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 Withdrawn.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.

Ten.

QUINLAN

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 stembolt 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 gooey 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)
RENAISSANCE: "Nor Bid the Stars Farewell" - TEASER

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

What do you mean?

Is that not obvious?

Commander Talora...

Talora.

Is that aggravation we hear in his voice? Perhaps.

Dojar rolls his eyes.

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

Dojar suddenly begins to realize where this is going.

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.

It's not so much you as...

Me.

Just about.

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

You're not locked up at all.

Aren't I?

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
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 then 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
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...
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.

Why?

NEIL
Based on what?

VULCAN
Because we believe that the Federation will win this war.

NEIL
Hope. 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
(dissipively)
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 then 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)
ZEVIR (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?

ZEVIR
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?

ZEVIR
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.

ZEVIR
(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?

ZEVIR
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.
And when do I get to see my mother?

Right away.

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

Then you've got yourself a deal.

(smiles)

I thought we might.

I want to see her. Now.

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

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

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.

What are you going to say to her?

What's that got to do with you?

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

I wouldn't have guessed.

I want to be your friend you know, Neil.

But I don't want to be yours.

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...

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
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.
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?
RENAISSANCE: "Nor Bid the Stars Farewell" - ACT THREE

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 then 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**
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.
RENAISSANCE: "Nor Bid the Stars Farewell" - ACT FOUR

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)

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.
INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Cross is sweating...

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
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.
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.
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.

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.
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