

MENAGERIE—THE TRIAL OF SPOCK

An Opera in Three Acts

Synopsis

ACT I – TREASON

Scene 1: Into the abyss [Starbase M-11]

Lieutenant Commander Spock, of the Starship Enterprise, contemplates the ethics of a decision he is soon to make that will call into question his loyalty and honor. Vina, a mysterious, seemingly ageless woman, appears—perhaps only in Spock’s mind—echoing his inner thoughts, and urging him forward. She dreams of bringing her love back to the land of the living.

Spock, along with his Captain James Kirk and the physician Leonard McCoy, arrive on the remote medical starbase M-11, where they meet the Vulcan Commander Zuna Tor, a flame from Kirk’s distant past. They tell her that their patient Christopher Pike, Spock’s former captain on the Enterprise, has summoned them. Puzzled, Tor explains that this would be impossible, as Pike is gravely injured, unable to communicate except through vague scans of his brain activity.

Pike shows distress, and at first rejects the idea of meeting his visitors, but he eventually agrees to meet Spock in private. When they are alone, Spock announces his plan for a journey that Pike regards with horror. Spock is unphased, and he reminds Pike that once they begin, “there will be no going back.”

Scene 2: False entry [Office of Commander Tor]

Tor and Kirk argue about the conflicts in their information about Pike, and can come to no understanding. McCoy arrives, and maintains that it is impossible for Spock to have lied, or committed so serious an error; Kirk is caught between them. Tor wonders if a deception may have something to do with Talos IV, a planet once visited by Spock and Pike and now forbidden from Federation contact, on penalty of death for treason. Kirk is incredulous, but Tor reminds Kirk of a profound connection between Spock and his former captain.

[/ M-11 Hospital Foyer]

Spock conspires to kidnap Pike, paralyzing members of the M-11 staff, and deceiving McCoy to lure him to the Enterprise. M-11 transport crew sound an alarm alerting Kirk and Tor that inexplicably, the Enterprise has departed with Spock at the helm. Kirk and Tor board a shuttlecraft in pursuit.

Scene 3: Mutiny [Bridge of the Enterprise]

Third Officer Lieutenant Hikaru Sulu is increasingly suspicious of the vessel’s auto-pilot status, but is unaware that Spock’s command of the ship is unauthorized. His questions intensify as McCoy comes to the bridge demanding to know why Pike is aboard. Lieutenant Nyota U’penda Uhura, the ship’s communications officer, announces the shuttlecraft’s approach, and Spock relents, inviting their pursuers aboard the Enterprise and submitting himself to McCoy for arrest. When Kirk and Tor arrive on the bridge, they learn from Sulu that auto-pilot cannot be suspended, and the computer reports their course is set for the forbidden planet Talos IV.

ACT II – THE TRIAL OF SPOCK

Scene 1: A Temporary Courtroom on the Enterprise

Unable to reverse the ship's course, Kirk and Tor interrogate Spock in an impromptu hearing, in hopes of finding their next course of action. Spock insists on an immediate court martial trial; when they resist, he points out that Pike, though injured, still qualifies to serve as the third requisite officer in the panel of judges. Pike demonstrates his ability to communicate "yes" and "no," and Kirk is persuaded to proceed. Spock immediately pleads guilty to charges of kidnapping, mutiny, and treason. Tor is shocked, and demands to know why Spock has thrown his life away. Her question, on record, gives Spock the right to present evidence in support of his answer.

/ the Bridge of the Early Enterprise

Spock presents a mysterious virtual reality record from 20 years ago, when Pike commanded the Enterprise, with Spock as Science Officer. The younger Pike, instructing his crew, impatiently refuses to follow a distress beacon that, being 18 light years away, has a low chance of success, and puts an already damaged ship and injured crew at risk. We learn that a recent conflict on Rigel 7 was nearly devastating.

Scene 2: Young Pike's Quarters on the Early Enterprise

In conversation with ship's doctor Catherine Boyce, Pike reveals he is contemplating resignation. She questions him further, and his answers suggest that he has never fully mourned the death of his fiancée Vivian, six years prior. He resists further discussion, but conquers his anxiety and decides to chance a belated rescue on Talos IV.

/ Courtroom on the Enterprise

Tor disputes the value of the evidence, but is outvoted, and the hearing is scheduled to continue.

Scene 3: A Survivors' Camp on Talos IV

A group of humans in tattered clothing are gathered in a circle, and begin to sing a hymn exalting the earth, from which they have long been cast away. Following the source of the distant beacon, Pike, Boyce, and Spock arrive near the site of this ritual, interrupting the singing of the suddenly overjoyed survivors. During introductions Boyce is alarmed at the perfect health of the humans living so long in these conditions. Pike is struck by the sight of Vina, who is likewise in rapture at the sight of her rescuer.

To help explain the survivors' unusual vitality, Vina demonstrates vents of gas that appear to serve as a kind of fountain of youth. But when Pike inhales from one of them, he collapses; suddenly all the castaways disappear. Strange Talosian creatures emerge suddenly and pull Pike's body into a hidden doorway in a rock outcrop.

/ Courtroom on the Enterprise

Uhura interrupts Kirk, Tor, and Spock's evaluation of the VR with an urgent message: Starfleet Command, having determined the Enterprise's course toward Talos IV, strips Kirk of his command, and directs Tor to place Spock in confinement, and abort the ship's course. Spock refuses Tor's orders to release the ship from manual control. As he is taken away by security, he begs Kirk to view the remainder of the evidence.

Scene 4: Courtroom

Reacting to their ongoing conflicts, Kirk tries unsuccessfully to regain a connection with Tor, invoking their past with a sense of hope for the future. She remains cool, and the remainder of the court returns to hear Spock's conviction (why?). When asked if he has anything further to add to his case, inexplicably, the holovision activates. When Tor tries to disengage it, Spock proclaims ignorance as to the source of the records, and turns to Pike. Tor asks if these images are from his own mind, and Pike affirms. This time Kirk protests, but Pike and Tor outvote him this time, reminding Kirk that Pike is the senior officer aboard.

/ Pike's Cage on Talos IV, and an Illusion of Riegel 7

Pike awakes to find himself a prisoner in a cage. An unfamiliar race of Talosian captors makes its presence known. Though he cannot see them, he can read their thoughts, and they read his, taking information and evaluating it empirically, registering his base instincts and impulses. Soon he is proclaimed suitable for the “next phase” of an experiment.

Suddenly Pike is outdoors, near some battle-torn medieval castle, compelled to defend Vina from a humanoid monster she calls a Talar. **Pike knows he is experiencing an illusion, but Vina reminds him that real pain can be part of his illusion.** Pike narrowly defeats the Talar, and then finds himself instantly back in his cage, now with Vina.

Scene 2: Courtroom

With Vina tending to Pike’s wounds on screen, Kirk timidly asks Pike how the testimony is relevant to Spock’s conviction. Tor protests that Pike cannot answer questions except in the affirmative and negative. But before Kirk can counter, Boyce speaks from the holovision, about the nature of the Talosian illusion. “Is she speaking with us?” Tor asks, and the answer is never clear, but all are transfixed as she appears to explain Pike’s experience...

Surface of Talos IV

Boyce, young Spock, and an Enterprise Engineer are on the planet’s surface, discussing the Talosian illusion and its ramifications. They communicate with lead engineer Montgomery Scott and work to set up a photon canon, in spite of their instincts it won’t work.

/ Courtroom

Uhura interrupts the trial again, asking to put Starfleet Commander Mendez on the screen. Mendez, angered, asks Tor why her course has not changed, and why communications persist between the Enterprise and Talos IV. Kirk and Tor are shocked at the news, and ask Pike if he intended to subject them to a Talosian illusion? He answers no...then Tor tries unsuccessfully to block the transmission.

The past crew of the Enterprise is seen and heard in the background, trying to break through the rock outcrop to rescue Pike from his Talosian abductors. As young Pike’s past struggles project on the screen above them, Kirk, Pike, and Tor stand helpless to resist their own path toward their fate on the planet.

Scene 5: Pike’s Cage

Vina and Pike discuss their purpose for being in the Cage. Pike insists he cannot imagine living in a virtual reality, physically bound and dormant, free only in thought and perception. But the keepers of the cage plunge them one more time into a new world; Pike is confronted by the Montana landscape he knew with his lost wife. Pike is distraught, and Vina knows too well that she cannot succeed by trying to emulate Pike’s past happiness, but she reveals that her life depends upon it.