

= The Child (Star Trek : The Next Generation) =

" The Child " is the first episode of the second season of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : The Next Generation , the 27th episode overall . It was originally released on November 21 , 1988 , in broadcast syndication . The story was originally written by Jaron Summers and Jon Povill for the cancelled late 1970s series Star Trek : Phase II . Due to the tight deadlines caused by the 1988 Writers Guild of America Strike , the producers of The Next Generation searched the records of that earlier television project , resulting in the script being amended by show runner Maurice Hurley .

Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures of the crew of the Federation starship Enterprise . In this episode , ship 's Counsellor Deanna Troi (Marina Sirtis) becomes pregnant by an alien entity and gives birth to a mysterious child . This causes problems for the Enterprise , which is transporting dangerous plague strains . The child 's presence on the ship begins to endanger the crew due to the effects on a virus sample being transported by the ship . It sacrifices its physical body , turning into an energy being , telling Troi why it visited before departing .

Being the first episode of the second season , " The Child " was the first episode to feature Diana Muldaur as Doctor Katherine Pulaski and Whoopi Goldberg as Guinan . Director Rob Bowman was allowed to use additional camera equipment to improve the style of filming , resulting in a change to the opening shot of the episode . It was watched by 10 @. @ 9 million viewers , but critics held a negative opinion of the episode saying that there was no ongoing effect to Troi . Further criticism also compared the means of the character 's pregnancy to rape , and that the reactions of the other crew were irrational .

= = Plot = =

The new Chief Medical Officer , Dr. Katherine Pulaski (Diana Muldaur) , is brought aboard the Enterprise as it prepares to travel to Aucdet IX in order to take on dangerous virus samples , which will be carried to a Starfleet Medical station in order to devise a cure for a plague epidemic in the Rachelis System . Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) meets her in the Ten Forward lounge , as well as the ship 's new bartender , Guinan (Whoopi Goldberg) . On leaving the starbase , a ball of energy passes through the hull and enters the ship unnoticed , eventually settling into ship 's counselor Deanna Troi 's (Marina Sirtis) quarters . The next day , Pulaski finds that Troi is pregnant ; the foetus is developing at an accelerated rate and will be fully developed in 36 hours . Troi does not know who the father is , but is aware of a " presence " entering her body the night before . Though the senior staff debate terminating the pregnancy , Troi decides she will carry the child to term .

While the Enterprise arrives at Aucdet IX and begins to transport the samples into a highly secure storage vessel , Troi gives birth to an apparently normal boy , whom she names Ian Andrew after her father . Ian continues to develop rapidly ; within a day , he appears as a four @-@ year @-@ old child with corresponding mental faculties . Troi , Picard and Pulaski observe Ian (Zachary Benjamin) purposely putting himself in harm 's way , seemingly just for the experience . When asked if he is ready to explain who or what he is , though , Ian responds " not yet . " Having completed the transfer of the virus samples , the Enterprise heads for Starfleet Medical , but the crew finds one of the plague strains is growing inexplicably ; should it continue growing , it will rupture the storage vessel and result in the catastrophic exposure of all on board .

They discover that an unknown source of Eichner radiation is causing the growth . Separately , Ian (R.J. Williams) , now appearing as an eight @-@ year @-@ old , confides to Troi that he is the source of the crew 's problems and will have to leave . Troi realizes Ian is dying and calls for medical assistance . As Pulaski tries to keep Ian alive , Lt. Commander Data (Brent Spiner) scans him and discovers that he is the source of radiation . Ian dies in Troi 's arms , and turns into a ball of energy , which settles into Troi 's hands , communicating telepathically with her for a moment , then leaves the ship . The lifeform told her that he wished to experience childhood and living among the crew . With Ian gone , the plague sample returns to normal and the crew continues on to Starfleet Medical .

= = Production = =

= = = Phase II = = =

The origins of an episode based on a female crew member becoming pregnant first materialised in Gene Roddenberry 's initial pitch for Star Trek : The Original Series . Entitled " Infection " , the episode was described as " A female crew member is discovered to be pregnant , and the growing realization it could be the larvae of an alien , using her body like some insects plant their eggs in other living insects . " A similar idea was created for the Star Trek : Phase II television series in the late 1970s . Jaron Summers pitched a premise for " The Child " in a meeting with Jon Povill , Roddenberry 's assistant , and producer Harold Livingston . Povill suggested changes in the meeting , and Summers subsequently submitted a revised draft treatment . Livingston asked Povill to re @-@ write it , who did a complete re @-@ write in the space of a week . Livingston was subsequently so impressed with his efforts that he demanded Roddenberry make him story editor . Roddenberry refused , until Livingston threatened to quit if Povill didn 't get the job . This changed Roddenberry 's mind but Livingston found that it seriously damaged their working relationship .

The story would have seen the Deltan , Ilia (Persis Khambatta) , becoming pregnant by an alien entity as the ship passes near a nebula . She gives birth to a baby girl , who she names Irska . The Enterprise suffers multiple near @-@ disasters , which are each resolved by the intervention of the child . Meanwhile the ship 's hull is slowly dissolving and the vessel will break apart in a matter of hours . The new Vulcan science officer Xon (David Gautreaux) mind melds with the child and discovers that it needs to be transported directly into a bright light which had been pursuing the Enterprise . This procedure is completed and as the child enters the light , it transforms into a higher life form . The episode ends with the crew musing that Ilia acted as the being 's first womb and the Enterprise was the second . The series was cancelled as it went into initial production for the pilot , " In Thy Image " , with that being rewritten as Star Trek : The Motion Picture . The script for the Phase II version of " The Child " was later reprinted in full in Judith and Garfield Reeves @-@ Stevens ' 1997 book Star Trek : Phase II : The Lost Series . Povill and Summers adapted the script for use in the fan @-@ series Star Trek : Phase II , also known as Star Trek : New Voyages . Povill also directed the episode .

= = = The Next Generation = = =

In response to the success of the first season , Paramount Television increased the budget per episode for Star Trek : The Next Generation , but also changed the financing structure so that funds could be carried over from episode to episode . But due to the 1988 Writers Guild of America strike , the work on the second season was delayed and the length of it overall was reduced . The producers sought to go into production immediately upon the strike being lifted , so they studied the story ideas put forward as part of Phase II . " The Child " was held up as one possibility , with the position of Ilia in the story changed to become Troi . Sirtis praised this development , as she felt she had been overlooked during the first season due to the presence of both Gates McFadden and Denise Crosby .

Show runner Maurice Hurley later admitted that he had never looked at the Phase II script , while executive producer Rick Berman later explained that the writers did not have as much time to redevelop the script due to the restricted time @-@ scale imposed by the strike . Despite this , director Rob Bowman wanted to give the fans of the show a good episode to start the second season , the idea of which Berman agreed with . So Bowman said that his direction " went a bit further " than he would normally , in order to compensate for the script difficulties . He was allowed to use additional cameras and equipment to improve the style of filming , including the opening shot of the episode .

Making their first appearances in *The Next Generation* in "The Child" were Diana Muldaur as Doctor Katherine Pulaski, and Whoopi Goldberg as Guinan. Muldaur had previously appeared in episodes of *The Original Series* as other characters, and had been written in to replace Gates McFadden as Beverly Crusher. Officially McFadden had chosen to leave as she didn't like her character development, the same reason given for Crosby departing during the first season. However, she had actually been fired by Hurley. It had been intended for Pulaski to bring more of a Doctor Leonard McCoy vibe to the series. Meanwhile, Academy Award winner Goldberg had been actively pursuing a role on the show as Nichelle Nichols' portrayal of Uhura in *The Original Series* had inspired her to become an actress. Her agent was initially ignored by the producers as they did not believe that she wanted to be on the show, until Goldberg called them herself. Her character, was named after Mary "Texas" Guinan, a prohibition @-@ era speakeasy owner.

= = Reception = =

"The Child" was released in broadcast syndication on November 18, 1988. It was watched by 10 @.@ 9 million viewers, the highest for the series since the first season episode "Too Short a Season", broadcast on February 14 of the same year. Dennis McCarthy's composition for this episode was nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Music Composition for a Series in 1989, but lost to Joel Rosenbaum for an episode of *Falcon Crest*.

The episode was described as "uneven" and an "inauspicious start to the second season" by James Van Hise and Hal Schuster in their book *The Complete Trek: The Next Generation*. While the duo praised the addition of Muldaur and Goldberg, the lack of a follow @-@ up to the episode was criticised as they felt that the events should have had some type of lasting effect on Troi. It was suggested that either she would want to have a child, or she would be wary of them in general due to the impact of the loss of Ian. Keith DeCandido pointed out several changes at the start of this season in "The Child" that would recur throughout the rest of the run of *The Next Generation* in his review for *Tor.com*. These included moving Geordi La Forge to become chief engineer, placing Miles O'Brien as transporter chief and Riker growing a beard. However, he criticised that Worf calling for Troi to have an abortion was never mentioned again, but added that it was discussed in a non @-@ canon novel, *A Rock and a Hard Place* by Peter David.

James Hunt, in his review for *Den of Geek*, was surprised that no @-@ one in the episode reacted to Troi undergoing what he saw as a form of rape. He also felt that her eagerness to have the child could have been a type of mind control, but none of the crew seem to consider that as a possibility. He said that the crew failed to act rationally for the sake of the plot, which was one of his pet peeves in television, adding that you could "Replace any main character in this episode with a parsnip and the outcome will be unchanged." Hunt also described the introduction of new elements as "clunky", feigning "wonder" that "someone doesn't say 'Nice facial hair, beardo' to Riker because that's the level of subtlety they go for." Zack Handlen, in reviewing the episode for the *A.V. Club* gave it a score of D+, criticising the passive nature of Troi and equated her pregnancy to rape. The entire life of the child was presented as a "joyous life experience", and Handlen described the lack of issues in a three @-@ day pregnancy as "bunk". He felt that the episode would have been better served by concentrating on the hard science fiction concept of the plasma plague, which was only used as a macguffin.

The first home media release of "The Child" was on VHS cassette, appearing on August 25, 1994 in the United States and Canada. The episode was later included on the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* season two DVD box set, released in on May 7, 2002. The most recent release was as part of the season two Blu @-@ ray set on December 4, 2012.