STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

"Too Short A Season"

by

MICHAEL MICHAELIAN

FIRST DRAFT
APRIL 13, 1987
"TOO SHORT A SEASON"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - STARSHIP

The U.S.S. ENTERPRISE NCC 1701-D is orbiting a verdant planet with large bodies of water.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, Stardate 41454.5. The Enterprise has been in orbit around the vacation planet of New Yelva. We are here to take on former starship Capt. Paul Jameson and his wife. I have been notified by Starfleet Command that the captain is carrying special sealed orders -- to be delivered personally to me.

INT. BRIDGE - CLOSE ON BLACK SCREEN

The viewing screen comes to life with a REPLAY of a crude BLACK AND WHITE VIDEO TRANSMISSION of the MORDANITE COUNCIL CHAMBERS as a Federation TRADE MISSION is violently taken hostage in the midst of negotiations with the Mordanite Council. (Note: the Mordanites have Mexican feature but light hair.)

PICARD (V.O.)
While awaiting Capt. Jameson's arrival, a Federation Trade Mission to Mordan IV has been taken hostage. My orders are to proceed to Mordan and 'liberate' our people.

There is NO SOUND on the VIDEO, and it abruptly CUTS OUT in the middle of the action. As the screen goes BLACK again:

ANGLE WIDENS

TO REVEAL that PICARD, RIKER, TASHA, DATA, and GEORDI have been watching the replay.

PICARD
(to Tasha)
That's it?

TASHA
That's everything Starfleet received from the Mordanites, Captain.
PICARD
No ransom demands?

TASHA
None yet, sir.

PICARD
(knowingly)
There will be -- you can
bet on it.
(to Riker)
Number One, I want an away
team prepared to go in if we
have to.

RIKER
We're already preparing.

Picard nods approval, pleased Riker is ahead of the situation.
Data exchanges a troubled look with Geordi.

DATA
Captain, inquiry -- since this
kind of incident has occurred
before on Mordan IV...

GEORDI
Why do we keep sending trade
missions back?

PICARD
That's classified at this time,
gentlemen.

They are interrupted as a VOICE calls "Capt. Picard to the
Transporter Room."

RIKER
Capt. Jameson?

PICARD
(nods)
Number One, how would you like
to meet a Starfleet legend?

RIKER
(smiles)
I thought we were working for
one, sir.

PICARD
I'm talking about a real legend.
TASHA
(also smiling)
So are we, Captain.

On reactions:

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

The TRANSPORTER CHIEF is at the console when Picard and Riker enter.

TRANS. CHIEF
Ready, Captain.

PICARD
Beam them aboard, Chief.

The chief does, and after the proper OPTICAL EFFECTS, CAPT. PAUL JAMESON and his wife, ANNE, appear on the platform.

Tanned and still handsome in his early sixties with a shock of white hair, Jameson is the epitome of distinguished. His manner is relaxed but energetic. Anne is beautiful at fifty with a deep, quiet strength, which seems to compliment his perfectly.

Picard moves forward to greet them, shaking hands warmly.

PICARD
It's good to see you again, Capt. Jameson. Mrs. Jameson, welcome aboard -- how was the vacation?

ANNE
(forcing a smile)
Very pleasant, thank you, Capt. Picard.

Jameson would like to dispense with the formalities.

JAMESON
I believe the last time we saw each other was ten years ago, Jean-Luc.

PICARD
(nods)
You were receiving another medal -- this one for breaking up the Relosian Conspiracy and adding the Relos System to the Federation. A tidy piece of work, Paul.
Riker and the transporter room crew are both amused and impressed. They're not used to seeing their "hero" engaged in hero worship. Jameson grins. He's the kind of man who loves to poke fun at his own image.

JAMESON

Yes, I was a hell of a starship captain -- what can I say?

PICARD

(also grinning)
I'll say you were indeed.

JAMESON

You know, Jean-Luc, I believe we could have been good friends if our paths had crossed more often.

PICARD

Well, I've always regretted we didn't have the opportunity to serve together.

Jameson exchanges a look with Anne. Hers is decidedly dark.

JAMESON

Could I see you in private, Jean-Luc?

(holds up sealed envelope)
My orders. Oh, and they concern Commdr. Riker as well.

As CAMERA PUSHES IN CLOSE ON the envelope in Jameson's hand:

MATCH CUT TO:

THE ENVELOPE

Opened, in Picard's hand. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL that we are in:

INT. CAPT'S OFFICE

Picard quickly peruses the orders. Jameson waits patiently. Riker waits with impatient curiosity. Finally, Picard looks up at Jameson, incredulous.

PICARD

(formal again)
Are you serious about this, Captain?
JAMESON
Completely... and it's Commander now.

RIKER
(confused)
Commander? But that's a step back in rank...

PICARD
(to Riker)
It seems my 'regrets' were premature. Captain... Commander Jameson has been appointed the new Executive Officer of the Enterprise -- effective immediately.

On Riker's stunned reaction:

FADE OUT:

END TEASER
SHORT/SEASON

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE

As it travels at warp speed through space.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's Log, Stardate 41454.5.
Our destination is now Mordan IV
with a mission to rescue our hostages
with a new Executive Officer
commanding the away team.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

Jameson, Picard and Riker are still in the midst of
discussing the sealed orders.

JAMESON
I thought you'd be pleased,
Commdr. Riker. You have a
sterling service record. I
personally recommended you
for your first command --
the U.S.S. Falcon.

Riker is not pleased and too upset to cover very well.

RIKER
Meaning no disrespect, Commdr.
Jameson... but you're a man of
at least...

He hesitates.

JAMESON
(smiles)
Sixty -- give or take a few years.
That doesn't mean I'm close to
death, Commander.

RIKER
It's not that, sir. It's just
that ship's exec officer is a...
well, a younger man's job.

JAMESON
(good-naturedly)
I had a physical prior to our
vacation on New Velva. I'm in
top shape.
Picard is also deeply disturbed but can cover it much better than Riker.

PICARD
After all you've been through, Paul, and all you've done -- a lifetime of service -- why start all over again at a cut in rank?

RIKER
(ironically)
And a cut in pay.

JAMESON
(without hesitation)
I accept them both. I still have twenty good years of service left in me -- service in space, not teaching at the Academy.
(pause)
I have to admit Starfleet was resistant at first. But they owe me -- so I called in the markers.

PICARD
Be honest with me, Paul -- can you serve under another captain?

JAMESON
If that captain is you, Jean-Luc. You're the man I respect most in all of Starfleet.

PICARD
(not convinced)
I appreciate your saying that, but...

JAMESON
But you don't really believe me. I don't blame you. This must seem pretty crazy to both you gentlemen.
(then, genuinely)
But my mind has been made up for some time. If you will allow me, I have a lot to give to the Enterprise.

Picard smiles, knowing he has no choice.
PICARD
Of course.

JAMESON
Believe me, the last thing I want to do is cause dissension on your ship, Jean-Luc.

PICARD
There will be no dissension.

JAMESON
Or any enmity with you. Commdr. Riker.

RIKER
None taken, sir.

JAMESON
Good. (then, to Picard) If I may go now, I'd like to see to my wife.

PICARD
Go ahead, Paul... (then) And welcome to the Enterprise, Commander.

Jameson smiles and snaps a quick salute to Picard. Then he exits.

ANGLE ON PICARD/RIKER

RIKER
I know he's the great Capt. Paul Jameson. I know Starfleet owes him. I know the Federation owes him. I know the whole damn galaxy owes him... but why do they owe him 'me'?

PICARD
I'm sure they don't look at it quite that way, William. Another exec officer would jump through his hind end to get his own command.
RIKER
Not this exec officer, Captain. I don't mean to sound ungrateful, but the U.S.S. Falcon is an old tub compared to this. I'd prefer to stay on the Enterprise.
(smiles)
I figure it'll take at least another ten years before I've learned all your tricks.

PICARD
You do, huh?

RIKER
I figure if a man wants to be a 'hell of a starship captain' he better study with a hell of a starship captain.

PICARD
(smiles, too)
What can I say?

RIKER
(lightly)
That I'm even wiser and more mature that you previously suspected?

PICARD
(laughs)
You are, Number One.
(then, seriously)
And the best exec officer I've ever had.

RIKER
(moved)
Thanks, Captain.

There is a quiet moment of friendship between them.

RIKER
(continuing)
How do you think you'll do with a 'legend' for an exec officer?

PICARD
(having his doubts)
I might just learn a few new 'tricks' myself.
Another quiet moment, each into his own thoughts.

RIKER
(finally)
Captain -- could I have permission to accompany the away team on Mordan IV? Maybe I could be of some use while I wait for my transfer.

PICARD
I'd be grateful, Number One. After all, they've been your team.

Riker nods and starts out.

PICARD
(continuing)
And, Number One?

Rikers turns back.

PICARD
(continuing)
I believe you'll make a hell of a starship captain -- with or without my tricks.

RIKER
(smiles)
Thanks again, Captain.

He exits. As Picard watches him go, a troubled expression over the whole Jameson business crosses his brow.

CUT TO:

INT. THE JAMESON'S QUARTERS
Paul and Anne are both unpacking and setting up "house". Usually jovial about sharing in the "housework", he seems very preoccupied with his own thoughts.

She also seems preoccupied as she begins to put up his many citations and medals. He glances over at them and frowns.

JAMESON
(snapping)
Do we have to look at those ancient relics?

He is immediately remorseful.

JAMESON
Sorry.
She doesn't respond immediately. They continue working. She glances at him as he look at himself in the mirror. She intuitively feels she's losing her man but doesn't know why or how to stop it.

**ANNE**
(finally)
I need to talk to you, Paul, but I find that very difficult lately.

**JAMESON**
(surprised)
Why? You know you can ask me anything.

**ANNE**
Ordinarily. But you've been so different the last few months.

**JAMESON**
My temper has been a bit short-fused, hasn't it?

**ANNE**
It's not just that. It's the sleepless nights, the worry about every ache and pain, the self-pity...

**JAMESON**
(trying to joke about it)
Why should you be upset, Anne? Just because your husband is going through a normal, healthy male mid-life crisis, driving you nuts as he becomes obsessed with the most important decision of his life.

**ANNE**
'Our' lives.
(pause)
I'm afraid, Paul. I feel you're turning away from me.

**JAMESON**
You're still angry because I needed some time by myself on New Yelva, that's all.

**ANNE**
You were gone for two weeks.

He offers no immediate answer.
ANNE
(continuing)
An exotic planet with exotic women -- who can blame you?

JAMESON
(shakes his head)
Why is it every time a husband wants some time for himself, his wife thinks it's about another woman?

ANNE
Because with most husbands, it is.

JAMESON
(with real affection)
Anne, after thirty years with a great lady, other women don't interest me.
(pause)
Look, I'm sorry -- I know you were looking forward to a peaceful retirement at the Academy. But I'm not like other men. That would have been the same as death for me.

ANNE
(quietly)
I know. I accepted your nature when I married you. Maybe -- if I'm honest with myself -- that's what I really love about you. So I'll see it through -- all over the galaxy. I just don't want you to turn away from me now -- not after thirty years of togetherness.

He smiles, suddenly bubbling with youthful enthusiasm.

JAMESON
I won't, Anne. For the first time, we can serve together on the same ship. This new Enterprise is the future of space exploration, and we're going to part of it -- with schools you can teach in...

He's been glancing in the mirror again. His hand unconsciously passes over a prominent scar on the back of his neck, but he doesn't see what he's looking for in the mirror. He frowns.
ANNE
(lightly)
You've been spending a lot of
time in front of the mirror
the last few days.

JAMESON
I guess I'm getting vain in
my 'old age'.

He turns to her, intending to tell her a secret he's been
carrying with him since New Velva.

JAMESON
There's something else, Anne.
Something I want you to know...

A long pause. He can't tell her -- yet.

JAMESON
(smiles warmly)
I want you to know that I still
love you very much -- that I'll
always love you...

She's in his arms. They embrace.

INT. HOLODECK

It is bare at the moment. Riker has assembled his away
team of Data, Geordi, and Tasha. (Note: all are in the
appropriate away dress and carry the proper arms for the
mission.) There is an air of melancholy and upset over
Riker's leaving them.

RIKER
(to the computer)
Show me the Council Chambers
of Mordan IV.

COMPUTER
Yes, sir.

A SIMULATION of those COUNCIL CHAMBERS (which we recognize
from the earlier video transmission) appears on the holodeck.
It is ancient-looking, torch-lit, and cave-like, but there
are touches of modern technology such as TV cameras, screens,
and control panels of some kind.

RIKER
The last time hostages were
taken on Mordan IV no armed
intervention was necessary.
TASHA
The starship simply orbited and beamed them back up.

RIKER
Right. But in case we can't simply 'grab and run', my plan becomes operable. Remember, Data, you're first -- on my signal...

DATA
No need to signal, Commander. I'll know.

GEORDI
(emotionally)
Me, too.

TASHA
Make it three for the road, sir.

Riker smiles and nods, sincerely appreciating their comraderie.

RIKER
(emotional himself)
Okay, team. Okay...
(then)
Now let's get to work.

Tasha is in especially upset over Riker's transfer.

TASHA
Sir? May I say something before we begin?

RIKER
Go ahead, Tasha.

TASHA
We don't think it's fair -- your being replaced without a voice in the decision.

JAMESON'S VOICE
I agree.

Jameson has just entered and been observing. Their ease with each other is replaced with a formal stiffness at his presence.
JAMESON
I know how you guys must feel. I've been there myself more than once. You're finally working well together, and you like each other. Then in waltzes a hot shot former space jockey, and Number One is yesterday's news.

(pause, then quietly)
Well, this former space jockey just might not be as confident as you might think. It's been twenty-five years since I was a 'number one'.

(pause)
What I'm trying to say is -- well, I'm asking for your help.

Riker smiles as he reaches out and shakes Jameson's hand.

RIKER
This future hot shot space jockey says you've got it, sir.

GEORDI
This one, too, Commander.

He shakes Jameson's hand. And as Riker introduces the other two, they add their voices and hand shakes -- even Tasha. CAMERA PUSHES BACK PAST our people to an IMAGE of the COUNCIL CHAMBERS. The COLOR of the IMAGE CROSSFADED TO:

A BLACK AND WHITE IMAGE

of the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, which is actually another VIDEO TRANSMISSION from MORDAN IV on the SCREEN on the bridge.

As a MAN of 30, dressed in the ceremonial robes of a Mordanite king, steps into the IMAGE:

ANGLE WIDENS

TO REVEAL Picard, Jameson, Riker and the away team watching the transmission. The SOUND like the VIDEO is crude.

MORDANITE MAN
I am Zepec, ruler of all the tribes of Mordan. These are our terms. We know the power of your starship. Do not try to use it: your people will die as we will die, and that would be very unpleasant for all. We will trade your people for the power of your starship.

(MORE)
MORDANITE MAN (CONT)
(after a pause)
We also know that Capt. Paul
Jameson is on your vessel.
Like your starship, we know
that he is powerful; we know
that he is great; but we do
not fear him. We will talk
only with the great Jameson.

The TRANSMISSION is CUT OFF abruptly again. As Picard,
Jameson and the others react to it, we:

END ACT ONE

FADE OUT:
SHORT/SEASON

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE

As it travels at warp speed through space.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, Stardate 41454.7.
We are now three days from
Mordan IV. The crew seems to
have accepted Paul Jameson, but
the prospect of a famous starship
captain as Executive Officer of
the Enterprise still leaves me
uneasy.

INT. HOLODECK

The simulation of the Council Chambers of Mordan remains on
the holodeck. Data, Geordi, Tasha and Riker have gathered
around Jameson. Riker stays in the background. It's Jameson's
team now. Data is relating information to the team.

DATA
Zepec was twenty-three when
he came to power. In a few
short years, he has conquered
and unified the rest of the
Mordanite tribes. Although
young, he is considered a very
crafty and dangerous adversary.

TASHA
(to Jameson)
None of that explains how he
knew you were aboard, sir.

GEORDI
Obviously, the captain's
reputation proceeds him.

JAMESON
(concerned)
We don't know that, Geordi.
(pause)
I've got a hunch. Apparently
the Ferengi have been trying to
trade with the Mordanites, too --
with the same results.
(smiles)
It seems someone, us or them, is
always hostage on Mordan IV.
It's almost a game with Zepec --
making monkeys of the powers that be.
RIKER
(adding)
But a game that's turned deadly:
we know some Ferengi hostages
were killed a year ago.

JAMESON
Our job is to make sure the
same doesn't happen to our
people.

GEORDI
I know it's classified, sir,
but I wish we knew why everyone's
so interested in this planet.

JAMESON
It's now de-classified -- at least
for my team -- there are advantages
to having pull with Starfleet.
(pause)
This whole thing is about Zalcon-
2000, still experimental but thought
to be the most powerful anti-viral
drug in the galaxy. And it comes from
only one source: the Tenac tree.

DATA
And the Tenac tree is indigenous
to only one planet -- Mordan IV.

JAMESON
So far, it can't be cultivated
anywhere else, nor have we been
able to duplicate it synthetically.

There is definitely something different about Jameson, some-
thing that is changing. If one looked carefully, they
would see that darker hairs have cropped up among the white.
His manner is more aggressive, more energetic. (Note: in
actuality, he is now at age 50.)

JAMESON
(turning to Riker)
I want to commend you on your
rescue plan, Commander. I
have nothing to add to it
now, but I want to take our
training a step further.
(to the computer)
Show me the Endurance Test
Course on Starbase 420.
COMPUTER
Which one, sir? Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced?

JAMESON
(smiles)
Advanced will do.

A SIMULATION of the advanced ENDURANCE TEST COURSE replaces the COUNCIL CHAMBERS simulation. The course is a series of obstacles combining running, jumping, hurling, climbing, etc. -- all with a 24 Century look.

JAMESON
(proudly)
Designed this myself thirty years ago, adapted from old Marine Corp training facilities.
(then)
Our mission is full of surprises. This course is programmed to change obstacles on you -- suddenly and without warning. And I won't have unfair advantage because I don't know the combinations. It's set up for two participants to race each other.
(to Riker, challenging)
How about it, Commander? You against the old man?

Riker doesn't want to go up against Jameson and embarrass the "old man".

RIKER
I'd rather not, sir.

JAMESON
(goading him like a kid)
I'll give you a head start. I feel like a new man. C'mon, Commander... I dare you.

Riker exchanges a look with the others, then shrugs.

ANGLE ON RIKER/JAMESON

As they race through the course and Jameson decisively beats Riker at the endurance game. Jameson chuckles in triumph.
JAMESON
They used to say 'youth is wasted on the young'...

He sees they're staring at him. He drops the levity.

JAMESON
Hey, I'm not the one who said it, okay, guys?
(then, barking an order)
Geordi, Data -- you're next!
(off their hesitation)
Now, gentlemen!

They start on the course.

JAMESON
(grinning)
Then I'll take on Tasha.

Tasha and Riker exchange a concerned look as Jameson eggs Geordi and Data on.

CUT TO:
INT. THE JAMESON'S QUARTERS

CAMERA STARTS ON the rows of citations and medals, then PANS TO:

THE BED

It is late at night. Jameson is just about asleep in his wife's arms. Her eyes, however, are wide open. They've just had an incredible love making session, which has resulted in mixed feelings for Anne: she loved his performance but is also unsettled by it. He stirs, opens his eyes, sees the look on her face.

JAMESON
(softly)
What's the matter, Anne?

ANNE
I thought I knew everything about you, Paul.

JAMESON
(smiles)
You do.

ANNE
You've never made love to me like that before.
(pauses, remembering)
It was like you were a different man.
Jameson shrugs as he rolls over to go to sleep.

JAMESON
I guess I'm feeling creative --
you know, the new job an' all.
(then)
Goodnight, sweetheart.

He closes his eyes. She doesn't.

ANNE
(quietly)
Like a different man.

JAMESON
(barely audible)
People change... nothing stays
the same.

ANNE
(sadly)
Somehow I thought we'd always
be.

JAMESON
What?

ANNE
The same.

His eyes slowly open. As he thinks about it, he's beginning
to feel amorous again.

JAMESON
(gently)
Think of me as a different
person. I have changed, Anne.
(running back to her)
I want to do things for you
I never could do before. I
want to please you like I
never have before.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately. She
responds, but when her hand touches the back of his neck,
her eyes open, surprised. He opens his eyes. She's staring
at the back of his neck.

JAMESON
Now what's the matter?

ANN
Paul... that scar you got ten
years ago -- it's gone!
His hand instantly reaches to the back of his neck. Nothing there!

ANNE
And your hair -- have you been coloring it?

JAMESON
(as he rushes to the mirror)
Of course not.

ANNE
It's getting darker...

She watches him as he checks himself out in the mirror. He's very pleased with what he sees.

JAMESON
(intensely)
It's working! By God, it's working!

ANNE
(totally confused)
What's working?

INT. PICARD'S QUARTERS

Still late at night. An incredulous Picard stares at a buoyant Jameson, who's requested this meeting with him.

PICARD
(French accent ascending)
The New Yelvan Rejuvenation Treatment? That quack procedure where their 'witch doctors' drain your blood?

JAMESON
I had to try it, Jean-Luc. I had to.

Picard swears under his breath in French (I think; at any rate, he swears under his breath).

JAMESON
Look, I'll admit I was in a kind of crazy state of mind, but every man goes through it around my age.
PICARD
Every man does not go through the New Yelvan Rejuvenation treatment!
(then)
Why didn't you tell me when you came aboard?

JAMESON
I didn't know if it was working when I came aboard.

PICARD
You should have told Starfleet.

JAMESON
I hadn't done it when I approached Starfleet.
(pause)
I know you're thinking I am crazy, but maybe in the future every Starfleet officer will be able to do this.

PICARD
(shaking his head)
I find this absolutely incredible. I'm hearing... but not believing.

A long pause. Then Jameson decides to try another approach.

JAMESON
How do you feel about butterscotch mints, Jean-Luc?

PICARD
(stares)
What?

JAMESON
(smiles)
Personally, I happen to love butterscotch mints.

PICARD
Now there's an important value judgement considering your situation.

JAMESON
If I had a butterscotch mint that would make you a year younger -- wouldn't you pop it into your mouth real quick?

Picard doesn't answer.
JAMESON
(boyishly goading)
C'mon, Jean-Luc... I'll bet you would... wouldn't you?

PICARD
(shrugs)
I don't know -- maybe I would.

JAMESON
Well, the only difference is that I've popped twenty of those mints.

PICARD
(frowns)
That's a hell of a difference, Paul.
(then)
Are you saying you've taken twenty years off your life with this treatment?

JAMESON
If it keeps working, that's maximum -- as far as I know.

PICARD
As far as you know?

JAMESON
Most people die from it. I survived. That was the first good sign.

PICARD
(shakes his again, still disbelieving)
Incredible.

JAMESON
Is it really? I haven't done any more than every human dreams of -- to live a little longer, to do a little more -- and to do it better the second time. If this works, I become unique in Starfleet. All my experience, my knowledge -- in a forty year old body. Think of the possibilities.

PICARD
I will, Paul... think on it.

CUT TO:
INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Picard, Beverly Crusher, Troi, Tasha, and Riker are seated around the conference table. Beverly is in the middle of her report on Jameson and the treatment.

BEVERLY
The New Yelvan Rejuvenation Treatment is allegedly accomplished with the insertion of tubes in both the aorta and subclavical vein -- simultaneously draining the blood and recycling "rejuvenated" blood back into the body.

PICARD
This is definitely a real procedure?

BEVERLY
(nods)
We've known about it for some time, but we've never had proof it actually works... until Capt. Jameson.

RIKER
Then it is working? He's getting younger?

BEVERLY
As far as we can tell.

RIKER
(shakes his head)
Incredible.

PICARD
That's what I said.

TASHA
If it actually works, why isn't everyone at sixty doing it?

BEVERLY
One, it's outside the realm of our medicine and it's safeguards; two, it's extremely painful and extremely dangerous. The survival rate is speculated at only two in ten. Capt. Jameson is one of the lucky ones.
PICARD
What about your examination? Is he fit?

BEVERLY
(nods)
He's one hundred percent healthy. The only thing we can detect that's different about Paul Jameson is that he has components of alien blood from a transfusion he received years ago on a mission. It might account for his surviving this rejuvenation treatment.

PICARD
But not a danger sign?

BEVERLY
Not at this time. He's been functioning perfectly well for years with partial alien blood. According to our findings, you'll probably wind up with a slightly younger but much more alert man, Captain.

TROI
And psychologically interesting as well. He's emotionally stable and wise but has an extremely youthful enthusiasm -- like a man reborn. You might wind up with quite an officer, Captain.

PICARD
(after considering for a moment)
I'm going to leave Cmmdr. Jameson in his position, but, one -- I want Troi on the away team if we have to go in.

(to Troi)
If you sense anything strange about Jameson's emotional behavior, report to me immediately.

TROI
Yes, sir.

PICARD
And, two -- I'm glad you're still on that team, Number One!

CUT TO:
EXT. SPACE - THE ENTERPRISE

As the starship orbits the planet of Mordan IV.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, Stardate 41455.3.
The Enterprise is now in orbit around Mordan IV. We are prepared
to do everything necessary to secure the release of the
hostage Trade Mission.

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

The Transporter Chief and his crew are at their posts around
the console. Jameson, Riker, Data, Geordi, Tasha, and now,
Troi, are in their away team gear, ready to beam down.

JAMESON
Computer, give us the co-ordinates
of the Trade Mission.

COMPUTER
Negative, sir -- sensors do not
detect the presence of the
Trade Mission on the planet's
surface.

RIKER
Have you scanned the Council
Chambers?

COMPUTER
Of course, sir, but sensors have
been unable to penetrate the
area around the Council Chambers.

RIKER
That's impossible.

COMPUTER
I'm afraid it is possible, sir.

JAMESON
Cause?

COMPUTER
Unknown at this time, sir.

Jameson looks a bit younger now (actually he's at 45) and
displays a bit of youthful impatience as Picard enters.
JAMESON
What the hell is blocking the
damn sensors, Jean-Luc?

PICARD
(not noting the impatient tone)
We're working on it, Paul.
Meanwhile, I have no choice
but to beam you down to the
co-ordinates the Mordanites
have transmitted. At the
first sign of a trap, we'll
beam you back.

Jameson steps onto the platform energetically.

JAMESON
Great. Let's go.

Picard exchanges a warning look with Troi as the rest of
away team follows Jameson to the platform.

PICARD
Energize.

The Transporter Chief does, and after the proper OPTICAL
EFFECTS, the away team is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORDAN IV - DAY

OPTICAL EFFECTS as Jameson, Riker, Data, Geordi, Troi and
Tasha appear on the surface, finding themselves in a barren
desert-like terrain. On a nearby hill is a clump of
scrubby shrubs with scarlet leaves.

DATA
(pointing them out)
Those are Tenac trees.

GEORDI
Not much of tree for all
the fuss over them.

Suddenly, as if materializing out of the terrain, the team
finds itself surrounded by 12 MORDANITE WARRIORS with Mexican
features but red hair fairly flaming in the bright sunlight,
their firearms pointed at our people.

ZEPEC himself now appears and walks directly to Jameson.
The Mordanite ruler has a fierce expression on his face.

ZEPEC
I am Zepec.
Jameson stays very calm as he mutually spars with Zepec.

JAMESON
I don't think so. The Zepec
I've heard of would not need
an army to greet his guests.

ZEPEC
He must be a very great prince,
that man.

JAMESON
He wouldn't welcome visitors
with threats.

ZEPEC
He must be a very well mannered
prince.

JAMESON
He must be.
(then)
I am Jameson.

Zepec smiles for the first time as he gestures openly.

ZEPEC
We are honored by the presence
of the great Capt. Jameson on
our poor planet.
(to a warrior)
Tell the Council that we are
coming!

The warrior runs ahead. Zepec turns abruptly and begins
walking toward the hills. The away team, trailed by the
warriors, follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE ENTRANCE - DAY

It is guarded by a PAIR of warriors. SURVEILLANCE DEVICES
record the event as, without stopping for a beat, Zepec
walks in. The away team follows. The warriors of the
greeting party stay outside.

IN A PASSAGEWAY

Cave-like, lit by torches, but equipped with CAMERAS, Zepec
leads the away team to:
INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

As we've seen it on the holodeck. SIX MEN in ceremonial robes wait. They're all younger, around thirty like Zepec. In the corner, away from the Council members, is an old man, who is in reality a SHUNNED PRIEST.

Zepec enters and takes his place in front of his Council. A ceremonial robe is instantly draped over him. The away team assembles in front of the Council.

ZEPEC
I am certain you are pondering the question of why you cannot simply take your people up to your ship as before.

JAMESON
It's a question that has, indeed, been on our minds.

ZEPEC
I will show you.

He gestures. Suddenly, BLUE LIGHT flashes back and forth over their heads like a LAZER WEBB.

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

Picard has been monitoring the progress of the away team.

PICARD
Beam them back!

The Transporter Chief tries. Nothing happens.

TRANSPORTER CHIEF
We can't, sir! It's some kind of force field our transporter beams aren't penetrating!

The away team is stuck on Mordan IV!

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO
FADE IN:

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Jameson, Riker, and the rest of the away team sit on the floor facing Zepec and the Council of Mordan in negotiation. The old priest watches the proceedings from his distant corner like a wizened bird of prey.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's log, Stardate 41455.3.
We are still unable to penetrate the force field which holds our Trade Mission prisoner. Comm'dr. Jameson has begin negotiations with their captors.

The force field that was over the Council Chamber has been turned off.

JAMESON
You must release the hostages first, then we can speak of trade.

ZEPEC
That I cannot do -- for you have refused to trade with us.

JAMESON
Not 'trade' -- refused to trade weapons.

ZEPEC
The Ferengi have traded Tenac for the force field.

JAMESON
The force field is defensive. We, too, will trade a force field for Tenac.

ZEPEC
One force field is sufficient. We need weapons.

JAMESON
We cannot give you weapons.

ZEPEC
I cannot give you your people back.
There is a stalemate in the talks. Jameson has begun sweating noticeably (this is from his hormones beginning to go crazy as a result of the rejuvenation treatment). He removes his helmet and wipes his forehead. His hair is almost all dark now!

Riker and Troi exchange a concerned look as the entire away team attempts to conceal any reactions.

RIKER
(whispers to Jameson)
Are you alright, Commander?

JAMESON
(a bit testy)
I'm okay. Just been awhile since I've been on the line.

The old priest suddenly begins CHANTING in the Mordanite language. Everyone glances at him.

ZEPEC
(refering to the priest)
Our priest of Mutar is very old. He believes the prophecy of Rahmac, the god from the sky, will yet be fulfilled.

(pointedly, to Jameson)
We have seen no gods from the sky. Only men with more powerful weapons than we have. We must have that power, too.

No answer from Jameson, who is staring at the priest, transfixed.

ZEPEC
I said that we must have that power, too, great Jameson.

Great Jameson whirs on Zepec with a child's anger.

JAMESON
(shouting)
Well, you're not going to get it!

Zepec is taken aback by the ferocity of Jameson's tone. Jameson looks around at the buzzing reactions on all sides. Troi nods to Riker, who knows he'll have to intervene.

JAMESON
(plaintively confused)
What...what was I saying?
RIKER
(taking over smoothly)
You were saying that if Zepec
doesn't deal with us, he will
have only the Ferengi to deal
with.

ZEPEC
So?

RIKER
The Ferengi are powerful as
you yourself have said. Sooner
or later, they will no longer
trade with you. They will take
what they seek, and you will
be their servant.

ZEPEC
(angrily)
I am Zepec! I serve no one!
But my people!
(to Jameson)
Is this man your tongue?

For the moment, the "older" Jameson has the upper hand again.

JAMESON
(sincerely)
He is telling you the truth,
Zepec. We are the only reason
the Ferengi have not already
conquered you. We are the
weight that balances the scales
of your future.

ZEPEC
(nodding)
There is much wisdom in what
you say.

JAMESON
Release our people, and we'll
talk of ways to peacefully help
yours.

ZEPEC
(thinks for a beat)
I will consider your words, great
Jameson, in council.

He stands up, and everyone else in the room follows suit.
ZEPEC
You may withdraw --
but two of your party will
join the hostages... as
a gesture of your good
faith.

JAMESON
We've shown our good faith
in these talks. I can't...

Zepec gestures once.

ANGLE ON PASSAGeway
As several armed Mordanite WARRIORS block the way.

ANGLE ON ZEPEC
He gestures again.

FULL ON COUNCIL CHAMBER
As the BLUE LAZER WEBB FORCE FIELD flashes overhead again.

ANGLE ON THE AWAY TEAM
Data and Geordi exchange a look, then step up to Jameson.

DATA
(sotto)
Let us go, sir.

GEORDI
Maybe we can find a way to
turn this thing off from the
inside.

Jameson considers for a second, then nods. As Data and
Geordi step forward, we:

CUT TO:

INT. PASSAGEWAY

Jameson, Riker, Tasha, and Troi (the remaining away team)
are brought in a "waiting area" near the Council Chambers.
Jameson is now sweating profusely and seems very distracted.
RIKER
Are you sure you're alright, sir?

JAMESON
(angry)
Get off my back, Riker! I just need a moment to myself -- is that okay with you?

RIKER
Of course.

Jameson sees they're all staring at him.

JAMESON
Was there something else?

TASHA
We may need to put the contingency plan into effect, sir.

JAMESON
We might.

TASHA
Do you have anything to add to the plan, sir?

The rejuvenation process has already gone crazy. Jameson is battling the internal changes, trying to hold on. It's a losing battle.

JAMESON
The plan?
(then, with boyish glee)
Yeah -- we wait for 'em to get back and jump 'em and kick a little butt!
(suddenly changing back to the man)
And Riker, on Relos we used a... I used a...

Jameson fixes on Tasha.

RIKER
What is it, sir?

JAMESON
(gleeful again)
Have you noticed how beautiful Lt. Natasha Yar is?

CUT TO:
INT. SICK BAY

Jameson lies on a table. He is being examined and tended to by Beverly and her assistants. Picard observes. He holds one of Jameson's medals concealed behind his back.

PICARD (V.O.)
Captain's Log, supplemental: the Mordanites have agreed to let us beam Cmdr. Jameson back to the Enterprise for a six hour period. But in spite of the best efforts of our medical staff, his condition continues to worsen.

The tranquilizers have only partially alleviated Jameson's anxiety level. Sweat is still on his forehead -- hormones are still going crazy. He stares straight ahead, seemingly oblivious to the activity around him. And looking younger yet!

PICARD
(to Beverly)
Where would you put his age now, Doctor?

BEVERLY
Around thirty. He doesn't seem to be able to recall much before that time with any consistency.

She looks at Picard, revealing the extent of her worry.

BEVERLY
And the rejuvenation process is accelerating.

PICARD
Have you told him?

BEVERLY
Yes. But he goes in and out of comprehension. And that's also accelerating.

PICARD
Have you isolated the cause?

BEVERLY
No, but we think it has something to do with his alien blood.
JAMESON
What alien blood?

He seems lucid enough -- for the moment.

BEVERLY
You received transfusions of a type N-3-Y blood when you were 42 years old.

The fact doesn't register with Jameson.

JAMESON
I don't believe you. That never happened to me.

BEVERLY
Are you positive?

JAMESON
(confused)
No.

Picard shows Jameson the medal that he was concealing.

PICARD
Do you recognize this, Paul?

JAMESON
(struggling)
Is that medal mine?

PICARD
Yes, I was there when you received it, for facing the Relos System.

Jameson shakes his head, defeated.

JAMESON
(softly)
Then obviously I should remember that, Captain.

PICARD
(gently)
Jean-Luc.

JAMESON
(looks at him for a beat)
Jean-Luc? I know you, and I don't know you, Jean-Luc.
(to Beverly, plaintively)
Please tell me the truth, Doctor. What's going to happen to me?
Beverly exchanges a look with Picard, then turns to Jameson.

BEVERLY
(with compassion)
That part of you beyond the age when the rejuvenation process ceases, will, in all probability, die. If the process does not cease, you will probably die.

JAMESON
(after a beat)
Why did I do this? How could I have made such an incredible mistake? Was I so different than you are, Captain?

PICARD
(also with compassion)
No -- not really. All of us question our lives. All of us go through some kind of crisis. But you can't go home again -- even for the most wonderful thing. That's the mistake you made, Paul.

There is a silent moment. Then Jameson's eyes light up as he looks over to see that:

ANNE JAMESON
Has come into Sick Bay. She stares at him, shocked at his appearance. The man on the table is the one she married 30 years ago!

JAMESON
Anne! I know you're my wife...

The sight of her has jarred his memory for a moment -- at least of her. She, on the other hand, is about to burst with conflicting emotions.

ANN
(to Picard)
Could I be alone with him?

PICARD
Of course.

He and Beverly exit.
JAMESON
(forcing a smile)
I'm so glad to see you.

ANNE
(bitterly)
Are you sure you remember me?

JAMESON
(emotionally)
Remember you? Anne -- our
honeymoon must have set records.

Seeing him looking like he did, she relives it for a moment,
and in spite of the situation, a smile comes to her lips.

ANN
It was wonderful.

JAMESON
We'll do it again someday.

ANNE
(snapped back to reality)
We did. On our 25th wedding
anniversary, we had our second
honeymoon.

JAMESON
(totally confused)
How could we? We just got
married!

He becomes pitifully agitated. She begins to regard him
more in horror than in anger.

ANNE
Then what about Mark?

JAMESON
Who?

ANNE
Our son... and our grandchildren.
You love the grandchildren so much.
Can't you remember them?

He shakes his head, regret overwhelming him.

JAMESON
I'm sorry, Anne.
(then with a childlike
remorse)
Can you forgive me?
She regards him for a long beat, her own conflicting emotions overwhelming her.

ANNE
(quietly intense)
I don't know you. I don't know what to think or what to do. I want to hate you for the selfish, selfish thing you did, but I can't even do that. That man is gone. The man I've loved is gone...

She trails off, tears coming to her eyes. She turns to leave unable to stand it any longer. He takes her hand. She doesn't turn to him but allows him to hold her hand for a beat, then slips it loose and exits. CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN:

CLOSE ON JAMESON
Watching her go, tears coming to his eyes as well. FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE
FADE IN:

INT. PASSAGEWAY - OUTSIDE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

It is late at night. Two Mordanite GUARDS watch over Riker, Troi, and Tasha. Riker is alert, Troi is semi-awake, and Tasha sleeps.

RIKER (V.O.)
Away Log, Stardate 41455.4:
Commander William Riker. Only
one hour remains before Commndr.
Jameson's return.

Riker looks over at Troi. Her eyes are now closed as she tries to get some sleep before the inevitable confrontation with the Mordanites.

RIKER
(activating his communicator)
Enterprise, this is Riker. Anything on the force field?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BRIDGE

Picard is with a full compliment of DUTY OFFICERS.

PICARD
(to Riker)
Negative.
(then)
Anything from Data or Geordi?

RIKER
Negative, sir.

Troi moves next to Riker, activates her communicator.

TROI
Troi here, sir. Is Commndr.
Jameson going to make it?

PICARD
We don't know yet. The medical staff is working on an antidote.

Tasha has awakened. She joins in.

TASHA
What if he doesn't make it, sir?
Do we use our own 'force'?
PICARD
Only as a last resort. Be prepared to execute the contingency plan.

RIKER
Let's hope it doesn't come to that, sir.

PICARD
I'll second you on that, Number One.

CLOSE ON RIKER
As he signs off and exchanges a grave look with Troi and Tasha.

CLOSE ON PICARD
As he orders the Enterprise put on battle alert (or its equivalent for this situation).

CUT TO:

INT. SICK BAY - CLOSE ON JAMESON
He is now sleeping in one of beds. But even in repose, the ravages of the rejuvenation process show on his face and sweat stands out on his forehead.

BEVERLY (V.O.)
Medical Log, Dr. Beverly Crusher: We suspect a drug is used during the recycling of blood in the rejuvenation process...

ANOTHER ANGLE - SICK BAY
TO REVEAL a flurry of activity as Beverly and her staff search for an antidote.

BEVERLY (V.O.)
...But we have been unable to isolate it in Commdr. Jameson's blood.
ASSISTANT MEDIC
(to Beverly)
Could it be totally absorbed
by now?

BEVERLY
It could be anything. There's
no data on this process, only
speculation -- and that's not
going us anywhere.

ASSISTANT
Can't we match him up with
other blood samples of the
process?

BEVERLY
I've tried that. With alien
components, his blood reacts
differently. Everything I've
come up with has been ineffective
or worse.

They work in silence for a couple of beats.

ASSISTANT
There isn't any chance of
finding an antidote, is there
Doctor?

BEVERLY
There's no chance of finding
it in time to help Commdr. Jameson.
I feel the most we'll be able
to do is arrest the process.

CLOSE ON JAMESON
Sleeping fitfully in the next room.

BEVERLY (V.O.)
Reversal is out of the question
for him now.

CUT TO:
INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

(NOTE: instead of an OPTICAL EFFECT of blue light for the FORCE FIELD, it could be invisible and simply in place over the Council Chambers Complex, i.e. so that someone would have to go outside to beam up to the Enterprise. Perhaps this would be more feasible so I'm going have an INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD in place for the remainder of this draft.)

Zepec and the Council sit on the floor opposite Riker, Troi, and Tasha. The old priest observes silently from his corner.

ZEPEC
It is the appointed hour. I have decided. Where is the great Jameson?

RIKER
He has entrusted me to come in his place.

ZEPEC
(displeased)
You are to be his tongue again?

RIKER
And his ears. Give me your answer. Will you release our hostages?

ZEPEC
(angry)
I will release no one to only a tongue and ears! I will speak only to Jameson! I will trust only Jameson!

Riker exchanges a look with Troi and Tasha.

TROI
(in her most flattering tone)
Great Zepec, ruler of Mordan IV, my captain of the starship Enterprise has instructed me to ask -- how can we be sure we can trust you?

Zepec smiles. Troi's beauty and manner fascinate him.
ZEPEC
Jameson is a fortunate man to have so many tongues to speak for him. Yours, at least, is pleasant.

TROI
(smiles)
Before Jameson can be returned, we must see that our people are unharmed.

ZEPEC
(gesturing)
You shall see it.

ANGLE ON ARCHWAY
After several beats, Geordi is produced.

ZEPEC
(to Riker, Troi)
You may speak to him -- but quickly.

ANGLE ON GEORDI
As Riker, Troi and Tasha confer with him in as much privacy as they can in the room.

GEORDI
Everyone is okay. That's the good news. It's downhill from there.

RIKER
Go ahead.

GEORDI
(speaking rapidly)
We haven't been able to pinpoint the source of the force field, but apparently there's some kind of self-destruct mechanism hooked into it.

TASHA
So the contingency plan?...
GEORDI
Out of the question -- this whole place would blow before one phaser's fired.

FULL ANGLE ON CHAMBERS
As Zepec stands up -- angry and impatient.

ZEPEC
You have spoken enough. Now I will speak to you, tongues and ears of Jameson.
(raising his voice)
You will all stay here and enjoy our hospitality under the protection of our force field.
(points to Tasha)
Except her. She will tell your captain of the Enterprise thus: if Jameson is not returned to us within the hour, I will execute one hostage every following hour until he is! Tell your captain.

Tasha looks to Riker. He nods to her, and she exits.

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM
Picard waits. The Transporter Chief is at his station.
Beverly comes in with an energetic, 25 year old Jameson.

PICARD
Commdr. Jameson, if there was any way to relieve you, I...

JAMESON
(smiles)
Jean-Luc?

PICARD
(surprised)
You recognize me?

Jameson nods, but Beverly shakes her head.

BEVERLY
I'm afraid it's only temporary -- very temporary. His moments of recognition are almost non-existent now.
PICARD
I have to beam you back
down, Paul.

JAMESON
I know -- the hostages -- I
was there, remember?

PICARD
(to Beverly)
Are you positive its only
temporary, Doctor?

Beverly nods sadly. Sweat already stands out on Jameson's
forehead.

JAMESON
(desperately trying to
hold on)
I'm Paul Jameson. I beat the
entire Relos System. I'll
beat this.

He trails off, stares at them.

BEVERLY
(quietly)
It might be the last time
the 60 year old man appears.

PICARD
(turns to Jameson)
I'm your Captain, and your friend,
Paul -- no matter what happens,
remember my voice.

JAMESON
(forces a smile)
I will. You can count on it,
Jean-Luc.

Picard shakes his hand.

PICARD
Good luck, Commander.

Jameson nods, then steps onto the transporter platform.

PICARD
Energize.

The Transporter Chief does. OPTICAL EFFECTS as Jameson is
beamed back to:

CUT TO:
EXT. COUNCIL CHAMBER COMPLEX

It is dawn. Tasha waits outside the hillside entrance of the complex when:

ANGLE ON JAMESON

MATERIALIZING near her. She is stunned by his youthful appearance (still 25). He sees her, stares.

TASHA

Commdr. Jameson?

JAMESON

Tasha?

He recognizes her, but barely. He is silent as he looks at her, Sweat on his forehead, a confused look on his face.

TASHA

Sir?

The 60 year old man has almost faded. A new young man, blank of the old one's memory, is nearly dominant.

JAMESON

(smiles)

Did I tell you once how beautiful you were?

TASHA

(uncomfortable)

Not directly, sir.

JAMESON

See, I remembered...

He shakes his head as if to throw off what's happening to him. She moves toward him, very concerned.

TASHA

Are you alright, sir?

He smiles at her shyly. The young man he's become decides on a direct, bold but very boyish approach to what he's thinking.

JAMESON

(speaking quickly)
You are beautiful, very beautiful.
I really like you. Let's get married, Tasha!
TASHA
But you already have a wife, sir!

He stares at her totally confused. Then he looks around, panicking.

JAMESON
I do not. I don't believe you!
(eyes darting around)
What is this place? I don't like it! I've got to get out of here!

He bolts. And after a moments hesitation, she's after him.

THE CHASE SEQUENCE
During which Jameson manages to lose Tasha in a thickly wooded area. Just before he disappears, we see he is drenched in sweat (and whatever else will indicate that the de-aging process has accelerated even more rapidly.)

It is a while before (using guidance from the Enterprise?) Tasha sees:

ANGLE IN WOODED AREA
A BOY, seated under a tree, back to CAMERA. His clothes seem to fit very loosely. As Tasha approaches, he turns around and we see why: it is Jameson. He's "de-aged" to 16 years old!

CLOSER ANGLE - TASHA/BOY JAMESON
He is fresh-looking, but distinctly resembles the former man. He grins at Tasha.

BOY JAMESON
Excuse me, but don't I know you?

TASHA
(nods, activates her communicator)
Enterprise, I've found him. What do I do?

CUT TO:
SHORT/SEASON

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Riker, Troi, and Geordi stare in disbelief as Tasha enters with the 16 year old Jameson. Zepec glares. A MURMUR of reaction RIPPLES through the Mordanite ranks.

ZEPEC
Who is this boy?

BOY JAMESON
I'm Paul Jameson.

There is an extremely tense moment, then:

ANGLE ON THE PRIEST

His eyes have been fixed on the 16 year old. Other Mordanites are looking to the priest now, not Zepec. He slowly bows to the boy.

PRIEST
(with quiet reverence)
Rahmac...

FULL ON THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The name "Rahmac" echoes through the room. All the Mordanites join the priest in obeisance to Jameson except:

ZEPEC

He glares at the 16 year old with defiant hostility.

FADE OUT:

END ACT FOUR
FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE – THE ENTERPRISE

In orbit around Mordan IV.

RIKER (V.O.):
Away Log, Stardate 41455.5:
We have been allowed to send
a brief message to the Enterprise:
it appears that the Mordanites
believe Capt. Jameson to be
their god Rahmac.

INT. BRIDGE

Picard, Beverly Crusher, the other duty OFFICERS at their
proper stations.

PICARD
(to the computer)
Tell me about the Mordanite
god Rahmac.

COMPUTER
According to their legends, the
ancient god Rahmac will return
on a powerful ship in the sky.
He is depicted as a mature god
who dies at night and is reborn
as a young warrior god in the
morning. He represents the sun.

PICARD
Which dies at night and is reborn
in the morning.

COMPUTER
Correct, Captain.

BEVERLY
And Capt. Jameson's rejuvenation
pattern fits the legend!

COMPUTER
Correct again, Dr. Crusher.

PICARD
(to Beverly)
Have you determined what age
he's at now, Doctor?
BEVERLY
According to last readings before he entered the Council Chambers, he is holding at age 16.

PICARD
Is that permanent?

BEVERLY
We don't know.

COMPUTER
Excuse me, Capt. Picard?

PICARD
Yes...

COMPUTER
Did you want to hear more on the Mordanite god Rahmac?

PICARD
Is it important?

COMPUTER
I think so, sir.

PICARD
Go ahead.

COMPUTER
Upon his return, the god will need a sacrifice to sustain him.

Picard exchanges a look with Beverly.

PICARD
What kind of sacrifice?

COMPUTER
Human, sir -- the sacrifice of their king.

Picard thinks for a beat, then:

PICARD
Transporter Room, prepare to beam down a second away team!

CUT TO:
INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Young Jameson is caught between a still defiant Zepec on one side and the priest and other Mordanites on the other. The away team flanks Jameson.

PRIEST
Bow to him, Zepec! All power is his!

ZEPEC
No man dies at night and is reborn in the morning!

PRIEST
You will die! You know the prophecy! The king will die to nourish Rahmac on his return!

ZEPEC
He is not Rahmac! He is not Jameson! He is an imposter! The boy is not Jameson!

The sentiment begins to echo among the others. Voices raging around him, the boy Jameson is becoming totally confused and upset.

BOY JAMESON
Stop! Please!

ZEPEC
We must have proof! We must have proof!

Riker steps up as the situation worsens.

RIKER
Let us speak with him. We will give you proof.

He quickly guides the boy to a neutral corner of the room. They're joined by the rest of the away team.

ANGLE ON AWAY TEAM

Troi looks to Riker, who is shielding a totally distraught Jameson from the Mordanites. Geordi shakes his head.

GEORDI
How are we going to give them proof?
RIKER
We better think of something fast. I have great faith in us.

During the following scene, Riker carefully scrutinizes every aspect of the Council Chambers. The boy Jameson is near tears.

BOY JAMESON
Help me... I don't know who I am... am I a god?

TROI
No, you aren't.

BOY JAMESON
I didn't really think so.

Riker spots something. Geordi is with him as Riker nods toward the surveillance screens.

TROI
You were Capt. Paul Jameson.

BOY JAMESON
What was I like?

TROI
You were considered the finest starship captain in Starfleet.

TASHA
And a hero.

BOY JAMESON
(smiles)
I think I'd like to be that again.

TROI
You may get your chance, kid, when they find out you're not Rahmac.

Riker and Geordi exchange a look.

RIKER
I think we've got a way to prove to them he's Jameson.

CUT TO:
CLOSE ON SCREEN

In the Council Chambers as a BLACK AND WHITE VIDEO of the man Jameson plays. It was taken when he made his first entrance into the Council Chambers. On a CLOSE SHOT of the man Jameson, the IMAGE is frozen, then is changed into a COMPUTER PATTERN which identifies the man.

ANGLE WIDENS

TO REVEAL a second SCREEN has been placed next to the first. All in the room are gathered around the screen except Riker and Geordi who work the image from a nearby control panel.

RIKER
That was Capt. Jameson yesterday when he first came to you.

Riker pushes several buttons.

CLOSE ON SECOND SCREEN

As the BLACK AND WHITE IMAGE of the boy Jameson plays. This was taken upon his arrival in the room. On a similar CLOSE SHOT of the boy, Geordi FREEZES the IMAGE, then changes it into a COMPUTER PATTERN which indentifies the boy.

FULL ON ROOM

The patterns match exactly! There is no doubt that the boy is Jameson. Zepec is immediately seized by his own people. The priest looks to the boy.

PRIEST
Tell us your pleasure, Rahmac.

The boy stands up tall. He glances at Riker, who nods.

BOY JAMESON
(strong as he can be)
Release him!

Zepec is instantly released.
BOY JAMESON
It is my pleasure that you release the hostages.

PRIEST
(gestures)
It is done.

Several Mordanites scurry out of the room to comply.

BOY JAMESON
And that you... well, for the rest of my pleasure, Commdr. Riker's going to speak for me.
(then, smiling)
I and my friends wish to return to my ship.

On reactions:

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE
Young Jameson is sitting at a computer terminal, absorbing material. He's already begun to re-educate himself.

ANGLE ON PICARD/ANNE JAMESON
As they observe from an unseen vantage point.

PICARD
The rejuvenation process has stopped. His system has stabilized.

ANNE
He's 14 years old?

PICARD
(nods)
And a totally new person. According to Dr. Crusher, nothing beyond that age remains.
(pause)
Do you still feel like punishing him, Anne?

ANNE
(shakes her head)
Being 14 years old again will be punishment enough for him.
(then)
Is he destined to live the same life, Jean-Luc?
PICARD
We don't think so. The life he lives will depend on him -- and the guidance he gets.

Anne looks at the boy for a long beat, then:

ANNE
I'd like to talk to the boy.

ANGLE ON YOUNG JAMESON
He looks up from the computer as Anne and Picard approach.

PICARD
Paul, this is Anne.

The boy looks at her and smiles. She smiles back.

BOY JAMESON
Should I know you?

ANNE
In a way.

He stares at her for a long beat, a sad expression on his face.

PICARD
What is it, Paul?

BOY JAMESON
I don't know... I was just thinking about mom and dad, that's all.

PICARD
(gently)
Your parents are no longer alive, Paul.

BOY JAMESON
They aren't?

PICARD
No, not for many years.

The boy seems lost trying to connect what was with what he no longer knows but senses the truth of.

BOY JAMESON
Then who's going to take care of me?
Anne exchanges a look with Picard.

ANNE
Maybe I will.

The boy looks at her again, surprised.

ANNE
At least we can talk about it if you want.

BOY JAMESON
(smiles)
I'd like that.

Picard nods as Anne sits down next to the boy.

FADE OUT:

END ACT FIVE