

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x03 - "Waiting for the
Mist to Clear."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novella

"Fragments and Omens"
by J Noah Kym

appearing in

Star Trek: Worlds of Deep Space Nine
Book 2 - Trill / Bajor

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING

Afternoon turning to evening. A sudden storm batters the countryside - thundering RAIN, driving WIND, threatening clouds. A country PUB stands on a hillside among this.

2 INT. PUB

The place is packed with people. Most have been forced to take refuge from the storm in here, and are making the most of the chance to drink and party. Waiters and bartenders are probably busier than they have ever been.

Tucked into a corner booth is RENA, a young, medium-dark skinned Bajoran woman, early 20s. Her clothes are wholly unsuitable to the weather - a light sweater and knee-length skirt. She has things to be doing and does not want to be stuck in this noisy, smelly place, but has no choice.

Finishing her ale, she rummages in her travelling bag and pulls out a large paper DRAWING PAD, sealed within a clear plastic waterproof packet. She opens the packet and removes the pad, opening it to look at a picture on the first page.

INSERT

It's a charcoal drawing of a design for a Bajoran grave marker. It seems half-hearted, unfinished.

BACK TO SCENE

Rena looks at her design, unhappy with it. Frustrated, she tears out the page, balls it up, HURLS it across the room.

As she follows the paper ball's progress, her eye falls on a table full of workers - trawler men in oily galoshes. She notices that most of the trawler men are eyeing her back over their drinks, keeping a close eye on her legs.

She hitches her skirt down as far as it will go. Groaning their disapproval, the men turn back to their drinks.

But one man at the table had not been looking at her legs - it is JAKE SSKO (although Rena does not know this). She looks at him, at his week-old beard, finds him attractive. Then he looks up and makes eye contact. His expression is kind and gentle, and she responds with a shy half-smile.

She is trying to decide whether to beckon him over - though she knows she probably shouldn't - when the waiter taps him on the shoulder and catches his attention away from her.

Slightly disappointed, Rena turns back to her pad and looks at the empty page. She has no idea what to draw on it.

JAKE (o.s.)

Excuse me?

Surprised, Rena looks up to see Jake standing near her. She subtly looks him over, and she likes what she sees.

JAKE

I saw you had some paper, and I was wondering if you could spare a sheet.

RENA

You have a sudden desire to sketch one of your comrades?

JAKE

(chuckle)

No, but there's a lady over there who's offered to transmit a message to my family for me. I just need to write it down.

Still suspecting it might be a strange pick-up line, she tears out a page, grabs a pencil and hands them to him.

RENA

Have a seat.

JAKE

Thanks. There's no transmitter on the barge, there's definitely not one in here, and I suspect I won't get to Mylea for another few days.

RENA
(intrigued)
You have business in Mylea?

JAKE
Not business exactly. More like it
felt like the right place to go
when I took off from home a week
ago. Maybe there's a fishing
outfit that could use a hand.

RENA
So you've not signed on to work
the river for the summer?

JAKE
Nah. Tessik told me about a famous
archaeological site he thought I
might be interested in. Yyn? I
have experience in archaeology so
I thought I'd check it out.

She watches his hands, writing complex Bajoran script on
the paper like a native. She finds that interesting - that
a non-Bajoran would be so familiar.

A uniformed (and wet through) local Militia OFFICER comes
into the pub. The bartender directs him to a microphone.
After a chime, the officer's voice booms from speakers.

OFFICER
Due to continuing bad weather and
the risk of flash floods, the
River Road and the Yolja barges
are being closed indefinitely.
(groans from
everywhere)
Arrangements have been made for
all of you to be accommodated in
the village nearby.

Rena looks around at the crowd, like them disappointed at
this. Jake notices and looks at her questioningly.

RENA

I'm feeling a lot of pressure to get home at the moment. This delay isn't welcome.

JAKE
Emergency?

RENA
Responsibilities.

JAKE
Ah, that I understand. You're welcome to bunk with me and the guys. They're not so bad. I'll walk with you if it'll make you feel more comfortable.

She smirks, flattered by what she still suspects is an interest beyond simple courtesy.

RENA
In the days of the *d'jarras*, high-born ladies always travelled with stewards for their protection.

Jake bows deeply, and holds his arm out for her to take.

JAKE
Accept my services, milady?

RENA
(mock harassed)
If I must.

She grabs her bag, puts the drawing pad back in it, then takes his arm and heads out of the pub into the evening.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING - DAY

One of the standard city shots, denoting government buildings. On the other side of the world from the storm, it is a nice sunny, pleasant morning.

4 INT. ASAREM'S OFFICE

First Minister ASAREM sits behind her desk in the well-appointed but not ostentatious office. Her Second Minister, a middle-aged Bajoran man named LEDAHN, sits opposite. She nibbles on toast as they go through her morning briefing.

LEDAHN

Okay, item one - new figures from the Ministry of Trade. Bajoran educators, artists and farmers are still in great demand on many Federation worlds. Bajoran cuisine appears to be especially popular.

ASAREM

Good. Amazing to think that only a decade ago we were struggling with famine. Now we can not only feed ourselves, but meet off-world demands too.

LEDAHN

Item two - the Federation Council convenes in five days, at which time they will discuss the Trill government's handling of the parasite crisis.

ASAREM

Inform Councillor Rava that Bajor will support holding specific individuals accountable, but not the Trill people *en masse*. They've suffered enough. Bajor has nothing to gain by making it worse.

LEDAHN

Understood. Item three - Minister Ridoll's report on the Cardassian situation. Inadequate health care is still the largest problem.

ASAREM

I never thought I'd be so grateful to Vedek Yevir for circumventing my authority. Please make sure the media knows that this office supports the Vedek's current mission to Cardassia, and set up a meeting with Ridoll to discuss additional medical aid.

Ledahn nods, but then looks off to side, touching the small comm device in his ear, as if he is receiving a message.

LEDAHN

First Minister, if you'll excuse me for a moment.

ASAREM

Of course, Muri, go on.

Ledahn politely excuses himself from the room. Asarem sits back, gazing up at a large portrait of Shakaar. Finishing off her toast, she goes to take a sip from a cup. But she splutters the drink back into the cup, bellowing out loud.

ASAREM

Theno!

Asarem's personal assistant, THENO, pokes his head around the door. Wizenred, 70s, with huge nose ridges. He is also long-suffering and thoroughly impertinent. He gets away with it because he's good at his job and is usually right.

THENO

You screamed, First Minister?

ASAREM

(re cup)

What is this?

THENO

Cela tea, First Minister. I had the kitchen prepare it for you.

ASAREM

No, no, no! Theno, how long have you been my aide?

THENO

It seems forever, First Minister.

ASAREM

Then you should know that I only drink *cela* tea from Rakantha. This is not Rakantha.

Theno comes in, picks up the cup for himself, takes a sip.

THENO

It seems passable to me.

ASAREM

That's the problem. Right there. That attitude. Bajorans don't strive for passable. Our culture and civilisation weren't built on passable. The monks in Rakantha have been growing *cela* plants for centuries. It's an art to them.

THENO

(unimpressed)

Is this the same group who campaigned a few years ago to have Cardassian voles declared a protected species?

ASAREM

(tightly)

Their droppings have been found to have a remarkable restorative effect on our farmland.

THENO

But... they're voles.

ASAREM

You're missing the point. The monks of Rakantha weren't afraid to get their hands dirty and work to make things better instead of settling for 'passable.'

THENO

My ignorance shames me, First Minister. Shall I have myself taken into custody?

ASAREM

Just get that swill out of here and bring me some kava juice.

THENO

As you wish. Would you like one vole dropping in that or two?

Before she can reply, Ledahn returns to the room with a troubled expression. Theno takes the chance to escape.

LEDAHN

First Minister... Rava Mehwyn is dead.

Asarem's face drops, appalled at that news.

ASAREM

Oh no... How did it happen? Who's responsible?

LEDAHN

What? No, no-one! She had a heart attack in her sleep at the Bajoran embassy, her second night on Earth. Natural causes. First Minister, I'm sorry if I led you to believe -

ASAREM

No, Muri, that's alright. I guess I've just gotten into the habit of assuming the worst.

LEDAHN

That's understandable, especially after all we've been through lately. But she was ninety-six, after all. We have to select a replacement right away.

ASAREM

Can't that wait?

LEDAHN

I'm afraid it can't. By the rules of the Federation Council, a world must have representation at the opening of the session, in two weeks' time, or it can't take part in the session at all.

ASAREM

What? It took the Chamber almost a month to agree to Rava in the first place. We'll never get a replacement councillor in time.

LEDAHN

Yes, we will. In an emergency like this, you have the authority to appoint an interim councillor without the Chamber's consensus. That appointment gets reviewed after a year, but by that time -

ASAREM

- She'll be thoroughly immersed in the job and no-one would dare revoke her. Excellent. Get me all the files on our candidates.

Ledahn nods, and rushes off to do as she says.

5 **EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING**

Back in the midst of the storm in the countryside...

6 **INT. VINEYARD STOCKROOM**

A storage room hewn from rock, with many wooden racks of wine bottles. A table has been set up with food, which the trawler men from Jake's boat are picking through. They are loud and raucous, drinking ale they brought with them.

Elsewhere in the room, Jake and Rena sit slumped against a wall with their own plates between them. Rena is still somewhat uncomfortable around the brash and noisy workers, but Jake's presence gives her distraction and comfort. She trusts him instinctively, and they chat freely and easily.

Rena picks up a piece of *hasperat* - a kind of savoury pastry - but grimaces at the taste and puts it back down.

JAKE

Sorry... I thought most Bajorans liked *hasperat*.

RENA

It's the bread. It's long past the point when it should be used this way.

JAKE

Oh, I... didn't notice.

RENA

My family has run a bakery in Mylea for generations. My father, and his father. A lot of things I don't know. Bread, I know.

JAKE

Do you have a large family?

RENA

Just me and my aunt. My parents both died in the Occupation. It was my grandfather who raised me, mostly. He used to tell me stories of how my parents were in the Resistance. He'd say they were the bravest people in town.

JAKE

I lost my mother when I was young too.

(sympathetic pause)

So... how did you end up in that tavern?

RENA

Before he died, my grandfather asked me to go to the Kenda shrine and bring back a *duranja* lamp. Don't really know why. So I left my place at Dakhur University, went to the shrine, got the lamp and that's when I got caught in the storm. Vedek Triu said my path would be revealed as I walked it.

(shrug)

I hope he was right.

JAKE

I've found that things tend to happen for a reason. Was that the responsibility you talked about?

RENA

Not just that. He also asked me to design his grave marker. I've been trying, but... nothing I try seems right. Nothing seems enough. How to express this remarkable life in a few inches of metal... his bravery, his kindness...

(beat)

I mean, there's the usual labels - resistance hero, devoted father and husband, fierce traditionalist. But none of those describe who Azeni Topa was.

She smiles, drifting off into a story. Jake is happy to sit back and listen, enchanted.

RENA

Okay, Mylea's a coastal town, right? So in the afternoons, we get a lot of fog coming in off the

water. I mean, not fog like you see in other places - this, you could easily get lost in. And people do, sometimes.

JAKE

Sounds like San Francisco on Earth.

RENA

When I was younger, I remember he used to step out onto the street in front of the bakery...

7 **EXT. BAKERY**

A middle-aged, dark-skinned Bajoran man, TOPA, stands in the cobbled street on a foggy afternoon, his face turned up to the sky and a faint smile on his face. A young girl, about five, approaches and joins him - YOUNG RENA.

RENA (v.o.)

He'd just stand there, face up to the sky, with his eyes closed, this funny little smile on his face. I asked him one time why he did that. The sun was hidden behind the mist, so why bother?

Topa turns to young Rena, still smiling enigmatically.

8 **BACK TO SCENE**

RENA

He said, "But I know the light is there. When it finally breaks through the mist, I'll be ready."

JAKE

(quite touched)
That's lovely.

RENA

I was too young to grasp the metaphor then, of course. But I think... that's kind of where I am

now. I feel like I'm waiting for my life to start, and that it won't happen till I get back to Mylea.

She says this not with any eagerness, but with a sense of heavy responsibility. Jake understands how she feels. Then one of the drunken trawler men barges over, interrupting.

TRAWLER

Little missy wanna join us for a game or two?

RENA

(polite)

I'm not much for *shafa*.

TRAWLER

(unpleasantly suggestive)

We don't have to play *shafa*.

JAKE

Get back to the game, Ganty. I think Volvin is cheating you.

TRAWLER

That reptile!

The trawler man lurches back over to his mates. Rena looks back to Jake, grateful for the timely rescue.

JAKE

(awkward)

Perhaps we should call it a night.

She agrees, but a touch disappointed. They both stand up.

RENA

So... we should probably exchange names. I'm Rena.

JAKE

Jacob.

RENA

Jay-cub. Thanks for... for being
my steward for the night.

He smiles warmly. She looks at him, still intrigued.

RENA

So, Jacob... where does a human
barge worker with a background in
archaeology learn to write such
fluent Bajoran?

JAKE

Well, I consider myself more a
writer by profession than anything
else. I'm working on something at
the moment - a modern twist on an
old Bajoran ghost story.

RENA

(impressed)

Really...? You'll have to let me
read a bit.

JAKE

If I can see your sketches.

RENA

Fair enough.

Impulsively, she leans in and gives him a quick peck of a
kiss on his cheek. Then she quickly turns, grabs her bag
and a bedroll, and heads into a closet that has been
assigned as her sleeping room, leaving Jake pleasantly
flustered.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

9 INT. CLOSET

In the cramped space, Rena rolls out her bedroll, kneels down on it, and opens up her bag. She takes out the sketch pad, and an ornate candelabra - the *duranja* lamp.

She looks at it, reminded of her grandfather. It makes her feel a bit guilty for flirting with Jake. But she convinces herself she has done nothing wrong, and places the lamp in a corner. Realising she needs the bathroom, she gets back up and steps out of the closet again.

10 INT. VINEYARD STOCKROOM

Emerging from the closet, she finds Jake already curled up inside his own bedroll, against the wall outside her closet door. Looking the other way, she sees the increasingly drunk and boisterous trawler men. Deciding better of it, she heads back into the closet.

11 INT. CLOSET

In an urgent rush, she grabs her things, shoves them back into her bag and heads out again.

12 INT. VINEYARD STOCKROOM

She stalks out of the closet, past Jake and heading for the exit. Seeing her, Jake scrambles up and after her.

JAKE

Where are you going?

RENA

I'm getting out of this place. If you feel the need to sleep outside my room to protect me, then it must mean you think I'm in danger.

(re trawler men)

I'd rather take my chances out there.

JAKE

I'll go with you. Just let me get my things.

RENA

I've lived in this province all my life. I can handle myself.

JAKE

Rena, I know you don't know me, but I want to help you. You're facing treacherous terrain in horrible weather, and it won't be light for another six hours at least. You're in as much danger out there as you are in here.

She pauses, resentful to need help. But she does like him.

RENA

Fine.

She turns and walks out, with Jake following.

13 EXT. BAJOR - RIVER ROAD - NIGHT

The storm is still raging. Jake and Rena huddle against the rain, walking along an old road. The rushing, churning sound of an overflowing RIVER can be heard. They are a little bit distant, not quite as comfortable as they were.

They come to a junction. Rena looks up at the sign, written in both Bajoran script and Federation standard (English). Rena rolls her eyes - another sign of Federation presence. She keeps walking along the river road, Jake keeping up.

A bridge looms out of the darkness, crossing the river. Rena aims towards it, with Jake following.

As she steps closer to the edge of the roaring river, the muddy ground gives way beneath her, and she begins to slip down towards the water. Jake GASPS, comes running after.

JAKE

Rena!

As Rena continues to tumble down the river bank, she loses grip of her bag and it falls, ripping open and dumping its contents into the mud. Stretching his arm out, Jake manages to catch hold of Rena's arm and slowly stops her slide.

Still on her knees, Rena grabs for her bag. The waterproof packet has ripped and the sketchpad is soaked with mud. All her sketches, her artwork, ruined. She POUNDS her fists into the muddy ground in fury, SCREAMING at the injustice.

RENA

I'm doing what you wanted! I walked away from my life to follow the path you laid out for me! Do you hear me? If I'm submitting to all of your demands - all of them! - you could at least make it easier! Do you hear me, dammit? Answer me! Send your Tears or your Emissary, but answer me!

Jake watches, keeping a respectful distance, saddened to see her anger and frustration. Rena gradually picks herself back up off the ground, her clothes soaked and caked in mud. Jake looks out through the storm, across the river...

JAKE

Something's out there, a ship. I can see the light on the bow.

RENA

They'll never see us in the storm.

Jake reaches into his own bag, slung over his shoulder, and pulls out a large flashlight. He shines it in the direction of the light from the ship. After a few moments of waving it around to get attention, the light seems to respond.

JAKE

(excited)

They're changing course! Rena!
You can go home!

Despite the storm and her unhappiness, she smiles at Jake's enthusiasm, glad for his help.

14 **EXT. RIVER PATROL VESSEL - NIGHT**

Still deep night. The large and bulky iron boat chugs along the river, its headlight piercing the rain and wind.

15 **INT. RIVER PATROL VESSEL**

A small and sparse bedroom aboard ship, with a rickety bunk bed, a small table, a chair and a porthole showing the continuing rain. Two steaming cups of tea rest on the table, and two emergency clothing packs are on the chair.

The room ROCKS slightly with the motion of the boat, and the wind howls outside. There is very low light. Jake is in the room, already wearing the bland but dry pyjamas from his pack, and spreading blankets across the two bunk beds.

Rena re-enters the room, also now in pyjamas and holding a bag carrying her sodden clothes. With a quick gulp of tea, she scrambles up the ladder to the top bunk, snuggles under the covers and turns her back without a word.

Jake accepts that she is in no mood to talk, so he sits on the lower bunk and drinks his own tea. Once it is finished, he resigns himself to his own bed. After a while...

JAKE

Rena.

RENA

Yes?

JAKE

Your book - I'm so sorry. I know how I'd feel if I lost my work.

RENA

I'm sure it's just the Prophets letting me know they're aware of my rebellious heart.

JAKE

Why would the Prophets take away your art?

Rena shuffles in bed - humans never understand this stuff.

RENA

They're not taking away my art.
More like... the Prophets have put
all Bajorans on a path. When we
accept our path, our lives are
filled with confidence and peace.
If we resist our path, we find
chaos and uncertainty. As you can
see, I'm not doing too well.

JAKE

Or maybe this is where your path
is supposed to lead.

(she scoffs)

Seriously. Last year, I thought I
lost my father. I believed that if
anyone could find him, I could. So
I went searching for him.

RENA

But you said your father lives
farther up in Kendra province. So
I take it he wasn't dead.

JAKE

No, but I didn't find him. I ended
up on this crazy adventure, and
ended up bringing several someone
elses back with me. None of it
made sense. But looking back, I
know what seemed like a mistake at
the time, was really part of a
larger pattern that I couldn't see
while I was inside it. My hopes
came true - my father came home -
but not in the way I'd expected.
Maybe that's where you're at.

She pauses, considering his confidence in her. She decides
that it is only fair she confide something in return.

RENA

My grandfather died a few weeks
ago. Just before Unity Day. He had
a degenerative illness that could

have been cured if he'd received treatment in his youth. But the Cardassians didn't care about helping Bajorans. So he lived out his last days in agony. He was so miserable and so brave... I could never have said no to him. So far, I've only been able to honour one of my promises - going to Kenda shrine. I need to go home to Mylea to finish the others.

JAKE

He didn't ask you to give up your art, did he?

RENA

Oh, no. But he asked me to commit to a life that would honour Bajor. That would preserve what is unique about us, in the face of all this change. I can best do that by returning to Mylea. Once my aunt retires there's no-one else to run the bakery. Mylean traditions are in danger of disappearing if no-one makes sure to uphold them.

She hears a rustling, and Jake's face appears at the edge of the upper bunk, near to hers.

JAKE

I hate not being able to see your face when we talk. I'll go back down if it bothers you.

Rena sits up in her bed, covering herself with the blanket, and pats the bed, inviting Jake to sit with her. He clambers up and perches at the other end of the bed.

JAKE

I understand what you're saying, Rena. But from the way you've talked about your grandfather, I have a hard time believing he'd want you to give up your studies.

RENA

I won't give it up, exactly. I'll help Marja with the bakery and pursue my painting in my spare time, like I always have.

Jake's expression makes it clear he is not convinced. Seeing it, Rena crosses her arms, defensive.

RENA

Look, I have nothing against you Federation people. But you don't have tens of thousands of years of history to protect. I owe it to Bajor.

JAKE

You owe it to yourself to paint. I saw you out there, screaming at the Prophets, more angry than almost any other person I've ever seen. And considering that I've seen Kira Nerys angry, that's saying something.

Rena is surprised by the namedrop, but Jake barrels on.

JAKE (cont)

You weren't screaming about preserving Bajor. You were screaming like someone who was having her soul - her *pagh* - torn out of her body.

(whisper)

Tell me again that you need to give up your art.

Touched, feeling like he knows her, she struggles against her instincts for the sake of her duty. Jake shuffles closer, trying to console and sympathise and comfort.

RENA

(quietly)

I'll do what I have to...

She begins to sob quietly under her breath. Jake reaches out tenderly and pulls her into an embrace. She doesn't resist. He pulls the blanket over them both to keep their legs warm. Rena gasps slightly with the intimate contact.

Tentatively, he reaches out and traces the edge of her face with his fingertips. Gently, cautiously, he leans close and kisses her. She knows she shouldn't, but lets herself relax into it and enjoy it.

The kisses become more passionate, more urgent. Rena's hand reaches around Jake's back, pulling him tighter to her, and he responds.

As they grow more intense, we do the classic "pan to fireplace" move - drifting over to the porthole and the rain and wind pounding against the outside of the boat.

CROSS-FADE TO:

16 **INT. RIVER PATROL VESSEL**

Later - the porthole reveals that it is morning, and the storm is over. There is a loud KNOCK on the door.

VOICE
(muffled)
Mylea Harbour in twenty minutes.

Woken by the noise, Rena lifts her head from where she lies on the top bunk, naked under the blanket, with Jake spooned up behind her and still asleep.

She disentangles herself, and climbs quietly down, grabbing her pyjamas from where they got thrown, quickly dressing.

She throws on a jumpsuit the patrol officers provided, grabs the rest of the emergency pack. With a nervous, uncertain glance back at Jake, she rushes out of the room.

17 **INT. BATHROOM**

A tiny, pokey bathroom onboard the ship. Rena enters, closing and locking the door behind her, puts down the pack and stares at herself in the mirror.

RENA

Oh, Rena... what have you done?

Still worried, she begins brushing her hair and washing.

18 **INT. RIVER PATROL VESSEL**

The door opens and Rena cautiously re-enters, knowing it will be awkward. Jake is already up and dressed in another jumpsuit. Looking over his shoulder hopefully, he sees her expression, and his own drops. He turns back to his bag.

JAKE

Don't tell me. It was a mistake,
you just want to be friends -

RENA

No, it wasn't a mistake. I chose -
we chose, and it was right. We
both needed the comfort.

She reaches out to touch him, but he flinches away.

JAKE

Comfort? You make me sound like a
favourite pillow.

RENA

I can't make this more than that.

JAKE

Why not? Because I don't fit into
Topa's plan? I'm not from Mylea?

(beat)

What, Rena? Tell me, since I don't
have the benefit of having the
Prophets lay it all out for me.

RENA

If I could, I would ask you to
come home with me when we get off
this boat. I would invite you to
stay at my house and we'd see what
could happen between us. But I
just can't.

Jake's angry face softens as understanding comes to him.

JAKE

There's someone else. Someone that
Topa wanted you to be with.

RENA

Yes... and no. Before I left to
study, there was an understanding
between me and someone I'd known
since childhood. I was ready to
break it off, but I owe it to Topa
to see if it can work.

JAKE

Well, far be it from me to stand
in the way of your path.

He hefts his bag onto his shoulder and heads out, leaving
Rena alone and feeling miserable.

19 EXT. MYLEA HARBOUR - DAY

The river patrol boat rests at the harbour jetty, and the
passengers are disembarking - lots of other people who were
also rescued from the storm. Rena and Jake are among them -
Jake pointedly not near to or looking at Rena.

Two people of Rena's age jump up and wave as they see her.
HALAR is a blonde girl in study robes, a trainee for the
church. KAIL is a muscular young man with tumbling sandy
hair, a manual labour factory worker.

As Rena approaches, Halar throws herself on her in a hug.

HALAR

You're safe! Oh, Rena! We were so
worried when we heard about the
storm. You must have been
terrified!

RENA

(wryly)
I've had easier trips down the
valley.

Halar lets her go, and Kail steps in. He hugs her, and places a kiss on her lips. She tries to control her discomfort with it - this is her fiancé-to-be.

Once he lets her go, Rena's eyes drift guiltily over to Jake, who is walking through the crowd, still not looking at Rena. Halar follows her eyes, and claps with glee.

HALAR

You're looking at Jake Sisko,
aren't you?

Rena's brow creases, confused for a moment, until she suddenly understands who Halar is talking about. She is amazed to realise who she just slept with.

RENA

Jacob... Sisko?

HALAR

Jake, Jacob... either way, he's a Sisko. The son of the Emissary. I practically squealed out loud when I saw him coming down the gang plank. Did you see him on the ship?

Rena is still too stunned to respond, as she watches Jake walk off without a glance in her direction.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. BEDROOM

Rena's bedroom, in the floors above the family bakery. As her morning ALARM goes off, she is already lying awake in bed, staring at the ceiling, her mind going round and round over the recent days' events. Guilty, confused, resentful.

She slaps off the alarm, drags herself upright with a sigh, and moves over to a sink with a mirror on the wall. She splashes her face, rinses out with mouthwash, ties back her unruly black hair, takes an allergy tablet.

She turns away, throws on simple clothes. Once that's done, she goes back to the mirror and stares at her own face.

RENA
Hello, bakery shop girl.

21 INT. BAKERY

A family outfit, where small and traditional ovens open onto a shop floor, separated by a long counter filled with pastries and rolls and loaves of all different kinds. It is early morning, but Aunt MARJA is already hard at work.

A door at the far end opens, and Rena steps in, wearing an apron. She and Marja do not especially get along, so she is not looking forward to this. Marja glances up from her glazing brush, waves absently, then goes back to her work.

MARJA
There's tea if you want.

RENA
What do you need me to do?

MARJA
If you can manage to stay focused,
glaze the buns.

RENA
What do you mean, focused?

MARJA

No tinted glaze. No decorative patterns. No experiments with the recipes. We're not creating art here, we're feeding people. Fofen Genn's replicators are down, and he's got a houseful of boarders to feed. He'll need a few baskets of rolls to hold them over till the repair person comes.

(sideways glance)

Kail came over every day while you were away. I know he wants to make it official.

RENA

It's not even unofficial. And he comes because you feed him.

Not even listening, Marja hands Rena a tray full of just-baked buns and moves away to do something else.

MARJA

Give those a minute to cool and then you can pack Fofen's order.

With a sigh, she places the tray aside and fetches baskets.

22 **EXT. BAKERY - DAY**

Rena emerges from the bakery with a large basket of bread in each hand. It is a misty morning on the same street where Topa once stood. She goes to a handcart kept outside the door and bends down to begin tying the baskets to it.

JAKE (o.s.)

Excuse me?

Rena looks up. Jake is swathed in the mist, so she doesn't recognise him at first. Then he emerges, and she jumps.

RENA

(squeak)

Jacob.

JAKE

Uh... yeah. Rena. Fofen sent me down to see if the bread was... I mean, I had no idea this bakery was yours - I, you know, umm...

The slap of shoes on the cobbled street announces another person arriving out of the mist. This is PARSH, a slightly nerdy boy their age, who has a bit of a crush on Rena.

PARSH

Hey, Jacob! My dad just heard from Marja, the bread's on...

(noticing Rena)

Oh, hi Rena. Great to see you. Sorry I missed Topa's funeral. He was a great old guy. If you ever want to talk, I'm always -

RENA

(awkward)

Thanks, Parsh. Let's get moving. My aunt will want me back at work.

PARSH

Right.

Rena passes the handcart off to Parsh, who is happy to take it. Rena and Jake follow at a distance, cold and prickly.

RENA

Well hello, Jacob Sisko. Who knew the son of the Emissary worked as a steward to ladies in distress?

JAKE

(retort)

Talked to Kail lately?

Speak of the devil - they catch up with Parsh outside the boarding house, and Kail is there chatting with him.

KAIL

A-ha! My woman has brought me food. Excellent.

Kail reaches to pinch a roll out of the baskets, but Rena SLAPS his hand away. Grinning, Kail pecks her cheek. Rena is practically crawling out of her skin with awkwardness. Then Kail eyes Jake up and down, comparing himself.

KAIL

I was just inviting Parsh to join our group. He's never been to Yyn.

RENA

Neither have I.

KAIL

(suggestive)

Of course not, or we would have had our wedding night already.

Jake's face is a picture of confusion. Parsh explains.

PARSH

Solstice night at Yyn, any couple can take one of the Astur candles and be granted the privilege of being married for the night.

Jake nods uncomfortably, understanding the subtext - sex.

PARSH

Why doesn't Jacob come along? He's a writer. He might find a story at Yyn. Halar would enjoy his company.

(to Jake)

She's mad about anything to do with the Emissary.

JAKE

(polite)

I'd like that. Count me in.

RENA

I need to get back to the bakery.

Shoving the baskets at Parsh, she turns and hurries back into the mist, desperate to get away.

23 **INT. BAKERY**

Rena comes rushing through the kitchen, right past Marja.

MARJA
We'll have customers soon!

RENA
I'm working on Topa's memorial!

She SLAMS the door behind her, heading back up to her room.

24 **INT. BEDROOM**

Rena runs into her room, extremely upset. She RIPS the sheets off the bed, takes a large white one and begins to pin it to the wall using her hair clips.

She pulls out a box of paints and starts painting furiously on the canvas, throwing colours at random in her anguish. Before long she is crying, painting for her life.

25 **INT. ASAREM'S OFFICE**

Asarem sits at her desk, speaking to another Bajoran woman, SORATI, on her screen. Ledahn is sat nearby again.

SORATI (screen)
I'm sorry, First Minister, but my answer is no. I'm honoured that you thought of me, but the truth is... my husband is not well. I cannot leave him for so long a time. I hope you understand.

ASAREM
You need never apologise for loving your husband, Sorati. Please give him my wishes. My loss is his gain.
(closes the signal)
Theno!

Theno appears, long-suffering expression in place.

THENO

First Minister, there is a comm
system...

ASAREM

Just bring me the list of all
Bajoran diplomats with at least
five years' off-world experience.

Theno nods and disappears. Asarem turns back to Ledahn.

LEDAHN

You didn't try very hard to
persuade her.

ASAREM

Should I have asked her to put her
world ahead of her family?

LEDAHN

Yes.

ASAREM

Easier said than done. Sorati's
out of the picture. Let's move on.

LEDAHN

To whom? We've been through every
name on that list. None has the
qualities you said were essential
for Bajor's first Councillor.

Theno returns and hands a padd to Asarem, then hovers.

THENO

Second Minister Ledahn, may I ask
you a question?

LEDAHN

Sure, Theno, what is it?

THENO

I've recently been informed that
Cardassian voles are an asset to
the environment. Why then are they
not a protected species?

LEDAHN

Well... they're voles.

THENO

My thoughts exactly.

ASAREM

(to Ledahn,
ignoring Theno)

You're right. None of these are good enough. Yes, they're all qualified, but Bajor needs someone who's more concerned with standing up for us than making friends.

THENO

If I may be so bold, Ministers... I have a suggestion.

ASAREM

Do you have nothing better to do?

THENO

Sadly, First Minister, that is precisely the reason I accepted this position.

Ledahn has to cover a smirk at that.

ASAREM

Do you have someone to suggest or don't you?

THENO

Your former husband.

Asarem's jaw drops, utterly dumbfounded and appalled.

ASAREM

I'll pretend I didn't hear that.

LEDAHN

First Minister, you may not have that luxury...

ASAREM

Stop right there. Get out, Theno.
Get out, or by the Prophets, I'll
kill you where you stand.

THENO

(unfazed)

I'll leave you to it then,
Ministers. I'm quite confident
that between the two of you,
you'll find someone... passable.

With a backward glance, knowing he has scored a hit, Theno leaves. Asarem stares after him. Then she turns back to Ledahn, who clearly thinks this is something she should consider. Turning to the wall, Asarem stews angrily.

26 EXT. MYLEA TAVERN - EVENING

A different pub in the town, down by the harbour.

27 INT. MYLEA TAVERN

A more regular-sized crowd of townsfolk out for the night. Rena, Halar and Kail sit together at a table. Kail has had a significant amount to drink and is becoming rather loud and obnoxious. The girls are getting embarrassed, waiting hopefully for Parsh or Jake to join them.

HALAR

Well, I think it's wonderful. Our
generation will be the first to
enjoy the benefits of being true
galactic citizens.

KAIL

(harrumph)

You know what the kids really care
about? They just want to know when
their parents will be getting the
latest replicator technology. When
the new holo-novels are available.

HALAR

Being Federation citizens means
more than just finding out what

the people on Earth are wearing this season. Yes, it means we gain things from them. But we get to show all those other worlds all the great things about Bajor.

KAIL

Please. Bunch of old people - off-worlders! - sign a piece of paper two months ago and suddenly we're all supposed to do our jobs without getting paid.

(snarl)

Now the flat-noses are everywhere, acting like they own the planet.

RENA

(horrified)

Kail! Hush! Who's been acting like that?

KAIL

You know who.

An uncomfortable moment. Parsh arrives to interrupt, much to Rena's relief. But Kail will not be stopped tonight.

PARSH

Sorry I'm late. The sonic showers went off-line again. Is Jacob here yet?

HALAR

You know that's not how it works, Kail. No-one gets a free ride. Everyone has to do something, but no-one gets left behind. No-one starves, no-one is cold, but not everyone gets his own holosuite.

KAIL

Oh no? Sounds like you understand all the rules, Halar. I wish someone would explain them to me. Why should I bother working in that iron foundry seven hours a

day, when they can replicate anything I could make by pressing a few buttons?

RENA

You should do it because you want to. Like I do in the bakery and Halar does in her mother's dress shop. Why are you being such a jerk about it?

KAIL

How different are they really from the Cardassians? Cardies had guns. Humans got holo-novels. What's the difference? At least the Cardies were tough. The Feds, they're just cowards. Every single one of them.

HALAR

(annoyed)

You think the Emissary is a coward too, Kail?

KAIL

The Emissary? Fine, let's talk about the Emissary. Let's start with how convenient it was that he showed up just when the Feds wanted to make a favourable impression on the gullible masses. I mean, there couldn't have been any political motivation for that, could there?

RENA

(sharply)

Why don't you just shut up, Kail?

KAIL

(incensed)

Wha...? What did you say?

RENA

You heard me. What do you know about the Emissary? You haven't

cared about the prophecies since you were little. You don't know anything.

Undaunted, Kail leers at Rena's slightly revealing outfit.

KAIL

You're hardly the portrait of piety, Rena. Faking sick to get out of shrine services so we could meet at the docks and -

RENA

(standing suddenly)

We're done, Kail. I thought this could work. I wanted it to work for Topa's sake. But I'm not putting up with this, not even for my grandfather.

KAIL

You gonna go find yourself a Federation boy now, Rena? Us Myleans not good enough for you?

RENA

I'm leaving now, Kail. Don't bother following me. And don't come to the bakery tomorrow with your apologies.

She pushes away from the table and begins to walk away.

Snarling, Kail steps into her path, and the empty beer glass in his hand begins to SWING towards her head...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

28 INT. MYLEA TAVERN

Before the glass in Kail's hand has a chance to hit Rena's head, it is STOPPED by a dark-skinned hand - Jake's hand.

JAKE (o.s.)
Hey, whoa! She hasn't done
anything to hurt you!

Moving with it, Kail turns the movement onto Jake instead, and ends up flinging Jake right off his feet and sending him CRASHing against someone else's table.

The entire room comes to a halt, holding their breath at the unexpected noise. Rena is absolutely stunned at what just happened. Meanwhile Jake slumps against the table...

JAKE
I bit my tongue...

HALAR
Kail! What's the matter with you?!
Help him up!

Startled, as if only just realising what he has done, Kail turns and lurches drunkenly out of the tavern. Parsh, who was keeping his head down, helps Jake up off the floor.

PARSH
He... I'm sorry, Jacob... he's not
normally like this. He got fired
from the foundry. His foreman...
they didn't like each other very
much, but that doesn't mean...
he's not normally like this.

JAKE
Someone should check on him. You
know where he went?
(Parsh nods)
Then you should go. We can plan
the Yyn trip tomorrow.

PARSH
(to Rena)
You're really ending it with him?
(she nods)
Good.

Then he turns and leaves. Jake rubs at a bump on his head.

JAKE
Man, this place is even rougher
than Quark's.

Still stunned, Rena can do nothing but turn and leave too.

29 EXT. MYLEA TAVERN - NIGHT

Rena RUNS out of the tavern into the warm, breezy night. She runs a few paces towards the harbour, and comes to a stop at the water's edge, crying the tension out.

The tavern's doors squeal open again, and Jake approaches her cautiously. He holds out a long chiffon scarf to her.

JAKE
I have your wrap. You left it on
the chair.

RENA
(taking it)
Thank you for looking after me.
Now please leave me alone.

JAKE
I want to be your friend, Rena.

Trying to escape from her feelings, she throws the wrap on and marches away down the wooden promenade of the harbour.

JAKE
I'm sorry about Kail!

RENA
(turning back)
Sorry? Why? You saw him in there,
his boorish, bigoted behaviour.

Yes, that was the man I once loved. By comparison, you come out looking like the fine gentleman steward. You can bask in your superiority with my blessing.

JAKE

I'm sorry because I know how much it meant to you to honour your promise to Topa.

RENA

(slumps)

I can't finish anything. First I lose my sketchbook in that damn storm. Now I've rejected the man he wanted me to marry. I'm a colossal failure.

JAKE

Rena... you aren't a failure.

He steps closer, tentatively, and gently kisses her. She doesn't pull away. But then the tavern door creaks again, and more revellers spill out. She lurches away guiltily.

RENA

I shouldn't be with you. Not like this.

JAKE

Why not?

RENA

I need space to think. I can't - I won't feel how I've felt the last few days...

JAKE

I'll walk you home. That's all. Nothing more. Marja wouldn't want you on your own at this hour.

Nodding hesitantly, she lets Jake guide her away.

Jake and Rena walk along the old, cobbled streets, wisps of mist still cloaking the ground. They are not holding hands, but only because Jake doesn't want to push it.

RENA

Why didn't you tell me you were the son of the Emissary?

JAKE

(thinks a moment)

Have you ever been asked to bless a broom?

RENA

(laugh)

Can't say that I have.

JAKE

The day I left my dad's house, I followed the back roads through the nearby farms. A farmer on his way to the market in Sepawa offered me a ride. He gave me his name, I gave him mine. Then he asked me to bless his broom.

RENA

But, you don't have any special connection with the Prophets.

(pause)

Do you?

JAKE

(shaking his head)

In this case, the saying "like father, like son" does not apply. But try telling that to the farmer. His wife was having trouble keeping dust out of the house. He thought a word from me might help.

RENA

(chuckling)

I see. I'm sorry, but that's...

JAKE

It's ridiculous! I'd have laughed too if the guy hadn't been so serious. My friend Nog would ask what's the good of having a name if you're not willing to trade on it. But that's not my style. So... I stopped telling people my name.

A few moments of quiet companionship as they walk.

JAKE

What went wrong tonight? With Kail, I mean. You were so determined to make it work.

RENA

Our relationship has been unravelling for a while now. When I came back from university...

JAKE

...Everything was different. I know that feeling.

RENA

He wasn't always such a fool. Something happened to him while I was away. He became bitter.

JAKE

Maybe something happened to you.

RENA

Maybe. Who knows these things?

JAKE

I do. I pay attention to these things.

RENA

You're a writer. It's your job.

JAKE

And you're an artist. It's your
job too.

By now they have reached the small courtyard outside Rena's bakery. Unsure how to end their evening, Rena gazes into Jake's face for a moment, then awkwardly says:

RENA
Thank you for walking me home.

Then she enters the shop and closes the door.

31 INT. BAKERY

From inside the shop, Rena waits and watches through the window as Jake turns and walks away into the night. When he has disappeared in the mist, she turns and heads upstairs.

32 EXT. BAJOR - COUNTRY COTTAGE - EVENING

Another house, a small country cottage hidden among the trees, away from prying eyes.

33 INT. COUNTRY COTTAGE

First Minister Asarem stands on the threshold - the door is already open. She realises she was expected. She enters the small house, expecting to see someone, but there is no-one.

She walks through, past modest furnishings and extensive shelves of books. Still no sign of anyone. She comes to the back of the house, where another door opens out onto a veranda, with a stunning view of the countryside.

34 EXT. COUNTRY COTTAGE - VERANDA

Cautiously stepping out, she sees a telescope set up, aimed into the sky, and a high-backed chair before it, facing away from her. A table next to the chair carries a bottle of spring wine and an empty glass. A hand appears from behind the chair and places a half-full glass on the table.

KRIM (o.s.)
I've heard it said that you don't
realise how much you miss people
until they're gone. But I'm coming

to find that you don't realise
just how little you miss them
until one comes to disturb you.

ASAREM

It's nice to see you too, Aldos.
Your charms are undiminished.

The man stands and reveals himself to be General KRIM (2x02 "The Circle"). This is Minister Asarem's ex-husband. He pours wine into the spare goblet, hands it to Asarem, and raises his in a toast. He knows full well why she is here.

KRIM

To Rava Mehwyn. May her *pagh* know
peace.

ASAREM

Bajor needs you, Aldos. I had to
come.

KRIM

I don't agree. I saved your
political career by unshackling
you from my disgrace. I asked one
thing of you when we last spoke,
seven years ago. To be left alone.
But you couldn't even do that.

ASAREM

You egotistical, self-pitying
pavrak! How dare you claim you did
me a favour by divorcing me?!

KRIM

Wadeen. Don't pretend you didn't
agree it was the best course of
action. The wife of General Krim,
Jaro Essa's fool, could never have
become First Minister.

ASAREM

Alright, I admit it. I let you
make the choice I was afraid to
make for myself. But no-one blamed
you, Aldos. The Circle Commission

exonerated you completely. You spent a lifetime fighting for our people. That's how you're remembered, not as Jaro's dupe.

(pause)

I know how it feels to have your faith betrayed. To follow a leader who is not what he claims to be. But I didn't have the luxury of hiding away when it fell apart. I had to fight harder than ever, because that's what Bajor needed of me. And it's what Bajor needs of you right now.

KRIM

Did you ever think that maybe I no longer care what Bajor needs?

ASAREM

Not for a second. The books, the telescope, the spring wine. You can pretend not to care all you want, but you don't fool me.

KRIM

I'm not a diplomat. I'm a soldier.

ASAREM

Then be a soldier! Walk out onto the battlefield and fight for your people. Make alliances, defend, strategise, advance, attack if you must, fall back when necessary. Do what needs to be done as Krim Aldos would do it.

He looks at her over his drink, trying to decide whether she is completely correct or completely insane.

KRIM

This will not endear you to the Chamber of Ministers. You'll have many more political adversaries.

ASAREM

(sigh)

Do you even know why I went into politics? Because I wanted power. Not like Jaro or Winn wanted it, for its own sake. But so that I could use it to do the most good. If I don't seize this opportunity to put a strong, effective Bajoran voice on the Federation Council, regardless of the cost to my own popularity, then all my power will have been wasted.

(shrug)

Besides, if you do the job the way I expect you will, my approval ratings will skyrocket. But I have to have your answer first. I need you to say it out loud, Aldos. Will you accept this appointment?

35 EXT. BAJOR - COUNTRY COTTAGE - NIGHT

Asarem emerges from the house, past a couple of Militia soldiers, and up to a hover-car that is waiting at the top of the driveway. Theno is there, opening the door for her.

ASAREM

He accepted. I told him a craft would come tomorrow morning to take him to the capital.

THENO

I dance for joy, First Minister.

ASAREM

Whatever made you think of Aldos in the first place?

THENO

You did, the other morning. When you complained about the tea.

ASAREM

There are times, Theno, when I don't know whether to thank the Prophets for you, or curse Them.

THENO

(deadpan)

I am often troubled by the same
question, First Minister.

He closes the hover-car door behind her, gets into the
front seat, and the vehicle floats away.

36 **INT. BEDROOM**

Morning breaks through the windows of Rena's bedroom, as
she rouses slowly from deep sleep. She staggers out of bed
and across to her sink, where she splashes her face.

Then she notices something that has been shoved under her
bedroom door - a brand new sketchbook. Surprised and
pleased, she reaches down to pick it up and finds that
another set of pages have been tucked inside it.

Pulling them out, she sees the top page, which carries a
few Bajoran ideograms, followed by the word "Jacob" signed
in English below them.

RENA

(reading aloud)

Everything old can be new again,
including your art. Jacob.

She smiles, touched, and looks at the other pages. She
realises with delight that it is a story, written in
Bajoran - the one he told her he was working on.

She takes the pages over to a seat under the window, and
begins to read in the morning light.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

37 EXT. YYN RUINS - DAY

An open-air archaeological dig of an ancient Bajoran city. The buildings are still in remarkably good condition, and the entire area has been turned into a public attraction.

Jake and Rena walk together through the ruins. Parsh and Halar are nearby, but far enough away to give Jake and Rena their privacy in the light crowd of morning tourists.

JAKE

How old is this place?

RENA

Not sure. Twelve, fifteen thousand years at least. Not as old as B'Hala, but old enough. Do they have ruins like this on Earth?

JAKE

Yeah, we have ruins. But they're a couple of thousand years old at most, and most of them are in a lot worse condition than this.

RENA

Yyn is famous for the Legend of Astur - the pageant we'll see later. But there's probably some religious significance too that's been lost over time.

JAKE

Bajor was aware of the Prophets this far back?

RENA

Sure. There's something I've been meaning to show you...

She reaches into the bag she is carrying, and pulls out the new sketchpad. She opens it and shows him the drawing.

INSERT

A simple but beautiful and effective drawing, in charcoal and pastels, of Rena's design for Topa's grave marker. It has the air of finality - this is the one.

BACK TO SCENE

JAKE

Topa's memorial. It's beautiful.
Is this the final draft?

RENA

I think so. Putting aside all the
baggage of what I thought I should
do, I remembered how I saw Topa.

JAKE

Will you explain it to me?

As Jake watches enchanted, she points out aspects of the drawing, pleased that he is pleased.

RENA

I worked in a few gemstones that
are native to Mylea. I chose the
style of runes they used here at
Yyn. It reads, "I know the light
is there. When it finally breaks
through the mist, I'll be ready."

(pause)

It isn't dramatic. No tales of his
exploits in the resistance. But to
me, this is Topa.

JAKE

What you've done here is told the
truth. That's what matters. He
asked you because he wanted to be
remembered the way you saw him.
Maybe he didn't want to be known
as part of the history of Mylea.
Just as your grandfather.

She wasn't entirely confident, but his support convinces her. She puts the sketchpad carefully back in her bag.

JAKE

Now come on. There's lots to see, and Parsh and Halar are probably hungry for lunch. Then tonight we're going to watch this Legend of Astur pageant. I'm reliably informed it's quite romantic.

Smiling, she lets him lead her by the hand into the ruins.

CROSS-FADE TO:

38 EXT. YYN RUINS - NIGHT

The ruins have now been set up as a performance centre. A dazzling display of actors, dancers, lights and fountains makes up the show, as spectators cuddle together on the surrounding grassland to watch and enjoy.

Rena now sits on a blanket between Jake's legs, him gently stroking her hair. Next to them, Parsh has plucked up the courage to put his arm around Halar, and she doesn't mind. They all sit in comfortable silence as they watch the show.

Rena quietly narrates the story to Jake as the actors and dancers perform...

RENA

(*sotto*)

Astur had found her true love, but she couldn't persuade him to leave the land to join her in the sea. Her father, the King of the Reef, granted her human form to be with him, but only as long as there was light. Astur and her lover built a great fire, hoping to deceive the King. But instead, the lovers were consumed by the flames.

On cue, enormous BONFIRES burst into flame all around the performers. The crowd oohs and aahs, impressed.

The performer playing the King of the Reef acts out his despair, picking up a large milky glass ball from the ground, and throwing it high into the air.

It seems to hover there, and then thousands of tiny candles burst into life all around the area. Rena applauds loudly along with the rest of the captivated crowd.

NARRATOR

And so it is, that on summer
solstice night, the sea turns to
flame as the King of the Reef
hopes that his daughter and her
lover can live again.

The stage lights dim - that's the end of the show - but the candles remain lit. People start to get up, ready to leave.

JAKE

What happens now?

RENA

Well, Parsh kind of explained it
to you, but it probably makes more
sense now you've seen the pageant.
The story goes that those couples
who capture a part of the flame -
the candles - have the King of the
Reef's blessing for one night as a
married couple. When the sun
rises, the spell is broken.

JAKE

Sounds like an excuse for people
to make love.

RENA

It is. But it's a romantic one,
don't you think?

Jacob and Rena begin to get up and gather their things. Parsh is nowhere to be seen. Halar steps closer and drags Rena to one side, eager and excited and nervous.

HALAR

I want Parsh to bring me a candle.

Rena blinks her surprise, but then she notices Parsh approaching out of the darkness, holding a candle in his cupped palms. He is shaking, clearly terrified, and looking at Halar as if hardly daring to hope. Rena grins, spins Halar around to face Parsh and pushes her towards him.

Happy for her friends, she turns back to find Jake. But she is surprised to realise that he is not there. She looks around, trying to spot him in the crowd, but there is no sign. Worried, she walks on, wondering where he has gone.

RENA

Jacob? Jacob...?

39 EXT. MYLEA STREETS - NIGHT

Rena walks through the cobbled streets, hugging herself against the light summer evening mist. She has been looking for Jake for some time, increasingly worried where he could have gone. The sounds of other people celebrating echo to her through the mist and darkness.

40 EXT. BAKERY - NIGHT

Rena approaches the outside of her bakery, and there is still no sign. As she takes one last worried look around...

JAKE (o.s.)

Rena.

Jake emerges from the shadows. Rena is too relieved to notice the candle he holds before him in his cupped palms.

RENA

Don't you ever leave like -

Then she realises. She had secretly hoped it would happen, but it is still a surprise now they are actually here. He approaches her slowly, almost as nervous as Parsh was.

JAKE

I know you made promises to Topa.
I know you feel like you have
obligations to Mylea. I'd never

ask you to walk away from those obligations...

RENA

I know...

She moves quickly to him and throws her arms around him, kissing him hard. He is caught by surprise, and only just gets the candle out of the way before she crushes him.

JAKE

Whoa... let's not take the legend too literally or we'll burst into flames.

Smiling, she kisses him again, then takes his hand and leads him through the door into the bakery.

41 **INT. BEDROOM**

Rena leads Jake into her bedroom, takes the candle from him and places it on a table. He is still a bit shell-shocked.

JAKE

If this is going too fast for you...

She shushes him with a finger to the lips, and pushes him gently down onto the bed. Equally as nervous, she joins him and begins to undo the buttons on his shirt.

He stops her, taking her face in his hands and bringing it to his own for another kiss. They relax a little, realising they are really going to do this.

After another moment of staring into each other's eyes, they kiss again and slide down onto the bed by the flickering candlelight.

42 **INT. BEDROOM**

Morning. Rena is woken again by the morning light, and turns in bed to see Jake beside her, awake, watching her.

RENA

Hey.

JAKE
(smile)
Hey yourself.

RENA
You look like you're going to
explode if you don't say whatever
it is you're thinking.

JAKE
I... I think I might be in love
with you.

Rena is surprised, but not offended.

JAKE
I know it's sudden and all, but -

On impulse, before he can spoil it with explanations, she
leans in and kisses him. He relaxes with relief.

JAKE
I feel like... you see me.

RENA
I see you because I love you.

Grateful and relieved, he kisses her forehead, then leans
in to whisper something into her ear. We don't hear or see
what, but Rena smiles, amazed, and looks him in the eye.

RENA
Ask me that again.

FADE OUT:

THE END