

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x11 - "Gateways."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Gateways Book 4

Demons of Air and Darkness
by Keith RA DeCandido

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE

A MALON TANKER vessel - one of the really humongous ones as seen in VOY 5x20 "Juggernaut" - cruises along with a planet visible some distance away.

Weapons fire comes from off screen and HITS the first tank, then the second. We don't see who is firing yet...

2 INT. MALON VESSEL - BRIDGE

Smoke, fires, sparking panels. A grizzled older male Malon, KRON, stands at a nearby panel, urgently shouting reports over the chaos. The female captain, MARSSI, clings onto her grubby-looking central console for dear life.

MARSSI

Return fire!

KRON

We have been! Our weapons have no effect.

MARSSI

I take it they aren't answering our hails?

KRON

Of course not. They don't want to talk, they want to destroy us!

The ship SHAKES violently under more weapons fire. Kron staggers, then checks his grimy panels again and curses.

KRON

Shield four is down and shield five is critical. They're on a parabolic course - they'll be back in weapons range in two minutes.

A moment of respite. Marssi tries to get her bearings...

KRON
Damn it! The warp containment
field is in trouble and the
impulse drive is down. We can't
even move now!

A young and nervous male named GRIL, speaks up...

GRIL
Who are these people, anyway?

3 **EXT. SPACE - MALON VESSEL**

And now we see - a HIROGEN ship soars threateningly into
view. The Malon ship is bleeding wisps of noxious green gas
from its leaking tanks - antimatter waste.

4 **INT. MALON VESSEL - BRIDGE**

MARSSI
The Hirogen are hunters. No-one
knows where they come from, but
supposedly, they'll hunt anything
and everything.

GRIL
But why hunt us?

KRON
It's what they do.

GRIL
Yeah, but whatever they do to us
will kill them too if the tanks
rupture or the core breaches.
What's the good of being a hunter
if you don't survive yourself?

MARSSI
(thoughtfully)
That's a good point. Maybe he just
doesn't know. Open a channel.

KRON
They haven't answered a hail yet.

MARSSI

They don't have to answer, they
just have to listen.

KRON

(taps buttons)

Fine, channel's open.

MARSSI

Attention Hirogen ship. We are
currently carrying half a trillion
isotons of antimatter waste. If
you continue with your present
course of action, this ship will
be destroyed and our cargo will be
exposed to space. This entire star
system will be irradiated and you,
us and anyone else nearby will
die. Please break off your attack,
for your own sake if not for ours.

A pause - will they see sense? Kron's console bleeps.

KRON

(surprised)

They're replying!

The HIROGEN's mottled face appears on the main viewscreen
with a sneering growl. His silver metal helmet is streaked
with a stripe of white paint on each side, and a stripe of
red on the left only. Clearly, this guy means business.

HIROGEN (screen)

Prey. You will surrender.

The screen goes blank. They are astonished - that's it?
Then the ship LURCHES again - more explosions.

KRON (cont)

Shields five and six are down and
seven is buckling. One more shot,
and we've got serious problems.

MARSSI

Yes Kron, our problems have been
quite light-hearted until now.

Kron checks his console, and seems very confused...

KRON

I'm picking something up. It just appeared a hundred-fifty *hentas* off the nose. It's... a hole.

MARSSI

Can you be a little more specific?

KRON

(irritated)

No! It's an opening of some kind, and there are stars and planets on the other side, but they don't match anything on our star charts.

MARSSI

So it's a wormhole?

KRON

No, it has none of the properties of a wormhole. In fact, it doesn't have the properties of much of anything. It's just... a hole.

GRIL

What the *tuul* is it doing here?

MARSSI

Who the *tuul* cares? Kron, use manoeuvring thrusters. I want the ship positioned so that the tank openings are facing that hole.

5 EXT. SPACE - MALON VESSEL

Slowly and painfully, the tanker begins to manoeuvre its enormous bulk...

With the Hirogen ship in the distance, we see the "hole" - and it is just that...

...there are no fancy effects, just a clearly defined and very clean-edged HOLE IN SPACE, showing a different star field through it. It is just hanging there in mid-space...

6 INT. MALON VESSEL - BRIDGE

MARSSI

Don't eject the tanks themselves
- just eject their contents.

GRIL

But Controller, that'll expose the
waste! The radiation --

MARSSI

We'll only be exposed for a short
time. I'm not losing the tanks as
well. Unless you want to replace
them out of your earnings?

7 EXT. SPACE - MALON VESSEL

The tanks open, and massive amounts of TOXIC GREEN MATTER
tumble out and towards the hole...

As it does, the Hirogen ship SWOOPS down and right into the
path of the waste. A big chunk of matter hits it square on,
and the Hirogen ship EXPLODES in a big mess...

8 INT. MALON VESSEL - BRIDGE

The crew watches this on the screen, amazed. Gradually they
realise they are saved, and they WHOOP with joy and relief.

KRON

Looks like you beat the odds
again, Controller.

MARSSI

Did you ever doubt it?

KRON

Yes, every second. But I'm glad
you proved me wrong.

GRIL

Controller, I must protest this!
We don't know what's on the other
side of that hole! What if --

MARSSI

Gril, what is the mission statement of this vessel?

GRIL

To dispose of antimatter waste in a way that is not harmful to the Malon community as a whole.

MARSSI

Exactly. And we've done that, and also kept this star system from being contaminated. So what are you protesting, precisely, Gril?

GRIL

Well, when you put it that way... I guess nothing, Controller.

Gril turns back to his console, and Kron chuckles...

KRON

Were we ever that young?

MARSSI

I was. You were already a cranky old man when you were born.

Relieved and elated at their narrow escape, they relax...

9 EXT. SPACE - MALON VESSEL

As more and more of the toxic green waste tumbles through the hole to who knows where...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

10 INT. DS9 - HOLOSUITE

Through the open doors, we see the station at YELLOW ALERT - we are already in mid-crisis here. KIRA and VAUGHN stride in purposefully together, to find NOG working on a panel...

KIRA

Report.

NOG

It's ready, sir. The connection is active at our end. We just need them to activate it on theirs.

KIRA

Any problems?

NOG

None, Colonel. My uncle is off-station, after all.

KIRA

Alright - dismissed, Lieutenant.

Nog nods acknowledgment and EXITS. The doors close, and Kira and Vaughn stand on the inactive holosuite grid...

Then more than a dozen people materialise - all Starfleet officers in red uniforms, though ROSS is the only admiral. Kira is the only non-Starfleet officer here, but she has nothing to prove - she is secure in her authority.

ROSS

Good afternoon, everyone. It's nice to know our relay systems are fine-tuned enough to allow holokonferences like this to occur. As for why we're doing this, we have a new problem. A few days ago, the Federation Council was approached by a group who identified themselves... as Iconians.

Some kerfuffle as they react with awe, surprise, confusion.

ROSS

We're sending data-packets to you all that detail everything we know about the Iconians, mostly from encounters involving *Enterprise* and *Defiant* over the last decade. But in a nutshell, the Iconians were a hugely advanced race who existed in this quadrant some two-hundred millennia ago. They're most famous for their gateways, which provided instant transport between two points, whether they were metres or light-years apart.

(deep breath)

The Iconians have offered us this gateway technology - for a price. Similar offers have been made to governments across the quadrant, some of whom could obviously use it in devastating ways. And more urgently, the Iconians have chosen to demonstrate their technology by activating the entire network. It is causing chaos all over known space. People showing up where they're not supposed to be, power systems drained, hostiles in each others' territory. Unfortunately, the Iconians have not seen fit to either tell us how to control the gateways or give us a map. So it's up to us to maintain the peace.

He turns to Cpt SOLOK, the VULCAN captain of the *T'Kumbra* from 7x04 "Take Me Out to the Holosuite."

ROSS

Captain Solok, I want your crew to monitor all reports of gateways. If the Iconians won't give us a map, we'll make one ourselves.

(to Vaughn
and Kira)

ROSS (cont)

Colonel, Commander, based on the preliminary reports, we've found something interesting out your way. There is no gateway activity within ten light-years of Bajor.

VAUGHN

(intrigued)

The wormhole?

ROSS

We think so, yes.

KIRA

It could be the Prophets protecting this region.

ROSS

(indulging her)

That's certainly a possibility, but I'd like to find out for sure. Is it natural? What properties are being displayed, and can they be harnessed beyond your sector?

VAUGHN

You're hoping to turn it into a practical counter-measure.

ROSS

Exactly.

KIRA

Admiral, we have another problem. We've had reports that the colony at Europa Nova is suffering a planet-wide catastrophe, possibly as a result of this gateway thing. Some kind of antimatter waste is appearing in orbit, seemingly out of nowhere. We're the nearest starbase. We need to evacuate the settlement immediately, and we're going to need the *Defiant* and as many ships as possible to assist.

ROSS

Yes, we're aware of the situation on Europa Nova. In fact there's a Federation Councillor there right now. I've assigned *Gryphon* and *Intrepid* to be at your disposal. Captains, your ETA's?

To Cpt MELLO of the *Gryphon* (human, short, female, sturdy) and Cpt EMICK of the *Intrepid* (human, taller, male, older).

MELLO

Two and a half hours, Admiral.

EMICK

The *Intrepid* can rendezvous with the *Defiant* in two hours.

ROSS

Good. I only ask that you hold back one runabout to investigate the wormhole, Colonel.

KIRA

Of course, Admiral. The *Sungari* can handle it.

Kira nods to Vaughn, who steps to the back of the room, out of the way of the meeting, and taps his badge. Meanwhile, the meeting continues in the background MOS...

VAUGHN

Vaughn to Dax.

DAX (comm)

Go ahead.

VAUGHN

Lieutenant, add the *Intrepid* and the *Gryphon* to our list and take *Sungari* off it. Have the runabout prepped for Nog and ch'Thane to take it out to the wormhole. And assemble the senior staff in Ops. We'll meet you there shortly.

DAX (comm)
Yes, sir. Umm... Starfleet's only
sending two ships? I take it more
is going on than just Europa Nova?

VAUGHN
Quite a bit more, yes.

Vaughn taps his badge to close the channel, and turns back
to the meeting, just as Ross is tying up...

ROSS
These will be trying days ahead of
us all. I want to keep in constant
contact, so I'll be reachable any
time you need me. Good luck.

A few at a time, the figures all dematerialise until Kira
and Vaughn are left alone. Kira sags with disappointment...

KIRA
Two ships. It's a good thing we
heard the whole meeting, or I'd
accuse Starfleet of short-changing
us again. Now I'm not sure they
can even spare us that much.

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

Ops is busy with Starfleet and Bajoran personnel running
about. Kira, Vaughn, Nog, DAX, ch'THANE, BOWERS and BASHIR
are all gathered around the central table, with TARAN'ATAR
still as a statue in his usual spot on the upper level.

KIRA
So that leaves us twenty ships?

DAX
A lot of them are cargo ships,
plenty of space. I also talked
with Minister Lipin and Vedek Eran
about arranging emergency housing
for the majority of the refugees
on Bajor, and Ro's people are
setting up accommodations here.

KIRA

Good work. Let's hope it's enough ships to get three million people off Europa Nova within two days.

VAUGHN

Doctor, what's our medical status?

BASHIR

I've had the lab replicating arithrazine non-stop since we received the distress call. The *Defiant's* dispensary is already full, and I'll have enough for the *Intrepid* by the time they arrive.

SHAR

Colonel, I'm not familiar with Europa Nova. They're not a Federation world?

KIRA

No, but it's a human colony. They settled about a hundred years ago.

VAUGHN

I'm surprised you're not familiar, Ensign. Andor has several trade agreements with Europa Nova.

SHAR

(evasive)

I... haven't been home in some time, Commander.

VAUGHN

Well, Ensign, your and Lieutenant Nog's task is to investigate the lack of gateways around Bajor, not to worry about the evacuation.

NOG

Uh, Colonel? I have something that might help. A shield modulator I... "acquired" from the Sheliak.

Nog proudly holds up a DATA ROD...

BASHIR

(amazed)

Aren't the Sheliak among the most
xenophobic species in the galaxy?

DAX

Xenophobic's the wrong word. More
like xeno-disdainful.

BOWERS

How did you manage to make a deal
with them, then?

NOG

(*faux* shocked)

A good Ferengi never reveals his
tricks.

Kira is in no mood for banter, brings them back to topic...

KIRA

What does it do?

NOG

It strengthens shields against the
effects of radiation.

DAX

That's handy.

NOG

It also weakens those shields'
effectiveness against weapons.

BASHIR

That's less handy.

KIRA

Hopefully nobody's going to shoot
at us on this mission, Doctor.
Good work, Nog. Get to work on
fitting it to all the Starfleet
ships, then report to the *Sungari*.

NOG

Yes, sir.

(beat)

Colonel...? If we're committing
all these ships to the evacuation,
does that mean we're giving up on
the search for Jake?

All faces drop - in the chaos they had forgotten him, and
they are appalled by that. Kira tries to be reassuring...

KIRA

We're not giving up anything, Nog.
But right now, we have to give
priority to the three million
people on Europa Nova.

(to Dax)

Lieutenant, you'll be in charge of
the station while we're gone. Keep
coordinating with Lipin and Eran.

(to Vaughn)

Commander, you'll take *Defiant*.
I'll take Ling and the *Euphrates*.
Bowers, you'll go in the *Rio*
Grande with Roness. That's it.

Dismissed, everyone heads to their stations.

Vaughn follows Kira up to her office - they are intercepted
on their way by Taran'atar.

TARAN'ATAR

Colonel, I request permission to
join the mission.

KIRA

(taken aback)

Any particular reason?

TARAN'ATAR

I may be of some use.

KIRA

How?

TARAN'ATAR

I don't know. Nor did I know how I might be of use on Doctor Bashir's mission to Sindorin, but you said that the mission would have failed without me. For that matter, I've yet to comprehend how I may be of use on this station at all, but Odo said that I would be. It seems reasonable that I continue seeking ways to make myself useful. Your mission to Europa Nova seems like such an opportunity.

In other words, he's bored. Kira glances to Vaughn to see what he thinks - he subtly shrugs. *Up to you.*

KIRA

Fine, you'll come with me on the *Euphrates*. Commander, let Ensign Ling know she's staying on the station.

VAUGHN

Yes, sir.

Satisfied, Taran'atar straightens himself.

TARAN'ATAR

With your permission then, Colonel, I will report to runabout pad A and prepare the *Euphrates* for our journey.

He heads off, as Kira and Vaughn enter her office...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

12 EXT. SPACE - ESTABLISHING

A VULCAN starship like the ones seen on *Enterprise* but more beefed up. It actually belongs to the ORION SYNDICATE.

TAMRA (v.o.)
This is so exciting!

13 INT. ORION SHIP - MALIC'S ROOM

TAMRA, a blonde and bubbly DABO GIRL, leans over to peer at the gaudy ARTWORK that lines the walls of this stateroom - paintings, jewels in display cases, sculptures, holograms.

TAMRA
All this stuff! It's so pretty!

At the large conference table sits MALIC, a small, gnarly but fancy-dressed ORION pirate, holding an elaborate PADD. He glances at Tamra, then back to QUARK, who sits opposite.

MALIC
You expect to be playing dabo here, Quark?

QUARK
You have your own entertainment, don't you?

QUARK leers over at an ORION SLAVE GIRL, stretched out on a chaise among the artworks, dressed in well-tailored "dirty rags". Her name is TREIR.

In response, she gets up and seductively drapes herself around Malic, daring Quark to do anything to her.

QUARK
Of course, it would help if I knew what it is I'm negotiating. It's hard to prepare for business when I don't know what the business is.

TAMRA

I can't wait to find out. This is
so unbelievably amazing!

Malic goes back to his padd, taps away, making Quark wait.
Quark is not ruffled - he can handle this guy.

Treir stalks the room, keeping an eye on Tamra, who is
oblivious, gawking at the lavish artwork...

Eventually, Malic looks back up...

MALIC

Have you ever heard of the
Iconians, Quark?

QUARK

Sure. Ancient species, conquered
most of the quadrant thousands of
years ago. I've auctioned several
of their relics over the years.
They're extinct though.

MALIC

Not so extinct, it seems. The
Iconians have returned, Quark. And
they want to deal. And... they've
activated all their gateways.

QUARK

Interesting. Where do I come in?

MALIC

The Iconians are auctioning the
rights to the highest bidder. And
I want those gateways for the
Orion Syndicate, Quark.

QUARK

What are the terms?

Malic tosses a simpler padd to Quark - he inspects it...

MALIC

The first is the initial offer,
followed by the secondary offer --

QUARK

And the third is the last-resort add-ons when the bidding gets fierce, I know. This isn't my first negotiation, Malic. If it was, you wouldn't have asked for me. And this list needs work.

MALIC

(menacing)

Have a care, Ferengi. Don't presume to overstep yourself.

QUARK

Just trying to do my job, Malic. To do that, I need to negotiate from the best possible position.

(beat)

Look, I freely admit that I owe you for not exposing my little scheme back on the station. But I could just as easily turn around and walk out of here and take my chances on Deep Space Nine.

Treir seems to glance his way. He sees it, doesn't know what it means, gets on with the job...

QUARK (cont)

So are you going to take advantage of my skills - the whole reason you brought me here - or are you going to guarantee you lose the gateways before I even walk into the room?

Malic seethes at him...

14 INT. ORION SHIP - MEETING ROOM

Quark enters a simpler room, Tamra trailing blankly behind. At the far end of a smaller conference table stand two ICONIANS - unimpressive as aliens go, with yellow skin, uninteresting faces and shapeless green satin tunics.

But sat between them, grinning malevolently... is GAILA.
Quark's confident game face drops to the floor - *oh crap*.

QUARK

Gaila.

GAILA

Pleasure to see you, cousin.

As the cousins and recurring nemeses measure each other...

15 **EXT. SPACE - DENORIOS BELT**

The runabout *Sungari* holds position in space, the wispy colours of the DENORIOS BELT drifting in the background.

16 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Nog and Shar sit in the front seats, working at sensors...

SHAR

Sensors are calibrated, beginning sweep. So far, I'm not detecting anything that would explain the lack of gateways in this sector.

NOG

So it's probably something natural to the wormhole?

SHAR

We don't even know for sure that the wormhole is connected. It's only a vague hypothesis based on circumstantial evidence.

(returning to
conversation)

So women are allowed to wear clothes now?

NOG

Allowed, yes. Not all of them do though, particularly once you get out of the capital. If nothing else, it's cut down on illnesses, which has the doctors in a tizzy.

SHAR
I don't understand.

NOG
Ferenginar is a very damp climate.
Now women are wearing clothes,
they don't get sick as often, so
the doctors do less business.

SHAR
I hadn't considered the economic
implications of women wearing
clothes on the medical profession.

NOG
Father has to. He's had to offer
all kinds of concessions to the
medical association. He was
entrusted by former Grand Nagus
Zek with making major reforms in
Ferengi business practices.

SHAR
My zhavey was elected as Andorian
Councillor with a mandate to
improve our trading positions with
non-Federation worlds like Europa
Nova. She was elected eight years
ago, and it hasn't happened yet.
May your father have better luck.

An amused smile from Nog.

17 EXT. SPACE - ORION SHIP

The Vulcan/Orion ship, now joined by the ICONIANS' ship. It
is shaped like a round-edged hourglass on its side, grubby
yellow, and as uninteresting as its inhabitants.

18 INT. ORION SHIP - MALIC'S ROOM

The first negotiation is over, and Quark is being debriefed
by a suspicious and unhappy Malic.

Tamra hovers aimlessly, checking her nails, while Treir
watches her warily...

QUARK

Yes, Gaila's my cousin. We've known each other since we were kids. We've even done a few deals together in the past.

MALIC

Is it going to be a problem?

QUARK

I don't see why. It's possible it may slow the negotiations down a bit. After all, Gaila and I know each other's tricks. That just means we'll have to come up with new tricks. In fact --

MALIC

Quark, the more you try to assure me there's no problem, the more I think there will be. So kindly shut up, and take a look at this. I think it's worth mentioning at the next session, don't you?

He hands Quark one of his lesser padds - the fancy one never leaves his possession...

INSERT - THE PADD

An intercepted Starfleet report, with the headline of USS T'KUMBRA and a headshot of Captain Solok

BACK TO SCENE

As Quark reads, his smile grows - he's got Gaila now.

19 INT. ORION SHIP - MEETING ROOM

A performing Quark SLAMS the padd dramatically on the table before a confused but defiant and gaily improvising Gaila.

QUARK

You told us the gateways were in every sector of the galaxy.

GAILA

They are.

QUARK

Then why are there no gateways
within ten light-years of Bajor?

The Iconians exchange a look, as if they are as surprised by this as anyone. Without a word, they scuttle out of the room. Gaila doesn't miss a beat...

GAILA

What need is there for one? You
have the wormhole.

QUARK

Which was discovered less than a
decade ago. Seems to me that this
should have been mentioned at some
point. Makes me wonder what else
you've managed to leave out.

GAILA

We've left nothing out, Quark. And
anyway, it should be pointed out
the Klingons, the Romulans and the
Breen don't much care if there are
any gateways around Bajor.

QUARK

You forget, cousin, that I'm not
here on my own behalf. I'm here as
a representative of the Orion
Syndicate, and they don't care
about Bajor either. But they do
care about being lied to in a
good-faith negotiation.

GAILA

(oh please)

Quark, you're always working on
your own behalf, one way or
another.

Quark smiles to hide his nervousness - Gaila's right.

20 **EXT. SPACE - DENORIOS BELT**

Re-establishing the runabout...

21 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Nog gets a drink from the replicator and brings it back to the front. Shar gets a sudden moment of inspiration...

SHAR

The Denorios Belt. It's full of tachyon eddies, isn't it?

NOG

Yeah, so?

SHAR

The wormhole is a local phenomenon - at its worst, it has no impact on the space around it beyond the Denorios Belt. It couldn't affect a ten light-year radius of space.

NOG

(catching on)

But Captain Sisko proved that the tachyon eddies go all the way to Cardassia...

SHAR

And Cardassia is within ten light years of Bajor. Nog, I think we have a working theory.

NOG

Now we just need to test it.

Now they are both excited - they are on the right path. Shar turns to his console to start the tests...

NOG

The belt has always been a hazard to navigation. That's why it took so long for anyone to discover the wormhole in the first place. Just don't tell Kira I said that.

SHAR

Why not?

NOG

As far as Bajorans are concerned, the Celestial Temple went unfound for so long because the Prophets were waiting for the Emissary.

SHAR

That's actually a perfectly valid interpretation of the facts. You could even argue that the Prophets made the Denorios Belt such a hazard precisely to keep it hidden until the right time.

NOG

Do you believe that?

SHAR

Well, I wasn't raised in that religious tradition, so no. But it's an interesting hypothesis.

NOG

So I'm not going to convince you that you need to live a profitable life so that you'll go to the Divine Treasury when you die?

SHAR

(simply)

Probably not, no. I'm afraid the Andorian afterlife is somewhat more complicated.

(checking panels)

I think I have something... Based on these readings, a compressed tachyon burst should disrupt the gateways, if combined with certain noble gases. All those gases are present in the Denorios Belt. We just need a way to harness them and combine it with the burst.

NOG

Oh, we can just rig the Bussard collectors on the *Defiant* for those gases, modify an intermix chamber to infuse the burst with them, then run it through the deflector array. One question though - you said "disrupt the gateways". Disrupt how?

SHAR

Unknown. We still have no idea how the gateways actually work.

NOG

Well, luckily that's Vaughn and Kira's problem, not ours. Setting course for DS-Nine.

As he hits the buttons, ALARMS go off all around the ship.

NOG

What is it this time?
(checks screens)
Oh no...

22 EXT. SPACE - THE DENORIOS BELT

A hourglass-shaped SHIP just like the Iconians' suddenly comes out of warp right on top of them --

-- and immediately starts FIRING on the small, vulnerable runabout.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

23 EXT. SPACE - DENORIOS BELT

The Iconians FIRE on the *Sungari*... the runabout is HIT --

24 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

-- and RED ALERT alarms sound all over the ship. Nog and Shar struggle to get the shields up and fire back...

SHAR
Damage to starboard nacelle. Not
critical, but we can't go to warp.

NOG
Returning fire.

Out the window, the runabout's phasers HIT the Iconians...

SHAR
Minor damage to their shields.
There's no match in the ship
database. Their weapons are some
kind of directed ladrion pulse.

The runabout takes another HIT in return...

SHAR
Shields sixty percent. Structural
integrity field weakened.

NOG
Send out a distress call.

25 EXT. SPACE - EUROPA NOVA

The USS *Gryphon* (Akira-class) and various freighters and cargo vessels are already in orbit of a small blue world.

Nearby, the *Defiant*, the *Intrepid* (Intrepid-class), two runabouts and a fleet of Bajoran ships come out of warp. Amorphous green material hangs in orbit over the planet.

Kira in command, Taran'atar at her side, checking panels...

TARAN'ATAR

I am reading an Akira-class
Starfleet ship already in orbit.
It registers as the USS *Gryphon*.
There is also an increasing amount
of theta radiation coming from the
antimatter waste field dead ahead.

KIRA

Contact the Europa Nova council.

Taran'atar works the controls -- and President SILVERIO
appears. Old, greying and grandmotherly. It has clearly
been a bad day for her.

SILVERIO (screen)

Grazia Silverio. You're Colonel
Nerys?

KIRA

Colonel Kira, actually. Bajoran
tradition puts family name first.

SILVERIO (screen)

Sorry, Colonel. I'm afraid things
are a bit hectic right now. You've
seen the evacuation plan?

KIRA

We're receiving it from *Gryphon*
right now. We also hope to figure
out how to cut off the radiation.

SILVERIO (screen)

That'd be good. This is our home,
Colonel, and we don't abandon it
easily. One other thing - I'd like
to get Councillor zh'Thane out of
here before the radiation gets
much worse. She's our guest, and
it's bad form to give your guests
radiation poisoning.

KIRA

Understood. We'll beam her to the
Defiant as soon as possible.
Euphrates out.

Silverio signs off. Kira takes a deep breath, and prepares to start again. She is in charge of a *big* operation here.

KIRA

Taran'atar, open a channel to all
the ships in the convoy.

TARAN'ATAR

(presses buttons)

Channel open.

KIRA

Everyone, this is Kira. We've got
five major cities and a lot of
rural areas to cover. As the
fleet's command vessel, I want
Defiant to handle the capital
city, L'Aquila. *Gryphon* will take
Spilimbergo, *Xhosa* handles Chieti,
Intrepid takes Padilla, and *East
Winds* will take Libre Pista. The
Rio Grande and *Halloran* will take
the smaller towns on the northern
continent, and *Euphrates* and *Ng*
will take the southern continent.

(beat)

Colonel Lenaris? I want you to
divide the remaining land into
nine areas and dispatch nine of
your ships to those areas. Your
last ship can scan the islands.

(beat)

You all have your assignments.
Let's get to work. Kira out.

Closing the link with a sigh, she starts the ship moving.

KIRA

Setting course for the southern
continent.

TARAN'ATAR

Shields raised for atmospheric entry. There is no indication that the Ferengi's modifications will have any deleterious effect. Colonel, may I ask a question?

KIRA

Of course.

TARAN'ATAR

You and President Silverio implied that you intend to restore Europa Nova. The most efficient course of action would be to relocate its inhabitants to another planet.

KIRA

(shocked)

This is their home.

TARAN'ATAR

I don't understand. It's simply a planet. To try to restore it is a waste of resources.

KIRA

A people can sometimes be defined by where they come from. Who the Bajorans are is shaped by our world. It's part of what ties us to the Prophets.

TARAN'ATAR

You believe caring for your home brings you closer to your gods?

KIRA

That's one way of looking at it.

TARAN'ATAR

Yet your gods cast you out.

Instinctively, her hand goes to her bare ear. A very touchy subject for her, but she knows he doesn't mean any insult.

KIRA
(quietly but firmly)
Not my gods. Just some people who
claim to represent them.

Taran'atar takes that on board and considers it...

TARAN'ATAR
My gods cast me out.

Surprised and saddened, Kira has no answer for that...

27 EXT. SPACE - EUROPA NOVA ORBIT

Elsewhere in orbit, the *Defiant* hangs over the planet...

28 INT. DEFIANT - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Vaughn stands at attention. Chief CHAO (female, Chinese)
works the transporter controls...

...and the platform fills with as many people as can fit.
Most are human - the politicians, hassled and indignant.
Vaughn disapproves that they are the first to escape.

VAUGHN
Greetings, and welcome aboard the
Federation Starship *Defiant*. I am
Commander Elias Vaughn, in charge
of this vessel. If you will please
follow Ensign Gordimer, he'll
escort you to the mess hall. As
soon as we're at capacity, you'll
be taken to Deep Space Nine.

As the humans file off the platform and follow security
officer GORDIMER (male, S African) out into the corridor,
Vaughn smiles wide at the one friendly face --

-- the elegant and immaculately dressed Andorian female,
VRETHA, Shar's mother (8x04 "Cold Fusion"). She gasps...

VRETHA
Elias! Is that really you?

VAUGHN
(warmly)
Councillor zh'Thane.

VRETHA
Please, Elias, I'm in no mood for
formality.

VAUGHN
Chief Chao, please prepare to beam
the next wave up. Energise as soon
as Ensign Gordimer returns.

CHAO
Aye sir.

Vaughn offers Vretha his arm, she gladly takes it, and they
head out...

29 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)

The old friends walk companionably down the corridor...

VRETHA
And just where are you taking me?

VAUGHN
The bridge, of course. You're a
Federation dignitary. It seems
only appropriate.

VRETHA
The ironic thing is, I was going
to make a side-trip to DS-Nine in
any case. I wanted to see my *chei*.

VAUGHN
You'll be very proud. Ensign
ch'Thane is a fine officer.

VRETHA
(tensing)
Yes, I'm certain he is. However,
there are other matters we must
discuss...

VAUGHN
Vretha, if there's a problem...

VRETHA
(with finality)
We'll talk later, Elias.

Vaughn recognises the face of a parent who has a troubled relationship with their child. They reach the bridge...

30 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

TENMEI is in the centre chair, the usual extras at other positions. As Vaughn and Vretha enter, she vacates and returns to the helm, all without looking at Vaughn...

TENMEI
Sir, we've detected something of
interest on the surface.

She hits some keys, and an IMAGE appears on the main view screen. It shows a coastal area, rocky and windy. On an outcropping, there's a clear person-sized gateway...

TENMEI
This is near one of the small
towns on the northern continent,
a place called Costa Rocosa.

VAUGHN
Good work, Ensign. Contact the
local authorities, tell them I'll
be beaming down. And alert Colonel
Kira to what you've found. You're
in command until I return.

TENMEI
Yes sir.

VAUGHN
Councillor, I think it might be
best if you waited in the mess
hall with the others after all.

With a nod of understanding, Vretha follows him out...

Vaughn stands with tricorder out, examining the gateway as waves crash nearby and wind whips his hair. Through the gateway, a harsh, flat world filled with acres of RED SAND.

VAUGHN

The good news is that this is indeed a working gateway, and it appears to be programmed for a single destination.

KIRA (comm)

So what's the bad news?

VAUGHN

The location in question is Torona Four. The homeworld of the Jarada, a xenophobic and fussy people who insist on very specific protocols. They've always steadfastly refused to allow any aliens on their soil.

KIRA (comm)

Commander, we have to use that gateway. I just got a report from the *Gryphon* that the transporters will be useless in eight hours.

VAUGHN

I don't think we can risk sending people through the gateway without contacting the authorities first.

KIRA (comm)

Make it fast, Commander. Whatever you have to do to convince them.

VAUGHN

Aye sir. Vaughn out.

He taps at his tricorder, hunting for information about the Jarada. This will be a delicate bit of negotiating, and he has to get it right. Preparing with a deep breath, he taps his combadge, and speaks loudly and clearly...

VAUGHN

Attention Jaradan authorities.
This is Commander Elias Vaughn of
Starfleet, representing the United
Federation of Planets. Commanding
officer of the USS *Defiant*.

(native greeting)

*Ârd klaxon lís blajh-blon ârg níc
calníc ârd trasulâ rass tass trasulâ.*

Vaughn pauses to clear his throat. That was hard work.

VAUGHN

As you may be aware, there is an
interspatial gateway linking your
world with another, a human colony
called Europa Nova. It is through
this gateway that I am contacting
you now. Europa Nova is suffering
an ecological crisis and needs to
be evacuated. We respectfully
request permission to bring people
through the gateway to your world.

Will they bother to answer? Eventually they do - a haughty,
insectile rasp that seems to condescend even over the comm.

JARADA (comm)

You honour us with the proper
greeting, Commander *Defiant*. For
that reason, we will grant you the
consideration of a proper warning.
Do not step on our world, or you
and your people will be killed.

Off Vaughn's worried expression...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

32 EXT. COSTA ROCOSA - DAY

With Vaughn and the gateway on the coastline...

VAUGHN

Please, I ask that you reconsider.
If you agree to help us, we will
share intelligence about these
gateways. We devoted considerable
resources to studying them.

Another pause, as the Jarada consider his offer...

JARADA (comm)

You will share this intelligence
before we allow any on our soil.

VAUGHN

We will share some of it. The rest
will come after the first refugees
have passed through unmolested.

JARADA (comm)

Very well, Commander *Defiant*. A
forcefield has been erected. It
will accommodate five-hundred-
thousand members of your species.
You will send that precise number
through and no more. Any who step
outside the boundaries will die.

VAUGHN

Understood. My thanks to your
government. *Trasulâ riss blajh-*
blon ârd.

JARADA (comm)

Again, you honour us with an
appropriate salutation, Commander
Defiant. Continue to do us honour,
and we will not do you harm.

The Jarada have signed off. Vaughn sighs with relief...

VAUGHN

(to self)

Bill Ross is gonna have a seizure.

33 EXT. SPACE - THE DENORIOS BELT

The *Sungari* is still under attack by the Iconian ship. The runabout is making use of its greater manoeuvrability - it zigzags around the Iconian ship, firing at several points on their shields. The Iconian ship fires back...

34 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Nog's console EXPLODES, throwing him back, and then goes blank. Shar's is still working, barely. Alarms all over.

SHAR

Shields down! One bit of good news
- their shields are down too.

NOG

That might mean something if we
still had any weapons. Transmit
specs for the tachyon burst to the
station in case we don't make it.

SHAR

(hits buttons)

Done. Wait - I'm picking up
another ship. It's the *Defiant*!

Through the window, they see *Defiant* drop out of warp right on top of the Iconian ship. They almost cheer with relief.

VAUGHN (comm)

Unidentified ship. You have fired
on a Starfleet vessel. Surrender
or suffer the consequences.

35 EXT. SPACE - THE DENORIOS BELT

Obviously unimpressed, the alien ship fires on the *Defiant* and the *Sungari* at the same time...

36 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

More explosions, sparks, smoke...

SHAR
Our antimatter containment is
weakening! And *Defiant's* shields
are down to forty percent!

NOG
Frinx it, that's because of my
shield modulator. Eject the core.

SHAR
Ejection systems offline!

Of course they are. The whole ship goes dark.

SHAR (cont)
In fact, at this point I would say
that the entire ship is offline.

Through the window, they see the *Defiant* pummel the Iconian
ship with its pulse phasers...

Without shields, the *Defiant's* weapons tear through the
alien ship easily, and it EXPLODES. The light shines
through onto Nog and Shar...

NOG
Nog to *Defiant*. Emergency beamout!

Nog and Shar both dissolve in a transporter beam...

37 EXT. SPACE - THE DENORIOS BELT

Defiant pushes away from the dead runabout and the debris
of the Iconian ship... and jumps to WARP.

Left behind, the runabout EXPLODES into pieces as well...

38 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The *Defiant* settles into its place on the docking ring. All
the other docking ports are busy with convoy ships...

39 **INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING AIRLOCK**

The refugees are being guided off the *Defiant* and onto the station by Starfleet and Bajoran security. Shar is helping.

VRETHA (o.s.)

Thirishar, there you are.

He freezes, shocked to hear his mother's voice. He turns as she emerges with all the politicians and refugees. Shar is stiff, polite, deferent, but *really* not wanting to do this.

SHAR

I wasn't expecting to see you here, *zhavey*.

VRETHA

I was on Europa Nova. I didn't realise you were on board - I thought you'd be on the bridge when Elias took me there.

SHAR

I was on the *Sungari*. They beamed me over before it blew up.

VRETHA

Blew up?! Obviously I should have stayed on the bridge. We need to talk, Thirishar.

SHAR

I'm afraid I can't right now, *zhavey*. The crisis is not -

VRETHA

Of course not now, Thirishar. You have duties to perform, and I need to contact the Council. We'll talk when we both have time to do so.

(emphatically)

But we will talk. We have danced around this for far too long.

SHAR

Yes, *zhavey*.

VRETHA

You always say "Yes, zhavey" in that respectful tone, yet you never change. It is a stalling tactic I will no longer tolerate.

SHAR

I'm sorry, zhavey.

VRETHA

No, I don't think you are. But enough of this. We will speak later. Be whole, Thirishar.

She walks off, guided by the security personnel.

Shar is almost shaking with buried anger at her. He would love to punch out a bulkhead here and now, but he is in public and must control himself. It is not an easy job...

40 EXT. SPACE - EUROPA NOVA ORBIT

The evacuation fleet hanging over the planet, focusing on the runabout *Euphrates*. *Gryphon* and *Defiant* have already gone. The atmosphere is thicker than ever with threatening green toxic waste matter and gasses...

41 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira and Taran'atar at the forward stations. Captain EMICK of the *Intrepid* is on the screen at Kira's side...

KIRA

Take all transporters offline.
Implement plan B.

EMICK (screen)

We've found a landing site for the *Intrepid* just outside of Padilla. I think we can take the city's remaining population on this run.

TARAN'ATAR

Colonel, I'm detecting a dense concentration of theta radiation in the upper atmosphere.

EMICK (screen)
(receiving report)
Confirmed. A solid mass of waste
material has fallen out of orbit.
It'll land four kilometres due
west of Spilimbergo.

Kira checks her plans - this is bad, very bad news. She
immediately starts the runabout moving towards the planet.

KIRA
The *Gryphon's* only got half the
population out. Kira to Bashir.

BASHIR (comm)
(very tired)
Bashir here.

KIRA
Doctor, what would be the effects
of a meteoric collision of a mass
putting out -
(checks readings)
- a hundred thousand kilorads of
theta radiation four kilometres
from a population centre?

BASHIR (comm)
Devastating. I could give you the
numbers, but the population centre
would be as good as dead.

KIRA
How far away would the waste need
to be to minimise the danger?

BASHIR (comm)
On another planet would be ideal.

KIRA
Julian...

BASHIR (comm)
Sorry. I would estimate a minimum
of a hundred kilometres.

TARAN'ATAR

I have reconfigured the tractor beam with additional power from the warp drive. I assume your intent is to divert the meteorite.

KIRA

That's the plan. Activate the beam on my mark.

BASHIR (comm)

Why not just destroy it?

EMICK (screen)

Doctor, if we could just destroy the waste with phasers, we would not be in this mess in the first place. Colonel, my crew has found a lake about a hundred-seventy-five kilometres north-west of Spilimbergo. The only life-form readings I'm getting are flora.

KIRA

(checking panels)

Got it. Thanks.

EMICK (screen)

Good luck, Colonel. I'll inform President Silverio.

KIRA

Thank you, Captain. Kira out.

Emick's face disappears. Kira pilots the runabout down into the cloud cover of the planet...

42 EXT. EUROPA NOVA ATMOSPHERE - DAY

The *Euphrates* breaks out from the cloud cover into the atmosphere, angles off to the side...

In the distance, we can see a large chunk of noxious green matter, three times the size of the runabout, trailing a stream of green gas as it falls through the atmosphere...

43 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira is struggling to keep the runabout on course through the high winds. She half-smiles - it's almost fun for her.

KIRA

Just like the old days. Piloting
skimmers around Dakhur Province,
in the dead of winter, avoiding
Cardassian patrols...

(beat)

Great, now I'm getting nostalgic
for the Occupation. What does that
say about my life?

TARAN'ATAR

Tractor beam ready.

KIRA

Activate!

44 EXT. EUROPA NOVA ATMOSPHERE - DAY

A TRACTOR BEAM leaps out from the runabout, begins to pull
at the much larger meteorite. The runabout lurches...

45 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira watches a graphic on the screen, and holds on as the
ship strains to pull the meteorite into a new course...

TARAN'ATAR

The ship is exceeding tractor beam
tolerances.

KIRA

Just another six seconds...

The graphic finally shows that the meteorite is on course.

KIRA

Disengage tractor beam.

Taran'atar presses buttons again...

46 EXT. EUROPA NOVA - DAY

The tractor beam cuts out, and the meteorite continues to plummet to the planet's surface...

The lake - calm, peaceful, clear water surrounded by lush trees and beautiful countryside. Then we see the meteorite heading straight for it...

...and IMPACT - the meteorite HITS on one edge of the lake.

47 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

The shockwave through the atmosphere hits the runabout, ROCKS it roughly. After a few moments, it settles down...

TARAN'ATAR
Shields holding - the radiation
has not penetrated. We remain
uncontaminated. But the tractor
generator has burned out.

Kira smiles with relief - they did it. She hits keys and an image of the lake comes on the screen. Her face drops...

48 EXT. EUROPA NOVA - DAY

Through a bilious green mist we can just about see the wreckage of the lake area. The water has evaporated, the trees have either been vaporised or are rotting on the spot. The landscape has been totally ruined.

49 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira hangs her head. She did what she had to do, but she can't help but look at the ruins as her fault...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

50 EXT. EUROPA NOVA

A slightly different angle on the ruined lake area...

55 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira is upset over what she had to do. Taran'atar is just carrying on as normal - none of this means much to him.

TARAN'ATAR

We are receiving a communication
from L'Aquila, Colonel. It is
President Silverio.

KIRA

(deep breath)

On screen.

President Silverio's face appears, even more haggard than before. Kira tenses - she is expecting to be yelled at now.

SILVERIO (screen)

Colonel, Captain Emick tells me
the town of Spilimbergo owes you a
debt of gratitude.

KIRA

(surprised)

Uh...

SILVERIO (screen)

I understand you diverted the
meteorite that was endangering the
town, at considerable risk to
yourself.

KIRA

Honestly, ma'am, the only risk was
that I wouldn't be able to move it
far enough. Starfleet makes its
runabouts pretty sturdy.

SILVERIO (screen)
Blagh - don't give me false
modesty. The point is, you took
the risk, and you saved lives. And
you got us that gateway at Costa
Rocosa. You have my gratitude.

KIRA
Thank you ma'am.

SILVERIO (screen)
Grazia, it's Grazia.
(looks off screen)
What? Oh, all right. I must go,
Colonel, there is still much to
do. But I just wanted to take the
time to thank you personally. As
long as you're in charge, I'm sure
we'll get through this.

Silverio signs off. Kira leans back, relieved and glad to
be appreciated. The console BEEPS again - she taps it and
Commander Vaughn's face appears on the monitor...

KIRA
Go ahead, Commander.

58 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Vaughn sits in the centre chair, talking to Kira on the
main VIEWSCREEN. Apart from Tenmei at the helm, the bridge
is crewed with all extras.

VAUGHN
Good news, Colonel. Lieutenant Nog
and Ensign ch'Thane have devised a
method of disrupting the gateways,
possibly even shutting them down
permanently. It's a modified
tachyon burst than can easily be
done from the *Defiant*.

KIRA (screen)
Would we have to do this on a
case-by-case basis, or would it
knock out the whole network?

VAUGHN

Ensign ch'Thane seems to think that activating it at one gateway will cripple the whole network at once. Of course, that might cause more problems than it solves.

She thinks about it. It's too big a decision for her alone.

KIRA (screen)

Run this by Admiral Ross, just in case there's something going on that we don't know about. Besides, we can't do anything until we've got everybody we can through your gateway at Costa Roca.

VAUGHN

Understood and agreed. I've got a message in to the admiral now.

59 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT (INTERCUT)**

KIRA

In the meantime, I'm not going to sit here waiting for another meteorite to endanger the planet.

VAUGHN (screen)

Beg pardon?

KIRA

So far we've been reacting. It's time we acted. The runabout won't be much help with the evacuation, but I can take it through the gateway to the other side and try to cut this off at the source.

(growl)

Somebody's using Europa Nova as their personal dumping ground, and it's going to stop now. Before something comes through that we can't stop from killing anyone.

VAUGHN (screen)
Very well, Colonel. We'll be ready
to emit the tachyon burst as soon
as the evac is completed.

KIRA
Captain Emick will be in charge of
the task force while I'm gone.

VAUGHN (screen)
Understood. Vaughn out.

Vaughn disappears, and Kira makes yet another connection...

KIRA
Kira to Emick.

EMICK (comm)
Emick here. I gather you intend to
go through the gateway?

KIRA
Yep. You sent a probe into the
gateway when we arrived, right?

EMICK (comm)
Certainly did. I'll have my second
officer send you the probe's data.
The star system on the other side
is in the Delta Quadrant. Oh, hang
on a second, we might be able to
get you some help. You familiar
with the USS *Voyager*, Colonel?

KIRA
Yes of course - they left DS-Nine
before they went missing.

EMICK (comm)
Right, and they wound up in the
Delta Quadrant. I'm having my
second officer look up the data
from the Pathfinder Project...
(checks info)
Ah, damn. *Voyager's* last reported
position is nowhere near.

KIRA

Let's hope she runs across another gateway that will get her home.

Taran'atar breaks in, wanting them to get on with it...

TARAN'ATAR

Shields are holding against the radiation.

KIRA

Setting course for the gateway.

BOWERS (comm)

Rio Grande to Euphrates.

KIRA

Go ahead, Lieutenant.

BOWERS (comm)

I'm picking up a new ship entering the system. Colonel... it's Galor-class. Cardassian.

EMICK (comm)

What the hell's a Cardassian ship doing here?

KIRA

I haven't a clue, Captain, but I intend to find out. Don't worry, I know how to handle Cardassians.

EMICK (comm)

Of that I have no doubt, Colonel. Keep in touch. Emick out.

The line drops, and Kira gets the ship moving...

59 EXT. SPACE - EUROPA NOVA ORBIT

The *Euphrates* pulls out of the atmosphere...

60 EXT. SPACE - ORION SHIP

Re-establishing, with the yellow Iconian ship along side...

61 **INT. ORION SHIP - CORRIDOR**

Quark and Malic walk together, Tamra and Treir trailing them. Malic is as unhappy as ever, Tamra is as clueless as ever, Treir as suspicious as ever, and Quark intimidated by the two enormous ORION GUARDS bringing up the rear...

MALIC

These negotiations have taken far too long already. I was under the impression you were good at this.

QUARK

I am. So's Gaila. That's why it's taking so long.

MALIC

That had better be the only reason, Quark. I'm fast running out of patience here.

QUARK

Don't worry. I'm confident this will be the final session and the gateways will be yours in an hour.

MALIC

You'd better hope that's the case, Quark. I still have the details of your little scheme on my padd --

QUARK

-- and all it takes is a simple command, yes, I remember.

Quark nods, getting a little bored with Malic's tough act. And then they reach the conference room...

62 **INT. ORION SHIP - MEETING ROOM**

The group enters the room, where Gaila is sat at the table, studying a padd, with the two Iconians silent behind him.

Quark settles confidently into his seat, Tamra draping an arm round him. Malic, Treir and his guards hover...

QUARK

Shall we bring this negotiation to
a close?

GAILA

Just a moment, Quark.

Gaila continues reading his padd, then settles back with
his fingers steepled and a malevolent, satisfied smile.

GAILA

Tell me Quark, how long have you
been working for Starfleet?

QUARK

(bark of laughter)

Working for Starfleet? Me? That's
ridiculous!

GAILA

Really? Then why is your nephew,
an officer in Starfleet, working
to sabotage the gateways as we
speak?

(to Malic)

Three years ago, Quark worked with
Starfleet to bring down an arms
dealer named Hagath. Two years
ago, he bartered a prisoner
exchange on Starfleet's behalf
involving a Vorta named Keevan.

QUARK

Those are lies.

MALIC

Are they? I've been growing more
and more suspicious of you, Quark.
And I was unaware of all these
connections to Starfleet.

Malic nods to his guards, who approach...

...and aim a WEAPON at each side of Quark's head.

He GASPS and panics in his seat...

Tamra SQUEAKS in fear, and backs away...

...to where Treir stands out of the way, bored with this.

MALIC

Either you tell the truth, Quark,
or you'll die.

QUARK

Alright, alright! I'll tell you.

(panting)

I'm working for Starfleet security
- they sent me here to drag out the
negotiations as long as possible.

Malic shakes his head with disappointment, and goes back to
tapping at his fancy padd. Gaila is beaming with delight...

Then Malic looks up at his guards, and says dismissively...

MALIC

Kill him anyway.

The guards settle in, preparing to shoot...

63 EXT. SPACE - EUROPA NOVA SYSTEM

Further out in the system, a Cardassian GALOR-CLASS ship
settles into orbit about one of the system's other planets.

The *Euphrates* approaches the ship head on, holding position
nearby, making its intentions clear...

64 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Taran'atar dispassionately checks readings...

TARAN'ATAR

The ship is indeed Galor-class,
registers as the *Trager*. I read
substantial phaser scarring and
multiple hull breaches, only two of
which are sealed by forcefields.
The structural integrity field is
at sixty percent of capacity.

KIRA

Looks like it took a beating
during the war. And Cardassia
doesn't have the resources to do
proper repairs, it would seem.

Steeling herself for what on earth might happen now, she
hits the comm...

KIRA

Trager, this is Colonel Kira Nerys
in command of a joint Federation-
Bajoran task force. What business
do you have in this system?

A Cardassian face appears on the screen, and from all
appearances, it's the face of the man Kira hates more than
anyone in the galaxy. The man who she blames for the deaths
of millions of Bajorans, who she thought was dead himself.

It's GUL DUKAT.

DUKAT (screen)

Greetings, Colonel.

KIRA

(with a snarl)

Dukat.

(to Taran'atar)

Arm phasers, prepare to fire.

On Kira's furious, hateful snarl...

BLACK OUT:

THE END