

STAR TREK

ONE OF OUR PLANETS IS MISSING

by
Marc Daniels

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STAR TREK

EXT: SPACE

The Enterprise races along.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's Log: Stardate 5371.3. A huge cosmic CLOUD has been reported moving toward the area of our galaxy. The United Federation of Planets, through Starfleet Command, has sent the Enterprise to . . .

charge

INT: ENTERPRISE BRIDGE

We see Kirk, Spock, Uhura, Sulu, Chekov, and the normal bridge complement. Engineer Scott is also present. Kirk is addressing the others. His voice continues from the above "voice over".

KIRK (cont.)

.... investigate it. I have been ordered not to reveal the nature of our mission. Mr. Spock and Dr. McCoy have been the only ones to know about it. Now that we have completed our re-supply and servicing at Mantilles, I have permission to brief you. Mr. Che^kov, punch up our present position.

why?

Chekov presses a button and a chart appears on the view screen.

INSERT: CHART OF THE GEMINI 14 SYSTEM.

A moving pip of light illustrates what follows:

KIRK'S VOICE (con't)

As you can see, we are in the Gemini 14 System. It is the most remote colonized group in our galaxy. Mr. Spock will give us a brief rundown.

INTERCUT: SPOCK, THE CHART AND THE OTHERS LISTENING

SPOCK

Gemini 14 is one of several inhabited Federation systems with a twin star for a sun. The planets in this formation are fewer than the general rule, numbering five, of which only one, Mantilles, is inhabited. The others are Nultor, almost a hot orbiting cinder, too near the twin star to support life, Bezaride, which has no viable atmosphere, and Alondra, even further

SCOTTY

Ah yes, I've heard of Alondra. That's the beacon . . . the one with the high energy core . . . isn't it?

SPOCK

Correct, Mr. Scott. Alondra, though so far out in space as to be eternally frozen, through some freak of formation, is almost pure "gravatium". This metal emits powerful energy rays which make Alondra an admirable and dependable navigation aid . . . a
sub-space beacon.

KIRK

We are plotting our course now by Alondra
~~which acts as a sub-space beacon~~, correct
Mr. Sulu?

SULU

Yes, Captain, it is some three billion
miles from us at the moment.

KIRK

Mr. Spock, let's look at the CLOUD's present
position.

SPOCK

Yes, Captain.

He consults his viewer and pushes some buttons. Another drawing
appears on the view-screen. We see the vast mass of the CLOUD,
irregularly shaped. It is some distance upward and to the right
of Alondra.

KIRK

There it is.

CHEKOV

This CLOUD, Captain, what do we know about
it?

KIRK

Very little. Sub-space sensors have determined
it to be of irregular shape, some five hundred
thousand miles across. The size and shape
have remained ~~constant~~ ^{constant} since first observance,
so it must be an entity of some sort. It
emits energy pulses which seem to peak in inten-
sity about once every day. It is also definitely

KIRK (cont.)

coming closer to our galaxy. Thank you
Mr. Spock.

Spock releases the chart from the view screen.

SCOTTY

D'ya think it might be harmful?

KIRK

We have no way of knowing, Scotty. That's
why no mention of this was permitted until
after our stop at Mantilles. Any leak as
to the purpose of our mission while we were
re-supplying, might have thrown a hundred
million people into a panic.

SPOCK

Mantilles is the closest inhabited planet
to the CLOUD.

UHURA

Where do you suppose it came from?

KIRK

Beyond our galaxy . . . who knows what's
out there....

SPOCK

Other galaxies to be sure . . . billions of
stars and star systems with their planets.
Some in the near vicinity have been charted
by visual observation and confirmed by space
sensor probe.

KIRK

The CLOUD came from out there somewhere.
All we know is that it's not too far from
Alondra right now. Our procedure will be
to

SULU (interrupting)

Excuse me, Captain

KIRK

Yes, Mr. Sulu?

SULU

I . . I don't know how to say this, but
Alondra has disappeared!

Spock quickly consults his viewer

KIRK

How is that possible? It was just there.

Spock, put up your chart.

Spock presses a button. They all look at the screen. The CLOUD
is somewhat closer to the center of the screen, but Alondra is
nowhere to be seen.

KIRK

You're right, Sulu, it's gone.
Uhura, check the orbit!

UHURA

I have, Sir. It has disappeared from its
known orbit.

KIRK

What about Alondra's gratium energy pulse? Our
sensors should be able to pick that up, where-
ever it is.

(looking up from his viewer) SPOCK

Captain, Alondra's pulse is now coming from the CLOUD.

KIRK
From the CLOUD?

SPOCK
Yes, Captain, ~~as near as I can judge~~, from approximately its center. The CLOUD must have pulled Alondra out of orbit and engulfed it.

He returns to his viewer and controls. Kirk thinks a moment and then:

KIRK
Chekov, get out any charts you have of the area where the CLOUD came from.

CHECKOV
Right, sir.

KIRK
Uhura, plot out everything our sensors can pick up in the same area and compare the two.

UHURA
Yes, Captain.

As they comply, Spock again looks up.

SPOCK
Captain, look here.

Kirk goes quickly to Spock's station and looks into the viewer.

SPOCK (cont)
As you can see, Alondra's gratium energy pulse is ~~already~~ considerably weaker, while the CLOUD'S is becoming stronger.

And what?

KIRK moves to Uhura and Chekov.

KIRK *(tensely)*

What about those charts?

UHURA

Working on it, sir.

SPOCK

Alondra's energy pulse is now completely merged with the CLOUD'S, which, incidentally, has hit one of those daily peaks.

KIRK

Wonderingly comes back to him.

Spock, do you think I mean, is it possible?

SPOCK

. . . that the CLOUD consumes planets?

KIRK

Yes. Could that be?

SPOCK

It seems logical, Captain.

UHURA

Ready, sir.

KIRK

Turning to the screen.

Put it up.

They all watch intently as Uhura presses some buttons on her console.

INSERT: SCREEN

We see the charts as Uhura speaks.

UHURA'S VOICE

Here is the result of my sensor probe.
And here is an overlay of Checkov's
navigation chart of the same area.

We see that eight planets are missing that were ~~in~~ evidence on
Checkov's chart. The overlay comes in and out several times to
emphasize the empty spaces which delineate the CLOUD'S path.

INTERCUT: Reactions of Kirk, Spock, Scott and crew. McCoy
enters as Kirk speaks.

KIRK

Eight planets are gone!

SCOTT

And now, Alondra.

McCOY

(Coming to Kirk.)

What's the situation?

KIRK

(Pointing to the screen)

Look at that, Bones . . . the CLOUD'S path.
It "eats" planets. ~~mean~~ If it continues
its present course it will get to Bezaride
tomorrow and . . .

SPOCK

. . . to Mantilles the day after.

KIRK (grimly)

A hundred million people will die.

MC COY

~~Realizing~~ (Realizing the extent of their problem.)

Jim, if we don't stop that CLOUD, it could
destroy our entire civilization'

SPOCK

It seems likely, Doctor.

KIRK (briskly)

Spock, put up your charts of the CLOUD'S position for the last two days and right now.

SPOCK

Yes, Captain.

They all look at the view-screen. We see the three charts which indicate the CLOUD'S position in relation to Alondra, Bezaride and Mantilles. In the first it is a considerable distance from Alondra; in the second it is much closer; and the third is the one we saw when Sulu reported Alondra missing.

SPOCK

(Describing charts.)

This is the day before yesterday, Captain.

He touches a button and the chart changes.

And here is yesterday.

He changes the chart again.

And this is the present position.

They look at each other.

MC COY

~~Maybe~~ Maybe it'll go back where it came from.

There must be plenty of planets out there . . .

SPOCK

(looks up from his viewer.)

That would be highly desirable, Doctor, but the fact is that the CLOUD is moving directly toward the Enterprise and my calculations of its rate of progress confirm ~~that it will~~ that it will

*no primitive
This would all
have been computed
by his people
him.*

SPOCK (cont.)

be at Bezaride by this time tomorrow and
at Mantilles the day after.

MC COY

Jim, radio Star Fleet Command. I know this
is a big ship but we need help. That thing
is a half a million miles across.

KIRK

Uhura will, of course, report our situation,
Bones, but we're too far out for any other
ship to reach us in time to save Mantilles.

MC COY

But we're like a . . . a . . . fly up against an
elephant What can we do?

KIRK

I don't know, but we can't just sit here. We've
got to meet the CLOUD and try to stop it. Mr.Sulu . . .

SULU

Captain?

KIRK

Set a course for the CLOUD and warp two ahead.

SULU

Yes, sir.

EXT.SPACE

The Enterprise zooms ahead.

FADE OUT

6:00

ACT II

EXT. SPACE: THE CLOUD, as the tiny figure of the Enterprise approaches to examine it.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's log: Stardate 5371.8. The Enterprise has now reached the CLOUD. The ship's protective shields are operating and all hands are on special alert, dedicated to the task of stopping this monstrous formation before it can destroy civilization.

INT. ENTERPRISE BRIDGE

All stations are manned and watching the view screen as the irregular mottled surface of the CLOUD passes by. Spock is busy with his viewer.

KIRK'S VOICE (cont)

unnecessary
~~I have sent Engineer Scott and Dr. McCoy back to their departments to stand ready for any emergency. Science Officer Spock is analyzing the CLOUD with his instruments in order to determine what were up against.~~

SPOCK (looking up)

Captain, the structure of the CLOUD is of loosely connected molecules, much greater in size than any I have ever seen . . .

SULU

You think it can be some kind of huge comet?

CHEKOV

If so, it would have an orbit and might swing away from our galaxy.

SPOCK

I think not, gentlemen. Comets are composed mostly of frozen gases and cosmic grit. It is only when these bodies pass close to a star that the heat energy vaporizes a portion of the comet and what is called the "tail" appears as a long stream of burning gas being dissipated into space. . .

KIRK (wryly)

If you don't mind, gentlemen, can we stick to the CLOUD . . .

SPOCK

Sorry, Captain. As I was saying, the CLOUD'S molecules are giant repeating ones with a simple chainlike structure, very loosely formed and light in weight.

KIRK

What are they made of?

SPOCK

No known element in our technology . . . Captain, my theory is that the CLOUD . . .

At this point the ship is thrown wildly about, caught in a sudden magnetic storm much like that created by sun spots. We intercut from ~~the~~ EXTERIOR SPACE where we see a close shot of the Starship being tossed around by these powerful forces, to the Bridge where the lights fluctuate and everyone is holding on for dear life. Suddenly all is calm and the lights remain steady. Everyone on the Bridge quickly mans his station and adjusts controls.

KIRK

Uhura, damage reports!

UHURA

Yes, sir.

She goes about checking various decks. Kirk peers at the view screen which shows a regularly ~~patterned~~ ^{patterned} tunnel ahead.

KIRK

~~SPOCK~~ Where are we?

SPOCK

The CLOUD'S energy pulses are coming from ~~all~~ ^{every} direction. It seems we are now inside it! As Kirk ponders this Uhura calls him and he turns to her.

UHURA

All stations report considerable shaking up but no damage, sir.

KIRK

Good.

SULU

(Pointing to View screen.)

Captain, look.

They all turn to the view screen where several huge irregularly shaped blobs are slowly approaching the ship.

KIRK

Stand by, phasers . . .

SULU

Phasers ready, sir.

CHEKOV

What are they?

KIRK

Put up all perimeter scans.

To check in
to know what's
happening.

For
Uhura

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UHURA

Perimeter scans operating.

The view screen changes to three different ~~views~~^{views}, each of which shows the same type of background and similar blobs approaching. As we watch they get closer until they obliterate all views with their distinctive color.

KIRK

Any sign of stress?

CHEKOV

Yes, Captain, there is some. The shields are holding, but we're wrapped around like a cabbage.

KIRK

Mr. Spock, what do you make of this?

SPOCK

It substantiates my theory, Captain. THE CLOUD is alive!

There is a general reaction.

KIRK

ALIVE?

SPOCK

Yes. It is a creature of some sort. Its ~~so~~ molecules are not small as in most ~~inanimate~~^{inanimate} objects, but are giant molecules, a type of polymers which occur in living organisms.

KIRK

But what are these "Blobs" that have enveloped us?

SPOCK

I think they are a kind of phago-cyte. . .

KIRK

Spock, please... polymers, phago-cytes....

*Kirk moved
from this*

SPOCK

Sorry, Captain. Phago-cytes are wandering scavenger cells which attack anything foreign in the body and try to devour or reject it.

KIRK

Like the white corpuscles in our blood stream?

SPOCK

Exactly!

CHEKOV

Captain, the stress on the shields is building . . .

Kirk looks at the screen where the color is pulsating and building in intensity.

KIRK

Mr. Sulu, prepare a low ^{stun} ~~stun~~ charge through the shields.

SULU

Ready, Captain.

They all watch the view screen.

KIRK

FIRE!

SULU

(presses a button)

Firing.

~~Presses a button.~~

The ~~xxx~~ blobs slowly fall away from the view screen but regroup and return, But now their color is ~~xxxx~~ paler.

KIRK

Increase the charge one hundred percent.

SULU

Ready, sir.

KIRK

Fire!

SULU

(pressing button)

~~Pressing button~~

Firing,

This time the blobs fall away and disintegrate.

SpOCK

Excellent, Captain.

KIRK

Thank you. Slow speed ahead, Mr. Sulu. We'll explore.

SULU

Slow ahead, sir.

KIRK

But we've got to know where we're going.. Uhura, use your scanners to assemble a diagram of the CLOUD'S anatomy.

UHURA

Yes, sir.

She busies herself at her console.

SPOCK

Captain, I believe we are inside a huge living organism, And like all living things, it must have food to survive. Judging from the disappearance of Alondra and the others, the CLOUD lives on the

SPOCK (cont)

raw mineral energy of the planets it consumes.

(evaluating) KIRK ~~(considering)~~
And it eats one every day....

SPOCK

Exactly, It is like a huge ~~XXXXXX~~ bull grazing here and there in the pasture of the universe.

KIRK ~~(Considering)~~

Yes I think you're right.

He muses for a moment,

Spock, this thing must have a brain somewhere....

~~Where is it?~~

UHURA

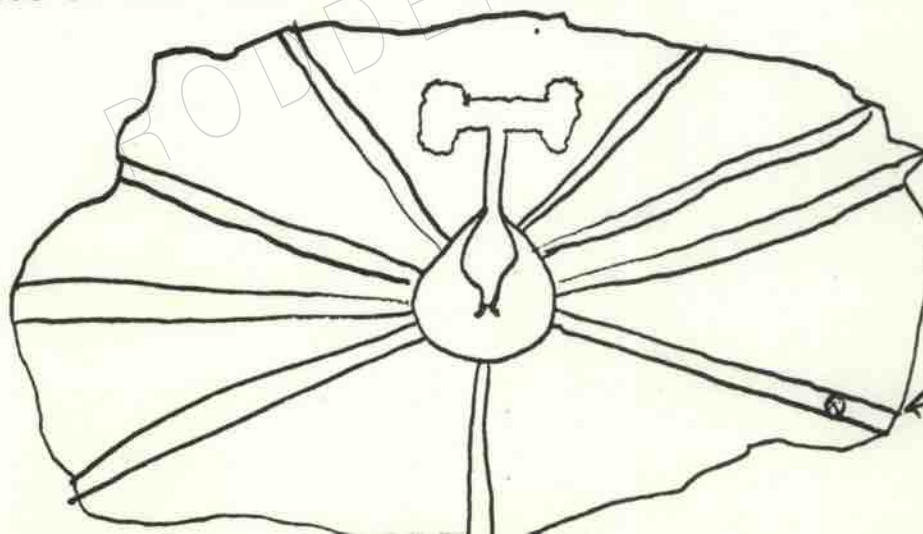
(interrupting)

Ready, sir.

KIRK

~~Punch~~ it up.

Uhura presses a button and on the view screen we see the anatomical diagram of the Cloud. It looks like a webbed octopus with ~~xxx~~ the tentacles leading to a pear-shaped center, *with an ovoid core*. At the top of the figure is what looks like a huge dumbbell with irregular edges. A ~~wider~~ *narrower* column leads from the *core of the* pear-shaped object to the dumbbell. It looks something like this:



We should see this from inside

THEY ALL EXAMINE THE CHART.

KIRK

Looks a little like an octopus, doesn't it?

SPOCK

Indeed it does.

KIRK

And our position is in one of the tentacles.
How do you suppose we got in here?

SPOCK

Perhaps the CLOUD makes periodic sweeps of the vicinity to pick up any asteroids or other bits of mineral energy that may be about.

KIRK

Like a whale ingesting plankton from the sea?

SPOCK

Exactly.

KIRK

Sort of a constant snack . . . and it consumes a planet about once every twenty-four hours. . .

CHEKOV

(Quietly to SuLu)

It's a good thing it doesn't eat three times a day.

KIRK

Mr. Chekov . . .

SPOCK

That pear-shaped object in the center with the ovoid core appears to be a rudimentary digestive system.

KIRK

And the brain . . .

SPOCK

I would assume it is that oddly shaped
object at the top of the diagram.

KIRK

You mean the dumbbell?

SPOCK

I beg your pardon?

KIRK

Never mind. . .

SPOCK

At any rate, there seems to be considerable
electrical activity emanating from the . . .
"dumbbell", did you say?

KIRK
(wryly)

That's what I said.

SPOCK

Therefore, it is pretty certain to be the brain
because synaptic activity ^{produces} ~~emits~~ electrical
impulses.

KIRK

Alright, Mr. Sulu, set a course for the brain.

SULU

Yes, sir.

SPOCK

May I know your intention, Captain?

*Shows with Spock
w/ 0.4 sec. waves*

KIRK

Certainly. When we get to the vicinity of the brain, we'll destroy it with our phasers. That will kill the CLOUD. Then we'll blast our way out. You said the molecules were loosely constructed, *didn't you?*

SPOCK
(Thoughtfully)

Yes.

KIRK

Of course, we'll have to go through the digestive system but our shields should prevent us from being absorbed. Mr. Sulu . . .

SULU

Sir?

KIRK

I think we may increase our speed.

INT. CLOUD TUNNEL

The Enterprise moves along at a good clip.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's Log. 5372.1 We have been proceeding inside the CLOUD. I have asked Dr. McCoy to ~~come~~ ^{come} to the bridge because his knowledge of anatomy may be of value to us.

INT. ENT. BRIDGE

Dr, McCoy is now standing beside Kirk's chair.

KIRK

(TO INTERCOM)

This is the Captain. All hands on alert status.

By now she should be in trouble.

KIRK (cont)

We are about to enter the digestive system.

Uhura, put up the chart.

UHURA

Yes, sir.

INSERT: Chart showing the Enterprise's position.

KIRK'S VOICE

Once we're inside the pear-shape, set a course for the opening to the core. That seems to lead directly to the brain.

INT BRIDGE

KIRK

Ahead slow, Mr. Sulu.

SULU

Yes, sir.

INT CLOUD:

The Enterprise passes from the tunnel into the pear shaped object.

INT. BRIDGE

All are tensely watching the view screen.

INSERT-VIEW SCREEN

The picture changes from the patterned striations of the tunnel to a murky liquid with large chunks of planet and asteroids bobbing around in it.

INT. BRIDGE

KIRK
(Amazed)

What's this?

McCOY
(Calmly)

I would say it's chyme.

Smile at TO

KIRK

Chyme?

McCOY

C-H-Y-M-E. It's a mixture of digestive fluid and food particles found in the human stomach. The fluids break down the *swallowed* food into chyme so that the nutrients can be absorbed by the body. The CLOUD still seems to be digesting pieces of Alondra.

KIRK

What happens now?

McCOY

Well, in our bodies, the chyme then moves into the small intestine, where the process of nutrient absorption begins.

Kirk looks at Spock who is listening *impassively*, and then back to McCoy.

SPOCK

Between the two of you, I'm beginning to think I'm in medical school.

McCOY

If we can look at the chart again . . .

UHURA punches it up.

INSERT: CHART, The Enterprise is now well into the pear-shape.

McCOY'S VOICE

Core... that smaller area in the center --- the
~~the~~ must serve as the area where the CLOUD
 gets ~~the~~ *its* nutrients.

INT. BRIDGE as before

KIRK

How do you think it does that?

McCOY

I don't know. I can only tell you what happens in here (He taps stomach) The Chyme passes into the small intestine which is lined by millions of minute finger-like projections called VILLI. They look like the pile of a carpet.

KIRK

Villi?

McCOY

From the Latin "villus" meaning shaggy hair. These fingers give the small intestine an area of about one hundred square feet, five times that of the human skin.

SPOCK

The better to absorb the nutrients.

McCOY

Exactly, ~~Mr~~ Spock. The villi literally pick the nutrients out of the chyme.

CHEKOV

Captain, we are about to enter the core.

KIRK

Full ahead, Mr. Sulu.

SULU

Full ahead, sir.

(Time lapse
should go here) →

INT: CLOUD

We see the Enterprise moving quietly through the chyme with the chunks of planet. It approaches an iris-like device which suddenly opens. The Enterprise is swept through it into the core along with some of the liquid and several of the chunks, whereupon, the iris immediately closes. The atmosphere in the core is a violent contrast to the muted soft murky color and quiet atmosphere of the area they have just left. It is a place of riotous colors and explosions. It is only partially filled with ~~the~~ chyme. The villi . . . for indeed they are there . . . stand out like huge slender waving pyramids. They seem to attract ~~the~~ chunks of planet and when contact is made there is a tremendous explosion in which the chunk disappears and the villi glows with an incandescent surge of color as it absorbs the mineral nutrient. The result is VAST TURMOIL! The liquid is churning, there are intermittent explosions and the Enterprise is rocking madly.

NOTE: From here on til further notice the Enterprise, inside and out, is in rocking motion.

INT BRIDGE

They all stare at the view screen in ~~cons~~ernation.

INSERT SCREEN

The vast cavern with its villi . . . a chunk of planet is drawn to a villi and explodes. The Villi glows alarmingly.

INT BRIDGE:

As the light of the explosion bathes them.

SPOCK

Careful, Captain. Those villi must be anti-matter. If the Enterprise touches one of them . . .

KIRK

We'll explode just like those chunks of planet. Mr. Chekov, increase the shield force.

CHEKOV

Increasing, sir.

KIRK

Mr. Sulu, try to make your way through to the opening on the other side.

SULU
(Grimly)

Yes, sir.

INT: CLOUD CORE

The Enterprise slowly picks its way through the gigantic villi surrounded by the turmoil. Suddenly it begins to veer towards a villi.

INT: BRIDGE

SULU

I can't hold it sir. We're being pulled off course

KIRK

Increase the shields to maximum.

CHEKOV

Shields to maximum.

INT. CLOUD CORE

This would have been mentioned earlier

Need trouble -- may be using wrong too fast. Front the clock!

INT: CLOUD CORE

We see the Enterprise slowly come to a stop.

INT. BRIDGE

SULU

We've stopped, Captain. I can't move her.

KIRK

Shields to override!

CHEKOV

Override, sir.

There is a tense moment while the ship strains and then it slowly begins moving again. Everyone shows relief.

SCOTTY'S VOICE

BRIDGE!

KIRK

Yes, Scotty?

INT: Enterprise Engine Room.

SCOTT

Captain, how long do you plan to keep the shields on override?

KIRK

That depends on how long it takes to get us through the valley.

SCOTT

The what?

KIRK

Never mind. What's the problem?

What have shields to do with movement of ship?

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SCOTT

Well, the override is puttin' an enormous strain on the anti-matter nacelle. What with the ^{maximum} engine power demands and the shields ^{on} the reserve is fallin' fast.

override,

KIRK

How much time have we got?

SCOTT

At best a couple of hours. I don't like it, Captain. If the indicator goes below two anti-kilos it won't regenerate.

KIRK

Thanks, Scotty. I'll get back to you. Mr. Sulu...

SULU

Sir?

KIRK

What's your estimate of how long it will take to get through this?

SULU

We can't make anything like normal speed because we're fighting the magnetic attraction of the villi. . . .

CHEKOV

The shields are on ~~on~~ maximum override and we're still making very slow headway.

SULU

I would say five to six hours.

KIRK looks at Spock and McCoy.

KIRK

Any suggestions, gentlemen?

McCOY

Couldn't we go back the way we came?

SPOCK

I'm afraid not, Doctor. That opening works in one direction only. We'd be swept back in here ^{along} with the flood of digestive material.

They are all quiet for a moment, then:

McCOY

Well, Jim, we've been in some tight spots, but I never thought I'd end my days as chyme!

KIRK looks at him with a rueful laugh, then...

KIRK

~~(Kirk - rueful laugh)~~

Hold your course, Mr. Sulu. Push ~~XXXX~~ the engines to the maximum. ^We've got an hour or so. Maybe the going will get easier.

INT: CLOUD CORE

The Enterprise creeps through the villi, narrowly avoiding explosions or making contact.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's Log 5372.6. We are making progress through the core but not nearly fast enough. I have given the con to Mr. Spock while I discuss the situation with Engineer Scott.

INT: ENTERPRISE ENGINE ROOM.

Close shot anti-matter power indicator. It shows the level

hovering around two anti-kilos. Shot then opens to ~~XXXX~~ reveal

Kirk & Scott.

SCOTT

Captain, why don't I go out there and . . .

KIRK

Not a chance . . . you wouldn't last
sixty seconds . . . if you touched . . .

SCOTT

How about the tractor beam?

KIRK looks at him.

SCOTT

We can cut a piece out of a villi and transport
it aboard.

KIRK (Skeptically)

Then what? If that piece touches the inside of
the ship or any of us . . .

SCOTT
(eagerly)

I can rig a force field box that'll hold the
piece of villi suspended in the center. Then
I can take it into the anti-matter nacelle.

KIRK

And then?

SCOTT

I'll put it into the regenerating chamber, and
release the field by remote control.

KIRK

The box will disintergrate immediately . . .

SCOTT

Who cares about the box? We'll have power again . . .

*Scott
wins*

*See it happen
Don't talk about
it.*

KIRK

Slowly)

What if your force field doesn't hold
while you're carrying that box inside the
ship?

SCOTT
(With a ~~twinkle~~)

~~then~~ None of us will have any more worries.

KIRK
(After a moment)

Alright, Scotty, it seems like the only way.

INT. CLOUD CORE

as Enterprise makes its way.

CLOSER SHOT AND ZOOM IN AS:

The tractor beam lances out from the ship and excises a two foot
chunk of the nearest villi.

LONGER SHOT:

Now the transporter beam comes from the ship. It focuses on the
chunk of excised villi, which slowly disappears.

INT. ENT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

The force field box sits in the transporter. It is a four foot
cube with an open top. There are handles on two sides. The Beam
focuses in the box and the anti-matter chunk appears. It remains
suspended in the center of the box. The shot opens to see SCOTT,
with a remote control device in his hand and KIRK watching. Two
technicians operate the transport ~~XXXXXX~~ console.

TECHNICIAN: Transport completed, Captain.

~~TECHNICIAN~~
KIRK

What do you think, Scotty? We've got about
ten minutes left.

SCOTT
(Checking the control device)

Looks like the force field is holding . . .

Let's go.

He clips the remote control to his belt, then he and KIRK step into the transporter, pick up the box, one on each side, and start out of the room, moving carefully

INT: ENGINE ROOM

Scott and Kirk, ~~moving with great care~~ *still moving cautiously,* enter and cross to a door marked "LIFT TO ANTI-MATTER NACELLE". A technician operates the door and they enter the elevator.

INT. ANTI-MATTER NACELLE

It ~~is~~ very quiet. Everything in this huge chamber is anti-matter except for maintenance walkways suspended on insulators. The walls are lined with cell-like bins each of which has red, yellow and green indicator lights on the outside. All bins ~~display~~ red lights at this point except one near the elevator door. As Kirk and Scott emerge from the elevator, they pass the one remaining green light which now changes to yellow.

SCOTT
(of the light)

Well, that gives us about two minutes.

As fast as they can they move down a walkway to the center of the nacelle, This is a hazardous journey what with the rocking of the ship, because ~~xxx~~ everything here is anti-matter except for the walkway. If they fall off, they'll be killed. Under the walkway there are tubes leading from the regenerating chamber in the center to the bins which line the walls. The regenerating chamber is like a huge pilot light on a gas stove with bins as burners. Kirk and

*And ship
would explode*

Scott finally arrive at the chamber. There is an insulated instrument panel beside it. Scott trips an intercom switch.

SCOTT

Alright, open it.

INT. ENGINE ROOM CONSOLE

A waiting technician pushes a button and looks tensly at the dials.

INT. A.M. NACELLE

The top of the chamber slides back with aggravating slowness. Finally it is open and they carefully place the box inside.

SCOTT
(to intercom)

Close it!

The cover starts to slide back. They watch to be sure it's closed tightly and then run for the elevator, along the hazardous walkway. When they arrive, Scott takes the force field control from his belt and looks at Kirk.

SCOTT

I hope I'm right about this, Captain. If not
it's been nice knowin' ya.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

KKXX

KIRK smiles and pats Scotty on the shoulder.

INSERT the last yellow light changes to red.

INSERT: Scott's hand operates the remote control.

ANGLE-~~ACROSS~~ REGENERATING CHAMBER.

It gives a ~~XXXX~~ loud cracking noise, ^{and} shudders, ^{then} and violet-colored rays appear from its vents. At the same time there is a growing rumble as we see the violet color flowing through the tubes to the bins. Now, one after another, we see the lights on the bins change from red to yellow to green, a steady reassuring hum fills the nacelle. We see a relieved Scott and Kirk standing at the elevator.

KIRK

Magnificent, Scotty.

SCOTT

(~~Nervously~~) (now in a state of collapse)

Thanks, Captain, I . . . I don't think I want to go through this kind of thing too often.

ACT BREAK

INT: CLOUD CORE

The Enterprise moves along toward the far end of the core.
The villi are much smaller and the turmoil has reduced considerably.
The ship does not rock so much now.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's Log 5372.8. The Enterprise is approaching the top of the core. We shall be glad to get out of here and free of the constant rocking motion. The opening that leads to the brain appears to be a huge tube lined with cable-like columns which splay out on all sides, each cable branching ~~xxx~~ to very fine capillaries which are imbedded in the walls of the core. ~~Dr. McCoy believes these are a combination of nerves and arteries carrying nutrients and stimuli to the brain. ... a sort of spinal column.~~

INT: BRIDGE

SULU

Engine response nearly normal, Captain.

KIRK

Reduce shields, Mr. Chekov.

CHEKOV

Yes, sir.

INSERT: View screen;

The mouth of the tube. The opening is covered by a ~~xxxxx~~ fine octagonal mesh.

INT: BRIDGE

KIRK

We should be able to slip through there. Make
for the ~~XX~~ center, Mr. Sulu.

SULU

Yes, sir.

INT. CLOUD

The Enterprise slips through one of the holes in the mesh and
moves ~~along~~ ^{into} the ~~tunnel~~ ^{column} easily.

NOTE: The rocking motion now stops entirely.

INT. BRIDGE. Everyone is relieved.

KIRK

I'm certainly glad that's over with.

SPOCK

I couldn't agree more, Captain.

McCOY

Another ten minutes and you'd have had a sea-sick
doctor.

Kirk laughs. They look at the view screen,

KIRK

Bones, what's all that?

INSERT: VIEW SCREEN

The column that leads to the CLOUD'S brain is completely unlike the striated tunnel by which the Enterprise got to the digestive system. The thick round cables which line the walls disappear into the distance, but there is no free passage for the Enterprise. An intricate arrangement of gray and white girder like structures lead from the cables on one side to the opposite wall, where they disappear between the cables on that side.

MC COY

I would say it's a kind of spinal
~~XIX~~ column. Those thick cables which
we saw buried in the walls of the core
must be a combination of nerves and arteries.

SPOCK

To carry nutrients and stimuli to the
brain

MC COY

Yes.

KIRK

What about those cross bars?

*Don't believe
Analog computer
for.*

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MC COY

They must be smaller cables which
serve the same function for the other
parts of the CLOUD'S body.

INSERT: VIEW SCREEN

MC COY (cont)

See how they criss-cross? They must
control the opposite sides of the
anatomy as does our nervous system.

INT: BRIDGE

KIRK

~~Amazing!~~ (Then briskly)

Mr. Chekov, lets see our position in
relation to Bezaride and Mantilles.

(CHEKOV

(punching buttons)

Yes, sir.

INSERT: SCREEN

The CLOUD is now perilously close to Bezaride. Mantilles is, of
course, also closer.

INT. BRIDGE

KIRK

Look at that, and its almost time for the daily meal.

SPOCK

It does seem as though Bezaride will be consumed.

KIRK

(Comes to a decision)

Spock, this is getting too close for comfort. I think we've got a clear shot at the brain. Mr.Sulu, prepare to launch a photon torpedo..

SULU

Yes, Captain.

KIRK

Mr. Spock, would you agree that the range is far enough to escape any harmful effect on the ship from the photon blast?

SPOCK

Yes, Captain, I agree . . .

KIRK

Good. Mr.Sulu, prepare to launch.

SULU

Aimed, armed and ready, sir.

SPOCK

~~Spock~~ But, Captain, I do not agree that you should use the torpedo.

No!

KIRK

Why not?

SPOCK

We have established that the CLOUD is alive.
The photon blast will surely kill it.

KIRK

Well, isn't that what we want? We've got to
stop it before it destroys all those people on
Mantilles.

SPOCK

But . . . suppose . . . the ~~cloud~~ CLOUD is an
intelligent being

KIRK

Intelligent?

SPOCK

If so, we are not permitted to destroy it.

McCOY

That's right, Jim. STARFLEET REGULATIONS. We can never
take an intelligent life . . .

KIRK
(Nodding)

Even though it means risking our own.

THERE IS A PAUSE, then.....

KIRK

Belay the torpedo, Mr. Sulu.

SULU
(pressing buttons)

Photon torpedo returned to magazine, sir.

McCOY

Well....what now? How do we find out whether it's intelligent? Do we talk to it?

KIRK

I doubt it . . . this thing couldn't have any speech, could it? Who would it talk to? But, if it has a brain, it can have thoughts. Spock, you said there is considerable synaptic energy being put out. Couldn't some of it be thought, not just reflex action?

SPOCK

It is possible, Captain....

KIRK
(With growing enthusiasm)

Well, ~~phew~~, thoughts are thoughts, regardless of size, shape or origin. Why couldn't you use the Vulcan symbiotic thought process to make contact. Maybe if we can explain the situation

SPOCK

It's certainly worth a try.

Let me analyze it for a moment.
SPOCK sits in his chair thinking.

KIRK
(Quietly to McCoy)

You'd better keep an eye on him.

This process can be a considerable physical strain.

McCOY nods and unobtrusively makes his way to the rail below Spock's console.

SPOCK

This will be difficult, Captain, I can't use the Vulcan Mind Meld because I can't touch the subject. It will be necessary to reach out a considerable distance to join our thoughts.

KIRK

I'm sure you'll do your best. Mr. Sulu....

SULU

Sir?

KIRK

Keep on toward the brain.

Mr. Chekov, put up your chart of the CLOUD and keep our position marked on it constantly.

CHEKOV

Yes, Captain.

~~KIRK~~
(To Spock)

Maybe it will get easier as we get closer.

SPOCK turns his ~~XXXXX~~ chair toward the front of the ship, leans back, closes his eyes, and places both arms, hands and fingers outstretched in front of him. After a moment, his wrists turn slowly from side to side as though the ~~XXXXX~~ spread out fingers

were radar antenna, He continues like this, hands slowly ~~turning~~ ^{rotating} from side to side. The others watch, fascinated, afraid to make a sound. When they do speak, it is in whispers. Suddenly, SPOCK'S hands slowly turn inward and, fingers still spread, move back till they rest on his head. His thumbs are under the ear lobes and his little fingers meet in a line just above the eyebrows. His other fingers form a kind of webbed cap over his head. McCoy looks around at KIRK who motions "Patience". McCOY turns back. Now SPOCK'S lips open slightly and ~~xxx~~ begin to move slowly. It is not recognizable speech of any kind, nor is there any sound.

KIRK
(Quietly)

I think he's got to him.

He goes to UHURA'S console and speaks softly to her.

KIRK

Try to get it on the universal translator.

UHURA
(Baffled, looking at her console)

What mode would I use for a cloud?

KIRK
(Reaching)

I don't know . . . try something very simple, *very elementary*.
Uhura: Captain, I don't have the faintest idea - - - ~~very elementary~~ ^{Kirk}. Wait a minute, Spock said it was

like a bull grazing - try something on the level of a herbivorous animal.

UHURA looks at him doubtfully, then ~~pushes~~ ^{tries} a combination of buttons. Gradually we hear SPOCK'S voice. It comes from a speaker in Uhura's console, not from him, and it is of a strange vocal quality, as if filtered through a maze of complex electronic equipment.

SPOCK'S VOICE

LISten to me
 Listen to me you
 are not alone here there is
 someone else. listen to me. . .
 listen to me listen to me. . .

Suddenly there is an ear shattering croak from the speaker. Uhura quickly adjusts a dial, bringing the volume down. It is the CLOUD. His voice is very deep and slow.

CLOUD'S VOICE
(amazed)

What . . . are . . . you?

SPOCK

I am another being

During the following intercut Spock, the reactions of the others, the speaker from which CLOUD'S voice comes, and the chart with the ship's position.

CLOUD

Where? *there is ~~none~~ ^{nothing} around . . .*

SPOCK

I am inside you?

CLOUD

Inside me? I don't feel anything .

SPOCK

I am very small and there are many of
me. We are in a space ship.

CLOUD

What?

SPOCK

A small box

CLOUD

~~How?~~ *Boy?*

SPOCK

A "thing", that holds us all.

CLOUD
(Unbelieving)

Inside me?

SPOCK

Inside you. . . .

CLOUD
(curiously)

Why?

Kirk & McCoy look at each other. This is going to be a long
process.

SPOCK'

We came to talk to you and you ate us.
You thought we were food.

CLOUD

Why?

SPOCK

What?

CLOUD

Why do you talk to me?

SPOCK

Many of us live on the things you
eat . . planets . . our homes are there.

CLOUD

You live on ~~planets~~ *those things I eat?*

SPOCK

Yes. Now listen, this is important. . .

CLOUD

No. No more ---
~~NO. NO. NO. small things.~~

I do not like this

I do not believe this

It must be a bothersome dream. I will not
listen anymore. . . ~~and I am hungry.~~

SPOCK
(Desperately)

Wait . . . I will tell you ~~something~~ something. . .

CLOUD: No. . . . I am hungry.

SPOCK: Wait . . . come back . . . listen . .

All watch agast as Spock sits up, shaking off the effects of the
contact.

SPOCK

He's gone . . I lost him . .

(then alarmed)

He said he's hungry.....

KIRK
(Nods)

We heard.

There is a sudden lurch, the lights dim, then flicker back on as
the power sources automatically adjust. Spock has ^{*quickly*} consulted his viewer.

SPOCK

SPOCK

Captain, the energy sensors are reaching
a daily peak. The CLOUD has eaten ~~ANXX~~
another planet.

KIRK

Bezaride?

SPOCK

I'm afraid so.

McCOY

Mantilles is next.

KIRK

And probably much sooner. It's ^{elot} closer.
Spock, you've got to make him believe
you. You've got to try to reach him
again.

SPOCK

Yes, Captain.

He sinks back in his chair and puts his hands over his head as
before. There is a pause as they all watch.

SPOCK'S VOICE

Listen to me

Listen to me

Listen to me

SPOCK stops for a moment and then sits up.

KIRK

Well?

SPOCK

I'm sorry Captain. It seems the CLOUD has gone
to sleep.

*Too easy
Have it coming
an unobscured
planet.*

KIRK looks at him astounded and SPOCK shrugs apologetically.



ACT BREAK

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INT: CLOUD ~~THE SPINAL COLUMN~~

~~The "spinal column"~~. The Enterprise is traveling an irregular course through the girder-like cross-bars.

KIRK'S VOICE

Captain's Log 5272.9. We are making our way toward the brain. The going is slow because of the complicated structure we are passing through.

INSERT: VIEW SCREEN

Showing CLOUD in relation to Mantilles.

KIRK'S VOICE (Cont)

Our situation is serious. Although the CLOUD is sleeping after having consumed Bezaride, it is drifting closer and closer to Mantilles.

INT: BRIDGE

Kirk, Spock and McCoy are looking at the screen.

KIRK

I don't see that I have any choice. I'll have to use a photon torpedo before he wakes up.

MC COY

Jim, you ~~XX~~ can't. This thing is definitely an intelligent being. You heard it talking to Spock.

KIRK

Bones, there are over a hundred million people on Mantilles.

McCOY

You'll be court martialled . . . disgraced . . . maybe even imprisoned!

KIRK

That's a chance I'll have to take.

SPOCK

Captain, We still have a few hours. If we can get to the brain itself, I think I can persuade the CLOUD that we actually exist. He doesn't seem to be hostile.

KIRK
(Considering)

No, as a matter of fact, I rather like him. (He thinks a moment, then . . .)

Alright, Spock. Let's ~~XXXX~~ have another go at it. Mr.Sulu, make all possible speed to the brain.

SULU

Yes, Captain.

SPOCK goes to Uhura's station.

SPOCK

We will need an exact detailed map of the brain area . . . the dumbell, I believe the Captain called it.

UHURA
(Smiles)

Yes, sir/

Why?

why?

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SPOCK

I should think we're close enough for
our sensors to function. Will you please
prepare ~~the~~ *the map?*

UHURA

Of course, Mr. Spock.

X She busies herself with a myriad of buttons and dials.

INT: CLOUD SPINAL COLUMN

The Enterprise forges ahead.

INSERT VIEW SCREEN:

The pattern of the column begins to change. The girders become
more numerous and interlaced.

INT: BRIDGE

All are watching the Screen.

MC COY

I think we're coming into the brain.

KIRK

And not a moment too soon. We are periously
close to Mantilles. Mr. Sulu . . .

SULU

Sir?

KIRK

Standby all phasers . . . if Mr. Spock's
attempt doesn't work, we'll have to destroy the
brain with multiple phaser blasts. We can't
use a photon torpedo at this range, we'd be destroyed
ourselves

SULU

Yes, sir.

SPOCK

Captain, I was planning to use the ~~forward~~ ^{forward}
phasers myself..

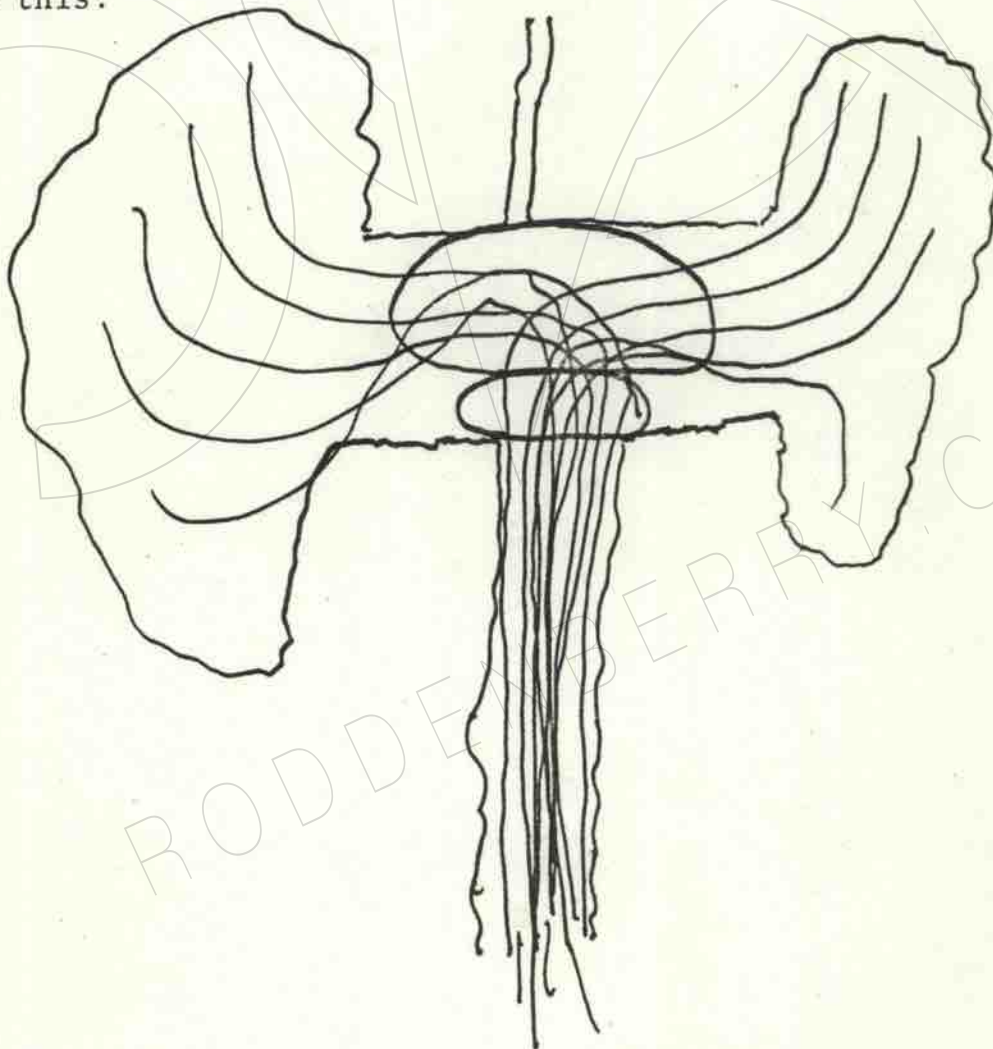
KIRK

For what?

SPOCK

Uhura, please put up the chart of the brain.

Uhura punches up the chart she has made of the brain. It looks
like this:



INSERT CHART ON VIEW SCREEN

A pip ~~XXX~~ of light follows Spock's discription.

INTERCUT with Spock and the others as necessary.

SPOCK

There is your dumbbell, Captain.

KIRK

Yes, I see.

SPOCK

The two elliptical ends are evidently the cerebral cortex or what corresponds to the cortex in ou~~r~~ anatomy. The lower object in the center, just at the top of the spinal column, through which we have been traveling, is what corresponds to our cerebellum. I would assume that its function is somewhat similar to ours. . .

KIRK

You assume?

SPOCK

Yes. The CLOUD is asleep and the major electrical activity is coming from the area I have called the cerebellum. This means, I think, that the physical functions ~~xxx~~ which are pure reflexes and below the level of consciousness, are taking place there.

MC COY

Such as respiration, digestion, heart beat . . .

*To put an
analogy*

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SPOCK

Correct, Doctor. All the functions of the body that go on automatically at all times. Awake or asleep. Remember, however, that our journey has been confined to the digestive system. There must be fully developed circulatory and neural systems in the vast reaches of this body.

MC COY
(Interested)

Probably, with a ~~MM~~ huge heart pump of some kind. . . .

SPOCK

Yes, Doctor. Wouldn't it be fascinating to explore the

KIRK

Gentlemen, time is passing!

SPOCK

Sorry, Captain. Now, just above the cerebellum is another ^{larger} object which seems to ^{function in the same} ~~correspond~~ manner as ~~to~~ our thalamus. As you can see, all the cables, which Dr. McCoy correctly identified as conduits of both nutrients and nerves, pass through the thalamus from both ends of the dumbbell. This thalamus, I believe, is, like ours, the area of the CLOUD'S sensory integration and it is here that we will make our attempt to convince the CLOUD of our reality.

KIRK

And the two ends of the dumbbell are like our cerebral ~~XXX~~ cortex where the major portion of thought and memory takes place.

MC COY

I would think so, Jim.

KIRK

But what is that small passageway coming out of the top?

SPOCK

It was too detailed to be seen on our earlier anatomical chart. . . .

MC COY

It must be some kind of sensory input. It leads directly to the thalamus.

KIRK

You mean . . . an"eye" ?

SPOCK

Something like that, Captain, although I don't believe the CLOUD "sees" as we do. Certainly sensory information of some kind must come in through there.

KIRK

Alright, but what do you plan to do with the forward phasers?

SPOCK

We must position the Enterprise at the top ~~MM~~ of the thalamus. From that point we can reach all the sensory nerves with a burst from the forward phasers.

MCCOY

You'll destroy the nerves!

SPOCK

Not if the phasers are on stun, Doctor.

KIRK

But what will this accomplish?

SPOCK

Captain, you are familiar, I'm sure, with the ancient Chinese art of acupuncture. . .

KIRK

Yes. They insert sharp needles through the skin into the nerves, right Bones?

Mc COY

Correct. The idea was to block the sensations of pain which ran through the nerves. That way they could perform their crude operations painlessly, without anesthetic, or relieve certain painful physical ailments for which they had no cure in those days.

I am always appalled when I remember that they actually used to
~~KIRK~~
~~(-TO SPOCK)~~ *cut people open to operate on them.*

~~SPOCK~~

KIRK

Yes... Spock, what about acupuncture?

SPOCK

My ~~plan~~^{plan} is to use acupuncture in reverse. Instead of preventing pain, I intend to cause pain to the CLOUD by using a series of low intensity stun charges on ~~the~~^{his} receptors for incoming sensory data. This will demonstrate to the CLOUD that we are real.

MC COY

But, Spock

SPOCK

The process should not hurt him ~~XXXX~~ overmuch, Doctor. It will seem like a series of pin pricks and we won't disturb ~~XXX~~ anything in the cerebellum, which might cause real damage without giving him pain.

KIRK

You think the CLOUD can have pain?

SPOCK

That's the gamble, Captain.

Kirk looks at McCoy

MC COY

I think it's brilliant, Jim.

KIRK

Alright, Spock, lets get at it.

ACT BREAK

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ONT. CLOUD brain

The Enterprise is traveling through the cerebellum.

INT. BRIDGE

All are intent on the view screen except ~~Spock~~ ~~who~~ who is in close consultation with Uhura. Sulu is very busy with the helm. Chekov is helping him.

KIRK

I think we're crossing from the cerebellum into the thalamus.

MC COY

Seems like it.

INSERT: VIEW SCREEN

The character of interlaced cables changes. They are no longer grey and white but are various colors which ~~xxx~~ tie into the main cables. These, in turn, after crossing, extend beyond our view into both ends ~~xx~~ of the dumbbell.

INT. BRIDGE

Kirk looks at the tense Sulu.

KIRK

Hold your course, Mr. Sulu.

SULU

Yes, sir.

KIRK

I realize it's difficult with all this twisting and turning, but do your best. We've got to get into position before the ~~WAX~~ CLOUD wakes up.

INT. CLOUD THALAMUS

The Enterprise picks its way through.

INT. BRIDGE.

SULU

I think this is it, Captain.

KIRK

~~SPROCK~~ Spock, have a look.

INSERT: VIEW SCREEN

The Brain chart with the Enterprise's position indicated at the top of the thalamus.

SPOCK

Yes, Captain, we're in position and we are ready. Here is a diagram of the thalamus prepared by Uhura. *why!*

Uhura punches up detailed diagram of the thalamus with its vari-colored cables crossing each other and disappearing off the chart on each side.

SPOCK'S VOICE

And here is an overlay of the targets for the phaser stun blasts,

INSERT: View Screen

An overlay appears with a series of numbers from one to thirty. Some of the later numbers are very close to the same spot.

INT. BRIDGE

SPOCK

Since I will be attempting to communicate with the CLOUD, Captain, it will be up to you to deliver the charges.

KIRK

How will I know what to do?

SPOCK

As you can see, the targets are numbered consecutively. Once I have the CLOUD'S attention, you can fire according to our conversation. Uhura will assist you since she helped me prepare the procedure.

KIRK

Very well.

SPOCK

Begin your firing when you see I am in contact with the CLOUD. The first three blasts should come in quick succession as they are intended to wake him.

KIRK

Right. Turn on the translators, Uhura.

UHURA
(Complying)

Yes, ~~XXX~~ Captain.

Spock moves to his chair and assumes the position we saw him in earlier. He stretches his arms out and goes through the procedure of reaching for the CLOUD'S thoughts. Meanwhile, Kirk, Sulu and Chekov are busy lining up their targets, they refer to the view screen which has the diagram and the overlay.

KIRK

One, two and three from the left. ~~Back~~ forward.

SULU

Yes, sir.

KIRK

Four, five and six from the right ~~back~~ forward.

SULU

Aimed and ready sir.

Kirk now looks to Spock who is in the deep trance. His lips begin the unintelligible movement and his breathing becomes heavier. McCoy has again moved to a position on the rail beneath Spock. Kirk looks to Uhura who nods. Kirk turns to Sulu.

KIRK

Fire left.

SULU

Firing.

INT. CLOUD THALAMUS

The phaser bursts lance out from the ship and hit three of the nerves.

INT. BRIDGE

A groan comes from the speaker on Uhura's console, then a louder groan. They all stand waiting and listening but the groans then subside and ~~nothing~~ nothing else happens. Uhura moves to Kirk.

UHURA

Fire the second sequence, Captain.

Mr. Spock ~~wondered~~ ^{wondered} whether ~~one~~ ^{one} burst would wake him.

KIRK

Fire right.

SULU

Firing!

INSERT SCREEN:

Just a flash as three more bursts stab at the nerves.

INT BRIDGE

A huge roar comes from Uhura's speaker. It ~~is~~ the CLOUD, now fully awake.

CLOUD'S VOICE

OW! What was that?

It hurts!

SPOCK'S VOICE

Listen to me..... listen to me....

CHEKOV

Next targets lined up, Sir.

KIRK

SULU

Aimed and ready, sir.

KIRK

Good.

CLOUD'S VOICE

What woke me?

It hurt!

SPOCK

Listen to me.....

CLOUD

You again? No. You are a dream.

SPOCK

I am real.

CLOUD

NO!

SPOCK

Yes! I will make you hurt again and you will believe me.

CLOUD

A dream ~~xxx~~ cannot hurt.

SPOCK

Watch this then, your one side will hurt.

KIRK

Fire.

SULU

Firing.

CLOUD

Oh! That hurts!

Stop doing 'that!

SPOCK

Am I real?

CLOUD

Stop it!

SPOCK

Still you do not believe? You ~~are~~ other
side will hurt now.

KIRK

Fire!

SULU

Firing!

CHEKOV

Realigning targets.

CLOUD

OW! OW! Stop it!

SPOCK

Now, do you believe I am real?

There is a pause. Everyone waits breathlessly, then.....

CLOUD

NO! It is a dream. I am dreaming the hurts, too.

KIRK

Fire!

SULU

Firing!

CLOUD

OW! OW!

KIRK

Fire!

SULU

Firing!

CHEKOV

Realigning!

CLOUD

NO. Stop. I must wake. I must stop
this dreaming... *this hurting...*

SPOCK

~~(Sweat is now pouring out of him)~~

You are not dreaming. It is real!

CLOUD

NO! NO! NO!

KIRK

FIRE!

SULU

FIRING!

The CLOUD gives a tremendous roar.

KIRK

FIRE!

SULU

FIRING!

The roar continues, increasing.

KIRK

FIRE!

SULU

Firing!

The roar now seems to become laughter.

KIRK

FIRE!

SULU

FIRING!

The CLOUD is indeed laughing loud huge guffaws. Kirk and everyone except Uhura is baffled as the laughing continues.

KIRK
(Puzzled)

SULU
(Also puzzled)

~~FIRE~~
Firing!

The laughter gets more frantic. The ~~KIRK~~ CLOUD is gasping with ~~laughter~~ *for breath.*

KIRK
(*very confused*) (to Uhura)

What are we doing?

UHURA
(Smiling)

We're tickling him, ~~the~~ Captain.

CLOUD

HA! Ha! Ho! Stop. Stop. *I* believe you.

I believe anything... Just stop small thing.

Stop. Tell something to me.

SPOCK

Listen carefully. We are small things.

We live on planets. You eat planets.

We do not want you to eat us.

CLOUD

I don't want to eat you. I might get
bad stomach.

Kirk looks at McCoy who snorts with laughter

CLOUD

Were you on the thing I just ate?

SPOCK

No.

CLOUD

Good.

SPOCK

~~XX~~ But many of us are on the planet near
you. Do not eat it.

CLOUD

Are you sure? It looks good to eat.

SPOCK

Sense it closely.

CLOUD

I will.

KIRK (to Chekov)

Punch it up!

Chekov pushes some buttons.

INSERT: SCREEN

We see the CLOUD drifting very near Mantilles. The CLOUD turns itself around so that a side we have never seen presents itself to the planet. The "eye" which is a huge sensitive grid, scans the planet.

CLOUD
(Excitedly)

Yes, yes, yes, there is something there.
Many somethings. I do not want to eat
that!

INT. BRIDGE

SPOCK

I am glad.

CLOUD

I will look some more for food.

SPOCK

Wait! Listen to me.

CLOUD

No. I must look for food now.

SPOCK

Wait! I have more to tell you . . .

CLOUD

No.

KIRK

Fire!

Sulu is so wrapped up in what is happening that he doesn't hear the ~~xxx~~ command.

KIRK

Sulu!

SULU

~~What?~~

KIRK

Fire!SULU
(Pushing button)

Firing!

CLOUD

OW! That hurts! Don't do that!SPOCK
(firmly)

Then, listen . . .

*There is a pause. then ---*CLOUD
(sullenly)

What do you want?

SPOCK

I want you to go back ~~to~~ where you ~~were~~ were
before. There are ~~too~~ many planets around here
that have us living on them. You would ~~not~~
like them.

CLOUD

No. I would not.

SPOCK

Then will you go?

Again there is a pause while the cloud considers.

CLOUD

Yes, I will go back.

There is vast ~~XXXXXX~~ reaction of relief.

CLOUD *(disappointed)*

I thought this was good feeding here.

SPOCK

It is not good feeding.

CLOUD ~~XXXXXX~~

No. I will go. And I will ~~XXX~~ look closely at things I eat from now on. I do not want to eat any of you.

SPOCK

Yes. That would be bad.

CLOUD
(Agreeing)

Bad for my stomach.

KIRK
(To Sulu)

Quick, lets get out of here through that "eye".

SULU
(busying himself)

Right, Captain.

INT. CLOUD.BRAIN

The Enterprise slips through from the top of the thalamus into the "eye" channel.

INT. BRIDGE:

KIRK

Lets see what it's like out there.

Chekov punches up the forward view~~er~~.

INSERT SCREEN

We see the inside of the ^{"eye"} channel. It ~~is~~ a smooth tube with small cables running lengthwise lining the walls.

INT: BRIDGE

KIRK

Step on it, Mr.Sulu.

~~SULU~~*(adjusting controls)*~~Yes, before it takes us back out there.~~*Yes, Captain.*~~I don't want to spoil any of the meals.~~

EXT: SPACE.

The Enterprise emerges from the CLOUD'S "eye".

INT. BRIDGE:

ON Spock

SPOCK

We are leaving you ~~and~~ now. We wish you good feeding. Eat all the astroids and stars and planets you want as long as they don't have us on them.

CLOUD

No, I won't eat them. And I certainly
won't eat . . . what you call, "stars"
either. They are too hot. They make very
bad stomach.

*Kirk and McCoy collapse in laughter. So does everyone else.
Spock sits up and smiles at them.*
EXT. Space

The CLOUD starts away and the Enterprise zooms gradually toward
us till it passes us and we see the CLOUD diminishing into space,
back into the outer universe ~~where it came~~ from *whence it came.*

FADE OUT

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