

STAR TREK

RENAISSANCE

"Nor Bid the Stars Farewell"

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TEASER

EXT. SPACE

Establishing shot of the ENTERPRISE docked at DEEP SPACE NINE. We hang on this for a little longer than usual so that the viewer may absorb the architecture of the station as well as the multitude of ships that have gathered around it. Starfleet, Klingon, Romulan and Dominion designs all hang in space surrounding it.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, Stardate 80255.8.
The Enterprise has been docked at
Deep Space Nine for the past two
days in preparation for the upcoming
peace talks with the Dominion.

INT. DS9 -- PROMENADE

We see the Promenade just as we remember it; busy, noisy and a dark ugliness that somehow manages to convey a brilliant atmosphere of momentum and the circle of life -- people young and old, Human, Klingon, Romulan and Bajoran all going about their lives.

Yet something seems strange about it, the Bajorans seem to be very aware of themselves and the area around them; they constantly look over their shoulder, and with good reason. For surrounding them are the faces of enemies both past and present -- Cardassian, Jem'Hadar and Vorta.

Deep within the crowd are Cross and Quinlan, who we slowly close in on during the continuation of Cross's log entry.

CROSS (V.O.)

Despite the events of the previous
two days, many of the delegates
gathered here are optimistic -- but
I find myself tense. Withdrawn. No
matter who I surround myself with I
feel wrong. Maybe once all of this
is over I'll feel better about
everything.

(pause)

And everything they did to me.

By this point we are all but on a complete close up of Cross and Quinlan.

QUINLAN

I never thought I'd see anything
like this.

Cross remains quiet for a second, then:

CROSS

I never hoped I'd see it.

QUINLAN

I think it's quite funny how we put things like that to one side. I've never really thought about the war since I joined the Academy...

CROSS

I think about it.

QUINLAN

Oh... Of course... I didn't mean to...

Cross swiftly pulls her out of the hole she has dug.

CROSS

How did the war affect you, Lieutenant?

She looks over at him, unsure were to take this.

QUINLAN

Not a great deal. I, errm, I lost an uncle.

CROSS

I'm sorry.

QUINLAN

Yeah. He was great. Had this little Jack Russell that jumped all over me. Think the damn thing was trying to have his evil way with me or something.

(Cross gives her a funny look)

That's the dog, Sir, not my uncle.

CROSS

(nods, part sarcastic)

It sounds like the three of you were very close.

QUINLAN

Some of the survivors told me they were carrying civilians to the escape pods to the end. I remember one woman, she broke down telling me how she owed her life to my uncle... it was a memorial service, I was ten; it was a horrible experience. She had this really weird...

CROSS

Did you just say they were carrying
civilians to the escape pods?

QUINLAN

Uh-huh.

CROSS

And you said this dog, it was a...

QUINLAN

Jack Russell.

CROSS

Right.

QUINLAN

Bravest dog in the quadrant.

CROSS

Mmmm. But then he'd be competing
against Lassie and that dog the
Russians sent up a few centuries
back.

QUINLAN

He's still out there?

CROSS

Oh yeah... Picard made contact with
him a few years back.

Beat.

QUINLAN

He didn't really, did he?

CROSS

Just as much as your Uncle's ever-
faithful Jack Russell dragged that
dying woman to safety.

QUINLAN

Hey!

Cross sighs.

CROSS

We're deluding ourselves, you know.

QUINLAN

We are?

CROSS

Look around you. We talk about the
past and it hurts us.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

So what do we do? We make a joke out of it. It hurts us and so we turn it all into a comedy. What does that tell you about us?

QUINLAN

That we don't want to be sad?

CROSS

That we don't want to face up to who we really are. We put up a mask.

QUINLAN

It sounds like you've had that one well rehearsed.

CROSS

Maybe because we hold up too many masks? Even if we find one that fits us we keep shifting through the collection until we find one that's big enough to cover our faces two times over.

QUINLAN

(confused)

Right.

CROSS

How upset were you when your uncle died?

QUINLAN

I hadn't really seen him for a few years. But yeah. I was upset. I was ten.

CROSS

(strongly)

Ten.

QUINLAN

Ten.

CROSS

That's how old I was when they took me to the Hole.

QUINLAN

The POW camp?

CROSS

(nods)

They took everything away from me and me away from everything that was

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

left. I didn't think I could find a place that was emptier than that.

QUINLAN

I thought you were with your mother?

CROSS

She died. While we were there.

QUINLAN

I'm sorry. I didn't realize.

CROSS

I didn't think life could be any emptier after that. Now it feels even worse. I sometimes find that the memories of what could have been are just too great. It's overwhelming.

QUINLAN

I get where that's coming from.

CROSS

Bad luck.

He looks at her.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Want a drink?

QUINLAN

I'm on duty.

CROSS

To hell with it, you're having one. Come on.

He leads her into what we used to know as Quark's and to a table on the upper level.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Don't worry -- I'll get something soft.

QUINLAN

Thanks.

Quinlan sits looking down the Promenade at the assorted Dominion delegates gathered around there and sees ODO entering, looking particularly delighted to be back on his old stomping grounds, before Quinlan looks up a moment later to see Cross returning with drinks.

On another part of the Promenade we see an airlock opening to see some Starfleet Admirals boarding Deep Space Nine, to

be greeted by a Dominion delegation along with some Starfleet officers in dress uniform. Quinlan looks up a moment later to see Cross returning with drinks.

CROSS

Here.

He places one of the drinks down on the table, retaining one of them for himself.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(toasting the
surroundings)

To hell.

Quinlan frowns at the dry toast, but picks up her drink and clinks it together with Cross's anyway.

QUINLAN

(unsure)

May it... continue to burn?

CROSS

Sounds good.

They both take a sip of their drinks, Cross shakes his head, evidently taken something strong. Quinlan sits staring into her glass for a second, as Cross sits staring at Quinlan.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(quietly)

It's a strange old game we play.

Quinlan doesn't reply, but we hear movement behind us and before we know it, Odo is standing next to the table.

ODO

Captain, Lieutenant, would you mind
if I joined you?

CROSS

(with a hint of
reluctance)

Not at all.

Odo takes a seat and looks at them both.

ODO

It looks like you've both seen happier
times.

CROSS

Something like that.

ODO

I think that this bar may also have
seen them.

QUINLAN

What do you mean?

ODO

There used to be another barkeep here, a Ferengi, went by the name of Quark. Used to be the most predictable petty thief in the book -- seemed to think that I loved him for one reason or another.

Raised eyebrows from both of crew members.

ODO (CONT'D)

Turns out he left about four years ago. Found his fortune in the stem-bolt industry and bought a moon in orbit of a system just past Risa.

QUINLAN

Lucky him.

ODO

No, not exactly. Quark was conned -- he thought he was buying paradise, it seems that he bought one with a prison colony covering half of it that he later ended up serving in for smuggling.

QUINLAN

What did he do?

ODO

Apparently he tried to smuggle some kind of narcotic to one of his former employees. She promised to rub his lobes if she got her fix and Quark being Quark agreed.

QUINLAN

So who's running this place now?

ODO

One of his most trusted associates. Goes by the name of Morn. I'd be surprised if the bar hasn't gone bankrupt by the end of the year.

CROSS

Riveting stuff.

Quinlan shoots him a glare.

ODO

Would you like me to leave, Captain?

CROSS

Well, I had hoped for a quiet drink rather than listening to the life story of this place.

ODO

(to Quinlan)

What's wrong with him?

Quinlan shrugs.

QUINLAN

He has his off days. Don't take it personally.

ODO

I'd find it difficult to believe he had good days if we hadn't already met.

CROSS

Am I just not here anymore, or what?

ODO

It's difficult to have a conversation with you without bringing up your pet hates, so I've decided to talk to Lieutenant Quinlan here.

CROSS

Maybe those "pet hates" have something to do with your fellow blobs of goo holding me in a POW camp for two years of my childhood while you were floating around over at this place making goeey eyes at their leader!

Odo obviously takes this personally, but chooses not to respond to Cross's attack.

ODO

Tell me, Captain, what is the Enterprise still doing here when it has someone as unstable as you for its captain?

CROSS

Unstable?

ODO

Yes, unstable. One day I'm your ally, the next I'm your enemy. When will you decide what I'm going to be?

CROSS

You've never been my ally, Odo.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

(beat)

But I don't think, and I hope, you'll
never be my enemy either.

He stands to leave.

ODO

So what does that make us, Captain?
Non-existent? Irrelevant? Or is
that just what you want us to be?

CROSS

Maybe it is. Maybe it is.

He leaves, leaving Odo sat next to Quinlan, unsure what to
say.

INT. DS9 -- PROMENADE

As Cross walks along we begin to pick out more and more
Dominion personnel amongst the crowd, until Cross is seemingly
surrounded by people from the various Dominion races.

They seem to close in on him, all walking at him, looking
straight at him as Cross watches in fear before seeing a gap
in the crowd and running as fast as he can towards it...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. DS9 -- PROMENADE

Continuous action from the teaser.

Cross continues to run towards the gap in the crowd before we begin to slowly flicker into a FLASHBACK. We see Cross running away from the crowd, and the image gradually intercuts with another scene of a young boy running away from an unseen foe, towards a gap in a crowd of blurred people...

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

A younger version of Neil runs towards a gap in the crowd of Dominion and other familiar humanoid races from the Alpha Quadrant, apparently these are other POWs. Behind him, a line of various races are gathered, apparently going through some kind of registration process.

From behind we hear a sharp, concerned cry for you the young boy:

ALICE (O.S.)

Neil!

The Jem'Hadar easily put a stop to the boy's break for freedom by extending their arms and knocking him to the floor where he lies barely conscious.

Alice runs towards him, but another Jem'Hadar stops him he as the first Jem'Hadar lifts the dazed Neil to his feet.

ALICE (CONT'D)

What are you doing with him? Don't touch him!

A Vorta emerges from the crowd.

VORTA

That doesn't concern you.

ALICE

Of course it does, I'm his mother!

VORTA

You'll have to let me know how that works. Vorta and Jem'Hadar are cloned. Sorry.

(to Jem'Hadar)

Take him away.

ALICE

Wait! Where are you taking him?

VORTA

Isolation, where else would we be taking him?

ALICE

Wouldn't an airlock match your style better?

VORTA

(clasps hands together)

Oh! What a good idea! Let's do that instead!

He savors her reaction for a few brief seconds, before rolling his eyes and taking Alice aside for a moment.

VORTA (CONT'D)

Believe me, you won't for last very long here with an attitude like that.

ALICE

I'm not planning on lasting long.

VORTA

Oh, that's a shame, I was hoping you'd be a fighter.

ALICE

Sorry to disappoint you.

VORTA

I'll live. You'll see the boy again in two weeks.

ALICE

Two weeks?!

VORTA

With our equivalent of only bread and water to survive on. Won't that be fun?

ALICE

Take me instead. Don't make him suffer -- he's only a child.

The Vorta's ears instantly prick up at this and he suddenly becomes deadly serious.

VORTA

Are you offering yourself to us?

Beat.

ALICE

I suppose I am.

VORTA
(to Jem'Hadar)
Take her.

JEM'HADAR
What about the boy?

VORTA
Leave him. It will be interesting
to see if he can survive here without
his mother.

Alice snarls at him, before turning to the other assorted inmates who have recently been captured.

ALICE
(pleading)
Someone take care of him! Please!
He's all I've got left! Please,
someone look after him!

Young Neil begins to stare as we continue to hear the fading sounds of Alice being taken away.

Neil lies on the floor, looking up at the ceiling as the Vorta walks over to him.

VORTA
Look at him. He's barely been here
five minutes and he's already lost
his mother.

There's a beat as he looks on, almost in sympathy, before he snaps to and looks up at the rest of the assembled POWs.

VORTA (CONT'D)
It will be interesting to see how
long the next one lasts.

He bends down towards Neil, patting him on his shoulder.

VORTA (CONT'D)
I'll see you in a few days.

He walks off, perhaps faintly chuckling.

FADE TO:

INT. DS9 -- PROMENADE

Cross is now walking along quite quickly and before we know what is happening he walks straight into TALORA.

TALORA
Captain?

CROSS

Talora! I didn't see you.

TALORA

Evidently not.

There is an awkward silence for a moment.

CROSS

Is there anything I can do for you?

TALORA

I was on my way for a chat with
Lieutenant Quinlan.

CROSS

What about?

TALORA

You.

CROSS

Didn't we have this conversation a
few days ago?

TALORA

Apparently it didn't affect you as
much as I'd hoped.

CROSS

Commander, I'm on a small space
station, surrounded by the people
who set my life moving towards the
abominable cesspit that it is, I'd
appreciate a little room for leverage
every now and then.

TALORA

Then perhaps Deep Space Nine isn't
the place for us.

CROSS

Have you been talking to Odo too?

TALORA

Of course not.

CROSS

Then why did you bring it up?

TALORA

Because I think it, Commander Grey
thinks it, Lieutenants Quinlan and
Boyle think it, and so does the
Federation Council.

CROSS

Since when has it mattered what Boyle thought?

TALORA

Since today. We cannot afford for the Enterprise to be involved in any more... incidents.

CROSS

And there won't be any more incidents. We're here for the good of the Federation.

(beat)

I know these people better than anyone. I spent two years of my life around them, I know how they think and I know how they act. This entire situation is a time bomb, Commander, and the Federation cannot afford to not have its best people on the Dominion here, regardless of whether that puts the Enterprise on the front lines once again or not. Is that understood?

TALORA

It is understood, but not necessarily agreed.

CROSS

The understanding is all that I need.

TALORA

You know how I feel about the situation, Captain. If you do intend to stay at Deep Space Nine -- please stay out of the way.

CROSS

Understood.

Talora realizes the reference and raises an eyebrow as Cross gives her a wry smile.

TALORA

While I have your attention, Y'lan and Dojar have returned from the Ellensworld Institute.

Cross doesn't know how to react to this news.

CROSS

Oh. That's good news.

TALORA

I don't believe that it is.

CROSS

How do you mean?

TALORA

As you have demonstrated, the tension level has risen dramatically since the Dominion envoy arrived at the station. I do not believe that it would be wise to insert two more variables into the situation.

CROSS

I don't understand.

TALORA

Dojar is a Cardassian, Y'lan a Q'tami. Neither race has been on the best of terms with the Bajorans.

CROSS

(realizing)

Of course. I never thought.

TALORA

You do appear to have other matters on your mind.

Pause.

CROSS

I'll talk to them.

TALORA

Good luck.

CROSS

I thought Romulans didn't believe in luck?

TALORA

I have only ever required it when the situation involves the Q'tami and his shadow.

Cross smiles.

CROSS

I'll see you later.

He turns and walks away, still noticing the large amount of Dominion troops around him.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- DOJAR'S QUARTERS

Y'lan is half sitting in a chair with his tentacles curled up under him while Dojar stands looking out of the window, sort of leaning against a wall. For a moment, it looks like they're not talking before we slowly begin to hear voices, as the two aliens' thoughts begin to fade in.

DOJAR (V.O.)

That is irrelevant.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

I fail to see how you can categorize something so significant to your personal life as irrelevant.

DOJAR (V.O.)

I do not wish to communicate on the topic.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

I will find out sooner or later.

DOJAR (V.O.)

Then you will have to wait.

We almost hear Y'lan sigh, but not quite.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

I will purchase you a drink if you tell me.

Dojar turns to look at him.

DOJAR

It's not that simple, Y'lan! If I inform you that I don't want to talk about it then I do not want to talk about it. Do you understand?

Y'LAN

No.

Dojar shoots a glare in his direction.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

You cannot be the only individual in this situation. If you do not wish to talk to me, then talk to someone else.

DOJAR (V.O.)

So you can listen in on the conversation? Don't think so, Tentacles.

Y'LAN

"Tentacles"?

DOJAR

I wish you'd stop doing that.

Y'LAN

I cannot help it.

Dojar sighs.

DOJAR

I don't want to talk about it because it hurts for me to do so.

Y'LAN

Then allow me to share in your pain.

DOJAR

You wouldn't want to.

Y'lan stands and walks over to him.

Y'LAN

I wish to.

Beat.

DOJAR

My father thought that the Dominion was our salvation. Before he could get down on all fours and grovel at their feet, they had him executed.

DOJAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Happy now?

Y'LAN

Indeed. I would like to hear the complete story.

DOJAR

There's nothing else to tell.

Y'LAN

But that is an abbreviated version of the story.

DOJAR

Abbreviated. But the only version I can tell without questioning existence.

Y'LAN

You do not question existence continually?

The door CHIMES.

DOJAR

I'd rather not talk about this, Y'lan.

The door CHIMES once again before Dojar sighs and walks over to it.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

As always, when your thoughts are becoming of interest.

Dojar shoots him a glance. The door slides open to reveal Cross.

DOJAR

Captain, what can I do for you?

CROSS

I wanted to have a little talk with you both.

Y'LAN (V.O.)

I wish to be alone.

Dojar turns to face Y'lan.

DOJAR

(shouts)

And I do not!

(turns to Cross)

Come on in, Captain.

He walks into the quarters leaving Cross, a little unsure of himself, waiting behind them.

CROSS

(half to himself)

I see the honeymoon's over.

He enters.

Y'LAN

What do you want?

Cross looks at him, unimpressed.

CROSS

I need to talk about what's happening with Deep Space Nine at the moment.

DOJAR

What's happening? I haven't had a chance to visit the station yet.

CROSS

I know. And I don't think that you're going to get that chance either.

DOJAR

What do you mean?

Y'LAN (V.O.)

Is that not obvious?

CROSS

Commander Talora...

Y'LAN (V.O.)

Talora.

Is that aggravation we hear in his voice? Perhaps.

Dojar rolls his eyes.

CROSS

...and I have been talking about the tension level amongst the Bajorans at the minute...

Dojar suddenly begins to realize where this is going.

DOJAR

And the two of you thought that if I were present it would make them even more uneasy. And I thought the war was over.

CROSS

It's not so much you as...

Y'LAN

Me.

CROSS

Just about.

DOJAR

So the Jem'Hadar are allowed to freely roam the station while I'm locked up on the Enterprise?

CROSS

You're not locked up at all.

DOJAR

Aren't I?

CROSS

It's a request. Something for you to consider.

DOJAR

Tell me, Captain, how much influence did you have in this? When you first met me, I seem to recall some bitterness.

CROSS

Actually, I really didn't think about it until Talora mentioned it.

DOJAR

But you feel it.

CROSS

Towards them I do, yes.

DOJAR

And to me?

CROSS

My job's brought me into contact with Cardassians enough to make me... relax around them over the past few years.

DOJAR

But you don't deny that deep down there's hate still buried there.

CROSS

No, I don't. It's a part of me, and it's a part of them.

Y'LAN

It doesn't have to be.

CROSS

What?

Y'LAN

I can assist you in removing the prejudices from your consciousness.

There is an awkward silence for a moment as Cross digests this information.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

You do not wish for these prejudices to be a part of you for any longer, correct?

Beat.

CROSS

I don't know...

DOJAR

You don't know?

CROSS

No, I don't. Like I said, those prejudices are a part of me. What would I be like without them?

DOJAR (V.O.)

Probably a better person.

CROSS

It's not as simple as you make it sound, Y'lan.

Y'LAN

I realize that. But Dojar believes the experience would make you a better person.

DOJAR

Y'lan!

Cross looks at Dojar.

CROSS

And he's probably right. But I don't know if I want to lose that part of me.

Dojar looks back at him, frowning.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Thanks for offering Y'lan, but I need to give that a lot of thought. It's not something that I can just throw away over night.

Y'LAN

The offer still stands if you would like me to assist you.

CROSS

I'll get back to you on it.

He nods at Dojar.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Think about what I said. You used to run security on this ship, you...

DOJAR

(bitter)

You don't need to remind me, Captain.

Cross continues to look at the Cardassian for a moment before turning away and exiting, leaving Dojar and Y'lan in the

room alone together, with the distant voices slowly beginning to fade back in again...

CUT TO:

INT. DS9 -- PROMENADE -- REPLIMAT

Talora and Marek sit at a table overlooking the Promenade eating a meal together. They talk softly to one another, slowly eating and appreciating their food.

MAREK

How about you?

TALORA

I spoke with the Captain some more about the Dominion. Other than that, nothing of relevance has happened.

MAREK

The Captain is still uneasy around the Dominion?

TALORA

Indeed. Until earlier today, the Enterprise's presence was not even required here and I asked him to leave the Bajoran region.

MAREK

And obviously he didn't. Why are we needed here now, though?

TALORA

A Romulan senator has requested that I be Romulus's chief negotiator to the Dominion.

Marek stops in his tracks for a second.

MAREK

Hold on, hold on. Chief negotiator? I thought you said that nothing else of relevance happened today?

TALORA

It did not. It is hardly a key role.

MAREK

Of course it is! Talora, do you realize what this means? You could be one of the people who make a difference, who make a new beginning for the Alpha Quadrant and the Dominion!

TALORA

I appreciate your enthusiasm.

MAREK

I only wish it were infectious!

TALORA

I have not yet accepted the request.

MAREK

What?

At this point Cross, who has been walking along the Promenade, reaches them and stands next to the table.

CROSS

I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

Apparently he doesn't instantly recognize him as he bends around the corner to get a closer look.

TALORA

Not at all. What can I do for you?

CROSS

(slightly awkwardly)

Can I have a word with you?

TALORA

Of course.

She moves her arm indicating for Cross to enter.

CROSS

I got an intriguing offer from Y'lan this evening.

He continues to look over at Marek for a second or two before turning around to face her.

TALORA

What did he say?

CROSS

That he could take away my prejudices. Or at least bury them deep enough that they wouldn't effect me any more, something like that.

TALORA

Did you accept?

CROSS

Not as yet.

TALORA

I see.

CROSS

I know it sounds stupid but...

(beat)

I don't know who I'd be without them.

TALORA

I would say that your concerns are justified.

CROSS

Really?

TALORA

Of course. As much as I would like to see you work with an open, unprejudiced mind everything that has come before is as much a part of you as, say, Doctor Elris is.

CROSS

But you think that I'd work better without it?

TALORA

I didn't say that.

Cross smiles at her.

CROSS

You know what? I might give it a try.

Talora comes close to sighing, but manages to restrain herself and shakes her head.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it. I'll see how it goes.

TALORA

Agreed.

There is a pause as Cross turns back to look at Marek who smiles back at him. Talora begins to look awkward and indicates for Marek to stop, he does so, slightly too abruptly and Cross turns back to look at Talora who remains looking awkward.

CROSS

Who's your friend, Talora?

TALORA

This is Lieutenant Marek, from Sciences.

CROSS

Marek, eh?

Cross pokes his head around the front of Talora who has now all but blocked his view of Marek and smiles at Marek, who looks inanely back at him.

MAREK

Hello, Sir.

TALORA

Is there anything else, Captain?

Cross stops in his tracks, not fully realizing that he's intruding.

CROSS

Of course. I'll see you in the morning.

TALORA

Good night, Captain.

CROSS

Good night.

He exits leaving Talora and Marek alone again.

MAREK

You know what your problem is, Talora?
You're too cautious.

Talora says the following a little too sternly:

TALORA

Excuse me?

MAREK

(awkwardly)
We, erm, we are off duty here aren't we?

Talora instantly realizes her mistake and refrains from the ice queen image.

TALORA

Of course.

MAREK

Good. It's just that, I think, every time an offer comes up, there's always something that holds you back, no matter how good the offer might seem.

TALORA

"Seem" is the key word in that last sentence.

MAREK

Yes, but, the Dominion peace talks, perhaps the most influential peace talks of the last ten years, if not our lifetimes, and you didn't reply with a resounding "yes" the minute the Romulans asked you to be their representative?

TALORA

I had to consider my options.

MAREK

And then the Captain...

He looks as though he is about to continue, but Talora interrupts him as she sits back down again.

TALORA

The Captain ignored my advice and chose to visit Y'lan anyway.

MAREK

Well, there is that.

Talora cocks her head and continues to eat.

MAREK (CONT'D)

I just wish you'd be a little more open to ideas instead of... analyzing them for so long.

Talora looks intrigued and is ready to fight back, before Marek, realizing that he is fighting a flawed argument quickly shovels some food into his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Cross walks down the corridor, alone, towards Y'lan's lab at the very end of it. He taps the chime and waits. The doors open and Y'lan stands in the doorway.

Y'LAN

Captain. It is late.

CROSS

I know and I'm sorry.

Y'LAN

You need not apologize. Q'tami do not sleep, and only Dojar has been disturbed.

CROSS

That's reassuring.

Y'lan nods slightly.

Y'LAN

Have you decided to accept my offer?

CROSS

I have.

On Cross's determined face we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross and Y'lan enter, Y'lan looks around, the Q'tami equivalent of uncomfortable.

CROSS
Something wrong?

Y'LAN
I have never been inside your quarters before.

CROSS
First time for everything.

Y'LAN
And there is a final time for everything also.

CROSS
There is.

He looks out at the stars before turning back to face Y'lan.

CROSS (CONT'D)
I don't know if I'm ready for this, Y'lan.

Y'LAN
Your fears will be removed from your consciousness; you will be able to...

CROSS
Hold on a second, did you just say fears?

Y'LAN
I did.

CROSS
My prejudices aren't based on fear.

Y'LAN
Are they not?

CROSS
I don't think so, no.

Y'LAN
Then what are they based on, Captain?

CROSS
I don't know.

Y'LAN

During my short time studying your culture I have determined that almost every prejudice is based on fear, whether it be the fear of heights, small insects, or, in your case, the fear of the Dominion returning to the Alpha Quadrant and repeating their past actions.

CROSS

Actually, for as long as I can remember I've wanted the Dominion to come back so I could kick their ass into the next millennium.

Y'LAN

Resulting in the Dominion not being able to return to the Alpha Quadrant to cause any more damage.

Cross just looks at Y'lan, silent for a moment.

CROSS

(accepting)
I suppose so.

Y'LAN

Do you wish to begin the procedure?

A beat as Cross examines himself for a moment, then finally...

CROSS

I do.

Y'LAN

Please take a seat, Captain.

Cross does as he is told, and Y'lan walks behind him, as Cross leans back and relaxes in his chair.

CROSS

How long is this going to take?

Y'LAN

As long as it needs to.

CROSS

(half joking)
Great.

At this point, Y'lan lays a number of his tentacles down on Cross's head. Suddenly, the room begins to spin around us, with Cross being the only figure we can clearly identify -- as the spinning gets faster and faster we suddenly zoom in on one of Cross's eyes as it flicks open...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- STREET -- FLASHBACK

Same shot, new location. We pull out to reveal that we have returned to the POW camp, as the younger Neil runs away from an unseen enemy, once again.

He sees some piled up rubbish further down the "street" he is running down and dives into it, unseen by his pursuers, who run past him.

After a moment, Neil emerges from the rubbish, sighing as he picks the litter off him.

From the direction he ran in, another figure emerges from the shadows.

VOICE (O.S.)

When will you learn?

Neil visibly jumps at this and swings around to see an elderly VULCAN woman facing him.

NEIL

Never. I won't surrender.

VULCAN

You may want to put fighting on hold if you wish to escape here intact.

NEIL

Maybe I don't want to escape intact?

VULCAN

You still don't believe that your mother is alive.

NEIL

The Vorta said her isolation was for two weeks, it's been three.

VULCAN

That means nothing. The Dominion would be breaking many war conventions if they did...

NEIL

(shouts)

Do you think the Dominion cares about war conventions? If they win the war they just forget about them, if they lose they've lost anyway, so what's a few more violated war conventions?

VULCAN

You should lower your voice. They will hear you.

NEIL

I don't care. No one here does.

VULCAN

Some do.

NEIL

Why?

VULCAN

Because we believe that the Federation will win this war.

NEIL

Based on what?

VULCAN

Hope.

NEIL

Isn't that an emotion or something?

VULCAN

I suspect that many Vulcans choose to ignore the concept, but in times as brutal as these, what else is there to hold on to?

As Neil considers what she has said we begin to hear raised voices from some of the other POWs in another location -- apparently something is happening, and a lot of people are gathering together. Neil and the Vulcan look at each other, before Neil turns and walks towards the sound of the noise.

VULCAN (CONT'D)

I hope that you find your mother.

NEIL

(dismissively)

Thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- MAIN SQUARE -- FLASHBACK

A large number of "inmates" have gathered in the main square. Neil blatantly pushes many of them to get towards the front, where many of the gathered are looking up at a set of stairs, leading to a large door that has a flashing red light above it.

FERENGI

What do you think? More new inmates?

ANDORIAN

Maybe that Klingon's finally coming
out of isolation?

Cross looks instantly excited by this and continues to push to the front as the Ferengi and the Andorian continue their conversation.

FERENGI

Oh, I hope not.

ANDORIAN

Why not?

Beat.

FERENGI

I stole his tooth sharpener.

The Andorian looks decidedly unoptimistic for the Ferengi's future.

Meanwhile Neil has worked his way to the front of the crowd behind some large barriers, which are guarded by a number of Jem'Hadar. One of them looks at Cross with a snarl.

JEM'HADAR

I'll kill you one day, boy.

NEIL

Try it.

The Jem'Hadar snarls some more.

Suddenly, the door opens, and the Vorta we saw earlier emerges, followed by a number of other captives.

VORTA

(shouts)

Let this be a lesson to you all. Do
not upset the Dominion!

Apparently the returning captives have been in isolation, and the assorted inmates cheer loudly and begin pushing people against the metal barriers, which results in them being shocked.

Neil also desperately tries to look for his mother, trying to jump to look above the heads of those who have stood in front of him whilst avoiding the huge metal barriers in front of him. He continues to do this for a while, until about twelve captives have walked down the stairs, and no others follow, and the Vorta walks away -- there is no sign of his mother.

Neil looks infuriated as the other inmates run to welcome their friends back to the world of the Hole, but Neil runs

towards the barrier and touches it, holds on to it, causing the room to be illuminated and to quiet. When he lets go his hands are burnt.

NEIL

(shouts)

Vorta! What have you done to my Mum? Vorta!

The Vorta stops in his tracks and smiles before turning around and looking down at the young Neil.

VORTA

Oh, I wouldn't worry. She's safe. Ish. She's been causing some of my men a slight amount of... conflict... so I've decided to keep her a little while longer.

Neil looks up at him fuming as the Vorta notices Cross's burnt hands.

VORTA (CONT'D)

Oh. Did you burn your hands? How unfortunate.

NEIL

(shouts)

Bastard!

VORTA

And there I was about to offer you some medical treatment.

He smiles a mischievous smile once again.

VORTA (CONT'D)

(to Jem'Hadar)

You! Bring him up here! After all... he's only a child.

The Jem'Hadar who threatened Neil earlier moves towards him, but Neil instantly draws back in fear. The Vorta apparently sees this.

VORTA (CONT'D)

And don't hurt him. Or you'll pay with your life.

The Jem'Hadar snarls again as he lifts Neil across/through the barrier.

As we watch this happening the camera pulls back and we see Cross and Y'lan stood watching amongst the crowd.

Y'LAN

You do not appear to have changed,
Captain.

On Cross's bemused expression, as he watches his younger self is escorted towards the Vorta. After a moment or so, they begin to follow Neil, talking as they go.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Do you believe that this is where
your fear of the Dominion is rooted?

Cross rolls his eyes.

CROSS

No shit, Sherlock. They hurt me
here, Y'lan. Physically. Mentally.
They hurt me. There's nowhere else
it could have come from.

Y'LAN

I disagree.

CROSS

What?

Y'LAN

I believe that your hatred lies much
deeper than that.

CROSS

So you think it came from somewhere
else other than here?

Y'LAN

Perhaps. We must look deep down
inside your consciousness, Captain,
because it is there that we will
find the event that has become so
buried within you, that you no longer
have the choice of whether or not to
let go.

CROSS

One event?

Y'LAN

Indeed.

CROSS

I was a prisoner of war for two years,
how can everything that I hate about
these bastards lead back to one
moment?

Y'LAN

I'm sure that that answer will be revealed to us once we identify the event itself.

CROSS

I don't know about this, Y'lan. How am I supposed to find something when I don't even know what it is that I'm looking for?

Y'LAN

Your conscience will lead the way.

CROSS

(sarcastically)

Oh, my conscience! 'Cos we all know that I have one of those!

Y'lan stops walking and looks over at Cross.

Y'LAN

I do not believe that you are fully dedicated to this exercise, Captain. Do you wish for me to stop?

CROSS

No. I'm --

But before he can finish,

Y'LAN

Then do not be so childish.

Cross pulls a face of mock fear and intimidation.

CROSS

Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned...

Y'LAN

I was not aware you were religious.
(pause)
Were there any particular events during your time in the camp that stand out as life changing moments?

CROSS

Well, I lost my mother in the camp.

Y'LAN

She was killed?

Cross puts his hands to his head and walks in front of Y'lan.

CROSS

(with a raised voice)

No, Y'lan, I just lost her down the vegetable aisle while we were shopping one day and then I never saw her again!

Y'LAN

That is unfortunate.

CROSS

(shouts)

Damn right she was killed!

Y'LAN

And you reacted in a similar way to how you are reacting now?

CROSS

Oh no. This is nothing to how I reacted to being told she was dead.

Y'LAN

You did not witness the event yourself?

CROSS

No. I didn't. I don't know what happened to her body. I suppose that was for the best, really.

Y'LAN

Why is that?

CROSS

Because if I had seen the body, I would probably have had to watch it rot.

Y'LAN

There were no graves here?

CROSS

No. If we were lucky, the Dominion equivalent of the garbage men would come around every so often and throw them into a furnace.

Y'lan seems quite insulted by this.

Y'LAN

You would treat the dead in such a way as that?

CROSS

If it was the choice between seeing maggots come out of someone's eye sockets for another day or throwing them in the trash, what would you do?

Beat.

Y'LAN

I would not be able to make that decision.

CROSS

Then pray to whatever god you believe in that you never end up in a situation like this.

Y'LAN

I intend to.

Cross looks at Y'lan, surprised by what he has said before they carry on walking.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Where are we going?

CROSS

Zeyvir's office.

Y'LAN

Who is Zeyvir?

CROSS

The Vorta that runs the Hole.

Y'LAN

The Hole?

CROSS

An affectionate nickname for this place.

Cross indicates the POW camp below them, before Y'lan nods in acknowledgement as they approach the door to which young Neil is being led to.

The Jem'Hadar opens the door and they enter, followed by Cross and Y'lan. The Vorta seen earlier is waiting inside.

ZEYVIR

Neil, I don't believe that we got the chance to get fully acquainted upon our first meeting. My name is Zeyvir.

He extends his hand to which Neil spits at.

NEIL

Go to hell.

Zeyvir does not look impressed and sighs, before walking over to his desk and pulling out a tissue to wipe the phlegm off his hand.

ZEYVIR

I really should stop trying to be so friendly.

NEIL

I don't know why you bother anyway. If you wanted to be friendly you'd just let us all go from here.

ZEYVIR

Yes, well unfortunately that isn't possible is it, so we may as well make as much as we can from this little... holiday.

NEIL

Some holiday.

ZEYVIR

But isn't it exciting! Meeting new people, not knowing what will happen from one minute to the next, not knowing where your mother is!

Neil just stares blankly back at him.

NEIL

Are just trying to intimidate me so I'll attack you and you can kill me too?

ZEYVIR

She's not dead, Neil, I promise you.

NEIL

Then release her.

ZEYVIR

I'm afraid I can't do that.

NEIL

Why not?

ZEYVIR

Because she volunteered to take your place in isolation. I didn't want to see her hurt, Neil, really I didn't, but she didn't seem to understand that by replacing you

(MORE)

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

she'd be tripling the amount of time she'd have to spend there herself. I know that it's unfortunate, but it's just the way life is sometimes.

NEIL

You didn't tell her that before she went in.

ZEYVIR

Oh, so you were conscious after all? She was worried about that, you know.

NEIL

Does she even know if I'm okay?

ZEYVIR

What would be the point in me telling her that you're safe when you're getting yourself in more trouble by the day?

(beat)

Why, Ekar'idan here could be grooming himself when you creep up from behind him and attempt to break his neck! You could fail, be shot and I'd have told your mother that you were fine, only for her to find out that you're dead as soon as she gets out of isolation! What kind of impression would that give of me? No, I don't think so.

NEIL

Why have you brought me here?

ZEYVIR

Because I want to make a deal with you.

NEIL

What kind of deal?

ZEYVIR

I will consider releasing your mother, today, if you agree to some ground rules.

NEIL

And they are?

ZEYVIR

Firstly, no more trouble causing.

(MORE)

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

If I find out you have been, I'll have your mother put back in isolation for double the time on half the rations. Secondly there's the small matter of discontent amongst the "inmates" as they've branded themselves. I want to put a stop to that. And if you want to see your mother, today, you're going to help me do that.

NEIL

What do you mean?

ZEYVIR

Neil, I'm disappointed. Do I really have to spell it out for you?

(pause)

I want you to spy on them for me.

NEIL

And you really think I'd do that for you?

ZEYVIR

If you want to see your mother any time soon, yes, I think you will.

Neil looks at him.

NEIL

You're a total bastard, do you know that?

Zeyvir smiles the same mischievous smile we saw earlier.

ZEYVIR

(humorously)

Yes, I believe I am, actually.

(pause)

So, what is it to be, Mr. Cross? Do you accept my offer or not?

NEIL

What do I have to spy on?

ZEYVIR

Oh, just escape attempts, talk of rebellion, riots, et cetera, just bring it to me and we'll put an end to it. Not much to ask really, is it?

There is a long pause as Neil thinks. He swallows.

NEIL

And when do I get to see my mother?

ZEYVIR

Right away.

This seals the deal for Neil and he can resist no longer.

NEIL

Then you've got yourself a deal.

ZEYVIR

(smiles)

I thought we might.

NEIL

I want to see her. Now.

Zeyvir walks over to his desk and taps some controls, apparently an intercom.

ZEYVIR

I think it's time we let Mrs. Cross out of isolation. Bring her here.

VOICE

Understood.

Zeyvir takes a seat and indicates for the Jem'Hadar to leave, he does so, leaving Neil alone in the room with the Vorta.

ZEYVIR

What are you going to say to her?

NEIL

What's that got to do with you?

ZEYVIR

I want to know whether or not I need that handkerchief again, we Vorta are very emotional, you know.

NEIL

I wouldn't have guessed.

ZEYVIR

I want to be your friend you know, Neil.

NEIL

But I don't want to be yours.

ZEYVIR

Why ever not?

(MORE)

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

I'm sure we'll start to get along just fine once you start bringing me all that information you're going to be gathering. Oh, the fun we'll have! And, after a while, you might find that this room is the safest place in the entire compound.

NEIL

What does that mean?

ZEYVIR

I'm sure you'll find out sooner or later.

Behind him the door chimes.

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

I wonder who that could be? Are you excited?

NEIL

Just get on with it, would you?

Zeyvir sighs and heads towards the door, before turning around again and looking back at Neil.

ZEYVIR

I could make you, wait you know. And you know, when you're waiting for something like this time seems to drag on forever... might be why my life seems to, but... oh, what the hell, I can see you're not going to amuse me in the slightest.

Neil just stares back at him blankly as Zeyvir heads back towards the door. He taps the key to open it, where two Jem'Hadar soldier stand. Slouching between them, looking extremely weak, pale and covered in soot, is Alice Cross.

Neil walks over to his mother and lifts up one of her hands that is hung limp by her side and holds it.

NEIL

Mum?

Alice manages to open her eyes slightly, apparently still getting used to the light.

ALICE

Neil?

Neil smiles and hugs her, unable to keep his manly image. He is brought to tears and Alice's closed, red eyes also begin to water.

NEIL

It's me, Mum. It's me.

At this point Zeyvir walks forward, stepping behind Neil and whispering into his ear:

ZEYVIR

(softly)

You might want to look after her.

(whispers)

I think she may have been raped.

Neil looks on, shocked as he continues to hug his mother.

As they do so, we pull back to where Cross and Y'lan stand, watching. As Cross looks back at his traumatized younger self, the Hole fades from around them, leaving us back in...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Y'lan removes his tentacles from Cross's heads and walks around to the front of Cross who is sat in a trance like state on the chair.

There is silence for a moment before:

CROSS

Tell me that that isn't traumatic enough for you.

Y'LAN

It was traumatic.

Another moment of silence.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

But there is still a long way to go before we can pinpoint the moment your hatred began.

CROSS

You mean that wasn't it?

Y'LAN

I doubt that your consciousness would have allowed us access to it so easily.

CROSS

So, you want to go again?

Y'LAN

It is too fast for us to be exploring that level of your conscience again,

(MORE)

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Captain. If we proceed further, we could...

CROSS

(shouts)

I don't care, Y'lan! I want to do this and I want to do it now!

Y'LAN

You will not sway my opinion on this matter, Captain. I suggest that you get some rest and prepare yourself for a session tomorrow evening.

CROSS

Tomorrow evening?

Y'LAN

Tomorrow evening. Good night, Captain.

He exits leaving Cross in the room alone. He walks over to a table with an ornament on it and knocks it over.

FADE TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS -- LATER

Cross lies awake in bed, tossing and turning, trying to sleep.

We keep FLASHING into flashbacks, scenes that we have already seen and that we are yet to see. They are a little distorted and difficult to make any sense of, before one flashback is just as clear as that of Cross laid awake in bed...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

We see Alice's dead body slumping to the floor, with a huge stab wound across her chest... as a young Neil looks on with wide-eyed disbelief.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross jumps up in his bed, fully awake, breathless, he looks around and starts shaking in his bed...

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross runs into the bathroom and begins splashing his face with water, before looking up at his reflection in the mirror. As the camera closes in on him we FLASH into another flashback...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil sits on the floor next to his mother's limp, bleeding body. He holds her, crying.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross is sweating profusely, breathing deeply and looking slightly uneasy on his feet.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

A Jem'Hadar looks back at Neil, smiling.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Same as before.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

The reflections of flames play across Neil's face as he watches something burning with tears in his eyes. Pull around to see a pile of wood burning quickly.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross is now looking severely ill, and moments later it shows he collapses on the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil and Alice walk down the staircase from Zeyvir's office together, with Neil supporting the weak Alice's traumatized body. Both are quite obviously emotionally frail for various reasons.

NEIL

How are you doing, Mum?

ALICE

Not so good.

NEIL

You're not supposed to say that...

ALICE

I know honey, I know...

There is a pause as Neil guides her down a particularly difficult step down to the floor.

ALICE (CONT'D)

What is this place?

NEIL

They call it the Hole. There isn't much of a welcoming party though.

ALICE

I guessed so.

There is an awkward beat as Neil guides Alice through the "streets" of the Hole, towards whatever it is he is calling home these days.

NEIL

Did he mean what he said, Mum?

ALICE

What do you mean?

NEIL

The Vorta. He said they...

(awkward, embarrassed
pause)

...that they raped you.

ALICE

It's nothing you need to worry about,
hun.

Neil is obviously hurt by this and begins to get quite enraged.

NEIL

But they hurt you!

ALICE

Yes, they did, but there's nothing I can do about that now.

NEIL

But it's all my fault!

ALICE

No it isn't. I would never let them put you through that.

Neil sobs as he continues to guide his mother, who is still very weak.

ALICE (CONT'D)

And I want you to promise me something, Neil. Listen to me.

They stop and Neil looks up to his Mum.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Promise me that you'll never get yourself put in there. No matter how long you're in here for, promise me you'll never do anything to get yourself put in there.

NEIL

I won't. I won't, I won't.

ALICE

Good.

Neil looks almost in awe at his mother, before realizing that they are still standing in the middle of a street.

NEIL

Come on, we're almost back.

ALICE

Back where?

NEIL

Home.

They round a corner where we see the entrance to a small room to which the doors have been forced open. Neil and Alice head towards it.

ALICE

I thought we'd be in cells with the other prisoners?

NEIL

No.

He heads towards the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You're going to have to hold yourself
up for a minute.

He leans her against a wall and walks over to the door and
disconnects some wiring from various places around the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You'd get a pretty good shock if you
walked into any of that.

His Mum smiles at him.

ALICE

You were always so clever.

Neil walks back over to Alice and holds her up again and
begins to walk over to the door with her.

Just as they are about to enter however Neil is struck down
by something from behind -- a CHALNOTH appears, having hit
Neil across the back of his head, taking both him and Alice
to the ground.

Alice cries out in pain as he lashes out and hits her also.
Both lie on the ground unconscious.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Cross lays on a biobed, with Talora and Elris watching over
him.

ELRIS

Welcome back.

CROSS

What happened?

ELRIS

We found you unconscious in your
quarters after you didn't turn up
for duty.

CROSS

How long have I been out?

ELRIS

At least six hours.

Cross sighs.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea what happened?

Cross looks up at Y'lan.

CROSS

Has Y'lan told you about what happened last night?

TALORA

He told us that you were involved in a procedure designed to resolve the issues between you and the Dominion.

CROSS

That's right. Did he tell you that it was through it was a form of telepathy?

ELRIS

No, actually. What did he do to you?

Beat.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

We see Alice's dead body slumping to the floor, with a huge stab wound across her chest... as a young Neil looks on with wide-eyed disbelief.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Same as before.

CROSS

Nothing. I just remember feeling really tense and then I must have passed out.

ELRIS

You do have a lot of neural activity going on around your hippocampus.

CROSS

What does that mean?

ELRIS

It means that you've been accessing your memories a lot more than your brain's designed for.

CROSS

What I've been seeing is almost as if I was actually there.

(beat)

Everything seems so real.

ELRIS

There we go, then.

CROSS

I don't want to stop working with Y'lan on this.

Elris and Talora share concerned glances.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Has it caused any permanent damage?

ELRIS

No.

CROSS

Could it cause any permanent damage?

ELRIS

I don't think so, but I still don't recommend it. Your brain simply isn't designed for...

CROSS

(interrupts)

Then I'm going to go ahead with another procedure. And besides, it's the best sleep I've had in years.

He smiles at her.

ELRIS

I don't recommend it.

TALORA

Listen to her, Captain.

CROSS

Talora, you were the one who told me to put my prejudices behind me, I'm doing that and I'm not stopping here. I have to find out what happens.

Elris sighs.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Am I free to go?

ELRIS

I can't see any reason to keep you here.

He stands, getting ready to leave.

CROSS
Then I'll see you later and
(to Talora)
I'll see you on the Bridge.

Elris nods and Cross turns to leave.

TALORA
Unless you return to Sickbay first.

CROSS
Oh, shut up.

He exits.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

The smile that was on Cross' face in the previous scene quickly dissolves into a frown as he walks along the corridor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil and Alice lie on the floor unconscious, but as we watch Neil begins to stare. He winces at the pain in his head and looks over at his Mum who is still unconscious. He gently shakes her.

NEIL
Mum. Mum!

She also begins to stare and Neil turns to look at his room. He walks away from his Mum for a moment and looks inside the room. It is devastated, there is nothing left inside it other than some rags and two poorly constructed wooden objects that are apparently passing for beds. Neil sighs and walks back over to his Mum.

NEIL (CONT'D)
They took everything.

ALICE
What?

NEIL
Everything's gone; everything that I had here, what I've got together over the past four weeks, it's gone!

Alice slowly sits up.

ALICE
What was there?

NEIL

Food, water, blankets, my alarm system. They've taken it all.

(beat)

Why didn't they just finish us off as well?

Alice is still weak but we hear a determination in her voice that we have not yet heard.

ALICE

Don't ever speak like that, Neil.

NEIL

Why? There's no point...

Though she is still obviously weak, the concern she has for her son has not been affected by this, if not made stronger by it.

ALICE

We can get all of that again. I can't get another you again.

She lets this settle in for a moment before:

ALICE (CONT'D)

Besides, don't say "us" next time. Some of us have got our hearts set on making it out of this place.

She manages to force a smile as Neil helps her up and guides her inside the room.

INT. THE HOLE -- CHEZ CROSS -- CONTINUOUS -- FLASHBACK

Neil guides Alice over to one of the beds and guides her down on to it.

ALICE

Who attacked us?

NEIL

I didn't see who it was.

ALICE

Looked like a Chalnoth.

NEIL

Chalnoth?

ALICE

Big furry things.

NEIL

There's quite a few big furry things here.

ALICE
Could be them, then.

A pause as Neil slumps down against the back wall.

NEIL
My head hurts.

ALICE
Let me have a look.

Neil walks in front of her and kneels down so that she can inspect the wound.

There is a fair amount of blood on the back of his head.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Do you feel dizzy?

She begins to touch around it.

NEIL
A bit, yeah. Ow!

ALICE
Sorry. How's your vision?

NEIL
Not bad.

ALICE
Not blurry?

NEIL
Nope, ow! Stop it!

ALICE
I don't think there's any major damage. Looks like a minor concussion.

NEIL
It doesn't feel like it.

He rubs the back of his head.

ALICE
So why did they attack you?

NEIL
I don't know, they just did.

Alice gives him one of those I don't believe you looks that mothers so often give their children. There's a pause.

NEIL (CONT'D)
I haven't made many friends here.
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's been a long four weeks.

ALICE

It should have been two weeks more.

Neil remains quiet.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Any idea why they let me out early?

NEIL

(edgy)

No.

Alice notices the tone of Neil's voice.

ALICE

Are you sure?

NEIL

Yeah. I'm sure.

Alice looks at him, concerned, as Neil deliberately looks away from her gaze.

FADE TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise docked at Deep Space Nine.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Cross stops walking outside Y'lan's lab and hits the chime. The doors open and Y'lan appears.

CROSS

You heard about what happened?

Y'LAN

Yes.

CROSS

Is it because of you?

Y'LAN

It is a possibility.

CROSS

And is it the reason why I can't stop thinking about what happened while I was there?

Y'LAN

I do not know.

CROSS

I've started to remember things,
Y'lan, things that I've never
remembered before.

Y'LAN

The part of your brain that stores
your memories has been put under a
great deal of strain. You may be
remembering what I have told you
about, your real reasons for your
hatred of the Dominion. Things that
you, as a child, have already blocked
from your consciousness or creating
memories from other echoes that...

CROSS

(interrupts)

Wait a minute, wait a minute. You're
telling me that my brain could be
making some of this up?

Y'LAN

It is a possibility.

CROSS

So these new memories I'm having...
they might not have happened?

Y'LAN

Perhaps. But there is also an equal
possibility that the events did happen
and that you are merely retrieving
them from your subconscious.

CROSS

How can I found out which it is?

Y'LAN

I do not know.

CROSS

What if you come back into my mind
again? Won't you be able to separate
what's real from what's not?

Y'LAN

No. It is not that simple.

At this point Cross begins to get more and more infuriated
by the enigmatic Q'tami.

CROSS

Why not?

Y'LAN

It is not possible for me to interpret that.

CROSS

Damn it, Y'lan, you said you'd help me!

Y'LAN

I did.

CROSS

Did you know that this could happen to me? That these memories could begin to surface?

Y'LAN

I did.

CROSS

Then why didn't you warn me?

Y'LAN

I warned you that there could be side effects.

CROSS

It's hardly a side effect, Y'lan! This is my life, as I know it, being brought into question! I need to know if what I'm seeing is real or not!

Y'LAN

I cannot help you. I am sorry, Captain.

CROSS

What about our next session?

Y'LAN

I cannot help you.

Cross frowns at him.

CROSS

Cannot or will not?

Y'LAN

Good night, Captain.

Y'lan turns to exit but Cross gets ahead of him and follows him into his lab.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- Y'LAN'S LAB -- CONTINUOUS

CROSS

Have Talora or Elris spoken to you?

Y'LAN

Yes.

CROSS

What did they say to you?

Y'LAN

They forbid me from carrying on with procedure. With little respect for my thoughts on the matter.

Cross is infuriated.

CROSS

Your thoughts? What about mine?! Does it matter what anyone else thinks, Y'lan, does it? This is my life, not theirs and I need to know what it is that I'm experiencing and I need to know now! I can't... get to all of the memories, they're blocked, I need your help to get me there. I'm going to ask you one more time Y'lan, then I'm going to start getting angry: Will you help me?

Y'LAN

I cannot.

Cross looks extremely angry but manages to control himself.

CROSS

Then I guess I'll just have to find out for myself, won't I? And all of you will have to live with the consequences...

He exits leaving Y'lan looking quite mystified.

INT. ENTERPRISE --- CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Cross exits the lab and begins to march down the corridor and as we close on Cross's face we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- HUT -- FLASHBACK

...a close up on young Neil's face as he peers between some metal railings looking into a hut type structure where a

number of people, including the Chalnoth, Ferengi and Andorian from earlier are gathered.

They talk with quiet voices, on edge, constantly looking around to see if anyone has seen them.

ANDORIAN

And this is the point where we hide
in waste disposal?

FERENGI

Correct.

CHALNOTH

I will not hide from my fate!

FERENGI

Do you want to escape this place or
not?

CHALNOTH

Are you questioning my dedication?

FERENGI

No.

CHALNOTH

Good. I will not be ridiculed!

ANDORIAN

That's nice. Where's the Vulcan?

FERENGI

She'll be here, be patient.

CHALNOTH

Patience, is something I'm fast
running out of.

He looks at the door and is about to exit when the assorted rags gathered there move and the female Vulcan we saw earlier enters.

Neil reacts to her presence with that of dismay.

VULCAN

I am sorry I am late.

CHALNOTH

I was just leaving.

VULCAN

That is unfortunate. I was afraid
that I was being followed.

ANDORIAN

Were you?

VULCAN

I don't think so.

ANDORIAN

You'd better hope that you weren't
or you will have endangered us all!

VULCAN

I realize that.

ANDORIAN

Good.

VULCAN

Where were you?

INT. THE HOLE -- STREET -- FLASHBACK

With that Neil turns away from the railings and begins to
walk away down the "street."

NEIL

(quietly, to himself)
Why did she have to be there?

He sighs and continues to walk forwards.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

The doors part and Cross walks in. The lights are dim and
no one else is apparently around. He picks up a hypospray
and then walks over to a cabinet full of add-ons to the
hypospray (containing the medication) and roots through them
until he finds what he is looking for.

He holds it up to his neck and injects himself with the
hypospray before turning and exiting...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- ZEYVIR'S OFFICE -- FLASHBACK

Neil is sitting on a wooden chair in the same office he was
in earlier; the Vorta sits on the edge of his desk looking
down at him. Standing either side of Neil are two Jem'Hadar
guards, including the one (Ekar'idan) from earlier.

ZEYVIR

So tell me, Neil. What do you know?

NEIL

Not a lot.

ZEYVIR

Really? I'd have thought a boy of your reputation would have eyes and ears all over the compound.

NEIL

Then you don't know me as well as you think.

ZEYVIR

So you're telling me that you don't know anything. What is it you humans say? All's quiet on the Western front?

NEIL

Something like that, yeah.

ZEYVIR

So if there is, oh, say an escape attempt, in the next few days you won't mind me putting your mother into isolation for the next eight weeks?

NEIL

There might be stuff going on I don't know about.

ZEYVIR

I hope for your sake that there isn't.

Silence.

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

You know I don't want to hurt you Neil, but I can't do that if you don't cooperate... Let me ask you one more time. Do you know anything?

NEIL

If you didn't want to hurt me, you wouldn't make me do this.

ZEYVIR

But where would I be without you? You've become my lifeline. Your visits are my one source of true happiness, Neil. I beg you, don't disappoint me.

A beat.

NEIL

Fine. The Chalnoth. He's planning something.

ZEYVIR

Planning what?

NEIL

An escape.

Zeyvir motions to one of the Jem'Hadar soldier standing next to Neil.

ZEYVIR

You. Put him in isolation -- I'll speak to him later.

The guard, the one that isn't on the best of terms with young Neil, nods, leaving only one guard by the Vorta's side.

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

Is that everything?

Neil nods.

NEIL

Uh-huh.

A pause as Zeyvir looks into Neil's eyes.

ZEYVIR

I don't believe you.

NEIL

No one else is involved, I swear!

Zeyvir raises an eyebrow at Neil's unnoticed slip of the tongue.

ZEYVIR

Correct me if I'm wrong -- but isn't the Chalnoth the man who raided your room a few weeks back?

NEIL

Yeah, he was.

ZEYVIR

Then why protect him? I seem to recall that he hurt your mother.

NEIL

No more than you did.

ZEYVIR

Oh, Neil, don't drag that up again, I thought we'd put that behind us. Let's get back on track. Now why would you protect someone who would do something like that?

Pause.

NEIL
I'm scared of him.

ZEYVIR
You're scared of him?

Cross nods.

NEIL
What's going to happen to him?

ZEYVIR
He's going to be put away for a long
time.

NEIL
What if he gets out? What if he
finds out it was me who told you?

ZEYVIR
I'd be more worried about what happens
if he tells us anything you haven't.
Is there anything else you haven't
told us?

Pause.

NEIL
No. That's it.

Zeyvir pulls a phaser out of one of the drawers on his desk
before looking over to the one remaining Jem'Hadar...

ZEYVIR
Bring his mother here.

NEIL
No! I'll tell you everything I know,
I promise!

ZEYVIR
Maybe I'll have her brought here
anyway, just to encourage you?

NEIL
No, I don't want her to know I've
been doing this. Please don't.

ZEYVIR
I'm sure she'll understand.

He looks over at the Jem'Hadar about to say something, when:

NEIL

If you bring her here I won't be able to carry on spying for you.

Pause.

ZEYVIR

Tell me everything you know, and make it quick.

Neil looks at him, relieved but still very much on edge.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Alice, who now looks moderately better, is waiting for Neil at the bottom of the staircase. Neil emerges with Zeyvir who sends him down the stairs, while he waits at approximately halfway down.

Alice looks at her son.

ALICE

That's the second time in a week. What's going on?

NEIL

Nothing.

ZEYVIR

He's just been helping with my paperwork; I thought the boy could do with at least some form of education while he's in here.

ALICE

Why do I not believe you?

ZEYVIR

It's your choice.

ALICE

(to Neil)

Come on, let's go.

She turns him around and they begin to walk towards the "street."

ALICE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

We'll talk about this when we get back.

NEIL

There's nothing to talk about!

At this point a 'ghost' of Neil appears which runs off down the street, leaving the other Neil stood beside his mother, only walking slightly faster towards their 'hut'.

INT. THE HOLE -- CHEZ CROSS -- FLASHBACK

Neil storms into the hut, quickly followed by Alice.

ALICE
Do you want to tell me what's going on?

NEIL
There's nothing to tell!

ALICE
Oh really? Then maybe you'd care to explain why the Dominion released me early and why you're spending so much time with that damn Vorta? Is he hurting you, Neil?

NEIL
No!

ALICE
Has he touched you?

NEIL
No!

ALICE
Then what's going on?!

Pause, as Neil looks down at the ground, Alice walks over to him.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Whatever it is, Neil, you can talk to me about it. No one's going to be annoyed, but you have to tell me what's going on.

Another pause.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Okay?

NEIL
Okay.

A long pause.

NEIL (CONT'D)
He said they'd release you if I spied on the camp for him.

ALICE
 (shocked)
Spied?

Neil looks at his mother, distressed by the amount of shock he sees in her face and quickly tries to rescue himself.

NEIL
 (quickly)
 He said they'd release you, I couldn't
 bear to be without you for any longer,
 I had to get you out of there, Mum!
 I couldn't let them keep you there!
 I love you!

Alice looks at him infuriated and Neil takes a few steps back, worried about what his mother might say, but she says nothing, only begins walking towards the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)
 Mum! Where are you going?

She doesn't answer. Tears once again begin to fill his eyes.

NEIL (CONT'D)
 Mum!

ALICE
 I have to talk to him.

NEIL
 Mum, no, you can't! They'll put you
 back in there again, you can't!

Alice ignores his pleas and storms outside...

INT. THE HOLE -- CONTINUOUS -- FLASHBACK

Alice exits, followed in quick succession by Neil.

NEIL
 Mum!

Neil turns to look at his mother, already a few meters down the street, only to watch in horror as the Chalnoth appears behind Alice, holding a knife up to her before plunging it into her back. She screams as it comes out of her chest and Neil begins to run back to her as the Chalnoth pulls the knife out.

From behind the Chalnoth the Jem'Hadar appears, smiling and as Neil continues to run over towards his fallen mother and holds her as the Chalnoth retreats into the street.

As he pulls her limp head up on to his legs, she holds out a blood covered hand and strokes his face with it.

She holds it there for what seems like an eternity as tears bleed from Neil's eyes.

ALICE
I love you, Neil.

NEIL
Don't say that! You're going to be okay!

Alice smiles at him, as her breathing becomes more difficult.

ALICE
I love you. Promise me you'll make it out of here. I love you.

Eventually, the hand grows limp and it slumps down on to the floor as a pool of blood begins to grow around them...

NEIL
(weakly)
I promise...

As a crowd of people grows around them we...

FADE TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross is curled up in a ball in his quarters, shaking violently. We are unable to tell if he is conscious or not.

From this we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CROSS'S QUARTERS

Cross lies still on the floor before we hear the doors slide open. The camera pulls up to show Elris and Talora urgently walking in. Elris flips open her tricorder and runs it over Cross.

Cross's eyes open ever so slightly, it is barely noticeable but as they do so the background behind them...

FADE TO:

INT. THE HOLE

And we see Elris and Talora from Cross's point of view, as though they are in the Hole with him. We only hear a strange ECHO of what Elris and Talora are saying.

ELRIS

Just like I expected; he injected himself with triaxocol.

TALORA

Has he overdosed?

ELRIS

I don't think so. It looks like the stimulation in his brain has just sent him into shock.

Cross's eyes finally close again and we...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Same as the last shot, except the eyes are much younger. Young Neil is holding Alice in his arms as the Chalnoth moves closer and closer. He lets Neil savor the moment of his mother's death.

CHALNOTH

Savor it, Human. Savor the sight, the sound, the smell of it all. It's raw passion, and it's the last thing that you're ever going to experience. You lucky b--

But before the Chalnoth can finish the sentence or get any closer a beam of energy strikes him in his side and the alien falls to the ground.

For a beat Neil remains looking at where the Chalnoth was standing, before turning to look at his shooter. Zeyvir stands still, phaser still in hand. The two of them just look at each other for a second before:

ZEYVIR
It's not your time.

Neil doesn't respond. The stare continues for what seems like an eternity before Zeyvir turns to look at the Jem'Hadar who stood idly by during the killing.

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)
You. Up here. Now.

The Jem'Hadar glares at Neil before walking to his fate in the Vorta's office.

Neil continues to cling to his mother's dead body. We hold on this image for a while, before we see some footsteps walking towards them -- the Vulcan we saw earlier has arrived.

VULCAN
You can't stay there forever, you know.

Neil doesn't say anything.

VULCAN (CONT'D)
Would you like to come with me?

Neil still remains silent. The Vulcan leans in closer to him and pushes the loose hair off the front of Neil's face.

NEIL
I have to keep her warm.

The Vulcan remains knelt down beside Neil as a crowd begins to develop around them.

After a moment there is a FLASH and the Vulcan is suddenly replaced by Talora. Elris also appears, standing next to her. The young Neil is also replaced, and slowly fades into the present day adult Cross.

CROSS
I have to keep her warm...

FLASH TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Talora and Elris stand over the now-conscious Cross. Both look at each other, utterly confused.

FLASH TO:

INT. THE HOLE

Same as before. Cross begins to realize that it is Talora and Elris and no longer the Vulcan who is present.

CROSS
Why are you here? You aren't supposed
to be here!

Talora turns to look at Elris.

FLASH TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Same as before.

TALORA
Are these the side effects?

Elris is about to speak before:

FLASH TO:

INT. THE HOLE

Same as before.

CROSS
(through tears)
What the hell are you talking about?

Elris leans in closer to him and begins scanning Cross with her tricorder. She looks very confused at the readings she is seeing.

ELRIS
I don't know what it is that I'm
seeing...

FLASH TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Cross sees the tricorder.

CROSS
You're from Starfleet. You're here
to rescue me!

Talora and Elris look at each other severely unnerved.

TALORA
What's happening to him?

A beat before Elris shakes her head.

ELRIS

I don't know. You'd better get Y'lan
up here.

Talora sighs.

FLASH TO:

INT. THE HOLE

Same as before.

CROSS

You have to help my Mum! She's been
stabbed! She's still warm, you can
help her!

At this point the images of Talora and Elris begin to fade
away, replaced once again by that of the Vulcan woman. Cross
also fades away into the body of his younger self over the
following dialogue:

CROSS/NEIL

(through tears)

You have to help her! Please!
Please!

We pull out to see that a crowd has surrounded him, and as
the Vulcan woman continues to crouch down by his side, Neil
Cross continues to weep, holding his mother's body in his
arms...

Hold on this image for a few beats before:

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THE HOLE -- ZEYVIR'S OFFICE -- FLASHBACK

The doors part to reveal a rough looking Neil appear in the
doorway, staring straight at Zeyvir.

NEIL

(dryly)
You rang?

ZEYVIR

Yes, I do believe I did.

No smiles this time, he is deadly serious.

NEIL

Get on with what you want to say.

Beat.

ZEYVIR

I'm truly sorry about what happened
to your mother.

Neil attempts to stand firm, but his bottom lip shakes the
nevertheless... Over the following sentence his voice goes
from a quiet whimper to a loud, fierce shout:

NEIL

You expect me to believe that?

ZEYVIR

Not really, no, but I thought I'd
give it a go anyway. It is
unfortunate, though.

NEIL

What, because you haven't got anyone
to keep me doing your dirty work
anymore?

ZEYVIR

Something like that, yes.

Neil sighs and stares at him blankly.

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

Do you know what the problem with
people like us, Neil?

NEIL

You're an asshole?

ZEYVIR

(smiles)

We don't know when to stop.

(pause)

I show you compassion in your time
of need, I give you sympathy in your
darkest hour and what do I get in
return? Nothing, but my good nature
thrown straight back in my face.

NEIL

I wonder why?

ZEYVIR

That's what I've been trying to
understand. Surely, after news of
your little job got out you can't
have many friends left down there...

NEIL

(interrupts)

Didn't have any anyway.

ZEYVIR

All the more reason for you to accept what I'm giving to you.

(beat)

You may not like it, but I do wish that you'd accept it -- perhaps even treasure it -- but that's not important, I just wish that you would take it as though it from was someone who cared about your well being as much as your mother did...

Really the wrong thing to say, Neil looks at him enraged and runs over to him and pins the Vorta to his desk.

NEIL

How the hell would you know what that felt like? Tell me, Vorta, have you ever felt what it's like to be loved? Ever?

ZEYVIR

I saw a Founder once...

Neil bangs Zeyvir's head against the desk.

NEIL

Wrong answer! I almost feel sorry for you, you know. Never knowing what that's like. But then you don't have to feel what it's like to be ripped away from them because of your fucking delinquency!

He bangs his head against the desk twice more.

ZEYVIR

Neil, I...

NEIL

Shut the fuck up! You think you're so clever manipulating me like that, don't you? Well, how clever are you going to look when all your fucking brains are smashed out on to the fucking desk?

He smashes Zeyvir's head on the desk over and over, as the doors behind him open and two Jem'Hadar soldier throw Neil against the wall. Blood appears at the side of his mouth, but he manages to pry himself up and walk towards the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Get out of my way.

He manages to run between the two guards and out into the Hole, leaving Zeyvir semiconscious on the desk.

NEIL (CONT'D)

(shouts)

I'll be back for you, Vorta! You
just wait!

As we see Neil disappear from our view we...

FADE TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

The reflections of flames play across Neil's face, across the tears in his eyes, as he watches something burning in front of him.

He tightly holds on to the pendant that Alice gave him, holding it between his fingers and running the fingers of his other hand down the chain as though it were hair.

Slowly pull around to see a large pile of debris alight with a huge plume of smoke rising above it -- as we hear klaxons beginning to sound and guards beginning to mobilize, Neil takes one last look at the flames, before turning and fleeing into the depths of the Hole...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CONFERENCE ROOM

The entire senior staff with the exception of Cross and Elris are gathered in the room, Elris joins them by video link on one of the monitors.

GREY

When will he regain consciousness?

ELRIS

I've been up all night trying to work out just that -- but I don't have a clue. I just don't know what's wrong with him.

GREY

What about Y'lan?

(to Talora)

Didn't you say he got him in this state in the first place?

TALORA

Not exactly... but we believe that whatever the Captain experienced whilst he was with Y'lan did initially trigger his hallucinations.

GREY

How do we know he's not hallucinating now?

Talora looks at Elris.

ELRIS

We don't. The neural patterns are similar, but not identical. Anything could be happening.

QUINLAN

Is it causing him any damage?

ELRIS

Not that I can tell. But I don't think we'll fully know for certain until he wakes up.

QUINLAN

So what do we do until then?

GREY

I think that we should bring Y'lan in for a few questions.

QUINLAN

Agreed. If anyone knows what's happening to the Captain, it's him. He might even have some magical gadget that can make everything go back to normal.

TALORA

That would be convenient.

QUINLAN

If only he had one for everything.

TALORA

Bring Y'lan to Sickbay. Doctor Elris and myself will talk to him there.

QUINLAN

Understood.

TALORA

Dismissed.

The staff begins to file out and Elris disappears from the monitor.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Talora stands over Cross as Elris continues to perform tests. The doors slide open and Quinlan enters with Y'lan in front of her.

QUINLAN

Here he is, Commander.

Talora turns around to see Quinlan walking in with Y'lan but does not respond.

ELRIS

Hello, Y'lan.

Y'LAN

Good morning, Doctor.

ELRIS

Anything I should know?

Y'LAN

I am in perfect health. Do you know something that I do not?

ELRIS

If you're trying to be funny, you're not.

Y'lan remains quiet.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

We need to know what's happening to the Captain.

Y'LAN

I have only come into contact with him once since our last meeting and as requested, I did not allow the procedure to continue.

ELRIS

Could that have had an effect on him?

Y'LAN

Possibly. Non-Q'tami who have not completed the procedure have been known to have complete mental breakdowns.

Talora and Elris look at each other.

TALORA

And you didn't think it was necessary to tell us this before?

Pause.

Y'LAN

I presumed that you were aware of the relevant facts.

Talora and Elris collectively sigh.

ELRIS

When you say complete mental
breakdown...

Y'LAN

The patient went completely insane.

Beat.

ELRIS

Is there any way you can continue
the process now he's unconscious?

Y'LAN

I could. But at great risk to my
own well being. I too could lose
control of my sanity.

Another pause.

TALORA

What will the Captain will be
experiencing right now?

As Y'lan says the following, the camera slowly zooms in on
Cross, before seeing Elris and Talora's reactions to what
Y'lan is saying.

Y'LAN

I presume that he will be where I
left him last; in the Dominion
prisoner of war camp where he was
held as a child...

ELRIS

(whispers)

Fighting for his life.

TALORA

Is there any other way we can help
him?

Y'LAN

Not that I am aware of.

Pause.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

But that will not be necessary. I
will assist you.

Elris seems slightly stunned by this.

ELRIS

You will?

Y'LAN

I will.

Elris breathes a sigh of relief.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

I must go and prepare. I will return
within the hour.

He exits leaving Elris and Talora slightly shell shocked by
what he has said.

QUINLAN

(to Elris)

You been massaging his tentacles
again?

Elris looks back unamused.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- CONDUIT

Neil is curled up inside what looks like a small, compact
electrical conduit. His clothing is in a much worse state
than we have seen previously; it is ripped and has blood and
dirt all over it. His face is also covered in blood and dirt.

He lies still, silent, even when there is a bright flash
from behind him he remains motionless. The camera pulls back
to reveal Y'lan crouched down inside the conduit. He walks
towards Neil.

Y'LAN

Captain Cross?

A beat.

Y'LAN (CONT'D)

Captain?

He puts a tentacle on the boy's shoulder, and Neil suddenly
jerks to life, pushing himself back against the wall.

NEIL

What are you doing here? How did
you find out where I'm hiding?

Y'LAN

I have come to take you away from
here.

NEIL

The Hole?

Y'LAN

Whatever you wish to call it.

NEIL

Who are you?

Y'LAN

I am Y'lan.

NEIL

How do I know I can trust you?

Y'LAN

I am a member of your crew.

NEIL

My crew? You mean from Starbase
129?

Y'LAN

I mean what I said.

Neil looks confused.

NEIL

How do I know I can trust you?

Y'LAN

Because I can help you escape.

Beat as Neil contemplates this -- how can he say no?

NEIL

What do I have to do?

Y'lan outstretches one of his tentacles and gently puts it
on to Neil's head. The scene around us...

FADES TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Close up on the younger Neil Cross who appears to be a little
older than when we saw him last, standing in front of the
stairs leading up to Zeyvir's office.

He still shows all the signs of the harsh environment that
we saw last time, his face is still covered with dirt and
blood, his clothes still torn, but he appears to have more
stamina about him, perhaps slightly more cool.

Neil stands watching the female Vulcan we saw earlier being
led up the stairs by two Jem'Hadar soldiers, heading towards
some make shift gallows.

Zeyvir, showing no signs of the attack Neil laid out on him
earlier, stands at the top of the stairs smiling.

ZEYVIR

(shouts)

Let this be a lesson to you all!
The Vulcan may have eluded our capture
for two years, but no one can escape
the might of the Dominion -- not
Vulcans, not Humans and certainly
not your pathetic Federation! No,
my friends, soon the Federation will
fall and all of your hopes for
liberation and freedom will be
quashed. The Dominion is the new
power in this quadrant and if you
haven't...

Suddenly there is a LARGE EXPLOSION and debris rains from
the roof of the Hole. Zeyvir looks around before scampering
back into his office as all of the prisoners dive for cover
from the falling debris.

Neil looks up at the dust falling from the ceiling from his
make shift shelter with a smile on his face.

NEIL

I knew you'd come.

He picks himself up from the floor and runs forward towards
the stairs as debris continues to fall and the Hole shakes
around him.

He reaches the electric barrier from earlier and slowly hold
out a piece of debris towards it, but before he can touch
the barrier with it, the room shakes once again sending him
crashing into the barrier! He winces, bracing himself for
the pain he will feel as his entire body hits the barrier...
but it never comes, the barrier is offline.

NEIL (CONT'D)

To hell with that!

He jumps over the barrier and runs up the stairs, ducking
down and extending his arms and legs resulting in the two
Jem'Hadar soldiers falling from the stairs and to their deaths
below, before Neil pulls the Vulcan to her feet and snaps
her to.

VULCAN

Neil?

Neil looks towards Zeyvir's office as he stands on the stairs.
We hear the supports of the stairs creaking around them and
they begin to buckle beneath him. Zeyvir looks up from what
he is doing at his desk for a moment and their eyes lock,
before Neil quickly turns away and devotes his attention to
the Vulcan.

NEIL

It's me.

He puts his arm around her and supports her as the two of them run down the stairs. As they do so the stairs begin to fall to pieces from above them and Neil picks up the pace, forcing the Vulcan to run down the stairs rather than stagger. They finally reach the bottom as the stairs finally collapse in a pile of dust behind them.

They head towards one of the streets inside the Hole as energy beams suddenly begin firing at them from an unseen assailant.

NEIL (CONT'D)

It's Starfleet; it's got to be!

VULCAN

You said that six months ago.

NEIL

But the last group of prisoners who came in here, they said that Starfleet was planning a big push into this sector!

VULCAN

That would be pleasing if it were true, but right now I would suggest that you stick to the pessimism that we have spoken of previously.

NEIL

So when you were being led up those stairs, you thought you were going to be killed.

VULCAN

I knew that I was going to be killed. I did not, however, wish to be.

NEIL

You Vulcans have got one screwed-up idea of optimism.

VULCAN

I do not believe that I would survive if optimism were a trait I possessed.

NEIL

I wouldn't be able to live without it.

They are now running down a smoke or dust filled street, as they manage to reach the conduit that we saw earlier and jump inside it, slamming the door on it shut behind them.

FLASH TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Cross is sweating...

FLASH TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- CONDUIT -- FLASHBACK

Neil and the Vulcan are pressed on top of one another as they hear soldiers run past outside, but they are not safe for long as we hear the familiar sound of a transporter as THREE JEM'HADAR beam into the conduit, reducing the space inside the conduit even more so.

Neil and the Vulcan see what is happening and quickly crawl to the door and pull it open and leap outside. There is even more debris falling from the ceiling and we can hear the noise of weapon discharges from all that far away.

They resume running once again.

NEIL

Looks like you were right.

The Vulcan looks at him.

VULCAN

I would not be so sure. Listen.

They listen, Neil looks back, confused.

VULCAN (CONT'D)

Those are Starfleet phasers.

NEIL

Really?

The Vulcan almost smiles and nods her head.

NEIL (CONT'D)

But they were Jem'Hadar!

VULCAN

Liberations don't come easily.

NEIL

We have to help them.

VULCAN

That would be unwise.

NEIL

Why?

VULCAN

You could be killed in the fire fight.

NEIL

Or I could die hiding -- I know which
I'd rather do.

They continue running back into the main area where we see Starfleet soldiers fighting the Dominion.

Neil and the Vulcan rush into the thick of things, and begin fighting some of the Cardassian soldiers nearest to them.

Neil begins to get particularly aggressive with one Cardassian soldier, kicking his face to a bloody pulp once he has knocked him unconscious.

NEIL (CONT'D)

This... is... for... my mother!

He gets so caught up in the moment that he does not see a Jem'Hadar creeping up on him from behind him, and the Jem'Hadar is about to snap Neil's neck when a phaser bolt kills the Jem'Hadar in mid step and Neil swings around to see the Vulcan holding a Cardassian phaser.

VULCAN

Watch your back!

Neil nods and smiles, before another phaser bolt hits the Vulcan square in her back from above him. Neil quickly turns around to see the Vorta holding a phaser of his own.

ZEYVIR

No one escapes the Dominion!

He aims his phaser at Neil and is about to fire when another HUGE purple-colored phaser beam comes roaring through the ceiling, apparently one from a Dominion ship in orbit, somewhere in one of the streets behind Neil, resulting in debris flying in all directions and everyone being thrown to the floor... From this we...

SMASH CUT OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Pan across the fallen rubble through clouds of dust. Beneath us, we can see various bodies littered across the floor and we close in on the body of a motionless boy, with blood running down his forehead... from the position of his neck he is quite obviously dead.

Suddenly we hear a COUGH and the camera suddenly swings around to see young Neil, not looking that much better off (with the exception of the whole neck thing) beginning to sit up and remove some of the dust from his face.

His face remains pretty much the same, so he pulls up his hands to his mouth and spits on them and tries rubbing his face again -- this doesn't achieve much more than making the dust solidify, he shakes his head and some of it gets out of his hair, but just like everything else around him he is still covered in dust.

Suddenly, he remembers something. He puts his hands in his pockets, quickly looking around for something, but he can't find it. He continues searching, looking around the dust covered ground for what he has lost. He frantically searches around on the ground for a second or so before finally finding what he is looking for.

He pulls out a long chain and after a moment we see that it is the pendant Alice gave him and he holds it up to the light as more dust falls from the ceiling. He lets himself smile for a second before quickly remembering his business, and begins walking around in the dust.

As he walks he leaves footprints as he goes, just as though he was walking through the snow. He reaches the position where the Vulcan fell from earlier and begins to dig around in the dust until he finds her face, the dust clinging to her pointed ears she almost looks like a snowman, entombed in a snow that will never melt... The smile that was on his face previously is now a distant memory as his face becomes overtaken with rage and once again he begins frantically digging in the dust...

FADE TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Y'lan is now stood away from Cross, Talora now stands over him as Elris monitors him with a tricorder.

ELRIS

Nothing's happening.

TALORA

How long until there's any effect?

Y'LAN

I cannot say. The captain is now living out the final days of his time in the prison camp. I cannot pinpoint how much more time there is until his escape, nor whether he will regain consciousness once he has completed reliving his experiences.

ELRIS

So you might not have changed anything whatsoever?

Y'LAN

That remains to be seen.

Suddenly Cross's eyes jolt open and bolts up right staring at Elris and Talora in the face before jumping off the bed he has been laid on and on to the floor, knocking one of Elris's medical boxes on the floor with him as he goes.

He quickly begins searching through the equipment as Talora and Elris look at each other before looking back at him on the floor.

TALORA

What's he doing?

Elris kneels down next to him.

ELRIS

Captain?
(pause)
Neil?

Cross looks over to her for an instant, before hitting her square in the chest, which sends her crashing back against the medical bed. He then continues his search.

TALORA

Security team to Sickbay immediately.

COMM VOICE

Aye, Sir.

Talora looks over at Cross, increasingly concerned.

FLASH TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil continues digging through the dust, still looking for something.

He tightly holds on to the pendant with one hand, being careful not to lose it as he continues digging. Eventually he finds what he is looking for -- the phaser the Vulcan was holding earlier...

FLASH TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Two security guards enter, looking puzzled at the seemingly insane Cross sprawled out on the floor searching through the medical gear, a nurse is now attending to Elris's head, which is bleeding.

The security officers walk over towards Talora.

TALORA

Restrain him.

The two guards look at each other before walking next to Cross.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Sir? Would you come with us please?

Cross's neck snaps around to look at them and instantly sees the phasers attached to their belts.

SECURITY GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

Sir?

Cross begins to stand up, but only makes it to waist height when he proceeds to grab one of the security officer's phasers and stunning the other one with it whilst knocking the other guard off his feet and turning to stun him also.

Elris and the nurse look on helpless while Talora walks up on Cross from behind but Cross turns just in time to give her a punch to the face, knocking her against a biobed, where she crashes down out of sight.

FLASH TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil stands up with the phaser and begins to look around. He sees Jem'Hadar and Cardassians lying either unconscious or dead on the floor and begins to shoot them regardless.

FLASH TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Cross looks angrily over at Elris and the nurse, the nurse clings to Elris terrified. Elris just looks at Cross square in the eyes as he draws his weapon and aims it at them.

FLASH TO:

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Just as Neil is about to shoot another Jem'Hadar, we hear voices from behind us and Neil swings around to see an unseen group of people with torches heading towards them, he aims his phaser at them and is about to fire when:

OFFICER 1

Don't shoot! We're Starfleet!

Neil drops his phaser to his side still keeping hold of it as he watches the Starfleet officers approaching him. We begin to see their uniforms as they get closer and closer but the tension in Neil's face is not released, it is still there and he is not content.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

Hey. You okay?

The officer walks over to him, unsure of what to expect.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

Do you want to give me that gun?

He indicates down towards the gun that Neil is holding, but his hand tightens around it and the officer sees this.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

Okay. You just keep hold of that, but I'm going to have to get you to come with me.

Neil remains quiet, his grip still tight around the phaser.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

(calmly)

Hey, can you hear me?

Beat.

NEIL

I need to get my things.

Pause as the officer contemplates his options.

OFFICER 1

Okay, okay.

He indicates for someone else to join him, and the camera pans from the ground up to reveal CAPTAIN HENRY PORTMAN.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

What's your name, kid?

NEIL

Neil.

OFFICER 1

Okay, Neil, this is Captain Portman,
he's a Captain in Starfleet. He'll
take you to get your things.

Neil nods blankly and turns to walk towards one of the streets. The officer indicates the gun to Portman and indicates for him to watch Neil.

Portman runs to catch up with Neil and walks by his side.

FLASH TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Cross exits, leaving Elris and the nurse alone, before walking out into the corridor...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

...and as he does so the bodies littering the hole, as well as the dark smoky atmosphere fills the corridor and Portman fades in, almost ghostly as does the younger Neil.

PORTMAN

Hold on a second!

Neil stops and turns to see Portman walking towards him -- at this point he is facing the debris field of where the stairs leading to Zeyvir's office used to be, and through the now dust covered, tinted windows he sees movement upstairs.

He takes note of this for a brief instant before turning to look at Portman who has now caught up with him and hasn't noticed where Neil's gaze was momentarily fixed.

At this point, QUINLAN walks around the corner, armed.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)

So where are we going?

QUINLAN

Where are you going, Captain?

CROSS & NEIL

Home.

Portman looks at him and smiles, Quinlan looks confused.

QUINLAN

Where's home?

PORTMAN

Where are you from?

CROSS & NEIL

Earth, you?

Portman looks at him wryly, Quinlan tries to match the two Cross's pace, holding her phaser up to him.

QUINLAN

Unless you want me to shoot you,
you'd better start making sense,
Captain...

PORTMAN

If you don't want to talk...

CROSS & NEIL

No. I really don't.

All four are now out of view of the rest of the Starfleet officers and explosions continue overhead, as does the phaser fire from all around them.

Cross and Neil pick up their phasers and fires at Portman and Quinlan, bringing them crashing to their feet. They are both still conscious but have been burnt from the phaser fire.

Cross and Neil quickly run over to them and takes off their commbadges.

CROSS

I'm sorry, but there's something I
need to do.

QUINLAN

You're not thinking rationally,
Captain! Whatever you're thinking,
we can help you. Let us help you!

PORTMAN

You could have just asked.

CROSS

You wouldn't like what I had in mind.

They also take Portman's phaser from his holster, Quinlan's from hers and swap it for the one they are holding, handing Portman and Quinlan the older phasers.

PORTMAN

What's this for?

QUINLAN

What are you doing?

CROSS

You don't deserve to die.

PORTMAN

How do you know I just won't shoot
you?

Quinlan picks up her phaser and takes aim.

Cross shrugs.

CROSS

It's set to kill.

Both Portman and Quinlan attempt to adjust the settings but fail.

NEIL

You learn a few tricks in places
like this.

CROSS

I'll be back soon.

He puts the commbadge in his pocket, or what's left of it,
and then walks away from Portman who lies on the floor,
looking around at the situation around him.

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil reaches the battered remains of the staircase, there
isn't much left but there is just about enough left to make
a determined effort to the top and Neil Cross begins his
ascent...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Cross pulls off a panel next to one of the turbolifts and
pulls out the circuitry inside it, the lights in the section
go dim.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Grey is sitting in the command chair.

CALE

Commander, the power to turbolift
three just went dead!

Grey looks back, confused.

INTERCUT:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

Cross pries the doors of the turbolift open and looks up the turbolift shaft before beginning to climb the ladder upwards...

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil climbs up the debris of the staircase, slipping every now and then but determined to make it to the top.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TURBOLIFT SHAFT

Cross climbs upwards, ascending the huge shaft...

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil continues to ascend the debris, but he slips suddenly and falls a little of the way down, resulting in Neil's leg being slashed by a piece of shrapnel...

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TURBOLIFT SHAFT

Cross reaches his drop off point and crawls into a maintenance tube -- not far away from him is a sealed door with a lever next to it. He pulls at it, revealing the entrance to another set of maintenance shafts, but quite different to those on the Enterprise. These are the maintenance shafts of Deep Space Nine...

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil manages to recover from the fall and begins to ascend once again, though the slash in his leg is quite obviously serious...

INT. DS9 -- MAINTENANCE SHAFTS

Cross crawls through the maintenance shafts before reaching a panel in the shaft below... he opens it and drops down into...

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- GUEST QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

He quickly swings around to see ODO looking straight at him, apparently having heard him coming. Cross draws his phaser and points it at him.

ODO

I take it you're not just dropping
in for dinner?

Cross doesn't react.

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Neil finally makes it into Zeyvir's office -- quietly, so that Zeyvir can neither see nor hear him. Zeyvir is working at the very back of the office, pulling his personal effects together whilst talking to presumably a Jem'Hadar on the comm.

ZEYVIR

I couldn't care less if it was the only functioning Dominion ship in the quadrant, the only thing I care about right now is that you're the only ship in range with its transporter working!

The Jem'Hadar ship suddenly stops responding, replaced only by static and Zeyvir looks at the comm panel, puzzled.

Neil positions himself in the doorway, the cut on his leg from the ascent into the office is bleeding badly now and he appears a little unstable on his feet -- nevertheless, he is holding the phaser...

NEIL

(quietly)
Vorta.

Zeyvir doesn't hear him, he carries on working.

NEIL (CONT'D)

(louder)
Vorta.

Zeyvir stops what he's doing and looks over at Neil.

ZEYVIR

I don't suppose you're here to help me with my packing?

Neil looks back at him, not amused.

At this point Odo and Cross as well as some items from the Guest Quarters were in moments ago FADE IN to view as the two timelines begin to draw closer together...

ODO

Odo to Security.

ZEYVIR

As much as I'd love to stay and chat, I'm afraid I've really got to go.
Ciao.

He taps some buttons on the comm.

ZEYVIR (CONT'D)

Get me out of here.

Nothing.

NEIL

I wouldn't get your hopes up.

He holds up some kind of homemade SIGNAL JAMMING DEVICE and waves it around in front of Odo and Zeyvir.

ODO

Captain, I know that my people hurt you, but I'm here on a mission of peace -- an incident like this won't help our cause.

In his dialogue, Zeyvir seems quite reticent about escaping alive, he knows his outlook is quite bleak whether he does or he doesn't, but like all living entities, his survival instinct kicks in, and he begins to bargain for his life, albeit half heartedly.

ZEYVIR

I haven't had my hopes up since they took Cardassia, to be honest. But we're all friends here, aren't we? I could have had you killed at any moment... but I didn't! You're still here!

NEIL

But there's people who I love who aren't -- some of them dead at your hand! Do you expect me to just forgive and forget something like that? Do you?

ODO

I don't expect you to forget, but this is the time for peace. Neither of us may like what's happened in our past, but for the sake of the people of today, we must let it rest.

ZEYVIR

No, I don't, but you survived -- you're a survivor, and that's what matters!

NEIL

What's the point of surviving if there's no one left to share it with?

ODO

(grunts)

You've got your own starship over there. I'd hardly say that your life's empty.

ZEYVIR

Surely you have the rest of your family to go back to!

NEIL

Hardly. You've taken everything away from me. There's no one left.

ODO

I can't say I blame them, if you're like this all of the time.

ZEYVIR

We killed them?

NEIL

More than that! You took away my life. Everything. Everything that's ever gone wrong in my life is because of you!

ZEYVIR

(patronizing)

Really? So before the war broke out you were a happy little boy with the wind blowing in his hair with nothing to fear?

ODO

Oh please, don't tell me we're getting into that again.

NEIL

Something like that.

ZEYVIR

To be honest I've always believed in making what you can out of life. It's not my fault you've been crying in a hole for the past two years rather than taking advantage of the night life.

ODO

Why do I get the feeling that you're talking to someone else?

Neil begins to get increasingly worked up, getting closer and closer to Zeyvir.

NEIL

I hope you've made the most out of yours, oh no, wait a minute you can't -- because you're held on a leash by the Founders all the time, sitting on your ass all day watching over this place, getting some kind of sick pleasure out of watching people suffer. Can you honestly say you've done that?

Zeyvir sees lights flashing outside his silhouetted windows, Starfleet is almost upon him. He sighs.

ZEYVIR

Probably not, but I'm sure there's another clone of me somewhere in the Gamma Quadrant who might.

ODO

Do you really think you can kill me with one of those?

He grunts.

NEIL

Let's hope not.

ZEYVIR

Well, it's been nice knowing you, Neil, now if you'd kindly hurry up and get all of this over with before these hounds finally break into their cage, I'd very much appreciate it.

A beat as Neil looks at him.

NEIL

No. No you don't. For the past two years you've taken my life from me -- you're not going to die thinking that you forced me into kill you. This is me and me alone.

He smacks Zeyvir across his face as he goes plunging into his desk.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Where have I seen this before? I should have killed you when I had the chance.

ZEYVIR

You did, this would be the second time you've done it and if you don't press that button sooner or later, you won't be doing it at all.

Neil is now in a complete rage; his face is bright red from the anger.

NEIL

Bastard!

He aims his phaser at Zeyvir, who looks at him, smiling, defeating Neil one last time, just as the doors open from behind him, and Portman limps in followed by an Enterprise security team led by Quinlan and Talora.

Neil quickly moves around to the other side of Zeyvir and holds the phaser to his head.

PORTMAN

Don't do it, Kid.

NEIL

I've already done it once, what difference is a second time going to make?

Portman looks confused but carries on with his diplomacy.

PORTMAN

What's your name?

ZEYVIR

Zeyvir, you?

Portman doesn't respond.

PORTMAN

What's your name?

NEIL

Neil.

PORTMAN

Okay, Neil, good. Now I'm going to tell you what's going to happen to this son of a bitch if you don't shoot him, and then you can decide what to do, okay?

NEIL

Okay.

PORTMAN

Okay, good. He's going to be taken back to Earth and he's going to be tried for war crimes, just like his leaders have been.

ZEYVIR

(dryly)
That will be fun.

PORTMAN

He's going to be found guilty and he'll be taken to a maximum security prison somewhere in the Beta Quadrant, his people won't know where it is. He'll be taken there by a Starfleet ship in total isolation, a white room, absolutely nothing -- and then he'll be beamed over where it will be exactly the same, and we'll keep him alive for as long as we can.

(beat)

The Federation gave up on the death penalty a long time ago, Neil. We started to understand that complete isolation is a lot worse a sentence than shooting their brains out. That's the easy way out. That's what they want you to think. That's what he's trying to make you do.

ZEYVIR

I'm not. Honest.

PORTMAN

Now what you've gone through here, I can't pretend to understand what you've gone through, it's tough, I know, but what he'll go through will be one hundred, one thousand times worse. He won't have anyone. He'll be totally alone and he'll rot, Neil. Don't give him the satisfaction of death because that's exactly what he wants. Do you understand?

Neil remains quiet as Portman limps forward.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)

Now. How about you hand me that gun?

Neil looks over to him with a completely blank expression on his face, he looks totally emotionless yet tears stream from his eyes. He's about to be freed. His enemies are defeated.

His family is dead.

He looks back at Portman and hands him the phaser. Portman indicates for the guards to come forward and they cuff the Vorta.

As the security guards begin to demand a total surrender of the camp, Portman puts his arm around Neil and begins to walk him towards a back exit, as Talora supports Cross and guides him away from Odo.

The camera closes in on the struggling Neil and the struggling Cross before we pull up and out to see the Hole FADE AWAY from around us, leaving us in Odo's guest quarters on Deep Space Nine.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- GUEST QUARTERS

Same as before.

ODO

I don't suppose someone would care
to explain what's going on?

Elris looks at him and lets out a sigh of relief.

INT. THE HOLE -- FLASHBACK

Silently and solemnly Portman guides Neil into one of the corridors within the Hole at the end of it is a door, which opens as they approach it. Neil's eyes widen with anticipation as they get closer and closer towards it before they finally step outside into...

EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- NIGHT

A beautiful star-filled night sky. Neil breathes a sigh of total relief as he looks up at the stars around him -- it is a magnificent view.

We do not see the ghastly the sight of the camp behind him, nor the terrain surrounding him -- just the stars. And Neil Cross.

FADE TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise docked at Deep Space Nine.

TALORA (V.O.)

First Officer's Log, supplemental.
I have been informed by Doctor Elris that the recent incident involving Captain Cross is a sign that he is being restored back to his normal self. The doctor believes that the two worlds the Captain has been living out are beginning to merge into one as his memories of the POW camp begin to once again return to his subconscious. After a full explanation, Ambassador Odo has accepted a full apology on behalf of the Captain.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

A SOVEREIGN CLASS starship, cruising through space at warp.

INT. USS LIBERTY -- FLASHBACK

Neil sits looking out of the windows inside his guest quarters. Noticeably, this is the first time in the episode that we have seen the younger version of Cross clean and in clean clothing.

The door chimes, and Neil, still with a look of remorse on his face, does not say anything. The doors open anyway and Portman enters.

NEIL

I thought there was a reason for the chime?

PORTMAN

One of the privileges of being a Captain.

He smiles, Neil continues looking out into space.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)

I think you'll be pleased to know my leg's all better.

Nothing.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)

So I hear you were in there for two years?

Neil nods.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)

That's a pretty long time, huh?

NEIL

I guess.

PORTMAN

There's not many people who've done that long you know. You're a survivor.

NEIL

I'd really rather not talk about it.

PORTMAN

Okay.

He sits down on Neil's bed.

PORTMAN (CONT'D)

I thought I'd try and give you some company, though. It's a long ride back.

Neil looks at him for a moment.

NEIL

What is there to talk about?

PORTMAN

What do you want to talk about?

NEIL

I don't know. The only thing I've thought about for the past two years is survival. It's etched on my mind...

PORTMAN

It might take you a while to get back to normal. But we have people who can help you with that.

NEIL

I don't want any help.

PORTMAN

Everyone says that when they first get out.

NEIL

How would you know?

Portman gives him a knowing look.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Oh.

PORTMAN

It wasn't for very long. A few weeks. But enough to make me realize how true a cause it is that we're fighting for.

NEIL

You fight the fight.

PORTMAN

I do.

NEIL

My Mum and Dad used to... fight the fight.

PORTMAN

Do you want to talk about them?

Neil finally turns around on the bed, he is no longer facing the window, but facing Portman. And over the following dialogue tears begin to well up in his eyes...

NEIL

I'm never going to see them again.
Talking about them is all I've got
left...

He looks at Portman in the eyes and shifts closer towards him.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I think it's going to take a while.

PORTMAN

It's okay.
(pause)
Is there anything I can do for you?

Beat, as for the first time, a small smile begins to play across Neil's face.

NEIL

Take me to see the stars again...

PORTMAN

You've got them right outside your
window.

NEIL

No. I mean, really see them.

Portman smiles and stands up, followed by Neil and the two of them EXIT.

INT. USS LIBERTY -- SHUTTLEBAY -- FLASHBACK

Neil and Portman stand watching the shuttlebay doors as they slowly SLIDE OPEN. Behind them are the stars, moving at warp, shining brilliantly in the stellar arena.

PORTMAN

Portman to Bridge.

OFFICER'S COMM VOICE

Yes, Captain?

PORTMAN

Drop out of warp for a second, would
you?

OFFICER'S COMM VOICE

Aye, Sir.

The order is obeyed and in front of them, the stars slow, leaving a brilliant view of the stars in front of us.

Neil walks towards them, until he is as close as he can get.
He reaches out his hand and comes into contact with a
forcefield...

CUT TO:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- REC DECK

An empty, dark Rec Deck.

Cross stands looking out at the stars with his hand extended
to the huge viewing window, his hand also in contact with
the forcefield.

The camera pans down to reveal that he is still holding his
mother's pendant.

He smiles.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END