

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x13 - "Horn and Ivory."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novella

"Horn and Ivory"
by Keith RA DeCandido

appearing in

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Gateways
Book 7 - What Lay Beyond

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

A vicious hand-to-hand battle is going on, not with phasers or guns, but swords, axes and shields. One woman stands alone at the crest of a small hill, fighting off two or three attackers at once with a large wooden staff.

The feeling of the whole scene is medieval, armies facing off against each other, although all those present are Bajorans, wearing old rough fabrics and beaten iron armour.

As we close on the central woman, we see that she is KIRA NERYS, and she is fighting for her life.

One of Kira's attackers SWINGS a large axe at her head - she dodges back just in time. His armour only covers his chest and groin, so she SWINGS at his unarmoured legs with her staff, and we hear the bones break, his SCREAM of pain.

Out of immediate danger, she takes a breath to look around the battlefield. A large and bulky Bajoran male approaches her, red-haired and bushy bearded, an ally. This is TORRNA, and he is grinning with shared victory.

As he approaches, another pair of attackers run up to them both. Kira knocks down the first with a SWIPE of her staff, but the second manages to strike at Kira with a sword --

-- gashing her left arm badly but not fatally. Kira BONKS the attacker over the head with her staff, and holding her right hand over the wound, continues over to Torrna.

Nearby, the thin sound of a HORN can be heard being blown, and most of the fighters who are not already dead or dying start to RUN away from Kira and Torrna.

TORRNA

(laughing)

They retreat! We've done it,
Ashla. We've driven the last of
them off!

KIRA
(grinning)
Yes, we have. As last stands go,
this was a pretty weak effort.

TORRNA
The Lerrit Army has lost all
control of the port, and without
the port they will never hold the
peninsula. Victory is ours! At
last, we are free!

A ragged, exhausted CHEER goes up around the battered few
soldiers on Kira and Torrna's side. Kira joins in, but she
looks like she is just going along with it.

She is not entirely sure how she ended up here, or why, but
knows she has to play along for the moment...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 EXT. ANCIENT BAJOR - DAY

A small town in a coastal area, the PERIKIAN PENINSULA. The stone buildings, identifiably Bajoran in design but pre-industrial and primitive, have been battered by long warfare, but the central BUILDING remains standing. We are on Ancient Bajor - thousands of years in the past.

3 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

A large stone room, tall and draughty, recently repaired from war damage. It's habitable, if not pretty. A dozen battered Bajorans sit around a large table, the highest-ranking members of the PERIKIAN ARMY. None are not wearing a Bajoran earring, and they have worn, uncared-for teeth.

TORRNA sits at one end, impatient and blustery. Near the other is INNA, a smart uniformed woman, a Navy Admiral with tightly tied hair. A third enters and takes the head of the table, opposite Torrna. This is NATLAR, small and tough, the leader of the Perikian state. Everyone rises for her.

Kira stands against the wall, keeps to herself, observing and occasionally glancing out of a dirty, cracked WINDOW.

NATLAR

Thank you everyone for coming.
Please, be seated.

Most sit, but there aren't enough seats for everyone.

NATLAR

I hereby call to order the first
meeting of the government of the
Perikian Republic.

Another CHEER, stronger and louder than before. At last...

NATLAR

Admiral Inna, once again we thank
you and the nation of Endtree for
all you have done for us.

INNA

The Lerrit's shipping tariffs were
an abomination, Prefect...

Kira flinches at the title...

INNA (cont)

I was glad to help in casting out
those leeches once and for all.

NATLAR

Be that as it may, Admiral, I'm
afraid we have more business with
our neighbours in Endtree.

INNA

With all due respect, Prefect, I'd
rather leave any such business to
the politicians. Whatever further
relationship may exist between our
two governments, it is not for me
to arrange. I would simply like to
return home and await new orders.

NATLAR

I, however, would rather you did
not leave just yet. General Torrna
has assembled a fine army, but we
are still vulnerable at sea. The
moment we lose the protection of
your fleet, Lerrit will return and
take us back with little trouble.
I would therefore request that
Endtree leave behind a delegation
of five ships to protect the port.

TORRNA

(slams table)

Prefect, no! We just fought for
our independence.

INNA

(pointedly)

With our help.

TORRNA
For which we thank you, Admiral.
(to Natlar)
But if we allow them to remain, we
become as dependent on them as we
were on Lerrit! We'd be exchanging
one oppressor for another!

FLASHBACK - 1x01 "EMISSARY"

Kira rants to the Bajoran Provisional Government about
inviting Starfleet in after the Cardassians have just left.

BACK TO SCENE

Kira hears her own words, wonders what to make of it...

INNA
My people do not oppress, General.

TORRNA
I still think --

NATLAR
General, can we adequately defend
the port with our current forces?

TORRNA
Given a few months, we can assemble
a fleet that --

NATLAR
And until that fleet is assembled?

Torrna is furious, but keeps his tongue for the moment...

INNA
One of my ships sets sail for home
tomorrow. I will send your request
to be put before the Council.

NATLAR
Thank you, Admiral. And should the
Council honour my request, General
Torrna will serve as your liaison.

TORRNA

What?!

A young GIRL enters - Natlar is glad of the interruption...

GIRL

Excuse me, but three men are here,
claiming to represent the Bajora.

NATLAR

Send them in.

Kira's eyebrows lift - another surprise. The girl leaves,
and three MEN enter, obsequious and snooty...

BAJORA 1

Greetings to you from the Bajora.
Do we have the pleasure of
greeting Natlar Ryslin?

NATLAR

I am Prefect Natlar, yes.

BAJORA 1

We extend our respects to your
provisional government, and --

Kira reacts again to the familiar words, but Torrna is
already out of his chair and thundering...

TORRNA

There is nothing provisional about
it! We are the Perikian Republic,
and we will be treated with the
respect we deserve!

BAJORA 1

My apologies for the imprecision
of my speech. Regardless, we do
come to you with an offer.

TORRNA

Really? The battle has been done
less than three days. Did you fly
here by *remla* bird with this offer?

NATLAR
General, please...

Biting his tongue again, Torrna reluctantly sits down...

NATLAR (cont)
General Torrna's point is well
taken. You cannot have received
word of our victory and composed
any offer in so short a time.

BAJORA 1
You are correct. We have been in
the city for several weeks now. If
you were victorious, then we were
prepared to offer you entry into
the Bajora. And if you lost, then
we would simply wait for a more
felicitous time to add this region
to the glory of the Prophets.

TORRNA
The Prophets?! You wish to make us
part of your theocracy?

BAJORA 1
(snippily)
We are not a theocracy, sir. The
Bajora is a democratic government
of the people. We wish to unite
the planet, once and for all.

FLASHBACK - 1x01 "EMISSARY"

Sisko tries to reassure Kira about his noble intentions...

BACK TO SCENE

BAJORA 1 (cont)
For too long, we have squabbled
and bickered in conflicts much
like the one you just finished.

TORRNA
That was hardly a squabble.

BAJORA 1

True, many lives were lost. And if we were a united world, they would not have been. We would all be free to follow our *pagh* without worrying about who rules us or who we will fight tomorrow.

(to Natlar)

I urge you, Prefect, consider our offer. The Bajora can only bring you benefit in these difficult times. You would have the service of our navy to guard your port --

TORRNA

And all we'd have to do in return is worship your Prophets, yes? A small price to pay, I'm sure.

BAJORA 1

And does this man speak for you all? Will you let one man stand between you and progress?

NATLAR

General Torrna does not speak for us all. He simply speaks loudest.

A small chuckle; Torrna fumes at the insulting dismissal. Kira sympathises - she said the same seven years ago.

BAJORA 1

You have been weakened by this conflict. The Lerrit have too, yes, but they have greater resources. The Bajora have greater resources still, and we're expanding. It is only a matter of time before we have united the entire planet.

NATLAR

You have given us much to think about. Prilla will show you to a chamber to refresh yourselves while we discuss your proposal.

BAJORA 1
We thank you for your hospitality
and your indulgence, Prefect.

The girl reappears, and the envoys leave with her...

TORRNA
You cannot possibly be considering
their request, can you?

NATLAR
Of course I am, General. I would
be a fool not to.

TORRNA
It would be foolish to accept
their offer! We'd be trading one
oppressor for another!

Another man, MALDIK, pipes up.

MALDIK
You keep saying that, Torrna. Are
you saying the Bajora, Lerrit and
Endtree are all the same?

TORRNA
That's exactly what I'm saying.

MALDIK
Then you're even more naive than
I thought.

TORRNA
(furious)
I'm naive? We are free, Maldik!
But we are not going to remain
free if we just let someone else
do exactly what Lerrit did.

FLASHBACK - 1x01 "EMISSARY"

Kira expresses her displeasure to Sisko - loudly.

BACK TO SCENE

Torrna calms down a bit, tries to regain some self-control.

TORRNA

You're right, Maldik. Lerrit,
Endtree and the Bajora are not the
same. But they are all outsiders,
and that is what concerns me. If
we simply allow ourselves to be
subsumed by whatever next power
comes along, then I have to wonder
what we have been fighting for.

The room pauses to consider what he has said...

4 INT. TORRNA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

A medieval look again - stone and wood, surprisingly clean
and tidy. Torrna sits at a window, looking out to the port
far in the distance. Several sea vessels rock in the water,
bearing the Endtree flag. Kira ENTERS a little exasperated.

KIRA

You want the good news or the bad
news?

TORRNA

I find it impossible to believe
that there is good news.

KIRA

Well, there is. Natlar rejected
the Bajora's offer.

TORRNA

Amazing. I wouldn't have given her
credit for thinking that clearly.

KIRA

Why not? You think you're the only
one who was fighting out there?

TORRNA

I sometimes wonder. I don't want
to see everything I -- we fought
for ruined by short-sightedness.

KIRA

But give the Bajora some credit too. I know you don't believe in the Prophets, but what they're doing is bringing the world together. Don't let a little agnosticism blind you to that.

TORRNA

What a wonderful way of phrasing it. But even if I thought the Bajora were the most wonderful people in the world, I still would not want to become a part of them. Someday maybe, but not today. Not after everything we've fought for.

KIRA

(gestures around)

That why you had the cleaning frenzy?

TORRNA

Well, it was either that or punch through the walls - and I do have to live here.

KIRA

Actually, no you don't. That's the bad news - the prefect wants you to relocate to the port and set up your Endtree liaison office there.

Torrna's face drops, and he is suddenly furious again...

TORRNA

An office? Inna hasn't even gotten her government's permission yet, and Natlar wants me to set up an office?

KIRA

She's hoping for the best. Anyway, after your performance today, I think she wants to keep you as far away from the capital as possible.

TORRNA

To keep my voice from being heard.

KIRA

Torrna, even from the port, your
voice is going to be heard.

Torrna's anger deflates, and he chuckles...

TORRNA

How do you do that, Ashla? Make me
laugh in my darkest moods. Very
well - if I am to be exiled to the
port, I want my strong right hand
by my side. To guard my back - and
to keep me from showing my ass.

KIRA

(ponders a moment)

Can I think about it?

TORRNA

Of course, let me know tomorrow.
It will take me that long to pack
up my own things and inform Lyyra
and the boys that we'll be moving.

LYYRA (o.s.)

Moving where?

They turn to see LYYRA entering. She is Torrna's wife, red-haired and stocky like him, and works as an army medic...

TORRNA

I'm the new liaison to the Endtree
fleet that will occupy the port.

LYYRA

Good. The change in climate will
do some good. The humidity opens
your pores, you know. How are you,
Nerys? Is the arm healing well?

KIRA

Well enough.

LYYRA

I still want to know what you did
to keep your teeth so perfect.

Kira doesn't want to answer that question, since of course
she is from the future, where they have better dental care.

KIRA

Nothing special. I need to get
going, and think about your offer,
Torrna. I'll talk to you tomorrow.
Good to see you again, Lyyra.

Kira leaves...

5 INT. ARMY BARRACKS - NIGHT

A room of rickety bunk beds and recovering soldiers. Kira
lies on her front on one bed, writing with an ink-well pen
before an oil lamp, in modern Bajoran script in a diary...

KIRA (v.o.)

Just like the good old days, I
said. And here I am, right in the
middle of them. My memories of how
exactly I got here are hazy... The
last thing I remember clearly was
that desert planet in the Delta
Quadrant. I was dying of radiation
poisoning... I was already dead.

FLASHBACK - 8x12 "DEMONS OF AIR AND DARKNESS"

Kira drags herself across the desert, half-dead...

BACK TO SCENE

KIRA (v.o.)

And now I'm in Bajor's ancient
past, fighting a war my history
barely remembers. I don't even
know how far back I've gone, or
how long I've been here. All I
know is there's no more radiation
sickness... and that the Prophets
put me here for a reason.

KIRA (v.o., cont)

I know the Prophets didn't build the gateways, the Iconians did. But from the reports I read on them, it seems the gateways work in all sorts of different ways. Some are fixed to one location, some change between several. Some even work inter-dimensionally. So it stands to reason they could take you through time as well. But then, so can the Prophets.

(beat)

And Torrna... he's a good man, if a little short-tempered. He calls me "Ashla" - it's Ancient Bajoran for "giant" - because I'm so much taller than most of the women from this time. Fighting with Torrna and the resistance against the Lerrit army - that was an easy decision to make. I don't want to do anything to significantly alter the past, but I feel it in my *pagh* that I'm here for a reason.

She pauses as she comes to her decision. Not like there was really ever any choice in the matter...

KIRA (v.o.)

So I will go with Torrna to the port. I went when my government wanted to get me out of the way, after all.

She stops writing, closes her diary, puts out the light --

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

6 EXT. PERIKIAN PORT - DAY

A bustling PORT, filled with merchants, sailors, soldiers and average people going about their day. In the distance, a large Endtree WARSHIP grows closer. It's a fairly nice and sunny day, as a brisk seaside breeze fills the air.

Kira stands talking to a very worried looking MERCHANT...

KIRA

Look, Torrna's not going to bite your head off if you take this complaint to him.

MERCHANT

Are you sure? I've heard about how he drove off the Lerrit Army by breathing fire and setting them alight!

KIRA

(amused)

I can assure you that his fire-breathing days are over. Just go to him and tell him that you object to the inspections. I can't guarantee that he'll do what you ask, but he will listen. Just give him a chance.

MERCHANT

(unsure)

If you say so.

KIRA

I say so.

The merchant walks away, and Kira approaches the docks, just as the Endtree ship draws close.

Now she can see that underneath the flapping militaristic Endtree flag there is another, smaller one - the more agrarian-styled flag of the Perikian Republic.

People all around CHEER to see the ship and their flag - Kira joins in too.

As the ship docks, the gangplank comes out and Torrna and Inna disembark, chatting amiably MOS, a far cry from their earlier relationship.

FLASHBACK - 4x07 "STARSHIP DOWN"

Sisko and Kira finally bond as friends over baseball, after three years of just being colleagues...

BACK TO SCENE

Torrna and Inna part; Inna walks another way while Torrna approaches Kira. They talk as they walk together back to their office.

KIRA

So what happened?

TORRNA

We found the pirates and took care of them in short order. They didn't have anything to match Inna's cannon.

KIRA

It wasn't that long ago you only ever referred to her as "the Admiral" or "that damned woman."

TORRNA

I suppose so. But she showed me something on this trip that I didn't expect. She was efficient yet merciful with the pirates, she was very effective in questioning their leader without being brutal unnecessarily... and she agreed to fly the Perikian flag.

KIRA
I was going to ask about that.

TORRNA
(shrug)
It took surprisingly little argument. I pointed out that her fleet was there at the invitation of the Perikian government, and to protect Perikian interests, so it made sense that they should fly our colours. Of course, she didn't give in entirely...

KIRA
Let me guess - you wanted the Perikian flag on top?

TORRNA
(seriously)
These are our waters, Ashla. Never forget that.

Torrna strides on... Kira watches him go, considering...

7 INT. TORRNA'S OFFICE - DAY

Basically the same room as before, but laid out as an office with a large wooden desk and various parchments strewn about.

Torrna is settling into his seat behind the desk as Kira enters after him...

KIRA
So what did the pirate leader say when Inna questioned her so efficiently and mercifully?

TORRNA
Actually, the most interesting intelligence wasn't from the pirates, but from their slaves. They were refugees from a disaster in the Fire Caves.

FLASHBACK - 7x25 "WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND"

The formerly dead Fire Caves burst into life with torrents of roiling supernatural fire...

BACK TO SCENE

KIRA
(quietly stunned)
What?

TORRNA
Apparently the entrance to the Fire Caves collapsed, completely destroyed the city of Yvrig. Some of them claimed there was some kind of blue fire when the caves collapsed, but I don't put much stock in that.

FLASHBACK - 6x21 "THE RECKONING"

Kira is possessed by a Prophet, with blue flames licking around her body...

BACK TO SCENE

Kira knows instantly what has happened - the Prophets have banished their enemies the *pagh*-Wraiths, to the fire caves.

KIRA
We've got to help those people!
There may be --

TORRNA
Sit down, Ashla. This happened more than two weeks ago. There's very little we can do.
(she settles)
However, this does mean that we're going to see a significant increase in traffic at the port. Without Yvrig, we're the only viable port on the southern coast of the continent.

FLASHBACK - 8x12 "DEMONS OF AIR AND DARKNESS"

Deep Space Nine is very busy, every docking port filled with Starfleet and Bajoran convoy ships...

BACK TO SCENE

TORRNA

We'll need to work on expanding the marina to accommodate more ships. Maybe now Marta won't close her tavern like she's been threatening to. Hell, we might need a new tavern...

KIRA

We'll need more ships from Endtree - or to start building our own.

TORRNA

What for?

KIRA

To hold off the pirates... and the Lerrit Navy.

TORRNA

The Lerrit Navy is barely worth giving the name.

KIRA

Don't be so sure. We got another dispatch from Moloki while you were away. He says that the Lerrit have employed shipbuilders from the Bajora to completely rebuild their navy. And with this change in geography, they're going to be more interested in taking us back than ever.

FLASHBACK - 5x26 "A CALL TO ARMS"

Dukat and Weyoun walk the Promenade, led by a garrison of Jem'Hadar, as the Dominion takes the station at the start of the war. They are met by Kira, Odo and Quark...

BACK TO SCENE

TORRNA

(slumps)

Damn it, I was actually starting
to enjoy the good news.

KIRA

I'm sorry, but -

TORRNA

No, that's alright. I don't blame
you, Ashla. That's why I keep you
around. You have the knack for
dragging me back to reality.

KIRA

Well... I'm glad you and the
admiral are getting along better,
anyway.

TORRNA

Yes. As much as I hate to admit
it, she's quite the brilliant
tactician. You should have seen...

They settle in for a happy, relaxed conversation, except --

SMASH-CUT TO:

8 INT. LERRIT DUNGEON

Kira FALLS on her face onto a cold stone floor, beaten,
bruised and bloody. A small and dingy dungeon, with muck
everywhere, INSECTS scurrying, and smelling disgusting.

The only light comes from a small WINDOW very high up in
the dark stone wall, far out of Kira's reach. She has been
here for some time, and she is filthy. She looks over from
her spot on the ground to the opposite corner...

...and there is TORRNA in a similar condition, huddled in a
ball and cradling an injured left arm, where a nasty WOUND
is looking infected and verging on gangrenous.

Behind her, a huge and heavy iron door CREAKS slowly open.
The bright LIGHT from outside makes her crease up her eyes.

A GUARD enters, big and threatening in a dark uniform, and
looks down on them with disgust.

Behind him comes Prince AVTRA, the monarch of the LERRIT
nation. He is young but carrying himself with a haughty
superiority, quite taken with his own importance.

He is dressed in clean white clothes befitting his station,
with a cloak over them to protect him from the grime of the
dungeon. Torrna and Kira both look up at him, contemptuous.

KIRA

Prince Avtra. You look better on
your coins, Your Highness.

The guard SLAPS her hard across the face in response.

AVTRA

You will rise in the presence of
royalty, General.

TORRNA

As soon as I'm in the presence of
some, I'll consider it.

FLASHBACK - 6x01 "A TIME TO STAND"

In the commander's office, Kira spits her anger right into
Dukat's face...

BACK TO SCENE

The guard KICKS Torrna in the stomach. He coughs hard for
several seconds, but is not deterred.

TORRNA

I'm disappointed, Prince. I was
hoping that Her Royal Highness
herself would come to gloat over
our capture. It is, after all, her
only true victory in this war.

Avtra LAUGHS out loud at that...

TORRNA

Something amuses you?

AVTRA

My dear mother has been dead for some time, fool. Do you truly think she engineered this war? Or our alliance with the Bajora?

Torrna remains stony-faced, refusing to give Avtra the satisfaction of a reaction. Avtra is not deterred...

AVTRA

With the Bajora behind us, Lerrit will destroy Endtree, squash you upstart rebels and finally control the entire southern coast.

KIRA

The Bajora are just using you to get to us, you know that, right? Once they get what they want, they'll turn on your next.

Avtra glances dismissively at Kira, then crouches down to Torrna, grimacing at the grime...

AVTRA

Now, General... I don't suppose you'll tell me the troop movements from your little band of spear carriers?

TORRNA

I'd spit on you right now, but you're not worth wasting the spit.

AVTRA

I thought as much. Besides, I can't imagine even your soldiers are so stupid as to retain the same battle plans after one of their generals has been captured. Still, I had to ask. And I had to see the infamous General Torrna in a Lerrit dungeon for myself.

FLASHBACK - 6x06 "THE SACRIFICE OF ANGELS"

Kira and her anti-Dominion resistance cell are behind a forcefield in one of the station's security cells...

BACK TO SCENE

Avtra stands, glad to have his business here finished...

AVTRA

(simply)

You will be publicly executed at dawn tomorrow. It was going to be yesterday, but the demand for tickets was simply outrageous. We had to have extra seating built for the stadium.

(re Kira)

As for this one... I suppose we should let Torrna have one final night of companionship before we take her to the front lines. She'll make fine arrow fodder.

He turns to leave, dismissing them as beneath his notice.

AVTRA

Enough of this. I need to get this dungeon stink off my person.

Avtra leaves, and the guard closes the door behind them. Kira and Torrna look to each other in worry...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

9 INT. LERRIT DUNGEON

Alone again after the Prince has left, Kira goes to Torrna.

TORRNA

We have to get out of here.

KIRA

I'm open to suggestions. You know there's no exit. The only ones who have free rein out of here are the insects.

Torrna tries to stand up, but unthinkingly braces himself with his wounded left arm, and collapses under it with a GROAN. Kira tries to help, but he waves her away...

TORRNA

I'm fine - just forgot the damn wound. Stupid arm's gone numb. Damn those foul Bajora - I hope their Prophets strike them down with lightning.

Kira shakes her head silently - she knows the Prophets don't work like that. Torrna struggles to get up again, grimacing. He is hurt worse than he is willing to show...

TORRNA

We have to get this intelligence back to Prefect Natlar and Admiral Inna. If the Queen is dead, and the Bajora are supplying the Lerrit... we can change our strategy, try to hit the supply lines the Bajora are using...

The door suddenly OPENS again, and a different guard enters. He looks nervous and furtive, and he closes the door behind him once he has entered.

Kira is confused - guards never do that...

This is MOLOKI, the Perikian spy in the Lerrit camp. He is playing the Quark role in the prison break scene from "The Sacrifice of Angels," although personality-wise he is more like Garak, with his fussiness and patriotism...

MOLOKI

(hands keys)

C'mon, c'mon, we haven't got much time. Take these.

TORRNA

Who the hell are you?

MOLOKI

Right, right, the password. *Free-o calee-waar veyot amska-fey.*

TORRNA

Moloki?

MOLOKI

In the very frightened flesh, yes.

TORRNA

We thought you were dead.

MOLOKI

Probably will be after this stunt, believe me. Don't know what I was thinking, coming up with this ludicrous plan. They'll use my guts for building material.

KIRA

What happened to you?

MOLOKI

Nothing happened as such. I simply couldn't get any messages out. The moment Her Royal Senility dropped dead, all hell broke loose. A spy can no longer make anything like an honest living in this world.

TORRNA

Can you get us --

MOLOKI

Yes, yes, I can get you out of here, just give me a moment to collect myself. I've never been much for impersonations, and I had to pass myself off as one of those imbecile guards that the Prince likes to employ. Stomping round all day, bellowing so loud you can't think! No style at all.

FLASHBACK - 4x22 "FOR THE CAUSE"

Kira watches Garak putter around his tailor's shop...

BACK TO SCENE

Kira smiles at the memory - luckily the others don't see.

Moloki pulls a parchment out from inside his cloak...

MOLOKI

In any case, here's a map of how to get out of here, as well as a map that shows the supply lines the Bajora are using. Assuming you get home alive, that should be fairly useful. Let me make this abundantly clear, General - it will not be easy to get home. It will involve going through a swamp and then through a mountain range. Deviate even slightly from the route I've marked, and you're guaranteed to be captured.

KIRA

And if we stay on the route?

MOLOKI

You're only likely to be captured.

TORRNA

I was afraid of that.

KIRA

(re Torrna)

He's not going to make it with his
arm in the shape it's in.

MOLOKI

He has to, dammit!

(composes himself)

Avtra is sterile. I had hopes that
his pathetic dynasty would finally
lose its choke hold on the Lerrit,
and we could be a good people
again, like we used to be. This
stupid alliance with the Bajora
changes all that, of course. Now
they've got a crop in the field,
they'll use it to take over once
the Crown Moron finally dies. Here
- you'll need this more than me...

Moloki reaches to his back and pulls out a short and sturdy
SWORD. Kira takes it, hefts it to test - it'll do. Torrna
is now on his feet and sweating more than he should...

KIRA

You okay?

TORRNA

No, but it doesn't matter. Moloki
is right, we must return with this
news or everything we've fought
for will be lost!

MOLOKI

You're as much of a crazed zealot
as I suspected, General.

(Kira protests)

I meant it as a compliment, my
dear, believe me. I can say that
as the craziest of crazed zealots
myself. Now come on, let's go over
this map quickly before someone
decides to check up on us...

They huddle and begin to plan...

10 **EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY**

Kira half-crouches, peeking out from behind a large ROCK. She is shivering badly, shiny with sweat, running a very bad fever, but holding on through sheer force of will.

Torrna leans against the rock too, feverish and cradling his wounded arm. Neither is well dressed or fed, and they are suffering badly from the cold, snow and biting wind.

Looking over to Torrna, Kira sees that he has actually fallen asleep - or passed out. Worried, she SLAPS him...

KIRA
Torrna! Torrna! Dammit, wake up!

TORRNA
Ash... Ashla?

KIRA
We're still not being followed.
And we've only got a few more
kilometres to go. Think you're up
to it?

Weak and confused, he struggles to push himself upright...

TORRNA
I think so. I just - aarrgh!
Sorry... keep forgetting that the
arm doesn't really work.

She reaches for him, trying to get to the arm --

KIRA
Let me look at it.

-- but he grabs her with his good hand to stop her.

TORRNA
No! I'm sorry, Ashla, but you
fussing over it isn't going to
change the fact that it feels like
someone's driven a flaming hot
poker through my shoulder.

KIRA
Once we get back home --

TORRNA
It'll be too late. Ashla - I need
you to cut the damn thing off.

Kira LAUGHS out loud at the ridiculousness of the notion...

KIRA
What? I'm no surgeon. If I cut
your arm off now, you'll just
bleed to death.

TORRNA
And if you don't, I'll die from
the infection anyway.

KIRA
Torrna, be logical. If I just hack
your arm off with no alcohol, no
bandages, no cauterising agent...

TORRNA
Okay, you've made your point... I
suppose this means I'll just have
to make it back to Perikia then.

KIRA
Damn right you will.

Kira helps him to his feet, and they head out into the
snow, make their way across the mountains.

They trudge and trudge and trudge...

FLASHBACK - 8x12 "DEMONS OF AIR AND DARKNESS"

Kira drags herself across the desert, withering from
radiation poisoning, towards the gateway and rescue...

BACK TO SCENE

Kira is increasingly feverish, but being the strong one and
forcing Torrna to carry on. She mutters to herself...

KIRA

Maybe it's just nonsense. Maybe all of this is. Maybe I'm just here because it's where the gateway sent me. There's no purpose, no path the Prophets have put me on. I'm just here because a portal happened to show up when I needed it.

TORRNA

(groggily)

What?

KIRA

Nothing.

TORRNA

We will make it, Ashla. We must. There is no other way. If we do not, Perikia will be lost. It's our land - the Lerrit don't belong there, and I'll do everything I can to keep them out. But we can't do it if we can't get Moloki's information back to the prefect.

Kira looks at him, the determination on his face. It encourages her...

KIRA

Yes. We'll make it. We will.

Then her knees BUCKLE, she collapses to the snow...

...and stays there.

WHITE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

11 EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

Kira lies prone in the snow, face down, as Torrna reaches out to her in worry. Slowly WHITE OUT.

We go into a series of flashbacks from previous episodes, seen as if in a dream, with the ghostly over-exposed feel of a *pagh-tem-far* vision from the Prophets...

12 FLASHBACK - 4x07 "STARSHIP DOWN"

The *Defiant* bridge - Sisko wounded, Kira caring for him...

SISKO

Major?

KIRA

Sir?

SISKO

Tell me another story.

13 FLASHBACK - 5x10 "RAPTURE"

Kira and Sisko in the holosuite with the reconstruction of the B'Hala obelisk...

SISKO

B'Hala. It was the eve of the Peldor Festival. I could hear them ringing the temple chimes...

KIRA

You were dreaming.

SISKO

No! I was there! I could smell the burning *bateret* leaves, taste the incense on the wind. I was standing in front of the obelisk, and as I looked up, for a moment, I understood it all...

14 **FLASHBACK - 8x11 "GATEWAYS"**

Kira and Taran'atar in the runabout, discussing "home"...

KIRA

A people can sometimes be defined
by where they come from. Who the
Bajorans are is shaped by our
world. It's part of what ties us
to the Prophets.

TARAN'ATAR

You believe caring for your home
brings you closer to your gods?

KIRA

I suppose that's one way of
looking at it.

TARAN'ATAR

Yet your gods cast you out.

KIRA

Not my gods. Just some people who
claim to represent them.

15 **FLASHBACK - 6x21 "THE RECKONING"**

Sisko speaks to the Prophet-possessed Kira outside the
station shrine...

SISKO

Why have you taken this woman's
body?

PROPHET KIRA

This vessel is willing. The
Reckoning - it is time.

SISKO

The Reckoning... what is it?

PROPHET KIRA

The end, or the beginning.

16 **FLASHBACK - 5x10 "RAPTURE"**

Sisko on the biobed in sickbay, post-vision...

SISKO
But what do the locusts represent?
And why Cardassia...?

ADM WHATLEY
You were dreaming. And dreams
don't always make sense.

SISKO
This was no dream!

17 **FLASHBACK - 5x10 "RAPTURE"**

Kira, Worf, Jadzia Dax and Chief O'Brien in Ops, while
Sisko is undergoing emergency surgery...

KIRA
Chief, I know you're worried, but
the Prophets are leading the
Emissary on this path for a reason.

WORF
Do not attempt to convince them,
Major. They cannot understand.

DAX
Since when do you believe in the
Prophets?

WORF
What I believe in... is faith.
Without it, there can be no
victory. If the captain's faith
is strong, he will prevail.

DAX
It's not much to bet his life on.

KIRA
(heartfelt)
You're wrong. It's everything.

18 **FLASHBACK - 4x07 "STARSHIP DOWN"**

Sisko wounded, Kira caring for him...

 SISKO
Major?

 KIRA
Sir?

 SISKO
Tell me another story.

WHITE OUT

19 **INT. PERIKIAN INFIRMARY - DAY**

Kira's eyes flutter open onto the ramshackle infirmary of the Perikian Army. Tending to her is MALDIK...

 MALDIK
Nerys?

 KIRA
Where... where am...

 MALDIK
You're in the infirmary --

FLASHBACK - 4x25 "BODY PARTS"

Bashir hovers over Kira as she lies on a biobed in sickbay

BACK TO SCENE

 MALDIK
-- at Fort Tendro. It's me,
Maldik. How are you feeling?

 KIRA
Thirsty. And warm.

 MALDIK
That's good. Both very encouraging
signs.

KIRA

Wait a minute. What about Torrna?
We were in the mountains, and --

MALDIK

He's already gone back to the capital. You'd both been declared dead by the Lerrit, you see. They claimed to have executed you. It came as something of a surprise to see him stumbling into the fort, carrying you on his shoulder. In any case, he left immediately to pass on some news or other about the Lerrit, and also let his wife and children know he was alive.

KIRA

Lyra must have been devastated.

MALDIK

I wouldn't know. The general did ask me to pass on a message. He said, and I think I'm quoting this precisely, "Thank her for me."

KIRA

Thank me? What did I do, besides fall on my face?

MALDIK

Well, you didn't actually come out and tell him you were dying of pneumonia while you were stupidly trudging through hip-deep swamps and freezing mountains.

KIRA

(weakly)

I didn't want to worry him.

MALDIK

No, better to wait until you fall flat on your face and completely terrify him.

Kira ignores his sarcasm...

KIRA

What about his arm? Were you able to save it?

MALDIK

Barely. You did a good job of keeping the wound clean. If you'd continued your summer stroll for much longer, it would have been infected, but he got the two of you here in time. Enough gossip, you need your rest.

KIRA

I'm fine...

She tries to sit up, but her head spins and she relents...

KIRA (cont)

On the other hand, maybe rest isn't such a bad idea.

MALDIK

(rolls eyes)

Soldiers make wonderful patients. Try listening periodically, it'll do you wonders.

As he turns away to his medical instruments and Kira lies back to stare at the ceiling...

20 EXT. PERIKIAN PORT - DAY

The port has been bombed and attacked by the Lerrit. Docks and buildings are collapsed or on FIRE, people walk around in shock, stepping over the BODIES to help the injured...

Kira stands with Maldik looking out over it with dismay...

MALDIK

Lerrit's last stand, I would say. General Torrna pretty much beat them on land, but the Lerrit Navy threw their whole armada at us.

KIRA
It looks like it.

MALDIK
Oh, the admiral, she threw back
pretty good. Cost her her life.

KIRA
(shocked)
Inna's dead?

FLASHBACK - 7x25 "WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND"

Sisko and Dukat tumble over the edge of the Fire Caves and
fall into the flames...

BACK TO SCENE

MALDIK
Just what we needed after every-
thing else. Natlar was killed too.
We won... but not without a cost.
(gestures
around)
A kind of "If I can't have it, no-
one can" gesture.

FLASHBACK - 7x25 "WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND"

Sisko, Admiral Ross and General Martok walk through the
devastated Cardassian cities, destroyed by the Dominion as
a final act of spite before surrendering...

BACK TO SCENE

The MERCHANT from earlier is among the battered people; he
spots Kira and Maldik...

MERCHANT
Oh, thank the Prophets she's here.
Maybe she can talk some sense into
him...

Kira looks worried - is he talking about Torrna?

21 **INT. TORRNA'S OFFICE - DAY**

Torrna slouches behind his desk, which is covered with a mess of papers and objects, plus empty alcohol glasses. He is drunk, destroyed with grief, long since forgotten the glasses and begun drinking straight from the bottles...

TORRNA

They're dead. Dead dead dead dead.

Kira stands just by the doorway, looking on with worry and sympathy. She empathises - she has been through this too.

KIRA

I know, Maldik told me about the prefect and Admiral Inna. But --

Torrna drunkenly SWIPES one of the empty glasses off the table, it SMASHes to the floor --

TORRNA

No! Not them. I mean, they're dead too, but that's not who I mean.

KIRA

Then who --

TORRNA

Lyyra! She's dead!

Kira is stunned to speechlessness. His wife...

FLASHBACK - 5x19 "TIES OF BLOOD AND WATER"

Occupation-era Kira walks into a resistance cave hideout, FUREL behind her, and sees the dead body of her father...

BACK TO SCENE

KIRA

What about the kids, are they - ?

TORRNA

They're dead too. All of 'em, dead dead dead. An' they din't know.

KIRA
Didn't know what?

TORRNA
That I was alive! Damned Lerrits
told 'em I was dead, but by the
time I got home, they were dead,
and I never got chance to tell 'em
I was alive!

KIRA
Maybe they found out from the
dispatches...

TORRNA
Doesn't matter. Nothin' matters.
(gestures)
They want me to take charge now't
war's over. Ain't gonna do it.

KIRA
What do you mean?

He snuffles, looking around at the bottles on the table...

TORRNA
Gonna drink m'self to death. If
that doesn't work, I'm gonna cut
m'throat. Don't wanna live in this
world without her.

FLASHBACK - 7x25 "WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND"

Odo morphs into a tuxedo suit before melting back into the
Great Link, as Kira waves him goodbye...

BACK TO SCENE

KIRA
Listen to me Torrna - you can't
just give up.

TORRNA
(thumps desk)
Why not? Haven't I done enough?

FLASHBACK - 8x03 "AVATAR, pt 3"

Kira sits behind her desk, trying to bury herself in work after her Attainder by Vedek Yevir...

BACK TO SCENE

KIRA

No, you haven't! You've spent all this time fighting, you can't give up now! Perikia needs you! They couldn't have fought this war without you, and they certainly wouldn't have won it without you!

TORRNA

Doesn't matter. Without Lyyra --

FLASHBACK - 3x13 "LIFE SUPPORT"

Kira cries over her ex-boyfriend Bareil's body as he slowly dies, bit by bit on an infirmary biobed...

FLASHBACK - 6x26 "TEARS OF THE PROPHETS"

Kira looks on distraught as Bashir draws the sheet over Jadzia Dax's dead body...

BACK TO SCENE

KIRA

There are still hundreds of people out there who fought and died for Perikia - including Lyyra. Without Natlar, without Inna, they'll need your strength. They need the man who beat the Lerrit Army. They need the man who trudged through the swamp and the mountains to get home. They need you.

FLASHBACK - 1x13 "BATTLE LINES"

Kira wails over Kai Opaka's dead body after the runabout crash in the Gamma Quadrant...

FLASHBACK - 5x19 "TIES OF BLOOD AND WATER"

Her father's dead body on the resistance cave floor...

BACK TO SCENE

TORRNA

Can't do it. Just can't.

With a snarl of frustration, Kira goes around to Torrna's side of the desk, tries to haul him out of his seat by his shirt. He's too heavy, plus drunk, so it doesn't work...

KIRA

Get up!

TORRNA

Wha' for?

KIRA

I said get up!

He stumbles to his feet. She drags him forcefully over to the window, where they look out at the devastated port, the fires and injured people. She is losing patience...

KIRA

You see that?

TORRNA

I don't see anything but --

KIRA

The bodies! Look at the bodies!
Those people died fighting for
Perikia! So did Natlar, so did
Inna, and so did Lyyra. You have
no right to give up now, because
if you do, Lerrit has won. There's
no-one who can unite these people
the way you can now - you're a
hero! Without you, they'll fall
apart, and either Prince Avtra or
the Bajora will be able to come
right in and take over.

Torrna stares out at the view, tears in his eyes. He stares for a long time, before finally turning back to Kira...

TORRNA
I'm sorry, Ashla.

But realisation has dawned on Kira's face at last. She finally understands what this has all been about.

With a look of distant amazement, she turns away from Torrna and walks calmly out of the room...

TORRNA
Ashla? Ashla, where are you going?

22 EXT. PERIKIAN PORT - DAY

Kira walks firmly through the damaged port. She looks at it as she walks past, but she has a goal, a purpose. She understands something now that she did not before, and somehow she knows exactly where she is going...

23 EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

The battlefield where it all began. On the small hill where we first saw Kira, with dead bodies of Lerrit, Perikians, Endtree and Bajora all around, there stands a GATEWAY.

Person-sized, glittering in the air, in the middle of nowhere with no explanation or visible means of support.

Kira approaches, looking at it with determination. She doesn't know where it will send her, but she is confident and knows there is a purpose at work here.

She steps through the gateway and into the white light...

WHITE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

24 EXT. SPACE - MILKY WAY GALAXY

The entire GALAXY, the full sprawling spiral, seen as if from outside it, looking up at it.

Slowly PULL BACK until we see that Kira is looking up at this too, gazing at it in wonder and fascination. She is as far from home as she has ever been.

Pulling further back, we see that she is back in the Starfleet desert uniform she wore when she first stepped through the gateway. She is standing on an oval platform that seems to just hang there in inter-galactic space, without any walls or visible force-fields.

A HAND reaches into Kira's view, pointing at the area of the galaxy that contains Bajor. A VOICE speaks, deep and rumbling but friendly. Kira is so fascinated by the view that she doesn't even react to the hand or voice...

ICONIAN (o.s.)

It's here.

Kira turns, eyes following the hand up the arm, to...

...a very tall and slim being, possibly eight feet tall, beside her on the platform. It is humanoid but dressed in a deep burgundy robe that completely obscures its features.

This is a real ICONIAN, genuinely worthy of the legend. Behind him is a control console that matches the ones from TNG 2x11 "Contagion" and DS9 4x23 "To the Death."

She is not scared, but perhaps awed - it is all part of the experience and she simply accepts this being's presence.

KIRA

Wh-what?

ICONIAN

The world you come from is here. I believe you refer to it as Bajor.

KIRA
Who are you?

ICONIAN
(considers a moment)
You could say I'm an emissary of
the people who built this outpost,
but that might have unfortunate
connotations for you. Suffice to
say, I am custodian of this place.

KIRA
You're an Iconian?

The figure nods subtly under his hood - that is as much of
an answer as she is going to get.

ICONIAN
You'll be pleased to know that
I was able to cure you of that
unfortunate energy.

FLASHBACK - 8x12 "DEMONS OF AIR AND DARKNESS"

Kira looks at her tricorder, showing THETA RADIATION LEVELS
and the rising line...

BACK TO SCENE

ICONIAN
I assume you wish to take the gift
that has been given to you and
then go home?

She wonders for a moment, still a little overwhelmed, but
then duty reasserts itself.

KIRA
Actually, I need to return to
Europa Nova. I made a promise that
I would do everything I could --

The Iconian is already gliding eerily back over to his
console, where he checks various instruments...

Kira cautiously follows him, and looks at the display, a holographic projection that hovers over the console.

It shows a blue dotted line bisecting the image, with one star system and various alien symbols on one side, and another on the other. The Iconian inspects the display.

ICONIAN

I see. One of our *hezlat* gateways is in orbit of that planet.

KIRA

Hezlat?

ICONIAN

Many gateways were constructed over time. Some large and inelegant, some small and functional, others that could be held in the palm of one's hand. The *hezlats* were among the earliest, and also among the largest. This one is stable - it links System X-two-seven-pi-L with System J-five-five-delta-Q.

KIRA

Someone decided to dump radiation into that *hezlat* of yours. We had to evacuate the entire planet before the levels became fatal.

ICONIAN

Yes, I see that now. But there is something blocking the gateway...

KIRA

That's one of our vessels. That's how we travel, by ship. I used mine to block the radiation from coming through and --

ICONIAN

I understand, Colonel. I observe your ships traversing the galaxy all the time from here. It is a hobby not shared by all my people.

KIRA

There are more of you, then?

ICONIAN

Yes. Some of them are dealing with this crisis now.

KIRA

What about Europa Nova?

ICONIAN

Hmm? Oh, yes. I am searching now.

He hits more controls, and the display changes to include a third star system...

ICONIAN

Ah, here we are. System O-two-two-psi-T has a star that will suffice for the purpose. I can reprogram this particular *hezlat* to transport the radiating matter on both sides into the star in that system, which will render it inert.

(works more controls)

I will also remove the object blocking the gateway. Would you like it in System O-two-two-psi-T, System X-two-seven-pi-L or System J-five-five-delta-Q?

KIRA

Uh... the second one. Is the place where you're sending the waste uninhabited?

The Iconian seems to suggest that's a stupid question...

ICONIAN

I assume by the state you arrived in that your species is vulnerable to this type of energy?

KIRA

Yes, very vulnerable.

ICONIAN

In that case, you must be careful.
The gateway can remove the matter,
but some of the energy will remain
around that planet. Repopulating
it will be a challenge.

KIRA

Like I said, I made a promise.

ICONIAN

It is time for you to leave.

The Iconian presses more controls, a blue LIGHT shoots out from the console, and a GATEWAY opens up right on the edge of the platform...

...through it, Kira sees Ops on DS9, same as it looked last time, with DAX at the central table and lots of bustle going on around her. Kira looks back to the Iconian...

KIRA

We thought there was some natural
phenomenon preventing the gateways
from functioning around my planet.
But this one on Deep Space Nine,
the one on the Perikian peninsula
thirty thousand years ago... but
that's not true, is it?

ICONIAN

No. But we respect the beings who
watch your worlds. And we promised
long ago never to interfere with
them. Unless invited to do so.

KIRA

Worlds...? Plural?

ICONIAN

Farewell, Colonel.

Realising that she is not going to get any more out of him, she turns and prepares to enter the gateway...

But before she does, she takes one last look at the galaxy entire. Looking up, she points at various parts...

KIRA

If that's the Alpha Quadrant...
and that's the Delta Quadrant...
then that must be the Gamma
Quadrant.

(pause)

You don't look so far away from
here, Odo.

ICONIAN

One of the things that doomed the
Iconian Empire, Colonel, was that
the gateway technology meant we
could no longer travel. We lost
sight of the journey in our desire
to reach the destination. Don't
make the same mistake.

KIRA

I won't.

With a smile, she steps through the gateway yet again...

WHITE OUT

28 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

The station is still busy with ships, but none of the
Starfleet ships are there - just Bajoran and civilian ones,
plus the Cardassian ship *Trager* docked at an upper pylon.

29 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

DAX stands at the Ops table, inspecting her consoles and a
number of PADDS at once. SHAR is at the sciences station,
extras elsewhere. After a few moments of quiet business --

-- Kira suddenly APPEARS in their midst on the lower level.
There is no gateway as such - Kira simply appears as if
stepping out of one, and drops the inch to the deck.

Dax jumps, SHRIEKS aloud, THROWS her padds up into the air with shock and surprise. She blinks several times...

DAX
Colonel?

KIRA
Yes, Lieutenant, it's me.

Dax rushes forward and HUGS Kira tight - completely non-regulation, but she doesn't care. Everyone else is pretty boggled too. Eventually Dax lets go...

KIRA
Report.

DAX
(pulls self together)
Europa Nova has been completely evacuated. Most of the refugees are on Bajor, but the station's filled almost to capacity too. Ro, Quark and Etana have returned, and Ro says she's got some good news regarding the Orion Syndicate. And Taran'atar's in the infirmary.

KIRA
(surprised)
He's alright?

DAX
I wouldn't go that far, but he'll recover. Whatever he fought gave him quite a beating. Apparently enough to cause delusions, since he reported that you were dead.

KIRA
I think I was, for a moment.

DAX
It's good to have you back, Nerys. I don't think this place could taken losing another commander.

KIRA

It's good to be back, Ezri. And don't worry, I'm not planning on going anywhere. I've still got too much work to do.

As Kira smiles, happy and serene...

30 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

The station is packed with human refugees from Europa Nova, as well as its usual throng of alien visitors.

KIRA stands in her Bajoran Militia uniform, looking out of an upper level window in the direction of the wormhole...

KIRA (v.o.)

Station log, Colonel Kira Nerys reporting. Dax explained what happened with the gateways.

(pause)

Apparently Captain Picard of the *Enterprise* succeeded in contacting the real Iconians and getting them to help him shut down the network. It's going to take the whole of Starfleet to do it, so Commander Vaughn has taken the *Defiant* to join the effort. Meanwhile the Corps of Engineers is already moving in to clean up the mess, including figuring out how to make Europa Nova habitable again.

(pause)

As for the fake Iconians, these Petraw found a way into the technology years ago and tried to use it to find their long-lost homeworld. When that didn't work, they tried to sell them to the highest bidder to finance another attempt. All they wanted to do... was go home.

She turns and begins walking through the Promenade... down the spiral staircase to the lower level. She walks proudly, comfortably. This is her home.

KIRA (v.o.)

Gul Macet and the *Trager* have been invited to stay at the station for a while as a prelude to some kind of diplomatic dialogue with Cardassia. Councillor zh'Thane, Ensign ch'Thane's mother, is still on board the station, helping the refugees. Lieutenant Bowers has been dispatched back to Europa Nova to pick up the *Euphrates*... and we have a lovely new piece of technology in the shield enhancer from the tanker ship.

(pause)

Dax is busy reassuring everyone, including First Minister Shakaar and Kasidy Yates, that contrary to reports, I am very much alive.

31 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Kira stands talking to BASHIR, while TARAN'ATAR can be seen on a biobed in the background...

KIRA (v.o.)

I made sure to take time to look in on Taran'atar as well. A good deal of my life, I owe to him.

BASHIR

It's absolutely astonishing. If any other humanoid had taken those kinds of injuries, even a Klingon, there's no way they would have survived. But he's recovering faster than anything I've ever seen. Of course, he hates being stuck here. But even laboratory-bred super-soldiers need their rest when they've had the stuffing beaten out of them.

Kira is now beside Taran'atar's bed, him still pretty badly damaged but healing, and looking as relieved as he can...

TARAN'ATAR
It is good that we have both
reclaimed our lives.

KIRA
You don't know the half of it.

Kira places a hand on the scaly shoulder, comforting her
fellow soldier...

32 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Sisko's BASEBALL sits where it always has on the desk. Kira
reaches in, reverently picks it up, turns it in her hand...

She sits behind the desk, scanning through the records of
Ancient Bajor on her computer and dictating her log...

KIRA
I've tried looking into historical
records about the war between the
Perikians and the Lerrit. There
was distressingly little from so
long ago. In fact, no mention of
the Lerrit at all. But the name
of General Torrna came up quite a
lot. Historians have debated over
the enormous significance he had
on the area. Streets and landmarks
are named after him. Apparently he
took my advice, stuck with it. Now
I have to take my own advice too.

She pauses to think it through, put the pieces together...

KIRA
I wavered. But the Prophets and
the Iconians worked together to
put me back on track. I know now
that I'm where I need to be, doing
what the Prophets need me to do.

She considers the baseball, the symbol of Benjamin Sisko's
command of the station, left behind when he "died"...

KIRA

I kept thinking in the back of my head that the Emissary was going to return. Hoping he'd return and take the burden off me. That he'd take the station back and everything would go back to normal.

(resolved)

But that's not going to happen. This station is mine now. I may have lost Benjamin, Odo, Jadzia, I may be Attainted... But I've still got responsibilities, just like Torrna did. And dammit, I'm going to live up to them.

She reaches down, opens a drawer inside her desk, places the baseball inside it, and closes the drawer again.

KIRA

I'll hold it for you, Benjamin, for when you come back. But I need this to be my office now.

With a satisfied sigh, she gets up from behind the desk and walks out into Ops. The doors close behind her...

...and we look out from the office onto Ops, as Kira joins Dax at the central table, ready to face the day.

FADE OUT:

THE END