

Picard's Wonderful Life

I know that there have been many spins on the themes of *It's A Wonderful Life* and I revisited one of my favorites the other night. In *The Next Generation* episode "Tapestry," Captain Jean-Luc Picard lies in sickbay following a mortal wound sustained during a battle. While clinging to life, the good captain is stands on the threshold to eternity where he is greeted by the wonderfully charismatic entity known as Q. The nearly omnipotent character offers Jean-Luc a choice: spend eternity by his side or return to the past and relive a life defining moment. If Jean-Luc changes the event, Q promises him that nothing earth-shattering will come of it.

The event centers around an incident involving the young, brash, devil-may-care Ensign Jean-Luc Picard and two of his fellow Starfleet Academy friends. The trio is on starbase for one last hurrah before going their separate ways. After a game of chance, Picard's friend discovers that he has been cheated by a rather nasty Naussican and a bar fight ensues. At the end of the fight, Jean-Luc is stabbed through the heart (a feeling he laughs at), requiring him to receive an artificial replacement. Also involved is the relationship involving his female friend which may or may not be a regret.

Will Picard change the course of his life? What will happen if he does? Although he is "just not that important" to the universe as a whole, what changes will occur in his personal life? Or will he simply be lead off to an eternity of what must be his own personal hell with Q?