

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x09 - "Suffer the Little Children."

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

incorporating elements from

Star Trek: Articles of the Federation

by Keith RA DeCandido

TNG 17x09 - "OUT WITH THE OLD"

Picard is inclined to believe Seven's intuition about Janeway and rush back to Sector 10, but Admiral Jellico orders him to stay away. To verify her claims, Picard asks Seven to mind-meld with Spock. Unfortunately, the attempt lets the Queen know they are onto her. That and the news from *Thunderchild* convince Picard to disobey orders. On Spock's advice, he sets course for a secret Starfleet facility containing incredible objects - including the [Planet Killer](#) (TOS 2x06 "The Doomsday Machine"). Kadhata, Leybenzon and T'Lana gather all the crew who think they should obey Jellico's orders and return to Earth to fight the Borg. They take over *Enterprise*, although only a nerve pinch from T'Lana stops Worf from outright killing Leybenzon in the attempt. Kadhata takes command, placing Picard, Seven, Worf, Crusher and LaForge under arrest. But too late - Spock has already locked the ship on course. They are going to the Planet Killer, like it or not.

TTN 1x09 - "ORION'S HOUNDS"

Thousands of Pa'haquel have died after the star-jellies used *Titan's* sensor data to beam the Pa'haquel into open space. Qui'hibra is furious, and decides to show Riker exactly why he shouldn't have interfered. Joining up with the rest of their alliance, he takes *Titan* to a battle against a monstrous space-going Harvester that eats planets. They are using everything they have - including the star-jellies they captured - to try to stop this creature from destroying a world of 200 million inhabitants. Maybe because *Titan* denied them some jellies, they fail, and the Shalra world is destroyed. The Pa'haquel alliance works to resettle the survivors. Riker realises Qui'hibra is not a bad guy, just desperate. Then the Pa'haquel react to a familiar threat - what they call Branchers, but Starfleet recognise as [Crystalline Entities](#). Riker uses the *Enterprise's* work on communicating with them (TNG 5x04 "Silicon Avatar") to drive them away. That done, Riker realises he has an idea...

VOY 10x09 - "HUNGRY"

On *Einstein*, Janeway detects Spock's mind-meld with Seven, and sets the cube's course for Earth. Seven's friend Captain Vargo

has been captured by *Thunderchild*, but when they intercept the cube and attempt to fire on it, the ship feeds on it and grows bigger. Vargo escapes, leaving *Thunderchild* to be literally swallowed by the cube. The Borg advance to Earth, facing a Starfleet armada - and the cube absorbs every ship, growing in size and power with each one. Admirals Jellico and [Nechayev](#) watch the slaughter in horror, before Janeway comes on screen and demands Picard and Seven be handed over. When they overhear that Picard is going to fetch the Planet Killer, the super-cube flies into the sun, providing it enough power to give birth - to the ships it already swallowed, now all assimilated. Janeway sends those after Picard, while she stays behind to keep an eye on Earth.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

The door of the office opens, and ESPERANZA PIÑIERO barrels through, Z4 BLUE scuttling close behind her.

PIÑIERO

Madam President, I apologise for bursting in. Do you have a moment? It's rather urgent.

NANIETTA BACCO, the president of the Federation, looks up from her desk, where she is reading a sheaf of papers. She gives her old friend and chief of staff a withering look, then returns to her papers.

BACCO

You know there are plenty of people I would happily have shot for doing what you just did.

PIÑIERO

I'll take that as a yes.

Piñiero and Z4 Blue take their seats - a specially modified one for Z4 to fit his insectile [Nasat](#) body. Bacco sighs and accepts their presence - they're obviously not going away.

PIÑIERO

Madam President, we just heard that the Tzenkethi have released Glamok from prison. He's on his way back to the Federation.

BACCO

Remind me?

PIÑIERO

Brek chim Glamok. The Tellarite reporter who went missing on Kliradon last year.

BACCO

Glamok - right, yes. Sorry.

PIÑIERO

Starfleet security thought all along that he was very likely to have been captured and imprisoned by the Tzenkethi, but there was never any proof. Well, they just proved it - by letting him go.

BACCO

That's unusually generous. The Tzenkethi despise the Federation. Why would they let a prisoner go just like that?

PIÑIERO

Zee-Four Blue has a theory.

Bacco and Piñiero both turn to Z4 Blue, whose chittering antennae suggest nervousness and uncertainty.

Z4 BLUE

The Tzenkethi Ambassador contacted me two months ago.

BACCO

We have a Tzenkethi Ambassador?

PIÑIERO

Yes, Madam President. Emra Vik Tov-B.

BACCO

Interesting - we only get a B.

PIÑIERO

Sending an A would be showing more respect for us than they want to.

BACCO

Unless he is an A and they're just calling him a B to make sure we underestimate him.

Z4 BLUE
Madam President...

BACCO
Right, sorry Ziff. Go ahead.

Z4 BLUE
Emra is actually an old... well, I hesitate to say friend, but we've maintained a cordial relationship. He's unusually reasonable for a Tzenkethi politician.

BACCO
Probably why he has the job. So he just called you out of the blue?

Piñiero covers a smirk at Bacco's deadpan joke. Z4 is less than impressed - he has heard them all before.

Z4 BLUE
Yes, Madam President. It seemed obvious that he was building up to asking me something. But he must have lost his nerve, because he hung up before getting to any kind of point.

PIÑIERO
Since that was all there was to it, I didn't bother bringing it to your attention at the time.

BACCO
But...?

PIÑIERO
But... Starfleet Intelligence has heard that Emra was recently seen on Kliradon - just before Brek chim Glamok was released.

Bacco sits back and ponders, putting the pieces together. The gorgeous skyline of Paris glitters behind her.

BACCO

So the Tzenkethi Ambassador, who we've had such little contact with that I didn't even know he existed ten minutes ago, calls one of my deputy chiefs of staff just to chat. Two months later he visits a Federation prisoner on a Tzenkethi border world, and arranges his extremely unusual release... to carry a message on his behalf?

Z4 BLUE

(nodding)

One that was too sensitive to risk coming to us with directly.

PIÑIERO

But urgent enough that he at least considered the direct route before chickening out.

BACCO

What the hell are they up to?

PIÑIERO

I don't know. But relations with the Tzenkethi have never exactly been what you might call warm. If Emra is going this far out of his way to tell us something, then it must be something the rest of the Tzenkethi government don't want him to tell us.

BACCO

Alright. Esperanza, get Starfleet to intercept whatever ship they're sending Glamok back to us on. Make sure he gets all possible support on his safe return - intelligence, medical, psychological, all of it.

PIÑIERO

Yes, Madam President.

BACCO

Ziff, call this Emra Vik Tov-B person back, and let him know I want to see him face-to-face in this office as soon as possible.

Z4 BLUE

But - he's specifically trying to avoid direct contact with us.

BACCO

Yes, so me demanding to see him gives him plausible deniability. He can say it was under duress. As far as anyone knows it's just the usual ambassadorial handshake.

Z4 BLUE

Understood, Madam President.

BACCO

And do it fast - I don't have time for games. I leave on my goodwill tour in a week, and Admiral Ross is driving me insane with his security briefings. Off you go.

PIÑIERO / Z4 BLUE

(standing together)

Thank you, Madam President.

Piñiero and Z4 both head towards the door to exit. As they open the door to pass through, Z4 mutters to Piñiero...

Z4 BLUE

She knows I hate it when she calls me Ziff.

PIÑIERO

Of course she does. That's why she does it.

Z4 BLUE

(tinkle of
annoyance)

Humans.

Piñiero chuckles under her breath, and then they close the doors behind them.

Leaving Bacco to sit at her desk, and ponder what the hell is going on...

2 EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY

Establishing the grand edifice that houses the heart of the Federation government in Paris, straddling the Place de la Concorde with the Seine flowing past nearby.

3 INT. FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

A different day. Bacco stands in a more formal outfit than before, suitable for a high-level diplomatic meeting. She gazes out of the window at the view.

Piñiero enters again, also in a smart suit. She approaches.

PIÑIERO

Madam President, the ambassador
has entered the building.

BACCO

Thanks, Esperanza. Whatever this
is, let's hope it's the start of
something better between us and
the Tzenkethi. I wouldn't mind
being the president who managed to
establish peace with the people
who see us as the literal devil.

PIÑIERO

Nothing wrong with your ego.

BACCO

Have we had anything from Glamok
as to what this is all about?

PIÑIERO

Not yet, ma'am. The *Atlas* is still
en route from the border.

Bacco nods, accepting that. There is a BEEP from Bacco's desk - Piñiero thumbs a control to receive the message.

SIVAK (comm)
Madam President, Ambassador Emra
Vik Tov-B of the Tzenkethi
Coalition is here to see you.

Piñiero looks to Bacco. Bacco nods back - go ahead.

PIÑIERO
Thank you, Sivak. Please show the
ambassador in.

Bacco turns to greet the Ambassador, Piñiero a half-step behind her. They are both nervous, but curious to see where this will lead. The door opens...

...and a BRIGHT GOLDEN LIGHT streams in from the waiting room outside.

Piñiero blinks and flinches slightly from the sheer power of the light, but Bacco doesn't - she maintains complete and total dignity in this important diplomatic moment.

BACCO
Ambassador, welcome to the Palais.

Off Bacco's politely smiling face, looking into the bright light that appears to be coming directly from the Tzenkethi ambassador himself...

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

4 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE

Establishing the station, as the Intrepid-class *Blackthorne* (last seen DS9 10x12 "Heresy") slowly approaches.

5 INT. DS9 - UPPER PYLON DOCKING AREA

Ro is stood with a NONCOM security officer, looking out of the window of the airlock apprehensively at the approaching starship. She taps her combadge...

RO

Ro to Evik. Is everything ready?

6 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

Security chief EVIK NATH stands with three other Starfleet security officers, who are all armed with phaser rifles. While talking to Ro, Evik points up and down the docking ring corridor, giving them silent direction.

EVIK

Setting up the last of it now,
Commander.

RO (comm)

Good. The *Blackthorne* is minutes
away, and the *Beshodi* less than an
hour behind it.

EVIK

Understood, sir. The route to the
Promenade is secure. I assure you,
no-one will know.

The other officers nod their acknowledgements and move down the corridor to do as they are told.

7 INT. DS9 - UPPER PYLON DOCKING AREA

RO

I hope not. Starfleet Command told me I couldn't even comprehend the level of secrecy around this, so I don't want some random civilian just stumbling across it.

EVIK (comm)
Speaking of civilians...

RO
Don't worry - the bar is closed down and Quark is off-station.
(sly smile)
His best spring wine supplier demanded a face-to-face meeting.

EVIK (comm)
Nicely done.

RO
I thank you. Okay, carry on,
Lieutenant Commander. Ro out.

Ro glances at her own security escort. Time was, this used to be her job. Now she has higher level worries. Looking out of the window again at the ever-nearing *Blackthorne*, she taps her combadge again.

RO
Ro to Bashir.

8 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

A hive of activity. Doctor BASHIR, his Starfleet nurse RICHTER, his Bajoran doctor AYLAM and his Bajoran nurse ETANA are all on duty, moving back and forth carrying supplies and devices.

BASHIR
Doing the best we can, Commander.
It was rather short notice, and I've never operated on one of this species before.

RO (comm)

I've never even seen one of this species before, so you're ahead of me. How's the Promenade looking?

Bashir walks to the Infirmary doors. They open onto...

9 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Poking his head out of the Infirmary door, Bashir sees that unlike the Infirmary, the Promenade is completely deserted, with the replimat and all the shops shut down and dark.

Quark's Bar is completely dead. Turning his head both ways, Bashir sees more SECURITY OFFICERS dotted along the length of the Promenade at regular intervals, all armed.

BASHIR
Quiet as a church mouse.

Bashir re-enters the Infirmary.

10 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY (CONTINUOUS)

The rest of the medical staff continue preparing...

RO (comm)
What about your staff - do they know what's going on?

BASHIR
Only enough to do their jobs. Safe to say they were surprised.

RO (comm)
I think we all were, Doctor. Ro out.

The line drops, and Bashir turns back to work.

11 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Back outside the station... and the *Blackthorne* finally docks at the upper pylon with a solid kerthunk.

12 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Major CENN is working the central Ops table, with ALECO at tactical, NOG at engineering and CANDLEWOOD at sciences.

CENN

Ops to Ro - the *Blackthorne* is docked, Commander.

RO (comm)

I can see that, Major. Tell Bowers to launch the *Defiant* now.

CENN

Aye, Commander. Ops to *Defiant*. You're clear to depart.

BOWERS (comm)

Understood, Major.

13 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The *Defiant* disconnects from the docking ring, and slowly turns to leave... but it doesn't go far.

14 INT. DS9 - UPPER PYLON DOCK

As Ro waits, the wheel-shaped airlock door rolls open...

...and reveals Doctor [KATHERINE PULASKI](#), walking along the short airlock corridor with a bag over her shoulder. The human woman is now pushing 70, but with no intention of stopping any time soon - and no time for fools either.

PULASKI

Commander Ro, I assume?

RO

Doctor Pulaski. Welcome to DS-Nine.

PULASKI

Hmm. Now that I'm here, perhaps someone would be kind enough to tell me why I'm here?

RO

They didn't tell you?

PULASKI

Damned admirals think they can
order me about however they
please, and not tell me a thing.
Worst part of it is - they can.

Ro smiles - they're going to get along. She gestures away
from the airlock and down the corridor, and they begin to
walk, the security officer staying on guard where he was.

RO

(taps combadge)

Ro to Ops - Doctor Pulaski is on-
board. Tell Captain Thann to take
up position with the *Defiant*.

CENN (comm)

Aye, Commander. Ops out.

PULASKI

I wish someone would tell me why a
doctor warrants all this security.

RO

It's not for you. It's for your
patient.

PULASKI

And doesn't anyone think I ought
to know who my patient is before I
stick a knife in them?

RO

Don't worry, I'll give you a full
briefing in my office.

PULASKI

You know, I've heard a lot about
you, Commander.

RO

I shudder to think.

PULASKI

Disciplinary actions, marks on
your record, prison...

RO
Look, if this is going to be a
problem -

PULASKI
Problem - are you kidding me? You
could be my younger sister.

The two of them chuckle and keep walking.

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

An ALERT on Cenn's console. Tension in Ops...

BOWERS (comm)
Defiant to DS-Nine...

CENN
I see it too, Lieutenant.

BOWERS (comm)
They're ahead of schedule.

CENN
I know. Ops to Ro. They're here.

16 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT**

Ro and Pulaski...

RO
Oh, fire. Computer, redirect to
docking ring, cargo bay seventeen.

The computer BEEPS affirmatively, and the turbolift changes
direction. Agitated, Ro turns to Pulaski...

RO
No time for a briefing, sorry.

PULASKI
So just tell me.

RO

Your patient is from a race that is hostile to the Federation. Hence all the security.

PULASKI

Okay. But why me? Don't they have doctors of their own?

RO

All I know is, they asked for you by name. They trust you.

Before a puzzled Pulaski can ask more, the turbolift comes to a halt and the doors OPEN onto Lieutenant Evik...

17 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The *Defiant* and *Blackthorne* have both taken positions on opposite sides of the station, clearly in patrol formation.

Meanwhile, a nondescript and markings-free TRANSPORT VESSEL approaches the station...

18 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Cenn is very nervous as he works his consoles...

CENN

DS-Nine to *Beshodi*. Relinquish controls to us, we'll bring you into docking port twelve. Station security is waiting to meet you.

(beat; console beeps)

They acknowledge.

CANDLEWOOD

Major - what's the big deal? Why does a basic transport like that need this level of security?

CENN

Need to know, Lieutenant. Just keep your sensors open for any hostiles out there.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh, come on, Major - we need to know what to look for at least.

CENN

(firm)

Lieutenant - no. Stop asking.

Cenn has not been this firm with Candlewood before - it takes him aback somewhat.

19 INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY

Ro, Pulaski and Evik enter the bay. It has been cleared of all cargo and there are more armed SECURITY dotted around the perimeter. The docking umbilicus from the transport ship is at the far end, with the airlock not yet open.

The three senior Starfleet officers stand at the bottom of the ramp, waiting for their guests to appear.

RO

I didn't have time to put on my dress uniform.

EVIK

If what you've told me is true, Commander, this is not an official visit. I don't think they'll mind.

Ro hopes he is right - she doesn't want to be responsible for a diplomatic incident. The airlock opens... and a BRIGHT GOLDEN LIGHT streams out from the ship.

Evik remains calm and professional. Ro is quietly amazed. But Pulaski recognises this light with instant horror...

PULASKI

Tzenkethi...

She immediately turns on her heel and stalks out of the cargo bay again. Ro is caught off guard and struggles to know what to do... but the LIGHT is now receding...

...until we see what is causing the light - our first view of a real-life TZENKETHI - Ambassador EMRA. This male alien is humanoid in shape, but that is the only resemblance.

His skin is bio-luminescent - he glows with a beautiful and warm GOLDEN light that seems to come from inside his very being. His clothing is flowing diaphanous silk. His facial features are attractive in the extreme - anyone with eyes would find this species irresistible. His voice when he finally speaks sounds like the music of WINDCHIMES.

EMRA

You are Starfleet Commander Ro?

Ro has difficulty tearing her eyes away from the beautiful vision in front of her enough to actually speak to him. She finally gets herself under control and steps forward. Emra seems scared and nervous, glancing around the room warily.

RO

Ambassador. Welcome to DS-Nine.
I am Commander Ro, yes. May I
present my chief of security,
Lieutenant Commander Evik.

EMRA

Is Katherine Pulaski among you?

RO

(covering
awkwardness)

She is.

EMRA

My charge's life - and perhaps
mine as well - depend on her.

Emra steps back into the doorway of the transport ship for a moment. When he comes back, he is carrying a CHILD in his arms - a Tzenkethi male like himself. The child, about 3 years old, glows GREEN but dully, sickly and half-hearted.

EMRA

We must get him to the doctor
immediately.

RO
Of course. Lieutenant Commander?

EVIK
If you'll follow me, Ambassador.

Evik leads Emra out of the room, the adult carrying the child effortlessly. Ro follows them...

20 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)

Evik and Emra turn one way, following the clear route to the Promenade. Emerging from the cargo bay, Ro spots Pulaski some distance away, watching with arms crossed.

PULASKI
That's my patient? A Tzenkethi?

RO
Is that a problem?

PULASKI
Damn right it's a problem. I won't do it.

RO
I'm sorry, I don't understand.

PULASKI
I won't do the operation. That child can die in agony, I don't care. I'm not doing it.

Off Ro's surprise...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

21 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY (SURGERY SUITE)

The Tzenkethi child, whose name is ZORMONK, lies on his side on a bio-bed. His back is warped and misshapen, the victim of a *spina bifida* like condition. His arms and legs droop loosely over the edges of the bed, floppy as if they contain no bones. He SHUDDERS occasionally in pain.

Bashir moves various heavy scanning devices into place around the bio-bed, setting them up. Emra stands nearby, watching with caution and confusion.

EMRA

You are not Pulaski.

BASHIR

No, Ambassador. My name is Doctor Julian Bashir.

EMRA

We asked for Pulaski. Only Pulaski can help us.

BASHIR

(still working)

She is aboard, I know that much. I'm sure she'll be here in just a moment. In the meantime, if you'll allow me, I'm going to start the preparations without her. I am an expert in xenobiology myself.

EMRA

(pause to consider)

You may continue. But we need Pulaski.

BASHIR

I understand.

Bashir moves around to crouch down in front of Zormonk's face, hoping to make a connection with the boy.

As Bashir speaks, low and gentle, the boy's eyes have trouble focusing on him. Shudders still jerk his body on occasion, and his green-glowing flesh throbs dully.

BASHIR

Hello, young man. My name is Julian. Can you tell me yours?

The boy looks back over towards Emra, confused and scared by this alien being so close to him. Emra, the ambassador more accustomed to dealing with humans, answers for him.

EMRA

He is Zormonk.

BASHIR

My friends and I are going to do everything we can to help you, Zormonk. I promise.

Zormonk is still in too much pain and confusion to respond. Bashir reaches out a hand to comfort him, touching the quivering bare flesh... and there is a BUZZ sound. Bashir quickly yanks his hand away, and shakes it out, confused.

BASHIR

That felt like an electric shock. Is that usually a symptom of his condition?

EMRA

No, it is natural, but controlled under typical circumstances.

BASHIR

(thinking to self)

Probably associated with the bioluminescence.

(to Emra)

What is his condition exactly?

EMRA

It is the *cal-tai*.

BASHIR

I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with that.

EMRA

It is rare. A growth on the spine, where the bones sit.

Bashir nods, processing but out of his depth a little here.

PHARMACY AREA

Etana and Richter are in this area, gathering supplies. But Etana pauses, gazing through into the surgery area at the glowing figure of Emra as he guards Zormonk.

ETANA

What a gorgeous people.

RICHTER

I don't have to be jealous, do I?

ETANA

(derisive look)

I'm just saying, why would the Federation be enemies with these people? They're so beautiful.

Doctor Aylam passes by, interrupting them.

AYLAM

Stop stargazing. We're here to save a child's life, not gawk.

Under Aylam's withering glare, Etana and Richter do as she says and move on. Aylam herself pauses a moment to gaze from afar at the crippled child on the bio-bed...

AYLAM

Where the hell is Pulaski?

CUT TO:

22 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Ro and Pulaski are both on their feet, pacing as they talk it out. The atmosphere is respectful but tense.

RO

Doctor, I'm afraid you're gonna have to explain this to me. You're refusing to save a child's life? What happened to 'do no harm'?

PULASKI

Don't you dare condescend to me, young lady. I was a prisoner of the Tzenkethi for four years. Do you know why they kept me alive that long? Because I operated on fourteen cases of *cal-tai* for them. That's all. If I hadn't saved those lives, under duress, they would have killed me without a second thought.

RO

(deep breath)

This was during the border wars?

PULASKI

That's right.

RO

And that's why they asked for you specifically.

PULASKI

Right again.

RO

There's nobody else who can do it?

PULASKI

Nobody else knows about Tzenkethi anatomy. Even after I was finally released, I never wrote up my notes. Had no plans to relive the experience, thank you very much.

RO

I can certainly understand that.

PULASKI

Don't patronise me either.

RO

I'm not. Look, Doctor, I'm a Bajoran who grew up during the Cardassian Occupation. You think I don't know about grudges?

PULASKI

Fine. You're a Bajoran. Would you save a Cardassian's life?

RO

I just did - less than a month ago. But I admit it took me a long time to get to that point.

PULASKI

Well, good for you. I'm still not going to do it.

RO

Doctor -

PULASKI

That's final. We're the same rank, Commander. And a command officer can't order a medical officer to violate her ethics. Try and force me, I promise you, I'll resign.

Without leave, Pulaski turns and walks out of the office into Ops, and across to the turbolifts. Ro sags against her desk in frustration. After a moment, she gets a new idea and stands, turning the computer on her desk to face her.

RO

Computer, call up a list of all Starfleet captains with experience of dealing with the Tzenkethi.

The computer BEEPS and brings up the list. Ro scrolls through... until she is brought up short by something.

RO

Huh. That's convenient.

She slaps the control to open the door, and shouts out onto Ops, where TENMEI can be seen hanging out at the Ops table.

RO
(beckons)
Prynn!

Tenmei jogs up and into the office. Once the doors close...

RO
I've got a job for you. I need you to pick someone up from Bajor, and it's urgent enough that I'm authorising warp speed within the star system. Can you handle that?

TENMEI
Obviously.

RO
Good answer.

23 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

A runabout lifts off from its platform, manoeuvres out of the station's immediate location and past the circling *Defiant* and *Blackthorne*... and jumps straight to warp.

24 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Cenn remains in place at the central Ops table. His console BEEPS - he checks it, then taps the console.

CENN
Commander, the *Nile*'s back.

RO (comm)
Thanks, Major. Get the captain up here as soon as they dock.

25 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

SISKO, in civilian dress, reaches to shake Ro's hand before she leads him over to the lounge area, where they sit.

RO

Thanks for coming on such short notice, sir.

SISKO

I'm happy to help, Commander. I had a quick glance at the orders on the way up...

RO

It's a mess, Captain. The patient, Zormonk - he's the son of Zaarok Tzel Gar-A himself.

SISKO

(that's big)

One of the Tzelnira, second only to the Autarch. He would never authorise asking the Federation for help, not even for this.

RO

Which is why Zaarok went such a complicated route to arrange this behind his own government's back. I don't think I have to tell you how politically sensitive this is. If we save this child, it could go a long way towards improving our relations with the Tzenkethi.

SISKO

And if we don't, it could make them worse.

RO

And now I've got the only doctor in the entire Federation who can do this refusing to help. And I honestly can't fault her reasons. The only reason Zaarok even knows about Pulaski is because he used to be in charge of the prison where she was held.

SISKO
I understand.

RO
I've been given responsibility for making sure it all goes smoothly. But I know nothing about Tzenkethi at all. Your record says you met them on the *Okinawa*?

SISKO
'Met' is a bit of a euphemism. But I'll share what I know.

RO
Would you be willing to talk to the ambassador? He and the child are with Bashir right now.

Sisko looks like he would like to say no...

26 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM

Emra enters the wardroom, where Ro and Sisko already wait. Before the door closes, we can see Evik stay outside in the corridor after having escorted the ambassador here.

EMRA
Commander Ro? Is there a problem?

RO
(avoiding the question)
Ambassador, this is Captain Sisko. I asked him to come here to advise on our current situation.

Well trained in dealing with humans, Emra steps forward and holds out his hand for Sisko to shake.

Sisko takes it, feels the same electric BUZZ as before...

FLASH

27 INT. TZENKETHI HARRIER

A younger SISKO, in an early TNG-era Starfleet uniform, a full head of hair, no beard. Prone on the deck, surrounded by the dead bodies of other Starfleet officers dressed similarly. He looks up at a figure looming over him...

It is a TZENKETHI soldier, with glowing RED flesh and an ominous black uniform. Sneering his hatred, the Tzenkethi reaches down with one long red finger, and presses the tip directly into Sisko's forehead, where it BUZZes on contact.

As the Tzenkethi keeps pressing, the BUZZ gets louder, becoming a SIZZLE. Sisko grits his teeth. The SIZZLE becomes a BURN, smoke drifting up from the point of contact. The Tzenkethi grin-sneers at his prisoner...

...and Sisko SCREAMS.

FLASH

28 BACK TO SCENE

Holding the Tzenkethi ambassador's buzzing hand, current Sisko tries his best not to scream all over again...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

29 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

The door from the ward room opens and Emra stalks out, a mix of angry and scared buried under professional control. He pauses at the sight of Evik waiting for him, then turns and stalks down the corridor. Evik follows.

As they walk off, we pass through the open doors into...

30 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM (CONTINUOUS)

...where we find Ro and Sisko sat at the table, Sisko's head in his hands. The door closes behind us.

RO

Well, that didn't go especially well, did it?

SISKO

I'm sorry.

RO

I thought I was bad at diplomacy. What the hell happened?

SISKO

I was on the *Okinawa*. We were on patrol near Tzenkethi space with the *Assurance*. We got into it with them over Entelior Four. They rammed the *Assurance* so hard, it got caught in the planet's gravity well and crashed to the surface.

RO

Prophets...

SISKO

So I was leading a rescue mission using the *Okinawa's* shuttles, when the Tzenkethi invaded the wreck and took the entire crew prisoner.

FLASH

The Tzenkethi soldier pressing his finger into Sisko's forehead, Sisko SCREAMING as he lies among the corpses...

FLASH

SISKO

The *Okinawa* only managed to rescue eleven of us. Eleven - from a crew of almost seven-hundred. They tortured the rest to death.

RO

Okay, I sympathise. But you know how important this is, Captain. Maybe if we could get Emra to apologise to Pulaski -

SISKO

That won't happen. They don't believe they have anything to apologise for.

RO

But if this Zaarok guy is working against his own government -

SISKO

Only to save his own child. Not because he likes the Federation.

RO

But there has to be some way to salvage this.

SISKO

I hope so. But I don't know what it is.

31 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Evik escorts Emra along the deserted Promenade. As they walk, they pass other armed Starfleet security at strategic points. Emra is still smarting from the meeting with Sisko.

EMRA

Lieutenant Commander, may I ask
you a question?

EVIK

I have no authority to speak for
the Federation, Mister Ambassador.

EMRA

Nevertheless, help me understand.
Why does the Federation attack us?

EVIK

I don't believe we do, sir. It is
not the Federation's way to attack
anyone first. We would go to any
lengths to avoid armed conflict -
a philosophy I fully agree with.

EMRA

I do not speak of armed conflict.
You attack us with words. Ideas.
Ways of doing things.

EVIK

We express a desire for peaceful
coexistence. Friendship. Forgive
me, sir, but it seems to us that
your people respond to such simple
overtures as a declaration of war.
To return your own question - why?

EMRA

Because you terrify us.

The ambassador turns and enters the Infirmary. Confused at
his declaration, Evik pauses a moment before following.

PAN up and across to the top level of the Promenade, where
PULASKI sits alone at a table, a glass of something strong
stolen from Quark's bar in front of her.

She has watched Evik and Emra enter the infirmary. Staring
down at the closing door, she takes a healthy swig of the
drink and SLAMS the empty glass back on the table.

32 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Emra returns to young Zormonk's side, with a glare across the bio-bed at Bashir. The human doctor is embarrassed at the situation, trying to maintain a professional face.

EMRA
Pulaski refuses to help us.

BASHIR
So I've been told. I'm sorry.

EMRA
Find her, Doctor. Change her mind.
Please.

Bashir looks down at young Zormonk, eyes unfocused, limbs drooping, occasional tremors wracking his little body.

BASHIR
I will. Doctor Aylam...
(she approaches)
Keep our patient comfortable. I'll
be back as soon as possible.

AYLAM
Understood, Doctor.

Bashir walks out of the Infirmary, onto...

33 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Bashir steps out onto the deserted Promenade, takes a deep breath. After a moment, he taps his combadge...

BASHIR
Bashir to Doctor Pulaski.

Simultaneous with him saying it, we hear the COMM SIGNAL coming from Pulaski's own combadge, saying the same words.

Bashir looks UP, and sees Pulaski looking back down at him from the upper level. She's been caught.

Bashir takes the spiral staircase to the upper level...

UPPER LEVEL

...and approaches Pulaski, hopeful but wary. She stands to meet him, stony faced.

BASHIR

Doctor Pulaski. I'm Julian Bashir. I've been looking forward to meeting you.

PULASKI

Really. God knows why.

BASHIR

You're something of a legend at Starfleet Medical. Your research catalogue alone is unparalleled. When I heard I would be assisting you on this project, I felt like a first year student all over again.

PULASKI

Your reputation precedes you as well, Doctor. Like the fact that you're an award-winning genius in alien anatomy and physiology, not to mention first in your class in paediatric medicine.

BASHIR

None of which is any substitute for experience. Doctor Pulaski, I don't know you, and I don't know what may or may not be going on here. But what I do know is that there's a little boy in there who needs help. And you're the only one who can give it to him.

Pulaski's face remains stony. Bashir's combadge chimes.

RO (comm)

Ro to Bashir. Could you report to my office, please?

BASHIR
(doesn't take eyes
off Pulaski)
Certainly, Commander. Shall I
bring Doctor Pulaski?

RO (comm)
She's with you?

BASHIR
In fact she is.

RO (comm)
Then yes, absolutely.

BASHIR
We'll be there in a moment.

The signal drops. Bashir gestures pointedly for Pulaski...

BASHIR
Shall we, Doctor?

Off her continued stony expression...

34 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

...to the same expression still on her face as she sits in
the lounge area of Ro's office.

Bashir sits next to her, with Ro and Sisko opposite. Ro is
trying to make it as unthreatening as possible.

RO
I don't know much about medicine,
Doctor. But I took an oath too.
All four of us did - to protect
the Federation and do what's best
for its people.

PULASKI
And just how does me operating on
a Tzenkethi fulfil that oath,
Commander?

BASHIR

(stern)

His name is Zormonk, Doctor. He's three years old.

SISKO

The Tzenkethi have been at odds with us for decades, and they still view us as some kind of evil empire that has to be stamped out.

RO

Not a day goes by that we don't hear some kind of anti-Federation propaganda from them. You're not authorised to hear this, but I'm going to say it anyway. Starfleet Intelligence told me an hour ago that the Tzenkethi are currently claiming that the Federation has kidnapped a child so that we can experiment on him. That President Bacco's upcoming summit with Martok and Tal'Aura is to plan the invasion of the Coalition using information from his torture.

PULASKI

I'm well aware what the Tzenkethi are capable of. I dare say better than anyone in this room.

SISKO

Believe me, Doctor, I know what you went through was horrible -

PULASKI

Horrible?! It would have had to improve by several thousand orders of magnitude to get to horrible! It wasn't just that they held me prisoner. It wasn't just that they forced me to treat their sick and injured. They only let me treat certain people - people who were worth it. I had to let two women, one man and three children die

because they weren't of the right echelon, while I wasted my time operating on a cousin of one of the Tzelnira who had no hope of recovery no matter what I did, which I told them over and over but they forced me to do it anyhow, and he still died. So do not presume to tell me anything about what I went through.

BASHIR

This is one child that you have an opportunity to save.

PULASKI

Don't talk to me about children!
The Tzenkethi took my children!

An awkward pause.

BASHIR

I'm sorry, I didn't know. There's no mention of it in your record. Did they die in the border wars?

PULASKI

They're not dead. But I might as well be to them. I've had three husbands. I tell everybody I'm still friends with all of them. That's a lie. After the armistice, they told Starfleet I had died so they didn't have to give me back. My husband remarried. My children grieved for me. And then when I was finally rescued and went home, it destroyed my husband's new marriage, and my children blamed me for lying to them.

RO

Zaarok's in that same prison now.

PULASKI

...what?

RO

That was also in the Intelligence report. They're telling everyone it's our fault, but really, they put Zaarok in the same prison you were in - the prison he used to run - for sending his son to the enemy. This is a member of the most privileged class in Tzenkethi society, and he's cooperating with his people's greatest enemy and allowing himself to be imprisoned because he wants his son to live.

SISKO

I'm still a captain. I could very easily order you to do this, but that would defeat the whole point. If you performed this operation under duress, it'd be no better than what the Tzenkethi did. I won't do that to you. Instead, I'm asking you - begging you - to look at what Zaarok did. He put aside his prejudices, went against every principle his people live by, to save a boy who never hurt anyone.

BASHIR

We have a great opportunity here, Doctor, to show that our people can work together. But it will only happen if you come back to the Infirmary with me and save Zormonk's life. If you don't, then we've got a dead child, someone else unjustly put in prison, and an enemy even more implacable than before thanks to the corpse of the child of one of their leaders who died in Federation custody.

RO

Understand something else, Doctor. If you still refuse, that'll be

the end of it. No reprimands, no
censure, nothing. I've spoken to
the head of Starfleet Medical, and
he agrees that you have every
reason to hate the Tzenkethi. You
can go right back to your career
with no repercussions. That's in
writing. I can show you.

Pulaski has listened to all of this. She thinks it over.
The others wait, no sign of which way this will go. Finally
Pulaski speaks, low and quiet.

PULASKI

Alright.

SISKO

I'm sorry?

PULASKI

I'll do it. God help me, but I'll
do it.

Off their relief, but her haunted expression...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

35 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

The door opens and a group of Starfleet officers strides into the Infirmary. Pulaski is at their head, bullish and determined now that her mind is made up. Behind her are Bashir and Ro, then Sisko, with Evik bringing up the rear.

Ambassador Emra turns at their entrance, instinctively alarmed. But he nevertheless stands to face Pulaski, as scared by her as she is by him. She looks at him, unmoved by his ethereal beauty, instead keeping it all business.

PULASKI

Ambassador Emra Vik Tov-B, I'm Katherine Pulaski.

EMRA

Doctor. I want you to know that I was not aware of the details of your history with my people when I was tasked with this assignment by the Tzel. I understand -

PULASKI

Let's make one thing very clear, Ambassador. I'm not doing this for you. I'm not doing this for the Federation, or for galactic peace, or for any of that nonsense. I'm doing it because there's a child in pain, and he has a father who loves him. Do you understand that?

EMRA

Perfectly, Doctor.

PULASKI

Alright, then. I want this room cleared of non-medical personnel and sterilised. And somebody get me some surgical reds.

Pulaski steps past Emra into the surgical suite, ignoring him now. Bashir follows her. Ro gestures for Emra to follow her out of the Infirmary, which he does. Sisko goes with them, as does Evik, leaving only medical personnel behind.

36 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Ro leads the party over to the deserted Replimat. (Evik has remained behind standing guard outside the Infirmary door.) She works the panels on one of the replicators, then turns back to Sisko and Emra.

RO

Ambassador, Captain, if you'd like to wait here, I've made sure you can sample any food or drink you'd like from the replicator. Or we can provide you with guest quarters if you'd prefer...

EMRA

Thank you, Commander, but I'd rather remain close to my charge.

RO

Understood. If you'll excuse me, I should check in with Ops.

SISKO

Thanks, Commander. We'll be fine.

Ro moves off, nodding to Evik to keep an eye on them as she goes. Sisko gestures for Emra to sit.

SISKO

Ambassador, I apologise for the way Doctor Pulaski spoke to you.

EMRA

It is refreshing to hear someone speak their mind so unambiguously. It does not happen on ab-Tzenketh. Those in my profession go to such lengths to soften their words that they often have no impact at all.

SISKO

Then I hope this will help us both. I don't trust your people, Ambassador. I'm not proud of that, but there it is. But I do trust a father who loves his child.

EMRA

On both points, we agree, Captain.

That established, they sit in companionable silence.

37 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Bashir, now wearing SURGICAL REDS, crouches in front of Zormonk. He speaks quiet and gentle to the child, who is still only half able to focus.

BASHIR

Zormonk, I don't know if you can hear me or understand, but we're ready to begin. We're going to give you something to help you sleep while we work, and then we're going to do everything we can to help you, I promise.

No response from the boy, so Bashir nods sadly and stands.

Pulaski brings a surgical arch for the bio-bed, locks it into place over the boy, and presses a control to release a small amount of GAS under the arch. Zormonk settles into unconsciousness. They continue to set up and prepare. She and all the support staff are likewise in surgical reds.

PULASKI

I wish we were doing this in a proper Starfleet sickbay.

BASHIR

They didn't want to get any deeper into Federation space than they had to. And this is the nearest outpost to the Tzenkethi border. Besides, I've had over ten years to whip this place into shape.

PULASKI

Well, either way it's better than a Tzenkethi prison cell. Alright, pay attention. *Cal-tai* is so rare because it affects the bones, and Tzenkethi don't have very many of those.

BASHIR

My scans showed me that the limbs are more like fluid-filled sacks, that contract and inflate at will.

PULASKI

Almost their entire skeleton is like that. It makes them unusually flexible for a humanoid species, but it also leaves them vulnerable to certain conditions. You'd think they'd have engineered it out of their genome by now.

BASHIR

They do that?

PULASKI

You really don't know anything about them, do you? Consider yourself lucky. Right, come on, let's get on with it. This little guy doesn't have time to waste.

Bashir and Pulaski set to work, with Etana, Richter and Aylam there to assist as needed. And we go into...

38 MONTAGE SEQUENCE

--INFIRMARY. Bashir gently rearranges little Zormonk's limbs so that he is lying on his front, bare back revealed. Pulaski works the surgical arch to fire a laser-scalpel, slicing through dull green skin along his spine.

-- OUTSIDE THE STATION. The *Defiant* and the *Blackthorne* continue their patrol, alert for hostile vessels.

-- INFIRMARY. Pulaski beckons Bashir to her side, and shows him something on the display on the side of the surgical arch. She is trying to explain something to him MOS, but she does not look happy about how this is going.

-- OPS. Ro and Cenn are both at the central Ops table. They look over towards Nog, who is at the science console with Candlewood. The two younger men LAUGH at some joke or other. Ro and Cenn turn back, sharing a look of worry. Only they know what is going on, and how important it is.

-- INFIRMARY. While Bashir and Pulaski continue to work in the background, Nurse Etana crouches down at the top of the bio-bed, laying a caring hand upon Zormonk's sleeping head, face full of sympathy and worry.

-- REPLIMAT. Sisko and Emra sit and wait in silence, no idea how things are going on the other side of the door. Across the Promenade, Evik stands guard outside the door, watching the two men from a distance.

39 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Pulaski looks in dismay at a display of the child's anatomy. Bashir comes to stand with her, while in the background, the nurses keep an eye on the patient.

PULASKI

Dammit! I've never seen a case this advanced before. It's just horrible. I'm amazed he's still alive at all.

BASHIR

What if we try to reposition the cluster? Sever the nerves here and here, reconnect them over here, leaving us free to operate on the growth without affecting them?

PULASKI

I'm not sure he's got time for that. But it's worth a shot.

They turn back towards the bio-bed and get to work.

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

Ro turns to Cenn at the central table, sees her first officer's haunted expression, places a comforting hand.

RO
(*sotto*)
How are you doing?

CENN
I know the comparison's not exact,
but... can't help thinking about a
father losing his child.

RO
Yeah. And even if it works... the
child's lost his father anyway.

So they both have their emotional associations...

41 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Etana watches from afar as Pulaski, Bashir and Aylam continue to operate. Richter sees her girlfriend's weepy, red eyes... and she GRIPS her hand tight in comfort.

Back at the bio-bed, the three surgeons work as a team, manipulating controls all around the surgical arch...

AYLAM
It's not working...

PULASKI
(*doesn't look up*)
Never say that in my sickbay
again. In fact - get out. If
that's your attitude, you're no
use to me anyway.

BASHIR
Doctor...

PULASKI
(*to Bashir*)
You - take over the neuro-electric
stabiliser. Move!

Bashir offers a sympathetic look to Aylam as the Bajoran medic moves out of the way, but he does as Pulaski tells him and takes over what Aylam was working on.

Aylam goes to stand with Etana and Richter, all of them watching from afar.

BASHIR
Doctor Pulaski...

PULASKI
Don't make me throw you out too.

BASHIR
Doctor... I'm sorry.

PULASKI
Don't be sorry, do something!

BASHIR
There's nothing left to do. You did it all. Please, Katherine...

Pulaski finally looks up from her work at Bashir, who is looking at her resigned and sympathetic. Pulaski seethes...

42 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Evik reacts as the Infirmary door opens. Bashir stands in the doorway, his surgical red cap in his hand.

Seeing him, Sisko and Emra both stand. By the look on Bashir's face, it is obvious how the surgery went.

Off the horrified defeat on all four men's faces...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN

43 EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY

Back on Earth...

44 INT. FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

The doors open again, and PIÑIERO enters - but this time as if she has a lead weight in her stomach.

BACCO looks up from her desk - she is in the midst of one of the regular briefings with Z4 BLUE, Admiral ROSS, and ASHANTÉ PHIRI, as per 12x02 "Read All About It".

BACCO

Esperanza. About time you got here, we -

PIÑIERO

Madam President, we just got a message from Deep Space Nine. Zormonk... is dead.

BACCO

...what?

PIÑIERO

According to Doctor Pulaski's report, the *cal-tai* was just too advanced. If she'd been able to get to him even a month sooner...

BACCO

Damn.

PIÑIERO

There's more, ma'am. According to Commander Ro's report, Doctor Pulaski went to extraordinary lengths to save him, long past the point where other doctors would have given up. Ro put the doctor in for a commendation.

BACCO

Good. I'll add my name -

PIÑIERO

She turned the commendation down.

Bacco hangs her head. Everything just got so much worse. Everyone in the room is silent. After a moment, Bacco raises her head again, looks at Ross.

BACCO

Admiral, is the *Atlas* back?

ROSS

Yes, ma'am. Mister Glamok was transferred to a Tellarite medical ship this morning.

BACCO

Turn 'em around. Send the *Atlas* back to the Tzenkethi border... just in case.

ROSS

Yes, Madam President.

BACCO

Zee-Four... get in touch with Emra. See if there's anything we can do to help.

Z4 BLUE

I'll try, Madam President. But from what little I know of the Tzenkethi... I doubt I'll ever hear from Emra again.

Bacco sighs, powerless at the horrible situation...

45 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

While the *Defiant* remains on patrol, the *Blackthorne* slowly moves back towards the upper pylon.

We move to focus on the nondescript freighter instead...

46 INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY

Where the Tzenkethi freighter is docked. Emra stands at the bottom of the ramp, gazing blankly at a small dead body wrapped like a mummy and lying prone on an anti-grav. It might as well be his own career and life he is looking at.

Sisko, Bashir and Evik are also there, seeing him off.

BASHIR

Again, I'm so sorry, Ambassador.

EMRA

No more to be done, Doctor. We all did our best in a bad situation. Now we face the consequences.

SISKO

If I may ask...

EMRA

Reclassification, barest minimum. Reconditioning and reassignment... if I am lucky. Much more likely...

He doesn't need to finish that. Instead he straightens, reaches out to shake Sisko's hand again. Sisko looks down at the hand, hesitates...

...then shakes the hand, refusing to react to the slight electric BUZZ at the contact.

Then Emra picks up Zormonk's corpse from the gurney. The body hangs limply, the fluid-filled legs drooping dead over Emra's arms. He carries the child up the ramp back into the ship, head held high, knowing he is going to his own death.

Sisko watches him go...

47 INT. DS9 - UPPER PYLON DOCK

Pulaski, blank and empty, stands waiting for the docking seal with the *Blackthorne* to complete. Ro is with her.

RO

I'm really sorry how this all turned out, Doctor.

PULASKI

Serves me right, I guess. If I hadn't held out like an idiot, I might have got to him in time...

RO

You had your reasons. Like I said, no judgement. We all understand.

PULASKI

You really need to stop that patronising thing, Commander. And your handing out commendations like candy. You should save them for people who deserve them.

RO

Why did you change your mind? I mean, I don't think any of us said anything you didn't already know, and it hadn't convinced you yet. So... why?

PULASKI

Zaarok was going to stay in that prison whether I operated on his son or not. There was nothing to be gained by not doing it. And if I let a child die without even trying... how could I ever call myself a doctor again? Or a mother.

RO

So where's next for you?

PULASKI

Wherever my orders send me, I guess. Best to keep moving. Might try and talk to Jackie. Hasn't spoken to me in fifteen years, no reason she'd start now. But it'd be nice to hear her voice.

The airlock rolls open. Pulaski hefts her shoulder bag.

RO
If you need to talk...

PULASKI
People usually regret telling me
that. See you around, Commander.
Say hello to Jean-Luc for me if
you see him - he'll enjoy that.

Ro chuckles as Pulaski walks into the airlock, which rolls closed behind her. Ro turns to walk away.

48 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

Ro is strolling down the corridor as the door from the cargo bay opens and Sisko walks out. They acknowledge each other and continue to walk down the corridor.

RO
Thanks again for helping out,
Captain.

SISKO
For all the good it did us.

RO
I'll get Prynn to drive you back
to Bajor.

SISKO
Thanks, Commander. That's all I
want to do right now - go home,
and give Rebecca a big, long hug.

RO
I might see if she can pick Quark
up while she's there.

Sisko shares a look with Ro and nods, understanding what she means.

They enter a TURBOLIFT together, both facing forward. The doors close.

49 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The *Blackthorne* disconnects from the upper pylon and begins to move away. The Tzenkethi freighter does likewise from the docking ring.

Both avoiding the patrolling *Defiant*, they move out of the station's immediate area in opposite directions, and set course for home...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW