

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x22 - "Greater Good."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
Mission Gamma Book 4 - Lesser Evil

by Robert Simpson

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DEFIANT - ESTABLISHING

The Starfleet ship warps through space in the usual way...

2 INT. DEFIANT - MESS HALL

BASHIR picks up a small Starfleet ration pack from a rack of them, and inspects it. He is unimpressed...

BASHIR

Ham and brie on a quadrotriticale
baguette.

(gets another)

Denevan cherries flambé.

(yikes)

Eelshark salad with mixed greens.

(turns it over)

May be toxic to non-Bolians.

With a dramatic sigh, he throws that one back too. Finally plumps for ASSORTED ROAST VEGETABLES and slouches over to a table. Next to him, VAUGHN is busy eating ARROZ CON POLLO.

BASHIR

Have I mentioned that I've come to
detest Starfleet field rations?

VAUGHN

Quite a few times in fact. Your
attitude surprises me, Doctor.
Colonel Kira once mentioned that
you fought to get assigned to DS-
Nine specifically so you could
rough it on the frontier.

Opposite, TENMEI is happily tucking into BABA GHANOUSH...

TENMEI

Learn to live dangerously, Doctor.
You'll be amazed how much you
enjoy everything.

BASHIR

I don't suppose Nog has had any
luck at all with the replicators?

VAUGHN

Shall I remind you why we're on
field rations in the first place?

BASHIR

Touché, Commander.

VAUGHN

You know, back in oh-four, I was
in a situation much worse than
this one.

TENMEI

Run for it, Doctor, before he
gains a head of steam.

VAUGHN

(ignores her)

I remember it well. We'd been
forced to go quiet for a month on
the wrong side of the Tholian
border. No replicators, no holo-
decks, total radio silence. Just
eighty-five people with nothing
but ration packs, the library
computer and a lot of imagination.

BASHIR

You know, that sounds fascinating,
sir, but I just realised I left
something on in the medical bay...

Vaughn GRABS Bashir, clearly performing to an audience...

VAUGHN

I can still recall Crewman
Richards stealing the rats from
the bio-lab for meatloaf...

TENMEI

He did not.

VAUGHN

Who's telling this story, Ensign?
Anyway, the point is that compared
to many who came before, we live
and work in luxury, even when
deprived of some of the things we
take for granted.

BASHIR

Point taken.

Vaughn clears up his food, drains the last of his iced tea,
and makes a big performance of smacking his lips...

VAUGHN

That was delicious. And you
haven't even started your meal.

Bashir looks down at his pack, now suddenly appetite-less.

BASHIR

I think I'll save it for later.
For when I'm really hungry.

Bashir gets up, puts the package back, heads to the door.
As he nears, it OPENS to admit Dax, looking concerned...

BASHIR

Hi. You okay?

DAX

What? Oh, yeah. Just a report I
need to make to the commander.
Enjoy your dinner?

BASHIR

Don't ask. See you when you get
off duty?

DAX

Sure. I'll even grab one myself
and we can eat together.

BASHIR

It's a date. Don't work too hard.

DAX
(forced laughter)
Where were you when I decided to
transfer to command?

BASHIR
(as he goes)
Being supportive.

With Bashir gone, Dax turns towards Vaughn. She is uneasy
about making this particular report...

DAX
Commander, Ensign. Hope I'm not
interrupting.

TENMEI
(getting up)
Actually, I was just about to get
going. Some of us have work to do.

VAUGHN
If you have time, stop by my cabin
later. I found a Rowatu recording
in the ship's database that I
don't think you've heard before.

TENMEI
Okay. Twenty-one-hundred?

Vaughn nods, and Tenmei leaves with a smiling nod at Dax...

DAX
If you don't mind my saying so,
it's nice to see you two getting
along so well now.

VAUGHN
Lot of wasted years to make up for.
We've learned quite a bit about
each other on this voyage.

DAX
She's a fine officer. The next
generation of Vaughns is off to a
good start.

VAUGHN

Oh, fortunately for her, she's a Tenmei through and through. So what's up?

DAX

I was hoping you could tell me. Sam was reviewing data from the latest probes. They detected an anomaly in a lower subspace stratum. It's a layer no-one else we know uses because of the high interference. But there's no doubt - it's a Starfleet transponder signal.

Dax hands a PADD to Vaughn. He reads the data --

-- and he changes immediately. He knows what this is. Shuts down cold, formal and tough while Dax keeps talking...

DAX

One of our people is out here, sir, where nobody else from Starfleet has ever been, as far as we know. But the signal's much stronger than any Bowers or I have seen before. I wondered if it might be connected to Starfleet Intelligence or...

(realises...)

Are you alright?

VAUGHN

Who else knows about this?

DAX

Just Sam. Is there something --

VAUGHN

Make sure it stays that way. I don't want either of you sharing this with anyone. Return to the bridge and engage the cloaking device immediately. Then alter course to trace this signal back to its source, maximum warp. If the crew asks, tell them not to.

DAX
You want to tell me --

VAUGHN
No. Just carry out my orders,
Lieutenant.

He gets up and heads to the door without further ado. But he stops at the threshold and turns back...

VAUGHN
One other thing. The *Sagan's* taken a beating the last few months. I want her better than ready in case we need her. Have a complete battery of systems diagnostics run from bow to stern, and an overhaul of the navigational array. Put Tenmei on it.

DAX
Alright. But it'll take time.

VAUGHN
Whatever it takes. Just do it.

And then he's gone, leaving Dax somewhat perplexed at the sudden change in tone...

3 INT. DEFIANT - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

Vaughn strides into his quarters, locks the door behind him, and stands in the centre of the small room. Breathing hard, hands shaking, eyes wild with indefinable emotions fighting to get out...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 INT. KORA II INSTALLATION

A typical Cardassian interrogation room, such as in 2x25 "Tribunal." Cold, metallic, hopeless and forbidding.

MADRED (o.s.)
Elias Vaughn. Starfleet special
operative. Rank of lieutenant.

A younger Elias Vaughn (in his early 70s) lies naked (with tasteful shadowing) on the interrogation table. Though he is not visibly restrained, when he tries to move, he can't.

The one who spoke is a Cardassian military male in his 30s, sneering and superior. This is Glinn MADRED, a younger version of the man from TNG 6x10/6x11 "Chain of Command."

VAUGHN
And whom do I have the pleasure of
addressing?

MADRED
You may address me as Glinn Madred.

VAUGHN
Forgive me if I don't salute.

MADRED
We know Starfleet intelligence has
been in communication with Cren
Veruda for some time. And that the
good doctor has expressed a desire
to seek his fortunes elsewhere.

VAUGHN
Really. Then I suppose it's lucky
I happened to be in the area.

Another Cardassian enters, a demure woman in her late 30s - Obsidian Order. In reality this is a disguised RURIKO (seen briefly in 8x02, 8x14) but Vaughn doesn't know that yet. Her eyes are fixed firmly on him...

MADRED

It's always best to leave information extraction to the experts, don't you think?

VAUGHN

Oh, don't sell yourself short, Madred. I'm sure you have the makings of a fine torturer.

Madred smiles coldly again. The disguised Ruriko continues as if she has not heard. Vaughn schools his face blank...

RURIKO

My name is Kree Omiturin. You, Lieutenant Vaughn, have arrived too late to protect your people from the doctor's invention. His artificial intelligence is about to link up across the Union via subspace, enabling an attack the likes of which the Federation has never seen.

MADRED

Unfortunately for you, the good doctor's expertise in devising counter-measures to his own invention will not be forthcoming.

RURIKO

I want to spend some time with the prisoner now. Alone.

Slightly disappointed, Madred nods and leaves. Ruriko produces a hypospray and injects Vaughn in the neck...

RURIKO

This will restore your mobility. And you'll find a prison coverall in the locker. Put it on.

Unsteadily, not sure what is going on here, Vaughn does so. She passes him a phaser, which he takes hesitantly...

VAUGHN
Why are you doing this?

RURIKO
If you're as smart as your after-
action reports paint you, you'll
figure it out soon enough.

She leaves the room, and he falls in step behind her...

5 INT. CELL

A door opens on a pitch-black prison cell of cold metal, letting in a small sliver of light that illuminates VERUDA, an old and beaten Cardassian male scientist. Ruriko and Vaughn step into the light, approaching him gently...

VERUDA
Is it time for another interview?

VAUGHN
Easy, Doctor. I'm with Starfleet,
and I'm getting you out of here.

VERUDA
Ah, the Federation man. You came
for me after all. When the Order
discovered my plan to defect, I'd
given up hope.

VAUGHN
Hope's the easy part. What could
be hard is escaping undetected
from a high-security Cardassian
scientific research facility.
Any thoughts, Ms Omiturin?

The Cardassian woman smirks knowingly...

6 INT. STARFLEET SHUTTLE

Vaughn, Ruriko and Veruda TRANSPORT onto the rear pad of a small Starfleet stealth craft. A female Vulcan, Lt Cmdr T'PRYNN, turns to them from the helm station, impassively ignoring Vaughn's expression of surprise...

T'PRYNN

It is good to have you back,
Lieutenant Vaughn. I have already
laid in and executed a course back
to Federation space.

RURIKO

Good work, Commander T'Prynn. If
you'll excuse me, Doctor Veruda
needs to rest before beginning
work on his counter measures. We
can debrief later.

She leaves through a door into the back, helping the frail
Cardassian doctor with her. Vaughn scowls at T'Prynn...

T'PRYNN

You have something to say.

VAUGHN

You knew about this, didn't you?

T'PRYNN

I was aware that a surgically
disguised Starfleet operative had
infiltrated the Kora Two facility.

VAUGHN

And you didn't see fit to reveal
that fact to me?

T'PRYNN

We knew there was a significant
non-zero probability you would be
captured. If you had been aware of
a third operative, you might have
been made to reveal that knowledge
under interrogation.

VAUGHN

You wound me, T'Prynn. Do you
really think I'd crack so easily?

T'PRYNN

You are only human.

VAUGHN

But why her of all people? 'Kree Omiturin.' Come on, T'Prynn. It's an anagram for Ruriko Tenmei.

T'PRYNN

Ah. Your nemesis.

VAUGHN

Please, she's a colleague.

T'PRYNN

Are you upset with Starfleet for assigning Commander Tenmei to this mission without your knowledge? Or do you resent being saved by your biggest rival within the bureau?

VAUGHN

Those are excellent questions.

T'PRYNN

She infuriates you.

VAUGHN

Yes.

T'PRYNN

She exasperates you.

VAUGHN

Yes!

T'PRYNN

You are attracted to her.

VAUGHN

(sigh)

Is it that obvious?

7

EXT. SPACE

The Starfleet stealth shuttle (circa 2340s) warps away.

With a simple change of ANGLE, we are now watching the *Defiant*, warping off in a different direction...

8 **INT. DEFIANT - SHUTTLEBAY**

At the far end of the bay, Tenmei lies on her back with her upper body underneath the jacked-up shuttle *Sagan*, working on repairs and upgrades.

In the foreground, Lt NOG's hands come into frame, holding two large MILKSHAKES, white and frothy, in tall glasses. He clears his throat to get her attention - she emerges...

TENMEI

Ohhh, those look good.

He walks over to her as she gets up, and hands her a glass.

NOG

Lieutenant Candlewood mentioned
you'd been in here since oh-eight-
hundred without a break.

TENMEI

May the Blessed Exchequer deliver
you from destitution, Lieutenant.

NOG

I'll drink to that.

Tenmei moves to drink, but hesitates at a horrid thought...

TENMEI

Tell me you didn't puree any tube
grubs for this.

NOG

No way. I learned my lesson the
first time. Mine's a grub shake.
Yours is just milk and ice cream.
Candlewood mixed them himself.

TENMEI

Sorry I doubted you.

She takes a gulp, rapture filling her face. Nog moves to try his own drink, and CHOKES on it, spitting it out in a comical spray of spluttering. Tenmei chuckles...

NOG
Milk and ice cream!

TENMEI
Both of them? Hmm. Lieutenant
Candlewood strikes again.

NOG
I'm gonna get even with that guy,
so help me...

TENMEI
Maybe he has a crush on you and
this is his way of expressing it.
How's Shar doing?

NOG
Better, I think. Hard to be sure
sometimes. You know what he's
like. So what did you do to get
banished down here anyway?

TENMEI
I wish I knew. I haven't been on
the bridge in three days, ever
since the course change.

NOG
Have you talked to your father?
I mean, Commander Vaughn.

TENMEI
Is that why you brought me the
milkshake? To pump me for inside
information?

NOG
No! Well, not entirely...

TENMEI
Nog, one thing you should know
about my father is that no-one has
ever accused him of nepotism. As
present circumstance will attest.

NOG

Sorry. You'd think the only son of the Grand Nagus would know better.

TENMEI

It's probably just force of habit. Secrecy was vital on the kinds of missions he used to go on.

NOG

But he gave all that up.

TENMEI

People change. I don't completely understand why - all that Orb business is lost on me, frankly - but I do know how bitter he'd become about his life since my mom died. Whatever convinced him to make the change, it's renewed him.

NOG

Candlewood has a theory what the course change is all about. He thinks it's Cardassians.

TENMEI

Why would he think that?

NOG

He noticed there'd been a download of a classified file about Kora Two three days ago. That's in Cardassian space. And Commander Vaughn is the only one on board with the clearance for that file.

TENMEI

Doesn't really prove anything.

VAUGHN (comm)

Vaughn to Nog. Report to my ready room immediately, Lieutenant.

NOG

Aye sir, I'm on my way.

TENMEI

See? Always the last to know.

Nog begins to head out of the room, glad to be included...

TENMEI

Hey!

Holding her milkshake with one hand, she beckons Nog back over with the other. He comes...

...and she grabs the unfinished milkshake out of his hand.

TENMEI

No sense letting it go to waste.

9 **INT. DEFIANT - READY ROOM**

VAUGHN sits behind the desk, DAX and BOWERS stand nearby. The door opens and Nog enters, trying to maintain a level of professionalism but eager to get into the loop...

VAUGHN

Thanks for coming, Lieutenant.
Have a seat.

Nog sits, a little nervous. Everyone is very serious.

VAUGHN

I want to be clear about something
from the very start, Lieutenant.
Nothing discussed during this
meeting leaves this room.

NOG

I understand, sir.

VAUGHN

Dax, tell him.

DAX

We've detected a Starfleet trans-
ponder signal here in the Gamma
Quadrant. We've traced it to a
class-M planet that the *Defiant*
is currently orbiting.

DAX (cont)

Our attempts to scan the surface to pinpoint this transmission have instead turned up something else - the wreckage of a Jem'Hadar ship.

NOG

Any indication what destroyed it?

DAX

No, and no sign of survivors either, although the interference is making it difficult to be sure. The only way we'll find out more is by going down there.

VAUGHN

I'll be leading the away team. You and Mister Bowers will accompany me to inspect the wreckage and locate the transponder signal. We beam down in thirty minutes.

NOG

Yes, sir.

VAUGHN

And Nog, I am repeating my initial order. This isn't to be discussed with anyone outside this room.

Nog now clearly understands this is not fun anymore - this is very serious. He departs, leaving Vaughn, Dax and Bowers to exchange intense glances...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 EXT. GAMMA QUAD PLANET - DAY

LONG SHOT showing normal-looking woodland - rolling hills and valleys, a variety of large trees, and large dinosaur-like creatures lumbering around or flying between them.

ZOOM IN, deep into the woodland, until we find Nog, Bowers and Vaughn. From this perspective we realise all the nature around them is on a massive scale - 30-foot trees, animals that tower over them. Nog has out his tricorder, scanning.

NOG

There. The fragments we detected
are in that direction.

VAUGHN

Let's get moving. Bowers, keep a
scan for life-forms. We don't want
to get accosted by a predator.

They move off into the woods, Bowers also getting out his tricorder. After 100 yards or so, they see what initially looks like a moss-covered tree at a 45-degree angle.

Getting closer, it is clear that it is actually a Dominion ship's WARP NACELLE. Nearby is a large hump of metal, most buried in the hill-side. Woodland has grown over it...

VAUGHN

How long has it been here?

BOWERS

No more than two years, I'd say.
But I don't think... Life-form.
Humanoid. Inside the ship.

NOG

Is it the source of the signal?

VAUGHN

No, that's a bit further south.

At Vaughn's nod, Bowers draws a phaser and takes point as the team approach the crashed ship, spot an entry, and take up position around it. Bowers calls into the hollow ship...

BOWERS

Attention occupant of the Dominion spacecraft. We're from the United Federation of Planets. We mean no harm, but we wish to speak to you.

For long moments, there is no response. Bowers is about to lead the team inside when one of the large PTERODACTYL-like creatures we have seen flying around comes bursting out of the entrance, nearly bowling them over. They all catch their breath after the surprise, then Bowers scans inside.

BOWERS

No other life signs. Sorry, sir,
I really thought it was humanoid.

NOG

I was this close to shooting that thing. What was it anyway, a bird?

VAUGHN

(shrug)

You two investigate the wreckage.
I'm going on alone to track down the transponder signal.

NOG

But sir, you said --

VAUGHN

Just do it, Lieutenant.

Vaughn walks off further into the woods. Nog and Bowers look to each other, not sure what's going on with Vaughn.

11 EXT. FEDERATION PARK - DAY

A grave stone, marked with the English words T'PRYNN, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, STARFLEET. 2190-2349. INTELLIGENCE, DUTY, STRUGGLE, WISDOM. Followed by presumably the same words in the Vulcan script. The stone is set among many in an open-air memorial, in a pretty wooded area.

Vaughn and Ruriko stand tearfully, holding hands, as they look down at the grave stone.

They turn to walk along the esplanade, sadly, sea on one side, woods on the other...

RURIKO

I've come to a decision, Elias.
I'm not taking any more field
assignments. I want to get back
into nanotech research full-time.

VAUGHN

Is this about T'Prynn?

RURIKO

...It's sobering to see proof of
how vulnerable we all are. That
even Vulcans aren't immortal.

VAUGHN

She knew the risks. We all do, or
we wouldn't sign on. Then is this
about... settling down?

RURIKO

I know you too well to ask that of
you, Elias. I just need a few
years away from the job.

VAUGHN

A few years away. To do what?

RURIKO

To raise a family. To have a
child. With you.

He is completely stunned. Not what he was expecting at all.

VAUGHN

Let's talk.

But his beamingly happy face shows that the decision is
already made.

From Vaughn's smiling face...

12 **EXT. GAMMA QUAD PLANET - DAY**

...to Vaughn's stone cold expression as he stares INTO CAMERA, having found the thing he was really looking for. We do not yet see what this is; we only see his face and the woods in the background. He taps his combadge...

 VAUGHN
 Vaughn to Bowers.

13 **EXT. DOMINION SHIP - DAY**

Nog and Bowers are inspecting what they can see of the outside of the crashed ship when the call comes through...

 BOWERS
 Bowers here. Go ahead.

 VAUGHN (comm)
 Is Lieutenant Nog still with you?

Nog looks over, nervous about Vaughn's recent attitude...

 BOWERS
 Yes, sir. We've been looking for
 the cause of the crash --

 VAUGHN (comm)
 Belay that. Lock on to my comm
 signal and get to my coordinates.
 On the double.

 BOWERS
 Aye, sir. We're on our way.

They know something is very much up with the commander. They gather their stuff and head off into the woods...

14 **EXT. GAMMA QUAD PLANET**

Trekking through the woods, Nog holds out his tricorder. He looks around himself, a bit uncomfortable...

 NOG
 I think something's watching us.

BOWERS

(taps combadge)

Bowers to *Defiant*. Anything new on sensors, Lieutenant?

DAX (comm)

Negative, Sam. Atmospheric interference is still playing havoc with our scans.

BOWERS

How's our transporter lock?

DAX (comm)

Chao reports the locks are solid. Is something wrong?

BOWERS

Not yet. But stand by. Bowers out.
(to Nog)
How sure are you?

NOG

I'm not sure. I'm probably wrong.
I just can't shake the feeling --

He stops, staring at his tricorder...

BOWERS

What is it?

NOG

I'm picking up a large creature about two hundred metres north. One of the sauropods we saw.

BOWERS

We're going nowhere near it, it shouldn't bother us.

NOG

But two minutes ago, the nearest of its species was kilometres away. That animal didn't wander in. It just appeared out of nowhere.

Deep breath - they think they know what it's all about...

BOWERS

First a humanoid, then a bird,
then a magic dragon.

NOG

It's a changeling...

15 EXT. GAMMA QUAD PLANET - DAY

Vaughn remains stood where he was, staring intently. Bowers and Nog approach, but as they get near, they see what it is Vaughn has been looking for all this time...

BOWERS

Oh my god...

VAUGHN

Now we know who brought down the
Dominion ship. But it cost them.

In front of them a large, deep ravine stretches into the woods. Not a natural ravine, but the result of another ship plummeting to earth, digging a massive furrow as it went. At the far end is what caused it - a broken BORG vessel.

On Bowers as he remembers...

16 MONTAGE - QUICK FLASHES

-- Bowers on the damaged bridge of a starship mid-battle, as Borg drones beam in and the frazzled crew react

-- Clips from "Star Trek: First Contact" as the dozens of Starfleet ships pummel away at the advancing Borg cube

-- Bowers hefts a TR-116 rifle, one of the throwback solid projectile weapons as seen in 7x13 "Field of Fire"

-- Unaccustomed to projectile weapons, the drones have no defence against the TR-116s and are going down

-- The ship's captain, an Andorian *shen* (female), turns -- she is already infected. She reaches for a nearby ensign. Bowers shoots her dead to save him.

17 **BACK TO SCENE**

Bowers now stares with horror and gut hatred at the dead Borg ship. Similarly dismayed, Nog has his tricorder out...

NOG

Woah... this isn't a Borg ship. Or
at least, it wasn't always.

BOWERS

What do you mean, Nog?

NOG

The hull plating underneath. I'd
know it anywhere. It's Starfleet.

He's right - this is a Starfleet ship that was assimilated, the pristine off-white panels overrun with the branching conduits, tubes and dull metal of the collective.

Vaughn knows exactly what ship it is. He knew all along...

VAUGHN

(quiet, intense)

USS *Valkyrie*, NCC-68816, Paladin-
class. Crew complement, thirty.
Lost with all hands stardate 46935
in a Borg engagement at the planet
Kora Two. Presumed destroyed.

(deep breath)

Let's go. What we're looking for
is in there.

Sobered, they begin to walk to the Borg-Starfleet ship...

18 **INT. BORG SHIP**

The transformed interior of the Starfleet ship. Cables and conduits have turned it into a cold, robotic environment. The outside forest has not encroached in here, unlike the Dominion ship. This is a dead, frightening place - a tomb.

Bashir BEAMS into the middle of this, GASPS and tenses as he recognises where he is. Previously as excited as Nog to have finally been invited to the secret mission, it's now naked fear. Trying to control it, he begins to walk...

Picking his way through the canted corridors, Bashir steps over the dead and desiccated bodies of collapsed drones.

Looking closer at one, he sees the distinctive ears of a Vulcan and a 2340s-era Starfleet insignia under the armour.

He turns a corner, and sees Bowers and Nog waving their tricorders over one solitary DRONE that is still standing in its alcove, apparently alive if a little withered.

A couple of steps away, Vaughn sits on a piece of machine, fingers rubbing the bridge of his nose, very pointedly not looking at the drone. Neither does he look up at Bashir as the doctor approaches...

VAUGHN

Thank you for coming, Doctor. This is the source of the transponder signal I mentioned. Please perform a full medical scan of the drone.

BASHIR

Yes, sir.

Bashir goes to join Nog and Bowers in their scans, sharing their looks of discomfort at the delicacy of the moment.

They work in silence, tricorders beeping. After a while, all three step tentatively back over to the commander...

BASHIR

Sir, I've completed my medical scans. The drone is a human female, age indeterminate. Approximately sixty-eight percent of its body has been replaced by Borg technology, including most of the left hemisphere of the brain.

(beat)

Its condition is critical, but stable. The alcove is acting like a life-support system, trickling just enough power to keep the drone alive. But that's it. In its current condition, the drone can't survive outside the alcove.

NOG

Sir, there's no evidence of any subspace transmissions besides the Starfleet signal coming from the drone. Any connection to the Borg collective was probably severed when the ship crashed.

Vaughn listens to the reports silently, then stands, his decision made. He is still not looking at the drone...

VAUGHN

Doctor, Lieutenant Nog... you're both to begin work immediately on extracting the drone from her alcove without killing her. Then you're going to beam her up to the *Defiant* where you, Julian, are going to reverse the assimilation and restore the drone's humanity.

Shocked looks - that is pretty much an impossible job.

BOWERS

Respectfully, sir, do you think it's wise to expose the ship to functional Borg technology?

VAUGHN

I've made my decision, Sam.

BOWERS

Yes, but the safety of the ship -

VAUGHN

(cold, dangerous)

- is my responsibility. And you'd do damn well to remember that, Lieutenant. Until further notice, restoring the drone is the *Defiant's* top priority. All other mission directives are suspended. Security is to be maintained, both for the safety of the ship and to keep this from as many of the crew as possible. Am I understood?

NOG / BOWERS / BASHIR
(not quite
all together)
Aye, sir.

VAUGHN
Doctor, you'll find the drone's
medical records in a subsection of
Ensign Tenmei's file.

Bashir's eyes widen - he nods with sensitive understanding.
Without another word, Vaughn walks away into the Borg ship.

BOWERS
I've never seen him like this.

NOG
And why would the drone's medical
records be in Prynn's file?

Bashir returns to the drone, looking closely at its face...

BASHIR
Because apparently, this poor
woman is Ruriko Tenmei. Prynn's
mother.

Off the seemingly peaceful Borg drone...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

19 INT. DEFIANT - SICKBAY

Ruriko is a Borg, in a disconnected alcove inside *Defiant's* sickbay. Unconscious, weak, only supported by the alcove.

Bashir and nurse RICHTER gently remove pieces of Borg tech. Bowers stands with phaser ready. Vaughn watches impassively from afar, unable to take his eyes off the pale face...

BASHIR

Sir? Her condition remains stable. Using records on previous attempts to reverse assimilation, we've neutralised the most dangerous implants. But we've had to leave intact the ones that are keeping what's left of her body alive.

VAUGHN

What about brain activity?

BASHIR

There is some. As best I can tell, she's in a coma. She's spent two years on minimal life support. I'll know more after we return to the Alpha Quadrant --

VAUGHN

No. You'll do the work here.

Bowers turns towards them - he heard, and he is not happy. Vaughn does not care what Bowers thinks right now.

BASHIR

Sir, please try to understand. I've done all that I can safely do for her under these circumstances. The *Defiant* simply isn't equipped to handle this, especially not without replicators.

Vaughn is getting angrier and angrier...

VAUGHN

We're not leaving orbit, Doctor.
I'm not putting Deep Space Nine,
Bajor or anyone else in the Alpha
Quadrant at risk. I want her mind
restored before we go anywhere.

BASHIR

I don't know that I can do that.

VAUGHN

Well, you're going to try.

Bashir meets Vaughn's glare and holds it. He sympathises,
but he thinks Vaughn has lost objectivity...

BASHIR

Alright. But I want to be clear
that this is against my medical
judgement. And I fully intend to
enter into my log that your orders
are putting this woman's life and
the safety of this crew at risk.

VAUGHN

You're certainly at liberty to --

TENMEI (o.s.)

Mom?

Vaughn SPINS to see Prynn standing in the doorway, gaping
at the Borg drone. Vaughn advances, blocking her view...

VAUGHN

Get out. Get out of here now!

TENMEI

But, dad --

He pushes her away, forcing her out into the corridor...

VAUGHN

NOW! Mister Bowers, confine Ensign
Tenmei to her quarters.

BOWERS

Sir?

VAUGHN

Do it, Lieutenant.

Bowers hesitates for a second, but gives in. He approaches the bewildered Tenmei and gently coaxes her along...

BOWERS

C'mon, Prynn. Let's go.

The door closes, leaving Vaughn breathing heavily.

20 **INT. DEFIANT - READY ROOM**

Bowers and Dax are alone in the room, in a secret meeting. Bowers is quite agitated, Dax trying to be diplomatic...

BOWERS

I'm not disputing that. I can't even begin to imagine what he must be going through. But you didn't see him down on the planet, or in sickbay. He's lost perspective. He's made it personal.

DAX

What do you expect? Ruriko Tenmei is the mother of his only child.

BOWERS

This is about more than Commander Tenmei! We've discovered evidence of a Borg incursion into the Gamma Quadrant. Our first priority is to report it to Starfleet. But Vaughn has even suspended transmissions to the station.

DAX

That incursion was more than two years ago. It may be an isolated incident. A few more days --

BOWERS

Lieutenant, this is the Borg we're talking about. We don't know what the hell they were doing here, or when they might return to finish the job. I for one don't ever want to face a Jem'Hadar drone. And God help us all if they ever manage to assimilate a Founder. We need to do something about this now.

Dax sighs - she knows he is right.

DAX

I'll talk to him. Take the bridge.
I'll relieve you when I can.

He turns and leaves. She sighs. What on Earth can she say?

21 INT. DEFIANT - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

Vaughn sits on his bunk, jacket off, staring down at his combadge in his hands. The door CHIMES. Vaughn really is not in any mood to be questioned or defied, but eventually he gives in and OPENS the door. Dax strides in firmly...

DAX

Pardon the intrusion, sir. But I need to speak with you about the current situation aboard ship.

VAUGHN

And I think you've forgotten that this isn't open to discussion.

DAX

Be that as it may, we're going to talk about it. Now.

VAUGHN

(looking up)

Excuse me? You think getting in touch with your inner Curzon is going to make me put up with this? You're dismissed, Lieutenant.

DAX

I'm not trying to be Curzon! I'm trying to be your first officer, dammit, and your friend. Or are you so tied up in yourself that don't need either one anymore?

Vaughn STANDS sharply, towering over Dax, dark and angry. She refuses to be intimidated...

VAUGHN

I strongly suggest you walk out of here now, Lieutenant, while I'm still willing to pretend this insubordination never happened.

DAX

You're a captain. You have a duty to these people who have served you faithfully for this entire voyage. And you have a duty to the Federation to put its security before personal considerations.

His hands clenched tight and shaking, he finally snaps and HURLS the combadge in his hand at his computer screen.

DAX

(quietly)

That's what this is about, isn't it? You've spent eighty years putting the Federation first.

VAUGHN

I did this to her, Dax. She's a Borg because of me.

DAX

Tell me what happened.

VAUGHN

Everything?

DAX

If it feels right.

22 **INT. T'PLANA-HATH - BRIDGE**

Populated with a nearly-all Vulcan crew, including Captain SOTAK and Lt T'VAR. Vaughn stands beside the captain's chair, gazing with displeasure at the image on the SCREEN:

A small smoky PLANET with an asteroid belt, focused on one ASTEROID in particular. A Starfleet ship, the unassimilated *Valkyrie*. Behind this, Ruriko enters the bridge - back in uniform, carrying a padd. She stands next to Vaughn...

RURIKO

After all these years, I can't believe we have to take down Cren Veruda's AI all over again.

VAUGHN

I have to wonder why it's only reconstituted itself now.

RURIKO

It's basically an artificial life-form. It has the same instinct for survival as any other life-form.

T'Var reacts (as much as a Vulcan can react, anyway) and urgently presses panels...

T'VAR

Detecting significant fluctuations in the local subspace fields.

SOTAK

On screen, Lieutenant.

23 **EXT. SPACE**

Space splits open dazzlingly, and an irregular vessel emerges, dwarfing the Vulcan and Starfleet ships --

-- the odd-shaped BORG SHIP from TNG 6x26/7x01 "Descent."

The Borg ship immediately FIRES on the other vessels. The *Valkyrie* is quick enough to get out of the way, but the Vulcan-styled *T'Plana-Hath* is HIT hard --

24 **INT. T'PLANA-HATH - BRIDGE**

Panels blowing, things sparking. The Vulcan crew work hard.

T'VAR

The Borg vessel is linking with
the mining station. It appears to
be conducting a data transfer.

RURIKO

Combining all it knows about
Cardassian armaments with the
Borg's most lethal technology.

Vaughn looks sharply to Ruriko. They only have one chance
before the entire mission is blown to hell...

VAUGHN

Is the prototype ready?

RURIKO

Ready is a relative term. I won't
be able to control it remotely.
I'll need to deploy on site.

T'VAR

The Borg vessel has ceased its
data upload. And it's powering up
its weapons again!

They brace for another attack, but the Borg ship FIRES on
the asteroid mining station instead - it is atomised. Then
the ship begins to move away, ready to leave...

Vaughn looks to Ruriko, knowing there is only one decision
he can make. She knows it too, and does not blame him...

RURIKO

We both knew it might come to this
one day, Elias. Let's just get on
with it.

VAUGHN

Commander Tenmei, execute. Take
the plan directly to the Borg.

RURIKO
(taps combadge)
Valkyrie, this is Commander
Tenmei. Please beam our away team
aboard and prepare to pursue that
Borg vessel.

VOICE (comm)
Acknowledged. How quickly will you
need an evac?

RURIKO
(wry smile)
Tenmei out.
(to Vaughn)
Goodbye, Elias. It's been a
wonderful life. At times.

VAUGHN
(whisper)
Goodbye.

The transporter beam takes her. Vaughn stares for a moment,
unable to believe what he has just done. He turns to watch.

The Borg ship opens its TRANSWARP FISSURE, slips into it
and disappears. The *Valkyrie* gives chase, slipping into the
fissure just before it closes. It is gone.

Everyone on the bridge is silent, honouring their comrades.

DAX (v.o.)
You made the only choice you
could, Elias. You must know that.

25 **INT. DEFIANT - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS**

Vaughn is emotionally exhausted from telling his story...

DAX
It sounds like Ruriko knew it too.
I don't think anybody on this ship
would blame you. Nobody deserves
what happened to her. But you can't
lose sight of the bigger picture.

VAUGHN

I never expected I would face a moment when I would put my own needs ahead of my duty. All my life, in every situation I was thrust into, I always knew what the right decision was. Whatever saved the most lives, whatever served the greater good, that's what I did. And I knew from the moment you brought me that padd what the right decision was here. And I deliberately made what I knew was the wrong decision. Because I couldn't bear the thought of failing her again.

DAX

These are some extraordinary circumstances no-one could have foreseen. The odds that she alone would survive the crash, much less be detected by the very ship you and Prynn are both serving on...

(thoughtful)

It's an impossible set of coincidences...

VAUGHN

No. There's an explanation. And until now I've managed to avoid looking at it too closely. But it's high time I deal with it.

Dax remains somewhat bewigged by Vaughn's intensity...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

26 INT. DEFIANT - TENMEI'S QUARTERS

The door opens on Tenmei - tense, arms folded, knowing full well who will enter - Vaughn. He speaks calm, warm...

VAUGHN

I know what you did, you know.

TENMEI

What are you talking about?

VAUGHN

Enough, Prynn. It's no coincidence that we just happened to detect that transponder signal, is it?

TENMEI

What can I say? You don't grow up as the only child of two Starfleet spooks without learning a thing or two. Yes, I programmed the *Defiant* computer to look out for mom's transponder frequency. What, you don't think I came on this voyage to get closer to you, do you?

Tenmei sees that that one really stung, and actually feels slightly guilty. It brings her fire back under control...

VAUGHN

You didn't do it alone, you know. Your search for your mother only succeeded because of the *Defiant's* mission. The mission I proposed when I moved to DS-Nine... after my encounter with a Bajoran Orb.

TENMEI

(derisive)

You're telling me this happened because of the wormhole aliens?

VAUGHN

I really don't know. You know me, Prynn. I've never been a believer in much of anything. But against all probability and reason, I have a chance to save your mother. To make up for what I did to her...

The real pain is coming through, and Tenmei responds...

TENMEI

It wasn't your fault. When are you going to stop blaming yourself?

VAUGHN

You've blamed me for seven years.

TENMEI

And I was wrong. I've realised that. And what does it matter why it happened? We found her.

VAUGHN

It matters because my decision to save your mother is based on the belief that I'm meant to. That it's destined somehow. And I've been letting that belief override my duty to this ship.

TENMEI

Look, I can't pretend I can take this idea of destiny seriously. But I do know you're not a bad captain. You're not even a bad father, really.

VAUGHN

How can you say that, Prynn? I was never there.

TENMEI

You were always there. Whether we could be together or not, I never doubted how much you loved us.

Shaking his head, Vaughn tentatively reaches out and pulls his daughter into an embrace. She doesn't resist...

VAUGHN

Oh God, you are so screwed up.

TENMEI

(chuckling)

Chip off the old block, that's me.

VAUGHN

Would you like to see her?

TENMEI

You'll let me?

VAUGHN

If you really want to. But I have to warn you, she's in bad shape.

TENMEI

I don't care. I want to be with her, dad. I want us both to be with her.

She takes his hand, and they smile together...

27 INT. DEFIANT - SICKBAY

Tenmei WEEPS gently at the sight of her mother's mutilated face. She begins to HUM a gentle tune, a lullaby. Vaughn listens from afar, enchanted by his daughter's voice.

Suddenly, the drone's eyes OPEN, staring right at Tenmei. She GASPS with surprise, and stops singing.

Vaughn, Bashir and a security EXTRA all react. The drone's lips are moving, small fish-like bubble-blowing motions...

Bashir runs up and checks his medical displays. Everyone is astonished and encouraged at this unexpected development...

BASHIR

Keep it up, Prynn. Don't stop.

Crying openly, Tenmei stutters her way back to the tune...

The drone keeps staring and mouthing...

RURIKO
(croaky whisper)
Puh... puh... prrrreeeeennn...

Tenmei is ecstatic, laughing through the tears. Vaughn reaches out to take her hand, begins to cry too...

28 EXT. GAMMA QUAD PLANET - DAY

The crashed Jem'Hadar ship...

29 INT. DOMINION SHIP

A mass of SKELETONS, most of them Jem'Hadar but one Vorta. Crouched on the canted deck, looking on wistfully, is a CHILD FOUNDER, the formless features but as a teenage girl.

NOG and BOWERS appear in the open doorway, phasers drawn just in case. The Founder looks up at them, unconcerned...

CHILD FOUNDER
I thought you left.

BOWERS
No, we didn't leave. We returned to our ship. It's still in orbit.

NOG
We're from the Federation. We're friends of Odo.

CHILD FOUNDER
I know about Odo. He rejected the Great Link. He caused the death of another Founder. He was cast out.

NOG
No, he went back to the Link, after the Federation and the Dominion made peace.

CHILD FOUNDER
There is no peace between us.

BOWERS

There is. We even have a Jem'Hadar living with us on Deep Space Nine. He was sent to us by Odo.

CHILD FOUNDER

I understand that kind of peace. You have Vorta also, overseeing you, and many Jem'Hadar.

NOG

I don't understand what he's doing there myself, really. If you come back with us, I'm sure Taran'atar will tell you all about it. You could even order him to accompany you back to the Dominion.

Bowers throws Nog a dirty look - that wasn't in the plan...

CHILD FOUNDER

Taran'atar is your First?

NOG

First on our station, yes.

CHILD FOUNDER

My First is dead. I miss First.

I miss Second. I miss Fourth.

(thinks a moment)

I do not miss Third. Why did you come back?

BOWERS

To invite you up to our ship. When we leave, we can take you with us.

CHILD FOUNDER

To your station, where you have your Jem'Hadar.

BOWERS

For a while, yes. We'll contact the Dominion, let them know we found you. You can go home.

The Founder looks down at the skeletons, oddly forlorn...

CHILD FOUNDER

I was taught to believe that solids can never be trusted. But I trusted my own kind to come for me, and here I have been for two years. I am ready to leave this place. I accept your offer.

Bowers lets out the breath he had been holding. Nog grins, thinking this is his chance to get rid of Taran'atar...

30 **INT. DEFIANT - SCIENCE LAB**

The child FOUNDER stands in the lab, visually inspecting a Borg DRONE, dead and withered, dismembered and laid out on a slab. SHAR has been working on it. Bowers stands nearby, keeping an eye on both their guests. Vaughn strides in...

VAUGHN

Report.

SHAR

Sir, we've decrypted the data in the neuro-processor, and we were able to verify the *Valkyrie's* mission to the Gamma Quadrant.

VAUGHN

And that was?

SHAR

Three years ago, during their most recent incursion into our space, the Borg updated their database on the Federation and transmitted it back to the Delta Quadrant. Two items that jumped out at them were 'Dominion' and 'changelings.' They spent the next year constructing a transwarp conduit to the Gamma Quadrant, then they deployed the *Valkyrie* as their advance scout. It encountered a Jem'Hadar ship.

Meanwhile, the Founder notices a RED LIGHT appear on the Borg corpse, and leans closer, intrigued...

BOWERS

It's possible the Borg decided they weren't prepared to deal with that much resistance. Or maybe their priorities just changed. The Valkyrie's mission was about the same time as the Borg's first contact with Species 8472.

VAUGHN

(nods thoughtfully)

Excellent work, gentlemen. We need to make this data available to the Dominion as well as Starfleet.

BOWERS

The Dominion, sir?

The Founder continues to walk around the dead Borg, quite fascinated by this strange alien. When a small piece of TECH begins whirring, moving, she thinks nothing of it...

VAUGHN

What better way to demonstrate our peaceful intentions than by returning a marooned Founder along with this information? This isn't just a tactical opportunity, it's a diplomatic one.

Assimilation tubules LEAP out of the dead Borg's hand, SINK into the Founder's changeling flesh, and inject NANOPROBES. The Founder SCREAMS, form losing control, thrashing around the room. The crew react - Bowers draws his phaser...

VAUGHN

No, not yet...

Slowly, the Founder manages to pull her flailing appendages under control, pulling tighter and tighter until she forms a BALL, black mass visible at its centre. The ball shrinks and shrinks, straining and vibrating on the deck...

VAUGHN
Prepare to fire...

Bowers aims his phaser, but suddenly the changeling-ball stops vibrating and grows back to its humanoid shape. She extends a third ARM out of her chest, opens the hand --

-- and reveals a small black pebble - the nanoprobes. Shar runs up, passes a tricorder over the black lump, excited...

VAUGHN
Are you alright?

CHILD FOUNDER
They were trying to overwhelm me.
They were quite painful. They kept
twisting me inside out. So I did
the only thing I could think of -
squeeze them until they stopped.

VAUGHN
Mister ch'Thane, explain please.

SHAR
It's true, sir, she's fine. Borg
nanoprobes work on a cellular
level, but in its natural state a
changeling has no cellular
structure. It's like trying to
assimilate a body of water.

VAUGHN
But that drone was dead. How can
its tubules still be functional?

SHAR
Apparently, even without a living
humanoid host, the Borg imperative
to assimilate can still survive,
lying dormant until the right
opportunity presents itself.

Bowers turns to Vaughn, horror on his face.

BOWERS
My God, that means -

VAUGHN
(realising)
Prynn.

Vaughn pulls his own phaser, and he and Bowers rush out...

31 **INT. DEFIANT - SICKBAY**

...and into sickbay, weapons drawn, expecting the worst...

But all is peaceful. Ruriko is in her alcove, eyes looking with love at TENMEI, who sits nearby reading aloud to her.

Vaughn sighs with relief, lowers his phaser, gazes upon his reunited family. Still, better safe than sorry...

VAUGHN
Prynn...

TENMEI
(looks up)
Dad? What's wrong?

VAUGHN
Not sure. But I need you to step
away from your mother right now.
We have to make sure everything's
alright. Please, Prynn.

Seeing the phaser, Tenmei does what he asks. She closes her book, puts it aside, stands up to move away...

And the tender look goes out of Ruriko's eyes, replaced by cold machinery. Her one working hand reaches out sharply...

Vaughn sees this, raises his phaser again...

And as we BLACK OUT, we hear the phaser FIRE.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

32 INT. DEFIANT - TENMEI'S QUARTERS

Tenmei paces around the room, crying and shouting, full of hatred and anger and grief. Dax sits quietly, letting her get it all out of her system...

TENMEI

He couldn't have been sure. He says she was going to assimilate me, but how could he know? Bashir said the autopsy was inconclusive.

DAX

I know. But he insists on what he saw, Prynn. Do you really think he was imagining it?

TENMEI

I don't know what to think. I just know we were so close... and he deliberately killed her. My father killed my mother, again.

DAX

You won't get any argument from him on that. He really believes that's true, that he killed Ruriko twice. But there's something that you both need to accept. Ruriko Tenmei died a long time ago, as a hero, saving lives. That thing in sickbay wasn't her. There was nothing left of her to bring back. She was all Borg.

TENMEI

She said my name.

DAX

(emphasising 'it')
Did it? Hard to know for sure.

TENMEI

Why did she respond to me, then?

DAX

You were the first life-form the drone encountered when it regained consciousness. It marked you for assimilation, just like the drone in the lab did to the Founder. Do you understand what I'm saying, Prynn? You weren't that thing's daughter. You were its target.

Tenmei shakes her head, not sure if she can accept this, preferring to cling to the familiar hatred...

DAX

Prynn, it was the Borg who killed your mother. Don't let them kill what's left of your family.

Slowly, Dax gets up and leaves Tenmei alone...

33 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

As Dax emerges and the door closes... Vaughn is there, leaning against the wall. He has clearly been listening in. He is just as distraught and emotionally wrecked as Prynn, but far more experienced at keeping it under control.

VAUGHN

Why did you lie to her? Ruriko was alive in there, somewhere. Julian told me so. Despite what the Borg implants were making her do.

DAX

That's right, I lied. Because she wouldn't understand that you didn't really kill Ruriko to save Prynn, or even to save the crew. You did it for Ruriko. So that whatever was left of her wouldn't have to live with turning her own child into a monster.

Vaughn sags against the wall, eyes red and swollen...

VAUGHN

L.J. warned me not to take Prynn
on this mission.

DAX

There's something to be said for
taking the advice of your elders.

A small smirk - Dax is substantially his elder as well. He
smiles slightly. But only slightly...

DAX

Give her time. Give yourself time.
And try to forgive yourself.

34 EXT. DEFIANT - ESTABLISHING

The *Defiant* is at warp, heading home once and for all...

35 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Vaughn sits in the centre seat, looks around at his senior
staff - Bowers, Shar, Dax next to him, Tenmei at helm - and
sighs. They were all so eager in the beginning, and now
they are all tired, emotionally battered and beaten.

BOWERS

Wormhole in one hour, sir. Still
no response from the station.

DAX

The new subspace relay might be
malfunctioning.

VAUGHN

Let's hope that's all it is.

SHAR

Sir, I'm conducting long-range
scans of the space near the
wormhole. I had hoped to determine
the status of the relay...

The edge in Shar's voice implies something is wrong...

...but he is also rather confused by what his panels are telling him. Vaughn sags further - yet another crisis...

VAUGHN
Yes, Ensign?

SHAR
Captain, the relay is gone.

VAUGHN
Was it destroyed?

SHAR
Yes sir, I believe it was. But... my scans are showing that the space around the wormhole has been altered since we were last here. If these readings are correct, the wormhole now opens within the Idran system.

VAUGHN
Idran? Are you telling me the wormhole moved three light years?

SHAR
Not at all, sir. The system has.

Vaughn looks at his science officer, flummoxed. Shar looks back, just as helpless. Suddenly Bowers REACTS --

BOWERS
Captain! Contact bearing zero-four-zero-mark-nine. Distance three-hundred-million kilometres and closing. It's a Dominion ship.

VAUGHN
(instant reaction)
Red alert. Give me a visual.

One of the smaller Jem'Hadar ships appears on the screen...

VAUGHN
Hail them, Sam.

BOWERS

Sir, they are already hailing us.
And they're dropping to impulse.

VAUGHN

(that's weird)

Take us out of warp, Ensign
Tenmei. Sam, put them through.

The image on the screen changes - it's WEYOUN, wearing one of their headsets, with various Jem'Hadar milling behind. He is positively cheerful and friendly, his usual smarmy self. Vaughn tries to be gracious and diplomatic...

WEYOUN (screen)

Greetings, *Defiant*. I trust your
little sojourn went well. To whom
have I the pleasure of speaking?

VAUGHN

I'm Commander Vaughn, captain of
this vessel. And you would be...?

DAX

I'll be damned. Weyoun. I thought
you were extinct.

WEYOUN (screen)

Lieutenant Dax, I was first cloned
in the Gamma Quadrant. Did you
really think some of my genetic
material wasn't still on file?

DAX

I might have known it was too much
to hope for.

VAUGHN

Was there a reason you contacted
us, Weyoun?

WEYOUN (screen)

Forgive me, Commander, yes. Our
sensors show you have a Founder
aboard your vessel. We demand its
return at once.

VAUGHN

We'd be happy to. Lieutenant,
please inform our guest of the
situation and arrange to have her
beamed aboard the Dominion ship.
And be sure to give her the chip.

Dax nods and leaves. Vaughn turns back to Weyoun...

VAUGHN

We rescued the Founder from a
crashed ship. We were going to
contact you from Deep Space Nine,
but your arrival here simplifies
matters considerably. Her ship was
brought down by a force we're
quite familiar with - the Borg.

WEYOUN (screen)

I see. We are aware of the Borg
from our intelligence on the Alpha
Quadrant. Many of us wondered how
long it would be before they paid
us a visit.

VAUGHN

If you'd like, I'm sure we could
arrange to provide the Dominion
with additional intelligence as
part of an information exchange.

WEYOUN (screen)

Thank you for your kind offer,
Commander. I'll certainly pass it
on to the Founders.

VAUGHN

While we wait, can you explain
what happened to the Idran system?

WEYOUN (screen)

Remarkable, isn't it? To answer
your question, Commander, I cannot
begin to explain it. I suspect you
will find out before I do.

Just then, Dax re-enters and nods to Vaughn...

VAUGHN
Your bridge?

WEYOUN (screen)
Acceptable.

Vaughn nods to Bowers, who hits controls. On screen, the child Founder MATERIALISES standing next to Weyoun, who bows in the typical obsequious Vorta way...

WEYOUN (screen)
Founder, you honour us with your presence. We're gratified by your safe return. Perhaps you'd care to rest after your ordeal?

CHILD FOUNDER (screen)
Yes, I think I would. Please thank the Federation people for their help to me. I owe them my life.

She turns and leaves, and Weyoun turns back to Vaughn. He would rather not have to thank them for anything, but he cannot disobey a Founder...

WEYOUN (screen)
You've done the Dominion a great service. You have its gratitude.

VAUGHN
We could say you owe us a favour.

WEYOUN (screen)
(cheerfully)
I'd rather not. Especially since we can repay it straight away. You see... I believe we've found something that belongs to you.
(nods off-screen)
Safe journey, Commander. Perhaps our paths will cross again.

The signal ends and Weyoun's face disappears.

BOWERS
Detecting a transporter beam!

VAUGHN
Shields!

BOWERS
Too late!

As Vaughn and Bowers both stand urgently, three Dominion TRANSPORTER beams coalesce at the front of the bridge.

As the beams deposit their passengers, Dax gasps aloud...

DAX
My God, Jake... is that really you?
Vaughn looks, and it is - it's JAKE SISKI, alive and well.

Dax runs up and throws her arms around him, hugging him tight as they both laugh happily. She HITS him lightly...

JAKE
Whoa, Ezri, take it easy.

DAX
You big jerk! Kasidy and your grandfather have been worried sick about you! We all have.

JAKE
I know, I'm sorry. Nothing worked out the way I expected.

BOWERS
The Dominion ship is moving off.

VAUGHN
Stand down from red alert, Mister Bowers. And have Doctor Bashir report to the bridge. Get Nog up here too.

JAKE
I'm sorry, Commander. I'm Jake Sisko. Permission to come aboard?

VAUGHN

(smiling)

No apology necessary, Mister Sisko.
Permission granted. Welcome aboard,
to you and your companions...?

JAKE

Oh God, I'm sorry. I forgot to
introduce my new friends. This is
Wex. She's on a pilgrimage.

He gestures to one of the other two bodies that beamed
aboard with him - a small young alien WOMAN with grey skin,
black markings and a large mane of white hair. She inclines
her head towards Vaughn, watching him, but does not speak.

JAKE

And, uh... this is my other new
friend.

Jake steps aside, and out from behind him steps another
FIGURE, dressed in old and dirty robes. The figure pulls
back its hood and steps forward, and Dax gasps again...

OPAKA

I apologise for the condition in
which I greet you, Commander. My
name is Opaka Sulan, and I was
once Kai of Bajor.

BLACK OUT:

THE END