

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x25 - "Unity, pt 2."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Unity

by SD Perry

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

BASHIR has just revealed his findings to KIRA, DAX and CYL.
Dax turns on Cyl, full of anger and accusation.

DAX

Did you know about this?

CYL

(defensive)

Of course not.

DAX

No more secrets, Cyl! I've had
enough!

CYL

Ezri, please... you must believe
me when I tell you I am as taken
aback by this as you are. Audrid
Dax herself was one of the first
to document the biological
connection between symbiont and
parasite. But the assumption was
always that it represented a
natural evolutionary divergence in
the distant past. As far as I
know, no-one ever put forth the
theory that the parasites were
engineered from symbionts.

KIRA

Doesn't that strike you as odd?

CYL

What do you mean?

KIRA

I mean, maybe the reason no-one
ever suggested it is precisely
because no-one wanted it known.
Maybe that's the real reason Trill

has always been so secretive about the symbionts. Not just for the living memory they represent, but because of the danger they pose if exploited. If they were tampered with once, and it gave rise to the parasites... Is it such a stretch to believe that your leaders would do or say anything to prevent that from happening again?

Cyl considers it, worried about the implications for his planet. He is not discounting it.

CYL

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

KIRA

Can you honestly rule it out?

Dax and Cyl share a look - they honestly can't.

KIRA

At the least I think this gives you something to present to the Symbiosis Commission. If you tell your people that an alien race experimented on your symbionts during their evolution, they might be more willing to help find out who and why.

CYL

I'll speak to Ambassador Gandres immediately.

2 INT. HOSPITAL

RURIKO TENMEI, as a human woman, lies in a 1950s hospital bed, connected to tubes and pipes. She is semi-conscious, looking with love at PRYNN, who sits beside her in 1950s era civilian clothing, reading aloud MOS from a book.

A hand comes into frame, POV, holding an old revolver. It FIRES at Ruriko, and BLOOD spatters across Prynn's face.

3 INT. STARFLEET SURFACE SHELTER - MORNING

VAUGHN jerks awake with a strangled scream, lying on his cot in a small, utilitarian Starfleet-style temporary shelter - little more than a shack. Necessities only, no luxuries. It's early morning, and sun sneaks in the window.

Vaughn is sweating, distressed, still wearing his rumpled uniform. He didn't get much rest. He pulls himself up to a sitting position on the cot, catching his breath.

He reaches sharply, uncoordinated, out to the portable comm unit installed in the shelter. He hits a series of keys, waits for a result.

After a moment, Prynn's face appears on the screen, open and pleasant at first. But when she sees who is calling, she shuts down cold, back to stiff and unfriendly.

PRYNN (screen)
What do you want?

VAUGHN
I'm sorry to bother you. I... just wanted to see you. To see how you were.

PRYNN (screen)
You've seen me, I'm fine. And I'm really very busy, so -

VAUGHN
I'm sorry. I'm sorry about everything, Prynn. Please believe that, you have to believe that much -

PRYNN (screen)
I have to go.

She reaches out and shuts off the signal. Vaughn sits and stares at the screen.

He just can't get the dream out of his head, or the guilt that comes with it. He is trapped in it, and it's only getting worse.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The station much as it was last time. The *Defiant* is still on the docking ring, and the area is full of Cardassians.

5 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

RO LAREN is looking through security reports on a series of padds. She is not happy with what she sees. Behind her on the monitors, HIZIKI GARD still sits alone in his cell.

Frustrated, she throws down the padds and heads out.

6 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Ro paces out onto the Promenade. The atmosphere is tense, the few people rushing to their places, not dawdling or chatting. Cardassian soldiers are at strategic points. She passes Quark's bar, considers popping in. But doesn't.

Then she notices something on the upper level, and stops and stares in happy surprise. It's TARAN'ATAR and the grey alien girl WEX, standing side by side and looking out of the window, in the direction of the wormhole. They make an odd couple - her small and slight, him huge and hulking.

UPPER LEVEL

Ro emerges from a spiral staircase and joins a small party of people walking along. As she passes Taran'atar and Wex, she peels off and steps up to the next window along, hiding behind the bulkhead so as not to be seen eavesdropping.

WEX

...I suppose not. Trellians enjoy their freedom. Did you know that?

TARAN'ATAR

They resisted Dominion control twice in the last century. I killed many during the last insurrection.

WEX

And have you ever stopped to wonder why a people would risk death to be free?

TARAN'ATAR

Failure to recognise overwhelming opposition.

WEX

No. It's because faced with a life of stagnation under the Dominion, the risk of death was preferable.

TARAN'ATAR

Then death is inevitable.

WEX

Your presence here would seem to suggest otherwise.

TARAN'ATAR

My presence here... is lost on me.

WEX

So why do you stay?

TARAN'ATAR

I was given no option to leave.

WEX

And what would you do if you had the option? Return to your unit?

TARAN'ATAR

I'm not sure. Do you have any suggestions, Lieutenant Ro?

Ro kicks herself - she's been rumbled. She takes a deep breath and steps into view, hoping the day can be saved.

RO

I apologise if I offended you. My curiosity got the better of me. This is a tense time, after all.

I'm Lieutenant Ro Laren, the station's chief of security.

Wex looks Ro up and down, seeming to inspect her.

WEX

You're good. By nature I'm not easy to sneak up on.

RO

I feel I should make it up to you. Is there anything you need to make your stay with us more pleasant?

Wex stares at Ro for a moment more, her big black eyes disconcerting. Then she nods towards Quark's bar.

WEX

I was considering trying out that establishment. How is it?

RO

Not bad. Food, drink, games of chance, holographic environment rooms. I can see to it you're well taken care of. I'm on good terms with the proprietor.

WEX

That sounds... interesting.
(to Taran'atar)
Will you join me?

Taran'atar turns and gives one small and tight nod.

RO

Great.

Ro lets the other two turn and walk back to the stairway together. Then she follows them, still a bit bemused.

RO

(to self)
And people think Quark and I make a weird couple...

7 **EXT. BAJOR - SURFACE - DAY**

The outside of the emergency shelter, set among a series of similar temporary buildings in a field, near to some old Bajoran ruins. BOWERS walks towards the shelter.

8 **INT. STARFLEET SURFACE SHELTER - DAY**

Bowers enters the shelter to see Vaughn working on reports, haggard and unrested, looking like hell. He is no happier with their progress than Ro. Bowers is aware of Vaughn's condition, and is compensating with extra professionalism.

BOWERS

Good morning, Commander.

VAUGHN

At ease, Lieutenant.

BOWERS

I have General Lenaris's report, sir. I'm prepared to brief you on our current status.

VAUGHN

Take a seat, Sam. When I said at ease, I was serious. Can I get you something to drink?

Bowers relaxes, but not much. He is worried about Vaughn.

BOWERS

Ah, that'd be great, sir. Coffee, black.

Vaughn goes to the basic replicator, and returns with the two coffees, hands one to Bowers. He sits back on his bed.

VAUGHN

So, fill me in.

BOWERS

The general managed to clear four more possibles, that family from Hedrikspool. He's still getting resistance to the Cardassians, so

he suggested reassigning them to the central compound, so they have as little contact with the public as possible.

Vaughn listens to Bowers' report, but only halfway. He is still thinking about Prynn and his own guilt over Ruriko. He says something only for the sake of something to say.

VAUGHN

What's your view of the situation?

BOWERS

Truthfully? We're accomplishing nothing here. These measures are not enough. People are slipping through the cracks, borrowing or stealing identity tags, lying for one another so they don't have to interact with Cardassians. They won't believe this "assassination ring" story for much longer.

The word brings it all back for Vaughn:

FLASHBACK - THE HOSPITAL

The hand FIRES the revolver at helpless 50s-era Ruriko, the BLOOD spattering Prynn's face.

BACK TO SCENE

Vaughn covers a wince. He tries to bring himself back to the conversation. But Bowers can see what is going on.

VAUGHN

Thank you, Lieutenant. I'll take your opinions into consideration.

BOWERS

Aye, sir.

Bowers leaves. Vaughn continues staring into the distance. He can't think about anything else but Prynn and Ruriko.

Gard lies staring at the ceiling, on the bunk in his cell. The door from the security office opens, and Ro walks in, carrying a large padd and two mugs of tea.

Gard sits up as she approaches, eyeing the padd with hope. Ro places the items on the central table, half-smiling.

RO
Promise not to kill me if I drop
the forcefield?

GARD
Solemnly.

RO
The outer office is locked down
and being monitored from Ops, so
if you were to try...

GARD
I won't.

She accepts his promise, and taps a control to drop the FORCEFIELD. She carries the padd and drinks into the cell, then taps a control on her hip to reinstate the shield. Gard is a bit disappointed that he is not getting out after all, but happy to have company, especially Ro's.

RO
Tea. A blend Quark came up with.

Gard takes the drink, sniffs it, sips it, and is pleasantly surprised at the taste.

RO
You'll have to stay here a while
longer, but they told me to give
you basic computer access... and
assured me you weren't dangerous.

GARD
I appreciate that. And I realise
this ship has long sailed, but...
I wanted you to know that my
romantic overtures to you were not

purely for the purposes of my mission. Not by a long stretch.

Ro takes that on board, not really sure how to react. Used? Flattered? Sympathetic? She sticks to business.

RO

I thought you might be willing to talk to me about a few things. For instance... what can you tell me about the parasites?

GARD

Nothing you don't already know.

RO

You knew Shakaar was infected.

GARD

Yes. We began tracing him after he started asking questions about Trill's defence network.

RO

(excited)

So you know where he was infected?

GARD

Alas, no. We did manage to narrow it down to five places, judging by the timeline. Three planets and two starbases. But we didn't have the resources to follow up.

RO

Do you remember the names of the five?

Gard grins. Ro grins back. They're onto something.

10 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

GUL MACET and a Cardassian medic are just leaving Kira's office after a meeting, when Ro passes them. She excitedly drops a padd on Kira's desk, proud of her work.

RO

Found it. First Minister Shakaar was infected by a parasite on Minos Korva.

KIRA

Are you sure?

RO

As much as I can be. Starfleet's been looking at all the places Shakaar visited on his way home from Earth. They've crossed the two stations closest to Earth off the list, which leaves nine... except there are really only five.

KIRA

Why only five?

RO

Because Gard finally gave me something useful - a timeframe.

Ro taps the padd so that it shows a space GRAPHIC. It shows an irregular line, generally heading in one direction, but diverting slightly to stop at eleven ICONS, each of which are tagged with names. The first two icons are already crossed out. Ro points to the third of the remaining icons.

RO

These are all the places Shakaar stopped. Notice that Betazed is third, after Deneva. Based on the reports from the *Enterprise* after the Starfleet infiltration, Deanna Troi, the ship's counsellor - she's a half-Betazoid - she sensed something was hidden, although she couldn't be sure what. So a planet packed with full-blood Betazoids surely would have detected any problems straight away. If Shakaar was already infected by then, he never would have dared go there.

KIRA

So that rules out New France,
Deneva and Betazed.

RO

Right. And Gard says it was two
weeks after Betazed that he
contacted them for information.

KIRA

(last planet)

Which would eliminate Xepolite.

RO

Probably Lya too, but I didn't
count it out at first. I just
spent two hours cross-checking
arrival and departure logs, and
Minos Korva has to be it. There
are Federation starbases on either
side, heavy surveillance. Every
moment would be accounted for. But
on the planet, he was taken on a
scenic tour of the mountain ranges
that lasted for four days. Low
population, lots of isolated
territory. Infinite opportunity.

Kira starts to smile at their first real lead in ages.

KIRA

Ro, this is really excellent work.
I'll contact Akaar immediately.

That certainly spoils Ro's celebratory mood.

RO

What about Gard? I couldn't have
done this without him. Will you
pass that along?

KIRA

I'll... do what I can for him.
It's complicated. But you're doing
a good job, Ro. Even the admiral
will have to concede that.

RO

It seems to me he doesn't have to do anything.

KIRA

I know he's difficult. But he's just doing what he thinks is best.

RO

(not convinced)

Permission to be excused?

KIRA

Granted. But let me just say... I hope you're still considering your options, about your resignation.

RO

I've been busy, Colonel. I'll give it all due consideration, when I have the time.

And the shields are back up between them again. Kira sighs with sad exasperation.

KIRA

Excused, Lieutenant.

Ro turns and leaves.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Focusing on the *Defiant* berthed on the docking ring.

12 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Half-lighting, under repairs. Prynn, SHAR and NOG all sit on the deck, working on disassembled components which lie on the floor between them. Nog is chatting, oblivious to the others' quiet sadness. They don't mind the distraction.

NOG

...and he said she's doing great,
and that his grandfather, Joseph,
will be there soon. And it turns
out he's coming with the chief!
Jake said it was a personal visit,
but Chief O'Brien will come to see
us, I know he'll want to see how
we transferred the fusion core
from Empok Nor... hey, do either
of you have the Lindsay wrench?

This is the first bit the others actually respond to. Shar silently shakes his head. Prynn rummages through her tools.

PRYNN

Didn't Senkowski come up a while
ago, borrow some stuff?

NOG

Oh, right. Back in a minute.
Either of you want something? The
replicators are back up.

PRYNN

No, thanks anyway, Nog.

Nog rushes out, leaving Shar and Prynn alone. There is uncomfortable silence. Prynn wants to say something to Shar, express sympathy, but doesn't know how to begin.

SHAR

You said your father had gone to Bajor.

PRYNN

Yes, they needed him for some confidential operation, something about the assassin's contacts, I think.

Shar doesn't respond, unable to reveal what he knows. She looks up at him, his face shadowed in the half-light. Shar looks up and they make eye contact - it is intense and strange. Prynn looks back down, a little embarrassed.

PRYNN

About the other day... I'm sorry if I bothered you.

SHAR

It was no bother. I apologise for my awkwardness. It had been a difficult morning.

PRYNN

Me too.

They go back to work for a while. Prynn wants to keep talking, engage Shar somehow. She feels a kinship with him, and suddenly realises that she wants it to be more.

PRYNN

So, would you like to have lunch tomorrow?

SHAR

That would be very nice. But I may have things to do. Colonel Kira asked that I assist with several departments in the coming days.

(slight smile)

I... I'm sure I can take time for lunch, though.

Prynn smiles back, happier than she has been in days.

13 EXT. BAJOR - KASIDY'S HOUSE

Sunny and bright, late morning. Calm, peaceful, birds tweeting, nothing wrong with the world.

14 INT. KASIDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Emerging from the bedroom in a light robe, heavily pregnant KASIDY sees JAKE moving around the kitchen. He grins to see her and rushes to pull out a seat at the dining table.

JAKE

Sit, let me get you breakfast. I made French toast when I got up, saved some for you...

(suddenly concerned)

Do you want French toast? Is that going to make you sick? I can make eggs. Or anything you want.

Taking the seat, she smiles at his excited attentiveness. It's nice to have someone to take care of her.

KASIDY

French toast sounds wonderful. And a big glass of water, please.

JAKE

Whatever you say.

He grins again and heads back to get the toast and water, then brings it back to the table and sits with her.

JAKE

So, is it a boy or a girl? I bet it's a boy. When I talked to Doctor Bashir about it -

KASIDY

(mock stern)

He didn't tell you a thing. He's sworn to secrecy.

JAKE

Y'know Quark's got a pool on it.

KASIDY

I'm stunned. Who's winning?

JAKE

'Boy,' but only by a few points.

KASIDY

Maybe I'll have twins, just to upset Quark. He'd have to give everyone's money back.

(off Jake's shock)

No, Jake. I'm not having twins. That I would know. Besides, 'avatar' wasn't plural.

At the reminder of the prophecy, Jake's good mood dims.

JAKE

It's weird. You know, having all these things revolve around Dad, and his family. It makes me wonder if we have any choice in what we do - any free will, you know?

KASIDY

Let me know if you figure it out. I'm just... I'm hoping he'll come back soon. I feel like it's time, now. I know that's because of the baby. But I'm also afraid that he's going to miss things, important things in our lives. Mostly, though, it's just what I want. Maybe that's selfish, but it's... it's what I want.

The poignant moment breaks when Kasidy feels a familiar movement inside her swollen belly. She reaches out and grabs Jake's hand, bringing it gently to her belly.

JAKE

Is it...?

Then his face breaks open in amazement as he feels the baby move inside her. She smiles back at him.

15 EXT. BAJOR - KASIDY'S HOUSE

Moments later, Kasidy and Jake come out onto their veranda, Kasidy having thrown on a dressing gown. They look out up the pathway, expectantly.

Further away, at the edge of their land, there is a small campsite - a few tents, with Bajorans outside cooking over a barbecue. Jake points towards it.

JAKE

What's over there?

KASIDY

I told you I had some volunteer help around here? That's them. Been hanging around for months.

JAKE

Really?

KASIDY

They're harmless. They just want to make sure the Emissary's wife doesn't lose communications, break her leg and go into labour all at the same time.

JAKE

Well, with the chief and everyone coming, I can tell them we're okay...

KASIDY

Feel free to try. I've been telling them that I'm perfectly fine for weeks now. They seem determined to stay, and I don't really mind -

Their attention is caught by Federation transporter signals appearing on the path. They deposit CHIEF O'BRIEN (with KEIKO, MOLLY and KIRAYOSHI), plus JOSEPH and JUDITH SISKO (from 8x06 "Fallout").

With a huge grin, Jake runs down and into a powerful bear hug with his grandfather. Big smiles all round.

JOSEPH

Jake, Jake... oh, thank God.

Kasidy approaches more slowly, and Judith and Keiko both give her more gentle hugs. Jake lets go of Joseph and turns to O'Brien, who holds out his hand for a friendly shake.

O'BRIEN

It's good to see you, Jake.

Jake looks down to see Molly pulling on his shirt, holding a book up to him.

MOLLY

I can read you a story, Jake!

JAKE

I can't wait.

He scoops her and carries her giggling back to the house. They all follow, all happy and content at the reunions.

16 EXT. BAJOR - STARFLEET SHELTER

Re-establishing Vaughn's rather meagre operations centre.

17 INT. STARFLEET SURFACE SHELTER

Admiral AKAAR enters the shack to find Vaughn asleep in his chair, leaning on his console, eyes moving with another unpleasant dream. Akaar looks at him with sympathetic worry, but then straightens and clears his throat.

Vaughn JERKS awake, takes a moment to figure out where he is. tries to pull himself together, straighten his uniform, embarrassed to be caught in this undignified state.

AKAAR

(straight)

Commander.

VAUGHN

I thought you were on the *Trager*.

(sudden worry)
New outbreak?

AKAAR
Nothing like that.

Akaar is uncomfortable here, about to deliver bad news. And Vaughn can see that. He feels indignant about Akaar's unannounced visit, like he is being checked up on. He is.

VAUGHN
Have a seat, Admiral. You mind telling me what's going on?

AKAAR
(he does)
You need a break. I'm sending you to the monastery in Ashalla for a few days, to get some rest.

VAUGHN
Are you kidding? We're in the midst of a major operation here. I don't have the time or the desire to rest. If you hadn't noticed, things are getting worse.

AKAAR
I've noticed. But this morning's security scans say you're not up to it. Your serotonin levels have continued to drop, and now your blood pressure is up. You're overtired. I've already discussed the matter with Colonel Kira and General Lenaris, and they agree.

VAUGHN
This is ridiculous! There have been seven new cases reported in the last two days -

AKAAR
Eleven. Remember? The four in Dakhur, yesterday morning.

Vaughn's pique is pierced by embarrassment. He forgot.

VAUGHN

I'm perfectly capable of doing my job, and... and I don't need this right now. Admiral, please. I need to work. One of the doctors can prescribe something.

AKAAR

Let's not argue about this, Elias. It's a medical leave, there's no shame in it.

Fighting indignation and shame regardless, Vaughn knows he has no choice but to relent. Akaar is right anyway.

VAUGHN

(resigned)

Who's going to step in?

AKAAR

It's only for a few days, a week perhaps. Bowers and Lenaris can handle it.

Seeing Vaughn's dejection, Akaar leans forward and places a meaty hand on his friend's shoulder in sympathy.

AKAAR

The choice wasn't yours to make, and dwelling on it won't change anything. You're off duty, Commander. A transport is standing by to take you to Ashalla.

VAUGHN

Why a monastery?

AKAAR

Because it's as far from your responsibilities as I can send you without shipping you off planet.

(stands up)

I'll see you soon.

With a final nod, Akaar turns and leaves. Vaughn stares ahead for a moment, then turns and looks for his travelling bag, grabbing his few effects and throwing them in.

18 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The *Defiant* is still sat on the docking ring, the station still surrounded by ominously loitering Cardassian vessels.

19 INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY

It is dark in the cargo bay. ETANA creeps nervously along, shining her PALM BEACON between the crates and objects. A loud CRASH as something falls off a shelf, echoes around the room. Etana JERKS around, aiming her beacon and raising her phaser in the direction of the noise.

ETANA

Bennings? Are you okay?

A Starfleet security officer, BENNINGS, appears from behind some crates, catching his breath from the shock, carrying his tricorder. He looks at Etana with a rueful grin.

BENNINGS

I was attacked by a box of stem-bolts, thank you very much.

Etana smiles with relief. They both recover from the shock while walking towards each other. This cargo bay is creepy.

ETANA

What is a stem-bolt, anyway?

He shrugs. Nobody knows. They proceed on together, shining their beacons into the numerous nooks and crannies.

BENNINGS

Anything?

ETANA

No, you?

BENNINGS

Just a lot of dark. Be nice to turn on a few lights around here.

ETANA

I wish we could. The power-grid malfunction in this sector is why Lieutenant Ro sent us down here in the first place.

Nodding, Bennings heads down another branch of passages, his palm beacon light bobbing on the walls and crates as he walks. Etana carries on, shining her own light over crates, reading the information panels on them.

ETANA

These scans, they're not thorough enough. There's no way we can get through even a quarter of the station population in a single day. And what if the aliens can move from person to person? We'd be right back where we started.

When Bennings doesn't respond, she turns back, looking for his beacon light. It is holding still now, not bobbing. As if it has been placed on top of one of the crates.

She turns, and Bennings is right there behind her. Her light splashes across his face, revealing the manic grin as he reaches to KNOCK it and the phaser out of her hands. Before she can react, he has got her by the throat.

He DRAGS her close to him, and as she struggles in vain to get free and reach her combadge, his mouth opens wide. She gargles a scream. From the darkness of Bennings' mouth, two sharp and purplish PINCERS are beginning to emerge...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

QUARK sits on a high stool behind the bar, his legs curled up and his feet placed on the edge of the seat. He scans the floor nervously with his eyes, alert for any movement. Meanwhile, his scarce business goes on around him.

He looks up to see Wex and Taran'atar hovering just inside the door. He doesn't like either of them, especially as neither has bought a drink. Then Ro Laren rushes past them, coming directly to Quark. She hisses at him in a fury.

RO

How did you find out, Quark?

QUARK

I have my resources. And no, I didn't tell anyone. We have that in common.

RO

I didn't have a choice. Until we get a fix on who's who -

QUARK

You think I'm one of them?!

RO

(gritted teeth)

If you were, you wouldn't have called to tell me you found out, would you? We're just buying time.

QUARK

Time is money. How many have they got? Is that why business is down?

RO

Only ten. And business is down because people are scared, by the lockdown and the possibility of anti-Federation terrorism.

QUARK

And what if word were to get out that there is no terrorist threat? That being in a crowd is actually safer than staying in?

RO

Don't mess with me, Quark. Two of those ten are my own security. If you let any of this leak, I swear to the Prophets I will make life hard for you.

QUARK

How much worse can it get?

RO

(deadly)

Oh believe me, Quark, I can make it worse. Count on it. Besides, I'd never speak to you again.

QUARK

(grinning)

That, I couldn't bear. Your secret is safe... but only if you keep me in the loop. As much as possible.

RO

Is there anything you need?

QUARK

(nods to Taran'atar)

You could get that alien monster and his new girlfriend to move. They're scaring people away.

RO

I asked Taran'atar to keep an eye on the bar, for exactly the reasons we've been discussing. And Wex is from the Gamma Quadrant. If she chooses to spend time with him, his presence will be less disruptive. Be grateful.

QUARK

Grateful for what? She's got an expression that could turn back time. Would you at least ask her to try smiling once in a while?

RO

(sigh)

I'll see what I can do.

Ro leaves and walks to the door, stopping to speak MOS to Wex and Taran'atar. As Ro moves off, Wex turns to look directly at Quark, and gives him the DIRTIEST look ever.

Meanwhile, TREIR has been working the other end of the bar. She calls over to Quark.

TREIR

Hey, Quark. Call for you. It's from Ferenginar.

QUARK

(confused)

Did they lift the comm blackout?

TREIR

Nope. The call's being routed from the Militia comnet on Bajor.

Intrigued, Quark goes to his comm panel behind the bar, and taps a few buttons. After a moment, ROM's face fills the screen, grinning wide, dressed in his Grand Nagal regalia. Quark is not especially pleased to see him.

ROM (screen)

Hellooooo, Brother!

QUARK

Rom. This better be important. I'm a busy man.

ROM (screen)

But brother, I have wonderful news! Leeta's pregnant! You're going to be an uncle again!

Rom reaches off screen and pulls LEETA into the picture. The pretty Bajoran woman - Quark's former dabo girl - is already starting to show. She waves cheerily at Quark.

QUARK

How nice.

ROM (screen)

What's wrong, brother? I thought you'd be happy for us.

QUARK

(snaps)

Oh, I couldn't be happier. I mean, let's look at my situation. Either Bajor joins the Federation, or we all get eaten alive. Either way, business is in the waste extractor and I'm going to have to close the bar. I have no prospects, and my personal life is a shipwreck. But hey, Leeta's pregnant, so it must be happy hour!

He grabs a complete stranger's drink off the bar and downs it, SLAMMING the glass back down in a tantrum.

ROM (screen)

I had no idea things were so bad, brother. I'm sorry.

QUARK

No, Rom, I'm sorry. You too, Leeta. It's great news, really. I'm just having a bad day here.

ROM (screen)

Is there anything we can do?

QUARK

Don't worry about me, I'll be fine. I always am. Look, I need to get back to work. I'll see you around, okay? Congratulations.

He cuts the signal and hangs his head.

Elsewhere, in one of the quiet areas under the stairs, Shar and Prynn share lunch. Conversation is still not easy.

PRYNN

May I ask a personal question?

SHAR

Yes.

PRYNN

Do Andorians have romantic or...
sexual... liaisons outside their
species?

It's an odd question. Shar is surprised, but not offended.

SHAR

They do, but it isn't encouraged.
And it isn't acceptable until
after the children have grown to
maturity. There must be proper
role modelling for the young.

PRYNN

Even off-planet? I mean, if there
are no children around...

SHAR

More acceptable. But still rare.

PRYNN

Why is that?

SHAR

I don't know. I suppose we're all
so thoroughly indoctrinated into
the need for bonding. Mating is so
very important, for the future of
our world...

PRYNN

(gently)

And if you have no mates?

He looks at her, and he finally twigs what she is asking. She is interested in him. He blinks in bewilderment and surprise. Such a thing absolutely never occurred to him.

PRYNN

I hope I haven't offended you.

SHAR

That's alright.

PRYNN

No, I've been thoughtless. I'm sorry. I just... I like spending time with you, and I was wondering what your situation is, now.

SHAR

I... don't know. I may not know for a while.

PRYNN

Then forget I asked. For a while. Let me subtly change the subject. Have you ever tried coconut? It's a kind of fruit, from Earth, and they make this pie out of it...

They go back to small talk, but the subject is out there...

21 EXT. BAJOR - ASHALLA MONASTERY

Set among the picturesque mountains, this is the same monastery Sisko visited way back in 1x01 "Emissary."

22 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - GARDEN - DAY

OPAKA sits in a quiet, secluded internal courtyard garden with warm sun and a wonderful view. She is reading quietly to herself, just relaxing, calm and peaceful.

Elias Vaughn steps into the garden, looking around at the tranquillity, respectful but largely unmoved by it.

VAUGHN

I hope I'm not interrupting your meditation.

She looks up to greet him with a smile, grasping his hand.

OPAKA

Not at all, Commander. I was only reading. Please, sit with me.

They both sit together on the stone bench. Opaka can sense he is troubled, but doesn't want to pry. For the sake of something to say, Vaughn gestures to her book.

VAUGHN

Let me guess. The Ohalu text?

OPAKA

Actually, it's a book of recipes.

VAUGHN

I thought you'd be up to your neck in the controversy by now. Railing against the heresy, perhaps.

OPAKA

I've chosen to actually read it, first. I'm half-way through, and so far I see nothing heretical.

VAUGHN

Really?

OPAKA

Oh, I can see why it bothers the Assembly. And I know I would have protested it, before my time in the Gamma Quadrant.

VAUGHN

But now you don't?

OPAKA

It's another interpretation of the Prophets, like that of the Eav'oq. There are things in the text I disagree with, or at least have a different opinion about. But I'm not sure our traditional beliefs

are entirely incompatible with what Ohalu says. In any regard, everything resolves, one way or another. Your *pagh*, for example, Commander, is in turmoil. But I have faith it will resolve.

VAUGHN

I wish I had that faith. I'm trapped, Sulan. And I don't have the first clue how to get out. What should I do?

OPAKA

How am I to know? It's your life.

VAUGHN

I thought... I thought you might have some insight.

OPAKA

Insight, no. I have opinions, and I can tell you what I see... if you're willing to look with me.

Vaughn nods solemnly, desperate for any lifeline.

OPAKA

If you had to pick a moment or an event that changed things for you, that turned your life onto this path you now walk, what would it be? Don't think on it too long.

VAUGHN

My experience with the Orb, on the *Kamal*. I took the job at DS-Nine because of it. I didn't even know that Prynn was stationed there...

OPAKA

If you could go back and erase that moment, unravel it from your story, would you? Would you cast aside the knowledge you've gained?

VAUGHN

I... don't know. What I want is clarity, I suppose. It felt so right, when I looked into that Orb. If I could just remember that feeling... if I had some sign...

Opaka looks away, letting him bring himself under control.

OPAKA

(softly)

The Orbs of the Prophets are here.

And he looks back up at her, hope in his face at last.

23 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

Like the one Kira visited in 2x02 "The Circle." Vaughn kneels on a cushion, gazing up in expectation at the ORB BOX on its stone pedestal. He is eager for this, but still daunted. Opaka stands behind the Box, wise and warm.

OPAKA

Are you prepared?

VAUGHN

You'll stay?

OPAKA

I'll be here.

He gives a nervous but resolute nod, and she reaches around the Box, gently opening the doors. The bright, swirling LIGHT surges out, engulfing Vaughn and washing over his face, eventually WHITING OUT the screen.

OPAKA (o.s.)

Walk with the Prophets.

24 INT, HOSPITAL

Ruriko lies in the 1950s hospital bed, connected to tubes and pipes. Prynn sits beside her in 1950s era civilian clothing, reading quietly from a book. The scene is now over-exposed, with that white dreamlike aura of a vision.

A hand comes into frame, POV, holding an old revolver. Ruriko sees it, scared. Prynn's eyes are wide, staring into camera with fear and confusion. The hand FIRES the gun at Ruriko. BLOOD spatters across Prynn's face. She SHRIEKS.

25 **INT. ASYLUM CELL**

Elias Vaughn, in his 1950s guise of ELI UNDERWOOD, jerks awake with a strangled scream, lying on his cot in a small cell, in a criminal asylum.

Early morning, and weak light filters in through the barred windows onto the featureless grey-green walls. Rain patters outside, with thunder rumbling somewhere in the distance.

Eli is sweating, distressed, wearing a bland asylum smock. He pulls himself up to a sitting position on the cot, catching his breath. The dream stays with him.

He reaches sharply, uncoordinated, to touch the shadows on the wall. But it's just a stone wall. He hangs his head in misery - he deserves to be here.

26 **INT. ASYLUM - COMMON AREA**

Opaka, in her 50s guise of SUE-LYNN, a human nurse, leads Eli shuffling along a corridor.

He is new here, and she is giving him the tour. She is kind, but understandably wary given his history. He is locked in his pattern of recrimination and self-hatred.

SUE-LYNN

...Group sessions three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. We're quite progressive here, but we also find that most of our patients enjoy some structure.

Eli glances backwards at the security guard following. It's Sam Bowers as SAMUEL the prison guard, tapping a billy-club threateningly in his hands, and sneering back at him.

ELI

I'm sure that will be fine.

Sue-Lynn continues to lead Eli into the common area - a larger room featuring the same grey-green walls, but with passably comfortable couches and mild entertainments.

Populating the room are a dozen more inmates, including young and androgynous SHAUN (Shar as a dread-locked human), pixie-like THERESA (Ezri Dax without her spots), and the giant older man LEO (Adm Akaar).

There is also another nurse LAURA (Ro as a rather stern human), and another guard TERRENCE (Taran'atar as a huge and imposing human).

Sue-Lynn leads him forward, to one of the inmates sat on a couch, a man whose face we cannot see yet. Sue-Lynn seems friendly with him, eager to please him.

SUE-LYNN

Benny, this is Eli Underwood.

The man turns, and it is BENJAMIN SISKO in his vision-guise as BENNY RUSSELL, wearing his small round glasses.

SUE-LYNN

Eli, this is Benny Russell. He's something of a... trustee, I suppose you'd say. I'm sure Benny will be happy to help you settle in. Won't you, Benny?

BENNY

My pleasure. It's nice to meet you, Eli.

He smiles in welcome and reaches out to shake Eli's hand.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

27 INT. ASYLUM - COMMON AREA

Eli Underwood takes a seat on the couch opposite Benny Russell. Benny's smile dims as he notices Eli's manner.

BENNY

What's wrong, Mister Underwood?
Or... may I call you Eli? You can
call me Benny.

ELI

I'm... nothing is wrong.

BENNY

I see. That makes you something of
an exception around here.

ELI

Oh?

Benny looks around at all the other faces in the room.

BENNY

That's right. Everyone who stays
here, everyone who works here...
We all have our crosses to bear.
Choices we made that we wish had
turned out differently. Bad
memories. Bad dreams.

Eli looks at Benny questioningly. Does he know his secret?

BENNY

But some of us just want to learn
about ourselves, about others.
Some of us... we need to learn. To
better ourselves.

ELI

But... aren't you here because...
I mean, we're all here for some
crime or another...

BENNY

That's one way of looking at it,
Eli. Is that why you're here?

ELI

I... yes. I'm here... because I
deserve to be.

BENNY

(smiling wide)

Then it must be where you belong.
Let me tell you about the schedule
around here. Did Sue-Lynn tell you
we're a progressive group?

They settle in for Eli's introduction to the asylum.

28 EXT. BAJOR - KASIDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Keiko O'Brien stands on Kasidy's veranda. She is watching Jake, Joseph and the children play in the fields, full of fun and laughter. She is pensive - there is something on her mind and she is not sure how to address it with Miles.

Miles comes out onto the veranda too. He has done something she won't be happy about, and she knows immediately.

O'BRIEN

Hi.

KEIKO

Miles, you didn't.

O'BRIEN

I tried to get out of it, I swear
I did, but Kira said that Nog was
working on some kind of weapon
scanner, that it's not picking up
a certain bio-sig, and asked if I
could take a look, and I said -

KEIKO

(sharp)

I don't care what you said.

O'BRIEN

What am I supposed to do, Keiko?
It's my duty to help, and I owe
Kira, we both do. If she'd asked
you, what would you have said?

She doesn't answer, going back to watching the children.
They're both quiet for a moment, then she makes a decision.

KEIKO

I got a call from the Agricultural
Commission. Right before we left.
They offered me a position.

O'BRIEN

(happy but confused)
That's great! Where's - why didn't
you tell me?

KEIKO

I turned it down. I turned it
down, but now... I don't know.

O'BRIEN

I don't get it. What's the job?

KEIKO

To head up a planetary renewal
project. Crops, season patterning,
irrigation systems, everything.

O'BRIEN

That's wonderful! It's what you
wanted, isn't it?

KEIKO

You don't understand. I'd... We'd
have to move there, for at least
two years.

O'BRIEN

Well, where is it?

KEIKO

(bombshell)
Cardassia.

The word hangs there. Miles doesn't know how to respond.

KEIKO

There are a number of projects starting up there, to work with the survivors, to help rebuild. We wouldn't be the only humans.

O'BRIEN

(bemused)

You're seriously considering it. Without even telling me.

KEIKO

I didn't tell you because I knew you wouldn't even think about it. You hate Cardassia.

O'BRIEN

I don't remember you expressing any particular love for it. Anyway, you said you already turned it down. What does my opinion matter?

KEIKO

Things were supposed to be safer. We just moved, you just started teaching. How could I even ask?

O'BRIEN

So now you're mad at me because you didn't ask me something you thought I'd say no to?

KEIKO

No, I'm not mad. Or maybe I am, but it's not your fault. It's just... I feel like all the big decisions we've made have been about your career. Don't misunderstand, I agreed to those things at the time, but... would you have considered it? Really?

O'BRIEN

Moving to Cardassia? Of all the planets... I don't know, Kay. I'd like to say that I'd be a hundred percent behind you, whatever you want, but there? I don't know.

(sigh)

We should talk more about this. But I told Kira...

KEIKO

That you'd be right there. I know. You'll be careful?

O'BRIEN

Always. I'll be back as soon as I can, I promise.

He reaches in to kiss and hug her briefly before leaving.

KEIKO

You're a good man, Miles O'Brien. But stop promising me things.

29 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Quark is behind his bar, talking incessantly, imprisoning Nog who is trying to eat his lunch at the bar. Nog just grunts and nods at appropriate intervals, not listening at all. Taran'atar and Wex remain hovering by the door.

QUARK

...Oh and that reminds me, did you know that Frool is talking about going back to Ferenginar? After all I've done for him. He got a half-slip raise just two years ago... and do you think that Wex person might have something to do with the parasites?

Nog's head jerks up in alarm, staring at his uncle.

QUARK

That got your attention, didn't it? Quite a coincidence, her

turning up when she did, then her
and that Jem'Hadar getting chummy.
Maybe they're, you know...

Quark leers suggestively. Nog grimaces with disgust.

NOG

I don't know what you're talking
about, Uncle.

QUARK

Oh, stop. And thank you so very
much for telling me my life is in
danger, by the way. That's what
makes family so special.

NOG

Uncle, please. How did you -

QUARK

Don't teach your elders how to
forge cheques. Your secret's safe.

Nog nods, relieved and annoyed together. But still worried.

NOG

Aren't you afraid?

QUARK

I've got Mister Victory-Is-Life
over there. Unpaid security.
Between him and Lady Grey, the
atmosphere in here is creepy
enough to scare anything away.

NOG

I don't think she's creepy.

QUARK

It's the way she looks at me, not
to mention the company she keeps.
She's trouble. I don't know how,
but I'm sure of it.

On cue, Wex turns her head and sends another disapproving
glare in Quark's direction.

QUARK

See that?! See?

NOG

I don't know. Half the people who
come in here look at you like
that. Anyway, gotta go.

Nog gets up and prepares to leave. Just then, there is a loud SNAP sound, like a mouse-trap closing, and then a customer SCREAMS. Nog and Quark react sharply as the customer jumps up onto their chair, looking with fright down at the floor. Suddenly everyone is on their feet.

A tiny PARASITE streaks across the floor, heading for the Promenade. Quark lets out a SHRIEK and jumps up on top of the bar. Nog reaches in panic for his combadge.

While Wex runs quickly to the door mechanism, Taran'atar CROUCHES down in the threshold, putting himself directly in the parasite's path. The small, skittering creature LIFTS OFF and aims directly for Taran'atar's face.

It flies straight into the Jem'Hadar's open mouth, fighting to work its way deeper. Taran'atar stands up and BITES down hard, crunching the parasite between his teeth, then SPITS the mulched pieces out onto the floor.

Nog watches all this with revulsion and horror. He and some of the customers walk forward, inspecting the mess on the floor with fascinated distaste. Some look at Taran'atar with admiration and gratitude. Wex speaks out loud.

WEX

I told you this place has vermin.
I saw the traps.

Quark leaps down off his bar, hissing at Wex.

QUARK

This establishment is clean.

(to customers)

I assure you, Quark's is vermin-free. Unless it's on the menu. It so happens -

NOG

- That my pet *hunta* spider just got eaten. I'm so sorry, Uncle. I know I wasn't supposed to bring him into the restaurant.

Begrudgingly accepting Nog's cover, Quark plays along.

QUARK

I've told you time and again, that's a stupid pet to have. Look what happened?

Sharing a glaring look of his own with Quark, followed by a grateful nod to Wex, Nog walks out of the bar. Quark goes back to placating his customers as best he can.

30 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Ro Laren walks down the corridor, still not pleased with how the situation is developing. As she nears a junction, she overhears Kira's voice, raised in irritation. She stops to listen in again, even knowing it might be a bad idea.

KIRA (o.s.)

...Which I've already put in my report. I think you'd want to give credit where it's due, Admiral.

Akaar. Ro sneers - she and the admiral do not get along.

AKAAR (o.s.)

If you want to suggest a commendation, that is your prerogative. But we have vastly more important matters at stake, Colonel, than whether or not your security chief decides to resign.

They are talking about her. Ro becomes even more indignant.

KIRA (o.s.)

After all she's done, finding the assassin, tracking the planet. You obviously have some grudge you

mean to hold on to regardless of
her exemplary performance
throughout this ordeal.

Ro swells with gratitude and pride to hear Kira defend her.

AKAAR (o.s)

Colonel, please, now is not the
time for this. We need to talk
about another matter. And this
corridor is not shielded. If you
will step inside...

At the sound of a door hissing shut, Ro realises it's over.
Both pleased and annoyed, she turns to walk back down the
corridor the other way. But there is a Bajoran WOMAN in her
way, looking at her strangely, unnaturally.

RO

Excuse me.

Ro attempts to step around the woman, but the woman SHIFTS
to stay in her path. The mouth starts opening wide, and the
points of the PINCERS begin to emerge.

Ro reacts instantly, dropping into a crouch and reaching
for her phaser. The woman leans over her threateningly, the
parasite dropping out of her wide mouth and right onto Ro's
arm. It grabs on and starts to CLIMB.

Horrified, Ro succeeds in batting the parasite off her arm,
but it is unharmed. Pushing herself away with her feet, she
fires her phaser at the woman. It has no effect. She keeps
coming, smiling her wide manic grin.

31 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Elsewhere in the corridors, Shar and Nog walk together on
their way to a meeting. Shar is still rather distracted.

SHAR

I'm sorry, Nog, what did you ask?

NOG

I asked if you had anything on your mind. I mean, if you wanted to talk about anything.

SHAR

I was thinking of Prynn Tenmei. She has suggested that she and I develop a closer friendship.

NOG

You and Prynn? That's interesting.

SHAR

I don't mean to suggest - that is, I am not interested in pursuing a... familiarity with anyone.

NOG

Right, gotcha.

Then Nog suddenly reacts to some sound only he can hear.

NOG

Did you hear a -

Then Shar hears it too - a short, strangled SCREAM. Recognising Ro's voice, Shar blood is boiling immediately - he is in warrior mode. He RUNS at full pelt to the nearest junction and around the corner, Nog struggling to catch up while tapping his badge and shouting orders.

NOG

Nog to Shul! Infiltration alert in corridor twenty-seven delta! Activate now!

Ro is on her knees, CLAWING at her face. She is fighting to keep her lips closed as the parasite DIGS into her face, trying to pry them open, all while the other Bajoran woman hovers menacingly over her.

Shar comes barrelling down the corridor, knocking the Bajoran woman aside and grabbing the parasite on Ro's face. He squeezes it, ramming his fingers through its shell until it breaks. It comes free with a spatter of Ro's blood, and Shar SLAMS the parasite into the wall, crushing it.

The Bajoran woman is quickly back on her feet and advancing again. She vomits up another parasite, and another, and another. They all fall to the floor and begin skittering towards their targets. Shar hisses, ready to attack.

But just as the parasites are getting close, they FREEZE, stopping completely in their tracks. The Bajoran woman does the same. Forcefields have popped into place around all but one parasite, and a sudden phaser shot takes care of that.

Ro, Nog and Shar all look up to see three security bodies holding stasis projectors and phasers. Relieved, Ro gets up off the ground and stares at the Bajoran woman.

SHAR
(re Ro's lip)
I'm sorry -

RO
We've got a queen.

Realising that she means the Bajoran woman, Shar and Nog share Ro's grin of satisfaction and triumph.

RO
We've got a queen.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

32 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS

A portable computer screen shows a GRAPHIC of a humanoid body. Clearly indicated at the base of the skull is a parasite, twice the size of the usual ones. Also indicated within the abdomen are at least a dozen more.

KIRA (o.s.)

You said they're telepathic.

Bashir stands by this screen as he continues his rather discouraging report. Kira, Dax, Ro, Shar, Nog and Cyl also stand in the central area. Gard remains within his cell.

BASHIR

The females are. They seem to use pheromones to control their soldiers, but a kind of mental imaging to communicate with other females within range. Each female is fully capable of setting up a colony on her own. They're born gestational, with a finite number of offspring already implanted.

KIRA

So... what produces the females?

BASHIR

Nothing we've seen so far.

RO

If we kill this female, the soldiers it commands die, right?

BASHIR

Right.

RO

So what are we waiting for?

BASHIR

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

RO

The risk is to the people still carrying those things around.

KIRA

Is there any way to communicate with her?

BASHIR

(doesn't want to say)

Not without a host body. And that's out of the question. Her ability to integrate with a humanoid's central nervous system is fast and all but irreversible.

CYL

But a being adapted to joining...

Cyl looks meaningfully between Dax and Gard. This is just why Bashir didn't want to say what he knew - because he knows Dax will volunteer. But he is bound by honesty.

BASHIR

If it tried to bond with a symbiont rather than a Trill host, there might be a way. But I can't recommend it.

DAX

I'll do it.

BASHIR

No. There are other options.

DAX

Like what?

BASHIR

Kill it, like Ro said. At least the station would be cleared.

KIRA

We have to communicate with it,
find out what it wants.

CYL

Colonel, I volunteer. In fact, I
insist on it.

(to Dax)

I've spent my life preparing for
this, Dax. Don't think you can
step in and take it away, just
like that.

GARD

(quiet but firm)

I've spent all my lives preparing
for this. It's what I do. If she's
going anywhere, I'm taking her.

(glance at Kira)

It's the least I can do.

Gard can see that Kira still isn't sure, so he presses on.

GARD

How long do you think it will take
for the soldiers to realise that
their mother isn't around anymore?
The lockdown is over. Don't waste
what little time you have left.

RO

Admiral Akaar wouldn't want you to
take the risk.

KIRA

No he wouldn't, but it's all we've
got. Julian, prepare Gard for the
procedure. Nog and Shar, get the
room ready. Ro, I want security
standing by. Dax, contact Ops and
make sure Selzner fields any calls
from the admiral. Have her say
that I'll... I'll get back to him.

Everyone gets to work. Julian looks at Dax, worried.

33 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS

A short time later, everyone is ready. Bashir straps the resolute Gard to a portable biobed. Nog has hooked up computer screens and connections. Shar works on another device. Dax and Cyl watch tensely. Ro has gone.

Kira is looking into a small clear container. The female parasite sits inside, the blue buzz of a stasis field barely visible around her. She is twice the size of the soldiers and an orange-brown colour. Kira shudders.

BASHIR

Not very appealing, is she?

KIRA

The *Enterprise* report described the queen differently...

BASHIR

That was the gestational body, a temporary second body for birthing the soldiers. This is the brains of the operation.

Kira goes to Gard, the man who killed her former lover.

KIRA

Are you sure about this?

GARD

Absolutely.

BASHIR

We're as ready as we'll ever be.

KIRA

Shar?

Shar activates his machine - the air in the room seems to become electrified, filled with static.

SHAR

This bioelectric field should block the female's ability to contact its soldiers for help.

KIRA
Then let's do it.

With a deep breath, Bashir works his controls. Gard closes his eyes. A micro-transporter DEMATERIALISES the female parasite. An active GRAPHIC shows the parasite appearing right on Gard's brain-stem. Everyone holds their breath.

Then Gard's eyes open again. They drift unfocused, then sharpen. Then unfocus, then sharpen again.

CYL
(quietly)
Is it working?

KIRA
Gard? Can you hear me?

GARD
She's here. She knows what's happening.

KIRA
I'm Kira Nerys. I'm in command of Deep Space Nine.

Gard continues to weave in and out, faltering some of his words as the parasite looks back out at them with contempt.

GARD
We know who you are. We know what you represent.

34 EXT. BAJOR - KASIDY'S HOUSE

As the house sits quietly in the afternoon sun, the Bajorans from the impromptu campsite on the edge of their land start to casually approach the house.

35 INT. MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

Opaka sits meditating silently as the light from the Orb fills the room. Vaughn is where he was, kneeling in front of it, his eyes half-closed and far away. There are some raised voices from the passages outside the prayer room.

Kira leans over Gard as the Trill speaks for the parasite.

KIRA

Stop your attack on Bajor. We don't wish to fight you. We can solve your concerns another way.

GARD

It's too late. We've already won.

KIRA

What do you mean?

GARD

We know, now. We know everything. You will destroy Trill. You will leave us the wormhole and withdraw from this space. You will give us the bodies we need, or we will obliterate all you hold sacred, and take what we want. Tell them.

KIRA

You won't succeed. I won't let you do this, do you understand?

GARD

I'm taking him now. You'll have to kill him. Kill us, it doesn't matter. We've waited for the time and it's happening now.

DAX

(scared)

Julian?

BASHIR

I have to pull her, now.

KIRA

Do it.

GARD

(manic grin)
Doesn't matter doesn't matter
doesn't -

Gard JERKS and spasms as Bashir presses his controls again. The queen rematerialises into the container, and Bashir rushes up to Gard with a hypospray.

The Trill flops back onto the biobed, staring blankly up for a few seconds. Then he hitches a breath, and he is back, if rather weakened.

Bashir runs back to his instruments to check readings.

KIRA
Report.

BASHIR
Neither symbiont nor host appears to have sustained any permanent damage.

KIRA
And the queen?

BASHIR
She didn't survive the separation.

Gard begins making a rasping whisper, trying to speak. Kira leans in close to hear him.

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

KIRA
Who? What artefacts?

GARD
Mother. Bajor. Tears.

Kira's eyes flare in shock as she interprets Gard's words.

CYL (o.s.)
The mother, maybe? The matriarch?

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

Kasidy and Keiko are chatting in the living room when there is a KNOCK at the door. Surprised, Kasidy waddles over to the door and opens it. It is the BAJORANS from the nearby campsite. Kasidy relaxes, recognising them.

KASIDY
Yes? What can I do for you?

Then the closest man raises a PHASER and grins evilly.

BAJORAN
You can let us in.

38 **INT. MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM**

The rising NOISE brings Opaka out of her meditation. She looks up to see a female PRYLAR standing in the doorway, with others behind her. Opaka is appalled at this breach of protocol, and starts to stand to protest.

PRYLAR
We don't need him.

One of the others raises a phaser, and SHOOTS at Vaughn. He is knocked over sideways, limp and semi-conscious. His head HITS the stone floor, but he remains deep in his vision. Opaka is shocked and terrified.

OPAKA
No...

39 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS**

Kira is still reacting to the last bit of news when her and Bashir's combadges go off. They both tap to receive.

KIRA
Kira, go ahead.

BASHIR
This is Bashir.

SELZNER (comm)
(urgent)

Colonel, Doctor, there's a medical crisis. We've got reports from the Promenade, decks five, seven, eleven, two at the docking ring -

At the same time, Ro steps into the cells area from her office, clearly agitated.

RO

Colonel, I'm getting reports from all over the station - people are collapsing, at least nine alien sightings so far...

Still reeling, Kira begins to absorb the extent of the problem. Bashir is already grabbing a medkit.

BASHIR

Colonel, he's stable, I should -

KIRA

Go.

(he does)

Ro, get your people out there, coordinate with Macet to track the parasites. We need crowd control -

SELZNER (comm)

Colonel, something's happening on Bajor, General Lenaris is reporting that a number of skirmishes have broken out...

Realising this is all her fault, Kira is instantly in action, moving to the door and beckoning them to follow.

KIRA

I'm on my way.

40 INT. KASIDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kasidy backs away from her front door, beginning to scream as the Bajorans force their way inside and GRAB her. Behind her, more Bajorans bustle Jake, Joseph and the children in through the back door at gunpoint.

Keiko rushes to her children but the Bajorans grab her too. Jake tries to fight - someone PUNCHES him. Kasidy SCREAMS. The lead Bajoran still has his phaser pointed in her face.

41 **INT. MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM**

Opaka falls to her knees to attempt to help Vaughn, who still remains far away, trapped in his vision. The prylars step over him and ignore Opaka as they go to the Orb, reaching up and closing the Ark doors.

PRYLAR

Put this one back with the others.

They carry the Orb out of the room, the lead prylar evilly grinning at Opaka as they leave her and Vaughn alone.

Opaka rips at her clothes in tears, desperately making a bandage for Vaughn's bleeding shoulder wound. But the commander is unresponsive, lying comatose on the floor, his eyes half-closed and far away.

FADE OUT:

THE END