

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x21 - "Into the Fire."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

and from the post-finale novels  
by Pocket Books

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1     EXT. BAJOR - SISKO'S HOUSE - MORNING**

Early, as the sun is rising over the distant hills and the local birds are fluttering and tweeting in reply. The Sisko homestead looks peaceful in the morning light.

**2     INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

OPAKA sits in the rocking chair in the corner of the room, slowly rocking back and forth with baby REBECCA in her lap. She's keeping the girl occupied with some simple toy.

KIRA emerges from the kitchen, in casual clothes. She's carrying three mugs of morning coffee. She drops one off at the side-table next to Opaka's rocking chair...

OPAKA

Oh, thank you, Nerys.

...and takes the other two to the couch. KASIDY gratefully receives, and Kira sits beside her. Kasidy is obviously filled with worry, clinging to the coffee cup for comfort.

KIRA

So he never came home?

KASIDY

No. Haven't seen or heard from him since I threw him out of the house.

(sags)

Oh God, why did I do that?  
Anything could have happened to him when he's in that state.

KIRA

Don't beat yourself up, Kas. You were scared, angry...

KASIDY

How's Rena?

KIRA

She's fine. Handling it better than Jake is. I don't think I've ever seen him so angry.

Kasidy puts her mug down on the coffee table, gets up and begins to pace. Kira and Opaka can only sympathise.

KASIDY

Damn it, Ben! At least call me and let me know you're okay.

OPAKA

(gently)

Perhaps he worried he would not be welcome after what happened. Perhaps he did not wish to burden you any further.

KASIDY

I'm his wife! He's supposed to burden me! I just hate when he gets like this. All this Prophets business screaming around in his head...

Kasidy slumps back down into an armchair.

KASIDY

I'm sorry Nerys, Sulan. I don't mean to be insensitive to your beliefs... I just wish those Prophets of yours would leave Ben out of it once in a while.

KIRA

I know what you mean. And I know this probably isn't what you want to hear... but I believe it's all for a purpose.

Kira looks subtly over to Opaka. Opaka gets the message. She stands and hefts Rebecca onto her hip.

OPAKA

I'll go and tidy Rebecca's things.  
I'm sure she can show me where  
everything goes.

Opaka carries Rebecca into the bedroom, leaving Kira and Kasidy alone. Kira smiles gratefully, then turns back to her friend.

KIRA

Kasidy, please... try and hear me.  
I know that the Prophets wouldn't  
ask him to do anything unless it  
was absolutely vital for the  
safety of Bajor. They take care of  
us. Ben is Their way of doing  
that.

KASIDY

But does it have to be so hard for  
him? And for me?

KIRA

I can only tell you that in the  
end, it'll all be for the best.

Kasidy wishes she could be as confident. And really, Kira is trying to convince herself just as much.

KASIDY

I know he lies to me.

(beat)

Alright, maybe not lie, that's too  
strong a word. But he keeps things  
from me. He hides and pretends.  
It's just because he wants to  
protect me. But I hear him  
mumbling in his sleep. I know he's  
scared. And I want to protect him  
too.

KIRA

Perhaps you could talk to Jake  
about it? Or encourage Ben to talk  
to Jake if he can't talk to you.

KASIDY

(shakes head  
firmly)

No. I don't want to put Jake in the middle of it. He has his own life to lead now.

KIRA

Then maybe you could persuade Ben to step back a bit. Take more of a back seat. Vaughn and Taran'atar and I can handle what we need to do...

KASIDY

I can't do that either. I could never ask him not to go with you. It's all he's thought about and worried about since he came back from the wormhole. Besides, if I try to make him choose... I'm afraid I'll lose.

KIRA

You don't seriously think he'd choose the Prophets over you...?

Kasidy looks Kira in the eye, sad and resigned.

KASIDY

He already did once.

Kira doesn't really have any answer for that. It's a tough situation all round, and she has her own doubts about it.

There's a BANG out on the veranda, at the back of the house. Kira and Kasidy look to each other, confused. They get up from the sofa and look to the back door...

...just in time to see SISKO half-collapsing against it.

Kira quickly rushes to the door, opens it and catches Sisko as he slumps into her arms. It's not unlike when he lurched into the ward room at the end of 5x10 "Rapture." He's wracked with the same kind of shivers and sweats, like his head is too full of comprehension, trying to burst out.

Kasidy stays back, her hand to her mouth, almost in tears at the state her husband is in. Opaka has emerged from the bedroom at the commotion. Sisko looks up into Kira's face, as if barely realising where he is.

SISKO

Nerys...

KIRA

Benjamin... what is it?

SISKO

I understand now. You have to gather everyone. Gather them all, before it's too late.

On Opaka, as she remembers...

**FLASHBACK - 10x11 "HARMONY"**

Itu has received revelation from their Orbs, during the last Ascendant attack. He stops another passing Eav'oq...

ITU

I understand now. You have to gather everyone. Gather them all, before it's too late.

**BACK TO SCENE**

The same words. Opaka realises - this is it.

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### **3**    INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Sisko stands over the sink, splashing his face with cold water. He's bringing himself around, forcing the knowledge that's rushing round his brain into calm, rational patterns by sheer force of will.

He looks up at his reflection, stares into his own eyes. We go into lightning-fast FLASHES of memory, barely enough to register...

- Three comet fragments approach the Gamma end of the wormhole (3x15 "Destiny")
- In engineering, Sisko is caught in a warp core discharge and phases out of existence (4x03 "The Visitor")
- Sisko weeps bitterly in Prylar Eivos's arms at the base of the *bantaca* spire (10x20 "In the Stars")

Sisko tenses his jaw at the memories, but doesn't run away. He accepts what he has to do.

### **4**    INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Sisko emerges from the bedroom into the living room. He has changed his clothes, freshened up, but still urgent and grim with determination.

Kasidy stands, holding Rebecca. She looks to her husband, knows exactly what he's thinking.

KASIDY

So this is it. It's finally arrived.

Sisko goes to her, and as gently as he can, gathers them both into his arms, pulls them tight.

SISKO

Kasidy... I love you. You know that. You and Rebecca and Jake are

the most important things in the  
universe to me.

Kasidy nods silently against his shoulder. Refuses to cry.

SISKO

I do what I do... what I've always  
done... to keep you safe. Whether  
it's for Starfleet or the  
Prophets... doesn't matter. You -  
you are what matters.

Sisko pulls back, looks Kasidy in the eye.

SISKO

Do you believe me?

KASIDY

(sad nod)

I do, Ben. I do.

SISKO

I am so, so sorry for whatever  
I've put you through. I have never  
wanted to hurt you. And I would  
never leave you if I didn't have  
to. But this... this I have to do.  
And I have to do it now.

He reaches in and kisses her deeply - as much for his own  
comfort as for hers. Then he kisses Rebecca's head.

SISKO

You should call somebody... to  
come and sit with you. I don't  
want you to be alone.

KASIDY

(no accusation)

Who would I call, Ben? Everyone I  
know is going with you.

SISKO

How about Prylar Eivos? He took  
good care of me, gave me a place

to sleep last night. And you said  
you liked him.

KASIDY  
(small nod)  
Maybe.

Kira re-enters the house from the front door. Sisko pulls  
back from Kasidy, takes a deep breath and steels himself.

SISKO  
Everything ready, Nerys?

KIRA  
I called the station. Vaughn's  
pulling everyone together.

SISKO  
Good. There's no time to waste.

Sisko gives one last kiss to Kasidy and Rebecca. Then he  
heads for the door. He doesn't look back. If he did, he  
might not be able to go. He walks out, and is gone. Kira  
tries her most reassuring smile for Kasidy...

KIRA  
Don't worry, Kas. I'll bring him  
home safe and sound.

KASIDY  
Thank you, Nerys.

But Kasidy doesn't believe it any more than Kira does. Then  
Kira turns and leaves as well. Kasidy follows her out onto  
the front porch...

**5     EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY**

Kira walks to join Sisko a few yards away from the house.  
Kasidy stays on the porch, watching them. We see Kira tap  
her combadge, and after a few moments, a transporter beam  
takes them. Baby Rebecca waves her daddy goodbye.

**6     EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING**

Much as we left it last time - *Defiant*, Vannis's Dominion ship, and the damaged *Even Odds* all sit in a line around the docking ring. A single RUNABOUT approaches and slowly lands on its pad, sinking into the body of the station.

7 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS**

ETANA and RICHTER sit together inside one of the cells. The force field is up, and security Ensign ALECO stands guard, but far enough away to give the women their privacy.

ETANA

So what's going on out there?

RICHTER

(faux cheerful)

Nothing special. Aylam's still flirting with Simon. Simon's still oblivious. Bashir's on egg-shells around him.

ETANA

(gently)

Kris - come on. Tell me.

RICHTER

(sigh)

They still haven't decided.

ETANA

What's taking them so long? It's not legal to hold someone this long without charges, you know.

RICHTER

It's... complicated, Kol. You know it is.

ETANA

And what about the rest?

(Richter doesn't  
answer)

I know something's going on. I can feel it in the air.

RICHTER

I don't know what. I'm just a nurse, they don't tell me anything. But I do know Kira just got back from Bajor.

Richter watches as Etana ponders what that means...

**8    INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

The door is open, and Kira stands at the threshold. Sisko is elsewhere in the room.

KIRA

Come on in, everyone.

Opaka enters, followed by VAUGHN, DAX, RO, PRYNN, NOG, BASHIR, SHAR, CENN, TARAN'ATAR and VANNIS. They spread out, taking seats (except for Taran'atar, who stands).

Last in the room are JAKE and RENA. Jake looks back over his shoulder for one more person to enter - DEZ, supporting himself with a crutch, and not quite sure what he's doing here. Sisko steps towards them, quiet and gentle.

DEZ

You must be Jake's father.

SISKO

I am. I'm very glad to meet you, Captain. I wanted to say... how grateful I am to you for looking after Jake while I was... away. Please, take a seat.

This is the man Dez has measured himself against in Jake's eyes. He nods uncertainly and hobbles away to a spare seat. Jake and Rena are about to follow, but Sisko stops them.

SISKO

Wait, Jake, Rena... please.

They pause, giving nothing away, but allow him to speak.

SISKO

I hope you'll let me apologise to you both. My behaviour was

inexcusable. Especially towards you, Rena. I would never hurt either of you. I was just so...

RENA

It's alright, Mister Sisko... Emissary. It's a stressful situation for everyone.

SISKO

Stressful. That's a reason. But not an excuse. I am so sorry.

RENA

Apology accepted.

Sisko turns towards Jake, who has yet to speak. He nods, almost reluctantly. But he knows his father is sincere.

JAKE

Apology accepted. Rena helped me understand some things... and so did Dez. But I was serious. Don't ever say anything like that again, Dad. Ever.

SISKO

I won't. There won't be a need. Because I understand now...

(to Rena)

...why you're here. I'll explain everything. Go on - take a seat.

Jake and Rena do as they're told. Sisko goes and stands by the window, next to Kira, and they look back at the rest.

SISKO

Thank you all for coming. I'm doing this in Captain Kira's quarters because I wanted this to be informal. This is not an official Starfleet briefing, or an official Starfleet mission for that matter. This is just us - the people in this room. So you all get an input, and no question or

suggestion is out of bounds, so long as it's respectful. With that said...

He nods to Kira, who takes over the meeting.

KIRA

Alright. You all know what we're up against. The Ascendants are coming. They believe that if they can reach the wormhole, and enter it, they'll become gods themselves. And they're willing to destroy anyone who gets in their way.

NOG

This is something I've been wondering, actually. We've had whole fleets going through the wormhole for years now. If the Ascendants have been searching for it, how did they miss that?

OPAKA

When the Eav'oq used the Orbs to hide, the Ascendants were... "cast out." Scattered across the quadrant in an instant.

VAUGHN

And this all happened thousands of years ago. To them, the Dominion are the "new kids on the block." It's taken them this long to even get close.

SHAR

Plus, we know that the wormhole is a localised phenomenon. Even as close as we are right now, there are no measurable readings until one hits the event horizon.

NOG

Alright, yeah, I get all that. But the thing is, Iliana Ghemor is in charge of them now, right? And she knows everything. About us, about the Dominion, about the wormhole... What she didn't get from the Obsidian Order or from your memories, Captain... Taran'atar gave her.

Nog looks to Taran'atar warily, expecting trouble. But the Jem'Hadar has no reaction. Nog is right, after all.

NOG (cont)

So if she knows all that... then what's she waiting for?

KIRA

I've asked that question myself. And the only answer I can come up with... is that she's been deliberately biding her time, maybe to gather up as many of the Knights as she can... to make sure they can't lose.

RO

That's a pleasant thought.

KIRA

And she's convinced she won't lose. She honestly believes she's following the will of the Prophets. That they're destined to destroy the Eav'oq.

VAUGHN

Captain... what do you believe?

Well, that's the question, isn't it? Kira pauses, and then lies as confidently as she can.

KIRA

We're going to stop them.

They are relieved to hear it. But Vaughn sees something in Kira's face the rest of them don't. Prynn speaks up first.

PRYNN

How? I mean, I don't mean to be negative, Captain, but I've seen what one of these guys can do. How can we possibly stop the entire race, if it really is just the people in this room?

SISKO

Luckily for us, Lieutenant, the people in this room are a pretty remarkable bunch. We can do it.

(to Dez)

And it all starts with you.

Dez looks back confused. Everyone has turned to look at him, and he's feeling a bit put on the spot.

DEZ

Me?

SISKO

Your ship can listen in on the Ascendants... and it turns out, that's the key to everything.

NOG

But they know about that now. We've lost the advantage.

KIRA

No we haven't. What we've got... is a trap.

DAX

(realising)

We listen in on them, they try to track the *Even Odds* down again, and they find it right where we want them to be.

CENN

And where's that?

KIRA

In orbit of the Eav'oq homeworld.

Everyone seems shocked at that.

OPAKA

Nerys... I thought the plan was to protect the Eav'oq. Now you tell us you intend to deliver the Ascendants right to them?

KIRA

They won't get anywhere near the Eav'oq. Because waiting for them in orbit will be a massive Jem'Hadar fleet, courtesy of Taran'atar, Vannis... and Odo.

DEZ

Hold on. The *Even* is my ship, and I haven't agreed to this.

KIRA

You won't be doing any fighting, Dez. Your whole job is to run as fast as you can, and then get the hell out of the way.

DEZ

Out of the way of a running firefight between two insanely violent armies out for blood. We'll never make it.

VAUGHN

You will if you have Lieutenant Tenmei at the helm.

SISKO

(gently)

Elias, that's not necessary...

VAUGHN

Is there a better pilot in this room? Is there a better pilot in this sector?

(no-one answers)

Then it's Lieutenant Tenmei's job. Let's move on.

Prynn is a little taken aback by this, but she trusts her dad, and she appreciates his faith in her. She'll do it.

BASHIR

What makes you so sure the Ascendants will ignore the Eav'oq to fight the Jem'Hadar?

KIRA

Something Iliana said. "They're easily distracted." They've already attacked the Dominion once. Put the Jem'Hadar in their path again, and they won't be able to resist taking the bait.

TARAN'ATAR

And then we will destroy them all.

SISKO

(sad smile)

I appreciate your determination, Taran'atar. But no, you won't.

TARAN'ATAR

I don't understand.

SISKO

I don't doubt your abilities. But it's not your job to kill the Ascendants. It's mine.

JAKE

Dad... what are you saying?

SISKO

That's the other reason we need them in the Idran system. They

want the wormhole... I'm going to  
give it to them.

As they all look at him in shock and surprise...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN:

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

The meeting is over. Everyone emerges from Kira's quarters looking a little shell-shocked. They've heard the whole plan, and it's a biggie. There are awkward glances as they go their ways, off to prepare for their respective roles.

Last to the door is Vaughn. He makes sure everyone else has left, and at the threshold, turns back to Kira.

**10 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

Kira stands gazing into her prayer mandala. Vaughn hovers in the doorway...

VAUGHN  
Captain... could I ask you  
something?

KIRA  
Of course, Commander.

Vaughn steps closer into the room, lets the door close.

VAUGHN  
I just wanted to know... why did  
you lie to us?

Kira looks at him, unsure whether to be offended, scared, caught out...

VAUGHN  
Please understand, I'm not  
accusing you of anything. But I  
saw the look on your face when you  
said you believed we'd stop the  
Ascendants. Don't worry, I don't  
think anyone else caught it. But  
I've had reason to be an expert at  
spotting lies.

Kira turns back to her mandala, full of confusion.

VAUGHN

Do you think Iliana will win?

KIRA

I don't know, Elias. There are just so many signs...

VAUGHN

Signs of what?

(Kira hesitates)

Captain... Nerys... Just talk to me. Let me help.

KIRA

(sigh)

She was right... about Cardassia. They attacked, killed billions of Bajorans... and that was one Prophet race against another. Why wouldn't it be the same for the Ascendants and the Eav'oq?

VAUGHN

But look at Cardassia now. It's falling apart, while Bajor has never been better.

KIRA

But Cardassia is a world of the Prophets, just like Bajor. If that happened to them, it could happen to the Eav'oq too.

VAUGHN

It could. Maybe it already has.

KIRA

What do you mean?

VAUGHN

The Ascendants first attacked the Eav'oq thousands of years ago, yes? And it didn't work.

KIRA

And now they're back.

VAUGHN

Just like Cardassia tried to come back to Bajor during the war. And it didn't work. Their second attempt to control you ended with them being razed to the ground. Who's to say the Ascendants' second attempt won't end up the same way?

KIRA

But is that any better? What right do I have to stop the Ascendants from achieving what their faith says is the entire point of their lives? Who am I to say that my interpretation of the Prophets is better, or more correct than theirs? If I do that, I'm no better than Yevir, when he tried to ban the Ohalu religion on Bajor.

VAUGHN

Captain, if protecting Bajor and the Eav'oq means stopping the Ascendants... then that's just what you'll have to do. What other option is there? Sit back and do nothing?

KIRA

Maybe the Prophets have some other plan...

VAUGHN

Captain, you are the Prophets' plan. I may not believe in a god, but I do believe that if there is a god, and if that god is going to save us... then he's going to do it by giving us the intelligence and imagination and strength to save ourselves.

Kira tries her best to take his advice...

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

Sisko strides down the corridor. Dax chases behind him...

DAX  
Ben - hold up!

He turns to her - she jogs up to him.

SISKO  
What do you need, old man?

DAX  
Ben, come on. Are you really sure  
this is the way to go?

He looks around, makes sure there's no-one to listen in.

SISKO  
It's the best of a bad set of  
options, Dax. But I do need to ask  
for your help.

DAX  
Anything. You know that.

SISKO  
I need you to be Jadzia for me one  
last time. I need you to be the  
one to press the button.

DAX  
I'm not the science officer, Ben.  
I'm not even assigned to DS-Nine  
or the *Defiant* anymore. Shouldn't  
Shar be the one -

SISKO  
Shar doesn't know me. Not like you  
do. I can't ask him to do this. He  
can stay here on the station, with  
Ro. She'll need good officers to  
rely on.

(beat)  
Please, Dax. I need you with me.

Dax sighs. How can she say no to her oldest friend?

**12**    **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

By the bar, QUARK holds court, relating a ribald tale MOS while the *Even Odds* Ferengi - FEG and TRIV - gaze with rapt attention, sucking up as much as their lobes will allow.

But we are focusing on a table on the main floor, at which FACITY, BRAD and GLESSIN sit together, all looking a little battered and bruised. Glessin especially is quiet and insular. They look up at a stomp-shuffle sound...

...and see Dez limping towards them with his crutch. Facity pulls out a chair, and he gently lowers himself into it.

FACITY  
Well? What did they say?

DEZ  
These people are insane. There's no other word for it. Must be an Alpha Quadrant thing.  
(beat)  
No offence, Glessin.

Dez is about to spill it all, but there's the sound of more people approaching - Jake and Nog. Dez sighs and rubs his face, as if to say, "Oh, will you just leave me alone."

JAKE  
Hi, everyone. Dez... can we talk to you for a second?

Dez looks down at the table, doesn't respond. The others are not sure what's up. Jake deflates, getting the message.

JAKE  
Fine. I guess I'll tell my dad he needs to find another plan.

Jake turns to leave. Reverse psychology. It works.

DEZ

Wait...

Jake turns back. He sees that Dez is struggling with this. The freighter captain wants to be involved, but wishes he didn't. Taking pity, Jake crouches down to Dez's level.

JAKE

Dez... I'm not asking you to change who you are. We just need your help.

NOG

Maybe there's something we can offer you in return. A deal.

Dez is half-way to being convinced. But he's scared. He doesn't know which way to jump. Facity speaks up...

FACITY

Tell me what you need, Jake.

JAKE

We need the *Even Odds* to act as a lure for the Ascendants. Use the Wa to get them where we want them. That's all.

DEZ

You're putting us in the middle of a war zone, Jake. I have to think of the safety of my crew.

NOG

Your crew will be safe.

GLESSIN

I'd do it.

The others look to Glessin for an explanation...

GLESSIN

The battle's coming anyway. Just once I'd like to get through one with my head high, knowing I did

something to help. I don't want to cower and cry all my life.

Dez reluctantly considers all the options...

DEZ

You're sure Prynn can get us through the battle safely?

NOG

I guarantee it. Run, and then hide till it's over.

DEZ

(deep breath)

Alright. But this is the last time, Jake. The moment it's over, you leave my ship and we go our separate ways.

NOG

Deal.

Nog looks to Jake for his confirmation...

JAKE

Deal. Thank you, Dez. We'll call you when we're ready.

They turn to leave. As they walk together out of the bar...

NOG

Jake, can I ask you something?

JAKE

Sure, Nog.

NOG

What is with us and crazy plans?

(beat)

I mean, we try to fly a runabout without the autopilot. We steal a stuffed bear to help out a mad scientist with his experiments. We pit a crew of cadets against the

biggest, baddest ship in the  
Dominion fleet. And now this...

JAKE

(sad sigh)

I don't think this is the same  
thing. This plan isn't crazy...  
it's just wrong.

They exit the bar...

**13 INT. DS9 - PRYNN'S QUARTERS**

Prynn is moving swiftly around the room, packing a small  
travelling bag. She's taking out her frustration and  
confusion on the clothes and drawers and closet doors...

PRYNN

It's wrong, Dad. I can't do it.

VAUGHN

I'm just saying, give it a chance.

PRYNN

No! I won't. Do you think I  
haven't gone over this with myself  
a hundred times? Shar and I cannot  
happen. It never has happened. The  
most we've ever done is kiss,  
and...

She drifts off, as if sadly remembering the kiss and how  
wonderful it was...

PRYNN

Is that really all we've done? In  
two years?

(plaintive)

He's so pretty... he makes me want  
to sit in a dark room, eat ice  
cream and cry.

(resolved)

But it's better for everyone if we  
stay colleagues and nothing more.  
So whatever I may or may not be

feeling, I'm just going to ignore  
it till it goes away.

She goes back to stuffing clothes haphazardly into her bag.

VAUGHN

But what if something were to  
happen... to either of you...

PRYNN

Then it wouldn't matter anyway.

Vaughn takes Prynn's hands, forces her to pay attention.

VAUGHN

Prynn, listen to me. I haven't had  
a lot of love in my life. Your  
mother, you, a couple of minor  
flirtations when I was even  
younger than you are now, and  
that's it. In more than a century  
of breathing.

(emphasising)

Do not follow my example.

Prynn is grateful for her father's advice. She smiles.

PRYNN

Don't sell yourself short, Dad. I  
can think of at least one person  
who's shown a definite interest.  
And it's more than a minor  
flirtation.

Opaka. Vaughn chuckles, pulls Prynn in close for a hug.  
They breathe together, glad to have each other.

VAUGHN

Just promise me you'll think about  
it. You're my daughter... and I  
want you to be happy.

PRYNN

I love you too, Dad.

They separate, steel themselves, and get back to work.

14 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

The door from Ops opens, and Nurse Richter enters. Kira is likewise buzzing around the room, putting things in order. She stops to greet Richter, directs her to the guest seat.

KIRA

Thank you for coming, Ensign.

RICHTER

What can I do for you, Captain?

KIRA

I wanted to tell you in person that we've come to a decision regarding Sergeant Etana.

RICHTER

(nervous)

Okay. Go on...

KIRA

She's free to go. Legally, the only thing we can charge her with is medical malpractice. And as the only one affected by that, Lieutenant Ro has chosen not to press charges.

RICHTER

(deep breath)

I see. Thank you, Captain. But if you don't mind... I don't want Kol to be released.

KIRA

(pause for WTF)

I'm sorry?

RICHTER

I want her to stay where she is, in jail. And I want her to stay there, behind that force field, for a long, long time.

Off Richter's determination, and Kira's confusion...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**15 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE**

Where we left it. Richter has just delivered her decision.

KIRA

Ensign... I'm not sure I understand. I thought you'd be happy. She didn't do anything wrong. Or even if she did... I know if I loved a person...

RICHTER

That's precisely why I want her to stay there. I know something's going on. I may not get all the details, and I don't expect to. But I know you're putting some kind of big mission together.

KIRA

I can't talk about that.

RICHTER

I know. And I also know my girlfriend, and whether Ro presses charges or not, Kol will feel like she has to make amends. If you let her out of that cell, she'll see your big mission as her chance to make up for what she did. So she'll join up, I won't be able to stop her... and then she's going to die.

Kira finds herself unable to deny the possibility...

RICHTER

So I'm asking you, Captain... Please. Keep her safe. At least until all this is over.

Kira considers Richter's request...

16 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The *Defiant*, Dominion Vessel 288, and the *Even Odds* all in a row around the station's docking ring. Repairs to the *Even Odds* are pretty much complete now.

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

A massive logistical operation - dozens of crewpersons and security bodies lifting and carrying and anti-grav-ing and preparing the three ships for the mission ahead.

**FIRST AIRLOCK**

Kira stands watching the crewmen do their thing. Nervous, worried, but burying it under professionalism. As they near finishing, she turns to Ro and Shar, who stand nearby. Ro knows this is it. And she doesn't envy Kira.

RO

Good luck, Captain. I don't wish I was going with you.

Kira chuckles with gallows humour, then reaches out and shakes Ro's hand. It feels like a curiously final gesture.

KIRA

Good luck to you too, Ro. And Shar. I know the station's in safe hands.

Kira turns and walks into the airlock towards the *Defiant*. With Ro's leave, Shar turns and walks along the corridor. He passes Vaughn on his way. Vaughn approaches Ro...

VAUGHN

Lieutenant. Everything ready?

RO

Yes, sir. Major Cenn's talking with General Lenaris right now. We'll be there.

VAUGHN

Good. Carry on, Lieutenant.

Vaughn enters the airlock too, and is gone.

## **SECOND AIRLOCK**

A squad of Jem'Hadar soldiers stand at attention as more Starfleet crew load supplies. Vannis and Opaka approach. Taran'atar snaps to attention.

TARAN'ATAR

The white has been administered.  
The soldiers are prepared. First  
Rekan'ganar is an able commander.

VANNIS

I agree. Thank you for your help,  
Ambassador.

OPAKA

You're not coming with us?

TARAN'ATAR

I have decided to travel on board  
the *Defiant*.

VANNIS

And the ranjen travels with us.  
What greater symbol of our  
alliance could there be?

Opaka smiles in pleasant surprise at the comment. Vannis turns and leads Opaka onto the ship, followed by the Jem'Hadar soldiers. Taran'atar turns to leave.

## **INSIDE THE AIRLOCK**

OPAKA

You seem much happier, more at  
peace than you did.

VANNIS

I died. That tends to change a  
person's perspective.

OPAKA

I know precisely what you mean.

They enter the ship.

### **THIRD AIRLOCK**

More crew loading up the *Even Odds* with final supplies. Sisko, Jake and Rena stand by, watching with bitten lip.

SISKO

I am so proud of you both. And I love you both. And I'm so sorry this has to happen...

JAKE

Dad, it's okay. We chose to be involved. Don't worry about us.

Jake and Rena turn to board, but Sisko calls them back...

SISKO

Rena... thank you.

RENA

For what?

SISKO

For reminding me... of what I needed to know.

Sisko grabs Rena for a big bear hug, pulls Jake into it too. Finally he lets them go and turns towards the *Defiant*.

Jake and Rena enter the airlock, passing Prynn on her way out. She looks out into the corridor, mildly disappointed, until she finds what she was looking for - Shar.

SHAR

Prynn... I wanted to wish you luck. But you do not need it. You will be magnificent.

Prynn's breath catches - what a wonderful thing to say.

PRYNN

I'll see you when I get back, Shar. That's a promise.

They share a moment. Then Shar turns to walk away.

### **FIRST AIRLOCK**

Back at the *Defiant*. Ro presides over the last few supplies being loaded, as Taran'atar approaches. She takes a breath.

RO

Taran'atar... Don't die.

TARAN'ATAR

I am already dead, Lieutenant. I go into battle to reclaim my life. A battle of blood or of words... the distinction no longer matters.

RO

Then go reclaim your life. And Taran'atar... kick their ass.

And she really means it. They're good now, back as friends again. He sees it, shares it. He turns and enters the ship, passing Commander Vaughn on the way.

Ro walks along, just as Sisko is approaching. They nod their acknowledgements. Sisko steps into the airlock, and passes Vaughn. Vaughn watches him pass with a curious look, then presses the control to roll the airlock door closed.

### **18 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

The turbolift rises into Ops, carrying Ro. She steps off and addresses Cenn. Shar is back at his station, with SEVAK running tactical, LEISHMAN at engineering, Cenn at the central Ops table, and TARSES elsewhere. All the new faces.

RO

Status, Major.

CENN

All three indicate ready. And General Lenaris is sending everything he's got.

RO

Let's hope it's enough.

**19**    **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

The doors open, and Kira strides onto the bridge.

DAX

Captain on the bridge.

Kira starts slightly - she is, isn't she? And it might be the last time. She takes the centre seat, looks around at her crew. Dax, Bashir, BOWERS and Nog, plus Ensign Aleco at the helm. Behind her, Vaughn enters the bridge.

VAUGHN

All departments report ready,  
Captain. On your command.

KIRA

Alright then. Signal the others to  
coordinate departure. Ensign Aleco  
- feel free.

ALECO

Aye, Captain.

**20**    **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP - BRIDGE**

Vannis stands in the centre, headset comm unit on. First REKAN'GANAR has the other comm. Opaka stays out of the way.

VANNIS

First - disengage and prepare to  
follow the *Defiant* into the  
anomaly.

REKAN'GANAR

Acknowledged.

Rekan'ganar moves to direct his soldiers to follow the orders. Vannis takes off her headset and offers it to Opaka, who accepts with delighted surprise.

**21**    **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Prynn is settling in to the helm station, familiarising herself. Dez is in the command chair, plus Facity, Brad and Glessin elsewhere. Jake and Rena hold hands as they stand out of the way on the upper deck.

PRYNN

Docking clamps disengaged.

GLESSIN

All power into the Wa is at its lowest level for the journey.

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

In Ops, all the crew are turned to watch the screen as the three ships disconnect from the docking ring and manoeuvre away. Behind them, unnoticed, the turbolift rises again.

Shar sees something out of the corner of his eye and turns - to his surprise, the lift carries PIF. Ro and Cenn turn too, a little baffled to see a green-furred talking dog.

SHAR

Pif! What are you doing here?

PIF

Jake arranged temporary security clearance for me. He said it was only fair, considering.

SHAR

No... I mean, why aren't you on the *Even Odds*?

Pif stretches his neck to look at the screen...

**23**    **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The three ships are now heading in turn to the wormhole. The *Defiant*, Dominion Vessel 288, then the *Even Odds*. They reach the event horizon, the wormhole BURSTS open in its great display of power and colour, and the ships dive in.

**24**    **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP - BRIDGE**

Opaka is now wearing the headset, and she gazes in awe and amazement at what she sees through it.

OPAKA

No matter how many times, it never  
loses its power.

**25**    **EXT. WORMHOLE INTERIOR**

The three ships slip smoothly through the sparkling blue-and-gold internal currents.

**26**    **INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR**

A rarely seen part of the ship - a corridor in the depths, with a rare porthole to the outside. Sisko stands leaning against the bulkhead, peering out of this porthole. As he watches, there are tears of sadness and loss in his eyes.

**27**    **INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR**

Elsewhere on the ship. Vaughn walks along another corridor. No specific destination, just walking. Things on his mind. He turns a corner, and sees Sisko standing at his porthole. He hesitates a moment, but then continues.

Sisko looks up as he feels Vaughn approaching, and pulls himself together. The men are still far from best friends, but there's a certain grudging respect between them now.

VAUGHN

Captain.

SISKO

Commander.

VAUGHN

It's all coming together just as  
you wanted. Are you happy?

SISKO

(quietly pointed)

Do I look like a man who's happy,  
Commander? Have I ever looked  
happy about any aspect of this?

VAUGHN  
(slightly chastised)  
No, I suppose not.

SISKO  
What I am is determined. It's what  
has to happen. So I'm going to go  
through with it.

This is getting close to Vaughn's own worries. He takes a  
chance, quietly opens up to Sisko.

VAUGHN  
Why? I mean... how can you be  
certain this is what's right?  
(beat)  
When you... "recruited" me last  
year... how did you know that was  
the right thing to do?

SISKO  
You're not going to like the  
answer.

VAUGHN  
I'll take it anyway.

SISKO  
The Orbs. Specifically the Orb of  
Souls. It called out to me.

Vaughn tries not to roll his eyes. Sisko sees it anyway.

VAUGHN  
What did you see?

SISKO  
Myself. Or... lots of myselfes.  
The Orb of Souls shows you  
different versions of yourself,  
different ways your life might  
have gone.

VAUGHN  
You mean alternate universes?

SISKO

Yes, exactly. There were nine of us. Well, nine places. One was empty - the pirate, from the Intendant's universe.

VAUGHN

Because he was already dead.

SISKO

(nods)

I... felt it happen. I could see all their lives, laid out before me, as clearly as I see you now. Dead or alive.

VAUGHN

And they told you what to do?

(Sisko nods again)

And you did it... even though you knew it would mean lying to me... forcing me to do what I did... you went ahead anyway.

There's no accusation in this anymore. In fact, Vaughn seems to be empathising with Sisko, albeit secretly.

Vaughn has nothing more to say. He is coming to understand Sisko a bit more. They have a quiet moment of unspoken companionship. Sisko turns back to the porthole...

**28**    **EXT. SPACE**

The Gamma entrance to the wormhole bursts open, and the three ships fly out of it.

**29**    **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Kira presses a control on the panel at her side...

KIRA

*Defiant to Even Odds.* You know what to do. Good luck.

PRYNN (comm)

You too, Captain. We'll see you there. *Even Odds* out.

30 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Even Odds* peels away from the other two ships, takes another heading, and jumps to warp. They're gone.

The *Defiant* and Dominion Vessel 288 turn together towards the planet in the distance... the Eav'oq homeworld.

31 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

The gleaming marble temple rests in its bucolic setting of trees and ponds and paths. Vaughn sits on a low stone wall, watching several EAV'OQ bounce peacefully on their way. After a few moments, a mildly surprised voice calls out...

OPAKA (o.s.)

Elias...?

Vaughn turns and sees Opaka strolling away from the Temple towards him. He stands in the presence of a lady.

VAUGHN

How's it going in there?

OPAKA

Nerys is... apologising. To the Eav'oq, for having been overly forceful with them last time.

VAUGHN

(smirk)

That's something I would have paid to see.

OPAKA

But I thought you were staying up on the ship.

VAUGHN

Dax can handle that. I wanted to ask you something.

OPAKA

Of course, Elias. Anything.

VAUGHN

Once, when I needed... help... you took me to see an Orb. I'd like to do that again.

OPAKA

Any particular one?

VAUGHN

The Orb of Souls.

Opaka's face falls. She knows the Orb of Souls is one of the toughest ones. Vaughn must be in a bad way.

VAUGHN

Please... don't ask. And don't tell anyone else, either.

OPAKA

I would never. Orb experiences are rare and precious, not for prying eyes. But are you sure?

VAUGHN

No. I want to be sure. That's why I need to ask... and whatever the answer, I'll do it.

OPAKA

I'll speak to Tendren at once.

VAUGHN

Thank you, Sulan. And there was one other thing... something Prynn helped me to understand. And as I'm afraid I may never get another chance to say it...

OPAKA

Say what?

In answer, Vaughn reaches his hand to caress Opaka's face, slowly and gently, as if barely daring. When she doesn't

pull away in horror, he leans further forwards. Gradually,  
tentatively, with small hopeful smiles... they kiss.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**32    EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

With Deep Space Nine itself in the foreground, we look off towards the wormhole in the distance. It blooms open...

...and one of the *Defiant's* tiny shuttlecraft emerges. But instead of coming towards the station, it turns and heads off the other way - towards Bajor.

**33    INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY GARDEN - DAY**

Vaughn strides into the garden area - Kai SOLIS is waiting for him. He turns at Vaughn's approach...

SOLIS  
Commander Vaughn.

VAUGHN  
(bows head)  
Your Eminence. Thank you for agreeing to see me.

SOLIS  
I am happy to help, Commander.  
Sulan thinks well of you. And I think well of her.  
(beat)  
May I?

Vaughn doesn't like the intrusion, but at least Solis had the decency to ask first. Vaughn nods his approval. Solis gently grasps Vaughn's earlobe. He closes his eyes, takes steady breaths, concentrates. After a moment, he lets go.

SOLIS  
As a very wise woman once said,  
"Look for solutions from within,  
Commander." Please follow me. The  
Orb of Souls awaits you.

Solis sweeps out of the garden, back into the main body of the monastery. Vaughn follows.

34 **EXT. SPACE**

Dominion Vessel 288 and the *Defiant* drop out of warp and coast to sub-light speeds. As they do, we PAN around...

...and see dozens of Jem'Hadar ships (of various models) holding position. Vannis' ship leads the *Defiant* through the lines of enemy vessels, as if creeping past a sleeping giant, where one step on a twig could awaken the monster.

As the *Defiant* proceeds, we turn with it to see... the Founders' homeworld in the distance, approaching.

35 **EXT. FOUNDERS WORLD**

A Starfleet transporter delivers Kira, Nog, Aleco (armed but holstered) and Taran'atar. A Dominion transporter deposits WEYOUN, plus Vannis and First Rekan'ganar.

Once there, they look around at the view - no Great Link, no sign of any Founders, just the vast unending expanse of empty rock. It seems like the entire planet is deserted.

ALECO

Captain...

Aleco directs Kira's attention to the horizon on the left - a golden missile, piercing the air on its way towards them. Kira looks to the right - another shape, the undulating space-fish from 7x14 "Chimera." They're converging on us...

Finally both shapes get here, and both MORPH, "landing" on the islet as humanoid forms - MEERA and LAAS, respectively. Nog and Meera smile, happy to see each other again. Kira takes a deep breath and directs a diplomatic nod at Laas.

KIRA

Laas.

LAAS

Kira.

KIRA

Where's Odo?

LAAS

He's coming.

Kira looks out over the empty rock. Somewhere out there, a shape is moving. A massive, flattened carpet of golden liquid, an entire continent of changeling matter, is slowly pulling itself together, retracting and coalescing. It crawls and flows over the rock, getting closer...

...until ODO stands before them all. For the first time, he is wearing the shapeless changeling smock they all wear. The image is clear - he's a Founder now. The two Vorta and the two Jem'Hadar bow their heads politely to their gods.

Odo and Kira look at each other. So many feelings trying to burst to the top. But this is business, they're in public, in front of their subordinates. It would be inappropriate.

You know what? Screw it.

Kira and Odo throw themselves on each other, a powerful hug and kiss that says everything all at once. Nog and Aleco look mildly uncomfortable. Meera smiles. Laas rolls his eyes. It goes completely over the others' heads.

Finally they pull themselves apart, get down to business.

ODO

What do you need?

KIRA

The Jem'Hadar. All of them. Or as many as you can spare.

ODO

(no hesitation)

You've got them.

LAAS

(exasperated)

Odo... a little discussion might not go amiss?

ODO

There's nothing to discuss, Laas. Everything I have is hers. Nothing

you will ever say to me can change that.

LAAS

You insisted they stay where they were. Keeping us safe.

MEERA

None of us are safe, Laas. Not while the Ascendants remain.

NOG

Meera's right. We've seen the Ascendants in action.

TARAN'ATAR

Founders... may I speak?

(at Odo's nod)

The Jem'Hadar are in anarchy. They need guidance, a purpose. I... understand how they feel. They need this as much as any of us. If fighting beside the Bajorans brings them together again... they will welcome it.

LAAS

(reluctant)

Very well.

ODO

Weyoun, I want to speak to the Jem'Hadar. All of them.

WEYOUN

At once, Founder.

Weyoun disappears in a transporter beam. Odo goes to Kira, takes her hands affectionately.

KIRA

Thank you, Odo.

ODO

Don't mention it. Anytime you want to start an interstellar war... just say the word.

She grins, taking the joke how it was intended.

ODO

Now what? Off to lead the fight from the bridge of the *Defiant*, I suppose?

KIRA

Actually... I'd been thinking I should lead it from the bridge of a Jem'Hadar ship. They might be more willing to fight for us if they see a Bajoran there in the trenches with them.

ODO

Well... I don't like you being in the line of fire... but I know it's pointless to try to dissuade you.

(turns to  
Taran'atar)

Taran'atar... I've heard from Weyoun and Vannis about everything you've been through. I'm sorry. I know myself just how far Section 31 is willing to go. If it helps, think of it as one more thing we have in common.

Taran'atar bows his head politely.

ODO

What will you do now?

TARAN' ATAR

Whatever I want.

ODO

And what do you want?

TARAN' ATAR

To stand beside Captain Kira, as  
her First.

KIRA  
(touched)  
Thank you, Taran'atar.

VANNIS  
I know of a ship that recently  
lost its Vorta, and its First.

TARAN'ATAR  
It shall be so. At least, for the  
duration of this mission. After  
that... we will see.

Off Kira's uncertain reaction to that...

**36 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY PRAYER ROOM**

The room where Kira first encountered an Orb in 2x02 "The Circle," and where Vaughn last did in 8x25 "Unity, pt 2." Now Vaughn stands again in front of an Orb on its plinth. Kai Solis closes the door behind him as he leaves.

Steeling himself, Vaughn reaches out, grasps the doors of the Orb's ark... and opens it. The rush of green energy swirls out of the box, and we **WHITE OUT**.

**37 WHITE SPACE**

We are in the Prophets' realm. The fog parts to reveal Vaughn, looking around in mixed wonder, fear, apprehension.

A HEARTBEAT sounds, breaths deep and regular. Vaughn walks forward through the fog... he seems to be alone for now.

**38 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

Sisko stands leaning against one of the gleaming white walls of the Eav'oq citadel. Brow furrowed, eyes closed, trying not to show how heartbroken he is. He feels a shadow... it's Opaka, looking at him sympathetically.

OPAKA

Benjamin... I wondered if you  
might like to pray with me. I know  
I could use a little...  
tranquillity.

They both know she's offering for his benefit, not her own.  
But it gives him the wiggle room to admit to his weakness.  
He smiles gratefully, and takes her hands.

**39    INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Odo stands in the centre of the bridge. The Jem'Hadar crew  
go about their business, a little awed to have a Founder  
among them. Kira stands to one side, nervous but hopeful.  
Laas stands to the other side, arms folded, unimpressed.

Weyoun reverently approaches Odo, holding a comm headset.  
He hands it to Odo, and then backs away. With a last glance  
to Kira, Odo dons the headset and prepares himself.

ODO  
I am speaking now to all Vorta and  
all Jem'Hadar... everywhere. This  
is the Founder.

Kira can't help but notice Odo's use of that word.

ODO  
I know you've all wondered why the  
Dominion has fallen into chaos.  
You might have wondered if your  
gods had abandoned you.  
(beat)  
I will never abandon you. But... I  
have kept things from you. The  
reason behind recent events... the  
real reason. That reason is  
called... the Ascendants.

The other Jem'Hadar on the bridge look between themselves,  
surprised... they'd heard the rumours. Laas hangs his head  
and sighs - he still thinks this is a bad idea. Kira is on  
edge, waiting for trouble...

**40    INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #2**

A different Jem'Hadar ship - Vannis and Rekan'ganar's crew.  
Odo's voice pipes through the ship-wide comm system...

ODO (comm)  
The Ascendants destroyed something  
very important to the Founders...  
important to us.

Rekan'ganar looks to Vannis in shock - what is this? He'd  
heard nothing. The other Jem'Hadar are likewise confused.

**41 INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #3**

A third ship. Taran'atar stands in the centre, listening.  
Odo's words are personal to him...

ODO (comm)  
That is what led to the chaos and  
confusion you have felt.

**42 INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Odo, Kira and Weyoun.

ODO  
But now we have a chance to strike  
back at them.  
(looks to Kira)  
...thanks to Bajor.

**43 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY**

Sisko and Opaka stand facing each other, hands held between  
them, heads down and eyes closed. Praying.

OPAKA  
Prophets, we humbly ask for Your  
guidance and Your love in the  
difficult times ahead...

**44 WHITE SPACE**

Vaughn walks around the white space, still alone, still  
only hearing one heartbeat, one set of breaths. He's a  
little confused, annoyed. Where are the others?

**45**    **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1**

Odo and Kira...

ODO

Our former enemies offer us the  
chance to set right what the  
Ascendants set wrong, by fighting  
our common enemy - together.

Kira smiles...

**46**    **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #2**

Vannis and Rekan'ganar and their crew...

ODO (comm)

I ask all Jem'Hadar, all Vorta,  
all soldiers of the Dominion... to  
follow two people.

The Jem'Hadar crew exchange confused glances...

REKAN'GANAR

Keep your place...

**47**    **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #3**

On Taran'atar as he listens to Odo's voice...

ODO

First Taran'atar, the oldest...  
and the wisest Jem'Hadar I have  
ever known.

Pride surges in Taran'atar's chest. His god accepts him.

**48**    **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1**

Odo gazes with love at Kira...

ODO

And Captain Kira Nerys of Bajor.  
The bravest woman I have ever  
known. Follow them, and they will  
lead you to victory.

(beat)

We are the Dominion. We fight  
together. And we will prevail.

He takes off the headset. It's done. He looks to Kira.

ODO

Weyoun, coordinate with all the  
other Vorta as to how many we can  
actually spare. Anyone who is not  
vital to the Dominion's security  
right this minute, I want out  
there with Kira.

WEYOUN

Of course, Founder.

Weyoun sets to work. Odo approaches Kira, talks *sotto*.

ODO

Nerys... are you alright?

KIRA

(quiet)

You let him call you Founder. You  
called yourself a Founder.

ODO

I also sent all those loyal  
soldiers to their deaths.

KIRA

That's what they want.

ODO

That doesn't make it any easier  
for me, Nerys.

**49    EXT. EAV' OQ CITY - DAY**

Opaka concludes her prayers...

OPAKA

We walk Your path, in certain  
knowledge that with Your wisdom

and light to guide us... we will  
prevail.

Opaka raises her eyes to Sisko, and sees that unbeknownst to her, she has only been making it worse on him. He looks more heartbroken than ever.

OPAKA  
Ben... what is it?

SISKO  
How much, Sulan? How much more are  
they going to ask of me?

Opaka gathers him to her breast and comforts him.

**50**    **WHITE SPACE**

Vaughn is in the white space... alone.

VAUGHN  
Hello? Are you there?  
(no answer)  
Sisko said my alternate selves  
would help me, tell me what to do.  
So where are you?

But there's no-one. He frowns, confused. He stares at a point directly in front of him, and a FLASH comes...

**51**    **FLASH**

Vaughn as a younger man, in his 60s, dressed in the uniform of an Andorian Guard. In a physical fight with an actual Andorian, he is STABBED in the heart and falls down dead.

**52**    **BACK TO SCENE**

Vaughn flinches at the "memory" of one alternate self. One that is now dead. He looks to the right side...

**53**    **FLASH**

The Starfleet shuttle shared by Vaughn, Ruriko and T'Prynn. The transporter "accident" caused by Section 31... except that it's Vaughn being burned to a crisp.

54 **BACK TO SCENE**

Vaughn turns away in revulsion and desperation. He doesn't want to see this. He looks to his left...

55 **FLASH**

A much younger Vaughn, barely in his 30s, strong and proud, wearing the golden tunic or tabard of the Mirror Universe. He struts along a starship corridor, turns a corner... and is STABBED again by a sneering junior officer.

56 **BACK TO SCENE**

Vaughn screws up his eyes, not wanting to see any more. But he can't not look. Another "memory" flash...

57 **FLASH**

A boy of about 12, CLOSE UP as he is rocked violently back and forth by some large angry shape, all claws and feathers and SQUAWKS of fury. The boy tries to protect himself with his hands. But one of the claws sinks deep into the back of his neck, right into his brain... and the boy is dead.

58 **FLASHBACK - EARLIER**

Vaughn's conversation with Sisko in the *Defiant* corridor...

SISKO

There were nine of us. Well, nine places. One was empty.

VAUGHN

Because he was already dead.

59 **BACK TO SCENE**

Vaughn looks around himself... all the places are empty. All the Vaughns are dead.

One final sad, comprehending look directly to his right...

60 **FLASHBACK - 9x24 "HA'MARA"**

The Vaughn of the Intendant's universe is an ancient, blind and crippled old man, thin as paper on the bed. Our Vaughn tearfully holds a phaser to his head... and FIRES.

**61**    **BACK TO SCENE**

Vaughn finally understands. All the Vaughns are dead. He killed the last one himself. That's why there's no-one to tell him what to do.

He's the last Elias Vaughn left in creation. As the truth comes crashing down on him...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

## ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

### 62 EXT. SPACE

The Alpha end of the wormhole bursts open, and the tiny *Defiant* shuttle dives in. We see a fleet of Bajoran Militia ships (like Kira's fleet from 7x02 "Shadows and Symbols"), blockading the area. They do not follow the shuttle in.

### 63 EXT. WORMHOLE INTERIOR (CONTINUOUS)

We travel with the shuttle, following it on its own through the inside of the wormhole.

The Gamma end bursts open, revealing normal space beyond, and the *Defiant* holding position right at its mouth. We keep following the shuttle...

### 64 EXT. SPACE (CONTINUOUS)

...into normal space. The shuttle approaches the *Defiant's* underbelly. The circular hatch in the larger ship opens up, and we go with the shuttle as it glides to a halt...

### 65 INT. DEFIANT - LAUNCH BAY (CONTINUOUS)

...and slips up the z-axis into the ship's small launch bay (as seen in 8x15 "Haunted"). It locks into place with a satisfying *ker-thunk* of machinery...

### 66 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

The door opens and Vaughn strides onto the bridge, firm and emotionally closed-off. Dax stands from the command chair.

DAX  
Welcome back, Commander.  
Everything okay?

VAUGHN  
Fine.

Dax knows him well enough to see that he's lying. But she knows not to ask, and he has no intention of telling.

VAUGHN  
Where's Sisko?

DAX  
In his cabin.

VAUGHN  
And where's Kira?

DAX  
(pointing)  
There.

Dax points to the main viewscreen. Vaughn looks, and we can see the Idran planet in the distance, and a massive fleet of Dominion ships hanging in space in front of it.

**68**    **EXT. SPACE**

The Dominion fleet fills the entire sky of the Eav'oq home world. All types of vessels - the small fighters, mid-sized cruisers, and the humongous behemoth battleships.

We close in slowly on one of the small fighters...

**69**    **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #3**

Kira stands in the centre, her headset on and transmitting. She looks out through her tiny eye-screen at the fleet. Thank the Prophets they're on her side this time.

KIRA  
First...

She looks to the side, and there is Taran'atar.

TARAN'ATAR  
Yes, Captain?

KIRA  
Everyone's clear on what's going to happen?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes, Captain. All the Vorta have been briefed on the battle plan.

KIRA

(sad chuckle)

I don't have a plan. Just make sure they understand that no-one gets past them. No-one gets anywhere near the Eav'oq.

TARAN'ATAR

They understand, Captain.

That's his way of saying, "Calm down, it'll all be fine." She's not so sure.

**70    EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

Opaka stands outside the Eav'oq citadel, gazing up into the bright, sunny sky. She can't see the ships from here, but she knows they're there. She hopes everything goes to plan.

She turns and walks back towards the citadel...

OPAKA (v.o.)

Emissary... I don't understand.

**CUT TO:**

**71    INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

Back to the big meeting in Kira's quarters. Everyone is gathered around, staring at Sisko. Opaka looks especially disturbed by what he just said...

OPAKA (cont)

You're going to... "give" the Ascendants their Fortress?

Sisko nods. He doesn't seem especially happy about it.

SISKO

That's right. Because that's how we're going to stop them - by giving them what they want.

Everyone looks back at him, a bit confused, a bit unnerved. He knows they don't understand what he's saying. He wishes he didn't understand it either.

72 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

PAN around the bridge of the *Even Odds*, seeing its crew on edge, waiting for the signal. Dez, Facity, Prynn, Glessin, Brad, Jake...

SISKO (v.o.)  
And it's all thanks to you.

...ending on Rena.

73 **INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

On Rena...

RENA  
Me? What did I do?

SISKO  
Jake told me it was your idea to take your road trip into the Gamma Quadrant.

Moving to Dez...

SISKO (cont)  
Without that, you would have never met the *Even Odds* again...

Moving to Shar...

SISKO (cont)  
And Lieutenant ch'Thane would have never figured out the Wa and its link to the Ascendants.

And back to Rena...

RENA  
(timid)

Is that the "reason" I'm here? Why the Prophets led me to you and Jake? Is that enough?

SISKO

There's more to it, but that's not important right now.

**74 FLASHBACK - 10x14 "AGAINST THE ODDS"**

Shar and Rena stand inside the Wa. Shar touches the orange splotch, and the Wa shifts into communications mode...

SISKO (v.o.)

We know the Wa is Ascendant technology.

**75 FLASHBACK - 10x21 "IN THE STARS"**

Prees is in the Wa during the Ascendants' attack, and the strange environment is going haywire.

SISKO (v.o.)

It responds to them, knows when another of its kind is near.

**76 FLASHBACK - 10x21 "IN THE STARS"**

Iliana standing in her Ascendant ship, talking to Kira across the mirrored wall...

SISKO (v.o.)

It even connects across massive interstellar distances.

**77 FLASHBACK - 8x23 "RISING SON"**

The bridge of the *Even Odds*, caught in the massive wash of energy as the Eav'oq are revealed and space is realigned. The Wa leaks onto the bridge, the coloured splotches morph into wide singing mouths...

DEZ (v.o.)

Prees said it went crazy when the whole Idran system moved in space.

On Sisko...

SISKO

Exactly. Because it's connected to the wormhole itself. It's their equivalent of the Orbs.

VAUGHN

So what are you saying? That we bring them just close enough to the wormhole to force their ships' systems to react and blow themselves to pieces?

DEZ

It won't work. The Wa may have gone crazy but it never came close to destroying the ship.

NOG

(realising)

Because it's only a small part of your ship anyway.

SHAR

Ascendant vessels are composed entirely of the Wa material, in various forms. It would create a much stronger reaction.

DEZ

I'm telling you it won't work. We even came right through the Anomaly to get here and the Wa never twitched.

NOG

Because you were powered down.

SISKO

Even so, you're right, Dez. The Wa's reaction as is isn't strong enough to destroy anything. So we need to... turn the wormhole

itself up a notch. Make it more reactive.

VAUGHN  
How do we do that?

DAX  
(gasp of inspiration)  
A subspace inversion.

**79**    **FLASHBACK - 4x03 "THE VISITOR"**

The bridge of the *Defiant*, with the wormhole on the screen. The blue flower is reacting stronger than usual, making the whole ship shake and vibrate. Jadzia is at the helm...

SISKO (v.o.)  
Exactly. It's a natural phenomenon, makes the wormhole's gravimetric field and neutrino levels increase a hundred fold.

**80**    **INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

On Major Cenn...

CENN  
But that only happens once every fifty years. The last time was just seven years ago.

BASHIR  
We can hardly wait another forty-three years for our next chance.

SISKO  
We make our own chance. Remember, Dax? Nerys? When the Cardassians came, to set up the relay...

KIRA  
(gasp)  
The sword of stars.

SISKO

We tried to peer through the  
Temple gates, using the relay...

DAX

And it accidentally set off a  
subspace inversion.

So that's it. It's all out. The room goes quiet, as they  
all absorb what this means.

VAUGHN

So that's the plan.

**81**    **EXT. SPACE**

The *Defiant*, holding position on its own...

TIANA (v.o.)

While B-N-N has not been given any  
specific information for security  
reasons...

**82**    **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Vaughn in the command chair. He looks around at his crew -  
Dax, Bashir, Nog, Bowers, Aleco (and extras). Dax sits at  
her panel, staring at the control she's going to press...

TIANA (v.o.)

...we do know that a combined  
Starfleet...

**83**    **EXT. SPACE**

The massive sprawling Jem'Hadar fleet in orbit of the  
Eav'oq homeworld.

TIANA (v.o.)

...and Dominion task force has  
been brought together in the Gamma  
Quadrant...

**84**    **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #3**

Kira and Taran'atar in charge of their Jem'Hadar ship...

TIANA (v.o.)  
...to address the Ascendant  
threat.

**85**    **EXT. SPACE**

The Bajoran Militia fleet, holding position...

TIANA (v.o.)  
Meanwhile, a Bajoran Militia  
fleet, led by General Lenaris  
Holem, has formed a blockade at  
the Alpha Quadrant entrance to the  
Celestial Temple.

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

Ro, Shar, Cenn and the others watch the fleet on the main  
view screen, tense and waiting for the moment...

TIANA (v.o.)  
The Militia press office has  
assured B-N-N that this is a  
precautionary measure only...

**87**    **INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS**

Etana and Richter sit together in one of the cells.

TIANA (v.o.)  
...and they do not anticipate  
either Ascendant or Dominion  
forces entering Bajoran space.

**88**    **EXT. BAJOR - SISKO'S HOUSE - DAY**

Things are peaceful and sunny as always...

TIANA (v.o.)  
In a joint statement released  
exclusively to B-N-N...

**89**    **INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

Kasidy sits on the couch, Rebecca in her lap. The big  
screen is out on the mantelpiece, and Kasidy is watching

the Bajoran News Network, featuring newsreader TIANA FEEN (from 10x02 "Brave New World").

TIANA (screen)  
...First Minister Asarem, Kai Solis, Vedek Yevir and Ranjen Opaka have called upon all Bajorans, whatever their religious affiliation, to pray for the safety of the Eav'oq, and our fleet.

(beat)  
Stay tuned, as we bring you more breaking news.

Kasidy looks down to Rebecca, bouncing happily in her lap, no idea of the danger her daddy is in.

**90 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

The door opens and Sisko steps onto the bridge, looking straight to the viewscreen and its view of the fleet...

SISKO (v.o.)  
Yes, that's the plan.

**91 THE WA**

The turbolift doors open onto the white fog of the resting Wa environment. Jake and Rena step out, holding hands. Daunted but ready to do what they have to.

SISKO (v.o.)  
*Even Odds* gets the Ascendants into the Idran system.

**92 INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #3**

Kira and Taran'atar...

SISKO (v.o.)  
The Jem'Hadar keep them away from the Eav'oq once they arrive...

**93 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Sisko looks at the screen...

SISKO (v.o.)  
And then I...  
(beat)  
...I kill them all.

Sisko hangs his head in shame...

FADE OUT:

**END OF SHOW**