

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x03 - "Avatar, pt 3."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Avatar, Book 2*

by SD Perry

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1 MONTAGE FROM EPS 8x01 & 8x02**

-- Vaughn caressing the Orb box, Picard in background.

VAUGHN  
Strange things happen, Jean-Luc.

-- As Vaughn closes the Orb box on the freighter.

VAUGHN (v.o.)  
Things that can't be explained.

VOICEOVER  
Last time, on Deep Space Nine.

-- Istani handing the pages to Jake at B'Hala.

ISTANI  
My name is Istani Reyla. It was  
written for you.

-- As Jake reads the prophecy.

JAKE  
"The first child, a son, enters  
the Temple alone. With the Herald,  
he returns."

-- Kira looks down on Istani's body in DS9's Infirmary.

BASHIR  
Nerys... did you know her?

KIRA  
At the camps, when I was a child.

-- Ro pulls the book from the hole in the corridor wall.

RO (v.o.)  
The book was Istani's.

-- Ro brings the book to Kira's quarters.

RO

She took it from B'Hala, and was  
killed for it... And here it says,  
absolutely, that ten-thousand  
people have to die before Kasidy  
Yates gives birth to her baby.

-- The wormhole opens and the Jem'Hadar come out firing.

-- The *Aldebaran* is destroyed. *Defiant* fires on the ships.

-- On the *Defiant* bridge:

DAX

Get ready, we're about to go on  
the offensive.

-- New Jem'Hadar arrives, attacks first ship, both explode.

-- The meeting in the DS9 Wardroom:

KIRA

Everyone is sending military back-  
up. They plan to send a well-armed  
fleet into the Gamma Quadrant to  
contact any Dominion forces.

BASHIR

They can't be serious!

-- Shar reveals Kitana'klan at Quark's and everyone reacts.

RO (v.o.)

Ensign ch'Thane found him at  
Quark's.

-- As Kira comes to see him in Security.

RO

His name is Kitana'klan... He says  
he's on a peace mission, sent by  
Odo.

- Nog and Vic in the casino lounge.

NOG

They're bred to kill, it's all they know how to do. And it seems like everyone suddenly forgot.

-- Jake's shuttle drifts through the wormhole.

-- In the cockpit:

JAKE

Help me, Dad. Help this happen.

-- Picard and Vaughn emerge from the DS9 airlock.

KIRA

Captain Picard, welcome to DS9.

PICARD

Colonel Kira, it's a pleasure to see you again. And may I present Commander Elias Vaughn, on special assignment by Starfleet Tactical.

-- Bashir approaches Kitana'klan, who watches him closely.

BASHIR

I've brought you a new white cartridge.

-- The four-way argument in the Security office.

RO

Someone with access to the Ohalu translation uploaded it, in its entirety, to the Bajoran comnet. Questions are coming in from every province.

YEVIR

A crisis has been deliberately unleashed, and all because an admitted opponent of the Vedek Assembly was given access to sensitive materials.

KIRA

I did it! I uploaded Ohalu's book.

-- Shocked reactions...

VOICEOVER

And now, the conclusion.

**2**    **EXT. FOUNDERS' PLANET**

A long, sweeping shot of the Great Link, gradually coming upon the islet of rock in the middle of the amber sea. ODO stands upon it, still wearing his Bajoran security uniform, thoughtfully gazing out over the roiling Great Link.

We slowly CLOSE on Odo. After a while, a column of liquid rises out of the sea and forms into LAAS, who steps towards Odo. When he doesn't get a reaction, he speaks.

LAAS

It has been decided that the Vorta will take soldiers to abolish unrest.

Odo nods, resigned to this, although he clearly disagrees.

LAAS

We still don't think anything will come of your plan.

ODO

You speak for the entire Link now, Laas?

LAAS

Most of it. They're willing to wait and see. But they believe the Alpha Quadrant will strike, as soon as they see an opportunity. The treaty was our death warrant. Solids are incapable of changing their prejudices.

ODO

(wry)

It's as if they forgot who started the war.

LAAS

We didn't try to murder them all  
with disease.

ODO

No, just with wars, abduction,  
terrorism, invasion... The disease  
was the work of extremists, a very  
few among very many, and only then  
because the Link had aroused the  
very fears and prejudices you  
ascribe to them.

(pause)

The Founders sent us out, you and  
I, to seek and discover, so that  
we would bring knowledge back to  
them. This is the knowledge I've  
brought. Why do you reject it now?

LAAS

Your knowledge is being heard.  
Even after all we lost to them. We  
do this for you. And yet still you  
plead for them. And now you send  
away a Jem'Hadar to gain the  
knowledge all over again. We fail  
to see what can possibly be gained  
from this.

ODO

We will gain trust, both ways. I  
trust the one I chose. He will  
learn to trust them, and they will  
learn to trust him. I assure you,  
it will work. Nothing will go  
wrong.

On Odo's confident, smiling face...

**CUT TO:**

**3    INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY**

On EZRI DAX, as she SCREAMS...

Standing in the open doorway of the cargo bay, she sees the damaged and bleeding body of JULIAN BASHIR unconscious on the floor. There is a bandage already pressed to his shoulder where there was none before.

As Dax runs to his side, grabbing his medkit and setting to work, ELIAS VAUGHN slaps his combadge urgently.

VAUGHN

Security alert. The Jem'Hadar soldier has killed at least two people and is no longer in containment.

**4 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

KIRA, RO, KASIDY and YEVIR are stood where they were at the end of 8x02 as Vaughn's call comes in.

VAUGHN (comm)

Starfleet medical officer down, needs immediate transport to medical facilities. Dax is with him. We're at cargo bay 41-C or C-41, this is Commander Elias Vaughn, acknowledge.

RO

(taps comm)

Vaughn, this is Ro, acknowledged. Ro to Sergeant Shul, security alert. The Jem'Hadar is out, repeat, the Jem'Hadar is out. All available security converge on cargo bay 41-C.

Kira is instantly in action before the call's over, talking over Ro and striding out of Security. Kasidy and Yevir just keep out of her way.

KIRA

Kira to Ops, Red Alert. The Jem'Hadar has broken free. Emergency medical transport right now from cargo bay 41-C to

Infirmary. Lock down the station  
and begin all emergency protocols.

**5**     **INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

As SHAR works transporter controls, BOWERS sets the Red Alert, and NOG's face shows the utter panic he feels. The three of them look to each other in shock as Ops reacts.

BOWERS  
Acknowledged, Colonel.

**6**     **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

QUARK looks up from cleaning glasses behind the bar as the Red Alert alarms go off and he sees Kira and Ro running urgently out of the security office.

QUARK  
Aw hell, what now?

**7**     **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Kasidy and Yevir are left alone. Yevir is just confused, doesn't know what to do. Kasidy gathers herself.

KASIDY  
I'm getting away from this damned  
station as soon as I possibly can.

And she walks out, leaving Yevir stunned.

**8**     **INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY**

Dax is working feverishly on Bashir, whose eyes flicker.

DAX  
Julian, can you hear me? Julian?

As Dax and Bashir dissolve in a transporter beam, Vaughn strides into the room and assesses the situation. Red Alert lights flash; he spots a dropped tricorder and grabs it.

RO (comm)  
Commander Vaughn, stay where you  
are, try to secure the situation



as best you can. Security and  
Colonel Kira are on their way.

VAUGHN

Acknowledged.

After a few seconds of scanning, Vaughn locates a dropped phaser, grabs it. After a few more moments of scanning, Kira, Ro and five Bajoran guards ENTER.

VAUGHN

Colonel, I've been scanning for any sign of the Jem'Hadar's shroud. It emits gravitons just like a ship's cloak, so they are traceable, but the trail rapidly dissipates. That's the theory anyway - I've never actually tried it first hand.

KIRA

Start scanning every direction from this door. Co-ordinate with Ops. Once you have a trace, let Ops take over with the station's internal sensors.

(taps combadge)

Shar. We're tracking Kitana'klan via graviton emissions. Be ready to take over once security gives you the go-ahead.

SHAR (comm)

Yes, Colonel.

VAUGHN

Colonel, I'd like to apprise Captain Picard of the situation, and ask him to stand by to assist.

KIRA

Please. And tell him I'm open to suggestions about how to resolve this before it goes any further.

GUARD

I've got it!

KIRA

Let's go.

The guard who starts heading down the corridor. Vaughn takes a look at one of the dead guards, throat slit and eyes glassy, knowing there will be plenty more to come.

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### **9 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING**

The station is still in disrepair; the lower core's lights are dim. Debris still floats about, the *Enterprise* is docked at an upper pylon, the *Defiant* berthed on the docking ring and a Klingon ship is nearby.

### **10 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Crowds dash about as Red Alert alarms go off. DEANNA TROI is walking down the Promenade when she is hit by the heightened emotions around her and steps into an alcove to centre herself. She taps her combadge.

TROI

Troi to *Enterprise*. What's going on?

PICARD (comm)

Counsellor. A Jem'Hadar soldier is loose on the station. He's killed two people and injured the CMO. We've gone to Red Alert.

TROI

If the CMO's down, I'll stay here and see if I can help, if that's okay, Captain.

PICARD (comm)

Very well, Counsellor. Be careful.

She heads across the Promenade to the Infirmary. The doors open to show lots of medical personnel running about, both Starfleet and Bajoran. Against the wall stands Dax, her shirt covered in blood, shaken and crying.

### **11 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Shar works at his panel. He is not panicked, but has become calm and focused under pressure.

His panel shows a schematic of a station corridor featuring seven dots of one colour and one of another, proceeding down the corridor. Shar watches their progress, removing parts of the station from the scan zone as they pass them.

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

Kira, Ro, Vaughn and five Bajoran security move together down the corridor, waving tricorders about.

KIRA  
Shar, are you still with us?

SHAR  
Yes sir.

KIRA  
Take upper pylon one off the list,  
and start - wait, just a minute...

**13 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

As Deanna approaches Dax, she makes out the Trill spots through the blood smudges, and realises who this must be. She reaches out to her - Dax jumps at the surprise.

TROI  
Ezri...?

DAX  
Deanna!

A whirl of emotions, Dax throws herself onto Troi in a tear-filled hug. Troi steadies herself...

TROI  
What's happened, Ezri? Is there  
anything I can do to help?

DAX  
I don't know... Julian...

Over Dax's shoulder, Troi watches the medical staff rush around an unconscious and bloody Bashir on a biobed. Troi gently leads Dax away into a quieter part of the infirmary.

**14    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Shar, Nog and Bowers work feverishly. Nog's face shows his utter horror.

BOWERS

Ensign, make sure you stay on the colonel's trail. Lieutenant, get ready to transport the security team to the Jem'Hadar's location the moment Shar pinpoints him.

NOG

I'm on it.

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

The team continuing to scan, all looking worried.

RO

Stay sharp, people.

GUARD

Sir, we've crossed off all the paths to the docking ring and the pylons. I don't think he can escape the station.

KIRA

Who says he wants to escape?

**16    INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Troi sits with Dax, letting the younger woman get it out.

DAX

What if he dies? The things I said to him. I told him to give me space, that I needed to step back from him... that I had some things I need to work out and I couldn't do it with him. But what if he dies? I shouldn't have said that, it's all my fault...

TROI

Shh, they'll take care of him, you know that. You won't lose him.

DAX

Oh Gods... there was so much blood. How can he lose that much blood and be okay? I need to be with him.

She tries to get up again; Troi pulls her back down.

TROI

No. He trained this staff himself - they must be the best there is.

Dax snuffles and tries to pull herself together.

DAX

Of course, you're right. I won't lose him. I won't.

(looks down)

Look at me, I'm a mess. I'm supposed to be the counsellor here, I'm not supposed to need counselling.

TROI

It's okay - I'm glad to help.

DAX

Heh - just imagine if Worf was here. The ex-girlfriend and the ex-wife sitting together. He'd have a meltdown.

(pause)

Are... we okay? About the Worf thing, I mean.

TROI

Oh, of course. Worf and I only dated a couple of times. It never amounted to much, especially after the *Enterprise* was destroyed. I was glad when I heard he'd married Jadzia. He deserved happiness.

DAX

And I'm not Jadzia, I'm Ezri. A fact I think Julian may still be unsure how to deal with.

TROI

It's very clear you love him.

DAX

I do. Ezri Dax loves Julian Bashir. And I will make room for him in my life.

**17    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Shar tensely watches his panel, the symbols on it blinking and beeping as they move.

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

RO

Colonel, I'm afraid it's getting less and less possible to ignore the obvious.

KIRA

I know.

(taps combadge)

Kira to Shar. Focus your scans on the lower core. Concentrate on paths to and from the reactors, and around the fusion core.

**19    INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Nog moans as he hears the news.

NOG

He's going to blow up the whole station...

SHAR

What makes you say that?

NOG

Why else would he go to the fusion core? It was their plan all along. The ships were firing at the core right from the start. He's going to kill us all.

20 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

KIRA

Ro, head to Ops. Begin emergency evacuation procedures on the way. Call in everyone you need to get it done as quickly as possible. Have Bowers contact every ship in our vicinity and tell them to get out of blast range, and coordinate with *Enterprise* and *Tcha'voth* for whatever they can provide. We've got seventy-five hundred on board that need to get out...

She trails off as something horrible occurs to her. Ro catches on as well.

RO

Seventy-five hundred on DS-Nine. A thousand on the *Enterprise*. Nearly two-thousand on the *Tcha'voth*...

KIRA

Ten thousand...  
(w/ horror)  
Ten thousand must die.

RO

I thought it was supposed to be all Bajorans.

KIRA

Does it matter? The number's too close to be a coincidence.  
(pause)  
Go.

Ro rushes off; Kira turns to Vaughn.



KIRA

Commander, it might be a good idea  
if you...

VAUGHN

All due respect, Colonel, but I  
may know more about the Jem'Hadar  
than anyone else here.

**21    INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Close on Shar's console as it shows a schematic of the  
lower core, gradually closing in on a flashing icon. Shar  
slaps the comm system urgently.

SHAR

Colonel, I have him. It appears  
that he's at the fusion core, on  
grid twenty-two.

NOG

Right where the primary reactor  
banks are.

KIRA (comm)

Get us to twenty-one. Set phasers  
on maximum.

Nog works the transporter, closing his eyes in mixed horror  
and hope.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### **22 INT. DS9 - FUSION CORE AREA**

A grand sweeping shot of a part of the station we have never seen before. A huge TOWER of energy, much bigger than a standard ship's warp core, pulses gently with bluish-white light, a deep HUM of power filling the space.

It is suspended vertically through a series of grid-metal platforms that ring it at regular periods along its height. These platforms are large enough to contain work areas.

As we sweep onto one of the more open areas, six figures BEAM into place - Kira, Vaughn and four Bajoran security guards with phasers drawn.

Kira and Vaughn edge towards the rim of their platform and look down to the level below. They see opened panels, a Bajoran tech dead on the floor, his neck twisted.

A little further around, and KITANA'KLAN comes into view, crouching before a panel with his arms thrust inside, his phaser to one side. Kira beckons one of the Bajoran guards forward, an older male. The guard takes aim with his rifle.

#### **POV - RIFLE SIGHTS**

Kitana'klan perfectly centred in the crosshairs...

#### **ECU - RIFLE TRIGGER**

...As the guard's finger tightens on the trigger...

#### **BACK TO SCENE**

Kitana'klan grabs his phaser and rolls in a split-second. The guard's shot misses. Nowhere to be seen, Kitana'klan suddenly pops out from behind some equipment and FIRES, hitting the guard square in the chest. He drops dead.

KIRA

Back! Everyone back!

They scuttle back from the edge; Kitana'klan is gone again in a second. Kira looks down at the charred guard. Nothing to be done for him now. She and Vaughn huddle.

VAUGHN

He'll stay there, to protect his work for as long as he can. Or as long as he thinks is necessary. If you can distract him, draw his fire up here, I might be able to circle down and get behind him.

KIRA

My thoughts exactly. But I'm the one who's going.

VAUGHN

We should both go, or three of us, but not together. He'll expect us to go straight at him, not two or three coming from different directions.

Kira nods, accepting Vaughn's advice; turns to the guards.

KIRA

Make it look good. Revolving shots, not a constant barrage. Keep firing until we get to the banks. If we don't make it, call for additional security. We have to stop him, we have to disable whatever he did to the controls.

With a deep breath, Kira and Vaughn head in opposite directions, and the guards begin FIRING onto the lower level. Vaughn takes the first ladder they come to. With a grim look, Kira heads towards another further away.

**23    INT. DS9 - FUSION CORE AREA - LOWER LEVEL**

When he reaches the next level, Vaughn looks around for cover, heads towards a bank of panels. He looks up and sees Kira watching him. He edges further around and sees the open panel, the dead worker. More phaser fire from above.

Under the cover, Vaughn runs head-down towards the panel. On the other side of the power core, Kira is doing likewise. She pokes her head out, sees Vaughn making a run for the panel, and steps out to run too.

Just as she does, she is gripped around the middle by an invisible force. A shrouded Kitana'klan pins Kira's arms to her sides in a bear hug, lifting her up and SQUEEZING. She cries out in pain and we hear the CRUNCH as ribs break.

Vaughn hears the noise. The invisible shape throws Kira aside, sending her crashing into a bank of panels where she HITS her head badly. From near the console, Vaughn leans out from cover and can see Kira's boots in a jumble.

VAUGHN  
(whisper)  
Damn it! Colonel...

Vaughn fires into the area around Kira, but doesn't hit anything. He desperately looks around for Kitana'klan, who is of course shrouded. Grimly, he turns to the console.

As he is about to look into the panel, the invisible shape appears right behind him. Vaughn feels the breath on the back of his neck, and closes his eyes, knowing he is dead.

Just as Kitana'klan is about to strike, another SHAPE leaps right on top of him out of nowhere, both unshrouding as they fall.

The two Jem'Hadar struggle powerfully on the floor as Vaughn backs away from the vicious fight. Kitana'klan spits and growls with fury, punching at the newcomer, who has him by the throat and shrugs off the blows.

The second Jem'Hadar (whose name is TARAN'ATAR) wrestles his way on top, straddles Kitana'klan and pins him down.

TARAN'ATAR  
Accept death.

Kitana'klan ignores him, so the newcomer reaches down to his head and TWISTS, breaking his neck with an audible CRUNCH. Kitana'klan falls slack, and the newcomer stands up, panting. Vaughn is watching very warily.

VAUGHN

I take it you're on our side.

TARAN'ATAR

I am.

VAUGHN

Good. We can talk about it later.

(shouts upwards)

Security, this is Vaughn. Hold  
your fire, that's an order.

Vaughn crouches down in front of the panel and starts to work on it. Taran'atar crouches down with him, looking around as the main power core begins to pulse brighter and the sound grows in pitch and volume.

VAUGHN

Damn it! He forced the core to increase density twenty percent, and then shorted out the control panel. The fusion reactors are going to blow.

TARAN'ATAR

Can anything be done?

VAUGHN

If I can get to the venting system, I might be able to release the pressure.

TARAN'ATAR

I will aid you.

Vaughn runs to another bank of consoles, Taran'atar with him. Vaughn shouts up to the security officers.

VAUGHN

Evacuate!

(to Taran'atar)

See if Kira's alive.

He goes. Vaughn checks the panels, working a couple of keys, before the whole console goes dark. He pulls open an

access port and sees a mess of tangled and torn cables. He slams his fist against the console.

VAUGHN

No! There's got to be something I can do.

In a heap on the ground, Kira struggles to open her eyes and sees the Jem'Hadar. She instinctively pulls away as best she can, which is not much. When she tries to move, she SQUEALS in pain as blood spreads across her side.

Vaughn appears by her side, and she latches on to him.

KIRA

Help... up...

Taran'atar gently manoeuvres her into a sitting position. She is too groggy to really protest.

VAUGHN

Kitana'klan sabotaged the fusion reactors. We're looking at a core overload in a matter of minutes, and the reactors won't vent.

KIRA

Get me up. Lift. Eject it from the top, my voice. Jettison. Up, we go up.

VAUGHN

We have to get to the top of the shaft, now. Can you pick her up?

Taran'atar reaches down and effortlessly picks Kira up, careful to be gentle with her.

VAUGHN

Hurry, to that lift.

Vaughn and Taran'atar - carrying Kira - hurry over to a Cardassian-design lift platform, which slowly begins to move vertically up the shaft, following the power core, which continues to glow brighter and hum louder.

COMPUTER

Warning. Plasma temperature is unstable. Engage liquid sodium loop at emergency venting. Capacity overload will occur in five minutes. Warning. Plasma temperature...

VAUGHN

Come on, come on...

Vaughn looks over with worry at Kira, who hangs semi-conscious in the Jem'Hadar's arms.

**24 INT. FUSION CORE AREA - TOP LEVEL**

The platform finally reaches the top, and they step out. The glaring white glow from below mixes with flashing red alert panels. It's hard to hear Kira over the growing HUM and noise of overloading machinery.

KIRA

Master con...

VAUGHN

Over there!

They run over to a panel, Kira grimacing in pain.

KIRA

Down...

Taran'atar lowers Kira to the floor, where she half-collapses, fighting to stay conscious.

COMPUTER

Capacity overload will occur in three minutes. Warning...

KIRA

Hit three-one-four-seven-zero.

(Vaughn does)

Computer, this is Colonel Kira Nerys. Initiate... initiate lower core emergency separation.

Authorisation Kira Alpha... One  
Alpha.

COMPUTER  
Identity confirmed. Request  
additional authorisation.

KIRA  
Override, Kira zero-nine.  
Disengage and initiate emergency  
launch... on my mark. Mark.

Kira's head lolls back, almost losing consciousness. From beneath them, a loud sound indicates things breaking free. The station SHUDDERS with the force of it. A cacophony of screeching metal and noise, and the core is EJECTED.

**25**    **EXT. DS9 STATION**

The brightly glowing lower core SHOOTs away from the bottom of the station and away into space.

**26**    **INT. FUSION CORE AREA - TOP LEVEL**

KIRA  
Did it...

**27**    **EXT. DS9 STATION**

The core EXPLODES in a blinding flash - the station rocks.

**28**    **INT. FUSION CORE AREA - TOP LEVEL**

Vaughn sighs with relief as he realises the station is saved. But when he looks down at Kira, she is unconscious. Or could she be dead?

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**



**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**29    EXT. STATION - ESTABLISHING**

The *Enterprise* and *Tcha'voth* are back, and the station is dimmed with the lack of a lower power core.

**30    INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

It is comparatively quiet. A female Bajoran doctor, GIRANI SEMNA, walks among the occupied biobeds checking readings. Ezri Dax is there, offering soothing words to some of the patients, but keeping an eye on Bashir, who still lies in one of the beds. Girani yawns and leans against a wall.

BASHIR  
Doctor Girani?

With an amused roll of the eyes, Girani goes over to him.

GIRANI  
Yes, Doctor.

BASHIR  
My BP and hematocrit are both normal, and I'm certain the tissue stitch has set by now. I would release me.

GIRANI  
And if you were on duty, you could do that. Another half hour, Julian. Post-surgical standards apply to everyone.

Bashir sighs dramatically, and looks up to Dax, standing by him, stroking his hair. Girani leaves them and walks over to see Kira, who is just coming back to consciousness.

GIRANI  
Easy, Colonel.

KIRA

The station. How's the station?  
Was anyone hurt?

GIRANI

Everyone's fine. You saved the station. You were badly hurt by the Jem'Hadar, a concussion and several fractures, but you've been treated -

PICARD (comm)

Picard to Doctor Girani.

GIRANI

(taps badge)

Go ahead, Captain.

PICARD (comm)

Is Colonel Kira awake?

GIRANI

Yes, Captain. She just woke up.

PICARD (comm)

Excellent. Please tell her the Starfleet task force will be arriving in a few minutes, and Commander Vaughn has called for a meeting as soon as she's able. We're meeting in the station's wardroom.

Kira stretches up and speaks into Girani's combadge.

KIRA

Captain, this is Kira. I'll need a few minutes to confer with my staff before I can be there.

PICARD (comm)

Of course, Colonel. Picard out.

KIRA

Am I good to go?

GIRANI

Absolutely. But if you feel any nausea or vertigo, I want you back here right away.

KIRA

I promise. Thank you, Doctor.

Kira gingerly gets off the biobed and walks over to talk to Bashir and Dax. Girani smiles and heads off.

**31    INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

Kira enters, taking off her jacket with a grimace at the aches. Going into the bedroom to get a change of clothes, she taps her combadge.

KIRA

Kira to Ro.

RO (comm)

Ro here, Colonel.

KIRA

What's our tactical situation?

RO (comm)

The evacuation went perfectly. The *Tcha'voth* picked up all the escape pods and returned them to us with everyone accounted for. There was no structural damage from the core's explosion, and the station can operate temporarily on emergency generators. But that's not a long-term solution.

KIRA

Understood. Please arrange a senior staff meeting at oh-nine-hundred tomorrow.

RO

Yes, Sir. Ro out.

As she finishes freshening up, Kira catches a look out of the WINDOW, and sees the task force. A large (but not too

large) fleet of Starfleet, Klingon and Romulan ships looking powerful and threatening.

She looks on with dismay. It's not an encouraging sight.

**32**    **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Kira walks across the Promenade. Various Bajorans stop to greet her warmly, thanking her for saving the station, telling her how she's blessed by the Prophets, asking about the book of prophecies. She accepts it all with humility.

As she reaches the stairs by the Replimat, she is caught up short as she notices Kasidy Yates standing, arms crossed. The tension between the two is clear.

KASIDY

How could you do this to me,  
Nerys?

KIRA

Kas, I'm so sorry. It was just -  
it was the right thing to do. I  
had to do it.

KASIDY

That's fine, good for you. So now  
you and the Vedek Assembly have  
both made a grand statement of how  
right you are. I appreciate that.  
But I didn't ask how you could do  
this. I asked how you could do  
this to me.

Kira tries to reach out. Kasidy isn't sure she wants that.

KIRA

But Kas, it's okay. I figured it  
out. The ten-thousand, it was  
going to be the residents of the  
station. But I stopped it -  
everyone's safe.

KASIDY

I thought it couldn't be stopped -  
the book said it was destined.

KIRA

Which just goes to show the book was wrong. There's not going to be any sacrifice.

KASIDY

Really? Because I woke up this morning to something like eleven-thousand messages to me on the comnet. Nerys, those people were offering to die for me. To kill themselves for me, to be part of the sacrifice for my baby.

KIRA

Oh Kas...

KASIDY

I can't handle this, Nerys. I guess I can understand why you did it. In your position I might even have done the same.

(pause)

But I really wish you hadn't done it. Because all of this means that if I want a moment's peace for the rest of my pregnancy, I'll... I'll have to leave. In fact, I'm already packed.

And she walks away, hugging herself. Kira is crestfallen.

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

Still miserable, Kira walks down the corridor towards the Wardroom. Two Starfleet, one Klingon and one Romulan guard stand outside, eyeing her. The door opens, she enters...

**34    INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

...And is understandably surprised to see Taran'atar standing at the head of the table, unrestrained, along side Vaughn. ADM ROSS and CAPT PICARD, two male KLINGON CAPTAINS and a female ROMULAN COMMANDER sit around the table.

VAUGHN

It's good to see you on your feet, Colonel, but you may want to sit down. This is First Taran'atar.

Kira warily walks in, dumbfounded. On the way she takes note of the phaser resting on a nearby guard's hip.

VAUGHN

It was Taran'atar who dispatched Kitana'klan, Colonel, and helped you and I eject the core. I'm reasonably certain he's on our side. I had him shroud for the walk here, so as not to alarm the station's residents. And I called this meeting so you could all hear what he has to say.

(pause)

Which brings us to the story of how he came to be here in the first place, which I haven't heard myself. Taran'atar, will you speak to us now?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes. The account Kitana'klan gave was partly accurate. There was an envoy sent to your station, who was attacked by rogue Jem'Hadar. I am that envoy, chosen by the Founder Odo to live among you and learn peaceful coexistence.

General reactions and harrumphing around the table.

TARAN'ATAR

On his return to the Dominion, Odo instructed the Vorta to begin a search among the Jem'Hadar for... deviants. He believed, based on knowledge he learned while living here, that some Jem'Hadar are capable of surviving without the white. When the search was done, they found only four. I was one.

He pulls back his collar, reveals there is no white tube.

VAUGHN

Why you out of the four?

TARAN'ATAR

I am not certain. Perhaps as the oldest among them, he thought I would be best suited to the task. Among my kind, I am an Honoured Elder of twenty-two tears. I had almost reached the anomaly when I was attacked. There are some who dislike how the war ended, and seek to redeem themselves.

KLINGON 1

How many?

TARAN'ATAR

Few. Among us, disobedience is dealt with quickly and decisively, when detected. The Founders have not sanctioned any hostilities since your treaty was signed.

(pause)

Although my ship was damaged, we were able to pursue the strikers into your space. When I understood we were about to be destroyed, I transported here. However, I soon discovered that Kitana'klan had also transported here. He gained time to achieve his goal by claiming that my mission was his. I underestimated his abilities. There was a human in the bay who was bleeding to death.

**35     FLASHBACK - INT. DS9 CARGO BAY**

Bashir lies bleeding on the floor. Taran'atar crouches by him and presses the mysterious bandage to Bashir's neck.

TARAN'ATAR (v.o.)

A Starfleet doctor. I tried to stop the bleeding before I went in pursuit of Kitana'klan.

36 BACK TO SCENE

TARAN'ATAR

Did he live?

KIRA

He did.

ROMULAN

This is a charming tale, but this creature has yet to offer any evidence that he is what he says he is. Where is the proof?

TARAN'ATAR

Here.

(holds out data chip)

It is from Odo. I was instructed to give it to you, so you might share the message with the Alpha Quadrant.

Kira is wary, looking from the chip to Taran'atar's face.

TARAN'ATAR

I tell you truthfully, Colonel Kira, I still do not understand what I am meant to achieve here. I was told understanding would come in time, and perhaps that will be so. For now, all that matters is that a Founder has given me a mission. It is not necessary that I understand, only that I obey. And you may be certain that I will do as the Founder has instructed me, or die in the attempt.

Kira slowly reaches out and plucks the chip from the Jem'Hadar's hand. She plugs it into the reader in the table, and they all turn to the view screen on the wall.



On it, ODO appears, wearing his Bajoran security uniform. Kira stares at him with longing.

ODO (screen)

This message is for Colonel Kira Nerys of Deep Space Nine. Nerys, I hope you're well.

(pause)

If you're watching this, you've most likely met Taran'atar by now, and he's probably explained himself. But I thought you should also hear it from me.

(pause)

Ever since we learned how and why the Dominion had created the Jem'Hadar, I've felt a certain responsibility. Their lives have only one meaning here - to fight and die for the Founders. And because the majority die young, few ever imagine anything else.

(pause)

Since arriving here, one of the ideas I've tried to introduce to the Founders is that the Jem'Hadar deserve to be freed of their dependency on ketracel-white, and allowed to evolve without further genetic manipulation. You can imagine their reaction to that.

He smiles, shakes his head a little.

ODO (screen)

I have no illusions. I can't transform the Dominion overnight. But it has to begin somewhere. And you have nothing to fear from Taran'atar. He's not dependent on the white, and he never fought in the war with the Federation. My hope in sending him to you is that... it's a first step.

(pause)

I also want to tell you, and the leaders of the Alpha Quadrant, that you have nothing to fear from the Dominion either. I've given them a lot to think about, and they'll be considering it all for some time to come, I expect. So I want you to pass the message along that if the Federation and its allies want to resume peaceful exploration of the Gamma Quadrant, the Dominion won't interfere. All the Link asks is to be left alone, until it's ready to make contact.

With a final, more intimate look, Odo signs off.

ODO (screen)  
Take care, Nerys.

The screen goes blank, but Kira continues sadly staring.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**37 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

Kira, Ross, Picard, Vaughn, the Klingons and Romulans take in Odo's message. Taran'atar remains stony-faced.

KIRA

Is there anyone here who doesn't believe what Odo and Taran'atar have told us?

ROMULAN

I have strong reservations. I wish to speak privately with the others in my forces before answering.

KLINGON 1

We also choose to confer among ourselves.

ROSS

Considering the evidence, I'm leaning towards Taran'atar's version of events. But we should all meet with our own teams to discuss. Shall we reconvene here in, say, an hour?

KLINGON 1

Agreed.

Everyone gets up to leave, except for VAUGHN, who sits gazing wistfully into the distance.

VAUGHN

Think of it - as long as we don't bother the Dominion, we'd be free to explore vast new areas of territory. Unknown worlds to find, new cultures to experience... and think of all the untapped resources available to us.

Taken with that idea, the Klingons and Romulans leave. It's clear that Vaughn has just made their decision for them.

KIRA

Well played, Commander.

VAUGHN

Thank you, Colonel.

KIRA

Since this is a Federation matter, and you already know where I stand on it, I'll take my leave now. Taran'atar, until I have a chance to explain your presence on the station, I'm going to ask you to stay in one of our guest quarters. I'll take you there now.

TARAN'ATAR

Shall I shroud?

Kira considers the question, then shakes her head.

KIRA

No. We might as well let people start getting used to the idea.

They leave.

**38 INT. DS9 - GUEST QUARTERS**

Vaughn sits at a comm terminal, which is split into three images, each of a high-ranking Starfleet Admiral. It's a rather acrimonious conversation.

ADMIRAL 1 (screen)

...And security risks aside, it smacks of sheer recklessness. Really, Elias, I think you ought to take some time to think this through. You're one of our best intelligence operatives, and that isn't something you can expect us to simply do without.

VAUGHN

I'm more than qualified, I have the background, the diplomatic awareness, and the desire.

ADMIRAL 2 (screen)

I'm sorry, Elias, this isn't open to discussion. You're too valuable to us, especially now.

VAUGHN

Then I tender my resignation from Starfleet, effective immediately.

ADMIRAL 3

That's a joke, right?

VAUGHN

Try me. I know this puts you in an awkward position. But this is my life we're discussing. I've made my decision, and if you don't like it, I'll retire and go through with my plans as a civilian.

ADMIRAL 1

Will you excuse us for a moment, Commander?

VAUGHN

Take your time.

The screen goes to standby, and Vaughn sits back, satisfied that he's got his way. After a moment, the Admirals return.

ADMIRAL 3

Congratulations, Elias. Pending approval from your new CO, I'll have the official order put through within a day.

VAUGHN

Thank you all, sincerely.

And he signs off, a huge grin filling his face.

39 **EXT. STATION ESTABLISHING**

As before - no lower core, *Enterprise* and *Tcha'voth* nearby.

40 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Ro Laren stands viewing the screens; they show the profiles of the three officers killed by Kitana'klan. Distracted, she doesn't see Quark enter with a steaming cup of tea.

QUARK

Good morning, Lieutenant. Forgive my presumption, but I've noted you have a fondness for hot tea, and I'm told this is an excellent blend. It's very expensive.

RO

Does that mean I have to pay for it?

QUARK

No no, of course not. It's a gift! Call it a token of my appreciation for your superb work with the evacuation last night. You really know how to pack a crowd!

RO

Thanks, Quark, that's very considerate of you.

QUARK

You're welcome...  
(does he dare?)  
...Laren.

She takes the tea, sits down at her desk, sips it.

RO

This is good. What's it called?

QUARK

(in a rush)  
Darjeeling-would-you-have-dinner-with-me?

RO

Quark...

QUARK

Never mind, forget I asked.

RO

No, wait. Listen... right now I'm going through a kind of... self-evaluation period. I'm flattered by your invitation, but the truth is, I really don't want to be involved with anyone right now.

QUARK

(jumps on the opening)

Involved? Who said anything about getting involved? I'm talking about eating together, you know, as friends.

RO

Oh... in that case, yes. Not tonight, though, I'll be too tired. In fact, maybe we should wait a couple of days, until things calm down around here.

QUARK

Heh - I can tell you're new. Things never calm down around here. There's always some new crisis threatening life as we know it. But a couple of days will be just fine.

RO

As friends, though, right?

QUARK

Friends, absolutely, got it. You won't regret this.

He bounces out of the room, and Ro bemusedly turns back to her screens, again not noticing a new body approaching.

PICARD (o.s.)  
May I come in?

She spins round at his voice, almost knocking over her tea. He's looking uncomfortable in the doorway. She's stunned.

RO  
Captain - yes, of course.

PICARD  
So... A Bajoran Militia  
Lieutenant, special forces, and  
chief of security. It's good that  
you're putting your tactical  
training to good use.

RO  
Yes, sir. The rank is honorary. I  
was appointed here, after the war.

PICARD  
I see. Do you think you'll stay?

RO  
I don't know. I think so, but  
sometimes I'm not sure if it's  
what I want.

PICARD  
Commitments can be difficult. But  
there are benefits to following  
through. You've done well for  
yourself - perhaps you should stay  
for a while.

RO  
Captain, about what happened -

PICARD  
Everyone has regrets, Lieutenant.  
I only stopped by to say that I  
hope you won't let your past  
dictate your future... and to wish  
you well.



RO  
Thank you, Captain.

He leaves, and she collapses back into her seat, almost in tears. She can't believe how nice everyone is being to her.

**41 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Picard steps out of the security office, straightens his uniform, and begins walking towards the turbolifts. Vaughn steps up along side, and they walk the Promenade together.

VAUGHN  
Mind if I walk with you, Captain?

PICARD  
Not at all. Quite an exciting few days, wouldn't you say?

VAUGHN  
I suppose you know what I did.

PICARD  
I had suspicions. This puts you in an extraordinary position, Elias. Assuming Starfleet approves.

VAUGHN  
Hell, even if they don't approve. But... there is one last thing before the *Enterprise* leaves...

PICARD  
Oh my goodness, yes of course. I'd almost forgotten in all the excitement. Let me know when you're ready.

VAUGHN  
Please say goodbye to Deanna for me.

PICARD  
It's been a pleasure, Elias. I hope we get the chance to work together again soon.

VAUGHN

As do I, Jean-Luc. Thank you for everything.

They shake hands and part as Picard enters the airlock. Vaughn turns and heads towards the Bajoran shrine.

**42    INT. DS9 - BAJORAN SHRINE**

Vaughn enters quietly, and sees Kira kneeling near the podium, eyes closed in prayer. He decides to leave her be, but she opens her eyes and sees him.

KIRA

Hello, Commander.

VAUGHN

Sorry to interrupt. Perhaps we could meet when you're finished?

KIRA

That's alright. I'm having trouble concentrating anyway. Have a seat.

(beat)

I never got a chance to thank you for what you did last night. If you hadn't been there, a lot of people would have died. You were instrumental saving the station.

VAUGHN

I really just helped you save it. But as long as you're thinking well of me, how would you feel about keeping me around? I've noticed you have an opening for an executive officer. I'd very much like to fill it.

KIRA

(frown)

You're over-qualified for the job, if you don't mind me saying. I was under the impression your background is primarily tactical...

VAUGHN

It is. But I had an experience recently that made me want to try something else. May I have something beamed directly to our position from the *Enterprise*?

She nods; he taps his combadge.

VAUGHN

Vaughn to Picard. Please have the object in Cargo Bay two beamed to my current location.

After a moment, a transporter effect twinkles, depositing the ORB BOX that Vaughn found in the Badlands. Kira goes to it in awe, thoroughly astonished.

VAUGHN

We believe it's the Orb of Memory.

KIRA

Where did you find it?

VAUGHN

On a derelict, in the Badlands. It... changed me, made me realise I didn't want to be doing what I was doing. On that freighter, I remembered who I wanted to be, rather than who I'd become.

KIRA

Freighter?

(wary)

A Cardassian freighter?

VAUGHN

That's right, the *Kamal*. It was trapped, had been for at least three decades.

KIRA

Were there Bajorans on board?

VAUGHN

Yes...

KIRA

Did you...

**FLASHBACK - CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER**

Kira walks through the scene in her dream, sees the shining light in the cargo bay.

**BACK TO SCENE**

KIRA

Did you find the Orb in a cargo bay? With Bajorans and Cardassians?

**FLASHBACK - CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER**

Vaughn walks through the bay in his space-suit, past the Bajoran and Cardassian hugging each other in death.

**BACK TO SCENE**

The two of them begin to realise the strangeness of this.

VAUGHN

Yes.

KIRA

I dreamed it, the day the Jem'Hadar attacked the station. I dreamed that I was in a lost freighter, in a cargo bay, and all around me were Bajoran refugees and Cardassian soldiers, and they were dying...

VAUGHN

Suffocating...

KIRA

And there was a light in the back of the bay...

VAUGHN  
And Benjamin Sisko was there.

They stare at each other, at the amazing non-coincidence.

KIRA  
Welcome to Deep Space Nine,  
Commander.

He gets up and slowly leaves her. She turns to the Orb, and when she is alone, goes to it, and slowly, reverently, opens the box. The light flows out and we WHITE OUT.

**43**    **INT. DS9 - GUEST QUARTERS**

VEDEK YEVIR restlessly stalks his quarters, muttering to himself. The signal on his companel sounds, and he accepts the call, astonished to find that it's Kira.

KIRA (screen)  
Vedek Yevir, would you come to  
Runabout pad C, as soon as you  
can? You may want to bring your  
things - we're going to Bajor.

She disconnects before he can respond. He is not pleased.

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

Yevir stomps towards the airlock, surprised to find Kasidy Yates standing with Kira at the doorway. Kira's manner is calm, tranquil, at peace - which only annoys Yevir all the more. Ro pops her head out from inside the ship.

RO  
Ready to go.

KIRA  
I'm glad you decided to join us,  
Linjarin.

YEVIR  
What's this about?

KIRA

Funny you should ask, because I'm not really sure myself. We're going to B'Hala, I know that much. For the rest... I'll know when we get there. Shall we?

**45**    **EXT. SPACE, NEAR BAJOR**

A runabout approaches Bajor.

**46**    **INT. BAJOR - CAVE SET**

Kira, Kasidy, Yevir and Ro materialise into the same caves where Jake was working. Kira holds a torch and a hammer.

KASIDY

What now?

KIRA

Now we go where the book was found.

YEVIR

Why? And why the hammer? B'Hala is sacred ground, it's not open to anyone who feels like digging.

KIRA

I just know there's an answer here.

They walk further, down increasingly smaller tunnels, until they come to an archway built into the rock.

KIRA

Come this way.

They follow her single file into the darkness. The tunnel goes steeply down into the earth, until they come to an eroded wall of stone.

KIRA

Here. This is as far as they've dug down. We're at the very bottom of the lowest level of B'Hala.

KASIDY

Do you know why yet?

KIRA

I think so. It's about you,  
Kasidy. And the book, and your  
baby.

She begins HITTING the wall with her hammer, until it finally breaks through. Then she CLAWS the hole open with her hands. When it is big enough, she crawls through, and they all follow.

On the other side, Kira shines her torch around, and they are all astonished to see an enormous room, a MAUSOLEUM filled with stone crypts going back into the darkness. Alcoves along the walls are filled with decayed and mummified bodies, thousands of years old.

RO

The prophecy of the ten thousand.

KIRA

These are the remains of the men  
and women who kept Ohalu's book  
safe. They all sacrificed  
themselves for the sake of the  
book, all long before B'Hala was  
lost. Ten thousand of them.

YEVIR

So many...

KIRA

Despite the prevailing orthodoxy,  
all of these people knew that  
Ohalu had been touched by the  
Prophets.

Kira turns to Kasidy, understanding on her face.

KIRA

They lived and died so that your  
child could represent a new age  
for Bajor. When people could be  
free to understand the Prophets in

new ways. The birth itself will be a catalyst, but your baby will be your own, Kas. You have nothing to fear.

Kasidy notes an empty alcove nearby, and walks over to it.

YEVIR

Why is that one empty?

Kasidy turns back to them, also now understanding.

KASIDY

It's for the last guardian of the book. It's for Istani Reyla.

On their reactions...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**



**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**47    EXT. BAJOR, CAPITAL CITY - ESTABLISHING**

Just a moment to establish where we are.

**48    EXT. BAJOR, VEDEK ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS**

A news conference; Vedek Yevir stands at a microphone on a small stage, with the suggestion of cameras and crowds watching him, including other Vedeks.

YEVIR

Two days ago, an unacknowledged book of prophecy was uploaded onto Bajor's worldwide communications network... anonymously. The Vedek Assembly had heard of this book, but none of us had read it - and I must admit, we were afraid to. Afraid that the Prophets would be overlooked in the controversy that followed. Afraid of the Bajoran people learning we knew of this book but had never spoken of it.

(beat)

I want everyone to know, it was I who pushed for this book to be condemned. Because for a moment, I forgot how strong our people are. To my shame, I didn't want the Vedek Assembly's authority to be challenged. I thought that would mean people turning away from the Prophets. I was wrong.

**49    INT. DS9 - SISKO'S QUARTERS**

Kasidy sits unhappily among crates of belongings, watching Yevir's speech on the screen and hugging her belly.

YEVIR (screen)

I might have continued on my narrow path, if not for the

miraculous return yesterday of the Orb of Memory. The Orb showed us the truth of the book's final prophecy - the prophecy of the Avatar, the Emissary's child, who is not yet born.

**50    INT. DS9 PROMENADE - REPLIMAT**

Vaughn sits eating quietly, while he and a crowd of adoring and nodding Bajorans watch Yevir's speech on a monitor.

YEVIR (screen)

But I believe that the Orb stands for more than the Prophets' love. I believe that it's also a sign - a sign that the Prophets choose for us to be open to change. They want us to look into our pasts, to learn from our experiences, and to use that experience to rise to the challenges of the future.

**51    INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE**

Kira sits alone at her desk, watching the speech on her desk monitor. Bustle continues out in Ops, but Kira sits quietly, much less confident and assured than before.

YEVIR (screen)

Rest assured, I am not saying we should tear down the very system that has allowed me this voice. All I mean to say is that like all of you, I am here to serve the will of the Prophets. And those among us who turn away from their light have no place in the Bajor of tomorrow. Because our lives and our world, every thing we do, we do for Them.

**52    INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

Quark watches on a monitor behind his bar as Yevir ties up.

YEVIR (on screen)  
Thank you for listening. Walk with  
the Prophets.

The speech having finished, Quark turns off the monitor and turns to Morn, who occupies his usual place at the bar.

QUARK  
What a load. At least Kai Winn  
didn't try to hide her insatiable  
craving for power. But he sounds  
like he's going for some kind of  
humility award with that little  
performance.

Morn raises his glass in agreement, and BELCHes loudly.  
Quark sighs and wanders down to the Promenade end of the  
bar to gaze down towards Ro's office again.

**53    INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Ro, however, is not there. She is stepping off the arriving  
turbolift into Ops, and heading over to Kira's office. Nog,  
Shar and Bowers are all at their stations, busily working.  
She nods at them, and looks through the office doors to see  
Kira working busily with a stack of padds. She toggles the  
alert, Kira looks up and lets her in without a smile.

RO  
Sorry to bother you, Colonel...

KIRA  
That's alright, come in.

RO  
I just wanted you to know that I  
sent my report on Istani's murder  
to the Ministry of Justice. I kind  
of figure with the killer dead,  
no-one's going to look too closely  
at the Assembly's involvement. But  
they may have some questions for  
you before they close the file.

KIRA

Thank you. Listen... I meant to tell you that you did an exemplary job with the evacuation. With the investigation too. Outstanding.

That takes Ro unawares, but Kira's manner is rather empty.

RO

I - thank you.

KIRA

I was too quick to judge you, and I hope you'll accept my apology.

RO

Colonel, I should apologise too. Being too quick to judge runs both ways, and I haven't made it easy for you.

KIRA

Maybe there comes a point when we all need to start again...

She absently brushes her hair back, and it reveals that she is not wearing the earring we have always seen on her.

RO

Colonel, your earring...

KIRA

I took it off. It seems that Vedek Yevir got the last word after all. I've been... Attainted.

RO

You mean...

KIRA

I mean I am no longer welcome within the Bajoran faith. I'm forbidden from entering any shrine. I can't study any of the prophecies, or wear my earring, or look into an Orb, or even pray with other Bajorans. Ever.

Ro knows how much this must be killing Kira, even though she is trying valiantly to hold it together.

KIRA

Ro, I have work to do.

Ro nods with sad understanding, and turns to leave. Kira goes back to her padds and buries herself in work.

**54    EXT. SPACE - ESTABLISHING**

The station can be seen in the foreground, with the *Tcha'voth* nearby and lots of shuttles and repair crews. But we're looking off in the direction of the wormhole.

**55    EXT. SPACE - INSIDE THE WORMHOLE**

Jake's shuttle bobs about in the wormhole, surrounded by all the streams and eddies of light.

**56    INT. SHUTTLE COCKPIT**

JAKE SISKO sits slumped at the controls, empty ration packs around him, a downcast look. He has been waiting a long time, and nothing has happened. He makes a decision.

JAKE

Computer, continue recording Jake Sisko personal log. It's been long enough. Nearly three full days, and all I have to show for it is a pinched nerve in my neck. I'll go back. And I'll tell everyone - Nog, Kas, Kira, Dax... I guess I just let my own wild hopes talk me into this silly fantasy that I could bring back my dad.

(beat)

But why should he come back? He's off enjoying his wondrous destiny. And I'm left here. I shouldn't be mad at him, I suppose. But that's okay. I don't have to be perfect. And neither does he.

He sits up straighter in the chair, presses some buttons.

JAKE

Going home.

As he hits the final buttons, the ship suddenly SWERVES, and a bright light BURSTS all around the ship. He clings to the consoles, desperately gazing out the window, hope returning to his face.

**57 EXT. SPACE - INSIDE THE WORMHOLE**

Jake's shuttle is spinning wildly and being thrown around by the currents of the wormhole, surrounded by bright, swirling colours, moving faster and faster.

**58. INT. SHUTTLE COCKPIT**

Jake still clings desperately to the console, no longer quite so excited, as things fly about the cabin.

JAKE

Stop it! Stop it!

The shaking gets more and more violent until Jake is finally knocked unconscious, and the bright light grows until it whites out the screen.

Jake gradually comes to, still in a fog. An indistinct shape is hovering over him, and a deep, vibrant voice (which may or may not be Benjamin Sisko) speaks.

VOICE

I've got you. You're going to be alright. I've got you.

FADE OUT:

**THE END**