

The testimony in the trial of Spock for mutiny continues. It has been revealed that the transmissions on the viewing screen are from the planet Talos IV and that the Talosians now control the Enterprise as they did thirteen years before. On that viewing screen they see the incredible story of Captain Pike's strange experience on Talos IV unfolding before them.

Pike and the other prisoners are asleep. The Keeper arrives in the menagerie and observes the sleeping subjects. It then goes to the side of Pike's cage. But Pike is not asleep. Alert to his surroundings he hears a slight click and leaps up, grabbing the Keeper as he attempted to remove the Lasers from the cage. It struggles violently in his grip even though it is a being of fragile stature.

"Now you hold still or I'll break your neck," Pike threatens.

"Don't hurt him," pleads Vina, "They don't mean to be evil."

"I've had some samples of how good they are," Pike snaps back.

Suddenly the form of the Keeper shifts and becomes the hideous and powerful apelike creature in a cage near Pike's. Its huge claws rake at Pike's hands. Growls below from its inhuman throat.

"You stop this illusion or I'll twist your head off!", and Pike means it.

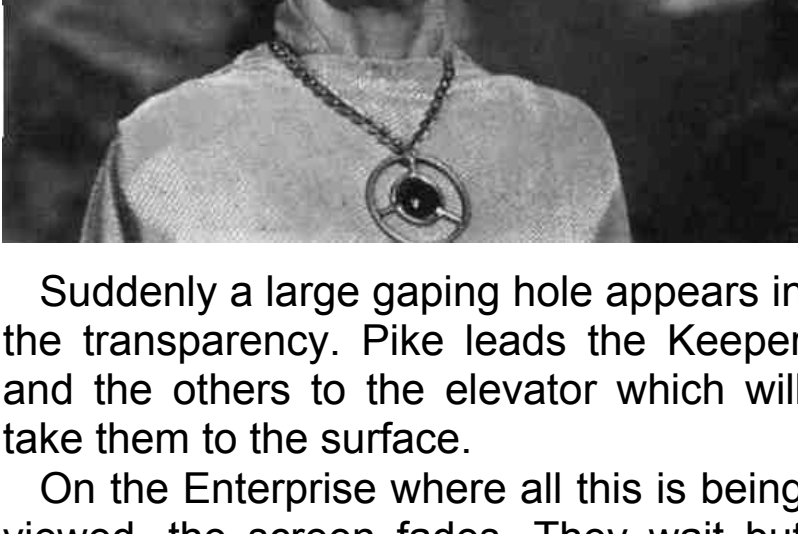
The Keeper resumes his natural form.

"All right," warns Pike, "Now, you try one more illusion, you try anything at all and I'll break your neck!"

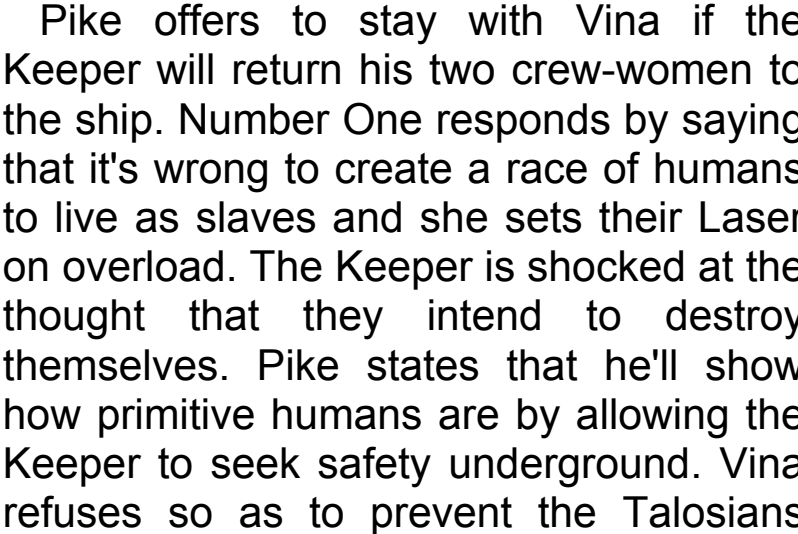
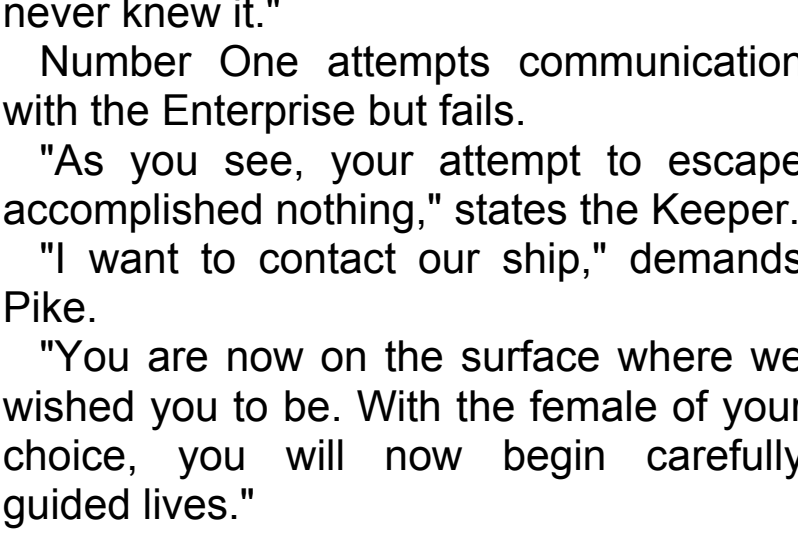
"Your ship," gasps the Keeper, "Release me or we'll destroy it."

"He's not bluffing Captain, with illusion they can make your crew work the wrong controls or push any button it takes to destroy your ship," Vina explains.

"I'm going to gamble you're too intelligent to kill for no reason at all," says Pike to his helpless Talosian prisoner.



"On the other hand," Pike continues, "I've got a reason. I'm willing to bet that you've created an illusion this Laser is empty. I think it's just blasted a hole in that window and you're keeping us from seeing it. You want me to test my theory out on your head?"



Suddenly a large gaping hole appears in the transparency. Pike leads the Keeper and the others to the elevator which will take them to the surface.

On the Enterprise where all this is being viewed, the screen fades. They wait but nothing happens. Mendez moves that they reach a verdict. They all vote and Spock is found guilty as charged. The screen finally re-engages and the images continue.

Pike and the others reach the surface of Talos IV, apparently free at last.

"They kept us from seeing this too," observes Number One upon seeing the devastated knoll, "We cut through and never knew it."

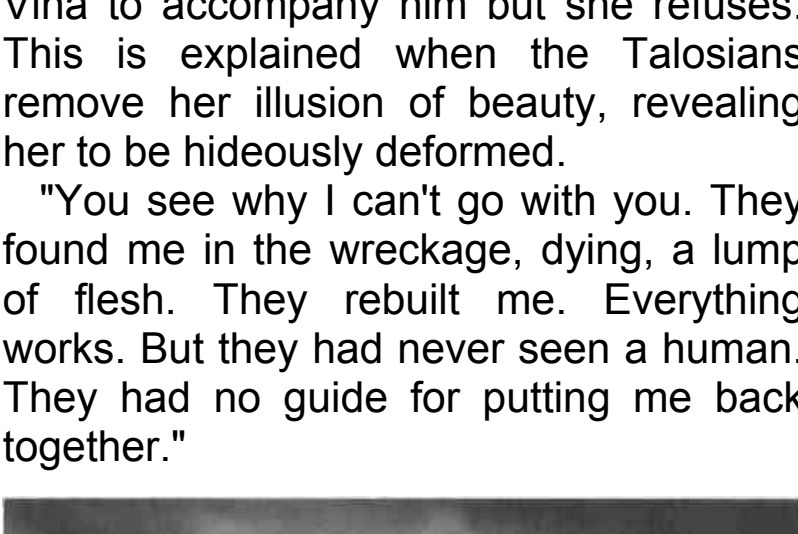
Number One attempts communication with the Enterprise but fails.

"As you see, your attempt to escape accomplished nothing," states the Keeper.

"I want to contact our ship," demands Pike.

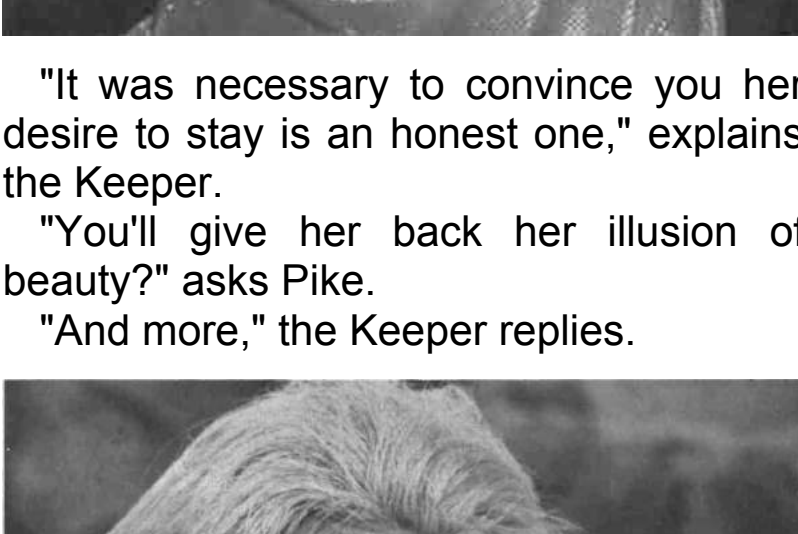
"You are now on the surface where we wished you to be. With the female of your choice, you will now begin carefully guided lives."

Pike offers to stay with Vina if the Keeper will return his two crew-women to the ship. Number One responds by saying that it's wrong to create a race of humans to live as slaves and she sets their Laser on overload. The Keeper is shocked at the thought that they intend to destroy themselves. Pike states that he'll show how primitive humans are by allowing the Keeper to seek safety underground. Vina refuses so as to prevent the Talosians from trying again. Just then two more Talosians appear. They explain that they have scanned the ship's records and have found evidence that the human race is too violent for their purposes, that humans prefer death to captivity. The Talosians had not thought such a thing possible. Number One cancels the overload. The Talosians refuse offers of aid saying that humans would eventually then learn their power of illusion and destroy their race as well.



They regain communication with the ship and transporter control. Number One and the Yeoman beam up. Pike invites Vina to accompany him but she refuses. This is explained when the Talosians remove her illusion of beauty, revealing her to be hideously deformed.

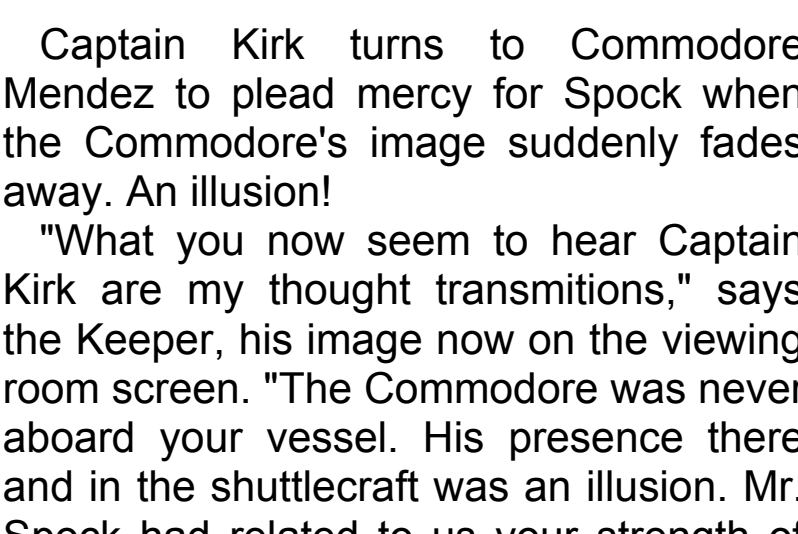
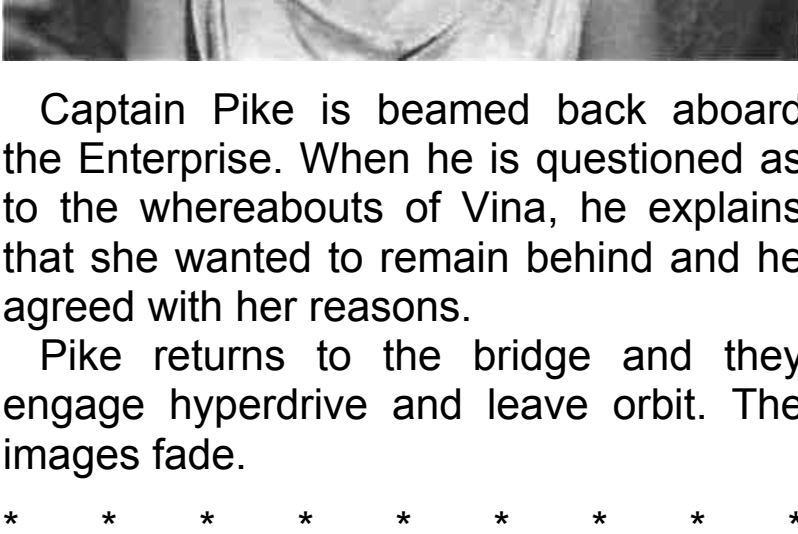
"You see why I can't go with you. They found me in the wreckage, dying, a lump of flesh. They rebuilt me. Everything works. But they had never seen a human. They had no guide for putting me back together."



"It was necessary to convince you her desire to stay is an honest one," explains the Keeper.

"You'll give her back her illusion of beauty?" asks Pike.

"And more," the Keeper replies.



Captain Pike is beamed back aboard the Enterprise. When he is questioned as to the whereabouts of Vina, he explains that she wanted to remain behind and he agreed with her reasons.

Pike returns to the bridge and they engage hyperdrive and leave orbit. The images fade.

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Captain Kirk turns to Commodore Mendez to plead mercy for Spock when the Commodore's image suddenly fades away. An illusion!

"What you now seem to hear Captain Kirk are my thought transmissions," says the Keeper, his image now on the viewing room screen. "The Commodore was never aboard your vessel. His presence there and in the shuttlecraft was an illusion. Mr. Spock had related to us your strength of will. It was thought the fiction of a court martial would divert you from too soon regaining control of your vessel. Captain Pike is welcome to spend the rest of his life with us, unfettered by his physical body. The decision is yours and his."

"Mr. Spock," Kirk begins, "even if regulations are explicit, you could have come to me and explained."

"Asked you to face the death penalty too? One of us was enough Captain."

A message comes in from Star Base 11 stating that they received the images from Talos IV, that they have decided to suspend General Order 7 for this occasion and that no action is contemplated against Spock. Kirk asks Chris if he wants to go to Talos IV and he blinks yes.

"Mr. Spock," says Kirk sternly, "when you're finished taking Captain Pike to the transporter, please come back and see me; I want to talk to you. This regrettable tendency you've been showing lately towards flagrant emotionalism..."

"I see no reason to insult me sir. I believe I've been completely logical about the whole affair. "

The Keeper speaks again for the final time saying, "Captain Kirk, Captain Pike has an illusion and you have reality. May you find your way as pleasant."

