

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x14 - "Twilight."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
Mission Gamma Book 1 - Twilight*

by David R George III

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

TENMEI crashes to the deck in a shower of SPARKS from her exploding helm. Eyes closed, midsection horribly burned.

VAUGHN looks down at her with horror. This is his daughter, and she might be lying dead at his feet.

Around them, *Defiant* SHAKES under fire, panels SPARK, smoke billows, RED ALERT alarms flash.

Vaughn has no time to stop, but he only just manages to take his eyes off Tenmei and drag himself to the helm. He tries to work the panels, burning himself in the process.

BOWERS (at tactical) and NOG (at engineering) call out...

BOWERS

Weapons power to the shields?

NOG

Weapons are offline!

The ship ROCKS again as more weapons fire hits --

2 EXT. SPACE

-- from two smaller ATTACK SHIPS, black and sharp, wasp-like. They hammer away at the *Defiant* from behind, chasing at sub-light. The Starfleet ship does not fire back.

3 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Vaughn moves round the front of the burning helm, reaches beneath to grab the FIRE EXTINGUISHER that is attached. His uniform sleeve catches FIRE as he does - he doesn't stop.

He SQUIRTS the canister's foamy contents on his arm first, then turns it on the console. It successfully puts out the fire. He tries the controls again - still dead. He turns to DAX at Ops...

VAUGHN
Dax, reroute flight control.

DAX
I've got it.

Smoke starts to clear. BASHIR hovers over Tenmei's body, checking her with a tricorder. Vaughn stares at her...

VAUGHN
How far from the planet?

DAX
Not far enough.

BOWERS
Two more Jarada heavies emerging
from the far side of the moon.

DAX
If we can get up to full impulse,
they won't be able to catch us.
We'd only have to worry about the
ones already firing on us.

BOWERS
I sure wish we had those weapons.

VAUGHN
Absolutely not. We promised the
Jarada intelligence on the Iconian
gateways, then turned the damned
things off. I'd be mad too. But if
we fire back, we'll be out of the
realms of "diplomatic incident"
and into "interstellar war".

The ship ROCKS again under more weapons fire...

BOWERS
Aft shields gone. Ablative armour
down to sixty-seven percent.

VAUGHN
Where are those evasive manoeuvres?

4 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Defiant* darts around, evading the two attacking ships.
In the distance in one direction, a reddish PLANET recedes.
In the other, a large CONVOY of cargo ships moving away...

5 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

As we were...

VAUGHN

Do we have warp drive?

NOG

Engines are intact, but there's a
micro-fracture in the port nacelle
- we wouldn't be able to maintain
warp for more than a few seconds.

VAUGHN

How many seconds?

NOG

Forty at most. Maybe no more than
twenty-five.

VAUGHN

How long before we're at a safe
distance to go to warp?

DAX

Six minutes. A minute and a half
after the other two ships get here.

BOWERS

And if we're still here when they
do, this fight'll be over fast.

VAUGHN

We could risk going to warp inside
the system for our own sake, but
the Jarada would see that as much
of a disrespect as firing on them.
And then they'd chase down both us
and the Europani convoy.

Bashir and RICHTER are gathering Tenmei's unconscious body up off the floor and carrying her out. Vaughn sneers - he wants to destroy the Jarada to avenge her, but he can't.

VAUGHN
Status of the cloaking device?

BOWERS
Operational.

SHAR
I thought we weren't allowed to -

Vaughn silences SHAR with a cold glance. The ensign returns his eyes to his console, realising this was *not* the time.

VAUGHN
Reroute all available power to the
impulse engines. Everything but
gravity, cloaking device and warp
drive. Do it now.

Panels and alarms go dark, main screen goes dark, even the main room lights go out, leaving only the lights from Nog, Bowers and Dax's panels. The sound of the engines grows...

DAX
Approaching ninety percent of full
impulse. Estimating ninety seconds
before the ships get here. Eighty
seconds before we can go to warp.
If the impulse engines hold up.

6 **EXT. SPACE**

Defiant runs, Jarada follow, convoy in the distance...

7 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

DAX
Thirty seconds. The Europani
convoy is out of Jarada space.

VAUGHN
Good, they won't follow them.

A pause, tension, everyone waiting, Dax watching panels...

DAX

Ten seconds.

VAUGHN

Nog, bring all systems back online.
At zero, shut down impulse drive.

NOG

Aye sir.

Lights and panels around the room SURGE back to life...

DAX

One. We're clear for warp.

VAUGHN

Maximum warp for ten seconds. Then
throttle down to warp three-point-
seven and take evasive action.

(to Nog)

Monitor the fracture.

8 EXT. SPACE

The first two Jarada ships get close ... another two come
into view from the other direction...

..and *Defiant* leaps into WARP and escapes. All four Jarada
ships quickly go to warp too and follow...

9 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

BOWERS

All four ships are in pursuit.

VAUGHN

Engage cloak.

Bowers works his panel - LIGHTS DIM around the bridge...

10 EXT. SPACE

At warp, the CLOAK ripples over the ship - it disappears...

11 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

DAX

Warp three-point-seven, starting
evasive manoeuvres.

VAUGHN

The fracture?

NOG

Stressed, but stable.

VAUGHN

Take us to station keeping.

DAX

Dropping out of warp. Engines
answering full stop.

BOWERS

The Jarada are approaching.

VAUGHN

They'll have read our course and
speed when we went to warp, seen
where we cloaked, and noticed the
fracture in the nacelle. Hopefully
they'll put all that together to
calculate the maximum distance we
could travel before we'd have to
drop to sub-light.

NOG

Except we'll be nowhere near.

VAUGHN

No celebrations yet, Lieutenant.

Tension again, as they wait to see if the Jarada will find
their hiding place...

BOWERS

They're heading off at different
vectors at warp one... They've set
up a search grid.

VAUGHN

(relieved)

Excellent. They'll figure out what we did eventually, and probably bring in some help to search. But by then we'll be long gone. Mister Nog, I believe you have a damaged warp nacelle to repair.

NOG

Aye sir, right away.

Nog bounds off to the door, but turns when Vaughn calls...

VAUGHN

Lieutenant... everyone. Well done.

(Nog leaves)

Normal lighting. And get rid of those alarms. Ensigns Senkowski and Roness, report to the bridge.

Cradling his burned arm, Vaughn settles back into the centre chair. As the lights come up, he looks at the broken helm console, then down at the spot where Tenmei landed --

FLASH

-- Tenmei's crumpled body lying on the deck

BACK TO SCENE

Vaughn closes his eyes, shudders. He did his duty, but his daughter may be dead because of it...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

12 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Focusing on the Ops pod at the top of the station...

13 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

An old BOOK stands on the glass shelves along the walls. It is a book of Bajoran prophecy, with Bajoran characters in old gold leaf along the spine. KIRA's hand reaches in --

KIRA (o.s.)

"When the Prophets Cried."

She longs to take the book off the shelf and read it - but she is not allowed. She is alone in the office, but she won't disobey the Vedek Assembly's orders. She moves to the replicator, rubbing her unadorned ear absent-mindedly...

KIRA

Raktajino. Extra hot, with two measures of kava.

The cup BEAMS IN - she tentatively takes a sip, savouring the scalding hot drink. Pulling herself together, she walks back to her desk, sits down...

KIRA

Computer, list today's itinerary.

COMPUTER

Oh-nine-hundred to thirteen-hundred hours, no meetings scheduled. Thirteen-hundred hours, senior staff meeting. Fourteen-hundred hours, open meeting for all station personnel. Fifteen-hundred hours, meeting with Promenade Merchants Association representative Quark.

(she rolls her eyes)

Seventeen-hundred hours, subspace conference with Starfleet Corps of Engineers regarding Europa Nova.

KIRA

Play back all waiting messages.

She settles into her chair, sipping her drink, staring out the window while listening quietly to the messages...

COMPUTER

First message from station
resident, First Taran'atar.

TARAN'ATAR (comm)

Colonel Kira. It has been many days since my return to the station and I am sufficiently healed to return to duty. I would like to request once again that I be liberated from the infirmary. This indolence is unproductive and... frustrating.

COMPUTER

Second message from Chief of
Station Security, Ro Laren.

RO (comm)

Colonel, I'd like your permission on a few changes to the security protocols. The station is close to capacity with Europani refugees, and there'll be even more arriving soon with the *Defiant*. Not only that, but more Bajorans are making pilgrimages from the planet to see the Orb of Memory in the shrine.

Kira looks back over at the book on the shelf...

RO (cont)

So I think it's a good idea to limit the number of people we allow on the Promenade at any one time. We can discuss the rest at the senior staff meeting, but I thought I'd give you a head's up.

COMPUTER
Third message from --

KIRA
Computer, pause messages.

She gets up and goes back over to the book, takes it off the shelf, looks at it...

KIRA
"When the Prophets Cried"... the
Tears of the Prophets. The Orbs.
(quoting)
"When the children have wept all,
anew will shine the twilight of
their destiny."

She smiles to herself - she doesn't need to read the book, she knows it by heart anyway. She put it back on the shelf.

ENSIGN (comm)
Ops to Colonel Kira.

KIRA
This is Kira. Go ahead, Ensign.

ENSIGN (comm)
Colonel, USS *Mjolnir* is hailing.
They're requesting an approach
vector and permission to dock.

KIRA
Mjolnir? Did they say why they're
arriving so far ahead of schedule?

ENSIGN (comm)
No sir. Should I enquire?

KIRA
...No. Send my greetings and bring
them in.

She is a little disturbed - she feels like something must be wrong for the ship to be here so soon. Wondering what it could be, she looks back at the book again thoughtfully...

14 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - UPPER DOCKING PYLON**

A small, angular Norway-class Starfleet ship, USS *Mjolnir*, is just coming to dock at one of the upper pylons...

15 **INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR**

KIRA waits with one Starfleet and one Bajoran security, as the door cycles open --

-- and a giant steps out, ducking his head to fit through the airlock. Kira looks up, dumb-founded for a moment. Starfleet Admiral AKAAR is extremely tall, broad and almost casually intimidating. Otherwise human-looking and as old as Vaughn, with long grey hair tied back in a ponytail.

AKAAR

You are Colonel Kira?

KIRA

Yes, I'm Colonel Kira Nerys.
Welcome to Deep Space Nine.

Akaar raises his right fist to his chest, then holds it out flat to Kira - she doesn't really understand the gesture...

AKAAR

I come with an open heart and open hand. A traditional greeting among my people.

KIRA

(a little flustered)
Well, welcome to Deep Space Nine.

AKAAR

Do you have time to speak with me, Colonel? It will require perhaps thirty minutes.

KIRA

Of course. What is this about?

AKAAR

I am headed to Bajor to assist in the resettlement of the Europani.

KIRA

I see. Excuse me, Admiral, but I wasn't asking why you've come to Bajor. I was asking why you've come to DS-Nine.

AKAAR

I wanted to speak with you.

KIRA

Alright. The wardroom is closest, or we can go to my office --

AKAAR

If you don't mind, we can use a conference room aboard *Mjolnir*.

He gestures back towards the ship. Kira is thrown off-balance yet again...

KIRA

(taps combadge)

Kira to Ops.

ENSIGN (comm)

Ops, Selzner here.

KIRA

Ensign, I'm going to be in a meeting aboard the *Mjolnir* for the next half-hour.

ENSIGN (comm)

Should I consider you unreachable, Colonel?

Kira looks to Akaar - his stiff stare gives her nothing.

KIRA

Yes. I'll let you know when I'm back. Kira out.

Already anxious and off-balance, she follows Akaar back through the airlock to the ship...

16 INT. MJOLNIR - CONFERENCE ROOM

Akaar leads Kira into a typical but small Starfleet-style room. There is a small conference table - Akaar takes a seat with his back to the steeply angled windows, gestures for Kira to sit opposite, where she can see the station.

He has deliberately put her on his home turf, which makes her wary. She fights to control her natural indignation...

KIRA

Will Captain Hoku be joining us?

AKAAR

No, she will not. I must inform you, Colonel, that *Mjolnir* will not be standing in for the *Defiant* during its upcoming mission to the Gamma Quadrant. The *Gryphon* will instead substitute for *Defiant*.

KIRA

I see. I typically get some notice of these things.

AKAAR

I am giving you notice now.

Kira bites her tongue.

KIRA

Thank you, Admiral. I'll note the change for my crew.

AKAAR

Colonel, I would like you to detail for me the evacuation of the Europani to Bajor.

KIRA

Almost three million people have been brought here from Europa Nova. The *Defiant* is scheduled back soon with the final convoy from Torona Four.

AKAAR

Yes. How are the Europani being housed on Bajor?

KIRA

Hospitals, some of them. Schools, government facilities, inns... even some private residences.

AKAAR

Do you know how the Europani on Bajor are being fed?

KIRA

I can have one of my officers in Ops upload whatever data we have about the Europani operations.

She reaches to her combadge, but Akaar raises his hand --

AKAAR

Colonel, I have already seen that data. I need not see it again. Data and reports have their places but I wish to hear from you.

That mollifies Kira slightly, makes her feel a bit more appreciated. She lets some of her building pique go...

AKAAR

Have your efforts to help the Europani had an impact on Bajor's aid to Cardassia?

KIRA

DS-Nine is continuing to function as a staging platform for aid to Cardassia. The situation is more complicated with the Europani on the station, but we're managing.

AKAAR

What I'm asking about is the aid going to Cardassia from Bajor... directly from the Bajoran people.

KIRA
(thrown again)
Oh... yes. There's understandably
been an impact. Fewer supplies to
Cardassia direct from Bajor. But
we're still coordinating the
relief efforts with supplies
provided by other worlds.

AKAAR
Colonel Kira... how do you like
commanding Deep Space Nine?

She looks up at him in surprise, not quite sure what he
means by the question. She looks past him, to the curves of
the station outside the windows. How does she answer?

17 **EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT**

The ship flies at warp, external damage still showing, with
the convoy of cargo ships coming up behind...

18 **INT. DEFIANT - SICKBAY**

Dim lighting so as not to disturb the patient. Vaughn leans
against the wall inside the doorway, gazing across the room
at the unconscious figure of Tenmei on a biobed.

Vaughn watches as Bashir approaches the bed, checks various
readings. When he is finished, he comes over to Vaughn, who
straightens to take his report...

BASHIR
Sir.

VAUGHN
Doctor.

BASHIR
I've given her a mild sedative to
help her sleep, but she won't even
need that in a couple of days. The
skin grafts are doing well, and
her internal organs... well, she
was very lucky. And what about
you? How are you feeling?

He stiffens - he is not one to talk about his emotions easily - but then relents a little...

VAUGHN

I'm tired. But I'm alright. I
assume I'm healing under here.

He lifts up his arm, which is bandaged from the burns...

BASHIR

That's what Nurse Richter says.

VAUGHN

(looks back
at Tenmei)

Thank you, Julian.

BASHIR

You're welcome, sir.

(awkward moment)

Well... have a good night then.

VAUGHN

Rest well, Doctor.

Bashir leaves, and Vaughn walks quietly over to stand by his daughter's bed. He looks down at her sleeping face in the dim light, full of relief for not having lost her, guilt and anger at himself for putting her here.

But he knows she will still hate him when she wakes up.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

19 EXT. RAINFOREST - NIGHT

A torrential DOWNPOUR in a close-quartered JUNGLE. Kira stands shuddering from the rain, uniform plastered wet to her skin. She is holding a knife, and utterly miserable...

KIRA
Why did I agree to this?

Wiping the water from her eyes, she peers out to look for something in the storm, hunting something...

KIRA
This is what I get for thinking
about the feelings of a Jem'Hadar.

TARAN'ATAR (v.o.)
Thank you, Colonel.

20 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits neat and tidy at her desk, as TARAN'ATAR stands at attention in front of her. There is still some bruising on his face, but he is very well healed considering...

TARAN'ATAR (cont)
Now that I have been released from
medical captivity, I will return
to duty immediately.

KIRA
Taran'atar, you know that Doctor
Girani only agreed to release you
on the condition that you don't
engage in any physically strenuous
activity for another twelve days.

Taran'atar inwardly grumbles, clearly not happy with this. He wants to argue, but she is his Vorta...

TARAN'ATAR
This is not our way.

KIRA

But surely the Jem'Hadar care for
their own health.

TARAN'ATAR

We do. But not by lying in a bed.
Once our fitness for combat is
sufficiently restored, a return to
duty is required. If necessary,
there can be an appropriate
reduction in rank.

KIRA

Well then, I guess I'll just have
to demote you to Second.

It was meant as a joke, but Taran'atar isn't laughing.

KIRA

Perhaps we can compromise and cut
it down to six days. Isn't there
anything else you can do in the
meantime?

Taran'atar considers it, not sure if he should say...

TARAN'ATAR

I would be interested in observing
you in combat, Colonel. I can
create a new simulation for you.

KIRA

I don't think so.

He accepts the rejection, turns and heads for the door. But
Kira feels bad for him...

KIRA

Wait. What did you have in mind?

21 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR, UPPER CORRIDOR

The holosuite doors open - Kira LURCHES out, soaked through
and covered in mud all up her chest and face, exhausted and
fed up. Taran'atar follows her out quite calmly...

TARAN'ATAR
You have failed to reclaim your
life.

KIRA
(annoyed mutter)
I'm reclaiming it right now.

Kira peels off her matted uniform jacket and tries to wipe
the mud off her face with it...

KIRA
Maybe if I'd had more information.
Or any information.

TARAN'ATAR
Not all missions are carried out
under optimal conditions.

KIRA
Optimal?!
(gathers herself)
Sorry, Taran'atar. I'm... just
frustrated. It's been a difficult
morning. You know, there's more to
see on Deep Space Nine than just
Ops and the holosuites. Maybe you
should visit some other --

Kira's combadge signals; she struggles comically with her
soaked jacket to reach it and tap it...

ENSIGN (comm)
Ops to Colonel Kira.

KIRA
This is Kira, go ahead.

ENSIGN (comm)
Colonel, we've just received word
from Commander Vaughn that the
Defiant will be arriving with the
evacuee convoy from Torona Four
within the hour.

KIRA
Alright, I'll be in Ops shortly.
Kira out.
(taps badge off)
After a nice hot shower.

She stalks off down the corridor, Taran'atar following...

22 **EXT. DS9 - DOCKING RING**

The *Defiant* settles into its place on the docking ring...

23 **INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS**

Standard DS9 quarters, decorated with tasteful paintings and sculptures. Tenmei sits in a low casual chair, out of uniform, watching a screen on a coffee table...

INSERT - THE SCREEN

VIDEO of a Bolian man in a wetsuit surfing on waves of deep red water. The Bolian pulls off a dramatic manoeuvre...

BACK TO SCENE

Tenmei is impressed. But then the door CHIME sounds, and her face freezes. She knows who it is. Her hands GRIP the arms of the chair, but she doesn't move.

The CHIME sounds again. Grudgingly, she peels her fingers away from the chair, taps the screen to pause the video, and cradling her delicate belly, stands to face the door.

TENMEI
Open.

The door opens and Vaughn stands there, with his hands held behind his back. He is nervous, not sure how to do what he so desperately wants to do. After an awkward pause...

VAUGHN
May I come in?

TENMEI
(no)
Yes.

He gingerly steps into the room, the door closing behind.

VAUGHN
How are you feeling?

TENMEI
Fine. I've been in better shape,
but I'm improving.

VAUGHN
Good, good.

He looks around at the artwork, trying to find a way to begin. Looking around as well, Tenmei spots --

-- a photo of an older Japanese woman, her mother RURIKO (8x02 "Avatar, pt 2") in a frame. While his back is turned, Tenmei moves to turn the photo face down, hide it --

-- but she moves too quickly, straining her wound, and puts her hand to her belly with a GRUNT of pain. Vaughn turns at the noise...

VAUGHN
Are you alright?

TENMEI
Yes, yes.

She starts back to the chair, but Vaughn approaches closer.

VAUGHN
Here, let me --

TENMEI
No.
(pause; calmer)
No. I'm alright. Doctor Bashir
said it's alright for me to walk
around, just not to do too much.

Vaughn accepts she is not going to let him near her. With difficulty, she gets herself back into the chair.

They go back to the awkward silences, not looking at each other...

VAUGHN

How bad is it? I mean, I spoke with the doctor, and I know you're going to recover completely. But how bad is the pain?

TENMEI

Not bad.

She is lying, and he knows it, but he will let her lie.

TENMEI

Doctor Bashir told me he could block the pain, but he'd rather not. He wanted me to be able to feel what I was doing so I wouldn't over-exert myself.

VAUGHN

I guess he's gotten to know you already, then. But really, you shouldn't push yourself.

He comes a little closer again. He wants to apologise, doesn't know how; she doesn't want to hear it anyway. But neither of them can find a way out now they are here.

VAUGHN

Prynn... I'm sorry.

She looks at him; she knows why he is really apologising. Keeps it tight, unemotional, polite but not giving an inch.

TENMEI

The blast aboard the *Defiant* was an accident. We were under attack. There's no need to apologise for that... Commander.

Accepting defeat for now, Vaughn sits in another chair...

VAUGHN

Are you still planning to be aboard *Defiant* for the mission to the Gamma Quadrant... Ensign?

TENMEI

Yes, I am.

VAUGHN

Then I think you need to establish
a better relationship with me.

Is that a *threat*? She is furious, but refuses to show it...

TENMEI

Commander, I have earned my senior
pilot position.

VAUGHN

Oh, you're an excellent pilot, no
question of that. But there's more
to being a Starfleet officer than
simply performing a job. There are
interpersonal skills, and they
include getting along with your
commanding officer, no matter how
much you blame... how much you
dislike him.

TENMEI

Commander, I have not allowed our
personal differences to interfere
with the performance of my duties.

VAUGHN

No? Wasn't it you who told me to
go to hell?

She starts to protest, but he placates her...

VAUGHN

We were alone, I'd said you could
speak freely. And it's not as if I
don't know how you feel about me.
The problem is, I'm not the only
one who knows. It's clear to a lot
of people that our relationship
is... strained. It makes for a
tense working atmosphere, and it
undermines my authority.

(more)

VAUGHN (cont)
So, if we're going to be together
in close quarters on the *Defiant*
for three months in the Gamma
Quadrant, you'd better learn to
get along with me.

She looks away, sees the overturned photo of her mother...

VAUGHN
Look at me, Ensign.

She does, face schooled to show nothing...

VAUGHN
Do you understand me?

TENMEI
I do, sir, yes. And you're right.

They hold eyes for a long pause. Finally, Vaughn accepts
her agreement, and stands up to leave, heads to the door.

VAUGHN
Good, I'm glad.
(pause)
Prynn? I am sorry. For everything.

TENMEI
I know.

He leaves, the door closes, and she sinks into her chair...

TENMEI
But it'll never be enough.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

24 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

GRAPHIC - a map of *Defiant's* planned route through the Gamma Quadrant. A rough loop that starts at the wormhole, goes out in the opposite direction from Dominion space as indicated on the map, and returns to the wormhole.

Pull back to see VAUGHN inspecting the screen at the rear of the bridge. Bowers, Shar and Prynn work at various other panels, while extras make sundry repairs. It's quite busy.

RONESS

Sir? You wanted the status reports
on the repairs and upgrades.

Ensign RONESS (last seen in 8x12) has approached - she hands over a padd, looking hesitant about his response.

VAUGHN

Something wrong, Ensign?

RONESS

It's just... well, I don't think
you'll be completely pleased about
the progress the crew has made.

VAUGHN

So far, I'm delighted by our
progress. Not to worry.

RONESS

I was wondering... I'm a little
confused as to why the *Defiant* was
assigned to this mission at all,
sir. We've had to make extensive
alterations to make her suitable.
If the *Gryphon* can spare the time
to cover for us at the station,
why can't she just take the
mission in the first place?

Vaughn isn't offended. He quite enjoys being wise.

VAUGHN

Defiant has a certain reputation in the Gamma Quadrant, Ensign. If the Dominion does decide to make trouble, having the *Defiant* there will show them we're prepared to handle them. Plus, after all they've been through, the crew of this ship and this station deserve first shot, don't you think?

RONESS

Absolutely, sir.

VAUGHN

Ensign Tenmei, can Ensign Roness help you at the conn?

TENMEI

No sir, I'll be done in just a few minutes. But Lieutenant Candlewood said he could use some extra bodies in the computer core.

Her manner is much warmer than before; Vaughn is glad to see it. He nods to Roness, who takes the hint and leaves the bridge. Vaughn looks down at the padd she gave him...

The door opens again, and Taran'atar stands there, still as a statue. The crew are rather surprised and discomfited...

TARAN'ATAR

Commander Vaughn. Colonel Kira told me to come and see you here, at this time.

VAUGHN

Yes, thank you for coming. Let's go to my ready room. There are some things I'd like to discuss.

Vaughn leads Taran'atar back out of the bridge. The door closes, and the bridge crew look to each other in confusion and a little alarm...

25 **INT. DEFIANT - READY ROOM**

Vaughn leads Taran'atar into the office...

 VAUGHN
Please, sit.

 TARAN'ATAR
I prefer to stand.

With a shrug, Vaughn calls up the same display on a wall monitor, tracing *Defiant's* path with his finger...

 VAUGHN
I wanted to confer with you about
the space we'll be travelling
through. Are you familiar with it?

 TARAN'ATAR
Is there a more detailed view?

Vaughn taps keys, and the graphic ZOOMS IN on the loop. Taran'atar inspects it, and points to various bits...

 TARAN'ATAR
I have visited this system, and I
have knowledge of these. They are
lifeless, and entirely ordinary.
To my knowledge, the Dominion has
never travelled beyond them.

Vaughn turns off the screen, turns seriously to Taran'atar.

 VAUGHN
I suppose what I'm really asking
is... do you think the Dominion
will try to thwart our attempt
to explore the Gamma Quadrant?

 TARAN'ATAR
You watched the Founder's message.

 VAUGHN
Yes, but I was looking for your
own opinion on the matter.

TARAN'ATAR

My opinion is not necessary. No
opinion is necessary. The Founder
said it, therefore it is so.

VAUGHN

...Very well. Thank you for your
time and assistance.

TARAN'ATAR

Why are you doing this?

VAUGHN

Exploring the Gamma Quadrant?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes. You know nothing of where you
are going, and you are worried
about an attack by the Dominion.

VAUGHN

The fact that we know nothing is
the whole reason we're going.
Plus... it's our nature. Humans
and other races find meaning in
their lives by extending their
knowledge. It's one of the reasons
I transferred to Deep Space Nine.

TARAN'ATAR

It is a weakness.

VAUGHN

What isn't? Thank you again.

Taran'atar takes the dismissal and leaves.

26 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira is catching up on paperwork. The comm signals...

ENSIGN (comm)

Ops to Colonel Kira.

KIRA

Kira here, go ahead.

ENSIGN (comm)
Colonel, I thought you'd want to
know - the *Trager* is requesting
clearance to dock.

Kira tenses - the *Trager* is Macet's ship, Dukat's cousin,
and she is not quite sure if she trusts him yet.

KIRA
Put Gul Macet through, Ensign.

ENSIGN (comm)
Aye sir.

A moment, and MACET's face appears on the screen. He looks
so much like Dukat, Kira has to stop herself from hissing.

MACET (screen)
(genuinely)
Colonel Kira, how nice to see you.

KIRA
Gul Macet. I'd like to know the
purpose of your visit to DS-Nine
before I authorise you to dock.

Macet seems genuinely surprised to be asked, which only
annoys Kira more - she assumes it's arrogance.

KIRA
Is there a problem, Gul Macet?
Don't you have a good reason for
visiting the station?

MACET (screen)
Yes of course, Colonel, of course.
It's simply that... I'm surprised
you haven't already been advised.
We're here to help transport the
Europani back to Europa Nova.

KIRA
How do you know about that? I was
only informed this afternoon.

MACET (screen)
I was contacted by Admiral Akaar.

KIRA
Admiral - ... I see.

She tightens, annoyed at Akaar's end-run around her, and ashamed of her mistrust of Macet.

KIRA
I'm sorry, Gul Macet. You have my authorisation to dock. I'm just a little tired this evening.

MACET (screen)
Not at all. And Colonel... my crew will remain aboard my ship while we're docked at the station.

He's being remarkably considerate - the station's residents won't want to see Cardassians. It warms Kira. He signs off, and she looks back over to the book on her shelf again...

KIRA
"Anew will shine the twilight of their destiny." Well, something's definitely coming.

27 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

NOG is paying attention to the padd in his hand, generally pleased, strutting happily. Just as Nog turns a corner --

-- he SLAMS into Ensign Roness. They both tumble to the deck with a THUMP, equipment clattering to the deck.

NOG
Sorry, sorry...

RONESS
No no, I'm sorry, sir.

They struggle to help each other up, have a few comical moments of reaching for the dropped items at the same time and bumping heads, and generally enjoy a bit of a giggle.

RONESS

Are you hurt, sir? I didn't see you, I --

NOG

It's alright, Gerda, I wasn't looking where I was going. I was too busy checking diagnostics. So how's the work going?

RONESS

Really well. Ensign Senkowski and his team just finished repairing the last of the hull breaches, and they're nearly done replacing the ablative armour.

NOG

That's great. Well, I need to get down to the computer core. Carry on, Ensign.

They both carry on their way. Nog reaches a lift, presses a button, waits a moment, the doors open, he steps in...

28 INT. DEFIANT - TURBOLIFT (CONTINUOUS)

NOG

Deck three, port computer core.

The turbolift moves, and Nog goes back to his padd. After a moment, the lift stops, the doors OPEN, Nog walks on --

-- and immediately SLAMS into another body. But this one does not move. It's like a brick wall, and Nog is thrown back to the floor with a CRASH. He looks up...

...and TARAN'ATAR is there.

FLASHBACK - 7x08 "THE SIEGE OF AR-558"

-- Nog being shot by a Jem'Hadar, screaming in pain
-- Nog on the operating table as Bashir amputates his leg

BACK TO SCENE

Nog is instantly as terrified as we have ever seen him. He stares up at the craggy horned face, shaking and shuffling back into a corner, trying to get as far away as he can. He just knows this monster is going to kill him...

NOG

Don't hurt me...

Taran'atar looks down at Nog, seeming to size him up. Nog is scratching at his biosynthetic leg, his nervous tic.

TARAN'ATAR

We are not at war with each other.
Did you hurt your leg?

NOG

You shot my leg off!
(try again)
A Jem'Hadar shot my leg off. It's
artificial.

TARAN'ATAR

You are fortunate to have
reclaimed your life.

NOG

I don't feel fortunate. Would you
feel fortunate to trade your leg
for a chunk of barren rock in the
Chin'toka system?

TARAN'ATAR

Chin'toka. I am aware of it. The
Dominion housed a communications
relay there during the war with
your people. Seventy-two Jem'Hadar
were killed in that action.

NOG

They were trying to kill us!

TARAN'ATAR

It was the Founders' will.

NOG

That doesn't make it right!

TARAN'ATAR

Of course it does. Everything
done in the name of the Founders
is right.

NOG

Shooting my leg off?!

TARAN'ATAR

Those Jem'Hadar soldiers were
trying to kill you, I'm certain.
Their mission was to defend the
communications array. They were
carrying out their duty. You
resisted them. Shooting you was
the appropriate thing to do.

(beat)

Everything done in the name of the
Founders is right. If that were
not so, I would not be here.

He leans down, bringing his face much closer to Nog's...

TARAN'ATAR

Or you would not be here.

Taran'atar stands up straight again, gives a last cold
glare down at Nog, then turns and walks away.

The turbolift door finally closes, leaving Nog alone,
shuddering in a terrified ball in the corner.

NOG

(whisper)

I hate them.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

29 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

QUARK slumps over his bar, chin in hands. RO sits across from him. TREIR, the new Orion dabo girl, sits by the dabo wheel looking equally bored - the bar is almost empty.

QUARK

I'm ruined. Just look at this place. It's not even twenty-six hundred and there are only -

(counts them)

- seven customers here. And one of them's not even conscious.

RO

Well, I'm not saying you're not having a bad night, but ruined?

QUARK

Even Morn isn't here. Giving a poetry reading in his quarters, River help us. More *pooncheenee*?

RO

What else have you got?

QUARK

Hmm... how about Saurian Brandy?

She shrugs and nods. Quark rummages in his stocks, brings out a bottle, pours the drink...

QUARK

It was Captain Sisko's favourite. I'll say this for the man - for a Starfleet type, he sure knew the value of quality catering.

RO

You're not all that fond of "Starfleet types," are you?

QUARK

Well, you have to admit, they're
not much fun.

RO

You know, I was a Starfleet type.

QUARK

You may have worn the uniform, but
I seriously doubt you were ever
the Starfleet type.

He smiles, but then straightens as Vaughn approaches...

QUARK

Commander Vaughn. Come for a
nightcap?

VAUGHN

Not exactly, Quark. Did you
procure that item I ordered?

QUARK

Oh, yes.

Quark grabs another bottle and hands it to Vaughn...

QUARK

Here you go, Commander. Now, how
will you be paying for that?

Vaughn smiles. He can't blame Quark for trying.

VAUGHN

Obviously it slipped your mind
that you asked for full payment
when I ordered it.

QUARK

Oh, of course. How silly of me.

Vaughn sighs and looks around the near-empty bar...

VAUGHN

The station has quietened down
some since the Europani left.

QUARK

The Europani and the crews of
their ships.

VAUGHN

Well, I hope business improves for
you. Thank you for this.

(to Ro)

Good evening, Lieutenant.

Vaughn leaves with his bottle, and Quark turns to Ro...

QUARK

You were awfully quiet.

RO

Yeah... I actually like Vaughn.
It's just... I guess you're right.
I'm not the Starfleet type.

QUARK

Take it from me, that's not the
worst thing in the world.

Suddenly he stands again, alerted to a noise --

QUARK

A group of people... a large group
of people, heading this way.

RO

I don't hear anything. You sure?

QUARK

Did I mention the ears?

Then a whole crowd of people, human, Bajorans and other
aliens, led by MORN, all enter the bar at once, chattering
happily. The clientele has quadrupled at least. Morn takes
his place at the bar. Ro gets up and prepares to leave.

QUARK

That must have been some poetry
reading. No, you're leaving?

RO
I preferred the quiet. Thank you
for the brandy.

She leans in close, and whispers right into his ear...

RO
Put it on my tab.

She walks saucily out, his eyes glued to her behind...

30 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

AKAAR steps out of a turbolift, ducking his head again. The super-tall officer looks a little lost in the corridors.

He walks one way, peers at the signage, doesn't really understand what it says, shakes his head in exasperation, tries heading back in the other direction.

Finally he finds the right door, presses the door chime...

31 INT. DS9 - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

Vaughn stands by the window, just turning to see him. Akaar peers into the room, steps in, ducking his head again...

VAUGHN
Did you travel half-way across the
quadrant to inspect my quarters,
Admiral, or are you going to greet
me with an open heart and hand?

AKAAR
Elias.

They approach warmly, do the heart-hand gesture opposite each other, clasping each other's arms in friendship.

VAUGHN
LJ, it's good to see you again.

AKAAR
And you, Elias. Although I'm never
certain where I'll find you next.

VAUGHN

I make my way around. May I offer
you something to eat or drink?

AKAAR

Considering their signposts, I'm
afraid to think what may come out
of a Cardassian replicator.

VAUGHN

Then it's lucky I have this.

He pulls out the bottle Quark gave him...

AKAAR

Capellan *grosz*? Oh Elias, well
done. How did you find it?

VAUGHN

The barkeeper here has some...
interesting connections.

Vaughn finds some tiny snifter glasses and pours one for
each of them. They raise them in a toast...

AKAAR

To old friends.

VAUGHN

And getting older all the time.

They settle down, sit on the low couches, sip the drinks...

AKAAR

Excellent. I wanted to ask your
opinion, Elias, about Gul Macet.

VAUGHN

His intentions seem genuine, but
regardless, his assistance has
been invaluable. Although I'm not
sure everybody shares my opinion.

AKAAR

Such as Colonel Kira?

VAUGHN

I can't speak for her, of course,
but I believe she's... cautious.
But she's put aside any personal
feelings for the greater good.

AKAAR

What do you think of her, Elias?

VAUGHN

I like her.

AKAAR

That's not what I was asking.

VAUGHN

Fine. She's decisive, loyal...
maybe a little quick to temper.
Not always as diplomatic as you
might expect of a command officer,
but I find it refreshing. In fact,
I think Starfleet could learn a
thing or two from her.

AKAAR

And how is Prynn?

VAUGHN

She's well.

AKAAR

I've followed her service record.
She's an exceptional conn officer.

VAUGHN

Do you have something to say, LJ?

AKAAR

Elias... do you think it's wise to
have Prynn with you on the *Defiant*?

VAUGHN

You said it yourself, she's an
exceptional officer. She deserves
a chance at alpha shift. And right
now, the *Defiant* can use her.

AKAAR

Having Prynn on the bridge is irresponsible and dangerous, more so if she still blames you for what happened to her mother.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Elias, but I've taken steps to have Prynn reassigned.

VAUGHN

(stares, imploring)

Don't do this, LJ.

AKAAR

Captain Mello has agreed to take Prynn onboard the *Gryphon*, and she's offered her own alpha shift conn officer for *Defiant's* trip through the Gamma Quadrant.

VAUGHN

Do you believe I haven't thought through all this? I have. I've fought with myself over and over. But LJ... I believe there's a reason I was led to this station, and it's to reconnect with Prynn. Please don't take that from me.

(Akaar absorbs,

Vaughn presses)

If you're concerned I'll somehow jeopardise the crew because Prynn is on the ship, I can promise you that won't happen.

AKAAR

I know. And that is what concerns me. That you will do the right thing for the crew, even if it is the wrong thing for you and Prynn. I'm not worried about your crew, Elias. I'm worried about you.

They hold each other's eyes, not knowing which way to go...

32 **INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR**

Ensign SHAR stands in front of the door to another set of quarters, holding a padd. He knows he has to go in...

Finally taking a deep breath and resigning himself, he stabs the door panel, the door opens, and he steps in...

33 **INT. DS9 - GUEST QUARTERS**

...to find VRETHA, his mother, placing materials for a meal around a circular cloth laid on the floor. She smiles at Shar warmly as he steps further into the room...

 VRETHA
Thirishar, come in.

 SHAR
Good evening, zhavey. Thank you
for inviting me --

His antennae twitching, Shar realises someone is standing behind him, and turns to see --

-- ANICHENT, an Andorian male of similar age to Shar. Tall, fit and muscular, white hair in long dreadlocks.

 SHAR
Anichent - what are you doing here?

 ANICHENT
Hello, Shar.

Shar is thrilled, rushes forward, embraces Anichent - this is one of his bondmates, his first young love, strong and dependable. Anichent is relieved, hugs him tightly back. Then Shar senses another presence, turns again to see --

-- DIZHEI, a thickset Andorian female of Shar's age. Another of his bondmates - it's a close, affectionate relationship, but not a passionate one.

Seeing her, he first smiles, but then his face drops with realisation, and he turns back to his mother. This is emotional blackmail.

Shar is instantly boiling with rage; the padd SHATTERS in his fist. He takes a couple of angry stalking steps towards the now stern-faced Vretha...

...before regaining control. Vretha watches him coolly...

VRETHA

What will you do now, my *chei*?

SHAR

How could you do this? Why would you do this? Do you think --

THRISS (o.s.)

We all did this, Shar.

He turns again to see another Andorian female emerging from the bedroom. This is THRISS, delicate and waifish, the last of his bondmates, and his true passionate love.

THRISS (cont)

We miss you.

He rushes to her, grabbing her even more lovingly than he did Anichent, swinging her around in happiness at seeing her. Dizhei and Anichent both come closer too, happy to have the whole four-way bond-group together at last.

SHAR

Thriss... Thriss...

DIZHEI

We love you, *ch'te*.

SHAR

(to all three)

I know. I love you too.

ANICHENT

Then come back with us. Come home.

Shar droops, stepping away from them all. It's much harder to say no to them than to his mother, but he still must...

SHAR

We've talked about this.

THRISS

No, you've talked about it. You've made this decision for all of us.

SHAR

I'm not responsible for your lives. What am I supposed to do? Am I supposed to let you, or our biology or our culture, decide what my life will be?

VRETHA

No-one wishes to decide your life for you, Thirishar. Your life is your own. Once you have completed the *shelthreth*, you may return to Starfleet, or whatever you desire. You need never set foot upon Andor again if that is what you want.

Thriss sobs softly at that prospect; Dizhei moves to comfort her. The emotional blackmail is starting to work.

SHAR

I... maybe... after I return from the mission...

VRETHA

No. What would happen if you did not return?

SHAR

I have a commitment.

VRETHA

You have a commitment? What of your commitment to your bondmates? That has existed far longer than your Starfleet career. And it is a personal commitment. More, it is an obligation to your kind.

SHAR

I did not make that commitment. It was made for me.

Vretha closes on Shar, determined to press the attack...

VRETHA

You have responsibilities. Look
into Thriss's eyes now and tell
her you won't come home.

He does look - he is starting to crumble, and he can't let
that happen.

VRETHA

You will do this, Thirishar.

The only thing he can do is turn and leave, so that's what
he does...

SHAR

I can't. I'm sorry.

THRISS

(plaintively)

Thirishar!

But he ignores her, as much as it hurts him to do so, and
walks out of the door. Thriss, Anichent and Dizhei turn to
each other, Thriss in tears, try to console each other...

...while Vretha looks after her son in a cold fury.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

34 EXT. DS9 - ESTABLISHING

Defiant is on the docking ring, and the larger, aggressive-looking Akira-class *Gryphon* sits at a lower pylon...

35 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits behind her desk, bemusedly watching Vaughn pace back and forth in her office, bursting with energy...

KIRA

Commander, do you intend to walk to the Gamma Quadrant? I've never seen you like this.

VAUGHN

To tell you the truth, I don't think I've ever been like this. I've wanted to do this for a very long time. Since I was a boy.

KIRA

(smirk)

A boy?

VAUGHN

Yes yes, all those aeons ago. My mother would take me out into the wilderness, and we'd sit around the fire, and I'd look up at all the stars. I remember thinking how everything you could conceive of must be out there somewhere.

KIRA

What happened?

VAUGHN

(a little sadder)

A lot of things happened, Colonel. Things always happen.

KIRA

Well, Commander, you've only got ninety more minutes before you officially become an explorer.

She stands up, walks around to him and reaches out to shake his hand, a sincere good-luck gesture...

VAUGHN

Permission to disembark, Colonel?

KIRA

Walk with the Prophets, Elias.

He turns to leave, but as the doors open -- Admiral Akaar is there, entering without being asked. Kira's mood cools considerably to see him.

KIRA

Admiral.

AKAAR

Colonel. I wanted a moment with Commander Vaughn before he left.

(turning to Vaughn)

I wish to bid you a safe and prosperous journey, Commander.

VAUGHN

Thank you, Admiral. And... thank you, for the other thing.

They nod their acknowledgements to each other, and Vaughn leaves, jogging down the stairs. Akaar turns to Kira...

AKAAR

Do you have a moment to talk, Colonel? I have a few more questions, if you don't mind.

She really does not want to have to deal with any more invasive questions from this supercilious Admiral, but...

KIRA

Not at all, please take a seat.

36 **INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR**

Shar walks down the corridor, carrying a travelling bag and not looking quite so excited. He is about to enter the airlock when he hears Thriss's soft voice...

 THRISS
Thirishar...

She looks puffy and bloodshot, as if she has been crying. Dropping his bag, Shar grips her arms gently...

 SHAR
Thriss, what are you doing here?

 THRISS
Thirishar, please. Don't go. We
love you. I love you. I need you.

 SHAR
What am I supposed to do?

 THRISS
Come back to Andor with us.

At last, he gives in - he can't stand seeing her like this.

 SHAR
I will.

 THRISS
...You will?

 SHAR
I'll visit as soon as I return.

 THRISS
No. Please. Now.

 SHAR
Thriss, this is all I can promise
right now. But it is a promise. I
will come home.
 (taps combadge)
ch'Thane to Lieutenant Ro.

RO (comm)
This is Ro.

SHAR
Lieutenant, I need a favour. My
bondmates are here on the station,
and they'll be here until I return
from the Gamma Quadrant. I'd like
for them to be able to stay in my
quarters. Will you arrange that?
I know it's an unusual request.

RO (comm)
I'd be happy to, Shar. Where are
they now?

SHAR
They're currently staying with my
zhavey - with Councillor zh'Thane.
Their names are Shathrissia
zh'Cheen, Thavanichent th'Dani and
Vindizhei sh'Rraazh.

RO (comm)
...I'm glad I'm recording this.
Trying to spell those names would
probably kill me.

SHAR
Thank you, Laren.

RO (comm)
You're welcome. Safe journey,
Shar. Ro out.

Now alone again, Thriss embraces Shar tightly...

THRISS
I love you.

SHAR
Wait for me.

They kiss deeply, and then Shar slowly steps away, picks up
his bag and enters the airlock, leaving Thriss alone...

37 **INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE**

Kira is sat back behind her desk, tight and indignant but fighting not to show it. Akaar sits opposite her...

KIRA

Forgive me Admiral, but isn't this information available to you from other sources than me?

AKAAR

Does that mean you cannot, or will not, answer my question?

KIRA

I can answer it, Admiral, and I will, but -

AKAAR

Do you think Bajor is committed to its own defence right now?

KIRA

Of course. The common defence is one of the central foundations of our government. If you're implying that there is some other -

AKAAR

I am implying nothing. I simply wish to know if you believe Bajor is prepared to stand on its own.

KIRA

I believe that's what I said.

AKAAR

And what are your reasons for believing that?

KIRA

You know what, Admiral? I think this is a conversation you'd be better off having with First Minister Shakaar.

AKAAR

I am having this conversation with you, Colonel. Your people are widely regarded as spiritual - is it possible that your collective spirituality defines your society to such an extent that it precludes a strong military infrastructure?

KIRA

We have to defend ourselves. But we're also accountable for other responsibilities. And yes, our spirituality guides us along our collective path.

AKAAR

What of those not on the path?

Kira ERUPTS, taking this as a personal slight. She slaps her hands on the desk and shoots up out of her chair...

KIRA

(seething)

That's it. This meeting is over.

AKAAR

(calm, confused)

Colonel, I am simply asking about your people. Trying to learn about their ways of life, who they are.

KIRA

There's been nothing simple about any of your questions, Admiral. In the few times you've talked to me since your arrival, you've managed to question Bajor's commitment to providing aid to Cardassia, our willingness to defend ourselves, our spirituality, the way I run the station, and now my Attainder.

Akaar slowly rises to his full height - at least a foot taller than Kira. She refuses to be intimidated.

AKAAR

I was not making reference to your
Attainder. I am not here to pry
into your personal life.

KIRA

Why are you here?

Akaar takes a moment, because this is big news...

AKAAR

I am in the Bajoran system to meet
with Councillor zh'Thane and First
Minister Shakaar. I am on DS-Nine
to preside over a summit between a
delegation of representatives from
Bajor and two from the United
Federation of Planets.

(beat)

And I am in your office to inform
you of this summit, at which
Bajor's application to join the
Federation will be decided.

Kira sits back down stunned, the wind knocked out of her.
She looks once again back over to the book of prophecies
resting on her shelf. Akaar sits back down opposite her.

KIRA

The twilight of our destiny...
it means the Federation...

AKAAR

Yes, Colonel. Shall we continue?

Kira gazes on, still astonished...

38 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Close on Commander Vaughn in the centre seat, a small smile
under his beard. His senior crew all sit at their stations.

He is not one to be too expressive while in command, but
even he cannot resist being happy about this. He taps the
console at his side...

VAUGHN

All hands, this is Commander Vaughn. Seven years ago, Benjamin Sisko and Jadzia Dax discovered a stable wormhole, which opened the door to an entire quadrant of new worlds. The war, sadly, closed that door to us. But the war's over now. As of this moment... we are back in the Gamma Quadrant.

The crew CHEERS, claps or otherwise celebrates. We can hear the rest of the ship doing likewise over the comm. The enthusiasm is infectious across the ship.

VAUGHN

On inhabited worlds all over the galaxy, courageous expeditions have taken place to explore the unknown.

(a nod to Nog)

The great Jalia, who discovered the Outer Islands on Ferenginar.

(a nod to Shar)

The crew of the *Kumari*, the first Andorian vessel to circumnavigate their globe.

(a nod to Bowers)

And the men who led the expedition across Earth's North American continent - Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Finally, Vaughn gives a loving gaze to TENMEI, who sits at the helm, looking back at him and smiling...

VAUGHN

Let us therefore, in their honour and on this stardate, rededicate ourselves to their ideals.

(beat)

All stations, report status.

A nice sweeping shot around all the senior staff as they eagerly wait for the mission to begin...

BOWERS

Tactical and communications ready.

TENMEI

Navigation and flight operations,
ready.

SHAR

Science and sensors, ready.

NOG

Impulse engines are online, warp
power available on your command.

BASHIR

Life support at optimum. Medical
bay standing by.

DAX

The ship is ready, Captain. Your
orders?

VAUGHN

(smiling)

Release all docking clamps. Aft
thrusters at one-quarter, port and
starboard thrusters at station
keeping.

TENMEI

Docking clamps released. Aft
thrusters one-quarter. DS-Nine
signals we're clear for departure.

VAUGHN

Ensign ch'Thane, let's see where
we're going. Activate the viewer.

SHAR

Main viewer, aye.

The main screen comes to life with an image of the star
field, the wisps of the Denorios Belt gradually coming
closer. Vaughn gazes at it with anticipation...

VAUGHN
Ensign Tenmei, set course for the
wormhole. Ahead one-half impulse.
And take us in.

TENMEI
Aye, sir.

Tenmei works her controls with a grin of excitement...

39 EXT. SPACE - DEEP SPACE NINE

Running lights bright and proudly showing the name, *Defiant*
arcs away from the station and towards the wormhole.

As the ship reaches the Denorios Belt, the bright lights
and swirling energies of the wormhole burst open...

40 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Close on Vaughn, as he smiles into the light...

41 EXT. SPACE

The ship dives into the wormhole, which closes up behind
them to leave empty space.

BLACK OUT:

THE END