



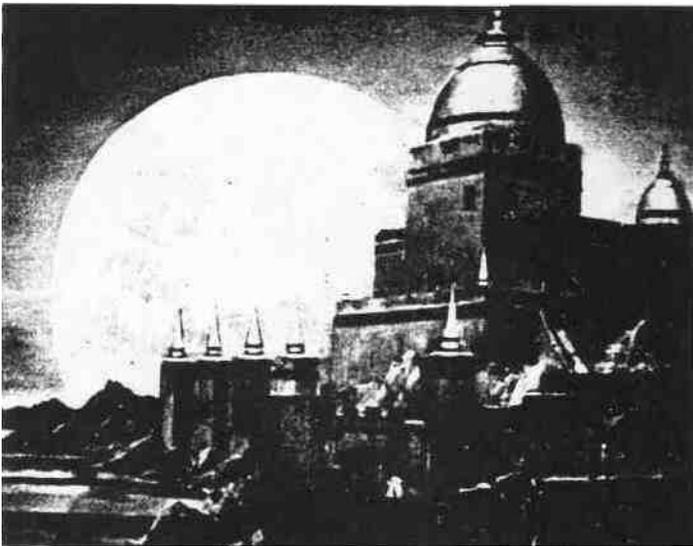
Vina leads Pike up a short rocky incline where she turns to him and says, "Don't you see it? Here and here," as she gestures toward empty air and barren rocks. Pike looks more puzzled by the minute.

"I don't understand," he replies.

"You will," she responds cryptically, "you're a perfect choice."

Upon uttering those words Vina vanishes into thin air!

Suddenly the rocks in the side of the mountain part and a door appears. From it steps two alien forms who spray Pike with some type of gas before he has a chance to react. Pike collapses and the aliens drag him into an elevator, but not before he is spotted by one of the landing party who lets out a cry of alert. At the same time the encampment, which was an illusion all the time, vanishes. The crew try blasting the mountain with their phasers but with seemingly little effect. Spock reports that it was a trap, that the captain is gone.



Pike awakens in a cage which is part of a much larger menagerie of animals and creatures from other worlds. The keeper of the menagerie and some other Talosians observe Pike and his confusion at being able to read their thought transmissions. They consider his intelligence shockingly limited. The Talosians "state" that they will soon begin the experiment.

The Talosians can read of a recent death struggle Pike had. They decide to begin with that, but giving Pike something more interesting to protect.

Pike is examining his prison when suddenly it seems to vanish to be replaced by Rigel 7. Pike realizes that it's an illusion, that the Talosians have reached into his mind and taken somewhere he's been, only this time the girl, Vina, is there, just as she was at the encampment. She insists they must hide and an angry roaring indicates it's a good idea.

"Longer hair, different dress, but it is you, the one the survivors call Vina, or rather the image of Vina. But why you again? Why didn't they create a different girl?"



The barbaric creature, which seems to be looking for them, shuffles into the courtyard.

"Quick," says Vina, "if you attack while it's not looking!"

"But it's only a dream!"

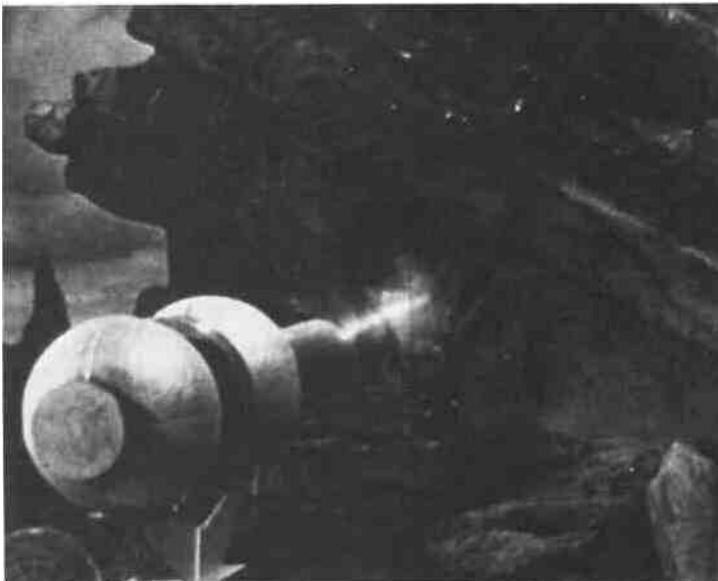
"You have to kill him as you did here before."

"You can tell my jailers I won't go along with it. I'm not an animal performing for its supper," Pike angrily responds.

"It doesn't matter what you call this. You'll feel every moment of what is happening!"

Reluctantly Pike engages it in battle and after a bitter struggle in which he finally kills it when it threatens Vina, it ends, the illusion fades.

Pike begins to suspect that Vina may be real when she returns to the cage with him. He questions her and when she lets slip that she is real, that they're like Adam and Eve, she suddenly screams to the air, "No! Don't punish me I'll die!!" and vanishes.



Meanwhile, Number One has taken command and had a Phaser cannon set up on the planet's surface to blast through to where Pike was kidnapped. It is tapped to the ship's power and although the noise of its blasting is deafening and the very sky seems to reflect the explosions and their power, the mountain only looks slightly scorched.

"The top of that knoll should have been sheared off the first second," says Number One.

"Maybe it was," the doctor responds, "It's what I tried to explain in the briefing room. Their power of illusion is so great we can't be sure of anything we do, anything we see."

Pike is sleeping in his cage when he hears a noise and finds a vial of a protein complex has been placed in his cage. Pike sees the Keeper standing outside his cage. He threatens to starve himself to deny the Talosian's their game when the Keeper demonstrates what it is to be punished. Suddenly Pike is in a blazing inferno, surrounded by fire and pain. He screams in anguish at the scalding temperatures when it suddenly ends. Pike drinks the vial.



Spock has decided that the Enterprise is powerless against the Talosians. He orders the ship to leave orbit and go for aid. But before the crew can respond the power fades from the bridge leaving them helpless. At the same time they notice that some force is going through the ship's library computer at incredible speed.

Meanwhile, Pike has found himself at a picnic. He looks around, at the city in the far distance, and then at the horse which seems to look familiar.

"They read our minds very well. Home, anything else I want, if I co-operate, is that it?"

"You're home. You can stay if you want."

"But we're not here! Neither of us! We're in a menagerie, a cage. I can't help either of us if you won't give me a chance. You told me once that they used illusions as a narcotic. They couldn't even repair the machines left by their ancestors. Is that why they want us? To build a colony of slaves? Back in my cage it seemed for a couple of minutes that our keeper couldn't read my thoughts. Do emotions like hate block off our mind from them?"

"Yes, they can't read through primitive emotions, but you can't keep it up for long, I've tried! They keep at you and at you year after year, tricking you, punishing you. And they won. They own me. I know you must hate me for that."

"No, I don't hate you. I can guess what it was like."

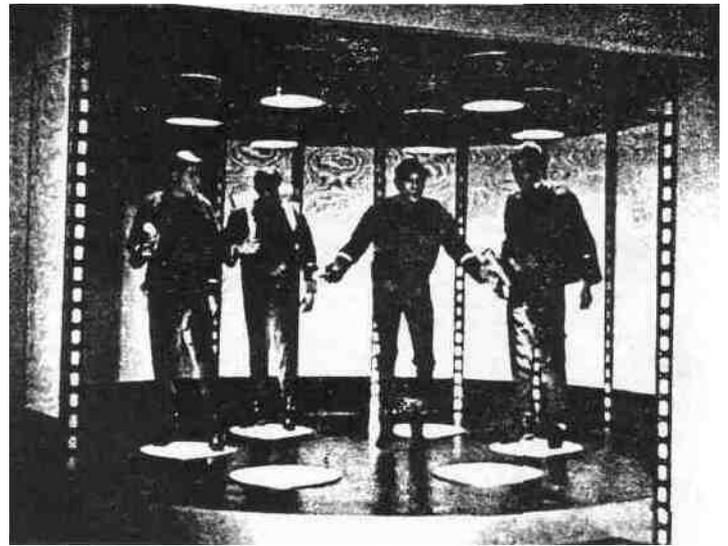
"That's not enough. Don't you see? They read my thoughts, my feelings, my dreams of what would be a perfect man, and that's why they picked you. I can't help but love you."

"If they can read my mind then they must know that I'm attracted to you. I was from the very first moment I saw you in the survivors' camp. You were like a wild little animal."

"I'm beginning to see why none of this has worked for you. You've been home and fighting on Rigel, that's not new to you either. A person's strongest dreams are about what he can't do. Yes, a ship's captain, always having to be so formal, so decent and honest and proper. You must wonder what it would be like to forget all that."







Strange evidence from the past. How the Talosians, planning to breed a society of human slaves tempted Captain Pike with the Earthwoman they held in captivity, and as she appeared to him in many forms, each more exciting than the last, Pike was beginning to weaken.

Pike attempts to leave the arena area, but when he turns he finds Vina, as the green Orion slave girl, staring at him seductively.

On the Enterprise, Number One is addressing the landing party.

"Well, you all know the situation. We're hoping to transport down inside the Talosian community."

"If our measurements and readings are an illusion also, one could find oneself materialized inside solid rock," observes Mr. Spock.

The transporter is engaged but only the two female members of the landing party beam down, leaving Spock and the others startled at the turn of events.

Number One and the Yeoman materialize inside Captain Pike's cage. Upon seeing them Vina screams in frustration, "No, let me finish!"

"It's not fair," says Vina, "you don't need them."

Pike grabs one of the Laser sidearms and tries it on the cage but with no result. Number One also finds that the communicator won't function. Pike grabs all the Lasers and throws them in one corner of the cage while his mind fills with thoughts of hate for the Keeper.

The Keeper addresses them through the cage and says, "Since you resist the present specimen you now have a selection."

"I'll break out of this zoo somehow and get to you! Is your blood red like ours? I'm going to find out! All I want to do is get my hands on you."

"Wrong thinking is punishable. Right thinking will be as quickly rewarded. You will find it an effective combination," observes the Keeper as he punishes Pike once more.

The women recoil at the awful pain they see in Pike's face.

"No, don't help me. I have to concentrate. They can't read through hate."

