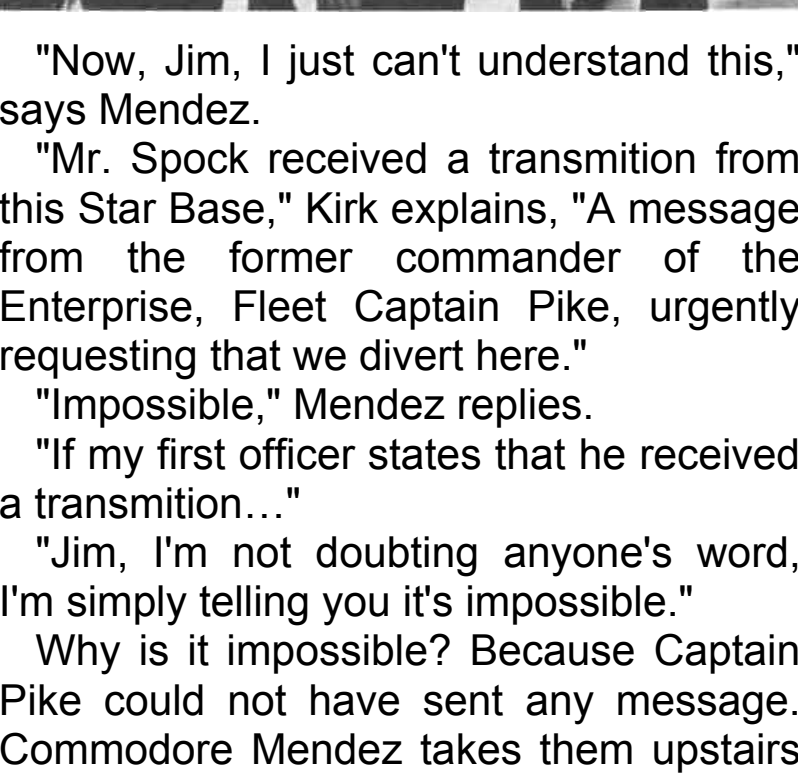




Star Base 11. After receiving a subspace message, the Enterprise changes course to journey to this Federation outpost. Upon arriving the landing party of Kirk, Spock and McCoy are promptly informed that Star Base 11 sent no such message. They accompany Miss Piper to Commodore Mendez.



"Now, Jim, I just can't understand this," says Mendez. "Mr. Spock received a transmission from this Star Base," Kirk explains, "A message from the former commander of the Enterprise, Fleet Captain Pike, urgently requesting that we divert here."

"Impossible," Mendez replies. "If my first officer states that he received a transmission..." "Jim, I'm not doubting anyone's word, I'm simply telling you it's impossible."

Why is it impossible? Because Captain Pike could not have sent any message. Commodore Mendez takes them upstairs to the medical section, explaining on the way.

Mendez turns to Kirk and asks, "You ever met Chris Pike?" "We met when he was promoted to Fleet Captain. I took over the Enterprise from him. Spock served with him for several years."

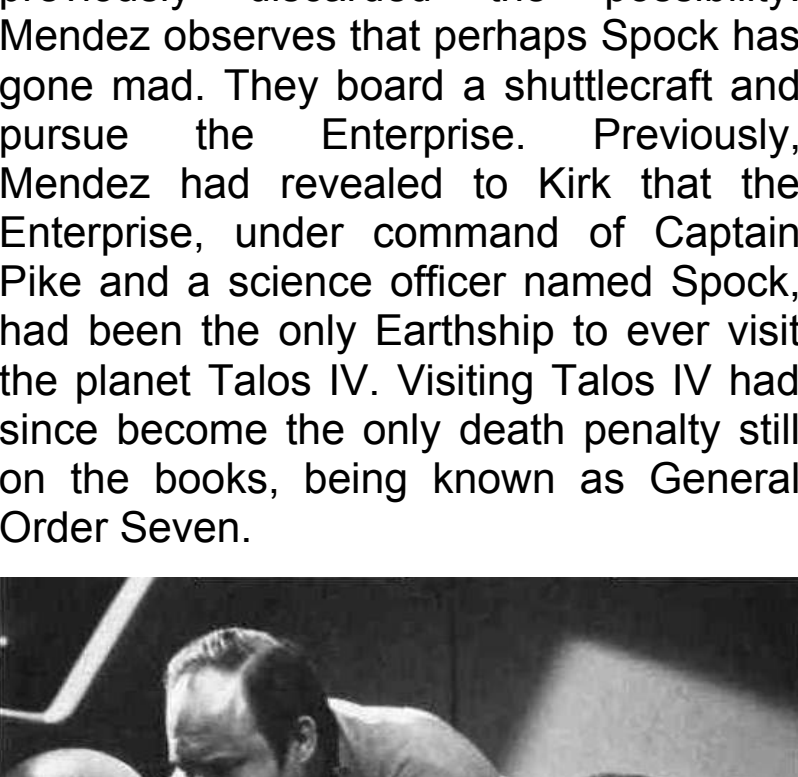
"Eleven years, four months, five days," replies Spock. "What's his problem Commodore," McCoy asks, his medical intuition alerted. "Inspection tour of a cadet vessel. Old class 'J' starship. One of the baffle plates ruptured."

"The Delta rays," McCoy hesitantly asks, as if he fears the reply. "He went in bringing out all those kids that were still alive. I just wanted you gentlemen to be prepared."

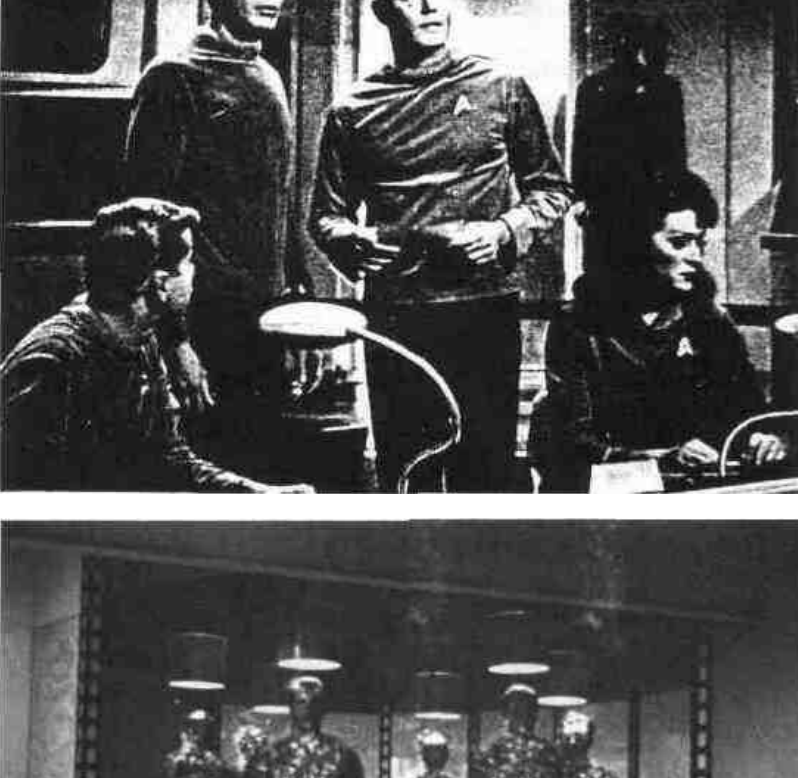
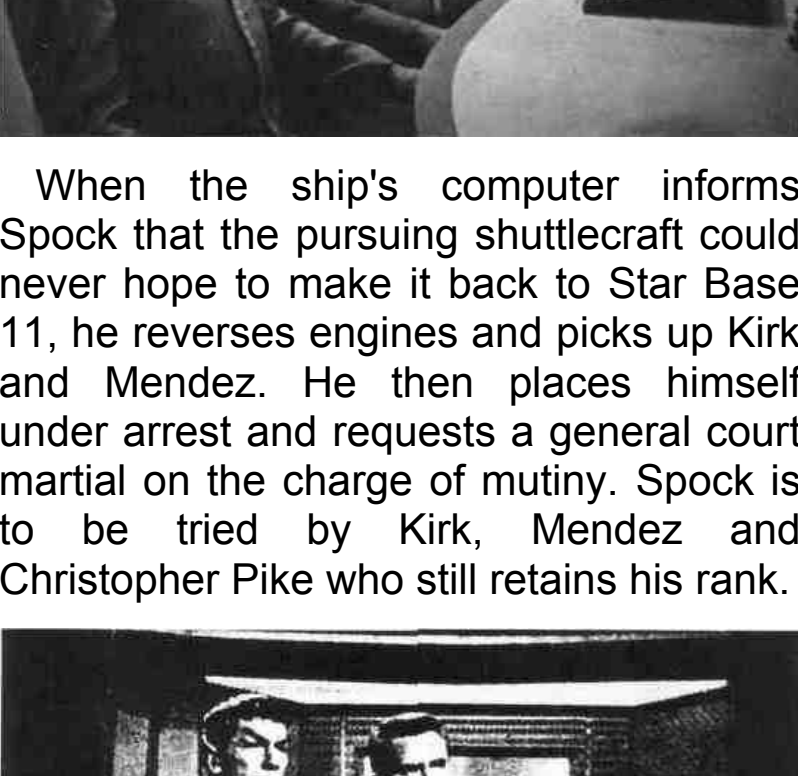
They enter and are greeted by a horribly crippled man sitting silently in a wheelchair.



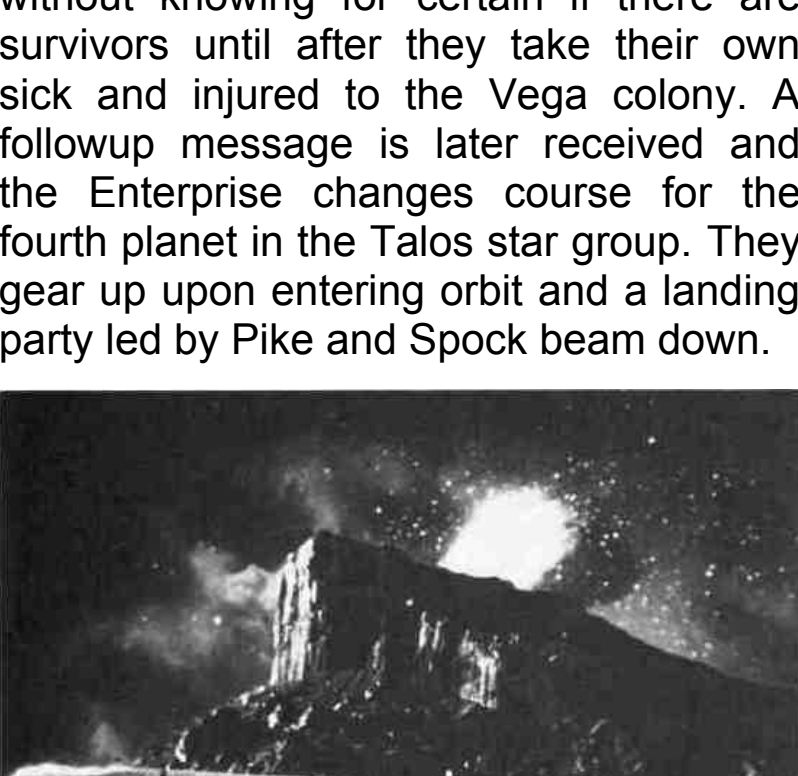
They try talking to Chris but he can only answer "yes" or "no" by blinking lights on his self-operated chair. Kirk and McCoy leave but Spock remains whereupon he reveals to Pike that he has a plan to take him somewhere which is six days away at maximum warp. Pike blinks no but Spock insists that he must do it.



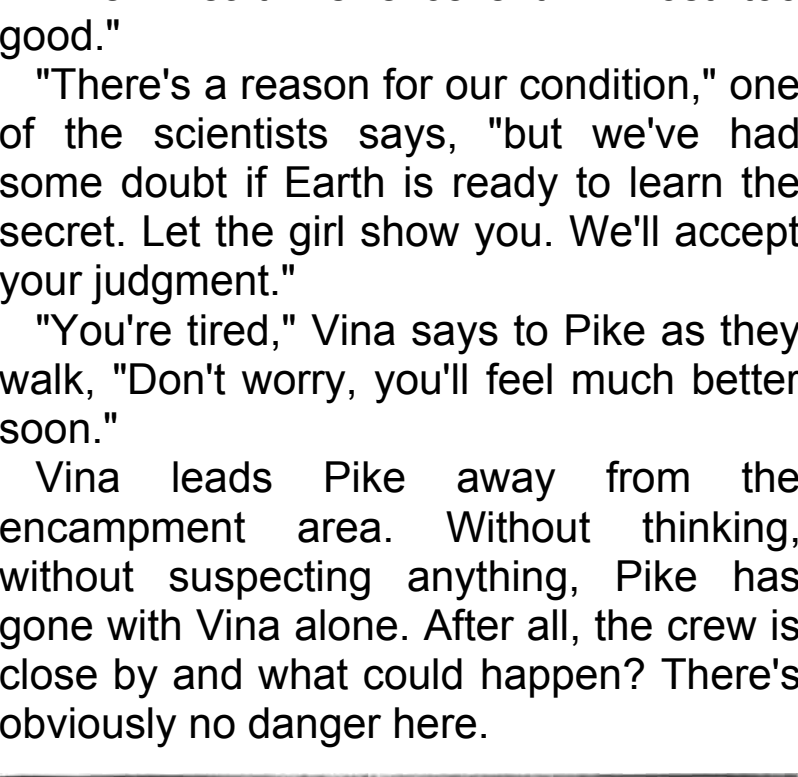
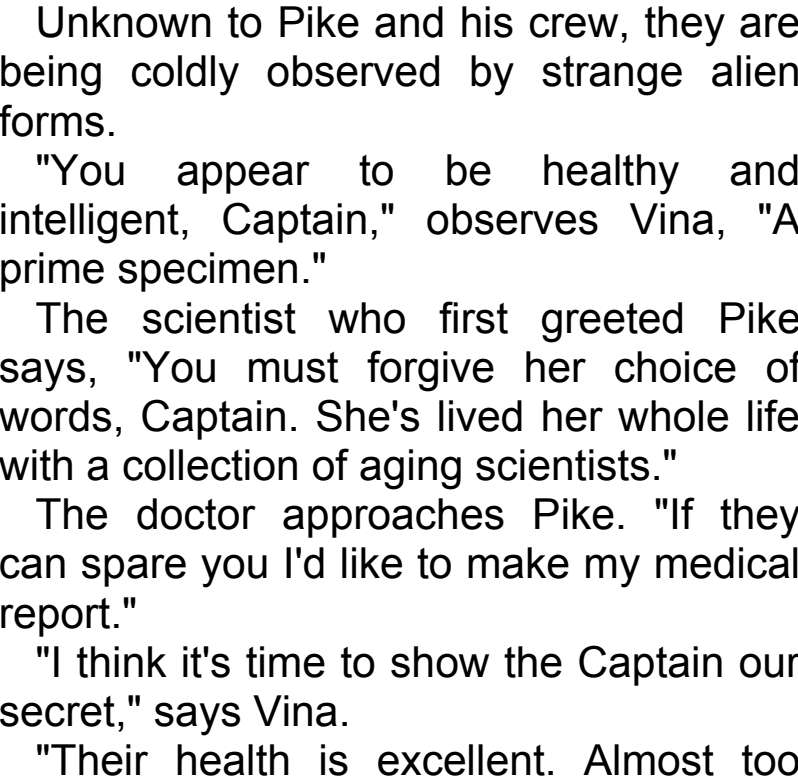
Later, in the computer center of the Star Base, Spock rigs up a tape which tells the Enterprise that it will be receiving new orders fed directly into the ship's computers. Spock returns to the Enterprise and takes command, supposedly on Captain Kirk's orders, and using the transporter snatches Captain Pike from the medical section.



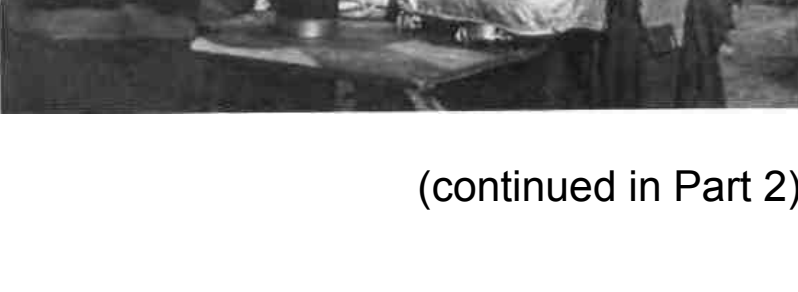
Captain Kirk is in Commodore Mendez' office when he is notified that the Enterprise is warping out of orbit and is maintaining a communications silence. Kirk and Mendez realize that it must be Spock's doing, even though they had previously discarded the possibility. Mendez observes that perhaps Spock has gone mad. They board a shuttlecraft and pursue the Enterprise. Previously, Mendez had revealed to Kirk that the Enterprise, under command of Captain Pike and a science officer named Spock, had been the only Earthship to ever visit the planet Talos IV. Visiting Talos IV had since become the only death penalty still on the books, being known as General Order Seven.



When the ship's computer informs Spock that the pursuing shuttlecraft could never hope to make it back to Star Base 11, he reverses engines and picks up Kirk and Mendez. He then places himself under arrest and requests a general court martial on the charge of mutiny. Spock is to be tried by Kirk, Mendez and Christopher Pike who still retains his rank.



With the Enterprise under complete computer control until it reaches Talos IV, Kirk can not do anything for the moment except proceed with the court martial. Mendez demands to know the point in taking Captain Pike and the Enterprise to Talos IV even though it means Spock's life to do so. Spock requests the monitor screen engaged whereupon images of the Enterprise thirteen years before appear on it. The Enterprise was then commanded by Chris Pike. Kirk demands to know what they're watching but Spock says he cannot answer at that time. The images reveal the Enterprise entering the Talos star group and receiving a distress signal from a survey ship the S.S. Columbia which disappeared eighteen years before. Pike refuses to send a rescue team without knowing for certain if there are survivors until after they take their own sick and injured to the Vega colony. A followup message is later received and the Enterprise changes course for the fourth planet in the Talos star group. They gear up upon entering orbit and a landing party led by Pike and Spock beam down.



The landing party materializes in a canyon to the left of the survivors encampment. The planet's surface has an eerie, ethereal look to it even though it's arid. A plant is found which makes an eerie musical tone. They cautiously come upon the encampment where they are greeted with looks of wonder and amazement.

"They're men! They're humans!" exclaims one of the survivors. They're busy exchanging greetings and information when suddenly they notice a beautiful young woman.

"This is Vina. Her parents are dead. She was born almost as we crashed." Unknown to Pike and his crew, they are being coldly observed by strange alien forms.

"You appear to be healthy and intelligent, Captain," observes Vina, "A prime specimen."

The scientist who first greeted Pike says, "You must forgive her choice of words, Captain. She's lived her whole life with a collection of aging scientists."

The doctor approaches Pike. "If they can spare you I'd like to make my medical report."

"I think it's time to show the Captain our secret," says Vina. "Their health is excellent. Almost too good."

"There's a reason for our condition," one of the scientists says, "but we've had some doubt if Earth is ready to learn the secret. Let the girl show you. We'll accept your judgment."

"You're tired," Vina says to Pike as they walk, "Don't worry, you'll feel much better soon."

Vina leads Pike away from the encampment area. Without thinking, without suspecting anything, Pike has gone with Vina alone. After all, the crew is close by and what could happen? There's obviously no danger here.



(continued in Part 2)