

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

14x19 - "An Old Vulcan Proverb"

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 19x19 - "CASINO ARTIFICIALE"

Data and LaForge set course for the Daystrom Annex on Galor IV. They contact Albert Lee, a former *Enterprise-D* engineer looking after Moriarty's holocube. Data is extremely worried for Lal - despite her resurrection, she still requires periodic treatments so her neural net doesn't overload. Meanwhile Moriarty explains his backstory to his 'guest' Lal and her nurse Alice. When *Enterprise-D* crashed (TNG "Generations"), Moriarty's holographic world was disrupted and his own daughters wiped from existence. He has spent every moment since probing what happened and trying to save his daughters. Lal describes her own life at the casino on Orion, and Alice reveals her past - she is one of Mudd's androids (TOS "I, Mudd") who was working as a barmaid at the casino. At Daystrom, Data forces his way into Moriarty's holocube, setting off alarms at the Institute - but finds that Moriarty himself is no longer in there...

VOY 12x19 - "SEVEN SISTERS"

On Aldebaran, Sharak fights off his attacker to find all the proof he needs to expose Dr Briggs, but a bomb destroys it all. He heads back to Starfleet with a full report. On Earth, Seven and Axum join forces to telepathically neutralise all nearby catoms, frustrating Briggs' experiments. As *Voyager* prepares for its journey, Meegan explains how the Seriareen created the Streams millennia ago to control a vast territory. But only seven of the incorporeal aliens are accounted for; Meegan claims the eighth is dead. On *Galen*, the EMH struggles to adjust to his newfound "disability", but his counselling with Cambridge helps both of them to accept their new realities, especially with respect to Seven. *Vesta* searches for *Demeter*, missing since visiting the farming worlds. They find them at the Ark Planet, where an astonished Minister Bralt is beginning to rethink all his farming policies. But then the Voth return and turn their attentions towards the Ark Planet...

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE

A Sovereign-class starship glides smoothly through space at low impulse... we turn with it to see where it's heading...

...revealing the massive mushroom SPACEDOCK in orbit over EARTH, with several smaller vessels moving back and forth, shuttles heading down to the surface or out of orbit.

The Sovereign-class proceeds calmly, on patrol. An Akira-class can also be seen in the distance moving the opposite direction - given the current tensions, Starfleet has all its most advanced ships on patrol of sensitive locations.

CLOSE IN on the Spacedock, gradually finding one of the hundreds of tiny windows in the station's mushroom cap... through which we can see FIGURES walking.

2 INT. SPACEDOCK - CORRIDOR

A broad corridor around the curve of the Spacedock, with a long picture window revealing the gorgeous view outside. Bacco's Nasat chief of staff Z4 BLUE trundles along on all eights, talking with exhaustion to a Starfleet LIEUTENANT.

Z4 BLUE

Hundreds of hands shaken, dozens of holovids, billions of kilometres travelled... I cannot get on that shuttle fast enough.

LIEUTENANT

And the President didn't want to do this herself?

Z4 BLUE

She felt it would be inappropriate to leave Paris, especially for something so vulgar as a political goodwill tour, at such a sensitive time. So... she sent me instead.

LIEUTENANT

I think you stepped up admirably,
Z4. Ms Piñiero would be proud.

At the reminder of his former boss, Z4 pauses, stretches up to rest his fore-pincers on the window ledge... and gazes out at the view beyond, the curve of the Earth below.

Z4 BLUE

I hope so. It was all her idea.
Before she... well, you know.

Suddenly outside the Spacedock, space RIPPLES...

...and a ROMULAN ship uncloaks right in front of them - the small Tiercel-class transport seen in 14x07 "The Summit".

Z4's antennae go stiff with alarm, his mouth drops open...

Z4 BLUE

Lieutenant - get me somebody in
the Palais right now. Right now!

The Lieutenant runs off down the corridor. Z4 Blue gawks...

3 EXT. SPACE

The Romulan ship sits in Earth orbit, making no movement...

...but the Sovereign and Akira are quickly moving into attack formation, other ships come running as well...

4 INT. ROMULAN SHIP - BRIDGE

A much smaller bridge than *Eletrix* or *Dekkona*, befitting the smaller ship. But the man in command is a true veteran, the highest admiral in the Romulan service, DEVIX. He sits calmly while his crew react to events all around them...

CENTURION

Admiral, two Federation starships
- the *First Minister* and the
Susquehanna - are taking up attack
positions nearby. Their shields
and weapons are fully charged.

DEVIX

Make no response, Centurion.

CENTURION

We are also receiving urgent hails
on multiple channels.

DEVIX

Is the one we need among them?

CENTURION

Checking... yes, Admiral.

DEVIX

Then send that one to main viewer.

The CENTURION enters commands, DEVIX turns to the screen...

...which changes to reveal Admiral AKAAR, displeased.

AKAAR (screen)

Romulan vessel, you have ten
seconds to explain your presence
in Federation space before I order
a dozen ships to surround you and
open fire.

Devix stands and calmly approaches the viewscreen...

DEVIX

Commander-in-Chief Akaar, I am
Fleet Admiral Devix aboard the
Imperial scout vessel *Enderavat*.
Please forgive our unexpected
appearance, but if you consult
those ships, they will tell you
our weapons and shields remain
unpowered. We are at your mercy.

Akaar looks sideways for a moment, receiving a report. At
length he turns back to the screen...

AKAAR (screen)

You have earned yourself an extra
five seconds. Why are you here?

DEVIX

We need to talk. And it would be best we do so in person.

On screen, Akaar grinds his jaw, considering...

DEVIX

You will want to isolate me, of course, to ensure I am who I say I am, and that I bring no weapons of any kind. I will travel alone. I will give you coordinates so that you may use your own transporter to retrieve me. And while I am on Earth, the *Enderavat* will remain undefended. After our meeting, I will take my ship - cloak, weapons and shields still offline - back to the Neutral Zone, preferably with a Starfleet escort.

AKAAR (screen)

(eyes narrow)

Why?

DEVIX

Because, as the military commander of my people, I despise war. As a fellow commander in chief, I hope you will understand this better than anyone. So I have come to discuss something very different.

(beat)

I realise you have little reason to trust me. But I implore you, Admiral, there is everything to gain from simple talking.

Another long pause as Akaar considers his response...

AKAAR (screen)

I will order all ships in orbit to refrain from firing until further notice. Will you stand by while a decision is made on your request?

DEVIX

I will. But time may be a critical component in our conversation.

AKAAR (screen)

Understood. Please stand by.

And the signal drops, returning to a view of the array of Starfleet ships all training their weapons on this ship. Devix calmly retakes his seat and waits with dignity...

5 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

AKAAR turns away from the wall screen to look at BACCO, who stands with arms folded, unimpressed. Secretary SHOSTAKOVA and Admiral ABRIK (both 14x01 "Siren") are also present.

SHOSTAKOVA

The Praetor is forcing Devix to resign. Could this be a defection?

ABRIK

That would not be consistent with our intelligence file on him.

SHOSTAKOVA

Then maybe political asylum?

ABRIK

Relations with the Romulans are at their lowest for decades. I don't think offering asylum to their former Fleet Admiral would make them any better disposed to us.

AKAAR

This is the second time since the events in the Bajoran system that the Romulans have made a request to talk. Perhaps we should do so. The alternative is... not talking.

BACCO

(tiny smile)

So you're suggesting we live up to our high principles, is that it?

AKAAR
(shares it)
Something like that, ma'am.

Abrik and Shostakova glance to each other awkwardly - they were there for the shorty robe incident in Bacco's house.

BACCO
Alright. We'll talk to Devix. But safely. I don't want the last act of a disgraced military man to be a suicide bombing in a misguided attempt to prove his patriotism.

AKAAR
Thank you, Madam President.

Akaar bows lightly and turns to leave.

6 EXT. SPACE

The Romulan ship in orbit, surrounded by Starfleet ships...

7 EXT. EARTH SURFACE - NEW ZEALAND - DAY

The identifiable island shapes of the Australasian nation, as seen in stock footage from 12x02 "Read All About It".

8 INT. PRISON - CONTROL ROOM

AKAAR now stands with other Starfleet and private security officers in a control room filled with several SCREENS that show different aspects of the New Zealand prison complex.

The minimum security section where people like Kasidy Yates and Tom Paris have stayed. Corridors leading to bedrooms and counsellors' suites. The rarely used maximum security sections. Plus a large GRAPHIC of the Earth and the various assets in orbit, including Spacedock and the Romulan ship.

Akaar looks to the other security officers - they nod back. The giant Capellan admiral leaves the room...

...and reappears on one of the screens, that shows a large TRANSPORTER PLATFORM.

9 **INT. PRISON - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

Akaar stands before the transporter platform... turns and nods to the operator on duty. She works her controls...

10 **SERIES OF SCENES**

The transporter control board activating... processing...

GRAPHIC - the transporter signal leaves the Romulan ship in orbit, goes down to the planet. The globe of Earth flattens into a 2D map, and the transporter signal bounces around a dozen locations - London, Beijing, Moscow, Los Angeles, Sao Paolo, Nairobi, Stockholm, Dubai... finally New Zealand.

GRAPHIC - a rotating Vitruvian Man of the incoming signal, the computer running a dozen different scans to check for DNA, weapons signatures, morphogenic particles, anything...

...and RED LIGHTS flashing as they detect something wrong.

11 **INT. PRISON - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

The transporter signal forms, a FORCEFIELD pops into life around the platform in response to the anomalies...

...and Akaar raises a Vulcanesque eyebrow of surprise.

AKAAR

Welcome to Earth... Madam Praetor.

...revealing that Praetor KAMEMOR herself stands on the transporter platform, nervous about what will happen now...

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

12 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

KAMEMOR sits in the guest chair. Gazes out at the Paris skyline through the window. Can't see a thing for nerves.

A moment, and the side door opens and BACCO enters. Kamemor stands out of politeness. Bacco does not acknowledge, heads straight to her chair without even looking at Kamemor. Once Bacco sits, Kamemor feels free to do so as well.

BACCO

Admiral Akaar tells me you made quite an entrance.

KAMEMOR

I hope you will excuse the subterfuge. But my previous attempts to engage with you went unanswered.

BACCO

I'm afraid I wasn't in the mood to talk after a Romulan warbird took part in an unprovoked attack on a Federation starbase. To be frank, I'm not sure I want to talk now.

KAMEMOR

I understand your feelings, Madam President. I am very sorry for -

BACCO

You're sorry? Sorry doesn't mean much to the families and friends who lost their loved ones.

Bacco is on the verge of losing control of her emotions. Kamemor cannot blame her. She takes a pause to regather...

KAMEMOR

When we met with the other leaders at the summit on Boslic, I did so with great hope for the future.

But even greater was the sense of accomplishment - when you and I forged an agreement specifically between Romulus and Earth. We each have our allies, but we are the preeminent powers in this part of space. The fates not only of our peoples, or even of our alliances, but of this corner of the galaxy depend on us. On you and me.

BACCO

Fine words, Madam Praetor. And yet the crews of two ships under your command have murdered hundreds of Federation citizens in cold blood.

KAMEMOR

I did not authorise those attacks.

Bacco JERKS to her feet, pointed claw trembling with rage.

BACCO

Do... not... lie... to me.

KAMEMOR

(genuine)

I am not here to lie to you, Madam President. I am here to try to save our people from destroying one another.

BACCO

Then you've got your work cut out for you. Do you know how many here screamed for an armed response to your attack on DS-Nine? Who wanted to go to war right there and then?

KAMEMOR

(quietly)

Why didn't you?

BACCO

Oh believe me, there's still time.

Bacco settles back into her seat, but no happier.

KAMEMOR

The Romulan Star Empire does not want war.

BACCO

So you keep saying. Yet somehow this keeps happening. Doesn't say much for your praetorship.

KAMEMOR

I realise that. And I am taking steps to find those responsible.

BACCO

Your "steps" are ineffective.

KAMEMOR

The Romulan reputation for deceit and secrecy is sadly well-founded. At least we come by it honestly.

BACCO

I beg your pardon?

Kamemor pauses to prepare herself...

KAMEMOR

Legend says that when our forebears first landed on Romulus, we found a wide array of life-forms that practised camouflage as a way of survival. Snakes that looked like vines. Flowers that looked like lizards. Mammals whose colour changed depending on how the light fell. The most famous, and the one that most inspired my ancestors, was a large raptor whose plumage had unique optical properties that mimicked the wavelength of ambient light, causing them to "disappear" against a clear blue sky. Can you guess that creature's name?

BACCO
(tight smile)
"Warbird".

Kamemor nods quietly.

KAMEMOR
My people have always felt a need to hide, to protect ourselves. The Federation's mantra of "We come in peace" has often sounded more like "Our aim is to absorb you into us, and then your way of life will be quietly altered to our standards. And if you say no, then you will soon find yourself surrounded by all the worlds that said yes, so just save yourself the time."

BACCO
That is not who we are. That is not who I am.

KAMEMOR
I believe that, Madam President. There are those who do not. They believe that acquiring slipstream drive is the only way to protect the peoples of the Typhon Pact.

BACCO
Because the drive provides us with a military advantage, is that it? You might notice we have not used that advantage against the Typhon Pact. Despite ample provocation.

KAMEMOR
Yes - as I told you, I know from experience that is not your way. My allies, however...

BACCO
Allies?! Is that really the word for what you are?

KAMEMOR

I don't understand...

BACCO

The Typhon Pact sells itself as "another Federation". As a group of nations working together for mutual benefit. But you don't do that, do you? You use each other. Look at what the Breen did to the Kinshaya on Janalwa. Or the way they used the Gorn on Orion. Is that what allies do?

Kamemor has no good answer, but Bacco is on a roll...

BACCO

And do you even realise that you didn't get your throne on your own merits? The Tzenkethi manoeuvred you onto it because they thought they could control you.

KAMEMOR

(eyes down)

I always suspected.

(eyes back up)

But how I got it is immaterial. Now that I have it, I will use it to protect my people. But you must understand what I'm up against. I'm trying... but it's hard.

BACCO

And what do you expect from me? Why are you here?

KAMEMOR

I am here... because I am deeply concerned that another attack on the Federation may be about to take place.

As Bacco's eyes widen all over again, and Kamemor sits waiting for the next explosion...

13 **EXT. SPACE**

A Cardassian vessel, *Formek*, nears a colony world. *Formek* is a tug, with not much crew space or storage but lots of tractor emitters to tow large objects through space. Those tractors are currently dragging a SOLAR COLLECTOR device.

14 **INT. CARDASSIAN TUG - BRIDGE**

A small and cramped control space with room for only three Cardassian civilian crew members - the captain, KENER, his first mate HEKT, and a third as yet unidentified...

HEKT

Entering the Nivoch system now.

KENER

Contact the colony administrators.
Let them know we're here with
their solar collector.

The third crew member works his panels, then turns to the others - revealing that he is MORAD (from 14x06 and 14x09).

MORAD

Message sent. Kener... I just
wanted to say thank you again.

KENER

For what?

MORAD

For giving me this chance. For
hiring me to work on the *Formek*.

KENER

(shrug)

You're a solid worker, Morad.
That's all that matters.

MORAD

Well, I just wanted you to know
that it's appreciated.

(back to panels)

Colony administrators acknowledge.
Sending a shuttle to intercept.

KENER

Time to rendezvous?

MORAD

Two hours.

(deep breath)

Seriously. Not many people would take a second chance on the man who attacked the Lakat annex and got imprisoned by Makbar herself. But I'm really not a violent man.

The first mate, HEKT, turns and mutters...

HEKT

Then maybe she sent you to prison for talking too much.

MORAD

Ha! You may be right.

KENER

Well, we've got two hours. Gotta fill the time somehow.

HEKT

Don't worry. I have some ideas.

Hekt gets up from his station, pulls a weapon... and SHOOTS Kener dead. The civilian tug captain tumbles from his chair to the deck, smoking hole in his chest.

Morad jerks to his feet, horrified. Looks between Kener's body on the deck and Hekt still holding his weapon...

MORAD

You didn't have to do that!

HEKT

You said no witnesses.

MORAD

I know what I said. That doesn't mean you had to kill him.

HEKT

Just eject the solar collector and
let's get on with it.

Morad steps to the captain's chair, drags Kener's dead body
aside with a wince of distaste, sits in his place and works
the controls at his side. Hekt returns to his own panels...

HEKT

You know, for someone who's done
what you've done and is about to
do what you're about to do, you're
strangely squeamish, Morad.

(beat)

Oh, I forgot... you're not a
"violent" man.

Hekt chuckles, shakes his head in amusement.

15 EXT. SPACE

The *Formek* switches off its multiple tractor beams, letting
the solar collector drift away into space...

16 INT. CARDASSIAN TUG - BRIDGE

Back in business mode now, Morad works his panels again...

MORAD

Get ready to go to warp.

HEKT

What are you doing?

MORAD

Sending another message to the
Nivoch colony, letting them know
where they can pick up their solar
collector.

HEKT

Why does it matter?

MORAD

They're still Cardassians. And
we've got sympathisers there.

HEKT

They'll wonder why we didn't wait.
We don't need anyone chasing us.

MORAD

(chuckle)

You think they have enough ships
to pick up their vital delivery
and chase us down? They won't care
about us. Just take this crate to
the highest warp factor you can
manage without shaking it apart.

HEKT

(off panels)

I think we should be able to do...
warp five.

MORAD

Excellent. That should get us
there in time. We don't want to
keep the Tzenkethi waiting.

Hekt works his controls...

17 EXT. SPACE

With the solar collector tumbling slowly away towards the
planet, the small Cardassian tug ship gradually builds
power and JUMPS TO WARP out of the system...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

18 3D TACTICAL MAP

...showing the local sectors, including the borders between Federation, Cardassian and Tzenkethi space. Bajor itself is marked clearly, and a lot of red dots along the Badlands...

RO (o.s.)
What's going on, Zivan?

19 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE (CONTINUOUS)

RO stands across from SLAINE, observing this star map that is cast above the situation table. Slaine gestures to it...

SLAINE
My regular dispatches from Central Command have revealed a distinct build-up of Cardassian military assets in the Delof sector.

RO
Do we know why?

SLAINE
No... and that worries me.

Ro stands and ponders the display. It bothers her too...

RO
There's no chance this is just a standard exercise? That it's a coincidence that they're all so close to the Tzenkethi border?

SLAINE
Those are not standard exercise formations. It's not any kind of exploratory or scientific fleet either. I've sent a request for clarification to my superiors... but they're unlikely to tell me.

RO

Whatever's going on, there's no way the Central Command would commit that many ships to one sector without a good reason.

SLAINE

You don't think they're going to invade Tzenkethi space, do you?

RO

The Cardassians might be stupid -
(realises, smiles)
- present company excluded - but they could have detected something going on in Tzenkethi space that we haven't heard about yet.
(beat)
Keep pressing for answers, *dalin*.
Wear them down until they give in - always used to work for me.

SLAINE

(small smile)
I'll remember that, Captain.

Ro nods and heads back off to her corner office. Slaine watches the display, ponders, mutters to herself...

SLAINE

What are you up to...?

20 **MORAD**

...as a heavy metal door IRISES open to reveal Morad, with Hekt stood behind, a rough corridor hewn out of rock behind them. Both react, catching their breath at the sight of...

21 **INT. ROCK CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)**

...two TZENKETHI soldiers, glowing red skin in severe black uniforms, awaiting them on the other side. The Cardassians can't take their eyes off such a beautiful people.

The soldiers turn and walk down the rocky corridor, moving smoothly and fluidly. Morad and Hekt dutifully follow.

The group reaches a RIGHT-ANGLE in the corridor - not right or left but UP. The two Tzenkethi transition smoothly onto the 'vertical' corridor, walking up what looks like a wall from the Cardassians' perspective. They try to follow...

...but stumble as they move from one gravity envelope to the other. It's like stepping onto an escalator - the body has to adjust when it doesn't get what it was expecting.

ANGLE to reorient with the new corridor...

...and the Cardassians scrambling to catch up. Finally they reach another heavy door in the rock, which IRISES open...

22 **INT. VIR-AKZELEN LABORATORY (CONTINUOUS)**

...to allow them all into a large circular room, prefab systems and supports artificially grafted onto the rock.

Morad pauses to gaze around - all kinds of equipment is squeezed into the space, filling the floor and the walls... but as he looks up, he realises, not the ceiling. That's odd - Tzenkethi use all surfaces. Why the difference here?

NELZIK (o.s.)

Morad - you are here.

Morad refocuses on the ethereal vision walking towards him - NELZIK TEK-LOM-A, a shining blue-green skinned Tzenkethi female. Morad and Hekt are both instantly smitten, although Morad hides it better. He stays professional but warm.

MORAD

Cardassians are a punctual people,
Nelzik. Please meet my associate,
Govar Hekt. Hekt, this is Nelzik
Tek Lom-A, chief scientist of the
Vir-Akzelen project.

Nelzik half-bows politely. Hekt just gapes in awe.

MORAD

Your message was urgent, Nelzik.
Hopefully the annular confinement
generator satisfied your needs?

NELZIK

Very much so, Morad. In fact that is the reason for my message - we have accomplished our goal.

Morad looks to Hekt, back to Nelzik - can it be true?

MORAD

You mean... we're ready to go?

NELZIK

We can offer you a demonstration right now, if you would like.

MORAD

Yes! Absolutely! Show me.

Nelzik smiles and moves back to her machines. Morad tails her, equally as excited. Hekt doesn't really care, he just wants to keep staring at the beautiful Tzenkethi woman.

NELZIK

My people began this project soon after the Cardassian Union first withdrew from Bajor.

MORAD

(w/ contempt)

Bajor. If we'd never left, none of this would have been necessary.

NELZIK

True. But it is gratifying to see our work reach fruition at last.

Nelzik TWISTS her body in an inhuman way, her oddly fluid body allowing her legs to sit under one console while her hands work the console literally behind her. Then...

...GRINDING machinery. Morad looks up at the roof in shock, and realises with glee why no-one was walking on it...

...as it IRISES open like the doors, retracting into the walls until the entire roof is gone, seemingly leaving the laboratory open to empty space.

Morad and Hekt gaze in awe at the star- and nebula-strewn view over their heads. The atmosphere is not escaping - it must be a forcefield or a holo-projection. Nelzik points...

NELZIK

Watch that point, right there.

She presses one last control...

...and a RED BEAM shoots out from the somewhere outside the lab, streaking out into space. Another BEAM shoots from a different spot outside, and another, and another. All the beams meet at the point where Nelzik said to watch...

...and a red light BLOOMS into existence there. A swirling red whirlpool of power, bright white at the centre. As the light grows and grows, shining on Morad's awed face...

WHITE OUT

23 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

PAN from the white light of the window and its view over Paris... to BACCO glaring sternly at Kamemor.

BACCO

Another attack? When? Where?

KAMEMOR

I don't know.

Bacco paces back and forth in front of the window, anger and frustration barely under control...

BACCO

You don't know? Then why are you here? So that when this attack happens and more of my people are killed, you can say you tried your best and we shouldn't retaliate?

(scoff)

Trust me, Praetor - if there's another Romulan attack, you can kiss the Neutral Zone goodbye.

KAMEMOR
(patient)
I am here... because of a report
from Admiral Devix.

CUT TO:

24 **INT. PRAETOR'S CHAMBER**

Admiral DEVIX, the one who brought Kamemor to Earth, stands at attention in her chambers. He does not want to be here, but his duty demands it. She is pouring tea for her guest. Proconsul VENTEL (14x07 "The Summit") is also present.

KAMEMOR
Admiral... please tell me what is
bothering you.

DEVIX
One of our warbirds is missing.

Kamemor turns away from her tea to face him, concerned. It *could* be nothing, but the fact that Devix is here at all...

KAMEMOR
Is that unusual?

DEVIX
It has been known to happen. Ships
encounter interstellar phenomena
that interfere with communications.
Commanders order subspace silence
when belligerents are near. Ships
remain cloaked while on patrol...

VENTEL
And starships can be destroyed -
by accident, or by an aggressor.

DEVIX
That can sometimes be the case.

KAMEMOR
But such legitimate reasons for a
disappearance of this particular
warbird are not what concern you.

DEVIX

No, Praetor. The *Vetruvis* was part of a recent military exchange with the Tzenkethi. Its crew continued to submit regular reports. Three days ago... those reports stopped.

VENTEL

Did you contact the Tzenkethi?

DEVIX

The Coalition claims the *Vetruvis* never arrived for the exchange.

VENTEL

Do you believe them?

Kamemor begins to pace, putting the pieces together...

KAMEMOR

It doesn't matter. If it is true, then the reports from the *Vetruvis* were fabricated. If the Tzenkethi are lying, then we may have a much bigger problem than one rogue ship - which is exactly what brought you here, isn't it, Admiral?

DEVIX

Yes, Praetor. After what happened at Utopia Planitia and Deep Space Nine... that is indeed my concern.

VENTEL

Where was the *Vetruvis*, at last known contact?

DEVIX

The Lamenda system, in Tzenkethi space on the edge of the Badlands.

VENTEL

The Badlands? Then near to their border with the Cardassian Union.

KAMEMOR

And near Bajor and the wormhole.

DEVIX

You understand my concern. There is more - the *Vetruvis* is under the command of Kozik - formerly Centurion Kozik of the *Dekkona*.

VENTEL

You're saying that Commander Kozik is part of the same rogue element as Marius and T'Jul?

DEVIX

There are too many connections to disregard it as a possibility.

Kamemor slowly paces the room, avoiding the throne...

KAMEMOR

What can we do about this? How do we find the *Vetruvis*?

DEVIX

Short of sending a fleet of ships into Tzenkethi space - and perhaps into Cardassian space as well - I'm not sure we can.

VENTEL

Do that, and we'll spark just the war we've been trying to avoid.

KAMEMOR

No... rather than searching for a single, probably cloaked ship in hostile territory... we need to know what action Kozik intends to take... and stop him.

VENTEL

And how do we do that?

CUT TO:

25 **INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY**

...where Kamemor has been relating this story to Bacco...

BACCO

So you don't know where or when
this commander might attack?

KAMEMOR

No. But I believe there is some-
body on Earth who might know.

BACCO

Are you accusing somebody in my
government of complicity?

KAMEMOR

Not at all, Madam President. I am
accusing someone in your custody.

Bacco stops pacing as she realises who Kamemor means...

BACCO

Tomalak.

CUT TO:

26 **INT. PRISON CELL**

Starting on a gorgeous view over the Romulan capital, the
image seen in TNG: *Nemesis* and ENT 4x12 "Babel One".

PULL BACK to reveal... that this is a large mural covering
one wall of a comfortable if not lavish prison cell...

...and TOMALAK lying on his bed beneath it, staring at the
painting in quiet longing...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

27 INT. PRAETOR'S CHAMBER

Kamemor THROWS a Romulan padd across her throne room, where it CLATTERS against the marble. She spits in disgust...

KAMEMOR

Tomalak!

Devix calmly absorbs his Praetor's outburst. Ventel reaches down to pick up the thrown padd, and looks at it...

INSERT - THE PADD

It shows an image of TEZRENE, the Tholian envoy's angular crystalline face glowing with rage, her species' customary SHRIEK of a voice issuing quietly from the recording.

BACK TO SCENE

Kamemor flaps an annoyed hand at Ventel and the padd...

KAMEMOR

Turn that thing off. I can't stand any more of her screeching.

Ventel does so - Tezrene is silenced. He turns back...

VENTEL

So... the Federation has Tomalak in custody. Is there any scenario that does not implicate him in what happened in the Bajor system?

KAMEMOR

I would welcome any explanation that does not paint Tomalak as a warmongering traitor and me as a fool. But I don't see how that's possible, Ventel. He suggested T'Jul for command of the *Eletrix*. He begged me to let him serve as my "liaison". And I believed him.

DEVIX

Tomalak is no longer a member of the military, Praetor. He has no authority to assign commanders.

VENTEL

(pointed)

Yet three warbirds and their crews have now taken actions contrary to the Praetor's policies.

Devix bows his head slightly - he is ashamed of that truth.

KAMEMOR

I do not blame you, Admiral. I know you are no Adventer Vokar.

DEVIX

Nevertheless, Praetor. Those ships were under my ultimate command. I must accept the responsibility.

VENTEL

If Tomalak was connected to T'Jul, that also connects him to Marius and Kozik. Has he been working at cross-purposes to us all along?

KAMEMOR

We got along well enough, or so I thought. Chairwoman Sela's report not only didn't place any blame on him, it didn't mention him at all.

VENTEL

As good as they are, the Tal Shiar are not perfect.

KAMEMOR

If it were just Tomalak, then with him on Earth in a Federation cell, our problems would be over. But the disappearance of the *Vetruvis* suggests otherwise, does it not?

DEVIX

If you will allow me a personal observation, Praetor...

(she nods)

...during our years together in the military, Tomalak struck me as one better suited to taking orders than giving them. I cannot picture him as the mastermind behind some great multi-national conspiracy.

VENTEL

Then who?

Kamemor looks at her friend - they both know there is only one candidate. Reluctantly, Ventel accepts the truth...

VENTEL

Chairwoman Sela.

If Kamemor had anything else to throw, she would do it...

CUT TO:

28 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Kamemor still sits across from Bacco, baring her soul...

KAMEMOR

I am a fool, Madam President. I trusted Sela. But every piece of information she ever provided me has now been cast into question.

Bacco looks back at her softly, verging on sympathetic...

BACCO

(quietly)

You can't know everything about everybody who works for you. You were thrust into leadership at a moment's notice. You had to start from scratch... trust some people who were already in place.

Bacco reflects back to her own first year in office...

FLASHBACK - 12x12 "LIFE OF A STATESMAN"

Bacco reveals to Admiral Ross that she knows his secrets...

BACK TO SCENE

Kamemor straightens, resolves herself...

KAMEMOR

Thank you, Madam President, but I am not here for absolution. I am here to help stop these traitors.

BACCO

Have you arrested Sela?

KAMEMOR

I have her under close observation by certain trusted individuals. But arrest... I don't see that netting me any actionable data. I believe Sela would rather die than betray the cause to which she has given so much time and energy.

BACCO

So you came here wanting to talk to Tomalak instead.

KAMEMOR

What I want is to wrap my hands around his neck and squeeze until he has breathed his last breath.

(deep breath)

But for the benefit of the Romulan Star Empire and the Federation... then yes, I would speak with him.

Bacco sits back in her presidential chair, considers her opposite number across the desk...

BACCO

Do you really believe you can get what you need out of Tomalak?

KAMEMOR

Yes. I know him. I worked with him. He's a slow, self-important dullard who puffs out his chest and calls himself a patriot even while he undermines the Empire. But I know how to talk to him.

Another moment, as Bacco works through the angles...

BACCO

I will have to confer with my advisors. I'll have Z4 find you somewhere comfortable to wait.

KAMEMOR

I would remind you that we may not have much time. The *Vetruvis* went missing three days before I even left Romulus.

BACCO

I understand.
(taps desk)
Sivak, send Z4 Blue in.

Bacco stands, Kamemor stands with her.

KAMEMOR

Thank you, Madam President.

BACCO

I'm still not totally sure I can trust you, Gell Kamemor. But I'm willing to see where this goes.

Agent STINSON opens the door, Z4 BLUE skitters across to Kamemor (who controls her slightly bemused reaction to a life-form she has never seen before) and they leave the room together. Bacco sits back down - what now?

29 **INT. VIR-AKZELEN LABORATORY**

HEKT drapes himself across the console, trying to schmooze closer to NELZIK. He still doesn't care about the work she does, but he has to find something to say, so he asks...

HEKT

What are you doing now?

She gestures to the large cylindrical device on the scanner machine before her, the computer running various sensing beams across it, readings scrolling across the screens.

NELZIK

I'm scanning the test device for any subspace variances caused by its journey.

Hekt leans even closer, in her personal space. She doesn't like it, but puts on a smile for the sake of the alliance. He just takes her barely disguised irritation as flirting.

HEKT

And... are the numbers good?

NELZIK

They are exactly as expected.

She slinks smoothly away, her flexible body allowing her to escape. He pursues, thinking she is playing hard to get, and pulls too close again as she works another station.

HEKT

It must be very gratifying to be able to demonstrate such success to your superiors.

NELZIK

In fact, this is not the project my ap-Rej originally tasked me to complete. However once I was able to convince him that what he wanted was simply not possible with our current level of technology, but that I could offer him a viable alternative, even the Autarch -
(heart-head-
-sky gesture)
- himself eventually approved the Vir-Akzelen project. And that is indeed gratifying, Mister Hekt.

Hekt gives a performative sigh, as if he empathises with the Tzenkethi scientist. All a ploy to ingratiate himself.

HEKT

If only my government could see the wisdom of our actions. But no - our so-called Castellan would rather prostrate herself before the Federation and its minions.

NELZIK

(couldn't care less)

A most frustrating situation.

Thinking he's in, Hekt places a hand on Nelzik's blue-green bioluminescent unclothed arm. She gives him a cold smile...

...BUZZ. Hekt flinches back at the startling electric shock from her skin. Nelzik feigns nakedly insincere concern...

NELZIK

Oh, I am sorry, Mister Hekt. We Tzenkethi can sometimes be a shock to other species. Perhaps it would be best to keep your hands to yourself in future.

And she moves off again. Hekt inspects the hand where she shocked him - what a *fascinating* species. It only makes him more intrigued with her. But before he can do anything...

...the whole room SHAKES. In fact the whole building, maybe the whole environment the building was built in.

Hekt staggers, holds on to the machines around him, trying to remain upright. Looks around in terror. But the red-skinned soldiers, the paler-blue-skinned junior scientists, even Nelzik herself, seem perfectly calm.

HEKT

What is that? Are we under attack?

NELZIK

Oh, didn't your own ap-Rej Mister Morad explain?

Apparently not. Hekt doesn't like that. He just clings on as the laboratory continues to SHAKE around them all...

30 **EXT. SPACE - VIR-AKZELEN ASTEROID**

A small ASTEROID is captured in multiple TRACTOR BEAMS...

...being projected from the *Formek*, the Cardassian tug. Its many tractor emitters that earlier held the solar collector device are now focused upon this asteroid...

...and at last the tug manages to PULL this single asteroid out of its place in a huge field of its fellows, until it is flying free and into the same open space we saw before.

31 **NELZIK**

A satisfied smile as the shaking of the room smooths out...

32 **HEKT**

Still worried as it becomes clear he is out of the loop...

33 **MORAD**

Alone on the *Formek's* bridge, with grim determination...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

34 MACET

The Cardassian Legate's familiar face on a wall-screen...

MACET (screen)

I advise you to watch your tone,
dalin Slaine.

OPEN OUT to reveal...

35 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE (CONTINUOUS)

...that this screen is on the walls of the Control Centre, with a normal day going on around us. But Slaine stands at this screen, holding on to her patience with Macet...

SLAINE

I mean no disrespect, Legate. I simply don't understand why you won't explain this to me.

MACET (screen)

Because you are a *dalin*, *dalin*. And I am a Legate. These choices are made far above your level and do not concern you.

SLAINE

Then what exactly is the point of me, Legate? Am I a token? Here to give Cardassia the appearance of engaging in the Khitomer Accords, but without any serious intent to actually work with our allies?

ANGLE - on Ro, listening in to this conversation from out of sight of either Slaine or Macet. She is impressed.

MACET (o.s.)

The Union takes our place in the Khitomer Accords very seriously, *dalin*. But we also have our pride.

ANGLE - back on Slaine, growing in confidence...

SLAINE

Pride?!

(pause to collect)

Legate... a military build-up on the border between our space and that of the Tzenkethi Coalition could be the spark that finally sets fire to this part of space. And since we are in the Khitomer Accords, any such conflict would inevitably drag in the Federation as well. If we expect them to lay down their lives for us, don't you think they deserve to know why?

Macet seems to be actually considering her words...

CUT TO:

36 **3D TACTICAL MAP**

...now showing an ever greater number of Cardassian ships gathering on the border of Tzenkethi space...

RO (o.s.)

So... now we know why.

37 **INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE (CONTINUOUS)**

Ro, Slaine, CENN and RWOGO now stand around the situation table, all staring at the holo-display cast above it...

SLAINE

Legate Macet was reluctant to give me this information. It was rather embarrassing for him to admit such a failure. But here are the facts.

(points)

For weeks, the Seventh Order has been keeping watch on a combined Romulan-Tzenkethi fleet performing manoeuvres in the Lamenda system.

RWOGO

Rather provocative manoeuvres.
Lamenda is the nearest Tzenkethi
system to Cardassian space.

RO

I'm sure that was deliberate. The
Tzenkethi do love to see how far
they can push us before we react.

SLAINE

Unfortunately, several days ago,
Macet lost track of one of the
Romulan ships in that fleet.

CENN

(w/ horror)

Meaning there's now a phase-cloak
enabled warbird on the loose.

SLAINE

Correct, Major.

RWOGO

I feel I must point out - Lamenda
is not just the nearest Tzenkethi
system to Cardassian space. It's
also their nearest system to us.

All their stomachs drop at this very bad news...

CENN

You don't think they're on their
way here, do you? Making another
run at the wormhole?

RO

(shakes head)

They have to know we've beefed up
security here as well. We've got
more ships on patrol than there's
been since the war. All equipped
with cloak detectors.

SLAINE

Agreed. So then... Cardassia.

CENN

But why? What would the Romulans want in Cardassian space?

RWOGO

Isn't it obvious? The Romulans failed to acquire slipstream from the Federation. They failed to create their own slipstream with the help of the Dominion. But who else has access to slipstream?

The answer comes to an appalled Ro and Cenn...

RO

Cardassia does.

CENN

By the Prophets - the Romulans are invading Cardassia.

(beat)

This is it, isn't it? It's starting.

SLAINE

Apparently so. Macet is not just barricading the Tzenkethi border. He's making sure the homeworld is as protected as he can make it.

RO

(into action)

Slaine, talk to Candlewood - get the specs for his cloak detector over to Macet as soon as possible.

SLAINE

(pleasantly surprised)

Thank you, Captain, I'll do that.

RO

Major, inform the patrol ships and advise them to go to yellow alert - just in case we're wrong and the Romulans are coming here after all.

CENN
Understood, Captain.

RO
Rwogo, use Quark's diplomatic channels to get a message back to Ferenginar as well. Dismissed.

Cenn, Slaine and Rwogo all go their own ways. But Ro stops Slaine before she can get far...

RO
Zivan... good work. Thank you.

Slaine smiles, proud, and leaves. Ro mutters to herself...

RO
I guess I better talk to Akaar...

She turns off the display and heads back her office...

38 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - EVENING

The door opens and AKAAR strides in, finding BACCO, ABRIK and SHOSTAKOVA waiting for him in the centre of the room.

ABRIK
What did Captain Ro have to say?

AKAAR
She believes the *Vetruvis* may be making a third attempt to acquire slipstream for the Typhon Pact by invading Cardassia, using the Tzenkethi Coalition's convenient location as a launching point.

As before, horror spreads around the room...

SHOSTAKOVA
Is that... likely?

ABRIK
They may see Cardassia as an easier target than either the Federation or the Dominion.

AKAAR

And they would be correct. The Union can field a significantly weaker force than Starfleet can.

ABRIK

Meaning we'd inevitably have to come to their defence.

Akaar maintains his usual stern demeanour, but underneath it he's as worried as the rest. He tries to focus them...

AKAAR

On that topic, what ships do we have along the Tzenkethi border?

ABRIK

(wracks brains)

Umm... *Aventine* is the only one, in the M'Kemas system. Shall I order Captain Dax into Cardassian space? To support their fleet?

AKAAR

(considers)

No, not yet. But make sure she's aware of the developing situation.

ABRIK

Yes, sir.

SHOSTAKOVA

I still can't believe the Romulans would be so desperate as to risk going to war over this.

ABRIK

Which is presumably why this was their third plan, not their first.

SHOSTAKOVA

(clutching
at straws)

Are we absolutely sure this is their plan? To invade Cardassia?

Bacco, who has been listening intently, finally speaks...

BACCO

No, we're not. It's a possibility that happens to fit the available information... but before I plunge the Alpha Quadrant into war... I need to be sure. I need to know.

(sigh)

So it looks like I have no choice.

Off Bacco's determination...

39 **KAMEMOR**

...to Kamemor's likewise. She stands erect and resolved, a black-clad security agent behind her... the turbolift doors close on them both, lights suggesting the lift going down.

40 **INT. PRISON - CONTROL ROOM**

One of the many screens shows a GRAPHIC indicating the turbolift travelling deeper, deeper into the complex...

AKAAR and DEVIX stand side-by-side, watching its progress. Both ramrod straight, both tense as hell with worry.

AKAAR

You would have preferred to accompany the Praetor yourself.

DEVIX

She assures me she is in no danger here. Nevertheless... it rankles to allow the chief executive of my Empire, a woman under whom I am proud to serve, out of my sight. Especially while on enemy soil.

AKAAR

That is, sadly, the nature of our position.

Devix looks sideways at Akaar, whose eyes remain focused on the screens... and perceives that they are kindred in this.

DEVIX

I want to thank you, Admiral, for allowing this. Given that I began the whole thing by misleading you.

AKAAR

You could scarcely advertise the Praetor's presence on board your ship. It would risk her security.

DEVIX

I was afraid from the first this was too great a risk. A Romulan praetor setting foot on the world of her people's greatest enemy...

AKAAR

An acquaintance, a man I've known since childhood, once taught me an ancient saying of his people. "Only Nixon could go to China."

DEVIX

I don't understand...

AKAAR

It means that only the leader of a nation known for its opposition to a neighbour can safely perform an action in apparent defiance of that opposition... and open peace overtures with that neighbour.

DEVIX

(eyebrow)

Fascinating...

Akaar has to smother a smirk. By now the turbolift has reached the bottom of its seemingly endless descent...

41 **INT. PRISON CELL**

The doors open, and KAMEMOR exits into the cell's anteroom. The security agent stays inside and lets her proceed alone.

She gazes at the mural painting of her capital city. The shelves with half a dozen paper books. The 'fresher with its half wall for some basic privacy. It's all so much more comfortable and civil than a Romulan cell would ever be.

And the cot with the Romulan male lying on it, eyes closed. Kamemor clears her throat. TOMALAK doesn't open his eyes.

TOMALAK

I do not require any food or entertainment. You may leave.

KAMEMOR

I'm not here to bring you food, Tomalak. Or entertainment.

At the familiar voice, Tomalak's eyes JERK open and he fair LEAPS from the cot. Genuinely surprised, he approaches the Praetor, hopeful this is his lifeline out of here. Only the FORCEFIELD between his cell and the anteroom stops him.

TOMALAK

Praetor... I can't believe you're really here.

KAMEMOR

I can hardly believe it myself. But I need the truth, Tomalak... And you will give it to me.

Tomalak slowly realises that she is not here to rescue him after all. He tries to decide how to handle this...

...while Kamemor knows exactly why she's here.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

42 INT. PRISON - CONTROL ROOM

Surrounded by security agents, Akaar and Devix watch...

A SCREEN showing Tomalak's cell. The proconsul sits on his cot, head in his hands. Kamemor paces calmly back and forth on the other side of the forcefield.

43 INT. PRISON CELL

They've been at this for hours. Tomalak is either genuinely exhausted, or putting on a great display of it. Kamemor is unimpressed with his performance. She is relentless.

KAMEMOR

I'm going to try again, Tomalak.
And I'm going to keep on trying
until you give me what I need.
No, not just what I need - what
the Romulan Star Empire needs.

TOMALAK

(looks up, dark laugh)
You have no notion of what the
Empire needs. If you had, I would
not be sitting here, because I
would never have needed to save
Romulus from its own praetor.

KAMEMOR

Interesting that you characterise
things that way, since in my time
as praetor, I keep finding myself
having to extricate the Empire
from situations you created.

TOMALAK

You're blathering, old woman.

Kamemor stops pacing and looks at Tomalak through the force field. After everything he's done, she is enjoying this.

KAMEMOR

You repeatedly provided President Bacco all the justification she could need to declare war on the Empire and the Pact... and if that had happened, if the Federation had gone to war, Romulus would have been forced to fight them without the slipstream drive.

Tomalak stands, incensed, provoked despite himself...

KAMEMOR

So you worried the Federation had an advantage... and then forced a situation for them to employ that advantage against us.

(beat)

You're not very bright, are you?

Tomalak RUSHES forward, barely able to stop himself before he runs right into the forcefield - though it still BUZZES at his closeness. He hisses and seethes in pure hatred...

TOMALAK

I did not endanger the Empire.

KAMEMOR

You didn't plan to kill Federation citizens at Utopia Planitia, and so start a war even you admit the Empire is unequipped to fight?

TOMALAK

(waves it off)

A pitiful handful of Starfleeters. The Federation hasn't the spine to go to war over so small a loss.

KAMEMOR

So you decided to raise the stakes by invading the Dominion, blowing up an entire space station, and risking a war on two fronts, still without delivering your prize.

Tomalak scoffs, turns his back on her, walks back to the mural of the Romulan capital. Kamemor speaks softly, points at the painting, tries to get through to him for real...

KAMEMOR

If we go to war today, Tomalak,
that gets destroyed.

Tomalak turns back to her, seemingly surprised...

KAMEMOR

Oh yes. We're on the brink of war. Both sides - the Typhon Pact and the Khitomer Accords - amassing at the borders. Preparing to fight at the slightest provocation.

(shrug)

But what difference does that make to you? This is where you'll sit for the rest of your life.

TOMALAK

We'll see.

KAMEMOR

Oh, will we? You think one of your powerful co-conspirators will fly to your rescue? Commander Marius of the *Dekkona*, perhaps. Oh no, he committed suicide in prison. Maybe Commander T'Jul of the *Eletrix* - wait, her atoms are spread across the Bajor system. Commander Kozik of the *Vetruvis*, then - ah, but he's unavailable at the moment.

TOMALAK

I'm sure he is.

Tomalak's knowing smirk is good news to Kamemor - it proves he does know what the *Vetruvis* is up to. She presses on...

KAMEMOR

Perhaps your most powerful friend will infiltrate the Federation and see you acquitted of your crimes?

Or maybe she'll see me deposed and my successor negotiate for your release? Or maybe she'll lead an entire army to Earth, and break you out of this cell by force?

Kamemor calmly takes a bench in the anteroom, sits opposite Tomalak. He can tell she is mocking him. Doesn't like it.

KAMEMOR

Sela gave you up, Tomalak.

(beat)

Once we arrested her, we gave her a choice - her freedom in exchange for your captivity. She revealed you as the mastermind of all these operations - Utopia Planitia, the Gamma Quadrant, Kozik's mission.

Tomalak gives a derisive SNORT. Kamemor chuckles along.

KAMEMOR

Oh, I agree. I found it unlikely in the extreme. But Sela is our most important witness right now. Her story is all we have.

TOMALAK

I can tell you a different story.

KAMEMOR

I'm sure you can. But that's all it will be. A story. I need more.

TOMALAK

Such as?

KAMEMOR

I don't need to know about your or Sela's involvement in your plans to steal slipstream from Utopia Planitia or the Dominion. I need to know the next plan.

TOMALAK

And if I tell you?

KAMEMOR

(shrug)

You won't be in the Imperial Fleet
and you won't be in my government.
But you will be home. And although
we will monitor your movements...
you will be free.

Tomalak considers her for a long time. Can he trust her?

She considers him back. Waiting for him to make his choice.

TOMALAK

Alright. I may as well tell you.
It will do you no good anyway.

KAMEMOR

Why not?

TOMALAK

Because it's too late. Kozik's
mission... has already begun.

Tomalak smirks. He now has the upper hand.

And Kamemor knows it. She tries to control her reaction...

44 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Formek* drags its asteroid cargo into the perfect spot
in open space... then its tractors let go. It pulls away
slightly, leaving the asteroid to settle into position.

NELZIK (comm)

Vir-Akzelen to *Formek*. My readings
confirm that the base is now in
the optimum location. Thank you.

MORAD (comm)

You are very welcome, Vir-Akzelen.

45 **INT. CARDASSIAN TUG - BRIDGE (INTERCUT)**

Morad works to shut down the ship now that it has done its
job. He is excited, eager to get moving.

MORAD

(continuing)

Genuinely, Nelzik, it has been my pleasure. I'm shutting the *Formek* down now - do whatever you want with it, I won't need it again.

46 INT. VIR-AKZELEN LABORATORY (INTERCUT)

NELZIK sits at her main console, with the other Tzenkethi scientists rushing around the laboratory as they prepare for the big moment. She looks askance at HEKT...

NELZIK

I'm sure I'll be able to put it to some use. I wish you all success, Mister Morad. It has been a joy to work with someone of like mind.
Vir-Akzelen out.

The line drops. Hekt approaches, another excuse to talk...

HEKT

You told him we're in the optimum location... What does that mean? Where are we?

NELZIK

(quietly exasperated)

To function at optimum levels, the Vir-Akzelen project must be exactly three-point-two light years from its target. It could function as far away as five-point-three light years, but given that this is all new and experimental technology, why tax it unnecessarily?

HEKT

(no idea)

Oh, I agree, absolutely.

Nelzik turns back to her work. She has too much to get done to bother indulging this brainless Cardassian thug.

47 **INT. CARDASSIAN TUG - BRIDGE**

Ship shut down, Morad reacts to a COMM SIGNAL coming in...

 VOICE (comm)
Denison Morad. Are you ready?

 MORAD
 (into wrist comm)
Ready and eager to begin.

 VOICE (comm)
Stand by...

A moment, then Morad DEMATERIALISES in a green-sparkling transporter beam...

48 **INT. VETRUVIS - BRIDGE**

...and reappears on a Romulan bridge under cloak, filled with activity as the moment of truth approaches. A Romulan male, KOZIK (seen 14x01), stands from the command chair...

 KOZIK
Mister Morad. Welcome aboard the
Vetruvis. I am Commander Kozik.

 MORAD
An honour to be aboard, Commander.

 KOZIK
I believe you've met our contact
from the Tzenkethi Coalition. May
I introduce our liaison from the
Breen Confederacy - Trop Sar.

Kozik gestures to a suited BREEN present among the many Romulans on the crew - TROP SAR (from 14x07 "The Summit"). He stands, nods his helmeted head, BUZZES with translation.

 TROP SAR
Mister Morad. What is your role to
be in this mission?

Morad smiles - none of this would be happening without him.

MORAD

I am here to witness the fruition of months of travelling, carrying annular confinement generators and messages and bombs. I am here to watch the Typhon Pact get the tools they need to put the Federation in its place at last. To destroy the sanctimonious humans, the brutish Klingons, the ludicrous Ferengi...

(catches breath)

And what about you, Trop Sar? What is your role?

TROP SAR

I know how to find what we need.

The Breen turns back to his work. Kozik covers a smirk at the short sharp declaration, as opposed to the Cardassian's florid speech. A Romulan underling passes Kozik a PADD...

KOZIK

Ah - my crew confirms that all systems are ready. Mister Morad - would you care to say the word?

MORAD

I'd be delighted, Commander.
(into wrist comm)
Vetruvis to *Vir-Akzelen*.

49 INT. VIR-AKZELEN LABORATORY (INTERCUT)

NELZIK at her console, in charge...

NELZIK

Go ahead, *Vetruvis*.

MORAD (comm)

We're ready here, Nelzik. Proceed.

NELZIK

Acknowledged. Stand by...

She works her console. Standing nearby, Hekt looks up to the open-to-space ceiling with anticipation...

50 **INT. VETRUVIS - BRIDGE (INTERCUT)**

Morad is just as excited for what's about to happen...

MORAD

You should watch this, Commander.

Morad and Kozik turn to look at the VIEWSCREEN...

51 **EXT. SPACE (INTERCUT)**

...as the multiple RED BEAMS fire out from spots on the asteroid's surface... meet at a point...

...and create the same swirling BLOOM of red power in open space. As the beams continue, the whirlpool grows...

52 **INT. VETRUVIS - BRIDGE (INTERCUT)**

Kozik looks on in satisfaction as the light grows...

KOZIK

It is amusing, is it not, Mister Morad? Your military is currently amassing on the Tzenkethi border, terrified that the *Vetruvis* has gone missing nearby.

MORAD

Meanwhile Starfleet flecks to the Bajoran system, paranoid that we will try to reach their wormhole again to enter the Gamma Quadrant.

KOZIK

And yet here we are, light years away from either of them, with no intention of invading Cardassia, as per Chairwoman Sela's agreement with Archon Makbar.

MORAD

And we no longer need those filthy Bajorans and their wormhole...

KOZIK
Because thanks to the Tzenkethi...
we now have a wormhole of our own.

53 EXT. SPACE (INTERCUT)

...and the red whirlpool finally expands larger than ever,
stabilises into a brand new WORMHOLE.

54 INT. VIR-AKZELEN LABORATORY (INTERCUT)

NELZIK at her console, reading her instruments proudly...

NELZIK
Meson and antilepton fluctuations
stabilising... verteron particles
levelling off... and the wormhole
is stable. Proceed, *Vetruvis*.

55 INT. VETRUVIS - BRIDGE (INTERCUT)

Kozik retakes his command chair. Morad stands beside him...

KOZIK
Thank you, Vir-Akzelen. Helm -
set course to enter the wormhole,
and from there... the Dominion.

56 EXT. SPACE

With the Tzenkethi asteroid generating the wormhole...

...a ROMULAN WARBLIND decloaks nearby...

...and dives into the wormhole's swirling red maw.

BLACK OUT

END OF SHOW