

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

13x20 - "Disinformation"

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 18x20 - "ROUGH BEASTS OF EMPIRE"

Via an old Gorn friend of President Bacco's, Spock leaks his intelligence back to Starfleet that suggests Empress Donatra may have been behind his attempted assassination, as well as his own doubt in that data. In response, Akaar sends *Enterprise* to speak with Donatra. As a Klingon, Worf is forbidden to join Picard, but Choudhury and Chen's recent experience pretending to be Romulans helps to smooth things over. Donatra denies any knowledge or involvement in the attack on Spock, but she does let slip her belief that her Imperial Romulan State is probably doomed. Tal'Aura has been winning the propaganda war against her, claiming that she does not really want the Romulan nations reunited. With little other choice, Donatra publicly calls for a summit to discuss reunification with Tal'Aura. The Praetor accepts, but only if Donatra comes to Romulus in person. Picard offers to transport her safely aboard *Enterprise*, but Donatra insists on going on one of her own ships...

TTN 2x20 - "TIME LOCK"

Agent Lucsly and a handful of DTI agents are handling the delivery of a newly confiscated artefact at the Eridian Vault. But this mysterious space-time portal is a trap - armed Vomnin mercenaries use it to infiltrate the vault, intending to steal time travel devices for their own use. Untrained to stop them physically (as the DTI *hate* adventures), Lucsly and colleagues deliberately set off another device that slows down time within the vault. As minutes pass inside, weeks pass outside. While Dulmer and the rest of the DTI fight against their own security measures to get in and save their friends, Lucsly learns that the raiders' leader, Daiyar, has her own agenda. She is able to turn other artefacts against the DTI agents, until it becomes a battle of both sides using artefacts against the other. As the time differential gets ever more extreme, Daiyar must decide if she is willing to let centuries pass to get what she wants...

VOY 11x20 - "BACK WHERE I BELONG"

Q Junior argues with his parents about Aunt Kathryn's death. It was part of a pattern of events that led to the Borg's demise; pull that thread and the whole tapestry unravels. But strangely

her death is a fixed point of the multiverse. In every timeline where Janeway exists, she died at the same time. Why? Junior accesses the Eridian Vault (TTN "Time Lock"), and discovers a timeline where Janeway *didn't* die - the one where *Voyager* did not get home after seven years (VOY "Endgame"). There, Janeway resolved a massive multiversal crisis involving the Q; with the timeline changed, the crisis remains. Junior convinces his mother to go back in time to when "our" Janeway was killed (VOY "Long Live the Queen") and save her "soul", and contacts Kes to help reconstitute her body. Against the entire multiverse's design, Kathryn is brought back from the dead and dropped onto *Voyager* - just in time for the Darkness to arrive...

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. AENAR UNDERGROUND CITY

Picking up immediately after the end of 13x19, with a view of the vast underground complex built right into the icy walls of the cave, once inhabited by the now-extinct Aenar.

SHAR, NOG and TENMEI stare at this view in awe from their icy ledge, while their guide ZH'YEMRE stands by proudly.

TENMEI

So the Aenar died out centuries ago... because they were more concerned with maintaining their culture than their numbers?

SHAR

We thought they died out centuries ago. They were rediscovered in the twenty-second century, but even then they refused to mingle with other Andorians. The end of the ice age drove them back into their underground cities in the Northern Wastes where they could stay cold. To my knowledge, the last Aenar died about a hundred years ago.

ZH'YEMRE

Most of their cities that we knew about were destroyed in the Borg attack. Ironically, this one was only rediscovered because of the Borg attack.

NOG

Shar, this is amazing. Look at all that room. It's the perfect place to house millions of refugees.

TENMEI

Not to mention an object lesson in not letting pride lead to suicide.

Shar smiles, hope filling his face for the first time in what feels like years. It's beautiful.

SHAR

It is more than both those things, my friends. There are a myriad of theories as to what caused my people's reproductive problems in the first place. Climate change, pollution, sin before Uzaveh, or even that we were never meant to exist in the first place.

(beat)

But one theory holds that in the ancient past, when we mixed openly with the Aenar, both populations were plentiful. It was only once society and geography separated us that our numbers began to fall.

TENMEI

You mean... Aenar interbreeding added something to your genome that you couldn't live without.

SHAR

Perhaps. Doctor zh'Yemre, the city looks well enough preserved. Have you found any Aenar remains?

ZH'YEMRE

We've barely started excavating. But you're right, it is perfectly preserved. There's no reason to think there wouldn't be remains buried under the ice somewhere.

NOG

Then you can take samples...

TENMEI

Add them back into your genome...

SHAR

And save our entire species.

The three young Starfleet lieutenants throw their arms around each other in elated hugs, WHOOPING with joy. A moment of sheer ecstasy, the path to salvation revealed.

Tenmei even starts jumping up and down in excitement...

...her boots SLIP on the ice, she almost goes tumbling...

...but her friends steady her, and she is saved.

They all LAUGH, overflowing with emotional catharsis.

2 **EXT. ANDOR - NORTHERN WASTES - EVENING**

The ice and snow covered mountains in the extreme north of the planet. The narrow path from the tiny settlement and the parked runabout, leading into the mountains and caves with the sheer drop cliff along one side.

And along that path, three unidentified FIGURES creep, all dressed in cold weather gear that completely obscures their identities while leaving plenty of room to fight, and to fire the heavy weapons they are all carrying...

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 EXT. SPACE - ARGAYA ORBIT

PAN across the three Cardassian Galor-class warships as their weapons systems power up...

...then across the convoy of largely defenceless passenger cruisers, with only the *Defiant* to protect them...

4 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Cmdr RO settles comfortably into her command chair...

RO
Red alert. Battle stations.

The *Defiant* goes to RED ALERT. CANDLEWOOD at sciences...

CANDLEWOOD
Commander! There's a comm signal coming in - I think...

RO
(not the time!)
Is there or isn't there, John?

CANDLEWOOD
There is, but it's not for us.
It's from the surface to Mogad.

RO
Then how are we reading it? Did you tap into their comms?

CANDLEWOOD
I didn't need to. There's a sub-channel with our transponder code.

RO
(grin)
Nice work, Nath. On speakers.

Candlewood works the panels, and the COMM comes to life with the voices of the two Cardassians - MOGAD and MACET. The *Defiant's* bridge crew silently listen as they talk...

MOGAD (comm)
(cutting in
mid-argument)
- not our concern! Let Starfleet
take care of their own vagrants,
we should not do it for them.

MACET (comm)
(threatening)
Cardassia has signed an agreement
to allow those colonists to settle
on Argaya, Mogad. And as a servant
of Cardassia, you will abide by
it... or face the consequences.

MOGAD (comm)
(sneer of disdain)
I barely recognise the Cardassia
you are asking me to serve, Macet.
Dukat may have been a madman but
at least he didn't let Starfleet
drive him like a riding hound.

MACET (comm)
Do you want to go back to the days
of Dukat, Mogad? To the days when
disloyal citizens would disappear
in broad daylight, fates already
sealed, and no-one would raise a
voice for fear of suffering the
same? I would be happy to oblige.

Mogad does not reply, seething silently. Ro smiles.

Alerts on ALECO's tactical console - he checks, gets Ro's attention. Ro turns to Candlewood, does the 'cut-throat' gesture. Candlewood gets the message, cuts the signal.

ALECO
All three ships have now powered
down their weapons arrays again,
and Gul Mogad is hailing.

Ro smothers her grin of smugness, settles into her seat.

RO

On screen.

VIEWSCREEN

...shows MOGAD, likewise schooling his features even though he is clearly unhappy about what he is being forced to do.

MOGAD (screen)

Commander Ro. Given the current cordial relationship between our two governments, we have decided to be magnanimous. You and your fleet may remain in the Argaya system while my...

(covers sneer)

...superiors request clarification on the terms of our agreement.

RO

(poker face)

We thank you for your generosity, Gul Mogad. And the colonists?

MOGAD (screen)

They are in no danger. However I must request that they not beam to the surface just yet - we are not sufficiently prepared for them.

RO

I see. I would ask, Gul, that you conclude your preparations, and your clarifications, as soon as possible. My people are eager to take advantage of your very kind offer to take care of them.

Mogad nods stiffly and cuts the signal. Ro thoroughly enjoyed how much Mogad *hated* having to do that.

She gets up from her chair, heads for the EXIT...

RO
Alright - I need to go talk to
Starfleet Command. John, you've
got the bridge.

Candlewood intercepts her half way...

CANDLEWOOD
Actually, Commander, I wondered if
I might have ten minutes to make a
call of my own...?

He wants to talk to Hetik - and Ro is feeling indulgent.

RO
Fine. Vel - you've got the bridge.

Ro EXITS one way, Candlewood gratefully EXITS the other.

5 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Currently without *Defiant* or passenger liners...

6 **INT. DS9 - CANDLEWOOD'S QUARTERS**

Candlewood appears on a comm screen, talking to HETIK...

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
I'm sorry, babe. Looks like this
mission is gonna take longer than
I thought. The Cardassians are
playing hard to get. But I'll be
home as soon as I can, promise.

HETIK
What does that mean - hard to get?

Candlewood pauses, thrown - that's not the part he expected
Hetik to question.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)
Oh - I just mean they're messing
about with letting the colonists
beam down to Argaya or not. Don't
worry, it'll all work out.

HETIK

I did tell you this was a bad idea from the start. And now see.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

Oh, don't let's start this again. It's just a misunderstanding, Ro's talking to Starfleet right now.

HETIK

Uh-huh. What about the refugees, where are they right now? They're still stuck on the convoy ships, am I right?

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

Well, yeah, but...

HETIK

Cardassians will never care about people in need, John. Not their own, and certainly not ours.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

Macet's trying to change that.

HETIK

And how's that going for him? It's an uphill battle, isn't it? I wish him all luck, John, I really do. But I have no faith it'll work.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

Look, I'm supposed to be on the bridge anyway. Can we put a pin in this until I get back?

HETIK

Just don't expect me to change my mind. Stay safe, John. Love you.

CANDLEWOOD (screen)

Love you too.

The signal drops. Hetik sits at the computer desk in their shared quarters... why can't John see how wrong this is?

7 EXT. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY

The centre of Federation government in Paris...

8 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

President BACCO stands from her desk, smooths her clothes. The door is opened by her personal security agent WEXLER...

...and GARAK strolls amiably in, placid and smiling.

GARAK

Madam President. A pleasure as always.

BACCO

Mister Ambassador. Thank you for coming at such short notice.

GARAK

Not at all, I'm at your disposal.

She gestures him to the guest chair - they both sit.

BACCO

Really. Then perhaps you can indulge me with an explanation for what the hell is going on in the Argaya system right now?

Garak smiles demurely - he will not rise to Bacco's bait.

GARAK

To what exactly are you referring, Madam President?

BACCO

Mister Ambassador, neither of us are stupid, and witty repartée does no good for those colonists.

GARAK

I always rather thought it was its own reward.

BACCO

The Federation made this agreement to settle refugees in the Lyshan, Solarion and Argaya systems in good faith. The Cardassian Union does not appear to be holding up its end of the bargain.

GARAK

The agreement remains in place, I assure you. My people simply need a little more time to... iron out the wrinkles before we proceed.

BACCO

That's not what I heard. Commander Ro's report said that one of your Guls threatened to open fire on a convoy packed with civilians. I'm no lawyer but that sounds an awful lot like a war crime to me.

GARAK

It would be disturbing, no doubt, had anything actually happened. Fortunately for us all, it didn't.

BACCO

(sigh, change tack)

Mister Garak... we've spent the last year doing favours for each other. We gave you those systems.

GARAK

In return for our support in your conflict with the Borg, yes.

BACCO

It was everyone's conflict, don't mistake that. You were helping yourselves as much as us. And yet we still gave you those systems.

GARAK

Are you now about to suggest we owe you a favour?

BACCO

Maybe more than one. We did just send one of our ships into enemy territory to help you extract an undercover spy.

GARAK

Which in turn helped you to avoid a war with the Tzenkethi. We both benefitted and suffered equally for those agreements.

BACCO

Sounds like a solid basis for an alliance to me.

GARAK

(sly smile)

It's well known that human hearing is more acute than a Cardassian's.

BACCO

So that's it - no home for those refugees, no chance of Cardassia joining the Khitomer Accords.

GARAK

Ah - now I'm afraid you're hearing things that aren't there, ma'am. I've said no such thing. I'm only asking for time for Cardassia to resolve some trivial minutiae.

BACCO

Those people don't have a lot of time left, Ambassador.

GARAK

Perhaps. But unless you allow us to take care of those minutiae I mentioned first, they may have even less time than you think.

Off Bacco's unhappiness with that...

9 **EXT. ANDOR - NORTHERN WASTES - NIGHT**

Re-establishing the Andorian arctic, now at night...

10 **INT. ANDORIAN ICE TUNNEL**

Shar, Tenmei, Nog and zh'Yemre now have their heavy winter coats back on, and they trudge along the ice-packed tunnel away from the Aenar city back towards open air. Tenmei has her tricorder out, and is inspecting its readings.

TENMEI

Forgive me for making the obvious pun, but if these readings are right, then what we just saw in there is the tip of the iceberg.

ZH'YEMRE

You're right. There's a lot more of the city still buried in ice.

SHAR

I've seen images of the Aenar city discovered in the twenty-second century. They are not identical.

ZH'YEMRE

We think this place must predate that city by almost a thousand years. Definitely pre-industrial by any modern measure, but they didn't let that stop them.

TENMEI

(puts away
tricorder)

Well, my main priority right now is to get back to that runabout and have a nice hot cup of tea.

NOG

I can call ahead and get the ship warming up for you if you want.

(taps badge)

Nog to *Rio Grande* - begin pre-flight procedures.

No response from the *Rio Grande*. A moment. Nog tries again.

NOG

Rio Grande, respond.

TENMEI

Could the weather be interfering?

NOG

Starfleet tech is a little more robust than that, Prynn.

ZH'YEMRE

None of our equipment should be blocking your comms either.

They reach a turn in the tunnel, all take the curve...

...and from the dark opening of the tunnel ahead of them comes three bright PHASER SHOTS, aiming right for them.

The phaser beams SCREECH and REBOUND off the ice walls, BLINDING them with reflected light.

NOG

Back! Get back!

The three Starfleet officers' training kicks in - they grab hold of zh'Yemre and pull her back behind the corner.

ZH'YEMRE

What's going on?

SHAR

We're under attack.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 INT. ANDORIAN ICE TUNNEL

Shar, Tenmei, Nog and zh'Yemre take cover around the corner of the tunnel, as more PHASER BEAMS screech and ricochet...

TENMEI

Is that the only way out of here?

ZH'YEMRE

I'm afraid so.

NOG

We'll have to fight our way out.

Nog reaches into his coat, pulls out his own PHASER. Shar immediately moves to stop him...

SHAR

No, Nog. Remember what Minister ch'Lhren said - if we hurt them, even in self-defence, they'll just use it as propaganda against us.

TENMEI

We need to get to the runabout.
But how? We can't beam straight to it without a comm connection.

SHAR

Prynn - give me your tricorder.

Tenmei wrestles out her tricorder, hands it to Shar. He rips off his gloves so his hands can move more quickly.

SHAR

Raise your hoods and goggles, and be ready to run. Don't stop until you reach the runabout.

ZH'YEMRE

Leave me, I'll only slow you down.

SHAR

This tunnel will be no safer soon.

Shar sees that the other three have done as he instructed. He feels no need to do it himself - he can handle it.

He works the tricorder, and like in 12x05 "Trial and Error" an ear-piercing SQUEAL is emitted, echoing and amplifying off the icy walls. They cringe and shudder from the noise.

The tunnel SHAKES, ice cracking and crumbling, flakes falling to the ground. The phaser bolts stop...

SHAR

Now!

All four run for their lives... around the corner, towards the dark EXIT, the tunnel collapsing in on itself...

12 EXT. ANDOR - NORTHERN WASTES - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

...and out into the open night air, past two of the FIGURES on their knees, struggling to function through the horrific NOISE coming from the tricorder still in Shar's hand...

TENMEI in the lead along the terrifyingly narrow path...

SNOW and stinging ICE shards making visibility near-zero...

NOG in the middle, unable to not look at the terrifyingly steep cliff to one side even as he runs after Tenmei...

SHAR in the rear, helping zh'Yemre along with one hand, the other holding out the tricorder like a warding charm...

The environment SHAKING at the vomit-inducing SQUEAL, the path disintegrating, getting narrower all the time...

The RUNABOUT appearing through the snow, home safe...

But the third FIGURE is holding position next to it. He raises his big heavy weapon, ready to fire...

Tenmei DROPS to the snowy ground, using her extreme sports skills to SKID along the ice on the edge of her boots...

...and KICKS the figure's legs out from under him, his shot going wild into the snowstorm...

...and he goes TUMBLING over the edge of the cliff, YELLING in horror as he falls, all sight of him lost in the snow...

Tenmei watches him go, appalled...

Nog reaches the runabout hatch, works the controls...

And Shar and zh'Yemre are the first ones through. Nog helps Tenmei up off the ground, and they enter too...

13 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Inside, Tenmei finds Shar already working feverishly on the emergency transporter controls at the rear of the cockpit.

TENMEI

Shar... one of them fell...

SHAR

I know. Just get us in the air.
Nog, the cargo hold - I need a
makeshift brig, quickly.

Tenmei runs to the helm, starts work. Nog runs off-screen to the rear. zh'Yemre staggers to a seat, out of the way...

...and Shar is still working with pinpoint focus...

14 EXT. ANDOR - NORTHERN WASTES - NIGHT

The runabout LIFTS AWAY from the cracking ground-ice, now supporting itself on thrusters and in no danger...

The two FIGURES by the tunnel entrance, one unconscious from a fallen ice chunk, the other looking up at the rising runabout in disgust, their mission failed...

...and they both DEMATERIALISE in a transporter beam...

The third FIGURE, free-falling down the side of the sheer mountainside, SCREAMING all the way...

...and he too DEMATERIALISES in mid-fall...

15 **SHAR**

...working the transporter controls. He shouts urgently...

SHAR

Nog! Are you ready? I can only hold three people in transporter suspension for a few moments...

16 **NOG**

...quickly swapping isolinear chips and shunting machinery. He steps out the way, presses a control - a FORCEFIELD pops into place covering a small cubicle area...

NOG

Yes! Do it!

17 **SHAR**

...hits one last control victoriously...

18 **NOG**

...watches as the three FIGURES rematerialise into his makeshift brig in various undignified poses. The one who was falling THUDS to the deck with an audible OOF.

NOG

They're safe. Prynn, get us back to the capital.

19 **BACK TO SCENE**

Tenmei PULLS the runabout up through the storm, and they are on their way. Shar finally turns to zh'Yemre...

SHAR

Doctor zh'Yemre, I must apologise. It seems we might have destroyed the entrance to your expedition.

But the civilian scientist is just looking at the Starfleet officers with amazement and stunned admiration.

ZH'YEMRE

We dug it once, we can dig it
again. The city itself is safe.
But you, all of you...

(no words)

...I have never seen anything like
it. Starfleet is truly remarkable.

TENMEI

I only wish more of your people
felt the same way, Doctor.

20 **EXT. ANDOR - NORTHERN WASTES - NIGHT**

The runabout flies UP, trying to escape the snowstorm...

21 **EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

The Galaxy-class *Robinson* in standard orbit over Andor...

22 **INT. ROBINSON - MAIN ENGINEERING**

SISKO guides CH'LHREN, the Presider's security minister, on
a tour of the ship - and he would just as soon be anywhere
else. As they pore over the Master Systems Display...

CH'LHREN

Starfleet computer technology has
always been very impressive.

(off Sisko's look)

I was not always the Presider's
minister of security, Captain -
in fact I was once a Starfleet
computer specialist myself.

SISKO

Ah yes, aboard the *Trinculo* during
the Dominion War. My security
chief provided me with your file.

CH'LHREN

Correct - although I would stress
that my role in that conflict was
nothing memorable. Certainly not
compared to your illustrious self.

SISKO

Every member of Starfleet plays a vital role, Minister ch'Lhren - especially computer specialists.

(gestures around)

Most of this wouldn't work without the right computers, much less the people who take care of them.

CH'LHREN

Regardless, that part of my life is behind me. I serve the people of Andor now. It seemed the thing to do after all that's happened.

SISKO

Yes... Starfleet has seen a lot of resignations, lots of people going home to help with rebuilding.

CH'LHREN

But not yourself?

Sisko darkens, turns inside with thoughts of Kasidy...

SISKO

No. I'm better off here.

CH'LHREN

In the interests of preparing you for the conference, I must inform you that there are many Andorians who feel the Federation failed us during the Borg attacks.

On Sisko as he remembers...

FLASHBACK - 12x21 "FRIENDLY FIRE"

Mid-battle over Andor...

SISKO

All hands, brace for impact!

Sisko is thrown to the deck as a fragment of Borg cube IMPACTS the *New York* right on the bridge dome...

FLASHBACK - 12x21 "FRIENDLY FIRE"

He sees Vaughn's ship heading straight for the Borg ship...

SISKO

Elias... no! Pull up!

FLASHBACK - 13x01 "THE RECOVERY POSITION"

Sisko stands over Vaughn's brain-dead body in sickbay...

SISKO

It's started, Elias.

BACK TO SCENE

The Andorian seems honest, guileless. But under a mask of perfect calm, Sisko is a roiling mass of guilt and anger.

SISKO

(haunted whisper)

Starfleet did everything we could.
You know what the Borg were like.

CH'LHREN

Indeed I do, Captain. But there are those among my people who feel that Starfleet gave up on certain planets because it believed they were beyond saving.

SISKO

(colder and colder)

More than a dozen ships sacrificed themselves over this world. I'm not sure how anyone could view that as giving up on Andor.

CH'LHREN

(helpless shrug)

I'm afraid that chaos breeds all manner of perspectives.

Does this guy want to get punched? Sisko is on the edge...

SISKO
I'm sorry, Minister. I need to
check in with the bridge.

CH'LHREN
If I've given offence -

SISKO
It's nothing like that. I simply
lost track of time. Excuse me...

CH'LHREN
Of course, Captain. There is much
here to hold my interest.

Sisko half-bows, and gets the hell out of there.

23 EXT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA BUILDING - EVENING

Returning us to the new Andorian capital building...

24 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - CH'LHREN'S OFFICE

Later that day, ch'Lhren ENTERS his office, a small windowless box without the frippery of the Presider's rooms. He locks the door behind him, moves smoothly to his desk, and enters the keypad combination to unlock the first drawer.

Inside the drawer is another box, another keypad. ch'Lhren types in a code, then leans over and lets the box SCAN his eye. It beeps affirmatively and pops open.

Inside the box is a small portable computer, non-Starfleet, deliberately generic and untraceable. He types entries into it, waits as it performs a sensor sweep...

SCANNING... SCANNING...
NO COVERT DEVICES DETECTED

Satisfied, ch'Lhren types more entries into the computer.

CONNECTING...
CONNECTING...

25 **FLASHBACK - EARLIER**

ch'Lhren watches Sisko walk out of Main Engineering, eager to escape... exactly as ch'Lhren intended.

Covering a sly smile, ch'Lhren turns back to gaze upon the Master Systems Display, now without any Starfleet officer to make sure he doesn't touch anything he shouldn't.

In the guise of reading the panels, he slips a HAND under the console, reaches into a shadowed corner where passing eyes will never spot it, and attaches a tiny round DEVICE.

ch'Lhren strolls away quite calmly. But beneath the master console, a RED LIGHT blinks three times and then goes dead.

26 **BACK TO SCENE**

ch'Lhren's computer displays...

CONNECTION ESTABLISHED...
ACCESS GRANTED

The small screen becomes a standard Starfleet LCARS display and quickly floods with information, reams and reams of computer data, all under the label USS ROBINSON NCC 71842.

ch'Lhren sits back, reads the data, and smiles...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

27 EXT. SPACE - ARGAYA ORBIT

The Cardassian ships, the *Defiant*, and the convoy...

28 INT. ARGAYA BASE - PUBLIC AREA

A general reception area. A XEPOLITE female, UWO, stomps unhappily into the room. EVIK turns at her arrival...

UWO

What the hell is Starfleet doing?

EVIK

Miss Uwo, I assure you that I am just as frustrated as you.

UWO

I doubt that, Mister Evik. I have been separated from my cousins on Bajor for months. I came here with you expecting to find them waiting with open arms. But now I hear they are forbidden to beam down?

EVIK

Not forbidden, just delayed. I'm working closely with Legate Macet, and I know that Commander Ro is in contact with Starfleet Command.

UWO

(sarcastic)

Oh well, I'm sure everything will be fine, then. Because Starfleet never fails.

Evik does *not* appreciate that tone, but keeps his temper...

EVIK

Starfleet may fail, Miss Uwo, but it always tries its best.

UWO
The obliterated Xepolite homeworld
begs to differ.

EVIK
You're being unfair.

UWO
Very possibly. But there are a lot
of people in this galaxy who are
tired of being at Starfleet and
the Federation's mercy. You should
keep that in mind, Mister Evik.

Uwo turns and stomps back out of the room again, leaving
Evik worried about yet more unhappy people...

29 **INT. DEFIANT - READY ROOM**

Ro alone behind the desk, Admiral AKAAR on the screen...

RO
What is taking so long, Admiral?

AKAAR (screen)
The president is currently using
all the diplomatic pressure at her
disposal to resolve the situation.

RO
(roll eyes)
"Diplomatic pressure" - great. I
remember Starfleet's "diplomatic
pressure" over the Cardassians'
invasion of my homeworld. How
about you get off your thrones
and do something, instead?

AKAAR (screen)
(blank, even)
I might remind you, Commander,
that the freedom afforded to you
by our personal relationship is
not infinite. Please take care
with your tone.

Ro bites her tongue, closes her eyes, takes a deep breath.

RO

I'm sorry, Admiral. You're right.
But there are people, real actual
people sealed up in tin cans here
while Cardassia and the Federation
play their diplomatic games. They
just want to go home.

AKAAR (screen)

The president is keenly aware of
that, Ro.

(tiny smile)

Neither she nor I require a mere
commander skipping over multiple
links in the chain of command to
tell us what we already know.

Ro knows enough to recognise when Akaar is actually making
a joke, not dressing her down for once. She shrugs...

RO

As Quark would say, what's the
point of having contacts if you
don't use them?

Off Akaar's distinctly subtle amusement...

30 **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

QUARK on the rampage, thundering towards the bar...

QUARK

Where have you been? You're late!

HETIK steps behind the bar, checks a padd for any updates.
For once, he will not submit - he gives it back full force.

HETIK

Don't start with me today, Quark.
I am not in the mood.

Before Quark can launch into a top-level tirade in front of
the lunch crowd, TREIR is there, pushing them apart.

TREIR

Hey hey hey - opposite corners.
Remember you're in public.

(shoos Quark
away)

Go.

Quark actually does as Treir tells him, reluctantly. Treir takes an equally reluctant Hetik by the arm and drags him to the quiet corner behind the bar, by the storeroom.

TREIR

What the hell was that?

HETIK

Nothing. I just don't need Quark's
usual crap right now.

TREIR

And I'm not buying it. Try again.

Hetik relents - he may as well confide in someone.

HETIK

John's not coming back, not yet.
The *Defiant's* having trouble with
the Cardassians. And... we had
another stupid fight.

TREIR

I'm sorry. But you've had fights
before, you always get through it
okay in the end.

HETIK

I know... but I keep thinking
about it, making myself angrier.
Why can't he see what a bad idea
this whole Cardassian thing is?

QUARK (o.s.)

Maybe you just miss him.

They turn, caught out - Quark is stood at the break in the bar, listening in. But he is not mad - he sympathises.

HETIK

Of course I do, but -

QUARK

Then maybe that's why you're angry at him, so you don't have to think about how much danger he's in.

Treir looks to Hetik - maybe he's right.

QUARK

When I'm worried about Laren... or Nog... it helps to pretend I'm mad at them. But deep down I know it's fear talking. Laren's out there facing off with Cardassians, Nath went and threw himself into a pile of traumatised refugees with nothing but his damn principles to protect him... and Gint only knows where my nephew is right now.

Turns out, the three bar employees are all as worried and miserable as each other...

31 EXT. ANDOR - ATMOSPHERE PROCESSING PLANT

A large industrial COMPLEX built into the ground, near to an area of devastation caused by the Borg. Multiple PIPES extrude from the round, flat base and into the land around it, although not into the dead area - there is no point.

In the centre of the base stands a TOWER reaching up into the grimy sky, and at the top of this tower are several MOUTHS to suck in dirty air and blow out clean air.

32 INT. ATMOSPHERE PROCESSING PLANT - CONTROL ROOM

Like a starship's main engineering - a dizzying array of control consoles, and the sense of machinery rising up into the tower far above them, and sinking down deep into the earth below. This is local Andorian tech, not Starfleet.

Nog is proudly showing Tenmei around, with the help of the local Andorian project supervisor, CH'PERINE. We can see a dozen other Andorian EXTRAS working in the background.

NOG

(points)

So the intakes at the top suck in all the dirty air and feed it down into the body of the tower.

CH'PERINE

The filtration units in the tower itself are layered back and forth repeatedly, so the huge surface area can remove as many impurities as possible. Then the clean air is pumped back up and out the tower.

NOG

(points again)

Meanwhile the impurities are sent down into the processing plant and reprocessed into raw energy to be fed out to the local communities.

CH'PERINE

So we're providing power as well as cleaning the atmosphere.

TENMEI

Very nice. It's impressive work, Supervisor ch'Perine.

CH'PERINE

Commander Nog and his team were an invaluable help. If not for his suggestion to install dynamic mode power conversion modules to manage the inconsistent energy flow, the project would have never got off the ground, so to speak.

NOG

(to Tenmei)

I got the idea from DS-Nine - we have to use dynamic modules so the Starfleet, Cardassian, Bajoran and anybody else's tech don't explode as soon as we plug them in.

(to ch'Perine)
But that was a last minute fix,
your team did all the hard work.

TENMEI
(grin)
Alright alright, don't fight -
you're both brilliant.

Suddenly, every SCREEN around the entire facility dissolves
into a mass of STATIC... before going completely dark.

TENMEI
Well, that's not good.

Nog and ch'Perine try various consoles - nothing.

ANDORIAN COMPUTER
(male voice)
Attention. Unauthorised computer
system access, high clearance
memory. Terminate control mode.

CH'PERINE
What?!

TENMEI
We're under attack again? Can your
security be overridden like that?

CH'PERINE
Not without specific authorisation
and decryption keys.

NOG
Well, it looks like somebody's got
them. I'm completely locked out.

A new ALARM sounds. ch'Perine runs to check a display of
old-fashioned, uncomputerised readouts - they are moving
quickly from blue (safe) to red (very much not safe).

CH'PERINE
Uzaveh... the power conversion
modules are offline. There's an
overload in progress.

NOG

That's a lot of stored power. If it blows, it'll be catastrophic.

TENMEI

The *Treishya* would really blow up this entire plant just to spite us? Is there no way to stop it?

CH'PERINE

Not in the three minutes we've got until critical. Even the emergency discharge circuits are offline - that shouldn't even be possible!

ANDORIAN COMPUTER

Attention. System overload in progress. Evacuate the facility immediately. This is not a drill.

NOG

Sounds like a good idea to me.
(taps combadge)
Nog to *Rio Grande* - emergency evacuation. Transport all life-forms in the atmospheric plant aboard, then raise shields.

STARFLEET COMPUTER

Working.

As the ALARM continues and the HUM of machines grows...

...all the background Andorian extras DEMATERIALISE...

...followed by Nog, Tenmei and ch'Perine.

33 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Parked on the ground outside the processing plant. Tenmei moves to her pilot station again, while Nog and ch'Perine both work on other panels...

CH'PERINE

Everyone is accounted for.

NOG

Prynn, get us out of here - we've got less than three minutes.

TENMEI

This is getting ridiculous...

But as she starts to power up the engines...

CH'PERINE

Wait! Stand by...

TENMEI

Stand by?! It's gonna explode!

But ch'Perine is checking the readouts in disbelief...

CH'PERINE

No, the overload has been aborted. The conversion modules and the discharge circuits are both back online... and the core temperature is returning to normal.

NOG

(off his own
consoles)

Checking... confirmed. But now there's a transporter-blocking field around the entire plant.

Tenmei gets up from her pilot station, now that there is no longer an emergency. She is putting it together...

TENMEI

I guess that explains why they didn't block our comms this time - they never wanted to kill us and blow up the plant at all. They just wanted to get us out of it so they could have it to themselves.

CH'PERINE

So it would appear. Who the hell do these people think they are?

An ALERT on Nog's console - he checks it...

NOG

Looks like you're about to get an answer to that, Supervisor.

Off ch'Perine's and Tenmei's looks, Nog taps a control, and a VOICE, electronically processed to disguise it, issues...

VOICE (comm)

We are the *Treishya*, guardians of Andor. We assume that sacred trust in place of a government unwilling to do what is necessary to protect our people and their identity. For too long we have been led by those who insert themselves into matters which are not their concern and which they can never understand.

Reactions from Nog and Tenmei...

VOICE (comm)

Outworlders, our message to you is simple. We do not want you here. We did not ask for your help, and we will survive quite well without it. Leave us, and do not return. If you choose not to do as we ask, then know that we will do what is necessary to make you leave. Any casualties that result from this ...will be on your own heads.

Off everyone's reactions...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

34 EXT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA BUILDING - MORNING

The next morning, two separate CROWDS of Andorian EXTRAS stand in the square outside the capital building.

Andorian Guard members are keeping them under control and in two separate groups - one advocating *for* the Federation, the other *against* it. Over this...

VOICE (comm, v.o.)

We do not believe our demands are unreasonable. We simply ask that Starfleet uphold one of the Federation's founding principles - the right to self-determination.

35 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - PRESIDER'S OFFICE

Sisko, ROGEIRO and Presider SH'THALIS sit around the coffee table in the seating area, unhappily listening while a device on the table plays the *Treishya's* announcement.

VOICE (comm)

Of course, we cannot be surprised if Starfleet will not abide by its own promises. In recent times the Federation has allied itself with parties who value such principles not at all. The Klingons, whose history is rife with violence and conquest. The Ferengi, who count the value of sentient life in bars of gold-pressed latinum. Even as I speak, the Federation twists out of shape to ingratiate itself with Cardassia, against whom it fought a bloody war barely a decade ago. How can we trust an organisation that so easily throws aside its own most closely held values?

The listeners grow more annoyed with every word...

VOICE (comm)

The Federation may well offer us life, but what is the cost of this gift they see fit to bestow upon us? Are you prepared to pay that price? If not, then stand ready, children of Andor, because the day of reckoning is fast approaching.

The message ends, and the listeners glower in response.

ROGEIRO

How can anyone be so stupid as to believe this? Anyone who's taken a children's history class can see what this guy is trying to do.

SH'THALIS

Do not discount the power of passionate rhetoric, Commander. And don't think there aren't people outside right now who are eating up every word of it.

SISKO

Then I have to suggest cancelling the conference, Presider. I have no doubt the *Treishya* will try to disrupt it - they've already made three attacks against facilities where Starfleet and Andorians are working together. They've warned us worse is on the way.

CH'LHREN (o.s.)

That would be a mistake.

They turn to see ch'Lhren, who has been standing at the window watching the protestors. Now he turns to them...

CH'LHREN

Commodore th'Deminesh questioned the *Treishya* prisoners from those incidents. They insist they have no intentions of harming anyone.

ROGEIRO

Their actions to date do not support that assertion, Minister.

CH'LHREN

It's a disinformation campaign, Commander. Nothing more. They are simply trying to elicit sympathy.

ROGEIRO

They're trying to provoke us into hurting them, so they can claim the moral high ground - just what you've been insisting we not do.

CH'LHREN

(cold smile)

Then instruct your officers to control themselves, Commander.

SISKO

Presider, if you won't cancel the conference, then could we at least move it aboard the *Robinson*, where we would have greater control?

CH'LHREN

That seems to me to be going to the opposite extreme.

SISKO

(glower)

Minister ch'Lhren, I was speaking to the Presider.

SH'THALIS

Threlas has a point, Captain. To cancel the conference outright would seem like capitulating to terrorists. But to move it aboard the *Robinson* would seem like Starfleet interference. They've manoeuvred us very cleverly. No, the conference will go ahead, and it will do so here, on Andor.

This is not a solution Sisko is happy with, but sh'Thalis is resolute. ch'Lhren smiles enigmatically...

36 EXT. BAJOR - VANADWAN MONASTERY - DAY

Establishing the monastery clinging precariously to the top of the mountainside...

37 INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - HOSPICE ROOM - DAY

VAUGHN lies in bed, as unconscious as ever, while his life support machinery softly beeps and hums around him.

OPAKA sits by his side, a book in her hands but forgotten for the moment - she is gazing sadly upon Vaughn's body.

FLASHBACK - 9x10 "FRAGMENTS AND OMENS"

Vaughn and Opaka stroll contentedly down a flowered path...

FLASHBACK - 9x10 "FRAGMENTS AND OMENS"

Vaughn takes Opaka's hand, not wanting her to go...

FLASHBACK - 10x21 "INTO THE FIRE"

Vaughn caresses Opaka's face, then they gently kiss...

BACK TO SCENE

Opaka smiles faintly at these memories. A moment to decide, then she puts aside her book and stands, moves to Vaughn's side... and reaches out to grasp his earlobe.

She closes her eyes, breathes, concentrates...

...and an amazed SMILE spreads across her face. She lets go and stands back, surprised but happy at what she sensed.

The door CREAKS open, and Vedek KIRA enters quietly.

KIRA

Sulan? Everything okay in here?

OPAKA

Nerys, please come in. And yes,
everything is okay.

Kira is intrigued by Opaka's beatific, serene smile in the
circumstances, but she lets it go - she has business here.

KIRA

Do you have a moment? I wanted to
talk to you - about Raiq.

OPAKA

How is our expectant mother?

KIRA

I think... scared. But you know
how she is - it always comes out
as anger.

Opaka smiles, nods - they are used to the Ascendant by now.

KIRA

She asked for you specifically.

OPAKA

For me?

KIRA

You're the first Bajoran she ever
met. You took care of her, nursed
her back to health. Now she wants
you to be her midwife. I think...
she trusts you.

OPAKA

Please tell Raiq... that I would
be honoured to assist at the
rebirth of the Ascendant race.

KIRA

Great! Thanks, Sulan. I was afraid
if I sent Ransel in there again
they'd end up killing each other.

(beat)

You know... it is ironic...

OPAKA

What is?

KIRA

That you and I were the first two Bajorans Raiq ever met, the ones she focused all her hatred on as enemies of the Ascendants.

OPAKA

(nods)

The warrior and the priest. The two sides of the Ascendant soul.

KIRA

And now we're the two she trusts most in the entire galaxy.

OPAKA

And to think some say the Prophets don't have a sense of humour.

Kira and Opaka smile together at the turns of fate.

OPAKA

And what of Vexh? How does his impending fatherhood appeal?

KIRA

(sigh)

I honestly can't say. He doesn't seem to care about... anything. It's all pointless to him. I guess he'd accepted there weren't going to be any more Ascendant babies.

OPAKA

Don't discount him yet, Nerys. Becoming a parent is a profound experience - it changes one's entire perspective in a second.

KIRA

Well... I wouldn't know.

With a smile, Kira leaves. Opaka turns back to Vaughn...

38 EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT

The Galaxy-class *Robinson* in standard orbit over Andor...

39 INT. ROBINSON - SCIENCE LAB

SHAR and BASHIR work together in a dimly lit room, where displays reveal page after page of complex data and genetic information. Shar is hunched over the screen, intent...

BASHIR

You do realise that sitting in such an awkward position for extended periods of time is bad for the spinal column...?

Shar looks up - had almost forgotten anyone else was there.

SHAR

I'm sorry, Doctor. The work is very absorbing.

BASHIR

There I certainly agree with you. Professor zh'Thiin's research is... well, it's extraordinary.

SHAR

Given the circumstances, I'd say that extraordinary is exactly what's required.

BASHIR

Oh, absolutely. But some of this stuff is over even my head.

That catches Shar's attention at last - he sits back and looks at Bashir, who seems frustrated and defeated.

SHAR

I don't understand, Doctor. I assumed your experience in genetic engineering would be greater than most, given your own status.

BASHIR

Honestly, I would have thought so too, Shar. But... it's where she charts her new protocols that I get lost. Look at this...

Shar gets up to join Bashir, who brings up a GRAPHIC of a dense, multi-coloured double helix with tags to point out various bit of interesting information. Bashir points...

BASHIR

This is one of the simulations zh'Thiin created to test her theories on inserting new recombinant DNA sequences into a sample of Andorian genetic code.

(points)

These are the new sequences here - a hybrid of Andorian DNA with a new code intended to fill the gaps left by genetic deficiencies after fertilisation. It's all recorded in great detail in her notes. But there's a small but noticeable gap between these simulations, and the protocol she actually used on live volunteers. You worked with Doctor sh'Veileth - does any of this look familiar to you?

Shar makes over the screen, flicks through a few pages...

SHAR

It is almost two years since I left that project to return to Starfleet. And the Borg attacked in the meantime - perhaps the relevant notes were destroyed.

BASHIR

No, that's not it - the gap comes within the last six months.

SHAR

Perhaps it was simply inspiration born out of desperation, then.

BASHIR

Maybe... but wouldn't you think she'd want to document that? We're talking about saving your entire species from extinction, Shar - if it works, she'd want to remember how she got there, surely.

SHAR

But the new protocols do work - the reports show that the trial subjects are developing with no detectable defects.

BASHIR

Yes, whereas previous protocols produced results only marginally better than the Yrythny therapy. Such a leap is... incredible.

Shar sits back to consider what Bashir is saying...

SHAR

Are you suggesting that Professor zh'Thiin is employing an untested procedure on live patients?

BASHIR

I don't think it's that simple. There's no denying the effort she expended postulating, documenting and testing her theories. It's just this one gap that bothers me.

SHAR

Perhaps she's simply overcautious. You did say she had access to the Federation's library of banned genetic research.

BASHIR

But what if she exhausted all that information without a solution? What would be her next step?

SHAR

I suppose... she'd seek out other parties. As long as she doesn't violate any laws it's not illegal, or even unethical, to look outside the Federation for help.

(beat)

Doctor... is there some reason you haven't approached the professor directly with your concerns?

BASHIR

I don't want to come off as if I'm accusing her of anything. Right now, it's just a puzzle with a missing piece. I need more data, then I'll know what to do.

Bashir begins typing quickly into the computer, requesting that more data. Shar moves back to his own computer...

40 EXT. STARFLEET COMMAND - NIGHT

The familiar complex in San Francisco, late at night...

41 INT. ADMIRAL AKAAR'S OFFICE

The private space of the Starfleet C-in-C. Akaar is working late, reading endless reports. But his screen suddenly changes, revealing an urgent ALERT...

INFORMATION REQUEST RECEIVED
ACCESS TO SHEDAI DATA FORBIDDEN
CONTAINMENT PROTOCOL ACTIVATED

As Akaar sits staring at this appalling development...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

42 EXT. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - MORNING

The sun is just peeking out over the Paris skyline...

43 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - MORNING

President Bacco has barely had time to wake up before Akaar hits her with the latest problem...

BACCO

The who?

AKAAR

The Shedai, Madam President.

BACCO

Never heard of 'em.

AKAAR

I have, but only in passing. The Shedai were apparently an ancient and powerful civilisation that flourished more than one-hundred thousand years ago in the part of space we call the Gariman sector.

Bacco's dour expression makes clear she is none the wiser. Akaar pushes a padd across the desk to her - a space map.

AKAAR

We call it the Gariman sector now, mostly out of a desire to deflect and reduce the history surrounding that region. But I'm fairly sure everyone knows we are actually talking about the Taurus Reach.

BACCO

(awake now)

The Taurus Reach? You mean what the Tholians have been whining about for years?

AKAAR

Indeed. A hundred years ago, the Taurus Reach was the focal point of a top secret Starfleet research effort unlike anything seen before or since. It was called Operation Vanguard, and it was conducted under the highest, most tightly controlled security measures ever utilised. An entire exploration and colonisation program was deployed in that region for the sole purpose of covering up the missions being conducted there.

BACCO

What does any of this have to do with why you're here?

AKAAR

The reason for this undertaking was the discovery in 2263 of an artificial DNA strand, millions of times more complex than anything on record. A blueprint not just for life but for civilisations - for entire worlds, and the life-forms to populate them.

BACCO

Created by these... Shedai?

AKAAR

Apparently so. The official files on Starfleet's efforts to acquire and understand Shedai technology, particularly this so-called meta-genome, are shrouded in secrecy. However, it seems someone recently - if inadvertently - attempted to access that information.

BACCO

That someone being Doctor Bashir of Deep Space Nine.

AKAAR

Correct, ma'am - although he is currently detached to the *Robinson* at Andor, preparing for Professor zh'Thiin's fertility conference.

BACCO

Okay, so he's working on genetic engineering - but isn't that the whole reason we sent him there?

AKAAR

Yes, ma'am, but -

BACCO

Then I don't see the problem. Send him what he asked for, just with the classified bits redacted out. He never needs to know.

AKAAR

That is already underway, ma'am -

BACCO

Wait - I see what I'm missing now. You're worried about why he asked for that data in the first place.

AKAAR

I don't believe Doctor Bashir is doing anything against Starfleet's interests or security. He's simply exhausting all possible avenues of research. But I must wonder how he knew what questions to ask - even the search terms are classified.

BACCO

Isn't he supposed to be a super-genius or something? Maybe he just figured it out.

AKAAR

The formulae he included were too specific for that possibility.

BACCO

Alright, so... what are your actual concerns here, Leonard?

AKAAR

That someone, either by accident or design, has access to data so dangerous that Starfleet felt the need to secure it within multiple layers of compartmentalisation and disinformation, each requiring a different authorisation that only your office and mine are capable of granting. This information was buried deeply for a reason, ma'am. If someone is trying to dig it up, I'd like to know who - and why.

Bacco sits back and rubs her temples - she gets it now.

BACCO

You know, Leonard, there are times when I really can't wait for the next person to come in here and boot me out so I can go home.

AKAAR

I take it Agent Wexler continues to thwart your efforts to build an escape tunnel beneath the Palais?

BACCO

Every night.

Bacco chuckles. Akaar offers his tiny smile of amusement...

44 **INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE**

Rogeiro sits in the centre chair, the regular crew around him - UTELN, PLANTE, SIVADEKI. The turbolift door opens, and BASHIR and SHAR enter. Rogeiro turns to greet them...

ROGEIRO

Gentlemen. Were you able to solve your little mystery?

BASHIR

I'm afraid not, Commander. The central archives sent me some of what I requested, but not all.

ROGEIRO

Is that cause for concern?

SHAR

Not necessarily. I still cannot believe Professor zh'Thiin would do anything illegal.

BASHIR

She already said that all options were on the table, Shar. Maybe she wasn't kidding.

Suddenly an alert on UTELN's tactical horseshoe...

UTELN

Commander... long-range sensors are detecting a vessel entering the Andorian system.

ROGEIRO

(cautious)
Identification?

UTELN

It's unarmed... but sensors have identified it as... Tholian.

Rogeiرو stands sharply - this is an unwelcome development.

ROGEIRO

Is the captain still down on the surface with the Presider?

UTELN

Yes, sir.

ROGEIRO

Contact them immediately.

45 **EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

The *Robinson* is already in orbit, but as we turn to see...

...a THOLIAN SHIP drops out of warp and cruises to a stop, the usual arrowhead shape seen most recently in ENT.

46 **INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - PRESIDER'S OFFICE**

Sisko, sh'Thalis and ch'Lhren watch this on a large display screen. Rogeiro's voice comes through the comm...

ROGEIRO (comm)

Confirming the vessel is unarmed.
It has deflector shields, but they aren't operational. Sensor profile suggests it's a diplomatic vessel.

SH'THALIS

The Tholians sent someone to talk?
They are not known for talking, as a rule.

SISKO

They're not known for joining forces with alien empires either, as a rule. Apparently things have changed.

They continue to watch, disquieted. Even ch'Lhren is thrown - this was not a part of his plans.

47 **INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE**

Rogeiro remains standing. Suddenly an ear-piercing SQUEAL fills the bridge, not unlike Shar's trick with the tricorder - Utehn has to SHOUT to be heard over it.

UTELN

It's an open hailing frequency, sir. They're not sending to us - they're sending to all of Andor.

ROGEIRO

Put it through, Lieutenant.

Uteln works his panels... and the SQUEAL drops, replaced by an image on the VIEWSCREEN...

...of a THOLIAN without its environment suit - NRESKENE. An angular, crystalline shape in orange-red hues, wavy with the heat of its ship's Venus-like atmosphere. The metallic shriek of its voice is translated into a robotic monotone.

NRESKENE (screen)

People of Andor. I am Nreskene, special emissary of the Tholian Assembly. I come to you in peace, with information of great import to all your citizens. It is our hope to establish a new era of cooperation with our interstellar neighbours. To this end, we have contacted your Professor zh'Thiin to provide her with scientific data to help the Andorian people.

Shar and Bashir react... Rogeiro notices...

SHAR

It seems I was wrong.

BASHIR

This is where she got her data - from the Tholians?

ROGEIRO

From a member of the Typhon Pact.

Nreskene isn't finished - they turn back to watch him...

NRESKENE (screen)

This information has been in our possession for almost a century, but was suppressed by our Ruling Conclave until recently. It was found in the Taurus Reach, and was created by a race known as Shedai.

ROGEIRO

Lieutenant ch'Thane, search all databases for the word Shedai.

SHAR
Aye, Commander.

Shar turns to his science station, quickly starts searching for information. The rest continue to watch...

48 INT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA - PRESIDER'S OFFICE

Where Sisko, sh'Thalis and ch'Lhren are also watching...

NRESKENE (screen)
It did not take us long to see the potential in this information, and that it could be used to help the Andorians, whose difficulties we have known about for some time.

CH'LHREN
(mutter to self)
This is why I have been saying it should be a private matter...

NRESKENE (screen)
What was also intriguing was the fact that the Federation has held this same data for just as long. Indeed it was a Starfleet vessel that discovered it a century ago.

Sisko's eyes flare at that...

49 EXT. PARLIAMENT ANDORIA BUILDING - DAY

...and the crowds of protestors outside the Parliament are none too happy to hear it either. They are getting worked up, and the Guards are having trouble controlling them...

NRESKENE (comm)
While the Federation has given the Andorian people a great deal of help, they have evidently avoided offering this particular data. Given its obvious potential, as proven by Professor zh'Thiin's success, we can only wonder why.

50 INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE

Rogeiرو grits his teeth...

NRESKENE (screen)

Perhaps they are unwilling to help one of their most long-held allies in their hour of need. Only their leaders can confirm or deny that. However, the Tholian Assembly has no such hesitation. Therefore, as our first act of goodwill, we publicly acknowledge our role in Professor zh'Thiin's research, and pledge to continue our support, in the hope of bringing about a true and lasting solution to Andor's problems. We await your response.

The image of the Tholian drops, replaced by that of his ship in orbit. Rogeiرو, Shar, Bashir all react...

ROGEIRO

Mister UteIn... package a copy of that message and prepare to send it to Starfleet Command.

UTELN

Aye, sir.

SHAR

You might also want to set ship's phasers to stun the whole planet.

Off Shar's trepidation for what is to come...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW