

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x19 - "Gratitude."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

incorporating elements from

*Star Trek: Typhon Pact:
Rough Beasts of Empire*

by David R George III

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

The *Defiant* sits at its usual spot on the docking ring, and there are many shuttles and transports docked all around.

2 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

We SWEEP slowly around the Promenade space, taking in all the levels and businesses and nooks and crannies. All around, Starfleet officers and enthusiastic civilians are helping to put up decorations, streamers, flags, balloons.

We are preparing for the GRATITUDE FESTIVAL, as seen in 3x10 "Fascination" and 6x26 "Tears of the Prophets."

After taking in as much of this as we can - excitement, colour, fellowship - we finally touch upon RO, strolling through the Promenade, watching this all go on. She looks at the decorations and the extravagance rather awkwardly. She's not catching the excitement bug like everyone else.

On her way past the security office, she waves a polite hello to EVIK, who is holding a briefing session for his officers half-in and half-out of the office door. He points this way and that, demonstrating what he says MOS.

Eventually Ro strolls on into...

3 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR (CONTINUOUS)

...Where there are even more decorations being raised by Starfleet officers and the occasional harassed Ferengi waiter. Ro pauses in the doorway, gazes at the spectacle.

QUARK holds court, bellowing commands to his minions.

QUARK

Grimp, you idiot! I said further
to the left! The left!

The Ferengi waiter mousily does as he's told. Quark turns another way, sees another waiter, stomps over to him in a fury, and grabs what he was working on off him.

QUARK

No no no! Like this, see? Do I have to do everything myself?

Despite her uncertainty, Ro can't help but smirk. Then Quark turns her way, and they both freeze. After recent events between them, neither knows how to act around the other. Unsure, hesitant, formal just to be safe.

QUARK

Commander. Good to see you.

RO

Ambassador. Preparations are going well, I take it?

QUARK

I'll make sure they go well if it kills me. The Time of Cleansing guts my profits every year - an entire month of Bajorans forgoing all worldly pleasures. So when it's finally over and we get the Gratitude Festival... well, I'm not leaving anything to chance.

RO

That's probably wise. Let Major Cenn know if you need anything.

QUARK

I will.

With a nod, Ro turns to leave. But Quark calls after her...

QUARK

Laren... thanks for coming.

A personal moment. Ro appreciates it, but doesn't know how to react. She half-smiles, nods awkwardly again, and turns to leave him to it.

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

The Kendra countryside is colourful and bright with the new life of spring.

5 **INT. SISKO'S HOUSE**

Early morning, but BEN SISKO is already up and pottering around the kitchen. The sun is shining and the birds are tweeting in the trees. Sisko is preparing breakfast - French toast with fresh fruit.

Sisko turns at the sound of KASIDY emerging from the bedroom. She's less of a morning person than Ben, not put her game face on yet. She staggers half-conscious into the kitchen, slumps into a seat at the breakfast table.

SISKO

Morning.

KASIDY

Morning. Rebecca up yet?

SISKO

No. I think she feels the same way about mornings as her mom.

KASIDY

Mmm? Mmm.

Sisko brings the French toast and fresh fruit to the table, places one on front of Kasidy, and takes a seat opposite her. Two mugs of coffee are already there waiting for them. He tucks into the food, she sticks to coffee for now.

SISKO

There was a message from Ranjen Sool at B'Hala. They've asked me to serve as the Presider for this year's Gratitude Festival celebrations at the site.

KASIDY

...Okay.

SISKO

It's quite an honour to be asked.

KASIDY

You used to leave it to Kira.

SISKO

Yes, I know. But they're good people at B'Hala. Plus, Eivos always used to do it, so...

Kasidy nods, getting his gist. Staring into her coffee.

KASIDY

Well... okay. Enjoy yourself.

SISKO

No, you don't understand. I want us all to go. As a family.

KASIDY

(hopeful)

Really?

SISKO

Absolutely. I'd like to take you there, show you everything they've discovered. Meet the people I work with. It'd be nice for Rebecca to learn a bit more about Bajoran culture. Plus... we get to spend some time together. We haven't done a lot of that lately.

KASIDY

No... we haven't.

(straightens)

Okay then. The commerce authority always takes the day off anyway. Not like I'll have anything better to do. Gratitude Festival it is.

Kasidy livens up, begins to eat. Sisko smiles, relaxes.

SISKO

Better dig out my best suit. And polish up my ancient Bajoran.

Kasidy nods at that, mouth full. They're both cheered.

6 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

PRYNN and CANDLEWOOD stroll along the corridor, on their way to work. Chatting amiably as they walk.

CANDLEWOOD

I'm telling you, Prynn, he kissed me. He actually kissed me.

PRYNN

Good for you.

CANDLEWOOD

And I didn't have to beg or grovel or anything. I think he might actually like me.

PRYNN

John... he dated you for several months. Of course he likes you. I keep trying to tell you that.

CANDLEWOOD

Yeah, but... do you think he might want to... I don't know... get back together?

PRYNN

Maybe ask him, instead of me.

CANDLEWOOD

Okay. I will. Tonight. At the Gratitude party.

PRYNN

Just don't be all desperate and clingy, alright? I know he's gorgeous, but have some dignity.

CANDLEWOOD

I thought we established dignity was not my strong suit. Oh, maybe this is a bad idea.

PRYNN

John! Stop panicking. He's not a god. He's just a person, like you.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh no. Definitely not like me.

They turn a corner into another corridor. As soon as they do, Candlewood hesitates. Stares at one particular door.

CANDLEWOOD

That's his quarters. Right there.

PRYNN

Ah. I did wonder why we took the long way around this morning.

Just then, the door in question opens. Candlewood jumps, immediately retreats back around the corner where he can see but not be seen, dragging protesting Prynn with him.

Out of Hetik's quarters, walks... a man who is definitely not Hetik. A human male in an engineering yellow uniform, carrying his tool kit. HETIK himself comes to the door, naked but for a bath towel around his waist. The Bajoran dabo boy leans against the doorframe in that effortlessly sexy way people like that can do. Damn them all to hell.

HETIK

Thanks for coming, Daniel. I'll see you later.

The man waves goodbye and walks away. Hetik turns and re-enters his quarters. The door closes behind him.

On Candlewood, who has just seen this. He is devastated.

And Prynn, who feels so sorry for him...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Ro sits in the lounge area, padd in hand, more spread out on the seat beside her. Major CENN sits opposite.

CENN

So I've got the Iltari Aerial Troupe on the lower level, outside the replimat. Didn't want them to be on the upper level, do some spectacular manoeuvre and go flying over the balcony.

RO

Probably a good idea.

CENN

Upper level is taken by Aleesh Kismari, a new musical group that's the big thing in Rakantha at the moment, apparently.

RO

Never heard of them.

CENN

No, me either. So I'm pretty sure that's everything. Except for...

RO

Except for what?

CENN

For who's going to be Presider. Who's going to lead the opening ceremonies. It's getting late in the day not to have decided.

RO

Give it to Vedek Capril. Or Lieutenant Commander Evik. He's all about community, isn't he?

CENN

They've both got their own affairs to attend to.

(delicate)

I really think it should be you.

RO

Me?! No. Absolutely not. Nuh-uh. No way. I've had quite enough publicity lately, thank you.

CENN

Commander, you are the community leader now. The senior Bajoran officer on the station.

RO

Why can't you do it? Aren't you always saying you're the only real Bajoran left, or something?

CENN

(chuckle)

I'd be honoured to, but I think you need it more than me.

RO

Need it? In what way do I need to be the Presider?

CENN

Look... can I speak freely, sir?

RO

If you must.

CENN

Ever since we met, you've been... well, uncomfortable about your relationship with Bajor. About leaving during the Occupation, about joining Starfleet, about the lack of religion in your life.

RO

I hope this is going somewhere.

CENN

It is. I realise I haven't helped exactly. But... you are Bajoran. And there's no harm in letting yourself just... be Bajoran. You came home. Let yourself enjoy it now that you're here.

RO

I appreciate your perspective. I'm just not sure I'm there yet.

CENN

Up to you. But you've only got a few hours left to decide.

RO

Thank you, Major. You've got work to do. Off you go.

Cenn gets up and leaves the office. Ro remains sat there, pondering what he's said.

8 EXT. B'HALA DIG SITE - DAY

Establishing the archaeological dig at the ancient city...

9 INT. B'HALA CAVES

The caves and warrens of the ancient city, now draped with decorations and banners and lights for the upcoming party. Monks and volunteers work feverishly to prepare everything.

SOOL (the young female monk who supervises the volunteers, as seen in 11x12 "Vigil") emerges from the crowd to greet Sisko, Kasidy and Rebecca. Neither Ben nor Kasidy are comfortable with her fawning, although he hides it better.

SOOL

Emissary! Oh it's so wonderful that you came.

SISKO

Ranjen Sool. I'd like you to meet my wife Kasidy, and my daughter Rebecca.

SOOL

It's a pleasure to meet you both. Of course we're all honoured that you'd agree to act as Presider for the festival, Emissary. It means a lot to us all.

SISKO

It's my pleasure. If you'll excuse us, we'd like to freshen up before we dig in.

SOOL

Of course, Emissary. We're all at your disposal.

Sool backs away, and Ben and Kasidy walk on into the caves, Kasidy keeping a tight hold of Rebecca by the hand.

KASIDY

They sure do love calling you Emissary.

SISKO

They mean it respectfully.

KASIDY

Oh, I know that. Didn't you used to try to discourage it though?

SISKO

It's their culture, Kas. I don't think I'm ever going to get them to stop.

KASIDY

Stay close, Rebecca, sweetheart. It's very important that you stay in my sight, okay?

REBECCA

Okay mommy.

KASIDY
I mean it. There's lots of places
to get lost in here.

REBECCA
I will, mommy.

KASIDY
Good girl.

They walk on through the crowds of preparing people...

10 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BUNK ROOM

The space with the sleeping bags on the ground and lockers
against the wall. Sisko and Kasidy enter, with Rebecca.
Kasidy gives the whole thing the side eye. Sisko sees.

SISKO
It's not that bad.

KASIDY
If you say so.

SISKO
I've taken a couple of naps here
while we've been working. Once you
accept it for what it is...

Rebecca runs off deeper into the room, towards the shadowy
areas at the back.

KASIDY
Rebecca! I told you to stay close!

REBECCA
I'm not going far, mommy.

SISKO
It's okay - there's just a smaller
area with some basins to wash in.
There's no danger. Besides, we're
hardly going to be living here
full time, like these people do.
We're just here for the party.

KASIDY

Ben... I appreciate the thought.
But I don't think one party is
going to solve all our problems.

Ben gets serious for a moment, addresses this directly.

SISKO

I know. That's not what I'm trying
to do. I'm not trying to ignore it
all or just paper over the cracks.
I just thought that if we spend
some time together, as a family,
at a place where the whole point
is to let go of all your troubles
and be happy for what you have...

KASIDY

(takes his hands)
You're right. It will help.

LUKA (o.s.)

Benjamin?

Sisko turns, and sees that LUKA, his Ohalavaru friend (last seen 11x12 "Vigil") has poked his head around the edge of the cave. Sisko grins and grabs him in a big manly hug.

SISKO

Luka! Great to see you.

LUKA

You too, Benjamin. So they roped
you in after all, did they?

SISKO

Ah, you know. The burdens of being
me. Kasidy - this is Luka Tirem.
He's been a good friend. My work
buddy at B'Hala. My... 'guide'.

Luka smiles bashfully at the reference. He shakes Kasidy's hand, bows politely.

LUKA

Mrs Sisko, it's a real pleasure to meet you.

(looks past)

Oh... and I know who this must be.

Ben and Kasidy turn and see that Rebecca is across the room, hovering nervously, not sure about this stranger.

SISKO

Rebecca honey? Come and meet my friend Luka. It's okay.

Still unsure, Rebecca nevertheless trusts her father, and comes forward. She sticks close to her mother though.

REBECCA

Hello, Mister Luka.

Luka crouches down to Rebecca's level with a big smile.

LUKA

Hello to you too. You are a very special young lady, Rebecca Sisko. Did you know that?

REBECCA

I am?

LUKA

Of course you are. You're Benjamin Sisko's daughter, and he's a very important man. So you would have to be important too, right?

REBECCA

(shy)

I guess so.

LUKA

Right.

Luka stands up again, with a grimace at his old bones.

LUKA

Well, there's still lots to do. So
I'll leave you be for the moment.
But we'll catch up at the party.

SISKO

Absolutely.

Luka turns to leave. But before he goes, he glances back at Rebecca, gazes for a moment as if he can't quite believe he's seeing her. Then he turns at last and goes.

KASIDY

He seems like quite a character.
Have you got to know him well?

SISKO

We talk. Kind of a tragic past,
but then what Bajoran hasn't? He's
a good guy. Come on! Let's freshen
up, and then we can join the fun!
How does that sound, Rebecca?

REBECCA

Okay, daddy.

Rebecca turns and runs back into the depths of the cave, to the 'bathrooms'. Holding hands, Ben and Kasidy follow her.

11 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BANTACA CHAMBER

A little while later. The huge spire at the centre of the buried city towers above the crowd of milling Bajorans and a couple of guest aliens. The whole area is dressed for a party, with flashing colours and flaming braziers and enough light to make it seem like we're not underground.

Dotted among the caves are stalls where people sell fresh food, or trinkets to mark the occasion, or where musicians play their instruments. The people mill about between these booths, all enjoying themselves. Sisko, Kasidy and Rebecca are among them, exploring all the nooks and crannies.

At periodic intervals are small woven baskets, carrying paper scrolls. Sisko reaches to grab one. But as he does, he stops, worried. He looks to Kasidy. He doesn't want to

insult her by doing this. But she looks back reassuringly and grabs a scroll of her own. Sisko relaxes.

REBECCA

What are those for, daddy?

SISKO

Well, honey, the idea is that you write all your problems on this piece of paper. Everything that's bothered you or upset you over the last year, you just write it down. Then, when the ceremony starts, you put the scroll into the fire. So that when the scroll burns away to ashes, your troubles go with it. And you can start the next year fresh, with no problems.

REBECCA

Can I do one?

KASIDY

(chuckle)

Sure, if you want, honey. But what does a little girl of not-quite-three have to be upset about?

REBECCA

(cheerful)

I'll think of something.

Sisko hands Rebecca a scroll and a pen, and she plonks herself down on the ground right where she is and starts scribbling. Sisko and Kasidy smile at the sight.

Then a hush spreads through the crowd. Something has happened. Confused, Sisko and Kasidy look over to the main entrance, draped in braids and lanterns. And there, standing in the doorway are KIRA... and RAIQ.

All the Bajorans are reacting to the sight of the Ascendant woman. And off Sisko and Kasidy's similar reaction...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

12 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BANTACA CHAMBER

Picking up from where we left off. As the crowd reacts, Raiq and Kira are very aware everyone is looking at them.

RAIQ

(sotto)

I am not welcome.

KIRA

(sotto)

You'll be fine. They just need a chance to get used to you, that's all. Come on. Stick with me.

Kira walks on into the crowd, determined to keep her head high. Raiq follows in her wake.

Eventually Kira spots Sisko and Kasidy in the crowd, and makes her way over to them. They greet warmly with hugs. Except for Raiq, obviously.

SISKO

Nerys! I didn't know you were coming to B'Hala.

KIRA

Last-minute decision. I thought it would be a good way to show Raiq a bit more of our culture, help her acclimate a bit more.

KASIDY

That's exactly the reason we brought Rebecca.

KIRA

Jake isn't with you?

SISKO

He's spending the holiday with Rena and her friends.

KIRA

Ah. You remember Raiq, of course.

SISKO

Of course. Good to see you, Raiq.

RAIQ

Sisko. Kira speaks of you often.
You are the Fire of the Bajorans.

SISKO

The Emissary, yes.

RAIQ

You are not Bajoran yourself. Yet
you follow their traditions, you
attend their ceremonies. Why?

KIRA

Raiq, don't be rude.

SISKO

That's okay. Ummm... I'm not sure
there's an easy answer to that,
Raiq. I don't do everything the
Bajorans do. But they look to me
for guidance. And I don't feel
like I can just abandon them.

RAIQ

Obligation. Not desire.

Everyone is uncomfortable with this. It's putting Sisko on
the spot. Embarrassing Kira. Giving Kasidy cause to worry.

SISKO

I suppose, in some cases.

KIRA

Come on, Raiq. Let's look around.

Raiq turns away with no ceremony and heads back into the
crowd. Kira is about to follow, but Sisko holds her back.

SISKO

Nerys, is she going to be trouble?

KIRA

(no idea)

No. She'll be fine.

Nobody believes her. Worrying, Kira follows Raiq. Sisko turns to Kasidy, and they share a worried glance.

13 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Re-establishing the station...

14 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR, UPPER LEVEL

Candlewood sits at a table, chin in his hands, looking miserable. Prynn sits across, sympathetic but encouraging. People are still setting up decorations here and there.

PRYNN

Cheer up, John.

CANDLEWOOD

My own fault. Should have said something sooner.

PRYNN

Maybe. But there was no guarantee he would have shared your feelings anyway.

CANDLEWOOD

Thanks for that.

PRYNN

Come on. Don't let it get you down. Today is supposed to be all about forgetting your problems and enjoying yourself.

A Ferengi waiter is just passing with a basket of scrolls and pens. Candlewood stops him and grabs one miserably.

CANDLEWOOD

Gimme that.

He takes the scroll and starts writing grumpily on it.

15 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR, LOWER LEVEL

Down on the main floor, Quark is holding a staff meeting - Ferengi waiters and exotic dabo girls, including TREIR and PIF. The one with the basket returns and joins the group.

QUARK

So good of you to join us, Broik. Okay! You all know this is the big day. So you all need to know what you're doing. Especially since we're low on staff anyway, thanks to somebody insisting I give all the Bajorans the day off.

He glares pointedly at Treir. She smiles back a perfectly polite F-you-to-death smile.

QUARK

Broik, Grimp, you're out on the floor taking orders. Frool, Penk, you're behind the bar making the orders they bring back.

(reluctant)

Treir, you're in charge of the bar.

(back to firm)

M'Pella, Rutia, Kespy. You work that wheel like you've never worked it before. Whatever you gotta do to keep'em gambling and drinking, you do it.

(shudder)

Pif, you're on door duty. Give them your biggest smile, your friendliest spiel. It's all about foot fall, people. Get'em in, get'em drunk, get'em happy... And get their money.

TIFF (o.s.)

Hi!

Quark looks down in surprise and sees that TIFF, the puppy who follows him everywhere, is right there at his feet.

Gazing up eagerly, tiny tail thumping away. Quark stifles another shudder. He looks across to Pif, whose face seems to be saying "Pleeeeeeease...." Quark sighs dramatically.

QUARK

Fine. Tiff, you can work the crowd and just...

(wince)

...be adorable. But if you get trodden on it's your problem.

TREIR

And this is in return for...?

Quark gives Treir another dirty look. She's on thin ice.

QUARK

For... pocket money.

Tiff yips excitedly. Pif grins proudly.

TREIR

And what will you be doing?

QUARK

(proudly)

I... am the host. Alright. We've got two hours left till the big event. So get moving.

(claps to emphasise)

Clean! Serve! Schmooze! Go!

The staff disperse to their tasks. As Quark turns back to the bar, he sees that Ro has been there watching. They're still a bit hesitant with each other. Quark moves behind the bar, a safety barrier. But he still talks to her.

RO

That was very generous of you, Quark.

QUARK

No it wasn't.

RO

Letting Tiff work for you? Giving
Hetik and the others the day off?

QUARK

All valid business decisions.

RO

Mmm-hmm. Yep. Sure. You know,
Quark... you have a bigger heart
that you like to admit to. Bigger
even than your prodigious lobes.
You shouldn't be ashamed of it.

Quark looks at her with a shy smile.

RO

You see? You don't even deny it
anymore. That's why you did what
you did. You cared about people
more than profit. I get that.

QUARK

And you really ought to be the
Presider for the ceremony.

RO

(awkward)

How do you know about that?

QUARK

You told me to talk to Cenn,
right? So I talked. And I think
you should do it.

RO

But it doesn't feel right. It
doesn't feel like me.

QUARK

(exasperated)

You work so hard at being unhappy.
Life goes a lot easier if you just
relax. You came home, Laren. You
shouldn't be ashamed of it.

Ro smiles shyly back at him.

RO
But what would I wear?

If that's her only problem, then the decision is made.
Quark grins.

16 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Cenn and Evik stand together in the office, going over plans for the event on the wall screens and multiple padds.

CENN
Alright, so we've got security stationed at all sensitive points, including the shrine, the assay office and the Infirmary. Is there anything we've missed?

EVIK
I'm certain not.

CENN
It's just important that this all works smoothly. Enough has gone wrong lately, and the Gratitude Festival is all about peace and happiness. We really need to -

EVIK
Major... it's not my first Gratitude Festival.

CENN
Right. Of course. I'm sorry, I'm doing it again, aren't I?

EVIK
(smile)
Yes. But it's understandable. It is our first time organising our own Gratitude Festival.

CENN
(nervous)

Actually, speaking of the shrine,
I was thinking of going there
right after this meeting. Squeeze
in a quick prayer. Probably won't
have time later. Would you... like
to join me?

EVIK

I would love to join you, Major.

CENN

Okay, good.

They place down their padds, and turn to head out.

EVIK

I'm certain we've got nothing to
worry about. Our officers are all
well-trained and reliable. And
besides, I trust everyone on Bajor
and this station to enjoy the
day's festivities in the spirit in
which they were intended.

CUT TO:

17 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BANTACA CHAMBER

On Raiq, as she stands alone, casting her eye warily and
suspiciously over the happy Bajorans below...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

18 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BANTACA CHAMBER

Raiq stands alone, staring up at the excavated Bantaca spire, trying to figure it out. The party goes on around her, but she doesn't care about it.

LUKA (o.s.)

According to legend, the markings perfectly pinpoint this city's place in the universe. If you know how to read them.

PAN around to see that Luka has stepped up beside Raiq, joining her in gazing over the Bantaca spire. She glances at him, just about acknowledges his existence.

LUKA

Do you have anything like it in your culture?

RAIQ

Why do you care?

LUKA

Just curious. I'm Luka, by the way. Luka Tirem.

RAIQ

I am Raiq, Archquester of the Ascendancy.

LUKA

Oh, I know exactly who you are. You've been quite the topic of discussion. A lot of people are curious about you, not just me.

RAIQ

Your curiosity is irrelevant to me. As is this entire exercise. What do I care how you celebrate your heretical holy days?

LUKA

Ah well, it's not actually my holy day. I'm with Ohalu, one of the -
(air quotes)
- "alternative" religions. So I know how you feel.

RAIQ

(derisive)
Feelings. Of course.

LUKA

I've been to plenty of Gratitude Festivals in my time, of course. Used to celebrate them just like everybody else, whether I wanted to or not. But the last few years, ever since I found Ohalu... it's just not my festival, you know?

RAIQ

Then you are a heretic to the Bajorans, as well as to me.

LUKA

(chuckle)
Yes, some of them probably would call me that. But I don't care what they think. Not anymore. I know I'm right.

There's a pause as Raiq goes back to inspecting the spire.

LUKA

Wasn't there another one?
(off Raiq's look)
Another Ascendant. Didn't I hear you found another one?

RAIQ

Vexh. He remains in seclusion at Janir. We grieve in silence.

LUKA

That's a shame. I would have liked to meet him too.

RAIQ

He would likely kill you on the spot for your heresy.

LUKA

I hope not. Because the truth is... I admire you, Raiq.

RAIQ

Why?

LUKA

Because you're firm in all your beliefs. Unwavering. It doesn't matter to you that other people don't agree. You know what you believe and damn anybody who says otherwise. I find that inspiring.

RAIQ

You do not wish to change my beliefs to match your own?

LUKA

Not at all. "Fundamentalist" is such an unpopular word these days. But I don't see anything wrong with deciding what you believe, and sticking with it no matter what. So, in the spirit of the Gratitude Festival at which neither one of us is welcome... Thank you, Raiq. Thank you.

RAIQ

This has been a most interesting conversation, Luka Tirem. And a most unexpected one.

LUKA

I enjoyed it too. Peldor joi, Archquester Raiq.

With a nod of respect, Luka moves off into the crowd in one direction. Raiq takes a last look at the spire, then moves off in the other direction.

Raiq rejoins Kira, who had been watching warily from afar.

KIRA

What was that all about?

RAIQ

I met a Bajoran whose conception of the universe aligned much more closely with my own than most. It was... refreshing.

KIRA

Alright... if you say so.

Meanwhile, across the large underground space, Sisko approaches Luka.

SISKO

Luka? I saw you talking with Raiq. Are you alright?

LUKA

I'm absolutely fine, Benjamin! She's a fascinating person.

SISKO

I think you should stay away from her. She could be dangerous.

LUKA

That's not very Starfleet of you, is it? Stop worrying, Benjamin. Go be with your family.

Luka walks on, quite happy. Sisko remains worried.

19 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

And back to the station...

20 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Ro stands in her office, looking at her reflection in a deactivated wall screen. She's wearing the white Starfleet dress uniform, and fiddling with it uncomfortably.

The door opens behind her, and Cenn steps in from Ops. He's also dressed to the nines, in the lilac Bajoran dress uniform. He hovers in the doorway.

CENN

It's time, Commander. You ready?

Ro straightens her uniform one last time, turns to Cenn.

RO

How do I look?

CENN

Every inch the professional, sir.

RO

Oh, now you suck up to me. Where was that a month ago?

With a wry smile, she follows Cenn back out of the room...

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

BOWERS stands at his tactical console, looking out over an otherwise sparsely populated Ops. Ro and Cenn emerge...

RO

Thanks for watching the store, Lieutenant.

BOWERS

You're welcome, Commander. Enjoy yourself.

RO

Yeah... we'll see.

Ro and Cenn head towards the turbolift and board it.

RO

Promenade.

And the lift takes them away, Ro still fidgeting with her uniform all the way.

22 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL

A turbolift door opens and Ro and Cenn emerge, only to find themselves rocked by the surging CROWDS on the Promenade.

Bajorans and others are celebrating, running and laughing, browsing the pop-up stalls selling fresh-cooked food, toys and trinkets, glamorous clothing. Every balcony is draped with columns of sparkly material, flags, banners. Music is playing, streamers are flying. Ro steps out, stunned.

RO

Oh my- ... Major, this is amazing.
You've outdone yourself.

CENN

Well... I thought we deserved it.

Prynn and NOG wander past, both in civvies. They both carry baskets of scrolls, handing them out to passers-by.

PRYNN

Hi, Commander! Major.

RO

Hi, Prynn. Having fun?

PRYNN

Don't I always?

With a grin, Prynn and Nog move on. Ro and Cenn move further into the crowd, pushing their way slowly through towards the shrine.

Outside the replimat, the gymnastic troupe is doing their dazzling display. Ro pauses to watch in amazement, claps in delight at an especially impressive manoeuvre.

Prynn and Nog catch up with Candlewood outside Quark's bar. He's also in civvies now.

NOG

Hey, John. Need a scroll?

CANDLEWOOD
(holds up scroll)
I'm all scrolled up, thanks.

PRYNN
He's had it written for hours.

CANDLEWOOD
In big bold letters. Triple
underlined. Several exclamation
marks.

Prynn grabs a scroll of her own and BONKS Candlewood over
the head with it.

CANDLEWOOD
Thanks for that.

Ro and Cenn walk on, nearing the shrine. Set up outside it
is the big platform carrying the unlit brazier. That's what
Ro is going to have to climb up on in front of everybody.
She stops, daunted at the sight of it.

RO
This still feels like fraud. I
don't follow the Prophets. So
should I really be doing this?

QUARK (o.s.)
This isn't about the Prophets.

Ro and Cenn both turn to see that Quark has crept up on
them, decked out in his finest suit.

QUARK
I've seen about a dozen of these
things, and I'm telling you, the
Prophets barely enter into it.
It's about the Bajorans. So get up
there, and be a Bajoran.

Ro wavers for a moment... then takes a breath, straightens
her uniform one last time. She steps towards the platform,
climbs the steps, and stands before the crowd.

QUARK
(exasperated)
She is such hard work.

Cenn smirks. Around them, the crowd APPLAUDS loud for Ro (remember that Bajorans clap with their back-hands).

Ro smiles shyly, embarrassed by the attention. As it dies down, she opens with a joke.

RO
I've never done one of these
before, so if I forget my words,
you can all blame Major Cenn.

The crowd chuckles.

RO
Peldor joi to you all.

She makes eye contact with Cenn in the crowd below.

RO
To us all.

He smiles approvingly. Ro reaches down and picks up the two flasks of oil. Raising them up, she intones the ritual.

RO
Tesra peldor impatri bren. Bentel
vetan ullon sten.

She tilts the flasks together, letting the oil run down the channel to the brazier, where it bursts into flames. The crowd CHEERS and APPLAUDS again.

RO
As Presider, I have the honour of
placing the first renewal scroll
into the flames.

She holds up her own scroll, and gently lowers it towards the brazier. But before she places it in, she makes eye contact with Quark. She's saying these words to him.

RO

As the scrolls burn, may all our
troubles turn to ashes with them.

Quark smiles back. Ro lowers the scroll into the fire, and
it burns away. The crowd APPLAUDS again, Quark among them.
Ro is starting to relax... she looks at Quark again.

RO
(silent)
Thank you.

She turns back to the crowd.

RO (b.g.)
Now I'm not going to tell you to
walk with the Prophets, because I
figure that's up to you.

While Ro continues in the background, Candlewood stands
watching. He looks across the Promenade...

...and sees Hetik standing and watching, looking fantastic,
having a great time, cheering and applauding Ro. Hetik
looks over, sees Candlewood, grins wide and waves to him.

Candlewood smiles politely, waves back.

RO (b.g.)
But I am going to tell you that
for the next twenty-six hours, you
have my permission to forget
everything and just have a great
time. Enjoy!

The human man from Hetik's quarters appears next to Hetik
in the crowd, stands beside him to watch the ceremony. They
chat comfortably together MOS.

Candlewood sees this. He tries his best to keep the smile.
But his hand tightens, crushing the scroll gripped in it.
Ending on Candlewood's face...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

23 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BANTACA CHAMBER

Sisko stands atop his own platform at B'Hala, pouring his own oil into the channel, setting the brazier alight. The crowd here CHEERS and APPLAUDS as well.

SISKO

Thank you all for being here. It means a lot to me, and to the memory of Prylar Eivos. In his name, I place the first renewal scroll into the fire, so that we may all start anew.

He looks across the crowd, where Kasidy stands in the front line, Rebecca secure in front of her. He makes eye contact, smiles hopefully. She smiles back. She gets it. He lowers the scroll into the fire, and the crowd APPLAUDS again.

The ceremony done, Sisko steps down from the platform and returns to stand with Kasidy.

KASIDY

That was nice, what you said.
About a new start.

SISKO

I meant it.

KASIDY

I know. Rebecca - do you want to place your scroll into the fire?

REBECCA

Okay, mommy. I wrote that -

SISKO

Oh no no no - you can't tell us what you wrote.

REBECCA

Why not?

KASIDY

Your wish might not come true.

SISKO

Besides, once the scroll is all burned up, whatever it is won't matter anymore. It'll be gone.

KASIDY

That's right.

Rebecca doesn't catch the subtext. She just drags Kasidy by the hand towards the brazier, holding out her scroll.

KASIDY

Carefully, carefully!

On the other side of the platform, Raiq stands gazing into the flames. The party going on around her. Kira sidles up.

KIRA

You okay?

RAIQ

This... is much as the Ascendants meditate. Over the flames.

KIRA

I remember.

RAIQ

The flames represent the power of the True. It burns out all heresy, until only the truth is left.

KIRA

It's exactly the same for us. You burn away what doesn't matter, till all you're left with is what does. You see? We're not so different.

Raiq doesn't want to hear it. She looks across the chamber, sees Luka. The one who told her to stick to her beliefs.

RAIQ

No! I will not accept this!

People nearby turn and stare, having overheard. She sneers back at them, raising a hand. It bursts into FLAMES.

RAIQ

We are not alike. You are heretics! All of you!

She holds her flaming hand out in front of her, using it to force a path through the crowd. She stalks away in a fury.

Kira watches her go. Then turns to look across the brazier at Sisko, who has seen the whole thing. They share a look of worry. Is Raiq going to snap?

CUT from the flaming brazier at B'Hala...

24 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL

...to the flaming brazier on Deep Space Nine. Candlewood is holding his crumpled scroll towards the fire. He hesitates a moment... then drops it in. It burns to ashes.

HETIK (o.s.)

Can I ask what was on it?

Candlewood turns and sees that Hetik has crept up on him. His breath catches as he looks up into the warm brown eyes.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh, just... stuff.

HETIK

Do you have anything like this on Earth?

CANDLEWOOD

Everybody's got their festivals. We have one called Yom Kippur - "day of atonement." It's supposed to be a new start, like this. Repenting of your sins so you can start fresh.

HETIK

Well... happy Yom Kippur then.

CANDLEWOOD

Tzom Kal. That's what we say. But thanks. And... I hope you and Kovacs are very happy together.

HETIK

...What?

CANDLEWOOD

Daniel Kovacs. I hope you're happy. Really. I mean it.

HETIK

Why would I be happy with Daniel Kovacs?

CANDLEWOOD

Hetik, I saw you. This morning. You naked, him leaving your room, first thing in the morning...

HETIK

Daniel Kovacs is married, John.

CANDLEWOOD

You slept with a married man?

HETIK

No! I didn't sleep with anyone.

CANDLEWOOD

Then why was he in your quarters?

HETIK

Fixing my shower! My shower wasn't working and he's an engineer.

CANDLEWOOD

That's why you were in a towel. Oh thank God.

HETIK

But why were you outside my room
first thing in the morning?

Oh crap. Candlewood is caught out...

25 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR, LOWER LEVEL

Ro and Quark at a table, LAUGHING their guts out together.
They've both had a bit to drink, and are distinctly merry.

RO
You did not!

QUARK
And after he promised to look the
other way on the Tzenkethi
imports, I told him exactly why
the Cardassians were here. It's
hardly my fault if Vaughn was just
about to tell him the whole thing
ten minutes later anyway.

RO
You are so mean! I wish I could
have seen his face.

Quark pulls a funny face. They laugh again.

RO
Thanks for this, Quark. We needed
this, all of us. And it worked.

QUARK
You're very welcome.

RO
I just don't know what we do now.
You did something horrible to me,
I did something horrible to you...

QUARK
You always hurt the ones you love.

RO
That cannot possibly be a Rule of
Acquisition.

QUARK

Oh, like you haven't broken a few rules in your time.

They smile again together, conspirators in rule-breaking.

26 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL**

Candlewood and Hetik are now sat together at a table out on the Promenade, specially set up for the festival.

HETIK

You broke up with me, John.

CANDLEWOOD

I know. To save myself, I guess. Because I didn't see how you could possibly love me. I mean, why would you? Look at you.

HETIK

Of course I loved you. Didn't the fact that we dated for months, that we slept together, that I didn't break up with you... didn't that make it obvious enough?

CANDLEWOOD

See, when you say it, it makes sense. But my self-esteem didn't allow me to hear that.

HETIK

So instead you told me you didn't love me. How is my self-esteem meant to respond to that?

CANDLEWOOD

Wait... you loved me?

HETIK

That's a surprise to you?

CANDLEWOOD

People don't usually love me. Like me, maybe. Think I'm funny. But love seems to be asking too much.

HETIK

I really wish you wouldn't put yourself down like that. You are funny. You're also cute, smart, spiritual, brave, cute...

CANDLEWOOD

You said that already.

HETIK

Just trying to drill it into your thick skull. Yes, I was pretty mad at you for a while there, but once that wore off...

CANDLEWOOD

You still love me? Then why the hell didn't you say anything?!

HETIK

I've been trying to talk to you for months! Congratulating you on your promotion, complimenting you on your outfit... And every time you've turned and walked away.

CANDLEWOOD

So the constant sweating, the staring forlornly from across the room, the total inability to form sentences when you're around...

HETIK

Was I supposed to interpret that as you being interested? Because where I come from, not talking to somebody is a sign that you're not interested. And that staring thing is creepy, by the way.

CANDLEWOOD

I know. Sorry. I guess it's a cultural thing, but with humans, all of that just means we're nervous. And very interested.

HETIK

(chuckle)

So we could have asked each other out again months ago? Or still been together to start with? Wish we'd talked like this earlier.

CANDLEWOOD

I'm not the best at talking when there's an unbearably beautiful man in front of me.

Hetik rolls his eyes at the over-the-top compliment.

HETIK

You know, we never did complete the Rite of Separation.

CANDLEWOOD

That's right, we didn't.

HETIK

Which means that, by a strict interpretation of Bajoran tradition, our relationship never actually ended.

CANDLEWOOD

(gestures around)

Well, we are at a traditional Bajoran festival. It would be inappropriate not to observe a strict interpretation of your traditional rites.

HETIK

I would take it as a deep and personal insult if you didn't.

Pause. Candlewood frowns, processing it all.

CANDLEWOOD

Wait, what just happened? Did we just get back together?

HETIK

Is that what you want?

CANDLEWOOD

Yes. Holy Lord, yes. Do you?

Hetik takes a bit longer to answer - long enough that Candlewood starts to worry.

HETIK

Only if you let it happen. Stop putting yourself down so much.

CANDLEWOOD

I'll work on it.

Candlewood reaches out to shake Hetik's hand, like a formal business agreement. Hetik takes it... and then holds it longer. They keep hold, and we PAN up to...

27 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE, UPPER LEVEL (CONTINUOUS)

Prynn and Nog sit together at another table, looking over the balcony's edge and down towards Candlewood and Hetik. Seeing them holding hands, Prynn points for Nog's benefit.

PRYNN

See? Told you.

She holds her hand out to him; reluctantly, Nog digs in his pocket and hands over a couple of slips of latinum to her.

PRYNN

Thanks. I may have no romantic life of my own whatsoever, but I can still spot it in others.

(beat)

What? Not jealous, are you?

NOG

Not like that. Just... they look so happy. I've never had that.

PRYNN
(realising)
Nog, when you said you never had a
girlfriend, did you mean...?

Nog's furious blush makes it clear she's hit a nerve.

PRYNN
It's nothing to be ashamed of.

NOG
I'm not ashamed.

PRYNN
Liar. Do you want me to help?

Nog's face is a comical mixture of amazed and horrified.

PRYNN
Not like that. But maybe I could
set you up...?

NOG
Don't even think about it. I'm not
having you paying someone to take
my virginity.

PRYNN
Nobody said a thing about paying!
But there's gotta be some girl on
this station with her eye on you.

NOG
There isn't.

PRYNN
Okay, a new mission. I got my dad
together with Opaka, I got John
together with Hetik, I'll find
someone for you too. Trust me,
Nog. I am the Goddess of Romance.

Prynn rubs her hands together gleefully. Nog looks on,
suddenly very worried...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

28 EXT. B'HALA DIG SITE - EVENING

Returning to the archaeological dig at the ancient city...

29 INT. B'HALA CAVES

The celebrations are starting to wind down as the day wears on. The crowd has thinned. Many of the booths are shutting up shop, and most performers and musicians are finished.

To one side, in a small alcove away from the main party, Raiq sits alone on a rocky outcropping. Insular, withdrawn. After a moment, Kira approaches softly.

KIRA

Are you okay?

Raiq acknowledges Kira's presence but otherwise doesn't respond. Kira sits beside her, speaks gently and quietly.

KIRA

Aren't you tired of this yet?

RAIQ

Of what?

KIRA

Of the fighting. The hating. We're not bad people, Raiq. I brought you here hoping it would help you see that. But you always turn and walk away. You fight so hard.

RAIQ

I am not Bajoran, Kira.

KIRA

I know you're not. But you met a Bajoran you liked, didn't you?

RAIQ

I liked him because he was not like you.

KIRA

But he was still a Bajoran. If he was an Oralian or an Ohalavar or whatever - that doesn't matter. We're not all the same, but we have things in common. You're not the same as us... but we have things in common.

Raiq looks down at her hands, remains quiet and withdrawn.

RAIQ

I am ready to leave this place, Kira. Take me home.

KIRA

Home... that's a start, I guess. Just let me say goodbye to Ben and Kasidy. Then we'll go.

Kira stands up, sympathetic for Raiq. She heads off into the thinning crowd.

Elsewhere in the caverns, Sisko and Kasidy sit together, Rebecca sat on Kasidy's knee as they all listen to the last musical group perform their closing piece. Kira approaches.

SISKO

Nerys! Have you had a good time?

KIRA

Not too bad. But it's time to go.

KASIDY

I think Rebecca feels the same way. It's a long day for a not-quite-three-year-old.

SISKO

It's a long day for me. Is Raiq okay?

KIRA

I think so. She never talks about it. And I admit I was worried. But she's coming around. Slowly.

SISKO

Alright. Well, it was good seeing you, Nerys.

KIRA

You too. Bye, Kas. Bye, Rebecca.

Rebecca looks up, smiles through the tiredness. Kira turns and leaves. Kasidy watches her go, thinking.

KASIDY

Ben... before we go too, could we talk? I mean, before we get home and go right back to ignoring each other again.

SISKO

Kas... I never ignored you.

KASIDY

No, I know. But we haven't really talked, have we? We get up, we go about our day, we do everything we need to do, but we haven't talked. Not really. Not for months.

SISKO

You're right.

Sisko looks out into the crowd. Not too far away, Luka is working to help tidy up - clear away the litter, fold up the flags, etc. Sisko stands and calls out.

SISKO

Luka...?

Luka looks up, sees Sisko beckoning, immediately drops what he's doing and comes over.

LUKA

Benjamin - everything okay?

SISKO
(checks with Kasidy)
Luka... would you mind looking
after Rebecca for a little while?

Luka looks between Ben and Kasidy, sees that they need to
talk - alone.

LUKA
I'll protect her with my life.
(holds hand out)
Rebecca? Would you like to come
with me and help tidy up?

Rebecca looks up at Ben and Kasidy for permission.

KASIDY
It's okay, sweetie. It's not for
long. Go ahead.

Rebecca jumps off Kasidy's lap, takes Luka's hand, and they
wander back off into the crowd. Kasidy watches them go.

30 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BUNK ROOM

Kasidy leads Sisko into the room by the hand. A random
Bajoran woman is just putting on her coat, but she quickly
doffs her head to Sisko and scuttles out.

Alone now, Kasidy takes them over to the bedrolls. They
fold a couple up as padding and both sit on the ground.

KASIDY
Ben... thank you for bringing me
here. For including me.

SISKO
Well, of course I included you.

KASIDY
No, not always. But I think that's
my fault. This... stuff... I never
was comfortable with it. It always
felt like this was a part of your
life that I never got to know...

and I didn't want to know. So you kept me out of it.

SISKO

I was afraid it would hurt you.

KASIDY

Ben the captain, Ben the father, Ben the husband... I knew those versions of you. And I loved them all. But I finally got a glimpse of Ben the Emissary today... and he's not such a bad guy.

Sisko is quite emotional at this...

31 **INT. B'HALA CAVES**

Rebecca holds a plastic bag, bends down and picks up bits of rubbish from the cave floor, and pops them in the bag. Next to her, Luka is doing the same.

LUKA

Your father's a very important man, Rebecca.

REBECCA

Yes, Mister Luka.

LUKA

And do you know why I was so excited to meet you?

REBECCA

No...

LUKA

Because you're a very important lady. You see, in my religion, you have a central part to play.

REBECCA

Me?

LUKA

(w/ passion)

"The child Avatar will be the second of the Emissary, he to whom the Teacher Prophets sing." You see? That's you! Foretold in a book written thousands of years ago. Isn't that exciting?

32 **INT. B'HALA CAVES - BUNK ROOM**

Sisko and Kasidy.

SISKO

Kas, you know I never meant to keep anything from you -

KASIDY

No - again, you did. But that's okay, I understand. I never made it easy for you to talk to me about it. Maybe if I had, I would have understood the decisions you made a little better.

SISKO

(cautious)

...Maybe.

33 **INT. B'HALA CAVES**

Luka has stopped cleaning up. Now he's crouched down to Rebecca's level, talking directly to her.

LUKA

You're in that book, Rebecca. The Avatar, the symbol of a united Bajor, where those who feel like me are respected, even honoured.

(looks around,
mutters)

Not that you'd know it from this lot. Look at them all. Acting like they don't know this is our place. Our history, not theirs. They stole it.

Rebecca flinches back from him, glances around for her mommy. He looks back at her, smiles conspiratorially.

LUKA

I'm in that book too, you know.
I'm the Guide. And now you're here
with me. It's a sign, Rebecca.

Luka's smile is starting to get a big manic...

34 INT. B'HALA CAVES - BUNK ROOM

Sisko and Kasidy.

KASIDY

You know those moments when
something just clicks for you...
it's been there all along, staring
you in the face, but you just
never quite got it. And then you
do.

Sisko doesn't know where she's going with this, but doesn't want to interfere with what is clearly important for her.

KASIDY (cont)

The Gratitude Festival. Burn up
the scrolls, burn away all your
problems. You just let it go. So
that's what I'm gonna do - I'm
gonna let it go. You're here,
Rebecca's here... and that's all
that matters. Anything else, we'll
handle it. Together, as a family.

SISKO

You're sure?

KASIDY

Yep. We're together. End of story.

Sisko launches forward and holds her as tight as he can.

35 INT. B'HALA CAVES

Luka reaches out and grasps Rebecca by her little arms.

LUKA

It's proof that Ohalu is the right way. The first way.

REBECCA

You're hurting me...

LUKA

Sorry, sorry. But it's true. I mean, look who's kai. Our guy. I voted for him. Obviously.

Luka stands on his creaky legs and takes Rebecca's hand.

LUKA

You know what? I know some other people who would be just thrilled to meet you. Be just as excited as me. Would you like that?

REBECCA

I wanna go back to my mommy...

LUKA

Your mommy left you with me, sweet heart. Your daddy too. It's fine, you know you can trust me. Come on, let's go.

Luka begins to walk, dragging Rebecca by the hand. Rebecca looks anxiously over her shoulder, looking for her parents.

Luka drags her into a narrower passage, away from crowds or onlookers. She struggles to pull her hand free, but he has a destination in mind.

REBECCA

I don't want to...

LUKA

Of course you do. Stop struggling. You'll come with me, and you'll meet my friends, and then everyone will see that we were right.

Luka continues to drag the struggling Rebecca down the darkening stone passage...

36 **INT. B'HALA CAVES - BUNK ROOM**

Sisko holds Kasidy tight, whispers into her neck.

SISKO
We're together. Everything's gonna
be good now. It's gonna be better.

Kasidy holds him tight back, rocks him to comfort him.

37 **INT. B'HALA CAVES - PASSAGEWAY**

Being dragged almost too fast for her little feet to keep up, Rebecca looks back behind her.

REBECCA
(shouts)
Mommy! Mom-

Luka CLAMPS his hand across her mouth, silencing her. Fed up of her struggling, he grabs her around the waist and HOISTS her up off her feet, adrenaline allowing his body to pick up the little girl and carry her.

LUKA
Stop struggling, I said! I'm not
going to hurt you!

Rebecca just struggles all the more, her SCREAMS muffled by Luka's hand over her mouth. He takes a firmer hold and carries her on down the stony passage, until they are lost in the dark, just the SOUNDS of their struggle echoing on.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW