

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x18 - "This Grey Spirit."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
Mission Gamma Book 2 - This Grey Spirit

by Heather Jarman

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Start CLOSE on a small ceramic urn sitting on the deck, close against the corridor wall. A scroll of old parchment is tucked inside. Two burned sticks of incense rest against a bronze religious icon, which stands next to it.

Lieutenant RO LAREN is crouched, inspecting these objects. The door nearby opens, and a boot nearly walks right into her head, only avoiding it at the last second, with a SHOUT of surprise. Colonel KIRA NERYS looks down at Ro in shock.

KIRA

You mind telling me what the hell
you're doing down there,
Lieutenant?

RO

Sorry, Colonel. You obviously
haven't been out yet.

Kira crouches down beside Ro and takes out the scroll. She unfurls it to reveal Ancient Bajoran characters, and scans through them till she finds one she recognises.

KIRA

Ohalu.

RO

I take it these don't belong to
you.

KIRA

Definitely not.

RO

(taps combadge)
Ro to Shul.

SHUL (comm)

Go ahead.

RO

Send someone with an evidence bin to Colonel Kira's quarters. Some religious artefacts have been left outside her door - I want them collected.

SHUL (comm)

Corporal Hava's on his way.

They both stand up now, Kira with a scowl.

RO

Any idea who might have left them?

KIRA

Since I made Ohalu's book public, I've been pretty much out of the religious loop. Maybe someone thinks his tokens will prevent my evil influence from tainting the faithful. I don't plan to lose any sleep over it.

RO

It occurs to me that since I'm hardly in the religious loop myself, surveillance of our local faithful might be a gap in our intelligence. We could be facing a religious uprising and neither of us would know about it.

KIRA

Point taken. Come to think of it, Kasidy Yates mentioned something about a schism in the Vedek Assembly.

RO

Interesting. At least I know what to keep an eye out for.

Corporal HAVA arrives, a little sheepish around Kira and Ro. Leaving him to it, the women start to walk together.

RO

Ensign Beyer mentioned something about a Cardassian ship arriving?

KIRA

Yes. The *Trager* is coming.

RO

Gul Macet's ship.

KIRA

Yes. He's ferrying a diplomatic delegation from the new Ghemor government. That's all he told me. Considering Macet's... family resemblance, you might want to send out a security notice to the station's residents. It's going to be tense enough having the Cardassians here. We don't need people thinking they're seeing the second coming of Dukat as well.

RO

Colonel... are we absolutely sure about this Macet? I know Captain Yates said she had a vision from the Prophets, but do we really know for certain that Dukat's dead? He was already insane - for all we know, he could have created this whole new personality and be calling himself Macet.

KIRA

I understand how you feel, Ro. But the Cardassian government provided me his DNA records, that prove he is who he says he is. Even so, increase the security presence and arrange enough accommodations for the crew.

RO

Will do.

KIRA

The head of the delegation is
Ambassador Natima Lang. I believe
Quark is acquainted...

Ro is intrigued by that little snippet, as they enter a
turbolift and the door closes behind them.

2 INT DS9 - SHAR'S QUARTERS

Dinner time for the Andorians. CHARIVRETHA sits cross-
legged at one end of an oval mat laid on the floor, filled
with bowls of various foods. ANICHENT and DIZHEI animatedly
chat while eating. THRISS sits quietly, not joining in.

CHARIVRETHA

So what have you been doing the
past few days?

ANICHENT

Actually, we've been touring the
station. This is a very
interesting place.

DIZHEI

We wanted to acquaint ourselves
with Shar's new life.

CHARIVRETHA

That's a lovely sentiment.

ANICHENT

Well, we've certainly spent plenty
of time on the Promenade too.

(playful glance at Dizhei)

Shopping.

DIZHEI

Oh, I haven't been that bad.

CHARIVRETHA

Thriss? How have you enjoyed these
places?

Thriss finally looks up from pushing her food around
absently. Her face is blank, empty.

THRISS

I've stayed here. I wanted to stay close to Shar.

CHARIVRETHA

(delicately)

I can understand that. But really, you should occupy yourself until he returns.

THRISS

I miss him.

DIZHEI

I do too.

ANICHENT

I encouraged him to join Starfleet, because I knew it's what he wanted. I just never expected him to leave so soon. Or stay away so long.

CHARIVRETHA

At least he finally promised to come home.

ANICHENT

I'm just not sure he actually will. I've been wondering if he might be right. Maybe the way of life we've chosen won't save us after all.

CHARIVRETHA

Absurd. The birth rate has increased significantly since the reforms.

ANICHENT

Maybe we're not dying as fast as a race anymore... but maybe some of us are dying a lot faster as individuals.

CHARIVRETHA

Nothing has been asked of Shar
that hasn't been asked of
generations before him.

ANICHENT

Then maybe we've been asking too
much of all of us.

THRISS

It doesn't matter. Nothing will
matter if Shar doesn't come back
from his mission.

Thriss gazes emptily down at her plate. Dizhei reaches
across the food to try to comfort her.

DIZHEI

Thriss, don't.

ANICHENT

He will come back, Thriss.

THRISS

Please excuse me, *Zhadi*.

CHARIVRETHA

Very well.

Thriss gets up from the food-mat and hurries back into the
bedroom. Dizhei and Anichent look to each other in sadness.
Charivretha looks on tensely, wondering what she can do
about Thriss.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

QUARK polishes glasses and places them back on shelves as Lieutenant Ro sidles up to the bar.

QUARK

I went ahead and reserved the holosuite for tonight. Hope that wasn't too forward of me.

RO

Tonight's not gonna work..

QUARK

Come on, Laren. Tell your slave-driver boss all work and no play makes for perpetually irritable employees. She should know.

RO

I have the feeling you'll want to be behind the bar tonight.

QUARK

Fine. I'll have to unload the holosuite time. Hey you, Treir!

TREIR appears from the back room, wearing workout gear - not quite as revealing as her dabo girl outfit, but close.

TREIR

Try again, Quark.

QUARK

Check the attitude in the back, Treir. This is business. And I could fire you for being out of uniform during business hours.

TREIR

(yawns, folds arms)

Try again, Quark.

QUARK

(exasperated)

I don't - this isn't - I refuse -

(deep breath)

If you have a moment, Treir, I'd like your input on a business proposition.

TREIR

Sure, I've got a sec. What's up?

Treir jumps up to sit on the bar, stretching her legs out and arching her back. She is deliberately distracting Quark, and it is working. She takes out some small metal rings from a pocket, and unsnaps them like hand-cuffs.

RO

Hey, are those those new anti-grav workout weights?

TREIR

Great for extra resistance. Just press this button here and it enhances the artificial gravity -

QUARK

Ahem! Were we not having a discussion, Treir?

TREIR

You were talking, certainly.

(hands one to Ro)

Be careful. They can be tricky.

QUARK

Due to an unforeseen cancellation, we have three hours of available holosuite time, leaving us with a prime business opportunity.

TREIR

Didn't I tell you that last-minute date rescheduling is a sure-fire way to kill a relationship before it starts?

Ro clicks the weight around her wrist, touches a button, and immediately PLUMMETS to the deck.

RO

Well, that was predictable.

QUARK

Can we please focus?!

Silence descends on the bar, everyone looking around at Quark's shout and Ro on the floor.

TREIR

The house announces a free round
of Orion ale!

A CHEER goes up, and Treir jumps down to help Ro up off the floor, unlocking and taking back the weight ring. Quark frustratedly tries to bring it back to the subject.

QUARK

We'll send out a station notice
that we're auctioning off this
rare and valuable holosuite time -

RO

(dusting off)

- in half-hour increments -

QUARK

Highest bidders can enjoy the
company of the dabo girl -

TREIR

- or boy -

QUARK

The dabo person of their choice.

TREIR

Good idea. Let me know if you need
me to proof-read the notice.

QUARK

The idea was for you to write it!

TREIR

Break time. I've got a few laps
around the docking ring to cover
before my next shift.

Paying no attention to Quark's conniptions, Treir jogs out
of the bar and onto the Promenade. Ro chuckles.

QUARK

I do not need my notices proof-
read!

(whirls on Ro)

Weren't you here on business,
Lieutenant?

RO

Right, business. Colonel Kira
asked that you send up a catering
menu to Ensign Beyer. Minister
Shakaar assigned her to oversee a
diplomatic reception.

QUARK

Another one? Maybe business won't
be so bad after all if the
Federation likes throwing this
many parties. Who is it this time?

RO

Cardassians.

QUARK

Anyone I know?

RO

Dukat's cousin... and Natima Lang.

A glass SHATTERS in Quark's hand. He barely notices.

RO

You might want to have Doctor
Girani look at that.

And she struts out with a smile.

4 **EST. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The battered and bruised Cardassian ship *Trager* is docked at an upper pylon, with the Starfleet ship *Gryphon* and the various other Ambassadorial ships also docked.

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

Ro and the elegantly dressed NATIMA LANG walk through the corridor, leading Gul MACET and a small group of Cardassian soldiers, who are conspicuously unarmed. Watchful Bajoran security bring up the rear.

Ro covers her discomfort with politeness, but has to fight the automatic response of a Bajoran to a Cardassian. She gives occasional nervous glances to Macet. Lang is also nervous, her eyes ever scanning for danger. Ro notices it.

LANG

Reconnaissance is an old habit.
You live most of your adult life
under the threat of arrest or
assassination, you fear an enemy
with a weapon in every shadow.

RO

I know something of that myself.

LANG

That doesn't surprise me.

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

Ro stands as the Cardassian party files into some quarters. There is definite tension between the Bajorans and the Cardassians, who resent being unarmed. Lang enters last.

LANG

I appreciate your forbearance,
Lieutenant. This isn't easy for
any of us.

Ro nods, relaxing slightly - perhaps Lang is a good guy after all. Once the doors have closed, Ro nods to the Bajoran security to stay, then leaves and walks down the corridor. She enters a turbolift.

7 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT (CONTINUOUS)**

Ro stands in the turbolift, thinking as the walls rush by. Suddenly, TARAN'ATAR unshrouds beside her - she YELPS.

RO

Don't I recall an order about you not shrouding in public places?

TARAN'ATAR

I needed to assess the enemy.

RO

The Cardassians aren't our enemy.

TARAN'ATAR

Do you know their minds? Their goals, their strategy?

RO

No, I haven't tapped into their database or spied on their private communications. It's called trust.

TARAN'ATAR

Then they are your enemy. The unknown is always your enemy.

RO

This will never work if the Cardassians think we're luring them into a trap.

TARAN'ATAR

You are naive if you think they aren't luring you into a trap.

The turbolift comes to a stop and the doors OPEN on the Promenade. Ro begins to walk out, but Taran'atar stays.

RO

What, you don't have anyone to spy on on the Promenade?

TARAN'ATAR

Nothing here concerns me. I will report my observations later.

RO

I'm telling Colonel Kira you've been shrouding against her orders.

TARAN'ATAR

Do you think I would have unshrouded in front of you if I hadn't wanted you to tell her?

8 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

The turbolift doors close, and Ro walks off, annoyed but considering what he has said - are the Cardassians the enemy? She approaches the security office, and the doors open to reveal Charivretha zh'Thane waiting for her.

Ro is caught with surprise again. The usually poised Andorian ambassador is more unsure than we've ever seen.

9 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

RO

Councillor, this is unexpected. What can I do for you?

CHARIVRETHA

I bring the accolades of Admiral Akaar, Lieutenant. He is pleased with Colonel Kira's decision to increase security. He also admires how capably it's been handled.

Ro knows something must be up - a compliment from Akaar is not normal. She takes her seat and gestures Vretha to sit.

RO

I appreciate his confidence.

CHARIVRETHA

It is my understanding that under the new precautions, no vessels may dock or leave the station. I require an exception for myself.

RO

Why?

CHARIVRETHA

That's a private matter.

RO

With respect, Councillor, I can only help you if you help me.

CHARIVRETHA

I know... but I've been trying to avoid taking an outsider into our confidence.

RO

Councillor, I have no desire to invade your privacy. Perhaps you should speak to Colonel Kira.

CHARIVRETHA

No. Thirishar considers you a friend, that is enough. But please keep this between us.

RO

As long as it doesn't affect station security, agreed.

CHARIVRETHA

Very well. Lieutenant, you know that Thirishar's bondmates are here on the station?

RO

Yes. I arranged for them to stay in his quarters.

CHARIVRETHA

And that has been a great help. But it may no longer be enough. By accepting his current mission, Shar put his well-being, and that of his bondmates, at great risk.

RO

How so?

CHARIVRETHA

He was supposed to come home! It is a biological necessity.

RO

I've heard that Vulcans -

CHARIVRETHA

This isn't like that. You know that unlike most races, Andorians have four sexes. Because our procreative process requires chromosomes from four parents, it is a very complicated matter for four compatible individuals to create a child together.

RO

Councillor, forgive me, but I don't see how such a biological system could sustain itself.

CHARIVRETHA

(with feeling)

It doesn't. Birth rates fall every year. Our species is on the road to extinction, Lieutenant.

RO

That's why you needed him at home.

CHARIVRETHA

Yes. Every new life is precious, but successful conception requires careful planning. Our culture is defined by simple survival. But Thirishar believes we are only delaying the inevitable. He was always contrary. Delighted in going against whatever his culture mandated. Now he goes off on his quest, thinking he's doing what's best for all of us, without

stopping to think how it affects
those closest to him!

RO

Councillor, has something happened
to one of his bondmates?

CHARIVRETHA

My *zhri'za*, Shathrissia. She and
Thirishar were always close -
closer than they should be. The
thought that he might be lost in
the Gamma Quadrant, that he may
not be able to come home for the
shelthreth... Thriss has become
emotionally unpredictable, perhaps
even unstable. If she worsens, I
may need to take her back to Andor
at a moment's notice.

RO

Councillor, without betraying your
trust, I'll take your request to
Colonel Kira, and let you know her
decision as soon as possible.

CHARIVRETHA

Thank you, Lieutenant.

Emotionally exhausted, Charivretha gets up and leaves. Ro
sits back and considers.

RO

Oh Shar... what have you done?

On Ro's anguished expression...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

From behind his bar, Quark is entirely focused on one table, where Ro and Lang sit. He can't quite overhear them because of the noise, and that winds him up enormously. He sees Ro laugh - what on Earth could she be laughing about?

Further down the bar, a new Starfleet woman sits. PHILIPPA MATTHIAS is in sciences blue, 40s, attractive but entirely normal. Reading a book and sipping from a bowl of soup, minding her own business. He slides over to engage her.

MATTHIAS

You must be Quark.

QUARK

And you must be a new customer I need to impress. Can I get you something to drink?

MATTHIAS

Thanks, but the soup will suffice until my husband gets here.

QUARK

I'm sure I have something that will excite both of you, Miss...

MATTHIAS

Philippa Matthias. And I'm sure Prylar Kanton's B'Hala lecture will be quite exciting enough.

Matthias follows Quark's eye-line to the table that he keeps glancing at, then she returns to her soup.

MATTHIAS

You must be very fond of her.

QUARK

I'm sorry?

MATTHIAS

You were involved with the Cardassian at that table, what, five years ago? Things didn't end well. You're looking for an opening to go over and find out what they've been talking about.

Quark's grin drops, suddenly not so smooth and charming.

QUARK

I thought telepaths couldn't read Ferengi.

MATTHIAS

I'm not a telepath, but I do know a lot about body language. Most people don't realise how much they give away about themselves. But then Ferengi aren't particularly complicated to decipher.

Quark is about to take that as an insult, when Matthias notices a Bajoran man waving to her as he enters - the husband. Quark leaves them be. Treir appears.

TREIR

Table six wants the Dabo-Dom-Jot Special.

QUARK

There is no Dabo-Dom-Jot Special.

TREIR

I invented it when I realised they would pay one bar of latinum for the Dabo-Dom-Jot Special.

QUARK

Then by all means, offer them the Dabo-Dom-Jot special.

TREIR

The thing is, if I'm the dabo part of the deal, then I want fifteen percent instead of my usual five.

QUARK

No deal.

TREIR

Fine. I'll tell them to try the Blue Moon Casino on the way home. Their Dabo-Dom-Jot Special is only forty-five strips.

QUARK

Ten percent.

TREIR

I would have settled for eight, but thanks for the bonus.

A second to think it through...

QUARK

Wait a minute. How can Blue Moon's Dabo-Dom-Jot Special be forty-five strips if you just invented it?

Treir shows him her pearly white smile and saunters away. Quark can't take any more - all these females are throwing him off his game. Enough is enough. He grabs a tray, a pitcher of drinks and two glasses, and strolls nonchalantly over to Ro's table.

Across the room, Ro and Lang sit leaning in towards each other, pretending not to notice Quark approaching.

RO

He's coming.

LANG

He lasted longer than I thought.

RO

You think he's built up a good head of paranoia?

LANG

Probably. I'll pay you later.

Quark reaches the table - Ro and Lang quickly pull apart, deliberately acting guilty. Quark lays the tray on the table and begins pouring.

QUARK

Ladies! I thought I'd bring over a special themed drink I concocted. I call it the Peace Treaty. Starts off provocative, ends up smooth.

RO

(taking a sip)

A little heavy on the syrup.

QUARK

Sounds like the dealings between your worlds could take a while.

LANG

Oh, I think we've found some consensus already.

RO

Absolutely. Bajorans and Cardassians can find a lot of common ground.

The women smirk at their own private joke. Quark grinds his teeth. Awkward silence as Ro and Lang enjoy his discomfort.

QUARK

So...

LANG

So...

They torture him a little longer, until Ro finally takes pity and stands up.

RO

Quark, why don't you have a seat? I have some business to take care of. Ambassador, it's been a joy.

LANG

The pleasure was mine, Lieutenant.

Ro begins to walk away, and Quark takes her seat with Lang. At Lang's suggestive look, Quark feels bound to explain.

QUARK

Lieutenant Ro and I are exploring the possibility of beginning a social relationship.

LANG

I think it's sweet. It's like the sheriff and the barmaid in those old Earth entertainment recordings you used to make me watch in the holosuite. What was that one you liked so much - Casablanca?

Quark sees that Ro has stopped at another table in the bar, where the four Andorians sit. Quark smiles.

QUARK

Now there's a holosuite program that I'm sure would be a big hit. "Andorian Ecstasy - Good Things Come in Fours." Very few people know about how Andorians... you know. Very hush-hush.

LANG

Perhaps they keep it private precisely to avoid having their intimate relations exploited by entrepreneurial Ferengi.

QUARK

Every bit of news out of Cardassia, every report... I looked for your name, Natima. Hoping you were alright.

LANG

I was worried about you too. But I had a feeling you'd make it.

QUARK

(grin)

Takes more than a few wars to kill
me off.

They smile warmly together, happy to see each other again.

Across the room, Ro has approached the Andorian table.
Thriss is no happier than she was before - the other three
are trying to maintain a happy face on the situation.

RO

Sorry to interrupt your evening. I
have good news about your trip.

THRISS

(tightly)

Trip? What trip?

Ro begins to realise she might have made a blunder.

CHARIVRETHA

The timetable for your return to
Andor, Shathrissia. We discussed
it earlier, remember?

RO

There are no specific plans, you
just have the freedom to leave
when you want.

THRISS

(tensing)

So you all conspired to return to
Andor without asking me. When was
this decided? You and Anichent
have a little pillow-talk, Dizhei?
Or was it your idea, Zhadi? Trying
to control us, as usual.

ANICHENT

We hadn't decided anything without
you. We simply had to make sure
the proposal was feasible. All is
well, zh'yi.

Anichent reaches across to comfort Thriss, but she snaps
away from him. Ro tenses.

THRISS
Don't. Touch. Me.

RO
How about we take this to the
holosuite? You can talk privately
-

THRISS
What's this 'we'? And why are you
still here? Oh, I see. You're one
of *Zhadi's* lackeys, doing her
dirty work for her.

CHARIVRETHA
Watch your impertinence in public.

RO
I answer to Colonel Kira, not
Councillor zh'Thane and certainly
not you. When I suggested you move
it to the holosuite, that was a
polite way of asking you to handle
your disagreement elsewhere.
Otherwise, there's the door.

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

But she turns back at the SMASH of breaking glass and GASPS
of surprise. Thriss is on her feet and has a broken bottle
held out in front of her, breathing hard, eyes blazing.

THRISS
You push and you push, but I'm not
giving in this time. I'm not
leaving this station without Shar!

Anichent reaches out to try to take the broken glass from
Thriss's hand, but she TWISTS and the glass ends up sunk
into his shoulder. Anichent blanches and falls, bleeding.
Dizhei SHRIEKS, Charivretha stands stunned.

Thriss jumps back horrified, BLOOD spattering on her dress.
Ro rushes up to check Anichent, tapping her combadge.

RO
Security! Send a team to Quark's!
Alert the infirmary. Councillor,
snap out of it! I need your help.

As Dizhei and Vretha move to help Anichent, Ro turns to Thriss, who backs away and holds the glass out in defence.

RO
Put down the weapon. Put it down
and we'll talk.

THRISS
No. I won't.

Across the room, Quark has noticed the noise, and got up to see what's going on. Other customers are doing the same.

LANG
Let her handle it, Quark. I'm sure
she can handle much worse.

QUARK
Yeah, but how many more bottles
will get broken in the meantime?

He joins the crowd that has started to form to watch the disturbance. He pushes through to the front just in time to see Ro KICKing out to knock the glass from Thriss's hand. Thriss returns with a PUNCH right to Ro's face.

Both women end up on the floor. Thriss gets an ELBOW in Ro's stomach. Ro drives a KNEE into Thriss's back. They struggle back up and begin to circle each other.

THRISS
Stay out of what doesn't concern
you!

RO
Back off! Now!

QUARK
Three-to-one on Lieutenant Ro.

Quark begins pocketing latinum from interested onlookers as more security rush in with phasers drawn.

Thriss LUNGES at Ro in a direct attack, but Ro SWEEPS her legs out from under her and pulls out her own phaser.

QUARK

That's my girl.

THRISS

I dare you to fire.

RO

Don't tempt me. Sergeant Etana, I want this woman in restraints. If she resists, shoot her. Quark, can I get some water?

Quark rushes off to do as she asks as ETANA and others grab Thriss, and Dizhei and Vretha help Anichent out of the bar. Ro turns to the gathered crowd.

RO

Drink. Eat. Gamble. Leave.

Quark returns, thoroughly in awe of Ro. He hands her the water, which she gulps gratefully.

RO

Only three to one?

QUARK

I'll lay better odds next time.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

11 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS

Thriss sits, insular and withdrawn, on a bench behind a forcefield in one of the cells. Ro stands watching her.

THRISS

Have you ever been in love?

RO

That's not relevant right now.

THRISS

If you knew exactly how relevant that question is, we wouldn't be having this conversation. I've answered your questions. Humour the crazy Andorian. Answer mine.

RO

I've been in relationships. I know how complex they can be.

THRISS

You've never been in love. I can see it in your face. I'm talking about redefining your life because another exists. You breathe when they do. You've never connected with another person out of more than loneliness, social obligation or primal urge. I'm sad for you.

RO

My personal life has no bearing on whether you get out of here.

THRISS

I'm not a threat, Lieutenant. You got caught up in something that started long before we even came to the station. What happened at Quark's won't happen again.

Behind her, the sound of the doors signals Lt Cmdr Matthias entering the room, leading a shaken and upset Dizhei.

MATTHIAS

Might I state for the record,
Lieutenant, that I believe you're
safe in releasing her.

RO

I'm not so sure.
(to Thriss)
I'll leave you two alone. But I'll
be able to see you from my office.

Ro disables the forcefield and lets Dizhei enter the cell.
Then she leads Matthias back out to the security office.

12 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

They enter the office, and Ro taps keys to bring the two
Andorians up on the screen while she talks to Matthias.

RO

You know, Commander, a lovesick
Andorian is not where I expected
trouble to come from today.

MATTHIAS

Certainly a busy first day on the
job as the new station Counsellor.

RO

Is she going to be okay? Can she
make it until Shar comes back?

MATTHIAS

I think she will. And once she's
heading back to Andor for the
shelthreth, the worst of her
problems will be over.

RO

Alright. I'll release her - on
your cognisance.

MATTHIAS

I understand.

(beat)

Ah well - I have to get changed
for the Cardassian reception. My
first big event - can't be late.

By Ro's expression, she is not looking forward to it.

13 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

A formal dinner arrangement, tables lining the room. Trill, humans, Andorians, Bajorans, Cardassians. Federation, Bajoran and Cardassian flags stand proudly. Sat at one end, Ro notices HIZIKI GARD, her Trill opposite number.

But the dinner is over, and the tables have been cleared. Shakaar stands to give a speech - confident, smiling, the perfect politician. Kira looks around, pleased and proud.

SHAKAAR

Our visitors, the Cardassians,
have requested a moment of our
time tonight, and we welcome them.
We Bajorans have travelled with
the Cardassians before. But we
must have courage to explore new
territory. I raise a toast to the
hope of new friendship.

Shakaar sits, and Natima Lang stands, walking to the centre of the room. A Cardassian soldier brings a holo-projector and places it by her side.

LANG

I come tonight to offer, on behalf
of Alon Ghemor and the people of
Cardassia, a token to launch this
journey. A symbol of hope that
personifies not only the difficult
past, but a vision for the future.

She nods to the soldier, who switches on the projector. An IMAGE appears in the centre of the room of a young woman, half-Bajoran and half-Cardassian, seated and talking into the recorder with a nervous smile - it is TORA ZIYAL.

ZIYAL

My name is Tora Ziyal and I'm an artist. Or I'd like to be. My teachers say I'm promising. That's why they asked me to make this holovid for when they submit my work to the Cardassian Institute of Art. I still can't believe they think I'm good enough!

Kira laughs with her old friend, weeping at the same time.

ZIYAL

I think part of the reason why I draw is to try to make sense of my life. I don't entirely belong to either part of my heritage. I hope it can mean something to someone else, though I don't know who.

The recording fades, and Lang takes centre stage again.

LANG

Symbolically, Ziyal represents both the horrors of the Cardassian Occupation of Bajor, and the glories that can come from a true alliance of our peoples, if we can see a way past our differences. It's for this purpose I have come to Deep Space Nine - to seek a lasting peace between our peoples.

The room explodes in a buzz of surprise and discussion, which dies down as the Cardassian soldiers bring in more objects, draped in obscuring sheets. They remove the sheets, revealing a dozen pieces of Ziyal's ARTWORK.

LANG

We found these in the ruins of the Cardassian Institute of Art. We hereby present them to Bajor, to serve as both a memorial of the past and a beacon for the future.

Looking at her friend's artwork, Kira lets the tears fall.

CROSS FADE TO:

14 **INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Later - the evening has moved on to mingling. Lang, Kira, Akaar, Shakaar and MINISTER ASAREM WADEEN (dark-skinned Bajoran woman) stand together.

LANG

I was hoping you'd be able to sit in on some of the talks, Colonel.

ASAREM

May I ask why, Ambassador? The First Minister has assigned those negotiations to me.

LANG

Colonel Kira is a living witness to atrocities against both hers and my own people. She can provide a unique perspective.

KIRA

I think you're overstating my importance, Ambassador. Now if you'll all excuse me, I have a station to run.

Anxious to get out of all the political manoeuvring, Kira escapes while she can. Gul Macet watches her go.

15 **EST. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Just enough to indicate time passing.

16 **INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

New layout again, this time for negotiations. Lang sits at one end with a handful of Cardassian aides, including Gul Macet. Asarem sits at the other end with Bajoran aides, including Kira. The atmosphere is tense and frustrated.

LANG

This isn't a new proposal. These are the levels already agreed in the post-war accords by the Klingons, the Romulans -

ASAREM

I'm aware of that agreement. It doesn't change the fact that maintaining such levels of aid indefinitely is undesirable.

LANG

You want to maintain our infant mortality rate? The numbers succumbing to the Calebrian plague? What we're receiving now barely covers those needs!

ASAREM

No need to raise your voice, Ambassador. I'm merely pointing out that, when taken individually, the medical supplies we provide have legitimate applications. But when combined with other agents, Cardassia could conceivably manufacture biogenic weapons.

Some small gasps. Kira's jaw drops at Asarem's audacity. Lang pauses in disbelief before formulating a response.

LANG

I accept that you hold us in little esteem. But what kind of soulless ghoul would I have to be to come here begging for help, if that were my intent? What possible motive could I have?

ASAREM

Re-establishing your military supremacy. Blackmailing Bajor. There are a host of reasons that aren't unprecedented.

LANG

With all due respect, Minister,
when was the last time you held a
child in your arms, dying from the
entirely curable Fostassa virus?

ASAREM

The last time a child died in my
presence? Eight years ago. Just as
the Cardassian occupation of Bajor
ended.

The tension between the two women is growing all the time.
Macet decides to gently break in.

MACET

Ambassador, Minister, perhaps now
would be an appropriate time to
call a recess. Once we've rested
and eaten, then perhaps we can
reconcile our differences.

ASAREM

Based on the talks to date, it's
my judgement that we take an
indeterminate recess until such
time as both delegations are
prepared to be more... flexible.

LANG

hen Cardassia is willing to do
whatever Bajor demands, you mean?

ASAREM

I mean as long as it takes.

Asarem stands and gathers her papers, ignoring everyone
else in the room. Defeated and astonished, the Cardassian
party leaves from one door, while the Bajorans leave by
another, until Kira and Asarem are the only ones left.

KIRA

Minister Asarem, might I have a
word?

ASAREM

Colonel Kira. I presume you want to share your unique perspective.

KIRA

Lang is asking for medical help, not quantum torpedoes. How does making it difficult to save Cardassian lives benefit Bajor?

ASAREM

You surprise me, Colonel. You of all people should appreciate the need to do whatever is necessary to make sure Cardassia is never again in a position to harm Bajor. Perhaps the reports of your patriotism were exaggerated.

KIRA

Last time I checked, I was wearing the uniform of the Bajoran Militia, Minister.

ASAREM

Last time I checked, faithful Bajorans followed the counsel of the Vedek Assembly.

Kira has to bite back a dozen sharp responses to that.

KIRA

Have you even been to Cardassia since the war?

ASAREM

No, I haven't.

KIRA

Then what right do you have to just dismiss Ambassador Lang like you did just now?

ASAREM

The rights given me by the Bajoran people when they elected me.

KIRA

To be their avenging angel? To single-handedly make Cardassia pay for its mistakes?

ASAREM

I decided to hear you out because, as commander of this station, you're entitled to a measure of input. But I'm done.

Asarem turns to leave - Kira moves to block her exit.

KIRA

Where is your compassion, Minister?

ASAREM

With the generations of dead and brutalised Bajorans who committed no crime beyond being Bajoran. The Cardassians allied with the Dominion. They brought destruction on themselves. Now get out of my way before I inform First Minister Shakaar that we need to reconsider your position as station commander.

Asarem angrily pushes past Kira and stalks out of the door. Kira watches her go, furious.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

17 INT. DS9 - ZIYAL'S ART EXHIBIT

The dozen pieces of artwork have been set up in the empty space of Garak's shop. Kira looks at them with emotion.

MACET (o.s.)

Considering my cousin's many failings, his daughter was a truly remarkable young woman.

Kira turns to see Macet at a polite distance, having come in unnoticed. It is late and they are the only ones there.

KIRA

Gul Macet. I haven't been very hospitable since you arrived. I apologise.

MACET

It's not all that surprising you would find my presence disturbing, Colonel. I'm not troubled by it.

KIRA

I'm glad that you don't hold our prejudices against us.

MACET

So... now that we've established we're not offended by each other, we can move on to more pressing matters - the talks. Put simply, we need your help, Colonel.

KIRA

You have outdated notions about how much my opinion matters around here, Gul. The replicator in your quarters isn't working? Call me. Anything requiring influence or persuasion? No-one wants to know.

MACET

How can you not appreciate your magnitude, Colonel, even among the formidable figures on Deep Space Nine right now? You have earned the respect of Bajorans, humans, Cardassians, even Klingons and Romulans. You've worn the uniforms of both the Bajoran Militia and Starfleet. You succeeded Captain Sisko as commander of one of the most crucial outposts in the Alpha Quadrant. Now a Starfleet officer serves as your second. To my knowledge, it's unprecedented.

KIRA

I retain command of this station only because Shakaar can't risk looking provincial while he's trying to impress Councillor zh'Thane and Admiral Akaar. What exactly do you think I can do?

MACET

Appeal to First Minister Shakaar. Ask him to intercede.

KIRA

You don't know what you're asking.

MACET

If you believe that peace between our peoples is what is right for Bajor, do you not have faith that the Prophets will light your path?

KIRA

If you know me as well as you think you do, you already know the answer to that.

MACET

I'm counting on it.

Macet turns to leave, and Kira follows him out.

18 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Kira and Macet emerge to find a RIOT in progress on the Promenade. A group of scrapping Cardassian soldiers and Bajorans (some Militia, some civilians) are tumbling out of Quark's bar, viciously fighting and beating each other senseless with chair legs, bottles, whatever is at hand.

KIRA

Kira to Ro.

RO (comm)

I know, I'm on my way. All my off-duty people have been summoned, but this sounds pretty bad.

KIRA

Actually, it's worse. I suggest you hurry, Lieutenant.

Glasses CRASH, fighters GRUNT, onlookers SCREAM. As the tussle falls further out onto the Promenade, Kira and Macet both wade in, trying to pull their own people out.

Quark pushes the last few bodies out of his bar and closes the doors. Only he and Morn are left inside, looking out.

KIRA

This is Colonel Kira! Any and all Bajoran nationals will stand down now or face criminal charges!

Some do, others don't. Phaser fire SHRIEKS down from above. Kira looks up to see Lieutenant Ro standing on the upper level in practical night clothes, pointing a phaser down at the crowd. More security begin to rush in.

RO

The next person to flinch gets more than a warning shot!

One last Bajoran Militia engineer tries one last PUNCH at a Cardassian - Kira PUNCHes him away first. Security begins pulling the calmed fighters away and handcuffing them. Passing one of his men off to them, Macet turns to Kira.

MACET

Colonel. I apologise for the
behaviour of my crew.

KIRA

We don't know who started it.

MACET

Regardless, my men should not have
been fighting. They will be
punished, I assure you, and we
will submit to whatever measures
Lieutenant Ro requires.

KIRA

That's appreciated, Gul.

Kira looks at Macet with admiration - he is really trying.
As security clear the area, and medics come in to help the
casualties, Kira leans down to an injured Cardassian in an
attempt to help. The Cardassian flinches back from her.

KIRA

You're going to be fine. We'll
find you something for the pain.

Kira beckons a junior medic over, who helps the Cardassian
to his feet and away. Elsewhere, Kira sees Macet, dragging
the last of his people. They make eye contact, exchange a
look of understanding and respect. Then she is alone again.

KIRA

You can unshroud now.

Taran'atar shimmers into view beside her.

KIRA

Maintaining surveillance on Gul
Macet will no longer be necessary.

TARAN'ATAR

I concur. Is there anything else?

KIRA

What do you think of him?

TARAN'ATAR
He is not what I expected.

KIRA
I know exactly what you mean.

19 **EST. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Just enough to indicate time passing again.

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

Kira walks down the corridor towards the Wardroom, ready for another day of negotiations.

As she reaches the door, she sees a group of Cardassians, including Lang and Macet, huddled in the corridor. Kira is instinctively wary, but controls her reaction.

As she approaches, Lang turns to her. The Ambassador's face is full of worry, frustration and sadness. Kira goes right back to wary, wondering what could have gone wrong now.

21 **INT. DS9 - ASAREM'S QUARTERS**

Minister Asarem is sat at her desk in her temporary quarters, reading a book, when Kira storms into the room. The colonel has a full head of steam, utterly furious.

KIRA
You cancelled the talks?! Why?

ASAREM
Colonel, I don't believe we had an appointment.

KIRA
Don't be clever with me, Asarem.
What the hell were you thinking?

ASAREM
A riot on the Promenade, Colonel?
Does that not prove Cardassians'
violent natures to you?

KIRA

There's no evidence whatsoever that they started the fight, and you know it.

ASAREM

(not listening)

Besides, once we're members of the Federation, existing treaties between them and Cardassia will apply equally to us. It's a waste of time and energy to negotiate something separately.

KIRA

This thing between Bajor and Cardassia - it's ours to resolve. Passing it off to the Federation is cowardly.

ASAREM

The decision is made, Colonel. It's not negotiable.

Asarem stands up to walk away from Kira - the conversation is over. Kira grabs her shoulder and pulls her back.

KIRA

This is wrong!

Asarem spins back to her, throwing off her hand. Blazing with anger, she advances on Kira.

ASAREM

How dare you! You think you know it all. You've always been that way. So self-righteous. Well this time, you're not even close.

KIRA

Shakaar cannot possibly have agreed to this!

ASAREM

That's where you're wrong, Kira.

Kira stops, stunned by that. Asarem smiles.

ASAREM

You should see yourself. It's almost worth putting up with your attitude just to see your face right now. Yes, Colonel, it's true. I came to these talks prepared to negotiate - to give probably more than Ambassador Lang asked for. And you know why I didn't? I was ordered not to.

KIRA

Ordered?

ASAREM

Shakaar told me to make it, in his exact words, "as difficult as possible" to find reconciliation with Cardassia.

KIRA

Shakaar wouldn't do that.

ASAREM

I knew you wouldn't believe me. Considering your history with him.

KIRA

If this is true...

ASAREM

Then he lied to us all.

22 INT. DS9 - MATTHIAS'S OFFICE

Matthias is just moving into her new counselling office, arranging nick-nacks and straightening furniture. The door opens and Thriss and Dizhei enter, hand-in-hand.

Thriss is more cheerful than before, dressed in brighter colours. Dizhei is now the one who looks nervous, pasting on a too-bright smile to cover it.

THRISS

Commander, I know I don't have an appointment...

MATTHIAS

Don't worry about it. Have a seat.

The Andorians sit down opposite on a couch, and Matthias takes an easy chair. Dizhei is holding Thriss's hand protectively. Thriss's other fingers drum nervously.

THRISS

I heard a rumour that Starfleet downloaded the latest reports from the *Defiant* through the wormhole array this morning.

MATTHIAS

(grinning)

And you want Shar's letter. No problem. Counsellor Matthias to Ops.

SELZNER (comm)

This is Selzner. Go ahead.

MATTHIAS

I was wondering when the communiqués from the *Defiant* would be released.

SELZNER (comm)

Umm... the colonel reviewed them some time ago. To my knowledge, all personal messages went out.

Thriss's drumming fingers cease. She seems to deflate.

MATTHIAS

Thanks. Matthias out.

(to Thriss)

Don't jump to conclusions. There might be something embedded in Commander Vaughn's datablock. Be patient. Colonel Kira will check when she can.

DIZHEI

Thriss has a shift with Doctor
Girani. You can contact her there.
Shall we go, *zh'yi*?

Dizhei, smiling too wide, practically drags Thriss away.

MATTHIAS

Wait. Perhaps Thriss can stay...

But they've already gone. Matthias sits back down, worried.

23 INT. DS9 - SHAKAAR'S QUARTERS

Minister Shakaar enters his darkened quarters, placing a travelling bag on the couch and throwing off his coat.

SHAKAAR

Computer, lights at full.

As he walks past the couch to the desk, opening his bag and reaching inside, we see Kira sat calmly on the couch.

KIRA

I hope you enjoyed your tour on
the *Gryphon*.

Shakaar spins in surprise. He loses grip of a small, flat silver box that he had been pulling out of his bag. The box clatters to the floor and falls opens, but it is empty.

SHAKAAR

How did you -

KIRA

You may be First Minister, but
this is still my station, Edon.

Shakaar nonchalantly bends down to pick up the box. He places it in a desk drawer while they talk.

SHAKAAR

This couldn't wait till morning?

KIRA

No.

Kira remains seated, taking the confident position. Shakaar continues to unpack, seemingly unconcerned.

KIRA

Last night, we had a violent riot on the Promenade. This morning, Lieutenant Ro discovered that the Cardassian flag and Ziyal's artwork had been vandalised. And today, Minister Asarem shut down the peace treaty talks.

SHAKAAR

Tragic. You didn't have to make this report in person.

KIRA

No, I didn't. But I believe what has happened can be attributed to a hostile attitude on this station towards Cardassians. And I think you're feeding that hatred, First Minister.

Shakaar stands back for a moment, appraising Kira.

SHAKAAR

Go ahead. Get it off your chest. You'll feel better.

KIRA

You told Asarem to back out of the peace talks.

SHAKAAR

Part of being a good leader is choosing between two equally good options. Peace with Cardassia is a good option. Membership in the Federation is a better one, and one that will take care of the first problem anyway. Why complicate matters?

KIRA

Because we aren't whole, as a people, without closure. As Bajor, sovereign and independent.

SHAKAAR

And their "gift"? How like them to remind us of our humiliation.

KIRA

What?

SHAKAAR

All those pretty pictures, Nerys, they came from Dukat's bastard. He took a woman from her home and raped her, and we got an artist. The ends don't justify the means.

He comes close and tries to take her hands, soothingly.

SHAKAAR

You need to relax, Nerys. I'm worried about how stressed you are. You should take time off.

Kira yanks her hands away, disgusted.

KIRA

The vandalism. The threats to the Cardassians. You didn't have anything -

SHAKAAR

Nerys, this is me you're talking to. You know me.

KIRA

No, I really don't think I do. Not anymore. But if Ro's investigation uncovers even the smallest link to you, First Minister, nothing will protect you from me.

The doors open, and a Bajoran AIDE stands in the doorway.

AIDE

Late night shrine services,
Minister. You wanted an escort?

SHAKAAR

Ah yes, thank you. I think we're
done here, aren't we, Colonel?

A final insult - she can't go to the shrine with him. He
leaves without waiting for an answer, and she is alone.

KIRA

Yes, we're done.

And she means a lot more than the conversation.

24 INT. DS9 - SHAR'S QUARTERS

Dizhei has fallen asleep on the couch. She wakes and
stretches, gets up, looks around. She's alone in the room.

She moves towards the bedroom, taps to open the door. There
is no-one inside, but there is steam coming from the
bathroom area. She moves towards it, and looks in.

Lying in the bottom of the shower cubicle, with the water
still running, is Thriss.

Her eyes are open and glassy. A knife lies by her side. Her
wrists are slashed and running with blue blood into the
shower. On Dizhei's SCREAMS...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

25 EXT. BAJOR - KASIDY'S HOUSE - DUSK

Dusk in the quiet countryside around the large house.

26 INT. KASIDY'S HOUSE - LOUNGE

The pregnant KASIDY YATES is sat comfortably on her large, plush couch. Kira is clearing up empty snack plates nearby. They are pleasant, friendly, casual - civilian clothing.

KASIDY

I'm not an invalid.

KIRA

Maybe not, but you've spent the last half hour rubbing your feet. Let me remind you that visiting every last stall on the market was your idea.

KASIDY

If my feet get any bigger, I'll have to attach signs saying, "Warning - wide load."

As Kira heads off with the plates, Kasidy struggles to get out of the couch. She grunts as the baby kicks, and she gives up, settling back down.

KASIDY

I think I'll just stay here for a minute.

KIRA

(calling from kitchen)

I remember this time, a month or two before Kirayoshi was born. I was in Quark's with Jadzia, and I'd just had a huge glass of juice. The little guy decided it would be the perfect time to play hoverball with my bladder.

KASIDY
Sounds familiar.

Kira comes out of the kitchen, leans on the door frame.

KIRA
I vote we replicate breakfast
tomorrow.

KASIDY
I like to cook these days. Helps
me keep him close. I remember when
we were first building this place.
Ben would go out back, grab a
baseball bat, and whack some balls
out into the field. Helped him
clear his head.

KIRA
Do you...

KASIDY
Get lonely? Miss him? The honest
answer is... of course. After
living on the station, the quiet
out here took some getting used
to. But I like it now. I have my
fears... I'd sleep easier knowing
Jake was safe. But I'm happy.
(looks up at her)
Your turn. Are you happy, Nerys?

KIRA
Kas -

KASIDY
I'm not budging until you tell me
what's on your mind.

KIRA
Where to start? The peace talks
mess, double-dealing Shakaar, the
daughter-in-law of a Federation
councillor commits suicide. You
don't want to hear it, Kas.

KASIDY

No, come on. I've been told I'm a good listener.

KIRA

I do the best that I know how to do, and where has that gotten us? Fights, threats, vandalism. I hate saying it, but I almost miss the war. At least then we knew who we were fighting.

KASIDY

Nerys, I'm no expert on commanding a space -

Kasidy's doorbell RINGS, startling them both. Kira heads to the door, already being up. Kasidy struggles to clamber out of the couch again.

KIRA

I'll get it.

KASIDY

I'm not an invalid.

Kira opens the front door on VEDEK YEVIR. He had been chewing his lip nervously, but seeing Kira, his jaw drops.

YEVIR

You?!

KIRA

Not who you were expecting, Vedek Yevir?

As Kasidy approaches the door, and Yevir looks relieved to see her, Kira folds her arms and blocks his way.

KIRA

With all due respect, Vedek, why not go back to town and call again in the morning? Make an appointment with Captain Yates.

Yevir looks right past her, appealing directly to Kasidy.

YEVIR

I know I've come without an appointment, Captain Yates, but my business is urgent. Bajor's spiritual health is at stake.

KIRA

Take it up with the Assembly.

KASIDY

I am not the Emissary, Vedek. Even though it seems I keep having to remind people.

YEVIR

Please. A moment of your time. That's all I ask. I beg of you.

Kira stops herself from scoffing, but Kasidy is actually considering it, trying to be polite. She turns to Kira.

KASIDY

Why don't you start walking without me? I'll catch up after the Vedek leaves.

Kira is puzzled, looks to Kasidy for an explanation. Kasidy shrugs - let's get it over with. Kira steps aside, and Yevir squeezes through, refusing to even touch Kira. Kira grabs a coat and heads out, slamming the door behind her.

In the lounge, Kasidy settles back into the couch as Yevir perches nervously. He doesn't know how to start.

KASIDY

Please get on with your business, Vedek.

YEVIR

The present state of affairs troubles me. Recent events bode ill for Bajor.

KASIDY

I'm in no position to do anything about the state of Bajor.

YEVIR

But I should be! I was chosen by the Emissary to lead my people. I should know how to guide them. But the way is dark to me.

KASIDY

If you want to make things right, you could start by rescinding Kira's Attainder.

YEVIR

(frowns, looks away)

The Colonel's standing within our faith is unrelated to this issue.

KASIDY

If you want to have this conversation with me, in my house, it's very much related.

YEVIR

From the start, I have tried to follow the path your husband laid out for me. Or at least, what I believed that path to be. I sought to destroy Ohalu's book because I truly believed it was the best thing for Bajor. Now I'm not so sure.

(pause)

I came here tonight, hoping that whatever light filled him might have touched you and that you...

(can't explain)

I felt compelled to come.

Kasidy stares at him, looking for duplicity. There is none. She is actually sympathetic for his confusion.

KASIDY

I'm sorry. I wish I knew what Ben would tell you if he were here.

YEVIR

I understand. I apologise for
disturbing you. Forgive me.

Yevir gets up, and with a shallow bow, starts to the door.
But he stops, staring at the mantelpiece over the fire.

KASIDY

What is it?

He moves closer, and we see he's staring enraptured at the
JEVONITE FIGURINE, the small golden statue from B'Hala.

YEVIR

What is that?

KASIDY

It's from B'Hala. Unearthed during
the excavation.

YEVIR

May I...?

KASIDY

Go ahead.

He reaches out, picks up the figurine and inspects it,
totally fascinated. Traces the Bajoran nose-ridges, the
Cardassian neck-bones, holds it up to the light and sees
the shining eyes. He turns to Kasidy, hopeful.

YEVIR

I don't have the right to ask...

KASIDY

Take it, please. If it has some
significance to you, then by all
means, it's yours.

YEVIR

Thank you, truly, Captain. I know
now why I had to come. I don't
know exactly what it is yet, but
this... I think this may be the
answer I've been searching for.

Taking the figure with joy, he walks slowly out of the house. Kasidy watches him go, having no idea what that was all about.

27 **EXT. BAJOR - FIELDS**

Night now, and Kira is walking huddled in her coat through the fields, farms and woods near Sisko's land. She is upset, angry, stepping hard.

As she gets angrier, more upset, she breaks into a run. The exertion lets the anger out openly. Tears are in her eyes, her skin flushed. She runs through the fields and into the woods, batting branches out of her way.

She trips on a tree root and goes sprawling onto her front, the breath knocked out of her. Gradually picking herself back up into a sitting position, she pulls her leg into herself, gripping her ankle in pain.

This is the last thing she needs - a sprained ankle. She begins to cry harder with anger and frustration. She pushes herself back to sit against the tree. She feels a big stone in her way, and works it out of the ground to inspect it.

Brushing away the soil and dirt, she realises that she is holding a baseball. Dirty, sodden, but definitely one of Sisko's baseballs.

Amazed, her tears of anguish turn to ones of relief and joy. It's a sign from the Prophets, from the Emissary. She's going to be alright.

FADE OUT:

THE END