

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x07 - "In Love and War."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

incorporating elements from

*Star Trek: Starfleet Academy:
Prime Directives*

by Chris Cooper

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. JANIR MONASTERY

Looking out through a stone archway, we see a perfect night sky, the first hints of a gorgeous sunrise peeking between the rolling hills. The newly arrived sunlight glints off the river that runs through the valley.

PULL BACK slowly, until we see that RAIQ sits alone by the archway, gazing out at this sight. She watches it quietly, contemplating as the sun gradually rises and the light slowly bleeds across the sky.

KIRA (o.s.)
You're up early.

Raiq turns, not startled, to see KIRA standing across the room, watching her watch the sky. Kira is quiet and gentle, careful not to intrude.

RAIQ
I find it difficult to sleep here.

KIRA
I know what you mean. I think it's just the time difference from the capital.

RAIQ
No... I mean without my vessel. My vessel cradled me as I rested. Soothed me. Your beds do not.

Raiq returns her attention to the sunrise. Kira takes a slow step forwards, trying to connect with her.

KIRA
It's beautiful, isn't it?

RAIQ
Is it? I'm not sure I would know how to judge such a thing.

Kira joins Raiq at the archway, sits gently beside her.

KIRA

You've never seen a sunrise before?

RAIQ

Why would I? My vessel was my home, Kira. It carried me from star to star, from world to world. I never stayed on any planet longer than I had to. There was no need.

KIRA

Don't you have a homeworld of your own to return to?

RAIQ

Our world is lost to time. Long before I was ever born. It no longer exists.

KIRA

It might, somewhere out there.

RAIQ

No. We are born on the Quest, and we die on it. Always searching the stars for signs of the Fortress. And the vessel with us always. We need no world.

KIRA

You have one now. It can be nice, sometimes, to just stop. Let the constant need to be on the move, to be doing something... just let it go. Take the time to see the world around you. Feel it. To watch the sun rise.

RAIQ

Why?

KIRA

It's nature, that's all. And it's beautiful.

RAIQ

How so? The light travels from your star, hits your atmosphere, diffuses into its components, warms the land. That is science, mere fact. How does aesthetics enter into it?

KIRA

You travel the stars. Don't you think they're beautiful?

RAIQ

They are powerful. Symbols of the True's strength, of the fire with which they burn. When we cleanse worlds of heresy, we use the stars to do so, in their name.

Raiq is casually discussing destroying entire planets like it's nothing. Kira has to force herself not to react.

RAIQ (cont)

But beauty... perhaps, in the sense that it affirms the glory and power of the True.

KIRA

I agree that the stars represent the light the Prophets bring to us. They are the light. They're how the light reaches us. But that's not all they are. They're also beautiful, just for their own sake. And I think you've got the right idea... to just sit here, and absorb that beauty. The pure sensory experience. Let it wash over you. For no other reason than just... because.

The two of them quietly watch the sunrise together.

The usual establishing shot, tight on Ops.

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

CANDLEWOOD sits at his science officer's station. There's work on his screens, and he's doing it, mostly. But he keeps glancing towards the captain's office.

Through the glass door, he can see VAUGHN, RO and BOWERS in tight conference over something. He has no idea what.

He looks over to NOG, who is working at his own engineering console. Extras man the other stations as needed.

CANDLEWOOD

Nog... could you come and have a look at something for me?

Nog gets up from his station and comes to Candlewood's.

NOG

What's the problem?

CANDLEWOOD

Nothing. I just wondered if you knew what was going on in there.

He nods towards the office, keeping it quiet. Nog turns and looks gives a quick glance too.

NOG

Nope. Maybe they're planning a party.

CANDLEWOOD

Promotions all round?

NOG

You got a promotion last month.

CANDLEWOOD

(faux offended)

Hey, I do good work! When I'm C-in-C of Starfleet, I'll make monthly promotions mandatory.

Nog shakes his head in wry amusement. Then they turn at the sound of the turbolift rising into Ops. It carries PRYNN, who joins them both at the science station.

NOG

Hey, Prynn. What brings you to Ops?

PRYNN

Ro called, said Vaughn wanted a meeting.

CANDLEWOOD

Did she say why?

PRYNN

Nope. All top secret.

They all wonder what on earth is going on. Then the door of the captain's office opens, and Vaughn leans out.

VAUGHN

Prynn, good, you're here. Come in.
Nog, Candlewood, you too.

That was a bit brusque. The three junior officers get up to enter the office, confused but curious.

4 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

Prynn, Nog and Candlewood enter and line up in front of the desk. Vaughn returns to behind the desk, tense and urgent. Ro and Bowers stand off to the side, also tense.

VAUGHN

Right. Let me start by saying that what I'm about to tell you is extremely classified, on pain of court martial. Understood?

NOG / PRYNN / CANDLEWOOD

(not quite together)

Aye, sir.

VAUGHN

Okay. Ro, tell them.

RO

There's a very sensitive mission,
and as our two lead tech guys, and
our senior pilot, you are the ones
to handle it. We need a mystery
solved.

PRYNN

(intrigued)

What kind of mystery?

VAUGHN

(grave)

The kind that's called... an
Ascendant ship.

The three junior officers begin to realise why the other
three were so tense and secretive. This is a big deal.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

Picking up where we left off. Vaughn has dropped his bomb, and the three junior officers are reacting...

NOG

Captain... how did you...

RO

It's Axno's ship. The other 'last Ascendant.'

PRYNN

Of course... After she tried to go into the wormhole, Sisko and Kira and I brought her back here.

RO

And left her ship in one of the runabout docking bays.

VAUGHN

I had it moved the moment I got back. It's been under top secret protection since then.

NOG

Where?

BOWERS

Empok Nor, in orbit of Cajara.

VAUGHN

The place is dead. Ignored by everyone unless I give you leave to use it for spare parts. Which you will notice I have not done.

RO

Perfect hiding place. The three of us are the only ones who know Axno's ship even still exists.

VAUGHN

And now the three of you.

PRYNN

But captain... Major Cenn was in charge of the station during all that. Surely he would notice.

VAUGHN

No. As far as any member of the Bajoran Militia knows - as far as anyone outside of this room knows - the ship was destroyed. Exploded in sympathy when Axno immolated herself.

CANDLEWOOD

But sir, the Bajorans...

VAUGHN

Lieutenants, this is a top level military secret. The knowledge that Starfleet possesses Ascendant technology would cause panic on Bajor. They would see it as a threat - correctly so. And Raiq, the actual last Ascendant, would see it as an opportunity. As her chance to do what she was born to do, and destroy the Bajorans. So this information must not get out. That is a direct order from me to you. Nod now if you understand me.

Vaughn is clearly not screwing around here. The three junior officers nervously nod their understanding.

VAUGHN

Good. Now, as vital as it is that we keep this secret, it is also vital that we crack its secrets. I want to know everything about that ship. What powers it. How its weapons work. What propulsion it

uses. Life support, repairs,
communications. Everything.

NOG

Yes, sir.

RO

Nog, Prynn - you two spent a lot
of time on the *Even Odds*. You
studied the Wa. That should give
you a good place to start. John,
you crack its computer systems.
It's organic technology, we don't
know anything about it. So you'll
have your work cut out for you.

CANDLEWOOD

Understood.

VAUGHN

Mister Bowers will escort you to
Empok Nor, where you will do your
work. I myself will be going to
the Gamma Quadrant to visit the
Eav'oq homeworld.

PRYNN

(quiet smile)

Among other things.

Vaughn gives her an indulgent look - he knows she knows.

RO

I'll stay in command here, and run
interference with Cenn.

VAUGHN

And I am emphasising yet again,
Lieutenants, the importance of
secrecy. This is between us in
this room, and no-one else.

CANDLEWOOD

(grin)

As the dabo girl said to the
vedek.

The room goes quiet. Everyone turns to look at Candlewood. Vaughn's glare could kill a person on the spot.

CANDLEWOOD

Excuse me a moment, captain.

Candlewood walks over to the far wall of the office, where there's a weapons locker on the wall. He opens the locker, pulls out a phaser, aims it at the floor by his feet, and FIRES, carving a circle around himself in the decking.

That done, the circle falls away into the space below, and Candlewood plummets through the hole, disappearing. He has literally fallen through a hole in the ground.

FLASH

Candlewood remains where he was, blushing furiously under the disapproving stare of the other officers. Prynn just closes her eyes, shakes her head silently.

Vaughn drags his angry glare back to the subject at hand.

VAUGHN

Gather whatever materials you think you will need and meet Mister Bowers at the Nile at eleven-hundred hours. I will expect your reports upon my return. Dismissed.

Candlewood, Nog and Prynn turn and leave the office. Ro, Bowers and Vaughn remain.

Vaughn gives Ro a look as if to say, "Really? This guy?"

7 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Close on one runabout pad. The pad rises up, locks into place with a solid *kerthunk*. The small ship lifts off, clears the station and turns towards the WORMHOLE. The big blue flower opens up, the ship dives in, and the wormhole swallows it whole.

Meanwhile a second runabout also launches from another pad, rises up, clears the station, and turns to head deeper into the Bajoran system. Following this one...

8 **INT. RUNABOUT - REAR CABIN**

Prynn, Nog and Candlewood all stand around the table, boxes and crates of equipment in front of them. They check device after device, confirming they're ready for whatever.

CANDLEWOOD

(defensive)

I'm the funny guy. I make jokes.
It's what I do. Especially when
I'm nervous.

PRYNN

Yeah, but... you need to learn to
read the room.

CANDLEWOOD

You'd just made a joke yourself.
"Among other things," you said.
"Suggestive eyebrow wiggle."

PRYNN

He's my father. I can get away
with it. A guy who's been in the
job a month probably can't.

NOG

Yeah, I didn't actually get that,
Prynn. What did you mean?

PRYNN

Just that he said he's going to
see the Eav'oq. What he's really
doing is going to see Opaka.

(beat)

What, you hadn't noticed they like
each other?

CANDLEWOOD

Even I noticed that.

NOG

Great. A hundred-and-five-year-old
has more romance than I do.

CANDLEWOOD

You'll find the right girl one
day.

PRYNN

Or boy.

Then things go quiet for a moment as they prepare.

CANDLEWOOD

Do you think he's gonna fire me?
Demote me back down to ensign?

PRYNN

Not for making an inappropriate
joke. He's not that vindictive.

NOG

But it might be a good idea to
prove how valuable you are by
solving this mystery ship.

CANDLEWOOD

Alright, then. On that subject,
what do we know? You two spent
more time on the *Even Odds* than I
did. By the time I got there, the
Wa was already dead.

PRYNN

But you have all Shar's records.
He's the one who figured out the
Wa was Ascendant tech at all. And
he translated the language.

NOG

The Wa was just a formless blob of
nothingness. This is a ship,
focused and dedicated. It's not
gonna be exactly the same.

PRYNN

But it's a place to start.

BOWERS (comm)
We're approaching Bajor Seven,
Lieutenants.

They close all their boxes, lock them down, and then turn to exit the rear cabin, towards the cockpit.

9 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

The three junior officers approach the forward viewport, where Bowers is piloting. Out of the window Empok Nor looms - completely dead, a dark and gutted shell of a station. Behind it is the gas giant of Bajor Seven, aka Cajara.

NOG
I've said it before and I'll say
it again. I hate this place.

PRYNN
I think it's beautiful.

NOG
Yeah, I guess. Except not. So
where is this super-secret ship?

BOWERS
Sealed in a runabout bay. We're
pretty sure it's powered down, but
given that we have no idea how its
power works, it may not stay that
way. So the captain doesn't want
to use transporters, or anything
that might set it off. I'll dock
in another bay and you'll go in on
foot.

Bowers is being terse and formal, following Vaughn's lead. The others pick up the vibe.

PRYNN
(re Bowers)
Still feels weird somebody else
being in that pilot seat.

CANDLEWOOD

Well, you have a whole new ship to learn how to fly now.

Prynn nods along. The empty station grows closer...

NOG

Anybody else feel like it's watching us?

10 EXT. EMPOK NOR

The runabout settles onto one dead docking pad. As it does, the lights around the pad begin to light up, presumably at a signal from Bowers.

Once the pad is powered up, it lowers into the station, taking the runabout with it. Once it's down, the hole covers up again, and the power all dies out. Everything is back how it was.

11 INT. EMPOK NOR - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Totally dark, lit only by the lights on three Starfleet environment suits. Candlewood, Nog and Prynn clomp heavily down the corridor in the suits, each out of breath and lugging their heavy boxes of equipment by hand.

PRYNN

I never realised how far it is from one runabout pad to the next when you don't have turbolifts.

NOG

I know! This is one time I can genuinely say I wish there was a Jem'Hadar here - they're a lot better at carrying.

CANDLEWOOD

Or a Klingon.

PRYNN

Vulcans are pretty strong too.

CANDLEWOOD

Basically anyone but a Ferengi.

NOG
Shut up!

Further down the corridor, they finally reach the right door. They stop by it, drop their boxes. Nog crouches down and pulls out a large and bulky device - a portable power unit. He opens a panel by the docking bay door, connects various cables into the power unit, presses buttons. We hear the surge of power coming to life in the room beyond.

12 INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY

Across the bay, where they're used to seeing a runabout, is instead Axno's damaged Ascendant ship. Sharp and silver, but looking dull and lifeless. No less dangerous for it.

The door opens, and three spacesuit-clad figures enter. Power hums to life around the room, lights come on, and air rushes from the recyclers. The surface of the ship RIPPLES, a shiver of movement from the tip flowing back to the rear.

As the door seals behind them, Candlewood checks his instruments...

CANDLEWOOD
We can take off the suits.

NOG
(gasp)
Did you see that?

CANDLEWOOD
See what?

NOG
I thought I saw the ship move.

PRYNN
It's completely dead, Nog.

Nog isn't convinced. Prynn walks closer, eager to begin...

PRYNN
So... Any ideas how to get in it?

Nog continues to watch the ship from afar, wary...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY

Now out of her enviro-suit and back in a normal uniform, Prynn teeters at the top of an auto-replicated ladder, reaching around the edges of the Ascendant ship's transparent canopy. She's having no luck.

Nog stands at the rear of the craft, where there are no obvious warp nacelles, no exhausts, no visible engines of any kind. Nog sighs with disappointment. Candlewood is on the deck, tricorder out, scanning the hull of the ship.

CANDLEWOOD

You know how your hair and your fingernails are made from the same material, but look and act different? I think that's what this is. My guess would be the hull stays in this featureless, neutral form until it explicitly needs to become something else.

NOG

Like an engine.

CANDLEWOOD

Or a weapon.

NOG

So if we need to tell it to be something before it will be it, how do we tell it what we want?

Prynn is reaching around the edges of the transparent canopy. She steps back, throws her arms wide...

PRYNN

Open sesame!

Nothing happens. She shrugs.

PRYNN

Worth a shot.

14 **EXT. JANIR MONASTERY**

The small monastery sits in its valley, by the winding river. Warm and bucolic.

15 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY**

A basic canteen area, not very fancy because this only a small monastery. Kira and Raiq are both in line, waiting for the cook to slop some food onto their plates.

KIRA

So, what do you want to do today?
Maybe take a walk outside...? I
haven't seen much of Janir myself,
so it'd be interesting for me too.

Raiq sighs, takes her food and goes to a table. Kira gets her own food and follows, sits down with her, tries again.

KIRA

Or we could just look around the
archives here in the monastery.

RAIQ

I am not some task you must
complete, Kira. Your constant
attempts to force me to accept
your culture are maddening.

KIRA

That's why I asked you what you
wanted to do.

RAIQ

I do not want to do anything. I do
not want to be here.

Kira throws down her cutlery with an annoyed clang.

KIRA

Alright, I've had enough of this.
All I've been trying to do since I
first brought you to Bajor is try

to find something in common. But you've been making it as hard as you can for me to do that.

RAIQ
(derisive)

Why should I engage with you?

KIRA
Because I'm all you've got! And because I deserve it. I've fed you, I've looked after you, kept you safe. For weeks!

RAIQ
You exterminated my race, woman. I have no-one else because of you. And you expect me to be grateful? You are lucky I have not throttled you in your sleep a hundred times over! That is what you deserve!

KIRA
I had to stop you! You gave us no choice. It was either you or us, you made sure of that.

RAIQ
And you have made sure to remind me that it was "all my fault" at every turn. Always telling me I am alone, you are my only hope. All to keep me on your leash.

KIRA
Would you rather I'd let you die? Would you rather we go back to killing each other? Would that make you happy?

As the angry words come out, Kira hears them for herself. And she laughs. Raiq is confused.

KIRA
You know, you're a lot like me. In fact, you are me, ten years ago.

RAIQ

(sigh)

What are you talking about now?

KIRA

I grew up fighting Cardassians. First twenty-five years of my life, that was all I knew. So when they finally left, I didn't know what to do with myself. I just kept fighting, battling everybody I met, whether they deserved it or not. Because I didn't know any other way to be.

RAIQ

And you believe that is true of me also.

KIRA

(simply)

Yes. The world has changed, Raiq. So many times, it's hard to keep track. You have to change with it. Life gives you no other choice.

Raiq goes quiet, and returns to her food. Kira lets her.

RAIQ

You are thirty-five cycles old?

KIRA

Thirty-six actually. Why?

RAIQ

How long do you expect to live?

KIRA

Barring illness and accidents, Bajorans live to over a hundred.

RAIQ

I am over a hundred now. And not half way through my time.

KIRA
(nods, impressed)
Looks good on you.

Aesthetics again. Raiq just frowns and eats her food.

16 **EXT. EMPOK NOR**

Re-establishing...

17 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

The runabout is sat quietly in the docking bay, blackness and cold metal outside the window. Lt Bowers sits in the chair, reading a padd, occupying himself while he waits.

18 **INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY**

In the other bay, Prynn remains at the top of the ladder, feeling around the edges of the ship's transparent canopy. There's nothing to get her fingers into. She looks down to Candlewood, who sits on a crate, concentrating hard on his tricorder screen.

PRYNN
Anytime you feel like helping,
John...

CANDLEWOOD
I'm not watching the springball
finals down here. You said Cenn
was in charge when you brought the
ship in. If he had any sense, he
would have turned the security
sensors on, right? So maybe those
sensors recorded the exact signal
Axno used to open the door.

NOG
Ooh, I like it. Sync me up.

Nog trots around from other side of the ship and pulls out his own tricorder. He and Candlewood tap and tap and tap as the tricorders beep. Prynn waits, feeling useless.

NOG

So how long has this been going on? Vaughn and Opaka.

PRYNN

Nothing's going on, really. They like each other, but nothing's actually happened.

NOG

Ah, nothing happened. That sounds familiar.

CANDLEWOOD

Nog, have you ever actually had a date? Ever?

NOG

Once. Eight years ago. It ended when I asked her to chew my food.

PRYNN

You did what?

NOG

That's what Ferengi women did. So I expected her to do it too. Didn't take me long to realise most women don't like that.

PRYNN

But you went to the academy. Surely you dated at the academy.

NOG

The academy? My freshman roommate was an Andorian *shen*, Pava something. She heard she was getting the first Ferengi in Starfleet as her roommate. So to seem friendly and welcoming, she did what she thought Ferengi wanted females to do... and opened the door naked.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh Nog... you didn't.

NOG

By the time I got out of the hospital, the story was all over campus. My dating opportunities dried up fast. So I concentrated on training and studying. Who wants to date a Ferengi anyway? We're ugly and we hate women.

CANDLEWOOD

You're neither of those, Nog.

Nog looks awkwardly askance at Candlewood, but then the tricorder beeps and saves them.

NOG

Okay, let's see what this does. Prynn, you might wanna get out of the way.

Prynn clammers down to the deck. Once she's clear, Nog aims his tricorder, and presses the button. Nothing happens. Nog sighs. He presses a few more buttons, tries again. It doesn't seem to have much effect.

Candlewood presses more buttons and then gives it a go. With a smooth but squelchy sound, the canopy sluggishly retracts back into body of the ship, leaving the ship open to be entered. Candlewood whoops with victory.

NOG

Don't do the dance.

CANDLEWOOD

Spoilsport.

Prynn is first back up the ladder, eager to explore.

19 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

The ship is about the size of a standard Starfleet shuttle interior. One seat, centrally placed towards the front, a smooth organic shape like it grew out of the deck. A semi-circular panel surrounds the seat, but with no individual

controls visible on it. The bulkheads sweep back smoothly, all one continuous surface, to a flattened back wall.

Prynn clammers over the edge and jumps the short distance to the deck. Nog and Candlewood follow, carrying their equipment bags. They look around. The thing looks dead - sagging walls, limp surfaces and grey lifeless colour.

PRYNN

There's no coloured patches. How do you tell what's what?

CANDLEWOOD

What isn't what, at least not until I tell it to be. It's some kind of bio-electricity. I think it's something the pilot actually generates herself. Or himself.

NOG

Okay, electric. That makes sense. We've seen their weapons - they're a basic electrical charge, just pumped up to a ridiculous degree.

PRYNN

So it's the ship's own nervous system? Like an electric eel?

CANDLEWOOD

And it connects to the pilot's nervous system, by way of these signals.

PRYNN

So the thing's never going to respond to us, not unless we can crack the code of those signals.

NOG

And convince it we are Ascendants.

Frustrated, Prynn plonks down into the pilot's seat.

PRYNN

I refuse to believe we're at a dead end already. I say we try the old-fashioned approach - pressing buttons.

She leans forward to touch the curved panel in front of her. She presses her hand against the surface... and the hand sinks in, like pressing on a sofa cushion. She pulls back and tries another area - the same response.

She pushes harder and her hand sinks in deeper, the surface breaking over her fingers like blancmange. She grimaces and tries to pull back... but her hand won't come free.

She yanks harder. But it's grabbed her fast. Nog and Candlewood grab tricorders and start scanning.

PRYNN

Uhh... guys?

CANDLEWOOD

At least it responded to you.

PRYNN

Great. Now get it off me.

Instead, the silver-grey surface sucks Prynn's hand down deeper. Now she's in it up to her wrist.

PRYNN

(near panic)

Guys, help me!

The panel shoots a small limb of material further up her arm, a dull grey version of when the Wa started reacting. It reaches half way to her elbow... and then starts climbing. Weak electricity crackles over the surface.

Nog grabs Prynn and starts to pull. Candlewood is working feverishly on his tricorder. But at this one point, the ship is coming to life. The grey material creeps up Prynn's arm, over the uniform, at the elbow now...

PRYNN

Get it off me!

On Prynn's panicking face...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

20 INT. ASCENDANT SHIP

The panel is growing, Prynn is panicking, Nog is yanking... but Candlewood is calculating. Full concentration on his tricorder as he taps away at crazy speed.

NOG
John, help us!

CANDLEWOOD
I am helping...

The yanking isn't working, so Nog runs to his bag, grabs a phaser out of it and prepares to fire at the panel...

CANDLEWOOD
Nog, don't! I've got it...

Candlewood points his tricorder at the panel like it's his own phaser, presses the button...

...and the panel retracts, letting Prynn go and returning to its dormant state. Prynn and Nog sigh with relief.

PRYNN
What did you do?

CANDLEWOOD
Recorded the bio-electric pattern from the panel, then reversed it and sent it back. Stab in the dark, but it seemed to work.

They turn to Prynn, but find her already half clambering out of the ship, back onto the ladder.

NOG
What are you doing?

PRYNN
What does it look like?

She's gone, no looking back.

21 INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY

Nog and Candlewood also emerge from the ship, where they see Prynn with her back turned, rummaging in the cases they brought. Clambering down the ladder, they approach gently.

CANDLEWOOD

Prynn? You okay?

PRYNN

Fine.

Nog and Candlewood silently agree that they'll go with her on this, for now, while she recovers from the scare.

NOG

Okay, let's keep going. John, why did you tell me not to fire?

CANDLEWOOD

Because I'm starting to figure this out. Why did the panel react to Prynn's hand, but the rest of the ship completely ignored three entire people?

NOG

Something about skin contact? Body heat, maybe?

CANDLEWOOD

Exactly. The ship absorbed energy from Prynn. That's what woke it up. It has receptors, all over the interior. Like our skin, with its specialised nerve cells for detecting heat or motion.

NOG

So firing a phaser at it would have only given it more energy.

CANDLEWOOD

Yup.

PRYNN

John... thank you.

CANDLEWOOD

This does, however, leave us on the horns of a dilemma. How do we figure out how the ship works without touching the damn thing or giving it any kind of energy?

NOG

Energy-dampening force field?

PRYNN

Can't hurt.

CANDLEWOOD

Let's do it!

The three officers return to their equipment boxes. Under the following dialogue, they set up three portable force field transmitters in a triangle around the ship - one at the pointed bow, two at the wider stern. They compare readings, check settings, futz with equipment. Meanwhile:

PRYNN

While we're on the subject of failed romances, what happened with you and Hetik, John? I know you dated. But then I didn't see you together anymore. Spill it.

CANDLEWOOD

Yes, we dated. But we broke up.

PRYNN

Why? Did he dump you?

CANDLEWOOD

(piqued)

No. It just wasn't going anywhere, alright? I wasn't feeling it.

PRYNN

Mmm-hmm. That's why for those few months, you floated around DS-Nine two feet above the deck. That's why there's still a picture of the two of you in your quarters.

CANDLEWOOD

It was nice. He's a nice guy.

PRYNN

Plus, of course, it doesn't hurt that he's outrageously hot.

CANDLEWOOD

(laughing)

Oh my god! So hot, I wanted to get down on my knees and shout "Thank you, Jesus!" And I'm Jewish!

Prynn laughs with him. Nog doesn't laugh. The force field emitters are set up now. They all switch them on and stand back as the machines generate a field surrounding the ship.

PRYNN

The phasers thing is making sense to me now. Whenever we were in battle with an Ascendant ship, standard phasers had no effect.

NOG

Because it fed off them. But extra-power phasers worked...

CANDLEWOOD

...because they overloaded the ship's nervous system.

NOG

Can we identify any more of these bio-signals? If you interface with all the records of Ascendant encounters. Starfleet, Bajoran... even the Dominion.

CANDLEWOOD

I could work faster if we boot up
the station's main computer.

NOG

No, Vaughn would never allow it.
Network the three tricorders
together, that'll have to do.

They gather together, start pressing buttons again.

CANDLEWOOD

Have you really never had a
girlfriend, Nog? At all? Not even
anybody you wanted to?

NOG

One. But it can never happen.

PRYNN

Why not?

NOG

Because she's on the other side of
the galaxy. She's probably about a
thousand times older than me but
looks like a teenage girl. And
because she's alien royalty from
an empire we're expressly
forbidden from ever contacting.

PRYNN

Meera?! You liked Meera?!

CANDLEWOOD

Who... the changeling girl? Well
no wonder, then. Maybe go for
someone a little closer to home.

Nog becomes awkward again. He puts his tricorder on the
deck, lets it work on its own. Prynn pulls out some ration
packs from the boxes, and they sit on the deck to eat them.

NOG

Look... John... I appreciate it.
But I'm interested in women.

CANDLEWOOD

(wtf?)

I know. That's not what I meant.

NOG

It's alright. Prynn told me years ago that you had a crush on me.

CANDLEWOOD

She what?!

NOG

She said that was the reason you were always playing jokes on me.

Candlewood jumps up again, flailing in horror.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh my God! Prynn?! Why the hell would you tell him that?

PRYNN

It was a joke! I didn't mean it!

CANDLEWOOD

You don't joke about that kind of thing, Prynn! Even I don't joke about that kind of thing! You can't go around telling people I've got a crush on my boss!

PRYNN

(playful)

Why... Do you have a crush on him?

CANDLEWOOD

Stop saying that! Have you been thinking I fancy you all this time? Oh dear Lord.

NOG

John, it's fine. I wasn't mad. I was glad somebody was interested.

PRYNN

It's a simple question, John. Do you fancy Nog, or not?

CANDLEWOOD
(embarrassed squeak)
No... I don't.

PRYNN
Then what's the problem?

CANDLEWOOD
Because that's even worse! Telling my boss I don't fancy him is worse than telling him I do! I might as well say, "Hey Nog - you're ugly!"

NOG
Told you.

CANDLEWOOD
See?! Oh God this is a disaster.

PRYNN
(laughing)
John, calm down! I formally apologise for ever suggesting you might be attracted to Nog. I grovel for your forgiveness.

CANDLEWOOD
(sits down, pouts)
Too late. It's done, it's ruined.
(beat)
Actually, that's interesting. I never thought to ask how Ferengi handle same-sex relationships.

PRYNN
Considering how they handled women until five years ago, my hopes aren't high.

NOG
Thanks for the confidence. Look - what's Rule of Acquisition number one-hundred-twelve?

CANDLEWOOD

No idea.

PRYNN

Oh, wait! I know this one. "Never have sex with the boss's sister!"

NOG

And what's one-hundred-thirteen?

CANDLEWOOD

No idea.

NOG

"Always have sex with the boss."
And since, up until five years ago, all the bosses and all the employees were males...

PRYNN

But that's just metaphorical, surely...

NOG

Mostly. But it's not unheard of for some businessmen to take it a bit more literally.

PRYNN

Anything to get ahead, I guess.

Candlewood chokes on his drink. Nog and Prynn laugh. But then Nog turns sharply, looking at the ship.

NOG

There! I heard something again.

PRYNN

I think you're imagining it.

NOG

I'm not. Something moved. The ship moved.

He gets up, begins to stalk around the ship, peering at it through the force field.

Then, just as it did at the beginning, the ship SHIVERS. A ripple passes the length of it, nose to stern. Pryn timer and Candlewood jump to their feet in horror, food forgotten.

PRYNN

What the hell?

CANDLEWOOD

But it's got no power!

The ripple continues, seeming to "freshen up" the ship's surface. Nog rushes to one of the force field generators.

NOG

The force field's still working.

Where is it getting power from?

The ship is slowly but undeniably powering up. Bulkheads strengthening, points sharpening, silver brightening. Candlewood has his tricorder out.

PRYNN

John, make it stop!

CANDLEWOOD

I'm trying!

The power builds and builds... and then the tip of the nose begins to glow red. Growing brighter and brighter...

NOG

Move!

Nog, Pryn timer and Candlewood run out of the ship's way...

...and then it FIRES. The jagged bolt of white electricity is comparatively weak, but still enough to blast the force field apart and SLAM into the opposite bulkhead.

It's a weak hole at first. Nog sees that with relief. But then the dissolving effect begins. Cracks spread, metal crumbles, the wall is going to go.

And with a huge CRUNCH of rending metal, the wall crumbles, leading through into some dead, empty part of the station. The air in the runabout bay begins to SCREAM into the hole, dragging equipment and junior officers with it.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

22 INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY

Where we left it - the three officers are fighting against the pull of the air as it rushes out of the room.

23 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

In the runabout, Bowers reacts as alarms begin to go off all over in response to the explosion.

24 INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY

BOWERS (comm)

Nile to Nog. What the hell is going on? I'm reading weapons!

NOG

Not the time, Lieutenant! I'll report later! Nog out!

(taps combadge)

John, turn the damn thing off!

CANDLEWOOD

(on tricorder)

I don't understand, it shouldn't have had the power...

The weapon stops firing, spluttering back to nothing.

Nog grabs a sheet of plasteel and a sci-fi nail gun out of a box, rushes to the damaged wall, almost pulled off his feet on the way. He SLAMS into the wall with the force of the wind. Once there, he struggles to place the sheet over the hole, then shoots bolts through it to hold it on.

The sheet in place, the scream of air stops. The machines drop back to the deck with a clang. All three GASP and pant with the adrenaline and the now-thinner air.

Beside them, the ship THROBS and THRUMS, struggling to maintain power. Like a car turning over, or an animal trying to rouse itself from sleep.

A few more taps on his tricorder, and then Candlewood looks up at the others, out of breath and looking appalled.

CANDLEWOOD

It was the force field.

NOG

The force field was working fine.

CANDLEWOOD

Yeah, it was... and giving the ship all the energy it wanted.

PRYNN

It feeds from the outside too?

CANDLEWOOD

Yep... the same receptors are all over the outer hull. For absorbing interstellar hydrogen, maybe? It's taking energy from everything. The moment we got here and turned on the lights... we started giving it everything it needed to come back to life.

NOG

(into action)

Turn it off! All of it! Prynn, pull the power pack. John, turn off the generators. Move!

Prynn runs back to the door, towards the portable power generator. Candlewood and Nog move quickly around all their other equipment, powering it all down.

All around, the lights are going down. The room sinks into darkness, the hum of machines dying out. Soon the only light in the room is the glow of the Ascendant ship itself. And even that is now dying out as the power bleeds away.

CANDLEWOOD

Now what?

From the increasing gloom of the runabout bay...

25 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY**

...to the bright flames of Raiq's makeshift brazier. She is silently praying. Kira approaches tentatively.

KIRA

I'm sorry for what I said earlier.
I only meant that you could rely
on me... but I can see how it
wouldn't sound that way to you.

(no response)

Seems like we're always talking at
cross purposes. I just want to get
to know you, Raiq. Can't you
just... talk to me?

RAIQ

Why? What do you care?

KIRA

Iliana asked me to look after you.

RAIQ

So it is obligation.

KIRA

Partly. But like I said before, I
like to listen to other
perspectives. Gives me a wider
picture. Let's start from the
beginning. Do you have any family?

RAIQ

What do you mean?

KIRA

Well, I heard you call Axno your
"sister." But I took that to be
more metaphorical than literal.

RAIQ

Axno was not my blood. All the Knights call each other brother and sister. It speaks of our bond in purpose to the True.

KIRA

So, do you have an actual sister, in blood as well as purpose?

RAIQ

How would I know?

KIRA

Why wouldn't you know? Didn't you grow up with your parents?

RAIQ

Grow up...?

(translates)

Ah - no, we do not mature in the company of our sires. The Knights gather at the Hearth, once every century, to make arrangements for the next generation of Knights.

KIRA

So you don't have families. You don't get married, fall in love.

RAIQ

How would that serve the True?

KIRA

How would it...?

(sigh, regroup)

So how did you grow up, if not with your 'sires'?

RAIQ

When young are born, they are placed into an available vessel and left to bond with it. Nurses oversee them as the armour grows. But the vessel is our only guide. Our cradle. Our partner. Our home.

KIRA

So each vessel bonds uniquely to its owner. It teaches them about your doctrine?

RAIQ

Correct. Each vessel is centuries old. As one Knight joins the True, her vessel passes to the next generation, and the Quest resumes.

KIRA

Alright, this is making sense now. This is how the Wa always adapted to any changes to the *Even Odds* - it's used to taking on new owners every couple of hundred years.

Raiq looks curiously at Kira, then looks away disappointed.

RAIQ

Ah, now I see. You sought tactical information. That was your true purpose, not "getting to know me."

KIRA

No! I'm sorry. I guess it's just the soldier in me. Hard habit to break. But I'm not pumping you for information, I promise. I'm just curious. Please, carry on.

Raiq is not convinced, but doesn't argue any further.

RAIQ

What of you, Kira? Where is your blood?

KIRA

All killed by the Cardassians. Mother, father, both brothers... all gone.

RAIQ

And you have no young?

KIRA

I carried somebody else's baby for a while once, but not my own, no. You said you're over a hundred - have you had any children?

RAIQ

When we gathered at the Hearth a cycle ago, it was my time to mate. But then the Fire came to us.

KIRA

You mean Iliana.

RAIQ

(nods)

In doctrine, the coming of the Fire heralds the final days. If the Ascension was at hand...

KIRA

...then there was no need to have a baby. And now...

RAIQ

...there are none left with whom to mate. I am truly the last of us. When I finally enter the Fortress... the Ascendant race will be gone.

Raiq gazes into the flames sadly. Kira sympathises...

26 **EXT. EMPOK NOR**

Re-establishing the deserted, powerless twin of DS9. With no lower power core, it is completely dead, an empty hulk of metal in orbit of the gas giant.

27 **INT. EMPOK NOR - RUNABOUT BAY**

In the darkness of the powerless shuttle bay, Nog helps Prynn to fasten her environment suit helmet into place. As the air supply flows, she breathes deeply, relieved.

PRYNN

That's better.

CANDLEWOOD

Is it? Everything we try, that
thing feeds off it.

Nog looks up at the ship, looming dark and ominous across
the room. He's frustrated, stuck for an answer.

Then he notices something. He reaches up to press a switch
- the lights inside his helmet go off.

PRYNN

What are you doing?

NOG

Turn your lights off.

Not knowing why, they do as they're told. The room sinks
into even more total darkness than it already was.

CANDLEWOOD

I say again... now what?

NOG

Don't you see that?

In the darkness, they now see a gentle glow coming from the
silhouetted shape of the ship. It's lit from inside.

PRYNN

(w/ horror)

It's still alive.

NOG

Something's working in there,
that's for sure. But what?

PRYNN

Only one way to find out.

Determined, Prynn marches back to the ship. Candlewood and
Nog watch her go, surprised. But they follow her.

At the foot of the ship, Prynn reactivates the replicator,
which recreates the ladder. She begins to climb.

CANDLEWOOD

But what about the power?

PRYNN

I don't think it matters anymore.
It's repairing itself already,
healing itself. The horse has
already bolted.

She struggles her heavy boots up the ladder. Eventually,
she disappears through the opening and into the ship.
Hearing no screams, Nog and Candlewood follow.

28 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

They enter to find Prynn standing in the cramped vessel,
looking at the panel she touched earlier. On the otherwise
featureless console, a coloured patch is just managing to
coalesce and hold its half-hearted shape.

The others join her, staring forlornly at the panel.

CANDLEWOOD

Orange. Orange means...

PRYNN

Communications.

NOG

There's a message?

PRYNN

I guess so. John, bring up Shar's
translation program. I'm going to
need it.

As Candlewood works the tricorder built into the arm of his
suit, Prynn reaches to her right wrist with her left hand,
presses controls, and disconnects the right glove.

Placing the glove aside, Prynn reaches towards the coloured
patch with her bare hand. They watch her, worried for her,
all on edge, awaiting disaster.

Finally, the fingers swim into the colour patch. An orange hue spreads dimly across the panel, not reaching the rest of the ship because it's not strong enough yet.

Then the VOICE comes. Not the swirling mass of voices heard on the *Even Odds*, but just one single, gently whispering voice. A male, tired and lonely, speaking across millions of light years, not knowing if anyone can hear him.

VOICE

Hear me, brothers and sisters. If you are there, hear my words. I am here, I received your call.

29 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY**

Kneeling by her flaming brazier, Raiq presses a hand to her chest, as if feeling something deep inside. Indigestion? She frowns, confused. Sat opposite her, Kira is worried.

KIRA

Are you alright?

Raiq doesn't answer. She just feels... something.

30 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

In the runabout, Bowers sees one curious little tell-tale light flashing on his console. He wonders what it means.

31 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

The three junior officers listen to the disembodied voice.

VOICE

I came as swift as I was able. But I was far from the Hearth, and my vessel is wounded. Have you yet to arrive? Or have you arrived already, and continued the Quest without me?

Nog, Candlewood and Prynn look between themselves. This poor man - he doesn't know what happened.

VOICE

Is it true that the Fire came to
us at last? And that the Final
Ascension approaches?

(beat)

Hear my words, I beg. I am Vexh,
Archquester of the Ascendancy.
Without guidance, I await you,
here at the Hearth. Answer me, my
brothers and sisters, if you are
able. Is there no-one?

Ending on the three officers, standing in the darkness with
only that weak orange glow, as they feel sorry for this
man, and wonder what to do about it...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

32 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

With the station in the distance and growing closer, we ride with the *Nile* as it returns to its brightly lit home.

33 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

The three junior officers stand at attention before the captain's desk. Vaughn stands behind it, holding a padd, receiving their report. Bowers and Ro stand to the side.

PRYNN

It's alive, sir. It's a living creature, and it's healing.

CANDLEWOOD

I cracked some of the bio-signals already. I'll need more time and computing power to do more. But I believe it can be done.

NOG

As for its power systems... it turns out that Empok Nor was the perfect place to hide it. With no fusion core on the station, and no pilot, the ship has nothing to feed off.

PRYNN

But with the energy we already gave it just by being there, it's already starting to heal.

NOG

So I recommend leaving it where it is, sir, where it can't absorb any more energy.

CANDLEWOOD

Which unfortunately means testing my bio-signals to be sure of what they do is going to be difficult.

Vaughn nods along, accepting the report silently.

VAUGHN

Very well, Lieutenants. Thank you for your reports. I'll advise you of future steps when I've decided upon them. And I reiterate once again the need for total secrecy.

He looks to Candlewood, daring him to make another smart comment. Candlewood looks back with total professionalism.

CANDLEWOOD

Understood, sir.

PRYNN

(straight, clear)

Captain, if I may... Lieutenant Candlewood was vital in decoding the ship's signals. I don't know what it might have done to me if he hadn't figured out how to turn the machine off. It's very possible he saved my life.

Vaughn knows what Prynn is trying to do here - use their relationship to get him to go easier on Candlewood. The tiniest ghost of a smile.

VAUGHN

Then good work, Lieutenant.

CANDLEWOOD

Thank you, sir.

VAUGHN

Dismissed.

Nog and Candlewood turn to leave. But Prynn hovers. She knows she can get away with things the others couldn't.

PRYNN

Sir... what about Vexh? Should we tell Raiq, or Kira?

VAUGHN

(hard)

Absolutely not. Under no circumstances are any of you to mention any of this to anyone.

PRYNN

But sir... he doesn't know what happened to his people. He ought to know. And Raiq deserves to know she's not the last one after all.

VAUGHN

The answer is no, Lieutenant. Don't ask me again.

Prynn, Nog and Candlewood exit to Ops, and at Vaughn's nod, Bowers follows them. Ro and Vaughn are left alone.

RO

That was a little... ruthless.

VAUGHN

Do you disagree?

RO

Not disagree, exactly. But I think there's room for discussion.

VAUGHN

How so?

RO

If you thought you were the last human in the galaxy, wouldn't you want to know that somebody discovered another?

VAUGHN

Right now, Commander, I don't care a Delavian fig for Raiq's emotional needs. I care about her openly stated goals, which are to

exterminate the Bajoran species from existence, along with anyone helping them. So no, I don't think I will hand over exactly the weapon she needs to do that, or introduce her to a new friend to help her along the way.

RO

Raiq helped us against Axno.

VAUGHN

Did she? Or was she simply using you to find another ally in her Quest? Thank you for your input, Commander. My decision is made.

RO

Alright. What happened with you and Opaka?

VAUGHN

(softening)

We spoke. We agreed that we're in different places, going in different directions. And that while it would have been nice, it's simply not the way the Prophets are leading us.

RO

(amused)

Really? The Prophets?

VAUGHN

You're dismissed, Commander.

Knowing she's getting no further, Ro accedes, and leaves the room. Vaughn takes a seat and stares out of the window.

34 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY**

Back to the beginning. Raiq sits alone by the stone archway looking out into the valley. Behind the mountains, it's sunset. The light is slowly dying from the sky.

Again, Kira approaches quietly.

KIRA

Are you feeling better?

RAIQ

My infirmity was short-lived. And unexplained. I will survive.

KIRA

Glad to hear it.

(beat)

Raiq... I'm sorry. I know you're in pain. I still believe what I did was necessary for my people... but I'm sorry for the pain it caused you. I want you to feel like this is your home too.

RAIQ

I see that, Kira. I do. But I am uncertain how it will ever come to be.

Kira can accept that for now. She settles down beside Raiq, looks out at the sunset.

KIRA

Can I ask you one more thing?

Raiq reluctantly nods her permission.

KIRA

Why did you save my life? In the shrine, when Axno was going to kill us all... you saved me. If you hate us so much, then why?

RAIQ

I have asked myself the same. At the time, it was instinctive. The mistress Iliana said that you were like her. Perhaps on that basis, I felt I must protect you from harm.

KIRA

I'm not like Iliana. If anything,
I'm more like you.

Kira reaches out and gently takes hold of Raiq's hand. To her own surprise, Raiq lets her.

KIRA

We are the same, you and me. I know you don't see it yet, but we are.

RAIQ

I did see it. In that moment, when Axno threatened us both... we were the same. Both heretics in her eyes.

KIRA

So you saved us both.

RAIQ

Apparently so.

(beat; melancholy)

Leave me now, Kira. I wish to watch the sun set... alone.

Nodding her understanding, Kira stands and lets her be.

Raiq returns to looking out of the archway at the sunset.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW