

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x10 - "Gut Feelings."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. JANIR MONASTERY

Another lovely morning in the Janir valley, the bright sun glinting off the river.

2 INT. JANIR MONASTERY - CHAPEL ANTEROOM

Bajorans are emerging from the chapel, services over for today. KIRA is among them. As she emerges, she finds RAIQ waiting for her. She smiles warmly, and they begin to walk.

KIRA

Good morning.

RAIQ

What do you even do in there?

KIRA

We just pray. Vedek Yevir leads the ceremony, and we pray.

RAIQ

He is not of your faith.

KIRA

No. But I'm starting to find that doesn't really matter. Yes, he can be a bit of a pompous ass at times, but he can also be surprisingly... compelling. Are you sure you don't want to join me, one morning?

RAIQ

I do not. Prayer to the True is a solitary pursuit.

KIRA

Not for us. We find strength in the communal aspect of it.

They continue to walk. Kira is quite encouraged that Raiq sought out her company, and she'll make the most of it.

KIRA

Come to think of it, I've never seen you pray.

RAIQ

Of course you have.

KIRA

You mean when you were sitting and staring into the flames? Was that prayer?

RAIQ

Every action I take is a prayer to the True. That is our way.

KIRA

So you don't need to set aside a time to pray every day. For you there's no difference.

RAIQ

To pray is to fight, to fight is to pray. You disapprove?

KIRA

Actually, no. I mean, maybe not the fighting part, but the idea that everything I do, no matter how small or insignificant, shows my love for the Prophets... I think that's a lovely idea.

Raiq pauses, rests lightly against one of the stone walls for a moment. She seems tired, out of breath.

KIRA

Are you okay?

RAIQ

I am perfectly well. Leave me be, woman.

KIRA

You came to find me.

RAIQ

Perhaps I should not have.

KIRA

You've been having more and more of these episodes, ever since we came to Janir. Are you sure you don't want to see a doctor?

RAIQ

I said leave me be.

Rallying her strength, Raiq pushes away from the wall and strides on down the passage. Kira follows. But Raiq is clearly in a bad mood, impatient and short-tempered.

KIRA

Raiq, if you're not well, I want to help.

RAIQ

Touch me and you will burn.

KIRA

That threat's getting kinda old, Raiq. Now tell me what's wrong.

Kira reaches out to grab Raiq and stop her. Raiq spins on her, suddenly furious. The armour around her arms generates the FORCE FIELD that we saw in 11x03, pushing Kira back and knocking her to the floor.

When Kira tries to get up, Raiq PUSHES the force field, holding her down on the ground from a distance.

KIRA

Raiq... what are you doing?

Raiq is now looking more and more agitated, less able to breathe properly or stand straight without wobbling. Her silver skin looks pale and sallow. She's scared, but covering it with anger and bravado. The force field is flickering.

KIRA

Alright, whatever this is, it's obvious you came to me for help. So let me help.

RAIQ

No. It is weakness...

KIRA

Yes, and I can help you with it. But you have to let me up.

The force field flickers again - Raiq is not strong enough to hold it. She feels a sudden TWINGE in her stomach, and her concentration is gone. The force field dissolves.

Kira scrambles to her feet, just as Raiq's knees crumble and she collapses to the ground. Kira rushes to her.

Raiq is on the stone ground, writhing in pain, her face full of confusion and fear. As she SCREAMS, Kira tries to comfort her, having no idea what's happening.

KIRA

Help! Somebody get help!

On Raiq's pain and Kira's worry...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

The station, with the *Defiant* clearly on the docking ring.

4 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

An ALERT beeps insistently on the central Ops table. RO touches the control, reads the results, frowns in worry. She slaps the comm panel.

RO

Captain, you'd better see this.

A moment later, the office doors open and VAUGHN steps out, mug of tea in hand. Meanwhile, Major CENN has also stepped closer, alerted by Ro's urgent demeanour.

VAUGHN

What's going on, Commander?

RO

Just got an advance alert from a Militia ship on its way from Bajor. They say they have Kira on board - and Raig - and that they have a medical emergency.

VAUGHN

What kind of emergency?

RO

Unspecified.

VAUGHN

Vaughn to Bashir.

BASHIR (comm)

Go ahead, Captain.

VAUGHN

Get yourself down to -

He looks to Cenn for the answer; Cenn checks the panels.

CENN
Docking port nine.

VAUGHN
- to docking port nine, Doctor.
You've got a medical emergency
coming in -

He now turns to Ro; she reads her own panels.

RO
E.T.A. seventeen minutes.

VAUGHN
- in seventeen minutes.

BASHIR (comm)
Who's the patient?

VAUGHN
Unknown at present. So pack
everything.

BASHIR (comm)
Understood. I'll see you there.

Bashir signs off. Vaughn beckons Ro towards the turbolift,
throwing over his shoulder as he goes:

VAUGHN
Major Cenn, you have Ops.

CENN
Yes, sir.

VAUGHN
Docking port nine.

And the turbolift takes them away, Vaughn sharing a worried
look with Ro.

Quite a crowd has gathered at the docking port. Vaughn and Ro, BASHIR and nurse RICHTER, plus Lt Cmdr EVIK and a phalanx of security, whom he directs to take up positions.

The port door rolls open, and Kira emerges into the airlock from the docked ship. She's urgent, worried.

KIRA
Julian! Come on!

At a nod from Vaughn, Bashir and Richter step into the airlock and follow Kira back into the ship. The others stay in the corridor.

6 **INT. BAJORAN SHIP**

Kira leads Bashir and Richter to a bench, where Raiq rests. She is clearly distressed - sweating, pale, weak. Bashir looks daunted as he sees who his patient is, but gets to work scanning with a tricorder. Raiq looks up in disdain.

RAIQ
Who are these?

KIRA
This is Doctor Bashir. He's going to help you.

RAIQ
I told you I need no help.

KIRA
Yes you do. So stop fighting me and let us help you.

BASHIR
I'm not even sure what I'm looking at here.
(taps combadge)
Bashir to Ops, three to transport directly to the Infirmary, please.

CENN (comm)
Stand by, Doctor.

He reaches out to touch Raiq's shoulder, and then the three of them disappear in a transporter beam.

Kira takes a deep breath and steps out into the airlock.

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

Vaughn and Ro look up as Kira returns, looking shaken.

VAUGHN
Well, what happened?

KIRA
Julian took her to the Infirmary.

VAUGHN
Raiq is the patient?

KIRA
Of course.

Vaughn looks meaningfully to Evik - he nods understanding.

EVIK
Evik to security - set up a perimeter at the Infirmary. No civilians to enter for any reason until further notice.

SECURITY (comm)
Understood, Commander.

KIRA
Who are you?

EVIK
(smile; shakes hands)
Sorry, Captain. I'm Lieutenant Commander Evik Nath, new chief of station security. It's a pleasure to meet you.

KIRA
You too. But I'm not a captain anymore.

EVIK

Nevertheless, it's an honour.

VAUGHN

If Raiq is sick, why bring her here? Bajor has doctors.

KIRA

But none who have experience with other life forms. Especially not at the monastery. I could think of one person who even had a shot.

VAUGHN

I'm sure Doctor Bashir is very gratified by your faith in him. I'd still rather have had some notice. You recall what happened the last time she was here.

KIRA

That was Axno, not Raiq.

Vaughn grunts his lack of reassurance, and turns to stomp unhappily down the corridor. Kira and Ro follow.

EVIK

Ensign - stay and guard the ship.

The ensign nods and takes up position. Then Evik follows.

Kira throws Ro a look - "What the hell's up his ass?"

Ro looks back - "I know... sorry."

Ahead of them, Vaughn grits his teeth, tense and angry.

8 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Raiq lies on a bio-bed, flinching at every move Bashir makes. He reaches to a sensor on the bed - she throws him a wary look. Her eyes dart at every beep and burble.

BASHIR

Kristen, get a full body scan going, I need to know what we're dealing with.

RICHTER

Aye, Doctor.

Bashir grabs a tricorder, holds it out towards Raiq. Quick as a whip she GRABS his wrist, stops him.

RAIQ

What are you doing to me?

BASHIR

I'm trying to help you. These devices will take scans of your body, so that I can figure out what's wrong with you.

RAIQ

No. Stay away.

Worried, Bashir struggles with his wrist in her grip. But she won't let go.

RAIQ's ARM

The armour around her arm begins to GLOW as it heats up.

BASHIR

grimaces as Raiq's hand begins to BURN his skin. He tries again to yank away - she won't let go.

BASHIR

Raiq, you're hurting me.

RAIQ

And I will continue, unless you leave me be.

The burn is really starting to hurt now. Bashir grits his teeth against it. Richter stands by, not sure what to do.

Finally, Raiq opens her hand and pushes Bashir away with a force field, THROWing him back until he CRASHes into some medical machinery with a clatter.

RICHTER

Doctor!

Richter rushes to check on him. Bashir stares at Raiq in confusion and determination. Raiq is surrounded by a force field, flickering and wavering but enough to keep him and anyone else away. She breathes hard, sweating with effort.

Bashir rights himself, but makes sure to stay back.

BASHIR

Raiq, please... we won't hurt you.
But it's obvious you're not well.
That's why Kira brought you to us
- so that we could help you.

RAIQ

I need no help!

BASHIR

I'm sorry, but yes, you do. I may
not be familiar with your species,
but nobody sweats like this and
has this much trouble breathing
when they're perfectly healthy.
Please, let us help you.

Raiq doesn't answer. It's obvious she's scared, covering it with anger. Bashir steps closer, his hands up in peace.

BASHIR

Do you trust Kira?

(no answer)

I trust her. I worked with her for
years. We trust each other. If you
trust her, and she trusts me, then
you can trust me too. I promise I
won't hurt you. But I need you to
let me in.

Raiq still isn't sure what to do. But then the TWINGE comes again, and she crumples in pain. The force field dissolves.

Bashir and Richter rush back to her side, tricorders out, buttons pressed. Raiq is too weak to protest anymore.

RICHTER
Can't we at least give her an analgesic?

BASHIR
Not until I understand her body chemistry better.

Richter reaches out to try to touch Raiq, move some of her clothing aside, but she pulls back in worry.

RICHTER
She's on fire.

BASHIR
Yeah, I got that, thanks.

RICHTER
I mean it, Doctor. She's burning up. Can't you feel it? It's radiating off of her.

BASHIR
Of course I feel it. I'm just not sure what to do about it. Where's that full body scan?

Richter trots over to a larger display, which shows full body scan readings. She looks it over.

RICHTER
Doctor... I don't even understand what I'm looking at here.

Bashir goes to join her, gazes over the readings too.

RICHTER
What's this, all over her skin? Is that supposed to be there?

BASHIR
I have no idea. To either.

Bashir makes a decision, and goes over to the far wall where he works a panel.

RICHTER

What are you doing?

BASHIR

Lowering the room temperature. We need to cool her down, and this is all I dare do until I know more.

The doors open, and we can see security in position out on the Promenade. Kira, Ro, Vaughn and Evik enter.

Ro hugs herself against the sudden cold. Evik takes up a position where he can clearly see Raiq, his hand ready to reach for a hip-mounted phaser at any moment. Kira rushes to Raiq's side. Vaughn goes straight to Bashir.

VAUGHN

Report, Doctor.

BASHIR

I've only had a moment to examine her, sir. But I can tell you this much - she's burning up from the inside out.

VAUGHN

What are you doing about it?

BASHIR

I don't know what to do. I'm not familiar with this species' biology. I've never even seen an Ascendant in the flesh before. But if I don't figure it out soon... she's going to die.

Vaughn remains stern, giving nothing away. But from her position at Raiq's side, Kira looks back in worry..

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

9 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Where we left it - Bashir has given Vaughn the bad news.

VAUGHN

"Burning up?" Is that literal,
Doctor? Because I assure you I'm
in no mood for poetry.

BASHIR

Her body temperature is out of
control. Or at least I assume it
is. I have no baseline readings
for this species, but whatever's
happening to her can't possibly be
healthy.

VAUGHN

Is she going to explode in a ball
of flames, like Axno?

BASHIR

I honestly can't say, sir.

Vaughn is not happy with that answer. But what can he do?

VAUGHN

Make every effort to ensure she
doesn't, Doctor. Evik?

EVIK

Aye, sir.

VAUGHN

Evacuate the Promenade. I want all
civilians in the habitat ring
within fifteen minutes.

Evik goes without another word. On his way out, he gestures
for SEVAK to take his place inside the Infirmary. The
Vulcan security non-com does so.

As Bashir goes back to Raiq, Ro takes Vaughn aside.

RO

(sotto)

Sir, are you sure you're not over-reacting?

VAUGHN

To what? To the presence on this station of one of the people who swore an oath on their gods to kill every Bajoran in existence? No, I don't think I am.

With a last stern look at Bashir, Kira and Raiq, Vaughn turns and leaves the Infirmary.

With a sigh of uncertainty, Ro follows him out.

10 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Ro emerges to find the Promenade in chaos. ANNOUNCEMENTS sound over the comm system, asking everyone to return to their homes. Security officers are gathering people up, shooing them along, explaining the situation.

As soon as he spots Ro, QUARK makes his way through the confusion directly for her.

QUARK

Laren! What's going on?

RO

We're evacuating the Promenade, Quark. Just as a precaution.

QUARK

(peeks over
her shoulder)

Is it the Infirmary? Who've you got in there?

RO

None of your business.
(before he
can protest)

Everyone, Quark. That includes
you, your staff and customers.

QUARK

But -

RO

Please don't make an issue of it,
Quark. Just do what you're told
for once. It's for your own good.

She moves off before he can argue any further. He watches
her go, more worried than angry. A last glance towards the
Infirmary, and he turns back to his bar.

11 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Raiq reclines on the bio-bed, comforted by the fact that
Kira is beside her. Bashir approaches quietly...

BASHIR

Nerys... Can you tell me what
happened? What do you know?

Kira slowly gets up from beside the bed and goes to Bashir
across the room.

KIRA

She started feeling ill a few
weeks ago, just after we moved to
the monastery in Janir.

RAIQ

No.

They turn and see Raiq struggling to sit upright.

RAIQ

I will speak for myself, woman.

BASHIR

Then please do. Because I want to
help you, but right now I have no
idea how.

RAIQ

It began almost as soon as I was taken to Bajor. It has only grown worse over time.

KIRA
Why didn't you tell me?

RAIQ
Tell you? The woman who killed all my brothers and sisters and left me alone in the galaxy?

KIRA
I'm trying to help you.

RAIQ
I think you did this to me. It has only happened while I have been in your care. I think this is your way of finishing the task you began, and destroying the last of the Ascendants.

KIRA
You think I've been poisoning you? I saved you.

RAIQ
And you have regretted it ever since. Now you take your final revenge.

BASHIR
Raiq, I assure you, that's not how we work. Please, just tell me everything. How did you burn my wrist like that, for starters? And that force field you made. How did you do that?

RAIQ
The armour, of course.

BASHIR
Armour? Is that what's all over your skin?

RAIQ

(to Kira)

I thought you said he was wise.

KIRA

(to Bashir)

From what I can tell, the armour is a kind of organic technology. It grows on their bodies almost from birth, bonds with them.

BASHIR

And that's what generates the force fields and the flames?

KIRA

Yes. But it's been getting weaker. She tried pushing me down earlier, but she couldn't hold it.

BASHIR

So if it's always been there, it's probably not what's causing this. Raiq, have you ever heard of any other Ascendant becoming ill like this?

RAIQ

Ascendants are the chosen of the True. We do not suffer sickness like the heathen.

KIRA

Weren't you sick when you met Opaka? When you crash-landed on the Ennis moon? She said you were feverish and delusional.

RAIQ

That was injury, idiot woman. I had been attacked. If my vessel had not also been wounded, I would have healed in hours.

BASHIR

And nobody's attacked you now. So it's not that either.

RAIQ

Then poison - as I said.

KIRA

Raiq, if I wanted to kill you, you'd be dead already. So quit blaming me. I'm tired of it.

BASHIR

Nerys...

He guides her away, out of Raiq's earshot.

BASHIR

I need more information. Otherwise the best I'm going to be able to do here is palliative. Is there anything else you can think of that might help?

KIRA

(breathe, think)

She talks about her vessel a lot. The ship she used to live in.

BASHIR

What about it?

KIRA

She said they bond with it from birth, like the armour. It takes care of them. She called it her cradle.

BASHIR

But her ship was destroyed, right?

KIRA

(nods)

Iliana took it into the wormhole.

BASHIR

(frustrated)

So that's no help either.

Bashir ponders to himself for a moment, then calls out.

BASHIR
Kristen?

Richter appears.

RICHTER
Yes, Doctor?

BASHIR
Call Aylam down here. And Etana too. I advise you to keep the room temperature as low as you can. If she keeps getting worse, we might have to go as far as an ice bath.

RICHTER
Understood.

BASHIR
Nerys, you stay with her. And please... try not to fight with her. Try to be comforting.

They both smirk, knowing that's not Kira's strong suit.

KIRA
Where are you going?

BASHIR
I have to speak to the captain.

And Bashir turns and leaves the Infirmary.

12 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

On Vaughn, sat at his desk, distinctly displeased...

VAUGHN
I beg your pardon?

Bashir stands before the desk, formal.

BASHIR

I said, I need Axno.

VAUGHN

Axno is dead, Doctor.

BASHIR

Her remains, then.

VAUGHN

What makes you think I have any to give you?

BASHIR

I'm not a fool, captain. Axno may have immolated herself, but there would still be remains. Ashes, something. And given the tension you've displayed any time anyone even mentions the Ascendants, I don't think you would have just thrown those away. I'm willing to bet you have them stored somewhere, possibly on board the *Defiant* where you can be surer of their security.

VAUGHN

Even if that were true, Doctor, why do you imagine I would hand them over to you just because you asked?

BASHIR

Because I need them to save Raiq.

VAUGHN

Now you really are talking nonsense. What use would ashes be?

BASHIR

I don't know anything about the Ascendants, not from a medical view. I can't figure out what's wrong with Raiq if I don't know what right is supposed to look

like. Even burned ashes would contain DNA traces. Assuming Axno was a normal, healthy Ascendant woman before her death, those traces would help me establish a baseline to work from.

VAUGHN

No.

BASHIR

I beg your pardon, sir?

VAUGHN

The answer is no, Doctor.

BASHIR

So you admit the remains exist.

VAUGHN

Alright, yes. Congratulations, Doctor, you've solved my little mystery. But I'm still not going to let those ashes out of their containment. Find another way.

BASHIR

If I could think of another way, Captain, I'd be doing it right now. I need those ashes to save a woman's life.

VAUGHN

An enemy woman.

BASHIR

Does that matter? Since when do we distinguish between friends and foes when it comes to saving lives? Have you forgotten what this blue collar means?

VAUGHN

(sharp, deadly)

You watch your tone with me, Doctor.

BASHIR

I have authority in all medical matters, Captain, even over you. So unless you want me to record in my log that you blocked my attempts to help my patient - a patient I could have saved if not for your interference - then I want those remains, and I want them now.

VAUGHN

Damn it, Doctor, this is not one of your moral crusades! This is a security issue. What do you think would happen if Raiq found out we kept the burned ashes of her "sister in the True?"

BASHIR

Raiq never has to know. I can do my work in private.

VAUGHN

Doctor -

BASHIR

Do you want me to beg? I've tried logic, I've tried anger. Is that what you want? Fine. Please, Captain... let me help her.

Ending on Vaughn's tense face as he considers what to do..

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

13 EXT. DEFIANT

Still docked at the station, but we focus on the ship...

14 INT. DEFIANT - VAULT ROOM

A room we have never seen before, but which we have no reason to believe hasn't always been there. It is deep inside the guts of the ship, no windows, lined with lockers.

Vaughn stands watching as BOWERS unlocks one sub-vault with a complex electronic doohickey. Meanwhile, CANDLEWOOD looks around the room in confusion.

CANDLEWOOD

I've worked on this ship for three years, give or take. I even lived on it for three months. How did I never know this room existed?

VAUGHN

It didn't exist until last year. I repurposed it from a munitions storage locker. Mister Bowers, do you have it?

BOWERS

Getting it now, sir.

Bowers' device beeps, and the vault unlocks. He opens it, reaches in, brings out an innocuous-looking box. He passes it to Candlewood. John takes the box over to a console, places it down gently, and then works the panels.

CANDLEWOOD

Candlewood to Bashir. Ready.

BASHIR (comm)

At your discretion, John.

Candlewood hits a control, and the box disappears in a small TRANSPORTER beam.

15 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY LAB**

A private lab away from the main infirmary. Bashir and Richter watch as the TRANSPORTER deposits the box onto his examination area. Gingerly he opens the box, revealing the even smaller box inside that contains Axno's ashes.

BASHIR

Alright. Let's get this figured out fast. Raiq can't have much time left.

With a nod of determination to Richter, they begin to work.

16 **INT. DEFIANT - VAULT ROOM**

Bowers closes the locker again, and the three turn to leave the room. But before they go...

CANDLEWOOD

Sir, permission to assist Doctor Bashir.

VAUGHN

Why?

CANDLEWOOD

I studied Axno's vessel. Bashir might need that data.

VAUGHN

That was a ship, not a body.

CANDLEWOOD

An organic technology ship, sir. Which we know responds directly to the pilot. They're connected.

VAUGHN

But Raiq doesn't know we have the ship. She can't know.

CANDLEWOOD

Hence why I said Bashir, sir.

VAUGHN

Bashir doesn't know either.

CANDLEWOOD

Then with respect, sir, in the current circumstances... don't you think he should?

This is quite bold coming from the juniorest of officers. Vaughn turns to Bowers, whose blank look gives him nothing. Damn it, he knows they're right, as much as he hates it.

VAUGHN

Report to the Infirmary, Mister. But you will restrict yourself to sharing information with purely medical applications, understood?

CANDLEWOOD

Aye, sir. Thank you.

Candlewood eagerly strides ahead of them out of the room.

17 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY LAB

On Bashir, very much unhappy, as Candlewood has just told him the secret...

BASHIR

He what?! Damn that man. Who the hell does he think he is, keeping these secrets from me?

CANDLEWOOD

The captain considered it a military matter. Need to know. And you didn't need to know.

RICHTER

Well, we know now. That's what's important. Right, Doctor?

BASHIR

Yes, yes, of course. Thank you,
Lieutenant. Let's just get on with
it.

Bashir tamps down any further ire - he has a job to do.
Candlewood and Richter assist.

18 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Raiq is on the bio-bed, wracked with spasms and sweats.
Kira sits by her side while ETANA passes a tricorder over
Raiq's body. AYLAM works across the room at a panel, and
Sevak stands within visual range, armed at the ready.

Everyone but Raiq is wearing heavier coats against the cold
air in the room. Etana works her tricorder with gloved
fingers. Breath condenses in the frigid air as they talk.

ETANA

The cold air is cooling her down a
little. But not enough.

Etana returns to Aylam. As a particularly strong wince of
pain hits Raiq, Kira tries her best to comfort her.

KIRA

Bashir'll figure something out.

RAIQ

You watch and smile at my pain.
You bring more Bajorans to taunt
me. If I were strong, I would burn
you here and now.

KIRA

I know that's fear talking. I
don't blame you. But I won't let
anything happen to you.

The biggest twinge yet hits - Raiq SCREAMS in pain, her
skin SMOKING, the clothes singeing at the edges. FLAMES
gutter at her wrists, lick out from her very eyes. Kira
jumps to her feet in horror. Sevak pulls his phaser.

KIRA

Etana! Do something!

Etana runs back over, tricorder out again. She's just as worried as Kira. Raiq continues to SHRIEK in pain.

ETANA

I don't know what to do!

Aylam rushes over with a hypospray in hand.

AYLAM

Hold her down.

Kira and Etana both work to try to hold Raiq's flailing body as still as they can. Then Aylam presses the hypospray to a bare section of Raiq's arm, and activates it. But the liquid just SQUIRTS out sideways over Raiq's silver skin.

AYLAM

It's not going in!

KIRA

It must be the armour.

RAIQ is insensate with pain. Kira grabs her face with her hands, winces against the heat, tries to get her attention, speaks clearly and slowly over the SCREAMS and WAILS.

KIRA

Raiq! We can give you something
for the pain. But we need to know
- where is your armour thinnest?

RAIQ

Aaaaaaahhh! F... F... Face!

Kira moves to hold Raiq's head still, and Aylam presses the hypo into her cheek. Nothing seems to happen for a moment, and Kira worries it won't work.

But then finally Raiq begins to calm down. More, then more... until her body relaxes and the guttering fires at her extremities die out. She's still in pain, but dulled, no longer so piercing.

KIRA

Bashir said he didn't know what to give her.

AYLAM

Bashir's not the only smart one.

KIRA

(w/ feeling)

Thank you.

Kira and Etana let go of Raiq, and Aylam steps away. With a look of sympathy, Etana also leaves Kira alone with Raiq. The Ascendant woman, exhausted and afraid, looks at Kira.

RAIQ

I am being judged.

KIRA

By the True?

RAIQ

By their silence. I do not hear their call.

KIRA

That just means you're not going to die.

RAIQ

No. I was denied the Ascension. I was branded a heretic. Now the True themselves reject my spirit.

(beat)

Will you pray with me?

KIRA

We're already doing it.

Raiq smiles through the tears, grateful for Kira's support.

KIRA

Sleep now. I'm here. I won't leave you.

Raiq nods, and relaxes back. Kira keeps watch.

19 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Deserted and quiet. Ro strolls along, peering through the windows of the bar as if expecting Quark to still be there. She smiles, slightly surprised, to see that he's not.

Outside the security office, she meets Evik strolling the other way. He's armed, but greets her with a gentle smirk.

EVIK

I was told this posting would be a hive of endless activity. You're the first face I've seen in hours.

RO

I know. It's almost creepy. But I would have killed for a few days like this back when I was security chief.

EVIK

Be careful what you wish for, I suppose. Any news?

RO

Not yet. Bashir's got what he needs.

EVIK

You mean the ship and the ashes?
(off Ro's reaction)
As security chief, the captain felt I needed to know.

RO

Did he also tell you not to tell Major Cenn?

EVIK

Those are my orders, yes. I can't say I'm especially happy about it. I certainly understand the need for military secrets, I'm not an idiot. But I don't much like keeping things from colleagues.

RO
I know how you feel.

The Infirmary doors open. Bashir stands in the doorway, with Richter and Candlewood hovering behind him.

BASHIR
Commander Ro... Can I speak with you, please?

EVIK
Go ahead, I'll continue patrols.

RO
Thanks, Nath.

Evik strolls on along the Promenade. Ro goes to Bashir.

RO
What have you got, Doctor?

BASHIR
We need to speak to the captain.

RO
We?

Bashir looks back through the doorway, to where Kira sits beside Raiq. Kira senses the eyes on her, and looks up.

20 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

Vaughn stands behind the desk, with Bashir, Ro, Candlewood and Kira also present. Bashir is making his report.

VAUGHN
Please enlighten us, Doctor.

BASHIR
She's dying, no doubt about that.

KIRA
What's killing her?

BASHIR
She is. She's killing herself.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

21 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

As everyone reacts to Bashir's pronouncement...

VAUGHN

Doctor, are you saying this is
some kind of long-form suicide?

KIRA

No. I don't believe that. She's
terrified of this.

CANDLEWOOD

Sorry, he's being dramatic. It's
not suicide. It's more like her
own body is attacking itself.

RO

Like an immune system thing?

BASHIR

Not quite. Nerys, what has she
been eating while you've been with
her on Bajor?

KIRA

The same things I eat. Why?

BASHIR

What does she normally eat?

KIRA

She said she doesn't eat at all.
Her ship takes care of everything.

BASHIR

And I think that's the problem.
She's not used to eating real
food. Breathing real air.

RO

Come on. She must have eaten food before, walked on planets before.

KIRA

But never for any length of time. She'd never even seen a sunset because she never stayed in one place long enough.

BASHIR

And now she is doing. And it's killing her.

RO

Well, she can hardly just stop eating and breathing.

BASHIR

No. And ordinarily it wouldn't be that much of a problem. They do have a system for regulating and repairing their bodies when they have to eat foreign food.

VAUGHN

What is it?

BASHIR

Their ships.

RO

But she doesn't have her ship anymore. Her ship was destroyed.

BASHIR

Exactly.

CANDLEWOOD

The way it works is, they have this armour on their bodies.

KIRA

Yes, it grows on them from birth.

CANDLEWOOD

We know the ship and pilot share a kind of language of electrical signals - now I see it's actually the armour that does that.

KIRA

What, you got all this just from studying the Wa?

CANDLEWOOD

No, from -

VAUGHN

(sharp)

Lieutenant.

Candlewood realises that in his enthusiasm, he was about to let out the secret. He clams up.

VAUGHN (cont)

What does all this have to do with Raiq being ill?

BASHIR

This bond between the armour and the ship is also what cleans out their bloodstreams.

CANDLEWOOD

It's an ingenious system, really. Like how people take in oxygen and produce carbon dioxide, and plants do the same in reverse, so that we balance each other. It's the same for Ascendants.

BASHIR

The ship leaches the toxins out of their bodies, probably while they sleep. It feeds off them. And in return, the ship feeds its own by-products back to the pilot. She feeds off it. Hence the no need for food.

CANDLEWOOD

Plus, the armour uses the same system. A power source for the flames and the shields - they help to burn off the excess. Very self-sufficient.

BASHIR

Sadly, without her ship, Raiq hasn't had this process for months. The toxins have been building up in her system, with nowhere to go. This was inevitable.

KIRA

Why didn't she say anything?

CANDLEWOOD

She probably didn't even realise. It's a natural process for them.

BASHIR

It's also why her temperature is so elevated. Her system is trying anything it can think of to burn off the toxins.

VAUGHN

So what are you doing about it?

BASHIR

Her body's own method isn't going to be enough. I can help, but her blood is too poisoned at this point for me to be able to do much. And it's not like we have another Ascendant around to give her a transfusion. The only thing that would really work is to get her back into her ship and let nature take its course.

Vaughn sends Bashir another deadly glare - not another word. Bashir looks back, undaunted.

KIRA

That's obviously not an option.
Julian, there must be something -

Then she sees the looks on everyone else's faces.

KIRA

What? What's going on?

VAUGHN

Nothing. As you say, that's not an
option. Thank you, Doctor. I think
it's time you returned to your
patient.

Bashir is defiant. Vaughn is pissed. Candlewood and Ro are
awkward. Kira sees all of this.

KIRA

No. He's not going anywhere till
you tell me what's going on.

BASHIR

Captain Vaughn has been keeping -

VAUGHN

That's enough. You are under
orders, Doctor.

RO

Sir... she needs to know.

VAUGHN

Damn it, have you all forgotten
who the captain is here? No!

BASHIR

Are you really willing to let the
only living example of this
species die when you have the
means to save her? That would
basically be genocide.

VAUGHN

Don't get carried away, Doctor.

KIRA

Tell me. What have you got that
could save her?

BASHIR

Another ship.

Vaughn can only turn away rather than punch something. As
he's pacing and trying to keep his temper, Kira reacts.

KIRA

What? How?

RO

It's Axno's.

KIRA

I thought that was destroyed.

CANDLEWOOD

No, it's safe.

KIRA

And you all knew about this.

From the looks on their faces, clearly they did.

KIRA

And you didn't think this was
something I needed to know?

CANDLEWOOD

The captain ordered us not to tell
you.

VAUGHN

And you're all in direct breach of
those orders right now. I could
have your commissions.

KIRA

They were the wrong orders, Elias.

VAUGHN

You don't get to say that. It's not your job anymore.

KIRA

I don't care about who's captain. I care about saving Raiq's life. We have to use that ship.

VAUGHN

How can you all be so blind? Ro - you ask me why I'm in a bad mood. Bashir - you say I'm tense about the Ascendants. Yes. I am. You know what Iliana said to me, as I left the wormhole? She told me to watch out for Raiq. Watch out for her. She's dangerous, Kira. You know it only takes one ship and one pilot to destroy an entire star system, and you want me to just hand it over?

KIRA

You don't know her. She's changed.

VAUGHN

She was anointed by the avatar of her gods to lead the crusade to kill all Bajorans everywhere. You think she's going to give that up just because one Bajoran was nice to her one time?

KIRA

So you're going to let her die.

VAUGHN

Or let an entire star system's worth of Bajorans die, along with anybody else she felt like? I'm okay with that decision, yes.

KIRA

I'm not. Doctor Bashir, take me to that ship.

BASHIR
I... don't actually know where it
is.

RO
(speaks up)
I do.

VAUGHN
Commander.

RO
I'm sorry, sir. But she's right.
I'm not okay with letting Raiq die
just so that we can keep our
military secrets. It's the wrong
decision and I don't support it.

BASHIR
You're outnumbered, Captain.

VAUGHN
You think this is some kind of
democracy? You follow my orders.
That's how this works.

RO
Not if the orders are wrong, sir.
We can face the consequences if
and when they come up. But we
can't just let her die.

As Vaughn seethes at them all...

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

The door from the office opens, and all five walk out into
Ops. Cenn is at the central Ops table, Bowers at tactical.

VAUGHN
Bowers, head to the *Defiant* and
get her prepped to ship out in
thirty. Doctor Bashir and Novice
Kira will meet you there. Mister
Candlewood, with me. Commander Ro,
you have the station.

BOWERS

Aye sir.

Bowers heads to the turbolift. Ro steps up to Vaughn...

RO

Sir, regulations require the captain to stay safe, and the XO to take any potentially dangerous away missions.

Now she shows respect to his rank? He glares at her hard enough to blister, holds her gaze, then turns away without another word. That's what he thinks of her suggestion. He heads to the turbolift.

VAUGHN

Defiant.

The lift takes Vaughn, Bowers, Bashir and Candlewood away. Cenn steps up to Ro, having watched the tense exchange.

CENN

Where are they going?

RO

They're taking Raiq back to Bajor.

CENN

In the *Defiant*?

RO

Take your position, Major.

Clearly he's getting no more than that. As Cenn moves away, Ro looks back with worry to the empty turbolift shaft...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

23 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - DEFIANT

The *Defiant* pulls back from its port on the docking ring, slowly turns and surges away into open space.

24 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Vaughn sits in the centre chair, with PRYNN at helm, Bowers and Candlewood at their stations, and extras as needed.

PRYNN

We've cleared the station, sir.

VAUGHN

Set course for Bajor, Lieutenant.
When we're clear of DS-Nine's
immediate sensor range, raise
cloak and alter course to head for
Cajara. Full impulse.

PRYNN

Umm... aye, sir. May I ask -

VAUGHN

No. Candlewood, Bowers...

He beckons them both sharply over to his chair. They leave their stations and approach. He speaks *sotto*.

VAUGHN

Is Axno's ship still receiving the
signal from the other Ascendant?

CANDLEWOOD

As far as I know, sir.

VAUGHN

You have the time it takes us to
reach Empok Nor to figure out a
way to block that signal. Bad
enough she find out about the

ship; I can't have her knowing she might have an ally as well.

CANDLEWOOD

Sir, I'm not s-

VAUGHN

Get to work, Lieutenant.

CANDLEWOOD

Aye sir.

Candlewood returns to his station; Vaughn turns to Bowers.

VAUGHN

I'll be going over there with Kira and Bashir. Don't bother arguing, I'm not in the mood. I want you to keep the ship combat ready. If there's any sign of this going wrong, I want you to destroy that entire section of the station.

BOWERS

But sir -

VAUGHN

You have your orders. Be nice if somebody could follow them today.

Vaughn gets up from his chair and leaves the bridge.

BOWERS

Aye, captain.

25 **INT. DEFIANT - SICKBAY**

Raiq lies on a bio-bed, unconscious. Kira watches over her, Bashir and Richter nearby. The door opens, Vaughn enters.

VAUGHN

Status, Doctor.

BASHIR

She's unconscious right now.

VAUGHN

Can you make sure she'll stay that way?

BASHIR

I'm more familiar with her blood chemistry now. I suppose I'd be comfortable inducing a coma. She'd remain unaware of the entire procedure.

VAUGHN

Very well. I want her ready for transport asap. If we're doing this, let's get it done.

Vaughn turns to leave the room. Kira follows him out.

26 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

Vaughn sees that Kira has followed him into the corridor.

VAUGHN

Did you want something?

KIRA

Just some answers. I get why you didn't tell Raiq about the ship. But why couldn't you tell me?

VAUGHN

Why would I? You're not Starfleet anymore. You're not even Militia. You resigned. To put it bluntly, Nerys, you're no longer one of us.

Kira stops and stares open-mouthed at Vaughn.

KIRA

That might be the ugliest thing you've ever said to me, Elias.

VAUGHN

From your perspective it must certainly seem so. But look at it

from mine. When you were captain,
or Sisko, would either of you have
entrusted military secrets to a
low-ranking church acolyte?

KIRA

It's not the same. You know me.

VAUGHN

I like to think so. But your
loyalties are no longer to me or
to the organisation I represent.

KIRA

(stunned)

You don't trust me?

VAUGHN

Personally, I trust no-one more. I
can't think of anyone better to
keep Raiq from being a danger to
us. I watched you do exactly that
with Taran'atar for three years,
so I know you're capable. But
sensitive information? I have no
reason to trust you with that,
because you have no reason to keep
it in confidence. You'd feel
obligated to tell Raiq, and that's
a risk I can't take.

KIRA

She's a frightened, lonely woman,
Elias. If we want her to trust us,
we have to trust her.

VAUGHN

You have the luxury of trust. I
don't. I have to plan for the
possibility that it won't be like
Taran'atar all over again. That
this time, you'll fail.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Nerys. I hope I can
still call you a friend. But this
decision is out of your hands.

Vaughn turns and walks away again, leaving Kira alone.

27 **EXT. EMPOK NOR**

Approaching the empty station, cold and lifeless in space.

The *Defiant* shimmies into view as its cloak drops.

28 **INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY**

The dim and shadowy room where Axno's ship rests. The ship hides in the darkness, the gentle orange glow from inside the cockpit lightly ebbing and flowing.

Transporters deposit Vaughn, Bashir, Candlewood, Kira and Sevak into the room. With them is Raiq, unconscious on a portable bio-bed that is riding on an anti-grav sled. Sevak and Vaughn are armed. They look around the dark room.

VAUGHN

Candlewood, you're up.

With a nod, Candlewood hefts the replicator machine over to the base of the ship, REPLICATES the ladder, and begins to climb. At the top, he sends a signal from his tricorder to OPEN the canopy, and then climbs inside.

KIRA

What's he doing?

VAUGHN

Getting it ready. Are we even sure this will work? It's not her ship. It might reject her.

KIRA

Raiq told me that the ships are used to adapting to new owners whenever the old one dies.

VAUGHN

And if it does, won't it just put her back to factory settings? And we go through it all again in a few months' time?

BASHIR

I'm hoping that with some of my own tweaks to her biochemistry, we'll get a happy medium.

VAUGHN

And she definitely won't know or remember what happened?

BASHIR

If she didn't know what caused it in the first place, she won't know what fixed it either.

CANDLEWOOD (o.s.)

Ready!

They look to see Candlewood poking his head out of the ship's canopy, waving for their attention.

CANDLEWOOD

You can come on up. One at a time though. And don't touch anything.

Sevak goes up the ladder first, pausing at the top to help Bashir guide the anti-grav up. Once there, Sevak clambers into the ship, Bashir follows him, and they work together to lift Raiq's unconscious form off the anti-grav.

29 INT. ASCENDANT SHIP (CONTINUOUS)

CANDLEWOOD

On there.

Candlewood points to the pilot's seat - they heft the body onto it. Vaughn helps Kira clamber over the threshold. They settle into the ship - with six people, it's a tight space.

VAUGHN

Now what?

CANDLEWOOD

Well... I don't actually know. It reacted to Prynn instantly.

KIRA

So we just wait?

Apparently so. Bashir and Candlewood both have tricorders out, taking readings. Sevak waits with hand on phaser.

The silver metal of the chair softens, Raiq's unconscious form sinking into it like a cushion. The shape SHIFTS, fluidly flattening and lengthening until it's more of a bed than a seat, Raiq's form carried with it the whole way.

The silver metal begins to BLEED around her, sluggishly at first, getting smoother and faster as it builds energy. It flows around her, covering her arms, creeping across her body. The others watch, equally fascinated and horrified.

The ship is stuttering to life all around them. Lights THROB from the silver surfaces. Electricity SKITTERS across bulkheads and panels. This is exactly what the ship needed.

The flowing metal has almost covered Raiq's body, leaving only her face clear. The ship seems to pause, figuring something out. The others wait for it all to go wrong.

Which it does.

The silver metal SNAPS tight around Raiq, like cling film. Electricity SPARKS all across her body, arcs jumping from arm to chest, from leg to head. Raiq JERKS inside the fluid cocoon, spasming violently in her unconsciousness.

VAUGHN

Back!

Vaughn and Candlewood back away to the ship's rear. Sevak pulls his phaser. Bashir and Kira refuse to leave her side.

VAUGHN

Doctor!

CANDLEWOOD

What's happening?

BASHIR

I don't know what's happening!

The sparks grow, jumping between Raiq and the ship itself. Raiq's shudders grow more violent. The ship begins to HUM, power building, panels brightening, bulkheads fortifying.

30 **INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY**

As the sparks of electricity shine from inside the canopy, the damaged and warped external surfaces of the ship punch themselves back into smooth and seamless place. The liquid surface ripples. The front point sharpens and glows.

31 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Prynn reads her panels. Bowers hovers anxiously behind her.

PRYNN

I'm reading huge energy spikes
from the runabout bay. Ascendant
power signatures.

BOWERS

Ready photon torpedoes.

PRYNN

But Sam -

BOWERS

I know, Prynn. But we have our
orders.

PRYNN'S PANELS

A GRAPHIC displays rising energy levels, creeping into the red zone...

32 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

The energy keeps growing and growing, great ARCs of power jumping across the ship.

VAUGHN

That's it - everybody out!

BASHIR

Captain -

VAUGHN

NOW!

They all rush to the exit, dodging power spikes as they go. They clamber over the edge to the ladder, leaving Raiq in the grip of the vessel. Even now, Bashir is the last to go.

VAUGHN

If we survive this, Doctor... you
and I are going to have one hell
of a conversation.

Then they're all gone, leaving Raiq alone, still tortured in the grip of the flowing silver metal.

Slowly **CLOSE IN** on Raiq's shuddering but still unconscious face, the only part not smothered in liquid. Tiny sparks of electricity skitter across the skin. Her eyes SNAP open, literal flames licking out of them. Around her, we hear the vessel continue to ramp up, sounds growing louder, lights growing brighter, reaching **ECU** on Raiq's face...

WHITE OUT

We hold on WHITE OUT for a few moments, as the sights and sounds drift away into distant echoes, until finally...

FADE IN

33 **RAIQ'S POV**

Sights and sounds slowly begin to penetrate the fog. Far away voices, happy and relaxed. Twittering birds. Then white stone walls, basic furniture, a Bajoran prayer symbol etched directly into the stone. All peace and tranquillity.

34 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY - RAIQ'S CHAMBERS**

Slowly struggling her way back to consciousness, Raiq finds herself on her thin, basic cot in one of the small personal chambers at Janir monastery. The room around her is clean, tidy, undamaged.

Clearing the cobwebs from her head, she looks around. Kira is sat by the bedside, gazing out of the open window at the warm and gentle countryside. Raiq croaks out...

RAIQ

Kira...?

KIRA

You're awake! That's wonderful.

RAIQ

Where are we?

KIRA

Back at Janir. On Bajor. You're safe here.

RAIQ

What happened to me?

KIRA

You were very ill. But just like I told you, Doctor Bashir is a genius. He fixed you. You'll be good as new.

Kira gives her a warm, confident and reassuring smile.

RAIQ

What was wrong with me?

KIRA

Oh, I don't know. I'm no doctor.

(beat)

How do you feel?

Raiq takes a moment to process the question.

RAIQ

Strange. Something is different... not quite as it was before. I cannot say clearer than that.

KIRA

After what you've been through,
I'm not surprised. I'm just glad
you're better now.

RAIQ
I think... I heard them.

KIRA
The True?

RAIQ
No. My brothers and sisters.

Kira covers the 'oh crap' moment. She stutters to recover.
Thankfully Raiq is too groggy to notice.

RAIQ (cont)
In my fever, I heard their voices
calling to me. I felt... at home.

KIRA
I'm sorry. You must miss them a
great deal.

RAIQ
They are with the True. It seems
I, still, am not. But I am now
once again sure they await me.
(smile)
I felt their power, even if it was
not my time to join them.

KIRA
(awkward, evasive)
I'm happy for you, Raiq. I'll let
you rest now.

As Raiq drifts off again, Kira stands. She quietly moves to
the heavy wooden door of the chamber, opens it, and exits.

35 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY - CORRIDOR**

Gently closing the door behind her, Kira hovers in the
corridor. The confident smile drops away. She's worried.

Taking a deep breath, she moves off into the monastery.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW