

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x17 - "Olympus Descending, pt 2."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novella

"Olympus Descending"
by David R George III

appearing in

Star Trek: Worlds of Deep Space Nine
Book 3 - Ferenginar / The Dominion

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 MONTAGE FROM 9x16 "OLYMPUS DESCENDING, pt 1"

-- The bright NOVA in the sky over the Founder's planet

VOICEOVER

Previously, on Deep Space Nine.

ODO (v.o.)

What is... that?

-- Odo pointing to the image in his headset viewer

ODO

That bright object over the planet
- it wasn't there when we left.

WEYOUN

It is likely a distant nova, and
poses no threat to the Great Link.

-- Laas returns and confronts Odo

LAAS

I want to know why the Hundred
were sent out. Why we were sent
away.

-- Laas disguised as Kira

ODO

For knowledge. That's what I was
told. And I had no reason to
disbelieve it.

LAAS-as-KIRA

But don't you see, Odo, we have
every reason to disbelieve it?

-- Laas-as-Kira dissolves into the Link

ODO

What are you going to do?

LAAS-as-KIRA
I'm going to learn the truth.

-- Taran'atar jerks awake in the runabout

KIRA (v.o.)
Taran'atar... I know about your
problem. About your new need to
sleep.

-- Kira discussing it with him in the cockpit

TARAN'ATAR
It is yet another failing. Another
way in which I am no longer a true
Jem'Hadar.

KIRA
Why do you want to visit the
Founder?

TARAN'ATAR
The Founder has been alone for a
long time now. I hope to be able
to offer some relief from that
circumstance.

KIRA
Taran'atar, Ananke Alpha is the
most secure, heavily guarded
prison facility in the entire
Federation. Are you going to
attempt to free the Founder?

TARAN'ATAR
Captain Kira, I have no doubt that
if the Founder wished to escape
her confinement, she could do so
without my assistance.

-- Indurane explains things to Odo

INDURANE
Have you ever known an infant
changeling?

ODO

I was an infant changeling. Laas
was an infant changeling.

INDURANE

There are no infant changelings...
because changelings cannot
reproduce.

ODO

How could we have possibly evolved
as a species without the ability
to reproduce?

INDURANE

The Founders did not evolve. The
Great Link was generated by
design. The Founder population
was created in its entirety...
by the Progenitor.

ODO

Are you saying... the Founders
have a god?

-- Vannis receives her orders from another Founder

FOUNDER

You will wait two weeks only, to
assess the severity of the Overne
winter and its impact on the food
supply. If there is any chance of
a shortfall, begin shipments from
Rindamil at once.

VANNIS

Acknowledged.

FOUNDER

Before then, I want you to take
your ship to a moon orbiting a
world near the Anomaly. A member
of a race calling themselves the
Ascendants spent some time there
when its ship crashed.

-- Indurane still explaining to Odo

ODO

But how could you expect us to find your Progenitor, when we didn't even know who we were, let alone of its existence?

INDURANE

We did not expect you to find the Progenitor. We hoped that it would find you.

ODO

And then what?

INDURANE

Then... we would be saved.

ODO

Why are you telling me now?

INDURANE

Because the Progenitor has finally returned.

-- Taran'atar steps off the runabout at Ananke Alpha

T'KREN

Mister Taran'atar, I am Commander T'Kren. Welcome to Ananke Alpha.

-- As Taran'atar faces down the automated weapons...

VOICEOVER

And now, the conclusion.

2 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - DOCKING BAY

TARAN'ATAR continues to stand, contemptuously staring down the automated armaments of Ananke Alpha.

Commander T'KREN stands opposite him. She turns and walks through the door, turning to her left afterwards and disappearing through another door.

Suppressing a growl, Taran'atar follows the red line painted on the floor, and passes through the door. The second door that T'Kren went through is now closed, leaving only a long corridor with another closed door at the end.

Taran'atar continues to walk the line, automated sensor and weapon units tracking his progress all along its length...

3 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - PREP ROOM

Taran'atar passes through that door and into a large, grey square room. More sensor and weapons ports dot the walls.

To his left is a large observation window through which he can see the facility staff, with various control panels and monitors. There is a male Orion, JENEK. A female Tellarite, CHEG. A male human, HEXTER. A female human, MATHESON.

And the Vulcan woman T'Kren, at one panel. She speaks, her voice issuing from speakers in the walls...

T'KREN

Mister Taran'atar, I am required by the United Federation of Planets to inform you that this facility has been deemed a no-hostage zone. In the event that you are taken captive by Ananke Alpha's prisoner, or by other forces attacking this facility, Starfleet will not negotiate for your release. Do you understand and consent to these conditions for your visit?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

T'KREN

Then upon that table you will find a Starfleet-issue coverall. Please remove the apparel you are currently wearing and dress in the Starfleet attire. Please do this with alacrity.

Taran'atar goes to the table, picks up and inspects the simple, undetailed red coverall. There is no coverage, so he simply unzips and drops his black jumpsuit where he is and dresses in the provided suit.

That done, he looks up, and sees that only three of the crew - T'Kren, Cheg and Hexter - are visible through the window now.

T'KREN

Thank you. Please move to the approximate centre of the room.

(he does)

In a moment, you will be joined by two security officers who will escort you to the cell housing the Founder. One will walk ahead of you, the other behind you. Please follow their instructions exactly. Do you understand?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

T'KREN

Once you have entered the Founder's cell, you will have one hour to visit with her. At the end of that time, you will be escorted back here. Do you understand?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

The door behind him, and another one in front of him, open. The Orion male Jenek enters from behind, the female human Matheson from the front. They both have cloth pouches at the waist, and hold phasers. The doors close behind them.

MATHESON

I'm Lieutenant Commander Matheson,
and this is Lieutenant Jenek.

Taran'atar couldn't care less for their names. He has nothing but contempt for these people, but controls himself for the sake of his meeting with the Founder.

MATHESON

We are now going to walk with you to the Founder's cell. At several points along the way, Lieutenant Jenek or I will ask you to stop. Please do so at once, and remain stationary until we ask you to proceed again.

TARAN'ATAR

I understand.

MATHESON

Please take a position between Lieutenant Jenek and myself.

(he does)

Thank you. We'll now proceed.

She turns her back on him, and the door in front of them opens. She steps through, Taran'atar follows, and then Jenek. Ahead of them is just another long, long corridor, stretching away into the distance, curving with the shape of the spherical station.

As they enter the corridor, Taran'atar takes a moment to look behind himself, looking back into the prep room. Then the door closes behind them, and Jenek gestures him on. He turns, and walks between the two officers, on into the distance, on his way to meet his god.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD - DAY

The NOVA, shining and shimmering in the pinky-orange sky...

...then PAN DOWN across the agitated, rolling sea that is the Great Link, to ODO and LAAS. Both in their humanoid forms, standing some distance apart on the rocky islet.

Odo has been relating the revelations to Laas, who is not thrilled. Laas's response is one of disgust, disappointment in his people. He seems appalled at the very notion...

LAAS

The "progenitor." Belief in a
First Cause is such a...
(distasteful)
...monoform... concept.

ODO

That's been my experience as well.
The Bajorans, the Klingons, certain
subsets of the humans and the
Andorians... countless other races
hold a variety of religious beliefs
about the creation of the universe.

LAAS

Are not the religious convictions
of monoforms simply the result of
certain electrochemical processes
in their brains?

ODO

Changelings don't have humanoid
brains.

LAAS

That's not my point. The belief in
a god most often a reaction to the
fear of death. And this ancient
changeling told you our people
are on the road to extinction.

ODO

I don't know... Would the Link
exile a hundred of its own based
solely on an unproven belief?

LAAS

The history of the Varalans is
littered with barbarous episodes.
They often professed their faith
in some creator as justification
for heinous behaviour. For cruel
acts of savagery against even
their own kind. The same story is
true of many monoform races.

ODO

But the Varalans and those other
species are not the changelings.

LAAS

No... and it pains me to think
that our people can be compared to
such inferior beings. And yet
you've told me that the Founders
sent out the Hundred based upon
just such an absurd belief.

ODO

Indurane maintains that it is more
than belief, more than faith.

LAAS

"Indurane" ?

ODO

The old changeling. It's the
Bajoran word for "ancient."

Laas rolls his eyes and scoffs. Odo smarts...

ODO

Regardless, according to him, the
Progenitor is a matter of reality.

LAAS

That is what believers say.

ODO

Except that Indurane thinks the
Great Link has succeeded.

That gives Laas genuine pause and surprise...

LAAS

What?

ODO

The Link thinks the scattering of
the Hundred through the galaxy has
brought about the result for which
it was intended.

LAAS

Why do they think that? And if it's
true, then where is the Progenitor?

ODO

I don't know.

LAAS

Then there are more questions we
need to ask, Odo.

ODO

I'm not sure we'll get anything
more out of Indurane. We need to
contact the Vorta...

PAN back up to the pink sky, and the NOVA hanging there...

CROSS-FADE to:

5 EXT. ENNIS SETTLEMENT - MORNING

Another sky, blue and clear. PAN back down again, revealing
the sparse, rocky ground of the moon of the Sen Ennis, as
seen in 1x13 "Battle Lines" and 8x23 "Rising Son."

A Dominion transporter deposits the Vorta VANNIS and three
Jem'Hadar, including First REKAN'GANAR. She looks around at
the distant mountains, stony slopes, tough vegetation...

VANNIS

Are you certain this is the place?

REKAN'GANAR

It is. Residual propulsion traces are scattered throughout the area, and ship's sensors detected small amounts of refined metals spread along this flat as well.

VANNIS

It must have been a crash or an emergency landing, then. No pilot would intentionally choose to set down here.

(to soldiers)

Find whatever you can learn.

The three Jem'Hadar spread out, each holding the Dominion version of a tricorder. Vannis pulls out her own sensor device and walks forward, towards a set of cave openings.

The tricorder alerts her to a bio sign. She doesn't react, but calmly changes direction to walk closer to the cave...

VANNIS

Hello there.

(no response)

Yes, I'm speaking to you. You, in the cave.

A figure emerges shyly from the cave - a young boy, human-looking, dirty from playing in the soil - MISJA. Vannis leans down, smiles, affects a gentle, soothing voice...

VANNIS

Hello. What's your name?

MISJA

Misja. What's yours?

VANNIS

I'm Vannis. Do you live here?

MISJA

In the village. With my tribe.

VANNIS
The Sen Ennis.

MISJA
(wary)
Ye-es....

VANNIS
Oh, don't worry. I'm not here to hurt you or your tribe.

MISJA
Why are you here?

VANNIS
I'm here to find a friend of mine. Quite tall and... silvery.

MISJA
(eager)
Raiq!

VANNIS
(playing along)
Yes, Raiq. Is Raiq here?

MISJA
No, she left a while ago. Right after she healed. She was hurt when her ship crashed.

VANNIS
Her ship crashed? Oh no. Is it still here?

MISJA
No. She flew away in it. I guess it wasn't too badly damaged.

VANNIS
Can you show me where?

MISJA
Sure. It was before I was born, but everybody talks about it. We play here all the time.

Trusting, Misja reaches out for Vannis's hand. She gives him it, and they walk together along the plain, to a point where there are slight indentations in the stony ground...

MISJA

Right here.

VANNIS

Would you mind if I took some readings? I just want to make sure that this was my friend's ship.

MISJA

Sure, I guess.

Vannis crouches down to inspect the ground. There are tiny pools of melted metal in the indentations. She takes as thorough readings as possible, then stands and smiles...

VANNIS

Yes, this was Raiq's ship. Thank you very much, Misja.

MISJA

You're welcome. Will you visit our tribe?

VANNIS

No, I don't think so. I have to go. I need to find my friend.

MISJA

(disappointed)

Okay.

VANNIS

Well, if you go and tell your tribe right now, they can come and visit me here before I leave.

MISJA

Great! I'll go get them.

He runs off with childish enthusiasm. Vannis pulls out a test-tube and scraper, scooping up some of the melted metal into the tube. She stores it away, taps her comm device...

VANNIS

Vannis to First Rekan'ganar.
Rendezvous at the beam-down point.
I have the information we need
about the Ascendants. We're
leaving. Alert the second to set
course for the Rindamil system.

REKAN'GANAR (comm)

Acknowledged.

Vannis smiles, satisfied. She has served her gods well...

6 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR

Taran'atar walks the gently curved corridor, Matheson ahead of him, Jenek behind, both with phasers at the ready. Their heels clack loudly on the surface. They come to the end of the corridor, where there is a door with a hand scanner...

MATHESON

Stop.

They do. Matheson holsters her phaser, opens the pouch at her hip, brings out a computer chip with a serrated edge - a chip and physical key in one. She slots it into a hole and TURNS it sharply. She then places her other hand on the scanner. Taran'atar watches every move Matheson makes...

MATHESON

Identify - Matheson, Lieutenant
Commander. Requesting access.

The scanner turns from red to yellow, and after a few more seconds, to green. The door slides open. Matheson withdraws the chip-key, puts it in the pouch, draws her phaser...

MATHESON

Let's continue.

7 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - RADIATION ROOM

Matheson, Taran'atar and Jenek stride through the door, Taran'atar noting that the door is at least 10 cm thick. Staying in close for now. Once they have passed through...

JENEK

Stop.

They do, and Jenek repeats Matheson's actions. Holster phaser, open pouch, insert key, scan hand.

JENEK

Identify - Jenek, Lieutenant.
Requesting closure.

The panel goes green to yellow to red. Jenek pulls the key, puts it in the pouch, draws his phaser, turns around...

JENEK

Let's continue.

They begin to walk again, and we WIDEN to reveal...

...that they are now walking on a BRIDGE across this much larger room, much wider than the claustrophobic corridor.

On either side, powerful RADIATION EMITTERS target the walkway, forcefields blocking them, and a DROP of hundreds of meters below. Taran'atar observes as they walk...

CROSS-FADE to:

8 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MAZE ROOM

Matheson leads the group through seemingly random patterns, corridors set at odd ANGLES. Taran'atar glances behind --

-- and watches the walls MOVE on hidden motors, creating a different layout of the maze once they pass through...

CROSS-FADE to:

9 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - HEAT ROOM

The walls are STEAMING and GLOWING red with heat, the air is hazy with it. It would be a difficult temperature for anyone, but we get the impression it can go a lot higher...

10 **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR**

They emerge from the heat room, and stop -- Jenek does the whole process. At the other end of the corridor, a GLASS DOOR, through it another glass door a few meters away...

MATHESON

At the end of this corridor is the Founder's cell. We will open the first door, you will step into the antechamber. The second door will not open until the first is closed. Lieutenant Jenek and I will remain in this corridor during your visit. Do you understand?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

MATHESON

Let's continue.

Matheson goes through the phaser-pouch-key-scanner process for the first glass door. It slides aside, and Taran'atar steps through. Matheson closes the first door, pulls out a different key, uses it to remotely open the second door. It slides aside, and Taran'atar steps through...

11 **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL**

Taran'atar steps into the room, the door slides closed behind him. He stops and looks around...

Potted plants, random objects, various interesting shapes. But for all its grand provisions, empty of an occupant. No sign of the Female Founder. *She's not here...*

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

12 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL

Taran'atar stands seemingly alone in the room. The entire room is extremely well lit, no shadows to hide in. But no sign of an occupant. Taran'atar calls...

TARAN'ATAR

I am Taran'atar. I am a Jem'Hadar
First.

(no response)

I humbly seek to visit with you,
Founder... to speak with you.

There is no response. It dawns on Taran'atar that perhaps the Founder doesn't want to speak to him...

TARAN'ATAR

If you do not wish my visit,
Founder, then I shall leave.
It is of course, your choice.

But there is still no response.,,

13 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

KIRA sits in the pilot's seat. Reading a padd, but cannot really concentrate on it. She puts it down and sits back, worrying about Taran'atar...

14 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM

The human male, Hexter, sits closely observing one monitor - it shows the *Rio Grande*, sitting in the docking bay.

T'Kren stands behind him, observing dispassionately. She turns to another pair of screens...

...where the Tellarite female Cheg sits watching two angles from the Founder's cell - they show Taran'atar standing, waiting hopefully for the Female Founder's attention.

After a few more moments of waiting...

...there is finally a hint of movement on screen, something emerging from the very top edge of the image. While T'Kren eyebrows in response, Cheg sags with relief to see it...

CHEG
There she is.

15 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL

One of the large, white, square ceiling tiles is melting, shimmering. It eventually drops to the floor... and MORPHS into the familiar changeling form of the FEMALE FOUNDER.

Taran'atar is simultaneously awed at the sight of a Founder changing in front of him, relieved that she has consented to see him, and scared of the moment now that it is here.

She stares up at him, curious and slightly disapproving...

FEMALE FOUNDER
Why are you here?

As Taran'atar tries to think how to answer...

16 EXT. SPACE - JEM'HADAR SHIP

Dominion Vessel 971, in orbit over the Founders' planet...

17 INT. DOMINION SHIP - WEYOUN'S QUARTERS

WEYOUN works urgently, moving back and forth with fierce concentration from one computer screen to the next in his room. Hurrying to get the work done as soon as possible, but very aware of the need to get it right too.

Behind him lurk ODO and LAAS, waiting with varying levels of impatience. Weyoun is intimidated and awed by their presence. He quite likes Odo, but is a touch scared of Laas and his more obvious contempt for solids...

ODO
Weyoun - are you making progress?

WEYOUN
I am. I am making significant progress.

LAAS

(snaps)

If you're making progress, then
what's the delay?

WEYOUN

My apologies, Founder. I'm afraid
the information you're seeking is
stored in numerous files, in
different locations. They're also
encrypted in a variety of ways.

ODO

But you do have the necessary
clearances to access and decode
the files?

WEYOUN

I do, thanks to your foresight.
I've collected all of the files,
and decoded most of them. I'm just
waiting for the last few files to
go through decryption, and then
for the final collation of data.

Laas turns to Odo, dismissing and ignoring Weyoun...

LAAS

Is there no-one who can do this
any faster?

Before Odo can respond, there is a BEEP from the computer.
Weyoun turns back to inspect it, works the panels for a few
more moments...

...then turns back to Odo and Laas, his satisfaction at
having served the Founders clear.

WEYOUN

Done.

LAAS

Good. Get out.

Weyoun's smile evaporates, but he bows his head and does as
he is told. Odo sees his disappointment and takes pity...

ODO

If you don't mind, Weyoun. It's just that Laas and I would like to discuss the contents of the files in private.

WEYOUN

Of course. I understand entirely. I'm more than happy to volunteer my home for you to work in. As always, it is a pleasure to serve.

ODO

Thank you, Weyoun. Good work.

Weyoun beams widely, then bows and backs out of the door, letting it close in his face. Laas shakes his head...

LAAS

You are too soft with them, Odo.

ODO

No, you are too harsh. These are his own quarters, Laas. You could have a little respect.

LAAS

Respect?! They're monoforms, Odo. Just because they're programmed to be more obsequious and fawning than most doesn't make them any more worthy of respect.

Disappointed with Laas, Odo walks over to the computers and begins inspecting the files. Laas continues to mutter...

LAAS

This whole thing is ridiculous. How can our people revere some creator of their own, and then set themselves up as gods for other races to worship? It's hypocrisy of the lowest kind.

Odo pays no attention to Laas's grumblings. He MORPHS his hands, sprouting extra FINGERS to work the keys faster...

ODO

Apparently they don't see it as a contradiction. I suppose they realised how strong a motivator such a belief could be from their own culture, and decided to use it to their own ends.

Odo brings up a display, a large STAR CHART that shows many sectors of space. Odo points to a large, irregular area surrounded by a BLUE line...

ODO

This is Dominion space.

Odo works some more controls - RED dots appear in seemingly random places outside the border of their space...

ODO

And here are all the locations to which the Hundred were sent.

LAAS

They're not symmetrical. They don't seem to be arranged in any particular pattern at all.

ODO

No, they don't.

LAAS

Where's the Omarion Nebula?

Odo taps more keys - a smaller area appears surrounded by a YELLOW line, with another yellow dot inside it...

ODO

Here.

(points to dot)

And here's the planet formerly occupied by the Great Link.

LAAS

It's not at the centre of the distribution.

ODO

But Indurane told me that the
Hundred were intended to draw the
Progenitor back to the Great Link.
So there must be some central
locus here.

Odo works the computer again, bringing up various programs.
On the main screen, RED LINES appear through all of the red
dots. The lines move around, always anchored to their dots
but trying to find one point where they all intersect.

At last, the lines find a common point, all intersecting in
one location - near to, but not inside, the Omarion Nebula.

LAAS

Are there planets there?

Odo interrogates the computer for more information...

ODO

There's one star system there.
Eleven planets and --

He breaks off as he reads some more information. Laas takes
note of Odo's confusion...

LAAS

What is it? What's wrong?

ODO

There's only one star in that
area, and it's been the brightest
object in the Great Link's sky for
months now. It went nova.

As Odo and Laas reflect on the stunning non-coincidence...

18 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira still sits, waiting and worrying...

FEMALE FOUNDER (v.o.)

I asked you a question. Why are
you here, in the Alpha Quadrant?

19 **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL**

The Female Founder stares up at Taran'atar, displeased at having to repeat herself. Taran'atar is nervous...

TARAN'ATAR

I am in the Alpha Quadrant because one-and-a-half years ago, I was sent by a Founder to reside on Deep Space Nine.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Another Founder... Odo?

TARAN'ATAR

Yes - Odo.

The Founder settles back, accepting that. She looks closely at Taran'atar, noticing the lack of white tube...

FEMALE FOUNDER

You are free of the white. Is this a result of your advanced age?

TARAN'ATAR

I do not believe so. I believe other, younger Jem'Hadar have been found with the same... deficiency.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Others were found? By whom?

TARAN'ATAR

By the Vorta, acting under the direction of Odo.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Odo. He explicitly searched for Jem'Hadar without dependence on ketracel-white? And then from that group, selected you to live in the Alpha Quadrant? Why?

TARAN'ATAR

I... I do not know.

FEMALE FOUNDER

He did not tell you? When Odo sent you from the Dominion, he did not explain your mission?

TARAN'ATAR

He did, but I do not understand. I am to experience living among the species of the Alpha Quadrant. I would never question the wisdom of a Founder, but I do not understand why this is necessary.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Did Odo tell you how long he would require this of you?

TARAN'ATAR

He did not. But during his recent visit to Deep Space --

FEMALE FOUNDER

His recent visit?

TARAN'ATAR

Odo spent more than a month on Deep Space Nine and Bajor, until leaving to go back to the Great Link almost three months ago. He accepted an invitation to attend a ceremony in which the Bajorans entered the Federation. I suspect he also wanted to see Kira.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Of course. His loyalties are still divided.

TARAN'ATAR

I would not presume to evaluate the loyalties of a Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER

(dismissing him)

Of course you wouldn't. You are not capable of it. But I am.

She turns and walks away from him, pacing around her room, talking as much to herself as to him...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Odo seeks to change the Dominion,
to alter the natural order. He
hopes to foster a relationship
between our people and the solids,
so that he can keep both the Link
and Kira in his life.

She grasps the trunk of a small tree, her fingers MORPHING to wrap around and around it, climbing up and down its length. She looks over her shoulder, back at Taran'atar...

FEMALE FOUNDER

But such efforts will never work.
Even Odo, with his inexperience,
will understand that one day.

TARAN'ATAR

As you say.

She grips her extended fingers tighter, and the trunk of the tree SNAPS under the pressure...

FEMALE FOUNDER

And when he fails, he will abandon
the Great Link and return to Kira.
Not just for weeks, but for as
long as Kira lives.

On that ominous pronouncement...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL

The Founder unwinds from the broken tree, but her hands remain long and extended, fingers dragging on the floor. Taran'atar watches confused, not sure how to respond...

TARAN'ATAR

Founder... surely no god would
ever betray the Great Link.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Of course he would. Odo will flout
the sacrifice I have made for our
people. I agreed to end the war,
to give myself over to my enemies,
to relinquish my freedom at the
hands of the solids, all to save
the Great Link... and to save Odo.

Then she throws her arms in the air, her fingers extending
up to the ceiling, their tips GLOWING like tiny stars...

TARAN'ATAR

To save Odo?

FEMALE FOUNDER

He was one of the Hundred. I was
one of those who decided to send
the Hundred away. I had no choice.
I wanted the Link to survive.

The Founder pauses, then brings her arms back down from the
ceiling, reforming into normal hands. She focuses anew...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Why have you come to see me?

TARAN'ATAR

Because I wish to be of whatever
service I can be to you. I thought
I might be able to offer some
relief from your... isolation.

FEMALE FOUNDER

And you imagine that your presence
would do that for me? Would allay
the misery of my seclusion?

She scoffs at him. Taran'atar stares back at the Founder,
ashamed. If he could blush, he would be bright red now...

FEMALE FOUNDER

A Jem'Hadar Elder would never be
so stupid as to think his company
is of value to a Founder. Either
your time in the Alpha Quadrant
drove you to fantasy, or there is
some other reason. What is it?

Unable to deny a direct question, Taran'atar finally admits
the truth to himself - his real reason for being here...

TARAN'ATAR

I need your assistance, Founder. I
am a Jem'Hadar soldier. I do not
belong in the Alpha Quadrant. I do
not belong without ketracel-white
in my body. I need guidance, but I
have no way of contacting Odo.

FEMALE FOUNDER

And so you sought to contact the
only other Founder you could.

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

FEMALE FOUNDER

You seek my permission to leave
the post Odo assigned you to.

TARAN'ATAR

I would never defy the will of a
god. But Odo is not the only god.

FEMALE FOUNDER

He is no god at all! And neither
am I!

Taran'atar stares, dumbfounded at the Founder's outburst.
He is starting to seriously worry for her mental state...

TARAN'ATAR

Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER

The Founders are not gods. We developed the Jem'Hadar and the Vorta into what they are now. We are powerful and superior to all solids. But the one true god - the Progenitor - created the Founders.

TARAN'ATAR

Founder... let me serve you...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Your servitude means nothing to me. You lost the war. Leave.

He stands, paralysed, torn. He doesn't want to leave her, but he can't disobey her either. Crestfallen, he turns back to the door, preparing to leave.

But before the door opens, he turns back with a new idea...

TARAN'ATAR

Founder...

21 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD - DAY

Odo and Laas stand on one side of the tiny rocky islet, the NOVA hanging in the sky above them. The old changeling INDURANE stands opposite them. They are angrily confronting him with what they have learned, but he is placid...

INDURANE

We are aware of this. We have kept that area under observation, and we knew of the nova's existence when it first occurred. Since that moment, we have been drawn to it.

ODO

What does the Link intend to do?

INDURANE

We have contemplated that question for some time now. At the first appearance of the nova, some of us - and soon many of us - believed the Progenitor had returned. We anticipated it coming to us, but as time passed and that did not happen, some began to consider another action besides waiting.

LAAS

Then what are you going to do?

INDURANE

We will travel to the region of the nova. We will find the Progenitor.

Odo and Laas share a dubious, worried glance. But Indurane gazes rapturously up into the sky, at the nova...

22 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR

Matheson and Jenek SNAP to attention - the far door has opening and Taran'atar is stepping into the ante-chamber.

Behind him, the Founder MORPHS into a shapeless, humanoid-sized mass, remaining in her cell.

The inner door closes. Matheson opens the outer door, and Taran'atar steps out. He barely acknowledges the others' presence. Brow furrowed, mind miles away - whatever thought occupies him is taking all his brain power.

MATHESON

Follow me.

Without responding, Taran'atar falls in place between Jenek and Matheson, as before. At the far door, they stop, and Matheson goes through the phaser-pouch-key-scanner process.

The door opens onto the HEAT ROOM. As the burning heat cycles down to survivable levels and they step through the door, Taran'atar is unconcerned - he is busy concentrating.

23 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM

T'Kren, Cheg and Hexter observe their screens. One shows Matheson, Taran'atar and Jenek leave the corridor...

The second shows the runabout sat in the docking bay...

The third shows the Founder sitting quietly in her loose, disembodied changeling state, on the floor of her cell...

Cheg and Hexter share worried, dubious looks. T'Kren keeps her attention on every single step the trio makes...

24 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL

The blob of formless changeling matter sits on the floor of the cell, shimmering... waiting...

25 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MAZE ROOM

CLOSE on Taran'atar - he is paying no attention to Matheson or Jenek... it's getting harder and harder for him to maintain his hold on whatever thought consumes him...

MATHESON

Let's continue.

Just as he steps over the threshold, Taran'atar FLINCHES at a pain in his head - his concentration has been broken.

26 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - FOUNDER'S CELL

...and the Founder VANISHES, not the usual morphing effect, but fading into nothingness as if she was never there...

27 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM

Cheg JUMPS up in shock at this sight. Alarmed, realising they are in trouble, T'Kren urgently slaps a control - a loud, shrill ALARM sounds, RED ALERT lights flashing...

28 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira reacts to the sound of the RED ALERT alarms through the walls of the runabout. She jumps in fear and surprise - this is everything she'd been hoping would not happen...

29 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - RADIATION ROOM

...and Taran'atar moves. SPRINGS forward, runs Matheson down, her head hitting the metal deck.

Taran'atar dodges a PHASER SHOT from Jenek, bounces against the forcefield with a BUZZ... and then he SHROUDS.

Jenek keeps firing, sweeping his phaser back and forth...

OOF - Jenek is TACKLED by a shrouded shape, THROWN back through the door, phaser FIRING wildly as it falls...

30 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MAZE ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

...Jenek THUDS to the deck. Taran'atar UNSHROUDS, grabs Jenek with one hand, the fallen phaser with the other...

TARAN'ATAR
Move and I'll snap your neck.

Automated phaser turrets FIRE - Taran'atar twists so they hit Jenek instead. The Orion SCREAMS. Taran'atar SHOOTS the turrets out with Jenek's phaser - they EXPLODE in sparks.

The walls begin to MOVE, rumbling to block his escape...

Through the open door, inside the radiation room, Matheson staggers to her feet, FIRES her own phaser...

With her spare hand, Matheson urgently rummages through the pouch at her hip to find the key to close the door again...

Jenek KICKS back into Taran'atar's shins, ELBOWS him in the stomach, BITES down on the powerful arm around his throat.

Taran'atar DROPS the phaser, uses the hand to reach up - and SNAPS the Orion's neck, throws him aside like garbage.

The door is rumbling closed. Taran'atar scoops up the lost phaser, CHARGES on Matheson, SHOOTS her right in the back.

She collapses, body smoking. Taran'atar grabs Matheson's arm, WRENCHES it up, presses her hand against the scanner.

The door RUMBLES back open. He drops the dead arm and RUNS.

31 **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - RADIATION ROOM**

Taran'atar CHARGES along the bridge, head down. The door at the other end is open, but starting its slow rumble closed.

The FORCEFIELDS drop, let the radiation through. Taran'atar GRIMACES as the radiation BURNS his flesh...

The bridge SPLITS in the middle, retracting into the walls at either end, leaving a gaping space in the middle.

Taran'atar runs faster, building momentum. Times his steps perfectly... and LEAPS across the gap...

...his chest SLAMS against the retracting edge and he GRABS on tight, phaser CLATTERING to the deck far below...

Swings up, clambers back onto the bridge, begins making his way towards the far door, which is still closing...

His body feels like it is on fire from the radiation. But he refuses to give up. He FLINGS himself forward, ROARS...

32 **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - CORRIDOR**

A figure HURLS itself through the shrinking gap of the door just before it closes - but the figure is MATHESON.

She drags herself to her feet, head woozy, dead arm hanging limp. Cameras and phaser ports all turn to look at her. RED ALERTs flash everywhere, but the phasers do not fire.

Wracked with pain, Matheson limps along the corridor... past the first door... and onto the second. Reaches for the scanner... can't quite manage it...

and COLLAPSES against the door, wheezing in pain. The door slides OPEN; Cheg emerges, points a phaser urgently around in case of Taran'atar. Not seeing him, she crouches down...

CHEG
Jackie... are you -

Matheson's formerly dead arm SHOOTS up, the hand GRABS Cheg by her fat, fleshy throat. Matheson SHIMMERS and unshrouds (again, not a changeling morph)... revealing Taran'atar.

33 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - MONITOR ROOM

He steps through the door... a phaser beam SCREAMS... he uses Cheg as a shield. He FIRES his phaser back aimlessly -
- making panels EXPLODE in sparks and smoke. The alarm dies in this room, but still sounds elsewhere in the station.

Another phaser out of the smoke - he THROWS Cheg's body into its path, FIRES back. SCREAM... THUMP... then quiet.

Taran'atar waits for the last one to appear... until at last a leg whips out of the smoke, KICKS the phaser from his hand. T'Kren steps back, her own phaser trained...

T'KREN
Where is the Founder?

Taran'atar takes a moment to catch his breath. Looks down at himself, the red Starfleet coverall ripped and torn...

T'KREN
I will ask you only once more --

A BLUR of movement - the coverall MORPHS and springs off Taran'atar's body. The changeling mass LEAPS at T'Kren, wraps itself around her hands so she cannot fire.

Taran'atar grabs the fallen phaser - and calmly FIRES. The Vulcan woman goes down with a shot right to the head. The changeling mass unwinds, MORPHS into the Female Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER
You're hurt. Can you go on?

TARAN'ATAR
Victory is life. I will serve you
for as long as I stand, and I will
stand at least as long as it takes
to return you to the Dominion.

FEMALE FOUNDER
Then let us depart.

Taran'atar moves to the few functioning consoles, using them to deactivate all the force fields and weapons.

34 **INT. ANANKE ALPHA - DOCKING BAY**

Taran'atar and the Female Founder emerge from the corridor into the rocking bay, phaser held out ahead of him...

Kira stands outside the runabout hatch, unarmed. She takes in the sight of them, sighs in disappointment...

KIRA

Taran'atar... I am ordering you
to stand down, and to return the
Founder to her cell.

Taran'atar pauses, not sure how to proceed. Odo told him to obey whatever Kira says. He looks to the Female Founder...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her. Kill her and let's get
out of here.

Taran'atar is torn. He has now been given conflicting orders by two Founders - by two of his gods. He attempts to cover his confusion by inspecting the phaser in his hand...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her!

He raises the phaser, struggling to make a decision. How can he choose between two gods?

But he does. He presses the firing button... the phaser FIRES... and the beam hits Kira square in the chest.

As Taran'atar watches, Kira collapses to the deck, hole in her chest, eyes staring in shock. She is dead.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

35 INT. ANANKE ALPHA - DOCKING BAY

Fuzzy, dreamlike... replay the moment...

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her and let's get out of here.

Taran'atar fires... Kira drops...

36 INT. RUNABOUT - REAR CABIN

Taran'atar JERKS awake from his dream, disoriented, panting hard. He is on the cot in the sleeping area.

He sits up urgently, staggers out into the rear cabin. Sees the stars streaking past at warp outside the window.

Everything seems peaceful. Still breathing hard, he makes his way clumsily through the hatch and into...

37 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

...and there is Kira, sitting calmly in the pilot's seat. Everything is normal, the ship flying smoothly.

Kira senses his presence, turns a little, smiles warmly...

KIRA

How was your sleep?

He growls, slumps into the seat beside her. Wary, unsure what is going on here. Pauses to process her question...

TARAN'ATAR

It was... interrupted.

KIRA

You don't look particularly rested.

TARAN'ATAR

Captain, our departure from Ananke Alpha. Was it... uneventful?

KIRA

Well... yeah. You finished your meeting with the Founder, they escorted you back through, and we left. Then you told me you wanted to be alone, so you went in the back. Don't you remember?

On Taran'atar's confused frown...

38 FLASHBACK - FOUNDER'S CELL

On the threshold about to leave, Taran'atar hesitates and turns back with a new idea. Extending the scene...

TARAN'ATAR

Founder... you are a god to the Jem'Hadar, are you not?

FOUNDER

There is only one true god - the Progenitor.

She turns away, no longer interested. Taran'atar exits...

39 SERIES OF SCENES

-- Taran'atar escorted uneventfully through security...

-- He shoots Matheson down...

-- Matheson leads him on calmly...

-- He shoots Kira dead...

-- He calmly boards the runabout, Kira by his side...

40 BACK TO SCENE

TARAN'ATAR

My memories are confused. I can recall two different series of events for the same period of time. They both seem real. Also, I imagined myself using abilities Jem'Hadar do not possess.

KIRA
Really? Like what?

TARAN'ATAR
The ability to turn our personal
shroud outward - use it to project
an image for others to see.

KIRA
Sounds like you had a dream. You
know - your mind's way of working
through its subconscious impulses
while you sleep. Perfectly safe.

TARAN'ATAR
I have read about such things in
my studies of the solids. It is
unacceptable. A Jem'Hadar needs
clarity of mind at all times.

KIRA
Everybody dreams, Taran'atar.

TARAN'ATAR
Not Jem'Hadar.

KIRA
Well, not most Jem'Hadar, I guess.
But then you're not like most
Jem'Hadar, are you?

Taran'atar grinds his teeth, disinclined to answer. There
is a small BEEP, Kira checks her panels...

KIRA
And we are entering the Bajoran
system. Dropping to impulse.

Outside, the warping stars drop back to normal space. DS-
Nine hangs silent in the distance, the *Defiant* in place...

KIRA
(content)
Nearly home.

But Taran'atar just frowns, confused... not *his* home.

41 **EXT. SPACE**

Dominion Vessel 971 travels at warp...

42 **INT. DOMINION SHIP - WEYOUN'S QUARTERS**

A large and undulating MASS of changeling, enough to make up six Founders, as if they stood in a circle then Linked.

Two bodies pull away, solidify into the familiar forms of Odo and Laas. They step away from the group - the Founders' agitation and excitement has been overwhelming for them.

LAAS

I find them exhausting. They're so... frenzied. It's undignified.

ODO

I suppose you can't blame them. They think they're on their way to meet their god.

LAAS

Such fanciful nonsense.

ODO

I'm trying not to be judgmental. So many times, Nerys tried to explain her unwavering faith in the Prophets to me. I always made an effort to understand... but I never really did.

LAAS

Because it's incomprehensible.

ODO

I'm just scared for how they'll react... when they find out the Progenitor doesn't exist.

WEYOUN (comm)

Weyoun to Odo.

ODO

I'm here, Weyoun. Go ahead.

WEYOUN (comm)
You asked me to inform you when we
approached the nova, Founder. We
have just entered sensor range.

ODO
Thank you. I'll join you on the
bridge shortly.

Odo nods acknowledgment to Laas, then exits...

43 INT. DOMINION SHIP - BRIDGE

Odo stands in the middle of the bridge, the headset in
place. He gazes with wonder at what he sees...

44 POV SHOT

...the bright, shining explosion of the NOVA, overlaid with
sensor readings.

45 BACK TO SCENE

Odo turns to see Weyoun at his panels, ROTAN'TALAG beside
him. Weyoun casts a quick, nervous look over his shoulder
at Odo, then returns to work. Odo flips up his viewer and
approaches him gently...

ODO
Anything to report, Weyoun?

WEYOUN
The radiation from the nova is
interfering with our scans.
(annoyed mutter)
It might help us to have some idea
of what we're looking for.

Odo smirks at Weyoun's seemingly impertinent tone. Weyoun
realises what he said, desperately backtracks from it...

WEYOUN
What I mean to say is, given the
circumstances, I'm finding this a
difficult task to accomplish. I
will endeavour to do better.

ODO

I'm sure your efforts are more than satisfactory. In fact, I may have given you a task that will not yield any positive results.

WEYOUN

(looks around, sotto)

Founder.. are we looking for one of the Hundred?

ODO

No, Weyoun, I don't believe we are. I want you to direct your search as if you were looking for changelings... but you should not expect to find any.

(sigh)

The Founders here are --

He is interrupted by TONES from Rotan'talag's computer...

ROTAN'TALAG

Weyoun, I've found something.

WEYOUN

What is it?

ROTAN'TALAG

Sensor sweeps in the region of the nova have detected an unusual object. As massive as a planet.

WEYOUN

As "massive as" a planet? Is it not a planet?

ROTAN'TALAG

Its shape is that of a spherical cap, approximately twenty percent of a full sphere. But if it is the surviving section of a planet, it is not obviously so. Radiation continues to interfere with scans, but I detect no rock, mineral or metallic substances in the object.

WEYOUN
What do you detect?

ROTAN'TALAG
Biomimetic cells.

Weyoun turns and stares at Odo, surprised and confused. But Odo is just as confused. Can it possibly be the Progenitor?

ODO
Are there changelings down there?

ROTAN'TALAG
The readings are consistent with
shape-shifting abilities. They
resemble those of a Founder...
but they do not match precisely.

Stunned, Odo swings his headset viewer down and gazes out at the view with a whole new appreciation...

46 EXT. SPACE

With the glittering NOVA shining, the Jem'Hadar ship pulls into the foreground, approaching the mysterious object.

It is as described - huge arched top surface, totally flat bottom surface. What it's made of, we can't quite tell yet.

47 INT. DOMINION SHIP - BRIDGE

Laas, Indurane and three other Founders stand on the bridge transporter platform, excited and reverent.

Weyoun stands by the control panels, wearing the headset. The Vorta hands Odo a Dominion tricorder, smiles at him...

WEYOUN
I hope you find what you're
looking for.

ODO
Thank you, Weyoun.

Then he nods to Weyoun, who works the panels. The six changelings disappear in a transporter effect...

48 EXT. PROGENITOR SURFACE

The changelings BEAM onto the object's surface - a vast, featureless, airless plain. The NOVA provides just enough illumination to look out to the slightly curved horizon.

Indurane and the other three Founders meld back into one big formless blob of changeling. Laas and Odo stand apart.

Odo raises his tricorder, taking readings. The screen fills with information. Confused, he looks around. No sign of anything, certainly nothing to cause these readings.

He crouches down, presses one hand to the surface of the object. It is black and dusty, like sand. He PUSHES into it, sensing for something to Link with. Nothing.

Laas holds out his hand. Understanding, Odo reaches up with his spare hand to hold Laas's, and the two hands LINK...

FLASHBACK - 9x16 "OLYMPUS DESCENDING, pt 1"

Laas directs Odo's attention to the pile of black ashes...

BACK TO SCENE

Odo looks up to Laas, beginning to understand...

FLASHBACK

Weyoun steps into the ashes, his boots crunching into them, his face overcome with horror...

BACK TO SCENE

Odo looks at Laas's feet, crunching into the huge object's surface, kicking up dust in the same way. He LURCHES to his feet, pulling his hand up from the surface. Ashes and dust drift slowly down from it as he does. He understands...

ODO (v.o.)
This object... this entire...
thing... it is the Progenitor.

LAAS (v.o.)
And it is dead.

They look across the dead expanse, to where the other four Founders are in their Link...

... and they've clearly come to the same conclusion. Their collective shape WRITHES wildly in their anguish..Tentacles THRASH about, mouths SCREAM silently into the darkness..

Still stunned themselves, Odo and Laas don't know what to do. Hands still joined, they speak through the Link...

LAAS (v.o.)
Their God? Our God?

ODO (v.o.)
I don't know. But the others think
so. Indurane thinks so.

There is a slight BUZZ - Odo looks down at his combadge. He MORPHS his chest, pulling the combadge inside himself...

49 INSIDE ODO

We're actually INSIDE Odo's chest for a moment. He opens up a hollow space inside, the golden fluid of his form leaving an empty hole. The combadge emerges into this space...

50 BACK TO SCENE

Odo and Laas remain Linked by the hand...

WEYOUN (comm)
Founder, I wanted to make certain
that everything is alright.

ODO (v.o.)
Everything is not alright, Weyoun.
The changeling on this planet is
no longer alive.

WEYOUN (comm)
We ascertained that as well. And
I think we know what happened...

ODO (v.o.)
I assumed it was radiation from
the nova.

WEYOUN (comm)

Yes, but I think we know what caused the nova. Our scans of the system detected warp signatures and the discharge of what appears to be an isolytic subspace weapon of enormous power and range.

ODO (v.o.)

Are you saying that a weapon, launched from a ship, caused this star to go nova?

WEYOUN (comm)

Yes, Founder. We already matched the warp signatures with those Vannis recorded recently at the Sen Ennis moon. This was done... by the Ascendants.

ODO (v.o.)

Weyoun, beam us up at once.

Without waiting for a response, Odo closes the hollow in his chest - the combadge emerges back out on his uniform. Odo and Laas look to each other with dismay...

LAAS (v.o.)

What do we do?

ODO (v.o.)

We go home, and we hope that the Great Link can handle the truth. Because it's no longer a matter of if or when the Ascendants are coming. They're already here.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

51 INT. RINDAMIL BEDROOM

Dead of night, with the only light coming in via a window. Two figures are roused from sleep by the NOISES of gunfire, phasers, smashing and screaming filtering from outside.

TEELENT (male) and ALSARA (female) are the royal couple of the alien Rindamil race. They are scared and confused.

Movement in the darkness - the Vorta VANNIS steps out of the shadows. The two aliens are clearly terrified of her.

TEELENT

You.

VANNIS

Yes, me. I'm delighted that you remember me, Teelent. I, of course, remember you.

ALSARA

Why wouldn't you remember us? You came to our world, uninvited. You chose us, made demands of us - threatened us.

VANNIS

(warm, expansive)

On the contrary. When I visited your world, I did so to welcome your people into the Dominion.

ALSARA

Welcome?! We never wanted - we never asked to be in your Dominion! Why did you come back?

TEELENT

She came for our food.

ALSARA

You can't take it!

VANNIS

Well, we're going to have to disagree on that.

TEELENT

Based upon your... requests... we've done everything we could to increase food production. But there's only so much land, and only so many people to work it.

VANNIS

I'm sorry to hear that. I thought I was quite clear about what would be expected of your people.

ALSARA

Teelent, no! We can't take the chance. What about our winters?

TEELENT

What choice to do we have, Alsara?

(to Vannis)

We can give you twelve percent of our food. That should help with the famine on that other world.

VANNIS

It seems you're not understanding me. The Dominion requires seventy-five percent of all food stores on this planet. Immediately. This is not a request. Your only choice in this matter is whether or not to cooperate. Look outside.

Teelent climbs out of bed, goes to the window, pulls back the curtains. What he sees makes him begin to cry. Vannis stands awaiting his decision, knowing what it will be...

52 **INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS**

Taran'atar ROARS, thrusting his *kar'takin* knife into some unseen enemy. He stalks across his bare quarters, executing battle manoeuvres, fighting imaginary opponents...

ANGLE

He is fighting the alien monster from the holosuite in 9x14 "Lost Time." But as he ATTACKS the creature, GUTS it, we can see ODO standing in the background, observing...

ODO
You're failing.

ANGLE

Taran'atar SPINS towards Odo - but there is nothing there. A moment's hesitation... and Taran'atar turns to attack a new invisible enemy. Brutal, agitated to the point of fury.

ODO (o.s.)
I told you to live among them. Not
hide from them in your quarters.
You're failing the mission I
assigned you.

Frustrated, enraged, Taran'atar SPINS - and launches a KICK into the wall of his quarters. Some of the weapons hanging there fall with a CLANG. Odo observes...

ODO
You're failing your gods.

And suddenly the Female Founder is there too...

FEMALE FOUNDER
The Founders are not gods!

Taran'atar SPINS, staring across his cabin, at the minimal furniture, the computer console. He is alone. He SEETHES...

ANGLE

QUARK is there, being annoying...

QUARK
You see? Nothing but threats.

Instantly enraged, Taran'atar rushes him, GRABS his throat, SNAPS his neck, RAMS him backwards into the wall...

ANGLE

Taran'atar's empty fist has dented a HOLE in the bulkhead. Suddenly, Odo is there again...

ODO

Just... keep trying, Taran'atar.

ANGLE

RO stands against the window...

RO

It's not always that easy, I know.

He rushes her, spitting hatred - and PUNCHES a hole right through her chest, his fist coming out the other side...

ANGLE

VAUGHN

I was looking for your own opinion
on the matter.

Ro is gone, but VAUGHN is nearby. Taran'atar spins, grabs a weapon off the wall, HURLS it towards Vaughn --

ANGLE

-- the weapon lodges into the blank wall.

BASHIR

It sounds... lonely.

Taran'atar pounds across his quarters, RAMS his shoulder right into BASHIR's ribcage, shattering it and making a huge dent in the bulkhead.

53 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Ro is sat behind the desk, with Kira perched on the edge as they confer over station business. A small ALARM sounds, and Ro and Kira look to each other, slightly worried.

Ro checks her panels and touches the comm...

RO

Ro to Taran'atar. We're seeing an alarm down here, originating in your quarters - a fracture in an internal bulkhead. Is everything alright?

54 INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

Taran'atar looks towards his companel, to where Ro's voice issues from. He should answer, but he stands, hissing...

KIRA (comm)

Taran'atar, this is Kira. What's going on down there?

(pause)

Taran'atar, please respond.

He does - by stalking towards the companel and driving his FIST through it. Odo shakes his head in disappointment...

ODO

Follow her orders as if you were following mine.

FEMALE FOUNDER

Kill her and let's get out of here.

55 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD - DAY

Odo stands alone on the rocky islet, the Link CHURNING, more agitated than we have ever seen it. He crouches down, sadly runs his fingers through the pile of black ashes. Motion catches his eye... he stands and turns...

Far away across the Link, towers of changeling matter RISE UP. They twist and spiral, stretching until they break off from the main body and SHOOT up into the sky.

It starts with just a few, but gradually more and more, and closer to the islet. Odo watches with worried fascination.

INDURANE quietly steps up onto the islet with him. The old changeling gazes sadly up into the sky, watching both the departing changelings and the shining nova in the sky...

INDURANE

It took us millennia to settle on the plan to send out the Hundred. Centuries more to implement that plan. And in the end, it worked. We saw the sign, and we knew the Progenitor had returned to us.

ODO

And now you feel guilty?

INDURANE

I do. We do. For those ill-served when we sent out the Hundred. Like you. Like Laas.

(re pile of ashes)

Like this one. And like the Progenitor itself.

ODO

So you're dividing the Great Link, sending yourselves out into this universe that you believe is so hostile to shape-shifters, all as penance for your misdeeds?

INDURANE

We abandoned pieces of ourself, and in doing so, we lured the Progenitor to its death. We have no direction. No hope.

ODO

Are you relocating, or dispersing?

INDURANE

Some may remain together in small links, but most desire isolation, even from our own kind.

Then Indurane MORPHS, becoming a twisting, writhing TOWER of changeling that reaches up into the sky like the others. Indurane disappears into the sky.

Odo can do nothing but stand and watch it happen...

56 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT**

Kira and Ro stand together in the turbolift, both a little nervous. They are armed, but holstered...

 RO
I don't think I've ever been to
Taran'atar's quarters.

 KIRA
Until a few days ago I'm not sure
he'd ever been to his quarters.
But he hasn't stepped foot outside
them in the three days since we
returned from Ananke Alpha.

 RO
Do you think the Founder said
something to him in the prison?
Something that would explain the
change in his routine?

 KIRA
I don't know...

As the walls rush past...

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

The turbolift door opens. Ro and Kira exit, turning to walk along the corridor, both anxious and on edge...

 RO
I'm trying to decide whether to
enter his quarters with phasers
drawn. When we were on Sindorin --

OOF -- an invisible force runs her down with the power of a rampaging bull, THROWN back, air PUNCHED out of her --

-- and she SLAMS against the bulkhead, her head RAMS hard against the bulkhead, and she drops to the deck.

Taran'atar UNSHROUDS between Ro and Kira, panting, furious, but not wild - completely under control and ready to kill.

Stunned, panicked, Kira reaches for her phaser. Taran'atar HURLS his knife, and it flies towards Kira. She fires...

And then the knife is in her chest, right in the heart. The force sends her FLYING back - she hits the wall, collapses to the deck. Gasping, dying, she looks up at Taran'atar...

58 INT. RINDAMIL BEDROOM

Teelent stands at his window, looking out at his world being ravaged by Jem'Hadar. Alsara shouts at Vannis...

ALSARA

How can you do this? If you take
our food, hundreds of thousands of
our citizens, maybe millions, will
die over the next few months.

VANNIS

If you choose not to cooperate,
then that number will die in the
next few hours.

Alsara stares with hatred, while Teelent just stands at the window. Finally he turns, tears in his eyes...

TEELENT

Take it.

VANNIS

Excellent.

The Vorta touches a control - the noises of violence and death from outside end. Her arms wide and gracious...

VANNIS

Welcome to the Dominion.

She presses another control, and a transporter takes her.

59 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD - DAY

Odo stands alone, watching the rapidly diminishing Link spiral up into the sky and disappear. The level of the Link sinks, until parts of the ground beneath it become visible.

Another figure walks up out of the sea, forming into LAAS. Together they watch the Link disappear into the universe. The bright nova hangs in the sky over it all...

LAAS
What are we going to do?

ODO
I don't know.

LAAS
What's going to happen to the Dominion?

ODO
Laas, from this point on... you and I are the Dominion.

60 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Kira lies on the deck, Taran'atar's knife in her heart. She looks down, the life running and spurting out of her body, and she knows she's going. Her vision is fading, darkening.

Some distance down the corridor lies Ro's body, bent at an impossible angle, back and neck broken.

The sound of turbolift doors -- and Kira looks towards it. Taran'atar's boots step into it. She looks up, making eye contact with him...

TARAN'ATAR
Runabout pad A.

The turbolift beeps, and as Taran'atar holds Kira's eyes, the doors close. The light fades from Kira's vision, and...

BLACK OUT

THE END