

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x14 - "Duty Calls."

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 17x14 - "START SMALL"

Picard and Crusher are in sickbay, smiling at her sonogram - she is pregnant. With their [recent marriage](#), and the new senior staff complete (including security chief Jasminder Choudhury and counsellor Hegol Den), it feels like things are finally coming together. Then they receive a planetary distress call from [Ramatis III](#) - the Borg are attacking. *Enterprise* is the only ship carrying deadly transphasic torpedoes (VOY 7x26 "Endgame") - Starfleet worries that allowing more ships to use them will allow the Borg to adapt faster. After its success against *Einstein*, however, the multi-vector agent has been distributed, including to former security chief Leybenzon's new assignment USS *Bhutto*. While *Enterprise* battles one Borg cube at Ramatis, Leybenzon leads the defence against another at Barolia... and fails, allowing the Borg to analyse the MVA and adapt to it. Picard hears the voice of the Borg Queen, taunting - the Borg are no longer interested in assimilating the Federation. They are coming to exterminate.

TTN 1x14 - "TIME'S UP"

2381: Deep in the Beta Quadrant, *Titan* is months from Federation space and can only react to the reports of Borg attacks. Dr Ree declares Troi's second pregnancy also non-viable, but she refuses to abort, even though it could kill her. Xin Ra-Havreii creates a holo-presence device that allows Melora Pazlar to project herself anywhere in the ship without leaving the stellar cartography lab. 2156: During the Earth-Romulan war, [NX-02 Columbia](#) (ENT 4x03 "Home") is attacked and badly damaged. Captain [Erika Hernandez](#) authorises a near-light speed trip to the nearest planet for help - it will take them months while years pass outside. The decision causes friction among her crew. 2381: Counsellor Haaj uses his patented argument therapy to force Troi to admit who she blames for the failed pregnancy - the baby itself. 2168: *Columbia* finally arrives at the planet, where the ridiculously advanced Caeliar welcome them... and tell them they can never leave.

VOY 10x14 - "FOCUS"

On *Voyager*, Chakotay hears the reports about the Borg attacks on Barolia, Acamar and Ramatis. He immediately gives up drinking, and focuses the crew on ideas for stopping the Borg. No other subject is up for discussion at senior staff meetings. On Earth, Seven of Nine is brought from her Academy classroom to the Palais in Paris - President Bacco has hired her as the official Borg expert. Bacco asks what could have inspired these latest attacks. Seven believes it was *Voyager* - when they destroyed the [transwarp hub](#) (VOY 7x26 "Endgame"), the Borg must have decided the Federation was now an intolerable threat and resolved to wipe them out once and for all. As for how the Borg are getting into Federation space, she has no idea. As his hands shake from withdrawal, Chakotay petitions Admiral Nechayev to assign *Voyager* back to the battle fleet. Needing every able-bodied person, she has no choice but to agree.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE

A Nebula-class ship, the USS *New York*, flies at warp.

2 INT. NEW YORK - BRIDGE

Standard Nebula-class bridge. Lieutenant CAVANAUGH (human female, 30s) is the ship's tactical officer and wears security yellow, but she has been placed in the captain's chair for this journey and is rather nervous about it.

The turbolift doors open and Admiral WHATLEY enters (DS9 5x10 "Rapture"). Cavanaugh immediately shoots to her feet.

CAVANAUGH

Admiral on the bridge!

As the rest of the crew jerk to attention, Whatley smiles - this crew of young untested newbies are eager to impress.

WHATLEY

That's alright, Lieutenant, sit please. What's our ETA?

Cavanaugh does sit, awkwardly, and checks the screens by her side. Meanwhile, Whatley comes to sit beside her.

CAVANAUGH

At current speed, the *New York* will arrive at DS-Nine in two hours and thirteen minutes.

WHATLEY

Okay good. Please let Commander Ro know that I'll need to meet with her as soon as we arrive.

CAVANAUGH

Already taken care of, Admiral. Is there anything else I can help you with, sir?

Whatley covers a smirk - his presence is making everyone nervous. He decides to take pity, and stands again.

WHATLEY

Actually, Lieutenant Cavanaugh, I will need you to remain in command for the remainder of our journey. Obviously the *New York* is without a captain right now, and I have much to prepare for. But I have full confidence in you.

CAVANAUGH

(gulp)

I appreciate that, sir.

Nodding acknowledgement, Whatley moves towards the ready room. With his back turned, the confident smile is free to drop... and Whatley is very worried about these poor kids.

He enters the ready room and the door closes, leaving Cavanaugh and the rest of the crew alone...

3 **EXT. SPACE**

The *New York* flies on away from us, still at warp...

4 **EXT. SPACE**

Elsewhere, the giant [Vesta-class](#) *Aventine* holds position in open space.

A runabout approaches the arrow-shaped ship, riding along the landing strip between the nacelles and eventually slipping through the *Aventine's* open shuttle bay doors.

5 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

As seen in DS9 12x01 "Godspeed". Lt Cmdr EZRI DAX sits in the centre chair, more confident than Cavanaugh was. The Bolian male helm officer, Lt THARP, turns to look at her.

THARP

Commander, the *Seine* has docked.

DAX

Thank you, Lieutenant. Bridge to Captain Dexar - the away team is back on board.

DEXAR (comm)
Acknowledged, Commander. I'll be there in a moment.

Dax gets up from the command chair and begins a tour of the bridge stations - more to fill the time than because there is anything she needs to check. She reaches the tactical station, where Lt KEDAIR ([Takaran](#) female) stands.

KEDAIR
Doesn't feel like we're really making proper use of *Aventine's* abilities, does it, sir?

DAX
Well... no. But to be fair, the science labs need as much of a trial run as any other system. Just because we're the fastest, most advanced, most well-armed ship in the fleet, with half a dozen experimental technologies on board, doesn't mean Lieutenant Commander Helkara shouldn't get to enjoy his botanical samples.

Kedair smirks a little, then snaps to attention as the turbolift door opens and Captain DEXAR enters. The happy, friendly Bolian male strolls in, perfectly at ease.

KEDAIR
Captain on the bridge.

DEXAR
Lieutenant Kedair. Lieutenant Commander Dax. Everything under control?

DAX
Perfectly, sir. All systems nominal.

DEXAR

(settles into seat)

Excellent. Although I must admit I'll be glad when Helkara has his fill of these botanical samples and we can get moving again. Doesn't feel like we're really using *Aventine's* abilities to their full potential, does it?

Dax and Kedair share a silent smirk.

DAX

I'm sure I don't know what you mean, sir.

BEEP BEEP BEEP. Kedair turns back to her console to check, and her face hardens at what she reads. It's not good.

DEXAR

Lieutenant? What is it?

KEDAIR

It's a distress call, sir. A full-scale planetary distress call, from the [Acamar system](#).

DEXAR

Does it say the nature of their distress?

KEDAIR

Yes, sir. They're under attack... from the Borg.

Dexar shoots to his feet as the tension around the bridge instantly spikes.

DEXAR

Lieutenant Mirren - time to the Acamar system at maximum warp.

The Ops manager, a human female Lieutenant called [OLIANA MIRREN](#), quickly works her consoles. (This is the same young woman who competed against Wesley in TNG "Coming of Age".)

MIRREN

Three hours and thirty-eight minutes, sir.

DEXAR

Mister Tharp, set course. Maximum warp, engage immediately.

THARP

Aye, sir.

As the sound of the engines builds, the main viewscreen shows the stars around us moving faster, faster... and then jumping to warp. Dexar retakes his command seat.

DEXAR

All hands, this is the captain. We are responding to a distress call and will very likely be going into battle. Senior officers to the briefing room, now.

(beat)

Lieutenant Kedair, respond to Acamar, let them know help is on the way, as fast as we can.

KEDAIR

Aye, sir.

As Kedair works her consoles to comply, Dax quietly takes the first officer's seat next to Dexar. He can see the uncertain look on her face.

DEXAR

Lieutenant Commander?

DAX

It's nothing, sir.

DEXAR

We're going into a red alert situation, Commander. If there's something I need to know, then I need to know it now.

DAX

It's just... you said we're going "as fast as we can". But we're not, are we, sir? Shouldn't we be using the slipstream drive?

DEXAR

I considered that option and rejected it.

DAX

But sir, it could get us to Acamar in a matter of seconds, rather than three-and-a-half hours.

DEXAR

Commander, the last time we tried to use the slipstream drive, we nearly blew up the entire ship.

DAX

It's what the *Aventine* is designed to do, sir.

DEXAR

And it doesn't work. Unless you and Lieutenant Kasslim have figured out how to make it work in the meantime, and not bothered to inform me?

DAX

No, sir. But the Borg -

DEXAR

I understand your desire to get there faster, Commander. But we're of no use to Acamar if we spread ourselves across a thousand light years before we even arrive. This ship and its crew need to be in one piece if we're to have any hope of stopping a Borg vessel. Therefore I am not prepared to authorise use of the slipstream drive at this time.

DAX
(deep breath)
Aye, sir.

DEXAR
(standing)
You have the bridge, Commander.
Lieutenant Kedair, Lieutenant
Mirren, I'm going to need you.

Dexar heads towards the door that leads to the conference room, behind the bridge. Kedair gestures for an EXTRA to take over her station, then follows the captain. From the Ops station, Mirren does the same.

Dax watches them go, then settles back into the command chair. Now she looks just as nervous as Cavanaugh...

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

6 EXT. SPACE

The *Aventine* zooms through space at maximum warp...

7 INT. AVENTINE - CONFERENCE ROOM

This room is oriented length-ways along the ship. Windows on both sides look out across the width of the saucer section, while the table runs the length of the room. These windows show the stars streaking past on both sides.

Dexar sits in the seat closest to the bridge - so that he has the least distance to go before he can get to business. (There is another exit at the far end of the room.)

Along the table to Dexar's right are ship's XO Cmdr TOVAK (Vulcan male), chief engineer Lt KASSLIM (Gallamite female) and CMO Dr LENA GLAU (human female). To the captain's left are science officer Lt Cmdr GRUHN HELKARA ([Zakdorn](#) male), then security chief Lonnoc Kedair, and Ops manager Olliana Mirren. (All but Mirren were seen in DS9 12x01 "Godspeed".)

KASSLIM

We're going as fast as the warp drive can manage, Captain. Laws of physics, et cetera. But I've got P-Seven Red watching the intermix ratio for any chance to push it.

DEXAR

More Starfleet ships are on their way, but even without slipstream we'll still arrive first. So the battle may well be up to us, and that means we will probably need power from the warp drive for tactical systems once we arrive. Lieutenant Mirren, you'll need to be on top of the EPS distribution.

MIRREN

Not a problem, Captain.

DEXAR
Speaking of tactical systems...

KEDAIR
They're fully energised and primed, sir. Regenerative shields, ablative armour, phaser cannons, chain pulsar, quantum torpedoes, internal defences...

GLAU
Sorry, what's a chain pulsar?

TOVAK
The chain reaction pulsar weapon is one of the new experimental tactical options provided to the Vesta class, Doctor. We have had no cause to use it thus far.

GLAU
But what does it do?

Lt Kedair works the controls set into the table before her. A 3-D HOLOGRAM appears above the table, slowly turning for everyone to see. It shows the *Aventine* itself...

KEDAIR
The chain pulsar is a ship-mounted armament that takes the form of a standard torpedo. But it doesn't act like a standard torpedo.

The hologram of the *Aventine* recedes so that we can now see both it and a giant BORG CUBE looming. Both ships have various readings in small text below their images. The *Aventine* fires a torpedo... which pauses in 'mid air'.

KEDAIR
Now watch the cube...

The torpedo begins moving towards the cube in SLOW MOTION. As it does, the running lights of the Borg cube begin to dim, and power readings beneath its image lower. Meanwhile the same lights and readings on the torpedo itself grow...

MIRREN

It's sucking the power from the cube...

KEDAIR

Exactly. And once it's got its fill...

As the holographic Borg cube sputters powerlessly, the torpedo shoots towards it... and destroys it in one massive EXPLOSION. The crew flinch back from the power of it, but the image FREEZES again on the blasted cloud of debris.

KEDAIR

The chain pulsar uses its target's own energy against it by absorbing it and then turning it back on them. If used against multiple targets, it will draw power from all of them before unleashing the accumulated energy all in one go.

TOVAK

However it should be emphasised that this weapon is untested in the field. Its use is recommended only as a last resort.

KEDAIR

But it is ready to be used, if that last resort arrives.

The rest of the senior staff nod a daunted understanding.

8 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dax sits in the captain's chair - the only other senior staff on duty is Lieutenant Tharp at the helm. She is trying not to feel left out of the planning meeting.

The door from the conference room opens and people emerge - clearly the meeting is over. Helkara, Kedair and Mirren all return to their regular stations. As Dax stands from the command chair, Cmdr Tovak meets her there.

TOVAK

I will now stand watch, Lieutenant
Commander. You are relieved.

DAX

Thank you, sir.

She backs away, then heads to the conference room door.

9 INT. AVENTINE - CONFERENCE ROOM

Dax enters the room, where she sees Dexar sat alone at the
table. Kasslim and Glau are just leaving by the far door.

DAX

Captain - do you have a moment?

DEXAR

I was about to begin my report to
Starfleet, but I suppose that can
wait. What's on your mind?

DAX

I wanted to apologise if it seemed
like I was questioning your orders
earlier. That wasn't my intention.

DEXAR

That's alright, Commander. I don't
object to you raising concerns if
you have them. You might consider
doing so in a less confrontational
tone, however.

DAX

I know. I'm sorry. I just have a
bad tendency to jump in without
thinking things through sometimes.

DEXAR

Not an ideal trait for a command
officer. I'm not saying you're not
a good candidate for that centre
chair some day. But I'd work on
taking the time to consider all
the angles before making the call.

DAX

Agreed. I thought the risk of using the slipstream was worth it to get to Acamar faster... but you're right. It's not ready.

DEXAR

Risks can be fun, Commander. But they are not always the wisest course of action.

Dax nods, accepting that graciously.

10 **EXT. SPACE**

The [Akira-class](#) *James T Kirk* travels at impulse...

11 **INT. KIRK - BRIDGE**

Captain ELIAS VAUGHN sits in the captain's chair. Science officer [SHAR](#) is behind him, conferring with security chief MAGRONE at the tactical console. After a moment, Shar leaves Magrone and walks over to Vaughn, who looks up...

VAUGHN

Lieutenant...?

SHAR

Captain, Lieutenant Magrone and I have been collating the latest reports from Starfleet...

VAUGHN

...and?

SHAR

And there's another Borg attack going on as we speak. At the Acamar system. The *Aventine* is responding.

VAUGHN

Aventine... that's Dax's ship. Are we in any position to help?

SHAR

Sir, Acamar is clear across the Federation. It would take at least a week at maximum warp. But that wasn't why I brought it up.

VAUGHN

Then please feel free to get to the point, Lieutenant.

SHAR

When I said another, I didn't mean in addition to earlier battles. I mean, there's an attack at Acamar, and an attack at Barolia... and an attack at Ramatis.

The bridge goes quiet. Shar knows what he's saying.

VAUGHN

Three separate attacks? All by the Borg, and all at the same time?

SHAR

Yes, sir.

VAUGHN

Lieutenant Magrone, get me a direct line through to Starfleet Command immediately.

MAGRONE

I've been trying, sir. They've asked me to hold. I imagine they're quite busy right now.

SHAR

Ships are responding to all three attacks, sir. Our current position is too far away to be of any real help to any of them.

VAUGHN

Alright. Absent orders, we're on our own. What do we know?

MAGRONE

Well, all three systems - Acamar, Ramatis, Barolia - they're all in the Onias sector.

VAUGHN

On the Romulan border? Has there been any response from Tal'Aura?

MAGRONE

Not that we're aware of. But I don't think the Romulans would tell us anything anyway.

VAUGHN

Helm, set course for the Onias sector. Maximum warp, now.

The Vulcan helms-woman, T'LARIK, responds.

T'LARIK

Aye, sir, engaging now.

The engines ramp up, and the ship jumps to warp.

SHAR

Sir, it's going to be too late.

VAUGHN

Never say that, Mister ch'Thane. I refuse to do nothing as Federation citizens are in danger. And since the Onias sector is clearly where the action is, that's where we'll go. Even if it takes us a week.

SHAR

Aye sir.

VAUGHN

In the meantime, I want all our resources devoted to figuring out where the hell these Borg are coming from. We should have got some kind of sign they were coming before they were in firing range.

SHAR
I'll get right on it, sir.

Vaughn nods him on his way, so Shar moves off to begin his work. Vaughn settles back into his chair, mind working...

10 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Kirk* zooms away at maximum warp...

11 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Bringing us home to the station, where the *New York* is just settling onto a lower pylon...

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

Commander RO LAREN reaches out to shake Admiral Whatley's hand, and directs him towards the guest seats.

RO
Admiral, welcome to DS-Nine.

WHATLEY
Thank you, Commander. I'm afraid it isn't a social call - by now I'm sure you've seen the reports.

RO
The Borg attacks... yes. Does command have any idea why it's happening?

WHATLEY
Do they need a reason?

RO
Well, I'm not sure what I can offer you to help.

WHATLEY
Actually, that's not even why I'm here. Well, it is and it isn't. I was coming here anyway, and the reports arrived on the way.

RO
...Okay. Then why were you coming?

WHATLEY
The *New York* needs substantial repairs. It was involved in the fight at Sector 108...

RO
Prophets... I heard about that.

WHATLEY
Horrible day. The captain and many of the crew were killed. Those who are left are rather young and inexperienced. I was hoping your crew could help out with the repairs and restocking.

RO
Absolutely - I'll get Lieutenant Nog and his team on it right away.

WHATLEY
Thank you, Commander. I'll also need to request the use of one of your runabouts, and a pilot.

RO
Not a problem. Where are you going, if I'm allowed to ask?

WHATLEY
To Bajor. I need to speak to an old friend.

Off Ro's curiosity...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

With the *Defiant* settled on the docking ring, and the *New York* at a lower pylon, a runabout launches from its pad on the crossover arms, and zooms out of the station's area.

14 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

BEN SISKO sits at the dining table, with young REBECCA next to him. On the table in front of them is a large portable flat screen, showing an image of a small crowd of people. Using the fingers on her right hand, Rebecca touches the screen, while counting up on the fingers of her left hand.

REBECCA

One... two... three... four...
five... six...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Someone is at the door. Rebecca stops...

REBECCA

Who's at the door, daddy?

SISKO

I don't know, sweetheart.

A little thrown off, Sisko gets up from the table. KASIDY emerges from the kitchen, equally curious.

SISKO

You keep counting, okay?

REBECCA

Okay, daddy.

While Rebecca goes back to counting on her fingers and muttering under her breath, Sisko goes to the door... and opens it to reveal Admiral Whatley.

SISKO

Admiral! I wasn't expecting you.

WHATLEY

Hello, Ben. Sorry for dropping in unannounced, but I needed to speak to you in person, not subspace.

KASIDY

Well, don't leave him on the doorstep, Ben. It's heading towards winter out there.

SISKO

Of course, come in, Admiral. What can I do for you?

Whatley steps into the room. He sees Rebecca counting out on her fingers, and smiles. It's nice to see such a basic family image, but in a way, it makes his job here worse.

WHATLEY

I may as well get straight to the point. Starfleet Command sent me here to talk to you.

SISKO

Specifically you?

WHATLEY

They wanted somebody who knew you on a personal basis, not just as a commander. If Bill Ross hadn't just retired, it probably would have been him. Ben... we need you to come back to Starfleet.

Off Sisko and Kasidy's reaction to that...

15 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Aventine* zooms at maximum warp, heading into battle...

16 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Captain Dexar sits in the command seat, his usual garrulous demeanour instead tight and controlled as he watches the stars rush towards them on the gigantic main viewscreen.

DEXAR
Time to Acamar system?

MIRREN
Two minutes ten seconds.

DEXAR
All hands, this is the captain.
Red alert, battle stations.

The telltale lights begin to flash around the bridge.

TOVAK
Bridge to sickbay. Doctor Glau?

17 INT. AVENTINE - SICKBAY

Glau stands in her sickbay, a troop of junior doctors and nurses around her. She is not looking forward to this.

GLAU
I'm here, Commander.

TOVAK (comm)
Prepare for casualties, Doctor. We
are going into battle.

GLAU
Yeah... I caught that part.

18 INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE

DEXAR
Sensors, can you confirm the
presence of only one Borg vessel
in the Acamar system?

MIRREN
According to current readings,
confirmed, sir.

DEXAR
Any indications the Borg are
attempting to assimilate the
planet's population?

TOVAK

The initial distress call did not specify, but it is their standard strategy. It would be illogical to assume otherwise here.

DEXAR

Agreed.

TOVAK

If I may, sir, it would also be illogical to assume the Borg are not aware of our approach. Their sensors are superior to ours.

DEXAR

I know. But they can't get a good fix until we drop out of warp. Helm, adjust heading to approach the Borg vessel from the opposite side to Acamar itself. And delay dropping to impulse until the last safe moment. Up to you when.

THARP

Aye sir.

TOVAK

Bridge to engineering.

16 INT. AVENTINE - ENGINEERING

Lieutenant Kasslim stands at a console while juniors rush about behind her, and the warp core pulses with power.

KASSLIM

Go ahead, bridge.

TOVAK (comm)

We will drop out of warp sharply and with little warning. Please ensure the inertial dampers are prepared for the task.

KASSLIM

On it.

17 INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE

Dexar turns to his side, where Lieutenant Kedair stands at her tactical console. Dax stands nearby.

DEXAR

Tactical, randomise our shield and phaser frequencies. Actually, set up a duplicate console - I want two people on weapons at all times. We've got enough of 'em, let's use 'em.

KEDAIR

Understood, sir.

DAX

I'll take that station, Captain.

DEXAR

Thank you, Commander.

(turns to Tovak)

Take internal defences, in case they try to board us.

TOVAK

Aye, sir.

Tovak gets up from his seat and takes another console. Dexar looks towards Helkara at the sciences console.

DEXAR

Sciences, keep sensors at full resolution as well. Any bit of data might be of use to us.

HELKARA

Aye, sir.

THARP

Captain, approaching target now.
Dropping out of warp in five...

As the crew tense for the moment...

18 **EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

The blue-and-white planet sits in space, seemingly calm...

...until a devastating GREEN BEAM OF ENERGY shoots down from off-screen and hits the surface, kicking up huge plumes of water and dust as it cuts a swath across.

The BORG CUBE looms into view in foreground, firing three of these beams simultaneously, all hitting different parts of the planet and causing equal devastation to them all.

PAN across space until we see... the *Aventine* zooms out of warp into the planet's orbit and instantly OPENS FIRE.

QUANTUM TORPEDOES and standard PHASERS all shoot their payloads directly at the Borg.

...and all HIT their target dead on, peppering the square surface of the cube with numerous EXPLOSIONS. The Borg do not let it stop them from firing on Acamar...

19 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

On Kedair at tactical...

KEDAIR

Direct hit, eight percent of the cube is destroyed.

(confirms readings,
frustrated)

No change in their attack.

DEXAR

Keep firing. We need to draw their attention away from the surface.

TOVAK

Captain, I am not detecting any transporter signals, any attempt to send drones to the surface. They are simply firing on the planet from orbit.

HELKARA

Why? That's not how they work.

KEDAIR
I guess it is now. They're
returning fire.

The screen shows *Aventine's* own WEAPONS continuing to shoot at the cube, plus a green twirling LIGHT heading right back at them... it IMPACTS, shaking the ship.

KEDAIR
Primary shields down ten percent
and recharging, secondary shields
holding.

DEXAR
We have to stop them firing on the
surface. Phaser cannons, time on
target.

DAX
Time on target, aye.

20 **EXT. SPACE**

On the outside edge of *Aventine's* saucer section, separate from the usual phaser strips, a PHASER CANNON reorients and fires a new kind of advanced super-powerful phaser beam.

On the other side of the saucer, a second cannon fires.

The two beams converge on a single point on the Borg cube and PUNCH a hole through their defences.

21 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dexar in his command chair, strong and solid...

DEXAR
Follow it through!

Dax determinedly works her panels...

22 **EXT. SPACE**

Four PHOTON TORPEDOES fire straight into the hole the phaser cannons just made...

...and DETONATE. Explosions rack through the core of the Borg cube, but do not destroy it.

The cube stops firing on the surface. Even while the fires continue to burn inside it, it turns...

...and heads right for the *Aventine*.

23 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dax sees this on the main viewscreen, and gulps.

DAX

Okay, that definitely got their attention.

DEXAR

Helm, hard about!

Concentrating too hard to respond, Tharp works his panels. On screen, the image of the looming Borg cube swerves...

HELKARA

Their shields are recharging. The damage is being snuffed out and they are not slowing down. They'll be at full power again any second.

DEXAR

But at least they're not firing on the planet.

BOOM. No, they're firing on us. The ship SHAKES under repeated slams from Borg weapons.

24 **EXT. SPACE**

Aventine runs at full impulse... the Borg cube chases after it. The cube FIRES one of its thick GREEN energy beams...

...and *Aventine* is HIT hard, right on the upper back of the engineering hull. As the ship ROCKS from the impact, bits of hull fly off into space...

...then *Aventine* swerves to the side, out of the way.

25 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Tharp is working his panels, moving the big heavy ship as smoothly as he can.

DEXAR

Nicely done, Lieutenant Tharp.

THARP

Thank you, sir. We may be big, but we're still smaller than them.

P7 RED (comm)

Engineering to bridge!

DEXAR

(alarmed)

Go ahead, engineering. Where's Lieutenant Kasslim?

26 **INT. AVENTINE - ENGINEERING**

Lieutenant Kasslim lies on the deck, her face half burned off and a blank look in her one remaining eye. Nearby, a junior officer sprays a FIRE EXTINGUISHER on the console.

P7 RED, a male [Nasat](#) with a red-tinged shell, hovers over the Gallamite woman, his front pincers poking hopefully at the body while his antennae are stiff with tension.

P7 RED

I'm sorry, Captain... Lieutenant Kasslim is dead.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

27 EXT. SPACE

Aventine runs. The Borg cube chases. As the Borg FIRE, *Aventine* SWERVES to avoid and fires back.

28 INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE

Tharp at his helm console, focusing with deadly accuracy.

Dexar in the command chair, calling out orders MOS.

Kedair at tactical, firing her weapons over and over.

Dax at another console, also firing and firing, watching everything with a worried but determined eye.

WHATLEY (v.o.)

The Borg are coming, Captain.

29 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Admiral Whatley sits on the couch, turned to face Sisko, who sits in the nearby chair. Both earnest, quiet.

WHATLEY

We don't know why, or even how.
But they are coming.

Sisko is suitably daunted - he has experience with the Borg himself. Before he can think up a response, Kasidy quietly re-enters the living room from Rebecca's bedroom.

SISKO

Is she okay?

KASIDY

Oh, she's fine. Counting away
without a worry in the world.

WHATLEY

I'm sorry, Missus Sisko, it wasn't
my intention to disturb you.

KASIDY
That's alright, Admiral. But are things really that bad?

WHATLEY
I'm afraid so. There have been three separate encounters with the Borg in the last six months. Right now, as we speak, another three encounters in the same day. That means three separate cubes...

30 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dax, still working her consoles, gazes in quiet horror at the sight on the main viewscreen, of the Borg cube chasing after them, the fires in its core now put out.

WHATLEY (v.o.)
(continued)
...and Starfleet has just barely managed to turn back one solitary cube at a time in the past.

31 **INT. KIRK - BRIDGE**

Vaughn sits in his own command chair, nothing to do while he watches the stars zoom past at warp. He remembers...

32 **FLASHBACK - DS9 12x10 "WHERE THE HEART IS"**

...An earlier time on the *Kirk's* bridge, as Vaughn, Sisko and President Bacco all watch the reports of the slaughter at Sector 108, with ships being swallowed up or destroyed by the giant mis-shapen super-cube.

WHATLEY (v.o.)
We've lost so many ships already.
So many good crews, so many good commanders...

33 **INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Sisko and Kasidy listen to Whatley relate these tales.

WHATLEY

I'm sorry, Ben. I know you took indefinite leave from Starfleet after you came back from your...
(searches for word)
...experience. But we need you. We need any good captain who's able.

Sisko still hasn't spoken...

34 EXT. SPACE

The Borg fire again and again on the *Aventine*. The ship can't evade all of the enemy's shots...

35 INT. AVENTINE - SICKBAY

The ship SHAKES, just as two EXTRAS are carrying the dead body of Lieutenant Kasslim into sickbay. Doctor Glau already knows there is nothing to be done, but still...

GLAU

Over there.

They carry the body over to a bio-bed and place it on - a little clumsily. Glau gives Kasslim a cursory inspection, but the conclusion is obvious. Damn it.

The door opens again and more EXTRAS enter - one bloodied on the head and arm, another supporting them as they limp through the door. Glau turns towards them...

BOOM. The room SHAKES again at another attack. Everyone staggers, and Kasslim's body TUMBLES off the bio-bed. Glau is annoyed at the indignity but has more to worry about.

GLAU

Bring him over here.

The two extras limp together to a bio-bed (other patients are already occupying other bio-beds, being attended to by other doctors), and Glau performs a visual inspection.

GLAU

It's not life-threatening. I'm afraid you'll need to wait.

As the extras move off, the ship is HIT again...

...and a massive EXPLOSION blows out one wall of sickbay. Glau is knocked to her feet under a pile of burning debris. She lands staring Kasslim's already burned, lifeless body right in the face. She CRIES OUT.

As she is wincing in pain and horror, the extras pull the debris off her and help her back to her feet. She grabs at her own back in pain, but shakes it off and keeps moving.

GLAU

Sickbay to bridge! That last shot hit sickbay - do that again and you'll be sorry.

TOVAK (comm)

Understood, Doctor. We will try our best. Bridge out.

GLAU

Alright, enough gawking! We've got patients to help. Move!

The other doctors get back to work, picking their way over the damaged equipment. As Glau moves to do the same, we see a BLOOD SPOT on her back, seeping through her uniform...

36 INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE

As the chase continues, Dexar looks across to his first officer, TOVAK, who operates a nearby console.

DEXAR

We can't keep this up forever, letting them just wear us down. Recommendations?

TOVAK

A frontal attack? Turn and face them?

KEDAIR

That won't be necessary, sir. They've stopped firing...

Off everyone's surprise...

37 **EXT. SPACE**

The Borg cube stops chasing the Starfleet ship, turns away from them... and begins heading back the way they came.

38 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

The crew watches this on the viewscreen with horror.

DAX

They're heading back to Acamar.

DEXAR

Helm, pursuit course!

39 **EXT. SPACE**

Aventine turns and begins chasing after the Borg cube.

40 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

The crew watches this on the viewscreen with horror.

DEXAR

We can't let them start firing on the planet again. Tactical... prepare the chain pulsar weapon.

Kedair blinks with surprise. Tovak steps forward...

TOVAK

Captain... I do not recommend that course of action.

DEXAR

I don't recommend it either, Commander. But I don't see a lot of choice. Kedair, you heard me.

KEDAIR

Aye, sir.

Kedair works her panel, setting up parameters and targets.

KEDAIR
Ready, Captain.

Dexar nods, looks back towards the cube they are chasing...

DEXAR
Fire, Lieutenant.

41 **EXT. SPACE**

Aventine FIRES what appears to be a normal-looking torpedo towards the Borg cube...

42 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

The crew watches the torpedo fly towards the cube, which is ignoring it. Dexar nods towards Kedair.

KEDAIR
And... activate.

43 **EXT. SPACE**

In space, the torpedo comes to life, becoming a tiny RED STAR of its own as it moves towards the cube.

The cube begins to STUTTER, power jerking and dropping and slipping, the sickly green running lights dying inside, its speed dropping...

44 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dexar is thrilled with this result.

DAX
It's working!

DEXAR
Helm, match their speed. Tactical,
continue standard weapons.

KEDAIR
Aye, sir.

Kedair goes to fire the phasers...

...but the *Aventine's* own power begins to STUTTER as well. The flashing RED ALERT lights dim, the engines GROAN, and the computer screens everywhere flicker...

45 **INT. AVENTINE - ENGINEERING**

P7 Red watches the warp core stuttering and falling and surging, as consoles everywhere around engineering also flicker on and off.

P7 RED
Engineering to bridge! What the hell are you doing?

46 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Mirren tries her best to get some information out of her half-functional operations console...

MIRREN
It's the chain pulsar weapon! It's stealing the power from us as well as from the Borg.
(turns to bridge)
Seriously, did nobody realise that might happen?

Clearly, nobody did. Tovak looks to Dexar, Dexar looks to Kedair, Kedair looks to Dax... Dax looks to the screen.

DAX
Look!

They do...

47 **EXT. SPACE**

The little red star of the pulsar torpedo is still growing and growing, sucking up more energy, heading towards the stuttering Borg cube... and it HITS.

A massive EXPLOSION rocks the Borg ship, blowing apart a good half of the cube. DEBRIS flies out, the remainder of the cube is sent tumbling away.

48 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dax WHOOPS with victory. Dexar looks at her with a faux-disapproving smile. But the rest of the bridge is just as happy and relieved. Even Tovak manages to look satisfied.

DAX
Sorry, Captain.

DEXAR
Understandable, Commander.

MIRREN
Captain... the *Aventine's* power is
not returning to normal.

She's right - the lights are still only half working, the computer screens still flickering. This is not good.

KEDAIR
Captain... the Borg.

They look to the screen again, worried...

49 **EXT. SPACE**

The remainder of the Borg cube, square along the surviving edges but a blasted wreck elsewhere, is still alive. It rights its tumbling motion...

...and heads back towards the *Aventine*.

50 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dexar stands from his chair, appalled at this development.

DEXAR
Status of shields.

DAX
I'm sorry, Captain. They haven't
recovered.

DEXAR
Any sign of other Starfleet ships?

TOVAK
Negative, Captain.

That's it, then. Dexar stares at the screen, at the broken Borg cube returning to finish them off.

The Borg FIRE one of the big green energy beams...

...and HIT the *Aventine* dead on.

EXPLOSIONS rock the entire ship, tearing apart bridge stations, rending plasteel sheets off the walls, sending girders and bulkheads tumbling.

Dexar is THROWN off his feet, CRASHES to the deck, CRACKS his skull on the edge of the transporter platform.

Tovak's console EXPLODES in his face, THROWING him back in a hail of debris and green blood.

Dax and Kedair stumble back as the tactical console suffers CRACKLES of power shattering the transparent surface.

As the initial explosions die down, Dax scrambles across the deck, lurches down the steps to the pit, grabs Dexar's body and rolls it over.

A GASH crosses his face, bisecting it the opposite way to his Bolian ridge. Dax places her fingers along the ridge, feeling for a pulse. Nothing. She looks across to Tovak's position... just a mashed lump of green bloodied flesh.

Her two superior officers are dead. She is in command now.

She looks up to the skittering, static-filled viewscreen... and sees the Borg cube looming. ...Oh shit.

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

51 EXT. SPACE

Aventine sits still - pretty much dead in space. Running lights are half-hearted and thready. An ugly, smouldering wound sits on the top of the saucer section, another on the spine of the ship. The warp nacelles throb dully.

And the Borg half-a-cube slowly inches closer to it...

52 INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE

Where we left it - Captain Dexar lies dead at Lt Cmdr Dax's feet. The bridge is wrecked, sparks and fires and smoke. Cmdr Tovak is a pile of mulch. The rest of the crew are just barely staggering back to their stations.

Dax looks up at the screen, at the approaching Borg ship...

...and it flies straight past them, ignoring the *Aventine* and heading back towards the planet. The crew are amazed.

HELKARA

They must think they've killed us
already. We're no threat to them.

MIRREN

They're not far wrong.

Dax pulls herself together, looks around at the remaining bridge crew. She is their commander now.

DAX

Captain Dexar is dead. Commander
Tovak too. That leaves me as the
Aventine's most senior officer.

KEDAIR

(straightens)
Orders... Captain?

DAX

I need a full status report. Now!

Something to focus on. Kedair, Mirren, Helkara and Tharp all work their half-functional panels as best they can. On the screen, debris continues to tumble and spin.

MIRREN

Main power is holding at thirteen percent only.

KEDAIR

Shields are non-functional, but the ablative armour protected us from the worst of that last blow. No hull breaches.

THARP

The Borg cube - what's left of it - is on a direct heading back to Acamar.

HELKARA

The debris is showing some strange molecular distortion. The readings don't match anything Starfleet has detected on Borg vessels before.

DAX

Is it a result of the chain pulsar weapon?

KEDAIR

There's nothing in the specs to suggest that would happen.

DAX

Then I don't care right now.

A small THUMP - they look towards the screen... and a BORG DRONE has landed on the outside of the ship, part of the debris from the destroyed section of the cube.

They all look at the Borg, clinging onto the outside of the ship. It raises its cybernetically enhanced arm, which sparks to life with a welding torch... and begins cutting into the hull. The viewscreen SHORTS out.

DAX
Internal defences?

KEDAIR
Non-functional.

DAX
Arm yourselves!

As Kedair wrestles open a cabinet containing phasers and quickly passes them out to the bridge crew, a Borg Drone TRANSPORTS onto the bridge in front of the viewscreen.

DAX
Don't let them touch you!

As the closest crew member to the Drone, Lt Tharp stands sharply from his console and raises his phaser, FIRES...

...and the Drone's personal shield shrugs off the shot. It raises its arm, a long BUZZ-SAW attached to the end...

...and STABS Tharp right in the stomach. The young Bolian man SCREAMS and tumbles to the deck.

Dax, Kedair and Mirren all raise their own phasers, and FIRE in unison... and the Borg Drone goes down.

DAX
Transporters!

HELKARA
They're offline.

DAX
(wracks her brains)
Dax to *Seine*. Engage transport,
beam two Bolian males from the
bridge direct to sickbay - now!

COMPUTER
Acknowledged. Energising.

The still-alive-but-screaming Tharp and the glassy-eyed-and-silent Dexar both disappear in transporter beams...

53 **INT. AVENTINE - SICKBAY**

...and reappear on the deck of the sickbay, which is just as ruined and sparking as the bridge. Doctor Glau steps over fallen girders to get to the new arrivals.

 GLAU
 Somebody help me here!

She bends down to the two Bolians... revealing that the BLOOD SPOT on her own back has grown bigger since earlier.

 DAX (comm)
 Dax to all hands. Intruder alert!
 Borg drones are beaming on board,
 and internal defences are down.
 Security to any and all critical
 points aboard ship.

The sounds of PHASER SHOTS and SCREAMS begin to echo in from outside sickbay...

54 **INT. AVENTINE - CORRIDOR**

Two Borg Drones beam into the dark and smoky corridor... and are immediately CUT DOWN by phaser fire from two Starfleet security officers.

Then one of the officers SCREAMS as another Borg weapon SLASHES right through his body.

His companion turns in horror and sees another Drone LOOMING right for him...

55 **INT. AVENTINE - ENGINEERING**

Another FIREFIGHT between security and Borg Drones is taking place here. P7 Red cowers out of the way...

 DAX (comm)
 Dax to engineering. Get those
 internal defences back online -
 that is your highest priority!

 P7 RED
 Understood, Commander...

Steeling his nerves, P7 Red curls himself into a small, tight ball covered in a tough chitinous shell, and ROLLS himself across the deck of the engineering section...

...past Drones and Starfleet security exchanging fire...

...until he reaches a console, where he unrolls his body, stretches up on his hind legs to reach the console, and sets all four fore-pincers skittering over the controls.

56 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Kedair is fighting hand-to-hand with another Drone, using a Capellan *kligat* against its saw-arm. She CHOPS off its humanoid arm, but the Borg comes back with its saw-arm...

...and STABS Kedair right through the belly like the other Drone did to Tharp. Kedair looks down at the hole in her stomach... and LAUGHS. The raw, gaping wound is no problem.

KEDAIR

You obviously don't know much
about Takarans, do you?

MIRREN

Kedair, back off!

Not waiting for an explanation, Kedair does so...

...and PHASER EMPLACEMENTS in each corner of the bridge fire at the Borg Drone, VAPORISING it on the spot.

MIRREN

Internal defences back online,
Commander.

DAX

So I see. Dax to P-Seven Red -
next priority is propulsion. We
need to get back to Acamar, now!

P7 RED (comm)

Impulse has no chance, Commander.
I can give you a few seconds of
warp, that's all.

DAX
(thinking)
Okay, stand by.

The line drops. Only Dax, Kedair, Mirren and Helkara remain on the bridge now, surrounded by Starfleet and Borg bodies.

HELKARA
You're thinking a split-second warp jump? Do we have the structural integrity for that?

MIRREN
I could divert power from weapons.

DAX
We'll need weapons. Divert it from life support. Kedair, any more of those chain pulsar torpedoes left?

KEDAIR
All due respect, Commander -

DAX
Yes or no.

KEDAIR
Yes, but they've seen it before. They're Borg - they'll adapt.

DAX
They can't adapt to this. They can shuffle their shields and twist their power signatures - the chain pulsar will suck it up no matter what. It's the perfect weapon.

HELKARA
Perfect except that it destroys us along with the enemy.

DAX
No, because here's what we're gonna do. Listen up, everyone.

57 **INT. AVENTINE - SICKBAY**

Lieutenant Tharp is unconscious on a bio-bed, under a surgical arch, while Doctor Glau works feverishly on him. She checks readings and pushes buttons as tiny laser beams and sprays of blue blood come from under the arch.

Glau blinks sweat out of her own eyes, screwing them up in an attempt to keep her focus, fighting against exhaustion and pain. She will *not* lose this patient. Her assistant, a Vulcan paramedic named T'PARAS, watches her with concern.

T'PARAS

Doctor Glau, you are injured. You must rest.

GLAU

I'm fine. Keep working.

Glau will not be swayed. She keeps working on Tharp...

58 **EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

The half-blasted Borg cube is back at Acamar, its massive and destructive ENERGY BEAMS scouring the planet below.

59 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dax sits at the helm herself, with Helkara, Mirren and Kedair back at their regular stations. They can only work off panels, because the main viewscreen is still dead.

DAX

Everyone ready?

(they all nod)

Okay. Three, two, one... now.

She works her controls...

60 **EXT. SPACE - AVENTINE**

The half-crippled *Aventine* jumps straight to WARP...

61 **EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

...and SLAMS back out of warp right on top of the cube.

62 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Hole still in her belly, Kedair works her panels...

63 **EXT. SPACE - AVENTINE**

The chain pulsar fires from *Aventine's* torpedo launchers, and BURSTS into its tiny red sun...

64 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

No time to wait - Dax works her panels...

65 **EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT**

...and *Aventine* JUMPS straight to warp again before the torpedo can suck up any of its power.

Alone now, the torpedo flies towards the Borg cube, its red light growing as the Borg's green light sputters...

...and IMPACT. The remains of the Borg cube are destroyed in a giant EXPLOSION.

66 **EXT. SPACE - AVENTINE**

Aventine SLAMS back out of warp again, juddering and smoking as it drops to a full stop.

67 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Dax pants with relief, calls out loud...

DAX

Talk to me! Did it work?

MIRREN

(off panels)

Yes! The Borg are destroyed!

Dax SLAMS the console in celebration. Kedair smiles.

DAX

Dax to all hands. It's over - we did it. Well done, everyone.

(beat)
Engineering - best efforts with
the impulse drive, we need to get
back to the planet. The survivors
will need our help. Sickbay - give
me a casualty report.

68 **INT. AVENTINE - SICKBAY**

Doctor Glau steps back from Tharp on his bio-bed. She has done everything she can for him now.

GLAU
Lieutenant Tharp will survive.
He'll be in recovery for a long
time... but he'll live.

Glau looks around the sickbay - filled with living patients under the care of other medics occupying every bio-bed. On the deck between them are fallen girders and dead bodies.

GLAU
No final casualty count yet. But
it's not good.

DAX (comm)
Understood, Doctor. Bridge out.

The line drops, and Glau slumps against Tharp's bio-bed.

GLAU
Okay. It's over. I can go now.

She staggers away from us, revealing that the blood stain now covers her entire back, from neck to thighs. She finds a corner, slowly lowers herself into it, and sits on the deck with her arms and head on her knees.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

69 INT. KIRK - BRIDGE

From the science station at the back of this intact and clean bridge, Shar excitedly calls for Vaughn's attention.

SHAR
Captain! We've established contact
with the *Aventine*.

VAUGHN
(quietly relieved)
They've survived, then. Good.

SHAR
They report that the Borg attack
has been stopped, but they still
require help from other ships.

VAUGHN
And we're still too far away?

SHAR
Aye, sir.

VAUGHN
Thank you, Lieutenant. Helm,
maintain course.

And just like that, Shar's enthusiasm is destroyed. Vaughn cannot afford enthusiasm - he knows this is not over.

70 INT. AVENTINE - ENGINEERING

By comparison, the *Aventine* is a dark, smoking wreck. Dax clambers over fallen bulkheads and engineers lying prone on the deck as they industriously repair machinery.

She finds P7 Red carefully manoeuvring the dilithium matrix housing out of the warp core with the help of an anti-grav device. Everyone is clearly exhausted but pushing through.

DAX

P-Seven - how's it going?

P7 RED

It's gonna take us a long while to put all the pieces back together, Commander. We could really use some help. Especially with...

He gestures around with one pincer, at the surprisingly small number of other engineers in the room. They were hit bad. Dax lays a comforting hand on P7's smudgy shell.

DAX

Help's on the way, Lieutenant.

He dips his antennae in acknowledgement. Dax turns to go.

71 INT. AVENTINE - SICKBAY

Dax forces the warped door open and steps into the room, which is just as blasted and ruined as everywhere else. Each bio-bed carries another moaning, wounded crew member.

At one bed, T'Paras is running a dermal regenerator over Kedair's wounded stomach. Dax heads over, nods to Kedair.

DAX

Lieutenant. Crewman T'Paras - where's Doctor Glau?

T'PARAS

The doctor is resting, Commander.

DAX

How's Tharp?

T'Paras leads Dax over to the biobed carrying the Bolian helmsman. He is unconscious, his blue skin a pale grey.

T'PARAS

He will survive. Although that outcome was not always certain.

DAX

Why not?

T' PARAS

The blood supplies were destroyed in the first attack on sickbay. A transfusion from any other species would be fatal to Bolians and vice versa. Doctor Glau was forced to take... unusual measures in order to save the lieutenant's life.

T'Paras gestures to where the corpse of Captain Dexar lies on another bio-bed, looking even more grey and bloodless than Tharp. Dax realises with disquiet...

DAX

She took the blood from Captain Dexar's body?

T' PARAS

It was the only compatible source available to her. The captain was, after all, not using it.

DAX

No... I suppose not. I'd like to speak to the Doctor now.

T' PARAS

This way, please, Commander.

T'Paras leads Dax across the sickbay, to the corner into which Doctor Glau is huddled. Glau is in the same position we left her - arms crossed on her knees, head on her arms.

DAX

Doctor Glau...?

The doctor doesn't move. Assuming she is just asleep, Dax crouches down and gently shakes Glau's arm... and Glau SLUMPS to the side, clearly dead.

Dax gasps and stands back. She spots the massive blood stain covering Glau's back, spreading across her entire uniform. T'Paras calmly regrets this development.

DAX

What happened?

T'PARAS

My apologies, Commander. I had not realised. Doctor Glau was wounded in the battle. She refused to rest despite my repeated admonishments. Evidently she chose to save Lieutenant Tharp's life... at the cost of her own.

Dax sighs, upset...

72 **INT. AVENTINE - BRIDGE**

Helkara regretfully hands over a padd to Dax, who now stands behind the vacant captain's chair. The crew picking through the blasted bridge are all smudged with soot, wearing torn and bloodied clothing, exhausted and sweaty.

HELKARA

A full casualty count, Commander. Between battle damage to the ship, direct combat with Borg drones, and those who bled out before help could reach them... almost a third of the crew were lost.

DAX

A third?! Gods, that's...

HELKARA

Two-hundred-thirty-one, sir. Four senior staff among them.

To have it stated so bluntly is devastating. Dax looks at the empty captain's chair, which looks enormous to her.

HELKARA

We've also received communications from other Starfleet vessels that are on an intercept course to us. They will arrive within two hours.

DAX

Good. There's Federation citizens down on Acamar who just survived a

planetary bombardment, and we're
in no shape to help ourselves, let
alone them. Thanks, Commander.

Helkara moves off, but Dax has something else on her mind.

DAX

Gruhn...

(Helkara turns back)

The Borg. Have you ever seen them
act like they did today?

HELKARA

I have never seen them act at all
before today, to my great relief.

DAX

They didn't try to assimilate the
planet - they just bombed it. And
when they boarded us, it wasn't to
convert us - they came to kill us.

HELKARA

I have no explanation, Commander.

DAX

No. But you said something during
the battle... something about
molecular disruption?

HELKARA

Yes, some kind of subatomic damage
to the debris of the Borg vessel.
Why, is it important?

DAX

I don't know... maybe. Could you
forward the readings to me, let me
take a look, just in case?

HELKARA

Of course.

Helkara heads off again. Dax looks at the captain's chair.
It is hers now, but she is not quite ready to sit yet...

SHAR (v.o.)
(flashback, from 12x10)
To see one's home in danger... it
is a terrible thing.

73 **FLASHBACK - DS9 12x10 "WHERE THE HEART IS"**

Ben Sisko, Kasidy, Jake and Rena stand on the transporter platform of the USS *James T Kirk*, as Shar sees them off.

SHAR
(continuing)
But that is why we do what we do.

74 **INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY**

Ben Sisko opens a wardrobe door... and finds his Starfleet uniform hanging there, unworn for almost four years now.

SHAR (v.o.)
(continuing)
To protect it to the best of our
ability.

Sisko pulls out the uniform and turns, still holding it, to see Kasidy sat on the bed, watching him.

SISKO
I don't have to do this.

KASIDY
Ben... if there's one thing I've
always known about you, it's that
you're a man of duty.

SISKO
But I promised to stay here and
protect you and Rebecca...

KASIDY
Starfleet needs you. The *New York*
needs you.

SISKO
You need me.

KASIDY

We have you. Your daughter will always know she has a father who loves her. Never doubt that. But right now... they need you more.

Sisko looks again at the uniform in his hands. She watches him, knows what is going through her husband's mind.

KASIDY

Jennifer.

(Sisko starts)

You never talk about her. That's fine, I don't want to intrude on your memories of her. But I know you lost her to the Borg.

Sisko closes his eyes as the ghostly SOUNDS of memory creep into the scene, that unforgettable wail of anguish...

SISKO (v.o.)

(flashback,

from [DS9 1x01](#))

Damn it, we can't just leave her here! Nooo!

SISKO (now)

I can't see that happen again. Not to you and Rebecca. I can't.

KASIDY

(calm, soothing)

That's why you have to go. Jake and Rena are safe on Earth with your father. Rebecca and I are safe here on Bajor with Jasmine and Nerys. The Federation needs you out there... doing what only Ben Sisko can do.

Sisko gazes at his wife, at his rock of support...

The bedroom door opens and Sisko emerges - wearing the uniform. Admiral Whatley has been waiting, nervous; he now stands, relieved, at the sight of Sisko back in uniform.

WHATLEY

Captain... thank you.

Kasidy follows Ben out, carrying the standard Starfleet travelling bag, and closes the door behind them both. Not quite ready to go yet, Ben calls out...

SISKO

Rebecca, sweetie?

The sound of little feet pattering... and then Rebecca's bedroom door SLAMS open and she comes barreling out.

REBECCA

Daddy, you changed your clothes!
Are you going back to the space
station?

SISKO

(crouching to
her level)

That's right, sweetie. And from
there, I'm taking a starship. I'm
going to be a captain again.

REBECCA

Can I come with you, daddy?

SISKO

Not this time, sweetheart. It
could be dangerous where I'm
going, and I need you to stay safe
here at home and look after your
mommy for me. Okay?

REBECCA

(slightly
disappointed)

Okay.

SISKO

You're going to be a good girl for mommy? And play nice with Jasmine?

REBECCA

Of course. Don't worry about us, daddy. We'll be fine.

Overcome, Sisko hugs his little daughter tight.

SISKO

I love you so much, Rebecca.

REBECCA

I love you too, daddy.

Sisko lets go of the hug and stands. She turns to hug Kasidy as well. Then he turns back towards Whatley.

REBECCA

Mister Admiral?

(they turn to her)

Bring my daddy back safe, please.

WHATLEY

I'll try my very best, Rebecca.

I promise you that.

Some last affectionate touches with Kasidy and Rebecca. Then Sisko takes the bag from his wife, hefts it onto his shoulder, and follows Admiral Whatley to the front door.

With Kasidy holding Rebecca close to her, they stand and watch Admiral Whatley and Captain Sisko leave the house... and close the door behind them.

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW