



STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"The Best of Both Worlds, Part I"
by Michael Piller

Outline

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ST:TNG Files

STARTREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS", PART II

This is a story about Riker and Picard's relationship. It is a rite of passage all men face -- the son who must discover his own strength and power...and, in order to do so, must vanquish the father upon whom he depends and dearly loves.

TEASE

1. Recap. Riker fires.

2. Picard anticipated and adjusted Borg defenses. Attack fails. We have burned out main navigational deflector. Picard/Locutus makes it clear he has all knowledge of the human Picard, all the technical advantages of the Borg, the most deadly enemy we've ever faced. He is superior and yet distinctly intimate, calling Riker "Number One" as he signs off.

ACT ONE

A-1. Riker Log. The Borg ship has resumed course for earth. They are unable to pursue pending repairs.

1. Bridge. Subspace communication with Admiral Hanson - he gives Riker the field commission of Captain. The Enterprise is his ship now. Hanson is leading starfleet to confront the approaching Borg. They are less than a day from intercept at Wolf 359.

2. Ready room. Riker enters and he sees the desk where Picard has always been seated...we might even play quick shots, lines from Riker's memory that haunt this moment. And he cannot bring himself to sit in that chair. Troi enters. He shares with her his deepest fears that they can never defeat Locutus, not with all the experience Picard now brings to the Borg. But he finds their relationship is not quite the same...he calls her 'Deanna', she calls him 'Captain'. She is his counsel. Their overt intimacy must be suppressed. It's lonely at the top.

3. Corridor/turbolift. Riker encounters Worf who gives a security update...and then expresses his interest in the first officer's vacancy. He feels his expertise as a warrior would serve Riker well in

the coming battle. Riker agrees, will seriously consider it.

4. Engineering. Geordi and Shelby supervising repairs. Riker arrives, gets update. Riker is trying a little too hard to be Picard in his new role. He treats them a little differently. They treat him a little differently. The old camaraderie isn't there. He hasn't found his own style of command yet. Shelby takes Riker aside, pitches for the first officer's position, knowing that she probably has little chance of getting it under Riker but maintaining she's the best qualified. He agrees to consider her. His first decision as Captain. Alone for a beat, we see in his face what it's like to work without the net. He's summoned to the ...

5. Bridge. Data informs Riker upon arrival that Starfleet has engaged the Borg at Wolf 359. Subspace message from Admiral Hanson. Hanson, under fire, says that the fight does not go well... Picard has turned every bit of starfleet knowledge to their advantage...we're attempting to withdraw and regroup...rendezvous with the fleet as soon as... Communications end suddenly. On reactions...

ACT TWO

1. Log. Repairs are complete. Warping to Wolf 359.

2. Observation Lounge. Riker picks Shelby as his first officer, surprising her, generously acknowledging Worf (and others) but saying her experience with the Borg makes her the right one for this job. He's still 'doing' Picard here, Riker solicits ideas from his crew...(one of which is Shelby's idea of separating the saucer section first raised in Part One, but it is observed by Geordi that Picard is well-versed in that plan). Beverly slips and calls Riker Commander. Riker makes a speech about Picard, about the difficult transition, about the coming battle...but he's trying a little too hard and it just doesn't score. He realizes it, dismisses everyone.

3. Ready Room. Riker enters to find Guinan...and she's sitting in Picard's chair...in a scene that cuts to the thematic core, she tells Riker that to prevail, he must leave Picard behind...he says he has, he virtually attempted to destroy him...you tried to destroy a Borg, but Picard the starfleet captain is still here, still in the room with us. You must find your own way, your own style of

command. She rises. The chair is yours. And he sits in it.

4. Bridge. Data calls Riker as they approach battle site. Reactions as they see the first wreckage of starfleet...the worst defeat in military annals since the Spanish Armada was sunk.

ACT THREE

1. Bridge. Data reports that the remaining vessels in the fleet have withdrawn...but the Borg has pursued and engaged them...Riker: take us there, Mr. Crusher.

2. Space shot.

3. Bridge & Space opticals. On screen we see the battle raging. Riker takes the Enterprise in to draw the attention of the Borg...hails Locutus... Riker engages him in conversation, seeking some humanity, some vulnerability...there is none. The battle begins...Riker, taking a cue from Guinan's speech, throws out the book that Picard virtually wrote...initiates what seems to be the wrong move. He puts Shelby's saucer separation plan into effect, knowing that Picard expects it...but is using it as a master diversion... and launching a small away team in a shuttlecraft (the Borg have adjusted to prevent transport). Shelby turns the character arc into respect for Riker. She, Data and Worf take the shuttlecraft into the Borg ship.

6. Borg ship. Shelby, Data and Worf make their way on board...

7. Intercutting: the battle bridge...as Riker rises to the occasion...anticipates Picard's moves, counters them brilliantly...

8. Borg ship. The away team snatches Picard...sedate him...fire fights their way to the shuttlecraft and escape.

ACT FOUR

1. Battle bridge. After a beat, the Borg resume their path to earth...Riker orders the saucer section reconnected...to pursue...

2. Space. We renew our pursuit.

3. Sickbay. Riker & Beverly. Picard regains consciousness. He is still tied into the Borg...still Locutus. It is of little concern to the Borg that Picard has been taken...he is their spokesman, he will continue to function aboard the enemy flagship as the Borg continue with their primary mission -- to strike at the heart of the Federation and force unconditional surrender with no further diversion. Picard attempts to reach out from the human side, he is drawn painfully back into Locutus. Beverly sedates him again.

4. Observation Lounge. Riker, in full command now, must decide again whether or not to terminate Picard...yes, he has all the knowledge of starfleet and earth defenses...but he also now has intimate knowledge of the Borg. We need somehow to reach the human side of Picard if we have any chance at all to defeat them...Beverly says she has no medical knowledge that would enable her to separate the man from the machine. The connection to the Borg is extraordinarily complicated...some life-sustaining component (tech) is included in the mass interaction...in other words, to remove the implants would be fatal to Picard. Bottom line: there is no way to access the human. Data leans forward -- then perhaps I can access the Borg side of him. On reactions...

ACT FIVE

A-1. Log. The Borg are approaching earth. Data's our last chance.

1. Matte shot: Paris skyline, night, still dominated by the Eiffel Tower. The bright lights of the Borg ship move into view.

2. Second unit, night -- a mother holds a frightened child as they look to the night sky... outside their home.

3. Space - The Enterprise.

4. Sickbay. Riker observes as Data connects himself into the Borg circuitry. He suggests to Riker that security stand by to neutralize him in case he becomes lost to the Borg in the process. Obviously there is great danger to Data.

5. The Borg Ship. Sends its cutting laser down to earth.

6. Sickbay. The connection is made...Data who is conscious reports that he has direct access to the Borg through Picard...and suddenly he begins to speak to the unconscious Picard, he has reached the humanity, "Yes, Captain...I understand..." and Picard tells him what he must do...Data adjusts his program and as he does, Picard shows greater and greater discomfort...he's using Picard as a conduit directly into the Borg ship to the (tech?), life force connection...and as he breaks it...

7. The Borg ship...the Borg all stop dead in their tracks. Circuitry begins to smoke. Then suddenly it explodes.

8. Matte shot. Paris. Night. As the explosion appears on earth.

9. Sickbay. Data reports the Borg ship is destroyed. Picard's eyes open...his identity returned. Beverly will now be able to use conventional medicine to remove the metal. There is a quiet moment between Picard and Riker. Do you remember anything?, asks Riker. Nothing at all, says Picard, except some brilliant strategy by a former first officer of mine.

10. Ready Room. Picard is back to normal, (or bandaged face?) though weak. Admiral Hanson has returned, having escaping the destruction of his ship, to offer Riker his choice of any starfleet assignment. Riker chooses the one he already has...comfortable with himself, happy where he is. The ambition of my youth, Riker tells the departing Shelby, has been replaced with a center to my life, and that center, is the Enterprise and her crew. It's where I want to be.

(Note: I can't help feeling that after what Picard has been through that being "back to normal" is simplistic and incredible especially for a show that takes such a realistic look at humanity and life. I must reiterate my feeling that there is a hell of an episode to be explored here. Why not use the next episode to explore Picard's recovery -- bandaged, his face is healing, but there is more than just physical healing to be done here...it is uncertain if he can ever fully recover from the nightmares of his captivity to resume command...and as the Enterprise orbits earth undergoing repairs, Picard returns to his roots to find himself. There is an interesting echo of the Beirut hostages returning home to be found here. Good episode!)