

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x20 - "Slave."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Warpath*

by David Mack

**NOTE:** This episode features three different versions of Kira Nerys. For clarity, we will refer to them as follows:

**KIRA** - Captain Kira Nerys of Starfleet, currently in the infirmary after being attacked by Taran'atar.

**INTENDANT KIRA** - The Mirror Kira, Intendant of Bajor, on board a Klingon Alliance vessel, formulating plans.

**GENERAL KIRA** - A mythical figure from Bajor's ancient past, leading her armies, a vision experienced by our Kira.

### TEASER

FADE IN:

#### **1 POV - HI-TECH VIEWER**

A vast expanse of DESERT, so hot and dry that the ground has cracked, creating great ravines in the ground. We are looking down at it from a slightly elevated position.

We SCAN slowly sideways, indicators changing accordingly at the side of the image. We are searching for something.

In the distance, there is a PUFF of dust from one of the winding ravines. The image immediately centres on the area and ZOOMS in closer, tracking the dust as it moves through the ravine. Its source is still hidden for the moment.

The ravine intersects with another, and at the intersection we briefly see what is creating the dust - a FIGURE riding a hover-bike, kicking up the sand of the desert.

On the brief shot of the figure, the image FREEZES and zooms in even closer. A computer program scans the image of the rider, resolving it further until it becomes clear that it is the CARDASSIAN WOMAN from 9x19.

#### **2 EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT - DAY**

We see the person holding the viewer - actually a targeting sight on a massive long-distance weapon. It is a NAUSICAN male, a coldly professional assassin.

He is lying on his stomach in a small, coffin-sized notch in the rocky hills that surround the desert area, with a sheet of camouflage netting hiding his position. The weapon's muzzle pokes out of a tiny hole in the netting.

He has been here for a long time, and was prepared to stay even longer. But now his target is in his sights. He smiles with cold satisfaction.

On the Nausicaan as he remembers...

**3**     **INT. PRISON**

A plain background of Cardassian design. It is dark and claustrophobic. Three figures sit against the wall, all looking into camera. There is the Nausicaan, the KLINGON WOMAN from 9x19, and the CHALNOTH male from 9x19. They all listen intently as someone speaks to them.

KIRA (o.s.)

She'll be trying to get here, to me. I want her stopped. What you do with her is up to you, I don't care - although personally I prefer dead. Just as long as she doesn't get anywhere near me or this facility.

The arrayed assassins and mercenaries nod acknowledgment.

**4**     **BACK TO SCENE**

The Nausicaan leans in to look through his targeting sensors again...

**5**     **POV - HI-TECH VIEWER**

Still following the puff of dust along the ravine. The image SCANS sideways, following the ravine ahead of the Cardassian Woman. Further along her path, there is another intersection, where the Nausicaan will get a clear shot.

We stay on the intersection, and the indicators superimposed in the image change, centring on that position, until the system says TARGET ACQUIRED.

**6**     **EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT - DAY**

The Nausicaan calmly and smoothly moves his fingers to rest on the firing control of his weapon. He knows he has her. There is no way he can fail.

Then there is an enormous RUMBLE from outside his hiding place. Something out there is causing a huge ruckus, a mechanical roar as air is displaced and pushed around.

He grimaces, annoyed at the disruption. With a growl, he looks back through the targeting sights...

**7**     **POV - HI-TECH VIEWER**

Nothing but dust and sand - whatever it is has kicked up enough to completely block any sight of the ravines or the Cardassian Woman. The system says TARGET LOST.

Then the great cloud of sand billows towards us...

**8**     **EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT - DAY**

His eyes flaring in alarm, the Nausicaan pulls away from the targeting viewer and brings up both arms, wrapping them around his head as protection.

A moment later, the sand cloud BLASTS into the crevice, RIPPING off the camouflage net, knocking over the weapon, and covering the Nausicaan head to toe in sand and dust.

It passes after a few moments. The Nausicaan ROARS with frustration and jumps to his feet. He scrambles out of his now-revealed hiding place, coughing from the sand in his lungs. He is standing on the low hills around the desert.

He looks up for the disturbance - there is a SHAPE in the sky, roaring through the air. But it is invisible, an empty space defined only by the clouds of dust it has kicked up.

Then it UNCLOAKS, and reveals itself to be the Klingon runabout, the *noH'pach*.

The Nausicaan ROARS his anger, but the ship ignores him. It zooms on through the air, heading directly for one of the larger hills. The Nausicaan turns to follow its progress.

Further beyond the mountain, on the opposite side from the desert, we can see a half-abandoned city in the distance.

The Klingon ship flies on towards the bigger mountain. It is heading directly for a crash against the rock face... but then it passes THROUGH the side of the mountain - just a holographic projection - and disappears.

**9     INT. PRISON - TUNNEL**

The Klingon ship flies down a long passage into the core of the mountain. Behind it we can see the fuzzy image of looking backwards through the holographic shield.

**10    INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

The ship emerges from the tunnel into the centre of the prison facility. It lowers down gently on anti-gravs until it LANDS on a docking platform.

PAN OVER the top of the vessel - the docking platform is actually a bridge over a massive chasm down into the depths of the mountain. A huge, cylindrical excavation, with a walkway spiralling around the edge, down into the darkness.

**11    INT. NOH' PACH - COCKPIT**

TARAN'ATAR stands at the controls, having successfully guided the vessel to a safe stop. This is his destination. He takes a deep breath and turns towards the rear cabin.

**12    INT. NOH' PACH - REAR CABIN**

Taran'atar steps into the rear cabin, where TENMEI still hangs by her wrists. He is oddly hesitant, at a crossroads.

TENMEI

Now what?

TARAN'ATAR

I have arrived at my destination.  
For the rendezvous.

TENMEI

Rendezvous? With who?

TARAN'ATAR

I... don't know.

(tired, confused)

No... I do know. But I am not  
meant to. I was told to forget...  
to forget her.

TENMEI

Forget who?

TARAN'ATAR

(frustrated)

I... don't... know.

TENMEI

Is that why you left Deep Space  
Nine?

TARAN'ATAR

No. I left the station because I  
had attacked Captain Kira and  
Lieutenant Ro. It is very likely  
that I killed them.

TENMEI

(blanches  
with horror)

Are you going to kill me, now?

TARAN'ATAR

No. I will remand you to whatever  
authority is in control here.

TENMEI

Great. You're a real prince.

TARAN'ATAR

Goodbye, Tenmei Tenmei.

He turns and leaves.

**13 INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

The small Klingon ship's hatch opens and Taran'atar emerges  
onto the docking platform. Crossing towards him is another

alien - a Nalori male. His skin is pitch black, with purplish ritualistic scarification marks on his face, and a rifle slung over his back. His name is JAID.

Behind Jaid, on the deck at the far end of the docking platform, are a dozen other aliens of various species. They are more mercenaries, waiting in a huddle, tense and alert.

For the purposes of later episodes, we need to be able to identify among them the following:

- An Efrosian female [Efrosians from movies 4 and 6]
- A suspicious-looking Romulan male
- A large, hulking Lissepian male [Lissepians from 1x15]
- A Kressari female [Kressari from 2x02]

JAID

You must be Taran'atar. I'm Jaid.

TARAN'ATAR

There is a prisoner on my vessel.  
Do with her and the ship as you  
see fit. I'm done with them.

Taran'atar hands Jaid the controller for Prynn's handcuffs, then pushes past him and into the depths of the prison.

JAID

Where are you going?

TARAN'ATAR

(doesn't turn)  
To meet my new god.

On Taran'atar's stern, yet uncertain face...

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

FADE IN:

**14 INT. DEFIANT - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

VAUGHN stands by the transporter platform with six security - human females NEELEY and MOORE, Andorian *thaan* THRON, Vulcan male SEVAK, and human males MINECCI and HEINS.

They are all wearing Surface Operations Blacks, handing out equipment and weapons between themselves. Meanwhile, CHAO (last seen 8x26) is working the transporter console.

BOWERS (comm)  
Bridge to Vaughn. We're in orbit  
over Harkoum.

VAUGHN  
Any company?

**15 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

BOWERS moves between the staff at other positions - T'RB at sciences, ALECO at tactical, ZUCCA at helm - all on alert.

BOWERS  
A handful of freighters. No sign  
of the *Verithrax*.

VAUGHN (comm)  
Do we have a lock on the *noH'pach*?

T'RB  
Negative, sir. I've got a clean  
ion trail to the surface, but then  
it just stops.

VAUGHN (comm)  
Could she still be cloaked on the  
surface?

T'RB  
No, sir - we'd still be reading  
neutrinos from her cloaking field.

BOWERS

(to T'rb and Aleco)

Run a level-one tachyon scan on the coordinates where the trail stops. Look for a lag in the return signal.

They do as he says. After a few seconds...

ALECO

You were right, sir. Signal lag, fourteen nano-seconds.

BOWERS

(into comm)

Commander, readings suggest there is a sensor-shielded facility on the surface. I'd guess that the *noH'pach* is inside that facility.

ALECO

It makes sense. If the Obsidian Order were using this place as a prison, they'd want to hide it from prying eyes.

**16    INT. DEFIANT - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

As the security team finishes its preparations.

VAUGHN

Alright - send the coordinates to the transporter and upload them to the security team's tricorders.

CHAO

(off panels)

There's no way to beam directly to those coordinates, sir. There's a transporter block along with the sensor blind.

BOWERS (comm)

I recommend you beam down a couple of clicks to the south. There's plenty of open desert nearby.

VAUGHN

(wryly)

And just when I thought all the fun had gone out of this job.

BOWERS (comm)

Sorry, sir. Best we can do.

VAUGHN

Acknowledged. Vaughn out.

(to team)

Alright, everyone - listen up. I know you've all fought Jem'Hadar before. You've been on the ground, you know how to handle yourselves. But this is something different.

HEINS

But Taran'atar's, like, really old for a Jem'Hadar, isn't he?

VAUGHN

Don't think for a second that's our advantage. Jem'Hadar don't get weaker with age. They just get stronger, and faster, and smarter. Taran'atar has spent the last twenty years doing nothing but fighting, and training to fight. And he has won every single time. He's going to know tricks you haven't even dreamed of. And if he really isn't under the Founders' control any more, then he's more dangerous than ever. And just to make our jobs more interesting, we also have to take him alive.

They nod acknowledgement - rather nervously. The door opens and PERMENTER jogs in, carrying the Cardassian device that Nog designed. She hands the unwieldy object to Vaughn.

PERMENTER

As requested, sir.

VAUGHN  
Thank you, Ensign. Chao?

CHAO  
Site locked in. Your cover's a bit  
low.

Nodding his understanding, Vaughn crouches to one knee, his old joints creaking. The others follow his lead.

VAUGHN  
Goggles down.

They all pull GOGGLES down over their eyes. Vaughn nods to Chao. Vaughn and the team dissolve in transporter beams.

KURN (v.o.)  
We've reached orbit over Harkoum,  
Intendant.

**17    INT. NEGH'VAR - BRIDGE**

As seen in 9x07 "Saturn's Children." Klingon general KURN has turned to address INTENDANT KIRA, who has just entered. The screen shows the same planet we saw in 9x19 "Warpath."

INTENDANT KIRA  
Move us into geo-stationary orbit  
over Grennoka Detention Centre.

Kurn nods to a subordinate, who does as he is told. Then the Klingon general approaches Kira, speaking *sotto*.

KURN  
My engineers want to know why your  
quarters require so much power  
from the main reactor. As do I.

INTENDANT KIRA  
An experiment. That's all you need  
to know.

KURN  
And is the regent aware of this...  
experiment?

INTENDANT KIRA

No... and if you see to it that he remains unaware... you may find yourself a step closer to taking his place and restoring your family's honour.

KURN

I can keep a secret if you can.

Kurn grins - he can't resist an offer like that. The Intendant smirks seductively in return, then slowly turns and slinks back out of the bridge.

**18 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

RO LAREN slowly opens her eyes, lying still and unable to move on her biobed. She looks slowly over to the side, where QUARK is asleep in a chair. He hasn't left her side. She can't help but smile at his attentiveness.

RO

(gently)

Quark... Quark?

He comes awake, realising that she is awake too.

QUARK

Laren. Are you okay?

RO

As well as can be expected. My toes are a little cold.

QUARK

You want me to get a blanket?

RO

No, that's okay. I'm just glad I can tell the difference.

He reaches out and holds her hand - she manages to grip it lightly. She cranes her head as best she can to look down at her feet. She just about manages to wiggle her toes under the covers. Quark watches her and grins.

QUARK

Quite a workout you've got there.  
You should keep your strength up.  
But between you and me, the food  
in this place is terrible, and the  
service is even worse. Can I bring  
you something from the bar?

RO

I'd like that.

Quark gets to his feet, thrilled to be able to do anything.

QUARK

I know just the thing. I'll be  
right back. Don't go anywhere.

RO

(deadpan)

Did I ever tell you how funny you  
are?

QUARK

(playing along)

No.

RO

Ask me why.

Sharing her grin, Quark turns and leaves. As she watches  
him go, her eye passes over KIRA's biobed. She is still  
unconscious, and SISKO sits by her bedside, leaning in  
close, holding her hand, and whispering quietly to her.

Ro is intrigued. Then Sisko looks up. Ro feels guilty for  
eavesdropping, but Sisko's warm smile reassures her.

SISKO

How are you feeling, Lieutenant?

RO

I've been better, sir.

SISKO

And you will be again.

RO  
If it's not too personal, sir...  
what were you saying to her?

SISKO  
I was telling her a story. An old  
Bajoran parable... about three  
brothers from Jokala.

RO  
The one about the *kava* root? Why?

Sisko looks back down at Kira, tears in his eyes.

SISKO  
Because she did this for me once.

Zooming to close-up on Kira's unconscious face, **WHITE OUT**  
as we go...

**19**    **INT. WHITE SPACE**

Kira stands in the realm of the Prophets. Just a moment, as  
we remember. Then she turns her head. MATCH CUT to:

**20**    **INT. / EXT. PAREN TONN - DAY**

GENERAL KIRA stands on the battlements, looking out at the  
Ascendant army. In charge is RAIQ, riding her large lizard  
monster. She sneers up at Kira, her contempt obvious.

GENERAL KIRA  
That's far enough. Speak.

RAIQ  
Abandon this fortress now, and  
your deaths will be merciful.

GENERAL KIRA  
We will not surrender.

RAIQ  
Your presence here is a heresy.  
All who dare trespass upon the  
fortress must die and burn.

GENERAL KIRA

I offer you the same counsel.

RAIQ

Renounce your heresy! Open the gate!

GENERAL KIRA

Never!

Raiq gives a dark grin, relishing the slaughter that is about to come. Kira turns and shouts down to her troops on the ground behind her, inside the keep.

GENERAL KIRA

Archers! Stand ready! Brace the gate!

Kira takes a deep breath, prays to the Prophets and braces herself for battle. We hear the low MOAN of arrows coming their way, and Raiq's voice calling out loud.

RAIQ (o.s.)

Die and burn!

Kira looks up, daunted, as the arrows approach...

VAUGHN (v.o.)

How much longer?

**21    EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT**

Vaughn crouches with Thron and Neeley at the edge of the mountainside. They are trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, but their black suits are more like targets on the bright gold sand. Thron works hard with a tricorder.

THRON

Too soon to say. Penetrating the shield without drawing attention to ourselves might be impossible.

VAUGHN

Forget subtle. Just get us in there.

Thron turns back to his tricorder. Neeley brings out three small DEVICES from her backpack, hands them to Thron. They program the devices and pull out tripod-like legs on each.

Neeley takes two devices and crouch-runs along the edge of the mountain, setting up one device at the halfway point, another at the far side, where the rest of the team wait.

Thron sets up his own device, nods 'ready' to Vaughn, who nods back. At the other side, the rest of the team tense their weapons. Thron touches the final control.

The hologram FLICKERS. Thron reaches his hand forward and presses it against the rock face - it passes right THROUGH. He holds up his tricorder, and reads back the information.

THRON

Tunnel on the other side, then a large space beyond that. Multiple life signs... and a lock on the *noH'pach*.

VAUGHN

Good work. Fall back.

Vaughn makes some complicated hand signals towards the team at the far side. Minecci takes point, pushing through the rock face with his weapon ready. Heins and Sevak follow.

Neeley and Moore run back along the wall to Vaughn. Vaughn takes a deep breath, readies himself, and then nods.

VAUGHN

Move up.

**22 POV - HI-TECH VIEWER**

From a higher elevation, we watch Vaughn's security team walk up to the rock face, and then step through it, and disappear. Sensors display readings over the image.

**23 EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT - DAY**

From a new vantage point behind a slight rocky outcropping, the Nausicaan watches Vaughn's team through his targeter with a frown. What the hell is Starfleet doing here?

A GLINT of sunlight on the sand right next to him. He drops the rifle instantly, SPINS, unleashes two short blades from his belt, ducks and crosses the blades over his head, just in time to block a deadly blow from above.

The Cardassian Woman LOOMS over him. She deliberately stays silhouetted against the bright sun, and when it peeks out, the diamond-ring effect continues to conceal her face.

The Nausicaan PUSHES her away, stands to confront her. She is carrying two long, curved, elegant blades - the ones she stole from the Chalnoth - against his two shorter ones.

They begin an extended back-and-forth, blades CLANGing and FLASHing in the sunlight. They move so fast that we still don't see the Cardassian Woman's face.

**24**    **INT. NOH' PACH - REAR CABIN**

Tenmei hangs by her wrists, struggling to do anything about it. Her toes barely touch the ground - all her weight is on her wrists, and it is wrenching her arms out of her sockets to hang there. She kicks her feet up, trying to reach the workbenches around the side of the room - no success.

Then she stops and tenses as she hears new FOOTSTEPS hitting the deck. She looks up, and Jaid steps into the doorway. He sees her hanging there, and after a moment of surprise, he grins like a predator.

JAID  
Hello. I'm Jaid.

On Tenmei's terrified expression...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### **25** EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT - DAY

Mid-fight - the Nausicaan assassin FEINTS to the side, drawing the Cardassian Woman's attention with one blade. Then he LUNGES forward with the other. She deflects and SLASHes at his belly, drawing blood. He brings up his knee, smashing it into her ribs - we hear them CRUNCH.

### **26** INT. PRISON - TUNNEL

Two Starfleet teams work their way quietly along the dark tunnel where Taran'atar flew the Klingon shuttle. Vaughn, Neeley, Thron and Moore on one side. Sevak, Heins and Minecci on the other side. Their black uniforms are much better suited in here.

### **27** INT. NOH' PACH - REAR CABIN

Jaid stalks to Tenmei, knowing that she is at his mercy. He has plenty of time to do whatever he wants with her - she is helpless. She watches him approach, taking silent note of the handcuff controller attached to his belt.

JAID

I'll say this for the Jem'Hadar...  
he certainly knows how to bring a  
lovely gift for his hosts.

### **28** INT. PRISON - TUNNEL

Vaughn and the security team reach the mouth of the tunnel. Vaughn signals everyone to pause.

#### **ANGLE**

Looking out onto the docking platform - they see the *noH'pach* sitting in the centre, over the massive empty space that dives down into the depths of the mountain. The remaining mercenaries stand nearby, unaware.

Vaughn turns to Thron, who still has his tricorder out.

VAUGHN  
(*sotto*)  
Where's Taran'atar?

**INSERT**

Thron's screen shows a GRAPHIC of the prison - the deep cavern, the spiralling walkway around it. There are also elevators at each quarter of the circle. A large flashing red dot indicates Taran'atar riding one of the elevators, although it is moving slowly.

THRON (v.o.)  
(*sotto*)  
Below us, and descending.

**BACK TO SCENE**

VAUGHN  
(*re noH'pach*)  
Can we capture the ship and beam him out?

THRON  
Negative. His signal's getting weaker the further down he goes. There must be a scattering field to prevent exactly that kind of thing.

VAUGHN  
Alright then - I guess we do this the old-fashioned way.  
(to entire team,  
*sotto*)  
I'm going after Taran'atar, and you're going to cover me. Don't go any further into the facility than you have to, and hold your fire until fired upon. When I'm ready to be extracted, I'll let you know. Questions?

Daunted but ready, the security team shake their heads. No questions. They get ready to move out.

29 **INT. NOH' PACH - REAR CABIN**

Jaid circles Tenmei, ogling her with a nasty, lascivious sneer. She conserves her energy, tracking his every step.

JAID

If you please me, you can look forward to weeks of my personal attention. Displease me... and you'll get to know my friends as well. Maybe all at once.

TENMEI

I don't know what you deserve more - my disgust or my pity.

JAID

(chuckle)

You're hardly in a position to be doling out pity. But don't worry. I'll teach you a few new positions soon enough.

He steps right up into her face. She SPITS at him. He takes a moment to wipe it away, then SLAPS her face hard. He reaches and lifts up her chin, forcing her to look at him.

JAID

That was foolish of you, darling.

The sound of WEAPONS FIRE comes from outside. Startled, Jaid turns his head for a moment, and Tenmei takes her chance. She KNEES him in the groin. He doubles over with a GRUNT. She knees him again in the chin, knocking him back.

Then she uses the last of her strength to haul herself up, wrapping her legs around his throat. She CRUSHes as hard as she can, SCREAMing with the effort of it.

30 **EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT - DAY**

The Nausicaan-Cardassian fight. He knocks one of the swords out of her hand. She twists and SWIPES the other sword at him. His right hand FLIES into the air, still holding its blade, blood dripping from the severed wrist.

The Nausicaan ROARS in pain and anger. He stabs forward with his remaining blade, but she twists - the knife sinks into the mountainside.

The Nausicaan SLAMS his arm down on the bones at her neck - they CRUNCH and she SHRIEKS. He grabs her shoulders and flings her face-first into the rock wall of the mountain.

She staggers back, hair hanging over her face, blood dripping from her mouth.

**31    INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

Vaughn crouch-runs along the wall of the docking area. A disruptor shot BURNS the wall right over his head - he cringes but keeps running.

**ANGLE**

Sevak leans out from cover behind a railing, and fires his own phaser rifle. Other phaser shots criss-cross the scene.

**ANGLE**

The Lissepian mercenary dodges to avoid the Vulcan's shot.

**32    INT. NOH' PACH - REAR CABIN**

Jaid FLAILS as he struggles against Tenmei's crushing legs. She pulls higher and higher, squeezes tighter and tighter, and finally kinks one leg up sharply enough that we hear the CRACK of his neck. He goes limp.

Slowly, she lowers her legs to the floor, dragging Jaid's body directly beneath herself, then stands on his chest. She reaches with one foot towards the handcuff controller on his belt, presses it, and the manacles SNAP open.

Tenmei DROPS to the floor, landing on top of Jaid's dead body. Rolling off him, she GROANS with pain as she forces her arms back down from their over-extended position.

She looks into Jaid's dead eyes with guilt and anger. She listens to the sound of WEAPONS FIRE still being exchanged outside the ship. She is a long way from out of this.

**33**    **INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

The Kressari female takes aim at Vaughn's running figure.

**ANGLE**

Minecci takes aim at the Kressari and fires. He has to dodge back from a return shot. That was close.

**ANGLE**

Vaughn VAULTS over a railing, just missing another enemy disruptor shot. He lands with a CLANG of boots on metal on a lower level, one that leads to the nearest elevator.

He runs towards the elevator, head down to avoid weapons. He reaches it and steps in. It is basic and industrial - little more than a cage with cables and pulleys attached.

**34**    **INT. PRISON - ELEVATOR (CONTINUOUS)**

He slams the half-door closed and pushes buttons. With a GROAN of long-unused machinery, the elevator begins to rumble slowly down into the depths of the prison.

Vaughn looks through the cage across to the other elevator opposite. It is much lower down, but still visible in the dark belly of the facility - just about. Taran'atar is in there. Vaughn is going to catch him, and make him pay.

**35**    **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

The lighting is dim. Sisko still sits by Kira's bedside.

The door opens, and DAX enters, careful not to disturb. Quark and Ro are occupied with themselves, Quark feeding her food with a fork. But Sisko looks up and smiles.

SISKO

Good to see you, old man.

DAX

I'm glad you could come, Benjamin.  
I'm sorry it had to be for this.

Dax takes a seat, and they look sadly down at Kira.

SISKO  
You look tired.

DAX  
Been up for about thirty hours,  
the last twenty-six of those on  
duty in Ops. I haven't felt this  
dragged out since the war.

SISKO  
Sounds like the job I remember.

DAX  
Don't get me wrong, I don't regret  
switching to the command track.  
But it's just... lately, so much  
of the job seems routine.

SISKO  
Requisitions. Transfers. New  
protocols from Starfleet Command.  
Just one damn thing after another.

DAX  
Pretty much. I guess... I just  
figured there'd be more action and  
less paperwork. Running a space  
station isn't where I see myself  
five years down the road.

SISKO  
Dax... are you talking about a  
transfer?

Dax is uncomfortable about this. It is a difficult subject  
for her - it almost feels like a betrayal.

DAX  
Maybe. I don't know. I just  
think... I want to get out there,  
see the galaxy a bit.  
(forced cheery)  
It's what Starfleet's supposed to  
be about, isn't it?

SISKO

From what I hear, you and Vaughn made some remarkable discoveries on your Gamma Quadrant mission.

DAX

That was the exception rather than the rule. Three months out of the last three years. And I don't see much chance of that changing while I'm here.

SISKO

Okay. That all sounds reasonable. Now why don't you tell me the real problem?

Dax sags, knowing that Sisko sees through her.

DAX

That is the real problem. I guess, maybe it's just not the only problem. Benjamin, look at all the things that have happened to me since I was joined. Worf, the war, Julian, the parasites, now this...

(re Kira)

I need to get away. I need a fresh start.

SISKO

Life isn't any easier on a starship, Dax. Just as much heartache. Just as much paperwork.

DAX

I know. I just think it'd be better... to not be here.

SISKO

(re Kira)

Well, I can guarantee she'd be sorry to see you go.

Dax looks sadly down on Kira's sleeping face again.

DAX

It's okay to admit you're worried about her, Ben. You don't have to play defence with me.

SISKO

(sigh)

I am worried. Mostly about Kira. But it's more than that.

DAX

Has something happened?

SISKO

Not to me. Not yet, anyway. It's nothing I can point to and say, "That - that's what's bothering me." It's more a feeling of something coming... something waiting to happen. Ever since the attack on the Sidau village, I've had moments - like Orb Shadows - when I thought I could glimpse it... but it always slips away.

DAX

Do you think the attack on Kira had something to do with it?

SISKO

I don't know... I'm afraid it's just the beginning of something bigger... something worse.

DAX

Okay... say you're right. What are you going to do about it?

(shrug)

You could always come back to Starfleet - take that promotion.

SISKO

(small chuckle)

That's one way I don't see my path leading. Besides, I kind of like wearing civvies all the time.

DAX  
So where are you headed?

SISKO  
I'm not sure.  
(looks at Kira)  
But I get the feeling this is  
where I'm supposed to start.

On Kira's face, as we **WHITE OUT** again...

**36 INT. / EXT. PAREK TONN - DAY**

General Kira of the Bajoran Army stands on the battlements of the fortress. She is surrounded by FLAMES, crumbling stone, dust, and Bajoran soldiers running back and forth.

She hears the sounds of her soldiers SCREAMing, and the attacking army's ROARS of triumph. She coughs her way through the smoke, and turns to Sisko, at her side.

GENERAL KIRA  
We have to stop those catapults!

SISKO  
They're too far out of range.

GENERAL KIRA  
In a few moments, those gates will  
fall. When they do, we charge.

SISKO  
Straight at them? It's suicide!

GENERAL KIRA  
It's the only way! We have to  
destroy the Ascendants' siege  
engines. Send a squad to clear a  
path to the gate. Go!

Daunted, Sisko nods and turns to pass the word to the troops. Kira turns back to look out over the battlements.

**CUT TO:**

37 **EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT**

The CRUNCH of the Nausicaan's knee as the Cardassian Woman kicks her boot at it - hard. He falls to the ground, BELLOWING in pain. They are both beaten and bloody.

**ANGLE**

The Nausicaan half-sits, cradling his ruined knee. The Cardassian Woman limps around behind him - we hear the *snick* of a sword. But he reaches into his boot with his remaining hand, pulls out another KNIFE and drives it backwards into her gut, slicing her intestines.

She GRUNTS and slumps to the ground. But then the Nausicaan stiffens, his eyes going wide. He slumps forward to the ground, and we see the bloody sword yank out of his neck.

He watches from his skewed perspective as the Cardassian Woman struggles to her feet, staggers to the rock face, and slumps against it. She finds his backpack on the ground and begins rooting through it. The Nausicaan understands.

NAUSICAAAN

The surgical pack is under the  
bottom flap.

Nodding her thanks, she finds it, opens it and pulls out a bone fuser. With her one good arm, she reaches up to her broken neck bones.

**ANGLE**

ECU on the Cardassian Woman's eyes as she SNAPS the bones back into place. Tears of agony force their way out, and she grits her teeth, but does not cry out. The Nausicaan is quite impressed. This is a powerful woman.

Then she takes the bone fuser and runs it along the neck bone. With both arms working, she grabs another tool and presses it to the wound in her belly, knitting her ribs and intestines back together.

Through all this, we don't see her face clearly - just her moving hands and panting breath. Mended as best as she can at short notice, she leans back against the rock wall.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

In a perfect world, I'd rest after a fight like that. But if that was Taran'atar on that Klingon ship, then I'm out of time. It might already be too late.

She reaches and picks up the Nausicaan's discarded rifle.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

I'm taking this.

NAUSICAAAN

(genuinely)

Good hunting.

The Cardassian Woman acknowledges with a nod, then stands and turns to leave. But she pauses, and turns back to him.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

Do you believe in gods?

NAUSICAAAN

I believe in the Four Winds.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

If you want, I'll release you to them.

NAUSICAAAN

You are a noble adversary.

She takes a hypospray from the surgical pack, crouches down and presses it to his neck. He sees her stand and begin to walk away, into the blinding sun, until we...

WHITE OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**38 INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

Phaser and disruptor shots criss-cross each other as the Starfleet team and the mercenaries exchange fire. The Romulan is felled by a phaser - unconscious but not dead.

Sevak and Minecci crouch together behind some slight cover, Sevak cradling a disruptor wound to his foot. Heins crouches over, firing sideways as he goes, and joins them.

HEINS

You guys okay?

MINECCI

Solid.

SEVAK

My wound is superficial. I can continue.

HEINS

Alright, Sevak - you'll cover us. Minecci, we'll flank right to that empty guard post. Take point.

MINECCI

Aye sir.

Minecci and Heins get ready to break cover, while Sevak gets ready to cover them.

**39 INT. PRISON - ELEVATOR**

Vaughn stands tensely in the elevator as it slowly rumbles down. His tricorder screen fritzes with static, useless. He puts it away, hoists his phaser rifle. He slips the goggles down over his eyes, and looks down at the lower elevator.

**40 POV - INFRA RED**

The infra-red goggles show a burly humanoid figure standing inside the other elevator.

**41**    **INT. PRISON - ELEVATOR**

In the lower elevator, Taran'atar stands like stone. He looks up and sees the second elevator following him down. He knows he is being followed. He can also hear the distant sound of phaser fire. None of it matters to him.

**42**    **INT. NOH' PACH - COCKPIT**

Tenmei emerges through the busted door - battered, bruised, tired and scared, carrying Jaid's phaser rifle. She moves to the front panels, starts trying to get them working.

The sound of the phaser battle outside rings through the walls. Tenmei looks up, surprised, and listens closer.

TENMEI

Those are Starfleet phasers.

She looks out of the window, but can't see anything specific other than criss-crossing phaser beams.

TENMEI

If Starfleet's here, it's got to be to stop Taran'atar. But the longer they're pinned down, the further away he's getting.

She pauses, stopping to consider her options for a moment. Then she hoists the rifle and checks its power.

TENMEI

I didn't come this far just to run away now.

She heads towards the open hatch.

**43**    **INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

Tenmei emerges from the hatch out onto the central docking platform. She looks down, and gulps at the sight.

**ANGLE**

Looking right down the mouth of the tunnel.

**ANGLE**

The sound of PHASERS brings Tenmei back to herself, and she quickly scurries for cover. The Starfleet crew and the mercenaries shoot at each other. None have noticed her.

She runs quick as she can, head down. She reaches the same point where Vaughn jumped to the lower level. She jumps down in the same place, then runs to the nearest elevator.

**ANGLE**

Sevak fires his phaser from behind his cover.

**ANGLE**

The Efrosian woman goes down from the shot.

**CUT TO:**

**44    EXT. PAREK TONN - DAY**

General Kira CHARGES out of the gates of Parek Tonn, right into the thick of the Ascendant army. Sisko, Vaughn, Ro and half of her army are with her.

Kira SWINGS her sword, cutting down bodies in her path. But flaming arrows TEAR into her legs and back as she strides. She forces herself onwards.

A loud whispering MOAN - Kira looks up and sees a cloud of arrows heading towards her. Flaming balls LAUNCH out of catapults towards her army. They are going to lose.

-- Ro is HIT by an arrow but forces through the pain to keep fighting.

-- Kira STUMBLES to the ground, flaming arrows piercing her legs and back.

-- Vaughn moves to face the Ascendant army, standing between them and Kira in an attempt to shield her.

-- Sisko reaches down, helping Kira up from the ground. But then he is hit too, and he falls to the ground.

Around them, soldiers SCREAM and WAIL as they are cut down wholesale by the constantly falling Ascendant arrows. Kira watches with horror as her army is obliterated around her. Sisko lies bloody and dying beside her.

SISKO

Not... enough. Should have... had allies.

She nods, knowing he is right. She looks down at her chest, but there is no arrow there... it is TARAN'ATAR'S KNIFE, lodged in her heart, among the ancient Bajoran armour. She is confused - where did this come from?

As she loses consciousness, white light bleeds over everything, and we **WHITE OUT**...

**45**    **INT. WHITE SPACE**

The white light recedes to reveal the real Kira Nerys. She is alone, looking around herself and re-accustoming herself to existence. Then Opaka emerges out of the white.

OPAKA PROPHET

Our hand is in motion.

KIRA

I understand. I'm ready.

Sisko stands beside her. He places a hand on her shoulder, offering warm support.

SISKO

No, you're not. No-one is ever ready.

Kira looks at him, worried.

**CUT TO:**

**46**    **INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

Heins and Minecci crouch-run across some open space towards the guard post they had spotted earlier. Sevak's phaser shot follows them.

Disruptor FIRE comes from an unexpected angle. Minecci is hit in the knee, Heins is hit in the shoulder. They both crumple to the deck in pain, sitting ducks out in the open.

A mercenary steps out, ready to finish them. But a third type of weapon - not Starfleet or disruptors - comes from a high angle and SHOOTS the mercenary down. Heins looks up.

**ANGLE**

The high domed ceiling of metal beams arching over them. A figure slips back into the shadows behind one of the beams - the Cardassian Woman, just barely visible as a shape.

**ANGLE**

Heins grabs Minecci and help-drags him over to cover at the guard post. They are both fighting against the pain.

MINECCI

Looks like we've got a new friend.

HEINS

I'll have to remember to thank her. Whoever the hell she is.

MINECCI

Assuming we get out of here alive.

**47 INT. PRISON - ELEVATOR**

Taran'atar's elevator GRINDS to a halt somewhere in the depths of the prison. He opens the half-gate and steps out.

**48 INT. PRISON - CORRIDORS (CONTINUOUS)**

Dark, metallic corridors - no signs of nature or softness here. Dim lights FLICKER, water DRIPS. Taran'atar walks along the corridor, not caring about any of it.

JEM'HADAR FIRST (o.s.)

Why do you not shroud?

**ANGLE**

Now we see the nameless JEM'HADAR FIRST from Sindorin again, walking calmly alongside Taran'atar.

TARAN'ATAR

I cannot. Fatigue prevents me.

JEM'HADAR FIRST

Where are you going?

TARAN'ATAR

I do not know where. Or why.

JEM'HADAR FIRST

Do you ever know why?

TARAN'ATAR

Always - because a Founder wishes it. Because a Vorta commands it. Because my First gave me an order. That is all I have ever needed.

#### **ANGLE**

Now instead of the Jem'Hadar First, Ro Laren is there.

RO

Then how do you explain me?

#### **FLASHBACK - 9x17 "OLYMPUS DESCENDING 2"**

Ro is thrown backwards by the invisible force.

#### **BACK TO SCENE**

TARAN'ATAR

I have betrayed the Founders. Odo wanted me to observe, comprehend your people and culture. You prize free will. You act irrationally and defy authority.

RO

Maybe that's what he wanted you to learn. Maybe by defying his will, you've done just what he wanted.

49 **INT. PRISON - ELEVATOR**

Vaughn's elevator GRINDS to a halt. Putting the rifle aside for a moment, he checks his backpack. He pulls out Nog's neuropulse device and clips it to his belt.

Then he takes a deep breath, steels his nerves, and opens the gate. Raising his rifle, he steps out into the dark.

50 **INT. PRISON - LABORATORY**

Taran'atar emerges, alone, into a large room. Tall tubes stand in rows (like at the Section 31 base in 8x08), all connected by thick cables to banks of dead Cardassian-styled computers.

Each tube holds a naked Jem'Hadar soldier, afloat in thick, gloopy liquid. The bodies have been opened and splayed in various unpleasant ways. Chest open, brain exposed, etc.

Elsewhere are large slabs of metal, which have been used as operating tables. Stringy bits of blood and guts are still dried onto the surfaces and the various instruments.

Taran'atar walks through all this, not looking at it or caring about it at all. He has his destination. He is alone, but still speaks as if he is talking to someone.

TARAN'ATAR

Perhaps this has all been a test.  
Odo sent me into exile to test my  
will. The imprisoned Founder  
denied her divinity to test my  
faith. Maybe they always meant for  
me to be free. To see if I would  
remain loyal when I have the  
freedom to betray them.

(beat)

But I am not here for Odo. And I  
am not here because I wish to be.  
I am here because of her...  
because she commanded me to come.  
And because I cannot refuse.

(beat)

I have come because I am a slave.

He walks on, unable to do anything else, until he is swallowed by the DARKNESS.

**BLACK OUT**

Soft beeps. A slow, regular heartbeat. Vague formless figures drifting in the black. Slowly, they resolve, the light slowly returning, gradually revealing...

**51 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Benjamin Sisko, looking down into camera, concerned. Tired, bloodshot eyes. Holding her hand. He has been here a while.

Kira is just coming round into blurry consciousness, lying on the biobed. Low lighting - still night-shift.

KIRA

Ben...

SISKO

I'm here, Nerys. You're alright. You made it through surgery, and you're going to be fine.

She concentrates, trying to put together the pieces of her confused memory.

KIRA

A knife... in my chest...

SISKO

Yes. Taran'atar attacked you and Lieutenant Ro.

KIRA

Why? Why did he do it?

SISKO

Bashir thinks someone was controlling him. Beyond that, nothing's really certain.

KIRA

Where is he now?

SISKO

He fled the station. Vaughn went after him in the *Defiant*. We're still waiting on an update.

KIRA

Ro?

SISKO

She's alright, Nerys. It'll be a while before she can walk again, but she will. Julian promised.

Kira tries to process everything. She gently reaches up and feels the skin over her chest where the knife hit.

KIRA

Feels like Julian had a hell of a time putting my heart back together.

SISKO

Actually... he didn't. He wasn't able to fix your heart, so he gave you an artificial one.

Irrationally scared, she presses her palm against her chest, feeling for her heartbeat. After a moment...

KIRA

Feels just like it always did.

SISKO

(small smile)

What did you expect - a drum solo?

KIRA

Well sure, why not?

SISKO

I'll see if Julian can add one.

KIRA

Oh please - don't give him any ideas. The last time he had an idea, I had the O'Briens' baby.

Sisko LAUGHS out loud, warm and rich. More than anything, that reassures Kira that everything is going to be okay.

KIRA

I'm glad you're here, Benjamin. It means a lot to me, that you would - well, that you would take time away from Kasidy and Rebecca to be with me. It's just... Thank you.

SISKO

Kasidy insisted on me coming. She said you needed me more than they did. But the truth is, I probably need you more than you need me. After all, what good would I be without my right hand?

The phrase seems to strike something in Kira's memory. Off her intrigued expression...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**52    INT. PRISON - THE PIT**

Looking down into the dark, hopeless depths of the prison.

**53    INT. PRISON - CORRIDORS**

Infra-red goggles on, Vaughn edges around a corner and looks down the length of the corridor. Somewhere a door CREAKS on old hinges, and rodents SKITTER in the darkness.

Vaughn steps into the corridor, gripping tight to his rifle, alert to every sound. He walks as quietly as he can, making light SPLASHES in the puddles on the floor.

He JERKS, aiming his weapon as he reacts to movement in the corner of his eye. It's a dangling wire swinging gently from the ceiling. Taking a deep breath, he presses on.

**54    INT. PRISON - LABORATORY**

Vaughn creeps quietly into the laboratory, careful to watch for anyone hiding in the shadows. He heads for the computer consoles, and takes cover by them.

He lifts off his goggles, pulls out his tricorder and tries it. Nothing useful. He looks up at the dead Jem'Hadar floating in their tubes, revolted by their condition.

VAUGHN

*(sotto)*

Test subjects. The Intendant knew  
a lot about Jem'Hadar brainwaves.  
Looks like this is where she did  
her homework.

He tentatively touches one computer panel - it springs to spluttery life, Cardassian characters crawling across the screen. He sets his tricorder on the surface, taps a few keys, then watches as it copies the data off the computer.

VAUGHN

*(sotto)*

No security protocols. Somebody  
didn't expect to ever be found  
down here.

The tricorder soon gives an affirmative BEEP. Vaughn picks it up and stows it in his backpack. He slips the goggles back on, hoists his rifle, prepares himself to move again.

He heads to the back of the laboratory, where there is another doorway. He sidles up to the opening, very quickly glances around it. It opens out into another room, dark and smoky, with lots of large, clunky machinery.

There is the tiniest hint of a body moving quickly through the smoke. Vaughn pulls quickly back around the corner. He checks his rifle - it's ready. He crouches down and creeps around the corner again...

... and a PHASER SHOT hits barely centimetres above his head. He pulls back to cover, cursing under his breath. He takes a deep breath, prepares himself again.

**55**    **INT. PRISON - GENERATOR ROOM**

A multi-level labyrinth of criss-crossed metal walkways, ladders and staircases, barely lit by flickering lights, thick with smoke and dust from the half-dead machinery. The floor is an inch-deep in brackish water from burst pipes.

Vaughn dashes out of cover and across a small gap to more cover beneath one of the staircases. He drops to one knee in the nasty, chemical-tainted water, and raises his rifle. He looks around in the darkness.

**56**    **POV - INFRA RED**

Scanning around the machinery, looking for any sign of Taran'atar. But there is nothing useful. The heat from the machines is enough to hide any bio-signs.

**57**    **BACK TO SCENE**

Vaughn crouches in the dark and damp. He is alone down here against a possibly crazed killing machine. Perhaps this wasn't the best idea he has ever had, but he is here now.

He pokes his head out from cover, enough to look around the room. Which way to go? No way to tell, so he may as well just make a choice and go. He steps out from cover, letting his rifle lead him through the darkness.

**58**    **POV - INFRA RED**

Advancing slowly through the smoky room, the outlines of machines and catwalks looming out of the gloom. Vaughn's heartbeat THUDS loudly, his breath hitching with nerves.

**59**    **BACK TO SCENE**

Vaughn reaches a wall, stands flat against it. He looks down at the water - his own footsteps have left RIPPLES. There is another set of ripples intersecting them. With alarm he realises - Taran'atar is nearby.

He quickly jumps into the gap between two large tanks. A PHASER SHOT hits the wall where he was standing, lighting up the room with energy and sparks. More SHOTS try to reach his new hiding place, but he is protected for the moment.

Vaughn cranes his neck up from between the tanks. Narrow ladders lead up the sides to a catwalk higher up. He racks his century of tactical experience for what to do.

He slips off his goggles, takes out his tricorder, taps the controls. He wedges his rifle between some pipes, then taps more tricorder keys, and the rifle responds with a short pattern of automated SHOTS out into the darkness.

Satisfied, he programs more. He prepares himself, then hits the 'go' key. The rifle begins FIRING - he uses the cover to make a quick dash for the ladder up to the higher level.

Just as he reaches the catwalk, the rifle stops firing.

Vaughn quickly programs more into the tricorder, and the rifle begins FIRING again. Then he grabs Nog's neuropulse device from his belt, and holds it out.

He looks out over the tanker, hoping for a direct shot at Taran'atar. But he is not there. Vaughn's eyes widen - he feels disaster coming. He SPINS around, holding the neuropulse weapon at eye level. Taran'atar is right behind him.

The Jem'Hadar instantly SWIPES the weapon aside, knocking it out of Vaughn's hand and smashing it to pieces against the metal of the storage tank. CRUNCH - Vaughn's hand breaks with it. He groan-screams with the pain.

Taran'atar PUNCHES Vaughn straight in the face, knocking the old human off his feet. He SLIPS on the oily metal and tumbles off the side of the catwalk. He lands on the level below with a CLANK, twisting his ankle as he lands.

Vaughn cries out in pain. Taran'atar glares down at him from the catwalk, then steps right off its edge and jumps lithely down to the lower level, SPLASHing into the shallow water right in front of Vaughn.

Vaughn tries to back away, hobbling on his twisted ankle. Taran'atar advances. Vaughn's back hits another wall. Nowhere to go. Taran'atar raises the phaser in his hand.

A PHASER SHOT fires from behind over Taran'atar's shoulder, hitting the wall over Vaughn's head. Taran'atar turns to face the newcomer - and Tenmei stands there, thoroughly pissed off and pointing Jaid's rifle at him.

TENMEI

Drop your weapon, and get the hell  
away from my father.

Vaughn is elated and terrified to see his daughter there. Tenmei is equally terrified to be facing down a Jem'Hadar, especially one who has already beaten her unconscious.

TENMEI

I said drop it - carefully. Toss  
it away.

Almost cavalierly, Taran'atar tosses the phaser in his hand away into the darkness, never taking his eyes off Tenmei.

TENMEI

Now the *dk'tahg*.

He reaches slowly to the Klingon dagger tucked into the belt of his jumpsuit, pulls it out delicately, and makes a show of dropping that too into the water.

That done, he folds his hands slowly behind his head, and begins to slowly lower himself to one knee. He closes his eyes and submissively bows his head.

VAUGHN

(panicked)

Shoot him, Tenmei! Shoot! That's an order!

TENMEI

But he's unarmed...

VAUGHN

Damn it, Tenmei - shoot!

In a blur of movement, Taran'atar LEAPS up from his crouch into the air, SHROUDING as he does. Realising too late what has happened, Tenmei begins firing wildly, desperately hoping to hit something.

Then a pair of boots land in the water right in front of Tenmei, UNSHROUDING to reveal Taran'atar again. He bats the phaser rifle out of her hand with ease, then SHOVES her hard in the chest, sending her crashing to the opposite wall. She lands with a gasp of shock and pain as the wind is knocked out of her. She crumples to the ground.

Taran'atar stands there, looking back and forth between Tenmei and Vaughn - both broken and beaten. Then a VOICE echoes out of hidden speakers around the room. Taran'atar does not seem surprised to hear it.

KIRA (comm)

Did you find the hypospray that I left for you?

TARAN'ATAR

I did.

KIRA (comm)

And the beacon?

Taran'atar reaches into a pocket of his jumpsuit, and pulls out a small device. It is a dimensional transporter unit, like O'Brien used in 3x19 "Through the Looking Glass."

TARAN'ATAR

I have it.

KIRA (comm)

Then it's time.

TARAN'ATAR

Obedience brings victory. And  
victory is life.

VAUGHN

(speaks up)

The captain's not dead.

Taran'atar pauses, looks at Vaughn, considers his words. But he turns back to the device, begins to press buttons. Vaughn keeps talking - anything to get Taran'atar to wait.

VAUGHN

I know it wasn't your fault. The  
Intendant made you do it. We can  
go back - make some kind of  
arrangement. It's not too late.

(no response)

You've had Prynn with you all this  
time, haven't you? And you  
hesitated up on the catwalk. You  
waited for me to turn around.  
Prynn and I are both unarmed.  
We're incapacitated. You could  
have killed us both at any time.  
But you didn't.

Taran'atar again seems to consider Vaughn's words.

TARAN'ATAR

You are not my enemy.

Then he presses the big red button on his device, and is overtaken by a complicated TRANSPORTER EFFECT that seems to twist inside and out before finally disappearing.

With Taran'atar gone, Tenmei pushes herself up against the wall, and crawl-limps over to her father.

TENMEI

Dad...

He reaches up to touch her, still amazed that she is even alive. They are both on the verge of tears.

VAUGHN

Prynn... We have to get out of here. Help me up.

She does, helping him stagger to his own unsteady feet. Leaning on each other, they begin to trudge through the water-logged room. But they look up as the voice echoes through the comm system again, full of venom and disdain.

KIRA (comm)

What a heart-warming reunion. I'm sure the two of you could go on and on. Unfortunately, my use for this base is about to come to an end - and so are you.

Lights around the dark room begin to FLASH RED - a clear warning. Loud, shrieking ALARMS sound and echo off the walls. A deep male VOICE begins to intone in a foreign (presumably Cardassian) language. We can't identify the words, but by the rhythm, it is clearly a countdown.

TENMEI

Who the hell puts a self-destruct in a prison?!

VAUGHN

The Obsidian Order. Run!

Still supporting each other, Tenmei and Vaughn try to move faster towards the exit, as alarms sound and the machinery around them begins to cycle louder and louder.

**60    INT. INTENDANT'S STATEROOM**

The fancy new transporter platform that has pride of place in the Intendant's lavish quarters hums and vibrates with power. The complicated TRANSPORTER EFFECT forms, twisting inside and out until Taran'atar stands on the platform.

Intendant Kira is there to greet him, a huge grin of success and satisfaction on her face. Taran'atar steps calmly off the platform and stands before her. The Intendant is so happy she can barely control herself.

INTENDANT KIRA

Taran'atar... in the flesh.  
Welcome to my universe. You've already been a better ally than I could have dared hope for. To finally stand here with you is an honour, and a pleasure long overdue.

TARAN'ATAR

Thank you. I, too, have looked forward to this meeting.

In an instant, his hand is around her throat. He LIFTS her several centimetres off the ground before she even realises what has happened. Shocked, scared, she flutters at his hand, but has no chance of loosening it.

He stares into her eyes, as hers flare with panic. She tries to reach for the alarm on her belt, but he grabs it and CRUSHES it before she can. He is cold and remorseless.

The transporter powers up again, and the complicated signal flares on the platform. Twisting inside and out, it reveals Kira - but not *our* Kira. A fourth version, who we will call NEW KIRA. This one is dressed in civilian Bajoran clothing.

New Kira steps gracefully off the platform, carrying a Klingon dagger. She looks smugly at the Intendant, struggling in Taran'atar's grip.

NEW KIRA

Put her down.

Taran'atar lowers the Intendant back onto her feet.

NEW KIRA

(to the Intendant)

Kneel.

The Intendant hesitates, so Taran'atar presses on her shoulders until she is forced to kneel. The Intendant looks up at the newcomer. She thinks this is the Kira she knows.

INTENDANT KIRA

My my - haven't you gotten fierce since we last met?

(re Taran'atar)

And more cunning, too. I won't underestimate his loyalty next time. I hate to admit it, but you played this well, Nerys. Bravo.

The New Kira sneers down at her - nothing but malevolence and contempt. Definitely not our Kira.

NEW KIRA

You have no idea who you're dealing with.

And like a flash, the New Kira lifts her dagger and SLASHES Intendant Kira's throat. The Intendant gapes in sheer shock as BLOOD pumps out of her neck and down her slinky black bodysuit. She would cry out, but she can't. She loses balance and slumps forward to the ground.

From her skewed perspective, as the darkness begins to creep over her vision, she hears...

NEW KIRA

Get rid of the body.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**61    INT. PRISON - LABORATORY**

Vaughn and Tenmei stagger-run through the room, between the stasis tubes filled with dismembered Jem'Hadar. The ALARMS shriek, the Cardassian VOICE drones, the red LIGHTS flash.

Vaughn is in pretty big pain, with his smashed hand and sprained ankle. But adrenaline is pushing him through.

**62    INT. PRISON - ELEVATOR**

Tenmei yanks the elevator's cage door open, guides Vaughn in first, then steps in herself and pulls the door closed. Vaughn stabs the button with his good hand. With a LURCH of dying machinery, the cage begins to rattle back upwards.

They look DOWN - the formerly pitch black bottom of the pit GLOWS an eerie red. They look UP - the docking platform seems miles above them, out of reach.

There is a loud EXPLOSION from far below. They look down - a red FIREBALL blooms, sending up pillars of dirty grey smoke. An even larger explosion rattles the entire prison, making the elevator groan. Tenmei clings onto Vaughn tight.

TENMEI

Why did you ask if he'd had me  
with him?

VAUGHN

He set a trap for us... he used  
you as bait... I thought he'd  
killed you.

(shakes head)

I thought... I'd killed you.

TENMEI

The comet.

VAUGHN

Yes.

Something falls down the tunnel of the pit and STRIKES the top of the elevator, making it ring like a bell. More EXPLOSIONS rumble from the depths of the prison. Vaughn taps his combadge, more out of hope than certainty.

VAUGHN  
Vaughn to Neeley.

NEELEY (comm)  
Neeley here, sir.

Vaughn and Tenmei both sigh with relief.

VAUGHN  
Neeley, the base's self-destruct  
is armed -

NEELEY (comm)  
We know. We're waiting for you.

VAUGHN  
Don't. You and Heins take the team  
and fall back. Get outside to safe  
ground. That's an order.

NEELEY (comm)  
What about Taran'atar?

VAUGHN  
He got away. Fall back now. Vaughn  
out.

Massive electric BOLTS leap across the chasm. They blow apart parts of the spiral walkway, but miss the elevator. They are followed by a staccato series of EXPLOSIONS.

Vaughn and Tenmei watch the levels go past as they rumble slowly upwards. Tongues of FLAME roll down the corridors to the central tunnel, ceilings fall and power conduits blow.

Tenmei looks back up to the docking level - it is getting closer. She tries to be encouraging.

TENMEI  
Almost there now.

Jinx. An EXPLOSION precedes one of the bridges to the docking platform buckling, splitting from the central part and swinging down... right towards them.

Tenmei pulls Vaughn down to the floor of the elevator. The huge slab of metal SLAMS into the cage, throwing Vaughn and Tenmei to the opposite side. The elevator WHINES to a halt.

Vaughn tries to see through the darkness, smoke, dust and flames. They have stopped halfway between levels.

VAUGHN

Help me force the doors.

They work together to open the gate - there is a metre's step up to the next level. More rumbles and explosions.

TENMEI

Can you boost me with one arm?

He wraps his good arm around her waist, and helps her jump up enough to pull herself up and struggle onto the surface. Once there, she reaches down to help Vaughn - the elevator LURCHES a few centimetres down, knocking Vaughn back.

TENMEI

Dad, come on! Now!

He gets back to his feet and grabs her arm - she YANKS him up as hard as she can. They collapse together onto the deck. The elevator breaks free and PLUMMETS into the dark.

**63    INT. PRISON - DOCKING AREA**

Tenmei leads Vaughn back up the small metal staircase. They turn towards the docking platform, in the middle, with the small Klingon ship still sitting on it. There is no sign of anyone else here, either Starfleet or mercenary.

VAUGHN

The ship...

They begin to cross one of the remaining bridges towards the ship. EXPLOSIONS go off around them - they duck the shrapnel and keep going. FLAMES lick the bottom of the platform, leaping all the way up the imploding tunnel.

A series of small, timed EXPLOSIONS go off all around the central platform, severing it from all the bridges. The platform and the ship on it both FALL into the flames.

Now disconnected, the bridge Tenmei and Vaughn are on SWINGS slowly down. Terrified, they turn and try to make their way back up it to safety around the edges. Tenmei is a few paces ahead of Vaughn, and reaches safety first.

There is another CREAK of metal, and the bridge angles down further. Vaughn flails for a hand-hold with his good arm, just barely making the last railing. His legs dangle down towards the fire. Desperately, Tenmei reaches out to him.

TENMEI

Dad! Climb!

VAUGHN

I've only got one arm, Prynn! I can't climb!

TENMEI

You can reach me!

VAUGHN

Dammit, I can't! Get out! Run!

TENMEI

No... please, take my hand...

Vaughn looks down into the flames only metres away. Then he looks back up, into Tenmei's eyes. He makes his decision.

VAUGHN

(gently)

Run, baby.

Then he deliberately LETS GO, free-falling into the abyss.

Tenmei's eyes flare, and instinctively, she dives after him. She grabs his arm with one hand, and tries to scabble for the railing with her other. She almost makes it.

Her hand slips. And then loses hold.

## **ANGLE**

Tenmei and Vaughn grip tight to each other as they plummet together into the fiery depths. But then a large dark SHAPE rises up through the flames to meet them. They impact it with a CRUNCH - it's metal, and it's rising.

## **ANGLE**

The shape rises out of the flames and back into the docking area. It is the Klingon ship, the *noH'pach*, with Vaughn and Tenmei riding on its back. They are broken and battered, but alive - not to mention confused.

Further EXPLOSIONS all around them. Pieces of the arching metal beams overhead break off and hit the ship on their way down, just avoiding Tenmei and Vaughn. They huddle together, clinging to life and each other.

Slowly, the ship turns and heads towards the dark tunnel that leads outside. As it crosses into the darkness inside, one massive EXPLOSION tears up the entire facility.

## **64 EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT**

The large mountain that hides the prison. Loud RUMBLES are muffled by the rock as the facility inside is destroyed. The holographic shield that covers the tunnel entrance is flickering, fritzing in and out.

The *noH'pach* zooms through the shield and out into the desert. Vaughn and Tenmei huddle together on its roof, clinging to each other fiercely. The shield dies, leaving the dark maw of the tunnel, with a hint of flames inside.

The *noH'pach* flies on steadily to a safe distance. As we hear one final earthquake finish off the prison, the small Klingon ship settles to the ground, kicking up the sand.

The engines shut down, leaving the whole scene oddly quiet. Peeling themselves apart, Tenmei and Vaughn look at each other. He strokes a loose strand of hair from her face.

TENMEI

Why did you let go?

VAUGHN

I had to make you... make you  
leave me and save yourself.

TENMEI

I wouldn't leave you, Dad... I'd  
never leave you.

Both of them are crying openly now. They cling together  
again, father and daughter, never wanting to let go.

A pneumatic HISS signals the Klingon ship opening. Curious,  
Vaughn and Tenmei turn to look, as a figure emerges from  
the hatch. It is the Cardassian Woman, limping and nursing  
her injuries, masked in blood, hair hanging over her face.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

Good, you're alive. I waited as  
long as I could for you. Almost  
too long.

VAUGHN

Then I guess we owe you thanks.  
Care to tell us who you are?

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

Listen to me. I failed my mission,  
and that means we're out of time.  
We have to warn Captain Kira Nerys  
that she's in mortal danger.

TENMEI

You're a bit late for that.

VAUGHN

Taran'atar already made an attempt  
on the captain's life. And we know  
he's working with Intendant Kira  
from the parallel universe.

The Cardassian Woman boils over with anger and frustration.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

You have no idea who you're  
dealing with!

VAUGHN

Then why don't you enlighten us?

65 **INT. INTENDANT'S STATEROOM**

The complex transporter signature flares on the platform, swallowing up the Intendant's dead body. When it is done, the body is gone. Taran'atar turns away from the panels, having done his job.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN (v.o.)

She's a renegade from the Obsidian Order. She's a deep-cover agent. An infiltrator, an assassin who knows thousands of ways to kill and torture and seduce you.

Taran'atar looks across the lavish chamber, to where the New Kira stands. The Vulcan handmaiden we have seen since 9x07 is helping zip up a new slinky black bodysuit. New Kira turns back to look at Taran'atar while the Vulcan's fingers place the Intendant's silver headdress on her head.

NEW KIRA

Thank you, L'Haan. Your rewards will be numerous and extravagant.

The handmaiden bows, and backs away to a polite distance.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN (v.o.)

Her handlers altered her surgically to look like Kira Nerys. But before the switch was made, something went wrong. The operation was betrayed from within. Kira escaped, and her lookalike vanished.

New Kira looks haughtily up at Taran'atar. He hates her. He would love to throttle her here and now, but he can't. His hands won't obey his wishes. He is under her control.

NEW KIRA

Your service has also been most impeccable, Taran'atar.

(raises voice)

Kira to bridge.

KURN (comm)

Kurn here, Intendant.

NEW KIRA

Set course for Regulon, General -  
maximum warp. It's time to rejoin  
the fleet... and then make good on  
my promises.

KURN (comm)

As you wish, Intendant. We depart  
at once.

In the large picture window, we see the stars jump to warp.

**66**    **EXT. HARKOUM - DESERT**

The Cardassian Woman stands by the *noH'pach*, cradling her  
wounds and explaining to a suspicious Vaughn and Tenmei.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

No-one knew if she'd been killed,  
or went mad, or was captured...  
no-one except the bastard who  
betrayed her.

(pause for breath)

His name was Gul Skrain Dukat...  
Her name is Iliana Ghemor.

VAUGHN

And you know all of this... how?

The Cardassian Woman takes a hand and sweeps the fallen  
hair out of her face, turns it up to them so they (and we)  
can clearly see her in the bright sun.

She looks like Kira, but as a Cardassian. Like Iliana  
Ghemor, from 3x05 "Second Skin." Yes, a fifth Kira. Sorry.

CARDASSIAN WOMAN

Because my name...

(beat)

...is also Iliana Ghemor.

67 **INT. INTENDANT'S STATEROOM**

New Kira - aka Iliana Ghemor - stands gazing out of the window at the stars warping away. Taran'atar and L'Haan the Vulcan handmaiden wait patiently for her to speak.

She brings up her hand - she is wearing the *pagh-varam*, the Orb fragment bracelet that she stole from Sidau, wrapped around her hand. She gazes into the stone, transfixed.

NEW KIRA

(excited)

We stand on the edge... we have  
the key to reality itself, and all  
we have to do is reach the door.

She seems to turn inside, her expression dark and haunted.

NEW KIRA

All those years in exile... all  
those years in the dark...

Then she changes again, a manic gleam coming into her eyes.

NEW KIRA

And now we have a battle fleet, an  
army at our command, and the  
multiverse at our fingertips.

(dreamy)

We have far to go and much to do.  
Reality is infinite...

(hateful)

...but it only has room for one  
Kira Nerys.

BLACK OUT:

**THE END**