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LA SIRENA
SPECIAL ISSUE

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TYPE: SPEED FREIGHTER

LENGTH: 85.57 M

CAPTAIN: CRISTÓBAL RIOS

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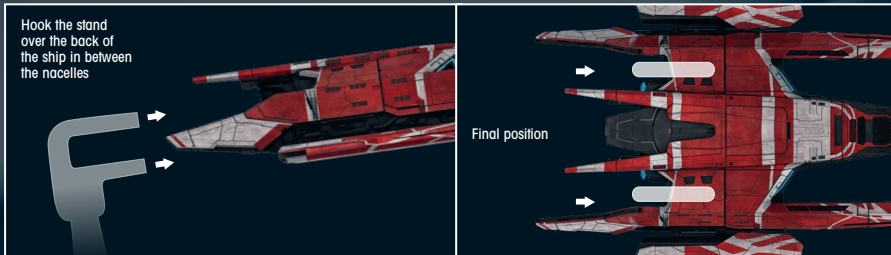
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LA SIRENA SPECIFICATION



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AFFILIATION:	PRIVATE OPERATOR
CAPTAINS:	CRISTÓBAL RIOS
WEAPONRY:	PHASERS

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LA SIRENA

La Sirena was a fast, privately operated cargo ship that was commanded by Cristóbal Rios.

The privately operated cargo ship, *La Sirena*, was a Kaplan F17 warp capable freighter. It was fitted with warp and impulse engines and was highly maneuverable. The interior of the ship was fitted with holoemitters throughout, which the ship's captain, Cristóbal Rios, used to generate a backup emergency holographic crew.

The ship's facilities included a sickbay, crew quarters, a galley and transporter pad, but most of the interior was given over to cargo storage. It was well-equipped for combat with defensive shields and phaser arrays. It was designed to operate in a planetary atmosphere and was robust enough to survive a journey through a transwarp corridor.



◀ This test render shows *La Sirena* from behind. Its designer, Mark Yang, drew inspiration from other mid-sized Starships including the runabouts and the *U.S.S. Defiant*.

Designing the **LA SIRENA**

Rios's ship was a departure: a small, nimble cargo vessel that had been given some serious upgrades.

Most *STAR TREK* series revolve around a giant starship or spacestation the size of a small city. *STAR TREK: PICARD* was different. Rios's ship, 'La Sirena,' was a mid-size vessel, large enough for a crew of five or six. Its technology was from a period we hadn't seen before, and, unusually, it was a private vessel rather than a part of Starfleet.

The task of designing the new ship was given to Mark Yang, who, as he explains, had worked with production designer Todd Cherniawsky before, "I had worked with Todd on 'Transformers,' where I had done all the vehicles, so we had a good relationship."

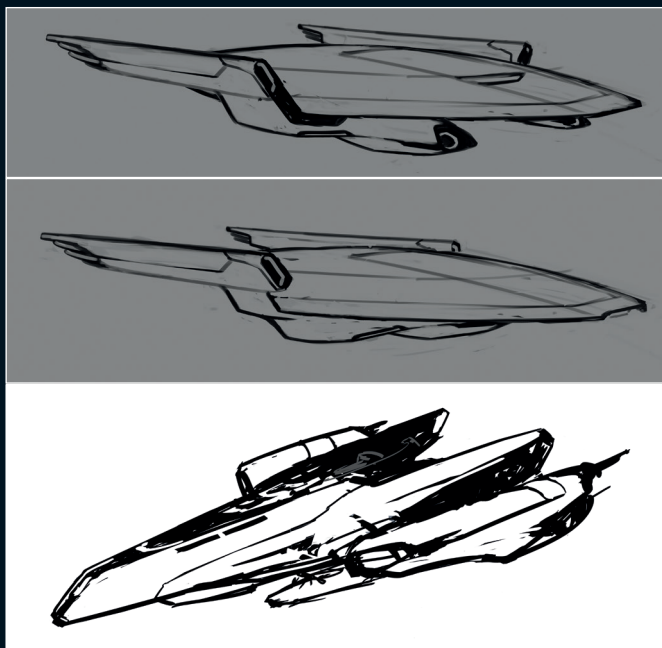
Yang was a newcomer to *STAR TREK* but he describes himself as "a huge fan." He clearly

knows the show's history and talks about the different kinds of ship with confidence. This was just as well since Cherniawsky wanted something that drew on *STAR TREK*'s history while taking it to a new place. "One of the things Todd told me," Yang says, "was that they wanted a ship that was kind of new but that still belonged in the *STAR TREK* universe. They were looking for a direction that felt like a blend between Federation tech and the other kinds of tech in the *STAR TREK* universe."

At the time, the ship that Cherniawsky

described to Yang was called the 'Arana Cosmica' or the Cosmic Spider. "Todd wanted it to be a lot smaller as indicated in the script," Yang remembers. "They wanted it to be kind of a Swiss army knife – to be able to do a lot of different things. The idea was that to begin with this was probably not a military ship, or even a high-powered ship, but then it was modified extensively.

"By the time of *PICARD* it wasn't brand new. I think it was probably constructed a little after the *Voyager* era and then changed. The



▲ Yang's early concept sketches show more conventional Starfleet designs. The last sketch (bottom) which was based on a runabout gave him a direction he thought was interesting.

concept was that it was used for Starfleet adjacent operations. Someone had been using it to do things it wasn't originally meant to do, so every few years it would get enhanced equipment. It would have been a civilian cargo cruiser that they added things to over time. Then someone got a hold of the ship and started to bring everything together, putting in more Starfleet equipment."

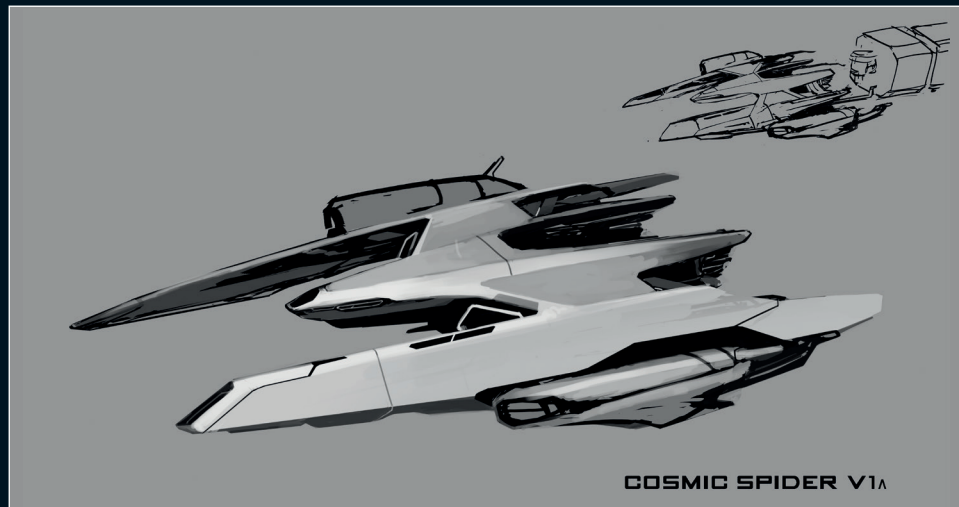
Yang started by sketching out some rough shapes, what he describes as napkin sketches. Some of the early ones looked like traditional Starfleet vessels with primary and secondary hulls, but he only felt he had something when he hit on a design that was more like an enhanced runabout.

FIRST THOUGHTS

"The thing that really struck me," he says, "was that this ship was smaller than the *Defiant*. It's almost like a giant runabout. If you think about the runabouts and the *Delta Flyer*, you can see they didn't go with the saucer shape. They all had this aerodynamic shape and the cockpit was always in the front. Even though this was a bigger ship – more of a bomber size – I thought it would be more like that. I took a lot of inspiration from where they took the *Defiant*. To me that was a departure from a lot of classic *STAR TREK* ships."

Yang produced another napkin sketch that developed the idea a little more. "It's a very small gestural sketch – suggesting what a small, fast, nimble ship that was capable of doing a lot of things, could look like." He then added a slightly more worked up sketch showing the basic shapes and presented it to Cherniawsky.

Even at this early stage, Yang had a clear idea of how his design would work. As he explains, the larger ships like the *Enterprise-D* were so powerful that they could be like



COSMIC SPIDER V1A

► Once Yang had a direction he liked, he produced this more detailed 'napkin sketch' which he showed to production designer Todd Cherniawsky.



sculptural pieces of art. "Those ships can be pretty much any shape you want them to be. The idea is that when you have a ship that's much smaller you can't do that." As Yang goes on to explain, he figured that the warp engines would need to be a certain size. "Any spacefaring vessel in the *STAR TREK* universe is based around the nacelles. I figured for a small ship to be credible, then the warp nacelles were probably going to be the biggest part of the design so they could generate a big enough warp bubble. I wanted them to be the first thing you see, so the two slats running down the sides are the warp nacelles."

FAMILIAR SHAPES

The central body of the ship had a shape that was reminiscent of a twenty-first century aircraft and forms an arrow shape that points forward. "I'm a huge fan of aircraft in general," Yang says, "so I like a lot of speed shapes. Most of my ships are inspired by aircraft and boats. Some of the original *STAR TREK* ship concepts I'd seen had kind of an arrow-shape to them. I thought about where they got the inspiration for the *Discovery*."

Yang explains that the design of the rear of the ship was dictated by the early script outlines that Cherniawsky had told him about. "I think the biggest departure is probably the tail section and that was a functional decision. At

the back there was some kind of industrial component that could be latched on to a cargo module or where additional equipment could be plugged into the ship. Think of it like a truck that hooks on to cargo or another vessel. Todd and the producers liked the fact that this design looked as if it could be the front part of any vessel."

ENHANCED ENGINES

The need for Rios's ship to tow cargo presented Yang with a problem, which rapidly became an opportunity. As he explains, in the *STAR TREK* universe, when ships are traveling at sublight speeds they rely on impulse engines, which are traditionally placed at the back of the ship where they operate like rocket thrusters.

"The typical impulse engine is in the back, but that would be blocked by the cargo so you needed some kind of propulsion on the sides. That's where the pods on the sides came from."

Yang made these additional engine pods look as powerful as possible. "One of the story points was that this ship was beefed up. I wanted to show what an enhanced nacelle would look like. A lot of people would look at the sketch and think the pods on the sides were the warp engines, but I always wanted them to be the impulse engines, and I always thought they weren't part of the original design but were attached afterward."

▲ Cherniawsky approved the basic approach to the design, so Yang started to work it up in more detail. This sketch, produced entirely in Photoshop, was shown to the producers, who gave it the nod.



▲ At one point, we were going to see Picard board Rios's ship at a spaceport. This drawing was done to show the emotional impact of him encountering such a different kind of ship for the first time, and to show the *Arana Cosmica* in scale with a human being.

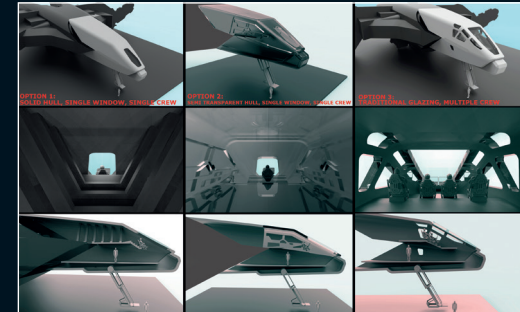
This just left the bridge, which Yang provisionally placed at the front of the nose section. "They had told me that they wanted the bridge to be arranged like the cockpit of a large bomber. I figured that if you had a big viewing port in the front, you could be a lot closer to the action, but of course on a starship, the bridge can be anywhere, and that could have been a deflector dish. I left that open as a possibility."

Cherniawsky liked the general direction of

the sketch and gave Yang the go ahead to take it further. "The next drawing," Yang remembers, "was a more refined version of the napkin sketch. I went in and pulled out a lot of the shapes. This was the first time I did anything that was shown to the producers. I think Patrick got a look at it and we got a positive response, so I kept on going."

As Yang worked up the details, he concentrated on making the ship feel a little more like something we might see in the

twenty-first century, with clearly visible mechanical parts that served an obvious function. "I feel like classic *STAR TREK* had a space exploration feel, where things weren't so refined. I think the capital ships like the *Galaxy* class can be ultra-refined, but the everyday craft should feel a little more practical. If you look at the Klingons there's still a lot going on there with different foils and so on. I thought there could be a little more attention paid to function."



◀ One of the biggest unanswered questions about the ship was how big the cockpit would be. These concept illustrations show different options, with one or several members of the crew on the bridge, and different arrangements of windows.



▲ This picture shows the ship from behind. The central prongs were designed to latch on to cargo modules. The circular ports on either side were airlocks.

▼ At one point, the story called for the ship to drop its cargo to start another mission. This concept illustration shows it decoupling.

Once the sketch had been approved by the producers, Yang remembers that it was shared with the rest of the art department, who would be designing the ship's interiors. "The set designers started asking me questions. We started going back and forth about what the internal volumes would look like, where the engine arrangements were, and where they could put crew quarters.

"I worked with a couple of people designing different parts of the set, mainly Rob Johnson who did most of the interiors, and Forest Fischer, who did a lot of the components. We were a three-man team going back and forth. We had a lot of discussions about how big the volumes

are. The idea is that a lot of the internals would be arranged like a submarine, in a straight hall. At that point we were still talking about bulkheads. There are more rooms and whatnot and different decks."

While work started on the interiors, Cherniawsky asked Yang to produce some visuals that illustrated what the ship would look like in action. "We wanted to see what it looked like up close from the front," Yang remembers. "I like to communicate the feeling of what it would be like to look at everything up close. That's why I do everything in high value: I think it's important to know whether something like this jumps out at you.



"Todd told me that they wanted to do a spaceport shot. I think some of the most striking shots of aircraft are when you are standing next to them. You really get a feeling of the material and how big they are. Even something like an F-14 is massive. We have a ship that's much smaller than we're used to, so we could do that kind of shot where you approach it on the ground."

At the time, Yang remembers, the idea was that Picard would meet Rios at the spaceport and realize just how different his life had become. "We were hoping that we'd have a shot where Picard walked up to a ship after all these years of not spacefaring and saw that this

is a new thing. It's something that should be familiar but it's still new. I wanted to get a little bit of scale."

The drawing that Yang produced has an unusual feel for *STAR TREK*. The ship looks much more contemporary with echoes of large aircraft. At least in part this was because Yang was still experimenting with colors and textures. "The darker materials make it very stealth bomber-like," he nods. "I kept the Starfleet light gray aesthetic for most of the ship, but I wanted to show that the bottom part of the ship is not necessarily Federation at all. It could be human design. There is definitely a Starfleet layer but it's not the entire ship."

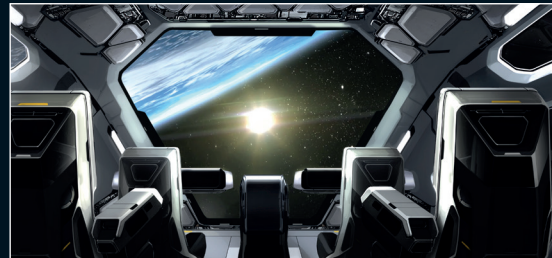
▲ This concept shows the weapons placement. Yang figured that putting them in arrays at the front of the enhanced engine pods would mean they were away from habitable areas of the ship.

▼ Yang added color to the engines, showing the parts of the warp and impulse systems.



INSIDE THE SPIDER

Unlike most Starships, *La Sirena* was designed around a central hall, which was originally going to be packed with cargo. Most of the design work was done by art director Rob Johnson, who provided Yang with renders, which he painted over. Johnson gave the interior an exposed framework that modular rooms were designed to fit into. The cargo would have done the same job, with different-shaped containers made to fit in the voids in the bulkheads. The cargo was never added and Johnson says what you see is “a skeleton without the organs.”



▲ The bridge was always located at the front of the ship in a cockpit that looked out into space, bringing the crew closer to the action.



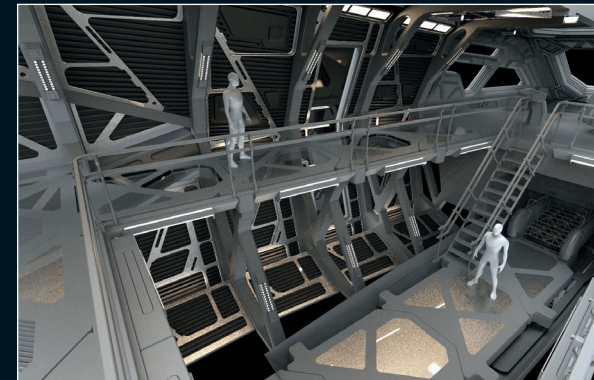
▲ Johnson and Yang wanted the bridge to feel very functional and more like something you might find on a twenty-first-century aircraft or space vehicle.



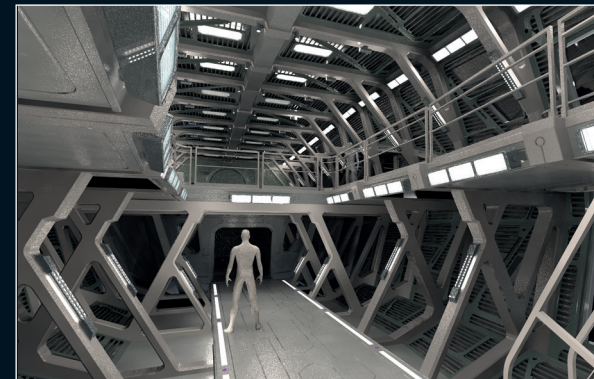
▲ From the very beginning the idea was that Rios's ship would have a smaller, stripped down bridge. Exactly how wide it would be and the arrangement of the seating went through several changes before the team settled on a version with an obvious 'captain's chair.'



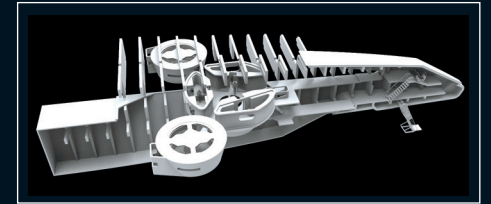
▲ The inside of the ship was built around a large hallway that was originally designed to hold cargo. The living areas were off to the sides.



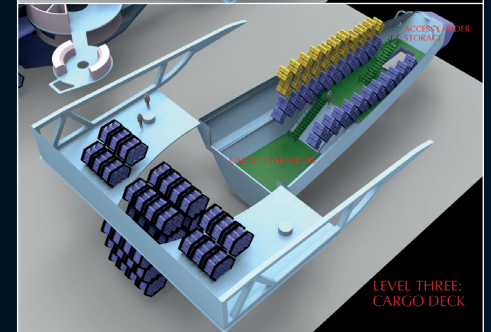
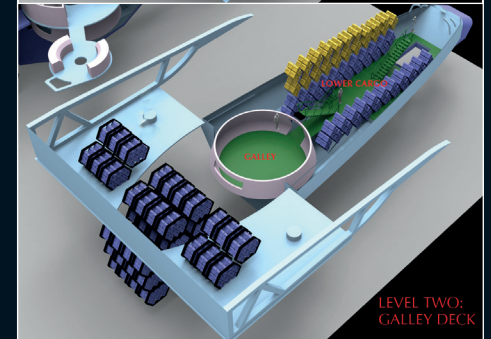
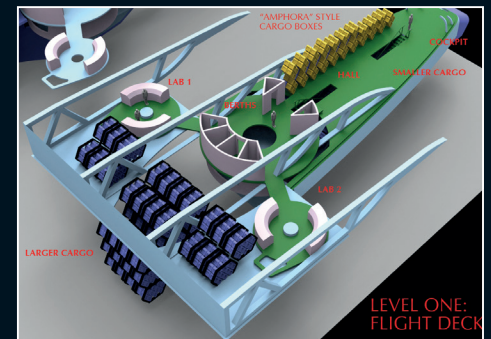
▲ Most of the work on the interiors was done by art director Rob Johnson. The main cargo area was on two levels behind the bridge, with a stairway leading down.



▲ Johnson designed a framework that he planned to fill with a variety of custom-made cargo containers, with different shapes to fit into the bulkhead. He says that if the containers had been there, the ship would have looked very different.



▲ These early models show the layout of the interior. The ship was arranged over three decks, with some of the rooms extending into the wings.



▲ These early deck-by-deck renders differ from the layout that was used in the final version of the sets. In particular the central part of the ship was made wider and the full galley set was never built.



▲ Yang produced these drawings to show alternative color schemes. Cherniawsky wanted to echo the work of designer Chris Foss, so he chose the red version.

When this drawing received a positive response, Yang spun the angles round to work out the rear of the ship in detail. How this looked was dictated by the idea that Rios's ship would be used for hauling cargo. Yang remembers working out how the Cosmic Spider would connect to other modules. "The main connection point, in my head, was the hitch above the cargo bay door that connects to whatever vessel or equipment you attached. There are potential connect points on either side of that. You can attach human size entry ports so you can walk through to whatever cargo you have."

Rios's ship didn't just tow cargo, as most of the interior was given over to storage bays,

which would dominate the design. "They wanted cargo access from the back," Yang nods, "which would take up a lot of the ship since it's so small. At this point Rob Johnson had a pretty solid idea of the interior. It was very much like a submarine corridor with a large door that opens from the back. We had worked out that it would be somewhat above the ground and there would be landing access."

The rear view also showed the engine pods from a different angle. At this point, Yang says, there was still discussion about whether they would be part of the warp or the impulse systems, and he offered up the possibility that they could move. "At one point there was some discussion about whether the impulse engines



would be articulated. I left the design up to the writers so if they had a story point it could be done. But at this time it was undecided."

Once Yang had completed this concept, Cherniawsky asked him to produce another drawing showing what the ship would look like when it was connected to a cargo module. "I think initially," Yang remembers, "there was a

shot of it on a cargo mission. The ship goes on a detour and something happens to it before it joins Picard on his journey. It was going to do one thing and then it was re-tasked to do something else so the cargo was abandoned."

Yang generated two drawings that showed the ship decoupling from a cargo pod and leaving it behind. He added color to his work to

▲ The ship underwent a series of design changes as it and the interior sets were built. The most significant changes involved widening the central section.



◀ John Eaves produced this piece of nose art which was added to the digital model.



▲ These renders show the finished CG model from a variety of angles with its full paint scheme.

indicate the function of the different engines, with red for the impulse engines and blue for the warp systems.

Around the same time, Yang started to think about where he could put the ship's weapons. "The ship was pretty tight in terms of how everything fitted together. Originally, it wouldn't have had more than a couple of phasers to cut things, but then they put big impulse engines in there. The front section of those was actually a weapons bay where they put in more powerful phasers and torpedoes, like you had on the *Defiant*. It made a lot of

sense to me. On the smaller ships there isn't a lot of deck space for phasers. These weapons are pretty powerful and if you get too close to them you're going to start melting stuff. The only other place you could put the weapons is where the deflectors are, but given that phasers are multi-directional, I wanted to put them out of the way. If they do overload you're not going to lose major decks."

The next stage was to make detailed drawings the visual effects team could use to build a model. "I produced some line views. That was the first indication of the actual



◀ Yang also produced some key frame illustrations showing what *La Sirena* would look like crashed on the surface of the androids' home planet, Coppelius.

volume. This," Yang smiles, "is when you start telling the truth of the shapes."

When this was done, Yang turned his attention to the color of the ship. Until now, he explains, he had deliberately avoided specifying it as he wanted to concentrate on the shapes. He produced a series of drawings showing alternative color schemes for Cherniawsky and the producers to choose from. "For some reason red just jumped out at Todd so we gave it a very striking paint job."

LAST CHANGES

At this point, Yang left the *Picard* art department to work on another project. Cherniawsky kept in touch, showing him the progress of his design, which was evolving as the story changed. The major difference involved the size and shape of the interior. In particular, the bridge got wider

and this meant that the central section of the ship was revised to accommodate it. The work was done by the VFX team who were building the model, but Yang rejoined the team to help finalize his design.

"I came back to solve a lot of the issues after they widened the center section. The story dictated that there was going to be a bit more of a traditional bridge. There weren't any big modeling changes. I think we changed the window arrangements. I think that was when they wanted a single hall on the inside."

The art department would make one last addition to the design. It was decided that Rios's ship, now renamed *La Sirena*, would have nose art. John Eaves rapidly produced artwork showing a mermaid that was added to the digital model. *La Sirena* was finally ready for action...



◀ This concept shows *La Sirena* on Coppelius from a different angle.

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