

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x01 - "Systems Under Repair."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE (STOCK FROM 10x22)

Replaying from 10x22 "Ascension". Ro stands at the top of the stairs, outside the commander's office. Cenn, Bashir, Nog, Bowers and extras are at their respective stations, going about their business.

The turbolift rises, carrying Admiral Batanides. She walks over to Ro, and the two of them enter Kira's former office. They stand in front of the now-vacated desk...

BATANIDES

With Captain Kira's resignation,
Captain Sisko's continued leave,
Commander Dax's transfer and
Commander Vaughn's...

(beat)

...loss in action, the chain of
command now falls to you.

Batanides holds up an extra command pip, reaches up to Ro's collar, and gently fastens it into place. Ro's eyes flare with amazement...

BATANIDES

Congratulations, Commander Ro
Laren. Deep Space Nine and the
Defiant are now yours.

The admiral holds out her hand. Ro gulps. A lot of heavy responsibility coming her way all at once. But with a deep breath, Ro decides she can handle it. She takes Batanides' hand firmly, and shakes.

Finishing on Ro, wearing her new Commander's pips on the security yellow collar...

CROSS-FADE TO:

2 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Beginning close-up on RO LAREN, now wearing a command red collar. She stands in the office, looking out through the doors onto Ops below. Bajoran Militia Major CENN is just coming up the stairs towards her. She takes a few deep breaths, readies herself, and presses the door control.

The door opens, and Cenn enters with an armful of padds.

CENN

Good morning, Commander Ro.

RO

Major Cenn. What do I need to know?

The door closes, and they move together to the desk - Ro sits behind it, and at her permission, Cenn takes the guest chair. He passes her the first padd.

CENN

That Denebian freighter that's stopping here for maintenance on its way to the Arawath colony - they brought up their schedule. Now they're arriving tomorrow instead of next week.

Ro takes the padd and inspects it with a sigh.

RO

I'll let Nog know. Next?

CENN

(next padd)

Reports of petty theft on the Promenade have gone up sixteen percent. Without a permanent security presence, the usual unsavoury element are feeling emboldened.

RO

That's a fancy word. Alright, let's make a plan to look at the security arrangements ASAP.

CENN

(next padd)

Admiral Batanides is screaming for our regular crew evaluations. Okay, more like politely hinting. But it is the fourth time she's asked, so we might want to get on those.

RO

As long as she's being polite, she can wait. Is that everything?

CENN

Not even close.

Ro sags further. Suddenly the DOOR CHIME sounds. Ro looks up and sees NOG waiting to enter. She lets the door open.

RO

Nog. Were your ears burning?
(off Nog's confusion)
Never mind. What's wrong?

CENN

Why assume anything's wrong?

RO

Because life is but a series of crises, Major, and all we do is lurch from one to the next. Go ahead, Lieutenant.

NOG

The repairs to the *Defiant* are going to take longer than I thought, Commander.

RO

And why is this?

NOG

Because the power surges caused by the wormhole inversion blew out the industrial replicators, and without those, I can't get the replacements I need.

CENN

So repair the replicators.

NOG

With what?

(hands Ro a padd)

Here's what I need, if you could
pass it on to Admiral Ross.

RO

First chance I get.

Before she can say anything else, BOWERS appears in the
still-open doorway. Ro forces a fake welcoming smile.

RO

Mister Bowers?

BOWERS

Commander, I'm still concerned
about our lack of defences.

NOG

As I was just saying, without
replicators there's nothing I can
do. I'm sorry.

BOWERS

Why can't you use the replicators
here on the station?

NOG

Because Cardassian replicators
can't create Starfleet parts to
the necessary specifications.

BOWERS

What about the runabouts, then?

NOG

(getting annoyed)

Do you really think I haven't
considered that? The runabout
replicators are just about big

enough to make raktajino, Sam.
Certainly not warp coils.

BOWERS

(fighting back)

Lieutenant, the safety of this station is my responsibility. Without a full tactical system on the *Defiant*, I can't do my job. What if there are still more Ascendants out there?

NOG

I can't give you what I don't have, Sam.

At the sound of a cleared throat, they turn and see that BASHIR is now standing in the doorway too.

BASHIR

I see you all decided to have a senior staff meeting without me. I can't tell you how good that makes me feel.

RO

No, Doctor, this isn't -

BASHIR

(interrupting)

So I may as well tell you now that that Denebian freighter - its crew will have some trouble breathing when they get here tomorrow.

All three other officers immediately break out talking over each other.

BOWERS

(overlapping)

The commander was speaking, Doctor. Do not interrupt a senior officer.

CENN

(overlapping)

How do you know about that? I only
just heard myself.

NOG

(overlapping)

What? The Denebians are coming
tomorrow? Why did nobody tell me?

As the four of them devolve into bickering and sniping, Ro
sits at her desk, completely ignored. She stares into the
middle distance, and sighs. So this is command.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

A nice sweeping shot of the station to re-establish. The *Defiant* sits in its usual place on the docking ring, and several freighters and civilian ships at other docks.

4 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

Ro enters the room. She finds the current senior officers - Nog, Bashir, Bowers, Cenn and Counsellor MATTHIAS - already arrayed at the conference table, with Vorta representative VANNIS sitting primly at the other end.

Ro stands at the top of the table for a moment. She's never run a senior staff meeting before, isn't really sure how to. She pauses, mentally counting bodies...

RO

Anyone know where Prynn is?

They all look between themselves. No, they don't.

RO

The call went out to all senior officers, didn't it, Major?

CENN

Yes, Commander.

RO

Counsellor - are you aware of any problems?

MATTHIAS

With Lieutenant Tenmei? Not specifically, Commander.

RO

Alright, I guess we'll do this without her then.

With a sigh, Ro sits and tries her best to look commanding.

RO

Thank you for coming, everyone.
And thank you too to Ambassador
Vannis for joining us. Since we
haven't had a senior staff meeting
since... well, since... I wanted
us to all get together and see
where we're up to.

(beat)

Nog, I spoke to Admiral Ross. He
promised me that everything you
need will arrive on the
Musgrave... in two weeks.

NOG

Two weeks?! Commander -

RO

(hands up, surrendering)

I know, I know. But it's the best
we're gonna get. Anything to
report from the Infirmary, Doctor?

BASHIR

Not a thing. Aside from the one
obvious exception, there were no
injuries or casualties resulting
from the, ah... 'incident' with
the Ascendants at all. Which is a
good job, really, considering I'm
one down on my staff.

RO

You want me to request a new
junior doctor from Starfleet
Medical?

BASHIR

Not yet. We'll see how it goes.
But as things stand right now, I
don't need any extra help.

RO

Alright. Major, we spoke about security on the Promenade. What's your assessment of the situation?

CENN

Well, as I said to you earlier, since your promotion there hasn't been a permanent security chief posted to the Promenade. I've been filling in as best I can, but I also have my duties as Liaison Officer to attend to.

BOWERS

We have a whole battalion of security officers and deputies on the station, Major.

CENN

(tightly)

I'm aware of that, Lieutenant. And they're doing their jobs. But it's not so much the number of boots on deck that's the problem. It's the lack of a figurehead, the lack of anyone who's clearly in charge and in control.

(uh-oh)

No offense, Commander.

(double uh-oh)

To anyone. Anywhere.

Cenn closes his eyes and grits his teeth at his own *faux pas*. Damn it, why does he keep screwing up like that? Ro just bites her tongue and lets the implied insult pass.

RO

Well, until such time as a new security chief is assigned, you'll just have to keep those deputies as visible as possible. Especially around Quark's. Come by Ops later and I'll help you work out a plan.

CENN

(relieved not to

be yelled at)
Thank you, Commander.

RO
Sam, anything I need to know about
from Starfleet Intelligence?

BOWERS
There's a lot of chatter about
what the Ascendant assault could
mean for the future security of
the Federation.

RO
Tell them they can stop worrying.
We took care of it for them. A
little gratitude would be nice.

BOWERS
Not about whether the Ascendants
themselves are still a threat.
More about the fact that Bajor
stepped outside of Federation
policy in order to handle that
threat. Which, if you recall, the
Federation didn't consider to be a
threat at all. There are still
several voices calling for a full
court martial of Captain Kira.

RO
They can't court martial someone
who's not in Starfleet anymore.

BOWERS
Sadly, resigning your commission
does not absolve you of the
responsibility for actions taken
while you were in Starfleet.

CENN
First Minister Asarem and Kai
Solis are protecting her from
prosecution. For the moment.

RO

(sigh)

Alright. Both of you keep me up to date on any developments.
Ambassador Vannis, do you have anything you would like to add?
Any reports from the Dominion?

VANNIS

No, Commander, I do not. There is no information regarding the Dominion that concerns you.

Again, Ro lets the frosty brush-off pass without comment.

RO

Well, Bajor... and I... would like to once again express our gratitude to the Dominion for their assistance in the recent crisis. And our happiness that you have remained with us to continue our alliance.

Vannis accepts that, in a manner that suggests she really couldn't care less.

RO

Alright, I think that's everything. Thank you, everyone.
Meeting adjourned.

She stands, and everyone else stands too and begins to file out of the room. The last one to go is Vannis, leaving by a different door to everyone else, not interacting with anyone else as she goes. But Ro catches up and stops her.

RO

Vannis.

VANNIS

Commander...?

RO

(hesitant)

Um... I was just wondering... Have you... heard anything from

Taran'atar? Do you know if he's okay?

VANNIS

(snooty)

The First has not chosen to apprise me of his activities. Nor do I care. Once he turned his back on the Founders, his existence became irrelevant.

RO

That's a bit harsh.

VANNIS

A Jem'Hadar is nothing without service to the Founders. Therefore Taran'atar is... nothing.

Her pronouncement made, Vannis sweeps out of the room. Ro is left pondering and worrying.

5 INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING

The engineering team is occupied repairing equipment all over the main engineering deck. Tools and open panels are strewn a bit haphazardly, and there are scorch marks on the warp core where the power surges hit.

Nog leads the repair efforts, with established engineering crew including LEISHMAN, CANDLEWOOD and PERMENTER also hard at work at various stations. Nog calls out:

NOG

Lieutenant Candlewood - how are those dilithium chamber intermix subroutines looking?

CANDLEWOOD

Still not a hundred percent, sir. They'll do in a pinch, but they could be better.

NOG

We're in no rush, John. I'd rather you take the time and get it right.

CANDLEWOOD

Aye, sir.

Candlewood goes back to work. The door opens and PRYNN enters. She wanders into the room, mostly ignored by the busy crew. She's hesitant, not sure she wants to be here. Nog finally notices her, and greets her breezily.

NOG

Hi Prynn. We were wondering why you weren't at the meeting.

(no answer)

You need something?

PRYNN

No, just... wandering. As long as the *Defiant's* going nowhere, I'm kind of at a loose end. Do you need an extra pair of hands?

NOG

I think we've got it mostly under control.

Prynn has stopped wandering, and is now staring silently up at the warp core. She gazes over the scorch marks, the signs of damage.

FLASHBACK - 10x22 "ASCENSION"

As seen from a high angle, this is an automated recording of events in main engineering during the Ascendant attack. Vaughn stands alone at the central console. The warp core reacts, throwing off massive arcs of power that catch him.

BACK TO SCENE

Prynn closes her eyes and tenses her jaw. Behind her, Nog has quietly approached. He knows what she's thinking.

NOG

(quiet, gentle)

Prynn... you don't have to be here if you don't want.

PRYNN
(re warp core)
What can you tell me?

Nog hesitates to tell her anything. Prynn turns to him, quiet but firm. She's obviously having trouble with this.

PRYNN
I need to know, Nog. I need to know it all. Tell me.

NOG
I don't know what you want me to say, Prynn. Anything I could tell you from an engineering standpoint is already in the official reports. Anything else...
(shrug)
...I'm sorry, Prynn. I've got no more answers than you do. But I'm sorry your father's gone -

PRYNN
(sharp hiss)
He's not gone.

NOG
All the scientific evidence says he is.

PRYNN
Then the science is wrong.

Fighting back tears and anger, Prynn turns and stalks out of the room. Nog watches her go with sympathy.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

6 INT. MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

KIRA NERYS kneels calmly on a cushion, facing a Bajoran prayer mandala symbol etched into the stone walls of the room. Her eyes are closed, her hands in the meditative position, her breathing slow and regular. She wears simple robes, religious in tone but very basic.

After a few moments, the peace is shattered by an urgent KNOCK at the door. Disappointed, Kira pulls herself out of her meditation and looks to the door.

KIRA

Come in.

The door opens and a PRYLAR enters, looking very worried.

KIRA

Prylar Haim - what's wrong?

PRYLAR

Forgive the intrusion, Novice
Kira. Please come. She is...

(lost for words)

Please. We need your help.

It's obvious the poor man is not messing around. Kira gets to her feet and follows him out of the door.

7 INT. MONASTERY - PRIVATE ROOM

The room is full of FLAME, scouring across the stone walls in moving jets as if from a flamethrower, accompanied by a raging, grief-stricken SCREAM.

This is RAIQ, the last Ascendant. The silver-skinned, golden-eyed woman is out of her mind with grief and anger.

The flames are coming from her own hands, great jets of fire that are spontaneously generated from the ARMOUR around her body. She is sending these flames all over the room with no thought of what or who might be in the way.

Chairs and a bed on the floor, tapestries on the walls - all set on fire by her rage.

Finally the door opens and Kira is there, flinching back from the flames. Prylar Haim cringes behind her. Kira shouts over the noise, trying to get Raiq's attention.

KIRA

Raiq! Raiq, stop!

Raiq turns and sees Kira there, and sneers. The flames still burn at her hands, if not shooting out anymore.

RAIQ

You... it is always you.

KIRA

Please Raiq, you have to stop.
You'll hurt yourself.

RAIQ

You pretend to care? You disgust me, heretic.

KIRA

Are you alright? You haven't said a word in a week, to anyone. Not since... your Orb experience.

At the reminder of that, Raiq lets the flames die out. She's exhausted herself. Relieved, Kira tentatively steps further into the room.

RAIQ

We grieve in silence.

KIRA

(re furniture)

This wasn't very silent.

RAIQ

My entire race is dead, woman. I try to hold my tongue as a faithful knight ought. But then I wake to this. A house - no, a

world full of heretics! You should
all burn.

KIRA

I know that anger, Raiq. Every
Bajoran does. But Iliana wanted
you to survive.

Raiq's head snaps up at the mention of Iliana. Her hands
tense, the flames beginning to form again. Kira tenses in
response... but Raiq lets it go.

RAIQ

The Fire... she betrayed us.

KIRA

Did she? Or did she give you
exactly what you wanted?

RAIQ

She betrayed me. My brothers and
sisters are with the True, basking
in their Unnameable glory... and I
am here among you unclean.

KIRA

She must have had a reason. She
was your Emissary. I know that if
my Emissary...

Kira hesitates - would she, really? She pushes through.

KIRA (cont)

If my Emissary wanted me to do
something, I'd do everything in my
power to follow his wishes.

RAIQ

Leave me alone, woman. We grieve
in silence.

Raiq turns away. Kira is disappointed. She just can't seem
to make a connection with this woman. Sadly, she turns and
leaves the room. The furniture is still burning.

Just a moment to bring us back home...

9 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Ro is back at the commander's desk again, looking at about a dozen different reports and seeming entirely over it all. She overhears a NOISE out in Ops, and looks up to see...

...Bowers and Cenn stood right outside her door, bickering again over something. Ro grits her teeth, hits a control on her desk and opens the door.

RO
You two, get in here.

Momentarily embarrassed, they both do as they're told. She closes the door behind them.

RO
What the hell's going on?

BOWERS
(talking over)
Commander, I need more bodies if I'm -

CENN
(interrupting)
He keeps trying to assign my deputies -

RO
One at a time. Major Cenn?

CENN
(deep breath)
Commander, Lieutenant Bowers has twice in the last hour reassigned deputies away from the duties I assigned them to, based on the agreement you and I came to.

BOWERS
Those are Starfleet officers, Major. That places them under my

authority. You're the Bajoran liaison, not the security chief.

CENN

Neither are you.

BOWERS

Besides the commander and Doctor Bashir, I am the senior-most Starfleet officer at DS-Nine.

CENN

And you think that automatically makes you first officer?

BOWERS

It makes me senior.

Exasperated, they both turn to look at Ro, who has been watching the exchange with a tense jaw. Now that she has their attention, she makes them wait for it.

RO

Are you kidding me with this?

BOWERS

Commander...?

RO

What is your primary responsibility on DS-Nine, Lieutenant?

BOWERS

Tactical operations, sir.

RO

Are we currently under attack?

BOWERS

No, sir.

RO

Alright, then. Major, what is your primary responsibility?

CENN

Frankly, sir, that's not been at all clear to me lately.

RO

Then I'll tell you. In the absence of a permanent security chief, a liaison officer is less important to me than a decent security presence on the promenade.

CENN

Understood, sir.

RO

I've been in this job for about ten minutes. I haven't had time to pick an XO. I'm not even sure where the bathrooms are yet. I don't need two senior officers having a measuring contest in the middle of Ops. Clear?

BOWERS

Commander, with all due respect, I can't -

RO

(faux cheerful)

I'm gonna stop you there, because whenever somebody starts out with "with all due respect," it means they're about to say something totally disrespectful, and I'm really not in the mood for that right now. You're grown men. You know what you're supposed to do. Anything else you can figure out between yourselves, preferably in a way that does not...

(counts fingers)

A - result in either of your deaths. B - violate the Prime Directive. And C - bother me. Okay? Good! Dismissed, gentlemen. Thank you for your time.

CENN
But, Commander...

RO
(talk to the hand)
No no no no. I said "Dismissed."
Bye now!

Understanding they've got their answer, they both turn to leave. At the door, they cross paths with QUARK, who was waiting to enter. Ro sees him.

RO
Quark? I swear, if you're here to complain about something -

QUARK
I know better than that, Laren.
"Measuring contest"? There's an image I could live without.

RO
(low threat)
Those ears are gonna be the death of you someday, Quark.
(sigh; sits back)
What can I do for you, Ambassador?

QUARK
I'm here to do something for you. On the authority of the Ferengi ambassador to Bajor, you are on a break as of this moment. He also requires that you take that break with him, in his bar, by the way.

RO
Quark...

QUARK
Don't make me make a diplomatic incident of it.

She reluctantly smiles. She knows he's trying to be nice.

RO

That sounds wonderful, Quark.
Thank you. But I can't. There's
too much to do.

QUARK

Even commanders need to eat, Laren.

RO

(confessional)

I have no idea what I'm doing,
Quark. I'm not a commander. The
station's already falling apart
around me, my senior officers are
squabbling in public or not even
bothering to show up...

QUARK

That's exactly why you need to
come with me. You're running on
empty. Everybody can sense it. You
need to act like you've got the
lobes to be in charge, or no-one
will respect that you do. But to
do that, you need to eat.

Ro purses a moment longer, and then finally relents.

RO

Fine. Who am I to argue with the
Ambassador?

She stands, rounds the table, places her arm in his with a
smile and heads to the door. The door opens...

...and Prynn is there, very formal and restrained. Ro
starts a little to see her.

RO

Prynn...

PRYNN

Commander Ro. Could I speak to
you, please? In private.

Quark knows how Prynn must be feeling, so doesn't protest.

QUARK

(to Ro)

I expect you in my bar the moment
you're finished.

RO

Thank you, Quark.

Quark graciously leaves, and Ro welcomes Prynn into the
office, leading her over to the couches. They both sit.

RO

I expected you in the staff
meeting this morning, Prynn.

PRYNN

I know. I'm sorry, sir. But to be
perfectly honest with you, I
didn't really see the point.

RO

That's not your decision to make.
Don't do it again, please.

Prynn nods her acquiescence. Ro softens.

RO

But I'm glad you've come to see me
now. What do you need?

PRYNN

(deep breath)

I need you... to help me save my
father.

On Ro's reaction to that...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

10 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Where we left it. Prynn has just made her plea. Ro winces with sympathy for the younger woman, speaks gently.

RO

Prynn, I'm not sure -

PRYNN

I know what you're going to say. He's gone, let him go. But he's not gone. He's just... trapped. We can rescue him.

RO

What makes you say that? Nothing I've seen suggests there's any way to get him back.

PRYNN

Jake said the same thing happened to Captain Sisko years ago. He's back just fine. Why shouldn't my dad be?

RO

You've read the same reports I have. You've seen the same video footage. You know your father was alone in the engineering section, by his own choice. He didn't want anyone to save him. Didn't he specifically ask you not to try?

PRYNN

So I'm supposed to just leave him there, stuck in Prophets' Limbo for eternity?

RO

(simply)

Yes. It was his choice.

PRYNN

I thought he was your friend. He looked out for you for years. How can you abandon him like this?

RO

That's not fair, Prynn. I'm just respecting his wishes. You should too. He did what he did to help stop the Ascendants, and to stop Captain Sisko having to sacrifice himself. It was a noble and selfless thing to do.

PRYNN

He's my father!

RO

Yes, and you should be proud of him, not trying to undermine him.

Prynn stands sharply, angry that she's not getting her way.

PRYNN

Fine. If you won't help me, will you at least let me read Captain Sisko's reports? All of them, the personal stuff too. Maybe there's something in there I can use.

RO

I'm sorry, Prynn. That's above your security clearance, and I won't violate Sisko's privacy. What I will do, though, is make an appointment with Counsellor Matthias for you. I expect you to attend it. That's an order, Lieutenant.

PRYNN

(grits teeth)

Aye, sir.

Back to formal and restrained, Prynn turns and leaves the office. Ro watches her go, still sympathetic.

11 **EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING**

The central monastery in Ashalla, on a perfect sunny day.

12 **INT. MONASTERY - KAI'S OFFICE**

As seen in eps such as 7x20 "The Changing Face of Evil." Kai SOLIS is away from the desk, arranging the flowerpots on the balcony. He's quite content, humming to himself. After a moment the door chime sounds.

SOLIS

Come in!

The door opens, and he turns to see Kira standing there in her robes, looking a touch nervous. He greets her amiably.

SOLIS

Novice Kira! Please, do come in.

She does, the door closing behind her, and joins him out on the sunny balcony.

SOLIS

(re flowers)

These things always take so much work. But it's good work. Soothes the *pagh*.

(aside)

Perhaps you should try it sometime.

KIRA

I did, once. It was a disaster.

They laugh together, and Solis hands her a bit of something to hold while he works at something else. Solis recognizes that she's troubled, but doesn't labour the point. He lets Kira talk.

SOLIS

So, Novice. May I call you Nerys?

KIRA

Of course, Eminence.

SOLIS

Then you must call me Tendren.

KIRA

(chuckle)

Oh, I don't think I could do that.

SOLIS

How are you settling in?

KIRA

(awkward)

Fine. Takes some adjustment, not being in uniform.

SOLIS

You're still serving, if it helps.
Only now you serve the Prophets
instead of the Federation.

Kira wavers - this is getting close to the reason she's here. But Solis continues, seemingly unconcerned:

SOLIS

And how is our guest?

KIRA

Angry. She's not letting anyone in. Least of all me.

SOLIS

It's understandable, Nerys. It's barely more than a week since she lost everyone she's ever known or cared about. It's going to take her some time to get past that.

KIRA

I know. But I'm not sure I'm the best one to help her.

SOLIS

(delicate)

Go on.

KIRA

How can I possibly teach someone else what's great about Bajoran culture and religion when I...

She drifts off, afraid to say something bad. So Solis does.

SOLIS

...when you're not sure about it yourself.

Kira hangs her head, ashamed to admit to it.

KIRA

I told her I would do anything the Emissary asked of me. Anything the Prophets asked. But...

SOLIS

Has your faith been shaken, Nerys?

Kira ponders the question, giving it its due weight, until she comes to an honest answer.

KIRA

No. I trust the Prophets. I trust the Emissary.

SOLIS

But...?

KIRA

But I don't know how to reconcile my faith in Them with what they asked me to do. With what Sisko asked me to do. With what Sisko did himself.

SOLIS

How can it be right, you mean, that they allowed an entire race who worshipped them to die?

(Kira nods)

Have you considered that they didn't allow anything? That they

simply knew what was going to happen, because in their eyes, it already had?

Kira tenses. That makes her very uncomfortable. Solis sees.

SOLIS

You know that we Ohalavaru do not worship the Prophets as gods. They are great and powerful beings, no question, and there is much we can learn from them. But that does not mean that they shape the universe around us, or that everything that happens is by their design.

Solis turns from his work and holds Kira's hands. Tries to offer her his warmest but most honest advice.

SOLIS

Do not look to the Prophets for answers, Nerys. It is yourself you need to make peace with, not them. Only then will you be able to serve them the best.

Kira is not entirely sure she agrees or even understands, but she nods, hands Solis back his gardening tools, and leaves. Solis returns to his flowerpots.

13 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Dinner crowd. TREIR, HETIK and Quark's various Ferengi waiters are busy keeping everyone happy. Quark himself is sat at a table under the stairs. Benefits of being the guy in charge. Sat opposite him, Ro tucks heartily into a meal.

RO

Actually, for all my protesting, this is good stuff, Quark.

QUARK

Powering a station the size of this one takes a lot of energy.

RO

(gracious)
You were right, you're always right.

QUARK
Finally, somebody admits it.

Ro chuckles good-naturedly through the food.

QUARK
How was Prynn?

Ro's good mood sags, replaced by sadness. Quark continues:

QUARK
You gotta feel sorry for the kid,
losing her father like that.

RO
I think that's the problem. She
didn't really lose him, at least
not in that sense. Vaughn isn't
dead. Maybe it would be easier on
her if he was. But she knows he's
still out there somewhere. She
just can't get to him.
(beat)
And I kinda know how she feels.

QUARK
How?

RO
...Powerless. I feel like I'm
sitting in the middle of a room,
and all the furniture around me is
just blown to bits, and I have no
idea what the hell happened.
(looks past him)
Oh, but here's something to
brighten the mood.

Quark turns to see PIF trotting up. The green-furred dog-like alien has a wide and welcoming grin on his face. Quark covers a grimace of revulsion which Ro happily ignores.

PIF

Good evening, Commander Ro.

RO

And a good evening to you too,
Pif. How's the family?

PIF

The puppies are growing so fast!
You know how kids are.

RO

(chuckle)

Not really, no.

PIF

Well, I don't want to interrupt
your meal. I just wanted to say
hello and wish you the best of
luck in your new command.

RO

Thank you, Pif. That's very sweet.

With a cheery smile, Pif trots away again. Quark mutters.

QUARK

Filthy little creatures. I don't
know why I keep letting them in.

RO

It's a free station, Quark. They
can go anywhere they want that's
not restricted, just like any
other resident. Just because you
have a problem with furry things
is no reason to throw them out.

QUARK

(changing subject)

So what are you going to do about
Lieutenant Tenmei?

RO

I don't know what I can do. She's
been going round the crew trying
to drum up support, I don't think

she even knows for what. She asked me to look at Captain Sisko's old records for hints...

QUARK

So why not let her?

RO

I can't, Quark.

QUARK

Maybe there's nothing in there that'll save Commander Vaughn. But it might help Prynn find a way to come to terms with it all. To get some closure.

RO

Maybe. I don't know. The whole thing's just such a mess. Kira's gone. Vaughn's gone. Dax is gone. Shar, Tarses... Taran'atar...

(beat)

How do we get past it, Quark?

Quark reaches across the table and takes her hands in his, holds them gently and lovingly.

QUARK

You just do. You keep going, one day at a time, until eventually you realise... you've gotten past it. And in the meantime, you make sure the ones you still have know how much they mean to you.

As she looks at him, she realises he's talking about her. And she realises he's been affected just as badly as the rest of them. As they gaze gratefully at each other...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

14 INT. DS9 - COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE

Last seen 10x07 "Instinct." Counsellor Matthias patiently sits in a chair in the open-plan area, while Prynn wanders aimlessly about the room, refusing to settle.

PRYNN

Counsellor, don't get me wrong -

MATTHIAS

Let me guess - this is pointless, you don't need a counsellor, you just want to get back to work. Maybe you even think counsellors are a waste of time altogether. But you don't want to make me feel bad by saying so out loud, so you'll just stomp around the room until I get sick of you and throw you out. How'm I doing so far?

Prynn stops and gawps, not sure how to react to being read quite so thoroughly.

MATTHIAS

I am the mother of two young children, Lieutenant. My patience goes far beyond what you can try. Sit down, please.

Cowed, Prynn collapses into a seat, insular and withdrawn.

MATTHIAS

I'm also an expert in decoding body language, so don't lie to me. I'll see right through it.

(beat)

Let's get to the point, shall we? You've been the most gregarious and outgoing person on DS-Nine for years. But for the last week you've been sullen and withdrawn.

PRYNN

I just lost my father, counsellor.
What do you expect me to do - belt
out showtunes on the Promenade?

MATTHIAS

We don't all grieve in silence.
But we do all grieve. It's normal,
it's human. But that's not what
worries me. Why didn't you come to
the meeting this morning?

PRYNN

(dramatic)

Oh my God! Why is everyone making
such a big deal of that?!

MATTHIAS

I'm just wondering what led you to
make that decision.

PRYNN

I don't know... Call it my little
act of rebellion.

MATTHIAS

Very little. The meeting went on
just fine without you.

PRYNN

Exactly. So what's the point?

MATTHIAS

That's my question to you. If your
act of rebellion was so small that
no-one even noticed, then why
bother?

PRYNN

(petulant)

I didn't feel like it, alright?

MATTHIAS

So you had no reason. You did it
just for the sense of... power.

Of control.

PRYNN

I guess so.

MATTHIAS

Who took your power away?

PRYNN

...what?

MATTHIAS

To feel the need to grab your power back like that, you must feel someone took it away.

PRYNN

A junior lieutenant has no power to take, counsellor.

MATTHIAS

(dismissing it)

That's voluntary. You accept that as part of the service. It's not what you're rebelling against.

PRYNN

This is ridiculous!

Prynn stands again sharply, and begins to prowl the room like a caged tiger. Matthias lets her, watches curiously.

MATTHIAS

Who are you so angry with?

PRYNN

You! Ro, Nog... You're all happy to let my dad fester away in the wormhole. Nobody will help me!

MATTHIAS

Did they tell you their reasons?

PRYNN

Yes.

MATTHIAS

Were their reasons wrong?

PRYNN

Of course they were wrong!

MATTHIAS

In what way?

PRYNN

He's my father!

MATTHIAS

Ah. So what you mean is, they weren't wrong, they just weren't what you wanted to hear. And if they weren't wrong, then they're not the ones you're angry with.

PRYNN

Alright then - in your opinion, who am I angry with?

MATTHIAS

Whoever took away your power. Whoever wouldn't let you do what you really wanted to do.

PRYNN

And who's that?

MATTHIAS

Well, let's come at it from a different angle. What did you want to do?

PRYNN

Save my dad!

MATTHIAS

And who didn't let you do that?

PRYNN

I told you! Ro, Nog -

MATTHIAS

(rolling over her)
No. We've already eliminated them.
Who else?

Prynn is confused, battling herself. Matthias presses her.

MATTHIAS
Who locked you out? Who kept you
from helping your father when he
needed you the most?

Matthias' wording finally clicks, and the realisation comes
slamming down on Prynn. She slumps back into the chair.

PRYNN
He did.

MATTHIAS
(quietly agrees)
He did. He's who you're angry
with. He's the one who took away
your power.

PRYNN
My power to save him.

MATTHIAS
He didn't want you to save him.

FLASHBACK - 9x20 "SLAVE"

The depths of the Grennokar detention base on Harkoum.
Vaughn is hanging off the ledge, about to fall into the
flames, and Prynn is clinging onto him for dear life.

VAUGHN
Run, baby.

And he deliberately lets himself fall.

BACK TO SCENE

Prynn has begun to cry. Matthias goes to her.

MATTHIAS

You have to let him go, Prynn. He wanted to go.

Prynn sits there in the chair, gently weeping.

15 **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

Quark is behind his bar, fussing with bottles and glasses and whatnots. He hears a rustle, and turns...

PUPPY

Hi!

Quark JUMPS, nearly dropping a glass at the sight of one of Pif's adorable little puppies sitting on the bar right in front of him, spines erect, big happy grin on its face and tail thumping away in happiness.

Slowly getting himself under control, Quark grits his teeth and mutters at the puppy...

QUARK

Get... off... my... bar.

PUPPY

(oblivious)

Hi!

Alright, that does it. Quark stalks around his bar to the customer's side, steels his nerves, and picks up the puppy off the counter. At arm's length like he's handling nuclear waste, he slowly lowers it to the ground. It runs off, and he wipes his hands on his jacket, shuddering in disgust.

Watching the puppy rejoin its father, Quark grimaces and comes to a decision. He stomps furiously out of his bar...

...across the Promenade, and into...

16 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)**

...where Major Cenn is standing behind his desk, comparing a padd to the screens on the walls.

QUARK

Major Cenn! I demand that you get those filthy vermin out of my bar this instant!

CENN
Vermin? What vermin?

QUARK
Those disgusting green furry things, of course!

CENN
(appalled)
The puppies? But they're adorable!

QUARK
They're unsanitary. Constantly underfoot. They leave hair all over the bar. I've put up with it for weeks already, and I can't take it anymore. I want them out! I'm taking a stand, Major!

CENN
Oh, like you took a stand over Taran'atar, you mean? That lasted until Ro whispered sweet nothings in your ear, didn't it? How principled you are.

QUARK
How dare you speak to me like that! I am the Ambassador -

CENN
We both know what you are, Quark. Pif and his family have been welcomed by Commander Ro and, by extension, the Bajoran government. If you let your bigotry towards furred species get in the way of that, I can guarantee it will affect the relationship between Bajor and Ferenginar negatively. Do you really want that? Can your

business afford to offend such an important customer?

Quark seethes - torn, uncertain, insulted. Cenn continues:

CENN

Now, you do raise a valid point as regards the hygiene issues. I could speak to Pif and ask him to keep his puppies from climbing up onto your bar, where there's food and drink. Although that's not really a security issue, and as you are the proprietor, non-security-related problems with your customers are really yours to deal with, not mine.

(beat)

I suggest you speak to Pif yourself - one intelligent, sentient being to another - and resolve any issues peacefully. Don't the Rules of Acquisition say there's profit in peace?

QUARK

(grits teeth)

They also say that success is smooth. Not furry.

Still furious, even more so at not getting his way, Quark turns and leaves. Cenn returns to his security reports.

17 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Ro sits behind her desk, alone. She's thinking hard about things, pondering what others have said to her. Does she go ahead with it? Dare she? Is it the right thing to do?

After a few moments of her worrying it over, she makes a decision. She taps a few keys on her console, and then with a final tap, presses 'execute'.

She sits back in her chair. It's done now, no taking it back. What happens next, she doesn't know.

Last seen briefly in 10x13 "Case of the Flamping Flurple."

The door opens and Prynn enters, still sniffly and upset from her session with Matthias. Righteous indignation is gone - she doesn't really know what to do with herself now.

Dejected, Prynn looks briefly out of the window, towards the stars. Then she slumps into her sofa.

There's a rhythmic beep from her personal computer console. Frowning, she gets up to check it. A red blinkie indicates an incoming message. Curious, she presses to accept.

RO (comm)

Prynn, it's Ro Laren. I've been thinking since our last conversation. And I've decided to let you read Captain Sisko's files. Only the ones from the wormhole inversion incident seven years ago. You'll find a link to the records and the codes to access them attached.

(beat)

This is against all the rules, Prynn. I hope you know that. So I'm erasing any evidence of this message from the logs, and if you tell anybody, I'll deny all knowledge. I still believe that you won't find anything in there that will help your father. But you might find something that will help you accept that he's gone. I hope you do.

(beat)

This is a short-term offer. The codes will expire at twenty-six hundred hours tonight. So make the most of it. Ro out.

Prynn is amazed. All the hope and determination she'd lost is now back again. She excitedly turns to the computer and gets to work.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

19 INT. DS9 - PRYNN'S QUARTERS

Prynn remains sat at her computer, going through the files, listening intently to audio records. SISKO's voice issues from the computer - she memorises every word.

SISKO (comm)

Captain Benjamin Sisko, personal log. I've tried to explain to Jake all the things I saw, the things I experienced during that brief time. I remember Dax and O'Brien telling me my temporal signature was out of phase. That I had been shifted into subspace. It certainly didn't feel like the first time I'd been in the wormhole. I didn't sense the presence of the wormhole aliens - the Prophets - at all this time. I was just alone.

Prynn is on the verge of tears as she imagines her father going through the same thing.

SISKO (comm)

But it really wasn't so bad. The whole thing passed in minutes from my perspective. Jake was the one I felt bad for. My son... my sweet boy. I tried to explain what I'd seen in the all-too-brief moments we were together. How he'd grown up, gotten his books published, gotten married... and then how he'd thrown it all away in a futile effort to save me. How I loved him for trying... and how sad it made me to see what it did to him.

Prynn steels herself against this. She doesn't care how hard it might be for her.

SISKO (comm)
And how eventually he was the one
who saved me...

Prynn blooms with hope...

SISKO (comm)
...at the cost of his own life.

...and her hopes are dampened. But not destroyed.

SISKO (comm)
No child should ever have to die
to save his own father. That's
against all the laws of nature.
The father gives up his life for
the child. Anything else is
just... wrong. I tried to explain
all of this to Jake. How grateful
I was for what he did for me. And
how he should never have had to do
it. And how I hope he never has to
do it again. I don't know if I got
through to him. I guess I'll just
have to make sure I never have to
find out. End log.

The log ends. Prynn sits there, a million feelings whirring around. Hope, worry, determination, sadness, desperation...

20 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Nog is at the Engineering station. Bowers is at Tactical. Extras are at all the other stations, getting along with their work on a normal day. After a few moments...

An ALARM goes off on Bowers' console. He checks it, is worried by what he reads. He hits a panel...

BOWERS
Ops to Commander Ro. Could you
come out here, please?

After a moment, the door from the commander's office opens and Ro emerges. She goes to Bowers' console...

RO
Whaddaya got, Lieutenant?

BOWERS
(re panel)
Take a look at this. Does it look to you like it looks to me?

Ro inspects the panel with a frown...

RO
Ro to Cenn.

21 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Cenn looks up from his desk. Intercut with Ops as needed.

CENN
Go ahead, Commander.

RO (comm)
We're showing some indications of a possible security breach at Runabout Pad B up here. Have you got anything?

Cenn works his panels, and works his panels again. And again. Needle in a haystack. Eventually he finds it.

CENN
I've got a tiny blip in power around the docking seals.
(not convinced)
It could be nothing...

22 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Urgently, Nog reacts to another alert on his panels.

NOG
Commander! The *Brahmaputra* is launching from pad B.

RO
What? There's nothing scheduled,
is there?

BOWERS
(checks panels)
No, sir.

RO
Ops to *Brahmaputra*.

23 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Prynn is in the pilot's seat, moving the ship quickly but steadily. She hesitates to answer the hail, but decides to go with it. She fakes a breezy, nothing-wrong tone.

PRYNN
This is the *Brahmaputra*. Go ahead,
Ops.

24 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Ro grits her teeth to hear the voice. Damn it, she was afraid of something like this.

RO
Prynn? Care to explain why you've
launched a runabout without
authorisation or a logged flight
plan?

PRYNN (comm)
Just a routine test flight,
Commander. Nothing to worry about.
I'll file a plan when I get back.

RO
No, you'll do it now. Turn the
ship around and come back,
Lieutenant. That's an order.

There's a pregnant pause as they wait to see if Prynn will obey the order...

25 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Prynn hesitates... but makes her choice.

PRYNN

I'm sorry, Commander, but I can't do that. I have to go see a man about a wormhole.

And she cuts the channel, returning her attention to her pilot's station.

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

Ro thumps the panel.

RO

Damn it. Bowers, tractor beam.

BOWERS

Aye, sir.

He works his panels...

27 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The tractor beam lashes out from the station...

...and the fleeing runabout dodges one way and the other, Prynn's expert flying evading the tractor beam despite several attempts from Bowers.

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

Frustrated, Bowers shakes his head. Ro turns to Nog.

RO

Nog - prefix override?

Nog works his panels...

NOG

Sorry, Commander. She's disabled the transponder. She's good.

Ro's frustration grows, especially since this is kind of all her fault.

NOG
Begging your pardon, Commander,
but what's the problem? Do you
know where she's going?

RO
(grudging
admiration)
I have a pretty good idea.

BOWERS
Do we go after her?

Ro isn't sure what to do. She sympathises with Prynn, but the junior officer has disobeyed orders.

As Ro struggles with her decision, another ALERT goes off on Nog's panel. He checks...

RO
Is it Prynn?

NOG
No, sir. It's... I'm not sure what
it is.

Curious, Ro goes to join Nog at his panels, while he continues to work at it. Sounds come over the speakers, garbled NOISE that chops and stutters and fizzes, with the barest hints of humanoid VOICES in the mix. Nog works...

NOG
I think it's a distress call.

RO
From who?

Nog leans in to his panels, listens closely to the sounds, concentrates on them...

NOG
Is that...?

Struck with a new idea, Nog begins working the panels again. A few moments later, he has the answer. He looks up at Ro, worried.

NOG

I couldn't identify the source. It's too garbled at their end, like whoever was sending was too damaged to even send a decent distress signal. So I tried to trace where it was coming from.

RO

And?

NOG

It's coming from the wormhole.

Nog, Ro and Bowers share amazed looks. Could this have anything to do with Prynn? Or even with Vaughn?

NOG

Well, not from the wormhole itself, but through it, from the subspace communications array in the Gamma Quadrant. I recognise the codes they used to access it. I programmed them myself.

RO

So who is it?

NOG

It's the *Even Odds*, sir.

RO

Your trader friends? Who were spying on the Ascendants for us?

NOG

Yes, sir. The last time I spoke to Captain Dez, he was very clear that after they did this one last thing for us, they were out. For him to ask for help... it must be pretty bad.

BOWERS

So what do we do? And what about Prynn?

Ro ponders her options for a moment, then makes a decision.

RO

Prynn can look after herself. And I think... I'd probably have done the same thing. Let her go.

BOWERS

Aye, sir.

RO

But get the *Defiant* prepped and ready for launch ASAP. I want to be through the wormhole and following that distress call in thirty minutes.

BOWERS

Aye, sir.

Pleased with that decision, Bowers quickly shuts down his panels and heads out.

NOG

(quiet smile)

Thank you, sir.

RO

It may be useless, but send a reply anyway, let them know we're on our way. And then get down to the *Defiant* too. If they're that badly damaged they'll need you.

NOG

Aye, sir. But... the *Defiant* is still not completely repaired herself. The replacements I need haven't arrived yet.

RO

Then you'll just have to do the best with what you've got.

Nog nods his understanding and gets to work.

RO

Ro to Cenn. Are you ready to be confused, Major?

CENN (comm)

(confused)

Commander...?

RO

Report to Ops on the double, Major. You're in command until further notice.

CENN (comm)

(shocked)

Aye, sir. I'll be right there.

Everyone around her is now hard at work, a new energy having entered the room. Standing outside the door of the commander's office, feeling determined and decisive at last, she mutters to herself...

RO

Oh, Prynn... I hope you know what you're doing.

Ending on Ro...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW