

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x15 - "Never See It Coming."

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 MONTAGE FROM PREVIOUS EPS

-- DS9 Ops. Ro says goodbye to Vaughn on the viewscreen.

RO
Safe journey, Captain.

VAUGHN (screen)
To us all, Commander. *Kirk* out.

VOICEOVER
Previously, on Deep Space Nine.

-- Bajor. Ro meets with Kira in the monastery gardens.

RO
Vaughn left this morning. I am now
officially in command of DS-Nine.

KIRA
You don't seem too happy about it.

-- The monastery. Ro is breaking the news to Kira and Raiq.

RO
We found a message from another
Ascendant. You're not the only
one, Raiq.

-- The Vedek Assembly. Bellis confronts Kai Solis.

BELLIS
A ship left the space station
yesterday, came to Bajor, stopped
at the Oralian Temple in Janir,
and then travelled through the
wormhole into the Gamma Quadrant.
To search for more Ascendants.

-- The runabout. Cenn talking to Lenaris on the screen.

CENN

I'm really not happy about this,
General. What do you want me to do?

LENARIS (screen)

Go along with it. Just remember
that you're an officer in the
Bajoran Militia, Major, not in
Starfleet.

-- The rear cabin of the runabout. Pif and Cenn.

PIF

They killed so many people. They
attacked the *Even Odds*, put my
family at risk. It could start all
over again if we're not careful.

CENN

You can trust me. We'll keep it
under control.

-- The runabout. Pif has found a clue in the database.

PIF

"The Black World" - that was all
we knew to call it. The place you
never go if you plan on living a
long life.

KIRA

It's the best shot we've got.

-- The Vedek Assembly. Bellis's ultimatum to Solis.

BELLIS

The Vedek Assembly cannot sit in
session without a minimum of
seventy in attendance. Until the
people's voices have finally been
heard and this man is removed from
the Apex Chair, it will not.

-- The Black World. Raiq approaches Vexh, the other last
Ascendant. They embrace, flames licking around them. Then
Raiq's eyes flick ominously towards Kira and Ro...

VOICEOVER
And now, the conclusion.

2 **EXT. BLACK WORLD - THE RIDGE**

Continuing the scene...

KIRA, RO, CENN and PIF stand and watch the scene below.

RO
Wonder what she's gonna tell him.

CENN
Oh you know, just that every other member of their race is dead. That we killed them. That the entire purpose of their culture has come and gone and they missed it. No big deal.

3 **EXT. BLACK WORLD - THE BASE**

Down below, RAIQ and VEXH step apart.

VEXH
My sister... It is a great relief to see you. Have you come to join the Quest?

RAIQ
(doesn't answer)
It is good to see you too, my brother. I am Raiq.

VEXH
I am Vexh.

RAIQ
How long have you been here?

VEXH
Almost half a cycle. I heard the call. I was far from the Hearth, but I came as swift as I was able.

RAIQ

But my brother, the call went out more than a cycle ago.

VEXH

(bitter)

I was attacked upon the path.

RAIQ

By who?

Vexh holds up a hand, waves it in the air as if working one of the panels in his ship. An image forms in mid-air, a 3D holographic recording.

It's wavery and incomplete, but clear enough to show a repeating video clip of three ships firing on the POV - Jem'Hadar ships. Raiq watches this with a sneer.

RAIQ

Animals. Their name is Jem'Hadar. They are heretics, worshipping metamorphic beings as their gods.

VEXH

Be assured, sister, they did not survive their attempt. But my own vessel was wounded, and I along with it. I could no longer trigger the shift.

RAIQ

I understand.

VEXH

But where are our brothers and sisters? If the call was over a cycle ago as you say, why has no-one else yet arrived?

The moment of truth. Raiq hesitates.

RAIQ

My brother... we did arrive. Long ago. We gathered here for almost a full cycle before the Quest.

VEXH

They have gone on without me?

RAIQ

Yes. I beg forgiveness.

VEXH

No forgiveness is required, my sister. Come, we will rejoin the Quest together. Where are they?

Again, Raiq hesitates. Vexh sees it. He knows something is wrong. Warily, he takes a step back from Raiq.

VEXH

Raiq... Where are our brothers and sisters?

Raiq still can't bring herself to say it...

VEXH

(mistrustful)

We should leave and rejoin them at once. Why will you not tell me of the Quest?

RAIQ

Because the words are difficult, my brother. The Quest... is over.

VEXH

The Quest is never over. It is our life. Speak truth now!

RAIQ

I am, Vexh. The words burn me as much as they do you, but by the light of the True themselves, I do not lie to you. The Fire came to us, and as doctrine promised, she heralded the Final Ascension.

VEXH

The Ascension... is real?

RAIQ

Real... and passed. Our brothers and sisters went on. Perhaps they assumed you were no longer among us. As was foretold, the Fire lit the path to the Fortress of the True. We found it... we battled the monsters who blocked our path... and they Ascended.

VEXH
They? Not you?

RAIQ
(sad shrug)
I am here, am I not?

4 **EXT. BLACK WORLD - THE RIDGE**

Up on the ridge with Kira, Ro, Cenn and Pif.

RO
How do you think it's going?

CENN
They haven't killed each other yet. Or us. So I'd say well.

Pif holds his sensitive doggy nose up in the air and sniffs curiously. He can smell something. No-one else notices.

5 **EXT. BLACK WORLD - THE BASE**

Vexh is struggling with what Raiq has told him. Grief, anger, denial...

VEXH'S HAND

His silver hand forms the POWER BALL we saw Blas use in 10x14 "Against the Odds" - a roiling palm-sized mass of destructive energy.

BACK TO SCENE

He slowly raises the hand, shaking with rage. Unfocused, emotional, barely holding on.

VEXH
Tell me you are lying.

RAIQ
I wish I could. But I am not.

VEXH
It can't be. It can't!

Raiq sympathises - she went through the same thing.

Vexh raises his hand further... and it BURSTS into flames.

6 **EXT. BLACK WORLD - THE RIDGE**

Kira sees this, her eyes flaring in alarm. Before she can think, she's running down the hill towards Raiq.

RO
Captain!

But Kira doesn't hear. Ro, Cenn and Pif run after her.

7 **EXT. BLACK WORLD - THE BASE**

Vexh looks up, sees these strangers running towards him. He doesn't know them or why they're here, but their presence only makes him angrier. His other hand BURSTS into flames.

Instinctively, without looking, Raiq throws one hand back towards Kira and casts a FORCEFIELD.

8 **KIRA**

Runs into the forcefield and bumps against it, frustrated and worried for Raiq. The others catch up to her. Closer now, a better view, but still can't interfere.

9 **EXT. BLACK WORLD - THE BASE**

Raiq tries to placate Vexh...

RAIQ
My brother, please... be calm. I am not your enemy. We are alike, you and I. We are alone.

The wrenchings of emotion become wrenchings of actual pain. Vexh cannot breathe, cannot focus, shaking hard.

He ROAR-SCREAMS, his hands bursting with short-lived jets of flame, and then crumbles to the ground. He's shivering, convulsing like Raiq herself did.

Raiq jerks towards him, alarmed and worried.

Her forcefield DISSOLVES, and Kira runs.

RAIQ
Help me! Help me!

As Raiq cradles the shuddering Vexh on the ground, and Kira and the others runs towards them to help...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

10 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Standard shot of the station at rest.

11 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

NOG, PRYNN and CANDLEWOOD sit at a table together, a semi-heated discussion already underway, their finished lunches and mugs of coffee long since forgotten.

CANDLEWOOD

I'm just saying, maybe "Uprising" wasn't the best title.

NOG

Why not?

CANDLEWOOD

Well, because for one thing there was no uprising.

NOG

Of course there was! DaiMon Mo disobeyed his orders to do the right thing.

PRYNN

But those orders were clearly wrong in the first place. It was setting up a straw man argument to make it easier to knock down.

CANDLEWOOD

And one ship doesn't really count as an uprising, Nog. And it wasn't even all the people on the ship. It barely counts as a mild disagreement.

NOG

Yeah, well... "Mild Disagreement" doesn't sell action figures!

The Bajoran security chief Lt Cmdr EVIK wanders up, his own mug in his hand, curious about the conversation.

EVIK

What are you three having such an animated discussion about?

PRYNN

We're talking about the latest *Marauder Mo* holosuite program.

NOG

In which brave and heroic Daimon Mo and his crew defy the immoral orders of their superiors and save a group of aliens they were supposed to just let die for the sake of their own profit.

CANDLEWOOD

(reassuring)

Don't worry, they still manage to make a profit at the end anyway.

EVIK

Ah, I confess I'm not all that familiar with the series. All I know is that it's supposed to only be worth playing the even-numbered ones. The odd-numbered ones are supposed to be dreadful.

NOG

This was an odd-numbered one!

EVIK

(hands up)

Don't shoot the messenger. I'm just relaying what I heard.

Suddenly QUARK is there, collecting empty glasses and butting in.

QUARK

Why, what have you heard?

EVIK

Apparently, the new *Marauder Mo* holo-program is creating some controversy among the fans.

QUARK

(wistful)

Ah, *Marauder Mo*. His ongoing mission to boldly go where no Ferengi had gone before, to seek out new profits and new people to exploit... it was inspirational! You know, it was because of *Mo* that I decided that one day, when I grew up, I was going to go out into space and be just like him.

PRYNN

That's why you signed up to the Ferengi Merchant Navy?

NOG

And ended up as the ship's cook.

QUARK

Hey, maybe it wasn't as glamorous or as action-packed as *Mo*, but I followed my dreams.

(sigh)

Still, it's not as good as it used to be. All these new characters... it's tough to make a connection. Anybody want anything else?

EVIK

I'm fine, thank you, Ambassador.

QUARK

So what do you think about this Vedek Assembly business, huh? Can you believe that half of them just walked out like that?

NOG

It wasn't half, uncle. It was barely over a third.

QUARK

It was enough. Don't get me wrong, another kai election will put my betting pools through the roof. But I can't help thinking it's just... petty.

EVIK

Perhaps. But Vedek Bellis and his supporters insist that the Bajoran spiritual community can never be harmonious with an Ohalavar in the Apex Chair.

CANDLEWOOD

Do you agree with him?

EVIK

I... ah... haven't quite decided yet. But he's clearly not alone in feeling that way. And I think it would be unwise to just dismiss him out of hand.

PRYNN

I guess we have to wait for the result of the vote.

EVIK

Which it's my job to administrate.

CANDLEWOOD

It doesn't usually work like that though, right?

EVIK

Certainly not. Bellis insisted on a public vote amongst the entire population this time, rather than just among the Assembly. Something about "activist vedeks" and letting the people have their say.

PRYNN

I can't stand the man myself. He's nothing but a bully.

EVIK

I'm sure there must be a way to work it out. I've never known two sides who couldn't mend their differences by simple discussion.

QUARK

I hope so. I've had my share of action-packed, thank you. I don't need to see Bajorans beating each other with clubs too. I do have one question though...

EVIK

Go on.

QUARK

If Vaughn has transferred, and Ro and Cenn are away in the Gamma Quadrant doing whatever they're doing, and the four of you are here talking about *Marauder Mo...* who's running the station?

Nog, Prynn and Candlewood look at each other...

NOG

We should...

PRYNN

...probably go...

CANDLEWOOD

...yeah.

They get up from the table and head for the door. Evik watches them go with a wistful smile.

EVIK

Ah, to be young and worry-free again, concerned only with the latest holosuite programs.

QUARK
You really think it's going to be
okay?

EVIK
I have to, Quark. The alternative
is... unpleasant to contemplate.

Evik and Quark go their separate ways, both pensive...

12 **EXT. SPACE - THE BLACK WORLD**

The dark and rocky planet as seen from space.

13 **INT. VEXH'S SHIP**

Vexh is horizontal, floating in mid-air, still shuddering
and convulsing. A FORCEFIELD is wrapped around him, and it
guides him gently, cushioning him and carrying him.

Raiq is casting the field, concentrating hard, to manoeuvre
Vexh towards the single pilot's chair. Kira, Ro and Cenn
are with them.

KIRA
Quick, get him onto the chair.

RAIQ
(sneer)
I know what to do, woman.

RO
(to Kira)
How do you know what to do?

KIRA
Because I was there... when we did
this for Raiq.

Raiq is distracted with a moment of gratitude to Kira,
momentarily forgetting her control of the forcefield.

Just in time - Vexh drops the couple of inches into the
chair. Instinctively, the chair begins to flow and reshape
itself, straightening into a bed, carrying Vexh with it.

Once in position, the silver liquid metal slowly bleeds out from the chair, flowing over Vexh's body. He gradually calms, relaxing into unconsciousness. The others watch, half fascinated, half revolted.

KIRA

Should we get out of here?

RAIQ

Why?

KIRA

It got kinda violent at this point when it was you in that chair.

RAIQ

(exasperated)

You misunderstand everything. That was Axno's vessel. Placing me into it required the vessel to adapt itself to me before it could heal me. Vexh's own vessel will heal him without any difficulty.

KIRA

Okay, good.

Jeez, she was only asking.

Leaving Vexh there to rest and recuperate, Ro and Kira begin to explore the ship. Raiq watches them warily.

RO

It doesn't look as badly beat up as Axno's did.

RAIQ

If the call went out more than a cycle ago, and Vexh has been here for half of that time, then it is strange that the vessel has taken this long to heal. The wound must have been great.

KIRA

Well, it's not like you guys are short on time.

RAIQ

We are a patient people. We waited millennia for the Ascension.

RO

Could that be why the ship hasn't healed? The Ascension destroyed the *Even Odds*, and that was barely one of yours anymore. Maybe it affected Vexh's ship as well.

RAIQ

It is a possibility. That was well reasoned, Ro.

Ro looks to Kira, smug, like "She likes me. Ner ner ner."
Cenn is uncomfortable with the lovefest.

CENN

I'll be outside if you need me.

Ro nods her permission. Cenn turns and clambers out of the hatch, and down the ladder.

14 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

Cenn reaches the ground again, and looks around.

CENN

Pif? Where are you?

He looks up the angle of the amphitheatre in front of him, towards the runabout. Nothing. Left, right. Nothing.

Getting worried now, he walks around the Ascendant ship, searching for the dog-like alien. On the other side of the ship, he looks up the hill again. And Pif is there, slowly climbing the hill. Cenn frowns, and chases after him.

CENN

Hey, Pif! Wait!

Pif glances back towards him, but doesn't stop climbing. He sniffs the air again. Cenn finally catches up...

CENN
What's going on?

PIF
Can you smell that?

Cenn shakes his head, no idea what Pif is talking about. After a moment they reach the opposite ridge line and stand at the edge, gazing out across the land.

And there, in the distance but quite clear, is what appears to be a WALL OF FIRE. It fills the entire horizon, miles away but growing very slowly closer.

Cenn and Pif see this, dismayed...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

15 EXT. BLACK WORLD

The wall of fire. Bright against the black rock of the planet's surface, it reaches up into the sky, gradually thinning as it reaches the edge of the atmosphere.

Kira, Ro, Cenn, Pif and Raiq now stand together at the ridge line, again half fascinated, half horrified.

RO

What is it?

CENN

It's the meridian. I said the planet was tidally locked with its sun, a very slow rotation? That -

(pointing)

- is the line between night and day. And it's getting closer.

(to Pif)

You said the planet caught fire.

PIF

I could smell it. The ozone.

KIRA

How long?

CENN

About twelve hours. And I really don't think we want to still be here when it arrives.

RAIQ

But Vexh remains unconscious. And until he has healed and awoken, he cannot move or pilot his vessel.

RO

Is there anything we can do to speed him up?

RAIQ

The vessel must take its course.
Although... perhaps... if it were
to bond with me as well...

RO

Can they do that? Two at once?

RAIQ

It is rare, but there are tales.
If I could help the vessel to
heal, the vessel could in turn
heal Vexh.

KIRA

But what about you? Aren't you
bonded to Axno's ship now?

RAIQ

I would not bond fully. Merely
assist. We should begin.

Raiq turns and heads back down towards the ship. With a
last glance towards the approaching meridian, they follow.

16 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Focusing on the Promenade...

17 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE, UPPER LEVEL

Evik stands at the barrier, looking down to the lower level
- specifically the shrine. From this vantage point we can
see Crewman SEVAK and Ensign ALECO standing guard as many
Bajorans, civilian and Starfleet, file into the shrine.

There's no particular problem, but Evik is troubled. He
watches as one Bajoran on his way in gives a dirty look to
another on her way out. Quark materialises beside him.

QUARK

Is it really the best idea to have
them voting in the very place
they're fighting over?

Evik doesn't react. Goes on watching for a moment.

QUARK

Are they having a big turnout?

EVIK

Lots of Bajorans on the station,
Quark. Lots of passionate people.

QUARK

And if passions get out of hand?

EVIK

Then I'll step in.

(beat)

You deal with them socially. Have
you been able to get a feel for
how people are... thinking?

QUARK

A lot of voices talking. A lot of
people refusing to listen.

EVIK

Just the Bajorans?

QUARK

Oh no. Everyone. Human, Ferengi,
Bolian... Some even wondering how
come they don't get a vote.

EVIK

They're not Bajoran.

QUARK

But they still live here. They're
still affected by what goes on in
Bajoran society. Shouldn't they
get a say too?

EVIK

Tell you what - if we get through
this one alive, I'll mention it to
Commander Ro.

QUARK

What about you? How do you think
it's gonna go?

Evik pauses again before answering. He's worried about it.

EVIK

I haven't been here long enough to
really get a feel for the entire
community. All I can do is hope.

QUARK

That's why you should have been a
Ferengi. Whichever way it goes, a
Ferengi will always find a way to
make the best of it. You don't
need hope when you have greed.

EVIK

Greed... I'm afraid that's exactly
the problem.

Down below, another pair of Bajoran civilians are arguing.
One PUSHES the other in the chest. The other PUSHES back.
Sevak and Aleco immediately move to separate them.

Seeing this, Evik sighs with disappointment.

18 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Nog and Candlewood are at their respective stations. Prynn
is at the central Ops table. BOWERS is at tactical.

PRYNN

Personally, I think it's political
correctness gone mad.

CANDLEWOOD

What is?

PRYNN

Mo! Obviously I think he should
have saved the aliens, but it's
not what the old Mo would have
done. He wouldn't have cared.

NOG

So he's growing as a character.
And you can't make a profit off
someone who's dead, can you? I'm
telling you, greed is the noblest
of emotions.

PRYNN

How the hell do you figure that?

NOG

Greed is just want. It gets a bad
reputation, but think about it.
Without want, nobody would ever do
anything. It's what makes the
galaxy go around.

BOWERS

What are you three talking about?

CANDLEWOOD

Marauder Mo.

BOWERS

Oh. For a moment there I thought
it might be something relevant.

PRYNN

Hey - steady on, Lieutenant. Mass
entertainment is always relevant
to the larger culture.

BOWERS

Alright then - what does *Marauder
Mo* have to tell us about modern
culture in the Federation?

PRYNN

For starters, greed. This Vedek
Bellis character, he's just being
greedy. He can't stand somebody
else having more power than him.

(to Nog)

And that certainly doesn't strike
me as noble.

Candlewood is keeping his head down, awkward with this.

NOG

You don't think he might have a point - that Bajoran society isn't ready for the changes that have happened in the last few years?

PRYNN

How can you say that? Look at Ferengi society. That's had more extreme changes in the last five years than Bajor has, but you're all "up with social progress" there, even with *Marauder Mo*.

NOG

(patient)

Yes, and I am here too. I'm just saying that writing Bellis off as a bigot doesn't help. Progress doesn't come from ignoring the conservative parts of society. It comes from listening, considering, and bringing them along with you.

Prynn and Bowers consider what he's saying. Candlewood... looks uncomfortable.

19 ON SCREEN

One of the Cardassian shatterframe screens shows Vedek BELLIS being interviewed on some kind of news programme.

BELLIS (screen)

It is not bigotry to follow the traditions that have sustained our world for centuries. And we should not allow them to call us bigots - that only shows their own intolerance.

20 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE, REPLIMAT

This broadcast is going out over many screens around the Promenade, and in Quark's bar. Evik sits alone at a table

in the Replimat, watching it. Around him, others have varying opinions. Evik doesn't know what to think. Yet.

BELLIS (screen)

For centuries, the Vedek Assembly has been built on worship of the Prophets. That is undisputed. So how then can it be led by one who does not even follow the Prophets?

(beat)

Believe me, I have no ill will against the Ohalavaru, the Oralian Way, or anyone who follows a different faith from me.

The reactions of others around Evik vary - some nod sagely, some roll their eyes in disbelief.

BELLIS (screen)

If they wish to create their own Assembly and govern their own affairs, that is none of mine. They simply have no place in our Assembly. And to be quite honest with you, I don't understand why they would even want to be there.

(beat)

But no. Solis and his followers insist on creating division where there need not be any. Until this unnecessary conflict is removed from our midst, the Vedek Assembly cannot function. And until the results of the vote are tallied in a few days' time, and Solis is forced to accept the will of the people, it will remain in recess. Bajor deserves no less.

Ending on Evik, as he considers Bellis's words...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 INT. VEXH'S SHIP

Begin on Vexh, still unconscious in the silver embrace of his vessel. We PAN across, and find Raiq stood with her hands pressed into the wall, eyes closed and concentrating. Then across the cockpit, to find Kira leaning against the control console and watching both of them.

KIRA
Is it working?

RAIQ
Yes, I believe so.

KIRA
And how do you feel?

It takes a long time for Raiq to answer.

RAIQ
I am confused. Vexh must survive.
I need him. But I am afraid he
will reject me, as Axno did.

KIRA
Actually I just meant physically,
with the bond with the ship. But
that's good too.

RAIQ
(sneer)
It is good that I am afraid?

KIRA
It's good that you're talking to
me. That's all I've ever wanted.
(beat)
Why don't you tell me about this
world - the Hearth, you called it.
Seems like kind of a dangerous
place. Not to mention barren. Why
would you come here?

RAIQ

It is sacred. The Knights gather every hundred cycles, to reaffirm our faith, to share news of the Quest, and continue the species.

KIRA

But why here, of all places?

RAIQ

Doctrine foretold that the Fire would burst forth from the last remaining Eye of the True in this place. And so she did.

KIRA

You came here looking for Iliana.

RAIQ

Not only that. The Hearth warms us. In the cold emptiness between the stars, the Hearth reminds us of the burning glory of the True.

KIRA

It warms you...

(translated)

The geothermal energy. All that sunlight that's scorching the planet's surface out there, it's what recharges your ships. But you only come during the off season, or else it would overload you.

RAIQ

And if Vexh does not recover before then, such will happen to him. I cannot allow that.

KIRA

(straightens)

Then let me go and get an update from Ro and Cenn. See how much longer we've got.

With Raiq's permission, Kira climbs out of the ship.

22 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

A wide shot - Vexh's ship sits alone at the bottom of the bowl, while up on the ridge away from the meridian, the runabout is parked.

23 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Ro is sat at the front position, thinking to herself. The windows show the darkness of the Black World.

After a moment, Kira enters through the open hatch.

KIRA

Ro - tell me some good news.

RO

Okay. Good news is, the meridian is still four hours away. Bad news is, it's accelerating.

KIRA

How does that happen?

RO

Prophets only know. Erratic orbit. Solar flares. Does it matter?

KIRA

No, I guess not. Okay, I'll tell Raiq to speed it up.

Kira turns to go, but Ro straightens and calls after her.

RO

Nerys - wait. Can I call you Nerys? Is that okay?

KIRA

Of course. I'm not your boss.

RO

See, that's the thing. I don't know what to call you anymore.

When you chased after Raiq before,
and I called after you, I said
"Captain." It was instinctive.

KIRA
(chuckle)
So? Just habit, that's all.

RO
But it made me think. On the way
here, you kind of... took command.
And I just let you.

KIRA
Oh... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to
step on your toes.

RO
No, I don't blame you. I blame me.
I guess... I still don't know how
to take command. It was easier to
just defer to you. Let you take
the pressure. You're used to it.

KIRA
Ro...
(correction)
...Laren. I'm not here to take
command from you. That part of my
life is over. I'm only here to
watch out for Raiq.

RO
Why? Why are you going so far out
of your way to help her, when all
she does is threaten to kill us?

KIRA
Because she needs me.

RO
It's guilt, isn't it?

KIRA
I killed her entire race, Laren.
That's on me.

RO

And on Sisko. And Taran'atar. And the Prophets.

KIRA

No. I was the Hand. It was my mission. My plan. So I have to make up for it. And I promise that from now on, all command decisions are yours. I won't interfere.

Ro nods, appreciating that. Then the door from the rear cabin opens, and Cenn enters, carrying a padd.

RO

Major. What have you been up to?

CENN

Studying. You gave me the codes to access Mister Candlewood's research, so I've been using the down time to learn. I thought maybe there was something in there that could help Vexh and Raiq.

KIRA

I imagine they know better than us, Major.

CENN

Maybe. But it can't hurt.

They all turn in surprise as the sound of Pif's BARK coming from outside the ship. They exit in curiosity...

24 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

Kira, Ro and Cenn all exit the runabout and rush to the edge of the ridge, looking down towards Vexh's ship. The ambient light is growing brighter as the meridian nears.

Halfway between them and the ship, Pif stands, spines tense and BARKING loudly. They run towards him.

RO

Pif! What is it? What's wrong?

PIF

The smell. It's getting stronger
all the time.

CENN

The meridian. It's nearly here.

RAIQ (o.s.)

Kira!

They turn again, and see Raiq in the distance, standing in Vexh's ship and looking out through the open canopy towards them. Raiq is beckoning them.

25 INT. VEXH'S SHIP

On Vexh, still lying on his chair-turned-bed. The silver blood is slowly flowing away back into the chair, and uncovering his body.

Raiq stands by the bed, Kira just behind her. Raiq glances back to Kira, anxious. Kira nods back, supportive. Raiq tentatively reaches out to touch Vexh. With Raiq's hand on his arm, Vexh struggles his way back to consciousness.

VEXH

Sister... what happened?

RAIQ

We are not certain, my brother.
You fell in pain, and we brought
you to your vessel to be healed.

VEXH

Gratitude, my sister. But tell
me... did I dream? Your words of
the Quest, of the Ascension... did
I imagine them?

RAIQ

No. No, you did not imagine. I beg
forgiveness, my brother.

Vexh slowly and painfully drags himself up vertical, turns to sit sideways. He absorbs everything, considers it all.

VEXH

No forgiveness is required, my sister. I think, perhaps... I already knew.

Raiq can understand that. She lets him process.

VEXH

The vessel connects the Knights, one to another, across the stars, no matter the distance. I called out again and again. Yet I heard no-one. I thought it was simply the wound... or perhaps I told myself so, to hide a truth I did not wish to face.

(beat)

But I believe that no truth can be hidden forever. It is a thing one knows regardless, is it not?

RAIQ

Yes. I believe that too.

Vexh peers past Raiq to Kira, quietly waiting.

VEXH

Who is this?

RAIQ

This is Kira. She is... she has helped me.

Kira gives a small smile of relief and gratitude.

VEXH

You ran to Raiq's aid. And others with you. Why?

KIRA

Because I was worried for her. I didn't want her to get hurt.

VEXH

Who do you worship, Kira?

RAIQ

(breaks in)

She is no threat to you or me, my brother. I assure you.

Vexh knows there's something Raiq is not telling him... but he is past caring. He lets it go.

VEXH

It matters not.

RAIQ

I do not understand.

VEXH

If the Quest is over and the Ascension passed, what does it matter if any creature be faithful, heretic or godless?

RAIQ

What else is there?

VEXH

Precisely.

Raiq exchanges an awkward look with Kira. Neither of them like how this conversation is going.

KIRA

Vexh... this world, your Hearth. We can't stay here. The sunlight is coming, it'll be here in less than four hours. We need to go.

VEXH

Why?

KIRA

Because if we don't, it'll kill us all. Do you think you can get your ship up and running by then?

Vexh closes his eyes and concentrates, 'feeling' his ship.

VEXH

It is wounded still. But the wound
is less than it was.

(realising; to Raiq)

You?

RAIQ

I helped as best I could.

VEXH

It was wasted effort, my sister.
This vessel will not travel the
stars again.

KIRA

(encouraging)

Of course it will. We can fix it,
don't worry. We're good at fixing
things.

VEXH

It will not if I do not wish it.

KIRA

Vexh... if you don't get this ship
fixed and out of here, you'll die.

Vexh looks up to Raiq and Kira, quite clear and serious.

VEXH

Then let it be so.

Raiq and Kira both realise... he wants to die.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

26 INT. VEXH'S SHIP

Picking up where we left off. Raiq reacts to Vexh...

RAIQ

My brother... no. We must leave.

VEXH

Why? If all our brothers and sisters are gone, and the very purpose of our lives fulfilled... what else is there to do here? If death is coming as you say, then let it come. I welcome it.

Raiq doesn't know what to say. Kira steps up.

KIRA

Vexh, listen. You're not alone. Raiq is right here. The two of you could start over, make a new life for yourselves. The Ascension doesn't have to be the end.

VEXH

(sneer)

Who are you? You cannot speak to me of the truth, of the purpose of the Ascendants. For all I know you shame the True with your very life. Leave us.

KIRA

Look, we don't have time for -

VEXH

I said leave!

Vexh stands and glares at Kira, his hands glowing with flames. Kira takes the hint and backs off. But she looks at Raiq, and Raiq gets her message - convince him. Then Kira clammers over the edge of the canopy and out of the ship.

27 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Focusing on the Promenade...

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

Lt Cmdr Evik sits alone at a table on the upper level. He gazes down into his drink, troubled. Down below, the usual middling crowd of drinkers and gamblers goes on.

After a while, a shadow falls over the table.

CANDLEWOOD (o.s.)

Mind if I join you?

Evik looks up to see Candlewood with his own drink.

EVIK

Mister Candlewood. Certainly, if you want.

Candlewood sits. It's clear Evik has something on his mind, and Candlewood wants to broach it with him.

CANDLEWOOD

You've been sitting and staring at the shrine all day. But you haven't gone in yourself. It's the vote, isn't it? Are you afraid Bellis is going to win?

EVIK

Why would that make me afraid?

CANDLEWOOD

Oh. I thought -

EVIK

If that's what the public wants, then that's what they should have. It's not my place to tell them they can't have it.

CANDLEWOOD

But that would mean throwing Solis and his followers out of the Vedek Assembly altogether.

EVIK

Very likely.

CANDLEWOOD

And you don't think that's wrong?

EVIK

(quiet, insular)

So what if I do?

CANDLEWOOD

When you first got here, you told everyone you'd work to keep all of the different communities of this station together. How does what Bellis wants to do fit with that?

EVIK

If the majority agree with him, I have to respect their choice.

CANDLEWOOD

But you do disagree yourself.

Evik's non-answer is enough answer in itself.

CANDLEWOOD

Why are you afraid to say that?

EVIK

Young man, I'm sure you mean well, but this is none of your business.

CANDLEWOOD

No, I guess not. I don't get a vote. But I do know my history.

EVIK

What does that mean?

CANDLEWOOD

On my world, there used to be a lot of tension between the various religions. Like, a lot. A lot a lot a lot. I'm Jewish, and we were not always the most popular group.

EVIK

On what grounds?

CANDLEWOOD

That we were different. We got singled out and picked on for being different. We weren't the only ones. It happened over and over again with various groups.

EVIK

And you don't want it to happen here.

CANDLEWOOD

Can you blame me? To me, faith is a very personal thing. I live by it, but I don't go around trying to force other people to live by it too. My faith is not about other people. It's about me.

EVIK

Faith is very much a communal thing on Bajor, Mister Candlewood. We draw strength from all being part of the same... 'group'.

CANDLEWOOD

Humans draw strength from being different. It took us a long time to figure that out, believe me. But ultimately it's what kept us together. Our differences.

EVIK

And you think that would be true for Bajor as well.

CANDLEWOOD

Doesn't matter what I think. I don't get a vote.

Candlewood's point becomes clear. It's what Evik thinks that matters. So... what does he think?

29 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Outside the shrine. The lines have gone, because pretty much everyone else has already voted by now. But Sevak and Aleco still stand guard, just in case.

Now Evik hovers on the threshold. He nods acknowledgement to the two junior officers. Then he nods to himself. He's made his decision. He walks on into the shrine.

30 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

The light from the approaching meridian is growing all the time, and the air feels electrified with its power. The burning daytime is almost here.

31 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Ro, Cenn and Pif all sit, while Kira paces back and forth anxiously. The light shines through the windows.

KIRA

This is stupid. Time's almost up, we need to be going. Why can't he see that?

RO

Raiq will convince him, Nerys.

KIRA

How long?

CENN

(checks panels)
Ten minutes.

KIRA

Alright that's it. We're -
(catches self)

Dammit. Sorry. Commander Ro, what do you want to do?

They all turn to look at Ro. Under pressure, she considers her options. Then she takes a deep breath and stands.

RO
Time's up. We force the issue.

32 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

Outside the runabout, the four of them pause and gaze across the amphitheatre. The wall of fire is almost on top of them. They feel its heat on their skin and the charge in the air. There's no time left to argue.

RO
Pif - you're our early warning system. Once it reaches the opposite ridge line... you bark like you've never barked before.

PIF
You can count on me, Commander.

Pif straightens his spines to attention, then the three Bajorans stride off down the hill towards Vexh's ship.

33 **INT. VEXH'S SHIP**

Vexh and Raiq stand together, grasping each other's hands.

RAIQ
Trust me, my brother. This need not be the end. Enough of our brothers and sisters have died already.

VEXH
They are with the True.

RAIQ
Yes, and we are not. Do you not believe that it would not be so if the True did not wish it so? We only have to have the courage to

find the reason. Trust in the wisdom of the Unnameable Ones, my brother. Live... by my side.

VEXH

But... we are so alone.

RAIQ

Then let that be what keeps us together.

Vexh is on his way to being convinced. Then Ro clammers over the edge of the ship, followed by Kira and Cenn.

RO

Alright, listen. There's no time left to argue about this, so I'm making the decision for you. We're gonna get this ship moving, and we're gonna do it now.

Raiq looks warily to Vexh, who takes a deep breath...

VEXH

I feel the power of the meridian approaching. That will help to bring the vessel out of slumber.

CENN

Right! Candlewood said the ship's skin absorbs energy. It's exactly what we need. I'll see what else I can get out of his research.

RO

Good work, Major. Alright, we're gonna be cutting this close. So let's get on with it, people!

Vexh takes his pilot's seat with renewed purpose, starts trying to coax responses out of the panels. Raiq stands with him, conferring. Cenn pulls out his tricorder, directs it towards one of the ship's interior walls, and begins working the controls. Kira takes Ro's arm, and smiles.

KIRA

(sotto)
Thank you.

Ro smiles back. It's gonna work.

34 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

The wall of fire is almost here. The silver skin of Vexh's ship shimmers with the heat and light. Pif hovers outside the runabout, spines on edge, watching it approach.

35 **INT. VEXH'S SHIP**

Vexh sits at his pilot's station, frustrated. He wipes a hand across the main console, and the ship responds with weak and wavery throbs of varying colours.

VEXH
The vessel fights me.

KIRA
How can it? It's your ship.

CENN
Maybe it still wants to die.

RAIQ
Be silent, Bajoran.

Cenn shrugs and carries on working his tricorder.

VEXH
I do not understand! I try to
bring the vessel out of its
slumber, but it will not! My
sister, help me!

Raiq begins sliding her hands over the malleable surfaces with Vexh. Colours swim and stutter across the panels, but the ship is not coming to life.

Then urgent BARKS sound from outside. Ro and Kira react...

36 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

The wall of fire has reached the first ridge line, the far edge of the great black bowl. Pure energy and burning air scorch the already blackened, crystallised ground.

Standing outside the runabout, Pif BARKS for his life.

37 **INT. VEXH'S SHIP**

As the barking continues...

RO

That's the signal. Vexh - can you get this thing moving or not?

VEXH

I don't understand... my vessel, are you not with me?

RO

I guess that's a no. Alright, everybody out! We're abandoning ship. All of you, out! Now!

Cenn rushes to the exit and begins clambering out.

KIRA

Raiq, we have to go!

RAIQ

Vexh...

VEXH

I do not understand...

RO

Out!

Raiq grabs Vexh, drags him towards the exit, forces him out through it. Raiq follows, then Kira, then Ro.

38 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

The meridian creeps down the hill towards Vexh's ship...

Ro runs for her life up the opposite hill, towards the runabout. In front of her, Raiq drags Vexh with her. Kira and Cenn follow. Pif is waiting for them outside the ship.

RO
(taps combadge)
Ro to Nile. Activate program Ro
one-one-five!

The ship's nacelles come alive and throb with power, ready to lift the ship...

39 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

The main pilot's consoles begin to run their own programs, getting the ship ready to take off...

40 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

The wall of fire touches the wing tip of Vexh's ship...

Vexh SCREAMS as he feels the ship's pain, stumbling. Raiq reaches out to drag him along...

PIF
Come on!

The group reaches the ship. Pif turns and runs through the hatch, followed by Kira, Cenn, Raiq dragging the struggling Vexh, and finally Ro.

41 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Ro slaps the panel to close the hatch behind them.

RO
Computer - take off, now!

42 **EXT. BLACK WORLD**

The runabout lifts off...

The meridian swallows up Vexh's ship, the wall of fire passing over. The ship shudders, warps, swells...

...and then BURSTS as it overloads with power, like all the other ships did at the Ascension.

The wall of fire continues on up the other side of the black stone amphitheatre, unheeding, towards the runabout.

As the runabout surges up into the air, escaping at the last moment...

43 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Vexh SCREAMS all over again, blood-curdling wails as his body reacts to the destruction of his ship. FLAMES burst from his hands and his eyes. His clothes singe with the power surging through him. He crumples to the deck.

RO

Kira - get him in medical stasis!
In the rear cabin...

44 **EXT. SPACE**

The Black World as seen from orbit, the burning line of fire creeping over the surface, separating night from day.

The runabout flies away to safety...

45 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Cenn and Kira help Raiq to carry Vexh through the hatch to the rear cabin. Ro focuses her attention on driving the ship, getting them the hell out of there.

Pif stands with rear paws on a side chair, front paws on the consoles... and looking out of the side window. He watches the planet catch fire. It's not a sight he likes.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

46 EXT. SPACE

The wormhole blooms open, and the tiny runabout flies out.

47 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The runabout settles onto its docking pad, which sinks into the body of the station.

48 INT. DS9 - AIRLOCK

The door cycles open, revealing Ro and Kira. BASHIR and Evik are waiting for them, with a med tech and a security.

EVIK

Commander - good to have you back.

RO

Good to be back, Mister Evik. Did we miss anything interesting?

EVIK

Yes, actually. I'll tell you all about it later.

BASHIR

Where's the patient?

RAIQ (o.s.)

Healer! Attend!

They look back through the airlock, and see Raiq leading the still-wobbly Vexh along. Bashir's jaw drops at the sight of a second Ascendant. As they emerge into the corridor and Bashir takes a hold of the patient...

RO

I'll tell you all about it. Later.

BASHIR

Bashir to Ops - three to beam directly to the Infirmary.

Bashir, Vexh and the med tech disappear in a TRANSPORTER beam. Ro gives a significant look to Evik. He nods.

EVIK

(taps combadge)

Evik to security - send deputies to the Infirmary immediately.

VOICE (comm)

Acknowledged, sir.

EVIK

If you'll excuse me, Commander.

At Ro's nod, Evik heads off. Ro turns to Kira and Raiq...

RO

You two going to be okay to wait while Bashir sorts Vexh out?

KIRA

We're fine. Thanks, Ro.

Ro heads back into the ship.

KIRA

You've been quiet.

RAIQ

There has been much to consider.

KIRA

(wry)

Tell me about it.

RAIQ

(takes it literally)

I was alone. I needed another to share the pain. I thought Vexh would be that other. But he has his own pain.

(beat)

As I realised that, I realised... that the other I needed had been with me all along.

Raiq turns to Kira, looks at her significantly. Kira realises what Raiq means, and her breath catches.

RAIQ

I beg forgiveness... my sister.

KIRA

(touched)

No forgiveness is required.

49 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

A turbolift door opens and Evik emerges, heading to the Infirmary. But on the way, a voice catches his attention...

VOICE (o.s.)

And the results are in, in this unprecedented public vote on the validity of Kai Solis Tendren's ascension to the Apex Chair.

Evik turns to find the voice - a news broadcast is showing on the screens around the Promenade. Over still images of SOLIS and Bellis both, the VOICEOVER continues:

VOICE (screen)

Vedek Bellis Nemani forced the Assembly into recess until the vote was complete. "The people must have their say," he said. And, after a massive effort by volunteers across the globe, the results have been counted. And they are... it's a landslide result. Almost eighty per cent of Bajor voted...

Evik holds his breath...

VOICE (screen)

...in favour of Kai Solis.

Evik lets out a huge sigh of relief, letting out tension that he's been holding for days. All around, people on the Promenade also sigh with relief, happy with the result.

50 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Quark stands behind his bar, cleaning glasses but really watching the screens along with all his customers. He too smiles quietly - this is what he wanted.

VOICE (screen)

This is a huge defeat for Bellis, one that he clearly never imagined would happen. By the rules Bellis himself set up, Solis retains the Apex Chair, and will remain kai.

One Bajoran customer slams his empty glass down onto his table, and stomps out of the room in anger. As Quark watches him leave, he tenses... because Pif crosses his path. The dog alien is bouncing with joy.

PIF

Quark! Did you miss me?

Quark grinds his teeth...

51 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

The turbolift carries Ro and Cenn up into Ops. Nog, Prynn and Candlewood are at their stations. On the main view screen, the image changes to a live feed of Solis standing at the press conference area we've seen before.

SOLIS (screen)

My children, I cannot sufficiently express the gratitude I feel for your support and your love. You have proven to me, and to all of us, that Bajor is ready to grow.

Ro and Cenn head towards the office, but hover outside the door until Solis has finished...

SOLIS (screen)

I was once told that my "liberal platitudes" were not welcome in the Vedek Assembly, only on the streets. Now, it seems the streets

have decided they are welcome in the Assembly after all.

PRYNN

Eh, I don't know. Sounds a bit preachy if you ask me.

CANDLEWOOD

Of course it's preachy. He's a priest.

PRYNN

Valid.

(to Nog)

Looks like they were more socially progressive than you thought.

NOG

Marauder Mo to the rescue again.

Ro shakes her head in amusement, and turns to enter the office. Cenn follows her.

52 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Ro enters, Cenn behind her. They pause at the desk.

RO

So... looks like we missed an interesting time.

CENN

Apparently so.

RO

How would you have voted?

Cenn hesitates...

RO

No, it's okay. You don't have to tell me. I'm not sure what I would have voted either. Or if I even deserve to have a vote.

CENN

(shrug)
Of course you deserve a vote.
You're Bajoran, aren't you?

RO
It's nice to hear you say that.
(pause)
Listen, Major... I'm going to need
an executive officer here. And I
think we worked together well the
last few days. We have different
views about things... but a good
commander needs that. So what do
you say? You want the job?

CENN
Even though I'm Militia?

RO
Especially though you're Militia.

Cenn takes a moment to think about the question...

CENN
Then... yes. I do want the job.
Thank you, Commander.

RO
Well, alright then. Let me talk to
General Lenaris, and -

CENN
I'll do that. You have a brand new
office to set up.

RO
Thanks, Major. Dismissed.

Cenn nods acknowledgement, and turns and leaves. Ro moves
behind the desk, takes a deep breath, and ceremoniously
lowers herself into the chair. This is her command now.

53 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Just a few moments, to indicate time passing.

54 INT. DS9 - CENN'S QUARTERS

Cenn sits at his desk, in his quarters. On the screen in front of him is General LENARIS.

LENARIS (screen)
Congratulations, Major.

CENN
Thank you, sir. Congratulations to you as well. You must be very pleased with Kai Solis's victory.

LENARIS (screen)
It's good to know that four-fifths of Bajor thinks I'm not a deviant, certainly. Now - what about your mission? Was it successful?

CENN
It was. Once Commander Ro gave me access to the research, I used it to sabotage Vexh's ship, and make sure it never left that planet. The ship was destroyed.

LENARIS (screen)
And Ro didn't suspect?

CENN
As far as I can tell, no-one does. They think the ship was simply too damaged to take off.

LENARIS (screen)
Well done, Major. It's bad enough we have one of those monstrosities in the system. We don't need two. You've done Bajor a great service today. Keep in touch. Lenaris out.

The screen goes blank. Cenn sits back in his seat, alone in his room, and ponders.

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW