

STAR TREK

"Destiny, pt 4: Grace."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: The Next Generation*

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

*Star Trek: Voyager*

*Star Trek: Enterprise*

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

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1     EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY**

It is still winter, but the cloud cover has cleared, and the day looks brighter.

BACCO (v.o.)  
(clears throat)  
Hmm-hmm.  
(taps microphone)  
Is this thing on?

A chorus of polite but subdued chuckles.

**2     INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

President BACCO stands at the podium. Behind her along the back wall stand her closest advisors - Admiral AKAAR, chief of staff PIÑIERO, deputies PHIRI and Z4 BLUE. Bodyguard WEXLER keeps a close eye on his charge, while press liaison JOREL pouts at someone else daring to use his podium.

Bacco looks out across the room. It is packed - despite recent events, it seems like every journalist and reporter in the entire Federation has turned up for this briefing.

Now that it comes time to speak, Bacco's attempt at humour quickly falls away. Her hands are shaking, but she lifts her chin and straightens her back.

BACCO  
Citizens of the Federation.  
Members of the Council, honoured  
ambassadors and guests... this day  
has been a long time coming. It is  
my pleasure and my honour to be  
able to bring you this good news.  
The Borg threat... is over.

The ROAR of applause and celebration is deafening. Bacco basks in the sound for a moment, but then Jorel steps forward and employs one his standard glowers of disdain, and the crowd eventually settles back down.

BACCO

The officers and crews of four Starfleet vessels have done what so much of our marshalled might could not.

**3 EXT. SPACE - EARTH ORBIT**

The four Starfleet ships in question all settle into Earth orbit, given a clear path through the busy field of refugee vessels bringing the natives home. *Enterprise*, *Aventine*, *Titan* and finally a patched-together *Voyager*.

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

A joint effort by the starships *Enterprise*, *Aventine*, *Titan* and *Voyager* has turned the tide, bringing an end not just to the Borg's invasion of our space, but to the tyranny and oppression of the Borg throughout this galaxy.

**4 INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

Bacco continues her speech to the Federation's press...

BACCO

(continuing)

In keeping with all the finest traditions of Starfleet, these four crews accomplished this feat not through violence or brute force, but through compassion.

**5 INT. ENTERPRISE - BRIDGE**

JEAN-LUC PICARD stands and watches the main viewscreen, as it shows the curve of the familiar blue-green-white world below, and *Enterprise's* three sister ships nearby.

He turns back to the bridge, in which his first officer WORF is busy organising everyone, handing out assignments, doing his job patiently and flawlessly. Picard feels lucky and grateful to have such a crew beneath him. Over this:

BACCO (v.o.)

(continued)

They took a chance on their better angels, reached out to a new ally, and in so doing transformed the Borg Collective into something benign, perhaps even noble.

**6**     **EXT. FEDERATION PARK - DAY**

SEVEN OF NINE wears her elegant white-furred winter coat, sitting on a glorified deck chair in front of the gleaming white memorial to Kathryn Janeway that dominates this part of the graveyard. Over this:

BACCO (v.o.)

(continued)

I am reliably informed that across the Milky Way, trillions of drones have been liberated, their free will restored.

Seven turns her left hand over and back again, looking at it in quiet curiosity. She lifts the hand to feel the skin around her left eye. Both are bare of Borg implants - just smooth blemish-free skin. How does she feel about that?

**7**     **INT. VOYAGER - BRIDGE**

CHAKOTAY sits in the command chair on his ship's damaged, darkened bridge. Around him the remaining senior officers - PARIS running the helm, LASREN at ops, VORIK at the engineering console - are celebrating their safe return.

Paris slaps Vorik on the back in congratulations. CAMBRIDGE shakes the Vulcan's hand in wry acknowledgement of their accomplishment, against all his pessimism. Over this:

BACCO (v.o.)

(continued)

This outcome might feel inadequate to those among us who want revenge on the Borg. I understand fully, I assure you. There is no minimising the tragedy we have endured.

Cambridge turns back to look at Chakotay, and sees that their captain remains as haunted and heartbroken as ever.

**8**     **INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

Even Bacco herself has to pause and gather her nerves in order to have the courage to say what she has to say next.

BACCO

(continuing)

I am also told, according to even our most conservative estimates, that more than sixty-three billion citizens of the Federation, the Klingon Empire, the twin Romulan states and other non-allied worlds were slaughtered by the Borg during this invasion.

**9**     **EXT. SPACE - ANDOR ORBIT**

The debris of the battle in orbit of Andor remains - it has only been a matter of days. As the only ship to survive the battle, the Galaxy-class *Venture*, soars past us, we see the horribly damaged surface of the Andorian homeworld below.

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

Sixty-three billion lives cut short. The mind boggles at the scope of it. Such a horrific crime against sentience seems to demand a proportional response.

**10**    **INT. VENTURE - SICKBAY**

A Galaxy-class sickbay, as seen throughout TNG. As the work to save the lives of the wounded continues, BENJAMIN SISKO stands out of the way, watching, refusing to leave.

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

But we must move beyond hatred and vengeance. The Borg Collective as we knew it no longer exists, and

we must remember that those who carried out its atrocities were themselves victims, slaves taken from their worlds and families.

Looking past the medics and their patients, Sisko spies one figure lying unconscious upon a bio-bed, no-one working on him because there is nothing they can do - ELIAS VAUGHN.

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

Now the force that controlled them is dissolved, and its emancipated drones have vanished to points unknown. There is, quite simply, no-one left to blame.

**11 INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

Bacco tries to portray a confidence she does not feel...

BACCO

(continuing)

In the aftermath of catastrophe on this scale, the prospect of rebuilding appears daunting. Some might even say it's impossible to ever recover. I say it is not only possible, it is essential.

**12 INT. TITAN - TUVOK'S QUARTERS**

TUVOK kneels on the deck before a meditation lamp, staring into the flame and desperately trying to calm his thoughts.

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

We will rebuild those worlds we lost. We will heal these wounds.

Behind him, at the door of the darkened room, DEANNA TROI stands, with Tuvok's wife T'PEL greeting her. They speak MOS, trying to discuss Tuvok's condition with sensitivity. Finally Troi accepts there is nothing she can do right now, and she leaves. T'Pel turns back to her husband...

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

We will reach out not only to our own wounded people, but to our allies and neighbours, and even to those who have called themselves our rivals or our enemies.

As T'Pel places a hand on his shoulder in quiet comfort, Tuvok does not react.

**13 INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

As Bacco continues, her power grows, voice strengthening as her subject turns to the future. The crowd are with her.

BACCO

(continuing)

We will not shrink from the challenge of raising back up what the Borg have knocked down. We will honour the sacrifices of all those who died to defend us, by creating a future that they would have been proud of. We will also rebuild Starfleet, to guarantee that all we have gained, through so much suffering and sacrifice, shall be defended and preserved.

(beat)

The Federation will rise anew.

This time the CLAPPING and CHEERING and STOMPING of feet are thunderous, and this time they will not be stopped. Bacco allows it - it's good for the people to feel good. As she begins to feel encouraged herself at last...

BLACK OUT

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### **14**    EXT. SPACE - EARTH ORBIT

Focusing on the *Enterprise*, although the other three ships are still there...

### **15**    INT. ENTERPRISE - CONFERENCE ROOM

WORF sits at the head of the table, handing out assignments to his senior staff - CRUSHER (medical), CHEN (contact), KADOHATA (ops), CHOUDHURY (security), ELFIKI (science), LaFORGE (engineering) and HEGOL (counselling). No Picard.

WORF

I made every effort to accommodate your requests, but you remain Starfleet officers. Therefore I have designed a rotating schedule allowing as many as possible to take leave, while not neglecting the maintenance and repair of the *Enterprise*. Your assignments.

Worf hands padds out to those sat nearest, who pass them down the line until they all have one. Inspecting them...

LaFORGE

Taurik said he's fine to run engineering for a while, so I'm heading home to spend time with my sister in Mogadishu.

KADOHATA

Me too. Well, not to Mogadishu, obviously, but to Cestus Three.

CRUSHER

The captain and I will be staying with his sister-in-law in LaBarre. Tropp can run sickbay on his own.

LaFORGE

What about you, Worf?

WORF

It is my intention to join  
Chancellor Martok on the Klingon  
homeworld. I am a member of his  
house... plus it is a chance to  
visit Alexander. After that...

He trails off without finishing, because he is looking at  
Choudhury, who sits staring at the padd in her hand, not  
speaking. She has no home or family left to go to. Nearby,  
Counsellor Hegol seems to have noticed the same thing.

HEGOL

I am happy to stay aboard the  
*Enterprise* for the time being.  
I know that Bajor is safe, and  
I dare say my services will be  
more keenly required here.

ELFIKI

Commander... I see you've got a  
full week here with none of the  
regular command staff on duty.

WORF

(glower)

You yourself are on duty, are you  
not, Lieutenant?

ELFIKI

But I'm not command staff. You'd  
need someone with that authority.

CHEN

That'd be me.

All but Worf turn to look at Chen, the youngest and least  
experienced officer at the table.

CHEN

Yes, me. Don't look so surprised,  
all of you. I've got no family to  
visit. I ran away from my mom as  
soon as I could and I never even  
met my dad. I'm more use here.

WORF  
Lieutenant Chen has the captain's  
full confidence.

Faces around the room suggest a wry "Okay, if you say so."  
Worf glowers to make sure no-one vocalises their concerns.

WORF  
You have your schedules. Those of  
you who are taking leave, you may  
do so as of now. Dismissed.

The company gets to their feet and heads for the doors.  
Choudhury is one of the last to go. Worf calls out...

WORF  
Lieutenant Choudhury...

She hesitates. Once they are alone, Worf steps closer...

WORF  
Jasminder... are you certain you  
would not prefer me to join you?

CHOUDHURY  
I appreciate the offer, Worf. But  
I don't need you to hold my hand.

Not unkindly, she pats him on the arm and leaves the room.

**16 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The Cardassian space station, with the *Defiant* and the *Da Vinci* docked, and freighters coming and going.

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

The door from the commander's office opens, and RO and GOMEZ emerge into Ops, heading towards the transporter.

RO  
It's been good having you here,  
Sonya. And good luck with your  
new mission.

GOMEZ

Don't need luck. We're miracle workers, remember?

With a shared smile, Gomez steps onto the transporter.

RO

Mister Candlewood, please beam Captain Gomez to the *Da Vinci*.

CANDLEWOOD

Aye, sir.

CANDLEWOOD works his console. Gomez waves goodbye to Ro, NOG and TENMEI, and then she is gone in a transporter beam. Ro heads down to the central ops table, run by CENN.

RO

Major, give the *Da Vinci* full clearance to the wormhole.

NOG

Why, what's their new mission?

RO

Something very important and prestigious, Lieutenant. Not to mention a long time coming.

CENN

Docking clamps released, *Da Vinci* is on her way.

They all look up to the VIEWSCREEN, which shows *Da Vinci* pulling away from the station, looping out into open space, and diving into the blue-white mouth of the WORMHOLE.

CANDLEWOOD

Commander! I've got the latest reports from Starfleet Command.

TENMEI

Don't tell me - it was all a misunderstanding, and the Borg are coming to obliterate us after all.

The attempt at gallows humour falls flat, as Candlewood's face reveals that the message is not good news.

RO

What is it, John?

CANDLEWOOD

Casualty reports. Confirmed deaths of Starfleet officers. Vessels known to have been destroyed.

Ro approaches Tenmei and takes hold of her hand. Then she looks up at Candlewood, and says what neither wants to say.

RO

Search the list, Lieutenant. Three names - Vaughn, Sisko, ch'Thane.

Grasping the solemnity of the task, Candlewood does. A few moments of silence... he looks up in delighted amazement.

CANDLEWOOD

They're not there.

NOG

You're sure? Check again.

CANDLEWOOD

They're not there, Nog.

TENMEI

(happy tears)

They're alive. They're alive.

CENN

Thank the Prophets.

As Tenmei runs to share a relieved HUG with Candlewood and Nog, Ro gives Cenn a curious look...

**18 INT. VENTURE - SICKBAY**

Beginning on ELIAS VAUGHN, lying unconscious on a bio-bed.

ROGEIRO (o.s)

He is alive... strictly speaking.

Open out to reveal ROGEIRO stood by the bed with SISKO. The latter is shut down, receiving Rogeiro's report blankly.

SISKO

But...?

ROGEIRO

But... Doctor Ibelna says that Captain Vaughn is all but brain dead. His injuries mean he won't survive without life support.

SISKO

I'll have to tell his daughter.

ROGEIRO

One other thing, sir. The reports of destroyed ships.. there were some Andorian refugee vessels.

Sisko turns to look across the sickbay, still populated by patients and medics, but the urgency has passed. Sitting on his own against the wall, staring into the middle distance, is SHAR. He is even more emotionally wounded than Sisko.

SISKO

Lieutenant ch'Thane's family?

ROGEIRO

No bodies found, but the ship they were registered to is on the list. Shar already lost his mother and his mentor in the Borg attack on Laikan. This will kill him.

Sisko turns away. He can't look, it's all too much. Rogeiro attempts to cheer him up, not knowing Sisko's own issues...

ROGEIRO

But the reports say neither Earth nor Bajor were attacked at all.

SISKO

(distant)

And I wasn't there.

ROGEIRO

Sir...?

SISKO

I begged Zenkar to send me to Earth or Bajor. He refused.

ROGEIRO

Yes. And both worlds survived.

SISKO

Apparently. And I stayed here, at Andor... and now a people who were already on the edge of extinction have seen millions more killed. Including everyone Lieutenant ch'Thane cared about.

ROGEIRO

I don't see the connection, sir.

SISKO

Maybe not. But I do.

With a brain-dead Vaughn on one side, and an emotionally devastated Shar on the other, Sisko feels the weight of crushing guilt. Somehow, this was all his fault.

**19 EST. BAJOR - SISKO'S HOUSE**

The personal dwelling on Sisko's private land in Kendra.

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

REBECCA plays with her bodyguard-babysitter JASMINE on the living room floor. In the archway to the kitchen, out of earshot, stand KASIDY and KIRA, wearing her pryLAR's robes.

KIRA

He's safe, Kas. You saw the report Major Cenn passed on - Benjamin's name was not on the list. You still have your husband, and Rebecca still has her father.

KASIDY

I know. I know. I'll just feel better when I can see him, and touch him, and really know he's safe. You know?

KIRA

You know Starfleet. There'll be meetings and discussions and debriefs for weeks, most likely. He'll be home as soon as he can.

KASIDY

You must be very happy.

KIRA

What do you mean?

KASIDY

Your prayer vigils. The whole planet's saying it's because of you that the Borg turned back.

KIRA

Look, Kas... I don't care about publicity or being famous. In fact, I'd much prefer to not have either. That's not why I did it.

KASIDY

I know, Nerys, I wasn't accusing you of anything. But... you do have a tendency to push yourself to the front of situations.

KIRA

(chuckle)

I think that's less about wanting fame than it is an "if you want it done right, do it yourself" kind of thing. I'm working on it.

There's the TRILL of an alert - somebody is calling them. Everyone is suddenly tense, assuming it must be bad. Jasmine gets up and heads over to her jacket hanging by the door, digs in the pocket and pulls out a Bajoran combadge.

JASMINE  
This is Sergeant Tey.

ROCHAN (comm)  
Sergeant, it's Major Rochan from  
Shikina. Is Prylar Kira with you?

JASMINE  
She is. Is there a problem?

ROCHAN (comm)  
The Kai wants to see her in her  
chambers as soon as possible.

JASMINE  
(off Kira's nod)  
Understood. She'll be there.

Jasmine taps the line closed, and all eyes turn to Kira,  
who has no idea what this could be about.

KIRA  
I guess I'm in trouble again.

KASIDY  
You want me to go with you?

KIRA  
I can handle them. You just keep  
an eye on this precious girl.

Ruffling Rebecca's hair on the way out, Kira waves goodbye  
to Kasidy and Jasmine, and EXITS. Kasidy remains standing,  
worrying about everything - Kira, Sisko, Rebecca...

BLACK OUT

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN:

**21 EXT. KLINGON GREAT HALL**

Heavy spiked boots and a ceremonial cane STOMP their way hesitantly up a slight incline of rubble and dust. As the figure reaches the top, we travel up the body to reveal...

...that it is CHANCELLOR MARTOK. The battle-scarred old warrior leans on the cane, his left leg still splinted with long strips of metal scavenged from his damaged ship. He turns slowly to look around, and sees...

...the FIRST CITY of Qo'noS, utterly devastated. Blasted husks of buildings, smoking wreckage and crashed vehicles. He CHOKES from the dust and filth in the air.

MARTOK

This is worse even than Praxis.  
Seven major cities destroyed...  
six members of the High Council  
lost in battle... all others  
missing in action.

Beside him, WORF wears his Starfleet uniform.

WORF

As of this moment... you are the  
High Council. A tempting thought.

MARTOK

The call of ambition is powerful,  
I do not deny it. But I will not  
be that man. That will not be my  
legacy. You have casualty reports?

WORF

Preliminary numbers only.

MARTOK

Tell me.

WORF

Seventy-seven million, worldwide.

Staring around at the destruction, Martok CHUCKLES.

WORF

Is something amusing, Chancellor?

MARTOK

I was just thinking... that this is the second time since I became chancellor that the Great Hall has been levelled. I could be wrong, but I think I am the only leader of the Council to make that claim.

WORF

I must take my leave.

MARTOK

So soon?

(off Worf's  
awkwardness)

Ah - there is a woman. Do not be ashamed of your passions, Worf. Jadzia would want you to be happy, and she looks upon us all with pride from *Sto-Vo-Kor*. And, if the tales are true, then her successor has brought more honour than the House of Martok has ever known.

(beat)

Still, I will tell you something, Worf... This is no victory. No songs will be sung of this day.

As the two friends stare out at the destruction...

**22 EXT. STARFLEET ACADEMY**

As seen in numerous previous episodes and movies.

**23 INT. STARFLEET ACADEMY - CORRIDOR**

SEVEN OF NINE strides purposefully down the corridor, in a smart business suit and carrying a folder under her arm. She is trying to get on with her day as if nothing changed.

ICHEB (o.s.)

Seven!

Seven turns sharply, and sees ICHEB running to catch up to her. He is wearing a cadet uniform, and like her, the metal adornments on his face have disappeared. As he nears, Seven gazes at this in shock. Icheb misconstrues her look...

ICHEB

Oh, sorry - Professor Hansen.

SEVEN

Icheb... are you alright? Your face, your implants...

ICHEB

I see the same thing happened to you. What did it feel like?

SEVEN

(glances around,  
evasive)

I do not wish to discuss it.

DOCTOR (o.s.)

Seven!

Exasperated, Seven turns the other way and sees the DOCTOR approaching. This is the 'real' Doctor now, not the newborn Doctor that was treating Chakotay.

DOCTOR

Excuse me - Professor Hansen.

SEVEN

What can I do for you, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Seven... you've been through a profound change. Both of you have. Why haven't you come to see me?

SEVEN

My transformation was courtesy of the Caeliar - reportedly the most advanced race ever encountered by

the Federation, and progenitors of the Borg. I have no intention of allowing Starfleet to indulge their inevitable paranoia about the Caeliar by subjecting me to invasive medical tests. Neither does Icheb.

DOCTOR

Seven - it's me. I can help.

SEVEN

Do not trouble yourself, Doctor. I will adapt.

It is clear Seven will not be swayed - there is no-one more stubborn, even when she is so clearly scared and worried. The Doctor can only sigh, and brings up a PADD, deeply troubled by the contents of it.

DOCTOR

Well anyway... I have another reason to talk to you. Have you seen this? It's the destroyed vessels report.

SEVEN

I have been otherwise occupied.

DOCTOR

I still can't believe it. I've been trying to find a way to talk to him about it, but -

ICHEB

Talk to who, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Commander Paris.

SEVEN

I was under the impression Mister Paris was currently at Starfleet Medical, watching over Mister Kim. Would you not have seen him?

DOCTOR

I know where he is, Seven. It's facing him I can't quite manage. I'm sure it'll be months if not years before we know everyone who's died, but...

SEVEN

Doctor, please come to the point.

The Doctor has been prevaricating, not wanting to face it.

DOCTOR

This morning, there was a report of shuttle debris found in sector 22093, an unregistered shuttle.

SEVEN

I'm sorry, Doctor, but I still do not understand the relevance.

DOCTOR

It's B'Elanna and Miral. It was their shuttle. That sector saw heavy fighting between the Borg and the Klingons, and they must have got caught in the crossfire.

Silence as everyone absorbs that. Seven speaks softly...

SEVEN

B'Elanna and Miral are dead?

ICHEB

Are you sure it's them? Someone might have made a mistake...

DOCTOR

Their names are on the list. That means someone must have identified whatever was left... I have to tell Mister Paris, but it's hard enough delivering such bad news to strangers, and Mister Kim's in a coma, Tuvok's on Deneva, I have no idea where Chakotay is -

SEVEN

I believe I may have an idea to help, Doctor. Come with me.

Grateful, the Doctor follows as Seven strides on down the corridor. Icheb is left to chase after them in confusion.

ICHEB

Wait - where's Chakotay?

Seven and the Doctor walk on without answering...

**24 EST. ORCAS ISLAND - FROM THE AIR**

The small group of islands off the North-Western coast of the USA, tucked into the complex series of peninsulas and waterways between Seattle and Vancouver. While there are some small settlements, it is mostly forest and woodland.

**25 EXT. ORCAS ISLAND - FOREST**

The forest is dense and the RAIN is cold and determined, but CHAKOTAY trudges on. Dressed in hardy adventurer's gear, he fights his way through the underbrush until he reaches a CLEARING in the trees, and a view.

He pauses for a moment to gaze out across the slopes down to the sea, the endless ocean beyond the tree lines, the mountains visible far in the distance. He takes his time - he might as well, since this is going to be his home.

Hefting his rucksack onto his back - survival gear by which a man might live alone in the wilderness for who knows how long - Chakotay turns and forges on into the forest.

**26 EXT. DENEVA - PLANET SURFACE**

A HAND scoops up a palm-full of grey-brown dust, then lets it slip through the fingers back down to the ground. The greasy mixture clings to the skin.

Tuvok stands back up, wiping off his hands on his trousers. He sees his wife T'Pel, who is looking across the blasted ground to the slow parade of mourners of various species.

T'PEL

Why did we come here, husband?  
Starfleet told us that nothing of  
Deneva had survived, and that  
there would be no remains or  
relics to recover.

TUVOK

I wished to see this for myself.

T'PEL

We should return to *Titan* now.

TUVOK

No. I am not ready yet.

T'PEL

There is nothing else for us to  
find or do here. Staying longer  
serves no purpose.

TUVOK

I do not wish to explain myself,  
T'Pel. I will remain here while I  
reflect on what has happened. I  
would prefer that you stay with  
me, but if you wish to depart, I  
will not stop you.

Both Vulcans gaze across the heath to the quietly milling  
crowds, all looking in vain for something to reclaim. A  
passing wind picks up the dust, kicks it around them.

T'PEL

If you are pondering the details  
of our son's death, I would urge  
you to consider that most likely,  
it was swift and entailed only  
fleeting pain.

TUVOK

The specifics of his demise are  
not important. I question his  
choice not to escape with Ione  
when it was still possible.

T'PEL

Elieth was fully committed to the service and protection of others. If he and Ione stayed behind, they must have considered it to be the logical choice.

TUVOK

I can see no logic in this, T'Pel. My son... is dead.

Tuvok returns to staring into the dusty ground...

**27 EST. SISKO'S RESTAURANT - DAY**

The classic New Orleans restaurant on a bright if cold day.

**28 INT. SISKO'S RESTAURANT - DAY**

The atmosphere is jubilant, with diners filling every table and several more sat at the bar waiting their turn. JOSEPH SISKO holds court as he always does, greeting everyone and generally being the life of the party.

JOSEPH

My son is alive! Did you hear? The bad guys are gone, and my son the Starfleet legend is safe and well.

As Joseph continues to move from table to table, checking that everyone is happy with their food and life in general, JAKE and RENA stand together in the kitchen, watching through the service hatch with delighted bemusement.

JAKE

Only last night he was sat out on that patio, with a drink in his hand, waiting for death. Now look at him go.

RENA

It's good to see him so happy.

JAKE

And how are you feeling now?

RENA

I'm feeling great! The Prophets have saved us all, the Emissary remains with us, my husband has an exciting new career beginning in a few weeks and this jambalaya is the best thing I've ever tasted.

JOSEPH

Damn right it is.

Joseph has passed through into the kitchen. He tears off his apron and rests against the counter for a moment.

JAKE

Y'okay, Grampa?

JOSEPH

I'm fine, just a little... over-excited, I guess. Don't you -

His knees BUCKLE, and Joseph plummets to the floor, sending a pan tumbling with a loud CLANG. Rena YELPS in shock.

JAKE

Grampa!

Jake rushes to his grandfather, who is on the floor and clasping his hands to his chest, eyes wide in fear. Out in the restaurant, customers are getting to their feet, having heard the sound. In desperation, Jake turns back to Rena.

JAKE

Call a doctor! NOW!

BLACK OUT

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

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

TREIR calls the results at the dabo table...

TREIR

Dabo!

...and the crowd CHEERS loudly and enthusiastically. The bar is packed full with Starfleet officers on their breaks, Bajoran civilians, and guest aliens, and all CELEBRATING.

Among them is TENMEI, raising her glass and cheering along with the dabo winners - strangers, but she is in a good mood. Sat opposite her is NOG, who is less celebratory.

NOG

The bar hasn't been this busy in weeks.

TENMEI

Your uncle must be happy.

Nog looks across to the bar, where QUARK is running his empire with pride and passion, in his element.

NOG

Guess so. Oh by the way, the *Da Vinci* came back through. They're on their way to Earth now.

TENMEI

Wish I could have got a chance to check it out before they left.

NOG

Me too. But they're on a clock.

A SIP of their drinks, another SHOUT of "Dabo!" from the table, and then Quark is there, cheering along with them. As the winners move off into the crowd and back to the bar to spend their winnings, Quark turns to Nog and Tenmei.

NOG

You're in an unusually generous mood, uncle.

QUARK

Fifty-fifth Rule, Nog.

And then he's on his way. Nog is less than convinced.

TENMEI

Which one's fifty-fifth again?

NOG

"Take joy from profit, and profit from joy." But I think he's really back on the thirty-ninth again.

TENMEI

And which one's that?

NOG

"Never tell your customers more than they need to know."

TENMEI

What do you mean?

NOG

That list of destroyed ships... the Nagus's personal shuttle wasn't on it.

TENMEI

That's a good thing, isn't it?

NOG

No... because at least that would have let us know for sure. As it is, my uncle has no idea if his moogie is alive or dead. And I don't know if mine is either.

Tenmei turns again to look at Quark, who is heading towards the bar's store-room...

Quark enters the store room, heading straight for a crate of bottles. He grabs one in each hand... but then stops.

And for a moment, the mask slips. All the joy and happiness was an act. In fact he's deathly worried for his family.

Then he raises the mask again, turns and heads back out into the bar. As he passes through the door, he raises the bottles in his hands and BRANDISHES them victoriously, to the cheers of the nearby crowd. The door closes behind him.

**31    INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

Tenmei watches Quark emerge with the bottles held high.

TENMEI

I guess it's like John said.  
Everything's a performance.  
Deep down, it's all fake.

NOG

Where is John anyway?

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

CANDLEWOOD lifts a box off an anti-grav, carries it over to the coffee table, and places it down. Then he stands and stretches his back out - it's hard work, this lifting lark.

HETIK comes over and takes John by the waist, massaging his boyfriend's sore back muscles and leaning in to place a kiss on the back of his neck. John relaxes into it.

Then Hetik goes to pick up another box, lifts it over his head effortlessly, and takes it into the bedroom. John watches with an annoyed pout at how easy he makes it look.

When Hetik emerges from the bedroom, he heads to a space they have made on one side of the living room, which features Hetik's Bajoran PRAYER MANDALA.

Hetik stops for a moment before it, not praying exactly but just appreciating. John joins him, and they stand with arms around each other, gazing into the swirling patterns. The two men KISS comfortably - the plague passed them over.

Hetik moves to grab another box from the anti-grav, and lugs it into the bedroom. Checking that his boyfriend is out of sight, John quickly steps to the front door...

...and touches the *mezuzah* set up on the doorpost. Better safe than sorry.

**33**    **INT. TITAN - KERU'S QUARTERS**

A PHOTO of [Lt Sean Hawk](#) (TNG "First Contact") rests on a shelf. A hand reaches in to pick it up - KERU's. The burly Trill security chief gazes wistfully at the image of his boyfriend, lost in battle against the Borg years before.

There is no anger anymore, no accusation. With the end of the Borg, Keru can let go of all that, and just enjoy the happy memories. He places the photo back on the shelf, and turns to TORVIG, who watches with quizzically cocked head.

Months ago, the mechanical arms and electronic eyepieces enhancing the diminutive cybernetic kanger-ostrich Choblik engineering cadet reminded Keru too much of the Borg. Now they have worked through their differences and are friends.

Keru pats Torvig affectionately on his furry back, and the two EXIT his quarters into the corridor.

**34**    **INT. TITAN - CREW LOUNGE**

The door of the *Titan's* crew lounge opens, and Keru and Torvig ENTER together - to find the room packed with other people. Here mill dozens of *Titan's* crew, of all shapes and sizes and colours and species and genders.

Keru and Torvig move into the crowd, who are to a body craning to get a glimpse out of the large picture window at the front of the lounge. The view reveals the Earth below, with *Enterprise*, *Aventine* and *Voyager* in view, as well as the throng of smaller ships moving in and out of orbit.

XIN RA-HAVREII stands looking out at this view, stroking his long white moustache. At the sense of someone new, Ra-Havreii turns... to see MELORA PAZLAR pushing carefully through the crowd in her armature suit.

RA-HAVREII  
Good morning, Melora.

PAZLAR  
Good morning, Xin. Room for one  
more up front?

Ra-Havreii glares at the young CATULLAN man next to him...  
the man moves, allowing Pazlar to step up to the window.  
The crowd forces the pair in close and intimate.

RA-HAVREII  
I thought you hated crowds.

PAZLAR  
I do. But I hate missing out even  
more. And they had to shut down my  
holo-presence network for repairs.

RA-HAVREII  
Oh, really? ...That's a shame.

PAZLAR  
I have a theory about the holo-  
presence system, you know.

RA-HAVREII  
Really? Do tell.

PAZLAR  
I think it's proof that you're in  
love with me.

RA-HAVREII  
(choke, splutter)  
Ridiculous! I mean... well, love  
is, um, such a strong word, and  
we've hardly - that is -

PAZLAR  
Simmer down, Commander. It's not  
the least enticing idea I've heard  
lately. And some of your past  
conquests have assured me that you  
know how to be gentle. Which is  
important to a girl like me.

Ra-Havreii smiles almost shyly - she has been talking about him with others. About sex. He's quite flustered.

RA-HAVREII

I confess I find your invitation almost irresistible, Melora...

PAZLAR

Almost?

RA-HAVREII

But... before I surrender to my passions, and to yours... it's vital that I be honest with you.

PAZLAR

About what?

RA-HAVREII

Well, about me. I am... deeply attracted to you, Melora, and in ways I haven't felt about someone for a long time. But I'm afraid it's simply not in my nature to be, well... monogamous.

PAZLAR

(soft chuckle)

Who's asking? Let's just see how our first date goes, okay?

RA-HAVREII

Okay. Sounds like a plan.

CHRISTINE VALE's voice comes over the comm system...

VALE (comm)

Attention *Titan* personnel. Muster starboard for passing honours.

The gathered crowd pushes even closer to the window, trying with all their might to see around corners to the right.

VOICE (o.s.)

Here they come!

Finally into view emerges the *Da Vinci*. And behind it, the Sabre-class vessel is dragging by means of tractor beam...

...the NX-02 *Columbia*, excavated from the desert planet in the Gamma Quadrant and brought home at last to Earth.

*Da Vinci* angles itself to present the battered and beaten, but still holding together, centuries-old ship to the many eyes they know are watching this momentous occasion.

PAZLAR

Wow... look at that. Sometimes videos don't do history justice.

RA-HAVREII

(sniffle)

Welcome home, old girl.

As the gathered crowd continues to gaze in awe...

**35    EXT. SPACE - EARTH ORBIT**

*Da Vinci* and *Columbia* move slowly into orbit, the two smaller ships joining their larger sisters...

**36    EXT. DENEVA - PLANET SURFACE**

CHOUDHURY crouches down to the dusty, oily, grimy surface, scanning what remains of the ground with a tricorder.

CHOUDHURY

Close enough.

She stands back up, and turns to WORF.

WORF

Are you sure?

CHOUDHURY

All of Deneva's a cinder. One patch of dirt serves as well as any other. We should get started.

She turns back to the tools she brought with her, and grabs a SHOVEL, handing another to Worf with a smile.

CHOUDHURY

Thank you for doing this with me.  
For coming back from Qo'noS.

WORF

Once I had checked on my family, I  
could not leave you to face yours  
alone. I am honoured that you  
would allow me to be here.

CHOUDHURY

Ready?

Worf smiles, and they begin to DIG into the ground. After a few minutes of hard labour, they have excavated a pit. They set down the shovels and grab more supplies - she a PACKAGE of chemicals and he a DRUM of water. Both go into the pit.

Finally Choudhury reaches for the final ingredient - a tiny SAPLING of a tree. Worf holds it upright while Choudhury shovels the soil back around it. Then they stand back to observe their work. Choudhury has tears in her eyes.

CHOUDHURY

It's so... it's so tiny.

WORF

It is a beginning.

Worf holds Choudhury to him, and they gaze upon the tree...

**37**    **EXT. EARTH - MOGADISHU**

GEORDI LaFORGE angrily pushes his way through a crowd. We hear the sounds of a SOCCER GAME - but one for school kids. These people are the kids' parents, cheering eagerly. But Geordi is not - he is trying to escape.

His sister, ARIANA, follows urgently through the path he created, carrying a pair of drinks from the concessions.

ARIANA

Geordi! If that was my kid scoring  
a goal and you made me miss it...

He ignores her and forges ahead, until he reaches the top of a hill which looks out over the city of MOGADISHU. There he stops, and Ariana finally catches up to him, handing him his drink then using her spare hand to fix her headdress.

ARIANA

Hey - I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.

LaFORGE

Yes you did. You've always hated Starfleet, you never hid it.

ARIANA

Not Starfleet itself. Just the fact that both parents and my brother joined it - and I never got to see any of them.

LaFORGE

It looks the same as always, doesn't it? So normal, like nothing happened. You would have no idea, seeing this, how close we came to losing it all.

ARIANA

Well that's not fair. You weren't here when things were at their worst. Wasn't much normality then.

LaFORGE

Didn't take you long to go back to soccer games and picnics, did it?

ARIANA

What are we supposed to do? Cover ourselves in sackcloth and ashes and beg the universe for mercy? Life goes on, Geordi.

LaFORGE

For you. Never mind the billions of people who weren't so lucky.

(beat)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean that.

ARIANA

(sigh)

You need to stop beating yourself up, Geordi. And you need to stop feeling guilty.

LaFORGE

I... what? That's ridiculous. I don't feel guilty...

ARIANA

I know you better than that, Geordi. You survived the Borg when billions died. You survived the Dominion, Tezwa, the Remans. You outlived mom. You outlived Data...

LaFORGE

That's stupid... I shouldn't feel guilty for living...

ARIANA

No... you shouldn't.

The tears are coming to Geordi's artificial eyes. Ariana gathers her big brother into her arms and holds him.

ARIANA

I'm proud of you, big brother, for putting on that uniform and going out there so that we can all live here safely and have picnics and play soccer. But I'm also very, very grateful that you get to come back every once in a while and share it with us.

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**38    EST. STARFLEET MEDICAL**

As seen in [VOY 7x25 "Endgame, pt 1"](#)...

**39    INT. STARFLEET MEDICAL - PRIVATE ROOM**

HARRY KIM lies unconscious on a bio-bed, all manner of hi-tech health-monitoring devices attached to him. TOM PARIS sits by the bed, balefully watching his injured friend. He is worn out, exhausted both physically and emotionally.

The door to the room creeps open, and Paris looks up...

...to see his mother, JULIA PARIS (last seen VOY 10x11 "Post Mortem"), poking her head into the room. She had been planning on staying strong for his sake, but the moment her son's arms are around her, the TEARS come full force.

JULIA

My son... I'm so sorry. It's too much to bear... How is Harry?

PARIS

They're going to wake him up tomorrow. His parents were here only an hour or so ago, and Libby an hour before that...

JULIA

Good, that's good. Tom... do you know why I've come?

An awkward pause. Paris can't look his mother in the eyes.

PARIS

I think so. It's the casualty reports, isn't it?

(Julia nods)

Is it about dad? Because -

JULIA

It's not about your father.

PARIS

Then what is it?

(no response)

Damn it, mom, say something.

JULIA

B'Elanna and Miral are dead.

Paris looks at his mother like she just spoke Sinnravian to him, but his legs know the truth - the strength goes from them and he staggers to the seat. His mother holds him up long enough to get him settled.

JULIA

Debris from B'Elanna's shuttle was discovered. Both their names were on the list. Tom, I'm so sorry.

Suddenly Tom is out of the seat and across the other side of the room, putting distance between them.

PARIS

It's... I mean, that's it, right?

JULIA

Tom?

PARIS

That's the only proof you have?  
Their names on a list?

JULIA

Seven of Nine and your Doctor friend showed me. They confirmed the remnants of the shuttle, and identified it as B'Elanna's.

PARIS

Show me. I wanna see it.

JULIA

Are you sure?

PARIS

I wanna see it, mom.

Reluctantly, Julia digs in her purse and pulls out a PADD, hands it to her son. He reads its contents... and his face hardens, unreadable. Neither sad nor angry. In fact almost relieved - it's proof, and he can accept it now.

JULIA

Tom... your father loved you. And he loved B'Elanna, and Miral. He never meant what he said to you that night.

PARIS

I know...

JULIA

He was terribly disappointed, of course, that you two broke up. But he shouldn't have blamed you. He knew there was more to it than that, he's just so stubborn -

PARIS

Mom, I know. He told me. He sent a message, just before... He said he was sorry. He said... everything I needed to hear.

Julia is overwhelmed to hear this about her husband - that he did the right thing at the end. She pulls Tom close and holds her son to her breast, lets him weep.

JULIA

You're so like him, you know that?

PARIS

Like dad?

JULIA

He would have been so proud of you, of what you've done, leading your crew through this savagery. It's what he would have done.

PARIS

Thanks, mom.

40 EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING

The central monastery in Ashalla...

41 INT. SHIKINA MONASTERY - KAI'S OFFICE

The door opens, and Major ROCHAN shows Prylar KIRA in. She enters and stops in shock - because not only is Kai PRALON sitting behind her desk, but also OPAKA, YEVIR, SOLIS and BELLIS are sitting or standing around the room.

PRALON

Prylar Kira. Thank you for coming.

KIRA

Of course, Eminence. Is there a problem?

PRALON

Not at all - quite the opposite. This is a time for celebration.

KIRA

I don't understand. What happened?

OPAKA

You happened, Nerys. It was you who led the vedeks into the streets. Who brought peace and love to the people of Bajor when they needed it most.

YEVIR

The Emissary chose well.

Everyone gathers around Kira, who is a little stunned at the attention. Bellis just looks on from afar, pondering.

PRALON

That is why we have decided that this is the only suitable reward.

Pralon reaches into a drawer in her desk, and pulls out an EARRING, of the very elaborate type worn by vedeks.

PRALON

We welcome you to walk with the  
Prophets... Vedek Kira Nerys.

KIRA

But your Eminence... I didn't do  
what I did for a reward.

SOLIS

We know, Nerys. That is what makes  
the reward so richly deserved.

YEVIR

And everyone in this room agrees  
that this is so.

Kira can't help but look askance at Bellis, whom everyone  
knows has disapproved of her. Yevir notes the glance...

YEVIR

(continuing)

Everyone in the room.

Bellis accepts Kira's mistrust without protest - he knows  
he deserves that and worse.

Turning back to Pralon, Kira reaches out and gingerly takes  
the earring from the kai's hand. She can hardly believe it.

But as she nervously, almost jokingly raises it to her ear  
to see how it feels, the others all congratulate her...

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

The door opens, and Major CENN enters from Ops. RO has been  
hovering anxiously by her desk, waiting for him, and now  
stands nervously at his arrival.

RO

Major. Thanks for coming.

(gestures  
to couches)

Shall we?

Cenn follows Ro to the couch area and sits, but Ro remains  
standing, pacing. Clearly she has something on her mind.

CENN

Commander... what's going on?

RO

Don't worry, you're not in trouble. I'm just... gonna talk for a while, okay? And I need you to just listen, and not interrupt. Just let me get it out.

A curious comment, but Cenn accepts it and settles back into the couch, signalling he will listen quietly. She nods and goes back to pacing a little, finding where to start.

RO

Alright. The Borg are gone. No-one disputes that, we've all seen the visual records. Seems pretty clear to me that we have these Caeliar to thank for it. But you, Nath, Kol, Nerys... every Bajoran as far as I can tell... ever since it happened you've all been thanking the Prophets for saving you.

CENN

Well -

Ro points at him and hisses a sharp, angry "zip it" sound, and Cenn falls back into silence. Ro continues to pace.

RO

Now, every neurone in my brain is telling me that's ridiculous. There is no possible coherent path from A to B to C, that can explain how anything the Prophets or the Bajorans did had anything to do with stopping the Borg. It was pure coincidence that they turned back right at the edge of Bajoran space, and I think it's silly to try to read anything into that.

Cenn purses a little but holds his tongue as he promised.

RO

But here's the thing. Vedek Bellis said it would happen. He came here and demanded that Starfleet leave, because the Prophets would protect Bajor. And you said the same. You said the Prophets didn't need Starfleet to protect Bajor, they were going to do it themselves.

(beat)

And from that perspective, I can't deny that it looks like you were right. Oh, I can come up with all the rational justifications about seeing what you want to see and interpreting everything through your personal worldview... but I keep coming back to that point. That for you - and for everyone else here, apparently - what you expected to happen, what you had faith would happen... did happen.

Cenn looks back at her calmly, peacefully, because she's right - he did have faith, and it was rewarded.

RO

In fact, Bellis actually left me a message a few minutes ago. I let the system take it 'cause I didn't fancy another slanging match right now... but he actually apologised for the way he spoke to me.

(off Cenn's surprise)

I know! That's the biggest miracle yet if you ask me. I didn't think he had it in him, and I was damn sure I didn't have it in me. But somehow... he managed it. And that got me thinking about Kira. About how she got the whole damn planet praying, the whole system, and it didn't matter if you were orthodox or Ohalavar or not religious at all - everyone prayed together.

(beat)

And again I thought - well, what difference is that gonna make? And maybe it made no difference to the Borg or the Caeliar. But you know who it did make a difference to?

Cenn smiles - she seems to be getting it.

RO

(continuing)

The Bajoran people. Maybe everyone else already got this, but I don't think it really matters if there's any metaphysical consequences to praying or not... because it's not about that. It's the psychological consequences, the sense of unity that comes from everyone doing the same thing for the same reasons.

(beat)

And who knows, maybe it does have some physical, measurable effect on hormones or brain chemistry or something - that's for Bashir to worry about. All I know is, from watching Kira, from watching the Bajoran civilians on the station, from watching you... it works.

Ro stops pacing and turns to face Cenn directly.

RO

Now, don't get overexcited. I'm not saying I've suddenly come over all religious. It's just... I see a whole planet of people working together like that, all believing the same thing, and then rejoicing when it seemed like everything they believed came true. A whole planet of people who understand something I apparently don't. And, can that many people all be wrong?

Finally, Ro sits, taking the couch opposite to Cenn, placing herself level with him.

RO

I've never felt that... surety.  
That connection. So I guess what  
I'm saying is... I'd like you to  
talk to me now... about the  
Prophets. Will you do that?

Cenn leans forward, closing the distance between them. It's everything he ever hoped for - of course he will.

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**43    EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY**

Bringing us back to the centre of Federation government. The SOUND of cheers and applause, the press room's response to Bacco's speech, still sounds over the top...

**44    INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

President Bacco has allowed the people their moment to celebrate, but at length she holds up a hand to forestall them, and they fall silent.

BACCO

One more thing. Although Starfleet will be needed for recovery and reconstruction, and to render aid to anyone who needs it, we will also renew our commitment to its mission of peaceful exploration, diplomatic outreach, and open scientific enquiry.

**45    INT. TITAN - BRIDGE**

A hive of activity as the *Titan* repairs and prepares. VALE stands at the centre of the organised chaos, while her crew of varied species works around her. Vale watches them all with satisfaction, all her conflicts about this job gone.

BACCO (v.o.)

(continued)

If not for the Luna project, exemplified by the *Titan* and its mission to put words into action by showing the galaxy what we are made of, we might not be here today. Therefore that mission will resume immediately - to seek out new worlds and new civilisations, and to offer, to those who are ready, our hand in friendship.

**46**    **INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

President Bacco continues her speech...

BACCO

(continuing)

There are those who might doubt our ability to do all of these things at once. To them I say, don't underestimate the United Federation of Planets. Just because we suffered the brunt of injuries in this conflict, don't assume we are weak or vulnerable.

**47**    **INT. STARFLEET MEDICAL - PRIVATE WARD**

PARIS sits still watching over the unconscious KIM. But in his hand, he holds the padd upon which his mother brought the news of B'Elanna and Miral's death. Over this...

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

With patience and courage, this can become a time of hope.

Paris looks at the padd, at the news upon it... and SMILES.

**48**    **EXT. SPACE**

B'Elanna's two-person slipstream shuttle ZOOMS through open space at high impulse...

BACCO (v.o.)

(continuing)

As long as we remain united...

**49**    **INT. SLIPSTREAM SHUTTLE**

Inside the small shuttle, the same report appears on another PADD held in another hand...

OPEN OUT to reveal it is B'ELANNA TORRES, alive and well. Her three-year-old daughter MIRAL sits playing nearby, as the ship around them is almost completely automated.

BACCO (v.o.)  
(continuing)  
...we will emerge from these dark  
and hideous days into a brighter  
tomorrow, and we will do so wiser,  
stronger and safer than we were.

Smiling at the news of her own death - her and Paris's plan worked - B'Elanna sets the padd aside and turns back to her joyful daughter, joining the game as the shuttle flies on.

50 **INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

Back to the speech...

BACCO  
(continuing)  
That future will not come about  
quickly or easily. But until it  
does, never flinch, never weary,  
and never despair.  
(beat)  
Thank you, and good day.

Finally Bacco steps back from the podium, as the room explodes into more APPLAUSE and CHEERS. Bacco looks at her press liaison JOREL, who points to the panel on the podium.

JOREL  
The switch is right there, ma'am.

BACCO  
I would never deprive you of the  
pleasure, Jorel.

Smiling his thanks, Jorel presses the button... and all the journalists and reporters disappear, their holographic images dissipating. Bacco is left with just her advisors.

BACCO  
Thank God that's over with.

PIÑIERO  
It was a wonderful speech, ma'am.  
It's what people needed to hear.

BACCO

It's what I needed to hear. The Borg are gone, sure. But now everything else is up for grabs.

AKAAR

There is certainly the potential for a period of instability.

BACCO

Instability? We've got a dead zone for a hundred light years around the Azure Nebula. More than forty percent of the fleet is destroyed. Sixty-three billion people are dead, and our economy's about to implode. We're long past unstable, Leonard. It's a whole new ball game... and we have no idea who's playing, or what the rules are.

PIÑIERO

That's what keeps the job interesting, ma'am.

Bacco gives a faux-withering look at her friend, and then the gathered company turns to file out of the room.

51 **INT. ENTERPRISE - CAPTAIN'S LOUNGE**

A private dining room for the exclusive use of the ship's commanding officer and his guests. PICARD stands from the table, raising his champagne flute.

PICARD

A toast. May our friendships, like fine wine, only improve with time's advance, and may we always be blessed with old wine, old friends, and young cares. Cheers.

RIKER

Hear, hear.

Around the table Crusher, Riker, Troi, Dax and Bowers all lift their own glasses and join the toast. They all drink,

and Picard settles back into his seat. Dax scoops up a small mouthful of chocolate mousse.

DAX

What an amazing dinner. Thank you for inviting us.

TROI

I did try to invite Captain Chakotay and Commander Paris, but their ship's counsellor said they were both otherwise occupied.

PICARD

A shame. Every commander deserves to be treated at least once to a meal in the captain's lounge. Not only is the cuisine exquisite, but the view is spectacular.

They all turn to look out the window, at the view of the Earth below them, and the sky filled with ships - the *Columbia* central among them.

RIKER

They really knew how to make 'em back then, didn't they?

DAX

I think they make 'em just fine now, thank you very much.

TROI

It is amazing, though. To think of how much of our history was shaped by the fate of that one ship.

BOWERS

Like the butterfly effect. One decision today can spell life or death for billions a hundred years from now. You just never know.

CRUSHER

True. Maybe the universe is more like the subatomic realm than we

normally think. Full of invisible effects and unseen consequences. What do you think, Jean-Luc?

PICARD

I think perhaps you've all had enough champagne.

They LAUGH - and it feels good to be able to laugh again after such a seemingly endless time of horror and misery.

BOWERS

There's one thing that still bothers me.

RIKER

What's that, commander?

BOWERS

I feel like we didn't really do anything. Captain Hernandez and the Caeliar saved us, while we just stood and watched.

Picard shakes his head and smiles. He can understand why someone might see it that way, but he doesn't.

PICARD

No. We did far more than that. The Federation saved itself, Mister Bowers, by doing what it always does. We worked together - even when some of us tried not to, too damaged to see what was necessary. We pooled our resources. We built alliances. We took all our gifts and wove them into a tapestry so beautiful that it inspired the gods themselves to come down from Olympus and fight by our side. We survived - and not by sinking to the enemy's level, but by raising them up to ours. And... I think we could all use a little redemption from time to time.

RIKER

Not to repeat myself... but hear  
hear.

Riker raises his glass again. Crusher is gazing at her husband with love and adoration - this is why she fell in love with him. Dax folds and sets down her napkin, and stands from the table. The others follow her example.

DAX

Sorry to eat and run, but we have to get back to the *Aventine* by 1900. We're expecting new orders from Starfleet Command.

PICARD

An exploration mission, perhaps?

DAX

No such luck. Admiral Nechayev said the *Aventine* will be needed to help with rescue and recovery efforts for at least the next few months. Seems like a waste of a perfectly good slipstream drive if you ask me. Now that it's fully online, I was hoping we'd get to visit a new galaxy or something.

RIKER

A new one? Do you mind if we finish exploring this one first?

Dax stretches up to peck Riker affectionately on the cheek.

DAX

Don't be silly, Will. That's what Starfleet has you for.

Chuckles around the room. Dax turns to Picard.

DAX

Captain, it's been a pleasure and an honour. I hope our paths get to cross again some day.

PICARD  
I'm certain they will. But next  
time, you're buying dinner.

DAX  
You're on.

With polite nods and handshakes all around, Dax and Bowers  
EXIT the room. Beverly shakes her head in amusement.

CRUSHER  
She's something else, alright.

TROI  
She's remarkably sure of herself.

PICARD  
She can't help it - she's a Dax.

CRUSHER  
(gentle warning)  
And I'm a Howard.

TROI  
And I'm a daughter of the Fifth  
House, heiress to the Sacred  
Chalice of Rixx, and the Holy  
Rings of Betazed.  
(pause of horror)  
And I'm turning into my mother.

RIKER  
(mutter)  
God, I hope not.

TROI  
What was that?

RIKER  
(polite smile)  
Nothing, dear.

TROI  
Mmm-hmm.

PICARD

(change the subject)  
Does *Titan* have new orders yet?

RIKER

Nope. We're moving to McKinley Station tomorrow at 0800 for some upgrades and refits. We'll find out what's next once we're done with repairs. I love a surprise.

The two women share a knowing glance and a shake of heads.

CRUSHER

Listen to you two. You talk like the biggest things in your lives are light years away.

TROI

Did you already forget your new assignments closer to home?

Now the two men exchange a glance - of mock dread.

RIKER

Parenthood...

PICARD

...the final frontier.

CRUSHER

(to Troi)

Have you picked out a name yet?

TROI

No. You?

CRUSHER

No. It's been a matter of some... contention.

TROI

I know the feeling.

Feeling that it's perhaps best to get out of there before it gets any worse, Riker turns to Picard, shakes his hand.

RIKER

We should go. Don't tell me to be careful.

PICARD

I wouldn't dream of it. Be bold.

RIKER

That sounds more like the Captain Picard I know. Good to have you back, sir.

A backslap of comradeship and another cheek-peck, and Riker and Troi are on their way.

PICARD

*Au revoir, mes amis.*

And they EXIT. With a sigh of satisfaction, Picard heads to the window. Crusher joins him, takes his hand. Everything feels right, now. Debts settled, promises kept. He's free.

CRUSHER

What will you do in a universe without the Borg, Jean-Luc?

Picard gazes into space, gives the question due thought.

PICARD

I'll hope that our son is born healthy. I'll hope that we can be good parents. I'll hope that he can grow up in a galaxy at peace.

(beat, smile)

That's what I'll do. I'll hope.

As we pass over Picard and Crusher and THROUGH the window, gazing at the curve of the Earth and the glittering blanket of stars above it...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW