

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x02 - "Unjoined, pt 2."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novella

"Unjoined"

by Andy Mangels & Michael A Martin

appearing in

Star Trek: Worlds of Deep Space Nine
Book 2 - Trill / Bajor

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 MONTAGE FROM PREVIOUS EPS

-- Scenes of the riots on Trill (9x01)

VOICEOVER

Previously, on Deep Space Nine.

-- Admiral Akaar confronts Hiziki Gard in sickbay (8x21)

GARD

The symbionts of Trill and these parasites are essentially the same species.

-- Kira talks to Cyl on the *Gryphon's* viewscreen (8x21)

CYL (screen)

The parasites are waging a war, Colonel. It's a war of revenge.

-- Parasite-Montenegro taunts Kira on the *Gryphon* (8x21)

MONTENEGRO

You think the symbionts are benign little creatures. You have no idea what they did to us. Believe me, they're far more dangerous to you than we are.

-- Bashir explains his findings in sickbay (8x24 & 8x25)

BASHIR

Genetic engineering. Someone created these parasites.

CYL

You're suggesting a generational conspiracy. Among the leaders of my world.

-- Cyl, Gard, Dax and Bashir discuss in the Senate (9x01)

GARD

It needn't necessarily be a
conspiracy. We could have
simply... forgotten.

-- Dax picks up the Kurlan *naiskos* fragment (9x01)

DAX

Can anyone hazard a guess about
this thing?

-- Bashir and Dax standing over Jadzia's grave (9x01)

BASHIR

This is a fragment of an ancient
Kurlan *naiskos*. We know the
parasites are related to the
symbionts. This thing suggests
they also have a connection to
Kurl. Maybe all three points are
connected. Perhaps the Kurlans
might also have been a joined
species, like the Trill.

-- Bashir rescues Dax from Verad's clutches (8x10)

DAX

Verad... you can't let him... The
symbionts, Julian... he wants to
kill them all.

-- Vaughn discusses with Trill President Maz (8x10)

VAUGHN

I've spoken with Doctor Bashir,
and he believes Verad was using a
drug designed to make all Trill
humanoids incapable of joining.

MAZ (screen)

If that's true, Commander, then
this isn't just a small political
uprising. This is the end of Trill
society as we know it.

VAUGHN

I hope his resentments aren't held
by more of your people... or else
the damage he inflicted will seem
small by comparison.

-- More scenes of violence and rioting and arrests (9x01)

NEWSREADER (v.o.)

One of the loudest voices is the
radical Neo-Purist movement,
inspired by the terrorist Verad
Kalon...

-- Watching the Neo-Purists' message on the screen (9x01)

WOMAN

Be warned. In the defence of our
world, we are prepared to take
drastic measures.

-- Bashir and the injured family on the streets (9x01)

MOTHER

Have the bombs gone off yet?

-- Rianu reporting to Cyl in the Senate elevator (9x01)

RIANU (comm)

Patrol vessel TDM-one-twelve
reports that a small device
detonated in low orbit directly
above Leran Manev. They say it
sent out some kind of electro-
magnetic pulse, but it dissipated
before they could analyse it.

-- In the Senate offices (9x01)

DAX

We have to find out the truth.
That's the root of the problem.

BASHIR

That is our main problem. Putting
a stop to the violence.

-- Then outside in the shuttle parking lot (9x01)

DAX

I don't have time to debate this
with you now.

BASHIR

Please, Ezri. Think for a minute
about what you're about to do.

DAX

Report to Emergency Response,
Doctor.

-- Dax arrives at Mak'ala and meets Keru (9x01)

DAX

Ranul! Oh, it's good to see a
friendly face. I've come to ask
for the help of the Guardians.

KERU

I'm happy to assist however I can.

-- Keru receives the message of the symbionts (9x01)

KERU

Just swim to the very bottom of
the pools. Where nobody's ever
gone before.

-- Bashir gets knocked out by a gang of Trill youths (9x01)

-- Dax sinks deeper into the darkness of the pools (9x01)

VOICEOVER

And now, the conclusion.

2 UNDERWATER

EZRI DAX continues to sink down through the dark, spooky
water, lit only by the tiny lights of her environment suit.

As she swims on into the depths, she sees a few SYMBIONTS
shadowing her along side. The swimming creatures "talk" to
each other with their electrical discharges. Dax is nervous
about going too deep, but their presence reassures her.

One of them flashes a message straight to Ezri's belly, talking directly to Dax. Ezri smiles as she receives the comforting communication. She reaches up to the neck of her suit and taps a comm circuit placed there.

DAX

Dax to Cyl.

CYL (comm)

Cyl here. How's your descent going, Lieutenant?

3 **INSIDE THE SUIT**

Ezri glances at her heads-up display, on the inside of her helmet face-panel. With dark and murky water behind them, one display shows AIR SUPPLY, another SUIT TEMPERATURE, another WATER PRESSURE. All are currently at normal levels.

4 **UNDERWATER**

Ezri also raises her arm, where a tricorder screen is incorporated into the suit. She checks readings on it.

DAX

So far so good, as long as 'down' is the right general direction. But I'm not sure how long I'll be able to keep this channel open.

CYL (comm)

Understood. I guess I don't need to remind you to be careful.

DAX

No, you don't...

Dax reaches a ledge in the rock face. She pauses on the edge, looking down into the seemingly bottomless chasm. As she pauses, her symbiont escorts do too. They gather, hovering. Dax looks at them, and understands.

DAX

You want me to go on alone? You can't... or won't go any deeper.

Nodding acceptance of this, she STEPS OFF and lets herself fall deeper into the water. She glances around, seeing nothing in the depths. She has to control her breathing, making sure to keep it regular and not let herself panic.

Another LIGHT SOURCE gradually filters in - winding threads of bioluminescent matter in the rock faces. Not the sickly green of the parasites, but a warm and reassuring orange.

She reaches out to touch the stuff - a mat of coral-like microbes. Some drifts off into the water at her touch.

DAX

Maybe this is what they eat when they're down here unjoined. Maybe the symbionts don't share everything with us when they join.

She carries on her descent. Further, further... finally Dax's boots TOUCH DOWN onto a solid surface, and she comes to rest. Looking around her, she still can't see much.

Then, far in the distance, she sees an elaborate electrical discharge, similar to how the symbionts communicate, but lasting longer. After a moment, another discharge replies.

Enchanted, Dax moves towards the lights, walking along the rough cavern floor. Dim, indistinct shadows create the long-lasting flashes, which come in a variety of colours.

Suddenly, Dax reacts to movement out of the corner of her eye. She turns to see a gigantic SYMBIONT GUIDE, the same overall shape as Dax itself but almost two metres long.

The creature swims slowly and inquisitively around her. She gawks in amazement, raising her tricorder for readings. It sends a long, continuous unbroken blue message to her abdomen. A gentle, curious VOICE echoes through Dax's head.

SYMBIONT GUIDE (v.o.)

The Annuated have been told to expect you. They understand the danger Trill faces. The Annuated have consented to interrupt their isolation in order to help.

DAX
Annuated...?

SYMBIONT GUIDE (v.o.)
The Annuated. The eldest of the
Swimmers. The keepers of their
most ancient memories.

While the connecting electric-blue filament continues, Dax
tries to accept this larger version of a symbiont.

DAX
So you can tell me the truth about
Trill's relationship to the
parasites? And to Kurl?

SYMBIONT GUIDE (v.o.)
I cannot.

DAX
(confused, frustrated)
You just said the Annuated are the
keepers of the oldest memories.

SYMBIONT GUIDE (v.o.)
Yes. But I do not yet qualify as
Annuated. That is for some aeon
yet to come.

DAX
That makes no sense. According to
this you're at least five thousand
years old. That makes you the
oldest symbiont anyone's ever
encountered.

The continuing blue discharge seems to flash brighter, the
colours varying. The Guide's voice becomes light, amused.

SYMBIONT GUIDE (v.o.)
I am but young. I tend to the
material needs of the Annuated. I
ensure that their eggs reach the
shallows. I assist the Annuated in
assimilating the memories of those

Swimmers who come here to die. It
is the memories kept by the
Annuated that you seek.

Dax reels with all these revelations about the symbionts.

DAX

All right. Where are these...
Annuated?

SYMBIONT GUIDE (v.o.)

You are among them already.

The Guide ends its connection to Dax, and sends a massive electrical discharge out towards the rock faces surrounding them. The FLASH bounces from one wall to the next, moving around to every surface within sight.

Then the ground begins to move under Dax's boots. As she is tossed gently into the swaying water, the walls begin to MOVE, writhing like a gigantic fish.

More electrical discharges FLASH around her, surrounding her, and she realises that the walls are not rock. They are made of humongous symbionts, just waking up. Each one is thirty feet long at least, and there are dozens of them, all beginning to swim grandly and majestically around her.

On Dax's utterly dumbfounded expression...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 EXT. MANEV HOSPITAL - DAY

A large and technologically advanced building, with many Trill moving about urgently - patients, doctors, police.

6 INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION

Very busy. Staff are just about coping with the rush of injured patients, either bloody from the fights or suffering breathing problems like the family from 9x01.

Into this chaos staggers BASHIR, using his sleeve to mop up blood from his head and nose. He spots a nurse and moves towards her, but gets woozy and collapses into a seat. Seeing him, nurse JENK approaches, nice but in a hurry.

JENK

Sir, can you hear me?

BASHIR

Of course I can hear you. I was just mugged, but I'm going to be fine. I'm a doctor -

JENK

Let me look at that.

She pulls away his hand and inspects the wound on his head. She grabs a cloth and starts quickly wiping the blood away.

JENK

You look worse than you are.

BASHIR

(sarcastic)

Thanks for the inspiration. You've got a great bedside manner.

JENK

You may have noticed we're a bit busy. No time for sweetness.

The nurse grabs a hypo and injects his neck.

BASHIR

I'm a doctor with Starfleet. I can help you here.

JENK

That's just what I was thinking. I recognised the uniform.

BASHIR

Has there been any word from the police about the bombs?

JENK

(worried)

What bombs?

7 INT. TRILL SENATE SECURITY CENTRE

As before, packed with harried Trill Defence Force officers rushing from one monitor to another. HIZIKI GARD is speaking loudly over the clamour with Colonel RIANU.

GARD

What do you mean, no-one has been able to find President Maz?

RIANU

Exactly what I said, Mister Gard. We're having more and more communications blackouts. We lost contact with the President's contingent five minutes ago.

GARD

Was she warned about the bomb threats? Is she on her way to the emergency shelters?

RIANU

We tried. We think Captain Grekel heard our warnings before we were cut off. We - ... Hold on.

Rianu touches her ear-comm and listens with a worried look.

RIANU

Two teams have found additional bombs in the vicinity. One at the Najana library, another at the shuttle station on Maran Avenue. They're trying to disarm them now.

GARD

Do we know what kind of bombs they are yet?

RIANU

Negative. I'm told there are traces of some kind of radiation, but we can't analyse it on the spot. We can try beaming them out if we can get site-to-site transporter stanchions in place.

GARD

There's bound to be more of these things. We should evacuate as many people as possible from the central districts. Get all key officials to radiation-shielded facilities as quickly as possible.

RIANU

Yes, Mister Gard.

He is already walking away, back to the elevator doors.

8 UNDERWATER

Dax treads water inside her environment suit, deep in the pools of Mak'ala. The huge Annuated symbionts swim slowly around her in a circle, like a school of manatees.

The mid-sized SYMBIONT GUIDE floats inside the circle with Dax. She raises her sleeve-mounted tricorder again, taking readings, absorbing them with amazement.

DAX

Over twenty-thousand years old...

9 **INSIDE THE SUIT**

Ezri sighs in wonder as she looks out at the gigantic creatures. Unnoticed for now, the readings on her in-helmet display show her air supply beginning to lower, while the temperature and pressure are beginning to rise.

10 **UNDERWATER**

DAX
(wondering aloud)
Is this where the Dax symbiont
will eventually end up, centuries
from now?

The Guide sends a snaking blue finger of electricity out to touch Dax's stomach.

GUIDE (v.o.)
Perhaps. If you take care not to
get it killed in the meantime.

Sweat drips down Dax's face as the suit temperature crawls slightly higher. She can't wipe it away.

DAX
Speaking of not dying prematurely,
I think we had better get started.

GUIDE (v.o.)
Impatient youth.

DAX
Look, I don't have a lot of time.
Just how long -

One of the Annuated answers her with a powerful discharge of electricity that HITS Dax square in the faceplate. It knocks her rolling backwards, and we ZOOM IN on her face...

11 **MEMORY MONTAGE**

-- Dax, no enviro-suit, on a plain white background, turns with surprise, her eyes opening wide as she sees...

-- A random Trill humanoid woman happily feeds a gurgling baby in its pram.

-- White space, Dax again, a new memory coming at her...

-- A symbiont plunging deep into the water, heading down towards the home of the Annuated.

-- A random Trill male uses some kind of blowtorch tool before sitting back to admire his handiwork.

-- Dax again, turning to see another new memory...

-- A prehistoric caveman Trill crouches by a river, a woman laid on the ground before him. He raises a symbiont in his hands to the approval of the other gathered cavemen, and then slowly lowers it towards the woman's abdomen.

-- Dax in her enviro-suit, underwater, her eyes scrunched shut and teeth gritted as she experiences...

-- A dog-like animal lies by a lake. A symbiont wriggles out of the water, squirms its way inside the abdominal pouch, and after a moment the animal gets up and trots off.

-- Underwater, three filaments of bio-electricity are now connecting the enviro-suited Dax to the massive floating Annuated. One of the filaments suddenly pulses with extra power, a stronger message coming to her...

12 INT. TRILL STARSHIP BRIDGE

...Dax finds herself standing on the bridge of a starship of a fairly early design. All around are Trill humanoids in uniform, as is she - she is one of the ship's crew.

On the viewscreen, the crew gazes with awe and wonder at a beautiful blue-green world, growing slowly closer in space.

TRILL 1

There it is... The first other world we've ever found, that's capable of supporting both humanoid and symbiont throughout all of both species' life-cycles. Or so the surveys say.

TRILL 2

It took us long enough to find it.
Let's hope we don't have to travel
as far or search as long to locate
the next one.

Dax shares their excitement - she is really someone else now, reliving another's memories. She turns around and sees a podium taking pride of place on the bridge. On the podium is a Kurlan *naiskos* (TNG 6x20 "The Chase"). She caresses it with affection, speaking the other person's words.

DAX

Imagine it... an exclusive society
where everyone is joined. There
will be no "unjoined underclass."
No Trill need ever live without
the immortality of joining again.
It will be... paradise... on this
beautiful new world.
(with delight)
Everyone... welcome to Kurl.

Not-Dax smiles beatifically...

13 UNDERWATER

... while in her enviro-suit, the real Dax's jaw drops as she absorbs this revelation. On the display, the water pressure and suit temperature gauges keep creeping higher.

14 EXT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA - DAY

RANUL KERU stands in the mouth of the caves. He sees the crowd of protesters, being held back by Trill Defence Force officers. They have woken up again now after their phaser stunning, more agitated and boisterous than ever.

TAULIN CYL notices Keru standing there, and comes to him.

CYL

Mister Keru.

KERU

General. What's riling them now?

CYL

We don't know. But from the way they've been checking their chronometers, they're expecting something to happen soon.

KERU

Co-ordinated attacks? Could they be moving against other spawning grounds, or the Symbiosis Commission?

CYL

Unfortunately, all communications are still being jammed. We don't know what's happening elsewhere, and I doubt anyone outside is hearing our messages either.

Keru looks back out at the crowd. He sees their placards, carrying slogans like JOINED FOR UNJOINED RIGHTS and MY DAUGHTER DESERVES A SYMBIONT TOO! He is not pleased.

KERU

I don't see why they'd attack here. It's not the symbionts' fault that our society has flaws. It's ours.

CYL

The Neo-Purists don't agree.

There is a slight RUMBLING from above and behind them, like falling rocks. Keru TURNS to see figures clambering over the high rock faces above the cave entrance.

KERU

General, behind us! We're under attack!

Keru dashes back into the cave just long enough to grab a Starfleet phaser he had left on the cave floor. Then he is back beside Cyl, FIRING up at the half-dozen protesters who have tried to get around the police. One of them is hit and tumbles down the rocks, falling to the ground with a THUMP.

Keru takes what cover he can in the cave and keeps firing. Cyl and his officers are occupied with the even more rowdy protesters, who are now openly fighting the police.

One of the protesters gets close enough to rush Keru at the mouth of the cave. Keru is busy firing on the ones from above and is caught off guard. But his attacker is felled at the last moment by a PHASER blast from off-screen. Keru turns to see Cyl lower his weapon and nod "you're welcome."

KERU

General... if I can get down to the *Rio Grande* I might be able to do something about this.

CYL

Do whatever you need to, Mister Keru. This is getting out of hand, and my officers are severely outnumbered. I'll cover you.

With another nod, Keru begins his dash towards the runabout. Cyl FIRES on another attacker from above while Keru keeps his head down to avoid the phaser blasts.

15 INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM

Emergency room bedlam - trauma cases are arriving apace and the Trill medics are struggling to cope. Into this comes a tired and bloody police woman - SAGADO - carrying a pre-teen boy unconscious in her arms.

SAGADO

I need help, please! Somebody...

BASHIR (o.s.)

In here!

Looking past the crowds, she sees BASHIR beckoning her to him. She carries the boy gratefully into a semi-private cubicle area, where Bashir takes the boy from her arms. Nurse Jenk is already there.

Sagado begins to turn away, wiping blood from her face. He calls her back.

BASHIR

I meant both of you. You can't go
back out there in your condition.

Sagado is about to protest when she becomes dizzy. She
takes the hint and sits down. Bashir places the boy gently
on the biobed and inspects the display readings.

BASHIR

There are severe fractures
throughout this child's body.
(dismayed)
Oh... a fragment of a rib has
entered his spinal column.

Sagado stands again, the colour draining from her face.

SAGADO

I didn't make it worse, did I?

BASHIR

Sit! You're making it worse on
yourself!
(to Jenk)
Get sterile instruments ready.
We're going to try and save him.

Jenk turns away to begin prep. Chaos continues outside the
cubicle, with people rushing past and the sounds of moans
and cries clear. As Bashir begins to wash up...

BASHIR

Officer...

SAGADO

...Sagado. Rame Sagado.

BASHIR

Officer Sagado, I need you to get
over here and wash up. I'm afraid
it's just the three of us, and I'm
going to need your help.

Sagado nods nervously and gets to her feet, walking to the
sink. Bashir finishes washing and puts on sterile gloves.

BASHIR

Right. We'll begin by clearing the damage to his spine. We can go in through the symbiont pouch -

Then a Trill doctor, TORVIN, is at the cubicle entrance, leading a gurney on which an older Trill man lies.

TORVIN

We need this cubicle.

BASHIR

(doesn't look up)

It's in use. I'm trying to save the life of this child.

TORVIN

From the looks of those scans, that child is beyond saving. We have a very important doctor from the Symbiosis Commission who needs surgery right now. His symbiont takes priority.

BASHIR

(dark and angry)

This child will survive, because we will keep working until we save him. I suggest you find another cubicle. Before it's too late.

Bashir turns back to his patient, the conversation over. He is in no mood for playing first-among-equals.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

16 UNDERWATER

The school of massive, undulating Annuated symbionts. As well as the usual symbiont shape, these giants possess numerous appendages, long and narrow, streaming from their sides. The smaller Guide symbiont has stubby, half-grown versions of these - they only develop with extreme age.

Ezri Dax still floats deep underwater, surrounded by them. She is seemingly held by the now half-dozen continuous bio-electrical communications the Annuated are sending to her.

Zooming in on her semi-conscious, far away face...

17 MEMORY MONTAGE

-- Dax in her white space, remembering others' memories...

-- Not-Dax caressing the *naiskos* on the starship bridge.

18 INT. KURLAN LABORATORY

Another new memory - Dax is now another person. She looks out of a sealed window onto a placid blue lake. Pleasure boats play across its surface. They are on Kurl itself.

Turning back to the room, she sees a laboratory, white and sterile. In the centre is a small and shallow bath in which sits a normal-sized symbiont. Two Trill humanoid SCIENTISTS lean over it, performing tests and checking readings.

DAX

It's so peaceful out there.

SCIENTIST 1

It won't stay that way. Not unless we find a way to neutralise this damned virus, and quickly.

SCIENTIST 2

It's killed more than a million Kurlans already.

19 **MEMORY FLASH**

Whip-fast images of Trill humanoids BELCHING blood from their mouths, WRITHING on the floor holding their bellies, symbionts RUPTURED and oozing pus...

20 **BACK TO SCENE**

Not-Dax shudders. Scientist 1 prepares a hypo and anxiously injects the symbiont, which shudders in response. Scientist 2 inspects readings from a tricorder-like device, relieved.

SCIENTIST 2

The RDNAL sequences are repairing and strengthening themselves, just as we saw in the simulations. With a few more adjustments to their genome, I think the symbionts will be completely immune.

SCIENTIST 1

Let's hope so.

In a flash, the laboratory is gone...

21 **MEMORY FLASH**

The sun-and-moon time-elapse image...

22 **INT. KURLAN MEDICAL THEATRE**

Not-Dax stands in a medical smock in an operating theatre. DOCTORS stand around a bed, on which lies a young male Trill INITIATE, nervous but excited to undergo joining.

Not-Dax watches with trepidation as the doctors lift the wriggling SYMBIONT out of a bath and hold it up - but this one looks more like a PARASITE. Its skin has become scaly and hard, its brown colour moving towards purple, and small pincers protruding from its head end.

DOCTOR

(proudly, to the room)

Now, observe. Our experiments have led us to the conclusion that the

symbionts will benefit from a more direct connection to their hosts. Therefore we have added these small grasping limbs...

(indicates the pincers)
...to the symbiont's genome. These will allow it to burrow gently and harmlessly through the host's throat and attach itself to the base of the brain-stem, thus creating a stronger joining and greater resistance to the virus.

As the others nod their understanding, the doctor brings the symbiont towards the initiate. Still nervous, the initiate leans his head back and opens his mouth wide. The symbiont takes over, crawling its way into the opening.

With the symbiont inside, the initiate closes his eyes and mouth, gritting his teeth against the intrusion. A moment, and he relaxes. Eyes still closed, he sits up. He smiles.

Then his eyes open, and they glint with the madness of the parasites. The smile turns into a rictus GRIN, saliva drooling from the side. Not-Dax recoils in horror...

23 MEMORY MONTAGE

-- The sun-and-moon time elapse image...

-- More scientists working with increasing worry and desperation in more laboratories...

-- Trill humanoid faces twisted by insanity and anger...

-- The Annuated sending ever stronger signals to Dax, swimming in her enviro-suit...

-- Dax's water pressure, air supply and suit temperature gauges moving closer to the red zone...

-- Violent, parasite-possessed humanoids attacking other Trill civilians, shaking off phaser shots...

-- White-space Dax beginning to cry from the memories...

24 INT. TRILL STARSHIP BRIDGE

Not-Dax is back on the bridge of a starship, more advanced and updated, a hundred years after the first scene. This is a military vessel, not a colony ship.

A stern female Trill CAPTAIN sits among her disciplined OFFICERS, all gazing with sadness and horror at the screen. It shows the world of Kurl again, but instead of blue-green and beautiful, it shows the scars of warfare, blackened spots, plumes of smoke, visible explosions on the surface.

CAPTAIN

Have they launched their ships?

OFFICER

None since we got here, Captain.
But some could have broken the quarantine and gotten off-world before we arrived. There's really no way to know for certain.

CAPTAIN

How many still alive down there?

OFFICER

Almost four million. All infected.

On the console before her, Not-Dax spots a flashing light.

DAX

Someone on the surface is hailing us, Captain. It's coming from a high-level official address.

CAPTAIN

Put it on screen.

Kurl's PRESIDENT appears on screen - a forty-ish Trill male whose madness-filled eyes sneer hatefully at the captain.

PRESIDENT (screen)

So you've finally come to kill the rest of us.

CAPTAIN

(upset, but holding
it together)

You've done a pretty thorough job
of that yourselves already. We've
been sent to maintain the medical
quarantine. By any means necessary.

PRESIDENT (screen)

You have failed to heal us. You
have betrayed our symbiosis. You
can no longer contain us. We have
vessels ready to launch even now.

CAPTAIN

Tell them they have to power down
and remain on the surface.

PRESIDENT (screen)

(laughing)

You do not command here.

OFFICER

Captain! I'm reading several
vessels leaving the surface.

The captain turns to Not-Dax, wishing she didn't have to do
this, but equally knowing she has no choice.

CAPTAIN

Private Memh, can you target all
four of them simultaneously?

DAX

Yes, Captain.

On screen, they can all see spots of light growing closer,
resolving into small escape shuttles.

Taking a deep breath, closing herself off from the guilt,
Not-Dax presses a button. Torpedoes scream out from the
bottom of the screen and hit all four vessels.

All around the bridge, the officers are almost in tears,
but holding it together for the sake of duty. Not-Dax won't
let herself look away from the screen.

OFFICER

They can still launch a lot of ships, Captain. We can't possibly chase down every last one of them. The risk to Trill is too great.

CAPTAIN

You're right, Mister Lev. Womb help us all, you're right.
(to Dax)
Private Memh, deploy biogenics, along with the incendiaries.

Dax/Memh forces her shaking hands to enter commands. More lights SHOOT out from the ship and plummet to the planet.

After a moment, they see the first EXPLOSIONS on the surface. Giant, circular detonations of white energy and radiation, followed by massive flames.

Dax/Memh stares at the screen, tears falling down her face.

25 **MEMORY MONTAGE**

- White-space Dax crying openly...
- A closed-door meeting between Trill officials...
- Pieces of paper being ripped up and thrown onto fires...
- Computer records being deleted wholesale...
- Bashir outside the Senate building, asking Dax...

BASHIR

Suppose you uncover some entirely new unknown horror from Trill's past. What will you do then?

26 **UNDERWATER**

In her enviro-suit, Dax gradually becomes aware of her surroundings again. The bio-electric signals from the Annuated cease one by one, until she is left alone, crying. The Guide floats towards her, sends a gentle message.

GUIDE (v.o.)

You have found what you sought.

She nods tearfully.

GUIDE (v.o.)

The Annuated are not accustomed to thinking at speeds compatible with youth. You must leave now, Ezri Dax, and allow them their rest.

From inside her enviro-suit, Dax stares back at the huge creatures as they swim away into the murky water.

DAX

You show me that ancient Trill committed genocide on its own people, and then just expect me to trot off like it's nothing?

GUIDE (v.o.)

Your ancestors did what they thought they had to do. You must try not to judge them too harshly. They discovered that our kind can be tampered with, perverted into a thing of horror. They sought to keep others from discovering this.

DAX

They killed four million people, then covered it up. That's a little hard for me to write off as mere youthful indiscretion.

GUIDE (v.o.)

Yes, they covered up their embarrassments. Just as Audrid Dax did. And so many others both before and after. Both Swimmers and Walkers.

Before she can reply, there is a loud and worrying CLICK from inside her enviro-suit.

27 **INSIDE THE SUIT**

The humming of the suit's cooling system dies out. Shocked out of her anger, Dax checks the readings on her in-helmet display. All the gauges are deep into the danger zone.

DAX

My suit... it's breaking down.
I'll never make it back to the
surface in time...

28 **EXT. RUNABOUT - DAY**

Keru reaches the runabout and flattens himself against the opposite side from the attackers. He quickly types a code into a recessed panel, and the hatch opens with a HISS.

29 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Keru rushes into the cockpit and immediately gives orders.

KERU

Computer, recognise Ranul Keru,
Lieutenant, USS *Enterprise-E*.
Authorisation seven-two-four-pi-
delta. Confirm.

COMPUTER VOICE

Authorisation confirmed.

Keru settles into the pilot seat, begins pressing buttons.

30 **EXT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA**

As his officers still battle increasingly desperately against the rioters, Cyl approaches Captain DOYOS.

CYL

Captain, when I give the command -
which I'm hoping to do any minute
now - I want all of our troops to
retreat by twenty metres.

DOYOS

Twenty metres? Sir, we'll be right
up against the cave entrance.

We'll be giving up all our manoeuvring room.

CYL

If what we have planned works, you won't need it. If it doesn't work, I won't give the signal. Just tell the troops.

Nodding uncertainly, Doyos moves away to relay the order.

In the background, we HEAR the runabout powering up and lifting off the ground on thrusters. Cyl looks up to see the runabout rising into the sky from behind the rock faces and moving slowly to position, high over the cave entrance.

31 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Keru sits in the pilot seat and looks out at the crowds, purposefully pressing a series of controls.

KERU

Okay Sean... you were the pilot.
Help me out here, babe.

32 EXT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA

Seeing emitters on the runabout's exterior flare into life, CYL turns and shouts to Doyos.

CYL

Captain! Now!

The police immediately FALL BACK towards the cave entrance. The rioters are momentarily confused, wondering what changed. But they quickly regather their momentum and SURGE forward *en masse*. They get only about a foot when they BOUNCE off against an invisible wall - a forcefield.

33 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Keru smiles with relief, letting out a held breath. Beside him, a panel shows a computer GRAPHIC of the runabout and its deflector shield bubble, extended out towards the cave and the rioters.

34 **EXT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA**

Doyos looks to Cyl, a little confused. Cyl grins.

CYL

Our Guardian friend modified the ship's forcefields to enclose everything from the skirmish line to the cave's entrance. Nobody is getting into the caves now.

A RUMBLING sound comes from behind the crowds. Some look confused, but most part to let the object through - a cargo skimmer being driven towards the caves.

DOYOS

Sir! The hostiles are driving a vehicle towards us.

CYL

Don't worry. They can't get that thing through the force-field.

But the driver does not seem interested in ramming the shield. The skimmer comes to stop well outside the limits. Now it is nearer, we can see some kind of roof rack holding a large silver object - one of the bombs.

The driver climbs out of the vehicle's cab, clambers up onto the roof, takes off the bomb's cover...

... and presses a button.

The screen momentarily **WHITES OUT**. The light recedes to reveal Trill all over the place collapsing in agony, SCREAMING, holding their heads or their bellies.

The forcefield from the runabout sparks and fizzles, but just about holds. Cyl collapses to his knees, groaning and retching...

35 **EXT. LERAN MANEV STREETS**

In the city, an open plaza in front of a large, ornate building is suddenly filled with a massive **WHITE LIGHT**,

expanding in a circle. It is the exact same type of explosion as Dax saw happening on Kurl.

36 **INT. ELEVATOR**

Gard is standing in the elevator, talking to Rianu on comm.

 RIANU (comm)
They've now found three devices.
All within half a kilometre of the
Senate Tower.

 GARD
 (urgent)
Colonel, make certain the guard
units at the Commission are aware
that -

Suddenly the building ROCKS and the lights FLICKER. Rianu's signal is lost in static and the elevator grinds to a halt, THROWING Gard roughly against the wall. He shakes it off, realising with horror what must have happened.

37 **EXT. TRILL SENATE BUILDING - DAY**

The plaza is filled with WHITE LIGHT, blinding the entire crowd and sending them all screaming to their knees.

38 **EXT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA - DAY**

Cyl lies writhing on the floor, among many (but not all) of his officers doing the same. He groans like his insides are being torn out, going pale... and he SCREAMS to the sky.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

39 ON THE BOMBER

Still on top of his vehicle, the bomber has been burned, boiled and skinned bloody by the radiation at the centre of the explosion. Perched against a railing, his body gradually loses its balance and topples to the ground.

40 EXT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA - DAY

He lands with a THUD on the ground, where the entire crowd has been knocked off its feet. The ones closest to the flashpoint are similarly burned but still alive and SCREAMing. The rest roll and grunt against the pain.

41 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Ranul Keru slumps across his console, barely clinging to consciousness. The radiation has made him weak - he fights through it, forces himself to concentrate. He looks out the window, confused at first. His eyes widen with horror...

42 EXT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA - DAY

The runabout slowly settles back down to the ground, avoiding the fallen and writhing Trill police.

Once down, the hatch opens and Keru runs out - still pale and sickly but pushing through. Reaching the police, he finds that most of them are now coming around, clambering to their feet, trying to figure out what happened.

Except for one - Cyl. He still lies on his back, letting out blood-curdling GROANS. His abdomen is moving violently under his jacket. Keru rips open his jacket and sees the writhing skin underneath - the symbiont is churning inside.

KERU

Captain! Help me with Cyl! We've
got to get him into the caves!

As Cyl SCREAMS again, holding his stomach in agony...

43 **INT. ELEVATOR**

Trapped inside the dark disabled elevator, Gard unholsters his phaser and FIRES it at the join in the door. He knows exactly what has happened out there, and wants to get out of here so he can help. He has not been affected himself.

GARD
I am not going to die in the dark.

44 **INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM**

The hospital is now overflowing with burned and injured Trill, and more and more joined humanoids are SHRIEKing in agony as their symbionts react to the radiation.

Of everyone, Bashir is the most together, the unjoined Trill staff just shaking off the after-effects. Around him, other hospital staff collapse to the floor, screeching and flailing. He is stunned at the scale of it all.

BASHIR
What the hell happened out there?

45 **UNDERWATER**

The symbiont Guide hovers in the water near Dax, still sending its bioelectrical communication.

GUIDE (v.o.)
You require rescue. The Annuated cannot help you.

DAX
If I die down here, the Annuated will have shared their memories with me for nothing.

The Guide seems to consider its options. It swims closer to Dax and comes up along side her. Another message...

GUIDE (v.o.)
Hold fast to my tendrils, young one. I will conduct you to the surface.

She grabs a hold of the stubby appendages along the symbiont's sides and lets it drag her upward through the water, swimming faster than she would ever be capable of.

GUIDE (v.o.)

Did you find the experiences the Annuated shared surprising?

DAX

More than you can imagine. I just hope that all the secrets I've dredged up will help calm down the chaos going on on the surface.

GUIDE (v.o.)

It will be interesting to see the Aboveworld again. My last Walker chose to end her life after the Kurlan civilisation was ended.

A stronger pulse along the electrical connection...

46 **MEMORY FLASH**

A young Trill woman kneels in a dark room, wearing a dark robe, her wrists slit and bleeding freely onto the floor.

47 **BACK TO SCENE**

DAX

You... you're Memh.

GUIDE (v.o.)

That was five thousand years ago. And I have not joined with a Walker since. I have stayed below, tending to those who preserve the memories of my time. Perhaps now is the moment to bring those memories forward into your time.

In her suit, Dax is sweating and finding it increasingly difficult to breathe. She checks her readings.

DAX

We need to go faster.

Instead, the symbiont comes to a halt, seemingly troubled.

DAX

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to -

GUIDE (v.o.)

Something has happened above us.
Something terrible. Many voices
are raised, yet many more have
gone silent.

Dax looks up into the water in worry...

48 **INT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA**

Keru, Doyos and two of his officers carry the groaning Cyl between them, rushing down the stony passages. Ahead of them in the caves there are cries of shock, dismay and panic. That doesn't help their own apprehension.

The group turns a corner to see the other Guardians by the edges of the pools. The milky water is clotted with the floating bodies of dead symbionts, bobbing lifelessly. The Guardians HOWL in despair, thrusting their hands into the water in attempts to reach them. Keru stops in horror.

KERU

They've killed the symbionts...

Cyl manages to grab Keru's arm. It brings Keru to his senses, and he leads the team towards the pools.

KERU

We need to extract his symbiont!
It's still alive!

Keru drags Cyl over to the main pool, stripping off his jacket and preparing to guide him into the water. A silver FLASH of electricity comes from one of the bodies in the pool and touches Cyl's abdomen. A moment later, a weaker, hesitant flash returns from Cyl to the pool.

GUARDIAN

They're communicating! They're not
dead - at least not all of them.

As the Guardians continue their efforts with renewed hope, Cyl manages to scratch words out for Keru.

CYL

I need to go down there. Dax is in trouble. She needs my help. Fal told me. Get me an enviro-suit.

KERU

What? General...

CYL

Get it now, Mister Keru. Please. We haven't got much time.

Not sure this is a good idea, but convinced by Cyl's determination, Keru turns and runs back out of the caves.

49 **INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM**

Bashir's cubicle-for-one is now packed with as many gurneys as will fit. The other patients all SCREAM as their abdomens squirm - the symbionts look like they will split straight through the skin with the writhing.

Bashir goes to a woman and injects a hypo into her neck - she calms slightly, but still whimpers under her breath. Officer Sagado re-enters the cubicle, looking horrified at the traumatised patients, traumatised herself.

BASHIR

Officer Sagado, do they have any clue what happened? I know it was some kind of radiation bomb...

SAGADO

Neurogenic radiation, plus an electromagnetic pulse. The whole city's in chaos, they all are. Gheryzan, New Scirapo, Bana...

BASHIR

Anything about Mak'ala?

SAGADO

No. It must be the Neo-Purists.
They hate the symbionts, and this
radiation is only affecting joined
Trills. They're all rejecting...

BASHIR

Yes, they are. And it's killing
them all. Again. Just like Verad
and his damn drugs...

Bashir trails off, an idea occurring to him, his mind
spinning with possibilities...

BASHIR

Verad... Gheryzan...
(dropping tools)
Nurse, keep them comfortable and
try to slow the rejections down.
I'll be back as soon as I can.

With that, he rushes out of the cubicle, leaving Jenk and
Sagado confused, worried and overwhelmed.

50 **INT. CAVES OF MAK'ALA**

Keru runs back into the caves, struggling to carry two
environment suits from the runabout with him. Cyl sits on
the side of the pool, pale as death but grimly determined.

KERU

I haven't been affected, General.
I ought to go with you.

CYL

(grabbing a suit)
I'm perfectly capable of handling
this on my own, Mister Keru. You
stay here. You have injured
friends who need your help. More
importantly, you have to tend to
the symbionts. The ones who are
still alive...

KERU

You're... not well, General.

CYL

That's not as important as making sure that Lieutenant Dax fulfills her mission.

Keru finally nods, accepting Cyl's decision. He helps as Cyl struggles against the pain to get into the suit. Once ready, he steps into the water, careful to avoid the floating symbiont bodies. He turns back to Keru with an air of finality and grace in the face of death.

CYL

Thank you for everything you've done today. Neither Cyl nor I blame you for what has happened. Without your help, many more of us would be gone.

The slip of the tongue did not go unnoticed by Keru - Cyl's symbiosis is dissolving. He turns and slips into the water, disappearing into its clouded depths. Keru watches him go.

51 INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM

Chaos still reigns. Bashir re-enters the cubicle carrying a large rack of hypos, filled with a chemical. But he finds Doctor Torvin busy operating on one of the patients with Jenk's help. Torvin is removing the woman's symbiont.

Two other patients have already been operated on - their symbionts rest in porta-pools which Sagado is carefully scanning. The hosts have been covered over with sheets - they are dead. Bashir sees all of this, and he is furious.

BASHIR

What the hell are you doing?

TORVIN

(equally incensed)

I should think that was obvious, Doctor. These symbionts urgently need to be removed from their hosts before they expire. So I am saving their lives, instead of running off with no explanation, like some.

BASHIR

And for every symbiont you save,
you're perfectly happy to let a
humanoid die, is that right?

TORVIN

A host must sometimes be
sacrificed to save a symbiont, and
you know that perfectly well.

BASHIR

Not when there are other options!

TORVIN

There are no other options,
Doctor! Symbionts take priority
over hosts, always!

BASHIR

If you'd just waited, I could have
brought you another option. But
instead you've just wasted those
people's lives for no reason.

TORVIN

What are you gibbering on about?
Once a symbiont is removed, the
host always dies regardless.

BASHIR

Not always. Last year, Verad Kalon
tried the same thing - forcing
every joined Trill to reject their
symbiont. Except he used a drug
instead of radiation - invented by
a Trill scientist named Bethan
Roa, at Gheryzan Hospital.

TORVIN

Gheryzan is a mental hospital. I
fail to see how that's relevant.

BASHIR

It's relevant because the drug's
effects dissolve the symbiosis

without killing the host. All of these people would be alive right now if you'd used it.

TORVIN

Doctor... I have never heard of Bethan Roa, and Verad Kalon was a terrorist psychopath. Even if he weren't, he is dead.

BASHIR

I'm not surprised you've never heard of Roa - there's no record of his work at Gheryzan anywhere in the Trill medical records. It seems he's the victim of another Symbiosis Commission whitewash.

TORVIN

(intrigued now)

We're not monsters, Doctor. If such a drug did exist, why would anyone want to suppress it?

BASHIR

Doctor Torvin, imagine what would happen if it became known that symbiosis could be undertaken on a temporary basis. That the bond could be established, then broken, then remade again just as easily. The symbionts would become black market commodities, bought and sold. Join for a day, no strings attached!

Torvin is appalled at the thought. But he is beginning to believe Bashir may be right.

TORVIN

But you said there was no record of it. So this is all academic.

BASHIR

Luckily for these people, I happen to have a photographic memory.

(holds out the hypo)
This is the correct formula right
here. I have enough for everyone.

Torvin takes the hypo from Bashir, considering it. But then he shakes his head, putting it firmly aside.

TORVIN

I'm sorry, Doctor, but I can't allow you to use it. Even if this drug can do what you claim - which I sincerely doubt - it is untested and experimental, and I will not use it on these patients without extensive testing. Which we obviously don't have time for.

BASHIR

Well, I'd rather take risks than stand by and do nothing. So if you don't mind, I have lives to save.

Bashir moves forward, getting ready to inject the remaining patients with his drug. But Torvin blocks him, determined. Jenk and Sagado stand by, unsure what to do.

TORVIN

Doctor Bashir, I will not allow you to endanger these symbionts with an experimental procedure. I must ask you to leave this room and let me get back to work. I've wasted enough time talking about this nonsense already.

Bashir stands his ground, fuming. Torvin stands his.

TORVIN

Very well. If you won't leave voluntarily, I'll have to have you removed. Officer Sagado, please escort Doctor Bashir off the premises immediately.

Putting down her tricorder, Sagado approaches Bashir and takes his arm, dragging him unwilling to the door.

52 **UNDERWATER**

The Guide symbiont, Memh, pushes on through the water, a barely conscious Dax clinging desperately to its tendrils.

As they rise, they pass first one dead and sinking symbiont body, then another, then more and more. Some of them emit fragile, half-hearted flashes of bio-electricity between each other, the last gasps of communication. The Guide sends a probing message up into the water.

GUIDE (v.o.)
The Walker needs help.

53 **ON DAX**

She can't hold on anymore. There is no oxygen left, she is boiling in her suit. Her increasingly clumsy fingers slowly lose their grip on Memh's tendrils, and she slips back down into the dark water, losing consciousness as she goes, falling down with all the other dying symbionts.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

54 DARKNESS

A scratchy, static-laden comm signal...

CYL (comm, v.o.)
Dax... mama...

FADE UP to reveal...

55 UNDERWATER

Dax is still inside her enviro-suit, all gauges in the red. She is unconscious, drenched in sweat and barely breathing.

Taulin Cyl is in another suit, gently shaking Dax, trying to get her back. He is in terrible pain, pale and sickly, wracked with cramps, but grimacing past it.

The symbiont Guide floats nearby, observing the procession of dead and dying symbionts sinking to the depths.

CYL (comm)
Don't die, Dax...

56 INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM

Bashir is just at the threshold of the surgery cubicle, being dragged by Sagado, still protesting.

BASHIR
You're making a mistake, Torvin.
And all these people's lives will
be on your head.

TORVIN
Get that idiot out of here.

Torvin turns back to his surgery. Bashir is about to be lost in the masses of panicked patients and staff filling the corridors. But with a burst of strength, he breaks free. He RUN back into the room, quickly GRABS a hypo, easily DODGES past Torvin's attempts to block him.

Bashir jabs one of the patients with the hypo directly into her writhing abdomen. Torvin furiously PUSHES Bashir away from the patients. Sagado and Jenk grab him and hold him.

TORVIN

You'd better believe I'll be telling your superiors about this, Doctor Bashir. Your Starfleet career is finished!

BASHIR

Maybe. But that hardly seems as important as all the lives you're willing to throw away for the sake of expediency.

Under this, the patient's squirms start to reduce, and the symbiont is starting to settle. Torvin notices this, and for a moment he is scared that Bashir has killed her.

But then the patient begins taking shallow but regular breaths. Torvin urgently runs tests to see for sure.

TORVIN

(amazed)

Let him go...

Jenk and Sagado release Bashir - he steps closer to Torvin.

BASHIR

(gently)

Doctor... I know you don't want these hosts to die any more than I do.

Still stunned at the patient's rapidly improving readings, Torvin looks at Bashir, holding out his hand for a hypo.

TORVIN

We have a great deal of work ahead of us, Doctor. Don't you agree?

Bashir smiles and hands Torvin a hypospray. Jenk and Sagado relax, and they all dig in to begin operating.

Dax's eyes finally flutter open, to Cyl's great relief.

CYL (comm)
You're awake.

DAX
Taulin... what's wrong?

Dax looks around, confused and semi-conscious. Her head is beginning to clear, and she is breathing easier. She sees Memh floating nearby, and all the dead symbionts. One normal-sized symbiont circles Cyl protectively.

CYL (comm)
It was the bombs. The Neo-Purists set them off on the surface. They irradiated all the joined Trill up there, as well as the symbionts in the upper pools. Must have killed hundreds of them.

(re his symbiont protector)
Fal here was one of the lucky ones. He guided me to you.

DAX
(horrified)
How widespread was the damage?

CYL (comm)
It seemed to affect those nearest the surface the most.

GUIDE (v.o.)
Neurogenic radiation. The Kurlans of old died in the same way. That secret apparently did not remain concealed with all the others.

DAX
Is it safe to go back to the surface? My suit is damaged. I can't spend any longer down here.

Through his own pain, Cyl smiles at her knowingly.

CYL (comm)

I know. I replaced your cooling unit with the one from my suit. You'll have as long as you need to get back to the surface.

DAX

But how will you -

CYL (comm)

We are becoming unjoined.

Dax begins to realise what he means - he is dying, and he saved her while doing so. She begins to cry.

DAX

No! There's got to be some other way. Some way to heal you.

CYL (comm)

(at peace)

There isn't, Ezri. I have lived a long life, and my symbiont has lived far longer. I think we've served our people well.

DAX

(shocked)

You're both going to die?

CYL (comm)

We don't know. Taulin Kengro will no longer live in this body. But with luck, his memories will remain. We will go to where you have just been. To the Annuated.

With a new spasm of pain, Cyl prepares himself.

CYL (comm)

It has been an honour to know you, Ezri Dax. Goodbye... mama.

He reaches up to his suit, and twists a control. Bubbles burst up out of the suit and into the water, his air going. He lets himself sink as the water comes rushing in.

Dax watches him sink into the darkness, tears streaming down her face. The smaller symbiont, Fal, follows him down. Her guide, Memh, sends her a gentle communication.

GUIDE (v.o.)

I regret your loss, young one.
Shall we continue to the surface?

As Dax continues to stare down into the dark water...

CROSS-FADE INTO:

58 EXT. TRILL SENATE BUILDING - MORNING

The morning after. The streets are comparatively quiet, the crowds mostly gone, the violence and horror having worn themselves out. The few people who remain now seem to realise what their rioting has led to - deaths uncounted.

In the shuttle parking area, the *Rio Grande* settles to the ground. The hatch opens, and Dax steps out. She is still recovering emotionally, having been deeply affected.

As she approaches the building, Bashir is there. He is in a similar mood - sad, exhausted, shaken, and just pleased to see she is alright. They didn't part on good terms. But for now, they just want to hug each other and hold on tight.

59 INT. TRILL SENATE OFFICE

Dax and Bashir now stand together at the window, looking down at a more peaceful crowd that is now starting to come together on the plaza below. After their greeting, things have now gone back to stiff and uncertain between them.

On the other side of the room, Hiziki Gard stands at the desk. His symbiont is safe, although he does look a bit scruffy after being trapped in the lift.

BASHIR

How much does the president know?

DAX

Everything. At least, everything I know. I gave her a full report before she went into surgery.

BASHIR

Are you sure that was wise?

DAX

Of course not, Julian. But as you've observed yourself on more than one occasion, our habit of secrecy hasn't exactly been healthy for us.

JULIAN

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to criticise. I was just curious about the details.

DAX

(mollified slightly)

I told Maz all about the ancient Kurlan colony, the one that was buried so deeply that no-one knew we were travelling the stars more than five-thousand years ago. I told her about the disease, about the genetic engineering project that created the parasites. We created the parasites. And then we tried to kill them all. It's no wonder they hated us.

BASHIR

How did she react?

DAX

Pretty much the way I expected. I can't really say I blame her for demanding to see some proof.

BASHIR

I suppose you can't ask for better proof than what came back with you from below the surface.

A large door opens and Trill President LYRISSE MAZ enters. She is tired, looking older, a little haggard. She nods to Dax and Bashir, and to Gard, who has been preparing the desk for her. Then she sits.

GARD

It's still a powder keg out there, Madam President. It might not be prudent to reveal absolutely everything Lieutenant Dax discovered at Mak'ala.

DAX

Madam President, the Federation Council is going to expect your government to answer some pointed questions about the treatment of the unjoined. And to offer redress of their legitimate grievances.

GARD

I think the terrorists may have already undermined whatever moral legitimacy the unjoined masses may have had.

BASHIR

Rubbish. The extremists were a tiny minority. There's no question the people out there have been wronged, and that the injustice has gone on for centuries. They will no longer meekly accept second-class citizenship, no matter how its justified.

DAX

You owe the Trill people nothing less than the whole truth, Madam President. It's the best way to honour the memories of those people... and to help heal the damage we're suffering now as a result of what happened then.

GARD

Taking in too much truth too quickly is like trying to drink from a tidal wave, Lieutenant.

MAZ

(to no-one in particular)

Perhaps you're right.

Preparing herself with a deep breath, she presses a button. A red light comes on, indicating a camera running. She speaks with conviction, faking it at first, but gradually coming to believe it more herself as she proceeds.

MAZ

Citizens of Trill... young, old, joined, unjoined... I come before you to address the accusations made against my government by the group known as the Neo-Purists. They claimed that we had concealed vital information from our own people... and they were right.

(beat)

The parasites that have threatened our world and others are a monster of our own making. They were created on the planet of Kurl, a Trill colony established during a period of prehistoric space exploration. This government has known the truth for over a hundred years, ever since our first discovery of the parasites by a joint Trill-Starfleet team.

Dax is shocked to realise that was her mission - Audrid's. Maz continues to speak, admitting her guilt with dignity.

MAZ

I have continued the dishonest policies of my predecessors in this office by concealing this from you. And my failure has led us all to a precipice.

61 **EXT. TRILL SENATE BUILDING - DAY**

A large SCREEN set into the building's wall broadcasts the president's message to the crowd in the plaza.

MAZ (screen)

We do not have accurate figures,
but we know the humanoid death
toll is already in the thousands.
The radiation casualties among the
sybionts are even worse. As a
result of the Neo-Purist bombings,
the worldwide sybiont population
has been reduced... by more than
eighty percent.

She pauses a moment to let the enormity of that sink in for
the crowd, who look around themselves, astonished.

62 **INT. TRILL SENATE SECURITY CENTRE**

Colonel Rianu, Captain Doyos and their officers watch the
monitors on their computers, which show the president.

MAZ (screen)

You may rest assured that those
responsible for this atrocity will
be found and punished. But their
attacks were successful. It will
take many years - perhaps decades
- before the sybiont population
has recovered enough to allow any
to be spared for sybionism.

Pointless guilt wrestles with anger and determination.

63 **INT. TRILL SENATE OFFICE**

Maz sits at her desk...

MAZ

I therefore issue the following
emergency proclamation. The
Commission will authorise no new
joinings, and shall suspend all

pending joinings, until further notice. No existing joining will be terminated. But all symbionts will be returned to the breeding pools at the end of the lifetimes of their current hosts, and will not be reassigned at that time. The symbionts must survive.

Dax and Gard both react to that with unease - they are both still joined - but they understand why it is necessary.

MAZ

As radical as this change is, it affords us a unique opportunity. While we wait for the symbiont population to replenish its numbers, the distinctions our society has drawn between the joined and the unjoined will shrink and vanish. Because we will all be unjoined, sooner or later.

Now building to her conclusion, she pushes back from the table and stands up.

MAZ

I cannot issue such a sweeping proclamation without including myself. This morning I underwent an experimental medical procedure that successfully interrupted the symbiosis between myself and the symbiont to which I have been bonded for all my adult life.

She opens her jacket, lifts up the bottom of her blouse, and reveals a noticeably slackened abdominal pouch. The others are not surprised - they knew this had happened - but they recognise the significance of the gesture.

MAZ

I am no longer Lyrisse Maz. I am Lyrisse Durghan. The Maz symbiont has already been returned to Mak'ala, to help in the Guardians'

efforts to restore the population.
I am now, like you, unjoined. I
stand with you, as one of you.

(imploring)

I call upon those of you who have
taken your legitimate grievances
to the streets to put violence
aside now. We all stand together
on this precipice. Let us face our
common future together. A future
of progress and equality for all
of Trill. And let us start today.

She taps the button and switches off the camera. With a
sigh, she settles back into the seat, looking at the others
for their thoughts. It is done now, no taking it back. All
they can do is wait and see how it turns out.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

64 EXT. TRILL SENATE BUILDING - DAY

The crowd is dispersing, the show is over. The doors of the Senate Tower open, and Dax, Bashir and Gard exit. There is still tension and awkwardness - she can't quite look him in the eye. Gard is aware of the tension but does not comment.

As they cross the plaza, Keru comes to meet them. He is tired but keeping a brave face, and Dax is glad to see him.

DAX

Ranul! What brings you to the
Senate Tower?

KERU

Just wanted to say goodbye before
you left Trill.

DAX

Julian, you remember Ranul Keru,
from the caves?
(to Keru, re Gard)
And this is Hiziki Gard, a special
agent for the Commission.
(to Julian,
re Keru)
If not for Ranul, I'd never have
found what I needed.

KERU

I haven't seen so much action
since I left the *Enterprise*.
Didn't think I'd ever miss it.

BASHIR

Sounds like you're considering
going back to Starfleet.

KERU

Maybe, someday. If I thought
Starfleet needed me more than the
symbionts do. And not just the

younger ones either. The ancient symbionts you contacted have been taking on a lot of memories. They'll need our help too.

BASHIR

So little is known about that phase of the symbiont life cycle.

Dax tightens slightly, knowing that Bashir just said the wrong thing. Keru scowls a little, but remains polite.

KERU

I think maintaining the seclusion of the Annuated will be a higher priority than studying them.

BASHIR

I'm sorry, I didn't intend any offence.

GARD

(covering the awkwardness)

I believe the Senate has scheduled new hearings into the bombings.

KERU

Yes, I've been asked to testify. Maybe I'll see you again then, Lieutenant.

Keru nods polite goodbyes, and heads off into the Tower. Gard seems to take the hint.

GARD

Lieutenant, Doctor... thank you for everything.

And then he turns and walks back into the building too, leaving Dax and Bashir alone. They head to the runabout.

65 **EXT. SPACE**

Standard runabout at warp shot.

Dax and Bashir sit in the front seats, just keeping an eye on things, although there is nothing really to do. They are still not really talking. Dax's thoughts are miles away.

DAX

I was wondering... would I have the courage to give up my symbiont the way Maz did? I never wanted it in the first place. But now I get to keep mine, while the people who really want one can't have one.

BASHIR

I believe you're experiencing what's called survivor's guilt.

DAX

(exasperated)

Yes, thank you, Julian. But I am a trained counsellor.

BASHIR

Then you should understand that every joined Trill -

DAX

Every joined Trill is currently just running out the clock. And when they die, their symbionts will go back to the pools, with no chance of regaining their eyes and ears and arms and legs. And every humanoid will be cut off from everything the symbionts know. We might even forget why we joined in the first place. Even people who revere memories can forget what's important.

BASHIR

You've got maybe a century of life left yet, Ezri. The symbiont crunch will be over by then.

DAX

How can you be so sure?

BASHIR

Because I intend to help in any way I can.

She smiles, grateful for his support. But it does not relieve her thoughts all that much. Bashir hesitates - he has something else he needs to get off his chest.

BASHIR

Ezri... we have to talk. Before we get back to DS-Nine and get swept up into yet another crisis.

DAX

What do you want to talk about?

BASHIR

The mission, at least peripherally. But... it's really more about how you handled certain aspects of the mission.

She sits back, folding her arms in classic defensiveness.

DAX

My homeworld was attacked by a clandestine global terror network, Julian. Under the circumstances, I think the mission went as well as anyone could have hoped.

BASHIR

I certainly can't argue with that, at least in retrospect. But when I tried to point out that going to Mak'ala was risky, you just brushed me off. Dismissed me.

DAX

It was risky. I didn't need you to tell me that. But it was the right thing to do.

BASHIR

Again, in retrospect, yes. But at the time, it was as if you had no regard whatsoever for my input.

DAX

Ah. So it's not about the mission at all. It's about you being under me in the chain of command.

Frustrated by her defensiveness, he gets up and paces.

BASHIR

Dammit Ezri, don't trivialise this! I'm not trying to defend my delicate ego. We both took wholly opposite approaches to the crisis. Doesn't that bother you?

DAX

Not especially. It was my call, and I made it. But if this isn't about me moving to command, then what is it about?

BASHIR

It's about whether or not my expertise is important to you. My advice. My experience, although I freely admit I don't have eight lifetimes to tap into.

(pause)

Whether I'm important to you.

Dax realises what he is saying, and the exasperation drops.

DAX

And you think you've become less important to me since I started wearing this red collar.

BASHIR

(quiet, withdrawn)

It seems that way, yes. We do nothing but fight, Ezri. It's not meant to be this hard... is it?

Stricken, tears in her eyes, she gets up and goes to him, hugging him tight. He clings on for hope's sake.

DAX

You were in love with Jadzia.

BASHIR

I don't really see what that has to do with anything.

DAX

You loved her, but you lost her to Worf. Then she died, and you lost her again. Then Ezri Dax blundered into your life, and suddenly you had a second chance.

BASHIR

(pulling away)

I love you, Ezri. Not Jadzia's ghost. Don't you believe that?

DAX

I do believe you, Julian. But I've always wondered if the only reason for that is that you loved Jadzia first. We came together under some pretty intense circumstances. The emotional baggage with Jadzia and Worf. The Dominion War. The final attack on Cardassia Prime. We became a couple not even knowing if we'd survive the first day.

BASHIR

(nodding,
understanding)

And none of that bodes well for a stable relationship.

DAX

It isn't that you're not important to me, Julian. You're a dear, sweet man. A good man. But the part of me that's just plain old

Ezri wonders if we'd be together
at all if I didn't see you through
Jadzia's eyes... and you didn't
see her in mine.

He begins to protest, but can't. Deep down, he knows she is
right. There is not really anything else to say.

Taking her by the hand, he leads her back to the seats, and
they sit, still holding hands, holding on to the comfort.

BASHIR
(gently, with
acceptance)
I suppose we're done now. As a
couple, I mean.

He gazes into her eyes, sees her gazing into his.

BASHIR
I hope you won't mind me telling
you that I still love you. I think
I always will.

DAX
I'll always love you too, Julian.

But now they are only friends, nothing more. They quietly
drop their hands and turn to watch the stars. It's over.

67 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Rio Grande* warps through space on its way home.

FADE OUT:

THE END