of this...

KIRK

(irritably)

Nobody's given up yet!

McCOY

(quietly)

Then on Bailey... let me put it in my medical records as 'simple fatigue'...

KIRK

(interrupting,  
snaps)

That's my decision, doctor!

EMPHASIZING KIRK

Kirk turns, crosses to his command position, stands lost in thought. McCoy following, moving in, still quietly.

McCOY

And it was your mistake. Expected too much, pushed him, overworked...

KIRK

(explodes)

I'm ordering you to drop it, McCoy!  
I've no time for you, your theories,  
or your quaint philosophies!

McCOY

Assuming we get out of this, captain, I intend to challenge your action in my medical records. I'll state I warned you about his condition. And that's no bluff.

KIRK

Any time you can bluff me, doctor...!

Kirk is immediately aware he has cracked a bit under the strain himself, raised his voice, has a number of bridge personnel eyeing him surprised. Discipline, his carefully developed image, his own self-respect have been lessened by some measure. He's sorry but there's no way to wipe it out. Meanwhile:

BALOK'S VOICE

Three minutes.

KIRK

(recovered now;  
quietly)

Fine, doctor. Let's hope we'll  
be able to argue it.

McCoy moves off; Kirk moves to sit in his seat. Then he stops... an idea forming. He looks toward the departing McCoy, then toward Spock.

KIRK

(to Spock)

Not chess, Mister Spock. Poker!  
Do you know the game?

EMPHASIZING KIRK

as he moves to his command position, the idea developing in his mind, sits. He waits a moment, considering, his expression growing more purposeful. The others watch him expectantly. Then he nods toward the communications officer.

KIRK

(firmly)

Ship to ship!

UHURA

Hailing frequencies open, sir.

Kirk sits upright, firm, a tone to match it.

KIRK

(filtered; amplified)

This is the captain of the Enterprise  
... Our respect for other life forms  
requires we must now give you this  
warning. There is one critical item  
of information never committed to  
the memory banks of any Earth ship.

PAN SHOT - OTHER OFFICERS

Surprised, wondering what he means.

KIRK'S VOICE

(continuing)

Since the early years of space exploration, our vessels have had incorporated into them a substance known as corbomite. It is a material and device which prevents attack on us.

EMPHASIZING KIRK

KIRK

(continuing)

If any destructive energy form touches our vessels, a reverse reaction of equal strength is created, destroying...

BALOK'S VOICE

(amplified;  
interrupting)

You now have two minutes.

SPOCK

His usual emotionless expression has gone to that of concern, watching Kirk for reaction.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

Kirk's officers and men watch him too. Their faces reflect their various degrees of hope or anxiety. Kirk makes a visible effort to keep his voice firm, goes on.

KIRK

(continuing)

... destroying the attacker. It will interest you to know that, since the initial use of corbomite more than two of our centuries ago, no attacking ship has ever survived the attempt. Death has little meaning for us. If it has none for you, then attack us now. We grow annoyed at your foolishness.

Kirk nods at Uhura and the circuit is CLICKED off. Spock moves to join Kirk.

SPOCK

However... it was well played.

A moment of silence. Finally:

SPOCK

I regret not having learned more about this Balok.

(indicating screen)

Some aspects of his face reminded me of my father...

SCOTT

Then, may Heaven have helped your mother.

SPOCK

(very coolly)

She considered herself a most fortunate Earth woman.

Another round of silence. Kirk's eye falls on McCoy, he speaks quietly.

KIRK

I'm sorry, I...

McCOY

For having other things on your mind?

(smiles)

My fault. I don't know how in...

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered; amplified)

One minute.

Sulu has said "One minute" in unison with Balok, checking his instruments, exact timing. He draws some irritated looks. Sulu shrugs. Kirk is amused.

SULU

I knew he would.

KIRK

Has it ever occurred to you you're not a very inscrutable Oriental, Mister Sulu?

Sulu turns, grins.

SULU

I tried it once when I was a kid. Remember those old...

(searching  
the word)

... images on celluloid stuff...

KIRK

Cinema.

SCOTT

Movies.

SULU

Yes, cinema. The ones about the time of the Sino-Western trouble...

UHURA

World War III, almost.

KIRK

(nods)

The world was lucky it was stopped in time. None of us here would be enjoying life today if...

Kirk trails his words, then sees McCoy next to him is grinning. A round of silence, then:

SULU

Well, anyway, the villains were Oriental, remember? I loved them. I used to sit in front of the mirror for hours practicing drooping eyelids, mysterious expressions...

(grins)

I never knew what it meant, these movies were I guess two hundred years old or so. But I wanted to be like them.

UHURA

You never made it.

SULU

I can't figure out why I'm like this. I don't have a drop of Western blood.

The bridge goes silent. Sulu's light-hearted comments carried for a while, but there's too much on every mind to keep idle conversation going. The room goes quiet again. Sulu has looked toward his time piece on the instrument panel.

AT ELEVATOR

The doors open, Bailey steps out. He stops, looks uncertain.

SULU

If anyone's interested...

(waits)

... thirty seconds.

KIRK - INCLUDING ELEVATOR

He sees McCoy's eyes shift to the back of the room, turns, sees Bailey.

They exchange looks; McCoy nervously watching Kirk.

BAILEY

Sir, request permission to take  
my post.

Kirk eyes Bailey, considers it.

SULU

Twenty seconds.

KIRK

(turns to Bailey,  
nods)

Permission granted.

Kirk nods; Bailey crosses.

EMPHASIZING SULU

watching his instrument clock. Bailey sits. He'll show the  
strain of the following, but will hang onto self control  
grimly.

INSERT - INSTRUMENT CLOCK

ticking off "zero" minutes; seconds "fourteen... thirteen...  
twelve... eleven..."

WIDE ANGLE

Kirk aware McCoy is giving him an approving look.

SULU

Ten seconds. Nine... eight...  
seven...

KIRK'S POSITION

Kirk looking up to see Spock has crossed to stand beside him.  
Spock's face is expressionless, almost too much so.

SULU'S VOICE

Six... five... four... three...  
two... one...

WIDE ANGLE

as everyone waits. Nothing happens. Everyone turns to look  
at the others.

SPOCK

An interesting game, this 'poker.'



KIRK

(nods)

It does seem to have advantages  
over chess.

McCoy draws a deep breath of relief, then to Spock:

McCOY

Love to teach it to you.

BALOK'S VOICE

(interrupting;  
filtered)

This is the commander of the  
Fesarius.

The communications officer moves to throw a switch but Kirk  
halts her with a gesture.

KIRK

Hold on that. Let's let him sweat  
for a change.

They wait a moment, then:

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

The destruction of your vessel  
has been delayed.

SULU

You've gotta admire him. The latest  
news every minute.

Some relieved laughter.

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

We must have proof of your corbomite  
device.

Uhura waits for a signal from Kirk to open the inter-  
communication channel. Spock moves to his station in the  
b.g., begins working with his controls.

BALOK'S VOICE

(continuing; filtered)

We will relent in your destruction  
only if we have proof of your  
corbomite device. Do you understand?

KIRK

(waits, then)

Ship to ship.



UHURA  
Hailing frequencies, sir.

KIRK  
(filtered; amplified)  
Request denied.

BALOK'S VOICE  
(filtered)  
Request denied.

BALOK'S VOICE  
(filtered)  
You will be destroyed unless you  
give us this information.

Spock gestures toward the o.s. screen.

SPOCK  
Captain...

Kirk and the others turn to the screen.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN - BALOK

where the WAVERING IMAGE OF BALOK is becoming visible.

BALOK'S VOICE  
(continuing)  
And now having permitted your  
primitive efforts to see my form...  
(nods)  
I trust it has pleased your  
curiosity... and now...  
(turns eyes;  
slight movement)  
... another demonstration of our  
superiority.

We HEAR A CLICK and the Enterprise viewing screen goes dark.

BALOK'S VOICE  
(continuing)  
We will soon inform you of our  
decision regarding your vessel.

GROUP - ELEVATOR DOORS IN B.G.

Kirk leans back, stretches in weariness. The elevator doors  
open to reveal Janice carrying a tray with coffee and cups.

AT ELEVATOR DOORS

Janice, crossing with incredible insouciance, CAMERA MOVING  
with her to the cluster of men who are joined by McCoy, who  
addresses her somewhat incredulously.

McCOY

I thought the power was off in  
the galley.

Janice pours with composure; others gather around.

JANICE

I used a hand phaser.

(smiles)

Zap... hot coffee.

Janice starts off with the filled cup for Kirk, McCoy picking up the pot to pour a cup for himself.

SULU'S VOICE

Something's going on, captain!

Kirk and Spock turn quickly to look at the o.s. ship's viewing screen.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

A small cell-like section of the alien ship is detaching itself from the mother ship, moves away but not out of FRAME.

KIRK - SPOCK IN B.G.

He moves to his command position to better view this new development. Spock works his devices at his hooded viewer in the b.g.

KIRK

It's a small ship.

SPOCK

About two thousand metric tons.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

The small alien ship now has moved closer to the Enterprise. Suddenly the mother ship starts moving away, its cell-like sections dwindling rapidly in size. Accelerating fast, to a pinpoint, then nothingness, leaving the tiny ship hanging before the Enterprise.

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

It has been decided that I will  
conduct you to a planet of the  
First Federation which is capable  
of sustaining your life form.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

Kirk and the others react to this announcement.

BALOK'S VOICE

(continuing; filtered)

There you will disembark and be interned. Your ship will be destroyed, of course.

SPOCK - AT HIS STATION

reacting to a new status in the various systems at his station... lights are blinking on.

SPOCK

Engine systems coming on, captain...

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

Do not be deceived by the size of this pilot vessel. It has an equal potential to destroy your vessel.

As if offering proof, CAMERA JARS slightly as the Enterprise is shaken by a jolt that causes some men to grab for support.

SPOCK - AT HIS STATION

turning from his instruments.

SPOCK

Tractor beam again.

COMMAND POSITIONS, FAVORING KIRK

BALOK'S VOICE

(filtered)

So that you may sustain your gravity and atmosphere, your systems are now open. Escape is impossible since you are being taken under our power to your destination. Any move to escape or destroy this ship will result in the instant destruction of the Enterprise and everyone aboard.

There is a small jolt that signifies the beginning of the journey. Kirk looks up to the viewing screen.

SULU

We're being towed, sir.

INSERT VIEWING SCREEN

The stars beginning to move as the small ship ahead begins towing the U.S.S. Enterprise through space.

BACK TO SHOT

as the faces of Kirk and the others reflect their feelings.

FADE OUT.

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - U.S.S. ENTERPRISE AND BALOK'S SMALL SHIP

Balok's ship, cell-like and tiny, hangs before the Enterprise as both ships move slowly across the stellar b.g.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's log, star date fifteen fourteen point nine four. The Enterprise is in tow. To this point, no resistance has been offered.

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

Some look moodily at the o.s. screen; others look elsewhere, lost in their own thoughts.

KIRK'S VOICE

Our plan... a show of resignation. Balok's tractor beam has to be a heavy drain of power on his small ship. Question, will he grow careless?

They look up at the o.s. ship's screen again.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

Balok's tiny ship hangs before them, the stars moving by slowly, passing toward us and past the screen.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK AND SPOCK

They are all silent for a long moment.

BAILEY

Captain...

(indicates  
instruments)

He's pulling out a little ahead of us.

Spock leaps for his station, consults his instruments. Then:

SPOCK

He's sneaked power down a bit.

SULU

Our speed is down to point six four of light.

Kirk eyes Bailey who is white-faced, strained.

BAILEY  
I'm all right, sir.

KIRK  
We'll need a right angle course,  
shear away from him no matter how  
he turns.

BAILEY  
Yes, sir.

KIRK  
Maximum acceleration when I give  
the word.

SULU  
Yes, sir.

He eyes the screen.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

Balok's ship pulls the Enterprise, dead ahead.

BAILEY  
wetting his lips, ready to press the proper switches.

SULU  
His hands poised above his controls, looking to the o.s.  
captain for the word.

SPOCK  
waiting, emotionless, alert.

KIRK  
turning to Sulu.

KIRK  
Engage!

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - FULL SHOT

Immediately everyone presses pre-arranged switches and controls, and the lights dim as a huge POWER SURGE SOUND is heard, the ship shuddering, lurching.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

Balok's tiny ship lurches slightly, beginning to pulsate with light.

EXT. SPACE - ENTERPRISE AND BALOK'S SHIP

The Enterprise starts turning away, Balok's ship trying to compensate for this motion, glowing fitfully in power surges.

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE - COMMAND POSITIONS

Engines begin to WHINE HIGHER, the lights begin to flicker as they all watch the o.s. screen.

SULU

It's a strain, captain. Engines are overloading.

KIRK

More power!

SPOCK - AT HIS STATION

inspecting his dials, lights FLASHING.

SPOCK

We're superheating. Intermix temperature seven thousand four hundred degrees... seven-five... seven-six...

An ALARM RINGS, Spock shuts it off.

SPOCK

(continuing)

Eight thousand degrees.

EXT. SPACE - BALOK'S SHIP

It glows fiercely as it tries to combat the pull of the Enterprise in this giant tug-of-war.

INT. ENTERPRISE - COMMAND POSITIONS

The bridge rocks as the Enterprise tries to break away, the men holding nearby objects in an effort to stay where they are. The WHINE of the engines is growing even louder.

KIRK

Shear away, Mister Bailey!

Bailey fights the strain... performs.

SPOCK - AT HIS STATION

A quick reading of the dials. Many LIGHTS FLASHING.

SPOCK

We're two thousand above maximum. Eight thousand four... five... six... she'll blow soon.

KIRK

steadying himself on the shuddering bridge. The WHINE from the struggling engines is terrific. Kirk has to shout:

KIRK

Now, Sulu! Impulse power too.

Sulu and Bailey turn toward Kirk, reacting hard.

SPOCK - AT HIS STATION

almost white-faced as he whirls, hearing this order.

EMPHASIZING SULU

He hesitates an instant, turns, hits a switch. A SHRIEK OF POWER added to the WHINE, the sum is deafening.

EXT. SPACE - BALOK'S SHIP

It is surging, pulsating with a piercing light.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

The Enterprise begins pitching, shuddering, the engines SOUND deafening.

INSERT - VIEWING SCREEN

Balok's ship still surging but the light pulsations are not as frequent. Suddenly one of the vessel's lights dims.

BAILEY'S VOICE

We're breaking free, sir.

EXT. SPACE - TWO SHIPS

The Enterprise beginning to pull away, the lights of the alien ship dimming. One blinks off, then on... Suddenly a flare-up of light then the alien ship goes dark and lifeless. The Enterprise, as if suddenly freed, accelerates away into the distance.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

Kirk relaxes.

KIRK

All engines stop.

The WHINE of the engines quickly runs down the scale until it is quiet again. They stare at the o.s. screen.

SULU

All stopped.



Kirk turns, eyes Bailey, nods. Then to others.

KIRK

Good. All hands.

The elevator doors open, Scott enters and crosses.

SCOTT

Engines need some work, captain.  
Bad. Can we hold it here a few  
hours?

SPOCK

If he got a signal through to the  
mother ship...

KIRK

(nods)  
We're not home yet.

UHURA

A signal, captain... very weak.  
(listens)  
It's Balok... A distress signal  
to the Fesarius... his engines are  
out... his life sustaining system  
isn't operating... the message is  
being repeated...

KIRK

Any reply?

UHURA

Negative. His signal is fading.  
I doubt if the mother ship could  
have heard it.

Kirk turns toward viewing screen.

INSERT - SHIP'S VIEWING SCREEN

Balok's ship hangs dull and lifeless in space.

COMMAND POSITIONS - FAVORING KIRK

KIRK

Plot a course for it, Mister  
Bailey.

Kirk's officers and men eye him with astonishment. Spock  
moves to join him at his post. Kirk hits his intercom button,  
his mike lights up.

KIRK

(voice amplified)  
This is the captain speaking.  
(MORE)

KIRK (cont'd)  
The first Federation vessel is in  
distress. We are preparing to  
board.

(seeks right words)  
There are lives at stake. By our  
standards, 'alien' life... but  
still life. Captain out.

BAILEY  
Course plotted and laid in, sir.

KIRK  
Ready the Transporter Room, Mister  
Scott.

SCOTT  
(hesitates; then)  
Aye, sir.

Scott exits into elevator.

KIRK  
(to Sulu)  
Bring us to within one hundred  
meters, Mister Sulu. Ahead slow.

SULU  
(sighs)  
Ahead slow, sir.

Kirk still sees questioning glances.

KIRK  
What is the mission of this vessel,  
gentlemen? To seek out and make  
contact with life forms wherever  
we find it.

(indicates screen)  
Life. And an opportunity to  
demonstrate what our high sounding  
words mean. Any questions?

There are none. Kirk gets up, looks around at his men.

KIRK  
I'll take two men with me. Doctor  
McCoy to examine and treat the  
aliens, if possible...

Kirk starts to move on, then stops, turns. He looks at  
Bailey.

KIRK  
(continuing)  
And you, Mister Bailey.

Bailey reacts with frank astonishment.

BAILEY

Sir?

KIRK

The face of the unknown, Mister Bailey. I think I owe you a look at it.

BAILEY

(hesitant)

Yes, sir.

SPOCK

Request permission to...

KIRK

Denied. If I'm mistaken, if it's a trap, I want you here.

Kirk moves toward the elevator doors, CAMERA PANNING him, where McCoy joins him with his doctor's bag, and then Bailey. McCoy presses the button for the doors to open.

INT. ELEVATOR

The doors whoosh open and Kirk, McCoy and Bailey come in, Bailey somewhat fearfully.

KIRK

Transporter room.

Relays CLICK, lights FLASH. The cab descends quickly. McCoy and Kirk do not look at each other.

KIRK

(continuing)

You don't approve either, I suppose.

McCOY

(shrugs)

I never ask your approval for my diagnoses.

KIRK

(eyeing Bailey)

Frightened, Mister Bailey?

BAILEY

Yes, sir.

KIRK

Of what?

BAILEY  
Well, as far as knowing exactly...

KIRK  
That's my point.

They have reached the proper level. The doors open.

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM - CLOSE ON TRANSPORTER CONTROLS

Establishing, then CAMERA BACK to reveal Scott at the transporter controls, an ASSISTANT at his side. Kirk, McCoy and Bailey enter the room. Scott looks up.

KIRK  
Transporter ready?

Kirk moves to Scott's side.

SCOTT  
Well, yes, sir. But it's risky.  
We're locked in on what appears to  
be a main deck...

KIRK  
(nods)  
Air sample?

SCOTT  
Breathable. In fact, a slightly  
higher oxygen content than our own.

Kirk turns to McCoy.

KIRK  
Ready, doctor?

McCOY  
No, but you won't let that stop  
you.

SCOTT  
Bend low, sir. It reads pretty  
cramped over there.

They start toward the transporter chamber, Bailey following.

TRANSPORTER CHAMBER

Kirk, McCoy and Bailey moving to stand in three of the spaces. Scott motioning them to hunch lower. Kirk looks to the others, sees that they are as they should be, then turns to the o.s. Scott.

KIRK  
Energize.

We hear INCREASING POWER SOUND, the CLICK of relays and the usual standard LIGHT FLICKERING and the TRANSPORTER EFFECT are seen. Kirk, McCoy and Bailey disappear, the SOUNDS and LIGHTS quickly dying away.

INT. BALOK'S QUARTERS

Kirk, McCoy and Bailey materialize with the usual SHIMMERING LIGHT. The quarters they find themselves in have such a low ceiling that their heads are an inch from it. There is a subdued, indirect kind of soft lighting, and no sign of smoke or trouble. They stare in astonishment at what they see.

POV SHOT - BALOK'S QUARTERS

CAMERA PANS the lush interior, velvet-like unusual draperies, luxuriously soft floor, all of it built for the obvious comfort of the occupant, the CAMERA REACHING AND HOLDING on BALOK, who sits in a chaise lounge kind of seat, his head even larger than we thought -- except that there isn't the same kind of lighting and he looks somehow different.

KIRK, MCCOY AND BAILEY

CAMERA MOVES with them to Balok, who hasn't moved. They stare down at the grotesque head. Then:

MCCOY

Sir, this is a... a dummy, a puppet of some kind.

(taps the head)

BALOK'S VOICE

I have been waiting for you.

They whirl about to the sound of the voice.

CUT TO:

THE REAL BALOK

The real Balok is a veritable child of a man, less than four feet tall, pudgy, soft-looking, warm and cuddly, wearing a robe of fine cloth, sitting in a small chair, smiling cherubically.

BALOK

I'm Balok. Welcome aboard.

Kirk, McCoy and Bailey, giants by comparison, move INTO FRAME to stare now at this childlike man. Balok indicates three small chairs (without any arms).

KIRK

I'm Captain Kirk...

BALOK  
(interrupting;  
nods)

... and McCoy and Bailey. Sit.  
Be comfortable.

As Kirk, McCoy and Bailey gingerly sit down on what would, by earth standards be a child's chair, Balok pushes a button. A servo unit moves out from the wall bearing a bowl and four cups. Balok picks up a ladle and starts filling the four cups.

BALOK  
(continuing)  
We must drink. This is tranya.  
I hope you relish it as much as I.

KIRK  
Commander Balok --

Balok waves a hand to quiet Kirk.

BALOK  
I know, I know. A thousand  
questions. But first, the tranya.

He hands them each a glass. Both men look down into the cup with some uncertainty. Balok smiles. His voice, deep and commanding, belies his small stature. He hoists his drink, sips. Kirk and McCoy do the same. Their uncertainty is replaced by a look of pleasure. McCoy takes another sip. Bailey, still distrustful and uneasy, drinks nothing. Kirk has turned, looks o.s. to the other figure with the enlarged head. Balok notices, smiles and indicates.

BALOK  
My alter ego, so to speak. In  
your culture he would be Mr. Hyde  
to my Jekyll.  
(with a smile)  
You must admit he's effective.  
You would never have been  
frightened by me.

Balok sips his drink, then puts it down with a satisfying sigh.

BALOK  
(continuing)  
And I thought my distress signal  
quite clever. It was a pleasure  
testing you.

KIRK  
(eyes him, then)  
I see.

BALOK

(smiles)

I had to discover your real intentions.

KIRK

But you probed our memory banks...

BALOK

Your records could have been a deception on your part.

Balok pours more tranya into his cup, offers to pour more for Kirk who declines. But McCoy wants some more.

McCOY

And your crew?

Balok eyes McCoy, surprised. Then he begins laughing.

BALOK

I have no crew, doctor.

(indicates dummy)

Just Mr. Hyde and me. I run everything from this small ship.

McCoy and Kirk exchange astonished glances. Balok is amused, yet pleased.

BALOK

(continuing)

But I miss company, conversation. Even an alien would be welcome. Perhaps one of your men... for some period of time... an exchange of information, cultures...

Kirk smiles broadly and so does Balok. These two men have found much to like in each other. Kirk considers it for a moment, his eye falls on Bailey.

KIRK

Yes. Do you think we can find a volunteer, Mister Bailey?

BAILEY

(suddenly)

Me, sir. I'd like to volunteer.

KIRK

(eyes Bailey,  
then nods)

Excellent idea.



BALOK

Ah?

(to Bailey)

You represent Earth's best, then?

BAILEY

No sir, I'm not. I'll make plenty of mistakes.

KIRK

(to Balok)

And you'll learn more about us this way. And I'll get back a better officer in return.

Balok now breaks in delighted, open laughter. Kirk joins in, laughing too.

BALOK

I see. We think much alike, captain, you and I.

Bailey feels the need for the tranya, takes a big drink.

ANGLE TO DOORWAY

Balok stands, moves grandly toward the door, turns to Kirk, McCoy and Bailey who ENTER FRAME to stand with him, towering over him. He smiles at them, a simple, guileless smile. Then he is all business again.

BALOK

Now, before I bring back the Fesarius, let me show you my vessel. It is not often I have this pleasure.

As Balok moves through the doorway, McCoy shakes his head with the wonder of it, and Kirk and Bailey smile as they follow Balok to the entranceway where they have to stoop to follow Balok through.

BALOK

(continuing)

Yes, we're very much alike, captain. Both proud of our ships.

They exit scene.

FADE OUT.

THE END