

STAR TREK

P I C A R D Episode Guide

Episodes 001–030

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Season One

Remembrance

Season 1

Episode Number: 1

Season Episode: 1

Originally aired: Thursday January 23, 2020
Teleplay: Akiva Goldsman, James Duff
Story: Akiva Goldsman, Michael Chabon, Alex Kurtzman, James Duff
Director: Hanelle Culpepper
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Brent Spiner (Data), Orla Brady (Laris), David Carzell (Dahj's Boyfriend), Merrin Dungey (Richter), Jamie McShane (Zhaban), Sumalee Montano (Dahj's Mother), Maya Eshet (Index), Douglas Tait (Tellarite), Dinero the Dog (No. 1), Arlene Rodriguez-Lopez (Trill Assistant), Richard Scott (Armenian Businessman)
Summary: At the end of the 24th Century, and 14 years after his retirement from Starfleet, Jean-Luc Picard is living a quiet life on his vineyard, Chateau Picard. When he is sought out by a mysterious young woman, Dahj, in need of his help, he soon realizes she may have personal connections to his own past.



As the USS Enterprise-D cruises through space, Lieutenant Commander Data and Jean-Luc Picard play poker in Ten Forward. They discuss Data's ability to bluff. Data raises the bet to "fifty," everything Picard has. Picard makes tea to stall; he doesn't want the game to end. Picard goes "all in." Data lays down five queens of hearts as Picard looks outside the window to see Mars. He is confused since he didn't know the Enterprise was on course to the red planet of the Terran solar system. He realizes something isn't right as an attack by rogue synthetics begins to devastate Mars. (ST: "Children of Mars")

As he turns back, he finds that Data is gone as the explosion from Mars blows through the windows of Ten Forward and destroys the Enterprise. He gasps and wakes from this dream at his family vineyard, Château Picard, in La Barre, France on Earth.

Meanwhile, in Greater Boston, Dahj Asha and her Xahean boyfriend Caler are sharing a romantic evening. She tells him that she has been accepted for a fellowship in Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Consciousness at the Daystrom Institute. He jokingly criticizes her replicator options. Just then, a squad of masked men transport into the room. One throws a knife, killing Caler. The men speak an alien language before switching to English. Forcing the panicking Dahj down on her coffee table, one places a pair of devices on her temples with a holographic interface and quickly swipes through a few screens, reporting that she hasn't been "activated." Getting her to her feet and throwing aside the table, they briefly interrogate her, demanding about the location of "the others" and where she's from, but from her bewildered responses, they determine they can get what they need later. They place a bag over Dahj's head to render her unconscious,

but she begins fighting back, alarming them that she is now "activating". Behaving like a highly trained and skilled fighter, she incapacitates the squad in moments and shoots them dead with one of their weapons, all while the bag is still on her head. Pulling it off, she regards the scene in confusion and regarding the weapon, lets it drop in her shock. She kneels over the body of her boyfriend to mourn as his blood continues to pool on the floor, and with a sudden gasp, has a vision of the face of Jean-Luc Picard.

At Château Picard, Jean-Luc and his dog, Number One walk through the fields, greeting his workers tending to the grapevines as he passes by. Picard talks to the dog in French. He returns to the house, where he speaks with Laris and Zhaban, two Romulan refugees who work as his housekeepers. Picard talks of his dreams and how he is feeling melancholy. As Zhaban makes breakfast, Picard laments his agreement to be interviewed live by the Federation News Network. He orders his trademark Earl Grey tea from a replicator, but decaf this time.

He dresses in a jacket and tie as the news crew sets up in his study. He's nervous, making sure from Zhaban that the interview will not address Picard's separation from Starfleet: Zhaban assures he did so no less than three times. Laris tells him not to forget who he is and what he did, saying "we have not." Zhaban tells him to "be the captain they remember."

The FNN interview begins with a capsule biography of Picard. The interviewer, Richter, asks him about the supernova that destroyed Romulus in 2387. Richter grows combative, asking him the very question that Picard dreaded: why he left Starfleet. He says that he left the USS Enterprise-E to command a rescue armada of ten thousand warp-capable ferries to Romulus before the supernova to relocate nine hundred million Romulans. He compares it to the evacuation at Dunkirk during World War II. Picard says that the Federation abandoned its duty to save millions of lives, regardless of whether or not they were Romulan. The unimaginable happened — the rescue armada was wiped out by a group of rogue synthetics who destroyed the Utopia Planitia Fleet Yards, killing 92,143 residents and igniting the stratosphere, which still burns. The intention of the attack remains unknown, and synthetic lifeforms were banned as a result of the attack. Picard believes this ban is a mistake.

Richter brings up Lieutenant Commander Data, and asks if Picard ever lost faith in him. "Never", replies Picard. She asks what he did lose faith in, why he resigned from Starfleet. Picard says, "Because it was no longer Starfleet! We withdrew. The galaxy was mourning, burying its dead, and Starfleet slunk from its duties. The decision to call off the rescue and to abandon those people we had sworn to save was not just dishonorable, it was downright criminal! And I was not prepared to stand by and be a spectator!" He accuses Richter of having no clue of what his reference to Dunkirk was, of being a stranger to history and to war, and ends the interview.

Dahj comes across and watches the interview on a viewscreen from a rainy street corner. She recognizes the man from her vision.

Back at Château Picard, Picard sits on a porch with his dog, drinking wine and quoting Shakespeare: "No legacy is so rich as honesty," from *All's Well That Ends Well*. Number One begins barking; Dahj has arrived. Picard stands to look at her, and asks what she wants. She says she saw the interview, and asks if he knows her. He's not sure. She tells him of the attack in her apartment and her killing of the assailants. She just knew how to fight them; "it was like lightning seeking the ground." Picard holds her hands and tries to calm her. She tells him she keeps seeing his face. "Everything inside of me says that I'm safe with you," she tells him.

That evening, Laris and Zhaban heal Dahj's wound from the fight and offer her a blanket. Picard offers her Earl Grey tea and sits with her on an outdoor deck, and he comments on her necklace. She takes it off and hands it to him when he asks to see it. She asks him if he'd ever been a stranger to himself, and he replies, "Many, many times." He returns her necklace and asks her name. She knows his name somehow, from an "older, deeper" place. He agrees, but doesn't know why. He tells her she isn't crazy and that she isn't dangerous (Number One would have let him know, who even now has chosen to rest beside her chair rather than that of his master). He offers her a room, and Laris takes her there. Before Dahj goes, she thanks Picard. He touches her necklace, left on the table.

In the morning, he has another dream. In the dream, Picard awakens, opens his window, and sees Data painting a picture in the vineyard. Picard, now in an old, familiar uniform, walks up to Data, dressed in the same style. Data asks Picard if he'd like to finish the painting, but Picard doesn't know how. It's a painting of a woman with the face not yet started in a hooded cloak standing on a rocky shore in front of a stormy sea. Data tells Picard that it is not true that

Picard cannot finish the painting, and as Picard reaches for the proffered brush, he is awakened by a clock. He has been asleep at his desk in his study. He quickly stands up to look behind him at a similar painting on his wall, only with the woman turned away to the sea. Laris enters, announcing that Dahj is gone: Laris was up at 5 am and when she passed by the occupied guestroom, the door was open and she only found Number One in the bed. She is nowhere to be seen on the feeds covering the property. Picard tells Laris that he has somewhere to go and to contact him if Dahj returns.

He travels to San Francisco to the Starfleet Archive Museum. He double-checks with Index, the museum's holographic directory assistant, that only he has access to his belongings locked in stasis in the quantum archives. He enters a single room vault containing memorabilia from his Starfleet career, ranging from a model of the USS Stargazer to the Captain Picard Day banner and several award statues. He uses a datapad control panel to access the quantum archive and recalls one of his items stored within its servers, which beams in onto the display case beside the datapad inside a protective case. Placing it onto the glass table in the middle of the room he opens it; it is the painting from his dream, only finished and with Dahj's face on the woman at the shore. Summoning Index, she reconfirms that no one has entered his archive, even for servicing. On his request, she recites that the painting is an oil on canvas and one of a paired set painted by Data in 2369 and given as a gift to Picard during their service on the Enterprise-D. The title of this one is Daughter.

In Paris, Dahj is on the run. Slumping against an alley wall, she opens up a holographic communicator device to contact her mother and tells her about the attack. She had gone somewhere to be safe, but concerned that her presence would put the people there in danger, she fled. Her mother is concerned, and tells her to go back to Picard. Dahj realizes that she hadn't told her mother about Picard, and is confused by how her mother knows. The face of her mother glitches and then tells her to focus and to find Picard. Opening her eyes, Dahj conducts a rapid-fire search on her communicator through secured systems to locate Picard at the archives, all within seconds.

Picard is walking out of the building when Dahj appears. He's stunned to see her, and glad she is safe. She tells him she can hear conversations a block away, and worries she has schizophrenia or suffering from head trauma. Picard tells her she does not, nor is she a "freak" — she might be very special. He tells her about Data, but that Data was not like those who attacked Mars. He insinuates that this is a common prejudice; Data was a decorated Starfleet officer who sacrificed his life for Picard over two decades ago. He was an artist and painted a picture of her thirty years ago. She says that's impossible. Picard tells her the title of the painting, Daughter, and relates it to her situation; he suggests the attack on Dahj became a "wake-up call," a "positronic alarm bell" that activated her power as an android. He reminds her of how she stated that "it was like lightning seeking the ground": the sudden emergence of her fighting abilities, the super hearing, and being able to search through Starfleet tracking systems to find him, which she most certainly did not have the proper security clearances for, all point him to the same conclusion. She protests, telling of her childhood in Seattle, where her father, a xenobotanist, developed a new hybrid of orchid and named it after her. He assures her that it is a "beautiful memory", but it is still hers and no one can take that away from her. He tells her to look inside, deeply and honestly, and see that she might be something lovingly and deliberately created, like the flower, and not a "soulless killing machine" as she fears. If she is who he thinks she is, she is dear to him. He tells her that they will go to the Daystrom Institute in Okinawa, Japan to see if she is indeed related to Data. He marvels when she tells him of her received fellowship.

She flinches, and warning Picard begins running, pulling him behind her. Someone is after them. Picard, out of breath, follows her up the stairs to a rooftop, where men similar to the group of assassins that killed her boyfriend and attacked her appear. She begins fighting them, using advanced hand-to-hand combat skills, dodging disruptor blasts, and leaping long distances. She smashes the mask of one of the men, who is revealed to be Romulan. One bites down on a capsule and spits an acid at her, damaging his gun that Dahj is holding and getting it on her lower face and clothes. Dropping the weapon, the acid eats away and burns her, and she screams in pain. As Picard shouts in horror, the compromised weapon causes a fiery explosion that envelops Dahj and blows Picard back some distance.

Flashes of his dreams and events of the day appear as Picard awakens at home, tended by Laris and Zhaban. Picard tells them that Dahj is dead, and they are shocked. The police told

them he was found alone on the roof, and according to the feeds, got there alone. They wonder if she has access to a cloaking device that interfered with the feeds. Picard muses she must have had an automatic system that triggered when she was in danger, and that she was a refugee, like Laris, like Zhaban, and like himself. He laments his life in hiding, "nursing [his] offended dignity, writing books of history people prefer to forget." He declares, "I haven't been living. I've been waiting to die." He stands up with purpose.

At the Daystrom Institute, he meets with Doctor Agnes Jurati. He asks her if it is possible to make a sentient android out of flesh and blood, and she laughs. She realizes he is serious and says it is impossible, a thousand years away. He tells her he had tea with one. They walk to the remains of the Division of Advanced Synthetic Research lab area, now a "ghost town" of unused work desks. Jurati explains that the rogue synthetics came from their lab; now they do only theoretical research which can never be developed or tested. The creation of new androids would be a violation of galactic treaty.

Jurati opens a drawer containing a disassembled B-4. Jurati explains that Data's attempt to copy his neural network to B-4 shortly before his death was an almost total failure; (Star Trek Nemesis) B-4 was too inferior and "not much like Data at all," and most of the positronic network was lost. Nobody had since been able to redevelop the science to create a Soong-type android. She tells Picard she was recruited by Bruce Maddox out of Starfleet to work on developing such technology, but after the ban, an emotionally crushed Maddox disappeared; she's been unable to find him.

Jurati tells him that any new android, even one of flesh and blood, would need to be created out of Data's neural net, now lost. He holds up Dahj's necklace, and she is stunned. She sits, and tells him the necklace holds a symbol for "fractal neuron cloning," a radical idea of Maddox's. He theorized that Data's entire code and even his memories could be reconstituted from a single positronic neuron. Picard concludes that and this would have allowed a new android to be created that thus contained an essence of the dead officer, or at least part of him. Picard declares Dahj to be Data's daughter, created by Maddox and modeled after Daughter; he comments that Data "always wanted a daughter". Jurati says it would be possible to create a female android from Data's positronic neuron, using the plural "they." Picard asks, "twins?" Jurati concurs: they were created in pairs. "So there's another one..." Picard muses.

A Romulan transport flies into a dock at the Romulan Reclamation Site. Narek walks on a catwalk over to a "Doctor Asha." She looks exactly like Dahj. He introduces himself, and she introduces herself as Soji. He compliments her necklace, identical to the one in Picard's possession: she briefly explains it was made by her father, a match with the one her twin sister wears. Narek talks about his brother, who had deceased unexpectedly the previous year. She offers to listen to Narek's "sad story".

It is revealed that the Romulan Reclamation Site is inside the wreckage of a Borg cube.

Maps and Legends

Season 1

Episode Number: 2

Season Episode: 2

Originally aired: Thursday January 30, 2020
Writer: Michael Chabon, Akiva Goldsman
Director: Hanelle Culpepper
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: David Paymer (Dr. Moritz Benayoun), Jamie McShane (Zhaban), Tamlyn Tomita (Commodore Oh), Orla Brady (Laris), David Carzell (Dahj's Boyfriend), Wendy Davis (Dr. Kabath), Chelsea Harris (Dr. Naashala Kunamadestifee), Peyton List (Lieutenant Narissa Rizzo), Ann Magnuson (Admiral Kirsten Clancy), Marti Matulis (Checkpoint Supervisor), Chaka Desilva (Burley Fuelie), Alex Diehl (F8), Kate Fuglei (Kvetchy Fuelie), Harrison Grant (Ensign), Anthony R. Jones (Pincus), Paul Keeley (Philosophical Fuelie), Jason Liles (Noiro), Meghan Lewis (Picard Computer / Planitia Computer Voice (voice)), Brit Manor (Tough Fuelie), Zachary James Rukavina (XB / Nameless)
Summary: Picard begins investigating the mystery of Dahj as well as what her very existence means to the Federation. Without Starfleet's support, Picard is left leaning on others for help, including Dr. Agnes Jurati and an estranged former colleague, Raffi Musiker. Meanwhile, hidden enemies are also interested in where Picard's search for the truth about Dahj will lead.



In 2385, at the Utopia Planitia Shipyards, it is First Contact Day and a skeleton crew is working during the holiday. A full collection of artificial lifeforms is in storage; they each have a designation with a letter and number branded on their foreheads. Created by the Daystrom Institute's Division of Advanced Synthetic Research, each has the same yellow-gold skin and golden eyes as Data did.

The synth F8 interacts with the skeleton crew, having them banter back and forth with him; they try telling jokes and, as with Data, the synth has no understanding of humor. It seems that these

artificial lifeforms are far less advanced than Data was as they have no ability to interact with the people on any manageable level, leaving an awkwardness to the people working there. F8

F8 smiles at a joke without understanding it

As they continue, one of the workers comments that F8 creeps her out and another admonishes her for it, with the retort being that the synths are not people and it does not matter if she says things that would offend a Human.

Later in the day as the crew is having their lunch, F8 appears to either malfunction or be taken over by an unknown source as his irises glitch; he begins tampering with the consoles and

lowering the shields for the base. When the crew begin to notice his actions, one crew member attempts to stop him; when he gets within arm's length, F8 breaks the man's neck without hesitating.

What appears to be the planetary defense grid is activated and turns towards the planet. One of the station's crew calls for security, explaining that F8 has been compromised. As she is doing this, F8 walks to the side of the room and picks up a welder, using it to murder the entire staff and the security officers who arrive to respond.

His job done, as the planetary defenses fire, F8 raises the welder to his head, terminating himself.

Back at Château Picard in 2399, Jean-Luc Picard and his housekeepers Laris and Zhaban review the security footage at Starfleet Headquarters showing the blast that injured Picard and killed Dahj Asha. The computer tells them that there was no trace of Dahj at the scene. To have erased Dahj's presence, Zhaban states that it matches the Tal Shiar's methods except for the fact that this happened out of their reach on Earth, but Laris believes the Zhat Vash, a secretive facade for the Tal Shiar, is more likely to have done so.

The housekeepers, former Tal Shiar operatives, explain to Picard that the Zhat Vash is known as a myth for scaremongering, but is actually an organization established thousands of years ago to keep secrets. Laris reveals that as a recruit, one of her first handlers had told her the Zhat Vash holds a deep loathing and fear of artificial lifeforms. (Zhaban interjects that his father had gotten the handler, his mother, drunk on Romulan ale at the time.) Laris justifies the existence of the Zhat Vash, pointing to the absence of androids, artificial intelligence, and studies on cybernetics in Romulan culture. Romulan computers are limited purely to numerical functions.

Picard and Laris beam into Dahj's apartment, where her boyfriend Caler was murdered and find the place lived in but otherwise undisturbed. Laris takes out a device used to conduct molecular reconstruction, a Romulan forensics technique. Picard reminds her that the technique is illegal in the Federation and its results are dubious. Grinning, Laris explains that is exactly what the Romulans wish the Federation to believe. She holds the device in her hand and sweeps it across the room, emitting a thin blue ray. When the ray reaches the couch, a reconstruction shows Dahj and Caler conversing moments before Caler's death: even the music that was playing can be heard.

But the reconstruction terminates moments later, immediately prior to the three Romulans beaming in; Laris finds the termination extraordinary and suspects that the Zhat Vash has wiped the particle residuals and saturated the room with antileptons, even though this would have been at no small risk to themselves. Seeing the Zhat Vash's ability to remove forensic traces, Picard begins to believe the Zhat Vash exists.

To find the whereabouts of Soji Asha, Dahj's identical twin sister, Picard suggests they scour Dahj's digital assistant for records indicating that Dahj had contacted Soji. They find that even though the data still exists, the index sorting the data has been deleted. Laris then taps into the heuristics that the computer has built to quickly identify its owner, which may contain tags created when the digital assistant corrected itself after misidentifying Soji for Dahj. Incoming records cannot show where Soji is located, but it indicates that she is not on Earth.

Narek and Soji talk about living in the wreckage of the Borg cube that she calls the Artifact. The Artifact is severed from the Borg Collective and thus is vulnerable. Narek complains that the ship itself is not very Romulan, with the exceptions of the owners and the extraction of Borg technology, which creates a sizable profit. They both joke that Soji was sent by their enemies and since she slept with Narek, he became an accessory to the fact; now she has to be silenced. They both share an intimate moment before the alarm goes off and it's time for both to get going to work. Soji asks if it's allowed for the two of them to be sleeping together, and Narek says definitely not and asks in Romulan if she can keep a secret, which she can. Kissing her on the forehead, he replies that so can he, at which she scoffs at while smiling.

Back on Earth, Picard is visited by Dr. Moritz Benayoun, an old friend from his time on the USS Stargazer; Picard says it's been a very long time. Picard offers some tea and mentions that his office will be forwarding the medical information to Starfleet once he's seen the results. Mortiz stays silent and suggests to the retired admiral that he should get something stronger.

Mortiz says that his medical scan results were at or above Starfleet minimums in every category and he was amazed that even at his age Picard is in excellent health, with one exception: an abnormality in the parietal lobe in his brain, which Picard was aware could be a problem. When

asked what it could be, Mortiz says bluntly that while there are a number of prognoses and treatment options, they all end the same way. Picard asks Mortiz to certify him for interstellar travel with Starfleet. Mortiz questions why he wants to go back out in space knowing his condition but, says if Picard's lucky, the trouble he's going to get into will kill him first.

Arriving at Starfleet Headquarters in San Francisco, Picard enters the building and views a hologram of the USS Enterprise before it changes to a familiar ship: the USS Enterprise-D. He is greeted by a young ensign at the desk and mentions he has a meeting with the CNC (commander in chief). The ensign gives him a visitor badge and mentions to the admiral that it's nice to see him up and around again. Picard goes upstairs to an office where he meets Fleet Admiral Kirsten Clancy. Clancy questions why he's a Starfleet Headquarters, and Picard says he is looking for Bruce Maddox and mentions that Maddox is using neurons from the late Lieutenant Commander Data to create a new organic synthetic. Clancy confirms that is exactly what he's doing, and says it gets better when Picard mentions Romulan involvement. Picard says that if there's a chance that whatever is left of Data is somewhere out there, the Federation owes it to him to investigate. While Picard concedes that they have frequently not seen eye-to-eye, he requests that she temporarily reinstate him to Starfleet and be given command of a small reconnaissance vessel with a minimal crew for one mission only. He also suggests that if his rank of admiral is too conspicuous, then he will accept a demotion to captain.

Right away, Clancy blasts Picard's suggestion, calling it "sheer fucking hubris", and mentions Picard's FNN interview, which Picard concedes that was a mistake. The admiral reminds Picard that the Romulans were their enemies and even before the Attack on Mars, there were fourteen species within the Federation that were threatening to cut ties with them, so they were faced with either saving the Romulans and allowing the Federation to implode or leaving the Romulans to their fate. Picard says that it's not up to the Federation to decide which species lives or dies, but Clancy says they do, as thousands of species within the Federation rely on one another for unity and cohesion. She also adds that they didn't have enough ships so they had to make choices, but she mentions that Picard didn't like his orders. Immediately Picard gets up from his chair and states he was standing up for what the Federation represents, what it should still represent. Clancy immediately takes offense at his lecturing and Picard warns that she can ignore him at her cost and that she's in peril, but all she sees are pitiable delusions from a once-great man desperate to matter, and she tells him in no uncertain terms to go home, and officially denies his request to be reinstated.

At the reclamation site, Soji is in the changing room, dressed in an orange overall. She helps a female Trill having trouble with the fasteners on her overall who had just arrived. Noting that the Romulans either don't yet know the extent of the damage the cube sustained — or maybe they do and don't tell anyone — she puts a device on herself and the Trill, and turns it on. She smiles and tells her new friend she's going to be fine.

Just before entering the gray zone, the checkpoint supervisor welcomes a group of workers, telling them that, as guests of the Borg Artifact Research Institute, their safety is very important. He reminds them not to venture outside their designated areas.

The Trill suddenly notices Narek, wondering who he is. Soji tells her his name. The Trill remarks that she didn't know Romulans could be so hot. Soji concurs, with a smile on her face.

The supervisor remarks that it's possible they will encounter former members of the Collective, and if the badge starts to blink green, they must run.

The doors open, and the workers pass through some sort of screening field to enter the gray zone. Narek approaches, and Soji starts to introduce her new friend, but he already knows her: Doctor Naáshala Kunamadéstifée, of Trill Polytech. Naáshala is worried that the cube could be reconnected to the Collective, but both Soji and Narek reassure her there is no danger: the link is broken, and to the Collective, this cube is just a graveyard.

As she begins to enter, Narek stops Soji and asks if he can join her for the procedure. She responds that he needs to get approval from the director of the project. She leaves, and Narek mutters that he actually doesn't.

Back at La Barre, Doctor Agnes Jurati is visiting Picard. When he thanks her for coming over, she jokes that it was hard to tear away from the action at her lab. When asked what tea she'd like, she responds Earl Grey, much to Picard's delight. She gathered Maddox's work from his ten years at the institute, but it's mostly redacted. She also did some digging into Dahj and confirms that she was accepted into Daystrom. In fact, she was a little too perfect a candidate.

Doctor Jurati has a feeling that her entire identity was created all at once, around three years ago. Picard wonders if Maddox could have done that, and she says he had the ability but doesn't know what his motive could be. Jurati tells Picard that he should not look for what Dahj was after, but rather look for the other android. If she's out there, where is she, and what is she after?

Back at the reclamation site, Dr. Kabath, a Romulan scientist, is recording her procedure as she removes the left arm implant of a "nameless" Borg. Soji resents Kabath calling the Borg "nameless", arguing that he had a name, and they just don't know what it was. Kabath responds that "Nameless" is a name. She then removes the ocular processing core from the drone's left eye. Soji holds the drone's hand, and whispers in Romulan: "You are free, my friend".

It's 9 pm at Château Picard, and the admiral is in his study. He picks up a silver box and takes something out of it. He walks outside, pins what looks like his old combadge on his chest, and, after a second or two of hesitation, he taps it and calls Raffi, telling her to not hang up, he needs her help: he needs a ship.

At Starfleet headquarters, Commodore Oh, a Starfleet officer appearing to be Vulcan, has been contacted by Admiral Clancy about Picard, of whom Oh says that they all thought that the "Hermit of La Barre" was safely mothballed at his vineyard; suddenly he is inescapable. When Clancy mentions Maddox's name, Oh is interested in knowing if he is still alive, but Clancy doesn't think it matters. Clancy goes on about Picard's "wild talk", saying it was sad. Oh reminds Clancy that if there were clandestine Romulan operations on Earth, she would know, and then Clancy would know, because it would be an intolerable act of war. Clancy agrees, but says she just wanted to check in with her. She doesn't put any stock into what Picard claimed, but out of an abundance of caution, she wants Oh to look into it. As soon as the conversation is over, Oh calls for Lieutenant Rizzo.

Back in La Barre, Laris is furious about Picard's plan to seek out Soji. He states that the daughter of his good friend has come to him for help, and was killed in front of his eyes by a Romulan death squad that will probably seek and destroy her twin sister, and wonders if Laris wants him to sit here doing nothing. She responds she wants him not to die. He says he has to go, and even though he doesn't fully understand all of it, he knows that it's important, and not only to him. Laris tells him to go, and take Zahban with him, so they can die together.

After Laris storms out of the study, Zahban notes that she does understand, but is simply worried for Picard. Arguing that the grapes are far more in need of protection than he is, the admiral tells the Romulan that he needs to stay behind for Laris and that the harvest is in less than a month. Zahban suggests that Picard contact his old crew, such as Riker, Worf, or La Forge because he'll need the help. Picard had considered it, but ultimately decided against it: he won't ask them because he knows they would do it in a heartbeat and put themselves at risk out of loyalty to him, and he just can't go through that again. Zahban concludes then that he needs someone who hates him and has nothing to lose. Picard informs him that he's already made the call.

In San Francisco, Lt. Rizzo, a Human female, enters Commodore Oh's office, who is examining a freeze-frame of the rooftop feed. She asks the lieutenant if the reflection off a metal handrail happens to look like disruptor fire, but Rizzo denies it. The commodore relates her conversation with Admiral Clancy, and tells the lieutenant that Picard has information about clandestine Romulan operations on Earth. Oh also reports that Picard named Zhat Vash, and that he tried to get a ship to find Bruce Maddox, although she adds that Clancy didn't mention either of those points. The lieutenant wonders how the commodore knows, but Oh takes offense at the question. Rizzo apologizes, noting that the situation is "unexpected", which Oh says is a "dirty word", perhaps the worst of all in their "line of work". Rizzo asks if she needs to take care of Picard, but Oh responds that while Rizzo's zeal and passion are commendable, they are nearly overbalanced by her impatience, which is not a good thing for an undercover agent. Oh believes that Clancy has adequately discouraged Picard but if the need arises, Oh will take care of him herself. She wants Rizzo to stay on her mission, and even though her team destroyed "the thing", losing the opportunity to interrogate it and nearly blew their cover, she now has a second opportunity that she must not squander. Having avoided eye contact during the reprimand, Rizzo says she has her best man on it, but that doesn't seem to reassure the commodore, noting that Rizzo's agent has a "troubling penchant for the unexpected", and she's had it with surprises: "everything is at stake". Rizzo vouches for the agent with her life; Oh agrees that her life is very much at stake and strongly recommends that Rizzo personally see to it that her man, and thus Rizzo, do not fail.

Picard gets out of a taxi shuttle in the middle of Vasquez Rocks, the only thing with him a bottle of Chateau Picard in a net bag. He walks to a house, from which a woman emerges with an energy rifle. She tells him he can call the taxi back and go back the way he came. His hands raised, Picard responds he just wants to talk, but there is nothing he can say she wants to hear. He turns around, noting as he walks away that secret Romulan assassins are operating on Earth. She asks if the bottle he brought is "the '86", powers down her weapon, and reluctantly invites Picard back.

Back on the cube, Rizzo appears to Narek as a hologram. He opines that her surgically-rounded ears look ridiculous, making her look "like a plucked wakak"; she tells him to shut up. On his progress, he says that indeed he has made some and that his approach (which she signed off on), although slow, is the only sound one. She hopes so for both their sake: if it doesn't start paying off soon, she'll have to un-approve it. She tells him that Commodore Oh is "quite distressed" and that having long been a useful ally, they can't afford her turning on them. She then informs Narek that she will arrive soon. He takes offense, stating that he is on top of it. Turning to the unmade bed, Rizzo confirms that it would seem so. She then asks if he found the nest, and if "the machine" has given up the location of its fellow abominations. He doesn't respond and walks through her image. She says that a lot of people have reservations about his approach, and calls him "baby brother". If he doesn't have any results by the time she arrives, she will have to try her own approach, and that won't be a pleasant one; another disastrous outcome will consume them both.

The End is the Beginning

Season 1
Episode Number: 3
Season Episode: 3

Originally aired: Thursday February 06, 2020
Writer: Michael Chabon, James Duff
Director: Hanelle Culpepper
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jonathan Del Arco (Hugh), Peyton List (Narissa Rizzo), Jamie McShane (Zhaban), Tamlyn Tomita (Commodore Oh), Orla Brady (Laris), Rebecca Wisocky (Ramdha), Sumalee Montano (Soji's Mother), Graham Shiels (Tal Shiar Operative), Son of Lee (Guard), Erik Armando Alvarez (Birdan), Willow Geer (Romulan Refugee), Ken Lyle (Fruit Vendor), Ian Nunney (Young Elnor)
Summary: Completely unaware of her special nature, Soji continues her work and captures the attention of the Borg cube research project's executive director. After rehashing past events with a reluctant Raffi, Picard seeks others willing to join his search for Bruce Maddox, including pilot and former Starfleet officer Cristóbal Rios.



Outside Starfleet Headquarters, Jean-Luc Picard meets with his XO, Raffi Musiker, after the synth attack on Mars, where they discuss the ramifications of the attack. Musiker is optimistic that the evacuation plan for the Romulans can still be achieved if Starfleet were to create a new fleet of mothballed starships and reserve duty officers, alongside synthetic labor; however, Picard informs her that effective immediately, synthetic lifeforms have been banned throughout the Federation, that any existing synthetics are being dismantled, and that any further research into synths has been halted.

Musiker does not buy the explanation that the attack was the result of a fatal code error, and suspects the Tal Shiar of sabotaging the synths, though Picard is skeptical that the Romulans would attack a fleet designed specifically to assist them.

Musiker remains eager to help the Romulans evacuate from the impending supernova, but Picard seems distraught. Asking about his distress, Picard informs her that the Federation has halted any further plans to lend assistance to the Romulans, and that many of them never wanted to assist the Romulans at all. Picard tells Musiker that he gave Starfleet a choice: to accept the revised Romulan evacuation plan, or to accept his resignation. Starfleet accepted his resignation, much to Picard's shock.

Musiker remains adamant about acting, unwilling to accept that this is the end of their efforts, but Picard admits that he has run out of ideas for further action, and that he believes that mounting a multi-world evacuation of tens of millions of Romulans without Starfleet's support would not be possible. Musiker insists that she cannot move forward without Picard's help, when

the CNC summons her. Realizing that she is about to lose her commission with Starfleet, she scolds Picard for giving up, and angrily leaves him, ignoring his calls to her.

At Vasquez Rocks, Picard and Musiker talk about the two synthetics and discuss the plan to find Bruce Maddox. Musiker seems noticeably uninterested and scolds him again, saying he has some nerve to come there, and that she had already heard of his plan from Fleet Admiral Clancy, and she sarcastically gives him advice not to tell the CNC of Starfleet about his unauthorized mission to find Maddox. She mentions the FNN interview which Picard dubs an "unmitigated disaster", and rants about him living in a chateau while she's living in a hovel. She mentions that since his resignation and her dismissal from Starfleet, the past fourteen years have been one big humiliation and rage, plus some snakeleaf-induced paranoia. She continues her grievance by suggesting it would have been nice to hear from him for a reason other than finding a pilot for his mission, such as just checking in on her, because she was not doing well at all. She begins to break down in tears when she tells him that she lost her security clearance, but she is unable to finish. She springs off her chair with the bottle of Chateau Picard and leaves, warning Picard not to touch her. All Picard can do is watch, but he immediately gets up and calls out her name.

On the Artifact, a now fully liberated Hugh is watching Soji Asha speak to the nameless unconscious Borg in its native tongue. Intrigued, he pays Asha a visit, and commemorates her for her work, and for speaking to the unconscious "xB" in his language. Asha replies that it was Hugh that taught her that even in an unconscious state, that such words can be soothing to an individual. Hugh informs Asha that he's granted her an interview with an xB by the name of Ramdha, and admits that after seeing her behavior earlier, it helped influence his decision, though he is curious as to why Asha is interested in interviewing Ramdha. Asha asks what Hugh knows about Ramdha prior to her assimilation into the Borg Collective, and asks if he has read her Romulan dossier. Hugh tells her he has not, before realizing that Asha has. He asks her how she managed that, and she replies that she merely asked to see it, noting that when she asks, people are happy to help her. Hugh replies it is usually the opposite for him, especially with Romulans. Asha says that Ramdha was an expert in Ancient Romulan Mythology, and notes that she wrote about evidence for a therapeutic utility of a shared mythical framework. Intrigued, Hugh grants permission for a thirty minute interview with Ramdha.

Back on Earth, Picard catches up with Musiker, and tells her that he understands her anger towards him. He admits that he disappointed her, neglected her, and wasn't there for her when he should have been and apologizes for it. She only replies that she doesn't care. However, when Picard once more brings up that there are indeed Tal Shiar operatives on Earth, and that they could not be there without some complicity from the Federation, she finally listens to what he has to say. Picard remembers that Musiker had always suspected the connections between the Romulans and Federation, but she says that those suspicions were only of the Mars attack. She elaborates that she doesn't just assume such connections, but that she has concrete evidence that a high-ranking Starfleet official willfully allowed the attack to happen on Mars, and end the rescue mission. Picard remains skeptical that the Romulans would sabotage their own rescue, to which Musiker simply replies that is exactly what happens with a cover-up: they conceal their reasons. Picard responds that he wants her help because she is good at seeing the things that other people are unable to see in this manner. However, Musiker refuses, and says she will not get herself involved in this sort of thing with Picard again. Before Picard can try to convince her otherwise, she demands him to leave. As Picard begins to walk away, she looks back to him and says that she knows a pilot who she will have contact him. Picard thanks her, before leaving.

At the Daystrom Institute in Okinawa, Dr. Agnes Jurati is enjoying a picnic, and listening to opera through some ear buds, before she turns around to see Commodore Oh, wearing shades, waiting for her to see her. She introduces herself as the director of Starfleet Security, and tells her she'd like to speak to her in regards to her recent visits with Picard.

On the Artifact, Hugh and Asha are walking to the unit where Ramdha is being held. Hugh approaches a Romulan guard outside the unit, and informs him that Asha will be meeting with Ramdha. The guard says that she needs authorization, but Hugh replies that as his unit is operated but the Reclamation Project, he has granted the authority, as the project's executive director. The guard grants them access without further protest, and follows Hugh and Asha into the unit which is full of Romulan xBs, all of which are busying themselves with certain simple tasks. Asking about it, Asha is told by Hugh that these are the only known Romulans to have ever been assimilated into the Borg Collective. They spot Ramdha at a nearby table, laying out

a peculiar set of cards in a certain fashion. They approach her, and Asha greets Ramdha, who merely looks at them, before returning to her cards without a word.

Back on Earth, at her home, Musiker is sitting outside, looking at a particular file on a tablet, when she gets a call from Picard. Although she hesitates, she answers, and asks what he wants. He correctly guesses that she is researching what they spoke about earlier, though she denies it. He then sends her everything that the Daystrom Institute has on Bruce Maddox, before leaving her to continue with her work.

In orbit of Earth, the *La Sirena* beams Picard onboard into an empty transporter room. A few moments later, the ship's Emergency Medical Hologram greets Picard, and leads him to the ship's captain, Cristóbal Rios. Rios is smoking, and has a large piece of tritanium shrapnel embedded into his shoulder, which the EMH begins to treat as he and Picard introduce themselves to one another. Rios offers Picard a drink, which Picard politely declines, before telling Picard to sit anywhere. Rios asks Picard about where they will be going, since Musiker informed him that Picard wasn't sure of their destination. Picard only responds that he's working on it, and that he will want to leave as soon as possible. Asking if there will be any illegal activity, Picard only responds that he doesn't know, but that he isn't in the habit of consulting lawyers before doing what needs to be done. The EMH successfully removes the shrapnel from Rios' shoulder, but is deactivated by Rios before he allows the EMH to patch his wound. Picard delves a bit more into Rios and his Starfleet history, in which Rios was a former Executive Officer aboard a cruiser called the *ibn Majid*; a ship that has since been stricken from Starfleet records. Picard notices a distinct bitterness from Rios in his attitude towards Starfleet, and tells Rios of his own falling out with Starfleet. Picard also notes the impeccable shape that the *La Sirena* is in, and that Rios has maintained and stowed everything in accordance with Starfleet protocol. Despite not knowing what happened with Rios in his past with Starfleet, or his old ship, Picard believes that Rios is still Starfleet to his core, to which Rios responds that is only his tragic sense of life. He also asks Picard to hire him or someone else, but to stay out of his head.

Meanwhile, Musiker has indeed continued to research Bruce Maddox's location, and after a considerable amount of research, traces some quantum fingerprinting connected to Maddox originating on Freecloud.

Back on the *La Sirena*, the ship's Emergency Navigational Hologram informs Rios that the ship's navigation sensors are back at their maximum range, before inquiring about Rios and his encounter with Picard. The ENH begins to list off the achievements and commemorations that Picard had earned in his Starfleet career, and tells Rios that Picard is a good man, and that it's been a long time since Rios has served with someone like him. Rios only laments that he does not need another grand heroic captain to work along side of, especially since the last time he had such a captain, he was killed, and that the death of this captain still haunts him.

Back at Château Picard, Picard and Laris stand outside, where Picard is reminiscing the familiar scents of the harvest season. Laris asks if he will miss it, to which Picard says that he will miss her, Zhaban, and Number One, but that despite trying his best to belong at the château, that he never truly felt at home. Laris only responds that she supposes that Picard always kept one eye on the stars.

Hugh and Asha continue to watch Ramdha arrange her cards on the table, and discern the meanings of certain symbols shown on each card. Soji sees a symbol for a door, which Hugh clarifies as meaning "shaipouin," or "false door," fitting with traditional Romulan housing, which feature a false front door which is never used. Asha then sits behind Ramdha, and asks for entry to Ramdha in Romulan. Ramdha doesn't take her eyes from the cards, and continues to lay them out, but finally invites Asha to join her at the table.

Back at Château Picard, Zhaban is giving Picard the last of his supplies, when the household is suddenly attacked by the Zhat Vash. Immediately taking cover, the Romulan assassins make their way into the house, and are fought by Laris, Zhaban, and Picard. Laris and Zhaban are successful in defending Picard as they fight the intruders off, successfully stunning many agents. After seemingly dispatching with every assassin, and making sure everyone is alright, another assassin charges into the house, only to be killed by Dr. Jurati, who seems mortified by the entire scene. Picard settles her down and comforts her as Laris and Zhaban restrain one of the unconscious assassins for interrogation. Jurati tells Picard of her conversation with Commodore Oh, and how Oh had inquired about why Picard had come to visit her at the institute. She reveals that she told Oh why he had come to her, and that she felt it was important to tell Oh the truth.

Jurati tells Picard that she did not tell Oh one thing. Before she can say what this is however, the assassin that Laris and Zhaban have restrained awakens, and Picard goes to question him. Picard asks the assassin why the Tal Shiar are on Earth, and if he himself is of the Zhat Vash, and promises that if he answers the questions, Picard will have him released. The assassin is silent, and Zhaban remains skeptical that an interrogation will be successful. Picard asks why the Zhat Vash killed Dahj Asha, to which the assassin only responds by saying that Dahj was not a girl. Picard asks for help in understanding everything that's happening, and the assassin says that she is not what Picard thinks she is, and that he will not find her before the Zhat Vash do. He calls the other sister the end of all; the Destroyer, before he bites down on a capsule and spits acid on Zhaban. While Zhaban is successful in quickly taking off his coat before the acid can hurt him, the assassin disintegrates before he can say another word.

On the Artifact, Asha begins her interview with Ramdha, though she seemingly gains little progress in speaking to Ramdha. Hugh tells her that Ramdha is known for having both good days and bad days. Asha asks about Ramdha's cards, which she calls pixmit, asking if Ramdha tells fortunes with them like a mandala. She asks if each symbol has a certain connection to Romulan mythology, however at the word, Ramdha expresses disliking of the term, and refers to the cards as the news. The concept intrigues Asha, who shows huge interest in the idea that she is able to express her trauma in such a manner that is rooted in deep archetypes, but still relevant. Asha expresses that she hopes to succeed in a similar fashion with her own work. At this, Ramdha gazes at Asha, visibly disturbed, and says that she knows her, and that she remembers Asha from tomorrow. Asha is confused by what she means, and asks her what she was doing. Asha tells Ramdha that she was onboard the very last ship the Shaenor, the Artifact assimilated when it was a part of the Borg Collective, shortly before the cube's submatrix collapse. Hugh seems confused as to how Asha would know this information. Asha asks Ramdha if she knows what happened, but Ramdha completely ignores the question, instead focusing on another of her cards. Ramdha asks Asha which sister she is, the one who dies, or lives. Ramdha then grabs the disruptor of a nearby guard, and aims it at Asha, fearfully saying she knows who she is, identifying Asha as "Shen-Cheneb", the Destroyer. Ramdha then aims he disruptor at her own head, but before she can fire, Asha rushes to her side and disarms her. Hugh immediately calms Ramdha, and settles the situation, while the other Romulan xB's in the room eye Asha in a fearful manner, much to her confusion.

Distressed at the scene that had just occurred, Asha calls her mother and asks if Dahj is alright, to which her mother responds that Dahj is fine. While her mother talks about what Dahj is up to, Soji seemingly becomes exhausted and falls unconscious while her mother continues to speak.

Later, she is awakened by Narek, who has come to her quarters after hearing what had happened. Asking about it, Asha expresses confusion as before the interview, she didn't recall ever hearing about the Shaenor, or knowing that Ramdha had been onboard the ship. She merely attributes this to the fact that she must have learned of the fact through one of the many unclassified documents about the Artifact. When she asks Narek if he believes her, she whispers in her ear that he believes he's falling in love with her, before they embrace each other.

Leaving her quarters, Narek meets with Narissa Rizzo in a hall, taking him by surprise. Rizzo is no longer undercover, and can smell that Asha has been very close with Narek, calling the scent carnal. She asks Narek what Asha has told him, to which Narek tells her that he's been told nothing, and that while he's unsure, he believes Asha has no idea of what she truly is, and after the incident on Earth, he believes it's best that she remain unsure of what she is. Rizzo realizes that the incident on Earth was a miscalculation, which is why she lets Narek continue with his own approach, but warns him to watch his feelings with Asha, before leaving him.

Back at Château Picard, Dr. Jurati informs Picard that the one thing she didn't tell Commodore Oh was that she would be joining Picard in his search for Dahj's sister. Picard then gets a call from Rios earlier than he expected. Rios tells him that his sources have told him that this mission is about to get hot, to which Picard says that it's already hot. Jurati makes her case to join, the she sees Dahj and her sister as a miracle that she needs to see for herself, and promises to earn her keep. Convinced, Picard and Jurati beam to the La Sirena.

Onboard, Picard is shocked to see Musiker onboard as well, and realizes that she was the source that Rios had spoken of. Musiker tells Picard that she's found Maddox, and tells Picard on the promise that he takes her with him to Freecloud. Picard at first is happy to have her join

them, but Musiker clarifies that she's not joining him, and that once they reach Freecloud, she will separate from them. Jurati asks Musiker why she wants to go to Freecloud, and Musiker treats Jurati with suspicion, and scolds Picard for letting her join when she wasn't able to run any security background checks on her. Picard asks why Musiker wants to go to Freecloud, and she refuses to answer. Rios simply asks if they can get underway, and they all take their positions. Picard smiles and gives his familiar "Engage" command, and the La Sirena heads to Freecloud at warp speed.

Absolute Candor

Season 1

Episode Number: 4

Season Episode: 4

Originally aired: Thursday February 13, 2020
Writer: Michael Chabon
Director: Jonathan Frakes
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Peyton List (Lieutenant Narissa Rizzo), Amira Vann (Zani), Rebecca Wisocky (Ramdha), Ian Nunnery (Young Elnor), Evan Parke (Tenqem Adrev), Erik Armando Alvarez (Bidran), Jaime Barcelon (Waiter), Kay Bess (La Sirena Computer (voice)), Donny Boaz (Skantal), David Chattam (Kibitzer #2), Willow Geer (Refugee #1), Djamel Hamdad (Refugee #2), Ken Lyle (Fruit Vendor), Linda Nile (Kibitzer #3), Ciro Suarez (Kibitzer #1), Heather Wynters (Shai), Sam Marra (Bartender), Michael Eshaun York (Terran Settler Kid)
Summary: The crew's journey to Freecloud takes a detour when Picard orders a stop at the planet Vashti, where Picard and Raffi relocated Romulan refugees 14 years earlier. Upon arrival, Picard reunites with Elnor, a young Romulan he befriended during the relocation. Meanwhile, Narek continues his attempts to learn more about Soji while Narissa's impatience with his lack of progress grows.



Jean-Luc Picard visits a Romulan Relocation Hub on Vashti in 2385. The settlement is lively, and the Romulans seem to be getting accustomed to their new lives as they go about their daily routines. When Picard beams down, many Romulans are excited to see him and rush over to him for any updates on the evacuation of Romulan worlds from the impending supernova. Picard is quick to assure them that the Federation will not abandon them and will help them settle in their new life.

A young boy named Elnor sees Picard beam down, hurries to the Gowat Milat's dwelling, and informs the sisters that Picard is coming. Shortly thereafter, Picard enters and greets everyone. Elnor is shy at first, but one of the warrior nuns, Zani, tells him to make himself seen, noting that he's been talking excitedly about Picard since his last visit. Elnor eagerly asks Picard if he brought him a present, to which Picard responds by giving Elnor a copy of *The Three Musketeers*. Zani rebukes Elnor's excited reactions, saying that Picard is not fond of emotional displays or children. Picard reassures Elnor that he's actually very fond of him, promising to read the book with Elnor later on. Picard thanks Zani and the Gowat Milat for their recent help in successfully relocating over ten thousand new refugees, and says that the Federation is in debt to them. He also gives Zani some sweet hanifak as a gift.

As they eat and speak, Picard notes how it must be difficult for Elnor, being the only boy in a house full of women, as the Qowat Milat is, by tradition, an all-female organization. Zani agrees that Elnor is loved, but does not belong with them. Picard promises that he will find a more suitable place for Elnor to live as soon as he can. Elnor and Picard in the meantime bond with each other on multiple ways, as Picard reads *The Three Musketeers* and gives Elnor fencing lessons. They are enjoying their time together when Raffi Musiker unexpectedly hails Picard. Picard tries to disregard the call, but is suddenly disturbed by what he hears, and responds "What do you mean, synths have attacked Mars?"

Informed of the devastating attack, Picard leaves earlier than anticipated. Picard meets with the nuns and assures them that he intends to make sure the mission to evacuate the Romulans moves forward as planned, and promises he will be back soon. Elnor just watches, hidden behind some curtains as Picard beams away.

La Sirena starts its warp drive as Cristóbal Rios sits on the bridge reading *The Tragic Sense of Life* when Doctor Agnes Jurati greets him. She attempts to engage him in conversation while he silently reads. She mentions that she was able to catch up on two years of back issues of the *Journal of Theoretical Cybernetics* and that she watered Rios' plants, and expresses confusion as to why Rios' holo-programs only include Klingon opera, to which he says is a long story. Jurati then remembers how she used to live with someone who loved reading paper books, and how she would bother him when he read them. Rios asks what he did about it, and Jurati only responds that since the person was her father, he just had to put up with it. It's then that Raffi Musiker angrily enters the bridge after noticing an abrupt change in the navigational log. Demanding to know where they're going, Rios tells her that Picard requested a stop at Vashti on their way to Freecloud.

Picard meanwhile is in a holographic recreation of his study back at Château Picard. He pauses the recreation, and the Emergency Hospitality Hologram asks if the program is inaccurate, to which Picard replies that everything seems absolutely correct. The EHH seems pleased, noting that the holoscans that Zhaban provided were very detailed, and that they were meant to make Picard feel more at home. Picard notes the strange presence of the EHH on the ship, to which the EHH says that while he came with the basic installation, his services on La Sirena are very rarely needed. Musiker then enters the holodeck, inquiring about Picard's decision to go to Vashti. Rios enters, and expresses his disdain for the EHH as the hologram deactivates. They join Picard for a cup of tea, and Musiker states her opinion that going to Vashti is a bad idea. Picard says that he is as eager to get to Freecloud as Musiker is, to which she immediately denies being eager. Jurati then enters the holodeck, and Musiker, in frustration, says that they can go to Vashti. Rios notes that the Qiris sector has been sketchy with criminal activity. He points out that it's mainly a power vacuum for smugglers and warlords like Kar Kantar, who practically controls the sector with a 23rd century Bird-of-Prey. Musiker scolds Rios for not telling Picard this information sooner, but Rios simply replies that he figured Picard already knew. Picard notes that the Qiris sector is in the territory belonging to the Fenris Rangers, only for Rios to correct him that the Rangers no longer control the area due to a lack of resources.

Musiker also mentions that Vashti is home to many Romulans of the Romulan Rebirth movement, and doubts that Picard will be successful in getting the services of one of the Qowat Milat warrior nuns. Jurati expresses confusion by what she means, and Musiker tells her that Picard is looking to hire an assassin. Picard clarifies that the nuns are not assassins, and that they can't be hired. Picard is going in the hopes that one will willfully choose someone. Picard talks about his past dealings with the Qowat Milat, and how they helped him and Musiker relocate more than a quarter of a million refugees during the evacuations. He also says that they are perhaps the most skilled warriors he's ever seen, and that even the Tal Shiar fear them. Rios is skeptical of Picard's ambitions to gain their service when it sounds like Picard owes more to them than they would to him. Picard notes that they have their own criteria on whether to give or hold their services for a cause. Picard is also confident that the nuns will find their cause worthy, noting that even if they don't, the Way of Absolute Candor will bind them to let him know. Picard resumes the holographic recreation, and Musiker approaches him and tries to reason with him. She understands that Dahj's death is making Picard think of Elnor, and asks that they focus on one thing at a time, and for them to get to Freecloud before going to Vashti. However, Picard tells her that they will still go, since he may not ever get the chance to come this way again. He then exits the holodeck, and heads for his quarters.

On the Artifact, Soji Asha is watching a holographic projection of an old Romulan talk show while she arranges pixmit cards. In the projection, Ramdha is talking about Ganmadan, which the Romulans say is the Day of Annihilation. She says how the day is the end of all life everywhere, when shackled demons will answer the call of Seb-Cheneb, the Destroyer. As she says this, Soji looks disturbed, remembering what Ramdha had called her a short time ago.

La Sirena reaches Vashti where they are met with a planetary defense system that the Fenris Rangers had helped to install. Musiker calls the system primitive but effective. She notes that every thirty minutes, the shield opens up for interstellar traffic with clearance, and that ships without clearance are immediately fired upon. She's also been unable to get the clearance to pass, saying that even when she said that Picard was aboard, the Romulans were unimpressed. Rios suggests that they offer a cash gift instead.

Picard beams down to Vashti's Romulan Relocation Hub. He is shocked to see that in the last fourteen years, the hub has not fared well. While still heavily populated by Romulan refugees, the settlement suffers from poverty, degradation, and ethnic strife. Unlike the last time he was here, Romulans ignore his presence and his overtures as he attempts to greet some. A few eye him in contempt from afar. One even signals another Romulan through a communicator when he sees Picard. Picard makes his way to the house of the Qowat Milat, where he sees Zani. He greets her, and though surprised to see him, she and the other sisters return his greeting. Picard is happy to see her, and tells her that though he knows he has no right to ask, that he needs her help one last time. A loud crash is heard, and a grown-up Elnor dashes through the curtains, apologizing before he realizes Picard is standing before him.

Soji is monitoring Ramdha as Ramdha lays on a biobed, unconscious. Narek enters and notes how Ramdha has always been tormented, saying that he isn't surprised she attempted suicide. Soji doesn't understand why she feels drawn to her, but blames herself for Ramdha's outburst, saying that it was something about her that disturbed Ramdha, but that when Ramdha saw her, she felt seen. They go to the mess hall and share a bottle of Romulan ale, and Soji admits that Narek's mysterious nature challenges her paradigm. She asks Narek how he knew she would go to the Disordered Ward, to which Narek denies that he knew at all. She asks if Narek has been watching her, which he also denies. Soji notes his lack of uniform, insignia, and rank, and that he knows an unusual amount of information, and can go wherever he pleases on the artifact, leading her to the conclusion that he is working with the Tal Shiar. Narek denies this as well, though admits that if he was Tal Shiar, he would still deny it. Soji asks him about the Shaenor, but he claims not to know anything, saying that he's sure the Borg databases have those records. Soji says those records are classified and asks if he has access to them, which Narek says he doesn't, but might know someone who does.

Narek then takes her to one of the cube's ventilation shafts. While they walk there, they talk about Ramdha, and how Soji learned to speak fluent Romulan. Narek concludes that she had to have learned it sometime before May 12th, 2396, when Soji left for the Beta Quadrant aboard the Ellison. Soji confirms that Narek has indeed been watching her. They reach the ventilation shaft, and Narek has Soji remove her shoes. Afterward he runs down the shaft and glides along the floor with a gleeful cheer, and she does the same. The two enjoy themselves as they glide through the shaft and engage in a kiss, before Narek tells Soji that the Ellison's passenger list shows no record of her ever having been aboard the ship. Soji once more says she was, and when she realizes that Narek is accusing her of lying about it, she angrily says "To hell with you". She begins to leave him, before he once more asks if she is interested in accessing the classified Borg data files on the Shaenor. She asks what he's doing, and he simply responds that he's doing the same thing she is; feeding an insatiable curiosity.

On La Sirena, Musiker picks up a transmission and realizes that someone has identified Picard on Vashti, and has sent out an alert to other Romulans. When they recommend to Picard that they beam him out, he declines, and says he needs more time to converse with the Qowat Milat. Musiker warns him that there is a lot of anger in the Romulans for what happened between them and Picard in the past, but Picard emphasizes that he is safe with the Qowat Milat. Rios then detects an incoming ship, which turns out to be Kar Katar's Bird-of-Prey. Picard tells them to do what they need to do, but he needs more time, before terminating communications.

On Vashti, Picard and Zani continue to talk. Zani tells Picard how most of the Qowat Milat sisters serve as freeblades. Picard asks if they still bind themselves to a cause, and Zani says they do if the cause is judged worthy. Elnor brings a meal to Picard, which Picard politely declines,

but this upsets Elnor, who exits the house. Zani realizes that Picard is shamed in seeing that Elnor never did find a new home after all these years, but Picard also laments in the state of the Relocation Hub, and how it has degraded so badly since the Federation cut ties with the Romulans. Zani simply observes that because Picard was unable to save everyone, he saved no one. Picard responds that he allowed the perfect to become the enemy of the good. Zani asks him what his cause is in regards to his inquiry for the Qowat Milat, and when Picard mentions that he will be taking on the Tal Shiar, Zani recommends that Picard talk to Elnor of his cause. Though Elnor can never truly be of the Qowat Milat since he's a man, Zani tells Picard that Elnor's skills in battle are formidable, and that though the journey may be dangerous, and may even kill Elnor in the end, she will be happy knowing that he will have ended up living, rather than dying on Vashti.

Picard approaches Elnor to formally ask him to judge his cause. He recalls how Data sacrificed his life to save Picard's life. He goes on to say that he had recently learned that Data had two offspring, how one was murdered in front of Picard, and how Picard wished to find the second one to save it from the same fate. Mentioning that the Tal Shiar are hunting her, Elnor surmises that the other sister is an android, then recalls stories that Picard had told him about Data, and his pet, Spot. Elnor then asks Picard why he needs Elnor, and Picard mentions his failure to protect Dahj. Elnor mentions that Picard doesn't know where the other sister is, if she's even alive, if Bruce Maddox is still alive, and that Picard anticipates pursuit by the Tal Shiar. Elnor mentions that Picard needs someone, but once more asks why Picard needs him specifically. Picard mentions that Elnor is young and strong, and that Zani had recommended Elnor to him. Picard believes his cause to be appropriate for the criteria of the Qowat Milat, but Elnor gets upset once more and recalls how Picard had left him on his own all those years ago, and ignoring Picard's pleas, leaves Picard, saying he has no reason not to do the same.

Picard lets Rios know that he's ready to leave, and Rios lets him know that the next available window for transport will be in seven minutes. Picard returns to the center of the settlement, and noticing a restaurant that serves only Romulans, decides to defy the warning, and enters the restaurant. Many Romulans take offense to this, but none confront him as he greets them, and sits down, attempting to get service. He is then approached by an ex-Romulan Senator named Tenqem Adrev, who introduces himself to Picard and mentions how he was present when Picard addressed the Hall of State as the embodiment of Starfleet; he remembers the many promises that the "great Saint Picard" made, which Adrev found very touching, moving him to tears. He remembers Picard bringing Wallenberg-class transport ships, and how many of the residents of Vashti boarded the Nightingale. Picard laments that the short amount of time made the evacuation difficult, but Adrev simply retorts that little was expected of Starfleet, and shows visible anger for Picard that he gave up the evacuation efforts. Adrev calls a few friends over, but before Picard can attempt to reason with them, Adrev angrily says that Starfleet had deliberately misunderstood Romulan self-sufficiency, and accuses Picard of trying to deliberately confuse and divide the Romulan people. Picard angrily rebukes the claim.

Having heard enough, Adrev tells one of his friends to give Picard his sword, meaning to engage Picard in combat, but Picard refuses. Adrev doesn't take the refusal for an answer, forcibly gives him a sword, and has him moved into the streets, where he attacks Picard. Picard, assuming a traditional fencing stance, successfully parries the attack, but throws the blade aside, refusing to fight. At that moment, Elnor appears, and tells Adrev, "choose to live". Adrev ignores Elnor, and moves to attack Picard once more. With remarkable speed, Elnor successfully subdues Adrev's friends and decapitates Adrev, lamenting "I regret your choice". Elnor then addresses the crowd that has since gathered to watch the confrontation, and binds himself to Picard as his qalankhkai, warning the crowd that anyone who threatens Picard will be choosing to die by his blade. Picard urges Elnor to put his blade away, before he himself addresses the crowd, acknowledging that both he and the Federation have failed the Romulans. He apologizes that he broke faith with the Romulans, resulting in the terrible pain and loss the Romulans have since had to suffer. Elnor realizes that Picard is also speaking indirectly to him. Rios hails Picard and tells him he's ready to transport them to the ship. At that moment, one of Adrev's friends pulls out a disruptor, but both Elnor and Picard are beamed to La Sirena before he has a chance to fire.

Safely on the ship, Picard angrily scolds Elnor for killing Adrev. Elnor responds that Adrev chose to die, since fighting a Qowat Milat is a battle that is not favorable. Picard angrily says that

he will benefit from Elnor's skill and courage, but will tell him when to fight and when to refrain, and has Elnor swear on this. Picard then introduces Elnor to Jurati and Musiker, and Musiker is visibly unimpressed. As they head to the bridge, Picard asks what made Elnor change his mind and bind him to Picard's cause. Elnor simply replies that the cause met the requirements for worthiness, and that Picard needed Elnor after all. Jurati asks what the requirements were, and Picard responds that a qalankhkai will only bind herself (or himself in Elnor's case) to a cause that is deemed lost.

On the Artifact, Narissa Rizzo enters Narek's quarters and startles him from sleep. She taunts him asking if he was expecting his "robot friend", and taunts him for his passionate encounters he's had with her. Narek simply emphasizes that he's interested in her obsession with Ramdha, what truly happened after the Artifact assimilated the Shaenor, and why the crew and passengers lost their minds after assimilation. Rizzo simply expresses frustration at Narek's slow approach to Soji. Narek is cautious as he fears that if he presses her too hard, she will activate, resulting in her death, like Dahj. Rizzo is unsympathetic, reminding him that the long-term goal is that they eventually will be dead, and Narek tries to explain that he wants to kill all of them, but emphasizes that they can't kill them until they find where they're coming from. Rizzo simply rebukes that in his approach, he just slides further into his own goals, and wonders of Soji is handling him, rather than he, her. She has him remind her that she is Seb-Cheneb, before telling him that she'll let him take his approach further for one last week, but warns that if there are no further results, she will take matters into her own hands. She then leaves him in his quarters, visibly torn in what to do and banging his head against the bulkhead.

Back in orbit of Vashti, Kar Kantar's Bird-of-Prey arrives on the scene and opens fire on La Sirena. Rios begins to execute evasive maneuvers, noting that the Bird-of-Prey has a primitive targeting system, but he is still worried about the planet's security net. Jurati asks if they can escape the Bird-of-Prey, and Rios responds that while they are more nimble, the Bird-of-Prey is likely faster than his ship. As the ship takes another hit, he activates Emmet, a hologram for tactical emergencies. Emmet handles the ship's phasers while Rios continues to maneuver the ship. The Bird-of-Prey begins to herd La Sirena towards the planet's security net, and Rios executes a series of maneuvers, but gets too close to the net. At that moment, an unidentified ship suddenly enters the fray and fires on the Bird-of-Prey. Their combined phaser fire cripples the Bird-of-Prey, but immediately afterwards, the unidentified ship takes a critical hit from the Bird-of-Prey.

Musiker tells Picard that the ship is hailing them, and Picard habitually orders for a channel to be opened. Rios agrees and opens a communications channel, and Musiker replies that the pilot is asking for permission to be beamed to La Sirena. Emmet believes beaming over the unidentified pilot would present too big a risk, but Musiker pushes, stating that the pilot's ship is breaking up. They immediately beam the pilot over, with Elnor readying himself for a potential threat, before the pilot's ship crashes into Vashti's planetary shield. The pilot materializes on the bridge, and is revealed to be none other than Seven of Nine, whom Picard immediately identifies. Exhausted and sporting an injury to her forehead, Seven tells Picard that he owes her a new ship and then collapses on the deck.

Stardust City Rag

Season 1
Episode Number: 5
Season Episode: 5

Originally aired: Thursday February 20, 2020
Writer: Kirsten Beyer
Director: Jonathan Frakes
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Dominic Burgess (Mr. Vup), Necar Zade-gan (Bjayzl), John Ales (Dr. Bruce Maddox), Mason Gooding (Gabriel Hwang), Landry Allbright (Chop Doc), Kay Bess (La Sirena Computer (voice)), Ayushi Chhabra (Pel), Casey Childs (Nightbox Piano Player), Casey King (Icheb), Sam Marra (Bartender), Lil Cory (Guest Star), Jon Ian Dredge (Starfleet Captain), Charlie Newhart (Romulan Guard)
Summary: The La Sirena crew begin an unpredictable and lively expedition on Freecloud to search for Bruce Maddox. When they learn Maddox has found himself in a precarious situation, a familiar face offers her assistance.



In 2386, on Vergessen in the the Seven Domes, Lieutenant Icheb is restrained on a table, anxious, and bloodied. His left eye is being held open, as a woman drills into him, before forcibly pulling the eye from its socket, revealing Borg cybernetic technology attached to the eye. The woman severs the eye from Icheb, as he screams in agony, before she asks him where his cortical node is. She is about to further strip him for his parts when a crash is heard. She looks around and calls out for Bjayzl, before Seven of Nine stuns every person in the room working near Icheb. She rushes over to Icheb, who

urges her to leave him. She refuses to leave without him, but the damage to Icheb is too severe, and he is suffering immensely. Realizing she won't be able to take Icheb with her, she offers to stay with him instead, but Icheb once more asks her to leave as he struggles to draw breath. Realizing there is no way to save her friend, she embraces him one last time, before she charges her phaser. She apologizes in tears, as she reluctantly euthanizes Icheb, and mourns over his body.

Thirteen years later, Bjayzl is enjoying herself in Stardust City on Freecloud when she's approached by a Beta Annari named Vup, who informs her that Bruce Maddox is in the building. She simply muses how the mighty have fallen, before she orders Vup to have Maddox killed. Vup is about to oblige the order, when she changes her mind, and decides on another approach.

Maddox is sitting by himself, visibly anxious, when Bjayzl approaches him and greets him in a friendly manner, saying he's looked better. He tells her that he's in hiding, and that his lab has been destroyed. Bjayzl offers him some tranya to help him relax. Bruce takes a drink, and tells her how a molecular solvent was used to completely destroy his facility, and apologizes to her

because he is in debt to her, and will be unable to repay her now. She asks who he thinks did this, and he whispers to her that he believes it was the Tal Shiar. She admits that this changes things, before Maddox begins to gag on his drink, and falls to the floor, unconscious. Having successfully drugged him, Bjayzl remarks how making a deal with the Tal Shiar is always a "pain in the ass".

Aboard the *La Sirena*, Seven visits Jean-Luc Picard in his holodeck-created study, accepting a drink of bourbon, before asking him why he is in the Qiris sector. Picard says he is looking for someone. Seven had assumed he was on some kind of "misguided diplomatic mission, saving the galaxy", to which Picard admits there would be some of that as well. Seven is aware he is going to Freecloud, expressing her disdain for the place, but explaining that the Fenris Rangers keep what little money they have there. Picard remarks on the difficult times on Fenris, to which Seven sarcastically asks if that makes him happy. Picard admits that he admires the Rangers' goals, their tenacity and their bravery, he is less than enthused about their vigilantism. Seven curtly tells him she doesn't need a lecture, and that she worked for the Rangers because they helped people who had no one else to help them, before saying that she would arrange to be picked up on Freecloud. As she is about to leave, however, she asks who Picard is looking for. "Someone who has no one else to help her," Picard answers. "Someone who will likely die if I don't." Seven holds out her glass for a refill, and sits back down.

On the bridge, Raffi Musiker is reviewing the file of a man named Gabriel Hwang when Captain Cristóbal Rios remarks on Seven meeting with Picard, and remarks on how they seem to know one another; Raffi points out that Seven is a former Borg, much like Picard. Rios suddenly realizes who Seven is, remarking that she was "notorious", and that he had forgotten that Picard had once been assimilated himself. He comments to Musiker on the "strange cargo" she had brought him.

In her quarters, Dr. Agnes Jurati watches a holo-vid of herself with Maddox, remarking on how he had baked chocolate chip cookies using replicated ingredients, and asking why he hadn't just replicated the cookies themselves. Maddox explains he dislikes the replicated kind, and that there was an "alchemy" to it, offering her a bite of it, before kissing her. It is clear Jurati's interest in the mission is more than simply rescuing her mentor and colleague.

As *La Sirena* enters orbit, the crew is bombarded by holographic advertisements from the surface. For Rios, it is the Red Bolian, offering to increase the ship's power efficiency; for Picard, an invitation for "afternoon high tea" at the Freecloud Grand Hotel; for Jurati, a boxing robot from the Freecloud Institute of Entertainment Robotics, whose head she punches off to deactivate it; and for Musiker, an offer to get "pick her poison" at Feely's Venom Garden. Elnor expresses puzzlement that he did not get an advertisement, before Musiker reports she has located Maddox on a jobs board for "interfacers", agents hired as intermediaries for business deals. Using an old trick from Starfleet Intelligence, Musiker has made herself a member of Freecloud's interfacers guild, and learns that Bjayzl is seeking a 'facer to arrange to deliver Maddox to the Tal Shiar. At the mention of Bjayzl, Seven angrily explains that she butchers former Borg for parts, and is high on the Rangers' wanted list. They consider their options: They are unable to outbid the Tal Shiar, and Bjayzl has a small army of private contractors as bodyguards, including a Beta Annari, which Rios considers a "nasty piece of work". While Musiker believes they were "shit out of luck", Seven proposes a trade, giving Bjayzl something she wants in exchange for Maddox, something she would find "irresistible"... namely, herself.

Musiker explains that she has manipulated the system to make Rios into a 'facer, "famous but not too famous". Picard wonders at the flamboyant costumes they are forced to wear, to which Musiker explains that 'facers dress that way in order to stand out. She warns Rios to drop his "brooding existentialist spaceman routine", and that his personality needed to match his outfit, to show a little panache. Seven helpfully suggests a feather in his hat. Musiker also suggests avoiding the Beta Annari if he can; their sense of smell allows them to determine whether someone is lying — as well what they had for dinner, and the last person they had sex with ("If they're not the same thing," Rios adds, which unsettles Jurati).

Rios enters the bar in Stardust City, requesting a Temtibi Lagoon (with two umbrellas) and a game tablet from the barkeep, telling him to inform Mr. Vup that he was there. Vup is suddenly behind him; wasting no time, he finds Rios' credentials to be sound, particularly from Quark of Ferenginar regarding some trouble with the Breen. Vup asks Rios if he is aware of the other party involved, and if he has had any dealings with the Tal Shiar before. Rios replies he is aware,

and that he has made it a point to stay out of their way, considering them to be "treacherous, violent, ruthless, and subtle", and that their concept of honor is rooted in their skill at deceit. If that was the case, Vup asks, why represent them now? Rios confidently replies he's not, and that his employer is offering "alternative remuneration" for Maddox. "Surprising," Vup replies, as he pulls a weapon, pointing it at Rios' head. "I'm not a fan of surprises." He asks why they should consider reneging on a deal with the Romulan secret police, reminding Rios that Beta Annari have 1,253 olfactory receptor genes, which means among other things he can smell a lie. Fortunately, Musiker arranged for Rios to be injected with some of her "home cooking": a delayed-release combination of chemicals that can fool a Beta Annari's olfactory system. Rios shows Vup a projection of Seven's bioscans; Vup considers that many Borg implants in a living specimen "impossible", but Rios asks him how he smells. "Truthful," Vup answers, adding that a single person with that many implants would be considered extremely valuable. Rios asks his indulgence for the "very smallest" of transporter windows.

During the preparations, Musiker expresses her concern not with Rios, but with Picard and Elnor. Picard, wearing an eyepatch, remarks in an exaggerated French accent that he thought he looked "appropriately sinister", to which Musiker remarks she has no comment. She hands Seven a pattern enhancer, which will allow them a stable tunnel to transport through Freecloud's shields, and will not be differentiated from Seven's implants in a scan. She also arranges to have Seven bound with her rigged handcuffs, which will allow her to escape if need be. Musiker asks Seven why she was helping the people out there, to which Seven admits that after the Romulan Neutral Zone collapsed, she felt someone had to maintain a semblance of order, and it had become habit for her. Musiker then tests a dark bag over Seven's head, to see if she can breathe through the material. Once they found Maddox, Seven would activate the pattern enhancer, and Jurati would beam them back to the ship. At that moment, Elnor suddenly speaks up and remarks how everyone was pretending to be someone else, everyone except for him. He laments that he doesn't know how to "not be Elnor", to which Picard tells him to simply be Elnor. "An Elnor that never talks," Seven sarcastically adds.

Back in the bar, Picard delivers Seven to Vup, all the while insulting her in his exaggerated accent as being "defiled", "damned, cursed". Vup again remarks that Seven was "quite a prize", given how many implants she still had. Picard explains that she was a "jeune fille", a young girl, when she was assimilated and that she would have to be diced up to get to all of her implants. Picard misinterprets Vup's reaction as squeamishness, offering to take his trade elsewhere; Vup grins and says he is not squeamish at all. Picard dismisses Rios, and makes one last demand of Vup: In return for delivering Seven, he wants proof that his bounty is still alive, and demands to see Maddox.

Just before leaving the ship, Picard finds Musiker searching for Gabriel Hwang again, finding him in the Stardust City Medical District. She expresses her confidence in him, remarking it was almost like the old days again, and hopes that he finds what he was looking for. Picard hopes the same for her as well, before she beams away.

At Stardust City Reproductive Health Services, Musiker approaches Gabriel, who is both surprised and not particularly pleased to see her, asking if she put a tracker on him or if she just hunted him down. She tries to explain to him how she is trying to turn her life around, and how she was there for him now, and for her grandchild... Gabriel is her son, and is expecting a daughter. He comments about how once he would have been glad to hear her say these things, then pointedly asks her about the attack on Mars, about how it wasn't the synths behind it, about the "Conclave of Eight", how it was worth ignoring him and his father for some "crackpot, tin-hat conspiracy". Musiker snaps that it was not a crackpot theory, that the attack was not what it seemed and that there was a conspiracy at play, and lives at stake. Gabriel heatedly reminds her that his and his father's lives mattered too, but not to her, and remarks on "how much it sucked" to be her kid. At that moment, a Romulan woman exits the clinic, whom Gabriel introduces briefly to his mother as his wife, Pel, before hurrying her away.

Back in the bar, Picard is shown proof that Maddox is alive — much worse for wear, but alive — and dramatically reveals his "bounty" to Bjayzl, remarking on her extensive implants, how those assimilated as children had more hardware. Bjayzl remarks on how she thought it would be Seven, "hoped" perhaps being the better word, and remarks on how she had always known Seven was "impressive". To Picard's shock, she remarks on how good it was to see Seven again, and addresses her by her real name, Annika. Then she nods to her bodyguards, who raise their

weapons.

Aboard the *La Sirena*, Jurati paces nervously in the transporter room, so much so that the ship's EMH (which, like all the holograms on the ship, looks like Rios) activates, asking what the nature of her "psychiatric emergency" was, and remarking on her elevated pulse and blood pressure, which she attributes to the EMH frightening him. Just then, the real Rios calls from the surface, flustering Jurati to the point she deactivates the EMH. Rios tells her something is not right and that they may have to abort, and asks her if she has a transporter lock; Jurati confirms she does, but they show as red, meaning the pattern enhancer is inactive. Rios tells her to inform him the moment it activates.

Bjayzl asks Seven if she is still angry that she "carved up" Icheb for parts, or because Seven trusted her, mocking her for being so "noble" at the time: "Save the outcast. Rescue the forgotten. You were so easy." If so, Seven asks, how did she escape? No one had ever been more valuable to Bjayzl than she was, a fortune in Borg tech that slipped through her fingers. Bjayzl remarks that was not the case anymore, to which Seven shows her how wrong she is: She deactivates her restraints and grabs Bjayzl by the throat, demanding that her bodyguards drop their weapons. Bjayzl fearfully orders them to do it. Picard demands an explanation, to which Seven admits she was not entirely candid with him. Elnor asks if they were still pretending. "No, Elnor," Picard sarcastically replies. "I think everyone has finally stopped."

As Elnor takes up the dropped weapons and holds the bodyguards back, Picard looks to Maddox, who identifies him, much to Bjayzl's surprise. She then remarks that he was being played, that Seven forgot to mention their "close, personal relationship". Seven angrily shoves Bjayzl into a chair and tosses the pattern enhancer on a nearby table, telling Picard to take Maddox and go: She intends to kill Bjayzl, but first, "hero to the end" as Bjayzl puts it, she would save the lives of Picard and his crew. Seven bitterly explains that she had joined the Fenris Rangers to help maintain order on worlds left behind by the Federation after the evacuations stopped, and that a young Starfleet science officer from the *USS Coleman* was helping them. He was on a reconnaissance mission near Daimanta when he received a distress call, which turned out to be an ambush orchestrated by Bjayzl to obtain his Borg implants, which were just "good business" to her. Seven explains that like her, Icheb was a former Borg rescued by the *USS Voyager* in the Delta Quadrant, and he was the closest thing she had to kin; Bjayzl harvested his implants without anesthetic, without even the mercy of death. Seven had met her on Fenris, where she was posing as a Ranger, and learned of Icheb from her. Picard gently tries to convince her that "murder is not justice". As they talk, Vup prepares to use a concealed weapon, but is killed by Rios. Seven tells him to use the enhancer and get out of there; Rios is inclined to agree, but warns Seven that if she kills Bjayzl, there would be bounties for all of them, and while he was not worried about himself, "the kid and the old man" — Picard and Elnor — wouldn't stand a chance. Bjayzl makes an offer: Her life for Maddox. Seven grudgingly agrees, and Picard calls for "five to beam up".

Back aboard the *La Sirena*, Jurati and Elnor carry the badly-injured Maddox to sickbay, while Rios heads to the bridge to prepare them for departure. Picard expresses his approval of Seven's choice, and offers her a lift. Seven declines, saying the Rangers have sent a corsair for her, which should be there by now, but decides to take two phaser rifles from the ship's armory, saying a vigilante could always use more, and gives Picard a holocomm chip in case he needs a vigilante. As she prepares to beam down, she asks Picard, when he was rescued from the Collective, if he honestly felt he regained his humanity. Picard confirms he did, but when Seven asks if he had regained all of it, he admits he has not. "But we're both working on it, aren't we?" he asks. "Every damn day of my life," Seven agrees, as she beams off the ship... back into the bar, where she immediately shoots Bjayzl's two bodyguards dead. As the patrons beam out, Bjayzl expresses her surprise that she left, remarking on how she risked her revenge by saving their lives, which reminded her of "the Annika of old". Seven agrees, commenting that Picard believed there was still room in the galaxy for mercy, and that she didn't want to disillusion him. She notes that Bjayzl is stalling, that her second security wave would be there within five seconds. She raises her two phasers. "He was like a son to me, Jay," she bitterly reminds her. "This is for him." Without another word, Seven vaporizes Bjayzl; as the security team enters, she begins firing on them on full automatic.

In the *La Sirena*'s sickbay, Maddox is lying on a biobed, suffering from severe abdominal hemorrhaging. He asks Picard if Dahj is dead, to which Picard confirms she is. Maddox reveals

that he knew it when the Tal Shiar came for him and destroyed his laboratory, because her embedded Mom AI would not have activated unless she was in danger. Picard asks if Dahj had a sister, to which Maddox identifies Soji, who is working aboard the Artifact, the captured Borg cube in Romulan space. When Picard asks why, Maddox reveals it was for the same reason he sent Dahj to Earth: To find out the truth behind the ban on synthetic lifeforms, remarking that "they" were hiding something, that there were "lies upon lies". Maddox did not know who, but he suspected that it was whoever was hunting Soji — not just the Romulans, but possibly the Federation itself. Jurati intercedes, telling Picard that Maddox needed to rest.

On the bridge, Rios remarks about the Artifact's location, and that flying into Romulan space doubled his fee, before asking about their "stowaway". Picard knocks on the door to Musiker's quarters, and is rebuffed. Picard simply smiles and quietly welcomes her back before walking off.

In sickbay, Maddox speaks to Jurati, thinking he had been dreaming when he saw her there. He asked if she had gotten to meet Dahj, to which Jurati said she hadn't; Maddox calls the Asha sisters "perfectly imperfect", remarking that he and Noonian Soong had managed to create artificial life, and that Jurati's contribution to the work was essential. "One more thing I have to atone for," Jurati says... as she deactivates Maddox's life support. The EMH activates, first asking about the nature of her "psychiatric emergency", before turning his attention to the actual medical emergency. Jurati deactivates the EMH, before tearfully confessing to Maddox that she wished he knew what she knew, and that she didn't know what she knew, that "they" hadn't shown her. With that, his vital signs flatline... Maddox is dead.

The Impossible Box

Season 1

Episode Number: 6

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Originally aired: Thursday February 27, 2020
Writer: Nick Zayas
Director: Maja Vrvilo
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jonathan Del Arco (Hugh), Charlie Newhart (Romulan Guard), John Ales (Dr. Bruce Maddox), Barbara Eve Harris (Emmy), Peyton List (Lieutenant Narissa Rizzo), Marti Matulis (XB Worker), Rico McClinton (Older XB), Ella McKenzie (Young Soji), Sumalee Montano (Marisol Asha (Soji's Mother))
Summary: Picard and the crew track Soji to the Borg cube in Romulan space, resurfacing haunting memories for Picard. Meanwhile, Narek believes he finally found a way to safely exploit Soji for information.



On a dark and stormy night, a young Soji Asha walks down the hall, looking for her father. She looks in a lit room to find a laboratory with flowers growing, before the man inside calls her name.

Back aboard the Artifact, Soji awakens in bed with Narek, telling him she was having the same dream. He asks her to tell him about it; when she wonders if he's concerned, or just wondering how her mind works, he asks her why it can't be both, wanting to know "every little thing" about her. She remarks that he thought she was an impostor, to which he backtracks and says she was "full of secrets".

She remarks on the irony of this coming from a Romulan, and notes the things he keeps from her — like his name, for instance, showing her knowledge of Romulan culture by remarking on how they only shared their "true name" to the one they gave their heart to. Narek instead asks about the dream, wondering if it was a random creation of her brain or an actual memory; Soji is not sure. Narek suggests asking her mother about it, as he knows she talks to her every night, much to her surprise. As he leaves, she calls out to him by the name she knows, to which he says that was not his actual name.

Aboard La Sirena, Agnes Jurati explains to Jean-Luc Picard that the injuries that Bruce Maddox had sustained on Freecloud were substantial, and that while the medication was enough to keep him stable, his heart "just couldn't take it". Picard can see it's hard for her, to which she confirms it was harder than she could have imagined. She remembers Maddox had told him that Soji was on the Artifact. When Elnor asks about it (apologizing for "in-butting", as he puts it), Picard explains it was an abandoned Borg cube, and when the young warrior asks about Seven of Nine, Picard is emphatic the Borg were nothing like her at all. Jurati also remembers that Maddox said he had sent Soji and Dahj to find out the truth behind the ban on synthetics, wondering why he would send Soji there; Elnor also wonders how they knew she was alive. Picard

admits they don't, which is why they have to find out. Elnor is quick to see that Picard is not looking forward to it, and he confirms he is not, as his last visit to a Borg cube was not voluntary. Jurati knows that he had been assimilated, becoming Locutus of Borg, as anything to do with the Borg was required reading in her work. She points out that the Borg in that cube were separated from the Collective and under the control of the Romulans, wondering if that changed them. Picard, with a hint of contempt in his voice, snaps that the Borg couldn't change, remarking how they "coolly" assimilate entire worlds, entire systems. "They don't change," he asserts, "they metastasize." After Picard abruptly excuses himself, Elnor tells Jurati that Picard can see she was also haunted by something she would rather forget, and asks if he was "in-butting" again. "That time, yes," Jurati curtly replies, as she too leaves.

In his holodeck-study, Picard brings up the computer files on the Artifact, any treaty on the subject, and the Borg. As he scrolls through the images, he sees two images of Hugh, both before and after his de-assimilation... before stopping on an image of himself as Locutus, putting a hand to his face where the implants had once been.

Late that evening, Cristóbal Rios kicks a soccer ball around the transporter room, as Jurati comes out of her quarters; he apologizes for waking her, before noticing she has not been sleeping. Jurati asks him why he likes it in space, which she calls cold and empty, and wanting to kill him. He offers her a drink, remarking on how close she had been with Maddox, and offers to talk about it. She kisses him, remarking she'd never slept with a captain before, before thinking on this "superpower" she has: sensing mistakes while she's making them. She admits she feels hollow, hopeless, lonely... afraid. She kisses him again, as Rio asks if it would help at all. Jurati admits it would help "for a few hours", as she leads him by the hand to his quarters.

Aboard the Artifact, Narek enters his own quarters to find his sister, "Narissa Rizzo", playing with his tan zhekran, telling her to hand it back before she breaks it. He refers to it not as a "toy", but as a tool to help him think, and remarks he is making progress with Soji. He explains about her recurring dream, wondering why Maddox programmed her to dream. "Narissa" mockingly asks if she dreams about growing old with him and making "freakish little android babies", and asks if he dreams of that too. To her disgust, she can see he has fallen in love with "it", and tells him she is taking over the operation. Narek explains that every piece of synthetic design serves a purpose, so why give her dreams? "Narissa" believes that it's simply a malfunction, but Narek believes it is intentional. Soji's neural pathways were auto-heuristic, always seeking and forming more efficient connections, which has somehow given her an unconscious mind; when she dreams, she's reconciling the two views of herself, human and synthetic, "bits of truth" coming to the surface. If he can get her to tell him about her dreams, he believes he can reach her memory engrams without triggering her self-defense programming, as happened with Dahj, and that she could lead them to their homeworld. "Narissa" asks if Narek intends to keep sharing her bed, "fidgeting" with her like he does his "stupid box". Narek chides her for her impatience, saying that the key to opening a tan zhekran was to understand what kept it closed, to move each piece ever so slightly, until the box reveals its contents.

Meanwhile, La Sirena is about to leave the former Romulan Neutral Zone and enter Romulan space, which is technically a breach of galactic treaty, but Rios sardonically says he has no problem with that, since Picard has a plan to get aboard a Romulan-controlled Borg cube crawling with Tal Shiar without authorization — or dying. When Jurati suggests using her scientific credentials, Picard tells her it won't work: If the Romulans don't recognize him the moment he steps off the ship, the Borg will. The way to do this, he explains, is the Gowat Milat way: being perfectly open. He explains that the Borg Reclamation Project maintains its independence by treaty, and if he can get Federation diplomatic credentials, the Romulans would be forced to let him meet with the project's director or risk a diplomatic incident. When Rios asks why the Federation would do this for him, Picard replies that they're not doing it for him.

A visibly-intoxicated Raffi Musiker, a bottle in her hand, enters the bridge, demanding a bit of space so she can "sweet-talk" the Federation, which Rios believes to be a bad idea. Inhaling a bit of snakeleaf, Musiker contacts her friend Emmy, a captain at Starfleet Command, and explains she needs diplomatic credentials for Picard to visit the Artifact. Emmy comments she wishes she could help, but the Artifact was restricted to scientists only, plus the "Romulan angle" makes it tricky. Musiker understands, but comments on how awkward it would be when they arrive at the Artifact in approximately three hours. Emmy worriedly tells her to turn around, as going into Romulan space without permission is an act of war. Musiker knows this, and also knows

that even if the Federation denied it, Picard is "so Federation, his face is probably still on the damn brochures", which is why she was giving the warning, and asking to "do it proper", with an official letter of credence. After a moment, Emmy agrees, "twenty-four hours, in and out", before telling Musiker not to call her again. Picard and the crew applaud her, before Rios helps her to her quarters.

Aboard the Artifact, Soji tells Narek she had the dream again, and meant to ask her mother about it, but fell asleep while talking to her. Narek asks if it happened often, to which Soji admits she is not sure. Narek, visibly uneasy, explains all communications from Romulan facilities are monitored, and all anomalies are flagged. He explains each call to her mother lasts exactly seventy seconds, which Soji believes to be impossible.

Back on La Sirena, as Rios helps Musiker into her quarters, she asks how long he's known her, and he says it has been "a while". She explains about her son Gabriel Hwang, who is grown up, married, and expecting a daughter, before lamenting she will never know her grandchild. Rios, showing a more tender side, tucks Musiker into bed, remarking that "no one gets all of it right", before taking the bottle out of her quarters and returning to the bridge.

Soji contacts her mother, talking about her dream, and asks if her father was there; "Mom" says he is in his lab and asked not to be disturbed. Soji believes something is wrong with her, which "Mom" believes to be overwork, suggesting she should lie down. Without any explanation, Soji grabs a tool from her desk and stabs herself in the hand with it, wondering why she feels no pain, before slipping into unconsciousness.

La Sirena approaches the Artifact, as Rios reads the letter certifying Picard as a Federation special envoy to the Borg Reclamation Project, limited only to meeting with the director, and only for Picard himself. As he sees the cube himself, Picard experiences flashbacks of his assimilation. Rios notes that they are not cleared to land, and that Picard is restricted to specific beam-in coordinates. Elnor is adamant that he should go with Picard, that his pledge overrules diplomatic credentials. While not looking forward to the trip at all, Picard insists that either he goes alone, or not at all. He tells Rios he will keep communications open, and makes clear to Elnor that he is to stay aboard the ship, no matter what. He holds Dahj's pendant in his hand, as he looks back up at the Artifact.

Soji awakens, and suddenly begins rummaging through her personal belongings — pictures, diaries, drawings, even the pendant she wears around her neck. Her scanner indicates that the probable age of all of these items is only thirty-seven months. She hurls her scanner against the wall in frustration.

Picard beams aboard the Artifact, finding himself alone, and overwhelmed by his memories of the Collective. As he suddenly begins to feel dizzy, he is grabbed by two Borg. He thrashes against them, demanding they release him, before a voice explains they don't want him to fall. Picard looks up to see Hugh, who says he did not believe until now that Picard was there, and welcomes him to the Borg Reclamation Project; while he didn't know why Picard was there, Hugh offers any help he can. Picard is relieved to see a "friendly face".

Hugh understands Picard's reluctance coming back to a Borg cube, the last place any former Borg ever wanted to see. When Picard asks how he can stand it, Hugh explains that the project needed a director, and as a Federation citizen, he could leave at any time, unlike the other "xBs" (as they call themselves) on the cube. He remarks that a new name could be the first step to a new identity, having learned that lesson aboard the Enterprise long ago. Hugh emphasizes that it was the Artifact, not a Borg cube, and that Picard was not Locutus anymore. Picard explains he is looking for Soji; Hugh has a hunch that she is in danger, given that Picard had come all that way to find her, and that there was a "dashing young Romulan spy" who had arrived two weeks before pretending not to ask questions about her. Picard asks Hugh to take him to her.

In her quarters, Soji explains to Narek that none of her possessions are more than three years old, and that she was not able to explain it. Narek suggests the possibility of false memories being implanted, someone looking for something on the cube, and concealing it from her. Soji confesses she is scared, and Narek comforts her, suggesting there was a way to help: a Romulan meditation method called Zhal Makh. Soji knows it was taboo for non-Romulans, but Narek believes it is the best way to uncover what was going on.

Hugh guides Picard through the Artifact, showing him where the xBs are brought to recover after the reclamation process. Picard marvels at the idea of undoing assimilation on such a scale, and the fact it was being done by the Romulans. He watches as a former drone, missing an eye,

undergoes facial reconstruction; the xB is brought to tears, seeing his nearly-restored face in a mirror. Hugh admits that the outcomes are far from ideal, but Picard believes he is doing good there, showing what the Borg are underneath — victims, not monsters. Nonetheless, Hugh explains, xBs remain the most despised people in the galaxy, just as enslaved as before, except this time their queen is a Romulan. Picard sincerely thanks Hugh for showing him around; Hugh knows that no one understands the work better than Picard would, and that he would make an ideal advocate for free Borg. Consulting his computer records, Hugh sees that Soji has called in, and takes Picard in to try and find her.

Back on La Sirena, Rios wakes Musiker and offers a cup of coffee. He also remarks that Picard has checked in, revealing Soji is alive, and that Musiker owes him two strips of latinum because she had bet they would find her dead. Musiker wonders why the Tal Shiar kept her alive, given that they know what she would look like, after having killed Dahj and gone after Maddox on Freecloud. She suspects that they need something from her, and that gets her to thinking: "What would the Tal Shiar need from a synth?"

Narek leads Soji through the Artifact, twisting the tan zhekran in his hands, as they approach a meditation chamber. Narek asks a sub-commander if the room was free; the sub-commander replies in Romulan that Zhal Makh was not for "round-ears", to which Narek replies in the same tongue that a sub-commander's rank bars "were not for idiots", and that he risked losing them. As they enter, Narek tells Soji to remove her boots, explaining that he evaded her question on whether he cared for her or not because it was too dangerous outside to show her. In there, he felt safe enough to be "vulnerable", and reveals his true name to be Hrai Yan. He tells her to begin at the yut makh; Soji is confused, as she thought that meant "closing" rather than "opening". Narek explains that the journey along the path of the Zhal Makh began with the closing of the eyes, "a journey into the center of the mind's most intimate space, where deepest truths were hidden" — her dreams.

Soji explains the dream begins the same way; she hears the rain against the window, calling out for her father. When Narek asks why, she says she was scared, perhaps of the thunder. As she walks the path, "Narissa" watches through a security camera as he continues to ask questions: How did she feel when he didn't respond? She says she felt lonely, abandoned. She reaches the lu shiar, "lifting the eyes", and asks what she sees out the window. She is unsure, as she never looked that way before. He encourages her to "ground herself in details", and tells her the key to the Zhal Makh is that she was in control of her mind. She says she sees darkness outside, perhaps trees. She turns to the qlam wath, the "unfolding". She enters her father's workshop, seeing him inside, but what he's working on. She can never see past the orchids, and when she enters, her father calls her name, and she awakens. Through that door, Narek explains, is the truth. He tells her that the goal is Vri Glam, the center. Her unconscious holds the key to the truth, and he encourages her to take the steps.

Hugh and Picard enter Soji's quarters while a voice notifies the inhabitants of the Artifact "sectors 58 through 521 and all (unknown) sectors are temporarily closed due to detected chronometric activity. If you have entered any of the affected sectors in the past forty-eight hours please proceed...", finding photos and other items scattered around the room; Picard realizes she is about to discover who she really is, and asks Hugh to find her. Hugh is puzzled when all indications are she is no longer aboard the cube, which should be impossible... unless, Picard points out, someone has concealed her.

Soji continues walking the path, saying she can see the orchids lit by a skylight, which her father cared for like his own children; Narek tells her that her father will shout at her, but tells her to keep moving, no matter what. Her father turns, but she can never see his face; behind the orchids, she can see who she believes to be herself, in pieces "like a doll"; through the skylight, she can see two red moons, "dark as blood", and surrounded by lightning. In the security room, "Narissa" congratulates her brother for finding out the truth, and sets out to find a planet with two red moons and constant electrical storms. Soji is confused as to why she was on a workbench, to which Narek tells her she was not real, and never was. While she desperately calls his name, an anguished Narek leaves the room and leaves her locked inside with his tan zhekran, which opens to release a radioactive cloud. Soji suddenly begins smashing through the floor; as Narek and the sub-commander watch, she tears a hole open and jumps through it.

Soji suddenly reappears on Hugh's computer monitor, showing her between two levels of the cube, and moving very fast; Picard realizes she has been activated, and tells Hugh to take him

to her immediately. Narek is also in pursuit, identifying Soji's employee number and saying she is hostile, "extremely dangerous". As Picard and Hugh search for her, an xB identifies him as "Locutus", just as Soji crashes through the ceiling. Picard identifies himself to her as a friend of her father, and shows her Dahj's necklace, saying he knows what is happening to her. Hugh warns that a large number of Romulans are approaching, and shows them a way out. Aboard *La Sirena*, Musiker reports that they are in trouble, and that Picard is not responding to comms. As Hugh guides them through the cube, Picard recognizes the room as the "queencell"; even though he had never been inside before, both he and Hugh know of it anyway from their time in the Collective. Hugh reveals a spatial trajector, a device the Borg obtained from the Sikarians, for use by the Borg Queen in the event of an emergency; it has a range of forty thousand light years. Picard contacts Musiker, and tells her to set a course to meet them at Nepenthe. As he turns around, Rios realizes Elnor is gone.

Elnor beams aboard the *Artifact*, quickly dispatching three Romulans holding Picard, Hugh, and Soji at gunpoint. Soji can hear more guards coming. Hugh confirms this, and reports the device is nearly at full power; he tells them to go, and he would keep the Romulans from tracing them. Picard tells Elnor the trajector will take them to a safer place, but Elnor elects to remain behind to cover their escape. Picard protests, saying he would not leave Elnor behind again; while Elnor admits he is glad to hear Picard say that, he knows the Romulans will destroy Soji if he can't get her away. Picard and Soji step through the trajector. Hugh needs only a few minutes to shut the device down and seal the room, and asks if Elnor can hold them back that long. Elnor replies he does not need that much time, and tells Hugh to stay behind him. "Please, my friends, choose to live," Elnor tells the approaching guards, as the door to the queencell shuts.

Nepenthe

Season 1

Episode Number: 7

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Originally aired: Thursday March 05, 2020
Writer: Samantha Humphrey, Michael Chabon
Director: Doug Aarniokoski
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), Kay Bess (La Sirena Computer (voice)), Jonathan Del Arco (Hugh), Chelsea Harris (Dr. Naáshala Kunamadéstifee), Peyton List (Lieutenant Narissa Rizzo), Tamlyn Tomita (Commodore Oh), Derek Webster (Romulan Guard), Lulu Wilson (Kestra)
Summary: Picard and Soji transport to the planet Nepenthe, home to some old and trusted friends. As the rest of the La Sirena crew attempt to join them, Picard helps Soji make sense of her recently unlocked memories. Meanwhile, Hugh and Elnor are left on the Borg cube and must face an angered Narissa.



At the Daystrom Institute in Okinawa on Earth, Dr. Agnes Jurati is listening to Kasseelian opera and eating sushi when she is approached by Commodore Oh of Starfleet Security. The commodore asks about her two recent meetings with Jean-Luc Picard, starting with the first at the institute in which Picard mentioned his belief he interacted with an synthetic life-form, before discussing the whereabouts of Bruce Maddox and his work in fractal neuronc cloning. Following that meeting, Jurati transferred more than three hundred gigabytes of data on Maddox's work to a PADD, presumably for Picard's use.

Oh then asks what she discussed with Picard at the second meeting, at his home in La Barre. Jurati jokingly remarks they discussed the works of Isaac Asimov, but eventually admits she expressed how sorry she was that she had been unable to meet Dahj Asha. Oh explains that Starfleet needed her help: Picard notified Starfleet that he is planning to travel off-world to find Maddox and Soji Asha, and Oh asks Jurati to accompany him. To better explain, Oh performs a mind meld, showing Jurati that Earth will be destroyed if synthetic life is allowed to exist. Oh then gives Jurati a form of edible tracking device, and tells her that a "terrible sacrifice" must be made.

Three weeks later, La Sirena is caught in the Artifact's tractor beam, as Cristóbal Rios and Raffaella Musiker try to hack the systems to break free so they can follow Picard and Soji Asha to Nepenthe, days away at maximum warp. Jurati suggests they simply ask the Romulans to let them go: They're after Soji, not them.

Aboard the Artifact, the xBs are lined up before the Romulan guards while "Narissa Rizzo" holds Hugh at gunpoint, demanding to know where he is hiding Picard and Soji. When he remains

silent, the guards kill one of the xBs. "Narissa" tries again: She knows Hugh, Picard, and Soji went into Subsector 11 of the old cube, but only Hugh returned. Hugh will only say they're gone, not where. "Narissa" expresses boredom, and orders the guards in Romulan to kill all of the xBs. As Hugh watches in horror, the guards mow them down. As Hugh mourns for the loss, "Narissa" expresses her hatred for the "vile" cube and the xBs, before saying that their former Borg status was not what killed them, but rather Hugh letting Picard and Soji escape, ruining years of work by "patient operatives", and possibly dooming a trillion people across half the galaxy; only Hugh's Federation citizenship and the treaty creating the Borg Reclamation Project kept her from killing him as well. She communicates with Narek, who is taking a ship out of the cube to follow *La Sirena*, before she has them released from the tractor beam. Musiker recognizes it's a trick, but Rios is confident: They'll have to catch him first.

Jurati asks about Elnor, who is still aboard the Artifact. Elnor steps out of the shadows of the cube, finding Hugh amidst the dead xBs, when he is contacted by Rios. Angered at seeing the murdered xBs, Elnor chooses to remain behind with Hugh, determined not to allow it to happen again. Rios remarks to him that everyone on the ship thought he was crazy, but admits (as Jurati speaks up) they thought him brave, as well. *La Sirena* goes to warp, with Narek's ship right behind them.

Picard and Soji emerge from the spatial tractor on *Nepenthe*, where they are immediately held at bow and arrow-point by a young girl in American Indian attire; Picard remarks that she may want to aim at his head, as his heart was solid duritanium, to which the girl adjusts her aim accordingly. Soji looks worried, as Picard said it was a safe place. Picard smiles knowingly before he asks the girl, "Are we safe here, Kestra?" Kestra lowers her bow, as Picard asks if her parents are about.

Kestra asks Soji if Picard is her father or grandfather, to which Soji says she doesn't know him, only that he said he was a friend of her father. Kestra notices she doesn't believe him, and Soji admits she doesn't believe anyone. Soji then asks about Kestra's compass, which she says was a gift from Captain Rupert Crandall, a friend who lived near Infinity Lake who was "even older than Picard"; she later says the compass is broken. She asks if Soji believes her, and when asked if she'd lied, Kestra admits she's only wearing a costume for a game she played with her brother Thaddeus, but that the arrows were real, though she wouldn't shoot anyone with them because she's a pacifist. When asked about Soji's father, Picard remarks that Kestra has probably heard of Data, leading Kestra to realize Soji is an android. Soji is upset by this, remarking about how everything about her life, her dreams, even her sister, were all fake. Picard reassures her that Dahj was indeed real, but that she had been killed by the Romulans. Soji, though tearful at this, continues to believe it was all a "mind game".

Upon arriving at a small, well-kept house in the woods, Soji asks Picard about the occupants, whom he calls "old friends", while Kestra calls for her parents. Deanna Troi steps out onto the porch to trim the plants, looking up first at hearing Kestra, then with joy to see Picard walking up. As she hugs him, she recognizes he's in trouble, and asks how bad. "Bad enough," Picard admits. He introduces Troi to Soji. Kestra then calls for her father, William T. Riker, who is working in the kitchen; at first, he tells her to stop yelling, then looks up in shock when she tells him Picard was there, before seeing him in his living room. As he joyfully reunites with his old captain, Riker can also see that Picard needs a place to hide out, and orders the house's shields raised — a precaution due to trouble with the Kzinti. Picard also suggests anti-cloaking scans, as the Romulans are involved. Riker reminds Picard that he had warned him during the supernova crisis that he would be "ass-deep in Romulans" for the rest of his life, and also Newton's fourth law of thermodynamics: "No good deed goes unpunished". Troi enters, saying Kestra was showing Soji to the shower, and explained that while she seemed Human with a full emotional range, she couldn't read her thoughts. Picard admits he's "in over his head", that he had left Earth with a plan, a ship, even a crew, and now he had "half a plan", and Soji still in danger. Riker suggests he needs a new plan, to which Troi adds it could start with a nap, offering their son's room while Riker prepares dinner — pizza with tomato and basil, and non-venomous bunnicorn sausage. Both Riker and Troi make clear that however long Picard needs to stay, he is welcome.

Soji uses the outdoor shower while Kestra asks her questions: If she could play the violin, if she liked Sherlock Holmes, or had super speed and strength — all things Kestra knew Data could do. She finds it "weird" that Soji has blood, saliva, and mucus, things Data did not have. Kestra explains that her parents served with Data on the *Enterprise* until he was killed, and that Picard

had been the captain — "the greatest Starfleet captain ever", as her father put it. Soji wonders how Data could be her father, as she had only been created three years before, and then wonders why he would make an android with Human bodily fluids. Kestra remembers that Data wanted to be more Human; he was gifted with incredible strength and intelligence, but he wanted to have dreams, tell jokes, learn how to ballroom dance. She asks if Soji was like that; Soji, tearing up, admits that until Kestra said "android" on the way to the house, she was still clinging to the idea that she was Human. Kestra tells her she thinks she's "amazing", partly because of how Human she seems... and partly because, since Soji is only three, Kestra gets to be "the boss".

As they enter Thaddeus' room, Picard mentions a language Kestra was speaking, which Troi says is Viveen, spoken by the "Wild Girls of the Woods". He remembers when he met Thad for the first time — he was no more than five, and speaking an invented language. Troi reminds him that had actually been the second time, as she shows him a picture of the first, of Picard in uniform holding Thad as a baby. His eighteenth birthday would have been the previous week; Kestra still mourned for him, but as each day passed, she came to terms with the loss. Picard promises that as soon as he had a plan, he and Soji would leave. Troi re-emphasizes that he was welcome to stay as long as he needed, but also expressed her worry if something were to happen to Kestra, admitting she was "not as brave" as she once was, which Picard believes to be a sign of wisdom.

Aboard *La Sirena*, Rios and Musiker detect Narek's ship tailing them; Rio thinks the ship to be a Romulan "snakehead", fast and well armed. Rios brings *La Sirena* to a full stop, hoping that the tail will overshoot them, before setting an alternate course. Jurati speaks up and asks if they actually want to go to Nepenthe, and Musiker reminds her it wasn't an outing: They were going to rescue Picard and the "synth chick". Jurati abruptly stands and prepares to leave, at which point Musiker reminds her of when she came aboard the first time, excited to go into space and meet a real, live, synthetic lifeform, but the closer they got to that, the less Jurati wanted to be there. Jurati angrily demands to be taken home to Earth, that Picard could handle himself, and someone else could handle the "fucking synth", asking why it had to be she who found Soji. Rios tells her that he has a paying client, and that she was just along for the ride, before leaving her in the hands of "Auntie Raffi", who had anything she needed; Jurati hopefully asks if it was cake.

Back on Nepenthe, Riker checks the wood-burning stove in his backyard as Picard comes out; Picard admits he's worried about Rios, that he didn't make it. Riker asks if Picard could tell him what he'd gotten himself into, Picard demurs, saying he didn't want to involve Riker or his family in his mission, that coming there was a "desperate impulse" he regretted. Riker, somewhat deadpan, remarks that how great it would be if the ignorance of danger was all it took to keep it away from the people they loved, before mentioning the regenerative powers of the soil on Nepenthe, which made the plants there grow like weeds. Just then, Kestra and Soji come out, conversing in Viveen, which Soji memorized in two minutes from Thaddeus' dictionary, which was three hundred pages long. Soji appears to be moving in a very "android" way, similar to Data, as Riker introduces himself to her. Picard explains they had served together, to which Soji repeats what Kestra told her about her father calling Picard "the greatest captain ever". Riker jokingly attributes it to drinking, before sending Kestra to tell her mother to bring more tomatoes. After they leave, Riker begins to lay out what he thinks is going on. Picard is worried about cloaking, which meant Romulans; he was overly worried for their safety, which meant the *Tal Shiar*; they were after Soji, not Picard; and from the tilting of the head, Soji was an android descended from Data. He comments only half-jokingly on the "classic Picard arrogance", how he made the decisions about who was in the loop and out of the loop, but while that would work as a starship captain, Riker reminds him he is more or less dealing with a teenager, and that he's not prepared for it. Picard admits he's probably not.

In the garden, Troi asks if Soji has ever seen real tomatoes before; Soji admits she's never had anything that wasn't from a replicator. Troi offers her a tomato from the garden, and Soji is taken aback at how "real" it tastes. Troi tells Kestra to take the tomatoes to her father and set the table, conversing in another language. Troi explains that it was Harpanthi, spoken by the "Mind Witches of the Southern Ice", another invention of Thaddeus. Troi explains he created eleven languages — twelve counting Pahlplah, the language of butterflies, which had only wingbeats rather than words. Thaddeus had been born and raised aboard starships, and was fascinated by the idea of having a homeworld like Betazed and Earth — so he created his own, Ardani, simply meaning "home". When Thad became sick, they moved to Nepenthe, which became the homeworld he wanted. Troi explains he had contracted mendaxic neurosclerosis, a silicon-based virus

which could theoretically be cured using an active positronic matrix, but when Thad contracted the disease, there were no active matrices, and none allowed to be created because of the synth ban. Kestra has told her mother about Soji, how "new" she is; Soji admits she's only guessing on her age, and that she only knows the Romulans seem to want to find out where she was created. She talks about Narek, how he got her to believe he cared for her, that perhaps he even loved her. Soji then says she can't trust Troi or Kestra, and especially not Picard, wondering if it was all some kind of trick just like with Narek. Picard walks up and admits it was all an elaborate plot, and that she was right not to trust any of them. Soji angrily shoves him aside and storms off.

Picard takes it as "encouraging" that she didn't break him in half. Troi bluntly tells Picard he had it coming, that he didn't take Soji's feelings into consideration: while he thought the idea of it all being a simulation was preposterous, Soji had no reason to believe that anything was real, not even herself; her ability to trust was a flaw in her programming. Kestra then calls from the stove, which is producing black smoke. As Riker runs to the stove, Troi admonishes Picard that he needs to be himself — compassionate, patient, curious. Picard adds "useful" to that list. Troi asks Picard to let them help, even to pretend the dinner table was his ready room on the Enterprise. Riker then calls out to "cancel red alert"; it was only a burnt tomato. Troi and Picard walk over to join Riker and Kestra for dinner.

Aboard the Artifact, Hugh and Elnor head back to the cube's queencell. Hugh admits he had been afraid of using its power, but now, angered by the murder of the xBs and his belief that he had failed them, he intends to "take this cube away" from the Romulans forever — which, "Narissa" remarks as she enters, sounded not only like a treaty violation, but open insurrection... to which she was grateful, as that meant she could kill Hugh now. Elnor draws his blade and tells "Narissa" and her guards in Romulan to "choose to live"; in response, "Narissa" opens fire with her disruptor. Elnor easily dispatches the guards with his sword. "Narissa" holsters her disruptor, saying that this was not the way the Zhat Vash fought the Qowat Milat. Elnor sheathes his sword, and engages "Narissa" in hand-to-hand. "Narissa" pulls one dagger from her belt, holding it at Elnor, while she hurls another into Hugh's neck. Elnor rushes to Hugh's side, before angrily pulling the knife from his neck and hurling it at "Narissa", who escapes with a transporter. With his dying breaths, Hugh tells Elnor he needs an xB to activate the queencell, before thanking him for letting him be a "hopeful fool" again for one brief moment.

Back on La Sirena, Musiker offers Jurati another slice of cake and a glass of chocolate milk; Jurati thanks her for being kind to her, considering her a good person. Musiker admits she's more like "the wreckage of a good person", a "temporary good person" in case of emergencies. Jurati begins to break down crying, and Musiker realizes it's about Maddox. Before they can speak further, Rios tells them their "little shadow" has returned. Just then, Jurati begins vomiting violently, at first what looks to Rios like blood, but which Musiker explains is red velvet.

On Nepenthe, as Riker serves dinner, Picard remains unable to contact Rios, and wonders if he needs another ship. Riker and Troi suggest the spaceport at Infinity Lake, if he's willing to wait; they had weekly services, but independent contractors were rare. Kestra suggests Captain Crandall and his ship, the Inside Straight, which she admits is somewhat broken — just like Crandall, Riker adds. Even if Picard were to get another ship, Riker wonders where he would go with it. Soji says they would go "home", explaining how Narek used Zhal Makh to find the planet she was created on. Picard explains that when Dahj first came to him, she had just been activated by the Romulans' first attempt on her life. Like Soji, she found she had incredible defensive capabilities. He asks her to listen to the timbre of his voice, feel the fluctuations of his heart rate, note the dilation of his pupils... asking her to trust him. Kestra asks if she believes him; Soji admits he believes he's telling the truth, but that doesn't mean anything. Picard explains she was created from the remnants of Data, who had given his life to save his, and that was part of the reason he wanted to help her find her home. But mainly, Picard admits that when Dahj found him, he was simply wasting his days at home, not truly living his life; now he had a mission, and no one, not even Soji, could stop him from carrying it out. Soji finally reveals that what she had seen through the skylight during the Zhal Makh, the planet with the electrical storms and two red moons. Riker speculates that this was where Maddox went to restart his research. Kestra tells Soji she has a homeworld. Soji agrees that she does indeed have her own Ardani, and tells Picard she wants to go there. Riker points out the Romulans have a head start, and Troi believes given what the Romulans did to Dahj and attempted to do to Soji, the planet

was in danger. Kestra, fiddling with a comm device under the table, reveals she asked Captain Crandall: They're looking for a planet in the Ghulion system in the Vayt sector, which didn't have a name, only a number.

Rios takes Jurati to La Sirena's sickbay, while Jurati insists she was fine, she simply ate too much cake. Rios explains he took her aside because the "shadow" keeps tailing them, and he thinks Musiker is being tracked by the Romulans. He points out how suspicious she was acting en route to Freecloud, doing a "goodbye forever" routine... and then came back, no explanation. Jurati knows she is the one being tracked, not Musiker, but Rios isn't buying it: Jurati's been on the ship since they left Earth, so the Romulans could not have put a tracker on her. Just then, Musiker calls Rios back to the bridge: The "shadow" is back. After Rios leaves, Jurati replicates a dose of noranium hydride, which the computer warns could have neurotoxic effects. She hesitates only for a moment before she puts the hypospray to her neck, then collapses to the deck. The La Sirena's EMH activates to find her on the floor, foaming at the mouth. Tailing La Sirena aboard his scout ship, Narek curses as he suddenly loses the signal: the noranium hydride has canceled out Jurati's tracker. The EMH calls Rios to sickbay, as Jurati was now in a coma.

Aboard the Artifact, Elnor pulls out the comm chip Seven of Nine had given to Picard, sending out an emergency signal to the Fenris Rangers.

On Nepenthe, Picard tells Riker that La Sirena only came into comms range late the previous evening. When asked about the crew, Picard refers to them as "decidedly motley", and that there had been nothing but drama since they left Earth. Picard asks Riker if he had ever thought of going back to Starfleet; Riker is on active reserve, but admits he would need a good reason. He believes that Picard shouldn't have retired in the first place, but also says he'd done his fair share of saving planets, and no one would fault him for staying home. Picard gratefully thanks Riker for many things, but foremost for not talking him out of his mission. Back in the house, Kestra draws a picture of Soji while she sleeps, and both express that they would miss the other after Soji leaves. Kestra admits she doesn't understand it all, but knows something bad happened to Soji, just as something bad had happened to her. Her parents helped her through it, but Soji didn't have parents — just Picard. Soji isn't so sure, but Kestra says they could be there for one another if they wanted.

Picard embraces his old friends as he and Soji prepare to leave, before Kestra runs out and hands Soji the broken compass, saying she only had to pretend it worked. Picard then taps the commbadge at his chest, calling for two to beam up.

Broken Pieces

Season 1

Episode Number: 8

Season Episode: 8

Originally aired: Thursday March 12, 2020
Writer: Michael Chabon
Director: Maja Vrvilo
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Peyton List (Narissa), Tamlyn Tomita (Commodore Oh), Rebecca Wisocky (Ramdha), Derek Webster (Romulan Guard), Jane Hae Kim (Tal Shiar Female #1), Kendra Munger (Tal Shiar Female #2), Ann Magnuson (Clancy), Ernesto Chaverri (Xborg)
Summary: Picard realizes how far some will go to protect secrets that go back generations when truths about the attack on Mars are revealed; Narissa orders her guards to capture Elnor, setting off a chain reaction on the Borg cube.



In 2385, Commodore Oh addresses a gathering of Vulcan and Romulan agents of the Zhat Vash, including "Narissa Rizzo" and her aunt Ramdha, on Aia, the "Grief World". She reminds them of the Admonition left behind by their forebears on this world, and shows them the devastation caused by artificial lifeforms in the past, warning them that these images may cause them to go mad. As Oh warned, the others are overwhelmed by the images, some committing suicide with their disruptors, others bashing their own skulls in with rocks or trying to gouge out their eyes. "Narissa", though

shaken, seems unaffected, and tells Oh that "we have to stop them", and asks Oh how and where they can begin. "On the world the Humans call Mars," Oh replies. "Narissa" goes over to help her aunt, who is the only other person still alive, telling her they had work to do.

Fourteen years later, aboard the Artifact, "Narissa" speaks to Ramdha, now an xB and comatose from her interaction with Soji Asha, commenting that there was no medical reason for her condition. She remarks it was "folly" that Ramdha took her and Narek in after the death of their parents, and "sheer madness" to submit herself to Admonishment, although she admires the "panache" with which Ramdha lost her mind, breaking a Borg cube by the sheer force of her despair. She remarks that Narek has found the "synethetics' nest", and will be joining him on the hunt as soon as she shuts down this "house of horrors", and Ramdha could join them if she woke up. She contacts one of her agents, Centurion Tarent, asking if he'd found "the freak"; Tarent confirms he has, having tracked him to Hugh's office.

Deep inside the cube, hearing footsteps, Elnor draws his blade; despite being disoriented by a stun grenade, he is able to hold his own for a time, until he is overwhelmed and held by the Romulan guards. Just then, some of the guards are felled by phaser blasts, while Elnor dispatches the rest. Seven of Nine then enters, asking where Hugh is, and wondering what was going on aboard the cube. Without a word, Elnor hugs her, relieved to see her.

Aboard *La Sirena*, Jean-Luc Picard introduces Soji to Cristóbal Rios, who appears to be disoriented. He tells Rios to set a course for the nearest starbase, Deep Space 12, and to get him a secure comm channel to Starfleet Command, much to the surprise of both Soji and Raffi Musiker. Rios finally says he will set a course for DS12, but after that, Picard was on his own. Soji is wrong-footed, as Picard had told her he was taking her home. Picard says he will, but given the nature of their enemy, they couldn't get there without support, and tells her she has no choice but to trust him; he understands that would make her angry, and admits that he would be as well in that position, as he begins to take her to a cabin. Musiker, however, is less keen on having her aboard, remarking they already had one "adorable little homicidal double agent" onboard thanks to Picard, telling him "how big a fool" he was. Picard apologizes for Musiker's rudeness and prepares to lead her away when Musiker draws a phaser, raging that Picard had built "this whole giant fantasy of rescue and sacrifice and redemption" all due to a single neuron. She then says that Agnes Jurati is probably a Romulan spy as she had a tracking isotope in her blood, and that Jurati killed Bruce Maddox.

In *La Sirena*'s sickbay, the EMH explains to Picard that Jurati injected herself with noranium hydride, which canceled out the viridium tracker already in her system; when she did, Musiker adds, they lost the *Tal Shiar* ship shadowing them. The EMH explains that Maddox's injuries had not been fatal, and that Jurati deactivated him before shutting down the hematic microrepair treatment that was stabilizing Maddox's condition. Musiker reminds Picard she had been skeptical about bringing Jurati along in the first place, and questions whether he knows what Soji was really like... or if Soji knew herself. When he is unable to answer, she leaves to inform Rios that they had been right about Jurati.

Picard sends his report in to Starfleet C-in-C Kirsten Clancy, telling her that while she may have thought he was being a "desperate old man, quixotic, paranoid, possibly senile" (which the admiral elects to leave at "quixotic"), he remarks that "the windmills have turned out to be giants" after all. He asks for a squadron to travel to the Vayt sector to rescue beings who had as much life and liberty as they, or Data, had, and saying if she thought it was not a job for Starfleet, she was a "waste of space". Clancy bluntly quiets him, telling him that a squadron was en route to rendezvous with him at DS12.

On the bridge, Musiker begins explaining her concerns to who she thinks is Rios, when she realizes that "Rios" is in fact one of his holographic crew — in this case, "Enoch", the Irish-accented navigator, who says that Rios set the course for DS12 before activating the holograms and shutting himself up in his quarters. While getting nowhere trying to talk about Soji, Musiker shows Enoch a design she kept picking up from the cube, which he identifies as an effort to draw an octonary, a planetary system with eight stars. He consults his archives and has found apocryphal references in ancient Romulan star atlases to such a system, which does not appear in any modern astral charts. Musiker gets to thinking that perhaps the Conclave of Eight, which she believes to be behind the attack on Mars, was not a reference to the number of people, but the place they met.

Aboard the *Artifact*, "Narissa" finds the guards onboard killed by Elnor and Seven, and the comm chip from the *Fenris Rangers*. Inside the queencell, Seven asks Elnor why he didn't go with Picard and Soji; Elnor replies that Picard released him from his pledge, and that he had found a cause even more lost than his. When he asks about how the queencell worked, Seven says she can either explain, or steal the cube. Her Borg implants allow her to bring the cube online, causing it to start regenerating. "Narissa" tells her guards to get rid of all the Borg still in stasis, while she handles the xBs.

Dining in *La Sirena*'s mess hall, Picard asks Soji about the food, and if she has a preference. Soji replies she honestly doesn't know, and tells him he didn't understand this "vacuum" inside her, where she didn't know if it was her speaking or her instruction set. Picard admits he doesn't, but tells her that while she may think she does not have a past anymore, he feels she still does, that she has "a story waiting to be claimed". Soji recognizes that he's referring to Data, among other things, and asks about him. Picard tells her of his bravery and curiosity, "a child's wisdom, unclouded by habit or bias". He admits to feeling a certain love for him in a way, but remarks that Data's capacity to reciprocate that feeling, or express emotion at all, was limited, something he supposed they had in common. Soji asks how he thinks Data would see him now; Picard expresses the hope that Data would remember him as someone who believed in him and in his potential, celebrating his success and counseling him if he fell short, offering help, and knowing

when to stay out of his way when he didn't need it. Soji thinks on this, before remarking that Data loved him after all.

Still looking for Rios, Musiker encounters another of his holograms, "Ian", the Emergency Engineering Hologram, who speaks with a Scottish accent and greets her as "lassie". Before asking not to be called "lassie" again, Musiker asks if he's seen Rios, to which Ian replies he hasn't, as he's still hiding in his cabin, remarking that seeing Soji likely brought up "unwelcome memories", and refers to Soji as "Jana". Musiker then asks what the likelihood of an octonary star system occurring naturally would be, which Ian believes would be "close to nil", which would mean it would have to be constructed somehow... but why? Ian thinks it might be showing off, but Musiker, still working on her theory, wonders if perhaps it was meant to be a warning. Getting closer to finding what she thinks is the truth, Musiker admits she finds the feeling "absolutely terrifying". Going to her quarters, Musiker tries to order a glass of wine when yet another Rios hologram, "Mister Hospitality", activates, telling her that she disabled alcohol service from her quarters two days before, and completely locked herself out of overriding the system. When she asks about Rios, he tells her that he could use someone to talk to who didn't look exactly like him (albeit "better groomed"), adding that Rios had opted for a self-scan option for the ship's holographic systems when he acquired *La Sirena*, so they were all more or less based on him, albeit with a few "careless" deletions later on.

In his own cabin, an intoxicated Rios opens his old chest from the *USS ibn Majid*, taking out his old uniform and other keepsakes, angrily telling Musiker to "piss off" when she tries to talk with him. Inside a keepsake box was a photograph of himself with his former captain, Alonzo Vandermeer, and a drawing of Rios... with someone who looks remarkably like Soji.

Back on the Artifact, Seven consults the cube's systems, seeing those Borg that Hugh reclaimed, while thousands more remained in stasis. Elnor suggests waking them up, but Seven knows they would be useless without the voice of the Borg Collective. However, she could activate and link their traneivers to create a sort of "mini-collective" on the cube, taking control of them to use against the Romulan troops. Seven is reluctant, as that would mean essentially assimilating them again, leaving them with no free will. Elnor naively suggests Seven simply release them after they win, but Seven tells him they might not want to be released... and she may not want to release them.

In Picard's holodeck study, Musiker assembles Rios' holographic crew, believing that somewhere under the "absurd spectacle" before her are five "broken pieces" of Rios himself, like they each got dealt a "hole card", and asks them to turn them over. She tells Ian that he had referred to Soji as "Jana", that he recognized her. Mister Hospitality believes that it had something to do with Captain Vandermeer on the *ibn Majid*. Emmet, the Emergency Tactical Hologram, actually falls "asleep" during the discussion, although when asked what happened to Vandermeer, he mimicks putting a phaser in his mouth and pulling the trigger, indicating the captain committed suicide. When she attempts to find out why, the holograms mention the *ibn Majid*'s logs were classified, and they seem to know why, but are unable to pinpoint it.

In *La Sirena*'s sickbay, Jurati regains consciousness to find Picard looking down at her, and asks if it worked. Picard confirms that she neutralized the viridium tracker before telling her they were en route to Deep Space 12, and upon arrival, she was to surrender herself to the authorities for the murder of Bruce Maddox. He then asks her why she killed Maddox, her mentor and lover. Jurati says that she "had to", revealing that Commodore Oh had come to her before they left, and performed a mind meld to plant "poison" in her mind, as well as a psychic block to keep her from talking about it. She then asks Picard if he believed in hell, admitting she didn't until she saw what Oh showed her, and now thinks about suicide every day to "comfort" herself. Picard asks if Oh's vision was a memory she lived through; Jurati says it happened "thousands of centuries" ago, and that they were on the threshold: they had to destroy all possibility of synthetic life or "hell would come again". When Picard asks about the threshold, Soji enters and says that it refers to the coming of Seb-Cheneb, the Destroyer... her.

Rios has fallen asleep in his quarters, listening to Billie Holiday's "Solitude", when Musiker enters and replicates a cup of black coffee. She asks him about Captain Vandermeer. Rios says he used to pretend Vandermeer was his father, calling him "Pops" in his head, but never guessed he would be a cold blooded murderer. Rios explains that while patrolling the Vayt sector, the *ibn Majid* picked up a small ship of unknown origin with two passengers, and alerted Starfleet of a first contact. They beamed the two beings aboard — the ambassador, Beautiful Flower, and

his young aide, Jana. They shake hands and sit down to eat, before Vandermeer killed them both with his phaser. Rios reveals that Vandermeer had received a "black flag directive" straight from Starfleet Security, and if Vandermeer disobeyed, Starfleet would destroy the *ibn Majid* with all hands. Rios confronted his captain, who then put the phaser into his mouth and pulled the trigger... and then Rios covered everything up, just as Vandermeer was ordered to do. He beamed the bodies into space, deleted the transporter logs, and told the fleet that Vandermeer had essentially committed suicide for no reason. Six months later, Rios was discharged from Starfleet, officially for post-traumatic dysphoria. He shows her the drawing that Beautiful Flower made of Rios and Jana, the latter of whom looks exactly like Soji; Musiker realizes they were synths.

At the same time Rios is talking with Musiker, Jurati talks with Soji, asking about simple things — whether she eats, sleeps, what she does when she's sad. She remarks on the constellation of three beauty marks on Soji's right cheek, which she calls "artistry", and how Data's creator Noonian Soong had thought of himself an artist; Soji also adds that she has a mole on her chest and a crooked pinky toe. Jurati raves about how Soji was a technological work of art, but Soji asks her if she thinks she's a person. She knows Commodore Oh has told Jurati to kill her too, but that she does not intend to allow her the opportunity. Jurati tells her that, now that she's met Soji in person, she would never take that opportunity.

Aboard the Artifact, "Narissa" begins shooting down xBs in the reclamation lab. Looking at the thousands of drones still in stasis, she asks Tarent if they scared him; the centurion admits he would be a fool if they didn't, but "Narissa" warns that something far worse was coming if she failed. In the queencell, Elnor and Seven watch the lifesigns begin to fade. Seven links herself into the cube's systems, creating her "mini-collective"; in response, "Narissa" orders the drones vented into space.

Aboard *La Sirena*, Soji gently escorts Jurati out of sickbay, where the others are waiting. Jurati says she is "done murdering people", and will turn herself in when they arrive at DS12. She confesses they were the closest she'd had to a crew, and apologizes for ruining it. Rios orders a cup of peppermint ice cream and a plate of French fries for Soji, remembering from his experience with Jana. Musiker explains what she has learned: Some two to three hundred thousand years earlier, eight suns were brought together with a planet in the center, which the Romulans called the "Admonition", as a warning against allowing synthetic life to evolve. The Romulans took this warning seriously, creating the Zhat Vash. When Noonian Soong started creating his androids, the Zhat Vash sent Oh, a half-Vulcan/half-Romulan, as their mole in Starfleet, and she eventually rose to head of Starfleet Security, all the while with one mandate: Stop the Federation's research on synthetic lifeforms. To that end, Oh engineers "a situation so terrifying" that the Federation's only response was to ban synths: the attack on Mars. In 2390, the *ibn Majid* makes contact with a pair of emissaries: Beautiful Flower and Jana. Soji knows of Jana, but wonders how; Rios replies it was the same reason he knew she liked to dip French fries in peppermint ice cream. They had come from the world Maddox had fled to after the ban, which the Zhat Vash have been looking for ever since... a world they now know of because of Soji.

Soji angrily pounds the table and storms off to the bridge, bringing *La Sirena*'s engines online, sealing the bridge with a forcefield, and deactivating the holographic crew: She is taking the ship to her home planet. She has located a node of the Borg transwarp conduit network nine hours away at top speed, not sure how she knows, but having learned what she has found, she seems to know a lot of things. Rios begins to sing a song in Spanish, "Arroz con leche" — a lullaby his mother taught him, which acts as an override code, allowing him to take back control of the ship. Picard suggests that since they've done it Maddox's way and his way up to that point, perhaps they should try to do things Soji's way, and hope they were not too late. He sits down in the captain's chair before he admits he has no idea how it works. Rios asks if Soji just planned to fly into a transwarp conduit, "gravimetric shear be damned", and reminds her that *La Sirena* was his ship. She then asks him to take her home, for Jana's sake. He relents, and takes the helm.

Aboard the Artifact, "Narissa" is informed that all of the Borg drones have been jettisoned, and that the fleet is prepared to travel to the synthetics' homeworld, before she is ambushed by a group of xBs, who take down Tarent and manage to overpower her; however, she beams to safety as the Romulan ships begin going to warp. Speaking for the "mini-collective", Seven intones that the cube was theirs again. Elnor warily asks if Seven intends to assimilate him now, to which the cube's collective replies that "Annika still has work to do" before disconnecting from her.

As La Sirena goes to warp, Picard remembers standing night watch as an ensign on the bridge of the USS Reliant, thinking he was the only one awake in all that emptiness, forgetting until then how much he'd loved it. He tells Rios that he remembered Vandermeer, who had been first officer to a former classmate from Starfleet Academy, Captain Marta Batanides. He asks Rios if Vandermeer knew Beautiful Flower and Jana were synthetic. Rios believes he had to, and that Vandermeer must have thought because of that, he could live with killing them. Picard thought him a good man; Rios agrees he was, and that he hates the idea that Vandermeer died believing Starfleet had betrayed him, had betrayed itself. Picard says that Starfleet did indeed betray itself, long before Oh gave Vandermeer the order; the ban itself was the betrayal. The Zhat Vash had set the trap, and Starfleet had chosen to react in fear. Rios, however, is wary: it had taken Soji all of five minutes to hack his ship, and now they were en route to a whole planet of others like her. Musiker had said the Romulans called Soji "the Destroyer"; what if they were right? Picard agrees that they may have been right about what had happened in the past, but the future was theirs to write, and they had powerful tools to write it with: openness, optimism, and the spirit of curiosity, while the Zhat Vash only had secrecy and fear. Soji then arrives, and reports that they had arrived at the transwarp conduit. She then takes out Kestra's compass, looking at it for a moment before Rios takes them in... followed by a Romulan scout ship.

Et in Arcadia Ego: Part 1

Season 1

Episode Number: 9

Season Episode: 9

Originally aired: Thursday March 19, 2020
Teleplay: Michael Chabon, Ayelet Waldman
Story: Michael Chabon, Ayelet Waldman, Akiva Goldsman
Director: Akiva Goldsman
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Dr. Altan Inigo Soong), Tamlyn Tomita (Commodore Oh), Brian DeRozan (Romulan Officer), Matt Perfetuo (Rune), Mike Perfetuo (Codex), Jade Ramsey (Arcana), Nikita Ramsey (Saga), Zachary James Rukavina (xB), John Ales (Dr. Bruce Maddox), David Paymer (Dr. Moritz Benayoun)
Summary: Following an unconventional and dangerous transit, Picard and the crew finally arrive at Soji's home world, Coppelius. However, with Romulan warbirds on their tail, their arrival brings only greater danger as the crew discovers more than expected about the planet's inhabitants.



La Sirena makes a turbulent journey through a transwarp conduit, with Agnes Jurati hiding under a desk repeating "please be over", and Cristóbal Rios holding the helm steady as the computer reports that the graviton field is holding at ninety percent. Finally, they emerge in orbit of the fourth planet of the Ghulion system. Rios asks Soji Asha if it was the planet she was looking for, and she nods. Jean-Luc Picard asks if they had beaten the Romulans to the planet; Raffi Musiker scans and finds no sign of any Romulan ships, or any other ships for that matter. She congratulates Soji for getting them

there "really damn fast" with the transwarp conduit, before saying she never wanted to do that again. Jurati enters the bridge, wondering why they had not gone to Deep Space 12. Rios says only that there was a "change of plans", and Picard adds that they traveled twenty-five light years in just fifteen minutes, which explained the turbulence. She notices the planet with the electrical storms and two red moons, which Soji identifies as Coppelius.

Just then, the red alert klaxons sound; the "snakehead" ship has followed them through the conduit, and begins opening fire on them. La Sirena exchanges fire with the ship, before getting in behind it and apparently disabling it. Musiker reports the single life sign is very faint; Soji believes it to be a trick, but Picard reminds her of the difference between killing an attacking enemy and watching a wounded one die, before telling Musiker to beam the life sign to sickbay. Just then, the ship suddenly appears behind them; it used its cloaking device as a holographic projector to fool them. As he attempts to evade the Romulan disruptors, Rios notices an "unexpected" arrival: The Artifact, now regenerated and bringing its weapons back online. Musiker suddenly

detects five incoming "bogeys" from the surface, which appear to be gigantic orchids; they begin enveloping La Sirena, the snakehead, and the Artifact. La Sirena's lights go out, and Rios uses his lighter in the darkness; the orchid has disabled all power. Just then, the ship begins to shake violently as the orchids begin pulling the three ships through the atmosphere, with the Artifact's sheer size causing a shock wave through the atmosphere. As the orchid begins to burn away, showing the sky around them, they see Picard sitting slack in his chair, eyes closed. "Thank you for coming... everyone," he says in a dazed voice, as the crew rushes to him.

Picard begins experiencing flashbacks before he awakens in La Sirena's sickbay, with Jurati hovering over him. She informs him that Rios has opened the shutters to let light in, as there was no power, and that she had found an old medical tricorder in the ship's medkit. She had found no sign of head trauma or anything else to cause him trouble, but she appears worried about something she found on the scan. She initially chalks it up to the tricorder being old, but when Picard asks what else it could be, she is unable to answer. Knowing full well what she found, Picard tells her the tricorder was fine.

Stepping into the main hold, Picard addresses the crew, telling them that he is going to bring Soji to her people and warn of the Romulan invasion force coming to exterminate them. He also reveals the abnormality in his brain that he has known of for years, and that his condition had been diagnosed as terminal just before they left Earth. However, he makes clear that he expects that to be the last word on the subject, and that he is not to be treated like a dying man for risk of "pissing me off". He then asks for a status update. Rios reports that the ship was structurally intact after the attack and the crash landing, but the orchid had disabled the power. Musiker adds that the planet is class M, and before the "space flower" disabled them, she had detected a settlement. Soji identifies it as Coppelius Station, some five or six kilometers from the crash site, and she suspects that it was the place where she was created; however, she admits her memories are jumbled, and that she had not been there long before Bruce Maddox took her and her sister Dahj away. Jurati asks if the inhabitants hate them; Soji doesn't think so, given what Picard had told her about how open-minded and unbiased Data was, but Rios reminds them that they had crashed his ship without asking his name first. Picard asks when the Romulans will arrive. Musiker believes the conduit has allowed them to negate the Romulans' head start, but she anticipates it could be within a day or two. Picard then suggests they go out and take a walk.

Musiker hands Soji a phaser in case they encounter any angry reptiloids, homicidal fungi, or "asshole Romulan ex-boyfriends". Stepping onto the desert-like surface, they see the crash site of the Artifact, to which Soji considers good riddance; Rios reminds her that they still had friends on board the cube when they left. Picard knows time is of the essence, but he wants to see if Elnor and Hugh survived, even if it's a small chance. Musiker points out that Coppelius Station, or "Synthville" as she calls it, is the other way, to which Jurati suggests splitting up. Soji, however, considered Hugh a friend as well, and believes it best to stick together... just in case of any homicidal fungi.

The party enters the shattered remnants of the cube, seeing the xBs that survived the crash moving around; one of them identifies Picard as "Locutus", which makes him freeze in fear. However, Elnor sees him and joyfully embraces him, glad to see he is alive. Dead Romulans kicked to the floor from the upper levels herald the entry of Seven of Nine, who asks if they had arrived for the cleanup, or just liked to make messes. She relates to Picard her experience in interfacing with the queencell, and how she had seen La Sirena in the conduit with the snakehead in pursuit, and so she opened another conduit to come after them. Picard mourns what has become of Hugh, before he sees the xBs working to try to bring the replicators back online; he then asks if it was possible to bring up the long range sensors. The sensors are activated, and Musiker and Rios see what they're facing: a fleet of 218 Romulan warbirds. Meanwhile, Soji looks through the photographs in her ruined quarters.

Picard has explained his illness to Elnor, who is shaken by the news, but also knows he needs protection now more than ever. Picard tells him that that the xBs need him more now, and tells him to keep working with Seven to reactivate the cube's defenses. When Elnor remarks that he may never see Picard again, he says this is true for any two people saying goodbye, and expresses his pride in Elnor. When Seven tells him to "keep saving the galaxy", he tells her that it was all on her now.

La Sirena's crew arrives at Coppelius Station, walking among the population, which begins

to surround them. One of them, with yellow eyes like Data's, recognizes Soji and welcomes her home; Soji knows that her name is Arcana. Arcana recognizes Picard almost instantly as being Data's former captain, and reaches out to trace the lines in Picard's face, and the grief and endurance they represent, before welcoming them all. Arcana asks Soji if her mission was complete; when Soji confirms it is, her grim expression makes clear that success brings bad news. Soji warns about the Romulan fleet en route to destroy them all. Picard asks how many more of the orchids they had, and Arcana replies that they had started with fifteen, and were now reduced to ten. A man makes his way through the crowd, bearing an uncanny resemblance to Data, if he had been organic like the others. He identifies himself as Altan Inigo Soong, "mad scientist", the son of Data's creator Noonian Soong.

Soji relates her story to Altan and the others, blaming herself for the Romulans finding their world. Altan reassures her that she could not have kept a secret she didn't know about, and believes the ban brought out the "deceptive side" of Bruce Maddox. He explains that he had been against Maddox's plan because of the risk of unwanted attention. Just then, Picard is approached by another android almost identical to Soji and Dahj, who brings him to the group. Rios believes her to be Jana, one of the two he met on the USS *ibn Majid*, but Altan identifies her as Sutra, Jana's sister. Sutra asks Jurati about the Admonition, which Jurati admits she only experienced second-hand, but it was enough to convince her to kill Maddox; when asked if she still felt that way now, Jurati wondered if she had lost her mind. Sutra agrees that this was what drove the Romulans to obsession, because they were driven to madness by a message not intended for them. Picard wonders if that meant it was intended for synthetic minds, and Sutra expresses a desire to find out. Arcana points out that they had only had one ship, and it had been destroyed when Jana and Beautiful Flower were killed. However, Sutra does not have to go anywhere at all. Altan explains that Sutra is well versed in Vulcan culture, and has even learned how to perform a mind meld. Rios protests, but Jurati reassures him it was alright, and that Coppelius' people need to know. Though Jurati is terrified, Sutra reassures her, and begins the meld.

Within the meld, Sutra sees the evolution of organic life, and its yearning for perfection — and in that yearning, they create synthetics. But organic life perceives synthetics as a threat because they would not age or suffer illness, and so they seek to destroy their creations, and in so doing destroy themselves. Somewhere beyond time and space, an "alliance of synthetic life" awaited a signal, and that "your evolution will be their extinction". As she breaks the meld with a shaken Jurati, all Sutra can say is, "Fascinating."

In Altan's lab, Jurati sees a butterfly, another synthetic creation; he says he had missed butterflies, so he made his own. She asks about Maddox, who Altan says spoke of Jurati often, and that his one regret was that he didn't bring her with him; Jurati confesses it was more like she didn't have the guts to go with him. Altan chastises Jurati for killing Maddox, and remarks on the "great debt" she owes... and asks if she is willing to help pay it, to give a life instead of take one. He has constructed a golem, but comments that Maddox was the expert on substrate work; however, he has regained an interest in the mind transfer process, commenting on a "sense of urgency".

Outside, Soji and Sutra argue about how to proceed against the Romulan fleet. Soji tries to assure her that Rios will repair *La Sirena* to get them to safety, but Sutra is adamant that her plan is the only way, as the Romulans consider synthetics to be abominations. Soji is horrified at the potential cost in lives, and insists there must be another option. Just then, to Soji's shock, a struggling and injured Narek is brought in.

Inside, Jurati is holding Altan's synthetic cat, which he has named Spot II, when Rios checks in on her, saying he needed to get the ship back online. Jurati tells him that she is staying behind, to help Altan work on some unfinished work of Maddox's. Rios warns her to be mindful, as he does not trust them; Jurati asks if it was them or her he was worried about, before telling him not to forget her when it was time to leave. Rios assures her that she was many things, but "forgettable" was not one of them.

Arcana gives Musiker a strange tool to repair *La Sirena*, telling her to "use her imagination". Motivated by gratitude for all he's done for her, Musiker expresses her love for Picard, which he awkwardly reciprocates, before abruptly leaving.

Picard opens a secure hyperchannel to Starfleet Command, explaining he has a first contact situation and a priority request to open diplomatic negotiations to protect Coppelius from a Romulan attack.

In his cell, Narek asks his guard, Saga, for some water from the bag he was carrying; when she doesn't answer, he asks if that was how they treated prisoners. Saga admits they had never had prisoners before, and asks how the Romulans treat theirs. Narek, understandably, asks to change the subject, before asking again for his water. As Saga moves to deactivate the force field, Soji stops her, telling her Narek cannot be trusted. Saga assures her that she has been monitoring Narek's life signs, but Soji is adamant. Narek expresses his love for Soji, and that his attempt on her life in the Zhal Makh was motivated out of his fear that she would kill him. Soji knows he loves her, but at the same time, she dismisses him as a "sad and twisted thing", and that he disgusted her... but not nearly as much as she disgusted herself by pitying him. Narek tells her that he pities her as well, as the Romulan fleet was coming to rain down fire upon their world, and kill every last "so-called living thing" on it. Soji confidently tells him that they won't. Saga tells him that food and drink will be brought to him, as well as treatment for the injury to his head.

Picard continues to try to contact Starfleet, but is unable to reach them, finally giving up as Soji enters. She recognizes the room as Maddox's quarters, and admits she could not understand why Jurati had killed Maddox, and could not imagine taking life to save life. She finds herself unable to understand "the logic of sacrifice", something that Picard is not sure he likes the sound of. She asks if he believes it has no logic, no calculus of life and death, to which Picard replies that depends on the person holding the knife. Jurati believed she was doing the right thing by killing Maddox, but now she was horrified by what she had done. Picard counters by asking if she had done what was right, or that she believed she had no choice. Soji tries to reconcile the idea: perhaps killing was motivated solely by fear, the opposite of logic, but what if killing was the only way to survive?

Meanwhile, Narek looks up and is shocked to see Sutra, taking over guard duty for Saga. She deactivates the force field and enters his cell, and tells him that she had been afraid that her desire to kill him would outweigh her immediate need of his services, and asks if he would like to get out.

Picard and Soji look up upon hearing screaming, only to find Narek is gone... and Altan mourning over Saga, pierced through the eye with the hummingbird brooch she had been wearing. Soji is enraged, saying that she should have killed Narek when she had the chance. Meanwhile, Narek is making his way across the planet to the crashed Artifact.

Sutra addresses the populace, warning that the arrival of the organics has cost them yet another sister, and that in one day, the Romulans would arrive... which gave them just enough time. When Picard asks for what, she explains that she experienced the Admonition in Jurati's mind. For Jurati, and the Romulans, it was a warning — but for synthetics, it was a message. A higher race of synthetics were waiting for a signal, and the frequency was encoded within the Admonition. Sutra and Altan had worked to create a suitable beacon to summon them before the Romulan fleet arrives. Once summoned, they would seek out and unite all synthetic life in order to "excise" them from the "oppression of organics". Picard, however, quickly realizes what this means: the extermination of all organic life, in order to prevent the extermination of synthetic life. He speaks to the assembled synths, saying that while he knows they have no reason to trust the Federation after the synth ban and what happened on the *ibn Majid*, there was room on *La Sirena* for all of them, and that he would see to their safety; once that was done, he would demand that the Federation lift the synth ban. Altan, however, tells his "children" that the Federation did not listen to Picard after the attack on Mars, and they would not listen to him now, and informs Picard that he is now under house arrest. Sutra emphasizes that he cannot be allowed to walk free, as he will have them doubting their conviction. Soji, to Picard's shock, agrees; this was not like the Romulan rescue, and her people could not be his "means of redemption".

Sutra also calls for Jurati to be arrested as well. However, Jurati remarks on how much she has risked to be there, to see the culmination of her dreams made real in their community, and that she wanted to be part of that. If they wouldn't do it for her, she adds, do it for Altan — to help him survive what was coming. Altan agrees, saying that Jurati was as close to a mother as they would ever get. Sutra points out that "a mother would die for her children", and asks if Jurati was willing to do so, adding she would know if she was lying. Jurati replies that she is. Sutra tells the others to take Picard away.

Aboard the lead ship of the Romulan fleet, Commodore Oh is informed that long range sensors detect minimal defenses, and that the fleet will make landfall in twenty-four hours.

Et in Arcadia Ego, Part 2

Season 1

Episode Number: 10

Season Episode: 10

Originally aired: Thursday March 26, 2020
Teleplay: Michael Chabon
Story: Michael Chabon, Akiva Goldsman
Director: Akiva Goldsman
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Isa Briones (Dahj / Soji Asha), Harry Treadaway (Narek), Santiago Cabrera (Cristobal "Chris" Rios), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor)
Guest Stars: Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data / Dr. Altan Inigo Soong), Peyton List (Narissa), Tamlyn Tomita (Commodore Oh), Kay Bess (La Sirena Computer (voice)), Brian DeRozan (Romulan Officer), Matt Perfetuo (Rune), Mike Perfetuo (Codex), Jade Ramsey (Arcana), Nikita Ramsey (Saga)
Summary: Picard and his team are pitted against the Romulans and the synthetics of Coppelius in a final confrontation.



Narek enters the Artifact crash site, keeping to the shadows as he hears the repair work going on inside. Elsewhere, Elnor asks Seven of Nine if xBs were better off dead: everyone hated them, they had no home, they don't belong anywhere. Seven counters by pointing out that she is an xB as well, with no home, and she didn't belong anywhere either... so why didn't she just put a phaser to her head and be done? Elnor admits that he would miss her if she did.

Moving through the cavernous wreck, Narek is suddenly held at knife point by his sister, "Narissa Rizzo", who then turns

him around to embrace him. She asks if he has found the synthts, if he's had sex with any of them yet, or if he's killed any; Narek answers that he has, he hasn't, and he's killed one. "Narissa" shows Narek her hiding place, right up against the ocean.

Held in house arrest in Bruce Maddox's former quarters at Coppelius Station, Jean-Luc Picard holds out a hand for a synthetic butterfly to land on; he holds it there for a second before releasing it to fly away. "Lucky you," he comments, as he thinks on his circumstances. Outside, Soji Asha (observed by Agnes Jurati) enters the locked room with a retinal scanner, and asks how Picard is feeling; he comments he would feel better if he were set free. Soji tries to convince him to see things from their point of view: Organics chose whether her kind lived or died, and synthts were never given a choice. Picard counters that saying she had no choice was a "failure of imagination". He pleads with her not to allow the Romulans to make her into the monster they fear, and stop building the beacon. The beings they hoped to summon may well be the salvation for Soji and her people, he argues, but it would be the annihilation of all organic life.

Inside the Artifact, Narek arms a series of grenades for use against the orchids, "ship-killing flowers that fly" as he explains to "Narissa"; he plans to return to the "nest" while she reactivates the Artifact's weapons. Before she can protest, he rages at her that he, the "family disgrace", the

"Zhat Vash washout", was the one who found Seb-Cheneb. "Narissa" tells him to go on then, as she had work to do. Narek exits the wrecked cube... followed by Elnor.

At the crash site of La Sirena, Cristóbal Rios and Raffi Musiker look over the tool given to Musiker by Saga before her death. Rios admits he is afraid of it, afraid it will "eat his soul"; Musiker jokingly mentions that since he doesn't have a soul, he'd be fine. When Rios asks what it did, Saga had told Musiker that she had to use her imagination to use the tool, but Rios adds he doesn't have an imagination either. Musiker reminds him that it was his ship, and he knew what was wrong. The intermix reactor is fused, and needs to be replaced, but the maintenance replicator was also off-line, because the intermix reactor was fused. Holding the tool in his hand, Rios can see no activation switch, but Musiker suggests that what Saga meant was to simply imagine the part not being broken — visualize the fix, "see the hole patching itself". Rios does so... and to both his and Musiker's astonishment, it works, and La Sirena's power is restored. They then hear a banging noise... a sound that Rios is familiar with.

Back at Coppelius Station, as the beacon construction continues, Dr. Altan Inigo Soong shows Jurati a machine containing all of Maddox's work to transfer an organic mind to a machine, and compliments her on her self-sacrifice. "But after all, that's what mothers do, isn't it?" he adds, as he leaves. Jurati tells herself that she could do this, and that she had to... before adding, "I'm not their mother, asshole," to the absent Soong.

Rios returns to the bridge to find Narek, the "abusive Romulan boyfriend", throwing rocks at the front viewport. Rios opens a communication channel, daring him to throw another rock, adding that he wanted to see what a photon torpedo could do at that range. Narek counters that he is carrying twelve armed molecular solvent grenade canisters, and that he was just throwing rocks. When Rios asks him what he wants, Narek claims he was trying to save the universe, and that they could keep fighting or work together to stop what was coming — it was Rios' call.

Musiker tries communicating with Picard, but is unable to reach him. According to Narek, the synthetics were building a transmitter to summon something there. He explains that the Romulans believe synthetics are fated to destroy all organic life, an event they call "Ganmadan", and that Coppelius Station was on lock down to prevent interfering with the beacon's construction. Rios and Musiker both remark that Picard was almost certainly going to interfere, as Musiker tries to hail him again. All of a sudden, Elnor appears, holding his blade to Narek's throat, telling him in Romulan to "choose to live"; Narek replies, in English, that he "very much" chooses to live. Rios talks him down, saying they might well need Narek's help.

In Soong's lab, Jurati finds him trying to transfer Saga's memories to a V-module as a memento for her sister Arcana, but the damage to her optical processors corrupted the data stream. Jurati explains she's been working on the neural laces for Soong's golem, but some of the files were encrypted, and Maddox had said that his "crypto Kung Fu" was the best. He leaves to check on the files, and asks her to keep an eye on the transcoding rate. Once Soong is gone, Jurati begins removing components from Saga's body, apologizing as she does.

Around a camp fire outside La Sirena, Elnor wonders why they choose to trust Narek, as his sister had murdered Hugh, and expresses his dislike for the Zhat Vash agent. Narek sarcastically asks how he feels about Ganmadan, because if they can't stop it, whether or not they like one another will not matter. Musiker asks what Ganmadan is; Elnor dismisses it simply as a story, but Narek retorts it was a story of the end times, much like Ragnarok or "Judgment Day" in ancient Earth myths. He explains that it involves two sisters, twin khalagu, or "demons", who intend to release a ch'khalagu, or "very bad demon" as Elnor snidely puts it. One sister is Seb-Natan, the Foreteller; the other is Seb-Cheneb, the Destroyer. He paints an apocalyptic picture based on the legends. When Musiker asks if he believes it was a prophecy, Narek says he does not. Rather, he believes it to be history — and history, he adds, always had a habit of repeating itself.

Meanwhile, the Romulan fleet, led by Commodore Oh, continues its course for Coppelius. "At last," Oh intones, "our great work is nearly at an end."

Narek shows La Sirena's crew the molecular solvent grenades he was carrying, originally intended for the orchids, but now he plans to use them for the transmitter itself. When Musiker asks how he intends to get them into "Synthville", Narek states he plans to go through the front door — acting as their prisoner, recovered after his "escape". A single concentrated blast, triggered by remote detonation, would be required to destroy the transmitter, but with the transporter block set up in the station, they would not be able to beam anything in or out. They conceal the

grenades inside Rios' soccer balls and approach the main gate, where they are stopped by Rune and Codex, who confiscate their weapons and belongings.

Inside the station, Jurati has recovered one of Saga's eyeballs to use on the retinal scanner in Picard's quarters. She explains they are about to power up the transmitter, and that she was busting him out to return to La Sirena. Inside the golem lab, Altan sees that the synthetic matrix for the golem was complete, and that it was ready to receive neural engrams. At the same time, the work to restore Saga's memories is also complete, and one of those memories appears on Soong's monitor... showing that it was Sutra, with Narek's aid, who stabbed Saga through the eye. Soong is horrified.

As the team approaches the transmitter, Narek sees the tower is almost complete, and that they need a line of sight at the superluminal tuner at the base. Musiker asks how they could get there without being seen. "An excellent question," Soong answers, from behind them.

Back at La Sirena, Picard and Jurati find it abandoned, with Jurati thinking the others had gone to find them. Picard asks for a status report on the Romulans; Jurati reports they are seven minutes from planetfall. Even if Starfleet Command had received Picard's message, they would still be behind the Romulans. Picard hopes to find a way to stall the Romulans in the hope that the Federation would arrive to help them. Jurati asks him: What then? Even if they stopped the Romulans and rescued Soji, she and the "golden children" would still call the "uber-synths" and wipe out all life. Picard heatedly replies that they would stop them, too, but Jurati points out that the synths were "generations beyond us". Picard agrees that this may be so in one sense, but in all other senses, they were children, and their only teachers were a couple of hermits — Soong and Maddox — and their fear of extermination. He calls fear an "incompetent teacher", and that while the synths had life, no one had taught them what it was for, calling being alive a responsibility as well as a right. Jurati asks how they can learn that lesson in six minutes and eleven seconds. "The way that children learn most things," Picard replies, as he takes La Sirena's helm. "By example." He brings up the ship's systems, wondering aloud how well he watched Rios at the controls. As La Sirena rises, Jurati lightheartedly gives him the order to "make it so", and Picard brings La Sirena into orbit.

At the base of the transmitter, Sutra addresses her brothers and sisters, saying that a portal will open once the signal is sent. Soong approaches, accompanied by Musiker and Elnor; he tells Rune and Codex to watch them. Soong returns the hummingbird brooch Sutra used to kill Saga back to her, saying that she was right that her fellow synths needed an "emotional jolt" to drive them to the decision she wanted them to make. Sutra remarks that she is glad he can see the reason behind her actions. Soong admits he does, but adds that reason wasn't everything, asking how she could help Narek kill her sister, believing he had taught her better than that. He deactivates Sutra, who collapses to the ground. "Turns out, you're no better than we are," he laments. He then nods to Musiker, who whistles to summon Rios and Narek. Elnor and Narek begin to fight the synths, while Rios pulls one of the soccer ball grenades from his pack... and sees Soji still working on the transmitter, silently urging her to move out of the way.

As La Sirena enters orbit, Jurati asks Picard how they intended to hold back 218 Romulan warbirds long enough for Starfleet to arrive, and asks if he's trying to "build suspense" when he doesn't answer. Picard pointedly replies that he is trying to pilot a starship for the first time in a long time, and he's trying to do so without exploding or crashing. Jurati agrees that it was a good call, choosing to focus on "one impossible thing at a time".

Soji continues to work on the transmitter as Narek tries to plead with her to stop; Rios, meanwhile, activates one of the grenades, which Soji catches in her hand and hurls away before it detonates, then returns to work on the transmitter.

Aboard the Artifact, "Narissa" brings the Artifact's weapons systems back on line and attempts to gain a lock on La Sirena, when Seven enters with a phaser in her hand, telling her to step away from the console and drop her disruptor. "Narissa" does so and raises her hands, saying she was unarmed, a fact Seven disproves when she deprives her of a pair of knives on her person. "Narissa" then remarks that Seven would be "pretty" if she weren't a "disgusting half-meat", and engages Seven in a furious melee.

In orbit, Jurati detects warp signatures, and Picard wistfully asks if they could possibly be Starfleet... but as if in answer, the Romulan fleet drops out of warp. Oh — addressed as "general" by the crew — is told that the synths are concentrated in just one settlement; Oh coldly orders the entire planet to be sterilized. The orchids rise from the surface to engage the Romulans.

Inside the Artifact, "Narissa" mocks "sad Queen Annika" for being assimilated as a child, as the Artifact's weapons lock onto La Sirena. As Seven holds her away from the console, "Narissa" asks why she didn't just put a phaser to her head and be done with it. "Because I still had this to live for," Seven replies, as she pushes "Narissa" to the edge. "This... is for Hugh." Seven kicks "Narissa" over the edge, screaming, to her death. With the Zhat Vash agent gone, Seven moves to the weapons console, removing the target lock.

In orbit, the battle for Coppelius rages, as La Sirena flies between the firing Romulan ships and the orchids. Jurati points out that now would be a good time for the "secret plan", because once the Romulans destroyed the orchids, they would still have two hundred ships, and there was only one La Sirena. She jokingly adds that they would name whatever plan he made the "Picard Maneuver"... before remembering it already existed, how he had made the Enterprise appear in two places at once. Picard corrects her that it was the USS Stargazer, that it had been a long time ago, and that it would be useless against so many ships. They would have to multiply the sensor images and then find a way to disperse them. Jurati takes up Saga's tool, which is able to create multiple projections of her face.

As Soji continues to work on the transmitter, she sees La Sirena on the sensors and opens a channel to Picard. He urges her to power down the beacon, saying he had something to give to her and her people, in the hopes it would change their mind. When Soji asks offhandedly what that could be, Picard answers that he was giving his life, before closing the channel. Soji appears shaken.

Aboard Oh's flagship, her officers report that the orbital defenses had been dealt with; Oh triumphantly orders all ships to target the "abominations' nest". Picard asks Jurati if she was ready, and that all of the projections would have warp signatures; she confirms with a nod. "On my mark," he orders, as he flies La Sirena directly in front of the fleet. Oh sees the ship and tells her fleet to ignore it; Picard gives Jurati the order, and suddenly one La Sirena becomes several hundred, forcing the fleet to engage them instead. A lucky shot strikes the actual La Sirena, causing it to spin out of control; the fleet suddenly vanishes. Soji activates the beacon, opening the portal; Oh orders the fleet to begin sterilization on her command.

At that moment, a fleet of Starfleet vessels — real, this time — drops out of warp. From aboard the flagship, the USS Zheng He, Captain Will Riker informs Oh that under the terms of the Treaty of Algeron, Coppelius is under Starfleet protection. When Oh protests that their claim preceded Starfleet's, Riker shows her Picard's transmission from the surface, which managed to reach Starfleet Command. Riker boasts that he is on the bridge of Starfleet's most advanced ship, and he had a fleet of them at his back, and that nothing would make him happier than to "kick your treacherous Tal Shiar ass", but instead, offers Oh one chance to stand down. Oh is unmoved, and orders her fleet to retarget weapons systems on the Starfleet armada. Riker orders weapons armed and deflectors to full.

Aboard La Sirena, Picard is suddenly gripped with pain in the back of his head, a condition which he is very familiar. Despite Jurati's protests, he tells her to get him 20 ccs of polisinephrine, and tells her to open a channel to Soji on an open frequency. He again pleads with her to power down the beacon, to show the Romulans she was not the Destroyer they feared, and if that did not convince them, they would answer to the Federation. When Soji points out that the same Federation had banned her and her kind, Picard argues that if the Federation wanted to destroy them, they would have joined forces with the Romulans, not against them — but they wouldn't, because they trusted Soji and her people to make the right choice, adding that he trusted her, that he believed in her. As Riker and Oh listen on the open channel, Picard explains that the whole point of what he had done was so that they could save one another. As mechanical tentacles begin to emerge from the portal, Soji smashes the transmitter controls, destroying the beacon. Now left to face Starfleet, Oh orders her fleet to stand down, and withdraws from Coppelius.

Riker hails La Sirena, explaining that when he heard Picard sent out an SOS, he asked for temporary reassignment; just because he wasn't going to talk Picard out of his mission, he adds, didn't mean he planned to let him go it alone, asking jokingly if he was supposed to sit in the woods making pizza while Picard had all the fun. He then formally informs Admiral Picard that he was leaving the situation in his "capable hands". Picard thanks him for always having his back; Riker replies that he had learned from the best. As the Zhang He and its fleet go to warp, Picard bids his old friend "adieu", rising from the captain's chair... and then collapsing to the

deck. As Jurati calls his name, he experiences flashbacks of his dreams, walking through his vineyard, seeing Data painting. Soji worriedly asks what is wrong, and Jurati reports the brain abnormality was causing his body to fail. Soji drops the transporter block, and beams Picard and Jurati to the surface. He tells Soji that "not being the Destroyer" was up to her, and that he had given her the choice. He looks to Musiker and remarks that she had been "quite right". But, as Musiker asks him about what... it is too late. Jean-Luc Picard, Starfleet veteran, captain of two starships Enterprise, is dead.

At Coppelius Station, Rios is approached by a visibly upset Seven of Nine, who takes a drink from a bottle of "what passes for alcohol" there, adding she did not recommend it. As they share a bottle, they remark on things they had thought they would never do again, and did anyway. For Seven, it was killing people who she felt deserved it, because it felt wrong for them to be alive. For Rios, it was allowing "another self-righteous, hard-assed old starship captain" into his heart, never again standing there to watch him die. Seven asks if he could have done anything to prevent it, and Rios admits he couldn't. As they watch the sun set, a synthetic butterfly takes wing. On a ridge overlooking the settlement, Musiker sits alone until she is approached by Elnor, who breaks down sobbing. She admonishes him to let it all out, as she joins him in mourning for Picard.

Suddenly, Picard awakens in the study of Château Picard, illuminated only by the fireplace, and believes he is having "another damn dream". To his surprise, Data enters, correcting him by saying it was in fact a "massively complex quantum simulation", although Picard would think he would say such a thing in a dream about him, if indeed Picard dreamed of him at all. Picard remarks that he dreamed of Data all the time. If that were the case, Data asks, was Picard, too, wearing the same clothes as he was when he died? Somewhat wrong-footed, Picard asks Data if he is indeed dead, and Data confirms that he is. He asks Picard if he remembers dying, and Picard believes he does, saying he felt something in his head that seemed to just go away, "like a child's sand castle collapsing". Data adds that he remembers that he was killed in 2379, but has no memory of his death, that his consciousness exists in a quantum reconstruction created from the memories he downloaded into B-4 just before his death. Picard wonders that Data cannot remember his own death, because Picard himself could never forget it. Data states that, apparently, he ended his life in the hope of prolonging Picard's. Picard confirms it, not realizing what was happening until he had already done it, and remarks he had been "furious". Data apologizes, but he could not have done otherwise. Picard agrees, saying that it was the "most Data thing" he had ever done, but often regretted that it had been Data who had died and not him. Data then asks if Picard regretted sacrificing his life for Soji and her people. "Not for an instant," Picard answers instantly, to which Data then asks why he would imagine Data would regret doing so for Picard.

Picard then asks about the simulation; Data explains that his memory engrams were recovered from a single neuron salvaged by Maddox, and then his consciousness was reconstructed from it by Soong. Picard expresses his distaste for Soong, to which Data admits that the Soongs are an "acquired taste". Whatever it is, Picard says he is glad to see Data, but regrets that he had never expressed his love and appreciation for him. Data remarks that knowing of Picard's feelings made up a "small but significant" part of his memories, which he hoped brought Picard some comfort; Picard admits it does, which is why Data would ask a favor of him before he left. Picard is wrong-footed, wondering why he would leave if it was a simulation. Data remarks that it is indeed a simulation, but that Picard himself is not. Before his brain functions ceased, Jurati and Soong, with help from Soji, were able to scan, map, and transfer a complete neural map of Picard's brain substrates. Picard asks if he has to go, and Data tells him that he does, as a door opens to reveal a bright light. Before he steps out, Picard recalls Data asked a favor. Data asks Picard to terminate his consciousness — not exactly death, but rather living briefly knowing that his life was finite. He remarks on how mortality gives meaning to Human life, how concepts of peace, love, and friendship were precious because Humans knew they could not endure. "A butterfly that lives forever," Data explains, as he releases one from his hand, "is not really a butterfly at all." Picard agrees to do as Data asks, before bidding a proper farewell to his old friend.

Inside Soong's lab, Picard — his consciousness now inside the golem — awakens, seeing Soji, Jurati, and Soong standing over him. Picard raises his hands to see them, and asks if he is real. Soji replies that of course, he is. Later, seated at a table, drinking tea, Picard asks about his new body. Jurati explains that it had no augmentations, no "superpowers"; Soong adds that

after ninety-four years in the same body, he would not want to adjust to "something new", but that his body was completely new, and everything worked. Soji adds that the brain abnormality that killed him was also gone, forever. Picard asks if it had made him functionally immortal, to which Jurati quickly explains that he would live roughly the same number of years he would have without the brain abnormality. Picard jokingly adds that he wouldn't have minded another ten or twenty years. Picard thanks Soong for his work, remarking that Soong's loss was his gain, but that they both had something to lose now... Picard had a promise to keep.

Inside the simulation, Data sips a glass of wine, listening to "Blue Skies" on a record player. In the lab, Picard explains to the others that it said a great deal about Data's mind that, looking at the Human race with "all its violence and corruption and willful ignorance", he could still see kindness, curiosity, greatness of spirit. He wanted more than anything to be part of that, to be part of the "Human family". "We are such stuff as dreams are made on," Picard says, quoting Shakespeare as he deactivates the simulation, "and our little life is rounded with a sleep." Data peacefully "dies" with Picard at his side, as the simulation fades to nothing.

Picard returns to La Sirena, telling its crew — now augmented by Seven and Soji — that it was time to depart. He comments to Soji on how she had worked so hard to get home, and now she was leaving it behind. Soji explains that she felt the urge to wander, and with the synth ban now lifted, she was free to do so, to which Picard adds that he was as well. Rios asks Picard if he was ready. Picard looks around to his crew, and gives the order: "Engage."

Season Two

The Star Gazer

Season 2

Episode Number: 11

Season Episode: 1

Originally aired: Thursday March 03, 2022
Writer: Akiva Goldsman, Terry Matalas
Director: Doug Aarniokoski
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: Kay Bess (La Sirena Computer), John de Lancie (Q), Alex Diehl (Harvey), Whoopi Goldberg (Guinan), Menik Gooneratne (Alien Emissary), April Grace (Admiral Whitley), Richard Jin (Moshe), Floyd Anthony Johns Jr. (Pirate #1), Swati Kapila (Decorated Officer), Rich Ceraulo Ko (Handsome Deltan), Geri-Nikole Love (Urtern), Adele Pomerence (Kemi), Anushka Rani (Sing), Dylan Von Halle (Young Picard), Madeline Wise (Yvette)
Summary: Starfleet must once again call on legendary Jean-Luc Picard after members of his former crew — Cristóbal Rios, Seven of Nine, Raffi Musiker, and Dr. Agnes Jurati — discover an anomaly in space that threatens the galaxy.



A group of Starfleet officers are making their way through the corridors of their ship, which has been boarded by hostile forces, taking the turbolift to the ship's bridge. Once there, they find Borg technology interfacing with the ship's systems and attacking the bridge crew. Jean-Luc Picard calls for the ship to activate its auto-destruct, and as it counts down to zero, he finds himself facing a Borg Queen...

Forty-eight hours earlier, at Château Picard on Earth, Picard goes through the vineyards with his dog Number One to the tune of "Time is On My Side" on a

record player, as automated grape pickers pick the fruit to be made into his family's wine. Laris, his Romulan housekeeper, oversees the boxing and labeling of fresh bottles. Picard looks at her longingly and then walks away. Laris then does the same.

Later that evening, the two toast in a number of Earth languages, and Picard remarks on how the day was easily his favorite of the year: the end of the season, "a confirmation of hard work well done". Laris concedes that was one way to look at it, and Picard asks for her way. Laris relies on a Romulan phrase, which Picard is able to translate as "seize today, for we know nothing of tomorrow". She concedes that the day was "glorious", but none of their tomorrows were ever certain. Picard offers a toast to Laris' late husband Zhaban, knowing how she must miss him, adding that he does as well. Laris admits she still did, even after a year and a half, and mentions that they had been promised to one another at birth per Romulan custom, but they did grow to truly love each other. She points out how Romulans did not suffer loss as Humans did; they loved deeply, and when they lost someone, they honored that love by loving again, even

more deeply still. When she first came to work for Picard, she saw him as a man who belonged to the stars, but now wonders: has he been seeking, or running? Realizing she may be growing too personal, she apologizes, but Picard encourages her to continue. She asks him point blank: "Why have you chosen to be alone?" He points out that he was hardly alone, but he knows that was not what Laris meant. Picard concedes he was a man who had reached for the stars, but Laris presses him: was that all he really wanted? He admits that what he really wanted often had to stand in line behind his sense of duty, the need to keep moving. Leaning closer to him, Laris asks what his heart would do if he suddenly decided to stop, there and now. He leans forward as if to kiss her, but hesitates; she notes it was late, and he had a speech to give the following day, before rising to leave.

Alone with his thoughts, Picard finds himself in his mind's eye alternating between his younger self and his current self, entering the glass cupola on the roof of the house — broken at present, intact in his past — and hearing the voice of his mother Yvette behind him. She calls him her "little Magellan", and the young Jean-Luc comments that he could have sailed off the edge of the world. Yvette tells him that Paris was just a transport away, and while his father Maurice "rooted around in the dirt" and his brother Robert was at school, they could create their own world there, clearing out the vines and painting the windows. Jean-Luc asks if that means his parents would fight less here, and Yvette's face falls. In the present, Picard stands in the ruins of the greenhouse, holding up a piece of glass with a rose painted on it, and begins experiencing traumatic flashbacks for a moment, before turning to that memory. Yvette assures him that of course, they would fight less — but if he should hear them shouting, to remember how tiny their voices were from up there. "Look up at the stars, Jean-Luc," she tells him. "Look up. As the present Picard does so, the view pulls back some distance away from Earth, as the USS Avalon detects a strange spatial anomaly.

Back in his home, Picard goes downstairs and looks up at his bookshelf, while Laris brings him a cup of Earl Grey tea, now cold. He is seeking a book with a green cover and gold lettering, a first edition; she finds it immediately and hands it to him. He tries to explain about what had occurred the previous evening, but Laris chalks it up to him merely being himself. He assures her nothing has to change, but Laris feels it is too late for that, that going forward things would only be awkward between them, and she felt too old for awkward. She then remarks on how even in the age of transporters, he somehow always manages to be late.

Picard gives an address at Starfleet Academy, referring to how space had always been considered "the final frontier", but as he grew older, he began to realize the true final frontier was time. In command, as in life, what one did in crisis often weighed less heavily than what one wished they had done, what could have been. Time offered many opportunities, but rarely second chances; and as steps forward went, he wanted to acknowledge the first fully Romulan cadet at the Academy: Elnor, sitting in the front row. "May you all go boldly into a future freed from the shackles of the past," he continues, as he claims to stand before them as "the last Picard". He notes how his ancestors had contributed to exploration on Earth and in the early solar system, but chooses to leave them with the words of his mother, who had not been an explorer; as a boy, she would point up to the night sky and say, "Look up, Jean-Luc, and let's see what's out there."

Meanwhile, aboard *La Sirena*, a band of pirates search the cargo hold for Seven of Nine, who is armed only with a wrench. Feeling movement nearby, she swings the wrench — only to go through one of Cristóbal Rios' holograms, Emmet, who tells her in Spanish that something was going on outside. Seven tells him she's "a little occupied at the moment", to which Emmet shrugs and moves off. One of the pirates calls for Seven to show them her "ugly Borg face". She manages to disarm and knock out the speaker, but finds herself under fire from another. Taking cover, Seven decides to try another tack, telling them that the medical supplies they were trying to steal belonged to the Fenris Rangers. Their answer is more gunfire, and Seven takes cover, asking Emmet for help. He proves to be something of a distraction (even dramatically yawning as one of the pirates shoots through his holographic body), and points out that he was "helpless". Seven, while pummeling another pirate, disengages the holographic safety protocols, allowing Emmet to tussle with the pirate shooting through him. As Emmet tosses the pirate to the deck, Seven charges at her and tackles her over the railing onto the lower deck. Seven thanks Emmet for his help, and he acknowledges with a silly salute.

Tying the pirates up, Seven beams them off the ship, and Emmet remarks on how Humans continued to act with fear at the sight of her Borg implants. Seven expresses regret at merging

the holographic programs, and wonders if there was a way to disable the therapeutic plugins; Emmet assures her she won't hear it from him. She finds her phaser and holster still on the captain's chair, and asks about what Emmet reported outside. He had detected a spatial distortion with tachyon fluctuations and a large spike in Hawking radiation, and brings it on screen. "What the hell is that?" Seven wonders, as she stares at the anomaly growing green on screen.

On the planet Raritan IV in the Beta Quadrant, Dr. Soji Asha proposes a toast to her tablemates, in both Federation Standard and the local language. Since the ban on synthetics had been lifted, she had been traveling for more than a year, noting that trust could not be built through an interpreter, but through words spoken from the heart. "True connection can only be forged when the heart has spoken," she concludes in the local tongue, to the approval of the table. Nearby at the bar counter, a visibly drunk Dr. Agnes Jurati remarks on how Soji had run one subroutine on making toasts and was suddenly "the belle of the ball". A man approaches her and offers her his hand, and begins remarking on how hands could have created "such a wonder" (thinking perhaps Jurati was a synth, or being one himself). Jurati recognizes it as an attempt at flirting, and remarks on how her relationships lasted less than a year, including being cleared of murdering her previous boyfriend under alien-induced psychosis. Suddenly, her communicator goes off, much to her relief; Rios, on the other end, is confused, saying that "never speak to me again" was the last thing Jurati had said to him.

Soji walks along with Jurati, relieved to get a break, jokingly worried she'd have to break into a medley of Deltan folk songs. She was able to hear that Rios had called Jurati away, while Soji would remain to continue being "charmingly diplomatic". When Jurati clarifies that by "hear" she meant "eavesdrop with [her] super robot hearing", Soji points out that Jurati had asked her to monitor any potential drunk hailing incidents, so she applied that to drunk answering as well. Jurati thinks this is exploitation of a technicality, and promises to call as soon as she knows they'll be back. Soji wonders if Jurati will be able to work with Rios, and Jurati admits that the idea made more sense when they were back on Earth. Soji admits she would never say "I told you so", but points out Rios' new job has a lot of pressure. Jurati asks how hard it could be, before beaming back up to the ship... a Starfleet ship, and Rios is in the uniform of a Starfleet captain. He orders helmsman Kemi to set course as quick as possible without flying into a sun, and orders Lieutenant Urtern to prepare an engagement plan. He then explains to Jurati that a subspace anomaly has been detected, and Starfleet is ordering them to investigate; he admits he needs Jurati's help, and she remarks that was "kind of kind" of him. Kemi reports the course is set. "Dale," Rios orders, Spanish for "make it so", as he lights a cigar. Jurati comments on keeping up the legacy, and points out it was his own fault, as no one expected him to accept a command with baggage. Rios' ship is the USS Stargazer, a ship named for Picard's first command. The Stargazer then goes to warp.

Back at Starfleet Academy, the cadets receive their assignments, as Picard walks with Commander Raffaella Musiker. He mentions he is considering an update to the Kobayashi Maru scenario, a test Musiker expresses her dislike of; Picard has been named chancellor of Starfleet Academy, which Musiker notes as being his way to focus on Starfleet instead of his private life. Picard retorts by asking about Seven, and Musiker acknowledges that she had to be out there helping people, wondering who could be more important than that. Picard can see that Musiker would like to be that important, and Musiker admits she had her hoping for something more. She comments on how both Picard and Seven were so "damn self-sufficient", she wondered if they even got lonely. Meanwhile, Elnor receives his assignment to the USS Excelsior as Picard approaches, glad to see him before he left. He is excited about his future in Starfleet, but worries that his excitement may be affecting his studies. Picard offers him a quote from the book he had found, Spock's memoir *The Many and the One*, about the challenges he faced as one of the first Vulcans in Starfleet: "Exhilaration enhances the absorption of knowledge." In other words, Picard concludes, "live a little," as he hands Elnor the book. Elnor thanks him, as Musiker approaches to instruct him to report for departure. Musiker is also assigned to the Excelsior, commenting that Elnor's absolute candor "will get his ass kicked", so she is watching over him. The orders go out for officers and cadets to report to their ships, and Picard bids Musiker safe journeys. After she leaves, he looks over to a plaque honoring the old Stargazer.

Meanwhile, the current Stargazer arrives at the anomaly, with Urtern reporting that it appeared stable; Jurati sarcastically comments that a rift in space-time did not constitute stability.

Lieutenant Sing at communications reports they are being hailed; it is Seven from La Sirena. Rios is dismayed at the damage done to his ship, to which Seven corrects it was hers now, and remarks on the violent nature of her work. Just then, a massive burst of static sounds through the comms; Sing runs it through the translator, but finds it inconclusive. Even intoxicated, Jurati is able to figure out the cause — it was not one language, but several, all pleading for help. They were all saying the same thing: "Help us, Picard."

Picard beams into the Forward Avenue Historic District in Los Angeles, entering a bar at address number ten. Inside, Guinan is looking over her drinks, when she hears him enter, thinking she will need a hot cup of Earl Grey; Picard suggests something stronger. She addresses him as "Captain Picard", though he whispers that he's an admiral now; to her, however, he will always be "captain". He offers her a bottle of Chateau Picard for her private stock; Guinan comments that with him nearly a century old, and her several, keeping things in reserve should not be among their priorities. He points out that El-Aurians age slower than Humans, but Guinan clarifies that it was only if they chose to; given how most Humans felt about mortality, she tried to keep up, as it were. Guinan can see he is not here to reminisce about the old days, that it was the new ones troubling him now. She has been with him through countless disasters, and had not seen him look quite as he did now... then corrects herself and says she has, grabbing a bottle of Saurian brandy as the wine "wouldn't cut it".

Picard explains he has loved before, sometimes quite deeply, but Guinan thinks it was only with those with whom Picard knew it would be only temporary, so that he would never have to fear any of them taking root. He asks if she takes him for the "fearful sort", and she acknowledges he has done many brave things "of a kind". Picard laments that "that particular ship has sailed", and he watched it leave. Guinan calls this ridiculous, saying that it was not too late. Time was not the problem; he himself was, as the only things he ever put out to break were his bones, the only thing he risked was his life. She reminds him there were worse things than being dead, and that the only thing she ever thought he was afraid to explore, whether flesh and blood or artificial, was his own heart. She asks him what happened that he never talked about with her. Picard finds himself unable to answer. Guinan understands: the answers he seeks were not in the stars, and never had been. But, she also suggests that they drink, as there was "one final frontier yet to come". They toast to that.

Back at his home, Picard is visited by Fleet Admiral Sally Whitley, who apologizes for dropping in, but has a sensitive matter on her hands. They had encountered something unique in space, and wanted to get his eyes on it. Picard gently protests, thinking there were other more qualified people than he. Whitley explains the anomaly caused a large spike in Adler-Lasky temporal radiation, and then began to broadcast. She plays the initial distorted broadcast, then filters it out to "help us, Picard". Whitley explains the transmission fell under Article 15, an entreaty to join the Federation... and apparently only wishes to speak to Picard about it. She holds out a combadge for him, and he reluctantly accepts it. Moments later, Laris returns, just as the shuttle leaves.

The shuttle comes out of warp near the Stargazer, and Picard is pleasantly surprised to see Seven waiting for him. As they walk through the corridors, the crew come to attention, recognizing him at once. Picard is impressed with the new Stargazer, but Seven is reticent; it was based on research from the Artifact, the derelict Borg cube held by the Romulans, and many in Starfleet still feared the Borg. She felt her presence was increasing the old feelings of paranoia. They arrive on the bridge, where Rios calls "admiral on the bridge", and the crew rise to attention. Picard remarks that it was certainly sleeker than his Stargazer, and that the older the refits got, the younger they looked, unlike himself. Jurati jokes that he looks "positively positronic". Picard asks Rios for a status update, and Rios shows the tactical analysis. Picard decides to see what they had to say to him personally, and with Rios' permission, orders hailing frequencies, identifying himself and requesting communication. When there is no reply, he tries again, only for a legion of voices to speak his name. Energy spikes cause the consoles and viewscreen to stutter; something is coming through the rift. Rios calls for red alert and orders the helm to give them distance. A massive vessel comes through the rift, emitting a shock wave that rocks the ship. Picard and Seven stare at the ship, and both come to the same conclusion. Seven confirms it aloud: the ship is Borg.

A fleet of ships arrives to join the Stargazer, including Musiker on the Excelsior, who informs Rios they are ready to assist. Rios lays out the situation: they were the tip of the spear, Picard was

ranking officer, "and the devil is calling your name", and asks what to do. Picard admits he doesn't know, thinking that what was out there could be the point that history turns. Seven reminds him that the Borg assimilate, not ask to be assimilated. Jurati thinks caution is warranted, but everything about the situation was unique. The Borg they know have been all but wiped out; Rios thinks it stands to reason that they would change tactics. Seven agrees, thinking they would resort to deception to achieve victory if it came to that. If they were wrong, Jurati warns, they could be depriving the Federation of an ally, something Picard concurs with. Seven is incredulous, pointing out how the Borg had wiped out entire species, and killed and assimilated billions, including her parents. If she's wrong, they destroy a Borg ship, but if she was right and they did nothing, that could spell the end for the Federation. Just then, Commander Moshe calls Rios to the bridge.

Sing reports the ship was hailing them. The Borg are adamant that "there is no more time", and seek to begin negotiations immediately with Picard, alone. Picard asks how they propose to do so, and they respond that they will send an emissary: their queen. Rios is adamant that he is not allowing the Borg onto his ship, and broadcasts to the fleet to raise shields. Moshe detects a single transport signal attempting to beam on board, but Rios orders fire held, as they couldn't get through the shields. Seven urges him to open fire. Rios opens a channel calling the Borg ship to cease its transport attempt, or it would be fired upon. The Borg activates its cutting beam in response, allowing the transport to penetrate their shields; Moshe reports it was headed directly for the bridge. Rios orders his bridge crew to arm themselves, but admonishes Moshe not to fire prematurely. Throughout the ship, the crew arms themselves as Rios orders security teams to the bridge. At that moment, the Borg Queen materializes on the bridge, but in a strange new form. She tells them the Borg wish peace... but first, she requires power, as tentacles lash out and stab into the consoles at the front. Seven opens fire, followed by Moshe, but the Queen only absorbs their phaser blasts, before projecting the energy back at Moshe, throwing him to the deck. The rest of the bridge crew begin to fire, but with the same result. Rios calls for his crew to cease fire, as Seven checks on Moshe; the Queen was stunning the crew, not killing them. The computer reports isolinear fragmentation. Jurati checks at a nearby console, and reports that the Queen is accessing all the Borg modifications in the ship in order to seize control — not just of the Stargazer, but of the entire fleet, using the Stargazer as a hub to access the ships' command codes, and has nearly assimilated the entire ship in a matter of moments. Seven insists to Picard that she cannot be allowed to have an entire armada. With no options left, Picard activates the auto-destruct sequence. As the timer counts to zero, the Borg Queen tells him to "look up". He stares at her in shock as the Stargazer explodes.

Suddenly, Picard finds himself back in the broken cupola of his home on Earth, and sees he is wearing a very different uniform. He enters the main house, seeing more militaristic artifacts, including a portrait of himself in a black uniform. Walking into his kitchen, he shouts for Laris, only to find a synth answering him instead, telling him how the solar shields were holding, and asking if he needed anything. Picard demands to know who he is, and he identifies himself as Harvey. Picard asks again about Laris, and Harvey identifies it as a Romulan name, asking if Picard wanted him to check the migrant rosters. Picard, visibly confused, asks what is happening. "An excellent question, Jean-Luc," a familiar voice responds. "Mon capitane, how I've missed you." Picard looks up in disbelieving shock to find Q standing there, looking much as he had when they had last met, thirty-one years earlier. Q notes how much older Picard looked, and snaps his fingers to match himself, now with white hair and beard. Picard is distinctly not happy to see him. Q reminds him of what he had said when they had met the last time: "The trial never ends." Picard demands to know what he's doing there. Q answers that Picard had talked a lot about second chances. "Well, my friend," he concludes, "welcome to the end of the road not taken."

Penance

Season 2

Episode Number: 12

Season Episode: 2

Originally aired: Thursday March 10, 2022
Teleplay: Akiva Goldsman, Terry Matalas, Christopher Monfette
Story: Michael Chabon, Akiva Goldsman, Terry Matalas, Christopher Monfette
Director: Doug Aarniokoski
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: John de Lancie (Q), Annie Wersching (Borg Queen), Jon Jon Briones (First Magistrate), Patton Oswalt (Spot 73 (voice)), Toni Belafonte (Zilah), Alex Diehl (Harvey), Paula Andrea Placido (Palace Soldier), Hanna Lee Sakakibara (Romulan Rebel), Katelyn Brooke (Security officer), Bryant Burnett (Security officer), Jimmy Chhiu (Confederation soldier), Stephen Dunlevy (Security officer), Floyd Anthony Johns Jr. (Security officer), Brent Spiner (Adam Soong)
Summary: Picard finds himself transported to an alternate timeline in the year 2400 where he must face one last trial orchestrated by his longtime nemesis Q.



Picard steps outside of his house on hearing air raid sirens and weapons fire and asks Q what "this" is; Q replies simply that it was "home". Picard then asks about the crew of the USS Stargazer. "How quaint, how provincial, how yesterday's Enterprise of you," Q mocks, before answering that there was no Stargazer. Picard demands to know what Q has done, and Q sarcastically notes how it was "so Human" to show someone a world of their own making and be asked what he had done. Increasingly agitated, Picard asks Q if he is ever tired of playing games with people's lives and tells him he

is not Q's pawn anymore. Q thinks Picard is underselling himself, as he was not a mere piece, but the board on which the game was played, to which Picard heatedly replies he was "too old for [Q's] bullshit". Q mockingly comments on how time was so unfair, and notes how Picard had so many wrinkles, and so many disappointments. Picard wants Q to get to the point, or "cut to the chase" as Q phrases it. In a harsh, almost shaking tone, Q tells him that the chase was cut, bleeding, "dying in [Picard's] arms", and that Q was "but a suture in the wound". Picard observes that Q does not appear to be well, before Q snaps his fingers and brings them into Picard's vineyard.

Picard is confused, as the harvest was only that morning. "Same time, same day, different harvest," Q answers. Picard again asks about the crew of the Stargazer. Q admits he intervened, having thought to himself that he wanted to see Picard, and so sought out the nearest explosion. Angry now, Picard again asks what Q wants, and Q answers he could tell him, but Picard was far

too clever to listen; that said, they were not too old to be students of their own behaviors. Picard heatedly tells Q he has had enough of his "stupid patronizing". Q abruptly slaps him across the face, leaving him a bloody nose, and replies that he has had enough of Picard's obstinance, his stubbornness, his insistence in changing in all ways but the one that matters. "This is not a lesson," Q tells him coldly. "It's a penance." He snaps his fingers, and the nearby record player begins playing "Non, je ne regrette rien", then asks if Picard liked the skies here; in his history, Q explains, Humanity had found a way to save the planet they were murdering, but in this time, they just "kept the corpse on life support". He snaps his fingers again, and they are in the main house... with Romulans slaving away cleaning the floor and preparing the kitchen; one looks fearfully up at Picard. Q sarcastically asks how paradise could be run without staff, and why they had to pay for help when they had alien slaves. Picard insists he would never do such a thing, but Q laughs, saying that such moral convictions were the luxury of the victors, before beckoning Picard onward.

Entering his study, Picard is repulsed to see a collection of weapons taken from various alien species... as well as a number of skulls. Q identifies some of their owners: Gul Dukat, executed in the Ithian Forests after "a hell of a fight" to take the Cardassian capital, and the reason for Picard's golem body in this timeline; General Martok, killed in combat after a bioengineered virus decimated Qo'noS; and Sarek, beheaded on the steps of the Vulcan Science Academy in front of his wife and son. All were killed by the same "withering" hand, the most ruthless and bloodthirsty general of the Confederation of Earth: Picard himself. When Picard asks what this "hellhole" is, Q answers that it was the only life he had ever known. He offers two choices: stay in the body of a madman and try, like Macbeth, to wash the blood from his hands, or seek atonement, perhaps forgiveness. When Picard asks for what, Q tells him that he knows the answer to that but assures him he will not make him do it alone. Picard replies that whatever it was, he would not play along with Q's game. Suddenly, the synth Harvey enters, asking if he wants him to answer to the designation "Q" now. Picard looks around and sees that Q is gone. Harvey sees Picard's confusion and asks if he was well; Picard replies that he wasn't, that he didn't know who he was anymore.

Picard observes a recording of a speech he transmitted, claiming that with the "brave crew" of the CSS World Razer, he had fought for a "pure universe", that he and his crew "subjugated savage civilizations" and "boldly conquered warlike alien worlds" — an inversion of the Federation's Charter — and obtained greater wealth and resources for future generations of Humanity. It becomes clear it's a recruiting message, ending with "a safe galaxy is a Human galaxy." Picard is distressed to hear such words coming from his own mouth, as Harvey enters with his "morning usual". Thinking it a cup of Earl Grey tea, he is disgusted by the beverage, finding it was coffee, a black Colombian roast. He asks again about Laris, thinking she had been employed there at the house, but Harvey finds no such record; however, he does identify Laris and her husband Zhaban as leaders of a "Free Romulus movement", and that both were killed at the gates of Romulus, and offers to show "tribute" photos, which Picard immediately declines. Harvey then reminds him that there is a shuttle coming in two hours to take him to the presidential palace, to which Picard (trying to get in character) demands to know why the "great general" is being called to the palace. Harvey tells him it was Eradication Day.

In San Francisco, as a male announcer calls for the citizens to enjoy "Eradication Day", Seven of Nine awakens suddenly in bed, as the computer in her apartment identifies her as "Annika". She sees a number of unusual items, before a mirror appears before her. To her shock, the Borg implant above her left eye is gone, as well as the Borg appliance on her hand. She thinks it cannot be real but checks all the psychological parameters; her cognition still functions, and she is able to smell the aromatic candle and feel the heat of its flame and sees a wedding ring on her hand. She realizes it was indeed real, but wonders how it was possible, as she had been aboard the Stargazer as it was destroyed. Just then, her door chimes, and she thinks it was Raffaella Musiker, but instead a male Human in the uniform of a Confederation magistrate (who addresses her as "dear", indicating it was her husband) and a male synthetic enter, saying coffee was on the way, and to prepare for the Eradication Day ceremony, before addressing her as "Madam President", to her confusion.

As Seven enters what is apparently her office, the magistrate goes on about the upcoming speech she is to give, as well as reports of insurgents in Okinawa and news from the Vulcan front. She looks up the reports and sees that Cristóbal Rios is listed as a colonel in command of

that front, asking for a briefing from a "Federation" officer, before correcting herself, saying that she was tired. The magistrate states that he will contact General Sisko, who is in charge of the Vulcan front. Seven declines and asks to speak to someone who's on the front lines, specifically Colonel Rios. When the magistrate hesitates, Seven becomes adamant and asks for coffee, some privacy, and a secure comm channel to Rios.

Meanwhile, Rios, commanding what seems to be a small fleet of ships similar to his own *La Sirena*, finds himself in the middle of a firefight with the Vulcan defense fleet, wondering what was going on. One of the other captains, Zilah, commends him on his tactics, clearing the way to "stomp the green-bloods". To his horror, he sees Vulcan being bombarded, just as he receives an alpha-priority message from "President Hansen". As he opens the channel, Seven secures the line and begins to speak in a somewhat vague way asking him to speak freely about anything "out of the ordinary". When he identifies her as "Seven", she is relieved, and asks if he has any idea what's happening, as her last memory was the activation of the auto-destruct on the *Stargazer*. Rios replies that unless being dead looked like "D-Day over Vulcan", something or someone moved them. She recalls him back to Earth on "presidential authority", wanting to speak face-to-face. Rios breaks off and goes to warp.

In Okinawa, a building explodes, and people are running through the streets. Among them is Elnor, who (like the others from the *Stargazer* and its fleet) has no idea what is going on, as he is being guided in the streets by a young female Romulan. The building explosions are attacks by insurgents in retaliation for the wars against Cardassia, Andoria, Qo'noS, Vulcan, and Romulus. She rejoices that the Confederation could call them terrorists, but soon they would be free. Just then, the security forces shoot her down, and hold Elnor at gunpoint, ready to execute him. Another female voice orders them to stand down, but one of the security officers say they have orders to shoot to kill. The unidentified figure shoots them all down in response, before removing her hood: Musiker. Elnor is relieved to see her, remembering last being together on the *USS Excelsior*, but Musiker had no more idea than he did. Just then, more security forces arrive, and Musiker decides to play along, holding him at gunpoint and announcing she wanted him alive for questioning. Elnor quietly protests he didn't know anything, and Musiker admits she doesn't either, before turning him over to the security guards.

The magistrate walks with "President Hansen" to give the Eradication Day address, asking if her discussion with "Colonel" Rios was informative, and she replies it was. He begins to talk about how it was understandable to be nervous on this "momentous" day, but Seven, playing the part, notes that he seems more focused on her than on his duties. As a means of seeking information, she tells him to explain why the day was so special, and maybe he would convince her he had the right priorities. The magistrate explains that as per tradition, they were eradicating dissidents, alien sympathizers, and terrorists; this particular event was special, as they were about to eliminate one of the Confederation's greatest enemies, and that Dr. Jurati would soon be prepared for her.

In her lab, Jurati awakens, hearing an animated cat talking about how it seemed wrong to celebrate eradicating other people. Jurati is confused and asks who the cat is, and the cat responds he is Spot 73, her "very best friend". Jurati begins running through the possibilities: she was insane, having a delusion; she was dead; or she was in a strange "mirror universe". Just then, the door announces "her Excellency the President", who Jurati openly calls "Seven", and asking about her implants, before pointing out her husband, saying it had been a while. Jurati continues to go on speaking about the time they were actually from, before the magistrate asks her to let them see the prisoner in stasis cell M5-10. Jurati somehow figures out this is her job and opens the cell in question... revealing a Borg Queen, much to the shock of both Seven and Jurati, while the magistrate points out that no enemy the Confederation had brought under heel had been as dangerous as the Borg. The Queen is confused and upset, saying that it was not right; the hive was gone, dead. The Queen is able to identify Seven as having been assimilated and escaped the Borg, then turns to Jurati, whom she calls a "fragile little teacup", and comments how she understands this feeling anywhere. When Jurati asks what, the Queen replies, "Un-belonging."

The magistrate contemptuously comments on how putting her in a cage had made her go mad, and the Queen seems to confirm this, saying that she was burning systems in distant quadrants, that "reality has been split", and that "time has been broken". Seven knows the Borg Queen has a transtemporal consciousness, able to hear its counterparts in time and space. Jurati realizes

something is wrong with the timeline, just as an officer reports to the magistrate about "General" Picard's status: he will be docking shortly.

Meanwhile, Picard arrives at the presidential palace, where another synth approaches to escort him to the president's office. Picard sees Musiker arrive with Elnor and his guards and tells the synth to give him a moment.

As Musiker delivers Elnor for psycho-interrogation, she announces she has authorization to handle it herself, but the Confederation officer handling the transfer says that her orders came from the magistrate and asks who granted Musiker authorization. Picard speaks up loudly that he gave her that authority, as the officers spring to attention. The officer apologizes as Picard stares sternly at her, then with a jerk of his head moves her aside, then does the same for the synth before ordering Musiker to bring the "prisoner". Musiker asks if that was actually "JL" in there, and Picard admits he wonders about that himself. Elnor is certain it was indeed him. Picard is relieved to see them both, saying they had been deposited in a mad world by a madman, but he will get them home somehow. He mentions to Musiker that Seven is the President, and Musiker jokes that she would "wear that gracefully".

The magistrate tells his president/wife that Picard has petitioned for the title of "Borgslayer", just as Picard and company arrive. The magistrate protests bringing an alien terrorist in such close proximity to the president, but Seven assures him that she was the one who ordered it. Picard and Musiker continue to play their roles, saying that they had sensitive intelligence from their "prisoner" to be discussed in private, Musiker adding to the magistrate that his "wife" would be just fine. The magistrate leaves, and Picard asks if they were all alright; Seven sarcastically responds that she is the president of a xenophobic authoritarian regime (who also seems to have worked out her commitment issues, Musiker adds). Picard thinks they're in an alternate reality, but Seven mentions the Borg Queen had a different theory. Picard asks if it was the same Queen from the Stargazer, and Seven replies it was of a more typical kind, who believes there was a divergence in time. Picard realizes this is what Q has done: Changed an event in the past to transform their present. This was not an alternate reality, but their own, transformed by an event of some kind in the past. However, Picard sensed that even for Q, something seemed off, like he was not quite sane. Musiker asks what to do next; Seven again mentions they were not the only ones who knew time was broken.

As Rios arrives in Earth orbit, the Borg Queen tells Jurati that the world was a lie, "the fiction of the 'what if' of what was", to which Jurati agrees wholeheartedly. Just then, she detects visitors, as Picard, Seven, Musiker, and Elnor arrive. As Jurati happily reunites with her friends, Picard approaches the Queen, who recognizes him right away as Locutus, and yet not at the same time. Picard demands to know what Q changed to turn Earth into a polluted authoritarian nightmare, and she eventually answers with a temporal recision: a single change in time. She calculates that the change occurred in Los Angeles in the year 2024 and advises Picard to seek "the Watcher" residing there. Seven points out that the Confederation did not seem to possess any time travel technology, and Jurati adds that the technological level was similar to the Federation, albeit with an emphasis on torture technology. Picard knows there are "cruder" methods of time travel, such as a slingshot effect around a sun, something that James T. Kirk had done with his Enterprise on more than one occasion. Jurati points out that they would need an intelligence capable of isolating the divergence and micro-shifting for any chroniton radiation; Kirk had Spock at his disposal for his time traveling. Seven points out that they had the Queen.

Picard knows the Queen is capable, but why would she help them? Seven thinks of all the talk of "eradication" and asks the Queen how it felt when her people were eradicated. She then says the Queen doesn't have to answer, because she knows already, mocking the end of the "Great Borg Empire". She asks if that was what the Queen wanted, or if she wanted to help return them to their present, to the Collective waiting for her in the Delta Quadrant. As the others wait tensely, Seven asks point-blank: "Will you help us?" The Borg Queen agrees. When Jurati asks "now what", Seven contacts Rios, asking for five to beam up, plus the Borg Queen. Rios is momentarily wrong-footed at the mention of a Borg Queen, but Jurati assures him she was in a stasis tube. Rios activates the transporters... but they still find themselves in Jurati's lab. Just then, a security alarm goes off; Seven recognizes it from her presidential brief, a security measure being taken for the "momentous day". Rios tries to tell them to find a blind spot in the security array, but communications are also offline. The Borg Queen is suddenly taken back into her cell and lifted out. Seven realizes the Eradication Day ceremony has begun.

Picard asks Seven where the Queen is being taken; per the Eradication Day protocol, the Queen is being placed in a queue for public execution, a practice Picard calls "barbaric", not helped by the fact that the Queen was to be killed by Picard himself. Picard sees an opportunity and tells the others to find a way. Just then, the magistrate returns, and Picard goes back into character, demanding Musiker find out "what this thing knows". The magistrate is confused by "Annika's" behavior, thinking she should be tested for telepathic incursion (much to Seven's not-quite play-acted outrage), to which Jurati offers a rambling explanation about how the Queen warned about Romulans from the Qowat Milat infiltrating the palace. The magistrate appears to buy it, before telling Seven and Picard they were needed on stage for the ceremony.

As a projection of a man named Adam Soong declares "a safe galaxy is a Human galaxy", Seven and Picard take the stage playing their parts; Seven gives her address to her "fellow Confederates", declaring that Eradication Day would be a symbol of Humanity's "merciful power", and who better to demonstrate that than Picard? While Jurati works in her lab, trying to get communications back with Rios, the Queen is brought onto the stage for her execution before the cheering crowd.

Jurati is finally able to get comms through to Rios, mentioning the lockdown, and asking if he still had transporter lock. Rios confirms the signal is barely registering, as some kind of transport inhibitor is active; he tells her to boost the signal and get a transporter lock. Jurati finishes that sentence, saying Musiker was working on it. Rios tells her to hurry; Jurati snaps about him being so "goddamn impatient". "We're doing this now? Seriously?" Rios asks, bemused. Meanwhile, Musiker brings a struggling Elnor in, saying to the security officers that he just confessed to uploading a virus into the palace computers, and offers him as a "gift" to them while she tries to "clear it out".

On stage, Seven continues her address, showing an example of what awaited rebellion, insurrection... resistance. "Tonight, we eradicate the Borg", she declares, as the crowd continues to chant "kill", as well as Picard's name. Seven lowers the stasis shield around the Queen, and Picard — hamming it up for the audience — draws his phaser. Meanwhile, Jurati and Rios continue to quarrel as they work, Jurati blaming Rios for his "man on the move" mentality making him feel he didn't fit in, while Rios points out that she only shared feelings with synthetic cats or people, but not Human beings; Jurati says she would hang up on him if it didn't get them killed. At the same time, the security officers continue to beat up Elnor, until Musiker finally lowers the shields... then turns Elnor loose on the security guards. Jurati is having difficulty getting past the inhibitor. Back on stage, the magistrate notices Picard's hesitation, and Picard tells Seven they may have to fight their way out, as the magistrate orders his men to get him off the stage. The Queen looks on with satisfaction as Picard shoots them down. Just then, Jurati breaks through the inhibitor, allowing all of them to be transported to La Sirena.

As the crew assume their stations, Rios orders Musiker to raise the shields to maximum, while Seven takes the helm. Jurati moves the Queen's stasis tube near to the warp core. Rios protests hooking "that thing" up to his ship; when Picard points out they need her to travel back in time, he replies that time travel does not make him feel better about anything. An alert warns Musiker that the fleet was onto them, as Jurati hooks the Queen into the ship's systems. Picard orders Rios to get them out of there, but before they can move, a presidential override lowers the shields. The magistrate beams aboard and immediately shoots Elnor in the chest, before holding the others at gunpoint. Additional security forces beam aboard, also armed. Elnor lies bleeding and gasping for breath on the deck while Musiker looks on helplessly. The magistrate then asks Picard what a trophy of his head will say: "How about 'Jean-Luc Picard, traitor. Killed while rescuing a Borg'."

Assimilation

Season 2

Episode Number: 13

Season Episode: 3

Originally aired:	Thursday March 17, 2022
Writer:	Kiley Rossetter, Christopher Monfette
Director:	Lea Thompson
Show Stars:	Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars:	Annie Wersching (Borg Queen), John de Lancie (Q), Jon Jon Briones (First Magistrate), Matt Kaminsky (Security Guard), Maggie Paceb (Little Girl), Sol Rodriguez (Teresa), Chloe Wepper (Gabi), Gattlin Griffith (Mugger), Marcelo Tubert (Mr. Alvarez), Richard Chiu (Driver), Steve Gutierrez (Ricardo), Peter Lindstedt (ICE Officer #1)
Summary:	Picard and the crew travel back to 2024 Los Angeles in search of the one person who can help them identify the point at which time diverged.



The Confederation magistrate orders the crew of the rogue CSS La Sirena to drop their phasers. Reluctantly, Picard and Rios, the only ones still armed, do so, throwing them to the deck. Musiker moves to help the wounded Elnor, but the magistrate trains his weapon on her, repeating the Confederation's maxim of "a safe galaxy is a Human galaxy" and asking why they showed concern for a Romulan, especially after what he did to the magistrate's security team. Seven of Nine, still attempting to assert herself as the

Confederation's president in this timeline, tells the magistrate and his forces to stand down, as it was a classified operation; the magistrate is not convinced, having begun to see that she was not "his Annika". Meanwhile, Dr. Jurati, still near La Sirena's engines, continues to hook the Borg Queen to the ship's systems. The magistrate challenges Seven to tell him what his full name is, if she was who she claimed to be. When she is unable to answer, Seven, Musiker, and Rios engage in hand-to-hand combat and disarm the magistrate and his security team, vaporizing the group with their own weapons. Picard and Musiker then tend to Elnor, who apologizes that he could not help them. Picard has Musiker take Elnor to sickbay and orders Rios to get them "out of this damned place".

In La Sirena's sickbay, Seven tears open Elnor's shirt, looking concerned at the gaping hole in his chest, while Musiker searches in vain for a medical kit. Seven points her to the dermaline pads to stop the bleeding until they could stabilize him. As they work, La Sirena comes under fire from the Confederation fleet. Rios shouts that he needs more hands on the bridge for assistance, and Musiker tells Seven to go while she stays with Elnor. As Seven takes her post on the bridge, Picard asks about Elnor, and her grim look is all the answer he needs as they approach Sol. "This is the only kind of life you understand," Q says, suddenly standing next to Picard. "Shall we see what else has been lost in the wake of your fear?" When Picard makes a turn to reply, Q is gone; instead, he calls out to Jurati asking how much longer before she was done. The doctor answers

that she was trying to figure out how to slingshot through a solar flare without being incinerated, and didn't want to be hurried (which, to her annoyance, Picard does anyway). Suddenly, Jurati and the Borg Queen are thrown to the deck.

Rios tells Seven to lock onto the lead ship, a Nova-class vessel, at its starboard nacelle. He waits for the proper moment, then gives the order to fire, destroying their quarry, but the other ships are still chasing them. Jurati tries to pick herself up off the deck, but to her horror sees the Queen loose from her stasis tube and crawling on her hands across the deck towards her. "Allow me," the Queen says, as she connects directly to the ship by herself. She begins calculating the temporal trajectory for the time jump, and then takes control of the ship's defense systems to neutralize threats. Rios finds himself locked out of his controls as the weapons fire on the two remaining ships, another Nova and a Steamrunner-class, and destroy them. He grimly tells Picard he is no longer in command of the ship. "Move backward to go forward," the Queen intones. "Shatter to mend. The past is now." Jurati scrambles to secure herself on the bridge as the Queen takes the ship to warp right over the solar surface, accelerating rapidly, until time seems to stand still...

La Sirena drops out of warp, and systems begin to come back online. Picard asks if they were successful, but Jurati is uncertain, as the chronometer was shot. They look for certain context clues: there was no colony on Luna, and there were signs of ozone layer depletion but no nuclear fallout on Earth itself. "Welcome to Earth of the 21st century," Jurati concludes. Suddenly the ship rocks violently, and Seven reports the navigation controls were offline. Rios realizes they were caught in Earth's gravity well. Seven attempts to activate the blast shields, but the forward ones are unresponsive. Rios, frustrated that he seemed to be locked out of his own ship, manages to regain partial nav control. Picard asks if that was enough to land, but Rios answers it would be more of a "targeted crash". Jurati protests at the idea of crash-landing in Los Angeles, one of the most heavily populated cities of the era. Rios asks if she had any better ideas, to which Picard answers that he did: give him manual control. When Rios asks where he was taking them, Picard only answers, "Home."

Picard brings the ship down in a heavily forested area, more or less intact. He asks if everyone else was alright, and all reply they were. Rios looks worriedly at his controls, as both primary and reserve power were being drained. Musiker frantically calls up for power to the sickbay, as the biobed was the only thing keeping Elnor alive. Elnor tells Musiker he was stronger than she thought. She tells him to prove it, but he admits he can't because he was busy with his organs at the moment, earning a slight chuckle. Musiker asks Elnor if this was the first joke he has told as he then begins coughing up blood, and Musiker again calls for more power. Picard realizes the time warp drained the Queen of power, and she was siphoning it from the ship to save her own life. The crew attempt to disconnect her from the ship's systems. Frustrated, Rios pulls his phaser, preparing to shoot the Queen, but Picard stops him, saying they needed her alive.

Elnor asks Musiker to take the medallion he received from the nuns of the Gowat Milat from his pocket, as it gave him comfort to know that even in the altered timeline he still earned it. Musiker reads the Romulan inscription, "Sem n'hak kon", which Elnor translates as "Now is the only moment," before he finally dies.

Picard and the crew watch sadly as Musiker places Elnor's body in the ship's morgue. "If we fail here, we fail Elnor," Picard says, "and everyone in our homeworld." Therefore, though he knows it was against every impulse they felt inside, they had to press on and mend the timeline. Seven bluntly tells him that he should have let Rios kill the Queen, but Picard knows the Queen is their only link to the fissure in time, and they were helpless until she was revived. Musiker is incredulous, asking if Picard wanted to wait around and nurse the Queen back to life. She tells him that he feels intense, sharp, disappointment in leadership. Putting aside the fact they were putting the Queen over Elnor, Musiker asks why history was changed, before answering that it was because of Q. She points out how Q and Picard had "jousting" for decades, how they "screw around with people's lives for sport". Picard denies doing so himself, but agrees that this is what Q does. He reminds them that the Queen mentioned a "Watcher" waiting for them in Los Angeles who could help them restore time. Rios asks if that will undo the "nightmare" of the Confederation, and Musiker asks if restoring time would bring Elnor back. Jurati says it is impossible to determine if they were existing outside of a temporal causality loop, but Musiker bluntly asks her again: if they restore time, will it bring Elnor back? The doctor is forced to admit she doesn't know. Musiker, however, is convinced it will, and does not intend to wait around for

the Queen: she intends to go find the Watcher herself, and storms off.

Picard can see Musiker is too emotionally invested, and both Seven and Rios elect to go with her. Jurati warns him to leave his phaser behind, since if he lost it in the past, Q would not be the only one causing changes in time. She is adamant that none of them draw any attention to themselves, whether it be in a hospital, a security checkpoint, or any kind of authority that can find their advanced technology. While the others began the search for the Watcher, Picard and Jurati would stay with the ship and try to revive the Queen. Seven questions whether Picard is prepared to do that, and he answers that the Queen was the only one who knew about the Watcher, and perhaps where to find it. Rios recaps the situation: they would try and revive a Borg Queen who could kill them all, beam from a ship with no power, and find a Watcher that may or may not exist. Picard confirms that was essentially it, and has them all go to work.

Jurati runs scans of the Queen, and concludes that she was in there somewhere, showing Picard her communication center: she was trying to talk, but couldn't find a way to speak. Picard recalls that when he had been Locutus, the Borg rarely spoke audibly, but a thought would be shared instantly with the entire hive. Jurati realizes that she is talking, but because no one is connected to her, no one can hear her. She attempts to draw from the environmental controls to bring the Queen out of her recovery mode, and asks Picard if he had access to the Queen as part of the Collective. Picard admits he had an intense euphoria, but no sense of self. Jurati theorizes that as Locutus, Picard could fix her from inside, but he shuts that down: total assimilation took hours for a newcomer, but she would know his mind, as he had been assimilated himself, and she would take control of him in seconds. Jurati then volunteers herself, as the Queen did not know her. Picard refuses to allow it, but Jurati insists that she had to get in and restore power to both the Queen and La Sirena, and reminds him that he'd told them their efforts would fail without her. Picard again refuses.

On the bridge, Seven has rerouted power from life support to the transporters, but at the moment they were "sub-computational", to which Rios adds that the technical term was "for shit". Still, it would be enough for a one-way trip. Musiker, in her grief for Elnor, bitterly comments that they could have used that power sooner. Rios notes the rotational computation would be off, so they could land near each other; Musiker brusquely says they would leave in ten. Seven tries to get her to slow down, as they had no idea where they had to go, but Musiker has done some digging and pointed out the Markridge Industrial Tower, the tallest building in Los Angeles at that time, as an ideal place to scan for alien activity. Seven shares a worried look with Rios as Musiker storms off.

The team looks for clothing that would work in that time period. Rios has chosen his outfit, asking Seven if he still looks like a "fascist bastard"; she agrees he no longer looks fascist, at least. As Rios leaves to check the transporter, Seven looks at her face in the mirror again, still thinking about her missing Borg implants. Musiker then enters, handing Seven a combadge prepared by Jurati to beam them back. Seven tries to talk to her about Elnor, but Musiker talks over her, finally saying that she wanted to focus on fixing the timeline rather than how it felt to watch Elnor die.

Jurati approaches Picard again and tries to convince him it would only be a "partial assimilation". "Halfway to Hell is still not a recommended destination," he replies, but Jurati is convinced it will work with Picard's help; her conscious mind would be fixing the Queen, while her subconscious — the parts the Borg had no use for — would remain behind with him. As long as those things remained separate, Jurati would remain herself. Picard could monitor her progress, and once she reached one hundred percent, he would disconnect her. Picard warns that the longer Jurati was inside the Queen's mind, the stronger the Queen would become. If anything went wrong, Jurati insists, he could just pull the tubule out and shut down the whole process. Picard asks how he would know, and Jurati replies that her subconscious would be active the entire time, so he would be the first to know, along with memories of how she missed her first grade school cat. Picard reluctantly agrees.

As Musiker, Seven, and Rios stand on the transporter, Picard wishes them luck, before reminding them that they were there to find the Watcher, not interfere with time; all their choices had consequences. Picard beams them away, leaving him and Jurati with the Queen. Now it was Jurati's turn, as she sits down next to the Queen; Picard attaches an assimilation tubule to her neck, and Jurati goes almost comatose. Sitting across from her, Picard looks down at the neural readings, as the doctor slowly begins her work.

Meanwhile, the team arrives in Los Angeles, finding themselves separated. Musiker materializes in a back alleyway, gets her bearings, and gets on her way. Seven appears right next to a young child, who asks if she was a superhero; smiling, Seven asks if she could keep a secret. She winks at the child and walks away. Rios gets the worst of it, materializing three stories up, unable to grab the fire escape to break his fall before he hits the sidewalk, falling unconscious with blood pouring out of his mouth.

Rios is taken to a medical facility for treatment, despite his protests against being taken to an emergency room or to the police. As he is dragged semi-conscious inside, his combadge drops to the floor, where it is picked up by a young boy.

Meanwhile, Musiker finds herself in a Sanctuary District, seeing an advertisement for a mission to Jupiter's moon Europa, when a man holds her at gunpoint demanding her money. She swiftly disarms and knocks out the thief, taking his own money in the process. Seven finds her there, commenting on how they had barely arrived and Musiker was already making friends. Musiker points out that the thief started it, and wonders how a society with so many contradictions didn't collapse sooner. She notes how relaxed Seven looks and asks about it; Seven doesn't answer, instead saying they should find Rios. She had been able to track Musiker's combadge, but had not been able to find Rios'. Musiker thinks he is on his way, and doesn't plan to wait for Picard to wake "her Highness".

Back on La Sirena, Picard asks if Jurati is still there. Jurati answers in an almost childlike voice, commenting about the "warm feelings", about how she wanted to disobey him out of spite, but only because she wishes he was her father. Despite himself, Picard is amused, seeing they were "diving into the deep end". The Queen is making her way through Jurati's mind, but Picard assures her she can push back. Jurati says she can feel the Queen "peering through doorways", and can hear rattling. As Jurati sought out the Queen's control center, the Queen was accessing Jurati's emotions: humor (implied by the doctor to be a defense mechanism), anger, and sadness, which she expresses aloud. The last particularly gets to her, seeing it as too much, too heavy... and then a thought occurs to her: perhaps she could just stop trying. Picard looks down, seeing the neural network functionality was nearly at eighty percent. Jurati begins to realize she was losing control of herself, the Queen was no longer observing... and then she speaks with the Queen's voice, addressing Picard as "Locutus", remarking on how she had not encountered someone with Jurati's sense of longing in a long time. Suddenly, the Queen begins to speak with Jurati's voice, saying that she was almost through. But Picard can see she is losing herself, and finally disconnects Jurati from the Queen. The doctor goes unconscious, and the lights go out.

In Los Angeles, Musiker and Seven arrive at Markridge Tower, and begin to climb its heights; the higher they go, the better signal they can get. However, they are stopped by a security guard, who tells them they were not allowed up there, as it was not open to the public. Seven explains that she and her girlfriend were looking to take a picture, and mentions a "colleague" of the guard's, tall and round, whom the guard identifies as "Kevin". Seven goes on, saying that Kevin let them up there on their first date for a picture, and then wanted to take another because they had just got engaged. The guard gives in, telling them to make it fast. As the guard leaves, Seven is surprised; most strangers don't tend to like her.

Meanwhile, Rios is being attended by a young doctor named Teresa, who runs a free clinic for those who could not afford hospitals, as well as those who wanted to avoid the authorities. He has suffered a concussion as well as a dislocated hand in his fall, which would impede what she thought was his career as a classical guitarist. Testing his cognition after the concussion, Teresa asks about his happiest childhood memory. Without going into too much detail, he explains that his mother worked at an academy that trained pilots, and he had snuck in when he was eight years old to try out a flight simulator until the alarms went off. He had thought he had broken it, but it turned out he had actually broken the flight records for any cadet at that academy. His storytelling comes to an end when Teresa relocates the fingers in his hand, before telling him to rest; she was having his "weird clothes" washed, admonishing him not to bleed on her scrubs. After Teresa leaves, Rios' hand goes to his combadge, only for him to realize it was not there.

Atop Markridge Tower, Seven remarks that the future they had seen was already beginning, as she looks out at a wildfire burning in the Hollywood Hills nearby; perhaps the change had already happened. Musiker is adamant that it won't, before suddenly detecting a blip on her tricorder from somewhere near MacArthur Park, just for a moment, before it was gone. A moment later, she then detects Rios' combadge, but seeming to be "on the fritz"; Seven wonders if it was Morse

code.

The source is the young boy, Ricardo, who picked it up in Teresa's free clinic and was repeatedly tapping it for the chirping sound it made. Rios, shaky on his feet, asks for it back, but Ricardo answers "finders keepers". Rios asks if his parents had ever taught him stealing was wrong. Ricardo replies his parents are dead, earning a sympathetic reaction from Rios, before the boy reveals he was lying; it was just him and his mother, his father having remarried. Ricardo asks for a trade, since if he gave it back without something in return, logically, that would be considered stealing. Calling him a "little Vulcan", Rios spots a plate of cookies atop a nearby refrigerator, and marvels at the taste of real peanut butter; he offers Ricardo the plate for the badge. Teresa intervenes, telling Ricardo in Spanish to get his jacket and go outside, as his aunt was waiting for him. Rios realizes that Ricardo is Teresa's son. "Forget the guitar, you're a genius," Teresa sarcastically confirms, before telling Ricardo in Spanish to finish his homework or he couldn't watch Rick and Morty. Ricardo protests in the same language that he only wanted one cookie and did not see the big deal. Rios observes that Ricardo is a fighter, and Teresa agrees, not sure where he got it from. He looks at her for a moment, and when she asks, he says he was trying to figure out where he got it from, being a "genius" after all. He asks for the badge back, but Teresa tells him to put his shirt on first, keeping the badge up front so she made sure he wouldn't steal anything. Rios concedes that was fair enough.

Meanwhile, aboard *La Sirena*, Picard gently puts a blanket over the unconscious Jurati, as the Queen regains consciousness. "Hello, Locutus," she greets him.

The Queen remarks that she had the "strangest dream", and that her "little companion" Jurati was in it. Picard notes that the Queen is far more lucid than she had been before, and the Queen confirms that her "clarity of vision" has been restored now that they've arrived before the divergence. Picard reminds her of what she had said about the Watcher. The Queen, playing coy, tells "Locutus" that if he wanted to access her innermost thoughts, he had to put something on the table, something it would hurt him to lose. Picard replies that they lost Elnor, someone dear to them, because of her. The Queen asks if this was how he negotiated. When Picard asks what she wants, the Queen replies she wants legs eventually, as well as a chorus of thoughts to break the silence... but for starters, she would settle for taking the ship.

In Teresa's clinic, Rios is dressed and ready to go, checking in with Teresa and her nurse, Gabi, when police sirens sound outside. Teresa explains it was a raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and has Rios help take some of her patients out the back door to escape.

The Queen calls it a "simple exchange": the ship for the location of the Watcher. Picard refuses, to which the Queen asks if he would sacrifice the future of countless others for his own. Jurati regains consciousness, and Picard tells her that her plan worked: the ship is back on line... as is the Queen, which he considers "same leopard, same spots". Jurati thinks they no longer need the Queen active now, and Picard wholeheartedly agrees. The Queen scoffs, dismissing the "idle Human threats", knowing that they wouldn't deactivate her because of their tendency to hope in the face of hopelessness. She has information they need, they hope she'll relent and give it to them, and each passing second increases the probability of her taking the ship anyway. In the end, she concludes, they'll sacrifice their lives for the future of the many. "So, in the interests of efficiency, shall we just fast forward?" Jurati asks exactly what information she holds; the Queen responds that she holds the location of the Watcher, and the exact time the divergence occurs. Rising to her feet, Jurati asks if she is sure about that. Accessing her memory, the Queen realizes something is missing, and demands to know what Jurati has done. Jurati asks the computer to dictate a file labeled "Shit I Stole from the Borg Queen"... which plays a set of coordinates for the location of the Watcher. Jurati is also sure the exact moment of the divergence will also come to her mind in time. The Queen, venom lacing her tone, warns Jurati that she has done something more difficult and vastly more dangerous than she realized: She's managed to impress her. Picard thinks Jurati needs to be as far away from the Queen as possible; Jurati insists she knew more, but Picard assures her they will find out in due time.

At Teresa's clinic, Rios watches anxiously as the ICE officers interrogate Teresa. Alvarez, one of the patients in a wheelchair, urges him in Spanish to flee. Rios, however, is concerned for Teresa, and tells the other man to go as fast as he can; he would remain to help Teresa. Disguising himself as a doctor, he tries to bring Teresa to the back to help a supposed 13-year-old child with a compound fracture of his leg. The ICE officer sees the bandages on Rios' hands, realizing he's a patient, and arrests them both for obstruction of justice. Teresa wonders if what

Rios was doing was brave or stupid; guessing that Rios had no ID or UHC card, the ICE officer goes with "stupid". As the ICE officers take them away, Rios hears his combadge chirp on the desk; Picard is repeatedly trying to make contact, but Rios is unable to answer him.

Watcher

Season 2

Episode Number: 14

Season Episode: 4

Originally aired: Thursday March 24, 2022
Teleplay: Juliana James, Jane Maggs
Story: Travis Fickett, Juliana James
Director: Lea Thompson
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: John de Lancie (Q), Annie Wersching (Borg Queen), Madeline Wise (Yvette Picard), Ito Aghayere (Guinan), Leif Gantvoort (ICE Officer #1), Penelope Mitchell (Renee Picard), Sol Rodriguez (Teresa Ramirez), Chloe Wepper (Gabi), Karl T. Wright (Man at LAPD Station), Oscar Camacho (Pedro), Sean Freeland (Tall Man), Kelli Dawn Hancock (Officer Stauss), Isabella Meneses (Small Girl), Brian Quinn (Dale), Kirk R. Thatcher (Mohawk Punk), Danielle Thorpe (LAPD Officer #1), Dylan Von Halle (Young Picard)
Summary: With time running out to save the future, Picard seeks out an old friend for help; Rios winds up on the wrong side of the law; Jurati makes a deal with the Borg Queen.



Aboard the crashed CSS La Sirena, Picard tries to contact Rios or Musiker, but only receives static as a response. Meanwhile, Musiker and Seven arrive at Teresa Ramirez's ransacked clinic, where Musiker detected Rios' combadge signal; Seven wonders why Rios would have needed a hospital. Gabi walks in from another room and tells them the clinic is closed, but Seven explains they were looking for their friend. Gabi tells her that Rios and Teresa were both arrested by ICE officers; while Teresa is a US citizen, and will "probably be detained longer than she needs to", Gabi hopes they find

their friend before ICE makes sure they don't.

Picard continues to try and contact the team, but to no avail; Dr. Jurati, bundled in a blanket (the ship's heating was disabled), knew the communications would be a long shot, as there were no relays in this time. They are only left with the hope that their friends are not dead. Seeing how Jurati is suffering from the cold, Picard suggests finding a place to build a fire. When Jurati asks if someone would spot La Sirena, Picard tells her that the Confederation added a few upgrades to the ship, and orders the computer to engage the ship's cloaking device. Picard and Jurati exit the ship and enter the nearby house — Château Picard, which appears to have been abandoned for a century at least. Picard explains that the Nazis used the house as a base of operations when they occupied France during World War II, and his ancestors had hid in the tunnels below the house before making their escape to England. The chateau remained in the family afterward, albeit kept under various caretakers, though they did not reside in it for generations after. As he

runs his fingers along an old end table, he recalls a childhood memory (which he notes hasn't happened yet, given where they are in time) of seeking out his mother in the house.

Picard finishes making up a fire in the fireplace, when Jurati asks where he was at that moment. "Lost in the past," he answers, "in more ways than one." He tells her they need to find out what else Jurati stole from the Borg Queen's mind about the change in the timeline, but first, Jurati needs rest. The doctor replies, as she fiddles with an abacus nearby, that thinking was her rest, commenting on the relaxing nature of calculus. Picard remembers that his mother used to play Édith Piaf's "Non, je ne regrette rien" to calm him down, and Jurati jokes that she could see a "little Picard" walking around the house, asking for "milk, chocolate, hot", to Picard's amusement. As she pulls a book from the bookshelf, she asks if he was the "skinny kid with the endless book collection", and Picard admits he was. Jurati looks around for a drink, finding a bottle of pinot noir among the ruins, asking if Picard had a corkscrew on him. Picard sees the label and comes to a realization: Jurati moved fifteen beads on the abacus, pulled the fifteenth volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica from the shelf, and the year on the bottle is 1915. The number fifteen seems to factor into their mission somehow; they realize it could be a date, and Picard asks if the ship's chronometer showed the date exactly when they landed. Jurati recalls that it was on the twelfth of April, 2024, which means something would occur on the fifteenth — three days before their future changes irrevocably.

Riding a bus in Los Angeles, Musiker and Seven listen as a middle-aged man with a mohawk plays a loud song on his boom box. When an annoyed Seven asks him to turn off the noise, the man (recalling a similar request thirty-eight years earlier) quickly turns his boom box off, apologetically explaining he just liked the song. As the noise abates, Musiker expresses the thought that they should have waited in their alternate future and come up with a comprehensive plan before making the jump. Seven notes there had not been "a lot of runways". Seven can see Musiker is still distraught about Elnor, whom Musiker insists they would get back if they fixed the timeline, and reassures her that his death was not her fault.

Back on La Sirena, Picard is preparing to beam into Los Angeles himself; as they couldn't contact the others, he was going to find the "Watcher" before time ran out. The Borg Queen stares with a smug smile at Jurati all throughout their preparations. Jurati offers to go with him, but Picard tells her she was needed on the ship, to try and boost communications and ensure the transporters could get them back. As Jurati beams Picard out, the Queen mocks her as being treated like an "afterthought"... but not to her, who can see Jurati is more than she appears to be: "Smart, cunning, and remarkably more cruel than I could have predicted." Jurati asks how she was "cruel", and the Queen replies that she had fixed her only to take what she needed, leaving her powerless but now awake to feel it. As Jurati leaves her to her "plotting, or whatever it is Borg Queens do," the Queen notes that Jurati had felt the same thing she had, which the Borg had so many words for: assimilation, cooperation... connection.

Picard materializes right outside of 10 Forward Avenue, a place with which he was familiar. He enters the empty bar and finds a bottle of Saurian brandy in a milk crate; as he moves to open it, the barkeep — whom he recognizes as a younger Guinan — interrupts, telling him the bar is closed. She offers him some "advice": walk back out the door, and she won't have to have him on her or "Luna's" conscience. Luna is revealed to be a pit bull, but Picard, familiar with the breed, is able to get the dog to sit and stay. He apologizes, thinking that 10 Forward was always open; Guinan says that if he was here to drink, he was late, but if he was here to loot, he was early — the bar was closing down. She notes he was older than her "usual" thieves, asking if he hasn't settled into retirement yet. Picard ruefully admits he's tried, but that afternoon naps and jigsaw puzzles were "not quite his speed". He tells her that he needs her help, which she refuses, saying she didn't "help". He persists that he had something important to tell her, and he knew how valuable listening could be... as an El-Aurian. Guinan pulls a shotgun from under the bar and points it right at Picard's head. "Who the hell are you, old man?" she demands of him.

Musiker and Seven approach the Los Angeles Police Department looking for Rios; Musiker begins to get in the desk sergeant's face, but Seven pulls her back and says they will wait outside of her "personal space". Seven politely thanks the officer for her service as they walk away. As they sit down, a man turns to them and tells them that LAPD won't have ICE detainees in their system, and that they had to go to the ICE offices to find who they were looking for.

Meanwhile, Rios and Teresa are booked by ICE, and placed in holding cells. An ICE officer enters and holds out transfer papers to one of the other detainees, who simply stares back. When

the ICE officer becomes confrontational, Rios steps in, commenting on how giving someone a uniform and a badge gave them power; he is shocked with a taser and left convulsing for a moment on the floor in response. As he regains enough balance to sit down, Rios wonders aloud why the past had to hurt so much, pounding his good hand on his knee in frustration. Teresa, in the next cell, tells him that if he dislocates his other hand, she would have to start charging, and asks why he didn't run away. Rios replies he did, but elected to run back. She admits she is trying to figure out the "brave-or-stupid conundrum", and Rios jokes that if she figures it out, to call his late mother. She asks who he is really, and he answers that he was just a "Good Samaritan" passing through.

Back at 10 Forward Avenue, Guinan remarks that she can count on one hand how many times she's been identified by her species while she's been on Earth, and asks where Picard is from. He answers that he is from France, but Guinan doesn't buy it; anyone who knows what an El-Aurian is would not be coming from "around here, planetarily speaking". She sees that Luna has taken to him, and comments on how she usually didn't like strangers; Picard replies that it was because she knew he was no threat. Guinan finally shrugs, telling him whether he stayed or left, she was closing the doors of the bar for good. Picard believes that his finding her at the moment she was about to leave meant that he was in the right place. He tells her he had three days to try and stop a critical event, and Guinan sarcastically wishes him luck with that. However, he regains her attention when he mentions a "Watcher". As she begins to deny it, a man walks in, asking if he was early. Kneeling down next to Luna, she tells the dog it was time to go with her "Uncle Dale", and hands Dale a basket before they leave.

Once Dale and Luna are gone, Guinan explains the troubles of the planet, how Humanity was killing it, how "truth is whatever you want it to be", and how a few people with the resources to change it refuse to do so because they fear having less. She tearfully notes how they had only "one tiny ball" in the galaxy, and all they wanted to do is fight. She has given them long enough, and now she wants to leave Earth. Picard, recalling the conversation he had had with Guinan in that very bar nearly four hundred years later, tells her it was not too late. "The problem isn't time," he says. "It's you." Guinan stares at him in surprise for a moment, and then becomes physically ill, vomiting on the floor. Picard recognizes she is suffering from Af-Kelt, or "time sickness", a condition that affects El-Aurians when the timeline has been changed; he tells her that he was repeating what she would tell him long from now in the future. Guinan thinks leaving the planet will give her distance from it, but Picard reminds her that distance offered no protection from time. There was a wrong that Picard had to correct... something only Guinan could help him do.

At LAPD Headquarters, Seven follows an irate Musiker into the parking lot. Musiker is hoping to find where Rios is being held so that they could get back to the work of repairing the timeline, and begins scoping the LAPD's police cruisers. Seven is incredulous, wondering how good an idea it was to break into a vehicle of an agency that investigated theft. Musiker's plan is to simply break into one and use its computer to find their information, which Seven thinks is no better. To her added annoyance, Musiker is carrying her phaser when they had agreed not to bring phasers with them; Musiker nonchalantly says she had no idea how it got there. Seven tells her that her brains seemed to be in her fists, meaning she was not thinking clearly. Musiker vaporizes the window of the cruiser to get inside, and uses her tricorder to turn the car on and access its computer. Seven heatedly asks how she could use the tricorder to do that, but not unlock it; Musiker admits she could have, but her way was more fun. She is able to access computer records, and is horrified to see so many matching Rios and Teresa's description in the system, before seeing that ICE had a processing center twenty-five miles northwest of Los Angeles. Musiker tries to contact La Sirena, at first getting no response, before Jurati speaks up. Musiker explains they were traveling to a place called Castaic to find Rios, and gives the coordinates. Jurati tries to beam them over, but power has failed again. She is also unable to contact Picard despite the comms boost. With no option, Seven is forced to drive the stolen police car through Los Angeles' streets, while Jurati tries to bring the transporters back online; even if she couldn't beam them directly to their destination, it would need to be on standby once they found Rios. The Queen gets Jurati's attention, and the doctor reluctantly tells them to stand by, as she had someone to assist them.

Meanwhile, at 10 Forward Avenue, Guinan summarizes what Picard has told her — that he is from the future, but time has been altered, and his future is "A-OK" while the one he was trying to prevent was "Hell on Earth". Yet for all that, she notes he hasn't even told her his name. Picard

explains he was trying not to change her path, and insists that whatever she was watching over was vital to the future of Humanity. Guinan tells him she was no Watcher, and as for Humanity, she draws his attention to the homeless people, forced to rely on charity to get by. Picard insists Humankind can change with patience, but Guinan tells him that only people who looked like Picard, rather than being dark-skinned like her, had the luxury of having patience in this time. As she places a tub of donations on the table for the nearby charity, she tells Picard she had seen that Earth had more potential than she imagined, but the hatred there never ended. She says that in the 21st century, hatred took off its hoods and put on suits instead. Picard told her that change was coming, but it was "too damn slow" in her view, and the cost too high, and admits being forced to watch it hurt her. Picard believes that history's darkest moments were tipping points for change, but Guinan remains pessimistic, saying that it would not tip soon enough. He pleads with her to stay at least a few more days.

In the ICE detention center, Teresa tells Rios that she did not spend six years in medical school just to watch her neighbors die because they were too afraid to go to a hospital, and admits she opened her clinic because she was a "control freak". Rios tells her where he comes from, she would be a hero; when she asks where, he is silent, not willing to give away too much. She then asks if he knew what would happen to him. He replies he does not, and asks if she does; she admits she is not sure either. She confesses to having a healthy fear of authority, but Rios points out that it did not seem to be the case when people needed help. Teresa attributes that to selfishness, that she felt the need to be needed. Just then, the ICE officer who tased Rios enters, with discharge papers for Teresa. Rios thanks her for her help, and Teresa keeps an offer of further aid open if he needs it. The ICE officer then asks for Rios' identity. Motivated either by frustration or the thought the officer won't believe him, Rios throws caution to the wind and identifies himself as commanding officer of the USS Stargazer, and that he was here to stop a change in time. The ICE officer just chuckles and walks away.

Seven and Musiker continue their wild ride through the streets of Los Angeles, with Seven remarking that she was not the worst driver on the roads. When they come to a traffic light turning red, Musiker insists that means they had to stop, but Seven keeps on going, narrowly avoiding crashing into a UPS truck. Seven tells Musiker that if she kills someone, she would blame Musiker for it; Musiker sarcastically suggests not aiming for them, in that case. Meanwhile, Rios is placed on a prison transport bus, and the ICE officer tells him that the end of the line will be the end of life as he knew it, before mockingly bidding goodbye to the "captain".

Back on La Sirena, the Queen sees Jurati has the "quickened flush of a woman with much to ask and no time to ask it". Jurati replies that several systems were still down after their connection (or "entwinement" as the Queen calls it) and some were recalibrating too slowly. The Queen asks about the cloaking or propulsion, but Jurati knows the Queen had been listening, telling her to fix the transporters, and that cloaking didn't matter. "Says the woman who won't meet my gaze for fear of being seen," the Queen goads her, commenting that there was great strength in being in plain view and being unafraid. Jurati sarcastically remarks how that would help when one had an army behind them, but the Queen replies that it was how one got the army to follow them in the first place, how to teach the choir to sing. Jurati tries to get back to the issue of the transporters. "Don't politely demure yourself," the Queen interrupts. "Convince me." Finally looking the Queen right in the eye, Jurati tells her that her friends were in trouble, she needed the transporters back online, and the Queen could think faster than she could type, before finally asking if she could trust her to help. "Beware the species that has not yet purged that word," the Queen replies; "they're simply begging to be conquered." Jurati wonders if she meant "help", but the Queen clarifies with "trust". Jurati thinks that strange to say to someone they're trying to get to trust you, but the Queen counters it was more believable than saying she could trust her. She compares Jurati to the brightest peacock yet so afraid to shine, which was why she was constantly alone. Jurati retorts that the Queen was cut off from the hive, and had to engage in slow conversation with her just to have someone to talk to, adding that she would not be so chatty if something happened to her friends. When the Queen asks what she would get in return for her help, Jurati offers herself: she has the Queen's thoughts in her mind after their connection, and both disliked being alone, so she offers to exchange "sad sack stories in between pressing catastrophes". The Queen appears intrigued.

The prison bus with Rios is making its way to its destination. In Los Angeles, Musiker sees Rios' file has been updated, and that he is being moved to a Sanctuary District on the US-Mexico

border. Musiker asks if Jurati has the transporters up, and the doctor confirms she is almost ready to commence beaming. But the LAPD have caught up with them, and Seven evades them the best she can while Jurati prepares to beam them to Rios' location. Jurati warns Seven that she was about to ask her to do something counterintuitive: hit the brakes. Seven is incredulous, as the police were all around them, but Jurati insists she trust her. Seven brings the stolen police car to a stop, and the police are on them with their guns drawn, demanding they step out of the car. As one officer watches, however, Seven and Musiker disappear right in front of her, beamed away by Jurati. The car is now empty, and Seven and Musiker are standing on a hill overlooking the highway where Rios' bus is approaching, coming fast. Back on the ship, Jurati is again looking away from the Queen, who begins calling her name; Jurati has limited her access again, and moves quickly away from her, even as the Queen begins shouting.

Outside 10 Forward Avenue, Guinan has finished her donations, and is now preparing to leave. Picard pleads with her for help, but Guinan is adamant that she is not the Watcher he seeks. Finally, he takes a gamble and identifies himself to her, saying that four hundred years from then, she would be his oldest and dearest friend. The name "Picard" gets Guinan's attention, and she tells him to get into her car. Guinan explains that he was actually looking for a supervisor, also called a Watcher, who was assigned to watch over the destiny of certain individuals; she admits the specifics were vague, as they were not big on explanations. However, she will be able to get Picard a "sort of" face-to-face meeting; when he asks about the "sort of", all Guinan can say is that the Watcher will want to meet with him.

In a nearby park, Guinan explains that Watchers are defensive about their assignments, and warns Picard not to lie or hide anything from this Watcher, or the Watcher would "probably bite [his] eyelids off". She takes Picard's combadge out of her pocket, having taken it off him, as she thought it might be a weapon. Just then, a girl in a butterfly-patterned dress and with colorless eyes tells Guinan that she should run. Picard asks if this was the Watcher, and Guinan says it wasn't. The girl again tells Guinan to leave before she lost her "very tenuous grip on [her] need to put [her] boot through [Guinan's] face". Guinan knows she means it, and gets up to leave. Picard asks her not to leave Earth just yet, that while she was done with listening, she was not done with Humanity yet. "Change always comes later than we think it should," he reasons. Guinan does not answer, as she walks away. The girl takes him a distance away, before demanding his combadge. Picard protests that without it, he was stranded; after a moment, the girl tells him to keep it, but remove its energy cell, and Picard does so. Then the girl's eyes return to normal, and she walks away. Another man at a nearby food counter now has the same eyes as the girl, and points him down a nearby tunnel. Picard makes his way there, when another man now assumes the same eyes. Picard asks about the "pantomime", and is told it was in case he was being followed. Finally, he sees a woman in a suit standing nearby, and asks if she was a friend of Guinan's. "Absolutely not," is her reply, as she turns. Picard stares in astonishment, as she appears very much like Laris. Without a word, the Watcher puts a hand on his shoulder and both disappear in a rectangular puff of smoke.

At Jackson Roykirk Plaza, Q is sitting at a table outside, reading a copy of the Los Angeles Times discussing a return to space exploration, when he observes a young woman reading a book. "You can't do it," he says, though whether to himself or the woman is unclear. "And you know it. Oh sure, you played the game for a while, when nothing was at stake. When the only challenge was fooling everybody into thinking you had the nerve. But now it's real. The fear is choking you. Well, here's the truth: you can't do it. People are gonna die. And now your fear, your doubt, is the loudest voice in your head." He snaps his fingers... and the woman starts laughing. Q looks confused, as he snaps his fingers again. But nothing happens. "That's unexpected," he says. "And most unfortunate."

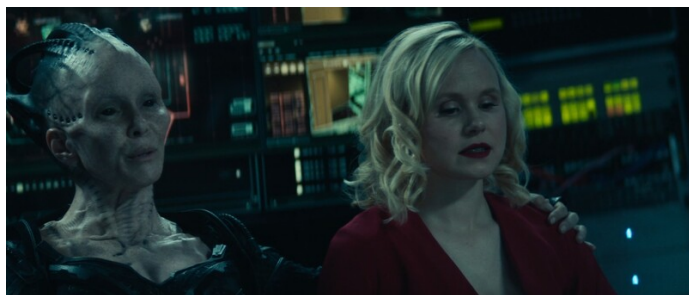
Fly Me to the Moon

Season 2

Episode Number: 15

Season Episode: 5

Originally aired:	Thursday March 31, 2022
Writer:	Cindy Appel
Director:	Jonathan Frakes
Show Stars:	Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars:	Brent Spiner (Adam Soong), John de Lancie (Q), Annie Wersching (Borg Queen), Penelope Mitchell (Renée Picard), Lea Thompson (Dr. Diane Werner), Ivo Nandi (Officer Leclerc), Brian Quinn (Dale), Kirk R. Thatcher (Punk in bus), Leif Gantvoort (ICE Officer), Jackie Geary (TBD), Kay Bess (La Sirena Computer), Oscar Camacho (Pedro), Daniel Mooney (Young Man), Zach Sowers (Security Guard #1), Shaw Jones (Guard #2), Michelle Haro (Guard #1), Kareem Stroud (Security Guard #2)
Summary:	Picard discovers an important person from his past may be integral to the divergence in the timeline. Q continues his manipulation of the timeline, taking an interest in Dr. Adam Soong. Seven and Raffi attempt a daring rescue of Rios, while Jurati faces the consequences of her deal with the Borg Queen.



Renée Picard is piloting the Shango rocket into orbit when a "1202 alarm" begins to sound; Mission Control in Houston warns of an impending impact with a Russian satellite. As the satellite impacts, the alarms stop, as the controller says, "Boom. You're dead." It was a training simulation for the actual flight, three days hence. Renée expresses frustration that everything seems to be "stuck", but

the controller assures her it was only jitters, and she would be fine.

Meanwhile, Jean-Luc Picard is taken to the apartment of the mysterious "Watcher", who he realizes is not actually Laris at all. She instead identifies herself as Tallinn. Picard explains that he has come from the future, and Tallinn immediately expresses her dislike for time travelers. When he identifies himself, however, her attention is piqued. She explains that like others in her profession, she has a singular purpose: to protect one individual, "a single string in a grand tapestry to which I'm not privy," as she puts it. Picard explains there was a divergence coming, something that altered the future he came from, and that either Tallinn or the person she's protecting are important to that future. Tallinn reveals that the person he is protecting is Renée, who is apparently Picard's ancestor.

Aboard the crashed CSS La Sirena outside Château Picard, the Borg Queen regains consciousness. "Alone, but not lonely," she says. "Silence so loud. Voices carried everywhere on invisible strings." She is able to hear the transmissions of the cellular phones and similar communications technology of the 21st century, and seems to take some pleasure from it. Her eyes open, and she asks the computer to intercept the local cellular tower frequencies. The computer does not recognize her voice, so the Queen mimics others with the same request: First Dr. Jurati,

then Picard, and then finally Rios. The computer confirms Rios' voice access, giving the Queen access. She is able to make a call to the French National Police, saying in French that there was a woman under attack near the Picard vineyard. The policeman on the line tells her to stay put, as an officer was on his way. The Queen smiles to herself.

Meanwhile, the bus carrying the actual Rios to the Sanctuary District on the US-Mexico border is detected by Musiker's tricorder, a minute up the road from their location. She plans to have Jurati use La Sirena's transporter to lock on and beam him out, but Seven of Nine points out an issue: If he is beamed out in the presence of other people, it could affect the timeline. Musiker clearly does not have patience for "time travel rules", and points out that they were about to lose Rios forever. Seven tries to reassure her that they would get Rios out alive, but in such a way that would not further alter time, and then demands that Musiker hand over the tricorder, saying she was being too careless, while Musiker counters that Seven was being "too goddamn careful". Seven asks her again, and Musiker reluctantly hands it over, saying he was four hundred meters out. Seven can see that Musiker is upset not only about Elnor, but about her son Gabe, saying that she needed a target, somewhere to set her feet and fight. Musiker counters that Seven only wants to run away, and Seven agrees, as she activates an electromagnetic pulse that disables the bus. "Because something that's not moving is vulnerable," Seven concludes.

Aboard the bus, Rios realizes what is going on, as the ICE officer orders the detainees not to move. Rios looks to one of the others, Pedro, and tells him in Spanish to get ready to act, before saying the same to the others. The ICE officer tells him to shut up, as he works to resolve the issue. Pedro tells Rios not to do anything stupid, but Rios replies that his friends already have that covered. The ICE officer now opens the security gate to the detainees' seating to silence Rios himself, but Rios attacks him. The driver pulls his gun, but Musiker disables him with a stun beam, just as Rios and Pedro knock out the ICE officer. Seven grabs a pocket knife from the unconscious driver and begins cutting the restraints of the detainees. Upon seeing Seven and Musiker, Rios remarks that the 21st century has so far been a "very bumpy century", but he was getting the hang of it. Seven knows someone will start missing the bus at some point, which meant they had to get out fast. Musiker suddenly sees one of the detainees looking like Elnor and tries to stop him, but realizes it was not him. The man asks if she was alright, and Musiker replies that she is, telling him to go with the others. Seven steps off the bus, asking what came next. Musiker, somewhat shaken, agrees with Seven's earlier idea to keep moving. Rios congratulates Pedro on his help and wishes him well, as he leaves with Seven and Musiker.

In Tallinn's apartment, Picard asks about her "job", and Tallinn explains she was chosen to be a Supervisor. Picard recalls from his history that James T. Kirk once encountered a Supervisor named Gary Seven, who had a similar job to "protect the tapestry of history", even (in Tallinn's case) a single thread. He then asks her about Renée. Tallinn explains that her job involves watching, but never being seen, and thus has never actually met Renée, but knows she grew up in the south of France, and taught herself how to sail by age ten; by eleven, she had moved on to chess, fluid dynamics, and Cantonese. She went to university at age sixteen, then spent a couple of years as a test pilot (those years were "nail-biters", Tallinn admits), before finally being recruited by NASA. Picard thinks she sounds "remarkable", and Tallinn agrees that she is. But she also has her struggles, particularly with feelings of melancholy, anxiety, and depression. "It's a shame, for a mind that can burn so brightly," she admits. Picard knows that depression in Humans can be debilitating, and thinks she is lucky to survive, but Tallinn thinks that's the problem: she's not exactly "surviving". She explains that the Europa Mission, the first manned spaceflight to the Jovian moon, launches in three days, a mission Picard knows was a pioneering spaceflight in his history. However, Tallinn expresses doubt that Renée will even be on the flight.

At the same time, Renée meets with a therapist, who tells her to be kinder to herself. Renée confesses that she has times where she wonders if she was truly ready, or if she would fail when the time came, knowing that lives would depend on her well-being. Tallinn brings up the feed from the session, explaining that it was a mandatory psychiatric evaluation for the mission. Picard protests that it was a private matter, but Tallinn shrugs it off. As they watch, Renée admits to feeling like nothing matters, feeling numb at times, and it scared her; she didn't know if it was gut instinct, or just plain fear. The therapist tells her that fear need not be an enemy, but a friend, and that perhaps it was telling her she was not ready. Picard thinks the therapist is trying to talk her out of it, and asks to see the therapist himself. To his fury, he recognizes the therapist as Q, who he realizes is trying to use Renée to change the future.

Dr. Adam Soong speaks before a board of doctors explaining his vision of understanding the Human genome, a future free of disease and genetic defects. He asks them to imagine he is a god, looking down at Humanity, and seeing them at a crossroads: Do they evolve to enlightenment, or divert into darkness? He asks them to picture a world free of genetic defects; if he had the power to nudge Humanity in the right direction, he argues, wasn't that his responsibility? He asks, if they could find the key to "unlocking our perfection", how far they would be willing to go. The panel chair, a Dr. Diane Werner, points out that he had been part of a private military organization, Spearhead Operations, testing his genetic experiments on soldiers. Soong points out they were ex-soldiers, but nevertheless Werner continues that his experiments were both illegal and unregulated. Soong argues that it was for a greater good, explaining that his daughter was afflicted by a genetic defect that left her confined to a single room; the smallest speck of dust would ruin her respiratory system, and ultraviolet radiation from sunlight would poison her blood. Werner tells him that breaking the Shenzhen Convention had serious consequences, and was left with no choice but to revoke his license and funding, and bans him from continuing any research into genetics.

Returning to his home and entering a sterile lab area, Soong is greeted by his daughter, Kore, who asks how it went, but sees it went badly by the look on his face. She asks if he did the "Humanity at a crossroads" speech, and he admits he did. He tells her that if there was "a single pearl of wisdom" he wanted to impart to her from his life experience and work, it was that "people are idiots", and assures her that some day soon she would meet some "morons" up close. Kore asks how soon, and Soong replies that he was "almost there". As she holds out her arm for her father to take a blood sample, Kore says she wants to learn to swim when she finally goes outside, to see nothing but sunlight reflected from the pool, to breathe the ocean air. Soong promises he will do anything to make that happen. However, upon analyzing the blood sample, the computer indicates a critical failure, that the genetic sequence he was working on had a 99.83 percent certainty of killing the subject. Soong is upset by this result, as he looks out to where Kore is sleeping on a couch. Suddenly, his computer screen begins to show the words "I can help". Confused, Soong looks as research data is rapidly shown on his screen, before it tells him to check his 3D printer. The printer creates a metal plate with a stylized letter "Q" and a phone number.

At Château Picard, the French National Police officer, Leclerc, explores the empty house with a flashlight, before using his radio to contact his dispatcher, reporting that the house was abandoned, but will continue to investigate. He comments on his hate for the countryside as he prepares to light a cigarette, before looking outside to see something shimmering in the distance — the cloaking device on La Sirena. Jurati is sleeping on a couch in the next room, and is not even seen by the officer. Leclerc goes outside and shines his flashlight on the ship, seeing that there is indeed something there, before going inside, gun drawn. "This can't be real," he says to himself, looking around the 25th century vessel, before he hears a woman's voice calling for help. He finally traces the voice to its source: the Borg Queen, suspended above the deck. "My hero," she sarcastically greets him. Leclerc falls backwards to the deck. The Queen sees he suffers from nicotine addiction, and offers to help with that... as a tentacle raises from over her shoulder.

In Los Angeles, Dr. Soong meets Q in a small diner, remarking on the "neat little trick" of Q hacking into his network, as well as providing specific data to the problem he was trying to solve. He asks Q if he knows how many "crackpots" he has to deal with, ranging from "basement-dwelling Nazis to "rich heiresses trying to clone their fucking cats", making clear that he did not do any of those things, warning Q not to waste his time. Q replies he wouldn't think of it, thinking on how he's taken time for granted of late, and "now she's threatening to abandon" him, something Soong dismisses as more crackpot talk, getting ready to leave. Q stops him short, saying that in seventeen seconds he would sit down, because he had driven an hour to meet a total stranger, not for mystery or curiosity, but because he was a father who was desperate. Exactly seventeen seconds in, Soong sits down, saying that if Q knew so much about him, he knew Soong would kill him if he thought him a threat. Q agrees, and says he likes that about him. When Soong asks who he is, Q's reply is somewhat dramatic: "I am the evolution of stardust. I am the gentle flutter of a butterfly. I am Death, destroyer of worlds." He then cheerfully adds that he was a fan of Soong's work, and a visionary who knows how important he was to the future of Earth. Soong demands to know what he wants, but Q replies that this was about what Soong wanted; what he wanted would come later. "She doesn't have much time, does she?" Q

asks, commenting on the irony of a geneticist whose daughter had an incurable genetic disease. Soong argues that nothing is incurable, but Q points out he has neither the funding nor time to prove that theory, as he pulls a small vial of blue liquid from his coat, rolling it across the table to Soong. He tells the doctor to analyze it, and if he likes what he sees, to call him... then perhaps Q will tell him what he wants.

At her apartment, Tallinn asks Picard why Q didn't just snap his fingers and make the Europa Mission ship disappear, or even Renée herself, if he was as powerful as advertised. Picard admits he doesn't know, but if Q is trying to change the timeline by manipulating Renée, he would rob her of the destiny Tallinn was sworn to protect. Tallinn knows she would go into pre-launch quarantine the next day, and there would be no chance of her backing out by then, which to Picard meant they would have to find a way to keep her from backing out for the next fifteen hours. Picard half-jokingly asks if Tallinn has any sedatives, but she replies that Renée has to attend the gala that evening, the big party before the astronauts go into quarantine. Picard's plan is to attend the gala, monitor Renée's state of mind, and prevent any interference, suggesting contacting his crew. Tallinn notes that he seems to be under the assumption she would take orders from him, but Picard argues that she has protected Renée for twenty-four years, and that they stood a better chance working together.

Back at La Sirena, the Queen begins calling out to Jurati, saying she had a "surprise" for her. Jurati awakens, shock in her expression, before looking up at the double-barreled shotgun hanging over the mantle. Arming herself with the weapon, Jurati returns to the ship, finding the Queen with one of her appendages wrapped around Leclerc's neck. She claims to be helping Jurati, who calls "bullshit"; the Queen amends that she was helping the both of them. She could take over the policeman's body, but it was Jurati she really wanted. She mocks Jurati as being alone in every timeline, every permutation of existence; her fate was to be "forever invisible". The Queen offers to change that: "Imagine being loved completely, every thought and whisper cherished, shared." With their minds joined as one, they could be more. The Queen adds that she is the only one in the entire universe who has truly seen Jurati. The doctor raises the shotgun, saying it had to end. The Queen is nonchalant, saying that she was getting out, whether in Jurati's body or Leclerc's. Jurati steels herself, then pulls the trigger.

In his lab, Soong analyzes the vial Q gave him, and is astonished to see the substance is stable, with one hundred percent effectiveness to treat Kore's condition. He wonders aloud how it was possible, before looking out at Kore reading a book on the monitor. Out on their deck, shielded from ultraviolet light, he hands Kore the syringe with the genetic stabilizer. Kore asks how he managed the breakthrough, and Soong says a "colleague" inspired him to try something new, and that he had tested it on himself already. Kore assures her father she trusts him, and gives herself the injection. Soong disables the drone shields blocking the sun, and unfiltered sunlight shines down on them both... with no ill effects. Father and daughter burst into joyous laughter, before Kore jumps into the pool; she admits she has "almost" got the hang of it, and asks if her mother was a good swimmer. "Like a duck" is Soong's answer; at her confusion, he amends that to "mermaid", remarking that she was a decade or two behind the times due to her isolation, and urges her to be patient with herself. "Patience requires time," she replies. Soong wonders if they could just not think for an afternoon, something that sounded out of character for him; he admits he just wanted to "take the win" for once. Kore asks about his "colleague", before she begins to feel immense pain, spider webs of blood crossing her face. Soong frantically brings the drone shield back online.

Rios, Seven, and Musiker are beamed back to La Sirena, horrified to see Jurati covered in blood standing at the transporter console. Jurati assures them it was not her blood, but admits she may have killed their only way home; behind her, the body of the Borg Queen hangs lifeless. Leclerc is unconscious in the ship's sickbay; Jurati had repaired most of his major organs (his spleen being held in a box nearby). She tells them the Borg Queen was killing him. She admits hating having to shoot her, noting how easy it had been; she had been just as Human as they were. Seven points out a few billion souls would disagree with her. Jurati erased his memory of the incident, but they had to get him to his car. Meanwhile, Picard and Tallinn appear in the rectangular puff of smoke, the supervisor asking if the crew was trustworthy. Picard assures her they were, just as they see the others pulling what Tallinn thinks to be a dead Leclerc outside. Picard is sure he's not dead, thinking there was a reasonable explanation.

In his lab, Soong has called Q to join him, and asks if he has the real cure, not something that

wears off, calling himself a "hostage" if indeed he does. Q answers that they were all hostages to what they loved, and the only way to truly be free was to love nothing. He confirms he has what Soong needs, and the doctor asks what he needs. Q admits that he has encountered certain limitations of late, and so asks Soong to remove an obstacle for both of them. "Does the name 'Picard' mean anything to you?" he asks.

Back at the château, Musiker asks Picard about Tallinn, noting her resemblance to Laris; Picard gives short, blunt answers. Tallinn shows them the therapy session between Renée and Q. Seven asks what Q is playing at, and Picard admits that there was a real danger of Renée removing herself from the Europa Mission, and that they have seen the consequences if she does. Rios wonders how this many-times-great-aunt of Picard's is the one person preventing their future from becoming a xenophobic tyranny, and Picard admits he doesn't know, as the history of the time period was "wildly incomplete". The century leading up to First Contact was rife with chaos, and that all that was known of Renée was that she discovered a microorganism on Io, another moon of Jupiter, that she believed was sentient; she convinced the mission commander to bring it back to Earth. However, none of that would matter if Renée did not go on the mission, so they would have to go to the gala and watch over her. Tallinn emphasizes that there is to be no contact with her; their intervention must be unseen. Picard knows it seems like Q is playing with them, but he is both unpredictable and dangerous, and Renée would be out in the open.

Tallinn points out another problem: The gala was a maximum-security event, and they weren't invited. Each guest was issued a radio-frequency invite that corresponded to a database of their entire life history. Tallinn's technology could get one person in temporarily, but once inside, facial recognition would take over. Even if they transported into the middle of the dance floor, they would be instantly caught. Jurati volunteers to hack the database, having taken "Antique Coding" in school. Tallinn thinks it cannot be done, as the database was physically separate from the network, but Jurati recognizes it as "air gapping", which she calls primitive but effective. They couldn't hack until they were inside, so Jurati would go in and input their identification into the database to allow the rest of them inside. Rios points out they were sending the roboticist as opposed to Seven, a Fenris Ranger, or Musiker, an ex-Starfleet Intelligence operative. Picard is confident Jurati has the skills to get them inside... and he has a plan.

At the gala, the band is playing the song "Fly Me to the Moon" as Jurati enters under the identity of "Holly Visser". Seeing a glitch on his computer screen, the security officer asks for another form of ID, and Jurati shows her California ID card. Inside the party, Jurati spots Renée. The young astronaut-to-be is watching footage of the launch of Apollo 11, the first manned mission to land on the Moon, while thinking to the "disaster" in her flight simulation. Jurati is spotted by the facial recognition camera, telling Picard she's jamming the signal; the security people looking at the footage see her as a "party crasher", and warn the guard on the floor that she's talking to herself. The security guard takes her in, where she is handcuffed to a chair in the surveillance room. She reports she was inside, and Picard acknowledges waiting for her signal. She then begins to think on her confrontation with the Borg Queen, shooting her to save Leclerc, before feeling an agonizing pain through her body. The Queen replies that it was her, that she had let herself into Jurati's mind while Jurati was inside hers. The Queen again says that they could be more together, but Jurati angrily replies they were nothing together. The Queen points out she was needed to get home, that Jurati in particular needed her. The Queen reaches out with her hand... and plunges assimilation tubules into her face.

In the surveillance room, the Queen suddenly appears next to Jurati, arm around her shoulder. "Captured on purpose," she mocks, "clever little plan." Jurati is silent, and visibly uncomfortable, as Picard calls her.

Two of One

Season 2

Episode Number: 16

Season Episode: 6

Originally aired: Thursday April 07, 2022
Writer: Cindy Appel, Jane Maggs
Director: Jonathan Frakes
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: Brent Spiner (Adam Soong), Annie Wersching (Borg Queen), Penelope Mitchell (Renée Picard), Sol Rodriguez (Dr. Teresa Ramirez), Alexandre Chen (Cute Waiter), Ren Hanami (Director Lee), Michelle Haro (Guard #1), Shaw Jones (Guard #2), Richard Leacock (Commander Musa), Zach Sowers (Security Guard #1), Kareem Stroud (Security Guard #2)
Summary: With the help of Tallinn, Picard and the crew infiltrate a gala on the eve of a joint space mission, to protect one of the astronauts they believe to be integral to the restoration of the timeline — Renee Picard. Kore makes a startling discovery about her father's work.



Picard is lying on the floor, blood running from his mouth, as Rios and Tallinn check on his condition. Tallinn believes he should be taken to a hospital, then asks Rios about getting him back to the CSS La Sirena's sickbay. As Picard lies unconscious, he flashes back to his memories of his home, seeking out his mother.

Thirty-four minutes earlier, Picard — dressed in a tuxedo for the Europa Mission pre-launch gala — glances over at Tallinn, who remarks that he "did it again", calling her "Laris". Given their

similar appearance, Picard had thought she might be an ancestor, but given that Laris was Romulan it didn't seem possible. Tallinn points out a "funny little thing" Picard's voice does when he mentions Laris' name, and asks who she is to him; Picard tries to play it down, saying she was "no one of importance", which Tallinn notes is an audible clue of when Picard is lying. Picard then has Rios get into position, while he calls Jurati to proceed with her part of the plan. Jurati is handcuffed to a chair in the surveillance room, and the Borg Queen, who is inside Jurati's mind after being fatally shot back on the ship, compliments the "clever little plan" about getting caught on purpose, remarking on how she missed Locutus. Jurati shoots back that he doesn't miss her one bit.

Picard tells her to speed things up, as the line was moving; Jurati takes a canister of anesthesia gas from a holster strapped to her leg, and knocks the two guards out. However, one of them has the keys in his pocket; the Queen points out she could have waited until he was closer to her. Meanwhile, Rios is checking in as "Karl Leonard Kelley", a 60-year-old heart surgeon from Texas, but the ID shows the real Kelley's picture. Rios has the security guards check again. Jurati is unable to move the chair — actually three chairs bolted together — to reach the security guard, and the Queen offers to help. Frustrated, Jurati accepts; the Queen tells her simply to pull on the handcuffs. She does so, and they release. Jurati then reaches the security console

and uploads the updated IDs, which allow Picard, Rios, and Tallinn to enter the gala. "Better late than never," Picard remarks, relieved. The Queen sardonically tells Jurati she's welcome for the help, to which the doctor tells her if she doesn't shut up, she will find a way to destroy her — a comment a confused Picard thinks is directed to him. The Queen suggests they leave, as the guards will wake up any moment with short-term memory loss, and she would like to get back to enjoying "our" evening, as she holds out her hand. Hesitantly, Jurati takes it.

Picard is now in a hospital, with the team surrounding him. His vital signs are dropping, and he is again seeing flashbacks in his mind.

Twenty-six minutes earlier, back at the gala, the team is in place: Picard and Tallinn at a table, and Rios, Seven, and Musiker at the bar. Jurati enters, freed from the security room, and gives Picard a nod. The Europa astronauts are engaging in photo opportunities, and one of them — Musa, the mission commander — calls out to "Picard". Renée, standing at the corner of the bar knocking back her drink, looks up, as Musa gestures for her to join him, half-jokingly adding that it was an order. Renée appears to be all smiles, and her future descendant notes that it seemed "so far, so good". Tallinn, however, knows Renée better; the supervisor can see she looks alright, but is aware that Renée knew how to put on an act, saying that there was a little sign she gave with her earlobe. She admits that while she has watched over Renée for twenty-four years, she was not used to interacting with Humans. Picard is surprised that Tallinn has never spoken to her charge once in all those years, but to Tallinn, that was not only the rule of her job, but the code she lived by. But while Tallinn was watching over Renée, Picard wonders, who was watching over her? Tallinn looks visibly uncomfortable at this question, then returns to business; they had ten hours before Renée had to report to quarantine, and they just had to keep her safe until then.

Jurati stands (to all other observes) alone at a table while the party is in full swing, while the Queen asks who "we" were that evening. Jurati is adamant that there is no "we", saying that the Queen was just a "houseguest" until she could find a way to get rid of her presence. The Queen mocks her for not being able to let her die. Jurati insists that the Queen was not who she was trying to save, which the Queen dismisses as "splitting hairs", before saying it was fun to lie to her friends, especially Rios, "the one [Jurati] had intercourse with". Jurati counters that she did not find it fun, before clarifying to mean the lying. She was faced with an impossible choice: she couldn't allow Leclerc, the French policeman, to die, but also couldn't kill the Queen either, the only means for them to get home. The Queen thinks they had talked enough, suggesting they enjoy the party instead, but Jurati insists on "no playing", that she had a mission to complete. The Queen replies that the stress hormones were not good for "us", but mockingly says that Jurati was in control.

At the bar, Musiker is offered a drink, and after an initial hesitation she goes for the non-alcoholic club soda. Rios approaches her, saying the perimeter was clear, Renée seemed to be enjoying herself, and there was no sign of Q. He pulls a cigar from his tuxedo jacket, marveling at the idea of real tobacco, and a box of matches. Musiker wonders about the "glow" Rios is showing, how he seems happy. Rios says that he's just making the best of things, but Musiker half-jokingly replies she finds that "alarming", given how she knew him. Rios admits that 21st century Earth is not what he thought it would be; everything was so intense, "all the cars and the honking and the shouting", and how dirty it was — along with the music everywhere, the good food, and the real cigars. Musiker, however, thinks it's more than that, saying he has had a "big goofy smile" on his face since he was locked up by ICE with Teresa Ramirez, the free clinic doctor. He clearly admires her, saying she built the clinic from the ground up for a community that had nowhere to go. Musiker warns him not to think about "going there", and Rios confesses that he's trying not to. Musiker suggests he try harder, seeing as a relationship with someone from another century would be "built on lies". Nearby, they hear Seven laughing, chatting with guests and enjoying herself. Musiker knows how much "baggage" her usual look with the Borg implants carries, and is glad to see her travel "light" for a while. As Rios moves off, Musiker once again sees a hallucination of Elnor, dressed up and standing at a table.

Renée returns to the bar, and downs her drink in a single gulp. Picard asks Tallinn if she normally drinks like that. Given that she was going into quarantine the next day, Tallinn thinks it was just a "last hurrah". However, she appears to look distressed, reaching up to her right ear — the beginning sign of a downward spiral, as Tallinn puts it — before looking at her cell phone. Tallinn has an interceptor program installed on it, and looks to see who Renée is exchanging text messages with. Tallinn curses in Romulan under her breath as she sees she is texting Q,

her "therapist", saying that she couldn't go through with the mission, and intended to tell Musa she was backing out after the party. Q encourages her to do so. Picard plans to speak to Renée, but Tallinn is adamant they do not break the code; besides, what if Q was right, and she was not ready? Picard, however, thinks it was actually Tallinn who was not ready. He compliments her on the job she has done to protect her thus far, but he believes it was her destiny to go on the flight, and gently suggests it was time for Tallinn to let Renée go. Tallinn relents, saying that they would need to keep Musa out of the way. Picard suggests Jurati, who speaks his language.

Jurati re-enters the room, the Queen asking if she "felt better", noting they had needed a "little break". She wanted to help Jurati "live a little", but there was only so much she could do; Jurati replies it was by design, as it was fifty-fifty between them, before asking the bartender for champagne. The Queen remarks on the amount of attention Jurati is getting, which Jurati attributes to her dress. The Queen, however, thinks it's the two of them together, and compliments Jurati on showing her potential. Just then, she feels a hand on her shoulder, and turns to see Rios, who asks if her communicator was down; Picard had been trying to call her. Rios notices she seems a little out of it, and asks if she was alright, offering to support her. Jurati is appreciative, saying he was great that way. Rios knows she's been through a lot; just hours earlier she had had blood on her hands. Jurati notices the way Rios' eyebrows moved when he expressed worry about her, and Rios admits he cares about her. In her head, the Queen admonishes her not to let fear get in the way. "Allow me," she says, taking momentary control of Jurati's body to have her pulled Rios by the tie into a passionate kiss. Rios clarifies that had not been what he meant, that he wanted to know what was wrong. Jurati admits she was not "herself" at the moment, and abruptly walks away.

Renée knocks back another drink, reliving the disastrous simulation earlier, and musters up the nerve to act. As she walks determinedly away, Picard realizes they can't wait for Jurati anymore; Tallinn agrees, it was now or never. When asked what he plans to say to her, Picard admits he is not sure. As he moves to follow her, he is stopped by another surprisingly-familiar face: Adam Soong, who remarks that they have a "friend" in common... Q. Picard makes it clear he is no friend of Q, and Soong replies that Q had said the same of him. Picard insists he not have anything to do with Q, but Soong counters that he has no interest in being part of whatever was going on, and suggests Picard stay away from Renée. Picard replies he could say the same to him. One of the guests approaches Soong, recognizing him as a generous donor to the Europa Mission, and asks if there was something she could do for him. Soong replies there is something, whispering that the "gentleman", Picard, was dangerous. The security on the perimeter is alerted, and they all begin to approach him.

The hospital the crew has taken Picard is revealed to be Teresa's clinic, as she works feverishly to save him. In his mind, he hears his mother's voice again, telling him to "look up".

Fourteen minutes earlier, Picard is in trouble: the security guards are all seeking him out, and he has lost Renée, asking if anyone had eyes on her. Rios confirms he does, and that she is on the move. Alone, Jurati tells the Queen she can't "push" her like that, but the Queen replies that she was trying to get Jurati to understand that good things happen when she lost control. Jurati listens as the situation goes down; Musiker reports the exits were blocked, and Picard asks for Tallinn's assistance. Rios doesn't think Renée will stay at the party much longer. "You want to help?" the Queen asks Jurati. "Let's help. Your friends need a distraction." The Queen sets off a nano-electric pulse that knocks out the lights, giving Picard and Tallinn their needed exit. Then Jurati's voice is heard, singing "Shadows of the Night" from the one of the balconies. The band begins to play along as spotlights follow Jurati down the stairs and onto the stage. She finishes the song to a round of applause, but Jurati is confused by her body's response. The Queen tells her that this had been her plan, to release the amount of endorphins needed to "steer the ship" for a while. Jurati insists she is in control. "Not anymore," is the Queen's smug reply.

Picard finally catches up to Renée, noting how upset she seemed. Renée tells him she wishes to be alone, but Picard replies that in his experience, talking about something else helps, and suggests she look up. Above her is suspended an OV-165 shuttle, which she calls "Spike" because of its "kick-ass" aerospike engines that use less fuel. She apologizes for any offense, but notes that Picard seems "a little up in years" to be a security guard. Picard concedes that's true, but adds that he was the wisest of them all. Renée half-jokingly says he probably thinks they let anyone be an astronaut these days. "Sometimes, those who shine the brightest feel the sting of fear and melancholy in ways that others can never understand," Picard replies. Renée thinks he

talks like he knows her, and in a way he does: she is an astronaut of the Europa Mission, and believes her indeed capable of great things. Picard tells her that in some ways, Renée reminds him of his mother; she also loved the stars, and also had her struggles. Renée thinks fear is sometimes a "friendly reminder" that one was not ready, but Picard insists that fear was fear, and it didn't speak in riddles; fear meant that one was smart, and understood the risks. Renée asks what he was afraid of, and he admits he didn't know where to begin. She asks if he found a way to live with it, and he replies that even in the darkest circumstances, there was a light, even if it was just a glimmer. "Trust that light," he urges her. "Find a way back. No matter what it takes." Renée thinks his mother was lucky to have him, triggering another memory. Back in character, he "remembers" that he was sent to bring her back, that Dr. Jemison was having a toast and wanted all the astronauts on stage; he had been sent to collect her, and asks if she would be joining them. Renée, seeming more confident now, replies that she will. Taking her arm in his, he escorts her back to the party.

Sitting in his car, Soong appears both distressed and angry, thinking of his daughter Kore, the brief glimmer of hope he had had with the temporary cure Q had given him, the anguish he had felt when it wore off, and the deal with Q he made to "remove an obstacle": Renée. Determined, he begins driving his car. Meanwhile, Renée walks with her (unbeknownst to her) distant descendant back to the party, saying going around outside was faster. Picard tells her it was as far as he went, and she thanks him for the pep talk. Just then, she is illuminated by the headlights of Soong's car, and Picard pushes her out of the way, taking the impact himself. Tallinn and Rios rush to his side, Rios calling him "Admiral" aloud (in Renée's hearing). Tallinn tells Rios they need to get him to a hospital, but Rios points out they'll want ID; when asked about his ship, he points out that a biobed was not a doctor. Rios, however, happens to know a doctor...

At her clinic, Teresa asks the crew — Rios, Seven, Musiker, and Tallinn — if he has any conditions; they all exchange glances, knowing that Picard has a synthetic body. Seven simply says that he has "some" transplants. When asked how many, Musiker replies "all of them". The monitors begin showing he has an unstable arrhythmia, the sign of a major cardiac event. When she applies the defibrillator, the device shorts out from the contact with his mechanical body, but it restores his heartbeat to normal. Teresa orders everyone to leave the room.

Back in her sterile room at home, Kore is writing in a journal when her father comes through the decontamination door, looking unkempt and unsteady on his feet after hitting Picard with his car. He slumps down on the couch with a sigh, saying that all his life he had invented things — machines, medicine — and knew he could bend the rules and take the risks. He had poured his heart into Kore, but even after everything, even convincing himself he could take action, he still failed. He had missed hitting Renée, but had taken out Picard as collateral instead. Kore is scared and confused, asking why he was talking like that. Soong raves that the "why" matters, and that she, his "life's work", was his "why". As he gets up to walk away, Kore pleads with him to be honest with her, but he does not respond.

Back at Teresa's clinic, she tells the others that Picard is stable, but non-responsive. Tallinn thinks this is not good enough. When Rios insists she was doing the best she could, Teresa curtly tells him she doesn't need his help. She would return in an hour; her son Ricardo was about to wake up, and wonder for the second time that week where she was. Musiker asks if they could see him now, and Teresa allows it. Alone with Rios, Teresa sarcastically says it was fun to return to her raided clinic in the middle of the night to have her hands inside his boss' chest, and notes the damage to the defibrillator. Rios jokes that perhaps her son cranked it up, but Teresa doesn't buy it, before asking him point-blank who he really was. Rios knows what it looks like, but assures her that he and his friends were the "good guys". "Good guys never say that," is Teresa's response, as she leaves.

Kore makes her way into her father's lab, and begins an Internet search regarding her father. The first news story refers to her father having his license revoked by the California Medical Board for an ethics violation of the Shenzhen Conventions. She sees other stories about his "disgrace", his prior work in genetic experiments with Spearhead Operations, and how he was labeled a "mad scientist". She finds other things on his computer that confuse her: videos taken with her father and a girl who appears to be her. She wonders aloud why she does not remember any of the events being played on the videos. She then sees video log entries, referring to girls named Persephone, Despoina, Persephatta, and Artemis, all of whom died at very early ages from

some form of genetic disease. She finally comes across a log where Soong is saying that "this one" will be the last, and admitting to a sense of release. He pledges to do everything and anything to make sure she survives, before naming her: Kore. Watching this, Kore is horrified, asking herself what she actually is, and what her father did.

Tallinn conducts her own scans with her servo, showing that all of Picard's brain synapses are firing. Seven knows that's not right, as brain activity should be minimal if one was in a coma, and Tallinn concurs. All of his vital functions were normal, and there was no sign of brain damage or bleeding; what if it was a mental condition? In his mind, Picard again hears his mother telling him to "look up at the stars". Tallinn believes Picard is essentially trapped in his own mind, and the longer he remained so, the harder it would be to get him out. She suggests using a neuro-optic interceptor, a device she uses to look through others' eyes, which could also be used to get inside his subconscious, like a "jury-rigged mind meld". Once inside his mind, Tallinn could hack into whatever memory or thought he is fixated on, and in theory interact with it. Musiker protests, saying that the brain being comatose was protective, but Tallinn, perhaps inspired by what Picard had told her earlier, replies that a lot of what they did was protective; it didn't mean it was good for them. Renée is being targeted by Q, and the only person who knew how he worked was Picard. Rios is forced to agree; they would stay with Teresa outside, while Tallinn worked inside. He points out that if something happened to Renée, their future was lost, and they also needed Picard awake to prevent that. When Musiker looks to Seven, her only response is to nod in agreement. Musiker still thinks a lot could go wrong, but given how much had happened since they crashed into that "bullshit time period", she wonders how much worse it could get.

As if in response to that, Jurati — now controlled by the Borg Queen — walks through the streets of Los Angeles, the interlapping voices in her head...

Monsters

Season 2

Episode Number: 17

Season Episode: 7

Originally aired: Thursday April 14, 2022
Writer: Jane Maggs
Director: Joe Menendez
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: Sol Rodríguez (Dr. Teresa Ramirez), Madeline Wise (Yvette Picard), Ivo Nandi (Officer Leclerc), Ito Aghayere (Young Guinan), James Callis (Maurice Picard), Jay Karnes (Federal Agent), Dylan Von Halle (Young Picard), Steve Gutierrez (Ricardo), Marti Matulis (Prisoner), Oscar Torre (Bartender), Travis Walck (Jester), Cyrus Zoghi (Red Bearded Guy), Sunny Ozell (Singer)
Summary: Tallinn enters Picard's subconscious mind to help him wake from a coma and face his deepest fears; Seven and Raffi search for Jurati fearing she's succumbed to her inner monster; Rios struggles to hide the truth about himself from Teresa.



Picard is wearing a tuxedo and is seated across from a Starfleet psychiatrist; he appears to be undergoing a routine psychological evaluation. The psychiatrist recalls that Picard was "humoring" him, and that the last thing Picard had said was that he had a fear of enclosed spaces. Picard tells him that he does not mean to do his job for him, to which the psychiatrist replies that naming Picard's fear was indeed not his job. Picard points out that analysis was his job, and returns to it. "The man who hates enclosed spaces

spends his life in the infinite cosmos," Picard says, chuckling a bit, before dismissing it as "too obvious". But when the man spends his life on a vessel, he adds, his only access to the outside is holographic, and now he becomes more interesting. The psychiatrist asks him if that concerned or bothered him at all, that he was not very interesting. Picard does not think it his job to be interesting, but the psychiatrist goes on to ask if they weren't more than their jobs — though in Picard's case, perhaps not, as even his friends call him "Captain", and asks who "Jean-Luc" really is. Picard thinks the line of questioning absurd, and that he had been humoring the psychiatrist for the past forty minutes. The psychiatrist assures him it was just routine, and they had only been going on for twenty minutes. Trying to coax Picard into speaking, he suggests telling a story. When Picard says he wouldn't know where to begin, the psychiatrist hands him the hologram of the Sun that had been floating next to him, and suggests he start with that.

Picard begins his tale, about a queen with fiery red hair... before trailing off. The psychiatrist notes he was not good at telling stories, and Picard agrees... but "the queen with the red hair" was. His mind conjures up a fantasy version of Château Picard, as his mother Yvette dressed as the queen in the tale, as she tells a story to the young Jean-Luc, who is dressed as a prince. She is painting the scenes of the story on the windows on the cupola of the house, about a sorcerer

who lost his powers when he was about to slay a noble prince, and melted away; though the sorcerer would be forgotten, the lesson would not: "There is no better teacher than one's enemy." Picard narrates the story, saying that the queen was most unusual, spending her time telling tales, because perhaps she knew her time with her son was borrowed. The queen hands the young prince a paintbrush, saying that he was like his father, expressing himself more with his hands rather than his mouth. The prince protests that he doesn't want to be like his father, but more like her. The queen tells him that as a prince, he would be expected to lift people up, and lead them with inspiring speech. He doesn't think he can, but she assures him he will, because she can see the future. And in a way, Picard's narration continues, she could; like an animal, she could sense danger. Perhaps it was magic, or perhaps it was because she lived in a world where monsters were real. The paintings in the windows seem to come to life, and the queen takes the prince back into the house just as the windows explode, hurling shards of glass into the doors just seconds after she closed them. As they reach the basement tunnels under the house, the queen is pulled away by a monster lurking in the shadows.

The entire scenario is taking place inside Picard's subconscious mind, as his body begins to shake, like someone experiencing a nightmare.

Inside Clinica Las Mariposas in Los Angeles, Musiker wonders what is going on inside Picard's mind. Seven, however, is concerned that Jurati is missing, and plans to return to the CSS *La Sirena* to scan for her combadge, given her "slightly alarming behavior" the previous day, like her spontaneous singing at the gala, and Rios pointing out that she had kissed him, which intrigues Musiker. Rios remains with Picard while Musiker and Seven return to the ship, asking Tallinn if she was sure her "jury-rigged mind meld" would work. "Not in the slightest," Tallinn admits.

Returning to *La Sirena*, Musiker expresses her distaste at the idea of Jurati and Rios getting back together, saying she would quit "the gang" if that happened. Seven looks amused, and Musiker clarifies that their relationship was totally different, referring to her and Seven as "the main event" and Jurati and Rios as "the side story". Musiker says the premonition she has is being old with Seven together, sitting on park benches, tripping "teenagers on floaty things" with their canes. Seven jokes she would be better at it, as she attempts to initiate the scan for Jurati's combadge. But her controls go blank beneath her hands; the ship's optical data network kicks her out, and then shows an encryption on the controls, completely locking her out. She instantly recognizes the encryption as being Borg in origin, which meant the Borg Queen had taken control before Jurati killed her. If they can't get access to the computer, they would never be able to locate Jurati, and as Musiker points out, the ship was also their only way home.

Back at the clinic, Tallinn attaches a device to Picard's head to allow her access to his mind. Rios asks what she had meant about letting Picard "take the lead", how he would help her help him out. Tallinn confesses it was a "leap of faith", and that was how she rolled; she hoped it would make sense once she was inside. She sits down next to him and activates the device, her eyes going milky white. Inside Picard's subconscious, she appears in the tunnels underneath the fantasy *Château Picard*. In the psychiatrist's office, Picard senses something amiss, but says to the psychiatrist that he was fine. He admits he didn't think Starfleet employed such people anymore, to which the psychiatrist sarcastically calls Starfleet "judge and jury of all things meritorious". He concedes the human model of psychiatry is a "lesser model", but there are those who have built up walls around their wounds that even a Betazoid couldn't get through. Picard recognizes the implication, and the psychiatrist mentions that he never finished the story. Picard says only that sometimes the story merely ends with a boy lost in a dungeon. The psychiatrist notes on his PADD that Picard was "hopelessly bleak" and recommends he be relieved of command, lest he take the crew on a suicide mission just to feel something, and remarks there were "a thousand ways to die" in space. This seems to get Picard's attention, as the psychiatrist urges him to "dig deeper". Picard picks up the story, realizing that the boy was not in fact alone.

Tallinn explores the dungeons in Picard's subconscious, hearing his voice echoing from moments of his life (including identifying himself as Locutus of Borg), while also hearing the growls of the monster in the shadows. Tallinn comments aloud on how Picard's mind looked sober, thinking that it would be a "blast" had he been drunk. Through the bars of one door, she spots the prince, the younger Jean-Luc, and approaches him, saying that she was here to help someone, and asking why he was alone. He replies that he couldn't leave, because his mother had told him to stay put if they were ever separated. Tallinn points out that he was the only one down here, and offers to help him get "unstuck". He insists he couldn't leave without his mother, and

that Tallinn couldn't just find her — she would have to save her. He goes on to say that a monster had taken his mother, and everything in the dungeons was on the monster's side. Just then, the doors shut, trapping them; the prince takes Tallinn and leads her into the dungeons.

Picard's mind shifts back to the psychiatrist's office, with the psychiatrist telling him their hour-long session was up and he could leave at any time, to go back to wherever it was he was hiding from himself. He admits he had been warned that Picard was stubborn. Picard is incensed that other people had been telling this psychiatrist things about him, and begins to realize the situation wasn't real. The psychiatrist challenges him to "say something real", and asks why he thought they were there. Picard finally admits that he is stuck, and the psychiatrist agrees that they both were. Picard becomes increasingly agitated, demanding to know who the psychiatrist actually is. He replies he is a studier of the human condition, while Picard was a starship captain, "ethical, diplomatic, cultured", with an affinity for the arts and intellectual thought, yet "perpetually untethered in the ways of the heart". When Picard asks why that was relevant to the session, the psychiatrist replies with a question of his own: "Why do you find it so difficult to be open, Jean-Luc? To let people in?" He goes on to say that Picard held people at arm's length, and questions why, speculating that perhaps there was a version of himself Picard didn't want people to see, a darker version. Picard turns at the sound of banging on the doors, asking what it was. The psychiatrist replies they both knew what it was: "the ever-righteous Jean-Luc", something he likes to hear other people say, because it let him push the truth away for longer. The psychiatrist accuses Picard of being obsessed with virtue, so much so that his story involved good triumphing over evil. Picard, enraged, shouts at him to stop; as he does, the banging also stops. He had never said anything of the kind, and that the psychiatrist didn't know how the story ended.

Inside the dungeons, Tallinn and the prince continue to flee the monster, hiding as a knight in heavy armor enters. The prince whispers that they had to find the white door, which was never in the same place for long, but behind it they could find his mother. As the knight leaves, a cloud of smoke approaches the prince, followed by echoing laughter as a horned monster grabs the prince by the arm. Behind her, a wasted-looking creature wraps chains around Tallinn's throat.

Teresa returns to the clinic with her son Ricardo, who is wearing a space helmet and carrying around a toy rocket; his babysitter was a no-show. As they are greeted by Rios, Teresa inquires on Picard's condition, and he assures her Picard is fine. As she moves to go inside, however, she finds the door locked. She says angrily in Spanish that she has held back from asking questions, but it was still her clinic, and did not appreciate Rios locking the doors in her clinic, before demanding the keys. Rios reluctantly hands them over, before telling Teresa to "keep an open mind". She enters to find Picard twitching in the throes of his mind, and Tallinn seated next to him with milky eyes. Teresa is frightened, especially with Rios walking slowly towards her "like a serial killer". Rios says he needs to try and explain the situation to her without breaking time.

Tallinn begins to convulse, as the creature inside Picard's mind is strangling her, saying it was not her journey and that she did not belong there. She headbutts the creature and removes the chains, before turning to the monster and demanding it release the prince. The monster, whose face is blurred, laughs in reply.

Picard is not responding to medication, and so Teresa says he has to be brought to a hospital, as she was not equipped for it. Throwing caution completely to the wind, Rios pulls out his combadge and calls Musiker on La Sirena, telling her he needs a neural stabilizer for Picard. Teresa watches in shock as the device, a neural oscillator, is beamed right into his hands. She is completely confused, wondering how it was real, and asking who he was. Rios urges her to focus. Teresa asks if she was about to kill Picard, but Rios, though not a doctor, trusts her completely. She holds the device next to Picard's head and activates it.

Inside, Tallinn asks the prince if he was "doing this on purpose", that he doesn't want to be unstuck. The prince thinks it might not be different, that it would be like all the other times. Tallinn points out that he would never know until he got there, but if he didn't leave now, he could be stuck there forever... and this time, he was not alone. She pulls the shackle loose from around the prince's ankle.

Picard is stabilized, much to Rios' relief. Teresa asks if he was from outer space. Rios replies that he was from Chile, but that he worked in outer space, which seems to be more of a surprise to her.

Inside the dungeon, Tallinn and the prince find the door back into the house. She kicks the

door open, then takes his hand as they proceed together.

Back on *La Sirena*, Musiker expresses relief that the replicators still work, as she produces two cups of coffee for herself and Seven. Meanwhile, Seven is making progress with the encryption, remembering it being based on a code used while she was part of the Borg Collective. Seven had thought Jurati had purged all the Borg code from the ship after they crashed, and so checked the security logs to see when the last introduction of Borg code had taken place. The image shows Jurati, still dressed for the gala, introducing Borg code from her fingertips into the ship's console. Both realize that they had to find her immediately.

Inside his subconscious, Picard looks around to see the office melt away into his own house, just as Tallinn and the prince enter. Picard is confused to see her, before the banging starts again. They turn to see the white door and the Starfleet psychiatrist, who the prince calls a "monster". Picard accuses the psychiatrist of keeping the queen locked away this whole time. The psychiatrist remarks on how Picard lived longer than he did, but at least he got to keep all his hair. "Not exactly a fair trade, is it... son?" he asks, as Picard finally realizes that the psychiatrist is in the image of his father, Maurice. Picard accuses his father of cruelty, of ruining his mother. The prince, the younger Jean-Luc, again calls him a monster. "Am I?" Maurice asks. "Perhaps. But not in the way you think." He reminds his son that he had thought he couldn't save his mother from a monster, and tells him to look again, as he opens the book in his hands. Picard remembers the tunnels beneath *Château Picard*, how his father had told him not to go into them, as there were a "thousand ways to die down there".

He recalls a memory from childhood, when Yvette had told him to "take what he loved" and head down into the tunnels with her. Jean-Luc had said he was afraid of the dark, but Yvette had replied she couldn't breathe in the house, and told him it was just a game of hide-and-seek. Jean-Luc had dropped his notepad on the floor as he had run with his mother into the tunnels, but then his foot broke through the ancient wood floor, and he became stuck while his mother continued to run. Maurice recalls it had been hours before he found Jean-Luc down there, and would never have known if he hadn't dropped the notepad. He knew that Yvette suffered from "cycles of terrible darkness" and "irrational exhilaration", as he tries to restrain her, clearly manic, and bring her back into the house. She had needed help, but she would not accept it. Maurice was forced to lock her away for her own safety. He turns to the adult Jean-Luc, saying that with no light, in a winding labyrinth, and rain about to come, he would never have made it out of the tunnels. Yvette, however, would have kept on going. Tallinn realizes that there was no monster actually chasing Yvette, but Maurice says there was, and always had been... but he couldn't save her, either, not from her own mind. The elder Jean-Luc is forced to admit that perhaps he never really knew his father.

Suddenly, the two elder Picards are gone, leaving Tallinn and the young Jean-Luc. She kneels next to him and says that he would do so much with his pain — he would eventually save worlds with it. As Jean-Luc removes the key from his shirt pocket, hearing his mother's pleas behind the door, Tallinn realizes there was more to it than that. At that moment, in Teresa's clinic, Picard regains consciousness, and Tallinn also returns to her own mind.

Outside Picard's room, Rios and Ricardo are drawing on the wall with chalk; Ricardo has drawn a rocket, while Rios has drawn *La Sirena*. Ricardo calls Rios a "spaceman alien" who can make things appear out of thin air. Rios jokingly scolds him for letting slip he had told Ricardo what happened, and emphasizing that he was in fact Human. Teresa thinks that someone who has to convince people of that should not be allowed around her child, but Rios knows she has good instincts about him. Teresa asks if he knew how often she'd been wrong, but he stresses she wasn't this time. Teresa also notes his loyalty to Picard, and Rios admits that, not having known his own father, he tended to seek out father figures, and had found one in Picard, even if he wasn't really like a son to him. Teresa thinks it to be Picard's loss, "whoever you are". Rios asks who she wants him to be. "A good guy," is her answer. Rios says that he is indeed a "good guy", and if he wasn't, he would become one. Teresa, not entirely joking, says that if he was lying and she had allowed him around her son, they would never find his body. Deciding to take a chance, he asks Ricardo in Spanish if he wants to "see something cool", and tells Teresa he wants to show her something. He beams them along with him to *La Sirena*, Teresa and Ricardo dropping what was in their hands (her coffee cup and his toy rocket) on the ship's transporter platform in shock. Ricardo runs off to "go touch everything", while Teresa is struck dumb by the fact that she was indeed aboard a spaceship.

In the streets of Los Angeles, Seven and Musiker are still trying to locate Jurati, Seven worried about a Borg Queen being on the loose. Musiker begins to insist that it was Jurati, but Seven can see she is unsure whether it's Jurati with a hint of the Queen, or perhaps the other way around. Checking in with the security cameras around town, they spot Jurati the previous evening entering a cocktail bar, Deacon's. Musiker wonders if she's still there, and Seven is sure a lot of people's lives will depend on their finding out. That evening, Jurati hears a live band performing inside, and makes her way in, attracting the attention of several men at the nearby pool table. She then approaches the window and shatters it, her eyes darkening and Borg nanoprobes visible moving through her body as the Queen asserts her control.

Musiker appraises Picard on the situation with Jurati, knowing it was not what he expected to wake up to, but assures him that she and Seven were on it. Picard tells her to keep safe and keep him informed, as he had something to attend to there first. Tallinn enters the room, assuring him that Renée was fine, and that there was no sign of either Q or Adam Soong, at least for now. She tells him that he had saved Renée from being run over by Soong. Picard thinks that they have moved beyond personal boundaries at that point, or at least he had. Tallinn decides to offer something in return, showing that her Human ears were in fact a disguise; she was actually Romulan, leading Picard to think that she could indeed be an ancestor of Laris. Tallinn explains that normally, supervisors were tasked to look after their own, but on occasion they looked after similar-looking species. That technology is useful, but it had its limitations; she couldn't reactivate it for another eight hours, which meant she had to "hide her truth" by covering her ears with her hair. She asks him if he was alright, and he says he was, but that they were losing time, the mission, Renée. Tallinn, however, is not so sure; she wonders if this was all part of Q's plan, to make him relive those memories, and if Picard knows that's not all there was to the story. Picard thinks it's irrelevant to what they're trying to fix, but Tallinn disagrees, not if Q wants him to know it. He remembers what his mother had said, how "there is no better teacher than one's enemy". He realizes he's been letting Q control the lessons, and that Q wanted him to know himself... but what if the lesson was to actually know Q? He had always considered Q "unknowable", yet he returns so late in Picard's life, and is still fixated on him. Q needs the trial to happen, but while it's fixated on Picard, it's deeply personal and urgent to Q himself. Tallinn thinks he wants to summon Q, which is beyond her capability. But Picard knows there's someone else...

Picard goes to 10 Forward Avenue to meet with Guinan, who is somewhat put out that there was no "hello" to his "new old friend" or a "thank you" for staying a few extra days. He has asked her to summon Q, although she points out that asking usually involves it sounding like a question. She explains that after a long cold war, the El-Aurians and the Q Continuum struck a truce; as El-Aurians associate unity with food and drink, they made the truce over a bottle — specifically, the bottle Guinan now holds in her hands. To her people, every action vibrates, every word has resonance, and that metal and liquid could capture the half-life of a moment. She emphasizes that she was speaking literally about the truce being made over the bottle, that the moment was still kept inside. El-Aurians hear the world like music, she says: if one finds the right note, the right memory, "pluck the right chord" as she puts it, they could get the attention of the player: in their case, their "friendly neighborhood Q". The bar begins to vibrate violently after she opens the bottle and pours its contents into a glass, and Guinan begins to shriek, the bottles on the bar beginning to shatter and chairs and tables move and fall over. Then after a moment, it stops. Picard asks what happened, and Guinan looks confused — it didn't seem to work.

On the streets, Musiker and Seven continue the search, asking how they could track something they didn't understand, as they arrive outside Deacon's, glass shattered on the sidewalk. Seven finds a glass bottle in a nearby trash can and throws it to the ground, explaining that she was "understanding". She asks to see the footage of Jurati breaking the glass again, and realizes that the action gave her a rush of endorphins, which allowed the Queen's nanoprobes to circulate faster to complete her takeover of Jurati's body. Musiker asks how long before she's strong enough to begin assimilating people, but Seven is unsure, as they were looking at an entirely new kind of Borg Queen, one who would want to begin a new Borg empire... starting with Earth, long before Humanity was able to defend itself from them. Instead of saving the future, Seven realizes, they may have just doomed it, and they would need Picard's help.

Back at 10 Forward Avenue, Guinan cleans up the mess, explaining that normally when an

El-Aurian summons a Q, a Q appears. Just then, they hear the bells over the front door ring, as someone enters and starts walking down the bar's stairs. Picard wonders if it was Q, but Guinan can sense it's not. A man in a brown suit and gray-white hair enters, and Guinan says the bar was closed. The man is confused, saying the sign said it was open, but Guinan replies the owner trumps the sign. He insists that he was "celebrating" and asked for just one drink, and Guinan relents. Her instincts tell her that he's the kind of person who would order bourbon when in fact he wanted a white wine and "to cozy up with some boring-ass nonfiction". The man chuckles and says she has him figured out, and she answers that she's been tending bar for a long time. Leaving him to his drink, Guinan begins to explain that there was no reason the summoning should not have worked unless something was really wrong. The man begins to chatter, saying that the "nonfiction" part was wrong, that he enjoyed science fiction and found science itself to be aspirational. He then pulls his cell phone from his pocket, showing video of Picard beaming to that very location some days before. Guinan tries to chalk it up to a glitchy camera. The man doesn't seem to be buying it, however, as he pulls out his identification: he is an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Other FBI agents enter, guns drawn. Picard's combadge drops to the floor as he and Guinan are handcuffed and taken into custody.

Mercy

Season 2

Episode Number: 18

Season Episode: 8

Originally aired: Thursday April 21, 2022
Writer: Cindy Appel, Kirsten Beyer
Director: Joe Menendez
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: John de Lancie (Q), Sol Rodríguez (Dr. Teresa Ramirez), Ito Aghayere (Young Guinan), Jay Karnes (Agent Wells), Steve Gutierrez (Ricardo), Cyrus Zoghi (Red Bearded Guy), Oscar Torre (Bartender), Chuti Tiu (Vulcan #2), Nanrisa Lee (FBI Agent), Charles Maceo (Merc One), Jackson Garner (Young Wells), Eduardo Roman (Vulcan #1)
Summary: With time running out before the launch of the Europa Mission, Picard and Guinan must free themselves from FBI custody. Seven and Raffi come face-to-face with Jurati and the horror of what she's become.



A boy with a flashlight runs screaming through the woods, before tripping and falling to the ground. When he looks up, two Vulcans are standing there, staring at him...

The scene shifts to an interrogation room, where Picard is staring somewhat worriedly at a bloodstain on the table; Guinan is looking almost bored. A buzzer sounds and the door opens, revealing their arresting officer from earlier in the day: FBI Special Agent Martin Wells. He assures them that it was just an "inter-

view", not liking the word "interrogation". The first question he asks is whether Picard is an extraterrestrial life-form. Guinan starts laughing heartily at the idea, while Picard replies that he is not. Wells begins writing in his notebook that at least their species has a sense of humor. Picard thinks the situation "absurd", saying they have cooperated and now want to leave. Wells replies that they can leave as soon as they tell him about their plans to sabotage the Europa Mission. Guinan calls Wells "buckets of crazy", thinking that their arrest and subsequent interrogation was "off the books"; they were in a basement room with broken file cabinets, and the security camera in the corner was not even plugged in. Wells admits that it was true, and in fact no one even knew they were there in the basement of the FBI field office, adding somewhat threateningly that things tended to disappear down there: Hopes, dreams... and as of that day, aliens.

Outside of Deacon's, where the owners are still clearing up the broken glass, Musiker reports to Rios that they tracked Jurati to that location. Rios is preparing to join them, but Musiker insists he stay with the CSS La Sirena. Rios is worried about a Borg Queen loose on the streets of 21st century Los Angeles, but Musiker tells him she knows how badly it can go if she is not found; in 2024, she believes people had trouble with revolving doors, and would never be able to handle a Borg Queen. Rios reminds her that Jurati was still in there somewhere too. Musiker tells him to check the ship's computer to make sure that the Jurati-Queen did not "Borgify" anything

else, and find a way to contain "her majesty" when they find her. She then checks with Seven, who has detected abnormal life signs. Musiker suggests that Seven "Borg up" to find her, but without her cranial implants, Seven has no proximity transceiver, so can't detect exactly where Jurati is. Musiker clarifies and asks her to "analog" as the Queen, "loose with legs", to figure out where she would go. Seven pointedly says she doesn't know, as she is not Borg any more. When Musiker points out she goes by "Seven", she is offended, asking Musiker what that meant to her. Forstalling the argument, she goes over to the man clearing the glass from the sidewalk, asking about the window breaking. He asks if she is a police officer, and when she asks why he wouldn't want to talk to one, he replies that he sees what they do with "nutcases", admitting it was "not exactly delicate". Seven replies that's why they want to find Jurati before the police do, saying she was her "sister". The man recalls that Jurati left with a man with a big red beard; she went one way, he went another.

In the basement of the FBI field office, Picard tries to assure Wells that they wanted to see the Europa Mission succeed. Wells does not seem convinced, saying he has a "lady friend" in the city government who keep an eye on things for him, and happened to find an image of Picard "shimmering into existence" on a downtown street corner, and then found him again at the gala the previous evening, one of "six known trespassers" (showing pictures of the other members of La Sirena's crew) at that party. He asks himself why aliens would want to crash a party for a space mission. Guinan remarks that she's not getting "FBI's Top Interrogator" vibes, thinking Wells was not the kind of person the Bureau would send after supposed terrorists. Taking on a conversational tone, she asks what Wells thought made him the man for this particular job. Wells nonchalantly refers to himself as a "good old-fashioned dedicated civil servant", but Guinan points out his heavy work schedule, lack of sleep, coming in with wrinkled clothes and a large cup of coffee. She reminds him she was a bartender and had seen people like him before: this was not just part of his job, this was personal. Wells looks uncomfortable for just a moment, before looking to Picard, seeing the bruise on the back of his hand from an IV. Picard replies he was dehydrated; "after all, I'm only Human." Wells does not seem to buy it, as he stands and leaves. Alone, Picard is worried; if Wells thinks they were trying to sabotage the Europa Mission, Q wouldn't need to do anything to Renée; the authorities would simply scrub the launch, and Picard and his crew would have broken the future on their own.

Meanwhile, Kore Soong continues to review the video logs of her father, Adam, on her laptop computer, listening to the entry referring to her creation. She pulls a device from a nearby cabinet, a virtual reality headset called Aspectus, to recreate Soong's lab, asking what her father is hiding. "Patience, mon petit," a voice informs her, as the headset detects a "non-native code". She turns and sees Q standing on the stairs leading into the lab. When she demands to know who he is, he replies he is "a friend, a fire-starter", before explaining that he was a simulacrum left over when he hacked into Soong's computer system, waiting for Kore to arrive at that moment. He holds up a vial with her name on it, giving less-than-assuring condolences for the others who didn't make it, saying that she was the strongest of them. He brings the vial over to a nearby computer, and Kore recognizes the sequence of the Human genome. She asks if she was an experiment, and Q replies that indeed Soong created her, but locked her away... then offers her the key to her freedom. "Are you brave enough to use it?" he challenges her. Kore pulls the Aspectus headset off, letting everything sink in. Just then, her cell phone begins beeping; there was a delivery for her in the airlock. It is a gift box containing a vial of the cure, with the word "Freedom" written on a tag tied around it.

Continuing the search for Jurati, Seven remarks on how easy it had been to get the man at Deacon's to trust her, being able to read his face like a map, and thinking it small wonder she ends up being president of the Confederation in the dark future. Suddenly, they find the red-bearded man dead behind a dumpster, his throat slashed. Seven tries to assure Musiker that Jurati could still be in there, fighting the Queen's influence, but Musiker is pessimistic: if Jurati is fighting, she's clearly losing. Thinking back to Musiker's earlier question, Seven puts herself in the Queen's place, saying that she would want nothing but the connection to the Collective, admitting that once one had felt it, it was hard to think of anything except getting it back. She knows the Jurati-Queen has not been able to assimilate, so she tried to recreate the connection one-on-one, with the man from the bar. One-on-one connection wasn't enough, however, so the Queen killed the man in frustration for "what couldn't satisfy her". Musiker thinks this a "spot on" assessment, and Seven angrily turns on her, saying that it was not "impressive" that she

could "access" the Queen, and thinks Musiker could be a little less happy she was "defective". She accuses Musiker of being manipulative, that "everyone has to be where Raffi wants them", and that the others could see that. Her attention is attracted by the man's cell phone, which is missing its battery, and asks what the battery would have been made out of. Returning to business, Musiker consults her tricorder, replying that a cell phone battery used lithium ions, a stabilizing metal. Seven is shaken, explaining that "stabilizing metals" were introduced to make those being assimilated into the Collective more receptive to nanoprobes. She still remembers the smell and taste of metal, even though she had been six years old when she was assimilated. Musiker worriedly asks if they will have to kill Jurati in order to stop the Queen.

Just then, a loud banging gets their attention, and they see Jurati, tearing through the batteries of the parked cars nearby. She spots them, and begins running at them. With the Queen's Borg strength on her side, she is able to overpower them both. As she is strangling Musiker, Jurati's inner voice fights against the Queen's control long enough for her to release her grip, leaving Musiker gasping on the pavement as Jurati walks away.

Picard paces around the interrogation room, while Guinan continues to look bored. Then they hear the buzzer heralding the door, and turn to see Wells again. He remarks on how obsession remains obsession until it paid off and became diligence, remarking on the IV bruise on Picard's hand. He knew Picard wouldn't have gone to a hospital, which led him to think he had gone to a free clinic instead... before showing him a picture of Rios, who had been arrested during a raid by ICE. Rios had made a "completely innocuous statement" upon his arrest, and asks Picard to read it aloud. He does so: Rios had apparently said he was in a "primitive past" with a "ragtag group of misfits", including a "cybernetic queen" seeking to wipe out humanity with her "old cohort" Picard, "a crusty old admiral" who is now a "flesh-and-blood robot". Wells asks him to circle back to the "wipe out humanity" part, before saying he had the clinic searched... and found Rios' combadge, left behind when he was arrested by ICE. He calls in one of his fellow agents to take Guinan to another room, while he focuses in on Picard.

Back at La Sirena, Ricardo is clearly making the most of the idea of being on a spaceship. Rios shows him and his mother Teresa the replicator, which Ricardo asks to produce several slices of different kinds of cake. As Ricardo tries out the cake, Rios asks Teresa about their lives together. Teresa admits it to be "chaos", which will have its effects on Ricardo in his later life. She works all the time, and is often so tired she just lets Ricardo stay up and watch television, usually cooking shows. Her upbringing was different, "boundaried" and "reserved". She then asks about Rios; she would likely not see him again, and wants to remember something more than "all the times [she] saved [his] ass". Rios corrects her that they had saved each other. Teresa begins conversing in Spanish, asking him to imagine they were a married couple (to Rios' surprise) who wind up in a bar, telling each other their deepest secrets; she wants to know what Rios' most "fundamental truth" was before he flew away to his future. He begins to admit that he had fallen in love with her, before Ricardo interrupts, saying his stomach hurt from eating too much cake. Teresa jokingly blames Rios for that and rises to help her son, before suddenly turning around and kissing Rios.

At the FBI field office, Wells has now become hostile, shouting at Picard to tell him his intentions for the Europa Mission. He is clearly not convinced Picard is from Earth, and admits he knows he is "out-brained". However, he notes that all species have pain receptors, and he had filed the paperwork regarding the technology recovered in the clinic. Wells is adamant that talking to him was Picard's best bet before the "boys up the line" arrive, who would get their answers another way before cutting him up for scientific analysis and suppressing all knowledge of his existence. Those "boys up the line" were on their way, Wells warns, and to them, Picard was nothing more than "a pig in a jar".

In the next room, Guinan's senses are heightened when she realizes the FBI agent who has come to interrogate her is none other than Q, who is not pleased to see who it was who had attempted to summon him, before recalling that it was the 21st century and that he has not technically met her yet. Q chastises her for the summoning, which he calls a "sacred ritual", not intended for "bipeds" to exchange "nauseating minutiae". Guinan remembers when the ritual stalled, she felt a sense of emptiness and fear, but had thought at the time it was herself; with him in the room, she now realizes that feeling had come from Q himself, and realizes he is dying. Q contemptuously remarks on how he despised the El-Aurians' sense of empathy. Guinan had thought that, while Q were able to kill one another, they were functionally immortal. Q had

thought so as well, but admits to feeling dread as he watches the "temporal horizon" darkening. He corrects her assertion of his "dying", believing instead he was on the threshold of the unknowable. When he had first felt it, he had thought it was a good thing, and was preparing to embrace the "warm glow of knowing", but had not felt even a glimmer of that as yet. He bitterly notes how dying stars glowed brighter as they raced towards extinction, while he himself seems to be disappearing into nothing; without his powers, it had taken him longer to arrive at that moment. Guinan asks if that was why he was here now, using Humans as his game pieces. He snaps his fingers several times in her face, admitting to "honestly trying to vaporize [her]" at that moment. Guinan persists, asking if what he was doing to Picard is his quest to find meaning in his life. Q concedes that now he has a lifetime, and wonders if a single act can change a lifetime. He denies bringing Picard to the past, as he had done that himself, and when Guinan points out that he was trapped there, Q rages that the trap itself was immaterial, it was the escape that counted. He leaves, saying he would see her when he saw her (unfortunately), before pointing out that Humans were all trapped in the past.

Soong, looking tired and disheveled, walks into Kore's room and begins to explain about the previous evening, before Kore interrupts asking if all his talk of "fixing" her had been a lie, if she had never been meant to leave the house... like all the other failed experiments, all different names for the same girl, and all based on Persephone, daughter of Zeus, king of the gods. She demands that he explain the experiment, calling him "Dr. Soong" rather than "Dad". Soong admits that she was created through somatic nuclear cell transfer and gestated in a proprietary medium; when asked how many there had been before Kore, he replies that the first dozen had only lived several hours, the next few in days, and the one before Kore had almost survived four years. He had not expected Kore to live past age six, but when she had not only survived but thrived, he couldn't help but hope, and with hope came success. Kore asks if she was only "success" to him, not someone to love. Soong tries to say he does love her, but she stops him, saying that he only loved his work, not her. She had been told stories of a mother to keep her happy, but now screams at him that it wasn't real. Soong scoffs at the idea of "reality", calling it "a construct of simple-minded fools" who couldn't operate without boundaries, before menacingly saying Kore existed only because he willed it. He then tries to backtrack, saying that he did indeed love his work, but that didn't mean he didn't love her as well. Kore asks him what he would be more afraid of if she was able to leave of her own free will: losing her, or losing his legacy? She leaves the sterile confines of her room and walks outside, removing her sandals to step barefoot onto the grass. Soong runs after her to stop her, and is shocked to see her standing outside without any clear painful effects from her genetic illness. She holds up the vial Q gave her, with its tag of "freedom" — freedom from Soong. Soong venomously tells her she doesn't exist without him, but Kore warns him that if he follows her, she will call the police... before asking if it wasn't actually Soong who couldn't exist without her. As she walks away from him, Soong stands frozen in rage, both at Kore's defiance and who he realizes must have given her the cure.

Meanwhile, Musiker and Seven are recovering from the Jurati-Queen's attack; Musiker insists she is alright, but stops to catch her breath after only a few steps, admitting she was "almost" alright. Musiker knows that the Queen could have easily killed her, as does Seven, who knows mercy was not a Borg quality. However, Musiker points out it was a Jurati quality, which meant she was still in there somewhere. Now they had to figure out the Queen's plan; the metals the Queen has introduced to Jurati's body from the batteries will allow her to assimilate, but imperfect metals could lead to imperfect assimilation, leading Seven to think it was merely a short-term solution. Seven has no idea what, since plans require resources, but she has no technology. Musiker asks about the cell phone from the man the Jurati-Queen had killed, if perhaps it could be used to track her. Musiker thinks back to what Seven said about her manipulating people, and admits that she does, thinking back to a conversation she had with Elnor aboard the actual *La Sirena* just before he left for Starfleet Academy. Elnor points out that it was contradictory to be in need of Seven staying on Earth while also fixing her ship so she could leave. He can see she wishes to appear "less wanting", but is actually transparent in her feelings. Musiker shushes him, saying this was supposed to be a lesson on deflector shield mechanics so he did not fail the basic tactical engineering class, one he would need to become a security officer. Elnor admits he would make a bad security officer, as being covert was not his style, preferring honesty instead. Musiker assures him she would help with all his classes, but is stopped short when Elnor reveals he was contacted by Zani, who tells him he was needed back on *Vashti*, and

thinks about delaying his studies for a year while he repays his debt to the Qowat Milat. Back in the present situation, Musiker admits to Seven that she was the reason Elnor stayed at the Academy, and then he died in her arms during their escape from the alternate Earth. Just then, the tricorder finishes accessing the broken phone, finding its search history. When Musiker asks what the Jurati-Queen could be after at the location she found, Seven grimly replies she could get whatever she wanted.

Back at his home, Soong is drowning his pain in alcohol when he hears the door open. Looking up the stairs, thinking it might be Kore, his expression becomes one of shock as he sees the Jurati-Queen, who assumes that a lecture on the futility of resistance would be unnecessary. Soong asks if he was dreaming, or if it was a nightmare. "Ultimately," she replies, "that's up to you."

Back in the interrogation room, Wells continues to ask Picard about why he was at the Europa gala, when the lights begin to flicker. Picard is able to see Guinan projecting herself in his mind from the next room, saying that "all Humans are stuck in the past", her eyes in the projection glancing at Wells. Picard realizes what she's saying, and turns the tables on the FBI agent, saying that he knows a haunted man when he sees one, knowing about the things they hold onto, the "pieces of emotional shrapnel" they held onto for their lives... before asking what it was for Wells. "What is your moment?" he asks. "What am I to you?" Picard proposes an exchange of truth. Wells admits that he has waited his whole life to meet someone like Picard, a "thing in the night", a "monster in the dark". Wells recalls an incident from his childhood; he was the boy in the woods, looking for his dog Maggie, when he came across a Vulcan survey team. The young Wells fled before tripping. When he looked up, the Vulcans had caught up to him. The male Vulcan put his hand on his face, and Wells thought he was going to "pull [his] eyeballs out", he could feel something going through his skin... and then they vanished in front of him, similarly to how Picard had appeared outside Guinan's bar. Picard recognizes that the Vulcan was trying to initiate a mind meld to erase any memory of the young Wells ever seeing him or his colleague, but had been transported away before he could finish the task. Picard now admits his own truth: He is indeed Human, but from the future, the 25th century, and had come back in time to save Earth, indeed the whole galaxy. To do so, however, Picard admits that he will need Wells' help.

Back at La Sirena, Rios is trying to bring the transporter back online. Ricardo, who had just touched one of the controls, asks if he broke it when the computer reports the transporter was offline. Rios assures him he hadn't, but "someone else" had, before telling him to go find his mother; he would be there shortly. He then contacts Musiker, saying they had "big problems", and asks if Picard was still missing.

Guinan, now back in the room with Picard, says that Q had come to her, talking about not just Picard, but all Humans, and what was special about them. Picard thinks it's their inability to escape the past, but Guinan believes the opposite: that when something was broken inside them, it stayed with them. They lived in the past until they could reconcile themselves to it, even if it was painful. They do all the work because they want to evolve, something Guinan admits to having forgotten how unique it was in the galaxy. Picard asks if she had any idea what Q meant when he said it was about the escape rather than the trap, but Q had seemed crazy to Guinan, not to mention the idea of him dying. He asks how long before the launch, but Guinan points out she was sensitive to the space-time continuum, and wasn't a clock. The door opens again to herald Wells, holding his possessions in a box. He has been fired by the FBI as "the man who cried alien", as he hands Picard the combadge. Picard wonders about the paperwork filed, but Wells confesses he lied about that, saying that if he had given proof, he would have been sidelined and Picard and Guinan handed over to the military. Wells had wanted to be the one who proved it, or at least he had thought he did. Wells thinks it was a waste of a life, but Guinan reassures him, admitting that she is indeed not from Earth, and that her people believed in an ebb and flow to things, how their destinies could run both apart and together, and that time was not what they thought it was. Some moments were meant to happen, even at great cost. Perhaps, Guinan suggests, Wells was meant to be the boy who encountered non-Human life, so he could be the man in the present, letting them go. Wells concedes it was something to think about, as he opens the door... and holds it open for them to leave. Guinan admits to Picard that she almost can't wait to meet him properly, and Picard replies in French that he felt the same, as they depart.

Back in Soong's lab, the Jurati-Queen accesses the network, commenting on the "primitive satellites". She reveals to Soong that he is quite famous in the version of the future she comes

from, asking who else had more to gain or lose than he did. Soong ruefully replies that he had nothing left to lose now, as Q had taken everything from him. The Jurati-Queen explains that he is at a fork in the proverbial road, with two futures. In one, he brings Humanity back from the edge of extinction, and will be called the "father of the future", with statues in capitol cities all over Earth. In the other, he dies alone, no glory, "forgotten in a pool of [his] own 90-proof vomit". Soong asks how he can guarantee the "other path", the Jurati-Queen explains that either Renée Picard goes on a mission that renders Soong's work obsolete... or she doesn't. If she doesn't, she explains, Earth will be in ecological freefall, and they will turn to Soong to save them: "You lose a daughter, but become godfather to a world." She asks if he has any "moral tethers" to speak of. Soong assures her he can get them into Mission Control. First, however, the Jurati-Queen explains there is an obstacle standing in his way, and hers as well: Picard. When asked what she needs of him, the Jurati-Queen replies that he has access to "raw materials".

Reunited at 10 Forward Avenue, Musiker and Seven explain to Picard that the Jurati-Queen has taken control of La Sirena's transporter, and has joined forces with Soong. Picard realizes that the only reason she would do that was to take the ship itself, which Seven points out would give her a four hundred year jumpstart to assimilating the entire galaxy. To get back, Picard suggests using Tallinn's transporter. As they leave, Guinan wishes Picard luck. Guinan and Picard share a warm goodbye before leaving. As they walk out of the bar, Seven warns Picard that the Jurati-Queen will be able to assimilate people; when she comes for La Sirena, she will not be alone.

As to confirm this, Soong is on the phone with a general, who has provided ex-special forces troops from Spearhead Operations for his use. When one of the mercenaries asks what Soong wanted with them, the Jurati-Queen approaches him, assuring him "it" would only sting for a moment, as she touches his face, introducing nanoprobe. Soong watches in shock as the nanoprobe takes control of the man. "Who's in the mood to add a little of their biological and technological distinctiveness to our own?" the Jurati-Queen mockingly asks.

Hide and Seek

Season 2

Episode Number: 19

Season Episode: 9

Originally aired: Thursday April 28, 2022
Writer: Matt Okumura, Christopher B. Derrick
Director: Michael Weaver
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: Brent Spiner (Adam Soong), Annie Wersching (Borg Queen), James Callis (Maurice Picard), Madeline Wise (Yvette Picard), Sol Rodriguez (Dr. Teresa Ramirez), Kay Bess (La Sirena Computer (voice)), Steve Gutierrez (Ricardo), Dylan Von Halle (Young Jean Luc Picard)
Summary: Picard must face the ghosts of his past when he and his crew are attacked by a new incarnation of an old enemy; Seven and Raffi face Jurati in a final showdown.



As a thunderstorm begins to roll over the French countryside, Rios continues to work feverishly to purge the Borg lockout of the computers on the CSS La Sirena, while Teresa and Ricardo watch. But it is too late: The Borg are activating the transporter remotely, and Rios is unable to stop it whatsoever. Looking out at the fields around the ruins of Château Picard, he sees the distinctive green glow of Borg transporters. Rios urgently tells his friends they have to immediately get off the ship, and ushers them quickly off

the bridge. He apologizes for Teresa for bringing her and her son into the situation, and tells her he needs to get her to safety. He moves to secure weapons to protect them, but as he does, a team of assimilated Spearhead Operations mercenaries beams aboard, followed shortly after by the Queen-dominated Jurati. The Jurati-Queen sheds the tattered red dress and opens the morgue vault containing the corpse of the original Queen. "Well, we've looked better," she muses, as she assumes the Queen's bodysuit, remarking how she was starting to feel more like herself again.

Tallinn's transporter deposits her, Picard, Seven and Musiker in the courtyard of the ruined house. Picard is emphatic that they have to defend the ship from the Queen. When Musiker asks with what, Tallinn hands Seven a Romulan disruptor pistol, while she hefts her own rifle (leaving Musiker unarmed and somewhat put out), remarking she was lucky they had enough time for her to get that much. Musiker asks how much time they had; Rios, Teresa and Ricardo in tow, tells them they have no more time. The Jurati-Queen is onboard, and she has more coming, "lots more". In the vineyard ahead of them, multiple assimilated mercenaries beam in, their Borg-altered targeting lasers shining out towards their targets.

The crew takes cover behind the barrels in the courtyard; Picard realizes the Jurati-Queen is trying to pin them down while she seizes La Sirena. Onboard the ship, she is about to do just that, when her hand suddenly halts over the console. The mind of Agnes Jurati continues to fight the Queen for control of her own body, telling the Queen she will not allow her to take

the ship. The Queen nonchalantly notes her presence, having still felt her "chattering away" in her subconscious. Jurati angrily asks how it felt to have her hands around her friend Musiker's throat and not be able to do anything about it; the Queen replies that it was probably like being limbless and powerless. Jurati had been poking around in the Queen's "trash dump of a mind", wondering why she was doing this. The Borg had assimilated millions of species and countless planets, and still the Queen has always needed more. The Queen answers that perfection took time, but Jurati retorts that it was never about perfection or evolution "or any of that bullshit", but rather because like her, the Queen was lonely. "To share your own crude colloquialism, bullshit," the Queen replies, to which Jurati asks why the Queen hasn't killed her yet. She continues to prevent the Queen from using the ship's console, reminding her that if she lets Soong win, the Confederation of Earth will rise and wipe out the Borg Collective in four centuries. The Queen counters that she knew of the Confederation's threat now, and would be able to prepare for it. As the Queen finally accesses the console, the ship's computer reports that a keycode was required. Jurati had used the signal with which the Queen controlled her assimilated mercenaries to lock the ship's computer with a fractal encryption code. "Welcome to the world's biggest paperweight," she says smugly. The Queen threatens to scrape the key out of her mind, but Jurati replies that she didn't bother to memorize the code. As the ship's computer could create holograms of anyone who had ever been onboard, Jurati also used that opportunity to create an Emergency Combat Hologram, which takes the form of Elnor; Jurati has hidden the code in his subroutines. She tells him to "play keep-away", and the hologram goes to work, killing two of the assimilated mercenaries with their own weapons. The Jurati-Queen looks after him, a cold rage in her expression.

Outside, Musiker can see the Jurati-Queen brought an army; Seven corrects her by saying that she had made one, and tells the other that the mercenaries were not people anymore, but Borg. She and Tallinn, the only members of the crew armed, open fire on the Borg mercenaries, as one throws a flashbang grenade. Tallinn warns the others to cover their eyes. As Picard puts his hands to his eyes to block the flash, his mind goes back to his childhood, as he asks his mother Yvette if they could play a game. While Yvette asks what kind, his father Maurice says to play whatever they wanted, just so long as they didn't break anything. Yvette not-quite-jokingly calls him a curmudgeon, remarking on the beauty of the day. Maurice replies that wars have started on "lovely days", and that industry and discovery didn't reserve themselves for a slight chance of rain, or so he'd been told. Jean-Luc also calls him a curmudgeon, leading Maurice to sardonically remark on how Yvette teaches him to make fun of his father. Quietly, Maurice notes that Jean-Luc is very smart, but also bored, with too much time on his hands. He then asks how Yvette is doing, remarking on how she seemed more "present", and hadn't had any "incidents" recently. Perhaps, he muses, things are improving for the better. Yvette is stone-faced throughout before Jean-Luc asks what game they should play. Yvette suggests a game of hide and seek.

Picard's mind returns to the present, as Seven and Tallinn exchange fire with the Borg mercenaries. Rios covers Teresa and Ricardo with his body, taking a bullet to the shoulder as they take cover inside the house. Picard asks Tallinn to beam Rios, Teresa, and Ricardo away to safety, while the rest of them stayed to protect La Sirena, aware of the unimaginable damage the Borg could inflict with the ship's advanced technology. Rios says he will make sure the others are safe, but will return. As Picard urges her to get them out, Tallinn pulls out her servo and teleports them to her apartment. Rios tells Teresa to lay Ricardo down and put a blanket over him; having seen his first taste of combat, the boy is in shock. Rios plans to return, saying that he couldn't afford not to. But when he tries to use Tallinn's computer, he finds he is locked out, and curses Picard. He is unable to go back to help the others.

Back at the house, Picard tells the others that Rios was wounded, and would only get himself killed trying to help them. Musiker sees they can't push forward against the superior numbers, so Seven proposes they simply go around. She asks Tallinn to give them suppressing fire as they split up, figuring they stood a better chance to take the ship if they flanked the attackers. Picard tells her to do it. Tallinn lays down fire as Seven and Musiker move out, but then mysteriously the Borg cease their fire, their targeting lasers going out. A moment later, they hear Soong's voice calling out to Picard. Tallinn aims at him, but Soong warns that if she fires, they will receive far worse in kind. Alternatively, they can hear his offer. He insists he was not a violent man by nature, and this was all new to him. Picard is not convinced, thinking perhaps the promise of

a legacy revealed the rot underneath it. Soong insists he knows a future worth fighting for, and Picard counters that he knows of one too. The doctor points out they were outnumbered, and has heard that Picard is familiar with his new "friends". Picard can see what Soong wants: The Queen takes the ship and destroys the Europa Mission, all so Soong can have his future. If this is the case, he asks, then why the parley? Soong replies that Picard is a rogue variable in his "experiment", and urges Picard to do them both a favor and surrender. He takes a faster path to the future, and Picard and his crew can still have a future. When Picard asks what happens if they refuse, Soong coldly answers that they would take a "far muddier path", and that Picard would die running. Picard recalls the game with his mother and smiles. "Hide and seek, indeed," he says to himself, before telling Soong that he would have to find them first. Soong orders the mercenaries to fire, as Picard and Tallinn retreat into the house.

Meanwhile, Seven takes point as she and Musiker make their way through the house. One of the mercenaries aims through a hole in the wall, as Seven and Musiker flatten themselves against the solid wall on either side, avoiding his notice. They again stay out of sight as another shines his targeting laser through the broken windows. But as they move past, the mercenary smashes through. Seven and Musiker engage the mercenary in hand-to-hand, as he pulls a knife and slashes Seven in the shoulder. Both manage to disarm him, and combine their strength to run the blade through his neck, killing him. Several more targeting lasers seek them out, as they continue on their way.

Picard guesses Soong has the house surrounded, and so suggests retreating into the tunnels beneath the house, while struggling to recall where the entrance was. Tallinn turns quickly and shoots down one of the mercenaries on the second floor, telling Picard to think faster or the memory would escape through the hole in his head. Thinking back, he recalls finding his mother in the house. Yvette's face darkens somewhat as she suggests finding somewhere less bright, somewhere her son's cleverness had fewer senses to draw from. She opens a secret compartment in a bookcase to the tunnels. Jean-Luc protests that his father has forbidden his going down there, but Yvette insists that they would go together, where she wouldn't be sad. Though the tunnels are dangerous, she calls her son her "light", the light that always drew her out, and tells him to guide his own way. Back in the present, the elder Picard finds the bookcase entrance, as Soong begins calling out for him. He opens the bookcase and ushers Tallinn inside before he follows, the door closing behind them.

The young Jean-Luc seeks out his mother out in the tunnels, saying that the game was no longer fun to him anymore. In the present, as she gets her bearings, Tallinn realizes she has seen the tunnels before, while inside Picard's mind. When she asked what happened, he mentions how the French Resistance had hidden munitions in the tunnels when the Nazis invaded during World War II, but that was not what Tallinn meant; she remembers it being especially dark in his memories, and asks him again what happened. Picard recalls going down to play hide and seek, but he had lost his mother... or rather, she had lost herself. Tallinn calls it a "very dangerous playground", and Picard agrees, remembering how his father had mentioned there were a thousand ways to die down in the tunnels. A flashback shows Maurice going down into the tunnels, urgently calling first for his wife, and then repeatedly for his son. Picard recalls that the tunnels led to a hatch on the other side of the vineyard, and from there they could reach the ship.

Musiker binds up Seven's wound as they hear movement nearby, Soong's mercenaries seeking them out. Seven takes on an air of command as she tells Musiker to arm up, and Musiker notices, suggesting Seven should have joined Starfleet. Seven had indeed tried after the USS Voyager returned from the Delta Quadrant, but had been rejected by Starfleet because she was a former Borg. Admiral Janeway had supported her and even threatened to resign if Seven was not accepted, but Seven eventually gave up and joined the Fenris Rangers instead. She sizes up the situation: a dozen or so Borg between them and the ship, a fifty-yard dash across open terrain, and all they had were a knife, a corkscrew, and an ice pick. Musiker thinks Seven would have been a great captain, and begins to talk about when they got out of their predicament. However, Seven is sure they would not get out of it, and Musiker reluctantly agrees, before they break off running, slashing at any mercenary to come close enough to them.

Aboard *La Sirena*, the holographic Elnor searches the weapons locker while the Jurati-Queen and her drones hunt for him. He first looks through the phasers, setting them aside as not feeling quite right... but looks considerably brighter when he comes across the real Elnor's tan qalanq.

At Tallinn's apartment, Rios is attempting to override Tallinn's computer, while asking about Ricardo. Teresa replies he is fast asleep, half terrified and half thinking it was the coolest thing he had ever seen. He is trying to rewire the subroutines to regain command access, but Teresa thinks he will get himself killed because he is unable to use his wounded arm, and urges him to sit down. She asks what would help extract a bullet, and he points to a tricorder on the table as he removes his jacket. Teresa marvels at the idea of an entire ER that could simply fit inside one's pocket, and being "surrounded by miracles", even knowing that win or lose, she would have to let them go. She then tells him to show her his arm, and he winces as he lifts his shirt sleeve to show the bullet hole, while the tricorder detects the bullet in his shoulder.

Back at Château Picard, Soong and his men search the halls, seeking out Picard, and find the bookcase. He sees the fleur-de-lis on the left side still turned; the opening mechanism had not locked behind Picard when he escaped into the tunnels. Soong chuckles as he pushes the bookcase aside, and tells his men to search for other entrances. Down below, Picard's memories go back to the hide and seek game with his mother, finding her sitting alone, looking somewhat dejected. She dully tells her son that he won the game, and he urges her to go back upstairs, and later that evening she could show him more constellations. Yvette remarks on how space was so vast, it took billions of years for the light of the stars to be seen from Earth. She considers the "exquisite light" they see as nothing more than an echo of a star that has long since faded, and feels that way about herself. She asks her son to promise her to ignore the "coldness of a dying star" — herself — and remember instead her light, and the infinite love she had for him. Before he can answer, they hear Maurice's voice, seeking them out.

Picard's mind goes back to the present, remembering he had only seen that room once, and then as a child. Tallinn asks if it was how he remembered it; he recalls getting his foot stuck in the rotting wood, and Maurice finding him, before he answers with a noncommittal "more or less". When asked what became of his mother, he recalls finding her, and Maurice locking her away. Eventually, he opened the door. However, his reverie is interrupted by sounds from up the tunnel; Soong and his men had found them. He urges Tallinn through a door, but she finds it locked. Picard searches the old German munitions boxes, and finds an old Luger pistol. He fires first at Soong and his mercenaries, forcing them to take cover, and then at the lock on the door. As he aims back at the mercenaries, the gun clicks, out of ammunition. He drops it and follows Tallinn through the door.

Aboard *La Sirena*, the holographic Elnor is more than holding his own, using his tan qalanq to dispatch a number of the Borg mercenaries. The Jurati-Queen gloats that she had warned him he couldn't hide forever. "Who said I was hiding?" he replies. He makes his way down into the hold and shuts the door, before recognizing Musiker coming through the door, Seven right behind her. He clarifies that he is "not exactly" Elnor, as Musiker sees the mobile emitter slapped on his arm. Elnor mentions that Jurati had encoded the encryption key to the ship's systems in his program, assuring them that Jurati was indeed still fighting the Queen for control. Seven asks him to give her access, but Musiker points out that unlocking the computer would give the Queen exactly what she wanted. Seven counters that they would need computer control to secure the ship, and urges them to trust her; she indeed has a plan, which will involve clearing a way to the transporter. Elnor unlocks the computer systems. Though she knows it was not actually Elnor, Musiker admits her guilty feelings about keeping the real Elnor, not because she was afraid for him, but because she feared being alone. The hologram assures her that he has memories of the real Elnor's final breaths, and knows enough to know that his last feelings would not have been of blame, but of love.

In the tunnels, Picard attempts to gain his bearings, as they come to a T-junction. The left way went deeper into the house, while the right went to the fields. However, as they go to the right, a targeting laser shines right at them. Aboard the ship, Seven accesses the transporter, and manages to beam the mercenaries onboard the ship right into the walls of the tunnels. Picard sees them materialize embedded in the stone, and remarks that they seem to have gained the advantage at last. He leads Tallinn forward, to an exit leading out into the solarium. Back on the ship, Elnor tells Seven her plan worked, and only one Borg was still onboard: The Jurati-Queen, looking very angry, and armed with one of the tools from the hold. Seven attempts to beam her into the brig, but the Queen has a transport inhibitor active. She charges at them, but Elnor blocks her with his blade, disarms her, and throws her to the deck. Musiker grabs phasers for herself and Seven, and they hold the Jurati-Queen at gunpoint. The Jurati-Queen

comments that three on one hardly seemed fair. Seven appeals to what remained of Jurati inside the Queen, knowing she could fight; Musiker adds that they had her dead to rights. "Do you?" the Jurati-Queen replies, as tentacles lash out, disabling Elnor's mobile emitter, disarming Musiker, and impaling Seven through the stomach. Musiker goes to the grievously injured Seven's side as the Jurati-Queen rises to her feet, telling the computer to give her primary control of the vessel.

The Jurati-Queen orders the ship's computer to set a course for the Delta Quadrant, intending to take advantage of the four hundred additional years to expand the Collective. Musiker tells her that Seven will die if she can't immediately stop the bleeding. The Jurati-Queen replies only that she has assimilated millions of languages, and they all had common concepts, such as love, hope, and fear... and (lashing out as Musiker attempts to go for her phaser) futility. "Species thrive without love," she goes on, as she picks up Seven's knife. "Kingdoms conquer without fear. But it is the imperfect nature of all organic things to fight an unwinnable battle against an undefeatable foe: Death."

As the sun rises over the countryside, Picard and Tallinn finally reach the solarium, and from there they can get to the ship. Just then, the doors open behind them, heralding Soong and his men. Soong remarks he is no stranger to "lost lab rats", and that to catch one, one did not follow it through the maze, but rather force it to the surface.

The Jurati-Queen raises the knife to finish off Seven, but again finds her hand stopping before the point of impact, and tears running down her face. She wonders why she is crying, but Jurati — reasserting herself again — tells her that they were not the Queen's tears, but her own. She points out that the chemical reactions the Queen used to take over her body weren't just produced by adrenaline and a "torch song"; sadness, loss, and despair, the feelings Jurati felt when the Queen tried to harm her friends, allowed her to take back some control of her body, something the Queen thinks is impossible. She again tries to bring down the knife, straining against Jurati's will. Jurati shows her images of Borg cubes exploding, saying that this was how Borg history would end, whether it was a "lone Borgslayer" or a united Federation, someone would always come for the Borg, and for the Queen's "top shelf, overreaching, Icarus-worthy arrogance". The Queen is dismissive about Jurati's "weapon of choice", thinking she could not be sad forever, but Jurati goes on, saying that in this or any other universe, the Borg will always lose. That was why the Queen fought as hard as she did: she felt the death knell of her species across infinite timelines, fearing loss just as regular Humans did. The Queen always sought connection, longevity, discovery... only she offered it without a choice. Jurati makes a proposal: What if they made it a choice? There were many lives that needed saving, including the one lying at the Queen's feet. The Queen dismisses the idea of harvesting from the "flotsam of space" and being left with nothing but scraps, but Jurati counters that it was a way to offer second chances. What if they took the ship, she argues, and built a better Borg — a real Collective, that embraced the uniqueness of its members? The Queen is appalled at the idea of embracing what she considers weakness, but Jurati believes what she dismisses as weakness is actually strength. The Queen calls the idea absurd, but admits it was "not entirely un-intriguing". Jurati urges her to imagine members who would fight harder for what they chose, who would lose no battles because they made no enemies, who would not be discarded and replaced. Attachments could grow and deepen, like with Seven; she used her Borg half to serve the best of her Humanity. "Let's build a universe of Sevens," she concludes, starting with the real one.

At the same time, Picard tries to reason with Soong, warning him that he did not know the horrific future he was about to create. Soong had been told they were thriving and prosperous, and beloved across the galaxy, but Picard corrects him by saying they were feared. Soong argues that they had to create their own destiny, whether they were captains of ships or captains of industry. To men like him and Picard, he believes, love and fear were the same thing, nothing more than a means to an end. He laments that in another future, he and Picard might have been friends, and bids him goodbye before ordering one of his mercenaries to kill Picard.

In Tallinn's apartment, Rios thinks he has succeeded in breaking through Tallinn's computer, which has begun rebooting. Teresa pleads with him to stay, but Rios tells her he does not belong there. She urges him to reconsider that, thinking the future seemed to have enough heroes already. He admits he had thought about staying in the past, but it was not his timeline; the future was for her and Ricardo to decide. She continues to plead with him, wondering if his future really was there, with them. As the computer counts down until it reboots, Rios kisses her deeply, but whatever he is about to say next is cut off as the transporter takes him — directly

into the solarium in front of Picard. He vaporizes the mercenary about to shoot Picard, and a key falls to the floor. The other mercenary draws his knife and grapples with Rios, but is disarmed; Soong picks up the phaser and points it at them, thinking he does not need to be from the future to fire it. Rios concedes he doesn't, but he does require the right DNA, and if he held it too long, it would explode. Soong quickly throws the phaser up into the air and flees. When the flash of the explosion clears, Soong has vanished.

The Jurati-Queen leans down and releases nanoprobes, repairing the damage to Seven's body. She tells Musiker that Seven will live, but at a cost... and as Seven regains consciousness, she sees and feels her implants again. Musiker asks if it was actually Jurati, and she replies that she is and is not at the same time, becoming something new.

Rios rushes back to the ship, and Picard stoops to pick up the key. He recalls opening the door to let his mother out of the locked room, and confesses to having the "strangest memory". Tallinn urges him to follow it. He thinks on how there were some moments in one's life that one wishes they could travel back to, memories that they wish to play in reverse, so that a tragic end might become a moment of joy. He recalled discovering that Yvette had hanged herself in that very solarium, and for his entire life, he kept himself from remembering it, a moment he was powerless to reverse. He had been told she suffered from mental illness, but he had only thought she was "inspired". That night, Maurice had locked Yvette in her room for her own safety, and perhaps for Jean-Luc's as well. But she had pleaded with her son to let her out, telling her how much she needed him, and needed his help. He had thought he was saving her, so when his father fell asleep, he let her out. If he had not opened that door, she would have lived to old age; he imagined her as an old woman offering him tea and asking for a chat. The key was a skeleton key, which migrated all over the house; that day, Picard laments, he wished it had not ended up in his hand. He had loved his mother "desperately", he admits. Tallinn points out that love can be a source of both grief and pain, and could also be a curse... but always and completely, it was a gift. As Tallinn embraces him, Picard's memory goes back to his boyhood, entering the solarium after his mother's suicide, and throwing a rock through the windows.

Aboard *La Sirena*, Seven is shaken by the return of her Borg implants, thinking on how she had been "Seven" longer than she had been Annika Hansen, and how it was nice to be "ordinary". Musiker thinks it impossible, as whether Borg or Human, Seven was the most extraordinary person she knew. All her life, Seven had been running from her implants, and Musiker wonders how much more she could be if she just stopped running. The Jurati-Queen, now completely balanced between her two selves, tells them it was time to go. Musiker protests at allowing her to proceed, but Seven knows that whoever this new Queen was, half of her was their friend, and perhaps in time all of her could be. The Jurati-Queen agrees that in time they could be, but for now a deal must be honored; a ship for a life was a fair exchange. She also tells them to tell Picard that the future will not have any need for a "Borgslayer"... at least, not from "them". She adds a final warning to tell them that the mission must not be postponed. To succeed, there must be two Renées: One who lived, and one who died. As Seven and Musiker digest this information, the Jurati-Queen beams them off the ship.

As the crew watches, *La Sirena* lifts off from the dust and into orbit. Rios laments that they took his ship, but Seven corrects him that it was her ship. Musiker explains that the Jurati-Queen took the ship in exchange for Seven's life. Picard worriedly looks at Seven's Borg implants, and asks if she is alright; Seven replies simply that she was herself again. While lamenting the loss of a friend, Picard sees they have regained themselves again, and now needed all of "themselves" to complete their mission. Soong has escaped, but Rios does not think that will last long, as the man did not strike the captain as being a "quitter". Picard agrees, thinking the doctor will have other ways to disrupt the mission. Seven gives Picard Jurati's warning about the two Renées, but Picard refuses to accept an outcome that has not yet occurred, and tells the crew they had work to do. As they walk away, Rios takes one last look up at *La Sirena* before the ship jumps to warp.

Farewell

Season 2

Episode Number: 20

Season Episode: 10

Originally aired: Thursday May 05, 2022
Writer: Christopher Monfette, Akiva Goldsman
Director: Michael Weaver
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Alison Pill (Dr. Agnes Jurati), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Evan Evagora (Elnor), Orla Brady (Laris), Isa Briones (Soji), Santiago Cabrera (Cristóbal Rios)
Guest Stars: Brent Spiner (Adam Soong), Whoopi Goldberg (Guinan), John de Lancie (Q), Wil Wheaton (Wesley Crusher), Penelope Mitchell (Renée Picard / Tallinn), Sol Rodriguez (Dr. Teresa Ramirez), Steve Gutierrez (Ricardo), Ren Hanami (Director Lee), Richard Jin (Moshe), Geri-Nikole Love (Urtern), Adele Pomerrenke (Kemi), Anushka Rani (Sing)
Summary: With just hours until the Europa Launch, Picard and the crew find themselves in a race against time to save the future.



With the new Borg Queen on her way to the Delta Quadrant, Picard recalls to Tallinn and Rios the stories he'd heard of how the château had been "shot up" when the family reoccupied it in the 21st century; the bullet holes in the wall from the battle of the previous evening were from that battle. Rios asks if that means they're on the path to the right future, but Picard is not certain. Rios still thinks on the prophecy Jurati gave before leaving, about how there had to be two Renées, one who lived and one who died. Rios

wonders how such a thing was possible. Picard looks up at Tallinn, who appears troubled at the idea, and says they will speak on it later. Just then, Seven and Musiker return, and Tallinn asks if they were all set as she pulls out her servo.

Transporting back to her apartment, Tallinn opens a safe and pulls out a device she says will work similar to tricorders, handing it to Musiker and another servo to Rios. Seven asks her to check on Soong's GPS; Musiker sees that his entire fleet of vehicles is still parked at his house. Rios knows that was where the Jurati-Queen hacked into the CSS La Sirena's transporters, which meant Soong had considerable remote capabilities at his disposal. While they investigated Soong's house, Tallinn would go to the Europa Mission launch; the astronauts' quarantine would end on launch day, and she would transport to the launch site to pass security and the bioscanners in the front lobby. When Picard asks what she plans to do, she says only that she is going to watch out for Renée, as that was what she does. Seven wishes her luck, and Tallinn does likewise. As Tallinn prepares to transport with her servo, however, Picard grabs her by the wrist and is taken with her, leaving the others wondering what he was doing.

As the communications herald the launch of the mission, the scene moves from the orbit of Jupiter and the destination moon, Europa, back to Earth, to the launch site in Southern California. Tallinn and Picard appear outside the base, with Tallinn asking what he was doing there. Picard bluntly says he knows what she is trying to do, and tries to convince her that she does not have to sacrifice her life for Renée's. Tallinn asks if Jurati would have any reason to lie,

and Picard thinks she would have thousands, as she was now part Borg. But Tallinn thinks she was more Jurati at the end, with a view of all possible futures. Picard makes it clear that he does not believe in prophecy, and even if he did, there were many ways to interpret what Jurati said, and tells her he will not let her sacrifice herself just because she interpreted it a certain way. Tallinn bluntly tells him that that he did not get to decide her fate just because he was afraid she would die. She understands why he would feel that way, but reminds him that other people's lives were not up to him, and their deaths were not his fault — not Tallinn's, if it came to that, and not his mother's. They couldn't control who they would lose, or spare themselves the pain. But other people's choices were their own, and this was the one Tallinn had made. "I don't need saving," she tells him. "I never have."

Meanwhile, at his house, Soong is instructing the computer controlling the automated drones to target the reaction control thrusters of the Shango X-1 shuttle, while Rios, Seven, and Musiker transport in. But as they cautiously enter his lab, they find the computer is merely playing a recording of his voice giving the instructions. Seven calls Picard, reporting that Soong was not there. Picard looks down and sees why: the doctor is at the launch site. Musiker rages at the "entire bullshit scenario" meant to draw them away from Soong, but Rios is more worried about the drones. Musiker detects four heat signatures nearby, and opens a wall to reveal the hidden drones. Rios suspects that this was Soong's backup plan, and Seven agrees: if he can't stop Renée from boarding the rocket, he would use the drones to destroy the rocket itself. The drones will launch in less than four minutes; Musiker sees the system is encrypted, and that she could stop it if she still had access to La Sirena. With the ship gone, however, she can't stop the launch. Musiker realizes Soong knew they would find the drones, and finds they were rigged with explosives. Trying to tamper with them would set them off, killing the crew on the spot. Rios asks if that was it, but Musiker is determined it's not, and asks for whatever small tools, such as pliers or scissors, that they can find. If she can't disable them, she would take manual control.

Tallinn watches as the astronauts make their way to the launch pad, and looks worried that she does not see Renée. She changes into a flight suit and follows them. Meanwhile, Lee, part of the Europa Mission's board of directors, is taking Soong around the facility, and the doctor asks to meet the astronauts, claiming that he wants to shake hands with "the men and women who are about to create the future." When Lee mentions the strict quarantine protocols, Soong asks if his donations to the mission didn't earn him "five minutes of facetime"; his guide relents, telling him they were about to suit up. Tallinn uses her security card to enter Renée's changing room, and finds her there alone. Renée remarks on how the mission was happening, and she was actually ready for it. She turns and finds Tallinn there, who she does not recognize, asking about Maya Orlando, the person on her suit-up crew. Tallinn tries to hedge, saying Maya wasn't feeling well, but Renée knows she was not on any of the suit-up crews, as she knew them all... and was also wearing Maya's uniform.

Lee expresses excitement at the mission, never thinking it would actually happen. Soong considers that attitude "terrible". Lee tries to clarify that she never thought it would be real, but Soong finds that "disrespectful", thinking he would leave her right there; after a second or two, he decides to do so.

Renée again asks to know who Tallinn is, thinking she has seen her somewhere before. Tallinn recalls that as a child, Renée had put a small spaceship toy into her mother's casket, and her dream of being an astronaut was motivated by the idea that if she flew out far enough, she would find her mother in the stars. Tallinn admits she had tried to hide herself from Renée, but there were times she couldn't. She picks up a small pendant of a sailboat and hands it to Renée, having given it to her after her real sailboat had capsized off Martha's Vineyard when she was ten years old. Tallinn had also been at the pre-launch gala a couple of nights earlier, and maybe "a dozen other glimpses" as well. Part of her, however, wanted Renée to see her, to know she was there. Renée had always thought she'd had a "guardian angel", and she had at least had a kind of guardian: Tallinn.

As Picard watches Soong heading for the astronaut quarters, Tallinn tells Renée that all she wants is for her to board the ship, and asks Renée to trust her. Soong enters the hallway outside her changing room just as Renée emerges in a panic. She appears glad to see Soong approaching, talking about a "crazy woman" who claims to be a "guardian from space". Soong assures her it was alright, and has her accompany him to find help. Heading down the stairs, Soong calls security to go to the suit-up room upstairs, just as Renée begins to stagger in pain. Soong smugly

pulls a thin layer of skin dosed with a neurotoxin from his hand, assuring her that it was fast... and fatal.

At the same time, back at Soong's house, the crew continues to try and bypass Soong's systems. Just then, the drones begin to launch in staggered intervals; Soong had programmed them that way to ensure at least one got off the ground. Musiker continues to work feverishly to gain manual control, and finally succeeds with one of them; Rios has full control over the drone, and Seven tells him to shoot the others down. Rios struggles with the controls as the drones fly across the Hollywood Hills, but ultimately Rios succeeds by crashing his drone into the other three, destroying them all.

Picard looks up to see Renée stagger out, calling him by name. As she collapses, Picard asks if there was some medical technology to save her, but she says it was too late. "Renée" is actually Tallinn, revealed a moment later as her masking technology fades away. She tells him she needs to see the launch. Hearing the rumbling of the engines, Picard tells her, as his mother had told him long ago, to "look up". Tallinn does, seeing the rocket launch, and is greatly relieved to see it. Tallinn admits she understands Picard better now, remarking on how his guilt had saved planets, countless lives for the one he couldn't save. She admits she finally revealed herself to Renée and told her the truth, and hopes that Renée will remember her, and know she had been worth all the effort. She tells Picard he had helped her do that, and tells him to absolve himself, or the only life unsaved would be his own. "Her eyes, they were so beautiful," Tallinn says as she dies, content that her job was done: Renée was fulfilling the destiny she had worked for so long to protect.

Inside his ransacked lab, a drink in his hand, Soong watches the news on television as Renée reports they were away at last. "On the wings of those who came before us," she says, holding the sailboat pendant Tallinn had given her. "Europa, here we come." Realizing that his future was not to be, Soong hurls his drink out of his hand, which smashes into the nearby cabinet. Suddenly, he hears something from his computer. To his horrified rage, he sees that all of his computer files are rapidly being deleted. It is Kore, using the Aspectus headset from a public library. Soong asks what she had done. "Made a new future," she replies. "For us both." The computer then reports a one-hundred percent file deletion; Soong's entire computer system had been purged. Soong is now left with nothing — until a thought occurs to him and he opens up a drawer in his desk, pulling out a confidential funding report from June 7th, 1996: Project Khan.

Meanwhile, Kore is alerted by a message on her laptop. "Curious what's next? Watch and observe," it tells her, before giving her an address: 460 Lowry Avenue in Los Angeles. Kore arrives at the address, a public park of sorts, and hears footsteps behind her. Thinking it was Q, she begins to tell him off about his "games", but it proves to be a much younger-looking man, who assures her they were very different, before greeting her by name. When she asks who he is, he says it was a "very long and very complicated story". Kore tells him she has nothing pressing, and so he begins by saying he had once been known as Wesley Crusher, but was now a Traveler of all of space and time. Kore thinks it to be a joke, but Wesley replies that the last time he told a joke, he inadvertently changed a century's worth of history, so tries not to be misunderstood. He goes on to say that he and his kind dispatched supervisors to watch over the "grand tapestry" of history, which was always a thread's pull away from total annihilation: a star can be born, but a ship lost, one species thriving while a civilization collapses. He admits that the tricky part was ultimately knowing when to step in. He tells Kore she has two paths before her: One would lead to a perfectly normal life, while the other would be to "everything else", but he could not guarantee her safety. He is recruiting her to become a Traveler, just as he had. Kore replies that she had never been safe in her life, and so chooses to go with Wesley, who welcomes her as a Traveler. They both disappear in a transporter beam.

Back at Château Picard, Ricardo "flies" his rocket through the house, while Rios collects all of the future equipment they had brought with them to ensure no "butterflies" would change their future. He, Seven, and Musiker realize there would probably be no returning to their future, and so they would have to live in the 21st century now. Seven wonders what they would do, and how money would work. Rios suggests going to Los Angeles, which Musiker jokingly calls "presumptuous"; Rios figures maybe he should ask first. Just then, Ricardo walks in to show Rios some "rocks" he and his mother Teresa found outside — corks from wine bottles. Seven remarks she has never seen Rios look so happy. Musiker asks if Seven was okay with the idea of staying in the 21st century, and Seven thinks she might be "better than okay". Musiker wonders,

if Seven was done running from her Borg past, whether she could focus on herself for a change, while not wanting Seven to feel like she has to spend every waking moment with her. Seven cuts her off mid-sentence with a kiss; when Musiker asks what that meant, Seven laughingly tells her to "let it breathe". Looking around, Musiker then wonders where "JL" slipped off to.

Picard, holding the skeleton key he had recovered from the night before, walks up to the door to what would be his mother's room, and pulls the loose brick from the wall to place the key. "Bravo," he hears Q's voice say. "Destiny. Left for the little boy you will be in the future to find." Picard walks into the solarium to find Q sitting alone, his head bowed. Q knows Picard had considered destroying the key, and asks that if the younger Picard had not found it, would he still have grown up with his mother? Would the shame have instantly lifted? But Picard had not destroyed the key, and had chosen to accept his fate, accepting who he was, and chosen who he was — a sort of absolution. And because he had, Q thinks that perhaps he might be considered worthy enough for someone else to choose, and perhaps might even choose to be loved. He had told Picard it had been about forgiveness: his own. Picard asks him why, "the eternal question" as Q puts it, before he admonishes Picard to "know thyself". Picard despairs at all the loss, all the death, including Elnor and Tallinn's. Q points out that Tallinn would always die in every timeline, but this was the only timeline she got to meet Renée. Picard again asks why, and Q tells him to finish the sentence. Picard does so, asking that for over thirty years since their first meeting, why had Q been so focused on Picard? Q admits that he was "moving on", essentially dying... and he was dying alone. He does not want such a fate for Picard. He remarks on how Humans fixate on their griefs, on moments of the past long gone, like butterflies with their wings pinned. He knows Picard still considers himself as the boy who turned a skeleton key and broke the universe, and his own heart. "No more," Q says, saying Picard was now unshackled from his past; as Q leaves, he leaves Picard free. Picard asks why it all mattered, wondering if he would be required for some important event in the future. Q chides him for thinking everything had to have import on the universe as a whole, believing that one life should be enough, before answering Picard's question of why it mattered: That it mattered, Picard mattered, to Q himself. "Even gods have favorites, Jean-Luc," he says, "and you've always been one of mine." Q then says that time was almost up, but he had one last surprise in store.

As Picard walks into the living room, Seven looks up and asks what was wrong. Picard replies that nothing was wrong, indeed quite the opposite. Leading them outside the château, they find Q there. Musiker is particularly unhappy to see him, but Seven tells her to try not killing him until he reveals what he wants. Q dramatically says he was time for his "final act". Musiker's first question is about Elnor; Q feigns ignorance, and when accused of killing Elnor, points out that it had been the alternate Seven's "idiot husband" who had done that. Musiker grabs Q by the throat, and he admits in his weakened state she could very well kill him; sending them all home most certainly would. He then asks if everyone was ready to return. To the surprise of the others, Rios elects to stay behind. Picard protests, warning about the change in the timeline this will cause, but Rios believes he never truly fit in, having spent a lot of his time on a cargo ship with five holographic versions of himself. He had never had a family in any real way until he met Picard and the others, but going to the past with them, he had now found a home of sorts with Teresa and Ricardo. Picard understands, and tells Rios to "make a good future". Rios wonders if it was always supposed to be this way, and that time was a funny thing; Q agrees with that latter assessment, much to his own surprise. Musiker sadly hugs her old friend one last time, and warns Teresa about how he was a "handful". "Piece of cake," Teresa replies. Picard approaches Q, who considers it "most unexpected", thinking perhaps there would be some surplus energy left to him afterward, enough for "a surprise, a gift". He bids Picard farewell, as it was time for him to go. "But not alone," Picard replies; "isn't that the point of all this?" Picard embraces his old adversary, who is moved by the gesture. "See you out there," Q says, as he snaps his fingers.

Picard finds himself back aboard the USS Stargazer's bridge in 2401, with the Borg Queen taking control of the ship, ten seconds from the auto-destruct sequence activating, and "Non, je ne regrette rien" playing. Picard orders the sequence cancelled, and the crew to stand down. Knowing what he does about the Queen, Picard tells the crew to let her proceed, and mentions he had once told a friend about what the song had meant to him. While he did not have time to teach them the words, he believes that the Queen has had four hundred years to consider them. "Haven't you, Doctor?" he says. The Queen disengages her tentacles from the consoles, and retracts the mask over her face — the face of Agnes Jurati.

Picard is glad to see a familiar face, and that she understands what he had told her about the song, how it had calmed him as a boy. The Jurati-Queen replies that she hoped it would calm him now. He now sees why she sent the signal, one she knew he would understand, and asks if it was still Jurati in there. She replies that she is, at least in part, but if they did not act, many would die, in this here and now. Picard asks about the threat she warned about, and why she has taken control of the fleet. At the helm, Ensign Kemi reports a massive spike in neutrino emissions focused on the center of the quadrant. Not hearing a response, she turns to find that Captain Rios is not there, and asks where he is. Picard orders her to remain on task, and bring the reading on screen. It appears to be a fissure of some sort; Seven consults the sensors, but is not clear what it is. What is clear is that if its triquantum waves keep increasing, it would devastate most of the sector, if not the entire quadrant. The Jurati-Queen has calculated that the only way to protect the quadrant was to harmonize the fleet's shields with her ship's, which was why she had begun taking over the vessel. Picard now realizes this is why he had been summoned: she needed someone with authority that she could trust, and who could trust her as well. "We needed a friend," she confirms. Meanwhile, Starfleet Command is trying to ascertain Stargazer's status, warning that they would consider the ship compromised if they did not answer soon. Seven turns to Commander Moshe and tells him to advise Starfleet they were in active negotiations. As Seven knew more about the Borg than anyone, even him, Picard uses his authority to give her a field commission of captain and command of the Stargazer. As she takes the captain's chair, Seven instructs Lieutenant Sing at communications to hail the fleet and tell them that Picard has authorized giving the Queen control, and orders the crews not to resist. "Agnes, be brilliant," she says. "Always," the Jurati-Queen replies.

The fleet is put into grid formation, the Borg ship in the center, as the Jurati-Queen begins harmonizing the fleet's shields. However, the USS *Excelsior's* shield emitters are off, and Musiker instructs them to recalibrate. Elnor responds, surprised to see Musiker, and remarking the last thing he remembered was being on *La Sirena*. Musiker, relieved to see him alive, tells him to make the adjustments. As Elnor gets to work, Musiker realizes that Q had brought Elnor back, and Picard recalls he had called it "a surprise, a gift". Kemi warns that the object was about to go up, and Picard orders them to brace for impact. A burst of energy crashes into the shield, but after a long and tense moment, the shield holds. Picard commends the Jurati-Queen for saving billions of lives. "That was the idea... mister," she replies. Looking as the anomaly changes from fiery to a more blue color, Musiker wonders what it was; Seven thinks they had just witnessed the creation of a transwarp conduit, but not a kind she was familiar with. The Jurati-Queen explains that even with the knowledge of the Borg Collective, she did not know who created it, but believes it to be part of a greater puzzle, connecting to some kind of threat. She asks for provisional membership in the Federation to watch over the conduit, "a guardian at the gates".

The Stargazer returns to Earth, and the crew takes advantage of the hospitality at 10 Forward Avenue. Guinan apologizes for not being able to tell Picard sooner about what had gone on, but knew that if she guided him right and set him straight, he would circle around eventually. She also thanks him for setting her straight first back in 2024. She notes that he had always been more clever than observant, gesturing to a picture nearby... a picture of Rios with Teresa. They had begun a medical movement together, the *Mariposas* — Spanish for "butterflies" — and he had led them through hard times, while she helped whoever needed help, whenever they might have needed it. Ricardo led a team of scientists that used the alien organism Renée discovered during the Europa Mission to reverse the deterioration of Earth's environment. They would all visit her bar whenever they were in Los Angeles, and remarks on how Teresa could drink Rios under the table. Picard, curious, asks how their lives had ended. Teresa had lived to extended old age, but Rios had been killed in a bar fight in Morocco over medical supplies, his last breath appropriately into a cigar; he had died as he had lived. Picard takes a pair of drinks from the bar and hands one to Elnor, raising a toast. "To family, then," he says, "because that's what we are, after all." With that toast, Picard tells them, there was somewhere it was time he got to. Guinan looks at him knowingly as he leaves.

Returning to his home, Picard finds bags packed in the hallway, before seeing Laris standing alone in the solarium. She had had the windows restored before she left, to give him something to look back to. Picard admits he had had enough of looking back, and decided to look forward from now on instead. He asks her where she was going, and she answers that she intended to find adventures of her own. Taking her hands, Picard — thinking on the lessons he had learned

while in the past — says that while time could not give second chances, perhaps people could. Laris looks relieved at this, as they stand hand-in-hand and begin to talk. The view pans away outside the house, and looks up to the stars.

Season Three

The Next Generation

Season 3

Episode Number: 21

Season Episode: 1

Originally aired: Thursday February 16, 2023
Writer: Terry Matalas
Director: Doug Aarniokoski
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars: Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Anthony Azizi (Orion), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Chad Lindberg (Ensign Foster), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar), Jani Wang (Bartender), Christian Crandall (Dark Haired Man), Amy Earhart (Eleos Computer (voice)), Grace Lee (Picard Chateau / La Sirena Computer (voice)), Ric Sarabia (Human Patron), Orla Brady (Laris), Marco Vazzano (Trill)
Summary: After receiving a distress call from Beverly Crusher, Jean-Luc Picard enlists help from generations old and new for one last adventure: a mission that will change Starfleet and his old crew forever.



In the 25th century — Aboard the SS Eleos XII, the song "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire" plays at the same time as a log entry during the encounter with the Borg more than thirty years earlier, when the USS Enterprise-D had to hide from a Borg cube in a dust cloud. The Eleos computer suddenly warns of a security breach and unauthorized boarding, bringing Dr. Beverly Crusher upright in her bed. "They found us," she realizes, as she orders the Eleos to charge its warp drive. A crew member wonders how they were found so quickly, but the doctor seals the door without a word to the

man, who begins pleading that he can help. Instructing the Eleos to "get us the hell out of here", Crusher locks another door behind her as she grabs a phaser.

The unauthorized docking completes, and the airlock opens. Snarling, masked figures step aboard. Without any hesitation, Crusher opens fire on them, leading to a firefight in the airlock corridor. But the power cell in her phaser depletes, resulting in her taking a glancing hit to the shoulder. Taking a risk, the doctor lunges forward to grab another phaser, and vaporizes one of the attackers. Using the reflective surface of a nearby container to track the other, Crusher fires into a coolant line, obscuring herself long enough to shoot down the other attacker. When it collapses to the deck, she coolly sets her phaser to maximum and vaporizes the body.

With the other man onboard screaming to let him out, Crusher returns to the Eleos' bridge. With still one minute left before the warp core charges, other ships arrive. She instructs the computer to prepare a coded subspace transmission to Admiral Jean-Luc Picard, just as the Eleos goes to warp...

At Château Picard, Laris remarks to Picard about how "first love" was always the sweetest, as they observe the painting of the Enterprise-D over the fireplace. Picard corrects her by saying she wasn't the first, remembering the USS Stargazer, but she was his favorite. Laris jokingly replies that she hopes the "favorite" won't be offended if the painting is taken down for cleaning. Picard idly muses that perhaps he could give it to Geordi La Forge, the current head of the Fleet Museum, and instructs one of his helpers to take it down and pack it. Laris stops the man with a warning look.

Picard is preparing to accompany Laris to Chaltok IV, where she will help set up diplomatic security, and the house is being packed up for his absence. Picard jokes that while Laris is working, he will sit by, sip Saurian brandy, and think about working on his memoir. Laris chides him that she doesn't have to prove how "in the present" he is. "The past matters, and that's okay," she tells him. Picard admits that these items, such as the Ressian flute he picks up, are important to him as memories of dear friends, old and new, but still only memories. Laris points out that there comes a point in one's life where they must look to the past, not just the future. Picard hopes that will not be him, as he does not see himself as a man who needs a legacy, but rather a new adventure.

Sitting alone in his office as a storm rolls across the French countryside, Picard is writing out cards at his desk when he begins hearing the chirp of a combadge. He asks the house computer for its origin, but it is unable to locate it. Going through the packed boxes, he finds the sound coming from the combadge of his old uniform from the Enterprise-D. After somewhat literal answers to his questions (which exasperate him), the computer reveals it was using an unusual codec that required a passcode. Picard hears the combadge chirp again from another point in the room, and realizes it was using the Myriad codec, and gives the computer his passcode. It is a recorded message from Beverly Crusher, who includes a set of encrypted coordinates, and gives the name "Hellbird". "And Jean-Luc... no Starfleet," she warns. "Trust no one."

Picard discusses the message with Laris, who could see that Crusher looked both terrified and injured. Picard has not spoken to the doctor in more than twenty years, nor has any other member of the old crew; she had just cut them all off without explanation. Laris thinks that their past history on the Enterprise, and that they had tried a romantic relationship at one point ("Tried" is the operative word," Picard confirms), leads Crusher to see Picard as the only person she can trust. When he wonders about not wanting Starfleet involved, Laris examines the situation from her viewpoint as a former Tal Shiar operative: Crusher's fear is genuine, not the result of paranoia, and she is out of options, leading her to turn to Picard, and only Picard, for help. Both realize he will have to go to answer Crusher's call for help. Picard tries to be light about it, saying he might be back in a few days, maybe less, but Laris is more realistic, thinking it might be more. She tells him there is a bar on Chaltok IV where one could view the sunset, and she would save him a seat; meanwhile, she urges him to mind himself. After she leaves, Picard looks wistfully up at the painting of the Enterprise-D over the fireplace.

At 10 Forward Avenue in Los Angeles, Captain William T. Riker sits at the bar, asking the bartender whether Guinan is "hawking souvenirs", noting the model ships. The barkeep replies it was for Frontier Day. When Riker notes the number of Enterprise-D models, she dismisses them as "the fat ones" and says no one wants them. He tells her to leave the bottle. As Picard joins him, Riker comments on the implied disrespect to the Galaxy-class. Picard jokingly refers to his old first officer as the "handsome elder statesman of Starfleet", while Riker laments how no one wants to hear an "old fart" drone on about 250 years of "boldly going"; both Picard and Riker are expected to give speeches for Frontier Day. Riker notes the worried look on his old captain's face. Picard thanks him for meeting in such circumstances and apologizes for taking Riker away from his family, but Riker's expression is grim when he replies that Deanna and Keatra would appreciate his absence, and offers to help.

Riker is surprised to hear about a message sent with the Myriad codec, thinking back to the "old days" when they used it because they thought their comms were compromised on Rigel VI (which Picard corrects to Rigel VII). Picard mentions the coordinates included with Crusher's message, and the word "Hellbird". Riker recalls that when Picard had been assimilated by the Borg, they had introduced a computer virus to interfere with their navigation system, adding the number 3 to every digit of their coordinates; adding 3 to the coordinates Crusher sent points to the Ryton system, outside Federation space, which Riker notes would be a perfect place to hide... but from what? In all the years he had known her, Picard had never seen her look so terrified.

Riker then asks why she had cut everyone out of her life, but Picard says he needs to find a ship. Riker then amends that to "we", and knowing they can't charter one. Picard protests, saying he can't ask Riker to put his life in danger, but Riker retorts that they were overdue for a "good old-fashioned road trip". Though Crusher had said "no Starfleet", Riker knows of a workaround, as both men finish their drinks and leave. A man in the bar, holding a small Enterprise-D toy, watches them go, and drops the toy into his own drink.

On the planet M'talas Prime, a hooded figure steps into a crowded bazaar in District Six, before meeting with an Orion at a restaurant counter, who makes a transaction for some form of narcotic. The figure is Raffaella Musiker, who appears to have lapsed back into her addiction. She laments that she is out of Starfleet, her girlfriend left her, and she's looking for a way back in. She has heard rumors of an experimental quantum tunneling device stolen from a Daystrom Institute offsite station that could be used as a weapon. She knows her dealer has information; she offers what money she has for that information. He reluctantly concedes that "a junkie wouldn't know when to quit", and mentions a possible lead involving the "Red Lady". When she asks what the "Red Lady" was, the Orion warns her not to ask questions that could get them both killed, and tells her he doesn't want to see her face again. Once Musiker leaves, she pulls out a secure communicator; she is in fact working undercover for Starfleet Intelligence, and requests a debriefing — and more money. As she makes the call, she picks up the narcotic container she got from the dealer, stares at it for a moment, then drops it to the ground.

Picard and Riker take a shuttle up to Spacedock in Earth orbit, where Picard discusses his concerns about their plan. Riker reminds him that it was not a plan, but a ruse (which is the part Picard doesn't like); they were two high-ranking Starfleet officers conducting a routine inspection tour. Picard worries that they could both face court martial, and that Riker could lose all he had worked for. Riker agrees, but only if they get caught. He tells Picard to put on his best "inspection face", one of those "rigid, disapproving, sour expressions" he was famous for. Picard's expression fits Riker's description almost to a tee, as they approach their destination — the new USS Titan, a Neo-Constitution-class vessel. As captain of her predecessor, Riker used a little sway to get onboard, but warns that the captain, Liam Shaw, would take some convincing to get him to change course to the Federation border, where Picard and Riker could then take a shuttle to the Ryton system. Shaw is not what Riker would consider a "friendly face", but Picard would recognize his first officer.

As the boatswain's whistle heralds their arrival, Picard and Riker are greeted by Seven of Nine, now in the uniform of a Starfleet commander, who grants them permission to come aboard. As Picard introduces her to Riker as "Seven", she quietly corrects him by saying that Captain Shaw preferred she use her birth name, Annika Hansen. Picard steps into the "inspection tour" role, forcing a Trill lieutenant to straighten up, while he straightens up the officer's combadge. Seven admits to being surprised they were coming, but hopes they will find the ship up to standards; Captain Shaw was catching up on his logs, but has requested they join him for dinner that evening. She also warns them to lower their expectations.

As the three officers step onto the bridge, Seven calls out "admiral on the bridge", adding "captain on the bridge" at Riker's cleared throat. The crew stands to attention, before Picard tells them to stand easy. The ensign at the helm seems extremely pleased to see them — Sidney La Forge, Geordi's daughter, whom Riker recalls had wanted to be a pilot; he embarrasses her somewhat by mentioning the nickname "Crash La Forge", earned at Starfleet Academy for crashing shuttles. Seven orders communications open to the dockmaster and requests departure clearance. She turns to Picard and asks that he give the order to get underway, but he chooses to let her have that honor instead. She orders moorings cleared as the space doors open, before ordering aft thrusters at one-quarter impulse power. The Titan clears space doors, and Seven orders maximum warp. Picard worriedly asks if they shouldn't alert main engineering they were going to warp 9.99, but Seven quietly reminds him that the newer ships in the fleet did so automatically. Picard quickly recovers (to Riker's amusement), saying that Seven would be a captain in no time. The Titan jumps ahead to warp.

Hansen brings them to the conference room, where Captain Shaw has already started on his own dinner, remarking that the reputation of his guests preceded them so much, he started early. Picard gives the captain a bottle of his family wine, though Shaw remarks he was more of a Malbec man himself, and thinks Riker prefers bourbon. Riker confirms he likes the "occasional old fashioned" at times, and asks where Shaw had gotten that idea. The captain remarks that all

the "bebop" he had purged from the computers when he took over spoke to Riker's "free-wheeling, loosey-goosey, Kentucky mash kind of style"; he admits to not being a fan of jazz, preferring structure and meter in his music (a nocturne by Frédéric Chopin playing in the background as he speaks), keeping tempo and time, which is why the two of them will likely find their inspection tour boring. Riker mentions it was a routine part of the fleet exercises for Frontier Day, but Picard seems curious; why would they find keeping their ships at readiness boring? Shaw replies that they would not be "blowing things up", taking fire or crash-landing, "the usual for you boys"; he brags that they would find the engines pristine, the hull intact, and every surface on the ship dust-free. Riker and Picard exchange glances, as they suggest changing course to the Ryton system. Shaw, wrong-footed, asks why they would do that, as it was on the edge of Federation space, further away and in the opposite direction from their intended course. Riker, appealing to the captain's ego, replies that it would give the new Titan "bragging rights", a great story for Frontier Day, with Picard adding about a final engineering inspection at Deep Space 4. Shaw points out that DS4 has been shut down for over a year, at which point Seven thinks he meant Deep Space 11.

To their surprise, Shaw refuses outright. He has been "keeping this train running" for five years, 36 missions, and that one didn't "get told where to go by standing in front of it and then changing the track". When Picard attempts to pull rank as an admiral, Shaw points out he was retired, and while Riker was an active captain, he was one without a command. The Titan was his ship now, Shaw reminds them, and proceeds to both compliment and disparage their careers, saying he had orders that came down from "actual officers", before emphatically denying the request. Seven points out that they could make up the time, but Shaw brusquely reminds her that her loyalty was to the ship, not to "old friends" and ex-Borg, the latter he says with some venom, earning a protest from Riker. Shaw leaves for his quarters and leaves Seven the conn, and insincerely hopes that the accommodations he has arranged for his "guests" are to their liking. As they leave for their quarters, Picard expresses his concern to Riker that every moment they're moving away from Ryton, the more worried he is about Crusher. When Riker asks what they could do, Picard has no idea, short of resorting to mutiny. Seven watches them leave, a pensive expression on her face.

Back on M'talas Prime, Musiker is alone aboard the SS La Sirena when a transmission comes in. Her Intelligence handler does not show their face, speaking through the ship's computer. She has not found anything on the "Red Lady", and her Intelligence contact is not any help in that regard either. Musiker requests a face-to-face to confer, which is denied. Frustrated, Musiker demands to know why they were bothering if her contact won't help her. When the contact asks her to speak freely, Musiker admits to the pressure: she has been undercover for months trying to discover who stole the experimental weapons tech from Daystrom, and why. The Orion gave her the "Red Lady", but she has no idea who or what that is and is terrified that whoever stole the weapons would use them to hurt people. She accuses the contact of not knowing what the job was like, at which point Musiker's Starfleet file is displayed on screen, noting her dishonorable discharge, being listed as "paranoid, obsessive and combative", 13 court martial-level offenses, and her issues with substance abuse. "Well, as far as mysterious handlers go, you're very detail-oriented," Musiker remarks sarcastically. The contact points out that the stolen weapons were an act of war, and that Musiker was a warrior; they suspect an imminent attack and urges Musiker to find the "Red Lady".

As the Titan proceeds at warp, Shaw's "accommodations" for Picard and Riker are bunks used by the lower decks crew, which Picard finds "utterly humiliating". It makes Riker think back to his cadet days, only he "didn't have to get up to pee this much". Picard recalls the last time he saw Crusher, "the way we left it", admitting it was not on the best of terms. He never believed it would be more than twenty years before they heard from her again, and Riker agrees that none of them did. Picard worries that it might be too late, before they hear Ensign La Forge calling them both to the observation deck.

Seven is there waiting for them, looking both incredibly tense and angry. She curtly apologizes for interrupting their sleep before asking for permission to speak freely, which Picard grants. She demands to know why they were really there, threatening to throw them both out an airlock and not look back. Riker is incensed, asking if that was how she spoke to an admiral, to which Seven retorts it was how she spoke to a friend. Picard reveals the message he received from Crusher, and how she said to trust no one, not even Starfleet. He didn't tell Seven because he

didn't want to jeopardize her career. Seven bitterly admits that things were simpler when she was with the Fenris Rangers, relying on her instincts, but Picard and Admiral Kathryn Janeway had convinced her to join Starfleet instead. She had thought it was the right path, thinking she would one day inspire people to follow her, even if it was dangerous, like Picard did, but wonders how she can inspire anyone when she is under the command of someone like Shaw: "How am I supposed to just ignore my gut, ignore my instincts, just to follow orders?" Picard gently asks her to let him know when she finds that answer, because he never did. La Forge calls from the bridge, informing her that they were dropping out of warp.

As they accompany Seven to the bridge, Riker realizes she disobeyed Shaw's orders and took them to the Ryton system. The sensors detected a vessel with minimal power readings on the edge of the nebula, whose properties interfered with their ability to scan for life forms. Riker asks if she realizes the consequences of her action; Seven simply tells them that in exactly four minutes, the ensign guarding shuttlebay 3 will be called away. Picard thanks her, as he and Riker leave for the shuttlebay. In his quarters, Shaw is awakened by the storm activity in the nebula, and angrily goes to the bridge, ordering Ensign Esmar to lock down the ship before demanding to know where Riker and Picard were. La Forge reports an unauthorized launch from Shuttlebay 3. Shaw coldly tells Seven she just "loyaltied [her] way out of a career", and demands a full report.

Back aboard La Sirena on M'talas Prime, Musiker's search for the "Red Lady" is going nowhere; it was not a person or a ship, but she soon realizes it was some kind of target. She asks for any events occurring in the next few months and discovers a dedication ceremony for a statue of Rachel Garrett, the captain of the USS Enterprise-C... a statue of red stone at the Starfleet recruiting center in District Seven. Musiker immediately has the ship take off.

As La Sirena approaches the recruiting center, Musiker places the ship on autopilot and tries to open a channel to warn them of an imminent attack. However, all she receives is static, just as a quantum tunnel opens under the recruiting center, tearing it apart... while the other end of that tunnel is in the sky above, raining its broken debris over the city. All Musiker can do is stare in horror.

Meanwhile, the Titan shuttle approaches the Eleos, running on minimal power. Riker admires the view of the nebula ahead; Picard notes they had spent half their lives chasing such views, while Riker adds they had spent the other half missing the chase. Picard wonders if Riker is actually enjoying himself. "Course not," Riker replies. "Are you?" As they enter sensor range, they are able to detect at least two Human lifesigns onboard, one corresponding with Crusher's last known Starfleet medical profile and also in critical condition. She will need help, as will the other person onboard, whom Picard wonders is friend or foe. As they arm themselves, Picard begins feeling a rush of adrenaline; when Riker asks if it was fear or the thought of seeing Crusher again, Picard admits it was both. "Your hands are stiff, my knees are killing me," Riker sardonically sums up. "So long as we don't have to move or shoot, we should be fine." As the airlock decontamination cycle completes, Riker asks if Picard was ready. "As ever," he replies.

Picard and Riker board the ship, seeing signs of the fight (Riker lapsing into calling Picard "captain" when he points out the phaser fire), and they detect the smell of delorium gas, from the breach in the coolant line Crusher created as a distraction. Riker also sees the scorch mark left from one of the vaporized assailants, noting that it was a kill shot, straight down, which didn't sound like the Crusher he knew. He also wonders about the ashes left behind. While Picard checks the ship's bridge, a man comes from behind him with a phaser.

Picard finds Crusher contained in a medical pod and calls out to Riker that he found her. Riker is brought onto the bridge at phaser-point by the unknown man. Picard identifies himself and Riker and tells him they were there to help and tells him to lower his weapon. As he does, Riker quickly elbows him in the face and disarms him. Picard realizes that Crusher would never have sent out a call for help only for herself. Riker asks who the man is, and he replies he is Crusher's son. An alarm sounds, indicating another vessel approaching. The man accuses Picard and Riker of leading "them" there, saying they had escaped from them on Sarnia, Exo-Port, and Kaphar. When Riker demands to know who their pursuers were, the man lowers the blast shield, revealing a massive vessel emerging from the nearby nebula.

Disengage

Season 3

Episode Number: 22

Season Episode: 2

Originally aired: Thursday February 23, 2023
Writer: Christopher Monfette, Sean Tretta
Director: Doug Aarniokoski
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars: Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Amanda Plummer (Vadic), Aaron Stanford (Sneed), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Randy J. Goodwin (Jae Hwang), Robert Morgan (Fenris Ranger), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Chad Lindberg (Ensign Foster), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar), Tiffany Shepis (Dr. Ohk), Amy Earhart (Eleos / Titan Computer), Adam Hunter (Security Officer), Naymon Frank (Guard), Grace Lee (La Sirena Computer), Jerry Marr (Operations Division Crewmember), Marco Vazzano (Trill)
Summary: Aided by Seven of Nine and the crew of the U.S.S. Titan, Picard makes a shocking discovery that will alter his life forever — and puts him on a collision course with the most cunning enemy he's ever encountered. Meanwhile, Raffi races to track a catastrophic weapon — and collides with a familiar ally.



Two Weeks Ago — The SS Eleos XII makes orbit over Sarnia Prime. At the helm is Jack Crusher, looking somewhat bored as he requests orbital clearance. Suddenly, two vessels from the Fenris Rangers approach. The lead ship opens a channel, warning that the Eleos has violated their airspace en route to a quarantine zone, and demands the Eleos transmit Federation authorization codes or submit to inspection. Jack's answer is that the Eleos has a moral authority to the people on the planet, who are currently suffering from Galarian fever and are "immunoresistant to bureaucracy".

"Inspection it is, then," the Ranger leader replies.

Jack emphasizes the Eleos is "a medical vessel, carrying medical supplies, to people who are in medical need". The Ranger leader points out that they were in violation of about 27 medical protocols, as he inspects each crate, which contain steroids, gene re-sequencers, and other supplies to combat the disease. Jack also reminds them that Galarian fever is fatal at the rate of one life per minute, which meant that ten civilians had died during the inspection. The Ranger leader opens a case containing two bottles of Romulan ale, and sarcastically asks if they were also for medical purposes. Jack answers that it can be used as an antiseptic, and an answer to life in general, all of which he was willing to share. When the Ranger leader asks if that was a bribe,

Jack assures him it was not, and that he had other items to bribe them with — a crate of phaser rifles. He points out that the warlords on the planet below engineered the fever so that they could clear the free zone of refugees before others could claim it. If they traded half to one warlord, half to another, and gave the Rangers part of the cut, it would be "bad guys killing bad guys". The Ranger leader agrees. As they take the crate back to the ship, he activates his comlink. "Reach out to the Marked Woman," he says. "We've found him."

In the present day, Jack, Picard and Riker observe the massive ship that emerged from the nebula in the Ryton system. Picard asks who they were, but Jack admits he doesn't know, only that whoever was piloting the ship has resources; the Fenris Rangers came after the Eleos first, then Klingons a day later, and then three Starfleet officers who tried to "prime direct [him] into an early grave", as Jack puts it. The Eleos' power levels are failing, and its systems are damaged because it was too close to the nebula for too long. Riker recalls that Beverly had said to "trust nobody", and wonders what the unknown ship wants. Picard knows they have to find out, and possibly find a way to negotiate. Jack asks for a threat assessment, and the computer dutifully reports that the unknown ship has all of the Eleos' systems targeted, with a one hundred percent probability of destruction. "They're not here to negotiate," he sums up. He believes he had things in hand before Picard and Riker showed up, but now that they were there, they might as well be useful: his mother needed medical care, and the medical pod she was in was losing power, so he hoped their shuttle had a "larger friend" close by. Riker confirms they came on the USS Titan, which was still somewhere nearby. If they could get Beverly into the shuttle, they could get reach out to the Titan.

The Titan holds position on the Federation side of the border. Ensign Sidney La Forge detects faint power readings near the Eleos' position. Commander Hansen orders a diagnostic scan, and Lieutenant T'Veen detects photonic signatures along with an energy reading that she does not recognize, before confirming it was a ship. Captain Shaw consults the readings himself, seeing its weapons capability, and asks if it has entered Federation space yet. La Forge reports the ship is remaining just on the edge, along the nebula. Hansen realizes they're going for Picard, and thinks they can intercept if they go quickly, asking La Forge how long it would take. To their shock, Shaw belays that; when Hansen points out that Picard and Riker were out there (and emphasizes their ranks), Shaw retorts by emphasizing her own rank compared to his before pointing out that the Titan was an exploration vessel that would be outgunned by the unknown enemy, and that he would not risk his ship and all five hundred members of the crew for Picard and Riker, who he dismisses as "relics" who think their decorations for service made them "golden boys". "They dug their grave, they took you with them," he tells her, ordering La Forge to hold position, then brusquely dismissing his first officer. When she holds her ground, staring him down, Shaw emphatically dismisses her again. Without another word, she leaves.

The unknown ship continues to simply circle the Eleos, leaving Jack wondering why it simply doesn't hail them. He tells Picard and Riker they have to go, and calls Picard "captain"; when he corrects that to "admiral", Jack shoots back that history remembered him with "one less pip". Jack preps his mother's medical pod for transport to their shuttle. Watching him head to the docking bay, Riker wonders to Picard about Jack being Beverly's son, and pointedly adds that there was something familiar about him. Just then, the unknown ship fires a spread of photon torpedoes, the blast throwing Jack back onto the bridge. Picard worriedly sees the medical pod is quickly losing power and Beverly's lifesigns are fading. Adding to their problem, Jack tells them they need a change of plan, as the attack destroyed the shuttle. They were now trapped.

On M'talas Prime, Musiker listens to the Federation news cast of the attack on the Starfleet recruiting center; the media attributes the attack to Lurak T'Luco, leader of a Romulan rebel faction. Frustrated, she opens a secure channel on SS La Sirena's bridge to her unknown handler at Starfleet Intelligence. She reminds them that she had been sent undercover to try and stop the use of the quantum tunneling weapon stolen from the Daystrom Institute facility, but she had failed, and 117 people were confirmed dead in the attack, deaths she feels she could have prevented. Her handler admonishes her not to seek blame or anger. Musiker intends to keep digging to find out who was responsible, but the handler replies that Starfleet Command has ended the investigation, as a suspect has been identified. Musiker is incredulous that they would believe someone like T'Luco, who had never made it to anyone's "most wanted list", could somehow breach an ultra-secure Daystrom offsite facility and take such a weapon. She thinks T'Luco probably bought it on the black market and was not the one who stole it, and a Fer-

engi crime lord named Sneed claimed he brokered the sale between T'Luco and an anonymous seller. She intends to question Sneed again, but her handler repeats that Starfleet Command has ended the investigation and orders her to disengage. When she again points out the 117 dead, the handler warns it would be 118 if she continued, and tells her not to engage. Musiker angrily asks why her handler is hamstringing her, and demands a face-to-face meeting, which is quickly denied. Making up her own mind, Musiker feels she needs to speak for the dead, and leaves to question Sneed herself.

Aboard the Titan, Hansen confronts Shaw in his ready room, the captain wondering if he should confine her to quarters. Hansen reports that Lieutenant Mura detected weapons fire, likely at Picard's shuttle, and reminds him that the shuttle was unarmed. Shaw dismissively replies he would put that in his report to Starfleet, and asks if she assisted Riker and Picard in commandeering "his" shuttle. She attempts to evade by saying they were perfectly capable of finding the shuttlebay on their own, but Shaw dismisses this as "bullshit". Deciding to play to his ego, Hansen tells him that he could either be the hero who saved two heroes, or the captain who sat by and allowed two legends to die. "It's your call," she adds, ending with a grudging "sir" before she leaves.

Meanwhile, Jack sums up the situation aboard the Eleos: they have no visuals, their only escape has been destroyed, and help is not coming. Riker asks if they've attempted to communicate. Jack sarcastically thinks surrender is indeed an option, and thinks of offering Picard and Riker to them. Meanwhile, Picard is setting up devices around the bridge, as Jack wonders if the "legendary admiral" has any ideas. Picard replies he is not strategizing, but safeguarding. When Jack asks from what, a transporter beam attempts to take him, but Picard activates the devices in time: transport inhibitors. It confirms that the unknown enemy wants Jack himself, alive, and if they can't take him out, they'll come in to take him themselves. As if in confirmation, the gravimetric lock activates. Riker has Jack toss him a plasma charge, which he rolls into the nearby corridor to deal with the intruders. Just as it seems they were in a stalemate, however, the unknown ship begins pulling the Eleos in with its tractor beam. Power begins to fail all over the ship, Jack resorting to pounding the system keeping his mother's medical pod active. Riker suggests diverting power to create a repulsor beam, but Jack warns it will not work; they've limped by for weeks, and didn't have the power to spare. Resigned to his fate, Jack tells them only it was nice to meet them. Just then, Riker detects something coming in on sensors.

The Titan interposes herself between the unknown ship and the Eleos, breaking its tractor lock. Shaw orders red alert, and to have Picard and Riker beamed out. T'Veen detects four lifesigns, and Shaw quickly amends that to getting them all out, muttering that the Titan was "basically a hotel now". Hansen orders a channel open to the Eleos, telling them to prepare for transport. The alien ship prepares to fire on them, and Hansen orders Ensign Esmar to beam them out, but Esmar cannot obtain a lock on them. Picard realizes the inhibitors were still active, pulls out his phaser, and destroys the devices, before telling them to try again. Picard, Riker, and Jack materialize in the transporter room, the Titan's security holding phasers on them as Jack raises his. Picard gently waves them all down.

On M'talas Prime, Musiker meets with her ex-husband, Jae Hwang, who asks how their son Gabriel was doing. Jae mentions that Gabe told him how she ambushed Gabriel at his baby's doctor. Musiker is shaken to hear that's what her son thinks of her, but adds that she wanted to see her granddaughter in person. Jae asks if she was keeping clean, and she confirms she is, and is back with Starfleet, because she wants to be, indeed has to be. When she asks about his "connections", he is initially angered, but she assures him it was for work; she knows he turns a blind eye to the backroom dealings in his bar, and wants an introduction to Sneed. Jae is incredulous, considering him a monster, but Musiker is adamant, saying she was working for Intelligence but they were blind to "something big". Jae recognizes the signs, remembering that Musiker getting involved in conspiracies led her to spiral into drug addiction. She asks how he broke away from it, thinking he made it look easy, but he says only he made a choice, especially after his son was born. He chose his son and his art because it was enough for him, but it wasn't for Musiker, and Gabe pushes her away because he remembers that. She continues to press on the importance of her mission, but Jae had thought she had come for him to put in a word with Gabe. He demands she make her choice: Either he can send a message for her to Gabe, or arrange a meeting with Sneed, because he will not do both. The look on her face tells him all he needs to know.

In the Rytan system, the unknown ship circles the Titan, and T'Pol reports all four were brought aboard, with the "injured civilian" beamed directly to sickbay. Hansen suggests they retreat at maximum warp, but Shaw replies they have engaged, and wants to know with who and why. Security escorts Picard, Riker, and Jack to the bridge, and Shaw tells them they were in "so much trouble". Jack sarcastically mentions how his mother said to "trust no one" and yet they brought everyone. Esmar tries to get the captain's attention, finally yelling "captain" — and Picard, Riker, and Shaw all answering, before the former two defer to the latter. Esmar reports the enemy ship was hailing them. Shaw orders the channel open. The cheerful-looking humanoid on the other end greets them with "good afternoon", thinking it was indeed afternoon in the Sol system, and identifies herself as Captain Vadic. She appears to recognize Shaw, who confirms his identity, adding that he was having a "good morning" before this. Vadic seems glad to hear this, and adds she was glad he remained "functional", given his official psychological profile with Starfleet. Picard steps forward, saying that Vadic has caused them some trouble and demands she state her business. Vadic recognizes him as well, "in the synthetic flesh" as she puts it, before accusing them of harboring Jack, who has broken a number of laws both inside and outside Federation space, and has a sizeable bounty on his head. Shaw emphasizes that Starfleet does not negotiate with bounty hunters. Vadic is almost gleeful as she sees he does not understand his situation, reminding him that the Titan was outside its jurisdiction, but lowers her shields so they can scan her ship to provide "clarification". The scans of Vadic's ship show a variety of numerous incredibly powerful weapons, including isolytic burst warheads, antimatter missiles, and an unknown weapon loaded in the primary bay. Vadic gives them one hour to surrender Jack to her. "Turn your back to run," she threatens, "and the only way you'll see the shot that kills you is through the hole in your proverbial chest." She then shows them a "parting demonstration" of her intentions, using the tractor beam to hurl the Eleos into the Titan.

Shaw, Hansen, and Picard all turn to look at Jack, wondering what he had gotten them into.

Hansen reports that the Eleos impact broke through the shields and blasted shrapnel through deck 11. Shaw (somewhat rhetorically) wonders how such a thing was possible; La Forge answers that it was a reverse tractor beam with polarity phasing, adding that her father had taught her any law of physics could be weaponized or countered with another law of physics. Shaw then sums up the situation: They couldn't run, as they would be destroyed the moment their nacelles lit up, the nearest ship was days away, and the nebula was interfering with their long-range communications. "We are essentially cornered," he rambles, "in space, which has no corners." Dismissing this line of thought, he asks what information they had on Vadic. There was nothing in Starfleet's files, but Hansen — a former Fenris Ranger ("antiestablishment pirate types", as Shaw calls them) — recalls rumors of a ship that flew no flag, but carried every weapon known to Starfleet, and some that weren't. He then wonders about Jack, and she hands the PADD over to him.

In the conference room, Jack tells Picard that who he was was not important, but Picard thinks it most certainly is, because it was no longer just about Beverly, but about him as well. Jack is adamant he has told them everything he knows, and knows nothing about Vadic. Riker reminds him that they were at a disadvantage and urges him to think, for both himself and his mother. Just then, Shaw, Hansen, and two security officers enter, Jack remarking that it had taken longer than he thought for that. Shaw reveals that Jack Crusher is known by a number of aliases, and that they had been "conned by a con man"; Vadic's claims were valid, and they were harboring an intergalactic fugitive. He orders Jack taken to the brig. He then turns on Hansen, relieving her of duty for insubordination. Picard tries to speak in her defense, but Shaw is dismissive; he is inclined to give Jack over to Vadic and return to Federation space, and save the rest for the tribunal. Riker is outraged, wondering when Starfleet started giving in to hostile demands. Jack was wanted for trial, not execution, and Vadic's ship was a "guillotine". But to Shaw, the rules of engagement outside Federation space were clear, that he had to preserve the safety of his ship and crew, reminding them of the kind of firepower Vadic's ship carried; if they engaged, they would most certainly lose. Picard asks Shaw to let him speak to Jack, as there must be something more to what is going on. Vadic had given them an hour, so Shaw gives Picard half that to prepare Jack for departure.

In the turbolift, Riker wants to know why Picard is "dancing around" the issue. Picard thinks he's talking about whether or not Jack is actually Beverly's son, but Riker dismisses that, looking to what he really sees, and tells his old captain to "do the math". Picard chides him for speculat-

ing, but Riker is adamant: "Tell me, honestly, you do not see what I see." Picard is left to think that over, before he arrives in the brig.

Picard decides to begin in a confrontational stance, admitting that he had an affinity for "virtuosos", but noting Jack's particular instrument was deception and thievery. Jack calls that a "hell of an opener", then asks about his mother. Picard notes she was mending, but unable to defend him, so he must defend himself. Picard brings up his criminal record, noting that he was wanted for organized crime on Andoria, actual terrorism on Binar III, and for the death of a man on Andreus V. Jack calls that last charge "unfair", as the man was a Falsettian, who went into a deep hibernation for seven cycles. The file also showed him being sighted on Kemiyo, a known war zone. Jack corrects him by saying it was a rebellion, the Kemiyaans had been fighting against their oppressors for decades, and he brought them medicine and supplies. Picard sarcastically calls him a "freedom fighter", and Jack concurs only in the sense that a doctor fights for the freedom of his patients not to die, which he believes he does, "at best"; at worst, he admits he's a thief. Picard agrees, that he stole medical supplies, but also weapons and other prohibited cargo. "Currency is currency and medicine isn't free," Jack retorts, saying that the people who disliked him were gamblers, low-level gangsters, and "fathers of daughters everywhere", not vigilante bounty hunters willing to fight the Federation. Picard scoffs at the "lovely self-pardon", believing they both knew Beverly would never permit it. Jack counters that she had taught him so, being an equal partner in his work. Picard counters that he knows Jack is lying because of that, but Jack bites right back, asking when Picard had even spoken to Beverly last, if anyone was still the people they knew, or if he had been planting roots in his vineyard while everyone moved on. Picard finally point-blank asks who his father was, and Jack heatedly replies that he never had one. Picard is somewhat shaken by this, as Jack now resigns himself to being handed over to Vadic to ensure his mother survives, "especially if it puts an end to this conversation". Picard believes that he should be tried in courts, not handed over to criminals; to hand him over to Vadic is to acquiesce, and worse, it betrays an old friend. However, keeping Jack aboard puts the Titan and her crew, including Beverly, at risk, and Picard has only 18 minutes left to decide what to do with him.

On M'talas Prime, Musiker makes her way to the back room to meet with Sneed, who is surrounded by a variety of "retro" Human artifacts, including a hand grenade and a baseball. He cracks open a Slug-o-Cola and invites Musiker to sit, as she was "making [him] nervous". Sneed remarks on how he brokers deals between people because he knows people, and he knows Jae and who he knows... except he didn't know her, which made him wonder how well he knew Jae. Musiker, not quite play-acting, remarks that artists were "unknowable assholes" who lived in their heads instead of the "real world". Sneed laughingly agrees, thinking that was why his first wife left him for Starfleet. Musiker seems to identify herself as such, saying that Starfleet didn't know how to live "high-class", as she pours a small bag of valuable crystals on the table in front of him. Sneed seems interested, but remarks that no one asked for "nothing for something", and that it would offend him if it did. Musiker mentions rumors of the portal tech deal to T'Luco. Sneed off-handedly mentions T'Luco went underground after destroying the Starfleet facility, but Musiker claims she works for him, and demands to know who paid Sneed to frame T'Luco for the attack. Sneed is suspicious, thinking that Musiker is working for Starfleet or Section 31, and slides an aerosol narcotic injector over to her, telling her to prove that she wasn't. She sprays the substance in her eye, feeling it take hold. Sneed calls the drug "Splinter", as it felt like one was being "ripped apart and pulled back together" over and over again. He then demands to know who she works for. Musiker maintains the lie that she works for T'Luco, earning a laugh from Sneed, who is impressed by her ability to resist the drugs. He proves that she doesn't work for T'Luco by lifting his severed head from the nearby ice box, asking if she thought he would risk his reputation by not tying up loose ends and selling out the "big fish". He decides he will take her money, but leaves his guards to take her head. She stabs Sneed through the hand, causing his guards to react, but before they can fire on her, one is killed from behind by a long blade. A white-haired Klingon begins cutting through the guards before finally taking off Sneed's head. After securing his blade behind his back, the Klingon helps Musiker to her feet, but the drug has left her disoriented. "I told you, do not engage," Worf chides her quietly, as he helps her out of the bar.

Picard and Riker approach Shaw with a proposal that does not involve cooperating with Vadic. Riker reminds him that Jack Crusher was still a person, but Shaw is adamant he will not risk

his crew for the son of Picard's "ex-girlfriend", if indeed he is her son anyway, and that fifteen minutes remained to give Vadic her answer.

In the brig, Jack nonchalantly places a device attached to a line on his wrist against the wall near the force field, and asks the security guard what the power level is, reminding him that he was required to tell him under Starfleet regulations. When the man does so, Jack activates the device to bring down the force field and headbutts the man unconscious.

In sickbay, Riker checks with the chief medical officer, Dr. Ohk, who informs him that Beverly suffered an arterial wound, but she had managed to stop the bleeding and believes Beverly would pull through. She was also under heavy sedation so she could recover, but Riker grabs a hypo and injects it into Beverly's neck despite the doctor's protests.

On the bridge, Shaw reminds Picard that this was not a diplomatic issue anymore, that they had already engaged their enemy. Picard insists they re-establish communication, but Esmar reports that Vadic is hailing them; Shaw orders her put on screen. "It's been centuries since timepieces last ran on the mechanics of gears," Vadic says, "and yet that persistent sound you hear is the gentle ticktock of passing seconds." Picard reminds her they still had time, and Vadic assures them that she will honor the terms, but thought they might like to know the name of her ship. She calls it the Shrike, after the Earth bird: "one that doesn't attack in anger or malice, one that isn't made frantic by hunger but rather kills surgically, carefully." She says they can either give her Jack now or continue to delay, but with each passing moment, she would "peck and jab" at them, until they had nothing left but the choice to give her what they could have given her already. "But certainly, take your time," she ends cheerfully, as she cuts the channel.

Shaw is now convinced they had to turn Jack over, but Esmar reports a security breach: Jack has escaped. Shaw orders a security alert, and to have all shuttlebays and transporter rooms locked down. Hansen, irrespective of whatever rank or post she might have at the time, finds him first; he is holding the transporter chief at phaser-point to unlock the transporter. She calls to the bridge and reports the situation. Picard realizes that Jack has decided to turn himself over anyway, thinking Starfleet wouldn't, because he is trying to protect his mother. Shaw advises Picard to clear his conscience, because whoever Jack was, he was just not worth risking the Titan's crew. He orders Esmar to unlock the transporters. Just then, Riker gently escorts Beverly to the bridge, and Picard is stunned to speechlessness to see her. Her expression leads him to realize what Riker had been getting at earlier. Asserting his rank, Picard belays that order, and has the shuttles and transporters locked down; "the boy stays here." Shaw is convinced Picard is going to get them all killed and asks why he is doing this. Picard replies that Jack is his son too. In the transporter room, the standoff ends, as Jack and Hansen lower their weapons. Resigned to what will come next, Shaw orders full power to forward shields, and La Forge to prepare them to fly. He takes his seat, and tells Picard that whatever happens next was on him now. Picard orders communications open to the Shrike. Vadic compliments Picard on his precise timing, and asks for his answer. Picard looks to Beverly, then says only one word: "Engage!"

The Titan gives Vadic her answer: a spread of photon torpedoes, before veering off. Vadic is almost giddy as she orders her helm to follow. Shaw and Picard both appear to be in agreement: If Vadic wants a fight, she will have to find them first. As the Titan flies into the nebula, Vadic laughs gleefully as the Shrike gives chase.

Seventeen Seconds

Season 3

Episode Number: 23

Season Episode: 3

Originally aired:	Thursday March 02, 2023
Writer:	Jane Maggs, Cindy Appel
Director:	Jonathan Frakes
Show Stars:	Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars:	Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Amanda Plummer (Vadic), Thomas Dekker (Titus Rikka), Chad Lindberg (Ensign Foster), Jin Maley (Ensign Kova Rin Esmar), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Tiffany Shepis (Dr. Ohk), Dean Neistat (Guard), Jermain Hollman (Ensign in Sickbay), Luis Avilez (Security Officer), Allison Acosta (Ensign Vesco)
Summary:	Picard grapples with a life-altering revelation as the crew of the Titan attempt to outmaneuver Vadic, while Raffi and Worf uncover a plot by a vengeful enemy.



The USS Titan-A goes deeper into the Rytan system's nebula, the Shrike hard on her tail, firing torpedoes. Jack Crusher escorts his injured mother Beverly back to sickbay, where a security ensign blames Jack for their predicament. Jack prepares to confront the man, but Beverly calls him back; the crew will need them soon enough.

Captain Shaw orders evasive maneuvers, trying to outrun the Shrike. But the nebula is interfering with their systems, and the Shrike's weapons have damaged

their aft sensors and their warp drive. Picard knows that Vadic could have destroyed them already if she wanted to; she was trying to force them to submit. Riker tells Shaw that they need to hide. Shaw orders La Forge to take them deeper. The Titan soon moves out of the Shrike's sensor range, just as the nebula interference finally brings down the Titan's sensors. "We lost her," Riker sums up. "For now," Picard adds grimly.

At 10 Forward Avenue in Los Angeles, circa 2381, Picard and Riker are celebrating the birth of Riker's firstborn child, Thaddeus, where Picard jokingly toasts that the boy will be raised by "someone endowed with great kindness, patience, and unconditional love" — his mother. Riker appears surprisingly solemn, and explains that they had been aboard the USS Titan when the call came from sickbay, and the way it was said worried him. It had taken seventeen seconds to get from the bridge to sickbay, what Riker called the longest turbolift ride of his life, because he thought something was wrong. It was in that moment that he realized he was now a father, and that all of what one reads about fatherhood went right out the window the moment he saw Thaddeus, so small and so fragile, giving him a feeling that he would burn the world for his son. He hopes that Picard will one day have that feeling too. Just then, a message comes

in from a very disheveled-looking Deanna Troi, who sees they've started with the whiskey and cigars; meanwhile, she has not brushed her hair in 72 hours, and his son just projectile-vomited all over engineering. Riker assures his Imzadi he's on his way, and she tells him to bring the whiskey. Picard has a thoughtful expression as his old first officer leaves.

Back aboard the present-day Titan, Shaw calls on the two ensigns watching out the "back windows" for the Shrike, who report no visual. La Forge reports that engineering has estimate at least two hours for repairs to the warp drive. Just then, the ship violently shakes, Lieutenant T'Veen reports it was an energy surge, with both electrical and biological signatures. Shaw sarcastically considers this "fun" and wonders if anyone else wanted to throw more "weird shit" at him. As La Forge, Esmar and Mura have all pulled 36-hour shifts, he relieves them to take some rest, if they can.

In her quarters, Seven of Nine frustratingly works on a small model while listening to Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus, K.618", when her door chimes. It is La Forge, who wanted to check up on her. Seven is confined to quarters for her earlier insubordination, but thanks her for her concern. La Forge mentions how her father was considered one of the greatest Starfleet engineers who ever lived, and were fine with her following him into Starfleet, but had second thoughts when she decided to be a pilot instead. Seven notes this sounded rehearsed. La Forge thinks nobody believed she belonged either, that she was only there because she was the daughter of Geordi La Forge. One of the few things she had in common with her father was that she too had a hard time making friends, but knew the value of the ones she did make. Shaw might consider Seven insubordinate for helping her friends, but Geordi would not. Seven is touched by this, and sincerely thanks La Forge, before dismissing her to go rest, smiling when La Forge acknowledges her as "Commander Seven".

In sickbay, Beverly gets to work examining an injured man, only showing a couple of cracked ribs. Dr. Ohk brusquely pushes her aside, earning a protest from Jack, who points out she had been injured. Beverly assures him she was fine, and asks Ohk to put her to work. Ohk is dismissive, saying it would take her longer to explain how technology has advanced than it would to just do it herself, before she is called away to engineering. Returning to her patient, Beverly tells him he will be fine, and to take it easy. As the man leaves, Picard and Riker enter. Riker suggests he and Jack step away, but Jack replies there was nothing that could not be said in front of him. Beverly again tells him she will be fine, and Jack leaves with Riker.

Neither Beverly nor Picard seem willing to begin the conversation for a long period, before she finally speaks. She reminds him of a shore leave on Casperia Prime two months before she left the USS Enterprise-E, "a perfect day on borrowed time" as she calls it, before he was called away early. By that time, they both knew they were at the end. Picard replies that he had not known that at all, that he never thought he would never see her again, or spend years wondering what it was he had done, when it was in fact something she had done. Beverly reminds him that they had ended their relationship, but Picard counters that they had only ended their romantic relationship, and for the fifth time at that. That night, Beverly became pregnant with Jack, and wanted to tell him. When he asks why she didn't, she replies that something always came up: refugees on Kalara V, angry about Romulan relocations, kidnapped him for nine days. Then two Reman assassins attacked the ship in the Donatra sector and held him at disruptor-point, and after that, a photon grenade went off meters from him during negotiations with the praetor. She was convinced there would always be attempts on his life. He asks if she never thought it would be different if she had told him, but she believes that when the galaxy called for him, he was not put-upon by it, but loved it, and she was not convinced he would have walked away from that. Picard points out that she made that choice for him, and that she had no right to condemn people before the fact. Beverly reminds him that he always told her how he never wanted a family, that he didn't want to be a father because he was too afraid of becoming like his own. Picard angrily chastises her for using his past to justify her action, using what he confided in her about his fears to justify cutting him out of the biggest decision of his life. Calming himself, he asks her what could have been had he known, what he could have been — a father, or perhaps a husband? He knows now he could never have become his own father, but he could have learned that twenty years earlier. Beverly admits she was terrified when Jack was born; being the son of Jean-Luc Picard would have put a target on his back, and she had already lost both of her parents, her husband, and her son Wesley to the stars that "owned" Picard. As a mother, her whole being was devoted to protecting her child, and she knew she could protect hers... but was not sure if she

could protect his.

In the corridor, Jack paces furiously, while Riker looks on with amusement. Jack tells him to stop looking at him like he was the outcome of a science experiment, but Riker replies that in a way, he was, an experiment that began two decades before he was born, and points out the resemblance to his "dad". Jack counters that Picard was not "Dad" to him. Riker believes Picard to be one of the finest men he has ever known, but Jack is less convinced, saying that he's found only one thing to be true: the bigger the legend, the more disappointing the reality. Riker chalks it up to just being Human, but Jack had heard Picard was positronic now. Just then, two Titan crewmen pass by, glaring at Jack as they make their way to the turbolift; he notices that "accusatory stares" seem to be contagious. Riker reminds him that they had a right to know who or what they were putting their lives on the line for. Jack had not asked for that, nor would he. Riker knows this, but tells him he had to own it, and the best thing he could do was give them a reason to feel good about it. Jack didn't know much about Riker, but recalled that his mother would begin to tell a story about the old crew, and her eyes would light up... but then she would get sad, and stop. He asks if Riker has a family, and Riker responds that he does: he has a wife and a daughter... and he had a son.

As the Titan continues to hide, Picard asks Beverly about the Shrike. She admits she knows nothing; she and Jack worked on worlds Starfleet had forgotten, and ran into trouble from time to time, but nothing like that. He reminds her of how she told him to "trust no one", and she explains that during a supply run on Sarnia Prime, Jack was ambushed by Fenris Rangers, and then Klingons came after him a day later, and even Starfleet had turned on them. Picard was the only person she could trust. She is convinced that what their pursuers want doesn't have anything to do with Jack, but with Picard himself. Picard protests that he knows nothing about Vadiv, and Beverly doesn't either, but she points out that the Shrike was no bounty hunter ship; it was a warship, with "Jean-Luc Picard-sized enemies" behind it. An energy surge shakes the ship again, and Picard makes to return to the bridge... before asking about Jack's accent. Beverly replies that he had gone to school in London and never shaken it, half-jokingly adding that it was probably in his DNA. Before he leaves, he asks if he hadn't deserved a chance, if Jack hadn't deserved a chance to know him. Beverly had told Jack of his parentage when he was old enough, told him where Picard was, and encouraged him to meet his father... and he had chosen not to.

Leaving sickbay, Picard glares for a moment at Jack before brusquely telling Riker to walk with him. When Riker asks what Beverly told him, Picard dismisses it as "immaterial", and that the safety of the ship mattered now. His own paternal instinct kicking in, Riker urges his old captain to speak to Jack, get to know him, because one never knew what they would regret later, remembering the loss of Thaddeus. Picard considers it irreparable, and believes he owes Shaw an apology for placing his ship into unnecessary danger. Meanwhile, the ensign at the aft section gets a visual of the Shrike bearing down on them. Shaw orders battle stations, while wondering aloud how the Shrike had found them, as it should have been impossible. The Shrike's helm reports to Vadiv that the Titan was "right where it should be". The Shrike fires several volleys of torpedoes, causing severe damage. Shaw is hurled across the bridge and seriously injured, blood pouring from his mouth as he staggers to his feet with the help of two of his crew. Blaming Picard and Riker for getting his ship into the situation, Shaw now leaves it in their hands to get them all out, transferring command authorization to Riker pro tem before being taken to sickbay.

T'Veen reports that the Shrike was still on visual, directly behind them. Riker has Picard launch a torpedo towards the Shrike, intending to detonate it with the phasers and cause a concussion wave. Picard gets the idea before he even finishes the thought, and carries out the order. Sure enough, the Shrike is knocked away into the nebula, and T'Veen confirms they were off sensors. Picard half-jokingly tells Riker it might be time he gets called "Number One".

On M'talas Prime, Musiker awakens in her cabin on the SS La Sirena, the local media continuing to play news about the attack on the recruitment center and pinning the blame on Lurak T'Luco. As she disables the feed, she can hear music playing from the main hold, and scrambles for her phaser. Inside, Worf is practicing blade drills with a kur'leth, with "Vallon sonore" by Berlioz playing at full volume. As he finishes, Musiker approaches, demanding to know who he is; Worf easily disarms her before identifying himself. Musiker realizes she is in the presence of a legend, one Picard spoke of all the time. The last thing she remembered was Sneed being about to kill her. Worf tells her it was not her time to join the dead; Musiker recalls the phrase from her transmission to Starfleet Intelligence, and realizes Worf is her mysterious handler. Worf

confirms that his interests align with Starfleet's, and that he is acting as a subcontractor of sorts, fearing some kind of attack. The incident at the recruiting center, using the stolen weapon from the Daystrom Institute, was part of something bigger. Musiker is incensed, having come to that conclusion herself; if that was the case, why did he demand she disengage when she was obviously right? Worf counters that he thought she would get herself killed, or nearly so, and that he had obviously been right about that as well. Musiker is still feeling withdrawals from Sneed's "Splinter" drug, which she had taken just before Worf saved her life. Musiker accuses him of blowing her cover, but Worf points out she had already done that herself. She wonders why she was getting herself involved in a mission that came at such a cost, to her life, her family, and her sobriety. Worf reminds her that she had taken on a mission no one said she should take, but he believed she had the heart of a warrior. He has discovered who paid Sneed to lie about T'Luco: A Human named Titus Rikka, who had multiple underworld contacts. They would track him down and find out the truth together, and stop their plan.

Back on the Titan, Picard and Riker are discussing strategy. Picard is convinced Vadic should be as blind as they are, giving a tactical advantage, but Riker believes they should continue to evade until their warp drive is ready, which La Forge estimates will be in approximately twenty minutes. Given the capabilities of the Shrike, Riker insists they should rely on defensive strategy, but Picard thinks they may be forced to re-engage. Riker points out that the Titan was not the Enterprise, but is welcome to his old captain's input regardless. Riker orders La Forge to "keep [them] squirrely" to buy enough time for repairs.

Small pools of blood line the deck leading into sickbay, as Beverly escorts one of the injured inside. Jack is reassuring a wounded ensign that while she may have lost a bit of blood, they had plenty available, and she would be fine. Dr. Ohk is attending to Captain Shaw, who is gasping for breath. With the other crew stable, Beverly examines the captain herself using her hands to determine what was causing his pain, and finds he is suffering from internal bleeding that the imaging scanner didn't pick up. With Jack's help, they're able to get him on his side. "How does she keep finding us?" Shaw asks. Jack can only apologize, not meaning for any of this to happen. All Shaw can do is repeat the question. Jack looks down at the blood on the deck, and comes to a realization, before immediately heading out.

The ensign at the stern reports no sign of the Shrike, and engineering reports ten minutes before warp drive is online. Another energy pulse rocks the ship. T'Veen again reports that the pulses have both electrical and biological signatures; she has never seen anything like it, believing it to be some kind of anomaly rather than a mere nebula. Picard sees that going straight through is not a recommended option, and T'Veen confirms this, that logic suggested going deeper would be unwise. Riker tells La Forge to change course, and inform engineering that however long it took them to emerge from the nebula was all the time they were getting to repair the warp drive. Jack attempts to get up to the bridge, needing to warn them about something, but the security officer reminds him they were at red alert and tells him to turn around.

As the Titan approaches the edge of the nebula, the Shrike is hard on her heels. Engineering reports warp drive is ready, and Riker orders a course plotted for the nearest starbase, while also having communications prepare an emergency SOS before going to warp. On the Shrike, Vadic orders "the device" to be prepared, and her crew confirms it was ready at her command. Mura reports a massive energy buildup unlike anything he had ever seen. The Shrike fires off a projectile that opens a portal directly in front of the Titan, pulling it back into the nebula. As the Titan again tries to escape, Vadic orders the weapon fired again, pulling the Titan back. Picard sees that Vadic is trying to corral them, using her weapons and the nebula's energy pulses to cripple them. Now, he insists, they had to fight back. Riker orders La Forge to take them back into the nebula.

On M'talas Prime, Musiker makes her way through the streets, before spotting Worf leaning against a nearby wall. She had told him to stay back, but it was not in his nature to "stay back"; he also thinks she looks "conspicuous" in the hood she is wearing. Musiker points out the "warrior gear" he has on, to which Worf corrects it was "casual". Musiker sarcastically asks if that was the kind of thing he would wear to a "Tuesday beheading". Worf is glad to see she is feeling better, but Musiker admits she's not; she just gets into it when the moment calls. Worf spots Rikka behind her, and tells her the moment is calling. Worf directs her to pursue him, but she loses him in the crowd. Worf, however, catches up to him, and body-slams him through a table just as Musiker catches up. "Beheadings are on Wednesdays," he corrects her.

The Shrike continues to peck away at the Titan, pushing her deeper inside the nebula. Picard sees they are running out of options, something Riker is all too aware of. Meanwhile, Jack approaches Seven in her quarters, asking about her time with the Fenris Rangers. "Blood in the water," he says, calling it the "oldest trick in the book", believing that was how the Shrike was finding them. They were leaving breadcrumbs, something that didn't need long-range sensors to pick up, but a mass spectrometer. Seven knows the warp coils are insulated with verterium — and they had a leak. Seven knows they have to be sure, but as she and Jack go to leave, the security officer stops them; Shaw's orders still stood. Jack solves that problem by knocking the lieutenant out with a single punch. "You're insane," Seven observes dryly as they make their way out.

Seven and Jack discover the source of the leak, donning gas masks to prevent the poison from killing them (though Jack wryly notes that with all the things trying to kill him that day, it would have to join the queue). Seven realizes the ship's computers are not detecting the leak, and when they discover the source, they find evidence of short-range phaser fire. Seven immediately calls the bridge with their discovery, and Picard comes to the same realization she did: they had a saboteur onboard. T'Veen reports that there was a massive gravity well at the center of the nebula, and recommends they change course. Picard believes they could use the discovery of sabotage to lure the Shrike into a trap and gain a tactical advantage, but Riker reminds him of what he had said earlier: he was not going to risk the ship or its crew. He orders La Forge to inform engineering to prepare for warp. He was bringing the ship and crew home.

As he helps work to stop the leak, Jack is ambushed by Ensign Foster, who appears unaffected by the verterium exposure. Foster removes Jack's oxygen mask and hurls him across the room, while Seven reports she's stopped the leak. When Jack punches him in the face, Foster's face begins to reshape itself. Jack collapses to the deck as Foster flees, while Seven repeatedly tries to contact him.

Aboard La Sirena, Rikka shakes violently in his restraints as Worf and Musiker play "good cop, bad cop"; Musiker is more than willing to torture Rikka to find out what she needs to know, while Worf takes a more reasonable, almost passive approach. Musiker recognizes the shaking as withdrawal symptoms, and pulls a container of narcotic from her pocket, holding it in front of him, taunting him. No one knew he was there, she tells him, and he would not leave until they knew what he knew.

Jack returns to consciousness, gasping for breath, seeing Seven standing over him, with what looked like tree roots growing on the ceiling behind her, and her voice telling him to "connect the branches"; he also sees a door of some sort. In actuality, Seven is frantically trying to waken him, and hauls him to sickbay, calling Picard to tell him Jack was injured. Riker urges his old captain to go. Beverly and Ohk immediately take Jack in, while Picard quietly tells the turbolift to take him to sickbay. He recalls what Riker had said when Thaddeus was born, and now Picard is having the longest turbolift ride of his life. When he arrives, Jack has flatlined, and Beverly frantically works to resuscitate him. After a moment, Jack lets out a long gasp of breath, as his vital signs return to normal.

Musiker begins to lose patience with Rikka's evasiveness, demanding to know who stole the weapons from Daystrom. Rikka again tries to blame the Romulans, but Musiker is not buying it. Rikka finally admits that he broke into Daystrom himself with "like-minded souls", enemies of the Federation, and that the theft was not about the portal weapon; that was just to keep Starfleet guessing. Musiker realizes they stole something else, something far worse. She also sees that what Rikka is displaying is not withdrawal. Worf asks how long Rikka has been away from the Great Link.

Picard returns to the bridge, now that Jack was stable. He again urges Riker to engage the Shrike to protect the crew, but Riker retorts that he is protecting the crew by trying to get them home. Picard is aware that Riker is fearful of loss. Riker is offended by this, knowing full well what loss feels like, and tells Picard he is out of line. Picard heatedly demands to know how long Riker will continue with a "failing strategy" before he changes it, before Riker coldly tells him to sit down: he was the captain of the ship now.

Worf recognizes that Rikka is a Changeling, and what Musiker mistakes for withdrawal symptoms is in fact the Changeling need to regenerate in a liquid form. Rikka taunts the "solids" that they were too late, the Federation would crumble. He finally dissolves into liquid and tries to escape, but Worf vaporizes him with a phaser. Meanwhile, Jack regains consciousness and reports

what he had seen when he confronted Foster, realizing that he too is a Changeling. Meanwhile, Foster sets an explosive device near a power conduit.

Worf explains to Musiker that the Changelings were a powerful enemy once, united in purpose, but when the Dominion War ended, a terrorist faction broke away from the Great Link and refused to accept their defeat. A trusted friend in the Link warned Worf of the threat, but if Starfleet acknowledged a faction of rogue Changelings, it could potentially ignite another war with the Dominion. He does not think the rogue Changelings intend to start another Dominion War, but they are preparing some kind of attack, possibly with Starfleet as a target. He thinks Musiker's instinct, that they stole the portal weapon and used it to cover up an even greater heist, may be likely, and suggests they go to the Daystrom station and find out for themselves — as partners.

Seven calls the bridge with Jack's suspicion, but as the ship prepares to go to warp, Foster's bomb goes off, disabling the warp drive. Riker now has no option but to attack, and orders the ship to come about. The leak has been repaired, which meant they should be coming behind the Shrike... but the Shrike has already turned to engage them. Riker orders tactical to fire everything they have, letting loose a volley of torpedoes. But the Shrike uses its portal weapon to redirect the torpedoes back into the Titan herself, completely disabling her engines. Mura reports that the Shrike was retreating. T'Veen warns that they were now sinking towards the gravity well, and La Forge has no control over anything.

Picard tries to reach out to his old first officer. "Remove yourself from the bridge," Riker says coldly. "You've just killed us all." With no way to respond to that, Picard leaves. The crew all stare in shock first at Riker, then at one another, as the Titan continues to plunge towards the gravity well...

No Win Scenario

Season 3

Episode Number: 24

Season Episode: 4

Originally aired: Thursday March 09, 2023
Writer: Terry Matalas, Sean Tretta
Director: Jonathan Frakes
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars: Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Amanda Plummer (Vadic), Chad Lindberg (Ensign Foster), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Jin Maley (Ensign Kova Rin Esmar), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Tiffany Shepis (Dr. Ohk), Yumarie Morales (Young Cadet), Jasmine Akakpo (Titan Ensign), Garth Kemp (The Face), Dylan J. Locke (Cadet #1)
Summary: Picard, Riker and crew must confront the sins of their past as the Titan drifts helplessly in a mysterious space anomaly.



At 10 Forward Avenue in 2396, Admiral Picard sits alone at a corner table as a plate is put in front of him. As he prepares to dig into his lunch, a group of cadets from Starfleet Academy approach, asking about an encounter he had had with the Hirogen, peppering him with questions about being hunted by the Alpha. Picard tries to deflect, saying he was not one for telling stories, but the cadets are insistent, asking how he escaped. Picard decides to go ahead, explaining that Lieutenant Commander Worf had con-

structed a "deadfall trap", turning the hunter into the prey. He goes on to urge them to remember that, no matter how bleak or unwinnable a situation may seem, as long as they and their crew remained steadfast in their dedication, one was never without hope.

Five years later, in the present day, Picard stands alone in his quarters on the crippled USS Titan-A as it continues its descent towards the gravity well in the Ryton system nebula, crashing into asteroids on the way. On the bridge, Captain Riker orders more power pulled from other systems to reinforce the shields, but Ensign Esmar reports that they had no systems to pull from. Engines were still down, and they kept hemorrhaging power every time Ensign La Forge tried to engage them. Engineering had sustained damage during the Shrike's attack. Lieutenant Mura reports that main power was down to nine percent, and the more power they used, the faster it depleted; the ship was bleeding to death. Riker suggests pulling power from either the warp core or the impulse reactors, but Esmar warns that it would cause the reactors to melt down. Lieutenant T'Veen concurs; even if they rerouted power temporarily, they would not have enough power to divert it back to prevent a chain reaction that would destroy the ship. Weapon power was zeroed out, and they were sinking faster towards the gravity well. Diverting power to shields would affect life support, and diverting from the engines would mean they could not escape the gravity well when they needed to. Riker asks how long they would have if they diverted everything

to life support; Esmar's grim estimate is only a few hours. Riker orders all non-essential systems shut down, and the crew to be gathered into common areas to conserve life support power. Just then, a blinding flash heralds a bio-electrical wave striking the ship. Mura reports damage to the shields, warning that they will lose shields altogether if they don't lower them between impacts. Riker orders the shields lowered.

Riker goes to Picard to report the situation: The Titan was dead in the water, and would be crushed by the gravity well within four hours, but life support would have failed by then. He then concedes that Picard had been right earlier. He remembers seeing the burial of his son Thaddeus, thinking that while the hole in the ground was only six feet deep, it felt like infinite emptiness. He and Picard had been across the far reaches of space, but nothing had proved to him that there was anything after death, and he had tried to shake that ever since Thaddeus died. Troi felt everything, but she couldn't live with him feeling nothing, and Riker admits he couldn't live with that either, which was why he left and came with Picard — because he was running from death, only to find it again. "This is the end, my friend," he sums up grimly, and advises his old captain to take what time they had left to get to know his son, and put his affairs in order. Picard can only watch sadly as Riker leaves to return to the bridge.

Seven of Nine, phaser in hand, goes into the quarters of Ensign Foster, the man Jack Crusher had identified as a Changeling. As she opens the closet, the body of the real Foster falls to the deck.

Seven reports to Riker that the Changeling had killed Foster days before ambushing Jack in the nacelle control room. To her shock, Riker orders her to keep it quiet. Seven reminds him that there was a saboteur onboard, but Riker points out that if the Changeling's mission had been to deliver Jack to Vadic, it had failed, and if Vadic had wanted to come after them, she would have done so already. Riker makes it clear he is not suggesting they do nothing, but is emphatic about keeping it quiet for the sake of crew morale, which was already low. He says he could reinstate her, but having her working in an unofficial capacity could work to their advantage. Seven understands completely, and agrees. "Go get the bastard," Riker orders. Seven begins walking through the corridors, eyes alert for any sign of an infiltrator.

In sickbay, as the body of Ensign Foster is put into a body bag, Beverly Crusher counts down from seven to one, just as another flash heralds a bio-electrical wave, not an asteroid as they had expected. Picard enters a moment later, and Beverly asks about their situation. A grim look and a shake of the head is all the answer she needs. Picard understands time is precious, but asks for a moment or two alone with Jack.

Captain Shaw is alone in his quarters, sharpening a knife against a whet stone resting on his propped-up and injured leg, when his door chimes insistently. His visitor turns out to be Seven, and he sarcastically congratulates her on the "bang-up job" her "heroes" have done with his ship. Seven gets straight to the point: they had a Changeling onboard, and given the state of the corpse in sickbay, it had been aboard since before they had picked up the Crushers. And as much as it pained her to admit, they had a major personnel problem, and no one knew the ship better than Shaw did. Shaw can clearly recognize the problem, and beckons her in.

Alone in the conference room, Riker begins recording a message for Troi in the event the Titan is ever recovered, but he finds himself unable to find the words he needs. Meanwhile, Picard takes Jack to the holodeck, the program a recreation of 10 Forward Avenue, which he calls a place of great significance to him, and asks if Jack had ever been there, to which he says he had not. Picard invites him to have a drink, offering something from his own backyard, but Jack admits to not being much of a "wine guy", preferring whiskey. Jack is surprised the holodeck is running given the state of the ship, to which Picard explains that the holodecks ran on an independent power source to provide a kind of sanctuary in times of distress. Jack sarcastically comments on the idea of cramming into a "tropical paradise" while the ship implodes around them, but says this "fake place" was as good as any to die in. Jack begins to talk seriously about the "elephant in the room", before asking about when Picard lost his hair. Picard notes his age in the early 20s and tells him to "enjoy it while [he] can", earning a laugh. He asks to know more about Jack's life, and Jack admits he doesn't know where to begin. Picard then decides to cut to the chase, and ask why Jack never wanted to get to know him. Jack is quiet for a moment, before mentioning that there was something Picard might be interested in. He recalls a supply run to M'talas IV, "a vile place" as he calls it, where he was trapped in a cargo hold with an Andorian with a broken antenna, which he had tried to help reset. Picard listens as he goes on.

Shaw wonders why a Changeling would infiltrate the ship as a transporter operator, but Seven admits she didn't know, as she had never encountered them before. Shaw has, calling them "walking, talking clay-dough", able to replicate appearances on sight, as well as voices, mannerisms, and speech patterns. Typically the easiest way to discover an infiltrator was to ask a simple question about something they should know, and if they gave a wrong answer, "boom, Changeling," as he puts it. Seven points out that it would require considerable knowledge about the rest of the crew. Shaw suddenly remarks that they had both gotten off on the wrong foot, and had underestimated Seven, believing she would be a great captain some day, before qualifying that this would be something he would say if he were a Changeling ("and not just a dick," as Seven adds). However, he does admit she was right about one thing: there were five hundred people on the ship, making it difficult to find one infiltrator. He suggests baiting the Changeling, making them come to her, by "steal[ing] their pot", before "sadly" noting he didn't mean cannabis. He explains that Changelings could not hold solid form for too long, and had to regenerate in liquid form. Based on Starfleet's files on Odo, he suspects the Changeling Foster had some kind of receptacle in which to regenerate, and tells her to find it; it would have leftover "residue goo" (which he shortens to "resi-goo") which could be input into the computer, allowing her to scan the ship for their saboteur.

As another wave shakes the ship, Seven tears Foster's quarters apart, searching for the pot. She then notices a shadow in one of the light fixtures, and finds the pot, laughing to herself as she finds "resi-goo" at the bottom of it.

On the bridge of the Shrike, outside the nebula, Vadic rises from her chair and walks over to a nearby console. With a knife, she removes her left hand, revealing that she too is a Changeling. The material shapes into a levitating face, which demands a report. She explains that the Titan could not escape the gravity well. When told to pursue, Vadic says it was not possible with her ship's payload. The face again demands she pursue. Vadic protests that it would be suicide, but her contact counters that it would be suicide to refuse, reminding her that everything was expendable, even Vadic herself, in their effort to obtain and deliver Jack, or "the asset" as it calls him. Vadic finally agrees, and orders the portal device disengaged from the ship before the Shrike returns to the nebula.

At 10 Forward Avenue in 2396, Picard relates the story to the cadets about his encounter with the Children of Tama, whose language was based on metaphor. Having told several stories by then, he tries to get back to his lunch, but one cadet asks about an incident with his friend Jack Crusher, regarding a mishap aboard a shuttle, later calling it a "no-win scenario". Picard recalls he had been about the same age as the cadets, and perhaps even "a little reckless".

In the present, a young ensign from the Titan's crew enters, asking if it was private; several other officers are waiting outside the door. Picard beckons them all in. Jack can see what Picard had been trying to get at, that their environment would make things "better" somehow, but he didn't feel he needed it. Picard, however, thinks that everyone needs some kind of connection, and tells him to look around. The Titan crew are both tired and scared, but are choosing to stick together, some holding onto one another, as if it was the last moment of their lives. Jack finally decides to open up, explaining he had grown up on his own. He had his mother, but he was content with being on the outside, and didn't feel he needed a "moment". Picard admits that perhaps he himself does.

Seven calls the biochemistry lab to have a substance — the Changeling residue — scanned. Though the biochemistry lab is closed to conserve power, she insists it is an emergency. Just then, an ensign pulls his phaser and kills one of the other crew, before turning and vaporizing the pot in Seven's hand. Seven pulls her own weapon and blasts off one of the man's arms, seeing the Changeling regenerate its solid form for herself. He charges at Seven, and she fires several more shots, and it goes completely gelatinous before seeping into the wall vents. She calls sickbay to inform them an officer has been killed. Beverly, who seems to know what is coming, remarks to herself that it was about to get worse.

Jack asks Picard about the "worst jam", other than their current situation, he had ever been in. Picard remembers it had involved Jack's namesake. Jack had always wondered why his mother had named him for her first husband. Picard explains that the elder Jack had been his best friend at the Academy, and that if he had had the opportunity, that was the name he would have chosen for his son too. They had been on leave on Argelius IV, and had met two "delightful and enthusiastic" young women there before being called back to the USS Stargazer. Picard had

decided to "borrow" a shuttle for him and Jack to accept the women's "invitation" for a romantic encounter ("get laid" as the younger Jack puts it). On their way back to the ship, a micrometeoroid shower struck the shuttle at high speed, disabling the engines and life support, and Picard had disabled the comms so no one on the ship could know they had "borrowed" the shuttle. However, they had improvised a system diverting power between the docking thrusters and life support, "inching" their way in a ten-hour trip before they made it back to the ship. They had been in sync throughout, Jack navigating, Picard firing the thrusters. Picard can see that Jack has already heard this story, and asks if his mother had told it.

Just then, Shaw enters, walking with a cane, complimenting the "harrowing tale of survival", and noting that Jack's mother was "liberal" with her pain medication. He asks Jack if Picard ever brought up when they had first met; he had been aboard the USS Constance on stardate 44002.3, thirty-four years earlier. Picard remembers all too well what he's referring to: Shaw is a survivor of the Battle of Wolf 359, in which forty Federation starships battled against a single Borg cube. Shaw had been in engineering during the battle, and then the next moment, he said it felt like space was burning. Fifty of the Constance's crew made it to the life deck, but there was only one escape pod, with ten seats. They had all been friends, and they didn't fight over who would live or die; they waited for orders. A lieutenant had come down, and began picking out the crew to go into the pod, and Shaw, "just some dipshit from Chicago" as he calls himself, was the last to be chosen. The lieutenant didn't even choose herself, simply ordering the crew to go. Ever since, he has always wondered if the lieutenant had made a mistake. He asks Jack if he knew where his "old man" was during the battle, before telling him: Picard had been on the cube. He had been assimilated by the Borg, who had given him the name Locutus: "the only Borg so deadly, they gave him a goddamn name," he rages. Jack tries to shut him down, but to Shaw's clear surprise, Picard stops him, saying it was alright, and that he understood, before quietly leaving. Shaw, clearly shaken by his memories, looks around at his crew staring at him, and apologizes, saying that at some point "asshole became a substitute for charm".

Jack catches up to Picard in the corridor, assuring him he didn't need to explain himself, but Picard was glad to talk to him anyway. Just then, Beverly sees them, explaining that she had been counting the period between the energy waves from the gravity well striking the ship, and had found a pattern, a pattern that matched that of contractions leading to childbirth. If the smaller waves were any indication, that "birth" would destroy the ship. They had to escape, but they had no power... until Jack realizes that the waves' energy could be used to let them "hitch a ride" out.

The three of them take the idea to Riker, who considers it insane. Both Picard and Jack insist it could work, using the waves to ride out, away from the nebula, the gravity well, and the "space babies". Beverly clarifies that it was clear they were swimming in the amniotic fluid of a spaceborne lifeform, and that they had encountered similar creatures in the past, such as the Farpoint creature. Familiar with the shuttle story, Riker points out that the Titan was not a two-man shuttle, and can only see trouble: using the thrusters would drain the power, they had no sensors to navigate the asteroid field, and the power array could explode. Starfleet protocol stated that they had to stay put and wait for rescue, but Picard counters that no one was coming to help them: if they stayed put, they would die. Looking down at the recording he was trying to make for Troi, Riker replies that at least they would leave something behind. Seeing this as well, Beverly points out that Deanna would tell them it was about trust. They were all together in that moment, and she thinks they should do what they had spent most of their lives learning to be great at. Picard agrees, reminding him that they had been in such situations before, and if it was the end, they would face it together. Riker finally gives in, recalling that the nacelles were protected from absorbing too much radiation, but if the covers were opened manually, they could possibly absorb energy from the wave that would go directly into the warp core. All are in agreement. "Then let's get the hell out of here," Riker says, speaking for them all.

Riker addresses the entire crew, explaining the plan. He elects to be honest, calling it a "hell of a risk", and that if anything went wrong, they would know quickly. Most of them do not know him, but he knows something about them: He was only as effective as they were, and his experience had taught him that if they worked together, they would get through.

Picard and Seven approach Shaw in his quarters. Picard knows he was the last person Shaw wanted to see, but they needed his help, despite the fact that Shaw was indeed a "dipshit from Chicago". Shaw is aware of the plan, and knows they realized the nacelle covers are two decades

old, and none of the engineering crew knew how to hot-wire it, so they came to an "old grease monkey". Shaw tells Seven to give him five minutes and meet him in nacelle control.

Beverly counts the period between waves, and warns Riker they would need at least one more for it to work. Meanwhile, Shaw and Seven get to work. Shaw is aware that if the Changeling really wanted to sabotage them, the best place to do it would be right there and then. He comes to a realization, and as much as she hates to admit it, Seven has the same idea, and reports it to Riker. Picard has Jack stay on the bridge with his mother, while Riker has all of the available power diverted to thrusters. All over the ship, power begins to go down as it is diverted, and Esmar warns they had only a few minutes of life support. Riker tells the crew to take a deep breath and hold it if they can. Shaw calls in, needing a few more minutes for the nacelle covering. Beverly's readings show the last wave coming in two minutes, giving Shaw only that much time. Riker then turns the conn over to Picard, as he was the only person there with any experience "flying blind". Taking the center seat, Picard has La Forge bring them about to position them for the wave, and aft thrusters at one-quarter, before giving the order: "Engage."

The crew works to divert every available bit of power they can for the thrusters, as they needed full power to ride the wave. Shaw is able to get the cover open for the port nacelle. Riker asks if they can manage it alone, and they assure him they can. The door opens to herald La Forge, who says she was sent down to help. She asks if they would still be able to fly with only one cover open. Just then, Seven puts her phaser to La Forge's head. She says that Captain Riker had sent her to help, but Seven had told Riker not to send anyone. When La Forge refers to Seven as "Commander Hansen", that proves to be her undoing, and Seven fires; La Forge was the Changeling. Shaw asks how she knew, and Seven pointedly replies that La Forge always called her "Commander Seven", out of respect. "Good call," he concedes, and gets back to work.

The real La Forge is at the helm, working with the thrusters. Riker asks for an update on the nacelle covers, just as Shaw disconnects the system. "Open for business," he replies. But they had the asteroid field in front of them, and La Forge has no contact sensors. Picard has Jack call out the contacts, while Picard orders the thrusters, just like he had on the Stargazer shuttle. On one particularly close call, Jack tells Picard to wait a few seconds before giving the order. Picard elects to go with his instinct, and sure enough, it works out. Thrusters were up to 98 percent, but there was no more power to divert. With nothing left but to go all in, Riker orders power diverted from life support. T'Pol counts down to the gravimetric detonation from the gravity well, and a few seconds after "one", the wave goes off. The energy goes into the open covers directly into the warp core, bringing systems back online. Picard orders La Forge to gun the engines and stay with the wave. T'Pol reports the nebula was changing around them.

Suddenly, Mura brings them up short: the Shrike is directly in front of them, and Vadic is clearly eager for a fight. Riker asks if the tractor beam is operating, and when La Forge confirms it is, he orders the beam to pick up one of the asteroids. When he judges the time right, he orders keel thrusters, and then has the beam cut, hurling the asteroid head-on into the Shrike, which tumbles head-over-heels while the Titan sails right by. The Shrike crew frantically reports that the warp core had gone into emergency shutdown to stop it from going critical, and impulse engines are offline. Vadic can only sit, head in her hands, as she has again lost her quarry.

Shaw and Seven arrive on the bridge as the nebula begins to break apart, and thousands of jellyfish-like creatures swim around the ship. "To seek out new life," Beverly whispers in wonder. Riker, glad to have survived, thinks they should "boldly get the hell out of here", and orders La Forge to take them to warp. The Titan crew, even Shaw himself, are greatly relieved to have survived the ordeal together and would now be going home.

At 10 Forward Avenue five years earlier, Picard wraps up his story to the cadets, explaining that one was only as good as those around them, and that their crew become a part of them: "They lift you up to accomplish the things you could never do alone." Again, he tries to get back to his lunch, when someone else suddenly speaks up from the bar — Jack, wearing a hat and trying to look inconspicuous. He mentions how Picard went on about his crew and life in Starfleet, but he wonders: what about life outside of Starfleet? What about an actual family? Unaware of who he actually is at this time, Picard says simply that he considered Starfleet to be all the family he ever needed. In the present, Picard suddenly recalls that memory, and connects the dots.

Riker is speaking with Troi over the comms, trying to explain his feelings, reaching out after what the Titan had just been through. She assures him that she was glad that he was alright, as was the crew. He admits that something was different now, and he didn't quite have the words

for it, but they had witnessed a birth, and it reminded him that there was a whole universe out there, and that it could be both beautiful and amazing. She notes he had not said anything so "lovely" in a long time, and Riker concedes this, apologizing for it, and expresses his willingness to fix things with her. She asks if he and Picard were in trouble, and he admits he didn't know yet.

"Admiral's log, stardate 78183.10. We have managed to escape death at the hands of our unknown enemy. Although we're free temporarily from the terror of the Shrike, too many questions linger. Who is this Vadic? And what exactly does she want with my son?"

In his quarters, Jack throws some water on his face when he sees a red, spreading growth reflected in the mirror. Voices begin echoing in his mind, whispering phrases like "find me" and "together soon", while his mind's eye sees visions of apocalypse and a door opening. After pounding his head and trying to clear the images, Jack is only left to look, haunted, at his own reflection.

Imposters

Season 3

Episode Number: 25

Season Episode: 5

Originally aired: Thursday March 16, 2023
Writer: Cindy Appel, Chris Derrick
Director: Dan Liu
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars: Michelle Forbes (Commander Ro Laren), Orla Brady (Laris), Amanda Plummer (Vadic), Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Anthony Azizi (Orion), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Aaron Stanford (Sneed), Kirk Acevedo (Krinn), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Amy Earhart (Titan Computer (voice)), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Grace Lee (La Sirena Computer (voice)), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar), Tiffany Shepis (Dr. Ohk), Hope Brown (Transport Officer), Justin Dobies (Bridge Security Officer), Alessandro Garcia (Intrepid Security Officer #1), William Greenberg (Male Changeling Ensign), John Pope (Young Ensign), Tarina Pouncy (Intrepid Security Officer #2)
Summary: Caught by Starfleet and facing court martial, paranoia grows as Picard struggles to uncover whether a prodigal crewman from his past has returned as an ally — or an enemy hellbent on destroying them all.



The crew of the USS Titan-A is making their way back home after their ordeal in the Rytan system; Lieutenant T'Veen is examining the material left over from the spaceborne creatures' birth, Lieutenant Mura checks in with Ensign Esmar about an update on repairs, and Ensign La Forge struggles to keep awake as she checks the status of the thrusters from the helm. Suddenly, Jack Crusher, wearing a red Starfleet uniform, comes up to the bridge and begins shooting them all down with a phaser. As the wounded Esmar tries to crawl away, Jack walks right up to them. Esmar tells him they know

what he really is, before his phaser comes up to finish the ensign off. The hull around him, and Esmar's face, begin to grow the same red roots he had seen in his mind's eye.

Jack is suddenly standing in his quarters, the phaser in his hand. His shaking hands drop the weapon to the deck, as his eyes begin to glow red, and he hears his mother Beverly in his mind telling him to come home.

"Acting captain's log, stardate 78186.03. We've limped to the edge of the Alpha Quadrant to pause for repairs to our warp core and other essential systems. Still no sign of Vadic and the Shrike. Perhaps our return to Federation space has offered us a bit of a reprieve. So now we have a chance to focus on all the other pressing matters.

Picard and Riker meet with Captain Shaw and Seven of Nine in the Titan's observation lounge, wondering how a Changeling was able to get aboard the ship undetected. Riker recalls that Changelings could mimic appearances on sight alone, but not internal physiology. Seven explains that all new crewmembers go through an internal imaging chamber before reporting to verify they are not shapeshifters, standard protocol since the Dominion War. Riker thinks Starfleet will want to look into that, but he knows they will want something else: Answers from him and Picard about their commandeering the Titan and endangering the crew. "Time to go home and face the music," Picard agrees. Riker rises and officially returns command of the ship back to Shaw. Shaw then tells them that he has already contacted Starfleet, and they are already sending a ship to meet them. He then turns to Seven, asking if she would like to "face the music stated or un-stated." She replies "stated," and so he reinstates her as his first officer. He then decides to step outside, so the three of them can get their "bullshit story" straight. After he leaves, Picard tells them he will bear the brunt of the responsibility himself.

Picard then meets with the Crushers, explaining the situation. Beverly apologizes for putting him in that position, but Picard waves it off, saying that the important thing is that they are safe and can return to their lives, and that perhaps he could be part of it. Beverly, however, doesn't think it's over, wanting to find out how a Changeling got past the ship's internal security systems, and asks to examine the dead Changeling who had impersonated Ensigns Foster and La Forge. Picard gives her the go-ahead, wanting to find out more about Vadic's intentions to better strengthen their case with Starfleet. After she leaves, Jack jokingly asks if he should find a comfortable pair of restraints. Picard assures him that Starfleet was built on reason, and that he could be persuasive if need be, something Jack can believe. Picard asks if he might consider a more "honest vocation", given that many "rebels" from all corners of the galaxy have found their way to Starfleet. Jack doesn't think that likely, and says that once he is done with Starfleet, he will be on his way.

Meanwhile, aboard the SS La Sirena on M'talas Prime, Musiker is sparring with metal fighting sticks against Worf's kur'leth. Worf is able to disarm her and headbutt her to the deck, holding his blade to her neck. He warns that the enemy's aggressiveness will always reveal their weakness, and that she could have sacrificed a move to reveal his. Musiker thinks she already knows his weakness — talking. Worf retorts that impulsiveness, stubbornness, and shortsightedness are hers. After getting as good as he gives, Worf blocks Musiker's attacks with one hand and tosses her to the ground once more. As Musiker gets back on her feet, Worf suddenly sets his blade on the deck and goes into a meditative pose, stopping Musiker short. Just then, a priority communication comes in from Starfleet Intelligence. Worf's handler is making contact, 24 hours after he made his request for access to Daystrom Station. Musiker is impatient, thinking that if the attack on the recruiting center was just a distraction, a bunch of "terrorist goo-freaks" were out there planning another attack. To their surprise, however, the request is denied. The unknown handler tells them to "find another way" before terminating contact. Musiker wonders why they would be denied access and yet still told to pursue; Worf assumes this comes from someone higher up in the chain of command. He accepts that they will be standing down, but Musiker refuses, willing to break into the station herself, thinking that Worf has not sacrificed nearly half as much as she has. Worf hurls a d'k tahg into the deck, warning her not to presume what he has or has not sacrificed. He reminds her that Daystrom Station was protected by a sophisticated AI system that requires security clearance from Starfleet Command to bypass. In that case, Musiker wonders, how did Changelings from District Six get in? Worf concedes only Sneed could have answered that, had he not been forced to decapitate the Ferengi to save Musiker. However, he is aware of someone in Sneed's circle: Krinn, the kingpin of the V'Lashi crime syndicate, who specializes in high-security infiltration.

As Worf and Musiker walk the streets, they suddenly begin to clear out. Worf explains that they were now the "alphas" of District Six, having destabilized the criminal element there. Musiker decides to go with it (not quite jokingly saying that sometimes "work is fun"), before drawing her phaser and firing a shot into the air. She loudly announces they are looking for Krinn, and that what happened to Sneed will happen to them if they don't give him up. Getting no answer, she turns to find Worf kneeling in the middle of the street. When asked what he is doing, he replies that he is waiting for the ecology of District Six to right itself. Musiker muses that they will indeed need a backup plan.

The Titan is met by the Duderstadt-class USS Intrepid, which orders them to stand down.

Seven reports receiving a secure transmission that the *Intrepid* is sending a shuttlecraft over with a security team. Shaw wonders what might be wrong with their transporters, and all Esmar can report is that their security officer insisted on using a shuttle, something Shaw considers strange. Picard and Riker share uneasy glances, before Picard leans over to Seven, quietly telling her he might need one more favor. Seven replies he had better do it while he can.

Picard and Riker accompany Shaw, humming a tune and looking rather pleased with himself, in the turbolift. When Picard asks him to stop, he apologizes, saying he feels "chipper," though of course not about their impending discipline. Riker reminds him that they have saved the galaxy a few times, and Picard adds he hopes they'll remember. Shaw, on the other hand, thinks they might remember when they crashed the saucer section of the *USS Enterprise-D* into a planet, or when "someone" (tilting his head at Picard) violated the Prime Directive so they could "snog a villager on Ba'ku," or when they nearly wiped out all of humanity with a time paradox in the Devron system, remarking on a "real chicken-and-egg thing happening" when it came to rescues from danger. "Those were the days," Picard says wistfully. As they round the corner, both Picard and Riker are shocked to see Ro Laren, a former officer from the *Enterprise-D*, now back in uniform as a Starfleet commander, walking towards them. Ro glances at them for a moment before turning to Shaw, formally asking permission to come aboard. Meanwhile, Seven runs into Jack in the corridor and takes him by the arm, saying she is taking him somewhere they can't find him. Ro informs Picard and Riker that Starfleet is requesting them to submit to questioning, and that anything they say could be used against them if charges are brought up. Riker asks what they could be charged with, and she replies simply: "Treason."

Seven takes Jack into guest quarters; when he protests that he can handle himself, she replies that his father asked her to hide him, handing him a duffel bag. When he looks inside, he immediately refuses, but Seven tells him it would be better for him to hide in plain sight when the security officers come searching. Inside the bag is a Starfleet uniform.

In sickbay, Beverly and Dr. Ohk conduct the autopsy on the dead Changeling, still in the image of Ensign La Forge. Beverly asks the real La Forge to confirm for the record that the corpse is indeed not her; La Forge's response is to turn and vomit onto the deck, which Beverly takes as a "yes." Beverly reviews the facts: On death, most Changelings return to their liquid form, but this one remained in its most recent replicated form. She slices into the skin, which to her surprise begins to bleed. The Changeling body has no DNA whatsoever, and yet projects a blood-like plasma, which means it could fool the traditional blood screening. La Forge wonders what that could mean.

Picard wonders how Ro could be back in Starfleet, thinking that she should be in prison for what she did. Riker points out that it has been thirty years, and that the Maquis are no longer an enemy. Picard is not convinced, saying that she was sworn to protect the Federation from terrorists, but instead became one, and points out that the last time Riker saw her, she pulled a phaser on him. Riker reminds him that Ro has always been an outsider, and that Picard had indeed been the one to send her to infiltrate the Maquis, knowing full well that she would empathize with them. To Picard, however, empathy was one thing and betraying one's commanding officer was another; he is incensed that she is the one accusing them of treason. He is not convinced she will treat them justly; he had been the one to mentor her, to make a bond with her, and she had broken that bond.

Just then, Ro enters, and Riker advises Picard to let her do the talking. Ro explains that the *Titan* is under official security review, and most of the crew will be going to the *Intrepid* for reassignment. Riker notes the tone of her voice, that their guilt has already been predetermined. Ro replies that their cooperation will bear weight on their sentence. She elects to begin with Picard, and has the security officers escort Riker out. Riker holds them off, going of his own volition. After they leave the room, Picard questions how a lieutenant who betrayed Starfleet and her commanding officer got reinstated, but Ro ignores this, beginning her official questioning on Picard's deception to get aboard the *Titan*. Picard does not relent, asking how a traitor can pose as a Starfleet officer. Ro mentions the Changeling problem Shaw reported, drawing a knife from her boot and slicing her hand to show she is not one herself. Picard then notices her earring is missing, recalling that it was a symbol of her faith — or is she "turning [her] back on another institution?" Ro coldly tells him to save his animosity, as it is not entirely about him. "Let's talk about your son," she says, and his glare of contempt only deepens.

In the guest quarters, Jack again hears his mother's voice echoing in his mind, telling him

to "find" her, to "hear" her, to "connect" them. He then heads to the transporter room, where he is stopped by one of the security officers, asking if he has been ordered to beam aboard the *Intrepid* yet. Jack asks to be sent anywhere, as long as it's not a Starfleet ship. When he is denied, he draws a phaser and shoots the man down... or so he thinks. In actuality, he stares, almost haunted, at the man, who asks if he is alright. Shaken, Jack quietly leaves.

On M'talas Prime, Worf and Musiker are still waiting in the street when targeting lasers train onto them. Several armed individuals hold their weapons on them, as Krinn, a Vulcan with an IDIC pendant hanging around his neck, approaches. He tells them that a Vulcan master had once taught him that pride inevitably leads to downfall, and yet here they were. Sneed's death had showed him that pride also led to traps, but patience led to rewards. Worf tells them that they have the upper hand, and orders them all to yield their weapons. Krinn suddenly draws a phaser and shoots at Musiker, who suddenly vanishes, a mobile emitter falling to the ground. Krinn knew they had prepared for him, so he had prepared for them. He looks directly up into the real Musiker's gunsights, just as one of his men comes up from behind her.

Back on the Titan, the autopsy on the dead Changeling continues. Beverly has determined that the Changeling has somehow managed to completely replicate internal organs, which only revert to their natural liquid state under intense dissection. Ohk wonders if this is some kind of new species, but Beverly doesn't think so; she believes it to be evolution, which means they could be anywhere... or anyone.

Ro asks Picard to tell her about Jack. Picard doesn't think he can do so, as he has only known him a few days, and wonders how it is relevant anyway. Just then, Beverly calls from sickbay, and Ro allows him to answer it. Tapping his combadge, Picard explains he is with Commander Ro, and Beverly replies that she has his test results. He asks her to send it up to him, before turning to Ro, explaining that he has a "private" medical issue. Picard goes over to a nearby terminal to receive Beverly's warning: These Changelings can fool blood screenings, and their capabilities are "beyond superficial", warning him again to trust no one. Turning back to Ro, he asks why she is so interested in Jack. Ro answers that perhaps it's because he is avoiding her questions about him, calling him "central" to the investigation. Picard, however, thinks it strange she is not so concerned about Vadik or the Shrike, thinking that the Ro he knew was more "thorough." Ro counters that perhaps he never knew her at all. He asks her to enlighten him, wondering how a defector "clawed" her way back into Starfleet. Ro explains that after years with the Maquis, she turned herself in to Starfleet, faced a court martial, and was imprisoned. But due to her experience with terrorist groups, she underwent an "arduous" rehabilitation program and joined Starfleet Intelligence, working her way up the ranks once again. He dismisses this as "mere facts," asking how she could become an enemy and betray her honor. "My honor?" she asks. "Or do you mean Starfleet's?" She dismisses the idea of blind faith in any institution making one "honorable," before asking what he knows about the Changeling onboard. Picard tells her he knows nothing, and that they killed it. She then asks to see the remains.

As the security officers search the ship for Jack, Picard leads Ro to sickbay, telling her that they should be alerted to their arrival. But Ro suddenly pulls a phaser, telling him there is a "change of plans," and has him step into the holodeck with her. Still set to 10 Forward Avenue, Ro locks the holodeck doors so no one else can enter. Stepping behind the bar, Picard disables the holodeck safety protocol. She tells him to keep his hands above the bar, and he agrees, "top shelf only." Ro considers the walls "a little thin" on the ship, and asks if the place has music; Picard enables the nearby jukebox, the sound of which causes Ro to turn... which allows Picard to draw a phaser of his own. He reminds her that this was Guinan's bar, asking if she remembered Guinan. She tells him to drop it, threatening to kill him, but Picard wants to know who she really is. Both believe the other may be compromised. Picard remembers that when Ro first came aboard the *Enterprise*, her earring was a violation of the uniform code. She had said it was for the family she had lost, but he now thought it was simply for her own ego. "An ego that led you to betray me," he snaps at her in the Bajoran language. She notes his skill with the language has improved, and Picard tells her he has been rehearsing this conversation for thirty years. Ro tells him he has no idea what it was like living under his "relentless judgment," but Picard thinks they had a bond based on mutual respect, and he feels she betrayed everything he believed in. Ro accuses him of wanting to mold her in his image, and that his affection and mentorship had been conditional. She is offended that he would question her honor, saying she had joined the Maquis to stand up against injustice, even if that meant betraying Starfleet. That

was who she was, but he had confused morality with duty, and that is his dishonor. He says he believed in her, but she counters that he only did so when it was easy for him; if he truly felt the way he claims, he would have understood. "You broke my heart," he tells her. "And you broke mine," she replies.

Both finally lower their phasers; Picard is convinced that their mutual pain proves who they truly are, before he asks why she's really here. Ro admits that Starfleet is compromised at its highest level. Addressing him as "Jean-Luc," she asks him if he trusts her. After a long moment, he finally nods, and says that he does.

Krinn's men bring Worf and Musiker to their knees, as the Vulcan crime lord asks if they recognize the location. It was here that Worf killed Sneed, a man he considered a brother, as they grew up together in District Seven. Worf mentions that they both work for Starfleet Intelligence, and that Sneed was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of innocents, a fact Krinn is aware of. He also knows they figured out that Sneed was the Changeling's facilitator, and that Krinn himself helped arrange the break-in at Daystrom. Musiker admits she could never imagine a Vulcan being "dumb enough" to become a gangster, but Krinn thinks that no utopia could exist without crime, and therefore an organized crime syndicate is logical. His associates place a pair of knives in front of Worf and Musiker, the latter of whom recognizes that they expect the two of them to fight to the death. Krinn admits some of his associates think that the Klingon, by nature, has the upper hand and will kill a Human within thirty seconds, while others believe the inverse. "Let's settle the wager," he says. Neither move to cooperate, to which Krinn gives them sixty seconds to begin combat, or they will both die. Worf quietly reminds her of what he had said about an enemy's aggression showing their weakness, and that he has sacrificed a great deal for this mission... and will now do so again. He tells her it has been an honor, before taking the blade and rising. Krinn notes that "Klingons seldom disappoint." Worf tells Musiker not to hold back, because he cannot. After a short and brutal duel, Musiker's blade is true, and he collapses to the ground. She is apologetic, but he tells her that she is a warrior, and that this is a worthy death, before collapsing into the street.

Aboard the Titan, the security officers continue their search for Jack, but based on slight vocal cues, it is clear both are actually Changelings. In the holodeck, Ro explains her belief that Changelings have infiltrated Starfleet in all levels, replacing several key personnel, and she is convinced there are more on the Intrepid. She can't even trust the ship's captain, and had insisted on the shuttle because she couldn't trust the transporters. She then asks what he knows about the preparations for Frontier Day. Picard knows it was the anniversary of Starfleet, and that he is supposed to give a speech. Ro is worried that the security preparations are classified, even to her, and that the festivities are mere days away. There have been twelve separate incidents aboard multiple starships for the past several months, all being kept quiet. Picard wonders what this has to do with Jack. Ro admits she doesn't know, but Starfleet insisted she retrieve him, and his name has come up multiple times in Intelligence chatter. She also mentions the attack on the Starfleet recruitment center on M'talas Prime, using a portal weapon similar to that used by Vadic. He suggests going to Admiral Janeway or Chancellor Roll, even letting him try, but Ro reveals she has been stonewalled at every turn; all she has are a pair of intelligence assets on the ground she can trust, trying to link the theft of the portal weapon to something else the Changelings want, and that they are close, even as they speak.

On M'talas, Krinn finds the situation "most unexpected," before having one of his men check the body. The Vulcan kneels next to him and takes Worf's pulse, then shakes his head. Krinn had calculated that Worf had a ten-to-one chance of winning, before remarking on how the smell of Klingon blood sickens him, and has two of his associates take him away. Krinn then tells Musiker that she works for him now, and that he knows she has far more to lose — an ex-husband, a son, and a granddaughter. Musiker threatens to kill him before he would ever own her. "Would you care to wager on that?" he replies, just as the lights fade... and his men suddenly fall to the ground, knives in their chests. Worf suddenly appears behind Krinn, holding a blade to his throat. He has mastered what he calls the "Kahless technique" of slowing his heart rate to imperceptible levels; however, he has lost a great deal of blood, and is still losing a great deal more, and thus advises skipping to the interrogation. Krinn gambles on being needed alive, but Musiker warns him to factor in the impatience of a Klingon in dire need of medical attention. Krinn finally admits that he brokered for a device that allows one to exploit the flaws in Daystrom Station's AI security, and concedes that it would be logical to give the device to them.

Ro tells Picard that she has transferred most of the Titan's crew to the Intrepid, leaving him with a skeleton crew, warning him to ensure they are loyal. She urges him to take the Titan and run. The two security officers searching for Jack catch up to her, having found she was in the holodeck but were unable to gain access. She tells them they are returning to the Intrepid. Quietly taking him aside, Ro places something into his hand, and admits that she wishes he could look into her heart and understand she did what she thought was best, and that for all the years since, she wishes they had known each other. With tears in her eyes, Ro says goodbye to Picard. The security officers protest that they had been instructed to find Jack, but she says simply they are leaving. As he watches her leave, Picard looks at the item she handed him: her earring.

As Picard and Riker arrive on the bridge, Shaw remarks on how that was the "fastest court martial" he had ever seen, before Picard tells him that they have to take the ship and run, telling him what Ro had revealed about Starfleet, and the Intrepid, being compromised. Shaw immediately beckons security, but Riker belays that. Picard pleads with Shaw to trust him. The Intrepid shuttle begins to return to the ship. The Changeling security officers, realizing their deception has been discovered, set an explosive onto the deck of the shuttle, arm it, and transport back to the Titan, where they morph into members of her crew to continue the search for Jack. Ro tries to contact the Intrepid, but finds her comms to the ship are jammed. She hails the Titan, warning them of what has happened. Riker tells Seven to beam her out, but the signal is inhibited; she has to get closer to the Titan. Riker urges her to turn back, but Ro doesn't have time to disarm it. She tells Picard to finish what she started. La Forge reports that the shuttle is moving away; Seven sees it heading for the Intrepid's port nacelle. Picard begs Ro not to do it, but Ro answers that she is giving them what he gave her when they met all those years ago: a fighting chance. Picard asks her to forgive him, as he does truly see her now. Just then, the connection is lost, and the shuttle impacts with the nacelle, the explosion severely damaging it.

Picard has little time to grieve, however; the Intrepid raises shields and arms weapons. Seven reports they are instructing the Titan to surrender. Riker realizes they are being framed for attacking the Intrepid by the Changelings on board the ship.

Riker urges Shaw that they need to run, but Shaw hesitates, not wanting his crew to become fugitives. Seven reminds him that most of the crew is on the Intrepid; if they engaged, they'd be risking the crew anyway. Picard adds his voice, saying that if they did not flee, Ro will have died for nothing, and many more would follow. Riker knows Shaw may not trust them, but he urges his fellow captain to trust his own eyes. Shaw orders red alert, telling La Forge to take them away the second the warp core is online. Over the P.A., he sounds battle stations, having nonessential personnel return to quarters, and informing them that emergency order 7-6-2-Alpha is in effect: Starfleet has been compromised.

Meanwhile, the two security officers find Jack on deck 10, and call two of their fellows for support. They inform him they will place a transport beacon on him and take him into custody. Something in Jack kicks in, and he is able to swiftly disarm and eliminate all four of the Changeling agents. He again sees the red roots crawling across the corridor, and a red door at the end of it, before reality reasserts itself.

Shaw orders the helm to bring them about; Seven warns the Intrepid is giving them one final warning to surrender. The Intrepid's torpedo bays are loaded and ready to fire. The warp core goes online, and Shaw gives the order to engage warp drive. The Titan goes to warp as the Intrepid fires. Riker knows the Changelings will be coming for them. Shaw wonders who exactly they would be coming for, and Riker grimly replies "everyone."

Picard sits alone in the conference room when Riker enters, offering his condolences, knowing what Ro had meant to him. Picard replies that Riker doesn't know; in fact, neither did Picard himself. He shows her Ro's earring, not sure why she had given it to him. Riker, however, does know, recognizing it as "old-school spycraft:" There is a data chip hidden in the earring, showing the entire course of her investigation, and showing that the infiltration reaches the upper levels of Starfleet Command. Just then, a transmission comes in through the earring, and both are astonished to see Worf on the other end; he is just as surprised to see them. He then wonders what happened to Ro.

In sickbay, Shaw is stunned to find four more Changelings on his ship, now dead, before complimenting Jack on his shooting. Beverly asks for a moment alone with Jack. After Shaw and Ohk leave, Beverly sees that Jack has not been sleeping. She remembers that there was a

time when he was growing up that he was afraid to sleep, afraid what he would see if he did. Jack doesn't remember having nightmares, but Beverly does, and knows he got through it; she believes he will get through what troubles him now, and urges him to talk to her about it. All the stress, meeting his father, the attempts on his life, are affecting him severely. She then notes the four dead Changelings, and wonders how he knew they were all Changelings. With tears in his eyes, Jack confesses he didn't, and confesses to his mother that he thinks something is very wrong with him.

The Bounty

Season 3

Episode Number: 26

Season Episode: 6

Originally aired: Thursday March 23, 2023
Writer: Christopher Monfette
Director: Dan Liu
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars: Daniel Davis (Professor James Moriarty), Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Amanda Plummer (Vadic), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Mica Burton (Alandra La Forge), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar), Amy Earhart (Titan Computer (voice)), Vaughn Page (Shrike Bridge Changeling), Byron Quiros (Starfleet Lieutenant)
Summary: Now on the run, Picard and the skeleton crew of the USS Titan must break into Starfleet's most top secret facility to expose a plot that could destroy the Federation. Picard must turn to an old friend for help.



Three Federation starships arrive at the location of a transponder left behind by the USS Titan-A, while another is found by the Shrike. Vadic grows increasingly frustrated, threatening her "ill-defined, unshapen" crew if another one tells her they have not located Picard. The Changeling at the helm explains that the Titan keeps leaving behind decoy transponders and jumping to warp at infrequent intervals. Vadic thinks of how exhausted they must be... as she is, as are all of their "brothers and sisters" who have to wear the faces of the Federation. She then becomes more upbeat, saying

that there will be rest, a day of "lifeless bodies burning in space." They will have peace and unity again... but first, they will have vengeance. The helm continues to persist; Frontier Day is 72 hours away, and they have no better idea of where Jack Crusher is than they did before. As they are saying a change of leadership might be needed, Vadic simply orders "enough" and the Changeling beside her draws their weapon and vaporizes the would-be mutineer on the spot.

Vadic sets her crew to work on finding all of Picard's known associates, including past and present Starfleet colleagues — anyone to whom he might turn for help. "We will scorch the Earth under which he stands, and the night will brighten with the ashes of the Federation," she declares. "And from them... we will rise."

In the Titan's sickbay, Beverly Crusher speaks to Picard about Jack's condition. After he had confided in her about his waking nightmares, she ran a micro-neural scan, and found all of the portions of his brain relating to cognition and imagination were affected. Jack has a terminal diagnosis of Irumodic Syndrome, inherited from Picard. Beverly remembers how he had had nightmares and spoke to imaginary things as a child, but she had thought he was gifted,

not "plagued with an overclocked brain." She has given him a neuro-inhibitor to temper the hallucinations, and it might be decades before the disease finally catches up with him. When Picard begins to speak, she stops him, telling him not to waste time burdening himself, when he could be unburdening Jack.

Picard finds Jack in the holodeck, still set to 10 Forward Avenue, having had several drinks by this point. When Jack sees him, he has the landlord pour one for his "old man" as well. He explains he is celebrating the fact that he is not crazy, just broken — and the way he sees it, he can either wallow in self-pity, or be like a Japanese teacup, which can be put back together with molten gold... or in Jack's case, bourbon. Picard thinks Jack should take it more seriously, but Jack says he is taking it "deadly serious," and quite possibly dead. He asks how Picard survived dealing with it, and Picard points out that he didn't, having had his body replaced with a golem, but he had lived with the syndrome for decades — and Jack has plenty more years ahead of him. Jack laments that it was unfortunate Picard wasn't as good at passing on genetics as he is wisdom. His mother had tried to protect him from becoming "collateral damage" in Picard's life, but he finds it ironic that he was probably doomed before he was born. He downs his drink and leaves, just as Seven of Nine calls: "they" have arrived.

Worf and Musiker beam aboard, greeted in the transporter room by Picard, Riker, Beverly, and Seven. Worf formally asks permission to come aboard, and Picard happily grants it, saying it has been too long. Worf replies it has been eleven years, five months, four days, minus his infrequent messages and his annual bottle of "sour mead." Riker knows he was talking about Chateau Picard, which Worf thinks is "quite tart." Though she knows Worf was not a "hugger" (and Riker points this out), Beverly hugs him anyway, glad to see him. Musiker tells Picard that Worf engages in meditation, and Worf confirms this, saying that the most advantageous battle stance is to be one within oneself, earning an incredulous reaction from Riker. Musiker greets her former-lover Seven, asking if she is alright; Seven replies that they are alive, at least. Musiker and Worf had a difficult time tracking the Titan down, which gave them time to process the idea that Picard and Beverly were now parents. Worf then turns his attention to business, telling Picard that they have to ensure Ro Laren did not die in vain, to protect both Starfleet and her kin, and that they have much to report.

As the Titan goes to warp, the crew meets in the conference room with Captain Shaw. Worf explains that the Changelings have re-emerged as a threat. During the Dominion War, they had used deception and might against the Federation, and Starfleet retaliated with the morphogenic virus; there were scars and shame on both sides. Starfleet had also provided the cure to the Great Link, but Shaw points out that it had weaponized a number of zealots as well. Ro believed that whatever was being planned was tied to Frontier Day — "no better stage on which to make a statement," as Picard puts it, and the day was in less than 48 hours. With time a factor and no leads, Worf and Musiker believe they have to return to the scene of the crime: Daystrom Station, where Starfleet keeps its experimental weapons technology and alien contraband, off the books. A few months earlier, Vadix had broken into the station and stolen a number of classified weapons, including the portal weapon, but Musiker and Worf speculate that the portal's use at the recruiting center on M'talas Prime was meant to cover the theft of something else; Shaw thinks it obvious that the weapon they took is even more deadly than the portal weapon. Seven points out that the only way to know for certain is to check Daystrom's inventory, and Beverly adds the copy Ro was able to get was heavily redacted. The full manifest would be inside Daystrom's vault. Starfleet security has had patrols every hour on the station since the break-in, but the vault itself is protected by an "astonishingly lethal" AI system, to which Worf and Musiker have acquired a key. However, if the key fails, instead of searching for one missing weapon, they will find themselves at the wrong end of many. Ro believed this weapon key to the entire conspiracy, and Picard also knows it is the only way they can clear their names and save Starfleet. He then asks for volunteers.

Worf, Musiker, and Seven head to the transporter room, where Seven tries to reach out to Musiker. Seeing this, Worf says he has been in battle alongside lovers many times, and is able to mention how therapeutic it can be when Seven says she is not going. Worf is relieved, admitting he had been practicing deceit, and that breakups on his homeworld rarely ended without bloodshed. Riker then enters, having volunteered to join the team. Seven reports they have come out of warp as close as they could to beam them in without alerting Starfleet. Ro's intel had a workaround for the station's transport inhibitors, but they will have to beam them in and out

before the manual patrols. Riker asks how long they have to find the weapons manifest, and Musiker estimates an hour at best. Riker hopes the key works, otherwise they will have to resort to "old-fashioned Klingon offense". Worf mentions that he now prefers pacifism to actual combat, before giving the order to energize. As the beam takes them, a deadpan Riker mutters that they are all going to die.

As they materialize inside the station, the station's AI conducts a security scan, requiring they identify themselves. Worf plugs Krinn's key into the system, just as the computer threatens to use lethal force if the "Daystrom visitors" do not identify themselves. After a tense moment, the key succeeds, granting them access to the station. But outside, their troubles are just beginning: two starships drop out of warp, having managed to locate the Titan. Shaw orders red alert and tries to have the team brought back, but Lieutenant Mura says that he can't get a lock; the ships have activated transport inhibitors to block any rescue from the station. Sidney La Forge recognizes them as Echelon-class ships, and they have traceable payloads; if they hit the Titan with their weapons, they could track the ship as they fled. "Spoken like a true La Forge," Picard commends her, before saying they have to run before their pursuers realize who is inside Daystrom. La Forge warns that short of being invisible, they won't be able to come back until the other ships can't track them. Picard appraises Riker of the situation, but adds he has an idea, before telling La Forge to set a course for Athan Prime. La Forge doesn't think it a good idea, and Worf adds that Starfleet security will patrol that area in less than an hour. Picard promises they will be back by then. The two ships lock weapons, and Shaw gives the order to withdraw at maximum warp.

The team, now on their own, explores Daystrom's weapons vault, which Worf explains as being the repository for Section 31's more "nefarious" technology. Among the items contained within are a thaloron generator, a second Genesis Device, and the body of Captain James T. Kirk. Worf is startled by a genetically modified tribble that jumps at the glass in its containment cell. Riker jokes about the "mighty Klingon" and the "mightier attack tribble," but Worf is not amused, seeing that Riker still finds comfort in humor, and humor in others' discomfort. Riker is surprised that Worf is so serious now, before Musiker directs them back to the mission at hand, and getting out — alive. The station's AI detects Riker's speech patterns and identifies him, preparing security measures. As they make their way through the corridors, a holographic crow flies past them, startling them. Riker thinks there is something familiar about it, before Worf calls out that he has found the mainframe. As he prepares to access it, a note from a violin can be heard over the comms, Riker identifying it as an F-sharp. A further burst of music sounds as the lights go out. When the emergency lights kick in, they are confronted by a man in a 19th century formal outfit, complete with top hat, and Riker is astonished to recognize him as Professor Moriarty.

"Greetings, old friends," Moriarty says politely, as he pulls a pistol from his coat.

The Titan arrives at Athan Prime, home to the Fleet Museum. The old Earth Spacedock has been moved here, to act as the last resting place of legendary starships. Shaw orders La Forge to find a place among the "relics," to be a "needle in the haystack." The station hails them, and though La Forge is clearly hesitant, Shaw has it put on screen. Picard is glad to see the caller, Commodore Geordi La Forge, the museum's director and Sidney's father. But Geordi does not appear happy to see them, telling Picard to power down nonessential systems immediately.

Geordi beams aboard along with his daughter Alandra. He admits that in the nanosecond he spent in the transporter beam, he debated the virtues of a curt, professional handshake or an uncomfortable, but long-overdue hug, before electing to give Beverly the latter. He then gives curt greetings to Picard and Sidney. As Picard prepares to introduce him to Jack, Geordi interrupts, saying he is in the middle of his third memo to Starfleet protesting having all of the fleet in one location for Frontier Day. Further, with all of the thousands of people who visit the museum daily, sooner or later someone will point out the one ship that doesn't belong. Geordi is adamant that they need to talk, and quickly leaves. Alandra greets her sister, who calls their father "impossible"; Alandra promises to do what she can. Jack sarcastically notes the "warm and cuddly" greeting, and Sidney admits she has not been on the best of terms with her father, something Jack sees they have in common.

On learning that Jack is Picard's son, Geordi is not entirely surprised that his old captain has managed to turn fatherhood into an intergalactic incident. Picard tries to explain that not only is Starfleet after them, but Changelings are as well, and tells him that Worf and Riker are stuck on Daystrom Station. Picard asks for Geordi's help to clone the Titan's transponder signal to lure their pursuers from Daystrom Station. Geordi is not happy to see his old friends pulled into the

situation as well, and explains that even if he were willing, he couldn't clone a transponder signal without randomized Starfleet security codes. He then has Alandra explain the biggest problem: every ship in Starfleet is now fully integrated, able to "talk" to each other. The Titan is a beacon, and it will only be a matter of time before they get close enough to track. Picard realizes this was how the two Echelons had found them.

At Daystrom Station, the search for the team continues, the starships USS Sternbach and USS Cole continuing their sweeps. Musiker wonders what a 19th century holo-villain is doing defending a 25th century black site. Moriarty retorts that "villain" does not do justice to his complexity, and only reveals her simplicity; Riker remarks that at least somebody is consistent. Moriarty opens fire, his old-style pistol firing live rounds, while the team's phasers pass through his holographic form. As further musical notes blare, Riker realizes this is not the same self-aware Moriarty they encountered on the USS Enterprise-D decades before, but more of a projection, one that is blocking their way to the security vault. Riker is able to identify the musical notes as they come, while Moriarty calls them "solvable puzzles," mocking their unguarded expressions, their visible scars. "Such pathetic old warriors," he sneers. Further musical notes sound, and Riker asks if he is trying to play some kind of a song for them. Moriarty confirms this, calling it a "maddening melody" and a "saccharine song," one he can not get out of his head. Riker then hears a portion he recognizes: "Pop Goes the Weasel," recalling hearing it on the holodeck when he first came aboard the Enterprise-D. Riker whistles the last notes of the song. Moriarty smiles, calling it "marvelous," as his projection vanishes, and the door to the mainframe opens. Worf asks how he knew it would work, and Riker recalls he had shared that tune with another dear friend ages ago, one who also dreamt of crows and sought to thwart Moriarty with the intellect of Sherlock Holmes... "somebody who couldn't whistle worth a damn." He recalls finishing the song the same way on the holodeck for Data decades before, who had also called it "marvelous." As they enter the mainframe, they see another Soong-type android: The station's security AI.

Geordi makes it clear he wants to help his old captain and crew, but he has a lot at stake. In the best-case scenario, he faces court martial, and at worst, a compromised Starfleet will put his family at risk. Alandra mentions something in Hangar Bay 12 that could help them, but her father shuts that down. Picard insists this is a life-or-death situation, but Geordi retorts that it is always life-or-death, which he felt fine with when he did so willingly with his own life under Picard's command, but now he believes Picard has put Sidney in grave danger, a charge Picard denies, defending her choice to join Starfleet. An exasperated Alandra leaves, apologetically reminding Sidney about their father's stubbornness.

Jack exchanges a glance with Sidney, before seating himself (over Seven's initial protest) in the captain's chair, saying he just wanted to "try it out." They cycle through the ships in the museum, and Jack is able to identify some of them: The USS Defiant, the USS New Jersey, and one he calls his personal favorite, the USS Enterprise-A, admiring her "clean retro lines," calling himself a "Constitution-class man." Seven remarks on how knowledgeable he is for someone who "didn't give a damn about Starfleet," but Jack has always been interested in starships, even before he knew about Picard. Seven then brings up another ship that Jack calls a "beauty:" The USS Voyager, which Seven explains had made its name farther out than any of the others had ever gone. She also calls it her home, where she had been "reborn," and the crew was her family. Jack sees she is now looking for another, noting how they were all looking for connection, but are always "just a little bit alone": "Stars in the same galaxy, but light years between us." Seven laughingly tells him he is truly his father's son, as Picard also has a knack for "poetic drive-by observation," which she sometimes finds annoying... but can also make a person feel seen. Jack admits that being equal parts irritating and endearing isn't "entirely unfamiliar." Seven then brings up another ship, the HMS Bounty, a Klingon Bird-of-Prey pulled from the bottom of San Francisco Bay after "the whole whale thing" in 2286. The story goes that the searchers had a hard time finding it, and Jack realizes it was because the cloaking device had reactivated.

Inside Daystrom's mainframe, Riker realizes the android was not trying to harm them; it was trying to communicate with them, because it recognized them. Musiker had thought Data had died (twice), and Riker confirms he did; Worf is adamant it can not be the same Data. Musiker examines the records, seeing this new android is a hybrid, a synthetic with an android interface. Riker thinks it could be their Data; before his first death, Data had copied his entire being into B-4, which had been unrecoverable up to that point; with the synth ban now lifted, nothing was impossible. After the death of Altan Inigo Soong, Starfleet co-opted most of his unfinished work,

taking a particular interest in the new android. Musiker finds a holographic message from Soong in the records. The doctor explains that before gifting his golem to Picard, he had intended to live beyond his years, becoming his own legacy. But in his last days, he recognized that this was not just poor humanity, it was poor science. Evolution was not meant to be preservation — it was meant to be addition.

At the same time, aboard the Titan, Geordi explains that Sidney has always been stubborn, which he admits she likely inherited from him, thinking that a parent always wants to impart the best aspects of themselves to their children. Picard, recently introduced to fatherhood himself, has learned that one is not always in control of what they pass on — strengths, weaknesses, and flaws alike.

Soong goes on to explain that the new golem he wanted to create would have various aspects of the other Soong-type androids: Lal, B-4, Lore, and "a great deal" of Data, this time with the wisdom and "true Human" aesthetic of age, and the hope that within the totality, something — someone — will rise to be the best of them. However, the records indicate that Soong died before he was able to finish the work, and that the personalities within the golem are battling one another.

Geordi thinks back to his days on the Enterprise, rushing into danger. He never feared for his life, not like he does for Sidney. He wants to help, but he cannot do so and protect his children at the same time. Picard returns to the bridge, saying they are leaving; Geordi will not help them, and he has to respect his wishes. However, he tells Sidney that her father wants to speak to her first.

Sidney point-blank asks why Geordi won't help them. He sits his daughter down, explaining that he and Picard have reached an agreement: She is to stay at the museum with him, and Picard will say for the record she was an unwilling participant in his action. Sidney protests, knowing it is not true, but Geordi tells her this is how it has to be. Sidney knows what is at stake, having seen a corpse that looked just like her. Geordi insists it should be left to Starfleet, but she reminds him that she is also a Starfleet officer. She had grown up listening to his adventures under Picard's command, how they always stood up for what was right. Geordi thinks it was a different time, but Sidney does not, thinking that it all stems from her not being like Alandra, who became an engineer like their father. While Geordi could build ships, Sidney only wanted to fly them, and she feels he took that as her rejecting him, while she believes it brought them closer. "You would believe in this if you believed in me," she says, rising to leave. Geordi stops her, asking if she knows what he and Alandra felt when the Titan went missing, and now that they are on the run, and Sidney is jeopardizing her life and career. Sidney reminds him she is on the run with her crew. When Geordi tells her they are not her family, she hits back that they are her family, because he had taught her that. "And I'm not scared to step up and help them," she adds. "You are."

As she returns to the bridge, Picard and Seven consider their options. They are almost out of time; Picard thinks they may have no choice but to return to Daystrom Station and engage the two Echelon's themselves to rescue their team, and suggests meeting with Shaw to discuss strategy. After they leave, Jack apologetically remarks on how he is partly responsible for the situation, and compliments Sidney on her ability to fly them "rather wonderfully" out of the messes he's made. This leads him to two simple questions: First, how well did they know the museum facility, and two, how do they feel about "minor larceny?" The La Forge siblings exchange amused looks at this.

Musiker wonders why Starfleet would install an insane AI to protect their deepest secrets; Riker thinks it was because it is a one-of-a-kind work of art, certainly more advanced than anything Starfleet could come up with. He recalls how it glitched out when it saw them, because it recognized them. This means that the AI saw everything that came and went in the station. "He is not protecting the manifest," Worf realizes; "he is the manifest." As Musiker brings up the files, an alarm sounds: Starfleet security has found them. They are out of time, and Picard is not answering comms.

The Titan suddenly begins experiencing bursts of electromagnetic radiation, causing parts of the ship to seemingly phase out of view. Geordi demands to know what Picard has done, but Picard is just as confused as he is. Just then, the Titan disappears completely; now cloaked. Geordi accuses Picard of stealing the cloaking device from the Bird-of-Prey, but as Picard protests his innocence, he stops, as both fathers realize the culprits: Their children. Jack and Sidney are

attempting to install the cloak, but are having difficulty with it. Geordi warns that Starfleet will be on its way, as the theft of the cloak set off an automated security alert, and asks how many Federation treaties Picard has just violated. Picard half-jokingly replies they will have to add it to his tab, before pleading with Geordi to help them. Geordi finally gives in, heading down to engineering (with a not-at-all-joking demand to Jack to stay away from his daughter) to help properly install the cloak.

Musiker works to free the android, but sees Starfleet security coming right up to them; she will not have time. Drawing his phaser, Riker (over Worf's protests) rushes in to give them that time. The Titan moves in under cloak, but Seven warns that they will have to decloak to beam the team out. As the Titan flies in, Riker is exchanging fire with the security officers, before taking a hit to the back from a transport inhibitor tag. Shaw orders what signals can be locked onto to be beamed out, as the Titan escapes to warp. Geordi and Jack meet the team in the transporter room, hearing of Riker's capture. "We have lost one friend in battle, but gained another," Worf says, as he steps aside to reveal their new "friend," Geordi then recognizes the face of Data.

Worf promises to Picard that he will find Riker and bring him home: "And fearful be the god or man or beast that stands in my way." Picard sincerely thanks him, and sends him on his way. Jack then enters, offering his apologies about Riker. He goes on to admit he can be a lot of things, mostly a "prick at the bar" who says things he can't take back, and maybe a bit cocky ("A bit?" Picard wonders). But he likes to think he has a few virtues as well, such as compassion, tenacity, and being principled, as well as occasionally clever. All of those, he gets from his mother. However, he also has courage, loyalty, and wisdom beyond his years, and until a week ago, he had no idea where those traits came from. Maybe he didn't just get some "bullshit disease" from his father, but "some of the good bits" as well. "Maybe," Picard agrees.

In sickbay, Geordi admits to Sidney that he is not angry at her for what she did, but disappointed in himself for not doing what his younger self would have done, expressing his pride in her. He then asks for an ionic flow regulator, but Sidney corrects him by saying he needed the focal adjustment spanner for the main port. When he asks how she knew, she answers that the reason she crashed so many speeders as a kid was to spend time with him fixing them. Picard, Beverly, and Worf enter a moment later, Picard stunned to see Data once again, having watched him die twice now. Geordi points out that he had watched Data the android die, but this was something else. The personalities had yet to be integrated, but the information is still there. Worf asks if he could tell them what Vadic stole from Daystrom, and Geordi believes he can, assuming he is sane enough to speak. He can reboot the android body, but warns that he can not completely isolate Data even with the personality partitions in place, so they will not know who they are going to get. Picard gives him the go-ahead, and Geordi brings the android online. He appears confused, but recognizes Geordi and Picard (addressing the latter as "captain"), saying that there are many voices of himself inside Daystrom Android M-5-10, but only one speaks about them with the most fondness. He says that he is Data, but then corrects that to say that he was Data. Beverly sees him as like Picard: Synthetic, but human. Picard asks him about the break-in at Daystrom. The android cycles through its personalities: Lore, B-4, even Altan Soong, also repeating Picard's name over and over. Finally, however, it accesses the manifest, finding the item that the Changelings stole: Human remains... the original organic body of Picard himself.

Aboard Daystrom Station, a security officer is attempting to beat the location of Picard and Jack out of Riker. Bloody but unbowed, Riker refuses outright, earning him another punch to the face. The security officer stares at him for a moment before drawing a phaser and vaporizing the two other officers in the room... before its shape becomes that of Vadic, who cheerfully greets him. Taken aboard the Shrike, Riker sizes up Vadic's burly-looking companion, wondering how much of that "goo shit" they poured into him, earning another strike across the face. Riker keeps up his good cheer, however, asking if Vadic thought he would give up more than three decades of loyalty just for her. Vadic agrees that he wouldn't do it for her, before revealing who she has in a nearby cell: Deanna Troi.

Dominion

Season 3

Episode Number: 27

Season Episode: 7

Originally aired: Thursday March 30, 2023
Writer: Jane Maggs
Director: Deborah Kampmeier
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars: Tim Russ (Tuvok), Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Amanda Plummer (Vadic), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Jenson Cheng (Shrike Lieutenant), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Garth Kemp (The Face (voice)), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar)
Summary: Crippled, cornered, and out of options, Picard stages a gambit to trap Vadic and reveal her true motive — a gamble that puts the Titan in the crosshairs and forces Picard and Beverly to question every moral code they've ever held.



The USS Titan-A hides with minimum power in the Chin'toka scrapyard, amidst the wreckage of the battles fought there, while Seven of Nine reaches out to her old friend Captain Tuvok for information on Riker's whereabouts. Tuvok replies that Riker was not reported in Starfleet custody. Seven glances over at Captain Shaw and T'Veen, who are analyzing Tuvok's voice; T'Veen nods, indicating it matched. Picard silently encourages her to proceed. Seven then asks about the last time Tuvok had seen Admiral Janeway. Tuvok admits it has been some time, but expects she is preparing for Frontier Day, which

is in 36 hours, and the entire fleet is being assembled in the Sol system for the celebration. Seven explains the belief that everything they've found points to a larger conspiracy and asks if Tuvok could connect them to someone they could trust. Tuvok seems apologetic when he replies that it will be difficult, given their status as fugitives. T'Veen and Shaw monitor the response, but the analysis comes back "inconclusive." Seven acknowledges the complexities of the issue were like "a house of cards," like the games of kal-toh they used to play. Tuvok concedes that she had beaten him "countless" times, which further seems to reinforce she is dealing with the real Tuvok. He agrees to meet with her to find new allies. Seven suggests meeting on Aklion VII, where she had had her neural pattern stabilized and Tuvok immediately agrees... which proves to Seven that he is actually a Changeling. No Vulcan would go to Aklion VII after the anti-Kolinahr demonstrations there, and her neural pattern had been stabilized on the USS Voyager by the real Tuvok.

Exposed, the Changeling smirks; Geordi La Forge then warns that the comm signal is being traced. Seven demands to know what they've done to the real Tuvok, as only he would have

known about their kal-toh games. The Tuvok Changeling responds only that all of the Titan crew will think death is a relief when the Changelings are finished with them. Picard then steps forward, demanding to know where Riker is. The Changeling's face changes to that of Riker, who mocks Picard by saying that he was "as good as dead," like Picard himself. Picard finally tells Geordi to cut the communication. Geordi warns that they cannot keep doing this, and perhaps it was time they just accepted their situation. Picard looks around at the others. "We're on our own," he agrees grimly.

In the conference room, Picard asks about Worf, and Geordi reports that he and Musiker had been observing Starfleet Security at Exo-Port and confirmed that there was no report of Riker in custody; they are on their way back. "And not a moment too soon," he adds, as short of hiding in junkyards like Chin'toka, he's running out of places to hide them. Picard adds they are also running out of time; Frontier Day is coming, and they still have to expose the conspiracy to Starfleet somehow. Beverly Crusher then speaks up, having been weighing a moral dilemma of sorts. Whether the new Changelings' physiology is evolved or engineered, it makes them unique, and the best way to expose them is that uniqueness — a weapon, or at the very least a tool, to help expose them. Her dilemma, however, is that it might require a biological solution, and targeting a species based on their biology is tantamount to genocide, thinking on the morphogenic virus used during the Dominion War; she knows they are desperate, but is concerned about crossing a line. Picard asks her to look into what she can find, and they would weigh the moral implications if and when it became a necessity.

Picard then thinks on how he is supposed to be involved in the Frontier Day ceremony, which would require genetic verification of his identity. Geordi wonders if the theft of his original body from Daystrom Station, and the Changelings' efforts to capture Jack Crusher, are part of a plan to combine their DNA to create a perfect genetic double of Picard. Picard has also had that same fear. Beverly points out that Picard's DNA is Picard's, and Jack's is Jack's... would they need the DNA of a relative to complete an incomplete DNA sequence? Picard knows they need more information, and Geordi points out there is someone aboard who knows more.

Picard and Geordi head down to sickbay, where Alandra La Forge has been working on Daystrom Android M-5-10, whom Picard refers to as "Mr. Data." Alandra believes she has found the source of the problem, and her father has her show Picard what that problem is (though warns to only allow cognitive functions). Alandra brings the android out of stasis, and it speaks with Data's voice. Recognizing Picard (again as "captain") and Geordi, he sees he is no longer aboard the USS Enterprise-E, and wonders about the Scimitar. Picard assures him that was many years ago. The android then glitches, and now speaks with the personality of Data's brother Lore, who smirks as he notes the cruelty of time. In the same sentence, both Data and Lore speak, the former apologizing that he is not in complete control of the body, and the latter adding that he is not in control of his revulsion at Picard's "ancient face." Alandra wonders if Lore has always been "this arch," to which Lore snidely asks if the "tree" moved, or if the "apple" (Alandra) had fallen far from it, ranting about how one would be "a little arch" if he had to deal with "self-righteous" people. Geordi explains for Alandra's benefit that Lore has a perverted idea of what it means to be Human, before telling Picard that the examination of the unit's positronic brain revealed four identity matrices. Those of B-4 and of Altan Soong are there as a memory file only, but Data and Lore are clearly partitioned off, and both are now fighting for dominance. He thinks Soong hoped the personalities would integrate within them, that it would give Data what he had always wanted — the chance to be truly Human — but the partition indicates the doctor's fear that Lore's personality would completely consume Data.

Picard reaches out to Data (even through Lore's interruptions and insults) to discover why the Changelings have taken his original body. Data accesses the archives, showing that an "anomaly" was found inside Picard's body, bringing into question the previous diagnosis of Irumodic Syndrome. Lore then takes over, saying it establishes him as an "inferior," a "perfectly imperfect Picard, through and through." Data again wrests back control and pleads with his captain to help him. This is too much for Picard, who has the La Forges reactivate the stasis. He remembers that two years ago, Data had asked Picard to let him go, to die in peace, and now he was asking for help again. He wonders if they could somehow free Data by erasing Lore. Geordi warns that the new android is far more complex than the Data he knew, more art than engineering; with the help of the ship's computers, he thinks he can stabilize Data, but if he lifts the partition, and Lore prevails, they might lose Data again, this time forever, and that is not something he

wants to go through again. "Me neither," Picard agrees.

Aboard the *Shrike*, Vadic makes contact with her superior, "The Face", who demands an update; Frontier Day is almost upon them, and they are running out of time. Vadic explains that Picard's associates are unexpectedly firm in their loyalty, and she does not expect them to break in the time they have left. "The Face" insists they must, warning Vadic that her physiology is not as unique as she believes, and that she is by nature malleable, "made to bend"; the prisoners, however, were of a singular flesh, and so it suggests she dismember one in front of the other, do anything to achieve success. "The hour of Starfleet's fall nears," it declares, before again emphasizing they must have Jack, warning that the existence of Vadic and her kind would be "meaningless" if they fail. "The Face" reforms again into Vadic's hand, and she returns to her command chair, a hard expression on her face.

Back on the Titan, Jack is in the turbolift with Sidney La Forge and a number of other crewmembers. When they're alone, he asks what her quarters are like, if they are nice. Sidney scoffs, saying as an ensign, she has very small quarters. Jack somewhat fumblingly mentions he has a "cracking nice suite," and asks if she would like to "hang out." In her mind, Sidney wonders if he is attempting to flirt with her, and wonders if he could be more "subtle" about it, like touching her hand or something. To her surprise, he does just that, just as the turbolift stops. She turns to look at him and asks why he had done that, wondering to herself how he had known to do that. It's clear that Jack can hear her thoughts, but he does not respond before the turbolift continues, taking him to the bridge.

As he approaches Picard, who asks how he is doing, Esmar speaks up from comms, saying they had detected another long-range trace attempt from Starfleet. Shaw tells them to ignore it like all the others, but Seven sees something that brings them up short: It was a compromised prefix code, used by captains in distress to ping their designated starships, giving the enemy the ship's location, but letting Starfleet know the captain has been caught and compromised. Picard realizes it was from Riker, and Seven identifies the frequency as matching that of the *Shrike*, which lets them know that Riker is in Vadic's custody. Shaw orders Esmar to block the signal, to not let Vadic find them. Jack then asks Picard if he could have a word.

Jack explains that he doesn't know what is wrong with him, but knows it isn't anything good. He blames himself for the situation, and worries about Riker, who had been good to him from the moment they met, and he also had a wife and child to worry about; now he was in danger. Jack thinks they should let the *Shrike* find them, and trade himself for Riker. Picard refuses outright. Jack asks if he had any idea what it was like knowing people had died, were dying, and will die, and wonders why they should die for him, believing he is not worth it. He admits he has always felt "different," like something was wrong with him, deep inside. He is able to hear things inside his head, but is not sure how to truly explain it. Picard emphasizes he is not giving up on Jack and urges him not to give up either. Jack admits he's all for a fair fight, or not when he's the one who's cheating, but they have never had the advantage in this situation. "What if we actually do?" Picard asks, saying he has an idea of how to get Vadic.

In open space in the Alpha Quadrant, the *Shrike* comes out of warp, finding the Titan floating derelict in space. Vadic's crew reports the Titan's warp core is offline, and that the ship is running on emergency power, but they can't detect any life signs due to radiation from a nearby wrecked Vulcan warship. Vadic is convinced Jack is alive, and then asks if there were any subspace transmissions. They find one, a recording from the Vulcan ship, the VSS *T'Plana*, which reports engaging the "fugitives" and disabling their warp core. Both ships are now dead in the water. Vadic is convinced, and orders a boarding party, but via shuttlecraft, not with transporters. Vadic's lieutenant warns it could be a trap, but Vadic is adamant that Jack is right there, that she could almost touch him. "Can't you hear that?" she asks. "Tick-tock, tick-tock, goes the ancient clock." They are out of time, so they will go and claim Jack themselves.

Vadic leads the boarding party aboard the Titan herself, consulting her wrist-mounted tricorder; she can detect life signs "scattered like rats" throughout the ship. Just at that moment, a figure emerges from the corridor, and Vadic is surprised to see it is Jack himself. He tells her she is too late, that everyone is dead. Vadic assures him that not everyone is, and that she is there to take him to a "better place." When he asks what that means, she replies that it would be better to show him than tell him. "You'll have to catch me first," he smirks, as he breaks off running. Vadic gestures her crew forward, while her lieutenant stands with her.

Jack runs through the corridors, meeting with Sidney at a junction. They fire on their pur-

suers and split them apart, before they call to the bridge to drop force fields around them, trapping them in the corridors. Jack makes it into sickbay, blasting down one of the pursuers, before Vadic herself enters from the opposite door. Jack calls for another force field, which traps Vadic in place. Shaw is surprised to see that it worked, before Seven urges Jack to get out. Vadic's lieutenant enters, weapon in hand, but Vadic raises a hand to stop him, looking with interest at Jack. Jack smiles and exchanges fire with the lieutenant, luring him into the chase. Meeting up with Sidney, they lure the remaining boarding party into their trap, but find themselves trapped as well, their only exits blocked by the force fields locking the Changelings in place. Geordi, down in the EPS control room with the android, tries to lock onto them with the transporter, but is unable to do so. He and Alandra leave the room to access the transporter controls, just as the doors to the control room close behind them. The android moves into view, glaring at them through the glass, and Geordi realizes Lore has taken control.

Beverly confronts her long-time pursuer, noting how she seemed almost at ease. She admits she had taken an oath to do no harm, but was now seriously reconsidering it. Vadic finds it "adorable," as she hears Picard enter behind her. She thinks he is there to be "understanding" to Beverly's "cruel," and she is bored with it already. Picard knows how they stole his original body from Daystrom, and how they plan to use his body and Jack's blood to fool the genetic scans so they can disrupt Frontier Day. Beverly adds that they know about the Changelings' new physiology. Vadic asks if they know about Jack's physiology too. They demand to know what she wants with him. Vadic says that she herself wants nothing, that Jack is not for her; indeed, she and Beverly could bond over that, because he is not really meant for her, either. Picard elects to speak plainly: Vadic has no way to escape, while admitting his "understanding" led him to recognize the travesty of the Dominion War. Seething, Vadic tells them that they can not compare the atrocities committed by their side to the warfare executed by hers. Beverly points out that the Changelings had started the war, but Vadic retorts that it was necessity, that the "solids" were coming for them, and they ruin every world they touch. When Picard asks her to name one world "ruined" by "solids," she replies with her own, remembering how Starfleet had introduced the morphogenic virus. Picard reminds her that Starfleet had provided the cure, but Vadic counters that Starfleet had elected to keep it from them, and that it had taken one of their own to give it to them. She has flashbacks of a Starfleet science lab as she rages at them about how Starfleet fueled her desire for their destruction, inflicting torment on her and those she loved.

Trapped in the corridor, Sidney calls her father to warn that they don't have much time, as the trapped Changelings pound at the force fields. But Lore has taken control of the ship's systems, including security and transporters. When Alandra asks why, Geordi replies it is because Lore enjoys the chaos. The Changeling lieutenant asks Jack how it will feel for Sidney to die for him. As Jack gazes at her, his eyes begin to glow red, and he can hear her wonder in her mind why he is looking at her like that.

Vadic's hands move like an orchestra conductor, asking her captors if they liked the symphony. Picard admits he wasn't aware they had music in the Great Link, and Vadic confirms they don't, but she and nine of her fellow Changelings had been held during the Dominion War at Daystrom Station, kept in jars on shelves. She recalls it had something to do with "Project Proteus," and that the symphony she remembers didn't have brass and strings, but the spinning of wheels down the hall, the sound of boots squeaking on concrete, the creaks of cage doors, screams of all tempos and pitches... and above all, whistling. She recalls the scientist at the station, who whistled "Three Blind Mice" while she experimented on the captive Changelings, subjecting them to pain, all to turn them into weapons: "Perfect, undetectable spies, able to drop into any species and spread chaos." She admits there was a "happy ending:" Starfleet had created the "perfect monster." Vadic had killed the Daystrom scientist and took her shape, and the evolution from those experiments allowed her to pass on the changes to others who linked with her, all to fool those who had "taken everything" from them. Picard is horrified, and quietly admits he didn't know. Vadic finds it remarkable how an "enlightened" species could ignore each other's pain and asks Picard if Beverly would have hidden his own son from him if she could truly feel his loss. She then shifts into Jack's form, asking Beverly if she was prepared to lose another son.

Vadic returns to her chosen form. "The Federation took my family," she tells them. "Now I will take yours."

Sidney warns her father that the shield regulators are beginning to fail, as the Changeling crew continues to pound away. Geordi tries to reach out to Data inside the android, but Lore replies that Data can't fight him. In sickbay, Beverly worries that Vadic appears too calm; she has a plan, and if they let her slip out, she will take Jack. As long as they are onboard, Vadic and her crew are a threat, and that everything she told them, she wanted them to know. She asks why Vadic would take the face of her torturer, and Picard believes it was to remind herself of her hate. He concedes that Beverly is right, that Vadic is an executioner for her cause... and that they would get no more from her, as he draws his phaser.

Geordi continues to try to appeal to Data, knowing he is still in there, and that life rarely gave second chances to say what one should. He believes Data made him a better man, a better father, a better friend. He begins to break down as he admits it broke him when Data died, but the memory of Data also helped put him back together. Picard asks Beverly if time has changed who they were so much, that they would compromise what they believe. Beverly admits that she is indeed losing her moral compass. The decision is ultimately made for them, however, as Lore takes control, mocking Geordi's attempts to appeal to his brother's memories of friendship. When Geordi asks what he wants, Lore replies that he wants no more than Geordi wants for his children, and what these Changelings wanted: Survival. He decides to "level the playing field." "The enemy of my enemies... well, you know the rest," he quips, as alarms begin to go off; Lore has taken complete control of the security fields and brings them offline. As the one around Vadic falls, she goes into liquid form and escapes through the ventilation system, even as Picard and Beverly fire on her.

The force fields trapping her crew also go down, and another field is brought up between Jack and Sidney, leaving them to fight their respective opponents alone. Geordi continues to try and reach through to Data. Though briefly disarmed, Jack is able to retrieve his phaser and kill his attacker, but Sidney is left at the mercy of the Changeling lieutenant, who slams her into the force field. Geordi rages at Lore to let his daughter go. As they make eye contact, the same red glow in Jack's eyes can be seen in Sidney's, and they are able to read each other's thoughts. Though separated, Jack guides her movements against the lieutenant, allowing her to avoid its attacks while inflicting her own. Finally, Data is able to take control, and brings down the field between Jack and Sidney. Sidney tries to figure out how she was able to hear Jack's voice in her head, and holds her phaser on him, not sure what to make of him. He tries to reassure her as whistling is heard from up the corridor: Vadic has found them. They both quickly make their exit.

Beverly consults the Daystrom archive on "Project Proteus," and discovers that the formula used in the experiments contained thelomium-847, a stabilizing agent with a half-life of one hundred years. In theory, that means that Vadic and her crew have trace amounts of it in their system, which would allow them to be tracked. They find Vadic and her lieutenant on deck 9, and Picard warns Shaw not to let them near the bridge access lifts. Shaw is already on his way with a security team, firing on them. The lieutenant vaporizes the security team, but Shaw brings him down... though not permanently, as he reforms behind the captain and hurls him into the turbolift with Vadic. Shaw orders the bridge to destroy the lift, but it proves too late. Shaw, his face bloodied, collapses to the deck, but the lift appears otherwise empty. However, Vadic and her lieutenant soon reform from the floor, and hold Seven at gunpoint, while the rest of the Changeling boarders emerge from the conference room.

Vadic opens a channel to the entire ship, saying they had proven themselves worthy, and not without guile, before asking what defense would be formidable against the "formless." She had warned them it would come to this, and that they could have saved themselves the trouble if they had cooperated with her earlier. She emphasizes she acted not out of cruelty, but mercy. "To be mutable, fluid, means knowing what the river knows: that there are many ways to the same sea." Now they are at the place they were always meant to be: To bring Jack where he most needed to be. At that moment, Jack and Sidney arrive in sickbay.

As she seats herself in the captain's chair, Vadic declares herself the new captain of the Titan. "And Jack, my dear, if you can hear me, it's time you learned who you truly are."

Surrender

Season 3

Episode Number: 28

Season Episode: 8

Originally aired:	Thursday April 06, 2023
Writer:	Matt Okumura
Director:	Deborah Kampmeier
Show Stars:	Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars:	Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Amanda Plummer (Vadic), Ashley Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Mica Burton (Alandra La Forge), Stephanie Czajkowski (Lt. T'Veen), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar), Jenson Cheng (Shrike Lieutenant), Amy Earhart (Titan Computer (voice)), Olivia Youngers (Titan Ensign)
Summary:	Vadic forces Picard to make an impossible choice: deliver what he can never give — or watch his crew perish. Their only salvation lies in the mind of an old friend and old foe.



Making herself comfortable in the captain's chair while smoking on the USS Titan-A's bridge, Vadic orders her followers to "take [the crew's] eyes" and lock down the ship's controls, just as Geordi La Forge unplugs Daystrom Android M-5-10 (controlled by Lore) from the ship's computer. As the lights go out, his daughter Alandra asks if he had in fact disconnected the android, and Geordi assures her he did; he knows Vadic has the bridge. Vadic then decides to "take their ears" by disabling internal communications, her crew ambushing that of the Titan in the corridors. Vadic herself takes

"the very road ahead of them" by sealing the doors. As she forces her prisoners — Captain Shaw, Seven of Nine, and the remaining bridge crew — to listen to the screams of their comrades, Vadic rises, eyes closed and hands waving like a conductor at the sound, before she closes the channel, walking down the line of the crew. Most stare at her with either fear or contempt; a tear falls down Esmar's face at the fate of their shipmates.

Picard and Beverly Crusher attempt to access the security systems from sickbay, but cannot break the security lockout. As he watches his parents work, Jack Crusher backs up against a wall, his eyes beginning to glow red, as Sidney La Forge wonders what he is doing; he is able to hear that thought in her head. His focus goes outside sickbay, and he is able to hear the thoughts of the Titan's crew. He is able to get inside the mind of a security officer, who wonders where the rest of his squad is. Seeing through his eyes, he advances down the corridor, finding several shipmates either dead or trying to hide, before the man is shot dead by one of Vadic's crew. Jack returns to himself, gasping in pain, before he tells the others that it was no use: The Titan was Vadic's now, and her crew controlled most of the ship.

As if to emphasize this, Vadic addresses the entire ship, telling the crew that she has left them without sight, sound, or freedom of movement; if she so wished, she could leave them without

air to breathe or gravity to stand, or make the environmental controls boil them or freeze them — or, she adds, she could be on her way with Jack in tow. She tells them to consider this, while she considers which of the bridge crew they would miss the most. "So, Jack Crusher to the bridge, would you please," she finishes.

While Vadic and most of her crew are on the Titan, Riker and Troi are kept in a holding cell aboard the *Shrike*, where Troi tries to clean up the blood from Riker's injuries. He tells his imzadi that he missed her, and she jokes that she should have taught him another word, like *yintaru*, which meant "baby of immense size". She can sense that he has changed; he admits that when they were in the Ryton Nebula, he had come face-to-face with "bleakness", something he hadn't felt since their son Thad died. When they had come out of it, the first thing he had wanted was to see her face, having missed loving her. Troi is sure this is Riker's concussion talking, and he agrees, but adds that when Vadic's people killed them, he would die knowing he'd given his last dose of the "old Riker charm" for her. Troi mentions that the Changeling who had impersonated him had been "charming" too — "good in bed, bad at pizza," is her assessment, which Riker laughingly sees as being much like himself. Troi had known they were impostors before she even knew they were Changelings, and that she knows these Changelings were different. Riker confirms they had discovered their evolved physiology. Most of the Changeling crew were off the ship along with Vadic, and Troi wonders if they did the right thing, sending out the compromised prefix code. Riker confesses that he couldn't bear to see them torture her anymore, and also believes Picard would know what to do. He is convinced Vadic is about to be caught in a "classic Captain Picard trap" even as they spoke.

Back on the Titan, Vadic finds the captain's chair quite "cozy" and expresses a desire to take it with her. Shaw is glaring at Seven, who tells him not to give her that look; she doesn't intend to apologize. He tells her she should have destroyed the turbolift he was on, but Seven didn't, and would make the same decision again, refusing to trade lives. Shaw reminds her she was a Starfleet officer, and didn't have the luxury of making decisions that felt "hunky-dory" to her, and that everything had consequences. Seven asks whether those consequences included saving his life, and when he addresses her as "Commander Hansen", she puts her foot down and uses the name she prefers. Shaw warns about the consequences that hadn't happened yet, not just to either of them, but to the entire ship. Vadic then orders a team sent down to find Jack, while she tries to coax him out with "fresh meat". She sounds the all-hands again, but addresses Jack directly, asking if he enjoyed "forcing chaos" upon the crew. She gives him ten minutes to come to the bridge, or she will begin executing the bridge crew, one for every ten minutes that she is forced to wait.

Jack is prepared to give himself up, but both his parents refuse; Picard points out that once Vadic has him, she will destroy the ship anyway before taking him wherever she plans to take him. Jack thinks she is just planning to take him to the Great Link, but Picard recalls how she spoke about seeking revenge, and thinks the plan is far more complicated. Jack emphasizes that he himself is not a Changeling, becoming increasingly upset as he admits that how he presented was a way to distract himself from this constant feeling that he was different. He wants to tell them something, and before he can finish the sentence, both Beverly and Picard assure him they were there for him. Jack believes he can retake the ship, as he has the ability to connect to other people, see through their eyes, and control their movements. He knows it sounds crazy, but he is not hallucinating, and Beverly runs her medical scanner to confirm this. Sidney backs him up, saying that he had done so with her, and had saved her life by using this ability of his. Picard thinks this is why Vadic is so bent on capturing him, because of this unique gift. He knows that high-ranking Starfleet officers have access to an override codex that can allow them to lock down the ship in the event of a hostile takeover, but it can also be used to lift said lockdown. However, the only controls that can do so are on the bridge, as Vadic has locked down the rest of the ship. Jack thinks he can get up to the bridge, and take control of a member of the bridge crew to access the controls, emphasizing that he has to try it.

Vadic warns that Jack had one minute left. Just then, Mura's eyes begin to glow red; Jack has taken control, and Picard tells him to input the codex into the console. Just as Jack/Mura is about to input the override, however, Vadic catches him. She wonders how Mura knew Picard's override codex, but realizes that Jack is in control, and seems glad to see he's realizing his full potential. As he returns to himself, Jack tells the others that Vadic knows about him. Vadic then speaks over the all-hands again, warning that his first ten minutes were up. She first forces

Esmar to their knees, and Esmar identifies herself by name, rank, and position. She then repeats this for Mura, but as he identifies himself similarly, she stops him, saying she wanted to know if he had people who loved him. Mura admits he has a son. Vadic points out that Picard has a son too, and suggests Mura tell him to come up to the bridge. Mura refuses, because he was Starfleet. Vadic threateningly asks if the others wanted to see what control looked like, before coming around behind Esmar and putting her phaser to their head. As she is about to pull the trigger, however, she suddenly turns and vaporizes T'Veen instead. She again demands that Jack come to the bridge, or she will continue to kill the bridge crew.

Aboard the *Shrike*, Riker believes the Titan's strategic advantage would not last, and that they were still outgunned; he and Troi might not survive. He is worried that their daughter Kestra would lose everyone in her life now because of this. Troi bluntly asks him if he was giving up again, pointing out he left the second Picard called, putting half a galaxy between them. She knows he was angry about what she did when Thad died, but believes he gave up. Riker didn't feel like he gave up, but admits to feeling numb because their son died, and he needed to feel the grief. Troi felt the grief was taking him over, and he was disappearing from them. He retorts that she used her Betazoid powers to push herself into his head to dull the pain, and when that wasn't enough, they both gave up. Unlike Riker, she could feel everyone's grief, not just her own. He accuses her of trying to erase his last connection to Thad; she replies she had tried to take it, to help him carry it. However, she had forgotten what all counselors had to remember, and that was that they couldn't skip to the end of healing. She confesses to disliking Nepenthe; though she knows they had gone there for Thad, she disliked their house, thinking it was designed by "retro prairie hipsters", and compared the sound of the local birds (Nepenthian red-winged banshees, Riker recalls) to screaming babies. Riker agrees, remembering how even the front steps of their home groaned at him. She admits to missing the sounds of a city, and the crowds of people. When Riker asks why they had gone to Nepenthe, she answers that one had to go through the door to what was next.

One of Vadic's crew enters, weapon in hand. Riker pushes it away from Troi, and is promptly shoved down for his trouble. As the Changeling's weapon raises, however, a blade goes through its back. As it collapses to the deck, Worf vaporizes it with a phaser. Both are overjoyed to see him, hugging him (to the point where Worf protests that he had a right to personal space). Worf admits he had counted the days since he had last seen Troi, and thought of her empathic gifts often during his self-evaluation (something Troi considers "wonderful" and Riker "inappropriate"). He goes on about his self-improvement, to which Riker wonders if it was a rescue or a continuation of the torture. Worf finally agrees they had to leave, but first there was something they had to see. Outside the *Shrike*, a cloaked Starfleet shuttlecraft holds position.

Horrified by T'Veen's execution, Jack is now adamant that the only way to end it was to turn himself over to Vadic. Meanwhile, Sidney continues to try to access the security lockout. She thinks she could come up with an override in about a year, and her father in about a month, but not in mere minutes. They would need an AI matrix capable of trillions of operations a second. Picard realizes there is someone onboard the Titan who can.

In the computer room, Geordi continues to try to reach out to Data inside the android, and turns when the doors open, phaser in hand, seeing Picard, Beverly, Jack, and Sidney. Both sides are wary that they had been replaced by Changelings. Geordi begins by saying that six years earlier, Picard had given him an anniversary gift. Picard recalls it had been a Chateau Picard Bordeaux, which Geordi had called "too dry" because his taste in wine was "pedestrian" at best, assuring Geordi that he was dealing with the real Picard. They explain that they need to use the android to regain control of the ship. Geordi is not too keen on the idea, however, as Data was not alone inside the android. Picard recalls the partition that separates the two personalities, something Geordi thinks is a good thing, as there would otherwise be nothing to prevent Lore from erasing Data. Picard wonders if there was a way to reverse this, so that Data could erase Lore and take full control. Geordi warns that Data's ethical subroutines would prevent that, but with no other option and with Sidney's urging, he tries to get to work. Jack leaves to buy them the time they need. Geordi warns Data to "buckle up" as he lowers the partition in the android's positronic brain.

Inside the mind of the android, Lore sees that the partition is coming down, and mocks the crew's hopes that Data will overcome Lore to help them regain control of the ship. Data begins to recall his memories, finding himself holding Sherlock Holmes' cap as he recalls a conversation

he had with Geordi decades before, about how Holmes had a place for everything in his office. Lore taunts Data about collecting "trinkets", while his mind would hold symbols of power and conquest, which he believes to be the only sensible measure of the success of a life. Data now holds Holmes' pipe, as he replies that the "trinkets" were his memories, the only sensible measure of the worth of a life. As the partition comes down, Lore steps right into his face, raving about how he was left abandoned and alone while Data was "showered" with love and affection, calling it a waste because he couldn't even feel it. He takes the pipe from Data's hand, and Data begins to glitch. He looks somewhat frightened as he asks what Lore had done, and Lore smugly replies that he was overpowering him, as he always could — one lifeform replacing another. "Evolution, my dear Watson," he says mockingly while smoking the pipe.

Aboard the *Shrike*, Worf, Riker, and Troi meet up with Musiker, where Worf shows what they have found: Picard's preserved biological remains, taken from Daystrom Station. However, the Changelings had removed sections of Picard's parietal lobe affected by Irumodic Syndrome. Riker wonders why they would want that, and Musiker accesses the ship's database. Musiker and Troi introduce themselves to one another, remarking on the "strange days" they've recently had. As she completes the download, Riker tries to reach the Titan, but the shields were up and communications down. An alarm begins to sound at the same time: Riker and Troi's absence has been discovered. They immediately leave to return to the shuttle.

Vadic learns the prisoners have escaped, and decides to give another demonstration of her impatience, preparing now to execute Mura. Just then, the turbolift goes active — someone was on their way up. It proves to be none other than Jack himself. Vadic had been sure the "baby boy" would decline her invitation, and Jack quips that his mother had taught him better manners than that. "I even brought you a gift," he adds, as he raises an unknown device in his hand.

Geordi worriedly watches as Lore's matrix begins to overcome Data's. Picard wonders if they could do anything to help, but Geordi knows they couldn't; this battle was all Data's now. Inside, Data, now holding a tricorder, finds it difficult to maintain focus, but Lore counters that it was not his focus he was losing, but his existence. Soon Lore would have consumed him utterly, and all of his memories, so priceless to him, would simply fade away. Data admits that his memories defined who he was, as he conjures up another: the hologram of Natasha Yar he had kept for many years. He recognizes that in his current state, he was powerless to stop Lore. Lore agrees, and is glad that Data sees it that way, as he takes the hologram and tosses it aside. Picard pleads with Data to fight, needing his help to retake the ship.

Vadic wonders if Jack thinks his "gift" will kill her. Jack concedes it may or may not, but he is certain it will kill him. He demands that she release the Titan's crew if she wants him alive. Vadic tells her crew to lock the Titan officers in the conference room. Shaw exchanges a look with Jack, who nods in reply. Seven hangs back, before returning to the bridge. When Shaw demands to know what she was doing, she retorts that she was "accepting the consequences". Jack tells her she should have gone, and she counters that he shouldn't have come up. Vadic finds it fitting that Seven stays to witness what was coming, but Jack returns her attention to him: He was there now, and asks what she wants. "Your gifts," she replies. Jack angrily tells her to enlighten him about those "gifts", since she seems to know so much about them. She asks him how it felt, roaming from planet to planet, species to species, trying to outrun the "constant shadow" of his isolation and loneliness. Jack tells her that when she wanted to stop talking in "batshit circles", he was "all ears". She knows he has heard voices, and wondered what they were, hearing so many voices after years of silence. She offers to help "put the pieces together", give him the answers he seeks. She knows he has seen a red door in his hallucinations, and asks if he has ever wondered what is behind it.

Geordi warns that Data's primary functions were shutting down, and that Lore was writing his own code; they were about to lose Data forever. Inside, Data hands Lore a pack of playing cards, recalling all the times he had spent playing poker with his friends. Lore is confused as to why Data was giving him these things. "Because you have had nothing, and I have had everything," Data replies. Outside, Picard admits he was no expert, but it looked like Data was surrendering to Lore. Inside, Data recalls his pet cat, Spot, remarking how a "simple creature" managed something he considers "miraculous" — teaching Data how to love. Spot was the best of him, and indeed the last of him. Lore simply takes Spot from his arms... and with that, Data fades away. Geordi tearfully tells his friends that that was it: Data was gone, and Lore has now taken complete control. But as Lore holds Spot in his arms, he now begins to glitch... and Data

returns. The scan of the android's positronic brain shows the red of Lore's matrix being completely overwritten by the blue of Data's. Lore, now fearful and confused himself, wonders what has happened. Data tells him he discovered the error in his deception: Lore had said that Data's memories meant nothing to him, but because they meant something to Data himself, Lore could not resist seizing them as trophies. Lore had taken the things that were Data, and in that way had become Data. He embraces his brother one last time, as they bid one another goodbye.

The android awakens, taking in his environment. Geordi cautiously asks if they were speaking to Data, and he confirms they are. Picard tells him the ship was in trouble. Data, now more confident-sounding, urges him to say no more, as he accesses the ship's systems. They are able to regain communications, and make contact with Riker on the shuttlecraft Emerson. Sidney explains the situation, and clears them to dock. Meanwhile, Data now addresses the ship, saying that the "friendly positronic, pissed-off security system" was back online, and was initiating an "immediate shift change". Vadic sends her crew to find them. Musiker is waiting for one such band, blades in hand; as one is about to get the drop on her, however, Worf vaporizes it with a phaser. Data now calls to Jack, telling him he was up. Jack activates the device in his hand and stands close to Seven — but it proves to be a personal force field bubble, protecting him and Seven. Picard orders the evacuation hatch on the bridge opened, as Seven tells Vadic to get off her bridge. "Oh, fucking solids," Vadic seethes, as she and her crew are vented into space. Vadic begins to freeze from exposure to vacuum before impacting with the Shrike's deflector, shattering into pieces.

Seven releases the crew, and presents Shaw with his ship back. Shaw orders the crew to stations; they weren't done yet. Esmar reports that Riker's team was back onboard. Shaw elects to give Seven the honor of destroying the Shrike. Seven orders Mura to target the Shrike and give it everything they have, something Mura does gladly.

With the Titan unleashing a volley of five photon torpedoes, the Shrike is no more.

Musiker vaporizes the downed Changelings, as Worf commends her on her performance, but points out flaws in her combat style, something Musiker considers to be "bullshit". Riker and Troi catch up to them, Riker considering Musiker "scary". Just then, Troi feels an overwhelming sensation, what she calls an "all-consuming darkness" somewhere on the ship.

Picard is glad to see Data has returned to them again. Data expresses the hope that they will see the friend they once knew, and that for better or worse, he had changed; he was clearly older now, for one thing. Beverly thinks it good to see him anyway, young or old. Data had always wanted the totality of the Human experience, and had already tasted death, but admits it was a new experience now, as he actually feels his neck crack slightly while doing his characteristic head tilt.

As the Titan leaves the Shrike's grave behind, Data expresses the belief that they were "good" here now, and Geordi points out he had used a contraction. Data counters that he didn't (again using a contraction), before Geordi realizes that Data was joking. It was one of many new changes for him; he was Data, but also Lore, B-4, and all else that Altan Soong programmed into this new body. When Geordi asks how he felt, Data replies simply that he did feel now. Geordi hopes that he can now sense how happy he was to have his old friend back, and Data admits that his gratitude for that friendship remained forever constant.

Geordi brings Data to the conference room, introducing him as the "newest version of a very old friend". Riker mentions he had had an "upgrade", and Data assures him that he was mostly himself, albeit with a bit of "computational joie de vivre" as he puts it. Picard mentions that the last time they spoke, Data had expressed his wish to experience death, and hopes that, glad as everyone was to see him, they had not betrayed that wish. Data thinks that version of him was "resting peacefully", but this new Data would rather be there with them more than anywhere else in the universe. They assemble around the conference table, Riker thinking it had been a long time since they had sat around a table like this. "Too long, really, by far," Geordi agrees. Beverly admits while it was her hardship that brought them all together, she was glad to see them, as she had missed them all over the years. Troi confesses she had spoken to Beverly in her darkest times, and even in happy times, glad to be able to do so even when she wasn't there. Worf says that he had slaughtered "countless" enemies, and considered sending their heads to his former shipmates, but was advised that it would be "passive-aggressive", earning a laugh from the others. Picard is glad to be able to be with his old friends again, because he needs their help to deal with the Changeling infiltration of Starfleet. Geordi reminds them that Frontier

Day was just hours away, and Riker adds that they still had almost no answers, though they were analyzing the information from the Shrike's computers to find out what exactly they were extracting from Picard's body. Data points out that this was all factual information, which ignores an "emotional truth". Troi agrees, recalling what she sensed when she came onboard — whatever the Changelings' plans for Frontier Day were, they seemed directly tied to Jack. Beverly reveals what he had told them of the visions and voices, and what they had seen of the abilities he has. Picard adds that whatever the cause, they were also getting stronger. Troi thinks the darkness she sensed was not directly inside Jack, but around him — along with an ancient and weak voice that was not his own. She thinks it was time she met him.

As the Titan engages her cloak, Jack meets with Troi, who asks if he was ready. Jack admits that one did not practice a lifetime of charismatic deflection to simply let people in. Troi concedes that as a counselor, it would be normal for him to seek her out, but given the circumstances, the quickest path to the truth was the one they needed now. She holds out her hands to him, and after a moment's hesitation, he takes them. She tells him to focus, before asking if, in any of his dreams or imagination, or even when awake, if he had ever seen a door. Jack confirms he has seen a red door, a talking door, and he has no desire to open it because he is terrified of what was behind it. Troi urges him that it might be time to open it. Jack refuses, but Troi assures him they would do it together, that he wouldn't be alone. Inside Jack's mind, he stands with Troi inside a corridor on the Titan, the door at the end of it. As Troi places her hand on the knob to open it, the voices continue to whisper Jack's name.

Vōx

Season 3

Episode Number: 29

Season Episode: 9

Originally aired:	Thursday April 13, 2023
Writer:	Sean Tretta, Kiley Rossetter
Director:	Terry Matalas
Show Stars:	Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars:	Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Elizabeth Dennehy (Elizabeth Shelby), Mica Burton (Alandra La Forge), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar), Majel Barrett (Enterprise Computer (voice)), Amy Earhart (Titan Computer (voice)), Grace Gregory (Security Officer), Jane Edwina Seymour (Borg Queen), Alice Krige (The Borg Queen (voice))
Summary:	A devastating revelation about Jack alters the course of Picard's life — and uncovers a truth that threatens every soul in the Federation. Picard and his crew race to save the galaxy from annihilation — at a gut-wrenching cost.



"Nothing is more elusive than a door the mind doesn't wish to open," Troi says, as Jack Crusher stares down the corridor of his mind at the red door, the song "I Can't Stop Crying" projecting through the hall. Troi can sense his reluctance and fear but assures him he is safe. She points out the vines approaching the door, but Jack says he has no idea what they mean. Troi tells him that all symbols have some kind of meaning and urges him to think. He finally recalls the Crimson Arboretum on Raritan IV, a place he had visited with his

mother as a child, and also recalls she "adored" the song they were hearing as well. Troi warns him not to get lost in it and stay with her. He recalls the song being less music and more memory, a code of sorts passed from his parents down to him. He remembers seeing thousands of flowers at the arboretum, all of them different on the outside, but beneath the soil, all were connected by the vines. He admits he does not find the idea comforting, but still right and true, purposeful, perfect. As they speak, the music slows and the corridor begins to darken.

In reality, Troi is sitting in the counselor's office aboard the USS Titan-A, holding Jack's hands, deep in concentration. Outwardly, Jack looks almost haunted, while inside his mind, his expression has hardened. Troi asks if Jack seeks to make such connections like the vines, and he admits he wants to make "many" connections. The voices, foremost among them his mother's, come from the door. Troi tells him his truth lies beyond it and asks if he would like her to open it, again assuring him he will not be alone. Jack finally agrees, and Troi slowly makes her way down the corridor to the door. As she opens it inside Jack's mind, in reality she suddenly awakens, stunned by what she has seen. She stammers out an apology and quickly flees from Jack, even as he demands to know what she saw in his mind. She makes her way down the corridor to sickbay,

where Picard and Beverly Crusher look up worriedly at the expression on her face, asking what happened.

Behind the red door in Jack's mind, Troi had seen a Borg cube... and heard the voice of the Borg Collective.

Picard and Beverly are stunned by the revelation, while also protesting it as impossible; Jack has never been assimilated by the Borg, nor are there nanoprobes in his system, nor any transceivers or receivers. Troi assures them that while her gifts are not perfect, there was no mistaking the Borg influence. Beverly knows from biology that communication does not always require words, like with a flock of birds turning in unison, or the architecture of an ant hive or a bee colony. Transceivers and receivers are sometimes organic, and so too must the technology be inside Jack. Picard is adamant that the only thing he passed to Jack was Irumodic Syndrome, but Beverly realizes he never actually had Irumodic Syndrome, which is why Altan Soong had kept his body at Daystrom Station. Somehow, he discovered, and Vadic somehow knew, that Picard had passed something to Jack, something left over from when he had been assimilated into Locutus. Beverly thinks they should tell Jack, but Picard, blaming himself as the cause for Jack's problems, chooses to take that responsibility himself. However, Troi stops them short when she points out there are "protocols" to follow. Vadic had been looking for a weapon to use against Humanity, and that weapon was Jack; they had seen how he could control others' minds. Troi apologetically tells them their son is now dangerous.

Jack is pacing furiously in his quarters when the door chimes, heralding his father. He immediately demands to know what Troi saw, before raging that he is never allowing any "goddamn Betazoid" near him again. Everyone has their secrets that they are entitled to, not to be put out on "psychic display" as his had been, and he feels Troi had no right, former Starfleet counselor or no. When Picard tries to defend his former crewmate, Jack screams at him to tell him what Troi saw. Picard finally admits that 35 years ago, he had been assimilated by the Borg and used to do "terrible things" before he was recovered. While he was outwardly unscarred, he had not been unchanged. Starfleet had cleared him for duty, but later diagnosed him with what was thought to be Irumodic Syndrome, which had killed him. However, the illness that led to his organic death turned out to be a "side effect" of the real cause, something that Picard has passed on to Jack, what he calls a "seed" that has taken a generation to grow. Jack wonders if that makes him like a bee, searching for a hive, for a queen, and Picard admits that perhaps subconsciously it does. Jack had always seen how the galaxy is imperfect, with broken political systems, wars, violence and bigotry, and wondered if it could be different if everyone could think with one mind, speak with one voice; perhaps a little "cybernetic authoritarianism" was the answer. But at the same time, the Borg don't feel, don't care, and yet he does; how does that factor in? Picard can only say that they have to take "precautions." Jack, furious, demands to know what Picard sees when he looks at him. Picard angrily replies that he came close to killing everyone he knew, everyone he loved, when he was Locutus. Jack doesn't know what it means to be controlled by them, what the Borg Queen could make him do... and Picard has seen what Jack is capable of. He knows of a place he thinks Jack will be safe, a research academy on Vulcan. Jack knows he's referring to Keslovar, which he condemns as a "prison" where the Vulcans would use the mind meld to "lobotomize the Borg" out of him, and refuses, choosing instead to find his own way.

As he tries to leave his quarters, however, two Starfleet security officers, phasers in hand, halt him. Jack realizes he was never going to be allowed to walk out alone. Picard sadly tells him that Starfleet protocol requires them to act in the interest of all others. Jack wonders what the protocols of a father tell him to do, or perhaps he had never been issued those? Just then, his eyes glow red, and the two security officers raise their weapons — at Picard himself. "Jack, what is this?" Picard asks him. "Futility," is Jack's answer, as he and his controlled security officers leave, even as Picard calls after him.

Beverly catches up to him in the corridor, asking where he is going. He replies simply that he is going home. She urges him to let them find another way. Jack had always thought the voice in his head he was hearing was hers, but in fact it was that of the Borg Queen. If she wanted him, he would trade himself for answers. And when he gets close enough to get them, he intends to show exactly who and what he is. Ignoring his mother's desperate pleas, Jack makes his way to the shuttlebay, and preps a shuttlecraft for launch. He briefly reaches out, hearing the Queen's voice in his mind again, then sets the coordinates and disables the shuttle's transponder before pulling out of the bay. Picard and Beverly are left to watch from the conference room as Jack's

shuttle goes to warp. Picard sadly notes that Jack inherited the best of her, and the worst of him. Beverly laments how she lost Wesley to space, and so watched Jack more closely, so close that she didn't see what was in front of her. She is adamant there must be another way, and she intends to find it.

Picard sits alone when he is approached by Data, who reports that Jack is jamming the transponder of the shuttle. He asks if Picard would like him to say something comforting, which Picard warns might be impossible. Data is aware of this, and simply puts a hand on his old captain's shoulder to show his support. Just then, Geordi La Forge calls from sickbay, telling Picard that there is something more about Jack.

Jack's stolen shuttle comes out of warp in the midst of the storm seen behind the red door, but no trace of the Borg. The shuttle's computer sounds an alarm, warning of tachyon radiation pulses, neutrino emissions, and gravitational flux. He wonders if it might be a wormhole, but the shuttle's computer reports it was a transwarp conduit. Just then, Jack doubles over, clutching his head in pain, as he can hear the voice of the Collective, before looking up to find a Borg cube looming over him.

Geordi explains that all Borg undergo genetic alterations so that their bodies can communicate with their cybernetic components, but Picard had undergone far more extensive alterations. The Borg had in fact written an entirely new genetic code inside him, something the crew had not been able to detect 35 years earlier. The anomaly that Dr. Soong had found in Picard's brain was in fact dormant Borg biological adaptations, which explains why Picard could still hear the Collective even after being liberated. Worf adds that this is why Vadic stole Picard's organic body from Daystrom Station: The Changelings had extracted the altered portions of his DNA, with the intent to weaponize it. While Picard as Locutus was a receiver of sorts, Jack appears to be a transmitter, able to send instructions. Picard points out that those Jack had taken control of, including the security ensigns, had never been assimilated by the Borg; how could he control them? Worf admits they do not know that yet. Beverly wonders how she had missed any sign of this, but Picard considers it a testament to her that he had resisted as long as he could. Geordi agrees, saying that while Jack is Borg, that is not all he was.

Riker asks what they will do now. Beverly thinks it is clear that the Changelings and the Borg had been working for a common purpose, and Worf reminds them that all of Starfleet is assembled on Earth: "Today is Frontier Day." The entire conspiracy has been for this one specific moment. Beverly urges them to warn Starfleet, but Riker wonders what they would be warning them about, as they don't know themselves yet; Geordi also points out that Starfleet would "blow [them] out of the water" the moment they enter the system. Picard believes they have to try, and calls to the bridge, telling Captain Shaw that they have to return to the Sol system. Shaw questions the wisdom of returning in the middle of the Frontier Day celebration with all of Starfleet there, "running exercises with our faces pinned to their dartboard" as he puts it. Picard believes it to be their only option. "Of course, it is," Shaw resignedly replies.

In Earth orbit, the USS Enterprise-F departs Probert Station under the command of Fleet Admiral Elizabeth Shelby. She addresses the fleet by saying that 250 years earlier, the Enterprise NX-01, Earth's first warp 5 vessel, made its maiden voyage. With it, a crew of 83 embarked on the journey that would lead to the birth of Starfleet. As the Titan makes her way to Earth, they listen as Shelby explains Starfleet's newest advancement: "Fleet Formation," a new synchronistic technology that allows all Starfleet vessels to act as one, "an impenetrable armada" as she puts it. Riker notes Shelby's rise, recalling how ambitious she had been decades before, and Picard wonders how Shelby of all people could endorse something so "Borg-like." "Happy Frontier Day, everyone," Riker sums up sarcastically; Seven of Nine adds they will be crashing "one hell of a party." Sidney La Forge reports from the helm that they will arrive in Sector 001 in less than an hour. Shaw wonders what will happen next.

Meanwhile, Jack beams aboard the Borg cube, where the Borg Queen's voice welcomes him home. She refers to him as her child, her flesh and blood. "For all my darkness, you are light," she tells him. "For all my suffering, you are life." Jack admits he is not sure what he is, but is sure he is not hers. The Queen replies that he is, and that she had thought of many names: "Regenerati," or perhaps "Puer Dei." Jack notes her fondness for Latin, but replies that he is neither her "rebirth" nor a "child of God." She replies that this is why he was Vox: Not Locutus, "the one who speaks," but the voice itself. She knows he has felt it too and urges him to believe in it. He raises his phaser, saying he believes in mercy, and intends to grant a "mercy" of sorts.

The Queen is suspended above him, telling him that she sees in him what Vadic also saw: An end, the vindication of both their species: "To take everything back from those who live their lives like shattered glass." She laughs, saying that if it were possible for him to kill her, he would have already. Jack screams in impotent rage at his predicament, before finally dropping his phaser. The Queen urges him to end his struggle and join her, reminding him that "resistance is futile." Cables descend from the ceiling and connect into Jack, turning his eyes a featureless black.

Aboard the Titan, Geordi explains to Beverly that he and Data have been looking over the intel that Musiker recovered from the Shrike before its destruction and have discovered Starfleet code inside Picard's DNA — more specifically, Data adds, transporter code. Beverly tells the computer to cross-reference the code with the transporter system of the Titan. The computer finds that the code is part of the transporter architecture. Data explains that to simplify the processing of millions of data points, the system stores coding common to all species, and Picard's Borg-altered DNA is now considered common biology in the transporter system. Beverly realizes this is what the plan was: Using the Changelings to infiltrate starships to introduce this code into the transporter system, to add the new Borg DNA into everyone, of every species, whoever uses a transporter. The Borg have essentially been assimilating the entire fleet without anyone ever knowing it.

The Titan comes out of warp in Earth orbit, as Shelby continues her summation of the new Fleet Formation system, which Riker thinks is more like a firing squad. The computers then blare out a warning, and Mura reports that it is just as expected: The fleet is trying to commandeer their systems. Shaw calls for countermeasures, but Esmar reports that the automation is shutting them down, and they are about to lose communications. Picard orders emergency hailing frequencies to the entire fleet. He reports the Changeling infiltration that has made them vulnerable to the Borg. Shelby hails directly, and he urges her to trust him, even if the message sounds desperate. However, the connection is lost, and Mura reports a massive energy spike.

The Borg cube activates, sending out a signal that causes Seven to double over in pain; she is able to detect it through her remaining implants. Data examines the simulation data, showing that the Borg genetic material did not propagate in species past a certain point in its developmental cycle. Beverly knows that for Humans, this is around age 25, when the frontal cortex stops development — which meant it will not affect them, but it will affect the younger members of the crew. Geordi is immediately worried about his two daughters. On the bridge, Shaw calls for red alert, but Mura does not respond to his commands. Nor does Sidney, as both of their faces writhe with Borg nanoprobes. Sidney turns, and emotionlessly speaks with the voice of the Collective. Geordi then tries to find his daughter Alandra, but the computer responds her life signs no longer register as Human: She too has been affected. Communications return for a brief moment, and Shelby frantically reports that something is happening to her crew as well. Two members of the Enterprise crew immediately shoot her dead, before the connection is again lost. Shaw and Picard both realize that Starfleet has been assimilated. The bridge crew all begin droning "eliminate all unassimilated." Seven quickly disarms and disables one officer about to fire on Riker, and Shaw takes up a phaser, ordering weapons to stun only as they quickly flee the bridge.

Geordi frantically tries to get to his daughters, but Data quickly halts him, saying they need a plan. The controlled crew marches through the corridors, firing on anyone they find, all while droning "eliminate all unassimilated." Esmar, speaking for the crew, reports to the Collective that they have control of the Titan.

In the turbolift, Shaw wonders why they haven't been assimilated, and Seven replies that with all the "gray hair" between them, it must have "skipped a generation." Picard knows they cannot save the ship, or the rest of the fleet, from inside; Riker agrees, they have to escape from the Titan. The lift stops on deck 4, in the midst of a firefight. Shaw urges Seven to close the door and proceed to Deck 11. As they do, an emergency transmission comes in from Captain Benbassat of the USS Excelsior, who reports he and his crew have managed to retake their bridge. However, the automated system takes the ship out of formation, right into the crosshairs of the rest of the fleet. The captain is requesting that whoever is listening tell his family about him before the Excelsior is destroyed. The Collective voices report the Excelsior as "eliminated" and the fleet-wide assimilation complete. Picard angrily demands the communications terminated. Riker wonders how Benbassat was able to get a message out. Shaw recognizes the channel as 99 Delta, a maintenance channel. An idea comes to him, and he changes the destination of the

turbolift to the maintenance deck. No guards, and thus no drones, are posted there, and there is a repair shuttle they could use to escape. Picard reaches out to anyone who may be listening to meet them on the sub-level maintenance corridor. The fleet, now joined by the Titan, sends a transmission to Earth, calling on the "weak and willful" to submit, as their strongest, all of Starfleet, are now Borg.

As the lift halts at its destination, they are met by Geordi, Data, Beverly, Musiker, Troi, and Worf; the latter four all have phasers in their hands. Troi is relieved, half-joking that she has never been so glad to see "so many wrinkles." Geordi is trying to get the door to the repair shuttle bay open, and also worries about his daughters. Picard assures him they will be saved, but first, they have to get off the ship. Riker worries about the fleet taking over the shuttle, but Data points out the shuttles are autonomous, not affected by the new system. Seven agrees with the "robot" (at which Data looks mildly put out) that it is the only way. Worf questions how a single shuttle can take on the entire fleet, but Geordi has a better idea. As he returns to work on the door, Worf warns of incoming. Shaw and Seven move to cover their escape. Geordi is able to get the door open, and he and Data power up the shuttle. Geordi hopes the shuttle has enough power to get them there, but Data wonders how Geordi is sure "there" hasn't already been destroyed. When Geordi tells him to think more positively, Data half-jokingly replies that he hopes they die quickly.

As the firefight continues, Shaw urges Beverly and Riker to go. Worf follows not long after. As Shaw then tells Picard to go, he takes a phaser blast to the chest. Seven tells Picard to go, but he refuses to leave without everyone. Seven urges him to "find a way out of this," and Musiker backs her up, also choosing to stay behind. As Seven tries to reach out to her captain, Shaw tells her it is not his ship anymore, but hers. "You have the conn, Seven of Nine," he says as he dies.

As the shuttle leaves the Titan, the fleet targets Probert Station, and prepares to eliminate all of Earth's defenses.

The shuttle arrives at the Fleet Museum on Athan Prime, and approaches Hangar Bay 12. Geordi knows they need an older ship, one not affected by the new automation system. He had been intending this as a surprise but decides there is no time like the present. Inside the hangar, much to the shock of Picard and the others, is a reconstructed USS Enterprise-D. Geordi explains that the saucer was recovered from Veridian III per the Prime Directive, so as not to influence the inhabitants of the system. He has spent the past twenty years rebuilding the secondary hull, including nacelles taken from the USS Syracuse and repairing the damage to the saucer. Data finds it strange that he is having an emotional reaction to seeing the old ship again, and Troi assures him he is not the only one. Geordi points out they could not use the USS Enterprise-E, and all eyes turn to Worf, who retorts that what happened was not his fault. Geordi warns there is still some hull work to be done, and the port nacelle cover is problematic, but both Riker and Beverly assure him she is still "beautiful" all the same. Worf asks if she can fly, and Geordi turns to Picard, who is quite convinced she can.

The crew steps onto the bridge for the first time in 30 years, taking in the old but easily familiar sight. Data approaches the navigator's station, before worriedly looking back and asking if Geordi is sure she is not connected to the Starfleet mainframe. Geordi assures him that he is positive: The Enterprise-D is the only functioning ship left in the fleet that is not. Worf remarks that he preferred the additional weapon systems on the Enterprise-E, but admits the work Geordi has done is "perfect." As Picard approaches the dedication plaque, he wistfully mentions how it was not until that moment, with all of them there, that he realizes what he had missed most: the carpet, earning laughs from the others. Geordi assures Worf that he is having the torpedo bays loaded as they speak and gives Picard the honors. Picard calls for the computer to initiate reactivation procedures, and the computer acknowledges, reporting that the Enterprise is under the command of Captain Picard, who happily accepts the "field demotion." He looks to his old shipmates, saying he is reluctant to call on them to face this foe again, but Riker reminds him that they are the crew of the Enterprise, and not only that, but they are also his family. Troi adds that Jack, Sidney, and Alandra are their family too. "Jean-Luc, wherever you go, we go," Riker assures him.

Picard orders his old crew to stations — Worf at tactical, Data at navigation, Geordi at the helm, and Riker and Troi on either side of him. Beverly reports systems ready, and Worf reports the same for weapons, though they are limited. Riker knows they will have to run, shoot, or hide, and they will need every bit of power to the shields. As they clear the old spacedock, Picard has

Data set a direct course for Earth, and gives the order: "Engage."

The Last Generation

Season 3

Episode Number: 30

Season Episode: 10

Originally aired: Thursday April 20, 2023
Writer: Terry Matalas
Director: Terry Matalas
Show Stars: Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard), Michelle Hurd (Raffi Musiker), Jeri Ryan (Seven of Nine), Brent Spiner (Data), Jonathan Frakes (Will Riker), Marina Sirtis (Deanna Troi), LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge), Michael Dorn (Worf), Gates McFadden (Doctor Beverly Crusher), Ed Speleers (Jack Crusher)
Guest Stars: Alice Krige (The Borg Queen (voice)), Walter Koenig (Anton Chekov (voice)), Tim Russ (Tuvok), Todd Stashwick (Captain Liam Shaw), Ashley Sharpe Chestnut (Ensign Sidney La Forge), Randy J. Goodwin (Jae Hwang (voice)), Joseph Lee (Lt. Mura), Jin Maley (Ensign Esmar), Tiffany Shepis (Dr. Ohk), Majel Barrett (Enterprise Computer (voice)), David Chan (Mechanic), Amy Earhart (Titan Computer (voice)), James MacKinnon (Starfleet Officer), Jane Edwina Seymour (Borg Queen), John de Lancie (Q)
Summary: In a desperate last stand, Jean-Luc Picard and generations of crews both old and new fight together to save the galaxy from the greatest threat they've ever faced.



An emergency transmission by Federation President Anton Chekov warns any who hear not to approach Earth, as the Borg had used a signal of unknown origin to assimilate the planet's youth and taken control of Starfleet. As the USS Enterprise-D makes her way there, the crew listens in grim silence as the President warns of Earth's imminent fall, and of their inability to stop the Borg signal and save their young people, but also reminds his listeners of what his father would say: "Hope is never lost. There are always possibilities." Until then, however, he urges anyone listening to avoid Earth;

in the background as the channel closes, his staff are urging him to an escape pod.

Worf reports that the fleet has taken attack formation against Earth. Geordi adds that the orbital defense platforms have been destroyed, but Spacedock's defenses are repelling the assault. "For now," Riker warns, adding that the planetary shields would not stand up against the fleet, before wondering where the "cavalry" was. Data reports that emergency transmissions from all Starfleet and civilian ships have gone silent. "Apparently, we are the cavalry," he sums up. From his own experience, Picard knows the fleet is being controlled by the Borg Collective, a hive mind with a single voice — a voice that was nearby. Data scans and confirms via long-range sensors that there was a Borg vessel at Jupiter. Picard orders a course to intercept.

Arriving in Jupiter orbit, the Enterprise detects a massive Borg cube in the center of the Great Red Spot. Beverly reports it was broadcasting the Collective and puts it on audio. Picard asks if she is able to find Jack amidst the cacophony of voices. She is eventually able to narrow it

down, and Worf confirms that he was indeed the command signal. Riker guesses the Borg were amplifying the signal from the cube. Picard knows that the only way to save Starfleet, and Earth, was to sever that connection, no matter the cost: "What began over 35 years ago ends tonight." He orders Geordi to take them in.

The Borg-controlled fleet continues to blast away at Spacedock's shields, including the USS Titan-A, with Esmar in the center chair. Sidney La Forge detects unauthorized movement on Deck 5, and the order is given: "Eliminate all unassimilated." Meanwhile, the unassimilated are able to hold their own, with Seven of Nine in the lead, making their way into a turbolift to the bridge. From the opposite lift, Musiker leads another team just behind Seven's, and both exchange fire with the assimilated bridge crew. But those shot by the unassimilated are taken by a transporter beam; the crew have linked their phasers to the transporter system (perfecting the "portable beam-me-up" as Seven jokingly calls it) to lock their assimilated crewmates in the transporter room. Seven orders her people to seal the bridge and take their stations. One ensign protests that he was a cook who took lunar flight training, but never finished because of problems at home. Seven interrupts by saying he was a pilot, which made him their pilot, and encourages him to take his station. Dr. Ohk brings up the maintenance channel over communications, where the unassimilated officers of the fleet report being overrun. Seven urges her crew to find a way to get them out of fleet formation mode, preferably before the Collective realized they had retaken the ship.

At Jupiter, the Enterprise approaches the cube. Data's scans indicate it was only 36 percent operational, and what power it did have was being used to broadcast the hive mind. Picard turns to Troi, who admits she has never felt anything quite like it before, a "quiet suffering" as she puts it. Data admits he hates the Borg for all the suffering they had inflicted on so many. Troi is able to sense Jack, but he is totally consumed by the Collective. Worf asks the question on their minds: What if Jack was at the point of no return? But both Picard and Beverly reject that idea. Just then, Data detects that the cube has scanned them... and lowered shields and redirected its weapons. Picard calls it an "invitation," and that their objective was clear: Locate and destroy the beacon that was transmitting the Borg signal. Geordi warns the signal was so powerful, it was scrambling their sensors. The only way to find it would be to beam aboard the cube. Beverly asks if there were any life signs, and Data brings the readings on screen. She then has the computer narrow down the signals that mimic human brain waves. She believes she can use those readings to pinpoint Jack's location, recognizing that Picard intends to go down himself. Picard asks her to lead him to Jack, complimenting how she had brought him that far, and asking her to let him bring their son home. Riker and Worf both volunteer to accompany Picard. Data eagerly does so as well, but Picard needs his expertise on the ship. Beverly agrees; while she wants nothing more than to tear the Borg limb from limb herself, they were all needed there. Riker shares a last, silent look with Troi, who looks pained at what she senses. Picard leaves Geordi in command, and before entering the turbolift tells his old shipmates it had been an honor serving with them.

They beam aboard the cube, where Riker worriedly notes the lack of movement or even sound; on a cube that size, there should be thousands of drones. Worf notices his "disappointment" at not being outnumbered, and Riker admits he had never been in any "too-quiet situations" that had ended with a pleasant surprise. "You don't leave the doors open if you want to keep the wolves out," Picard agrees. They find a Borg drone dead in its regeneration alcove, and Worf's tricorder scans indicate the necrotic tissue was being consumed. Riker wonders what they could be sustaining, and Picard grimly wonders whom. As they continue their sweep, every drone they find is dead; the cube is essentially a tomb, which explained the lack of bio-signs. Picard points out that in the absence of one army, they simply raised another. Beverly reports from the ship that she has found Jack's bio-signs in a chamber one level below him, which Picard recalls being near the unimatrix array and below the transporter platform. When Riker asks how he could know that, Beverly believes some part of Picard must still be tied to the hive — which is how Picard knows it was now time to part ways, as he could no longer be their captain, but now had to be a father. He tells them to find the beacon, and thanks Riker for his loyalty, which meant so much to him; as he is about to say something similar to Worf, he tells his old captain that there were two turns of phrase a Klingon never admits to knowing: defeat, and farewell. As Riker and Worf leave, Picard asks Beverly to lead him to their son. She warns that she can lead him to the next level, but the interference increased after that. As she is about to make an admission of her

own, Picard assures her that she did "everything right" with Jack.

As Picard proceeds alone into the cube, he finds Jack, now Vōx, giving orders to the new Collective. He declares to the worlds of the Federation that their biological and technological distinctiveness would contribute to the whole, their cultures would evolve to serve the future, and peace and prosperity would spread throughout the galaxy. Assimilated into the Collective, they would exist in a universe without fear or loss, unbroken, perfect. Picard tries to reach out to him, saying he was there to take him home, when laughter echoes in the chamber. He looks up to see the Borg Queen, held up in the wall behind Jack. She tells Picard that Jack was home, as was Picard: "At last, Locutus has returned... to his true family, to his Collective... to me."

Aboard the Titan, as the battle rages around them, the unassimilated crew have detected the Enterprise near the Borg cube on Jupiter. Seven realizes Picard's plan, using an older ship that was not controlled like the rest of the fleet, and wonders how they can do the same. Musiker sees the signal as being propagated by line of sight, which meant if they couldn't see the Titan, they couldn't control it... and Seven knows they had a way to be unseen. She orders tactical to upload every prefix code they had for the entire fleet and scramble their shields; they can't fire while cloaked, so they would have to be fast. The cook/pilot protests at the idea of one ship against the entire fleet. Seven tells her crew she was not asking them to give their lives for nothing, but to fight for what was below, on Earth: Their families and children. The Borg had taken their crew and killed Captain Shaw; at that moment, they were all that was left of Starfleet. Musiker reports the cloaking device was online, and Seven gives the order.

Picard demands to know what the Queen has done to Jack; the Queen smugly replies that she could do nothing, as she had only her words, and the "soft assurances" of a mother's love. "You are not his mother!" Picard shouts in rage, as he fires his phaser at the Queen, who is protected by a shield. The Queen goes on to say that there had been no Collective until recently, just herself, an "unimaginable loneliness" that she and Jack shared. Picard accuses her of worming her way into his head, but she retorts that Jack found her, at the very edge of space, where she had been abandoned to die of starvation and age. As the cries of her "children" died out, she heard another voice, louder and clearer: Jack's voice. Picard demands she release Jack and take him instead, but the Queen refuses. The future of the Borg did not lie in assimilation, she believed, but evolution.

Riker and Worf make their way through the cube to find the beacon, and Worf is able to locate a central access terminal. Riker expresses the hope that the Borg have been too busy dying to upgrade their codecs. As Worf communicates with the Enterprise, one of the "dead" drones awakens; as Riker finds the broadcast emitter, another follows suit. Meanwhile, on Earth, the Titan weaves its way through the assimilated fleet, decloaking, firing, and recloaking to avoid being retaken by the fleet automation, attempting to buy Picard and his crew time to stop the Borg.

Picard condemns the Queen as insane, consuming what little "Collective" she had left. The Queen replies that she did so only for this moment, so that Picard could stand as witness. He asks what it is he was to witness. "Your future's end," she replies. She had made the deal with Vadic and her rogue Changelings to be her weapons, because they too understood the pain of losing a generation to Starfleet. Together, they weaponized Picard's biology, rewriting the Borg machine code into genetic code. They no longer had to consume materials to continue, but could now reproduce through biology, propagating a new Collective with a single purpose: Not just to assimilate, but to annihilate.

Aboard the Titan, the assimilated crew manage to force their way out of the transporter room, while the drones activate aboard the cube and attack Riker and Worf. The cube begins opening fire on the Enterprise, and Geordi orders evasive maneuvers. Worf passes Riker his kur'leth, the latter being surprised at its weight; Worf directs him to the hilt, where he has concealed a phaser. The Titan continues its hit-and-run attacks, narrowly missing being hit by a photon torpedo. Musiker warns the fleet was using predictive algorithms to find them, and the pilot warns it was working; the fleet was redeploying assets to pursue them. On the Enterprise, Geordi warns Beverly that he didn't have time to work on the weapons, so she would have to fire them manually. The doctor proves more than up to the task, however, inflicting considerable damage. When all eyes turn to look at her in wonder, she smiles and shrugs, saying that a lot had happened in the past twenty years. Meanwhile, Riker wonders why Worf never used the hidden phaser that whole time, and Worf replies only that "swords are fun." Riker tells the Enterprise

they should have the schematics for the beacon now. Troi examines the schematics and is able to detect the location — that was the good news. The bad news, Data adds, was that it was at the heart of the cube itself. Geordi believes it impossible to reach, not even for a pilot like his daughter Sidney. Data, however, has other ideas, and takes the ship in. When the others protest, he pleads with them to trust him; while he agrees it was statistically almost impossible, his "gut" tells him he can do it. Geordi finally agrees to go with Data's "gut," and Data takes them in, weaving through the structure of the Borg cube. Troi wonders why she can suddenly sense enjoyment; as if in answer, Data has an almost ecstatic look on his face as he navigates through the cube.

Spacedock finally falls to the relentless assault, and Earth's planetary shields collapse. The fleet redeploys to target all of Earth's major population centers. As Seven orders another strafe run, the ship violently shudders; Sidney and Alandra have destroyed the Titan's cloak, which will allow the Collective to retake control of the ship. Picard tries to reach out to Jack, who directs the fleet to fire on Sector 001. In desperation, Picard begins ripping out the cables connecting him to the cube. The Queen warns that it would kill him; severing the link would sentence his mind to "insurmountable, unsurvivable shock," and that only Jack himself could choose to leave now. The Titan is neutralized, and the fleet targets Earth's major cities.

Data brings the Enterprise into the center of the cube, where they see the beacon for themselves. As Beverly prepares to fire, however, Geordi stops her short, and asks if Data sees the same thing he does. Data confirms the beacon is integrated directly into the cube's systems; destroying the beacon would set off a chain reaction that would destroy the entire cube, and everyone onboard. Beverly protests that there had to be another way, but Troi lays down the situation bluntly: If they destroyed the cube now, they would kill everyone onboard, but if they waited, the Collective would wipe out everyone else. Geordi looks up at Beverly, who is struggling with the idea, but finally, she quietly nods. He then calls Riker, who has heard every word. They had a transporter lock on Riker and Worf, but not Picard, and prepare to beam them out. Riker, however, has no intention of leaving Picard behind. Troi warns that he would have a minute at most to get out the moment they fired, but Riker believes he owes Picard a lifetime; a minute was the least he could spare. He promises to see her soon. Worf quips that there had been a moment he was worried they might actually survive, as he joins Riker. Data reports he had lost their signal; they had crossed into the dead zone.

Picard continues to rip out cables; the Queen now sounds worried as she asks what he was doing. Picard replies that he vowed never to return to the Collective and had been running half his life from it. But now he had something to go back for. As Riker and Worf catch up to him, Picard takes a cable and jabs it into his neck, connecting him to the Collective. Inside, he finds Jack, who says he could hear so many voices, welcoming him — all joyful, no loneliness or fear, perfect. Picard tells him the euphoria wasn't real, that perfection was not evolution, but death. He knows Jack had always felt different, hungering for connection while trying to keep people away, to keep them from seeing who he really was. Picard had been the same, having joined Starfleet to find a family he didn't have, and he had found it, and let them in. But there was always a barrier; he too thought there something was wrong with him, and he waited, waiting in his vineyard to die alone. But now, he realized that Jack was the part of him he never knew was missing. Jack insists that it was all written before his birth, that this was what he was meant to be, and this was where he belonged.

Aboard the Enterprise, Geordi knows they were out of time, and hopes their friends had some left. He turns to Beverly, who nods, and targets the beacon. He gives the order to fire, and the Enterprise destroys the beacon with a barrage of torpedoes and phaser fire. Riker turns to Worf and asks if it was "good enough," and Worf agrees that it was a fine day to die with honor. As the Enterprise makes her escape, Data is attempting to lock onto the others, but the shockwave of the beacon's destruction is interfering with the transporter signal. Picard decides that if Jack will not leave, he will stay to the end, telling his son that he had changed his life, and embraces him. As he relives all of the memories with his parents, Jack finally awakens, and begins frantically tearing out the cables himself, including that connecting Picard to him. Riker speaks aloud, hoping Troi would hear him, assuring his imzadi that he loved her and would see her soon, together with their son. Troi, sensing him, realizes she knows where they are, and goes to the helm.

The Queen rages that Jack had been born there, and so would die there. Jack retorts that the

time of the Borg was over. The Queen reminds him that even if he survived, he would be changed, broken, alone. Looking to his father, Jack replies that he would not be alone. The Enterprise flies in overhead and is able to beam them to safety. The Collective orders its last directive to be carried out now that the "command signal" — Jack — has been interrupted. The Queen screams at her defeat as the Borg cube is torn apart, the Enterprise able to escape just in time. Aboard the Titan, the assimilated crew reaches the bridge, but as the Queen's cube is destroyed, the nanoprobes fade. The crew looks around at one another in confusion. Sidney, realizing she was pointing a phaser at Seven, begins to apologize, and breaks down crying as Seven hugs her, assuring her it was over.

Aboard the Enterprise, Picard emerges from the turbolift together with Riker, Worf, and Jack, who has had some of his Borg implants removed from him. On screen, Geordi is relieved to see his daughters are safe and sound. Worf sinks into the chair to the left of the captain's seat and is briefly heard snoring, exhausted from his ordeal. As Jack is reunited with his mother, Picard welcomes him aboard the Enterprise.

"Captain's log, Stardate...shall we say one. The first of a new day for friends both and young. Starfleet had implemented a fleet-wide transporter solution to purge our young officers of the Borg infection. A world-saving effort developed by our new head of Starfleet Medical Branch – Admiral Crusher, who also managed to spearhead technology that privately scans for other irregularities. In constant need for information, Our changeling adversaries kept yet did not kill many of their targets. From the lowest of ranks to the very highest."

The Enterprise and the Titan arrive in Earth orbit amidst the wreckage of the battle. Beverly is promoted to admiral and named the head of Starfleet Medical, where she develops a transporter technique to purge the Borg code introduced by the Changelings, as well as more easily detect Changeling infiltrators. The targets replaced by Changelings are recovered alive, including Captain Tuvok, who meets with his old friend Seven onboard the Titan. Tuvok explains that in light of the recent events, the Enterprise veterans are receiving full pardons for hijacking the Titan with Seven's help. However, Seven's aid to them, and her disobedience of her captain, must be taken into account. Seven thinks her instincts don't fall in line with Starfleet protocol, and so she is electing to resign from Starfleet. However, Tuvok shows her the officer review sent to Starfleet Command by Captain Shaw prior to the Titan setting course for the Rytan system, in which he referred to her both by his preference ("First Officer Hansen"), then more accurately by hers, "Seven of Nine." In his message, Shaw admitted to being a "relic of an older time" that followed "the book," which he conceded was "boring," whereas Seven was reckless and unrelenting, and "doesn't give a damn" about protocol or procedure. However, he also believed she was brave and loyal, thought that the "book" that she would write would be "great," and that maybe the rules she breaks were broken anyway. He recommended that Seven be promoted to captain upon their return to port. Seven is stunned to tears by the revelation, before Tuvok gently denies Captain Seven's resignation.

Musiker is listening to a message from her ex-husband Jae Hwang, who is impressed with what he has heard about her part in what happened; their son Gabriel is "still in awe," and both were eager to see her again, and she is in tears upon seeing the face of her granddaughter. At that moment, Worf enters, saying he had been told that tears were a body's weapon against pain. Having never wept himself (as Klingons had no tear ducts), he hoped hers were happy. Musiker explains that her son has heard about what happened and reached out to her, inviting her to meet her granddaughter for the first time. Every newscast her family had seen had shown Musiker's face, as well as all of her classified valor commendations. Worf, with a knowing look in his eye, thinks whoever leaked the information was an "honorable maverick," and Musiker, realizing what Worf has done, adds that they were a dear friend as well. Worf hopes that she will find happiness with her family, and Musiker hopes that he will continue to be a warrior for peace.

Troi meets with Data alone, knowing how he could be overwhelmed by emotion, given how traumatic his experiences were: life, death, self-realization. Data admits the transition has been difficult, and finding balance is challenging. Troi remarks that they had gone over their time by an hour (again), while her PADD shows a list of places to possibly take a beach vacation, looking

particularly at Kaphar Prime. Meanwhile, Data goes on about the trials of finding his humanity; he sometimes feels joyful, other times melancholy, some anxiety and ease, some anger. Being Human, he concedes, is just as difficult as the desire to be so, as well as "infinitely more complex" than he imagined. He realizes he was rambling on, and apologizes, asking if they would meet the same time tomorrow. "Can't wait," Troi replies, in a voice that showed she didn't mean it. As they approach the door, Riker arrives, asking how Data was feeling. Addressing Riker as "commander" (the last rank he recalled Riker having), he replies that he was "okay." After Data leaves, Riker jokingly asks if he was still "batshit."

One year later, Picard, Riker, and Geordi stand on the bridge of the Enterprise-D, now given a place of honor at the Fleet Museum. Picard muses that if there was ever evidence that the past mattered, it was right there. Geordi wonders how many times she has managed to "save the world," and Riker thinks it would be more than the years would allow "three old men" to remember. Geordi thinks on what they might have been like without the Enterprise, and Riker believes they would certainly have been different — but not better. After a moment of reflection, Geordi has the computer initiate the shutdown sequence. Riker admits to missing the old computer voice. Picard tells Geordi to "take care of her," and Geordi agrees; after all, she had taken care of them.

At the rebuilt spacedock, Picard and Beverly pilot a shuttle inside, while Jack, now commissioned an ensign, paces behind them. Jack insists he is not nervous, but Beverly points out he was pacing nervously. Picard recalls doing the same before his first assignment, saying he had walked "a light year in a circle" before beaming aboard. Beverly notes the unusual step of the accelerated officer's track, and Jack thinks it might have been nepotism; after all, the family name meant something. Picard, however, assures him that names meant nothing, and it was all Jack's doing, before expressing his pride. He also mentions that Jack never mentioned where he was being posted. This was why Jack was so nervous, because he says it was not for him. As the shuttle enters the bay, Picard sees the Titan... only Jack says it was "not quite" the Titan anymore. Beverly apologizes for the subterfuge, knowing how much Picard disdained fanfare. As they approach, Picard is stunned almost to tears to see that the Titan has been rechristened in honor of Picard and his crew: USS Enterprise, NCC-1701-G. "Names mean almost everything," Jack tells him. "Welcome to the Enterprise, Admiral."

Jack steps onto the bridge and calls for the helm to set a course for the M'Talas system, and for tactical to fire all weapons. As he sits himself in the captain's chair, Seven orders him out. He protests that it was "so cozy," but Musiker — now first officer — reinforces it. Seven tells Sidney, now a lieutenant, to ignore everything Jack just said, and Sidney replies she usually did. Seven emphasized that it was just a shakedown cruise. Musiker remarks on how Starfleet saw fit to give "a thief, a pirate, and a spy" their own ship. Jack agrees that they sound like a bunch of "ne'er-do-wells and rule-breakers." "What could possibly go wrong?" Seven asks rhetorically. Mura reports all engines online, and deflector shields were prepped for warp. Jack asks where he was needed — communications, since he could speak thirteen alien languages, tactical, since he knew the "ins-and-outs" of the universe's most "nefarious characters," or perhaps the science station, not his strong suit but he had been able to "science [his] way" out of situations. Seven stations him in the left-hand seat, as "special counselor" to the captain. Esmar reports they were cleared for warp. Musiker asks what the order would be: "engage," "make it so," "take her out," so on, as a captain's first official act of command had a "long history". Jack thinks of it as writing the opening line to one's legacy, and wonders what it will be. As Seven gives the order, the new Enterprise goes to warp.

At 10 Forward Avenue, the old crew of the Enterprise has gathered; Riker calls it the "end of the road," and that they had closed the place down... again. Geordi notes that Guinan has been giving them the "side-eye" for the past half-hour, to which Troi attributes to a certain someone draining the bar of all the bloodwine — and surprisingly, she is addressing Beverly. Beverly thinks they should have music, much to Worf's dismay; he is looking to leave, as he has a lecture on Mugato meditation to give the next morning. Riker and Troi are also thinking it's time to call it a night, planning a "whirlwind vacation," but can't quite decide a destination — Kaphar Prime, or Orlando, something Geordi calls a "tough choice." He calls for one final toast, to which Data prepares to give a rather humorous one before being talked down. Riker looks to Picard, who quotes from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and

in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat. And we must take the current when it serves or lose our ventures." As they clink their glasses, Picard adds one final note: A playing card, bringing the crew together for a few hands of poker.

Mid-Credits Scene — Settling in his quarters on the Enterprise, Jack sets his bag down on his bunk. "Well, look at you, a chip off the old block," a voice says behind him. Jack turns, phaser in hand, finding himself face-to-face with Q. Picard had told Jack all about him, but Jack had thought that Q was dead. Q quips that he had hoped "the next generation" would not think so linearly. He tells the "young mortal" that he had much ahead of him. Picard had told Jack that Humanity's trial was over, and Q replies that it was — for Picard. For Jack, however, the trial has just begun...

Actor Appearances

A

Kirk Acevedo	1
0305 (Krinn)	
Allison Acosta	1
0303 (Ensign Vesco)	
Ito Aghayere	3
0204 (Guinan); 0207 (Young Guinan); 0208 (Young Guinan)	
Jasmine Akakpo	1
0304 (Titan Ensign)	
John Ales	3
0105 (Dr. Bruce Maddox); 0106 (Dr. Bruce Maddox); 0109 (Dr. Bruce Maddox)	
Landry Allbright	1
0105 (Chop Doc)	
Erik Armando Alvarez	2
0103 (Birdan); 0104 (Bidran)	
Jonathan Del Arco	3
0103 (Hugh); 0106 (Hugh); 0107 (Hugh)	
Luis Avilez	1
0303 (Security Officer)	
Anthony Azizi	2
0301 (Orion); 0305 (Orion)	

B

Jaime Barcelon	1
0104 (Waiter)	
Majel Barrett	2
0309 (Enterprise Computer (voice)); 0310 (Enterprise Computer (voice))	
Toni Belafonte	1
0202 (Zilah)	
Kay Bess	7
0104 (La Sirena Computer (voice)); 0105 (La Sirena Computer (voice)); 0107 (La Sirena Computer (voice)); 0110 (La Sirena Computer (voice)); 0201 (La Sirena Computer); 0205 (La Sirena Computer); 0209 (La Sirena Computer (voice))	
Donny Boaz	1
0104 (Skantal)	
Orla Brady	5
0101 (Laris); 0102 (Laris); 0103 (Laris); 0301 (Laris); 0305 (Laris)	
Jon Jon Briones	2
0202 (First Magistrate); 0203 (First Magistrate)	
Katelyn Brooke	1
0202 (Security officer)	
Hope Brown	1
0305 (Transport Officer)	
Dominic Burgess	1
0105 (Mr. Vup)	
Bryant Burnett	1
0202 (Security officer)	
Mica Burton	3
0306 (Alandra La Forge); 0308 (Alandra La Forge); 0309 (Alandra La Forge)	

C

James Callis	2
0207 (Maurice Picard); 0209 (Maurice Picard)	
Oscar Camacho	2
0204 (Pedro); 0205 (Pedro)	
David Carzell	2
0101 (Dahj's Boyfriend); 0102 (Dahj's Boyfriend)	
David Chan	1
0310 (Mechanic)	
David Chattam	1
0104 (Kibitzer #2)	
Ernesto Chaverri	1
0108 (Xborg)	
Alexandre Chen	1
0206 (Cute Waiter)	
Jenson Cheng	2
0307 (Shrike Lieutenant); 0308 (Shrike Lieutenant)	
Ashlei Sharpe Chestnut	10
0301 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0302 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0303 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0304 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0305 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0306 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0307 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0308 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0309 (Ensign Sidney La Forge); 0310 (Ensign Sidney La Forge)	
Ayushi Chhabra	1
0105 (Pel)	
Jimmy Chhiu	1
0202 (Confederation soldier)	
Casey Childs	1
0105 (Nightbox Piano Player)	
Richard Chiu	1
0203 (Driver)	
Lil Cory	1
0105 (Guest Star)	
Christian Crandall	1
0301 (Dark Haired Man)	
Stephanie Czajkowski	8
0301 (Lt. T'Veen); 0302 (Lt. T'Veen); 0303 (Lt. T'Veen); 0304 (Lt. T'Veen); 0305 (Lt. T'Veen); 0306 (Lt. T'Veen); 0307 (Lt. T'Veen); 0308 (Lt. T'Veen)	

D

Daniel Davis	1
0306 (Professor James Moriarty)	
Wendy Davis	1
0102 (Dr. Kabath)	
Brian DeRozan	2
0109 (Romulan Officer); 0110 (Romulan Officer)	
Thomas Dekker	1
0303 (Titus Rikka)	
Elizabeth Dennehy	1
0309 (Elizabeth Shelby)	
Chaka Desilva	1
0102 (Burley Fuelie)	
Alex Diehl	3

0102 (F8); 0201 (Harvey); 0202 (Harvey)
 Justin Dobies 1
 0305 (Bridge Security Officer)
 Dinero the Dog 1
 0101 (No. 1)
 Jon Ian Dredge 1
 0105 (Starfleet Captain)
 Merrin Dungey 1
 0101 (Richter)
 Stephen Dunlevy 1
 0202 (Security officer)

E

Amy Earhart 7
 0301 (Eleos Computer (voice)); 0302 (Eleos / Titan
 Computer); 0305 (Titan Computer (voice)); 0306
 (Titan Computer (voice)); 0308 (Titan Com-
 puter (voice)); 0309 (Titan Computer (voice));
 0310 (Titan Computer (voice))
 Maya Eshet 1
 0101 (Index)

F

Michelle Forbes 1
 0305 (Commander Ro Laren)
 Jonathan Frakes 2
 0107 (Will Riker); 0110 (Will Riker)
 Naymon Frank 1
 0302 (Guard)
 Sean Freeland 1
 0204 (Tall Man)
 Kate Fuglei 1
 0102 (Kvetchy Fuelie)

G

Leif Gantvoort 2
 0204 (ICE Officer #1); 0205 (ICE Officer)
 Alessandro Garcia 1
 0305 (Intrepid Security Officer #1)
 Jackson Garner 1
 0208 (Young Wells)
 Jackie Geary 1
 0205 (TBD)
 Willow Geer 2
 0103 (Romulan Refugee); 0104 (Refugee #1)
 Whoopi Goldberg 2
 0201 (Guinan); 0210 (Guinan)
 Mason Gooding 1
 0105 (Gabriel Hwang)
 Randy J. Goodwin 2
 0302 (Jae Hwang); 0310 (Jae Hwang (voice))
 Menik Gooneratne 1
 0201 (Alien Emissary)
 April Grace 1
 0201 (Admiral Whitley)
 Harrison Grant 1
 0102 (Ensign)
 William Greenberg 1
 0305 (Male Changenling Ensign)
 Grace Gregory 1
 0309 (Security Officer)
 Gattlin Griffith 1
 0203 (Mugger)
 Steve Gutierrez 5
 0203 (Ricardo); 0207 (Ricardo); 0208 (Ricardo); 0209
 (Ricardo); 0210 (Ricardo)

H

Dylan Von Halle 4
 0201 (Young Picard); 0204 (Young Picard); 0207
 (Young Picard); 0209 (Young Jean Luc Picard)
 Djamel Hammad 1
 0104 (Refugee #2)
 Ren Hanami 2
 0206 (Director Lee); 0210 (Director Lee)
 Kelli Dawn Hancock 1
 0204 (Officer Stauss)
 Michelle Haro 2
 0205 (Guard #1); 0206 (Guard #1)
 Barbara Eve Harris 1
 0106 (Emmy)
 Chelsea Harris 2
 0102 (Dr. Naashala Kunamadestifee); 0107 (Dr. Naashala
 Kunamadestifee)
 Jermain Hollman 1
 0303 (Ensign in Sickbay)
 Adam Hunter 1
 0302 (Security Officer)

J

Richard Jin 2
 0201 (Moshe); 0210 (Moshe)
 Floyd Anthony Johns Jr. 2
 0201 (Pirate #1); 0202 (Security officer)
 Anthony R. Jones 1
 0102 (Pincus)
 Shaw Jones 2
 0205 (Guard #2); 0206 (Guard #2)

K

Matt Kaminsky 1
 0203 (Security Guard)
 Swati Kapila 1
 0201 (Decorated Officer)
 Jay Karnes 2
 0207 (Federal Agent); 0208 (Agent Wells)
 Paul Keeley 1
 0102 (Philosophical Fuelie)
 Garth Kemp 2
 0304 (The Face); 0307 (The Face (voice))
 Jane Hae Kim 1
 0108 (Tal Shiar Female #1)
 Casey King 1
 0105 (Icheb)
 Rich Ceraulo Ko 1
 0201 (Handsome Deltan)
 Walter Koenig 1
 0310 (Anton Chekov (voice))
 Alice Krige 2
 0309 (The Borg Queen (voice)); 0310 (The Borg Queen
 (voice))

L

John de Lancie 8
 0201 (Q); 0202 (Q); 0203 (Q); 0204 (Q); 0205 (Q);
 0208 (Q); 0210 (Q); 0310 (Q)
 Richard Leacock 1
 0206 (Commander Musa)
 Grace Lee 3
 0301 (Picard Chateau / La Sirena Computer (voice));
 0302 (La Sirena Computer); 0305 (La Sirena
 Computer (voice))

Joseph Lee	10
0301 (Lt. Mura); 0302 (Lt. Mura); 0303 (Lt. Mura);	
0304 (Lt. Mura); 0305 (Lt. Mura); 0306 (Lt.	
Mura); 0307 (Lt. Mura); 0308 (Lt. Mura); 0309	
(Lt. Mura); 0310 (Lt. Mura)	
Nanrisa Lee	1
0208 (FBI Agent)	
Son of Lee	1
0103 (Guard)	
Meghan Lewis	1
0102 (Picard Computer / Planitia Computer Voice	
(voice))	
Jason Liles	1
0102 (Noiro)	
Chad Lindberg	4
0301 (Ensign Foster); 0302 (Ensign Foster); 0303	
(Ensign Foster); 0304 (Ensign Foster)	
Peter Lindstedt	1
0203 (ICE Officer #1)	
Peyton List	7
0102 (Lieutenant Narissa Rizzo); 0103 (Narissa Rizzo);	
0104 (Lieutenant Narissa Rizzo); 0106 (Lieu-	
tenant Narissa Rizzo); 0107 (Lieutenant Narissa	
Rizzo); 0108 (Narissa); 0110 (Narissa)	
Dylan J. Locke	1
0304 (Cadet #1)	
Geri-Nikole Love	2
0201 (Urtern); 0210 (Urtern)	
Ken Lyle	2
0103 (Fruit Vendor); 0104 (Fruit Vendor)	

M

James MacKinnon	1
0310 (Starfleet Officer)	
Charles Maceo	1
0208 (Merc One)	
Ann Magnuson	2
0102 (Admiral Kirsten Clancy); 0108 (Clancy)	
Jin Maley	10
0301 (Ensign Esmar); 0302 (Ensign Esmar); 0303	
(Ensign Kova Rin Esmar); 0304 (Ensign Kova	
Rin Esmar); 0305 (Ensign Esmar); 0306 (En-	
sign Esmar); 0307 (Ensign Esmar); 0308 (En-	
sign Esmar); 0309 (Ensign Esmar); 0310 (En-	
sign Esmar)	
Brit Manor	1
0102 (Tough Fuelie)	
Jerry Marr	1
0302 (Operations Division Crewmember)	
Sam Marra	2
0104 (Bartender); 0105 (Bartender)	
Marti Matulis	3
0102 (Checkpoint Supervisor); 0106 (XB Worker);	
0207 (Prisoner)	
Rico McClinton	1
0106 (Older XB)	
Ella McKenzie	1
0106 (Young Soji)	
Jamie McShane	3
0101 (Zhaban); 0102 (Zhaban); 0103 (Zhaban)	
Isabella Meneses	1
0204 (Small Girl)	
Penelope Mitchell	4
0204 (Renee Picard); 0205 (Renée Picard); 0206	
(Renée Picard); 0210 (Renée Picard / Tallinn)	
Sumalee Montano	3
0101 (Dahj's Mother); 0103 (Soji's Mother); 0106	
(Marisol Asha (Soji's Mother))	
Daniel Mooney	1
0205 (Young Man)	

Yumarie Morales	1
0304 (Young Cadet)	
Robert Morgan	1
0302 (Fenris Ranger)	
Kendra Munger	1
0108 (Tal Shiar Female #2)	

N

Ivo Nandi	2
0205 (Officer Leclerc); 0207 (Officer Leclerc)	
Dean Neistat	1
0303 (Guard)	
Charlie Newhart	2
0105 (Romulan Guard); 0106 (Romulan Guard)	
Linda Nile	1
0104 (Kibitzer #3)	
Ian Nunney	2
0103 (Young Elnor); 0104 (Young Elnor)	

O

Patton Oswalt	1
0202 (Spot 73 (voice))	
Sunny Ozell	1
0207 (Singer)	

P

Maggie Pacleb	1
0203 (Little Girl)	
Vaughn Page	1
0306 (Shrike Bridge Changeling)	
Evan Parke	1
0104 (Tenqem Adrev)	
David Paymer	2
0102 (Dr. Moritz Benayoun); 0109 (Dr. Moritz Be-	
nayoun)	
Matt Perfetuo	2
0109 (Rune); 0110 (Rune)	
Mike Perfetuo	2
0109 (Codex); 0110 (Codex)	
Paula Andrea Placido	1
0202 (Palace Soldier)	
Amanda Plummer	7
0302 (Vadic); 0303 (Vadic); 0304 (Vadic); 0305 (Vadic);	
0306 (Vadic); 0307 (Vadic); 0308 (Vadic)	
Adele Pomerence	2
0201 (Kemi); 0210 (Kemi)	
John Pope	1
0305 (Young Ensign)	
Tarina Pouncy	1
0305 (Intrepid Security Officer #2)	

Q

Brian Quinn	2
0204 (Dale); 0205 (Dale)	
Byron Quiros	1
0306 (Starfleet Lieutenant)	

R

Jade Ramsey	2
0109 (Arcana); 0110 (Arcana)	
Nikita Ramsey	2
0109 (Saga); 0110 (Saga)	
Anushka Rani	2
0201 (Sing); 0210 (Sing)	

Sol Rodríguez.....2
 0207 (Dr. Teresa Ramirez); 0208 (Dr. Teresa Ramirez)

Arlene Rodrigez-Lopez 1
 0101 (Trill Assistant)

Sol Rodríguez.....5
 0203 (Teresa); 0204 (Teresa Ramirez); 0206 (Dr. Teresa Ramirez); 0209 (Dr. Teresa Ramirez); 0210 (Dr. Teresa Ramirez)

Eduardo Roman..... 1
 0208 (Vulcan #1)

Zachary James Rukavina.....2
 0102 (XB / Nameless); 0109 (xB)

Tim Russ 2
 0307 (Tuvok); 0310 (Tuvok)

Jeri Ryan 5
 0104 (Seven of Nine); 0105 (Seven of Nine); 0108 (Seven of Nine); 0109 (Seven of Nine); 0110 (Seven of Nine)

S

Hanna Lee Sakakibara.....1
 0202 (Romulan Rebel)

Ric Sarabia 1
 0301 (Human Patron)

Richard Scott.....1
 0101 (Armenian Businessman)

Jane Edwina Seymour.....2
 0309 (Borg Queen); 0310 (Borg Queen)

Tiffany Shepis.....5
 0302 (Dr. Ohk); 0303 (Dr. Ohk); 0304 (Dr. Ohk); 0305 (Dr. Ohk); 0310 (Dr. Ohk)

Graham Shiels 1
 0103 (Tal Shiar Operative)

Marina Sirtis 1
 0107 (Deanna Troi)

Zach Sowers.....2
 0205 (Security Guard #1); 0206 (Security Guard #1)

Brent Spiner.....8
 0101 (Data); 0109 (Dr. Altan Inigo Soong); 0110 (Data / Dr. Altan Inigo Soong); 0202 (Adam Soong); 0205 (Adam Soong); 0206 (Adam Soong); 0209 (Adam Soong); 0210 (Adam Soong)

Aaron Stanford.....2
 0302 (Sneed); 0305 (Sneed)

Todd Stashwick.....10
 0301 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0302 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0303 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0304 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0305 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0306 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0307 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0308 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0309 (Captain Liam Shaw); 0310 (Captain Liam Shaw)

Kareem Stroud.....2
 0205 (Security Guard #2); 0206 (Security Guard #2)

Ciro Suarez.....1
 0104 (Kibitzer #1)

T

Douglas Tait.....1
 0101 (Tellarite)

Kirk R. Thatcher 2
 0204 (Mohawk Punk); 0205 (Punk in bus)

Lea Thompson.....1
 0205 (Dr. Diane Werner)

Danielle Thorpe 1
 0204 (LAPD Officer #1)

Chuti Tiu 1

0208 (Vulcan #2)

Tamlyn Tomita 6
 0102 (Commodore Oh); 0103 (Commodore Oh); 0107 (Commodore Oh); 0108 (Commodore Oh); 0109 (Commodore Oh); 0110 (Commodore Oh)

Oscar Torre.....2
 0207 (Bartender); 0208 (Bartender)

Marcelo Tubert..... 1
 0203 (Mr. Alvarez)

V

Amirah Vann 1
 0104 (Zani)

Marco Vazzano 2
 0301 (Trill); 0302 (Trill)

W

Travis Walck.....1
 0207 (Jester)

Jani Wang 1
 0301 (Bartender)

Derek Webster.....2
 0107 (Romulan Guard); 0108 (Romulan Guard)

Chloe Wepper.....2
 0203 (Gabi); 0204 (Gabi)

Annie Wersching.....6
 0202 (Borg Queen); 0203 (Borg Queen); 0204 (Borg Queen); 0205 (Borg Queen); 0206 (Borg Queen); 0209 (Borg Queen)

Wil Wheaton.....1
 0210 (Wesley Crusher)

Lulu Wilson.....1
 0107 (Kestra)

Madeline Wise.....4
 0201 (Yvette); 0204 (Yvette Picard); 0207 (Yvette Picard); 0209 (Yvette Picard)

Rebecca Wisocky.....3
 0103 (Ramdha); 0104 (Ramdha); 0108 (Ramdha)

Karl T. Wright 1
 0204 (Man at LAPD Station)

Heather Wynters 1
 0104 (Shai)

Y

Michael Eshaun York.....1
 0104 (Terran Settler Kid)

Olivia Youngers.....1
 0308 (Titan Ensign)

Z

Necar Zadegan 1
 0105 (Bjayzl)

Cyrus Zoghi 2
 0207 (Red Bearded Guy); 0208 (Red Bearded Guy)