

Memory ★ ICON

Prelude to Reflection

by [Dave Biggins](#)

FOREWORD

Prelude to Reflection is an adventure for **Star Trek: The Next Generation Role-Playing Game**. It is an adventure when the heroes of your series meet their counterparts in the Mirror Universe. It is also a historical link (non-canon, of course) between the mirror universe portrayed in the original series and Deep Space Nine. I have also borrowed a great deal from Diane Duane's novel *Dark Mirror* (except for the dolphin...I abhor cute).

Owing to the fact that the main non-player characters are the mirror versions of the player characters, no pre-generated NPCs are provided. Instead, five roles are presented for you, the GM, to adapt to your own series.

- **THE BRUTE:** This fellow will be the ship's captain regardless of his or her position in this universe. Select the character whose fitness and intellect is the greatest. His or her Fitness modified by Strength should be at least three. A high Intellect is also desired, but not as critical as Fitness.
- **THE DUPE:** This should be the mirror of the character most used to taking orders. Alternatively, it could be the character of the player who always seems to suffer from lousy die rolls (in my experience, there's always one in every group).
- **THE SADIST:** If one of the characters in the group portrays the ship's doctor, this would be the ideal role. A science officer with a background in life sciences could work too.
- **THE MACHINIST:** This role is meant for the mirror version of the ship's engineer or science officer.
- **THE SACRIFICE:** This is the mirror version of the highest-ranking character. If he or she has been selected for another role, go down the chain of command until the character is determined.: This is the mirror version of the highest-ranking character. If he or she has been selected for another role, go down the chain of command until the character is determined.

"What If I Have Less Than Five Characters in My Series?"

Welcome to the club. NPCs can take up those roles unfilled by characters. The most critical roles should still be based on the player characters. The roles listed above are in order of criticality. **THE SADIST** and **THE MACHINIST** can be merged together with some extra skills.

"What If I Have More Than Five Characters in My Series?"

You are a lucky GM. Warp the remaining character's personalities to the extent that they would fit in with the mirror universe. I highly recommend reading the essay [Running Adventures in the Mirror Universe](#) by [Molotov](#) and [Jordan H. Orzoff](#) for inspiration.

Creating that Mirror Universe NPC

Strictly speaking of statistics, there are no major differences between the PCs and NPCs and their mirror counterparts. Owing to the prevalence of knives in that reality, add the skill Primitive Weapons (Knives) at skill level 1 (2). If the PC already has this skill, alter it in accordance with the character creation rules in the Core Rulebook.

To balance this out, add three points of Rivalries and Sworn Enemies to the mirror character's list of Disadvantages. This reflects

the rather factitious nature of the mirror universe.

Plot Synopsis

The Terran Government made sweeping reforms to its government and things went down hill from there. The Cardassians and Klingons, sensing the newfound weakness, united and promptly invaded them.

The Empire's fleet was shattered and the remaining vessels were left to survive by means of piracy. One of such ships is that of the mirror characters'.

THE BRUTE, reading the past history of the Terran Empire, learned of another universe where his ship and crew could possibly survive (and exploit). He had **THE MACHINIST** design a confined ionic beam to punch a hole into the current reality.

Starfleet will notice this and send the character's ship to investigate this phenomenon. **THE BRUTE**, in the meantime, discovers that there is a combined Klingon-Cardassian Task Force coming for him. To buy some time, he sends out all his shuttles led by **THE SACRIFICE** with the promise that they will be transported back once things get hot. This is a promise that he or she does not intend to keep.

Following that, **THE BRUTE** notices the characters' ship at the other end of the rift. After some modifications made by **THE SADIST** and **THE MACHINIST**, he or she has **THE DUPE** transported to the characters' ship on orders to set a time bomb to the other ship's matter-antimatter converter. In the event that that fails, **THE DUPE** is unknowingly equipped with a fail-safe device that would hopefully wipe out the ship's population.

Sooner or later, the characters will be transported onto the mirror ship. They learn of what is going on the alternate universe and in the process of possibly trying to disable the confined ionic beam, get captured.

The ranking character will be brought to **THE BRUTE** while the next ranking character has an appointment with the agony booth courtesy of **THE SADIST** and **THE MACHINIST**. **THE BRUTE** will request political asylum for him and his ship and a decision will have to be made quickly because the Klingon-Cardassian Task Force is rapidly approaching.

Time Table

This adventure runs along a very tight timetable that the GM will have to monitor closely. The adventure runs an hour in scope. The players will learn that their goal is to close the portal between the two universes before the Task Force arrives.

H-Hour	Ship begins scanning ionic cloud.
H+9 minutes	THE DUPE transports onto the ship and is promptly intercepted.
H+15 minutes	THE DUPE succumbs to the biological failsafe.
H+21 minutes	The biological failsafe spreads through the ship unless properly contained.
H+45 minutes	THE SACRIFICE engages the Task force and is killed.
H+57 minutes	Rift is large enough for mirror ship to enter PC's universe.

H+60 minutes	Task Force arrives.
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Dedication

This adventure is dedicated to Eric Brennan. You got your mirror universe adventure! My next adventure is to make a sequel of "Up the Long Ladder." I don't remember who challenged me but I do remember the challenge!

PART I: INTRODUCTION

"Captain's log, Stardate 45245.8: We have been diverted from our mission at Selay to investigate a rapidly expanding cloud of ionic gas two light years from our current position. I have assigned the bulk of the work to my science department and look forward to a detailed report."

Bridge

Scanning the cloud should be left to the science department. The scanning is reflected in an Extended Shipboard Systems (Sensors) Test. Each roll represents three minutes of research. As rolls are made, tabulate the results. Any failures (two or below) result in one point being subtracted from the total. In the event that the player rolls all ones, subtract five. Let the player roll as many times as he or she likes, but keep track of the time. Provide the character information in accordance with the totals below.

4	The expansion of the ionic cloud is anything but natural. Something in the center is displacing the atoms of the ordinarily inert gas.
11	In the process of scanning, a lot of the ionic interference is filtered and there seems to be a probe near the periphery of the cloud.
21	At this point, the source of the molecular displacement is discovered. Apparently there is a spatial rift in the cloud's center.
34	The source of the rift appears to be a starship opening it from within.

This Extended Test should be more than a simple die rolling exercise for the player. It could serve as a reminder that he or she is not the only science officer on board. Many hands make light work and getting some of the NPC science officers involved for a combined test might not be a bad idea. At the same time, don't let the player go overboard. While a Starfleet vessel has many resources at its disposal, they are by no means limitless. Below are some vantages where the cloud can be observed.

- Long Range Sensors
- Lateral Sensors
- Navigation Sensors (after a big fight with the Conn)
- Shuttle Sensors

Various probes can be used to enhance the die result also.

Assume one science officer per resource. The science officer (or whoever is in charge) might enlist some help from other departments. When the probe is detected, he or she might want to have Engineering transport it aboard. Alternatively, Tactical might pull it on board with the tractor beam. The bottom line is that the science officer shouldn't have to do it alone. If the player doesn't realize this, some friendly advice from the Captain or First Officer might set him or her in the right direction.

If the probe is brought aboard and examined, they will be shocked to discover that except for a few modifications, this is a Starfleet issue probe!

After the total reaches 34, characters might want to examine the ship inside the rift. Due to the lingering ionic interference, the Shipboard Systems (Sensors) Test should be made at Moderate (7) Difficulty. A success indicates that except for a great deal of battle damage, the ship is theirs. Scanning for actual activity on the ship will require the same test at Challenging (11) A success will indicate that several shuttles are leaving the ship and heading deeper into the rift.

Let the assumptions fly. If they decide to consult the almighty computer for information, listen for any of the following parameters and consult the table below to determine the difficulty of the Computer (Research) Test. The key parameters follow.

- Ionic Energy/Gas
- Identical Ships
- Dimensional Shifts

Parameters	Difficulty
3	Routine (4)
2	Moderate (7)
1	Challenging (10)
0	Difficult (13)

In the event of a success, read the report below.

In 2267, the crew of the U.S.S. Enterprise under Captain James T. Kirk encountered a continuum parallel and existing with our own while transporting a landing party through an ion storm. Virtually everything in this universe is duplicated. The Federation in that reality was a tyrannical empire. During the encounter, Kirk convinced members of the mirror crew that such a government would only ferment a revolt. Whether government reformation occurred or not is unknown.

PART II: CONFLICT

By now the ideas should be flying. Let the players come up with any half-baked theory. If in fact they failed the computer test, the GM might inject a red herring into the story. Perhaps fifty years ago, the *U.S.S. Excelsior* encountered a rift where they faced their future selves? Perhaps one hundred years ago the *U.S.S. Constitution* encountered some Klingons who created a duplicate of their ship? You get the idea...

Any attempt to hail them will only result in static. The mirror ship can hear them. They're just not responding (but don't let the players know that).

If the characters have already determined that shuttles are leaving their mirror ship, they might to track them through the rift via sensors to determine where they are headed. This will require a Shipboard Systems (Sensors) Test at Difficult (13) Difficulty. If this test is successful, they will detect a large group of ships heading in the general direction of the mirror version of their vessel. The characters will not be able to figure out what types of ships they are.

Just as the characters are observing the mirror ship, the mirror ship is observing them. Nine minutes after the characters' ship begins scanning, **THE DUPE** is transported onto the characters' ship with a crude bomb.

Fortunately for the characters, **THE DUPE** sticks out like a sore thumb. His or her uniform is Mirror universe issue. As far as the description of it goes, describe it like the mirror universe uniforms presented in the original series but update them to be proportional to that of the Next Generation. He or she also carries a Type II phaser at setting 9.

Due to some surgical alterations done by **THE SADIST** and **THE MACHINIST**, **THE DUPE** is not feeling all that well. Sensor relays have been attached to his optic nerves so that the mirror ship can monitor him at all times. There is also an organic sac somewhere in his body containing a disease that will kill him and hopefully the crew of this ship in the event that he is captured.

THE DUPE'S orders are to proceed to engineering and place the bomb on the exterior of the dilithium intermix chamber. Once the timer is set, he will be transported back to the mirror ship. Unbeknownst to him, the timer is actually a detonator.

Luckily for the ship, one of the characters on his or her way from one part of the ship to another will run into **THE DUPE**. Once **THE DUPE** realizes that he or she has been spotted, the phaser will be drawn and melee will ensue.

Due to illness, **THE DUPE** suffers the following penalties.

1. **THE DUPE** will always lose initiative. will always lose initiative.
2. There is always a +2 penalty to all **THE DUPE'S** die rolls.

The character should win the fight. In the event that he or she begins to lose, have some security personnel arrive just in time. Alternatively, the mirror ship might activate his biological failsafe and he or she simply collapses.

The humane (and ultimately smart) thing to do is to speed **THE DUPE** to sick bay for medical observation. A doctor conducting a medical examination is reflected in an Extended Shipboard Systems (Medical) Test. Each roll represents three minutes of the exam. As rolls are made, tabulate the results. Any failures (two or below) result in one point being subtracted from the total. In the event that the player rolls all ones, subtract five. Let the player roll as many times as he or she likes, but keep track of the time. In the event that someone does not do the examination in sick bay (like the brig) with a medical tricorder, subtract two from the die rolls. Provide the character information in accordance with the totals below.

4	There are several microscopic sacs implanted in his or her <i>organ of your choice</i> that are rapidly deteriorating. There are also implants attached to the back of his or her eyes.
11	Emerging from the sacs is a virus spread through his body.

Six minutes into the examination, **THE DUPE** will succumb and die. After twelve minutes, the disease will begin to spread. If the doctor analyzes the disease, have him or her attempt a Life Sciences (Microbiology) Test at Moderate (7) difficulty. If successful, the doctor will recognize it as a disease that he or she once combated. Finding a cure (especially if the disease has begun spreading through the ship) requires a Medical Science (Pathology) Test at Challenging (11) Difficulty. The disease does six points of damage (minus Fitness) every three minutes.

All this assumes that there was some disease in the doctor's (or **THE SADIST'S** counterpart's) background. Make what ever modifications you deem necessary but keep it believable. An enraged Mugato bursting from **THE DUPE'S** chest pushes the envelope of credibility in *Star Trek*.

Examining the bomb will require a Material Engineering (Personal Equipment) Test at Routine (5) difficulty to determine what it is and how it's detonated. Examining his or her phaser will require the same test at Routine (3) Difficulty. A success reveals that there are no stun settings on this phaser.

After **THE DUPE** passes away, the crew might want to examine the ocular implants. This requires a Systems Engineering (Medical) Test made at Challenging (9) difficulty to determine that the implants were a visual transmitter.

Needless to say, there are several questions that need to be answered. The answers, most likely, will be found in the mirror ship. The mission will require an Away Team infiltrating the ship, covertly learning of the mirror ship's intentions, and if necessary cutting the ship's access to this continuum.

Characters might point out that sending a man to attempt to destroy this ship is, by itself, a hostile intention. In that event, have the Captain or other NPC point out that they cannot prove that **THE DUPE** was on orders from the mirror ship. Besides that, explaining to Starfleet their actual long-term intentions looks a lot better on a report than "because they're just plain evil."

The characters will be outfitted in costumes similar to that of **THE DUPE'S**. The transporter will require some fine-tuning to push them through the ionic interference but, all in all, it is still doable. Determining where to transport the characters can be determined by engineering from their own deck plans to determine a spot where the away team is least likely to be detected. Communication with the Away Team's ship will be the responsibility of the Away Team to avoid any accidental exposure.

PART III: CLIMAX

When the team finally transports to the enemy ship things will seem to go off without a hitch. No one is present in the area of the ship where they were transported.

Unbeknownst to the characters, they are being monitored. In the mirror universe, paranoia tends to run rampant on the ship and **THE BRUTE** likes to keep one step ahead of potential adversaries. For that reason, internal sensors are cued much higher than normal. Once the Away Team is on board, the mirror ship's shields will go up, trapping the characters inside.

The Away Team will not be apprehended immediately. The time that the characters are on board and what they do is reflected in Surveillance Points. When the characters amass 10 Surveillance Points, a security team will intercept them. The security team and their tactics are described later. Below is a list of how Surveillance Points are tallied:

Every three minutes the characters are on board	1 point
Characters access the ship's computer	2 points
Characters interact with a mirror character	2 points
Characters get into a conflict with a mirror character	3 points

The most direct way to discover what is going on is to consult the ship's computer. Getting a general history after Kirk's encounter will require a Computer (Research) Test at Routine (4) Difficulty. Success will provide them with the same information revealed in the Introduction but with further details.

...After the encounter with Captain Kirk's doppelganger, sweeping government reforms occurred in the Terran Empire. Although the social reformations eased the social burdens, it left the Empire militarily weak. Two of the Empire's rivals, the Cardassian-Klingon Alliance, seized the opportunity and began a massive invasion. Within a month, the Terran Empire fell and Starfleet was reduced to a scattered band of pirates.

Discovering the ship's current mission will require a Computer (Data Alteration/Hacking) Test at Difficult (13) Difficulty. Reduce the difficulty to Routine (4) if the person doing the hacking is the basis for **THE BRUTE**. If successful, they will learn that the mission of this ship is to escape from this universe and into that of the characters'. Apparently, they are firing a confined ionic beam into a weak spot in the space-time continuum. This is opening a portal into the PC's universe. Anyone making a Systems Engineering (Weapons) Test at Moderate (7) difficulty will be able to determine that the control system for such a beam would be located in main engineering.

While the characters are moving about the ship, there are many sites the characters could pass by and witness.

- Vivisection of Klingon or Cardassian prisoners conducted by **THE SADIST**
- A discussion hosted by **THE MACHINIST** going over how ocular implants can be improved upon

- Some poor schmuck in the agony booth

Eventually, a security team will move in on the characters. Have two security officers for every character. As far as Security Officer statistics go, use the Andorian Security Officer Archetype but alter it to reflect that of a Human Racial Template. The team will split into two elements and attempt to out flank the characters. Once that is done, the characters will be ordered to surrender at gunpoint. Some characters participating in the events during the Confrontation may remember that there are no stun setting on these phasers. Unknown to the characters, the security team received some very unusual orders from **THE BRUTE**: bring them in alive.

If characters resist, they will move in for hand-to-hand. The objective of the GM is to take at least one of them prisoner. If the PCs appear to be getting the upper hand, send in an appropriate number of reinforcements. If one or two PCs escape, that is fine. In fact, it could move the adventure along. *Remember that the shields are up and transport is not an option!*

On Ice

Captured characters would be taken immediately to the brig. The highest-ranking character will be taken to see **THE BRUTE**. The next highest-ranking character has an appointment with the Agony Booth (let's face it, a trip to the Mirror Universe wouldn't be complete without one).

The agony booth is kept in the brig for the sake of convenience and is run by **THE SADIST** and **THE MACHINIST**. They are flanked by two security guards whose phasers are set to setting six.

They will let the force field down and order the character to come out under the watchful eye of the two security officers. The characters might decide to make their move then. Remember that this bit of melee could mean the deaths of the characters.

In the event that they don't, the agony booth will do its effects on the character. It will begin with inflicting one point of damage on the character. After that, the damage will double every minute. Once a character is knocked out (or killed if frail), the next character in the chain of command will be used until the first one comes to consciousness (where it begins anew).

The players might want to come up with an escape plan.

Interview with **THE BRUTE**

The character taken to **THE BRUTE** will be in store for an experience that is somewhat less draining than the agony booth. As the character enters **THE BRUTE'S** ready room, **THE BRUTE** is talking to **THE SACRIFICE** by way of monitors. **THE SACRIFICE** reports in a panicky voice that all shuttles have been lost and is begging to be allowed to return to the ship. **THE BRUTE** refuses stating that they cannot afford to bring their shields down for transport and consoles him or her with the fact that his or her sacrifice is for the "glory of the Empire." Following that he ends the transmission and formally requests political asylum for the ship from the PC.

The character might see some problems but **THE BRUTE** doesn't. Any of his past heinous deeds will be simply blown off as "necessary evils" or "bargaining from a position of strength." Furthermore, he or she will be downright baffled to why this should bother the PC. In his or her universe, all the past things he or she has done are the nature of the beast.

A character making a Law (Starfleet Regulations) at Routine (5) Difficulty will realize that only the Captain is authorized to grant asylum on behalf of the Federation. This could be a way to get a message back to the ship. Of course **THE BRUTE** may monitor this call by phaser point.

Only the highest ranking PC and **THE BRUTE** will be present in the ready-room. If the PC decides to take on **THE BRUTE**, it will only be the two of them. Of course, the character will be unarmed while **THE BRUTE** carries a knife and Type II phaser (setting 6).

If the character manages to overpower **THE BRUTE**, allow the character to make a break for an escape. Send opposition the

character's way only if it appears that the PC is dawdling. It's time to free the other characters (unless they've already freed themselves or have never been captured) and save their universe from the mirror.

PART IV: CONCLUSION

Down in Engineering

To complete their mission the Away Team will have two objectives. The first is to shut down the confined ionic beam. The second is to lower the shields so that they may transport away. Luckily for the away team, they can both be taken down in main engineering.

One of the questions that might crop up is that if the ionic beam is shut down, how will they get home? Anyone making a successful Space Science (Astrophysics) Test at Moderate (7) Difficulty will realize that once the beam is knocked out of commission, there will be anywhere from one to three minutes before the inter-dimensional breach closes. This is to keep the characters from thinking that everything is hopeless while at the same time keeping them moving on a tight timetable.

In their favor, security will not be actively hunting them down. With the Task Force fast approaching and the ship trying to make it through the rift, security has other things on their collective minds. Of course, if the Away Team is having too easy a time of this, the GM might have them run into one or two guards to keep them moving.

In engineering, there will be one security guard for every two Away Team members and one Engineer for every player. Have most of the engineers monitor the confined ionic beam. Have at least one by the shield generators.

The security guards will immediately engage the Away Team with phasers on setting six. The engineers will not engage unless someone tries messing with their station. They will defend themselves and their station with knives.

Needless to say, a direct assault might cost the lives of some of the Away Team members. Making their way there via Jefferies Tubes is probably the best answer. Have the first person out of the tube make a Stealth Test at Moderate (6) Difficulty. If successful, that person has one round of surprise on his side. If he or she chooses not to attack and let someone else out before making his or her move, the next person must make the same Stealth Test with a +1 difficulty. This continues and the difficulty rises by +1 with each person. Once someone blows the test, however, the security guards take immediate action and any element of surprise is lost.

Another option would be a site-to-site transport. If successful, this will give the PCs an automatic surprise. The only problem is that they will have to gain control of a transporter room first. Each transporter is manned by a lone security guard (no surprise unless the Jefferies Tube option is taken first).

Shutting down the shields will require a Shipboard Systems (Tactical) Test at Routine (5) Difficulty. Shutting down the Confined Ionic Beam will require the same Test at Moderate (6) Difficulty. Of course, a well-placed phaser blast to each of the consoles could do the trick nicely as well.

The Task Force

Gunning for the mirror ship is a Task force consisting of one *Galor*-class Cardassian warship and a Klingon fleet consisting of one *Vor'cha*-class, two *B'rel*-class, and four *K'vort*-class vessels. It is hoped that the characters are off the mirror ship before they arrive.

Even back on their own ship, the characters are not out of the fire yet. As the *Galor*- and *Vor'cha*-class ships engage the mirror ship, the remaining ships will make a move for the characters' universe. Unless the characters are in a Borg Cube, engaging all of them would be suicidal.

The trick will be to close the portal. Depending on how long it took the Away Team to complete their mission, They might be able to afford the time to wait for the rift to close. If they moved down to the wire, they could close the portal by creating their own confined

beam with a reversed polarity. Realizing this (if the players don't come up with it themselves) will require a Space Science (Astrophysics) Test at Moderate (7) Difficulty. Carrying this out will require a Shipboard Systems (Tactical) Test at Challenging (9) Difficulty. Once the beam is engaged, the portal collapses and the characters can take a minute or two to breathe collective sighs of relief.

Experience and Renown

This adventure is a real meat grinder. Mere survival is worth two experience points. Coming up with brilliant (or at least adequate) strategies is worth an extra experience point as is good role-playing.

Below are possible Renown Awards

Knuckling under to THE BRUTE'S demands	-1 Aggression
Coming up with a solution that completely floors the GM (in a nice way)	+2 Skill
Moving immediately to shut down the ionic beam without attempting to learn about their mirror counterparts.	+1 Aggression -1 Openness
Coming up with the idea of sending an Away Team to the mirror ship	+1 Initiative
Refusing to cede to any of THE BRUTE'S demands	+1 Discipline

There are, of course, other possible Renown Awards that a GM could come up with. They deserve it in this one.

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