

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x18 - "Renegade."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Warpath

by David Mack

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 DARKNESS

A heartbeat thumps. Regular but anxious breaths hiss.

2 ON KIRA

Where we left things. KIRA lies on the floor, against the wall, her eyes staring up, the life bleeding out of her.

3 ON TARAN' ATAR

As he holds KIRA's gaze, burning it into his memory.

TARAN' ATAR
Runabout pad A.

The turbolift's computer beeps, and the doors close. We stay with TARAN' ATAR inside the lift as it begins to move. Any confusion is gone - action has brought clarity. Tensing for what may come, Taran'atar SHROUDS and disappears.

4 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

A normal day so far. EZRI DAX is in command, at the central Ops table. She taps a comm panel.

DAX
Lieutenant Dax to Ensign Tenmei.
How are things going, Prynn?

5 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

TENMEI sits in the pilot seat of a runabout, docked inside the station. She is alone, working the panels.

TENMEI
Nearly ready, Lieutenant. Just a couple more minutes.

She taps the comm to close the channel, then turns as NOG enters from the rear of the runabout. He passes her a padd.

NOG

There you go - final specs.

TENMEI

Thanks, Nog. These engine upgrades just better be as good as you said.

NOG

(mock offended)

Are you doubting my work, Ensign?

TENMEI

Never dream of it, Lieutenant.

NOG

Why'd you volunteer for this, anyway? Most pilots would rather scrub waste conduits than run a boring test flight.

TENMEI

(more sombre)

No, it's good. I'm looking forward to the quiet time.

On Tenmei as she remembers...

QUICK FLASH:

-- Prynne and Shar, about to have a possibly romantic moment in the *Defiant's* shuttlebay (9x08).

BACK TO SCENE

Prynne pulls herself together, forcibly brightening herself, trying not to think about it.

TENMEI (cont)

The fact that you've souped the ship up to go faster than ever before is purely a coincidence.

NOG

Just remember this is a test. I need you to make sure they work

without blowing up, not run them
until they blow up.

TENMEI
(grin)
Yeah yeah yeah.

As the two chuckle together...

CUT TO:

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

RO LAREN unconscious, twisted into a grotesque shape on the deck. Her back is broken. In the distance further down the corridor, Kira lies with Taran'atar's knife in her chest, blood still spurting out and staining the carpet.

7 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT**

POV shot - we watch the walls rush by, then slow until they come to a stop. A pulsing HEARTBEAT and heavy BREATHS sound clearly. The doors open, and we wait for a moment until we make sure no-one is entering.

TARAN'ATAR (o.s.)
Fusion core. Grid twenty-two.

Before the doors can close again, our POV slips quickly out and into the corridor outside.

8 **INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)**

We move along the corridor, pulse still pounding, until we reach a circular door. We look through the glass and see the door to the runabout at the end of the short airlock.

We move to the panel beside the door, which shows various tech readings. An invisible hand reaches out and taps some controls - the panel changes to show a vid of the runabout sat on its platform, the airlock connected to its hatch.

We hear a noise, and move back to the airlock as we see Nog emerge from the runabout hatch and walk toward us. The door rolls open, and Nog walks through.

We step aside to let him pass, which he does. Nog pauses briefly, looks around and concentrates, as if hearing a tiny sound. We watch, holding our breath.

After another moment, he decides it is nothing, and walks away. We watch him go, then we turn back and step into the airlock, the door rolling closed again behind us.

9 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Alone again in the pilot's seat, Tenmei taps one control to close the hatch with a hiss and a clunk. Then she taps another control to open the comm.

TENMEI

Ops, this is Tenmei on the
Euphrates, requesting liftoff
clearance at runabout pad A.

DAX (comm)

Clearance granted, Ensign. Your
flight plan is approved. Dropping
force field and raising platform
to launch position now. Stand by.

10 **EXT. RUNABOUT**

Stock footage - inside the dock, we see the platform rise up, carrying the runabout up towards space.

11 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The platform locks into place.

12 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

DAX (comm)

Euphrates, you're clear for lift
off. Safe journey.

TENMEI

Acknowledged. See you in a few
hours. *Euphrates* out.

Tenmei taps the panels to close the comm channel, and then starts the runabout moving.

13 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The runabout lifts gently and heads away from the station, slipping carefully between the pylons and out of the area.

14 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Tenmei works the panels calmly, in control. The station falls away behind her as she reaches safe distance.

TENMEI

(to self)

Alrighty-then. Let's see what these babies can do.

She is about to hit the controls to jump to warp, when there is a WHISPER-RUSH of air behind her. She turns in surprise and sees Taran'atar pointing a phaser in her face.

TARAN'ATAR

Do not reach for the comm. Set a new course.

As Tenmei reacts with surprise and fear...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

15 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

A transporter JULIAN BASHIR, RICHTER and ETANA into the corridor. They are in major crisis mode.

Ensign ALECO (9x16 "Olympus Descending, pt 1") crouches over the captain, trying to do something to stop the bleeding. He is the one who found the bodies and called the alert. He backs away as Bashir sprints towards Kira.

BASHIR

Move!

Bashir and Richter crouch by Kira, throwing pads over the bleeding. Etana, in her new medical Militia uniform, moves to Ro. She looks down at her former boss in shocked horror for a second, then hunkers down to assess her injuries.

Bashir scans Kira...

INSERT

The tricorder screen shows a diagram of Kira's heart, torn almost in two by Taran'atar's knife.

BACK TO SCENE

Bashir presses a hypospray against her neck. HISS... then he taps his combadge.

BASHIR

Bashir to Ops - emergency medical
transport! Five to infirmary, now!

The transporter takes them again, leaving only Aleco alone in the corridor.

16 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

The transporter deposits them into the Infirmary, and the three medical officers begin moving Kira and Ro to biobeds.

17 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

VAUGHN strolls the Promenade. He steps over the threshold into Quark's, planning for a nice quiet beer at the end of his shift. QUARK himself notices the aged commander, and begins to move forward. But then there is a commotion...

TARSES (o.s.)
Out of the way!

Vaughn turns, surprised, and sees Doctor TARSES and a new Bajoran Militia medical officer, AYLAM (middle-aged woman), sprinting down the Promenade, urgently pushing members of the public out of the way as they dash to the Infirmary.

Realising there is something big going on, Vaughn abandons his plans and heads with concern towards the Infirmary. Quark watches him go, annoyed at the lost profit but intrigued as to whatever the latest drama might be.

18 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Tarses and Aylam rush into the room, where Bashir, Richter and Etana are desperately working to help Kira and Ro.

BASHIR
Tarses, over here. Doctor Aylam,
take Lieutenant Ro. Etana, you're
with Aylam.

Aylam helps Etana move Ro to one of the surgical suites. As the two of them settle Ro onto the biobed, Aylam pulls out her tricorder and begins scanning.

The new doctor trembles, shaken and nervous at such a huge emergency on what is near enough her first day, but determined to save her patient.

In the other room, Bashir and Tarses are doing the same to help Kira.

Vaughn steps into the doorway, unnoticed in the chaos, and sees Kira lying on the biobed, the haft of Taran'atar's knife poking straight up out of her chest. He recognises the weapon instantly, and realises what has happened.

19 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)**

Vaughn strides urgently down the Promenade towards the turbolift, plans already forming in his mind.

Quark watches the commander go. Then he looks back to the Infirmary, where security are already taking up position. Quark begins to realise that something is very wrong.

20 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

The display over Kira's biobed lights up with information.

BASHIR

Near-total bifurcation of the cardiac muscle.

TARSES

Massive bleeding in the pericardium. Puncture runs from the aorta to the inferior vena cava, through both atriums.

BASHIR

We can't fix this. Let's stop the bleeding and stabilise her for full bypass.

(calls over shoulder)

Kristen, pull up the captain's last physical and use it to match an artificial heart.

(other way)

Doctor Aylam, report.

In the other surgical suite, Aylam reads off her tricorder as Etana fixes a surgical arch over Ro's prone body.

AYLAM

Fracture of the tenth and eleventh thoracic vertebrae. Partial severing of the spinal cord between the tenth and eleventh thoracic. Rupture of the spleen, consistent with blunt force trauma. Internal haemorrhaging.

BASHIR
Stabilise her, then assist us.
(to Tarses)
Simon, get the surgical arch. We
need to start now.

Bashir turns back to Kira, and takes a deep breath. He grasps the handle of the knife, and slowly DRAGS it out of Kira's splintered breast bone. BLOOD drips off the tip of it, until he throws it into a medical tray by his side.

As it continues to drip blood, we see that one of its two jagged points has actually broken off.

21 INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

Bajoran Major CENN DESCA, and a male Benzite Starfleet security officer, Lt jg CARDOK, poke their heads gingerly around the doorframe and into Taran'atar's quarters.

CENN
Clear.

They move in, phasers drawn. The room is in ruins. All the furniture has been smashed, the computer screen crunched and sparking, even a starburst crack in the window.

They wander, scanning everything with a tricorder in one hand, a phaser in the other. Cenn crouches down and finds the broken tip of Taran'atar's knife on the floor.

CENN
No sign that anyone was in here except the Jem'Hadar. I'm reading his DNA on everything - the comm panel, furniture, bulkhead. If he was ambushed, I've got nothing on whoever attacked him.

CARDOK
Sir, I'm detecting traces of fresh Jem'Hadar blood on the carpet and on some pieces of the furniture.

Cardok follows the tricorder's BEEPS back towards the door.

CARDOK (cont)
And the blood trail seems to lead
outside these quarters.

CENN
Computer, locate Taran'atar.

COMPUTER
Taran'atar is not on the station.

In the circumstances, this does not point to Taran'atar's
innocence. Cenn taps his combadge.

CENN
Cenn to Ops.

DAX (comm)
Go ahead, Major.

CENN
Taran'atar's quarters are wrecked,
and the computer says he's not
aboard the station - which might
just mean he's shrouded.

DAX (comm)
Hang on - back-up's on the way.

There is a pause, and then Dax's voice sounds from all the
speakers around the room, as well as their combadges.

DAX (comm)
Attention, all decks - intruder
alert.

22 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Quark looks up as he hears the announcement. He rolls his
eyes - there is always some emergency going on.

DAX (cont)
All security personnel, report in
for new orders.

Numerous crew who were sitting at tables and eating or
drinking get to their feet and hurry out to their stations.

23 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT**

Vaughn is already on his way to Ops when he hears the announcement over his combadge.

DAX (cont)

Commander Vaughn, please report to Ops immediately.

VAUGHN

(taps comm)

Already on my way, Lieutenant.

Plans and contingencies come and go through his mind.

24 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Moments later, the turbolift arrives in Ops, and Vaughn steps off. The room is in panic, crew running back and forth coordinating. Stood at the central Ops table, Dax is the calm in the storm. Vaughn walks down the steps to her.

VAUGHN

Report.

DAX

Captain Kira and Lieutenant Ro have been -

VAUGHN

Attacked, yes, I saw. Our response?

DAX

Major Cenn is heading up the investigation, starting in Taran'atar's quarters, which is where Kira and Ro were heading when they were attacked. I've ordered Nog to help Cenn direct the forensic teams.

VAUGHN

What about Taran'atar himself?

DAX

The computer says he's not on the station, but if he's shrouded...

Vaughn makes an impatient get-on-with-it gesture.

DAX

We've declared intruder alert and started a deck-by-deck sweep.

VAUGHN

If taking out Ro and Kira was his first move against the station, he'll go for the system controls in the lower core. From there he could overload the failsafes and initiate a core overload.

DAX

Just like Kitana'klan. So I sealed off the primary and auxiliary controls and put twenty security guards in an ambush deployment, near the primary heat exchangers.

VAUGHN

To mask their body heat and scent profiles. Well done. Have you deployed search teams?

DAX

Yes - I put Bowers in charge.

VAUGHN

Good choice.

Vaughn turns to the reports and readings on the table.

VAUGHN

So... the hunt is engaged.

DAX

Yes, sir. But who's hunting who?

Vaughn looks at her - he knows exactly what she means.

25 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Aleco leads a team of security scanning everything in sight - the carpet, the walls, the pool of blood where Kira fell.

BOWERS (o.s.)
Ensign Aleco - report.

Aleco turns and sees SAM BOWERS jogging up - the tactical officer looks dishevelled and half-awake, like he has been roused from sleep for this emergency.

ALECO
Sir. We've got Jem'Hadar blood and microscopic DNA traces on the deck. There's a strong trail from Taran'atar's quarters to the turbolift.

(re turbolift)
This is the same turbolift that stopped here at the time of the attack. More blood and DNA traces inside.

BOWERS
You've confirmed that the trace began in his quarters? No chance he doubled back, maybe to set an ambush?

ALECO
Negative. Decay rates in all samples are consistent with continuous progress from the quarters to the turbolift.

BOWERS
Who's got the activity logs for this thing?

ALECO
(holds up padd)
Right here, sir. First stop after leaving this deck was Runabout Pad A. Second was the fusion core, grid twenty-two.

BOWERS

Then we go to the runabout pad. If he went to the fusion core, there are more than enough people waiting for him already. But we can't let him get off the station.

26 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Tenmei sits in the pilot seat, as Taran'atar stands behind her and keeps his phaser pointed to her head. Through the windows we can see that they are travelling at high warp.

Refusing to allow him the pleasure of seeing her scared, Tenmei is holding herself with dignity and quiet defiance. Taran'atar almost respects her for it.

TENMEI

Where are we going?

TARAN'ATAR

That is none of your concern.
Maintain your course and speed.

And that is all he has to say on the matter. She does as he says, but without the respect of an acknowledgement.

27 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

In one of the suites, Aylam and Etana work on Ro, working the surgical arch, pressing controls, taking readings.

AYLAM

Okay, her internal bleeding's under control. And the spleen's fused back together. Now for the hard part.

Then Ro's eyes open and she lets out a short, sharp SHRIEK. Aylam jerks back, letting out a surprised shout of her own. Ro is panicked, confused - and can't move.

RO

What...? Where...? The captain?

Etana comes forward and tries to calm her friend, while trying to control her own shock at this turn of events.

ETANA

Relax, boss. The captain's in surgery. You're in the infirmary with her. We're patching you up. Lie still.

RO

Why can't I move?

AYLAM

(evasive)

When I've finished my examination, I'll make a diagnosis. Not before. Just let us make you comfortable.

(to Etana)

Ten cc of adozine.

Etana presses a hypospray gently against Ro's throat, and the lieutenant drifts off. Aylam takes a deep breath, knowing she is only delaying telling Ro the bad news.

In the other room, Kira has been stripped of her upper uniform, with the surgical arch concealing her modesty. Bashir, Tarses and Richter work feverishly around her.

Kira's readings FLATLINE - Bashir jumps into action. He grabs a cortical stimulator, attaches it to her forehead.

BASHIR

Push thirty cc of tri-ox. Setting autonomic bypass.

Kira's readings flutter briefly, but do not come back to life. Bashir works the cortical stimulator again - Kira jerks, and her readings return, albeit weakly. Bashir is relieved, but has no time to pause.

BASHIR

Hook up the ventilator. I'll get the rapid infuser going. Nurse! We need type and cross, twenty units of whole blood, stat!

While Richter runs off to the stores, and Tarses gently guides breathing tubes down Kira's throat and nose, Bashir works the delicate controls of the surgical arch.

Under the arch, we can make out the sharp red light and hissing, SIZZLING sound of a laser burning through Kira's sternum. That done, the laser stops and forcefields pop into place. Bashir winces as the smell of blood fills the air. Richter runs back into the room, worried.

RICHTER

Doctor, we have only four units of Captain Kira's blood type on hand.

BASHIR

(still working)

Get a list of all Bajorans on the station with Captain Kira's blood type. Send them all a priority request for blood donors.

(to Tarses)

Push four units of plasma into the infuser to keep her pressure up. Let's keep going.

TARSESES

Sir, with just four units of blood and four of plasma -

BASHIR

(understanding)

We can keep her alive for another twenty minutes.

As they urgently keep working...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

28 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Vaughn paces back and forth behind Kira's desk, impatiently waiting for something. He picks up the baseball that still sits on the desk. Turns it over in his hand for a moment. Then places it back on the desk and returns to pacing.

29 INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

Nog works at Taran'atar's comm panel, bypassing the smashed screen with cables, running to a series of other devices and tricorders. He knew all along Taran'atar would do this. Major Cenn stands behind him, others around the room.

CENN

Are you in?

NOG

Yes, sir. But there's not much here to see. It doesn't look like Taran'atar used the replicator more than a dozen times. And the comm system...

(drifts off,
confused)

That can't be right. There's a huge discrepancy between his comm logs and his power usage.

CENN

(suspicious)

Can you be any more specific?

NOG

Officially, he sent and received less than one quarter kiloquad of data since his arrival on Deep Space Nine. But the power logs for this comm node show a lot more than that - enough for thousands of kiloquads of data.

CENN

Are there any explanations?

NOG

(shrug)

A data error in the logs. Mis-wired node relays. Damage to the comm panel's memory buffer...

CENN

Alright - noted. Run a full diagnostic and have your people check out all the hardware. If this is a glitch, I want it ruled out. But if it's not...

NOG

I'll get the data recovery team on it right away.

CENN

Keep me posted.

Nog nods, and Cenn steps away to confer with the others.

30 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Quark leans against the section of his bar that opens directly out onto the Promenade, and past him we can see a crowd of Bajorans waiting anxiously outside the Infirmary. Security are keeping them in line. Quark is drying glasses.

CLOSE UP on Quark as he manoeuvres his enormous ears into just the right position to catch as much as possible.

Then his face drops as he hears a name, and the glass falls from his suddenly numb hand, SMASHING to the deck. He VAULTS directly up over the bar, landing on the Promenade.

31 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Quark runs across the Promenade and pushes his way into the crowd of Bajorans outside the Infirmary. Closest to the closed door is Vedek CAPRIL, the priest who runs the station's shrine (8x20 "Twist of Faith").

Barging his way to the front, Quark fishes inside his jacket and brings out a handful of isolinear rods. He sorts through them until he finds the right one.

Looking left and right, he waits for the security guards to look away and then inserts the rod into the door's locking mechanism. The door slides open and he slips quietly in.

32 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY (CONTINUOUS)

The door closes, and Quark sees the urgent movements in the Infirmary. Bashir, Tarses and Aylam confer in whispers over Kira's body. The words are muffled but the tone is clearly agitated, worried. Things are not going well.

Richter and Etana are taking a quick moment to comfort each other in a quiet corner. None of them have noticed Quark. He takes the chance their distraction gives him, and slips sideways into the other surgical suite.

There he sees Ro, unconscious on the biobed, looking pale and fragile. He creeps forward quietly, not wanting to disturb her. Her head lolls towards him, her eyes flutter open. She is groggy, on some seriously heavy pain meds.

RO

Quark... what are you doing here?

QUARK

What does it look like?

He is breathlessly relieved that she is alive. He reaches out and takes her hand in his - she can't grip back.

QUARK

What happened?

RO

I don't know... the last thing I remember is...

(struggling to
put it together)

I was in the turbolift with the Captain. We were responding to an alert in Taran'atar's quarters...

QUARK

(angry mutter)

I knew it. That monster was bound
to snap sooner or later.

RO

I didn't see who attacked us.

QUARK

Of course not. He was probably
doing that little invisibility
trick of his. Probably too scared
to face you head on.

RO

(wryly)

Yeah. I'm sure that was it.

(re other room)

I know you can hear what they're
saying. What's going on?

Quark pauses, focuses on listening into the conversation.

QUARK

Sounds like she's bleeding out.
They've run out of blood for a
transfusion, and the gadgets
aren't enough.

RO

Tap my combadge for me.

QUARK

Why?

RO

Just do it.

He reaches across and taps her badge - she calls out loud.

RO

Doctor Bashir! Doctor Tarses!
Etana! Anyone! Get in here!

Etana rushes into the room, worried for her friend.

ETANA

Lieutenant, what's wrong?

RO

Is it true the captain needs a
blood transfusion?

ETANA

Yes, but -

RO

Then take mine. We have the same
blood type.

ETANA

That's very generous, boss -

RO

You're wasting time. Just do it -

ETANA

Laren - calm down. We've got the
situation under control.

The outside doors OPEN, and the security allow the Bajorans
outside to file calmly in. Etana turns to speak to them.

ETANA

Thank you for coming. Captain Kira
has been seriously injured and has
lost a lot of blood. Records show
each of you has the same blood
type as Captain Kira. We can't
force any of you to donate blood,
but we're asking for volunteers.

They mutter between themselves, more surprised than
unwilling. But Capril steps forward with certainty.

CAPRIL

I will go first.

(to others)

In the name of the Prophets, I
implore each of you to join me in
helping Kira in her hour of need.

RO

Better late than never, right,
Vedek? And with an audience too.

Capril turns to her, his face stony. The others hush.

CAPRIL

Do you plan to tell me what I
already know, Lieutenant? That I
turned my back on Kira when Yevir
had her Attainted? Abandoned her
after years of spiritual fellow-
ship? Perhaps you think I'm an
opportunist - trying to curry
favour or forgiveness now that the
Attainder is lifted. Would you
consider another explanation?

RO

Such as what?

CAPRIL

That I am ashamed of what I did -
even though I would do it again if
such were my orders. You serve
something larger than yourself,
just as I do. Sometimes you obey,
even if you do not agree.

RO

And sometimes you don't. You
betrayed her.

CAPRIL

And now I give my blood for her.
Make of that what you will.

His point made, he allows Etana to lead him away. The other
donors follow them. Left alone again, Quark turns back to
Ro. Her expression is overcome with fear, anger, grief.

QUARK

You know, if you want to pick a
fight with people, you should at
least wait till you're back on
your feet.

RO
I may never be back on my feet,
Quark. I'm paralysed.

33 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Vaughn is sat behind the desk, watching the screen in front of him. The screen shows a recording of Taran'atar's meeting with the FEMALE FOUNDER from 9x17. This is what he was waiting for, and he is watching every detail closely.

FEMALE FOUNDER (screen)
...Not just for weeks, but for as
long as Kira lives.

Just then, the office door opens and Dax strides in.

DAX
Commander -

VAUGHN
Lieutenant, listen to this.

He beckons her around the desk, points her to the screen.

DAX
The recordings from Ananke Alpha?

VAUGHN
Commander T'Kren was surprisingly
forthcoming once I explained the
situation. And once I pointed out
that my security clearance is
higher than hers.

Grimly, he works the controls to rewind the recording a few moments, then begins playback again.

TARAN'ATAR (screen)
I would not presume to evaluate
the loyalties of a Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER (screen)
Of course you wouldn't. You are
not capable of it. But I am.

Dax frowns, uncertain what Vaughn is getting at. He fast-forwards the recording for a second, then sets playback.

FEMALE FOUNDER (screen)
And when he fails, he will abandon
the Great Link and return to Kira.
Not just for weeks, but for as
long as Kira lives.

Vaughn pauses the playback, and turns to Dax, expectant.

VAUGHN
Did you hear that?

DAX
I think so.

VAUGHN
Could that be it? Could Taran'atar
have interpreted the Founder
saying that Odo would leave the
Dominion for Kira as an order to
kill her, as a preemptive measure?
(Dax is unconvinced)
Think about it. We know that Odo
told Taran'atar to obey Kira as if
he were obeying Odo himself.

DAX
(catching on)
So what happens when a Jem'Hadar
is given conflicting orders by two
different Founders?

VAUGHN
I never thought to ask.
(beat)
What did you want?

DAX
We've got a situation. Come with
me - you should see for yourself.

Annoyed, Vaughn gets up and follows Dax out of the office.

34 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE (CONTINUOUS)**

Dax leads Vaughn out into Ops, and down to the central table. Bowers is already standing there, waiting for them.

DAX

There's no evidence Taran'atar tried to reach the fusion core. Sending the turbolift down there looks like a diversionary tactic, something to split our focus.

BOWERS

My team tracked the target to Runabout Pad A. The blood trail terminates there. We've ruled out double-backs or beam-outs.

VAUGHN

Then he may already be off the station? How?! Flight ops were locked down from the moment you sent out the alert.

Dax and Bowers both hesitate, neither wanting to give the bad news. But Vaughn is impatient. Dax takes a deep breath.

DAX

The *Euphrates* left on a short test flight about two minutes before the alert. Based on the turbolift activity log, Taran'atar could have reached the *Euphrates* almost a minute before it took off.

Dax has already called up the *Euphrates'* filed flight plan. Vaughn looks it over, and conceals his reaction.

INSERT

Clear in the report is an image of the pilot - Prynn.

BACK TO SCENE

VAUGHN

Where is the *Euphrates* now?

DAX
(checks panels)
Bearing one-nine-eight mark three-five. Way off her flight plan and cruising at warp eight-point-one.

VAUGHN
Eight-point-one? A runabout?

DAX
Lieutenant Nog's been toying with some upgrades, sir.

VAUGHN
Mister Bowers. Hail the *Euphrates*, priority one. Put it on screen.

BOWERS
Aye, sir.

Bowers works his panels for a few long, tense moments.

BOWERS
No response, sir.

VAUGHN
You're sure they're receiving us?

BOWERS
Yes, sir. I have a confirmed signal lock, but no response.

VAUGHN
Open a channel.

Bowers works his panels again, then nods at Vaughn.

VAUGHN
Runabout *Euphrates* - this is Commander Vaughn on Deep Space Nine.

35 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Tenmei reacts to her father's voice from the speakers.

VAUGHN (comm)
We know that you're receiving us.
Respond immediately. That's an
order.

TARAN'ATAR
Ignore him.

Tenmei grits her teeth, unable to do anything. Keeping his phaser on Tenmei with one hand, Taran'atar uses the other hand to enter a complex series of commands in a panel.

36 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Vaughn waits, hoping against hope to hear his daughter's voice. But he can't afford to be optimistic.

VAUGHN
Dax, access the transponder and
initiate a command override. I
want that ship back, now.

Dax works her panels quickly and silently for a minute. But she can't get any joy out of them. She looks up, dismayed.

DAX
The transponder is offline. We
can't initiate an override.

VAUGHN
Get a long-range sensor lock on
the *Euphrates* and track it as long
as you can. Taran'atar's on that
ship, and I'm going after him in
the *Defiant*. You're in command
until I get back.

(to Bowers)
Lieutenant, get to the *Defiant* and
prep her to ship out, on the
double. Round up a security team
that has combat experience against
Jem'Hadar.

BOWERS
Aye, sir.

Bowers heads hurriedly over to the turbolift. Vaughn turns and heads back up to the office. Dax calls after him.

DAX
Good luck, sir.

He doesn't reply, just shuts himself away in the office.

37 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

Vaughn stands in the office, his back to Ops. His pulse is POUNDING, his fists CLENCHING, but he works to bring himself under control.

VAUGHN
Breathe, Vaughn. Cool head. Don't
lose control. Calm.
(pause)
That bastard has my daughter.

On Vaughn's furious expression...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

38 EXT. RUNABOUT

The *Euphrates* flies at high warp.

39 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Tenmei quietly, calmly pilots the ship. Taran'atar could kill her at any moment, but she refuses to act scared. The Jem'Hadar is across the cockpit, looking something up in the computer while keeping his phaser trained on Tenmei.

She checks on him out of the corner of her eye. While he is briefly distracted, looking at the computer, she looks the other way at one of the instruments on her panels.

INSERT

Tenmei quietly, subtly, moves her hand over a control and dials it down, taking it down from full to zero. Then she covers the display, hiding it casually with her hand.

BACK TO SCENE

She checks out of the corner of her eye again. She notices him blink, screw his eyes up, shake his head as if he is tired. Interesting - that could be useful information.

TENMEI

He'll come after us, you know.

TARAN'ATAR

I know that.

TENMEI

And once he does, he'll overtake
us in a matter of minutes.

TARAN'ATAR

I had not expected to escape the
station alive. And yet now I am a
billion kilometres away.

TENMEI

Won't make a difference. Even at warp eight this ship can never outrun the *Defiant*.

Taran'atar has found what he was looking for in the computer. He straightens, satisfied.

TARAN'ATAR

It does not need to. Adjust our course as indicated and maintain speed.

Tenmei receives co-ordinates on her panel. She reads them, frowns in confusion at what they represent. She looks askance at him, not understanding. He points his phaser at her again. She takes the hint and does as she is told.

40 INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

Nog is still working on the comm panel, its smashed screen dark but cables leading to tricorders and devices. The more he finds, the less he likes it. Cenn approaches.

CENN

Anything to report, Lieutenant?
(no response)
Lieutenant.

NOG

Sorry, sir. Just thinking about the *Defiant*. I just don't like the idea of her shipping out without me. Feels wrong.

CENN

Lieutenant Leishman is capable, or you wouldn't have promoted her. Now, what have you found?

NOG

I'm getting closer to reversing the data shredding.

Cenn leans in, peers over Nog's shoulder at the displays.

CENN

Is that sort of thing standard in Starfleet comm terminals?

NOG

No, sir. Not standard at all. Even garbled, it's obvious there's a lot more data in this buffer than there should be. Taran'atar either received a lot of information from somewhere, or he transmitted a lot of information to somewhere. Either way, he did an expert job of covering his tracks.

CENN

How soon do you think you can recover the data?

NOG

A few hours. But this is a real hatchet job. It won't be perfect.

CENN

But then you'll be able to tell me where Taran'atar was transmitting?

NOG

Ask me again in a few hours.

41 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Ro lies on her biobed, still paralysed. Quark sits by her side, holding her numb, unresponsive hand. Tarses enters, with Etana by his side.

RO

How's the captain?

TARSES

It's too soon to tell. There's still much to be done. But we're about ready here. Is there anyone you'd like us to contact before we anaesthetise you for surgery?

Ro looks at Quark; he squeezes her hand. She has no family left, and all her friends are in this room. She sighs.

RO

No. I'm all set here.

Tarses nods, and he and Etana get to work preparing the equipment they will need. Ro turns to Quark, holding back tears. She is both terrified and grateful for his support.

RO

Keep a secret?

QUARK

Have so far.

RO

I'm scared.

QUARK

That makes two of us.

Etana returns, preparing more equipment and settings.

ETANA

Ambassador Quark - I'm sorry, but regulations prohibit any unnecessary persons from being in the surgical suite during an operation.

RO

It'll be okay, Quark. Lockdown's over. You should get back to the bar.

QUARK

Good point. No telling what Treir's done to the place while I've been gone. But I'll be right here when you wake up. That's a promise.

Quark stands and slowly retreats to the doorway, both of them keeping a brave face for the other's sake. He hovers there, at the periphery, as Tarses and Etana move to begin.

TARSES

Okay, Lieutenant. Repairing the damage in your neck shouldn't be difficult, but the damage in your back is much more serious. We're going to do everything we can, but it's important for you to know that we can't make any promises.

RO

I understand. Do what you can.

TARSES

We will.

Etana leans in and presses a device to Ro's forehead, switches it on. Ro drifts into unconsciousness.

Quark takes a deep breath and leaves. On his way out, he walks past Bashir and Aylam still busily working on Kira. Medical devices BEEP in time with her life signs.

Quark pauses a moment, watches them work, then moves on and exits to the Promenade.

BASHIR

Okay, Doctor Aylam... I'm ready to begin. You're sure the artificial heart is ready?

AYLAM

Yes, Doctor.

BASHIR

Alright then. Activate the bypass, and let's begin.

Aylam reaches across the surgical arch, presses buttons, and the beat of the BEEPS slows right down - barely a step above flatline. Bashir begins to work.

ZOOM IN to ECU on Kira's unconscious face...

The image going to **WHITE OUT** as we get closer, until...

42 **WHITE SPACE**

Shapeless white space, overexposed and blown out. We are in a Prophets vision, like in 1x01 "Emissary." A slow, steady, thumping HEARTBEAT, and breathing...

CLOSE ON

Kira's hand, stretching the fingers, testing her existence. We move up her arm until we see her face, the realisation gradually dawning on her - she is with the Prophets. She is awed and terrified that she is in the presence of her gods.

FAST MONTAGE:

- Kira's father dying on the cave floor (5x19)
- Bareil dying on the biobed in sickbay (3x13)
- Marritza dying on the deck of the Promenade (1x19)
- Kira cradling Shakaar's body in the Wardroom (8x20)
- Kira looking at Taran'atar's knife in her chest (9x17)

Back to the white space - Kira thinks she got the message.

KIRA

I'm dead.

The light changes, and Kira turns...

43 **INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR**

Kira looks around, and she is in the corridor, meeting Opaka as she first returns from the Gamma Quadrant in 8x24. OPAKA is there, but it is a Prophet. She smiles up at Kira.

OPAKA PROPHET

Our hand.

Kira turns, and Ro is there.

RO PROPHET

Our hand is closed.

KIRA

I don't understand. Are you saying
I'm not welcome?

44 **INT. DS9 - QUARTERS**

Kira sits on the couches with SHAKAAR, in his temporary guest quarters, as they did in 8x16.

SHAKAAR PROPHEET
Our hand is not ready.

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

Kira sits behind her desk, as Vaughn-as-Prophet walks back and forth in front of her, like in 8x14.

VAUGHN PROPHEET
Our hand must reach out to our children.

She really doesn't understand. She is still getting her head around the idea that she is talking to her gods.

46 **EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE - DAY**

Kira and SISKO stand on his property, under the shade of the tree in his garden, as they did in 9x10.

SISKO
I'm glad you've come. It was time.

KIRA
Ben? Is it really you?

SISKO
It's part of me. I'm not really sure which part. I exist now in linear time, on Bajor... but part of me also exists here. It wasn't always this way... until it was.

KIRA
I don't really follow.

SISKO
It's not important. Not yet.

Sisko turns his head, looking across the garden. Kira turns to follow his eye-line...

47 **INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR**

Taran'atar THROWS the knife, it flies straight into Kira's chest. She is thrown against the wall, blood spattering...

White lights bleeds over the image, until...

48 **WHITE SPACE**

Kira GASPS, her hand going to her chest instinctively. She turns, and Sisko is standing beside her in the white space.

KIRA
What's going to happen? Is this
death?

SISKO
That's up to you.

KIRA
Is that why I'm here?

SISKO
No.

KIRA
Then why am I here?

A hand reaches in to grasp her ear, turning her head gently until we see Opaka, looking up at Kira.

OPAKA PROPHET
To set our hand upon the path.

49 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Close on Kira's face, restful in unconsciousness as Bashir and Aylam work busily around her, just out of sight...

50 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Dax stands at the central Ops table as her crew buzz around her. The station has resumed normal operations, but the crew are still all on edge over what has happened. There is a beep from Ensign SELZNER's panels.

SELZNER
Lieutenant, Commander Vaughn is
hailing us.

DAX
On screen.

Vaughn's face appears on the main screen - he sits in the
centre seat on the *Defiant's* bridge.

VAUGHN (screen)
We're almost ready. Do you still
have a fix on the *Euphrates*?

DAX
No, sir. Without the transponder
we couldn't keep a lock. We might
have a better chance if we could
triangulate our readings with
other ships in the area.

VAUGHN (screen)
No. I don't want anyone else
involved in this unless absolutely
necessary. Even one stupid mistake
could get Prynn killed. I won't
take that chance.

DAX
I understand. Starfleet might not.

VAUGHN (screen)
(quick, sharp)
Then don't tell them.
(calmer)
At least, not yet. File no reports
until we can explain not only what
happened but why it happened.

DAX
Yes, sir.

VAUGHN (screen)
Any word on Ro or the captain?

DAX
They're both in surgery. Julian
is...
(not)
...hopeful.

VAUGHN (screen)
Alright then. We're all set over
here. *Defiant* requesting clearance
to depart.

DAX
(working panels)
Clearance granted. Docking clamps
released. You're free to navigate.
Good luck.

VAUGHN (screen)
Acknowledged. *Defiant* out.

Vaughn disappears from the screen. Dax pulls up an exterior
view of the station on the screen, and they watch the
Defiant pull away from the station and leave the area.

Dax thinks for a moment, then turns and walks up the stairs
to Kira's office. She walks through the door...

51 **INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)**

Dax looks down at Sisko's baseball, sitting in its regular
place. She makes a decision.

DAX
Computer, open a channel to Bajor.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

52 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Bashir and Aylam work urgently over Kira's body. Aylam finishes a certain task, stands back to take a breather.

AYLAM

I'm ready for the next step,
Doctor.

BASHIR

(a touch indignant)
You can't be done already.

Aylam is a little taken aback by Bashir's sharp tone. He realises stress is getting the better of him, and softens.

BASHIR

Please inspect the new bonds and
make certain there are no defects.
The captain's been through enough
trauma today... I don't want any
post-surgical complications.

AYLAM

Yes, Doctor.

She goes back to work. The pair of them work in silence for a while, with only the sounds of the medical instruments.

In the next room, Tarses and Etana work on Ro in the same way. Machines whirr and buzz, monitors beep and burble.

Finally, Bashir has done everything he can.

BASHIR

The moment of truth. Doctor Aylam,
prepare to deactivate the bypass
and unclamp the aorta.

Nodding, Aylam reaches into the surgical arch and works the controls. The BEEPing monitors settle into a new, regular rhythm. Bashir is relieved - things are going well.

BASHIR

Alright, then. Let's remove the
bypass connections.

The pair of them go to work again, with the surgical arch
whirring and doing various things. After a long pause,
Bashir seems satisfied, and steps back a bit.

BASHIR

Would you mind closing, Doctor?

AYLAM

Not at all, Doctor.

Aylam begins methodically disconnecting all the technology.
Bashir strips off his medical gloves and steps back. He
gazes with worry upon Kira's unconscious, restful face.

AYLAM

Her EEG readings are borderline,
but there doesn't seem to be any
indication of brain damage.

BASHIR

Brain damage isn't always obvious
in physical scans. The mind is a
subtle balance of chemistry,
electricity, and the intangible.
There's nothing to do but wait.

Zooming to close-up on Kira, and WHITE OUT as we go...

53 INT. WHITE SPACE

Kira is surrounded by Prophets in the shape of her friends.

KIRA

What path?

OPAKA PROPHET

The path.

SHAKAAR PROPHET

We must offer our hand to our
children.

OPAKA PROPHET
In peace...

JAKE PROPHET (o.s.)
And in war.

Kira turns at the voice, and sees that she is now on...

54 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

JAKE SISKO stands there, appearing as he did when possessed by a *pagh*-Wraith in 6x21 "The Reckoning." Eyes glowing, power crackling around him. But it is a Prophet speaking.

EVIL JAKE PROPHET
It is the Vessel.

QUICK SHOT:

-- Kira possessed by a Prophet, standing in the doorway of the station's shrine, power crackling around her.

BACK TO SCENE

KIRA
You mean me? Yes, I was.

EVIL JAKE PROPHET
What was... is still.

KIRA
But why? Why was I worthy?

Sisko steps up beside her. She turns to him, and suddenly they are at...

55 EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE - DAY

SISKO
Why was I?

KIRA
But... you're the Emissary!

SISKO

So? The Prophets set in motion a chain of events to ensure my existence. But they were surprised to meet me in the present. They didn't know until they'd met me that they needed to create me. But does that mean I was worthy? Or simply that I... was?

Kira is confused by all the riddles and paradoxes. WHITE LIGHT bleeds over everything again, and they are back in...

56 **WHITE SPACE (CONTINUOUS)**

The Prophets are there, trying to explain something to her.

SHAKAAR PROPHET

Our hand must be opened.

VAUGHN PROPHET

Our hand must touch the linear.

EVIL JAKE PROPHET

This our hand has done before - as the Vessel.

KIRA

I don't understand! What do you want from me?

Opaka reaches up and grasps Kira's ear again...

OPAKA PROPHET

Walk the path, and you will know.

On Kira's face, as the light around her subtly changes...

MATCH CUT TO:

57 **EXT. PAREK TONN**

Kira's face. But as we pull back, we see she is dressed in ancient Bajoran armour, as in 8x13 "Horn and Ivory."

General Kira Nerys of the Bajora Army rides at the head of a large phalanx of soldiers along a long, straight road.

Rocky land lies all around them. Misty mountains in the distance on either side. Far ahead is a massive castle, the grandest stone fort that seems to climb up into the sky.

Kira looks around herself for a moment, orienting herself to her new existence. But then the role takes over, and she cries a loud "Hai!" to her soldiers to head on.

58 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Across the room, Bashir has turned to consult with Tarses at a large screen. It displays a diagram of a humanoid figure - Ro. He is surprisingly impressed by what he sees.

The door from the Promenade opens and Quark enters, staring at them agitated and impatient.

QUARK

Where is she?

(no response)

I see the two of you standing here gabbing, so I know she's not in surgery. So where is she?

BASHIR

(sympathetic smile)

She's back in the ward. I set out a chair for you.

QUARK

(softening)

Thanks.

He quickly walks past them. Bashir and Tarses turn back.

NOG (comm)

Nog to Doctor Bashir.

BASHIR

Go ahead, Nog.

NOG (comm)

Sir, I've found something in Taran'atar's comm logs that I think you should look at.

BASHIR
What is it?

NOG (comm)
I'm not exactly sure. Let's say
I'm looking for a second opinion.

BASHIR
On my way. Bashir out.
(to Tarses)
I'm sorry, if you'll excuse me.

Tarses nods, and Bashir turns and leaves.

59 EXT. DEFIANT

The *Defiant* flies at warp. Its image ripples as the cloaking device engages.

60 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Dark lighting - cloaked. Vaughn and Bowers stand together at the rear of the bridge, by the large readout screens.

Ens T'RB is at sciences, Ens PERMENTER at engineering, Ens Aleco at tactical, and Ens ZUCCA (female human) at helm.

ALECO
Commander, we have a sensor lock
on the *Euphrates*.

VAUGHN
Good work. Patch it to me here.
Helm, adjust course to intercept.

Vaughn turns to a GRAPHIC - a star chart with the *Euphrates* indicated. He and Bowers inspect the screen, confused.

BOWERS
I don't get it. What's his plan?

VAUGHN
We can ask him that when we catch
him.

61 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Tenmei is in the pilot's seat. In the forward viewport she can see Taran'atar's reflection, further back in the cockpit. He crouches down and opens the hatch in the floor.

Taking the chance, she reaches up and taps some keys on the panel above her head. A light goes from green to yellow. She checks his reflection again - he didn't notice her.

Taran'atar disconnects two large canisters from inside the hatch. He stands holding the canisters - signage on them suggests weaponry. Then a small BEEP from Tenmei's panels.

TENMEI

We're approaching the coordinates
you gave me. Scanning...

TARAN'ATAR

Stop. Initiate no action unless I
order it.

She does. He steps up and looks over her shoulder at the panels, apparently satisfied with what he sees.

TARAN'ATAR

Drop out of warp and hold position
at the coordinates indicated. Then
set the helm to autopilot.

Again she frowns, confused. But she does as he says.

62 **INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS**

Bashir walks into Taran'atar's quarters, picking his way over the smashed furniture and broken objects. Major Cenn and the forensic crews work at various points.

He approaches Nog, who stands by the comm panel, frowning over the readings from one of the attached screens.

NOG

Thanks for coming, Doctor.

BASHIR

No problem. What have you found?

NOG

More than I know what to do with.
Massive data files, huge comm
logs, all of it scrambled. I've
been decrypting it one piece at a
time and putting it back together.
And all the incoming signals I've
recovered so far have one thing in
common...

He brings up a new display - a moving waveform image.

NOG (cont)

...A repeating wave, embedded in
all the messages as a subcarrier.
I have my ideas, but I could be
totally wrong. Any guesses?

BASHIR

It looks organic. Fairly long
frequency, more neuro-electric
than cardio-electric... I could be
mistaken, but I think it's a brain
wave.

NOG

That's what I thought too. It's
close to the kind of delta wave we
use for surgical anaesthesia.

BASHIR

It could have been modified to
work on a Jem'Hadar. I could check
it against Taran'atar's recent
medical scans... but that would
violate his medical privacy.

NOG

(shocked)

He stabbed the captain and broke
Lieutenant Ro's back! I think he
ought to be -

(gathers self)

He's a Jem'Hadar - I don't think
privacy is high on his list.

Bashir is not happy with Nog's tone, but has to admit he has a point. He pulls out his own tricorder and accesses records. He holds it up against Nog's display.

NOG

They're an exact match.

BASHIR

(dismayed)

This is Taran'atar's sleep cycle brain wave. This is why he's been falling asleep.

NOG

So it's some kind of mind control?

BASHIR

Exactly. Something like this could produce a hypnogogic state in seconds...

(off Nog's
confusion)

Susceptible to suggestion. And since Jem'Hadar are programmed to be obedient...

NOG

Suggestions to him would be like commands. But Jem'Hadar are only supposed to obey the Founders and the Vorta.

BASHIR

But if someone found a way to circumvent that... Nog, we need to know who's behind this. Have you found any other clues?

NOG

Let me see...

Nog begins working hard on his devices again, biting his lip with anxiety. Bashir waits, trying not to be impatient. After a few moments, Nog reacts.

NOG

Hold on, what's this? This one
signal... it's not just data.
There's an image embedded...

BASHIR

Can you decrypt it?

NOG

Just give me a second here...

Nog works again for a few more moments. Then the computer
BEEPS as the file is recovered. We don't see the screen,
but we see Bashir and Nog's reaction.

This is very, very bad news.

BASHIR

Oh my God...

On Bashir's dismayed expression...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

63 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Close-up on Tenmei, as she wonders what the hell Taran'atar is up to, and how she can get out of it. He is working on the munitions canisters - they now have cables attached.

Tenmei slowly reaches one hand sideways towards a control, hoping he won't see her... when Taran'atar stands straight.

TARAN'ATAR

Retrieve an environment suit from
the utility corridor.

That is not a good sign. Withdrawing her hand, Tenmei stands and quietly, slowly walks towards the rear of the cockpit, Taran'atar watching her every step.

As she approaches the hatch, she looks towards the controls for the transporter. If she can get to it quickly enough...

TARAN'ATAR

Do not approach the transporter.

Pausing briefly with annoyance, she carries on. The hatch opens, and she wonders if she can make a run for it...

TARAN'ATAR

Instruct the computer to keep the
door open.

Gritting her teeth again, she does as she is told.

TENMEI

Computer, hold the cockpit hatch
open.

COMPUTER

Acknowledged.

She steps through the hatch, Taran'atar still watching her every move...

64 **INT. RUNABOUT - CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)**

She steps into the corridor and presses a button to open a hatch. Inside is a deflated environment suit. She pulls it off the rack, rolls it up into a ball, grabs a helmet off a shelf, and carries the whole package back through the door.

65 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT (CONTINUOUS)**

She re-enters the cockpit and walks straight to Taran'atar, who stands watching her. She warily hands the suit to him.

TARAN'ATAR

Resume your post.

Tenmei sits back in the pilot seat, while Taran'atar takes the suit towards the adapted munitions canisters.

66 **EXT. SPACE**

A zooming fly-by as if we're watching the *Defiant* at warp, except that there is nothing there, because it is cloaked.

67 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Dark lighting for cloak. Vaughn is in the centre seat, tense as he waits to catch up to the *Euphrates*. From a panel at the side, Bowers speaks up.

BOWERS

DS-Nine is hailing us, sir.

VAUGHN

On screen.

The main viewer changes to show an image of the central table in Ops, where Dax stands front and centre. Nog, Cenn and Bashir are behind her, all looking tired and worried.

DAX (screen)

We've made some important discoveries, Commander.

VAUGHN

Give me the highlights, Dax.

She nods, and steps back to let Cenn step forward.

CENN (screen)

The forensic investigation has confirmed that it was Taran'atar who attacked the captain and the lieutenant. Mister Nog retrieved and analysed several caches of data from the comm system in his quarters. And... they suggest that our Jem'Hadar guest may have been involved in the massacre of the Sidau village in Hedrikspool.

VAUGHN

Based on what, Major?

CENN (screen)

Among the data were logs from Doctor Bashir and Chief O'Brien - the same logs that Lieutenant Ro discovered. He also had some obscure academic research articles on the nature of the Sidau Orb fragment, and numerous classified Starfleet records about the Orbs and the Celestial Temple. There were also documents detailing security protocols for foreign vessels visiting Bajoran space.

VAUGHN

What else?

CENN (screen)

Something I'd never heard of before - an alternate universe, one that was previously visited by station personnel.

Vaughn is dismayed - this just gets worse by the minute.

VAUGHN

Did anything in the data suggest a motive?

On screen, Bashir steps forward to answer that question.

BASHIR (screen)

Nog identified a subliminal signal embedded in all the messages Taran'atar received. The pattern is an identical match for Taran'atar's brain waves. I think that whoever contacted him is using the signal to control him.

VAUGHN

Are you saying someone bypassed his genetic conditioning? There's not many people who could do what you're suggesting, Doctor.

BASHIR (screen)

Actually, that's the thing - they didn't need to bypass it.

VAUGHN

(frustrated)

Doctor, did they or didn't they?

BASHIR (screen)

Well, Commander... Nog was able to recover a single-frame image of the person who sent these messages.

Bashir reaches forward and taps some buttons on the central Ops table. An inset IMAGE appears in the corner of the *Defiant's* main viewscreen. It is dark and grainy, but the image is unmistakably Kira's face. Vaughn understands.

VAUGHN

(grave)

The Intendant.

BASHIR

Unfortunately, yes. And because Odo told Taran'atar to obey Captain Kira's every command, and the Intendant is Kira...

VAUGHN

I understand the implications,
Doctor.

BASHIR (screen)

But it means he's not responsible
for his actions, sir. He may not
even consciously realise he's been
compromised.

VAUGHN

We need to move quickly. Is there
any way to break the Intendant's
new conditioning in the field?

BASHIR (screen)

I'm working on ideas. A neuro-
electric pulse might counteract -

VAUGHN

How long, Doctor?

BASHIR (screen)

A few hours.

VAUGHN

Get back to me when you know.
Vaughn out.

Vaughn slaps the armrest panel, cutting the signal, fuming.

VAUGHN

Bowers! How long till we intercept
the *Euphrates*?

BOWERS

(check panels,
surprised)

Actually sir, we'll intercept in
thirty seconds. The *Euphrates* is
holding position... correction,
the *Euphrates* is adrift.

Vaughn shifts forward - something about this instantly
strikes him as wrong. Fast, urgent exchanges.

VAUGHN

Helm, drop to impulse.

ZUCCA

Aye, sir.

VAUGHN

Can we get a visual?

The screen changes to show a grey-white COMET tumbling slowly through space, with the runabout tiny alongside it.

VAUGHN

What the hell is that?

T'RB

The Nahanas comet, sir. It's a rogue body on the border between the Bajor and Almatha sectors.

BOWERS

Magnifying...

The image changes to show a close-up of the *Euphrates*, adrift and tumbling, all its running lights off. The rough grey mass of the comet is in foreground.

VAUGHN

Tactical, report.

ALECO

Minimal power on the runabout. Shields are down... no life signs. They're not on board.

VAUGHN

Did it have a run-in with the comet?

BOWERS

Checking... Affirmative. We're reading small debris and pulverised rock and ice, scattered along a trajectory consistent with the runabout's position. Maybe she managed to get the drop on him.

T'RB

Sir, I've got an intermittent signal... a Starfleet SOS, from the surface of the comet. It's Ensign Tenmei's combadge, sir! She's on the comet!

VAUGHN

Beam her up.

T'RB

(frustrated)

She's deep in a crevasse with a lot of magnesite. It's hard to punch through.

VAUGHN

Helm, lock onto that signal and get us a clear line of sight for transport.

ZUCCA

Aye sir.

On the view screen, the comet grows closer as the *Defiant* surges forward. We lose sight of the runabout, focused on one deep crevasse in the grey, icy surface of the comet.

VAUGHN

Aleco?

ALECO

Still on the runabout, sir. No change.

ZUCCA

We're directly above Tenmei's position.

VAUGHN

Drop cloak, arm phasers and stand by to transport.

The LIGHTS come up as the cloak drops.

BOWERS
Cloak disengaged. Phasers ready.

VAUGHN
(slaps panel)
Bridge to Chao. Lock onto Ensign
Tenmei's signal and energise.

CHAO (comm)
Aye, sir. Energising...

T'RB
(urgent)
One life sign on the runabout!
Jem'Hadar!

ALECO
Runabout's shields raising!

VAUGHN
Fire pha -

A massive, thunderous BOOM shakes the room as the entire ship is physically hit hard by something from outside.

The bridge goes dark. The crew are TOSSED out of their seats as the ship literally ROLLS over backwards. THUMPS and YELLS of pain as bodies slam hard into bulkheads.

The ship's engines WHINE and struggle to right the ship, inertial dampers tumbling the crew back to the deck. Every screen and panel is either dark or flickering with static.

Vaughn DRAGS his bruised and aching body towards the centre seat, collapses into it and hits the panels at his side. Around him, the rest of the crew are doing likewise.

VAUGHN
All decks, damage report!
(to Bowers)
What hit us?

BOWERS
Still trying to figure that out
myself... patching in the backup
sensors...

The main view screen crackles back to life, but all we see is a cloud of pulverised ice and rock surrounding the ship. Vaughn is just confused right now, wondering what happened.

BOWERS

No sign of the *Euphrates*, sir...
Hang on - I've got her! Heading
for Cardassian space, warp eight.

T'RB

Shields and cloak offline.

ALECO

Weapons offline.

ZUCCA

Helm sluggish.

LEISHMAN (comm)

Engineering to bridge.

VAUGHN

Go ahead, Leishman.

LEISHMAN (comm)

We took a beating down here, sir.
Warp core's down, and we've got
damage in the port nacelle.

VAUGHN

Everyone alright?

LEISHMAN (comm)

Nothing a week on Risa wouldn't
fix.

VAUGHN

How long to get us back in the
hunt?

LEISHMAN (comm)

Won't know till I get a look at
that nacelle, but a few hours at
least.

VAUGHN

Economise where you can, and keep
me posted. Bridge out. Mister
Bowers, do we still have a lock on
Ensign Tenmei?

T'rb and Bowers look at each other, haunted and sickened.
Then they look up at Vaughn.

BOWERS

Sir, we know what hit us. It was
the comet. It exploded.

The bridge goes quiet as everyone realises what that means.
The blood drains from Vaughn's face.

T'RB

The comet was rich in ultritium.
Sensors indicate a high-powered
explosive on the comet's surface
was used as a detonator. We
suspect the explosives were from
the runabout's weapons package.

Nobody wants to say any more, so Vaughn fills in the last
details himself, in a thin, dry, whispering voice. He
stares down at the deck, not focused on anything.

VAUGHN

And they were linked to her
combadge. So that our shields
would be down for transport.

BOWERS

(quiet)
Yes, sir.

Vaughn closes his eyes, clenches a fist.

VAUGHN

Should have boarded the runabout.
Shrouded. He was shrouded. He was
there all the time.

He stands, shaken and bloodless. He is on the verge of
vomiting.

VAUGHN
Bowers, you have the bridge.

BOWERS
Aye, sir.

Vaughn tries to maintain composure, but he basically just staggers to the door and leaves the bridge. The crew watch him go with silent shock and sympathy.

68 **INT. DEFIANT - READY ROOM**

Vaughn staggers into the room, almost walks into the desk. He is holding himself tight, desperately trying - and failing - to hold the emotions in.

VAUGHN
Computer, lock the door.

A beep signals agreement. His pulse is pounding, his breath is short, tears are forcing their way out.

VAUGHN
Like Ruriko. You killed Prynn just
like you killed Ruriko.
 (pulls self together)
No I didn't. He did. Tricked me...
used her as bait... not my...
 (it's not working)
Feeble excuses... stupid bastard.
God forgive me... I killed my
little girl.

On Vaughn's anguished, tearful face...

FADE OUT:

THE END