

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x26 - "Unity, pt 3."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Unity

by SD Perry

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 MONTAGE FROM PREVIOUS EPS

-- The big exposition meeting in the wardroom (8x24)

KIRA

The situation is this.

VOICEOVER

Previously, on Deep Space Nine.

KIRA

First Minister Shakaar Edon was assassinated here on the station, just as he was about to sign Bajor into the Federation.

-- Hiziki Gard shoots and kills Shakaar (8x20)

KIRA (v.o. from 8x24)

The assassin was a member of the Trill Ambassador's entourage, a man named Hiziki Gard.

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

AKAAR

Shakaar was host to a parasite.

GARD

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

-- Jake introduces Wex and Opaka to the *Defiant* crew (8x22)

JAKE

This is Wex. She's on a pilgrimage.

-- Quark complains about Wex to Nog in his bar (8x25)

QUARK

The way she looks at me, not to
mention the company she keeps.
She's trouble.

-- The dream sequence, as the hand with the revolver shoots
50s-era Ruriko (8x25)

-- Akaar confronts Commander Vaughn on Bajor (8x25)

AKAAR

I'm sending you to the monastery
in Ashalla for a few days, to get
some rest.

-- Opaka and Vaughn in the monastery garden (8x25)

OPAKA

The Orbs of the Prophets are here.

-- Opaka opens the Ark; the Orb sweeps Vaughn away (8x25)

-- Inside the criminal asylum vision (8x25)

SUE-LYNN

Benny, this is Eli Underwood. Eli,
this is Benny Russell.

ELI

I'm here because I deserve to be.

BENNY

Then it must be where you belong.

-- Jake and Kasidy welcome Joseph and O'Brien (8x25)

JOSEPH

Jake, Jake... oh, thank God.

-- Jake places his hand on Kasidy's pregnant belly (8x25)

JAKE

Is it...?

-- Ro Laren overhears Kira and Akaar arguing (8x25)

AKAAR

We have vastly more important matters at stake, Colonel, than whether or not your security chief decides to resign.

-- Ro confronting the Bajoran woman in the corridor (8x25)

RO
We've got a queen.

-- Bashir in security, discussing the parasite queen (8x25)

BASHIR
If we kill her, any other females in the vicinity will know. It could be a major security risk.

GARD
I've spent all my lives preparing for this. It's what I do. If she's going anywhere, I'm taking her. The lockdown is over. Don't waste what little time you have left.

-- Once Gard has taken the queen parasite (8x25)

GARD
It's too late. We've already won. You will give us the bodies we need, or we will obliterate all you hold sacred.

GARD
She's... they're... there's only one. She sees the artefacts... Mother. Bajor. Tears.

-- The prylars shoot Vaughn and take the Orb away (8x25)

-- The Bajoran helpers invade Kasidy's house (8x25)

-- Back to the security meeting (8x25)

SELZNER (comm)
Colonel, something's happening on Bajor, General Lenaris is

reporting that a number of
skirmishes have broken out...

KIRA
I'm on my way.

-- As Kira moves into action:

VOICEOVER
And now, the conclusion.

2 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

KIRA NERYS bursts out of the security office, making her way across the Promenade. DAX, NOG and SHAR rush out after her and head in their own directions. RED ALERTS begin to sound with announcements over the comm system.

COMM VOICE (comm)
Station alert. Alien presence on board, lockdown status. Invaders are small, insectile, extremely dangerous -

Panicked people rush about while security (Starfleet, Bajoran and Cardassian) try to keep the peace. Kira doesn't want to ignore the worried people, but she has to - she has bigger problems right now. She heads towards a turbolift.

WEX (o.s.)
Colonel Kira.

Kira looks up to see WEX blocking her way, trying to get Kira's attention. It takes Kira a moment to recognise her.

KIRA
Wex. Now isn't a good time. If you'll excuse me -

WEX
I understand, but it's important that we talk. I may be able to help you. I want to help.

KIRA

You want to help, find Taran'atar,
tell him to report to Ro.

Kira steps past Wex, heading on to the turbolift. Wex tries to keep pace with her, but Kira isn't interested.

WEX

I know you'll want to hear what -

KIRA

It'll have to wait.

And she steps into the turbolift, leaving Wex to watch her go with her big black eyes.

3 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

RO hurries down the corridor, heading toward a disturbance. Also hurrying in the opposite direction are Nog, Shar and Chief O'BRIEN. Ro and O'Brien are surprised to see each other, but only have time to register each other and exchange friendly nods as they keep moving urgently.

4 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

The room is in commotion as the Red Alerts sound and flash, with EXTRAS rushing about to various tasks. Ro appears on the rising turbolift platform and heads towards Kira's office. Through the door she can see Kira talking animated on her comm screen. She notices Ro and beckons her in.

5 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

Kira closes the comm as Ro enters. Kira is tense, worried, guilty over what happened but determined to deal with it.

KIRA

Asarem tells me that she can't get through to the Ashalla monastery. There's been activity at at least five other sites. Hostages have been taken. Six senior members from the Chamber of Ministers, a number of prominent vedeks... and B'Hala, the Central Archives, and

the shrine at Kendra are all now under parasite control.

RO

We still have no trace on thirty-four people aboard the station, and three Cardassians have been injured by Bajoran mobs. But the parasites are definitely dying. The victims will all be okay.

Listening but also still constantly thinking, Kira comes to her decision. She speaks with confidence and strength, still working it out in her head even as she says it.

KIRA

Right. Good. Sounds like you're on top of it. I need you to get Nog, ch'Thane and Chief O'Brien to the *Defiant*, but do it quietly. Bare minimum crew, Nog will know who. Dax is already there, but she'll need to be alerted that we're go. Direct channel, go through my office. I'll get Selzner to cut us loose. Macet will spot us, even cloaked, but we can deal with that when it comes up...

RO

(impressed)

You're taking the *Defiant* out. Without Akaar's authorisation.

KIRA

Gard had to mean the parasite mother, the matriarch, and the Orbs are the only artefacts anyone calls the Tears. She's at the monastery, Ro, I know it. Kill the mother, maybe all the females die. Even if they don't, it will stop them from spreading.

RO

(nod to comm screen)

Did you tell them that?

KIRA

(shakes head)

Akaar was too busy ordering me to stand down to hear what I think. Starfleet has a way of overlooking renegade conduct when things turn out well. This is anything but.

Ro nods with sympathy, having experienced that herself.

KIRA (cont)

He says he'll deal directly with DS-Nine's officers from here on out... and Asarem only had time to tell me that Kasidy Yates and the Sisko family have been abducted. Keiko O'Brien and her children were left behind to pass along a warning. Any sudden moves will be dealt with harshly. They're safe, at least. I'm to confine myself to this office until the admiral gets here, at which time he'll take my report, and coordinate with the Federation and Asarem as to contacting the parasites to discuss their demands.

RO

That could take days.

KIRA

Which is why I'm going to try and stop her myself. This is my fault, Ro. The secret is out, and Bajor is paying the price, so I've got to do what I can. And since I'm officially out of the picture, the negotiators can argue that I was acting on my own. If I get caught, which I won't.

Ro smiles, impressed with her commander's guts. But then:

KIRA (cont)
I'm leaving you in charge.

RO
(dumbstruck, tiny
croaking voice)
What? You can't.

KIRA
I can. You're my security chief.
You know what's happening at every
level, you have all the access,
you're more than competent enough
to handle this. All you need to do
is what you're already doing -
keep everything and everyone
moving, find those missing bugs,
and when Akaar shows up, do what
you can to stall him.

RO
You can't. I can't. Bowers, maybe,
or -

KIRA
No time for this, Ro. You know you
can do it. Put Shul on security,
Selzner can keep Ops running, Chao
can take over engineering. I'll
tell Bowers to back you.

At that, Kira departs the room on her mission, leaving Ro still stunned. Gradually, as she looks out at the bustle in Ops, a small smile creeps over her face. She can do this.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

6 EXT. BAJOR - ASHALLA MONASTERY

Seemingly peaceful and calm from the outside.

7 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

The door is FLUNG open and a group of parasite-possessed Bajoran monks and civilians jostle JAKE, JOSEPH and JUDITH Sisko into the room. They are all trying to protect the massively pregnant and extremely distressed KASIDY YATES.

KASIDY

At least they left Keiko and the children alone.

JAKE

(brave face)

Everything's going to be fine.

Looking back at the Bajorans, he sees three have stayed in the room, phasers drawn, blank expressions on their faces.

PRYLAR

Sit. Don't make trouble or we'll kill you.

JAKE

We won't make trouble.

OPAKA (o.s.)

Jake?

Jake turns a slight corner in the room to see OPAKA sat cross-legged on the floor, caring for Commander VAUGHN who lies on a pillow by her side. Jake goes to her.

JAKE

Sulan?

The whole family goes over to sit with Opaka, helping Kasidy settle onto another pillow. Kasidy seems to relax somewhat in Opaka's presence, taking comfort.

JAKE

Everyone, this is Opaka Sulan, the former kai of Bajor. Sulan, this is my family. Do you have any idea what's going on here?

OPAKA

None at all. Perhaps they've simply gone insane.

JAKE

I think they're possessed. On the way here, I heard one of them refer to himself as 'this body.'

JUDITH

So what do they want with us?

JAKE

They know Opaka and dad's family are important to Bajor, they must be counting on that to bargain for whatever it is they're after.

JOSEPH

(exasperated)

I swear, this planet...

Judith gives him a 'shush' look. Jake looks down at Vaughn, unconscious, wounded but bandaged, his head on the pillow.

JAKE

What happened to Commander Vaughn?

OPAKA

He was in the middle of a sacred vision when they burst in and shot him, then took away the Orb. His *pagh* remains with the Prophets.

(certain)

They will take care of him.

Closing in tighter on Vaughn's fluttering half-closed eyes:

Elias Vaughn, in his 1950s vision-guise of ELI UNDERWOOD, sits across a utilitarian dining table from BENNY RUSSELL, the 1950s vision-guise of BENJAMIN SISKO. They share a basic lunch as the other inmates do similarly around them, chatting over the clanging of metal trays and utensils.

A random janitor comes by, mopping the linoleum floor. He smiles broadly at Benny as he passes - Eli finds that slightly odd. Everyone is very solicitous of Benny here.

BENNY

Do you have children, Eli?

ELI

(stiffly)

A daughter.

BENNY

(proud smile)

I have a baby on the way. My girl, Cassie, she's expecting any time.

ELI

(what do I say?)

That's nice. So, ah... Cassie is your girlfriend?

BENNY

I miss her, very much. I thought I'd be okay here, but knowing that she's waiting for me at home, about to have our baby... I don't know. It's important for me to be here, but... but relationships don't stay on hold. People keep moving and growing, and if you spend too much time away, you miss things. You miss life.

Eli doesn't know how to respond to this strange, compelling man. He goes back to his simple meal.

BENNY

What's your daughter like?

Eli smiles as he drifts off into pleasant memories.

ELI

She was... she was perfect. A perfect baby. I met her mother when I was serving in Korea. Pria looked like her mother, but acted more like me, I think. She was careful. Watchful.

BENNY

And now?

ELI

She's got some of her mother in her, some of me, I suppose. But she's mostly her own. Stubborn as a mule. Smart. Beautiful. She's got an impulsive streak in her.

(smiles)

When she was twelve, she decided she wanted to go to the beach for a day. Her mother was too busy to take her, so Pria actually took Ruri's car. Just borrowed the keys and drove off, happy as you please. She made it three blocks before running over a curb, ended up in a neighbour's rose bushes.

(chuckles)

She could barely reach the pedals, didn't even know where the beach was, but she gave it a good shot.

BENNY

(delighted)

I bet there was hell to pay when you got home.

ELI

(sadder)

No, I was out of town. I was in the middle of a sales conference, I think... Ruri told me about it later. I missed a lot of things, Benny. I was providing for them, I

told myself. I thought I was doing the right thing, doing what I was supposed to do. But I missed it, all that time, all those memories, and there's no way to get it back.

(embarrassed)

I, ah... I'm sorry.

BENNY

Don't be sorry, Eli. I'm glad you said what you did. And I'm glad you're here. Just don't forget that you still have a daughter. And just because you missed part of her life, doesn't mean you have to miss all of it.

ELI

She's...

FLASHBACK

The hand fires the gun. Blood spatters Prynn's face.

BACK TO SCENE

ELI

She doesn't want to see me.

BENNY

If my child didn't want to see me, I'd keep trying. I'd try until one of us stopped breathing, just to let that child know I loved them.

Benny reaches across and lays his hand comfortably across Eli's. Eli begins to hope for a second, then pulls his hand away. He drains his cold metal cup, putting it down empty.

ELI

Guess we should get out of here.

BENNY

(mysterious grin)

Guess we should.

9 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

With the *Defiant* berthed on the docking ring, and the numerous Cardassian ships in the vicinity.

10 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Kira sits anxiously in the centre seat, with Dax at tactical, Shar at sciences, O'Brien at engineering and TENMEI at helm.

SHAR

Cardassian sensor window in
three... two...

KIRA

Kira to Ro, we're ready here.

11 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Ro stands on the upper level, outside Kira's office.

RO

Acknowledged, Colonel.

Ro nods to SELZNER, sat at the sciences station, and CHAO, at the engineering station. They both work their consoles.

12 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Kira nods to O'Brien, who works his console.

O'BRIEN

Activating cloak now.

13 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The *Defiant* begins to ripple as it disappears. As it does, numerous emitters on the skin of the station come to life.

14 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Chao's panel shows a GRAPHIC of the section of the docking ring at which the *Defiant* is berthed. As *Defiant* cloaks, the emitters cast a stasis field that takes the same shape as the ship. Chao nods to Ro with nervous confirmation.

15 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Lowered lighting for stealth mode.

O'BRIEN

Stasis transmission is holding, Colonel. Anyone scanning the area will get a general reading of correct size and weight, but it won't stand up to real scrutiny. Hell, it won't stand up to anyone looking out a window.

KIRA

It'll hold long enough for us to be on our way. Ensign?

Tenmei nods her acknowledgement, and works her panel. On the view screen, their view of the station pulls back as the *Defiant* manoeuvres away, turning to face the Cardassian ships surrounding them. Tenmei smiles in grim determination - this is her chance, after the previous time didn't work.

16 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Moving past the looming Cardassian ships, including the *Trager* (identifiable by its damage). We are following what appears to be empty space.

17 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

KIRA

Go to full impulse at your first opportunity, Ensign.

TENMEI

Aye, sir.

Everyone holds their breath, watching the Cardassian ships slip past on screen. Gradually, the ships become fewer, and the tiny dot of Bajor in the distance grows closer.

At his console, O'Brien is playing back the message he received from KEIKO. He has seen it before, and it relieves and angers him. He should have been there to protect them.

KEIKO (screen)
...they're fine, we've been taken
to a Starfleet camp in the Hill
province. A Lieutenant Bowers is
taking care of us. They weren't
hurt, Miles.

KIRA (o.s.)
Chief?

O'BRIEN
(caught)
Sorry, Colonel, what did you say?

KIRA
Is there any way to transport
through the cloak without being
detected, even theoretically?

O'Brien starts to automatically shake his head 'no,' but
then stops as an idea occurs to him.

O'BRIEN
Theoretically, I suppose.
(thinking as
he talks)
If we created a series of over-
lapping subspace fields to use as
a transport site, each gradually
weaker as it neared the surface...
they'd get a reading, but too
vague to identify. And nowhere
near the ship. If it works, though
- which it probably won't - we'd
only be able to beam one person
through without setting off the
surface sensors.

SHAR
That would take an enormous amount
of energy, more than we have.

O'BRIEN
(shrug)

So we tap the warp core. We're not using it for anything else.

KIRA
How long will it take?

O'BRIEN
How long have we got?

KIRA
Do it. Shar, you and Nog help him. You too, Prynn, once we establish orbit.

They all nod. O'Brien and Shar rise, heading for the door.

18 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)

As Shar and O'Brien walk along. Shar is quietly impressed with O'Brien's suggestion

SHAR
You believe it will be possible to integrate the weakest field into linear space, with the transport subject inside.

O'BRIEN
Anything's possible.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

19 INSERT

Close again on Commander Vaughn's flickering, half-conscious eyes as he experiences his vision.

20 INT. ASYLUM - COMMON AREA

Eli browses around the common area alone one afternoon, the pale light making waving shadows on the walls as thunder rolls in the distance. He looks at the games of chess and draughts and backgammon, the decks of cards.

He looks at the art area, with its plain white paper and coloured crayons. He sees pictures pinned to the walls, showing the classic sci-fi images of the '50s. One slightly crumpled picture shows the pulp fiction version of DS9.

Bemused, Eli walks away and down the corridor to the rooms. As he approaches one room, he hears VOICES, and hovers outside the door to listen in. Inside, Benny Russell is holding court for all the staff and inmates of the asylum.

SHAUN (Shar), THERESA (Ezri), SAMUEL (Bowers), SUE-LYNN (Opaka), LAURA (Ro), LEO (Akaar) and TERRENCE (Taran'atar) speak in the flat, monotone, slightly confused voice of the Prophets. Benny patiently answers their questions.

SAMUEL

But if you recognise your basic
aloneness, of what import are the
relationships? The comforts do not
last.

LAURA

Is it the memories? Do they
provide the same comfort as the
communication and time spent with
the other?

BENNY

Not the same. But yes, there is
comfort in the memories. Even in

unhappy ones. Remember what I said about familiarity?

SHAUN

There's comfort in familiarity. In not-change.

BENNY

Because...

SHAUN

Because change is difficult. As with letting go of anything, even the bad seems better than the nothingness that might take its place. We know this.

BENNY

(pleased)

That's right. We know this.

Eli is intrigued and slightly unsettled by this situation. What is going on in this place? And who is Benny Russell? He turns away and returns to the common area.

21 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM**

Opaka sits meditating over Vaughn's comatose body, doing what she can for him. After a moment she opens her eyes, and looks over to where the Sisko family sits against a wall. Kasidy is propped up on every cushion they could find in the room, but still looks uncomfortable, flushed.

OPAKA

Would one of you get some water? There's a basin in the storage cupboard. Perhaps one of our... watchers might escort someone to the fountain outside?

JAKE

I'll ask.

He stands, and Joseph resolutely struggles his own rickety frame vertical. He is determined to protect them if he can.

JOSEPH
I'll go with him.

They move towards the Bajorans, who still stand keeping watch. Opaka is proud of how calmly they are all handling themselves. While the Sisko men are away, Opaka goes over to Kasidy, trying to be as soothing as she can.

OPAKA
How are you feeling?

KASIDY
(forced smile)
Not very well. Though to be fair,
I haven't felt that great lately.

OPAKA
I remember my last days of bearing
all too well. When the baby comes,
women set aside the memories of
discomfort, I think, remembering
the emotional. The anticipation,
the joy. But carrying a new life
through the last few weeks is no
easy appointment, is it?

KASIDY
No, it isn't. Particularly when -
(sudden shift)
The baby's moving.

With a glance for permission, Opaka places her hand gently on the swollen belly. She closes her eyes, feeling for the movement. The muscles JERK involuntarily. Opaka knows what it is - the contractions have started. Kasidy is in labour.

KASIDY
My back hurts.

OPAKA
(worried, covering)
I'm sure it does.

Eli jerks, awoken by the increasingly loud THUNDER rumbling outside the asylum walls. He had fallen asleep on the thin cot in his cell, and had another bad dream. He looks up to see Benny sitting on his bed beside him, a shadow in the dim light. He places a comforting hand on Eli's shoulder.

BENNY

Eli, are you alright?

ELI

(lie)

I'm... fine...

FLASHBACK

The hand fires the gun. Blood spatters Prynn's face.

BACK TO SCENE

BENNY

(sharp)

Stop it.

Eli looks at Benny confused - stop what?

BENNY

You think you killed her. That's what.

ELI

What - why are you here? What's going on? What's wrong?

Benny gestures to the barred window, where THUNDER rolls louder than ever and dark SHADOWS move ominously.

BENNY

Some things are happening. Though really, what do you care? I mean, you don't live here, right?

(taps Eli's head)

You live in there. You stay in there.

ELI

Where is everyone?

BENNY

Don't worry about everyone else. I thought we'd have more time here, but circumstances have changed, and we need to get some things cleared up, you understand?

Eli nods again, not understanding in the slightest.

BENNY

Everyone is gone. They were called away, alright?

ELI

But not us.

BENNY

That's right, not us. Because it's time for us to go our own way. Time for you to go back to your life. And me... I've got places to be myself. But for that to happen, you have to make a decision.

Eli waits for Benny to go on. He is still wigged by the strange situation, but Benny's presence reassures him.

BENNY

For me, this place has been about learning and teaching. It's only one of the places I am... that probably doesn't make much sense, but never mind. Things don't always make sense, do they?

ELI

(understatement much?)

No, they don't.

BENNY

I'm here to help, do you believe that?

(Eli nods)

And you're here because you think you killed your wife.

ELI
(difficult admission)
I did. I did kill her.

BENNY
You think you did.

ELI
(annoyed)
No, I don't think I did it, I did
it. I shot Ruri.

BENNY
(patient)
You think it. You live it, again
and again, by keeping it in your
mind.

ELI
So? I feel bad about it. I... I
deserve to be punished.

BENNY
And as long as you believe that,
you will stay here. I know what it
is, to stay in pain. You think
it's beyond your control. But you
can decide to let it go. Because
here's the thing... it doesn't
matter anymore. Whatever happened,
it's in the past. The nature of
time, for beings like you and me -
it has to be about movement. It
has to be a process, not a goal.
There is no goal.

ELI
I know that, but -

BENNY
You don't know it. Listen, Eli.
Hear what I'm saying with your
gut, not your mind. Time moves.
Ruri is dead, she died a long time
ago, but you are alive. What you

have with your daughter isn't a noun, something that can be broken or fixed. It's a verb, a process, something you create with each and every moment. Work with Pria to make each moment worthwhile. But repeating the guilt, living in the pain, the past... it doesn't work. It denies time. It denies life!

Benny is becoming very passionate about his subject. Eli is crying openly, holding onto Benny's hand, to the lifeline he is offering. Benny stands up, holding his hand out.

BENNY

Stand up, Eli. Come with me.
Decide to move on, to explore, to see what there is to see.

There is another deep RUMBLE of thunder, and the building actually begins to TREMBLE from the force of it.

ELI

What's happening?

BENNY

It's time to leave, Eli. Will you come with me? Can you?

Still crying with emotional catharsis, Eli nods and grasps Benny's hand, standing and looking towards the corridor.

ELI

I'm ready.

23 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The *Defiant* is gone, although the stasis field taking its place is just visible. Cardassians still loom ominously.

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

Ro stands at the central Ops table, increasingly confident about her ability to handle this. A BEEP sounds.

SELZNER

Lieutenant, Admiral Akaar has just requested permission to beam aboard from the *Trager*.

Ro wonders for a moment what to do about it. Then she smiles as she gets a rather wicked idea.

RO
Tell him to come up to the office.
Tell him Kira'll meet him there.

Selzner nods acknowledgement, and Ro takes a deep breath. She leans back against the Ops table, keeping an eye on the turbolift and just spoiling for a fight.

RO
If I'm gonna resign... may as well go out with a bang.

25 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

Kasidy sits against the wall, BREATHING heavily and increasingly stressed. Her backache is getting worse, and she continually wriggles on the pillows to get comfortable.

Everyone is trying to comfort her as best they can, and she appreciates it, although she is getting a bit sharp too, from all the stress and fear. The contractions come again, and she grits her teeth against them.

Then Opaka GASPS as she realises the cushions are wet, a damp patch spreading out from Kasidy's bottom. Kasidy looks down at herself in surprise. Her water has broken.

KASIDY
Oh...

JUDITH
Kas?

At Judith's worried face, Kasidy begins to cry.

26 EXT. SPACE - BAJOR ORBIT

In orbit of the blue-green planet, with Cardassian ships visible in orbit, but far on the other side.

27 **INT. DEFIANT - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

Kira steps up onto the transporter pad, scared, but knowing she has to do something. Nog, Shar and O'Brien are all working on various parts of the consoles. Dax stands watch.

O'BRIEN

I've pinpointed the entrance to the underground chamber. There are a number of lifeforms near it. I can't get an exact count, the subspace fields are causing a lot of interference.

KIRA

Let's do it. I'm ready.

O'BRIEN

Colonel, I have to remind you that I'm not going to be able to beam you back up. If you make it down there okay, you're on your own.

KIRA

Keep talking and I'll throw up, Chief.

With a wry smile, O'Brien nods and works the consoles.

O'BRIEN

Good luck, Colonel.

Kira dissolves in the transporter beam...

28 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY**

...and rematerialises in the cold, dark, stone passageway of the monastery.

As soon she is solid though, before she can catch her bearings, HANDS descend on her. A half-dozen Bajorans are on her already, KNOCKing the phaser out of her hand, SWEEPing her feet out from under her, THROWing her to the ground with their artificially enhanced strength.

There is nothing she can do - as much as she struggles, she is outnumbered and overpowered and caught off guard. Six Bajorans pin her limbs to the ground, and one leans over her threateningly, his wide and silent GRIN spreading as the tiny purple PINCERS emerge, and Kira's eyes flare...

Suddenly all six are YANKed back away from her, against their will.

As Kira cringes on the floor, unable to see what happened, she hears the SCUFFLES of a fight, GRUNTS of exertion, and finally bodies crumpling to the ground or against walls.

The fight over, Kira gets warily to her feet, unable to see her saviour. She looks around at the fallen bodies, not understanding what happened. Then there is movement.

Out of the shadows steps a figure - it's Wex.

KIRA
(stunned)
Wex?

Wex reaches out lovingly towards Kira, who flinches away.

WEX
I'm... sorry.

As Kira watches amazed, barely daring to believe what she is seeing, Wex begins to CHANGE. Her body ripples, turns golden and liquid, and reforms moments later... into ODO.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

29 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY

Where we left it, as Kira stares in amazement at Odo's sudden appearance. She is shocked, happy, angry, relieved, trembling with excitement and a dozen other emotions.

KIRA

You... I...

She can't manage any more before she falls into his arms and they are embracing as if they will never let go. But they both pull back after a moment.

KIRA

You know why we're here?

ODO

Yes. The hostages. The queen.

KIRA

You take the hostages.

ODO

(doesn't want to
let her go)

We should stay together.

KIRA

We have to hurry. And you've got a better shot at protecting them.

ODO

(reluctant)

Alright.

Even though they both know there is work to do, they can't pull away from each other, gazing into each other's eyes.

KIRA

You could have said something.

ODO

You were busy.

She smiles sheepishly back at him. Then they hear footsteps approaching, and pull themselves together.

ODO
(whisper)
We have to go.

She nods, and reaches up to cup his face. He kisses her hand, then she turns and leaves, picking up her dropped phaser on the way.

He lovingly watches her go for a moment, then turns himself and MORPHS into a small, weasel-like creature, scuttling off into the darkness.

30 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

Ro stands at the central Ops table, taking reports from the crew, as Admiral AKAAR rises into Ops on the turbolift.

Without sparing a look for Ro, Akaar marches over to Kira's office, walks inside, and stops. Ro turns to see him sneer at Kira's absence, and she turns back to work with a smile.

31 INT. ASYLUM - CORRIDOR

Benny guides Eli down the corridor as the building SHAKES with the thunder. Eli is disoriented, not sure why the walls are shaking, but Benny forges ahead confidently.

Eli looks at the dull green walls, and sees that the walls are starting to fade in colour, becoming misty and blurred.

ELI
The walls...

BENNY
We have to hurry.

ELI
Why?

Benny doesn't respond, pulling Eli on down the corridor as the building continues to fade away and disintegrate around

them. A coruscating WHITE LIGHT obscures the far end of the corridor, and Benny is dragging them towards it. CRACKS appear in the walls and floor, and more white light streams in through the cracks. Eli watches all this in dismay.

ELI

Benny, what's happening?

BENNY

(raising voice)

Dissolution. Hurry, Eli!

Terrified and uncertain, Eli follows Benny on further.

32 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

As Vaughn lies mostly ignored on the floor, everyone else is around Kasidy, who is moaning, hissing and breathing in heavy, steady rhythms as her labour continues.

Opaka is helping Kasidy focus on the breathing and staying calm. Jake shoots an uncertain look at Joseph and Judith, unsure what to do for the best. He reaches in to brush Kasidy's hair out of her face as she continues to groan, puff and pant her way through another contraction.

A small throw blanket has been thrown across Kasidy's spread lap, and Opaka gently reaches under it to check Kasidy's progress. Behind them, the Bajorans continue to stand mute and impassive...

...until there is a SHOUT from the passageway outside.

VOICE (muffled)

Intruders! Intruders!

The three Bajorans react with momentary shock, but quickly aim their phasers at the Siskos. The leader, the female prylar, FIRES her weapon. But a thin limb of CHANGELING protoplasm springs out of nowhere and blocks the beam.

Not thinking, reacting on instinct to the shooting, Jake throws his body around Kasidy's in a human shield. In seconds Joseph and Judith have joined him. Kasidy continues to huff and groan as another contraction hits.

The other two Bajorans FIRE their weapons, but more slivers of Changeling FLY out to block the beams. The Bajorans have no time to react before Odo is coalescing on the floor of the prayer room, taking on near-humanoid form for a split second before spreading out into a thin, wide Odo-shield.

Jake looks up momentarily with an expression of surprise and confusion, as he sees the Odo-shield blocking more phaser bolts from the Bajorans. Thin limbs of Changeling leap out of the main body to PUNCH the Bajorans unconscious against the stone wall.

There are more SHOUTS from outside, and heavy fists begin to POUND against the door. Odo quickly moves his shield form to press against the door and hold it closed. The shield form changes shape again, ending up as humanoid-Odo standing with one arm spread flat and holding the door.

Jake shares a smile of gratitude with him before turning back to Kasidy, who GROANS as another contraction hits.

33 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY

Kira creeps along, hearing the commotion from the corridors behind her but unable to do anything about it. She comes into the small area with the holographic reflecting pool from 1x01 "Emissary."

She steps closer. The reflecting pool is not functioning, revealing the curved STEPS that lead down into the Orb Chamber. Tentatively, her phaser held out before her, she begins to creep down the steps.

34 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB CHAMBER

Stealing her way quietly and slowly down the spiral stone staircase, Kira hears a SOUND - a wet, sucking, squelching noise that comes in pulsing waves. She grimaces at the thought of what could make such a sound, and wrinkles her nose up at the horrible smell that goes with it.

Kira reaches the bottom of the steps and turns a corner into the main chamber. This is the secret underground room that Opaka showed to Sisko in 1x01 "Emissary," where the Orb was hidden. Now all nine ORBS are here, laid out in a circle, but in the middle of the circle lies the MATRIARCH.

The main queen parasite is massive and swollen, over a metre thick at its middle, four metres from tapered tip to tip. Its sickly, fishbelly-white flesh pulses in rhythmic movements as it squeezes EGG SACS out from its rear.

The football-sized sacs are translucent, with dozens of semi-formed soldier parasites squirming inside each of them. They BLURT out of a sagging, wet opening and land on the stone floor in a sloppy mess. About twenty egg sacs are already on the floor, writhing between the Orb boxes.

Kira gapes in unvarnished horror and revulsion at this sight. The matriarch senses her presence and raises what passes for its head. Its blind, milky eyes can't see but it knows she is there. Its small, atrophied pincers gnash uselessly, and its black maw opens wide, making an angry SQUEALing, SCREECHing sound at Kira.

35 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY

In the dark corridor, the six parasite-controlled Bajorans who attacked Kira previously, and were knocked out by Odo, JERKS out of their unconsciousness at their mother's signal. Scrabbling up off the floor, they begin to head towards the Orb Chamber and Kira.

36 INT. ASYLUM - CORRIDOR

Benny and Eli are ever closer to the bright, swirling LIGHT at the end of the corridor. The floor is in pieces around them, more of the glaring light streaming through cracks. The building continues to SHUDDER and CRUMBLE, small pieces breaking off and falling away into the light.

Benny and Eli are at the last point where there is anything to stand on, before the light overtakes everything. Eli is still scared and confused, but Benny drags him forward, pushing him to go ahead, shouting over the rising noise.

BENNY

There! Go!

ELI

What about you?

BENNY
I'm right behind you!

ELI
But -

BENNY
It's okay. Now go!

Benny grins wide, excited and peaceful, encouraging. He shoves Eli forward into the light, and he is lost in it.

37 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB CHAMBER

Kira still stands, looking in disgust at the matriarch. There is SHOUTING from above, as the Bajoran soldiers get closer. On the ground, one of the EGG SACS breaks open, and the tiny soldier parasites tumble out. Within moments they gather their bearings and begin to scuttle towards Kira.

She raises her phaser and blasts the nearest one. The mother SCREECHES in fury, and more parasites come at Kira. She doesn't have time or phaser power to kill them all before they overwhelm her. She doesn't know what to do.

KIRA
(praying)
Help me...

SISKO (v.o.)
(whisper,
half-heard)
Nerys...

Inspiration hits. Holstering her phaser, KIRA steps confidently and calmly towards the nearest ORB BOX. She turns it to face the matriarch, and opens the doors.

The silver-white LIGHTS surges out, flowing over the matriarch. It turns its head and SCREECHES.

Kira steps towards the next Orb, and opens the door. Then the next, then the next, then the next. Each one reveals a slightly different shade, blending together to fill the room with ever brighter swirling white light.

The matriarch SCREECHES.

Kira reaches the ninth Orb, the last one. She is barely visible in all the blinding, surging light.

KIRA
(triumphant)
You want Bajor? Here it is.

Kira opens the final doors, and the white light is total.

WHITE OUT

38 WHITE VOID - PROPHETS' REALM

The fog parts slightly to reveal the parasite matriarch, alone in the void. It looks around itself, confused, screeching now in something more like fear than anger.

SISKO (v.o.)
(soft, distant)
I see you.

The matriarch whips her head around again. Far away, in the white, a dark humanoid FIGURE is walking through the void towards it. It is an indistinct shape for now.

SISKO (v.o.)
(soft, distant)
I'm here to tell you that it's over. Your campaign, your hatred... your time. It all ends here, now.

The matriarch screeches in defiance as the figure grows closer, resolving clearer. It is BENJAMIN SISKO, getting closer and closer to the matriarch. He looms over it, filling the frame, his eyes aglow with righteous power.

SISKO
You picked the wrong planet!

WHITE OUT

39 **WHITE VOID - PROPHETS' REALM**

A Vorta - SEJEEL - and a garrison of JEM'HADAR stand in the white void, looking around themselves in confusion at their surroundings.

SEJEEL

First! I demand an explanation for this!

FIRST

I have none to offer.

SEJEEL

We had just entered the Anomaly. A sole Federation vessel stood against the might of thousands of Dominion warships.

FLASHBACK - 6x06 "THE SACRIFICE OF ANGELS"

-- Sisko stands on the bridge of the *Defiant*, staring down the enormous Dominion fleet at the end of the wormhole.

-- The ships begin to disappear into nothingness.

BACK TO SCENE

SEJEEL (cont)

We were on the verge of changing the face of half the galaxy, and this is your response? But for your incompetence, we would already - First! Look at me when I address you!

FIRST

Be silent. Do you hear that?

They listen closer, and hear the SCREECHing, WAILing sound of the parasite matriarch in the distance, growing closer.

SEJEEL

What is that? What's happening?

Then it appears out of the white void, thrashing its tail and gnashing its pincers, screaming loud, and coming closer all the time.

SEJEEL

First...

FIRST

Weapons!

The entire garrison of Jem'Hadar reach behind their backs and draw their *kar'takin* blades, raising them high.

FIRST

Victory is life!

ALL JEM'HADAR

Victory is life!

The horde charges toward the monster, death on their minds.

WHITE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

WHITE OUT.

Then FADE IN to:

40 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB CHAMBER

Their job done, the Orbs' light recedes, leaving them turning quietly in their open boxes. All the tiny soldier parasites lie still, dead.

Kira is exhausted, but triumphant. Then she looks again as the light recedes more, and her jaw drops in astonishment.

41 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Admiral Akaar paces the room angrily, waiting for Kira. Ro trots up the stairs and pops her head in, sweet as pie.

RO

May I speak with you a moment,
Admiral?

AKAAR

Where is the colonel? She was
supposed to wait here.

Ro enters, closing the door behind her, struggling to keep her pleasant demeanour as Akaar glowers and bullies her.

RO

I regret to inform you that the
colonel is unable to meet you at
this time. However, I'm prepared
to present you with a full report.

AKAAR

You're giving me the runaround,
Lieutenant. We are in a crisis
situation, and I would rather not
deal with any of your... your
nonsense right now. Where is she?

Okay, that's it. Ro has had enough now.

RO

My nonsense? Colonel Kira is working to resolve this crisis. What are you doing, besides looking for somewhere else to put your foot down? Now, do you want to hear my report, or not?!

Akaar stares at her, absolutely stunned to be spoken to like that. He is quite speechless. But Ro can see the storm clouds gathering on his brow. He's about to blow.

Then suddenly both of their combadges go off, and they look through the doors out into Ops. They see the crew are spontaneously celebrating, cheering and hugging each other.

SELZNER (comm)

Lieutenant, Bajor is reporting the hostage-takers have collapsed. At every site. The parasites are dying. Lenaris is standing by, he says - he says it's over, sir.

Akaar and Ro stare at each other, equally surprised. Then the admiral finds his voice, cool but professional.

AKAAR

I have things to do, Lieutenant. Inform the colonel that I'll expect her report as soon as she returns to this office.

He turns and strides out of the door without looking back. Ro watches him go, aware that she nearly got herself well and truly fired. She grins, as relief and elation set in.

RO

Maybe I have an affinity for this kind of work.

42 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

Unconscious on the floor, the Bajorans' mouths begin to creak open and a small, purple parasite crawls out of them. Judith SHRIEKS, so she and Jake dash over to STAMP on them.

JUDITH

Got it -

JAKE

They're dying -

All three parasites are soon squished into pulpy messes on the floor. The thumping on the door has stopped now, so Odo lets go of the door and OPENS it. He sees more collapsed Bajorans outside, and more parasites beginning to make a run for it. He quickly rushes to stomp them all.

Under all this, Kasidy's labour is ever more advanced, and she MOANS and SHOUTS and SCREAMS with the effort of giving birth. OpaKa stays with her, coaching and soothing her.

Elsewhere, Elias Vaughn gradually regains consciousness, cringing against the light and the noise. Joseph Sisko leans over him, dabbing his forehead with a damp cloth.

JOSEPH

You're okay. Just rest now, you're going to be fine.

Vaughn looks up at Joseph, disoriented. Breathing hard, he agrees and closes his eyes against the chaos.

OPAKA

What's happening? Are they all -

JAKE

Yes, all of them!

OPAKA

Oh, thank the Prophets! Thank -

KASIDY

Uuunnhhh!

JAKE

Get someone down here right now!

OPAKA

...Two, three, four...

JUDITH

You're doing great, Kas, great!

OPAKA

...Nine, ten, and breathe, good,
deep breath and push, two,
three...

JUDITH

There! There, I see it!

Kasidy bears down, not even conscious of what people are saying to her anymore. The PUSH is everything, and she screams without even realising she is doing it.

OPAKA

Good, good!

JAKE

Oh, God! Oh, it's so -

JOSEPH

Kasidy...

Beaming, Opaka brings the BABY out from under the blanket. Joseph hands her the damp cloth - she re-wets it and dabs the baby clean. Everyone is gazing on in wonder and love.

JUDITH

She's beautiful, Kasidy. She's
beautiful.

Opaka hands the baby to Kasidy, who cradles it, unable to take her eyes off its face. As they are all laughing with relief and joy, the door opens behind them.

SISKO (o.s.)

Kasidy...

Kasidy looks up, happy tears in her eyes, and BENJAMIN SISKO is standing in the doorway, Kira beside him.

They stride towards her, and Kasidy bursts into even more tears of joy. Everyone is laughing and shouting, asking questions, but Kasidy and Ben only have eyes for each other and their child.

43 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Safe and triumphant now, as the *Defiant* rests in its place on the docking ring, with the *Trager*, *Gryphon* and others sitting on various other docking ports.

44 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

The walkways are filled with happy, relaxed people, smiling and going about their lives.

Colonel Kira walks along the Upper Level, watching them all with satisfaction. New Federation and Bajoran flags drape the balconies and there is an air of low-key celebration.

KIRA (v.o.)

Station log, Colonel Kira Nerys reporting.

(beat)

We did it. The station is safe, Bajor is safe. The parasite matriarch has been destroyed, and all the people who were controlled by them have recovered.

(sadder)

Well, almost all. There were some losses. Captain Mello and Commander Montenegro of the *Gryphon*. Tigart Hedda, the woman who hosted the station's mother parasite, couldn't be saved. Neither could the others like her on Bajor. And of course, Shakaar Edon is gone.

(cheering up)

But overall, I'd say this is a victory. With the crisis resolved, Bajor's membership in the Federation is back on solid ground. The parasites' plan meant rushing the signing ceremony last time around, so some things were missing. Some people who should have been here, weren't. This time, we'll do it right.

45 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS**

HIZIKI GARD stands inside his security cell. TAULIN CYL is outside, with Ezri Dax, and the three are talking MOS. It looks like it's not especially good news.

KIRA (v.o.)

As for Trill, this situation affected them just as severely as it did us. They concealed vital intelligence about a major threat, and conspired to murder a foreign head of state. There's got to be some kind of repercussions. And I get the feeling it could get a lot worse before it gets better.

With a nod, Dax leaves Gard and Cyl alone.

46 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Ro Laren and Odo are both perched on corners of the desk, laughing as they swap amusing Quark anecdotes. Dax enters from the cells, smiles at Ro and takes Odo's hand in friendly welcome for a moment, then carries on her way.

47 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Dax exits onto the Promenade and heads over to the Replimat where Bashir waits, sat at a table. She joins him, and they both smile, but there is tension. Bashir has something on his mind, and things aren't entirely alright between them.

On the lower level now, Kira strolls past them, watching them with a light smile. Admiral Akaar approaches her and greets her with professional courtesy. She disobeyed his orders, but he can't deny things worked out for the best.

48 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Ro looks up and sees Akaar through the door. As he finishes his brief conversation with Kira, he looks in through the glass and makes eye contact with Ro. He gives her a stiff nod of acknowledgement and walks away.

Kira approaches and enters the room. Odo turns to her, and they take each other's hands and gaze lovingly into each other's eyes. Ro looks away with a faint smile, slightly jealous of their happiness.

49 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Elias Vaughn stands outside a set of quarters, waiting patiently for Prynn. He is nervous about the meeting. After a moment she rounds a corner, heading towards him.

When she spots him she slows for a moment, gritting her teeth. But she keeps walking towards him and her quarters. He tries not to show the fatherly love he feels for her.

TENMEI
(polite but indifferent)
Commander.

VAUGHN
May I speak to you a moment?

TENMEI
If I say yes, will you stop
calling me?

VAUGHN
No. I've already made that
mistake.

She considers that for a moment, then shrugs, pressing the panel to open the door.

TENMEI
Come in.

50 INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS (CONTINUOUS)

Vaughn follows her in. Once the door closes, she turns with her arms folded. She still wants nothing to do with him.

TENMEI
What do you want?

He takes a deep breath. He has to get this right.

VAUGHN

Maybe I should tell you what I don't want. I don't want to tell you I'm sorry again. And I don't want your forgiveness.

TENMEI

What?

VAUGHN

I could tell you I'm sorry a billion times, and it would never make up for my behaviour as your father. There's no excuse for how inadequately I've loved you.

Prynn folds her arms tighter, trying to hold on to the indifference, but is a little confused by his eloquence.

VAUGHN

All I want now is to get to know you, a little. You don't owe it to me, and if you don't want to talk to me for a while, that's okay too. But I won't stop trying, not ever again. Giving up, telling myself that you were better off without me... that has been the worst mistake of my life.

Against her best efforts, Prynn's ice is starting to melt.

VAUGHN

I'd like it very much if you'd accompany me to the ceremony tomorrow. And maybe after that, something to eat. Or the next day, or next week. Whenever you're ready, Prynn. Whatever you want.

She clears her throat, trying to keep the emotions out.

TENMEI

I'll think about it.

VAUGHN

(relieved)
Thank you.

51 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Kira and Ro stand just outside Quark's bar, away from his line of sight. With them is Odo-disguised-as-Wex, and Kira is egging the alien girl on with a mischievous grin.

52 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Wex enters the bar as Kira and Ro peep their heads around the doorframe, trying to control their giggles. Quark is about to pour a drink from a large bottle when he sees Wex approaching, and the familiar stern glare on her face.

QUARK
(I hate you)
Ah - Wex. And what can I do for
you today?

Wex doesn't respond, but places her hands on the bar and looms over Quark as much as she can. Then she starts shape-shifting, and Quark JERKS in surprise, the drink flying out of the bottle and all over his shirt.

By the time Wex has turned back into Odo, Quark has thrown himself backwards in shock, crashing into the shelves and smashing a few glasses before slipping on the liquid and collapsing to the floor.

In the doorway, Kira and Ro are howling with laughter. As Quark looks with amazed horror up into Odo's face, the Changeling replies with his scornful little half-smile.

Quark drags himself back to his feet, furious, brushing his shirt off uselessly. Odo turns and saunters back to Kira and Ro. Quark looks up and sees Taran'atar watching the whole episode from an upper level. Even the Jem'Hadar has managed a little smile of amusement.

53 INT. DS9 - SHAR'S QUARTERS

Shar sits at his desk, calmly reading reports and articles. There is a CHIME at the door, and he goes to it to answer. It is VRETHA, his zhavey.

Shar tenses, not ready for this. She is just as stiff and unyielding as ever. But they both have to be polite.

SHAR

Will you come in?

She enters, still stiff. She stands awkwardly in the room, as if waiting for him to speak, not sure what to say.

VRETHA

I'll be returning to Andor the day after tomorrow.

SHAR

Oh?

VRETHA

I came to ask if... if you will be joining me. I know there was some consideration among the three of you, that an arrangement might be made...

SHAR

None has been. I think that they'd be best off with another. But I thank you for your offer, if that's what it was.

She glares at him, accusing. He remains calm, if unhappy. He refuses to let her make him feel guilty anymore. Not getting anywhere, she turns and heads towards the door.

SHAR

Whether or not I can help my people, I have a place here, zhavey. I was able to help Colonel Kira resolve the situation on Bajor. I'm - I'm wanted here.

VRETHA

You were wanted at home.

SHAR

I was needed at home. That is not
the same thing. Perhaps I'm wrong,
perhaps I've done everything
wrong. But I want to stay here,
now.

Vretha stops in the doorway, but does not turn around to
look at him. Her voice is like ice.

VRETHA

Stay then.

And she walks out without another glance. Shar stares at
the door for a moment, then sighs and goes back to his
desk, picking up the reports where he left off.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

54 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - GARDEN - DAY

Opaka sits on the bench in the courtyard garden, reading again. This time, it is the Ohalu book.

After a moment, VEDEK YEVIR steps into the garden, much as Vaughn did. He is nervous to be around the legendary former-kai, and full of doubts about himself. She welcomes him with a smile, trying to see the best in him.

YEVIR

You wished to see me, Eminence?

OPAKA

I am merely Sulan now, Vedek Yevir. Please sit, I only wish to speak with you a moment.

Uncertainly and uncomfortably, he does.

OPAKA

I don't know if I managed to convey to you how much I admired your work with the Cardassians. The return of the Tears is a great achievement. It speaks to the power of your faith.

YEVIR

I am merely an instrument of Their will... and that of the Emissary.

OPAKA

What do you think you'll do next?

Yevir hesitates, looking away uncomfortably.

YEVIR

Once, I believed I was destined to become kai.

OPAKA

And now?

YEVIR

(isn't it obvious?)

You've returned, Eminence. No, I must follow through on my peace initiative. I thought I might go to Cardassia for a time, as an ambassador of faith.

OPAKA

Your vision is inspiring. You have truly been touched by Them.

YEVIR

Perhaps... perhaps you will be able to heal our spiritual disunion in a way I was not.

OPAKA

(gently)

I see no disunion. Certainly there is disagreement among the faithful but I do not believe it to be the crisis you perceive. Our people are simply learning new ways to seek and understand the Prophets, new ways to walk their path.

YEVIR

But the Ohalu heresies challenge the very foundation of our faith!

OPAKA

Is that something to fear? We are sentient beings, Linjarin. To question everything is our nature. Why would the Prophets not wish us to indulge, even exult in that aspect of ourselves that defines us like no other?

Yevir doesn't answer, too confused and unsure. Opaka knows she has to tread carefully if she hopes to convince him.

OPAKA

I think that exposing our people to such ideas might prove helpful. That such an act might even be seen as an act of faith.

YEVIR

(stands suddenly)

What I did in Attainting Kira Nerys had to be done. She put her own judgment before that of the Vedek Assembly, and is directly responsible for our people's present spiritual upheaval -

OPAKA

Kira Nerys may be the truest child of the Prophets I have ever known, Vedek. No matter what losses she endures, what injustices are inflicted upon her, no matter how long or how deeply she struggles, her faith never wavers. What she did in releasing Ohalu's book was an affirmation of her faith.

She stands, and takes Yevir's trembling hands in her own.

OPAKA

As I see it, it was not the release of the Ohalu text that set Bajor's present discord in motion, Linjarin. It was the Attainder of Kira Nerys.

(pause)

Your *pagh* is strong, Vedek Yevir. I believe there is much good you will accomplish as you walk your path. I hope you will take care that your steps are true.

She gives a small bow, then turns and walks away, leaving him to consider her words.

55 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Ro Laren walks efficiently towards the security office.

56 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

She enters the room to find a package placed on her desk. It wasn't there before. She looks around, wondering who could have brought it. Then she steps around her desk and slowly unties the string, unfolds the brown paper wrapping.

Inside is a Starfleet uniform with a security gold collar and lieutenant's pips. On top of it is a small paper note, hand-written in an elegant cursive script.

INSERT - THE NOTE

In case you needed encouragement.
JLP.

BACK TO SCENE

Ro looks in wonder at the note, wondering what the man continues to see so deserving about her. She smiles - the encouragement is having its effect. She unfolds the uniform, holds it up against herself to see how it looks.

Smiling uncertainly - she is still not totally convinced - she drapes the uniform over the back of her desk chair and walks thoughtfully back out onto the Promenade.

57 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Ro leaves the office, walking past Quark's bar. She looks in to see him slouching at the bar. What will she tell him?

Kira passes in the other direction, nodding to Ro, and continues on into the bar.

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

Kira approaches Quark. He is miserable enough as it is, but seeing Kira just makes him even grumpier.

KIRA
Quark, do you have a minute?

QUARK

Why, you wanna ruin another very expensive shirt for me?

KIRA

Hey, you were the one who wanted me to cheer up. I couldn't resist it. And I'll pay for the cleaning and the broken glasses. At a reasonable price.

QUARK

What difference does it make now? It's all over anyway. Bajor's joining the Federation after all, and that means that after tomorrow's party, I'm finished.

KIRA

(dismissively)

Yeah, that's a shame. Look, I only came by because I was asked to bring you some news.

QUARK

Whatever, just get it over with.

KIRA

(dramatic sigh)

A couple of days ago, the Ferengi government contacted the Bajoran government and expressed interest in opening full diplomatic relations. First Minister Asarem agreed, and with the approval of the Chamber of Ministers and the Federation Council, your bar has been declared the Ferengi Embassy to Bajor. In other words, Quark, effective immediately, the space between these walls is the sovereign territory of Ferenginar, subject to its laws and practises.

Quark snorts, scoffing at such seemingly irrelevant nonsense. Then he stops, stunned, the penny dropping.

QUARK

Are you telling me... my bar is
the new Ferengi Embassy? And I'm
the new ambassador to Bajor?

KIRA

(unimpressed)

I didn't have any say in the
staffing.

Quark can hardly believe it. His mind drifts, imagining all
the wonderful profits that will now come his way.

QUARK

Diplomatic immunity?

KIRA

Don't push your luck, Quark. Come
by my office tomorrow and we'll
hammer out the details. Better
yet, make it the next day.

Kira turns and walks away, hiding a small smile that she
would never let Quark see. He still stands there amazed,
not sure how this happened. One thing is clear, though.

QUARK

I'm still in business.

Quark's dabo girl TREIR jiggles over, beaming widely.

TREIR

Congratulations, I overheard.
Either you have the dumbest luck
in the quadrant, or somebody in
high places really loves you.

QUARK

Rom...

TREIR

I assume you'll be wanting to
renegotiate our contract?

Quark rolls his eyes and walks away.

59 INT. DS9 - ZIYAL'S ART EXHIBIT

In the space formerly occupied by Garak's tailor shop. It is quiet, very few people. Ro stands gazing at the drawings, hoping they'll help her sort out her thoughts.

She moves to stand next to one at the back of the room, a crude but effective portrait of a face, bisected so that one half is Bajoran and the other half Cardassian. Also absorbed in the painting is a Cardassian civilian.

RO

It's wonderful, isn't it?

GARAK

It's my favourite.

Ro double-takes and realises she is standing next to GARAK. She tenses for a moment, knowing his reputation. But he is calm, thoughtful. He doesn't seem to pose any danger.

RO

Mister Garak. Are you... are you here for the signing?

GARAK

You know, that was my original purpose in coming. See a few friends, watch the ceremony... and I suppose I was looking for some kind of closure to my time here. But now that I've seen this... I think I might just go home again. Avoid the rush.

He turns to her, smiling warmly, touched by the paintings.

GARAK

It's been a pleasure to meet you in person, Lieutenant. Please give my regards to Quark.

Garak gives a polite bow, and walks away. Ro wonders whether she ought to do something about him, but decides that he's no trouble. She turns back to the drawing, coming to her decision. She straightens herself. She is staying.

60 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira stands behind her desk, wearing a Starfleet uniform, command red. She is buzzing with excitement, happier than she has been all year. An idea occurs, and she reaches down and opens a drawer in her desk.

61 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

Everyone in Ops is just as excited, waiting for something. The turbolift rises into Ops, carrying Ben Sisko. He is wearing civilian clothes, and the moment he steps off the lift, SAM BOWERS stands and announces in a booming voice.

BOWERS
Captain on deck!

Everyone in Ops stands and turns to face Sisko. Someone starts clapping, and soon the whole room is ringing with APPLAUSE and CHEERS.

SISKO
At ease.
(no effect - louder)
At ease!

Gradually the din dies. He appreciates the welcome, and he steps down into the pit, smiling around at them all.

SISKO
It's good to see you all. I hope to be able to catch up with each of you later. But right now, I'm late for a meeting. And I don't have to tell you how the CO hates to be kept waiting.

Gentle laughter, and Sisko climbs the steps to the office.

62 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

The doors open and Sisko steps in. Something is immediately THROWN at him, and he CATCHES it instinctively. He smiles when he sees that it's his BASEBALL. Kira is grinning wide.

KIRA

I suppose you'll want the office.

Sisko grins too, remembering their first ever conversation. He is different now. More centred, serene, contented.

SISKO

I thought I'd say hello first. The new uniform suits you, by the way.

She looks down at herself, slightly self-conscious. She touches the four pips of a captain. She feels good in it.

KIRA

Still haven't got used to the rank. Makes me feel like I've been demoted. And the combadge is on the wrong side.

SISKO

You'll adjust. Or Starfleet will.
(lobs baseball back)
And this belongs with the station's commander, I think.

KIRA

(delicately)
You're not coming back?

SISKO

Actually, Starfleet wants to make me an admiral. They planned to offer it to me after the end of the war.

KIRA

That's wonderful news! And well deserved. You'll be -

SISKO

I turned them down, Nerys.

KIRA

(uncertain)
So... what are you going to do?

SISKO

I'm going to take my family to the Federation induction ceremony. And after that... after that, I thought I'd stick around for a while, see what happens next.

KIRA

Something always does.

SISKO

Yes, it does, doesn't it?

63 EXT. BAJOR - OUTSIDE ASHALLA - DAY

A large park has been arranged as a public event space, and it is packed with endless people, milling about happily and waiting with excitement. It is a bright sunny day.

This is the Federation signing ceremony, at last, and it seems the entire planet has turned out for it. On a natural rise at one end, a large stage has been constructed.

Akaar, ASAREM and Vretha stand, with every major dignitary on their right - Gul MACET, Cleric EKOSHA and Ambassador LANG from Cardassia; Vedek Yevir, General LENARIS and Opaka Sulan from Bajor; President MAZ and General Cyl from Trill; General MARTOK and Ambassador WOLF from Qo'noS; Grand Nagus ROM and first lady LEETA from Ferenginar.

On their left stand the senior staff of Deep Space Nine, and friends. Vaughn stands with Prynne, not entirely at ease, but trying. Shar is nowhere near his zhavey, standing companionably with Nog and Jake as they share a joke.

Ro and Quark stand together, Ro wearing her new Starfleet uniform and Quark in his new best ambassador's outfit. They turn and smile at each other. They're going to be okay. Dax, Bashir and Bowers are there too, enjoying the mood.

Kira stands with Odo, their hands holding, with Taran'atar keeping close to Odo. Kira is in her Starfleet uniform, and as she looks over to smile at Yevir, we can see her EARRING back in place, glinting in the sun. Yevir offers a half-hearted polite smile, which Kira accepts graciously.

Over all this, Jake quotes from Ohalu...

JAKE (v.o. from 8x01)
"Battles fall and fail, and there
is a time of waiting, the space
between breaths as the land heals
and its children retire from war."

Jake looks down to see Joseph and Judith standing in the front row of the crowd, happily watching the proceedings. Near them stand Treir, MORN and HETIK, then the O'Brien family. Miles turns to Keiko and nods to her. He'll go with her to Cardassia. She smiles warmly and hugs him tight.

Jake smiles, and turns to see his father standing near him on the stage. Sisko's arm is thrown lovingly around Kasidy, who carries their baby daughter, glowing with happiness.

JAKE (v.o. from 8x01)
"The first child, a son, enters
the Temple alone. With the Herald,
he returns, and soon after, the
Avatar is born. A new breath is
drawn and the land rejoices in
clarity and change."

Asarem steps forward, and makes a comical play of searching about her person for a pen. The crowd chuckles amiably.

Akaar raises the official signing DOCUMENT, and Asarem inks her thumbs, pressing them firmly to the document. A huge CHEER goes up through the crowd, and streams of CONFETTI and BALLOONS explode all over.

As the crowd around them celebrates and all the dignitaries grin with satisfaction, Kira looks to Sisko, who had been watching the ceremony with great pleasure. They share a triumphant smile that says, "We did it."

KIRA (v.o. from 8x02)
"The child Avatar will be the
second of the Emissary, he to whom
the Teacher Prophets sing, and
will be born to a gracious and
loving world... a world ready...
to unite."

64 **INT. KASIDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

It's late night, and the family has had a huge celebratory dinner some hours ago. Pots and plates are strewn about everywhere. Jake is making a valiant attempt at gathering them and taking them to the kitchen. He's tired but happy.

Joseph is fast asleep in Kasidy's rocking chair, and Judith is standing by the large picture windows, gazing out on the surrounding fields contentedly.

Ben walks around slowly, closing windows and pulling shutters, lowering lights. He gives Judith a peck and half-hug as he goes past, and gently kisses his father on his sleeping head. With a last goodnight wave to Jake, he goes to the bedroom.

65 **INT. KASIDY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM**

Inside the bedroom, Kasidy sits in a chair, already in her nightclothes and tastefully feeding the baby. She smiles at him as he enters and disappears into the en-suite bathroom. He comes out a moment later in his own nightclothes.

Kasidy comes to him, and they both climb into bed together, placing the baby in between them. They settle in, facing each other across the happily gurgling, sleepy baby. They smile in pure contentment, entwining their fingers with their daughter's. Everything is right in their world.

Sisko reaches up to tap off the light, and we...

BLACK OUT:

THE END