

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x17 - "Olympus Descending, pt 2."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novella

"Olympus Descending"  
by David R George III

appearing in

*Star Trek: Worlds of Deep Space Nine*  
*Book 3 - Ferenginar / The Dominion*

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1 MONTAGE FROM EP 9x16**

-- The bright NOVA in the sky over the Founder's planet.

VOICEOVER

Previously, on Deep Space Nine.

ODO (v.o.)

What is... that?

-- Odo pointing to the image in his headset viewer.

ODO

That bright object - it wasn't there when we left.

WEYOUN

It is likely a distant nova, and poses no threat to the Great Link.

-- Laas returns and confronts Odo.

LAAS

I want to know why the Hundred were sent out. Why we were sent away.

-- Laas disguised as Kira.

ODO

For knowledge. That's what I was told. I had no reason to disbelieve it.

LAAS-as-KIRA

But don't you see, Odo, we have every reason to disbelieve it?

-- Laas-as-Kira dissolves into the Link.

ODO

What are you going to do?

LAAS-as-KIRA  
I'm going to learn the truth.

-- Taran'atar jerks awake in the runabout.

KIRA (v.o.)  
Taran'atar... I know about your  
problem. About your new need to  
sleep.

-- Kira discussing it with him in the cockpit.

TARAN'ATAR  
It is yet another failing. Another  
way in which I am no longer a true  
Jem'Hadar.

KIRA  
Why do you want to visit the  
Founder?

TARAN'ATAR  
The Founder has been alone for a  
long time now. I hope to be able  
to offer some relief from that  
circumstance.

KIRA  
Taran'atar, Ananke Alpha is the  
most secure, heavily guarded  
prison facility in the entire  
Federation. Are you going to  
attempt to free the Founder?

TARAN'ATAR  
Captain Kira, I have no doubt that  
if the Founder wished to escape  
her confinement, she could do so  
without my assistance.

-- Indurane explains things to Odo.

INDURANE  
Have you ever known an infant  
changeling?

ODO

I was an infant changeling. Laas  
was an infant changeling.

INDURANE

There are no infant changelings...  
because changelings cannot  
reproduce.

ODO

How could we have possibly evolved  
as a species without the ability  
to reproduce?

INDURANE

The Founders did not evolve. The  
Great Link was generated by  
design. The Founder population was  
created in its entirety... by the  
Progenitor.

ODO

Are you saying that the  
Founders... have a god?

-- Vannis receives her orders from another Founder.

FOUNDER

You will wait two weeks only, to  
assess the severity of the Overne  
winter and its impact on the food  
supply. If there is any chance of  
a shortfall, begin shipments from  
Rindamil at once.

VANNIS

Acknowledged.

FOUNDER

Before then, I want you to take  
your ship to a moon orbiting a  
world near the Anomaly. A member  
of a race calling themselves the  
Ascendants spent some time there  
when its ship crashed.

-- Indurane still explaining to Odo.

ODO

But how could you expect us to find your Progenitor, when we didn't even know who we were, let alone of its existence?

INDURANE

We did not expect you to find the Progenitor. We hoped that it would find you.

ODO

And then what?

INDURANE

Then... we would be saved.

ODO

Why are you telling me now?

INDURANE

Because the Progenitor has finally returned.

-- Taran'atar steps off the runabout at Ananke Alpha.

T'KREN

Mister Taran'atar, I am Commander T'Kren. Welcome to Ananke Alpha.

-- As Taran'atar faces down the automated weapons...

VOICEOVER

And now, the conclusion.

## **2    INT. ANANKE ALPHA - DOCKING BAY**

TARAN'ATAR continues to stand, contemptuously staring down the automated armaments of Ananke Alpha.

Commander T'KREN stands opposite him. She turns and walks through the door, turning to her left afterwards and disappearing through another door.

Suppressing a growl, Taran'atar follows the red line painted on the floor, and passes through the door. The second door that T'Kren went through is now closed, leaving only a long corridor with another closed door at the end.

Taran'atar continues to walk the line, automated sensor and weapon units tracking his progress all along its length.

**3     INT. ANANKE ALPHA - PREP ROOM (CONTINUOUS)**

Taran'atar passes through that door and into a large, grey square room. More sensor and weapons ports dot the walls. To his left there is a large observation window through which he can see the facility's staff, with various control panels and monitors.

There is a male Orion, JENEK. A female Tellarite, CHEG. A male human, HEXTER. A female human, MATHESON. And the Vulcan woman T'Kren, at one panel. She speaks, her voice issuing from speakers in the walls.

T'KREN

Mister Taran'atar, I am required by the United Federation of Planets to inform you that this facility has been deemed a no-hostage zone. In the event that you are taken captive by Ananke Alpha's prisoner, or by other forces attacking this facility, Starfleet will not negotiate for your release. Do you understand and consent to these conditions for your visit?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

T'KREN

Then upon that table you will find a Starfleet-issue coverall. Please remove the apparel you are currently wearing and dress in the Starfleet attire. Please do this with alacrity.

Taran'atar goes to the table, picks up and inspects the simple, undetailed red coverall. There is no coverage, so he simply unzips and drops his black jumpsuit where he is and dresses in the provided suit.

That done, he looks up, and sees that only three of the crew - T'Kren, Cheg and Hexter - are visible through the window now.

T'KREN

Thank you. Please move to the approximate centre of the room.

(he does)

In a moment, you will be joined by two security officers who will escort you to the cell housing the Founder. One will walk ahead of you, the other behind you. Please follow their instructions exactly. Do you understand?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

T'KREN

Once you have entered the Founder's cell, you will have one hour to visit with her. At the end of that time, you will be escorted back here. Do you understand?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

The door behind him, and another one in front of him, open. The Orion male Jenek enters from behind, the female human Matheson from the front. They both have cloth pouches at the waist, and hold phasers. The doors close behind them.

MATHESON

I'm Lieutenant Commander Matheson, and this is Lieutenant Jenek.

Taran'atar couldn't care less for their names. He has nothing but contempt for these people, but controls himself for the sake of his meeting with the Founder.

MATHESON

We are now going to walk with you to the Founder's cell. At several points along the way, Lieutenant Jenek or I will ask you to stop. Please do so at once, and remain stationary until we ask you to proceed again.

TARAN'ATAR

I understand.

MATHESON

Please take a position between Lieutenant Jenek and myself.

(he does)

Thank you. We'll now proceed.

She turns her back on him, and the door in front of them opens. She steps through, Taran'atar follows, and then Jenek. Ahead of them is just another long, long corridor, stretching away into the distance, curving with the shape of the spherical station.

As they enter the corridor, Taran'atar takes a moment to look behind himself, looking back into the prep room. Then the door closes behind them, and Jenek gestures him on. He turns, and walks between the two officers, on into the distance, on his way to meet his god.

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### **4**    EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD

The NOVA, shining and shimmering in the pinky-orange sky.

PAN DOWN, across the agitated, rolling sea of changelings that is the Great Link, until we find ODO and LAAS. Both are in their familiar humanoid forms, standing some distance apart on the rocky islet.

Odo has been relating the revelations to Laas, who is not thrilled. Laas's response is one of disgust, disappointment in his people. He seems appalled at the very notion.

LAAS

(distasteful)

The "progenitor." Belief in a  
First Cause is such a...  
monoform... concept.

ODO

That's been my experience as well.  
The Bajorans, the Klingons,  
certain subsets of the humans and  
the Andorians... countless other  
races hold a variety of different  
religious beliefs about the  
creation of the universe.

(pause)

But Indurane actually conveyed  
recollections of the Progenitor,  
although his memories were old and  
indistinct. Still, I perceived his  
beliefs more as issues of fact  
than of conviction.

LAAS

Is that not always the way it is?  
Are not the religious convictions  
of monoforms simply the result of  
certain electrochemical processes  
in their brains?

ODO

Changelings don't have humanoid brains.

LAAS

That's not my point. Isn't the belief in a god most often a reaction to the fear of death? And this ancient changeling told you that our people are on the road to extinction.

ODO

I don't know... Would the Link exile a hundred of its own based solely on an unproven belief?

LAAS

The history of the Varalans is littered with barbarous episodes. They often utilised their faith in some creator as justification for heinous behaviour. For cruel acts of savagery against even their own kind. The same story is true of many monoform races.

ODO

But the Varalans and those other species are not the changelings.

LAAS

No... and it pains me to think that our people can be compared to such inferior beings. And yet you've told me that the Founders sent out the Hundred based upon just such an absurd belief.

ODO

Indurane maintains that it is more than belief, more than faith.

LAAS

"Indurane" ?

ODO

The old changeling. It's the  
Bajoran word for "ancient."

Laas rolls his eyes and scoffs. Odo smarts.

ODO

Regardless, according to him, the  
Progenitor is a matter of reality.

LAAS

That is what believers say.

ODO

Except that Indurane thinks the  
Great Link has succeeded.

That gives Laas genuine pause and surprise.

LAAS

What?

ODO

The Link thinks the scattering of  
the Hundred through the galaxy has  
brought about the result for which  
it was intended.

LAAS

Why do they think that? And if  
it's true... then where is the  
Progenitor?

ODO

I don't know.

LAAS

Then there are more questions we  
need to ask, Odo.

ODO

I'm not sure we'll get anything  
more out of Indurane. We need to  
contact the Vorta.

PAN back up to the pink sky, and the NOVA hanging there...

CROSS-FADE INTO:

**5     EXT. ENNIS SETTLEMENT - MORNING**

Another sky, blue and clear. PAN back down again, revealing the sparse, rocky ground of the moon of the Sen Ennis, as seen in 1x13 "Battle Lines" and 8x23 "Rising Son."

A Dominion transporter deposits the Vorta VANNIS and three Jem'Hadar, including First REKAN'GANAR. She looks around at the distant mountains, stony slopes, tough vegetation.

VANNIS

Are you certain this is the location?

REKAN'GANAR

It is. Residual traces of a propulsion trail are scattered throughout the area, and ship's sensors detected small amounts of refined metals spread along this flat as well.

VANNIS

It must have been a crash or an emergency landing, then. No pilot would intentionally choose to set down here.

(to soldiers)

Find whatever you can learn.

The three Jem'Hadar spread out, each holding the Dominion version of a tricorder. Vannis pulls out her own sensor device and walks forward, towards a set of cave openings.

The tricorder alerts her to a bio sign. She doesn't react, but calmly changes direction to walk closer to the cave.

VANNIS

Hello there.

(no response)

Yes, I'm speaking to you. You, in the cave.

A figure emerges shyly from the cave - a young boy, barely five years old. He is human-looking, and dirty like he has been playing in the soil. His name is MISJA. Vannis leans down to him, smiling, and affects a gentle, soothing voice.

MISJA

Hello. I was just playing and I saw you.

VANNIS

I know. What's your name?

MISJA

Misja. What's yours?

VANNIS

I'm Vannis. Do you live here?

MISJA

In the village. With my tribe.

VANNIS

The Sen Ennis.

MISJA

(wary)

Ye-es....

VANNIS

Oh, don't worry. I'm not here to hurt you or your tribe.

MISJA

Why are you here?

VANNIS

I'm here to find a friend of mine. Quite tall and... silvery.

MISJA

(eager)

Raiq!

VANNIS

(playing along)

Yes, Raiq. Is Raiq here?

MISJA

No, she left a while ago. Right after she healed.

VANNIS

Healed? Oh no. Was she hurt?

MISJA

She wasn't well, but Tadia told me she didn't know whether she was sick or got hurt when her ship crashed.

VANNIS

Her ship crashed? Oh no. Is it still here?

MISJA

No. She flew away in it. I guess it wasn't too badly damaged.

VANNIS

Can you show me where?

MISJA

Sure. It's just over here. It was before I was born, but everybody talks about it. We play here all the time.

Trusting, Misja reaches out for Vannis's hand. She gives him it, and they walk together along the plain, to a point where there are slight indentations in the stony ground.

MISJA

Right here.

VANNIS

Would you mind if I took some readings? I just want to make sure that this was my friend's ship.

MISJA

Sure.

Vannis crouches down to inspect the ground. There are tiny pools of melted metal in the indentations. She ponders a little, making sure she has as thorough readings as possible. Then she stands, turns back to Misja and smiles.

VANNIS

Yes, this was Raiq's ship. Thank you very much, Misja.

MISJA

You're welcome. Will you visit our tribe?

VANNIS

No, I don't think so. I have to go. I need to find my friend.

MISJA

(disappointed)

Okay.

VANNIS

Well, if you go and tell your tribe right now, they can come and visit me here before I leave.

MISJA

Great! I'll go get them.

He runs off with childish enthusiasm. Vannis pulls out a test-tube and scraper, scooping up some of the melted metal into the tube. She stores it away and taps her comm device.

VANNIS

Vannis to First Rekan'ganar.  
Rendezvous at the beam-down point.  
I have the information we need about the Ascendants. We're leaving. Alert the second to set course for the Rindamil system.

REKAN'GANAR (comm)

Acknowledged.

Vannis smiles, satisfied. She has served her gods well.

**6**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR**

Taran'atar walks the gently curved corridor, Matheson ahead of him, Jenek behind, both with phasers at the ready. Their heels clack loudly on the surface. They come to the end of the corridor, where there is a door with a hand scanner.

MATHESON

Stop.

They do. Matheson holsters her phaser, opens the pouch at her hip, brings out a computer chip with a serrated edge - a chip and physical key in one. She slots it into a hole and TURNS it sharply. She then places her other hand on the scanner. Taran'atar watches every move Matheson makes.

MATHESON

Identify - Matheson, Lieutenant  
Commander Jacqueline. Requesting  
access.

The scanner turns from red to yellow, and after a few more seconds, to green. The door slides open. Matheson withdraws the chip-key, puts it in the pouch, and draws her phaser.

MATHESON

Let's continue.

**7**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - RADIATION ROOM (CONTINUOUS)**

Matheson, Taran'atar and Jenek step through the door, Taran'atar noting that the door is at least 10 cm thick. Staying in close for now. Once they have passed through...

JENEK

Stop.

They do, and Jenek repeats Matheson's actions. Holster phaser, open pouch, insert key, scan hand.

JENEK

Identify - Jenek, Lieutenant.  
Requesting closure.

The panel goes from green to yellow to red. Jenek pulls the key, puts it in the pouch, draws his phaser, turns around.

JENEK  
Let's continue.

They begin to walk again, and we WIDEN to reveal that they are now walking on a BRIDGE that crosses this much larger room, much wider than the claustrophobic corridor.

The walkway has open space all around it. On either side are powerful RADIATION EMITTERS targeted at the walkway, forcefields blocking them, and a DROP of hundreds of meters below. Taran'atar observes everything as they walk.

CROSS-FADE TO:

**8     INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MAZE ROOM**

The next set of corridors are set at odd angles, and there is an inch gap between all the walls and the deck, the gap covered by the blue glow of a forcefield.

Matheson leads the group through seemingly random patterns. Taran'atar glances behind as they walk, and sees that the walls are MOVING on hidden motors behind them, creating a different layout of the maze once they have passed through.

CROSS-FADE TO:

**9     INT. ANANKE ALPHA - HEAT ROOM**

The party continues to walk on, through a room where the walls are STEAMING and GLOWING red with heat. The air is hazy with it, and it would be a difficult temperature for anyone, but we get the impression it can go a lot higher.

**10    INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR**

The group emerges from the heat room into another corridor. They stop, and Jenek goes through the whole process with the key and the scanner. As the door closes, the walls cycle up the heat level in that room to lethal levels.

The group turns again. At the other end of the corridor is a glass door, and through it we can see another glass door a few meters further away.

MATHESON

At the end of this corridor is the Founder's cell. We will open the first door, and you will step into the antechamber. You will wait while we close the first door. The second door will not open until the first is closed and sealed. Lieutenant Jenek and I will remain in this corridor during your visit. Do you understand?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

MATHESON

Let's continue.

Matheson leads them forward to the first glass door. She goes through the phaser-pouch-key-scanner process again, and the door slides aside. Matheson gestures Taran'atar forward, and he steps into the area between the doors.

Matheson closes the first door, replaces her key, pulls out a different key and uses it to remotely open the second door. It slides aside, and Taran'atar steps through.

**11    INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL**

Taran'atar steps into the room, the glass door sliding closed behind him. He stops and looks around.

We PULL BACK and pan around, seeing the whole room. For all its furnishings and provisions, it appears to be empty of an occupant. No sign of the Female Founder anywhere.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### **12**    INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL

Taran'atar stands seemingly alone in the room. There are potted plants and random objects of various interesting shapes. The entire room is extremely well lit, no shadows to hide in. And no sign of an occupant. Taran'atar calls...

TARAN'ATAR

I am Taran'atar. I am a Jem'Hadar  
First.

(no response)

I humbly seek to visit with you,  
Founder... to speak with you.

There is still no response. It dawns on Taran'atar that perhaps the Founder doesn't want to speak to him.

TARAN'ATAR

If you do not wish my visit,  
Founder, then I shall leave.  
It is of course, your choice.

But there is still no response.

### **13**    INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira sits in the pilot's seat. She is reading a padd, but cannot really concentrate on it. She puts it on the surface and sits back, worrying about Taran'atar.

### **14**    INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM

The room with all the screens where the officers sit. The human male, Hexter, sits closely observing one monitor on which is a shot of the *Rio Grande*, sitting in the docking bay. T'Kren stands behind him, observing dispassionately.

T'Kren turns to another pair of screens, where the Tellarite female Cheg sits watching two angles from the Founder's cell. They can see Taran'atar standing there, waiting hopefully for the Female Founder's attention.

After a few more moments of waiting, there is a hint of movement on the screen. Something is emerging from the very top edge of the image. Cheg is almost relieved to see it.

CHEG  
There she is.

**15**    **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL**

One of the large, white, square ceiling tiles is melting, shimmering. It eventually drops to the floor and MORPHS into the familiar changeling form of the FEMALE FOUNDER.

Taran'atar is simultaneously awed at the sight of a Founder changing, relieved that she has consented to see him, and scared of the moment now that it is here. She stares up at him, curious and slightly disapproving.

FEMALE FOUNDER  
Why are you here?

As Taran'atar tries to think how to answer...

**16**    **EXT. SPACE**

Focusing on Dominion Vessel 971, hanging in orbit over the Founders' golden planet.

**17**    **INT. DOMINION SHIP - WEYOUN'S QUARTERS**

WEYOUN stands at a large series of computer panels in his room, urgently working back and forth between numerous different running programs. hurrying to get the work done as soon as possible, but making sure he gets it right too.

Behind him are Odo and Laas, waiting with various levels of impatience. Weyoun is intimidated and awed by their presence, He quite likes Odo, but is a touch scared of Laas and his more obvious contempt for solids.

ODO  
Weyoun - are you making progress?

WEYOUN  
I am. I am making significant progress.

LAAS

(snaps)

If you're making progress, then what's the delay?

WEYOUN

My apologies, Founder. I'm afraid the information you're seeking is stored in numerous files, in different locations. They're also encrypted in a variety of ways.

ODO

But you do have the necessary clearances to access and decode the files?

WEYOUN

I do, thanks to your foresight. I've collected all of the files, and decoded most of them. I'm just waiting for the last few files to go through decryption, and then for the final collation of data.

Laas turns to Odo, dismissing and ignoring Weyoun.

LAAS

Is there no-one who can do this any faster?

Before Odo can respond, there is a BEEP from the computer and Weyoun turns back to inspect it. He works the panels for a few more moments, and then turns back, his satisfaction at having served the Founders clear.

WEYOUN

Done.

LAAS

Good. Get out.

Weyoun's smile evaporates, but he bows his head and does as he is told. Odo sees his disappointment and takes pity.

ODO

If you don't mind, Weyoun. It's just that Laas and I would like to discuss the contents of the files in private.

WEYOUN

Of course. I understand entirely. I'm more than happy to volunteer my home for you to work in. As always, it is a pleasure to serve.

ODO

Thank you, Weyoun. Good work.

Weyoun beams widely, then bows and backs out of the door, letting it close in his face. Laas shakes his head.

LAAS

You are too soft with them, Odo.

ODO

No, you are too harsh. These are his own quarters, Laas. You could have a little respect.

LAAS

Respect?! They're monofoms, Odo. Just because they're programmed to be more obsequious and fawning than most doesn't make them any more worthy of respect.

Disappointed with Laas, Odo walks over to the computers and begins inspecting the files.

LAAS

This whole thing is ridiculous. How can our people revere some creator of their own, and then set themselves up as gods for other races to worship? It's hypocrisy of the lowest kind.

Odo pays no attention to Laas's grumblings. He MORPHS his hands, sprouting extra fingers to work the keys faster.

ODO

Apparently they don't see it as a contradiction. I suppose they realised how strong a motivator such a belief could be from their own culture, and decided to use it to their own ends.

Odo brings up a display, a large STAR CHART that shows many sectors of space. Odo points to a large, irregular area surrounded by a BLUE line.

ODO

This is Dominion space.

Odo works some more controls, and RED dots appear in seemingly random places outside the border of their space.

ODO

And here are all the locations to which the Hundred were sent.

LAAS

They're not symmetrical. They don't seem to be in any pattern.

ODO

No, they don't.

LAAS

Where's the Omarion Nebula?

Odo taps more keys, and a smaller area appears surrounded by a YELLOW line, with another yellow dot inside it.

ODO

Here.

(points to dot)

And here's the planet formerly occupied by the Great Link.

LAAS

It's not at the centre of the distribution.

ODO

But Indurane told me that the  
Hundred were intended to draw the  
Progenitor back to the Great Link.  
So there must be some central  
locus here.

Odo works the computer again, bringing up various programs.  
On the main screen, red lines appear through all of the red  
dots. The lines move around, always anchored to their dots,  
trying to find one point where they all intersect.

At last, the lines find a common point, all intersecting in  
one location - near to, but not inside, the Omarion Nebula.

LAAS

Are there planets there?

Odo interrogates the computer for more information.

ODO

There's one star system there.  
Eleven planets and -

He breaks off as he reads some more information. Laas takes  
note of Odo's confusion.

LAAS

What is it? What's wrong?

ODO

There's only one star in that  
area, and it's been the brightest  
object in the Great Link's sky for  
months now. It went nova.

As Odo and Laas reflect on the stunning non-coincidence...

**18**    **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira still sits, waiting and worrying...

FEMALE FOUNDER (v.o.)

I asked you a question. Why are  
you here, in the Alpha Quadrant?

19 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL

The Female Founder stares up at Taran'atar, displeased at having to repeat herself. Taran'atar is nervous.

TARAN'ATAR

I am in the Alpha Quadrant because one-and-a-half years ago, I was sent by a Founder to reside on Deep Space Nine.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Another Founder... Odo?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes - Odo.

The Founder settles back, accepting that. She looks closely at Taran'atar, noticing the lack of white tube.

FEMALE FOUNDER

You are free of the white. Is this a result of your advanced age?

TARAN'ATAR

I do not believe so. I believe other, younger Jem'Hadar have been found with the same... deficiency.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Others were found? By whom?

TARAN'ATAR

By the Vorta, acting under the direction of Odo.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Odo. He explicitly searched for Jem'Hadar without dependence on ketracel-white? And then from that group, selected you to live in the Alpha Quadrant? Why?

TARAN'ATAR

I... I do not know.

FEMALE FOUNDER

He did not tell you? When Odo sent you from the Dominion, he did not explain your mission?

TARAN'ATAR

He did, but I do not understand. I am to experience living among the species of the Alpha Quadrant. I would never question the wisdom of a Founder, but I do not understand why this is necessary.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Did Odo tell you how long he would require this of you?

TARAN'ATAR

He did not. But during his recent visit to Deep Space -

FEMALE FOUNDER

His recent visit?

TARAN'ATAR

Odo spent more than a month on Deep Space Nine and Bajor, until leaving to go back to the Great Link almost three months ago. He accepted an invitation to attend a ceremony in which the Bajorans entered the Federation. I suspect he also wanted to see Kira.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Of course. His loyalties are still divided.

TARAN'ATAR

I would not presume to evaluate the loyalties of a Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER

(dismissing him)

Of course you wouldn't. You are not capable of it. But I am.

She turns and walks away from him, pacing around her room, talking as much to herself as to him.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Odo seeks to change the Dominion,  
to alter the natural order. He  
hopes to foster a relationship  
between our people and the solids,  
so that he can keep both the Link  
and Kira in his life.

She grasps the trunk of a small tree, her fingers MORPHING to wrap around and around it, climbing up and down its length. She looks over her shoulder, back at Taran'atar.

FEMALE FOUNDER

But such efforts will never work.  
Even Odo, with his inexperience,  
will understand that one day.

TARAN'ATAR

As you say.

She grips her extended fingers tighter, and the trunk of the tree SNAPS under the pressure.

FEMALE FOUNDER

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

On that ominous pronouncement...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**20 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL**

The Founder unwinds from the broken tree, but her hands remain long and extended, fingers dragging on the floor. Taran'atar watches confused, not sure how to respond.

TARAN'ATAR

Founder... surely no god would  
ever betray the Great Link.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Of course he would. Odo will flout  
the sacrifice I have made for our  
people. I agreed to end the war,  
to give myself over to my enemies,  
to relinquish my freedom at the  
hands of the solids, all to save  
the Great Link... and to save Odo.

Then she throws her arms in the air, her fingers extending up to the ceiling, their tips GLOWING like tiny stars.

TARAN'ATAR

To save Odo?

FEMALE FOUNDER

He was one of the Hundred. I was  
one of those who decided to send  
the Hundred away. I had no choice.  
I wanted the Link to survive.

The Founder pauses, then brings her arms back down from the ceiling, reforming into normal hands. She focuses anew.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Why have you come to see me?

TARAN'ATAR

Because I wish to be of whatever  
service I can be to you. I thought  
I might be able to offer some  
relief from your... isolation.

FEMALE FOUNDER

And you imagine that your presence  
would do that for me? Would allay  
the misery of my seclusion?

She scoffs at him. Taran'atar stares back at the Founder,  
ashamed. If he could blush, he would be bright red now.

FEMALE FOUNDER

A Jem'Hadar Elder would never be  
so stupid as to think his company  
is of value to a Founder. Either  
your time in the Alpha Quadrant  
drove you to fantasy, or there is  
some other reason. What is it?

Unable to deny a direct question, Taran'atar finally admits  
the truth to himself - his real reason for being here.

TARAN'ATAR

I need your assistance, Founder. I  
am a Jem'Hadar soldier. I do not  
belong in the Alpha Quadrant. I do  
not belong without ketracel-white  
in my body. I need guidance, but I  
have no way of contacting Odo.

FEMALE FOUNDER

And so you sought to contact the  
only other Founder you could.

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

FEMALE FOUNDER

You seek my permission to leave  
the post Odo assigned you to.

TARAN'ATAR

I would never defy the will of a  
god. But Odo is not the only god.

FEMALE FOUNDER

He is no god at all! And neither  
am I!

Taran'atar stares, dumbfounded at the Founder's outburst. He is starting to seriously worry for her mental state.

TARAN'ATAR

Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER

The Founders are not gods. We developed the Jem'Hadar and the Vorta into what they are now. We are powerful and superior to all solids. But the one true god - the Progenitor - created the Founders.

TARAN'ATAR

Let me serve you, Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Your servitude means nothing to me. You lost the war. Leave.

He stands, paralysed, torn. He doesn't want to leave her, but he can't disobey her either. Crestfallen, he turns back to the door, preparing to leave. But before the door opens, he pauses and turns back to her with a new idea.

TARAN'ATAR

Founder...

**21**    **EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD**

Odo and Laas stand on one side of the tiny rocky islet, the NOVA hanging in the sky above them. The old changeling INDURANE stands opposite them. They are angrily confronting him with what they have learned, but he is placid.

INDURANE

We are aware of this. We have kept that area under observation, and we knew of the nova's existence when it first occurred. Since that moment, we have been drawn to it.

ODO

What does the Link intend to do?

INDURANE

We have contemplated that question for some time now. At the first appearance of the nova, some of us - and soon many of us - believed the Progenitor had returned. We anticipated it coming to us, but as time passed and that did not happen, some began to consider another action besides waiting.

LAAS

Then what are you going to do?

INDURANE

We will travel to the region of the nova. We will find the Progenitor.

Odo and Laas share a dubious, worried glance, while Indurane gazes rapturously up into the sky, at the nova.

**22**    **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR**

Matheson and Jenek stand to attention as Taran'atar walks through the inner door into the ante-chamber. Behind him, the Founder MORPHS into a shapeless, humanoid-sized mass, remaining in her cell. The inner door closes. Matheson opens the outer door, and Taran'atar steps through.

The Jem'Hadar's brow furrows with concentration. He barely acknowledges the others' presence. His mind is miles away, and whatever occupies it is taking all his brain power.

MATHESON

Follow me.

Without responding, Taran'atar falls in place between Jenek and Matheson, as before. At the far door, they stop, and Matheson goes through the phaser-pouch-key-scanner process.

The door opens onto the HEAT ROOM. As the burning heat cycles down to survivable levels and they step through the door, Taran'atar is unconcerned - he is busy concentrating.

**23**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM**

T'Kren, Cheg and Hexter observe their screens. On one they see Matheson, Taran'atar and Jenek leave the corridor, the door closing behind them.

On another they see the runabout sat in the docking bay. On a third they see the Founder sitting quietly in her loose, disembodied changeling state, on the floor of her cell.

Cheg and Hexter share worried, dubious looks. T'Kren keeps her attention on every single step the trio makes.

**24**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL**

The blob of formless changeling matter sits on the floor of the cell, shimmering.

**25**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MAZE ROOM**

CLOSE on Taran'atar, as he pays no attention to Matheson or Jenek, to their clanking boots on the deck, or to the moving corridor walls. It is getting harder and harder for him to maintain his hold on whatever thought consumes him.

As the group moves into the RADIATION ROOM, Taran'atar's concentration is slipping...

MATHESON  
Let's continue.

Just as he steps over the threshold, Taran'atar gets a pain in his head, puts his hand to his forehead. He opens his eyes - his concentration has been broken.

**26**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL**

The Founder disappears, fading away into nothingness as if she was never there.

**27**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM**

Cheg JUMPS up in shock at this sight. Alarmed, realising they are in trouble, T'Kren urgently slaps a control, and a loud, shrill ALARM sounds, RED ALERT lights flashing.

**28**    **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira reacts as she hears the red alert alarms through the walls of the runabout. She jumps in fear and surprise - this is everything she had been hoping would not happen.

**29**    **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - RADIATION ROOM**

In the split-second between the alarm going off and the officers reacting, Taran'atar moves. He SPRINGS forward, running Matheson down, her head hitting the metal deck.

Taran'atar DODGES to his right, BUZZING against the force field, evading a PHASER SHOT from Jenek..

Taran'atar SHROUDS. Jenek keeps firing, sweeping his phaser back and forth.

OOF - Jenek is TACKLED off his feet by a SHROUDED shape, his phaser FIRING wildly before slipping from his grasp.

**30**    **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MAZE ROOM (CONTINUOUS)**

Jenek falls to the floor of the maze. Taran'atar UNSHROUDS, grabs Jenek with one hand, and the fallen phaser with the other. He YANKS the struggling Orion up to use as a shield.

TARAN'ATAR  
Move and I'll snap your neck.

Automated phaser turrets FIRE at Taran'atar; he SHOOTS them out with Jenek's phaser, and they EXPLODE in sparks.

The walls begin to MOVE, rumbling to block his escape.

More automated phaser ports FIRE - Taran'atar twists so that they hit Jenek instead. The Orion SCREAMS.

Through the open door, in the radiation room, Matheson staggers to her feet and FIRES her own phaser.

With her spare hand, Matheson urgently rummages through the pouch at her hip to find the key to close the door again.

Jenek KICKS back into Taran'atar's shins, ELBOWS him in the stomach, BITES down on the powerful arm around his throat.

Taran'atar DROPS the phaser, uses the hand to reach up and SNAP the Orion's neck, then throws him aside like garbage.

The door is rumbling closed. Taran'atar scoops up the phaser, CHARGES on Matheson, SHOOTS her right in the back.

She collapses, body smoking. Taran'atar grabs Matheson's arm, WRENCHES it up, presses her hand against the scanner.

The door RUMBLES back open. He drops the dead arm and RUNS.

**31**    **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - RADIATION ROOM**

Head down, Taran'atar CHARGES along the bridge. The door at the other end is open, but starting its slow rumble closed.

The FORCEFIELDS drop, letting the radiation through. Taran'atar GRIMACES as the radiation burns his flesh.

The bridge SPLITS in the middle, retracting into the walls at either end, leaving a gaping space in the middle.

Taran'atar runs faster, building momentum. He times his steps perfectly, LEAPS across the gap.

His chest SLAMS against the retracting edge and he GRABS on tight, the dropped phaser CLATTERING to the deck far below.

He swings up, clambers back onto the bridge, begins making his way towards the far door, which is still closing.

His body feels like it is on fire from the radiation. But he refuses to give up. He FLINGS himself forward, ROARS...

**32**    **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR**

A figure HURLS itself through the shrinking gap of the door just before it closes - but the figure is Matheson.

She drags herself to her feet, head woozy, dead arm hanging limp. Cameras and phaser ports all turn to look at her.

RED ALERTs flash everywhere, but the phasers do not fire. Wracked with pain, Matheson limps along the corridor...

**33**     **ANGLE**

Matheson reaches two closed doors. She drags herself past the first and on to the second, which has a hand scanner.

Matheson reaches for the scanner. She can't quite manage it, and COLLAPSES against the door, wheezing in pain.

The door slides OPEN; the Tellarite female Cheg emerges, points a phaser urgently around in case of Taran'atar. Not seeing him, she crouches down towards Matheson...

CHEG

Jackie... are you -

Matheson's formerly dead arm SHOOTS up, and the hand GRABS Cheg by her fat, fleshy throat. Matheson SHIMMERS and unshrouds (not a changeling morph)... revealing Taran'atar.

Cheg GURGLES and shudders in his grip as he gets to his feet. He grabs her phaser, steps through the doorway...

**34**     **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM (CONTINUOUS)**

As he steps through the door, a phaser beam SCREAMS in his direction. But he holds up Cheg, uses her as a shield.

He FIRES the phaser aimlessly, causing panels to EXPLODE in sparks and smoke. The red alert alarm dies in this room, but we can still hear it sounding elsewhere in the station.

Another phaser shot comes out of the smoke - he THROWS Cheg's body into the path of the beam, simultaneously FIRING back into the smoke. A surprised SCREAM and THUMP.

A quiet comes over the scene. Taran'atar waits for the one last officer to appear.

A leg whips out of the smoke KICKS the phaser out of his hand. Commander T'Kren steps back, her own phaser trained.

T'KREN

Where is the Founder?

He takes a moment to catch his breath. He looks down at himself, sees the red Starfleet coverall ripped and torn.

T'KREN

I will ask you only once more.  
Where is -

A BLUR of movement - the coverall MORPHS and springs off Taran'atar's body. The changeling mass LEAPS at T'Kren, wraps itself around her hands so she cannot fire.

Taran'atar grabs the fallen phaser and FIRES. The Vulcan woman goes down with a shot straight to the head. The changeling mass unwinds, MORPHING into the Female Founder.

FEMALE FOUNDER

You're hurt. Can you go on?

TARAN'ATAR

Victory is life. I serve you for as long as I stand, and I will stand at least as long as it takes to return you to the Dominion.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Then let us depart.

Taran'atar moves to the few functioning consoles, using them to deactivate all the force fields and weapons.

**35    INT. ANANKE ALPHA - DOCKING BAY**

Taran'atar and the Female Founder emerge from the corridor, phaser held out. The runabout waits in the hangar, and Kira stands outside the hatch, unarmed. She takes in the sight of them, and sighs in disappointment.

KIRA

Taran'atar... I am ordering you to stand down, and to return the Founder to her cell.

Taran'atar pauses, not sure how to proceed. Odo told him to obey whatever Kira says. He looks to the Female Founder.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her. Kill her and let's get out of here.

Taran'atar is torn. He has now been given conflicting orders by two Founders - by two of his gods. He attempts to cover his confusion by inspecting the phaser in his hand.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her!

He raises the phaser, struggling to make a decision. How can he choose between two gods?

But he does. He presses the firing button, the phaser FIRES, and hits Kira square in the chest.

As Taran'atar watches, Kira collapses to the deck, a hole in her chest, her eyes staring in shock. She is dead.

BLACK OUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**36 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - DOCKING BAY**

The image is fuzzy, dreamlike. Replay the moment as Taran'atar holds his phaser on Kira...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her and let's get out of here.

Taran'atar fires...

**37 INT. RUNABOUT - REAR CABIN**

Taran'atar JERKS awake from his dream, disoriented, panting hard. He is on the cot in the sleeping area.

He sits up urgently, staggers out into the rear cabin. Sees the stars streaking past at warp outside the window.

Everything seems peaceful. Still breathing hard, he makes his way clumsily through the hatch and into...

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

...and there is Kira, sat calmly at the pilot's seat. Everything is normal, the ship flying smoothly.

Kira senses his presence and turns a little, smiling nonchalantly. Taran'atar frowns in confusion.

KIRA

How was your sleep?

He growls, slumps into the seat beside her. Wary, unsure what is going on here. He pauses to process her question.

TARAN'ATAR

It was... interrupted.

KIRA

I gotta say, you don't look particularly rested.

TARAN'ATAR  
Captain... our departure from  
Ananke Alpha. Was it uneventful?

KIRA  
Well, yeah. You finished your  
meeting with the Founder, they  
escorted you back through, you  
came back to the runabout and we  
left. Then you told me you wanted  
to be alone, so you went in the  
back. Don't you remember?

On Taran'atar's confused frown...

**39 FLASHBACK - FOUNDER'S CELL**

On the threshold about to leave, Taran'atar hesitates and  
turns back. Extending the scene...

TARAN'ATAR  
Founder... you are a god to the  
Jem'Hadar, are you not?

FOUNDER  
There is only one true god - the  
Progenitor.

She turns away, no longer interested. Taran'atar exits.

**40 SERIES OF SCENES**

-- Security escort Taran'atar uneventfully through the  
safety procedures. Looking at Matheson...

-- He shoots Matheson down.

-- Matheson leads him on calmly.

-- He shoots Kira dead.

-- He calmly boards the runabout, Kira by his side.

-- The runabout lifts off and leaves Ananke Alpha.

TARAN'ATAR

My memories are confused. I can recall two different series of events for the same period of time. They both seem real. Also, I imagined myself using abilities Jem'Hadar do not possess.

KIRA

Really? Like what?

TARAN'ATAR

The ability to turn our personal shroud outward - use it to project an image for others to see.

KIRA

Sounds like you had a dream.

TARAN'ATAR

A dream?

KIRA

Yeah, you know. It's just your mind's way of working through its subconscious impulses while you're asleep. It's perfectly safe.

TARAN'ATAR

I have read about such things in my studies of solids. It is unacceptable. A Jem'Hadar needs clarity of mind at all times.

KIRA

Everybody dreams, Taran'atar.

TARAN'ATAR

Not Jem'Hadar.

KIRA

Well, not most Jem'Hadar, I guess. But then you're not like most Jem'Hadar, are you?

Taran'atar grinds his teeth, disinclined to answer. There is a small BEEP, and Kira checks her panels.

KIRA  
And we are entering the Bajoran  
system. Dropping to impulse.

Through the forward window, we see the warping stars drop back to normal space. Deep Space Nine hangs silently in the distance, the *Defiant* in place on the docking ring.

KIRA  
(content)  
Nearly home.

But Taran'atar looks past the station to the colourful wisps of the Denorios Belt beyond it. That is where the wormhole is, and through it, Taran'atar's home.

**42    EXT. SPACE**

Dominion Vessel 971 travels at warp.

**43    INT. DOMINION SHIP - WEYOUN'S QUARTERS**

A large and undulating MASS of changeling, enough to make up six Founders. It is in the form of a wide cylinder, as if they stood in a circle and then all linked.

Two bodies pull away, solidify into the familiar forms of Odo and Laas. They step away from the group - the Founders' agitation and excitement has been overwhelming for them.

LAAS  
I find them exhausting. They're  
so... frenzied. It's undignified.

ODO  
I suppose you can't blame them.  
They think they're on their way to  
meet their god.

LAAS  
Such fanciful nonsense.

ODO

I'm trying not to be judgmental. So many times, Nerys tried to explain her unwavering faith in the Prophets to me, and I always made an effort to understand. Still, I never really did.

LAAS

Because it's incomprehensible.

ODO

Even the Bajorans never believed that the Prophets created the entire universe or the Bajoran people themselves. But the Link... they truly believe their saviour is at hand. I'm just scared for how they'll react when they find out it doesn't exist.

WEYOUN (comm)

Weyoun to Odo.

ODO

I'm here, Weyoun. Go ahead.

WEYOUN (comm)

You asked me to inform you when we approached the nova, Founder. We have just closed to within sensor range of the system.

ODO

Thank you. I'll join you on the bridge shortly.

(to Laas)

I'll keep you informed.

Laas nods, and Odo goes to the door and exits.

**44**    **INT. DOMINION SHIP - BRIDGE**

Odo stands in the middle of the bridge, the headset in place. He gazes with wonder at what he sees.

45 POV SHOT

What Odo sees through the viewer - the bright, shining explosion of the NOVA, overlaid with sensor readings.

46 BACK TO SCENE

Odo turns to see Weyoun at his panels, ROTAN'TALAG beside him. Weyoun casts a quick, nervous look over his shoulder at Odo, then returns to work. The Vorta is trying his hardest, but getting frustrated with the lack of progress. Odo flips up his viewer and approaches him gently.

ODO  
Anything to report?

WEYOUN  
The radiation from the nova is  
interfering with our scans.  
(annoyed mutter)  
It might help us to have some idea  
of what we're looking for.

Odo smirks at Weyoun's seemingly impertinent tone. Weyoun realises what he said, and desperately backtracks from it.

WEYOUN  
What I mean to say is, given the  
circumstances, I'm finding this a  
difficult task to accomplish  
quickly. I will endeavour to do  
better.

ODO  
I'm sure your efforts are more  
than satisfactory. In fact, I may  
have given you a task that will  
not yield any positive results.

WEYOUN  
Founder...  
(looks around,  
nervous, then sotto)  
Are we looking for one of the  
Hundred?

ODO

No, Weyoun, I don't believe we are. I want you to direct your search as if you were looking for changelings... but you should not expect to find any.

(sigh)

The Founders here are -

He is interrupted by TONES from Rotan'talag's computer.

ROTAN'TALAG

Weyoun, I've found something.

WEYOUN

What is it?

ROTAN'TALAG

Sensor sweeps in the region of the nova have detected an unusual object. As massive as a planet.

WEYOUN

As "massive as" a planet? Is it not a planet?

ROTAN'TALAG

Its shape is that of a spherical cap, approximately twenty percent of a full sphere. But if it is the surviving section of a planet, it is not obviously so. Radiation continues to interfere with scans, but I detect no rock, mineral or metallic substances in the object.

WEYOUN

What do you detect?

ROTAN'TALAG

Biomimetic cells.

Odo gapes at the implication - a Founder. Weyoun turns and stares at Odo, surprised and confused. But Odo is just as confused. Can it possibly be the Progenitor?

ODO  
Are there changelings down there?

ROTAN'TALAG  
I have been able to isolate DNA sequences in the scans, but just a few. The readings are consistent with shape-shifting, but while they resemble those of a Founder, they do not match precisely.

Stunned, Odo swings his headset viewer down and gazes out at the view with a whole new appreciation.

**47**    **EXT. SPACE**

With the glittering NOVA not so far away, the Jem'Hadar ship pulls into the foreground, approaching the mysterious object. It is as described - the top segment of a sphere, with a huge arched top surface, but totally flat bottom surface. What it is made of, we can't quite tell yet.

**48**    **INT. DOMINION SHIP - BRIDGE**

Laas, Indurane and three other Founders stand on the bridge transporter platform, excited and reverent.

Weyoun stands by the control panels, wearing the headset. The Vorta hands Odo a Dominion tricorder, smiles at him.

WEYOUN  
I hope you find what you're looking for.

ODO  
Thank you, Weyoun.

Then he nods to Weyoun, who works the panels. The six changelings disappear in a transporter effect.

**49**    **EXT. PROGENITOR SURFACE**

The changelings BEAM onto the surface of the object. It is a vast, featureless, airless plain, completely flat. The dim light from the nova provides just enough illumination to look out to the slightly curved horizon.

Indurane and the other three Founders meld back into one big formless blob of changeling. Laas and Odo stand apart.

Odo raises his tricorder, taking readings. The screen fills with information. Confused, he looks around. There is no sign of anything, certainly not to cause these readings.

He crouches down, presses one hand to the surface of the object. It is black and dusty, like sand. He PUSHES into it, sensing for something to Link with. Nothing.

Laas holds out his hand. Understanding, Odo reaches up with his spare hand and holds Laas's, and the two hands LINK...

**50    FLASHBACK - 9x16 "OLYMPUS DESCENDING 1"**

Laas directs Odo's attention to the small pile of black ashes he brought back to the Link.

**51    BACK TO SCENE**

Odo looks up to Laas, beginning to understand...

**52    FLASHBACK**

Weyoun steps into the ashes, his boots crunching into them, his face overcome with horror.

**53    BACK TO SCENE**

Odo looks at Laas's feet, crunching into the huge object's surface, kicking up dust in the same way. He LURCHES to his feet, pulling his hand up from the surface. Ashes and dust drift slowly down from it as he does. He understands...

ODO (v.o.)  
This object... this entire...  
thing... It is the Progenitor.

LAAS (v.o.)  
And it is dead.

They look across the dead expanse, to where the other four Founders are in their Link. They have come to the same conclusion, and their collective shape WRITHES wildly.

Mouths SCREAM silently into the darkness, tentacles THRASH about. Their anguish and pain are clear even without sound.

Still stunned themselves, Odo and Laas don't know what to do. Their hands still joined, they speak through the Link.

LAAS (v.o.)  
Their God? Our God?

ODO (v.o.)  
I don't know. But the others think  
so. Indurane thinks so.

There is a slight BUZZ - Odo looks down at his combadge. He MORPHS his chest, pulling the combadge inside himself.

**54**    **INSIDE ODO**

We're actually INSIDE Odo's chest for a moment. He opens up a hollow space inside, the golden fluid of his form leaving an empty hole. The combadge emerges into this space.

**55**    **BACK TO SCENE**

Odo can't use his actual mouth to speak in the vacuum, but his voice vibrates inside the hollow to talk to Weyoun. His hand remains linked to Laas, and they share reaction shots.

WEYOUN (comm)  
Founder, I wanted to make certain  
that everything is alright.

ODO (v.o.)  
Everything is not alright, Weyoun.  
The changeling on this planet is  
no longer alive.

WEYOUN (comm)  
We've ascertained that as well.  
And I think we know what happened.

ODO (v.o.)  
I assumed it was radiation from  
the nova.

WEYOUN (comm)

Yes, but I think we know what caused the nova. Our scans of the system detected warp signatures and the discharge of what appears to be an isolytic subspace weapon of enormous power and range.

ODO (v.o.)

Are you saying that a weapon, launched from a ship, caused this star to go nova?

WEYOUN (comm)

Yes, Founder. We already matched the warp signatures with those Vannis recorded at the Sen Ennis moon. This was done... by the Ascendants.

ODO (v.o.)

Weyoun, beam us up at once.

Without waiting for a response, Odo closes the hollow in his chest - the combadge emerges back out on his uniform. Odo and Laas look to each other with dismay.

LAAS (v.o.)

What do we do?

ODO (v.o.)

We go home, and we hope that the Great Link can handle the truth. Because it's no longer a matter of if or when the Ascendants are coming. They're already here.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**56 INT. RINDAMIL BEDROOM**

Dead of night, with the only light coming in via a window. Two figures are roused from sleep by the NOISES of gunfire, phasers, smashing and screaming filtering from outside.

TEELENT (male) and ALSARA (female) are the royal couple of the alien Rindamil race. They are scared and confused.

Movement in the darkness - the Vorta VANNIS steps out of the shadows. The two aliens are clearly terrified of her.

TEELENT

You.

VANNIS

Yes, me. I'm delighted that you remember me, Teelent. I, of course, remember you.

ALSARA

Why wouldn't you remember us? You came to our world, uninvited. You chose us, made demands of us - threatened us.

VANNIS

(warm, expansive)

On the contrary. When I visited your world, I did so to welcome your people into the Dominion.

ALSARA

Welcome?! We never wanted - we never asked to be in your Dominion! Why did you come back?

TEELENT

She came for our food.

ALSARA

You can't take it!

VANNIS

Well, we're going to have to disagree on that.

TEELENT

Based upon your... requests... we've done everything we could to increase food production. But there's only so much land, and only so many people to work it.

VANNIS

I'm sorry to hear that. I thought I was quite clear about what would be expected of your people.

ALSARA

Teelent, no! We can't take the chance. What about our winters?

TEELENT

What choice to do we have, Alsara?  
(to Vannis)

We can give you twelve percent of our food. That should help with the famine on that other world.

VANNIS

It seems you're not understanding me. The Dominion requires seventy-five percent of all food stores on this planet. Immediately. This is not a request. Your only choice in this matter is whether or not to cooperate. Look outside.

Teelent climbs out of bed, goes to the window, pulls back the curtains. What he sees makes him begin to cry. Vannis stands awaiting his decision, knowing what it will be.

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

Taran'atar ROARS, thrusting his *kar'takin* knife into some unseen enemy. He stalks across his bare quarters, executing battle manoeuvres, fighting imaginary opponents.

**ANGLE**

He is fighting the alien monster from the holosuite in 9x14 "Lost Time." But as he attacks the creature, gutting it, we can see ODO standing in the background, observing.

ODO  
You're failing.

**ANGLE**

Taran'atar SPINS towards Odo, but there is nothing there. A moment's hesitation, and Taran'atar turns and attacks a new invisible opponent. Brutal, agitated to the point of fury.

ODO (o.s.)  
I told you to live among them. Not  
hide from them in your quarters.  
You're failing the mission I  
assigned you.

Frustrated, enraged, Taran'atar spins and launches a KICK into the wall of his quarters. Some of the weapons hanging there fall with a CLANG. Odo observes.

ODO  
You're failing your gods.

And suddenly the Female Founder is there too.

FEMALE FOUNDER  
The Founders are not gods!

Taran'atar SPINS, staring across his cabin, at the minimal furniture, the computer console. He is alone. He SEETHES.

**ANGLE**

QUARK is there, being annoying.

QUARK  
You see? Nothing but threats.

Instantly enraged, Taran'atar rushes him, grabs his throat, SNAPS his neck, and RAMS him backwards into the wall.

**ANGLE**

Taran'atar's empty fist has dented a hole in the bulkhead. Suddenly, Odo is there again.

ODO  
Just... keep trying, Taran'atar.

**ANGLE**

RO LAREN stands against the window.

RO  
It's not always that easy, I know.

He rushes her, spitting hatred, and PUNCHES a hole right through her chest, his fist coming out the other side.

**ANGLE**

VAUGHN  
I was looking for your own opinion  
on the matter.

Ro is gone, but ELIAS VAUGHN is nearby. Taran'atar spins, grabs a weapon off the wall, and HURLS it towards Vaughn.

**ANGLE**

The weapon lodges into the blank wall.

BASHIR  
It sounds... lonely.

Taran'atar pounds across his quarters, RAMming his shoulder right into BASHIR's ribcage, shattering it and making a huge dent in the bulkhead.

**58 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Ro is sat behind the desk, with Kira perched on the edge as they confer over station business. A small ALARM sounds, and Ro and Kira look to each other, slightly worried.

Ro checks her panels and touches the comm...

RO

Ro to Taran'atar. We're seeing an alarm down here, originating in your quarters - a fracture in an internal bulkhead. Is everything alright?

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

Taran'atar looks towards his companel, where Ro's voice issues from. He could answer, but he stands, hissing.

KIRA (comm)

Taran'atar, this is Kira. What's going on down there?

(pause)

Taran'atar, please respond.

He does, by stalking towards the companel and driving his FIST through it. Odo shakes his head in disappointment.

ODO

Follow her orders as if you were following mine.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her and let's get out of here.

**60    EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD**

Odo stands alone on the rocky islet, the Link CHURNING, more agitated than we have ever seen it. He crouches down, sadly runs his fingers through the pile of black ashes.

Motion catches his eye. Far away across the Link, towers of changeling matter are rising up. They twist and spiral, stretching up until they break off from the main body and SHOOT up into the sky. It starts with just a few, but gradually more and more, and closer to the islet.

Odo watches with worried fascination. INDURANE quietly steps up onto the islet with him. The ancient changeling gazes sadly up into the sky, watching both the departing changelings and the shining nova in the sky.

INDURANE

It took us millennia to settle on the plan to send out the Hundred. Centuries more to implement that plan. And in the end, it worked. We saw the sign, and we knew the Progenitor had returned to us.

ODO

And now you feel guilty?

INDURANE

I do. We do. For those ill-served when we sent out the Hundred. Like you. Like Laas.

(re pile of ashes)

Like this one. And like the Progenitor itself.

ODO

So you're dividing the Great Link, sending yourselves out into the universe you believe is so hostile to shape-shifters, all as penance for your misdeeds?

INDURANE

We abandoned pieces of ourself, and in doing so, we lured the Progenitor to its death. We have no direction. No hope.

ODO

Are you relocating, or dispersing?

INDURANE

Some may remain together in small links, but most desire isolation, even from our own kind.

Then Indurane MORPHS, becoming a twisting, writhing tower of changeling that reaches up into the sky like the others. Indurane disappears into the sky. Odo can do nothing but stand and watch it happen.

61 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT**

Kira and Ro stand together in the turbolift, both a little nervous. They are armed, but holstered.

RO

I don't think I've ever been to Taran'atar's quarters.

KIRA

Until a few days ago I don't think he'd ever been to his quarters. But he hasn't stepped foot outside them in the three days since we returned from Ananke Alpha.

RO

Do you think the Founder said something to him in the prison? Something that would explain the change in his routine?

KIRA

I don't know.

As the walls rush past...

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

The turbolift door opens. Ro and Kira exit, turning to walk along the corridor, both anxious and on edge.

RO

I'm trying to decide whether to enter his quarters with phasers drawn. When we were on Sindorin -

The air is PUNCHED out of her as an invisible force runs her down with the power of a rampaging bull.

She is THROWN backwards down the corridor, her head RAMS hard against the bulkhead, and she drops to the deck.

Taran'atar UNSHROUDS between Ro and Kira, panting, furious, but not wild - completely under control and ready to kill.

Stunned, panicked, Kira reaches for her phaser. Taran'atar HURLS his knife, and it flies towards Kira. She fires...

And then the knife is in her chest, right in the heart. The force sends her FLYING back. She hits the wall, collapses to the deck. Gasping, dying, she looks up at Taran'atar.

**63**    **INT. RINDAMIL BEDROOM**

Teelent stands at his window, looking out at his world being ravaged by Jem'Hadar. Alsara shouts at Vannis.

ALSARA

How can you do this? If you take our food, hundreds of thousands of our citizens, maybe millions, will die over the next few months.

VANNIS

If you choose not to cooperate, then that number will die in the next few hours.

Alsara continues to stare with hatred, while Teelent just stands at the window. Finally he turns, tears in his eyes.

TEELENT

Take it.

VANNIS

Excellent.

The Vorta touches a control - the noises of violence and death from outside end. Her arms wide and gracious...

VANNIS

Welcome to the Dominion.

She presses another control, and a transporter takes her.

**64**    **EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD**

Odo stands alone, watching the rapidly diminishing Link spiral up into the sky and disappear. The level of the Link sinks, until parts of the ground beneath it become visible.

Another figure walks up out of the sea, forming into Laas. Together they watch the Link disappear and disperse into the universe. The bright nova hangs in the sky over it all.

LAAS

What are we going to do?

ODO

I don't know.

LAAS

What's going to happen to the Dominion?

ODO

Laas, from this point on... you and I are the Dominion.

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

Kira lies on the deck, Taran'atar's knife in her heart. She looks down, the life running and spurting out of her body, and she knows she's going. Her vision is fading, darkening.

Some distance down the corridor lies Ro's body, bent at an impossible angle, her back and neck broken.

The sound of turbolift doors comes to her, and Kira looks towards it. She sees Taran'atar's boots stepping into it. She looks up, making eye contact with him.

TARAN'ATAR

Runabout pad A.

The turbolift beeps, and as Taran'atar holds Kira's eyes, the doors close. The light fades from Kira's vision, and...

FADE OUT

**THE END**