

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x14 - "Lost Time."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the short story

Star Trek: Corps of Engineers: Lost Time

Written by Ilsa J Bick

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

A close-up on the Promenade and Ops areas... then the image SHUDDERS as the station is rocked by an unseen force.

2 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

Starting on a flashing RED ALERT signal and wailing ALARM, then panning quickly to NOG at his engineering station...

NOG

Here comes the second front - hold
on!

The station SHUDDERS again, rumbling all around them. Lights and panels rupture in SPARKS, supports GROAN.

KIRA

(re alarms)

Someone shut that thing off! You'd
have to be brain dead not to know
we're in trouble!

The alarm is silenced. The station snaps and jerks again, and staff all around Ops are thrown off their feet.

KIRA NERYS - who had been gripping onto the central Ops table - loses her grip, tumbles to the floor, barking her chin on the table on the way down.

She shakes her head clear, spits out blood, then looks up as ELIAS VAUGHN reaches down to help her. EZRI DAX is opposite her at the Ops table.

VAUGHN

You still with us?

KIRA

(woozy)

I'm fine. What about everyone
else? How's the station?

DAX

Ro and her people are keeping everyone in their quarters. The infirmary's getting swamped with minor injuries - Julian and Simon have their hands full.

VAUGHN

I locked down the docking pylons and issued a general warning to reroute out of the system.

Everyone is tense and urgent - definite crisis mode. Kira snaps her head around to look at Nog - too fast, she makes herself dizzy. Holding back bile...

KIRA

Time to next distortion wave?

NOG

Impossible to predict. It's just... random. Like someone's flicking a switch on and off. The only thing I can tell for certain is that they're getting stronger.

KIRA

Uh-huh. What about Bajor?

VAUGHN

Not good. Ground stations report increased tectonic activity along the Tilar and Musilla plates. They're trying to evacuate the coastal areas, but with so little warning...

KIRA

(dismayed)

...We'll be lucky if only a third of them drown. Kendra valley's lousy with fault lines...

NOG

Oh no... Jake and Rena...

KIRA

Nog - concentrate. Where is this coming from?

NOG

(working panels;
frustrated)

I don't know. There are subspace distortions all over the system.

VAUGHN

Could it be another thoughtscape entity, like the one we encountered in the Gamma Quadrant?

NOG

Not the same kind of readings. That was one universe trying to push through into ours... this looks more like two parallel universes grinding up against each other like... well, like two tectonic plates.

VAUGHN

Is it the alternate universe? The one we're used to dealing with? Could it be some kind of attack by the Intendant?

Kira is a touch surprised Vaughn knows about that. But he was with Starfleet Intelligence... Nog works his panels.

NOG

Umm... no, I don't think so. The quantum signature doesn't match.

KIRA

Really? You can tell that?

VAUGHN

It's a fairly new development.

NOG

It's based on readings taken in various Starfleet encounters over

the years. Commander Worf's experience with a quantum fissure on the *Enterprise*, the *Defiant's* encounter with the Cathedral artefact in the Gamma Quadrant, that time the alternate Vedek Bareil transported over here... a dozen others. We're starting to be able to pinpoint a particular alternate universe by their quantum signature. This one is new, but it's a lot closer to us than the Intendant's universe. It's really fascinating how -

KIRA

(slams hand down)

I don't care, Nog! Just tell me you know how to stop it!

Nog stutters and blushes, embarrassed to be chewed out in public. He returns to his panels.

NOG

I'm trying to track the source right now, sir.

VAUGHN

Time's a factor, Lieutenant. The planet's coming apart at the seams, literally.

NOG

Aye, sir.

KIRA

What about the wormhole?

VAUGHN

With these kind of distortions, I don't see how its horizon can remain coherent.

KIRA

(grits teeth)

Meaning it's destroyed too.

NOG

(apprehensive)

Sir, I've localised the epicentre of the distortions... It's coming from in orbit of Bajor seven.

(beat)

From Empok Nor.

KIRA

What? I thought you left that place dead and powerless.

NOG

(a bit defensive)

We did! But I don't think Empok Nor itself is doing this...

VAUGHN

(catching on)

The Androssi devices.

NOG

Yes, sir.

The station SHUDDERS again as another distortion wave hits. Frustrated, Kira stalks upstairs to Nog's station.

KIRA

Will someone please explain this? You said you guys took that station apart looking for any little presents the Androssi left behind. How did you manage to miss something big enough to crack space-time?

NOG

Well, to be fair, sir, the Androssi did what they always do - dropped everything into subspace. We didn't find it because it wasn't there.

KIRA

Well, this something that's
nothing is destroying Bajor,
Lieutenant. Vaughn - what do you
know about the Androssi?

VAUGHN

Not much, I'm afraid, Captain. I
only encountered them in person
once, and never had anything to do
with their technology.

NOG

Sir... there's only one ship I
know of that's got enough
experience with the Androssi. We
need the Corps of Engineers - we
need the *Da Vinci*.

Kira nods, realising she has got no choice.

KIRA

Alright... Commander, get a hold
of Captain Gold on the *Da Vinci*.

VAUGHN

(working)

Aye, Captain.

KIRA

Let's just hope they get here
before Bajor tears itself apart.

On Kira and Nog's expressions...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Establishing... the *Defiant* pulls away from the docking ring, and all five runabouts launch from their pads.

As they all head away from the station towards Bajor, the small, snub-nosed Sabre-class USS *Da Vinci* (8x04 "Cold Fusion") settles into place on the docking ring.

4 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM

DS9's senior staff, including RO, BOWERS, Dax and Nog, at one end of the table. *Da Vinci's* senior staff sit at the other, includes XO Cmdr GOMEZ (TNG 2x17 "Samaritan Snare"), security chief Lt Cmdr CORSI (Aryan blonde with a severe manner), non-com engineer STEVENS (4x07 "Starship Down"), and non-com science specialist SOLOMAN (Bynar male-ish).

Kira sits at one end, opposite the *Da Vinci's* captain DAVID GOLD. The meeting is already underway.

GOLD

To be honest, Captain, I've no more idea about the technobabble of the situation than you do. That's Gomez's business. But I can tell you something like this would be right up Biron's alley.

GOMEZ

We know the Androssi like to hide their devices in another dimension when they're not using them. From the readings Nog showed me, I'd say one of those devices fell into somebody else's universe, and now those somebody elses are trying to find out where it came from.

NOG

Their scans are what's disrupting space-time in the Bajoran system,

focused through the hole the Androssi device left behind when it slipped through.

KIRA

Alright. I've assigned the *Defiant* and all five runabouts to help Lenaris however he needs them. We seem to be in a lull between wave fronts right now, but I don't expect that to last.

NOG

I wouldn't bank on it, sir, no.

GOLD

We'll get underway as soon as possible, then, Captain. I'd like to request that Lieutenant Nog join us - he has much more experience of Nor-class stations than any of my people.

KIRA

Absolutely. I'm assigning Bowers to you as well - you never know what other surprises the Androssi may have left for you.

NOG

Will Commander Duffy be joining us, Captain?

Nog's innocent question provokes odd reactions - all the *Da Vinci* crew tense, awkward and uncomfortable. Corsi grits her teeth angrily, Gomez looks away and swallows, Stevens subtly shakes his head, warning Nog away from the topic.

GOLD

(clears throat)

No he won't, Lieutenant. Commander Duffy passed away six months ago.

NOG

(flustered)

Oh... I'm sorry, I...

GOLD

(on with business)

It's a plan, then. With your
leave, Captain?

KIRA

Good hunting.

The two crews get up and head off to duty. Gomez walks out quickly, not wanting to talk, with uncomfortable looks from the other *Da Vinci* crew.

Nog knows he has made some kind of social *faux pas*, but has no idea how to handle it. Kira watches them go, and Dax hovers behind until they're alone.

DAX

All this talk about alternate universes... awfully interesting timing. Just yesterday, Soloman submitted a formal request to access the Orb of Time.

KIRA

He didn't know the Assembly's new restrictions on the Orbs?

DAX

I guess not.

KIRA

Why do you think he wants to see an Orb?

DAX

Well, his application said that he's been studying the Orbs, and he's concluded that the way they emit energy is very much like a computer program. He wants to know how the Prophets harness and direct the energy to create a time shift. But there was a definite tone of personal interest.

KIRA

I didn't know a Bynar could get religion.

Dax is not sure if that is what's really going on here.

5 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The *Da Vinci* uncouples again, and heads off in a different direction to the one the *Defiant* took.

6 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Ro and Corsi enter the security office, looking at the screens which show reports from around the station.

RO

Well, that was... awkward. I know what it's like to lose a crew member, believe me. But Nog didn't mean any harm.

CORSI

Kieran Duffy is still a raw wound for us, Lieutenant. He died at Galvan Six.

RO

(ashamed)

Oh... I never thought... sorry. I heard about that. That must have been horrible for all of you.

CORSI

(with attitude)

Losing half our crew to stop a stupid Starfleet experiment from destroying a native population? Yeah, you could say that.

(calmer)

But it's not just that. Kieran and Sonya - Commander Gomez - they were a couple. He'd just proposed to her. And then Galvan Six happened. And Duffy sacrificed

himself before she even got a chance to answer him.

RO

Okay, I get why that's bad for Gomez. But why are you taking it so personally?

CORSI

Because it was supposed to be me, dammit! I'm the chief of security, I'm the one who's supposed to go into danger like that. But no, I was unconscious in sickbay, so Duffy went in my place. And died.

Ro begins to understand the problem.

7 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

BASHIR is just finishing with a Bajoran civilian patient, helping him up from the biobed and showing him out. Kira enters, nods in passing to the Bajoran, and approaches.

KIRA

Everything under control, Doctor?

BASHIR

More or less.

KIRA

If you've got a second, I have a favour to ask.

BASHIR

Of course. What is it?

Kira is hesitant, not sure whether she should do this. But she decides she has no choice. She pulls Bashir over to an area where they are out of earshot of anyone else.

KIRA

I'm worried about Taran'atar. I thought we were getting somewhere, but ever since Odo was here, he seems to have withdrawn. I haven't

seen him in Ops in weeks. Whenever I manage to track him down, he's either even more irritable than usual, or he's busy slaughtering something in the holosuites.

BASHIR

What do you want me to do?

KIRA

I think... he needs a friend, I guess. I've tried, Ro's tried. But perhaps you have more in common with him than we do.

BASHIR

(dubious)

Because I'm genetically engineered, you mean?

KIRA

Only that he might take you more seriously. As an equal, maybe.

BASHIR

Well... I'm not sure what I can do. But I'll try.

KIRA

Thank you, Julian. Let me know how it goes.

Kira leaves, and Bashir ponders.

8 **EXT. SPACE**

The seventh planet in Bajor's system is a bluish gas giant. Empok Nor hangs in orbit, lower power core missing. Regions of spatial distortion ripple throughout the area.

The *Da Vinci* holds station a safe distance away. Beyond it and closer to the station, a small shuttle craft attached to a lower pylon, in a currently-stable pocket of space.

9 **INT. EMPOK NOR - CORRIDOR**

Four figures in spacesuits clomp down the dark, airless corridors, using mag-boots in the zero gravity. They shine wrist lights as they go. The first two are Nog and Stevens, with Soloman and Bowers in suits a small distance behind.

NOG

I hate this place. First I get kidnapped by Garak, then I face off against a whole horde of Jem'Hadar, then I get zapped by an Androssi booby trap.

(bitter)

Now Bajor's about to fall apart, and apparently it's all my fault.

STEVENS

Hey, we all checked the place out.

NOG

Kira didn't yell at you in front of everyone.

STEVENS

Well, what do you expect, Nog? Her station, her planet, her version of Heaven are being torn apart by whatever's going on here.

NOG

Stevens... you know I didn't mean to upset anyone, don't you? I only asked 'cause I got used to working with Commander Duffy last time.

STEVENS

I know, Nog. But you just need to tread carefully. The *Da Vinci's* had a rough time lately.

Nog glances behind them, making sure they are a safe distance from Soloman and Bowers. He speaks confidentially.

NOG

As long as we're talking, would you explain something else to me? Your crewman Soloman is a Bynar.

STEVENS

Right. What about it?

NOG

Well, I've never actually met one before, but I read about them in Cultural Studies at the Academy, and I thought they always operate in twos. You never ever see a Bynar without his partner.

STEVENS

That's true. Each pair is basically two halves of the same person. They think together, like two computers in a network.

NOG

So how come Soloman's on his own?

STEVENS

Um... yeah... well. That's another one of our less happy stories. Soloman's real name is One-One-Oh. He and his partner, One-One-One - they were billeted to the *Da Vinci* as non-com computer specialists. But just after the war ended, we were assigned to clean up some of the mess, and One-One-One... She was killed when an unexploded Jem'Hadar torpedo went off.

NOG

Oh, River...

STEVENS

It nearly broke him. Catatonic for a week, just couldn't function on his own. Eventually he recovered, physically at least. Emotionally, he'd lost half of himself.

NOG

Couldn't he get a new... half?

STEVENS

That's what Bynars are supposed to do in that situation. Go home and be given a new partner. But One-One-Oh thought that would be dishonouring One-One-One's memory. He didn't want a new partner.

NOG

So he just decided to go it alone?

STEVENS

Thus the nickname - Soloman. "Solo man." Of course, that means he's a pariah on the Bynar homeworld now, because he refused to do what his culture said he should.

NOG

Yeah, I know what that's like. DS-Nine seems to attract those kind of people.

Nog glances behind again, sympathy for Soloman in his face. He clumps on down the corridor, more depressed than ever.

10 INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE

One of the side doors is gradually CRANKED open by Bowers, and Nog and the rest of his team emerge into the room. They look around - there is no power to anything except for one SCREEN flickering with static. Nog taps his comm.

NOG

Nog to Commander Gomez.

GOMEZ (comm)

Go ahead, Lieutenant.

NOG

We've reached Ops - it's the same as everywhere else. Everything's off except for the basic computer system, and that's picking up the signal from the other side.

11 **INT. EMPOK NOR - POWER CORE AREA**

Gomez is in another space-suit on one of the many access levels, with HAWKINS covering her. She is connecting two large battery units to Empok Nor's power grid. She is still smarting from the reminder of Duffy, which colours her attitude towards Nog, even though she knows it shouldn't.

GOMEZ

Connecting power now.

12 **INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE**

Soloman is stood in front of the one working computer panel as power surges back into the station. Low lights come on around Ops, air hisses out of the ventilation ducts, gravity wobbles into place, and the screen settles a bit.

STEVENS

Looks great up here, Commander.
Soloman's gonna try for computer
access in a minute.

GOMEZ (comm)

Keep me informed, Fabe.

Stevens tests the surrounding air with the tricorder on his arm. He judges it good, and twists off his helmet.

STEVENS

It's good, guys. We can breath.
Soloman, whenever you're ready.

Nog, Bowers and Soloman take off their helmets. Soloman steps closer to the computer console, gazing at it.

SOLOMAN

I am... preparing. If I cannot
interact with the other universe
directly, I may be able to access
their data-stream via one of Empok
Nor's nonessential systems.

SOLOMAN

(whisper)

Stop...

(a little louder)

Stop...

(urgent, panicked)

Stop stop stop stop stop stop -

The repetition builds into a scream, and then Soloman is thrown away from the computer in a cloud of sparks. He lands hard on his back, and the breath is knocked out of him, killing his scream. Nog rushes up, hovering over him.

NOG

Are you okay? What happened?

SOLOMAN

(catching breath)

The data-stream, it is a search program. I found a synchronisation signature. A Bynar signature.

NOG

What? A Bynar? Who was it?

SOLOMAN

One-One-Oh. The person on the other end of this data-stream - it is me.

On Nog and Stevens' reaction...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

16 EXT. EMPOK NOR - ESTABLISHING

The *Da Vinci* nearby, its shuttlecraft closer...

GOLD (v.o.)

So let me get this straight...

17 INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE

Soloman sits primly on the steps to the Prefect's office, recovering. Gomez crouches by Soloman, offering support. Hawkins and Bowers eye each other uncomfortably. Stevens and Nog hover anxiously, unsure.

GOLD (comm)

You contacted... yourself... in a parallel universe.

SOLOMAN

Exactly. And I believe that if I re-enter the data stream, I will be able to commune with this other One-One-Oh and determine what he is searching for.

GOLD (comm)

I'm not so sure, son. How do we know this isn't just a trick by the Androssi - that their device isn't faking Bynar brainwaves?

SOLOMAN

(pauses)

That is a possibility I had not considered.

GOLD (comm)

Well, you'd better. Even if this is an alternate you, he's going to be completely... well, alien. He's the roads you didn't take, and some you can't even imagine.

SOLOMAN

Sir, Bajor's safety requires that
I take the chance. And that I do
so as soon as possible.

We can hear Gold huff and consider over the comm line,
while Soloman waits with patience and certainty.

GOLD (comm)

Alright. But Stevens, Hawkins -
you keep a damn close eye on him.

STEVENS

You got it, Captain.

GOLD (comm)

One last thing. If you've reached
- well, yourself - and this other
One-One-Oh is Bynar enough that
you recognise yourself, then he's
probably bonded, right? To his own
One-One-One. So you would have
picked up her synchronisation
signature as well.

Soloman looks around at his companions, at the computer
screen with its scrolling text, and confidently lies.

SOLOMAN

No, sir. I did not.

He looks deeply back into the tumbling codes, and we dive
into it again, the text whooshing around us. Soloman's
small, shy voice echoes through the datastream...

SOLOMAN (v.o.)

Please, do not be afraid. It is
only I - One-One-Oh. And yet...
I am my own person. I wish to
communicate with you...

(pause, plaintive)

No, wait, come back... please...

Until slowly it resolves into another image...

18 CLOSE-UP ON

...the face of another Bynar - ONE-ONE-ONE. She hears the words and recognises the signature on the other end of the signal, and jerks back. Switch angle again to reveal...

19 INT. DA VINCI - SICKBAY

One-One-One stares in horror and confusion at the blocky and clumsy ANDROSSI DEVICE she was just touching. Around her are this universe's versions of GOLD and GOMEZ, the latter of whom runs to check on the shaken Bynar.

This universe's Soloman - or rather ONE-ONE-OH - has jerked back from the Androssi device much more violently, and now spasms in unconsciousness on the deck. LENSE, the ship's medic (from 3x22 "Explorers"), rushes up to tend to him.

GOMEZ

One-One-One, what's wrong?

ONE-ONE-ONE

Another! There is... another Bynar in the data-stream. A... singleton.

GOMEZ

But that's not possible...

ONE-ONE-ONE

He is so lonely...

GOLD

Gold to bridge! We got what we came for. Set course for the Denorios Belt and let's get out of here before the Cardassians find out we've been sneaking around their territory.

We feel the ship launch away. Gold turns to Lense, who has moved the unconscious One-One-Oh to a bio-bed to scan him.

GOLD

Lense - what the hell happened?

LENSE

He's unresponsive. Autonomic functions are fine, but he won't come out of it.

GOLD

Dreck! Without the Bynars the mission's as good as schtupped.

Gomez points to the flashing light on One-One-Oh's head.

GOMEZ

But look - he's still in active communication with someone.

GOLD

But if he's talking to another Bynar - a singleton of all things - then where is he?

Off the flashing light on the unconscious One-One-Oh...

20 **INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE**

Back in "our" universe, the light on Soloman's head is pulsing in the same pattern. Nog and Stevens wait nearby, uncertain and worried.

NOG

Do you think it's working?

STEVENS

I don't know. I hope so. How long has it been - twenty minutes?

GOMEZ

Give him his chance.

Around them, the station SHUDDERS with a new wave of distortions. Soloman just stares deeply into the code.

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

Returning us to our home, the space rippling slightly as the DISTORTION WAVE arrives.

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

From one of the upper corridors, Bashir looks down on the empty bar. The station RUMBLES from the distortion wave, and glasses and bottles CRASH to the floor from the bar.

Bashir turns and walks towards the holosuites. He reaches one, checks the panels, and taps a comm link.

BASHIR
Taran'atar? It's Doctor Bashir.
Are you in there?

The comm sends back sounds of exertion and fighting, but Taran'atar himself does not respond. Bashir considers it, and then presses the panel to open the door.

23 **INT. HOLOSUITE (CONTINUOUS)**

Open to reveal the bare holosuite grid, where Taran'atar battles a random MONSTER. Bashir gingerly steps in...

BASHIR
Taran'atar...?

Mid-movement, Taran'atar SPINS in surprise and THRUSTS his weapon towards Bashir, stopping just in time. Bashir flinches back, but manages to stand his ground.

Seeing who he nearly hit, Taran'atar stands at attention. He is not ashamed - he just knows he should not attack. Behind him, Bashir sees the monster launch its own attack.

BASHIR
Computer, pause program.

The monster freezes. Taran'atar is unconcerned.

TARAN'ATAR
Doctor Bashir. Do you have need of me?

BASHIR
Not need, exactly. Just that we haven't really spent any time together since Sindorin, and I

wanted to see how you were doing.
Make sure you weren't hurt by all
the shaking around.

TARAN'ATAR

The distortions do not concern me.
Nothing here concerns me.

BASHIR

Perhaps you could tell me about
what you were fighting there. I
don't recognise that species.

TARAN'ATAR

It is from the Rintanna system. I
can provide you with biological
and sociological information if
you wish.

BASHIR

Only if you want to.

TARAN'ATAR

I want to return to my training.

BASHIR

Okay, I'll leave you to it, then.

With a sigh of defeat, Bashir turns to leave. Taran'atar
hesitates, embarrassed by what he is about to admit.

TARAN'ATAR

Wait.

(Bashir turns)

Perhaps... there is something.

BASHIR

What is it?

TARAN'ATAR

I believe I may have a medical...
problem. There are periods of
blankness in my memory. Times for
which I have no recollection of
events. It is disconcerting.

BASHIR

I take it Jem'Hadar don't normally experience such things.

TARAN'ATAR

Never. A Jem'Hadar must maintain clarity of mind at all times. To be unaware of my surroundings for even a moment is an unacceptable lapse in discipline.

BASHIR

How often has this happened?

TARAN'ATAR

Three times. Once while training, and twice while studying in my quarters.

BASHIR

Perhaps I should run some scans in the infirmary.

TARAN'ATAR

No. No-one else must know of this.

BASHIR

Alright... then how about your quarters? They're private, and I can observe you there just as well as anywhere else.

Taran'atar considers it, embarrassed by the whole thing.

24 **INT. TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS**

A distinctly bare set of quarters - one a computer desk and a variety of weapons on the wall. A Bajoran officer moves medical equipment into position, as Bashir and Taran'atar enter. The Bajoran flinches at the sight of him.

TARAN'ATAR

(to Bashir)

Make the security officer leave.

BASHIR

I'm not sure I'm willing to do that. The last time I was alone with a Jem'Hadar, he nearly tore my head off.

TARAN'ATAR

Kitana'klan was young and foolish, and a traitor to the Founders. I saved your life on that occasion. You may be certain I will not harm you now, because the Founder has ordered me not to.

BASHIR

If you don't know what you're doing during these blackouts, how can you be sure?

TARAN'ATAR

(insistent)

I will not harm you.

Hesitantly, Bashir nods and turns to the officer.

BASHIR

It's okay, you can leave. But stay outside.

Reluctantly agreeing, the officer leaves. The door closes behind him, and Bashir turns back to Taran'atar.

BASHIR

Just in case, the sensors are set to alert Ops and the Infirmary if anything happens to either one of us. If nothing happens, then they'll never know we were here.

TARAN'ATAR

Acceptable. You may begin.

Taran'atar moves to his computer console, sits awkwardly, and calls up files to study. Still nervous at being alone with him, Bashir begins setting up his equipment.

Soloman sits in his space suit, helmet off, still entranced by the scrolling codes on the screen. Gomez, Nog, Stevens, Bowers and Hawkins all hang around, hoping for some sign of progress. There is none. Focusing on Soloman...

26 **INT. DA VINCI - SICKBAY**

Soloman's counterpart, One-One-Oh, still lies unconscious on the biobed. One-One-One stands by his side, crying, holding his hand, unable to move on without him. Lense keeps an eye on his readings while Gold and Gomez pace.

VOICE (comm)

Bridge to Gold. We've reached the Denorios Belt, and there's no sign the Cardassians detected us. The *Li Nalas* is waiting, and Major Kira's on the comm.

GOLD

Alright, put her through. Can't put this off forever.

A screen on the sickbay wall brings up a picture of KIRA - a high-up leader in the anti-Cardassian resistance.

KIRA (screen)

David - have you got it? Is it what we thought?

GOLD

Nerys... yes, we got it. As for what it is - no, I don't think so.

KIRA (screen)

The legends say the Tears of the Prophets will appear in the skies over Bajor. If that is an Orb, we need it, David. The resistance is on the verge of giving up the fight to the Cardassians. They need proof of the Prophets to keep them believing we can win.

GOLD

I understand that. And I know that this thing appeared as if by magic in orbit of Cajara. But I've had Lieutenant Dax scan it six ways to Sunday, and it isn't one of your Orbs, Nerys, I'm sure of it.

(more bad news)

There's more... when the Bynars did their thing and tried to connect to it, it knocked one of them out. One-One-Oh is in a coma.

GOMEZ

I'm telling you, he's still communicating with someone - or some thing.

KIRA (screen)

It's a Prophet! He's talking to the Prophets. I'm beaming over.

GOLD

That's really not necessary -

KIRA (screen)

I may as well give you back your chief engineer while I'm at it.

(off screen)

Duffy, get your stuff together.

She cuts the comm, leaving Gold stewing.

27 INT. EMPK NOR - OPS CENTRE

Nothing has changed. Gomez stands, agitated, taps her comm.

GOMEZ

Gomez to *Da Vinci* - I think we have a problem. We haven't had any response out of Soloman for almost thirty minutes now.

GOLD (comm)

Can you pull him out?

GOMEZ

I'd rather not do that against his will. I can't be sure what it would do to him.

GOLD (comm)
Well, this is a hell of a thing.
What do we do -

The line drops. Gomez taps her combadge again, troubled.

GOMEZ
Gomez to *Da Vinci*. Are you there?
(no answer)
Da Vinci, come in.

She looks to Hawkins, who taps his comm as well.

HAWKINS
Hawkins to *Da Vinci*. Please respond.

Still no answer. They are all becoming worried now.

NOG
Maybe the distortions are interfering with the signal.

GOMEZ
With the deflector shield up, I should be safe to beam back to the *Kwolek* now. Its sensors should be able to tell me if there's anything wrong with the *Da Vinci*. Hawkins, you're with me.
(taps comm)
Gomez to *Kwolek* - two to beam up.

Hawkins comes to stand by Gomez. A transporter signature takes them both...

27 **CLOSE ON GOMEZ**

We stay with Gomez as the room dematerialises around her. We're going inside the transporter beam with her, as we did with Barclay in TNG 6x02 "Realm of Fear."

28 **GOMEZ' S POV**

We see the Ops Centre of Empok Nor dissolve. Then we realise that there is another figure in the matter stream - the alternate DUFFY (8x04 "Cold Fusion"), wearing the alternate universe's Starfleet uniform. His eyes widen in surprise as he recognises Gomez...

29 **CLOSE ON GOMEZ**

Still in the transporter beam, Gomez also gapes in shock as she recognises her dead lover...

30 **INT. SHUTTLE - TRANSPORTER PAD**

The transporter sequence completes, depositing Gomez and Hawkins onto what looks just like a runabout's transporter pad. She is still gaping in surprise and horror, barely able to breathe from the shock of it, beginning to cry...

GOMEZ
(shaking)
Kieran...

From Gomez's face, we pull back, out through a window of the shuttle, until we're...

31 **EXT. SHUTTLE**

...We continue to pull away from the shuttle, away from the lower arm of Empok Nor to which it is attached.

Further and further away, we see the distortions rippling through the local space, and there is no sign of the *Da Vinci* at all.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

32 EXT. EMPOK NOR - ESTABLISHING

Just re-establishing for a moment. The *Da Vinci* has gone.

33 INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE

Gomez is back with the others. They are all stood around discussing - except Soloman, who remains entranced at the computer. They are trying to be delicate and sympathetic to Gomez, who is still a touch upset but insistent.

GOMEZ

I'm not imagining things.

STEVENS

I didn't say you were. But Sonnie, you know that wasn't really Duffy you saw, right? It was just some weird glitch caused by the spatial distortions. You know that.

GOMEZ

He recognised me, Fabe.

NOG

Soloman said he's contacted an alternate version of himself. Maybe you did the same, sir.

As if in response, the station SHUDDERS again with another round of distortions.

GOMEZ

Obviously this hole in the space-time continuum is still open. Something must have slipped through for a second.

NOG

Whatever we're feeling in here, it's about eighty times worse out there.

BOWERS

What about the *Da Vinci*?

GOMEZ

She's gone. No sign of an impulse trail or debris. She must have got caught up and slipped through the hole too. Fix the hole, she should pop right back into our reality.

NOG

Which leaves us right back where we started.

He turns to look at Soloman, still deep in the code...

34 INT. DA VINCI - SICKBAY

One-One-Oh remains unconscious. Kira inspects the Androssi device as Gold stands by. Gomez is in a semi-private alcove in the sickbay, hugging Duffy affectionately. These two are a couple, too. But Duffy is deep in thought.

GOMEZ

You're a million light years away.
Something on your mind?

DUFFY

Just thinking about what happened in the transporter. It was weird, Sonnie, like a vision of the future or something. All the time I was working with Kira, I had this feeling something was wrong.

GOMEZ

Now I've got you back, nothing's wrong.

She leans in close, and they kiss passionately.

35 INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE

On our Gomez, remembering Duffy, as the station SHUDDERS...

36 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Vaughn grips tight to the arms of his command seat as the *Defiant* SHAKES around him. The computers ranged around the bridge fizzle with static, and one BURSTS into sparks. TENMEI is at the helm, fighting to keep the ship under control. The viewscreen shows an in-orbit view of Bajor.

VAUGHN

Tell me we got them!

TENMEI

Yes sir, they're in transporter room one, and Doctor Tarses is assessing their injuries.

VAUGHN

Still no word from Captain Sisko?

TENMEI

No, sir. I hope he's alright.

VAUGHN

If you think the Bajorans are going to let anything bad happen to their Emissary, Ensign, then you really haven't been paying attention.

Prynn turns to him, ready to defend herself. But she sees his smirk, and realises he is only joking with her. She softens a little, and returns his smile.

TENMEI

Actually, Commander, from what I've read, I'd bet that Captain Sisko is helping them out more than the other way around.

VAUGHN

(smiling)

You're probably right, Prynn.

The ship SHUDDERS again, reminding them both to get back to work. But Vaughn spares his daughter another smile first.

37 **INT. TARAN' ATAR' S QUARTERS**

The distortion hits Deep Space Nine, making Taran'atar's computer GLITCH and FIZZLE, knocking out its power. The Jem'Hadar gets to his feet in anger and frustration.

TARAN' ATAR

How am I to supposed to study with these kinds of disruptions?! The Dominion would never allow this.

BASHIR

Taran'atar, try to calm down.

Taran'atar begins to stalk back and forth in his room. His movements are becoming looser and less coordinated than usual, similar to how he was in the holosuite last episode. Watching him pace, Bashir notices this with worry.

TARAN' ATAR

Why should I be calm? I follow the Founders' orders as a Jem'Hadar should. I fight for them for twenty-two years without fail. But now I am stuck in this godless place where the computers do not even function!

In frustration, he launches a PUNCH right into the computer's screen, shattering it in a shower of sparks.

BASHIR

Computer, raise force field!

A field snaps into place, separating the two. Taran'atar sneers, but the Jem'Hadar is weakening. He reaches for a weapons on the wall, but he stumbles against the wall. His eyes are flickering as he fights against unconsciousness.

TARAN' ATAR

I... do not... understand...

Slowly but inevitably, Taran'atar slumps to the ground by the wall, unconscious. Bashir watches him from behind the force field, with mixed fear and sympathy for his patient.

In the alt-universe, One-One-One stands by her unconscious partner's bedside, afraid for him. Alt-Kira continues to circle the Androssi device. Gold is not impressed.

KIRA

I need to know what this is, Gold.
That means I need those Bynars.

GOLD

Those Bynars are my crew, Major.

KIRA

This is more important than one person - or two! This device is the only thing that'll bring the Bajorans together to fight off the Cardassians!

GOLD

And I've told you it's not an Orb!

KIRA

(not listening)
Doctor Lense, can you wake him?

LENSE

Not without hurting him. Bynar physiology is tough - half the time you gotta look at them more as sick computers than humanoids.

(to One-One-One)

Sorry.

ONE-ONE-ONE

It is... accurate.

LENSE

There's only one way I can think of to get through to One-One-Oh - One-One-One has to be willing to try to commune with him. Maybe she can - I don't know, reboot him or something.

One-One-One looks up at them, small and scared and tearful.

ONE-ONE-ONE

But, this might not be a Prophet.
It might be... infection.

Kira glares at Gold. Knowing he has to convince her, Gold comes down to One-One-One's level, tries a soothing voice.

GOLD

You're right to be frightened. No-one blames you for that. Hell, it shows good sense. But One-One-Oh's not coming out of this. Lense can't do anything for him. Humans value love. I don't know what's in a Bynar's heart, but how far are you willing to go to help your partner?

ONE-ONE-ONE

(nervous)

I wish... I will... I will try.

GOLD

Well, alright then.

Nodding with satisfaction, Gold steps back over to Kira.

One-One-One reaches out to hold One-One-Oh's hand, grasps it tightly, looks at him. The light on her head gradually begins to PULSE in the same rhythm as that on his.

39 INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE

In our universe, Soloman's head-light is FLASHing in the same rhythm. He is miles away, gazing into the churning figures on the screen, but a small smile of recognition creeps over his face as he feels One-One-One's return.

Nog crouches down by him on one side, Gomez on the other. They both see the relaxed, peaceful smile on his face.

NOG

What do you think that means?

GOMEZ

I haven't seen that smile on him
in more than a year - since before
One-One-One died.

STEVENS

Are you saying what I think you're
saying?

GOMEZ

(nods solemnly)

I think that Soloman hasn't just
found himself - he's found One-
One-One. That's why he was so
eager to go back in.

STEVENS

Eager enough to lie to us? He's
never lied before.

NOG

Maybe he just never had anything
worth lying about before.

GOMEZ

Well, the longer he spends in
there, the more the fabric of
reality bends and breaks out here,
and the more Bajor gets ripped to
shreds. So we have to get the
mission done with or without him.
The question is - how?

Nog stands up, begins pacing back and forth in the dark,
empty Ops. He's brainstorming.

GOMEZ

Nog, what is it? I'd recognise
that "I've got an idea" look on
any engineer's face.

NOG

I was just thinking about what you
said about Duffy. About how the
other Duffy is still alive.

Stevens turns and glares at Nog again - he warned him to be sensitive about that. But Nog's brain is occupied. Gomez takes a deep breath and gives Nog the benefit of the doubt.

GOMEZ

What about it, Nog?

NOG

Let's just think a sec. Besides bio-filters and phase transition coils, what does a transporter have that nothing else onboard a starship has?

GOMEZ

A Heisenberg compensator. So?

NOG

So what's the compensator for? It makes up for changes you make on a quantum level any time you use the transporter.

GOMEZ

(doesn't appreciate
being lectured)

Yes - it overrides the inevitable informational drift from being broken down into your particles. Doesn't really tell you anything, just gives you information in a general sense and compares it to what's stored in the buffer. Otherwise, I rematerialise with my arm hanging out of my ear.

NOG

Right. So what if your transporter snagged some information in the stream and compared it to what's already there - in the *Kwolek*?

GOMEZ

(catching on)

And it came up with Duffy.

NOG

(excited now)

And if it has the patterns for Duffy, it's probably still got the patterns for Soloman back from when he wasn't Soloman. So if I access those, compare the two and whittle them down...

GOMEZ

...Then you get rid of the two Solomans. And whatever's left will be the interaction between Soloman and that universe's One-One-One.

NOG

(triumphant)

And that means I can talk to her.

STEVENS

Wait, wait. That's a Bynar search program that's running there. You don't even know the language.

NOG

I will in a second. I've had the tricorder reading everything that has gone through Soloman's memory buffer while he's been connected. There should be enough to run a translation program by now.

STEVENS

Alright, say you can do that, then. What are you going to say?

GOMEZ

How about, what the hell are you looking for?

Flushed with excitement and success, Nog gets to work with his tricorder. Gomez crouches back down by Soloman.

GOMEZ

I'm sorry, Soloman. We have to.

40 **INT. TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS**

Taran'atar JERKS awake on the floor. He is momentarily disoriented, but then recognises where he is. He stands, frowning in confusion. Then he sees Bashir sat across the other side of the room, watching him with sympathy.

BASHIR

Welcome back. How do you feel?

TARAN'ATAR

Disoriented, but otherwise ready for battle. You were observing me.
(touches forcefield)
Did I attack you?

BASHIR

No.

TARAN'ATAR

Have you diagnosed my condition?

BASHIR

As a matter of fact, I have.

TARAN'ATAR

Tell me.

BASHIR

Based on my observations and readings, I believe that what's actually happening here, why you're missing periods of time... is that you fell asleep.

On Taran'atar's unhappy reaction...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

41 INT. TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

As Taran'atar absorbs Bashir's analysis. The forcefield is down, but the Jem'Hadar stands still, staring down Bashir.

TARAN'ATAR

This is intolerable. Humiliating. Already I am exiled from everything I know. Forced to live among fools and weaklings. Now I must accept this shame as well?

BASHIR

There's no shame in needing sleep from time to time, Taran'atar. I can help you learn to handle these new developments... if you want.

TARAN'ATAR

If I understand your laws correctly, you are required to keep my diagnosis a secret from your colleagues.

BASHIR

If you're talking about doctor-patient confidentiality, then yes, you're right.

TARAN'ATAR

Then you will not inform Captain Kira about my condition.

BASHIR

Alright. But I would think she'd want to know. And I would think you'd want to be honest with her.

TARAN'ATAR

No Jem'Hadar wishes to appear weak in front of their Vorta.

BASHIR

This isn't weakness, Taran'atar.
It's just natural progression.

TARAN'ATAR

Explain.

BASHIR

You don't require ketracel-white.
You've begun to eat limited foods
- soup, rice. Now you're starting
to need sleep, albeit much less
frequently than humans, so far. It
might be a function of advanced
age, but I believe that your
physiology is slowly returning to
its natural state, the way it was
meant to be before the Founders
manipulated it to their purposes.

TARAN'ATAR

You speak as if this is something
to be desired. I should have
expected such a response.

BASHIR

What does that mean?

TARAN'ATAR

(matter-of-fact)

You are arrogant. Hypocritical. I
have observed this in most members
of Starfleet. Despite your claims
of respecting all life equally,
you believe your own way of life
is inherently superior, and that
to make others be more like you is
to make them better. The Founder
ordered me to live among you - not
to live like you.

BASHIR

Is being like us so terrible?
Isn't there anything about our way
of life that you can respect?

TARAN' ATAR

(thinks a moment)

I do respect Kira. More than I have respected most of the Vorta under whom I have served, in fact. She is an able warrior, honest and honourable. She does not simply command - she leads. But mostly... I respect her because she has gone out of her way to earn my respect and my obedience, even though she did not need to.

(beat)

But she is still mistaken about me. She sent you to me because she believes I require... company. I comprehend that Commander Vaughn, Lieutenant Ro, even you, are all valued within your own system. But that does not mean that I wish to spend time with you, or become like you. If I am forced to live in this place and have indignities piled upon me, I will do it as a Jem'Hadar - focused on the mission and nothing else.

BASHIR

That sounds... lonely.

TARAN' ATAR

You will never understand Jem'Hadar. Leave me now. And keep your promise. Captain Kira will remain unaware of my blackouts, and I will work to conquer them myself. Without your help.

Downcast, Bashir gets up to go, not sure what else to do.

BASHIR

Alright... I'll order you a new computer screen. I'll just tell them that it was damaged by the disruptions.

42 **EXT. EMPOK NOR - ESTABLISHING**

Re-establishing again, lonely in orbit of the gas giant.

43 **INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE**

The others have been waiting or pacing while Nog works with his tricorder. Then he takes a deep breath.

NOG

I think I've got it.

GOMEZ

Okay. Go ahead, Lieutenant.

A little nervous now that it's time, Nog steps close to Soloman and crouches down by him. He activates a program on his tricorder and waits for some response. Still in his trance, Soloman's face creases with a small frown.

44 **INT. DA VINCI - SICKBAY**

Holding onto One-One-Oh's hand, One-One-One gasps slightly in her own trance.

ONE-ONE-ONE

Beneath the surface... there is
now another line of code. It is...
not thought.

GOLD

A fourth Bynar? Are you sure?

ONE-ONE-ONE

No, no... this is not One-One-Oh,
and it is not One-One-Oh's double.
Both are unchanged. This one is
new. It says that the double is a
Bynar named Soloman...

(winces with pain)

...and that he exists in another
level of the universe. Another
temporal realm.

KIRA

It's a Prophet!

GOLD

Will you give it a rest?

KIRA

What's happening now is precisely what's been prophesied - that The One will reach out and his Temple will be reborn. Look, we know that Bynars always come in twos, right? But now One-One-Oh has found his opposite number - a singleton. How is that possible? A single Bynar isn't capable of meshing. But this one can, and he calls himself "Solo Man."

(off blank reactions)

Don't you get it? Solo man - one man. The One.

Gold shakes his head in exasperation. One-One-One agrees.

ONE-ONE-ONE

No... there is Soloman, and then there is this other. He is a...
(unfamiliar word)
... ferengi.

GOLD

Never heard of it.

ONE-ONE-ONE

He says it would take too long to explain. Apparently there are many rules pertaining to acquisition.

(pauses to listen)

He says that we must shut down the device - that our search program has created problems in their realm. That temporal distortions are destroying the fabric of space-time.

KIRA

Ask the Prophet to tell us where -

ONE-ONE-ONE

(insistent)

It is not a Prophet. It is a Ferengi. He says that One-One-Oh - Soloman - in his universe... he lost his partner.

(voice breaks,
tearful)

He says I died there.

Sympathetic, guilty, Gold takes One-One-One's free hand.

GOLD

(gently)

One-One-One - does this Ferengi know why Soloman was there in the first place?

ONE-ONE-ONE

No, but I sense Soloman... waits.

GOLD

For what?

ONE-ONE-ONE

There is a void in him. But I cannot fill it. Much as I wish to help, I have my own partner here.

(looks at Gold,
tearful)

I want my One-One-Oh back, whole, and yet I feel such sorrow for this other. He is so alone. I do not know how he has managed to survive.

GOLD

I suppose he just went on. People do that.

ONE-ONE-ONE

How can they, when the heart knows what it has lost?

Gold has no answer.

45 **INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE**

On Gomez, as she waits for a response...

GOMEZ

Well?

NOG

I know the message got through.
One-One-One's code changed to
accommodate it.

GOMEZ

And what about Soloman?

NOG

He's there, but it's like he's
locked in tight somehow.

HAWKINS

Can't we just give him a general
neural suppressant or something -
take him offline that way?

GOMEZ

But then we'd lose the connection
altogether. We still need them to
shut down the search.

NOG

Right now, all we can do is talk
to them. It's up to them to decide
- they're the ones who are looking
for something, not us.

GOMEZ

Then ask them what they're looking
for. Maybe we can help find it.

Nog turns back to his tricorder...

46 **INT. DA VINCI - SICKBAY**

The rest of the alt-*Da Vinci's* crew has gathered round now,
interested in the exchange. Gomez is holding Duffy's hand.

GOLD

I'm not sure if I'm relieved that it's not a Prophet, or not.

(deep breath)

Another universe? Another us? What makes them think they can help? We have no way of knowing if our two universes are compatible at all.

DUFFY

(glance at Gomez)

Actually, sir, now that you mention it...

GOMEZ

Kieran saw something when he beamed over with Major Kira. Another me.

DUFFY

I believe she was from this other universe. They had another Gomez, and I think she recognised me.

Gold considers this. He looks to Kira, whose determination hasn't changed. He takes a deep breath.

47 INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE

Gomez reacts to Nog's report...

GOMEZ

The wormhole? That's what this is all about?

NOG

That's what they say. Apparently they don't found theirs, and they thought the Androssi device would help them find it.

STEVENS

In a weird sort of way, I guess it has. I mean, it reached out and found this version of Bajoran space well enough.

BOWERS

I'm not sure we should tell them.
Ever hear of the Prime Directive?

GOMEZ

Ever hear of Pandora's Box? They
know we're here. We know what
they're looking for. From the
sounds of it, they're on a clock.
If we don't, what incentive do
they have to turn that thing off?

NOG

None.

GOMEZ

That's right. And if they don't,
things don't get better over here.
Seems pretty cut and dried to me.
(to Nog)
Do it.

48 INT. DA VINCI - SICKBAY

Kira reacts to One-One-One's report...

KIRA

It's in the Denorios Belt? But
that's where we are right now.
It's a mess of plasma storms and
tachyon eddies - that's why we
always hide here. But I always
assumed the Temple would need
somewhere stable to open.

GOLD

Guess again.

KIRA

But then why hasn't it opened
before, if we've been right on its
doorstep all this time?

GOLD

(sneer)

Maybe you don't have the faith.
Look, you've got your answer, and
I for one would like to get out of
here before Gul Garak comes
chasing us down.

GOMEZ

(re Androssi device)
But what do we do with this?

KIRA

I'll take it back to the Bajoran
resistance with me.

GOLD

(sigh)
How many times do I have to tell
you it's not an Orb? It can't help
you open your precious Temple.

KIRA

They don't have to know that.

GOLD

So what, you'll just lie to them?

KIRA

Everybody needs something to
believe in, David. Something to
keep them going.

49 INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS CENTRE

Nog checks the readings on his tricorder...

STEVENS

Will they do it?

NOG

I don't know.

GOMEZ

They have the information they
wanted. They'll have to decide how
to use it. My guess, though, is
they're committed now.

Hawkins quietly hands Gomez a hypospray out of his security -cum-medical kit. She presses it gently to Soloman's neck.

GOMEZ

And so are we.

Soloman slumps backwards into Gomez's arms, and she cradles him tenderly. Around them, the rumbles have stopped.

50 **INT. DA VINCI - SICKBAY**

Kira and the Androssi device have gone. One-One-One is still holding tight onto One-One-Oh's hand, the tears flowing. She has been forgotten in all the confusion, but now Gold comes to her gently. She looks up at him, crying.

ONE-ONE-ONE

He is gone, Captain. He is gone.

GOLD

Is he dead?

ONE-ONE-ONE

No... but he is one again. He is alone. They have chosen for him. But how will he live, Captain? How can he?

GOLD

Because he will. He'll have to.

As One-One-One continues to cry...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

51 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Calm has returned. The *Defiant* and *Da Vinci* are both docked safely at the station. We're back in our own universe now.

52 INT. DA VINCI - CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM

Captain Gold sits behind his desk, while Soloman sits upright in the seat opposite him. It's definitely a disciplinary meeting, but Gold is not unsympathetic - he knows what Soloman has been through.

GOLD

How do you feel?

SOLOMAN

Badly. I chose very poorly.

GOLD

Yes, you did. And in the end, Commander Gomez chose for you.

SOLOMAN

Yes. And because of her and Nog, DS-Nine and Bajor are now safe. But... I have missed her so much.

GOLD

One-One-One, you mean?

SOLOMAN

The chance to make up for the time we have lost - I could not resist.

GOLD

Anything else?

SOLOMAN

I lied. I have never lied, and for that I am truly sorry. You would be within your rights to transfer me off your vessel.

GOLD

Yes, I would. Don't think I haven't considered it. But you're far more valuable to me if you stay. On one condition, however - you go to counselling, for a few months, maybe on a starbase. Or perhaps with Doctor Lense, since you seem comfortable with her. Anyway, we have time.

SOLOMAN

Yes... there is always that.

53 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits behind her desk, with Nog standing before her.

KIRA

I just wanted to tell you that I'm very happy with the work you did on Empok Nor, Lieutenant. Thanks to your creativity and skill, Bajor and this station are safe. In fact, I'm putting you in for a commendation.

NOG

Thank you, sir.

KIRA

I'd also like to apologise for snapping at you. Seems I've been doing that a lot lately.

NOG

No need, sir. It was a stressful situation for all of us.

KIRA

Yes. You might be pleased to know that we heard from Captain Sisko. They're all perfectly fine. He's even helping Rena's Aunt Marja feed all the displaced people.

NOG
That's good to hear, sir.

KIRA
Dismissed, Lieutenant. You've got plenty of repairs to see to.

Nodding acknowledgement, Nog turns and bounds out of the door, down the steps into Ops. Kira proudly watches him go.

KIRA
Computer - play back messages.

COMPUTER VOICE
First message from Chief Medical Officer, Julian Bashir.

BASHIR (comm)
Captain... there's something I need to tell you. I'm breaking a serious confidence talking about this. If it got back to Starfleet Medical, then I could be in major trouble.

(pause)
But... I'm just too scared about what could happen if I don't tell you, and you did ask me to keep you informed. It's about Taran'atar...

Kira's face drops in anticipation of trouble...

54 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

The crew is just closing up shop after the completion of the mission. Vaughn is making his final notes on the panels on his armrests.

VAUGHN
(to crew)
Excellent work, people. You all did a good thing today. Now go get some rest.

Tenmei waits a little too obviously for the last few non-coms to depart, leaving her and Vaughn alone. She approaches him nervously, not sure how to say what she wants to. The reverse of the scene in 8x06 "Fallout."

TENMEI

Commander... Dad...

Vaughn is very happy to hear that word from her.

VAUGHN

Prynn... what can I do for you?

PRYNN

I was just thinking... about what happened on Empok Nor... about losing the people you care for...

(composes herself)

I was wondering if you might be free later this week. I haven't tried out the Klingon restaurant yet - still. And I wondered if you might like to join me to give it a shot. Never scared to take a risk, that's me. Only if you're free.

Vaughn smiles, touched that she is making the effort.

VAUGHN

I'd love to, Prynn. How about tomorrow night?

PRYNN

Tomorrow night would be great.

Relieved, she smiles and exits. He watches her with love.

55 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Bashir is working hard, trying to keep himself distracted from all the business with Taran'atar. The door opens and Ezri Dax strolls into the infirmary.

DAX

Hey, Julian. You okay?

BASHIR

As much as can be expected. It's been a rather busy day.

DAX

I was wondering... Have you had a chance to read Crewman Soloman's final report on what happened on Empok Nor?

BASHIR

No. Like I said, I've been busy.

DAX

Makes interesting reading. Turns out he contacted an alternate reality, with another Starfleet, another DS-Nine. Well, Terok Nor. It's strange to think about how things might have turned out, with just a little tweak. For example, the alternate *Da Vinci's* science officer... was Dax.

BASHIR

Really? You went back to science?

DAX

No, not me.

(beat)

It was Jadzia.

Bashir isn't sure how to react to that. With an enigmatic look, Dax leaves him and exits out onto the Promenade.

56 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

Dax crosses the Promenade, passing Kira on her way. Kira stops to look inside Quark's bar. QUARK himself is clearing up the mess of smashed glass and spilled liquids. He is being helped by his Ferengi servers, TREIR and HETIK, and to Kira's surprise, Ro and a few of her security staff.

Kira is about to move on, when she sees Taran'atar walking towards the bar. He stops as he sees her.

TARAN' ATAR

Captain.

KIRA

Taran'atar. Everything alright?

TARAN' ATAR

Everything is... fine.

KIRA

Alright then. Carry on.

He nods and walks into Quark's. Kira turns and looks up to the top level, where she can see Commander Gomez standing by herself, gazing out of the porthole into space.

57 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR - UPPER LEVEL (CONTINUOUS)

Holding himself tight and under control, Taran'atar walks up the stairs and towards the holosuites. He taps the control panel, and the door opens to reveal the monster from earlier. He immediately ROARS and launches upon it.

58 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE - UPPER LEVEL (CONTINUOUS)

Kira emerges from the spiral staircase and quietly walks over to Gomez. Gomez starts to pull herself to attention when she notices Kira, but Kira waves her down.

GOMEZ

Captain... I was just watching the wormhole before we ship out. Always another problem to be solved. No rest for the wicked. I just wanted a moment, and this... this is a good place.

KIRA

Yes, it is. Sometimes I take it for granted. Then I think back to the time when it went away, and I remember to be grateful.

(beat)

I read your report, and Soloman's. I talked to Captain Gold.

GOMEZ

(nods absently)

Weird to think about that other universe. Somewhere, out there, people I've cared about are alive. People Soloman cared about, too. And I took him away from them.

(pause)

Do you ever wish you could go back? Do things over?

KIRA

Do I wish I'd never released the Ohalu prophecies, or never joined the resistance? Put the genie back in the bottle?

(small smile)

No. I don't worry about what can't be changed. If I could, then it wouldn't be my past, and I wouldn't be me. I don't have the imagination to consider choices I'd never have made anyway.

Kira pauses, sees the look of regret and loss on her face.

KIRA

What about you? Do you have regrets?

GOMEZ

All the time.

(quieter)

All the time.

On Gomez's face, as she gazes out into space...

FADE OUT:

THE END