

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x05 - "Deep Down."

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 BASHIR, as he walks along one of Deep Space Nine's corridors. The walls move past as he strolls at a leisurely pace, smiling pleasantly, satisfied with the world.

2 FRONT ANGLE

Looking down the length of the corridor as Bashir walks towards us, alone. Still happy.

3 LOW ANGLE

On Bashir's feet - his boots walking smooth and regular on the carpeted deck.

4 SIDE ANGLE

The walls move past, and Bashir continues to stroll.

O'BRIEN (o.s.)

Hey, Julian! Wait a minute!

Bashir doesn't turn back. But as MILES O'BRIEN catches up from behind, Bashir glances over his shoulder, happy to see his friend. O'Brien is in uniform, and walks with Bashir, just slightly behind and to his left.

BASHIR

Hello, Miles. I've been waiting for you.

O'BRIEN

That's cuz I'm always behind.

BASHIR

Yes... that's true.

5 REAR ANGLE

Walking with Bashir and O'Brien now, looking down the corridor ahead of them. It seems to stretch out forever.

In one of the doorways that periodically dot the length of the corridor, stands GARAK. He smiles his typical enigmatic smile as Bashir approaches.

GARAK

Come now, Doctor. Didn't I teach you to keep your secrets better than that?

Bashir and O'Brien keep walking, and Garak joins alongside, taking up position just behind and to Bashir's right.

6 **FRONT ANGLE**

The trio walks towards us, Bashir in the middle.

BASHIR

Secrets? I don't know what you're talking about, Garak.

O'BRIEN

(mutter)

As usual.

GARAK

(teasing)

Now who's plain and simple?

7 **SIDE ANGLE**

Bashir, O'Brien and Garak stroll along, left to right. Another figure steps into frame to walk with the group - ODO, wearing his Bajoran Militia uniform.

ODO

(warning growl)

Garak... I've got my eye on you.

GARAK

That's very flattering, but quite unnecessary, Constable.

8 **FRONT ANGLE**

Now KIRA (in a Bajoran Militia uniform) walks with Bashir, with Odo on the other side. O'Brien and Garak are gone. The corridor stretches out behind them.

KIRA
Julian can handle him, Odo.

Odo grunts his disbelief.

9 **REAR ANGLE**

Looking at their backs as they stroll down the corridor... Bashir in the middle, SISKO at the right (in uniform) and a tall, elegant woman on the left, with her long dark hair in a ponytail and her hands clasped behind her back.

SISKO
Julian can handle anything that comes his way, right, Dax?

10 **SIDE ANGLE**

EZRI DAX emerges from behind Bashir, wearing a blue-collar uniform and taking a position level with Bashir (on the far side, his left). They continue to walk along the corridor.

DAX
I know he likes to think so.

Bashir frowns, a little confused...

11 **LOW ANGLE**

Bashir's boots, treading steadily... and another pair of boots comes on his right (closer to the camera), overtaking and passing him.

O'BRIEN (o.s.)
Out of the way, Julian.

12 **FRONT ANGLE**

O'Brien is now on his right, Garak on his left (opposite of earlier). Both of them move ahead of Bashir, walking further along the corridor.

13 **BASHIR'S POV**

O'Brien and Garak walk on...

O'BRIEN (cont)
I don't want to play anymore.

BASHIR
No, that's fine, I understand.

GARAK
I'm afraid I have much more
important things to do than wait
for you, Doctor.

O'Brien and Garak walk on, stretching further ahead of Bashir. They reach out and hold each other's hands as they move away into the distance.

14 **CLOSE ON BASHIR**

...who blinks in surprise. He looks to his right...

15 **WIDER ANGLE**

...where Sisko walks, wearing Bajoran civilian clothes.

SISKO
Open your mind, Doctor. You're too
small minded.

Sisko's entire body begins to glow an unearthly white. Bashir's only reaction is a small flicker of puzzlement.

16 **ON KIRA**

...wearing a Starfleet uniform, walking at Bashir's left. Eyes closed, whispering prayers under her breath.

17 **ON SISCO**

...as the glow filling him grows quickly, his image fading simultaneously, until he disappears from sight altogether.

18 **SIDE ANGLE**

...as Odo - now dressed in the shapeless smock of the Founders - also overtakes Bashir.

ODO

Excuse me, Doctor... I have a major galactic civilisation to save single-handedly.

19 REAR ANGLE

...watching Odo walk on ahead of Bashir, into the empty and endless corridor. Dax steps up to Bashir's side...

20 BASHIR'S POV

Wearing the red-collar command uniform, Dax looks up at Bashir. The walls continue to move past, right to left.

DAX

You used to do things like that, Julian. Back in the day.

21 ON BASHIR

...who recoils, defensive.

BASHIR

But I like it here.

22 FRONT ANGLE

Dax steps ahead of Bashir, walking confidently forward.

DAX

Well... that's nice.

She walks on, leaving Bashir behind. He watches her go, plaintive, hopeful...

Dax overtakes the camera, leaving Bashir alone in the corridor...

23 LOW ANGLE

Bashir's boots walk on, floor passing beneath him...

24 **SIDE ANGLE**

Though Bashir's body walks at the same pace, the walls moving past him slow down... slower... slower...

BASHIR

Dax...?

No response. The walls slow and slow, until they stop moving altogether. Bashir's body still walks - it's just not getting anywhere.

25 **FRONT ANGLE**

Bashir walks, but he is not progressing any further down the corridor. The walls aren't moving.

The camera slowly pulls back, retreating down the long, empty corridor away from him. Bashir continues to walk towards us, but getting further and further away...

BASHIR

(small, plaintive)

Hello? Is anyone there?

Silence.

CUT TO:

26 **INT. DS9 - BASHIR'S QUARTERS**

Bashir jerks awake with a surprised "Buh!" He is lying in tangled bed sheets on his bed in his darkened quarters. He looks around himself, his senses returning to him.

As Bashir realises he just had a nightmare...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

27 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Just a moment to establish...

28 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Bashir stands near his desk. All the familiar medical staff - TARSES, RICHTER, ETANA and AYLAM - stand around, holding padds or notebooks. Bashir is leading a staff meeting.

Bashir has dark circles under his eyes, his muscles a little slack. Nothing too overt, but just enough to mark him as tired and lethargic. We are already mid-meeting...

BASHIR

Doctor Tarses, any news on Ensign Cardok?

TARSES

He'll be fine. He just needed his carbon trichloride adjusting - apparently his body needs a little more than the average Benzite. Easily manageable with a tweak in the atmosphere in his quarters.

BASHIR

Good, good. Umm... Kristen, did we talk about quarantine issues for the Kressari freighter tomorrow?

RICHTER

(a little confused)

Yes, Doctor... last night, before I clocked out.

BASHIR

(annoyed at himself)

Right, of course. Right. Sorry.

Bashir frowns and shakes himself, clearing his foggy head.

ETANA

Doctor... are you feeling okay?

BASHIR

Yes, I'm fine. Just... haven't been sleeping all that well lately. Bad dreams.

(waves it away)

It's nothing. I'm fine.

Etana and Richter exchange a worried glance. Bashir sees...

BASHIR (cont)

(firmer)

I said I'm fine. Now... we've covered everything, yes?

TARSES

I think so. It's evening shift, there's no urgent business. We can run the shop for a while, if you want to take a moment, grab something from the Replimat...

BASHIR

Yes... yes, I think I might do that. Thank you, Simon. Alright, er... dismissed, then. Thank you, everyone.

Bashir turns back to his desk and places his padd down, while the others go their separate ways.

29 INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

The doors open with a hiss, and KIRA enters, TARAN'ATAR trailing behind her.

KIRA

Well... here you are.

Taran'atar looks around the room, unimpressed. He has no particular desire to be here. He steps further into the room, inspecting things. Kira is sensitive to his feelings.

KIRA

Like I said, we've put everything
back the way it was.

TARAN'ATAR

Not everything.

He looks pointedly at a bare wall. Kira takes his meaning.

KIRA

We decided that it would be in
everyone's best interest if you
didn't keep any weapons in here.

(beat)

I realise you're quite capable of
killing without weapons. But I saw
no need to make it any easier.

Taran'atar watches Kira for signs of fear, anger, hatred...
but she is holding tight. He turns away, keeps exploring.

TARAN'ATAR

I am here on a mission of peace.
I have no need of weapons.

KIRA

I hope that's true. But I know
you've also used them in the
course of your training and
exercise.

TARAN'ATAR

I can generate holographic weapons
for that purpose. They would
present no danger to the station's
physical populace.

KIRA

The holosuites aren't an option.
Quark is digging his heels in
about banning you from the bar.
He's threatened to make a
diplomatic incident of it.

Taran'atar nods, accepting this without judgement.

KIRA (cont)

You'll have to exercise either in here... or in the station's public gymnasium.

TARAN'ATAR

The public will not want to share facilities with me.

KIRA

Maybe not. But you went through the same thing last time. They got used to you then. They'll get used to you now.

TARAN'ATAR

It is not the same. When I first came to Deep Space Nine, people hated me simply because I was Jem'Hadar. Now they will hate me because of what I did...

(looks at Kira)

...to you. And to Lieutenants Ro and Tenmei.

An uncomfortable pause. Kira pushes through it.

KIRA

Look in the other room.

Intrigued, Taran'atar moves to do as she says.

ANGLE - THE BEDROOM

...with an actual bed in it. Taran'atar looks back at Kira.

KIRA

I'm assuming you still need to sleep.

TARAN'ATAR

(grumble)

I do. The Founder maintained his prohibition against using the white.

KIRA

Then this should help you. Don't be embarrassed. Odo himself used to sleep in a bucket he kept in the back of his office.

Taran'atar stares at the bed.

KIRA

How long since you last slept?

TARAN'ATAR

Not since I left the Dominion.

KIRA

That must have been days ago. I can't order you to do anything, but if you want my advice, I'd take the chance for a nap right now. Once you've rested, we can start talking about what you're actually going to achieve here.

She turns and walks away, slightly relieved to be away from him. She approaches the door...

30 ANGLE ON THE DOOR

...which opens, and Bashir walks in, still looking tired and haggard.

31 BASHIR'S POV

...a completely empty set of quarters. Basic furniture shorn of any personal belongings or effects.

Bashir steps in, lets the door close behind him. He looks over towards the bedroom... a wistful half-smile.

A few more steps around the room, memories filling him...

The dining table. The sofa. The window full of stars. Back to the bedroom. Memories attached to all of them.

Then he shakes himself. Enough of this. He pulls himself together, turns and walks back out of the room again.

32 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira enters her office, VAUGHN following behind. Kira takes her chair, Vaughn sits opposite. Kira picks up a padd.

VAUGHN

How did it go?

KIRA

About as well as can be expected.
He's not happy about it, but he'll
do it.

(change the subject)

So I guess we need to discuss
who's taking over from Dax.

VAUGHN

Alright. For second officer of the
station, I think it's Ro.

KIRA

Really?

VAUGHN

Why not? She's certainly got the
experience, the instincts, the
tactical training. Picard said she
would have been a Lieutenant
Commander a decade ago if not for
that whole Garon Two thing.

KIRA

Don't get me wrong, I respect her
abilities. And sure, I have no
problem leaving her in charge
short term. But do you really
think she can handle long term?

VAUGHN

Can't get to one without going
through the other. She can do the
job, Captain. She may not believe
it herself... but that's why she
needs us to believe in her.

Kira is not entirely convinced, but eventually she accepts Vaughn's wisdom.

KIRA

If you say so.

(taps on padd)

I am promoting Lieutenant Ro Laren to the position of Second Officer of Deep Space Nine. If you and I are out of commission or otherwise unavailable... she's in command.

(new thought)

Oh, but what about alpha shift ops controller? Ro can't spend all day parking freighters.

VAUGHN

So we split the role. Leave Ro as Chief of Security and Second Officer, and assign Major Cenn to Ops to run the boards. Keeps him nearby in case we need him as Bajoran liaison.

KIRA

Always used to work for me. So! That just leaves First Officer of the *Defiant*.

VAUGHN

Well, there I'd go with Bowers. Twenty-year veteran of the service, stickler for protocol -

KIRA

Yeah, I noticed.

VAUGHN

He's already stood in for Dax in the past. We may have had our disagreements, but I never doubted for a second he has the interests of his ship and crew at heart.

KIRA

Okay, I guess that's decided.

Kira taps again in her padd, confirming the orders.

KIRA

You know, I kinda like having you
make all these decisions for me.

VAUGHN

Advising you, Captain. The final
decision is always yours.

Kira looks down at her padd... and smiles mischievously.

KIRA

Ro in command. Should be fun.

CUT TO:

33 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

RO sits at her desk but leaning across it threateningly...

RO

Do you want me to punch you in the
face? Is that what this is about?

Major CENN, her Bajoran Militia liaison officer, looks like
a man who is facing down a wild animal on a lonely street.
He tries to carry on as best he can, being professional,
standing up for himself while trying not to poke the bear.

CENN

Lieutenant... providing short-term
visiting dignitaries with a few
guards is one thing. Placing a
constant, round-the-clock security
presence on one is quite another.

RO

(gritted teeth)

Well, Major, it's going to happen.
Captain Kira made this deal, and
she's in command of this station,
so what she says goes. Ours is not
to question why, but to shut the
hell up and do as we're told.

CENN

(patient, cautious)

I understand that. I'm only saying that it might be easier said than done. I'm not sure we have the bodies to spare, not to mention the fact that it could well be seen as a diplomatic insult.

RO

You're afraid we'll hurt his feelings?

CENN

Relations with the Dominion are in a delicate place. With all due respect, Lieutenant, you won't make them any better by watching Taran'atar's every step. I understand how you feel, but you might just have to -

RO

(interrupting)

Say one more word and I will snap your neck. Seriously.

Ro is as coldly angry as we have ever seen her. Cenn stops and gapes, astonished. Though he doesn't like being spoken to like this, he is wise enough not to make it any worse.

RO

You have your orders. Make it happen. Now get out, while you can still walk.

Without saying a word, Cenn nods nervously, stands, and heads out onto the Promenade.

34 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

A turbolift door opens and Ro emerges, walking gingerly with the help of her walking stick. She is still furious with Cenn, muttering under her breath...

RO
Trying to tell me about trust.
After all that crap he gave me
about this entire station being an
affront to Bajorans, he wants to
make nice -

An unseen force BARRELS into her with the strength of a
raging bull, knocking the breath is out of her...

35 **RO**

lands with a CRUNCH against the bulkhead. Bones BREAK and
she gasp-SCREAMS. She crumples to the floor, eyes wide with
terror, neck at an unnatural angle. She looks up to see...

36 **TARAN' ATAR**

His face filling her vision, he's coming for her, his face
contorted with fury...

37 **RO**

As she SCREAMS...

CUT TO:

38 **INT. DS9 - RO'S QUARTERS**

The strangled scream forces its way out of Ro's throat as
she jerks awake from her dream. She is lying in her bed,
the sheets are soaked with sweat. She looks around in a
panic, catching her breath.

She's alone. She's safe. It was just a dream. She pants
from the terror...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

39 INT. DS9 - RO'S QUARTERS

The BATHROOM. Ro splashes cold water onto her face, trying to shock the dream out of her system. Stares at herself in the mirror. Take a deep breath. Gets herself under control.

She opens the mirror, revealing the cabinet, and finds the hypospray. She pushes the cabinet closed again...

...And Taran'atar is standing behind her in the mirror. Ro SHRIEKS, jerks in surprise and fear, spins on the spot...

40 REVERSE ANGLE

...but there's nobody there.

Ro forces her beating heart to slow, her rasping breaths to even out, and turns slowly back to the mirror.

41 FIRST ANGLE

She lifts the hypospray in her hand, and purposely injects the painkillers. She breathes deeply as they take effect.

She reaches to the side and grabs her walking stick. Turns and heads back to the main room, hobbling more than usual.

The main room is still darkened for night. Standing in the bathroom doorway, she stops and looks at the bed, with its rumpled, sweat-drenched sheets. Stares for a moment.

RO
Computer. Time.

COMPUTER
Five-hundred forty-seven hours.

Too early to go to work. Too late to go back to bed.

RO
Fine. Start the shower.

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

The Jem'Hadar lies on his bed, straight as a rod, fully dressed and on top of the cover. Nothing has been moved or ruffled at all. He just lay down and went to sleep.

L'HAAN (v.o.)

Why are you here? What good does
it serve?

43 **EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD**

A sweeping, panoramic view of the Great Link, the enormous sea of golden Founders swelling and rolling gently.

TARAN'ATAR (o.s.)

This is the world of the Founders.
The home of the Dominion. This is
where I belong.

Panning around slowly, we see Taran'atar standing on the usual rocky islet, staring out at the Link.

Panning further, we see a Vulcan woman - L'HAAN, the Intendant's handmaiden (last seen 9x23 "The Soul Key") - standing just behind, gazing out over the Link with him.

L'HAAN

Is it? Then why have they twice
sent you away?

TARAN'ATAR

To do work for the Founders that
only I was capable of doing.

L'HAAN

You parrot the words of your
former masters. Have you no
thoughts of your own?

TARAN'ATAR

I never needed thoughts of my own.

L'HAAN

That is not a denial. Tell me your
thoughts.

TARAN'ATAR

Why do you care?

L'HAAN

You are the one who has brought me here, to ask precisely these questions of yourself.

TARAN'ATAR

Federation double-speak. None of you ever say what you mean.

L'HAAN

I am not Federation. I am not even real. But you are correct that I lived a life of deception. Very well - leave me. Return to your Founders, if they will have you.

Taran'atar steps towards the edge of the Link. But as he steps closer, the tide of the sea recedes away from him. Another step closer - the Link moves away again.

Frustrated, Taran'atar turns and looks at L'Haan. She gazes back at him, completely expressionless and impassive.

TARAN'ATAR

This is pointless. None of this is real. I am already with the Founders - I do their bidding. That is all a Jem'Hadar needs.

L'Haan arches an eyebrow, indicating disagreement.

L'HAAN

You have learned the ways of the humans well. Now you lie to yourself.

Getting angry, Taran'atar turns towards L'Haan and advances on her. But as he does, her image FADES AWAY into nothing.

Taran'atar stands alone on the islet, surrounded by the Link. He looks at it... it seems very far away. He SCREWS UP his eyes...

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

...and opens his eyes from sleep. Calm and controlled. He sits up slowly, and turns to sit on the bed's edge.

He frowns, sneers, growls... and then puts it behind him. He stands and moves to the door.

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

Crewman SEVAK stands, as relaxed and at ease as a Vulcan ever is, in the corridor outside a set of doors. The doors open and Taran'atar walks out. Sevak snaps to attention.

Taran'atar is about to walk straight past Sevak without acknowledging him, but Sevak stops him.

SEVAK

Pardon me, Ambassador, but
Lieutenant Ro has requested that a
member of station security
accompany you at all times outside
your quarters.

Taran'atar stares him down, a little irritated. He makes silent note of the phaser holstered at Sevak's hip.

TARAN'ATAR

She does not trust me.

SEVAK

I have no information about the
Lieutenant's motivations, sir. Nor
are they any of my business. But I
will follow my orders.

That strikes a chord. Taran'atar relents.

TARAN'ATAR

Very well. I wish to visit the
station's exercise room. You
may... accompany me.

Taran'atar turns and walks, Sevak follows.

46 INT. DS9 - GYMNASIUM

A large room like a cargo bay, set up as a multi-exercise gym, with weights machines, treadmills, a stretching area. The doors OPEN and Taran'atar marches in, with Sevak close behind. But they are brought up short when they realise...

Ro is in the room, on the opposite side, using a weight-and-pulley machine while taking care to support herself properly and not overdo it. She turns when she sees someone has entered, and STARTS at the sight of Taran'atar.

A Mexican stand-off of awkward stares.

TARAN'ATAR

Lieutenant. I had not expected anyone else to be here this early in the station's day. I thought it prudent to avoid the civilian population for now.

RO

(blank)

That's probably a good idea.

(beat)

I'll let you have the room to yourself.

TARAN'ATAR

That will not be necessary.

RO

No, it's no trouble.

She disentangles herself from the exercise equipment and grabs for her walking stick, with her anti-grav anklets visible. She starts to hobble across the room towards them.

It's a big room, and the long, silent stretch of time is agonisingly awkward, as she makes her way across it. The Vulcan and the Jem'Hadar can't show any emotional reaction, but the struggle is accusation enough on its own.

Finally she hobbles past them and out the door. Taran'atar stands there, considering everything.

47 **INT. DS9 - BASHIR'S QUARTERS**

Bashir sits on his bed. In uniform, but slumped and tired, no energy. Looks at the pillow, considering whether to just lie back down or not. A moment - he pulls himself together.

BASHIR
This is ridiculous.
(stands up)
Computer - Arabica coffee, full strength.

COMPUTER
Standard user preferences for this replicator indicate no caffeinated beverages. Please confirm request.

BASHIR
Oh, for God's sake. Confirm.

The replicator produces a steaming cup of coffee. Bashir reaches in to grab it. He takes a sip. It doesn't help.

BASHIR
Might as well get the morning started.

COMPUTER
Please restate request.

BASHIR
(roll eyes)
Disregard.

Taking his coffee, he heads to the door. It OPENS at his approach...

48 **INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)**

...but as he passes the threshold out into the corridor, the standard lights die out and the usual background sounds of the station fade away.

The door closes behind him. Bashir stands in the corridor, looking up and down it, puzzled. What's wrong here?

BASHIR
Hello? Is anyone there?

No answer. Just dim background lighting, no sounds.

BASHIR
Computer? Has there been a power
failure in this section?

No response.

BASHIR
I suppose that answers my
question.

Carrying his coffee, Bashir begins to walk down the
corridor, a bit trepidatious.

49 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Dark and silent, only dim emergency lighting to see by. And
it is a ghost town, with not a single soul to be seen...

...except for Bashir, who emerges from around the curve of
the station, walking along. He is still puzzled and not a
little worried.

50 POV ANGLE (CONTINUOUS)

Something is watching Bashir. We see him from behind. He
jerks his head around, looking urgently back the way he
came - towards us. Did he hear something?

There's nothing there - even though our POV is right there
in the middle of the Promenade, watching him, he doesn't
see us. He turns back around and walks on.

51 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Security office - dead. Replimat - dead. Quark's bar -
dead. Station shrine - dead.

Finally he reaches the Infirmary. Doors closed. He steps
warily towards them. They open onto a similarly dark and
deserted room.

52 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY (CONTINUOUS)**

Bashir creeps into the room, still expecting something to jump out at him.

BASHIR
Anybody there?
(beat)
I'm not about to get jumped by a
Lethean again, am I? I've had
quite enough of that.

But no, there's nothing.

BASHIR
Computer... please respond.

COMPUTER
Ready.

BASHIR
Then can you please tell me where
everyone is.

COMPUTER
Please restate request.

BASHIR
This station has a crew of
hundreds and a population of
thousands. From the bats in the
belfry right down to the bears in
the bedroom. So why can't I find
any of them?

COMPUTER
Unknown.

BASHIR
Are they still on board?

COMPUTER
Negative.

BASHIR
When did they leave?

COMPUTER

A long time ago.

That's disquieting. Bashir walks through from the office area to the surgery suite. Still empty.

BASHIR

Is there anyone left?

COMPUTER

Negative. You are alone.

BASHIR

(small, scared)

Then what's following me?

COMPUTER

Nothing. You are alone.

BASHIR

Stop saying that.

COMPUTER

All your friends have left you.
You are alone.

BASHIR

Stop it!

Bashir hears the door of the Infirmary open - he turns and moves quickly to see who it is, hopeful to prove the computer wrong.

It's OLD BASHIR. Like he looked in 3x18 "Distant Voices" - a wrinkled and decrepit old man, white-haired and stooped over, barely able to place one foot in front of the other.

53 **BASHIR**

who gazes sadly at this passing vision, understanding now.

54 **OLD BASHIR**

shuffles slowly towards his usual desk, creakingly lowers himself into the seat, and looks forlornly out at the room.

55 OLD BASHIR'S POV

from his position at the chief medical officer's desk, he looks around at the Infirmary. It's empty now, no sign of the younger Bashir.

56 OLD BASHIR

turns back to his desk. Taps the computer and talks to it in a creaky old man's voice.

OLD BASHIR

Begin medical officer's log. I've been alone here now for... fifty years. Everybody else has moved on. But it's okay. I like it here.
(sadly)
I'll never leave.

An arm in a Starfleet medical uniform reaches into frame, unseen by Old Bashir, and grabs his shoulder. Old Bashir jumps in fright -

MATCH CUT TO:

57 INT. DS9 - BASHIR'S QUARTERS

Bashir JERKS awake in his bed, back in his darkened quarters. He readjusts to his surroundings...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

58 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Major Cenn enters, nervous. He glances over to the bar, where QUARK is serving. Cenn heads to a table near the bar, where RICHTER and ETANA sit together, sharing breakfast.

CENN

Umm... Ensign, Sergeant... excuse me for interrupting, but could I join you? I was hoping to get your advice about something.

Richter gestures to a spare chair - he sits.

RICHTER

Sure, Major. What's on your mind?

CENN

It's about Lieutenant Ro. She's been kinda tough on me lately...
(to Etana)
...and you worked with her a long time... how do you handle her?

ETANA

I'm not sure I ever handled her, Major. She is tough. But I like that. Piss her off, and she will bring you down. But if you can get her on your side, she'll be the fiercest friend you ever had.

CENN

But this seems like more than just her usual bad mood. She's tired, irritable... I'm actually worried for her.

RICHTER

Doctor Bashir's been kind of rough lately too. Not angry... just woolly, absent minded. I can't

help thinking back to that
Cathedral thing in the Gamma
Quadrant, how it sucked the brains
right out of him...

Cenn looks horrified - Richter reassures him.

RICHTER (cont)
Metaphorically speaking.
(looks up; *sotto*)
Speak of the devil...

Cenn looks at her, confused by the human idiom. She nudges
his attention towards the door, where Bashir just entered.

CENN
He looks awful...

RICHTER
Yeah... he said he's not been
sleeping well. Bad dreams.

The three of them watch Bashir sluggishly approach the bar.

59 **BASHIR & QUARK**

Bashir settles in at the bar.

BASHIR
Small coffee please, Quark. Full
strength, Arabica blend.

QUARK
(surprised)
I thought you were a decaf man.
But I guess you do look kind of...
(how to say it?)
...like Morn with a hangover.

Bashir forces a tense smile of grim amusement.

BASHIR
Just get me the coffee, Quark.

Quark turns away to the replicator and works the buttons.

60 **CENN, ETANA & RICHTER (FOREGROUND of SC 61)**

Scene 61 (Bashir & Quark) takes place simultaneously in the background. Cenn, Etana and Richter overhear. Observing them, something worrying occurs to Cenn...

CENN

Sevak walked Taran'atar to the gym first thing this morning. He said Ro was already there, looked like she'd been there a while. I guess she's not sleeping either...?

RICHTER

You think she's been having bad dreams too?

CENN

She'd certainly have reason to.

ETANA

But what are the odds two of the station's senior officers would have an attack of the *pagh-wraith* at the same time?

61 **BASHIR & QUARK (BACKGROUND of SC 60)**

Quark places a steaming cup of dark coffee on the counter in front of Bashir. Bashir looks up at him, unimpressed.

BASHIR

What's that?

QUARK

It's coffee. Full strength, Arabica blend.

BASHIR

It's a large. I asked for a small.

QUARK

Oh, that. It's at no extra cost. Treir's idea to build good will with the customers.

Bashir is getting louder, angrier. Other customers start to stare. Quark is baffled, trying to rescue this transaction.

BASHIR

But I didn't ask for a large.

QUARK

But... it's the same price.

BASHIR

That's not the point! I asked for a small because I only wanted a small. If I'd wanted a large I would have asked for a large. But I didn't, did I?

QUARK

(hands up)

I'm sorry, I just thought you'd like it.

BASHIR

You should give the customer what they ask for, Quark, not what you think they'd like.

To punctuate his point, Bashir **SHOVES** the cup of coffee away. It tumbles off the counter and **SMASHES** to the ground.

QUARK

Hey!

Etana is instantly on her feet, security training kicking in. The rest of the bar is silent, watching the scene.

ETANA

Doctor! Is there a problem here?

Under staring eyes, Bashir realises he has gone too far.

BASHIR

Quark... I'll pay for the damage. I haven't been sleeping well...

ETANA
(delicately)
Still having the nightmares?

BASHIR
It's stupid. I don't have
nightmares. There must be
something wrong with me.

QUARK
Then you stay the hell out of my
bar until you get it fixed.

ETANA
Quark, this is serious. Bashir's
not the only one acting strange
lately... and I'm starting to
think it's not a coincidence.

Etana leads Bashir gently away. Quark stands behind his
bar, jaw set and angry, watching them go.

CENN
(*sotto*, to Richter)
So much for not being angry.

63 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

In the surgical suite, Bashir sits sideways on a bio-bed,
slumped and tired, and rather embarrassed. Richter and
Tarses work various scanners and physically examine him.

In the main room, there is an impromptu staff meeting,
featuring Kira, Ro and Major Cenn. SHAR and NOG both enter
from the Promenade and join the group, carrying padds.

KIRA
Shar - anything?

SHAR
Nothing so far, sir. All the usual
scans are negative, but there are
some more... exotic traces that
are not scanned for as a matter of
course. I will continue.

NOG

Maybe it's nothing. People have dreams all the time. I had a dream that I went to bed still wearing my uniform.

Everyone turns to look at him. Deer in the headlights.

NOG (cont)

I hadn't, though.

Tarses and Richter enter from the surgical suite, having finished examining Bashir. Bashir follows them, not wanting to be left out, although that wasn't really Tarses' plan.

TARSES

I haven't found any obvious medical cause, either, Captain. But I'm not yet prepared to say there isn't one.

BASHIR

Of course there is. There's always some reason for this kind of thing. Keep looking.

KIRA

We will, Doctor.

BASHIR

Kristen, work with him, will you? Airborne pathogens, degenerative disorders. And Shar... various kinds of non-corporeal aliens are known to attack using telepathic signals... check everything.

SHAR

Certainly, Doctor.

BASHIR

(on a roll)

On this station alone we've had probability games, imagination aliens, telepathic archives....

(indignant)

I don't have nightmares, Captain.
I haven't since I was a little
boy. And me and Ro at the same
time? That's no coincidence.

KIRA

(calm down!)

We'll handle it, Doctor. You just
get some rest.

RO

(impatient)

Are we done with this now? That
damned Kressari freighter is on
final approach for its delivery of
poison flowers, and security is
short enough as it is.

CENN

What about Taran'atar?

Ro visibly tenses. Nog sees it, and is concerned.

KIRA

What about him, Major?

CENN

Crewman Sevak has been assigned to
escort him. If he could be
relieved, we'd have more bodies
spare to help with the Kressari...

Cenn gives a nervous glance at Ro - she's keeping her eyes
averted, but is practically vibrating with annoyance. Kira
is aware of the tension. Everyone in the room is aware.

KIRA

Assignment of security personnel
is Lieutenant Ro's responsibility.
Any changes are hers to make.

CENN

Understood, sir.

KIRA

Alright everyone. Get to work.

They do so, all but Tarses and Richter heading out onto the Promenade. Ro stomping angrily, Bashir slouching tiredly...

KIRA (cont)

Major Cenn, stay a moment, please.

Cenn stops, closes his eyes in a wince. He knows he did wrong, and now he is in trouble. Once they are alone...

KIRA

(not unkindly)

Do you know what you did wrong, Major?

CENN

I do. And I'm sorry -

KIRA

I'm not the one you owe an apology to. I know you meant well, and a good commander welcomes dissenting points of view from time to time. But there's a time and a place. And once your direct supervisor has made their decision, it's inappropriate to go over their heads to their supervisor.

CENN

Begging your pardon, Captain... but isn't that exactly what you did with Akaar and Asarem only a few days ago?

Kira can't help but smile. He's got her there.

KIRA

Yes... and if things hold to pattern, that should blow up in my face any day now. If you really want to help Ro, then find whatever's behind this.

Cenn nods with resolve. He'll catch them.

Kira stands in front of the bar, Quark behind it. TREIR is nearby, cleaning up the smashed coffee cup. Others sit at the bar, just doing the usual things, including a KLINGON male, who overhears everything Quark is about to say.

QUARK

Don't even try to paint this as my fault, Captain. I try to do a good deed - at my own expense - and I get attacked and slandered.

KIRA

I'm not blaming you, Quark. I just asked what happened. If there's something wrong with my medical officer, I need to know about it.

QUARK

Well I'm sure the Federation will figure it out with their sensor readings and science explanations.

KIRA

(sigh)

Fine. But I also wanted to talk to you again about Taran'atar.

QUARK

No is no, Captain.

KIRA

Quark, you know this isn't right.

QUARK

What I know is that I've had six customers come to me just this morning and say how grateful they are that I banned that overgrown rock from my bar. I don't need murdering Jem'Hadars, and I don't need crazy hew-mons either. So with all due respect, Captain, get your own ledgers in order before you come for mine. Are we done?

KIRA
(bites tongue)
Thank you for your time, Mister
Ambassador.

Quark turns his back and returns to work. Disappointed,
Kira can only walk away. Treir is right there.

TREIR
What was that all about?

QUARK
What else? Taran'atar. It's all
his fault.

TREIR
What is?

QUARK
Ro. Bashir. The whole station's
having bad dreams because of that
murdering monster.

Quark stomps off, leaving Treir a little bemused. But the
Klingon man has heard - he sneers and growls. He gets up,
walks across the bar and joins a table of other Klingons.
He talks to them MOS, and they all growl...

65 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

A standard freighter ship settles onto the docking ring.

66 INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY

The ship's hold is open. Starfleet security, led by Major
Cenn, stands waiting at the bottom of the gangplank. The
ship's captain, a Kressari male called INGTUPLETH, walks
down the gangplank, surprised to see them.

CENN
You are Captain Ingtupleth?

INGTUPLETH
I am.

CENN

Major Cenn, station security.
Please come with me, Captain.
There are some questions I'd like
to ask you.

Confused and wary, Ingtupleth has little choice but to agree. He follows Cenn out of the room, nervously watching the security as they move up the gangplank onto his ship.

67 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Cenn leads Ingtupleth down the corridor. The Kressari is still a little confused as to what is going on here. As they turn a corner together, they notice Taran'atar approaching, with Sevak escorting him. They both tense.

INGTUPLETH

A Jem'Hadar...? I thought -

CENN

He's none of your concern.

The two groups pass each other in the corridor. Taran'atar is uncomfortable, knowing everyone hates him. Ingtupleth is worried - does the Jem'Hadar have something to do with why he is being questioned?

Cenn and Ingtupleth move on, but the Kressari glances back over his shoulder, still worried about the Jem'Hadar.

At the other end of the corridor, Taran'atar and Sevak turn the corner. As they pass, we see the Klingon from Quark's, lurking in the shadows, watching Taran'atar's every move.

On the Klingon's threatening sneer...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

68 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS

Cenn and Ingtupleth sit across a table in the middle of the room. The cells are empty, but threatening just by their presence. The Kressari still has no idea what this is all about, and is increasingly scared and nervous.

CENN

What is the nature of the cargo you're delivering today, Captain?

INGTUPLETH

Several species of flora native to Kressar... as I told members of your station's staff when the arrangements were first made.

CENN

And those are poisonous species, are they not?

INGTUPLETH

Potentially poisonous under very rare conditions, yes.

CENN

And one of the effects of that poison is hallucinations, correct?

INGTUPLETH

Major, I answered all of these questions weeks ago. And your crew agreed to provide the quarantine to prevent exactly the effects you're worried about.

CENN

Yes, it's stretched our resources nearly to the limit. So I have to wonder... what else might be going on while they're all so occupied?

INGTUPLETH

What else...? Major, I have no idea what you're talking about.

CENN

I'll tell you what, Captain. Members of our senior staff - the two most closely involved in running your quarantine in fact - have recently found themselves afflicted with a series of dreams designed to target them personally and make them less able to do their jobs. On the exact same day that this shipment of hallucinogenic plants arrives on the station. Surely you can see why that would jump out at me as being more than a coincidence?

INGTUPLETH

(stunned)

Major... I have no intentions against you or anyone on this station. Why would you even -

CENN

You seemed surprised to see a Jem'Hadar in the corridor earlier. Why was that?

INGTUPLETH

(thrown off)

I was just shocked, that's all. I'd heard that one used to live here, but I thought he'd left. What does that have to do with -

CENN

The thing is, Captain, the last time I talked with a Kressari in this room, she was part of a concentrated plan to kill the commander of this station, using that very Jem'Hadar as her agent. In fact, she was the one who

perfected the method the group used to over-ride his loyalty to the Founders... a method that included sending him subconscious instructions while he slept. So again, I can't help noticing that he's back only a matter of days before you arrive... with your hallucinogenic plants.

Ingtupleth sits back in his chair, absolutely amazed.

INGTUPLETH

I think I've heard enough of your baseless accusations, Major. I'm not saying another word to you until I have legal counsel.

CENN

One will be provided for you. But in the meantime, I'll need to ask to you remain in our custody... for your own safety, of course.

As the Kressari captain looks increasingly worried...

69 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Ro sits alone at her desk. On the screens, unnoticed for now, Cenn leads the Kressari captain into a holding cell.

Close on Ro's blank staring eyes as she remembers...

70 **INT. RO'S QUARTERS**

Last night. Ro is asleep in bed, caught in a dream...

...then she JERKS awake. Lying flat on her back, she raises her head, looks around at the darkened bedroom. Takes a moment to catch her breath.

71 **RO'S POV**

Looking across the room from her bed. There is a hint of movement - a SHADOW seems to shift.

72 **RO**

Her eyes flare in fear. Small gasp. She moves to get up... but she can't move. She looks down at her arm, wills it to move... nothing. Her legs... nothing. Getting increasingly scared, she looks back up at the room.

73 **RO'S POV**

There is a NOISE from somewhere in the darkness... like a chuckle and growl combined.

74 **RO**

turns her head, breath rasping, looks over to the window.

75 **THE WINDOW**

A humanoid SHAPE dashes quickly across the window, briefly silhouetted against the starlight.

76 **RO**

The tiniest whimper of panic. Gritting her teeth, she tries again to force her body to move. It won't. The GROWL comes again, louder... closer... right on top of her now...

Looking vertically down on her, getting closer... she can't escape... she SCREAMS...

77 **INT. RO'S QUARTERS**

Ro wakes for real, a strangled scream in her throat again, pulse pounding in her ears. She instantly sits up, looks around... nothing. Tests her hands, clenches and stretches them in front of her face... fine. Fights back the tears..

78 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

...and fights them back again, coming out of the memory. She opens a desk drawer and pulls out a hypospray. Pushes it to her neck, injects the painkillers...

The Promenade door opens, and Ro looks up, caught in the act. NOG is in the doorway. He sees the hypospray. Doesn't react or comment, though he knows exactly what is going on.

Ro puts the hypospray away. Returns her attention to her desk and tries to look like she is busy. She doesn't want company. Nog steps further in, the door closing behind him.

NOG

Lieutenant, I came to tell you that Shar still hasn't found anything... and that I understand how you feel.

RO

(sharp)

Lieutenant, have I given you any indication at all that I want your sympathy?

NOG

(a bit annoyed)

This isn't sympathy. You can get sympathy from my uncle. This is empathy. Believe it or not, Ro, you're not the only one who's ever been hurt by a Jem'Hadar. The Federation is filled with people in the same situation.

He pulls up the leg of his uniform, revealing the artificial leg underneath.

NOG (cont)

...Including me. In case you forgot, when Taran'atar was first assigned to the station, I had a hard time believing he wasn't about to kill me every time I saw him.

Nog drops his pant-leg, having made his point. Ro is a bit chagrined, perhaps the tiniest bit ashamed of herself. She won't go as far as saying so, of course.

RO

(quietly)

How did you get past it?

NOG

Well, in my case it took a supernatural encounter with a mysterious spaceborne artefact in the Gamma Quadrant. You may have to go the long way around. But I did get past it, and you will too.

A touch embarrassed, Ro just gives a small nod of thanks. Nog accepts it graciously. Nog looks up at the monitors, sees the Kressari captain in one of the holding cells.

NOG

What did the Kressari do?

RO

What?

She turns around to look at the screens herself, confused. Seeing the Kressari, and Cenn standing nearby, she frowns.

79 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

A turbolift door opens, and Taran'atar and Sevak emerge. They walk along the Promenade, and all around, extras give Taran'atar dirty looks. Taran'atar glances at them.

They are about to head past Quark's bar, but Taran'atar notices Quark, noticing him from just inside the bar. The Ferengi stops what he is doing and stands firm. None shall pass. Taran'atar stops walking and turns his back.

SEVAK

Is there a problem, Ambassador?

TARAN'ATAR

I am not permitted to use the Ferengi's holosuites. The exercise room was unfulfilling. Every face on the station looks at me with hatred. I tire of it.

SEVAK

With respect, Ambassador, did you truly expect it to be otherwise?

TARAN'ATAR

I did nothing to these people.
Those whom I did hurt, I have
apologised to. Is that not enough?

Sevak raises an eyebrow... and suddenly, Taran'atar reaches out and GRABS the Vulcan, SHOVES him out of the way...

...Revealing the KLINGON from earlier, storming towards Taran'atar with his *dk'tahg* dagger raised ready to strike.

KLINGON

Die, *fekh'lari* monster!

Untroubled, Taran'atar PUNCHES hard with one fist, getting the Klingon right in the chest and sending him FLYING back. The Klingon lands in a heap. Sevak looks caught unawares.

80 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS

Ro marches into the room, her walking-stick CLANGING hard. Cenn is still there, tapping into a padd while Ingtupleth stands inside a cell, looking nervous and confused.

RO

What the hell is he doing in here?

CENN

Lieutenant... I was interviewing Captain Ingtupleth with respect to... your condition. I believe he and his cargo may be involved in what's been happening to you and Doctor Bashir.

Ro clenches her fists, closes her eyes, takes a deep breath. She may lose it at any second.

RO

Major Cenn, explain something to me. How is it that you can manage to dress yourself in the morning, being so mind-numbingly stupid?

Cenn's jaw drops...

81 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Taran'atar looks down at the Klingon on the floor, sneers in contempt. The Klingon growls back, full of anger.

TARAN'ATAR

I had wondered when you would finally attack. I smelled you following me an hour ago.

KLINGON

I attack my enemy to his face, not in the dark, with honourless mind games.

TARAN'ATAR

And I am your enemy?

KLINGON

Not for much longer.

The Klingon LAUNCHES back up off the floor for another go. But before he can make contact, Sevak steps calmly between them, pushing Taran'atar back and protecting him.

A sharp KICK knocks the dagger out of the Klingon's hand. Enraged, the Klingon aims a FISTS at Sevak's head, but the Vulcan catches the fist in his own, and he smoothly and efficiently TWISTS the arm behind the Klingon's back.

The Klingon ROARS in frustration, but Sevak's spare hand reaches for a NERVE PINCH. The Klingon slumps, unconscious.

SEVAK

Do you know him?

TARAN'ATAR

Not before now.

A SHOUT of anger, and they turn to see KLINGON 2, the first Klingon's friend from the bar. He stands in the doorway, a little drunk and glaring down at his fallen friend.

KLINGON 2

What did you do to him? I will kill you!

Klingon 2 runs to attack. Taran'atar runs to meet him, before Sevak can do anything to stop him.

Meanwhile the Security Office doors are open and Nog stands in the doorway. He sees the fight and stays back...

82 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS**

Ingtupleth is inside his cell. But he might as well be invisible right now, as Cenn and Ro are arguing across him.

CENN

Lieutenant, you may be my superior officer, and I'm sorry for what you're going through, but it is not okay for you to speak to me like that. I'm trying to solve -

RO

He's got nothing to do with it, you idiot!

NOG (comm)

Nog to Ro. There's a situation on the Promenade. We need you here right now.

Ro looks towards the front in surprise. After a moment to collect, she turns back to Cenn.

RO

Get him out of there. Now.

And she turns and stomps back towards the exit.

83 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Taran'atar and Sevak fight Klingons 2 and 3 - the first is still unconscious. The Klingons are loose and sloppy, Sevak is sharp and precise, Taran'atar is pure blunt force.

In the midst of this, Quark is desperately pushing them all out of his doorway, while trying not to get hurt himself. The general background crowd is staying out of harm's way.

QUARK

There is no fighting at Quark's!
(shakes head)
What is it with this place?

The second they are over the threshold, he hits the switch to close the doors. The Security Office doors open and Ro steps out. Nog directs her attention towards the fight.

SEVAK

gets a solid martial arts hit in against Klingon 3.

TARAN'ATAR

gets Klingon 2 in a headlock. The Klingon struggles and roars. Taran'atar tries for a NERVE PINCH. It doesn't work. Taran'atar looks at his own hand, confused, and then at Sevak, who gives him a calm eyebrow mid-fight.

KLINGON 2

laughs, spins in Taran'atar's grip and PUNCHES him hard. Growling with anger, Taran'atar PUNCHES him back.

RO

stands at the security doors. Does she interfere, or does she enjoy the show? Nog is confused by her lack of action.

NOG

Lieutenant...?

A burly BAJORAN man steps up out of the crowd...

BAJORAN

Hey! Leave him alone!

The Bajoran tries to GRAB Taran'atar's arm and pull him away from the Klingon. Taran'atar turns and SHOVES the Bajoran man away, making sure it is a non-lethal blow.

The Klingon takes his opening and gets a good slog in. The Bajoran man comes back too, and begins to hit Taran'atar. Getting more aggressive and angry, Taran'atar SPINS on the spot with hands out, pushing everyone away from him.

Momentarily free of attackers, Taran'atar looks up and sees Ingtupleth, the Kressari captain, heading towards him. Cenn is following the Kressari, trying to hold him back.

Behind them all, Nog is still staying out of it. But Ro turns and heads back into the Security Office.

INGTUPLETH

You! They put me in jail because
of you, you murdering freak!

And Ingtupleth joins the fight too, attacking Taran'atar. Cenn wades in, trying to pull Ingtupleth back out. It's devolving into a furball of fists and kicks.

A phaser blast SHRIEKS across the Promenade, hitting the bulkhead. Cenn turns and sees Ro holding the phaser...

RO

That's enough! Stand down now or I
will fire, and I will not miss.

They do not stop fighting. Gritting her teeth, Ro starts forward, not noticing that she has dropped her stick and is walking on her own. She wades into the fight...

RO

I said stop it, all of you!

Ro reaches for Taran'atar's arm, and the Jem'Hadar reacts angrily, SHOVES hard with all his might...

...and Ro FLIES across the Promenade, landing hard with a CRUNCH against the bulkhead. She crumples to the deck, and SCREAMS in shock and pain...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

84 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Ro lies on a bio-bed, unconscious. With a small GASP, she opens her eyes and sees Doctor Tarses working over her. She sighs, annoyed with herself as much as anything else.

RO

Am I paralysed again?

TARSESES

Far from it. In fact, you're better than ever. In all the adrenaline rush, I bet you didn't even notice you dropped the walking stick, did you?

Ro thinks back a second... and then gives a small smile.

TARSESES

You're fine, Lieutenant. A couple of bruises, a bit of shock... but that's all.

He gently helps her to move up to a sitting position.

TARSESES

I would like to think it goes without saying that you still need to take it easy. But knowing you -

RO

I get it, Doctor. Thank you.

The main doors from the Promenade open and BASHIR rushes in, looking a little wild and desperate. He rushes over to Ro and Tarses.

BASHIR

I heard what happened. Are you okay? Did you find out what's going on?

TARSES

Lieutenant Ro will be fine,
Doctor. And no, I haven't yet
found a cause for your dreams.

RO

Cenn had the crazy idea it was the
Kressari -

BASHIR

Yes! Exactly! That must be it.
The flowers have hallucinogenic
effects, don't they?

Tarses is trying to be patient, but Bashir is grating.

TARSES

Yes, they do. But I've checked
that. The quarantine is secure.
There's no sign of any spores
getting loose. That's not it.

RO

Julian, I agree with Simon -

Bashir boils over with frustration, and pushes past Tarses.

BASHIR

You're both useless. I'll find it
myself. I'll prove it!

Bashir goes to his panels and begins working. Tarses and Ro
exchange worried looks.

85 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits behind her desk, Taran'atar at attention in front
of her.

KIRA

No, you're not in trouble. Nog and
Sevak both corroborate that it was
self defence. And that you went
out of your way to use non-lethal
methods. Thank you for that.

TARAN'ATAR

I had anticipated emotional reactions. I did not expect they would extend to violence.

KIRA

The Klingon who attacked you... apparently his brother served on the *noH'pach*.

Taran'atar nods, understanding the reference. He killed the crew of the *noH'pach*.

KIRA (cont)

The others were just defending their friend. They're all sleeping it off in security. Do you want to press charges?

TARAN'ATAR

What good would that serve?

Kira understands what he means.

86 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Ro walks along the Promenade, away from the Infirmary and towards the Security Office. She is not using the walking stick, but still taking it easy. She reaches the security doors - they open...

87 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

...and Quark is there waiting for her. She stops, hangs her head, sighs. Now what?

RO

What do you want, Quark?

QUARK

What's Rule of Acquisition number one hundred ninety?

What the hell does that have to do with anything? Ro moves around to her seat, wanting to get back to work.

RO
(dismissive)
"Hear all, trust nothing."

QUARK
Which is why I'm here, to ask you
for myself if the stories I'm
hearing are true.

RO
(angry growl)
Get out of my office, Quark.

Quark steps closer, chuckling.

QUARK
You don't scare me, Laren.

She gives him the glare of death.

QUARK
Okay, you scare me a little. But
not enough to make me leave.
(beat; gently)
Why didn't you tell me?

RO
Because it's none of your damn
business. Still isn't.

QUARK
Why do you insist on acting like
you don't have anyone to turn to?
People around here care about you,
Laren. You know what Major Cenn
did this morning, after you ripped
him a new one? He came to Etana
and Richter, looking for help. He
was worried about you.

RO
Got a funny way of showing it.
Throwing the Kressari in jail. We
had to waive the docking fees to
make it up to him.

QUARK

Because you wouldn't tell him what the problem was. He was flailing around in the dark. He couldn't help but make it worse. Hell, I probably didn't help much either.

RO

You?

QUARK

The Klingon overheard me saying it was all Taran'atar's fault.

Ro tenses again, and Quark sees it. He goes to her.

RO

(small whisper)

He scares me, Quark. I'm afraid to even go to sleep.

QUARK

I know. I'm sorry. But you're safe with me.

(clarification)

In my bar.

Ro peers at Quark, and realises something.

RO

Quark... did you ban him from your bar... for me?

QUARK

Of course I did. You can't expect me to welcome him like an old friend after what he did to you.

Ro smiles, touched by his support. She reaches out to touch his ear affectionately. She comes to a decision.

RO

Undo it.

QUARK

What?

RO
Let him back in the bar. None of
it was his fault. He's said he's
sorry. Undo it.

QUARK
Laren...

RO
Please, Quark. For me.

Quark takes a deep breath. How can he refuse?

QUARK
You know this'll hurt business.

That's a yes. Ro smiles in thanks.

88 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Major Cenn sits at the bar, while life around him returns to normal. Treir is working the bar, and Cenn is gazing lovingly at her while she goes about her business.

There is a COUGH, and Cenn turns to see Ro standing nearby. He jumps a bit, worried he is about to be yelled at again. Instead, Ro moves to take the seat next to him.

RO
Mind if I join you, Major?

CENN
(confused, wary)
Not at all, Lieutenant.

RO
I wondered... if could buy you a
drink.

Cenn is quietly taken aback. It's an apology.

CENN
That would be nice. Thank you.

RO

Alright, then.
(calls over)
Treir?

Treir heads over to them. Cenn smiles - he accepts Ro's apology - but then he looks past Ro, and his smile fades.

Ro sees the change, and turns to look - Taran'atar has entered the bar. There is tension all around the bar as people stop talking and turn to look.

Ro manoeuvres off her bar stool and stands to confront Taran'atar. He approaches and stands face to face with her. She wants to run, fight, scream... but she controls it.

TARAN'ATAR
Lieutenant... thank you.

RO
You're welcome.

With a nod, Taran'atar walks past and heads up the stairs towards the holosuites. Around the bar, at least two customers get up from their seats and walk out in protest.

Ro sees it. She turns to the bar, gets back on her stool.

RO
Synthale?

Cenn has watched the exchange. He's impressed.

89 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Bashir is alone at his desk, working hard, frazzled and unrested. Screens scrolling, padds strewn all around. He hears the doors open behind him - he doesn't look up.

BASHIR
I said get out, all of you. If
you're not going to help me -

KIRA (o.s.)
(firm)
Doctor.

Bashir jerks around, recognising a command tone when he hears it. Kira is there, with Shar, Tarses, Richter and Etana hovering awkwardly behind her. Bashir stands, a little ashamed. Straightens himself up, without success.

BASHIR

Captain. I'm sorry. What can I do for you?

KIRA

I have Lieutenant ch'Thane's final report.

BASHIR

About time. What have you found, Shar?

SHAR

Nothing, sir. I have checked every subspace band for signals, and there is only the usual background radiation. No traces of telepathic activity on the station.

BASHIR

(frustrated)

Then it must be something else! Simon, the Kressari...

TARSES

No, Doctor. Besides, you said this started a couple of days ago. The Kressari only arrived today.

BASHIR

Something else then! Kristen, you remember the Cathedral...

KIRA

Doctor... no.

Kira is gentle but firm. Bashir kind of knows what she's telling him... but doesn't want to accept it.

BASHIR

I don't have nightmares, Captain.
I'm not some stupid little boy
who's afraid of the dark!
(getting tearful)
I'm a grown man. I know everything
that happens in my own head, and I
don't have nightmares! I can't!

It's getting uncomfortable. Kira glances at Tarses, and he gets her message. He gently leads the others away and out of the room, until Kira is left alone with Bashir.

KIRA
Doctor...

Bashir slumps into his seat, exhausted but still fighting. Kira goes to him, worried for him, gently trying to help.

BASHIR
There has to be something...

KIRA
There isn't. I'm sorry, Julian.
But there's nothing you can blame
this on. No aliens, no diseases...
(beat)
There's just you.

Tearfully, he finally accepts it.

BASHIR
Just me. I am alone.

Bashir stares, teary-eyed. Kira is there for him.

90 **ON COMM SCREEN**

A personal screen in someone's quarters shows Doctor LENSE (last seen 9x15 "Wounds"), head and shoulders, in uniform.

LENSE (screen)
Julian! This is a nice surprise.
What's the occasion?

WIDEN to reveal...

91 **INT. DS9 - BASHIR'S QUARTERS**

Some time later, Bashir sits alone in his quarters. He is past the worst of it now.

BASHIR

Hi, Elizabeth. I hope you don't mind... I just felt the need to talk to somebody.

LENSE (screen)

Any time, Julian, you know that. What's wrong?

A deep breath, as Bashir finally admits it to himself.

BASHIR

Ezri's gone.

LENSE (screen)

Oh Julian... I'm sorry.

BASHIR

My own stupid fault. I knew it was coming. It just... brought up some issues for me... that I didn't want to face.

LENSE (screen)

Like what?

BASHIR

Like feeling like everyone is moving on with their lives without me, and I'm stuck here doing the same old job...

LENSE (screen)

It's an important job, Julian. They couldn't manage without you.

BASHIR

Thanks, I guess. What about you? Anything new with the great Doctor Elizabeth Lense?

LENSE (screen)
One thing, yeah.

Lense pulls back from the camera, and we see that she has a definite bump - she is about six months pregnant.

BASHIR
My God, Elizabeth... is it...
(sadly)
...Is it Saad's?

LENSE
(sad nod)
Yep. My baby's father is dead, on another planet, in another dimension, that no-one can get to anymore. At least I hope for his sake he's dead.
(beat)
So I know what you mean... about feeling left behind.

On Bashir's sad face...

92 INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

Taran'atar lies on his bed, asleep. Like it was before, with him lying straight as an arrow.

L'HAAN (v.o.)
You have returned...

93 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD

Taran'atar stands gazing out at the Great Link from his position on the islet, as it gently swells and rolls. L'Haan the Vulcan woman stands nearby, watching with him.

L'HAAN
I did not expect to see you here.
You called it pointless.

TARAN'ATAR
You did not expect it because you do not exist. You are a fabrication of my mind.

L'HAAN

Indeed I am. And yet here you are again to speak with me. May I ask why?

TARAN'ATAR

I am hated and attacked everywhere I go. Even the Founders cast me out.

L'HAAN

Does it bother you?

TARAN'ATAR

It should not. A Jem'Hadar should be above such things.

L'HAAN

That is not a denial. How fascinating... a Jem'Hadar who wants a friend.

TARAN'ATAR

A Jem'Hadar has no need of friends.

L'HAAN

Do not worry, Taran'atar. I will be your friend.

On that ominous note...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW