

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x04 - "Easy Come, Easy Go."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 CLOSE-UP ON PADD

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

WIDEN to reveal...

2 INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS

...PRYNN TENMEI, holding the padd in her hand and watching the screen, as she relaxes on her sofa. It is just before bed, and Tenmei is dressed in the *ceara*, the Andorian silk pantsuit that she wore in 9x08 "No Place Like Home."

She laughs as the Bolian man pulls off a tricky manoeuvre with a flourish. The image changes to a still photo of the same Bolian man, with a handful of other people of various species, all celebrating as if at a drunken after party.

The words WISH YOU WERE HERE appear super-imposed over the party picture. Prynn rolls her eyes, amused, then reaches up and taps off the screen. She tosses the padd down onto the coffee table, stands, stretches her shoulders and neck out, and drinks the last of a small glass of water.

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

TENMEI

(singing)

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

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

TENMEI

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

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

It's SHAR.

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

TENMEI

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

SHAR

I have returned to my position on
the station.

(beat)

May I come in?

TENMEI

(coming back to
her senses)

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

She backs away, letting him enter. She is rather flustered
by this, not least that she is in her night clothes. She
pulls the neck closer around her, in a futile attempt to
cover herself a bit more.

Shar stands uncomfortably in the room, not sure what to do
with himself now he is here.

SHAR

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

TENMEI

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

(realises that
was stupid)

Obviously.

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

TENMEI

Oh, come here.

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

TENMEI

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

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

SHAR

Did I interrupt something?

TENMEI

Oh, no... nothing important.
Grimnar - he was the tactical officer on the *Sentinel* when I was beta shift conn - he sent me a video of him surfing on Canopus.

SHAR

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

TENMEI

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

(beat)

Shar, what are you doing here? Why aren't you home on Andor?

SHAR

I wished to return to DS-Nine.

TENMEI

But I thought you'd be deep in the middle of the *shelthreth*... did I say that right?

SHAR

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

TENMEI

And was it... successful?

SHAR

(wistful smile)

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

TENMEI

(interrupting)

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

(beat)

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

(blanks on word)

...*thaan*. Or whatever it turns out to be.

SHAR

(evasive)

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

TENMEI

Those traditions are centuries out of date, Shar. And it's not like you were ever one to follow traditional family structure anyway. I mean, sure, we miss you

around here. But T'rb's handling things fine as far as I know. I'm sure you could have stayed longer if you wanted.

SHAR

No... I wished to return here.

TENMEI

Why?

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

SHAR

I returned for you.

On Pryn's surprised, unsure reaction...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. DS9 - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

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

VAUGHN

So what did you say to him?

He sits on the couch and hands the drink to Prynn, also sat on the sofa. They are sharing breakfast the next morning, nibbling from fruit and pastries as they talk.

TENMEI

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

VAUGHN

Aren't you interested anymore?

TENMEI

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

VAUGHN

(no judgement)

Well, I'm glad to hear it. But, just to play devil's advocate for a moment, he's here anyway. He made that choice himself. If you were to take advantage of it, who could blame you?

TENMEI

(thinks for a second,
then shakes head)

I don't want to get stuck in the middle of something so complicated. It's not like there's

just one other woman to worry about. There's two other women, and another man, and a baby.

VAUGHN

Well, strictly speaking...

TENMEI

Yes, yes, I know. They're not really men and women, they're *chan* and *thaan* and the rest. And Shar has spent the last six months... basically having constant sex with them all.

VAUGHN

(chuckles)

Is that what puts you off?

TENMEI

(a little insulted)

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

VAUGHN

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

TENMEI

In fact, there was a time in the Academy when I briefly considered giving up on men altogether and trying out the other side of the fence.

VAUGHN

(intrigued, amused)

Really? I didn't know that.

TENMEI

But then I thought, no, why give myself a whole new set of problems

in addition to the ones I've
already got? Might as well stick
to the devil I know, I guess.

VAUGHN

Oh, I have so much to learn about
you!

(beat)

Thank you for coming to see me,
Prynn. Talking to me like this.
Makes me feel like your father.

TENMEI

(simply)

You are my father.

(beat)

So what do I do?

VAUGHN

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

Prynn nods, taking that on board.

4 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

On BASHIR...

BASHIR

Are you ready?

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

BASHIR

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

Ro gives him a sour look. He smirks and reaches for the
control, presses it...

...and Ro's metallic leg supports disengage with a WHIRR and a HISS. Bashir removes the metal frames while NOG holds Ro's balance. Nog gradually manoeuvres Ro towards a bio-bed - Ro sits gingerly on it with a small wince of pain.

Nog cheers and applauds gently. Ro glares, more out of habit than anything else. But she can't help being happy about this. She lets a small smile of relief slip through.

RO

Glad to put those damn things
behind me at last.

BASHIR

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

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

NOG

These are anti-gravity workout
weights. I've adapted them for
continuous use. They're a lot less
visible and clumsy than the full
units. You can even hide them
underneath your regular uniform,
probably.

He brings the devices over to Ro, and with a pause for her permission, crouches down and begins to snap them closed around her ankles.

NOG

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

RO

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

BASHIR

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

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

BASHIR (cont)

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

RO

I get it, Doctor. I'll behave.

BASHIR

Good. Do you need an analgesic before we go?

RO

If that's okay.

He reaches to the side and grabs a hypospray. He passes it to Ro, who injects herself in the neck.

That done, Ro gently manoeuvres herself off the bio-bed. She lowers her weight onto her feet and tests her balance - she is a little wobbly but steady. She looks down, and sees that the trouser legs do indeed hide the devices.

RO

Feels like standing on a balloon.

BASHIR

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

RO

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

Grabbing her walking stick, she begins to walk to the door. The others follow.

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

The turbolift rises into Ops, carrying Bashir, Ro and Nog. They walk - slowly, in Ro's case - down the steps to the central Ops table, where Vaughn, Tenmei and DAX await. BOWERS is at tactical, extras at the other stations.

NOG

Anybody know why the Captain wants to see us all?

DAX

Standard senior staff meeting, as far as I know.

One of the side doors, and Shar ENTERS. Prynn tenses, and Vaughn places a comforting hand on her shoulder. The others turn to welcome Shar, especially Nog, who hugs Shar warmly.

NOG

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

SHAR

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

Still standing by the Ops table, Vaughn nudges Prynn. Bracing her nerves, Prynn approaches Shar.

TENMEI

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

SHAR

No need to apologise, Prynn.

TENMEI

We'll talk later, yeah?

Nog's ears prick up, but he doesn't intrude. Kira's office door opens, and KIRA calls out to them.

KIRA

Okay everyone, come on in.

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

VAUGHN

I was sorry to hear about your zhavey's resignation, Ensign.

SHAR

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

VAUGHN

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

Shar, of course, is uncomfortable with personal matters.

SHAR

They are appreciated, Commander.

They enter Kira's office.

6 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira in the couch area of the office. As everyone enters and the door closes, she TURNS and reveals a tray carrying eight glasses filled with sparkling spring wine.

VAUGHN

What's the occasion, Captain?

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

KIRA

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

Left with only her own glass, she lays down the empty tray on her desk and picks up a PADD instead. With the glass in the other hand, she reads aloud from the padd.

KIRA

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

Surprised jaws begin to drop...

KIRA

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

DAX

Yeah!

Dax clinks her glass with Nog's in celebration. Kira holds her hand up to forestall more celebrations - there's more.

KIRA

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

Among more cheers, Vaughn grabs Prynn for a half-hug and kiss on the head. He is absolutely thrilled for her.

KIRA

And, as a suitable welcome back to a place that has been the poorer for his absence, Chief Science Officer Thirishar ch'Thane is promoted from Ensign to Lieutenant Junior Grade, in recognition of his astonishing commitment to scientific endeavour... which may well have saved his entire species from extinction.

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

VAUGHN

Congratulations to all of you.

KIRA

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

Dax's eyes FLARE in shock... she shakes her head tightly but urgently to warn Kira off the subject. Kira sees, but frowns, not getting the message. She is already in the middle of it, can't stop talking now...

KIRA

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

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

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

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

VAUGHN

(a toast)

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

Bashir, still bewildered and taken aback. Dax tries to look at him, but the look on his face is painful. Her eyes try to apologise to him...

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

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

7 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

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

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

Nog runs to his engineering station, checking readings. He
looks to Kira in horror... Kira looks to the viewscreen -
it shows the usual view of space bursting open...

NOG
It's a Dominion ship.

BOWERS
They're hailing us, Captain.

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

KIRA
Put them through.

The viewscreen changes to show the Vorta, VANNIS (last seen
10x01 "Emancipation"), wearing one of their communicator
headsets and smiling pleasantly. Kira is quietly wary.

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

KIRA
Thank you. Greetings from the
Federation in return. I must
admit, we are rather surprised to
see you.

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

KIRA
(still not sure)
That's good to hear. Perhaps you
could explain a little?

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

Vannis politely steps aside, and TARAN'ATAR steps onto the
screen in her place.

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

Everyone's reactions...

KIRA
(whisper)
Taran'atar...

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

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

8 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

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

9 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

The door opens, finding DS9's senior staff standing in wait. Kira, Vaughn, Dax, Bashir, Ro, Nog, Shar. Not Prynn.

Bowers leads the party into the room - Vannis, Taran'atar, and Bajoran Militia Major CENN. Two armed Starfleet security and two Jem'Hadar soldiers stay outside in the corridor, taking up defensive positions. The door closes.

There is enormous tension in the room as everyone reacts to the sight of Taran'atar, back in a Dominion uniform. Kira and Ro are especially apprehensive, understandably.

BOWERS

Our Dominion guests, Captain, as you requested.

KIRA

Thank you, Lieutenant. Every one, please take a seat.

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

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

KIRA

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

VANNIS

By the Founder's order, we are here to open diplomatic relations with the Federation. The treaty

between us ended the war. Now the Founder wishes to take the next step, by sending a citizen of the Dominion to act as an official representative.

The senior staff glance between each other, amazed.

KIRA

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

VANNIS

(uncomfortable)

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

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

TARAN'ATAR

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

VANNIS

And I have been asked to be the First's... assistant.

RO

(quietly pointed)

A Vorta working under a Jem'Hadar. Fascinating.

Vannis tenses, almost embarrassed. Kira gives Ro a warning glare to keep it zipped, then turns back to Vannis.

KIRA

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

TARAN'ATAR

The Dominion is in chaos, Captain.

VANNIS
(quiet warning)
First. That is enough.

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

Vannis takes a deep breath, bites her tongue. This is difficult for her, but it is what the Founder ordered.

VANNIS
Yes. We will.

TARAN'ATAR
The Link believes in a supreme being - an entity known as the Progenitor. They initiated a program to contact this entity. However, upon its success, the Progenitor was killed. By a race known to us as the Ascendants.

Quiet shock again around the room.

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

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

TARAN'ATAR
By taking this action, the Ascendants declared war against the Dominion. Unfortunately, the Dominion is in no condition to wage war again. The loss of the Progenitor affected the Founders profoundly. They dissolved the Great Link, leaving the Dominion without guidance.

KIRA

Odo...?

TARAN'ATAR

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

VAUGHN

Are you saying that the Dominion needs our help?

VANNIS

Hardly, Commander. However, the Founder does believe this is the perfect time to further peaceful relations with the Federation.

RO

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

KIRA

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

DAX

What about your opposite number? Someone to represent Federation interests to the Dominion?

TARAN'ATAR

The Founder believes he can serve in that capacity himself, given his own experience living here.

KIRA

I'll make sure to pass on your offer to the Federation Council and Starfleet Command. Major Cenn - please inform General Lenaris and Minister Asarem's office. I

think Admiral Akaar is with the
First Minister as well.

CENN

Yes, Captain.

KIRA

Until we receive a response, this
information is classified to the
people in this room.

TARAN'ATAR

The Founder desires openness,
Captain. But he left the specifics
to your discretion.

KIRA

Understood. In the meantime, I
hope you'll stay as our guests.

VANNIS

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

That had a bit of an edge. It sounds like Vannis doesn't
particularly want Taran'atar around. She is still quite
unsure about all this - it just doesn't feel right to her.

KIRA

Very well.
(to her officers)
Dismissed.

They all stand and begin to file out, although their faces
reveal they're all still quite unsure and uncomfortable.

ON KIRA

as she stands at one end of the table, looking directly at

TARAN'ATAR

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

10 INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS

Bashir SPINS on Dax, furious with her.

BASHIR

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

DAX

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

BASHIR

But... I thought...

(frustrated)

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

He can't finish, ashamed and embarrassed.

DAX

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

They both sigh, deflating. Standing apart.

BASHIR

I've read about the *Luna*. It's a prototype for a new explorer class, right?

DAX

Exactly. The Lunas are Starfleet's attempt to shift back to a more friendly exploration footing, after so many years of conflict. Twelve ships featuring the most

advanced scientific equipment in the fleet, and crewed by the most socially and biologically diverse crews any Starfleet ship has ever had. All the better to represent a truly multi-cultural Federation to all those new worlds and new civilisations.

BASHIR

Sounds great... in theory.

DAX

Well, yes... there's always a learning curve with these kind of things. But the fact is that this assignment on the *Luna* is perfect for me. It's got science, it's got technological advances, it's got inter-species diplomacy. And really, Julian, I'd hope that you could be happy for me.

BASHIR

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

DAX

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

BASHIR

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

DAX

Well, then. Even more so.

She smiles tentatively at him, hoping they are still friends. He grudgingly smiles back - they are. For now.

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

Middling busy, lunch-time. Nog and Shar sit at the bar, drinks in their hands. They raise their glasses in a toast.

SHAR
Lieutenant Nog.

NOG
Lieutenant ch'Thane. And about
time too.

They CLINK their glasses together and drink. QUARK is suddenly there, his face cold and closed.

QUARK
Is it true?

NOG
Is what true, uncle?

QUARK
You know perfectly well what.

SHAR
Taran'atar has returned to the
station. Although, I remain
unclear on the circumstances of
his leaving...

QUARK
Really. Well, let me enlighten
you...

There's a commotion from the crowd - people are getting to their feet and gasping in fear and surprise. Nog, Shar and Quark all look up to see why...

Taran'atar and Kira have entered the bar, tailed at a polite distance by two armed Starfleet security. By the mutters and hisses from the crowd, he is clearly unwelcome.

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

QUARK

Get out.

Kira is surprised that Quark would go this far. But it's clear he is not kidding.

KIRA

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

QUARK

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

KIRA

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

QUARK

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

(to Taran'atar)

Get out. Now.

Quark is immovable. Kira sighs. She turns to Taran'atar and gestures him back out of the bar.

KIRA

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

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

Quark takes a deep breath, settles and returns to his bar. He picks up his cloth and dries glasses. After a moment, he looks up to see Nog and Shar staring at him, amazed.

QUARK

They'll make anyone an ambassador
these days.

(beat)

What?

12 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Kira and Taran'atar walk along, with the security tailing. All around, people throw hateful, uncomfortable looks at Taran'atar. He is aware of them, but keeps his head high.

KIRA

I'm sorry about that.

TARAN'ATAR

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

KIRA

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

VAUGHN (o.s.)

Captain.

Kira looks further down the Promenade, and sees Vaughn leading a group of visitors towards them. Admiral AKAAR, First Minister ASAREM, and Ranjen OPAKA. The group is escorted by Bowers and Ensign ALECO (9x19 "Warpath").

VAUGHN (cont)

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

KIRA

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

ASAREM

Thank you, Captain. There is -

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

Taran'atar is simply so surprised that he doesn't resist. He lands in a pile on the deck, immediately jumping back to his feet and preparing himself for battle.

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

Confused but under orders, the four security officers do so. By now everyone on the Promenade has gone silent, watching the confrontation. Opaka is especially stunned.

Even the customers of the bar are looking out of the windows at them - Quark, Nog and Shar among them.

KIRA
Admiral! What the hell are you
doing?

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

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

Kira watches them go, shocked and powerless.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

13 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Vannis, bringing the force of Dominion authority to bear...

VANNIS

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

Akaar, on his feet and bellowing...

AKAAR

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

KIRA

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

AKAAR

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

VANNIS

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

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

RO

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

Akaar isn't listening. He POINTS angrily at the monitors,
where we can see Taran'atar standing in one of the
confinement cells, armed security keeping watch.

AKAAR

(gritted teeth)

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

ON MONITOR

Showing Taran'atar looking into the security camera from under heavy, ominous brows...

14 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

Taran'atar stands immobile, waiting...

Vaughn stands in the centre of the holding area, watching him warily and curiously...

VAUGHN

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

TARAN'ATAR

I was facing four weapons.

VAUGHN

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

TARAN'ATAR

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

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

TARAN'ATAR
You have answered your own
question.

Vaughn considers that...

15 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

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

VANNIS
Is this really your wish, Admiral?
To recommence hostilities between
us?

AKAAR
You're helpless. You said so
yourself.

Vaughn ENTERS from the cells area, speaking firmly.

VAUGHN
Admiral. Could we speak privately,
please?

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

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

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

Vannis turns and EXITS to the holding cells area. Kira takes a moment, catches her breath. Is Vannis right? Ro is still sat behind her desk, a bit shell-shocked.

KIRA
How are you doing?

RO
How do you think?
(beat)
You?

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

RO
I thought you'd forgiven him.

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

RO
...Cut in half.

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

16 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

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

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

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

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

She turns and EXITS back towards the security office.

17 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Vaughn and Akaar stand in a quiet area, hidden under one of
the spiral staircases.

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

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

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

Opaka stands quietly near the entrance to Quark's, as life
begins to return to normal along the Promenade. She watches
Vaughn and Akaar in the distance, forcefully talking.

The security office doors open and Vannis exits onto the
Promenade. She and Akaar make eye contact, and then Vannis

coldly turns away. She beckons the two waiting Jem'Hadar soldiers, and they move off together down the Promenade.

Equally cold, Akaar turns and walks away from us. Vaughn sighs, disappointed in the outcome. He looks up and sees Opaka, and walks over towards her.

VAUGHN

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

OPAKA

Why aren't you?

VAUGHN

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

(beat)

You didn't have to come for this,
Sulan. It's not your problem.

OPAKA

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

VAUGHN

(realising)

That's why you came. It's time for
you to go...

He wishes it wasn't true...

18 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

Now Kira has come to talk to Taran'atar. He sits on the bench in the cell - she stands, arms folded.

KIRA

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

TARAN'ATAR

I returned to the Dominion to receive the punishment I deserved.

KIRA

So why didn't you? Receive punishment, I mean.

Taran'atar looks at her curiously.

TARAN'ATAR

You wonder why the Founder spared me... considering his personal relationship with you.

Kira didn't want to state it that bluntly... but yes.

TARAN'ATAR (cont)

I do not believe it was an easy decision for him. I fully expected execution. But he was eventually convinced there was more to gain by letting me live.

KIRA

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

TARAN'ATAR

Because I have promised the Founder my fealty.

KIRA

You did that last time. Didn't help.

TARAN'ATAR

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

KIRA
Is that enough?

TARAN'ATAR
That will be your choice.

19 **INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS**

Prynn and Shar both stand awkwardly, apart.

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

SHAR
Perhaps I have not explained myself well.... I returned to the station to return to you.

TENMEI
(distressed sigh)
That's exactly what I thought you meant. But Shar... what about Anichent and Dizhei...
(little wibble)
...and Thia?

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

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

She trails off, afraid she has said too much.

SHAR

(lost for answers)
Prynn... what do you want me to do?

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

SHAR
(baffled)
What does Taran'atar have to do with it?

A pause, as Prynn realises...

TENMEI
You don't know, do you?

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

TENMEI
Don't you read the news?

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

Prynn takes a deep breath, steadies her nerves.

TENMEI

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

SHAR

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

Prynn wonders how much to reveal...

20 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

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

Prynn stands by her open doorway, desperately calling after him. She is almost tearful with fear and worry.

TENMEI

Shar, please - stop!
(no response)
Shar!

On Prynn's anguished face...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

21 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Nog stands outside the Security office, holding his hands up to try to calm down the approaching Shar...

NOG

Shar, just calm down, stop for a minute -

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

22 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

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

SHAR

Step out of my way, Lieutenant.

RO

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

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

RO

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

Behind him, in the open doorway, Nog has clambered back to his feet. Prynn runs up to the doorway, out of breath.

TENMEI

Shar, please... stop.

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

TENMEI

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

Ro makes a show of holstering her phaser. She takes careful
steps towards Shar, specifically blocking the monitors.

RO

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

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

NOG

Come on, Shar. Let's go.

Nog and Ro gently lead Shar away from the door, back down
the Promenade. Bowers, Aleco and Cenn holster their weapons
with relief, and move to disperse the nosey crowd.

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

23 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS AREA

On Taran'atar, waiting, waiting... he looks up and sees...

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

TARAN'ATAR

Ensign Tenmei.

He looks closer...

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

TARAN'ATAR (cont)

Lieutenant Tenmei. Apologies. And
congratulations.

TENMEI

Somehow I doubt your sincerity.

TARAN'ATAR

I have no ill feelings toward you.

TENMEI

Strange way of showing it.

TARAN'ATAR

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

TENMEI

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

Taran'atar shifts his weight, and immediately, Prynn flinches backwards, away from him...

FLASHBACK - 9x19 "WARPATH"

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

BACK TO SCENE

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

TARAN'ATAR

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

TENMEI

I can protect myself.

She turns and leaves.

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

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

25 **INT. DS9 - STATION SHRINE**

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

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

After a while, she frowns, and opens her eyes. It's not working. She rocks back onto her heels, and then stands. She turns, and sees that Asarem is standing there.

KIRA

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

ASAREM

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

(re Orb)

Did you find what you sought?

Kira sighs. No, she didn't.

KIRA

I was just praying for guidance. For a sign... But I couldn't concentrate. I kept thinking about Odo... about how he's so sure that the Dominion and the Federation can work together, even despite everything that's happened.

ASAREM

And you're not so sure.

KIRA

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

ASAREM

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

KIRA

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

(beat; sad)

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

ASAREM

Captain, we may not have always seen eye to eye. But I cannot deny that whatever situation you find yourself in, you always seem to find your way out. Bajor has faith in you.

KIRA

(roll eyes)

Bajor...

But then something occurs to her... her face falls as the full scope of the thought occurs to her...

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

KIRA

First Minister, do you trust me?

ASAREM

I'm fairly sure I just said that.

KIRA

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

Off Asarem's curious expression...

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

ASAREM

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

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

ASAREM

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

AKAAR

(controls his anger)

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

ASAREM

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

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

ASAREM

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

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

VANNIS

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

Akaar is still in his seat, seething. He looks over to Kira, his eyes burning her in her seat. She stares back, not giving anything away.

AKAAR

This was your idea, wasn't it?

ASAREM

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

Pause. Akaar grinds his teeth.

AKAAR

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

ASAREM

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

AKAAR

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

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

ASAREM

I haven't dismissed you, Admiral.

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

AKAAR

Then with your permission, First
Minister...

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

ASAREM

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

VANNIS

Yes, First Minister.

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

27 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

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

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

28 INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT (CONTINUOUS)

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

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

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

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

AKAAR

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

And he turns and leaves. The doors close.

KIRA

(quiet)
So do I.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

29 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Two glasses are clinked together in celebration. Dax and Kira sat together at a table on the main floor of the bar.

DAX

Classic Kira manoeuvre, I'd say.
The kind Sisko used to chew you
out for all the time.

KIRA

(sad chuckle)

I guess. Akaar's pretty mad at me.

DAX

Ah, he'll get over it. Annoying
admirals is kind of a captain's
job description.

KIRA

In that case, maybe I should turn
command over to Ro.

DAX

(laugh)

I'd love to see Akaar's face.

Kira stares into her drink. Gets serious for a moment.

KIRA

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

DAX

I'm looking forward to it.

KIRA

But are you certain about it?

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

DAX

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

KIRA

And you're sure you're not... running away?

DAX

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

KIRA

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

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

30 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Dax steps nervously into the Infirmary. Bashir is working at the far end. As he turns and walks towards us, he notices Dax there. He stops, reining his emotions in.

BASHIR

You ready for the off, then?

DAX

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

BASHIR

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

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

DAX

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

BASHIR

(blank)

I kind of assumed we always were.

DAX

(blurting it out)

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

BASHIR

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

DAX

Part of me wants to.

BASHIR

Just not a big enough part.

DAX

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

BASHIR

(polite but cool)

You should go.

She thinks he is being noble and self-sacrificing...

DAX

Why?

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

DAX
Julian, wait -

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

He turns and walks away, the conversation over. Dax, torn between sadness and indignant anger, also turns and stomps out of the Infirmary onto the Promenade.

31 INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS

In her bedroom, Dax angrily grabs clothes from a chest of drawers and shoves them forcibly into a small travel bag.

That done, she throws the bag over her shoulder and marches back to her living room. The room features three Starfleet EXTRAS, who are beginning to pack up her belongings.

DAX
Crewman...

One of the extras turns to her...

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

CREWMAN
Everything, sir?

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

DAX
I'm not coming back.

The door closes behind her.

32 INT. VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

On Vaughn, agitated and worried, as he talks to Prynn...

VAUGHN

You should never have gone to see him.

TENMEI

I had to see him for myself.

VAUGHN

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

TENMEI

And you haven't? He beat the hell out of you just as much as he did me. So why are you being all nice and friendly?

VAUGHN

I promised to kill him, Prynn!

TENMEI

...What?

VAUGHN

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

TENMEI

So why didn't you?

VAUGHN

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

Prynn stops to consider that... while Vaughn realises something important as well.

33 **INT. DS9 - DOCKING PYLON CORRIDOR**

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

VAUGHN

Good luck. Have a safe journey.

OPAKA

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

VAUGHN

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

OPAKA

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

VAUGHN

It's not the Eav'oq I'm worried about.

OPAKA

The Dominion will take care of me too. Vannis's vessel will remain in the Idran system to confer with the other Vorta and be nearby to support Taran'atar.

VAUGHN

But... doesn't it scare you?

OPAKA

I was never at war with the Dominion, Elias. If anything, I feel sorry for them. That an

entire race could be so paranoid,
so consumed with the fear of
persecution that they would lash
out so viciously... it saddens me.

VAUGHN

(re Bajor)

You fought to protect yourselves.

OPAKA

And then we went back to peace, as
best we could. So yes, it saddens
me to think of what they did in
their fear. But I don't hate them
for it. Besides, if what
Taran'atar tells us is true, they
have been punished enough.

VAUGHN

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

OPAKA

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

Vannis appears from inside the airlock...

VANNIS

Ranjen Opaka, are you prepared?

OPAKA

I am, thank you, Vannis.

(back to Vaughn)

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

She turns and follows Vannis back onto the ship.

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

34 INT. TENMEI'S QUARTERS

On Prynn...

TENMEI

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

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

Shar gently reaches inside his uniform and pulls out a small object. He slowly, reverently opens his hand and reveals that it is a *shapla* - an Andorian betrothal charm as last seen in 8x09 "Paradigm." Prynn sees what it is.

TENMEI

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

SHAR

You know what this is, Prynn.

TENMEI

(penned in)

Of course I do.

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

SHAR

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

TENMEI

Shar, stop it...

SHAR

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

TENMEI

(on the attack)

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

SHAR

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

TENMEI

(shouts)

Well I can't!

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

SHAR

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

TENMEI

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

SHAR

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

TENMEI

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

Shar is quite bewildered - he has put his heart out there and Prynn is just stomping all over it. He does the only thing he can - turns and leaves.

Prynn remains there, tears threatening.

35 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

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

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

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

Taran'atar turns and leaves.

36 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)**

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

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

37 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

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

Quark moves around the table, letting the door close behind him. He goes to her, crouches down by her seat and gathers her into his arms. She collapses against him, lets him hold her, and starts to cry.

38 **INT. DS9 - DOCKING PYLON CORRIDOR**

Dax walks along the corridor, travel bag on her shoulder. She stops at the airlock, looks back down the corridor... and there is no-one else there.

She walks into the airlock and the door cycles closed behind her.

39 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

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

40 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

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

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

41 **INT. DS9 - DOCKING PYLON CORRIDOR**

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

The wormhole opens, and the Dominion ship plunges into it. The wormhole closes up behind it. Vaughn stays, looking out onto empty space.

42 **INT. USS AURORA**

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

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

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

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

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW