

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

13x06 - "Born Under a Bad Sign"

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and on the *Star Trek* tie-in novels
by Pocket Books

TNG 18x06 - "MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

Admiral Akaar calls Picard in a fury about kidnapping the Centauri governor, but Kadhata and Choudhury "accidentally" take the comm array offline for "repairs". The governor makes a public speech exhorting Federation worlds to support each other and rededicate themselves to its ideals. The *Nansen* arrives at Pacifica to take Picard into custody, and its captain places Worf in command... with orders to keep doing what they're doing. Back aboard *Enterprise*, Beverly gives birth to a son - René Jacques Robert François Picard. Having witnessed the situation on Pacifica, Kadhata transfers to join the Starfleet team there instead - they need help, plus it is closer to her own family on Cestus. Once Akaar arrives in person, he offers Picard an admiralty and a role leading Starfleet resettlement efforts. Picard reminds Akaar of what James T Kirk told him (ST "Generations") and declines the offer, but he does wonder if raising a child on a starship is really the best idea...

TTN 2x06 - "IN DENIAL"

Dr Ree brings Troi and Nurse Ogawa to Lumbu, looking for a safe birthing place. Troi's fears for Riker and the baby triggered Ree telepathically, and he is paranoid over any threat. Tuvok takes a security team - he worries his own grief over his son's death affected Troi, and Ree in turn. Ogawa's son Noah stays with Tuvok's wife T'Pel, and they discuss managing grief. Troi thinks Ree's desperation is because he never had any children of his own, being unimpressive for a Pakhwa-thanh male. But when Tuvok arrives, his own confession pushes Troi to admit she is holding on to anger at Ree for his actions during her pregnancy, forcing Ree to try to prove he is a good parent. With everyone now clear-headed, Troi is able to give birth safely, with the Lumbuans' help. Tuvok arrests a guilt-ridden Ree, and they all worry about breaching the Prime Directive, but luckily the Lumbuans accept them as spirits and go on with their lives...

VOY 11x06 - "DIABOLATRY"

The cube looming over B'Elanna's tiny slipstream shuttle is thankfully not Borg - it is someone's low-tech approximation. *Voyager* arrives just in time to save B'Elanna from its attack.

Admiral Batiste assigns *Voyager* and *Galen* to investigate the not-Borg cube's origin system. They find six distinct life-forms working as one. *Hawking* detects another cube, containing dead bodies arrayed like drones in alcoves, sending out a weak signal: "Please accept the offering of the Indign." It seems these Indign idolise the Borg as the epitome of cooperation, and string up passersby as tributes to their "gods". Seven reports that the Indign were judged unworthy of assimilation by the Borg. Eden and Batiste argue over the ethics of telling the Indign that their "gods" no longer exist. In a counselling session, Seven rejects the name "Annika" - it feels like the Caeliar want her to be less than she was. Cambridge assures her she is stronger than any voice in her head...

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The usual view of Starfleet Headquarters in San Francisco. No damage here, since Earth was saved from Borg attack.

BEN SISKO walks across the plaza towards the main building, still in civilian dress. Head down, hoping not to have to talk to anyone. He enters...

2 INT. STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS - RECEPTION

Sisko walks up to the reception desk, where the CAITIAN yeoman recognises him without having to introduce himself.

CAITIAN

Mister Sisko. The admiral is expecting your visit. If you wouldn't mind...?

The Caitian gestures towards a security scanner nearby on the counter. Sisko wordlessly steps up to it, places his hand on it, waits for it to SCAN his palm-print, then steps back to the yeoman, who reads off the results.

CAITIAN

Thank you, sir. If you'll take either of the central turbolifts behind me, Ensign Ventrice will see that you're comfortable until the admiral can see you.

Sisko nods, then steps around the reception desk towards the turbolifts, which are flanked by security guards. He steps inside a waiting carriage...

3 INT. TURBOLIFT

The door closes and the lift begins to move without Sisko saying anything. His destination has been pre-programmed.

Sisko stands silently, contemplating the step he is about to take. He doesn't want to do it, but he sees no choice.

Finally the turbolift glides to a stop and the door opens, revealing an older human woman, VENTRICE, waiting for him.

VENTRICE
Mister Sisko, I'm Ensign Ventrice,
the admiral's assistant. Please
follow me.

Sisko steps out of the turbolift, into...

4 INT. STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS - ANTEROOM

...a gorgeous reception area with big picture windows out over the San Francisco coastline. Many doors lead off to various offices, each with a secretary's desk outside it.

As Ventrice leads Sisko across this room, he notices that the walls are decorated with dramatic paintings of major Starfleet assets, including the original *Enterprise*, one of *Voyager*, and one of Deep Space Nine itself (with *Defiant*).

VENTRICE
Would you like a drink, or
something to read?

SISKO
No, thank you.

VENTRICE
Very well, please take a seat. The
admiral will be with you shortly.

While Ventrice returns to one of the desks, Sisko sits in a comfortable chair among several, and waits. While he does, he tries to look out of the window at the lovely view, but his eye inevitably drifts to the image of Deep Space Nine.

After a few moments, the door near to Ensign Ventrice opens and Admiral WHATLEY emerges, smiling wide and striding forwards to vigorously shake his old friend's hand.

WHATLEY
Ben! Sorry to keep you waiting.
Come on in.

Whatley turns and heads back into the office, with Sisko following. He nods to Ventrice on his way.

WHATLEY

Thank you, Ensign.

5 INT. STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS - ADMIRAL'S OFFICE

This room offers a different view over San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge clear. Whatley heads back to sit behind his desk, gesturing for Sisko to take the guest chair.

WHATLEY

Have a seat, Ben. I'm glad to see you made it through the horror in one piece. Can I get you anything?

SISKO

No, thank you, Admiral.

WHATLEY

Oh for God's sake, Ben, call me Charlie. Now what I can do for you on such short notice? We may not have long, I'm still coordinating all those refugee ships.

SISKO

Then I'll get right to the point. I've decided to rejoin Starfleet. I want you to reactivate my commission - permanently.

Off Sisko's stern but resolute mien...

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

6 EXT. STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Bringing us back to the centre of Starfleet operations...

7 INT. STARFLEET HEADQUARTERS - ADMIRAL'S OFFICE

...where Admiral Whatley stands gazing out of the window at the Golden Gate Bridge. Sisko is waiting for a response.

WHATLEY

You weren't here when the Breen attacked Earth, were you, Ben?

SISKO

No, I was on Deep Space Nine.

WHATLEY

Of course. But you saw the images of the bridge.

SISKO

Yes.

WHATLEY

Do you remember what you felt when you saw those images?

Sisko nods without replying. No need to verbalise it.

WHATLEY

I'm sure you're aware that the Golden Gate is famous not just all across Earth, but throughout the Federation. And because of its proximity to this building, it's become associated with Starfleet. When images of the broken bridge were released to the public com nets, applications to the Academy skyrocketed. And not just from Earth - from everywhere.

SISKO

They wanted to defend against the enemy who destroyed the bridge.

WHATLEY

Who destroyed a part of their universe. An enemy who attacked a home they knew, even if it wasn't precisely their home. We actually received applications from Gorn and Ferengi. Even one Tholian!

(beat, turns)

Is that why you want to rejoin Starfleet, Ben? To help defend a Federation that's been wounded?

Sisko still doesn't respond, because the answer is no.

WHATLEY

That would be a legitimate reason, no doubt. The fleet's been gutted, we need everyone we can get. And there's obviously no questioning your abilities, you're practically a legend around this place.

SISKO

I've never asked to be a legend, Admiral.

WHATLEY

No. But the thing is, when I came to Bajor to call you back into Starfleet only a few weeks ago, you agreed on one condition only - that the moment the battle was over, you would step down and go home to be with your family. As much as we need people, we also need stability. Reliability. I can't have somebody joining up today and resigning tomorrow.

SISKO

That won't happen.

WHATLEY

Are you sure? I heard about your father. I sympathise, but I also know from experience that the death of someone so close to you can drive a person to do things they wouldn't otherwise do... and which they soon come to regret.

SISKO

I've made my decision.

WHATLEY

Ben... we've been friends for years. The Tzenkethi border wars, you on the *Okinawa*, me on the *Assurance*... What's going on?

If Sisko admits the truth, Whatley will never give him what he wants. He gropes for something the admiral will believe.

SISKO

Admiral... when I was first posted to Deep Space Nine, I objected. I was raising a teenage son, and a hostile frontier beyond Federation space didn't seem the ideal place to do that. I considered leaving Starfleet altogether so I could return to Earth. In the meantime, I followed my orders, I went to Bajor, I went to Deep Space Nine ...and I changed my mind.

(beat)

When I left Bajor a few weeks ago, I couldn't imagine anything more important than staying at home to protect my family. The Borg showed me that there is something more important after all - staying away from home to protect my family.

(emphasised)

I changed my mind.

Whatley sits and ponders, holding Sisko's gaze. Finally...

WHATLEY

Alright, Ben. I would say you'll have your choice of assignment, but if you were hoping to return to Deep Space Nine -

SISKO

No.

(gentler)

I was actually thinking more along the lines of starship command.

WHATLEY

The *New York* will be undergoing repairs for quite a while. But we do have ships that need a captain.

SISKO

Any port in a storm.

WHATLEY

I could promote you to admiral, but frankly we've got enough of those around here right now.

SISKO

I don't need the rank. I just want to return to service.

With a sigh, Whatley stands from his desk, Sisko joining him. Whatley reaches across, and shakes Sisko's hand again.

WHATLEY

Alright then. Welcome back to Starfleet... Captain Sisko.

Off Sisko's grim expression...

8 EXT. UTOPIA PLANITIA SHIPYARDS

The Galaxy-class USS *Robinson* NCC-71842 hangs in space, framed by the spidery arms of a maintenance module.

Many other ships likewise hang in the background, and the planet of MARS below them all.

9 INT. ROBINSON - MAIN ENGINEERING

As seen throughout TNG. Sisko and Cmdr ROGEIRO walk down the short corridor that leads to the main engine room. Sisko is stern and closed off, Rogeiro cautious of that.

ROGEIRO

There are still several systems not completely repaired, Captain. But given the number of ships needing to be repaired...

SISKO

I understand, Commander.

They turn the corner into the actual engine room...

...and standing in front of the Master Systems Display is an unusual figure - a new alien lifeform called an OTEVREL.

Non-humanoid, almost hourglass-shaped with a narrow centre but wider top and bottom, covered in a thick green hide and a uniquely designed gold-collar uniform. Rings of tentacles trisect the tubular body. Two of the upper tentacles end in visual sensors, while the others function as fingers.

(Meanwhile, the engine room is filled with junior officers performing repairs with all manner of tools and torches.)

ROGEIRO

You remember Commander Relkdahz?

SISKO

Of course. Good to be working with you again, Commander. Your status?

The Otevrel, named RELKDAHZ, replies in a tinny scratch processed into a male-inflected voice by his combadge.

RELKDAHZ

Captain. On the positive side, this Galaxy-class engine room is almost identical to the *New York's* Nebula-class engine room, so I've learned my way around quickly.

SISKO
And on the negative side?

RELKDAHZ
Almost everything else.

The upper range of tentacles gesture at the MSD...

RELKDAHZ
(continuing)
Decks eleven through sixteen can't access the main computer, the port manoeuvring thrusters keep firing on their own, and the shield grid absolutely refuses to charge any higher than thirty percent.

On cue, an ALARM suddenly sounds. Relkdahz's eye-stalks instantly scan over the MSD to determine the cause...

RELKDAHZ
Power surge in the starboard monitoring station. Lieutenant Gsellman, get out of the way!

Too late - a panel EXPLODES, throwing Lt GSELLMAN (human female) back in a shower of sparks. Sisko and Rogeiro move instantly to check on her, pull her back from the fire.

ROGEIRO
Lieutenant!

Relkdahz GLIDES smoothly on a hundred tiny feet across the floor, scoops up a FIRE EXTINGUISHER with his thicker lower tentacles, passes it quickly up to the thinner upper ones and SQUIRTS it at the burning panel. The fire goes out.

SISKO
Commander Rogeiro, escort the Lieutenant to sickbay.

GSELLMAN
I think I can manage, Captain.
Thank you anyway.

Gsellman heads out of engineering, walking wounded. Sisko and Rogeiro recover from the excitement while Relkdahz glides across to another console, works its panels.

ROGEIRO

What caused that, Commander?

RELKDAHZ

My guess is a damaged relay in the EPS conduit. That's one problem I can fix relatively easily. I'll assign someone at once.

ROGEIRO

Thanks, Relkdahz.

Rogeiro after-you's for Sisko, and they leave engineering, Sisko still closed off. Passing through into...

10 **INT. ROBINSON - CORRIDOR**

Walk and talk...

ROGEIRO

So, as I was saying, Captain...

SISKO

Yes, I see.

(beat)

I was looking at the crew manifest on the shuttle over from Earth. You have Lieutenant ch'Thane down as chief science officer.

ROGEIRO

Is that a problem, sir? I worked with Shar on the *Kirk*, and I know he's an excellent scientist.

SISKO

I'm not questioning his qualifications, Commander. I'm questioning the fact that when I last left the *Venture*, he was an emotional wreck. Is he really ready to return to duty?

ROGEIRO

He requested to return, sir. He assures me he's ready, and I think he needs it. Most of the crew fought the Borg, Captain, whether on this ship or some other. There isn't a one of us here who isn't damaged in some way. I know Shar is having regular counselling, and frankly, sir... so am I.

SISKO

Very well, Commander. But I want both the ship and the crew ready for duty in two weeks. When I come back aboard, I expect to be able to launch without any delay.

ROGEIRO

When you come back, sir? You're not staying to oversee?

SISKO

That's your job, Mister Rogeiro. I'll be elsewhere... I have another matter to take care of.

Sisko strides on, leaving Rogeiro confused in his wake...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 EXT. SPACE

A nondescript Federation passenger liner travels at low warp...

...but then drops out of warp back to impulse speed.

12 INT. PASSENGER LINER - CABIN

Sisko, in civilian clothes, stands at the window of these equally nondescript quarters and gazes out into space.

As the ship curves in its course, the unmistakable shape of Deep Space Nine itself hoves into view and grows closer.

On SISKO as he remembers...

FLASHBACK - 1x01 "EMISSARY"

Sisko with his arm around young Jake, catching their first sight of Deep Space Nine out of the window...

BACK TO SCENE

Sisko turns away, not wanting to think about that...

13 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

The door opens and Sisko strides in. RO greets him, directs him to the guest chair while she retakes her own seat.

RO
Captain - welcome back to DS-Nine.

SISKO
Thank you, Commander. I'd like to request the use of a runabout.

Ro is a bit thrown by Sisko's abrupt, businesslike manner. No time for small talk apparently.

RO
Certainly, Captain. I've no doubt
you're eager to get home. I'll
assign Lieutenant Tenmei -

SISKO
No. I'd rather travel alone, thank
you anyway.

RO
As you wish, sir. I can have some-
one come and pick up the runabout
once you're done with it.

SISKO
No need, Commander, I can bring it
back myself.

Ro doesn't quite understand what is going on, but Sisko is
barrelling through...

SISKO
In the meantime I thought I'd pay
a visit to Captain Vaughn. I
assume he's in the Infirmary?

RO
Actually Doctor Bashir moved him
into Lieutenant Tenmei's quarters.
She's looking after him herself.

That adds an extra layer of complication to Sisko's plans.

SISKO
I see. Very well, I'll contact
Lieutenant Tenmei. Please let me
know when the runabout's ready.

Sisko stands, the meeting over. Ro follows his lead.

SISKO
Thank you, Commander. Carry on.

And he turns and leaves the office.

On RO - what the hell was that all about?

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

Sisko exits the office into Ops, and heads straight to the turbolift without acknowledging anyone. He steps aboard...

SISKO
Habitat ring.

A moment, long enough for Sisko to look around Ops. No-one we know is on duty, all unfamiliar faces. He burns it all into memory - it's probably the last time he will be here.

Then the turbolift takes him away.

15 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Focusing on the habitat ring...

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

Sisko walks along the corridor, looking for the right set of quarters. He finally finds it, hesitates...

...and presses the door chime. A few moments...

...and the door opens to reveal Lt TENMEI, unrested and out of uniform.

TENMEI
Oh - Captain Sisko. I didn't know you were aboard the station. What can I do for you?

SISKO
Lieutenant Tenmei. Forgive me for disturbing you. I've been told that your father is staying with you...?

TENMEI
Uh yes, yes he is. Would you like to come in?

SISKO
Thank you.

Tenmei steps back out of the way, and Sisko enters her quarters. It's a bit of a mess.

TENMEI

Sorry about the mess. Tidying up just hasn't seemed like the highest priority these days.

SISKO

I understand. How is your father?

TENMEI

No better. He's through here, if you'd like to see...?

Sisko nods, feeling awkward but also needing this. Tenmei leads him through to...

BEDROOM

...where VAUGHN is laid out no differently than he was at the end of 13x02 "Live and Let Die". A thin and grey old man surrounded by life support and monitoring machines, breathing steadily and shallowly but no other sign of life.

Sisko shows no reaction - this is not news to him.

TENMEI

Julian says it's just a matter of keeping him comfortable. Which I can do better in here than in a hospital ward.

SISKO

Lieutenant... Prynn... would it be okay for me to have a few moments alone with him?

TENMEI

Yes, of course. Umm... I'll go and clean up in the other room a bit. Take as long as you need.

SISKO

Thank you.

Still a bit scattered, Tenmei shuffles back out of the room, letting the bedroom door close behind her.

There is a chair by the side of the bed, so Sisko sits in it. He notices the book on the bedside table - Tolkien's "The Silmarillion" - and the guitar laid against the wall in the corner. Tenmei has been keeping her father company.

SISKO

Elias... it's Ben. I have no idea if you can hear me, but I'm just going to talk anyway. You're the only one I can talk to.

(deep breath)

I'll be going down to Bajor in a little while. I know it'll be one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. But I have no choice. I'm returning to Starfleet, and this might be the last time we see each other, so I just wanted to take time to say goodbye... and thank you. I know you couldn't understand what was going on, but you tried, and that meant a lot. I just wish...

(sad chuckle)

I look at you like this, and it makes me feel... old. Worn out. But there's a lot of life in front of me yet, and I need to start getting on with it.

But he sits there, no eagerness to get on with it at all.

17 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Less busy than it was in earlier eps, since many of the refugees have moved down to Bajor. The Infirmary door opens and SISKO and BASHIR step out, pausing in the doorway.

BASHIR

I'm afraid Lieutenant Tenmei is right, Captain.

SISKO

I trust you'll do what you can.

BASHIR

That's just the problem, sir -
there's not much I can do.

SISKO

I understand, Doctor. It's a
difficult situation all round.

(drifts a moment,
then comes back)

Thank you for your time, Doctor.

Nodding his acknowledgement, Sisko moves off. Bashir
watches him go, sensing something else is going on.

Sisko pauses at the door to Quark's Bar, sees that it is
too busy and happy for his current mood, and turns away to
walk down the Promenade instead.

On his way, a Bajoran CIVILIAN catches his eye and half-
bows in respect...

CIVILIAN

Emissary.

Sisko instinctively hardens, but nods a polite greeting and
moves on before the civilian tries to engage any further.

Sisko reaches the spiral staircase and begins to climb...

...emerging onto the upper level of the Promenade. Then in
to the upper floor of the bar, head down the whole way.

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

Once inside, he climbs even higher, to the rarely used
third floor, hoping to avoid contact as much as possible.

He takes a seat, and only moments later QUARK is there.

QUARK

Captain Sisko. Good to see you.
Your usual *raktajino*?

SISKO

Yes please.

QUARK

(types on padd)

On the way. Can I interest you in something from our new food menu?

Quark pulls up a different page on the padd and passes it to Sisko. Sisko takes it more out of habit than enthusiasm.

SISKO

As long as it comes without too much unnecessary conversation.

QUARK

Ah - one of those days. Don't worry, I understand, Captain.

SISKO

You don't understand anything, Quark.

(re menu)

What's this? Jambalaya à la Sisko?

QUARK

Very popular. Inspired by the recipes of the Sisko family restaurant on Earth and licensed exclusively to Quark's.

SISKO

Jake? Jake did this?

QUARK

At my suggestion. We all heard about your father, Captain - this was introduced in his honour. The station's Bajoran populace can't get enough.

Sisko jerks to his feet, the chair SCRAPING on the metal floor. Quark staggers back, alarmed at this reaction.

SISKO

Cancel my order, Quark.

Sisko shoves the padd back at Quark and stomps away, leaving the Ferengi barkeep confused.

As Sisko heads out of the bar, he taps his combadge...

SISKO

Sisko to Commander Ro. Is there an update on the runabout?

RO (comm)

I was just about to call you, Captain. The *Brahmaputra* is ready for you at pad C.

SISKO

Thank you, Commander. I'll head straight there. Sisko out.

Off Sisko's stern expression...

19 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

A runabout launches from its pad and heads off at impulse.

20 EXT. BAJOR - EVENING

Sun setting over the mountains, glinting off the Yolja river that winds nearby, a gentle breeze through the trees.

The landed runabout's hatch HISSES open and Sisko steps out, still in civilian dress, bag on shoulder. Closing the hatch behind him, he walks down the country lane nearby.

He turns a corner, and sees his house peeking from behind the trees. He pauses to steel his courage...

21 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The door opens and Sisko steps inside. Like in New Orleans, the lights are low and the room is empty. Sisko looks at the fireplace, the rocking chair, pictures on the mantle.

The muffled sounds of Kasidy's voice and Rebecca's girlish giggle make it to Sisko's ears; he can't help but smile.

Then the door from Rebecca's bedroom opens, and KASIDY and REBECCA emerge, the girl in pink pyjamas and a hair bow.

Kasidy SQUEAKS in shock at the unexpected body in their living room, until she realises who it is. Rebecca SHRIEKS:

REBECCA

Daddy!

She runs to him, arms wide open. He crouches to meet her, sweeps her up into his arms, stands back up.

Across from them, Kasidy watches with a warm smile growing. She and Sisko make eye contact, and for the moment, all is well in the world. Daddy's home.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

22 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rebecca is in bed, under the covers, dolls cuddled up to her side, clearly tired but absolutely refusing to sleep.

Sisko sits on the bed beside her, reading from an actual storybook while she fights to keep her eyes open.

SISKO

And so Flotter, Trevis and the invincible invertebrates walked off together into the Forest of Forever, hand in branch in claw, and had lots and lots of fun for the rest of the day.

Sisko looks up to Rebecca's face, and sees that she is fast asleep at last. Very quietly closing the book, he gets up without disturbing her, lowers the nightlight to its lowest level, and heads out to the living room.

23 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sisko finds that Kasidy has prepared a light late meal, and is just laying it out on the table. Sisko smiles wide and sits at the table as Kasidy serves.

KASIDY

She finally asleep?

SISKO

Took me three stories, but yes, eventually she drifted off.

KASIDY

She hasn't seen her dad in weeks. She's excited. Can't blame her for wanting to stay up with you.

(beat, she sits)

Ben, I'm so sorry about Joseph. How are you handling it?

They both start to peck at the food unenthusiastically.

SISKO

Haven't slept much. Just... on top of everything else... I'm sorry for not contacting you sooner.

KASIDY

I understand. I'm sure Starfleet must have kept you busy. Although I think a message for Rebecca would have been appreciated.

SISKO

Comm lines were down, then Jake called, so I dropped everything and ran back to see dad...

KASIDY

Hey... it's okay. You know I would have come, but with travel how it is now, and Rebecca...

(Sisko nods
absently)

How is everyone? How's Jake and Rena? And Judith?

SISKO

They'll be fine. They have their own lives to get back to.

She sees that Sisko is just shuffling food around the plate, not eating it. She takes pity.

KASIDY

If you're not hungry, don't force yourself. We can just sit.

SISKO

I... thanks.

They lay down their cutlery, pick up their wine glasses and head over to the couch, sitting opposite each other with the fire roaring. It takes a while to start talking again.

KASIDY

How was it?

SISKO

It was hard. Dozens of our ships, only six of theirs... but they damn near wiped us out. The *New York*, the *Kirk*, the *Cutlass*... Starbase Seven... and millions of Andorians dead before Dax's people stopped them... and then Elias...

KASIDY

I know. Nog told me. I'm so sorry. I know you were close to him.

SISKO

I was. I am. He's still alive. They sent him back to Deep Space Nine, since Lieutenant Tenmei is his only living relative.

KASIDY

How is he? Has there been any improvement?

SISKO

No. Julian has him hooked up to every kind of life-sustaining equipment known to science... but he says there's no evidence of any higher brain functions. Maybe I'll have another chance to visit him before I...

KASIDY

Before you what?

He can tell that she is suspicious, knows that something is going on. The old simmering tensions are flaring up again, and he is about to deliberately set them aflame.

SISKO

Before I leave the Bajor system.

There, it's out. No taking it back now.

KASIDY

What? Where are you going?

SISKO

I'm returning to Starfleet.

KASIDY

(anger rising)

You are returning to Starfleet.
No discussing it with me first,
your decision's made, is it?

SISKO

(helpless)

The Borg annihilated forty percent
of Starfleet. They desperately
need experienced officers.

KASIDY

Oh I'm sure they do. But I would
have thought you've done enough.

SISKO

Kas...

He tries to reach for her - she jerks away and gets to her feet, voice rising.

KASIDY

Don't you 'Kas' me.

She looks back over towards Rebecca's bedroom door, worried to be overheard. She makes an effort to rein herself in, takes a deep breath, and sits back down on the sofa again.

KASIDY

Ben, I know things have been tense
between us in the past. And I know
why you had to go help fight the
Borg, the Ascendants, all of them
- you were protecting your family.

(takes his hand)

But we are a family. We have a
daughter. We agreed we didn't want
to raise her on Deep Space Nine.

And I don't want to raise her here on my own with you gone off on missions half the time. Not to mention the danger you'll be in.

SISKO

I'm not going back to DS-Nine.

KASIDY

(pulls away again)

Then where are you going?

SISKO

I'm taking over command of the USS *Robinson*. I'll be looking after the surviving crews of the *Kirk* and the *New York* - Elias's crew. At least for now, our mission is to patrol the Sierra sector... near the Romulan Neutral Zone.

Kasidy stands again, no longer able to control her anger.

KASIDY

The Neutral Zone?! That's on the opposite side of the Federation. Really, Ben, if you want to leave me, you don't have to go so far.

SISKO

Kasidy, I don't want to leave you. The *Robinson* is a Galaxy-class ship, you and Rebecca could...

KASIDY

Me and Rebecca could what? Come with you? Live aboard a starship? You know that's not the life I want for our daughter.

(beat)

Wait a minute. You do know how important it is to me to raise Rebecca on a planet, in a real home. That wasn't even a genuine offer, was it?

(bitter laugh)

It was safe for you to make it
because you knew what my answer
would be. You don't really want us
coming with you at all, do you?

Sisko just looks helplessly up at her from the sofa. Kasidy
begins moving around the room, picking up his coat and his
travelling bag. Over this:

KASIDY

Twice before I threw you out of
this house thanks to your crazy
obsession with the Prophets. This
time... I think you came here
intending to get thrown out.
Well, allow me to indulge you.

She shoves the coat and bag into his face. He takes them
sheepishly, and stands on wobbly legs. Kasidy heads to the
door and opens it, waiting for him.

KASIDY

Who knows, maybe the third time
will be the charm.

SISKO

Kas... I'm sorry.

KASIDY

Goodbye, Ben.

With nothing else to say, Sisko hefts the bag on his
shoulder and heads out into the night.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 INT. ORB CHAMBER

Sisko's face is bathed in BLUE LIGHT as he kneels on the stone floor before the open Orb box, his eyes closed against its brightness. His jaw is tense, working.

After a while he opens his eyes, squints into the light, trying to make a connection. But there is nothing.

Finally he accepts defeat, and closes the Orb box doors. He takes a second to let his eyes adjust to the dim light of the Orb chamber, then sluggishly gets to his feet.

25 INT. SHIKINA MONASTERY - ATRIUM

Sisko emerges into the area seen in 2x24 "The Collaborator" as downcast as ever. He winces against the bright sunlight streaming through the archways.

The kai's assistant, Prylar HAIM, is gazing happily into this light, letting it warm her. At Sisko's arrival, she turns and half-bows.

HAIM

Emissary.
(Sisko's
 jaw tenses)
I trust your Orb experience
provided what you needed.

SISKO

(evasive)
It was... what I expected.

HAIM

(not catching on)
I'm glad. Will you be staying with
us much longer?

SISKO

No, I'll be leaving tonight.

HAIM

We will be sorry to see you go,
but it has been an honour to have
you staying here with us.

SISKO

I appreciate your hospitality.

And he quickly moves on, avoiding any more conversation.

26 **EXT. SHIKINA MONASTERY - GARDENS - DAY**

As seen in 2x02 "The Circle". Sisko strolls along the stone path, trying to let the beauty of nature lift his spirit. He eventually comes upon the babbling brook and rock garden where he first encountered Vedek Bareil, and pauses there.

He picks up a small rock and casts it gently into the water, closing his eyes to make a wish as he does so. Then he sits on the edge, takes off his shoes and dangles his feet into the water, sitting back and trying to relax.

Soft FOOTSTEPS bring him around, and he looks up to see a FIGURE watching him, face hidden by silhouette of the sun.

SISKO

Hello?

KIRA

Hello, Benjamin.

SISKO

Nerys!

Sisko jumps to his feet and immediately moves to hug Vedek KIRA. She chuckles. Then he pulls back and looks at her...

SISKO

Wait - Vedek Kira? How is that possible? From novice to prylar to vedek in less than three years?

KIRA

I know! It only just happened a few weeks ago.

SISKO

Well congratulations! I haven't seen you since -

KIRA

- since the thing with Raiq and Vexh. And Rebecca.

Sisko turns away, hiding his reaction. Kira sees this immediately - an opening.

KIRA

So what are you doing here?
Looking for me?

SISKO

I didn't even know you'd be here.

KIRA

Ordinarily I'm not - I'm based at Vanadwan Monastery now. But I have a meeting with Vedek Garune this afternoon about relief supplies, so I have some time to kill. We could take a walk, if you like?

He picks up his shoes, puts them on, and they move off.

Back on the stone paths...

SISKO

It's good to see you flourishing, Nerys. I have to admit that when you left Starfleet, I was afraid you were doing it for the wrong reasons. That you were running away. But it seems to agree with you. You look... at peace.

KIRA

I feel at peace. There was a time I thought I'd never say that. But I understand why you were worried.

SISKO

You do?

KIRA

Of course. I had a few sleepless nights myself, thinking about the things I'd done. But getting to know Raiq helped me sort it out.

(beat)

Is that why you're here? Do you need help sorting things out?

Sisko doesn't reply directly, but spots a park bench by a large tree, and goes to sit on it. Kira joins him.

KIRA

So much tension, Benjamin. You seem so troubled, so... isolated.

SISKO

I am isolated.

KIRA

No, you're not. You've got family and friends, not to mention an entire planet that treasures you. And you've got the Prophets.

Sisko stands, steps away, suddenly raging. Kira watches...

SISKO

No! I don't have any of that!

KIRA

What's happened?

SISKO

The Prophets have abandoned me.

She gets up, takes his hands, patient and comforting.

KIRA

No. They would never do that. I'm sure it must feel like it after everything that's happened, but -

SISKO

Nerys, they've left me. I tried to explain it to Elias, but now he's gone too -

KIRA

So explain it to me instead.

Sisko steps away again, paces. He wasn't expecting to talk about this, but if it would be anyone, it would be Kira.

SISKO

I'm here at Shikina because I needed somewhere to stay. I told myself I was looking for a place to think in private, and that's true, to some extent. But really, I came here to find the Prophets.

KIRA

They're here, Benjamin. They're with you, even if you don't know it, even if you can't feel them.

SISKO

No, they're not. I've been here for three days, I've consulted three different Orbs - nothing.

KIRA

It happens -

SISKO

Not to me. I'm the Emissary - or at least I used to be.

KIRA

You still are -

SISKO

No. I see that now. They -

KIRA

Ben - stop it. You of all people must have faith.

SISKO

I do have faith - I believe in the existence of the Prophets, and in their love for Bajor. It's not you they've abandoned - it's me.

Kira takes a moment, steps away. It's obvious Sisko is hurting, and she has to think of how best to help him.

KIRA

I think this all goes back to the Borg invasion. The entire galaxy has been traumatised. And you know your mind needs to be clear and open for an Orb to speak to you -

SISKO

No, it goes back much further. Back to the Ascendants... no, further even than that. You know what the Prophets told me, Nerys.

KIRA

I'm not sure what you're talking about.

SISKO

I'm talking about when they told me I must "walk the path alone."

Kira pauses - they seem to be getting to the meat of it.

KIRA

Kasidy.

SISKO

They told me that if I spent my life with her, I would know nothing but sorrow. I told you, and you said you didn't think I should marry Kasidy.

KIRA

I was wrong. It was foolish of me to say anything, I can't know the

will of the Prophets. And even if it was true, the "sorrow" was when you left Kasidy to go to the Temple. And you came back from that. It's over, it's done.

SISKO

No, it's not. I thought that too at first, but now I know better. You were right all along. They were right. They were worried about me, and I didn't listen. And now look what's happened.

KIRA

Benjamin, I don't understand -

SISKO

My father is dead!

KIRA

(stunned)

Oh, Benjamin... I'm so sorry, I had no idea. Was it the Borg?

SISKO

No! It was me! And he's just the latest victim of my arrogance. Think about everything that's happened since I returned from the Temple. The Sidau massacre. Iliana Ghemor. The Ascendants. The Borg all but destroying Andor.

KIRA

But you helped with all those events. You saved lives.

SISKO

But people still died. Hundreds of them. Millions! And what about in my own life? Prylar Eivos and his wife. Luka kidnapping Rebecca. And now Elias, and my own father. The sorrow is getting closer, Nerys.

KIRA

I really can't believe -

SISKO

If I stay with Kasidy, then some day soon, it will be her death that's tearing at my heart. Or Rebecca's. Or Jake or Rena.

KIRA

What are you saying? Are you leaving Kasidy?

SISKO

If I live my life with Kasidy, I will know nothing but sorrow. I must walk the path alone. That's what they said, and it's true.

Kira steps back, amazed at this. But Sisko is resolute.

KIRA

I know you'll do what you feel you must. You always do.

SISKO

I have no choice. For the safety of my family, I have to protect them - from me.

KIRA

There are always choices, Ben. Have you tried explaining any of this to Kasidy? Talking to her?

SISKO

She wouldn't understand. She doesn't believe, not in the way you and I do. If I tried, she'd never let me leave, or she'd insist on coming with me.

KIRA

So you're just going to leave without an explanation?

SISKO

I already left. Things have been strained for a while.

KIRA

Because you made them strained?

SISKO

Probably. She'll be hurt, but she'll get over it. In the long term it's better this way.

KIRA

What about you?

SISKO

I'll go back to my life. Back to what I know.

KIRA

Starfleet?

SISKO

Yes. The *Mjolnir* leaves DS-Nine tonight to take me back to Earth.

Kira studies him for a moment, then steps close and reaches towards his ear like Vedeks do. Sisko puts his own hand up to stop her, not wanting the invasion of privacy.

But off Kira's steady unaccusing look, he feels guilty and gives in. She takes his ear, looks into his eyes, breathes deep. After a moment, she steps back.

KIRA

Your *pagh* is... wounded. Please be careful, Benjamin. If -

There is movement nearby, and they both turn to see that Prylar HAIM has appeared again, averting her eyes politely.

HAIM

I apologise for the intrusion, Emissary. Vedek Kira, you asked to be notified when it was time for your meeting with Vedek Garune...?

KIRA

Yes, thank you Haim. I'll be there in a moment, if you'll wait for me by the entrance to the arboretum?

HAIM

Of course, Vedek. Emissary.

Haim half-bows and backs off. Kira turns back to Sisko.

SISKO

It was good to see you, Nerys. I'm sorry to have burdened you, but thank you for listening.

KIRA

It's no burden, Benjamin. If you ever need me, to listen or to help in any other way, you know where to find me.

SISKO

Would you go to Kasidy? You can't tell her what I've told you, but you could comfort her.

KIRA

Of course. Stay safe, Benjamin.

They hug again, and then Sisko turns to walk away. Kira watches him go... walking down the stone path alone. Full of worry for him, she turns to go her own way.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

27 INT. ROBINSON - TURBOLIFT

The turbolift glides through the ship, lights flashing by as it moves. Sisko is reading from a padd, as Rogeiro points out certain aspects on its screen.

ROGEIRO

As you can see, Captain, Commander Relkdahz and his team were able to repair ninety-five percent of the *Robinson's* problems -

SISKO

Ninety-five percent? I told you I wanted repairs to be complete by the time I got back, Commander.

ROGEIRO

Yes, sir. But the rest are no more than minor quibbles that can be repaired on the way and have no negative effect on the function of the ship as a whole. I decided it made more sense to launch as we are than to delay any further.

SISKO

(grudging)

Alright, Commander. That was the right decision. I can see Captain Vaughn was right about you.

ROGEIRO

Sir?

SISKO

More than once he wondered out loud if you were a mindreader. It was the only way he could explain you providing just what he needed before he even asked for it.

ROGEIRO
I'm flattered, sir.

SISKO
I'll be expecting the same level
of service from you as my first
officer, Commander.

ROGEIRO
Of course, sir. Will you be giving
a speech to the new senior staff?

SISKO
Not exactly.

The lift stops, the door opens, and Sisko strides onto...

28 **INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE**

Mostly like the *Enterprise-D*, but with 20 years' worth of refits and upgrades. Sisko heads to his command chair with little attention paid to anyone, as Rogeiro calls out...

ROGEIRO
Captain on deck. All hands stand
to attention.

They do. Sisko reaches the centre of the bridge, and turns to face them...

SISKO
I am Captain Benjamin Sisko. I
know some of you already, and some
of you know me. But we are all
here to do a job, so let's get on
with it. Commander? Take us out.

Sisko takes his command seat. The senior staff are a bit thrown by the abruptness, but in order to push through it, Rogeiro begins throwing out orders.

ROGEIRO
Commander Relkdahz, thrusters and
impulse power ready, standby warp.

The Otevrel stands to the port of the tactical horseshoe.

RELKDAHZ

All systems ready, Commander.

ROGEIRO

Lieutenant Commander Plante,
contact Utopia Planitia control
and request clearance to depart.

Human female PLANTE (12x21 "Friendly Fire") replies from
the Ops position...

PLANTE

Acknowledged, Commander...

As Plante works her panels, Rogeiro turns to the others...

ROGEIRO

Science, tactical, medical...?

Andorian Lt SHAR steps forward, starboard of tactical...

SHAR

Science ready, Commander.

Bald Deltan male, Lt Cmdr UTELN, mans the tactical station.

UTELN

Tactical ready, sir.

A human male, Dr KOSCIUSZKO, sits at the captain's left...

KOSCIUSZKO

Sickbay ready, no medical issues
to report, Commander.

PLANTE

Control reports we are clear to
depart, sir.

ROGEIRO

Very well. Helm, release all
moorings, one quarter thrusters
until we clear space dock.

The Tyrellian female at helm, Lt SIVADEKI replies...

SIVADEKI

Aye, sir.

29 EXT. UTOPIA PLANITIA SHIPYARDS

The spidery arms of the space dock OPEN OUT, releasing the Galaxy-class ship from their grasp. The ship's thrusters FIRE, and the ship slowly moves out...

30 INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE

Sivadeki reports...

SIVADEKI

Space dock cleared, sir.

ROGEIRO

Set course for the Sierra sector,
full impulse to the edge of the
Terran system, then warp four.

SIVADEKI

Aye, sir.

The VIEWSCREEN shows the other structures of the ship yard peeling away as the *Robinson* moves out into open space. Rogeiro takes the empty seat at Sisko's right, and states the obvious as an attempt to connect with his captain...

ROGEIRO

The ship is underway, Captain.

SISKO

Thank you, Commander.

That's all Sisko will say. Rogeiro glances towards Doctor Kosciuszko on the opposite side of Sisko - both men are a bit concerned over their new captain's impenetrability.

We feel the ship's power build, and Sisko looks up... On SCREEN, the stars jump to WARP.

Sisko stands from his chair, pulls his uniform straight.

SISKO
Mister Rogeiro, you have the
bridge. I'll be in my ready room.

And he's gone, leaving Rogeiro with nothing to say but...

ROGEIRO
Understood, Captain.

Rogeiro doesn't understand at all.

31 INT. ROBINSON - BRIDGE

Sisko strides into the office, takes his desk, currently bare of any personal effects, and taps the computer.

SISKO
Computer, list waiting messages
for Captain Benjamin Sisko.

COMPUTER
One waiting message from Kasidy
Yates, Kendra Province, Bajor.

Sisko tenses, paralysed for a moment...

FLASHBACKS

- Sisko meets Kasidy for the first time in the cargo bay (3x23 "Family Business")
- Sisko lets security take Kasidy away to be arrested (4x22 "For the Cause")
- Sisko and Kasidy get married, despite the Prophets' warning (7x18 "Till Death Do Us Part")
- Kasidy shoves Sisko's coat and bag at him (from earlier in this episode)

BACK TO SCENE

Sisko pushes these memories away and makes a choice.

SISKO
Computer, delete message.

The computer BEEPS affirmatively.

SISKO
Sisko to Lieutenant ch'Thane.
Please report to my ready room.

SHAR (comm)
Acknowledged, Captain.

A few moments while Sisko sits in his chair silently, then the ready room doors OPEN and Shar enters.

SHAR
What can I do for you, sir?

SISKO
Were you able to replicate the
item I requested, Lieutenant?

SHAR
I have the programme ready to run
at your discretion, sir.
(re replicator)
May I?

Sisko nods, so Shar goes to the replicator and speaks...

SHAR
Computer, access programme
ch'Thane delta four and activate
at this station.

The computer BEEPS affirmatively, the replicator powers up, Shar reaches in to pick up the result, turns to Sisko...

...and he is holding a BASEBALL set on a small plinth. He hands it to Sisko, who takes it without expression.

SHAR
I'm afraid I don't understand the
significance, Captain...

SISKO
Why are you here, Lieutenant?

SHAR
Sir...?

SISKO

Why did you return to Starfleet?
You could have gone home.

The personal question makes Shar uncomfortable, but he cannot refuse a direct query.

SHAR

I have no reason to return home,
sir. My family is gone. Starfleet
gives me somewhere to stay and a
way to contribute.

SISKO

(re baseball)

That's what this is about.

(beat)

Dismissed, Lieutenant.

Shar nods acknowledgement, turns and leaves.

Sisko places the baseball on its plinth upon his desk, just as it used to be in his office on Deep Space Nine. Adjusts it so it's at the right angle. Sits back and gazes at it.

Then he turns to his desktop computer and gets to work...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW