by [Dave Biggins](#)

FORWARD

Barbarians at the Gate is an adventure designed for ***Star Trek: The Next Generation Role Playing Game***. In this adventure, the players role play an Away Team sent to recover a Federation Survey Team.

The Survey Team was investigating TSA 40270-103, an ancient Tkoni Space Station orbiting Altair VII, a Class J Gas Giant. Back when the Tkoni Empire was thriving, the station served as a customs house for any ship approaching their colony on Altair III.

It was staffed by a single hologram named Portcullis whose job it was to interview petitioners to the Tkoni Empire. In defense of the station was a Thought Maker designed to trick petitioners into thinking Tkoni defenses were stronger than they actually were.

The Tkoni Empire passed away and what is now referred to as TSA 40270-103 fell into disuse.

Four years ago, Altair collapsed into a white sub-dwarf. Stellar matter was spread through the whole system annihilating Altair III and irradiating the atmosphere of Altair VII. The EMP put out by the collision damaged the circuitry of the station and altered Portcullis' personality from cautious to downright paranoid.

When the survey team reactivated the station, they signed their own death warrants. The hologram took control of the Thought Maker and took out the Survey Team slowly and methodically.

One of the survey members, Chief Lynch, was a survivor of the Battle of Wolf 359 with a deep seated fear of the Borg. Portcullis used the Thought Maker to play on his fears until he reduced Lynch to a raving mad man.

As the Thought Maker did its work on Lynch, Portcullis turned his attention to Shimona. He knocked out the Chief Petty Officer and assumed his likeness. That done, he promptly jettisoned Shimona into space.

When Lynch, in a fit of mad rage, vaporized Chief Black, Shimona/Portcullis killed Lynch. The Thought Maker made LT Bingham believe that that Shimona/Portcullis had his phaser set on stun.

Portcullis then dispatched LT Bingham at his leisure.

Three weeks later, the U.S.S. *Hood* (or whatever ship you are using in your campaign) arrives to pick up the Survey. Portcullis is ready and waiting…

CAMPAIGN NOTES

I designed this episode for my own series. The characters include one from Command, Science, Medical, and Security. This should not effect play too greatly so long as the characters have some technical

background.

None of the characters in my series are Psionic. If your series includes characters with a strong psionic background you might want to "up" the strength of the Thought Maker a bit.

CAPT DeSoto and LCDR Torres (my series' NPC captain and first officer) can be replaced by your own command staff. I would strongly recommend play testing Portcullis against your players' characters ahead of time to gauge and adjust his strength. You'd want the final battle to be a tough fight but you don't want Portcullis to mop the floor with them in the first round.

I'm very lucky to have some creative players who come up with solutions that I don't think of. I've included some of these alternate solutions in paragraphs preceded by the word "NOTE".

Barbarians at the Gate is yours. Have fun with it!

PART I: U.S.S. *HOOD*
Captain's Log, Stardate 45047.2: We have been sent to Altair VII, a Class J Gas Giant. Orbiting the planet is TSA 40720-103, an ancient Tkoni orbital space station. A Starfleet team has been there for the past month analyzing the ancient technology inside. Due to the station's decay in orbit, we have been sent to retrieve the team and the data that they have collected.

SCENE: Bridge, U.S.S. *Hood*
The main viewer shows a large "wheel" with four spokes leading to a central hub. Its orbital decay is obvious owing to the fact that planetary gasses are being drawn into the station's rotation.

Captain DeSoto will order the Conn to establish a parking orbit in conjunction with the station. This will be a Routine (5) Shipboard Systems (Flight Control) Test.

He will then tell his Communications Officer to hail the orbital space station. This is a Routine (3) Shipboard Systems (Communications) Test. A failure or a success will not establish a communications link. A success will, however, indicate that they are being jammed.

CAPT DeSoto will then tell Tactical to scan for life signs and Science to analyze the planet's atmosphere. Both of these are Routine (4) Tests in Shipboard Systems (Sensors). Tactical will detect no life signs. Science will find that the upper atmosphere consists of highly ionized gasses that could interfere with transport, sensors, and communications.

CAPT DeSoto will then tell LCDR Torres to put an Away Team together and report to his Ready Room in 15 minutes. Torres will select the characters to make up his team and will order the Operations Manager to calculate the time until the orbital space station breaks up in the atmosphere. A successful Computer (Simulation/Modeling) Test at Routine difficulty will reveal it to be in four hours.

SCENE: Ready Room, U.S.S. *Hood*
Once everyone gets settled and the meeting starts, CAPT DeSoto will begin his briefing.

"Gentlemen, ladies, there were four personnel assigned to that orbital space station: Lieutenant

Thomas Bingham, the leader of the survey team, and Chief Petty Officers Thomas Black, John Lynch, and James Shimona. Since our Sensor scans were inconclusive, I want you to go into the orbital space station itself and check for survivors.

"Due to the high quantity of ionized gasses in the atmosphere, transport is an unacceptable risk. There are no ports by which a shuttle can dock, therefore we will approach the station EVA. Mr. Torres?"

Mr. Torres takes the stage.

"Thank you, sir. EVA will be dangerous due to the orbital space station's close proximity to the atmosphere. Ops: how long until the orbit completely decays?"

Mr. Torres awaits input.

"Not long, then. We'll tether ourselves together until we reach the station. The main airlock has been modified with Federation technology so getting in won't be a problem. In front of you is the system data pulled from LCARS and if there are no questions, we will suit up in fifteen minutes."

Give players Handouts one and two. Characters will be equipped with Type II Phasers, the appropriate Tricorders, and extra Environmental Suits for possible survivors.

NOTE: One of my players came up with an another idea. He and Torres went EVA to the station with Pattern Enhancers allowing the rest of the Away team to transport to the station. This saved another character (who was Zero-G Intolerant) a great deal of difficulty (and potential embarrassment).

SCENE: Empty Space Between *Hood* and TSA 40720-103
Traveling there by EVA will require a Moderate (6) Personal Equipment (Environmental Suit) Test. Any failures will require the two personnel he or she is linked to make a Combined Athletics (Lifting) Test with a Difficulty equal to the victim's Fitness + Strength.

While traveling, LCDR Torres will inform them that if there are no survivors, the a log of their findings should have been kept by LT Bingham on his tricorder. Finding that tricorder will become a priority.

Once everyone reaches the airlock, Getting the airlock open will require a successful Security (Security Systems) Test at Routine (4) difficulty. Once inside, the atmosphere will automatically reassert itself.

PART II: THE ORBITAL SPACE STATION
The exterior of the Tkoni checkpoint was explained in the introduction. The hub of the station is the Control Room. The exterior of the control room is lined with windows to the outside. Play up on the fragility of the station. Talk about the groaning of the metal getting louder and the intervals between groans shorter.

Once the Away Team is inside the orbital space station, its defenses will be activated. The defenses consist of two levels: mental and physical.

The Mental comes in the form of a Thought Maker: a version superior to those that the Ferengi manufacture. Whenever the Thought Maker tries placing a mental illusion into someone's head, roll a single drama die. The target number for the thought maker is each character's Presence + Willpower + Psi. If the roll is a success, the character will fall for the illusion. Any characters with a Psi attribute of 1 or greater and has the mental defense skill will remain unaffected.

The physical defense is a hologram like Portal in episode 7 of **ST:TNG** "The Last Outpost". This hologram's name is Portcullis.

Portcullis takes the form of James Shimona, one of the lost surveyors. He will be activated with the rest of the defenses.

There first encounter with him will be him coming around the corner firing a phaser. It is a Type I Phaser at Setting 8. Count this as a Surprise. His first shot will miss, however, and combat will continue normally. During combat, "Shimona" will be screaming frantically about "the Borg coming for us all".

Once stunned or otherwise incapacitated, LCDR Torres will identify him as Chief Petty Officer James Shimona. He will remain that way for fifteen minutes unless someone tries to scan him with a medical tricorder. In that event, he will spring to his feet immediately screaming and babbling incoherently.

Scanning him with a medical tricorder will reveal him to have no life signs whatsoever. If told this, he will look confused and state that the tricorder must be undergoing some interference. Failing that, he will immediately vanish and not appear again until the tricorder is found in the central control room.

After the fifteen minutes of unconsciousness or him being calmed, he will become quite lucid and confirm that he is Chief Shimona. If asked about the mission log, he will claim that it was taken away by the Borg with the rest of the crew.

His face then brightens and he says that there are computer systems where each spoke meets the outer wheel. The computer system contains nothing but algorithmic garbage. Anyone who makes a Physical Science (Computer Science or Mathematics) Test at Moderate (7) Difficulty will realize that.

Anyone who voices any concerns about splitting the Away Team up, Shimona/Portcullis will claim that the communicators work perfectly well in the *interior*. Getting the signal to the *exterior* is the problem.

LCDR Torres agrees and spreads the Away Team evenly among the computers. Have anyone objecting to this plan make a Persuasion Test at Moderate (6) Difficulty. If this succeeds, LCDR Torres will compromise having everyone travel in pairs. A failure will mean that Torres will tell the character that they do not have time to go from computer to computer as a group much less stand around and argue.

If anyone asks about the central hub, Shimona/Portcullis will claim that the interior was stripped by the Borg.

With a wolf in the fold, the stage is set. As described above, have the Thought Maker roll against each character. Every character who the Thought Maker succeeds against will see the *Hood* bank out of orbit and warp out of the system. To keep the drama tense, hold off on this sight until the characters are split up from

one another.

Communicating with the ship, due to surrounding ionized gases, is difficult. Reaching the ship will require a Personal Equipment (Communicator) Test at Challenging (9) difficulty.

Preparation can help. A tricorder could be used to boost a communicator's signal. This will be a Moderate Systems Engineering Test (Personal Equipment) at Moderate (7) Difficulty. For every 15 minutes a character spends laying out the system and planning the correct connections, allow him or her a +1 to the die roll.

Some of the illusions will have audible components as well. One of the characters will receive a call from LCDR Torres to go EVA stating his belief that one of the computer nodes is outside.

The character will <u>think</u> that he has re-donned his environmental suit. In all actuality, he hasn't and he will not realize this until the pressure door closes and the count down begins. The character has five rounds to figure a way out of there.

Opening the pressure door from the outside will require a Security (Security Systems) Test made at Moderate (7) Difficulty. Forcing the door open will require an Athletics (Lifting) Test made at Difficult (12) Difficulty.

Alternatively, one of his fellow Away Team members might have caught a glance of him entering the airlock without a helmet. Opening the doors from the outside will require a Security (Security Systems) Test made at Routine (4) Difficulty.

The final option would be to take a phaser to the door. The door can take 20 points worth of damage.

Part III: Portcullis Revealed
The Central Control Room can be accessed via all four spokes of the wheel. The problem is getting through the doors. The door had been locked by Tkoni codes. Of course, this did not stop the previous Away Team. A character can get through with a successful Security (Security Systems) made at Challenging (9) Difficulty. Of course, the door can also be blown away by a phaser with 20 points of damage.

Once through the door, the characters are in for a shock. In the center of the room is a large red globe with veins of silver running through it. Along the walls are is a complex array of computers. On the ground is the body of a decaying human whose skull had been split open. Just outside the corpse's reach is a tricorder.

The red globe is the Thought Maker. The computer array is the holographic generator. Both can take 15 points of damage before being destroyed.

The body is that of LT Bingham. Anyone running a medical tricorder over him will determine that he has been dead for three weeks. With a successful Personal Equipment (Medical Tricorder) Test at Routine (5) Difficulty.

After LT Bingham was killed, Portcullis tried scrambling the log entries. Fortunately for the characters, he did not do a thorough job. Unscrambling the codes will require a Personal Equipment (Tricorder) Test made at

Moderate Difficulty. Once unscrambled, LT Bingham's log is an open book.

"Survey Log, Stardate 45017.2: The *Fearless* just dropped us off at the station when we got to work. Lynch got life support operational in no time at all. Black is inventorying this station like a kid on Christmas. Shimona and I are trying to figure out how to hook up the remaining systems. There's a lot of work ahead of us but some of this stuff could advance our own technology by light years."

"Survey Log, Stardate 45018.9: We got most of the systems up. Shimona found what he thinks is a holographic generator. Black looked over the circuitry and said that the computer that is connected to the generator might actually be able to learn from human interaction. I've downloaded the specs. Lynch, though, is getting spooked. He's claiming that someone is watching us. I'm trying to calm him down but I'm no counselor."

"Survey Log, Stardate 45020.7: We tried activating the hologram. It was a total bust. On the lighter side, Shimona found what looks to be a Ferengi Thought Maker, only a lot more complicated. Black has analyzed some of the stabilizers in this station and he thinks that it's run by gravitons. He promises to have something for me tomorrow. Lynch has taken over inventory. I think he just needs to be left alone for awhile."

"Survey Log, Stardate 4…5…0…2…1…point…7: Black and Lynch are dead. Lynch came in screaming that we were in league with the Borg. Before we could do anything, he drew a phaser and vaporized Black. Shimona fired back vaporizing Lynch. He swears that the phaser was set on stun. I checked it myself. It was. I put out a distress signal but we can't get through the interference. The *Hood* is not scheduled to pick us up for another twenty-six days. I hope Shimona and I can hold out that long."

"Survey Log, Stardate 45022.8: I went over to look over the exterior of the station. I found Shimona floating out there. I'm no medical officer, but he had to have been out there for a couple of days. Who the Hell is this 'Shimona' I've been talking to?"

After the characters hear the last log entry, Shimona/Portcullis will materialize next to the character with the tricorder in hand and state "I really wish you hadn't seen that." In his hand is a large pole-arm.

Portcullis will sneer at the characters.

"I am Portcullis, Protector of Orbital space station 323. I will not stand by and let you pick the bones of this outpost dry!"

Characters might try reasoning with him. Telling him that the Tkoni Empire died over 600,000 years ago will not help. The only possible way to calm him down is by satiating his "ego" by acknowledging the right in his actions. Even then, the odds are against the character. Talking to him that way will require a successful Fast Talk Test at Difficult (12) Difficulty.

If that fails or the character tries to attack Portcullis outright, he will attack. The pole arm does 3+2D6 points

of damage.

Whenever a character "kills" or "knocks out" Portcullis, he will fade away and be replaced in two rounds. Additionally, there will be a number of Portcullis "clones" equal to the number of characters who attacked Portcullis. These clones are nothing but illusions put on by the Thought Maker to distract the characters. The mimic Portcullis' actions but can neither give not take damage. Destroying the Thought Maker will make them vanish.

Likewise, Portcullis will not be permanently killed until the Holographic Generator is destroyed.

Part IV: Escape
Once the Holographic Generator and the Thought Maker have been destroyed, the orbital space station begins to collapse upon itself as it gets dragged into Altair VII. Keep the tension up, as characters rush to the airlocks, tell them to make Athletics (Running) Tests. As they're scrambling to don their environmental suits, ask for Personal Equipment Tests.

With the destruction of the Thought Maker, there will be no more mental illusions. The *Hood* will be there waiting for them.

Of course, going EVA from a space station caught in a planet's gravity well will not be easy. Getting out will require a Moderate (7) Personal Equipment (Environmental Suit) Test. Characters who fail this test could be pulled along by two other characters making a Combined Athletics (Lifting) Test at a Difficulty equal to the victim's Fitness and Strength +2.

The *Hood* will dispatch a shuttle to pick the characters up. If one of the characters get swept into the gravity well of Altair VII, have the shuttle swoop toward the character and give the character an opportunity to clamber on. This will require an Athletics (Climbing) Test made at Challenging Difficulty.

NOTE: Remember in the Surveyor's logs when LT Bingham mentioned that the station moves via gravimetric drive? My Away Team's Science officer did. He activated the station's computers and got the drive working. It tore most of the station apart but it did get them far enough from the station to allow the *Hood* to transport them out.

When they return to the *Hood*, they will see the remnants of TSA 40720-103 crushed by the gravity of the gas giant.

Award each player one experience point for survival; two if they managed to get the data on LT Bingham's tricorder.

Award Renown as follows:

Characters attack Portcullis *immediately* after finding out that he is not who he says he is (i.e.: Medical Scans)	Aggression +1
Characters obey LCDR Torres without question	Discipline +1
Characters question every order LCDR Torres gives them	Discipline -1

Characters try stuff without consulting Torres first	Initiative +1
Characters try to reason with Portcullis (Hey! It was worth a shot…)	Openness +1
Characters came up with innovative ideas how to pull their team's bacon out of the fire	Skill +1

Characters should end the adventure with no more than 3 points of Renown.

NONPLAYER CHARACTERS

Captain Robert DeSoto

Image: Starfleet captain with sad eyes and a receding hairline.
Personality: CAPT. DeSoto is a very mild-mannered man in his early-sixties. He approaches all situations with a quiet and calm bearing.
History: Starfleet has been the center of his life for as far back as he could remember. His most memorable times were of him serving as an Operations Manager aboard the U.S.S. *Intrepid* during the Khitomer Massacre, his time as First Officer during the several brush-fire conflicts with Cardassia and assuming command of the *Hood*. He has had several First Officers come and go to include Commander William Riker. He plans to stay with the *Hood* until the ship (and he) retires.

ATTRIBUTES
Fitness: 2
Coordination: 2
Intellect: 3
Logic +1
Presence: 2
Willpower +1
Psi: 0

SKILLS
Administration (Starship) 4 (5)
Athletics (Climbing) 3 (4)
Command (Starship) 4 (5)
Computer (Research) 2 (3)
   (Modeling) (3)
Culture (Human) 2 (3)
Diplomacy (Interstellar Trade) 1 (2)
Dodge 2
Energy Weapon (Phaser) 1 (2)
History (Human) 1 (2)
   (Federation) (2)
Language, Federation Standard 3
   Portuguese 1

Law (Starfleet Regulations) 4 (5)
Personal Equipment (Tricorder) 1 (2)
Physical Science (Mathematics) 2 (3)
Planetary Survival (Urban) 1 (2)
Propulsion Engineering (Impulse Drive) 2 (3)
   (Warp Drive) (3)
Shipboard Systems (Command) 4 (5)
   (Sensors) (5)
Space Science (Astrogation) 1 (2)
   (Stellar Cartography) (2)
Starship Tactics (Cardassian) 4 (5)
Systems Engineering (Sensors) 2 (3)
Vehicle Operations (Shuttlecraft) 2 (3)
World Knowledge (Earth) 1 (2)

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES
Code of Honor (Starfleet); Department Head (Tactical); Rank (Captain)

Courage: 5
Renown: 63
   Aggression: 6
   Discipline: 19
   Initiative: 10
   Openness: 18
   Skill: 20

Resistance: 2

Healthy		
Stunned +1		
Injured +1		
Wounded +2		
Incapacitated (-)		
Near Death (-)		
Killed		

Lieutenant Commander Manuel Torres

Image: An unassuming Hispanic male of average height and indeterminate age. NOTE: For a better picture of Torres, see *ST:TNG* Episode 1: "Encounter at Farpoint (Part 1)."
Personality: LCDR Torres is a gentleman's gentleman. He has a quiet, easy-going manner which makes

him somewhat more approachable than the captain. A social butterfly, he tries to get to know as many of the crew members as possible.

History: Before becoming the *Hood*'s First Officer, he was the Relief Flight Control Officer aboard the *Enterprise*. He was hospitalized after the first meeting with the Q-entity where he was reassigned to the Utopia Planetia Ship Yards on Mars. From there he has been the Flight Control Officer of countless shake-down cruises.

ATTRIBUTES
Fitness: 2
Coordination: 2
   Reaction +1
Intellect: 2
   Perception +1
Presence: 2
   Willpower +1
Psi: 0

SKILLS
Administration (Starship) 2 (3)
Athletics (Running) 3 (4)
   (Climbing) (4)
Command (Starship) 2 (3)
Computer (Simulation/Modeling) 1 (2)
Culture (Human) 2 (3)
Dodge 1
Energy Weapon (Phaser) 1 (2)
History (Human) 1 (2)
   (Federation) (2)
Language, Federation Standard 3
Law (Starfleet Regulations) 2 (3)
Personal Equipment (Tricorder) 1 (2)
Physical Science (Physics) 1 (3)
Planetside Survival (Urban) 1 (2)
Propulsion Engineering (Warp Drive) 1 (3)
Shipboard Systems (Flight Control) 2 (3)
   (Sensors) (3)
Space Science (Astrogation) 1 (2)
   (Astronomy) (2)
   (Stellar Cartography) (2)
Starship Tactics (Federation) 2 (3)
Systems Engineering (Flight Control) 2 (4)
Unarmed Combat (Starfleet Martial Arts) 1 (2)
Vehicle Operations (Shuttlecraft) 2 (3)
World Knowledge (Earth) 1 (2)
   (Deneb IV) (2)

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES
Code of Honor (Starfleet); Department Head (Flight Control); Innovative; Phobia (Q-Continuum, +3 Difficulty on all tests); Phobia (Sub-Zero Temperatures, +1 Difficulty on all tests); Promotion (Lieutenant Commander)

Courage: 5
Renown: 28
    Aggression: 2
    Discipline: 7
    Initiative: 5
    Openness: 6
    Skill: 8

Healthy		
Stunned +1		
Injured +1		
Wounded +2		
Incapacitated (-)		
Near Death (-)		
Killed		

Shimona/Portcullis

Image: A portly oriental male in his early forties with a weak mustache on his upper lip. He wears a Starfleet issue utility uniform with Chief Petty Officer insignia.
Personality: After his initial "terror", he will calm down to prove himself to be an intelligent man of good humor and enthusiastic attitude. This is all a ruse, of course, to hide his murderous intentions.
History: Portcullis was a hologram designed by the Tkoni to handle routine customs duties and to deal with smugglers. Altair's collapse damaged the Holographic Generator altering his personality. He killed the Federation Survey team with cool precision and assumed the form of Chief Shimona, one of the Survey members. He now waits for other "barbarians" planning to storm the gates of the Tkoni Empire.

ATTRIBUTES
Fitness: 3
Coordination: 3
Intellect: 3
Presence: 3
Psi: 0

SKILLS
Administration (Tkoni Government) 3 (4)
Computer (Research) 1 (2)

Culture (Tkoni) 1 (2)
Diplomacy (Commercial Treaties) 3 (4)
Dodge 1
History (Tkon Empire) 1 (2)
Law (Tkoni) 1 (2)
Primitive Weaponry (Pole Arm) 3 (4)
Systems Engineering (Thought Maker) 1 (2)
Unarmed Combat (Brawling) 2 (3)
World Knowledge (Altair III) 1 (2)

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES
Paranoid with Homicidal Tendencies

Healthy			
Stunned +1			
Injured +1			
Wounded +2			
Incapacitated (-)			
Near Death (-)			
Killed			

HANDOUT #1

TKONI
HOMEWORLD
Unknown.

HOME REGION
The Tkoni are a long extinct race that died out some 500,000 years ago. Artifacts of that civilization have been found spread over several systems resulting in this sector being named after the dead empire. It is theorized that several races in this sector to include the Bandi, Neo-Bandi, Ligonians, Aldeans, and Edo are in fact descendants of that long extinct race.

SUGGESTED ATTRIBUTE & EDGE RATINGS
N/A

SPECIAL OR UNIQUE ABILITIES
Unknown.

SPECIAL OR UNIQUE SKILLS
Their technology was sufficient to create self-aware holograms, drain energy from orbiting starships, and

rumored to be capable of moving planets.

SIZE
Human average according to fossil records.

TRAITS COMMON TO THE SPECIES
Like most imperial cultures, it is theorized that they believed themselves to be superior to all other races and civilizations.

STORY NOTES
They've got their artifacts spread all over the Tkon Sector.

DESCRIPTION
According to fossil records and artifacts, it is believed that they appeared similar to Humans.

HANDOUT #2

PLANETARY TEMPLATE

Planet Name: Altair VII
Class: J
System Data: Altair VII has two large moons.
Gravity: 6G, estimated due to the planet's gaseous nature.
Year & Day: 831/56
Atmosphere: Hydrogen-Helium with a significant amount of Cobalt. High Pressure.
Hydrospere: 0%
Climate: Unknown.
Sapient Species: None
Tech Classification: N/A
Government: N/A
Culture: N/A
Affiliation: N/A
Resources: Hydrogen-Helium gasses suitable fuel from primitive space fairing propulsion systems.
Places of Note: TSA 40270-103, an ancient Tkoni orbital platform.
Ship Facilities: None
Other Details: Altair was a Type K main sequence star that collapsed into a white sub-dwarf four years ago. The collapse sent stellar matter throughout the system destroying several of the smaller worlds (to include a Class M world, Altair III). Some stellar matter hit Altair VII irradiating the atmosphere.