

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

13x01 - "The Recovery Position"

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

and on the *Star Trek* tie-in novels  
by Pocket Books

### **TNG 18x01 - "LOSING THE PEACE"**

Surrounded by endless death reports, Starfleet begins a massive relief effort. Millions have been displaced from worlds damaged or destroyed by the Borg, and need to be found new homes. Choudhury wonders whether it was a good idea to sleep with Worf just for comfort, but Worf is surprisingly un-Klingon about it - he will not pressure her. While *Enterprise* undergoes repairs, Kadhata returns home to Cestus III, desperate to reunite with her family. Picard and Crusher are at the family vineyard, relaxing in the knowledge that the Borg are truly gone. He is called to a meeting of admirals, at which Akaar (who has been made Starfleet C-in-C) recounts the scale of the devastation. He informs them that Starfleet's reconstruction efforts are not working, and asks Picard to become a roving problem solver aboard *Enterprise*. Picard will have wide latitude to handle any crisis he finds, however he deems necessary...

### **TTN 2x01 - "WATCHING THE CLOCK"**

Captain Riker thinks *Titan* and its crew should stay and help the Federation rebuild. Admiral Masc insists the exploration mission is more important - symbolically, politically and tactically. But many have doubts about joining them, Tuvok included. While they repair and recrew, three Temporal Investigations agents - Dulmer and Lucsly (DS9 "Trials and Tribble-ations") plus field agent Meyo Ranjea - interview the crew about the Caeliar's predestination loop and the time-displaced Erika Hernandez. The crew are already tense, but being needled by the DTI pushes them to the point of resignations and transfer requests. Ranjea is the DTI's greatest diplomat, and has met Troi after previous similar incidents, so between them they are able to ease the tensions. Dulmer and Lucsly return to the DTI's head office in Greenwich, but Ranjea stays on board *Titan* as a permanent mobile DTI presence, as they head back out to unexplored space...

### **VOY 11x01 - "FULL CIRCLE, pt 1"**

Captain Afsarah Eden leads Project Full Circle, Starfleet's enquiry into *Voyager's* scientific and cultural discoveries in the Delta Quadrant. Admiral Batiste is impatient for Eden's final report because, with Admiral Janeway no longer around to

block it, Starfleet has finally approved his plan to send *Voyager* back to the DQ. The Full Circle fleet will comprise nine ships, all fitted with slipstream drives, with a mission to investigate former Borg space, confirm they really have gone, and reestablish relations with DQ cultures. Batiste will command the fleet, but who will command *Voyager*? Tom Paris hikes out into the wilds of Canada, hunting for Chakotay. The captain does not want to come back to the world, but Paris insists. Chakotay must undergo psychological evaluation before being handed back his command. But given Starfleet's losses, *Voyager*'s counsellor Hugh Cambridge is the only one available to evaluate him, and the two have never got along...

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1     EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE**

The familiar space station hangs among the stars, with almost every docking port occupied by a variety of civilian ships, freighters, passenger liners, vessels of all kinds.

As we PULL BACK and PAN AROUND slightly, we see that even more vessels hang in space nearby. The entire area is full with them, roughly lined up as if waiting their turn.

As we watch, one ship slowly disengages from the station, backs carefully away, before turning and making its way towards an open path between the arrayed ships.

**2     INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

The station's control centre is abuzz with crew, but for now only two are familiar - Bajoran Militia major CENN at the Ops table and Starfleet Lt (fg) CANDLEWOOD at sciences.

Cenn is a strong focal presence, undoubtedly busy but calm. He checks the readings on one screen, taps a control.

CENN

This is Deep Space Nine control to *Carthage*. You are cleared to depart the area, please continue to follow your prescribed flight plan out of the Bajor system.

VOICE (comm)

Thank you, DS-Nine. *Carthage* out.

Cenn moves to check another screen, taps another control.

CENN

DS-Nine control to *Voralpe*. Thank you for your patience, you are now cleared to proceed to docking port twelve. Please follow prescribed flight plan, and station security will be waiting to greet you.

VOICE (comm)  
About time, DS-Nine. *Voralpe* out.

CANDLEWOOD  
Nothing like being appreciated.

Cenn cuts the line, and looks up to exchange a look of mild exasperation with Candlewood. They are all a bit stressed these days. Then Cenn turns back to his docking controls.

**3     EXT. SPACE**

The first vessel crawls down the clear corridor between the waiting ships. The last ship it passes, set slightly back from the others as if to keep watch, is the *Defiant*.

**4     INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Starfleet Lt (fg) PRYNN TENMEI sits at the helm console, as other crew work the various bridge stations. She enters a command on her console, then looks at the main viewscreen -

**VIEWSCREEN**

- which shows a GRAPHIC of the station and all the ships currently surrounding it. The icon indicating the first ship is just passing the *Defiant* as it emerges into open space and moves off the grid. Tenmei refocuses the display to look at the second ship, now moving out of its previous holding place and slowly approaching the station itself.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Tenmei watches this with some tension. She turns to the man currently occupying the tactical station - Lt (jg) ALECO.

Tenmei then turns to look at the captain's chair - and it is empty. She turns back to her own console, straightening her shoulders and jutting her chin. She is in command here.

**5     EXT. SPACE**

The second ship gradually moves into place, docking at the same port the first ship only just vacated.

6 INT. DS9 - DOCKING BAY

The circular airlock from the newly docked ship cycles open and CIVILIANS begin to flow out. There is no mad rush, more an exhausted trickle of downcast people carrying what few possessions they could grab while running for their lives.

Starfleet SECURITY crew guide these people into four lines, each leading to a PERSONAL SCANNING BOOTH like those seen in the Palais entry halls (12x02 "Read All About It").

Since only one person at a time can step into each booth to be scanned, the lines back up and the room begins to fill. Station security chief Lt Cmdr EVIK NATH stands nearby.

EVIK

Welcome to Deep Space Nine. Please form orderly lines to pass through the scanners. These will confirm your identities and check for any medical issues requiring immediate treatment. My officers will then lead you to your accommodations.

REFUGEE 1 steps forlornly into one booth and stands there while scanning beams pass up and down their body. A GREEN LIGHT presages the booth opening again, and Refugee 1 walks hesitantly out to stand with Vulcan security non-com SEVAK.

REFUGEE 2 is next in line. But their scan results in a RED LIGHT, and Refugee 2 is led towards a different group, this one led by nurse KRISTEN RICHTER. Alarmed, Refugee 2 looks across the room towards Refugee 1. Richter speaks softly...

RICHTER

Please don't be concerned. We're going to take you to the station infirmary and follow up on these scans, make sure you're healthy. Then you'll be reunited as soon as possible. I promise.

Scared to be separated, Refugees 1 and 2 have no choice but to comply as they are led away with their own small groups - Richter leading those who need medical attention through one door, Sevak leading those who don't through another.

As Refugees 1 and 2 share a last glance and then pass out into their separate corridors, Evik repeats his welcoming spiel for the next group filing out of the refugee ship...

**7**     **INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR**

Sevak leads his group of tired, nervous civilians down the corridor, passing numerous other doors through which we can see similarly exhausted and scared strangers settling into rooms, whether they are actual residential quarters or not.

After a while of walking, Sevak stops at another door, and gestures for his group to pass through into...

**8**     **INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY**

Where once we would have seen crates and boxes, now there is, in effect, a Starfleet shanty town. Semi-private booths have been set up, each containing a basic cot and a small closet. As the refugees file listlessly in...

SEVAK

Please take a room. I apologise for the conditions in which we must house you, but the station is near capacity. These quarters must serve until more long-term housing can be secured. Replicators for food and private facilities for grooming are available here...

Sevak gestures to one side of the room, where a series of temporary latrines and a bank of replicators stand. Lt (fg) NOG is working on one of these, its electronic guts open.

NOG

Not yet, they're not, I'm afraid. This entire section had an EPS overload an hour ago, blew out the whole unit's circuits. I'm working on it as fast as I can.

Still barely mustering enough emotion to react to this, Refugee 1 slumps on towards an empty cot. Sevak turns to leave the room, returning for his next group of refugees.

9     **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Another airlock cycles open, and Richter leads her group - containing Refugee 2 - out onto the Promenade. As they file out, they are a little perturbed to see...

...what looks like hundreds of EXTRAS just like them, refugees from a dozen worlds and a myriad species filling the space. It may be busy but it is not happy - they all have the look of people whose entire world has changed in a moment and they have yet to figure out how to process it.

Scared anew by the sheer numbers, Refugee 2 allows themselves to be led down a narrow corridor created by Security bodies to allow the new arrivals to pass safely to the infirmary.

As they walk, Refugee 2 looks across the Promenade and into QUARK'S BAR, likewise busy with bodies but surprisingly un-festive. We can see QUARK himself pour drinks and hand them to customers - running his business efficiently but with little in the way of pzazz or his usual showmanship.

Then Richter stops the group and directs them into...

10    **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

...which is also busy with strangers. Doctor AYLAM, nurse ETANA and chief medical officer JULIAN BASHIR are all on duty, helping a range of patients. Bashir notices...

BASHIR

Ah Kristen, thank you. Please  
bring them through here...

Richter leads her patients through to another room of the infirmary, then turns to go back for her next group. Bashir immediately grabs a tricorder and begins to scan Refugee 2, who remains scared and confused by this entire experience.

BASHIR

As I thought, radiation poisoning.  
(off R2's reaction)  
Don't worry, it's easily treated.  
Had a dozen cases today already.

Bashir reaches for a hypospray, but inspects the readings along its side before using it. He is not happy.

BASHIR

Nurse Etana, we're getting low on hyronalin again. Can you enter a restock request, please? You can use my authorisation.

ETANA

Yes, Doctor.

As Etana moves to do that, Bashir injects Refugee 2...

**11 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE**

The station's commanding officer, Cmdr RO LAREN, stands in her office looking out of the large picture window behind her desk. The view is filled with more of the same varied refugee ships, as far as the naked eye can see.

(NOTE: We should see Ro only from her right side for now - why this is so will become clear in time.)

She considers what this means - more ships fighting for docking places. More temporary beds and mass bathrooms. More sickness and overcrowding. More scared and shell-shocked people torn away from everything they knew.

And no end in sight to it all.

Ro continues to stare out of the window...

FADE OUT

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

FADE IN:

**12    EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

The ice-capped moon that is the Andorian homeworld orbits its blue gas giant parent. Even from orbit, the black smudges of the devastated surface can be seen clearly.

A Galaxy-class ship, the *USS Venture*, hoves into view, in geo-stationary orbit around Andor. The large vessel is also damaged - scars on its flank, one entire segment of the primary hull dark, and one warp nacelle flickering.

**13    INT. VENTURE - SISKO'S QUARTERS**

Captain BENJAMIN SISKO stands at the window of these luxury quarters, the type of room assigned to visiting dignitaries in the Galaxy-class style as seen through TNG. Like Ro, he gazes out at the view beyond, at the damaged planet below.

The door CHIMES - Sisko turns his back on the window.

SISKO

Come in.

The door opens and Cmdr ANXO ROGEIRO enters. The former XO of the *USS James T Kirk* looks tired and run down - he has been working hard. Sisko feels guilty to see this.

SISKO

Commander. Did you need something?

ROGEIRO

I just wanted to give you the latest status update, sir.

SISKO

Is that really your job, Mister Rogeiro? You're not the *Venture's* first officer, and I'm not its captain. I have my own concerns.

Sisko sits at his desk, gathers together the padds upon it, trying to at least look like he was busy doing something.

ROGEIRO

Yes sir. But I would think it's all hands on deck at a time like this. I'm just trying to help.

SISKO

Alright - go ahead.

ROGEIRO

Repairs to *Venture* are proceeding, but slowly. Beyond the necessary work to keep ourselves operating, the captain has prioritised the needs of the survivors on Andor. Uninjured crew from the *Kirk* and the *New York* have been redeployed to the surface, plus any shuttle craft not used in the evacuation.

Sisko cannot help but glance back out of the window.

SISKO

Is there a final count?

ROGEIRO

Estimates currently place deaths in the millions. I'm not sure there'll ever be an accurate final count, at least for the homeworld. We do know, however, how many survived the Borg's simultaneous attack on the Alrond colony.

SISKO

How many?

ROGEIRO

Four hundred twenty two, sir. A civilian vessel called *Kovlessa* was able to pick them up.

SISKO

Four hundred? From an entire planet?

ROGEIRO

Sir, we fought six Borg cubes.

(gestures round)

Precisely one of our ships made it through in one piece. I think four hundred survivors is about as good an outcome as we could hope for.

SISKO

Is that supposed to be a joke, Commander?

(regathers)

I'm sorry - I know you lost people too. Is there any news on Elias?

ROGEIRO

Doctor Ibelna's prognosis remains the same. Captain Vaughn will not survive without life support.

SISKO

Thank you, Commander. Dismissed.

ROGEIRO

Actually, there was one other thing I was hoping you could help me with, sir. Lieutenant ch'Thane?

SISKO

Venture has a counsellor, doesn't she? Why come to me? I barely know the lieutenant.

ROGEIRO

Counsellor T'Khay's appointment book is rather full, sir. And you did both work at Deep Space Nine.

SISKO

Commander... I agree that Mister ch'Thane needs help, but I am not the one to give it. Find someone else. Dismissed.

Stern and unmoving, Sisko clearly wants Rogeiro to go. Seeing he will get no further, Rogeiro turns to leave...

14 **INT. VENTURE - SHAR'S QUARTERS**

Lt (fg) Thirishar ch'Thane (aka SHAR) sits on the couch of this much smaller room, back to the window. He is wearing a *ceara* (Andorian pyjamas) and staring blankly at nothing.

Rogeiro gently places a bowl of steaming food onto the low table before Shar's couch, next to a Starfleet padd that is already there. Shar reacts to none of this.

ROGEIRO

There you go - marsh bison with  
roast *vithi* bulbs. Enjoy.

Shar continues to stare, muscles slack and antennae limp, making no attempt to eat. Rogeiro quietly picks up the padd from the table, gives it a quick glance, then places it back down. It's exactly what he was afraid it would be.

ROGEIRO

Shar... you haven't eaten in days.  
You don't speak, don't even move  
for hours at a time. This isn't  
helping anyone. It's not healthy.

No response. Rogeiro sees again that he is getting nowhere, and turns to leave with regret. At the door...

ROGEIRO

If you need anything, Shar, you  
know I'm only a comm line away.

He exits. Shar remains where he was.

15 **EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE**

Focusing on the command module at the top of the station, although we should still feel the presence of the many *many* refugee ships nearby.

16 **INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE**

Ro sits behind her desk, speaking via the comm screen to Admiral WHATLEY (last seen 12x14 "Duty Calls").

WHATLEY (screen)

I sympathise, Commander. But Bajor is now a member of the Federation, and as such it faces the same responsibilities as any Federation world, including the taking in of refugees from nearby sectors.

Ro runs her hands through her hair... revealing that she no longer wears a traditional Bajoran earring in her left ear.

RO

With respect, sir, please don't "as you know" me. We're well aware of our obligations and we're happy to live up to them. It's not a question of will - it's a question of resources. We're overloaded.

WHATLEY (screen)

It's the same story all over the Federation, Commander. Billions of people lost their homes, in case you forgot. And Bajor is one of a disturbingly small number of worlds the Borg never reached.

RO

I understand that, sir. But we've got people sleeping in cargo bays here. No Federation citizen should be forced to live like this.

WHATLEY (screen)

What about sending people down to Bajor itself? Why are you keeping them in cargo bays when there's a whole planet right next door?

RO

Bajorans have never run away from helping those in need, sir. We've already sent some. But it will take time to set up housing and facilities and supply chains. In the meantime it's all on us.

On screen, Whatley sits back, taking Ro's words on board. But as he begins again, the signal degrades into STATIC...

WHATLEY (screen)  
Alright, Commander. I suppose I  
can take a look at the list and  
see if anyone can...

But the admiral's words are finally lost in scratches and squiggles of interference, and the signal drops.

Ro YELLS at the computer in frustration - just as she was beginning to get somewhere! She launches up from her desk and stomps to the door out onto Ops...

**17    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

...and immediately begins laying into Candlewood while he urgently works his science station.

RO  
Candlewood! What the hell? I was  
just on the comm with Admiral  
Whatley, trying to get some of  
the pressure off our backs.

CANDLEWOOD  
I know, Commander. There's just so  
many subspace comm signals coming  
in and out and filtering down to  
Bajor. The sheer mass is making  
them interfere with each other.

RO  
So make them stop interfering.

CANDLEWOOD  
I can't, sir, not without -

RO  
Fix it, John. It's your job, for  
Prophets' sake. And I don't want  
this happening again, understood?

And she heads back into the office, metaphorically slamming the door behind her. Major Cenn offers a sympathetic look, but Candlewood straightens and gets to work.

CANDLEWOOD

Computer - display all subspace communications currently active or queued. Arrange by category tag, incoming and outgoing.

The various computer screens display a series of charts, which Candlewood inspects. He begins to type commands...

CANDLEWOOD

Okay... allow all existing signals to complete, and then apply new rolling priority codes. Official Starfleet business comms highest, civilian to civilian next...

(regretful)

...and non-official-business Starfleet comms last.

COMPUTER

Working.

That done, Candlewood moves to another panel and begins entering more commands there. Finally satisfied...

CANDLEWOOD

Candlewood to Commander Ro. Your connection with Starfleet Command is now re-established.

RO (comm)

Thanks, John.

(beat)

Good work.

Candlewood allows himself a small smile at a job well done, then he turns back to his station, more solemn and serious.

CANDLEWOOD

Computer, record a message for inclusion in the daily update for all crew.

COMPUTER

Working.

CANDLEWOOD

From Lieutenant John Candlewood, chief science officer, to all crew of Deep Space Nine. The station is now experiencing an unprecedented level of subspace communication traffic. To best help the incoming refugees, their own communications as well as any official Starfleet comms concerning their movements must be given priority. Therefore as of now, all Starfleet officers and crew-persons are limited to one personal message per week.

(beat)

I'm sorry, I know this will come as a blow to those of us who are feeling the need to stay in touch with loved ones these days. But that is the nature of the service - to sacrifice our own needs to help others. One message a week. Make it brief, make it meaningful. Please consider this an order from the station commander. Signed, John Candlewood. End message.

The computer beeps affirmatively, and Candlewood slumps against the console. Cenn approaches and speaks privately.

CENN

Nicely done, Lieutenant.

CANDLEWOOD

I'd feel better about it if I hadn't just denied the crew what I already enjoyed myself. Spoke to my mom in Chicago this morning.

CENN

You did nothing wrong, John. Try to remember that.

Easier said than done. Cenn moves back to the central Ops table, while Candlewood gets on with his work...

**18**    **INT. VENTURE - SISKO'S QUARTERS**

Sisko sits at his desk, putting off what he does not want to face. But he cannot put it off any longer, he owes it. He taps the computer on his desk...

SISKO

Computer, establish subspace comm link via Deep Space Nine to Bajor, Kendra province, Sisko residence, attention Kasidy Yates.

COMPUTER

Working. Unable to establish real time comm link.

SISKO

Why not?

COMPUTER

All Starfleet to civilian subspace comm traffic through station Deep Space Nine has been deprioritised. Do you wish to override?

Sisko knows he could do that, *should* do that, but actually it's just the excuse he needed to put it off some more.

SISKO

Negative. Cancel request.

The computer beeps, and Sisko goes back to the window...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN:

**19 EXT. BAJOR SURFACE - DAY**

A pleasant open field area, like a village green. A group of CHILDREN of various ages and races play together in one section - tag, hopscotch, typical children's activities. Among these is REBECCA SISKO (now 4 years old).

Elsewhere on the green are more temporary shelters in the standard Starfleet style. In front of these is a row of refugees lining up for food and supplies from volunteers.

Last in the row of volunteers is KASIDY YATES, with her friend JASMINE TEY standing nearby. Kasidy hands a package of toiletries to each person, while Jasmine never takes her eyes off the group of playing children - that is her job.

JASMINE

One good thing about all this -  
the children can play together.

KASIDY

Silver linings, I guess. I just  
wish I could do more.

JASMINE

Kas, you've been off shuttling  
supplies for the last two weeks.  
On your one day off, you're out  
here helping. You're doing fine.

KASIDY

I'm also sleeping in my own bed,  
surrounded by four solid walls,  
and not relying on the kindness of  
strangers for soap and toothpaste.

JASMINE

Would you rather have strangers  
traipsing through your house? I  
don't think Ben would be happy  
about that.

KASIDY

I have no idea what Ben wants, do I? All I've had is one brief text message. I've heard more from Nog than I have my own husband.

JASMINE

You can't blame him for that, Kasidy. At least you know he's alive. That's more than some of these folks know.

There is a CRY from the children - Jasmine instantly dashes from Kasidy's side towards little Rebecca as Kasidy watches with worry from afar. Let the official bodyguard handle it.

Two of the other children are fighting over a toy, but as Jasmine sees, Rebecca is already trying to calm them down.

REBECCA

Stop fighting! There are enough toys for everyone.

Having paused half way, Jasmine smiles to see this, and returns to Kasidy's side.

JASMINE

It seems Miss Rebecca has the situation under control.

KASIDY

She's got a good heart.

(beat)

I just wish her father was home.

And she goes back to handing out supplies...

**20    EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

The *Venture*, still in orbit of the Andorian homeworld.

**21    INT. VENTURE - SICKBAY**

A Galaxy-class sickbay, as seen in TNG. Cpt ELIAS VAUGHN lies entirely unconscious on a biobed, its readings stable but low. The old man is on life support, and little else.

Cmdr Rogeiro sits by his side, holding a padd but not doing much with it, just thinking.

The sickbay door opens and two figures enter, both Andorian civilians. One is THANTIS, Thriss's mother (last seen 9x09 "Paradigm"), and the other is ZHERATH, a *chan* we have not met before. Rogeiro stands to greet them as they approach.

THANTIS

You are Commander Rogeiro?

ROGEIRO

I am, thank you both for coming.  
You are Delegate Sessethantis?

THANTIS

(bows head)

Of the Visionist Party, and *zha* of the clan Cheen, at your service.

ZHERATH

And I am Zherathrizar ch'Fosse. I hope we are not interrupting...?

ROGEIRO

Oh... no. Captain Vaughn was...  
is my commanding officer. But I'm afraid there's nothing to be done for him. I was just trying to compose a letter to his daughter.

THANTIS

Starfleet bore great losses in the recent conflict. I would like to express the deepest condolences, as well as the profound gratitude, of the Parliament Andoria.

ROGEIRO

We are here to serve, Delegate.  
But I actually asked you to come here for another reason...

Off their trepidation...

22 INT. VENTURE - SHAR'S QUARTERS

Shar sits in a slightly different outfit and in a slightly different position, but nothing else has changed. He is as blank and empty as before, and the padd still sits on the low table in front of him.

At the door, Thantis and Zherath stand hesitantly. Rogeiro allows the door to close in his face, leaving the Andorians alone together. Thantis is the first to approach, cautious.

THANTIS

Thirishar. It is good to see you.

Shar does not react, so Zherath gives it a shot.

ZHERATH

Your commander Rogeiro told us the news. We are so sorry, Thirishar.

THANTIS

We came to help, if we can.

Still no response, so Zherath crouches down to Shar's level and takes his limp, unresponsive hands from his lap.

ZHERATH

I know the loss is unbearable. We feel it too. But we would like to help. Will you not speak to us?

Shar's eyes finally move - taking in first Thantis, then Zherath, before looking away again.

SHAR

(blank)

I don't know you.

Zherath looks to Thantis, worried. Is Shar so damaged that he doesn't recognise his own father?

ZHERATH

(gently)

My poor *chei*... I am Zherathrizar.  
I am your *charan*.

SHAR

(tiny sneer)

I know who you are. But I don't  
know you. You left *zhavey* and our  
family years ago. And I have no  
use for you now. Get out.

THANTIS

Thirishar, please...

SHAR

Get. Out.

Shar's eyes shine with hatred, burning the other two to  
ashes where they stand, and he snatches his hands away.

Zherath steps back in defeat, and with a wince of sympathy,  
allows Thantis to guide him back out of the room. Shar has  
already gone back to staring aimlessly into the distance.

**23    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Cenn remains at his central Ops table, controlling the  
shuttle traffic. He hits his comm...

CENN

This is Deep Space Nine control to  
the *Tikopai*. You are cleared to  
depart, please continue to follow  
your prescribed flight plan out of  
the Bajor system.

VOICE (comm)

Acknowledged, Deep Space Nine.  
Disengaging now.

**24    INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Tenmei watches her display on the main viewer - it shows  
another ship disengaging from the station (from a different  
docking port than the earlier departure) and slowly inching  
towards the open passage that she is guarding. All is well.

BEEP BEEP BEEP. Tenmei checks her panels, then urgently  
refocuses the display, until it reveals...

...another vessel moving out of its assigned place in the queue without leave to do so. Tenmei slaps the comm system.

TENMEI

(professional)

*Defiant* to *Laweya*, please remain in formation until given leave to proceed. Acknowledge, please.

SKIPPER (comm)

Negative, *Defiant*. I've been in formation for more than eighteen hours. That's an open docking port up there, so I'm taking it.

TENMEI

(firmer)

Remain in formation, *Laweya*. You are endangering your passengers.

SKIPPER (comm)

I'm trying to help my passengers. *Laweya* out.

TENMEI

(working panels)

*Defiant* to *Laweya*. *Defiant* to *Laweya*. Please respond.

(no response)

Damn it. *Defiant* to DS-Nine Ops. You seeing this, Major?

25 **INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Cenn at the entry Ops table...

CENN

I see them, Lieutenant. DS-Nine to *Laweya*, you are ordered to stop your approach. Please comply.

CANDLEWOOD

(off panels)

They're not complying...

CENN

DS-Nine to *Tikopai*. Please cut your engines immediately.

VOICE (comm)

This is *Tikopai*. I thought you said we were cleared to depart?

CENN

You were, *Tikopai*, but someone else is trying to jump the queue, and they're in your path. I need you to cut your engines now.

VOICE (comm)

Alright, complying, DS-Nine.

**26**    **EXT. SPACE**

The freighter *Tikopai* is doing as instructed, its engines shutting down as it glides down the narrow passage between its waiting fellows, with DS9 itself in the background.

But from another angle, we now see a second ship, *Laweya*, moving towards it down the same corridor. There is nowhere for either ship to go, except right towards each other.

**27**    **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

The GRAPHIC on the main viewer shows this, and Tenmei is not happy. She quickly calculates on her panels...

TENMEI

Oh hell. Major, it's not going to be enough. The *Tikopai's* momentum won't dissipate in time, and the *Laweya* is accelerating.

ALECO

He doesn't think he can squeeze through the gap, does he?

TENMEI

Looks like it. Can you get a tractor on him?

ALECO

Not with all these other ships in  
the way.

TENMEI

Well, somebody better do something  
soon, or those ships are going to  
collide, and we'll have a lot of  
dead refugees on our hands.

**28**    **EXT. SPACE**

As the *Tikopai* and the *Laweya* continue inexorably towards  
each other...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT TWO**

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

### 29 EXT. SPACE

Picking up where we left, as the two passenger ships head towards each other down the narrow corridor made of other waiting ships, on their way to a devastating collision...

### 30 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

The GRAPHIC shows them getting closer, Tenmei getting less and less happy about it...

TENMEI

Okay, screw this. Everyone, hold on to your seats. Aleco, be ready with those tractors.

She quickly works her panels...

### 31 EXT. SPACE

The *Defiant* fires thrusters... and SHOOTS up vertically on its Z-axis, lifting out of the plane upon which most of the ships are lined up. The G-forces on it must be enormous.

As it rises, the ship quickly TWISTS to give it the perfect angle of attack. Two TRACTOR BEAMS leap out, one from the fore of the *Defiant* and one from the aft...

...and snatch the *Laweya* also fore and aft, using its own momentum to SWING it upwards and over the *Tikopai*...

### **CLOSE-UP**

...as the higher ship skims the lower with barely inches of space between them...

### **BACK TO SCENE**

...and up on out of the parking plane, squeezing through the narrow spaces between the parked ships.

32 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Tenmei grits her teeth as the ship whines around her...

ALECO

Tractors are exceeding rated  
tolerances, Lieutenant...

TENMEI

Just a second longer...

A power conduit BURSTS into sparks behind her. She doesn't  
let it deter her...

33 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Defiant* finally hauls the *Laweya* into at least somewhat  
open space, and both ships stabilise.

34 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

An alert from the computer...

ALECO

Incoming hail from the *Laweya*.

TENMEI

I'm shocked. Keep those tractors  
working, Aleco, I don't want him  
going anywhere.

(taps control)

*Laweya*, this is *Defiant*. How can  
we help you?

SKIPPER (comm)

What the hell do you think you're  
doing? How dare you manhandle my  
ship! I demand -

TENMEI

I'm just going to stop you there,  
*Laweya*, because you're really in  
no position to demand anything. I  
just prevented you from causing a  
collision that would have killed  
all your passengers.

SKIPPER (comm)

You're exaggerating, *Defiant*. We would have been fine. I was just trying to get my passengers onto the station so they can receive the attention they need.

TENMEI

That's an admirable goal, *Laweya*, but your execution was a little off. Now, we're going to hold you here until we figure out what to do with you. But please be assured we will not punish your passengers for your mistake. *Defiant* out.

(taps control)

*Defiant* to DS-Nine. You been following the fun?

25 **INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Cenn is relieved at the crisis averted...

CENN

That's affirmative, Lieutenant. Well done, by the way, that was quick work. I've advised *Tikopai* to proceed, which means docking port four is now available. I'll bring the *Shavest* in.

TENMEI (comm)

Major, my actions may well have injured some of the *Laweya's* passengers - I gave them a pretty rough ride. It's possible they might need medical attention.

CENN

Understood, but everyone in that line out there has been patiently waiting their turn. I don't want to reward bad behaviour.

CANDLEWOOD

Major, the *Shavest* is a Geneva-class, it's pretty advanced and luxurious, as these things go. I doubt their passengers are in any danger. Maybe they'd be willing to slip back a couple of places in the list, to where the *Laweya* was?

CENN

It's worth asking, I suppose.  
Standby, *Defiant*.

TENMEI (comm)

Standing by, sir. But if I can suggest, you might want to have Commander Evik standing by as well. I don't think the *Laweya's* skipper is very happy.

CENN

I'll see to it. Thanks, Prynn.

26 INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY

The temporary accommodations in the cargo bay. Nog CLUNKS the cover back into place on the replicator bank, and steps back. He scans the array with his tricorder, presses a button and watches as the unit HUMS back to life.

BASHIR (o.s.)

That sounds like progress, Nog.

Nog turns and sees Bashir entering, carrying a portable med kit and gently guiding along REFUGEE 2 from the top of the episode. They look nervous and frightened.

NOG

For now. Still a lot of strain on the system, though. The station's power distribution hasn't worked this hard since the war.

BASHIR

I have every confidence in you,  
Lieutenant.

(to refugee)  
Okay, I checked the records, and  
your friend was brought here.  
You'll be safe, I promise.

Nodding, Refugee 2 moves into the room searching for their counterpart. Nog and Bashir watch them with an encouraging smile, wishing there was more they could do.

Soon enough, Refugee 1 appears in the opening of one of the booths, sees their partner, and the two rush towards each other and into a powerful hug of desperate relief.

Nog sees this, and looks away, swallowing his own feelings.

Bashir sees Nog's reaction, probes gently.

BASHIR  
Everything alright, Nog?

NOG  
(packing toolkit)  
Can't stand around here all day.  
Always something to be fixed.

BASHIR  
Yes, I need to get over to docking  
port four myself, Major Cenn said  
my services might be required.

NOG  
(polite nod)  
Doctor.

Nog walks out, carrying his toolkit. Bashir watches him go, worried for him. Then he hefts his own medkit and heads out himself, turning the other way out of the cargo bay.

**27    INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS**

Lt Cmdr Evik stands by as two security guide the *Laweya's* SKIPPER, an otherwise professional and normal-looking non-Starfleet human male. The skipper is not happy about this.

SKIPPER  
This is ridiculous!

As the security guards leave and Evik activates the force-field over the cell, we see that he is not the only one in here - two other males are already occupying the cell.

The other cells are in the same state, a small handful of offenders in each of them.

EVIK

Not at all, sir. You failed to follow the instructions of the station's officers. Penalties for such infractions are only to be expected. Good day to you, sir.

Evik turns to leave, but the Skipper calls after him...

SKIPPER

Don't you have bigger things to worry about than persecuting transport captains?

EVIK

(turns back, cold)

Yes sir, I have. I have a station normally occupied by around eight thousand individuals but currently supporting twice as many, most of them having lost everything they ever owned as they ran for their lives, and now in such states of trauma they may never recover. So I really don't have the time for a transport captain who thinks he's free to risk even more pain to those whom he pledged to help simply because he's a "maverick" who doesn't follow the rules. You will remain in this cell until you learn that this is no time for selfishness. And if that sounds like a parent scolding a child, consider why it sounds that way.

Evik turns and leaves for real this time, while the skipper sits and stews on the cell's couch, shamed in public.

28     INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

The bar remains as busy as before, but the atmosphere is downcast, not at all jovial. Evik has just explained why.

QUARK is at the bar, serving quickly and quietly. He catches sight of NOG entering, and beckons him over. Nog squeezes through the crowd to join Quark behind the bar.

QUARK  
Nog! Over here!

NOG  
Don't tell me, your replicators  
are down again.

QUARK  
I asked it for Lorillian *tepsima*  
cakes, it gave me Denebian slime  
steaks. They weren't even cooked.

NOG  
(getting to work)  
Maybe you were mumbling.

QUARK  
My elocution is perfect.

While working, Nog has spotted a pile of Ferengi padds thrown a bit haphazardly under the edge of the counter.

NOG  
What are these? Unpaid bills?

QUARK  
These people have no money, Nog.

NOG  
And you're still serving them?

QUARK  
They'll remember who helped them  
when they needed it. Besides, I'll  
cover it as a diplomatic expense.

NOG

Ah. Rule one-forty-four - "There's nothing wrong with charity as long as it ends up in your pocket".

QUARK

Good to see Starfleet didn't beat all the Ferengi out of you.

Nog shakes his head in amusement - he knows Quark is being nice actually, he just doesn't want anyone to know that.

EVIK (o.s.)

Ambassador! Lieutenant!

They turn to see Evik calling to them from the door.

EVIK

I'm glad I caught you together.  
A message just came through for you both. The signal is using diplomatic credentials...

NOG

Father...?

Nog and Quark share a look, thinking it can only possibly be bad news. Nog packs up his tools again, Quark flaps a bit then hands his latest order off to another bartender, and they head off to join Evik.

**29    INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Evik leads Quark and Nog into the security office, but stands back and directs them towards the wall screens.

EVIK

Take however long you need.

NOG

Thanks, Commander.

Hesitantly, Nog works the controls, and one of the screens comes to life with a scratchy, incomplete image. Nog works to get a clearer signal, until...

The screen eventually reveals MAIHAR'DU, the Grand Nagus's silent Hupyrian manservant, piloting a Ferengi shuttle. Nog and Quark are rather surprised and confused by this.

QUARK

Maihar'du?! What do you want?

The poor put-upon giant alien looks mutely into the camera, unable to reply. Quark rolls his eyes.

QUARK

Honestly, what is the point of putting someone who's never allowed to speak as your main point of communication?

ISHKA (o.s.)

Quark! Be nice to Maihar'du!

Quark's big and blowsy mother ISHKA bustles up, pushing Maihar'du aside to take over the screen. Maihar'du gets lost in the sheer mass of her enormous, tasteless dress.

ISHKA (screen)

I asked him to keep trying while I was in the bathroom. You'd think being the Nagus's mother would let me jump the comm queue, but no -

QUARK

Moogie! You're alive!

ISHKA (screen)

Of course I'm alive, what kind of nonsense is that?

NOG

But Risa... the Borg...

ISHKA (screen)

(serious)

Yes... we got away just in time, thanks to Maihar'du here. A lot of others weren't so lucky. It was a horrible thing. So... wasteful.

NOG

And when you say "we"...

ISHKA (screen)

Yes Nog, your mother is fine too.  
She's just sleeping in the back.

Nog slumps, letting out the worries he has been feeling all this time. Ishka continues...

ISHKA (screen)

We're heading home to Ferenginar,  
let Rom look after us until we  
figure out what to do next.

QUARK

Call us again when you get there.  
And tell Rom I need him to sign  
off on something for me.

(beat)

It's good to see you, moogie.

ISHKA (screen)

Good to see you too, son.

With a warm smile, Ishka signs off, and the signal drops. Quark and Nog look at each other again... and then throw themselves into a happy, congratulatory hug.

NOG

Yes! They're alive!

Quark is not the type to say he loves his mommy, but even he can't help the huge flood of relief as he hugs Nog back.

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**26    EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

The *Venture*, still in orbit of the Andorian homeworld.

**27    INT. VENTURE - GUEST QUARTERS**

Just a space to talk without being overheard. Thantis and Zherath sit talking to Rogeiro, who is ever more stressed.

ROGEIRO

I'm sorry, I thought family would be able to get through to him.

ZHERATH

His family died, Commander. He is simply overwhelmed by it all. And Thirishar was always a stubborn child. You are not to blame.

ROGEIRO

Maybe not, but I am responsible for him. He's my science officer. But I've been too busy to spend any proper time with him, and Captain Sisko...

(...is no help)

All the counsellors say you have to let grief take its time, you can't force it. But this is so much, and I'm afraid if I leave him alone much longer...

THANTIS

...He will hurt himself.

(Rogeiro nods)

Thirishar and I have often been at odds. But I have no desire to see him dead by his own hand. No parent should have to live through their own child's death.

Thantis is clearly haunted by memories of Thriss.

ROGEIRO  
Is there any way to break through?

THANTIS  
I believe there is. But it will  
not be easy for him.

Off their trepidation...

**28**    **INT. VENTURE - SHAR'S QUARTERS**

The door opens and Thantis and Zherath enter. Shar remains unmoving, but Thantis refuses to walk on eggshells here.

THANTIS  
Your *charan* and I have returned,  
Thirishar. You may not be the most  
gracious of hosts, but it would be  
unwise to leave you in such a time  
as this. You need not speak.

Thantis leans down and snatches up the padd that has been sitting in front of Shar all this time. Shar's eyes flick towards it defensively - he does not want anyone else touching it, but he also doesn't want to break his cocoon.

THANTIS  
Come, Zherathrizar. Shall we eat?

Feigning disinterest, Thantis heads to the replicator and generates some food. Zherath is less certain about this path, but follows Thantis's lead and grabs mats (only two) to create a dining circle in the middle of the floor.

Thantis returns with the food, lays it out on the mats, and she and Zherath nonchalantly sit and begin to eat, making idle conversation as if Shar is not there hearing it all.

THANTIS  
I heard of Charivretha's passing.  
Andor is saddened by her loss.

ZHERATH  
Andor? Not you, Sessethantis?

THANTIS

I made no secret of my disapproval of Shathrissia's relationship with your *chei*, or of Charivretha's choices as a parent. But I held great respect for her as a rival.

Shar tries to resist reacting, wanting to remain distant. But how dare Thantis talk about his *zhavey* that way?

ZHERATH

She was more than your rival, *zha*. She was a passionate servant of our people. She sacrificed her life to comfort them in their last moments. Unlike some, who fled with the rest of the Parliament.

THANTIS

(shrug)

Government must have continuity in a time of crisis.

(mouthful)

I note however that you were also elsewhere when the Borg came. But then you had already demonstrated your lack of commitment to family.

ZHERATH

My separation from Charivretha and our other bondmates was entirely amicable, even to Thirishar.

Shar flinches to hear his own name mentioned...

ZHERATH (cont)

It is a common enough event in bonds whose children are fully grown, as you well know.

THANTIS

Common in the city, perhaps. But we all know the city is no more the real heart of Andor than this replicated slop is real food.

Now they insult even Starfleet, who fought for their lives?  
It is getting harder for Shar to rein himself in. Thantis  
picks up the padd she took from Shar, pretends to read it.

THANTIS

Of course, Charivretha is not the  
only one to be lost. I felt as if  
Thiareleta were my own grandchild,  
despite Shathrissia's death.

ZHERATH

Do you think I have no feelings,  
*zha*? All my own bondmates, all my  
*chei*'s bondmates, my grandchild  
who I had never even met -

THANTIS

And whose fault is that?

ZHERATH

- are dead, yet you feel entitled  
to claim grief that is not yours  
to claim? Your *zhei* gave up her  
place in my *chei*'s bond.

Shar fights back the tears as they talk about Thriss...

THANTIS

Indeed she did. And I have faced  
my own guilt and responsibility.  
It sounds as though you have not.

ZHERATH

As heartless as Charivretha ever  
said you were. My child has lost  
his bondmates, his parents, his  
own child, his mentor, even his  
captain. What have you lost?

THANTIS

You think I have not suffered?

SHAR

(quiet, background)  
Stop it.

Thantis reaches up with her left hand, and begins to pop a series of clasps around her right shoulder.

THANTIS

You think I have not felt pain?

SHAR

Stop it.

All the clasps undone, Thantis grasps the elbow firmly and WRENCHES the entire arm off her body. She brandishes the bio-synthetic replacement in her left hand, the straps that fixed it to her body flapping loose in the air.

THANTIS

Shathrissia saved my life by taking my arm. But I was unable to save her life in return, and now my *zhei* is like this arm - only a memory, never to truly feel again. Is that enough pain for you?

SHAR

Enough!

Shar stands sharply and FLIPS the coffee table across the room, the bowl of cold food on it smashing against a wall.

Thantis and Zherath scramble to their feet - finally, after all their efforts, they have got Shar to react to them. He is seething, almost crazed with rage...

SHAR

You speak of grief... what do you know of grief? Either of you?

(to Thantis)

You, who disrespected my *zhavey* with every breath in your body, every word from your mouth, and drove her own child to suicide?

(to Zherath)

And you, who I have not seen in twelve years, yet now you call yourself my *charan*, but where were you when Charivretha chose the Whole over her very life?

ZHERATH

Thirishar...

THANTIS

You must not blame your *charan* for surviving, Shar. It is Uzaveh's will that -

SHAR

Uzaveh? Even after this you hold to superstition? Your Uzaveh sent his demons to kill Charivretha. He killed Shathrissia. He killed Lata, and Anichent, and Dizhei, and Thia, and Doctor sh'Veileth, and millions more of us besides. So why are you still alive?

(to Zherath)

Why are you? Does Uzaveh love you more than he loved them?

ZHERATH

We have no answer for that, my *chei*. No-one does or ever will.

SHAR

Then why are you here? What good are you if you cannot explain?

THANTIS

We are here to be sure that you do not do anything foolish.

SHAR

(bitter laugh)

Foolish?! What is foolish in this time of pure insanity? Denying that the universe has marked us for extinction seems most foolish to me. Why should any of us live if our creator hates us so? Why not finish his work for him?

ZHERATH

Because we must have hope.

SHAR

What is there to hope for? One alone cannot be Whole, you taught me that. And yet here you are, the only survivor of your entire bond. You will never be Whole again!

The words catch in Shar's throat, but they cannot be denied now they are out. All his walls crumble, and he collapses in tears to the floor. Zherath and Thantis run to hold him.

SHAR

I would end it all as Shathrissia did, if only I had the courage. But even now - even now - those old teachings that every Andorian life is too precious to waste have too great a hold on me. So I will go on. I will live... if only to see how pointless living is.

ZHERATH

Oh my *chei*...

THANTIS

I will go back to Cheen-Thitar Keep, and I will weave a great tapestry. Vretha, Thriss, Thia, Anichent, Dizhei, Lata... they will all have a place in it. They were never pointless, Thirishar. They were loved.

As Shar continues to weep on their shoulders...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**29 EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

The *Venture* continues to sit in orbit over a world that is gradually darkening for night.

**30 INT. VENTURE - SICKBAY**

Vaughn's unconscious form has been relayed onto a mobile biobed, all the support tech going with him. Medical EXTRAS are making a last check of all the readings.

Rogeiرو stands supervising. Sisko enters and joins him.

SISKO

Everything under control?

ROGEIRO

It's good to see you out of your quarters, sir. And yes, Lieutenant ch'Thane is feeling better. Not ready to return to duty quite yet, I don't think, but on his way. And Mister Magrone is ready to receive the captain aboard the *Madeira*.

SISKO

What about messages for Lieutenant Tenmei and Commander Ro?

ROGEIRO

Umm, not yet sir, sorry. I've been occupied...

SISKO

That's alright, I'll send those messages. Speaking of which... I'd like a moment alone with Vaughn.

ROGEIRO

Of course, sir. We'll be waiting outside.

Rogeiro and the medics step away, leaving Sisko standing alone with his friend's might-as-well-be-dead body. Once he is sure they are out of earshot...

SISKO

It's started, Elias. Everything  
I was afraid of... it's here.  
And I don't know what to do.

Of course, Vaughn has no words of comfort for Sisko...

**31 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

The turbolift rises into place, carrying Tenmei and Aleco. They step down to the central Ops table, where all the rest of the senior staff are gathered - Ro, Cenn, Evik, Bashir, Nog and Candlewood. It is the end of a long, tiring day.

TENMEI

*Defiant's* all tucked in warm and  
comfy for the night, Commander.

RO

Thanks, Lieutenants. Major Cenn  
told me about your adventures -  
good work.

EVIK

I let the *Laweya's* captain go free  
- he actually asked me to pass on  
his apologies to you all. Plus he  
was right that I do actually have  
bigger things to worry about.

BASHIR

And no casualties either, except  
for the expected radiation cases.  
Those are all fixed now.

NOG

As are the replicators. Until the  
next time they overload of course.

CANDLEWOOD

And my new comm traffic priorities  
are in place and working great.

RO

Actually, the comm failure helped me prove my case to the admiral - he's agreed to shuffle the refugee ships around a bit. Not send them away altogether, I don't want us to ever turn anyone away. But some will be going to Prophet's Landing instead, and some to the Bajoran colonies in the Valo system.

She shares a look with Evik - that's where they both grew up as refugees themselves during the Cardassian Occupation.

EVIK

They'll take care of them.

RO

I know they will. You've all done well today - thank you. In fact...

(out loud)

Umm... everyone? Can I have your attention for a second please?

There's something I need to say.

Everyone stops what they are doing and pays attention to Ro - senior officers and random extras alike.

RO

I know things are bad right now. I know you want there to be one big thing you can do that will fix everything all at once, and there just isn't anything. And that's a very helpless-causing feeling.

(beat)

But you're not helpless, and you can do something to help. You're doing it. All the little things, the people you've helped today, the people you will help tomorrow - those are our victories. They feel small and insignificant. They're not. Small things tend to accumulate and become big things.

So let those small victories buoy you. Let them keep you going when it feels like it's all too much. And I think if we keep doing that, then that's what will get us all through this.

(beat)

So... that's what I wanted to say. Now let's all get back to work, shall we?

Candlewood stands and starts CLAPPING. Ro rolls her eyes in mild embarrassment, but she is happy really. Then she turns and heads back into her office, Cenn trailing behind her.

**32    INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE**

Ro returns to her desk, and Cenn stands nearby.

CENN

I think you may have a talent for this "command" thing after all.

RO

Thank you, Major.

CENN

Could I ask you something?

RO

I guess. What's on your mind?

CENN

I couldn't help but notice... you've taken your earring off. May I ask why?

Ro's fingers instinctively go to her now-bare ear. She sits back and ponders Cenn's question.

RO

I'm not totally sure I know why myself. But I was thinking about that conversation we had, Major - the one about the Prophets.

CENN

Really?

RO

It won't come as a surprise if I tell you I always had a difficult relationship with the religious authorities of Bajor.

CENN

You hid it well.

RO

(faux glare, then...)

I'm Bajoran, I'm proud of being Bajoran, so I wanted to wear my earring. But I was fed up of the vedeks wandering up and grabbing my ear whenever they felt like it. So I put the earring on the other ear to stop them doing that.

CENN

And to deliberately annoy them.

RO

That was just a fun bonus. But after everything we talked about that day... it didn't seem right to be going out of my way to do that anymore. So I took it off.

CENN

I think I understand. You wore it as a kind of protest, and you're not protesting anymore. I like it.

RO

Your approval was not required, Major... but thank you.

CENN

Who knows, maybe one day you might even put it back - on the proper ear - and come to services with the rest of us.

RO

Didn't you hear the speech? I said take your small victories where you can get them.

A small smile between them, and then Ro nods for Cenn to be on his way. He goes, and she gets back to work.

**33 INT. VENTURE - SISKO'S QUARTERS**

Sat at his own desk on the *Venture*, Sisko taps the computer screen, which beeps affirmatively.

SISKO

Computer, record a message for delivery to Lieutenant Prynn Tenmei at Deep Space Nine.

COMPUTER

Working.

SISKO

Lieutenant, this is Captain Sisko. I don't know if you're aware, but I accepted reactivation to the fleet to fight the Borg threat. I was part of a task force assigned to protect Andor. Your father's ship was in the same task force.

(closes eyes)

The *James T Kirk* took heavy battle damage. I'm sorry, but your father was critically wounded. His body is alive, but... but the doctors report no brain activity.

(deep breath)

Lieutenant... Prynn... I want you to know that Captain Vaughn fought heroically. I realise that sounds trite, but it's true. His last act was a brave, desperate attempt to save the people of Andor without sacrificing the lives of his crew.

**FLASHBACK - 12x21 "FRIENDLY FIRE"**

-- Sisko on the darkened bridge of the *New York*, staring powerlessly at his own viewscreen, seeing...

-- The *Kirk* impacting the Borg cube, its main hull skimming its surface by inches while its low-hanging warp nacelles are sheared off and explode in the depths of the cube

**BACK TO SCENE**

Sisko flinches against this memory, but pushes on.

SISKO

As I record this, your father is on his way back to Deep Space Nine with Lieutenant Magrone, his chief tactical officer. Maybe Doctor Bashir will be able to help him.

(beat)

I know that the two of you had a stormy relationship, but he was so happy that you both managed to put it behind you at last. He loved you very much, Prynn. I'm sorry for your loss. End message.

The computer beeps again, recording complete. Another look out of the window at the devastated world below, where the meridian between day and night is fast creeping across the planet's surface. Sisko takes a deep breath, forges on.

SISKO

Computer, record another message for delivery to Kasidy Yates, Kendra Province, Bajor.

COMPUTER

Working.

SISKO

Kasidy...

(start over)

Kas, I wanted to tell you...

But he is lost for words. Before he can figure out what to say about what is going through his mind...

VOICE (comm)  
Bridge to Captain Sisko. There is  
a pre-recorded message for you,  
sir. It just came in.

SISKO  
Send it down here.

Sisko taps to pause the message to Kasidy and receive the  
new incoming one - and is surprised to see JAKE pop up on  
the screen. The younger Sisko looks tired and worried.

JAKE (screen)  
Dad, it's Jake. I've been trying  
to get a hold of you but the comm  
traffic is all screwed up. I don't  
even know how long this will take  
to reach you.

(voice shaking)  
It's Grampa Joe, dad. He's sick.  
He collapsed right in the middle  
of the restaurant. He's in Orleans  
Parish Hospital, and he improved a  
little bit, but...

(beat)  
Aunt Judith and Uncle Samuel are  
here, and Uncle Aaron is on his  
way. I know what you're doing is  
important, dad, but if you can get  
here, you should. It's serious.

Already buried in existential horror, Sisko is hit anew.  
He looks out of the window at the curve of Andor below...

...and night has fallen on his view.

FADE OUT

**END OF SHOW**