

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x04 - "Easy Come, Easy Go."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 CLOSE-UP ON PADD

...that is playing a video of a BOLIAN man in a yellow wetsuit, surfing on high waves of deep red water.

WIDEN to reveal...

2 INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS

...TENMEI, watching as she relaxes on her sofa in a *ceara*, the Andorian silk pantsuit from 9x08. The Bolian pulls off a tricky manoeuvre with a flourish - Tenmei laughs.

Next a still photo of the same Bolian man, one of a group of aliens all partying together. WISH YOU WERE HERE appears super-imposed on the picture - Tenmei rolls her eyes.

She taps off the screen to close, tosses the padd onto the coffee table, stands, stretches her shoulders and neck out, and drinks the last of a small glass of water.

She potters around the room, shutting everything down for the night. She quietly sings to herself as she does, the words from Vic's last song in 10x03 "Steppin' Out"...

TENMEI

(singing)

You make me feel so young
You make me feel like
Spring has sprung
And every time I see you grin
I'm such a happy individual...

She is almost done and ready to go to bed when there is a CHIME at the door. She stops, confused. She goes to the door, taps the control to open it...

TENMEI

Dad, I thought you said this was
too late for --

But stops dead when she sees that it's not her father.

It's SHAR.

He hovers at the door, rather nervous about how he will be received. She is too surprised to say much for a moment...

TENMEI

Shar, I... what are you doing here?

SHAR

I have returned to my position on the station. May I come in?

TENMEI

Oh... yes... of course. Please.

She backs away, flustered, pulls the ceara closer around her, in a futile attempt to cover herself a bit more.

Shar enters, but stands uncomfortably in the room, not sure what to do with himself now he's here...

SHAR

I apologise for the late hour.
I... wanted to see you first.
Before someone else had the chance
to spoil the surprise.

TENMEI

No, that's fine. Just a bit of a
surprise, that's all. Obviously.

She shakes her head at her own silliness. It breaks the tension a bit, and she steps towards Shar...

TENMEI

Oh, come here...

And she hugs him in chaste but genuine welcome. He is a little surprised but relaxes into it after a moment...

TENMEI

It's really nice to see you, Shar.
Please, have a seat.

They perch on the sofa together, at opposite ends. Shar spots the padd on the coffee table...

SHAR

Did I interrupt something?

TENMEI

Oh, just Grimnar. He was tactical officer on the *Sentinel* when I was beta shift conn - he sent me a video of him surfing on Canopus.

SHAR

Ah. I remember you mentioning your regret at never having the chance to do so yourself.

TENMEI

Yeah... he just wanted to make me jealous.

(beat)

Shar, why aren't you home on Andor? I thought you'd be deep in the *shelthreth*... did I say that right?

SHAR

You did. And I was. But the *shelthreth* is complete.

TENMEI

And was it... successful?

SHAR

(wistful smile)

Yes. Thanks to Doctor sh'Veileth's treatments, Thia was able to conceive quite easily. Often, the four bond mates must stay enmeshed for several days to ensure --

TENMEI

Please, Shar... I don't need all the details.

(beat)

Well, I'm happy for you. But... surely the child can't have been born already. Didn't want to stay and see the birth of your little baby...

TENMEI (cont)
(blanks on word)
...*thaan*. Or whatever it turns out
to be.

SHAR
(evasive)
The *chan* is customarily the least
involved in child-rearing. Our
traditional role as warrior and
hunter means we would often remain
away from the crèche, protecting
the Keep.

TENMEI
Those traditions are centuries out
of date, Shar. And you were never
one to follow traditional family
structure anyway. I mean, sure, we
miss you around here. But T'rb's
handling things fine as far as I
know. I'm sure you could have
stayed longer if you wanted.

SHAR
No... I wished to return here.

TENMEI
Why?

There's nervousness, but also a bit of "isn't it obvious?"

SHAR
I returned for you.

On Tenmei's surprised, unsure reaction...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. DS9 - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

VAUGHN brings a drink from the replicator to his sofa...

VAUGHN

So what did you say to him?

He sits on the couch, hands the drink to TENMEI. They share breakfast the next morning, nibble from fruit and pastries.

TENMEI

What could I say? I said... that it was very flattering but I ought to get to bed and I'd see him tomorrow. Today. And then I got him the hell out of there.

VAUGHN

Aren't you interested anymore?

TENMEI

I... that doesn't... he's a married man, dad! With a child on the way. Whatever I may feel about Shar, I am not a home wrecker.

VAUGHN

Glad to hear it. But, just to play devil's advocate, he's here anyway. He made that choice himself. If you were to take advantage of it, who could blame you?

TENMEI

I don't want to get in the middle of something so complicated. It's not like there's just one other woman to worry about, is there? There's two other women, and another man. And Shar has spent the last six months... basically having constant sex with them all.

VAUGHN
(chuckles)
Is that what puts you off?

TENMEI
(a little insulted)
I'm not a prude, dad. But I haven't exactly had the smoothest ride when it comes to dating. I never get the easy ones. Men and me... well, let's just say there's no universal translator for that.

VAUGHN
Oh, you're not unique in that, Prynn, believe me.

TENMEI
There was a time in the Academy when I briefly considered giving up on men altogether and trying out the other side of the fence.

VAUGHN
(intrigued, amused)
Really? I didn't know that.

TENMEI
But then I thought, no, why give myself a whole new set of problems in addition to the ones I've already got? Might as well stick to the devil I know, I guess.

VAUGHN
I have so much to learn about you!
(beat)
Thank you for coming to see me, Prynn. Talking to me like this. Makes me feel like your father.

TENMEI
(simply)
You are my father.
(beat)
So what do I do?

VAUGHN

That's your decision. But before you make it, you should have at least one honest, open discussion with Shar. Right now you're only working off half a conversation in the middle of the night. It's still possible you've got the wrong end of the stick.

Tenmei nods, taking that on board...

4 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

On BASHIR...

BASHIR

Are you ready?

RO takes a deep breath and prepares herself... she nods.

BASHIR

Alright, then. Ladies and gentlemen, drum roll please...

He smirks and reaches for the control, presses it...

...and Ro's metallic leg supports disengage with a WHIRR and a HISS. Bashir removes the metal frames while NOG holds Ro's balance. Nog gradually manoeuvres Ro onto a bio-bed.

Nog cheers, applauds gently. Ro glares, more out of habit than anything. But she can't help being happy about this...

RO

Glad to put those damn things behind me at last.

BASHIR

You're not out of the woods yet, Laren. I still want you to use the walking stick, and Nog has a little something for you too.

Nog holds up two of the anti-gravity ANKLE RINGS that we saw Treir using in 8x18 "This Grey Spirit."

NOG

These are anti-gravity workout weights. They're a lot less visible and clumsy than the full units. You can even hide them underneath your regular uniform.

With a pause for her permission, crouches down and begins to snap them closed around her ankles...

NOG

They're set at a slightly lower level than the old supports were, and I'll lower them another five percent every week, as your legs continue to get stronger.

RO

What if I don't come back to get them altered?

BASHIR

Then I'm sure Lieutenant Nog can fashion some kind of remote control device and do it anyway.

Said with a smile, but one of "just dare me"...

BASHIR (cont)

I'm serious about this, Ro. You need to follow our instructions precisely if you want to get back to fighting strength. You can't afford any mishaps.

RO

I get it, Doctor. I'll behave.

BASHIR

Good. Do you need an analgesic before we go?

RO

If that's okay.

He grabs a hypo, passes it to Ro - she injects herself.

Then she gently manoeuvres herself off the bio-bed, lowers her weight, tests her balance - a bit wobbly but steady...

RO
Feels like standing on a balloon.

BASHIR
There'll be a bit of readjustment
after each... adjustment.

RO
As long as I can walk under my own
power, I'll live with it.

She grabs her walking stick, and they head to the door...

5 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

The turbolift rises into Ops. Ro stays on the upper level, Bashir and Nog head down to the central Ops table, where Vaughn, Tenmei and DAX await. BOWERS is at tactical...

NOG
Anybody know why the Captain wants
to see us all?

DAX
Standard senior staff meeting, as
far as I know.

Shar enters through a side door, hesitant and nervous. But they all turn to welcome him warmly... Nog and Shar hug... Vaughn nudges Tenmei pointedly towards him...

NOG
Shar! I'd heard you were back. How
you doing, my friend?

SHAR
I am well, thank you, Nog. It is
good to see you again.

TENMEI
Hi Shar... look, I'm sorry about
last night. You just kind of
caught me off guard.

SHAR
No need to apologise, Prynn.

TENMEI
We'll talk later, yeah?

Nog's ears prick up, but he doesn't intrude. The office doors open, and KIRA calls out to them...

KIRA
Okay everyone, come on in.

The group moves towards the office. Vaughn joins Shar...

VAUGHN
I was sorry to hear about your zh'vey's resignation, Ensign.

SHAR
I am certain Councillor zh'Faila will make an excellent replacement as Andor's representative to the Federation, Commander.

VAUGHN
Ensign... I'm trying to express my sympathies.

Shar, of course, is uncomfortable with personal matters...

SHAR
They are appreciated, Commander.

They enter Kira's office...

6 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

...just as she TURNS -- and reveals a tray carrying eight GLASSES filled with sparkling spring wine.

VAUGHN
What's the occasion, Captain?

Kira moves round the room, letting each person take a glass as she talks. They are all rather perplexed...

KIRA

One thing I never told you while the admirals were here, is that I arranged a little treat for some of our younger senior staff.

Left with only her own glass, she lays down the empty tray, picks up a PADD instead, she reads aloud from it...

KIRA

As commander of Federation station Deep Space Nine, I hereby announce the following promotions...

Surprised jaws begin to drop...

KIRA

Chief Engineer Nog is promoted from Lieutenant Junior Grade to Lieutenant Full Grade, in recognition of his continued excellence in the position, most especially during the conflict at the alternate Terok Nor station.

Dax *whoops*, clinks her glass with Nog's in celebration...

KIRA

Senior pilot Prynn Tenmei is promoted from Ensign to Lieutenant Junior Grade, in recognition of her continued excellence in the position, most especially during the conflict at the alternate Terok Nor station.

Vaughn grabs Tenmei for a half-hug and kiss on the head...

KIRA

And Chief Science Officer Thirishar ch'Thane is promoted from Ensign to Lieutenant Junior Grade, in recognition of his astonishing commitment to scientific endeavour, which may very well have saved his entire species from extinction.

And now a full-throated CHEER from everyone, raising their glasses and toasting the junior officers. Shar is somewhat embarrassed, but is quietly flattered anyway...

VAUGHN

Congratulations to all of you.

KIRA

There is one last thing... a matter of great pride, and some sadness. In just a few days, one of our family will be leaving us.

Dax's eyes FLARE in shock... she shakes her head tightly but urgently to warn Kira off the subject...

Kira sees, frowns, not getting the message. She is already in the middle of it, can't stop talking now...

KIRA

Lieutenant Ezri Dax has applied for and been awarded the position of second officer aboard USS *Luna* during that vessel's shakedown cruise, with concomitant promotion to a rank of Lieutenant Commander, effective immediately.

Some shock and simple surprise mixed in among the happy reactions, except...

Bashir. His face has fallen, stunned and hurt by this news.

Kira approaches and clinks glasses with Dax, who really doesn't want to do this right now...

VAUGHN

(a toast)

To Lieutenant Commander Dax - and a grand new adventure on board the *Luna*. You'll be missed.

Bashir, still bewildered and taken aback.

Dax tries to look at him, but the look on his face is painful. Her eyes try to apologise to him...

BOWERS (comm)
(urgent)
Bowers to Captain Kira. I need you
in Ops, sir. Now.

The party is dampened - that doesn't sound good at all...

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

Kira is first out of the office, with the others following.
She looks to Bowers at tactical...

BOWERS
The wormhole's opening, sir...
something's coming through.

Looks all around as everyone is surprised and uneasy about
this development...

Nog runs to his engineering station, checks readings, looks
to Kira in horror...

NOG
It's a Dominion ship.

BOWERS
They're hailing us, Captain.

KIRA
Yellow alert. Put them through.

As Bowers works his consoles, the screen changes to show...

...the Vorta VANNIS (last seen 10x01 "Emancipation") in one
of their communicator headsets and smiling pleasantly...

VANNIS (screen)
Captain Kira, my name is Vannis.
I bring you greetings from the
Dominion.

KIRA
Thank you. Greetings from the
Federation in return. But I must
admit, we're a little surprised
to see you...

VANNIS (screen)
I have been sent on a mission by
the Founders, Captain. A mission
of peace.

KIRA
(still wary)
That's good to hear. Perhaps you
could explain a little?

VANNIS (screen)
I believe I will let my...
(expression cools)
...associate speak to that, Captain.
A face with which you will be quite
familiar, I understand...

Vannis politely steps aside...

...and TARAN'ATAR steps onto the screen in her place.

TARAN'ATAR (screen)
(acknowledging)
Captain Kira.

Everyone's reactions...

KIRA
(whisper)
Taran'atar...

On Kira, as all the horrors of the past come back to her...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

8 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Focusing on a Dominion vessel docked at an upper pylon...

9 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

BOWERS and CENN enter - leading VANNIS and TARAN'ATAR. Two armed Starfleet security and two Jem'Hadar soldiers stay outside in the corridor, taking up defensive positions...

BOWERS

Our Dominion guests, Captain, as
you requested.

Kira, Vaughn, Dax, Bashir, Ro, Nog and Shar (not Tenmei) all react to the sight of Taran'atar back in a Dominion uniform. Kira and Ro are especially apprehensive...

KIRA

Thank you, Lieutenant. Everyone,
please take a seat.

Awkwardly, everyone does. Kira at the head, Vaughn at her right, Dax at her left. Vannis takes the opposite end of the table, Taran'atar standing at attention just behind.

Bashir is not next to Dax, but opposite and a few seats down. Through the scene, he is not really paying attention, but sending hurt, insulted, even angry glances Dax's way...

KIRA

You said you were on a mission of
peace. Please... elaborate.

VANNIS

By the Founder's order, we are here
to open diplomatic relations with
the Federation. The treaty between
us ended the war. Now the Founder
wishes to take the next step, by
sending a citizen of the Dominion
as an official representative.

The senior staff glance between each other, amazed...

KIRA

And you are here to be that...
ambassador?

VANNIS

Not me. That task... has been
assigned to First Taran'atar.

Gasps of surprise. Kira looks at the hulking Jem'Hadar...

TARAN'ATAR

I am not unaware of the irony,
Captain. Nevertheless, this is
the Founder's wish. He believes
that my experience living among
you makes me the ideal one to
represent him to the Federation.

VANNIS

And I have been ordered to act as
the First's... assistant.

RO

A Vorta working under a Jem'Hadar.
Fascinating...

Vannis tenses, almost embarrassed...

KIRA

Do you know why... the Founder...
has chosen to take this step?

TARAN'ATAR

The Dominion is in chaos, Captain.

VANNIS

(quiet warning)
First. That is enough.

TARAN'ATAR

(to Vannis;
a challenge)
The Founder commanded honesty.
We will obey his wishes.

Vannis bites her tongue... but eventually relents.

TARAN'ATAR

The Link believes in a supreme being - an entity known as the Progenitor. Upon contacting this entity, however, the Progenitor was killed... by a race known to us as the Ascendants.

Quiet shock again around the room...

KIRA

The Ascendants... Opaka warned us they were coming.

VANNIS

It appears they are already here, Captain. I myself confirmed their presence in the Tevlin-De system.

TARAN'ATAR

By doing this, the Ascendants have declared war on the Dominion. Sadly the Dominion is in no condition to wage war... The Progenitor's loss affected the Founders profoundly. They dissolved the Link, leaving the Dominion without guidance.

KIRA

Odo...?

TARAN'ATAR

...remains as the only Founder in command, along with Laas.

VANNIS

The Founder believes this is the perfect time to further peaceful relations with the Federation.

RO

Without the controlling instincts of the other Founders to get in his way, you mean.

KIRA

This is certainly an interesting proposal, Vannis. I can't deny, intelligence on the Ascendants would be a valuable asset.

(beat)

I'll pass on your offer to the Federation Council and Starfleet Command. Major Cenn - inform General Lenaris and Minister Asarem. I think Admiral Akaar is with the First Minister as well.

CENN

Yes, Captain.

KIRA

Until we receive a response, I hope you'll stay as our guests.

VANNIS

My soldiers and I will wait aboard my vessel. But Taran'atar is free to remain if he so... chooses.

That had a bit of an edge. It sounds like Vannis doesn't particularly want Taran'atar around...

KIRA

Very well. Dismissed.

They all stand and begin to file out. KIRA stands at one end of the table, looking directly at...

...TARAN'ATAR, who stares back from the opposite end, no more comfortable here than anyone else...

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

Bashir SPINS on Dax, furious with her...

BASHIR

You couldn't have told me this yourself? You had to wait and make me look like an idiot in front of the whole senior staff?

DAX

I've been trying to tell you for weeks... I just never found the right time. You already knew I was thinking about it, Julian. It can't be that much of a surprise.

BASHIR

But... I thought... I thought you'd decided against it. When you asked me to go to Vic's...

DAX

Julian... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to lead you on. I was trying to break it to you gently, after a fun night out. I guess it backfired.

They both sigh, deflating. Standing apart...

BASHIR

I read about the *Luna*. Prototype for a new explorer class, right?

DAX

Exactly. Twelve ships, featuring the most advanced scientific equipment in the fleet, and crewed by the most biologically and sociologically diverse crews any Starfleet ship has ever had.

BASHIR

All the better to represent a truly multi-cultural Federation to those new worlds and new civilisations. Sounds great... in theory.

DAX

Well, yes... there's always a learning curve. But the fact is, this assignment is perfect for me. It's got science, inter-species diplomacy, technical advances... And really, Julian, I'd hope that you could be happy for me.

BASHIR

I am happy for you, Ezri, of course I am. It's just - and I freely admit how selfish this is - I don't want you to go.

DAX

You're right, that is selfish. It's also very sweet. But we're not a couple anymore, Julian. So you don't have any say in my decisions.

BASHIR

It's hardly as if you gave me any say when we were a couple.

They smile tentatively, hoping they're still friends...

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

Middling busy. Nog and Shar CLINK their glasses together...

SHAR

Lieutenant Nog.

NOG

Lieutenant ch'Thane. And about time too.

QUARK is suddenly there, his face cold and closed...

QUARK

Is it true?

NOG

Is what true, uncle?

QUARK

You know perfectly well what.

SHAR

It is a fact that Taran'atar has returned to the station. Although I remain unclear on the specifics of his leaving...

QUARK

Really. Well, let me enlighten
you...

A commotion from the crowd - people getting to their feet,
gasping in fear. Nog, Shar and Quark look up to see why...

Taran'atar and Kira have entered the bar, tailed by two
armed Starfleet security. He is clearly unwelcome.

Quark throws down his dishcloth, hurries around the bar. He
strides up to Taran'atar, stands up to him, face to face...

QUARK

Get out.

Kira is surprised that Quark would go this far...

KIRA

Quark, think about this. You can't
deny him entry to the bar just
because he's a Jem'Hadar.

QUARK

I can deny him entry because of
what he's done. As the proprietor
of this establishment, I have the
right to refuse service to anyone
I consider to be a danger to me or
my customers. And I don't want
this monster in here.

KIRA

Quark, please try to understand.
It wasn't his fault. He's here to
make peace with the Federation.

QUARK

I'm not the Federation, Captain.
This bar is Ferengi territory,
and the Dominion is not welcome
on Ferenginar.

(to Taran'atar)

Get out. Now.

Quark is immovable. Kira sighs. She turns to Taran'atar...

KIRA
Come on, Taran'atar. Let's go.

Taran'atar stares down at Quark, strangely impressed. Then he slowly turns and leaves with Kira.

Quark takes a deep breath, returns to his bar. Picks up his cloth and dries glasses....

QUARK
They'll make anyone an ambassador
these days.
(beat, looks up)
What?

12 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Kira and Taran'atar walk along, security tailing. He is aware of the hateful looks, but keeps his head high...

KIRA
I'm sorry about that.

TARAN'ATAR
I did not expect this to be easy,
Captain. Nor did I expect you to
be so... sanguine about my return.

KIRA
You think this has been easy for
me? Believe me, I haven't
forgotten anything.

VAUGHN (o.s.)
Captain...

Kira looks up, sees Vaughn leading a group towards them - Admiral AKAAR, First Minister ASAREM and Ranjen OPAKA, escorted by Bowers and Ensign ALECO (9x19 "Warpath")...

VAUGHN (cont)
Admiral Akaar just arrived from
Bajor with First Minister Asarem
and Ranjen Opaka. He insisted on
seeing you immediately...

KIRA
Admiral. First Minister. Ranjen.
Welcome back to Deep Space Nine.

ASAREM
Thank you, Captain. There is --

But Akaar ignores Kira, walks straight up to Taran'atar,
GRABS him by his lapels, THROWS him across the Promenade.

Taran'atar lands in a pile on the deck, immediately jumping
back to his feet and preparing himself for battle...

AKAAR
(bellows, furious)
Security! Draw weapons, take aim!

The four security officers do so. Everyone on the Promenade
has gone silent, watching. Opaka is especially stunned.
Even the customers of the bar are looking out of the
windows at them - Quark, Nog and Shar among them...

KIRA
Admiral! What in fire are you doing?

AKAAR
(ignores her)
Lieutenant Bowers! Place Mister
Taran'atar under arrest. If he
offers any resistance... shoot him.

With four phasers pointed at him, Taran'atar has little
choice. He allows Bowers to push him towards the security
office. Akaar is still fuming.

Kira watches them go, shocked and powerless...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

13 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

VANNIS bringing the force of Dominion authority to bear...

VANNIS

This is unacceptable! I demand
that you free the First at once.

AKAAR on his feet and bellowing...

AKAAR

I will do no such thing. By order
of Starfleet Command, Taran'atar
is *persona non grata* at any
Federation facility.

KIRA caught between them...

KIRA

You said you agreed with us that
he should be free.

AKAAR

I said I was against torture. I am
very much in favour of punishment
where punishment is due.

VANNIS

Taran'atar is a subject of the
Dominion. It is not within your
authority to punish him, whatever
his crimes.

RO half-heartedly tries to butt in, sat behind her desk...

RO

Everyone, let's just try and calm
down here...

Akaar isn't listening. He POINTS angrily at the monitors,
where Taran'atar stands in a cell, security keeping watch.

AKAAR

That... individual... attacked two Starfleet officers, on Federation ground. This was not during a time of war, or in self defence. It was not an accident, or exercise that got out of hand. He meant to leave the station, knew he had to kill Captain Kira and Lieutenant Ro to do so, and laid in wait for them both to achieve that end.

ON MONITOR

Showing Taran'atar looking into the security camera...

14 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

Taran'atar stands immobile, waiting. Vaughn stands in the centre of the holding area, watching him warily...

VAUGHN

I'm surprised you didn't put up more of a fight...

TARAN'ATAR

I was facing four weapons.

VAUGHN

Wouldn't have stopped you before. You could have killed him in a second before anyone else moved.

TARAN'ATAR

Retaliating against the admiral would have been contrary to the Founder's instructions.

VAUGHN

But you don't need to follow the Founders' instructions anymore.

TARAN'ATAR

You've answered your own question.

Vaughn considers that...

15 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

On the monitors, we see Vaughn turn and leave. Meanwhile everyone else is still arguing...

VANNIS

Is this really your wish, Admiral?
To recommence hostilities?

AKAAR

The Dominion is helpless. You said
so yourself.

Vaughn ENTERS from the cells area, speaking firmly...

VAUGHN

Admiral. Could we speak privately,
please?

Akaar will listen to Vaughn where he listens to no-one. He draws himself up, EXITS onto the Promenade without a word. Vaughn follows, with an uncertain look back at Kira...

KIRA

Vannis... I promise we'll get this
sorted out.

VANNIS

Will you? Or will you allow your
admiral to do what you dared not?

Vannis turns and EXITS towards the holding cells area.

Kira takes a moment, catches her breath. Is Vannis right? Ro is still sat behind her desk, a bit shell-shocked...

KIRA

How are you doing?

RO

How do you think?

(beat)

You?

Kira slumps into the guest seat. Taran'atar's image remains on the monitors, watching over their shoulders...

RO
I thought you'd forgiven him.

KIRA
I thought I had too. But seeing
him here again... I wish I had
Akaar's certainty.
(looks up at
Taran'atar's image)
My stomach wants to recoil, to run
away... my brain understands what
really happened... and my heart is
torn between the two.

RO
...cut in half.

Struck by Ro's wording, Kira puts a hand to her chest...

16 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

Taran'atar stands inside the cell, Vannis paces outside...

VANNIS
Typical Federation arrogance. This
is exactly the kind of thing that
caused the war in the first place.
If they'd simply stayed on their
own side of the galaxy...

TARAN'ATAR
You will do nothing. This was
anticipated... and worse. The
Founder trusts the Federation to
see the wisdom of his proposal.

VANNIS
Yes... he does... and I fail to
understand why.
(pulls it together)
Still - my understanding is not
required. I will send a message to
Weyoun, to inform the Founder of
these... developments.

She turns and EXITS back towards the security office...

17 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Vaughn and Akaar stand under one of the spiral stairways...

VAUGHN

L.J., listen to me. This isn't the way to go.

AKAAR

The decision has already been made. Had Taran'atar still been here during my previous visit, I would have actioned it then.

VAUGHN

But it's not his fault. How many times in the history of Starfleet have officers been possessed by alien forces, committed atrocities while under their control? And how many times have they been forgiven because they were acting against their own will? Why not extend that same courtesy to others?

Opaka stands quietly outside Quark's, watching Vaughn and Akaar in the distance, forcefully talking...

Vannis exits security, makes eye contact with Akaar, coldly turns away. Beckons the waiting Jem'Hadar - they move off.

Equally cold, Akaar turns and walks away too. Vaughn sighs, disappointed. He sees Opaka, walks over towards her...

VAUGHN

I haven't seen him so angry in... decades.

OPAKA

Why aren't you?

VAUGHN

Because... I suppose I understand. Maybe I even sympathise. People can do things they never intended when they have no other choice.

VAUGHN (cont)
(beat)
You didn't have to come for this,
Sulan. It's not your problem.

OPAKA
It involves the Ascendants. I must
learn all I can... that is the
entire reason I'm going to the
Eav'oq, isn't it?

VAUGHN
(realising)
That's why you came. It's time for
you to go...

He wishes it wasn't true...

18 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

Now Kira has come to talk to Taran'atar, arms folded...

KIRA
I was almost disappointed when you
left. I'd hoped you'd stay and try
to work it out.

TARAN'ATAR
I returned to the Dominion to
receive the punishment I deserved.

KIRA
Why didn't you? Receive punishment.

Taran'atar looks at her curiously...

TARAN'ATAR
You wonder why the Founder spared
me... considering his personal
relationship with you.
(beat)
I do not believe it was an easy
decision for him. I fully expected
execution. But he was eventually
persuaded there was more to gain
by letting me live.

KIRA

Benjamin told me a human saying -
"once bitten, twice shy." We've
been bitten twice by a Jem'Hadar
claiming a mission of peace. Why
should we risk it a third time?

TARAN'ATAR

Because I have promised the
Founder my fealty.

KIRA

Did that last time. Didn't help.

TARAN'ATAR

I was too weak to resist the
control of the other. Now that
weakness no longer exists. I am
free to choose whom I obey. I have
chosen the Founders.

KIRA

Is that enough?

TARAN'ATAR

That will be your choice.

19 INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS

Tenmei and Shar both stand awkwardly, apart...

TENMEI

Thanks for coming, Shar. I just
thought should talk about what you
said last night. I'm wondering if
I actually understood you right...

SHAR

Perhaps I did not explain myself
well.... I returned to the station
to return to you.

TENMEI

That's exactly what I thought you
meant. But what about Dizhei and
Anichent and... and Thia?

SHAR

My bond lived without me before.
They understand my obligations to
Starfleet. Thia does not need me.

TENMEI

She's carrying your child, Shar.
That's why you stayed - to have a
family. You shouldn't leave that
for me, even if I do...

She trails off, flustered, afraid she has said too much...

SHAR

(lost for answers)

Prynn... what do you want me to do?

TENMEI

Look - I don't know, okay? I'm all
over the place with this. You tell
me you want me in your life and then
you go back to your bondmates, which
is great, I told you to do that, you
should do that, but then you come
back and say you're here for me, and
that's great, that's exactly what I
wanted, but you're a married man,
Shar! You left your family for me!
How the hell am I supposed to react
to that? And now Taran'atar's back
on top of it all --

SHAR

(baffled)

What does Taran'atar have to do
with it?

A pause, as Tenmei realises...

TENMEI

You don't know, do you?

SHAR

It is clear something happened to
make him leave the station, but no-
one has had time to tell me what.

TENMEI
Don't you read the news?

SHAR
(simply)
Starfleet reports are not a bond
group's first concern during the
shelthreth.

Tenmei takes a deep breath, steadies her nerves...

TENMEI
Taran'atar attacked Kira and Ro.
Nearly killed them both. Then he
escaped on a runabout... with me
as his hostage.

SHAR
(quiet, deadly)
What did he do to you?

Tenmei wonders how much to reveal...

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

Shar is in full warrior mode, conscious thought pushed out
of his head by berserker fury. He runs at top speed down
the corridor, death on his mind.

Tenmei stands by her open doorway, desperately calling
after him. Almost tearful with fear and worry...

TENMEI
Shar, please - stop! Shar!

Off Tenmei's anguished face...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

21 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

NOG stands outside Security, hands up to try to calm the approaching SHAR...

NOG
Shar, just calm down, stop for a
minute --

Shar SHOVES him out of the way, knocks him onto his ass. Nog lands with a GRUNT of pain - Shar barrels on past, too furious to care. The doors open and Shar enters...

22 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

...to see RO, Bowers, Aleco and Cenn in a defensive line in front of the desk, all armed, blocking Shar's path. Shar just barely stops himself, hissing with anger...

SHAR
Step out of my way, Lieutenant.

RO
You can't honestly think I'm going
to do that.

Shar takes another determined step forward - the four security officers raise their weapons...

RO
I'm prepared to give the order to
fire, Shar. Don't make me do that.
Not to you.

Behind him, in the open doorway, Nog has clambered back to his feet. TENMEI finally catches up, out of breath...

TENMEI
Shar, please... stop.

Shar pauses, still breathing deeply... he looks up at the monitors, where Taran'atar stares back at him...

TENMEI

He's behind a force field, he
can't hurt anyone... you'd only
get yourself killed.

Ro makes a show of holstering her phaser. Takes careful
steps towards Shar, blocking his view of the monitors...

RO

She's right, Shar. Come away. I'll
take you back to your quarters.

Shar is slowly getting himself under control. He looks to
Nog - and the quick flash of guilt at having hurt his
friend breaks his anger. The moment is gone.

NOG

Come on, Shar... Let's go.

Nog and Ro gently lead Shar away from the door, back down
the Promenade...

Bowers, Aleco and Cenn holster their weapons with relief,
and move to disperse the nosey crowd...

While everyone else's backs are turned, Tenmei slips into
the Security office, letting the doors close behind her...

23 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

On TARAN'ATAR, waiting, waiting... he looks up and sees...

...Tenmei slowly creeping around the corner, out of one of
the auxiliary corridors. She watches Taran'atar closely,
aware of his every movement...

TARAN'ATAR

Ensign Tenmei.

He looks closer...

CLOSE-UP on Tenmei's neck, seeing the new rank pip...

TARAN'ATAR (cont)

Lieutenant Tenmei. Apologies. And
congratulations.

TENMEI

Somehow I doubt your sincerity.

TARAN'ATAR

I have no ill feelings toward you.

TENMEI

Strange way of showing it.

TARAN'ATAR

On the contrary. I am gratified that you have suffered no long-term consequences from our... encounter. It was not easy to restrain myself.

TENMEI

I'm supposed to thank you? For not killing me when you had a chance?

Taran'atar shifts his weight - immediately, Tenmei flinches backwards, away from him...

FLASHBACK - 9x19 "WARPATH"

In the runabout, Taran'atar backhands Tenmei across the face, hard enough to knock her unconscious...

BACK TO SCENE

Tenmei's pulse is racing, her fight-or-flight response is screaming... and he is just looking at her calmly.

TARAN'ATAR

Why did you come here? Was it to see me humbled? Brought low and humiliated? I'm not. I regret what happened, but it can't be changed - certainly not by your Andorian protector's blind fury.

TENMEI

I can protect myself.

She turns and leaves.

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

Standard shot - the *Defiant* on the docking ring, and the Dominion ship still docked at an upper pylon. There is at least one Bajoran shuttle also on the docking ring...

25 **INT. DS9 - STATION SHRINE**

Dark lighting, with the gentle flickering lights of a candle. A moment of quiet and calm.

KIRA kneels at the altar, facing the ORB on its plinth and the Bajoran religious icons. Her eyes are closed and her hands are in the traditional position - she is praying.

After a while she frowns, opens her eyes. It's not working. She rocks back onto her heels, stands, turns --

-- and sees that ASAREM is standing there.

KIRA

Oh - First Minister. I'm sorry, I didn't see you.

ASAREM

No, I'm sorry for interrupting you, Captain.

(re Orb)

Did you find what you sought?

Kira sighs. No, she didn't.

KIRA

I was just praying for guidance. For a sign... But I kept thinking about Odo... how he's so sure that the Dominion and the Federation can work together, even despite everything that's happened.

ASAREM

And you're not so sure.

KIRA

I almost feel guilty for doubting him. Is that wrong?

ASAREM

Of course not. Only one who does
not wish to know the answer does
not question.

KIRA

But I don't know the answer to any-
thing. I'm not even praying to a
real Orb. That's a fake. A hologram.
Maybe that's why the Prophets
haven't answered my prayers.

(beat; sad)

Or maybe it's my heart that's the
fake.

ASAREM

Captain, we may not have always
seen eye to eye. But I cannot deny
you are a remarkably resourceful
woman. Whatever situation you find
yourself in, you always seem to
find your way out.

(beat)

Bajor has faith in you.

KIRA

(roll eyes)

Bajor...

But then something occurs to her...

...face falling as the full scope of the idea unfolds...

Kira turns to Asarem, the answer now clear to her...

KIRA

First Minister, do you trust me?

ASAREM

I'm fairly sure I just said that.

KIRA

Because I'm going to ask you to do
something... unexpected.

Off Asarem's curious expression...

Asarem stands at the head of the table, in control...

ASAREM

As First Minister of Bajor, I make
the following pronouncement.

Kira, Vaughn, Akaar, Vannis, Opaka and Dax sit around the
table, appropriate security details around the room...

ASAREM

Bajor has always striven for peace
with former adversaries, as our
treaties with Cardassia attest.
The Dominion has offered us all
an invaluable opportunity to work
towards peace across the galaxy.
If the Federation will not grasp
that opportunity, then Bajor will
not make the same mistake. Today,
Bajor accepts the Dominion's offer
of diplomatic relations.

AKAAR

(controls his anger)

First Minister, with all respect,
that is not your decision to make.
The Federation Council has made
clear to me its intentions to
reject the Dominion's proposal.

ASAREM

You misunderstand, Admiral. At no
time did I say that the Federation
has accepted. I said Bajor. If I
understand the Federation charter,
member worlds have the right to
hold diplomatic associations with
non-member states so long as those
agreements seek only to affect the
worlds in question and not the
Federation as a whole. That is the
pact I intend to make with the
Dominion today... and there's
nothing you can do about it.

Under his professional exterior, Akaar is pretty steamed about this. Vaughn has a small relieved smile...

ASAREM

And as an example of Bajor's good will in this matter, I hereby officially pardon First Taran'atar of the Jem'Hadar. He is to be released from Starfleet custody forthwith. The Bajoran Militia has agreed to take responsibility for the First's safety. We welcome the First as Dominion representative to Bajor, such position to take effect as of today. He will reside aboard this station... with the highest diplomatic privilege.

Vannis takes a deep breath, stands from the table. This is still weird for her, but at least it's better than war...

VANNIS

First Minister, the Dominion is grateful for your intercession in this matter... and we accept. Thank you.

Akaar is still in his seat, seething. He looks over to --

-- Kira, his eyes burning her in her seat. She stares back, not giving anything away.

AKAAR

This was your idea, wasn't it?

ASAREM

The decision was mine, Admiral. And I have every right to make it. Unless you're suggesting that a Starfleet officer has the power to tell a Federation member world's democratically elected civilian leader what to do?

Pause. Akaar grinds his teeth.

AKAAR

Not at all. But in all good faith,
I must warn you that contradicting
the Federation's edict will win
you no friends in the council
chamber.

ASAREM

My concerns are for Bajor first
and foremost, Admiral. And I
believe that, with the Ascendant
threat looming, Bajor needs all
the friends it can get.

AKAAR

I will be sure to inform Starfleet
Command of your decision. And warn
them to prepare for the worst.

He stands and begins to move for the exit. But before he
can get very far...

ASAREM

I haven't dismissed you, Admiral.

He stops, turns. The tension in the room is enormous.

AKAAR

Then with your permission, First
Minister...

Calmly, with all the time in the world, Asarem turns back
to the room as a whole...

ASAREM

This meeting is adjourned. Vannis,
I would like to confer with you
about the arrangements, if you
would remain please.

VANNIS

Yes, First Minister.

The room stands and begin to file out. Vannis, Asarem and
their security details remain...

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

As people file out, Kira walks along pleased, relieved even, with the deal that has been struck. It feels right.

She arrives at the turbolift, whose door is already open and waiting for her. She steps over the threshold...

28 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT**

...and sees that Admiral Akaar has beaten her to it. She steps aboard in complete silence. Neither speaks or looks at the other as the doors close and the turbolift sets off.

Now alone with him, Kira is no longer so happy. She worries she has gone too far. They continue to stand in silence...

At last the lift stops and the doors open to the Promenade. Akaar begins to exit - Kira suppresses a sigh of relief.

But at the threshold, Akaar turns back. A wordless, cold glare that communicates just how annoyed he is with her...

AKAAR

I hope, for your sake, Captain...
that you have not just made a huge
mistake.

And he turns and leaves. The doors close.

KIRA

(quiet)
So do I.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

29 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Two glasses *clink* together in celebration. KIRA and DAX sit together at a table on the main floor of the bar...

KIRA

This is a good move for you, Ezri.
The Luna project is a big deal for
Starfleet, and getting ahead is
all about the plum assignments.

DAX

I'm looking forward to it.

KIRA

But are you certain about it?

Has Kira struck too close to home? But Dax forces onward...

DAX

I'm doing it. The thing is... Lela
was there at first contact with
the Vulcans. Torias broke the
trans-warp barrier. Jadzia found
the wormhole with Ben. I want to
make my own legacy, one that's
just Ezri's. And frankly... I
don't feel like I can do it here.

KIRA

And you're not... running away?

DAX

Nerys... Julian and I have been
over for more than a year.

KIRA

Yes... and then he went away for
months. And when he came back, you
started flirting with him. And
then he got hurt... and then you
started talking about going away.

Kira's conclusion is clear - Dax still has feelings for Bashir. Dax stares into her drink, pondering...

30 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Dax steps nervously into the Infirmary. BASHIR is working, but he turns, notices Dax. Stops, reins his emotions in...

BASHIR

You ready for the off, then?

DAX

Nearly. The *Aurora* arrives in an hour. Akaar and I are both hitching a ride back to Earth.

BASHIR

Oh, that's right - the *Luna* is launching from Utopia Planitia.

Awkward pause. What can they possibly say to each other?

DAX

Julian, just for once, can we be completely honest with each other?

BASHIR

(blank)

I kind of assumed we always were.

DAX

Yes, I still have feelings for you. Okay? And that's part of the reason I'm going. Here, this station, is always going to be the past. Worf, Jadzia, you, me... I need to go, start fresh. If I stay here... I'll be standing still.

BASHIR

Is that so bad? If you do have feelings... then what's wrong with staying here and exploring them?

DAX

Part of me wants to.

BASHIR
Just not a big enough part.

DAX
Julian... I don't want to leave
you, or Nerys, or Quark. I would
miss my friends.

BASHIR
(polite but cool)
You should go.

She thinks he's being noble and self-sacrificing...

DAX
Why?

BASHIR
(with an edge)
If you don't know for certain that
you want to be here, then you
obviously don't want to be here.
So you should just go.

DAX
Julian, wait -

BASHIR
(cold, hard)
I said go. Goodbye, Dax.

He turns away, conversation over. Dax, indignant, also
turns and stomps out of the Infirmary onto the Promenade...

31 INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS

Dax angrily grabs clothes from a chest of drawers, shoves
them into a travel bag, throws the bag over her shoulder...

...and marches back to her living room. Three Starfleet
CREWMEN are beginning to pack up her belongings...

DAX
Crewman...

One of the crewmen turns to her...

DAX (cont)
Make sure everything gets boxed up
as quickly as possible.

CREWMAN
Everything, sir?

Dax is already on her way out the door, not looking back...

DAX
I'm not coming back.

The door closes behind her.

32 INT. VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

On VAUGHN, agitated and worried, as he talks to TENMEI...

VAUGHN
You should never have gone to him.

TENMEI
I had to see him for myself.

VAUGHN
But... I didn't want that. You've
been through enough, Prynn.

TENMEI
He beat the hell out of you just
as much as he did me. So why are
you being all nice and friendly?

VAUGHN
I promised to kill him, Prynn!

TENMEI
...what?

VAUGHN
When I thought he'd killed you...
I promised myself I would track
him down and avenge you. Even if
it meant shooting him down in cold
blood, even if I had to die in the
process, he would pay.

TENMEI
So why didn't you?

VAUGHN
He didn't give me the chance. But more than that... it was the wrong decision. If there's one rule I've lived my life by, Prynn, it's that the choices you make should be the ones that are right, regardless of personal feelings.

Tenmei stops to consider that...

...while Vaughn realises something important as well...

33 INT. DS9 - DOCKING PYLON CORRIDOR

Vaughn holds his feelings in tight. He and OPAKA wait at an airlock, with the Jem'Hadar soldiers in background...

VAUGHN
Good luck. Have a safe journey.

OPAKA
I will, Elias. It was generous of Vannis to offer to transport me to the Eav'oq world.

VAUGHN
You have to call us if you need anything... Nog's packaged up all the equipment you'll need, and the subspace relay is right there in the Idran system...

OPAKA
Elias... I'll be fine. The Eav'oq will take care of me.

VAUGHN
It's not them I'm worried about.

OPAKA
The Dominion will take care of me too.

VAUGHN

But... doesn't it scare you?

OPAKA

I was never at war with the
Dominion, Elias.

(sigh)

If anything, I feel sorry for
them. That an entire race could
be so paranoid, so consumed with
the fear of persecution that they
would lash out so viciously... it
saddens me.

(straightens)

But I don't hate them for it.
Besides, if what Taran'atar tells
us is true, I think they've been
punished enough.

VAUGHN

Punished? I fail to see how the
Founders have been punished for
anything.

OPAKA

To lose your god? To learn that
you yourself are responsible for
its destruction? I can think of
few things more horrible.

Vannis appears from inside the airlock...

VANNIS

Ranjen Opaka, are you prepared?

OPAKA

I am, thank you, Vannis.

(back to Vaughn)

Be well, Elias. I'll see you again.

She turns and follows Vannis back onto the ship.

Vaughn watches her go, holding his feelings in. The back
ground Jem'Hadar soldiers move to board the ship. Vaughn
watches them tensely as they board, and the door closes...

34 INT. TENMEI'S QUARTERS

On Tenmei...

TENMEI

I have to do what's right, Shar.
Regardless of personal feelings.
And being with you with your...
"situation"... is not right.
I'm sorry.

She is firm, unshakeable. Final word on the matter.

SHAR gently reaches inside his uniform, pulls out a small object. He slowly, reverently opens his hand and reveals --

-- a *shapla*, the traditional Andorian betrothal charm last seen in 8x09 "Paradigm." Tenmei sees what it is...

TENMEI

Oh Shar, don't... don't do this.

SHAR

You know what this is, Prynn.

TENMEI

(penned in)

Of course I do.

He opens the clasp, reveals one strand of white hair, and one strand of black hair, woven together. Tenmei closes her eyes, not wanting to see this...

SHAR

You gave this to me, Prynn, the
last time we parted. You said that
someday we'd be together.

TENMEI

Shar, please, stop it...

SHAR

I've kept it near to me every day.
I would look at it... and think
of you.

TENMEI

(on the attack)

And what did your bondmates think of that, huh? Of you dreaming of another woman while you're with them?

SHAR

Andorians can love more than one person at once, Prynn...

TENMEI

(shouts)

Well I can't!

Shar is being open and honest here, just laying out his emotions. He is not trying to be manipulative - in fact he is a little confused by Tenmei's harsh reaction...

SHAR

Prynn, I don't understand. This was your promise. It's why I came back to you.

TENMEI

Don't you dare make me the villain in this! Don't abandon your family before the child's even born and make me the excuse. This is emotional blackmail!

SHAR

I don't even know what that means. I am only telling you the truth.

TENMEI

No! I can't do this, Shar. I won't do this. I'm sorry. I think you should leave now.

Shar is quite bewildered - he has put his heart out there and Tenmei is just stomping all over it.

He does the only thing he can - turns and leaves.

Tenmei remains there, tears threatening...

35 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

RO sits in her seat, where she has been all day, staring down at her desk, blank faced, not working...

The door from the cells area opens, and Cenn and Aleco emerge. They lead TARAN'ATAR through the room and to the Promenade. Ro never raises her head, never looks at him.

At the door, Taran'atar pauses and looks back to Ro. She drags her head up and makes eye contact. Nothing. Empty.

Taran'atar turns and leaves.

36 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Cenn, Aleco and Taran'atar leave the security office and walk down the Promenade.

QUARK stands in his doorway, arms folded and face stern, watching them go. Hating him.

37 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

The doors open and Quark steps carefully into the doorway. Ro looks up at him - she is on the verge of crumbling.

Quark goes to her, lets the door close behind him. Crouches down by her seat, gathers her into his arms...

...and she collapses against him, lets him hold her, and starts to cry.

38 INT. DS9 - DOCKING PYLON CORRIDOR

Dax walks along the corridor, travel bag on her shoulder. She stops at the airlock, looks back down the corridor...

...and there is no-one else there. She walks into the airlock and the door cycles closed behind her.

39 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Bashir sits at his desk, working hard. Refusing to think about it...

40 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The Dominion ship disengages from the upper pylon and slowly begins to move away, heading towards the wormhole.

At the same time, on a lower pylon, the USS *Aurora* (Nova class, as seen in VOY 5x26 "Equinox") disengages and moves slowly away in the other direction.

41 INT. DS9 - DOCKING PYLON CORRIDOR

Vaughn looks out of the window, watching the Dominion ship pull away from the station. (This is the same window Kira and Shakaar looked out of in 4x13 "Crossfire".)

The wormhole opens, the Dominion ship plunges in, and the wormhole closes up behind it.

Vaughn stays, looking out onto empty space...

42 INT. USS AURORA

A plain Starfleet-style room, small guest quarters. Dimmed lights, no personal effects.

Dax sits on the couch under the window, staring out onto space. Pensive, sad, upset over the argument with Bashir.

She watches the station recede further and further away as the *Aurora* leaves the area...

...until it finally moves around the curve of the window and disappears from sight, leaving an empty starfield...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW